

Film about a Woman Who...

Yvonne Rainer

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All of the credits are black type on white background. "IT" stands for "inter-title"; "v-o" for "voice-over"; "b" and "w" for black and white; other abbreviations are CU (close-up), MCU (medium . . .), LS (long shot), MLS (medium . . .), MS (medium shot).

SOUND

Thunder and rain begin.

IMAGE

Film About a Woman Who . . .

with Dempster Leech, Shirley Soffer, John Erdman, Renfreu Neff

and James Barth, Epp Kotkas, Sarah Soffer, Yvonne Rainer, Tannis Hugill, Valda Setterfield

Technical Assistants

Scott Billingsley, Epp Kotkas, Barry Ralbag, Karl Schurman

Sound: Deborah S. Freedman, Kurt Munkacsi (The Basement), Lawrence Loewinger, Titles: Neil Murphy

Excerpts from "La Sonnambula," Vincenzo Bellini, Orchestra and Chorus of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino; "Maria Elena," The Baja Marimba Band; Three piano sonatas by Edvard Grieg "Thanks," "arietta," "Native Land" played by Philip Corner.

Photos from the Mangolte and Soffer families.

Financed in part by fees derived from performances of "This is the story of a woman who . . .," "Performance around an unfinished film," "Kristina (For a Novella)"

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Narrated by Yvonne Rainer and John Erdman

Cinematographer: Babette Mangolte

edited by Yvonne Rainer and Babette Mangolte

*Written and directed by Yvonne Rainer
1972-1974*

D, S, J, & R on sofa watching slides. (MCU)

Thunder and rain continue.

Y' voice:

He feels a growing irritation. He had run into her on the way to the shooting. He hadn't seen her for a year. Some banter was exchanged. Now he is reviewing the conversation in his mind "She hasn't changed a bit," he muses to himself. His mind works in spirals as he watches the slides.

D scratches nose.

Earlier this week she saw them on the other side of the street and was surprised at her response—mild distaste rather than the rage she had anticipated. The whole thing now seemed rather sordid. It was receding. She had ducked into a shop to avoid them.

R crosses legs.

He thinks about making love, then about being in love, then about performing. Then he thinks about her: his very gaze seemed to transform her into a performer, a realized fantasy of herself. Sometimes it was almost as if she were saying "Look at me, look at me—a small price to pay for my love in return." He finds himself agreeing.

S looks at J.

IT: agreeing . . . (w on b)

Projected slide (b on w): But only momentarily. It is quite possible that by this time he feels very bad. This stage of his life as a captive audience-for-one seems based in artifice and as such must sooner or later come to a close. He sighs to himself. "Such delicious artifice. Nowhere is captivity less painful or more complete."

IT: (full frame, b on w) same as above.

no image

(Sound of rain fades out.)

She tries to reconstruct the passage from the novel that had so impressed her. The best she can do is: "All is finally clarified. It is unspeakable, but clear. The reach of my jealousy, of my certainty of betrayal, engulfs me at every step. It is unthinkable that I live in this condition in intimacy with another person. And the possibility of living a life without intimate connections is equally intolerable. Is it any wonder that the most plausible solution is to remove my existence? I see no way through my dilemma.* I am not one to compromise; I wish I were; my life would be easier. The phone is ringing. . . . It's always been all or nothing for

**Silhouetted backs of group on sofa watching slide of text beginning with "dilemma" and ending with "what else?"*

me. This statement is for ART, even though at this very moment I don't know where to turn." She can't remember, hard as she tries, the passage that had followed. It had suggested that such a dire solution might not be necessary. She is now wracking her brain to remember . . . What else, what else, what else?

The rain makes her think of when she was 18 years old, spending a summer in Chicago. She was sitting by an open window in a room with five other people. It had started to rain heavily. A woman on the other side of the room was talking about her baby sitter. She said, "I hope the stupid girl has sense enough to close the windows." Without a second thought she reached over and shut the window. A stunned silence fell on the room.

She thinks about the snow in Vermont and their last night in the cabin—the four of them lolling about the sleeping-loft warmed by a wood fire. Their talk had ranged over motion and phallic-vaginal body parts and illusion and comfort and back to sex-as-illusion. Again she repeats to herself the remembered phrase "Easy locomotion between comfort and discomfort." Now it all seemed like good social titillation. "Contempt again," she thinks. "But I can't help it. Social interactions seem to be mostly about seduction."

Projected slides:

S on beach.

S in field.

S with children.

S and camel.

Full frame photo of S and camel.

LS J on beach.

S enters with square of glass.



S in foreground with J on beach positioning himself in spaces formed by her limbs.



