

GIOVANNI'S ROOM

Written by  
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Based on the novel by James Baldwin

INT. BEDROOM SPACE - DECEMBER 1956

First, a window.

Beyond it is a large expanse of plains, extending to the Normandy sea. Snow hurtles down and envelops the landscape.

A FIGURE appears, peering out of the window. This is DAVID (22).

DAVID (V.O.)

Hella.

In his right hand, a drink. He rests his left arm on the wall, fixed on the ocean.

DAVID

Hella, I'm sorry.

The space is revealed. It is dark, and without a few clothes on the floor, would seem uninhabited, a ghostly room.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I couldn't have stopped --

We see a table aside the bed: on it, a few empty glasses, a pair of socks, and an open journal, blank, with a pen.

A SUDDEN FLASH of a FACE. A man, behind a bar, looking deep at us with haunted eyes.

DAVID (CONT'D)

There's nothing I could do, Hella,  
and I'm sorry. I love you.

DAVID retreats from the window, and starts toward the bed. He slumps on it, drinks, and sets the drink down. Staring at the open journal. Just staring.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I love you.

Snow continues to fall outside.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Hella. Hella.

HELLA (O.S.)

David.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK - MORNING - MAY 1956

DAVID is opposite a girl, HELLA, (21). They sit on a park bench somewhere in Paris, the city of this story.

DAVID

I know. I have no idea if they'll even say yes, so it's early --

HELLA

Of course they will, my sweet... you don't have to worry about them. My dad has always liked you, and my mom --

DAVID

... is coming around to it.

HELLA

... is coming around to you.

A beat. DAVID watches as the sun begins to rise quicker into the day and more people begin to walk past them.

DAVID

I just wanted this. Before you went off and, I mean, who knows,

HELLA

What do you mean 'who knows'? I love you.

DAVID

I love you, Hella... you're leaving.

HELLA

Not at all. I'm gone for only months, across only one border, mind you.

DAVID

A whole mountain range too.

They smile.

HELLA

I'm not sure that I can just say that I can.

DAVID

You want to.

HELLA

I, yes, I want to, but I want many things that seem fruitful only for a moment, then the work of dreams. Do you see what I'm saying?

DAVID

Hardly. It's not a dream, the ring is in my pocket.

HELLA

I... here? In Paris?

DAVID

You'd wish to come back home?

HELLA

I don't know. I don't know!

DAVID

I'm not trying to press.

HELLA

Here is -- here is what I know. I'm going to Spain. I'll return when I feel I should. If all is well, that won't be past the year, and when I return, maybe you take that ring in your coat pocket out and we can have a Christmas dinner. But I'm leaving now, right now. That's what I know.

DAVID is now flushed with the motion of people walking past them. The morning seems to have quickly become midday.

HELLA gets up from beside him.

HELLA (CONT'D)

Goodbye, David. Write me.

DAVID

Each week, love.

She stops for a moment, as if she has forgotten something, taking a patient, thoughtful look into DAVID's eyes.

HELLA

I will be thinking of you each moment.

She begins to walk away. DAVID feels the ring in his coat pocket begin to pinch against his chest.

EXT. MONTPARNASSE CAFE - AFTERNOON - NOVEMBER 1956

DAVID and JACQUES (65), a Belgian-born businessman, sit at the spacious terrace of a cafe. JACQUES has an aged, intent face, as if he cannot look at anything or anyone with only half-engagement.

JACQUES

I wonder why he did it. If it was money... I could've --

DAVID

It's a product of circumstance. You are not complicit, directly anyway.

JACQUES

In some way, the blood is on each of our hands.

Silence for a second. DAVID has not touched his *vin chaud*.

JACQUES (CONT'D)

You weren't happy together?

DAVID

Uhm. It might have been better if he stayed in Italy with a wife, had children. He loved to sing -- maybe he should have stayed, sung his life away in the meadows, died in bed. Died in bed. Instead of in their hands.

DAVID stands up and brushes himself off.

JACQUES

In any case, nobody can stay in the Garden of Eden forever.

It makes DAVID's blood run cold. He nods.

INT. BEDROOM SPACE - DECEMBER 1956

DAVID sits on his bed in the house in Normandy.

He scribbles a note onto the top line of a page in the journal, then sets the journal down. He leaves the bedroom.

The writing reads: *Nobody stays in the Garden of Eden.*

EXT. MONTPARNASSE CAFE - AFTERNOON - NOVEMBER 1956

DAVID and JACQUES continue at the terrace. JACQUES hands him a blue letter.

JACQUES

The date is in here. You don't have to open it, I just thought --

DAVID

It's okay, Jacques. Thank you.

JACQUES

They have decency to tell us when. You put a young man to death, you have to carry some humility with it, I guess.

DAVID

Mm.

JACQUES

I wonder if you remember the last time we were here. Seated inside, of course.

DAVID locks eyes with JACQUES: of course.

INT. MONTPARNASSE CAFE - MORNING - JUNE 1956

DAVID and JACQUES are seated in the corner of the cafe. JACQUES is leaning out of his seat, taking some interest in DAVID.

JACQUES

I had no idea you were a popular man here in Paris.

DAVID

I wouldn't say -- Hella was my friend, first.

JACQUES

Well, yes! They always are. You don't mean to travel and find love, or whatever that is.

DAVID

I didn't mean to travel at all.

JACQUES eyes him, confused.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
I mean, I did, but... not nearly  
for this long.

JACQUES  
How have you been working?

DAVID  
I... haven't been. I mean, a  
little, but not enough for --  
anyway, I've been borrowing money  
from my father, back in America.

JACQUES  
What a prize. A fully funded school  
trip. But I tease!

JACQUES LAUGHS, and DAVID uneasily joins him.

DAVID  
Sure, if you'd like. But Hella is  
gone, and my father has been  
travelling --

JACQUES  
I understand, David.

DAVID  
Understand?

JACQUES  
The young men now, you have so much  
stamina. I can hardly keep up,  
though I try and you've seen me --  
a young man now needs money. And if  
it can't be found by work, it must  
be--

DAVID  
-- borrowed.

JACQUES can sense DAVID's urgency. He has played this game  
before.

JACQUES  
Yes, borrowed. I can give you ten  
thousand francs --

DAVID  
You're too kind, Jacques.

JACQUES

That's borrowed money. I expect you to pay it back when you become a fine lawyer, or medical student, politician --

DAVID

I'll be sure to do that.

JACQUES

-- and one more condition! Come have a drink with me, tonight. I'll take you to a great place.

A FLASH of a FACE, the same as before, a BARTENDER with a fixed gaze.

DAVID

Yeah, okay. I will.

INT. BARROOM - NIGHT

JACQUES enters and DAVID follows.

The BAR is a calculatedly calm trance -- men are drinking and chatting with abandon, but each is reserved as they drink together. DAVID walks uneasy, can't feel out the place.

JACQUES moves swiftly, go-ahead, to the counter. A BARTENDER stands with his arms down on the counter, palms flat. JACQUES pulls a smile.

JACQUES

*Un cognac sec.*

DAVID makes eye contact with the BARTENDER, and looks off for a moment.

BARTENDER

*Et toi?*

DAVID

A -- *une fine à l'eau.*

BARTENDER

Bien.

JACQUES moves to his left slightly, partially eclipsing DAVID.

JACQUES

You are new here, *garçon*, no?

BARTENDER

To some?

JACQUES

To some!

(overly flirtatious)

But maybe not to those who look...

BARTENDER

Maybe not.

As the BARTENDER indifferently lights a cigarette, JACQUES prods on. DAVID looks on.

JACQUES

All these men here, lining the walls of their musk -- and so few women.

BARTENDER

Well, they're waiting at home then, maybe.

JACQUES

I'm sure a fine one meets you at home.

As he says this, the BARTENDER turns and starts toward the opposite side of the counter. JACQUES sits for a moment, and begins to laugh with an acceptance and, without looking at DAVID, is embarrassed.

JACQUES (CONT'D)

I'm sure he must sleep with girls. They always do.

DAVID

I've heard of men like that. Beasts!

JACQUES

Stop it. Why don't you invite him to drink with us?

DAVID

But of course! You lust, I buy the drinks.

JACQUES

You know that's not -- I will pay, but the boy is certainly not to drink anything per my request. Call him over.

DAVID pauses. JACQUES lays an elbow on the counter, impatient.

DAVID  
I only hope he orders the most expensive champagne around. A magnum of it. Barman!

The BARTENDER swings back on the voice, and heads back to DAVID.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Barman, we would like to offer you a drink, if we may.

Just then, JACQUES erupts with laughter, and DAVID turns and sees GUILLAUME. He is older than JACQUES, but has a perceptible youth about him as he moves around the bar he owns.

GUILLAUME  
Corrupting my barman, Jacques?  
*Vraiment*, at your age?

JACQUES turns to greet wide-smiling GUILLAUME, and DAVID turns back to GIOVANNI. As he looks up, a pair of eyes meet him and us: the bartender's gaze is that which we have seen before. The moment is held for a few beats, before:

BARTENDER  
I drink no alcohol when I work, but I will take Coca-Cola.

DAVID  
Hm?

BARTENDER  
You offered me a drink, *ami*, or I'm daydreaming. And seeing as I've been working for only hours and am restless... I'm certainly not dreaming. Coca-Cola. *Pour toi?*

DAVID  
The same, yes.

While the BARTENDER moves to prepare the sodas, DAVID follows him with his eyes, tracking.

BARTENDER  
*A la votre.*

DAVID  
*A la votre.*

They raise their glasses to each other, smirking.

BARTENDER

Well, you bought me a drink, so  
I'll tell... my name's Giovanni.

DAVID

David.

GIOVANNI

You are American?

DAVID

From New York.

GIOVANNI

I hear it's very beautiful. Like  
Paris --

DAVID

(*aback*)  
No city is as beautiful as Paris --  
er, New York is, but in a different  
way.

GIOVANNI

And which is that?

DAVID

It's... high and new. Electric. No  
one who has never seen it can  
imagine it. Paris is older --

GIOVANNI is amused, and smiles at DAVID as he continues.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Not of this century, anyway.

GIOVANNI

*J'adore votre enthousiasme*, but it  
seems to my errant mind that we  
are, in point of fact, in Paris as  
of now.

GIOVANNI laughs. DAVID tries to elaborate.

DAVID

There's a... in New York, you  
cannot help but wonder what it will  
look like in years. Years and  
years, when we, in this bar, die  
out and New York is no longer new.  
When America is an artifact of the  
past.

GIOVANNI

You are merely immigrants, David.  
The world has admired the artifact  
and you have decided to take it for  
your own. And, besides, *ami*, you  
haven't left Europe for very long.

DAVID

The ocean is very wide.

GIOVANNI

(mocking)

*Ah! The wide Atlantic! The seas of  
no end!*  
You aren't of a different planet.

DAVID

A most unlucky fact, indeed.

A beat. The bar has not quieted throughout this exchange, but  
we truly hear it now. A longer while, and GIOVANNI chuckles.

GIOVANNI

*Vive l'Amerique!*

He holds his glass up in triumph.

DAVID

*Bien sur.*

GIOVANNI

Do you come here often, David?

DAVID

No.

GIOVANNI

Oh, but you will come often *now*,  
yes?

