

STAY

by

David Benioff

USE FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE -- NIGHT

A wrecked Ford Mustang burns in the middle of the empty bridge. Empty. No other cars, no people in sight..

There is a gaping hole in the windshield on the driver's side. Flames consume the backseat. Smoke spills out the windows. The radio still plays, however: The Band's "I Shall be Released."

One of the Mustang's front tires has blown out. Scraps of black rubber litter the accident scene.

As the camera pulls in, we see HENRY LETHAM, twenty, sitting in front of the ruined car. His eyes are closed.

He looks sick-- pale, skinny, disheveled-- but he has a presence, a magnetism that compels you to look at him.

Finally Henry opens his eyes. After a moment he stands and walks away from the burning car, never turning around, heading for the illuminated towers of Manhattan.

Somewhere nearby a BABY is HOWLING, though no one is in sight.

INT. MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS APARTMENT -- MORNING

Tuesday

The baby's HOWL continues, faintly, in the background.

DR. SAM FOSTER, a psychiatrist in his early forties, wakes up in bed, disoriented, sunlight shining on the disheveled sheets.

For several seconds Sam looks about the apartment, confused, as if he's never seen the place before.

EXT. OLLIE'S NOODLE SHOP -- 116TH AND BROADWAY -- MORNING

Sam parks his old, battered Volvo in front of the Chinese noodle shop. He checks his watch and curses under his breath.

Sam's hair is beginning to gray, but he's still built like a college tennis player. He smiles readily but there is a brooding quality about him, in his dark eyes, that suggests he has seen things most of us have not.

EXT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY -- MORNING

The bells are tolling. Sam dashes through the campus gates. Under his tweed blazer he wears a frayed navy-blue cable-knit sweater.

As he rounds a corner he checks his watch, and before he looks up collides with LILA CULPEPPER, knocking her styrofoam cup of coffee to the sidewalk.

With her stylish haircut and clothing, Lila looks more like a young editor of a fashion magazine than a graduate student. Only the thick philosophy textbooks she carries and her red-ink stained fingers give her away.

She shoves him.

LILA
Watch where you're going, old man.

SAM
Jesus, kids these days...

He kisses her on the lips.

LILA
I don't have time to stand here
flirting with you. I've got to give
a test to Grunbaum's undergrads.

Sam stoops to pick up the empty cup, stands straight, crumples the cup, tosses it into a nearby garbage can.

SAM
Thank God none of the TAs looked
like you when I was a student. I
would've flunked every test.

LILA
(unimpressed)
Oh, that's sweet. Can I tell you
something?

She sidles up next to him and fixes the collar of his jacket.

SAM
What?

LILA
You owe me a cup of coffee.

EXT. TURNER HALL -- MORNING

Sam hurries inside the sleek, angular, glass-and-steel building.

INT. TURNER HALL -- MORNING

Sam gets out of the elevator and waves to a RECEPTIONIST sitting behind a desk. A sign on the wall behind her reads COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES.

SAM

Hey, Toni.

TONI

Hey, Sam. Henry Letham's waiting in Beth's office.

SAM

Thanks.

He walks down the hallway and opens the last door on the left.

INT. BETH LEVY'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Henry, wearing paint-spattered army pants and a black long-sleeve tee-shirt, stands at the window of the bookshelf-lined office, looking out at the sky. He stares at Sam when Sam enters the room. Sam smiles and nods.

SAM

Henry?

HENRY

Where's Dr. Levy?

SAM

Dr. Levy had an appendectomy, she'll be gone a few weeks. I'm Dr. Foster, I'm covering for her.

Sam offers his hand and Henry examines it for a moment before shaking. Sam goes behind the desk to sit and gestures for Henry to sit in one of the facing chairs.

Sam pulls a manila folder from his suitcase. Henry sits on the edge of a facing chair. He looks ready to bolt at any second.

Henry holds a piece of string which he coils tightly around his index finger, then uncoils, then coils again.

HENRY

So you're the substitute shrink?

Sam smiles.

SAM

I guess you could call me that.
Does it make you uncomfortable that
I'm filling in for Dr. Levy?

Henry thinks about it, coiling the string tightly.

HENRY

Is she your girlfriend?

SAM

No. We were classmates, actually.
So listen, I read your file--

HENRY

Oh, really? May I read your file?

SAM

Fair enough. How about you ask me a
question for every question I ask
you?

HENRY

How about we don't play stupid
games.

Sam smiles and leans back in his chair. Far from being deterred by Henry's attitude, he's intrigued. He likes challenges.

SAM

Okay. Tell me why you're here.

HENRY

You read the file. You ought to
know.

SAM

You torched your car. Why?

HENRY

I don't know.

SAM

What do you mean, you don't know?

HENRY
I don't remember.

SAM
Were you drinking?

HENRY
I opened my eyes and I was sitting
in the car and it was on fire.

Henry is quiet for a moment, remembering.

SAM
Do you often set fires?

HENRY
No. I'm not a pyromaniac or
anything. It's not like I burned
flies when I was a kid.
(beat)
Maybe a couple times I did. Is that
bad?

SAM
For the flies it is.

HENRY
I remember them trying to crawl
when they were on fire.

Henry is silent for a moment. He coils the string so tightly
around his finger that the tip of his finger turns bright
red.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Maybe Hell is the place where all
the bad things you've done come
back to get you.

Another pause. Sam points at Henry's finger.

SAM
You're cutting off the circulation.

HENRY
I never meant to hurt anyone.

SAM
You were a kid. Kids are cruel.

HENRY
I'm not talking about the flies.

SAM
What are you talking about?

Abruptly, Henry stands, knocking over his chair in the process. He bends down to pick it up.

HENRY
Sorry. I better go.

SAM
Are you sure? I feel like we're just getting started.

HENRY
No, no, I better--

Henry looks out the window.

HENRY (CONT'D)
We'll have hail this afternoon.

Sam watches him leave and then stares out the window. The sky is bright blue.

EXT. RIVERSIDE PARK -- AFTERNOON

The sky is still blue on this beautiful autumn afternoon. Sam and Lila, on rollerblades, slowly roll down the promenade overlooking the Hudson River. Lila holds Sam's hand, steadying him.

Lila is obviously skilled; Sam is obviously a beginner. He wears a helmet, kneepads, and elbow pads over his long-sleeve tee-shirt.

LILA
Don't lean forward too much.

SAM
Okay.

LILA
Try to relax. You're too tense. Try to get the rhythm. You want it to feel natural.

SAM
I have wheels strapped to my feet. There's nothing natural about it.

Two kids on rollerblades whiz by the couple. Sam, trying to get out of the way, nearly falls.

One of the kids begins skating backwards. He nudges his friend and imitates Sam's spastic motions. Both of them laugh and zoom away.

SAM (CONT'D)
Ha ha, you little bastards.

LILA
We don't have to do this, you know.
It's supposed to be fun.

SAM
I'm having fun.

He lets go of Lila's hand and tries to skate in the manner of Eric Heiden, pumping his legs with one hand behind his back, going faster and faster.

LILA
Sam...

Sam, now out of control, begins speeding downhill.

SAM
How do I stop? HOW DO I STOP?

Ahead of him, the path forks left and right. He won't be able to make the turn at this speed.

At the last second, Sam grabs onto a lamppost. He spins around the post and flops into a bush.

LILA
(catching up)
Sam? Sam?

Sam lies on the ground, catching his breath. He's covered with leaves and dirt.

LILA (CONT'D)
You okay?

Lila crouches beside him and begins checking him for injuries with the practiced skill of a nurse.

SAM
I'm fine, I'm fine.

LILA
That was impressive.

She lies down next to him.

SAM
 Maybe I'm not ready for this. I'm
 not so coordinated.

LILA
 That's okay. You're a sexy klutz.

They kiss. Lila pulls herself closer, her hands on Sam's wrists. Abruptly, Sam pulls his long sleeves down farther, as if to hide something on his wrists. Lila releases him.

For a moment both of them are quiet.

LILA (CONT'D)
 You don't have to do that. You
 don't have to hide from me.

Sam doesn't look at her.

SAM
 I'm not hiding.

LILA
 Sam.

Sam raises his head.

LILA (CONT'D)
 Don't hide.

She kisses him. In the middle of the kiss a loud CRACK startles both of them.

LILA (CONT'D)
 What was that?

For a few seconds nothing happens. And then another CRACK, and then another, coming rapid fire now, grape-size chunks of ice falling from the sky and shattering on the paved walkways.

SAM
 Hail.

INT. CAR -- NIGHT

DRIVER'S POV

We see the road through the driver's eyes. We're somewhere in Brooklyn, driving fast through a string of green lights.

Everything is very, very quiet.

We turn to the right. A GREEN-EYED WOMAN (20) sits in the passenger seat. She says something, but we can't hear a word.

She smiles.

INT. SUBWAY CAR -- AFTERNOON

Henry opens his eyes. He sits in a car that shudders and rattles its way through the underground. On his lap is a book on the artist Tristan Rêveur.

He pulls a cigarette from a pack and lights it.

Next to Henry sleeps a long-haired TEENAGE BOY wearing a Walkman: from the headphones we hear "I Shall be Released."

Various subway riders glare at Henry and wave away the smoke, obviously annoyed that he's polluting their airspace.

A YOUNG WOMAN who wears her blonde hair in dreadlocks sits across the car, watching Henry.

YOUNG WOMAN

You go to Columbia, right? We were both in Psych 221. Professor Matthewson?

(pointing at his book)

You did your oral presentation on psychosis and Tristan Rêveur, right?

Henry stares at her as if she's speaking an alien language. A BUSINESSMAN standing between them, holding onto the metal pole, wearing a gray suit and carrying an attache case, shakes his head at Henry.

BUSINESSMAN

No smoking on the train.

HENRY

What?

BUSINESSMAN

(pointing)

Look at the sign, fella. No smoking on the train.

Henry looks at the sign.

INSERT NO SMOKING SIGN

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)
Capeesh? Put it out.

HENRY
Capeesh? Are you in the Mafia?

The businessman leans closer, until his face is inches from Henry's.

BUSINESSMAN
Put out the fucking cigarette.

Henry slowly rolls his shirtsleeve back from his forearm. The skin is mottled with fresh burns.

He draws on his cigarette until its point is red-hot, then stabs it out on the skin of his wrist. He does not flinch.

The businessman reels backward. The dreadlocked Columbia student's mouth drops open. The people sitting next to Henry stand and move away.

Henry offers the cigarette butt to the businessman, who waves his hand at it and moves away, muttering:

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)
You ought to be locked up.

HENRY
I am.

When the train pulls into the next station, the businessman and the Columbia caucastafarian hastily depart.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Bookshelves overflowing with books dominate the space. The one luxurious feature is a working fireplace where a well-built little fire now burns.

Lila's curled up in bed, highlighting lines in Dante's *Purgatorio*.

Sam, lying beside her, speaks on the PHONE.

SAM
Hey, Beth, this is Sam. Hope you're feeling better. I met with your patient Henry Letham today, thought maybe we could compare notes. Anyway, give me a call.

He hangs up and stares into the fire, his hands folded over his chest.

SAM (CONT'D)

(to Lila)

You don't think it's a little odd,
predicting a hailstorm like that?

LILA

(not really paying
attention)

So he watches the Weather Channel.

SAM

I looked in the newspaper. There
was nothing about any hail today.

LILA

Maybe he's a shaman and he did a
little hail dance.

SAM

Okay, forget it.

LILA

(finally looking up)

How's Beth Levy?

SAM

I don't know. She hasn't returned
any of my calls.

LILA

Hm.

SAM

What does "hm" mean?

LILA

She always kind of liked you,
didn't she?

Sam jabs Lila in the ribs with his finger.

SAM

What are you, jealous? Beth's one
of my oldest friends.

LILA

She's your oldest friend, that's
supposed to make me unjealous?

SAM
Unjealous?

LILA
She's in love. It's obvious to everyone but you. And every day you wear that sweater she made you--

She points at the blue sweater, lying folded on top of the dresser.

LILA (CONT'D)
--and all I can think is, Damn, I can't even knit.

SAM
She saved my life, sweetheart.

LILA
I know.

SAM
You're the only one for me, all right? I knew I would find you. And I did.

LILA
(kissing him on the lips)
It took you long enough.

INT. BETH LEVY'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Wednesday

Sam sits behind Beth's desk and Henry sits facing him.

SAM
Have you considered a career in meteorology?

Henry says nothing, only stares at the chewed-down stubs of his fingernails.

SAM (CONT' D)
The weatherman said something about the hail?

HENRY
I can't listen to the weatherman anymore. I don't understand a word he says.

SAM
You don't understand the
weatherman?

HENRY
Do you?

SAM
Sure. He says rain, I bring an
umbrella.

Henry stares at Sam for a moment, trying to gauge the
psychiatrist. He seems to come to a decision.

HENRY
I don't know what's real anymore.

SAM
Go on.
(off Henry's non-response)
Give me a chance, Henry. I'm good
at what I do.

HENRY
The voices never stop.

SAM
Voices?

HENRY
In my head. They never stop.

SAM
Why were you so reluctant to tell
me that?

HENRY
I don't want to fit into your grid.
I don't want you saying, "Okay,
paranoid schizophrenic. Two hundred
milligrams of Risperdol should do
the trick."

SAM
You don't want me making
assumptions about you, right?

Henry nods.

SAM (CONT'D)
But aren't you making assumptions
about me? You think I want to fit
you into a grid?
(MORE)

SAM(cont'd)

I don't make grids. I want to know the particulars about Henry Letham. You hear voices. All right, that's important information. What are the voices saying?