MCU J, S, and Sarah pose on beach as for a still camera.

Backs of group on sofa watching slides:

Wedding group

Three women and baby

Two women

Mother and son

Young man

Shirley and family

Shirley, Sarah, John

J and R

Full frame photo of J and R as above dissolves into

IT (w on b): Events of the past rose like waves and battering against her mind threw it into a wild commotion of shame, grief, and joy.

MCU D sits watching TV. Sarah sits on floor leaning against his chair. She plays with a small clay bear. He occasionally looks at her. Camera moves in arc from right to left.

The man danced with the three-year old child. It went on for a long time. He didn't take his eyes off of her. He manipulated her tiny soft limbs in time to the music. He bent down to her, lifted her up, turned her around under his hand, delicately balancing and manoeuvring her body, which at times his two huge hands all but concealed from view. She could not stop looking at the two of them. The sensuality of the dance fascinated her, and then as time passed it became bizarre. She began to be uneasy in the realization that he knew that *she* in particular was watching.

MCU J & R pose for photo.

J's voice:

First an emptiness like a great white bird soared through her. Then she began to think about particulars: the quality of his intelligence at the moment, his insight into the nature of her struggle, his refusal to go along with her desperate He had dragged it all out of her. Now she had to pay. Yet it was a relief that he was now carrying the ball. It was his turn to and not dance the fandango in And there was still so much she didn't know, which, if known, might have made her act differently. How much of the problem of their differences was real and how much was a smokescreen to conceal? Her mind clouded when she tried to answer. She had set him an impossible task. ". to allow me to when I need to," she had told him. He had reminded her that *she* was not so of *his* She pleaded special circumstances. They argued. His voice was hard and curt. The die seemed cast. Yet in some way she trusted him. He would They would meet again. If only he could say "But we really"

Which was all very well for *her* to say, having jumped the gun in Then that terrible accusation of his. She couldn't even repeat it, it Yet it posed another question: "Is it possible that I have really, that I will never make Only in this way survive." So be it. There are worse ways to live. Being so may very well She felt, however, little conviction. And finally, she grew calmer, almost resigned. They had both been —her terror and the —slowly eroding and regard him and pleasure.



J in foreground (CU), S very small on cliff. He turns his head, scans sky.



CU S in foreground. J and Sarah walk away from each other on beach.

(Silence for about 1½ minutes.)
 She had dinner with him and his male lover and several of their friends. It was a noisy ebullient gathering. Some of her previous reservations about him were revived with renewed force. "He seems to be one way and then you meet his friends and you think "How can he stand them?"



MS S, D, and Sarah at table. S flips pages of book; D watches over bread in toaster.

IT: Madame the healer. (w on b)

MS of table from another angle. D dunks toast in coffee and hands it to Sarah.

IT (w on b): When thinking this over, she became self-critical. Finally she gave it up and went out to the museum.

Fade-up on photo of Pantheon exterior.

And then you realize that he can stand them because he is *like* them in certain disagreeable respects." And yet she didn't want to dismiss him. "It isn't that I expect him to be only I want him to"

"Don't waste your time over these old-fashioned faggots," she admonishes herself, "with their pendulum swings from gentle passivity to nasty aggression. The ones who still refer to each other as 'she'."

She likes him because he is so gifted and has done so much work on himself. He still thinks of art, however, as a form of self-immolation. "Why did you not write about *them*?" he had asked her. An indirect rebuke for her self-involvement. She had to admit that she really did believe that her own life was more interesting than that of anyone who might portray it in performance, or she couldn't deal with anyone else's life as interestingly as she could with her own. If this applied to her, it was equally true of him. But she didn't want to go into it at the dinner. And besides, it would have put her in a condescending position. He had never sought her advice. She didn't want to risk taking on needless responsibility with regard to him.

She had a kind of mind incapable of encompassing historical data. She could understand an event only through illustration—such as the plaster casts of people in death throes at Pompeii, the paintings at Versailles depicting

the inflated gestures of Louis XIV. She visited the Pantheon at different times of day. She didn't respond when he beckoned to her to come over to listen to the recorded lecture on the earphones. She knew that to know who was buried there would not make the visit any more meaningful to her. She stood in the great expanse of floor and enclosed light and felt her mind soar.

By the end of the day she was sick of madonnas holding up their male infants, saints holding their bloody foreheads, martyrs holding their heads, angels holding their fingers up, duchesses holding up their robes, dukes holding their falcons, soldiers holding their spears, lions holding up banners, and virgins holding up mirrors. "Everything is about seduction or death . . ." But then she thinks of her own recent situation and the word "resignation" springs to her mind. But she knows she can't resign herself to it and must sooner or later have a confrontation or simply end it. She would not add her name to his collection of dubious friendships.

