Adaptation.

By Charlie Kaufman
Do I have an original thought
in my head? My bald head?
Maybe if I were happier,
my hair wouldn't be falling out.
Life is short. I need
to make the most of it.
Today is the first day
of the rest of my life.
I'm a walking clich.
I really need to go to the doctor,
have my leg checked.
There's something wrong.
A bump.
The dentist called again.
I'm way overdue.
If I stopped putting things off,
I'd be happier.
All I do is sit on my fat ass.
If my ass wasn't fat,
I'd be happier.
I wouldn't have to wear these shirts
with the tails out all the time.
Like that's fooling anyone.
Fat ass. I should start jogging again.
Five miles a day.
Really do it this time.
Maybe rock climbing.
I need to turn my life around.
What do I need to do?
I need to fall in love.
I need to have a girlfriend.
I need to read more,
improve myself.
What if I learned Russian
or something?
Or took up an instrument?
I could speak Chinese.
I would be the screenwriter who speaks Chinese.
And plays the oboe.
That would be cool.
I should get my hair cut short.
Stop trying to fool everyone into
thinking I have a full head of hair.
How pathetic is that?
Just be real. Confident.
Isn't that what women are attracted to?
Men don't have to be attractive.
But that's not true, especially these days.
Almost as much pressure on men as there is on women these days. Why should I be made to feel I have to apologize for my existence? Maybe it's my brain chemistry. Bad chemistry. All my problems and anxiety can be reduced to a chemical imbalance or some kind of misfiring synapses. I need to get help for that.
But I'll still be ugly, though.
Nothing's gonna change that.
Shut up! Shut up! Okay?
Let's really try today to solve our camera problems. Keep between-take time at an absolute minimum. These masks are really hot. Okay? I wanna be very well-heard on that from everybody. Don't futz unless it's absolutely important to the shot, okay? I don't say that for me. I say that for the people sitting here. Thank you. In the rubber. - I like my dress. Okay?
- Very good.
So now, folks, you better heed that advice. Okay? Heed that advice. Stand by for picture. Have her rotate around the table a little bit further. Hold on until we're clear. You. You're in the eyeline.
Can you please get off the stage?
Yeah, just bring in the six-footer.
What am I doing here?
Why did I bother to come here today?
Nobody even seems to know
my name.
I've been on this planet for 40 years,
and I don't understand a single thing.
Why am I here?
How did I get here?
My leg hurts.
I wonder if it's cancer.
There's a bump. I'm starting
to sweat. Stop sweating.
I've got to stop sweating.
Can she see it dripping
down my forehead?
She looked at my hairline.
She thinks I'm bald. She...
We think you're great.
Oh, wow.
Thanks.
That's nice to hear.
We all just loved
the Malkovich script.
Thanks. Thanks...
Such a unique voice.
Boy, I'd love to find
a portal into your brain.
Trust me, it's no fun.
Heh, heh.
So tell me your thoughts
on this crazy little project of ours.
First, I think it's a great book.
Laroche is a fun character.
Absolutely.
And Orlean makes orchids
so fascinating.
Plus, her musings on Florida
and orchid poaching, Indians.
It's just... It's great,
sprawling New Yorker stuff.
I'd want to remain true to that.
I'd wanna let the movie exist,
rather than be artificially plot-driven.

Great.

I guess I'm not exactly sure what that means.

Oh.

I'm not sure I know what that means either.

I don't wanna ruin it by making it a Hollywood thing. You know?

Like an orchid heist movie or something, you know?

Or changing the orchids into poppies and making it about drug running. Definitely.

Why can't there be a movie simply about flowers?

I guess we thought that maybe Susan Orlean and Laroche could fall in love, and...

Okay. But I'm saying, it's like, I don't wanna cram in sex or guns or car chases, you know, or characters, you know, learning profound life lessons. Or growing, or coming to like each other, or overcoming obstacles to succeed in the end, you know? I mean...

The book isn't like that and life isn't like that. You know, it just isn't. And... Ahem.

I feel very strongly about this. John Laroche is a tall guy, skinny as a stick, pale-eyed, slouch-shouldered, sharply handsome, despite the fact he's missing all his front teeth.

I went to Florida two years ago to write a piece for The New Yorker.
After reading a small article about a white man and three Seminole men arrested with rare orchids they'd stolen from a place called the Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve.

As natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection. It's interesting to contemplate an entangled bank...

Polyrrhiza lindenii.
A ghost.

Cut her down, Russell.

Morning.
Hey.

May I ask you gentlemen what you have in those pillowcases?
Yes, sir, you absolutely may.
Okay, then, I'm asking.
Well, okay, then.
Let's see.

We've got five kinds of bromeliad, one peperomia, nine orchid varieties.

Uh...
You know, about 130 plants all told.
Which my colleagues here removed from the swamp.
You're aware it's illegal to remove plants or animals from state-owned land?
Yeah, and don't forget, these plants are all endangered, sir.
Every one of them.
Well, exactly. That's exactly the issue. This is a state preserve.
Yes, sir. It is.
But...

