

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL STATE WE ARE IN

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - MORNING

Dawn breaks, casting a soft radiance over the New York skyline. The city streets are serene and deserted. Piles of leaves in vibrant shades of red, orange, and yellow line the sidewalks, signaling the arrival of Fall.

INT. ROW'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

ROW, 20s, lies awake in bed, basking in the gentle morning light that filters through the window.

Her desk and floor are scattered with a sea of scripts, adding a touch of disorder to the space. Above her bed hangs, a poster of Gena Rowlands in the iconic film "A Woman Under The Influence," lying in bed. Just like Gena in the poster, Row lies in bed, mirroring her vulnerable position.

She rises from bed and approaches a record player. Billie Holiday's "Tenderly" starts to play.

ROW
(to the room)
May I have this dance?

She dances as if tethered to an unseen partner. The gentle tune escapes through her window.

INT. CASS'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

The music, like a morning siren, wafts into the bedroom. CASS, 20s, lies in bed, fast asleep.

A saxophone case stands sentinel near the wall. Bookcases line the walls, filled with books of various genres: history, science, space, art, poetry, and a plethora of books about music.

The music wakes him up. He listens to the song, completely absorbed. He mutters the lyrics to himself.

CASS
*Then you and I, Came wandering by,
And lost in a sigh were we...*

INT. ROW'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - MORNING

Row pauses before her reflection in the mirror, a moment of stillness.

ROW
(to herself)
So, Row, what are you going to do
today?

She turns on the shower.

INT. CASS'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - MORNING

Cass, in a pale-blue robe, stands in front of the mirror, in deep thought.

CASS
(to himself)
Another lonely Saturday...

He opens the medicine cabinet to reveal a lineup of prescription bottles: Klonopin, Wellbutrin, Doxepin. He takes a pill from the Wellbutrin bottle and swallows it, then slips the Klonopin bottle into his robe pocket.

The music fades to silence, replaced by the urgent clamor of sirens.

EXT. OLD TENEMENT BUILDING - EAST VILLAGE - MORNING

Police cars, an ambulance, and fire trucks rush toward the building.

Two EMTs swiftly emerge from the ambulance, wheeling a gurney inside. Firefighters rush into the building, while police unfurl a yellow "DO NOT CROSS" tape in front of the entrance.

INT. OLD TENEMENT BUILDING - EAST VILLAGE - MORNING

Firefighters hammer on doors.

FIREFIGHTER
Carbon monoxide leak! Carbon
monoxide leak! Evacuate, now!

Tenants open their doors and hurriedly exit the building, following the instructions.

INT. ROW'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Row, wearing a pink dress, dries her hair with a hair dryer, then applies lipstick in the mirror. Suddenly, a loud knock on the door startles her.

FIREMAN (O.S.)
Carbon monoxide leak! Evacuate
immediately!

INT. ROW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Row quickly puts on her shoes, grabs her bag, and rushes out the door.

INT. CASS'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The blaring sirens outside invade Cass's apartment. He emerges from the bathroom, his robe askew. He swiftly puts on his jeans and slippers. He looks out the window, taking in the chaos below. Hastily, he tucks a joint into his wallet, puts on his grey fedora, and grabs his saxophone case.

EXT. OLD TENEMENT BUILDING - MORNING

Tenants cluster anxiously as EMTs wheel out an ELDERLY WOMAN. Among the crowd, Cass catches sight of Row.

FIREMAN CAPTAIN
(to all the tenants)
There's a carbon monoxide leak! The
building is off-limits until 9pm
tonight!

In the crowd of displaced tenants, Cass feels oddly adrift. He spots Row leaving and decides to follow her.

EXT. EAST VILLAGE - STREET - MORNING

Row moves swiftly through the lively streets of the East Village. Cass hurries to keep up, passing old tenement buildings, modern condos, pedestrians, and turning corners.

Row crosses a street and pauses at a glass storefront showcasing a vintage dress. She admires the dress and catches a glimpse of Cass's reflection behind a lamppost in the storefront glass.

Row continues walking, now aware of Cass following her. Suddenly, she stops and turns, catching Cass off guard and leaving him no time to hide.

ROW
What the hell do you want?

CASS
I'm sorry-- I-- I was just...

Row's eyes widen and her mouth hangs open as she lets out a piercing scream, mimicking Janet Leigh's blood-curdling scream from "Psycho." Her hands shoot up, shielding her face and head, perfectly capturing the intensity of the original scene.

Cass, shaken to the core, collapses onto the ground next to a parked car, holding his chest and hyperventilating.

CASS (CONT'D)
Oh my God!

Row breaks into laughter, reveling in her performance.

ROW
You know, I've always wanted to do that, the iconic shower scene from "Psycho." "We all go a little mad sometimes..."

She looks at him.

ROW (CONT'D)
Hey, you okay? You don't look so good...

She pulls a bottle of water from her bag and hands it to Cass.

ROW (CONT'D)
Here, have some water...

Cass takes three deep breaths, then suddenly rises, picking up his saxophone case.

CASS
Are you nuts?!

ROW
Yeah.

Cass takes off.

ROW (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Why am I snitching on myself so
early in the morning?

She runs after Cass.

ROW (CONT'D)
Hey! Hey! Wait a minute!

CASS
What's the matter with you?

ROW
You have absolutely no sense of
humor.

CASS
Leave me alone.

ROW
I said I was sorry. Will you just
stop? Please!

Cass stops and turns towards her.

CASS
What do you want?

Row chuckles.

ROW
"What do you want?" Really? You
were the one following me!

CASS
It doesn't matter anymore.

ROW
I made you uncomfortable.

CASS
You scared the shit outta me.

ROW
Oh my God. You were stalking me.
What was I supposed to do?

Cass rubs his neck.

CASS
Okay, okay, you're right.

ROW
Who are you? Have we met?

CASS
Uh, well, we're, um, neighbors.
You're my-- my downstairs neighbor.

Row appears slightly surprised, realizing she hasn't noticed him before.

ROW
Oh, hi...

CASS
I'm Cass.

ROW
Row.

She eyes him suspiciously.

ROW (CONT'D)
So, why were you following me?

CASS
I... It's just that... I didn't
know where else to go.

Row lets out a heavy sigh.

ROW
Me too.

CASS
Bu-- but you were walking so fast,
I thought...

ROW
Oh, no, no. I'm an actor. I was
rehearsing. I'm playing a neurotic
writer in an upcoming play.

CASS
(almost to himself)
It figures.

ROW
Hey, what's that supposed to mean?

After an awkward pause.

ROW (CONT'D)
Well, uh, it was nice meeting you.
Sorry again.

CASS
Yeah, same here. I didn't mean to
scare you, too.

ROW
It's okay.

Another awkward silence ensues.

ROW (CONT'D)
Well, bye.

Cass sadly waves.

CASS
Bye.

Row starts to walk away, but Cass, driven by an impulse,
calls after her.

CASS (CONT'D)
Hey, wait!

Row stops and turns, curious about what he has to say.

ROW
Yeah?

Cass moves closer to her.

CASS
So, uh, what are you gonna do all
day?

ROW
Hmm? I really don't know.

Cass pauses, contemplates.

CASS
It seems like, um, uh...

ROW
What?

CASS
It-- it seems like, uh, we both
don't have anywhere to go.

ROW
And...?

Cass wrings his hands.

CASS

Uh, you know, um... we could... um, maybe we could spend the day together?

ROW

You serious?

CASS

Uh, yeah... I mean, we both don't have any plans, right?

Row absorbs the idea, contemplating the possibilities.

ROW

Hmm?

CASS

It's Saturday... um, everyone's favorite day of the week.

ROW

And there's nothing more pathetic than spending it alone.

CASS

Exactly.

ROW

I... I don't know. What if you're like a wandering psych patient?

She eyes him up and down, taking in his pale-blue robe and slippers.

ROW (CONT'D)

I mean, you're wearing a robe and slippers.

Cass looks at himself, almost like he forgot he was wearing them.

CASS

(to himself)

Oh, fuck.

(to Row)

I-- I didn't have enough time to change. The only thing I cared about was my sax.

Row furrows her brows, conveying her lingering uncertainty.

CASS (CONT'D)
Hey, what about you? You-- you
almost gave me a heart attack.

ROW
Is that all you got?

CASS
Uh, you can turn out to be a-- a--
a-- wackadoodle.

Row laughs.

ROW
"Wackadoodle"? Really?

Cass shrugs. Row contemplates further, allowing the idea to
settle in.

ROW (CONT'D)
Why not? What the hell! If this is
how I get myself killed, I'm all
about it.

Cass smiles, surprised.

CASS
Wow, all right. Great.

ROW
But first, coffee. My brain's a no-
go without it.

CASS
Coffee time is my favorite time.

Row steals a glance at Cass, softly laughing to herself.

EXT. CAFE - MORNING

Cass and Row step out of the cozy cafe.

ROW
So, now what?

CASS
I'm not sure. I... I can't make
decisions.

ROW
Uh... let me think...

Cass finds a bench outside the cafe and slumps down, resting his face on his hand. Row joins him, sitting by his side, observing the world bustling around them.

ROW (CONT'D)

Well, here we are...

CASS

Yeah.

A confused JAPANESE TOURIST couple approaches, iPhone map in hand.

JAPANESE TOURIST

Hi, uh, how do we get to the Guggenheim?

Row glances at the map, eager to help. She points to a nearby bus stop.

ROW

Take it up to 89th Street.

The tourists bow in gratitude, disappearing into the city crowd.

ROW (CONT'D)

Um... we're in the heart of New York, right?

CASS

Right.

ROW

Let's just walk around and see what inspires us.

CASS

Okay. Sure.

