

CARINNE'S STORY

An original screenplay
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ACT 1

FADE IN

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING - DAVID'S SHARED OFFICE - DAY

DAVID, a man in his 40s, is reading a short story written by a student. He is on the last page.

He turns it back to the first page. It is titled "DREAM BY DAY by Carinne."

He taps the essay a couple of times then picks it up with a pile that's under it.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

David paces back and forth. He is alone.

He stops and braces himself against the wall.

He takes several deep breaths. He lifts his head and exhales.

He walks up the stairs.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING - CLASSROOM - NIGHT

David enters the classroom. CARINNE, a student in her 30s sits in the classroom in the front row. A FEMALE STUDENT sits in the classroom. 22 other FALL STUDENTS are in the room and they occupy all the seats.

David is enthusiastic.

DAVID

Hello everyone – ooo – just on time.
Thought I'd be a bit early. I should
really synchronize my watch to the
clock here.

The students are attentive.

DAVID

Ready to do that thing we do?

Students acknowledge in a variety of ways, all positive.

DAVID

Let's go over your writing samples from
last time first. A little E.A.P. seems an

appropriate introduction: "From every depth of good and ill." Too obscure? Perhaps Dickens is more appropriate for my experience reading your work: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

Some students chuckle.

DAVID

I don't mean that figuratively.

Many students laugh.

David cracks a smile.

Carinne is very attentive.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING - DAVID'S SHARED OFFICE - DAY

David is in his cubicle section. BONNIE, a woman 55 or older, is in the other cubicle space.

BONNIE

Our break can't come soon enough – I'm desperate.

DAVID

Uh huh.

He is trying to get to the door.

BONNIE

What are you doing for Thanksgiving?

DAVID

Oh, not much.

He opens the door.

BONNIE

Are you going to be here?

DAVID

Ye - uh, no. I'm visiting family. Down South I have some family.

BONNIE

Oh that's nice -- we're having all of our
nieces and nephews coming to our place
and all of their kids.

DAVID

Good. That sounds like fun.

He steps out the door.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

David opens the door to the copier room.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING - COPIER ROOM - DAY

WENDY, a woman in her 40s, is making copies. She smiles as she sees David.

He steps into the doorway holding the door open.

WENDY

Hey, David.

DAVID

Oh Wendy. Are you --

WENDY

I'm going to be here a while, but I can
pause it and let you in.

DAVID

No -- it's -- I can use the one downstairs.

WENDY

You know, I have a beef with you.

DAVID

Oh?

WENDY

I overheard two of my students talking
about transferring out of my class and
into yours!

DAVID

Oh!

WENDY

Stop being so charismatic!

DAVID

Sorry...

WENDY

Sheesh.

DAVID

It's too late -- besides my class is still full.

WENDY

I know -- if it were anyone else but you...

He smiles.

DAVID

I'll go use --

He starts to head out the door.

WENDY

You can hang out.

DAVID

No problem.

WENDY

You know I'm going to try my best to steal a couple of yours.

DAVID

I know.

WENDY

Alright then.

He backs out the door.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

David closes the door to the copier room. He leans up against the door.

His smile fades.

He closes his eyes and exhales deeply.

He walks away from the door down the hall.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

David is talking on a cell phone. He is cooking simple noodles on the stove as he talks.

DAVID

I had a colleague invite me over, so I do have a place to go. She has a bunch of nieces and nephews around there. I'm sure it will be chaos.

He waits for the other person to talk.

DAVID

Yes.

He waits.

DAVID

You know it's not like we ever made a big deal out of Thanksgiving.

He waits.

DAVID

Well you guys have fun. Tell them I miss them.

He waits.

DAVID

Tell everyone I'll miss them again. Bye, Mom.

He turns the phone off.

He sets the phone down on the counter and leans against it.

He takes several deep breaths.

The noodles are over-cooked.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David sits on the couch holding a plate of noodles in his lap. He watches a black & white movie on DVD. It's a farce. The action is very over-the-top and silly.

He eats his noodles slowly.

His mood runs counter to the program.

He sets the plate on a coffee table.

He turns the movie off with a remote. The room is darker.

He sits for a moment staring at the television.

DAVID

Wendy...

Pause.

DAVID

You are probably with friends and family, aren't you?

He sits quietly in the dark room staring at the television which is off.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING - CLASSROOM - NIGHT

Fall Students are exiting the classroom. David is up at the front podium talking to the Female Student. A folder full of papers sits on the podium in front of him.

Carinne hangs out behind the Female Student waiting and watching him.

FEMALE STUDENT

(to Carinne)

You can go first --

CARINNE

Oh no -- no hurry.

FEMALE STUDENT

(to David)

I just wanted to say that advice -- I completely took it another direction and it was so much better.

DAVID

I'm glad you had the time to go over it on our short holiday break. It often feels like months instead of a few days off.

FEMALE STUDENT

Yeah -- it was crazy at my house, but I worked it in. I hid in my room and told people to let the maestro compose!

DAVID

Good for you -- I'm glad it's working for you now.

FEMALE STUDENT

Thanks!

David nods.

Female Student walks away.

CARINNE

Another satisfied customer!

DAVID

Apparently. What's up, Carinne?

CARINNE

I think she stole my thought -- I did the same thing. I had some free time this long weekend.

DAVID

How'd it turn out?

CARINNE

I just sent it to you, so you tell me.

DAVID

I'll be sure to print it -- look at it later today.

