

ON NIGHTS LIKE THIS

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INT. NICOLE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CHRISTOPHER and NICOLE sit next to each other on the couch in the living room, each with a glass of water. Her residence is a duplex located around central Waltham close to Moody Street. The living room is full of packed boxes.

NICOLE

You just don't get it do you?

CHRISTOPHER

What did I do?

NICOLE

(more indignant)

Shit, Christopher. Should everything be about you? You know. I'm my own person. I'm not just about you and your stupid needs or fantasies or God knows what else is in your head.

He finishes drinking his water.

CHRISTOPHER

(subtly mocking)

You're one to talk.

She looks away from him and gets up to drink the rest of her water. She paces for a while in the room and suddenly faces him sternly.

NICOLE

If you love me, then shut your face.

CHRISTOPHER

(sardonically)

Sounds like a threat.

She walks toward him and stares at him closely.

NICOLE

(almost seductively)

It's a promise.

CHRISTOPHER

(a beat; smiles at her)

You tease.

NICOLE

(slaps him hard)

Fuck you!

She walks away from him as he recovers from the shock.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm getting tired of this ongoing,
back and forth, love-me-then-hate-
me nonsense.

NICOLE

It's not my fault you burned
yourself bad.

CHRISTOPHER

Badly.

NICOLE

What?

CHRISTOPHER

Burned yourself badly.

NICOLE

Oh fuck your grammar Nazi bullshit!

He gets up. She is still away from him.

CHRISTOPHER

(assertively)

I came here to make amends.
Instead it sounds like you just
want to yell and curse at me.

NICOLE

Fuck your reason.

CHRISTOPHER

(sarcastically)

Well don't that sound really mature
and grown up.

NICOLE

And fuck your snark.

CHRISTOPHER

(indignant)

What am I suppose to do? Take this
anger and rage with delight?

(mocking)

Please madam, I want some more.

(back to indignant)

What do you want from me?

NICOLE

Right now I want you to fuck off.

CHRISTOPHER
 (sardonically)
 You know you can do that standing
 up.

She stares at him angrily after this insult. Then her face contorts in rage and she rushes at him.

NICOLE
 Get the fuck out of here! I can't
 take this anymore from you. I hate
 you! And fuck everything about
 you!

CHRISTOPHER
 (looks down - then at her)
 Nicole

NICOLE
 I don't want to hear anymore from
 you! Now fuck off!

She starts chasing him around the room, forcing him back toward the living room door.

CHRISTOPHER
 I'm

NICOLE
 Fuck off you bastard!

She forces him down the stairs and toward the door.

EXT. NICOLE'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

CHRISTOPHER
 Look, I

NICOLE
 Just fuck off!

Nicole opens the door, pushes Christopher out and slams the door shut. He looks at the door to see her march up the stairs. He then backs away from the door, all the while looking at the house. He turns around to walk back to the car and then he feels a sharp pain on the back of his head.

CHRISTOPHER
 Ow! Damn it!

A water glass shatters onto the concrete sidewalk. He looks at the shattered glass and then up at the window to see Nicole there.

NICOLE
(yells out)
Fuck you!

She slams the window shut and he continues to look up at the window, all the while rubbing his head. He looks at his fingers and can make out the sight of blood.

CHRISTOPHER
(quietly)
Ah shit.

He unlocks the car, opens the door and enters. He puts the key in the ignition, turns on the map light and opens the glove compartment to pull out some napkins for the back of his head. When he finds the bleeding as stopped sufficiently, he starts the car and drives away from the neighborhood.

EXT. CHRISTOPHER'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Christopher drives up near his building and parks along the street. Christopher exits the car and walks up to his door. He unlocks the door, opens it and walks up the stairs to his apartment.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Christopher unlocks the door and steps inside his apartment. He walks determinedly toward the kitchen.

He drops the keys on the counter and stands still in front of the sink for a moment. He then grabs a bottle of wine from the shelf, a bottle opener from a drawer and a wine glass from the cupboard. He opens the bottle inside the kitchen and walks out to the living room with the bottle and the wine glass.

He sets the bottle and the glass on the table and walks toward his sound system. He makes a song selection and walks back to the couch. He sits down and proceeds to pour a glass of wine. He drinks from it and his anger gradually changes to melancholia.

After a few moments, he overhears festive partying nearby. Perturbed by this, he gets up with his wine glass.

CHRISTOPHER
(sotto voce)
Shit.

He walks back to the sound system to turn the volume up.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
(shouts at the ceiling)
I hope you're having fun you
bastards!

He continues to drink his wine and listen to the music, all the while upset and angry. He eventually collapses onto the couch, still upset and angry.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Christopher wakes up to the sound of birds chirping. He slowly gets up. He notices the minor hangover, the clothes he wore since yesterday and the sunlight. He takes the bottle and finishes the rest of the wine before taking both bottle and wine glass back to the kitchen.

In the kitchen, he cleans out the glass in the sink.

He then takes a shower and changes to lounge pants and a white undershirt, anticipating not going anywhere for the rest of the day.

He sits on the couch with a laptop, typing away with focus and determination and listening to music through the sound system. In between writing, he looks around the apartment and especially at the window.

CUT TO:

INT. INDEPENDENT THEATER - DAY (PAST)

Christopher returns to his seat next to Nicole with popcorn and drink in hand. She looks at him sitting down.

CHRISTOPHER
(with a smile)
Thank goodness for places like
these that can bring some
interesting cinema from distant
shores.
(after a beat)
But we can't always depend on
foreign imports to save our
domestic situation.

NICOLE
Meaning?

CHRISTOPHER
Meaning we have to pull our weight
and add our own efforts. And I
want to help.

NICOLE
How?

CHRISTOPHER
Well, there's that one script I'm
working on right now.

NICOLE
Is it that train thing?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah. I have the main outline done
and now I'm going to write the
actual script.

NICOLE
Wait. You are going to actually
write this?

CHRISTOPHER
That's the plan.

NICOLE
Oh.

She looks away. He takes a few sips of his drink before he notices her looking away from him.

CHRISTOPHER
You don't think I can do it.

NICOLE
Well have you ever written a script
before?

CHRISTOPHER
This will be my first serious
attempt at writing one. But I've
had lots of film ideas for as long
as I can remember. Including this
one.

NICOLE
So why not become a full-time
screenwriter? Why are you still
writing articles for The Globe?

CHRISTOPHER
That's just how things happened.

NICOLE
(annoyed)
I don't know, Chris.

CHRISTOPHER
Why this sudden doubt?

NICOLE
So you are just going to write it
and hope for the best?

CHRISTOPHER
Of course I'm going to write it.
But it's not like I'm not flying
blind here. I have guidebooks and
other resources I'm going to use.
But I also know what I want.

NICOLE
I just think it's presumptuous to
think you can just take up writing
a script when a) you've never
written one before and b) you have
a pretty good job already.
(after a beat)
Besides, it doesn't sound like it's
something people would want to see.

CHRISTOPHER
(slight chuckle)
Oh ye of little faith.

She turns away and he looks at her. He then resumes eating his popcorn. Then the house lights dim and the projector starts. He puts his arm around her and she frigidly rests beside him.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Christopher gets up from the couch and walks around the room. He selects a song from his sound system and walks back to the couch. He sits down and looks at the ceiling before he resumes typing.

CUT TO:

INT. NICOLE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT (PAST)

Christopher and Nicole are in bed together. He kisses and holds her lovingly. She faces away from him.

CHRISTOPHER
 (softly)
 I love you.

NICOLE
 (dispassionately)
 Yeah.

CHRISTOPHER
 What's wrong?

NICOLE
 (resigned)
 Nothing.

CHRISTOPHER
 What is it Nicole?

NICOLE
 I'm not in the mood OK? Please.
 Let's just go to sleep.

CHRISTOPHER
 OK. I didn't mean to

NICOLE
 (turns to look at him)
 Chris. Please. Shut up.

She breaks his embrace. He then turns to lie on his back. She grabs more of the sheets to wrap around herself. He notices this but then turns to sleep facing away from her.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Christopher stands before the window, looking out onto a twilight sky. He turns back toward the apartment and moves toward a phone plugged onto the wall. He opens the phone and enters a speed dial number. He hears the dial tone and then the following voicemail introduction.

SARAH (V.O.)
 Hello. This is Sarah. I'm sorry I missed your call. But if you leave your name, number and a brief message, I'll get back to you as soon as I can. Thanks.

CHRISTOPHER
 (after the tone)
 Hey there. It's Christopher.
 (MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Listen. I need to talk to you.
And I need to talk to you alone.
Please call me as soon as you can.
We can get together for lunch or
something. Talk to you later.
Bye.

He hangs up the phone and lies down on the couch with a loud sigh.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THE BOSTON GLOBE - NEWS FLOOR - DAY

Christopher walks toward his desk. He sets down his briefcase, pulls up his chair to sit down and turns on his computer. He looks around his cube as the computer warms up. He then lingers at his monitor.

CUT TO:

INT. PROVIDENCE SMALL VENUE - NIGHT (PAST)

Nicole looks around the emptying venue. She sees Christopher talking with a BAND MEMBER and approaches him. He wraps up his conversation and turns to see her standing, looking at him.

NICOLE

Excuse me. I'm sorry to bother you but I can't seem to find my friends anywhere and they are my ride back to Boston.

CHRISTOPHER

(cordially)

Oh. I'm sorry to hear that. It's no problem giving you a lift back.

NICOLE

It isn't?

CHRISTOPHER

Not at all.

NICOLE

(relieved)

Oh thank you so much. Are you ready?

CHRISTOPHER

I'm ready.

NICOLE
Great. Let's go.

They start to walk side by side.

CHRISTOPHER
(offers his hand)
I'm Christopher, by the way.

NICOLE
Nicole.

They shake hands and continue to walk toward the exit.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BOSTON GLOBE - NEWS FLOOR - DAY

Christopher types at his computer and looks over some handwritten notes.

CUT TO:

INT. BOSTON SMALL VENUE - NIGHT (PAST)

Christopher sits at the mini-bar and listens to the band performing. After a few moments, Nicole walks up to where he is and kisses him on the cheek.

NICOLE
Sorry I'm late.

CHRISTOPHER
That's alright. Do you want anything?

NICOLE
Not right now. Thanks.

She embraces her from behind. She places her hands upon his. Both close their eyes to the music.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BOSTON GLOBE - NEWS FLOOR - DAY

Christopher rubs his eyes and gets up from his desk. He walks to the water cooler.

CUT TO:

INT. NICOLE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT (PAST)

Christopher and Nicole are in bed together. They embrace and caress each other as ambient music plays in the background.

NICOLE
(in a whisper)
Oh Chris. I love you so much.

CHRISTOPHER
(softly)
I love you Nicole, . . .
(after a deep kiss)
. . . So madly . . .
(after another one)
. . . And so truly.

Nicole looks at him as if she is about to cry.

NICOLE
Oh Chris.

She pulls him very close and grabs onto him very tightly.

CHRISTOPHER
Oh Nicole.

NICOLE
You're so good to me.
(looks at him)
You're the best thing that's ever
happened to me.

She kisses him very passionately and touches all over his body.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BOSTON GLOBE - NEWS FLOOR - DAY

Christopher suddenly exits his reverie by the vibration of his personal phone. He checks the phone and answers.

CHRISTOPHER
Hey Sarah.

SARAH (V.O.)
Hey there. I got your message from last night. I would have returned your call sooner but I got back late.

CHRISTOPHER
That's all right. Better late than
never I guess.

SARAH (V.O.)
Yeah. So. Do you want to meet for
lunch today?

CHRISTOPHER
Yes please.

SARAH (V.O.)
Alright. Do you want to meet at
1:30?

CHRISTOPHER
That's fine by me.

SARAH (V.O.)
Alright. See you then.

CHRISTOPHER
See you. And thanks.

SARAH (V.O.)
Don't mention it. Bye.

CHRISTOPHER
Bye.

He ends the call and puts his phone away. He then returns to his typing when he hears JACK talking loudly from a distance. His face recoils in dread as Jack approaches his desk.

JACK
Hey! Chris! My boy! My man!
What's happenin'?

CHRISTOPHER
Not much Jack.

Jack wanders close to Christopher and sits beside him. After a while, Jack notices Christopher's attitude.

JACK
So what's the serious face for?
You look like your cat or your dog
or whatever just got run over.

CHRISTOPHER
I'm actually working here. You
know? The whole point of being
here?

JACK

Come on Chris. All work and no play and all that.

(leans over)

You know most people really start working on Tuesday instead of Monday.

Jack laughs uproariously at his own joke while Christopher continues his efforts to ignore him.

CHRISTOPHER

Look. You may not be working but I am. In fact I like to work. And I hate to be the one spoiling your fun here with you watching me work.

JACK

Hey man, that's cool. Just go back to work. Be the no-fun critic. That's what you are.

CHRISTOPHER

(sarcastically)

Yes, Jack. That's exactly what I am.

JACK

Well then, catch ya later. Don't work too hard.

Jack leaves happily. Christopher types and then turns to see Jack still socializing in the distance.

CHRISTOPHER

(sotto voce)

All work and no play, huh? No work and all play makes Jack nothing but a dumbass.

Christopher continues typing.

EXT. STREET CAFE - DAY

SARAH is already seated at an outdoor table with a glass of water. She looks up to see Christopher approaching the cafe.

SARAH

(waves at him)

Hey there.

CHRISTOPHER
(checks his watch)
I'm not late am I?

SARAH
No, I'm just early.

CHRISTOPHER
OK.

He takes a seat across from her.

SARAH
So I take it you want to talk about
Sarah today.

CHRISTOPHER
How could you have guessed?

SARAH
It's been on your mind for quite
some time.

CHRISTOPHER
I'm that obvious right?

SARAH
Apparently so. At least you're
consistent. And honest.

CHRISTOPHER
Thanks for the appraisal.

SARAH
That's what I'm here for.

He receives a glass of water as well and signals the WAITRESS
to give him a few minutes.

SARAH (CONT'D)
So it's over now?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah.

SARAH
Don't get hung up over it. I'm
sure she was a nice girl and I'm
sure you really cared about her
like you tend to do with your
others. But she's not worth it.

CHRISTOPHER
How do you know?

SARAH

To be frank, she rubbed me the wrong way. It's that whole "not so sure what I'm going to do now after college" aura she gave. And I think with you and your committed aspirations, you don't want that kind of uncertainty in the same room.

CHRISTOPHER

Maybe I could have helped.

SARAH

Noble gesture. But I think with her, it would have been like giving a pig singing lessons.

CHRISTOPHER

You don't know that.

SARAH

You're right. I don't. But do you want to take the time and effort to prove me wrong? I would just err on the side of caution. That's all.

CHRISTOPHER

Maybe.

The waitress returns and they give their orders.

SARAH

Furthermore, I don't think you initiated and maintained this relationship for noble reasons.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh? What makes you think that?

SARAH

I just had this feeling you dating her was less about her and more about reliving past glories. Real or imagined. Or perhaps both.

CHRISTOPHER

How could you know that?

