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# Youth Without Youth

By Francis Ford Coppola

Sometimes I admit to  
myself that it's possible  
I will never be able  
to finish my life's work.  
My one and only book.  
And that in the end,  
without her...  
...there will be nothing.  
And I will die alone.  
What are you doing here,  
Coane Dominic?  
I have a migraine.  
I thought a walk might help.  
But in your pajamas  
on Christmas Eve?  
Don't catch cold. Look.  
At the first opportunity,  
I'll...  
What do you do  
at the first opportunity?  
At the first  
opportunity, I have to- I have-  
It's in the drawer.  
I- I have saved-  
I saved it for-  
At the first opportunity,  
I will open the blue envelope.  
Not here in Piatra Neamt  
where everyone knows me,  
but somewhere far away.  
Bucharest perhaps.  
At Easter.  
Universal.  
Universal.  
Special Easter  
edition. Universal.  
War clouds over Romania.  
Oh, it's pouring.  
Universal.  
He was struck by lightning.  
Call an ambulance.  
Call for some help.  
Look, who knows  
what sins he has committed

that God would strike him  
on Easter.  
They say whoever dies during  
Easter goes straight to heaven.  
Dominic.  
Oh...  
I will wish you.  
You know what I mean. I mean...  
I will love you  
until the day I die.  
The eye seems intact,  
but I don't know  
if he is blind or not.  
I don't even know  
if he's conscious,  
if he hears or  
if he understands what he hears.  
If you understand what I say,  
squeeze my finger.  
I'm Dr. Roman Stanciulescu.  
I'm here to help you.  
Good.  
We wish to find out  
your age.  
For every 10 years,  
squeeze my finger once.  
Ten.  
Twenty.  
Twenty.  
Thirty.  
Forty.  
Forty.  
Fifty.  
Fifty.  
Sixty.  
Sixty.  
Seventy.  
Seventy.  
Seventy years old.  
Seventy. I would  
have thought less.  
Well, in this larval state,  
it's hard to estimate.  
I've never

met anyone like you.  
You want to know  
absolutely everything.  
Laura, try to imagine  
conceiving a passion  
for something,  
having one desire,  
dedicating your life to it  
and then failing.

I am 26.

I have no accomplishments,  
I've made no discoveries.  
I'm a failure.

Do you have a wife?

No.

- No.

Nephew?

Yes.

- Nephew.

Nephew.

- Do you want us  
to inform your nephew  
about your condition?

No.

Let us know the first letter  
of your name. Continue.

I am going to say  
the alphabet.

A, B, C, D...

D.

- D.

He doesn't live  
in Bucharest.

He has only one relative,  
a distant one,  
and he has no wife.

Thank you.

He'll accept any test,  
no matter how dangerous  
or painful,  
to verify whether  
the optic nerve was damaged.

That's interesting.

How old did you say he was?

Seventy.

He's hiding his age.

He's a young man

in the prime of his life.

I didn't come here...

I came here for an education.

- Come.

What did you think

about the lecture?

Professor Matei

is getting senile.

He told us the same thing

three or four times.

I didn't

notice. I was asleep.

Let's go get

something to eat.

Is it true?

Failure, success.

Such extremes, Dominic.

You yourself taught me

about Chandrakirti.

The concept of tetralemma logic,

the four possibilities.

What you say is so,

or it is not so,

it's also so

and not so combined, heh,

or it's neither so

nor not so combined.

You know,

I've never told you this,

but Dr. Chavannes' lecture

in Paris...

I waited to see him.

I was hoping that he would

accept me as a student.

And he told me that if I didn't

master Chinese, Sanskrit,

Tibetan and Japanese,

I would never become

a great Oriental list.

But didn't you tell him

you wanted to study

only the Chinese language?  
I did.  
I told him that  
I'd been studying Chinese  
for six months,  
six hours a day.  
He stepped up  
to the blackboard.  
He wrote  
some 20 characters on it,  
and he asked me  
to pronounce them  
one by one  
and then translate the passage.  
In order to master Chinese,  
one must have  
the memory of Mandarin.  
Photographic memory.  
A memory of a Mandarin.  
I remember hearing  
about another case,  
a priest hit by lightning.  
Burned over his whole body  
and would survive  
many years afterwards.  
True, he was left  
blind and mute,  
as our man is also probably.  
Don't talk so loud.  
Maybe he can hear you.  
I want him to hear me.  
Let's see how he'll react.  
Maybe he isn't mute at all.  
No!  
Not mute! Not mute!  
Try to pronounce any word,  
anything.  
Blue envelope.  
Envelope...  
The teeth,  
they're barely holding.  
Call the dentist right now  
and see if the x-rays are ready.  
What's next?

