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The Happy Hours
draft of 31 May 2005

White screen.

The following words, in gray, flash on the screen for a few seconds, just long enough to be read:

And if these words are spoken or read.

And then:

Let us speak of the memory they leave behind.

White screen.

The camera slowly pans down the empty, white wall.

Throughout this scene the voices of a man and woman are heard. The man is never seen, only heard, occasionally speaking to the woman. Both voices are always soft, words spoken quietly, not rushed. A twilight hush. The sound of footsteps on a wooden floor. The sound of pots and pans hanging from a rack, hitting, ringing against each other, faintly resembling the tinging of bells. A beautiful sound.

MAN (off)

Please, continue.

The woman, Hannah, is reading from a book.

HANNAH (off, reading)

One conception of the ancients is solemn and almost frightening. They imagined their ancestors sitting in huge caves in a circle on thrones, in silent communication.

The camera continues to pan down the wall. A series of framed photographs hanging on the wall are slowly revealed.

MAN (off)

What time is it?

HANNAH (off)

We going to be late?

MAN (off)

Maybe. (Pause) Sorry, go on.

HANNAH (off)

Of course, darling. (Slight, affectionate sarcasm in her voice)

The camera continues to pan down the wall, the metal headboard of a bed comes into view, and then Hannah's head is seen, looking down, at her book that is not seen.

The camera stays in position. She is lying on a bed. Her face is not seen. She is staring slightly back toward the wall. The photographs on the wall are seen behind her.

HANNAH (reading)

When a newcomer entered they rose and bowed their heads to welcome him, if he deserved it.

The camera pans slowly down, revealing the book she is reading, and her hand on the pages. Camera stays in this position.

HANNAH (reading)

Yesterday, when I was sitting in the chapel in my carved seat and saw opposite me other seats arranged in a circle, I remembered this, and it was a comforting and happy thought. Why can you not remain here? I said to myself, (Pause) remain here, quiet and lost in your thoughts for a long, long time, until your friends arrive at last and you will rise, and with a friendly gesture direct them to their places.

She turns the page.

HANNAH

Play something nice.

Footsteps are heard. She continues to read.

HANNAH (reading)

The stained-glassed panes transform the day into somber twilight; someone should donate an ever burning lamp, so that here even the night would not complete darkness. (Pause)

The camera now begins a very slow pan up that will stop when Hannah finishes reading and closes the book, and frames her face in profile.

HANNAH (reading)

We may imagine ourselves in any situation we like, but we always think of ourselves as seeing. I believe that the reason man dreams is because he should not stop seeing. Some day perhaps the inner light will shine forth from us, and then we shall need no other light.

She stops reading and closes the book. Sits up slightly on her forearms, looks to right, looks to the left, her head in full profile.

Sound of soft radio static.

Footsteps.

White screen.

In an extreme close-up, in slow-motion, Hannah reaches her hand into the frame, the man reaches his hand into the frame from the side.

MAN (*off, softly*)

Let's go.

The music begins to play, softly, as the screen turns white, just before they touch.

White screen.

Camera tracks right, the white screen is revealed to be a white wall. The stacks of a library come into view. The camera slowly tracks right down the central aisle of the stacks. Various people are seen looking for and browsing books. Three or four perpendicular aisles pass by before the camera stops, framing one aisle symmetrically, the ends of the shelves on the right and left of the frame. There is a window in the background of the aisles, which casts a dreamy sort of glow. Two men, John and Charlie, are looking around, trying to find a book. In their hands they each hold a small scrap of paper. Charlie looks at the numbers on his piece of paper. John takes a book off the shelf and flips through the pages. Charlie turns around and notices that John's book is the same one he is looking for. He looks on the shelf to see if there is another, and there is not. John looks up.

CHARLIE

We must be in the same class.

JOHN

A shame isn't it.

CHARLIE

That we both need the same book.

JOHN

No, that we both were asses enough to take this class. My name's John.

They shake hands.

CHARLIE (*smiling*)

Charlie.

A classroom. Camera frames a small lecture hall about half full, faces forward, some reading, some talking, some looking around. John is seated near the back, looking at a very pretty girl, a few seats away, and to his right. The pretty girl notices his glances and sees him writing on a small square piece of paper. John begins to fold the paper. Students continue to come in and sit down. Charlie walks into the class and sits a few rows down in front of John, who notices him walking in. He continues to fold the square piece of paper. Charlie opens his notebook, takes out his pen, and starts to write. John finishes making this little origami crane. The pretty girl looks over at the crane, and at John. He reaches over and places the crane on the girl's desk. He stands up, grabbing two identical books from his desk, and walks down and sits next to Charlie's. Charlie looks up and John hands him one of the books, recognized as the same book from the library. In the background, the pretty girl unfolds the crane, reads what is written, looks toward John and smiles.