CARINNE

Great -- I think it's pretty good. So --

DAVID

Alright --

CARINNE

Oh sorry --

DAVID

No, you were about to --

CARINNE

I wanted to ask you what you write. Can we read any of your short stories?

DAVID

Oh my -- haven't you heard "those who can't do, teach"?

CARINNE

Come on -- I bet your stuff is so good. I want to read it.

DAVID

Maybe later.

CARINNE

I'll keep my opinions to myself --

DAVID

Thanks -- you know -- I've got to get going -- I have -- I've got a meeting to get to.

CARINNE

Oh -- alright. Can I schedule an appointment during your office hours?

He picks up the folder and starts to head out.

She walks with him.

DAVID

Yes -- email me and we'll come up with a time.

CARINNE

Day after tomorrow would be great -- looking forward to some one-on-one.

He nods.

They exit the classroom.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

David sits on the couch. That same black and white movie plays in the background. The volume is down.

A plate of cold noodles sits on the coffee table in front of him.

He is on the last page of a manuscript.

The final line is a quote:

"To him whose eyes are cast on things around him with a ray turned back upon the past?"

He makes a notation and a question mark with a red pen next to it.

He flips back to page one. It's titled "THROUGH STORM AND NIGHT by Carinne".

He hears thunder outside.

He turns his head toward the window. There's a flash from lightning.

He looks at the manuscript again.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING - DAVID'S SHARED OFFICE - DAY

David sits alone taking deep breaths.

He closes his eyes.

Wendy knocks on the door, then opens. David stands up to look over the cubicle wall.

DAVID

Hi.

WENDY

Hey -- avoiding me?

DAVID

Not -- no. Why --

WENDY

You need to come see me for lunch
sometime. This decade please.

DAVID

I'm sorry -- so many papers --

WENDY

Don't give me that crap. I know exactly
how long it takes.

David nods.

She comes in and sits in the chair next to him.

WENDY

How was Thanksgiving?

DAVID

Fine. Good. Yours?

WENDY
Frantic. And you're lying.

DAVID
What?

WENDY
You spent it alone.

DAVID
I don't --

She glares at him.

DAVID
If you knew my family --

She shakes her head.

DAVID
It's difficult. After my dad died, it was
easier for awhile -- we all were closer.
But now...

She waits.

DAVID
My mom -- it can be depressing.

WENDY
Why?

DAVID
After my dad -- you know?

WENDY
I think your mom has moved on -- don't
you?

DAVID
I don't know. It's -- I still don't know
how to deal with it. Never been good at
it even after this many years.

WENDY
Who's good at dealing with suicide?

DAVID
You'd think I'd get better at it with my
family. My dad, an uncle, a couple of

cousins – I'm the convergence of two lines of depression.

WENDY

Yeah.

DAVID

Good thing I didn't have kids.

WENDY

They alter your priorities. You'd be amazed.

DAVID

I'd be a wreck.

WENDY

Like me?

DAVID

Like you.

They chuckle.

WENDY

You can come over sometime – you don't have to socialize. Just hang out.

DAVID

Thank you.

WENDY

And that's a "no".

DAVID

I'm not –

WENDY

Social anxiety, too, dear?

DAVID

Not shyness – just easily overwhelmed by stimulus. You have no idea how hard it is for me to interact with a group of people.

WENDY

Well you're an enigma to me – first instructor I've heard with anxiety in

crowds. Have you tried therapy?
Medication?

DAVID

I can't talk to a counselor. It doesn't
work for me. Medication makes me so
dull I can't teach.

WENDY

You mean you can't teach the way you
normally do.

DAVID

If I can't teach like that, what's the
point?

WENDY

Plenty of teachers here that aren't as
effective as you. They still have a job.
Oh my goodness you almost can't get
rid of 'em!

They laugh.

DAVID

You know what I mean.

WENDY

Yeah. But I don't want to read a
message from college news that
Professor Parker committed suicide.

DAVID

So you think that would make the
college news?

She shakes her head and gives him a look.

WENDY

You know, my husband had a cousin he
was close to kill himself. He found it
helpful to just let it out.

DAVID

Yeah. When I feel down, I just write
about it. That's good therapy.

She touches his hand.

WENDY

If you need to talk, I'll listen. I'm a good listener.

DAVID

Thanks, that's very sweet of you.

WENDY

I care about you.

DAVID

Thanks -- I ca -- appreciate that.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David sits on the couch. He has a plate of noodles in his lap that he slowly eats.

He is watching that same old farce on television. This time the volume is off.

DAVID

Wendy... love you...

He puts the fork down.

Tears slowly well up and come out of his eyes as he stares at the television.

He shakes his head.

DAVID

Stupid.

He sits quietly.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING - DAVID'S SHARED OFFICE - DAY

David sits in his chair. Carinne's paper is in front of him.

Carinne takes off her coat and sits in a chair next to him.

CARINNE

I'm nervous.

DAVID

I'll be gentle -- actually, it's all good news.

CARINNE

Really? You liked it?

DAVID

It's very good. Your best one yet.

CARINNE

Really?

DAVID

Very engaging. Very mature.

CARINNE

Are you saying I'm old?

DAVID

No, no -- it's -- come to think about it,
my older students are the better writers.

CARINNE

Why is that?

DAVID

Experience. Something to draw from.

CARINNE

I have a lot, that's for sure.

DAVID

That's why this is your best work -- it
sounds real. There's a place for poetry,
but not in prose. I'm glad you are taking
my advice there -- and drawing on your
own reality.

CARINNE

Yeah, it was like a revelation! I have a
lot of stuff like that.

