

THE FUTURIST CONGRESS

Written by

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Inspired by "The Futurological Congress" written by Stanislaw Lem

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Address  
Phone Number

## INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE, DINING NOOK - SUNSET

The film opens with a semi-close-up of Robin Wright, a beautiful 43-year-old actress. Her delicate face seems on the verge of an emotional outburst, and she looks straight into the camera. A low magenta sunset light adds dramatic tone to her face as the camera moves in very slowly, almost imperceptibly, to focus on her bloodshot, weary eyes. Behind ROBIN, through the window, the sky is in motion: a pair of giant, colorful kites fly around, mingling with the slow but steady movement of airplanes from the nearby airport. Every so often a plane lands, crossing the kites' flight path without touching them. We hear AL, an older man with a tired, cracked voice.

AL

Robin. Look at me, Robin.

She looks away from the camera to AL, who is not yet shown.

AL (CONT'D)

Do you believe me when I say that I love you? How long has this been going on? 24 years? 25? I've always been there for you - always! In any situation, through all your choices, all your fears, all that awful enslavement to your anxieties - I was there. All the irrational walkouts, always when shooting was just about to start: "Do me a favor, Al, get me out of this, get me out of that, get me out clean, without burning any bridges. Aaron needs me at home." But Aaron is just an excuse. Lousy choices! That's your whole story, Robin. Lousy choices: lousy movies, lousy men, friends you couldn't trust. Even the one thing you can't choose - your mother - you made a lousy choice there, too.

A brief pause. The camera moves closer into Robin's face

AL (CONT'D)

You had it all, Robin. A queen at 24. All the big studios came crawling. I don't know... Maybe I was too soft on you, like everyone says. I don't know.... Maybe I really was. But you were just a kid, and you were scared, and you made the choices, you made them on your own, and you slammed all the open doors, crushed all the dreams, and now... now...

Having previously appeared unreal, a statue in her own home, she reacts.

ROBIN  
(monotonous, embarrassed)  
Now what? Al, talk to me. What are they offering?

The scene opens up and we finally see Al, a man in his late sixties. Well-dressed, old-school suit with a classic cut. Unclear if he is Robin's agent, mentor, or an old friend. He is upset, anxious. He sits down, takes a deep breath, drinks a large glass of water. Robin is on the verge of tears.

AL  
I have no idea what they're offering. I wish I did. They called this morning, yelled at me for twenty minutes straight about how they're sick of us, and said it was a "final offer," that this proposal "won't be on the table again." That's what they said - it won't be on the table again.

ROBIN  
(monotonous)  
And what do you think it is?

AL  
How on earth should I know?

Al takes a deep breath and talks to himself.

AL (CONT'D)  
One thing I do know: they won't be back. They've never spoken to me like that, Robin. Never.

The door opens. Robin's 15-year-old daughter, Sarah, enters. She looks old for her age, and tries to look much older. The type of adolescent that goes out of their way to let everyone know they're growing up, they're rebelling, and they hate the world.

SARAH  
Sorry, Al, but Mom, I think you need to go now.

ROBIN  
What happened?

SARAH  
Airport security called. No pressure, same as usual.

Robin gets up to leave, worried.

2

EXT. OPEN FIELD ADJASCENT TO AIRPORT - DAY

Robin runs through the open field. Behind her, blurred, are the very few houses of her small town. In front of her, beyond a low chain-link fence, the airport runways. Her agent Al runs tiredly some distance behind her. Above the runways near the fence is a giant, colorful, wonderful kite shaped like a prehistoric-looking bird. All its strings lead down to an 11-year-old boy who guides it towards the runways. The boy is Aaron, Robin's son. A few dozen yards away stands an airport security guard in brown uniform, holding two ruthless German Shepherds by their chains. The dogs are barking furiously at Aaron. But the security guy seems uninterested in approaching the boy, out of fear or respect.

ROBIN  
(shouting)  
Aaron! Aaaarooon!

She continues running toward AARON. It is apparent at first glance that something about Aaron is not right. His stance, his posture, the way he responds to her calls. Cut to Aaron's POV to see how he sees his mother approaching him. Then we hear the world the way he does. Aaron's hearing is hallucinative, due to a rare genetic disorder called "Usher syndrome." A plane comes in for landing near the kite, but all Aaron hears is a monotonous, beautiful, windy sound. Everything else is virtually silenced. He can hardly hear his mother. She comes close to him, they hug. The plane's heavy shadow covers them. The plane seems about to intersect with Aaron's kite, but it does not.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Come on, Aaron, let's go home.

SECURITY GUARD  
Ms. Wright.

ROBIN  
I know, this is the last time. I swear it's the last time. You are so kind to Aaron, I'll never forget it.

3

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE. DINING NOOK. - NIGHT

Robin, Aaron and Sarah are eating dinner. Through the window, the same mystical atmosphere of kites and airplanes. Robin looks exhausted. Sarah is strong, angry, controlling, not as pretty as the mother and brother but bitter and very sharp.

SARAH  
So, Aaron, what was that? United  
435 from Rochester?

AARON  
Actually no.

SARAH  
What was it, then?

AARON  
United, but not Rochester.

SARAH  
Let's see. Wednesday, 6 p.m. Fort  
Lauderdale? Oh, I know -  
Minneapolis.

AARON  
That's not what matters.

SARAH  
What matters, then?

AARON  
That the wind was blowing from the  
west, that Nessi flew like a queen  
over the runways, and that it  
looked like a match made in heaven.  
I thought any minute they were  
going to unite: the colors, the  
red, that white, the black clouds.  
It was powerful. Really powerful.

ROBIN  
It's not gonna happen, Aaron. You  
know that.

SARAH  
Why not? What do you care?

ROBIN  
It's not going to happen because  
you're not going there anymore.  
There's no way you're going there,  
because the next time you do, we'll  
have to pack up our stuff and move  
to a lousy neighborhood in the  
city, where there won't be any sky  
for you to see, not to mention  
kites.

SARAH  
(to Robin, badgering)  
I saved you today.

ROBIN  
You saved me? From what?

SARAH  
From Al's proposal.  
(cynically)  
What was he offering you so warmly?

ROBIN

That's none of your fucking business.

SARAH

It isn't? It's none of my business if we keep on living in this shit-hole forever? It's none of my business if you keep on being bitter and taking it out on us all day, every day...

ROBIN

(taking the blow)

I told you, it's none of your business.

SARAH

(in a more appeasing tone)

Fine. None of my business.

Aaron is there, but we are not sure if he is listening, hearing, or in a completely different world of sound.

AARON

Tell her, Mom, what do you care?  
Tell her what he offered.

ROBIN

I have no idea.

SARAH

(barking)

Sci-fi? Graphic novel? Holocaust? I don't see why you won't do a Holocaust flick. Every B-grade actress that does Holocaust wins something, and you could play both sides.

ROBIN

What do you mean, both sides?

SARAH

Well, look at you - Nazi and victim. You're multi-purpose for Holocaust flicks. You know what? You could even play a collaborator if they needed one. How many actresses have that kind of talent these days?

ROBIN

(almost laughing)

No. He didn't offer Holocaust.

SARAH

How do you know? You said you have  
no idea what he offered.

ROBIN

Can we drop this discussion?

SARAH

Let's not drop this discussion for  
once.

AARON

Yeah, let's not. It's pretty  
interesting.

ROBIN

Actually it's not interesting at  
all. You have you idea how not  
interesting it is.

4 EXT. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS - DAY

Robin and Al drive into the studio lots. The scene is familiar from dozens of movies: Tall buildings, short ones, buildings from the 1940s, palm trees, immaculately manicured grounds. Al rolls down the window.

AL

Robin Wright for Mr. Green.

It takes the guard a while to recognize her.

GUARD

Oh, Ms. Wright. I didn't recognize  
you.

ROBIN

What else is new?

5 INT. HALLWAY. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS - DAY

Robin and Al walk down a long hallway. The walls are covered with posters of Paramount productions, including some good ones from the 1970s: the two "Godfather" movies, and others from the golden era of directors. Strong sun-rays shine through. Al lags behind Robin. She stops by a poster and waits for him to catch up. It's one of her old movies, "Forest Gump." Another poster from the same movie shows her in the center. She looks at her young self, who looks back at her. A long moment. Over this close-up of the two Robins we hear the beginning of the next dialogue.



6

INT. CEO'S OFFICE. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS - DAY

The studio CEO, JEFF GREEN, is laying out his new vision. He is the predictable prototype: young, brilliant, narcissistic, shrewd, evil, slippery. He is smarter, he knows better, he and his friends will bring the next studio revolution.

JEFF

I remember the first time you came to this studio. I was a young number cruncher, sitting down the hall. Everyone said: Here she comes. Finally, the heir to Grace Kelly. She's beautiful, she's sexy, she says brains, power, nobility, modesty, wildness, fantasy, hot-cold, a heap of contradictions, and she's one of us, Goddamnit! Not some Australian who grew up on a cotton farm where you have to drive two-hundred miles to get to a movie house where the projector runs on bunker fuel. She's one of us! That Robin Wright - she's from Texas! I remember standing in the hallway with the other money guys, watching you come in. You were already Princess Bride, Buttercup, and I imagined switching Grace Kelly's face with yours on the "Rear Window" poster, and it just fell right into place for me. What a great idea! You were the future, Robin! The answer, the promise. The studio gambled on you like the Bulls drafted Michael Jordan in '84. You were the whole package. We stood there in the hallway, and you were so beautiful it just pinned us against the wall. We were embarrassed. I can't believe I'm in this situation.

ROBIN

Exactly what situation are you in, Jeff?

JEFF

The situation of offering you the last contract you'll ever have.

ROBIN

The last? Already? I'm not even 44.

JEFF

Look, Robin. Things are changing quickly. Pretty soon...

(looks around)

(MORE)

JEFF (CONT'D)

Pretty soon this whole structure we love so much won't exist anymore.

ROBIN

Paramount?

JEFF

No, no, God forbid! I mean this whole structure of the actor, the agent, the lawyers, the trailers, the coke, the depressions, the break-ups, the lovers, the sexual kinks, the broken contracts, the terrible legitimization of bad taste in scripts, the post-failure blues, the skipping out on PR, the wild breaches of contract, the begging for forgiveness - all that will be behind us soon, do you get my drift?

Robin smiles at him, but it's unclear whether it's a smile of awkwardness or contempt.

ROBIN

No, not really.

JEFF

Look, Robin. I want to make you an offer you'll find very difficult to refuse.

ROBIN

Go for it.

JEFF

We at Paramount are going to scan you, all of you: your body, your face, your emotions, laughter, crying, nostalgia, depression, happiness, climaxing, fear, longing. We'll sample you, we'll preserve you, and from then on we will own this thing, this identity called Robin Wright.

ROBIN

And what will you do with her, with this Robin Wright of yours?

JEFF

We'll do all the stuff *your* Robin Wright wouldn't do.

ROBIN

Like what?

JEFF

Like all the movies you missed out on because of lousy choices. You gave up, you quit, you gave in, you fled, God knows what you did. And you always did it at the last minute, you jammed our productions and lost millions... How old did you say you are now?

ROBIN

Does it matter?

JEFF

It does. It matters a lot for the contract price.

ROBIN

I don't see what difference it makes if these... these scientists of yours -- they are scientists, aren't they?

JEFF

(amused)

They're artists. Great artists. But that's okay, you can call them scientists.

ROBIN

What difference does it make how old I am if you and your computer artists can create me at any age? What do you care if I'm six or sixty? Why do you even need me the way I am now?

JEFF

I don't. I need Buttercup from the "Princess Bride," and Jenny from "Forest Gump," and what's her name from "State of Grace." That's who I need. I need you because of your history.

ROBIN

A history paved with lousy choices. You said it yourself.

JEFF

For the last fifteen years, sure. Not a single flick, not even one movie you made could get its head above water. They all tanked. But maybe we can save you.

ROBIN

From who?

JEFF

From yourself, Robin!! From yourself. Maybe when we own you, maybe when we're Robin Wright instead of you, you'll make better choices.

Robin turns to Al in disbelief.

ROBIN

You knew about all this.

AL

(defensively)

Knew about what?

ROBIN

About all this crap he was going to offer me.

JEFF

How would he know? A guy like this, who still thinks cameras run on bunker fuel?

AL

On what?

JEFF

Bunker fuel. Crude oil. Never mind. He doesn't get the technology, he's from the Stone Age. So what do you say, Robin?

ROBIN

I say I don't understand why you need me. Why don't you just take your engineers and go invent yourselves some completely new characters, then move them around with your computers and tell them what to do and how to move and what to eat and who to fall in love with, and maybe these characters of yours can fuck those cartoons from the kids' movies, those furry animals that never stop talking, and that way you'll get a whole bunch of baby characters, and they'll be part talking furry animals, part young blonde actresses, and it'll just open up a whole new world for you. What do you want from me? Why do you need an antique like me?

JEFF

No problem. But I don't think you really understand how generous my offer is. You're at the end of your career Robin. You fell off the top long ago. In the economy of scanned characters you're not worth two bucks. For twenty years now, your name's been built on your ex. No studio is gonna offer you a scanning or sampling or a new life. You're nothing to them. Nothing.

His words are hurtful, insulting, like digging in the knife and twisting it around.

ROBIN

How do you know--

JEFF

I know.

ROBIN

--what offers I've had from other studios?

He can clearly see through her lies.

JEFF

You know, it's like stocks. Signing the hot girls is no big deal. It's smarter to sign the ones who could have been hot and didn't want to, and then make them hot. Send their stocks soaring.

She knows he's onto her lies, and that he knows she knows, but still, she doesn't take her eyes off him.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Robin, we're at war. Six months from now, anyone who hasn't signed is dead! Gone. Character erased from the screen forever! Big screen, small screen, computer screen, cellphone, you'll be back here on all four begging us to sample you. I'm making you a generous offer, a fair offer. I'm offering you a sum... a decent sum. I'm offering you a sum that will set you for life. You can retire, take your kid, your special kid, and build him an airport for kites.

ROBIN

Leave my kid out of it. What do I need to do for this to happen?

JEFF

Nothing. Just sign, go through half a day of scanning, and that's that.

ROBIN

That's it?

JEFF

That's it. And obviously you agree not to act again anywhere, ever, for all eternity.

ROBIN

What do you mean, "anywhere"?

JEFF

No movies, no plays, no fringe theaters in Western Australia, not at your kids' birthday party, and not for two and a half geriatrics in the old age home in that dump you live in. Anywhere means anywhere. It's over. Robin Wright the actress lives and breathes inside Paramount labs. And this Robin Wright

(he points at her)

takes the money, flies off to some Polynesian island, and finds herself another job. What do you say?

ROBIN

I say fuck you. You know, us actresses used to say we didn't want to end up in your bed to get a part, and I'm saying I don't want to end up in your computer for a part. It's very simple. Fuck you, Jeff.

Jeff is the kind of person who is unswayed by anything. He'll always find a smarter, crueller answer, a bigger knock-out than anyone unprepared can pull on him.

JEFF

This offer is valid for thirty days. After that, you're on your own.

7

INT. AL'S CAR - DAY

Al drives her in moody silence through the city streets to the airport suburb where Robin lives. They are in Al's poorly maintained old American gas-guzzler. Robin quietly gathers strength. Then she lashes out at him.

ROBIN

Why didn't you tell me?

AL

Because I didn't know, I had no idea.

ROBIN

I don't believe you. You're banking on me for your pension.

AL

You witch, don't say things like that.

He drives silently, hurt.

ROBIN

And if you didn't know, then why did you have to humiliate me like that before the meeting?

AL

'Cause they pressured me, they said I was a loser, that I used to be someone and I lost it, that you were the only talent I had left, that I'd ruined all your chances. They said some terrible things.

ROBIN

And you believe that crap?

AL

A little.

He contemplates for a while.

AL (CONT'D)

I could have been less easy on you. It would have turned out different.

ROBIN

No, I mean do you believe that this whole thing called movies, this whole magic that drives people crazy could be made by a few computer programmers?

AL

Of course I do. That's what the money guys have been fantasizing about for twenty years. Now they're in charge, and the technology is here. More than that, I believe that anyone who doesn't sign, and fast, is dead. They're so twisted, they'll try to erase your past.

(MORE)

AL (CONT'D)

Your movies, everything you've made  
- people who want to see them won't  
be able to find them on the shelf.  
It's just like he said: you won't  
exist anymore. Whether you sign or  
not, you won't exist anymore.  
You'll be dead, Robin. So you're  
better off taking the money and  
running.

8

EXT. BACK FIELD. ROBIN'S HOUSE. - DUSK

The runways seem to join naturally with the field. Aaron is out there in his own world. The light is dim, as it usually is here. The whole place is like a workshop for Aaron's kites. Huge flying animals, corpses of big, colorful fireboxes, wonderful works of art. Aaron is working on a kite combining the Wright Brothers' first glider from the 1920s with bird wings. Moving in on Aaron, we hear his gradual loss of an auditory connection to the world, because of Usher syndrome. The winds take on a dreamlike, addictive quality, while human voices fade into the background. Robin reaches him, hugs him, and admires the new model.

ROBIN

I didn't think you'd be able to get  
it done so fast.

AARON

Did you ever think about this - the  
Wright Brothers? Aaron Wright?  
Robin Wright? Maybe I'm like a  
great-grandson of those guys.

ROBIN

It definitely looks that way,  
judging by how you can figure out  
their sketches.

AARON

Except that there was nothing  
beautiful about their planes, the  
first gliders. It was all just  
practical.

A large plane comes in for landing nearby. Aaron and Robin look up and watch silently. Aaron concentrates.

AARON (CONT'D)

2019 from Indianapolis. The Wright  
Brothers were born in Indiana.

He goes back to his giant kite.

AARON (CONT'D)

Can you imagine this thing flying?  
Right there among those monsters?



ROBIN

Aaron.

AARON

What?

ROBIN

You know that a kite can't crush a plane in landing.

AARON

Of course I know.

ROBIN

Then why is it so important for you to do this at an airport, and stress everyone out?

AARON

Because of the harmony, Mom. The combination of cruel technology and the wonderful silence of a gliding object. It's way more interesting than just flying it in some field. And anyway, on the day of the crash, I'll get better.

ROBIN

Why would you say something like that?

AARON

'Cause I know. I'll get better.

Aaron tries to tell which way the wind is blowing. He gives Robin the edge of the kite to hold, and starts running with the string towards the open field. The kite slowly lifts up, more like a partridge with Boeing-aspirations than a kite. It looks wonderful when it flies. Robin signals to remind him of the limits set by the airport security. Shot from afar, Robin, Aaron, the kite and the airport at sunset look more like a painting than the real thing.

9

INT. BATHROOM, ROBIN'S HOUSE. - NIGHT

A close-up of Sarah's face while she sits on the toilet. A marijuana roach is in the corner of her mouth. She tries, unsuccessfully, to re-light it with a wet lighter. She wipes and looks at the toilet paper, but we cannot see what she sees.