DAVID

What for?

GIOVANNI

The ocean may very well be wide.  
Don't you know when you have made a  
friend?

DAVID

So soon?

GIOVANNI momentarily pauses, and studies his wristwatch.

GIOVANNI

Well, David... We could wait another hour, if you like. Or how about closing? We can become friends then. Even tomorrow we can become friends, although a man of such passion for this *ancient* city may be busy --

He leans forward and places his elbows on the bar, half-joking.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)

You tell me, what is this thing in the air? About time? Why is it better to be late than early? People always like to bite their lip and say, *we must wait*. And what are they waiting for?

The two gather silence for a moment, and DAVID breaks into laughs upon GIOVANNI's smirk.

DAVID

Only to see... only to wait and see how they feel.

GIOVANNI

And you wait, David. And does it make you sure?

PATRON

*Garçon!*

GIOVANNI is called by another PATRON on a stool opposite DAVID.

GIOVANNI

You tell me how sure you have become when I return.

GIOVANNI starts towards the PATRON, and DAVID is in thought. His hands lay flat on the bar, firmly upright on the stool.

JACQUES is no longer engaged with GUILLAUME, but is now flirting with younger men in a group.

He watches the bartender move the other direction, mix and serve a drink, and return in what could've been no time or all the time in the world.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)

Speak. I, unlike you, cannot wait for long.

DAVID  
But you win.

GIOVANNI  
Then you may be coming here more  
often. I trust it.

GIOVANNI returns to other side of the bar, and JACQUES  
approaches DAVID from behind.

JACQUES  
Look at me! The man behind the  
curtain.

DAVID  
And by that, you mean --

JACQUES  
You're welcome, simply. It is known  
throughout the bar you and *garçon*  
have made plentifully on  
conversation. I trust there's been  
no confusion.

DAVID stands from the stool to meet JACQUES upfront.

DAVID  
I would dread it if you were  
confused.

JACQUES  
Oh, I'm not sure I've been less  
confused in my life. She is in  
Spain, *mon chérie*, she couldn't  
know if she wanted --

DAVID  
Enough of that! I do dread your  
incoherence, babblings of a drunk!

JACQUES laughs, and DAVID is stunned.

JACQUES  
Well, my. Confusion is a luxury  
only the young can afford, David,  
and you're not getting any younger.

DAVID  
The only confusion I possess is  
that of your misread of everything.

A beat.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Don't go mentioning Hella again.

He slumps onto his stool, JACQUES on to another group of men sitting at a table near.

As DAVID sits, he looks over to his left for GIOVANNI, who catches his glimpse from the corner of the bar, and winks at David.

INT. BEDROOM SPACE - NIGHT - DECEMBER 1956

DAVID is asleep in the bed. The bed lamp is partly dimmed, but writing is visible in the notebook beside it.

A KNOCK on the door beyond. ANOTHER KNOCK jolts DAVID awake.

He moves out of bed and approaches the door. Another PIERCING KNOCK, sending David back a few feet in reaction.

DAVID opens the door. Seeing no one, he looks around the dark street. Sees no one.

He retreats back to his room, walking to his bed. A LIGHT shining on the beach below FLASHES. DAVID looks, and sees a MAN walking the beach, dragging one foot behind the other.

DAVID  
(CONT'D)  
Giovanni...

DAVID is FROZEN beside his bed. He murmurs to himself.

From DAVID's view, GIOVANNI trudges through sand.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Gio -- !

The CALL is unheard, and GIOVANNI continues on from sight.

EXT. PARIS RUE - EARLY MORNING - JUNE 1956

The street is vacant and dry before sunrise. GUILLAUME closes the bar and locks up as JACQUES, DAVID, and GIOVANNI begin to stumble onto the street. Not drunk, but a mix of tired and dazed from the previous night.

GIOVANNI is ahead of DAVID on the street, a youthful pace in him. They move toward Saint-Germain-des-Pres.

As DAVID looks after him, he sees

EXT. SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRES - APRIL 1956

HELLA, standing before the Saint-Germain Cathedral. She looks back at DAVID.

DAVID (O.S.)  
It's beautiful, no?

HELLA  
The most beautiful.

She smiles slyly.

JACQUES (O.S.)  
Not bad, huh?

EXT. PARIS RUE - EARLY MORNING - JUNE 1956

JACQUES nudges DAVID's shoulder.

DAVID  
What about?

JACQUES  
(*gesturing to Giovanni*)  
Not bad at all. And I know -- I know!

GIOVANNI  
*Taxi! Les Halles, s'il vous plait,  
et depechez-vous!*

A TAXI halts at GIOVANNI's feet. He leads the four as they pile in.

INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

The cramped cab crawls toward its destination. DAVID and GIOVANNI in middle. They begin to cross the Seine.

JACQUES  
This old whore, Paris, is very moving as she turns in bed.

GIOVANNI  
The water is yellow.

GUILLAUME  
And...?

GIOVANNI suddenly cusps DAVID's hand in his own palm.

GIOVANNI  
Perhaps in your country the rivers  
are a shined blue.

DAVID looks down at the adjoining fingers, unsure.

DAVID  
The shine is long removed as I am.

GIOVANNI smiles, the others chuckle, and DAVID quickly takes his hand from GIOVANNI, and removes a cigarette from his coat pocket.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Light, *quelqu'un*?

GIOVANNI lights the cigarette for DAVID. He quickly retracts his hands to his lap.

EXT. RUE DE RIVOLI - EARLY MORNING - CONTINUOUS

The FOUR MEN stroll along the street, as passerbys begin to open their shops.

GIOVANNI  
When I first came to Paris, I  
worked in Les Halles.

JACQUES  
Did you work, or were you merely  
hired?

GIOVANNI  
Meaning what?

A WOMAN CALLS to GIOVANNI down the street, waving her arms.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)  
Ah, Madame Clothilde!

CLOTHILDE profile. She is loud, presence hanging over the street, with eyes on everyone.

CLOTHILDE  
You couldn't stay away, you old  
slime.

GIOVANNI shrugs jubilantly. Heading over to CLOTHILDE, the men approach an old BAR, almost ghostly in its age.

GUILLAUME  
I didn't think today, but I can't  
say I didn't suspect it.

DAVID

What?

GUILLAUME

The vermin that must be within  
these walls... Giovanni plans to  
poison me.

CLOTHILDE chuckles and embraces GIOVANNI, who turns.

GIOVANNI

And then? I'd have no job, no life -  
- and I have only just found out I  
want to live.

He turns back to CLOTHILDE, who leads him inside. JACQUES and  
GUILLAUME turn to a perplexed DAVID and snicker.

INT. LES HALLES BAR - MOMENTS LATER

The cafe is lively but few are present -- a record playing by  
the bar lifts the atmosphere.

A COOK paces back and forth in a small kitchen behind the  
bar.

CLOTHILDE moves behind the bar and DAVID makes eye contact.  
She has a ubiquitous air of her, as if she knows your story  
from the first look, or could come very close.

GIOVANNI

Madame, you have not met my  
friends. C'est Guillaume, mon  
*patron* --

CLOTHILDE

Ah, *c'est vrai?*

CLOTHILDE smirks at GUILLAUME; *Him, a boss?*

GIOVANNI

Et Jacques aussi, one of our finest  
customers.

JACQUES

Enchante.

CLOTHILDE

Enchante.

GIOVANNI

Et Monsieur *des Etats-Unis*, David.

GIOVANNI turns to DAVID and smiles. There is pride and joy on  
his face.

CLOTHILDE

I am glad you came to Paris. A lot to see, you know that.

DAVID

Yes, thank you. A lot to see.

GIOVANNI puts his arm around DAVID ceaselessly. DAVID forms a grin.

GIOVANNI

Clothilde, we are thirsty!

They laugh, along with some of the bar patrons.

INT. LES HALLES BAR - MINUTES LATER

DAVID drinks cognac at the bar. Behind him, JACQUES and GUILLAUME are talking to more young men. GIOVANNI and CLOTHILDE are catching up. For the first time in a while, DAVID is alone with his thoughts.

A beat. DAVID takes heavy gulps. He retrieves a note from his pocket and places it on the table. It reads: *Hella, I cannot bear it here witho--*

JACQUES taps DAVID on the shoulder. DAVID is startled and places the note back into his jacket.

JACQUES

This is an important day for you.  
How are you?

DAVID

Fine? I feel fine.

JACQUES

I tell you... you should see yourself now. *Quel age avez-vous?* 21? 22? You are so young and it's happening now.

DAVID

I can't stand when you talk like --

JACQUES

David, look at me. I'm more than twice your age, and I'm a mess. If not for your youth, you would be destroyed by what's happening now.

DAVID

And what's that?

JACQUES peers into his jacket, the note partly out.

JACQUES  
You are going to write to Hella?

DAVID  
As I do every week or so.

JACQUES  
... about last night and this morning?

DAVID  
And for what?

JACQUES turns to GIOVANNI, still immersed in conversation with CLOTHILDE.

JACQUES  
David, it's not as if he doesn't feel something too. He doesn't know of Hella, nor would he act the same way if he knew. You can't treat him as you've treated me -- with dishonesty.

DAVID  
If it seems as if I've been dishonest with you, it's because --

JACQUES  
My life. You think -- you think that my life is dirty. Smiling wide at the young men, precariously, for ten minutes in the dark with them.

DAVID  
I can't say I disagree.

JACQUES  
Of course not, but think of all those who have lived well, while you pretend nothing happens in the dark between your legs.

A beat. DAVID looks at himself in the reflection of his glass.

JACQUES (CONT'D)  
My life is dirty, yes, but why? It's not the physicality. Not sleeping with other men in the dark. It's because there's no affection.

(MORE)

JACQUES (CONT'D)

In the dark, there is touch, but not contact. Not connection. That is why it is dirty. And that is why you cannot pretend to detest the dark.

DAVID

And it would please you for me to do so? To act on affection?

JACQUES

But it is not for me. I'll be nothing but ash in no time. You're young. To pretend, to deny affection at your age -- what an absolute waste.

DAVID turns to JACQUES head-on, and nods. GIOVANNI glimpses at the two talking from across the bar.

DAVID

And I may have just found out I want to live.

EXT. RUE DE RIVOLI - MINUTES LATER

JACQUES and GUILLAUME continue to talk up young men as they exit the bar. GIOVANNI and DAVID follow.

DAVID

I must return to pay my hotel bill.

GIOVANNI

Ha! To wake up, alone, to people demanding your money? No, you will come with me. I will smile when you wake up. They will not.

DAVID

My clothes are --

GIOVANNI

-- waiting there in the meantime. Come! I am far too drunk to get back to *chez moi* alone.

DAVID can see GIOVANNI, now perfectly visible under the inquisitive dawn, tremble a little, his fingers shaking.

EXT. RUE DE RIVOLI - EARLY MORNING - MONTHS BEFORE

DAVID can see GIOVANNI, now perfectly visible under the inquisitive dawn, tremble a little, his fingers shaking.

GIOVANNI

I will show you my room. You were going to see it, eventually.

A CAB, seemingly from nowhere, approaches the men and GIOVANNI hails it.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)

*Bachaumont, monsieur.*

GIOVANNI climbs in without haste. DAVID follows.

