

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

"The Young Knight"

Written by

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FIRST HOUSE DRAFT

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. VINCENT'S CHAMBER - DAY

As a strange VOICE gently intones words from Shakespeare's "Henry IV, camera PANS over books, maps and other artifacts of learning which fill this gracious place...

VOICE (O.S.)

'...thou makest me sad, and makest
me sin in envy that my Lord
Northumberland should be the
father to so blest a son-- a son
who is the theme of honor's
tongue...'

It's a classroom situation where we FIND KIPPER, JAMIE and several other tunnel CHILDREN listening. In the back, behind the class, VINCENT sits, watching his teaching assistant reading...

MICHAEL

A grown child of the tunnels, now 20, recites the words of this speech as if it bears on him with a terrible, personal weight...

The young man shares a powerful bond with Vincent. He is a prized pupil and friend who idolizes his mentor with an ardor so unabashed, he imitates everything about Vincent that he can: he dresses like Vincent, wears long fair hair like Vincent's, even patterns his speech after Vincent's...

The only thing he hasn't changed to be more like Vincent is what he can't change: an extraordinary and delicate beauty...

MICHAEL

'...O that it could be proved that some
night-tripping fairy had exchanged in
cradle-clothes our children where they
lay... Then would I have his Harry and
he mine. '

Michael looks up from the aged volume he's reading to Vincent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT

Thank you, Michael. You read it beautifully.

MICHAEL

It's a very moving speech...

KIPPER

(unconvinced)

I didn't like it.

VINCENT

Something about it troubles you, Kipper?

KIPPER

You said me the king loved his son. If that's true, how come he wants to trade Harry for someone else? Bow could any father want to do that?

MICHAEL

(patiently)

This father was more than a father, Kipper. He bore an obligation he knew was greater even than what he owed his flesh and blood...

VINCENT

The obligation to his people.

JAMIE

But what about love, Vincent? You've always told us love is more important than anything else...

VINCENT

To each of us, deep down, there can be nothing more vital, more compelling, than love... but none of us lives in a world of only loved ones...

MICHAEL

The king was thinking of his son's destiny.

VINCENT

And the greater the destiny, the greater the sacrifices one is called upon to make...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The children reflect on this.

VINCENT

What Shakespeare tries to tell us, here and elsewhere, is that the choices life presents us are never simple. It's a fact he celebrates and mourns at the same time...

Seeing the deeply thoughtful faces of all his students, including Michael, Vincent decides this is a good time...

VINCENT

That's enough for today...

The children gather their things and leave more or less in a big hurry, depending on their age: the youngest are gone fastest. Trailing all of them is Jamie, who dawdles, watching Michael, waiting for him to notice her. But Michael is deeply preoccupied, standing near a bookcase and staring into space...

JAMIE

Thanks for the lesson, Michael.

MICHAEL

Hm? Oh yes.

JAMIE

See you around...

MICHAEL

Of course. Bye...

She leaves slowly, exiting with a shy smile. Michael barely notices. Vincent watches him for a beat.

VINCENT

Michael, is anything wrong?

MICHAEL

No... I'm only thinking...

VINCENT

(beat; he knows)

Of your old life. Above.

Michael looks at him, surprised.

VINCENT

I've sensed your preoccupation for some time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MICHAEL

I'm so happy here, Vincent. But
I can't help it... my thoughts
wander up there more and more...

VINCENT

It's not surprising. You've never
ventured outside as much as the
other children... The sun and the wind
used to be your constant companions...
now you've barely know them for seven
years. No one could blame you for
dreaming of it again...

MICHAEL

(an entreating look)
Vincent... I feel now... I may finally
be ready to be part of that world again...

VINCENT

(warmly; but with
sadness)
I'm sure of it.

MICHAEL

And even if I'm not... I think...
I have to try...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FATHER'S CHAMBER. DAY

FATHER and Vincent consult on Michael's situation. Father confronts
the prospect of Michael's departure from his gentle world with some
confusion and dismay...

FATHER

He wants to leave? I don't understand.
Isn't he happy here?

VINCENT

Of course he is. You know that. But
Michael's time below was always intended
as a healing time, to prepare him for a
return to his former life...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER

As it was for me, and most of the rest of us... But when one grows accustomed to the tranquility, the nurturing spirit we've created for ourselves here... well, I've never understood why anyone would opt for the alternatives above...

VINCENT

You forget that Michael's alternatives are richer than most of ours... He has a place to take among the privileged if he chooses it...

FATHER

A place in a world he hasn't lived in for seven years?

VINCENT

He says he's corresponded with his father all this time to apprise him of his progress in learning.

FATHER

The same father who abandoned him?

VINCENT

Michael feels ready to forgive him now... he feels it's time to close a wound that's bled bitterness into his heart for too long...

FATHER

(beat; a sigh)

Well, Vincent... you know the boy better than I... And we all know how deeply you care for him...

VINCENT

Yes...

FATHER

Do you trust he'll be all right above by himself?

VINCENT

I've thought of that. I believe I know the ideal person to help him...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FATHER

Catherine?

VINCENT

She shares the same background he had. I can think of no one more qualified to guide such a delicate passage...

CUT TO:

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE - CATHY'S DESK - MORNING

CATHY sits with her elbows on her desk, waiting for her coffee to clear away the mists, absently opening mail...

JOE

(approaches smiling)

You look thrilled to be here, Radcliffe...

CATHY

(zombie-like)

Thrilled to be where?
Where am I?

She glances at an envelope with a gold-engraved return address and idly tosses it into the trash without opening it. Joe retrieves it...

JOE

What? You got something against the Daughters of the American Revolution?

CATHY

It's just another fund-raiser. Nothing to get a paper cut over.

JOE

(wanting to open it)

May I?

(off her shrug, opens
and reads the invite;
sarcastic)

Oh I see. You're absolutely right. Just another black tie gala featuring Lester Lanin's orchestra and the Governor as Master of Ceremonies... what a yawn.. .