"Romania may be forced  
to negotiate with Hitler. "  
France is abandoning us  
to the Nazis.  
He is right.  
His x-rays have come in.  
You really should  
take a look at them.  
The roots are healthy, but they  
are being pushed up by new ones.  
So we feel you're out  
of danger.  
Only now do you begin  
to become an interesting case.  
You understand why,  
don't you?  
The way the lightning  
struck you,  
you had to have been killed  
on the spot,  
or else to have died  
of asphyxiation.  
At best you'd  
be left paralyzed,  
mute or blind.  
You are lucky,  
I'll give you that.  
Yes.  
We had ordered a set of dentures  
to allow you to eat  
and above all,  
to speak normally.  
But the x-rays show  
that, uh,  
a new set of teeth  
are ready to appear.  
It's impossible.  
Yes. It's simply impossible.  
And yet the x-rays are clear.  
You are getting new teeth.  
This is no longer a case  
of a living dead man,  
but of something else.  
What, exactly,

we still don't know.  
Your recovery is amazing.  
I don't want to tire you out.  
Get some rest.  
I'll be back tomorrow.  
News stories  
and feature articles  
are starting to appear  
in different papers,  
the majority of them absurd,  
ridiculous.  
What are you doing?  
New teeth!  
But you must help us  
understand this.  
We have to know more about you,  
who you are,  
what your profession is.  
What's your real age?  
Please cooperate  
a little more.  
Were you so stubborn  
when you were young?  
Always.  
What is this you  
insist on writing, young man?  
Well, I've almost finished  
with antiquity, the Middle Ages.  
But the most exciting part,  
the origins.  
The origins of language, of-  
But when will  
you finish it, Dominic?  
He needs 10 lifetimes  
to do it all.  
The origins of  
language, human consciousness,  
even the idea  
of time itself.  
This would call for years  
of research.  
And what with the inexperience  
of our provincial...  
...librarians.



I'm terribly sorry,  
professor.  
I have an appointment.  
I really must run.  
He's brilliant. Brilliant. But-  
Laura, I'm so sorry.  
I completely forgot.  
We have to talk,  
Dominic.  
It's very important  
for both of us,  
and I can't hide it  
any longer.  
Of course.  
It's snowing. Should we go  
to the Caf Select?  
No. And please don't interrupt.  
It's not what you think.  
I feel that you aren't mine,  
that you are never here with me.  
That you-  
That you live in another time.  
I'm not thinking  
of your research,  
which in spite of what  
you believe, does interest me.  
I wanted to help you  
with that.  
But you keep yourself shut away  
in an alien world,  
one I can't enter.  
So for my sake and for yours,  
we should break  
our engagement and separate.  
No.  
Laura, no.  
We are still young.  
We both love life.  
You will have more time  
for your research.  
You'll see later.  
Tell the professor  
what he wants to know.  
Tell him you need

a new identity.  
All right, you can go.  
I'll be here all afternoon.  
I understand  
that you are willing  
to speak to me candidly.  
You don't have to make  
a great effort.  
The words you cannot pronounce,  
you can write.  
My name...  
is Dominic Matei.  
On January the 8th...  
I reached the age of 70.  
I am a teacher  
in Piatra Neamt.  
I live on Strada Episcopiei  
at Number 18.  
It is my house.  
It contains a library of...  
some 8,000 volumes...  
which I have willed  
to the lyce.  
You're 70 years old?  
Extraordinary.  
If...  
If you require further proof,  
I can tell you the...  
titles of the books  
on my desk or any other...  
There's an album  
of photographs somewhere?  
More precisely, with pictures  
of you when you were young?  
And some, uh, clothing?  
I implore you  
to be very, very discreet.  
Agents from the Secret Service,  
they'll never believe  
I'm past 70  
and therefore they'll never  
believe I am who I say I am.  
Of course.  
We'll be very careful.

Anything can happen  
if you're interrogated by them.  
I won't let that happen.  
It's true, though,  
these are difficult times  
in Romania.  
In truth...  
I came here with the intention  
of committing suicide.  
I had saved an envelope  
with enough strychnine in it  
to end my empty life.  
Please...  
could you find me  
a fictitious identity?  
That's not a problem.  
When your beard comes off,  
you'll look like a man of 35,  
or, um, 40, at most.  
Don't worry.  
You're handsome  
without the beard, you know?  
I have your jacket.  
If you like, you can take me  
to the movies sometime.  
The sleeves are  
too short.  
And the tie is no good.  
They look like  
an old man's clothes.  
Go with him.  
I've seen that car before.  
Last night in my dream.  
Some people might say  
that's a bad omen.  
I'm not superstitious.  
They're waiting for us.  
Professor.  
Welcome. Thank you, doctor.  
There's wild roses  
somewhere.  
I want you to note down  
all that passes through your mind.  
All the books you've read,

all the languages you know,  
everything, all the memories,  
no matter how insignificant.  
If you aren't in the mood  
to write,  
or if you have  
too much to say,  
use this device.  
German, I'm sorry to say.  
A wire recorder.  
How do I operate this?  
How do I operate this?  
My memory...  
My memory is unbelievable.  
I have a surprise for you.  
Soon you'll receive  
all the things  
from your home

**in Piatra Neamt:**

your reference books,  
dictionaries,  
personal belongings.  
Ah.  
The watch she gave me.  
I've brought  
your family album.  
The one with your pictures  
from lyce and the university.  
What are you thinking?  
What kind of memories?  
What kind of associations?  
When I look  
at that photograph,  
I sense the heat  
of that morning.  
The fragrance of the oleander.  
Laura's scent.  
Soap...  
on her skin.  
It's unforgettable.  
She married someone else,  
you know.  
And a year later

she died in childbirth.  
It was awful.  
It's a kind of hypermnesia  
with lateral effects.  
It's...  
too much,  
and it's useless.  
It seems useless  
because we don't know yet  
what to do with it,  
with this fantastic  
recovery of memory.  
It's useless.  
Soon it will be learned  
that someone,  
an old man of unknown origin,  
was struck by lightning  
and after 10 weeks  
appeared perfectly healthy  
and young again.  
Let's hope the rest  
will not be found out.  
The anterior-posterior  
diameter, 19 centimeters.  
The height of the face,  
And the length of  
the nose, 6 centimeters.  
The sexual  
organs look like those of a man of 40.  
They are fully functional.