DAVID

The suicide part was very... convincing.

She points at herself.

CARINNE

That black line of depression runs deep
here.

DAVID

It was very real.

CARINNE

Don't tell me you're also a psychiatrist.

DAVID

No -- just experience here, too.
Depression's big in my family.

CARINNE

How do you deal with it?

DAVID

Well I -- I'm not the -- it's good to talk
about your feelings and problems. My
family isn't very good at that.

Carinne reaches into her handbag and pulls out a bottle of pills.

CARINNE

I wish I could talk about it -- I just take
these instead. I get loopy if I don't.

She hands the pill bottle to David. He looks at them.

DAVID

Well that's --

CARINNE

Don't you?

DAVID

Don't I?

CARINNE

No meds?

DAVID

I -- it's funny you mention that. I was
talking to a colleague about that
yesterday.

CARINNE

About not taking medication?

DAVID

It makes me feel dull.

CARINNE

Ain't that the truth.

DAVID

Different for different people.

CARINNE

Maybe so.

He looks back at her paper.

DAVID

So anyway -- yes, big improvement here.

CARINNE

Can I be bold?

DAVID

In what...?

She smiles at him.

He gives a weak smile back.

CARINNE

Can I buy you a cup of coffee and talk more?

DAVID

I'm not --

CARINNE

I don't mean to --

DAVID

It's not -- I've had issues with students' interest.

CARINNE

Oh no -- I mean, well, I have to admit an interest, but I understand. Absolutely.

DAVID

Because it's not --

CARINNE

No, I mean -- hey, look.

She touches his hand. His hand stiffens.

CARINNE

I'm talking about a friendly chat over coffee. Public place.

She takes her hand off of his.

He shakes his head.

CARINNE
Safe. And I won't touch.

DAVID
Let me think about it.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Carinne sits sipping a coffee at a table. David comes in. He holds a manuscript. She perks up.
She stands.

CARINNE
I'm so glad you came.

She gives him a half hug. He doesn't reciprocate.

DAVID
Hi – oh –

She sits down. He sits down on the other side of the table from her.

DAVID
I – uh – read this one.

He sets it down on the table in front of her. The title is “TO ONE IN PURGATORY by Carinne”.

CARINNE
Oh good -- I know it wasn't one for
class, so thanks for that.

DAVID
Carinne...

CARINNE
David?

DAVID
I need to be honest here. I'm a little
uncomfortable meeting you in this
context.

CARINNE
Just coffee.

DAVID

You seem to have more interest here.

CARINNE

So? You set the boundaries, right?

DAVID

I need to, yes.

CARINNE

Then it's Ok. Ok?

DAVID

I'm concerned -- I had a situation years ago, when I first started teaching. A female student... very confident... too confident.

CARINNE

Do tell.

DAVID

I think you get the idea.

CARINNE

David -- we're not kids. We're not even young.

He exhales.

DAVID

That's for sure.

CARINNE

So -- my story?

DAVID

Yeah. About that... first -- you are truly an exceptional writer. Very evocative imagery especially. But... um... this David character sounds strangely familiar.

CARINNE

It's based on you. Not that I know you that well. Just a fantasy.

DAVID

And this detailed sexual encounter with a student, Emily. Anybody we know?

CARINNE

It's a fantasy.

DAVID

It's -- it's flattering. But you realize, this teacher thing -- it's a role I play. Do you understand that? It's not the real me.

CARINNE

I know -- this student thing -- it's just a role I play, too.

He looks at her and slowly nods.

CARINNE

I do want to get to know you. I think you could be a very interesting character to work with.

He chuckles.

DAVID

There's really not much to get to know. Trust me -- I'm not that interesting.

CARINNE

So you say. Coffee?

DAVID

I never drink it. I know, I'm a heretic here in the Northwest.

CARINNE

Yet you met me at a coffee shop. Interesting. Do I have my charms?

He chuckles and shakes his head.

She stares at him and smiles.

He looks down.

DAVID

Oh my.

CARINNE

I predict the next answer you'll give me is "yes".

He squints at her.

DAVID
I'm keeping my mouth shut.

CARINNE
Tease.

DAVID
Carinne...

CARINNE
Ok. Ok. You walk home isn't that right?

DAVID
Yes.

CARINNE
See? "Yes"...

DAVID
Ah -- very good.

CARINNE
You head that-a-way, right?

She points up the street.

DAVID
That-a-way.

He nods.

CARINNE
There's a great little lunch place that-a-way. Tomorrow -- my treat.

DAVID
Carinne.

CARINNE
Just two adults here.

He shakes his head.

CARINNE
Remember how easy that first "yes" was -- I'll make it easier. We won't talk about anything teacher-student related.

He looks at her.

She stands up, drops some money on the table.

CARINNE

Am I too bold?

DAVID

Too bold for what?

She takes his hand in hers and squeezes it.

CARINNE

I predict we're going to have a good
lunch tomorrow.

She lets go of his hand and walks toward the exit.

She doesn't look back.

He does.

EXT. STREET - DAY

David walks toward home. He has a smile on his face. A PASSER-BY walks by him.

He becomes conscious of his smile.

He tries to stop smiling, but he can't seem to.

ACT 2

EXT. DINER - DAY

Through the window Carinne and David are sitting next to each other laughing.

DAVID

Nude modeling?

CARINNE

Sounds compelling, doesn't it? It was for artists and a few times for an art class.

DAVID

How did that make you feel, having a bunch of strangers stare at you?

CARINNE

Exposed.