My colleagues are Seminole Indians. Did I mention that?
You're familiar, I'm sure,
with the State of Florida
v. James E. Billie?
So you know even though Seminole Chief
Billie killed a Florida panther,
one of, what,
40 in the entire world?
Forty.
Forty.
The state couldn't
successfully prosecute him,
because, you know,
he's an Indian, and it's his right.
As repugnant as you and I, as white
conservationists, find his actions.
But...
Not to mention the failed attempts
on three occasions to prosecute
Seminoles for poaching palm fronds.
Which I believe they use to thatch the
roofs of their traditional chickee huts.
How about that?
With the chickee huts, right?
Yeah, he's right. That's exactly what
we use them for. Chickee huts.
Yeah.
Yeah.
Yeah.
Yeah, but I don't...
I can't let you fellas leave yet.
Just hold on there a minute.
Okay?
Charles, is that you?
Did you eat lunch?
I had that shrimp cocktail
in the fridge. Was it yours?
I hope not. I couldn't remember,
so I ate it.
Maybe we should write our names
on our food items from now on.
What's with you?
My back.
Charles, you'll be glad.
I have a plan to get me out of your house, pronto.
A job is a plan. Is your plan a job?
Drum roll, please.
I'm gonna be a screenwriter.
Like you.
I know you think this is one of my "get rich quick" schemes, but I'm doing it right.
I'm taking a three-day seminar, and it's only 500 bucks.
Screenwriting seminars are bullshit.
In theory, I agree with you. But this one's different.
This one's highly regarded in the industry.
Donald, don't say "industry."
I'm sorry. I forgot.
Charles, this guy knows screenwriting.
People come from all over to study with him.
I'll pay you back as soon as I...
Let me explain something.
Anybody who says he's got "the answer" will attract desperate people, be it in the world of religion...
I need to lie down while you explain this.
Sorry. I apologize.
Okay, go ahead.
So...
Sorry. Okay. Go.
There are no rules, Donald.
And anybody who says there are is just, you know...
McKee writes that a rule says, "You must do it this way."
A principle says, "This works and has through all remembered time."
The script I'm starting, it's about flowers.
Oh.
Nobody's ever done a movie about flowers before.
So there are no guidelines. What about Flowers for Algernon? Well, that's not about flowers. And it's not a movie. I'm sorry. I never saw it. How...? Okay, keep going. Look, my point is that those teachers are dangerous if your goal is to do something new. A writer should always have that goal. Writing is a journey into the unknown. It's not building, you know, one of your model airplanes. McKee is a former Fulbright Scholar, Charles. Are you a former Fulbright Scholar? Say something. I dragged her here, and now I'm not saying anything. Make her laugh. Say something funny. I hate parties, Amelia. Why did we come here? Because we're hip, young trendsetters on the make? More like old losers sitting on the floor, maybe. Jesus, Charlie. Heh, heh, heh. Speak for yourself. Okay... Charlie, we're gonna fix you up. We're gonna solve the whole Charlie Kaufman mess for once and for all. Okay. Okay, let me see. What do you need? What, what, what? Well, I'm glad you took the orchid script. I think it will be good for you to get out of your head. It'll ground you to think about the
bigger picture, about nature and stuff.
I still can't believe
they gave me that job.
I mean, after that lunch.
I was sweating insanely.
I was ranting. I was a mess.
You were nervous
because she was pretty.
How do you know she was pretty?
After eight months of knowing you,
I think I get what makes you sweat.
Well, whatever.
Well, moving on, what next?
You need a new getup.
This whole flannel-shirt thing,
it's not really doing anything
for you anymore.
Thanks for coming out
with me tonight, Amelia.
To begin.
To begin.
How to start?
I'm hungry.
I should get coffee.
Coffee would help me think.
But I should write something first,
then reward myself with coffee.
Coffee and a muffin. Okay,
so I need to establish the themes.
Maybe banana-nut.
That's a good muffin.
Orchid hunting is
a mortal occupation.
Victorian-era orchid hunter
William Arnold
drowned on
a collecting expedition.
Osmers vanished without a trace
in Asia.
Augustus Margary survived toothache,
rheumatism, pleurisy and dysentery,
only to be murdered when
he completed his mission
and traveled beyond Bhamo.
Laroche loved orchids, but I...
I came to believe he loved the
difficulty and fatality of getting them
almost as much as he loved
the orchids themselves.
I've been a professional
horticulturist for like 12 years.
Uh, I owned my own plant nursery,
which was destroyed by the hurricane.
I'm a professional
plant lecturer.
I've given over, like, 60 lectures
on the cultivation of plants.
I'm a published author,
both in magazine and book form.
And I have extensive experience
with orchids
and the asexual micropropagation
of orchids under aseptic cultures.
That's laboratory work.
It's not at all like your nursery work.
Um...
I'm probably
the smartest person I know.
Thank you.
You're very welcome.
Mr. Laroche?
I'm Susan Orlean.
I'm a writer for The New Yorker.
It's a magazine that...
I'm familiar with
The New Yorker.
"The New Yorker?
Yes, The New Yorker." Right?
That's right.
I'm very interested in doing a piece
on your situation here, and...
Oh, yeah? Yeah.
You wanna put this in?
I don't care what goes on here.
I'm right, and I'll take it all the way
to Supreme Court.
Because that judge
can screw herself.
That for real would go in? Absolutely. Hmm.