Henry shakes his head and looks out the window.

SAM (CONT'D)

I think it might be helpful if you start writing it down.

HENRY

Writing what down?

SAM

What the voices are saying. Write down the exact words when you hear them. Okay? Henry?

Henry hasn't been listening.

HENRY

What?

SAM

Write down what the voices are saying.

Henry grabs a pen and a pad of paper from the desk and begins writing.

SAM (CONT'D)

They're talking to you now?

Henry continues writing furiously. When he finishes he stares at his own jagged cursive

SAM (CONT'D)

Can I see?

Henry hands the pad over. Sam studies it, straining to read the handwriting.

SAM (CONT'D)

(reading)

"Write down what the voices are saying... They're talking to you now?"

(looking at Henry)

That wasn't a hallucination, that was me talking.

HENRY

You come inside my head, Doctor,
and show me how to tell the
difference.

SAM

(continuing to read)

"Stay, Henry, stay. Stay. Stay.
Stay."

(looking at Henry)

You're hearing this voice now?

Henry nods, rubbing his palm over his scarred forearm.

SAM (CONT'D)

Do you recognize the voice?

HENRY

Yes.

SAM

Who is it?

HENRY

I don't know.

SAM

You just said you did.

HENRY

It's a woman. I know her, but I
don't know who she is.

SAM

I don't understand.

Henry says nothing, only scratches his forearm. Sam notices the fresh burn on Henry's arm. He stands, goes around the desk, gently takes Henry's arm and inspects it.

SAM (CONT'D)

What's this from?

HENRY

I burned myself.

Sam looks closer. He notices the old burn scars that constellate Henry's forearms.

SAM

(more firmly)

What are these scars from?

Absently, Henry looks at his forearms.

HENRY
Cigarettes, I guess.

SAM
Why do you have cigarette scars on
your forearms?

HENRY
Because I keep burning myself.

Sam nods and studies Henry for a moment. He releases Henry's arm and sits on the edge of the desk.

SAM
Why do you want to hurt yourself?

HENRY
I guess it's practice.

SAM
Practice for what?

HENRY
For Hell.

Sam takes a deep breath and exhales.

SAM
You think you're going to Hell?

Henry nods.

SAM (CONT'D)
Why?

HENRY
Because of what I did.

SAM
What did you do?

Henry shakes his head, stares out the window.

SAM (CONT'D)
Whatever it is, we--

HENRY
I know you're trying to help me,
Doctor. And thank you. But it's too
late.

SAM
Why is it too late?

Henry stands and grabs his bookbag off the floor.

HENRY
Saturday at midnight I'm going to
kill myself.

He rubs his arms and smiles.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I need to get ready.

He walks out, leaving a stunned Sam alone in the room.

INT. COLUMBIA PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL -- AFTERNOON

Sam walks down the corridor of the Mental Health Ward. He knocks on an office door marked: Mobile Crisis Unit. No answer. As he's about to knock again he hears a commotion at the end of the hallway.

Two strapping PARAMEDICS are wrestling a fiercely agitated, heavy-set woman, DAISY, toward one of the rooms. She appears to be homeless, wearing layer upon layer of filthy clothing, her hair matted, her skin dirty and bruised.

Standing beside the paramedics, DOCTOR SCHLEGEL, a gaunt man with a sparse goatee, tries to calm the woman.

DR. SCHLEGEL
Come on, Daisy. We've got your
television turned on and
everything. Take it easy.

DAISY
I AM NOT A NAZI! I AM NOT A NAZI,
GODDAMN YOU!

DR. SCHLEGEL
Nobody's calling you a Nazi, Daisy.
Come on, now.

Sam hurries down the corridor toward the disturbance. Daisy falls to the floor and the paramedics, unable to force her into the room, try to hold her still as she thrashes in their arms.

Dr. Schlegel has prepared a hypodermic and now crouches, waiting for an opportunity to stick Daisy.

DAISY
I AM NOT A NAZI!

DR. SCHLEGEL
I know it, Daisy, I know it.

DAISY
(beginning to sob)
You can't treat me this way. I am
not a Nazi! I don't deserve this.

DR. SCHLEGEL
Believe it or not, sweetheart, it's
for your own good.

The paramedics hold her tight and Schlegel sticks the needle
in Daisy's arm.

DR. SCHLEGEL (CONT'D)
If you'd remember to take your
pills, we wouldn't have to go
through this every month.

DAISY
I'm not a Nazi. I'm lovable.

DR. SCHLEGEL
You are.

DAISY
(already beginning to
fade)
I'm lovable.

The paramedics hoist Daisy to her feet and lead her
peacefully into the bedroom.

Dr. Schlegel sees Sam for the first time and smiles, a little
embarrassed.

DR. SCHLEGEL
Hey, Sam. The glamorous world of
psychiatry, huh?

They shake hands and Schlegel leads Sam back toward the
Mobile Crisis Unit office.

DR. SCHLEGEL (CONT'D)
So what brings you to Club Meds?

SAM
I wanted to check the protocol on
involuntary committal.

(MORE)

SAM(cont'd)

I've got a student threatening to kill himself.

DR. SCHLEGEL

Jesus, tell him to take a number. Well, the rules are pretty straightforward. If he says he's gonna hurt himself or someone else, we can take him in. But we can only hold him here for forty-eight hours.

SAM

Forty-eight hours? What are we going to do in forty-eight hours?

They stop outside the MCU office.

DR. SCHLEGEL

Hold his hand, feed him some pills.

(beat)

If we catch him in the actual attempt, that's different. He's broken the law. But just based on a threat? Without a court order, we can't keep him for long.

SAM

He wants to do it Saturday at midnight. If we take him in now he'll be out by then.

DR. SCHLEGEL

What, he's got an appointment to off himself?

SAM

That's what he told me. Saturday, midnight.

DR. SCHLEGEL

So maybe we should pick him up Friday, hold him through the weekend.

(shaking his head)

As you just saw, it's not a real fun process. If there's any way to avoid it, avoid it. What do you have him on?

SAM

He won't take any pills.

(beat)

(MORE)

SAM(cont'd)

He wants to die, Jeff. I've got
three days to convince him not to.

EXT. TWELFTH STREET -- DUSK

Sam is walking home when he stops to watch PIANO MOVERS at work. Using ropes and pulleys, they hoist a Bechstein baby grand toward the open windows of a fourth-floor apartment.

PIANO MOVER 1 acts as the foreman, issuing commands.

PIANO MOVER 1

Easy, easy.

A small BOY, accompanied by his MOTHER, runs down the street holding a red balloon. He trips and falls and the balloon begins to float away.

BOY

(yelling at escaping
balloon)

Wait! Wait!

The piano movers hear the boy's cries and see the balloon. Piano Mover 1 makes a valiant effort to capture the escaping balloon; he runs after it and leaps... but he can't quite reach it.

Everyone watches the red balloon drift skyward.

PIANO MOVER 1

Sorry, kid. It's gone to balloon
heaven.

Sam smiles and enters his building, where the DOORMAN greets him.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT -- DUSK

Lila meets Sam at the door and kisses him on the lips.

LILA

I didn't think you were going to
make it. I need you to make a fire.
You're the only Eagle Scout I've
ever dated.

She leads him into the bedroom.

SAM

I never made Eagle Scout. The Troop Master caught me drinking Mad Dog 20/20 in my tent with Lydia Eumanian.

LILA

Lydia Eumanian?

SAM

The horniest thirteen-year-old in Northern New Jersey.

Lila curls up at the foot of her bed and watches as Sam grabs a bundle of twigs from beside the fireplace and starts laying down the kindling.

LILA

Only because I never lived in Northern New Jersey.

Sam begins stacking the logs.

LILA (CONT' D)

Are you okay, baby? You look a little tense.

SAM

That student. Henry. He told me he was going to kill himself Saturday night.

LILA

Kids at Columbia are always talking about killing themselves. It's hip. It's like wearing black.

SAM

I don't think it's a front for this one. Saturday at midnight, he says. Just like that. Like it's a date he's made.

Sam rolls an old newspaper and inserts it beneath the stacked logs.

LILA

Why Saturday?

Sam strikes a match and lights the fire.

SAM

Hm?

LILA
 Why does he want to do it on
 Saturday? What's so special about
 midnight Saturday?

Sam watches the kindling catch.

SAM
 He left before I could ask.

Confident that the fire is in good shape, Sam walks over to the bedside table, picks up the phone and dials a number. He waits for a moment and then shakes his head.

SAM (CONT'D)
 (on phone)
 Beth, it's Sam again. Where are
 you? You all right? Uh, okay, give
 me a call when you get this.

He hangs up and sits on the edge of the bed.

SAM (CONT'D)
 I'm starting to get a little
 worried about her.

LILA
 I'm starting to get a little
 worried about you, baby. It's a
 hell of a job, listening to these
 crazy boys and girls all day.

SAM
 At least I get you all night.

Lila grabs Sam by the collar and pulls him over to her. They kiss.

SAM (CONT'D)
 Don't go crazy on me.

INT. BETH LEVY'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Thursday

Sam sits behind the desk and Henry sits facing him. Sam holds a typed contract.

SAM
 I want to propose a deal. I've
 written up a contract.
 (MORE)

SAM(cont'd)

It says you won't do anything to hurt yourself without contacting me first. And here's my card. It has my home phone and cell phone, so you can call me whenever you want.

Henry leans forward and takes the contract and business card from Sam. He reads the contract quickly, signs his name, and hands it back to Sam. He pockets the card.

HENRY

Saturday at midnight I die.
Consider yourself contacted.

Sam, bewildered, looks at the contract for a moment and then sets it aside.

SAM

Why Saturday?

HENRY

It's my twenty-first birthday.

SAM

I think the tradition is to go out and get drunk, not blow your brains out.

HENRY

Have you heard of Tristan Rêveur? He was one of the Dada artists. When he was eighteen he told everyone he would live three more years and then go to New York and kill himself. And that's exactly what he did. He came to New York for his twenty-first birthday, saw the sights, and shot himself in the head.

Both of them are silent for a while.

SAM

What about your parents? Have you considered what this might do to them?

HENRY

They don't care.

SAM

How do you know that?

HENRY
It's pretty obvious.

SAM
Do they live around here?

HENRY
No. They're over in Mahlus Gardens.

SAM
Mahlus Gardens? Where's that?

HENRY
It's a cemetery in New Jersey. I
thought you read my file.

SAM
(startled)
I did. It didn't mention anything
about that.

HENRY
It's a little out of date, then.

Henry stands, walks over to the office window and looks out
across the campus.

SAM
Any other family?

Henry shakes his head.

SAM (CONT'D)
Friends?
(off Henry's silence)
Who are you closest to?

HENRY
What do you mean, closest to?

SAM
If you got into trouble and you
needed someone, who would you go
to?

HENRY
I am in trouble.

Henry does not say this in a self-pitying way. He is simply
stating a fact.

SAM
Yes, I think you are.

HENRY

Then you've got your answer.

Sam does not understand.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I came to you, Doctor. I guess that means I'm closest to you.

SAM

To me? We met two days ago.

Henry inspects his fingernails.

HENRY

There was a girl.

SAM

(perking up)

A girlfriend?

HENRY

I barely even talked to her. She was my waitress at this diner I used to go to. On Canal Street.

(beat)

She'd keep filling my coffee cup. She'd say, "Is everything okay?" I mean, I know waitresses are always asking that, but... this is stupid.

SAM

No, it's not stupid. This waitress, did you ever get her name?

HENRY

Athena.

SAM

Athena? Really?

(beat)

All right, that's a start.

HENRY

No, it's not. She was in my life for a few minutes and now she's gone.

SAM

She's not gone. She's somewhere else.

HENRY

There is no somewhere else. If
you're not in my life, you don't
exist.

SAM

(smiling)

You think I disappear when you're
not watching?

HENRY

I'm always watching.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

We're back in the DRIVER'S POV again, speeding along the
Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. The Brooklyn Bridge looms in the
distance, Gothic arches majestically lit.

We look at the green-eyed woman, but she's speaking to
someone in the backseat. Her mouth moves but everything is
silent.

We turn to the road again. The bridge is waiting for us.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK ZOO -- AFTERNOON

MONTAGE:

Henry enters the Zoo beneath the Delacorte Clock, the bronze
animals playing their instruments, marking the hour.

Henry watches a lone silverback GORILLA who sits on a large
rock, staring back at Henry.

Henry sits on a park bench, watching an OLD MAN throw bread
crumbs to a horde of squawking pigeons.

Henry sits in the last row of the bleachers overlooking the
seal pool. The front rows are filled with screaming CHILDREN.

On an island in the middle of the pool, TRAINERS toss fish to
the SEALS as rewards for various tricks: clapping their
flippers, jumping through hoops, kissing each other,
balancing balls on their noses.

INT. POLAR BEAR TANK -- AFTERNOON

We see a blurred Henry through the window of a polar bear
tank. The BEAR is swimming laps, never pausing.

It's an oddly graceful animal, bulky but elegant, flipping at each end of the pool to kick off the wall (one wall being the window that Henry stands behind).

EXT. POLAR BEAR TANK -- AFTERNOON

Henry seems mesmerized by the bear's endless swim. A well-dressed ENGLISHMAN and ENGLISHWOMAN approach and watch the bear perform its laps.

ENGLISHMAN

(to Henry)

You suppose he's bored?

HENRY

I think he's trying to forget where he is.

The Englishman nods and they all watch the bear in silence for a moment.

INT. POLAR BEAR TANK

The polar bear glides soundlessly through the water, ignoring the blurred faces beyond the glass.