Camera frames John and Charlie, from the back, in a sporty convertible with the top down. John is driving through an urban industrial area. Only the back of their heads are seen. The stereo is playing some music.

CHARLIE

You know it's freezing out.

JOHN

I bought a topless car for a specific reason, my friend.

CHARLIE

And you wish for her to remain topless.

JOHN

Right on the mark, as usual.

CHARLIE
Who is this?

JOHN
A friend of mine. Calls himself- *(the CD in the stereo skips for a second)* Merde.

CHARLIE
In a film, if you curse in a foreign language, does that change your rating?

JOHN
Most likely.

CHARLIE
Nudity is universal, though.

JOHN
As it should be.

Long pause.

JOHN
I think I'm in love.

CHARLIE
What's it been, a week?

JOHN
Almost.

CHARLIE
I guess that's all it takes.

Charlie's studio. Camera frames John and Charlie sitting on a couch up against a wall. An end table and large mirror is to their side. Hanging on the wall is a chalkboard. On the table are various books

including a book on origami. In the reflection of the mirror, standing very still, one hand covering her sex, a nude, pregnant woman, clothes on the floor. Charlie is looking down at the floor where lie some scattered, large, white pieces of paper, a pencil in his hand. He looks very sad. He does not look up.

The woman raises the other hand (in the reflection), holding something in her hand.

John looks around, at the papers on the floor, at Charlie, a long look into the camera (at the pregnant woman), looks at his watch, looks back at Charlie, and looks back into the camera.

A cafe/bar. Camera frames John and Charlie, sitting at small table against the wall, facing each other, in profile, from the tabletop up. Three espresso cups are on the table, a couple empty whisky glasses. An ashtray on the table has a lit cigarette. A few pictures hang on the wall between them. The air is very smoky. Faintly heard music. No words are spoken for a while. John begins to look a little impatient.

JOHN
She should be here soon.

CHARLIE
Georgia, right?

JOHN
Yeah, I know, no states.

CHARLIE
Or fruits.

JOHN
Cities, perhaps.

CHARLIE
Perhaps.

John looks past Charlie. Takes a drag on his cigarette.

JOHN

There's my girl.

Camera frames, on-center, shoulders up, a very pretty girl, standing in front of the door. No sound. She is looking down. In slow-motion, she looks up and walks toward camera. Camera pulls back with her as she walks. She looks side to side. Like she expects people to be looking at her. Very much the model on the catwalk.

Close-up of her lower-legs, walking, feet stepping lightly on the floor, in slow-motion.

Camera frames her on-center, shoulders up, standing in front of their table. She is looking slightly down toward the table. Charlie and John are heard off screen, their voices sound very similar.

JOHN (off)

Right on time.

GEORGIA

Of course.

JOHN (off)

You remember Charlie.

GEORGIA

How could I forget, the quiet artist, lost in his thoughts.

CHARLIE (off)

Lost, I hope not, quiet, yes. Hi.

JOHN (off)

Shall we roll?

Georgia lifts up a plastic mask and holds it in front of her face, covering her face. And speaks very slowly, seductively:

GEORGIA

Charlie must dance with me.

JOHN (off)

Beautiful.

The party. *A large room. A tightly packed frame of people, all wearing masks, some brightly colored, some solid black or white, most covering their faces, some wearing them on top of their head, more Venetian carnival than Halloween, yet not as Baroque. Some people are dancing, mostly the girls, some talking. The music is similar to the music heard in the car, slow, yet more danceable.*

Camera tracks slowly right, along this sea of faces, of masks. In passing notice Georgia's mask, she is dancing with a couple of girls. A few flashes from a camera are seen off screen.

Camera continues to track right. The back of Charlie's head comes into view. In front of him and just to his right, facing the camera, standing closely together, are two girls of the same height with the same hair, wearing identical masks and clothes, who are possibly twins.

Camera continues to track right and in the background, seen between the pack of people, facing the camera, up against the wall, is Hannah, with her mask flipped up on top of her head.

Camera continues to track right and stops with John on the edge of right frame, half in half out, looking to the left at Charlie and past him to Georgia who is off screen.

CHARLIE

Twins.

LEFT TWIN

Possibly.

RIGHT TWIN

Would you like to know?

LEFT TWIN

But only in the dark.

RIGHT TWIN

And only with her hands.

LEFT TWIN

How identical we are.

CHARLIE

Her hands? Wonderful, but I think you got the wrong guy.

In the background, Hannah lifts up her camera and takes a picture, a flash goes off. John looks at her, and Charlie looks past the Twins at her. The crowd of people pushes around, pushing Charlie toward Hannah, and pushing John out of the frame. Charlie and Hannah are seen in the background, through the crowd. Hannah has not changed her position up against the wall.

