

Revolutionary Road

SCREENPLAY BY
JUSTIN HAYTHE

BASED ON THE NOVEL
BY RICHARD YATES

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT, 1947. FLASHBACK.

City lights. The soaring bridges and glowing windows of New York City. The SOUNDS of a cocktail party.

INT. GREENWICH VILLAGE APARTMENT - NIGHT, 1947. FLASHBACK.

A party of bohemian types in the village. Artist's canvases propped up against the walls. A narrow hallway with couples talking intimately. Two rooms crammed with young people smoking and drinking.

A man and a woman in their 20's stand alone in a corner...

FRANK WHEELER, intelligent good-looks, and APRIL JOHNSON, a patrician beauty, a woman amongst girls. He's been making her laugh.

FRANK

So, what do you do?

APRIL

I'm studying to be an actress.
You?

FRANK

I'm a longshoreman.

APRIL

(smiles)
No, I mean really.

FRANK

I mean really too. Starting Monday, though, I'm doing something a little more glamorous. Night cashier at a cafeteria.

APRIL

(smiles)
I don't mean how you make money. I mean what are you interested in?

FRANK

Honey - if I had the answer to that one, I bet I'd bore us both to death in half an hour.

She laughs. He smiles, revelling in her attention.

INT. GREENWICH VILLAGE APARTMENT - NIGHT, 1947, LATER.

Later, Frank and April dance. They move well, in sync, looking into each other's eyes. He slides his hand down the silk of April's dress until it rests in the small of her back.

Close on their hands. Their fingers slowly entwine as they lose themselves in each other...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT, PRESENT.

Close on Frank's face, seven years later, full of doubt and tension as he watches his wife, April, on stage and as we hear the hollow VOICES of a very bad amateur play...

Finally, mercifully, the curtain falls. Nothing. Then vigorous, relieved applause.

Frank hears a voice from behind, through the applause:

WOMAN

Thank God *that's* over...

April takes the final bow. She's fighting not to cry. Frank applauds her loudly. Looks around to see who else is joining him. But there is no noticeable crescendo in the applause.

Then Frank hears the voice again:

WOMAN (CONT'D)

...And *she* was very disappointing.

He can't argue.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT, MOMENTS LATER.

Frank now moves against the crowd of exiting audience members towards the stage. He keeps his head lowered, avoiding eye-contact, until he feels a hand on his sleeve.

MR. AND MRS. GIVINGS, an older couple, are standing in his way.

MRS. GIVINGS
Frank! Very nice Frank!

FRANK
Thanks, Mrs. Givings.

Frank steps around her.

MRS. GIVINGS
I can't tell you how much we enjoyed it. You have a very talented wife.

Frank forces a smile as he goes.

FRANK
I'll pass it along!

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT.

April sits alone at her dressing table crying.

INT. BACK STAGE - NIGHT.

The CAST mills backstage. The mood is subdued, but some have decided to make light of the disaster.

Frank moves through the crowd. Across the room, he sees -

MILLY CAMPBELL, 30's, determinedly bright, up on her tip-toes. Her husband SHEP, 30's, heavy-set, is still in costume, shell-shocked and pebbled with sweat.

MILLY
Frank!

FRANK
Hi!

MILLY
She's through there...!
(points)
You 'bout ready for that drink?

FRANK
Couple of minutes!

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT.

Frank enters. The chair in front of the mirror is empty. A cigarette burns in the ashtray. Frank glances at a standing screen in the corner. April's costume is draped over the top. He goes towards it, deciding what to say.

FRANK
(heartfelt)
April, sweetheart. You were great.
I mean it.

The door to the bathroom opens. April enters in street clothes. Frank's been talking to an empty room.

APRIL
Hi. You about ready to leave?
I've just got to get this makeup
off, then we can go.

She sits in front of the mirror, too embarrassed to look at him. FRANK can see that her face is blotchy from crying. He puts his hand on her shoulder.

FRANK
Well... I guess it wasn't a triumph
or anything, was it?

APRIL looks at him in the mirror. She holds his look just a second. And from her expression, he knows he said exactly the wrong thing.

APRIL
I guess not. I'll be ready in a
minute.

FRANK
Take your time.

He removes his hands and lights a cigarette. APRIL begins to take off her makeup.

APRIL

Will you do me a favor? Milly and Shep wanted us to go out with them afterwards. Will you say we can't? Say it's because of the baby sitter or something?

FRANK

Well, the thing is, I already said that we could. I mean, I just saw them out there and I said we would.

APRIL

(tense)

Oh. Then would you mind going out again and saying you were mistaken? That should be simple enough.

FRANK

Don't you think that's a little bit rude, April?

APRIL

Well I'll tell them myself.

FRANK

Okay. Okay. Take it easy. I'll tell them.

He backs to the door.

INT. HIGH-SCHOOL CORRIDOR - NIGHT.

April and Frank walk down a long empty echoing corridor, past school lockers, booster club posters and silent classrooms.

They don't touch. They don't speak. The tension between them is palpable.

INT. WHEELER CAR - NIGHT.

Frank drives. April stares ahead. Their faces are lit by the dashboard. After a while...

FRANK

I mean it, baby. You were the only person in that play.

APRIL

Thank you.

He looks over at her.

FRANK

We just never should've let you get mixed up in the damned thing.

APRIL

All right.

FRANK

You've *studied* for Christ's sake.

APRIL

Could we sort of stop talking about it now?

FRANK

Sure. I just don't want you feeling bad about it, that's all. Because it's not worth it. I mean, it's bad enough having to *live* out here among these damn people - what'd you say?

APRIL

I said *yes*. All *right*, Frank. Could you just stop talking now, before you drive me crazy, *please*?

Frank clenches his jaw and flips on the indicator.

APRIL (CONT'D)

What are you doing? Why are we stopping?

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT.

The car comes to a stop at the side of the road.

INT. WHEELER CAR - NIGHT.

Frank turns off the ignition. He slides towards her.

APRIL

No, Frank, please don't...

He puts his arms around her.

FRANK

Baby, it's okay...

APRIL

Please don't touch me.

FRANK

April...

APRIL

Why can't you...just... *LEAVE ME ALONE!*

Frank slides back behind the wheel. Beat.

FRANK

It strikes me, that there's a considerable amount of bullshit going on here.... And there's one or two things I'd like to clear up. Number one, it's not my fault the play was lousy. Number two, it's sure as hell not my fault you didn't turn out to be an actress, and the sooner you get over *that* little piece of soap opera the better off we'll *both* be. Number three, I don't happen to fit the role of dumb, insensitive suburban husband; you've been trying to hang *that* one on me ever since we moved here. Number four -

She opens the door and is out of the car, flashing across the headlights. Frank struggles with his door.

EXT. HIGHWAY SHOULDER - NIGHT.

April stands in the dark 30 yards from the road looking over an expansive countryside. There's only a few lights in the distance. This is still farmland.

Frank comes up behind her, careful to keep his distance.

FRANK

What the hell are you doing? Come back to the car.

APRIL

No. Just let me stand here a second.

Frank raises his arms in exasperation. A car approaches. He puts a hand in his pocket and tries to look casual. The car's headlights light up April's back, then pass.

FRANK

April?

She doesn't move.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Look, can't we sit in the car and talk about it, instead of running all over Route Twelve?

APRIL

Haven't I made it clear I don't particularly want to talk about it?

FRANK

Okay. Jesus, I'm trying to be nice about this thing.

APRIL

How kind of you. How *terribly, terribly* kind of you.

FRANK

Wait a minute. I don't deserve this.

APRIL

You're always so wonderfully definite, aren't you, on the subject of what you do and don't deserve?

She turns and walks past him back towards the car.

FRANK

Wait a minute!

He stumbles after her. Other cars whizz by, but he's past caring.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Wait a minute, God damn it!

She leans against the car and folds her arms.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You listen to me. This is one time you're not going to get away with twisting everything I say.

APRIL

Christ, I wish you'd stayed home tonight!

FRANK

You know what you are when you're like this? You're sick. I really mean that. You're sick!

APRIL

And you know what you are?
(eyes raking him)
You're *disgusting*.

FRANK

Oh, yeah?

APRIL

Just because you've got me safely in this little trap, you think you can bully me into feeling whatever you want!

FRANK

*You in a trap! You in a trap!
Jesus, don't make me laugh!*

APRIL

Yes, me.

(clutching at her chest)

*Me! Me! Me! Oh, you poor, pathetic
little boy -- Look at you! Look at
you, and tell me how by any stretch
of the imagination you can call
yourself a man!*

He raises his fist, she flinches away, and BONG! BONG! BONG!
BONG! He punches the hood of the car. Then, silence. The
look April gives him is probably the worst look he's ever
received: a look of pitying boredom.

FRANK

Don't look at me like that, April.

APRIL

Could we please go home now?

She calmly walks around and gets in the car. After a moment,
Frank follows...

INT. CAR - NIGHT.

They sit silently in the car in the darkness.

TITLE CARD: REVOLUTIONARY ROAD

EXT. WHEELER HOUSE - MORNING.

A small, attractive suburban house in the morning sunshine.
Frank walks out to the car, stops and looks back at the
house.

INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

April stands at the window. The SOUND of the car pulling
away.

EXT. REVOLUTIONARY ROAD TRAIN STATION - MORNING.

Frank stands on a grey platform, amongst a crowd of commuters. The morning commuter train eases into the station.

INT. COMMUTER TRAIN - MORNING.

Frank sits against the train window holding a "New Yorker." Around him, the train is crowded with men reading newspapers.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL PLATFORM - MORNING.

In one swift movement, all the doors of the commuter train swing open as a hundred feet step down onto the platform.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - MORNING.

An empty stairwell in Grand Central: a tide of grim, determined commuters rise into view. A mass of suits and hats. Frank is amongst them.

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - MORNING.

Knox Headquarters -- a squat, formidable structure. Thick HONKING traffic. Crowded sidewalks.

Frank walks with the crowd past a display window: bright cardboard images of fashionable women grin and point their pencils at a list of product benefits - "SPEED, ACCURACY, CONTROL."

Pride of place at the center of the display is a new Knox 500 Electronic Computer with a sign that reads: "Performs A Man's Lifetime of Work in Just 30 Minutes!"

INT. KNOX BUILDING ELEVATOR - MORNING.

Frank rides crushed against the wall in a crowded elevator. He glances over at -

MAUREEN GRUBE, 23, ripe, a little obvious, but undeniably sexy. She meets his look. And looks away.

INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, FRANK'S CUBICLE - MORNING.

Frank opens the bottom right drawer of his desk, props up his feet and lights a cigarette.

JACK (O.S.)

I'm going to need your help this morning, Old Scout.

Seated beside Frank, JACK ORDWAY, 40's, tall and effete with greying hair, appears to be hard at work, hunched over a file. He is, in fact, propping up his head with his hand while shielding his eyes.

JACK (CONT'D)

For the next few hours, you're to warn me of Bandy's every approach and you may have to screen me from public view in the likely event I that I throw up. It's that bad.

FRANK

Good morning, Jack.

JACK

Nothing good about it, I assure you.

EXT. WHEELER HOUSE - DAY.

April drags two overflowing garbage cans to the curb. She stops and looks down the empty road. Not a single human being in sight.

Close on April's face.

INT. MRS. GIVINGS' CAR - DAY, 1948. FLASHBACK.

