

ADMISSIONS

by

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EXT. RURAL ROAD - SPRING MORNING

A tank-sized LEXUS HYBRID winds its way through flawless countryside.

INT. LEXUS - CONTINUOUS

CONRAD HARTMAN, 17, stares blankly out of the passenger-side window, wrapped up in his iPod touch. This kid's got no trouble getting dates. He sips on a soda.

Conrad's father GEORGE HARTMAN, 40's, drives -- upbeat. He presses buttons on the car's navigation system.

GEORGE
Eleven minutes away.

Conrad is oblivious. He sets his soda on the center console.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(loud enough so
Conrad can hear)
Cup holder.

Conrad puts his soda in the holder.

George picks a NECKTIE off of the seat and tosses it over to Conrad -- who ignores it.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Conrad!

Conrad slowly removes his ear buds.

CONRAD
What?

GEORGE
Put it on.

CONRAD
Dad, no one wears ties to these things.

GEORGE
A young man in a tie makes a statement.

CONRAD
That I listen to Gordon Lightfoot and drive a Lexus?

GEORGE
You'll look distinguished.

Conrad ignores the tie, puts back the ear buds, and re-enters musical bliss.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Put on the tie or we're having the
"sex talk".

ON CONRAD'S FINGER

as he raises the VOLUME of his music.

After a moment, George reaches over and gently tugs the ear buds out of Conrad's ears.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
The pudendum, from the neuter
plural of pudendus, is the area of
the female form ...

CONRAD
Uh!

Conrad, defeated, starts to put on the tie. George tries not to smile.

GEORGE
(singing with the CD)
"Carefree Highway, let me slip
away, slip away on you ..."

CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL ROAD - MORNING

A RANGE ROVER passes through the same countryside.

INT. RANGE ROVER - CONTINUOUS

EDITH MARTIN, 40s, drives, arm out the window.

In the passenger seat, AUDREY MARTIN, 17, attractive and very put-together, pecks at an iPhone, her index finger moving at warp speed.

AUDREY
I need a six-letter word for
llama?

EDITH
Vicuña.

AUDREY
How could you possibly know that?

EDITH
Gimme another one.

Audrey returns to her puzzle.

AUDREY
Walk -- starts with an "s".

EDITH
Strut... Saunter...

AUDREY
Six letters --

EDITH
Stride. No -- stroll.

AUDREY
Ends in "y".

EDITH
Sashay!

They High Five.

AUDREY
Okay -- what's another word for
"feckless."

Edith ponders.

EDITH
Honey, feckless is the other word.

AUDREY
Come on. Nine letters.

Edith looks over at Audrey. So beautiful you want to die. And -- so grown up.

Edith turns her attention to the road again. Suddenly, filled with emotion.

HER P.O.V.

of a fork in the road. There is a sign -- "MIDDLETON COLLEGE" -- with an arrow slanting to the left.

Edith doesn't take the turn -- continuing on the same road.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Mom.

EDITH

Mmm?

AUDREY

You just missed the turn.

EDITH

No I didn't.

AUDREY

The sign said "Middleton College"
(short beat)
...not this way.

EDITH

Are you sure?

AUDREY

Of course, I'm sure. What's going
on?

Edith grows increasingly emotional.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

Edith pulls to a stop on the SIDE OF THE ROAD next to a
rail fence. She puts her head on the wheel for a moment.
Then, she looks over to Audrey.

She's about to speak when she notices something THROUGH
THE WINDOW behind her daughter.

EDITH

Wow.

Edith gets out of the car. Audrey is flummoxed. Edith
runs around the car toward the rail fence.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Audrey -- get over here.

Audrey rolls down the passenger window.

AUDREY

What are you doing?

Edith slowly approaches the fence. On the other side,
just a stone's throw away, stands a MARE and her FILLY.

EDITH
 (loud whisper)
 Can you believe this -- aren't
 they beautiful!

The two horses nuzzle each other affectionately -- the
 mother-daughter symbolism not lost on Edith.

AUDREY
 (equally loud
 whisper)
 The tour begins at ten sharp!

EDITH
 It won't start on time. Nothing
 ever starts on time.

AUDREY
 You're willing to derail my entire
 college career so you can gawk at
 livestock?!

Edith, mesmerized, slowly extends her hand across the
 fence --

-- prompting the spooked filly to BOLT from her mother at
 full speed.

ON THE MARE

looking at Edith like, "What the fuck?"

ON EDITH

suddenly overcome with emotion.

EDITH
 (to the Mare)
 I understand.

BACK AT THE CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Edith gets in, doesn't move.

AUDREY
 Can we go now?

EDITH
 Pointless.

AUDREY
 What?

EDITH
The nine-letter word for
feckless... pointless.

Audrey looks at the crossword -- it fits. She then looks at her mom -- confounded by her shortcomings, yet still always surprised by her depth.

CUT TO:

EXT. MIDDLETON COLLEGE - MORNING

A SERIES OF SHOTS reveals post-card views of the campus -- stunning Victorian and Gothic red brick-and-stone buildings, filled with STUDENTS circulating, studying, goofing around. You'd send your kid here in a second.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

George drives between rows of cars parked side-by-side.

GEORGE
Look, Con, I know Middleton's not at the top of your list, but just give it a chance, okay? Sometimes places surprise you.

Conrad continues to stare out of the window.

CONRAD
I'm surprised no one else is wearing a tie.

George comes to TWO OPEN SPACES -- directly across from one another.

He pulls partially into the one on his left -- then shifts his car into reverse.

CONRAD (CONT'D)
Can't you park head-in like most every other driver on the planet?

George begins backing up.

GEORGE
You have much better visibility exiting when you back in. Besides, the physics of the rear wheel base --

CONRAD
Dad!

George SLAMS ON THE BRAKES just before backing into the rear bumper of a Range Rover that has pulled into his intended spot.

He puts the car in park -- gets out.

GEORGE
(calling out)
Excuse me --

Edith and Audrey, who've exited the Rover, turn their attention to George.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
-- you took my space.

Edith points to the space in front of George's car.

EDITH
I thought you were pulling into that one.

GEORGE
I was backing into this one.

She nods knowingly.

EDITH
Oh -- you're one of those.

GEORGE
What does that mean?

AUDREY
(under her breath)
Do not make us late.

EDITH
Look. It's a parking lot.
There's a space. Celebrate.

Edith turns and begins walking toward the Admissions building.

A HORN BEEPS

as George is blocking the drive-way.

Conrad tries to stifle a chuckle.

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Edith and Audrey share an identical speed-walk. Edith glances back toward George and Conrad.

EDITH

I mean, what kind of guy spends
\$100,000 for a hybrid and backs
into parking spaces?

AUDREY

Let it go, mom.

EDITH

I'll bet he irons his underwear.

(beat)

I'll bet he waits thirty minutes
after eating before swimming.

AUDREY

God! What has gotten into you
today?

Edith continues to look back at George.

EDITH

And I'll bet he made his boy wear
that tie.

Audrey lets out a MOAN of exasperation as they continue on.

INT. LEXUS - CONTINUOUS

George has pulled up into the empty space. He's out of sorts as he exits the car, cleans the lenses of his GLASSES.

GEORGE

Can you believe that woman?

(mocking)

"Celebrate."

CONRAD

Dad --

GEORGE

Of course she drives a Range Rover
because we all know that paved
roads are so treacherous. I'll
bet she's never used a turn signal
in her life.

CONRAD

You left out the part about her
being kind of hot.

GEORGE

Really? I didn't notice.

CUT TO:

INT. ADMISSIONS BUILDING - MORNING

ON A BROCHURE ENTITLED -- "THE MIDDLETON EXPERIENCE" as
it's handed out to a group of PARENTS and STUDENTS. On
the cover is a photograph of the campus BELL TOWER.

A PAIR OF HANDS

opens the brochure, revealing a basic map of the campus.

A STUDENT TOUR GUIDE addresses the group with a
confidence inversely proportional to his bedraggled
appearance.

GUIDE

Welcome to "Meet Middleton." My
name is Justin and I'll be taking
you around today. I am a junior
here at the college and a double
major in Music and Horticulture,
unfortunately known as a
"Dingleberry."

Both George and Edith LAUGH, but quickly bring it under
wraps -- refusing to acknowledge that their senses of
humor could overlap in even the slightest way.

JUSTIN

The structure of the day is very
simple. We will tour the campus,
which takes approximately two
hours. We will then break for
lunch, after which you will spend
a portion of the afternoon meeting
with faculty representatives in
the department of your choice.
And by the time the bell tower
sounds the afternoon call, no
doubt, you will have fallen in
love. Are there any questions?

He leaves no time to respond.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
My kind of group. Okay then --
right this way.

As the group shuffles toward the exit, George is focused
on the brochure.

GEORGE
Hey Con -- looks like Middleton
has an observatory.

Audrey, walking next to Conrad, WHISPERS to him.

AUDREY
It's actually a planetarium.

CONRAD
(to George)
It's a planetarium, Dad.

Conrad looks over to Audrey, who gives him a supportive
WINK.

As they file out of the building, Edith and Conrad push
through the door at the same time.

Conrad stops to allow her to pass.

EDITH
Thank you.

As she slides past, she touches his tie.

EDITH (CONT'D)
What a waste of a perfectly
beautiful tie.

CONRAD
Tell me about it.

Edith pats him on the back sympathetically -- walks on.

EXT. ADMISSIONS BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

George sidles up next to Conrad.

GEORGE
What the hell was that about?

CONRAD
It's the truth.

GEORGE

It's none of her business.

Justin brings the group to a stop beside a huge CEMENT PEDESTAL on top of which are large pair of BRONZE BOOTS.

JUSTIN

The college was founded in 1890 by Lowndes Pope Middleton, who as a young man made a fortune in whale blubber before devoting himself full-time to education and philanthropy. His bronze likeness once stood upon this pedestal, but disappeared in the late 1960s.

AUDREY

Why didn't they replace him?

JUSTIN

Well, the boots have become a living metaphor for the mission of Middleton.

AUDREY

Which is?

JUSTIN

I don't really remember.

ON EDITH,

suddenly conscious of George's sub-zero stare.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

The campus itself is situated on just over one hundred breath-taking acres, and several of the original structures, including the Rutledge Chapel, were designed and built by Middleton himself.

EDITH

Have you had any deaths on campus?

Justin is stymied. Other parents and students turn their attention to Edith.

EDITH (CONT'D)

How's security? Will our children be safe?

Audrey bows her head -- shielding her eyes with her hand in near shame.

JUSTIN

Uh -- good news for your kids --
the murder rate has hovered around
zero for about a hundred and
twenty years.

Audrey takes a billfold from her purse and hands her mother five dollars.

AUDREY

I'd like a coffee.

EDITH

Can't it wait?

AUDREY

Coffee. Now. Please.

Audrey's icy stare communicates the subtext. After a beat, Edith takes the money.

EDITH

Extra sweet, right?

Edith peels away from the tour.

JUSTIN

Our next stop is going to be the
Pope Library, the college's
largest, known throughout New
England for being one of the last
bastions of the Dewey Decimal
system.

Just then -- George's PDA vibrates. He removes it from his breast pocket -- studies the message.

GEORGE

It's the hospital.

As George splits off from the group, Conrad puts in his ear buds.

George punches in a call.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

This is Dr. Hartman.

(beat)

Hello?

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(beat)
Hello?

He looks at his phone. CALL ENDED. He notices that there is NO SIGNAL.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Dammit.

He starts wandering in different directions with his PDA outstretched -- trying to get a signal.

CUT TO:

EXT. A SNACK CART - LATE MORNING

Edith holds a large COFFEE.

EDITH

Oh -- and one of those.

The VENDOR hands her an APPLE.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Make it two.

He hands her another and she puts them in her bag. She then reaches out, and grabs a third.

The Vendor shoots her a look.

EDITH (CONT'D)

I hear they keep the doctor away.

VENDOR

How many doctors do you have?

She pays, heads back to the tour.

Along the way she sees

GEORGE

standing atop a six-foot STONE WALL. He's busy wrapping up his call, looking more than a little concerned. She slows as she approaches.

GEORGE

No, it's okay, Larry. Call any time.

He ends the call.

EDITH
These things are so feckless,
don't you think?

GEORGE
Excuse me?

EDITH
These tours.

GEORGE
Feckless? Let me guess -- you're
a high school English teacher.

EDITH
Wrong. How 'bout you?
(short beat)
Let me guess -- Brooks Brothers
model?

George jumps down.