HANNAH

Having trouble.

CHARLIE

How could you tell?

HANNAH

I can sense discomfort, even through the mask.

CHARLIE

I'd almost forgotten I had this on. *(he removes the mask)* These things remind me of my childhood, dressed up for Halloween as The Bat.

HANNAH

The Bat?

CHARLIE

Yeah, my brother got to be Superman, me just The Bat.

HANNAH

How sweetly sad.

CHARLIE

One day, I hope to escape the generic.

The crowd of people pushes Charlie closer to Hannah.

Camera frames Charlie, from the back, shoulder up, facing Hannah, whose face is mostly blocked by the back of Charlie's head.

CHARLIE

You take a lot of pictures?

HANNAH

A hobby. People intrigue me. My aim though is more documentary than artistic. Plus I'm a sucker for masks. You?

CHARLIE

Taking photos makes me nervous. The immediacy of it. I like to create in an air of fermentation.

HANNAH

Sounds delicious. We are talking about art?

CHARLIE

I believe so.

HANNAH

Everyone seems to be an artist these days, don't you think?

CHARLIE

Makes one crave the days when the icons of the monks spoke to the world.

HANNAH

Very medieval. And yet the freedom we have.

CHARLIE

Art desires limits not freedom.

The CD playing the music skips for a second.

HANNAH

This would be the perfect time for you to ask me to dance.

CHARLIE

I'm not really the dancing type.

HANNAH

Everyone's the dancing type. So ask me back to look at your art.

CHARLIE

I would love for you to see my work.

HANNAH

Is that the liquor talking?

CHARLIE

No, you.

Camera frames Hannah, against the wall, from the waist up, looking down at the screen on her camera. Her mask is pushed slightly down over her forehead just covering her eyes.

Camera frames Hannah, shoulders up. She lifts her head, still looking slightly down, eyes hidden by the edge of the mask.

HANNAH

Perfect, so, let's go.

Black screen. The voices of Hannah and a man are heard, softly.

HANNAH

And the day after that, and the next.

MAN

And the day after that.

HANNAH

And tonight.

An empty street of storefronts. There is no sound. A light rain is falling. A drape in an open window blows in the wind to the right, then stops. A group of three or four girls walk into the frame from the left, at a leisurely pace, they walk past a window and some check themselves out in the darkened glass while still walking, and continue walking out of the frame, one girl jumping over a puddle. The drape blows again, a little more than before, and then stops.

Hannah walks into the frame from the left. She walks to the center of the frame, and then the camera tracks right with her, walking with her. She turns her head to the right, looking back over her shoulder, continuing to walk.

A man's voice is heard, softly.

MAN (off)

Hannah.

Camera frames Hannah, from the shoulder's up, as she turns her head, in slow-motion, camera turning with her, her face wet with rain. She has a sad look.

A cafe/bar. Camera frames two old men (or two slightly crazy men, the kind found in every coffee shop drinking too much coffee) sitting on the barstools on the left, their backs to the camera, one is reading a newspaper. Hannah is sitting on a stool to the right, smoking a cigarette. They are framed from the top of the bar up. Behind the bar, facing the camera, is an older woman, with a very kind, wise face, a young hearted grandmother. She speaks with a French accent.

OLD MAN (reading)

For a fraction of a second in _____, a dying remnant of an exploded star let out a burst of light that outshone the Milky Way's other half-trillion stars combined. (pause) The pulse registered on instruments aboard 15 spacecraft, including one designed to record cosmic gamma rays and turned on just the week before. (pause) Half a galaxy away, the starburst was one of the brightest objects ever observed in the sky, after the sun and perhaps a few comets. The radiation even temporarily compressed Earth's ionosphere and distorted long-wavelength radio signals. Giving off more energy in 0.2 seconds than the Sun does in 100,000 years. (pause, stops reading) This event was not deemed worthy of the front page.

OLD MAN 2

Yes, the end of the world will be covered on page six.

The Old Man looks at his friend.

OLD MAN

And here they quote an astronomer: (reading) Whoppingly bright.

OLD MAN 2

To know when to speak, and whom to ask to speak.

OLD MAN

Words are very difficult. What was it he said at the end of his life (pause) I feel that I have done nothing more than desire to speak, and if I have said anything, it is not what I desired to say.

OLD MAN 2

Yes, word means less to me than ever before. (pause) Among my most prized possessions are words that I have never spoken.

HANNAH

Must we always quote.

OLD MAN 2

But, these words speak when none other would be as precise. Why speak words that have been spoken more perfectly in the past?

OLD MAN

Life, though, is it ever a work of art? A striving for the perfect, in an imperfect body, in an imperfect world.