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATHY
(smiles, toying)
See what I mean?

JOE
(can't suppress it)
Radcliffe! How tired can your blue
blood be?!

CATHY
You don't understand, Joe...I've
been to a thousand of these things.
They're boring.

JOE
It's lucky Cinderella didn't have your
attitude, or Prince Charming'd still be
hitting singles bars..

CATHY
Time out, pal. I thought you hated
these things...

JOE
Well, given the choice I'd much rather
knock down a few pins with the guys...
but compared to what you do with your
spare time...

CATHY
How do you know what I do with my
spare time?

JOE
For starters, you don't have any
spare time! You're always here!
And when you do finally leave,
I never see you changing into an
evening dress like some of the
other workaholic ladies, I never
see you coming in with bags under
your eyes, I never see you giggling
on the phone with your boyfriend..

CATHY
(smiling)
Are you worried about me, Joe?

He stops and looks at her, thinks about it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOE

Yeah, I am.

(he pushes the invite
across the desk to her)

Go to the party, Radcliffe. For
me.

CATHY

(she pushes it back)

No. You go. For me.

JOE

I'll go if you go.

CATHY

Are you asking for a date?

JOE

With you? God no. Never.

CATHY

Tell you what. You go, and maybe I'll
join you.

JOE

(takes the invite)

I'll take it.

She shoots him a grin, as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CATHERINE'S BALCONY. NIGHT

As Vincent tells Cathy more of Michael's story...

VINCENT

...he was only thirteen when it
happened... Michael believes his
father started avoiding him then to
hide from the pain of her death.

CATHY

(moved)

Both parents taken from him...
how tragic...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT

Others might have been able to accept his father's behavior, to see it was only a form of grief, but Michael was too sensitive to bear it... the feeling of abandonment. He ran away.

CATHY

How did he find your world?

VINCENT

One of our helpers came across him wandering the streets. His father was contacted, but showed no interest in getting him back... it was decided we should give him refuge below.

CATHY

And now...?

VINCENT

Many of the people who live below left lives of pain and deprivation behind. For them, the choice to stay is an easy one, a welcome one...

CATHY

But Michael comes from a wealthy family...

VINCENT

(a tinge of pain)

Like you... he gives up a great deal if he casts his lot forever among us.

CATHY

Vincent... I wouldn't have anyone believe that money by itself makes life's choices easy.

VINCENT

Of course not... but there are opportunities it affords -- to study at the finest institutions, to see worlds beyond ours... opportunities Michael deserves...

Cathy's doubt is softened by Vincent's obvious deep concern. She smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CATHY

You want him to have what you've never had...

He looks away, out over the city...

CATHY

Tell me how I can help, Vincent...

CUT TO:

INT. MICHAEL'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

A number of tunnel people crowd the chamber as Michael prepares for his journey above. Most of them are women, whose affection for him -- and sadness at his leaving -- make it clear he's a heartbreaker down here. MARY and Jamie fuss over him, disagreeing about what he should wear. Father doesn't understand why Michael can't use his clothes.

Vincent watches quietly from a corner.

FATHER

(holding up a stodgy brown suit)

Honestly, I don't see what's wrong with this.

(to Jamie)

Didn't I hear you girls chattering something about nostalgia in the fashions today? Old styles coming back again?

JAMIE

Not that old, Father.

Jamie is pulling a slightly worn blue seersucker suit coat off Michael and replacing it with a rattier black jacket with padded shoulders (all of it obviously found clothing).

MARY

(objecting)

What are you doing, Jamie? That thing is hideous!

JAMIE

You're dressing him like a ten-year-old! This is what everybody wears nowadays.

She spins a bemused Michael around checking him out...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAMIE

We can hardly find cast-offs anymore
because all the young people are buying
them up...

FATHER

I agree with Mary. He looks like some
sort of ruffian with that thing on...

(offers his suit again)

...but with something well preserved
like this--

JAMIE

Father!

FATHER

(holds up his hands)

All right, all right... I defer to
your expertise...

JAMIE

(turning Michael to face
her; serious)

Now listen to me Michael. There are some
very pretty girls up top who may act
friendly to you, but that doesn't mean
they like you the way we do. If you take
my advice, you won't even talk to them.

MICHAEL

(feigning innocence)

Girls as pretty as you, Jamie?
I can't believe it.

She blushes deeply. Others in the chamber laugh. Michael smiles at
Vincent. Vincent smiles softly back, but already his mixed feelings
are clear: what Michael now experiences, he can only dream about...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THRESHOLD POINT - NIGHT

Cathy waits by the brick wall opening and reacts as
Vincent approaches...

CATHY

Vincent...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT

I must thank you again for what
you're doing, Catherine--

CATHY

Please. I've already told you I'm
delighted to do it... Where is--

She stops short as she sees approaching from the darkness

A SILHOUETTED FIGURE

With broad shoulders, golden-haloed hair and princely
carriage that unmistakably evoke Vincent... until he steps
into a shaft of light, and is revealed to her in all his
retiring beauty...

She reacts, her breath slightly taken... And Vincent can't
help noticing...

VINCENT

(after a long beat)
This is Michael...
(to Michael)
Meet Catherine...

CATHY

(recovering, smiles and
offers her hand)
Hello...

MICHAEL

(shy, taking the hand)
I've heard so much...

CATHY

So have I...

MICHAEL

I'm so grateful to you for taking this
time--

CATHY

Don't be silly.

The three share an awkward moment or two, until Michael
turns to Vincent.

MICHAEL

Thank you for understanding so well,
Vincent. I think you've known my mind
better than I know it myself...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VINCENT

I've always sensed the potential for
great things in you, Michael... whatever
you find above today, I'm certain it's
only the first step into an
extraordinary destiny.

Vincent guides him forward with a hand on the shoulder...

VINCENT

Now hurry... the world awaits
you...

Michael steps through the doorway and walks toward the light.
Catherine gives Vincent a last look and turns to follow... She
puts a hand on Michael's arm to guide him and they disappear
together into the light...