SARAH

Oh, shit.

She gets up, her shorts around her ankles, and opens several bathroom cabinets, looking for something. Her motions are quick, angry.

She finds an old box of tampons, looks at it, and decides it's too ancient. She pulls up her shorts, leaves the bathroom and goes into the living room to find Robin.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Mom, where are your tampons?

Robin is just coming in from the other room. Ignoring Sarah, she crosses the living room to the bathroom, then stops. Sarah follows her.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Did you hear me?

ROBIN

(buying time)

What did you say?

SARAH

I asked where your tampons are.

ROBIN

I have no clue. There should be a box somewhere in there.

SARAH

What do you mean you have no clue? You've had a cabinet full of tampons in the bathroom ever since I can remember.

ROBIN

Well, maybe we're out.

SARAH

Out? How could we be out, Mom? There were dozens of boxes in there.

ROBIN

Maybe they expired.

SARAH

Oh yeah?

Robin ignores her and walks to the kitchen. Sarah suddenly comprehends something and follows Robin into the kitchen. Robin turns, pulls the joint out of Sarah's mouth and throws it into the sink.

ROBIN

How many times have I asked you not to smoke that shit in the house?

SARAH

Don't tell me.

ROBIN  
Tell you what?

SARAH  
That this is it... Isn't it a  
little early?

ROBIN  
Early for what?

SARAH  
Jesus, Mom! You're all of 44 and  
you've already hit menopause? What  
does that say about me? What's  
going to happen to me? How many  
fertile years do I have left?

Sarah has unintentionally but cruelly touched a nerve, giving  
Robin an excuse for an outburst.

ROBIN  
What does it say about you?! About  
you, Sarah? Why do you think  
everything in the world says  
something about you? It doesn't say  
anything except that from now on  
there's one thing in the world that  
you'll have to take care of  
yourself.

SARAH  
Yeah?

ROBIN  
Buy your own tampons, Sarah! And  
it's not menopause. My period just  
comes and goes every few months,  
that's all. It's deceptive.

SARAH  
Deceptive?

ROBIN  
What are you? A fucking witch?  
Where is all this evil coming from?  
I told you it isn't menopause. I  
told you it's on the horizon, it  
could happen at any time. But you  
can calm down, it'll take a while.

Sarah gives her a strange look. Probing. Suddenly she  
realizes this is not an easy thing.

SARAH  
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be such  
a bitch.

She walks over to Robin, and they share a rare moment of warmth, something we are used to seeing between Robin and Aaron.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Since when?

ROBIN

A year or so. At first I thought... You know, a vitamin deficiency. B-12, stress, hot flashes, not enough sleep, no work, depression, short periods, weak, just a trickle of blood. Nothing wrong with my blood tests, so I twisted everything around to avoid figuring it out. I was so naive - can you imagine? Not long ago I was still hoping a new man would come into my life, and I'd give you two a little brother or sister.

SARAH

Honestly, I kind of hoped that too. I'm sorry, I didn't mean it. Really, Mom, I didn't mean it.

But Sarah is too clever, she won't let go yet.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Does this have anything to do with the fact that you're hanging around in a club with some of my best friends' friends?

ROBIN

What?

SARAH

You heard me, the Black Club.

ROBIN

Never heard of it.

SARAH

The one full of 22-year-old punk heads? They say you're there at least once a week. Jesus, Mom! People know me in this town.

ROBIN

Oh, that? That's for my new part.

SARAH

What part?

ROBIN

The one me and Al had a fight over.

SARAH

Liar! There's no new part. You hanging out at that place is old news, I've been hearing about it for at least six months. Watch it, Mom, you're going to end up just like your mother.

Robin looks at Sarah. This is the moment where she breaks down. She hugs her wild daughter strongly.

ROBIN

Look, I need your advice on something.

**Some time later,** Robin and Sarah sit in the kitchen, wearing sweats, holding coffee mugs. It's an intimate scene, and they have obviously been there for a while. Their conversation has paused. Sarah shakes her head and gives her mother a practised look that says, 'Oh my God, how is this person even related to me?'

SARAH

I don't get you. I swear, I don't get you. What's your problem? Take the money and tell them to go screw themselves.

ROBIN

Do you realize that two years from now you'll be gone from this house, and my life will be more and more Aaron, because his condition will only get worse? I can easily enslave myself to a life with Aaron. Easily. I'm already there, really. I'm becoming a shut-in, I'm in the prison of this disease, of this place, of the airport. And now with this fucking contract I'll be destroying my last chance to get out of the prison, to be on a set, to meet people. So you want me to sign? And for money?

SARAH

It's not the money.

ROBIN

Then what?

SARAH

It's you. It's your only way to stay alive.

ROBIN

Alive where?

SARAH

In the movies, Mom.

ROBIN

You call that a life? What are you talking about? It's numbers and dots in computers. Zero-one-one-zero. Computer commands. It has nothing to do with me. They'll do whatever they want with those sets of numbers.

SARAH

They've always done whatever they wanted with you.

ROBIN

What's that supposed to mean?

SARAH

It means... What difference does it make whether it's some pathetic producer trying to please his shareholders and make money, so he can fuck with more money, and make more and more money, or if it's a director trying to please the producer, trying to make more money. Maybe you're better off with some nice computer geek. Maybe they're kinder than those studio assholes.

ROBIN

With one big difference.

SARAH

What?

ROBIN

That this way I get to choose which crap I want to do, and sometimes I even choose good things. But the other way, they'll choose for me, or for her. Freedom of choice is the last thing we have left.

Shouts come from the other room. It's Aaron calling Robin.

10

INT. ARON'S ROOM. ROBIN'S HOUSE. - NIGHT

Robin rushes to Aaron's bed. He is sitting up with his hands over his ears, obviously suffering.

AARON

It's amazing. Even lying down I can lose my balance.

ROBIN

What do you feel?

AARON

It's like the bed is on a boat, in the middle of a bad storm.

She hugs him.

AARON (CONT'D)

It's not supposed to hurt like this.

ROBIN

No, it isn't. Should I call Dr. Barker?

AARON

No, it won't do any good.

ROBIN

Strange that you mention boats.

AARON

Why?

ROBIN

When it all started and I was looking up Usher syndrome on the web, I found something in a forum about this legend passed down from generation to generation in some deaf people's village in the Middle East, I can't remember where exactly. And this legend says that the first deaf man in the village wasn't born deaf. He was a great seaman who got trapped in a storm, and he prayed to God, and God told him he would save him if he gave up one of his five senses.

AARON

Idiot. Couldn't he choose smell? Or taste?

ROBIN

He told God he wasn't willing to give up sight, feeling, smell or taste, because then he wouldn't be able to enjoy his wife, whom he loved more than the sea.

AARON

It's all very well to love her, but  
then he couldn't hear her.

ROBIN

The perfect solution.

This squeezes a little smile out of Aaron.

AARON

The more time goes by, the less I  
can hear people. But nature, and  
the machines I like, sound more and  
more beautiful, like perfect  
musical scales.

ROBIN

It sounds like you're choosing it,  
designing it.

AARON

It's more like someone else is  
choosing for me. Maybe that God,  
from the deaf village.

ROBIN

Still, this is the third night  
you've woken up screaming. I'm  
calling Dr. Barker tomorrow.

AARON

It won't do you any good.

ROBIN

Why do you say that?

AARON

Because I'm not taking that  
medication. The Dresrifil.

ROBIN

Dexarifil. It's called Dexarifil.

AARON

You'll have to force me, Mom.  
Sedate me, tie me up. I love my  
life, my fate. I don't want to be a  
part of you. Your lives look like a  
horrible punishment to me.

ROBIN

You're not here to make that  
decision.

AARON

Why not? I'm here to be sick, so  
why can't I make the decision?

(MORE)



AARON (CONT'D)  
Why do you think you're better than  
me at making decisions? When  
exactly has that been proven?

She strokes him, and climbs into bed with him. But he pulls away, squeezing against the wall.

11 INT. ROBIN'S CAR - NIGHT

Robin is driving through an unattractive area of town. She is alone in the car, listening to energetic American punk from the sixties. She goes through a rough neighborhood on the outskirts of town, and screeches to a stop at a pedestrian crossing where two young men are fighting, blocking her way. One overpowers the other and punches and kicks him in a craze as he lies in a puddle in the middle of the road. She waits patiently, calmly. Suddenly the hitter straightens up and looks at her. It's a tense moment. She looks back at him. A cinematic eternity. He drops the other guy like a sack of potatoes, comes up to Robin's car and motions for her to roll down the window, but she ignores him.

YOUNG MAN  
I know you.

ROBIN  
Could be.

YOUNG MAN  
No, for sure. I know you! Where the  
hell do I know you from?

He comes too close and puts his head up against the window. It turns menacing. She screeches past him and drives away.

12 INT. CLUB - NIGHT

A dark, spacious night club in downtown L.A., filled with young people in their twenties and thirties, in dark clothing. They stand listening to upbeat music, dancing to a seemingly different beat. The atmosphere is heavy. A band on stage performs cover versions of American punk-rock from the sixties. Iggy and the Stooges, "Dirt." Robin walks through the crowd to the bar. She looks out of place, almost twenty years older than most of the people, more elegant and classy in her light clothes. At the bar she meets JASON, the tall, handsome barman. He smiles at her.

JASON  
What's up, Princess?

ROBIN  
What does it look like?

JASON  
You look like crap. Did you get a  
job offer?

ROBIN  
Something like that.

He holds up a cocktail

JASON  
The usual?

Robin nods.

He hands her a tall glass of Tequila Mary, her regular drink.  
She takes the glass and looks at him.

ROBIN  
Do you know how much younger my  
mom's lover is than her?

JASON  
I have no idea.

ROBIN  
28 years.

JASON  
Then we're good. There's less than  
20 between us.

ROBIN  
Pace yourself, Jason. Three years  
from now my daughter will start  
hanging out in this place.

JASON  
I can't wait.

ROBIN  
You don't want to mess with her.

JASON  
Why not?

ROBIN  
She's a wild bitch. She's the real  
deal.

She takes a big gulp, then quickly changes the subject.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Tell me something, Jason. What kind  
of movies do you watch?

JASON  
Trash.

ROBIN  
Quality trash?

JASON  
No. Just pure trash.

ROBIN  
Why?

JASON  
'Cause that's what I grew up on. It calms me.

ROBIN  
(pointing at the crowd)  
And all these people?

JASON  
Nothing but trash. The point is to come out of the movie and not remember what you saw. You can rent the good stuff on DVD, but that never happens. Me, for example, I haven't seen a movie you were in for twenty years.

ROBIN  
Twenty years? Not since you were six?

JASON  
Eight.

She contemplates, watching the disharmonic movements on stage.

ROBIN  
You didn't miss much.

JASON  
Did you get an insulting offer?

ROBIN  
I don't know if insulting is the right word.

She turns to him very seriously, seeking support.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
They offered to scan me, sample me, put me in the Paramount computers and start making that pure trash I never wanted to do.

JASON  
Dough?

ROBIN

Tons.

JASON

Brilliant. Go for it.

ROBIN

Just like that?

JASON

You know, when I was a kid my parents moved us here from Detroit. And in Detroit, we used to play hoops on my block all day, every day, until it got too dark or too cold. Then I come here, at 13, and on my very first day I hit the courts, right here behind the bar. And I suddenly realize that all my shots don't count, because here they only count if you get a free throw shot afterwards, and they only count a win if it's at least by five points, and you can't dunk, and after every rebound you have to pass the 3-point line. It's a totally different game. I didn't know how to play it.

ROBIN

And what does that have to do with anything?

JASON

As a kid, you learn quickly that every court has its own rules, neighborhood rules, and you can't turn up on a new court and impose your old neighborhood rules on everyone. It doesn't work that way. If you're in, you're in, and you accept the rules without whining. You want to make movies? Well these are the new rules in this court. So drop the pose, drop the hypocrisy, it's not like you. Find a different court. You can't be on the inside, in the studios, and take their money, and then spit in their face. It's hypocritical. Go act in fringe theatre, live in a loft, collect empty cans for food, but don't stay in their court and whine about it.

She sips her drink. He's not sucking up to her - he really is criticizing her, chewing her out, forcing her out of the victim stance. She finds him attractive for it. Time passes, she gets swallowed up by the crowd, then comes back to him.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Why do you come here?

ROBIN  
I like this court.

JASON  
What do you like about it?

ROBIN  
That no one sees me here. No one  
sees anyone here. Everyone's a  
total stranger, they're all inside  
themselves, it's alienated, it's  
bad, but it's very powerful. You  
could die here and nobody would  
notice.

There is chemistry between them. She looks at him, and she  
pulls him to her and kisses him very gently, sensually. Then  
she pulls away.

JASON  
Where are you going, Princess?

ROBIN  
Take a good look at me. Where do  
you think I'm going?

He is young, and seduced by her teasing. He looks at her and  
comes closer, attracted. She picks up her drink and  
disappears into the crowd. She stands by the stage, where the  
music is unbearable and sounds nothing like the original  
song. Lost in herself, she starts to move out of synch with  
the rhythm.

13 EXT. BACK FIELD. ROBIN'S HOUSE. - DAY

A muggy, dark day. Black clouds over the runway. Aaron is at  
the front of the field, Robin behind him. Sarah is in the  
background, watching the airport's low traffic through an old  
set of binoculars. Aaron runs with the wind, his kite flies  
up high, and we hear through his ears, which pick up the  
thermals caught by a plane as it takes off. But the kite is  
unsteady and loses altitude. A small jet starts diving down  
to the runway.

ROBIN  
Please, Aaron, don't go over the  
marker! I'm begging you.

Aaron doesn't hear her. The kite starts gliding toward the  
runways. The plane comes in for landing. Robin runs to Aaron  
and clumsily pulls the kite strings back toward the yard. The  
kite loses stability, but the crash is averted. As the scene  
opens up, we see Sarah lowering her binoculars with an  
astonished look on her face. Then she holds them up again.

SARAH  
Jesus, Mom! Fuck! Did you invite  
your mother?

ROBIN  
I certainly did not.

SARAH  
Well, she just landed. I can see  
her stepping out of that United  
plane right now, and let me tell  
you, she's on fire.

14 INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE. DINING NOOK. - DUSK

BETSY, Robin's mother, sits down with the family for a meal of pasta and wine. She is a crude version of Robin, and has tried to blur her face with plastic surgery. She is eccentric. There is nothing surprising about her having a lover decades younger than her. Aaron sits by the window, watching the planes. He is cut off from the conversation, but not completely. He picks up fragments, and interferes when necessary.

ROBIN  
So when exactly did it happen?

BETSY  
What?

SARAH  
When did he dump you?

BETSY  
He started acting weird when they  
switched his meds. They gave him  
some super-new version of Cyperlex.  
He suddenly became full of life,  
ravenous, horny. He even stopped  
being cheap, started going out to  
restaurants with friends after work  
and blowing his salary on booze and  
parties. He claimed he was happy.

She stops, pondering whether he really was happy.

ROBIN  
And was he?

BETSY  
I think so. I think he was very  
happy.

SARAH  
So wasn't it easier for you when he  
was happy?

BETSY

Much easier. Except I wasn't sure it was him. He was someone else.

ROBIN

And he wasn't sure it was you.

BETSY

He was, but it suddenly dawned on him that he was 28 years younger than me.

SARAH

Makes sense to me.

BETSY

Not for a guy who's fantasized from age 10 about his teachers, his principals, his friends' mothers, and every woman who's at least 30 years older than him.

ROBIN

And you really believe he wouldn't have figured it out one day without the pills?

BETSY

I have no idea. I really don't. But if a psychiatric med cancelled out what he felt for me, that means what he felt for me was a mental illness.

SARAH

Makes sense to me.

AARON

Me too. Now we just have to figure out who's behind the pills. I don't want any pills.

SARAH

We know you don't want any pills, Aaron.

BETSY

(to Robin)

What are you up to these days?

ROBIN

Nothing.

BETSY

I mean other than developing an obsessive dependency relationship with your son.

AARON

Excuse me? What's obsessive?

BETSY

A kind of perversion. Really, look at yourself. You live in an airport, for God's sake. You're Robin Wright - do something!

ROBIN

Such as?

BETSY

Give the boy a pill for Christ's sake! Force him, if you have to. Save him from yourself. Then get a couple of face-lifts, take ten years off, and get yourself back in the market. There are no more roles for actresses of your age.

SARAH

So, do you guys not have any mirrors down in Florida?

BETSY

Why do you ask, honey?

SARAH

No reason. I was just wondering if that whole invention of mirrors had reached you there.

BETSY

You're a piece of work, Sarah. I took one look at you in the hospital nursery and I knew you'd be a witch.

SARAH

Makes sense to me. You're not the only one who thinks that.

The doorbell rings. Robin looks at Sarah, who shakes her head. She isn't expecting anyone.

ROBIN

Well, open it.

SARAH

It must be for you, I don't have any friends. Do you have any friends, Aaron?

Aaron doesn't hear her. Robin gets up and goes to the door. They watch her, and we realize that this is not a household anyone pops in on. They are cut off from the world.



At the door stand Al and his tall, thin lawyer, STEVE, who wears a modern suit. He is younger than Al, and looks like the stereotypical Jewish Hollywood lawyer.

ROBIN

You could have called, Al.

AL

What good would that have done? You haven't answered my calls since the studio meeting.

He bursts in with Steve, and Robin stops him.

ROBIN

My mother's here. Watch your mouth.  
Who's this?  
(indicating Steve)

AL

This is Steve. He'll draw up your contract with the studio. He's a scanning genius. Keanu Reeves? Michelle Williams? He did their contracts, they're hermetically scanned.

Betsy recognizes him and shouts from the dining table.

BETSY

Hey, Al! How long has it been? Five years? Six?

Al takes advantage of the chance to invade the room. He high-fives Aaron, who obviously has a warm relationship with him. Al kisses him and Sarah, and hugs Betsy.

AL

Betsy, you look great! Really great. A young lover is better for you than a diet of pills, that's for sure.

BETSY

What's news with you, Al?

AL

Me? I poke my head up and I can see the grave. It's all over soon, Betsy.

BETSY

Why this talk? You're my age!

AL

That's just it - I'm your age. This is Steve, he's a new lawyer I'm working with. Scanning contracts genius.

BETSY

A new lawyer? What happened to Podolski?

AL

Podolski's dead.

BETSY

Wow. He was our age, too.

AL

A year older.

Without wasting any time, Betsy turns to Steve.

BETSY

Scanning genius, heh? Well, I did see on the entertainment channel that the studios are starting to sample actors into tiny little computer creatures. It must change the way contracts work completely.

STEVE

(nerdy)

That's absolutely true, Ms. Wright.

BETSY

Call me Betsy.

STEVE

That's true, Betsy. It's a different type of contract. A one-off sale. Very tricky, lots of details, you have to be sharp! There's no going back to fix it afterwards.