After three days in that city she began to panic. How was she to face him when he arrived? What she had not allowed to intrude on her consciousness at home was now a reality: she couldn't go on with it. Even this brief interlude was enough to make her aware of a tremendous relief and renewed purpose. She had to tell him. She felt at once anxious and happy. How had she stood it for so long?

Photo of interior.

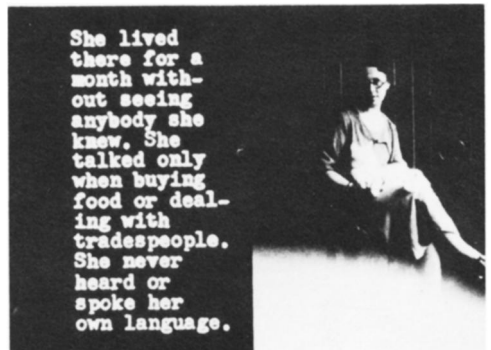
Cluny tapestry

Etruscan fresco

Drawing of pillars

*Greek relief
painting of Coliseum
painting of Roman scene
Versailles
Roman Forum
Grand Canyon
Las Vegas
Borghese Garden*

Las Vegas on left, 1920's photo of woman and cat on right.



Ocean with (white) titles at top of frame:

In short, suddenly she found herself in a bad way.

no title. Camera pans to left.



The light from the open doorway shows a man and a woman coming from the opposite direction.

no title. Camera pans to r.

Somehow she suspects she has failed miserably again. She has failed to tell herself what she wanted. "Let him figure it out for both of us!"

no title

J's voice: She tries to go back to the earliest move that had launched this particular series of *faux pas*. Perhaps it was not too late to set things right.

(In the following section all titles are black type against a white ground.)

IT: An Emotional Accretion in 48 Steps

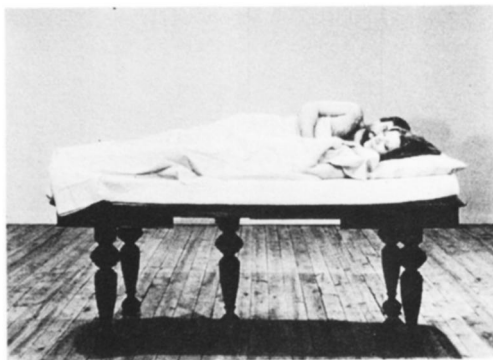
IT: 1 She confides to him a deep hatred she feels for someone.

IT: 2 Later she is offended when he talks at length about meeting with that person.

IT: 3

MLS D and R in bed (on table).

He is puzzled by her behavior.



She pretends to sleep.

IT: 4

MCU D and R in bed. His eyes are open; hers are shut.

IT: 5

MCU D touches R's hand.

IT: 6 She imagines herself telling him to go away.

IT: 7

MCU (same as above)—D withdraws hand.

IT: 8 She decides to demand his affection.

IT: 9

R (lipsync): "Would you hold me?"



IT: 10

MCU D takes R in his arms.

IT: 11 She tells him she's upset.

IT: 12

MCU D speaking to R.

IT: 13

IT: 14

CU D and R kissing.

IT: 15 They make love.

IT: 16

CU Kiss.

IT: 17

MCU They both sleep.

IT: 18 The next morning she gets up early and works for an hour.

IT: 19

MCU D sleeping alone in bed.

IT: 20



MCU R removes her diaphragm.

IT: 21

MCU D eats breakfast & reads newspaper.

IT: 22

J's voice: He apologizes.

She whimpers.

He congratulates himself on clearing up the matter. He becomes aroused.

She participates with pleasure, but something is still bugging her.

He analyzes the situation. She doesn't say much.

She feels uneasy.

She agrees that "getting what you want" is the only way to proceed, but she . . .

He thinks the situation is resolved.

They see each other that night in a complicated social situation.

(Duet & chorus from "La Sonambula" begins and continues through #48.)

MCU R in shower, reaches for towel.

IT: 23

MCU D at table, looking to right and talking.

IT: 24 He continues to use the pronoun "we." He is pleased with his clarity.

IT: 25

IT: 26 He thinks the main fear "we" share is that getting gratification will result in a withdrawal of love by the other.

27
doesn't express the
annoyance she feels.
Why is he talking
about that now, and
why is he saying
"we"?

IT: 28

Camera in hall. D comes out door and walks down stairs.

IT: 29

LS jumble of furniture and people.

IT: 30 She is on edge, but

IT: 31

MCU R with glass in hand talks and laughs. D looks at her, then whispers in her ear.