**My opinion:**

is clinically youthful.  
I warned you there would be  
a sort of international  
consultation.  
They had to see firsthand.  
They couldn't believe  
the reports  
I published  
in La Presse Mdicale.  
Well, I wasn't expecting  
such questions.  
Especially since I was still

in the hospital and had no way  
of confirming or ruling out  
sexual possibilities.

Excuse me.

In your notebooks,  
you speak of erotic dreams.  
Are you sure they were dreams?

I don't know.

But if I've confused erotic  
dreams with real experiences,  
my life is far more interesting  
than I'd imagined.

Good,  
we value this information.  
Thank you.

But in the case  
of the young lady in Room 6,  
my friend,  
that woman was imposed on us  
by the Secret Service.

What young lady in Room 6?

Have we met  
somewhere before?

Of course we've met before.  
Several times, in fact.

I am impressed.

You are very discreet.

Where?

And when?

Most recently,  
last night in Room 6.

Your room is next door.

Open up!

Second floor is clear.

Sir...

- Over here.

Over here or there?

- Hey, get out of the car.

Hey, you, stop  
the car. Stop the car.

Don't worry.

It had to happen  
like this,

for you to be confused

with others,  
for people to think you can't  
distinguish dream from reality.

Who is taking care of me?

Did you think all you've gone  
through is due to chance?

Who is watching over me?

It doesn't matter now.

You'll find out later.

Besides, you've guessed  
some of it already.

Otherwise, why haven't you  
told the professor  
about...

certain dreams like this?

Stop.

If you know  
someone else exists,  
why have you never  
referred to it?

I must not think,  
I must not think,  
I must not think  
of anything.

I must not think,  
I must not think of anything.

I must not think,  
I must not think of anything.

I must not think,  
I must not think...

Yes.

You learn more quickly,  
more profoundly, in sleep.

You told the professor  
that in sleep  
you continued your studies  
of the daytime.

Little by little, you discovered  
you'd mastered Chinese,  
just as later, you discovered  
you'd mastered other languages.

I'm beginning to understand  
what's happening to me.

Yes.

Good.

The enormous concentration  
of electricity that exploded  
directly above me  
regenerated me and...  
amplified fabulously  
all my mental faculties.  
But this electrical discharge  
also made possible  
the emergence of a new  
personality, a sort of...  
double.

Yes.

The formula of the double  
is... correct and useful.  
But don't be in a hurry  
to tell the professor.

So, what I can say?

A man was about to  
cross the street.

He was 70 or 80 years old.

The young lady  
in Room 6

disappeared  
two days ago.

Your companion of a night,  
or several.

I'm afraid it was several.

Do you love me?

Yes, more than I could  
have imagined.

Tell me how you desire me,  
how you long for me.

You are my dream  
and my goddess.

She recorded all your conversations  
and transmitted them  
to the Gestapo.

And when she asked you  
questions

in Russian, Polish  
or German,

you replied without difficulty  
in all those languages.



It's probable that after  
listening to the recordings,  
someone high up in the Reich  
decided to kidnap you.

Kidnap me?

You have become  
the most valuable human specimen  
existing today  
on the face of the earth.

Come, have your chicken.

All the medical schools  
in the world  
would like to study you.

As a sort of guinea pig.

- Professor.

We are doing all we can  
to prevent that.

Professor, ahem,  
in your office,  
you must come.

Please, professor,  
immediately.

We are disturbed over your level  
of cooperation, Herr Professor.

As you see, your government  
has instructed you

to relinquish  
the patient  
and all relevant files  
to our custody.

I'm sorry, I cannot  
comply with this one.

"Cannot comply"?

I will not turn over  
the patient himself.

As his doctor,  
his condition won't allow  
transfer at this time.

I'll return  
with a German doctor.

Good.

You're behaving as you should  
in order to create  
the necessary confusion.

The double.  
He always answers the questions  
I'm ready to ask.  
Like a true  
guardian angel.  
Now that's a correct  
and useful formula.  
Are there others?  
Many.  
For example?  
Along with angels and guardian  
angels, there are powers:  
Archangels,  
seraphim, cherubim.  
Intermediary beings  
par excellence.  
Intermediary  
between consciousness  
and unconsciousness?  
Well, of course.  
But also between  
nature and man,  
man and the divine,  
reason and Eros.  
Feminine and masculine,  
darkness and light,  
matter and spirit.  
So it's come back  
to my old passion again:  
philosophy of religion.  
Yes,  
for you it will always  
come back to that.  
But I can't believe  
in the objective reality  
of the person  
with whom I'm conversing. I-  
I can only think of him  
as my double.  
Well, in a sense,  
that's what he is, but...  
that doesn't mean  
he doesn't exist  
in an objective way