SARAH

What do you mean, a one-off sale?

STEVE

After they sample you, and you're in their computer, there's no way back. Whatever was agreed before the sampling, that's the way it is. The studio owns the character, so you have to be really careful.

BETSY

What character?

STEVE

The one that used to be the actor.

SARAH

Used to be?

AL

The minute the studio pays and samples, the actor isn't an actor, he's just a person. A nobody. And the actor he used to be is from now on a character in the studio's computer.

STEVE

And the studio does whatever they want with him.

SARAH

Can they make Nazi porn with him?

STEVE

They can make Nazi porn, animal porn, anything. Unless the lawyer put a clause in saying they can't. It's very tricky.

AARON

But they can also make him into Spiderman, or a Watchman!

SARAH

Obviously. Or a freedom fighter in dictatorial China. Sometimes they do really good stuff with those little creatures in their computers.

AL

Good stuff, bad stuff - they can only do what the contract says they can do.

STEVE

Yeah... And the contract is very tricky, I'm telling you, very tricky. It's a new field. We're on the cusp.

BETSY

And what happens to the actor?

AL

What actor?

BETSY

The one who used to be an actor and is now a computer creature.

AL

He goes off to play golf.

SARAH

What if he doesn't like golf?

AL

Then he plays whatever he wants.  
Do you have a screen in this house,  
or is that too progressive for you  
guys?

15

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. EVENING

The whole family, including Betsy, sit with Al and Steve in front of an old TV. Steve is operating a DVD player. The screen shows a scene with numbers running across the bottom - an unfinished work. There is a semi-known actress in the scene, let's call her Michelle, and a somewhat famous actor. They perform the most banal scene imaginable. They are in a bathroom. Morning. He's shaving, she's brushing her teeth. Each at their own sink.

HE

And you know what? There's  
something I haven't told you.

SHE

You were with Maria, too.

He pauses for a long time. He seems reluctant to confess, but she keeps her wits about her and taunts him.

SHE (CONT'D)

Say it, you piece of shit. Say you  
were with her, too. That horny  
bitch - no other man would touch  
her with a barge-pole. But you?  
You'll jump on anything that moves.

HE

No, I wasn't with Maria.

SHE

No, no, sure you weren't. I knew  
it. I knew it the whole time.

HE

I wasn't with Maria.

SHE

Oh no? Then who?

HE

I wasn't with anyone, but I... I  
voted for McCain.

She is totally shocked. Now she loses it.

SHE

What?!

(collecting her thoughts,  
gathering strength for an  
outburst)

You voted McCain?!

HE

I voted McCain.

SHE

Why, because the other guy was  
black? You fascist!

HE

No, because he's a Commie.

SHE

You puritanical piece of shit! You  
liar! How could you? How? You  
trash! Behind my back! How long  
have you been carrying this around?  
How long? Four months? Five? How  
long ago were the elections?

The actress looks shocked. She walks around the big bathroom,  
smashes a perfume bottle, then another. In the living room,  
Steve pauses the DVD.

ROBIN

That isn't Michelle.

AL AND STEVE

That IS Michelle.

ROBIN

Well, obviously it is, but you're  
telling me they did that without  
her?

AL

If you really want to know, she was  
in Paris when they were making this  
crap on their computers.

SARAH

I'm shocked. It looks perfect.

BETSY

Yep, perfect.

STEVE

Perfect, no. But it's not bad at  
all for the beginning of the  
revolution.

Steve picks up the remote control and rewinds the scene to the beginning of Michelle's outburst, then forward again, then back.

STEVE (CONT'D)  
Notice anything?

ROBIN  
Should I?

STEVE  
Look at her neck every time she moves her head.

Steve runs the shot back and forth again, and we can see a bizarre tic in Michelle's neck when she turns her head. Her whole head jerks up, as if someone were pulling its strings.

AL  
Look at those morons. They've been trying to solve that bug for three years. Her fucking head jumps, it jumps! Look at how it jumps -- look!

Al bursts out laughing, and so does Sarah, but Robin is not amused at all.

ROBIN  
I don't find it all that funny.

AL  
Just wait and see what that tic looks like in the sex scenes. It'll crack you up.

SARAH  
Yeah, Mom, its good stuff. Don't be so harsh. Technophobia has never gotten human nature anywhere.

AL  
Oh come on, Robin! Drop the hypocrisy. It's not like that much has changed: they came, they took, they made a shitty rom-com, just like they've been doing since the forties. Do you think it would be any better for her, or for you, to be stuck on that set for six weeks? Like a dog? Kissing some actor with bad breath?

ROBIN  
But don't you have a problem with the fact that they didn't ask her?

AL

When did they ever ask you, Robin? You were always their puppet, all of them, the directors, the producers. They told you what to do, how to behave, how to act, how to smile, how to love, and they told you the subtext to every fucking line they churned out. And once you hit 35 they told you how to look young, 'cause if you didn't do what you had to do to knock off a few years you'd become extinct, for God's sake. So what's the difference? The fucking choice?

ROBIN

Yes, you know what? It is the choice. The fucking choice. We had a choice.

AL

(over-excited)

What kind of choice was it when they kept stressing you out, saying if you didn't work for a year you'd disappear? You call that choice? All those women who got face-lifted to death and can't smile or show pain or emotion - that's a choice? That's just staying on as their tools, don't you get it? We've been saved! By some miracle, through these fucking computer samples, we've been saved. We're free now. You're nuts if you don't take the deal. I swear to you, you're a basket case and everything they say about your terrible choices is true. Wake up, Robin! This is your gate to freedom.

At last, silence in the room.

BETSY

Now, can the studio make the actor younger?

STEVE

Only if the actor really wants them to, and the lawyer puts it in the contract.

BETSY

Would any actor *not* want to?

STEVE

You'd be surprised.

BETSY  
Why on earth wouldn't they?

ROBIN  
(exploding)  
Maybe because they hate the lives  
they had when they were young?  
Maybe some of them don't yearn for  
the past? They're somehow able to  
live in the present, and they like  
it?

SARAH  
I think the future is much more  
interesting than the past.

BETSY  
That's because you're 17.

SARAH  
16.

BETSY  
When I was 16 I wouldn't have had  
dinner with my grandmother.

AARON  
Who did you have dinner with?

BETSY  
With the boy who had the sexiest  
motorbike in the neighborhood.  
Why doesn't Robin sign a contract  
like that?

STEVE  
When she wants to, she will.  
They'll sign her up on the spot.

BETSY  
(to Robin)  
Are you kidding me? You don't want  
to do it? An actress of your age,  
without any surgery - it's your  
last chance, this contract.

ROBIN  
Then why don't you sign one?

BETSY  
If only I could. I'd sign a  
contract like that with Satan.

ROBIN  
Are you staying overnight?

BETSY  
Same as always.



16 INT. ROBIN'S CAR - DAY

Robin and Aaron are driving to town. He is in his own world, hearing sounds other than the radio: wind, birds riding thermals up to the sky, a completely different engine noise. Every so often she looks at him. He seems tranquil, immersed.

17 INT. AUDIOLOGY CLINIC - DAY

Dr. Barker is the audiologist who treats Aaron's Usher syndrome. It's a fancy, sterile clinic, where Aaron comes for routine check-ups every few months, to determine how fast his hearing is deteriorating. He sits in the waiting room with Robin, still lost in his world, watching a huge aquarium full of Betta fish. In his mind he invents a low-key soundtrack for the fish. Dr. Barker comes out. He looks like a middle-aged rabbi, with a trimmed beard, round face and round glasses. He is very warm, and Aaron is happy to see him.

DR. BARKER

Aaron, how are you, my boy?

AARON

Everything's good, Dr. Barker.

DR. BARKER

Any new flying monsters?

AARON

I have the real thing now. The original Wright Brothers.

DR. BARKER

You don't say! The glider? December 17, 1903?

AARON

The glider. I made a replica.

DR. BARKER

You know, when I think about it, you must be part of the Wright Brothers. Aaron Wright.

AARON

I'm the original Wright Brother. I build better than them, and I build in a world of jet planes. It's totally different. Don't forget, they had no competition.

The examination room looks like a recording studio. Aaron puts on headphones, while Robin and Barker stand on the other side of the glass. It is a routine exam - words in one ear, background noises in the other, then words and background noise in both ears.

The words get louder and louder as the background noise decreases. But not for Aaron: his interpretation of the words follows his own internal logic.

Siren. DR. BARKER

Silent. AARON

Glove. DR. BARKER

Love. AARON

Kite. DR. BARKER

Fright. AARON

Hear. DR. BARKER

Fear. AARON

Car. DR. BARKER

Far. AARON

Table. DR. BARKER

Able. AARON

Sky. DR. BARKER

Try. AARON

Parade. DR. BARKER

Afraid. AARON

Shell. DR. BARKER

Fell. AARON

Dr. Barker increases the background noise. Aaron is in his own world of sound.

DR. BARKER

(to Robin)

He's deteriorating steadily. We can't point to the time when he loses his hearing completely. It could take a year, it could take twenty.

ROBIN

Yes, but it's not just his hearing.

DR. BARKER

No. He's on a path he built for himself with this illness, like many others, for whom the illness and the hallucinative hearing are a personal equation created only in their mind. Aaron has a beautiful mind, and he's gifted.

DR. BARKER (CONT'D)

Train.

AARON

Pain.

DR. BARKER

Throne.

AARON

Alone.

DR. BARKER

Storm.

AARON

Warm.

DR. BARKER

His emotional maturity is unbelievable, so he takes it to imaginary places. It's a bit like the difference between movies and books.

ROBIN

In what way?

DR. BARKER

Ten people can read the same book, but they'll invent ten different faces for the characters, and different behaviors, and so they each see a completely different movie in the book. But in movies everything's very manipulative. The truth is almost always the same truth. The nuances in the viewers' perceptions aren't very different.

ROBIN

And it's only getting worse. I feel like I'm losing him. You have to help me.

DR. BARKER

It's not necessarily getting worse. It's the unknown. The medication might cause a fatal deterioration. Right now he's just becoming introverted, shutting himself off in his world, but his world is whole. In movies it's getting much worse.

ROBIN

What do you mean?

DR. BARKER

Soon all this will be irrelevant. They'll just have electronic stimuli that our brains translate according to what's in our subconscious. People will be given story data and they'll cast their mother or their girlfriend as Marlene Dietrich, or you, the way they saw you in a movie. All depending on what's in their box. Aaron's doing the same thing: he takes existing signals, like the ones I'm transmitting, or whatever life is transmitting to him, and he decodes them according to the data in his imagination. He's a rare case, but he's ahead of his time by God knows how many decades.

(turns to Robin)

And what about you? Any new parts on the horizon?

ROBIN

(understanding something profoundly, for the first time)

Yes... I think so.

She looks at Dr. Barker, then at Aaron through the glass. She has reached a comprehension. Aaron smiles at her, opens the door and joins them.

AARON  
Dr. Barker?

DR. BARKER  
Yes, Aaron.

AARON  
Can you play the volcano track again?

DR. BARKER  
Volcano?

He clearly has no idea what Aaron is talking about.

AARON  
Yes. It's a very special sound.

DR. BARKER  
Sure, I'll play it for you, Aaron.  
Just tell me one thing: I understand there's no real change in your thoughts about taking medication?

AARON  
I told Mom. She'll have to force me. Full sedation.

DR. BARKER  
That bad, huh?

AARON  
Of course! I look around and I feel more beautiful than other people, and happier. I feel things that happen above me and beside me more than other people do. I'm alive, Dr. Barker. I'm alive in a beautiful, whole world. Why do you need me in your world so badly?

DR. BARKER  
But you know that a few years from now you may completely lose your hearing. And it could get even worse - there's always a small chance of blindness.

AARON  
I know, and then I'll have sign language, which is an emotional, expressive language, full of life. I won't miss anything.  
(MORE)

AARON (CONT'D)  
I'll be in my world. My world is  
good. Very good.

18 INT. AL'S CAR - DAY

The same familiar shot of the car approaching Paramount Studios. Al is at the wheel, Steve next to him, and Robin in the back. Al is so excited that he can't share the others' silence.

AL  
Whatever happens, let Steve run the  
show.

ROBIN  
Do me a favor, Al, and shut the  
fuck up.

The car approaches the gate. It's the same guard from the first encounter. The window rolls down.

AL  
Robin Wright for Jeff Green.

The guard pokes his head in and looks at Robin, trying to figure out why she looks familiar.

GUARD  
Oh, Ms. Wright. I didn't recognize  
you.

ROBIN  
What else is new?

19 INT. HALLWAY. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS. - DAY

The same exact shot of Robin walking down the hallway. She looks at the movie posters and the Oscar statuettes in glass cabinets. Al and Steve walk behind her. She goes up to the "Forest Gump" poster, but something in the image is different. The young Robin's face is defiant, scornful, truly contemptuous. We focus on present-day Robin as she examines the young Robin for a long time, and vice versa. She feels dizzy. Al realizes, and hugs her.

AL  
Are you okay?

ROBIN  
I'm fine. Just saying goodbye.

20 INT. CEO'S OFFICE. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS - DAY

Jeff is studying the contract. Robin sits opposite him, Al next to her, Steve on the other side of the table.

JEFF

(murmuring)

"No child abuse, no horror, no prisons" - what prisons? - "sex only in a love story/betrayal/romantic comedy. No porno, no Holocaust, no Nazis." What is it with you and Nazis?

(to Steve)

Are you the guy who wrote this?

STEVE

You better believe it.

JEFF

What's your story with Nazis? Are you some kind of swastika freak?

ROBIN

It's not him, it's my kids.

AL

It's her kids.

JEFF

Nazis and porn is your kids? Porn... At your age? Porn! And anyway, Nazis and Holocaust rake in the awards, don't you know that?

ROBIN

Awards for who? For your computer artists?

JEFF

Nice! I see you learned something. Now they're computer artists, not just technicians.

He takes off his reading glasses and gives her a penetrating look.

JEFF (CONT'D)

You know what, Robin? This is all details, trivia. I'll agree to everything, except this bullshit about sci-fi.

AL

No sci-fi, Jeff! Sci-fi is a dumb genre, in our opinion. She's never done sci-fi before, and she's certainly not doing it now.

JEFF

Of course she never did it! If she'd done one sci-fi flick this contract would cost me six times as much. No sci-fi, no contract.

ROBIN

Then no contract.

JEFF

What's left without sci-fi? How many people do you think read "Lord of the Rings?" Maybe one percent of the people who came to see the movie? And I'm talking to you about a flick that grossed one billion. And nobody read the fucking book. You want to know why?

ROBIN

Why?

JEFF

'Cause it's one helluva complicated book. That's why! It's a nightmare to get through.

AL

Did you read it before you made the movie?

JEFF

Are you kidding me? Do you know how impossible it is? But I saw the movie, and that's exactly why we make movies. But that's not what I wanted to say.

ROBIN

What did you want to say, Jeff?

JEFF

That I'm going to keep you young forever. That's what we'll do with you. How old are you now - 44? 45? 46?

ROBIN

43.

JEFF

Sign the sci-fi and I guarantee we'll make you 33-34 and keep you that way forever. We'll never make you older. You'll be forever young, I promise you. Forever young.



ROBIN

It sounds like you know exactly  
what you're going to do with me the  
second you buy me.

AL

33 or 34...

JEFF

(to Steve)

Which sounds better to you?

STEVE

32.

JEFF

Greedy. Too greedy. Not believable.  
34, forever young, and we'll seal  
the deal.

ROBIN

Can we do it now?

JEFF

What do you mean, now?

ROBIN

Now, right now, this thing they  
have to do to me. I don't want to  
put it off for even another day.  
It's either now, this second, or  
never.

JEFF

I have to see if there are any  
vacant booths, if there are people,  
you can't just... It doesn't work  
like that, same day.

ROBIN

Then go check. But do it now!!!

21 INT. SCANNING AND SAMPLING WAITING ROOM. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS -  
DAY

The room looks like a waiting room for an MRI at a mediocre  
hospital. A long corridor with nothing but white benches.  
Robin is sitting on the last bench, hunched in a fetal  
position, looking lost and lonely. A big red light on the  
wall opposite her flickers every few seconds, followed by a  
piercing alarm sound. The seconds seem like an eternity. A  
door opens and a sad middle-aged man in a green robe emerges.  
He is wearing earbuds and holding a clipboard. He grins at  
Robin.

SCANNER

Robin Wright?

22

INT. SCANNING AND SAMPLING ROOM. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS - DAY

A huge, white room with scanning and sampling machines that at first glance look old-fashioned. A familiar X-ray machine, a flickering light projecting on a blank white wall. The scanner prepares his equipment. He looks shy, trying to avoid Robin while she stands fully dressed, her bag over her shoulder.

ROBIN

Aren't you...

SCANNER

Yes, it's me.

ROBIN

Arthur, Arthur Rein! What are you doing here Arthur? You were such a great DOP! "The Boys From Alabama," "Mingus," "Seven Sisters"...

SCANNER

I'm lucky to be here. The other guys are at home, doing nothing,

ROBIN

And you consider this job being lucky?

SCANNER

Well, at least I deal with actors, and light. Hey, I'm lucky to meet you at work, just like in the old days. I'm lucky I get to tell you to take off your shirt now.

A series of clean, white shots: Robin with her shirt off, then in her underwear. Red dots cover her face and body. Long shots, close-ups, all under the flickering light. The ex-DOP operates the instruments, and every so often he gives her directions.

SCANNER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Okay, Robin. I don't want to miss any of your charming expressions here. Princess? Now smile, smile, yes... You're happy. Happy. Now serious, serious. Smile loudly, loudly. Now laugh. And...no, wider. Sharp transition, sharp transition.

She switches expressions, and the camera zooms in on her. She looks humiliated. She knows he'll tell her to cry soon.

SCANNER (CONT'D)

I know this is hard, but now...go for the transition, from emptiness, blankness, to sadness...

(MORE)

SCANNER (CONT'D)  
Now slowly, amazement. To crying...  
crying.

The scene ends on Robin's tearful face. Half naked, dispirited, she looks like she's been through a hazing ritual.

23 INT. ROBIN'S CAR - NIGHT

A close-up of Robin driving slowly through town, still crying. She looks out through the side window at a big plane landing near her house.

24 EXT. BACK FIELD. ROBIN'S HOUSE. - NIGHT

Aaron takes advantage of the night, the loneliness, the full moon, and his mother's brief absence. There is a strong wind. The moonlight blends beautifully with the orange runway lights. Aaron starts to fly his kite. Its white silky paper reflects the runway lights and the moon spectacularly.

25 INT. CLUB - NIGHT

Robin walks into the club, the same familiar shot. Same people, same terrible heaviness, mediocre punk. She walks up to the bar and ignores Jason while he pours her a Tequila Mary. Then another. She looks at the stage, in her own world.

JASON  
You signed!

It's not a question but a statement of fact. She just looks at him without answering.