SARAH

Just a feeling. But plausible from what I know about you.

(interrupts Christopher)

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)
 And don't you dare say I don't know
 you. Trust me. I know. And in
 that Biblical sense too.

Christopher daydreams.

CUT TO:

INT. BACKYARD TENT - NIGHT (PAST)

Christopher and Sarah as teenagers are in the tent, making
 love under a full moon and clear night.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET CAFE - DAY

Christopher still muses on the past and breaks out of it when
 the waitress hands them their meals.

CHRISTOPHER
 (clears his throat)
 Yeah.

SARAH
 (playfully teasing)
 So. Was it good for you?

CHRISTOPHER
 (embarrassed)
 Sorry.

SARAH
 Don't worry about it.

CHRISTOPHER
 (sighs)
 I'm an asshole.

SARAH
 No you're not. You just have your
 moments. Hell we all do.

CHRISTOPHER
 But I must be awful.

SARAH
 No. You're not. Trust me on this.

CHRISTOPHER
 Really?

SARAH

(laughs)

Yes you mopey goof. You're a nice guy in spite of yourself sometimes. And remember, I am very selective about with whom I spend my nights. Especially the prom.

CHRISTOPHER

That's true.

(a beat)

But why just that one night?

SARAH

I think that night was just for us. And I'm sorry if you ever thought it could have been more. I didn't want to hurt you nor lead you the wrong way. But for me, I think greater things lay ahead for the both of us.

CHRISTOPHER

I guess.

He gestures his ring finger and she looks down at the engagement ring on her left hand.

SARAH

Look Chris. I know you are in a low right now. But I really think things will work out for you too. I really do. And please accept it.

CHRISTOPHER

I do. I'm sorry.

SARAH

It's alright really. And if it helps, I don't regret that night at all. And I hope you don't either.

CHRISTOPHER

I don't.

SARAH

Good.

They resume eating their lunch.

INT. NEWBURY COMICS BOSTON - DAY

Christopher browses the vinyl record stacks. At a certain moment, he looks around the store and a woman's back catches his eye. He looks at her for a few moments. ELENA turns to the side and he sees her profile. He looks as if he recognizes her but does not really know. She turns around and walks away from his view. He looks out and then resumes flipping through the records.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BOSTON GLOBE - NEWS FLOOR - DAY

Christopher types at his computer. Jack comes up behind him surprisingly.

JACK
Hey man! How's it going?

Christopher continues to type.

JACK (CONT'D)
Still have your nose to the old
grindstone eh?

He continues to type.

JACK (CONT'D)
Man I can't see how you do it
sometimes. Just sitting there and
typing away for hours on end.

He continues to type.

JACK (CONT'D)
I mean that's gotta kill your eyes.
And wear you out at the end of the
day.

He stops typing and turns to face Jack. He shrugs his shoulders while giving a slight smile and turns around to resume his typing.

JACK (CONT'D)
(close to his ear)
And I bet doing this ruins your
sense of fun.

Christopher stops typing, slams his hands on the desk and stands up to confront Jack.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh for fuck's sake, Jack! Have you ever considered for a single moment what I'm doing is fun for me?

JACK

You're kidding right? Trashing this movie. Pissing on that album. How can it be fun? It's probably the most shit thing you can do.

CHRISTOPHER

That's not what I do. I write music and film reviews. And yes I like certain things but I also try to make it clear whenever I review something. This is not like covering sports. Or whatever you are suppose to be doing. And besides, I'm going through shit right now. And I hope that trashing movies and pissing on albums - as you so eloquently put it - will give me some high that's better than what I'm currently feeling right now.

He grabs his coffee mug and leaves his desk. Jack soon follows him.

INT. THE BOSTON GLOBE - HALLWAY - DAY

Jack catches up to Christopher and stops him.

JACK

Hey man. What's going on? What shit are you going through right now?

CHRISTOPHER

Nothing that concerns you.

JACK

Come on, man. Meet me halfway or something. Is it girl trouble?

CHRISTOPHER

Not that it's any of your business but yes.

Christopher leaves. Jack looks at him leaving.

JACK
(aloud to himself)
Wow. Chris with a girl. Who would
have known?

INT. THE BOSTON GLOBE - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Christopher cleans his coffee mug as Jack enters the room.

JACK
So what kind of trouble? Got into
a fight or something?

Christopher starts to dry the inside of it and lets out a
disgruntled sigh.

CHRISTOPHER
I don't want to discuss this.
Especially with you.

JACK
What? Did you forget her birthday?
Anniversary?

Christopher grabs some flavored cream and artificial sugar
packets to pour inside his mug.

JACK (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Is she not satisfied with your bed
performance?

CHRISTOPHER
(fervently at the wall)
No.

Christopher walks with the mug toward the coffee dispenser.
Jack still looks at him.

JACK
She dumped you. Didn't she?

CHRISTOPHER
Yes Jack. She broke up with me.
(sarcastically)
Congratulations you brilliant
detective you.

Christopher looks at the dispenser pouring coffee. Jack
ponders a moment and then snaps his fingers.

JACK

That's it! I've got it! You should come with me tonight to the club. It'll be great. I would have asked before in the past but I didn't know if you'd be into it.

CHRISTOPHER

Well, your past instincts were and are right. I'm not into it. And certainly not tonight.

Christopher takes the mug full of coffee, takes a sip and leaves the room.

JACK

(loudly)

Oh come on Chris.

Jack leaves the room.

INT. THE BOSTON GLOBE - HALLWAY - DAY

Jack walks up to Christopher, who is still walking with his mug.

JACK

Chris, trust me. You're going to love it. It'll be good for ya.

CHRISTOPHER

No, Jack. It will not be good for me.

They leave the hallway and enter back onto the news floor.

INT. THE BOSTON GLOBE - NEWS FLOOR - DAY

Christopher walks steadfastly back to his desk and Jack follows behind him.

JACK

Why not? Is it because of her? Because if it is, you have to forget about her.

CHRISTOPHER

That's not it.

JACK

Or is it because you suddenly don't like women anymore?

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

Which is cool if you don't because it leaves more for me. But just know I can't help you out in that department.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm really just not interested. And at this point, very little interests me. This probably includes breathing.

JACK

Man you're such a downer. This is not healthy for you. Come with me. I promise it'll be fun.

CHRISTOPHER

No.

JACK

Well you're no fun. Just go with me. It'll be great.

CHRISTOPHER

No. It won't.

JACK

Please Chris. Do this for me.

Jack continues sending his invitation and Christopher continues rejecting it. Suddenly Christopher erupts in anger.

CHRISTOPHER

Alright already! Jesus Christ, will you just shut up about it?

JACK

OK, OK. Man you got a temper. Maybe you should lay off the coffee or something.

CHRISTOPHER

Well maybe you should get back to work or something. And leave me alone!

JACK

Fine. Be that way. But I'm telling you.

(leans to him - quietly)
When you get laid tonight, you'll thank me in the morning.

Jack leaves. Christopher sighs, drinks his coffee and resumes typing.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Christopher, already showered and dressed in his best club attire, looks at himself in the bathroom mirror, making his final preparations for the night. He has music playing in the background.

CHRISTOPHER

(sotto voce)

So I'm going out to paint the town red as it were. Never thought it would happen. Much less with Jack involved.

(after a sigh)

I have a terrible feeling about tonight. I don't think it'll be what Jack thinks it could be. But then again, maybe tonight is my night. Maybe I will end up thanking Jack in the morning.

(turns off the music)

And maybe tonight is when hell will actually freeze over the Boston skyline in late spring.

He leaves the apartment and locks the door behind him.

EXT. THE NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Christopher waits outside for Jack. After a few moments, Jack approaches Christopher.

JACK

(exultantly)

Hey! My man! You look deadly. Fuckin' A.

CHRISTOPHER

(meekly)

Thanks.

Jack takes Christopher and leads him to the door.

INT. THE NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Jack leads Christopher inside the club. Christopher looks around in general and notices the music while Jack looks around for familiar faces.

JACK
(to Christopher)
Here. Let me show you around.

CHRISTOPHER
Look Jack. I appreciate the offer.
But I think I'm better on my own.

JACK
Are you sure? 'Cos I know a few
people and maybe I could

CHRISTOPHER
That's OK. Really. Just go have
fun.

JACK
Alright man. Catch ya later.

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah.

Jack leaves. Christopher stands and observes.

INT. THE NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Christopher stands at the edge of the floor with a drink in
his hand. He approaches WOMAN 1 standing alone.

CHRISTOPHER
Hi there.

She leaves without acknowledging or answering him. He looks
at her leave, a bit discouraged, and takes a drink.

INT. THE NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Christopher looks around the club with another drink in hand.
He almost bumps into WOMAN 2 but stops himself in time.

WOMAN 2
Oh I'm so sorry.

CHRISTOPHER
That's alright. Nothing happened.

WOMAN 2
(smiles)
OK.

CHRISTOPHER
Do you want to dance?

She leaves as he asks the question. He looks on and feels more discouraged.

INT. THE NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Christopher has another drink and sees WOMAN 3 and WOMAN 4 walking. He walks up to them confidently.

CHRISTOPHER
Evening ladies.

WOMAN 3
Evening.

CHRISTOPHER
How are you?

WOMAN 4
Fine, thanks.

WOMAN 3
Do I know you?

CHRISTOPHER
Don't believe so.
(offers his hand)
I'm Christopher.

WOMAN 3
Hey, listen. I see my friends over there. But maybe we can catch each other later?

CHRISTOPHER
Oh. OK.

WOMAN 4
Nice meeting you Peter.

CHRISTOPHER
It's Christopher.

Both of them start to walk away.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Wait! I didn't catch
(a beat; sotto voce)
Shit.

He takes a drink and walks off the floor.

INT. THE NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Christopher sits at the bar, very forlorn and inebriated.

CHRISTOPHER
(shouts - signals)
Excuse me?

The BARTENDER walks over to him.

BARTENDER
Another one?

CHRISTOPHER
(takes out his card)
No. Close the tab.

BARTENDER
No more rounds for yourself and
others tonight eh?

WOMAN 5 and her BOYFRIEND walk behind him. He comes up to Christopher.

BOYFRIEND
Thanks again. You're the best.

WOMAN 5
(embarrassed)
Come on. Please.

They leave and Christopher looks on before he turns back to look at the bartender.

BARTENDER
(takes the card)
I'll close it.

The bartender leaves and Christopher looks around the club.

CHRISTOPHER
This is so stupid. I knew it
wasn't going to work.

The bartender returns with the receipt, his card and a pen. Christopher signs it and leaves it on the counter. He puts the card away and finishes whatever drink remains.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Fuck all this. I'm gone.

He gets up too suddenly and is thrown off balance. He catches himself for a moment, takes the card and leaves.

INT. THE NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Christopher walks through the floor and stops for a moment. He sees the first woman and starts to walk toward her. He walks too fast and becomes nauseous. He clutches his stomach but then walks more confidently. He is calm when he stands by her.

CHRISTOPHER

Hey there.

Suddenly he feels a sharp pain in his stomach and then vomits in front of her.

WOMAN 1

Ah! What the fuck?

She slaps him hard and storms away. Christopher, shocked by his actions, leaves the nightclub quickly.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Christopher unlocks the door, turns on the light, closes the door and locks it. He walks toward the couch, muttering to himself. He sits down, very angry and very upset. After a few moments, he feels another sharp pain and rushes to the bathroom to vomit. He returns to the couch and collapses in exhaustion.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. PARK STREET STATION - DAY

Christopher leaves the Green Line trolley and heads toward the Red Line. As he heads down the stairs, Elena walks up the stairs opposite of him. He notices her and lingers as she walks toward the trolleys. He turns back, ponders for a moment and resumes down the stairs.

INT. THE BOSTON GLOBE - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Christopher sits near the edge of the counter and drinks his coffee. Jack enters the room and sees Christopher.

JACK

Hey Chris! What happened last night?

CHRISTOPHER

I don't want to talk about it.

JACK

Was it that bad? Come on man.
Don't take it so hard.

CHRISTOPHER

Look. I'm pissed off right now.
At a lot of things. And especially
at you. So if you want to make it
worse, just keep right on talking.

JACK

Man, I'm sorry it didn't work out.
But I think if you weren't such a
serious stiff all the time, maybe
you'd get some.

CHRISTOPHER

You think that's my great plight?
Me not "getting some"? Hasn't it
ever occur to you that life is more
than just leisure fucking?

JACK

I'm just trying to help you out
man. I could tell you were all
depressed and shit and I thought
taking you out last night would
help you feel better.

CHRISTOPHER

Well, Genius Fuck, I didn't feel
better. In fact it made me feel
worse. So just do me a favor and
leave me the fuck alone.

JACK

OK man. Jesus you're testy. I can
see why that bitch of yours left
your sorry ass.

Christopher walks up to him indignantly and pushes him back
very hard. Jack throws a square punch, knocking him out
cold.

CUT TO: BLACK

INT. THE BOSTON GLOBE - BREAK ROOM - DAY

JAMES peers over a fallen Christopher, urging him to wake.
He finally does and checks where Jack punched for any blood,
saliva or bruises.

JAMES
Break's over in the break room.
(smiles)
And that was some break you had.

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah. Some break.

JAMES
You OK? I know it's a stupid
question to ask and all that but I
have to you know.

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah. I'll be fine.

Christopher picks himself up.

JAMES
Listen. I know about what happened
in here. And don't apologize
either. I don't blame you. In
fact I've wanted to do that myself.
You just happened to beat me to the
punch.
(a beat)
In a matter of speaking.

CHRISTOPHER
(laughs)
Yeah. Though I hope it's better
for you than it was for me.

JAMES
Thanks.

CHRISTOPHER
Listen. Can you and I talk later?

JAMES
Absolutely. Over lunch?

CHRISTOPHER
Sounds great.

JAMES
(looks at his watch)
It may be early but do you want to
go now?

CHRISTOPHER
Sure.

JAMES
Splendid. Let's go then.

They leave the break room.

INT. COFFEESHOP CAFE - DAY

James and Christopher enter and converse as they wait in line to order.

JAMES
You know. I can't help but be amused with this American obsession with making every square yard have something to do with coffee.

CHRISTOPHER
What can I say? It's the personal gas station.

JAMES
I guess you can call it that. Granted it's more an urban trait. But I wouldn't be surprised if it gets to where even in suburban areas, every other back lawn will have its own coffee bar, complete with teenage barista.

CHRISTOPHER
Also known as their spoiled daughter.

JAMES
Or their neighbor's. Think of the potential extramarital scandal.

CHRISTOPHER
You mean Desperate Daughters?

JAMES
(laughs aloud)
See. I knew you still have some humor in you somewhere.

CHRISTOPHER
Thanks.

They both approach the counter and place their order. James pays for both of them. They find a table nearby to converse.

JAMES

So Christopher. What do you want to talk about?

CHRISTOPHER

I've just been down lately. Nicole and I broke up over the weekend.

JAMES

Oh. I'm sorry to hear that.