We open on State Road 29.
A battered white van speeds along,
making a sharp, skidding right
into the Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve.
The driver of the van is
a skinny man with no front teeth.
This is John Laroche.
I need a break.
I loved the Sibelius violin concerto.
Yeah, me too. It was great.
The end was a little weird, but...
Oh, no! God, it was passionate.
It was exultant.
The soloist was amazing.
Such beautiful tones. So precise.
God, it blows my mind.
I wish I could play like that.
You do.
Oh, Charlie. I don't.
I'm mediocre at best.
Well, I love listening to you play.
Oh, thanks, Charlie.
Here we are.
So, uh...
What are you up to now, then?
Oh, um, I should
probably get to bed.
I have a lot of work
to do tomorrow.
Well, good night, then.
I would stay out.
It's just that I've been struggling
on the script right now.
Been thinking about it too small,
writing it like a story about Laroche.
That's not enough. I mean,
I wanted to write about flowers.
Anyway, I can't figure it out, and I
haven't been sleeping well lately,
so I thought I should get home
and try to get a good night's sleep, you know. Start fresh in the morning. Hm.
Otherwise, I'd stay out. I understand. I hope you figure it out, Charlie. I really do. Thanks. Thanks for coming out with me and everything. Sure, it was fun. So I have to go to Santa Barbara next weekend for this orchid show up there. I thought maybe you could come.
No, I...
I don't think I can make it next weekend. I don't think I can. I've got something. Sorry. Okay.
So, well, okay, then. So good night, then. Good night, Charlie.
- Why didn't I go in?
- I'm such a chicken. I'm such an idiot. I should have kissed her. I've blown it. I should go and knock on her door right now and kiss her. It would be romantic. Something we could someday tell our kids. I'm gonna do that right now. Hi.
Hey. Thanks for picking me up. This van's a piece of shit. But when I hit the jackpot, I'll buy myself an awesome car. Hey, what are you driving? Um, it's... Well, it's a rental. It's a Lumina. Awesome.
I think I'll get one of those too. Here we go. Where do these people learn to drive, huh? Ha, ha!
The world's insane.
So I was impressed to hear
how accomplished you are
in horticulture.
The thing you gotta know is,
my whole life is looking for
a goddamn profitable plant, see?
And that's the ghost.
Why the ghost orchid?
Well, the sucker's rare.
You know?
Mm-hm.
And I'm the only one in the world
who knows how to cultivate it.
Mmm.
See, the idea was, get the Indians
to pull it from the swamp.
I researched it. Long as I don't touch
the plant, Florida can't touch us.
And I stop future poaching by making the
flowers readily available in stores.
I'm a hero, the flowers are saved,
Laroche and nature win.
Oh. Great.
Did you get that last part?
Uh, yeah, I sure did.
Orchids are the sexiest
flowers on earth.
The name orchid derives from the
Latin orchis, which means testicle.
Hey, Charles.
I pitched my screenplay to Mom.
Don't say "pitch."
Sorry.
Anyway, she said it was Silence
of the Lambs meets Psycho.
Maybe you guys could collaborate.
I hear Mom's good with structure.
So how come Amelia doesn't
come around anymore?
Did you put the moves on her
or something?
Hi.
I'm looking for John Laroche.
Hi. Hi.
I'm writing an article on John,
and I stopped by.
Hoped I could see him.
John's not here.
Oh.
Well, you were at the swamp
with him, weren't you?
Saw you at the courthouse,
that's how I know.
I'm Matthew Osceola.
Susan Orlean. Nice to meet you.
Maybe I could talk to you
for a second.
I'm just trying to get a feel
for the whole operation...
You have very beautiful hair.
Thank you very much.
Thank you. I just...
I just washed it this morning.
I just used a new conditioner.
I can see your sadness.
It's lovely.
Well, I'm just tired, that's all.
That's my problem.
So maybe we could chat
a little bit,
and I could get some background...
I'm not going to talk to you much.
It's not personal.
It's the Indian way.
Angraecum sesquipedale.
Beauty! God!
Darwin wrote about this one.
Charles Darwin?
Evolution guy? Hello?
You see that nectary down there?
Darwin hypothesized a moth
with a nose 12 inches long
to pollinate it.
Everyone thought he was a loon.
Then, sure enough,
they found this moth
with a 12-inch proboscis.
"Proboscis" means nose, by the way.
I know what it means.
Hey, let's not get off the subject.
This isn't a pissing contest.
The point is,
what's so wonderful
is that all these flowers
have a specific relationship
with the insect
that pollinates it.
There's a certain orchid
looks exactly like a certain insect.
So the insect is drawn
to this flower,
its double, its soul mate,
and wants nothing more
than to make love to it.
After the insect flies off,
it spots another soul-mate flower
and makes love to it, pollinating it.
And neither the flower nor the insect
will ever understand
the significance
of their lovemaking.
How could they know that because
of their little dance, the world lives?
But it does.
By simply doing
what they're designed to do
something large
and magnificent happens.
In this sense, they show us
how to live.
How the only barometer
you have is your heart.
How when you spot your flower,
you can't let anything get in your way.
He's really quite a character.
No front teeth.
Doesn't seem to bother him at all.
Why doesn't he get them fixed?
It seems almost sociopathic
to make everybody look at that.
Yeah, but he gives
a great blowjob, honey.
He is a fascinating character, though.
Sounds like a gold mine, Sue.
It could be. I don't know, you know? He's, uh...
He lives with his dad, he's obsessed with his dead mother, and...
He wears his sunglasses on a little dingle-dangle around his neck.
Loving it.
Tell them about the van.
Okay, the van. The van.
I can't tell about the van. I gotta pee.
No, tell us about the van.
- It's amazing. It's...
- What's in it?
You did it in the van.
Shut up.
David, you tell... Don't you tell them.
Don't tell them.
Okay, the van.
David!
This van was filled with junk...
Shut up!
- Potting soil. Shovels.
- Food wrappers. Fertilizer.
Susie said she hoped it was fertilizer, anyway.
Said she couldn't be sure.
Laroche had a certain aromatic look about him.
And she said...
She said perhaps his obsessiveness didn't leave room in his schedule for personal hygiene.
Maybe the orchids got all the available water.
I wanted to want something as much as people wanted these plants.
But...
it isn't part of my constitution.
I suppose I do have one unembarrassed passion.
I wanna know what it feels like to care about something passionately.
"Should one be lucky enough to see a ghost orchid, all else will seem eclipsed."
If the ghost orchid was really a phantom, it was such a bewitching one that it could seduce people to pursue it year after year and mile after miserable mile.
If it was a real flower, I wanted to see one.