Vincent watches this, then turns and walks away alone, his regal
bearing seeming slightly stooped with sadness...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADB IN:

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAY - M.O.S.

We FOLLOW Cathy and Michael as they amble along a busy commercial boulevard. She points out things and people, explaining it all to him... they start out a little awkward, maybe, but soon they're smiling a lot...

They come upon some breakdancing kids and watch for a moment...

They buy some frozen yogurt from a street vendor...

She steers him away from a proselytizing moonie...

INT. BOOKSTORE. EVENING - M.O.S.

Cathy showing Michael some new releases, twisting an imaginary steering wheel to explain who Lee Iaccoca is...

INT. ART GALLERY - DAY - M.O.S.

They share a light moment reacting to strange modern art...

CUT TO:

INT. VINCENT'S CHAMBER - DAY

Vincent reads by a dim light, the mood very lonely and quiet. Nothing but the clinking pipes and the distant rumble of trains... until faint FOOTFALLS become audible and grow, and Michael's voice calls out:

MICHAEL (O.S.)
Vincent! Vincent!

And he runs in the room, panting and smiling, an explosion of life. He's wearing something bright and new, something even more out of place down here than the found street clothes Jamie dressed him in before.

MICHAEL
Vincent! You're here!

Vincent looks up at him slowly, and Michael is momentarily embarrassed at his boyish outburst. He looks at his feet, catching his breath and lowering his voice:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAEL

I'm sorry... I've just been
running... There's... so much I
wanted to tell you...

Vincent sets down his book with a slow deliberateness that belies
the tone of his words:

VINCENT

How was today, Michael? You must
describe every part of it for me.

Michael smiles and begins moving about the chamber, gazing around
as if looking past these walls, unable to suppress the energy
released by his recollections...

MICHAEL

Vincent, Vincent... I'd forgotten how
exciting this city could be... how it
seems to shudder with life... how every
corner throws out something new to
startle you...

VINCENT

(knowing it from his
dreams, softly)
How it teems with as many
possibilities as it has people...

MICHAEL

So many of them... working so hard,
creating so many things, so much to
see and do... and feel...

VINCENT

Is it different than you remember it?

MICHAEL

What I remember being different...
was me... the things that scared me
then, thrill me now.

VINCENT

You no longer feel threatened by
what you don't know... Nor do you
read your own loneliness in the eyes
of every stranger.

MICHAEL

And I owe that to you...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VINCENT

No... you've only been helped to see the value in yourself which is beyond comparing, beyond the standards or expectations of others...

MICHAEL

(regarding Vincent with admiration)

You were the first to see it in me, Vincent... the way you see it in everyone... No matter how hard you have to look...

VINCENT

It is always there...

MICHAEL

(a beat; with deep feeling)

When I think how well you've prepared me for this time... it's as if you knew just how it would be...

Vincent looks away. There's a painful truth to these words...

MICHAEL

... I wish you could share it with us, Vincent...

Michael's words continue, as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT. NIGHT

Michael continuing in v.o. over the following...

He and Cathy sit and talk at a table for two. She laughs at his disappointed reaction to the tiny portions of his nouvelle cuisine entrée when it arrives...

MICHAEL (V.O.)

... I wish you could be there with Cathy and me...

They both laugh now as he mockingly pushes the food around, looking for more of it, and we:

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

Cathy is walking Michael home at a leisurely pace...

MICHAEL

I want to thank you for everything
you've shown me, Cathy. I can't say how
it's helped to be reintroduced to this
world by a friend...

CATHY

I've enjoyed doing it. Very much...
(a few beats of awkward
silence)

Have you thought about what you'd like
to do with your life up here, Michael?
There's a lot to choose from...

MICHAEL

I know... but I have an idea...

He hesitates, seems embarrassed by his answer. He
looks at his feet, working up the nerve...

MICHAEL

I've always had a notion... a
vision of what I would be -- could be --
if I came back to my old life... But it
frightens me now, seems too much like a
pipe dream, like it will betray me...

CATHY

Tell me about it...

MICHAEL

(halting; shy)

What Vincent does for everyone below --
teaching, caring, protecting... Maybe
it's true that what he is somehow limits
his life, his-world, but there are
no limits to the importance Vincent has
to the people he cares about...

(turning to her,
passionate about it)

To be so important to people, to have the
power to do so much good... that is my
dream...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATHY

(deeply moved)

That's a beautiful dream, Michael. Not a pipe dream at all...

MICHAEL

It's one reason I've always hoped I could be part of my family again... their position -- their / wealth -- can help me make the dream real...

They arrive at the pipe entrance under the bridge...

CATHY

Do you feel ready to see them yet?

MICHAEL

Almost...

(smiles)

I think I almost do...

CATHY

Good...

They look at each other for a moment, then he departs with a modest wave. As he disappears into the pipe, Cathy watches him with a curious expression, as if trying to decide something about him...?

CUT TO:

INT. FRONT DOOR - CATHY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cathy enters and stoops to pick up mail left under her door. She flips through it, and stops at an engraved invitation identical to the one she tossed at the office. She gives it a thoughtful look now, and sets it aside, not discarding it with her other junk mail...

Then she reacts to a familiar tapping at her window...

CUT TO:

EXT. CATHY'S BALCONY - NIGHT

Cathy emerges to find Vincent standing at the balcony rail looking out. Hearing her he turns.

VINCENT

Catherine. Where is Michael?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATHY

On his way below. I just left
him. Why?

VINCENT

(looking away)

Father was worried. It was
getting late.

CATHY

(ironic)

Father was worried?

VINCENT

(he looks at her;
hesitates a beat)

Father is concerned... both of us are
concerned... this all may be happening
too quickly for Michael... we may be
letting him rush into something...

CATHY

Shouldn't that be up to him?

VINCENT

Of course. But Michael has been very
sheltered these last seven years... he
may not fully understand what it is he
faces.

CATHY

He faces his future. Who is ever fully
prepared to face their future? I
wasn't...