CHRISTOPHER

Thanks. I'm trying to get over it but I still have trouble figuring out exactly what happened. It was as if she loved me one moment and then she hates me the next. It's strange.

JAMES

Well people do indeed change.

CHRISTOPHER

But don't they also remain the same?

JAMES

True. But still there are changes.

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah. Well, I know one change with her was she was moving out when I last saw her.

JAMES

Where did she live?

CHRISTOPHER

Over in Waltham. She used to live in a duplex but it didn't work out for her. Something about roommates moving out and not being able to bring someone in to help pay the rent.

JAMES

Did she consider you?

CHRISTOPHER

She did. But compared to where I live now, it's not an ideal location.

JAMES

So why not have her move in with you?

CHRISTOPHER

She did consider it but then she changed her mind.

JAMES

Huh. I would have imagined Brookline being more attractive than Waltham. Unless she had good reasons for it. Do you know where she is now?

CHRISTOPHER

With her parents in Waltham.

JAMES

(ponders a moment)

You know.

(a beat)

I think that was part of your problem. She sounds like a Mum and Dad girl to me.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm not going to argue with you there.

JAMES

You really don't want that lingering around you. Perpetual tension and all of that. For an example, what if all four of you have different ideas about how to live one's life.

CHRISTOPHER

That reminds me of another change that happened. Those films I want to make. She was excited about them when we started dating. But recently, she wasn't interested in them. In fact, she would dismiss them as far-fetched and stupid.

JAMES

You see. You don't need that kind of shag-off attitude.

CHRISTOPHER

But then how can she go from one mode to the other?

(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

I mean shouldn't there at least be some consistency to these things?

JAMES

Perhaps. But then again, people are also fickle and temperamental. Especially when choices are involved. I would imagine someone with your love of music, film and literature would understand that.

CHRISTOPHER

I guess.

JAMES

Look. I'll be blunt here. And I do apologize for this. Knowing very little about her, I think she was in the end a bad match for you. If for no other reason, she was a distraction from what you can do and from what you want to do.

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah. You're right.

(a beat)

So what should I do now?

JAMES

I really think you should let her go. Move on with your life. You have many other worthwhile pursuits.

CHRISTOPHER

But it's hard to move on.

JAMES

It's never easy. And yes I'm fully aware this breakup only just happened to you. I'm not expecting some instant turn-around here.

CHRISTOPHER

Thanks.

JAMES

Having said that, perhaps I can help turn things around for you.

CHRISTOPHER

How so?

JAMES

For starters, I have some great news. You've been promoted.

CHRISTOPHER

Really?

JAMES

Yeah. I'm promoted as well and I put in a good word for you. And it's not because we are friends or anything like that.

(smiles)

In fact I hate you most days.

CHRISTOPHER

(smiles)

Thanks.

JAMES

Just being honest here. But seriously, you are a good man and a good writer. You earned it. Four years on the job.

CHRISTOPHER

Wow. That long.

JAMES

I know. At any rate, I have a new office and you are going to have mine.

CHRISTOPHER

Nice.

JAMES

And also take the rest of the day off. On the house.

CHRISTOPHER

Are you sure?

JAMES

Why not? Your work is done ahead of schedule. And you could use the break.

CHRISTOPHER

Thanks.

JAMES

Not a problem.

(gets up)

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

Well I got to head back to the office. Things to do and a paper to help run.

CHRISTOPHER

Never a dull day.

JAMES

Though I have to ask. Why exactly did you attack pretty boy back there?

CHRISTOPHER

Oh Jackov? For giving me perhaps the worst night of my life.

JAMES

Do I want to know?

CHRISTOPHER

Best not.

JAMES

Well, may today fare better for you.

CHRISTOPHER

Thanks.

JAMES

See you tomorrow.

CHRISTOPHER

See you.

James leaves the cafe and Christopher sits back and finishes whatever lunch remains.

INT. BARNES & NOBLE PRUDENTIAL CENTER - DVD - DAY

Christopher looks through the DVD shelves. He has in his hand The Double Life of Veronique. He turns to see Elena at another section from where he is. He casually approaches her. She looks through the titles, at first unaware of him but then turns to see him.

ELENA

I'm sorry. Am I in your way?

CHRISTOPHER

Oh no. Not at all.

She notices the DVD he is holding as he rummages through the shelves.

ELENA
Is that any good?

CHRISTOPHER
Oh this? Yeah.

ELENA
What is it about?

CHRISTOPHER
Oh boy.

ELENA
It's one of those I'd take it?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah. It is.

ELENA
Don't worry about it. The good ones are very often hard to describe succinctly and give it justice. Like Proust.

CHRISTOPHER
You read Proust?

ELENA
Yeah. Or tried to at least.

CHRISTOPHER
For class?

ELENA
Yup.

CHRISTOPHER
So was literature your concentration then?

ELENA
Yes. And also psychology.

CHRISTOPHER
Where was this?

ELENA
At BU.

CHRISTOPHER
Ah. So what are you doing now?

ELENA
I'm at Harvard now. Studying
psychology.

CHRISTOPHER
Nice.

ELENA
Yeah. Yourself?

CHRISTOPHER
I write for The Globe. Reviewing
music and film.

ELENA
Aren't you Christopher Waterson?

CHRISTOPHER
Yes I am. You know me?

ELENA
Yeah. I really enjoy reading your
reviews.

CHRISTOPHER
Thank you. It's good to hear my
stuff is read. And you are?

ELENA
Elena. Elena O'Keefe.

CHRISTOPHER
Nice to meet you.

They shake hands.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
So what brings you out here?

ELENA
Just distracting myself. Putting
off a paper I need to finish. Bad
girl I know.

CHRISTOPHER
You're not bad. As far as I can
tell.

ELENA
Thank you.
(a beat)
And yourself?

CHRISTOPHER
Oh just perusing here.

ELENA
Is there anything you can recommend
for me?

CHRISTOPHER
Oh I'm sure I can think of
something. Oh! I remember what
else I wanted to get.

Christopher reaches out for The Spirit of the Beehive.

ELENA
Let me see.
(looks at his choice)
Another one that's hard to
describe?

CHRISTOPHER
Unfortunately yes.

ELENA
You never go easy on yourself do
you?

CHRISTOPHER
Nope. It always seems to be uphill
for me.

ELENA
I hope it's not all uphill for you.

CHRISTOPHER
Thank you for the concern.

They laugh and smile together.

ELENA
So you're going to watch those
later tonight?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah. I'm actually going to go
home right now and watch them.

ELENA
Sounds like you know how to have
fun.

CHRISTOPHER
(smiles)
To each his own.
(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
(looks at the DVDs)
It was nice talking with you.

ELENA
Likewise.

He walks over to the counter.

ELENA (CONT'D)
Wait.

He turns around to see her.

ELENA (CONT'D)
Do you want to come over to my
place instead?

CHRISTOPHER
Are you sure?

ELENA
Absolutely. After all, that counts
as a distraction, right?

CHRISTOPHER
But don't you have your paper to
finish?

ELENA
Don't worry about it. I'll get it
done. Eventually.

CHRISTOPHER
OK then. Just let me pay for
these.

ELENA
That's funny. I thought you were
going to steal them.

CHRISTOPHER
Amusing thought, but no. Besides I
don't think I could pull it off.

They smile as they walk over to the cashier.

INT. ELENA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Elena unlocks the door and they enter her apartment.
Christopher walks over to the living room and prepares the
DVD for viewing. She looks around in the kitchen.

ELENA
Do you want anything?

CHRISTOPHER
Nothing at the moment.

ELENA
I'm going to make myself some
coffee. It won't take long.

CHRISTOPHER
OK.

ELENA (O.S.)
Which one are we going to watch
first?

CHRISTOPHER
Is The Spirit of the Beehive
alright?

ELENA (O.S.)
What's that one again?

CHRISTOPHER
The one about the kid in 1940s
Spain.

ELENA
(arrives with her coffee)
Oh right. Yeah, that's alright.

He looks on and waits until she is comfortable. He then starts the DVD and sits back on the couch. She turns off the lights and sits on the couch next to him with her coffee mug in her hands. The title music plays as they watch.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ELENA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Christopher and Elena watch the end, holding hands. When the film stops, they turn to look at each other.

CHRISTOPHER
So what do you think?

ELENA
I really liked it.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm glad. You're never sure with a film like this one how someone will react.

ELENA

Yeah.

She gets up to turn on the lights and returns to the couch. They turn slightly to face each other.

CHRISTOPHER

Was there anything that struck you in particular?

ELENA

I felt like this was really a film made from a child's point of view.

CHRISTOPHER

How so? I mean you're right since it is more or less Ana's story. But your take on it.

ELENA

It was just in the way scenes played out. A child will not understand what is happening. Like when she looks at her parents' pictures in an old photo album and does not understand the context. It's just something that's there and you are not exactly sure what it is.

CHRISTOPHER

It makes sense.

ELENA

Furthermore, I can see how what happened with Ana - her quest to understand and eventually encounter "Frankenstein" - will set the stage for the rest of her life. Wasn't she six in this?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes.

ELENA

Those years, and that year in particular, are so crucial for what the rest of your life will be.

CHRISTOPHER
The child is the father of the man.

ELENA
Exactly.
(a beat)
Have you seen this before?

CHRISTOPHER
I rented it via Netflix. It looked interesting based on the description. And I had a feeling it would be something like Andrei Tarkovsky doing To Kill a Mockingbird.

ELENA
Interesting comparison. Please explain.

CHRISTOPHER
If both book and film look at growing up and, what you observed, those crucial years in a general way, this one dares to enter into spiritual realms. Much like Tarkovsky's films.

ELENA
Didn't he make Solaris?

CHRISTOPHER
Yes he did.

ELENA
Ah. Nice to know I'm not a total ignoramus when it comes to film.

CHRISTOPHER
You are not.

ELENA
You think so?

CHRISTOPHER
No.

ELENA
So you're not going to condemn me for having such sparse knowledge of the cinema?

CHRISTOPHER
Why should I do that to you?

ELENA

Don't know. I thought you are someone who enjoys vanquishing philistines?

CHRISTOPHER

Because I'm a critic?

ELENA

Yeah.

CHRISTOPHER

You're not a philistine. First off, you're too smart and beautiful to be that.

ELENA

Thank you. I'm quite flattered.

CHRISTOPHER

Furthermore, I think of discovering films to be more a journey of exploration rather than some pursuit of riches. You discover films; you don't horde them. For me, I'm still discovering them and I like that.

ELENA

I like that too. And I'm glad I can journey with you.

CHRISTOPHER

And I'm glad to have a first mate as it were.

They exchange smiles.

ELENA

Are you hungry?

CHRISTOPHER

(looks at watch)

A bit.

ELENA

I'll check to see what I have. I may have to go to the store.

CHRISTOPHER

Whatever is fine. I'm not too picky.

ELENA
Alright then.

She walks back to the kitchen. He gets up and puts the DVD back in its slipcase.

CHRISTOPHER
Do you need any help?

ELENA (O.S.)
Not at the moment.

CHRISTOPHER
OK.

ELENA (O.S.)
Ugh.

CHRISTOPHER
What?

ELENA
(returns)
I was going to make pasta and have wine to go with it. But I don't have any wine.

CHRISTOPHER
Cooking or drinking?

ELENA
What do you think?

CHRISTOPHER
Well, you don't know. After all, I would imagine drinking cooking wine will give it the right kick.

ELENA
(laughs)
Yeah. Kicking up bile.

CHRISTOPHER
True. But you can't argue with the aftertaste.

ELENA
It's not at all worth it.

CHRISTOPHER
Experience?

ELENA
(smiles)
No.

CHRISTOPHER
(shrugs his shoulders)
Had to ask.

ELENA
So you want drinking wine?

CHRISTOPHER
Sounds good. And to make up for
the bad joke, I'll go out and get
it for us.

ELENA
It wasn't that bad of a joke. And
are you sure?

CHRISTOPHER
I offered. So I'll go.

ELENA
OK.

CHRISTOPHER
Anything in particular?

ELENA
No. Just something that will work
with pasta.

CHRISTOPHER
Anything you don't want?

ELENA
Nope.

CHRISTOPHER
Alright then.
(gets his coat)
And still the drinking variety?

ELENA
Quiet you!

Both smile and laugh as he exits the apartment.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ELENA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Christopher walks into the apartment with the bottle of wine. Elena comes out of the kitchen.

ELENA
Hey, you got the wine.
(looks at the bottle)
And it's not cooking wine. Good
boy.

CHRISTOPHER
My aren't we skeptical regarding my
own abilities.

ELENA
Until you can prove it, I can have
my doubts.

CHRISTOPHER
What are you trying to be? A
lawyer?

She grins and returns into the kitchen to drain the pasta. He walks back to the living room with the wine bottle and prepares the next DVD.

ELENA (O.S.)
So we are watching the other one
you got?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah.

ELENA (O.S.)
And you said it's a little easier
to describe than the other one.

CHRISTOPHER
A bit. But not by much.

ELENA (O.S.)
Could you get everything else while
I get the pasta?

CHRISTOPHER
Sure.

He walks to the kitchen to grab the bottle opener, two wine glasses, two plates, two forks and some napkins. They both walk out of the kitchen and toward the living room. They sit back on the couch.

ELENA
Have you seen this before?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah I have. Back in college.

He pours the wine as she serves the pasta.

ELENA
You are not going to spoil it for me are you?

CHRISTOPHER
Unless you want me to.

ELENA
Ah, no.

CHRISTOPHER
(smiles)
OK then.

He starts the DVD and starts to eat. Elena eats as she looks at him.

ELENA
Comfortable?

CHRISTOPHER
Oh yeah.

ELENA
(raises glass in a toast)
To healthy distractions.

CHRISTOPHER
(toasts her glass)
Chin-chin.

The film starts and both of them eat and drink.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ELENA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The film approaches its end. Christopher watches with his right arm embracing a cuddling Elena, who has her right arm draped across his chest. He stops the DVD at the end and she awakes to the sudden silence.

ELENA
(half-awake)
How long was I asleep?

CHRISTOPHER
About twenty minutes. Maybe half-an-hour.

ELENA
Oh I'm sorry.

CHRISTOPHER
That's quite alright. You've had quite a day of film watching.

ELENA
I guess so.

CHRISTOPHER
Shall I leave it with you to revisit it at your leisure?

ELENA
You don't mind?

CHRISTOPHER
Not at all.

ELENA
Thanks.

CHRISTOPHER
Thank you.
(deep sigh)
Actually I realize I can't thank you enough. I feel like a moocher. Coming here unexpectedly. Showing off movies. Eating your food. I feel like an intruder.

ELENA
You shouldn't. You're not a moocher. You did pay for the wine in addition to the entertainment. And you're not an intruder either. Remember I invited you over here. And yes there was an ulterior motive on my part, which was to get me out of doing school work for a while.

CHRISTOPHER
(laughs)
Good excuse as any.

ELENA
But seriously. I really had a good time today.

CHRISTOPHER

Me too.

ELENA

Plus I can say I entertained a critic from The Globe at my place.