GEORGE
Cardiac surgeon. I was speaking
with a patient.

EDITH
So you can fix a heart over the
phone?

GEORGE
Not exactly. But I can comfort.
Give reassuring counsel.

EDITH
Is he gonna' make it?

The question troubles George.

GEORGE
I don't know.

Edith stops smiling.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. How exactly did we get
there?

He extends his hand.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
George Hartman.

Edith GROANS. Raises her fists skyward in a gesture of exasperated defiance.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
What?

EDITH
Hart-man?

GEORGE
I like things neat, what can I say.

She extends her hand and they shake.

EDITH
Edith Martin.

GEORGE
Edith?

EDITH
I know. I know. But it's gonna make a comeback, wait and see.

GEORGE
Excuse me one moment --

George gets the attention of an approaching STUDENT.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Where's the Pope Library?

The Student points.

STUDENT
It's the building next to the building behind that building.
(beat)
But you can cut through that building there.

GEORGE
Next to the thing?

STUDENT
Exactly.

The Student walks on.

EDITH
Forty-three grand a year and that's the best they can do?

George gives Edith an "after you" gesture. They begin walking.

EDITH (CONT'D)

You made your boy put on the tie, didn't you.

GEORGE

You mean the "waste" of a tie?

EDITH

Well it's obvious he doesn't want to wear it. I was just trying to be encouraging.

George stews for a short moment.

GEORGE

Your girl seems very -- determined.

EDITH

Audrey. I named her after Audrey Hepburn, but it was a serious miscalculation. I should have named her Benito.

GEORGE

A smart-phone fascist?

EDITH

Right? Oh my God, if Audrey had to give up either her phone or a kidney she'd be on dialysis. I'm sure of it.

GEORGE

So is Middleton your first stop?

EDITH

The only stop. I couldn't get her to look at any other place. My husband was supposed to chaperone but he couldn't get away from work.

GEORGE

I told my wife I wouldn't miss this for the world.

George surveys the campus.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
It's a little slice of heaven,
isn't it?

EDITH
Middleton? A little small for my
taste.

George deflates a bit as Edith jogs up the library steps.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - SOON AFTER

Justin, tour group clustered tightly around him, WHISPERS
reverentially.

JUSTIN
The Pope library houses nearly two
hundred thousand volumes, and is
home, as well, to several rare
book collections.

IN THE BACK

George and Edith stand next to each other. After a
moment --

GEORGE
(whispering)
It's not small -- it's intimate.

EDITH
These things are dog-and-pony
shows. They give your child no
idea, whatsoever, of what it would
be like to actually go here. It's
just a day.

A SCOLD of a parent gives George and Edith the stink-eye.

GEORGE
One day can be an eternity.

EDITH
Particularly if you're in the
company of a man who backs into a
parking space.

George is unfazed -- his sparring sea-legs now well
beneath him.

GEORGE

These tours are kind of like a first date. You know? She's pretty. She's smart. She smells good --

EDITH

-- so maybe you'll try to stick your hand up her shirt?

The Scold whips her head around --

SCOLD

Shhhhhh!

Edith flips her the bird behind her back -- George swats it down.

JUSTIN

Currently we have, on loan from the British Library, a manuscript by renowned poet and author Charles Dodgson. Now Dodgson didn't write under his real name --

Audrey's hand shoots up.

AUDREY

(calling out)
Lewis Carroll.

JUSTIN

Very good. Carroll's masterwork, "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," will be with us through the end of the month.

George RAISES HIS HAND.

GEORGE

Isn't it extraordinary that such a small college be given access to a resource such as this?

Edith barely stifles an incredulous LAUGH.

Conrad -- spotting George from across the room -- is outwardly embarrassed by his dad's question.

JUSTIN

("off book" once
again)
I don't really know.
(MORE)

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

We have a ton of cool stuff happen here. Last month, Snatches of Pink gave a free concert on the quad. You know, shit like that.

Justin is oblivious to the odd looks from Audrey and several PARENTS.

EDITH

Justin --

AUDREY

(under her breath)

Mom --

EDITH

-- on a scale of one to ten, could you rate the effect on your life, respectively, of the visiting manuscript versus the Snatches of Pink concert?

Justin lets loose with an awkward CHUCKLE.

JUSTIN

Pink rocked it pretty hard.

Edith looks at George -- confident in her return of serve.

EDITH

(whispering)

Pink rocked it pretty hard, George.

Edith turns and heads off in Audrey's direction. George continues watching her as he moves toward Conrad.

JUSTIN

(back "on book")

Uh -- if you will, follow me through the north exit, and we'll move on to Osborne Hall, named for the fourth of Middleton's seven illegitimate children. Just a side note, as we walk you'll see the Alumni fountain on your left. The fountain serves as center stage for one of our oldest campus traditions -- the "Victory Plunge".

Edith raises her hand.

EDITH
Speaking of fountains ...

JUSTIN
Second floor -- back right.

EDITH
Thank you.
(to Audrey)
Be right back.

JUSTIN
Okay -- the Victory Plunge.
Right. Back in April of 1945, an
Osborne resident, after hearing
the allies had declared victory in
Europe, jumped in the fountain and
the rest of the dorm followed.
The celebration is reenacted every
year. If you stay around late
enough this afternoon, you're
welcome to join them.

GEORGE'S P.O.V. -- Edith heads up the stairs to the
second floor bathroom.

He then turns his attention to Conrad.

GEORGE
(to Conrad)
Pretty tight, huh?

CONRAD
Dad, please don't say "tight".

GEORGE
Well, what do you think so far?

CONRAD
About what?

GEORGE
Middleton.

CONRAD
Why are you cramming this place
down my throat?

GEORGE
I'm not cramming anything down
your throat.

CONRAD
 (doing a spot-on
 George imitation)
 "Just keep an open mind, Con."
 "Sometimes places surprise you,
 Con." "Pretty tight, huh?"
 (beat)
 Can't you just let me figure it
 out for myself?

GEORGE
 How are you going to do that,
 Conrad -- with your feckless
 approach.

CONRAD
 Feckless?

GEORGE
 Yeah -- that'd be "not-tight" to
 you. How much thought have you
 given to what you want to study?
 If you want to "figure it out"
 yourself then do it.
 (beat)
 And what the hell is wrong with
 Gordon Lightfoot?

Conrad shakes his head in frustration and walks away.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 Where are you going?

CONRAD
 I'm gonna figure it out myself.

As Conrad exits the library, George's expression betrays
 his regret at Conrad having taken his suggestion
 literally.

He then turns to see the entire Tour Group staring at
 him.

The Scold steps forward to say something --

GEORGE
 Save it, lady.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY SECOND FLOOR - SAME

George passes row after row of stacks looking for Edith.
No luck.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

Edith stares in the mirror. Breathes deeply. She turns her face side to side. She rearranges a piece of hair.

She digs into her purse and produces a tube of LIPSTICK. She's about to apply it then thinks better of it. She gives one last look then leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY SECOND FLOOR - SAME

George winds his way deeper into the library, rounds a corner, then stops in his tracks.

GEORGE'S P.O.V. THROUGH THE STACKS of TWO STUDENTS kissing with a carnal passion that is arresting. It's like a car wreck -- he can't stop looking. They remain oblivious to him.

The Boy sticks his hand up under the sweater of the Girl, who has absolutely no objection.

EDITH (O.S.)
(whispering from
behind George)
I think he just rounded second.

George nearly jumps out of his skin.

EDITH (CONT'D)
You don't think they're freshmen,
do you?

The STUDENTS finally pull apart -- now noticing George and Edith. Edith waves.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Carry on.

They look at each other and go back to their Olympic-caliber macking.

Edith peels away.

EDITH (CONT'D)

You know it isn't polite to stare.

George follows.

GEORGE

I wasn't staring.

EDITH

You were a statue.

GEORGE

How long were you there?

EDITH

Just long enough to catch you
staring.

Edith stops next to a table where another STUDENT, 20s,
is studying.

EDITH (CONT'D)

What are you doing up here?

GEORGE

I -- was looking for the bathroom.

EDITH

Is that your story? Because my
money's on you followed me.

For a moment, George is speechless. He blushes.

GEORGE

I did no such thing.

Edith relishes being on the offensive. George remains a
bit flustered.

EDITH

Of course you did.

GEORGE

I could just as easily say you
came up here so that I would
follow you.

EDITH

You could. And you'd be wrong.

GEORGE

Why are we fighting?

EDITH

We're not fighting. We're having
a discussion about why you're
following me.

Just then, the Student jerks up from his desk. It's as
if George and Edith have assaulted his very last nerve.

STUDENT

Excuse me, but I'm trying to work
on a paper -- christ, I mean, it
is a library.

GEORGE

I'm sorry. We were rude.
(beat)
What's your paper?

STUDENT

(dismissing)
You wouldn't be interested.

GEORGE

Try me.

STUDENT

I don't think so.

GEORGE

(nostalgic)
No -- give it a shot. I might
surprise you. What are we looking
at -- Hemingway, Steinbeck?

STUDENT

Images of sexual alienation as
they relate to the Monkey Garden
in "The House on Mango Street."

George and Edith share a look.

GEORGE

I've got nothing for you. Good
luck.

STUDENT

You guys get separated from the
tour?

They nod.

STUDENT (CONT'D)
"Meet Middleton" -- what a hand
job. Let me guess -- you get the
Dingleberry?

Yeah.

GEORGE

Yeah.

EDITH

The Senior LAUGHS.

STUDENT (CONT'D)
You're better off on your own.

George and Edith leave.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

They head down.

GEORGE
Okay. I did follow you.

Edith is enormously pleased by the admission.

Why? EDITH

GEORGE
I wanted to apologize.

EDITH
For what?

GEORGE
For being "that guy."

EDITH
You're not really "that guy."
Your son thinks you're "that guy",
but trust me -- you are definitely
not "that guy." Monkey Garden back
there will grow up to be "that
guy."

(beat)

Anyway -- apology accepted.

George holds the door for her -- we get the feeling it hasn't been done in awhile.

EXT. QUAD - LATE MORNING

George and Edith exit onto the quad.

EDITH
So where do you suppose they are?

GEORGE
According to the schedule --
Osborne Hall.

EDITH
Where's that?

George looks at his brochure.

GEORGE
I think it's the building next to
the building behind that building.

Edith slaps him on the shoulder as they begin walking.
After a moment --

GEORGE (CONT'D)
So I'm guessing -- Chicago.

EDITH
Nope.

GEORGE
It's gotta be the Midwest.
Cincinnati.

EDITH
Not even close. D.C.

GEORGE
(knowingly)
D.C. D.C. always trips me up.
What do you do?

EDITH
I own a small business.

GEORGE
Let me guess --
(long beat, then
confidently)
You sell -- antiques, no --
(a short beat)
you sell gardening equipment.

Edith's look betrays George's wild inaccuracy.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Antique gardening equipment?

EDITH
Children's furniture.

GEORGE
Really?

EDITH
High-end children's furniture.

GEORGE
What constitutes high-end?

EDITH
It being in my store.

George LAUGHS.

EDITH (CONT'D)
How about you? You fix broken
hearts -- what else?

GEORGE
We live in New York.

EDITH
The city?

GEORGE
Westchester.

EDITH
Do you have other children?

GEORGE
No. How about you?

EDITH
Audrey's all we could handle.
(beat)
Speaking of which, she's probably
spitting up blood by now --
plotting how she can become
legally emancipated.

EXT. NEAR OSBORNE HALL - SAME

George and Edith round a corner -- stop. No tour in
sight.

GEORGE

I thought they'd be here.

Edith takes out her phone -- dials. After a moment --

EDITH

Hi -- where are you?

EXT. TOUR - SAME

AUDREY

Where are you? I thought we were going to do this together?

EDITH

Well that's what I thought until it became obvious that I've become some endless well of embarrassment for you.

AUDREY

Look -- you know how important this day is to me. Why are you doing this?

EDITH

I don't know what you're talking about.

AUDREY

"How many people have been killed at Middleton"??

EDITH

You're indicting me for being a caring parent?

AUDREY

No, I'm indicting the succubus that body-snatched your soul and is walking around in your clothes today!

EDITH

(sotto voce, to George)

She just called me a succubus.

(beat)

Listen to me, Audrey --

AUDREY

No mom, you listen -- this is the beginning of my Middleton Experience, and I'm not going to let you ruin it.

(beat)

I'm going here, I'm going to study with Emerson, and you know what else? I'm going to finish.

EDITH

What does that mean?