EXT. POLAR BEAR TANK

Somewhere nearby a BABY is howling. Henry looks around but there is no baby in sight.

ENGLISHMAN

And is it working?

Henry looks at the Englishman.

HENRY

It's hard to forget where you are, isn't it?

ENGLISHMAN

You tell me.

Both the man and his wife smile at Henry and walk away. Henry watches them go.

The unseen baby continues to howl.

EXT. COLUMBIA PHILOSOPHY BUILDING -- AFTERNOON

Lila sits cross-legged in the grass lawn that fronts the Philosophy building, highlighting lines in a textbook. A few feet away, Rodin's bronze *Le Penseur* sits in permanent contemplation.

SAM (O.S.)
So what's he thinking?

Lila looks up from her book and sees Sam staring at the statue. She smiles and studies the Thinker for a moment.

SAM (CONT'D)
I think therefore I am?

LILA
It's not thinking anything. It's a statue.

SAM
You're kind of literal minded, you know that?

She grins and tosses aside her book.

LILA
You grade two hundred papers in a week, see how literal minded you get.
(beat)
You met with that student today?
The suicidal one?

Sam squats down beside Lila and picks at the grass. He rests his BRIEFCASE on the ground beside him.

SAM
He came in, yeah.

LILA
And? Why does he want to die?

Sam stares at Lila for a while and she looks away, flustered.

LILA (CONT' D)
I'm sorry, is that a stupid question?

Sam shakes his head. He takes Lila's hand.

SAM
No. It's the question. I just don't
have an answer yet.

LILA
And you... did you...

She's obviously uncomfortable, not sure how to proceed.

SAM
I need to find something he wants
to live for.

LILA
How are you going to do that?

SAM
He'll tell me. That's why he keeps
coming to see me.
(checking his watch)
I've got a meeting to get to. See
you at home.

He kisses her on the lips, stands, and begins walking away.
Lila sees that he's left his briefcase lying on the ground.

LILA
Henry!

Sam turns and stares at her. Lila points at the briefcase.

LILA (CONT'D)
Forgetting something?

Sam walks back to her, staring at her the whole time.

LILA (CONT'D)
What's the matter?

SAM
What did you just call me?

LILA
(confused)
What?

SAM
You just called me Henry.

LILA
Baby, I think I know your name by
now.

SAM
But you called me Henry.

Lila holds up her hands.

LILA
Hey, don't shoot.

SAM
No, it's just--

LI LA
I know who you are, Sam. I promise.

SAM
Okay. Okay.

He grabs his briefcase, kisses her again, and walks away. She watches him go.

EXT. HUNGARIAN CAFE -- MORNING

Friday

Henry sits on the sidewalk outside the cafe, playing cat's cradle with a string. He's good, creating intricate patterns and undoing them.

Sam walks up to him.

SAM
Hey. You're early.

HENRY
I skipped glee club today.

SAM
Oh.
(beat)
That's a joke, right?

HENRY
Yes, sir.

Sam leads Henry inside.

INT. HUNGARIAN CAFE -- CONTINUOUS

A small, dark cafe where STUDENTS and PROFESSORS drink coffee and eat homemade pastries. Bad art lines the walls.

Henry and Sam find seats in a corner of the room, far away from everyone else.

The song playing on the radio ends; the new song is "I Shall be Released."

Henry sits up straight when he hears the song. He stares at the nearest stereo speaker as if trying to figure something out.

HENRY

I can't escape this song.
(looking at Sam)
Why did you want to meet here?

SAM

The Hungarian Cafe? Sentimental favorite. When I was an undergrad I worked here.
(pointing)
I lost my virginity under that table.

HENRY

(shocked)
You what?

SAM

I used to lock up every night. So one time I brought my girlfriend here and we had a bottle of wine, and, you know, one thing led to another. It wasn't very comfortable.

Henry laughs and shakes his head.

HENRY

I never had a shrink tell me something like that.

SAM

(looking up at the artworks)
They still have the same bad art on the walls.

HENRY

(looking at the art)
Tristan Rêveur used to say that bad art is more tragically beautiful than good art, because bad art documents human failure.

SAM

I don't know about this Tristan Rêveur guy. I think you ought to choose your role models a little more carefully.

(beat; very sober now)

You do understand that I'm required by law to report anyone who physically threatens himself or others?

Henry laughs.

SAM (CONT'D)

What's funny?

HENRY

You take all this so seriously.

SAM

Should I not take it seriously? Is that what you're telling me? Is this a joke?

HENRY

I'm not talking about Saturday. I am going to die on Saturday. I just mean your role. The psychiatrist. You play it well.

Sam considers this for a moment.

SAM

Why do you think I'm playing a role?

Henry smiles but does not answer.

SAM (CONT'D)

Are you playing a role? The Suicidal Romantic? Why'd you choose that role? Why do you want to die?

The smile disappears from Henry's face. He rubs his palm over the burns on his forearm.

HENRY

I don't want to keep hurting people.

SAM

Who did you hurt?

HENRY

I don't know.

Henry is becoming more and more distraught. He stares at the floor, picks at his fingernails. But Sam won't let it rest -- he knows he's on to something important.

SAM

Have you done something, Henry?
You've hurt someone?

HENRY

I don't know. Maybe.

SAM

You do know. What have you done?

Henry, still staring at the floor, begins to shake his head violently.

SAM (CONT'D)

Is that why you're thinking about
suicide? Is that it? You need to
punish yourself? What happened?

HENRY

I don't remember.

SAM

You don't want to remember. But you
have to. You can't escape from the
truth. Whatever it is you've done,
you have to face it.

Suddenly Henry stops shaking his head and looks straight at Sam, a strange smile on his face.

HENRY

If I can't escape from the truth,
we're all in serious trouble, Dr.
Foster.

EXT. HAMILTON LAWN -- COLUMBIA CAMPUS -- AFTERNOON

Sam and DR. LEON PATTERSON, a middle-aged blind man wearing dark glasses, sit on folding chairs, facing each other over a fold-away chess table.

A small radio on the grass plays Billy Holiday. Sam moves his queen.

SAM
Queen to g4.

LEON
Billy Holiday. I remember her
singing at the Five Spot, years
ago.

SAM
I wish I could have heard her.

LEON
Yes. Well, I wish I could have seen
her.

SAM
Here, I want to show you something.
Give me your hand.

Sam pulls a small, pale-blue Tiffany's box from his blazer pocket, opens it, pulls out a diamond ring and hands it to Leon.

Leon rotates the ring between his fingers and rubs the stone.

LEON
It's certainly a very hard diamond.

SAM
That's what I asked for. I said,
"Give me the hardest diamond you've
got."

Leon hands the ring back to Sam and then claps him on the shoulder.

LEON
Congratulations, Sam. I'm very
happy for you. Does she know?

Sam returns the ring to his blazer pocket.

SAM
Not yet. I want the mood to be
right before I propose. The last
few days... I'm having a hard time
with one of Beth Levy's patients.
He wants to kill himself Saturday
night.

LEON
Henry Letham.

SAM
(surprised)
You know him?

LEON
Beth told me about him. He's been planning this suicide for quite some time. The good news is, he's still meeting with you. He's looking for help.

SAM
You've been shrinking heads for thirty years. I figured you could give me some ideas.

LEON
Knight to c3. Check.

Sam moves Leon's knight for him and studies the chess board.

LEON (CONT'D)
Do you remember the dream of the burning boy that Freud refers to?

SAM
Vaguely.

LEON
Vaguely meaning no?

SAM
Right.

LEON
He describes a man whose child is dying. The father sits by the boy's bed, night after night, mopping the sweat from the boy's forehead, bringing him water to drink. All for nothing. After the child dies, they give him a wake, set up a circle of candles around his body. The father is exhausted, of course. He goes to sleep in the next room. And he dreams that his boy stands beside him, holding his arm and whispering, "Father, can't you see that I'm burning?" When the man wakes up he runs into the next room and sees that one of the candles has fallen onto the shroud and set the dead boy on fire.

SAM

He noticed the heat or the light
and his unconscious figured out a
fire had started.

LEON

Probably. That's the logical
explanation. But what's
interesting, what interested Freud,
is the way the father's unconscious
dealt with that knowledge. Some
part of him knew that a fire had
started, but rather than waking
immediately he created a dream-
version of his child, to act as a
messenger.

SAM

He wanted his boy alive again. The
fire could wait a moment, he wanted
his boy to stay with him. What made
you think of it?

Leon smiles, tapping his cane on the floor in time with the
beat.

LEON

I never stop thinking about it. I
heard that story fifty years ago
and I still can't get it out of my
mind. Our imagination wants to
protect us from everything.

A shadow falls over the chess board and Sam turns around.
Henry stands behind him, staring at Leon. Henry's face is
even paler than usual, his eyes wide in disbelief.

Sam stands and grips Henry's shoulder.

SAM

Henry! Didn't expect to see you. Do
you know Doctor Patterson?

Leon rises from his chair and extends his hand in Henry's
direction.

LEON

Hello, Henry.

Henry ignores the offered hand. He can't take his eyes off
the old man's face.

SAM
(to Henry)
What's the matter?

HENRY
(to Leon, in a dazed
whisper)
What are you doing here?

Leon is confused, unsure whether he's being spoken to or not. He withdraws his extended hand.

LEON
Excuse me?

HENRY
You're dead.

Leon is puzzled for a moment but smiles.

LEON
Not yet, I'm happy to say. Dr.
Foster, I'll leave you two in
peace. We'll finish the game later,
yes?

Leon walks away, tapping the ground before him with his cane.

SAM
Are you all right? Here, take a
seat.

Henry remains standing. He watches Leon disappear around a corner before turning on Sam.

HENRY
You're playing games with me.

SAM
What are you talking about?
Nobody's playing games.

HENRY
(furious)
Why did you bring him here? Are you
torturing me?

SAM
Henry--

HENRY
What are you doing to me?

SAM
What are you talking about?

HENRY
That's my father, goddamn you.

Sam stares at Henry for a moment and then sits.

SAM
Dr. Patterson never married. He has
no children.

HENRY
I know my father.

SAM
Listen--

HENRY
You think I wouldn't recognize my
own father?

SAM
I thought you told me your father
was dead.

HENRY
He is dead. He died and they buried
him and that was him sitting here.

SAM
Henry, think about it for a minute.
Dr. Patterson is alive and well.

Henry doesn't say anything for a while. He rubs his scarred
forearms in silence. Finally, gesturing at the campus about
them, the buildings and trees and students:

HENRY
Everything you believe is a lie.

SAM
Then tell me the truth.

Henry closes his eyes for a moment.

HENRY
Your troubles will cease and
fortune will smile upon you.

Sam stares at the student, perplexed.

SAM
Where did that come from?

But Henry is already walking away.

EXT. CORNING DORMITORY -- LATER

Sam and a CUSTODIAN stand by the entrance. A specially-marked Mobile Crisis Unit ambulance pulls up. Dr. Schlegel steps out, followed by the two burly paramedics from before.

SAM
We can't wait any longer.

DR. SCHLEGEL
Let's do it.

All four men enter the building.

INT. DORMITORY HALLWAY

Sam knocks on the door to room 313. There is no sound from within.

The custodian flips through the keys on his massive key ring. The other men wait in silence.

CUSTODIAN
Here we go.

He slips the master key into the lock and opens the door.

INT. HENRY'S DORM ROOM

The room is very dark. The custodian walks over to a window and pulls the shade up. Weak sunlight streams in.

CUSTODIAN
Jesus.

The room is small and almost empty: there is a bare mattress in one corner and a chair by the window.

A phone and answering machine are on the chair.

Every inch of the walls and ceiling is covered with minuscule handwriting, an endless loop of black ink. Sam steps closer to the wall and examines it.

The phrase FORGIVE ME repeated again and again and again.

The paramedics exchange glances. Dr. Schlegel studies the handwriting carefully. Something on the floor catches his eye and he stoops to pick it up.

DR. SCHLEGEL

Trouble.

Dr. Schlegel hands a small box to Sam.

INSERT EMPTY BOX OF .38 CALIBER CARTRIDGES

Sam walks over to the answering machine.

INSERT PHONE MACHINE

The number 1 is flashing in the LED display.

Sam looks at Dr. Schlegel, who nods. Sam pushes the play button.

For a moment there is nothing but static. In the background we hear a murmur of voices and distant sirens. After a few seconds of this a female voice:

FEMALE VOICE

Stay Henry stay stay stay Henry
 stay stay stay Henry stay stay stay
 Henry stay stay stay Henry stay
 stay stay Henry stay stay stay
 Henry stay.

EXT. DORMITORY

Sam and Dr. Schlegel stand alone on the steps while the paramedics stand in front of the ambulance, smoking cigarettes and watching the COLLEGE GIRLS stroll by.

SAM

Now what?

DR. SCHLEGEL

Not much we can do at this point.
 We don't have the manpower for a
 stakeout or anything like that.
 I'll notify the police but they
 won't do anything.

SAM

Why not?

DR. SCHLEGEL

Because they're New York City cops,
that's why not. They've got more
important things to do than look
for depressed college students.

SAM

Then I'll find him.

DR. SCHLEGEL

Okay. If you spot him, give me a
call and we'll pick him up for you.
But do me a favor, Sam?

SAM

What's that?

DR. SCHLEGEL

Be careful. A guy this far gone's
got nothing to lose.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

DRIVER'S POV

We're on the ramp leading up to the Brooklyn Bridge. The Gothic towers, massive and imposing, rise above us. It's late, traffic is light, and we're moving fast.