ROBIN  
You think those guys can play  
anything written before they were  
born?

JASON  
Depends who wrote it.

26 EXT. BACK FIELD. ROBIN'S HOUSE. - NIGHT

Aaron's perfect "Wright Brothers Kite" is in mid-flight. He has tears of excitement. A large plane lands through a teardrop. It comes closer, circling high above for landing.

27 INT. CLUB - NIGHT

Robin is on-stage. At first she looks slightly unnatural. She is wearing dark clothes, the same ones she wore in the sampling lab. Her makeup is smeared, and she starts to seem in synch with the place, her face shadowed.

ROBIN

Anyone here heard of a guy named  
Bob Dylan?

The crowd whistles and boos. The band plays the first bar of "Forever Young," but it takes them a while to hit the right chords. Their guitar riff is so different from the original that it gives the song a fascinating twist.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

May God bless and keep you always,  
May your wishes all come true,  
May you always do for others  
And let others do for you.  
May you build a ladder to the stars  
And climb on every rung,  
May you stay forever young,  
Forever young, forever young,  
May you stay forever young.

She slowly gets into it, but the irony and the sadness, together with the unexpected power from the guitars, give the song a rough electric energy. The black-clad masses who were previously only dots in the background, come closer to the stage, drawn to Robin. They project something between attraction and impending violence.

28 EXT. BACK FIELD. ROBIN'S HOUSE. - DAY

This is Aaron Wright's pivotal moment. The fulfillment of all his fantasies. The plane dives down for landing, straightening over the runway while the kite hovers opposite in all its glory. The inevitable explosion gets closer and closer.

29 INT. CLUB - NIGHT

Robin still on stage, the atmosphere grows denser. She is engrossed in the song, but also seems distant. She doesn't see the crowd getting closer, menacing.

ROBIN

May your hands always be busy,  
 May your feet always be swift,  
 May you have a strong foundation  
 When the winds of changes shift.  
 May your heart always be joyful,  
 May your song always be sung,  
 May you stay forever young,  
 Forever young, forever young,  
 May you stay forever young

The camera closes in on Robin's face, just like in the film's opening shot. She is surrounded by a crowd of young men, but we see only her face, her eyes.

30

EXT. NEVADA DESERT. ROAD TO ABRAHAMA - DUSK (**ANIMATED!!**)

TITLE: **Twenty years later - 2030**

From a close-up of Robin belting out "Forever Young" on-stage, we switch to a close-up of her twenty years later. The year is 2030 and she is 62. The world is animated. The animating camera draws back from Robin's face, still beautiful despite a delicate web of wrinkles. She wears a highly stylized tie-die dress, her hair is fashioned like an Egyptian princess, and she is driving a huge American car that runs on sampled solar panels. The car hurtles through red desert hills. In the distant horizon is the city of Abrahama, built entirely from replicas of grand 20th century ocean liners, now luxury hotels amid the desert sands. The proportions and colors of the whole picture are slightly distorted, reminiscent of an early 20th-century futurist painting. A wonderfully sexy female voice erupts from thin air.

VOICE

The city of Abrahama and "Paramount Nagasaki" welcome you to the **Futurist Congress**. We would like to remind you that during the Congress, Abrahama will remain a Free Zone.

Massive hologram billboards materialize on the roadsides, screening on dust waves. They advertise household robots who do anything from vacuum cleaning, ear-cleaning and manicures, to oral sex.

Robin stops the car when subsequent billboards show the trailer for the new "Triple R" (Rebel Robot Robin) movie (live action in the animated world), a trashy sci-fi series about robots whose consciousness make them rebel against who ever built them and gave them brains. In the films, Robin is a goddess starlet bent on eliminating the robots. This is the kind of crap that **Paramount Studio** (now Paramount Nagasaki) has been making with Robin's computer image for the last 20 years. The hologram billboards show two miserable, homeless robots. They look hardened, evil, violent, battle-scarred, with wires and circuits hanging out of them. They roam the streets with bottles of Jack Daniels in one hand and knuckle-dusters in the other, and indiscriminately beat up a little girl on a dank street corner. Agent Robin - **Robin Wright** - enters the scene. She is stunningly beautiful, forever young, in her mid-thirties (just as the studio promised), wearing a tight-fitting evening gown. She faces the two evil robots fearlessly. The leader drops the girl and shouts out in a hoarse, smoky voice, reminiscent of Walter Hill's "The Warriors."

ROBOT

Roooooobiin! Come out and plaaaayy!

Robin takes a step forward. She faces the robots in a low-angle Western shot. From a small satchel she draws a lasso that is a live fuse. She spins it overhead and lassos the rebellious robot. An explosion is heard and the robot splits in two. The upper body keeps cursing her, and she takes a few small steps forward. She strikes a match on the rough iron that used to be the robot's head and lights a cigarette.

NARRATOR

The new Triple R, "Street Fighters." Now in the air!

Robin's animated car drives off towards Abrahama. She takes out a pair of goggles from the glove compartment and puts them on. They act as a transmission and reception device.

ROBIN

Hey, Aaron, how are you, honey? I miss you. Can you see that? Un-fucking-believable! Abrahama City on the horizon! That's a piece of work, I tell you. Probably one hell of a genius designer on a bad acid trip.

On the screen of Robin's goggles, but in full-frame, we see Aaron. He is 31 years old. It is clear that he did not grow up right - the face is the same, because Aaron the boy had a grown man's face. But the curious expression of the Wright Brothers' Aaron is gone. He is large, hunched, clumsy, his gaze unfocused and distracted. He is completely deaf. Robin's words run like 3D subtitles in front of his face, and he literally touches them.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

No doubt it's the perfect collaboration between the dream factor of Paramount and the drug factor of Nagasaki. Sick perverts, Paramount Nagasaki. But is it real? Or is it hallucinations, part of their drug control conspiracy?

AARON

Well, it looks real to me, Mom, but you never know with those guys, do you?

ROBIN

Yeah... At least they say it's a free zone. Did you see the trailer for the new one?

AARON

Looks awesome.

ROBIN

Sure does. They changed my costume designer.

Aaron is touching the 3D words moving in front of him.

AARON

At last. When are you on?

ROBIN

I have no clue. But you can count on them, it's perfectly organized. I'll keep you updated every hour.

AARON

I love you, Mom.

ROBIN

Love you too. I'll be home in a couple of days.

31 EXT. PARAMOUNT HOTEL. NEVADA DESERT - DAY

Robin's fancy solar car glides into the Paramount Hotel's grand entrance. The hotel is a replica of a spectacular ocean liner from the 1930s. A narrow road climbs steeply up the ship's side to a grand atrium hung with chandeliers. In the background are endless giant vessels: ancient 5th century Viking ships, fantastical pirate ships - all are now seven-star hotels for congress attendees. The whole area is full of robots, the new service industry workers. The car stops in front of the ship's entrance. A valet robot runs up to park it. He gives Robin a long, strange, menacing look, jumps into the car and disappears.

Another robot picks up her metallic suitcase and hurries into the hotel along with crowds of people.

32 INT. LOBBY. PARAMOUNT HOTEL - DAY

This lobby could only exist on a ship. The ceiling is at least ten stories high, adorned with fine wood, round windows, and giant old-fashioned ceiling fans. A blend of classic ocean liner style and neo-modernism, operated by robots. The lobby is bustling. It is the first day of the Futurist Congress. The world is divided into three: the futurists, who are scientists and chemists, all carrying small, transparent briefcases. Their lectures are databases that can be downloaded from thin air and read the same way all information is now obtained: through goggles, watches, or straight onto the retina. The buyers, who distribute Paramount Nagasaki's product, a pure drug control system that helps the rich get richer and the poor work like slaves with less pain. And the journalists, walking transmitters, their stream of consciousness disseminated over the air to anyone who wants it.

ANNOUNCER

The city of Abrahama, "Paramount Nagasaki," and the Hotel Paramount Abrahama welcome the attendees of the Futurist Congress. We would like to remind you that for the duration of the Congress, Abrahama is a Free Zone.

The animating camera descends diagonally from the ceiling to the lobby, joining Robin as she heads to the front desk. She passes scientists with briefcases, journalists in goggles, and buyers whose faces are strained with expression of gambling addicts. She is surrounded by giant screens. Robots all around the edges of the atrium watch the trailer for Robin's new movie. Robin puts on her goggles.

ROBIN

Hi, Aaron.

She waits for a signal.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

What you see here is the Paramount Abrahama lobby, and these creeps all around me are supposed to be scientists, chemists. It seems there are two kinds of scientists: the researchers, who sit in Paramount Nagasaki labs testing new drugs on third-world slaves.

(MORE)



ROBIN (CONT'D)

And the travelling scientists, who haven't smelled a lab in years, and they just travel the world, staying in luxury hotels, talking up the lab-rats' inventions and selling them like crazy.

She approaches a scientist. He is laughing. Then we see Aaron just as Robin sees him on her goggles. He is laughing too, Robin's words running in subtitles in front of him while she gazes into the scientist's face, an extreme fish-eyed close-up. His eyes are transmitting scrolling screens.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Take a good look at them, Aaron. You can recognize them by the scrolling flight boards from the last century, which run over their pupils every so often. Here, look - if I get close to this zoned-out chemist...

She gets even closer to him

ROBIN (CONT'D)

...then you can immediately see that he has no silver fillings, because they would beep at the airport. All they care about is congresses. Now, the buyers...

She turns and goes up to a buyer. Stock exchange numbers run frantically on his goggles, and he looks terrified.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

These guys, the buyers, are such a cliché. They look like they're in a constant state of panic, waiting for the congress. They don't know what to expect, what the new drug reforms will do to their bank accounts.

AARON

Oh, Mom, they do know. It's all in writing in their studio contracts, and they've seen it on their slaves. Do they recognize you at all?

ROBIN

Who?

AARON

Someone? Anyone? I mean... the new film is out - what is it, No. 10? It's all over the air.

ROBIN

No... Nobody sees me. I'm just an old lady to them.

AARON

Welcome to the Wrights! No one's recognized me for thirty years... It's not so bad once you get used to it.

ROBIN

I see you left your room. Does that mean you're feeling better?

AARON

No... it means it stopped raining, so I can walk without being afraid of slipping on wet leaves. Remember last fall? That didn't end well.

ROBIN

I miss you. I'm going up to my room for a while, honey. I can't hear you in this crowd. I love you, Aaron. Love you lots, honey. And most important - I'll be home in a couple of days.

As she moves down the line, people all around her are focused on their goggles, reading more and more information. It's hard to tell what people see on their goggles or watches, but the flow of information never stops: on retinæ, watches, every imaginable gadget, and of course on the huge screens. The robots bustle around. They move towards one another, gather in pairs and small groups, point at the screens, go back to their positions. Robin reaches the front of the line and walks up to the robot clerk.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Wright, Robin. Personal guest of Paramount Classic.

The robot looks up from his computer and gives her a penetrating gaze. So does the security officer.

DESK ROBOT

Robin Wright. Yeah, sure. You're the sixth one today.

ROBIN

The sixth what?

DESK ROBOT

The sixth Robin Wright.

But then he stares at her again and seems to see something.

DESK ROBOT (CONT'D)

Floor 100, room 100. All the materials you need for the Congress will be on your bed. I would like to remind you that there are to be no objections shouted from the audience. Only clause numbers. Please memorise the clause numbers. You are only permitted to speak from the audience seat in clause numbers. Anyone speaking otherwise will be removed. Ralph will see you to your room, Ms. Wright. Have a pleasant Congress.

33 INT. ELEVATOR. PARAMOUNT HOTEL - DAY

Robin and Ralph, a robot, take the elevator. This work-weary low-ranking robot is poorly designed, purely functional and charmless. His face is sad, he is obviously depressed. He attaches Robin mechanically to the wall of the gold-plated elevator so that when they break the sound barrier she will stay put and not shatter. He puts her small suitcase between his feet. He looks at her, hits a button, and she is pressed against the wall. He starts to breath loudly, madly, like a dangerous pervert.

ROBIN

Jesus Christ! What the fuck is wrong with you?!

The door opens, and Ralph mimics Agent Robin's exploding lasso move from Triple R. Yes! Someone recognizes her at last!

ROBIN (CONT'D)

It's only a movie, you moron! And it's not even the real me on that screen.

Realizing that the robots are onto her, she walks out of the elevator and down the hall.

34 INT. HOTEL ROOM. PARAMOUNT HOTEL - DAY

A massive room on the 100th floor of the ship/hotel. Huge round windows frame red desert landscapes with beautiful ships planted at peculiar angles. Robin slowly walks around, inspecting the room. Next to bottles of champagne in the mini-bar, she finds a military cape, a plunger, a rusty iron rod and a gas mask.

ROBIN

Free Zone, they call this.

She moves heavily to the window. In the distance, among the ships, she thinks she can make out rows of little ants coming in the direction of the city, kicking up clouds of dust as they march. The scene is so distorted that we're not sure if Robin really sees the army of ants or is just hallucinating. She glances at the sink. The tap drips slowly, loudly, like torture. Bottles of mineral water line the shelf above the open bar. She looks back at the desert, walks over to the bar, takes down a bottle of soda water with large bubbles, and holds it up to the light.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Free Zone.

She considers the bottle, then tosses it in the trash, convinced it's tainted. She takes a long drink of water from the faucet. Outside, the sun is setting over the red desert. She paces the room, looks out through the windows. The tiny ants are getting closer. Through the window, on a huge desert hologram, Robin watches the young, studio-replicated Robin Wright being interviewed about the new movie. She has Robin's voice, and her aura, but she is a perfect computerized creation.

ROBIN (YOUNG, LIVE ACTION) (CONT'D)

I find something new in this character, Agent Robin, every time. Like now, in the "Street Fighters" production, the robots who come from the gutters are part of our lives. It's all very close to us. People buy household robots, squeeze every last drop of blood out of them, and then throw them out when they've expired. They used to have rehab centers for these robots. Now they tear them apart for scrap. Iron is a perishable substance these days. It's only natural that they would start to rebel. People call "Triple R" sci-fi, but I say, absolutely not! It's not sci-fi, it's documentary. Totally documentary.

She turns off the duplicated Robin and **begins to hallucinate**, or perhaps enters a replicated memory. There is a flash of lightning, and the lights go out. Outside the dark room, the sun has almost set.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Room service. Can I have room service?

She speaks to the open space, knowing someone is listening.

ROBOT (V.O.)

Yes, Ms. Wright. How can I help you?

ROBIN

The lights went out in here. The power, everything's off. Does that make sense or is it just in my mind?

ROBOT (V.O.)

Ultimately, everything makes sense, and everything is in our mind. What would you like to order, Ms. Wright?

ROBIN

A full breakfast. Eggs, hashbrowns, three pieces of toast.

ROBOT (V.O.)

And to drink, Ms. Wright?

ROBIN

I'll skip the liquids.

ROBOT (V.O.)

All types of liquid?

ROBIN

All types.

ROBOT (V.O.)

How would you like your eggs, Ms. Wright?

ROBIN

Easy over. Any chance of the yolks still being soft by the time they get to the 100th floor?

ROBOT (V.O.)

But of course, Ms. Wright. That's exactly why we at Paramount Hotel Abrahama invented the supersonic elevator, so that no yolk would ever harden! If you glance outside your window, you can see the elevator making it's way up to you as we speak.

She looks out at the space elevators running up and down the ship's outer walls. Supersonic booms accompany them as they zoom up 200 floors. She is still speaking when the door opens and Ralph the robot comes in with a tray. The room is dark.

ROBIN

Is it really dark in here? Or is  
the darkness in my mind?

RALPH

(recorded voice)

Everything is in our mind. If you  
see the dark, then you chose dark.

Through the round windows, the young Robin is visible again. Her interview is becoming tedious. The robot looks at her, mimics her famous lasso move, and wheels out. Robin walks slowly to the bathroom with the breakfast tray, sticks a piece of rolled-up toilet paper into the pat of butter, and lights it. She throws the rest of the food into the bathtub. The bathroom fills with candlelight. The room is hot, and quickly fills with dark smoke. Robin drips with sweat. She takes her shirt off. She looks at herself in the mirror, but in the reflection she is the young Robin, also half-naked, beautiful, just like the studios made her. She gets closer to the mirror: yes, it's her, at 62. She takes a step back and it's *their* Robin again. She caresses her breasts. They seem saggy to her touch, but in the mirror they are wonderfully firm.

ROBIN

It's in the water. It's the fucking  
tap water. How pathetic. Hey, Jeff  
Green, can you hear me?

(looking up at the dark  
ceiling)

Can you hear me, you piece of shit?

(screaming)

I'll sign anyway.

(then softer)

I'm not me anymore. You're me.

Don't worry, I'll sign. You don't  
have to fuck with my head anymore.

She paces the bathroom, then starts to slowly bang her head against the shelf over the sink. She bangs harder and harder, until blood starts to trickle down her forehead. More and more blood, into the sink and on the floor. She wets her face, still head-butting the sink. Blood keeps dripping. She kicks the bathtub hard with her bare foot. She goes back to the bed, trips, and collapses with her face in the pillow.

35

INT. CLUB - NIGHT (**FLASH BACK!**)

The same familiar L.A. club, but this time it is an **ANIMATED** replica. Robin is on-stage, animated, darkly singing Leonard Cohen's "If it be Your Will." She looks lifeless, washed-up, with none of the pre-sampling charm or grace of the studio's replica. The audience is sparse, and they barely see her. Her performance is sad and touching.

ROBIN

If it be your will / That I speak  
no more / And my voice be still /  
As it was before / I will speak no  
more / If it be your will / That a  
voice be true / From this broken  
hill / I will sing to you / If it  
be your will / To let me sing...

The doors burst open and a "Paramount Police" force rushes in, wearing yellow uniforms with the Paramount logo. Jeff Green marches at the fore. They pepper the ceiling with bullets and storm the stage. They stop the show, and Jeff approaches Robin with a menacing look.

JEFF

Are you Robin Wright?

ROBIN

Well, I used to be.

JEFF

Paramount Police.

He flashes a badge, like in a 70s cop drama.

JEFF (CONT'D)

You went too far!!! You know we're  
too busy making you a star! Next  
time we'll have to shoot you, you  
fucking whore.

He handcuffs her and they drag her out like a petty criminal.

36

INT. HALLWAY. PARAMOUNT HOTEL ABRAHAMA - DUSK

Present-day Robin walks down a long, deserted hallway in the ship/hotel. Round windows reveal the endless Abrahama sunset, which casts a contrasted hue on the signs pointing to "Paramount Classic." She seems to be walking slowly, heavily, padding from side to side as if on a sinking ship. The sign on the door at the end of the hallway reads: "Jeff Green. Paramount Classic." There are two chairs outside. Tom Cruise sits on one of them. Animated, he looks the same but older, with white hair and wrinkles. He has not aged well. Robin sits down next to him.

ROBIN

So they asked you here, too.

TOM CRUISE

You and me are the only ones who  
survived.