He laughs.

DAVID

I'm sure.

CARINNE

Actually it was boring just standing there. Very hard for me to shut off my brain and stand still.

DAVID

I know that feeling.

CARINNE

Those were in the days when I thought I'd be an artist. I figured that was a way to get my foot in the door –

DAVID

Or any relevant body part.

She smiles.

CARINNE

Then I looked at the painter's work and I couldn't compete, try as I might.

DAVID

That's too bad.

CARINNE

I kept modeling for a while though – I figured if I couldn't get my own work in the Met, maybe I could at least get my bare ass in there!

He laughs.

DAVID

Well, I look forward to stumbling across your naked backside in a museum someday. I can say "I know that ass!"

They laugh.

CARINNE

You wouldn't have to go to a museum to see it.

She stares at him. He looks away.

DAVID

Well...

CARINNE

And up goes that professor wall again. Tough nut you are.

DAVID

You definitely have a different take on life, I'll give you that.

CARINNE

I'm in good company.

DAVID

Outsiders looking in.

CARINNE

Uh huh.

Pause.

CARINNE

So...?

DAVID

So?

CARINNE

What are you working on – your writing? Share share.

DAVID

I haven't written in ages.

CARINNE

"Don't squander it."

DAVID

That sounds familiar. Where have I heard that before?

CARINNE

"The writer's recipe for regret." David's wisdom from pearl and ruby glowing.

DAVID

Don't think it's quite the wisdom of the ages.

CARINNE

An important rule, I'd say. And I'd hate to be accused of being ignorant of one important rule.

DAVID

You have a way with words – others' – you really embrace dark romanticism, don't you?

CARINNE

I find it... inspirational.

DAVID

I've never heard anyone else call it that before.

CARINNE

Like a second November rain on my face, providing me with the healing tears I can't.

DAVID

Others' words?

CARINNE

All mine that time.

He listens.

CARINNE

Another?

He nods.

CARINNE

Words of love in the sand written by a
careless heart. With time, the sand
shifts.

He smiles and stares at her.

CARINNE

Stray love, stray back to you, or keep
straying? Stray words echo from the
precipice once more then gone: last
time, last time. Last time?

She stares back.

CARINNE

What kind of heart are you?

He shakes his head.

DAVID

I don't know.

CARINNE

And if I were to follow you home,
would you let this stray in?

He lowers his head.

He exhales.

She waits.

DAVID

For the sake of fairness, I'm going to
have to make the final an objective test.

She thinks about it for a second then laughs.

He laughs, too.

They stare at each other smiling.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Carinne sits with David on his couch. She holds a pen and is writing on a paper test.

She makes a few notations on the last page, then puts the pen and paper down on the coffee table.

CARINNE

Done.

DAVID

How did you do?

CARINNE

You tell me, Teach.

He picks up a red pen off the coffee table. Then he picks up the test and looks it over.

DAVID

Perfect.

CARINNE

I wanted to be perfect. The other students will be happy it's easy.

DAVID

I didn't think it was that easy.

CARINNE

I'm a motivated student. Did I pass?

DAVID

Most definitely.

CARINNE

Good. Now, former professor, your former student hereby requests an alteration in our relationship.

He smiles weakly. He holds the paper test tightly.

She takes the test from him and puts it on the coffee table.

She takes the pen from him and puts it on the coffee table.

She slides closer to him.

He is fixed in place looking away from her.

Her eyes are fixed on him.

She touches his shoulder. He shivers.

She holds his shoulder more firmly.

DAVID
Sorry. It's been – long –

CARINNE
I know.

She slides even closer and puts her arm around him. She takes his hand in her other hand.

CARINNE
Can I... touch you?

DAVID
Yes.

She strokes his hand.

He begins to relax.

He stares at her hand.

He strokes her palm with his fingers.

She moves her hand from his hand up to his face.

She touches his face and directs him to look at her.

He looks at her.

CARINNE
I don't let anybody touch me.

He nods.

CARINNE
You can touch me. Anywhere.

She places his hand on her chest.

He looks at his hand on her chest then back to her eyes.

He moves his hand from her chest to her cheek. He caresses it.

She trembles.

CARINNE

It's been – long time –

DAVID

I know.

She starts to cry.

He moves his face closer to hers.

He stares at her as she looks away.

He places her hand on his chest.

DAVID

Carinne... my heart... it isn't careless.

She looks into his eyes.

She hugs him.

He hugs her back.

Then tighter.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – HALLWAY – NIGHT

David opens the bedroom door and steps out. He has been sleeping.

There's a light on in the living room. He walks toward the living room.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

David steps into the living room. Carinne is in a robe sitting on the couch.

She's writing in a notepad. She's been writing a lot.

DAVID

Hey.

She starts and turns to see him.

CARINNE

Oh my goodness!

DAVID

Sorry.

CARINNE

I was really deep in a thought.

He walks up to her.

DAVID

I was just checking to make sure you were Ok. Sorry about the small bed – hard to sleep?

CARINNE

Not at all.

DAVID

I guess I should get a bigger bed. Haven't had a need for it.

She smiles at him.

CARINNE

Hard to imagine, such an eligible bachelor.

She arches back and reaches a hand behind her toward him.

DAVID

Yeah... something like that.

He takes her hand. She pulls him to the back of the couch.

She pulls his head over hers.

She kisses him deeply upside down.

She wraps her hands around the back of his neck. He braces himself against the back of the couch so he doesn't fall on her.

DAVID

I shouldn't interrupt you – wow – you are really on a roll.