Mrs. Givings sits behind the wheel, driving slowly along a suburban street talking at high speed.

Frank sits beside her wearing sunglasses. April sits in the back.

We don't yet see what Mrs. Givings is describing, only as it plays on their faces.

MRS. GIVINGS

Of course, I knew the moment you came off the train what you were looking for... A small remodeled barn, or a carriage house - And I just hate to be the one to tell you that sort of thing just isn't available anymore... But I don't want you to despair. There is one place down here I want to show you... Now of course it isn't very desirable at this end.

(gestures)

As you see, *Crawford* Road is mostly these little cinder-blocky, pick-up trucky places - plumbers, carpenters, little local people of that sort.

Frank turns around to April, lowers his glasses. April stifles a giggle.

MRS. GIVINGS (CONT'D)

But *eventually*...

(she points, her arm fully extended)

Eventually it leads up to *Revolutionary* Road, which is *much* nicer. Now, the place I want to show you, is a sweet little house and a *sweet* little setting. Simple, clean lines, good lawns, marvelous for children. It's right around this next curve... Now, you'll see it - *there*.

They all look.

MRS. GIVINGS (CONT'D)

See the little white one? Sweet isn't it? The perky way it sits there on its little slope? Charming, isn't it?

April smiles. A smile full of promise.

APRIL

Oh, yes.

INT. BANDY'S OFFICE - DAY. PRESENT.

Frank's FIST raps against the door of an office...

TED BANDY, 46, tight and precise, looks up from behind a well-organized desk.

FRANK

You wanted to see me?

Bandy holds out an envelope from behind his desk.

BANDY

Came for you from Toledo this morning.

Frank reaches for it, but Bandy moves it out of reach.

BANDY (CONT'D)

This is the third one this month.

FRANK

Oh, right, sorry. I thought I'd taken care of that...

Frank reaches again, but Bandy moves it. A little man enjoying his power.

BANDY

I'm not prepared to have this conversation again, Frank. You understand?

FRANK

...Absolutely, yes.

BANDY

These folks in the provinces look up to us, Frank. We need to be *efficient*. We can't have this kind of back and *forth*, and so forth. It's just not *efficient*. Am I right?

FRANK

...Absolutely, yes, yes...

Bandy finally hands over the envelope.

INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, FRANK'S CUBICLE - DAY.

Frank sits at his desk.

JACK

What was that about?

FRANK

Toledo. Branch manager wants a revised brochure for the conference on "The Knox 500."

(impersonating Bandy)

"It's just not *efficient*."

JACK

(sharp inhale)

Sounds like a real goodie.

FRANK

I don't even know what the Knox 500 does... Do you?

JACK

Don't insult me.

Frank drops it in his In Box. Then, looking up, he sees Maureen across the office. Thinks.

INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, MAUREEN'S DESK - DAY.

Frank stands over Maureen at her desk. The envelope from Toledo lies in front of her.

FRANK

Now, if you'll look in the inactive file under SP-1109 you'll find copies of all the stuff we sent to the agency... and that way we can trace the thing back to its original sources.

She nods, jotting down a note.

For the first time, Frank allows himself to take in her profile, her cleavage, her lips.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I hope you weren't planning on an early lunch.

MAUREEN

I'm not really hungry.

FRANK

Good. I'll check on you later.

INT. ALGONQUIN HOTEL RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON.

Maureen and Frank sit in a secluded corner. Maureen sips a martini. She's already a little drunk.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You know something? You're lucky you met me.

MAUREEN

Oh? How's that?

FRANK

I can show you the ropes. There's an art to survival at Knox. Let me show you what I mean.

He waves over the waiter.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Bring me the telephone would you?
And two more martinis.

Maureen looks daunted at her empty glass.

MAUREEN

Wow.

The waiter brings over the phone. Frank dials. He holds his finger to his lips. He uses an authoritative tone.

FRANK

Hello Mrs. Jorgensen. Frank Wheeler here. Just wanted to let you know that I've had to send Maureen Grube down to Visual Aides for me. I'll probably need her the rest of the day... Okay? Fine. You too.

Frank hangs up and smiles at Maureen.

MAUREEN

I never even heard of Visual Aides.

FRANK

That's because it doesn't exist.

Maureen smiles.

INT. WHEELER HALLWAY - DAY.

Now we're moving behind April as she moves through the silent house. She carries a basket of dirty laundry on her hip. She pulls the bedding off the couch. The distant SOUND of children playing.

MRS. GIVINGS (O.S.)

Yoo-hoo!

She turns to see Mrs. Givings at the screen door.

April manages a friendly smile.

APRIL

Hi Helen.

MRS. GIVINGS

I can't stay a minute... My, don't you look comfy! I just wanted to bring this *sedum* for that messy patch in the front yard.

She puts it on the table.

MRS. GIVINGS (CONT'D)

All it wants is just a tiny dollop
of water for the first few days,
and you'll find it absolutely
thrives.

APRIL

Well, thank you... You want some
coffee?

MRS. GIVINGS

Only if you're having some.

Helen sits down. With the end of her finger, she pushes a
dirty dish out of her way.

APRIL

Is there something I can do for
you, Helen?

MRS. GIVINGS

Oh... yes, I almost forgot. I do
have a small favor I'd like to
ask...

(quiver of anxiety)

It's about my son, John. He's been
in the hospital.

APRIL

I'm sorry to hear that.

MRS. GIVINGS

Well, actually, just for the
present, he's in Pleasant Brook...
Psychiatric.

April's face. She knows what it means.

APRIL

...I'm so sorry.

MRS. GIVINGS

Oh... Nothing serious. He just
got a little run down. Things can
just get the better of us
sometimes. Don't you think?

APRIL

Yes. Of course.

Mrs. Givings smiles. Then, pretending to read the titles on a stack of books on the table...

MRS. GIVINGS

It really is a marvellous facility and the treatments seem to be doing him wonders... Anyway, they said getting out for an afternoon might do him some good.

She pauses on Sartre's 'Nausea', looks at it vaguely.

MRS. GIVINGS (CONT'D)

I think he finds my friends a little *conventional*, frankly. I mean, he's travelled. He has a PhD in mathematics. I suppose you could say he's an intellectual. It would do him a world of good to meet a young couple like you.

APRIL

We'd love to Helen.

MRS. GIVINGS

So, I thought perhaps if you had some time...

APRIL

We'd love to.

MRS. GIVINGS

(flushed with relief)

Thank you, dear... Thank you.

April smiles generously.

MRS. GIVINGS (CONT'D)

I remember when you first came off the train. You weren't like most of my clients. You were different, somehow.

April's face. She's listening.

MRS. GIVINGS (CONT'D)

Well, you looked simply ravishing
and I just knew Frank did something
terribly brilliant in town. You
just seemed... *special*... Of
course you still are.

April takes this in.

INT. WHEELER HOUSE - AFTERNOON.

April watches from the picture window as Mrs. Givings walks
down the drive towards her car. Her face is reflected in the
glass. Something is taking shape in her mind.

INT. ALGONQUIN RESTAURANT BAR - AFTERNOON, LATER.

The dining room is now almost empty. Waiters and busboys eat
in the corner.

Frank cuts a solitary figure. He lights his last cigarette
and crumples the pack.

MAUREEN (O.S.)

I guess you got me a little drunk.

Maureen slides into the booth. She stares at the table,
trying to focus.

FRANK

You know what today is?

MAUREEN

...Monday?

FRANK

It's my birthday. I'm thirty years
old today.

MAUREEN

Happy birthday!

Maureen raises her glass, then sways drunkenly.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

What was the name of the department
you made up again?

FRANK

Visual Aides.

MAUREEN

...What-a-joke.

He sips his drink.

FRANK

Want to hear a real joke...?

She looks up at him.

FRANK (CONT'D)

My old man worked at Knox.

MAUREEN

Yeah?

FRANK

He was a salesman in Yonkers. Once
a year he used to take me into the
city for lunch. It was supposed to
be a special, life-advice sort of
occasion.

MAUREEN

Nice.

FRANK

Not really... I used to sit there
and think, 'I hope to Christ I
don't end up like you.'

Frank grins as if it's supposed to be very funny.

FRANK (CONT'D)

And here I am, a thirty year old
Knox man. Can you beat that?

MAUREEN

I think I kind of lost you... Your
father worked for Knox...?

(MORE)

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, but everything's kinda going out of focus.

Frank takes her arm to steady her. She meets his eye.

FRANK

How 'bout some air?

INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - DAY.

Close on a hand opening an old cigar box.

April is sitting with the box at the kitchen table. It contains various sentimental knickknacks from her past, including photos of the kids, of her and Frank in New York with friends, and a photograph of Frank in uniform beneath the Eifel tower on liberation day... She studies it.

INT. BETHUNE STREET APARTMENT - DAWN, 1947. FLASHBACK

Frank fixes coffee in the tiny kitchen.

April is sitting up in bed in the first blue light of day wearing Frank's T-shirt. She holds a curled collection of black and white photographs in her lap. She stops on the same picture of Frank and the Eifel Tower.

Frank comes over with the coffee, and two cigarettes. He lights them both, and gives her one.

FRANK

You ever been to Paris?

APRIL

I've never really been anywhere.

FRANK

Maybe I'll take you with me.

He lies down with his cigarette between his teeth.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm going back first chance I get.
People are alive there.

He stares up at the ceiling. She studies him. Appraising.

FRANK (CONT'D)

All I know now is that I want to feel things. Really *feel* them. How's that for an ambition...?

APRIL

Frank Wheeler?

FRANK

Mm?

APRIL

I think you're the most interesting person I've ever met.

He looks at her, overwhelmed by her face in the light.

APRIL (CONT'D)

I mean it.

INT. MAUREEN'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Frank stands at the mantle tying his tie.

FRANK

Well, I guess this wasn't what you had in mind when you went to work this morning?

Maureen covers herself with the sheets.

MAUREEN

No. It certainly wasn't.

Frank inspects the contents of the mantle: photos of Maureen at the prom; Maureen with her parents.

Maureen tentatively fingers her hair that has now gone to frizz. The sheet slips down. She grabs at it. Then wills herself to calm down and act sophisticated.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

Do you have a *cigarette*, Frank?

He turns and smiles at her.

FRANK

Sure, here.

He comes over and gives her one. Lights it with his Zippo. She exhales, slowly gaining confidence.

Frank gets up and pulls on his jacket.

MAUREEN

Can I get you a drink or anything?

FRANK

No thanks, Maureen. Actually, I guess I'd better be cutting out, it's getting kind of late.

MAUREEN

Gee, that's right. Have you missed your train?

FRANK

It's all right, I'll get the next one.

He comes over to her. Bends down, kisses her gently on the lips.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Listen: you were swell. Take care now.

INT. FRANK'S STATION CAR/WHEELER HOUSE - NIGHT.

Frank's station car turns into the driveway. He sits there a moment in the darkness.

EXT. WHEELER FRONT DOOR - NIGHT.

Frank approaches the door with his key. He takes a moment to gather himself, but before he can, the door opens.

April is dressed in a black cocktail dress. She looks wonderful. She smiles. She steps forward and takes his face in her hands. She kisses him.

APRIL

Frank...

FRANK

Why are you all dressed up?

She hands him a glass of whiskey and closes his fingers around it.