OLD MAN 2

But aren't the imperfections what you come to love the most?

HANNAH

Words, is there anything that causes such pain as words?

OLD MAN 2

And those words are much too sad for one so young.

OLD WOMAN

And yet we must speak, my friends, if only out of the necessity to utter these words of love.

OLD MAN 2 (*smiling*)

Dear woman, that is the perfect ending to our imperfect words, (*pause*) je t'aime.

Pause.

OLD WOMAN

Your man was in here last night looking for you. I told him it was your night off. (*pause*) I like him.

HANNAH

Yeah, everyone does.

OLD WOMAN

What's his name, again, (*pause*) Johnny?

HANNAH

No, just John.

Black screen. Hannah's voice, softly.

HANNAH

Fuck you, Johnny.

A small, circular pedestrian tunnel, covered with tiles. A violin is heard. On the right side of the screen stand John and Hannah. John

has his back against the tunnel wall, Hannah is pressed up against him with her arms around his shoulders.

HANNAH

And this was all your idea. The walk into the tunnel, the violin player, the snow?

JOHN

Well, the snow is out of my hands.

HANNAH

Where did you find him?

JOHN

He was playing on the street. I tossed in some change, and asked him if he did special occasions.

HANNAH

And what's the special occasion?

JOHN

Well, you are.

HANNAH (*smiling*)

The meal was delicious. (*pause*) You do know that we are in a tunnel. Don't you think it's such a cliché?

JOHN

A cliché?

HANNAH

You know, the tunnel as a prelude to -

JOHN

-as a prelude to what?

The camera turns slowly to the right, John and Hannah disappearing off the left side of the frame. Camera frames the opening of the tunnel. There is snow falling.

HANNAH (off)

Je t'aime.

JOHN (off)

Now this is a cliché.

Black screen. A couple flashes of light.

A man's voice is heard, softly.

MAN (off)

Hannah.

Camera frames Hannah, from the shoulder's up, in profile, as she turns her head to the right, in slow-motion, camera turning with her. Repeat of an earlier scene. She has a sad look.

Black screen. The voices of Hannah and a man are heard, softly.

MAN

We'll see each other tomorrow, (pause) and the day after tomorrow.

HANNAH

And the day after that, and the next.

MAN

And the day after that.

HANNAH

And tonight.

The cafe/bar. Camera frames from top of the bar up. Behind the bar is Hannah, her back to the camera, working. John, with his back to the camera, is to the right. All the stools are taken. A pretty girl sits next to him, to his right, her back also to the camera. People walk by, some stand looking around. The two Old Men sitting on the left, get up, one Old Man puts his hand on the shoulder of his friend for a second, smiling, and they walk off screen. Two people take their seats. Music is heard.

John reaches over and brushes the hair off the ear of the girl to his right, and leans in and whispers in her ear, words which are not heard. The girl looks down and to the right, and we see her smile.

JOHN

Can I buy you a drink?

HANNAH (back to the camera)

You do know I work here. The drinks, as a rule, are on me.

JOHN

Well, yes, but I must woo you.

HANNAH (back to camera, laughing)

Woo, what an awful word.

JOHN

So, can I buy you a drink?

Camera frames a road, on-center, industrial-warehouse urban scenery passing by.

Black screen. A couple flashes of light and then another. The voices of Hannah and a man are heard.

MAN (laughing)

Is this really the appropriate time.

HANNAH

But, darling, this is the one act that deserves documentation. *(pause)* And I won't even ask you to smile.

The cafe/bar. Camera frames from top of bar up. Hannah and the Old Woman stand behind the bar facing the camera, the Old Woman is wiping the bar down with a white cloth, Hannah is resting her arms on the bar looking down, an ashtray has a couple of lit cigarettes, the bar is empty.

HANNAH

Birthdays are such sad times. Memories spent with others, wishes forgotten.

OLD WOMAN

Love comes and goes, but it is always there.

HANNAH

Yes, I have always been lucky in love. I just expect too much of people.

OLD WOMAN

You must expect only that mistakes are made. The wrong road is sometimes taken. But above all you must act, and let some things be decided by others. And this I know is the hardest for you. We are all children, we all need a hand to lead us. Be ready to take that hand, it is not often offered. *(pause)* But I am an old woman who perhaps speaks her mind too much. Preaching when I should be silent. Yes. *(pause)* So, let us celebrate this birthday. It is a new year.

The Old Woman looks into the camera.

OLD WOMAN

Now, let us dim the lights.

The light dims to almost total black, in very low contrast the figures can just be seen. The Old Woman is still looking into the camera.

OLD WOMAN

Ah, oui, that is perfect. And now, if you please, the music to set the mood.

Music is heard, softly.

OLD WOMAN

Merci, you are too kind, c'est tres belle. Come, let us light this cake.