The reason wasn't that I love orchids. I don't even especially like orchids. What I wanted was to see this thing that people were drawn to in such a singular and powerful way.
So how many turtles did you end up collecting? Oh, I lost interest right after that.
Oh.
I dropped turtles when I fell in love with Ice Age fossils. Collected the shit out of them. Fossils were the only thing that made sense to me in this fucked-up world. I ditched fossils for resilvering old mirrors. My mom and I had the largest collection of 19th-century Dutch mirrors on the planet. Perhaps you read about us. Mirror World, October '88? I got a copy here somewhere. I guess I'd just like to know how you can detach from something that you've invested so much of your soul in. I mean, didn't you ever miss turtles? The only thing that made
your 10-year-old life worth living?
Look, I'll tell you a story, all right?
I once fell deeply, you know, profoundly in love with tropical fish.
I had 60 goddamn fish tanks
in my house.
I'd skin-dive to find
just the right ones.
Anisotremus virginicus, Holacanthus
ciliaris, Chaetodon capistratus.
You name it.
Then one day I say, "Fuck fish."
I renounce fish. I vow never
to set foot in that ocean again.
That's how much "fuck fish."
That was 17 years ago, and I have
never since stuck a toe in that ocean.
And I love the ocean.
But why?
Done with fish.
If you'd really loved something,
wouldn't a little bit of it linger?
Evidently Laroche's finishes
were downright and absolute.
He just moved on.
I sometimes wished
I could do the same.
Good afternoon.
So, what looks good today?
The key lime pie, please.
A small slice.
And a coffee, please.
Skim milk, please.
Orchids. I love orchids.
Oh, cool. That's... Heh.
Well, I'll be right back
with your pie.
I'm so excited. I've always wanted
to come to an orchid show.
I think these flowers are so sexy.
Let's see what's around back.
What?
You wanna hear my pitch?
Go away, goddamn it.
You know, I'm just trying
to do something.
Hey, thanks a lot, buddy.
Cool.
Okay, there's this
serial killer, right?
Well, no, wait.
And he's being hunted by a cop.
And he's taunting the cop, right?
Sending clues who his next victim is.
He's already holding her
hostage in his basement.
So the cop gets obsessed
with figuring out her identity
and in the process
falls in love with her.
Even though he's never even
met her. She becomes like...
Like the unattainable.
Like the Holy Grail.
It's a little obvious,
don't you think?
Okay, but here's the twist.
We find out that the killer
really suffers from
multiple personality disorder. Right?
See, he's actually really the cop
and the girl.
All of them are him.
Isn't that fucked up?
The only idea more overused than
serial killers is multiple personality.
On top of that,
you explore the notion
that cop and criminal are
two aspects of the same person.
See every cop movie ever made
for other examples of this.
Mom called it
psychologically taut.
The other thing is, there's no way
to write this. Did you consider that?
I mean, how could you have somebody
held prisoner in a basement
and working in a police station
at the same time?
Trick photography.
Okay, that's not what I'm asking.
Listen closely.
What I'm asking is:
In the reality of this movie, where
there's only one character, right?
Okay?
How could you?
What exactly would?
I agree with Mom. Very taut.
Sybil meets, I don't know...
Dressed to Kill.
Cool. I really liked
Dressed to Kill.
Until the third act denouement.
That's not how it's pronounced.
Sorry. I...
Okay, sorry.
Hi.
Hey.
Some key lime pie for you today?
Okay, yeah. That sounds great.
I'll cut you an extra-large slice.
Preferred customer.
Thank you.
That's really sweet of you.
Well, I'm just a sweetie, ain't I?
Still reading about orchids, I hope?
Yes, I am.
This friend of mine
has this little, tiny pink one
that grows on a tree branch
just like that.
I can't remember...
It's called an epiphyte.
Right. Right!
Boy, you know your stuff.
No, not really.
I'm just learning.
Epiphytes grow on trees,
but they're not parasites.
They get their nourishment
from the air and the rain.
Well, I'm impressed.
That's great.
There are more than 30,000 kinds
of orchids in the world.
Wow, that's a lot, huh?
Yeah. Yeah.
Yeah.
I'll be back with an extra-large slice
of key lime pie for my orchid expert.
But... So anyway,
I was also wondering...
I'm going up to Santa Barbara this
Saturday for an orchid show, and I...
Oh.
I'm sorry.
Well, um...
I apologize. I'm sorry.
So I'll just be right back with your pie.
There are more than 30,000
known orchid species.
One looks like a turtle.
One looks like a monkey.
One looks like an onion.
One looks like a schoolteacher.
One looks like a gymnast.
One looks like that girl
in high school with creamy skin.
One looks like a New York
intellectual
with whom you do the Sunday
Times crossword puzzle in bed.
One looks like a Midwestern
beauty queen.
One looks like Amelia.
One has eyes that dance.
One has eyes that contain
the sadness of the world.
So I got married,
and me and my beautiful new wife,
my now ex-wife, the bitch,
opened up a nursery.
People started coming out
of the woodwork to ask me stuff
and admire my plants  
and admire me.  
I think people were spending time  
with me because they were lonely.  
Couldn't drag me away  
And you know why I like plants?  
Huh-uh.  
Wild, wild horses  
Because they're so mutable.  
Adaptation's a profound process.  
It means you  
figure out how to thrive  
in the world.  
Yeah, but it's easier for plants.  
I mean, they have no memory.  
You know, they just move on to  
whatever's next. But a person, now...  
adapting's almost shameful.  
I mean, it's like  
running away.  
No sweeping...  
Keener!  
Hey, man.  
Please don't hit  
on crew members, Donald.  
What, the makeup girl?  
She was hitting on me, bro. Heh, heh, heh.  
Don't embarrass me.  
I have to work with these people.  
I won't. Anyway, listen,  
I meant to ask you, I need  
a cool way to kill people.  
Don't worry. For my script.  
I don't write that kind of stuff.  
Come on, man, please?  
You're the genius.  
The killer's  
a literature professor.  
He cuts off little chunks from  
his victim's bodies until they die.  
He calls himself  
"The Deconstructionist."  
That's kind of good. I like that.  
See, I was kidding, Donald.
Oh, okay. Sorry.
You got me. Heh, heh.
Do you mind
if I use it, though?
It's really good.
I tried to split the Cassie scene
from the beginning to the end.
I saw that. Why did you do that?
Because I wanted there to be more
tension. Then you pick it up later...
- But are you changing?
- Keeps more tension.
That way the audience
gets stuck early on.
- You like it?
- I really like it.
Oh, it's so funny to be seeing you
After so long, girl
The way you look...
Heh. You look hot tonight, baby.
Thanks, Donald.
That's swell of you to say.
Don't you think she's hot, bro?
I'm heading home, Donald.
Really? Come on.
Hey, it's Amelia.