APRIL

First of all, I missed you all day and I want to say I'm sorry. I'm sorry for the way I've been since that stupid play. I'm sorry for everything and... And I love you... Now wait here till I call you. Okay?

She goes, leaving Frank in stunned silence. He takes a large drink.

From inside the house, the sound of the children's voices. Whispering, giggling. Then April's voice:

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

Alright Frank! You can come in now!

INT. WHEELER LIVING AND DINING ROOMS - NIGHT.

Frank enters the house. Walks through the darkened living room towards the light. Enters the dining room.

The room is lit by the candles burning on a birthday cake.

JENNIFER, 7, MICHAEL, 5, and April sit around the table wearing paper birthday crowns.

They sing Happy Birthday.

INT. SHOWER - NIGHT.

Frank scrubs his skin, his scalp, his face: trying to wash away Maureen.

He turns off the water. He stands there in the silence, regaining control.

INT. FRANK AND APRIL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Frank steps out of the bathroom. April turns from the mirror wearing the silk negligee and comes towards him with two glasses.

APRIL

Frank. I have had the most wonderful idea. I've been thinking about it all day.

FRANK

What's all this about?

APRIL

You know how much money we have saved...?

She hands Frank a glass of brandy.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Enough to live on for six months without you earning another dime. And with the money we could get from the house and the car, longer than that.

FRANK

What we get for the house...What are you talking about? Where are we going to live?

APRIL

...Paris.

Frank stares.

APRIL (CONT'D)

You always said it was the only place you'd ever been that was worth living. So why don't we go there?

FRANK

You're serious?

APRIL

Yes. What's stopping us?

FRANK

What's stopping us? Well, I can think of a lot of things. For instance, what kind of a job could I possibly get?

APRIL

You won't be getting any kind of job, because I will.

Frank laughs.

FRANK

Oh, right.

APRIL

Don't laugh -- listen a minute! Have you any idea what they pay for secretarial positions in the government agencies in Europe? Embassies and those things.

Frank laughs again.

FRANK

No, I don't.

APRIL

I'm serious about this Frank. Do you think I'm kidding or something?

FRANK

No, I know, I know. I just have a couple of questions, is all. For one thing, do you mind telling me what exactly I'm supposed to be doing while you're out earning all this money?

She draws back, shocked that he doesn't get it.

APRIL

Don't you see that's the whole idea? You'll be doing what you should've been allowed to do seven years ago. You'll have *time*, Frank. You'll have time to find out what it is that you actually want to do, and when you figure it out you'll have the time and the freedom to start doing it.

FRANK

Sweetheart, it's just not very realistic, is all.

APRIL

Well, I happen to think *this* is unrealistic. I think it's unrealistic for a man with a fine mind to go on working like a dog year after year at a job he can't stand, coming home to a place he can't stand, to a wife who's equally unable to stand the same things.

Frank is silent. How could anyone possibly argue with her?

APRIL (CONT'D)

You want to know the worst part? Our whole existence here is based on this great premise that we're somehow very special and *superior* to the whole thing, and you know what I've realized...? We're not! We're just like everyone else. Look at us! We've bought into the same ridiculous delusion. This idea that you have to resign from life and settle down the moment you have children. And we've been punishing each other for it.

FRANK

Listen: we decided to move out here. No one ever forced me to take the job at Knox.

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

I mean who ever said I was supposed to be a big deal, anyway?

APRIL

When I first met you, there was nothing in the world you couldn't do or be.

FRANK

I was a little wise guy with a big mouth, that's all.

APRIL

You were not! How can you even say that?

FRANK

...All right... So, I'll have time. And God knows that's appealing. It's very appealing. And I mean, everything you say might make a certain amount of sense, if I had some definite talent maybe. If I were an artist or a writer.

APRIL

But Frank, listen to me: It's what you *are* that's being stifled here. It's what you *are* that's being *denied* and *denied* and *denied* in this kind of life.

FRANK

And what's that?

APRIL

Don't you know...?

He looks at her. She gazes back at him.

APRIL (CONT'D)

You're the most valuable and wonderful thing in the world... You're a man.

Frank looks at her. In that moment, he loves her more than ever before. He kisses her.

APRIL (CONT'D)

This is our chance, Frank. This is our one chance.

Beat.

FRANK

Okay.

APRIL

Okay?

FRANK

Why not...? Why the hell not?

April throws her arms around him.

INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, ELEVATOR BAY - MORNING.

DING. The elevator doors slide open. Frank steps onto the fifteenth floor, full of energy.

INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, FRANK'S CUBICLE - MORNING.

Frank arrives at his desk. Casually tosses his briefcase down. Lights a cigarette.

Jack stands nearby making idle chat with office co-workers, ED SMALL, 36 and VINCE LATHROP, 33 - a pair of overgrown children.

JACK

Ah, Franklin. Good to see your shining face. What's the news?

FRANK

I'm moving to Paris.

JACK

Right. And I'm moving to Tangiers.

Frank shrugs, smiles, picks up the Toledo file, scans it.

He reaches for his Dictaphone and clears his throat.

FRANK

...Intra-company letter to Toledo... Attention B.F. Chalmers, branch manager... With regard to recent and repeated correspondence, this is to advise that the matter has been... very satisfactorily taken in hand, period, paragraph.

He takes out a cigarette.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We wholly agree that the existing brochure is unsuitable. To this end we have developed...

He lights the cigarette with a SNAP of his Zippo.

FRANK (CONT'D)

"Speaking of Production Control..."

Smiles. He's making it up as he goes, and enjoying it. It's all meaningless now!

INT. AMERICAN EXPRESS OFFICE - DAY.

April sits in the American Express office.

CLERK (O.S.)

Here you are Mrs. Wheeler:

A handsome CLERK smilingly hands her a stack of documents.

CLERK (CONT'D)

Here's the travellers checks you asked for... and your steamer reservations... and these I'll pass on to the embassy for you.

APRIL

Thank you.

She looks at them in her hands: it's real.

CLERK

Good luck.

April smiles.

INT. MIDTOWN RESTAURANT - DAY.

Jack, Frank, Ed and Vince sit crammed in a booth in a tiny, crowded Midtown Luncheonette.

Frank looks pleased with himself. The rest sit in stunned silence.

JACK

And when does this noble experiment commence?

FRANK

September. October at the outside.

Jack and Vince exchange a look.

Frank's enjoying the effect.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I just happen to think people are better off doing some kind of work they actually like.

ED

(vague)

Right, yes.

VINCE

(mumbled)

Absolutely, absolutely.

JACK

But... I mean, assuming there is a true vocation waiting for you. Wouldn't you be just as likely to discover it here as there?

A waitress puts the check on the table.

FRANK

No... I don't think it's possible to discover anything on the fifteenth floor of the Knox building, and I don't think any of you do either.

The men are silent. Frank picks up the check.

FRANK (CONT'D)

This one's on me.

EXT GRAND CENTRAL STATION - AFTERNOON

Frank is standing leaning against a coffee bar in Grand Central Station. He is finishing a beer.

It is rush hour, and amidst the sea of people, he is the only one not moving.

He is watching all the people walking by with an air of detached amusement. As if he were now above them all.

EXT. SPACE BETWEEN TRAIN CARS - AFTERNOON.

Frank rides between train cars. The wind whips his hair. He takes a deep pull from a pinched cigarette - then flicks it straight as a bullet into the passing countryside.

He feels alive.

EXT. REVOLUTIONARY ROAD TRAIN STATION - AFTERNOON.

The commuter train slows into the station. A door swings open. And Frank leaps from the still moving train onto the platform. He slows to a walk.

EXT. WHEELER HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON.

The kids dance back and forth through the sprinkler, shrieking with pleasure.

April sits on the steps in front of the house reading some material from the American Express office.

She looks up as Frank's car pulls into the drive. He steps out of the car and comes towards her. She looks up and smiles. He drops his brief case on the ground and walks towards her. She meets him in the middle of the lawn, and they embrace.

INT. FRANK AND APRIL'S BEDROOM - EVENING.

CLOSE UP - two fingers walk the journey from New York to Paris across the page of an atlas.

Michael and Jennifer, dressed for bed, sit sandwiched between April and Frank under the bedclothes.

APRIL

...All the way to... *here*.

A pause as the two kids stare at the Atlas.

JENNIFER

But *why*?

APRIL

Well, sweetheart. It's a big world out there and we thought maybe we should go see a little bit of it.

MICHAEL

How far is it?

APRIL

A long way. We have to take a boat ride over the sea to get there.

JENNIFER

I won't know anyone there.

APRIL

I know. And neither will I. But remember when you started school? And now look how many friends you have...

Frank senses that they are a little concerned. April and Frank look to one another.

FRANK

You'll never guess what they eat in Paris. You'll never guess...

JENNIFER

What?

FRANK

Snails.

JENNIFER/MICHAEL

Snails?!

APRIL

And frog's legs!

The children dissolve into disgusted laughter. April and Frank laugh with them.

INT. CAMPBELL FRONT HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON.

At the bottom of the stairs, Shep hums a big band number as he vigorously shines his shoes.

SHEP

Buddappa banh! Banh! Banh!

He takes a swig of beer and lets out a satisfied belch.

INT. MILLY AND SHEP'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON.

Milly sits at a vanity table doing her face. She wears a floral dress and her hair's been done. She looks at Shep in the mirror.

MILLY

You better get changed, they'll be here soon.

SHEP

That what you're wearing?

MILLY

(panic)

Don't you like it?

SHEP

...No... No. You look great,
doll. Guess I better haul ass.

He walks into the bathroom. Milly looks back at her reflection.

INT. CAMPBELL KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON.

The small explosion of a beer can opening.

Shep watches the golden liquid fill his glass.

INT. CAMPBELL FAMILY ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON.

Shep walks through the living room with his glass of beer. He's halfway across the room, before he notices -

His four SONS dressed in matching pajamas, propped up on their elbows chewing gum at the television screen.

SHEP

Hiya gang.

They don't even look up.

EXT. CAMPBELL HOUSE - EVENING.

Shep walks across the grass to the edge of his property. He drinks and looks down over Revolutionary Road. He can see the Wheeler house. He takes a drink of beer, his eyes focused on the house.

MILLY (O.S.)

Shep?

Shep wheels around. April and Frank are standing there with Milly. April wears a new indigo silk dress. Her hair moves in the warm breeze. She's never looked better.

INT. CAMPBELL LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Shep mixes drinks with his back to the room.

Milly walks in and places two heaping trays of hors d'ouvres on the coffee table.

APRIL

Oh those look great. I'm starving!

April helps herself.

MILLY

April, I can't get over it - you look like the cat who ate the canary! Do you have something to tell us? A little bit of news?

SHEP

(disapproving)
Not to pry or anything.

MILLY

(suddenly unsure)
I'm not prying. Am I prying? I didn't mean to.

FRANK

Actually, we *have* got some pretty important news.

Shep and Milly look up expectantly.

He smiles conspiratorially at April.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You want to tell 'em?

April smiles back at him.

APRIL

We're going to Europe. To Paris...
To live.

Milly's face drops. Shep is frozen.

Overlapping:

MILLY

What?

SHEP

When?

MILLY

Why?

FRANK

September.

Beat. Then:

MILLY

But what for?

FRANK

What for? Because we've always wanted to. Because the kids are still young. Because it's beautiful. Shep, you tell her.

SHEP

...It's a great city.