AUDREY

It means I won't have to settle for selling furniture the rest of my life.

ON EDITH -- reeling.

ON AUDREY, instantly wishing she could take back the words.

After a long silence --

EDITH

Well you know -- when I was in the library, I happened to run into the Dean of Students.

ON GEORGE -- Huh?

AUDREY

Dean Pruitt?

EDITH

In the flesh and he offered to give George and me a personal tour of the campus. A peek behind the curtain.

AUDREY

Really?

EDITH

Really. So you know what. Take your space. Enjoy the cookie-cutter tour with the Dingleberry, and call me if you need a ride home.

She defiantly hangs up. Takes a moment to collect herself.

GEORGE
That was frightening.

EDITH
What?

GEORGE
The way you so convincingly lied
to your daughter.

EDITH
I'm not even warmed up.

She starts walking -- unable to shake her exasperation.

EDITH (CONT'D)
You know -- you spend years caring
for your child, instilling value
systems, teaching self-reliance,
and then, they grow up and wield
it like a goddamn machete.

(beat)
Maybe Monkey Garden is right.
Maybe we'd do better on our own.

GEORGE
You're advocating tour hooky?

EDITH
Oh yeah.

George gives it thought. We get the feeling he'd like to
come on board, but is reticent.

GEORGE
What do I tell Conrad?

EDITH
Give him space, George. Let him
loosen his tie.

GEORGE
This visit was my idea. He'll
think I flaked-out on him.

Edith's look says "are you serious?"

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I'm not sure he has money for
lunch.

Edith stops -- stares at the ground.

HER P.O.V. of

TWO BICYCLES lying on the grass.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I don't think so.

EDITH

They're probably in class. We'll have them back before they're out.

She begins to mount one of the bikes.

EDITH (CONT'D)

This is fate.

GEORGE

This is a bad idea.

EDITH

When was the last time you rode a bike, George?

George gives it a moment's thought.

EDITH (CONT'D)

My point exactly. Get on. According to the Dingleberry, we've got a little over one hundred breathtaking acres at our disposal. We need speed.

(beat)

We'll bring 'em back.

She pushes off and begins riding down the pathway.

EDITH (CONT'D)

(calling back)

Come on, Hartman! Get the stick out of your ass!

CUT TO:

EXT. TOUR - SAME

Audrey, still flummoxed from the conversation with Edith.

HER P.O.V. of Conrad -- also alone.

She walks over, and -- manufacturing a winning smile -- extends her hand.

AUDREY
Hi, I'm Audrey Martin.

CONRAD
Conrad Hartman.

They shake. Conrad looks around.

CONRAD (CONT'D)
Where's your mom?

AUDREY
Who cares?

CONRAD
She seems pretty cool -- I mean --
for a mom.

AUDREY
Why didn't your mom make the trip?

CONRAD
This is dad's thing -- and dad's
thing is rarely mom's thing. I
think he wants it to be some kind
of bonding experience, but I'm
just not feeling it, you know?
It's all so... feckless.

AUDREY
You said feckless.

Conrad shrugs. Audrey smiles.

CONRAD
What about your dad?

AUDREY
He's playing golf.

CONRAD
Okay.

AUDREY
It's his job.

CONRAD
Really?

AUDREY

When some men turn fifty, they buy
a convertible or get hair plugs --
my dad decided to become a
professional golfer.

CONRAD

How's it going for him?

AUDREY

Ask my mom when you see her.

They continue on with the tour.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS - EARLY AFTERNOON

George and Edith ride side-by-side on a tree-lined path.
Edith takes her hands off the handlebars and raises her
arms high. Her head falls back.

EDITH'S P.O.V. of the blossoming tree-tops above her.

Both of their expressions radiate the pure bliss of
youth.

GEORGE

Twelve!

EDITH

What?

GEORGE

The last time I rode a bike I was
twelve!

EDITH

You strike me as a helmet-wearing
kind of guy, George -- you sure
you're okay?

George pulls out of the formation and heads toward a
wooden bridge. There are steps down to the bridge but
George ramps off of the top --

EDITH (CONT'D)

George!

-- clearing them completely.

Edith follows and lets out with a STACCATO GROAN as she
bumps down the stairs onto the bridge.

Once over the bridge they rise side by side again. He looks over to Edith -- wind in her hair.

GEORGE

I think I lost a testicle.

Edith LAUGHS, then gets a look of alarm.

EDITH

George!

He swerves at the last second to avoid colliding with a LIGHT POST.

GEORGE

About that helmet...

He rejoins her on the path as they glide through the campus -- like the weight of their worlds has lifted momentarily.

As they coast down a hill, something catches Edith's eye. She instantly veers off of the brick path and begins riding over the grass.

George maneuvers to follow.

CUT TO:

EXT. BELL TOWER - SAME

Edith drops her bike at the foot of a BELL TOWER. It's an impressive Colonial structure -- easily the tallest on Middleton's campus.

George arrives, but stays on his bike.

EDITH

Get the stick out of your ass,
Hartman!

She jerks open the heavy door to the bell tower and enters.

George lays his bike down and follows -- very tentatively.

INT. BELL TOWER

GEORGE'S P.O.V. of the metal stairs -- circular, narrow and steep -- that lead to the top. He hears Edith's FOOTSTEPS above him.

He takes a deep breath, then begins to climb.

INT. TOP OF THE BELL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

It's a small but open space, providing breathtaking views of the campus in all directions. Edith leans out over the railing -- reveling in the beauty of the day.

EDITH

Wow.

ON GEORGE

who crawls up the final steps -- then SITS -- his feet remaining on the last steps.

Edith pulls inside -- sees George.

EDITH (CONT'D)

You okay?

GEORGE

Sure. Give me just a second.

Edith walks around the bells -- pausing a moment in each direction for a look.

EDITH

You can see the entire campus --
the town --

(short beat)

-- the one car parked backwards.

(beat)

Get over here.

ON GEORGE

who doesn't leave the steps, but rather, pulls the Middleton BROCHURE from his back pocket. He opens it.

GEORGE

Do you know the legend of the Bell
Tower?

EDITH

No.

George reads aloud from the brochure.

GEORGE

It says here that "the Bell Tower was completed in 1917, the year that the United States entered the first World War. More than 150 of Middleton's students enlisted for military service. There was a young woman, a freshman named --

There is an almost imperceptible pause.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Matilda Reynolds -- whose boyfriend --

(short beat)

-- Seymour Sternshine was among the newly-minted Doughboys. Upon his departure, she ascended the steps of the Tower and stood in the East window --

George points to the East opening.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

-- silently pledging her eternal love to him and vowing that she would rise into the tower at the same time each day until he returned safely from the War."

EDITH

What happened?

George looks back at the brochure.

GEORGE

It says that Seymour was killed by a stampede of rogue swine in the Loire Valley that also claimed the lives of --

Edith comes over and RIPS the brochure from George's hands. She glances at it before hitting him on the head with it.

EDITH

Seymour Sternshine.

(beat)

Okay, so I have a little trouble playing poker in a brightly lit room.

Edith goes back to the railing.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Come look at this.

George doesn't move. He has a slightly "sick" look.

Suddenly -- she "gets it." She locks in on George who's not budged from his uncomfortable seat on the top stair.

EDITH (CONT'D)

You're afraid of heights.

GEORGE

"Afraid" is a strong word. Let's just say I choose to organize my life in such a way that heights never really enter the equation.

EDITH

So -- you'll open someone's chest with a sharp knife, but you won't stand at this window?

GEORGE

It's a little more complicated than that.

EDITH

I'm serious. You can't miss this.
(beat)

I'll take care of you. I promise.

He wants to move -- he just doesn't. She comes over and TAKES HIS HAND. He slowly rises.

George takes baby steps. He remains as close to the bells -- and away from the railing -- as possible.

GEORGE

(nervously)
Oh -- I saw a bird.

Finally, she puts her arm around him and leads him one step closer.

GEORGE'S P.O.V. of the very tops of the DISTANT MOUNTAINS.

They inch closer to the railing -- squeezing together a bit more. It's the closest they've been to each other since they've met.

The height is getting to George. He turns to look away. It brings him face to face with Edith -- who lets her arm fall away.

It's potentially an awkward moment, but neither turn away.

EDITH
Oh my God.

GEORGE
What?

Edith points.

EDITH
That building, top floor, fourth window from the left.

George turns and braves a look.

EDITH (CONT'D)
I'm starting to get Middleton as "intimate."

HIS P.O.V. of TWO COLLEGE STUDENTS screwing like rabbits in a dorm room.

GEORGE
I'm calling that a home run.

They both LAUGH -- George just a little bit more nervously than Edith.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUTLEDGE PLANETARIUM - SAME

Audrey and Conrad arrive, with the rest of the tour group, in front of the RUTLEDGE PLANETARIUM.

As Justin DRONES, Audrey stares blankly at the structure.

AUDREY
It's so small.

CONRAD
Compared to what?

AUDREY
On the virtual tour it seemed bigger.

Conrad considers.

CONRAD
Well, there's always Princeton.

AUDREY
What does that mean?

CONRAD
It doesn't seem like you like this place very much.

AUDREY
That's because I love this place.

CONRAD
Why?

Audrey reaches into her bag, pulls out a hardback BOOK authored by --

AUDREY
Roland Emerson.

A PROSPECTIVE STUDENT, bookish and unattractive, turns to Audrey.

PROSPECTIVE STUDENT
I hear Emerson's leaving.

AUDREY
That's bullshit. Turn around.

The Potential Student meekly obeys.

Audrey refocuses on Conrad -- hands him the book.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
He's one of the premier linguistics scholars in the country.

CONRAD
(a little teasing)
And ...

AUDREY
Linguistics is the perfect foundation for any number of careers.

CONRAD
Like ...

AUDREY
Like the law. Like business.

PROSPECTIVE STUDENT
(to Conrad)
I'm sure I read he's leaving --

Audrey leans forward -- next to the Potential Student's ear.

AUDREY
I'm sorry, but if you interrupt
our conversation again, I will
pull every hair out of your king-
sized head.

Back to Conrad, who recoils a bit.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
What are you going to study?

Handing her back the book --

CONRAD
I'm keeping my options open.

AUDREY
Yeah, I hear that department is
really strong.

The tour group moves on.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF CAMPUS - EARLY AFTERNOON

George and Edith, back on their bicycles, slow as they
approach the same SNACK CART Edith visited earlier.

Dismounting --

EDITH
I'm thirsty, Hartman. Let's give
this good man some business.

GEORGE
(to the Vendor)
Two Gibsons up, with extra onions,
please.

The VENDOR looks at George like he's a Martian.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Or a couple of waters.

VENDOR
(to Edith)
How are you on apples.

EDITH
Flush.
(beat)
Do you have a cigarette?

VENDOR
I don't smoke.

EDITH
Neither do I.

EXT. CAMPUS BENCH - MOMENTS LATER

Edith and George sip their waters -- resting. STUDENTS criss-cross in front of them.

ON A MALE STUDENT -- bushy hair, overweight, unkempt appearance -- looks kind of like Ronald McDonald without the make-up.

GEORGE
Battle Creek, Michigan. Dad's a cereal engineer for Kellogg, mother sells Mary Kay. In addition to having several copies of "Juggs" magazine under his pillow, he is a chemistry major and will later find a cure for Restless Legs Syndrome.

Edith LAUGHS so hard she practically does a spit-take. Without even looking, George hands her a napkin.

EDITH
That one over there.

GEORGE
Ichabod?

EDITH
Exactly.

ON A GANGLY TEEN who can be no more than a freshman.

GEORGE

Ichabod is from a long line of Middleton graduates dating back to his great grandfather, Seymour Sternshine. He majors in Geology and Astronomy -- making him, of all things, a "Rock Star". He will, however, forego the sciences, and his first novel, entitled "Life as a Spyrochete", will sell over a million copies.

EDITH

My turn.

George points.

GEORGE

There's one for you.

ON A GIRL -- a tissue balled in her fist as she walks quickly. She appears to have been crying.

EDITH

Her name is Tessa, and she's just learned from her parents that her Rhodesian Ridgeback named "Hedwig" has died. She is rushing to tweet her grief on Twitter.

Edith points.

EDITH (CONT'D)

There.

ON A STUDENT who is a dead ringer for George at eighteen years old.

George takes a moment.

GEORGE

That is Georgie. He's enormously bright, but hampered somewhat by a little-brother complex and an unflagging desire to make things work. He is a biology major who will marry the first woman he falls in love with, and later go on to a long, distinguished and unfulfilling career as a surgeon.