ROBIN

And who are all the rest?

TOM CRUISE

Characters they invented.

ROBIN

What have you been doing all these years?

TOM CRUISE

I was in UNICEF, handing out food to hungry kids in Africa. And you?

ROBIN

Taking care of my son.

The door opens and she goes in.

37

INT. OFFICE, PARAMOUNT NAGASAKI CLASSIC - DAY

The office is small, pathetic, befitting a pathetic clerk. The clerk is Jeff Green, twenty years later. He looks the same but with a full head of white hair. He stands up and smiles at her.

JEFF

Robin, Robin, Robin. I'm more proud to see you than happy.

ROBIN

I can imagine.

JEFF

Look who's left - just you and what's his name, the one sitting outside. That guy's one thing, he cost me a fortune. But you? I paid two cents for your contract, and here you still are. Twenty years later. I told you back then: you were pure gold, buried in the mud, you just needed an alchemist to dig you out. Oh, Robin...

ROBIN

Yes, Jeff.

JEFF

You're the greatest achievement of my life.

ROBIN

I'm happy for you, Jeff. You have no idea how happy I am.

JEFF

What have you been doing all these years?



ROBIN

I was in UNICEF, handing out food to hungry kids in Africa.

JEFF

You're kidding me! They still have hungry kids there?

ROBIN

Not many, thanks to you. So, what's this contract that couldn't be signed through the regular communication modes and made me drive 2,500 miles?

JEFF

Oh, Robin, you drove here because you're the guest of honor at The Futurist Congress. And the contract is nothing extreme. Just a twenty-year extension, and one other little clause.

ROBIN

What's in this little clause?

JEFF

That from now on they can drink you.

ROBIN

Excuse me?

JEFF

You heard me. From now on you can be drank, or eaten in an omelet. Or in creme brulee.

She nods: she's heard it all before.

JEFF (CONT'D)

You see, Robin, pretty soon this whole structure will stop existing.

ROBIN

What structure, Jeff? Paramount Classic? Paramount Hotel?

JEFF

No, not Paramount Hotel.

He laughs and turns a safe-lock on a small door next to him. The door opens, revealing rows and rows of computer techs, animators, huddled over their computers. She looks up and sees air vents in the corners of the room.

JEFF (CONT'D)

This whole structure won't exist: the scriptwriter who needs his anti-depressants, the ex-Russian storyboarder with a drinking problem, the animators always behind deadline, those idiots who fall in love with their computer characters, the lighting people, the special effects people - they can all go fuck themselves. Movies are old news! A remnant of the last millennium. As you will very soon find out upstairs in The Futurist Congress, Paramount Nagasaki is entering a new age - we're in the era of free choice!

ROBIN

And that means what?

JEFF

That means from now on you're substance. That's all. You're a chemical formula that Paramount Nagasaki's brilliant pharmaceutical department has cracked, and people can drink you in their milk-shakes and imagine you any way they like.

ROBIN

Everything?

JEFF

What do you mean everything?

ROBIN

They can imagine everything?

JEFF

Don't start up again. I had enough out of you twenty years ago.

ROBIN

That means everything!

JEFF

Yes, everything: drama, Little Red Riding Hood, extreme art-house, porn, comedy, sci-fi trash, zombies. What do you care?

She gives him an apathetic look. We can't tell whether or not she cares.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Tell me something: when you fantasize about someone, alone in bed, in the dark, do you pay him royalties?

He holds out a piece of paper with some lines of print on it.

She looks at him, gives the smile of an older woman, and starts to laugh. She laughs for a long time, increasingly hysterical. He doesn't understand. She picks up the paper without looking at it and signs.

38

INT. CONGRESS HALL. PARAMOUNT HOTEL - DAY

Hall 1 of the Futurist Congress evokes a world of imagery from stock exchange trading floors all over the world: a crowded, smoky hall with huge ceiling fans, excitable people wearing blue or black suits, waving something in their hands--we never know what. The scene is alive with movement. Information is project on every gadget, but mainly on goggles and directly on pupils. It consists mostly of the speakers' clause numbers. A stranger not receiving the transmitted explications would not understand a thing other than shouted out numbers. Since Robin has her goggles on, we can see running transcripts of the speeches. The speaker on stage is practically ecstatic. He wears a black-and-white suit and a thin purple tie.

SPEAKER

Let us not for a moment forget that the chemical takeover, our chemocracy, was a no-choice situation. It was imposed on us. Horrifyingly, we were forced into it. *They* forced us. *They* didn't want our robots. We offered, but *they* didn't want them. We offered them freedom, the chance to walk around like in Ancient Greece, doing nothing but thinking and thinking and thinking, and fucking every so often, and thinking again. But *they* didn't want that. So what choice did we have? Arms? Guns? Tanks? That's a joke.

The animating camera shows a thousand-story building in CHINA. It starts at the first floor: maternity wards with thousands of babies. It goes up a few dozen floors: children running through gardens with artificial lawns. Up to the center of the monstrous building: vast factory rooms with endless figures who may be robots, but they are real people, all sitting at 3-D printers, printing out our lives. Food, clothes, solar cars, furniture, toys. Endless rows of people and machines.

But when the camera points at the ceiling we see vents releasing a thin trickle, colored slightly darker than transparent. This trickle activates the factory workers.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

Most of them pose no threat. Death in the factory is harder than the occupation. Weapons no longer make people work 18-hour days. Tanks and airplanes no longer maintain our affluence like they did a hundred years ago. Arms are passe, they're pathetic, disgusting, from another era. Only a change of consciousness has worked. Chemistry has saved us from mass suicide, from collective, national, global depression - bitter, fatal depression. And now it's supposed to save *them*, too, the workers.

The camera climbs further up, to the factory's old age home: the same air vents and workers, but they are slower. Then to huge incinerators on the roof, where workers' lives end. The smoke syncs perfectly with the speaker's "free choice." But, in one part of the audience a kind of hysteria is emerging. These are the buyers, the distributors, afraid for the future of their factories. We see one of them on stage now, full of rage and anger, on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

BUYER SPEAKER

Free choice, free choice, you say! But has anyone ever asked what they'd do with it? Three billion Chinese, 1 billion Indians? What would they do with all this new-found free time? Is it moral to take people who know nothing but how to operate a machine in response to amphetamines, and leave them without any concept of time? Is it responsible to base the global economy on a superficial premise such as chemical substances that provoke free choice? As of midnight tonight, when Paramount Nagasaki relinquishes all drug control, billions of people are in danger of hunger and death. There is no doubt that at this rate, if we continue with 2, we will very quickly reach 5, and ultimately 6. And in the end, may God have mercy, we will reach 22. Yes, yes. 22.

The crowd sitting and standing in the aisles wave their papers furiously and shout.

CROWD

Twenty-two! Twenty-two!

Robin is standing in one of the front rows, among the journalists, some of whom are transmitting through their goggles. She tries to load her goggles with the material, pressing the relevant numbers on her watch. She hits 2, then 5, then the big number, 22. But everything happens too fast. She turns to one of the journalists

ROBIN

Excuse me, what's 22?

JOURNALIST

The end of the world! The end of  
the world!

Information flows like in a National Geographic documentary, with dramatic music and urbane narration. There is a new speaker, undoubtedly a Paramount Nagasaki big shot. He is a large man, wearing a tailored three-piece suit.

SPEAKER

At the end of the last millennium,  
the throne was claimed by King  
Bill. His first act as king was to  
release American space satellites  
into the world. Thus, in one  
stroke, this great man opened the  
world up to itself. He gave the  
world a way to reach places it had  
always wanted to reach. They called  
it GPS in those days. Until then,  
ships sailed at sea and prayed for  
clear skies so they could reach  
their destinations. Some were  
shipwrecked and some were lost. And  
that was 1992, not 1492. The desert  
convoys saw infinity, and prayed  
for stars. Death lurked in every  
corner.

As the speaker goes on, we see a lone ship out at sea. The captain uses a sextant to read the stars, but it's raining. It's a modern ship, very similar to the Paramount Hotel. Behind it is one of Columbus's ships - he sails around the globe to India, and gets stuck at America. From there the scene changes to convoys of hashish smugglers in the endless desert, rotting away in storms.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

... And this despite the fact that  
the satellites had been here for 40  
years, but they were used only by  
the U.S. Military. No one else had  
access. Until this king, Clinton,  
came along and gave us the  
possibility of a peaceful arrival.

(MORE)

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

He gave us GPS. So small, but so great. What we're doing here today at Paramount Nagasaki is the same thing, but much bigger and broader. The exact same thing: we're releasing the brain's navigation satellites out into the world, giving people the choice to see what they want to see. Truth, lies. Giving them the power to be good or bad, to work, sleep, die, be someone else, be someone they never could. After all, the body acts alone - it is a *phenomenal* technological machine that we are not even close to understanding. Technology has lost, chemistry has won. And the body doesn't really need us. If the body acts alone, all that is left is *desire*, aspirations, fantasies.

The thousands of Chinese workers in the building, who are duplicated, enslaved, genetically engineered to work until death, hover up to their new life through the factory windows.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

Our chemical control of the world has taken over *desires*. From now on desire is free. This is freedom's declaration of independence! Today, *Paramount Nagasaki opens the gates of freedom for the world!*

The crowd goes wild, yelling, waving their hands. The speaker hushes them:

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentleman, free people of the world. It is an honor for me to invite the symbol of the Paramount Nagasaki revolution: She used to be our finest actress at Paramount, then we made her the best Silicone Graphic creature ever created in the history of motion pictures, Agent Robin, and from today, everybody can be her, or what she used to be: Robin Wright!

Robin slowly walks onto the stage. She seems shy but yet very self confident. We realize it's a moment she's been planning for quite a while.

ROBIN

Has anyone here ever thought about the person behind the chemistry? Maybe one of you scientists, or the journalists? Maybe just a thinking man? Someone with a conscience? Who has taken the time to understand what we're going through? You've mass-produced us. You've concocted solutions out of us. Has anyone ever asked themselves what human form is left of us?

The crowd starts to whistle, looking for numbers on their watches, but there are no numbers.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Look at me!

She gains confidence, and the "traders" slowly quiet down.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Look at me. I used to be an actress. Then, a pile of computer code. And starting tomorrow, you can drink me in your milk-shakes. Look at me!

(shouting)

Behind every chemical compound you think up, there is a person built exactly like you. From the same material, with the same loves, the same dreams, who used to have a mother they loved, who wanted to love like her, and who did not choose to be your guinea-pig. Did you ever think of using your energy to find a cure for suffering? I have a child at home. He's watching you now. He can't hear you. He can barely stand up. He's been suffering since the day he was born. You could have been his hope. Did any of you ever think to direct your chemistry to his problem? The problems of hundreds of millions of other children? I have nothing to say to you. If I'm the symbol of the revolution, then the revolution is dead. The world is dead.

The front rows of buyers and distributors start shouting:

CROWD

Twenty-two! Twenty-two!

A commotion ensues, sweeping up the whole crowd. The man on stage motions for Robin to step down, but she takes her time.

CROWD (CONT'D)  
 (shouting rhythmically)  
 Twenty-two! Twenty-two!

Finally a group of policemen in Paramount uniforms gets on stage and throws her out of the room.

39 EXT. PARAMOUNT SHIP DECK - DUSK

A stunning sunset in Abrahama. Robin walks out through the ship gates, down past the command bridge and onto to the huge deck, where she walks alone. The polished wood reflects the red sun-rays. She walks away from the bridge and lights a cigarette. A robot zooms up and holds out a designer ashtray, just as a hologram drops down and screens the "Triple R: Street Fighters" trailer. After beating up the little girl, the robots scratch their balls, look up and shout:

ROBOT  
 Robin! Come out and Play!

Robin looks at her young self in the huge hologram. Not far away stands a man roughly twenty years younger than her: tall, lanky, masculine, attractive, wearing a tattered suit and smoking a cigarette with great pleasure as he watches the new movie on his black horn-rimmed glasses. He is suave. When Robin approaches him he doesn't even look up.

ROBIN  
 What do you think?

DYLAN  
 (not looking up)  
 Looks like one of the best.

He lights another cigarette with the old one, and only then looks into her eyes. There is a long pause of three or four seconds. He seems perhaps to recognize her.

DYLAN (CONT'D)  
 But I prefer the one with the Nazis. "Triple R 7," I think it was.

They smoke slowly, enjoying the moment, the view. He looks at her again, contemplates, again with a hint of recognition.

DYLAN (CONT'D)  
 You're not one of the scientists.

ROBIN  
 Is it so obvious?

DYLAN  
 It's a question of statement.



ROBIN

What statement?

DYLAN

Cigarettes for you are a need, not  
a statement.

ROBIN

What statement?

DYLAN

That cigarettes can't kill anymore -  
a scientist's statement.

His tone is slightly belittling. They each take another drag. While she ponders his argument, **troops from the chemical resistance's civil uprising suddenly emerge over the nearby hilltops.** They have been hiding out in caves, deep in the earth, drinking ground water, eating long-expired canned goods, and are now the most hardened people on earth. Their uniforms range from WWI-era through the present. They look like a medley of early 20th century German soldiers, Russians, Vietcong, Fatah guerillas, and army surplus from Saddam Hussein's forces. Their weapons are also a mixture: antique carbines, late 19th century pistols, a variety of Uzis, hand-carved AK-47's, ancient hand grenades, and classic gas masks like the ones we associate with Gallipoli, unlike the ones used in 2030, which are fold-ups built from "smart materials." This seething mass can only exist in animation. Robin and Dylan watch in astonishment.

ROBIN

Jesus, what is this shit? I thought  
this was supposed to be a free  
zone.

DYLAN

I don't think those guys would  
agree with you. I don't think they  
agree with anything coming out of  
this Congress.

They stand frozen on the deck, transfixed. Dylan pulls himself together first.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Come on, let's go back inside. This  
is going to be bad.

He stands close to her, but not too close, trying to guide her back into the ship's belly. But she stubbornly keeps watching the troops, fascinated.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Robin - it is Robin, isn't it?

She doesn't move, only nods. And then it starts. The first gang of rebels advances toward the ship, shooting harpoons with hooks and ropes. They hang from the ropes like wild animals, and start climbing up the ship. At the same time, from the surrounding hills, other rebels fire ancient bazooka rockets with huge iron catapults. Weapons out of use for centuries come alive and start firing. Robin and Dylan get down on the desert sand and watch. At first there is no resistance, but then two robots that look like nuclear mosquitoes dive down from the sky and spray the rebels with an unknown substance, all to the sounds of electronic Wagner, a paraphrase on the "Apocalypse Now" helicopter scene. The area fills with purple smoke. The journalists are the first to reach the scene. Robin and Dylan peer over the high side of the ship. Dylan realizes what is going to happen and takes out his fold-up mask. He holds it to Robin's face.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Breathe.

(to Robin, yelling)

Breath deep and hold it in as long  
as you can!

She takes two deep breaths and hands him back the mask obediently. He puts it to his face. There is something very intimate in this moment between the two strangers. The smoke gradually clears, revealing a dramatic change in the rebels' condition. Instead of the violent outburst of years of aggression, they start to feel each other up, hugging, cuddling, kissing. The journalists arrive and quickly join in the love-fest, as do the non-robot police.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Come on, let's go inside now.

They run, hunched over, toward the ship's belly. Looking at the front of the ship, they see the top floors start to collapse. Explosions, fire and smoke are everywhere. Robin turns to look back. On one side, it looks like a huge rave. But on the other side, the rebels are there to kill. Robin sees all this, takes off her mask and puts on her goggles.

ROBIN

Look at this, Aaron! Look: a real  
revolution. Romantic, hysterical,  
with real, brave, suicidal rebels.  
Look at them! They're everything we  
always wanted. They're what Sarah  
dreamed of being. They're...

Dylan pulls her toward the ship again, shouting. He throws her goggles off and shoves the mask on her face.

DYLAN

We're going in now, Robin. Now!

40

INT. HALLWAYS. PARAMOUNT HOTEL - DUSK

They are running against the crowd down a long hallway to the lobby. The arrogant scientists and hedonistic journalists who only a few moments ago were deciding peoples' fates, are now a herd on the verge of hysterics. Amidst it all, the robots are going wild. These obsequious service providers, designed by man to be so civilized, are now joining the rebellion, going against their nature, reaching out long arms into the crowds and crushing any human they encounter.

ROBIN  
(shouting)  
Where are we going?

DYLAN  
I have no idea, but I think the  
basement is best.

They manage to cross the lobby, but as they turn to the corridor a huge explosion is heard. They drop to the floor in a panic, but when they slowly, fearfully get up, they can see that the entire hallway is engulfed in flames. All the round windows are encircled in fire: it is a spectacular scene. Dylan pulls Robin to the basement. People run opposite them with masks on - these are the first rebels, taking over the ship from inside. **Robin begins to hallucinate** - she has overdosed on the substance. Suddenly she thinks she recognizes someone - a redhead with a mask, thin, tattooed, running madly. Robin freezes.

ROBIN  
(murmuring)  
Sarah?  
(screaming)  
Sarah!

The hallway is empty. Dylan is gone, swallowed up in white smoke. Robin is frozen, and she feels the hallways start to sway like a ship. She is paralysed.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
(mumbling)  
Sarah, Sarah.

Dylan reappears, grabs her and holds her to him.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
I saw Sarah.

DYLAN  
It's not her. You must be poisoned.

ROBIN  
How do you know who Sarah is?

DYLAN

It's not Sarah. Sarah was killed in an accident in 2014.

ROBIN

How could you know that? Who are you?

DYLAN

I know a lot more than you can imagine. She OD'd, they thought it was suicide. But she didn't want to die. If she could, she'd be here with them, with the rebels. I swear she would.

They are swallowed up in the circle of fire.

41 INT. SHIP BASEMENT. PARAMOUNT HOTEL ABRAHAMA - NIGHT

The basement is an exact replica of the basement in an early 20th century ocean liner. Huge vats that once stored coal are now hooked up to the ship's operating system: air conditioning, water, plumbing, fuel. They all integrate with the historical design, now with glistening aluminum pipes and silver ducts carrying air. Yellow emergency lights blink, flooding the area with a dim glow. Plumes of smoke periodically burst from the vats that were hit in the attack. Filthy water slowly trickles across the floor. Eight glistening red inflatable couches float over the sewage water. They are loaded with people, all wearing transparent, sampled gas masks that are an integral part of the rescue couches. Dylan and Robin come in from the depths of the basement towards the floating survivors.

DYLAN

Okay, clear out! We have a woman injured badly here.

He yells at them, but no one even looks at him.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

(shouting)

I said we have a woman with severe head injuries here! Irreversible hallucinogenic poisoning! Who's giving up his seat?

A man wearing a tattered post office clerk's uniform gets up from his colorful seat and stands lopsided, obviously high.

SENIOR OFFICIAL

I suggest we draw straws.

DYLAN

Who are you?

SENIOR OFFICIAL  
I'm from management!