EXT. BOWERY STREET - MORNING

Cass and Row stroll along the now clean streets of the Bowery. He hums a soft tune to himself and looks around.

CASS

The Bowery is looking more like the suburbia.

They stop in front of the old CBGB, now transformed into a John Varvatos clothing store. Cass looks away.

CASS (CONT'D)

I, I, I, can't look at it. They turned the birthplace of Punk into a boutique shop. You know, the Talking Heads made their debut right here, performing "Psycho Killer" for the very first time!

ROW

(to herself)

*Psycho Killer, qu'est-ce que c'est?
Better, run, run, run, run, run,
run, run away...*

Her face suddenly lights up with an idea.

ROW (CONT'D)

I got it. I got it. Let's get the fuck out of here!

CASS

Wha-- what?

ROW

Uh, we can explore outside the city. There's more to New York than glossy skyscrapers and fancy boutiques, right?

CASS

Oh, wow, yeah-- yeah, that sounds cool.

ROW

I'm sick of going to the same places.

CASS

Me too.

ROW

Though... it might rain later.

CASS

Should we grab umbrellas?

Row looks down at his slippers.

ROW

Uh, we should probably get you some shoes.

Cass chuckles.

CASS
Oh, right.

ROW
How about we go to Chinatown? It's
nearby.

CASS
Sure.

INT. CHINATOWN STORE - MORNING

The Chinatown store is filled with colorful displays of Asian footwear styles and traditional Chinese shoes. Cass and Row navigate through the aisles.

ROW
So, what's your shoe size?

CASS
Uh, ten.

Row spots a pair of black Kung Fu shoes and hands them to Cass.

ROW
Try these...

Cass slips off his slippers and slides his feet into the shoes.

CASS
Cool.

Cass takes a few steps, feeling the comfort and flexibility of the shoes.

ROW
You're giving off some major Kung
Fu vibes!

Cass awkwardly attempts a Kung Fu kick, resulting in a comical display.

CASS
Ready for our New York adventure?

Row responds with a Kung Fu punch.

ROW
Bet.

Cass and Row share a laugh, brimming with excitement as they set out to explore the wonders of New York.

INT. STATEN ISLAND FERRY - MORNING

Cass and Row sit in silence, waiting for the ferry to set sail. He softly hums to himself, deep in thought.

Row contorts her face as if tasting an extremely sour candy, then tightly closes her eyes and presses her lips together. She continues with variations, opening her eyes wide and stretching her jaw muscles. Cass's humming fades as he watches her.

CASS
What are you doing?

ROW
Uh, facial acting exercises. Wanna try?

CASS
Okay.

ROW
Close your eyes.

Cass obediently closes his eyes.

ROW (CONT'D)
Imagine a time when you were really angry... Now express it.

Row's face morphs into a tableau of rage, her eyes fierce. Cass mimics her, his version comically exaggerated. She laughs.

ROW (CONT'D)
Want me to show you?

Cass nods.

ROW (CONT'D)
Bring your eyebrows closer together, okay?

Cass furrows his brows.

ROW (CONT'D)
Good... Now press your lips super tight.

Cass purses his lips tightly.

ROW (CONT'D)

Now, stick out your tongue.

Cass sticks out his tongue, and Row playfully follows suit. They laugh.

The ferry slowly sets sail, and Row rises from her seat, making her way toward the railing. Cass follows.

They lean over the railing, the city a distant spectacle.

INT. STREET FAIR - STATEN ISLAND - MORNING

The approaching Halloween season is evident in the fair's lively decor: pumpkins carved into grinning faces line the walkways, faux cobwebs stretch across stalls, and life-size skeletons hang from tree branches, swaying in the gentle breeze.

Cass and Row wander through the street fair, teeming with animated people and enthusiastic vendors.

ROW

So, what do you do, Cass? What's your contribution to this rampant capitalist society?

CASS

I-- I teach music to second graders.

ROW

Oh, that's so cool. I love kids. They're so nose-y.

She glances at Cass's saxophone case.

ROW (CONT'D)

What about your sax? You in a band? Any upcoming shows?

Cass looks down, his cheeks turning pink.

CASS

No... I'm-- I'm actually really shy.

ROW

You love playing?

CASS

Yeah... it feels like flying.

ROW
That makes me sad.

CASS
Why?

ROW
Because you're not doing what you
love.

CASS
Performing in front of people
freaks me out. What if I fuck up?

ROW
Hmm... You should think about it
this way... Perfection is totally
impossible and also very boring.
Like, where's the fun in that? And
I think the pressure to be great
like all the time, you know, to
come across as perfect, is not
really realistic.

Cass rubs his neck.

ROW (CONT'D)
Like, what's the alternative?
Regret? No thanks. Fail, fail,
fail... it beats not living.

Cass takes this in.

INT. STREET FAIR - STATEN ISLAND - MOMENTS LATER

Cass and Row find an arts and crafts station where children
of various ages are engaged in crafting Halloween masks.

ROW
This is so cool.

They take a seat, joining in the fun.

ROW (CONT'D)
What do you want to be?

CASS
Uh, I don't know.

ROW
Well, for today, we can be
anything...

They both consider the endless possibilities, deep in thought.

ROW (CONT'D)

I know! You'll be a pink moon, and
I'll be a shining star.

Cass smiles, accepting the imaginative roles. Row starts cutting a piece of art paper.

CASS

I... I really like that.

ROW

Yeah?

CASS

Yeah, um, "Pink Moon," is like my
favorite Nick Drake song.

Row nods, she knows his music too.

ROW

Yeah, he's cool.

CASS

Do you know what it means?

ROW

Uh, I think so... isolation,
feeling alone, right?

Cass drifts off for a moment.

CASS

Yeah, exactly, disconnection... Um,
it's the title track of his final
album, which he wrote during a very
hard time in his life.

ROW

He battled depression, no?

CASS

Yeah.

Cass shifts uncomfortably, quickly redirecting the conversation.

CASS (CONT'D)

Anyway, um, have you heard of the
annual Pink Moon event?

Row shakes her head.

CASS (CONT'D)

Uh, The Pink Moon is the full moon in April, named after the wild ground phlox, a pink wildflower that blooms in spring. Native American tribes gave it this name.

ROW

Magic.

Cass cuts out a moon shape from a pink foam sheet. Row looks at him.

ROW (CONT'D)

It's too small...

Row gently takes the scissors from Cass's hand, their fingers slightly brushing, creating an intimate moment. Cass looks at her with a soft smile, his eyes lingering on hers as she skillfully cuts.

ROW (CONT'D)

Better.

Row passes the scissors back to him, smiling.

EXT. STREET FAIR - STATEN ISLAND - MORNING

Now wearing their handmade masks, Cass and Row make their way through the bustling fair. He takes a moment to admire Row's star mask.

CASS

"We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars..."

Row smiles. Their eyes meet. A moment.

ROW

Who said that?

CASS

Uh, Oscar Wilde.

Row shakes her head and sighs.

ROW

It's crazy he went to jail just for being gay.

Suddenly, a YOUNG GIRL, 9, munching on a red candy apple, carelessly bumps into them and continues on her way, unperturbed.

Row's attention is drawn towards a stand piled high with tempting red candy apples.

ROW (CONT'D)
Dare you to grab two...

CASS
Are-- are you suggesting I steal them?

Row gives a confirming nod. Cass ponders her daring proposal.

CASS (CONT'D)
Hmm? I don't know...

ROW
Did you ever steal anything as a kid?

CASS
Well... I might have "borrowed" some Star Wars trading cards from my friend's older brother when I was six. I... I really wanted them, and I didn't think he'd notice.

ROW
Criminal.

CASS
Um, what about you?

Row laughs.

ROW
I was a brutal, brutal, thief. Like Bonnie and Clyde vibes.

CASS
All right, all right...

He eyes the alluring red candy apples.

CASS (CONT'D)
I'll steal the apples, only if you steal something later.

ROW
Bet.

As the vendor momentarily turns away, Cass nonchalantly approaches the busy table and swiftly takes two candy apples.

Cass and Row sprint away from the fair like a pair of mischievous accomplices.

VENDOR

The apples are free, you idiots!

EXT. HISTORIC RICHMOND TOWN - STATEN ISLAND - DAY

Cass and Row stroll along a charming street in Historic Richmond Town, a village frozen in time. Their masks hang loosely around their necks as they enjoy their candy apples.

CASS

I, um... I want to ask you something?

ROW

Sure. What is it?

CASS

Is Row really your name?

ROW

Yeah, I was named after my grandpa, Rowland, and my favorite actress is Gena Rowlands. So, it's like fate.

CASS

That's pretty awesome.

ROW

Have you seen her movies?

CASS

Um, I-- I saw, "The Notebook."

Row lights up.

ROW

Oh, man, you've got to see "A Woman Under the Influence." It's amazing...

She hums the "Swan Lake" theme, extending her arms in the air and twirling around, mirroring Gena Rowlands' performance. Cass watches her. She stops, and they continue walking.

ROW (CONT'D)

Cassavetes' films are all about being real. Don't be a robot. His characters fall a lot, but they always get back up. That's courage.

CASS

"It takes courage to make a fool of yourself."

ROW

That's right, man!

CASS

It's really cool that you're named after your grandpa.

Row drifts off.

ROW

Yeah... my grandpa pretty much raised me. My parents were always too busy with work. I barely saw them. I think they just had me to look like they had the "perfect life". You know, balancing family and career. The whole idea of the American dream is just a joke.

There's a pause.

ROW (CONT'D)

Um, so, what about you? Are you close to your family?

Cass looks off.

CASS

My mom is like my best friend... I miss her so much since she left New York. She's always been there for me.

Row looks down.