CHRISTOPHER

Very true.

ELENA

Smart. Funny. Considerate. Cute.
A winning combination.

She kisses him on the lips quickly. He looks surprised by this spontaneous gesture.

CHRISTOPHER

Thank you.

(a beat)

You know it takes one to notice one.

ELENA

Mhmmm.

They look at each other and then they kiss slowly.

CHRISTOPHER

I take it this means we are going to see each other again.

ELENA

Of course. After all, I'm holding your DVD hostage.

They walk toward the door.

CHRISTOPHER

Right. But you know it's all voluntary.

ELENA

Yes. But it's much more fun if it's involuntary.

CHRISTOPHER

Ooh. Like to play rough, eh?

ELENA

Maybe.

(soft kiss)

But not tonight.

CHRISTOPHER
Another night?

ELENA
Another night.

CHRISTOPHER
Until then, . . .
(slow kiss)
. . . Have a good night.

ELENA
You too.

He leaves and she closes the door.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Christopher enters his apartment. He plays a song from his sound system and lies down on the couch with a smile. After a few moments, he notices his phone vibrating and reads a text message from Elena. He smiles and responds to the message. He puts the phone away and lies back happily.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. COMMONWEALTH AVENUE PARK - DAY

Christopher walks through the park underneath the bright afternoon sun and amongst the hustle and bustle of traffic. He sees Sarah, who is sitting at a bench and reading a book, and walks toward her.

CHRISTOPHER
Hello.

SARAH
(looks up)
Oh hey. How are you?

CHRISTOPHER
Great.

SARAH
Great. You look happy.

CHRISTOPHER
It's amazing what can happen in a few days.

SARAH
I'll say.

CHRISTOPHER
Do you mind if I sit down?

SARAH
No, not at all. Go ahead.

He sits and she puts the book aside.

SARAH (CONT'D)
So what's her name?

CHRISTOPHER
(laughs)
Do you think that's why I'm happy?
Why do you assume it's a woman?

SARAH
Come on Christopher. You are a
romantic at heart. You do feel
better when you have a woman in
your life. Granted it's not an
absolute necessity for you but I
think you glow more when basking in
the presence of the divine
feminine.

CHRISTOPHER
I'm that obvious?

SARAH
Yes. But don't feel bad about it.
Seriously, I'm happy for you.
Especially considering how quickly
it came.

CHRISTOPHER
Thank you. Not just for the mutual
happiness, but for the other day.

SARAH
Not a problem. I'm glad I was able
to help. Not exactly sure how.

CHRISTOPHER
You listened.

SARAH
Well I'm here for that. No matter
what happens.

CHRISTOPHER
Thanks.

He notices his phone vibrating and checks the number.

SARAH
That's her?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah.

SARAH
I'd better go.
(gets up)
It was nice seeing you again.
Happy nonetheless.

CHRISTOPHER
Thanks. It was nice seeing you
too.

SARAH
Bye.

They wave farewell to each other. She walks away and he answers the phone.

CHRISTOPHER
Hey there.

ELENA (V.O.)
Hey. How are you?

CHRISTOPHER
Great.

ELENA (V.O.)
Where are you?

CHRISTOPHER
Just along Commonwealth. Enjoying
the outdoors.

ELENA (V.O.)
Nice choice. Do you want to enjoy
something with me later?

CHRISTOPHER
But of course darling.

ELENA (V.O.)
So what shall we do?

INT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT

Elena arrives, spots Christopher and approaches his table.

CHRISTOPHER

Hey.

ELENA

Why hello beautiful stranger.

CHRISTOPHER

Wow. Second date and I already get a pet name.

ELENA

You like it?

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah. It beats snookums.

ELENA

Can't really see you as a snookums.

CHRISTOPHER

Good.

ELENA

Unless I wanted to spite you for some reason.

CHRISTOPHER

Thanks for the fair warning.

ELENA

No problem.

Christopher and Elena order drinks.

CHRISTOPHER

So. Is this another distraction from school work?

ELENA

Nope. Celebration. I'm done for the year.

CHRISTOPHER

Excellent. Congratulations.

ELENA

Thank you.

They receive their drinks.

CHRISTOPHER

So why psychology?

ELENA

I find it fascinating. Figuring out why people do what they do. Is it physiological? Neurochemical? Behavioral? Experiential? Maybe even mystical. So many factors at play. And often many of them at once.

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah.

(takes a drink)

I imagine you have access to a very substantial bank to be attending Harvard.

ELENA

Nope, just luck. My maternal great-grandmother passed on a few years ago. She and my mother were very close. She left a very generous portion of the estate to her and consequently to me provided the money is used only for education. I had already completed the university route at that point. So because of that and some other means, I decided to attend Harvard for post-graduate studies.

CHRISTOPHER

Why Harvard?

ELENA

I knew I wanted to continue studying psychology and they have what's considered to be one of the top programs in the country.

CHRISTOPHER

Do you know what aspects of psychology you want to study further?

ELENA

Actually I had this idea that my professors really liked. And I'm going to try to use it for a doctoral dissertation. Or at least the master's thesis. It's building on Freud's index of complexes.

(MORE)

ELENA (CONT'D)

But it's about relationships and roles one plays in it rather than just individual personality. I call them "relational complexes."

CHRISTOPHER

I like that. I like that a lot.

ELENA

Thank you. I like it too. Plus it gives me an excuse to continue studying literature. And even film.

CHRISTOPHER

If there's anything I can do to help, please let me know.

ELENA

Thank you.

They give their dinner orders.

CHRISTOPHER

So you grew up around here?

ELENA

In Salem actually.

CHRISTOPHER

Ah.

ELENA

You know. I've noticed you don't sound like you're from around here at all.

CHRISTOPHER

You're right. Born and raised in Herndon, Virginia. Outside of Washington DC.

ELENA

Ah. A Southerner.

CHRISTOPHER

Sort of. DC complicates things. As they often do.

ELENA

So what made you want to invade the North?

CHRISTOPHER

After graduating from William and Mary, I tried to find work. But it was a frustrating ordeal. Plus I felt I needed to live somewhere where it was not about the federal government. So I thought Boston would be a nice place.

ELENA

Have you been here before?

CHRISTOPHER

Once.

ELENA

Why Boston?

CHRISTOPHER

The one time I went, it just seem right to me. At any rate, I wasn't completely alone. A good longtime friend of mine moved up way ahead of me and was able to transition me into the Boston area. It took some doing but in little time, I was able to get a job with The Globe.

ELENA

Nice. What did you study at William and Mary?

CHRISTOPHER

English.

ELENA

Always a writer.

CHRISTOPHER

In a sense. Writing has always been a good outlet for me. Still is. Working with The Globe, it gave me the chance to talk about film and music, both things I love.

ELENA

You play?

CHRISTOPHER

Nope. Had a few weeks of piano lessons when I was a kid. And a college hall-mate tried to get me into playing guitar.

(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Admittedly I do sing in the shower sometimes but it's probably off-key.

ELENA

Maybe you can amuse me with some singing later.

CHRISTOPHER

(smiles)

Perhaps.

ELENA

Have you thought about working in film? A screenwriter perhaps?

CHRISTOPHER

It's funny you should mention it. That is something I've been thinking about doing for quite some time.

ELENA

Any ideas?

CHRISTOPHER

Well, there's this one idea I've been trying to write for a while. It's about this guy who takes a train to work. One day he notices something unusual. He sees someone he hasn't seen in a long time. He then starts to journey with this long-lost friend. But as the journey goes along, it takes a dark turn and just in the nick of time, he's back on the train, as if he awoke from a dream. But then he interacts with someone else. That starts another journey. Then it stops and we return to the train again. This happens a few times and that's the film.

ELENA

Sounds intriguing. Have you thought about if the character learns something along the way?

CHRISTOPHER

I've thought about it but I'm not exactly sure what.

ELENA

Will you make it clear at some point why these tangential journeys occur?

CHRISTOPHER

I'm not sure. There's a large part of me that wants to keep it a mystery and not explain any of it.

ELENA

Good. I can't stand dumb explanations from people who don't know what they are talking about.

CHRISTOPHER

Unless of course there's a good explanation for it.

ELENA

Right.

(after a beat)

I think I'm a little bias on this idea but I could see this as being psychological in nature.

CHRISTOPHER

That's possible. But that also seems to be a type of cliché. Just dismissing it as "it's all in his head."

ELENA

Yeah I can see your point. But then again, overactive imaginations do exist. Very often prompted by routine commutes on public transits. Hell I would if I had to do that kind of commute a lot.

CHRISTOPHER

Actually I think that's where I got the idea originally.

ELENA

See. Life influences art.

CHRISTOPHER

So it does. So it does.

ELENA

(raises glass for a toast)

To art and its wonderful sources of inspiration.

CHRISTOPHER
(toasts her glass)
Chin-chin.

ELENA
That's the second time I heard you
use that phrase. Where is that
from?

CHRISTOPHER
It's a British bastardization of
Chinese. Someone I knew in college
introduced me to it. I found out
it actually is Chinese. "Please-
please" I think it means. The
British somehow adopted it into
their lexicon for toasting.

ELENA
I did not know that. Neat.

CHRISTOPHER
I like it. It's not something you
hear all too often.
(notices the food)
Ah. Incoming.

Christopher and Elena receive their respective dinners.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT

Christopher and Elena have finished their dinners.

ELENA
Back to your film idea. Have you
started to write the script?

CHRISTOPHER
Not yet. I have an outline done
and several story lines drafted.
But the actual script I haven't
started it yet. Distractions.

ELENA
What kind?

CHRISTOPHER
I'd rather not get into it.

ELENA
I understand. It's not me is it?

CHRISTOPHER

Oh no. Far from it. In fact, I can see you as a source of inspiration. If I may be so bold.

ELENA

That is bold. And flattering. And I'm glad to be of help. I'd like to be. Especially for ideas I like.

CHRISTOPHER

You like it then?

ELENA

Oh yeah. It's certainly different. And I think most people can use something different in their movie viewing.

CHRISTOPHER

So you don't think the idea is too far-fetched?

ELENA

Nope.

CHRISTOPHER

Nor is it far-fetched for me to write it? My first script?

ELENA

(mimics Christopher)

Oh no. Far from it.

They both laugh.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm glad you think so.

ELENA

I do.

She notices an INEBRIATED SINGER trying to sing a song on the stage. Christopher sees him as well.

CHRISTOPHER

I take it you're amused by his singing?

ELENA

Not really. I much rather be amused by you.

CHRISTOPHER

I don't know. I think I need his alcohol content in order to do it.

ELENA

I don't think you need it. Come on. I need to be amused.

CHRISTOPHER

You need to be amused.

ELENA

I insist.

CHRISTOPHER

You insist?

ELENA

(seductively)

Mhmmm.

CHRISTOPHER

(smiles)

Foul temptress.

He gets up and approaches the stage. He makes a request to the STAGE MANAGER, who uses it as an excuse to get him off stage.

STAGE MANAGER

Thank you, thank you. And now we have a new guest. First time here. Let's give a hand to Christopher Waterson.

CHRISTOPHER

Thank you.

The music starts and he looks at the prompter for the lyrics and the cue. He sings the song as if he were actually performing it and not just imitating it. He even adds a slight dance. The crowd notices and moves with it. Elena remains at the table looking at this performance.

At the end of the song, the crowd cheers and applauds loudly. Christopher smiles and waves at the crowd as if he were the actual performer. Elena applauds and cheers loudly.

EXT. ELENA'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Christopher and Elena walk hand-in-hand, smiling at each other. They are only a few blocks from her apartment.

ELENA
I had a great time tonight.

CHRISTOPHER
Me too.

They continue to walk. After a few beats, Elena breaks the silence.

ELENA
May I ask you a question? And you are under no obligation to answer it.

CHRISTOPHER
Of course.

ELENA
Do you really think your idea is far-fetched?

CHRISTOPHER
No. I don't think so.

ELENA
Then why did you ask me earlier if I thought it was?

CHRISTOPHER
Well. Some people do find it far-fetched to make that kind of a movie. And furthermore, that it would be written by someone who hasn't written a screenplay before.

ELENA
(stops)
Do you want to know what I think is far-fetched?

CHRISTOPHER
OK.

ELENA
I think it's far-fetched to let good ideas go to waste. I think it's far-fetched to convince yourself that others won't like it just because it dares to be different from the usual fare. And I really think it's far-fetched to stop yourself short of achieving a dream.

(MORE)

ELENA (CONT'D)

Especially when you have the talent and the conviction to realize it. If you have it - and I believe you do - you shouldn't let anything or anyone stop you from making your dream into reality.

He looks at her for a while. He then kisses her, tenderly and lovingly. He then breaks it and holds her close.

CHRISTOPHER

(whispers)

Thank you.

She breaks the embrace and sees him with a few tears in his eyes.

ELENA

For what?

CHRISTOPHER

I don't know. For loving me I guess.

She smiles as he leans over to kiss her again.

ELENA

I guess you can call it that.

They look lovingly into each other's eyes.

CHRISTOPHER

Good night, Elena.

ELENA

Good night, Christopher.

She walks up to her building.

CHRISTOPHER

I love you.

She turns to look back at him, smiles at his gesture and enters her building. He leaves soon after and heads back to his place.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Christopher lies back on the couch, propped up and writing his script on his laptop. He has music playing and a determined look that breaks into an occasional smile.

INT. THE BOSTON GLOBE - CHRISTOPHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Christopher sits in front of his computer. Music plays in the background at a low volume. His office looks and functions the way he wants it. James walks by the door and knocks to get his attention.

CHRISTOPHER
(looks up, smiles)
Hey James.

JAMES
Hey there. You're looking well.

CHRISTOPHER
Thank you.

JAMES
Working away?

CHRISTOPHER
In more ways than one. I'm working on the script finally.

JAMES
Wonderful. I'm glad you're taking that up again.

CHRISTOPHER
Thanks.

JAMES
I'll leave you to it then.

CHRISTOPHER
Alright.

James begins to leave but then remembers his original reason for being there.

JAMES
Oh yes. Something I was going to give you.

CHRISTOPHER
Oh?

JAMES
You're going to love this.
(reaches in his pocket)
Apparently a big budget production actually wants a critic's take on a film.

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah?

JAMES

Strange things do happen sometime.
(pulls out a screening
pass)
You'll see what I mean.

Christopher gets up to receive it from James and reads it.

CHRISTOPHER

(in shock)
Ah what the hell?

JAMES

Exactly.

CHRISTOPHER

And they want a respectable opinion
of this?

JAMES

Apparently it's suppose to be that
good.

CHRISTOPHER

Boy are they going to be
disappointed in getting something
potentially disrespectful from me.

JAMES

Come now. You're not planning to
be that cruel.

CHRISTOPHER

Maybe not. Maybe.

JAMES

Just don't be vulgar.

CHRISTOPHER

I can't promise that I'll try. But
I'll try to try.

JAMES

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

CHRISTOPHER

There is a plus side to this. You
just gave me a date idea.