Milly glances nervously at Shep.

MILLY

When did you make this decision?

APRIL

Oh... about a week ago... its hard to remember. We just suddenly decided to go, that's all.

MILLY

About a week ago, and you tell us now!

APRIL

We had to get used to the idea.

Shep forces himself across the room and hands the Wheelers their drinks.

SHEP

So, what's the deal, Frank? You get a job over there, or what?

FRANK
(smiles)
No. Not exactly.

SHEP
What do you mean, 'not exactly?'

APRIL
Frank won't be doing any kind of a
job, because I will.

SHEP
(to Frank)
And what are *you* going to do?

FRANK
I'm going to study... and I'm going
to read and... I suppose I'm going
to finally figure out what I want
to do with my life.

SHEP
...While she supports you?

Beat.

FRANK
Yes. While she supports me... At
least in the beginning.

APRIL
You wouldn't believe what they pay
for secretarial work in government
agencies over there. NATO and
E.C.A. and those places.

FRANK
The cost of living is dirt cheap
compared to here, so we should be
all right.

Beat.

APRIL
The truth is we just need something
different.

(MORE)

APRIL (CONT'D)

We're not getting any younger and we don't want life to just pass us by.

MILLY

Gee, it sounds wonderful, kids. I mean it; it really sounds wonderful. We'll certainly miss you, though - won't we, sweetie? Golly.

SHEP

Sure.

MILLY

Paris. Wow.

A silence. Shep's face.

INT. MILLY AND SHEP'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Milly sits on the edge of the bed in her night gown. She is brushing her hair.

Shep stands in the open doorway to the bathroom, doing up his pyjamas. After a beat...

SHEP

You know what I think?

Milly looks up.

SHEP (CONT'D)

I think this whole plan sounds a little immature.

Milly's face brightens.

MILLY

Oh God, I'm so relieved. Me too... I was thinking that the whole time.

SHEP

What kind of man is going to sit around in his bathrobe picking his nose while his wife works all day?

MILLY

I don't know, Shep. I just don't know.

Milly is crying.

SHEP

What is it?

MILLY

Nothing. I'm just so relieved.

He sits down beside her. She falls into his arms.

SHEP

Come on. Don't cry. Please. It's all right. It's going to be all right.

A kid's shout from somewhere in the house. Milly sits up.

SHEP (CONT'D)

I'll go.

INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT.

Frank and April burst into the kitchen, laughing.

FRANK

Jesus, their faces! You'd think we'd told them that we were swimming up the Yangtze river or something.

Laughing, April hands Frank a drink.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You know what this is like, April? Talking like this? The whole idea of taking off to Europe this way? It's like the way I felt going up to the line the first time, in the war. I was probably just as scared as everyone else, but inside I never felt better. I felt *alive*. I felt full of blood.

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

And everything looked more *real*.
The guys in their uniforms. The
snow on the fields, the trees. And
all of us just... walking. I mean
I *was* scared of course. But I kept
thinking: this is it. This is the
truth.

APRIL

I felt that way once too.

He looks at her. And there's something in her eyes.

FRANK

When?

APRIL

The first time you made love to me.

He walks over to her and kisses her passionately.

And they make love that way, face to face, with the lights
on, looking into each other's eyes, fully clothed, until he
comes inside her.

As he comes, she makes a sound, almost inaudible, but it
sounds like...

APRIL (CONT'D)

...No

He holds her, breathing heavily. She strokes his head.

INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR - DAY.

Frank walks across the 15th floor, the atmosphere unusually
abuzz.

He arrives in his cubicle. Jack, Ed and Vance are talking in
hushed tones.

FRANK

What's up?

ED

Bart Pollock is here.

VINCE
He's in Bandy's office.

FRANK
(unimpressed)
Yeah?

A small signal light illuminates on Frank's desk.

ED
Looks like he wants to talk to *you*.

Frank looks around. They're all looking at him. He looks over in the direction of Bandy's office.

JACK
Hey. Keep my name out of it.

INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, BANDY'S OFFICE - DAY

Bandy looks up from his desk. An uncharacteristic smile.

BANDY
(warm)
Frank. How are you? You know Bart Pollock?

FRANK
Well, we've never met, but -

A massive MAN in tan gaberdine rises up from a chair.

BART POLLOCK
Glad to know you Frank.

He holds a file in his enormous hand.

BART POLLOCK (CONT'D)
Speaking of production control?

Frank looks away, ready for a dressing down.

BART POLLOCK (CONT'D)
Frank... This is a crackerjack.
They're just tickled to death in Toledo.

He slaps the file on the desk. Frank can't believe it.

INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - DAY.

Close of a book: "Brighter French."

Frank sits on the couch, flipping absently.

FRANK

You wouldn't have believed this
guy.

April enters carrying a plate of sandwiches.

FRANK (CONT'D)

He's perfect Presidential material
in the worst sense. A million
dollar smile and about three pounds
of muscle between his ears.

(mimicking Pollock's
booming voice)

"Frank, this is a *crackerjack*."

April looks around to be sure everything's in place.

APRIL

Wish I saw his face when you told
him you were leaving.

Frank looks away.

FRANK

...Horse's ass.

TOOT of a car horn. April goes to the window.

APRIL

I think this is them.

INT./EXT. WHEELER HOUSE - DAY.

Through the picture window, we see the Givings' car is parked
in the driveway.

Mrs. Givings gets out of the car holding a tinfoil covered
baking pan. Mr. Givings opens the backseat.

Out steps JOHN, 30's, an institutional haircut and ill-fitting suit. He looks around the sunny neighborhood.

INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - DAY.

The kitchen is suddenly crowded with the Givings, Frank and April.

Overlapping:

MRS. GIVINGS
Sorry to be late.

APRIL
You're not late.

MRS. GIVINGS
The traffic was terrible.

MR. GIVINGS
Good to see you.

MRS. GIVINGS
Wasn't it terrible, Howard?

MR. GIVINGS
Route 12.

Hands are shook, the baking dish exchanged.

APRIL
You didn't have to do that.

FRANK
The time they finish that stretch of road, they'll have to start all over again.

John stands by himself closest to the door.

APRIL
And you must be John?

Silence settles over the room.

MRS. GIVINGS
Say hello, John.

JOHN

Nice to meetcha. Heard a lot
aboutcha.

John smiles, exposing a mouthful of deeply-stained yellow
teeth and high, eroded gums.

INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - DAY.

Mrs. Givings leads the group into the living room.

MRS. GIVINGS

Where are your darling children?

APRIL

They're at a birthday party. Sorry
they couldn't be here.

John walks around the room, stiff-legged, examining the book
shelves, the paintings.

JOHN

Don't worry. If I had a certified
lunatic coming around the house,
I'd probably get the kids out of
the way too.

April and Frank exchange a quick glance.

MRS. GIVINGS

Oh, look at all this food! You
didn't have to go to any trouble
for us.

APRIL

It's just some sandwiches.

April lifts the plate and offers it to John.

APRIL (CONT'D)

John, would you like a sandwich?

He avoids her look, but he takes four.

JOHN

Helen's been talking it up about
you people for months.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

The nice young Wheelers on
Revolutionary Road, the nice young
Revolutionaries on Wheeler road.

Polite laughter.

FRANK

Who'd like some sherry?

MRS. GIVINGS

Please, don't bother Frank.

JOHN

I'd like some sherry. And I'll
drink Helen's if she doesn't beat
me to it.

April can't suppress a smile.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(suddenly serious)

But, hey... Listen, though. You
got a high-ball glass...? Put a
couple-three ice cubes in it, pour
it up to the brim. That's the way
I like it.

FRANK

I think I can do that.

Mr. Givings eats his sandwich, watching his son.

MRS. GIVINGS

Oh, this is the most wonderful egg
salad, April. You must tell me how
you fix it.

Frank hands John his high-ball glass.

JOHN

You a lawyer Frank?

FRANK

No, I'm not.

JOHN

I could use a lawyer.

MR. GIVINGS

John, let's not get started again about the lawyer.

JOHN

Pop, couldn't you just sit there and eat your wonderful egg salad, and quit horning in?

Mr. Givings gives his son a level, warning look.

JOHN (CONT'D)

See, I've got a good many questions to ask and I'm willing to pay for the answers... Now, I don't need to be told that a man who goes after his mother with a coffee table is putting himself in a weak position legally; that's obvious.

Frank and April exchange a look.

MRS. GIVINGS

John, come and have a look out this fabulous picture window.

Mrs. Givings gets up and goes to the window.

JOHN

If he hits her with it and kills her, that's a criminal case.

MRS. GIVINGS

Oh, *look*, the sun's coming out!

JOHN

If all he does is break the coffee table and give her a certain amount of aggravation and *she* decides to go to court over it, that's a civil case.

MRS. GIVINGS

Maybe we'll see a rainbow! John, come have a look.

JOHN

Ma, how about doing everybody a favor? How about shutting up!

April's face. She's not smiling now.

MR. GIVINGS

Steady down, now.

With her back to the room, Mrs. Givings closes her eyes.

FRANK

I can look into it. Maybe recommend someone.

John stares at Frank for any sign of condescension.

JOHN

So, what do you do, Frank?

FRANK

I work for Knox Business Machines.

JOHN

You design the machines?

FRANK

Nope.

JOHN

Make 'em, sell 'em, repair 'em?

MRS. GIVINGS

All these questions.

FRANK

I sort of help sell them, I guess. I work in the office. Actually, it's sort of a stupid job. I mean there's nothing - you know, interesting about it or anything.

MRS. GIVINGS

Oh, Frank...

JOHN

Whaddya do it for then?

MR. GIVINGS

Maybe Frank doesn't want to be questioned like this, son.

JOHN

Okay, okay, okay - I know it's none of my business. And besides, I know the answer. You want to play house, you got to have a job. You want to play very *nice* house, very *sweet* house, then you got to have a job you don't *like*. Anyone comes along and asks "Whaddya do it for?" he's probably on a four-hour pass from the State funny farm. All agreed...? Ma?

Frank laughs.

John smiles his yellow grin.

MR. GIVINGS

Sorry, Frank.

FRANK

Don't be. I agree with everything you said, John. We both do. That's why I'm quitting the job in the fall and we're taking off.

APRIL

We're moving to Paris.

John looks over at his mother.

JOHN

Did you know about this, Ma...? Wow. How do you feel about that, Ma? The nice young Wheelers are taking off!

John bursts into a painful braying laugh. It goes on and on.

Mrs. Givings brings a hand to her brow - she's on the verge of tears.

MRS. GIVINGS
...John, please.

MR. GIVINGS
Steady down, son.

April looks at Frank - the whole thing is in danger of going off the rails.

FRANK
How about some fresh air, John?

John stops laughing abruptly. He looks to his parents.

FRANK (CONT'D)
If that's all right with you?

MRS. GIVINGS
I don't know if it's a good idea.

MR. GIVINGS
...If John wants to, I don't see the harm.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY.

Frank, April and John walk through the woods.

The ground is freshly rained on and damp. The sun is bright.

John buttons up his top button and pulls his sleeves down over his hands.

APRIL
I hear you're a mathematician.

JOHN
You hear wrong. It's all gone now.

APRIL
All gone?

JOHN
You know what electrical shock treatments are?

APRIL

Yes. Yes I do.

JOHN

I've had thirty-seven.