INT. CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE -- LATE AFTERNOON

Henry sits, head bowed, eyes closed, in a forward pew of the enormous cathedral. An enthusiastic blonde TOUR GUIDE is leading a group of Midwestern TOURISTS up the nave, pointing out the sights.

TOUR GUIDE

The largest stained glass window,
above the entry-way -- looks like a
kaleidoscope, doesn't it? --
contains over three thousand
separate pieces of glass. Some of
the best craftsmen from around the
world have worked on the Cathedral
of St. John the Divine, but it's a
long way from finished. It won't be
complete for at least another
century.

The tour group exits the cathedral, leaving Henry alone in the building. He raises his head toward the ceiling.

HENRY'S POV

The roof of the cathedral is so high, and the lighting so poor, that it's impossible to see the ceiling.

From somewhere inside the building a BABY'S howl echoes. Henry looks around, wondering where the sound is coming from. He gets up and begins to follow the noise.

Everywhere he goes statues of the saints stare down at him, unsmiling.

No matter where he stands, the baby's howl seems just as far away. He walks up the nave, toward the entrance.

The cathedral is very dark, the nave very long. His footsteps echo off the stone walls. Finally he reaches daylight and exits.

EXT. CATHEDRAL

Henry examines the hallucinogenic peace fountain on the cathedral's grounds. Saint Michael, winged and victorious and sword-wielding, has just decapitated Satan, whose headless body is plunging into the abyss.

Henry walks over to the fenced-off garden behind the Peace Fountain. The one PEACOCK in Manhattan lives in this garden.

Henry, behind the fence, watches it strutting about, fanning its gorgeous array of feathers.

BOY (O.S.)

Mommy, is that man going to die?

Henry wheels about. The small BOY we last saw holding a red' balloon stands a few yards away, holding his MOTHER'S hand.

He has a new red balloon.

Both mother and child stare at Henry. Finally the mother tugs her son away, but the child continues to stare over his shoulder at Henry.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Sam sits at the kitchen table. The documents, from Henry's folder are spread out before him: transcripts, application materials, etc.

Sam studies a passport photograph of Henry for a moment then continues to sift through the material while Lila, sitting on the opposite side of the table, eats take-out Chinese food.

SAM
(examining a memo)
He refused to take the mandatory swim test. Maybe he's afraid of water.

LILA
(chewing)
Mm.

SAM
Citations for Studio Art.
Apparently he's an accomplished painter.

LILA
Did you ever hear from Beth Levy?

SAM
No. Listen to this: "Of all the students I have encountered at Columbia, Henry Letham has the most fertile imagination. If he maintains his concentration he will create new worlds with his art."

LILA
Clearly that professor wants to fuck Henry Letham.

Sam, still paging through the documents, laughs.

SAM
There's the graduate student cynicism I know and love.

LILA
What exactly are you doing, baby?

Sam looks up at her.

SAM
What do you mean?

LILA
You're letting this kid take over your life. It's not your job to track down missing students.

Sam is quiet for a moment.

SAM
Whose job is it?

LILA
I just don't think it's healthy to
be so obsessed with one patient.

SAM
I don't think it's healthy, either.
But if I don't help him, no one
else will. He's alone in the world.

LILA
Maybe you're right. Maybe I am a
cynic. But it seems to me that he's
using you.
(beat)
You want your fortune cookie?

SAM
It's all yours.

Lila cracks open the cookie and pulls out the fortune.

LILA
(reading)
"Your troubles will cease and
fortune will smile upon you."

Sam slowly looks up at her. All the color has drained from
his face.

LILA (CONT'D)
And not a moment too soon, that's
all I can say.
(noticing Sam's
expression)
What's the matter, baby? Sam?

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Sam stands outside an apartment door, holding the Henry
Letham folder. He rings the doorbell. No answer. He rings
again. He bangs on the door. No answer.

SAM
(yelling)
Beth?

Finally the door opens, still chained.

SAM (CONT'D)
 (quieter)
 Beth? It's Sam. Are you okay?

DR. BETH LEVY unchains the door and walks back into the apartment. Frizz-haired and overweight, Beth looks bad. She obviously hasn't showered in days, or changed her clothes.

INT. BETH'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Sam follows her inside, closing the door behind him. The only light in the apartment is from the streetlights.

Beth sits on the floor, her back against a sofa.

SAM
 How you feeling? I'm sorry, I
 should have come earlier.

Beth is not paying any attention to him. Sam sits down a few feet away from her.

SAM (CONT'D)
 Beth?
 (forcing a laugh)
 They've got you doped up on some
 serious painkillers, huh? What are
 you on, Vicodin? Percoset?

BETH
 There was no surgery.

SAM
 What do you mean? The appendectomy--
 they decided not to operate?

BETH
 I made it up.

SAM
 You... why?

BETH
 Do you want to play? Can we play a
 kissing game?

She begins crawling toward him on her hands and knees.

BETH (CONT' D)
 I always wanted to kiss you. Let's
 play a kissing game. Okay?

Sam holds up his hands.

SAM

Beth...

She stops abruptly and sinks back on her haunches.

BETH

No, I'm too old for you. I'm too fat. You like them young and skinny, don't you? Like that little slut you live with.

SAM

Stop.

Beth's face seems on the verge of collapse.

BETH

Don't hate me, Sam. Please don't hate me.

SAM

How could I hate you?

BETH

Not that it matters. Not that any of it matters.

SAM

This has something to do with Henry Letham.

Beth laughs very hard. It is not a pleasant sound.

BETH

Oh, yes, yes, it does! Hurrah, you win! It does have something to do with Henry Letham. You win the grand prize. Very good, very good, ten points. Thank you for playing, Henry.

Sam cocks his head and looks at her more closely.

SAM

It's Sam.

BETH

I remember you. Sad, sad Sam. Henry's got quite an imagination, doesn't he? I remember you.

(MORE)

BETH(cont'd)

I remember cleaning your bathroom floor, on my hands and knees, between the tiles, behind the sink, everywhere.

Sam is speechless for a moment.

SAM

That was twenty years ago. What does that have to do with Henry?

BETH

Everything has to do with Henry.

SAM

You know he's planning to kill himself this weekend?

BETH

No more Mondays, anyway. That's the good news. I never liked Mondays. We played make-believe. Didn't we? We played make-believe for so many years. Except it wasn't us playing.

SAM

Do you know where I can find him? Beth?

BETH

Ask his mother.

SAM

His mother? His mother's dead.

BETH

Ask her anyway.

INT. BETH'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Sam has managed to get Beth into bed. She sleeps now while Sam sits at the foot of the bed, looking through papers from Henry's folder.

He dials a number on his CELL PHONE.

SAM

Hello? Yes,. I'm sorry to bother you at this hour. My name is Dr. Sam Foster, I'm a psychiatrist at Columbia University. Yes. I'm calling about a student named Henry Letham.

Sam listens.

SAM (CONT'D)
 He's your son? He... I'm sorry,
 this is very strange. He told me
 you had died... Hello? Hello?

Sam stares at the cell phone. He dials the number again and listens. Nobody answers.

BETH (O.S.)
 You have no idea what's going on,
 do you?

Sam turns and sees Beth sitting up in bed, watching him. She is calmer now, but her eyes are still bloodshot and wild.

SAM
 He lied to me.

BETH
 Trust me, Sam-- the truth is worse
 than the lie.

EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE -- NIGHT

We watch the battered old Volvo glide over the Hudson, beneath the lighted suspension cables.

EXT. SUBURBAN ROAD -- NIGHT

Sam drives down dark New Jersey back roads.

He pull into the driveway of a small, rundown house. No lights are on inside.

INT. SAM'S VOLVO -- CONTINUOUS

Sam checks the address on the form in Henry's folder. He looks up, sees 9625 on the mailbox. He parks the car.

EXT. LETHAM HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Sam gets out of the car and walks to the doorstep. The house is dark. Sam rings the doorbell. No answer. He rings again.

MRS. LETHAM (O.S.)
 I've been waiting for you.

Sam spins around. MRS. LETHAM sits in the darkness on a porch swing. She wears a silk kerchief around her head, the kind that chemotherapy patients sometimes wear.

SAM

Mrs. Letham? I'm Dr. Sam Foster. I called before?

(beat)

Sorry to bother you at this hour, but it's an emergency.

MRS. LETHAM

I thought you'd never come visit.

She stands and approaches Sam. She has a limp. She's a kind-looking woman, but weary, with dark circles below her blue eyes and wisps of gray hair straying out from under the kerchief.

SAM

I would have called earlier, except... to be honest, I didn't even know you were alive.

MRS. LETHAM

I guess it's easy to forget me, all alone out here in the country.

SAM

Your son's not well.. That's what I'm here about. I'm trying to find him. He's... he's threatened suicide.

Mrs. Letham laughs but the laugh turns into a cough. She limps to the front door.

MRS. LETHAM

I know why you came. Not because of me. You came to see Olive, didn't you?

Sam frowns.

SAM

Olive?

MRS. LETHAM

I know you did.

She opens the door, flicks on a light and leads him inside. In the light we can see that Mrs. Letham has a wine-stain birthmark on her left cheek.

INT. LETHAM FOYER -- CONTINUOUS

The house is immaculate. The windows are spotless; the chandelier by the staircase glitters; the hardwood floor is polished and gleaming.

But there is no furniture to be seen anywhere. Sam and Mrs. Letham's footsteps echo in the empty house.

A black Neapolitan MASTIFF pads into the room and stares at the newcomer. The dog is massive, at least 160 pounds, slobber-jawed, its black eyes tiny in its huge head.

SAM
(under his breath)
Jesus.

MRS. LETHAM
Here she is. She's been lonely. Me and Olive keep each other company. It feels like we've been alone in this house for a thousand years.

SAM
Hey, Olive. How you doing, girl?

The mastiff stares at him impassively.

MRS. LETHAM
She doesn't remember you anymore, you've been away so long.
(beat)
Let me fix you something to eat. I have some leftovers in the fridge.

SAM
No thank you, I ate. Do you know how to contact your son? Any friends or relatives he might have gone to see?

But Mrs. Letham limps into the kitchen anyway and Sam is forced to follow her. Olive pads in after them.

INT. LETHAM KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

The kitchen shines like the rest of the house. Someone has spent hours scrubbing every surface until it gleams.

Mrs. Letham opens the refrigerator and looks through it.

The refrigerator is empty.

MRS. LETHAM

Most days I don't say a single word. I'm silent so long sometimes I forget how to speak. It's so quiet here.

SAM

Mrs. Letham, we have an emergency. Henry's in danger.

Suddenly, Mrs. Letham seems close to tears. She closes the refrigerator and looks at Sam.

MRS. LETHAM

Do you hate me? You must hate me. Is that why you did it? Because you hate me?

SAM

I don't hate you at all. Your son needs help. That's why I'm here.

Mrs. Letham smiles and takes Sam's hand.

MRS. LETHAM

I knew you'd come back, eventually. It was so quiet without you, so lonely. But now you've come back and you're never going to leave.

Sam is quiet for a moment, searching Mrs. Letham's smiling face.

SAM

Who do you think I am, Mrs. Letham?

MRS. LETHAM

Don't play these games anymore. Not anymore.

SAM

Who am I?

MRS. LETHAM

You think I don't know you, Henry? You think I don't recognize my only son?

Mrs. Letham wraps her arms around Sam and squeezes him to her.

MRS. LETHAM (CONT'D)

Oh Lord, I missed you. I missed you so much. I could never stay angry at you. I know you didn't mean to hurt me.

Sam nods. He speaks very quietly, very carefully. They are still locked in an embrace.

SAM

Mom?

MRS. LETHAM

Yes, baby?

SAM

How did I hurt you?

MRS. LETHAM

It doesn't matter anymore. Let's not talk about it, please.

SAM

Where do I go on the weekends?

MRS. LETHAM

You go the city. You've been going to the city since you were old enough to take the train.

SAM

And where do I go in the city?

Abruptly, Mrs. Letham goes cool. She breaks off the hug.

MRS. LETHAM

You used to go to your classes, before you met Athena.

SAM

Athena?

MRS. LETHAM

(increasingly angry)

Now you might not even graduate, your grades are so bad.

SAM

Do you remember where Athena lives?

MRS. LETHAM
Athena this, Athena that, always
Athena, beautiful Athena. I'm sick
of Athena! I'm sick of her!

SAM
Mrs. Letham--

Sam abruptly stops talking, seeing what we now see. Blood trickles down the side of Mrs. Letham's face, leaking from underneath her kerchief.

A large drop of the blood falls and splatters on the white-tiled floor.

Mrs. Letham sees the blood and grabs a sponge from the sink. She drops to her knees and begins violently scrubbing at the spot on the floor.

MRS. LETHAM
How could you? Your own mother, how
could you?

Meanwhile the blood is beginning to stream down her face. She scrubs ferociously but more and more blood spatters on the tiles.

Sam kneels beside her.

SAM
Let me look at your head.

When he reaches for her kerchief she slaps away his hand and snarls.

MRS. LETHAM
You did this!

Olive leaps upon Henry, knocking him to the floor, biting viciously at his face and throat.

Sam desperately holds the mastiff off, the slobbering jaws inches from his jugular.

Mrs. Letham watches for a few seconds before speaking.

MRS. LETHAM (CONT'D)
Olive! Off!

Upon her command the mastiff immediately disengages and retreats. Sam bleeds from the hands, neck, and face.

MRS. LETHAM (CONT'D)
You better leave, Henry. You're not
welcome anymore.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM-- EARLY MORNING

Saturday

Sam sits while an INTERN finishes sewing up the gash on his
neck.

INTERN
The Percoset will make you a little
drowsy, so--

SAM
I know.