JAMES

It's not what's-her-face is it?

CHRISTOPHER

Who?

JAMES

(smiles)

Glad to hear. Enjoy it. If you can.

CHRISTOPHER

Right. Thanks.

James leaves and Christopher sits back at his desk. Not long after, Jack walks by his door.

JACK

Hey man. How it's going?

CHRISTOPHER

(not noticing him)

Fine, thanks.

JACK

Like the new place?

CHRISTOPHER

(looks at Jack)

Yes I do Jack.

(closes the door - smiles)

Yes I do.

Christopher turns up the volume and resumes typing.

INT. AMC BOSTON COMMON 19 - DOWNSTAIRS LOBBY - NIGHT

Christopher and Elena walk through the lobby. He has his advance screening pass and press pass in his hand and she has her arms encircling his. They walk up to the LOBBY USHER who examines his passes.

LOBBY USHER

It will be just a few moments before you are seated.

CHRISTOPHER

Thank you.

LOBBY USHER

(points at Elena)

Partner in crime?

CHRISTOPHER

(looks at Elena - smiles)

Yeah.

LOBBY USHER
Don't you look a bit old for that
kind of thing?

CHRISTOPHER
Let me tell you. You are never too
old for some good old-fashioned PDA
in a theater.

LOBBY USHER
(smiles)
Point taken. Besides I think this
is right for it.

ELENA
Not a fan?

LOBBY USHER
No. And I like the guy who made
it. But this is just . . . it's
just not right for him.

ELENA
That bad.

LOBBY USHER
Yeah.

The lobby usher receives the go-ahead to let the invited
press inside the theater.

LOBBY USHER (CONT'D)
You can go in now.

ELENA
Thanks.

CHRISTOPHER
Thank you.

They walk pass him and up on the escalator.

ELENA
Sounds like he gave you your
review.

CHRISTOPHER
It's certainly a good start of one.

Elena smiles and leans close to him as they ascend up to the
theater.

INT. AMC BOSTON COMMON 19 - THEATER - NIGHT

They walk to the section marked "PRESS ONLY". They find two empty seats directly next to the aisle. Christopher takes the seat one over from the aisle and sets his drink in the cup holder to his left. Elena sits down at the aisle and sets her drink in the cup holder to her right. He lifts the armrest between them and moves in closer to her to put his arm around his waist. She rests her head on his chest.

ELENA

At least we get special seats.

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah for a "special" movie.

ELENA

And by "special" you mean

CHRISTOPHER

Exactly.

After a few moments, the house lights dim and the first preview plays, which consists solely of a single explosion sound, followed by a "COMING THIS FALL" title card.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

(to Elena)

You at least got to admire the brevity of it.

ELENA

True.

The next preview is just the sound of a low rumble and then two explosions in succession, followed by a "COMING SOON" title card.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh kay.

ELENA

Did they even try?

CHRISTOPHER

Nope.

The last preview is just the sound of a low rumble, then a whirring missile and a loud explosion, followed by a "PLAYING RIGHT NOW" title card.

ELENA

I can't even find the words.

CHRISTOPHER
I think this makes a more
interesting article than the movie
we are about to watch.

The logo demonstrating the sound mix plays.

ELENA
I was going to say. I thought it
was another stupid minimalist
trailer.

The film starts its opening titles.

CHRISTOPHER
Oh God.

ELENA
It's just the credits?

CHRISTOPHER
Sorry. Gut reaction.

ELENA
Just don't get anything on me.

He chuckles softly. The film starts proper and they start
making banter at the film at a low volume as not to draw too
much attention.

ELENA (CONT'D)
So why are we here?

CHRISTOPHER
You heard the guy. To make out.

ELENA
Besides that.

CHRISTOPHER
I don't know. To appease the
marketing gods.

ELENA
Is that like offering a virgin as a
sacrifice?

CHRISTOPHER
Something like that.

ELENA
Such savages don't deserve such
tasty treats.

CHRISTOPHER

Very true.

They kiss quickly yet firmly. She resumes resting her head on him. He has his arm around her.

ELENA

Thanks for bringing me along.

CHRISTOPHER

Not a problem. Although I feel bad dragging you into this.

ELENA

But then I'll feel bad for leaving you to watch this.

CHRISTOPHER

Good point.

ELENA

And I would have made sure you felt bad that you didn't bring me along for a free movie. No matter how bad it is.

CHRISTOPHER

Right.

The THEATER USHER comes up with a flashlight and points at Christopher and Elena.

THEATER USHER

(sternly)

Excuse me.

CHRISTOPHER

(cordially)

What's the problem?

THEATER USHER

You are talking during the movie.

CHRISTOPHER

We are just talking to ourselves.

THEATER USHER

It's distracting. Please keep quiet.

CHRISTOPHER

OK.

She smiles and softly chuckles. Christopher clutches on her shoulder and she responds by pressing her head hard on his chest. He sighs and starts singing "Bum-deedee-dee-dee, hoocha-hoocha". She looks up and smiles at him.

ELENA

I like a man who can be entertaining. Especially when the movie isn't.

CHRISTOPHER

It isn't suppose to be. It's suppose to be "art".

ELENA

(gets up)

It is?

(hears dialogue)

It's not even good art.

CHRISTOPHER

This guy is using art film sensibilities the same way a five-year old uses profanity.

She laughs loudly and sharply. The theater usher thus returns.

THEATER USHER

Excuse me, sir.

CHRISTOPHER

(low volume)

Yes?

THEATER USHER

Please no talking.

CHRISTOPHER

OK. Sorry.

THEATER USHER

Are you a member of the press?

CHRISTOPHER

I am. And she's with me.

THEATER USHER

Alright. I don't want to hear anymore out of either of you.

CHRISTOPHER

Alright.

The theater usher leaves. She resumes resting her head on his chest. After the theater usher is out of sight, she snores comically but softly as not to draw too much attention. He looks down, smiles at her routine and assumes the role of a straight man.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
(softly)
Hey. Elena.

ELENA
Hmmm?

She resumes snoring for a bit.

CHRISTOPHER
(a bit louder)
Hey, Elena.

ELENA
Huh?

Elena continues snoring.

CHRISTOPHER
Hey. Wake up dear.

ELENA
(half-daze)
Uh, wha? Did the crap movie end already?

CHRISTOPHER
No, it's about ten minutes into it.

She lifts her head to look around the theater.

ELENA
Ah hell.

She collapses back into him and snores loudly. They both laugh at the routine. They embrace each other and exchange a brief yet loving kiss. The theater usher returns with the flashlight on them.

THEATER USHER
I thought I told you to stop it. I and others can hear you over there.

CHRISTOPHER
We couldn't have been that loud. Unless you were more interested in us than in the movie.

THEATER USHER

Well we can still hear you.

CHRISTOPHER

No. This would have been hearing me.

(gets up - shout-sings)
I don't like the film! I don't like the film! Play it all back! Play it all back! And I don't like the scenery! And I don't like the sets! So. Put it all down! Put it all down!

THEATER USHER

(interrupts - more stern)
That's it! Final warning. If I have to come up one more time, both of you are out of here!

CHRISTOPHER

Alright, alright. We can be absolutely silent.

THEATER USHER

Fine.

The theater usher walks down. Christopher and Elena make out in a slightly exaggerated manner. The usher turns around and sees them. He is at first annoyed by this but walks off knowing at least they are no longer talking. They stop for a moment to see if he left. They smile at each other.

CHRISTOPHER

Good show.

ELENA

(in a comical British high-class accent)
Why thank you darling.

They kiss but in a more restrained manner without losing any passion. After several minutes of this, he breaks the kiss to look at the screen.

CHRISTOPHER

Shit. This is still playing?

ELENA

Apparently.

CHRISTOPHER

Do you want to get out of here?

ELENA

Yes.

They get up and leave the theater. Before they exit, he turns to give his final denouement.

CHRISTOPHER

(shout-sings)

But I like the actors! And I like
the show!

He turns and they both walk out.

INT. AMC BOSTON COMMON 19 - UPSTAIRS LOBBY - NIGHT

Christopher and Elena are walking together, side by side, smiling and with their arms around each other. The THEATER MANAGER sees them and calls for their attention.

THEATER MANAGER

Excuse me. Hey!

They stop and turn to see him run up.

CHRISTOPHER

Yes?

THEATER MANAGER

I've received numerous complaints
about your rude behavior back
there.

CHRISTOPHER

Look I'm sorry about that. But try
to see it from my view. If you had
to sit through a bad film, wouldn't
you want to make fun of it?

THEATER MANAGER

OK. Now try to see it from my
view. You have viewer after viewer
coming to you complaining that a
couple of people are acting like a
pair of drunken frat boys when they
are trying to watch a movie.

ELENA

Wow. I'm a frat boy now. Thanks
for changing my sex.

THEATER MANAGER

Who are you?

ELENA
What is it to you?

THEATER MANAGER
I'm asking you.

ELENA
I'm with him.

THEATER MANAGER
And why were you sitting at the
press section?

ELENA
Because I'm with him.

THEATER MANAGER
(to Christopher)
May I see your press pass?

Christopher pulls out his wallet and shows him his press
pass. The theater manager examines it.

THEATER MANAGER (CONT'D)
Alright. I'm letting this go
because you are leaving. But if I
ever hear about you two again, you
will be banned from this theater.
(points to Christopher)
Even if it's a regular showing.
You got that?

CHRISTOPHER
Jawohl.

THEATER MANAGER
Now get out of here.

They walk down the hall. They turn to each other and smile
as they walk toward the door.

EXT. BOSTON PUBLIC GARDEN - NIGHT

Christopher and Elena walk through the garden, holding hands
and laughing underneath a full moon.

ELENA
Thank you for another fun evening.

CHRISTOPHER
Thank you for making it fun. Wish
it could have been a better setting
though.

ELENA
Meh. At least you got your money's worth.

CHRISTOPHER
I still want a refund.

She laughs and he smiles.

ELENA
Nevertheless I got to spend another evening with you.

CHRISTOPHER
That is true.

They walk a few paces more and stop at a bench where they can see more of the garden in spite of the darkness.

ELENA
What are you thinking? If anything?

CHRISTOPHER
Oh. Lots of things.

ELENA
Like the film?

CHRISTOPHER
Oh God no.

ELENA
(with a smile)
I mean your film. Your script.

CHRISTOPHER
Oh right. I've been writing it for the past twenty-four hours or so. Managed to get about twenty pages done. Give or take.

ELENA
Wow. That's a lot for that amount of time.

CHRISTOPHER
It is.

ELENA
That must mean you had a long night.

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah. But it was one of those nights where you are just completely into the moment of writing and you barely notice the time. It's great.

ELENA

I definitely know what you mean.

CHRISTOPHER

And I have you to thank.

ELENA

Oh? What did I do?

CHRISTOPHER

You were encouraging.

ELENA

I do what I can.

CHRISTOPHER

And I know this is going to sound bold. Like that's a surprise. But I think I wouldn't have started it at all, much less written as much as I have without you.

ELENA

But don't forget that you did it. You came up with the idea and you are doing something about it. Not me.

CHRISTOPHER

Well. Even if you work alone, there's always someone there. And you were. And still are.

She looks up at him and smiles. Then they both look into the garden with its pond and lights.

ELENA

What a lovely evening.

CHRISTOPHER

It is.

He closes his eyes.

ELENA

You're thinking of what to say next aren't you?

(MORE)

ELENA (CONT'D)

(looks out into the pond)
I myself don't know what to say. I mean I love what I see right now. And I love what I am feeling right now. But it's times like this I was I were a poet. To articulate it beautifully. Like Rilke.

He inhales deeply and discreetly, opens his eyes and begins to recite Rilke from memory.

CHRISTOPHER

Whoever you are: in the evening step out of your room, where you know everything; yours is the last house before the far-off: whoever you are. With your eyes, which in their weariness barely free themselves from the worn-out threshold, you lift very slowly one black tree and place it against the sky: slender, along. And you have made the world. And it is huge and like a word which grows ripe in silence. And as your will seizes on its meaning, tenderly your eyes let it go

She looks up at him with a loving gaze. He looks at her and she moves forward to kiss him softly. The kiss lingers.

ELENA

(softly)

I love you.

He puts his arm around her and she leans close to him. They both bask in the evening's beauty. She clutches onto him gently and he smiles.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Can I ask you something?

CHRISTOPHER

Sure.

ELENA

(gets up)

Did someone tell you your film idea was "far-fetched"?

CHRISTOPHER

Do you really want to know?

ELENA
(smiles)
I asked didn't I?

CHRISTOPHER
(sighs - hesitates)
It was . . .

ELENA
. . . Your former lover.

CHRISTOPHER
How did you

ELENA
I suspected something along those
lines.

CHRISTOPHER
I'm that predictable?

ELENA
Not really. I mean. I just had a
feeling it was the case with you.

CHRISTOPHER
I am that predictable?

ELENA
(smiles)
Don't be hard on yourself. I think
you are someone who takes a
statement like that from someone
you loved then really hard.

CHRISTOPHER
But isn't kind of pathetic?

ELENA
Feeling hurt by what amounts to a
verbal betrayal? No.

CHRISTOPHER
But should I just let it go? Brush
it aside and not let it fester
inside of me?

ELENA
That's the goal.

CHRISTOPHER
I understand. And I try. But
somehow it lingers on inside.
(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
No matter how long it's been. Like
the first time.

ELENA
First time?

He looks at her and then out into the water.

CHRISTOPHER
(sighs)
My first heartbreak.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY (PAST)

Children are running around the playground, playing various
games.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
It's been said that your childhood
days are the happiest in your life.

A child runs through the obstacles of the playground set.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
It's that moment when you can be
free.

A teacher walks by a group of kids sitting down.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
Driven.

Children playing kickball in an open court.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
Energetic.

Some kids are playing basketball.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
All without fear.

Another child runs in the open spaces of the playground in a
game of chase.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
And without hesitation.

YOUNG CHRISTOPHER walks with ALEX and JOHN and they just
talk.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
 Sure it was tedious going through
 the daily cycle. Yet it was simple
 and not at all complicated.

Young Christopher stares out into the distance, noticing
 someone.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
 However, both tedium and simplicity
 can only last for so long.

MARIE, who bears some physical resemblances to Nicole and
 Elena albeit younger, walks with her friends including BECKY
 toward young Christopher's direction.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
 The day I first noticed her, my
 whole world as I knew it felt very
 different.

Young Christopher looks at Marie in a daze. Alex and John
 notices this. Alex tries to get his attention.

ALEX
 Chris? Chris. Hey Chris!

Young Christopher snaps out of his trance and looks at Alex.

YOUNG CHRISTOPHER
 What?

ALEX
 You OK?

YOUNG CHRISTOPHER
 Yeah. I'm fine.

JOHN
 You were looking at Marie. Weren't
 ya?

Young Christopher does not acknowledge it.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Come on. Admit it. You like Marie
 don't ya?
 (dances around him)
 You like Marie! You like Marie!

ALEX
 Hey knock it off.