He pushes his hat back and turns his head at April.

JOHN (CONT'D)

See?

There are scars on his forehead. April can see them.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Supposed to jolt out the 'Emotional Problems.' Just jolted out the mathematics.

APRIL

How awful.

JOHN

(mimicking)

'How awful...' Why, because mathematics is so 'interesting?'

APRIL

No. Because the shocks must be awful and... well, because it's awful not to be able to do what it is you want to do. I think mathematics are dull.

John stares at April. He smiles.

JOHN

I like your girl, Frank.

FRANK

Me too.

JOHN

So, what do a couple of people like you have to run away from?

FRANK

We're not running.

John comes to a stop.

JOHN
And what's in Paris?

APRIL
A different way of life.

FRANK
So maybe we are running... We're
running from the hopeless emptiness
of the whole life here.

JOHN
The hopeless emptiness? Now,
you've said it. Plenty of people
are on to the emptiness, but it
takes real guts to see the
hopelessness... Wow.

John continues walking. Frank and April watch him go.

INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - DUSK.

Frank and April at the kitchen table.

APRIL
You know, he's the first person who
seemed to know what we were talking
about.

FRANK
That's true. Maybe we are just as
crazy as he is.

APRIL
If being crazy means living life as
if it matters then I don't care if
we are completely insane.

(beat)
Do you?

FRANK
No.

APRIL
I love you so much.

EXT. WHEELER HOUSE - DAY

The small, attractive house bathed in sunlight.

INT. MIDTOWN HOTEL RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON.

Frank follows Bart Pollock as he cuts a swathe through an impressive midtown eatery. A small MAITRE D' scuttles in front of them. Bart nods, points at well-wishers, and makes a politician's show of knowing the staff.

BART POLLOCK

Tell you something, Frank. I'm a little sore at Bandy for the way he's kept you under a bushel all these years. This place okay, for you?

Frank smirks at the performance.

FRANK

This is just fine, sir. Fine.

INT. MIDTOWN HOTEL RESTAURANT - LATER.

Bart Pollock sits across an expanse of white tablecloth gripping a martini glass in one of his enormous paws.

BART POLLOCK

One thing interests me, Frank, and one thing only: selling the electronic computer to the American businessman...

BART POLLOCK (CONT'D)

That's why I'm assembling a team. Men like *you*, not your average salesmen... It'll mean more money, and I got to be honest, maybe more of a time commitment. But you'll be part of something exciting, Wheeler... *Computers*.

FRANK

Well, sir, it sounds exciting.

BART POLLOCK

Bart!

FRANK

Bart...

Frank looks down at his plate. He can't help himself.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Do you happen to remember an Earl
Wheeler?

Bart looks at him blankly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Out of Yonkers?

BART POLLOCK

Can't say that I do. Relation of
yours?

FRANK

My father. He worked at Knox
almost twenty years.

BART POLLOCK

(thinking)
Earl Wheeler... Earl Wheeler...

FRANK

No reason you would have heard of
him.

BART POLLOCK

Well, I'm sure he was a good man.

Frank smiles. Looks down.

FRANK

There's something I should have
mentioned earlier... I'm leaving
the firm. In the fall.

BART POLLOCK

Another outfit?

FRANK

No, it's not another outfit --

Bart holds up his hands.

BART POLLOCK

Now look, Frank. Is it a question of money? Because if it is, there's no reason we can't get together on a satisfactory -

FRANK

I appreciate that, but it's not money. It's more of a personal thing.

BART POLLOCK

A *personal* thing? I see.

(looks down, clearly disapproving)

Frank... Let me tell you something *my* father told me... A man only gets a couple chances in life. If he doesn't grab 'em by the *balls*, it won't be long before he finds himself sitting around wondering how he got to be second rate.

Frank's face.

FRANK

I guess so.

Bart lets it hang.

BART POLLOCK

So, do me a favor... Sleep on it. Discuss it with your *wife*. Because let's face it: where the hell would any of us be without our wives, anyway?

On Frank's face.

BART POLLOCK (CONT'D)

And Frank, in all sincerity, if you do decide to join us, I believe it'll be a thing you'll never regret.

(MORE)

BART POLLOCK (CONT'D)

And I believe something else, too.
I believe it'd be a fine memorial
to your Dad.

Frank finds himself surprised by his welling up of emotion.

INT. KNOX BUILDING - EVENING.

It's late. Frank is sitting in his cubicle over his
Dictaphone. Jack is long gone.

FRANK

Knowing what you've got, comma,
knowing what you need, comma,
Knowing what you can do without,
dash. That's inventory control.

He stubs out a cigarette in an overflowing ashtray.

Close on his face.

Maureen stops by Frank's cubicle. She pretends to be
surprised to see him.

MAUREEN

Oh, hi Frank. Working late?

FRANK

I got to dig myself out here.

MAUREEN

I heard you were getting promoted.

Frank shrugs, no big deal.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

Big shot. I guess your Dad would
have been real proud, huh?

FRANK

(surprised she remembered)
Huh. Yeah, I guess so...

MAUREEN

(smiles sweetly)
So...

(MORE)

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

maybe I should buy you a drink or something? You know...?
Celebrate.

Frank's face. We don't know which way he'll go. He smiles.

FRANK

Yeah. Maybe.

She smiles. She can't quite believe it.

MAUREEN

I'll just get my coat.

Frank sits there a moment longer, thinking. Then he follows.

INT. WHEELER FAMILY ROOM - DAY.

On a television. Elmer Fudd points a gun at Bugs Bunny, and pulls the trigger.

Frank frowns into his French phrase book. Mike is watching the TV.

April works a sewing machine with a cigarette burning beside her. Jennifer stands beside her holding a stuffed Giraffe and a list, which she reads.

JENNIFER

I'm going to take my doll carriage
and my bear and my three Easter
rabbits and my giraffe and all my
dolls and my doll house.

APRIL

I thought maybe we'd give the doll
house to Madeline.

JENNIFER

No! I don't want to give it to
Madeline.

April has to stop to re-thread and she's losing patience.

APRIL

I already *explained* to you, the big things are going to be hard to pack.

Frank lowers the book. He recognizes her tone.

JENNIFER

But Madeline can have my bear and my Easter rabbits -

APRIL

No! Just the big things. Look. Wouldn't you rather go outside and play with Michael.

JENNIFER

I don't feel like it.

APRIL

You've been inside all day.

JENNIFER

I don't *feel* like it!

APRIL

Well, I don't feel like explaining everything fifteen times to somebody who's too bored and silly to listen!

Jennifer turns and runs up the stairs, upset.

April lets out a defeated sigh. She turns to the kitchen to see to the supper. Steam rises from the vegetables.

Frank stands in the entrance silently watching for a moment.

FRANK

What's the matter?

APRIL

Nothing.

She carries a pot of steaming, overcooked vegetables to the sink, slops them into a colander.

FRANK

I don't believe you. Did something happen today or what?

APRIL

Nothing happened today that I haven't known about for days and days.

FRANK

What?

APRIL

Oh God, Frank, please don't look so dense. Do you mean you haven't guessed or anything?

FRANK

What are you talking about?

She finally stops and looks at him.

APRIL

I'm *pregnant*, that's all.

Beat as he absorbs it. He's totally blind-sided.

FRANK

What...? Jesus.

She comes over to him.

APRIL

Oh, Frank, I meant to wait until dinner to tell you, but I just - well, I've been pretty sure all week and today I went to the Doctor and now I can't even *pretend* it's not true.

FRANK

(still stunned)
Jesus... How long?

APRIL

Ten weeks.

FRANK

You didn't say anything.

APRIL

I thought... Oh, I don't know what I thought.

He stares, still unsure how he feels.

APRIL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Frank. I'm so *sorry*.

FRANK

I know you are.

She looks at him, with slight desperation.

APRIL

We don't have to let this stop us. There are things we can do. Remember that girl at school I told you about...? As long as you do it before 12 weeks, it's fine.

He just looks at her and his silence makes her desperate.

APRIL (CONT'D)

We've got to be together in this, Frank. Otherwise nothing's going to make any sense.

FRANK

Okay. We'll figure it out.

He takes her in his arms.

FRANK (CONT'D)

12 weeks. So we have time.

On Frank's face... Slowly, he smiles.

APRIL

I love you Frank.

FRANK

...I love you too.

EXT. LONG ISLAND SOUND BEACH - AFTERNOON.

A baking hot day. The sky is electric blue. Radios PLAY, children CRY, dogs BARK. Sunbathers cover almost every inch of sand.

We find Shep, Milly, Frank and April with beach chairs, coolers and umbrellas.

A child wrapped in a towel sleeps on Milly's lap.

April wears a pair of dark glasses, behind which she is thinking, thinking.

SHEP

So, Frank, how's work? They gonna survive without you?

FRANK

Actually... Something kinda funny happened the other day. I did some dumb little piece of work to get myself off the hook with Bandy, and suddenly I'm The Bright Young Man.

SHEP

(laughs)

That's always the way, isn't it?

FRANK

It's incredible. I knocked this thing off in a couple of minutes and now they want me to join their team of 'specialist' salesmen.

SHEP

Morons.

FRANK

It'd be funny, if they weren't talking about so much damn money.

April turns and looks at Frank. Long and hard. If he can feel her look, he doesn't show it.

SHEP
(stealing a glance at
April)
So, you tempted?

FRANK
(shrugs)
Well, it's kind of ironic, don't
you think?

April suddenly stands up. Frank and Shep watch her walk down to the water's edge.

SHEP
She okay?

Frank stares after her.

EXT. LONG ISLAND SOUND BEACH, WATER'S EDGE - AFTERNOON.

April stands in the water staring out over the sea. The waves break against her ankles. Whether it occurs to her or not, she's staring in the direction of Europe.

Frank comes up beside her.

APRIL
I thought you turned the job down?

FRANK
(shrugs)
Not yet... It's just an option,
that's all. With the money they're
talking, things could be different
for us here. We could get a better
place. Travel.

April shakes her head and drags on her cigarette.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Look, the point is - we *could* be
happy here. At least for a while.

She stares out at the sea.

FRANK (CONT'D)

It is possible that Parisians
aren't the only ones who know how
to lead interesting lives, April.

She turns to him.

APRIL

So you've made up your mind?

FRANK

No. Like I said, it's an option.

APRIL

...And supposing you're right. You
make *all* this money and we have
this *interesting* life here. Won't
you still be wasting your life
toiling away at a job you find
ridiculous? Just like your father.

FRANK

(sharp)

Maybe we let that be my business.

APRIL

(incredulous)

Your business?

FRANK

(exhales)

It's too hot for this. I'm going
to get wet.

She just looks at him. He walks into the ocean. She stands
on the shore, watching him swim away from her.

INT. WHEELER FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT.

April paces the family room. Her hair is a defiant mess.
She still wears her bathing suit under her clothes.

Frank sits on the couch.

The windows are open, and most of the lights are off. It's a
very hot night.

APRIL

You don't want to go, do you?

FRANK

Come on, April. Of course I do.

APRIL

You don't! Because you've never tried at anything. And if you don't try at anything you can't fail.

FRANK

What the hell do you mean I don't try? I support you, don't I? I pay for this house. I work ten hours a day at a job I can't stand.

APRIL

You don't have to!

FRANK

Bullshit! I'm not happy about it. But I have the backbone not to run away from my responsibilities!