VINCENT

Nor was I... but Michael... Michael
is a terribly sensitive young man.
With very high ideals...

CATHY

Has he told you about his dreams?

VINCENT

(with obvious
misgivings)

Yes...

CATHY

You don't approve?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VINCENT

Catherine, you must understand... the children of the tunnels are blessed... they learn of life in a place that's protected from the hurt and the disillusionment of your world... it's a refuge where dreams are mostly safe from reality... dreams that might be impossible anywhere else, live below.

CATHY

Like our dream?

VINCENT

(he looks at her)

And Michael's... Such dreams are sorely tested above...

CATHY

But Vincent. If we want them to be real, we have to test them, don't we?

Vincent looks hard at her, perhaps wondering what test is in store for their dream...

CUT TO:

INT. MICHAEL'S CHAMBER. NIGHT

Far from taking it slower, Michael's reacclimation process has switched into a higher gear, as becomes apparent for us watching him put on a tuxedo outfit, Vincent observing nearby...

MICHAEL

... Cathy says she usually skips these functions, but she thought it would be educational for me... and I might meet charity people I can work with in the future...

Vincent is quiet. This whole thing plagues him with a nest of apprehensions...

Michael finishes tucking in his shirt and picks up a wrapped package. He removes a card and opens it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAEL
 (explaining)
 It's from Cathy.
 (reading)
 'Wear these with confidence and
 pride. Catherine.'

He opens the package and produces a matching red tie and cummerbund. He beams.

MICHAEL
 She's wonderful, isn't she
 Vincent?

VINCENT
 (almost sadly)
 Yes...

Michael finishes buckling on the cummerbund and takes the tie over to his mirror. As he tries a few times to tie it, Vincent appears behind him, and they regard each other's images...

VINCENT
 Do you expect you'll run across faces
 from your past?

MICHAEL
 (a tinge of
 apprehension?)
 It's quite possible...
 (gives up on his tie)
 Vincent, can you tie this for me?

VINCENT
 (shakes his head)
 I can't... I don't know how.

Michael shrugs and leaves Vincent alone before the mirror.

MICHAEL
 That's all right. Cathy will
 know...

Vincent gazes at his troubled image in the mirror, not sure if he has a right to his feelings...

VINCENT
 Michael--

MICHAEL
 (turns to him)
 Yes?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VINCENT
(torn; holding something
back)
Be careful...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET ON WAY TO CHARITY BALL. NIGHT

Michael and Catherine walk arm in arm, he in his tuxedo, hair pulled back in a pony tail, and she in a beautiful, somewhat revealing gown. The mood is pleasant, but there's a new ingredient present... a little bit of sexual tension... They're keeping the strange distance between them of people on a first date, feeling tremulous electricity in their touch...

MICHAEL
(after a beat)
You know, there's another dream of mine I haven't told you about yet, Cathy...

CATHY
(smiles)
Tell me.

MICHAEL
It has to do with you...

She waxes somewhat apprehensive...

MICHAEL
Ever since Vincent began telling me about you, I've wondered how it was possible for any woman to equal his words of admiration... Then I saw you, and realized a woman could be so beautiful...

CATHY
Michael, please...

MICHAEL
... and then I got to know you, and realized she could also be as wise and kind and strong...

She looks away...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAEL

Cathy... my dream... and I pray
it's not impossible... my dream...
is to find a love as perfect as
yours and Vincent's...

Cathy stares at him, moved and troubled by his speech. As she's about to answer, we SEE they're almost at the entrance to the Ball (some hotel or mansion). We hear PARTY SOUNDS and MUSIC rising, and partygoers start pressing toward them from all around...

CATHY

Michael... please... don't expect
too much from life... or love...
no love is completely perfect...
not even ours...

She's about to say more when a friend of hers, LIBBY, appears behind them and takes Cathy's arm...

LIBBY

Cathy! Chandler honey!

Cathy turns and produces a party smile for her friend:

CATHY

Libby. Great to see you.

LIBBY

(staring at Michael,
addressing her)
Where've you been for godsakes?!
(to her COMPANION)
I told you she wasn't dead.

CATHY

(steering Michael
inside)
Just hibernating, Libby. You
understand.

LIBBY

(to their backs)
It depends... What was it? Detox?
(following them inside)
Wait! Cathy! Introduce me to goldilocks!

INT. BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cathy and Michael enter, get their names checked. Libby and Companion follow, but are quickly taken aside by other guests. Michael reacts to the grandly romantic atmosphere: throngs of elegantly dressed people, splashy decorations, strains of "Heaven" swelling out from the orchestra...

MICHAEL

(beaming)

Cathy... it's fantastic...

CATHY

(surprised she agrees)

These things can be fun
sometimes...

JOE (O.S.)

You were right, Radcliffe...

Cathy turns and smiles at Joe and his DATE. He looks u comfortable in his tux, but she's smiling and happy.

JOE

... What a bore. Why'd I ever let
you talk me into this?

CATHY

You talked me into it!

JOE

(on a roll)

I haven't seen a single person
I know, the Governor's a no-show,
and I was kidding myself if I ever
thought I knew how to dance to
this stuff.

CATHY

(smiling)

Sorry, Joe...

JOE

I would've left hours ago if they didn't
shake me down for a hundred fifty bucks
to get in--

(notices Michael)

Hey wait a second. I thought you said
you had nobody to take. He looks like
somebody.

JOE'S DATE

I'll say...

Joe shoots her a look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATHY
I'm sorry. Joe, meet Michael.
(to Michael)
Joe is my boss.

MICHAEL
At the District Attorney's office?
(shakes Joe's hand;
earnestly)
You do very important work, Joe. I'm
honored to meet you.

JOE
(reacting to Michael;
gestures at his Date)
Meet Sherry.

Sherry takes Michael's hand from Joe, grins girlishly.

SHERRY
Very nice to meet you. Are you a
model?