EXT. GIOVANNI'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

The two men exit the cab at Rue de Nation, and DAVID raises his head to view the full four-story residential building.

GIOVANNI

This way, towards the back.

INT. GIOVANNI'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

From a long hallway, the two enter GIOVANNI'S ROOM.

DAVID is caught up in it all, and can barely make out all the strewn-about clothes and the outlines of the walls, the bed, the slightly chipping paint.

GIOVANNI

Renovations. Don't mind it.

GIOVANNI reaches his hand to DAVID'S shoulder. DAVID turns.

They look into each other. GIOVANNI'S hand begins to slide down his shoulder, and slide --

INT. GIOVANNI'S APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING

DAVID and GIOVANNI, asleep. The curtains dip in from the window several feet as the wind blows against them.

A moment passes. GIOVANNI nudges against DAVID, waking them both up. A mutual smile.

GIOVANNI, pressing on DAVID's skin, lifts his frame so as to look down on DAVID. He laughs.

GIOVANNI  
You're nimble.

DAVID  
That's what... you... think!

GIOVANNI leans in for a prolonged kiss. Seconds pass by. He eyes DAVID and his tongue stumbles.

GIOVANNI  
Have you slept with a boy before?

A brisk silence falls, and the record is audible from down the hall. Stern fixtures between the two. David's eyes hesitate.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND - AFTERNOON - JULY 1948

A warm, damp August. The coast is quiet but looms large and attentive. DAVID and another BOY rest their feet in the sand about fifty feet from the water, a loose sunbathe.

EXT. AVENUE - BROOKLYN, NY - MINUTES LATER

DAVID, younger, on the sidewalk with the BOY, who equates DAVID's youth and emulates his innocence.

BOY  
Now, how about it?

DAVID  
Joey ... it's late now.

JOEY  
It's 9:30. The show's in fifteen minutes, and at our credit we can --

DAVID  
(through "we can")  
Joey, I'm burnt.

David flashes his peach-toned forearm. Joey smiles.

INT. JOEY'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT DAY

A modest bathroom, engulfed in steam. The two laugh and howl under the water and whip their towels at each other's trunks.

INT. SHOWER - CONTINUOUS

As they sting each other, DAVID nudges at JOEY's shoulder. They both slow, struck in the water, and DAVID trembles his fingers over JOEY's collarbone.

JOEY

Ahhh!!

The water runs cold, and the two jump out, playfully shrieking and still hitting each other with their towels.

INT. JOEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Deep into night. Minimal light from the windowsill coming onto the bed, where DAVID lies, primal, scattered over the sheets. An untampered sleep. From behind, he can make out sounds, bare and stifled, and rolls over.

As he turns, he sees JOEY looking at himself and his pillow in confusion.

DAVID

Joey ...

JOEY

I think it's bedbugs.

DAVID

Bedbugs?

JOEY

I didn't know. I think I have them.  
Bedbugs.

DAVID patiently begins to smirk, and chuckles. JOEY throws his pillow at DAVID.

DAVID

So you're a slob!

JOEY

I've never been bitten by one  
before.

DAVID

You're dreaming, Joey. Go back to  
sleep. You're dreaming.

JOEY looks down, around -- it takes a second for him to receive it.

JOEY

You fucker.

DAVID and JOEY laugh and begin to wrestle. DAVID puts JOEY in a headlock of sorts, and JOEY pinches his arm in retaliation.

DAVID

You slob.

As DAVID throws the word out, JOEY looks up at him. The light from the sill catches his face. A long gaze. DAVID puts his fingers to JOEY's chin, and the two fall into the sheets. The light from the sill illuminates their backs and limbs, beginning to intertwine.

INT. JOEY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

DAVID and JOEY, eyes shut, each shaped as reactions to the other's figure. DAVID begins to move his hands, cupped onto the pillow. Opening his eyes, he sees JOEY, whose mouth hangs ajar and whose nose emits hints of breaths.

DAVID takes his hand and hovers it over JOEY. He moves his hand down, in the air over him, and strokes the air between them.

As he retracts his hand, he looks frightened. He moves his hand through JOEY's tee, and uncovers his bicep, glaring back at him.

DAVID now, catatonic. His eyes flutter and moisten. As JOEY continues breathing, he causes slight impressions in the pillow cradling him.

DAVID slowly starts to lift himself from his shoulders. He props himself upright against the bedframe. He can't stop looking at JOEY.

He pulls his shirt corner back down, covering the bicep. He begins to shed tears. A restful JOEY flares his nostrils.

DAVID moves himself off the bed, tears welling down his face. He can't stop looking at JOEY. He moves swift, weightless as a ghost, to the bedroom door. He glimpses at JOEY. His eyes weaken.

INT. GIOVANNI'S BEDROOM - JUNE 1956

DAVID's eyes, straight off.

GIOVANNI

David? Have you slept with a boy  
before?

DAVID, back in, quick to answer.

DAVID

No. No -- you're it.

GIOVANNI smiles, and softly pecks his cheek. DAVID manages a  
brief smile, and nods to himself.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - DECEMBER 1956

Through the window, small snowflakes fall outside to form  
something of a blizzard. DAVID looks out to where the white  
meets the sea.

He waits a moment to watch the falling white. Then, a KNOCK  
at the door.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

DAVID approaches the door, taking his time. He OPENS to find  
his CARETAKER, greeting him with a smile.

CARETAKER

*Bonjour, Monsieur.*

DAVID

*Bonjour, Irene. You are here for  
inventory, yes?*

Without response, she removes a LIST from her bag, confirming  
his thought. Then, she views the glass of COGNAC in his right  
hand, with little left.

IRENE

You have been staying in the house?  
We have not seen you in days,  
monsieur.

DAVID looks resentful, embarrassed. He eyes the ground, fixes  
on it.

DAVID

The weather has been awful.

IRENE

Maybe, but --

DAVID  
 -- and I'll be leaving tomorrow  
 anyway.

IRENE feels the tension of being cut short; DAVID moves his eyes to her.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
 So inventory must be quick.

IRENE  
 Let me start from the back.

IRENE is slightly upset, but moves and begins inventory in the small kitchen.

DAVID sets his glass of COGNAC behind him on a small table.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
 At the *tabac* they say you haven't  
 been for days. You've been going to  
 town to eat?

DAVID  
 Sometimes.

IRENE  
 On foot, of course. The bus driver  
 has not seen you either.

DAVID  
 Sometimes.

IRENE passes the bathroom.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
 I'll clean that myself, *ce soir*.

IRENE says nothing, continues to the bedroom.

IRENE  
 You should have come across the  
 street. I would have been happy to  
 prepare you something -- soup.

DAVID can only nod. IRENE enters the bedroom, with clothes lying everywhere, a floor barely visible under them. DAVID tries to offer a gentle, knowing smile.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
 You are going to join your fiancée  
 tomorrow?

A beat. DAVID dreaded this question, and stammers a response.

DAVID

No --

IRENE looks up.

DAVID (CONT'D)

No, she has gone to America. Alone.

Only music playing from between the walls of the next house is audible. In the bedroom, a pin could drop.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I don't --

IRENE

It is not good for you, a young man, to be here in a great house with no woman. You must find another. *C'est la vie!* You are staying in France?

DAVID

For awhile, I think.

IRENE

And your parents?

DAVID

Well, my mom is dead. My dad lives in America, but...

DAVID and IRENE share a look of understanding.

IRENE

The inventory is about complete. Monsieur, I hope for the best.

DAVID

The same for you, Irene.

IRENE moves to the door, while DAVID retrieves his glass from the table. He watches her leave, and they WAVE to each other.

DAVID, now alone, takes a drink, and moves toward the window.

EXT. SPANISH BALCONY - MORNING - JULY 1956

HELLA sits at a chair with a sprawling view of the SPANISH COUNTRYSIDE. She drinks coffee from a glass and reads a letter.

DAVID (V.O.)  
*My Hella, I'm so very glad to write  
 to you again. Truly.*

INT. GIOVANNI'S ROOM - JULY 1956

DAVID and GIOVANNI are moving light furniture and making space for some of DAVID's clothes.

DAVID (V.O.)  
*Money is slow to come as always,  
 but I have been trying several  
 jobs. // Money is slow but I am  
 trying earnestly to give it my best  
 shot, and I --*

EXT. PARIS RUE - MORNING

DAVID kisses GIOVANNI, and starts down the street, an envelope in his hand. GIOVANNI looks on, restless.

DAVID (V.O.)  
*In the meantime, I have found a  
 room here with a young bartender.  
 We both were losing money for our  
 hotel stays, and decided to split  
 the costs to live in the same  
 space.*

EXT. PARIS RUE - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

DAVID passes SEVERAL KIDS running after each other on the street. As they pass him, he smiles.

DAVID (V.O.)  
*Odd jobs. They're not exactly the  
 type of work I imagined, we  
 imagined, but as long as Jacques  
 has errands for me, I will accept.*

INT. GUILLAUME'S BAR - DAYTIME

JACQUES and DAVID sharing a drink as GIOVANNI looks on, pours up for other patrons.

DAVID (V.O.)  
*I should tell you, although you  
 must think it already: it is you in  
 my mind whenever I run foolish  
 errands or silly tasks, meant  
 solely to fill the time, not just  
 pass it.*

EXT. BRIDGE - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

DAVID continues walking, now on a bridge over the Seine, with dawn views of the Pantheon and of the city.

DAVID (V.O.)  
*Every dish washed, every trip to  
 the market, I cannot help myself  
 but imagine you with me as we move  
 through this city's beating heart.*

EXT. RUE - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

DAVID approaches the postal services building.

DAVID (V.O.)  
*It's all for you, darling, and for  
 us. I await your return earnestly.  
 Love. David.*

Before walking inside, he takes a breath, and continues in.

EXT. SPANISH BALCONY - MORNING

HELLA sets the letter down, and after a moment, kisses the envelope. Off her lips --

EXT. RUE - MORNING

-- GUILLAUME pats DAVID on the shoulder.

GUILLAUME  
 The tea leaves had told me this  
 would occur!

DAVID  
 What?

GUILLAUME  
 This chance encounter.

DAVID registers.

DAVID

I suppose, though this city is becoming smaller each day. Perhaps we are eating and drinking our way through it -- de-densifying it.

GUILLAUME

You have kept your wits about you, I see. Even after the night we had. It's important to --

DAVID

The night? When we went out?

GUILLAUME

We had a good time!

DAVID

We certainly had fun.

GUILLAUME

You did.

He chuckles. DAVID again registers.

GUILLAUME (CONT'D)

I know this city like my palms, and I know my friends like the skin of them. Giovanni is a friend. You, I could say now, are a friend, no?

DAVID

You're asking if we are friends? We are at the very least, friendly.

GUILLAUME

Amicable! I'd say the same.

GUILLAUME motions DAVID to walk with him. As their conversation continues more and more people begin to sprout onto the street as the morning turns to day.

GUILLAUME (CONT'D)

So, as a friend, I am of course interested in where you and Giovanni ended up to the other night.

DAVID

We, when we left the bar, left each other.

GUILLAUME

Let me say it this way: my friends,  
like all people, have habits and  
ways...as friends, we know each  
other's ways.

DAVID

All this because...