Camera frames the Old Woman, on-center, from the shoulders up, looking down, still in very low contrast, barely seen in the low light.

The sound of a match being struck.

White screen. The voice of the Old Woman is heard, softly.

OLD WOMAN

Vous etes un ange descendu sur la terre, take flight once again.

Camera frames a girl, in profile, jumping over a puddle, in slow-motion, her arm stretched out into the screen.

Camera frames a road, on-center, industrial-warehouse urban scenery passing by.

Camera frames the feet of a girl, in profile, jumping over a puddle, in slow-motion, and a girl behind her splashes in the water.

Camera frames Hannah, in profile, shoulders up, driving a car, the same car driven earlier by Charlie and John. She turns and looks into the camera.

Black screen, a couple flashes of light. A mans voice is heard, softly.

MAN

Make a wish.

The Art Opening. Camera frames an assortment of people, men, women, facing the camera, wearing dressy clothing, lots of black and grays, facing the camera, in a large white room. They are looking at the art, which is never seen. Some people are looking directly into the camera (at the art hanging on the wall), others slightly to the left and right. Some people walking slowly back and forth. A couple groups talk amongst themselves. Some people don't speak at all. Behind them is a long table, covered with a white cloth, with various bottles and glasses sitting on it. Behind the table, also facing the camera, stands a man in a white suit who is serving the drinks. The camera begins a very slow track right. Various conversations are heard, some on-screen others off. Soft music is heard.

WOMAN

(looking left and right, facing camera) She's very pretty.

WOMAN 2

(looking left and right, facing camera) Yes, an elegant softness, the skin has a great life to it. Her eyes, though (pause) her eyes frighten me.

WOMAN 3 (off)

I hate secrets, to me they are too close to lies.

MAN

(looking left and right, facing camera) This desire to put everything in. The line must be drawn before-

MAN 2

-But you must have the desire.

WOMAN 4 (off)

Yes, I read it. I liked his last better.

MAN 3 (off)

But you have to judge the work by what it aims to be.

WOMAN 4 (off)

No, I disagree.

MAN 4

They're quite erotic. (laughing, and turning to his female companion) I think we'll need to see some proof of age.

WOMAN 5

I've seen much more.

MAN 4

That does not surprise me. (pause, turning to second female companion) And you, what do you think?

WOMAN 6

(she looks to her left to make sure someone doesn't hear and whispers) I don't care for it. (pause) They make me too sad.

MAN 5 (off)

I think you're blushing.

WOMAN 7 (in background)

I hate pornography.

MAN 6 (*in background*)

On moral or artistic grounds? (pause) I would have to hate it on artistic grounds. That it shows everything. There is no freedom for the viewer, only a call for action.

WOMAN 7 (*in background*)

I don't know about that. I just remember my grandfather, and the magazines he just left lying around. Grandmother didn't even care. The dirty old man.

WOMAN 8

No, it should never be quantitative.

MAN 7 (*off, whispering*)

I think they're talking about us.

MAN 8

There's the story of Dante in exile, walking the streets of Verona. People whispered to each other that he goes to Hell when he chooses and brings back news from there.

WOMAN 9

(*facing camera*) It all seems too unreal.

WOMAN 10

(*she strokes Woman 8's hair*) This is reality.

WOMAN 11 (*off*)

I hope your not spending all your nights with just one woman.

WOMAN 12

(*looking left and right, facing camera*) I find it all very repetitive.

MAN 9

(*looking into camera*) I couldn't agree more.

MAN 10 (*off*)

But does it lack poverty?

MAN 11 (*off*)

Well, yes, Mozart will be enjoyed for another 1000 years, but Bach -

MAN 12 (*off, in a hushed tone*)

-Ja, ja, die engel sprechen von ihm fur ewigkeit.

Camera tracks past the string quartet which is playing the music, and stops, framing Charlie and Hannah in the background, facing the camera, standing side by side, to the right of the screen. Charlie is drinking from a glass. Standing in front of them is a man with his back to camera.

CHARLIE

And you, my friend, what do you think? Do you like them?

MAN

There's a wonderful stillness to them. They take away my desire to speak.

CHARLIE

Thank you, thank you so very much.

HANNAH

I think it's your best work yet. You've put all you have into it. Yes? Your loves, your dreams, your needs.

CHARLIE

My needs. Yes, my needs. And yet my work always seems to belong to the past. My hope, my dream is for the ever present. Is that possible? I don't know. To create something that is always now, that lives neither in the past or the future. Maybe that is only possible- *(pause, looks toward Hannah)* That is my desire.

Camera frames Hannah on-center, shoulders up, looking down.

CHARLIE *(off)*

I need. *(pause)* I need you.