EDITH

I detect a sadness in Georgie.

GEORGE
Don't worry about Georgie.

George SMILES.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
He has enormous resolve -- and a
rich fantasy life.

Edith gives it a moment.

EDITH
Can I tell you something about
Georgie?

GEORGE
Shoot.

EDITH
I think he has no idea how truly
special he is.

George is surprised by the admission.

EDITH (CONT'D)
But it's probably just the
Aquafina talking.

Just then, they both hear PIANO MUSIC coming from a
nearby window.

Edith is drawn to it.

GEORGE
Hey Edith -- maybe we should think
about getting the bikes back.

After a moment, George follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARTS BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

Edith walks to one side of the open window, puts her back
against the building and closes her eyes as the music
wafts past.

She waves George over. He stands next to her.

GEORGE
(quietly)
The "Appassionata."

She beams.

 EDITH
You play?

 GEORGE
I play at it. You?

 EDITH
A prodigy.

George isn't buying it.

 GEORGE
Given your spotty track record in
the realm of the truth, I'm going
to need some confirmation.

She gets up and heads into the building -- he follows.

CUT TO:

INT. REHEARSAL BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

They walk down a hallway. From behind each closed door,
gorgeous and varied PIANO MUSIC escapes. Debussy,
Rachmaninoff. Then --

AN OPEN ROOM.

They enter -- but leave the door open.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - SAME

It's a tiny room -- barely big enough for the BABY GRAND
PIANO it houses.

George holds out his hand -- gesturing for Edith to take
a seat.

 EDITH
Age before beauty.

George takes the bench. He cracks his knuckles
exaggeratedly. Glances underneath to make sure his feet
are on the proper pedals.

He carefully places his arched fingers on the lower
register keys, and lets out with a dramatic

ARPEGGIO

up and down the keyboard. There are a few CLUNKERS.

Edith grimaces and swivels her right hand in a mock rating -- decidedly so-so.

George repositions his fingers then emotionally launches into --

CHOPSTICKS.

He plays with a feigned passion.

Just before the end of the first round, Edith joins him on the bench -- scooting him over with her bottom.

At the top of the next round she begins with the standard BASS ACCOMPANIMENT. They play happily for the round.

GEORGE

Prodigy?

In the next verse, as George continues the traditional melody, Edith moves into a much more INTERPRETIVE BASS.

It's complicated and rich -- indicative of true talent.

George is captivated by the ease with which she riffs on the traditional accompaniment. After a moment, he stops playing completely while Edith continues her bravura interpretation. Then, there's a

KNOCK ON THE OPEN DOOR.

Edith stops instantly.

ON A MUSIC MAJOR, 20,

who has the fragile, exasperated look of someone studying for a final exam.

MUSIC MAJOR

Okay, I'm next door trying to learn the Rachmaninoff Second, okay, and "Chopsticks" playing in the background -- it makes it feel like you're mocking me.

(near tears)

Okay?

EDITH

(sympathizing)

Rachmaninoff is so hard. I mean, the guy must have had hands the size of trash can lids.

MUSIC MAJOR

I know. If I stretch any further
I feel like bones will poke out of
my fingertips.

Edith gets up and goes over to the Music Major. She
takes both of his hands. Looks at them carefully.

EDITH

These are Bach's hands. Stay away
from the Russians. Listen to them
-- admire their passion, but don't
obsess with playing them.

The Music Major pulls Edith into the TIGHTEST HUG
imaginable. He won't let go.

MUSIC MAJOR

(through tears)
No one's ever said that to me.
(beat)
Thank you.

EDITH

My pleasure.

MUSIC MAJOR

You're a lucky man.

George accepts the compliment -- albeit awkwardly. He
glances out of the window.

Just then he notices something through the open window.

GEORGE'S P.O.V. of TWO CAMPUS SECURITY OFFICERS who stand
over the "borrowed" bicycles. One speaks into a RADIO.

The other questions a STUDENT who -- spotting George
through the open window -- points directly at him.

George DUCKS back out of sight as the Officers head for
the building entrance.

GEORGE

Edith.

The Music Major won't let go.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Edith!

Edith pries herself loose. George grabs her by the hand
and jerks her into the hallway.

EDITH
(to the Music Major)
Good luck.
(to George)
Why are we going this way?

GEORGE
Two Campus Security guys are
coming into the building. I think
they're looking for whoever stole
the bicycles.

EDITH
We borrowed them.

GEORGE
I'd rather not have that
discussion.

INT. ARTS BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

George and Edith walk the hallway looking for another
exit. Edith has far less a sense of urgency than George.

EDITH
Wasn't that nice?

GEORGE
Yeah. He seemed like a good kid.

EDITH
No -- I'm talking about our duet.
It felt so good to have -- to have
a partner.

GEORGE
I think we should walk faster.

Edith slows to a stop.

EDITH
Are you happy George?

George is exasperated -- looking back to see if they're
still being followed.

GEORGE
I'll be a lot happier if we don't
end up in jail.

George takes her hand and leads her deeper into the
building -- again checking behind them as they go.

Suddenly, Edith stops and peers through a porthole-style window. After a moment, she opens it and waves George to follow.

INT. BLACK BOX THEATER - CONTINUOUS

PROFESSOR RILEY circulates amongst a group of STUDENTS on the stage.

The Students are paired up, standing back to back with each other.

RILEY

First we breathe. Deep breaths.
As deep as you can possibly
breathe.

ON GEORGE

who peeks out of the window -- looking for any sign of the Security Guards.

ON EDITH

who listens to Professor Riley's instruction and, at the back of the theater, begins to participate in the exercise.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Deep breaths help your lymph
system clean out the toxins in
your body. Breathe in by pulling
in the diaphragm. Inhale through
your nose and mouth at the same
time, then round your lips and
gradually release the air in a
silent whistle.

(beat)

Now, turn to your partner. Pant
rapidly with the mouth open, but
do not inhale.

(demonstrating)

Huh-huh-huh. Pant seven times,
pause briefly, inhale deeply.

Edith pants vigorously. George comes over to her.

GEORGE

(sotto voce)

Stop panting --

Riley turns at the sound of George's voice.

RILEY
(calling out)
Can I help you?

GEORGE
Sorry. Wrong door.

RILEY
"All the world's a stage, And all
the men and women merely players,
They have their exits and
entrances, And one man in his time
plays many parts..."

GEORGE
Maybe some other time?

He grabs Edith's hand, reaches for the door, when --
through the porthole -- they spy the Security Guards
walking past.

Whipping back around with George --

EDITH
We'd like to sit in on your class
for a bit if we may.

RILEY
Who are you?

GEORGE
We got separated from the campus
tour.

RILEY
Dingleberry?

Edith and George nod.

RILEY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, but no one audits my
class.

George is panicked.

RILEY (CONT'D)
I require full participation.

RILEY GRINS.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAFETERIA - EARLY AFTERNOON

The tour group gathers around Justin.

JUSTIN

This concludes the tour portion of the day. Thank you -- you've been a terrific audience and please remember to tip your waitresses.

There's a smattering of APPLAUSE.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

(looking at his watch)

The cafeteria is directly behind you -- I'd pass on the chowder -- and enjoy the rest of your visit.

Justin turns to leave. Audrey follows.

AUDREY

Excuse me.

Justin stops.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I just have a few questions.

JUSTIN

Uh -- the tour's kind of over.

AUDREY

Just real quick. Is it true that Roland Emerson is leaving Middleton?

JUSTIN

Roland Emerson? What year is he?

AUDREY

He's not a student, he's the premier linguistics --

Before she can finish, a YOUNG WOMAN, 20, approaches Justin from behind, spins him around, then

SLAPS HIM

hard across the cheek.

She then turns and storms away, leaving Justin stymied. He soon takes off after her.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Wait!

Shouting back --

JUSTIN

I'm sorry!

AUDREY

I can't wait to fill out your
evaluation! Dingleberry!

Conrad looks on -- amused and horrified.

CUT TO:

INT. BLACK BOX THEATER - A LITTLE LATER

Two students, EMMA and GERALD are in the middle of an
improvisation.

EMMA

So, how was your day honey?

GERALD

Okay, I guess. What's for dinner?

Emma starts to CRY.

EMMA

I'm leaving you, Gerald.

GERALD

No you're not. What's for dinner?

EMMA

There is no dinner, Gerald. I'm
leaving. And I won't be talked
out of it this time.

Edith and George look at each other in mild disbelief.
Edith raises her hand.

EDITH

I'm sorry, but I thought these two
were supposed to be married.

RILEY

That is correct.

EDITH

No married couple in the history
of marriage talks like that.

GEORGE

I can't say it was really working
for me either.

Riley studies them a moment.

RILEY

George. Edith. Take the stage.

Edith stands. George waves off Riley as if he thinks
it's a joke.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Make it real for us.

EDITH

Come on.

Edith grabs George's hand -- leading him onto the stage.

RILEY

I'm going to give each of you,
separately, an objective which you
will attempt to achieve through an
improvised dialogue. Easy enough?

Riley WHISPERS to Edith. Her eyes narrow with resolve.

He then WHISPERS to George.

GEORGE

Could I have a different
objective?

Riley puts his fingers to his lips.

RILEY

Save it, George. You know the
rules. Remember. Stay in the
moment -- connect with your
partner.

GEORGE

No -- really.

RILEY

Come on, George. You're a
successfully married couple. You
know each other inside out. This
should be a piece of cake.

Riley goes over to his Students.

RILEY (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Edith is trying to get George to
bake a pie -- while George is
trying to get Edith in bed.

The Students CHUCKLE -- nod knowingly.

RILEY (CONT'D)
(to George and Edith)
Trust your instincts. Call upon
your own experience and emotion as
necessary.

ON THE STAGE

They sit at a dinner table. Staring at each other.
After a long moment --

EDITH
Are you happy, George?

Riley is clearly puzzled by Edith's line of questioning.

George lets out a nervous LAUGH.

GEORGE
Maybe this isn't the best time --

EDITH
It's the perfect time.

George gives it a moment. We see the question "soaking
in", and it takes George to another place.

GEORGE
If I were -- would you have to
ask?

EDITH
So we're going to be honest today?

GEORGE
I've been honest every day of this
-- my marriage.

EDITH
We'll I haven't. And it's time I
tell the truth.

GEORGE
Go right ahead.

Riley interjects.

RILEY
Remember your objective, George.

EDITH
I am profoundly unhappy.

GEORGE
And that's supposed to be a
revelation?

EDITH
And lonely.

Just then -- in her purse on the theater chair -- Edith's
phone rings. It's some silly RINGTONE that is at odds
with the tone of their improvisation.

She instinctively goes to get it.

GEORGE
Let it ring. You started this and
I want to hear what you have to
say.

EDITH
No you don't. You don't want to
hear anything that isn't about you
and your wants and your needs.

Edith again moves toward the phone.

GEORGE
When did you stop loving me?

George's question stops her dead in her tracks.
Mercifully, the phone stops ringing.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Or did you ever love me?

Edith sees George's genuine pain -- his truthfulness
masked in this theater exercise.

EDITH
How can you say that?

GEORGE
Because we're telling the truth.

Edith comes over to him.

EDITH

George...

She reaches out to touch him, but he turns away.

Edith walks around behind him and puts her arms around him -- her head on his shoulder.

GEORGE

I'm so sorry.

It's a moment of true tenderness. George turns slightly and catches the smell of her hair, and nuzzles just a bit closer.

ON RILEY AND THE STUDENTS

who are riveted by the pathos.

The Students' APPLAUSE snaps George and Edith back to reality.

RILEY

Well, you ignored my direction thoroughly but I have to say it was an inspiring bit of work. I'll bill you later for the session.

They both look as if they've been suddenly awakened from a dream -- maybe just a little embarrassed.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARTS CENTER - AFTERNOON

George and Edith sit on the steps in silence. Edith looks at her phone.

EDITH

I should really call him back.

George senses her need for space.

GEORGE

Oh -- sure -- of course.

He begins to walk away -- slowly -- remaining within earshot.

EDITH

Sorry I missed your call -- we were in a thing.

(MORE)

EDITH (CONT'D)

(beat)

Oh, great. It's a little slice of heaven.

She glances over to George.

EDITH (CONT'D)

(beat)

Of course -- she's having a blast.
I think it's gonna be tough
getting her back in the car.

The sadness of reality descends on George in an instant.
His look is of quiet despair.

Before Edith turns back toward him, he pulls out his
phone and manufactures his own conversation.