GUILLAUME

Gio's not the type to leave an  
accompanied night. Not these days,  
anyway. I understand you took a  
liking to you as well.

DAVID

I.

GUILLAUME

You are not in America anymore.  
Paris? She is a beauty, yes, but by  
night a whore. Everyone is abound  
and in bed with everybody else.

DAVID

If "whore" could only explain it...

GUILLAUME

No need to mock me, David. I'm  
telling you to  
consider...reconsidering.

DAVID

Reconsidering.

GUILLAUME

Giovanni...he lets his heart guide  
him. He turns his mind away.

DAVID

So, his attraction to me is  
mindless?

GUILLAUME

I don't mean...I mean, he has  
histories. He has things, uncoiled,

DAVID

You stopped me, on the street,  
backhanding me for sleeping with  
someone and telling me he's  
mindless?

GUILLAUME  
I'm terribly embarrassed, but --

DAVID  
That's a way to put it.

GUILLAUME  
-- he has a family, David.

DAVID  
What?

Hits DAVID like a truck at a steady pace.

GUILLAUME  
A family, back in Italy, where he comes from. If he's keeping it from you, I don't know what. Maybe he's scared, or forgot -- it's not mine to ask why.

DAVID  
It's not yours to begin with!

GUILLAUME  
I'm telling you, I love him as a child, I ask you to be careful an--

DAVID  
I ask you to be GONE!

A beat. GUILLAUME turns silently away and begins walking. Rather than call out, DAVID instead wipes his eyes.

INT. GIOVANNI'S APARTMENT - MORNING

As DAVID enters, GIOVANNI's is painting a side room. Music plays on a record player on the floor. A mess, but a homely, renovating type mess.

GIOVANNI  
What do you think about a sea of books?

DAVID  
Books? A bookcase?

GIOVANNI sets his paint down and walks to DAVID.

GIOVANNI  
You can see it just as I can, right?

GIO gestures to a wall.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)

We move them here, aligned, maybe three separate rows? Eventually, we gather enough so that you look at the wall and you just see the spines.

DAVID

Sounds like a cheap way out of painting the wall.

Mutual giggles.

GIOVANNI

I'm serious, David!

GIOVANNI approaches DAVID for a kiss.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)

It could be our first venture in this room. Eventually, porcelain bathtubs, tiling --

DAVID

And in a year or two...Xanadu.

GIOVANNI

Something of the sort.

DAVID

My love.

They embrace and kiss again.

DAVID (CONT'D)

So.

GIOVANNI

So?

DAVID

What else?

GIOVANNI

Well, I'm painting now, and dinner is scallops --

DAVID

I meant ideas! What else for ideas.

GIOVANNI

Well, at the moment.

DAVID  
The sea of books is okay.

GIOVANNI  
That's what I thought.

A beat. GIOVANNI turns to continue painting.

DAVID  
Guillaume ran into me on the way  
back.

GIOVANNI  
He did? He finds himself in the  
thick of it.

DAVID  
He knows. About us.

GIOVANNI  
I expected he would. You --

DAVID  
I suppose so.

GIOVANNI turns back to him.

GIOVANNI  
What did you think? I work for him.  
He smells men in my breath when I  
haven't slept with one in weeks.

DAVID  
Yeah. He also mentioned you had.

DAVID, biting his tongue now.

GIOVANNI  
What's that?

DAVID  
Nevermind, I don't know what I'm  
saying.

GIOVANNI  
David, this is Paris --

DAVID  
I know, I know! I know we're in  
Paris!

Whoops. GIOVANNI shutters, head to floor.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, it's just -- he said the same thing, and it's...I like to think I'm *here* now, you understand?

GIOVANNI

I do.

DAVID

I'm tired of being talked to like the man of the Mississippi, the, the, the *Roi* of the Rockies. I'm here now. I'm here.

He sits on GIOVANNI's bed, exhausted. GIOVANNI joins him, comforts him.

GIOVANNI

You are.

A beat.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)

Here you are.

INT. GIOVANNI'S APARTMENT - LATER

The two are painting together with rollers. DAVID still seems upset about the earlier conversation, GIOVANNI picks up on it.

DAVID

It's okay.

GIOVANNI

I know. I --

DAVID

Yeah?

GIOVANNI

The bookcases.

DAVID

Your bookcase?

GIOVANNI

Our bookcase. I got the idea from my father.

DAVID

Oh.

GIOVANNI

I never really connected with anybody in my family, except my father. Our house looked something like this. Smaller, more cavernous. Even if we had little space, there was less for me. Single child. My father worked textiles for all the day.

DAVID

-- and your mother?

GIOVANNI

Died. I was young. Every now and then, a sister of hers or parents would come to see about money or something they had left behind. One of the first things I learned after my mother died was that people pick up everything they left behind -- socks, pliers, ink, jars -- they pick up everything, and in exchange they leave their dignity. Right at the door. And then it's my father and I's job to decide what to do with all the shame that's left rotting on our doorstep? Fat chance.

DAVID

Hm.

GIOVANNI

One of the only things my father and I could do, or would do, is sit at our central table, gnaw on some cheap Mediterranean food, and read.

DAVID

From your bookcase.

GIOVANNI

From anything. From the words, from the pages, we would forge this silent relationship -- and it was forgery. All of it.

DAVID

I'm sorry about that, Gio --

GIOVANNI

Don't. I doesn't matter now, only in a positive way, anyway. I look at the wall and I see potential.

DAVID

For a forged relationship.

GIOVANNI

For a real relationship. A chance to become real.

DAVID

I see it.

GIOVANNI

And your father? What about your father?

DAVID

What about my father?

INT. BROOKLYN FLAT - MARCH 1954

BAGS are being STUFFED. Clothes, toiletries, books, the works.

We see DAVID, in a bedroom lined with posters (Brooklyn Dodgers, Topps, Barbara Stanwyck) stuffing these bags.

THUNDEROUS steps up the stairs. Entering DAVID's bedroom is his FATHER, MORRIS.

MORRIS

Is today the day?

DAVID

You know I can't say. Half the time I pack I end up just coming back.

MORRIS sits on the bed next to the travel bags.

MORRIS

You know you can tell me. I was young too. In some ways, your aunt thinks I still am.

DAVID

There's a difference between youth and acting like a child.

Silence, then they slowly start to chuckle.

MORRIS

That's good. Your mother would have said it some way like that.

They both look at a PORTRAIT in the hall outside the room of a BEAUTIFUL, YOUNG MOTHER of DAVID. She likely didn't live long after this portrait.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

What I mean to say is,

DAVID

I know. Believe it, I know. There's not much you or Ellen or anybody could do.

MORRIS

Is that so?

DAVID

I feel...lost. Contorted, to fit something outside of myself.

A beat. MORRIS isn't one for robust emotional support.

MORRIS

I'm to transfer some money to you.

DAVID

No, dad, please, I'll get a job, or,

MORRIS

Paris? Off one job? You'll be eaten alive. I will give you some of my funds and from there you will need to scrap. Two jobs, three. That city's well is not dried up.

DAVID

Thank you, Dad.

MORRIS

And call up Jacques once you're there. He remembers you, and he often forgets how lavish he is in giving.

INT. BROOKLYN FLAT - LATER

ELLEN, MORRIS's sister, sits on a couch as DAVID brings down the last of his bags.

ELLEN

David.

DAVID

Yes, Aunt Ellen.

ELLEN

So you're really off?

DAVID

It appears so.

ELLEN

What is that? Blanketed? I mean you intend to go.

DAVID

I do. To Paris.

ELLEN

Paris!

A beat.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

I want you to know that what you're doing now, well...your father will never admit it, but he's relieved, in a way.

DAVID

In what way is that?

ELLEN

The way it all happened after Jeanine --

DAVID

What? I won't have this conversation again.

ELLEN

David, you have to understand. You have to grow up. Your mother's death has had a direct influence on my brother's alcohol use.

DAVID

My father. Not your brother, my father. It's different. Do you understand?

ELLEN

I'm not trying to blame anybody or anything --

DAVID

Okay.

ELLEN

Just to say. Your father loves you with everything, and if you had stayed all these years, he

DAVID

Was afraid? Huh? Is that it?

ELLEN

I happen to believe this is a good trip for you --

DAVID

And why would I collapse into his problems? Why would I manifest his agony, if that's what you're trying to say, anyway?

A beat.

ELLEN

You think you're stronger than you are. Go to Paris. Go to Paris and you'll see.

Off his horrified look --

EXT. BROOKLYN FLAT - MOMENTS LATER

DAVID weeps, sobs into his shirt, kneeling on the porch. A train nearby slowly begins to drown out the noise.

EXT. LES HALLES - JULY 1956

DAVID is cycling down the road.

HELLA (V.O.)

*David,*

*I cannot express to you the joy I continually find in your letter. At the terrace, on the beaches, in the garden, the Apple tree, the square.*

HELLA seen at the various locales she describes, reading DAVID's letter.

HELLA (V.O.)  
Your words have given me clarity,  
like a pair of new eyeglasses.

DAVID continues his morning cycle along the river.

HELLA (V.O.)  
*The truth is, I've been lost here  
in Spain. I feel, in some ways,  
contorted. I've tried again and  
again to convince myself of this  
visit's efficacy, but I only spin  
in circles.*

Continuing cycling...

HELLA (V.O.)  
*But there is one thing I am sure of  
today. My answer is yes. When I  
left for Spain, I was expecting to  
find something, something amid the  
air that I could latch to. Out of  
fear, I don't know. Out of  
hopelessness, I could only guess.*

Continuing cycling, now up to GIO's apartment...

HELLA (V.O.)  
*My answer is yes. I am returning to  
Paris, to you, in one week come  
Saturday. I'm done with searching  
for reasons away from you. I'm  
ready for you.*

INT. GIOVANNI'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE on the letter she has written, in GIOVANNI's hand, as DAVID arrives.

HELLA (V.O.)  
*... with love, HELLA.*

DAVID's reaction to letter: half-fear, half-excitement.

GIOVANNI  
Your mistress?

DAVID  
I told you I had asked her to marry  
me, yes.

GIOVANNI  
You have an answer.

DAVID rushes over to see/read the letter. As he reads,  
GIOVANNI looks stern at him.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)  
It feels real. She's serious, I  
think.

DAVID  
I suppose so! Oh, wonderful,  
wonderful!

GIOVANNI  
I suppose.

A beat. DAVID continues to fix his eyes around the paper, re-  
reading.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)  
Why Spain?

DAVID  
Huh?

GIOVANNI  
I mean to say...Spain. Is she  
comparing you to Spanish men? Is  
she plotting an Atlantic getaway?

DAVID  
No, she -- she's a very complex  
girl, she went to Spain to think.

GIOVANNI  
To think.

DAVID  
About our marriage.

GIOVANNI  
And on a whim, she said yes.

DAVID  
Well --

GIOVANNI  
You know, I always fixate on the  
word "complex".

(MORE)

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)  
Used to describe people who never  
have a clue what is going on.

Seismic shift in conversation. DAVID holding back fumes.

DAVID  
I am not going to hear this.

GIOVANNI  
This?

DAVID  
This talk. It is meaningless, and,  
and futile, and --

GIOVANNI  
You're just like her. Evading the  
conversation, wanting to leave.

