

HOTEL CHEVALIER

Written by

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EXT. HOTEL. NIGHT

A stone building on a corner in Paris. There is a glass awning over the entrance and a revolving door at the front. A sign reads HOTEL CHEVALIER.

INT. HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT

A junior suite with a large bed and a sitting area. There is a small sofa, an armchair, yellow-paneled walls, red-carpeted floors, and a television set with the sound turned off. A war movie set in a prison camp is showing. Classical music plays on a portable stereo on the dressing table. An open suitcase sits on a bench at the foot of the bed.

There are towels and clothes on the armchair and sofa. There are room service trays from breakfast and lunch on the floor. The bed has not been made. Books, papers, boxes, and bags are stacked and strewn everywhere.

A twenty-five-year-old man lies on the bed dressed in a bathrobe with HOTEL CHEVALIER stitched onto the pocket. He is reading the *International Herald Tribune*. He is Jack.

Jack sets down the paper and picks up the telephone. He dials. Pause.

JACK

Bonsoir. S'il vous plait, je voudrais un verre de lait au chocolat, et une soupe d'oignon, et un sandwich avec--how do you say "grilled cheese"? Merci. Exactly. Merci beaucoup.

Jack hangs up the telephone and picks up the newspaper again. He turns the page. The telephone rings. He answers it.

JACK

Hello?

A girl with a smoker's voice says:

VOICE

Hi.

Jack lowers the newspaper. He stares into space for ten seconds. The girl continues:

VOICE

I'm on my way from the airport, and the front desk won't give me your room number.

Jack's mouth opens slowly. His eyes narrow. He blinks once.

VOICE
What's your room number?

Silence. Jack says quietly:

JACK
120.

VOICE
I'll see you in half an hour.

JACK
Wait a second.

VOICE
What?

JACK
Where are you?

VOICE
I'm here.

JACK
I didn't say you could come here.

VOICE
Can I come there?

JACK
(pause)
OK.

VOICE
I'll see you in half an hour.

There is a click, and the line goes dead. Jack keeps the receiver to his ear for a minute. He finally places it back on its cradle. He stands up.

Jack turns off the television set. He collects the towels and clothes off the floor and puts them in the closet. He selects a shirt and a suit and hangs them on a doorknob. He goes into the bathroom and turns on the taps in the shower and the bathtub. He stands in front of the mirror and looks at himself.

Jack goes back into the bedroom. He opens all the windows and relights the room, switching various lamps on or off. He moves his books around, placing different ones in prominent spots. He puts postcards of paintings and photographs on the tables and nightstands.

He removes exotic items from his boxes and bags: a statuette of an Arabian sultan, a mounted dragonfly in a little case, an old-fashioned music box, a Japanese vase. He sets them in a row along the mantel. He takes tubes of paints and brushes out of a box and arranges them next to a half-finished still life. He turns off the classical music. He listens to the first ten seconds of an English folk song, then presses stop.

Jack goes into the bathroom, takes off his bathrobe, and steps into the shower.

CUT TO:

Fifteen minutes later. The bed has been made. Jack lies on it dressed in a gray wool suit with a black shirt. He has bare feet. His hair is wet and neatly combed.

There is a knock on the door. Jack immediately stands up and goes to the dressing table. He presses play on the portable stereo. The English folk song starts again. He goes to the door and opens it.

A twenty-five-year-old woman dressed in a gray wool coat stands in the hallway. Her hair is cut short, and she wears red lipstick. She smiles with one side of her mouth. She carries a plastic grocery bag, a small paper sack, and a handful of white flowers. She has a toothpick in her mouth. She is Rhett.

Rhett says into her mobile phone:

RHETT
Who else is coming?
(pause)
OK, maybe. I'll call you later.
Bye!

Rhett snaps her phone shut. She and Jack stare at each other. She laughs.

RHETT
What's this song?

Jack shrugs. Rhett hands him the flowers.

JACK
Thank you.

Rhett starts to kiss Jack but he puts his arms around her and hugs her. She hugs him back tightly. He motions for her to come inside. She goes into the room, and he closes the door.

He says, trying to sound mysterious:

JACK
How'd you find me?

RHETT
It wasn't actually that hard.

Rhett examines the Arabian sultan and turns to Jack with a bemused look. She winds the music box a turn. She looks at the dragonfly, the vase, the half-finished still life, and each of the books and postcards. She touches the shirts in Jack's suitcase. It has a jungle pattern print of small cheetahs, elephants, zebras, palm trees, and pelicans all over it and the initials J.L.W. Stenciled onto it.