CARINNE

You aren't an interruption. You're an inspiration. I have never felt like this.

She flips through the notepad. She's written several pages.

CARINNE

All tonight. All because of you.

He kneels down next to her to look at her work.

DAVID

You are amazing.

CARINNE

It's first person. It's about me.

DAVID

I can't read your handwriting very well.

CARINNE

I'll type it up for you. I want you to read it.

DAVID

So tell me: who is Carinne?

She turns pages as she speaks.

CARINNE

She's a sad girl, then a run-a-way, then a thief, then an artist and model, then a vagabond, then a wandering sage, then a sad woman, then a writer, then a lover. She's a figment.

He leans against the arm of the couch.

DAVID

Run-a-way?

CARINNE

I bounced around from one foster home to another. Is it running away when you never had a family to run from?

DAVID

This Carinne sounds like an interesting character.

CARINNE

You can know everything about her through the lines on these pages.

She traces her finger over the letters on the page.

CARINNE

You just have to trace these words with your eyes and she takes form – she lives.

He touches the words on the page with her.

DAVID

I have so much to learn about her.

CARINNE

And she about you. I want to have you
live on these pages with her.

DAVID

Oh how I want to just live like this,
submerged in a moment... like this.

CARINNE

We will.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – DAY

David enters. He sees Carinne sitting on the floor in his office down the hall.

He moves toward her.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – HALLWAY – DAY

David enters the hallway and stops. Carinne has papers spread all over the floor of the office and coming out into the hallway. They are the manuscripts of his stories. She sits among them and gives the appearance of a child in a sandbox.

A box is sitting near her.

DAVID

What –

CARINNE

I've been reading.

DAVID

How did you –

CARINNE

I found them – buried treasures.

DAVID

My stories...

She reaches into the box and pulls out a toy from his childhood.

CARINNE

And with them, another buried treasure?

DAVID

I got that when I was a kid.

She reaches into the box and pulls out a sex toy.

CARINNE

And this?

DAVID

Uh – that’s – that’ll be harder to explain...

She smiles.

CARINNE

Naughty naughty.

She reaches in the box and pulls out a gun and holds it by the barrel with two fingers.

DAVID

Oh my – that’s where that is – I really need to get rid of that thing.

CARINNE

Didn’t figure you for a gun-slinger.

DAVID

I – part of my – family heirloom. Those have been in there a long time.

She sets the gun back in the box.

CARINNE

You dangerous boy.

He gives her a look.

She looks at the manuscripts around her.

CARINNE

So I read them all.

DAVID

You read them -- all?

CARINNE

Dozens of stories and none of them finished. Except a few early ones.

DAVID

I know.

CARINNE

And the recent ones are so much more... real.

DAVID

I know.

CARINNE

I love them.

Pause.

He lowers and shakes his head.

DAVID

I can't finish.

She holds out her hand to him.

He takes her hand.

He slowly kneels to her.

She pulls him toward her, to his knees.

He moves toward her.

She puts her arms around him.

She pulls him down onto her.

They fall onto the manuscripts.

They start laughing.

They hug.

They roll.

They kiss.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING – CLASSROOM – NIGHT

David enters the classroom. About half the students, 12 to 15 WINTER STUDENTS, are there and in seats.

He is less enthusiastic than normal.

DAVID
Sorry I'm late. I haven't made very
much progress on your stories this week.

Students appear detached.

DAVID
We'll do some group writing today.

EXT. OREGON COAST – DAY

Carinne and David stand on the beach and look out at the ocean. The wind is blowing. It's cool.

He hugs her from behind.

She stares at the line on the horizon where the ocean meets the sky.

She takes it all in.

CARINNE
I stand amid the roar.

He looks where she looks.

DAVID
Of a surf-tormented shore.

They stand fixed like statues on the beach.

They take hands and move away from the water.

Near where they stood, words are written in the sand in her handwriting: "Carinne & David".

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

On the television plays that black and white movie. The volume is down.

Carinne and David are on the couch. Their faces come together.

CARINNE
I'm distracted – just tell me.

She kisses him.

DAVID

It's kind of a silly movie – I put it on the cheer myself up sometimes.

He kisses her.

CARINNE

I don't think you'll need it right now, do you?

She kisses him.

DAVID

No –

CARINNE

I can't even think about a movie – I'm just torn between –

She kisses him.

CARINNE

-- writing and ravaging you.

She kisses him.

He kisses her back.

DAVID

A woman after my own heart.

She kisses him.

CARINNE

Let me ravage –

She kisses him.

CARINNE

-- then write –

She kisses him.

CARINNE

-- then ravage some more.

He kisses her.

DAVID

Too bad I can't share –

They kiss.

DAVID
-- this motivational technique –

They kiss.

DAVID
-- with my students.

She smiles and kisses him.

CARINNE
One student at a time, baby, one student
at a time...

She blocks his smile with a kiss.

They kiss again.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – BEDROOM – NIGHT

David and Carinne lie in bed together. She's facing away from him with her head on the pillow.

He is holding her from behind. His head is resting lightly on hers.

They both look in the same direction, staring into darkness.

She is smiling. He is content.

CARINNE
Silence.

He hugs her and kisses her ear.

CARINNE
I can reach out and touch it.

DAVID
I know you can.

He follows her arm up to her hand with his hand.

They both reach out into the darkness of the room.

He is smiling with her now.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING – HALLWAY – DAY

David walks down the hallway carrying some folders.

Wendy comes up from behind him and catches up with him.