SHERIFF KENNELLY knocks on the open door and peeks in.

SHERIFF
Dr. Foster? I'm Sheriff Kennelly.
Could I have a word with you, sir?

The intern drops the needle into the biohazard waste
receptacle and exits the room.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)
You got bit up pretty good. Got
your rabies shot already?

SAM
Yes.

Sheriff Kennelly pages through a notebook.

SHERIFF
Now, I've been looking through the
report Deputy Carlyle gave me. And
I just wanted to check on
something. You said the assault
took place at 9625 Rickover Street?

SAM
That's right.

SHERIFF
Home belonging to the Letham
family.

SAM

Right, her dog attacked me. She's-- Mrs. Letham-- she's very sick right now. She's had some sort of head trauma, and she's showing signs of schizophrenic paranoia. She's all alone and she needs help. She should be in a hospital.

SHERIFF

The thing is, Doctor, I knew Maureen Letham. I went to high school with her.

SAM

Oh. Okay, well maybe you know her son, then. Henry. He's a patient of mine at Columbia University. That's why I visited her.

SHERIFF

Sure, I remember Henry. Pale, skinny kid. Always reading.
(laughing uncomfortably)
Kind of gave me the creeps.

SAM

That's him.

SHERIFF

What's strange, Doctor, what I'm trying to figure out, is who you were speaking with over at 9625 Rickover Street.

SAM

I'm sorry, I thought we already established that. Maureen Letham.

SHERIFF

There's a basic problem here I'm trying to work out. See, I mentioned I went to high school with Maureen Letham. I also went to her funeral. She's been dead for six months.

Sam stares at the sheriff, dumbfounded.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Car wreck. Her and her husband. As far as I know, that house is empty still. The family's trying to sell it.

SAM

I was talking to Maureen Letham last night. We were talking about her son.

SHERIFF

Well, it's probably just someone's confused. How long they keeping you here?

SAM

I've got to head back to the city as soon as possible. Listen, 9625 Rickover Street: I was there. Henry's mother was there.

The sheriff stares at Sam. Finally he nods and stuffs his notebook into his jacket pocket.

SHERIFF

All right, Dr. Foster, we'll be in touch. I've got your number.

The sheriff turns to leave. When he's halfway down the corridor, Sam calls out to him.

SAM

Sheriff?

SHERIFF

Yep?

SAM

Maureen Letham. Did she have a birthmark right here?

Sam points to his left cheek. The sheriff squints at Sam.

SHERIFF

Yes sir, she did.

EXT. WEST 44TH STREET -- NIGHT

Henry walks down one of the few blocks near Times Square that still looks like the old Times Square: erotic bookshops, peep shows, adult theaters.

Everyone else on the street is dressed for the cold night, but Henry still wears the same T-shirt he's had on all day. He doesn't seem to notice the cold.

He looks up at the marquee of a porn movie theater. INT.
PORNO THEATER -- NIGHT

He walks down the aisle and finds a seat in the front row. We hear the soundtrack: the usual moans and gasps over the usual cheesy music.

CLOSE ON HENRY

We watch Henry's face bathe in the flickering light from the screen.

Henry looks weary. His hair lies flat and wet across his scalp. Now, below the synthesized music and the grunting we hear a low and distant thump.

The thump slowly gets louder-- it's a heartbeat. Louder and louder until all other sound is masked.

Finally we see the screen. A FETUS curled up within its mother's womb, silently swimming in the amniotic fluid.

We pull back to see the other viewers in the theater. Many of them are asleep, street people who went inside to escape the cold.

Those still awake stare at the screen as if nothing strange were happening. A grizzled old VETERAN in an army jacket. Two TEENS from the suburbs, wearing their varsity jackets. An OBESE MAN, peering through coke-bottle lenses.

And we go back to Henry, who sits silently watching the screen.

Back on screen, a montage of a life in the form of brief clips from what could have been home movies.

A hospital nurse presents the baby boy to his mother. The boy rattles the bars of his crib. The boy takes his first steps.

HENRY
(under his breath)
Stop.

In each new image the boy is slightly older. Sledding down a snowy hill. Blowing out candles on a cake.

Henry turns to look at the projector, lighting the screen with its story.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Please stop it.

On screen: the boy raising his hand in class. Down by the shore, throwing a tennis ball for Olive (the mastiff looks exactly like she did when we first saw her). Kissing a girl for the first time (judging from his closed eyes and hesitant pucker). Reading a novel. Stealing second base. Drinking whiskey with his friends.

Henry, tormented by what he sees on screen, keeps looking back at the projector's white light.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Stop! Stop! Turn it off!

On screen: the boy smoking a cigarette (and now, if we haven't before, we recognize that it's a younger Henry on screen). Arriving for his first day of freshman year at Columbia. Shooting pool with friends in a smoky bar. Sitting in the bleachers cheering for the New York Yankees.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(beginning to sob)

Stop! Stop!

Walking down Broadway with the GREEN-EYED WOMAN, whom we recognize from the driver's POV sequences.

Driving across the Brooklyn Bridge with the green-eyed woman and two passengers in back whose faces we can't make out.

HENRY (CONT' D)

(sobbing; barely able to speak)

Stop... stop...

A terrible noise fills the theater-- steel colliding with steel at high speed. The screen goes black.

Henry bolts up from his seat and runs from the theater.

After a few seconds, two words appear on the bottom of the screen, a subtitle.

FORGIVE ME.

The subtitle does not fade away. The men in the theater stare at the screen. Nobody says a word.

EXT. TWELFTH STREET -- DAWN

Sam parks his car down the block from his building and walks toward home. Halfway there he stops to watch piano movers at work across the street.

They are the same piano movers we saw before, and they seem to be hauling the same piano into the same apartment.

PIANO MOVER 1

Easy, easy.

Sam stops in his tracks. He has been here before.

A small boy, accompanied by his mother, runs down the street holding a red balloon. He trips and falls and the balloon begins to float away.

BOY

Wait! Wait!

The workmen hear the boy's cries and see the balloon. Piano Mover 1 makes a valiant effort to capture the escaping balloon: he runs after it and leaps... but he can't quite reach it.

Sam stares at the rising balloon in disbelief.

PIANO MOVER 1

Sorry, kid. It's gone to balloon heaven.

Everything but the time of day is the same: the cars in the street, the kid's crestfallen expression, the red balloon disappearing into the gray sky.

Sam runs across the street and confronts Piano Mover 1.

SAM

You were here on Thursday. You were moving this piano on Thursday, too.

The man is engaged in the difficult business of hoisting a piano into a fourth-floor apartment and doesn't have time for this kind of banter.

He looks briefly at Sam and then back to the Bechstein.

PIANO MOVER 1

Can I help you with something, pal?

SAM

That kid with the balloon, the exact same thing happened on Thursday.

PIANO MOVER 1

We're a little busy here. Why don't you go bother someone else?

Sam watches the workmen on the fourth floor ease the piano into position.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

Sam staggers in the front door, exhausted. Lila comes out of the bedroom. She stops in her tracks when she sees him, all bandaged and battered, then hurries over to him.

LILA

What happened to you?

Sam shakes his head. How can he possibly explain what has happened to him? He limps toward the bedroom. Lila, nonplussed, follows after him.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

LILA

I was calling people all over the city looking for you. I was about to call the police.

Sam checks the clock: 8:12 a.m. He begins to undress, pulling off his sweater.

LILA (CONT'D)

What's going on, Sam?

Sam sits on the edge of the bed, considering the question.

SAM

I don't know.

LILA

I don't know? You run out in the middle of the night and don't come back until eight in the morning, no phone call, no explanation, looking like someone tried to murder you? Don't tell me I don't know.

Sam lies down on the bed, his clothes half-removed. He's too exhausted to have a real conversation, too bewildered by the events of the last few hours, too numbed from the Percoset.

SAM

You want a better answer, ask someone else.

LILA

Excuse me?

SAM

Lila, I'm seeing things that don't make any sense. Okay? I'm meeting people that are supposed to be dead, . Beth Levy's had a nervous breakdown and this kid I'm supposed to be treating knows what's going to happen before it happens.

LILA

You were at Beth Levy's all night?

Sam groans.

LILA (CONT'D)

You're losing me, Sam. I swear to God, you're starting to lose me.

Sam grunts, already half-asleep.

LILA (CONT'D)

(heavy sarcasm)

I'm glad we had this conversation. I think we really cleared the air on some important issues.

(jangling the car keys)

I'm going to the library.

SAM'S FIRST DREAM

The screen goes black. And then bright white. The white gradually resolves and we see that we're staring into the glare of a small flashlight.

The flashlight disappears and Sam's face replaces it, Sam's face looming large, staring directly into the camera.

SAM

Can you hear me, Henry? Henry? I'm a doctor, I'm going to help you. Can you hear me?

END OF SAM'S FIRST DREAM

Sam opens his eyes. He's lying on his bed, still half-clothed. He looks at the clock. 3 p.m. He sits straight up. He's running out of time.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT -- AFTERNOON

Sam prepares to leave, after having showered and changed clothes (though he still wears the sweater he always wears).

He looks at himself in the foyer mirror. His eyes are haunted.

INT. HALLWAY -- AFTERNOON

Sam pushes the elevator button and waits. The door slides open.

Henry stands there. He slept on the street and it shows. Sam stumbles backward.

SAM
 Jesus Christ.
 (beat)
 What are you doing here? How did
 you know where I live?

The doors start to slide shut and Sam gets into the elevator. They descend.

SAM (CONT'D)
 I've been looking all over for you.
 I saw your mother last night.

Henry seems uninterested.

SAM (CONT'D)
 You told me she was dead.

Henry stares at Sam, never blinking.

SAM (CONT'D)
 Everyone seems to think your
 mother's dead. But I was standing
 in her kitchen talking to her.

Sam indicates the bandages on his neck.

SAM (CONT'D)
 I met Olive.

HENRY

Olive's dead, too. We put her to sleep when I was twelve. She had a tumor in her liver.

SAM

Olive's not dead. She is very much not dead.

HENRY

She was a good girl. She used to kill the rabbits.

Sam grabs Henry and presses him against the wall of the elevator.

SAM

Quit playing with me.

HENRY

(with mock surprise)
Doctor Foster!

SAM

I want to know what's going on. How do you know the future?

HENRY

I make it up.

The door opens onto the seventh-floor. A MUSLIM WOMAN in full veil looks into the elevator. Sam releases Henry. The woman decides not to get in.

Everyone is silent until the doors slide shut again.

SAM

Ever since I met you impossible things have been happening. I'm trying to help you but it feels like I'm losing my mind.

(beat)

What happened to your parents?

Henry shrugs.

SAM (CONT'D)

There's something you want to tell me. Why can't you admit that? If you just wanted to kill yourself, you'd have already done it. So why don't you? Why do you keep coming to me?

HENRY

Because you're the only one who can help me.

Henry looks down at the cigarette burns marking his forearms.

HENRY (CONT'D)

You want to know why I keep burning my arms?

SAM

Yes.

HENRY

I want to see if I'll feel any pain.

SAM

Do you?

HENRY

Nothing.

Sam looks up at the floor indicator lights. Henry looks up as well. 3...2...1.

INT. LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

They exit the elevator in the lobby and stand in front of a mirrored wall.

HENRY

I showed you my scars. Now let's see yours.

Sam frowns and touches the bandage on his neck but Henry shakes his head.

HENRY (CONT'D)

No, your old scars.

Sam is silent.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Come on, don't be shy.

SAM

How do you know about that?

Henry says nothing. Finally Sam rolls up the cuffs of his shirt. He holds his arms in front of him, palms up.

Three narrow scars carve up each wrist. Henry looks at them for a moment and then Sam rolls the cuffs back and buttons them.

SAM (CONT'D)

First year of medical school. I read somewhere you're supposed to do it in warm water, to make the blood flow quicker. I was always a good reader. So I filled the tub and I cut my wrists and I waited. Beth Levy found me. She was in the room across the hall, she came over to borrow a textbook. She dragged me out of the bath and she put tourniquets on my arms and she called an ambulance. I'd lost six pints of blood by then, but they saved me. They sewed me up and I was good as new.

For the first time, Sam has Henry's complete attention. The young man stares intently at Sam, waiting for the rest.

SAM (CONT'D)

I was in the hospital two weeks. Beth came in every night and sat with me for a few hours. She was my only visitor. I didn't feel like talking. Not to Beth, not to anyone. So she didn't talk. She sat in the corner of the room, knitting. Beth's not a natural with the knitting needles. I mean, she's maybe the smartest human being I've ever met, but this was not one of her skills. She never stopped, though. She'd screw up all the time, she'd have to unravel the whole night's work, but she never stopped. Do you know how good it felt to have her in there? Not talking, not giving me advice, not doing anything but being there with me.

Henry looks at Sam's navy-blue cable-knit sweater.

HENRY

The sweater you always wear.

SAM

(nodding)

The morning the hospital released me, she came to give me a ride home. She looked exhausted. I guess she stayed up the whole night. She handed me the sweater and said, "Tada! Finished!" I tried it on and it fit, perfectly. And she said-

HENRY

"It's cold outside, Sam."

Sam stares at Henry.

SAM

She told you the story?

HENRY

Maybe I told her the story.

SAM

What the hell does that mean?

HENRY

You're leaving something out, aren't you? You never told me why.

SAM

Why I slit my wrists?

Sam thinks about it for a moment and then shrugs.

SAM (CONT'D)

I thought everything was a lie. The whole world was a lie.

HENRY

What if it is?

Sam shrugs again.

SAM

What if it is? It's not worth dying over.