independently.  
Oh, I'd like to be convinced,  
but-  
In metaphysical controversies,  
empirical proofs  
lose their value, but...  
wouldn't you enjoy receiving  
a few fresh roses  
picked from the garden?  
I've always liked roses.  
Well, where would you like me  
to put them?  
Not in the vase,  
at any rate.  
One right here  
in my hand...  
as I'm holding it now, open.  
And another on my knee?  
The third rose.  
Where do you want me  
to put the third rose?  
Let's see.  
Things are more serious  
than we thought.  
We know now why the Gestapo  
will try anything,  
anything, in order to get  
their hands on you.  
Why?  
Among the intimates  
of Goebbels,  
there is an enigmatic  
and ambiguous person,  
a certain Dr. Josef Rudolf.  
Dr. Rudolf believes that  
electrocution by a current  
of at least a million volts  
could produce  
a radical mutation  
of the human species.  
Word of these experiments  
has reached the ear  
of Adolf Hitler,  
who has become personally

interested in your case.  
Attention!  
The experiment begins!  
They want  
us to lend you to them  
for a period of time.  
God help me.  
Time, Dominic,  
we are running out of time.  
Austrian-Swiss  
border. Passport control.  
Please disembark  
with all luggage.  
An order has just come in  
from Vienna  
that certain nationals  
will be detained.  
But why? I have  
a valid passport and visa.  
Please take a step back.  
Go on!  
My cooperation with the Nazis  
is only symbolic.  
Go ahead.  
Thank you.  
Geneva.  
1941, May the 7th.  
Dominic Matei, dictation.  
The documents in the Geneva  
safety-deposit box  
summarize my life,  
which was profoundly changed  
in the spring of 1938,  
in front of the Gara de Nord  
railway station  
in Bucharest.  
My first experiences  
were described and analyzed  
by Professor Roman Stanciulescu,  
in reports which were  
confiscated by the Nazis.  
The war rages around me.  
I am a fugitive  
in neutral Switzerland,

encircled by the Axis powers.  
My Romanian homeland has  
made a pact with the devil,  
Adolf Hitler,  
and may soon be under siege.  
I've lost contact  
with my dear friend,  
Professor Stanciulescu,  
which could mean  
that he's been killed.  
I live in fear,  
dreading what awaits  
in the alleyways.  
Eluding capture by my wits,  
moving from hotel  
to rooming house,  
always working on my book.  
November the 30th, 1941.  
Zurich. Dominic Matei.  
I have explained  
in portfolio B  
how I instinctually  
found the talent  
to preserve myself.  
Living like a secret agent,  
I discovered abilities  
to forge documents,  
change addresses  
and prepare disguises.  
Shortly before he disappeared,  
Professor Stanciulescu  
arranged a bank account  
for me in Geneva  
under the name  
of William Pedersen.  
Now, without him,  
these funds will be depleted.  
Oh, good morning,  
Mr. Pedersen.  
And I will have  
to find other means.  
February the 20th, 1942.  
Bern.  
I must face the undeniable

and chilling truth,  
that I am a mutant.  
Like a character  
in a science-fiction novel,  
I am a strange superman  
of the future.  
I have access to knowledge  
unavailable to mankind.  
Powers I don't fully  
understand.  
Despite this, I try to behave  
as an ordinary intellectual,  
working to complete my book,  
documenting the origin  
of language  
and human consciousness.  
I began to realize that  
with any text I had before me,  
if I wanted to know  
the content,  
I simply... knew it.  
Lake Campione.  
October the 23rd, 1942.  
I found I could augment  
my income.  
Winning just enough  
not to arouse suspicion.  
No more bets.  
Nothing is as it seems,  
I am the proof of that.  
We've got a winner.  
Dominic Matei?  
Dominic Matei.  
I trust no one.  
Look at these.  
See? These were taken  
at the clinic  
of Dr. Stanciulescu...  
in 1938.  
And to think, 10 months ago,  
on January 8th,  
you turned 74 years old.  
Eleven again.  
You're trying

to look older too.  
Those glasses aren't  
even prescription.  
I still don't- Thank you.  
I still don't know  
with whom I have the pleasure  
to be speaking.  
Ted Jones, Jr.  
I'm a correspondent  
for LIFE magazine.  
Listen.  
Switzerland is entirely  
surrounded by the Axis powers.  
I'm cashing out.  
Thank you.  
I'm on special assignment  
for the United States.  
I really think you're  
confusing me with someone else.  
We can protect your identity,  
completely.  
I have a very powerful  
organization behind me.  
I know I can be  
of some service to you.  
We can pay you, or we can make  
some arrangements for you,  
anything that might help you.  
You know,  
your English is perfect,  
but you're not saying anything.  
I'm afraid I must remain  
neutral in all of this.  
Now, if you'll excuse me.  
If someone were to tell me  
that there exist among us  
authentic magicians, saints,  
bodhisattvas,  
or anyone endowed  
with miraculous powers,  
I would believe them.  
In a certain sense,  
what you say is true.  
But you've attained

the freedom to accept  
or reject  
these new conditions  
to use them to finish  
your life's work, or not.  
Have you decided?  
To use them for good  
or for evil.  
Have you decided?  
Despite my precautions,  
I was afraid  
I would inadvertently  
give myself away  
conversing with professors  
and colleagues  
at the university.  
I knew more than any of them  
and understood things  
they never even  
suspected existed.  
I know you're  
a good friend  
of the Romanian  
Professor Stanciulescu.  
I'm very sorry. I heard he died  
in a plane crash, an accident.  
But we can talk about this  
when my friend gets here.  
I told him to come at 9:00.  
Your friend?  
Dr. Monroe.  
The director of an important  
gerontology foundation.  
He's Swiss, like me.  
Like you.  
You know,  
I do have a name.  
Would you like to know it?  
Be careful.  
He knows who you are.  
Hello, I'm Dr. Monroe.  
Head of the foundation  
investigating  
the materials



of Professor Stanciulescu.  
I'm afraid I have no idea  
to what you're referring.  
The belief that youth and life  
can be prolonged in any way  
other than by the purely  
biochemical ones.