ROW

My parents don't believe in me. Sometimes it feels like they want me to fail so I'll get a "real" job... They always say I'll never make it as an actor.

Another pause.

CASS

Uh, where you from?

ROW

Florida.

CASS
How did you end up in New York?

ROW
I studied acting at NYU. After graduation, I decided to stay.

CASS
Do you miss Florida?

Row scoffs.

ROW
Nope. It feels like the 1950s there. It's a fucking shithole. I'm never going back.

She sighs.

ROW (CONT'D)
Ugh. I've only been doing off-Broadway shows and a few commercials. I really need to get more work.

Cass looks pensive, stealing a sideways glance at Row.

CASS
Um, do you have another job?

Row's head shakes almost imperceptibly. Her eyes remain on the cobblestones beneath her feet.

ROW
No, not at the moment.

CASS
Are you looking for work?

ROW
Not exactly.

Cass looks slightly surprised.

CASS
So, like, how do you afford the high rent?

Row looks away, her cheeks turning a shade of red. The question clearly makes her uncomfortable, but she musters the courage to reply.

ROW
My parents... they do it to keep
controlling me.

CASS
It must be nice.

ROW
Yeah, I guess.

After a moment, she flips the conversation back to him.

ROW (CONT'D)
So, what about you... have you
lived in the city your whole life?

CASS
Yeah, um, pretty much. My mom and
I, we lived together... until she,
uh, moved a few years ago. I-- I
ended up keeping her rent-
stabilized apartment.

He drifts off.

CASS (CONT'D)
The neighborhood doesn't have the
same feel as it used to, though.

Row falls silent, considering the price of progress. She
looks at the quaint, untouched beauty of Historic Richmond
Town, appreciating its preservation.

ROW
I suppose that's the price of
progress, right? But it's nice to
have places like this, where things
never change.

CASS
Yeah, I guess you're right.

Suddenly, Row stops and stares at him.

ROW
Hey, wait, your name's Cass.

Cass looks at her strangely.

CASS
Yeah...

ROW
 You know, Gena Rowlands and John
 Cassavetes...

Row playfully points to herself, then to Cass.

ROW (CONT'D)
 Row... Cass...

CASS
 Oh, wow.

Row laughs, playfully slaps Cass's arm.

CASS (CONT'D)
 Ow.

They continue walking.

ROW
 You know, Rowlands was Cassavetes'
 muse...

Cass turns red.

INT. STATEN ISLAND FERRY - DAY

Cass and Row are back on the ferry, seated near a group of PROUD BOYS. They are dressed in matching black Fred Perry polo shirts and wear hats displaying the group's logo - a left-facing rooster head. One of them has a tattoo of a fetus inside a heart on his arm. Row eyes the tattoo.

ROW
 (to herself)
 Tsk.

Proud Boy #1 begins to mockingly sing Frank Sinatra's "New York, New York." Cass and Row observe them.

PROUD BOY #1
*If I can make it there, I'll make
 it anywhere, It's up to you,
 New York, New York, New York, New
 Fucking York!*

The Proud Boys burst into laughter, noticing Cass and Row watching them. Proud Boy #2 eyes Cass's bathrobe.

PROUD BOY #2
 (to Cass)
 What the fuck are you looking at,
 clown?

ROW

Uh, hey, tell me something...
you're matching shirts... did you
use Valpak coupons?

PROUD BOY #2

Ha, ha. Very funny.

Row is about to respond, but Cass nudges her, signaling her to stay quiet. Cass clears his throat, visibly nervous.

CASS

You-- you like Sinatra, right?

PROUD BOY #2

What are you, stupid? Of course.
He's a fucking legend!

CASS

Wanna hear a story about him?

The Proud Boys laugh, exchanging nods and looking smug.

PROUD BOY #2

Sure. Why not?

Cass's knee bounces up and down.

CASS

Uh, so, in the late '40s,
Sinatra... he goes to Harlem to see
Sammy Davis, Jr., right? And, um,
he's so impressed, uh, after the
show, Frank invites Sammy to come
see his show. B-- but you know what
happened? A whole week goes by,
and, uh, Sammy doesn't show up. So
Frank goes back to Harlem and...
and asks him why he didn't come.
And, uh, Sammy says, "I did. They
wouldn't let me in." So Frank, he
gets, you know, really pissed off
and tears up his contract with the
theater. And when Sammy can't
perform at the Copacabana, Frank,
uh, refuses to perform there too.
And when Sammy couldn't get a room
at the Sands in Vegas... Frank said
if Sammy wasn't treated equally,
he'd walk out. Then, when Sammy got
into a car accident and, um, lost
his eye... Frank paid his medical
bills. He even offered Sammy his
house to recover.

(MORE)

CASS (CONT'D)

And when they asked Frank why he did all that, you know what he said? "He's my brother."

A long silence follows as they all stare at each other. The tension is palpable.

PROUD BOY #2

Fuck you!

Row stands up, looks at the proud boy's tattoo of a fetus inside a heart.

ROW

Fuck you! I love abortions!

Row grabs Cass's hand, and they start running.

PROUD BOY #2

Get them!

The Proud Boys give chase, running after Cass and Row throughout the entirety of the ferry.

Cass and Row hold their breath and hide behind a wall as the Proud Boys run pass them.

EXT. STATEN ISLAND FERRY - DAY

Cass and Row run off the ferry, laughing.

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

Cass and Row come to a stop, trying to catch their breath. They find a nearby bench and sit down, collecting themselves.

ROW

That was fun!

CASS

Yeah!

ROW

So, where to next?

They pause, deep in thought.

CASS

Wanna just hop on the subway and see where it takes us.

ROW

Yeah.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Cass and Row sit next to each other in a semi-crowded train, they look around aimlessly as an awkward silence hangs between them.

As the doors open, a trio of OLD MARIACHI SINGERS enter, dressed in full black, gold-embroidered Charro suits. They begin playing a Spanish romantic song.

Cass and Row exchange subtle glances, visibly touched by the music.

As the song comes to an end, Cass and Row extend their hands, dropping change into the singers' cup.

ROW

That was beautiful.

CASS

Yeah, that was cool.

ROW

This is why I love this city.

CASS

Me too.

EXT. MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS - STREET - DAY

Cass and Row walk along the street.

CASS

Can I ask you something personal?

ROW

Yeah, sure.

CASS

Um, are you religious or believe in God?

Row shakes her head defiantly.

ROW

I don't believe in that stuff anymore. It's just non-stop propaganda. You know, all they do is spread lies, hate, fear.

(MORE)

ROW (CONT'D)

And my biggest beef with them is what gives them the right to tell others how to live. Why do they do that, huh? What do they gain? So, fuck them!

CASS

Mmm... You sound angry.

This encourages her to continue her rant.

ROW

Yeah, I'm fucking angry-- When I think of all the good people who suffer because of them.

(mocking)

"God told me to hate you." They're evil, racist, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, money-laundering frauds. And then I think of all the useless wars and terrorist attacks carried out in the name of God. It really pisses me off!

CASS

Okay, I get it. B-- but not all of it is, uh, so bad. I mean, it can teach patience, forgiveness, kindness... You know, everything has its pros and cons, right?

Row looks at him cynically.

ROW

Yeah, yeah, I'm sure. I do hope hell is real, though.

CASS

Why?

ROW

All these intolerable little shits have to go somewhere, right?

Row turns to Cass.

ROW (CONT'D)

Wait, why are we even talking about this?

CASS

Uh, well... I-- I was wondering if, uh...

ROW
What?

CASS
We're close to St. John the Divine.
I've never been... Wanna go?

Row's expression shifts to one of slight unease and surprise.

ROW
You religious?

CASS
No, well, yeah, um... a little.

ROW
What does "a little" mean?

CASS
I... I kind of believe in a higher
power.

ROW
So, you do believe in God?

CASS
No, no, no. Not like God-- God in
the Bible. I mean, I believe that--
that maybe there might be some kind
of, uh, afterlife.

ROW
So, you believe in heaven?

CASS
Well, not exactly like-- like the
heaven they talk about in books.

ROW
Then what?

Cass pauses before replying.

CASS
So, uh, have you ever heard about
Plato's ideas on death and the
afterlife?

Row shakes her head.

ROW
No... tell me.

CASS

Yeah?

ROW

Yeah... I'm curious.

CASS

So, um, he believed in the immortal soul-- this part of us that exists before and after our physical bodies. He thought that-- that, like, uh, we go through many lives to learn more.

ROW

So, like, our soul keeps coming back?

CASS

Yeah.

ROW

Isn't that the same as buddhism?

CASS

Uh, it's a bit different.

ROW

How?

CASS

Well, uh, they believe consciousness is reborn into humans, animals, other realms. It's, um, an ongoing process of rebirth.

ROW

So, it's not just humans?

CASS

Right, um, it includes all kinds of beings, and it-- it can take many different forms.

ROW

Ugh. I don't wanna come back as a rock.

Cass chuckles.

CASS

No, no, no, only conscious beings can be reborn.

ROW

Cool, all right. So, did Plato believe in any form of, uh, judgment after death, like in the Bible?

CASS

Well, um, it's complicated... He thought the soul looks at its actions and choices in life. It's like, uh, being accountable for what you've done, and your afterlife depends on it.

ROW

It all sounds the fucking same to me.

Cass shrugs.

CASS

I-- I guess you're right. You know, it's not even really about the afterlife. Uh, I just hope there's more to life than this. Like, something bigger. I mean, I'd even be okay with an alien invasion, you know...

He looks up at the sky in wonder. Row follows his gaze.

CASS (CONT'D)

What's up there... hidden, unseen, and invisible?

A moment.

ROW

So, why this cathedral?

Cass beams.