HENRY

Why not? Why live if everything you believe turns out to be a lie?

SAM
Because it's a beautiful lie.
(beat)
And I want to see what comes next.

Henry shakes his head.

HENRY
No. You don't.

He starts to leave but Sam grabs him by the arm.

SAM
I can't let you go, Henry. I'm
taking you to the hospital.

Sam begins leading Henry out the door.

HENRY
Get your hands off me.

SAM
I can't do that.

Henry pulls a revolver from his waistband (the bulk of it had been hidden below his T-shirt). He presses the muzzle against Sam's neck.

HENRY
I think you can.

SAM
Let me help you, Henry. Let me try.

Henry says nothing but Sam sees the look in his eyes and releases his arm.

HENRY
You want to know what happened to
my parents? I killed them. I killed
my mother, I killed my father.
(beat)
I'm going to Hell.

SAM
I don't believe in Hell.

HENRY
But I do, Dr. Foster. I think we're
already there.

Henry walks out the building's front door.

Sam takes a deep breath. He stares at his reflection in the mirrored wall.

After another moment he steels himself and walks out the door.

EXT. MORNINGSIDESIDE HEIGHTS -- CONTINUOUS

SAM

Henry--

But Henry is nowhere in sight. Sam looks around, trying to spot him, but he's gone.

A taxi waits at a red light. Sam runs over to it and climbs into the backseat.

INT. TAXI -- CONTINUOUS

SAM

Canal Street. A diner.

The CABBIE, a middle-aged Filipino wearing a Mets cap, turns and raises his eyebrows at Sam.

CABBIE

Which diner? There's maybe twenty--

Sam hands the cabbie two twenties.

SAM

Just keep the meter running.

EXT. CANAL STREET DINER -- AFTERNOON

Sam jumps out of the taxi and hurries into the diner.

INT. CANAL STREET DINER -- CONTINUOUS

Sam approaches WAITRESS 1.

SAM

Is there an Athena working here?

WAITRESS 1

Yeah. Athena!

Sam raises his eyebrows, amazed that the search was so easy.

A bull-necked BUTCH COOK wearing a dirty apron, her grey hair shaved to the scalp, a buxom mermaid tattooed on her thick forearm, pushes open the kitchen door, cleaver in her hand.

BUTCH COOK
Yeah, what?

SAM
Athena?

BUTCH COOK
What do you want?

SAM
Are you a waitress?

BUTCH COOK
Do I look like a goddamn waitress?
I'm the cook.

SAM
Right, my mistake. I'm very sorry.

MONTAGE

Sam and the cabbie work their way east on Canal Street, stopping at every diner but finding no green-eyed Athena. It's getting darker and darker and time is running out.

The wind picks up and rain starts to fall.

EXT. DINER -- NIGHT

Sam ends up at a rundown old diner on the corner of Canal and Allen.

The cabbie drives off. This is the last diner.

INT. DINER

Sam seats himself at the counter. Outside it's pouring.

SAM
Is there a waitress here named
Athena?

WAITRESS 2
Athena? Nah, never heard of her.

SAM

All right. Could I just get a cup
of coffee, please?

Sam reaches into his blazer pocket for his wallet and feels
something else.

He pulls out the engagement ring and turns it in the light,
watching the diamond sparkle.

WAITRESS 3 (O.S.)

You planning on proposing to
Athena?

Sam looks up. Waitress 3 apparently overheard his previous
conversation. He pockets the ring.

SAM

No, I'm-- do you know her? We're
talking about the same Athena?
Green eyes?

WAITRESS 3

You a cop?

SAM

No, no, nothing like that. More
like a matchmaker. I know a guy who
really likes her but he's shy.

WAITRESS 3

She doesn't work here anymore. But
she's in my acting class.

SAM

She is? Could you--

WAITRESS 3

What are you, a stalker?

SAM

No, honestly, look...

He pulls out his wallet, removes a photo I.D., and shows it
to her.

SAM (CONT'D)

See, I'm a psychiatrist.

WAITRESS 3

(examining I.D.)

You're a psychiatrist, huh? So you
can give Valium prescriptions?

SAM

I could give them to a patient of mine who needed them, yes.

WAITRESS 3

Okay. Good luck finding Athena.

She walks away. Sam stares at her back and then up at the clock on the wall, which reads 7:30. Sam looks at Waitress 3 and takes a deep breath.

INT. ACTOR'S STUDIO -- NIGHT

A cramped stage in front of several rows of seats. ATHENA (the green-eyed woman from the DRIVER'S POV sequences and the LIFE MONTAGE) and DEVON, a young man with bleached hair, stand on stage, rehearsing.

Sam enters through a door in back.

ATHENA

What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune that she sends you to prison hither?

DEVON

Prison, my lord?

Sam sits in the back row and watches. His hair is wet from the rain.

ATHENA

Denmark's a prison.

DEVON

Then is the world one.

ATHENA

A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o'th'worst.

DEVON

We think not so, my lord.

ATHENA

Why, then 'tis none to you. For there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison.

DEVON
Prison, my lord?

Athena grins and shakes her head.

ATHENA
Denmark's a prison. We already had
this conversation.

DEVON
Oh, crap. Um...

ATHENA
(prompting)
Why, then your ambition--

DEVON
Why, then your ambition makes it
one. 'Tis too narrow for your mind.

ATHENA
O God, I could be bounded in a
nutshell and count myself a king of
infinite space, were it not that I
have bad dreams.

(normal speaking voice)
That's my favorite line in the
whole play.

DEVON
Good line. I better get home and
rest the pipes. I've got a solo in
choir tomorrow morning.

ATHENA
Thanks for reading with me. You're
a good Rosencrantz.

DEVON
You're a good Hamlet.

Devon grabs his satchel from the side of the stage and walks
out. Sam stands and walks down to the stage, where Athena is
packing up her things.

SAM
I always pictured Hamlet as a man.

ATHENA
That's a bit narrow-minded of you,
isn't it? This is the lesbian
Hamlet. All the parts are played by
women.

SAM

Oh. That's... new.

ATHENA

I'm joking. I'm Ophelia. I just get so sick of playing her. Lovely, lost Ophelia. Things get tough and she jumps in the drink. Hamlet hogs all the good lines.

SAM

Yeah, he's notorious for that.

ATHENA

We've met before, haven't we?

SAM

I don't think so.

He offers his hand and they shake.

SAM (CONT'D)

Sam Foster.

ATHENA

Athena. Are you joining the class? It's good. Kenny's a bit of a dictator, but you get used to him.

Athena pulls on her sweater.

SAM

No. I've been looking for you, actually.

ATHENA

That's flattering. Please tell me you're a casting director.

SAM

A psychiatrist, unfortunately. I... I have a patient who likes you very much.

Athena smiles, but clearly she's not thrilled by this conversation.

ATHENA

This is an unusual way of getting a date. What's his name?

SAM

Henry Letham.

ATHENA
(shaking her head)
Never heard of him.

SAM
I was hoping you might know where to find him. He mentioned you once. He has a crush on you. You served him coffee in a diner, you were nice to him. The way he tells it, you were the one good thing that ever happened to him.

ATHENA
Henry. Is he very pale? Very thin and very pale? His arms are scarred?

SAM
You remember him?

ATHENA
He always ate pecan pie with his coffee. I remember that. But we never spoke outside the diner. Except...

SAM
What? Tell me.

ATHENA
I feel stupid saying this stuff to a psychiatrist. You'll think I'm insane. But I had the strangest feeling about him. I mean, he's this ragged-looking guy, probably hasn't bathed in months, but something about him... I'd seen him before, somewhere. I'd known him. What's wrong with him?

Sam hesitates for a moment. This is privileged information, after all, which he is loathe to disclose. But there's no time left for playing by the rules.

SAM
He's going to kill himself at midnight.

Athena opens her mouth to speak, closes it, then opens it again.

ATHENA

Why?

SAM

He seems to believe he did something terrible. And he thinks this is the only way he can make up for it. That's my guess, anyway.

ATHENA

I wish there was something I could do. Actually... this probably won't help, but I did run into him one night at A. Smith's.

SAM

A. Smith's?

ATHENA

The art bookstore. He was sitting in the back, reading. I don't know, maybe he hangs out there. It's nearby. Come on, I'll show you.

She leads Sam out the side door.

EXT. BACK ALLEY -- CONTINUOUS

A very dark, narrow alley piled with trash. Somewhere nearby a BABY is howling.

The storm has died down but a drizzle continues, and rainwater drips from the overhanging fire escapes.

ATHENA

I know, it's gross.

Sam steps in a puddle and looks down.

SAM

Christ.

He steps out of the puddle and looks up. Athena is nowhere in sight.

SAM (CONT'D)

Athena?

The alley seems to be darker and narrower than before; the streetlights shining from the head, of the alley seem farther away.

SAM (CONT'D)

Athena?

He begins jogging forward. After a few steps he slips on a wet wrapper and falls backwards onto the trash-strewn pavement, banging his head.

For a moment everything is dark.

SAM'S SECOND DREAM

Sam's face suddenly fills the screen. He is staring directly into the camera.

SAM

Come on, kid, you need to stay
conscious. Come on, come on, stay
with me.

END OF SAM'S SECOND DREAM

Sam opens his eyes. He's lying on his back in the alleyway. He stands, unsteadily, and brushes the dirt from his clothes. He pats his blazer pocket and realizes it's empty.

Panicked, he looks through all his pockets. The RING is gone.

He bends down and tries to find the ring, but there is no light to see anything.

He looks up. The only light comes from beneath the side door into the actor's studio.

Sam opens the door and lets the light from the studio shine into the alleyway.

ATHENA (O.S.)

Why, then 'tis none to you.

INT. ACTOR'S STUDIO -- CONTINUOUS

Sam frowns and leans into the studio. He cannot believe what he sees.

On stage, Athena and Devon are performing the same duologue as last time.

ATHENA

For there is nothing either good or
bad but thinking makes it so. To me
it is a prison.

DEVON
Prison, my lord?

Athena grins and shakes her head.

ATHENA
Denmark's a prison. We already had
this conversation.

Sam legs go weak. He shakes his head back and forth.

DEVON
Oh, crap. Um...

SAM
(under his breath)
No.

ATHENA
(prompting)
Why, then your ambition--

DEVON
Why, then your ambition makes it
one. 'Tis too narrow for your mind.

ATHENA
O God, I could be bounded in a
nutshell and count myself a king of
infinite space, were it not that I
have bad dreams.

Sam bolts, letting the side door close behind him. Neither
Athena nor Devon seem to notice.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
That's my favorite line in the
whole play.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

DRIVER'S POV

We're cruising across the Brooklyn Bridge. The driver's hands
(a man's hands) are on the steering wheel.

We turn to the right and see Athena sleeping in the passenger
seat. The driver's eyes (and the CAMERA) return to the road.

Suddenly, and with no warning, everything changes.

The car shakes and lurches to the right. We see the hands on the wheel desperately trying to control the car, but it's impossible.

Through the windshield we see the road spinning away from us, and then the steel guardrail coming at us far too fast.

INT. LEON'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Leon sits by a partially-opened window, listening to the wind, the rain, the thunder. He sways as he listens, and gestures with his hands, as if he were conducting the storm.

HENRY (O.S.)
You always loved storms.

Leon grabs his cane and stands up.

LEON
Who's that? How did you get in here?

Leon trembles and thrusts at the air in front of him with his cane.

HENRY
It's me, Dad. Henry.

LEON
What are you doing here?

HENRY
What are you doing here? You died. I kissed your cheek at the wake.

LEON
You've got the wrong man. I told you that before. I never had any children.

HENRY
You don't recognize me.

He walks over to Leon, who hears him coming and raises his cane in fear. Henry grabs the cane and pulls the older man closer.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I'm not going to hurt you.

He removes Leon's dark glasses. Leon's eyes swim in their sockets: useless, blind eyes.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Look at me, Dad. Look at me.

CLOSE on Leon's eyes. They seem to stabilize, the pupils dilating, beginning to focus, to work.

Leon looks directly at Henry now. He reaches out and touches the young man's face.

Leon cannot speak. He looks at his own hands, the lines creasing his palms. He looks out the window. A bolt of lightning brightens the night sky and Leon moans.

LEON

Lightning.

HENRY

Do you recognize me now?

Leon turns back to the boy. Leon's face is transfixed with wonder everything he sees is a miracle. He touches Henry's cheek again.

LEON

What are you?

HENRY

I'm your son.

LEON

No--

Henry embraces the older man, buries his face in the psychiatrist's shoulder.

HENRY

Is this my punishment, Dad? You won't recognize me?

LEON

I never had a--

HENRY

Please, please, Dad. Forgive me.

LEON

For what?

HENRY

For killing you.

Leon pushes out of the embrace and takes a half step backward.

LEON
I'm alive.

Henry shakes his head sadly.

LEON (CONT'D)
What are you? Are you a god?

HENRY
A god?

LEON
You perform miracles...

HENRY
Miracles?

He walks over to the living room wall. One strip of wallpaper has begun to peel slightly and Henry tears the strip off the wall.

HENRY (CONT'D)
You think it's a miracle?

Words in black ink are scribbled on the bare wall beneath the paper.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Can you see now?

Henry tears off an entire sheet of the wallpaper, and then another, and then another, flaying the wall.

The phrase FORGIVE ME is written again and again, the familiar endless loop of minuscule, tortured handwriting.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Can you see? It's in my head, Dad.
It's all in my head.

Leon stares at the writing for several seconds, then turns to stare at Henry.

LEON
No--

HENRY
I'm dreaming you.