Michael blushes and Cathy smiles, as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BALLROOM - LATER

Cathy is at the refreshment table filling two punch glasses when she's accosted by Libby and two GIRLFRIENDS.

LIBBY
Okay Chandler. Quit stonewalling. Who is
this guy?

Cathy turns and looks over her shoulder.

HER POV - MICHAEL

across the room, chatting amiably with some older society matrons, apparently making a hit...

CATHY

smiles, enigmatically.

CATHY
Friend of a friend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIBBY

Everybody's saying he's more than a pretty face, too. It sounds too good to be true. Is it true?
(off Cathy's smile)
Does your friend have any other friends?

CATHY

I'll ask him.

GIRLFRIEND #1

(staring at Michael)
He's so beautiful!

Cathy looks at him again. Thinks about it.

CATHY

(quietly)
I guess he is, isn't he...

LIBBY

Tell me you're engaged to him, Chandler, or I'm going over to propose myself, right now.

Cathy starts over to him with the punch glasses.

CATHY

(over her shoulder)
I'll tell him you're interested.

As she crosses toward him, we SEE he notices her, and we

INTERCUT:

CLOSE SHOTS of each of them with

POV SHOTS of the other,

And as they get nearer, maybe we even go into SLOW MOTION, so it's crystal clear these two are making each other's hearts beat faster and faster...

CUT TO:

INT. VINCENT'S CHAMBER. NIGHT

And Vincent knows it:

He suddenly looks up from a book he's reading...

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM - BACK TO SHOT

Cathy and Michael getting nearer and nearer, until he looks off for a moment and then does a double take:

HIS POV - AT THE FRONT DOOR

A distinguished-looking GENTLEMAN enters alone...

CATHY

doesn't notice Michael's reaction, arrives at his side.

CATHY

You're making quite an impression on everybody, Michael. I just heard Mrs. Henderson wants to interview you for a job at her foundation--

MICHAEL

Cathy--

CATHY

It's just the kind of thing you're looking--

MICHAEL

Cathy.

CATHY

(she stops; a beat)
What? You look frightened...

MICHAEL

(indicating)
That man. Over by the door. With the red scarf...

(when she spots him)

Cathy... he's my father...

Cathy looks again at the man. Then back at Michael.

CATHY

Michael... are you all right? Would you like to leave? I'm sure there's a back way--

MICHAEL

No... I'm ready... Cathy, I want to talk to him. I want to tell him I'm back...

CATHY

What can I do to help?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAEL
 (he takes a deep breath)
 Wait here.
 (looks in her eyes)
 And wish me luck.

He begins to cross to the door. Cathy looks after him with great concern...

CATHY
 Good luck...

AT THE DOOR. MICHAEL'S FATHER

is giving his coat and scarf to an attendant. We SEE Michael approaching. The man starts to move away...

MICHAEL
 Sir!

The man stops. Looks at Michael without recognition.

MICHAEL'S FATHER
 Do I know you?

MICHAEL
 You used to. My name is Michael.

MICHAEL'S FATHER
 I'm sorry. Michael who?

Michael stands frozen in fear. It's the moment he's waited seven years for... He summons all his nerve...

MICHAEL
 Michael... your son.

The man stares at Michael for a long beat before it comes to him. He blanches. He looks around to see if anyone is listening.

MICHAEL'S FATHER
 Rose's boy? Is that who you are?
 (off Michael's nod;
 nearly panicking)
 Good god. What the hell do want?
 Didn't you understand what your
 mother told you? She told me you
 understood...

Michael's dream is beginning to crumble... now nightmarish memories flood back to wipe it out...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICHAEL'S FATHER
What's the matter? Did you
already spend the money?

MICHAEL
(beginning to break
down)
I didn't want the money... I
never touched it...

MICHAEL'S FATHER
(not understanding)
You don't want money... what are you
here for? What do you want?

MICHAEL
I want... to be your son...

The man looks away, absorbing this. He agonizes. But he's not
the kind of man who would accept the boy now. The
embarrassment, the shame, would be too hard...

MICHAEL'S FATHER
Dammit... You can't be. It was all an
accident... and it's been settled, for
years... please...

CATHY

looks over, SEES Michael's head hung in pain, starts to
approach them...

MICHAEL

looks up at his father slowly, and knows it's impossible. He can't
make the man love him...

MICHAEL
(crushed; weakly)
I understand.

The man puts a hand on Michael's shoulder in parting.

MICHAEL'S FATHER
I wish you good luck. I really do...

He leaves, and just as Cathy nears, Michael turns and rushes
for the door. She calls for him, and follows...

JOE, LIBBY, OTHERS

look up and see her as she runs out...

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST - NIGHT

Michael runs, Cathy following half a block behind...

CATHY
Michael! Wait! Please!

Michael runs a few more paces, then stops and buries his face in his hands, sobbing. Cathy catches up and tries to comfort him, taking his head in her hands...

CATHY
Michael, try to calm down... Tell me what happened... It's all right... you're with me now...

MICHAEL
It was all a lie... I knew it all along... It could never be...

CATHY
Michael, you have nothing to be sorry for. Whatever happened, it's not your fault--

MICHAEL
(suddenly pulling away)
You don't understand, Cathy! It is my fault! I lied! To you, to Vincent... to myself!

CATHY
What are you saying? He isn't your father?

MICHAEL
He's my father, yes... But my mother... she wasn't his wife...

CATHY
Who--?

MICHAEL
She was the maid! She worked for him!

CATHY
(trying to accept this)
But... I thought you wrote to him... I thought he knew you were coming back someday...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAEL

(hardening to it)

I never sent the letters. I was afraid he'd throw them away. He never wanted his wife to know... but I always thought someday, he'd accept me, he'd be my father again...

CATHY

Oh Michael--

MICHAEL

It was just an empty dream, Cathy! All of it! Dreams upon empty dreams! Now I have nothing!

CATHY

Don't ever think that, Michael. You have everything! You have people, so many people, who love you. You have Vincent, Father, all your friends below...

(taking his arms)

And you have me...