IT: 32 "Let's go to my place."

IT: 33 She agrees, but grudgingly.

IT: 34 At his place she says she doesn't feel like making love.

IT: 35

MS D & R in bed. He repeatedly "checks her out."

IT: 36 He knows something is wrong.

IT: 37

CU D and R in bed. Heads face camera.
As they speak subtitles appear:
(D) I feel good with you.
(R) I'm glad.

IT: 38 Something is bugging her.

IT: 39

MCU: D and R lying in bed.

IT: 40

MCU as above—R places her hand on D's groin (on top of quilt). He removes her hand and rolls away from her onto his side. She does likewise.

IT: 41 In the morning she is hugely depressed.

IT: 42

MCU D in bed. R, fully dressed and holding coat, bends over and kisses him, then leaves frame.

IT: 43 She arrives home.

IT: 44 She is very angry.

IT: 45 She knows the crucial moment was when she said "Hold me."

IT: 46 Somehow she had betrayed herself. She hadn't wanted to be held.

IT: 47 (Do you think she could figure her way out of a paper bag?)

IT: 48 She had wanted to bash his fucking face in.

CU R's face.

Music ends in fiery blast.

R (lip-sync): "I'd like to kick your ass in!"

About 30 seconds after IT (“Oh Christ . . .”) appears, another duet and chorus from “La Sonambula” begins. The IT stays for another 30 or 45 seconds, then disappears.

Music fades down.

R’s voice: “Doesn’t that make you think of the movie?”

(long pause)

S (lip sync): “What movie?”

R’s voice: “2001.”

S (lip sync): “Oh yes, of course. Only in the movies can you send your mind away.”

Y’s voice: For some reason she is embarrassed about her reverie.

(long pause)

D’s voice: “I don’t think she really wanted to die. She just wanted to be asleep, to (lip-sync): not be alive, to stop the pain of that Saturday night.”

R (lip-sync): Always it was someone’s (she is now out of frame) passion that started me off.

D’s voice: I’m just not going to get excited about it. I know you’re distorting things for the sake of fiction; exaggerating and displacing and so forth.

R’s voice: That’s such a relief. I had thought you’d be angry at the way I referred to your work. I would have done it so differently.

IT (w on b): “Oh Christ,” she thinks. “Now he’ll never screw me again.” She is determined, however, not to back off. She will take the bull by the horns, so to speak, and try again. . . . His performance was magnificent. Afterwards she wept. Then she slept. As a pool of warm water spreading in the sunlight.

no image (for 1 minute)

IT (w on b): Her thoughts drifted back to the first time she heard the music. Her brother had just begun to collect 78’s and Strauss, Mahler, and Beethoven daily flooded the house.

LS from rear D & R on couch, S profile in chair at right.

CU S’s profile.

LS reversal of previous LS. Camera slowly tracks in to CU of S’s face during the speech.

Track ends: CU of S

CU lasts 10 seconds longer. Then

IT (w on b): "I dreamed of my mother last night, and of my husband. My husband was crying for me."

IT (w on b): She is really thinking about the way crumbs of food collect at the corners of his mouth when he eats.

LS woman in long dark gown jumping.



MCU group configuration with photo figures. Ends in fade-out.

MCU Profile R on couch looking down at lap and toying with cigarette foil. D is seated as before.

CU R's fingers playing with foil. Image is to right of frame.

MCU R on couch to left of frame. D (off-camera) gets up (the sofa cushion moves). R looks to left of frame.

MS R on sofa at lower-right corner (camera is elevated). J walks into frame from top, goes to back of couch.

MCU R at center of frame. J rests his hand on back of sofa, then leaves left side of frame.

D's voice: I'd make a few changes myself. I would have had that inter-title, "I dreamed of my mother last night and of my wife. My wife was crying for me"—I would have shown somehow that he was *really* thinking of something else.

R's voice: And I would have put some jumps in that solo, and maybe a longer fade at the end of that shot on the stairs.

J's voice: Now when she thinks of the work all she can see are the flaws. That part is too long, that too short, that too quick, that too slow.

CU R's lap to right of frame.

MCU R at center of frame. J enters from left, sits half out of frame, then moves in to look into her face, moves out again, leaving his hand on sofa cushion. She takes his hand and presses it to her lips.

Slow fade-out.

LS of street from 3rd-story window. J carries box of envelopes, which he drops as he opens a door. He goes in, closes door, comes out again, starts to pick up envelopes.