YOUNG CHRISTOPHER
 Yeah, knock it off. And besides,
 you're off-key.

They continue to walk through the bustling playground.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
 It's a strange yet wonderful
 feeling the first time you notice a
 woman in that way.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY (PAST)

Children are sitting at their desks as the TEACHER walks around the room, giving a lesson. Young Christopher alternates between hearing the teacher, writing and looking at Marie.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
 This was a new feeling for me. I
 didn't know what it was or how to
 handle it. But what little I knew
 about it, I loved it.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY (PAST)

Marie stands by the wall, observing the playground alone. Young Christopher approaches her.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
 And her.

YOUNG CHRISTOPHER
 Hey.

MARIE
 (looks at him)
 Hey.

Young Christopher looks down nervously, unsure how to say what he's feeling to her.

YOUNG CHRISTOPHER
 Nice day, huh?

MARIE
 Yeah.

Young Christopher gathers his courage in spite of still feeling nervous.

YOUNG CHRISTOPHER

Say I was wondering.

(a beat; nervously)

There's that end of the year dance coming up. And I was wondering if you and I would like to go together.

MARIE

(flattered)

Sure. I'd love to go with you.

YOUNG CHRISTOPHER

Really?

MARIE

Absolutely.

Young Christopher smiles brightly but regains some composure.

YOUNG CHRISTOPHER

So I'll see you later then?

MARIE

(smiles)

OK.

He walks off, still retained though tremendously excited internally.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)

It's one thing to experience an attraction to someone in particular. It's another to have that same someone acknowledging that attraction and therefore turning it from possibility into reality.

INT. YOUNG CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM - NIGHT (PAST)

Young Christopher lies on his bed, reading Rilke's Sonnets to Orpheus and listening to music on his headphones. Occasionally he stops to look at the ceiling, lost in a daydream.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)

For that one moment, I was in a state of full and complete bliss.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY (PAST)

Young Christopher, Alex and James eat lunch together at a table.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
And I thought that moment would
perpetuate itself forever.

Marie and Becky walk up to young Christopher's table. Becky gets young Christopher's attention.

BECKY
Hey.

Young Christopher looks up at her and Marie.

BECKY (CONT'D)
Marie has something to say to you.

Becky nudges Marie to speak and she does so hesitatingly.

MARIE
I'm not going to the dance with
you.
(hesitates)
I'm going with someone else.

He is stunned by this sudden news.

MARIE (CONT'D)
(remorsefully)
I'm so sorry.

Becky tactfully gestures an approval for what Marie did.

BECKY
(to the table)
Well. Thank you all for your
attention. Have a good day.
(to Marie)
Come on Marie.

They both leave. Young Christopher looks deflated. Alex, to his right, looks on with sympathy and concern. John, to his left, looks on with indifference and disregard.

JOHN
Haha! You were dumped.

YOUNG CHRISTOPHER
(punches him)
Shut up.

ALEX
Yeah. Cut it out.

They continue to eat their lunch in silence.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
It's strange how it works. One day
you are floating on Cloud 9.

INT. YOUNG CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM - NIGHT (PAST)

Young Christopher lies on his stomach on top of his bed. He buries his face in a pillow and cries profusely. A thunderstorm rages outside the room.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
The next, you are weighted down by
a merciless gale.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - INDOOR GYM - NIGHT (PAST)

Young Christopher, dressed in khaki slacks and a nice polo shirt, looks out onto the dance floor from the edge of the room, dismayed.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
I can't really explain why I went
to that dance anyway. Perhaps it
was trying to play tough and
somehow get through the pain.

He spots Marie and her date and turns more dismayed.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
Or perhaps it was because I had
some faint hope that Marie would
come back to me.

He also sees other kids dancing together and turns even more dismayed.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
Or maybe even someone else who saw
me for me as I could see them.

Young Christopher notices Becky walking toward him.

BECKY
Hey there.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
Or maybe not.

Young Christopher looks at her and then back down. Becky looks out to the dance floor.

BECKY
 (sighs dreamily)
 What a perfect evening. Everything
 is going good. Everyone is having
 oh so much fun.

Becky turns to see young Christopher, more forlorn now.

BECKY (CONT'D)
 (sarcastically)
 Oh I'm sorry. I didn't realize.

Young Christopher looks briefly at her and then back down onto the floor.

BECKY (CONT'D)
 Are you still into her?

YOUNG CHRISTOPHER
 (timidly)
 Not really.

BECKY
 Say again?

YOUNG CHRISTOPHER
 (louder)
 I said not really.

John notices young Christopher and Becky talking and walks up to them.

JOHN
 Hey guys. Watcha all talking
 about?

YOUNG CHRISTOPHER
 Nothing.

JOHN
 You guys are talkin' about Marie
 aren't ya?

BECKY
 (with smirk delight)
 As a matter of fact, we are.

JOHN
 Ooooh. Chris's favorite subject.
 He loves Marie.
 (MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)
(to young Christopher)
Yes he does. Yes he does.

John continues to taunt him. Young Christopher tries to back away and brush him off. Becky observes with amusement.

BECKY
Well, well, well. The truth comes out of the mouth of the fool.

Becky walks closer and John backs away from both of them.

BECKY (CONT'D)
You may still like her, Christopher. But as you can already tell, she doesn't like you. And let me let you in on a little secret.
(leans in close)
No one does.

Becky walks away. Young Christopher looks at her and then at John, who is still standing there obliviously. He musters enough anger to throw a hard punch at John and then leaves the room.

Alex then walks up to John, still rubbing his sore spot. Alex then punches him in the arm.

JOHN
Dang! What was that for?

ALEX
You kicked my friend when he was down. So I'm calling it even.

Alex kicks John and walks off.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - MEN'S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT (PAST)

Young Christopher takes off his clothes to reveal a swimsuit and puts them on the bench. He then walks to the mirror, looks at it and breaks down crying. He then washes his face. He soon notices a razor blade on the sink counter. He lingers at it, takes it and walks toward the pool door.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - INDOOR POOL - NIGHT (PAST)

Young Christopher walks toward the Jacuzzi, crestfallen but resolute.

He walks into the Jacuzzi and sits along the edge. He takes the razor blade, looks at it, places it at his wrist, slashes one, then the other, closes his eyes and arches back as he bleeds.

After a few minutes, DAVID and STEPHANIE walk into the room. At first they are completely unaware of what had occurred. Then they both notice young Christopher arched back, arms extended like a crucifix and sitting barely conscious in the red/bright pink water. David signals Stephanie to call for an ambulance. Then he rushes to young Christopher in order to pull him out and to stop his bleeding.

Moments later, paramedics carry young, bandaged and half-awake Christopher on a stretcher.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOSTON PUBLIC GARDEN - NIGHT

Elena looks at him as Christopher looks at her.

ELENA

Why did you do it?

CHRISTOPHER

Because I didn't have any hope then. I didn't want to feel that pain anymore. I figured if I went through it once, there was no need to go through it again.

His eyes water softly. She holds his hand tightly and looks at him lovingly.

ELENA

You don't have to anymore.

She gently kisses him on the cheek. He looks at her ecstatically yet reservedly with a single tear.

CHRISTOPHER

Thank you. My dear Elena.

They look into each other's eyes, just smiling, for a while. They silently get up and walk through the garden.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Christopher and Elena enter the apartment solemnly. He turns on the lights and she sits down on the couch.

CHRISTOPHER
Do you want anything to drink?

ELENA
Just water.

CHRISTOPHER
OK.

He goes to the kitchen to pour two glasses of water. She looks around the apartment.

ELENA
Nice place.

CHRISTOPHER (O.S.)
Thanks.

He returns with the water.

ELENA
Thank you.

He sits beside her and drinks. They both set their glasses down and look at each other.

CHRISTOPHER
Look. I'm sorry to bring that story up. It was a bit melodramatic I know. But

ELENA
It's OK really. I understand. It happened to you.

CHRISTOPHER
I wish it didn't. I feel stupid having tried what I tried. Let alone telling you this.

ELENA
Again it happened to you.
(a beat)
But I have to know. What happened after that night?

CHRISTOPHER
I was in the hospital for the rest of the night under monitor. A week or so later, I had a few therapy sessions.

ELENA
What was the conclusion? If any.

CHRISTOPHER

He said if I continue to work on my writing, it would help me in a lot of ways. And he was right.

She holds his hand.

ELENA

So that night?

CHRISTOPHER

It was the only attempt.

ELENA

I'm glad. Because I never want to see you hurt. Especially by you.

He looks at her, almost on the brink of tears.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh Elena. You're so good to me.

ELENA

(smiles)

Why wouldn't I be?

They embrace each other tightly and they then break to look at each other.

CHRISTOPHER

Can I share something with you?

ELENA

Of course.

CHRISTOPHER

Ever since I was twelve, I had this idea of a great slow dance number. I tried to realize it that awful night but couldn't. Mostly because the DJ wasn't interested. But tonight, I want to dance to that song. With you.

ELENA

I'd be delighted.

He walks over to the stereo system and sets it to play Vangelis' "First Approach". After the music starts, he walks back to her and offers his hand. She rises from the couch, walks with him and they dance slow together. Soon, she rests her head on his chest.

CHRISTOPHER
You like resting on me.

ELENA
You are so comfortable. And I like
your smell.

CHRISTOPHER
Thank you.

Over the course of the music, their dancing gets more intimate. When they start to kiss, it is slow but passionate and it only intensifies. They also slowly unclothe each other, touch each other and finally make love with each other for the first time.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Christopher and Elena sleep beside each other in a spoon position. He has his right arm draping her stomach and his left encircling her bare chest. Her right hand rests on his left arm and her left hand is on top of his right. They caress each other's feet using their feet. He nuzzles against her neck and she breathes out a sigh of contentment.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FURNITURE STORE - DAY

Christopher and Elena walk down the aisle, looking at the various showrooms. They exchange commentary and laugh about what they see.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FENWAY PARK - DAY

Christopher and Elena watch the game while conversing with each other. They occasionally cheer with the enthusiastic crowd.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Elena sits on top of the bed wearing pajamas. Christopher approaches the bed in lounge pants and an undershirt.

He talks for a moment and then laughs. Elena embraces him and kiss him passionately.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FRIENDS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Christopher tells an engaging and humorous story amongst friends. They all laugh. Elena, who sits to his left, enjoys it too.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HISTORIC SALEM - DAY

Christopher and Elena walk down a path side by side and leisurely talk.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. INTERSTATE 93/CAR - DAY

Christopher drives with Elena beside him. They talk and exchange laughs as he drives northbound amongst pleasant, late summer weather.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WHITE MOUNTAINS - DAY

Christopher and Elena sit on top of a blanket, looking at the grand vista ahead. She puts her arms around him from behind. They look at each other and then kiss gently and lovingly. They smile at each other and then look back out together.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. WHITE MOUNTAINS - DAY

Christopher and Elena are lying down on the blanket, taking a nap. Elena lies on her side with her arm around his chest. Christopher is on his back with one hand on her arm. She sleeps soundly while he actively dreams.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE CORRIDOR - DAY (DREAM)

Christopher and Elena walk down the corridor where paintings from the 16th to 18th century are on display. They glance at the paintings as they walk. An ominous drone slowly gets louder and louder.

They stop and look at a painting more akin to Francis Bacon, Lucien Freud or Jenny Saville, than to the others by Reubens, Veermer and Van Eyck. Echoes of a woman's menacing laughter appears. Elena, scared by this, holds onto Christopher tightly and he comforts her. The laughter gets louder and deeper. Elena, overwhelmed and frightened, screams as she then spontaneously combusts.

The laughter stops. The drone continues its intense drive. Christopher, shocked by what just happened, looks at the mysterious painting, now melting and flaking away to reveal a cropped photograph of a woman facing out, leaning upon something and her hand flat and smiling at camera. Soon the laughter returns, at first softly and then increases in volume. As it increases, the woman in the photograph appears to move. She laughs at him diabolically.

CHRISTOPHER
(quixotically)
Nicole?

She laughs aloud and the photograph pulls back to reveal Nicole and Christopher standing amongst a bare forest in the dead of winter. Nicole in the photograph steps back from Christopher in the photograph and she looks out sinisterly. She raises her hand and snaps her fingers. This signals the pulling a rope, lifting photograph Christopher up off the ground. He suddenly moves, kicking and struggling on the hangman's rope as he is lifted.

Nicole walks around the dangling body, pushing it and then gradually escalating the violence: hitting it with her fists, then with a baseball bat and finally with an axe. Blood splatters beyond the frame and into the corridor. As she's doing this, she laughs and sneers. Christopher in the corridor looks at this violence in shock.

Finally, Nicole takes out a sub-machine gun, aims it beyond the picture whilst grinning diabolically and fires. She then jumps out of the picture. Christopher backs away and runs endlessly as Nicole fires. Eventually he trips and Nicole peers over him with a sinister grin. She aims the gum right at him and fires endlessly. The drone reaches its intense point and then suddenly stops and gives off a final echo-delay.

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE MOUNTAINS - DAY

Christopher wakes up with a violent start and gasps heavily for air. Elena, already awake, turns to see him.

ELENA
Are you alright?

CHRISTOPHER
(panting)
I . . . I

She leans closer to him. Still in shock, he gets up and she embraces him.

ELENA
It's OK. I'm here. I'm here.

CHRISTOPHER
(softly crying)
Oh Elena.

They continue to embrace each other.

ELENA
Let's go home.

He breaks the embrace and wipes away any tears before getting up. She gets up as well and they both pack up.

EXT. INTERSTATE 93/CAR - DAY

Christopher drives on silently the interstate southbound with Elena beside him under a twilight sky. She looks at him with concern.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

An upright Christopher looks at the window. Elena then appears in the bedroom and looks at him. She puts her arms around him and leans her cheek against his back. He notices this and places his hands on hers.

ELENA
You know I'm here for you.

CHRISTOPHER
(turns around)
Thank you.

They move close together and kiss gently. The kiss soon turns more passionate.

They then walk toward the bed and she ends up on her back as he rests on top of her. Her legs wrapped around his and her hands pulling him as close as possible. He kisses her deeply and all over her face. She responds with a pleasurable sigh.

Suddenly he gets a panic attack and gives a sudden shout followed by panicked breathing. She looks on with concern.

ELENA

Christopher?

He looks at her, still breathing but then gradually composes himself.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm sorry. I don't know what happened.

ELENA

It's alright. It's alright.

(caresses him lovingly)

Oh Christopher.

(softly)

Kiss me.

He resumes kissing her neck. She sighs and moans. He soon puts his hands within her shirt to feel her skin and her breasts. She responds by putting one of her hands on top of his crotch between his underwear and pants. He gets excited by this move.

But then he has another panic attack. This time he gets up and sits on the opposite side of the bed and puts his hands on top of his eyes. He breaks down crying at this point. She gets up and slowly puts her hand on his back. He recoils a bit and she is surprised by this reaction. She tries to console him again but he recoils again. Perturbed by this rejection, she moves away from him.

He regains some composure and turns to face her contritely. She lies down half-propped up and first looks away from him and then toward him irately.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm sorry Elena.