DYLAN  
What management?

SENIOR OFFICIAL  
Hotel management. Everyone here is hotel management. Powerful, important people. I suggest we draw straws.

DYLAN  
Straws? What do you mean?

SENIOR OFFICIAL  
For the seats. And we can take our masks off for a couple of minutes.

DYLAN  
Why would you do that?

SENIOR OFFICIAL  
That way we won't have to draw straws! People will breathe in the poisoned air and then they'll want to crowd together on top of each other, rub up, mingle, make out.  
(feeling himself up)  
Who's going first? Who's taking it off? Who?

He asks like a child asking who will take their underwear off first at a grade school party. Dylan goes up to him and takes his mask off, counts to ten, and the man takes a full breath. Dylan throws him onto a floating chair with two other horny people. The man cuddles up with them. Dylan lays Robin softly on the man's vacant chair and sits down next to her.

DYLAN  
Robin... Robin, can you hear me?

He slaps her, and she comes around.

DYLAN (CONT'D)  
Robin, can you hear me? This is important. It's very important. Don't sink, don't give up. Stay awake, please.

ROBIN  
I want to see my son.

DYLAN  
As soon as we can, I'll connect you. Don't sink.

He slaps her gain, trying to keep her alert.

DYLAN (CONT'D)  
Tell me about Aaron.

He tries to keep her awake. She lifts her head. The depth of fear is visible in her eyes.

ROBIN  
Why does everyone except me respond  
to this drug with such love?

**She is hallucinating again.** She stares at the ceiling webbed with pipes, but in her hallucinatory state she sees a round shaft of sewage tearing open in the ceiling. A marine sergeant peers out. She knows him: it's Jeff Green again. He lowers himself down on a rope, followed by more soldiers, and goes straight to her.

MARINE SERGEANT JEFF  
(yelling)  
Are you Robin Wright?

His voice is loud, authoritative, firm.

ROBIN  
(nodding)  
At least I used to be.

She clings to his legs and he climbs like a cartoon character back up into the round sewage hole.

42 INT. MILITARY HELICOPTER - NIGHT

**The hallucination continues:** A familiar American Sikorsky helicopter with a rich cinematic past. Terrible rotor noise cuts through the air. Robin lies on a field cot surrounded by six marines, all familiar faces from the studios, including Jeff, Al, and Steve. She is hooked up to an IV drip and oxygen tanks. The noise is intolerable. She looks to one side and sees the helicopter dive down on the city, as if in sync with the motion of her head. Abrahama is on fire. Paramount Hotel Abrahama is up in smoke, the glistening white of the hotel crumbles, drips and melts. People are still leaping to their deaths. The other ships are burning, too, in the revolutionary fire. Jeff and Al lean over her.

JEFF  
Give her more oxygen, we need her  
alive.

AL  
Why keep her alive? You have her  
already, just let her die in peace.

STEVE  
Yeah, you killed her long ago.

JEFF

Look at what a stunning old lady  
she's turning into. No surgery,  
nothing, she's a clean cut. You  
can't manufacture that!

(turning his head back)

How far are we from the hospital?

PILOT

We're already there.

They descend sharply, a geometry possible only in animation,  
straight into a familiar airport. Robin can see Aaron's giant  
wright brother's kite rising up toward them. The helicopter  
is on a direct collision course with the kite. Her mouth  
opens wide.

ROBIN

Aaaaarooooon!

She sees the adult Aaron down there, standing alone,  
unsteady, holding the giant kite by two long strings with  
immense power, fighting the strong winds created by the  
rotors. Aaron and the kite grow closer at an alarming rate,  
heading to a huge crash. **She awakes from the hallucination -  
back to the ship's basement.**

43

INT. SHIP BASEMENT. PARAMOUNT HOTEL - NIGHT

The man next to her sits stroking her hand. It's Dylan.

ROBIN

Who are you?

DYLAN

Dylan. Dylan Truliner.

ROBIN

Do you work for *them*?

DYLAN

I used to. Until this morning, when  
they declared the Futurist Congress  
revolution. I'm the animator who  
moved you on the computers for  
twenty years. Head of the Robin  
Wright department at Paramount.  
Your body, your face, your smile,  
your sadness. That was my whole  
life.

ROBIN

Tell me more.

DYLAN

I wound up there by chance. I was an unemployed animator, a UCLA grad, and they put me on the Robin department for the first film, "Triple R Strike." I was lost.

ROBIN

Why?

DYLAN

Because I had no clue who you were. I'd never heard of you, never seen you in anything. So they gave me a week for research, and in that week I watched every frame you'd ever shot at least twenty times. I researched you obsessively.

ROBIN

What was there to research?

DYLAN

Where you came from, where you went. Texas, So Cal, Santa Barbara, the all-American girl, tight jeans and boots. After a week I came and pitched them the lasso idea. I had a little illustration, drawn in pencil.

ROBIN

What was in it?

DYLAN

You, standing there in boots and a cowboy hat in the middle of China, waving a lasso over your head.

44 INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT (**FLASH BACK**)

An animated version of Robin's familiar house. A plane lands on the runway outside. Robin, Aaron and Sarah watch a live-action trailer for "Strike," the Triple R series breakthrough: The Trailer is **live action** a hall full of industrial robots, similar to the Chinese factory, but these are definitely machines. In the front row of the machines sit the populist rebels. They make a few incomprehensible head motions, then suddenly burst out of the hall and down the factory hallways. We follow them in a track-shot until they burst through a door into an office where the management is meeting. The managers are being held by two other robots. The new group has obviously come to communicate with them. One of them picks up the CEO and dangles him out the window. Then Agent Robin kicks in the door. The robots throw sharp knives at her.



She draws the lasso, in its debut appearance, and wraps it around one robot, then another. Cut to the animated Wrights watching the live-action movie.

SARAH

Fuck, Mom - it's perfect! It's amazing how they made you.

AARON

Yeah, but what's that tic in your head?

ROBIN

What tic?

AARON

Every time you turn your head, your neck jerks.

45 INT. SHIP BASEMENT. PARAMOUNT HOTEL - DAY

Explosions are heard in the background.

ROBIN

What *is* that tic in my head?

DYLAN

Programming bug. We only solved it when the Nazis came and I was made department head.

46 EXT. POW CAMP - NIGHT (**LIVE ACTION**)

Classic WWII shot: black-and-white, barbed wire fences, floodlights, guard posts. A group of black robot-soldiers crosses the frame in a Nazi march. Their insignia is similar to a swastika, red on black, but in its center are computerized code numbers, zero-one-one-zero. They are followed by four robots sitting in a black jeep. Two POWs run clumsily towards the fence and the robots crush them, emitting a medley of gibberish in an Austrian accent.

ROBOT-NAZI

*A kleiner mensch, ha-ha-ha!*

The downed POWs' insignia look like Microsoft or Google icons.

DYLAN (V.O.)

Paramount Nagasaki only made "Triple R - The New Final Solution" because they wanted an Oscar.

(MORE)

DYLAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They knew a Nazi film would bring it, especially if the POWs were computer programmers, nerds, helpless geeks with no powers of resistance - they're instantly sympathetic. And once you're doing a Nazi/victim flick, you may as well solve the programming glitches to get the Oscar. Never mind that computer programmers are the only academy voters left.

Agent Robin approaches the fence, expertly skirts around the guard tower, and instead of tossing the requisite grenade, she draws her lasso and crushes the guard robot, who has infra-red eyes for night vision. Everything happens in total silence, of course, like in "The Dirty Dozen," except for the idiotic grunts of the Nazi-Robot infantrymen. Agent Robin enters the enclosure and starts lassoing all the rest, setting the place on fire. She flips over a Nazi-Robot jeep, then guns down the troops who rush in. Her head rocks exaggeratedly from side to side. The whole POW camp is pandemonium. Robots run everywhere, old military vehicles drive around, grenade smoke fills the air.

47

INT. SHIP BASEMENT. PARAMOUNT HOTEL - NIGHT (ANIMATED)

A natural transition from the live action POW camp smoke to the animated smoke in the hotel basement. The war for chemical freedom of choice is at its height. Rebels with masks and assorted uniforms cross the basement, firing shoulder missiles. The situation worsens: water starts spouting from gaping cracks in the walls, steam bursts out intermittently, then giant cockroaches arrive. Robin looks at Dylan. He touches her forehead - she is burning up. **She's hallucinating again:** she feels herself sprouting thick, green roots from her feet, and they mingle with the filthy water on the floor. Dylan also grows roots into the ground. She can see the other survivors making out on the couches - men with men, with women, anything goes. Dylan grows flowers before her very eyes. Her hallucination is so extreme, so colorful, that her mind can barely tolerate it. He shoots out huge blossoms of flowers in bright red and orange. She starts to bloom, too. The cockroaches grow larger, then they stand up on their hind-legs in pairs and walk arm-in-arm into the depths of the basement. A survivor piggy-backs on a cockroach and rides him outside, turning his head to look back at the floating people.

PIGGY-BACKER

The rebels - they've taken over management!

SURVIVORS

What management?

PIGGY-BACKER

Paramount Nagasaki! They've taken  
over the management floor and  
they're stopping the chemistry  
flow. It'll all be over soon.

He disappears on his cockroach into the steam.

ROBIN

(softly)

How do I know if I'm dreaming?

DYLAN

Do you know what my dreams are? Can  
you see them?

She looks at him, and now she sees four giant cockroaches  
playing poker on his lap.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Robin, can you see my dreams?

ROBIN

Four giant cockroaches playing  
poker on your lap - is that a  
dream?

DYLAN

Yes, but not mine.

ROBIN

What's your dream, Dylan?

DYLAN

To sit here with you, after all  
these years.

ROBIN

Did any of you think about me, that  
whole time? About what I went  
through after I sold myself?

DYLAN

You didn't sell yourself. You sold  
your identity.

ROBIN

I was an actress. My identity was  
me. I had nothing else.

DYLAN

Yes you did. You had your kids. And  
anyway, I was obsessed with you for  
years.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

There were years when everything got confused in my head, between you and her. I went to California to look for you.

ROBIN

Don't tell me you're one of those losers who fell in love with their computer characters.

DYLAN

Worse. I looked for you because I ran out of ideas.

ROBIN

I thought you were just in charge of moving me around, I mean *her*, in a box.

DYLAN

Exactly. And I ran out of ideas for what to do with you. Physically, I mean. I was dried up. I wanted new movements, a different sensuality, things a woman gains with age. But nothing I invented ever worked for you, and I knew that if I found you in real life, you'd give me ideas I could never come up with in my mind. I was afraid to lose you.

ROBIN

Me.

DYLAN

Yes. I was afraid they'd take you away from me.

ROBIN

*Her*. You were afraid they'd take *her*.

48

EXT. FIELD, CALIFORNIA - DUSK (ANIMATED FLASHBACK)

A stunning, blossoming, open green field in the middle of nowhere. An animated Aaron Wright, in his twenties, stands in the middle of the field holding a kite, like a slithering snake with a monster head. All along the field, other kites are attached by their strings to iron stakes in the ground. On the edge of the field we see Robin, also middle-aged. She runs from one string to the next, making sure the kites are in motion.

DYLAN (V.O.)

What stunned me after I found you was that Aaron set off to war every day with the kites, as if the sky was full of space enemies trying to sabotage his creation. And you were completely in it with him. You two had a whole world of your own. I came once a week to watch you from my car. That's where I got the idea for "Triple R 6, The Bats are Coming," but even then I felt like I'd sold you out, betrayed you.

Throughout the monologue we see Aaron and Robin in the field, struggling against nothing with their kites. It is unclear whether this scene is Robin's hallucination or Aaron's.

ROBIN (V.O.)

Is there any way I can get in touch with Aaron now? He must be really worried.

DYLAN (V.O.)

Not now, but it'll be over soon.

ROBIN

How do you know?

DYLAN

I can feel that they've started pumping out their depressants. That's always the last killer.

ROBIN

I thought it was depressants the whole time.

DYLAN

Depends for who.

ROBIN

So does that mean we lost?

DYLAN

Of course we lost. Did you think we could win?

49

INT. SHIP BASEMENT. PARAMOUNT HOTEL - NIGHT (ROBIN HALLUCINATING)

The scene is seen from Robin's POV. The ruined, rotting basement is deserted. The walls slowly cave in, sewage water rises. The sound of water dripping and spouting from the walls reverberates off the crumbling walls. Two giant cockroaches with their tails crossed nibble on a couch.

There is a dim sound of bubbles, and slowly, three divers rise up from the water. Their black diving suits bear small "Paramount Police" insignia. The first one to remove his diving mask is Jeff Green.

ROBIN  
Where is everyone?

JEFF  
They hallucinated themselves out,  
to freedom.

ROBIN  
Where's Dylan?

JEFF  
Went with the flow.

He points to the stream of dirty water leading outside.

ROBIN  
Why am I the only one left here,  
alone?

JEFF  
'Cause you fucked up again.

Robin is still in the zone. She cannot understand.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
What exactly was going through your  
mind when you got on that stage?

ROBIN  
But you invited me! I thought I was  
the symbol.

JEFF  
The symbol? Symbol of what?

ROBIN  
Of the chemical revolution.

JEFF  
You're not a symbol. You're  
nothing. The symbol is what we made  
of you. Look at yourself.

He takes out a small rusty mirror and holds it up to her. She sees herself: twisted, gaunt, faded, old.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
Does that look like our symbol? It  
was suicide, what you did there.  
You left us no choice.

A short while later, same location. Robin is being lead to the gallows.

She leans on two guards, passed out, her clothes dripping with sewage water. Behind her stands a firing squad. Jeff is next to her. The ship door opens to a blinding light.

50 EXT. PARAMOUNT HOTEL. NEVADA DESERT - SUNRISE (**ROBIN'S HALLUCINATION**)

This is the first time Robin has left the ship since the rebellion began. The area is destroyed. Fragments of shattered ships hang in the sooty desert air. Smoke still lingers from the improvised mortars. "Paramount Hotel" is a scorched skeleton, its innards spilling out onto the desert sand. The first morning light opens Robin's sunken eyes. She is wearing a death-sentence outfit, a dark, faded blue jumpsuit far too big for her. Only her face still looks beautiful. The firing squad leans against the ruins of the ship. Jeff walks up to her dramatically, with no compassion.

JEFF

How would you like it?

ROBIN

Bullet to the head. One. Quick as possible. Just get me out of this hallucination.

And then, for the first and last time, Jeff softens.

JEFF

After all these years, I think it's time you knew: *This is no hallucination - it's your life! It's all of our lives!*

He draws a pistol from its holster and puts a bullet in her head.

51 INT. OPERATING ROOM, HOSPITAL - DAY

Robin is in a white, state-of-the art OR, advanced technology, graphs screened on holograms in the air, lovely soft light from the windows. Six doctors in green cloaks watch her. She awakens from a deep sleep. The head physician is giving his diagnosis. He has an impressive mane of white hair, and is remarkably arrogant.

HEAD PHYSICIAN

The following case is particularly interesting. The patient, whom some of you might know, was an actress once. I forget her name. She suffered from severe hallucinogenic contamination during the Abrahama uprising.

(MORE)

HEAD PHYSICIAN (CONT'D)

For some 4 months now, she has been convinced that her life, everything she experienced, is all a hallucination. It was so extreme that when the rescue forces reached Abrahama, she begged the chief fireman to shoot her in the head and put her out of her misery, believing that death was in fact her only way to end the hallucination.

One impertinent female student, provocatively dressed, marches forward and challenges him.

RESIDENT

But perhaps this is a case of psychosis? It is possible that she lives in two parallel universes.

HEAD PHYSICIAN

No, no, no! How could this be schizophrenia? There is no gradual progression of the illness. This is a psychotic response to the government's pharmaceutical bombardment during the uprising. She is a lost case, hopeless. So much so that we have decided to freeze her.

RESIDENT

Freeze her? Already? Without giving it any time?

HEAD PHYSICIAN

There is no time. Time for what?

RESIDENT

Time to excrete the hallucinogens, time for them to evaporate.

HEAD PHYSICIAN

You want us to give her time? If she wasn't the woman from that series, what's it called, we wouldn't even do her this favor. With today's advancements our liquid nitrogen can easily keep her frozen for 70 years.

52

INT. REFRIGERATION ROOM, HOSPITAL - DAY

The scene is accompanied entirely by music, no dialogue. It is the same room where Robin woke up. Now she is lowered by a small crane into a steaming tub of liquid nitrogen.



Robin's POV: the man lowering her into the liquid is the director of photography who sampled her twenty years ago at Paramount Studios. He looks at her with no expression, no recognition. She slowly sinks into the tub and the nitrogen turns a beautiful blue. She sinks lower and lower, and we sink with her, and the bluish nitrogen slowly opens up and we are in an endless desert of icebergs, colored blue and white and every shade in between. Robin is there, ageless, walking alone, lost, through infinity. She looks to the sides, wondering where to go. Winds blow all around, and she grows older. Drawn from afar she looks like a small, lost dot in the expanse. The landscape changes: first the hills grow larger, then they shrink down into an endless icescape. Within this monochrome we see the corner of an orange and white kite in the distance.

ROBIN  
(shouting)  
Aaron! Aaroon!

Eventually he reaches her. He is also ageless, perhaps in his late twenties, still his mother's little boy. She hugs him.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Aaron, you heard me! You heard me  
calling you.

AARON  
Yes, Mom. I heard you. Of course I  
did. What's so weird about that?

Now Aaron and Robin are gliding, embraced, through the icescape, on sleds built from broken planks. Aaron holds onto the kite string, and the kite pulls them along like a parachute, further and further into infinity. They pass into an icy formation that slowly closes in on them, becoming more and more shell-like, more and more imposing, until the string snags on an ice-rock and snaps, and they are trapped inside a crevice. The scene closes in on them and on the title:

**TITLE: THE YEAR 2050 - Animated**

53 EXT. STUNNING LANDSCAPE - DAY (ANIMATED)

A beautiful landscape, evocative of late 18th century paintings (Gainsborough, Turner, etc.). The beauty is over the top: rolling green hills, clusters of lovely flowers in symmetrical arrangements, fluffy clouds, babbling brooks, goats bleating in the background, a few beautiful hound dogs, windmills with sails slowly turning. It takes a while to realize that the scene is not static. Robin sits on a bench by an old stone table, eating cornflakes, toast and eggs. A perfectly androgynous nurse, wearing a sexy white outfit, clears the tray and serves coffee.

NURSE

Would you like anything else, Ms. Wright?

ROBIN

To see my son, Aaron.

NURSE

You know we're doing the best we can to locate him, Ms. Wright. Perhaps some tea for now? Dessert?

ROBIN

Did you find his DNA listing?

NURSE

We're working on it, Ms. Wright. We've been on it since the moment you awoke. Do you remember how long it's been?

ROBIN

You said twenty years.

NURSE

(laughing)

No, I mean since you woke up.