Hey, Amelia!
Hey, Donald. Hey, Charlie.
Hey. Hi there.
- Amelia, we don't see you anymore.
- What happened to you?
It's good to see you.
Oh! This is my girlfriend, Caroline.
She's a makeup artist for the movies.
Hi.
This is David, my friend.
Hi.
Hey. Nice to meet you.
- Amelia's talked a lot about you.
- Hi, I'm Donald.
- Hey.
- Caroline.
Cool camera.
So how are you?
You know me, a mess.
Oh, Charlie,
it's really good to see you.
Is the work good?
It's a disaster.
I don't know what I'm doing.
But, anyway, it's my problem.
I don't want to bore you.
You have your stuff, right? I mean,
we both have our own separate stuff.
Anyway, I should go. I was
heading home to do some work.
You coming?
No, I'm gonna stay at Caroline's.
A little push, push
in the bush.
Donald, you're such a tard!
See you, Charlie.
To write about a flower,
to dramatize a flower,
I have to show the flower's arc.
And the flower's arc stretches back
to the beginning of life.
How did this flower get here?
What was its journey?
Therefore, I should infer
from analogy
that probably all the organic beings
which have ever lived on this earth
have descended
from some one primordial form
into which life was first breathed.
- It is a journey of evolution.
- Adaptation.
The journey we all take.
A journey that unites each and every one of us.
Darwin writes that we all come from
the very first single-cell organism.
Yet here I am.
And there's Laroche.
There's Orlean.
And there's the ghost orchid.
All trapped in our own bodies,
in moments in history. That's it.
That's what I need to do.
Tie all of history together.
Start right before
life begins on the planet.
All is...
lifeless.
And then, like, life begins, um,
with organisms.
Those single-cell ones.
Oh, and it's before sex, because,
like, everything was asexual.
From there we go to bigger things.
Jellyfish.
Then that fish that got legs
and crawled out on the land.
And then we see,
you know, like, dinosaurs.
Then they're around for a long time.
Then an asteroid comes and "phwar!"
The insects, the mammals,
the primates, monkeys.
The simple monkeys. Old-fashioned
monkeys giving way to the new ones.
Whatever. And then apes.
Whatever. And man.
Then we see the history of human
Hunting, war, love,
heartache, disease,
loneliness, technology.
And we end with Susan Orlean
in her office at The New Yorker
writing about flowers, and bang!
The movie begins.
This is the breakthrough I've been
hoping for. It's never been done.
McKee is a genius!
Hilarious. He just comes up with these
great jokes, and everybody laughs.
But he's serious too, Charles.
You'd love him.
He's all for originality, just like you.
But he says we have to realize
that we all write in a genre
and we must find our originality
within that genre.
See, it turns out, there hasn't been a new genre since Fellini invented the mockumentary.
My genre's thriller. What's yours?
You and I share the same DNA.
Is there anything more lonely than that?
What'd you say, bro?
- Yeah?
- Hey.
Hey, Susie-Q.
What you up to?
I don't wanna bother you.
Just thought I'd call and get some more info.
I think you say some pretty smart things, John.
Yeah, smartest guy I know, huh?
So...
whatever happened to your nursery?
It was going pretty well.
But, you know, sometimes bad things happen, darkness descends.
Nursery business good, Johnny?
Everything's good, Uncle Jim.
This last year's been a dream.
I'm telling you.
Finally pulling out of debt.
Amen, honey.
I'm so proud of you two, and...
No, ma'am. I'm sorry,
I can't answer that.
Stay right there.
Hey.
- Hold it. Which ones are dead?
- Sir, please, don't move.
- Which ones are dead?
- Let's move it!
I killed my mom, you know, and my uncle.
Um, that's how I lost my front teeth.
And my wife was in a coma for like three weeks.
And she divorced me soon after she regained consciousness.
Well, I think if I almost died, I would leave my marriage too.
Why?
Because I could.
Because it's like a free pass.
Nobody can judge you if you almost died.
Well, I judged her.
Maybe I was being judged too.
It was like a month after that, Hurricane Andrew came and just swooped down like an angel of God...
and just wiped out everything I had left.
Everything.
I knew it'd break my heart to start another nursery, so, you know,
when the Seminoles called, wanted a white guy or an expert to get their nursery going, I took the job.
I wasn't gonna give them a conventional little potted-plant place.
I was gonna give them something amazing, you know?
Yeah, I know, John.
I know.
"I was going to give them something amazing."
It's beautifully written.
You have such a unique voice.
Thank you very much.
Ahem.
We're big fans.
Oh, thank you.
Laroche is such a fun character.
Yeah.
It's funny and fresh.
And sad in a way.
So we were wondering
what's next.
Well, Random House has asked me
to expand it into a book,
so I'm gonna be doing that.
And...
Susan, we would like to option this.
You wanna make it into a movie?
Into a movie.
Ha, ha, ha. Oh, God!
That's really...
How does that sound?
That's very exciting.
Good.
It's just comical. I hadn't thought of it.
I've never written a screenplay before.
Don't worry about that.
We have screenwriters to write the screenplay.
- Hey, superstar.
- It's Marty, super agent.
I just wanna remind you
it's been 13 weeks
and Valerie's anxious
to see a draft.
If you could wrap things up, get
it to her by Monday, that'd be great.
Call me when you get this.
Adis, amigo.
What? What'd you laugh at?
You're a genius.
Which line?
You're a genius.
You're a genius.
"We see orchid hunter
Augustus Margary."
He wears a filthy, spittle-soaked rag
around his head to quell the pain.
The back of his trousers are stained
greasy black from an anal leakage
due to dysentery.
"He moans with each tentative step
through the overgrown jungle."
I'm fucked.
We open with Laroche. He's funny.
He says, "I love to mutate plants."
He says, "Mutation is fun."
Okay, we show flowers and... Okay.
We have to have the case.
Show Laroche.
He says, "I was mutated as a baby.
It's why I'm so smart."
That's funny. Okay, we open at the beginning of time.
No! Laroche is driving into the swamp.
Crazy White Man!
Aah!
I don't know how to adapt this.
I should've stuck with my own stuff.
Don't know why I thought
I could write this.
See her?
I fucked her up the ass.
No. I'm kidding.
Um...
Maybe I can help.
It's about flowers.
Okay. Um...
But it's not only about flowers, right?
You have the crazy plant-nut guy?
He's funny. Right?
"There's not nearly enough of him
to fill a book."
So Orlean "digresses in long
passages." Blah, blah, blah.
"No narrative unites these passages."
I can't structure this.
It's that sprawling New Yorker shit.
Oh, man, I'd fuck her up the ass.
Sorry.
The book has no story.
All right. Make one up.
I mean, nobody in this town
can make up a crazy story like you.
You're the king of that.
No, I didn't want to do that this time.
It's someone else's material.