CASS

It's-- it's the largest cathedral in North America. The Gothic design is so cool, and the artwork is amazing too, especially the Keith Haring Triptych I've always wanted to see.

A hint of a smile appears on Row's lips, her curiosity piqued.

ROW
Keith Harding?

CASS
Yeah.

ROW
All right. Sure. Let's go.

INT. CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - DAY

Cass and Row stand in awe as they enter the majestic cathedral. Sunlight casts vibrant colors across the vast space through stained-glass windows. They look up at the soaring ceilings.

CASS
Pretty awesome, huh?

ROW
Yeah.

They walk along the central nave, admiring the stunning artwork and historical artifacts. Their eyes are drawn to the Keith Haring Triptych.

CASS
Oh, wow...

ROW
Now that's my type of cool.

They take in the triptych, completely absorbed.

ROW (CONT'D)
What's the story?

CASS
Harding finished it just weeks before he died... It's a tribute to those who died from AIDS... Uh, I think art can really bring people together, you know?

ROW
Yeah.

INT. CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - MINUTES LATER

Cass and Row continue their exploration, pausing at various notable artworks and historical features, stealing glances of each other. They stop in front of the Barberini Tapestries.

CASS

Uh, these were made in the 17th century and show the life of Christ. They're made of wool and silk...

Row looks up at Cass, visibly impressed.

INT. CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - MOMENTS LATER

As Cass and Row walk through the cathedral, soft organ music starts to play. They pass a dedicated area where votive candles burn.

ROW

Um... I'd like to light a candle for my grandpa.

CASS

I thought you didn't believe in God?

ROW

I... I don't really, but he did. Do you think that's phony?

CASS

No, I think if there was ever a God, He wouldn't judge.

Row drops some money into the donation box and then lights a candle.

ROW

(to herself)

Hey, grandpa... I wish you were here. I miss you so much. I love you... I forgive you.

Cass watches her.

EXT. BIBLICAL GARDEN - CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - DAY

Cass and Row stroll through the biblical garden, where various plant species mentioned in the Bible flourish. They marvel at the vibrant peacocks and the bustling hive of 15,000 honeybees.

They come to a stop before the Peace Fountain created by Greg Wyatt.

CASS
It's a symbol of peace.

ROW
Will we ever have peace?

CASS
I hope so.

EXT. ROOFTOP - CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - DAY

Cass and Row stand on the rooftop, smiling as they take in the breathtaking view of the city, even catching a glimpse of the spire of One World Trade Center.

EXT. MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS - STREET - DAY

Cass and Row exit the cathedral, stepping out onto the street.

CASS
So, how do you feel?

ROW
Um, I'm not sure... But, that was kinda wild.

CASS
What do you mean?

ROW
It's hard to say. I need to think about it. But I'm definitely gonna need a drink now...

EXT. PARIS BLUE - HARLEM - DAY

A "PERMANENTLY CLOSED" sign hangs on the door. In the window, there's a photograph of Samuel Hargress Jr. with the inscription "RIP LEGEND." Cass gazes at it.

CASS
I can't believe he's really gone.

ROW
Who was he?

CASS
Uh, he was the owner of this bar and was here every day; he lived upstairs.

(MORE)

CASS (CONT'D)

It became a hub for Harlem jazz, with lots of famous musicians performing. He loved music and the community, and that made the place special. He was so cool—always in a 70s suit, snakeskin shoes, a fedora, and sunglasses at night. People remembered him for his style, but mostly for his kindness. He was one of a kind...

INT. JAZZ BAR - HARLEM - DAY

Cass and Row sit at the semi-empty bar. The space is dimly lit, with vintage posters, photographs, and artwork covering the walls paying homage to jazz legends. The vibrant sounds of jazz music fill the room.

The BARTENDER, 50s, pours two whisky shots. Row swiftly downs her drink, while Cass hesitates, looking at his glass.

ROW

Come on... Just one shot.

Cass gulps down the whisky, coughing slightly.

CASS

Okay, so, um... returning to our earlier conversation...

He raises his empty shot glass.

CASS (CONT'D)

Liquid courage, right?

ROW

All right, all right. Um, the art felt magical, you know? It-- it almost made me believe in... a life force that connects us all.

CASS

Right, right.

ROW

I still don't believe in God, though. But, uh, I think all that magic comes from within us, right? We are the magic.

Cass smiles, appreciating her perspective.

CASS
I like that.

Row signals to the bartender, who refills their shot glasses.

ROW
To Samuel Hargress Jr.

CASS
A true legend.

The two clink their glasses together, smiling.

EXT. HARLEM - DAY

Cass and Row stroll along a street. He is humming once again.

ROW
What are you humming?

Cass shrugs nonchalantly.

CASS
Oh, just something.

Row nudges him playfully.

ROW
Show me...

CASS
Wh-- What do you mean?

Row points to his saxophone case. Cass rubs his neck and reddens.

ROW
Right now, right here.

CASS
I'd rather die.

Row looks around.

ROW
Um, the street's pretty quiet. Just delete your mind for a moment. It's all in your head, remember? Come on, take a chance...

Cass pauses.

CASS
I-- I see disaster. I see
humiliation.

ROW
But?

CASS
Okay. All right.

Row smiles. Cass takes a deep breath, nervously unzips his saxophone case, and pulls out his instrument. He positions the saxophone and starts playing a Billie Holiday song. His fingers glide effortlessly over the keys.

As the music fills the air, the noise of the street seems to pause. Row's face lights up with recognition. She knows the song, and is visibly moved.

Cass places the saxophone back in its case. A long silence hangs between them as they walk off.

ROW
That was really... really nice.

CASS
Ah, it was just all right.

ROW
How did it feel?

CASS
Um, like the world was kinda
ending.

ROW
Yeah, that's valid. I've been there
before.

Row rushes toward the bus before it leaves, with Cass closely following behind.

INT. BUS - DAY

Cass and Row sit side by side, quietly riding the bus. Row looks out the window, deep in thought. Cass steals glances at her.

EXT. BRONX - DAY

Cass and Row amble down a busy street. The noise of urban life - car-horns, distant music, spirited conversations - fills the air.

Suddenly, Row pauses, her gaze drawn to a modest flower shop. Her eyes lock onto the delicate white gardenias. She picks up some and pays for them.

Cass looks at her with curiosity.

CASS
Who are those for?

Row smiles.

ROW
Lady Day...

Cass is taken aback.

CASS
What-- Billie Holiday?

ROW
Your lady's buried right here in
the Bronx. We're going to see
her...

Cass smiles.

EXT. SAINT RAYMOND'S CEMETERY - BRONX - DAY

Cass and Row stand before the imposing, yet serene, closed gates of Saint Raymond's Cemetery.

CASS
It's closed.

He sinks onto the ground, a look of defeat on his face.

ROW
You give up that easily? Haven't
you ever climbed a fence?

She hands Cass the gardenias, her eyes gleaming with daring determination.

CASS
But, uh, we can't do that?

ROW
Why not?

CASS
Breaking in? What if we get caught?

Row laughs, shaking her head at his caution.

ROW
Who's gonna snitch? They're all
dead.

With a grace born of adrenaline, Row scales the fence, her figure momentarily silhouetted against the sky. She lands with a soft thud on the other side, turning back to urge Cass on.

ROW (CONT'D)
Come on...

Encouraged, Cass passes the gardenias back to Row and scales the fence, a thrill coursing through his veins.

EXT. SAINT RAYMOND'S CEMETERY - BRONX - DAY

The cemetery is quiet, its tranquility, contrasting sharply with the city's bustle. Row and Cass tread softly among the tombstones, the gardenias clutched in his hand.

EXT. BILLIE HOLIDAY'S GRAVE - SAINT RAYMOND'S CEMETERY - DAY

They reach Billie Holiday's headstone. Cass lays the white flowers down reverently, a silent tribute to the music icon.

ROW
Life's one big improv. Just like
jazz, just like our day...

Cass and Row smile. From his wallet, Cass pulls out a joint, glancing at Row with a grin. They sit side by side, passing the joint back and forth, and gradually become high. They lie down on the grass, gazing up at the sky.

ROW (CONT'D)
Do you ever think about time?

CASS
Tick tock. Tick tock.

ROW
Is anything free from time? Nothing
lasts...

(MORE)

ROW (CONT'D)

Sometimes, I feel like I'm running out of time. Getting older. The world just slips away...

CASS

What if how we see time is what makes us sick?

ROW

How?

CASS

Ever hear of Julian Barbour's theory on time?

ROW

Nope, I don't think so.

Cass pushes up from the grass. Row mirrors his movement, both seated upright now, facing each other.

CASS

He, uh, challenges the idea that time flows in a straight line. What if all of time is happening at once? Every moment, every experience, all at once.

Row pauses, takes a moment to process this.

ROW

So, there's no past, no future... only now!

CASS

Right! Life isn't about, uh, counting seconds or hours. Time isn't something to conquer. The more you chase it, the faster it, um, slips away. Thinking success is about how much time you fill only leads to suffering. It's not how much time you have... but how you use it that really matters.

With a burst of energy, Row stands up, stretching her arms towards the sky as if physically challenging the constraints of time.

ROW

Fuck time!

Inspired, Cass also stands, joining her in her defiance. Together, they shout into the open sky, their words echoing in the quiet cemetery.

CASS AND ROW

Fuck time!

EXT. BRONX ZOO - DAY

Cass and Row, still high, wander through the bustling zoo, absorbing the vibrant sights and sounds. They pause at the monkey enclosure, where monkeys chatter and leap about with unrestrained fervor.

CASS

I envy them.

ROW

Why?

CASS

They don't have to worry about the same bullshit we do. They can just be.