You do know  
what I'm referring to?

No, I'm sorry.

Methods proposed  
by that Nazi, Dr. Rudolf.  
Electrocution by means  
of a million or more volts.  
Insane.

Fortunately, I believe  
that method was never tried.  
But our informants said  
that Professor Stanciulescu  
had worked with a somewhat  
analogous case of rejuvenation  
induced by a bolt  
of lightning.

We know who you are,  
Mr. Dominic Matei.  
Now, I have a prior engagement,  
I really must run.  
I'm terribly sorry.

- I know.

Perhaps we could have dinner.

Later tonight?

Mr. Matei?

What do we do with time?

That question,  
"what do we do with time"  
expresses the supreme ambiguity  
of the human condition.

I have no idea  
what you're talking about.

An opportunity has been  
given to us.

We, the human race.

"We"?

No.

You and I both know

**what is coming:**

atomic warfare,  
cataclysmic destruction.  
But unlike the others,  
I'm trying to find a meaning  
to this impending catastrophe.  
Think of me as the last  
European optimist.  
This can be our life's work.  
Please.

There are a few of us who since  
The fact that you appeared  
all of a sudden  
means that you have  
a special mission  
and that you possess means  
of knowledge much superior  
to those available to us.  
You are gravely mistaken.  
What is indispensable  
to a truly human existence?  
For instance,  
the Occidental artistic  
treasury, music and poetry,  
but also a part  
of classic philosophy,  
and above all, science.  
Post-historic man  
will be allergic to science  
for at least  
one or two centuries.  
No, always science.  
Science above all.  
Dominic.

I'm surprised at you.  
Dominic, don't believe  
anything he says.  
Shut up!  
I will tell him the truth.  
Come, Dominic,  
join me in this work.  
He is Dr. Josef Rudolf,

Hitler's most  
dedicated scientist.  
Adolf Hitler?  
If you actually knew him...  
If you had ever been with him,  
in his presence...  
If I could describe it to you...  
Well, uh,  
you will meet him soon enough.  
No! The Gestapo  
had Stanciulescu killed  
and Rudolf was the one-  
Traitor!  
You have no choice  
in the matter.  
Dominic.  
You were  
the honey in my dreams.  
Forgive me. Please, forgive me.  
It's true what he says.  
You really have no choice  
in the matter.  
Geneva 1955, 20th of August,

**about 10:**

Dominic Matei.  
I've decided to stop  
making notes in English  
and instead to use  
an artificial language  
of my own invention.  
Now I can describe paradoxical situations...  
impossible to express in any existing language.  
This will permit me to reveal facts...  
I have not dared to confess in writing.  
This language will only be deciphered...  
by means of a perfected computer.  
So my testimony is addressed to the future...  
let us say in the year 2010.  
But to whom?  
The coming nuclear wars...  
will destroy many civilizations...  
Undoubtedly, this will unleash...  
a wave of deep pessimism, historically unprecedented.

A general despondency.  
My testimony, deciphered in the future...  
could counter the despair...  
because it shows the potential of humanity:  
a species superior to Homo sapiens,  
born in a far-off future.  
This depends on the preservation  
of the material in the safe-deposit box.  
I don't know how this will be assured.  
But I do not doubt that the material  
will be preserved.  
Otherwise,  
my life would have no meaning.  
Hello!  
Excuse me,  
what's the best way  
up to the top?  
Is it Laura?  
She's afraid of curvy roads.  
I really don't think  
you should go on.  
There's a storm coming in.  
We're used to mountain storms.  
And anyway, we can't wait.  
It is.  
Our vacation will  
be over in a few days.  
Maybe I can help.  
That's it.  
That's it.  
I'm Veronica.  
What's your name?  
Dominic.  
With her,  
you use your real name.  
Thank you.  
Be careful.  
Goodbye, Dominic.  
I can only guess what happened.  
When the big storm broke out,  
they were probably  
on the road  
that runs under  
the mountain wall,

where most  
of the lightning struck.  
I'm afraid they could have  
been buried in a rockslide  
or a close strike of lightning  
can cause a heart attack.  
Your name?  
Martin Audricourt.  
Passport, please.  
You know, I can always  
go in a taxi by myself.  
If I need help, I'll call  
from the first service station.  
I don't think they could  
have had time to reach the shelter.  
They could have taken refuge  
in one of the crevices  
in the wall.  
Oh, there's their car.  
There's a woman  
over here.  
She's dead.  
Om, shanti  
Shanti  
Veronica?  
What happened?  
Are you all right?  
Sanskrit.  
How can it be?  
She's had a shock.  
She's suffering from amnesia.  
What language is that?  
What is she speaking?  
It's an Indian language,  
I think.  
Her papers identify her  
as Veronica Buehler, age 25.

**Occupation:**

Living in Liestal,  
Canton Ble-Campagne.

Excuse me.

- Please.