I have a responsibility to Susan...
Anyway, I wanted to grow as a writer.
I wanted to do something simple.
Show people how amazing flowers are.
Are they amazing?
I don't know. I think they are.
I need you to get me out of this.
All right.
Charlie, you've been stringing them along for months.
Not to give them anything at this point would be a terrible career move.
Hey, my script's going amazing.
Right now, I'm working out an image system.
Because of my multiple personality theme, I've chosen a motif of broken mirrors to show my protagonist's fragmented self.
Bob says an image system increases the complexity of an aesthetic emotion.
Bob says...
You sound like you're in a cult.
No, it's just good writing technique.
I made you a copy of McKee's 10 Commandments.
I posted one over both our work areas.
You shouldn't have done that.
Because it's extremely helpful.
Hey, Charles, I'm putting a song on.
"Happy Together."
Like when characters sing in their pajamas and dance around.
I thought it'd break the tension.
At first I was nervous about putting a song in a thriller, but Bob says that Casablanca, one of the greatest screenplays ever written, did exactly that. Mixed genres.
I haven't slept in a week, Donald.
I need to go to bed.
Oh. Okay.
Good night.
Yeah?
Hi.
John, it's Susan again.
Hey, Susie-Q.
Um...
How's it going?
Great. I'm training myself
on the Internet.
It's fascinating.
I'm doing pornography.
It's amazing how much these suckers
will pay for photographs of chicks.
It doesn't matter if they're fat
or ugly or what.
Well, that sounds good.
It's great, is what it is.
Listen, John, I hate feeling like
I'm being a pain to you, but I...
I still haven't seen a ghost.
Yeah?
And I was hoping maybe you'd...
Yeah.
Yeah, I'll take you in.
Tomorrow.
Really?
Thank you so much.
Oh, John.
Damn it.
There are too many ideas
and things and people.
Too many directions to go.
I was starting to believe the reason
it matters to care about something
is that it whittles the world down
to a more manageable size.
Such sweet, sad insights.
So true.
I like looking at you.
I like looking at you too, Charlie.
I don't know how to do this.
I'm afraid I'll disappoint you.
You've written a beautiful book.
I can't sleep.
I'm losing my hair.
I'm fat and repulsive.
Shh. You're not. You're not.
Just whittle it down, you know?
Focus on one thing in the story.
Find that one thing
that you care passionately about
and then write about that.
Delicate, haunted by loneliness,
fragile, beautiful.
She lies awake next to her sleeping,
insensitive husband.
Her voice-over begins,
"I suppose I do have one
unembarrassed passion.
I want to know how it feels to care
about something passionately."
- Hey.
- Morning.
Hey, you two.
Up early for a change?
You seem chipper.
I'm good. I have some new ideas.
God, you guys are so smart.
It's like a brain factory in here.
I got some ideas too this morning.
He got really, really good ones.
You know,
in a Donald sort of way.
I'm putting...
Hey! What?
I'm putting in a chase sequence.
So the killer flees on horseback with the girl.
Cop's after them on a motorcycle.
And it's like a battle between
motors and horses.
Like technology versus horse.
And they're still
all one person, right?
Well, that's the big payoff.
It sounds exciting.
Thanks, man.
Thanks.
See, I told you he was gonna like it.
- You're my muse. You are.
- I love being your muse.
I'm so happy about that.
I'm picking up
an order for Kaufman.
Oh.
Valerie.
Hi, Charlie.
It's quite a coincidence
bumping into you.
I'm sorry I didn't call you back.
I was away last week.
That's okay.
I meant to because
things are going well,
and I wanted you to know.
That's great.
I'm anxious to see something.
You should sit because
I'm here with Susan right now.
She's dying to meet you,
so it's funny bumping into you.
Have a seat.
Susan Orlean's here?
Yeah, she's here in town for a reading or something.
She's just on the phone.
Sit down. Have a seat.
She's dying to meet you.
Oh, um, um... Well, I should
probably go, because...
Well, I'd love to meet her too,
but I don't want to be beholden.
And, well...
Once you meet somebody
that you've been writing about,
it becomes very hard
to separate. So...
Well, okay, I'll speak to you soon.
And I'm almost done.
I'm almost done.
Tell Susan that I would love
to meet with her at a future date.
As she sees fit.
Okay.
- Who am I kidding?
- This isn't Susan Orlean's story.
I have no connection with her.
I can't even meet her.
I have no understanding of anything
but my own panic, self-loathing
and pathetic, little existence.
The only thing I'm qualified to write
about is myself and my own self...
We open on Charlie Kaufman.
Fat, old, bald, repulsive,
sitting in a Hollywood restaurant
across from Valerie Thomas,
a lovely, statuesque film executive.
Kaufman, trying to get
a writing assignment,
wanting to impress her,
sweats profusely.
Fat, bald Kaufman
paces furiously in his bedroom.
He speaks into his hand-held
tape recorder, and he says,
"Charlie Kaufman, fat, bald,
repulsive, old,
sits at a Hollywood restaurant
with Valerie Thomas."
Kaufman, repugnant, ridiculous,
jerks off to the book jacket photo
of Susan Or...
What do you want?
I've finished my script.
I'm done.
So would you show it
to your agent?
It's called The Three.
Thanks. I also want to
thank you for your idea.
It was very helpful.
I changed it a little.
Now the killer cuts off body pieces
and makes his victims eat them.
Caroline has this tattoo of a snake
swallowing its own tail, and...
Ouroboros.
I don't know what that means.
The snake.
It's called Ouroboros.
Don't think so. It's cool for my killer
to have this modus operandi.
When he forces the woman
who's him to eat herself
he's eating himself to death.
I'm insane.
I'm Ouroboros.
I don't know what that word means.
I've written myself
into my screenplay.
That's kind of weird, huh?
It's self-indulgent.
It's narcissistic.
It's solipsistic.
It's pathetic.
I'm pathetic.
I'm fat and pathetic.
I'm sure you had good reasons,
Charles. You're an artist.
It's because I'm too timid to speak
to the woman who wrote the book.
Because I'm pathetic.
Because I have no idea how to write.
I can't make flowers fascinating.
Because I suck.
Hey, am I in the script?
I'm going to New York.
I'll meet her. That's it.
That's what I have to do.
Don't get mad at me for saying,
but Bob's having a seminar
in New York this weekend.
So if you're stuck...
And she said, "Laroche
is such a fun character."
No shit, I'm a fun character.
Who's gonna play me?
Well, I've gotta write
the book first, John.
Then, you know, they get
somebody to write the screenplay.
Hey, I think I should play me.
Ha, ha, ha. Most people yearn for something exceptional, something so inspiring they'd want to risk everything for that passion, but few would act on it. It was very powerful, and it's intoxicating to be around someone so alive. Come on, just follow me. They're right nearby. Okay.