He looks in her eyes, needing love so badly now, her words put him in a dangerous trance...

MICHAEL

You love me?

CATHY

Of course I do.

MICHAEL

And Vincent?

CATHY

He loves you too, Michael. We all do. You know that!

MICHAEL

Cathy... I need you...

She takes him in her arms and squeezes him hard, trying to make him feel safe...

CATHY

I'm here.

He pulls his face back and looks into her eyes, drinking something from them he thirsts for desperately. She holds his gaze, wanting to give him whatever he needs...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Until suddenly he pulls her lips into his, and she can't pull away, not yet...

EXT. CENTRAL PARK. NIGHT

Vincent is crossing the park in their direction when he looks up and sees

CATHY AND MICHAEL

across the wall, kissing... Like a fairy tale image .. a beautiful prince and princess, dressed to perfection, locked in embrace...

VINCENT

turns instantly and hides behind a tree. We see in his eyes, in the heaving of his chest, that this image is straight from his worst nightmares...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST. NIGHT

Cathy, her eyes open in fearful awareness, pulls away from Michael's lips. She's afraid of devastating him any further, but can't allow this to go on...

CATHY

Michael... please don't think..

But Michael is ahead of her... already shame is welling within him...

MICHAEL

Vincent...

EXT. CENTRAL PARK. NIGHT. VINCENT

Visibly weakened with pain, he steals quickly from his hiding place, and without a look back, makes for the tunnels...

EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST. MICHAEL

His shame compounding, beginning to overwhelm him... he backs away from Cathy...

MICHAEL

... What have I done?

CATHY

(gesturing for him to wait;
as kindly as she can)

You've done nothing, Michael...
It was a sweet gesture... I'm
grateful for it...

MICHAEL

(with seething self-
contempt)

You offered your friendship and I
wanted more... I took your gift
and twisted it... I don't deserve
your friendship! I don't deserve
anything!

CATHY

Michael, wait. We're only human...
human beings make mistakes!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAEL
 (his deepest
 disappointment)
 Vincent doesn't--!

He turns and runs.

CATHY
 Michael! Wait! Come back!

But it's no use. Michael is gone...

CUT TO:

INT. VINCENT'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Vincent staggers in heavily and stops at the center of the room. He casts his eyes about the chamber, searching for some source of solace, some familiar object to anchor his careening psyche...

But everything just stares back at him strangely, COLORS GOING GREY and cold before his eyes, details falling IN and OUT OF FOCUS...

And the room starts to slowly TURN... his universe has lost its center, and now it SPINS out of control, with the frightening sensation of vertigo...

Vincent is losing his balance, and grabs the arm of his chair to steady himself. He lowers himself uneasily into it and grips his head to slow the spinning...

When he can see clearly again, he FIXES ON a favorite worn book of poetry and reaches for it. He opens it to a dog-eared page and tries to read:

VINCENT
 (with difficulty)
 'When in disgrace with fortune and men's
 eyes/ I all alone beweeep my outcast
 state,/ And trouble deaf heaven with my
 bootless cries...'

But his tortured mind will not be calmed...

INSERT:

the words on the page SWIRL and DANCE, taunting him...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT
(increasingly halting)
'...Yet in these thoughts myself
almost despising,/ Haply I think
on thee--'

Finally he can't take it anymore. He throws the book across the room, and the moment of anger clears his head enough for him to stand. He lumbers out...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Where Michael finds his world upside-down as well. He wanders aimlessly, dazed and distraught, bumping into pedestrians and cars, ignoring their words of protest and concern...

Eventually he reaches an empty street, and as he turns into an alley, comes across a grating with light shining from underneath. He stops and looks down, making a decision.

He stoops and takes hold of the grating, and with a desperate straining heave, pulls it loose and throws it aside. He looks into the hole and plunges down...

CUT TO:

INT. LONG STRAIGHT TUNNEL SECTION - NIGHT - VINCENT

accelerating along, trying in vain to stay ahead of his nightmare...

The tunnels CONTORT nightmarishly (CAMERA FIX), twisting, tilting, narrowing and widening...

He turns his head to the side, as if checking peripherally behind him, and catches:

FLASHBACK - Catherine and Michael kissing...

He shakes it off, takes a sharp turn into a different passage...

CUT TO:

INT. UPPER TUNNEL - NIGHT - MICHAEL

descending through strange sub-passages, trying to get back down to the tunnel world he knows...

CUT TO:

INT. TUNNELS - NIGHT - VINCENT

still trying to escape the demon images, he happens upon a construction project. Mary, Jamie, Kipper and others are working with tools to shore up a water-softened wall.

They see him and he freezes. Something in his unnatural poise alarms them.

MARY

Vincent?

He turns to go back the way he came.

JAMIE

Vincent!

He ignores her, so she jumps up to chase him.

MARY

Jamie! Leave him alone-

But Jamie is gone...

INT. NEIGHBORING PASSAGE - CONTINUOUS

Jamie is right behind Vincent...

JAMIE

What's wrong, Vincent? You look hurt...

She reaches him and stops him with a hand on his arm.

JAMIE

Vincent! Speak to me! What's wrong?!

VINCENT'S EYES

stare at her strangely. It's like he hardly recognizes her. Then he answers, in a voice at the ragged edge of a growl:

VINCENT

Let me be...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She steps back from him, and we SEE behind her

KIPPER

his young face staring frightened...

CUT TO:

INT. TRI-LEVEL CHAMBER - NIGHT - MICHAEL

Running along the walkway and disappearing through a door.
Getting closer...

CUT TO:

INT. VARIOUS TUNNELS - NIGHT

As Vincent and Michael, each on his own separate flight,
move rapidly through the tunnels, CROSSING FRAME in
opposite directions so we know they're on collision course,
until

They meet.

They stand looking at each other for a long beat.

MICHAEL

(at the edge of
breakdown)

Vincent. Thank god I found you... I
need to talk to you...

Vincent says nothing. Michael takes a step toward him and Vincent
backs away.