ELENA

Forget it.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm really sorry. I don't know what's going on here.

ELENA
Don't worry about it.

He approaches her to kiss her. She halts him.

ELENA (CONT'D)
Let's just go to bed.

CHRISTOPHER
Why? If it's because of how I'm acting, I'm

ELENA
It's nothing. I think tonight's not a good night for you. Let's just go to sleep.

CHRISTOPHER
Alright.

She gets up and gets some sleepwear she has in the room. He watches in confusion as she leaves the room to change.

INT. HOME FURNISHING STORE - DAY

Elena walks slightly ahead of Christopher.

ELENA
(indignantly)
Unless it's something related to here, don't talk to me.

He looks down and they continue walking down the aisle.

CHRISTOPHER
What are you looking for?

ELENA
I don't know.

CHRISTOPHER
What do you mean?

ELENA
Look. I'm annoyed at you right now. Just go somewhere else. I'll catch up with you later.

CHRISTOPHER
What?

ELENA
Just go. Don't make a scene.

CHRISTOPHER
How will you find me?

ELENA
Go get coffee somewhere. I don't
know. Just go away.

He stands for a moment in shock and then turns and walks away. She looks out and then resumes walking through the store.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

Christopher and Elena walk onto the court smiling with rackets in hand.

CHRISTOPHER
You are a brave soul trying out
tennis.

ELENA
You can't be any worse than me.

CHRISTOPHER
Oh I'm sure I'm just as bad.

She walks to the opposite side of the court. He walks to his side with a ball in hand, preparing to serve. He serves and she completely misses the ball. They both laugh.

ELENA
We're having a great start.

She readies herself and he serves again. There is a fairly decent volley between them before it ends on her side.

CHRISTOPHER
15-love.

ELENA
Love can't be bad can't it?

CHRISTOPHER
In a certain sense.

He serves again and the volley is again decent. It once again ends on her side.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
30-love.

He serves again and the volley ends up being more intense. At some point, she hits the ball hard and it hits him hard.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
(very loud)
Ow! Fuck!

She rushes over to him.

ELENA
I'm so sorry!

He walks away from her. When she tries to hold him, he rejects her advances. She looks back, hurt by this rejection. He then turns around to see her.

CHRISTOPHER
(sternly)
I'm alright now. Let's play.

She walks back over to her side and readies herself.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
30-15.

He serves. The volley starts decently but gets to be more aggressive on his part. It ends on his side.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
30-all.

ELENA
Are you OK?

CHRISTOPHER
I'm fine. 30-all.

He serves. The volley is still aggressive on his part and it ends on his side.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Shit!

ELENA
Calm down. It's just a game.

CHRISTOPHER
30-40.

He serves. The volley turns more aggressive on his end but it ends on her side.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Deuce.

He serves. The volley turns more aggressive over all. Eventually he hits hard and the ball hits her.

ELENA
Ow! What gives?

CHRISTOPHER
(laughing disingenuously)
Elena, I'm sorry.

She looks at him angrily but resumes her stance. He readies the serve.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Actually you're doing well.

ELENA
Cut the flattery. Just play.

CHRISTOPHER
Advantage out.

He serves. The volley begins leisurely but gradually gets more aggressive on both sides. The volley ends on his side. She gives a silent cheer.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Fuck this!

He throws the racket toward his wall and storms off. She starts to walk toward him.

ELENA
Christopher!

He ignores her and leaves the court. She looks out for a moment and then picks up any stray balls and his racket.

INT. FRIENDS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone sits around the coffee table and converses except for Christopher. He sits in a chair alone with a beer in hand, listening to the conversation and brooding. Elena sits in the middle of the couch between two of her friends. At a certain point, she looks at him disapprovingly.

ELENA
(mouths)
Don't be difficult.

He reacts defensively but resumes drinking his beer in isolation from the group. After a few moments, he tries to redeem himself. She looks at him, confused by this sudden change of mood. He reacts to her reaction by recoiling away and maintaining silence.

INT. THE BOSTON GLOBE - CHRISTOPHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Christopher sits at his computer. He picks up the phone to call Sarah.

SARAH (V.O.)

Hello. This is Sarah. I'm currently away for quite a while. If this is an emergency, please leave a message and I'll try to get back to you as soon as I can. Otherwise, I will return your call when I return at the end of the month. Thanks.

Christopher disconnects the call.

CHRISTOPHER

(sotto voce)

Fuck. That's right.

(sighs)

Besides I shouldn't bother her with this shit.

(sighs)

Oh well.

Christopher looks at his computer. Jack walks by the office.

JACK

Hey man!

CHRISTOPHER

Go away.

JACK

What's with you man? You're like a moody roller coaster.

JAMES (O.S.)

Jack!

JACK

(toward James)

What?

James appears outside the door.

JAMES

What are you doing?

JACK

Nothing. Just saying hi to this drama queen here and he's getting all drama queen on me.

JAMES
I've had enough of you and your
rubbish. You're gone.

JACK
Why?

JAMES
You're a nuisance and you're
completely unproductive. Now get
out.

JACK
You can't do that.

JAMES
Yes I can. And I'm not alone here.

JACK
Oh.
(points at Christopher)
Was it his call then?

JAMES
Him and others.

JACK
Others?

JAMES
Yeah. Now bugger off.

Jack leaves disgruntled. James looks at him leave and then
toward an amused Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER
That was a surprise.

JAMES
Yeah I know. Shit. I should have
done that ages ago.

Christopher laughs and James joins him. The vibrating phone
then interrupts the laughter.

JAMES (CONT'D)
See you later then.

CHRISTOPHER
See ya.

Christopher looks at the phone and recognizes the number.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Hey Elena.

ELENA (V.O.)
Hey. Did I catch you at a bad
time?

CHRISTOPHER
(sincerely pleasant)
No. Not at all.

ELENA (V.O.)
Say. Do you want to meet at the
Garden today for lunch or a walk?

CHRISTOPHER
Sure. Absolutely.

ELENA (V.O.)
OK. See you then.

CHRISTOPHER
I love you.

ELENA (V.O.)
Love you too. Bye.

He hangs up and resumes work with a smile on his face.

EXT. BOSTON PUBLIC GARDEN - DAY

Christopher and Elena walk side by side but not holding
hands. She looks at him.

ELENA
Can you please tell me what's
wrong?

CHRISTOPHER
Nothing's wrong.

ELENA
Come on Christopher. You've been
acting weird for the past couple of
months.

CHRISTOPHER
I'm sorry if I did. I guess it's
just things on my mind.

ELENA
Like what? You can tell me.

CHRISTOPHER
I'd rather not. It's stupid.

ELENA
Well if it's stupid, then you
should let it go.

(a beat)
I hate to see you make rivers out
of streams. It's pointless.

CHRISTOPHER
You're right. I should let this
all go.

ELENA
And if you need to tell me
something, please do.

CHRISTOPHER
I will. And I'm sorry.

ELENA
It's OK really. Just remember to
smile every now and then. I like
it when you smile.

CHRISTOPHER
(smiles)
Thanks. I like it when you smile
too.

She smiles in response. They resume walking through the garden and toward the Make Way for Ducklings sculpture. They have fun with each other and even interacting with some of the children. They continue playing and laughing for a while until they are close to each other. They exchange a sincere kiss and resume walking, this time hand in hand and smiling.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Christopher sits on the couch with his laptop amongst a quiet room.

CHRISTOPHER
(singing sotto voce)
When routine bites hard. And
ambitions are low. And resentment
rides high. But emotions won't
grow. And we're changing our ways.
Taking different roads. Then love.
Love will tear us apart. Again.
Love. Love will tear us apart.
Again.

He stops and looks at the screen and then out into space.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
(sotto voce)
This is stupid.

He gets up and paces around the room.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
What is wrong with me? I mean I
have a wonderful woman in my life.
And I keep acting like a complete
jackass. That's completely unfair.
First and foremost to her.

He looks around the room while standing still.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
I got to make it right somehow.
And I think I know how.

He puts on his coat and shoes, grabs his wallet and keys and
then proceeds out the door.

INT. ELENA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Christopher knocks at her door with a bouquet of roses behind
his back. Elena opens the door.

CHRISTOPHER
Hi.

ELENA
Hi.

CHRISTOPHER
It's good to see you.

He reveals the bouquet.

ELENA
(takes it)
Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER
(a beat)
May I come in?

ELENA
Look this is a really bad time.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm sorry. I thought I could come in and talk.

ELENA

Not right now.

CHRISTOPHER

Come on Elena.

(enters)

I just want to

He stops to see DANIEL sitting on the couch with books, papers and a pair of coffee mugs on the table in front of him. Elena walks up behind Christopher and stands between him and the couch, off to the side of the table.

ELENA

Christopher, this is Daniel.
Daniel, this is Christopher.

DANIEL

(gets up)

Ah, you're the famous Christopher.
Elena's told me a lot about you.

(extends his hand)

Please to meet you.

Christopher shakes his hand but surprised by his presence.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

I'd better go.

Daniel starts to gather all his materials.

ELENA

I'm sorry Daniel.

DANIEL

That's OK, really. I think I can work some more on my own now.

ELENA

Are you sure?

DANIEL

Absolutely.

Daniel puts on his coat and takes his materials.

ELENA

Alright then.

DANIEL
(to Elena)
Thanks for your help.
(to Christopher)
It was nice meeting you.

Christopher looks at him, somewhat coldly and indifferently.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
(to Elena)
Bye now.

Daniel walks out. Elena looks at him leaving.

ELENA
(toward Daniel)
Bye.

Daniel exits. Elena then looks at Christopher scornfully.

CHRISTOPHER
Who was he?

ELENA
A study partner. You know. That
time of year. Exams are coming up.

CHRISTOPHER
Oh.

ELENA
Don't act so shocked. It's not
like I've never studied with people
before.

CHRISTOPHER
I didn't realize that's what you
were doing.

ELENA
Well it wouldn't have hurt to call
me first wouldn't it?

CHRISTOPHER
Again I didn't realize.

ELENA
Of course you don't. When have you
ever realized something other than
what's in your own head?

CHRISTOPHER
What? Look I'm sorry. I didn't .
. . . .

ELENA

(interrupts)

I want to explain something to you. You came all the way out here. Uninvited. I told you it was a bad time. But you came in anyway. And you chased away my study partner.

CHRISTOPHER

Again. I'm sorry.

ELENA

I'm sorry. You're sorry. We're all sorry. Isn't that it?

CHRISTOPHER

What more can I say?

She sits down at the couch.

ELENA

And then you pull off this jealousy nonsense. He's clearly a student. Just like I'm clearly a student. We take classes together. Remember that? And we take exams at the end of the semester. Remember that too?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes.

ELENA

So don't act all jealous on me.

CHRISTOPHER

How am I suppose to react?

ELENA

How about using your brain instead of acting so impulsively?

CHRISTOPHER

OK. Again I'm sorry about coming here uninvited. I'm sorry about my actions tonight.

ELENA

You keep saying that. And I'm so sick of it. It looks like you enjoy absolving yourself of any kind of responsibility for your actions.

CHRISTOPHER

What?

ELENA

Just stop these constant apologies. Take some responsibility for what you've done. And make some effort to change.

CHRISTOPHER

I realize that now. That's why I came over.

She stops and calms herself down.

ELENA

Really?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes. Really. I wanted it to be a surprise. And heartfelt. Hence the roses.

ELENA

That's true. I'll give you that.

CHRISTOPHER

I realized what an ass I've been. And I wanted to apologize for it. Sincerely. Not that I wasn't sincere before. But I realized I hurt you. And I wanted to acknowledge it to you. Reconcile myself to you. And see if we can move on together.

She looks down, processing what he just said. Then she looks up at him.

ELENA

Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER

And if I had known you were busy. Or even made a phone call in advance, I wouldn't have

ELENA

Look. I should apologize too. It was not fair of me to yell at you like that. Especially as I can see you made a sincere effort at reconciliation.

CHRISTOPHER

Thank you.

ELENA

And yes you should have called. You should have done a lot of things differently. But I shouldn't have questioned or doubted the intention, which was noble.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm not exactly sure how I should take that.

ELENA

Forget it. That came out wrong.
(looks toward the kitchen)
Do you want something to drink?

CHRISTOPHER

Water please.

She gets up and prepares a glass of water. He sits down on one of the end of the couch. She returns and hands him the glass and he drinks it down quickly.

ELENA

Can I start again?

CHRISTOPHER

Sure.

ELENA

I realize just now - and for a while - that I've been extremely blunt with you. I'm someone who likes to tell it straight. Nothing hidden. As a result, I tend to be very blunt. I hadn't realized how hard you would have taken it. This could explain these mood swings you've been having lately.

CHRISTOPHER

That's part of it. I am sorry for putting all of this on you. I realize I'm very sensitive. And I'm quite mercurial. By the way, I don't like saying "bipolar" or using any psychological terms as trait descriptors. Adjectives exist for a reason.

ELENA

No, I understand. In fact I admire you for avoiding that. And not just from an aspiring psychologist.

CHRISTOPHER

Thank you. At any rate, I know I'm moody at times. And I don't mean to take it out on you. Especially you. Well, at anybody. But most especially you.

ELENA

Thank you. I'd appreciate it.

CHRISTOPHER

So I'm truly sorry for hurting you like this. I hope you can see its sincerity.

ELENA

Yes I do see it.

CHRISTOPHER

Good.

ELENA

More water?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes please. Thank you.

She takes the glass and pours a glass of water from the kitchen. She returns to him and he drinks it down, though slower than the last time.

ELENA

Wow. You are thirsty.

CHRISTOPHER

Long commute.

ELENA

You mean you walked all the way from Brookline to here?

CHRISTOPHER

No. But still. I am thirsty.

ELENA

Fair enough.

She looks over at the table and closes her book.

CHRISTOPHER
So studying's OK?

ELENA
It's fine. I think that's probably another thing too. Exam stress. I shouldn't worry about it. But I do. The professor's a bit of a bastard and has been giving me grief.

CHRISTOPHER
Oh man. I'm sorry to hear that.

ELENA
Thanks. Still. It's no excuse for taking it out on you.

CHRISTOPHER
Remember I'm the asshole here.

ELENA
Well. You're not a complete asshole.

CHRISTOPHER
(smiles)
Can't deny it.

ELENA
No, Christopher. You know you're not an asshole.

CHRISTOPHER
Really?

ELENA
Yes, really. You gave me roses.

CHRISTOPHER
True.

ELENA
And besides. What seems to be the problem, if you want to call it that, is you let your emotions get the better of you. You let them control you rather than you control them.

CHRISTOPHER
I can see that.

They sit in silence for a moment.

ELENA
I was wondering about something.

CHRISTOPHER
What?

ELENA
Have you considered going into
therapy again?

CHRISTOPHER
Why?

ELENA
It's just an idea. I mean you can
learn some means of tempering these
emotions.

CHRISTOPHER
Why?

ELENA
Don't you want to have some control
of your life?

CHRISTOPHER
I guess.