APRIL

It takes backbone to lead the life you want, Frank.

He shakes his head and gets up.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

FRANK

Is it alright with you if I go to the bathroom?

She disgustedly twists out her cigarette, and immediately lights another.

INT. WHEELER BATHROOM - NIGHT.

Frank splashes water on his face like a boxer between rounds. He looks up at his reflection.

He reaches for a towel, but there isn't one. He turns to the shelf behind him and pulls down a fresh towel. Something catches his eye.

He reaches to the back and retrieves a small brown paper package.

He opens it, his face slowly registering what it means...

INT. WHEELER FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT.

April wheels around as -

Frank storms in, a rubber syringe in his hand.

FRANK

What the hell are you going to do with this?

APRIL

And what do you think you're going to do? You're going to stop me?

FRANK

You're damn right!

APRIL

Go ahead and try!

He comes at her across the room with the syringe in his hand. She moves away.

FRANK

Listen. Listen to me. You do this - you do this and I swear to God I'll -

APRIL

You'll what? You'll leave me? Is that a threat, or a promise?

He shakes it in her face.

FRANK

When did you buy this, April? I want to know!

APRIL

You know you really are being melodramatic about the whole thing. As long as it's done in the first twelve weeks, it's perfectly safe.

FRANK

That's now April! Don't I get a say?

APRIL

Of course you do! It would be for you, Frank, don't you see? So you can have time. Like we talked about.

FRANK

How can it be for me if the thought makes my stomach turn over?

APRIL

Then it's for me... Tell me we can have the baby in Paris, Frank. But don't make me stay here. Please.

FRANK

We can't have the baby in Paris.

APRIL

Why not? I don't need everything we have here. I don't care where we live! I mean who made these rules, anyway? The only reason we moved out here was because I got pregnant. Then we had another child to prove the first one wasn't a mistake. I mean how long does it go on?

He turns away.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Frank. Do you actually *want* another child? Well, do you?

He won't answer.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Come on, tell me. Tell me the *truth*, Frank. Remember that? We used to *live* by it. You know what's so good about the truth? Everyone knows what it is, however long they've lived without it. No one forgets the truth, Frank, they just get better at lying. So tell me: *do you really want another child?*

Frank turns towards her.

FRANK

All I know is what I feel. And anyone else in their right mind would feel the same way.

APRIL

(quiet)

But I've *had* two children. Doesn't that count in my favor?

FRANK

Christ! The fact that you even put it that way! You make it sound like having children is a punishment.

APRIL

I love my children.

FRANK

And you're sure about that?

APRIL

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

FRANK

April, you just said our daughter was mistake. How do I know you didn't try to get rid of her, or Michael for that matter? How do I know you didn't try to flush our entire fucking family down the toilet?

APRIL

No that's not true. Of course I didn't.

FRANK

But how do I know April?

APRIL

Stop. Please just stop, Frank.

FRANK

April, a normal woman, a normal sane mother doesn't buy herself a piece of rubber tubing to give herself an abortion so she can, go live out some God damn fantasy.

April's face.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(sober)

All I'm saying is you don't seem entirely rational about this thing... And maybe we should get someone to help you think about it.

APRIL

...And the new job's going to pay for that too?

FRANK

April if you need a shrink, it'll be paid for. Obviously.

April turns to the book shelves. Her back to him.

Frank waits, his heart beating quickly.

APRIL

...Okay. I guess there isn't much more to say, then, is there?

Her eyes are bright with tears.

APRIL (CONT'D)

So I guess Paris was a pretty childish idea, huh?

Everything hangs on Frank's answer...

FRANK

I guess maybe it was.

April closes her eyes. Tears run down her cheeks. He walks over to her, but he doesn't touch her.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We can be happy here April... I can make you happy here.

She cries quietly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We've had a great few months. It doesn't have to end...

She turns to face him.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We're going to be okay.

APRIL

I hope so Frank. I really hope so.

INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - MORNING.

Frank stands at the picture window watching...

April approach the children. She squats on the ground so she can be at their height and talks to them. Michael tries to get into her arms. Jennifer turns away and walks sulkily across the grass.

Frank looks into his coffee cup. He doesn't look like a man who won an argument.

INT. KNOX WAITING ROOM - DAY.

Frank sits smoking nervously in an oak-paneled waiting room. The door opens behind him. He gets to his feet.

RECEPTIONIST

Thank you for waiting. Mr. Pollock can see you now.

He follows her through the door. The door closes behind her.

We see the scene in dumb-show through the glass door. Bart looks up as Frank enters. An "I knew it all along" smile spreads across Pollock's face. He offers his hand to Frank. Frank smiles thinly. They shake.

JACK (O.S)

Foiled by faulty contraception.

INT. MIDTOWN RESTAURANT - DAY.

Frank, Ed, Vince and Jack sit in the same booth in the same crowded luncheonette.

Frank stares out the window. The others can't contain themselves.

ED

I can't say I'm sorry.

VINCE

Wouldn't have been the same without you.

JACK

You'd have been sorely missed in the old cubicle, I can tell you that.

He raises his glass, drinks alone.

JACK (CONT'D)

Besides which...

Frank looks away from the window.

FRANK

What?

JACK

...Well, the plan always seemed a touch *unrealistic*, don't you think?

Frank glares with barely contained fury.

JACK (CONT'D)

I suppose, it's none of my
business, really.

FRANK

No. I suppose it isn't.

A beat.

JACK

Well, we won't be the only ones
glad to hear the news. They'll be
celebrating in the secretarial
pool.

Ed and Vince chuckle. Frank's face.

INT. VITO'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT.

Two drumsticks spinning in a spotlight. They click out a
rhythm, and crash into a number.

Cut back to reveal a small, low-ceilinged joint. On-stage
are the Steve Kovack quartet, four perspiring middle-aged men
with day jobs.

YOUNGISH COUPLES, and the odd middle-aged COUPLE navigate the
dance floor.

A smattering of lost SINGLES line the bar.

The Wheelers and Campbells sit squashed into a booth on the
side of the dance floor.

Several empty glasses have accumulated. Milly is beating the
edge of the table with red drink straws. She's a few drinks
ahead.

They have to SHOUT over the MUSIC.

MILLY

Hey! Remember the first time you
brought us here? You said, it
takes a special kind of taste to
enjoy Vito's Log Cabin!

SHEP

It's so awful it's kinda nice!

MILLY

That's right!

They laugh at the old joke. Then Milly begins to weep.

MILLY (CONT'D)

(dabs at her eyes)

Look at me...! I'm just so happy.
Our little gang's back together
again!

She knocks her drink back. The number finishes.

SHEP

At least Europe's not going
anywhere.

April stares out at the dance floor. Frank looks at her. A
new number starts.

FRANK

Wanna dance?

APRIL

I don't really feel like it.

MILLY

I'll dance!

Milly takes him by the hand and pulls him away. Shep and
April watch. Then Shep turns his attention to April.

MILLY (CONT'D)

(tipsy)

Guess April's pretty blue 'bout
Paris, huh?

FRANK

Think she'll be okay?

MILLY

Oh, sure. Give us girls a couple
of days and we can get over
anything!

Frank turns his attention to Milly. He's a good dancer. His movements are fast and aggressive, his mind on April.

Milly is a little too drunk, and hurries to keep up, perspiring through her dress. He spins her around and around, back and forth into his arms. Milly begins to look slightly dizzy.

MILLY (CONT'D)

...Frank.

He doesn't hear her over the music, or he doesn't care.

MILLY (CONT'D)

Frank... I...

FRANK

(sudden remorse)

You okay?

MILLY

Gee...I'm afraid I'm not very...

Her body spasms with the need to be sick. She turns and rushes for the lady's room.

EXT. VITO'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT.

Frank leads the way through the cars.

Shep supports Milly who is now falling down drunk.

April walks alone a few paces behind...

They reach Shep's car, which is trapped behind several other cars.

SHEP

Of all the inconsiderate...

A beat. Frank looks to April.

APRIL

Look - why don't you take Milly home, then go home yourself and that would take care of both sitters. Then Shep can take me home later.

SHEP

All right with me.

FRANK

(to April)

You'll be alright?

APRIL

Sure.

Frank holds April's look an instant, then walks away with car keys in hand.

INT. VITO'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT.

Steve Kovack performs an exhausting, sweat-drenched drum solo.

April and Shep now sit alone in the booth.

SHEP

I'm sorry you're not going away anymore. I know it was important to you.

April distantly nods her thanks.

SHEP (CONT'D)

Don't take this wrong; I've been there and...they don't have so much we don't have here.

APRIL

It didn't have to be Paris.

Shep sips his beer, trying to figure out how to connect with her...

SHEP

You just wanted out, huh?

APRIL

I wanted in. I just wanted us to live again.

Shep nods, not entirely sure what she means.

APRIL (CONT'D)

For years I thought we shared a secret...that we would be wonderful in the world. I didn't exactly know how, but just the possibility...kept me hoping.

She takes a long slug of her drink.

APRIL (CONT'D)

How pathetic is that? To put all your hopes in a promise that was never made? See, Frank knows...he knows what he wants. He's found his place. He's just fine. Married, two kids. It should be enough. It is for him. He's *right*; we were never special or destined or anything at all.

SHEP

Sure you are. You're The Wheelers. You're a terrific couple, everyone says so.

April doesn't hear, she's pursuing her thought...

APRIL

I saw a different life. I can't stop seeing it.

(beat)

Can't leave, can't stay.

(beat)

No damn use to anyone.

April turns and stares at him.

The band strikes up a new number.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Come on, let's do it.

INT. VITO'S LOG CABIN, DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT.

April and Shep dance.

Shep can't dance well, but he's trying. April, on the other hand, is a wonderful dancer. She dances out as far as their joined hands allow and does a little twitching, hip-bobbing curtsies before twisting back, all seemingly effortless. It is joyous, released.

INT. SHEP'S CAR - NIGHT.

Shep slips behind the wheel and is immediately kissing her, groping.

SHEP

Let me take you somewhere.

APRIL

No. Please. Here. Now. In the back seat.

She climbs into the back seat. He pulls off his jacket and climbs in after her. He folds the jacket under her head for a pillow...

She remains perfectly still, allowing him to kiss her, to search under her clothing, to kiss her skin and finally, to lift her skirt and pull her clothing aside and make love to her against the vinyl seat cover...

As suddenly as it began, it's over. Shep collapses against her. April stares into the darkness.

SHEP (CONT'D)

April... This is what I've always wanted... I love you.

APRIL

Don't say that.

SHEP

I mean it, I love you.

APRIL

Please, just be quiet for a minute, then you can take me home.

They begin to quietly assemble themselves.

INT. FRANK AND APRIL'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Frank stands at the mirror putting on a clean shirt.

INT. WHEELER KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON.

April stands at the kitchen table chopping vegetables. She wears an unflattering floral dress.

Frank stands in the doorway watching.

FRANK
It's beautiful out.

APRIL
Yes; it's lovely.

He glances at the calendar.

FRANK
You know what today is?

She doesn't look at him.

FRANK (CONT'D)
It's twelve weeks.

APRIL
That's right.

He walks over to her. He takes her in his arms. She stiffens.

FRANK
Look, this has been kind of a crazy summer. We've both been under a strain. I mean I know you're upset.

APRIL
You know I'm not sleeping with you and you want to know why?