GEORGE

Hi honey -- I thought I'd catch
you before you left. Just
checking in. Everything's fine.
Conrad is passionately indifferent
about Middleton -- big surprise --
but it...

GEORGE'S P.O.V.

of Edith on the phone. As she talks, she tucks her hair
behind her ear. She's never appeared more attractive to
him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

-- it's really beautiful here.
I'll -- uh, I'll try you later.

George ends his call. Moments later, Edith closes her
phone. They look at each other across the way --
conflicted and unsure.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFETERIA - SAME

Audrey and Conrad pay for their lunches, carry their
trays toward the seating area.

They pass SEVERAL PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS -- all sitting
with BOTH PARENTS.

AUDREY

Look at that. Parents and their children, on a college tour, eating lunch together. What a novel idea.

CONRAD

I think it's overrated.

They take seats at the end of the table.

AUDREY

All I wanted was for her to just let me have my day. She's not going here. I'm going here. I just wanted her to shut up and be here. Is that too much to ask?

CONRAD

What's the big deal. Give her a call.

AUDREY

I shouldn't have to give her a call.

CONRAD

Why are you so angry?

AUDREY

(yelling)
I am not angry!

CONRAD

Do you want me to eat somewhere else?

AUDREY

So you want to leave too? What is this -- take a shit on Audrey day?

CONRAD

I don't mean this in a bad way, but you're kind of a lot of work.

AUDREY

Really! So we're taking the gloves off?

Conrad opens his arms in a "bring it on" gesture.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I know you. I know you better than you know yourself. You think your million dollar smile will give you an all-access backstage pass for life. But you know what - that fairy-tale ends. You've peaked. Your days of skating through classes on good looks and banging the homecoming queen are done.

Conrad stands up -- takes his tray.

CONRAD

Have a good life.

AUDREY

Where are you going?

Conrad can't believe she doesn't get it.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Please don't leave.

CONRAD

Why should I stay?

AUDREY

I'm sorry. I'm a nice person, I promise. Sometimes I push away people I like. It's one of my few flaws.

(beat)

I'm really sorry. Please stay.

Conrad puts his tray on the table.

CONRAD

You want me to call your mom?

AUDREY

No -- she's on a "private tour" with the Dean of Students ...

A moment later, her look darkens. She takes out her Blackberry -- dials.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Middleton College, please.

(short beat)

The office of the Dean of Students.

(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)
(short beat)
Thank you.

Conrad watches -- curious.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Hello, my name is Audrey Martin,
and I am a rising freshman
currently on a tour of the
Middleton campus. Would it be
possible to have just a very brief
word with Dean Pruitt? It's very
important.

Audrey's look turns to one of ANGER.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Thank you.

She hangs up.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
The Dean of Students is in Toronto
at a conference.
(beat)
She lied to me.

Conrad grimaces -- fully aware of what might be coming.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
My mom has absolutely lost it.
She's gone batshit crazy.

Audrey stands.

CONRAD
What are you gonna do?

AUDREY
I'm going to find her ass and
expose her lie.

CONRAD
Relax. Let her do her thing. Go
to your meeting and take care of
it later.

AUDREY
In case you haven't noticed, I'm a
now kind of girl.

Audrey storms away. After a moment, Conrad gets up and follows.

THEY EXIT at one end of the cafeteria --
-- just as George and Edith ENTER at the other.
They survey the room -- looking for their children.

EDITH
I thought the kids might be here.

George checks his watch.

GEORGE
It's almost two.

EDITH
They've probably gone on to their
departmental meetings.

GEORGE
What should we do?

EDITH
I smell fried chicken.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - SAME

George and Edith set their trays at a table for two.
Edith busily organizes her food. Salts. Peppers.

She begins eating, but after a moment, notices George
hasn't moved.

He just stares at his plate.

EDITH
George?

George slowly raises his eyes.

GEORGE
What are we doing?

Edith looks at him for a long moment -- then gazes down
at her plate.

EDITH
Having lunch?

GEORGE

How can you say that? Look me in the eyes and tell me that we're just having lunch.

Edith looks into George's eyes.

EDITH

I need -- I need -- the ketchup.

She gets up from the table, but George takes her arm -- gently bringing her back to her chair.

GEORGE

What was that? What really happened in that theater class?

EDITH

It was two adults making believe.

George stares at Edith, exasperated that she isn't flummoxed by their day thus far.

GEORGE

Making believe? That's what you call it?

EDITH

What do you call it, George?

GEORGE

If you wanna know the truth -- I'm afraid to give it a name. Because the ones that are swimming around in my head are scaring me to death.

Edith stops what she's doing -- uncomfortable at the admission.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

What are we doing?

(beat)

I mean. At the piano? It was ...

He looks to Edith for some validation. Nothing.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Didn't you -- I mean. When our knees touched -- I ...

Still nothing.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Am I reaching here? Please --
tell me.

Edith rearranges food on her plate.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
And when your husband called. I
felt --
(beat)
I felt like ...

Edith looks up. Her eyes betray her silence.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Edith -- help me out here!

All of a sudden, George realizes that STUDENTS nearby
have stopped eating and are watching the drama unfold.
He looks downward.

EDITH
What am I supposed to say?

GEORGE
Something.
(beat)
Anything. Tell me that some part
of this day has meant more to you
than just killing time while your
kid looks at a college.

EDITH
We're married. Kids --

GEORGE
Goddammit, Edith. I know that.
(long beat)
But just tell me that you feel
something. That I'm not just
imagining this.

George takes Edith's hand, but she pulls it away.

EDITH
We should probably get back to our
children.

GEORGE
Don't go. Edith.
(short beat)
I'm sorry.

EDITH
No, I'm sorry, George.

She gets up.

GEORGE
Edith!

She turns and walks away.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS

Edith exits. She walks quickly -- obviously distraught. She reaches into her purse and pulls out one of the APPLES. She takes a huge bite.

She continues at a brisk pace when --

GEORGE (O.S.)
Edith!

She closes her eyes for a moment, but doesn't look back.

GEORGE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(breathless)
Edith!

George catches up from behind. He comes in front of her and walks backwards as he pleads.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I was out of line.
That was incredibly presumptuous
of me.

Edith doesn't speak.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Please say something.

EDITH
You should have stayed and
finished your lunch. Here.

She offers him an apple. He doesn't take it.

GEORGE
Why won't you talk to me? We have
one of the greatest half-days of
my life and now you've suddenly
lost the ability to communicate?

EDITH'S P.O.V. of the TOUR in the distance.

EDITH
If you need me, I'll be in the
real world.

She begins walking toward the group in the distance.
George stands there for a moment. Watching her.

ON EDITH

who looks as though it's taken every muscle in her body
to leave George standing there.

After a moment, George heads toward the tour -- hustling
to catch up with her.

AT THE TOUR

Edith finally arrives -- only to see it's

THE WRONG TOUR.

It's not lead by Justin, but rather by a very attractive
COED.

COED
The college was founded in 1890 by
Lowndes Pope Middleton, who made a
fortune in whale blubber before
devoting himself full-time to
education and philanthropy.

Just then -- George arrives at the group.

EDITH
Excuse me.

COED
Yes?

EDITH
Where will you be in about three
and a half hours?

The Coed is confused.

COED
I'm sorry?

EDITH

We were -- I was with the ten
o'clock tour, but got separated
and --

An IRATE MAN pipes in.

IRATE MAN

(to Edith)

It's not really our problem. Some
of us are on schedules and take
this seriously.

Edith makes a bee-line for the Irate Man.

EDITH

I politely interrupt to ask a
simple question and you think that
gives you the right to indict my
parenting?

Her plea is both openly aggressive and intensely
heartfelt.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Look at you. You think you've got
it all worked out -- don't you.

The IRATE MAN looks puzzled.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Eighteen years of saying the right
things, making good choices,
telling yourself that it all adds
up to little Johnny here having
what it takes to skate through
life. Congratulating yourself on
minimizing pain and maximizing
self-esteem, and never fucking up
a birthday party, and all the
bullshit that you think adds up to
a happy, gracious, well-adjusted
human being who will never hurt
you. Well, I've got news for you --
it doesn't add up. Baby horse
tells mommy horse she's a
succubus, then she bolts -- gone!
You're left eating apples by
yourself. You think their lives
are all Alice in Wonderland, but
really, it's Snatches of Pink,
okay? And don't kid yourself --
there is a lot of sex here.

EDITH looks to the Coed who sheepishly gives confirmation.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Don't you understand? Nothing
adds up -- it's just a feckless
Dingleberry monkey garden!

ON GEORGE

for whom this is adding up more than she knows.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Here's how it works: You love
them -- they love you, but after
that, all bets are off. After
that -- if you've done your job
right, they just leave.

She takes a long beat.

EDITH (CONT'D)
And you know where that leaves
you?

The Irate Man dares not answer.

EDITH (CONT'D)
It leaves you alone with some
stranger you realize you haven't
really gotten to know much over
the last eighteen years.

The Irate Man's WIFE gives her husband an odd look.

Edith takes the Man's "The Middleton Experience"
BROCHURE.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Here's all you need to know about
"The Middleton Experience" --
(beat)
It doesn't include you.

She balls up the brochure and throws it on the ground.

George takes Edith lightly by the shoulder.

GEORGE
Come on, Edith. Let's go.

As they begin to leave, the Irate Man MUMBLES something
under his breath.

George hears it, turns, and gets right up in the guy's grill.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
What did you say?

The Irate Man senses George's hair trigger. He doesn't respond.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
It's beautiful here -- isn't it?

The Irate Man nods.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Why don't you try and enjoy it.

George bends down and picks up the Man's crumpled brochure and puts it in his own pocket.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Celebrate.

Together, George and Edith walk away.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS -- AFTERNOON

Audrey power walks -- Conrad keeps pace. She gazes side to side -- still searching.

After a moment, Conrad begins to slow down. Then -- he stops.

AUDREY
C'mon.

CONRAD
I'm done.

AUDREY
She's around here -- I know it.

CONRAD
I think I'm just gonna go to my meeting.

AUDREY
Why don't you do that?

CONRAD

Can I tell you something? I'm gonna be honest and I don't want to hurt your feelings, but if I was your mother today -- I think I might want a breather.

AUDREY

What's that mean?

CONRAD

It means what it means.

He shrugs then slowly puts in his ear buds.

AUDREY

That's it. Go ahead. Failure has a lot of great sound tracks.

She turns and walks away.

After a moment, a rage begins to build in Conrad. He RIPS OFF HIS TIE and throws it across the back of a bench.

He walks off in the opposite direction. His pace quickens until he finally is in a dead run.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEAR HUMANITIES BUILDING - AFTERNOON

George and Edith walk in silence. They come to a point where their paths diverge slightly. They stop.

GEORGE

I'm this way.

Edith faces George -- takes his hands -- looks at them in hers.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Definitely not Bach's hands.

EDITH

Well --

GEORGE

Well.

EDITH

Thank you.

GEORGE

For?

Edith doesn't answer. She senses the hurt that underlies his one-word responses.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

How about we just leave it at
"goodbye."

Edith tries to summon a response, but cannot.

George gives her a smile. It's a weak smile, filled with gratitude and admiration, but it's also a smile of what might have been.

He nods a silent farewell -- turns -- and walks away.

Edith watches him a bit before turning, reluctantly, and going her own way.

As she walks, she becomes more emotional. At one point, she looks back over her shoulder --

HER P.O.V. of George disappearing around the corner of the Humanities Building.

Edith watches for a moment before experiencing what we understand to be a moment of clarity.

Then -- she starts to RUN -- after George.

While she runs, an APPLE falls out of her purse and comes to rest on the grass.

INT. HUMANITIES BUILDING - DAY

Edith barges into the lobby of the building -- looking around for George.

HER P.O.V. of the ELEVATOR FLOOR INDICATOR. It's stopping on the Second Floor. She bolts for the stairwell.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Edith takes the steps two at a time -- a recapitulation of George's pursuit of her in the library earlier.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

Edith exits the stairwell -- breathing heavily. There is a palatable air of desperation.

She looks in both directions -- again no sign of George.
Instinctively, she heads left. Again -- running.

AROUND A CORNER

Edith runs -- growing more emotional by the second.

A TONE sounds and STUDENTS exit the classrooms into the hallway.

From behind Edith, George exits the men's room. He sees her first.

GEORGE

Edith!

Edith turns -- elated. She hurries to him.

EDITH

We need to talk.

Aware of the growing crowd, she grabs him, opens a door next to them, and pulls him inside.