ELENA
What do you mean "you guess"?

CHRISTOPHER
This is going to sound crazy but I
think these emotions can help me in
my work.

ELENA
What do you mean?

CHRISTOPHER
I mean I think this will aid me in
making films.

ELENA
How does it help you to make films?

CHRISTOPHER
It's because I'm so aware of them.
That way if I write a scene, I know
how to emote. And I also want to
direct too. I want to be able to
convey to actors those emotions for
a scene.

ELENA

I'm sure you can have both.

CHRISTOPHER

Both what?

ELENA

Both the ability to recall emotions for your art and control them for other aspects in your life.

CHRISTOPHER

I don't know.

ELENA

I'm trying to help you here.

CHRISTOPHER

I understand. But I just don't want to be told by a therapist something I did or something I am is wrong.

ELENA

I think you're mistaking it for religion. Therapy is not about right or wrong. It's about coming to grips with life.

CHRISTOPHER

I don't know.

ELENA

Why is this so hard for you to accept?

CHRISTOPHER

Because.

(a beat)

Because I don't know why I need it.

ELENA

I never said you needed it.

CHRISTOPHER

But it sounds like I do.

ELENA

All I'm trying to do is help you. Why this resistance?

CHRISTOPHER

Because I already had therapy. Why do I need to go through it again?

ELENA

You had it when you were twelve years old. And while I know it made a big difference in your life, it's not enough to depend on analyses made when you were a pre-pubescent.

CHRISTOPHER

But it's not like I've changed at all.

ELENA

That's not a good thing to say.

CHRISTOPHER

What do you mean?

ELENA

What I mean is that you can't deny any changes you made since you were twelve. Like you changed your residency.

CHRISTOPHER

I changed residency. So what?

ELENA

(sighs)

Let me start again. You can't assume that nothing else about you has not changed. And besides, why are you so concerned with change? What are you afraid of exactly?

CHRISTOPHER

I'm afraid they are going to try to make me into another person. Like they want me to be some kind of automaton who will be more obedient than a dog.

ELENA

How?

CHRISTOPHER

They can prescribe something. Some mood-altering drug.

ELENA

Not necessarily. Just because Prozac and Xanax are popular treatments doesn't necessarily mean it's going to be automatically prescribed for you.

CHRISTOPHER

How do you know that?

ELENA

Well for starters, people have different reactions to drugs. The whole one man's meat is another man's poison.

CHRISTOPHER

Well I don't think any drug is a meat for me.

ELENA

OK. Let's assume that's true. But a good therapist is going to entertain many more options than just drugs. One who only pushes drugs on someone is one who thinks slothfully. If he thinks at all.

CHRISTOPHER

OK.

ELENA

I may not have my doctorate yet. Or my license. But trust me on this, there are plenty of options.

CHRISTOPHER

OK.

ELENA

And I'm only trying to help you. I don't want to see you needlessly suffer. Even if it's for art. It's really not worth it.

CHRISTOPHER

OK.

ELENA

You understand?

CHRISTOPHER

I guess. But at the same time, I don't think I need to go through that exercise again. I mean I already went through it. And they confirmed an outlet for me. And it's helped me a lot. Why do I need to go through that process again?

ELENA

Again, I'm not disputing your creative outlet as a means of channeling emotions. In fact, I'm very glad you were encouraged to have that outlet. And furthermore, I'm glad you took that outlet and are turning it into a career. But at the same time, it's really not enough.

CHRISTOPHER

Why?

ELENA

Because you need to stop letting these emotions affect other areas of your life. Like your health in general. Or your relationships. Especially your intimate ones. And unless you want to be some anti-social bohemian, it's important to have a healthy social life.

CHRISTOPHER

Who cares?

ELENA

What do you mean who cares? I do.

CHRISTOPHER

Why?

ELENA

Because I have to be honest, these recent mood swings you've been having is affecting us right now.

CHRISTOPHER

(in shock)

Wow.

(a beat; regretfully)

I'm so sorry.

ELENA
Don't apologize. Just understand
where I'm coming from.

CHRISTOPHER
I'm sorry for being so selfish.

ELENA
Christopher.
(smiles)
Stop apologizing.

CHRISTOPHER
OK.
(with a slight smile)
I'm sorry.

ELENA
Shush.

She puts a finger to his lips and she kisses him gently.
They kiss again except a bit more deeply. Then they break it
and she looks at him.

ELENA (CONT'D)
Have you eaten already?

CHRISTOPHER
No.

ELENA
I don't know exactly what I have.
So I can't promise anything.

CHRISTOPHER
You know. That's OK. I don't
really need anything.

ELENA
Are you sure?

CHRISTOPHER
I'm sure.

ELENA
OK. Well I'm going to make
something for myself.

CHRISTOPHER
Alright.

She walks over to the kitchen. He still sits on the couch,
looking around the room.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Listen. I'm glad I was able to
talk with you tonight.

ELENA (O.S.)
Me too. Even if your timing was
really bad.

CHRISTOPHER
(smiles)
Don't make me apologize again.

ELENA (O.S.)
I'm not. And you better not
apologize. You've already reached
your apology quota for the night.
Maybe for the month too.

CHRISTOPHER
Come on. I don't apologize that
much.

ELENA (O.S.)
Yeah you do. In fact I just saw
your picture next to "apology" in
the dictionary.

CHRISTOPHER
Print edition or Wiki?

She steps into the living room.

ELENA
(laughs)
Quiet you!

She steps back into the kitchen.

CHRISTOPHER
It's a fair question.
(a beat; notices the book)
Does my timing have to do with
what's his face?

ELENA (O.S.)
You mean Daniel?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah. Your forbidden lover.

ELENA (O.S.)
He's not my lover. He's my study
partner.

CHRISTOPHER

There's a euphemism if I ever heard one.

ELENA (O.S.)

Well you haven't. He and I take the same class. We have the same jerk-off professor. So we often study together. Nothing more than that.

CHRISTOPHER

Sure. That's it.

ELENA (O.S.)

Christopher. Where do you get off?

CHRISTOPHER

I'm not getting off from anything.

ELENA (O.S.)

The only thing you need to get off of is this bad joke of yours.

CHRISTOPHER

What bad joke?

ELENA (O.S.)

Pretending there's something going on between me and Daniel besides just the class and comprehensive study.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh. Comprehensive study. That's it. Yeah.

She returns to the living room.

ELENA

(sternly)

Christopher. Stop it. Right now.

She leaves for the kitchen.

CHRISTOPHER

OK. I'm just seeing where you stand.

ELENA (O.S.)

You should know where I stand.

CHRISTOPHER

I mean he seemed embarrassed or ashamed or something.

ELENA (O.S.)

No. He was just surprised. Just like I was surprised to see you when you should have figured out that this is a bad time to show up.

CHRISTOPHER

Right. It was a bad time to show up because you were studying.

ELENA (O.S.)

Exactly. Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER

Which probably means something else too.

She returns to the living room in a fury.

ELENA

Christopher! Shut up! That joke is getting way too old. And it wasn't even funny the first time!

CHRISTOPHER

OK. OK. I'm sorry.

ELENA

And stop this persistent apologizing!
(rubs her head)
God! You are so difficult sometimes.

CHRISTOPHER

I was just trying to be funny.

ELENA

Well you failed miserably. And we are talking: epic fail!

CHRISTOPHER

What?

ELENA

I've had it up to here with these ridiculous mood swings.
(MORE)

ELENA (CONT'D)

This whole wallowing in self-pity one minute and then the next having this half-ass happy-go-lucky attitude. It's nauseating sometimes.

CHRISTOPHER

What did you say?

ELENA

You know what I said. And since I better break it to you since you are not going to let it go. While I am faithful to you, these past few days I've enjoyed Daniel's company a lot more than yours.

CHRISTOPHER

What?

ELENA

You heard me.

He sits in stunned silence.

CHRISTOPHER

I don't know what to say.

ELENA

Well I do. I never want to hurt you. But at the same time, I don't want you to hurt me. And these past few months, I've been hurt by your mood swings and your temperamental behavior.

(interrupts Christopher)

And quit apologizing.

(a beat)

I wasn't happy with you. I was once. But now not so much. Hence me liking Daniel more.

CHRISTOPHER

Does he know?

ELENA

About what?

CHRISTOPHER

Well. About your feelings toward him.

ELENA

Yes.

CHRISTOPHER
What the fuck?

ELENA
Hey! You don't have some privileged access to emotions! I can feel them too. And I can even express them too. Especially to whomever I please.

CHRISTOPHER
So you just told him.

ELENA
Yes.

CHRISTOPHER
And nothing more than that.

ELENA
No. In fact, Daniel was the one who suggested you and I could be reconciled. I doubted it but I gave it a shot. And because I love you in spite of yourself.

CHRISTOPHER
In spite of myself?

ELENA
Yeah.

CHRISTOPHER
What the fuck? You mean to tell me: you told him about my flaws, your unhappiness with me, your growing interest in him instead of me and yet he suggests you try to reconcile our grievances and you wanted to do it because you still love me both in spite of myself and in spite of your newfound attraction to him?

ELENA
Ding, ding, ding! Right you are! Crazy how life works sometimes.

CHRISTOPHER
I don't believe this.
(a beat)
So did you come up with some kind of make-or-break criterion?

ELENA

Yes.

CHRISTOPHER

And?

ELENA

You're getting warmer.

CHRISTOPHER

I didn't say anything.

ELENA

You didn't have to.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh for fuck's sake. What do you mean?

ELENA

You are so stubborn with yourself. You never want to change yourself for the better.

CHRISTOPHER

We just talked about it tonight! Did you expect me to call to make an appointment for a therapist right this fucking minute? It's Saturday fucking night!

ELENA

OK. I don't expect you to call for a therapist tonight. But you were extremely resistant to the idea of pursuing it.

CHRISTOPHER

You just gave me the idea tonight. I have to think it over.

ELENA

Yeah. So you can dismiss it and then go back to being a prick and we are in this whole mess all over again.

CHRISTOPHER

You don't know that.

ELENA

I know you.

CHRISTOPHER

No you don't.

(stammers)

I mean.

(still stammers)

What if I want to change right now?

ELENA

First off, I haven't seen you make the effort. And second, it wouldn't be because of you. It will be because of me.

CHRISTOPHER

Because of you?

ELENA

Yeah. You want to appease me so you can go back to fucking me. You love me only when I love you. And even then you are more in love with your emotions than you are with those who truly love you.

CHRISTOPHER

(flabbergasted)

What?

ELENA

It's something I've noticed about you. More and more as time goes on. At first I didn't want to believe it because I refused. But I can see now that it's true.

Elena starts to cry at this point.

CHRISTOPHER

Elena. Look. I . . .

(catches himself)

. . . I really . . . I don't know what to say. But I want you to know that I really do love you.

ELENA

(still crying)

Then why do you keep hurting me like this?

(notices some noises in the kitchen)

Oh no!

She rushes to turn off the stove.

ELENA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(yells)
Oh fuck! Fucking shit!

He gets up from the couch and walks around the table, looking at where the kitchen lies.

CHRISTOPHER
What?

She returns to the living room.

ELENA
Are you really that stupid?
(pushes him violently)
You ruined my dinner, you fuck!

CHRISTOPHER
I'm

ELENA
And stop this fucking apologizing!
(pushes him)
Just stop it!
(pushes him harder)
Right now!

CHRISTOPHER
I

ELENA
Right now!

She pushes him so hard that he almost hits the wall. He remains in stunned silence. She continues crying very hard.

CHRISTOPHER
Oh Elena.

ELENA
No, Christopher.
(wipes away tears)
Look. It's my turn to apologize.
I'm sorry for blaming you for the dinner.

CHRISTOPHER
It is my fault.

ELENA
That's better.

CHRISTOPHER
Better?

ELENA
You accepted responsibility,
instead of just apologizing.

CHRISTOPHER
How is that somehow better?

ELENA
Just trust me on this. This will
help you.

CHRISTOPHER
OK.

ELENA
And likewise, I should not have
pushed you like that.

CHRISTOPHER
Don't worry. I'm fine.
(ponders)
Do you think what we just did was
progress?

ELENA
A little.

CHRISTOPHER
What do you mean a little?

ELENA
Exactly what it is.

CHRISTOPHER
But doesn't a little go a long way?

ELENA
It can. But I don't know. Maybe
it's only too little, too late.

CHRISTOPHER
Too little, too late?

ELENA
I don't know. Maybe there's hope.
But then . . . I don't know.

CHRISTOPHER
OK. This is what I don't get. You
love me. But you keep insisting I
make some kind of change. And
preferably substantial and
immediate. If you truly love me,
then why this need for change?

ELENA

I'm not trying to change you! I'm just trying to help you!

CHRISTOPHER

OK.

ELENA

In fact, what you just said should reveal to you just how selfish you really are.

CHRISTOPHER

How?

ELENA

Stop playing ignorant.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm not playing here. How am I selfish? How come you see it and I don't?

ELENA

OK. Here's the large pink elephant that's been doing nothing but making large piles ever since it entered the room. It's this baggage you keep carrying around yourself.

CHRISTOPHER

What baggage?

ELENA

This obsession with the past. Why do you keep holding onto these various phantasms when you have someone right here, right now with real flesh and blood, who loves you truly and deeply and even wants to help you exorcise your demons?

She starts to cry and slowly walks toward him to embrace him. He reluctantly accepts it.

ELENA (CONT'D)

(crying)

Why are you doing this to yourself? Please. For God's sake. Let it go.

CHRISTOPHER

I don't know what to make of all this.

ELENA

You don't have to know how. But please just know. For me.

He breaks it and starts to head toward the door.

ELENA (CONT'D)

And don't think it's going to go away when you leave.

CHRISTOPHER

What makes you so sure?

ELENA

Come on. You of all people should know. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

CHRISTOPHER

Cute.

ELENA

And also fanaticism consists in redoubling your efforts when you have forgotten your aim.

CHRISTOPHER

Very cute.

ELENA

Listen to me Christopher. I'm telling you this because you are on the verge of setting yourself up for perpetual damnation on top of your perpetual apologies. There's nothing romantic about being Sisyphus.

CHRISTOPHER

How do you know that?

ELENA

Because I love you. And therefore I know you.

He looks at her and turns around toward the door.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Wait.

He stops and turns to face her.

ELENA (CONT'D)

If I'm never to see you again,
please know this. I don't hate you
for looking back. But I can't
understand why you would want to
look back. Let alone to go back.
But no matter what you choose to do
in the end, just know that I will
always love you.

He looks at her for a moment. Then he turns around and heads
out the door.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Christopher walks through Boston coming from Cambridge and
heading back to Brookline. Amongst the hustle and bustle of
the crowd, he brushes past the THIRD WOMAN, who resembles
Elena and Nicole. After a block, he stops and senses he had
just passed someone. He then turns around to see her
standing at the corner. She looks out onto the street,
waiting to cross, and then turns around to see the crowd
around her. She catches Christopher in the distance and sees
him briefly.

He still looks at her and thinks about what to do next.

CUT TO: BLACK