DAVID  
That's,

GIOVANNI  
Maybe you are meant to be with her.

DAVID  
That's,

GIOVANNI  
Her nimble makeshift trip to a  
getaway peninsula --

DAVID  
-- that trip is the only reason I'm  
in this room. Forgery, like your  
father. Don't you understand that?

GIOVANNI  
I would say -

DAVID  
Choose something to say. If she's  
dumb, thank her for it because  
leaving led to me. If she can't  
take me seriously, thank her for  
that and cherish it. I don't know  
what you want me to say.

A beat.

GIOVANNI

I want you to say, when she comes back to the train platform in Paris, that you will not meet her there. You will not see the smoke from the back of the train, or hear the whistles, or help with her bags. I want you to say -- you'll stay with me.

DAVID

I just can't say that. Not now.

GIOVANNI sulks for a moment, than lies down on the bed, turning away from DAVID.

DAVID crosses the room, grabs a glass and begins to pour himself a drink from the table. Drinks it. All of it.

He enters the small room being painted, and looks around. Walks over to the can of paint, considers.

Then, DAVID crosses back to GIO, lies with him. Holds him.

Silence between them.

INT. BROOKLYN FLAT - SOMETIME IN 1954

DAVID lies in bed, turned away from his door. Hears commotion. Shouting.

He peers over to the door, where the light under it shows a pair of feet, still outside the door. Another pair approaches.

ELLEN (V.O.)

You cannot do this. Cannot do this.

MORRIS (V.O.)

Whyyy not?

INT. GIOVANNI'S APARTMENT - JULY 1956

GIOVANNI in bed, asleep. After a moment, he gets up, sluggish, sees David crouching in the corner, reading.

GIOVANNI

Ah, you're still reading her words, I suppose.

DAVID doesn't respond.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)

David?

DAVID

It's my father.

GIOVANNI

What?

DAVID

My father. He's asked me to come home.

GIOVANNI

Well...sure.

DAVID

Sure?

GIOVANNI

I understand it.

DAVID

I feel guilty. All I ever do is ask him for money, for more and more -- and he just wants me to come back home. To come back, to see him. Guilty.

A beat.

GIOVANNI

I'm sorry, *cherie*.

DAVID

Yeah.

GIOVANNI

Maybe if you went back to see him at some point soon --

DAVID

I will. But I have to make things right with Hella first.

GIOVANNI

You wouldn't hold off on that?

DAVID

I think it odd of myself to travel to America just as she writes her plan to return here.

GIOVANNI

Well, surely, she'd be understanding.

DAVID

I suppose, but my letter, to her? *Thank you for saying you'll marry me, darling. I'm off to New York now.* That would be an Atlantic getaway.

GIOVANNI

You aren't choosing.

DAVID

Yes. Don't have to. I will see to Hella, then my father.

GIOVANNI

See to?

DAVID

You know what I mean.

GIOVANNI

I suppose, but I would choose my father before a mistress.

DAVID

You cannot call her that anymore. And this was about my father.

GIOVANNI

You brought her up. I would not even think to mention her if you hadn't.

DAVID starts towards the door.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)

David.

Nope. No response, and David is out.

INT. BROOKLYN FLAT - SOMETIME IN 1954

DAVID lies in bed, turned away from his door. Hears commotion. Shouting.

He peers over to the door, where the light under it shows a pair of feet, still outside the door. Another pair approaches.

ELLEN

You cannot do this. Cannot do this.

MORRIS

Whyyy not?

MORRIS's words are slurred. ELLEN's are combative. DAVID still only hears them from beyond the door.

ELLEN

Do you see what you are? Ugh, it makes me sick.

MORRIS

What did I d-do?

ELLEN

You drank, Mo. You narcissistic fuck.

MORRIS

You cannot. Cannot say that. About me.

ELLEN

You have a child in there, Morris, a child,

MORRIS

He's. Uh, 20, for chrissake.

ELLEN

Exactly! He knows what you're doing.

DAVID slowly creeps out of bed and starts toward the door.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

One of these days he's going to leave us, leave you, because you're

--

MORRIS

Who's leaving.

ELLEN

-- worthless.

MORRIS

You don't know what you're, you're saying.

DAVID opens the door, and surveys the scene.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

My son!

David is rendered speechless, doesn't offer anything up.

ELLEN

You're scaring him.

MORRIS

My son!

DAVID

I don't understand...

ELLEN

He's drunk, honey. Mo, Get to bed!

MORRIS

Why would you leave?

DAVID

...

ELLEN

What?

MORRIS

Why would you leave. David? With Aunt. Ellen. Why?

DAVID

I'm not taking Aunt --

ELLEN

It's gibberish. He means to say 'why are you leaving me with Aunt Ellen'.

DAVID

Dad, you told me to go. You said I should.

MORRIS

I said. I said you c-could.

ELLEN

Now. Done.

ELLEN grabs MORRIS and takes him across the hall to his room.

DAVID

Dad.

DAVID begins to tear up, and calls out, but ELLEN closes the door on him.

He stands, illuminated by the moon, lost in thought. Somewhere else.

EXT. MONTPARNASSE RUE - JULY 1956

DAVID walks down the cobblestone, to a near cafe.

INT. CLOSERIE DES LILAS - LATER

DAVID, alone at a table with one drink in hand, another finished. Approaching: a WOMAN, 25 or so.

DAVID  
Sue! My goodness!

SUE  
David, my dear, how have you been keeping?

DAVID  
Out of money, out of prospects,  
debating the apocalypse --

SUE  
You haven't changed.

DAVID  
Please, sit.

She obliges.

INT. CLOSERIE DES LILAS - LATER

Between the two, about seven finished drinks.

SUE  
So, you're living alone, then?

DAVID  
Yes... sort of.

SUE  
*Sort of?* You have a dog?

Chuckles.

DAVID

Not quite. This kid I know, true  
Parisian, fights with his mistress  
every now and then.

SUE

So, a couple's fight dictates your  
living status?

DAVID, processing the charade. Working on it.

DAVID

Well, they fight, then he'll get  
kicked out for a night and he will  
bunk with me.

SUE

Ah.

DAVID

What about you?

SUE

Oh, nothing ever happens to me. I'm  
like a stone wall. Impenetrable.

DAVID

Well, doesn't that depend on the  
weapon?

They grin to each other. A BUSBOY comes along.

DAVID (CONT'D)

*Deux ricards, avec beaucoup de la  
glace.*

BUSBOY nods and hurries off. Before he vanishes, he TURNS,  
and DAVID sees GIOVANNI's face on him for a moment. Bats an  
eye, and the BUSBOY has turned away.

SUE

Where were we?

DAVID

Stone walls. How they can't be  
entered.

SUE

I didn't know you had an interest  
in stone walls.

DAVID  
There's much about me you don't  
know, I'm sure. Besides, aren't  
discoveries fun?

SUE  
Everything's a discovery.

DAVID  
Sure it is.

DAVID eyes her jeans, her thighs, running up her chest --

The BUSBOY delivers the drinks, hurries off.

SUE  
I think I've just about had all the  
discoveries I can take.

DAVID, thinking. About how to pull it off.

DAVID  
You can't be a stone wall forever.  
Impenetrable is impermanent.

Thinking.

SUE  
I don't know how you mean.

Impulsively:

DAVID  
Invite me over for a drink.

SUE  
I -- i don't have any--

DAVID  
No matter. We'll go out to buy a  
bottle. We'll buy one here.

SUE  
I'm sure I've bored you.

DAVID  
Ah, Sue. I've placed my cards on  
the table. You're still holding  
yours, even after this.

SUE  
It's the summer sun that makes you  
attracted to me, is it not?

DAVID  
If you invite me to yours, we can  
find out.

DAVID is pleased. Quick-witted, he's gained control of the  
conversation. Wields it.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Decision is yours: another drink  
here, or one at yours.

SUE  
I'm sure I'll regret this. Let's  
go.

INT. SUE'S APARTMENT - LATER

The two sit on SUE's sofa, red wine in hands.

SUE  
Where, from here?

DAVID  
Another drink, or perhaps down the  
hall.

SUE  
I must say, I haven't done this,  
been in this situation in a while.

DAVID  
Well. Why don't you start by making  
me feel comfortable. Acquainted. As  
a guest.

SUE  
(playing along)  
Why don't you take off your coat,  
your shoes. Roam a bit. Take a look  
at my books. I often wonder what  
the world would be like without any  
books.

They smile.

DAVID  
Not bad.

SUE  
No?

DAVID  
No, not bad at all.

INT. SUE'S BEDROOM - LATER

They lie, naked. Post-coitus.

SUE  
Impenetrable.

DAVID  
Oh, come on.

SUE  
What a stupid thing to say.

DAVID  
I invited myself over. Clearly  
nothing disastrous came from your  
mouth.

SUE  
Maybe not disastrous, but I can  
just let it run.

DAVID  
A quality of all people. Have you  
ever known anyone to not talk  
raucously when about themselves?

SUE  
There's a point there.

A beat.

SUE (CONT'D)  
Say you'll call.

DAVID  
Yes.

SUE  
Say it.

DAVID  
I'll call.

SUE rises, reveals her body. Moves to put on clothes. She  
throws DAVID clothes.

SUE  
Your pants.

DAVID  
Yeah.

A beat.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It was nice, to leave the house.

SUE

That's what this was? Leaving the house?

DAVID

Well, no, I just meant to have a woman. Living with none, talking with few, I grew restless.

SUE

Uh.

DAVID

Just to feel another, jolt again.

SUE

The way you talk. Funny, I can't tell if I was a thrill to you or just a distraction...

DAVID

I don't... what's wrong with either?

She turns and SLAPS DAVID. He didn't see that happening.

SUE

Get out.

DAVID

I don't understand --

SUE

I won't see you. Not for the rest of my time in Paris.

DAVID

--

SUE

Go!

DAVID

I need to put on my pants.

INT. TAXI - FEBRUARY 1956

HELLA and DAVID sit in the back, driving to unknown location.

HELLA  
David?

DAVID  
Yes, love.

HELLA  
I just... I love you. I just wanted  
to say that.

DAVID  
I know that. And I love you too.

HELLA  
It's just that I've never felt more  
excited to share my life with  
someone. It's thrilling.

DAVID kisses her. She smiles.

HELLA (CONT'D)  
I don't know, I just wanted to say  
that.

DAVID  
Yes, love.

INT. GIOVANNI'S APARTMENT - JULY 1956

GIOVANNI laughs hysterically, hair in his face, cognac in  
hand. DAVID enters.

DAVID  
The mid-day drunk. Celebrating...  
what?

GIOVANNI just continues to laugh. Out of confusion, DAVID  
laughs with him.

GIOVANNI  
Where you were you last night? Oh,  
darling, everywhere I looked.

DAVID  
Gio -- what are you doing?

GIOVANNI  
You can't run off like that! I get  
so... restless. Yes.

DAVID  
My love, what?

GIOVANNI

Have a drink. This bottle is my freedom.

DAVID

You didn't go to work?

GIOVANNI

Those people are dirty, *tu sais?*

DAVID, no longer laughing with him.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)

He fired me. He said I was dirty, a thief. A street boy. Said the only reason I was there was to wait it out.

DAVID

Wait?