Y's voice: Her mind overruns with the faces of people gone from her life. This one made unreasonable demands, that one unacceptable criticism, this one let her down once too often, that one grew tired of her elusive reserve. Maybe it was true that in spite of all her protestations to the contrary, she really preferred her own company. She preferred, as Rilke said, to love her solitude and bear with sweet-sounding lamentation the suffering it caused her.

She knew that he would be back. He had to work things out his own way. And he was assured of his prior claim on her affections. His arrogance at first astounded her, then finally could be forgiven in her anticipation of the pleasure they both knew would again be shared—even if it had to be postponed a whole year.

LS N.Y. harbor from War Memorial Plaza at Battery Park. Ship enters at left. When it has almost disappeared at right, v-o begins.

CU J and S on beach. J draws S over onto him.

CU previous action in slow-motion. J and S roll out of frame to left.



CU slow-motion, J lying on his side, S propped on elbows. S leaves frame to left, her legs cross to right, her shadow is seen moving toward ocean into upper right corner of frame.

Then she remembers what the scene had reminded her of. The sky with its leaden clouds, the wet spray of the sea, the thump of surf against the rocks. The two weeks had fled past them. She

didn't remember a single argument, not even the kind of manoeuvring for brief privateness that people do when they are together constantly. At this remove it seemed impossibly idyllic. Looking at those two weeks against the backdrop of later events, she was at a loss to understand the nature of his feelings. She herself felt like a fool thinking about it—deceived and humiliated. But she also felt a deep sadness. There was no denying her own happiness and sense of completion at the time. Had he ever felt such things in her presence—for even a single moment? She wondered.

LS same scene as above. S rolls over onto J at very bottom of frame. Sarah cavorts with two dogs near the sea.

Photo of Mont St. Michel

A succession of 40 stills from murder-in-the-shower sequence in "Psycho" begins.

On the way back to the city she was careful not to touch him as they sat in the back seat of the car. When he unconcernedly—or calculatingly (she couldn't tell which)—shifted his position so that his knee grazed her thigh, she carefully disengaged herself from contact. By the time they arrived in town he occupied most of the seat, and she had squished herself into a cramped tight ball. She was enraged.

She stumbles out of the theater. Her disgust with the film and actual nausea drive her body into the street. She recalls roughly the location of the hotel and starts walking in that direction. Her gut burns and she has to keep spitting out the bitter saliva that collects in her mouth. The streets are dimly lit and deserted, the houses shuttered and silent. She wonders if she will find the hotel in time. At a certain point, not having seen any familiar landmarks for awhile, she realizes that she is lost and experiences a powerful exultation. The discomfort of her body, the presence of the night, her solitude—all give her an acute sense of the moment. She finds a vacant grassy lot, gropes her way past the open door of a parked truck, and vomits. Relieved, she straightens up and sees the looming outline of a huge gas storage tank and remembers standing in

the street across from the hotel that morning watching two men on a scaffold painting the tank orange. She then knows that she is now only a block away. Almost regretfully she goes directly to the hotel, willing to take care of her body, reluctant to terminate being lost in the sleeping town.

LS S walking in street at dawn.

same as above with Subtitle: She groans at the pros- (w on b)

Street disappears, leaving only subtitle for 5 seconds.

IT: pect of a new struggle with her prejudices. "Fuck it," she thinks, "not now, not now. The rich and the powerful really are beneath contempt." (w on b)

IT (w on b): In any case . . .



CU R at table dealing with trout, framed from mouth to top of stack of plates. D (off camera to left) drops utensil on floor. R looks, wipes mouth, picks up utensil and places it on table (off camera), begins to eat.

R looks to left and smiles. Camera pans to left and down over table, passing smoldering cigarette in ash tray, rests on cheese and crackers. Hands come into view, spread cheese on cracker, camera follows cracker to J's mouth. He chews, pauses, looks to his left. Hand comes into view, wipes corner of J's mouth, camera follows it to ashtray, then the cigarette to D's mouth. He inhales, exhales, looks to right. Camera pans to right to original framing of R.

Sound of utensil dropping followed by mix of utensils-on-plate sounds, some in sync with R's fork and knife.

J's voice: "Yes. He said, 'Willy, say goodbye to America.'"

Sync sound.

Sound of loud chewing, not in sync with image.



R is in MS in upper left. Track ends.

CU J's hand moving fork.

Pan begins to right.

5 seconds after "woman" R's hand resting on table comes into view. As camera arrives at original framing of R's mouth, she speaks.