Leon opens his mouth to speak but no words come out.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I can't get out of it. I try-- I try to wake up, but I can't. I'm trapped here.

LEON

Henry--

HENRY

But I can't die in a dream, right? So if I try to kill myself, I'll end the dream.

LEON

And what happens to us?

Henry stares at the older man for a moment and then abruptly turns and leaves. Leon limps after him.

LEON (CONT'D)

What happens to us?! What happens to us?!

Henry opens the apartment door and slams it shut behind him.

Leon looks at the closed door for a moment and then out the window, where the lightning is becoming more and more frequent.

INT. THE WHITE HORSE TAVERN -- NIGHT

A sprawling old bar in the West Village. Henry, soaking wet from the rain, pushes open the door and enters. The barroom is nearly empty. He approaches the bar.

The BARTENDER is a heavily-muscled bruiser paging through a bodybuilding MAGAZINE.

BARTENDER

You got I.D.?

Henry takes his driver's license out of his wallet and the bartender inspects it carefully. The clock on the wall reads 9:05.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Happy birthday, kid. First one's on the house.

HENRY

A shot of Jack with a Bud back.

BARTENDER

An All-American drinker, that's what I like to see. Coming right up.

HENRY

Isn't this where Dylan Thomas had his last drink?

BARTENDER

(serving the shot and beer)

Yep. He lined up eighteen shots, downed them all, and said, "There, I think that's a record." Then he dropped dead. "Do not go gentle into that good night."

Henry raises his shot glass to the bartender.

HENRY

"Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

Henry gulps down the shot and pounds the glass onto the bar.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Eighteen more for the record.

EXT. EIGHTH AVENUE -- NIGHT

Sam, shell shocked, walks slowly down the block. He looks into the face of every person he passes.

A light rain continues to fall.

SAM'S POV

Every shade of humanity is represented in the quickly passing faces. The beautiful and the ugly, the rich and the poor, the thin and the fat, the happy and the agitated and the expressionless.

Each face comes into focus for a second before leaving the frame.

Sam stops in front of a storefront. A. SMITH'S is written in gold script on the glass.

INT. A. SMITH'S -- NIGHT

Sam wanders through the aisles. He checks the back area, where a few STUDENTS sit on the window ledges, paging through art books. Henry is not here.

A bespectacled CLERK approaches Sam.

CLERK
Can I help you find something?

SAM
Henry Letham.

CLERK
A book by Henry Letham or on Henry Letham?

SAM
No, he's... I thought he might be here. I heard he comes here sometimes.

The clerk calls over to SMITTY, the rumped shop owner, who sits behind the checkout counter paging through a book of photographs.

CLERK
Smitty, you know a guy named Henry Letham?

SMITTY
Sure.
(he looks at Sam)
Something happen to him?

SAM
I need to find him. It's an emergency.

SMITTY
I keep telling the kid to get some sun. It's not healthy spending all your time in bookstores.
(laughing)
Look at me.

SAM
You haven't seen him tonight?

SMITTY

Nah, he hasn't been by in weeks.
You're his father?

SAM

No, I... I teach up at Columbia.

SMITTY

You're his art teacher? Kid's got
talent. I have one of his paintings
here somewhere.

Smitty ducks below the counter and begins delving through the
drawers.

SMITTY (CONT'D)

(crouching)

Here we go.

He stands and spreads an unframed CANVAS over the counter.

INSERT PAINTING

It's a very dark, haunting interpretation of the Brooklyn
Bridge at night. The perspective is unusual, looking straight
up the Gothic arches-- the view you would have if you were
lying flat on your back on the bridge.

SMITTY (CONT'D)

He didn't have any money for the
books he wanted, so he gave me
this. I think I got a pretty good
deal.

SAM

What books did he get?

SMITTY

Tristan Rêveur. What else? The kid
is obsessed with Tristan Rêveur.
Maybe he got that from your class.

SAM

I doubt it. Do you have any more
Tristan Rêveur books?

SMITTY

Nah, he bought me out. It was all
secondhand, out-of-print stuff. So
what do you think? Is he gonna make
it?

SAM

What?

Smitty indicates the painting.

SMITTY

You think he's got what it takes?

Sam stares at the painting and nods.

INT. WHITE HORSE TAVERN -- NIGHT

Henry is drunk. A row of empty shot glasses is lined up before him. The clock reads 10:03. The Band's "I Shall be Released" plays over the stereo system.

HENRY

Could you change the station? They never quit playing this song.

The bartender raises his eyebrows.

BARTENDER

First time I heard it in years.

He changes the station.

HENRY

Where is everybody?

BARTENDER

I guess the rain scared people away.

HENRY

It's my birthday. I want some company.

A crew of soaked TOURISTS stumble into the bar. They speak German. HAUSER, their leader, a tall blonde man with mutton-chop sideburns and a bead necklace, approaches the bartender.

HAUSER

Is this the place of death of Dylan Thomas?

BARTENDER

Yep.

HAUSER

Ah!

He turns to his friends and announces the news in German. They all say Ah! and nod happily.

INT. WHITE HORSE TAVERN -- LATER

The Germans and Henry sit in a circle, all of them very drunk. Hauser is reciting a Thomas poem. He has a strong accent but he gets every word right.

HAUSER

And death shall have no dominion.
Dead men naked they shall be one
With the man in the wind and the
west moon...

Meanwhile, Henry pulls the heavy black revolver from the pocket of his overcoat and places it on the bar.

The bartender, reading his muscle magazine at the far end of the bar, does not notice. Nor do the Germans.

HAUSER (CONT'D)

When their bones are picked clean
and the clean bones gone, They
shall have stars at elbow and
foot...

Henry reaches back into his pocket and dumps six bullets onto the bar.

HAUSER (CONT'D)

Though they go mad they shall be
sane, Though they sink through the
sea they shall rise again...

Henry opens the gun's cylinder, loads one bullet, spins the cylinder.

HAUSER (CONT'D)

Though lovers be lost love shall
not; And death shall have no
dominion.

The other Germans clap and whistle.

HENRY

You want to play a drinking game?

The Germans nod and smile at him but it's clear they have no idea what he's talking about. He aims the revolver at his own head.

The Germans are suddenly very quiet.

He pulls the trigger.

Click.

He offers the gun to Hauser.

HENRY (CONT'D)
You sure you don't want to play?

HAUSER
(refusing the gun)
No, please. This is for drinking
game?

Henry reopens the cylinder, adds another bullet, spins,
presses the barrel to his head.

HENRY
You hear a click, you drink. You
hear a bang, I drink.

Henry winks at the German and pulls the trigger.

Click.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Drink.

Hauser smiles and nods at his comrades. He grabs a full beer
mug from the bar and downs half of it in a gulp.

The bartender looks up, sees what's happening, throws down
his magazine.

BARTENDER
Whoa, whoa, whoa, little brother.
What are you doing?

Henry doesn't answer. He adds another bullet, spins, aims,
pulls the trigger.

Click.

Hauser finishes the beer and places the empty mug on the bar.

The other Germans, less confident that this is really a game,
have slowly begun to back away.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Put the gun down, kid. Come on.

HAUSER
(to bartender)
This is a drinking game.

BARTENDER
The hell it is.

Another bullet into the cylinder. There are four now. Spin, aim, pull.

Click.

HENRY
Drink.

Hauser is nervous now. He stares at his comrades, who can only watch fearfully.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Come on, you're falling behind.

Hauser grabs another beer and swills it down.

Fifth bullet. The same procedure. The bartender is inching closer to Henry. Henry looks at him. The bartender freezes.

Click.

One of the German women starts crying. Hauser drinks as much as he can but spits some of it up.

Henry inserts the sixth bullet into the sixth chamber. He closes the cylinder, is about to spin it, realizes he doesn't have to, smiles at the Germans, presses the muzzle against his temple.

Henry lowers the pistol.

The bartender and the Germans release their breath at the same time.

HAUSER
It is a joke? It is a toy, yes? It
is a toy gun?

Henry points the revolver at the bottle of Jack Daniel's sitting on the bar. He pulls the trigger. The bottle explodes.

Nobody moves. Henry returns the revolver to his pocket. He bows to the Germans.

HENRY
Welcome to America.

He walks out of the silent bar.

INSERT CLOCK -- 11:11

EXT. EIGHTH AVENUE -- NIGHT

Sam is making a call from a phone booth. He ignores the rain.

INT. COLUMBIA LIBRARY STACKS -- CONTINUOUS

Lila sits in her study carrel in the deserted library. On her desk: stacks of books, a laptop computer, and her cell phone, which is ringing. She picks it up.

LILA
Hello?

INTERCUT

SAM
It's me.

LILA
(coldly)
I'm surprised you remember the
number.

Sam tries to answer but then simply shakes his head.

SAM
Are you in the library?

LILA
Where else? The glamorous life of a
graduate student.

SAM
Listen, do me a favor. There was an
artist named Tristan Rêveur--

LILA
Am I your research assistant now?

SAM
We don't have time for this.
Believe me, we do not have time for
this. Tristan Rêveur.

(MORE)

SAM(cont'd)

I need you to find his biography
and tell me where he killed
himself.

LILA

You know--

SAM

Please, Lila.

LILA

All right. It'll take me a minute,
hold on.

Sam waits on the line. Someone taps on the side of the phone booth, behind Sam. Sam waves the person away but there's another tap. Impatiently, Sam turns around.

Leon stands there, smiling in the rain, no longer wearing dark glasses, looking directly into Sam's eyes.

Sam stares at Leon for a moment before speaking.

SAM

Leon?

LEON

I always thought you had brown
eyes.

SAM

You can see me?

LEON

I can see everything. For the first
time, I can see everything.

Sam cannot speak for a moment. Finally:

SAM

How?

LEON

Henry. It's all because of Henry.

Sam shakes his head in stunned disbelief.

SAM

What's happening to us?

LEON

The Buddhists had it right the
whole time. The world is illusion.

SAM
You're telling me we're dreaming?

LEON
No. Henry's dreaming.

INT. CAR -- NIGHT

DRIVER'S POV

We watch a terrible accident from the driver's perspective, through the windshield: the steel guardrails rush toward us and it's too late to swerve.

The collision is utterly, eerily silent.

The CAMERA'S motion follows the head of the driver, slamming forward and then back, a terrible confusion as the car begins to roll, the windshield shattered.

In all this chaos we are thrown from the car, but it's impossible to get any sense of our bearings before the SCREEN GOES BLACK.

EXT. SEVENTH AVENUE -- NIGHT

Henry, soaked by the rain, stands outside a clothes boutique, well lit to attract passers-by. He stares through the plate glass window at the immaculately-attired mannequins.

A sign posted inside the window reads: EVERYTHING MUST GO.

BOY (O.S.)
Mommy, is that man going to die?

Henry, startled, turns and sees the same boy and mother we've encountered several times before. The mother pulls her son closer. They stare at Henry.

The boy holds a red balloon.

Henry looks down. Blood is dripping from his shirtsleeves, down his arms, off his fingertips, splattering on the sidewalk, mixing with the rainwater. He stares at his palms.

Somewhere nearby a BABY is howling.

When Henry looks up again everything on the crowded street has stopped. The cars and trucks and buses have stopped, the people on the sidewalk have stopped.

Everyone stares at Henry. Riders on the city bus lean out the window and stare at him. Bicycle messengers stare at him. A woman walking her dog stares at him, and so does the dog. The newspaper vendor stares at him. People sitting in a restaurant look at him through the window.

Henry closes his eyes. The puddle of blood by his feet grows larger and larger.

INT. COLUMBIA LIBRARY STACKS

INSERT LEATHER BOOK SPINE

The gold-lettered title reads: "La Vie de Tristan Rêveur."

Lila pulls the book off the shelf and begins skimming through the final pages. Her cell phone is wedged between her shoulder and her face.

LILA
Sam? You there?

SAM (O. S.)
Did you find it?

LILA
Yeah. My French is a little rusty.
Let's see... oh, he was friends
with Marcel Duchamp... here it is.

She reads haltingly, translating as she goes.

LILA (CONT' D)
"At midnight on the fifteenth of
March, Rêveur strolled calmly to
the center of the Brooklyn Bridge,
tossed a white rose into the East
River, and shot himself in the
head. He was taken to Bellevue
Hospital and pronounced dead on
arrival."

EXT. EIGHTH AVENUE -- CONTINUOUS

SAM
(on phone)
Jesus, the Brooklyn Bridge.
(beat)
Listen to me. Lila?

LILA
I'm listening.

SAM
I don't know where we are anymore.
I don't know--

LILA
Baby--

SAM
I love you. You hear? It's the one
thing I know is real. I was put on
this world to find you.

LILA
But what's--

SAM
No matter what happens, we'll find
each other.

INT. COLUMBIA LIBRARY STACKS -- CONTINUOUS

LILA
Baby, I don't understand--

EXT. EIGHTH AVENUE -- CONTINUOUS

SAM
(on phone)
We'll find each other.

Sam hangs up. Leon gazes with wonder at everything: the
headlights, the neon, the pedestrians.

SAM (CONT'D)
What time is it?

Leon presses a button on a black faceless watch he wears. A
synthesized voice speaks.

VOICE
Eleven thirty three.

LEON
If Henry dies in his dream, the
dream ends. And if the dream ends--

Leon spreads his open hands to indicate the street, the city,
the world.

LEON (CONT'D)

All gone.

Sam pulls out his wallet, fishes a card from it and hands it to Leon.

SAM

Call the police and tell them Henry's on the Brooklyn Bridge with a gun. Then call Jeff Schlegel at the Mobile Crisis Unit.