MICHAEL

A terrible thing has happened,
Vincent... I need to tell you
about it...

Vincent is going through torment. The nightmare image stands real
before him now, and it's doubly painful because now he remembers
that this is a boy he loves. And trusted...

VINCENT

(with difficulty)

Now... is not the time...

Michael begins to wonder...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAEL
Vincent... is something wrong?

VINCENT
Yes...

MICHAEL
Are you all right?

VINCENT
No...

MICHAEL
(a step forward; urgent)
Vincent... please tell me..

VINCENT
(a step back)
... You...

Michael realizes, in horror:

MICHAEL
You knew... you must have felt
it...

VINCENT
I felt it... all along...

Michael suddenly realizes what Vincent thinks...

MICHAEL
Vincent, wait...

VINCENT
(turning away)
No. Don't say anything.

Vincent starts to move away, his head bowed to avoid the sight of Michael. Michael tries to stay alongside...

MICHAEL
Vincent, please! You don't
understand..

VINCENT
(raising his voice)
Don't explain. I can't hear about it. I
can't think about it...

But Michael persists... he follows close behind Vincent and presses his case, even as Vincent turns abruptly away into different passages...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICHAEL

You have to know! What happened...
wasn't supposed to happen... it wasn't
what anybody wanted...

VINCENT

(absently; as if by
rote)

You owe me no apology. I cannot rule
my own heart -- let alone yours or
Catherine's... whatever happened was
bound to happen... We cannot resist
such things...

MICHAEL

Vincent, listen to me! You don't
know what happened...!

Suddenly they come to a dead end in the passage. Vincent
faces the wall, unable to turn and face Michael...

MICHAEL

... A moment of weakness... a moment of
need... it was nothing!

VINCENT

(eyes closed; exquisite
agony)

Michael... I saw...

Michael absorbs this. A long beat...

MICHAEL

You were above?

VINCENT

Yes...

MICHAEL

My god... I'm so ashamed...

Michael's need to explain is redoubled now. He
tries to turn Vincent to face him.

Vincent finally turns, and can't help looking at Michael now.
During the following, we SEE his POV to be that of a cornered
animal: the perspective is WIDE ANGLE, the feeling nightmarish and
claustrophobic; even Michael's becomes DISTORTED to sound
otherworldly, haunting...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MICHAEL

Vincent... what you saw -- it was terrible... but not what it looked like. Cathy was helping me. I was confused. It was nothing... nothing...

Vincent's lips curl slightly, and a tiny growl escapes him...

(NOTE: Perhaps the entire rest of the scene is played with sound and picture distorted...)

VINCENT

Enough! Your words are empty to me... I hear only echoes... I feel -- only pain...

MICHAEL

Vincent-

VINCENT

(fever rising)

I can't -- look at you!

And suddenly he shoves Michael aside to get away. Thinking only of escape, he hurries off without looking back, not noticing that his blow is enough to knock Michael hard to the ground. Michael watches Vincent with a stricken look, as we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADS IN:

INT. CENTRAL PARK DRAINAGE DUCT. DAY

Cathy leans against the bars of the swinging door, knocking on the sliding wall behind it with a pipe, and calling gently under her breath:

CATHY

Vincent... why won't you come...?
Something's wrong... I can feel it...

She waits, then bangs some more, then waits. But nobody comes...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHAMBER OF THE WINDS. DAY

FINDING Vincent, huddled in a corner at the bottom of the stairs, pondering the abyss... .

He seems sad, but no longer tormented as he was last night. He simply sits, gazing into the middle distance, until we begin to hear in v.o. the words of a sonnet that speaks his thoughts... (NOTE: either e.e. cummings' "if your lips should touch another's," or perhaps the following, Shakespeare's 87th:)

VINCENT (V.O.)

'Farewell! Thou art too dear for my
possessing,/ And like enough thou
know'st thy estimate...'

under which, as he CONTINUES, we

CUT TO:

INT. DRAINAGE DUCT. DAY. CATHY

gives up and runs out, determined to find another way...

VINCENT (V.O.)

'... The charter of thy worth gives
thee releasing...'

EXT. CATHY'S APT. BLDG. - DAY. CATHY

running inside...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT (V.O.)
'... My bonds in thee are all
determinate...'

INT. CATHY'S APT. BLDG. BASEMENT - DAY - CATHY

hurries down the stairs, shoves aside the boxes hiding her
secret entrance and climbs down...

VINCENT (V.O.)
'... For how do I hold thee but by
thy granting?..'

INT. THRESHOLD POINT - DAY - CATHY

rushing toward us through the light where last we saw her
disappearing with Michael, and hurrying into the tunnels...

VINCENT (V.O.)
'... Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth
then not knowing...'

CUT TO:

INT. CHAMBER OF THE WINDS - DAY - VINCENT

as before, but now speaking the last words of the sonnet out loud
to himself, softly:

VINCENT
'... Thus have I had thee, as a dream
doth flatter,/ In sleep, a king; but
waking, no such matter.'

Vincent sighs, and lets his head fall slightly, his sadness
no less heavy even with this brave attempt at acceptance...

CUT TO:

INT. TUNNELS - DAY - CATHY

hastening, taking a turn and finding herself suddenly face-to-
face with Father. His look is deeply mournful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATHY

Father, where is Vincent?
Something is wrong with him. I
can feel it.

FATHER

Vincent is all right. He had a
difficult night...

CATHY

Has Michael come back? He left
suddenly and I couldn't follow...

FATHER

(darkly)
I've heard all about it.

CATHY

What do you mean?

FATHER

Catherine... Vincent was in the park
last night. He sensed something in you
that he mistook for fear, and went up
to see if you were all right... it was
a mistake...

CATHY

(realizing)
My god... I have to see him,
Father. I have to explain... Where
is he?

FATHER

(with difficulty)
I... cannot tell you.

CATHY

What?! You've got to tell me! I
have to see him! He has to know
what happened--

FATHER

Catherine. I'm sorry. But Vincent
asked specifically not
to see you. Either one of you.