Can I ask you a personal question? Look, we're not lost. I've done this a million times. When everything is killing me, I just say, "Screw it," and go straight ahead. Oh, fuck...

Sundial. I'll just set this up, we'll wait a few minutes, and then we'll be able to tell which way the sun's moving. We should be headed southeast. So you collect anything? Not really, no. Yeah, well, you know, it's not really about collecting the thing. It's about being able...

The thing about computers, the thing I like, is that I'm immersed in them, but it's not like a living thing that's gonna leave or die or something. John, I'm sorry. I just...

Okay. I don't...

Hey. Okay. Fuck the sundial. I know how to get out of here. I know how to get out of here. I know this swamp like the back of my goddamn hand.
You're just like everybody else.
Fucking leeches.
You just attach yourself to me
and suck me dry, spit me out.
Why don't you get your own life?
Your own fucking interests?
Fucking spoiled bitch.
Life seemed to be filled with things
that were just like the ghost orchid.
Wonderful to imagine
and easy to fall in love with,
but a little fantastic
and fleeting
and out of reach.
"...But a little fantastic
and fleeting and out of reach."
Hello?
Hey, it's Marty. How's it going?
Has it been helpful talking
to the writer? What's her name?
Susan Orlean. It's been okay.
Uh-huh. Well, I mean,
are you making headway?
Valerie's breathing down my neck.
You can't rush inspiration.
Okay. All right. Fair enough.
Listen, the other reason
I called was The Three.
It's just amazing.
I don't know what that is.
Donald's script.
A smart, edgy thriller.
It's the best script I've read all year.
Oh.
Good.
Yeah, I'm gonna sell it for a shitload.
Two fucking talented guys
in one family.
Maybe you could get your brother
to help you with the orchid thing.
Marty, don't say that. I mean...
All right. It's just a thought, buddy.
I mean, he's really
goddamn amazing at structure.
I have to go.
All right. Adis, amigo.
Finish that...
Fuck!
Okay, thank you, thank you.
We have a long three days ahead.
Years from now, you'll be at a posh cocktail party congratulating yourself on how you spent a weekend with an asshole from Hollywood for your art.
I am pathetic. I am a loser.
So, what is the substance of writing?
I have failed. I am panicked.
I have sold out. I am worthless.
I... What the fuck am I doing here?
What the fuck am I doing here? Fuck!
It is my weakness, my ultimate lack of conviction that brings me here.
Easy answers, rules to shortcut yourself to success.
And here I am because my jaunt into the abyss brought me nothing.
Well, isn't that the risk one takes for attempting something new?
I should leave right now. I'll start over.
I need to face this project head-on...
And God help you if you use voice-over in your work, my friends.
God help you.
It's flaccid, sloppy writing. Any idiot can write narration to explain the thoughts of the character.
Okay, that's it.
One hour for lunch.
You cannot have a protagonist without desire.
It doesn't make any sense.
Any fucking sense.
You follow? Good.
Anyone else?
Yes?
What if a writer is attempting to create
a story where nothing much happens?
Where people don't change,
they don't have any epiphanies.
They struggle and are frustrated,
and nothing is resolved.
More a reflection
of the real world.
The real world?
Yes, sir.
The real fucking world.
First of all, you write a screenplay
without conflict or crisis,
you'll bore your audience to tears.
Secondly, nothing happens
in the world?
Are you out of your fucking mind?
People are murdered every day.
There's genocide, war, corruption.
Every fucking day,
somewhere in the world,
somebody sacrifices his life
to save somebody.
Every day, someone somewhere
takes a conscious decision
to destroy someone else.
People find love.
People lose it.
A child watches a mother beaten
to death on the steps of a church.
Someone goes hungry.
Somebody else betrays
his best friend for a woman.
If you can't find that stuff in life,
then you, my friend,
don't know crap about life!
And why the fuck are you wasting my
two precious hours with your movie?
I don't have any use for it!
I don't have any
bloody use for it!
Okay, thanks.
Thank you.
You're welcome.
No. Thank you.
Thank you so much, Mr. McKee. This course makes you look at writing in a whole different way. Mr. McKee.
Yes?
I'm the guy you yelled at this morning.
I need more.
I'm the one who thought things didn't happen in life.
Ah. Right. Okay.
Nice to see you.
I need to talk.
Mr. McKee, my even standing here is very scary.
I don't meet people well.
But what you said this morning shook me to the bone.
It was bigger than my screenwriting choices.
It was about my choices as a human being. Please.
Yeah.
Well, you know, I could sure use a drink, my friend.
"...But a little fantastic and fleeting and out of reach."
Then what happens?
Well, that's the end of the book.
I wanted to present it simply without big character arcs or sensationalizing the story.
I wanted to show flowers as God's miracles.
I wanted to show that Orlean never saw the blooming ghost orchid.
It was about disappointment.
I see.
That's not a movie.
You gotta go back, put in the drama.
I can't go back. I've got pages of false starts and wrong approaches.
I'm way past my deadline.
I'll tell you a secret.
A last act makes a film.
Wow them in the end,
and you got a hit.
You can have flaws, problems,
but wow them in the end
and you've got a hit.
Find an ending. But don't cheat.
And don't you dare bring in
a deus ex machina.
Your characters must change
and the change
must come from them.
Do that and you'll be fine.
You promise?
Mr. McKee.
Have you taken my course before?
My brother did.
My twin brother, Donald.
He's the one who got me to come.
Twin screenwriters?
Yeah.
Well, Julius and Philip Epstein,
who wrote Casablanca,
they were twins
You mentioned that in class.
Finest screenplay ever written.
Great writers' residence.
Donald.
Hey, how's your trip going?
You getting it on with that
lady journalist, you dog, you?
Yeah.
Listen, I'm just calling to say
congratulations on your script.
Isn't that cool? Marty says he can
get me high-sixes against a mil-five.
That's great, Donald.
I want to thank you
for all your help.
I wasn't any help.
Come on,
you let me stay in your place.
And your integrity
inspired me to even try.
It's been a wild ride.
Catherine says
she wants to play Cassie.
Oh, please!
Ha, ha, ha.
Please, Donald?
Catherine Keener?
Catherine Keener's in my house?
Yeah, we're playing Boggle.
She's great. You should really
hang out with her, Charles.
Yeah. Um, look...
I've been thinking.
Maybe you'd be interested in hanging
out for a few days in New York.
Oh, my God, yes.
Yeah?
I was gonna show my script
to some people,
and, well, maybe you could
read it too, you know, if you like.
Of course. I'd be flattered.
Okay.
Thanks, Charles.
Okay, bye.
So, like, what would you do?
The script kind of
makes fun of me, huh?
I'm sorry. I was trying something...
Hey, I don't mind. It's funny.
Good. Okay.
So, what would you do?
You and me are so different,
Charles. We're different talents.
I know. Just for fun...
how would the great Donald
end this script?
Heh, heh. Shut up.
"The great Donald."
I feel like you're missing something.
All right. Like what?
Look.
I did a little research on the airplane. "Sometimes this kind of story turns out to be something more," some glimpse of life that expands like those Japanese paper balls you drop in water and they bloom into flowers and the flower is so marvelous you can't believe there was a time all you saw "was a paper ball and a glass of water." First of all, that's inconsistent. She said she didn't care about flowers. For God's sake, it's just a metaphor. Well, but for what? What turned that paper ball into a flower? It's not in the book, Charles. I don't know. You're reaching. Maybe. But I think you actually need to speak to this woman. To know her. I can't. Really. I'll go. I'll pretend I'm you. I want to do it, Charles. We'll get to the bottom of this. We're gonna fix your movie, bro. But you've gotta be exactly me. I have a reputation to maintain. You can't be a goofball. Can't be an asshole. I'm not an asshole. You know what I mean. No flirting. No bad jokes. Don't laugh how you laugh. I'm not gonna laugh. I get to have people think I'm you.
It's an honor.
So I guess I'll bring out
the big guns now.
Do you keep in touch
with Laroche?
I felt I detected an attraction to him
in the subtext. Care to comment?
Uh...
Well, our relationship
was strictly reporter-subject.
I mean, certainly an intimacy does
evolve in this kind of relationship.
By definition, I was so interested
in everything he had to say.
But the relationship ends
when the book ends.
Mendacious deceit.
What?
Nothing.
I just have one more question.
If you could have dinner with one
historical personage, living or dead,
who would it be?
Uh, well, I would have to say...
Einstein.
Or Jesus.
Very good.
Interesting answer.
She's lying.
What do you mean?
What happened?
Nothing. She said everything right.
Too right.
Well, maybe because they're true.
Did you embarrass me?
People who answer questions
too right are liars.
Everybody says Jesus and Einstein.
That's a prepackaged answer.
"Jesus and Einstein"?
Listen, Charles, I have an idea.
You'll need to buy me
a pair of binoculars.
What's "Jesus and Einstein"?
Imagine me and you I do
Come on.
I think about you day and night
It's only right
Sing with me.
To think about the one you love
And hold her tight
So happy together
What the hell do you need
binoculars for?