You're the only one

who can calm her  
and speak her language,  
Mr...?  
Audricourt.  
I'm a student of linguistics.  
Greetings.  
What is your name?  
It is a pleasure  
to make your acquaintance.  
My name is Rupini.  
Thank you.  
Good morning.  
What can you tell us,  
Mr. Audricourt?  
The young woman believes  
she is living  
in northeastern India  
She feels  
that she has spent  
several months  
in a cave meditating.  
Now, this is where she was  
when a big storm broke out  
and she saw lightning strike  
above her on the mountain.  
Many large rocks were dislodged,  
blocking the mouth of the cave.  
Is that all?  
She asserts her name  
is Rupini,  
daughter of Nagabhatta,  
descended from one of the first  
families to convert to Buddhism.  
She became a disciple  
of the philosopher Chandrakirti,  
which is why she was in the cave  
copying down his works.  
I see.  
Would you mind if I discuss this  
a moment with my colleagues?  
Not at all.  
We will invite  
some doctors from, uh,  
Zurich, Basel and Geneva

to come to see her.

I...

If I might make a suggestion?

Yes.

Perhaps some experts from  
the Oriental Institute in Rome  
might be necessary.

Necessary for what?

Well, to confirm  
if what she's saying is fact.

Fact?

Exactly.

I present to  
you Professor Giuseppe Tucci  
from the Oriental Institute  
in Rome.

I am Blasi, his assistant.

Professor

Tucci, it's an honor.

Before we begin,  
who wrote the telegram  
that included  
some of the particulars?

I did, professor.

You're a Sanskritist?

Not exactly. Excuse me.

Uh, but I have an interest  
in Oriental studies.

I came only because  
of your report.

Thank you.

You did well.

Well-being, your ladyship.

Welcome to both of you.

Where am I?

Why doesn't anybody  
understand me?

As in dreams, the mind presents  
the appearance of duality.

We've had some of her  
remarks translated into English.

The young woman's knowledge  
of Madhyamika philosophy  
and her master, Chandrakirti,

is convincing.  
The discussion only became  
delicate whenever Rupini  
asked what had happened to her,  
where she was  
and why no one understood her.  
What did you tell her,  
professor?  
I always  
begin by reminding of Maya.  
The cosmic illusion.  
The great witch.  
Actually it's  
not a dream, I told her,  
but it takes part  
in the illusory nature  
of dreaming,  
because it is the future,  
therefore, of time.  
Now, time is  
par excellence unreal.  
I don't believe  
I convinced her.  
But fortunately, she's, uh,  
enthusiastic about logic  
and dialectics,  
and that's mainly  
what we discussed.  
Uh, professor,  
could all this possibly be...?  
How shall I say?  
Fact?  
"Fact"?  
Mmm.  
I would suggest  
a journey to India,  
more precisely to the province  
of Uttar Pradesh,  
to the caves where Rupini  
claims to have meditated.  
I should think  
the Oriental Institute of Rome,  
of which I am president,  
would sponsor the expedition.



And, young man,  
I think you should  
accompany us to India.  
I'd be delighted,  
professor.  
It's been understood she will  
be put into a deep sleep  
before leaving the clinic  
and will continue  
to sleep  
until we reach the vicinity  
of the caves.  
Start rolling. Rolling!  
Tucci! Tucci, look here!  
We are very close  
to the frontier of Nepal.  
According to Rupini's account,  
this is where we'll find the  
cave where she would meditate.  
We are very fortunate in having  
a pandit from Gorakhpur  
familiar with  
the Madhyamika philosophy.  
He'll be at her side  
when she awakens.  
Everyone,  
hide themselves.  
No form,  
no feeling,  
no thought,  
no choice,  
no consciousness.  
Gone, gone,  
gone beyond,  
completely gone.  
Enlightenment.  
So be it.  
Welcome.  
Why did it take you so long?  
I was already here.  
I know this place.  
Stay back. Hide yourself.  
Over here!  
Ah!

Oh, God.  
Are you all right?  
Just be still. Lay still.  
Just rest.  
Veronica.  
She recognized it.  
This is the cave!  
But the entrance is blocked.  
I don't think  
you'll be needing me for a while.  
She is awake,  
but she has not  
opened her eyes.  
Greetings.  
How are you feeling, Rupini?  
Didn't we-? Didn't  
we ask directions of you today?  
My name is Veronica Buehler,  
and I speak three languages:  
German, French and English.  
Have you ever tried to  
learn any Oriental language?  
Never.  
Or have you ever read anything  
about India  
or Indian culture?  
Some popular books.  
Like?  
Heh. Rudyard Kipling,  
I think?  
The Jungle Book.  
Have you ever heard  
the name Rupini?  
No.  
In an earlier existence,  
Veronica Buehler  
had been Rupini.  
I would say, for the vast  
majority of the Oriental lists,  
a clear example of  
the transmigration of the soul.  
And, young man, your opinion?  
As a neophyte Oriental list,  
I can only cite some classical

Indian conceptions,  
from Upanishads  
to Gautama Buddha.  
Excuse me. It is  
precisely in the Upanishads  
in the Brhadaranyaka  
and Chandogya Upanishads  
that one can find this belief  
for the first time.  
This is karma, isn't it?  
But it's hard for me to believe  
that I ever existed before.  
How did you say?  
Metempsychosis.  
Metempsychosis.  
- Mm-hm.  
That absolutely  
doesn't make sense to me.  
Maybe...  
What?  
Maybe I was possessed  
by an evil spirit.  
Well...  
They never leave us alone.  
It's all so confusing.  
I'm afraid  
I'm going crazy.  
Hello, Miss Veronica,  
just an interview.  
That's enough. Let's go.  
Taxi!  
Just drive, drive anywhere.  
I- I think  
we should get away. I...  
I think we should go somewhere.  
We should be alone.  
We should go to, uh,  
somewhere beautiful,  
a Mediterranean island.  
Dominic, that would make me  
very, very happy.  
Look, that bird.  
What kind of birds  
do they have in Malta?