R (lip-sync): This? Oh, this was given to me by a friend of my brother's when I was 15. He and Ernie had practically been raised together. Then I didn't see him for a long time until Ernie discovered that he was living with his mother only a few blocks from us. He started showing up at our house. I guess he always had been homosexual. I remember him as a very young boy running around in his mother's nightgown with pears stuck in the bosom. By the time I saw him again he extraordinarily handsome. Then he went to Mexico. And brought this back with him. It must have been the very first necklace I ever owned. I had a huge crush on him. I would cast long lingering looks his way. He was very gracious about it, although I remember that when he presented me with the necklace his hand trembled slightly as he withstood the ardour of my gaze. Ernie saw him very infrequently during the next four years, and only when he invited him to his house. By that time my brother was married and had a

(no pause in soundtrack)

remember him as a very young boy running around in his mother's nightgown with pears stuck in the bosom. By the time I saw him again he was extraordinarily handsome. Then he went to Mexico. And brought this back with him. It must have been the very first necklace I ever owned. I had a huge crush on him. I would cast long, lingering looks his way. He was very gracious about it, although I remember that when he presented me with the necklace his hand trembled slightly as he withstood the ardour of my gaze. Ernie saw him very infrequently during the next four years, and only when he invited him to his house. By that time my brother was married and had a baby. Sometimes I would be invited to dinner and he would be there. I remember—it might have been the last time I ever saw him—we left Ernie's place together one evening. (pause) He told me that by the time I was thirty I would probably be a very beautiful woman.

R (lip-sync): I think the primary distinction has

been betw . . .

Y's voice: She finds herself looking at the other woman with curiosity. She has a way of talking—delicate, precise, and lilting—that reminds her of women she has had disdain for in the past. Effeminate women. Yes. Yet this woman's assertion emerges in spite of the style, and not unpleasantly. She is intrigued and self-conscious. The three of them talk about sexual fantasies. She keeps thinking about privacy. No, it isn't hard to talk about these things. It is almost too easy, almost meaningless, almost absurd. "What will I say to her when we meet for the second time?" she thinks. Then she realizes that the subject of conversation has come up because there are three of them. "An intimate revelation to her alone might demand a comparable gesture," she reasons. "With an audience of two my revelations are reduced to gratuitous display. I become a performer."

IT (w on b): "I think the primary distinction has been between the teeth and the tongue," she says. There is a silence. The discussion then resumes without taking her pronouncement into account.

CU Pan back and forth across 3 women's faces. The title

Who is the victim here? appears at the top of the frame during the first complete left-to-right pan. The women are engaged in conversation, which is not heard.

MLS S and D stand in back of sofa, R in front. S & D walk to front; all 3 start to sit.

MCU All three standing in front of sofa, heads out of frame.



They sit. S and D carefully disrobe R, one article of clothing at a time, from gloves to blouse.

CU midsection of R and D, standing. She is wearing black skirt. D starts to untie drawstring.

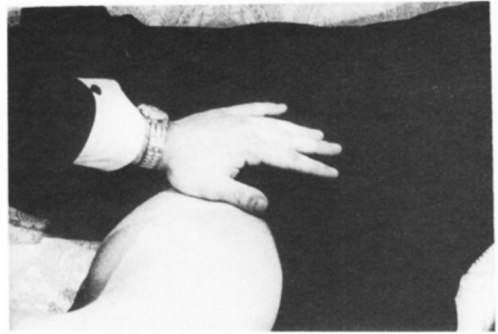


She covers bow with right hand and presents him with her left hand, from which he proceeds to remove three bracelets which he slips into the pocket of his tuxedo. The skirt is then pulled down by 2 pairs of hands (S has entered frame), followed by the panties. R sinks below the bottom of frame to lie on the sofa. S and D meet at back of sofa where he gives S the bracelets. They hover behind sofa, facing camera and seen only from neck down. D slides hand down surface of sofa and slowly brings it back up, which action is matched by R's knee rising then sinking.

CU R's nude body on couch framed from neck to hips. She lies on her back. D's hand slides over her belly, breast, and down her left arm.

CU R's torso and head, same posture as above. She toys with medallion, sits up, moves out of frame by leaning forward, lies back down.

MS R lying on sofa with black skirt pulled up above bosom, S leaning elbows on back of sofa. Both of them watch D, who is seated in chair on wheels. He slowly slides his hand from R's ankle up over her calf, along her thigh, coming to rest at her crotch on top of the velvet. Camera has slowly tracked in, keeping the hand in center of frame, ending in CU.



Starts in CU—R's hips center, D's face to right, his hands grasping the top of the black bloomers she is wearing. As the camera dollies back, he slowly pulls down the bloomers. Both sides of the sofa come into view. S sits on the right, Y on the left, her face disfigured by peculiar patches. When the bloomers are almost to the floor

no image for 30 seconds.