CUT TO:

INT. PROJECTION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The WHIR of a film projector goes unnoticed by George and Edith. There is just enough light for them to make out each other's face.

GEORGE

What's going on?

EDITH

I didn't want anyone else to hear.

GEORGE

Hear what?

EDITH

What I'm about to say.

There's a moment of silence.

GEORGE

We said goodbye.

EDITH

You said goodbye. I didn't say anything.

(MORE)

EDITH (CONT'D)
(short beat)
And I won't be rushed.

There's an awkward silence.

GEORGE
Edith.

EDITH
Yes?

GEORGE
I am a Board Certified Cardiac Surgeon, and I'm hiding in a dark room from a hallway full of freshmen I don't know. Does any part of that seem odd to you?

EDITH
George.

A short moment.

EDITH (CONT'D)
I don't want to say goodbye.
(beat)
This makes me happy.

There's a pregnant silence.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Say something.

His smile slowly disappears. They're looking at each other -- their eyes now completely adjusted to the darkness.

It's that moment -- the one where you know you're about to kiss someone for the first time.

The revelation sends a shock wave of anticipation through both of their bodies.

George reaches out and takes Edith's face in his hands. Even in the near dark, we can feel she's blushing.

He moves in -- slowly. It will be a kiss for all time. Then --

THE DOOR OPENS!

A WEDGE OF LIGHT

illuminates George and Edith -- who look like deer caught

in headlights.

ON A TEDDY BEAR OF A MALE STUDENT

who is equally taken aback. He carries a SODA.

STUDENT

Whoa -- hello.

George and Edith remain frozen.

STUDENT (CONT'D)

Who the hell are you, and what are you doing in my projection booth?

GEORGE

We're sorry -- we --
(short beat, then
awkwardly)
George.

EDITH

Edith.

STUDENT

Duncan.

Duncan starts to grin.

DUNCAN

Were you guys making out?

EDITH

No.

GEORGE

No.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Cause it looked like you were making out.

He nods his head -- smiles knowingly as he walks over to check on the projector.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

(to himself)
Old people -- makin' it happen in the projection room.

George looks like a reprimanded school boy, but Edith's attention has turned to the projected image.

EDITH

Oh my God --

GEORGE

What?

Edith is drawn to the GLASS that separates the projection room from the classroom where the movie plays.

George pulls her back.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(whispering)

What are you doing? You can't
just leave it there. We were --

(short beat)

We were about to --

Edith puts her index finger over George's lips --
silencing him. But the look she gives him is smoldering.
We understand there is nothing more she'd rather do than
kiss him.

ON DUNCAN

himself aroused by Edith's sensuality.

She then pulls George toward the glass.

They watch in silence for a moment -- the movie's light
flickering on their faces.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

You know this movie?

She watches -- transfixed -- like she's greeting an old
friend.

EDITH

I haven't seen it in twenty-five
years.

GEORGE

What's happening?

EDITH

The two men are Jules and Jim.
And they're both in love with the
woman --

(to Duncan)

What's her name?

DUNCAN

(boldly, in a French
accent)

Catherine.

EDITH
(echoing)
Catherine!

ON THE SCREEN

Jules, Jim and Catherine walk along the Seine. All of a sudden, without warning, Catherine gets up on the retaining wall and JUMPS into the river. Jules hurries down the steps to pull her from the water.

GEORGE
Why'd she jump?

EDITH
Catherine has a love for life that borders on the catastrophic.

DUNCAN
That chick's like eighty now, but back in the day, she was tight, huh George?

George watches intently.

EDITH
I saw this movie at the Thalia on the Upper West Side with Barry Gribble. I knew we'd never have another date when we walked out of the theater and he said -- "what do the French have against color?"

They watch together in silence for a few moments.

GEORGE
Who gets Catherine?
(short beat)
How does it end?

Edith doesn't answer.

DUNCAN
It always complicated in French films, isn't it?

George's PDA vibrates. He checks it.

GEORGE
It's the hospital -- I'm sorry.
Excuse me.

George exits into the hallway.

ON EDITH

who continues to watch the movie -- completely engrossed.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDENT UNION - SAME

Conrad wanders -- alternately staring at a piece of paper in his hand and the numbers on doors.

A PRETTY GIRL bursts out of glass double doors --
LAUGHING.

Conrad approaches her.

CONRAD

Excuse me --

PRETTY GIRL

(interrupting)

You're late. Get in there -- he's
waiting for you.

She walks down the hall -- leaving Conrad confused.

INT. OFFICE WAITING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Conrad enters, rather meekly, through the glass doors which read -- "WMDN -- Radio Middleton."

HIS P.O.V. of the empty waiting area. There are several
FRAMED RECORDS and PLAQUES hanging on the wall.

CONRAD

Hello?

There's no answer.

At the far end of the waiting area, there are large,
wooden double doors. He crosses the room and pushes
through them.

CONRAD'S P.O.V. of the campus RADIO STATION. By
commercial standards it's fairly crude, but it overflows
with character and intimacy.

Enclosed in the D.J. Booth, over which an "ON AIR" sign
is illuminated, is BONEYARD SIMMS, 50s. He speaks into a
large MICROPHONE that dangles from above him.

After finishing his bit, he pushes some BUTTONS, then
emerges from the booth.

BONEYARD

Does your watch say three o'clock?
Because my watch broke years ago,
but I know you're late.

CONRAD

Sorry.

BONEYARD

First lesson in radio -- don't be
late. Silence is death.

CONRAD

I --

Boneyard raises his hand in protest.

BONEYARD

Save it. If it doesn't involve
you, a smoking-hot coed and the
Velvet Buzzsaw, I don't want to
hear it.

(short beat)

What's your name?

CONRAD

Conrad.

BONEYARD

Great. We'll change it.

Boneyard extends his hand.

BONEYARD (CONT'D)

Boneyard Simms. Welcome to radio,
kid.

Conrad goes to shake Boneyard's hand, but he gets pulled
into a big bear hug.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. PROJECTION BOOTH - A LITTLE LATER

George re-enters the room. Edith turns.

EDITH

Is Larry okay?

GEORGE

No, actually. They're rushing him
into surgery. I'm going to need
to get to a computer.

EDITH
We can go to the library.

DUNCAN
Mine's a lot closer if you need it
quick. I'm just over in Osborne.

GEORGE
If it's not too much trouble.

DUNCAN
Not at all.

Duncan starts to leave.

EDITH
What about the movie?

DUNCAN
There's still another hour or so --
I can just run you over.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTER OFFICE OF DR. ROLAND EMERSON - SAME

Audrey wanders around the reception area. It's a mix of
PLAQUES, DEGREES, and PHOTOGRAPH after PHOTOGRAPH of
Roland Emerson with a Who's Who of International Literary
Celebrities.

She then eases up to the desk of the RECEPTIONIST.

AUDREY
I read in a chat room that he
refuses to sponsor freshmen or
sophomores for independent study.
Is it true?

Without looking up --

RECEPTIONIST
You'll need to speak to Dr,
Emerson about that.

AUDREY
Do you know if he ever got my
letters?

RECEPTIONIST
All six of them.

Audrey beams.

CUT TO:

INT. DUNCAN'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

The door unlocks, swings open -- George and Edith enter, followed by Duncan, who walks over to an enormous COMPUTER on his desk.

DUNCAN

This Mac's the shit, huh George?
It's got next generation Intel
micro-architecture -- two Quad-
Core Intel "Nehalem" processors
that hum along at about three and
three-quarter gigahertz--

GEORGE

(interrupting)

I just need to access our VPN.

DUNCAN

I have no idea what you're talking
about George -- but she's all
yours.

Edith looks around the room curiously -- occasionally picking up knick-knacks that no doubt have stories behind them. A cow SKULL. A weathered LOBSTER TRAP.

George works on the keyboard and before long there is a full screen of what looks like the movie version of an X-RAY.

VOICE (O.S.)

What the hell is that?

Duncan's wiry suite-mate, TRAVIS, 19, comes into the room with what looks like a turbo-charged BONG. He wears a striped "CAT IN THE HAT"-style hat.

DUNCAN

Dude, get over here. George is a
cardiac surgeon and he got a call
on the bat phone to check out this
guy's heart on-line.

Travis wanders over.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

we see a seemingly amorphous, pulsating RED MASS.

TRAVIS
That's wicked cool.
(to George)
Could we have the password?

George points to the screen.

GEORGE
This is actually video of a
patient's heart. It's called an
Angiography. We use x-rays and
contrast dyes to produce images of
the chambers and blood vessels.

DUNCAN
I'm not a doctor, obviously, but
this guy doesn't look so good.

GEORGE
It's actually worse than that.

Duncan turns to Travis.

DUNCAN
Are you gonna be here for a little
bit?

TRAVIS
Why?

DUNCAN
I'm projecting for Dunlap's class.
I left in the middle of the movie
to help the Doc here. Could you
hang with them until I get back?

TRAVIS
You got any 4-2-0?

DUNCAN
Of course.

TRAVIS
Set me up.

DUNCAN
Deal.

Edith is watching this exchange with near disbelief.

George takes out his PDA -- makes a call.

GEORGE

(solemn)

Hi.

(beat)

Get him into surgery as quickly as possible. Ask Rob to scrub in. Tell Larry I'm so sorry I couldn't be there personally, but that I'll check on him -- that I'll see him in the morning.

(beat)

Thanks.

George hangs up -- takes a seat on the edge of Duncan's bed. He runs his hands through his hair -- obviously at odds with so many things.

Edith sits beside him on the bed.

EDITH

Everything okay?

George looks at Edith. Everything's far from okay.

GEORGE

I have a patient who will most likely die today. I have a son that, most of the time, probably wishes I were dead, and I'm living a day that makes me realize I've been dead.

EDITH

We can't always be where we want to be, George.

GEORGE

But I should be there for him. He deserves that.

(beat)

It's so hard to let go. It never gets any easier. I just wish Conrad knew I did everything I could possibly do.

EDITH

You mean your patient?

George nods "yes."

EDITH (CONT'D)

You said Conrad.

George puts his head in his hands.

TRAVIS

George -- you need to take the
edge off.

GEORGE

I could use a drink, actually.

TRAVIS

Out of luck -- I'm only nineteen.

Travis is busy packing the bowl of his uber-bong.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

But Duncan keeps some frightful
bud on hand. For medicinal
purposes.

Travis LAUGHS a little too hard at his own joke.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

He's got a connection with this ex-
NASA guy who grows it in his barn
in Vermont. It's epic.

GEORGE

I don't -- uh. I really --

Travis takes out a lighter and fires up the bong. He
inhales. While he's still holding in the smoke --

TRAVIS

You guys aren't with the college
are you?

George and Edith look at each other, silently
communicating "how did we get here."

Travis exhales dramatically.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTER OFFICE OF DR. ROLAND EMERSON - AFTERNOON

The inner office door opens and the charismatic ROLAND
EMERSON, 50s, bids farewell to TOM WOLFE.

WOLFE

Great to see you, Roland.

Emerson gestures to a bowl of CHOCOLATES on the table.

EMERSON
Have a truffle, Tom.

WOLFE
No. No. Too many of those and
I'll be lunching with Bill
Buckley.

Emerson CHUCKLES.

EMERSON
Always a pleasure, Tom.

Audrey watches the exchange -- dumbstruck. Wolfe nods to her politely as he passes.

EMERSON (CONT'D)
Miss Martin?

She bounds up to Emerson and extends a firm hand.

AUDREY
It's a pleasure, Dr. Emerson.

EMERSON
Won't you come in.

As she enters, Emerson catches the Receptionist rolling her eyes. He smiles -- clearly enjoying the effect he still can have on starry-eyed students.

INT. EMERSON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Emerson closes the door.

AUDREY
That was Tom Wolfe.

EMERSON
Indeed it was. Tom's an old
friend and an expert bridge
partner.

Audrey removes Emerson's book from her satchel.

AUDREY
Before we get started, would you
mind autographing my text?

Emerson can't help but LAUGH -- just a little.

EMERSON

Of course. What do you have there?

He takes the book.

EMERSON (CONT'D)

Ah, yes.

He sits behind his desk, removes a Mont Blanc pen from its holder and scribbles with a flourish on the inside cover.

He lightly blows the ink dry before returning the book to Audrey.

AUDREY

Thank you so much.

She opens the cover to read the wisdom of the inscription. Her face falls.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

What does it say?

EMERSON

In addition to it being in Greek, I assure you it is very profound. You'll be sure to let me know when you've worked it out.