That's a Maltese falcon.  
Welcome.  
Thank you.  
No, that's fine.  
Thank you.  
Thank you.  
Thanks very much.  
Finally alone.  
Dominic,  
it's beautiful here.  
Yes, it is.  
When I first opened my eyes  
and saw you...  
I confess I was thinking,  
if I were three  
or four years older and...  
if he were  
to ask me to marry him...  
I would say yes.  
Veronica.  
My love.  
Is it true?  
Yes.  
I've always loved you.  
Veronica?  
Do you understand it?  
I don't know this language.  
Ancient... Beyond...  
Why else did you have  
to know her?  
Veronica?  
Veronica...  
It's all right.  
That's all right.  
It's all right.  
I've got you.  
I've got you.  
I've got you, darling.  
I've got you, Laura.  
It's all right.  
I've got you.  
I've got you, darling.  
I've got you, Laura.  
I love you, darling.

I love you.  
Was that Rupini's voice?  
Mm-hm. Yes.  
She's moving back in time  
from Sanskrit  
to earlier languages.  
That was Egyptian.  
Perhaps you'll take us back  
to a time before history.  
The origins of language,  
which is where I've always  
wanted to go, but I never could.  
But it's helping me  
finish my work.  
Good.  
Good. I want to help you.  
You know, I'm...  
I'm 88 years old, really.  
If I added up all the years  
Rupini lived,  
I'd be older than you.  
Well, then let's go dancing.  
Thank you.  
I don't think  
we'll be recognized,  
even with our pictures  
in all those magazines.  
Well, our pictures  
are still appearing.  
Let me see.  
What's the matter?  
I feel tired all the time,  
and I don't understand why.  
Something is happening  
inside me. I can feel it.  
And she's right.  
The Para mediumistic ecstasies  
have exhausted her.  
Champagne?  
Veronica?  
Veronica!  
No! Veronica, don't!  
Veronica!  
I was so worried!

What is it?  
It was a dream.  
A bad dream.  
What was-? What was it?  
I was somewhere beside a river,  
and someone,  
a stranger with a head  
like a dog,  
was coming toward me.  
And in his hand, he-  
He had...  
Explain it to me!  
I want to know  
what Rupini knows.  
She knows things  
that we don't understand yet.  
No. Let me-  
No, no!  
Don't ever leave me.  
I'll never leave you.  
Don't ever leave me.  
I'll never leave you.  
Don't ever leave me.  
I'll never leave you.  
Veronica.  
The stranger in your dream  
was probably Shiva.  
And in his hand, a skull.  
For Shiva is both creator  
and destroyer combined.  
Dominic?  
There's someone  
who looks like you  
spying on us.  
I didn't notice anyone.  
By the gate.  
Come and look.  
There's no one there.  
Maybe I was mistaken.  
You've been in the sun too long.  
Let's go inside.  
I'm 88 years old, really.  
She's in a  
hyper-suggestive state.

Tell her you love her.  
Tell her that you've  
always loved her.  
I love you.  
I've always loved you.  
That's Sumerian.  
No, it's Babylonian.  
After Egyptian and Babylonian,  
there followed probably  
a sample of proto-Elamite  
and one of Sumerian.  
She is descending  
deeper and deeper  
into the past.  
But how far back will she go?  
Your life's work will  
finally have what was missing.  
Every night for two weeks,  
Veronica went  
further back in time.  
Through unknown languages...  
unwritten history.  
Getting closer...  
and closer...  
to the inarticulate moment...  
of the beginning.  
But at what cost?  
Madam is not suffering  
from anything,  
anything at all.  
Are you sure, doctor?  
Yes. I've prescribed  
a series of shots  
with vitamins and minerals.  
Perhaps it's...  
the nervous condition  
that precedes menopause  
in certain women.  
Well, just how old do you  
take her to be, doctor?  
Late 40s, more or less.  
She's 25.  
Where have all  
the mirrors gone?

Bring one to me.  
Veronica, you're not well.  
Bring a mirror to me,  
Dominic, please.  
Maybe that one.  
I should have understood this  
from the beginning.  
One more regression,  
she'll reach  
the protolanguage.  
Your life's work  
will be complete.  
You know I'm right.  
Dominic?  
Dominic?  
Look.  
Come sit with me.  
Come sit with me.  
Veronica.  
Veronica, I'm to blame for this.  
No, it's me.  
Listen to me. Listen to me  
and don't interrupt.  
Please, listen.  
Listen to me.  
If I continue to live with you,  
by autumn  
you will have perished.  
I can't tell you more.  
But I assure you,  
in reality, you haven't aged.  
The moment I disappear  
from your life,  
your youth and your beauty  
will return.  
Don't leave me, Dominic.  
Please, don't leave me.  
I was doomed to lose everything  
that I love.  
But I'd rather lose you young  
and beautiful, the way you were,  
the way you will be again  
without me,  
than to watch you perish



in my arms.  
You promised me  
you would never leave me.  
I am going to leave you.  
If you leave me,  
I will die without you.  
If in a few months,  
you don't find yourself  
as you were last autumn,  
I'll come back.  
The minute I receive  
your telegram, I'll come back.  
Three or four months,  
just wait-  
Somewhere...  
far away from me.  
Don't leave me.  
Please. Please.  
Dominic.