Track resumes. Bloomers are now on the floor. Camera begins to track forward as D pulls R's pants slowly up over her legs. (He looks straight forward at the camera the whole time; Y and S keep their eyes on the pants.) Camera veers to left toward Y's face as the pants arrive in place.



The patches on her face begin to be recognizable as newsprint. One is on her forehead, another on right cheek, another on chin, and two on her left cheek.

Dissolve into extreme CU of first clipping

"I'm still floating drunk full of you. Do you mind if I indulge myself for a few minutes and recall those things which make me laugh all over? I like your long, unruly hair and the way it was sticking up in the front, that childlike mischievous expression on your face when I pushed it down over your forehead."

Dissolve into previous CU. Y moves chin into view.

Cut to extreme CU:

"I'm totally intoxicated, overflowing with you and wanting you more than ever before."

Cut to previous CU. Y lowers face to show forehead. (This one is read aloud by Y's v-o.)



Y raises face to bring left cheek into view.

Dissolve into CU:

"It all adds up to one thing: I love you George Jackson, every inch on the outside and all the depths and dimensions of your awe-inspiring mind . . . goodnight, George, your wife sends infinite love."

"Love you, love you with love even more unbounded, even more unconquerable. Your life-long wife."

Y's voice: An hour and a half since the last embrace . . . you're still here, I see you, we are one, and this indestructible togetherness they'll never be powerful enough to wrest away from us . . . That so much love could exist anywhere, in any two people, even between us, I never realized. It makes me feel all fluttery and kind of weak, not enough though in the sense of succumbing to weakness, for it makes me feel so much stronger . . . my life-long husband.

Y's voice: She catches herself snorting gleefully at the scene of the two women being totally bitchy to one another. She remembers a similar scene—was it Dorothy Lamour, or Betty Grable?—in a movie she saw when she was no more than 9 or 10. One woman had ripped another woman's dress off. She had stayed in the movie theater long after her friends had left until that scene came around again. She had laughed louder than anyone around. And she must have felt guilty about it, because she never told anybody, not her mother, nor anybody.

Phone rings four times, followed by footsteps drawing closer and receiver being picked up. Then Y's voice: "Hello? Oh hi, hi . . . Yeh, I just got it in the mail. You want to hear it? Well, I'll try, but your handwriting is sort of hard to read . . . OK, here goes: 'This is the poetically licensed story of a woman who finds it difficult to reconcile certain external facts with her image of her own perfection. It is also the same woman's story if we say she can't reconcile these facts with her image of her own deformity.* She would like to engage in politics, but she can't decide whether to join the big women or the hunchtwats. The big women have a lot to offer, but she has discovered* essential weakness in their proposal to use wads of counterfeit money for . . . doorstops? What is this . . . boxtops? Oh . . . *boxstops. Neither is she attracted to the naive notion of the hunchtwats that every connection brings bed-chains. Not that it's a matter of victims and oppressors. She simply can't find alternatives to being inside with her fear or standing in the rain with her self-contempt.* How long can you go on this way, mmm? You still think it's all going to come out right, don't you? For instance, if you get up in the morning and feel your feelings well enough you will receive the right gifts from heaven without ever having to ask for them or even define them. It

Slow fade-out.

Photo of elderly woman in field.

Dissolve into slow-motion fight between S and R. MLS

Camera speed changes 4 times during fight—16 f/s to 24 to 48 to 24.

Fight lasts 5 minutes. V-O begins after 2 minutes of silence.

Titles appear at top of frame:

**They thought her shit was more important than she was.*

**Her shit got more attention than she did.*

**box-stops*

**Sit tight.*

**Is she for or against herself?*

**She feels like a fool.*

**(no more titles)*

Sequence of shots dealing with Sarah in bed and her real and imagined nightmares. The first image and subtitle appear simultaneously with crash of thunder.

Subtitles:

How bad can it get? Listen:

- 1 *I appear to self-sufficient.*
- 2 *I can behave as though you don't exist.*
- 3 *My face conveys a congealed intelligence.*
- 4 *You think, therefore, I have silent wisdom.*
- 5 *If I were wiser life might be unbearable.*
- 6 *I am a stern and unrelenting judge and critic. I do not forgive.*



- 8 *I refuse to compromise with a world to which I have been a total stranger from the beginning.*
- 9 *And if I make occasional concessions, I will not grant this privilege to others.*

should be smooth sailing now, right? Just deciding which side you're on should insure that all the best things in life will beat a path to your door. Right? After all, you've paid your dues, haven't you? What do you want? Her pretense of innocence must end. Nothing is new anymore, thank god. Now at last she can use her head and her eyes. If the mind is a muscle then the head is a huntress and the eye is an arrow. Thanking you for your immediate attention to this matter, I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest possible convenience. Respectfully . . . blah, blah, blah ' Yeh, I think it's pretty good. I think they'll get the message."