Sam runs to the curb and tries to hail a taxi. All of them are occupied.

LEON

Saturday night in the rain. You'll never find a cab.

SAM

Jesus...

Sam sees the subway station on the corner (we're on Eighth Avenue and Fourteenth Street). He starts running toward it.

Leon watches him go and then drops Schlegel's card. It flutters to the sidewalk.

Leon walks away, west on Fourteenth Street. He is the only person on the sidewalk. As he walks farther from the camera, we see for the first time that hi's feet are bare.

In the middle of the block, the streetlight above him flickers and dies. The succeeding streetlights, lined up parallel on opposite sides of the avenue, progressively flicker and die.

Leon disappears into the darkness.

INT. SUBWAY CAR -- NIGHT

Sam's riding on the 6 (he took the L to the 6).

He's alone in the car, except for a MUSLIM WOMAN in full veil. Sam looks at her. Is she the same woman he saw in his building earlier in the day?

She resolutely keeps her gaze on the floor.

The express train passes by on the inside track.

Sam watches it pass. Each fluorescent-lighted car is empty. Except the last car.

Henry stands in the last car, holding onto a pole.

His eyes meet Sam's.

Henry waves goodbye as his train plunges into the tunnel ahead.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE SUBWAY STATION -- NIGHT

Sam runs up the stairs of the station and begins sprinting east. The streets are slick with rain.

EXT. SOUTH STREET -- NIGHT

Sam runs.

EXT. EAST RIVER -- NIGHT

The lights from the Brooklyn Bridge's suspension cables are reflected in the dark waters of the East River.

A white rose floats beneath the bridge, pelted by the falling rain.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE -- NIGHT

Sam finally reaches the great bridge. He runs up the walkway.

Henry stands alone on the walkway beneath one of the two stone arches that rise above the bridge. The Manhattan-bound traffic rumbles by behind him. He ignores the rain.

Henry stares at the giant clockface atop a building in Brooklyn. The clock reads 11:57.

SAM

Henry!

Henry turns and sees Sam running toward him. We now see that Henry holds the revolver in his right hand.

The headlights of passing cars flicker over both men's faces.

Henry smiles.

HENRY

Dr. Foster. I'm glad you came to watch.

SAM

(gasping for air)

I didn't come to watch. I came to stop you.

Henry cocks the hammer of his revolver.

SAM (CONT'D)

(speaking rapidly)

I found your waitress tonight. I found Athena. She remembers you.

The mention of her name seems to make Henry distraught. He shakes his head violently.

HENRY

I didn't mean to hurt her.

SAM

You haven't hurt anyone yet, Henry. Just put the gun down.

HENRY

I've hurt people. I have. I've done something terrible.

SAM

Just put the gun down, Henry. Okay? Put the gun down. Let me help you.

HENRY

It's the only way out. Don't you see that?

SAM

One of the first times I met you, you said you didn't know what was real anymore. Okay, well I thought I did but I was wrong. I don't know what's real, either. And if you die-

HENRY

You're real, Dr. Foster. You tried to save me. You were just a little too late.

(beat)

For the longest time I didn't understand what was happening to me. But now--

SAM

But you waited. Why didn't you shoot yourself as soon as you knew? You wanted me to help you. Why?

HENRY

Because I'm afraid. I don't know what's on the other side.

(beat)

Maybe that's why I can't wake up. I'm afraid to go back there.

SAM

Then don't. Don't go back.

HENRY

It's a dream. It's got to end sometime.

SAM

Listen. Listen to me. If you're wrong, you pull the trigger and you're dead. End of story.

HENRY

I'm not wrong.

Sam nods but says nothing for a moment.

SAM

(very quiet)

Okay. What if you're right? What if it is your dream? Look around. Look around!

Henry takes his eyes off Sam and looks around. The cars race by, headlights streaming. Below the bridge the East River flows. And behind them are the towers of Manhattan.

Everything shimmers in the rainfall. The skyline looks both majestic and fragile.

SAM (CONT'D)

The whole world is in your dream. Athena's here, I'm here, everyone. You kill yourself, you're killing all of us.

(beat)

Stay here. Stay with us.

HENRY

I have to wake up.

The moment he says these words everything goes quiet. The bridge is suddenly empty, no traffic at all, nobody in sight but Henry and Sam.

The rain stops. The stars, normally invisible above the city, now crowd the sky, brighter and more numerous than we've ever seen them.

Then the stars begin to fall, all the stars rain from the sky, leaving burning trails in their wake, the entire sky crisscrossed with these scars.

An apocalyptic howl, the most terrifying noise imaginable, seems to erupt from everywhere and nowhere. The bridge shudders and sways.

Henry shoves the barrel of the revolver into his mouth.

SAM

Please don't. Please--

CLOSE on Henry.

He pulls the trigger.

FADE TO WHITE

Very bright. People in the theater should be shielding their eyes.

As we fade in we see that the bright light is actually a small flashlight, shining directly into the camera.

SAM (O.S.) (CONT'D)

He's still alive.

The camera pulls back to show Henry lying on his back on the walkway, blood streaming from his head. Sam is crouched beside him, holding one of his wrists. In his other hand, Sam holds a small flashlight, which he shines in Henry's eyes.

Sam is not wearing his navy-blue cable-knit sweater, though he was before Henry shot himself.

The camera pulls back farther. This is the Brooklyn Bridge but this is not the scene we just left., A Ford Mustang has just been in a terrible collision.

There is a gaping hole in the windshield on the driver's side. Flames consume the backseat. Smoke spills out the windows. The radio still plays, however: The Band's "I Shall be Released."

One of the Mustang's front tires has blown out. Scraps of black rubber litter the accident scene.

ATHENA is kneeling next to Henry, on the opposite side of Sam, holding Henry's other hand.

Henry's arms are burned and lacerated from the accident.

Other cars have stopped short of the Mustang. All Manhattan-bound traffic has come to a halt. From the distance, we hear the blaring of horns.

ATHENA
(in shock)
He's okay, right? He's going to be
okay?

Sam leans closer to the injured man, so that his face is hovering right above Henry's.

Henry's eyes are open. He appears able to see, but he's losing a tremendous amount of blood. It puddles below him on the asphalt, deep red in the bridge's incandescent lights.

SAM
(to the gathering crowd)
We need an ambulance! Somebody call
an ambulance!

He begins to unbutton his shirt. BETH LEVY gets out of a stopped car and hurries over. She wears the navy-blue cable-knit SWEATER, which she now quickly shrugs out of and hands to Sam.

BETH
Here, use this.

Sam bundles the sweater and presses it against the deep, unseen gash on Henry's head.

BETH (CONT'D)
I just called 911. They're on the
way.

HENRY
(to Athena)
Hold this--

He has Athena hold the sweater to staunch the bleeding.

ATHENA

(to Henry)

Stop bleeding, baby. Okay? You've got to stop bleeding now.

Sam pinches Henry's nostrils and blows into his mouth to make sure the airways are clear.

SAM

He's breathing. Hold that tight.

Sam goes to check on the other two casualties. The first, an old man, lies halfway out of one of the rear windows. Sam checks his pulse. Nothing.

Sam shakes his head and walks around to the other side of the car, but we PULL IN for a closer look at the old man.

It's LEON. Blood leaks from his nostrils and mouth.

On the other side of the car lies MRS. LETHAM, face up, eyes open. Blood streams down her face from a massive head wound. Sam checks her pulse as well, but it's obvious she's dead.

Sam closes her eyelids, hurries back to Henry, and crouches beside him.

ATHENA

His mom and dad? Are they okay?

SAM

They're both gone.

CLOSE ON HENRY'S EYES. We can tell that he has registered this news.

For a moment the frames projected on screen slow from their 24-per-second clip and then melt away entirely. The white screen is replaced by a shot we've seen before: Henry, alone on the empty bridge, walking from the burning Mustang.

The vision disappears as quickly as it appeared, and we're back at the accident scene, watching Sam trying desperately to save Henry.

In the backseat of one of the stopped cars, a BABY, strapped into its baby seat, HOWLS and howls.

A crowd has gathered around the accident scene. From the nearest cars come the drivers and their passengers, circling around Henry.

The strange thing is that we recognize all of them.

The Englishman and his wife. Sheriff Kennelly (not in uniform). A young woman we last saw on the subway, asking Henry about his Spanish Art class, and the businessman who wanted him to quit smoking. Dr. Schlegel and the burly paramedics (not in uniform). A middle-aged Filipino wearing a Mets cap. The various waitresses and cooks we saw in the diners. Devon. Smitty. The Muslim woman in full veil. The bartender from the White Horse Tavern. A crew of blonde tourists standing together. The piano movers.

The boy with the red balloon and his mother.

BOY

Mommy, is that man going to die?

Lila rushes over to Sam, Athena and Henry.

LILA

I'm a nurse.

SAM

All right, keep tabs on his pulse.
If it stops we'll have to start
CPR.

Lila grabs Henry's wrist and checks his pulse against her watch.

SAM (CONT'D)

(to Athena)

What's his name?

ATHENA

Henry.

SAM

Can you hear me, Henry? Henry? I'm
a doctor, I'm going to help you.
Can you hear me?

Henry's lips have begun to pale from the loss of blood. When he speaks, his mouth barely moving, Sam and Athena bend closer to hear.

HENRY

Hail.

Athena looks up. No hail is falling, but the lights on the suspension cables above look like pieces of ice suspended in the air.

ATHENA

It's not hail, baby.

LILA
He's hallucinating.

SAM
Keep him talking.

Henry's eyes are still open but he appear to be fading fast. He is trying to speak and his face contorts with the effort. Athena bends closer to hear him.

SAM (CONT'D)
What did he say?

The blood from Henry's head wound has seeped through the sweater and onto Athena's hand.

Athena struggles to keep from hysteria. She kisses Henry on the forehead. When she looks up we see that her mouth and chin are spotted with Henry's blood.

ATHENA
"Forgive me."

SAM
It wasn't your fault, Henry. I was driving right behind you. Your front tire blew out.

ATHENA
You hear that, baby? It wasn't anybody's fault.

CLOSE ON HENRY'S EYES. Again, it appears that he understands the message. The words have a calming effect; his face is no longer contorted.

SAM
We need an ambulance!

Sam stands up and looks out over the backed-up traffic. We PULL BACK and see that the bridge is jammed with rush-hour commuters. There is no ambulance coming.

Sam crouches down again and peers into Henry's eyes. He takes hold of Henry's free hand (Athena holds the other hand).

SAM (CONT'D)
Come on, kid, you need to stay conscious. Come on, come on, wake up!

Henry mutters something. Sam leans closer to hear.

HENRY
You're real, Dr. Foster.

Sam has no idea what Henry's talking about.

SAM
It's Dr. Williams, Henry. Just stay
with me.

ATHENA
Henry, come on. Come on. I need
you, baby, come on.

LILA
I'm losing the pulse, Doctor.

Sam begins CPR.

ATHENA
Stay, Henry, stay. Stay. Stay.
Stay.

CLOSE ON HENRY'S FACE

The camera shows what Henry sees.

HENRY'S POV of the crowd of faces gathered around him. At first they are clear, each face cleanly delineated. But they begin to blur and merge together.

The camera PANS UP, past the blur of faces. We see the great Gothic arches of the bridge from this angle-- the perspective of a man lying flat on his back.

We have seen this view before, in Henry's painting.

The camera continues to PAN UP, past the glittering towers of Manhattan, up and up into the nighttime sky.

Now the screen is BLACK, but we continue to hear Athena's words.

ATHENA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Stay. Stay.

The screen is black for ten seconds. And we think it's going to stay black, except now we notices pin-pricks of light piercing the darkness.

The stars are back in the sky, but these are the usual pale New York stars, not the hallucinatory fires that scarred the air with their fall.

PAN DOWN to the bridge.

Two ambulances have arrived, as well as several police cars.

The PARAMEDICS (not the same ones we've seen before) load three dead bodies onto stretchers, while the POLICE OFFICERS mark the scene and begin questioning people in the crowd.

A female OFFICER sits with a stunned Athena on the trunk of a squad car.

Meanwhile, a TOW TRUCK OPERATOR begins attaching the hooks and chains to the ruined Mustang. One lane of westbound traffic has already resumed moving.

The people in the passing cars stare out their windows at the carnage.

Sam and Lila, grim-faced and exhausted from their ordeal, stand beside one of the ambulances.

SAM

Too much bleeding. Too much.

LILA

You did everything you could,
Doctor. There was never a chance.

Sam says nothing. Lila touches him on the shoulder, briefly, and walks away.

She's getting farther and farther away. Soon she'll be gone. Sam finally looks up.

SAM

Hey.

Lila turns.

SAM (CONT'D)

Thanks for helping.

Lila smiles sadly.

LILA

I wish we could have done more.

She starts to walk away again.

SAM

You want to grab a cup of coffee
somewhere?

Lila turns again and looks at him.

SAM (CONT'D)
I won't be able to sleep tonight.

Lila hesitates for a second and then nods.

LILA
I'd like that.

Sam begins walking toward her and then stops.

He notices something lying on the asphalt, something glittering amid the debris of the wreck, the broken glass and twisted metal. He kneels and picks it up.

Lila, curious as to what he's found, walks over to him.

LILA (CONT'D)
What is it?

Sam, standing, shows her the diamond ring. It glitters in the lights of the bridge. But we're pulling back now, farther and farther from the wrecked car, the ambulances, the slow-moving traffic.

We're rising higher and higher, above the suspension cables, above the great arches, above the blinking red lights that warn airplane pilots.

All the commotion on the bridge is silent now, nothing but beads of light trickling over the dark river.