They walk and talk.

Hey – WENDY

Hey. DAVID

WENDY
You are ignoring me again, but not in
the usual way.

What? DAVID

They get to his office.

He opens the door and she follows him in.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING – DAVID’S SHARED OFFICE – DAY

David enters followed by Wendy.

WENDY
Oh, I know coy when I hear it.

DAVID
You don’t –

WENDY
You are getting laid!

DAVID
My ...! Wendy!

He sits in his chair.

WENDY
Now I know it!

She sits in the chair next to his desk.

WENDY

Your pathetic protestations don't fool me, mister. You better let me in on it.

DAVID

As if it's your business –

WENDY

And I want details.

He chuckles as he speaks.

DAVID

Wendy – this is so uncharacteristic –

WENDY

G— You're in a good mood. I have to know more.

DAVID

Is it enough for you to know that I'm happy – for once?

She is earnest.

WENDY

Look you. I've been married for a long time now, and there's nothing even remotely innovative going on there. If someone I know is having new sex, then I want details!

He laughs as he speaks.

DAVID

--n – n – new sex –

He starts laughing.

WENDY

Oh – you're in love. Oh. Oh.

DAVID

I have never felt this way.

WENDY

Oh. I thought this might just be some tawdry fun.

DAVID

Now I'm embarrassed.

WENDY

You? – I want juicy details, and I get Mr. Twitterpation.

She leans forward and hugs him.

WENDY

I'm so happy for you – you deserve this.

DAVID

Now I'm really embarrassed.

She speaks into his ear.

WENDY

Give me one thing to tide me over –

DAVID

Ok – when I've, you know, finished and I think we're done, she isn't. She's relentless – she can keep playing for an hour or two – and she brings me... um... back to life, so to speak. I've never had such intense experiences. It's like an hour long orgasm.

WENDY

Oh that's good. That's very good.

Wendy stands up and composes herself.

WENDY

She better not hurt you.

DAVID

I'll be fine. Thanks for your concern, Mom.

She shakes her head.

WENDY

You didn't say that.

DAVID

Get out of here.

He kicks toward her.

WENDY

We're not done with this conversation.

He stands up and pushes her toward the door.

DAVID

I've said too much as it is. Out.

She opens the door.

WENDY

I'll want more details soon!

DAVID

Out!

She walks out and starts to shut the door. She peeks in.

WENDY

-- and I'm relentless, too!

He runs up and shuts the door on her.

Her laugh can be heard in the hallway.

He laughs.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – BEDROOM – NIGHT

David is in bed. He wakes up abruptly.

DAVID

Carinne?

He looks around.

She is standing outside the sliding glass door. The sliding door is open.

She is facing away from him. She is only covered with a white sheet.

He slides out of bed. It's cold with the door open. He shivers.

He walks up slowly behind her.

She is looking out and up into the sky.

DAVID (OS)

On the outside again?

She keeps looking up. She doesn't look at him.

CARINNE

Looking out.

He walks up behind her.

CARINNE

Holding back the night.

He is still behind her.

He looks at her. Then he looks where she is looking.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

David enters through the front door. Carinne is typing on a laptop connected to a printer on the coffee table. On the couch and coffee table are several manuscripts neatly stacked.

DAVID

Hey – and whoa.

CARINNE

I finished many of your stories.

DAVID

What?!

He walks up and grabs one of his. It's titled "Elk".

DAVID

What do you mean you finished?

She continues typing.

CARINNE

I gave them endings.

He flips to the end of the one he's holding.

DAVID

Do you know how many years I've been working on this one?!

He reads some.

DAVID

What?! The French hunter does not kill the white elk in the end –

CARINNE

He does now.

DAVID

I have a complete picture in my mind of how this would play out. You can't just tack on – implausible endings!

CARINNE

Well then you finish it.

DAVID

Dammit! You need to understand how much this pisses me off.

CARINNE

You know what pisses me off?

DAVID

What?!

CARINNE

Your neglect.

DAVID

What are – I'm not neglecting you – I have –

CARINNE

Your treasures, not me.

DAVID

These are mine to neglect! Why don't you work on your own stuff?!

CARINNE

Look –

She shakes her head.

She screams.

He steps back.

She starts laughing.

DAVID

What the hell was that?!

CARINNE
Oh, am I being irrational?

DAVID
What the hell...

CARINNE
I didn't really spend too much time with
your stuff. I just needed a mental
exercise. I figured it would motivate you
to actually do some work.

DAVID
Real motivation is internal – intrinsic.

She pats the couch next to her.

CARINNE
Not always.

She slides the manuscripts to clear a spot for him.

He walks over and sits down.

She takes another manuscript off the coffee table.

CARINNE
This is mine.

She hands it to him.

CARINNE
Read it when you are alone. I don't want
to know when you read it.

He looks it over. It's titled "Carinne's Story".

CARINNE
Are you going to be mad at me all
night?

DAVID
Maybe.

CARINNE
Do you want to... spank me, teacher?

She rotates to show her backside to him.

DAVID

Yes.

CARINNE

Really?

He looks her over and nods slowly.

She pats him on the shoulder.

CARINNE

Hold that anger.

She puts a finger to his lips.

CARINNE

And don't speak. Not at all.

He stares at her.

CARINNE

Give me two minutes after I go in there.
Then come in – don't say a word.

She stands up and unbuttons and unzips her pants.

CARINNE

And don't hold back when you start. I
want it to hurt deep – leave marks.

He stares at her.

She goes into the bedroom.