Rhett goes into the bathroom. Bubbles float over the top of the bathtub. Jack stands in the doorway. She turns on the sink faucet and takes a toothbrush out of the glass. She asks as she brushes her teeth:

RHETT
Are you going to take a bath?

JACK
It's for you.

Rhett squints at Jack.

RHETT
Who cut your hair?

JACK
The barber in the lobby.

RHETT
You're learning to paint?

JACK
I'm trying.

Rhett finishes brushing her teeth. She turns off the faucet and puts the toothbrush back in the glass.

Rhett comes out of the bathroom and stops in the middle of the sitting area. She takes off her coat and sets down her bags. She wears gray wool pants and a cream silk blouse. She puts the toothpick in her mouth. She sits down in the armchair and says quietly:

RHETT
What the fuck is going on?

Jack sits down next to his suitcase on the bench at the foot of the bed. Rhett says to him from across the room:

RHETT
How long have you had this hotel
room?

JACK
I don't know.

RHETT
More than a week?

JACK
More than a week.

RHETT
More than a month?

JACK
More than a month.

RHETT
How much does it cost?

JACK
I think like 750 million euros or
something.

Rhett laughs. Jack shrugs.

RHETT
How long are you going to stay?

JACK
How long are you going to stay?

RHETT
I'm leaving tomorrow morning.

Pause. Jack reaches into his pocket and takes out a chocolate
mint in a silver wrapper with HOTEL CHEVALIER printed on it.
He unwraps it. He eats it. Rhett walks across the room and
sits down on the bench on the other side of Jack's suitcase.

RHETT
Don't you think it's time for you
to go home?

JACK
Probably.

RHETT
Are you running away from *me*?

JACK
I thought I already did.

The doorbell rings. Jack looks surprised, then remembers. He goes to the door and lets in the room service waiter. The waiter wears a tuxedo. He puts a little wedge under the door to hold it open. He rolls a cart to the middle of the room. He nods to Rhett. He lifts a silver dome off each item as he introduces it with a French accent:

WAITER

The onion soup, the chocolate milk,
and the grilled cheese sandwich.

JACK

Thank you.

The waiter presents the bill, and Jack signs it.

RHETT

Order me a Bloody Mary, please.

JACK

Two Bloody Marys, s'il vous plait.

The waiter nods. He goes swiftly out of the room and closes the door behind him.

Jack and Rhett stand over the room service cart looking at the food. She puts one of the silver domes back over the grilled cheese sandwich. She touches Jack's face. He takes the toothpick out of her mouth. She kisses him. He pulls her over to the bed.

Rhett sits on the edge of the bed. Jack stands in front of her. She lifts a foot in the air. He pulls off one tall boot and then the other one. She stands up, and he sits down. He unbuttons her pants and pulls them down. She steps out of them. He kisses her on the stomach. He pulls down her panties. They are pink. She steps out of them. She puts her hands on the side of his face.

RHETT

Have you slept with anyone?

JACK

No. Have you?

RHETT

(long pause)

No.

JACK

That was a long pause.

Rhett looks at Jack uncertainly. Jack looks away. He puts his hands on Rhett's hips and says quietly:

JACK
I guess it doesn't really matter.

RHETT
No, it doesn't.

Rhett pulls Jack onto the bed and gets on top of him. Jack sees several large, pale-purple, fading bruises on Rhett's arms and back.

JACK
You've got bruises on your body.

Rhett shrugs. Jack touches a bruise on Rhett's side. Rhett says suddenly:

RHETT
Whatever happens in the end, I don't want to lose you as my friend.

JACK
I promise I will *never* be your friend, no matter what, ever.

Rhett stares at Jack with her lips parted. He stares back at her. Her voice cracks slightly as she says:

RHETT
If we fuck, I'm going to feel like shit tomorrow.

JACK
That's OK with me.

Jack lifts Rhett's blouse over her head. She is naked except for a pair of white socks.

RHETT
I love you. I never hurt you on purpose.

JACK
(pause)
I don't care.

Rhett hugs Jack tightly with tears on her face. Jack finally points to the window and says:

JACK
You want to see my view of Paris?

RHETT
OK.

Jack and Rhett stand up. He helps her into his hotel bathrobe. She picks up another toothpick and puts it in her mouth. They go out onto the balcony.

EXT. BALCONY. NIGHT

A wide avenue runs from the hotel to the river. Yellow lights glimmer all over the city, and the sky glows dark blue. Jack stands behind Rhett with his arms around her as they look out across Paris. They go back inside.

The curtains blow slightly in the breeze. The English folk song ends. The sounds of the street come faintly from below.