Row's eyes follow a baby monkey as it falls and learns. The mother monkey swiftly picks up the baby, displaying their care for each other.

ROW

I wonder what they think of us.

CASS

That we're not very kind.

ROW

Cruel, even.

CASS

Yeah.

A moment passes.

ROW

Thank you.

CASS

For what?

ROW

For stalking me this morning.

CASS
I'm glad I did.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Cass and Row sit across from each other in a semi-empty train, their hands positioned for a game of red hands.

ROW
Ready?

CASS
Mm-hmm.

Their hands are outstretched. A sudden jolt of the train distracts Row, and Cass seizes the opportunity to slap her hands. A ripple of laughter passes between them. Suddenly, Row drifts off.

ROW
Um... do you ever feel stuck?

CASS
Trapped?

ROW
Yeah...

CASS
Sometimes... yeah. It's like, uh, walking in fog.

ROW
Or crying without knowing why.

CASS
Or knowing why but not being able to stop.

ROW
Right.

CASS
Uh, I think it's called depression.

They exchange a glance and, with a soft smile, their hands return to the game.

EXT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS - DAY

Cass and Row come across a lively Spanish musical concert. The crowd sprawls before them, a massive sea of people bustling with relentless energy. Cass's face turns pale and tenses up as he takes in the sight.

ROW
Let's move closer.

Cass rubs his neck, feeling uncomfortable.

CASS
No, no, no, no. I'm find here.

Cass wrings his hands.

ROW
What's wrong? You okay? You look all pale.

Cass's hands tremble slightly as his eyes dart around, scanning the crowd with unease.

CASS
I... I...

Row looks at him, sensing his nervousness.

ROW
What is it?

Cass looks down, feeling embarrassed and hesitant to share.

CASS
I-- I have anxiety. I can't handle big crowds.

Cass takes a step back, distancing himself from the crowd. Row follows suit, and they start to walk away.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Cass and Row stand in silence, holding onto the pole.

ROW
We have a serious mental health crisis in this country.

She playfully point to Cass.

ROW (CONT'D)
Exhibit A.

Row nervously laughs. Cass looks down, hurt. She immediately regrets her words.

ROW (CONT'D)

Cass, I'm sorry. I... I didn't mean-

-

As the doors open, Row exits the train. The influx of people causes Cass anxiety, preventing him from stepping onto the platform.

Row shouts through the departing train's window.

ROW (CONT'D)

Next stop-- Get off at the next stop!

Cass looks at her, visibly anxious.

EXT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS - DAY

Row emerges from the subway and rushes onto the bustling street. She runs through the streets of Washington Heights, visibly panicked.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - DAY

Cass sits on a bench, anxiously waiting, his knee bouncing up and down as he scans the surroundings. He reaches into his robe pocket, retrieves the bottle of Klonopin, and swallows a pill.

After a long moment, he looks up and spots Row sprinting down the stairs, sweaty and gasping for air. He stands. With relief and a smile, she approaches him, opening her arms wide. She hugs him.

ROW

I was so worried you left me.

She catches her breath.

ROW (CONT'D)

I didn't mean to hurt you.

CASS

You don't have to say anything--

ROW

It- it wasn't a jab, honestly. It's just... I sometimes make stupid jokes to cover up my own feelings.

(MORE)

ROW (CONT'D)

You see, my heart is broken. My grandpa was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and got really depressed, and he...

Cass sees tears welling up in her eyes.

CASS

It's okay.

ROW

No, it's not. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

CASS

I forgive you.

Row hugs him again, holding on tightly.

EXT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS - DAY

Cass and Row walk in silence for a long moment.

ROW

Do you get panic attacks?

CASS

All the time.

ROW

Do you take medication?

Cass pulls a bottle of Klonopin from his robe and shows it to her.

CASS

And some other stuff.

ROW

How does it feel? The anxiety, I mean.

Cass hesitates for a moment, wringing his hands and looking down as he speaks.

CASS

Uh, imagine a voice only you can hear, always with you, even when you're happy. It fills your mind with doubts. You try to block it out, but it's like yelling into a storm.

(MORE)

CASS (CONT'D)

Um, the worst part is, no one else can hear it. They just see you struggling.

Cass clenches his fists and firmly presses his hands against the sides of his head.

CASS (CONT'D)

Get the fuck out of my head!

Row looks deeply moved.

ROW

I'll never fully understand what you go through. But sometimes, when I'm acting, I'm afraid I'll forget my lines or mess up... and that people will think I don't belong here.

CASS

Does your mind ever feel like it's racing, like you can't catch up with yourself?

ROW

What do you mean?

CASS

Like-- like you're trying to get ahead, but no matter what, you're always a step behind.

Row nods in understanding.

ROW

Sometimes.

A moment passes.

ROW (CONT'D)

What else scares you?

CASS

Everything. Some people aren't scared of anything... I wish I could be like that.

ROW

You don't really believe that, do you?

Cass shrugs.

CASS
What scares you?

ROW
Frogs.

Cass chuckles.

CASS
Seriously?

ROW
Of course.

CASS
Frogs?

ROW
They're so creepy. You don't think so?

Cass shakes his head.

ROW (CONT'D)
Um, their slimy skin, bulging eyes... They blend into their surroundings and then jump out of nowhere. Boo! And their weird sounds, like growling and grunting? Sometimes they sound like they're croaking.

CASS
Uh, male frogs croak to attract females, like a way of saying, "Hey, I'm here"!

ROW
Mating, huh?

She mimics the croaking sound. A deep, low, guttural croak.

ROW (CONT'D)
Yep, that's really sexy.

They both laugh.

EXT. STREET - WASHINGTON HEIGHTS - DAY

Clouds roll in, the city's hustle and bustle slowing as distant thunder rumbles. Cass and Row stroll down the street.

Suddenly, rain begins to pour heavily. They exchange a glance, and without a word, break into a run, dodging the few remaining pedestrians.

EXT. UNITED PALACE - CONTINUOUS

They skid to a stop in front of the grand facade of the United Palace. They stare up at the towering marquee, the lights flickering against the dark, stormy sky.

The marquee reads: "Some Like It Hot."

ROW
Do you believe in magic?

Cass smiles.

ROW (CONT'D)
Shall we?

CASS
Absolutely.

They exchange a quick glance, before dashing into the grand theater, shaking off the rain.

INT. UNITED PALACE - DAY

The theater is bathed in a magical glow as the film plays on the screen. Cass and Row sit together.

On the screen: The seduction scene on the yacht between Sugar Kane (played by Marilyn Monroe) and Joe (played by Toni Curtis).

The moment hangs in the air. Cass looks at Row, but she's focused on the film, unaware of him. He watches her for a moment, then turns back to the screen with a small smile.

EXT. STREET - WASHINGTON HEIGHTS - DAY

In the aftermath of the rain, the world seems freshly washed and sparkling. Cass and Row amble down the glistening streets. Spotting a large puddle, Cass subtly guides Row around it, ensuring her path remains dry. Row smiles, touched by Cass' thoughtful gesture.

CASS
Uh, can I ask you something?

ROW

Yeah.

CASS

The acting... is it all real?

ROW

In what sense?

CASS

Uh, all those passionate movie kisses. Are they real?

ROW

Well, kind of. It's complicated. The kisses are physical, but they don't have personal feelings. You're just playing a character. It doesn't mean anything. Let me show you...

Her words linger in the air, a silent invitation. The tension builds as she steps closer.

ROW (CONT'D)

Imagine I'm Sugar, you're Joe...

Cass looks hesitant. She steps closer, fully into her role.

ROW (CONT'D)

Give me a line to work with, okay?

Cass recalls a dialogue, his voice barely above a whisper.

CASS

"I got a funny sensation in my toes—
— like somebody was barbecuing them
over a slow flame."

ROW

"Lets throw another log on the
fire."

Row leans in to kiss Cass. He hesitates for a moment, then leans in to kiss her back. The world around them seems to fade. It's not an act anymore; it's a moment charged with undeniable attraction.

As they break the kiss, Row steps back, shifting from the character back to herself.

ROW (CONT'D)

So... was that real?

Cass is startled, his cheeks turn red.

CASS

Uh... um... I...

Row smiles. They continue walking, but something has shifted. An unspoken electricity hums between them, the echoes of the kiss lingering. Row sneaks a glance at the flustered Cass.

INT. OLD BOOKSTORE - QUEENS - DAY

Amid a sea of haphazardly stacked books, Cass saunters through the narrow aisles, his fingers grazing the books as he passes. He pauses, something catching his attention. A small book, which he lifts from the shelf, admiring the cover with a hint of recognition in his eyes. A smile dances on his lips as he carefully tucks the book into the pocket of his robe.

A little distance away, Row scans a table littered with various books. Two TEEN GIRLS, faces awash with a layer of makeup far too mature for their age, hover nearby, glancing at Row's selections. Row hands them Patti Smith's "Just Kids" with a warm smile.

ROW

How about this?

The girls exchange a glance before giggling in unison.

GIRL #1

We prefer something more romantic.

Undeterred, Row retracts her suggestion and watches the girls wander away.

Across the store, the tension between a YOUNG COUPLE escalates, their fighting echoing off the worn wooden walls.

Cass and Row exchange a glance before wandering further into the labyrinth of book-filled aisles.

CASS

Movies, books, songs tell you what love should be. You, um, dream of it before you experience it, creating unrealistic ideas. And then, uh, you're disappointed when reality doesn't match the dream...

Their attention is once again drawn to the another QUARRELING COUPLE, 40s, in the corner.

WOMAN

You're crazy. Why would I do something like that?

MAN

To hurt me!

WOMAN

You're insecure!

Exchanging a glance, Cass and Row veer away from the contentious scene.