He watches her.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING – DAVID'S SHARED OFFICE – DAY

A tear drops on the last page of a manuscript. Some words are smudged by the tear.

David reads Carinne's manuscript. He wipes a tear away as he keeps reading.

He flips back to the title page. It says "Carinne's Story".

He hugs the manuscript.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – DAY

David is standing. He puts down Carinne's manuscript on the coffee table. The title "Carinne's Story" is prominent.

Carinne is sitting on the couch.

DAVID

It isn't finished.

CARINNE

You can still deliver a verdict.

DAVID

Powerful. Frequently brilliant – far better than I can write.

CARINNE

Really?

She is beaming.

DAVID

The suicide fantasy elements are becoming more pervasive.

CARINNE

I'm working it out here.

DAVID

It's disturbing. Conjures up many emotions.

He sits next to her.

CARINNE

I borrowed from your family. I hope you don't mind – I don't have one to draw from.

DAVID

You work it out very convincingly. I know I never told you any specifics. You have – impressive imagination.

CARINNE

Isn't it romantic?

DAVID

Suicide? It's selfish. I have difficulty connecting to the romantic aspect you see in it.

CARINNE

There is a self-sacrifice aspect, don't you think? I mean, so damaged that he's better off for his family dead than alive.

DAVID

I think that's what your father character believed.

CARINNE

You have trouble with that character.

DAVID

Yes, but I can't separate my feelings about that character from my personal feelings. It's not that I disagree with your take on him – I just can't empathize with his... methods. I never could.

CARINNE

Can you empathize with any of the characters?

DAVID

Yes. Oh yes. I'm very drawn to the narrator of your story. Very. If I didn't love her before, I would love her after reading that.

He takes her hand.

DAVID

You have such a unique take on... everything! I love to see the world through your eyes.

She is affected by his words.

DAVID

I want more.

She puts her arms around him.

He touches her arm.

DAVID

I'm dying to see how it ends.

CARINNE

Me, too. It's a difficult journey to the end.

DAVID

You're a tease for not finishing it.

She smiles.

CARINNE

I want you to make love with me, and I want you to stare into my eyes the whole time.

He looks at her and smiles.

CARINNE

Will you do that for me?

DAVID

Yes.

CARINNE

Even when the pace quickens and when you get tense and taut?

DAVID

I can – I will.

CARINNE

I feel exposed – I want you to expose yourself to me, too.

He nods.

She smiles.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING – HALLWAY OUTSIDE CLASSROOM – NIGHT

The classroom is dark. A sign hangs on the door to the classroom.

A couple of Winter Students read it then walk away.

The sign says “WR 241 Class Cancelled Tonight. Check the Schedule Online for Assignments.”

EXT. AVENUE OF THE GIANT BOULDERS – DAY

Carinne and David hike through the boulders. David leads.

They help each other climb when necessary.

EXT. MILL CREEK FALLS – DAY

Carinne and David look out at the falls.

DAVID

I haven't been here for many years.

CARINNE

Beautiful...

They walk up closer to the falls.

The rocks are covered with moss and are slick making walking difficult.

They stop.

He faces her.

He takes out a pocket knife.

DAVID

Not the sharpest knife in the world.

He digs a cut into his right palm.

He starts to bleed.

He hands the knife to her.

She makes a quick cut on her right palm.

He flinches. She doesn't seem to react to it.

She holds her hand up to him.

He presses his hand into hers.

Their blood presses together.

DAVID

Now you have family.

They lock fingers.

They stare into each others' eyes.

She drops the knife and it sticks into the ground near her feet.

They embrace.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

David is sitting on the couch reading Carinne's manuscript.

He shakes his head.

Carinne is behind him cooking something in the kitchen.

DAVID

What the hell kind of ending is that?

She walks over to him. She looks concerned.

She leans on the back of the couch and reads over his shoulder.

CARINNE

I took great pains to perfect that imagery: "the serene skies give our final moment the calm it deserves, the petals ushered by the wind that sets them to motion against the motionless face of my lover, brushing his cheek like I did before."

DAVID

I don't mean the imagery. I mean the... murder-suicide pact...?

CARRINE

What do you mean?

DAVID

I don't believe a murder-suicide pact is a plausible ending for them.

She stands up straight.

CARINNE

Are you trying to finish my story for me?

DAVID

No –

CARINNE

Finish your own stories.

DAVID
I just think it's a cop-out.

CARINNE
That's your bias.

DAVID
I'm not against –

She abruptly goes back to cooking.

He turns to look at her.

She comes back to him and puts her arms around him.

CARINNE
I want to make love after dinner – can
we?

He is confused.

CARINNE
Can we?

He holds up her manuscript.

DAVID
I thought you wanted to –

She takes it from him and tosses it aside.

CARINNE
I'll rewrite it later.

DAVID
That isn't –

She hugs him.

CARINNE
I have so much energy – I want to play!

She fake-bites him on the cheek and on his head making fake chewing noises as she does.

He grabs at her and she wrestles against him, and starts chewing on his neck.

He starts to laugh.

DAVID
You're a nut!

EXT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – PORCH – NIGHT

David walks up to his apartment door. He has papers from his class in a folder. It's dark inside.

He unlocks the door.

He opens the door and looks in.

He turns on the porch light and shafts of light stream in the blinds showing some of the living room.

He steps in.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

David enters the door.

He is struck and knocked aside from something coming from behind the door. The folder flies out of his hand and papers scatter.

It's Carinne, but he can't see her in the dark.

He falls to a knee and gets up quickly. She steps back.