**The 3:**

from Bucuresti to lasi  
will depart in five minutes.

**The 3:**

from Bucuresti to lasi  
will depart in five minutes.  
Good evening.  
Audricourt.  
Sign here, please.  
Thank you.  
On the second floor, Room 19.  
Thank you.  
By the way,  
do you know if the Caf Select  
still exists?  
How could it not exist?  
It's an historic monument.  
Of course.  
Have you heard  
of Professor Dominic Matei?  
You know,  
I was born here.  
Then you know that

he frequented Caf Select  
the whole time he was  
professor here in Piatra Neamt.  
That's right.  
Here's your key.  
Nineteen?  
The second floor.  
All right.  
Welcome home.  
Caf Select.  
Maman.  
Maman.  
Maman.  
Maman.  
"Good and  
evil lose their meaning,  
"and in the absolute  
being coincides  
with nonbeing. "  
Yes, but what no one dares  
to say  
is that in the horizon  
of these philosophies,  
atomic wars must be,  
if not justified,  
at least accepted.  
No, I reject that.  
True meaning of nuclear  
catastrophe can only be this:  
The mutation  
of the human species,  
and the arrival  
of the new man.  
Yes, but atomic wars  
will destroy populations,  
civilizations.  
That is the price to be paid.  
How can you even say that?  
The resulting electromagnetic  
pulse will create  
an unlimited potential  
for post-historic man.  
Yes, but it could go  
the other way

and provoke a regression  
in the species.  
All that matters is knowledge  
and the perfection  
of the human being.  
So you're saying that the end  
justifies the means?  
There is no other way.  
Just as there was no other way  
for Veronica, just aging  
and suffering and then death.  
There was no other way.  
That's why you've never  
finished your book,  
why you'll always be a failure.  
No.  
Dominic, what have you done?  
Oh, Dominic.  
Save me.  
Save me, Dominic.  
Dominic, what have you done?  
What have you done?  
And the third rose?  
Where shall  
I put the third rose?  
Oh, where shall I put it?  
Dominic?  
Dominic Matei?  
Cuconul Dominic Matei?  
Is it you?  
Praise God,  
you've returned.  
Dr. Neculache, look.  
He's back.  
Cuconul Dominic is here.  
In other words,  
the story begins  
all over again.  
Old friend.  
Dominic?  
Look, it's you.  
- I'm dreaming.  
I am dreaming.  
When I wake up,

it will seem like  
I've just begun to dream indeed.  
It's like, uh,  
the story of Chuang-tzu  
and the butterfly.  
The story of Chuang-tzu  
and the butterfly?  
Yes.  
A king who was dreaming  
that he was a butterfly  
that dreamed he was a king,  
who was dreaming  
he was a butterfly.  
I know very well  
that I'm-  
I'm dreaming,  
and in a minute or two  
I will wake up.  
You are awake, Cucoane Dominic,  
but you are tired.  
In fact, you look very tired.  
All right.  
Between December the 20th, 1938,  
and this evening,  
many things have happened.  
That is when it is happening,  
Cucoane Dominic.  
This is December 20th, 1938.  
I don't dare tell you  
what year we are  
really living in,  
we who are outside this dream.  
I know that if I were to make  
the effort, I would wake up.  
You are not dreaming,  
Coane Dominic.  
You're here with us,  
your friends.  
You're at the Caf Select.  
This is what we imagined  
would happen.  
When Conul Dominic  
comes to his senses,  
when he recovers,

you'll see.  
He'll go straight  
to the Caf Select.  
But if I'm not dreaming,  
then you'd know about...  
Hiroshima.  
Of the hydrogen bomb,  
of Neil Armstrong,  
the astronaut who landed  
and walked on the moon...  
...last summer in July.  
Dominic!  
Dominic, it's true.  
You've come back.  
Welcome.  
You look good.  
Welcome, old friend.  
It's like that story of, uh,  
the Chinese philosopher,  
you know, the one  
I've told you about many times.  
Which Chinese philosopher?  
The name escapes me now.  
The one with the butterfly.  
Well, it's too long to repeat.  
I'll call for a sleigh  
to take you home.  
I don't need a sleigh.  
I'm going on foot.  
The next time  
the problem arises,  
I shall know how to answer.  
What problem, dear Dominic?  
The problem which worries  
all of us.  
Dominic?  
Is it your teeth?  
Is it your teeth? Dominic?  
Should I lock up  
the door?  
The guest in Room 19  
hasn't come back yet.  
He went to the Caf Select.  
I'll call.

Yes, he came here.  
He went into the backroom.  
Uh, no one was there,  
so he stayed only  
a few minutes  
and left without  
saying good night.  
He was, uh, holding  
his hand to his mouth.  
And the third?  
Where do you want me to put  
the third rose?