Her question could be serious, or she might just be testing Robin's alertness.

ROBIN

Three weeks. Three weeks tomorrow.

NURSE

Well then, we've been working on it for three weeks.

ROBIN

And when do you think I can leave this place for the real world?

NURSE

Your thawing rate is very slow, Ms. Wright. Steady, but slow. In your previous millennium's concepts, you're a bit like a diver with decompression sickness, and now the atmospheric pressure is being reduced to bring him back to life. I wouldn't worry, if I were you. There are others worrying on your behalf.

The nurse takes the tray and leaves. Two perfectly coordinated rainbows appear, but then the sky grows overcast. Robin gets up and walks slowly toward a building that looks like an ancient Tuscan villa.

It is a sanitarium that might be real or dreamed. Robin's slow progression give the sense of terrible loneliness.

54

INT. ROOM, THAWING INSTITUTE - DAY

A plain, wide room with huge windows onto the tranquil landscape. A stream runs outside of the window, and plump sheep graze. Robin sits looking out at the rainbows. It looks like a perfect lunatic asylum built for royalty. In the room is an ancient television from the 1980s, encased in a laminate unit. An announcer with a strong British accent, wearing a brown suit and black horn-rimmed glasses, reads the weekly weather survey, as Robin sits down to watch in an old-fashioned upholstered armchair.

ANNOUNCER

And now for the weather. In keeping with the past 63 weeks, the winner of the survey is "Summer in Southern Spain," which features a bright day with temperatures of 18 degrees Celsius, twenty percent humidity, soft cumulus clouds, two rainbows in the afternoon, and one hour of rain between sunset and twilight. The Weather Company apologizes for the lack of complete symmetry in the rainbows for the past two days. On the other hand, symmetry contradicts art.

She looks at the screen apathetically for a few more seconds, then eyes the air vents suspiciously. The animating camera moves slowly to the vents, but they emit nothing. No air-conditioning is necessary, as the weather is pre-ordered. Robin looks back at the stream outside the window. The rainbows slowly disappear from the horizon and black clouds cover everything. It starts to rain heavily. **Robin enters a hallucinative state.** The stream overflows, and she sees a sailboat - a miniature model of one of the Abrahama boats. Aaron the child is in the boat, struggling against the high water, holding the white sails like he used to grasp his kites. The water keeps rising. Lightning pierces the dream.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

In those days, when the weather was not under full control, solitary sailors had to contend with the evils of the sea. Some were forced to give up emotions or sensations to the God of Sea, such as their ability to fall in love, or to feel, see, or hear, in order to reach the shores of safety.

(MORE)

## ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Mythology aims to underscore that in real life, anyone who survives the storm must give up a part of his soul, thus traversing a stage on the way to enlightenment.

Lightning strikes Aaron's boat. He puts both hands to his ears and screams in pain. The water slowly settles. Someone knocks on Robin's door several times. The weather stabilizes. Robin is soaked with sweat. The nurse comes in, sits down next to her, and wipes her sweat with a white handkerchief.

## NURSE

Robin, you must release your mind from the thoughts. Try to get out of the room as much as you can. Go out into nature, try to interact with the other thawed people, focus on the landscape, meditate. Relax your emotions and your mind.

Robin recovers and sits up straight.

## ROBIN

I don't understand it.

## NURSE

What?

## ROBIN

I was supposed to wake up after twenty years.

The nurse laughs and wipes Robin's face lovingly. She gives her some tea.

## NURSE

I told you, it's just to make it easier on you. It's like bringing a diver back from the Bends. You have to start as far away as possible, with the things you know from childhood. This is the set-up we chose for you. The early 1980s. Tomorrow morning someone very special will be coming to take you out into the real world for a while.

## ROBIN

Special.

## NURSE

Yes, someone special.

## ROBIN

Real, or robot?

NURSE

Robot? Do you see any robots here at the institute? There's no such thing anymore. Technology lost!! Fell apart. It's about chemistry now.

ROBIN

Sometimes I miss those robots. They had a certain charm.

The nurse looks at her and caresses her face. The treatment at the thawing institute is obviously very emotional, and physical.

55 INT. ROOM, THAWING INSTITUTE - NIGHT

The landscape is now lit by the moon and stars. Everything looks very artificial, yet tangible. Robin is lying in bed. There is a knock on the door and she sits up. An old-fashioned robot enters. In fact it is a robotic sex-doll that looks like the Michelin Man. Inflatable, with adjustable openings: mouth, rear end, breasts. The Michelin robot drags in a 1980s-style ghetto-blaster, puts it on the floor, hits a button, and starts doing a great "dirty dance" to the Talking Heads' "We're on the Road to Nowhere." He gyrates around the stunned Robin, pouting, shaking his hips, coming closer to her, moving sensually although somewhat clumsily. It takes Robin a while to understand that she is being offered any kind of sexual service. She goes up to the robot, grabs a curtain string, and tries out the lasso trick. She fails, and then simply engages in one-to-one battle and karate chops. She dismantles him, breaks him into pieces, takes out all her anger. When she's done, every electrical circuit in his body is dismantled. Outside, the sun is rising.

56 INT. ROOM, THAWING INSTITUTE - SUNRISE

Robin's room grows lighter. The room is a mess, with pieces of the Michelin corpse everywhere. It looks like the scene of a bloody battle, although it may not be blood. Robin sleeps deeply on the armchair, breathing heavily. There is a gentle knock on the door.

ROBIN

(whispering)

Yes?

The nurse comes in and looks around at the destruction. She does not seem surprised.

NURSE

Robin, you have a visitor. Do you feel ready for him?

ROBIN  
The special one?

NURSE  
Yes.

The nurse walks out and Dylan comes in, slightly older. He looks at Robin, not having seen her for twenty years, trying to see what has changed. She looks at him as though they only parted yesterday. After a fairly long pause, they hug for a long time, expressing both affection and nostalgia.

ROBIN  
What are you doing here?

DYLAN  
I waited for you.

ROBIN  
For me?

DYLAN  
Yes, for the moment when you could be thawed, when medicine would advance enough to fix you.

ROBIN  
You waited for me all these years?

DYLAN  
It's not the only thing I did with my life. But yes, I was the last person to see you, and I had a responsibility.

ROBIN  
Responsibility.

DYLAN  
Of course. How many of the frozen get to wake up? And in a place like this? Maybe one in ten thousand.

ROBIN  
Why me?

DYLAN  
Because I was here to watch you, because you were one of the few who could afford to be frozen for 20 years.

He points to the Edenic view through the window, and they walk over together and look at it.

ROBIN  
They're looking for my son.

He takes out a computer print-out, hole-punched down the sides, from a leather briefcase that looks like a retro doctor's bag. He holds Robin's hand and they sit down.

DYLAN

This is Aaron's original DNA listing. I've been looking for him for a very long time, since I knew they were about to thaw you.

ROBIN

And...

DYLAN

There's no sign. No trace. I don't think he's with us anymore.

ROBIN

What do you mean not with us? Not with us in this world? He's not alive? Is that what you're saying - that he's dead?

DYLAN

It's much more complicated, Robin. The world today is unlike the one you came from. To find Aaron, alive or not, we'd have to take a long journey.

ROBIN

But do you think there's a direction? A clue?

DYLAN

I have no idea. But I'm here to start somewhere, to take you out into the big city.

57

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK. 2050 - DAY

This is Robin's first excursion from the dream-like, protected facility where she was thawed. Nothing of the artificial reenactments at the Institute could have prepared her for real life in 2050 New York. Green gardens hang all the way up to the sky. Sophisticated light tunnels transfer light evenly and beautifully so that each level blooms eternally. Nature has penetrated urbanity harmoniously. The people are beautiful, cookie-cutter replicas of famous works of art: Picasso's fractured woman, Van Gogh's portrait of the doctor, van Eyck's Arnolfini couple, Duhrrer's self-portrait, Boticelli's Primavera, Renoir's women, Andy Warhol's Marilyn Monroe. Others are simply models of perfect beauty. They are all stunningly gorgeous. Some fly by, wearing slim "smart backpacks" with wings and quiet engines. Robin has a backpack, too. Embracing Dylan, she admires the passersby.

ROBIN

How is it that everyone, but everyone, is so young and beautiful? It doesn't make sense.

DYLAN

There's no more ego, Robin. Ego was revoked, like weapons. Thanks to chemistry, we've been redeemed. There's no ego, no competition, no violence, no war, no strong or weak, no secrets. Think about it: no secrets. Everyone is what they are, everyone is what they want to be, what they always wanted to be.

The beautiful masses fly past. But they are formulaic, standard, mere models of beauty, like stencils. It is clear that one only has to pick a type, assemble it, and let it take over. People's clothes change according to their seductive intentions. Skirts grow shorter as women walk. Underwear swells. The distinction between men and women blurs. As she moves down Fifth Avenue, the gap between the "old" Robin and the passersby grows. We begin to hear hard, deep breaths, but they get swallowed up in the general beauty until suddenly, from Robin's POV, we see playbacks of Agent Robin in the crowd: Robin at the height of her beauty, as the studio designed her.

ROBIN

Oh God, I don't believe it! They're still manufacturing that crap?

DYLAN

(laughing, without irony)  
No, they're not.

ROBIN

Then who are all those characters?  
Is it merchandise?

DYLAN

They're people who decided they were Agent Robin.

ROBIN

What do you mean "decided"?

DYLAN

Probably this was always their dream, and now they're playing you in your movies. They don't need you anymore. They are you. Or it might be you seeing yourself in them. That's also possible.

ROBIN

Do you see them?



DYLAN

Yes, but that's because I'm with you, and I feel you.

She cannot understand him. It's too early for her. She leans back on a pharmacy window, watching the people go by, trying to spot more Robin Wrights. It becomes more difficult.

ROBIN

I think I want to go back.

DYLAN

Back where?

ROBIN

Home.

DYLAN

This is your home, Robin.

58 INT. DYLAN'S HOME. MANHATTAN. 2050 - DAY

A huge loft on the Upper West Side, overlooking the boats slowly crossing the Hudson. A wonderful window is in constant motion: at first it views the west side of town, then rises up to the center of the ceiling to reveal the moon and stars, then down to the floor tiled with decorative fish, and back to the west. It completes a whole rotation, but as part of the loft walls. Dylan is wearing a casual overall, making pasta. Robin lies in bed, in the same clothes. He brings her the pasta and a glass of wine.

ROBIN

Pasta and red wine. How did you know?

DYLAN

Are you kidding me? You forget how many years of my life I spent on you.

ROBIN

I don't think I can eat anything. Do you even have to eat now?

DYLAN

That's the only thing you have to do - eat and breathe. Everything else, the body does on its own. Didn't you see? People don't do anything. They have no urges, no motivation, nowhere to go. Everything is resolved. They just live.

ROBIN

And are you really here? Is this real?

DYLAN

I don't know if 'real' is the word. Maybe 'free' is a better definition.

ROBIN

So the uprising on the ship was successful.

DYLAN

The uprising was a failure, of course. But the takeover was a success. There's no more pharmaceutical dictatorship. There's free choice.

ROBIN

What if I don't want to take part?

DYLAN

Then you'll realize very soon that you can't not take part, because you won't be part of this world.

ROBIN

And you're still working for them. That's what you're doing.

DYLAN

(laughing, eating and drinking)

Don't you remember? They fired me twenty years ago. I'm an animator, not a chemist. There's no more technology. Technology collapsed. Only chemistry is left.

ROBIN

So what have you been doing for twenty years?

DYLAN

Nothing. Just being a dude. A junkie. I tried all the drugs they give out. I swallowed them all, I became who I wanted to be, and who I hated. I tried it all. I flew between the worlds, I became a champion, an expert, a guide. I'm considered a sought-after guide through the depths of chemistry.

ROBIN

Guide me.

DYLAN  
Where to, Ms. Wright?

ROBIN  
To my son.

Dylan laughs, gets up, throws his leftover pasta in the sink and comes back.

DYLAN  
You can't find your son in this world. Maybe he's on the other side.

ROBIN  
What's on the other side?

DYLAN  
The ones who didn't pass over, who aren't taking part in the chemical party. And of course everyone who operates the world you see here. All those are on the other side.

ROBIN  
Then let's go there.

DYLAN  
(laughing)  
I'm not sure you want to. It's probably impossible to get back again. But we can start somewhere. It's a long journey.

59 EXT. 47TH STREET, NEW YORK. 2050 - DAY

Robin and Dylan walk down the street that is now an endless row of pharmacies dispensing chemical ampules. The street is covered with beautiful, lush greenery. Rainbows light it up with many colors. All the doorways to the shops and pharmacies look alike, but with different illustrations. Dylan walks through this psychedelic market confidently, guiding Robin the tourist.

DYLAN  
This street holds the wisdom of a thousand years. It's the realm of knowledge in the current life.

They see a man and woman coming out of a "dreamery," embracing, in a world of their own.

DYLAN (CONT'D)  
That's the best dreamery in Manhattan.  
(MORE)

DYLAN (CONT'D)

You just ask for whatever you want:  
 Mom, back to the womb, Dad,  
 nostalgia, childhood, sexual  
 flight, wild sex. They take your  
 data, and three hours later you get  
 an ampule.

They continue to walk slowly down the street. An ampule store identifies different categories by illustrations: Medieval history, the Crusades, 20th century history (Stalin, Hitler, John Lennon), physics, nuclear physics (Hiroshima), New Orleans music.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Here, in this pharmacy, you can  
 chose to download Encyclopedia  
 Britannica from the 1970s right  
 into your gut, and wake up the next  
 morning knowing all the entries.  
 Or whole Charlie Parker scores, or  
 Chinese, or the history of Cubism.  
 Anything. It costs pennies. Once I  
 downloaded the entire Greek  
 mythology in one night.

Walking among the seductively illustrated ampules is like an eclectic but illogical tour through a giant library.

ROBIN

You could transmit data straight  
 into your head in 2030, too.

DYLAN

But you couldn't feel it. When I  
 was consuming the Greek mythology,  
 I was inside it, part of it. I was  
 half-God, half-man. I impregnated  
 one of Zeus's daughters and birthed  
 a whole city. Then I fucked the  
 city, burned it, punished it. I  
 felt what it was like to truly envy  
 something you created, in this case  
 a whole city. There's no more  
 "information" data - it's all about  
 feeling. Just make a choice, and  
 feel whatever you choose. What do  
 you choose, Robin?

ROBIN

Usher syndrome.

DYLAN

Aaron's disease.

ROBIN

Yes, Aaron's disease. I want it  
 inside me, in my mind, in my body.

60

INT. DISEASE RECONSTRUCTION STORE. 47TH STREET. - DAY

The variety in the store is huge - from AIDS, eliminated years ago, through all kinds of cancer, tuberculosis, tetanus, typhoid fever, and psychiatric disorders, which still exist in 2050. A handsome man has just finished drinking his ampule. He steps outside, puts on green glasses, and does not know which way to turn. Robin looks at the pharmacist. He breathes heavily. Everyone does.

ROBIN

What did he take?

PHARMACIST

Total amnesia. Reconstruction of brain damage after an accident.

ROBIN

Why would he do that?

PHARMACIST

He can't stand life in this world with his memories from the previous one. He wants a fresh start. It's very common lately. What would you like?

ROBIN

Usher syndrome. Loss of hearing in adolescence.

The pharmacist pulls out a microfiche reader, the kind customarily used in spare parts shops a few decades ago.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Are you telling me you don't have a computer?

He and Dylan laugh.

DYLAN

Computer? There's no such thing anymore. Just like there's no TV and no movies. All the movies are inside your mind. You just have to get them out.

PHARMACIST

What level of Usher syndrome were you looking for?

ROBIN

I don't know. It started with Type II.

PHARMACIST

Blindness?

ROBIN

Unclear. The prognosis was possible  
blindness. Gradual loss of balance.

PHARMACIST

Why do you need this? Are you  
researching someone?

ROBIN

No. I'm missing someone.

The pharmacist looks at the microfiche on the light table.  
Then he stands over a centrifugal machine and begins to pour  
a mixture of colorful liquids.

61 EXT. NEW YORK - NIGHT

Robin and Dylan fly low over the city, slightly below the  
skyscrapers' tops. The city is lit up, colorful, decorated.  
The plankton in the Hudson reflects the light of the full  
moon. They glide away from Manhattan. Robin hears her own  
deep breaths and her heart pounding, accompanied by an almost-  
musical hum. The frame moves gyroscopically, pulsating, and  
it's unclear whether that is part of her flight, or a  
question of balance.

62 EXT. AIRPORT, NEW YORK - NIGHT

Robin and Dylan are outside the fence of a large airport,  
near a fueling station. It looks exactly like any airport  
today. They hunch down in the field, watching two workers  
refuel a huge Boeing jet with a primitive gas pump. Robin  
hears her heartbeats, her body working, and another dim  
sound, like music growing louder. Her unsteady picture  
results from the Usher syndrome. Dylan hears only the wind,  
but it is a soft, musical breeze. One of the workers  
absentmindedly lights a cigarette, just as fuel starts to  
spill next to him.

ROBIN

Are you sure this is 2050?

She hears herself very distantly, speaking from inside her  
own body. Dylan laughs and lights a cigarette, indifferent,  
also losing his balance.

DYLAN

Obviously. International air travel  
hasn't progressed in the last  
hundred years, since the invention  
of the jet engine. Everything else  
they tried just blew up into  
pieces.

They watch the puddle of fuel spreading beside the plane.  
Other aircrafts land in the background.

The worker finishes and is about to toss his cigarette when he sees that he's surrounded by fuel. He stops and swallows the cigarette like in a cheap magic trick. Dylan disappears into the darkness, dragging behind him the strange shell of a wonderful old kite, surprisingly similar to Aaron's Wright Brothers replica. Robin is amazed. She hears a loud screech, a grating iron sound: it's the kite being dragged. She can barely hear herself, or Dylan. The disease is taking over.

ROBIN

Where did you find that?

She asks softly, hearing her own voice from the depths.

DYLAN

I waited for you for 20 years.  
Kites were part of my collection.  
What else is there to do around  
here?

He keeps dragging the kite along. Eventually, they both pick it up, in a perfect imitation of how Aaron used to do it decades ago. She hears herself, her working body, the sound of strings at work. He hears the wind. As their joint effort increases, their selective hearing begins to come together while the background noise dies down. When they are virtually united, a large plane lands. Robin and Dylan face the plane, like Robin and Aaron long ago, except they are completely out of balance, feeling disconnected from gravity. They hold the kite up against the plane. Their bodily noises unite into one pulsating flow. At the climax, the plane flies by and slices through the kite. They do not hear it at all. Sharp cut to:

63

INT. DYLAN'S HOME. MANHATTAN. 2050 - NIGHT

Robin and Dylan's visual and disease-related unity continues harmoniously in a beautiful sexual encounter. The rotating window surrounds them. They are still unsteady. She hears her heart beat loudly, close, inside her. She hears herself come, this time from within her body, a different kind of music. Later, they lie in bed on their backs, half covered with a colorful silk sheet, smoking cigarettes. He blows rings, then a thin ribbon of smoke that elegantly pierces all the rings.