She looks him straight in the eye.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Well, I'm sorry Frank, but I don't really feel like talking about it.

She pulls herself free of his grasp. He watches as she adds the vegetables in the pot on the stove.

FRANK

Okay. What do you feel like talking about?

APRIL

Would it be all right if we didn't talk about anything? Can't we just take each day as it comes, and do the best we can, and not feel we have to talk about everything all the time?

He smiles patiently.

FRANK

I don't think I suggested we talk about everything all the time. My point was, we've *both* been under a strain and we ought to be trying to help each other as much as we can right now.

She's utterly uninterested and it's making him nervous.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I mean God knows my own behavior has been pretty weird lately... I mean, as it happens... there is actually something I'd like to tell you about...

She continues folding the napkins.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I've been with a girl in the city a few times.

Finally, she stops moving. She looks at him.

FRANK (CONT'D)

A girl I hardly even know. It was nothing to me, but she got a little carried away. She's just a kid... Anyway, it's over now. It's really over. If I weren't sure of that I guess I could never have told you about it.

APRIL

Why did you?

FRANK

(relieved)

Baby, I don't know. I think it was a simple case of wanting to be a man again after all that abortion business. Some kind of neurotic, irrational need to prove something.

APRIL

No. I don't mean why did you have the girl; I mean why did you *tell* me about it?

He is suddenly unsure.

APRIL (CONT'D)

I mean what's the point? Is it supposed to make me *jealous*, or something? Is it supposed to make me fall in love with you, or back into bed with you, or what? I mean what am I supposed to say?

He tries that same patient smile, but it's not convincing.

FRANK

Why don't you say what you feel?

APRIL

I don't feel anything.

FRANK

In other words you don't care what I do or who I fuck or anything?

APRIL

No; I guess that's right; I don't.

She is frighteningly calm.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Fuck who you like.

His panic mounts.

FRANK

Don't you see...Don't you see, I
want you to care.

APRIL

Oh, I know you do. And I suppose I
would if I loved you. But you see
I don't think I do anymore. And I
only just figured that out. And
that's why I'd just as soon not do
any talking right now.

She goes back into the kitchen. Frank follows her.

FRANK

Oh, now don't give me this shit!
You know God damn well you love me!

APRIL

You think so?!

FRANK

You know GOD DAMN WELL!

MRS. GIVINGS (O.S.)

Yoo-hoo! Any one home?

Frank and April stare at each other, breathless.

INT. WHEELER DINING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON.

Frank and the Givings' sit with cocktails. It's painfully
awkward. Moving boxes are everywhere.

APRIL

I'm sorry dinner's late. Can I get
anyone a refill?

MRS. GIVINGS

Oh, don't worry. It's nice just to sit for a bit and socialize...You really didn't need to go through all the trouble of cooking. I can see you have a lot to do with packing and what not.

Frank looks at April. She avoids his look.

FRANK

Actually, there's been a change of plans.

MRS. GIVINGS

Oh?

John looks up.

Frank looks at April.

FRANK

I thought maybe it was obvious... April's pregnant.

April manages a forced smile.

MRS. GIVINGS

Oh, April! I can't tell you how pleased I am. Oh, but I expect you'll be needing a bigger house, now, won't you?

JOHN

Hold it a second, Ma.

John gets to his feet.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I don't get this.

He fixes Frank with the stare of a prosecuting attorney.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What's so obvious about it? I mean okay, she's pregnant; so what? Don't people have babies in Europe?

MRS. GIVINGS

Oh John, really. I don't think we need to --

John holds up a hand.

JOHN

I'm asking the man a question. If he doesn't want to give me the answer, I'm assuming he'll have sense enough to tell me so.

FRANK

Suppose we just say that people anywhere aren't very well advised to have babies unless they can afford them.

JOHN

(nods slowly)

Okay. Okay; it's a question of money. Money's always a good reason...

John paces the room, with his hands behind his back like a detective at a murder scene.

JOHN (CONT'D)

But it's hardly ever the real reason. What's the real reason? Wife talk you out of it, or what?

He turns the force of his smile on April.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Little woman decide she isn't quite ready to quit playing house?

She walks across the room and stabs out her cigarette. Then immediately lights another.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Nah, nah, that's not it. I can tell. She looks too tough. Tough and female and adequate as hell.

He swings around to face Frank.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Okay, then; it must've been you.

Frank stares back defiantly. Rage bubbling.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What happened?

MRS. GIVINGS

John, please, you're being very --

John holds up his hand.

JOHN

What happened, Frank? You get cold feet, or what? You decide you're better off here after all? You figure it's more *comfy* here in the old Hopeless Emptiness after all, or --

Frank's face.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Wow, that did it! Look at his face! What's the matter, Wheeler? Am I getting warm?

Frank stares at John, his rage increasing. Mr. Givings gets to his feet.

MR. GIVINGS (CONT'D)

All right, son. I think we'd better be --

JOHN

Boy!

He lets out his braying laugh. April starts to laugh.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Boy! You know something? I wouldn't be surprised if you knocked her up on purpose just so you could spend the rest of your life hiding behind that maternity dress. That way you never have to find out what he's made of.

FRANK

Now *look*, I think that's just about enough out of you. I mean, who the hell do you think you are? You come in here and say whatever crazy God damn thing comes into your head and I think it's about time someone told you to keep your God damn -

MRS. GIVINGS

He's not well, Frank.

FRANK

Not well, my ass! I don't give a damn if he's sick or well or dead or alive, he should keep his fucking opinions in the fucking insane asylum where they belong!

April stares at Frank.

MR. GIVINGS

Let's go, son.

Mr. Givings moves John towards the door. Mrs. Givings slowly stands. April is the only one left seated.

JOHN

Big man you got there, April.

He winks at April and puts his hat on.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Big *family* man, solid citizen. I feel sorry for you. Still, maybe you deserve each other.

April's face.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Matter of fact, the way you look right now, I'm beginning to feel sorry for *him*, too. I mean, you must give him a pretty bad time, if making babies is the only way he can prove he's got a pair of balls.

FRANK

You... fucking..!

Frank lunges at John. Mr. Givings tries to hold Frank back. Mrs. Givings leaps between them. She's crying.

MRS. GIVINGS

He's not *well*, Frank!

Silence. Mr. Givings slowly releases Frank. He is breathing heavily.

MR. GIVINGS

All right, John. Let's get on out to the car now.

He guides him from the room.

MRS. GIVINGS

I'm sorry April, I'm so sorry...

JOHN

Right... Sorry, sorry, sorry!
 Okay Ma? Have I said 'Sorry' enough times? I *am* sorry, too.
 Damn; I bet I'm just about the sorriest bastard I know. Course, get right down to it, I don't have a whole hell of a lot to be *glad* about, do I?

He takes another step towards the door, then stops and turns back, laughing again.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Hey, but I'm glad about one thing, though.

He points a yellow-stained finger at April's stomach.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You know what I'm glad about? I'm glad I'm not gonna be that kid.

They go out.

Frank goes to the liquor cabinet, pours a whiskey and drinks it.

April watches him from across the room.

FRANK

Okay, okay, don't tell me. Don't tell me; let me guess. I made a Disgusting Spectacle of Myself. Right?

APRIL

Right.

He turns to April.

FRANK

And everything that man said is True. Right? Isn't that what you're going to say?

APRIL

Apparently I don't have to. You're saying it for me.

He comes towards her.

FRANK

But you're wrong.

APRIL

Why am I wrong?

FRANK

Because the man is insane. He's fucking *insane*! Do you know what the definition of insanity is?

APRIL

What is it, Frank?

FRANK

The inability to relate to another human being. It's the inability to *love*.

She looks at him. Then she begins to laugh.

APRIL

The in -- the in; the inabil; the inability to --

She reels around the room, her laughter increasingly out of control.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Oh. -- Oh, Frank, you really are a wonderful talker! If black could be made into white by *talking*, you'd be the man for the job. So now I'm crazy because I don't love you -- right? Is that the point?

FRANK

No. Wrong. You're not crazy and you *do* love me; *that's* the point.

He takes a step towards her.

All the laughter goes out of her face. She backs away.

APRIL

But I don't. In fact I loathe the sight of you. You're just a boy who made me laugh at a party once and if you come any closer, if you touch me or anything I think I'll scream.

He takes her by the arms.

FRANK

Oh baby listen --

She SCREAMS. High and shrill. Her eyes wide open, cold and perfectly calm.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Fuck you, April. And fuck all your hateful, snotty little -

She slips past him.

He goes after her.

She pulls a chair into his path.

He SLINGS it against the wall.

APRIL

What're you going to do now? Are you going to hit me? To show how much you love me?

FRANK

Oh, no, don't worry, I can't be *bothered!* You're not worth the trouble it'd take to hit you. You're not worth the powder it'd take to blow you *up*. You're an *empty* --

He begins to shake with anger.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You're an *empty, hollow* fucking *shell* of a woman. What the hell are you living in my *house* for if you hate me so much? *Huh?* Will you answer me that? Why the hell do you *fuck* me? What the hell are you carrying my *child* for?

He points at her belly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Why the hell didn't you just get rid of it, when you had the chance? Because listen. Listen: I got news for you. I wish to God you had.

He strides out of the room.

INT. FRANK AND APRIL'S BEDROOM - EVENING.

Frank enters the bedroom and slams the door.

He paces, slowly calming.

He sits on the bed with his head in his hands... His mind racing. Then he's on his feet again. He rushes for the door.

INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - EVENING.

Frank enters, running, but the kitchen is empty. Frank runs out of the room into living room.

INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The living room is empty. He goes straight for the front door.

EXT. WHEELER HOUSE - EVENING.

Frank bursts out the front and comes to a stop.

She's across the street - climbing unsteadily into the woods...

Frank breaks into a sprint.

EXT. WOODS - EVENING.

April walks through the woods.

Frank runs up behind her, scrambling through the muddy bracken.

April wheels around.

APRIL

Don't come any closer.

FRANK

April, listen, I --

APRIL

Don't come any *closer*. Can't I even get away from you in the fucking woods?

He stops moving.

FRANK

April, listen, I didn't mean that. Honestly; I didn't mean what I said.

APRIL

Are you still talking? Isn't there any way to stop your talking? I NEED to think. Can't you see that?

She backs up against a tree trunk, looking down at him.

FRANK

Please come back. What're you doing out here?

APRIL

Do you want me to scream again, Frank? Because I will, if you say another word! I mean it!

Frank has no choice - they're outside. The neighbors would hear and call the police. He reluctantly backs away, then turns back the way he came, glancing over his shoulder as he goes.

INT. WHEELER FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT.

Frank stands at the window watching the section of woods where he left April.

Then, he sees her come back across the street. She walks around the side of the house. He turns and runs into the kitchen.

INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - NIGHT.

Frank goes to the window. He watches April walk up into the yard and stop against a tree.

Frank pours a drink and takes the bottle with him to the window. He looks out, drinking.

In the darkness, he can make out the glow of April's cigarette deep in the woods.

INT. FRANK AND APRIL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT, LATER.

Frank falls back on the bed.

He's now very drunk.

His eyes close as he slips into unconsciousness.

INT. FRANK AND APRIL'S BEDROOM - MORNING.

Frank wakes alone. He looks around the room. His head is throbbing.

INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - MORNING.

Frank stands in the doorway dressed for work. He stares...