Black screen. The voices of Hannah and a man are heard speaking softly, slowly, with pauses between each phrase. The music continues.

HANNAH

Do you see my feet, in the mirror?

MAN

Yes.

HANNAH

Think their pretty?

MAN

Yes. Very.

HANNAH

You like my ankles?

MAN

Yes.

HANNAH

And my knees, too?

MAN

Yes. I really like your knees.

HANNAH

And my thighs?

MAN

Your thighs, too.

HANNAH

See my behind, in the mirror?

MAN

Yes.

HANNAH

Do you think I have a cute ass?

MAN

Yes. Very much.

HANNAH

Shall I get on my knees?

MAN

No. That's OK.

HANNAH

And my breasts. You like them?

MAN

Yes. Really.

HANNAH

Which do you like better, my breasts, or my nipples, or- *(words whispered too softly to be heard)*

MAN

Yes.

HANNAH

And my belly, (pause) has it changed?

The cafelbar. Camera frames as before. Behind the bar is the Old Woman, sitting on the left, his back to the camera, is Charlie, looking very pensive, and on the far right sits a pretty girl. The girl is drinking and occasionally pushing her hair back from her ears, looking over at Charlie. Charlie glances over a couple times, but does not make a move.

OLD WOMAN

You all right, hon?

CHARLIE

Yes, thank you.

OLD WOMAN

You just let me know if you need anything.

CHARLIE

Another drink, perhaps.

The Old Woman pours him a drink, and smiles at him.

A young man walks into the frame, up to the bar, back to the camera, and turns to Charlie.

YOUNG MAN

Got a quarter?

Charlie tosses him a quarter, and the young man walks out of the frame.

Music begins to play, very danceable. The young man walks back into the frame, extending his hand out to the girl. She smiles and takes his hand, and they walk out of the frame.

A girl walks into the frame from the right and sits down next to Charlie.

GIRL

A couple of us are sitting over there. Thought you might like to join us.

CHARLIE

That's all right. Thanks, though.

GIRL

You like drinking alone?

CHARLIE

Yes, sometimes it's nice.

GIRL

I don't think we should ever be alone. (pause) Well, if you change your mind.

The girl walks back out of the frame to the right. The Old Woman walks over in front of Charlie.

OLD WOMAN

You know, hon, there will come a time in your life when you realize that the chances you believe will always be offered, will be sought and desired, but will never occur with the frequency of the past. A dance is sometimes just a dance. It need not be a prelude to the future. We bleed, and laugh, and cry, cause we are of this world. These pretty young girls only wish to see you smile, and smile with you.

(pause, Charlie smiles at her) Ah, that's sweet of you. (pause) Another drink?

CHARLIE

Please.

Black screen. The voices of Hannah and a man.

HANNAH

It hurts, doesn't it? (pause) Not knowing.

MAN

Yes.

HANNAH

Good.

A room. Camera frames the edge of a bed on the left, the angled back of a TV on a stand, a bench up against the wall with a small stack of white, folded sheets on it, and Hannah wearing a robe and some large headphones on her head. She is trying to fold a large, white sheet. The light from the TV is seen, the image is not. A man's deep voice on the TV is heard, and nothing else.

TV VOICE

...It appears to have been an accident, the driver losing control on the icy road. There were no survivors. Her passenger, a young man, died on the scene. She was later found to be pregnant. Despite all efforts, they could not be-

She takes off her headphones, and the TV Voice ends. The sound of water from a faucet is heard. A voice is heard from the right.

MAN (off)

A sad tale.

HANNAH

What? (she turns her head to the right) Here, help me with this.

She walks over with the sheet to the right, half out of the frame, and backs up, holding one end of the sheet, the other end of the sheet being held by the man, who remains out of the frame. They begin to fold the sheet, Hannah beginning to look very sad, she walking closer to the edge of the right frame as needed, and then out of the frame at the end. She walks back into the frame with the folded, square sheet, and places it on top of the others. She sits down on the bench, and looks at the TV.

MAN (off)

It's ready.

Hannah turns her head to the right, stands up, and walks out of the frame to the right. The sound of the water stops.

MAN (off)

Very nice.

HANNAH (off, laughing)

Hey, I'm shy.

MAN (off)

Really, you fooled me.

The sound of someone getting in water. The camera begins a slow track right, and stops, framing an open door, to the right of the frame. Through the frame of the door, the edge of a bathtub is seen. Occasionally, Hannah's leg is seen coming out of the water ending at her lower thigh.

MAN (off)

You enjoy cursing don't you?

HANNAH (off)

Actually, I don't even think about it. But yes, maybe I do.

MAN (off)

Don't you think those words lose their power, the more you say them.

HANNAH (off)

You're such a prude.