GIOVANNI

To rob him. That was, is his fear. You know what he did?

GIOVANNI continues before DAVID can respond.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)

He had come in after me. I was cleaning the bar, keeping, all of it. He came in, immediately angry. Visibly angry. Maybe, a boy had just humiliated him.

DAVID

A boy?

GIOVANNI

Often. More often than -- anyway, he had started to yell. When he gets angry that way, he covers it with a layer of professionalism.

DAVID

I don't understand, Gio.

GIOVANNI

He tries to keep cool, I think -- but really, he is fuming. He would need to be drunk, or else he starts to lash out.

DAVID

He lashed out. At you?

GIOVANNI

The thing was, was that he waited! He waited for others to come into the bar. He wanted my turn, in humiliation. Awful. He said, yes, that I was a thief. That I had no gratitude, no decency. I run with the river rats, or so he thinks.

A beat.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)

I could've killed him. I could've killed everyone in that bar.

A beat.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)

Have you ever known a man to have such an episode? A man who doesn't respect even a hair on his body?

DAVID

Gio, look, it's okay.

DAVID providing comfort. All he can do. GIOVANNI leans on him.

GIOVANNI

I suppose you'll be leaving me.

DAVID

No. No.

GIOVANNI

David, in finances we are novice at best. Paris is not built for it. Unless we did want to run with the rats...

DAVID

We'll find a way. Jacques, my father, even if I --

GIOVANNI

I'm not going to have a hand in it if it makes you uncomfortable.

DAVID

We won't have a choice. Asking for money is not comforting. But we will.

Silence. They rest on each other.

GIOVANNI  
What now, then?

INT. GIOVANNI'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

DAVID and GIOVANNI sit across from each other on the floor, with an island of CRUMPLED CASH between them.

DAVID  
What is your count?

GIOVANNI  
Four thousand, four thousand five hundred.

DAVID  
I'm about the same, a little less.

GIOVANNI  
Nine thousand.

DAVID  
Nine thousand francs, yeah. About.

GIOVANNI  
David...

DAVID  
Jacques. Now. My father, perhaps later.

DAVID starts towards the door. A mission.

GIOVANNI  
David. Wait.

DAVID  
No time for waiting now, Gio.

GIOVANNI  
I'm not going to stand idle and pretend Jacques is a good man, but we can't just barge in and --

DAVID  
I told you before, didn't I? He has a little more money, and a little more lending spirit, than he knows what to do with it.

GIOVANNI  
Fine.

DAVID

You go out, walk off the cognac.  
Stay close.

GIOVANNI

Always.

They smile at each other. DAVID exits.

EXT. PRISON COURTYARD / SQUARE - DAY

Desolate. Misty. Dark.

In the square's center is a structure not unknown to us: a GUILLOTINE, wooden stocks, angled, high blade. Shimmers singularly in the fog. Foreboding.

From the PRISON come TEN MEN, indecipherably wardens, priests, practitioners, lawmen. They walk towards the guillotine in the center.

A moment between them as they form a circle around the machine, heads down and arms at their sides.

From further view, two more MEN from the prison now walking to the courtyard: a WARDEN tightly gripping by the shoulder a prisoner, GIOVANNI. White jumpsuit. Also shimmers singularly in the fog.

The scene is unfolding itself. A few of the men in the circle step back to allow GIOVANNI and the WARDEN a path to the guillotine.

As the WARDEN watches GIOVANNI place himself in the stocks, the circled men move a step further back, avoiding the cut soon to come.

Everyone in position now. WARDEN officiating procedure.

One of the circled men looks behind them, back to the prison walls, and all of the other men soon follow, eyeing the same thing.

THEIR POV: DAVID, horrified, white jumpsuit as well. Sitting up against the wall. Tears down his face, pink in the cold.

The men motion to DAVID to come to them.

He begins to walk, meeting them at the center. Again, they step aside to allow him inside the circle, between them and the machine, a front-row seat.

DAVID, now eye-level with GIOVANNI, contemplating, crying, lost.

                                  DAVID  
I'm sorry.

                                  GIOVANNI  
No.

                                  DAVID  
I'm sorry.

                                  GIOVANNI  
No, no.

                                  DAVID  
Nobody can stay in the Garden of Eden.

GIOVANNI, horrified.

Men watch.

WARDEN steps back.

Guillotine GOES.

On the SNAP --

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - DECEMBER 1956

DAVID shoots up, out of bed. Awake now.

He looks to the window. It is mid-day.

He gets out of bed, puts different clothes on. Sees snow falling from the sill. Sighs.

On the bedside: the NOTEBOOK. Still lays open.

INT. NORMANDY TABAC - MOMENTS LATER

IRENE said it: DAVID hasn't left his house in a long time. Afraid, confused, dejected.

Yet here he is, entering the tabac. Stops before ordering. Then gestures for a BARTENDER.

                                  BARTENDER  
David, look, we're happy to see you.

DAVID  
Mm. Scotch?

BARTENDER  
Looks good today. On the rocks?

DAVID  
Mm.

BARTENDER goes to make the quick drink. DAVID sits at a table.

OTHER PATRONS look at him occasionally. Like a face they've seen before, plastered on a body... but have forgotten since.

A moment, maybe too long, of this painfully public prying.

An OLDER PATRON (50s) turns from his seat and turns toward DAVID.

OLDER PATRON  
I heard your girl has gone. Left.

DAVID  
I'm sorry?

BARTENDER gets scotch to DAVID.

OLDER PATRON  
Housekeeper! Irene is a wonderful woman, with a mouth like a parakeet.

DAVID  
Ah.

OLDER PATRON  
Just saying... if you're looking for refuge, if you're looking for escape, it's not here.

DAVID  
No?

OLDER PATRON  
No. This is a fishing hole. Period. It's not the "nice quiet" of the brochures. It's a deafening silence. Dead in ten years silence. Makes me want to crawl out of my own ass.

DAVID  
Why don't you leave, then?

OLDER PATRON thinks on it. Deadpan:

OLDER PATRON  
I love fish.

He laughs, DAVID joins him. The laughter is abuzz throughout the bar. Airy, light mood now.

OLDER PATRON (CONT'D)  
It ain't here. What you're looking for. Running from.

DAVID  
What in me makes you believe that I'm running? Did Irene say something?

OLDER PATRON shrugs off the idea.

OLDER PATRON  
Nah. No. A person like you, what 20? 25? 30 with a good haircut? Young people don't come up here 'less they running from something. Now --

DAVID  
Flattering.

OLDER PATRON  
-- young, running, needs a place. A real "nice quiet".

DAVID  
A diagnostic?

OLDER PATRON  
An idea. America. Go to America.

DAVID, unable to express the irony, shrugs. Takes a drink.

DAVID  
Hadn't thought of it.

EXT. CAFE - JULY 1956

DAVID and JACQUES. Money talk.

JACQUES  
Of course. Of course.

DAVID  
Really?

JACQUES  
 You don't think I would ever leave  
 you dry?

DAVID  
 Hadn't thought of it.

They grin.

JACQUES  
 Well, don't even question it. Two  
 thousand?

DAVID knows that's not enough. Takes a second --

JACQUES (CONT'D)  
 Three.

Impulsively:

DAVID  
 Yes. My, yes. I cannot thank you  
 enough.

They tap glasses and drink.

JACQUES  
 How is he?

DAVID  
 Gio?

JACQUES  
 No, the Pope. Yes, how is he?

DAVID  
 Good.

JACQUES  
 You cannot possibly expect me to  
 sit here, drink my coffee, not  
 gloat to you.

DAVID  
 For?

JACQUES  
 Encouragement. Maybe it's the old  
 soul in me, but I credit myself for  
 the sharing of your skin. Yours and  
 his.

DAVID  
 I suppose so. A matchmaker.

JACQUES  
 If not for myself, than at least  
 for someone else.

They laugh.

DAVID  
 I can't help it.

JACQUES  
 What's that?

DAVID  
 That you're more receptive. Because  
 you wanted it.

JACQUES  
 Nonsense. You wanted it. I only sat  
 next to you. A driver and a  
 passenger are not the same thing.

They laugh again.

DAVID  
 You'll say anything, until the end  
 of time, to keep me with a man.

JACQUES  
 And, what would be the harm in  
 that?

JACQUES drinks. DAVID sits and chuckles.

INT. GIOVANNI'S APARTMENT - LATER

The two are working on a BOOKCASE that GIOVANNI is trying to  
 carve into the wall. Working with bricks. Arduous work.  
 Labor.

GIOVANNI  
 Three thousand. You said he was  
 charitable.

DAVID  
 Yeah.

GIOVANNI  
 I mean, three thousand. With a  
 snap. Not a word.

DAVID  
 Yeah.

GIO stops working. Registers abnormal tone in DAVID.

GIOVANNI  
What are you thinking of?

DAVID  
Honestly?

GIOVANNI  
Yes. Honestly.

DAVID  
Leaving Paris.

Hits GIO. Didn't expect it.

GIOVANNI  
And why's that?

DAVID  
Talking to Jacques.

GIOVANNI  
Oh, what'd he say?

DAVID  
Huh?

GIOVANNI  
He said something stupid.

DAVID  
No. No, he said nothing at all,  
actually. It was...the nature of  
the conversation. Asking for money.  
Having pity. Money. Pity. Money.  
Pity.

GIOVANNI  
David --

DAVID  
I don't. Fit here.

GIO sets down his working equipment.

GIOVANNI  
Then let's go. Somewhere. I'll go  
wherever you feel.

DAVID  
Italy. Isn't that your home?

GIOVANNI

Italy.

DAVID

Yes, Italy. We could do it. Go back home.

GIOVANNI

There is no 'home' out there, David. A man's origin doesn't designate a man's home.

DAVID

That's nothing. And you know it. Italy is where you're from.

GIOVANNI

I can't just go back.

DAVID

Italy is where you're from. That's home.

GIOVANNI

I cannot. Just go back. To Italy.

DAVID

How do you mean?

GIOVANNI

I'll never go back.

DAVID

That's an exaggeration. Of course you'll go back, one day. You'll go back, just like I'll go back to America.

GIOVANNI

When you go back to America --

DAVID

What? I will. I'm sure of it.

GIOVANNI

When you go back, back 'home', you'll realize you have no home. Then you'll see how deep you are.

DAVID scoffs, laughs at the idea.

DAVID  
 Beautiful logic. You mean to say, I  
 have a home as long as I don't go  
 there.

GIOVANNI  
 Don't mock me --

DAVID  
 No, you! Don't bullshit me!

GIOVANNI  
 Don't bullshit you! When you have a  
 woman fifty miles away coming to  
 marry you!

DAVID  
 I --

GIOVANNI  
 Or is that wrong? Is that wrong? Is  
 she here? In Paris? Behind the  
 goddamn curtains?

DAVID sits on the bed, then rises back up. Won't sit for  
 this.

DAVID  
 I never meant to hurt you. I meant  
 to love you. No -- I never even  
 meant to love you. It just  
 happened. After all of this, you  
 cannot place that on me. You just  
 can't.

GIOVANNI  
 And why not? What is the great fear  
 in you Americans --

DAVID  
 That's it! That's it! That's why I  
 need to leave.

GIOVANNI  
 ...