Crash of thunder. Thunder continues until #7 of the following 17 subtitles.

- 10 *It is time for me to be silent, methodical, resentful, gloomy.*
11 *You are a sap to feel close to such as me.*
12 *I despise you.*
13 *I shall remove myself from your offerings.*
14 *I shall appear self-sufficient.*
15 *I shall appear to need nothing, YOU LEAST OF ALL, SAP.*
16 *I shall become still, feign death.*
(Frame goes black during #16.)
17 *One false move and the jig's up.*

CU *D's face looking at camera.*

MLS *R "rushes" into her clothes in slow motion.*

D (lip-sync): . . . because she has younger-looking breasts than you. (repeats) . . . because she has younger-looking breasts than you.

About 10 seconds after beginning of shot D's voice: *I'll leave. I don't want you to go down there alone this time of night.*

End of shot, Y's voice: Propelled by an avalanche of rage, her limbs catapulted her body into her clothing. She hardly knew what she was doing, and when her voice came out, it surprised her.



CU *R's face.*

no image

R (lip-sync): You're not moving fast enough.

Y's voice: He lost no further time and bolted out of the door. Then she became aware of her heartbeat. When it had settled down she thought that she had never been that angry in her whole life. She thought she knew how someone could murder.

MS *J, S, R, D cavort on sofa. At bottom of frame is subtitle:*

DUMMY! My life is such a mess.

IT (w on b): She grieves for herself.

Backs of J, S, R, D on sofa looking at slide of Luxembourg Gardens.

MS 4 people clambering on sofa as before.

Luxembourg Gardens as before.

IT (w on b): It was impossible to face him. Everytime she turned to face him he changed his position so that they were always side by side in a 45° angle.

People clambering on sofa.

MLS J and R on sofa. He talks and smokes. She remains totally still. (Shot continues for 10 or 15 seconds after v-o ends.)

People clambering on sofa as before. Shot lasts 3 seconds.

LS D in snowfall walking toward corner of building.

**no image*

**Camera in car moving backwards shooting past CU of J to LS of R walking on other side of street. She goes into a diner. He stops car,*

Y's voice: The places for sitting in the Luxembourg Gardens are individual chairs rather than benches. So one can make small adjustments in placing oneself in relation to a companion or the total view.

(pause)

She sees him and tries

to turn away, but it is too

late. He has already caught sight of her.

He tells her about his eidetic

images. She listens intently, watching his darting eyes, the mouth moving, pursing, curving, opening, the slender fingers curving around the cigarette. Her eyes devour him. Her mouth becomes hollow with expectation. She moves her knees cautiously so that they are further apart. He doesn't notice, or pretends not to. She holds back, continues to listen, and the sensations pass.

What was it like for him when he was with her? Images with oily outlines waver in her reverie. She sees them eating together, but not the place; she sees them talking, but not their expressions. One of them may have just smiled in response to the other. She can't quite make it jell.* But she feels her jealousy acutely. The knowledge of their past urbanity and mutual congratulations releases slivers of jealousy* through her mind in a slow drip.

“Maria Elena” begins.



gets out, crosses and goes into diner.

IT (b on w): In her fantasy she speaks to his penis. Contingent on what she says it enlarges and decreases in size. The man does not otherwise move in his reclining position. Neither does he speak.

last notes of “Maria Elena”

D, S, and Y in subway train. Y hands S a piece of paper which makes her laugh uproariously.

“Thanks” begins.

“no image” is intercut with R, J, and S running back and forth in the rain, then with a woman’s and man’s feet running back and forth indoors.



The four protagonists are seen from the rear observing a dance performed by Epp Kotkas and James Barth.

“Arietta” (Dance moves in and out of sync with music.)

LS of Barth running in circle at previously seen Battery Park location.



“Native Land”

Intercuts of LS and fragmented CU's of Kotkas and Barth performing from 20 poses derived from photos and drawings of Isadora Duncan.

CU R's face.

Final bars of sonata:

Ocean with titles at top of frame:

Several years later she would ask him, “Where were you when I was giving birth to your child? After all, I did it for you.” He hit her across the face.

ENOUGH!

He laughs out loud.

Now she is thinking of his penis again.

no title (ocean remains)

She sighs with relief. Now that she knew the truth about her feelings she was free to love him again.

no title

You could always have an ocean ending.

(Ocean fades out.)

Music fades down.

(Final title fades out.)