MAN (off)

No, I just think that there has to be a reason, some meaning in all our words. Even the most banal. Every act must have an undeniable right to exist. (pause) Just think if we spoke a word, one specific word, just once in our life, the power that word would have. But that realization arrives too late, and the word has already been spoken.

The camera begins a slow zoom toward the door. Also panning very slightly right turning left in the direction of the bathtub.

HANNAH (off)

Darling, I couldn't agree more, but you know what. (pause) This tub here is big enough for the both of us.

MAN (off, laughing)

I don't care to get wet.

Some water is splashed out of the tub to right.

HANNAH (off)

There, problem solved.

The door to the bathroom is slowly closed from the inside, hinged on the right, and the camera's zoom ends with the closing of the door.

HANNAH (off, very softly)

So, let's -

Camera frames a woman's bare feet, on-center. One foot moves a little, very slowly, and then a robe falls down from the top of the screen, in slow-motion, and lies on the floor. She steps slowly over the robe toward the camera, just one step and frame ends.

Camera frames a woman's bare feet and bottom of robe. She slowly sits down, squatting, turning in profile. Frame ends before her waist is seen.

Camera frames the side of a bathtub. A woman's right arm rests on the top edge of the tub. She runs her index finger slowly along the top of the tub, and then rests her hand around the edge, grasping the sides, her grip tightens.

Black screen. The voice of a man.

MAN

What time is it? (pause) What time is it now?

Camera frames Hannah walking around a room.

MAN (off)

Would you be able to give up everything, to start life all over again (pause) to choose one thing, just one thing, and be faithful to it (pause) to make it the thing that gives meaning to your life (pause) something that contains everything else (pause) that becomes everything else just because of your boundless faith in it? Could you do that? Say (pause) if I asked you.

Hannah stops walking, and in profile turns her eyes slightly toward the camera.

HANNAH

I have heard all this before. *(pause)* Could you?

MAN *(off)*

I *(pause)* I believe so.

Black screen. The voice of a man.

MAN

And now?

Camera frames Hannah in profile, facing right, shoulders up, on the far right side of screen.

HANNAH

And that's your answer?

CHARLIE *(off)*

Yes.

Camera tracks right and turns, framing the back of Charlie, on-center, partly covering Hannah from view, who is facing the camera, looking at Charlie.

HANNAH

You know, the truth should look different from the lie.

Long pause.

CHARLIE

Why don't you say something?

HANNAH

Because I have nothing to say.

The cafe/bar. Camera frames from top of bar up. The Old Woman stands behind the bar facing the camera, speaking to Hannah who is sitting in front, her back to the camera, smoking a cigarette. The bar is empty.

OLD WOMAN

Yes, I know. *(pause)* And if these words of mine are any comfort to you, I think that you will find that your memory of pain is much briefer than your memory of pleasure. It is a great gift.

The Old Woman begins to wipe down the bar with a white cloth. She looks over to the right.

OLD WOMAN

I'm sorry, we're closed.

Camera frames Hannah sitting on the bench up against the wall, from seat of the bench up, facing the camera. On the bench is a stack of folded, white sheets, and large headphones. Hannah is wearing a robe with her hair up. She is resting her arms on her legs, looking to the right. She reaches down to the floor, which is not seen, and picks up a folded white sheet, placing it on the bench with the others.

She looks to the right again, and the camera tracks slowly over to a blank white space on the wall.

White screen.

HANNAH *(off, softly)*

Tell me a story.

The Rescue. A snow-covered hill. Screen white with snow. There is no sound throughout this scene except for the sound of Charlie's voice and the sound of the helicopter at the end.

MAN (off)
On the news last night I saw a scene that touched me deeply.



The camera tracks left revealing the legs, the feet, of men wearing brightly covered snowsuits, and the end of a knotted, thick, yellow rope

that hangs from the sky, moving slowly back and forth, and forming the bottom half of a parabolic shape.

MAN (off)
There was an accident in the mountains.

One man, wearing a harness, and a large head-covering helmet, is putting on a large, boxlike backpack.

MAN (off)
A man had been injured. Skiing, I think.



The camera now tracks right, following the yellow rope floating in the air, moving slowly back and forth, left and right, sometimes tracking with the camera, and a group of kneeling figures come into view.

MAN (off)
An attempt was made to rescue him.

A man, injured, on his knees, seen only from his back, is being helped with great care, talked to, comforted, their arms around him, by three men, also kneeling. All wear brightly colored snowsuits.



A harness is wrapped around the injured man.

The yellow rope continues to move very slowly, back and forth.

The man wearing the large helmet walks back into the frame as the three other kneeling men slowly move away, one to the left, the other two to the right, glancing to the sides and the sky.

The camera tracks left away from the scene.