DAVID  
 That's what... I told you. I  
 thought I told you. I am not  
 willing to be resorted to that. If  
 you want to say I have no home  
 there, don't reduce me to only  
 'American'.

GIOVANNI

I won't reduce you. I won't... I  
love you, David. I love you.

A lull, as fights have. Both struggling for words, both  
grasping for the next point, the finishing stab.

But nothing comes. Silence.

They turn away from each other, looking opposite  
directions...

Framed by the bookcase that has yet to be carved...

Surrounded by painted walls, but the paint is still drying.

EXT. SAINT LAZARE STATION - AUGUST 1956

TITLE CARD: One Week Later

The station, SAINT LAZARE, in the middle of the city, glowing  
effervescent in the morning light.

HELLA (V.O.)

*Mon chere, I arrive Saturday  
morning, a quarter to 7am your  
time. Meet me at 18. Platform 18.  
Hella.*

INT. PLATFORM 18 - MOMENTS LATER

DAVID stands among tens, maybe hundreds, of others on the  
platform.

A few moments, then TRAIN of BLISTERING VOLUME approaches...

DAVID eyes the windows, trying to catch a glimpse of her.

The train stops. A moment, and out shuffles the passengers.  
And HELLA.

DAVID doesn't rush toward her; he waits a moment of her  
looking around earnestly before he comes over to her.

HELLA

David!

They embrace. A hug that lasts ten or so seconds.

DAVID

How are you feeling?

HELLA  
Tired. Miss you. Want a drink.

DAVID  
We can fulfill all of that back at yours. Let's go.

HELLA  
It feels so good to have been in your arms again.

DAVID  
Yeah, it does.

He means it. A puzzle piece has been placed.

INT. HELLA'S APARTMENT - LATER

HELLA and DAVID sit at a mid-size lounge table. Wines across the table.

HELLA  
There's about ten, so we can start with whichever one.

DAVID  
Surprised. A girl small as you lugging all that onto the train.

She teasingly slaps his shoulder.

HELLA  
I take care of wine better than mothers with newborn children.

DAVID  
That you do!

HELLA uncorks one, pours two glasses, hands one to DAVID. They drink for a moment.

HELLA  
I didn't like Spain much.

DAVID  
Huh?

HELLA  
I knew you were going to ask, and so I say, I didn't like Spain much.

DAVID  
I see.

HELLA

Besides, if any place is one of reconciliation, it is here, my love. Paris.

DAVID

Not that we have to put it to the test.

HELLA

No.

Elephant in the room: she said yes. Neither wants to bring it up themselves, would rather yield to the other.

A beat.

DAVID

Were you serious in your letter?

Bingo.

HELLA

Yes. I was. I mean, it was spontaneous, I suppose, but I think that we are.

DAVID

Spontaneous?

HELLA

Yes. But, I must admit, even if it's embarrassing to a degree, I am a traditional girl. I want you, David, and kids, and a house. A family, a man to come home to.

DAVID

That's all I want, too.

HELLA

I was serious.

DAVID smiles. HELLA kisses him, deeply, passionately. He reciprocates.

INT. HELLA'S BEDROOM - LATER

HELLA and DAVID lay together in her bed.

HELLA

We are going to run out of money.

DAVID  
Believe me, I know.

HELLA  
Yeah?

DAVID  
I got another loan from Jacques the other day. Three thousand francs.

HELLA  
Do you split with your roommate, the bartender?

DAVID freezes momentarily. Tries to process what he wrote to her about GIO.

DAVID  
Oh, well, uh, I'll figure that out. I haven't spoken to my roommate in a little while.

HELLA  
But, you've been living with him, yes? Did you not did discuss splitting of the loan? You split the costs of --

DAVID  
I know, I know.

HELLA  
So?

DAVID  
I don't know.

HELLA  
What?

DAVID  
When I'll talk to him next.

INT. GIOVANNI'S APARTMENT - SIMULTANEOUS

GIOVANNI lays in bed. Stares up at the ceiling.

LOST. LONGING.

GIOVANNI  
Where...did...you...go...

Doesn't move, fixated on the ceiling.

EXT. RUE - DAY

As DAVID and HELLA walk down the street, we hear DAVID's letter to MORRIS.

DAVID (V.O.)  
*Dad, I won't keep secrets from you  
 anymore. I found a girl and I want  
 to marry her...*

They ENTER a small bookshop tucked away in the neighborhood.

DAVID (V.O.)  
*...She's American. Family from  
 Minneapolis. Her dad's a lawyer, I  
 think...*

They are BROWSING, taking books off shelves, READING...

DAVID (V.O.)  
*...Hella wants to honeymoon here,  
 so we may need some more money to  
 hold us over that way...*

HELLA moves to a different aisle to look for a book...

DAVID (V.O.)  
*...I know you'll love her, Dad.  
 She'll love you. She's made me a  
 very happy man...*

DAVID turns a corner...

DAVID (V.O.)  
*Love, your son.*

...and he runs into a MAN perusing books: JACQUES.

JACQUES  
 Ah, here you are, David! We thought  
 you had returned to America.

DAVID  
 We?

JACQUES  
 Your man, your baby. You left him  
 there in his apartment with no  
 food, no money. Thought he might  
 have stuck his head in an oven.

DAVID  
 I --

JACQUES  
-- if he had an oven.

DAVID, panicked. Did not think he would have to face this, or at least so soon.

DAVID  
He's here. With you.

JACQUES  
He's somewhere in this store.

DAVID  
Oh god...

HELLA returns to DAVID with a book in hand.

JACQUES  
Good morning, mademoiselle.

DAVID  
Hella, my fiancée.

JACQUES  
Ahhhh! Hella, you must understand,  
David has been hiding from us since  
you have come.

DAVID nervously laughs, trying to spark a lighter tone in the conversation. Behind him, appears GIOVANNI.

GIOVANNI  
David, where have you been? Drowned  
in the seine.

DAVID, frozen. Calm, but robotic.

DAVID  
Giovanni, meet Hella. My fiancée.

GIOVANNI  
*Enchante*, mademoiselle.

A beat. Politeness hanging by a single thread.

HELLA  
*Enchante*. I'm going to go buy this  
at the front.

DAVID  
Okay, love.

HELLA goes off.

JACQUES

Well, I may not privy to any disc--

GIOVANNI

No discussion. Not now. My apartment, David, tonight. You owe me that much. At least that much.

DAVID nods. JACQUES and GIOVANNI turn and walk.

DAVID crosses to the exit, meeting up with HELLA.

HELLA

David, what were they talking about?

DAVID

How was I supposed to know of Gio's stress?

HELLA

Gio?

DAVID

Giovanni. We were only roommates.

HELLA

Aren't you going back to collect your things.

DAVID

Tonight, I'll go. Have to get my razors.

She holds his hand as they walk back into the SUN-SPLASHED street.

INT. GIOVANNI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

GIOVANNI lays in bed when DAVID arrives. No need to ask who it is. It is known.

GIOVANNI

You never lied to me, but you never told the truth, either.

GIOVANNI begins to sob.

DAVID

Baby.

GIOVANNI

I have never known anyone like you before.

DAVID

I have to say --

GIOVANNI

No. It is my turn to speak.

He FIGHTS TEARS to continue.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)

In Italy, I had a woman. She was good to me. She loved me, and not for anything besides who I was. I should have liked to stay there, to grow old and make babies and fill my stomach with pasta and herbs. One day you would arrive, in an American car, shame us for our simple lifestyle, our prehistoric happiness. I should have liked to stay there. In that village. And then... then came the day of my death. The day I wished had been my death. I cry now, for you, David. But I cried that day. That day. I remember everything of that day. The trees lining the gardens, the pebbles before me, the smell of dust as I moved off of it, the homes and the colors they made when the sun got to them. I buried my son. In the churchyard where my father lay, my grandfather, too. Born dead. We lathered him in holy water and prayed, but he had never took a breath. My baby, my child, my woman and I had made. In the dirt. I went into my house and took the crucifix off the wall. I spat on it, threw it to the ground. Left my mother and my woman, bereft of child, screaming. Then I came here, and I know, and I know, that God is punishing me for laying with you, for spitting on his Son. I know that. I will die here in Paris. I know that too. I may never see my village again. Never.

Silence follows. DAVID feels words on the roof of his mouth, but they don't come.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)

Please, stay.

DAVID, suddenly:

DAVID

You knew of her. You knew she was coming back, Gio. I never claimed to stay with you.

GIOVANNI

You lie so much, you have begun to believe your own lies.

DAVID

No matter how you feel, I still love her.

GIOVANNI

Love her! You don't love anyone!

DAVID

What?

GIOVANNI

You love your purity. You think I'm dirty. I stink of desire. You tell me you have the ability to love, but what is this! Where are we, right now? Is this your love? Can I feel it wash over me?

DAVID

Gio.

GIOVANNI

You're immoral, not I. You're dirty, not I. I loved you. You loved the idea of love. And now you despise it. And that girl will make you pure?

DAVID

I love her.

GIOVANNI

...

DAVID

What now?

GIOVANNI

I suppose. You leave.

DAVID  
Suppose I do. What will you do?

GIOVANNI  
I will get a job with Guillaume again. He has shown warmth to me since he let me go and humiliated me. Or I will have to paddle off Jacques. You know the feeling.

DAVID  
I do, I do.

A beat.

GIOVANNI  
Jacques left a bottle of cognac here. One for the road, as you say?

DAVID  
Yes. Let's.

GIOVANNI gets up to grab the cognac, pours two glasses.

GIOVANNI  
To... oh, fuck it.

They LAUGH. And DRINK.

They'll never speak again.

EXT. MONTPARNASSE CAFE - AFTERNOON - NOVEMBER 1956

We've been here before.

Title Card: TWO MONTHS LATER

DAVID and JACQUES continue at the terrace. JACQUES hands him a blue letter.

DAVID  
I just can't believe it.

JACQUES  
I was never one to trust the papers, but --

DAVID  
You're not supposing they are fabricating?

JACQUES

No. I suppose not. He came to see me, after.

DAVID

He saw you? After --

JACQUES

Yes. By this time, Gio was running for days. They hadn't managed to catch him, because he would weave in and out of the city.

DAVID

What did he say? How was he?

JACQUES

Beaten, David. He was beat, defeated, he knew it. Only hours before they would catch him. He came back to tell me, to let me know, to pray for him. He may have done the same for you had he known where you and Hella lived.

DAVID

How did he -- how did it happen?

JACQUES

Quickly. Listen:

INT. GUILLAUME'S BAR - TINTED

We REVISIT GUILLAUME'S BAR in a faded sequence. Patrons line the walls. GIOVANNI ENTERS the bar.

JACQUES (V.O.)

Guillaume had been polite to Gio, so Gio came in looking for his barman job back.

GUILLAUME eyes GIOVANNI as he comes in and motions him upstairs with him.

JACQUES (V.O.)

Did Guillaume have any intention of hiring him back? No way to know.

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

GUILLAUME leads GIOVANNI into a private dressing room above the bar. He motions for GIOVANNI to sit and begins to undress.

JACQUES (V.O.)  
 What is known, what you could probably guess, is that Guillaume saw a transaction in it.