Let's go, let's go.
She hung up the phone.
She's upset.
Stop watching her.
Leave her alone.
She's crying.
She's at her computer.
This is morally reprehensible.
United
to Miami.
Eleven fifty-five a.m.
Tomorrow.
Thought she was done with Laroche.
Her parents live in Florida.
That was no parent phone call,
my friend.
Don't say "my friend."
A guy entering.
Handsome.
Must be her husband.
She's acting weird
with him, though, right?
Don't you think?
What's she hiding from him?
Maybe she's a lesbian
and doesn't know how to tell him.
What do you think?
Have you checked out
Laroche's porn site?
No. I'm trying to read.
Anyway, I'm gonna look
at the porn site. Research.
Don't tell my old lady.
You mean Mom?
No, I don't mean Mom.
Still say we should go
to Miami tomorrow.
Forget it.
Some of these chicks look okay.
Hey, guess what.
We're going to Miami tomorrow.
I said, no.
I said, oh, yeah, baby. Come here.
What I came to understand
is that change is not a choice.
Not for a species of plant,
and not for me.
It happens, and you are different.
Maybe the only distinction
between the plant and me
is that afterward,
I lied about my change.
I lied in my book.
I pretended with my husband
that everything was the same.
But something happened
in the swamp that day.
Hey, look.
I told you I'd find
the jewel of the Fakahatchee.
It's a flower.
Just a flower.
Well, might as well grab it.
Long as I'm here.
Oh, man.
Boy, my porn site's
gonna be big.
Look, something
I didn't tell you
that I want to tell you
about the ghost. Okay?
I think it might help you.
I'd just started at the nursery.
And I went back one night
to pick up something.
They wanted the ghost
just to extract the drug.
It had been a ceremonial thing,
but the young guys, you know, they liked to get stoned.
So Matthew?
He was one of the guys who...?
Sure.
Matthew lived on that shit till they ran out.
Because there was this one day he was fascinated by me.
By my hair and my sadness.
Yeah, well, it does that.
That's what I wanted to tell you.
I mean, I think you'd like it, Susie.
It seems to help people be fascinated.
I can extract it for you.
I know how. I watched.
I'm probably the only white guy who knows.
I want to do this, Susie.
I'm done with orchids, Laroche.
- Hello?
- Hi.
It's John.
Did you get my package?
John?
Johnny.
Hey, John?
Yeah?
Very happy now.
Well, I'm glad.
Very happy.
Um, John?
Hm?
Will you go like this...?
No. Keep going.
No. No.
I'm trying to make a dial tone.
And you have to sustain.
And then I will join you, and together...
See, I can't do it by myself.
Which one do you want me to do?
Yes. Yes. Yes.
Okay. Here we go.
That's it.
We got it.
We got it. That's fucking amazing.
Do you ever get
lonely sometimes, Johnny?
Well, I was a weird kid.
Nobody liked me.
But I had this idea...
If I waited long enough,
someone would
come around and just,
you know, understand me.
Like my mom.
Except someone else.
She'd look at me and quietly say,
"Yes."
Just like that.
And I wouldn't be alone anymore.
Oh, I wish I were an ant.
Oh, they're so shiny.
You're shinier than any ant,
darling.
That's the sweetest thing
anybody has ever said to me.
Well,
I like you, that's why.
Hey.
I don't have time for that.
I'll get a closer look. You wait here.
No, wait.
I should go.
I mean, it should be me, right?
I mean, it's my...
I was, you know...
Go for it.
You're the man.
Rip them.
Just rip them.
Darling, I don't know
what's come over you.
You came all over me last time
I was here, as I recall.
Oh!
Mmm!
Ooh.
Goddamn!
Hey! Fuck. Hey! Hey!
Aah! Aah!
Get in here!
Shut the fuck up, now!
Sit the fuck down!
Who is that, Johnny?
Who the fuck are you?
I just... Nobody.
Huh?
I just... I'm just...
Wait a minute, wait a minute.
He's that screenwriter.
The guy that's adapting our book?
Yeah.
Well, that's wild.
It's nice to meet you.
Hey, dude,
who's gonna play me?
I don't know that. I should...
Well, I thought
I should play me.
Why...? Did he follow me?
No, of course not. I should go.
Yeah, yeah. I mean,
it was nice to meet you,
but let me give you my number.
I'm really freaking here, Johnny.
Why is he here?
Why did he follow me?
What does he know?
I don't know anything about anything.
He did see the greenhouse.
Oh, shit.
Oh, shit.
Are you gonna write about this
in your screenplay?
I really don't know what "this" is.
He's lying.
- Hold him.
- Stay! Just...
We have to kill him.
What?
What are we supposed to do?
What can we do?
Sit the fuck down!
Susie, you gotta calm down.
Now, you're getting
a little emotional.
You don't know...
I can't have him writing about me.
I can't have the whole world,
all the people knowing about us
and about this.
Why?
You ashamed of me, Susie?
No, that's not it.
No. How can you even think of that?
Well...
I'm a professional journalist,
and the drugs and...
Susie.
We can't kill anyone.
Okay. Okay.
Then I'll do it.
By myself.
Susan...
Hey! Come on. Fucking get down!
- I wouldn't tell any...
- Put him in his fucking car!
Turn it off. Just get out.
Run! Run! Go!
Susan! What the fuck was that?
I don't know. I couldn't see.
Shit.
Fuck!
Come on!
Help me find the flashlight.
So it was a guy?
Yeah. Fat.
That's all I could tell.
- This is ridiculous.
- We're gonna have to split up.
- I can't. I can't be by myself out here.
- I'm not gonna do that.
They're gonna find us.
I don't think so.
I don't want to die, Donald.
I've wasted my life. God, I've wasted it.
You didn't. And you're not gonna die.
I wasted it.
I admire you, Donald, you know?
I spent my whole life paralyzed,
worrying about what people think,
and you, you're just oblivious.
I'm not oblivious.
No, you don't understand.
I mean that as a compliment.
There was this time in high school.
I was watching you out
the library window,
you were talking to Sarah Marsh.
Oh, God, I was so in love with her.
I know. And you were flirting with her,
and she was being really sweet to you.
I remember that.
And then, when you walked away,
she started making fun of you
with Kim Canetti.
And it was like
they were laughing at me.
You didn't know at all?
You seemed so happy.
I knew. I heard them.
Well, how come
you were so happy?
I loved Sarah, Charles.
It was mine, that love.
I owned it.
Even Sarah didn't have
the right to take it away.
I can love whoever I want.
But she thought you were pathetic.
That was her business,
not mine.
You are what you love,
not what loves you.
That's what I decided
a long time ago.
What's up?
Thank you.
For what?
No, shh, shh, shh!
Listen. I hear them.
I hear them. I hear them breathing.
Charlie?
- Charlie?
- Charlie!
- Guys?
- Charlie!
Charlie!
Where's the van?
Are they gone?
I don't know. Maybe.
John? John!
Shit!
I can't believe I got shot.
Isn't that fucked up? Heh, heh.
Shut up. Stop laughing.
Donald? You're gonna be okay.
It's gonna be okay, Donald.
Just don't go to sleep. Just don't
go to sleep, Donald. Look at me.
Look at me, Donald.
Keep looking at me.
Open your eyes.
Donald, please open your eyes.
Donald. Donald, please
open your eyes, Donald.
Donald! Donald, open your eyes!
Imagine me and you I do
I think about you day and night
It's only right
To think about the one you love
And hold you tight
So happy together
Look at me.
Imagine me and you I do
And I...
Help!
John!
Halt!
I'm sorry.
Now I have to do this too.
I'm not a killer.
You put yourself in...
Johnny!
- Susan!
- No!
- Help!
- No, no!
Johnny! Johnny! John!
Oh, no, no, no.
Oh, God.
Oh, you fat piece of shit!
He's dead, you loser!
Shut up!
You ruined my life, you fat fuck!
Shut up! Shut up!
Fuck you, lady! You're just a lonely,
old, desperate, pathetic drug addict!
Oh, my God.
It's over. Everything's over.
I did everything wrong.
I want my life back.
I want it back
before it all got fucked up.
I want to be a baby again.
I want to be new.
I want to be new.
Hello?
Hello?
Mom.
Charles? Charles, is that you?
Charles, what's the matter?
You okay?
Donald says, "That was her
business, not mine."
You are what you love,
not what loves you.
"I decided that a long time ago."
Kaufman starts to cry.
He tries to thank his brother,
but he can't put it into words.
So how you getting on?
I'm okay.
I miss him, you know?
How's the script coming?
It's good. I'm almost finished.
I'll be really glad to move on
to something else.
I'll bet.
Things okay with you?
And then in January, David and I went to Prague.
That was a high point.
That sounds great.
There's amazing puppet theater.
Yeah, I've heard.
I've gotta see that.
And there's this church decorated
with, like, human skulls and bones.
Forty thousand
skulls and bones.
I thought about you
when I went there.
Charlie, I'm with someone.
Why are you doing this now?
I love you.
I should go. I have to...
Stuff I have to do.
I'm going away this weekend...
Million things, okay?
Yeah.
I love you too, you know.
- I have to go right home.
- I know how to finish the script now.
It ends with Kaufman driving home
after his lunch with Amelia,
thinking he knows
how to finish the script.
Shit, that's voice-over.
McKee would not approve.
How else can I show
his thoughts? I don't know.
Well, who cares what McKee says?
It feels right.
Conclusive.
I wonder who's gonna play me.
Someone not too fat.
I like that Grard Depardieu,
but can he not do the accent?
Anyway, it's done.
And that's something.
"Kaufman drives off from
his encounter with Amelia
filled for the first time with hope."
I like this.
This is good.
Imagine me and you I do
I think about you day and night
It's only right
To think about the girl you love
And hold her tight
So happy together
How is the weather?
So happy together
We're happy together
So happy together
So happy together