ROW

Let's fight.

CASS

What?

ROW

Pretend to be them.

CASS

I can't?

ROW

Improvisations, remember? Just follow my lead...

As they carry out the fake break-up, Row stuffs her bag under her dress.

ROW (CONT'D)

You cheated on me because I got fat!

The surrounding patrons watch with increasing intrigue.

CASS

No, no. You're not fat. You're not. Well, you did put on some weight but--

Row fakes crying, throwing the audience - and Cass - for a loop.

ROW

You made me fat! Did you ever think I might be pregnant?!

CASS

What-- Pregnant?! Is it mine?

Their dramatic scene reaches a climax as Row hurls a book at Cass, but misses him. Then she bows theatrically as she concludes the performance.

CASS (CONT'D)
(whispers)
What are you doing?

ROW
Bowling to our audience.

Cass whirls around to find the entire bookstore watching them. He raises his hands in a placating gesture, explaining their act as Row's bag slips from underneath her dress. Cass flushes.

CASS
Don't worry, it's okay. Really.
It's-- it's make-believe. I-- I
don't care if she's fat. I swear.

He points to the bag.

CASS (CONT'D)
See? It's not real.

Overwhelmed by the absurdity of it all, they dissolve into fits of laughter. As they move onto another aisle, Row picks up a self-help book on relationships.

ROW
Something to slit your wrists to.

CASS
Does it make you sad?

ROW
What?

CASS
It never last.

ROW
Yeah, but in the end, though,
nothing is truly lost... you gain
so much.

CASS
Really?

ROW

Yeah, it's like, um, I often think about those who have never fallen in love or never been in a "Punch-Drunk Love" type of relationship. Or can you imagine never having someone be obsessed with you at least once in your lifetime? Uh, my dentist, who I think is like in her forties, once told me she's never been in a relationship. No one has ever fallen in love with her. Now that makes me sad, you know?

CASS

Yeah, yeah.

ROW

I think it's better to be in it, than not be in it at all.

Their conversation dwindles as they come across an ELDERLY COUPLE kissing behind a bookshelf. The sight sparks another line of thought.

CASS

It's not easy meeting people in this big city, though.

Row sighs heavily.

ROW

Tell me about it.

CASS

I hate bars. They just make me anxious, and it's too expensive. Fifteen dollars for a glass of wine? That's crazy.

ROW

I hate bars too. They're so loud. How can you talk when everyone's shouting?

They reach the cashier's counter. Cass retrieves the small book from his robe.

ROW (CONT'D)

What's that?

CASS

Uh, nothing, just...

Cass reluctantly reveals the title: "Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair."

ROW
Neruda... That's pretty serious stuff.

CASS
It's a gift, uh, for my mom.

Row nods, her eyes narrowing slightly, knowing it's bullshit.

ROW
Right, sure.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Cass and Row sit on a bus bench, their hands clasped as they engage in a playful thumb war.

CASS
Okay, pop quiz: Polar bear fur isn't white. True or false?

ROW
False.

CASS
Actually, it's true. Polar bear fur is clear. It looks white because it reflects light. Each hair is colorless. Okay, your turn...

ROW
All right, um... Do we have only five senses?

CASS
Yeah.

ROW
We have more than five... like balance, pain, and time.

Cass takes this in.

CASS
Time is a sense?

ROW
Uh-huh.

CASS
I don't get it?

ROW
We can't see or touch it, but it's always there. It helps us track when things happen and how long they last.

CASS
Fuck time, remember?

ROW
Yeah.

They both laugh, then they continue.

CASS
Do octopuses have three hearts?

Row shakes her head.

ROW
No one has three hearts.

CASS
Wrong again. Two hearts pump blood to their gills, and the third pumps blood to the rest of their body. The third heart actually stops beating when they swim.

ROW
I wish I had three hearts.

Row pins Cass's thumb firmly.

ROW (CONT'D)
More!

CASS
All right, are shooting stars really stars falling from the sky?

ROW
Uh, yes. No. Um, I'm really not sure.

CASS
Shooting stars aren't actually stars. They're tiny bits of dust from space that burn up when they hit Earth's atmosphere... creating a bright flash of light.

Row's eyes light up.

ROW
More about the stars!

CASS
Here's another myth: Stars don't
move.

ROW
Really?

Cass nods.

CASS
They might look still from here
because they're so far away, but
they're always moving in their
galaxies. This movement is
called... proper motion.

Row laughs.

ROW
"Proper motion," huh?

Cass nods.

CASS
Your turn, no?

ROW
Right, yes...

She takes a moment to think.

ROW (CONT'D)
Um, okay, here's one: Do humans
share 50% of their DNA with a
banana?

CASS
That can't be true.

Row mimics the sound of a game show buzzer.

ROW
Bzzt! It is..

Cass laughs.

CASS
So, we're half bananas?

ROW
No, it just means all life is
connected and shares a common past.

CASS
I like that one...

ROW
One more...

CASS
Okay.

ROW
True or false: Elbow licking is
possible.

CASS
True.

ROW
I actually don't know the answer.

They both laugh, twisting their arms in a vain attempt to
lick their elbows.

EXT. KARAOKE SHOUT - ASTORIA, QUEENS - DAY

Cass and Row stroll down the street, passing a karaoke place
with colorful lights and lively music emanating from inside.
Row playfully nudges Cass.

CASS
No, no, no, no.

ROW
Why not?

CASS
I can't sing.

ROW
Me neither.

CASS
But you're an actor.

ROW
Well, that doesn't mean I can do it
all.

Row smiles, challenging Cass. He raises an eyebrow,
intrigued.

ROW (CONT'D)

All right, if you could sing one song, what would it be?

Cass beams.

CASS

"Summertime," by Billie Holiday.

ROW

Why that song?

Cass's expression turns dreamy.

CASS

Um, it's about those moments when life feels easy, when nature is full of life... and there's hope. It reminds me of the simple things... I wish I could be more carefree... like you.

A moment.

CASS (CONT'D)

What about you?

Row pauses.

ROW

"Because the Night" by Patti Smith.

CASS

Why?

ROW

Well, because it's really horny poetry.

Cass laughs, nervously.

ROW (CONT'D)

I mean come on. "Take me now baby here as I am." "Desire is hunger is the fire I breathe." "Love is an angel disguised as lust." "So touch me now, touch me now, touch me now." It's about fucking, right?

Row looks at him. Cass flushes, he looks away. A moment passes.

ROW (CONT'D)

Well, we both can't sing. Shall we give it a shot?

CASS

Okay. All right. Sure.

INT. KARAOKE SHOUT - ASTORIA, QUEENS - DAY

The private room they enter is cosmic-themed, stars scattered across the ceiling.

Cass, a bit nervous, steps up to the karaoke machine. He hesitates before selecting "Summertime."

As he sings, his voice is shaky and off-key. Row watches, biting back a laugh, charmed by the effort.

CASS

That was awful.

ROW

You bet.

They both laugh.

CASS

Your turn...

Row approaches the microphone and starts singing "Because the Night." Her voice is sexy. She can sing! Cass watches, stunned - and a little turned on.

EXT. KARAOKE SHOUT - ASTORIA, QUEENS - DAY

Cass and Row step out onto the street.

CASS

Cheater. You lied.

ROW

If I told you I could sing, you wouldn't have tried. Why is it easier to connect when we share the same fears?

CASS

I suppose you're right.

There's a silence.

CASS (CONT'D)

I lied too.

ROW

When?

Cass pauses before replying.

CASS

I don't talk to my mom every week... She died during Covid. I just tell people she moved. It's easier than explaining.

ROW

Why tell me now?

CASS

After you opened up about your grandpa... I...

ROW

Grief is complicated, right? It hurts so much, but no one wants to talk about it. It's like this empty space in your soul that nothing can fill.

CASS

(almost to himself)
Yeah.

A moment. They continue walking.

EXT. ASTORIA PARK - DAY

A typical day in the park: parents hover over their children, dogs are strolled, kids flock to an ice cream truck, couples walk hand-in-hand.

Cass and Row sit back-to-back under the sprawling shade of an oak tree.

ROW

When do you feel... good?

CASS

Um, when I'm not second-guessing everything or worrying about things that haven't happened yet. Thinking too much makes it hard to breathe. I wish I could turn my brain off...

ROW

What do you think about the most?

CASS

I-- I used to think I had everything figured out... now I realize I know nothing. I don't know what's going to happen anymore.

ROW

Life's unpredictable, isn't it? No amount of planning can really prepare you.

Row springs to her feet.

ROW (CONT'D)

You know what we need?

CASS

What?

ROW

More spontaneity. Doing things without overthinking. That's our real selves--not the imaginary stuff in our heads. My acting coach always says, "Provoke the unexpected".

Row starts to climb the oak tree. Cass jumps to his feet.

CASS

Hey! Hey! Shit! What are you doing?!

ROW

Living!

CASS

Oh, God-- Please, don't do that. You-- you might get hurt.

He rubs his neck.

CASS (CONT'D)

I-- I'd really, uh, prefer it if you came back down now.

Row perches high up, taking in the view.

ROW

Okay, your turn...

CASS
Nope. Nope. Absolutely not.

ROW
Try...

Cass firmly shakes his head.

CASS
What if I fall?

ROW
We all fall sometimes...

Cass mulls it over, rubs his head.

CASS
All right. Okay. Fine.

ROW
Yeah?

CASS
Yeah!

Cass, cautiously, begins to climb the tree. Row watches him from above, offering words of encouragement.

ROW
You're doing great. Just don't look down.

Of course, Cass looks down.

CASS
Shit. Fuck. Shit.

ROW
Told you not to look down.

Cass reaches the top and clings tightly to a branch, breathing hard. Row beams, pulling him into a sudden hug.