Once nearly NAKED, GUILLAUME starts to take off GIOVANNI's shirt. Instead, GIOVANNI gets up and starts to YELL at GUILLAUME.

JACQUES (V.O.)  
 Giovanni did not feel this way. He got angry --

GIOVANNI pushes GUILLAUME, who is laughing through the episode. Offers playful pushes back at him.

JACQUES (V.O.)  
 -- really angry, irrational,

GIOVANNI gets hands around GUILLAUME's neck, and keeps them there, and keeps them there...until GUILLAUME falls to the floor.

JACQUES (V.O.)  
 Bloody.

INT. BARROOM - MOMENTS LATER

GIOVANNI walks down the stairs of the bar, passing patrons to the door.

JACQUES (V.O.)  
 By Gio's account, and by the accounts of all of the newspapers, that's how it happened.

INT/EXT. BARROOM - MOMENTS LATER

GIOVANNI walks out without stopping or looking behind him. Continues down the road.

JACQUES (V.O.)  
 Quickly.

EXT. MONTPARNASSE CAFE - AFTERNOON - NOVEMBER 1956

Out of flashback.

DAVID

So the paper's account, of his  
sentencing?

JACQUES

True, also. Everybody in Paris  
knows it, too.

Here is where JACQUES gets emotional, tears sprouting up.

JACQUES (CONT'D)

And, because he lived with me, his  
primary address, I was sent this.

JACQUES pulls an envelope from his coat-pocket, hands it to  
DAVID.

JACQUES (CONT'D)

The date of the execution. It's in  
here. You don't have to open it, I  
know I couldn't. I just thought --

DAVID

It's okay, Jacques. Thank you.

JACQUES

They have decency to tell us when.  
You put a young man to death, you  
have to carry some humility with  
it, I guess.

DAVID

Mm.

JACQUES

Take this envelope. Please. If you  
open it, if you don't open it, I  
would like you to have it.

DAVID

Thank you, Jacques.

JACQUES

So, you're leaving, then?

DAVID

Hella and I will go to Normandy.  
There's a house there we rented.

JACQUES

Good. If I had half the mind, to leave this city now. But it wouldn't be right. Or fair. To Gio, I mean. His spirit is in my room, his apartment, even if he never finished it...

DAVID

Yeah.

JACQUES

He never would've finished it, not with you or I hanging around.

DAVID

I suppose not.

A beat.

JACQUES

Good luck to you. I will be seeing you.

JACQUES rises, and DAVID follows suit.

DAVID

Be seeing you.

JACQUES turns and walks away. DAVID watches for a moment.

EXT. NORMANDY HOUSE - DAY

The house of the present, where David now resides. HELLA and DAVID unpack the car's trunk and backseats full of travel bags. HELLA hesitates, stops to talk.

HELLA

I want to make sure you're alright.

DAVID

Yes, my dear.

HELLA

What happened, obviously, horrific.

DAVID

Yes.

HELLA

So do you --

DAVID  
He was just my roommate, Hella.

HELLA pauses knowingly. Continues, moving the bags inside.  
DAVID follows.

INT. NORMANDY HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

DAVID and HELLA have pretty fully moved in; besides a few furnishings still left over, all of their bags are tucked away neatly and the home looks comfortable, a far cry from its manner when only DAVID lives there.

They sit at a dining table.

HELLA  
I wish you would tell me. Explain to me.

DAVID  
It's probably just nerves. I've been nervous for awhile.

HELLA  
I know. But.

DAVID  
...

HELLA  
It's Giovanni.

DAVID  
And?

HELLA  
Well. I don't know.

DAVID  
...

HELLA  
I feel as if, you feel bad, for leaving him in that room.

A beat.

HELLA (CONT'D)  
Maybe you blame yourself for what had happened.

DAVID  
I don't.

HELLA  
Maybe you feel awful about leaving  
him.

DAVID  
I don't know.

HELLA  
Stop torturing yourself. His  
burdens were his own. You've no  
part in it.

A beat.

DAVID  
He was so beautiful.

DAVID begins to sob. HELLA comforts him.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
I feel like I put him in the shadow  
of the knife. He wanted me to stay.  
He begged. That night, when I went  
to get my things, he cried.

HELLA  
He was in love with you.

A beat.

HELLA (CONT'D)  
He was in love with you, David.

DAVID  
Yes.

HELLA  
Why didn't you tell me? Or did you  
not know?

DAVID  
I --

HELLA  
You couldn't keep him from those  
feelings, or killing that man.

DAVID  
You don't know. Anything about it.

HELLA  
I know how you feel --

DAVID  
You don't know how I feel.

HELLA gets up, pacing the kitchen space now. DAVID stays, sitting.

HELLA  
Don't shut me out, David. Please, don't.

DAVID  
...

HELLA  
I want to help you.

DAVID  
I don't know.

HELLA  
Maybe we should return home.

DAVID  
We just got here, love. Went to the *tabac* and now, unpacked.

HELLA  
I want to go home and get married.

DAVID  
Yeah?

HELLA  
Yes. And have kids.

DAVID  
Hella --

HELLA  
I want you, David. What are we spending time here for?

DAVID  
I don't know.

HELLA  
Please, David. Let me have you. Where have you gone?

HELLA kneels down and begins to CRY. DAVID reaches to comfort her.

HELLA (CONT'D)

David. Let me be a woman. I don't care what you do to me. I don't care what it costs, either. I'll wear my hair longer, I'll give up my cigarettes. I'll throw out the books.

She wears a smile, but DAVID is barely receptive.

HELLA (CONT'D)

Just let me be a woman. That's what I want. It's all I want.

HELLA stands beside him, KISSES him.

After a moment, DAVID KISSES back.

INT. NORMANDY HOUSE - BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

DAVID and HELLA lie in bed. HELLA is asleep, turned on her side.

DAVID stares up.

After a few moments, he gets out of bed, and walks out of the bedroom.

INT. NORMANDY TABAC - NIGHT

DAVID comes in, only a few minutes before closing. Looks around.

He eyes a young SAILOR (20) sitting alone with a beer in hand. Comes up to him.

DAVID

A lone shipman. And for what?

SAILOR

Well, my family is here in the region. Tonight, after closing, I'll go to a hotel.

DAVID

You're new here?

SAILOR

Yes.

DAVID

And cute.

SAILOR

Well.

DAVID

I'm new here to. As of tonight.  
Nowhere to stay.

SAILOR

Have a drink with me, if you'd  
like.

DAVID doesn't smile, but does accept.

DAVID

I would.

SAILOR

Alright.

DAVID sits, orders a COGNAC from the BARTENDER.

DAVID

A young man alone in France. An  
American, I might add?

SAILOR

Yes. Virginia.

DAVID

New York. Seems we share the  
Atlantic wherever we are.

SAILOR

I guess that's right.

DAVID

Yeah.

Now, DAVID offers a smile.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - LATER

DAVID and the SAILOR having sex at the hotel. No passion.  
Lust.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - LATER

DAVID and the SAILOR lie in the bed.

SAILOR

This was a mistake, wasn't it?

DAVID  
How do you mean?

SAILOR  
You're not new here.

DAVID  
In Normandy? Yes, I am.

SAILOR  
Maybe, but not as you say.

DAVID  
I suppose.

SAILOR  
Was it a mistake?

DAVID  
I suppose.

SAILOR  
...was that your first time?

DAVID  
No. No.

SAILOR  
Okay.

The SAILOR moves out of bed, starts to put his clothes back on.

DAVID  
Stay. For a minute.

SAILOR  
Stay? In my own hotel room?

DAVID realizes what he had asked.

SAILOR (CONT'D)  
Come with me.

A beat.

DAVID gets up, puts his clothes back on.

SAILOR watches.

They head out.

EXT. NORMANDY RUE - EARLY MORNING

DAVID and the SAILOR walk with each other. It is early, five or six a.m.

Walking down the streets, a little drunk, they kiss each other and slap each other every now and then.

Until:

HELLA

DAVID!

She is standing there, outside of a shop, furious.

HELLA (CONT'D)

As if I had to guess where were you. After we made love. You -- you --

DAVID

Hella --

HELLA

I wanted a life with you! Kids!

DAVID

Hella. I have to tell you --

HELLA

Do you have any idea? You useless buffoon...I could have left... I could have gone home...

DAVID

Hella.

HELLA

I wanted you.

SAILOR

Is she -- ?

DAVID nods. SAILOR slowly moves away from the two, chuckling lightly. HELLA is sickened, almost kneeling on the cobblestone.

DAVID

What are we going to do?

After a pause, HELLA rises back on her feet.

As cold as can be:

HELLA

I'm going home. I should've, months ago. But I'm going home now.

Off her --

INT. NORMANDY HOUSE - DECEMBER 1956

DAVID, alone now, on his bed. Notebook in hand. Travel bags beside him.

On his nightstand is the envelope JACQUES gave him. The execution date. He folds it, puts it in his pocket.

IRENE enters from the front door.

IRENE

I've left your tickets here on the counter. Do not forget them, as a young man might.

She chuckles, and DAVID fakes a smile back.

IRENE (CONT'D)

You're going back to Paris?

DAVID

I've no reason to face my father, my peers in New York after she left.

IRENE

It seems unfair. She can return to America, and you have to stay here?

DAVID

I appreciate it. Truthfully, though, I might be better off here where I have the whole ocean to protect me from her.

IRENE

Uh huh.

DAVID

Have you got the keys?

IRENE

Master, yes. You need not worry. These homes, beachside...

(MORE)

IRENE (CONT'D)  
 sell quickly. It will not be a  
 burden of yours for long at all,  
 darling.

DAVID  
 Thank you, Irene.

She starts out.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
 Irene?

...she turns back. *Yes?*

DAVID (CONT'D)  
 Thank you.

A moment. Then:

IRENE  
 The ocean won't protect you from  
 anything, David. It'll only prove  
 how close it all is.

She waves goodbye, pitiful, and closes the door.

DAVID, a moment in silence, gets up, towards the window.

DAVID looks out at the snow falling, at the window, one last  
 time. Closes his eyes.

EXT. PRISON COURTYARD / SQUARE - DAY

The dream. Again.

Desolate. Misty. Dark.

In the square's center is a structure not unknown to us: a  
 GUILLOTINE, wooden stocks, angled, high blade. Shimmers  
 singularly in the fog. Foreboding.

From the PRISON come TEN MEN, indecipherably wardens,  
 priests, practitioners, lawmen. They walk towards the  
 guillotine in the center.

A moment between them as they form a circle around the  
 machine, heads down and arms at their sides.

From further view, two more MEN from the prison now walking  
 to the courtyard: a WARDEN tightly gripping by the shoulder a  
 prisoner, GIOVANNI. White jumpsuit. Also shimmers singularly  
 in the fog.



INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

As the train for Paris HUMS in, DAVID finally can't go without it anymore.

From his pocket, he PULLS out the ENVELOPE that JACQUES gave him...

Considers it. A moment. He tears it up.

Pieces fly and fall on the station floor. Words now indecipherable.

The TRAIN stops. DAVID gathers himself.

As he walks on, a few of the pieces of the letter and envelope begin to roll back from the wind.

A mere step from boarding the train, the wind carries the pieces to his back shoulder. He turns, watches them fall to the platform floor again.

Off his look --

FADE OUT.

THE END