Camera tracks back to reveal a group of seven men in the foreground, and the injured man and the backpack man barely glimpsed in the background.

The yellow rope is now a vertical line that hangs between the man with the large helmet and the injured man. The yellow rope moves very slightly back and forth.



Flight helmet man lifts up his right arm and grasps a firm hold on the rope.

MAN (off)

And I thought what if that was life? That in all our times of trouble, our pains and sorrow, these angels of mercy would arrive, and wrap their arms around us, and lift us up into the clouds and away from harm.

The silence ends as the sound of a helicopter becomes more predominant.

The sound of the helicopter grows louder, a deafening sound as the injured man and flight helmet man, attached to the rope, are lifted a few inches into the air, barely noticeable, and suspend there for a moment.

Black screen, no sound, the voice of Hannah and a man softly.

HANNAH

A wonderful show. A lovely tune. The scent of-
(pause) Just once more, before we go.

MAN

Please.

Black screen. The sound of a car starting.

The Concert. *A glass enclosed botanical garden on a cloudy overcast day. Throughout this long take the camera will continue to move, in contrast to the geometric movement in the rest of the film, flowing slowly, smoothly through the gardens of plants and flowers and strolling people. Some people alone, or in groups are looking at the plants. People walk by, toward and away from the camera. No voices are heard. The sound of birds. The chamber orchestra is heard off in the distance. Potentially, one-third of the film, 30 minutes, will take place in these gardens.*

Camera enters through a door and begins its stroll through the gardens. A man approaches whose eye catches something behind the camera, his face was expressionless, but his eyes light up, as he walks towards the camera and then behind. The music begins to play, softly in the distance.

Camera continues its stroll through the gardens. Occasionally someone will look over and smile. A man looks at his watch while his female companion studies some flowers, he looks around impatiently. People sit on benches, an old man is asleep on one, a woman is reading on another. A man kisses a woman, the woman looks around to see if anyone was looking. A man looks around, and then quickly picks a flower, hiding it behind his coat, later on we see the man give the flower to a woman. The leaves on the trees blow from some wind.

Towards the end of the stroll, a woman singing in a foreign language is heard, along with the orchestra.

A man opens a door, and the camera enters another room, framing a small chamber orchestra, and the woman singing, around which are a circle of chairs, most of which are occupied. Some of the audience is looking at their pamphlets.

Camera circles behind the chairs, and comes to a man who is standing behind an empty chair. He pulls out the chair and smiles at the camera. The camera moves on. Hannah walks into the frame from behind the camera, walks a few yards in front of the camera and turns her head back, her face toward the camera.

Camera frames Hannah, in profile, shoulders up, driving a car. She turns and looks into the camera.

MAN (off)

Why don't you say something?

Hannah smiles ever so slightly into the camera.

Camera frames the car from the rear, driving on the right side of the frame, through an urban industrial landscape. Camera follows the car for a bit. A group of four people are seen in the distance, standing on the left side of the frame.

Camera stops as the car makes a sharp right turn out of the frame, framing the edge of a wall on the right, the four people standing on the left. One man looks in the direction of the car, and then starts walking across the road to the right in that direction.

The sound of brakes squealing, the sound of a crash. Then silence.

A succession of images flash on the screen. Some long, most shown for just an instant. All silent:

Young man and girl dancing at the bar.

Masked covered faces. A flash of light.

A man walks in slow-motion to the left, in profile, just a few steps, and then collapses forward, on his side, his face away from the camera.

A woman's hand skimming through water.

John, front view, shoulders up. A couple flashes of light. He smiles.

The man seen running earlier, pulling a man on the ground.

The reflection of a woman's hand in a mirror, pushing against the side of the frame.

Charlie standing at the party, on the right, John at the far left edge of frame, facing camera. John looks at Charlie, then Charlie looks toward camera. A couple flashes of light.

Camera frames the earlier road scene, the man walking to the right, then he runs out of the frame. The three other people standing on the left. One looks into the camera. And the camera slowly moves up the road in their direction.

Camera turns slowly to the right where the car turned, framing the black asphalt of the road covered with debris.

Camera pans slowly up, revealing a car and some figures lying on the ground.

Camera continues its pan up, and then stops, framing the car on the right, from the rear, smashed into a pole, both doors open, with flames coming out of the car. On the far left, lying on her side is Hannah, her back to the camera, behind her, lying on the ground, partially seen, is a man, and behind them, kneeling, one knee on the ground, is the man seen running earlier, facing the camera, looking down at the unmoving bodies.

A light snow begins to fall.

The man kneeling leans his head down for a second, as if listening, then looks up and into the camera, raising his right arm and waving, beckoning someone to come.

Very softly, for a few seconds, in the distance, the silence is broken by the sound of a helicopter.

Black screen. Credits.