DYLAN

Is it true, that story about  
Charlie Chaplin?

ROBIN

What story?

DYLAN

That in his will he left all his  
money to the first person who could  
blow eight rings of smoke and loop  
them.

ROBIN  
How would I know?

DYLAN  
Well, you were in show biz.

ROBIN  
Me? Show biz?? You're talking about  
her again.

He props himself up one arm, looks at her, touches her neck  
softly, runs his finger down to her chest.

DYLAN  
How do you want to do it this time?

ROBIN  
You mean, what kind of geometry? Do  
they have an ampule for that, too?

DYLAN  
I meant, we can be anything. You  
can be twenty, I can be James Dean.

ROBIN  
You mean you want me as the  
Princess Bride? At twenty?

DYLAN  
We can play with it. We have the  
chemistry, and thanks to chemistry  
we have redemption.

ROBIN  
And it can be unrelated to each  
other?

DYLAN  
What do you mean, unrelated?

ROBIN  
Let's say I want to be... Saint  
Catherine. But you'd see me as 20-  
year-old Robin?

DYLAN  
Who the fuck is Saint Catherine?

ROBIN  
She's the holy virgin, the martyr  
who swore to dedicate her life, her  
whole being, to Christ. We spent  
our whole childhoods fearing her,  
worshipping her, envying her. I  
want to be her, a moment before her  
death. But I want to change her  
mind for her, I want a man to  
redeem her from her suffering.



DYLAN  
Can I be that man?

ROBIN  
I guess it's your choice. Be  
whoever you want.

64 INT. CHURCH, SIENNA, ITALY. MIDDLE AGES - DAY

Saint Catherine's final days, toward the end of the 13th century, at the age of only 33. She is gravely ill. Her holy, tormented pallor reflects the strong white light pouring through the church windows. Wearing white muslin from head to toe, she lies on the alter while a procession of half-naked men pass by her bench. She motions for the last man, Dylan, to join her. Their slow lovemaking starts to the sounds of Johnny Cash's "Spiritual." The elderly Cash himself sits behind them with a guitar and sings. As they make love, Robin takes control of Dylan, turning into an animal, tearing him apart.

65 INT. BATHROOM, DYLAN'S LOFT. 2050 - NIGHT

Robin is in the bathroom. There is a moving window there, too, intermittently showing the Big Dipper up in the sky, followed by the Hudson outside. She is naked, alone, sitting on the toilet. She seems to see data running across the water in the toilet bowl while she urinates. She is no longer sure what she sees, but it looks like a list of data from a routine lab test: blood sugar, cholesterol, leukocytes. When she flushes, the data disappears with the water. She looks in the mirror and sees herself clearly. Finally, after Catherine, after 20-year-old Robin, here she is: beautiful Robin Wright, looking very young for 62. She looks outside and the city looks real, the way she knew it when she was young, but with a few lights in the sky. She gets up and looks at her whole body in the mirror. She takes a step back, then forward. It's her. She punches the mirror with her fist and it shatters. She bleeds. The reflection is gone. She picks up the fragments of glass and searches for something in them. She leaves a trail of blood as she goes back to the bedroom. Dylan is at his bar, where he performs his chemistry in a centrifugal machine. He looks at the drops of blood. She starts touching furniture, breaking it, smashing mirrors. She walks up to him and hits him hard, punches him, cuts him with shards of glass.

ROBIN  
Do you feel that? Tell me you feel  
it.

She takes one of his test tubes, smashes it and cuts her hand.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Do you want me to see if you're real?

Dylan, understanding, tries to hold her hand, but she cuts him and he starts bleeding.

DYLAN

Robin, I have to explain some more things to you.

ROBIN

Don't explain anything to me.  
You've already explained too much.  
Does this hurt?

She yells at him, threatens him with the broken test tube, cuts him again. And again.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Does it hurt?  
(yelling hysterically)  
What's gone wrong, huh? What broke down here? I'm not supposed to feel anger, or violence, or jealousy, or longing. Thanks to chemistry. We're redeemed, aren't we? So what's happening to me?

He subdues her, and she cries in his arms. He caresses her.

DYLAN

It's just the beginning.

ROBIN

What next?

DYLAN

We've gone through wisdom. Next is morality.

ROBIN

I thought ego was dead. Who needs morality? There's no competition, no evil, everything's calm, deadly boring. I want to know what happened to my boy.

DYLAN

Your boy is 50.

ROBIN

But he's still my boy. What happened to him after evil was destroyed? Did society stop being cruel to him?

DYLAN

Evil wasn't destroyed, it can't be.  
It was just blocked, put to sleep  
in the depths of the human mind.  
It's there, in everyone you see on  
the street, waiting to break out.  
The only way to hurt people today  
is to interfere with their chemical  
choices.

ROBIN

I want to feel it, I want to let it  
break out.

DYLAN

What is evil for you?

ROBIN

What do you mean?

DYLAN

Murder, rape, genocide, holocaust?

ROBIN

Humiliation! The humiliation of a  
defenseless child - that is the  
height of evil. Did you ever try  
that stuff?

DYLAN

Once, and I never will again. But I  
know where you can get hold of  
some. You know, it's not going to  
get you out of the maze of this  
world.

ROBIN

I don't know anything anymore.

66

INT. SUBWAY TUNNELS. NEW YORK. 2050 - DAY

Robin and Dylan speed down the tracks of what used to be New York's subway, on old-fashioned roller-blades. The subway looks the same, but more crowded, claustrophobic, nothing like elegant Fifth Avenue. The people look horribly dense, twisted, controlled by the stifling atmosphere, which is reminiscent of a war scene. Robin wears a helmet and clings to Dylan as they skate. She hugs him in a panic.

ROBIN

What is this?

DYLAN

These are people who paid a fortune  
to feel what used to be, in that  
world.

ROBIN

Is it real?

DYLAN

You're back to that again?

They turn off the track and make their way through crowds of people standing futilely in line, feeding cards into the turnstiles. They go through one stage, wait, go to the next line, crowd up against people, sweating. People are dressed monotonously, badly. In the depths of the tunnel they reach a club that used to be a covered shopping area.

67 INT. SUBWAY CLUB, NEW YORK. 2050 - DAY

The club is packed, filthy, like a 1980s punk-rock club. People are doing a violent "pogo dance" on top of each other while horrible punk music blares. Robin and Dylan make their way through the sweaty crowd and out onto a large outdoor deck. Teenagers play ice hockey, using two ancient wooden goals. They are dressed sloppily, but wear full helmets and carry heavy hockey sticks. People press up against low fences all around, shouting and roaring. Other boys wait their turn on the sides of the court. One boy tries to join the group. He is heavy, with big features, walks unsteadily, swaying, looking extremely out of place. He desperately wants to get in the game, but every time he enters the court he gets clobbered with a stick by one of the players. Robin and Dylan watch the game, then slowly join in, still wearing their roller-blading helmets. We see Robin's POV through her helmet grates: the hesitant boy tries to join the game again and gets hit, again and again. Robin is swallowed up in the crowd. The boy is now in the middle of the court. The other kids circle around him. Their blades scrape the dirty snow loudly. They beat him with sticks. He almost passes out. They beat him while he's down. In a take-off of "1900," one of the kids lifts up the boy, holds him by the feet and spins him around like a ballerina. We hear the sound of a skull cracking. The boys take off their helmets. Robin is standing next to the perpetrator. The animating camera closes in on her, into her eyes.

68 EXT. WEST VILLAGE, NEW YORK. 2050 - DAY

The scene opens up to a street in the West Village. Robin is lying on the street. Dylan kneels next to her, holding her head while the light on her face changes. The rainbows fade and dark clouds cover everything. It happens in seconds. He strokes her wet hair and puts her head on his lap. She slowly awakens. When it starts to pour, people press up against the shop windows. Some break into a sort of ancient rain dance. Robin opens her eyes wider, giving herself over to the rain. Dylan answers her unasked question.

DYLAN

Everything's okay. You woke up in time for monsoon week. It's a kind of celebration here.

She slowly gets up as Dylan holds her. Drenched, they walk down the street. People stand looking up at the sky. The restaurants and pharmacies are full. They disappear into a glistening event hall on the banks of the Hudson.

69 INT. EVENT HALL / BAR / RESTAURANT, NEW YORK. 2050 - DAY

An incredibly fancy restaurant, ornate, a huge foyer with high ceilings supported by decorative pillars, an imitation of the Temple of Zeus. Miniature elephants walk around on a stage, while an orchestra plays. The perfect humans we met at the thawing institute are waiters here, serving exquisite food on gold dishes. Through the giant windows the diners can see the artificial designer rain flooding the city. People stand with umbrellas and drink wine, celebrating the rain as in an ancient ritual. Robin has no appetite. Dylan eats greedily from all the dishes: colorful Japanese cuisine, game meat. He drinks a big glass of wine, and stops for a moment to tidy Robin's hair.

DYLAN

That's it. It's all okay now. You could say you've been through everything.

ROBIN

You said three.

DYLAN

(playing innocent)  
Three what?

ROBIN

Three realms. There was wisdom, there was morality. There's one more left. What's the third one?

DYLAN

It's not relevant.

He keeps on eating. A waiter-robot fills his wine glass.

ROBIN

(aggressively)  
You promised to go all the way with me. I want my son. What's the third realm?

DYLAN

Truth.

ROBIN  
Have you been there?

DYLAN  
No.

ROBIN  
Why not?

DYLAN  
Because I don't know if you can get back.

ROBIN  
And you like your life here so much? This non-existent nothing?

DYLAN  
I like it enough, or don't hate it, to not want to gamble on hell.

ROBIN  
Then send me there. I'll tell you about the other side. Can you send me over?

He hesitates, still eating, trying to evade the question and gain time.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Do you have a way to send me there?

DYLAN  
Yes.

ROBIN  
Is it at home, the substance?

Dylan is laughing awkwardly, but this time out of embarrassment.

DYLAN  
It's not a chemical cocktail. It's just a kind of white-out that deletes all the chemical influence in a second. The truth comes right out.

ROBIN  
Where is it?

Dylan opens his mouth and points inside. She doesn't understand.

DYLAN

(whispering)

It's like the cyanide pills the Nazis kept under their tongues in case of surrender. When I left the old world, I took one. It was my compensation from *Paramount Nagasaki*. That's what I asked them for after twenty years of work: this little capsule.

ROBIN

I want it.

DYLAN

And if your son comes back?

ROBIN

And if he's there? On the other side? That's more likely.

He stops and gives her a long look.

DYLAN

This is all I have left, Robin. If you take it, you're leaving me. You can't do that, not now.

ROBIN

Come with me.

DYLAN

I can't. This capsule is only enough for one person.

She looks at him. It's a moment of choice: him, or the only chance to find Aaron. She leans back in her chair.

ROBIN

How do you know you can't get back?

DYLAN

It's like coming back from death. Maybe some have, but we'll never know.

He holds the capsule between his fingers. She looks into his eyes, tearfully.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

It's your choice, and I'll give you anything you want. I love you, Robin. I always have. I loved you for twenty years when I didn't know you and you were my whole world. And I loved you for twenty years when I waited every hour of every day for you to come back.

Robin weeps.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Think about it for a minute. What's the chance... what's the chance of all this?

She grabs the capsule, as if afraid to change her mind, and pops it in her mouth. She swallows. She kisses him for a long, long time. They keep kissing, then break away. After a short pause, we see Robin's POV: The wonderful hall full of grand tables, with mosaic walls and orchestral music in the background, disappears. The animated world turns very gradually into live-action. Robin is in a cement basement, next to rusty iron tables with no tablecloths. The music now comes from a beat-up speaker hanging on a wooden post. The crystal chandeliers have turned to bare light-bulbs. Dylan is an emaciated old man with scars, wearing work clothes. His silver tray, filled only moments ago with game and Japanese hors d'oeuvres, has turned into a chipped bowl of disgusting brown-grey gruel. The place is horribly crowded, like a soup kitchen, and suddenly we realize why everyone is breathing heavily: there's no air. By the time Robin walks out to the street, the transition from animation to live-action is complete.

70 EXT. RUINED CITY. 2050. LIVE ACTION - DAY (LIVE ACTION)

It's hard to tell if it's New York or anywhere else on the planet, or some other planet. It looks like a world after a nuclear holocaust, or perhaps a chemical one, or an ecological one, or just total environmental destruction. A mist of cold and filth hangs low, blocking the sun. People wearing rags lounge on the corners of the almost-deserted street, eating scraps of meat and bread, scratching for food. We see Robin's POV, and hear the sound of deep breathing. Robin leans over to one of the street people.

ROBIN

Do you know who's in charge here?

WOMAN

Who are you looking for?

ROBIN

I'm looking for a doctor. Are there any doctors in this world?

WOMAN

On the other side of town, where the nobility lives, they have doctors.

Ancient trolley-cars cross the town, and she jumps up onto one of them and disappears inside.



71 INT. TROLLY-CAR - DAY (LIVE ACTION)

The trolly looks more like a cargo train than a modern electric tram. The relative darkness outside prevents us from seeing where Robin is going. It's like time travel, with the repetitive, grey, faded, ruined landscapes of post-war European films. The circular travel, in one shot, is very similar to Kelvin's in Tarkovsky's "Solaris." The scene slowly loses its orientation in time, and eventually we see only Robin's face and slits of light. The image becomes more and more abstract, and ends with streaks of light over a close-up of Robin's face.

72 INT. OPERATING TEAM'S RESIDENCES. 2050 - DAY (LIVE ACTION)

The living quarters of the operating team, which controls the world's chemical system, look like classic colonists' housing in the New or Old Age: buildings surrounded by greenery and fences, like an aristocratic military base sitting high above the surrounding filth. People in white coats walk by on their way to labs. It is a very low-tech world, like something out of the 1950s. Or a government building in a Communist state. Robin walks into a large reception room.

73 INT. RECEPTION ROOM. OPERATING TEAM'S RESIDENCES. 2050 - DAY (LIVE ACTION)

The reception hall looks like a government office in Communist Russia. Robin walks up to a suited woman behind a desk.

ROBIN

Do you have a list of doctors?  
Supervisors?

CLERK

Who are you looking for?

ROBIN

An ENT physician named Dr. Barker.

CLERK

Dr. Barker retired many years ago.

ROBIN

Does that mean I can't find him?

CLERK

Why not? Where exactly would he go?  
He's still with us, in his room.  
The same room at the end of the  
hall on the second floor.

74 INT. HALLWAY. OPERATING TEAM'S RESIDENCE. 2050 - DAY (LIVE ACTION)

The hallway is long, endless, full of locked doors. Not a soul in sight. As Robin walks slowly down the hallway and the picture breathes, we recall the hallways of the "Paramount Hotel" ship. Robin knocks softly on the door.

75 INT. DR. BARKER'S ROOM. 2050 - DAY (LIVE ACTION)

Dr. Barker opens the door. He is old now, roughly eighty, with white hair and deep wrinkles all over his face. He recognizes Robin immediately and hugs her.

ROBIN

I knew you'd never cross over to the other side.

He laughs and invites her to sit down. They both sit.

DR. BARKER

You shouldn't be so impressed that I'm still here. Being here, on this side of truth, is not such bravery.

ROBIN

What do you mean?

DR. BARKER

Well, Robin, nothing has really changed.

ROBIN

But what about free choice?

DR. BARKER

There's nothing new. Once, we used to mask the truth with antidepressants, drugs that concealed and lied. Now we reinvent the truth. There's no big difference. The drugs have just gotten much better.

ROBIN

And is there no choice?

DR. BARKER

The only choice is between waiting for death here, in the filth of truth, or hallucinating over there. Maybe it's better to be there, dreaming.

Robin needs time to understand this hard truth. She looks out the window, but there's no life there. Only the depressing grayness of death.

ROBIN

And Aaron?

Dr. Barker is silent. He cannot look her in the eyes. He turns to the window.

DR. BARKER

Aaron waited for you here all those years. 19 years he waited for you to come back. His condition got worse and worse, he was almost blind in the end, but he didn't cross over, even though I told him to. I begged him, because I knew I wouldn't be here forever to take care of him. Six months ago, he crossed over. He's someone else now, in the world of chemical fantasy, on the other side.

ROBIN

Six months.

DR. BARKER

Yes, exactly six months ago. He just broke down. He no longer believed you'd come back. No one believed they could bring you back, apart from that young man, the one who created you in the computers. He turned over worlds to find a solution for you, he devoted his life to it, and he won.

He goes up to her and hugs her. She looks like a little girl.

DR. BARKER (CONT'D)

Basically, there's no way to find Aaron. Here he doesn't exist. And on the other side, there's no way of knowing who he is now. But at least you can go back there. That's something, too. It's better than death.

ROBIN

There's no sign, no trace?

DR. BARKER

I don't know, but if I had to bet on something, it would be his gait. His strange, unsteady way of moving through space. He developed this kind of owl navigation system, where he could find his way in the dark and silence. That will never leave him. But it's just a gamble.

ROBIN  
(hesitantly)  
And on the other side?

DR. BARKER  
What about it?

ROBIN  
Will I go back to the same place I  
came from?

DR. BARKER  
(smiling awkwardly)  
There's no such thing as "the place  
you came from." You invented it.  
You'll go back to the place your  
brain and your chemistry take you  
to. After your experience here, it  
will be a new place in your  
consciousness, where you've never  
been before. Your past is dead.

76 EXT. 2050 - DAY (**ANIMATED**)

Robin is on an empty street in a completely unfamiliar urban environment. Rain floods everything. Only pharmacy lights glimmer here and there. The bare, arid street responds quickly to the rain, and as she moves onto much busier streets, the plants come life and grow right before our eyes. Robin is drenched, her light dress clings to her body. She walks with great determination and loneliness through the torrent, into nothingness. The rain gradually stops, the light changes, rainbows appear, and the world fills with beautiful colors. People appear, and Robin is swallowed up in the crowd. Darkness falls, and she keeps walking as the landscape changes from lush green to desert, to endless green bare hills, still full of beautiful people. Light shines again, the streets fill up. Robin is like a tourist in time, passing landscapes and crowds, eras. It becomes an abstract journey. We see her in the crowd from above. In the distance, far away from Robin, a heavy figure walks in the crowd. Cut to Robin, she is old now, and she starts to follow the figure. He walks unsteadily. We see him from behind or from the side. Robin follows him, picking up her pace, getting closer. The tension builds as the figure disappears down an alleyway. Robin runs after him. Her face is strained and her body is using its last strength. She gets closer, narrowing the gap, closer and closer. The heavy man slows down gradually and eventually stops, still with his back to her. His strength seems to have run out. Robin is behind him. They are alone. She gently touches his shoulder.

ROBIN  
Aaron?

He starts to turn around, but the picture cuts to black before we see his face.