AUDREY

You can count on it.

He smiles -- shakes his head.

EMERSON

You'll have to forgive me. My profile amongst high school seniors is all but non-existent.

Audrey sits tall.

AUDREY

I read "The Philosophy of Language" in ninth grade. It changed my life.

EMERSON

Really.

AUDREY

Absolutely. It's so simple, yet so passionate. From the first paragraph, I knew I was in the hands of a genius, and I felt so privileged to be able to share so intimately in his mind and his soul.

Emerson stares at Audrey for a long moment.

EMERSON

Well -- what can I say?

She pages furiously through the text. Stops on a passage. Holds up the book and reads aloud.

AUDREY

"The most important element in all forms of communication is understanding the language of what isn't being said."

Audrey stares at Emerson -- starry eyed.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Advise me.

EMERSON

Sounds like you've worked it out well on your own.

AUDREY

No, I mean be my advisor. Next year. I won't let you down.

He taps his fingers on his desk for a few moments -- considering.

EMERSON

How would you feel about a cup of tea?

Audrey beams.

AUDREY

That would be fantastic.

He shrugs --

EMERSON

Fantastic.

CUT TO:

INT. WMDN - SAME

Conrad now sits in the D.J. booth with Boneyard. Some ALTERNATIVE ROCK plays in the background.

CONRAD

You're not a student are you?

BONEYARD

I'm a student of life, my friend.

The song ends. Boneyard cozies up to the mike.

BONEYARD (CONT'D)

That was The Oath out of Charlottesville, Virginia. If you ask me, they have all the pieces to become a really -- mediocre band. Less brawling and more music boys. Okay. Boneyard Simms on a lazy Friday. Don't you have homework to do?

Conrad admires the ease with which Boneyard operates in the booth. He presses a button and another SONG starts.

BONEYARD (CONT'D)

(to Conrad)

I am a visiting professor in the English Department which means I get a substantial amount of money to tell students what I know three hours a week -- and --they give me a few hours on the air here and there.

(short beat)

Where were we?

CONRAD

Number four.

BONEYARD

Oh yeah. The fourth rule of radio is know your audience. That's the beauty of radio. It's about making a connection. There's something going on between you and the people out there.

(MORE)

BONEYARD (CONT'D)

It's living and changing moment to moment. You don't see it, but you feel it. You respect it. You grow it.

(beat)

You can't get that on VH1.

Conrad looks around the booth. There a a pile of PACKAGES in one corner.

CONRAD

What are those?

BONEYARD

CDs. Demos from every kind of band you can think of -- all desperate to get a little slice of the pie.

(short beat)

What are you listening to?

Boneyard gesture to Conrad's iPod. Conrad hands it over and Boneyard FINGERS THROUGH his library.

BONEYARD (CONT'D)

Shit, shit, shit, shit, bullshit, shit -- you got a great ear, kid. I think you're a natural.

Boneyard smiles -- reaches into a small COOLER and takes out a BEER.

BONEYARD (CONT'D)

Beer?

Conrad considers it for a moment.

CONRAD

Uh, I better not.

BONEYARD

Good call -- more for me.

CUT TO:

INT. DUNCAN'S ROOM - SAME

ON WATER BUBBLING FURIOUSLY.

We pull away to see George sucking on the mouth of the bong.

TRAVIS

Goddamn George. Bogart that hog!

Edith's LAUGHING hysterically.

EDITH

Stop Bogarting George. It's my
turn again.

Travis LAUGHS.

TRAVIS

You guys kill me. Isn't it
supposed to be the kids who go to
college and smoke pot behind their
parents' backs?

George hands the bong to Edith before nearly COUGHING up
a lung.

GEORGE

How 'bout some music?

George goes to the computer and CLICKS the mouse.

CLOSE ON THE MONITOR

as he scrolls through the MUSIC LIBRARY. We see a series
of BAND NAMES that are utterly unfamiliar.

ON GEORGE

who's puzzled.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Who are these bands?

He continues to scroll.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

You don't have any Pink Floyd?

TRAVIS

You can't get that kind of pot
anymore, George.

ON THE MONITOR

as George comes across SNATCHES OF PINK. He smiles.

He DOUBLE CLICKS on the first song. A pulsating DRUM
BEAT is joined instantly by SPEED METAL and a thumping
BASS.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
 (over the music)
 Nice call, Georgie. Keepin' it
 Pink.

Travis bumps fists with George.

ON EDITH

who finishes her turn with the Bong -- exhaling the smoke
 upward as she stares at George. Both of their heads
 begin to bob in rhythm to the music.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
 I gotta say, in my short life,
 you're the grooviest parents I've
 ever met.
 (beat)
 Where'd you guys meet?

GEORGE
 (matter-of-factly)
 College.

CUT TO:

INT. MIDDLETON FACULTY CLUB - AFTERNOON

Emerson and Audrey are led to a white-clothed table in
 the center of a bustling dining room.

Audrey is wide-eyed at club's old-world elegance.

A white-gloved WAITER approaches.

WAITER
 Good afternoon, Dr. Emerson. Tea?

EMERSON
 Thank you.
 (short beat, to
 Audrey)
 As I was saying, the trouble with
 Chomsky was that he couldn't leave
 his politics out of it. In my
 view, it compromises the science.

AUDREY
 Some would say that Chomsky was
 just true to his conscience.

Again, Emerson LAUGHS and shakes his head.

EMERSON

You're a very serious young woman.

AUDREY

Thank you.

EMERSON

I didn't quite mean it as a compliment.

Audrey's perplexed.

EMERSON (CONT'D)

It seems like you're hurrying somewhere in such a way that the journey will yield very little pleasure. Slow down. College shouldn't necessarily be about narrowing your focus, it should be about broadening your experience.

AUDREY

That reminds me -- I wanted to ask you about your independent study policy.

Emerson takes a moment before continuing.

EMERSON

I'm leaving Middleton. At the end of the week as a matter of fact.

It's nothing Audrey has even remotely considered.

AUDREY

For a sabbatical?

EMERSON

I'm retiring.

AUDREY

But you're the premiere linguistics scholar in the country.

EMERSON

I guess you could say I'm changing tense.

Audrey is oblivious to his attempt at levity.

AUDREY

I -- Where are you going?

EMERSON

Nowhere in particular. I might do
a little op-ed work here and
there. Putter around in the
garden. Play a little golf.

The pane of glass that is Audrey's perfect world has a
spider crack in it. And it's growing.

AUDREY

You're the sole reason I even
considered Middleton.

EMERSON

That is very flattering and
precisely why I am taking the time
to tell you of my plans.

Just then, the Waiter arrives with the tea service.

AUDREY

You can't do this to me.

Upon hearing Audrey's plea, the waiter shoots Emerson a
quizzical look. Emerson gives out with an uncomfortable
LAUGH.

EMERSON

Excuse me?

Audrey's volume creeps a bit louder.

AUDREY

You're all I thought about this
past year!

EMERSON'S P.O.V. of several COLLEAGUES who have stopped
their conversations to stare at him and Audrey.

EMERSON

(under his breath)
There are other linguistics
professors at Middleton --

AUDREY

(interrupting)
I don't want them. I want you!

The entire room falls silent.

EMERSON

Miss Martin, please --

He reaches out and tries to take her hand -- attempting to calm her.

AUDREY
Don't you touch me!

Emerson recoils at the obvious implication.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Is that what this is all about?
Tea at the Faculty Club -- I'll
let her down easy?

Emerson realizes the situation is much more volatile than he could have imagined.

EMERSON
Please excuse me.

He rises and begins to leave the dining room.

AUDREY
(loudly)
You don't just walk away! You
can't just leave!

Audrey balls up her napkin, throws it on the table, and follows.

EXT. THE FACULTY CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Emerson hurries down the stairs of the club. Audrey stands at the top landing and leans over a rail -- yelling at Emerson as he walks away.

AUDREY
I did not come all this way to be
abandoned.
(beat, then
hysterically)
You can't do this to me!

STUDENTS passing by slow down to rubberneck at the car wreck that is Audrey.

After a moment, she collects herself enough to descend the stairs. As she does, she takes out her Blackberry and dials.

CUT TO:

INT. DUNCAN'S ROOM - SAME

ON EDITH'S PURSE

where her phone rings -- unheard -- as the MUSIC still
blares from iTunes.

Edith and George are LAUGHING HYSTERICALLY.

EDITH

I can't believe my baby is
leaving.

GEORGE

Conrad has no idea what he's in
for. He's gonna' get his ass
handed to him.

EDITH

Where did the last eighteen years
go?

GEORGE

Sleep-overs, soccer games,
slamming doors.

EDITH

I don't feel like I thought I'd
feel when this happened.

GEORGE

How do you feel?

EDITH

Young!

GEORGE

You are young.

EDITH

Who defines young as having a
child in college?

GEORGE

Larry would.

This cracks them up even more -- but then -- Edith's
LAUGHTER suddenly turns to CRYING.

George finds himself tenderly putting his arm around her -
- giving comfort.

EDITH

I don't have to wait up until one
in the morning listening for
Audrey to come home.

GEORGE

I don't have to fumigate Conrad's
room twice a year.

EDITH

I don't have to get pushed away
and made to feel like shit because
I care.

ON TRAVIS

who stares at George and Edith, slack-jawed -- unable to
comprehend their wildly swinging emotions.

Edith can't stop the tears.

George springs to his feet. He goes over to the computer
and CRANKS the volume. It's deafening.

Then, George starts DANCING.

Edith watches, smiling through the tears. We get the
feeling that, in this moment, she realizes that
everything makes sense. Somehow, it will all be okay.

ON GEORGE DANCING

It's horrible, white, doctor dancing. He looks like an
octopus falling out of a tree.

Simultaneously, Edith and Travis are rapidly thrown into
convulsive fits of LAUGHTER as George kicks it old
school.

Then --

THE DOOR OPENS.

Duncan stands in the doorway surveying the carnage that
is his room. He smiles.

DUNCAN

(over the music)

Where's the party? Oh wait, it's
in my room.

GEORGE
(loudly, but fondly)
Duncan!
(short beat)
Hey -- how does the movie end?

EDITH
(to Duncan)
Don't spoil it.

Duncan walks over to Travis.

DUNCAN
You got into the purple shit,
didn't you?

TRAVIS
George needed a friend.

DUNCAN
How is it?

TRAVIS
George is dancing -- that's how it
is. And as you can tell -- George
doesn't dance.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. CAMPUS - SAME

Audrey dials her mother again. Nothing. She looks at the iPhone -- now seemingly a metaphor for her "too planned" life.

In utter frustration, she

HEAVES IT

against the side of a building. It breaks apart and falls to the ground.

She squats low to the ground and begins to CRY. After a moment, she falls back -- sitting -- and continues to cry.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. DUNCAN'S ROOM - SAME

ON GEORGE

who is also CRYING. He sits on the floor. Travis and Duncan flank him. Travis puts the hat on George. Edith turns the music down.

Travis and Duncan look to Edith as if silently asking "what can we do?"

EDITH

I think it's his first time. He's probably just overwhelmed.

DUNCAN

Come on -- you and George have never blazed up?

George shakes his head "No" -- Edith is a statue.

Travis puts his arm around George.

TRAVIS

It's okay, George. I still respect you.

DUNCAN

I respect you too, George. I'd let you dig around in my chest.
(short beat)
Not today, of course.

Edith stifles a LAUGH.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

How'd it work out with your patient?

George shakes his head.

TRAVIS

Can I tell you a story?

GEORGE

Sure.

TRAVIS

When I was a kid, we had this dog. It was a big dog -- a mutt -- but I think it might have had a little Labrador in it. Or maybe Retriever. Anyway, this dog had a ball sack that was abnormally large.

George looks over at Travis -- clearly puzzled by his tack.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

When I say abnormally large,
George, it looked like someone had
gone in there and surgically
implanted two Crenshaw melons. It
drug the ground it was so huge.

DUNCAN

Dude, we understand it was large.

TRAVIS

Huge.

DUNCAN

(apologetically)

Huge.

TRAVIS

Anyway, the dog got sick. They
said it was a liver thing or
something. Anyway, the sicker it
got, the smaller the ball sack
got. My dad asked the Vet about
it and he said he'd never seen
anything like it.

Everyone stares at Travis like he's a Martian.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

You know what I think, George?

George shakes his head -- borderline fearful of what is
about to come.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

The ball sack is life.

GEORGE

The ball sack is life.

TRAVIS

Exactly.