ROW (CONT'D)
You did it!

Cass freezes for a second before nervously hugging her back.

EXT. ASTORIA PARK - DAY

As they walk away from the park, Cass spots a tear in Row's tights and the fresh scrape beneath it.

CASS
Your knee...

Row checks her knee.

ROW
Shit.

CASS
You okay?

ROW
Yeah, it's just a scrape.

Row pulls out a compact first aid kit from her bag, as if she's always ready for such situations.

CASS
Does this happen often?

Row shrugs nonchalantly.

EXT. LONG ISLAND CITY - STREET - DAY

Cass and Row walk along the waterfront boardwalk with the city skyline in the background.

ROW
So, why jazz?

CASS
It's-- it's how I connect to the world. Music is everywhere, in everything we do... laughter, tears, even how we walk.

ROW
And when we touch, kiss... make love.

CASS
Exactly, it's communication! Jazz changes, flows. Musicians improvise, creating something new every time. It's free, expressive, and you can feel it.

Cass suddenly hops up on a street bench.

CASS (CONT'D)
The city is full of music. It's always telling stories. We just need to listen...

Row smiles and climbs up onto the bench next to him.

CASS (CONT'D)
New York City is jazz!

They stand together, taking in the city's sounds.

MONTAGE

-- A pair of FEET, clad in worn-out shoes, PATTERN and SHUFFLE on a paved walkway, each step creating a rhythm of its own.

-- A CHILD'S LAUGHTER echoing around, as if carried by the wind.

-- A OLD MAN in a quiet alleyway, muffling his SOBS in a crumpled handkerchief, an echo of sorrow reverberating off the walls.

-- A YOUNG COUPLE, lost in their own world, share a KISS on a bustling street corner.

-- The EAST RIVER WAVES gently lap against the shore, their soft MURMURS punctuating the city's symphony.

-- A CONSTRUCTION WORKER drilling into concrete, the GRATING SOUND creating a rhythm, adding a harsher, vibrant tone to the city's song.

-- Through a cracked, DISTANT APARTMENT WINDOW, the rise and fall of a COUPLE'S BICKERING.

-- BIRDS on a tree, their sweet NOTES serenading the day.

-- Cass and Row's chests, their HEARTBEATS pulsing in time.

END MONTAGE

INT. MOMA PS1 - WOMEN'S BATHROOM - DAY

Row enters the bathroom, takes off her ripped tights, and throws them in the trash. She cleans the scrape on her knee and puts on a fresh bandage.

She looks at herself in the mirror, fixes her hair, and applies lipstick. She smiles, feeling better.

INT. MOMA PS1 - MEN'S BATHROOM - DAY

Cass stands at the sink, splashing cold water on his face. He looks at his reflection, notices his robe is a little messy, and straightens it. He takes a deep breath, ready to go back to Row.

INT. MOMA PS1 - DAY

Cass and Row stand in the "Meeting" room by James Turrell, staring at the sky through a huge ceiling cut-out.

CASS
(almost to himself)
The most important part of the
face...

Row looks at him, curious.

ROW
What's that?

CASS
The eyes.

ROW
Really?

CASS
No question.

Row offers a counter-argument, her tone teasing.

ROW
What about the mouth?

Cass shakes his head.

CASS
Nope.

ROW
You need it to eat... and kiss. And
the nose is important too.

Despite her points, Cass stands his ground, his tone firm.

CASS
Eyes are more important.

ROW

But, you need it to breathe. And how would you smell the flowers in the spring? Don't forget the ears...

CASS

Still, no.

ROW

How would you hear "I love you"?

CASS

Eyes talk...

They fall silent, looking at each other. A moment.

INT. NOGUCHI MUSEUM GARDEN - DAY

Cass and Row meander through the lush pathways of the Noguchi Museum Garden.

CASS

Do you love being an actor?

Row nods.

ROW

I can be anyone I want. What would you be?

Cass pauses before replying.

CASS

Um, a book.

Row softly chuckles.

ROW

A book?

CASS

Yep.

ROW

So, you want people touching you all the time, even with greasy fingers? Tears on your pages, getting mad at for what you say... being burned or thrown out.

CASS

Uh-huh.

Row looks at him.

ROW
You a masochist?

Cass shakes his head.

CASS
What about you?

ROW
An angel.

CASS
Why?

ROW
I want to hear everyone's stories
and know their secrets.

CASS
When did you know you wanted to be
an actor?

Row chuckles, her eyes distant, lost in a memory.

ROW
When I was six... I broke my leg.

Cass raises an eyebrow.

CASS
Climbing a tree?

Row smiles.

ROW
I stayed inside all summer. Grandpa
moved my bed by the window. I
couldn't climb trees, but I could
imagine being one. I've been
pretending ever since.

She stops and raises her arms like a tree, swaying gently as
her hair moves in the wind.

ROW (CONT'D)
Try it...

Cass follows, raising his arms and closing his eyes, standing
still with her.

INT. BUS - DAY

Cass and Row sit on a nearly empty bus, looking calm and relaxed.

ROW
How come we never met?

CASS
We did.

Row looks surprised.

ROW
When?

CASS
Last spring. I saw you sitting on
the steps, crying.

Row pauses.

ROW
I remember. You gave me your
handkerchief.

CASS
Why were you crying?

Row pulls a pocket watch from her bag. She opens it, and Mozart's "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" plays softly.

ROW
I got caught in the rain and broke
my grandpa's watch. It's the only
thing I have left of him. I found a
place on Delancey to fix it.

The music creates a nostalgic feeling.

ROW (CONT'D)
I miss him so much...

Row rest her head on Cass's shoulder, her eyelids growing heavy as the music lulls her into a peaceful state.

ROW (CONT'D)
I'm glad we're neighbors...

Cass closes his eyes.

CASS
Me too.

They both relax, eyes closed, in a quiet moment.

CASS (CONT'D)
You hungry?

ROW
I'm starving.

Cass smiles, eyes still closed.

INT. INDIAN RESTAURANT - QUEENS - DAY

Cass and Row sit in a busy Indian restaurant, across from each other in awkward silence. Row watches other couples eat, while Cass fiddles with a napkin, folding it into a paper airplane.

ROW
You seem tense.

Cass shrugs.

CASS
No-- I'm fine.

Row chuckles.

ROW
Just a little nervous, maybe? I get butterflies when I eat with someone new.

Cass rubs his neck.

CASS
All right, yeah. I am nervous.

Row smiles triumphantly.

ROW
I knew it! Why do people get nervous when sharing a meal for the first time?

CASS
It's intimate... You really see someone when you watch them eat.

They share a quiet moment, exchanging glances. The paper airplane sits forgotten on the table.

The waiter arrives with plates of food.

ROW
So, what's the most embarrassing
thing you've done on a date?

CASS
Um, I once spat food while talking
and it landed in her hair.

Row mischievously fills her mouth, spilling some food as she speaks.

ROW
Like this?

CASS
Worse.

Cass stuffs his mouth and deliberately spills food.

ROW
Gross.

Other diners stare at them in disgust. Cass and Row burst into laughter, quickly cleaning up the mess, still giggling.

EXT. WILLIAMSBURG - DAY

Cass and Row ride their Citi Bikes through the lively streets of Williamsburg, moving smoothly in sync. They pass by the Domino Sugar Factory, colorful street art on North 14th Street, Marlow & Sons, Nitehawk Cinema, Bedford Avenue, the Music Hall of Williamsburg, Brooklyn Brewery, McCarren Park, and finally arrive at the busy Artists & Fleas market.

EXT. CITI BIKE STATION - DAY

The sound of wheels screeching to a stop. Cass and Row, laughing and out of breath, roll their Citi Bikes into the docking station.

INT. ARTISTS & FLEAS MARKET - DAY

Cass and Row walk through the busy market, surrounded by stalls of jewelry, art, clothing, and home decor.

CASS
You still haven't stolen anything.

ROW
I just haven't found the right
thing to steal--

Suddenly, Row ducks behind a rack of dresses.

CASS
What are you doing?

Row gestures toward a YOUNG WOMAN across the market.

ROW
My ex.

Cass follows Row's gaze and discreetly looks back at her.

ROW (CONT'D)
Is she gone?

CASS
Not yet... Okay, now.

ROW
Are you sure?

CASS
Yeah, she's gone.

Row resurfaces from under the clothing rack.

ROW
I'm bisexual... Do you have a
problem with that?

CASS
No, of course not. Some of my
favorite musicians are LGBTQIA+...
Billie Holiday, Bessie Smith, and
Ma Rainey, the "Mother of the
Blues".

ROW
Just checking.

CASS
Why did you break-up?

Row looks uncomfortable.

ROW
She dumped me.

CASS
Why?

Row rolls her eyes.

ROW

We argued about Gena Rowlands until
I cried...

She blows a raspberry like Mabel in "A Woman Under the
Influence," as a rebellious gesture.

ROW (CONT'D)

She kept saying, "How's acting
gonna pay the bills"? She was so
mean, like my parents. "Get a real
job". Ugh, she said I was always
pretending.

Cass hides a smile as he veers off toward a vintage
sunglasses shop. Row browses, finds a pair like Holly
Golightly's from "Breakfast at Tiffany's," and puts them on,
admiring herself in the mirror.

ROW (CONT'D)

"I'm like cat here, a no-name slob.
We belong to nobody, and nobody
belongs to us. We don't even belong
to each other."

As the vendor turns, Row walks off with the sunglasses still
on. Cass casually follows her.

ROW (CONT'D)

"I'll never let anybody put me in a
cage."

Cass stifles a laugh, trying not to laugh out loud.