She takes this like a punch in the gut. She reels...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CATHY

But he doesn't understand! He doesn't know what he saw! Father, you have to tell me where he is! For his sake!

FATHER

(firmly)

For his sake, I think you should ask yourself if it were not best to leave him alone.

CATHY

(a long beat; darkly)

What are you saying?

FATHER

(with sadness)

Catherine, as you know, in the beginning I had no faith in the worthiness of your relationship with Vincent... But you proved, at least for a time, that I was wrong. You did wonderful things for him. You opened doors within him which none of us knew existed. You led him to heights of feeling most people never know...

He puts a hand on her arm, looks in her eyes...

FATHER

But deep down, all of us have known a time must come when the joys are outweighed by the sadness -- the hopelessness, of living a life guided by dreams which can never come true...

Cathy looks stricken, wondering if he's right...

FATHER

Why not let that time be now, while the memories are still sweet... while you both still have time to build futures that are real...?

Cathy searches for the truth... then:

CATHY

(a voice from her heart)

Because... I can't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FATHER

But Catherine--

CATHY

You don't understand... I have
no choice... even if I knew
it was right...

(tiny)

I couldn't do it...

Father looks at her, deeply troubled but irresistibly moved
by the power of this love...

CUT TO:

INT. CHAMBER or THE WINDS - DAY

Vincent still sits at the bottom of the stairs in
contemplation when Cathy appears at the chamber entrance
above him. Instantly he senses her presence and turns. We SEE a
fleeting joy in his look, replaced all too quickly by remembered
resolutions...

VINCENT

Catherine...

CATHY

Vincent.

VINCENT

(requiring Herculean
effort)

I must ask you a favor. I must
ask you not to stay...

She starts down the stairs toward him...

VINCENT

Don't come down -- please...

CATHY

(continuing down)

I spoke with Father. He said you didn't
want to see me.

VINCENT

Seeing you -- is painful for me,
Catherine...

CATHY

Because you think I've fallen in love
with another...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT
As you are entitled to...

CATHY
But I haven't.

He looks at her. Frightened to let himself believe this.

VINCENT
Catherine--

CATHY
You don't know what you saw,
Vincent--

VINCENT
(a tweak of anger)
I know what I felt. There was terrible
passion in that moment, Catherine.
Please don't deny it to me.

CATBY
What I was feeling was for you...

She's getting close to him now, in more ways than one. He pushes himself slowly to his feet against the wall behind him, standing as if to protect himself...

CATHY
Michael was in need... he was a
frightened creature in a strange
place, someone too sensitive to
stand the hatred and cruelty of
my world, and yet desperate to
be a part of it... He was you,
Vincent... and he needed me --
he needed my love...

She stops a step away from him, her face level with his.

CATHY
... To be able to give something so
badly needed... it carried me away --
carried us both away...

VINCENT
You have so much to give, Catherine.
I would never want you not to give
it...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CATHY

You don't know how hard it is Vincent, not being able to show my love to you, in ways that go deeper than words...

Vincent swells with love as he feels her return to his heart. Now it is he who pleads...

VINCENT

But you do, Catherine... You always have... Every minute you spend with me, every thought you share .. I receive in my heart like a gift, more precious than life...

She takes his face in her hands and brings it toward her.

CATHY

(near tears)

I need you so badly...

VINCENT

(closing his eyes, the feel of her hands like magic)

Catherine...

And slowly, very slowly, we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MICHAEL'S CHAMBER. DAY

Michael is packing essential items .. clothes, some books, etc. -- in a well-traveled leather duffle, when Vincent appears at his door.

MICHAEL

(sees him; surprised)

Vincent.. I thought you didn't..

VINCENT

(his finger to his lips)

Hush. I've heard your story from Father -- and I've seen Catherine. I understand everything...

MICHAEL

I still owe you such an apology, Vincent. I can never--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT

None of it. The only apology
necessary is mine, for not
listening when you tried to
explain.

MICHAEL

(a beat; marveling at
Vincent)

Now I have even more to thank you
for...

(smiles)

And my debt to you was already way too
large to repay...

VINCENT

(re: duffel bag)

What are your plans?

MICHAEL

I don't know... to travel, I guess...
There's obviously a great deal I still
have to learn... .

VINCENT

How will you live?

MICHAEL

My father put aside some money for me...
I never wanted to accept it, because of
what it would mean... Maybe now I
will...

VINCENT

And what of your dreams, Michael? I
hope you won't abandon them...

MICHAEL

They seem a little foolish now...

VINCENT

Dreams are never foolish -- as long as
you remember what they are. Your dreams
especially, Michael. They are beautiful,
and the world will be a better place
when you find a way to make them real...

Michael looks deep into Vincent's caring eyes, and sadness wells
within him...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICHAEL

Vincent... I will miss you so much...

VINCENT

(embracing him)

We will never be far apart...

Michael buries his face in Vincent's shoulder. Vincent squeezes him. He is deeply moved...

VINCENT

I've always said no child below was more important to me than the rest... But I'll tell you a secret, Michael. It isn't true... Be happy.. and you'll make me very proud...

Michael pulls back and smiles at Vincent. We linger with them a moment, and then

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VINCENT'S CHAMBER. DAY. CATHERINE

stoops in a corner to retrieve the book Vincent threw last night. She looks at the page it's open to...

Vincent enters looking for her...

VINCENT

Catherine?

And he's arrested in the middle of the room by her voice:

CATHY

'... Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,/ Haply I think on thee -- and then my state,/ Like to the lark at break of day arising/ From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate...'

He stands motionless, facing away from her, letting her voice carry the words deep into him. As she reads, she moves toward him...

CATHY

'... For thy sweet love remembered, such wealth brings/ That then I scorn to change my state with kings.'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT
(a beat; without turning
to her)
I love you, Catherine.

She presses herself against his back and wraps her arms around him. They both close their eyes in deepest rapture, and we gently

FADE OUT.

THE END