The kitchen has been tidied and is bathed in sunlight. The table has been carefully set for two.

April stands at the stove wearing a fresh maternity dress. She seems serene.

April turns and looks at him.

APRIL

Good morning.

FRANK

Good morning.

He stands there frozen.

APRIL

Would you like scrambled eggs or fried?

FRANK

Oh. It doesn't really matter -
Uh... scrambled, I guess, if it's
easy.

APRIL

Fine. I'll have scrambled too.

Frank sits at the table.

INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - MORNING, MOMENTS LATER.

Frank and April sit across the kitchen table, eating. For several moments, only the sound of their cutlery.

FRANK

It's kinda nice having breakfast
without the kids for a change.

April reaches out to pour him some orange juice. Her hands shake slightly.

APRIL

Yes. I thought you'd probably want
a good breakfast today. I mean it's
kind of an important day for you,
isn't it? Isn't this the day you
have your conference with Pollock?

FRANK

(surprised)

Yes. That's right, yes.

He shrugs.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Big deal.

APRIL

I imagine it *is* a pretty big deal;
for them, anyway. What exactly do
you think you'll be doing? You
never have told me much about it.

FRANK

Haven't I? Well... I think this
whole thing is about Knox getting
ready to buy up one of these really
big computers, bigger than the
'500'. Did I tell you about that?

APRIL

No, I don't believe you did.

FRANK

Well, you know -- Basically it's just a...a big, fast adding machine. Only...

He takes a pencil from his inside pocket and delicately sketches the computer on the napkin.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Instead of mechanical parts, you see, it's got thousands of little individual vacuum tubes.

She picks up the drawing and looks at it. It's surprisingly delicate.

APRIL

Oh, *I* see. At least I think I see; yes. It's really sort of -- interesting, isn't it?

FRANK

Well, I don't know, it's -- yeah, I guess it *is* sort of interesting, in a way.

APRIL

You should value what you do Frank. You're obviously good at it.

He smiles, flattered and surprised. He slips the pencil into the inside pocket of his suit.

FRANK

Guess I'd better be getting started.

He stands. April stands up too, smoothing her skirt.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Listen, though, April; this was really nice... I mean it was a swell breakfast. Really; I don't know when I've ever had a -- a nicer breakfast.

APRIL

Thank you... I'm glad; I enjoyed it too.

They stand there gazing at one another across the table. Suddenly, inexplicably, his eyes are filled with tears.

He turns and walks to the door. He puts his hand on the handle and turns back once more.

FRANK

Then you don't -- You don't hate me, or anything?

APRIL

No; of course I don't.

She comes over to him.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Have a good day.

He leans down and kisses her tenderly. They look at one another a moment longer.

FRANK

Okay, then... So long.

He steps through the door. She catches the door before it shuts and watches him through the screen.

EXT. WHEELER DRIVEWAY - MORNING.

April walks out onto the driveway as the car reverses away down the drive.

INT. WHEELER CAR - MORNING.

Frank backs the car onto the road. He slides the car into drive and then catches sight of April in the driveway.

EXT. WHEELER DRIVEWAY - MORNING.

April sees Frank looking back at her. She waves. Frank waves from the car and drives off...

Then April is alone. She shivers from the morning chill. She turns and looks back at the house.

INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - MORNING.

April enters through the screen door and goes to the table. She looks down at Frank's diagram and carefully places it aside.

She carries the dishes to the sink and begins to wash them.

Suddenly, her body convulses as she tries to hold back from crying. And then there is no stopping the tears...

INT. WHEELER HALLWAY - MORNING.

April is standing by the phone, with her hand on the receiver, rehearsing. She is smoking. She dials.

APRIL

Hello... Milly? Everything all right? My voice sounds what...?

April uses both hands to grip the receiver.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Well, no, I'm afraid I'm not feeling any better... If it's not an inconvenience for you... This evening would be great. What...? Oh, well- no, not if they're outdoors playing. Don't call them in.

The cigarette shreds in April's hand.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Just give them - you know, give them each a kiss for me, and give them my love, and tell them - you know... All right, Milly. Thanks.

She hangs up and begins to cry again. Takes a breath.

INT. WHEELER HALLWAY - MORNING.

FOOTSTEPS...

We move behind April as she walks through the silent house.

The distant SOUND of children playing outside.

Each room she passes is a pocket of silence.

INT. FRANK AND APRIL'S BEDROOM - MORNING.

April makes the bed.

She arranges her shoes on the floor of the closet.

April reaches onto a shelf behind some clothes. Pulls out the brown paper package.

INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - MORNING.

April stands at the stove over a pot of rolling, boiling water.

She removes the rubber syringe from its paper packaging and drops it into the pot. She checks her watch.

INT. WHEELER HALLWAY - DAY.

April carries the pot of boiling, sudsy water down the hall.

INT. WHEELER BATHROOM - DAY.

April places the pot into the tub. She lays towels across the floor. And closes the door...

INT. WHEELER BATHROOM - DAY, MOMENTS LATER.

The SOUND of running water. The empty mirror. April's face rises up into the reflection with a gasp.

INT. WHEELER HALLWAY - DAY.

We move with April down the hallway, her face is pale.

INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - DAY, LATER.

Now April stands at the picture window. She is shaking.

A DROPLET of blood slides down her knee. She looks down.

On the floor, two droplets of blood appear between her bare feet...

Now we see the bright maple leaf of blood seeping through her skirt. She is shaking more.

She walks slowly out of the room, towards the kitchen.

APRIL (O.S.)

I think I need an ambulance....

Yes... One one five Revolutionary
Road.

INT. CAMPBELL KITCHEN - DAY.

Milly folds laundry. She looks up to see -

An ambulance turns into the Wheeler's driveway. Her face clouds with instinctual foreboding.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON.

Shep steps out into a hospital hallway.

Frank paces, helpless in the waiting room, his face a mask of bewildered, childlike confusion. He looks up to see -

Shep coming towards him.

SHEP

Frank? They tell you what
happened?

FRANK

Jesus, Shep. I couldn't even understand half the things he told me. He said the fetus was out before they got her here. He said they had to operate to take out the whatdycallit, the placenta and now she's still bleeding. He said she'd lost a lot of blood before the ambulance came, and now they're trying to stop it, and he said a whole lot of things I didn't get, about capillaries, and he said she's unconscious. Jesus.

SHEP

How about sitting down, Frank.

FRANK

What the hell do I want to sit down for!

SHEP

Okay. Take it easy.

FRANK

My God.

SHEP

Here, have a cigarette.

Shep offers the pack. Frank doesn't take one.

FRANK

She did it to herself, Shep.

Shep's face as he realizes what he's saying.

FRANK (CONT'D)

She did it to herself.

Shep takes a cigarette for himself. He lights it with trembling fingers.

SHEP

I'll get some coffee.

Frank looks over at Shep as if he'd forgotten him. He nods.

Shep stands and walks down the hall.

INT. HOSPITAL - COFFEE MACHINE - AFTERNOON.

Shep stands at a coffee machine, gathering himself. He looks up. He begins to feed coins into the machine. His hands are trembling. He drops a coin. It rolls under the machine. He has to get down on his hands and knees to retrieve it...

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON.

Shep walks tentatively, holding a cup in each hand, slopping coffee onto the floor...

He rounds the corner and stops.

Frank is no longer in his chair at the end of the long echoing hallway. Shep looks around...

Then suddenly, the double doors are flung open and a number of nurses hurry out. Behind them, comes Frank, supported by two Doctors.

Shep runs to them as they move Frank over to a chair. He's in shock.

FRANK

No. No. No.

They try to make him sit, but he stays stubbornly on his feet, the chair skidding behind him.

DOCTOR

Try to sit down, Mr. Wheeler.

SHEP

Sit down Frank.

Frank looks at Shep - his face is a terrifying blank.

EXT. REVOLUTIONARY ROAD - MAGIC HOUR.

A toyland of white and pastel houses along the road. The crisp green lawns. The blue televisions flickering behind the glass.

We hear the WHISK of running footsteps on the asphalt, the rush of a man's breath...

Frank is running down the middle of the street, tears streaming silently down his face...

INT. CAMPBELL LIVING ROOM - EVENING, ONE YEAR LATER.

Four high-ball glasses with glistening cubes of ice.

Shep puts the finishing touches on four drinks.

MR. and MRS. BRACE, a pleasant looking young couple fresh from the city sit on the couch.

MILLY

...It was the worst experience of my life. Such wonderful people. Weren't they Shep? Poor April.

Shep picks up the drinks and carries them across the room. He stands there beside the three of them, but he can't bring himself to sit down and join in.

MILLY (CONT'D)

Frank lives in the city now. Where is it he works?

SHEP

Bart Pollock Associates.

MR. BRACE

Computers. Interesting firm.

Mr. Brace removes his pipe and looks at it.

MRS. BRACE

Have you seen him since?

MILLY

No. Too many memories, I think. Shep's seen him. In the city.

Shep nods.

MILLY (CONT'D)

He's just dedicated to those kids.
Every spare moment he has, he
spends with them...

Shep turns and walks out of the room.

EXT. CAMPBELL HOUSE - EVENING.

Shep walks across the lawn to the edge of the property. He looks out over the suburban houses. At what was once the Wheeler house.

Shep's face, looking out. His eyes are filled with tears. Milly comes up behind him.

MILLY

You okay?

SHEP

Mm-hmm.

She takes his arm and holds him close.

SHEP (CONT'D)

I don't want to talk about The
Wheelers any more.

MILLY

Okay. We don't have to. We don't
have to.

Shep and Milly look out over Revolutionary Road.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY.

The same silence over a beautiful day in the city. And from the silence, the faint sound of wind through the leafy branches of trees.

Two children play in a playground in a small park.

It's Jennifer and Michael. They seem happy, engrossed. Other kids play around them.

Watching them from a bench is Frank. He is a little older, a little thinner.

Close on Frank's face. The SOUND of his children playing.

INT. GIVINGS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mrs. Givings crouches on a cotton work sheet painting varnish onto a chair. Mr. Givings sits reading the paper.

A new puppy sleeps curled up on the rug nearby.

MRS. GIVINGS

I can't tell you how pleased I am about the little Revolutionary Road place, Howard. Remember how dreary it looked all winter? All cold and dark and -- well, spooky. Creepy-crawly. And now whenever I drive past, it gives me such a lift to see it all perked up and spanking clean again, with lights in the windows. And do you know, I was just thinking, I've loved that little house for years, and the Braces are the first really suitable people I've ever found for it. Really nice, congenial people, I mean.

Mr. Givings fiddles with his hearing aid.

MR. GIVINGS

Well, except for the Wheelers, you mean.

MRS. GIVINGS

Oh, I was very fond of the Wheelers but they always were a bit -- a bit whimsical, for my taste. A bit neurotic. I may not have stressed it, but they were often very trying people to deal with, in many ways.

(MORE)

MRS. GIVINGS (CONT'D)

Actually, the main reason the little house has been so hard to sell is that they let it depreciate so dreadfully. Warped window frames, wet cellar, crayon marks on the walls, filthy smudges around all the--

Mr. Givings reaches up to his ear and SUDDENLY... SILENCE... but for the faint sound of wind.

He gazes out the window as behind him Mrs. Givings continues to talk, but we can't hear a thing.

He has turned off his hearing aid.

FADE TO BLACK.