EXT. MARSHA P. JOHNSON STATE PARK - DAY

Cass and Row walk through the vibrant floral gateway of
Marsha P. Johnson State Park, with Row wearing the sunglasses
she just took. Marsha's famous quote, "Pay It No Mind," is
displayed across the top.

They stroll past panels that tell the story of Marsha's life
and activism.

CASS

Did you know that Andy Warhol
painted a portrait of Marsha P.
Johnson?

ROW

No.

CASS

It's part of his "Ladies and Gentlemen" series. They're portraits of drag queens and transgender people.

ROW

Wasn't he a bit of a creep? I mean, he was only interested in fame and, uh, emotionally shallow.

CASS

You know, I-- I kind of believed that too until I, um, watched this docuseries on his life. His voice is AI-generated, which is kind of weird at first, but now I-- I think it's beautifully done. He was actually really sensitive, thoughtful, and... lonely. It made me feel sad. There's one quote of his that really stuck with me...

Chuckles at himself.

CASS (CONT'D)

Sorry, I'm talking too much again.

Row takes off the sunglasses and looks at him.

ROW

No, no, keep going, I want to hear it.

CASS

Okay, um, he said, "People should fall in love with their eyes closed." I thought it was beautiful. Love is about something deeper than looks.

Row looks at him, clearly impressed.

ROW

I've never met anyone like you. You're the smartest person I know.

Cass's cheeks turn pink, and he nervously rubs his neck.

CASS

I'm-- I'm just really into information, especially history.

ROW

Why history? It can be depressing sometimes.

CASS

I-- I think if everyone really knew all of history, especially the bad parts, maybe we'd stop all this hate.

Row frowns, her eyes narrowing.

ROW

It doesn't matter.

CASS

What do you mean?

ROW

Most people live in a bubble and don't even care. I read that 60% of Americans don't know six million Jews died in the Holocaust. And no one wants to talk about the Native American genocide, slavery, or Ukraine.

CASS

Yeah, it's really sad.

Row clenches her jaw, angry.

ROW

Do you think people ever learn from history? They're banning books about LGBTQIA+ people, race, and racism! They're more afraid of books than guns! And women's rights... It's crazy that this shit is still happening.

CASS

It feels hopeless, but... I want to believe there are more of us than them. Maybe we can change things.

ROW

Optimist, huh?

CASS

Yeah, but think about it. Without activists, we wouldn't have had big changes.

(MORE)

CASS (CONT'D)

We wouldn't have equal rights for Black Americans without people like Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, and John Lewis!

ROW

And we wouldn't have had the Stonewall riots without Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, and Stormé DeLarverie.

CASS

See? You're an optimist too.

They share a smile..

ROW

Can I ask something, but it's kinda dumb?

CASS

Sure.

ROW

Okay... So, you're like a walking library, right? You read a lot and love learning. Why haven't you been to all the places we went today?

Cass pulls out his iPhone and shows her his Instagram.

ROW (CONT'D)

Hmm, only four followers...

Cass sadly nods.

CASS

Yeah... it's hard to make friends when you have anxiety. It's tough being vulnerable.

He looks down, embarrassed.

CASS (CONT'D)

I-- I'm always worried about being misunderstood. Like, they won't get me or think I'm weird.

Row looks at him empathetically.

ROW

Well, I spent the whole day with you, and I feel super lucky.

(MORE)

ROW (CONT'D)

I think you're pretty special. You really are.

A moment.

ROW (CONT'D)

Social media is fake, you know? No one has that many friends. It's all bullshit.

CASS

Yeah, but it's what everyone cares about.

ROW

I think you only need a few close friends. Friends who'll stick with you no matter what—who'd live or die for you. If you have that, you're lucky... So, uh... would you like to be my friend?

CASS

I'd like that.

ROW

But there's a condition...

CASS

Wh-- What?

ROW

No more religious stuff, unless it's about a Keith Haring Triptych.

CASS

Bet.

ROW

Bet.

Row smiles at Cass, and he smiles back.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Cass and Row stand on the train, hands inches apart as they both hold onto the pole.

SUBWAY CONDUCTOR (O.S.)

Next stop, Brooklyn Bridge.

ROW

It's almost over.

CASS
What is?

ROW
Today.

CASS
Oh, right.

A brief silence.

ROW
Well, it's still not nine yet,
right?

CASS
Right.

ROW
Let's walk a little, okay?

CASS
Yeah, sure. Wanna walk over the
Brooklyn Bridge?

Row smiles.

ROW
I'd really like that. You know,
I've never walked over the bridge.

A brief pause.

ROW (CONT'D)
Um, do you know any cool stories
about the bridge?

CASS
Yeah, actually.

ROW
Of course you do.

They share a smile.

CASS
So, around 2009, couples started
"padlocking" the bridge. They put
locks on it and threw away the key,
kind of like in Paris, to symbolize
their love.

ROW
That's so romantic. What happened
to all the locks?

CASS
The city had to remove them all
because the weight was putting the
bridge at risk.

ROW
How sad.

The train doors open, and Cass and Row step off.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - DUSK

The city is bathed in a warm, golden light as dusk falls. Cass and Row walk slowly, deep in thought. They stop at a traffic light. Row absentmindedly pulls a loose string off Cass's robe. When the light changes, they continue walking.

CASS
I have to tell you something...

ROW
What is it?

CASS
Um, earlier, when you said kissing
in movies isn't real, that it's
just acting...

ROW
Right.

CASS
I... I wasn't really acting.

Row smiles.

ROW
Same here.

Cass smiles back.

EXT. BROOKLYN - STREET - DUSK

They walk toward the bridge when a scene catches their attention. A group of CONSTRUCTION WORKERS prepares to demolish an old brownstone, making way for new condos.

CASS
Nothing is holy anymore.

They stand still, watching in silence as the workers bring down the building, a cloud of dust rising.

Cass pulls out the book he bought earlier and starts reading aloud.

CASS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(reading)
Tonight I can write the saddest lines. I loved her, and sometimes she loved me too... Through nights like this one, I held her in my arms, I kissed her again and again under the endless sky... My soul is not satisfied that it has lost her... My sight searches for her as though to go to her. My heart looks for her, and she is not with me... The same night whitening the same trees... We, of that time, are no longer the same...

MONTAGE:

-- The skyline of New York at sunset, with warm hues casting a nostalgic glow.

-- Building fronts of bodegas, exuding a sense of neighborhood charm.

-- The iconic Chelsea Hotel, a symbol of artistic and bohemian culture.

-- A street lined up with old brownstones, each with its unique character.

-- Cobblestone streets from Brooklyn, Harlem, Staten Island, reminiscent of a time long ago.

-- Murals and Graffiti-covered walls, capturing the urban vibrancy and street art scene.

-- CBGB, the legendary punk rock venue, representing the city's rich musical history.

-- The Brooklyn Bridge, a majestic structure spanning across the East River.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - NIGHT

Cass and Row step onto the bridge, the lights casting a glow on the New York skyline, its beauty taking their breath away.

CASS
Look at that... There's no place
like it.

He looks at the city with a new sense of reverence.

CASS (CONT'D)
New York will always be...

Row smiles.

ROW
...New York.

Cass smiles back.

CASS
Yeah.

Row moves closer to the railing, lost in thought.

ROW
Do you believe dreams can come
true, Cass?

CASS
Sometimes.

ROW
You're not the only one...

CASS
What do you mean?

ROW
Everyone's scared. I'm scared too.

CASS
Of what?

ROW
That I'm not good enough. It's all
a risk, isn't it? What if I don't
make it?

CASS
But you seem so confident.

Row softly laughs.

ROW

Actors are so insecure, even if they appear confident. It's a tough business, you know. You can work hard and still not make it. It's all about luck.

Cass turns to Row.

CASS

You're a star, remember?

ROW

Right...

She searches her bag, takes her mask out and puts it on.

ROW (CONT'D)

And you're the pink moon...

Cass takes his mask out of his pocket and puts it on.

CASS

I think we're gonna be all right.

They share a quiet moment, then continue walking across the bridge. Row shivers slightly. Cass slips off his robe and drapes it over her shoulders.

ROW

Thank you.

EXT. OLD TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Cass and Row stand in silence in front of their apartment building, facing each other. Their eyes are fixed on the ground, unsure of what to do next. Eventually, their eyes meet.

ROW

It was fun. Wonderful...

CASS

The best Saturday of my life.

ROW

Yeah, mine too.

A moment.

ROW (CONT'D)

So, uh, what are you up to tonight?

CASS
Uh, you know, nothing much.

They share a knowing laugh.

CASS (CONT'D)
And you?

ROW
I don't know. No plans, really.

Cass looks like he's about to say something but hesitates.

ROW (CONT'D)
Well... thanks again for today.

She takes off the robe and hands it back to him.

ROW (CONT'D)
I guess that's it... uh, bye.

Row lingers, waiting for Cass to stop her.

CASS
Um, okay... see you around.

Row looks slightly disappointed.

ROW
Yeah, sure.

Row begins walking toward the entrance. Cass rubs his neck, struggling to find the courage to speak.

CASS
Row!

Row stops, smiles, and turns around.

ROW
Yeah? What is it?

CASS
We never danced.

ROW
W-- What?

CASS
We spent the whole day together...
talking, making masks, stealing,
singing, riding bikes, eating,
acting, even climbing a tree... but
we never danced.

(MORE)

CASS (CONT'D)

(pause)

Saturday isn't over yet...

Cass smiles and extends his hand. Row smiles back and takes it. Their fingers touch...

EXT. HUDSON RIVER PARK - NIGHT

Time slows as Cass and Row dance slowly, cheek to cheek, in perfect harmony. They're lost in their own world, surrounded by the stunning New York City skyline.

FADE OUT.