Travis takes the hat back from George and stands --
proudly.

DUNCAN

Damn, Trav, I had high hopes there
would be a point in there
somewhere.

Just then, we hear the BELL TOWER CALL. It's joined almost immediately by a host of bells -- all kinds -- as they CHIME throughout the dorm.

TRAVIS
The fountain!

DUNCAN
(to George and Edith)
Are you guys in?

Edith looks to George -- expectantly.

EDITH
I am so in the fountain.

GEORGE
I don't have a change of clothes.

EDITH
Christ, George. When was the last time you jumped in a fountain?

George smiles -- up to the challenge.

GEORGE
Ask me tomorrow.

EXT. CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

BELLS continue to ring. The tower bells, the chapel bells, cow bells. Students lean out of their dorm windows and RING whatever bells they possess.

CUT TO:

INT. WMDN - SAME

Boneyard is on the mike. Conrad is in front of a second mike.

BONEYARD'S P.O.V. of a CLOCK -- 4:30 p.m. He reaches over, flips a SWITCH.

EXT. QUADRANGLE - DAY

On LARGE SPEAKERS, from which a small bit of FEEDBACK sounds. Then we hear BONEYARD on the radio.

BONEYARD (O.S.)
By my count, it's time for the Victory Plunge. So get in that fountain you crazy kids.
(MORE)

BONEYARD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 And don't forget your sunscreen.
 (to Conrad)
 Hey Confab -- how 'bout a little
 music for our revelers.

INT. WMDN - CONTINUOUS

Boneyard pushes the mike over to Conrad.

After a moment --

CONRAD
 This is for all of you reluctant
 Middletonians who might be
 thinking about not getting in that
 fountain today.

CUT TO:

INT. DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Conrad's voice rings out through the campus, George
 cocks his head in recognition.

CONRAD (O.S.)
 Do yourself a favor. Get in the
 water. Now. You might think it's
 too stupid, or uncool, but you'll
 never know you really feel about
 it until you jump in. Go ahead.
 Give it a chance. And hey -- you
 just might like it.

Pink Floyd's "Comfortably Numb" begins playing. Boneyard
 nods his approval.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. WMDN - CONTINUOUS

BONEYARD
 Not bad kid.

Just then, a FRAZZLED STUDENT bursts into the station.
 Boneyard exits the booth.

FRAZZLED
 I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry. I'm
 never late, I promise. It won't
 happen again.

BONEYARD
 Who are you?

FRAZZLED

I was supposed to start here
today.

Boneyard looks back over to Conrad who is still sitting
in the booth.

BONEYARD

(to Conrad)

Well then who are you?

CONRAD

I was on a tour of the campus. I
got lost.

Boneyard considers the dilemma -- throws an arm around
Conrad.

BONEYARD

But now am found. Was blind but
now you see.

Conrad smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. OSBORNE DORMITORY - LATE AFTERNOON

George and Edith spill outside with the rest of the dorm
POPULATION to the CHEERS of the gathering campus. They,
along with hundreds of STUDENTS, head, en masse, to the
Alumni Fountain.

Everyone is fully-clothed, though some have children's
WATER WINGS or TIRE INNER TUBES.

EXT. THE ALUMNI FOUNTAIN - SAME

As the STUDENTS approach the fountain, CAMPUS SECURITY
OFFICERS have gathered to supervise the tradition.

One by one, they step down into the small-swimming-pool-
sized fountain and run through the knee-deep water.
SCREAMING. They flail and splash each other.

MAINTENANCE WORKERS with FIRE HOSES connected to the
adjoining dormitories send huge arcs of water over the
fountain.

STUDENTS hang out of their windows above -- CHEERING.
Some have make-shift hoses to augment the waterfall.
Other's throw confetti.

The water in the sunlight -- as if by magic -- forms a small RAINBOW over the Alumni Fountain.

George and Edith arrive. Edith runs headlong into the fountain. George hesitates. He starts to take off his shoes.

EDITH

Don't you dare!

Throwing any last remnant of prudence to the wind, George bounds into the lake.

The celebratory sound of BELLS RINGING still reverberates throughout the campus.

In the water, George and Edith wander amongst the other students -- truly reveling in the tradition.

It's liberating. Cleansing. A rebirth, of sorts, as the drops of water from the hoses rain down on them.

From behind, Edith puts her arms around George. He turns.

They move in close. They breathe heavily, though only stare at each other in silence as the mayhem continues around them.

EDITH (CONT'D)

This day is going to end, isn't it.

GEORGE

No. Never.

Edith holds George's face. She takes George's hand and puts it on her face. He traces its outline -- the eyes, the nose, the mouth.

They're about to kiss when we --

A GUY IN A FOOTBALL HELMET

taps George on the shoulder.

STUDENT

Excuse me.

The moment is broken. They both turn to the Guy.

STUDENT (CONT'D)

I think those policemen are trying
to get your attention.

GEORGE AND EDITH'S P.O.V. of the Campus Security Officers
who approached the Music Building earlier. One of the
Officers is pointing directly at them.

George scoops up Edith in his arms -- not unlike how
Jules took Catherine out of the Seine in "Jules and Jim."
He walks away from the officers.

Once out of the fountain, he sets her down, and they both
scamper away.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEAR THE BELL TOWER - SAME

As they get closer to the Bell Tower, George begins to
walk more quickly.

Soon, he breaks into a jog -- then something of a run.

EDITH

George!

George is heading straight for the Bell Tower.

AT THE BELL TOWER

he swings the door open and enters. Edith struggles to
catch up.

INT. BELL TOWER - SAME

George takes the steps two at a time.

Below, Edith enters the tower and hears George's
FOOTSTEPS above. She follows.

INT. TOP OF THE BELL TOWER - SAME

George reaches the top of the stairs. After a moment's
hesitation, he walks boldly over to the railing. He
looks out.

GEORGE'S P.O.V. of the LAKE and all the STUDENTS reveling
in it.

He then looks up to see the neighboring town, the distant
mountains -- New England in all its glory.

He suddenly finds himself LAUGHING -- it's as authentic as it is unexpected.

Behind him, Edith arrives at the top of the stairs -- joins him at the window.

EDITH
What?

GEORGE
You were right!

EDITH
About what?

Feeding off of his unabashed joy, Edith soon finds herself laughing as well.

GEORGE
It is special.

Both are breathing heavily and dripping wet.

Edith trembles with cold -- or perhaps anticipation.

They look to each other, laughter slowly subsiding... giving way to something even more authentic -- and intoxicating.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

Audrey lies across the hood of the Range Rover -- her back resting against the windshield.

Conrad -- still without his tie -- saunters up to the vehicle.

CONRAD'S P.O.V. of Audrey -- eyes shut -- motionless.

CONRAD
I'm sorry.

She squints at Conrad.

AUDREY
Me too.

CONRAD
You know, I was wrong about this place. I think I could go here.
(MORE)

CONRAD (CONT'D)

(beat)

Yeah.

Audrey reassumes her position.

AUDREY

You couldn't pay me to go here.

CONRAD

Bad day?

AUDREY

Catastrophic.

CONRAD

I'm sorry.

AUDREY

It's not your fault.

After a moment, Audrey looks back over.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Got rid of the leash, huh?

Conrad feels at his neck. A slight GRIN breaks across his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASE OF THE BELL TOWER - A LITTLE LATER

George and Edith exit the bell tower. They look a little shell-shocked. They walk in silence for a few moments before George slowly reaches down and takes Edith's hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. EDGE OF THE QUADRANGLE - SAME

They're about to walk into the open quadrangle -- within view of their cars -- when Edith pulls George back.

EDITH

Not yet.

They share a look that makes us consider the possibilities of what happened at the top of the bell tower.

GEORGE

What do we do?

EDITH
I'm not so good with plans.

George gives it a moment.

GEORGE
We --

He gets more emotional.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I don't think we --

He reaches over and pulls Edith into a hug so tight they appear to be as one. After a long moment --

EDITH
I thought you fixed hearts.

If it were a possibility, they would never let go.

GEORGE
It ends badly, doesn't it.

Edith pulls away.

EDITH
What do you mean?

GEORGE
The French movie.

Edith smiles through her tears.

EDITH
That's what makes it so special.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT

Conrad, now reclining with Audrey on the Range Rover, sits up -- opens his eyes.

CONRAD'S P.O.V. of George and Edith in the distance -- walking toward him.

CONRAD
Here they --

He stops when he notices they're WET AND DISHEVELED -- moving like zombies toward the parking lot.

CONRAD (CONT'D)

Whoa.

AUDREY

This can't be good.

As George and Edith get closer to their children, they silently drift away from each other.

ON AUDREY

who sits up as her mother approaches. Edith's appearance takes Audrey by surprise.

Both she and Conrad dismount the Rover.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

What happened to you?

She can't speak. She hands Audrey her keys.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Where've you been? Why didn't you answer my calls?

Edith gently pulls Audrey into a tight hug. Audrey resists at first -- then embraces her mother as well.

EDITH

Please, Audrey.

Audrey senses in her mother's tone that -- were they to have an accounting of their respective days -- the net loss of Edith's would be much greater than hers. It's unspoken, but understood.

Edith gets into the passenger side of the car.

ON CONRAD

who stares at his father for a few moments in silence.

CONRAD

You okay, Dad?

George doesn't answer. In a moment of pure instinct, Conrad puts his arm around him.

GEORGE

Do you mind driving?

CONRAD

Really?

GEORGE

Yeah. I need you to drive.

George hands him the keys.

Conrad, obviously unaccustomed to such a request, hurries around to the driver door.

Conrad hits the remote and the car unlocks.

INT. LEXUS - SAME

George sits in the passenger seat, the fountain water squeezing out of his clothes onto the leather. He could care less.

Conrad eases into the driver seat and starts the car. He makes the necessary adjustments for the seat and mirrors.

As Conrad begins to back up, we hear the afternoon CALL of the BELL TOWER.

George slowly leans his head against the passenger window. He CLOSES HIS EYES tightly.

FLASH BACK TO:

THE BELL TOWER

George puts his arms on Edith's shoulders.

She removes his GLASSES, sets them on the railing, then moves closer to him. Their chests touch.

BACK ON GEORGE IN THE LEXUS

We can't tell if he's trying to expel the memory or hold on to it for dear life.

BACK IN THE BELL TOWER

He pulls her tight -- taking the back of her head in his hand and pulling it to his chest.

She looks up. In her eyes we see hunger, we see passion and we see absolution. And now we recognize the moment.

The KISS is nothing short of epic. It's as if they've waited for this moment ten lifetimes.

It feeds a hunger that has been gestating since the moment they met. It's open-mouthed and passionate. It's focused and carnal. It's real and it's lasting.

IN THE RANGE ROVER

It's clear that Edith's thoughts have drifted to the same place. It's their shared memory that, sadly, grows uncomfortably distant with every passing second.

AUDREY

Mom?

Edith is snapped out of the reminiscence. She swallows, then turns to her daughter. Tears course down both of her cheeks.

EDITH

We're going to be okay.

CUT TO:

EXT. QUANDRANGLE - SAME

It's begun to rain slightly.

ON CONRAD'S TIE

still draped across the bench. Raindrops begin to bead on the silk.

CUT TO:

EXT. A DIFFERENT PART OF CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

The rain increases in intensity.

ON AUDREY'S BROKEN IPHONE

as some pieces begin to float in tiny puddles created by the rain.

CUT TO:

EXT. HUMANITIES BUILDING - SAME

ON EDITH'S APPLE

lying still in the grass. Forbidden fruit left behind.

CUT TO:

INT. BELL TOWER - SAME

ON GEORGE'S GLASSES

still untouched on the railing. A windblown RAIN DROP hits the top of one of the lenses and slowly streaks downward.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LEXUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Conrad drives as George continues to stare out of the window.

CONRAD
Should I take Route One or Ninety-five?

As George looks over to Conrad, he suddenly has a moment of recognition.

CONRAD (CONT'D)
What?

George reaches into his pocket. He pulls out the crumpled "The Middleton Experience" brochure. He stares at it.

GEORGE
How 'bout we take the long way.

Conrad nods.

CONRAD
Sure dad.

George gazes at the image of the Bell Tower on the brochure.

CONRAD (CONT'D)
You were right.
(beat)
Middleton's not so bad.

George ponders Conrad's unintended absolution. Then -- slowly -- a slight smile.

CUT TO:

An expansive, spectacular view of the countryside.

Somewhere on the roadways far below, George and Edith find their way home.

THE END