He grabs her and pushes her against the wall.

He steps back realizing it's her.

DAVID
What the hell are you doing?!

CARINNE
Boo?

She starts to laugh loudly.

DAVID
Not funny.

He goes to the standing lamp, and turns it on.

DAVID
I have serious trust issues with things
like that.

CARINNE

Are you mad?

DAVID

You tell me.

She steps up to him and kneels before him.

She looks up at him.

CARINNE

I'm ready to take my punishment.

DAVID

Your punishment is you're being ignored – I have a lot of work to do tonight.

He turns away from her.

She stands up.

CARINNE

Fine!

He turns back to her.

CARINNE

I've been waiting for you – hours – I watched that black and white movie of yours three times – I cleaned up – I've been waiting –

DAVID

Look –

She rambles.

CARINNE

Don't you understand what I do here for you – don't you know I've been waiting –

DAVID

Yes.

CARINNE

I've been waiting for hours –

DAVID

Yes! You said that.

CARINNE
Fine! I'm leaving then!

DAVID
Aw, what do you mean –

She grabs her coat.

CARINNE
I'm going for a walk –

DAVID
At this hour?

CARINNE
At any hour – I've lived on the street
before – didn't you read that about me?

DAVID
Carinne...

CARINNE
I'm just a vagabond – always was,
always will be –

She heads out the door.

DAVID
Carinne.

CARINNE
Always will be.

He follows her to the door.

DAVID
Carinne!

She walks off.

He stays in the doorway.

DAVID
Dammit.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – BEDROOM - NIGHT

David is asleep in bed.

He is awoken by a scratching and rapping sound.

He looks to the sliding glass door that leads from the bedroom to the back porch.

Carinne stands there, barely recognizable in the darkness.

He starts.

He recognizes her.

He gets out of bed quickly, then unlocks and throws the sliding glass door open.

She is soaking wet, although it doesn't seem to have been raining. She seems weak.

He grabs her and steadies her as she sways.

CARINNE

I had an accident.

DAVID

Are you hurt?!

CARINNE

I don't think so – I'm cold.

DAVID

Get out of these wet things.

He helps her take her top off.

DAVID

Where is your coat?

CARINNE

I don't know.

DAVID

Did you fall in an open sewer? You smell Ok...

CARINNE

Don't know.

He starts to help her out of her pants.

DAVID

You silly goose. You aren't hurt?

CARINNE

No.

DAVID

You are cold.

He rubs her arms and legs.

CARINNE

Aww – I like it when you call me a silly
goose.

He shakes his head.

DAVID

Let's get you to bed.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – BEDROOM – DAY

Carinne is in bed. Her back is to the door.

David comes in. He holds a full pill bottle.

He sits on the bed next to her. He tugs at her to wake her up.

DAVID

Hey – you need to get up – eat.

CARINNE

What – where –

She looks around.

CARINNE

How long have –

DAVID

You've been in bed for two days.

She sits up.

He shows her the pill bottle.

DAVID

When did you stop taking these?

She takes them from him and drops them down next to the bed on her side.

CARINNE

I can't write with those – you know that.

DAVID

I'm concerned.

CARINNE

Hold me.

He puts his arm around her.

CARINNE

I had a dream – it scared me...

DAVID

Tell me.

CARINNE

You left me and I went searching for you.

She holds him and stares straight ahead as she tells the dream.

CARINNE

I was alone. I came to a lake. It was beautiful, covered with a blanket of fog. And though there was a light wind, the fog was still. The trees didn't move.

She motions with her hand as she tells the story.

CARINNE

And as I came to the shore of the lake, I saw you there. You were under the water. Calm, quiet.

He looks at her.

CARINNE

I was so happy I found you. But you weren't moving. I was scared.

DAVID

I'm right here.

CARINNE

I was scared you died before me and left me alone. I needed to stay asleep to join you. I couldn't reach you under the water. I needed to sleep...

She grips him tightly.

CARINNE

Promise me you won't leave without me.

DAVID

I won't leave you.

CARINNE

Take me with you... take me under the water...

He cradles her head.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING – DAVID'S SHARED OFFICE – DAY

David sits in his cubicle at the computer.

There's a knock at the door. Wendy opens the door and pops her head in.

He starts.

WENDY

Hey – ooo... did I scare you?

DAVID

No – a little – it – I was reading this story...

WENDY

From a student?

DAVID

Ye— no – former student...

WENDY

Spooky story?

DAVID

She re-worked the ending, and it's incoherent. Like crazy rambling – I don't know.

WENDY

That is creepy.

DAVID

It – that's where I was when you knocked.

WENDY

I was going to give you a hard time, but you look disturbed enough.

DAVID

A hard time?

WENDY

Well, a little birdie told me someone isn't perfect anymore.

DAVID

What?

WENDY

Richard mentioned you didn't get perfect student evaluations this time.

DAVID

He's not supposed to be telling you that.

WENDY

He and I are tight – friends in high places.

She points at herself.

DAVID

I should have a talk with him.

WENDY

Well, it's not like it was a disaster – from perfect to very good is still better than most everyone. Everyone except me that is.

DAVID

So competitive.

WENDY

I'm number one, I'm number one.

DAVID

You seem more like a number two to me right now.

She thinks about that for a second, then gives him a look.

She sticks her tongue out and pops out the door again.

He looks at the manuscript again. It's titled "Carinne's Story".

He is disturbed.

EXT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – PORCH – NIGHT

David walks up to his apartment door. It's dark inside.

He unlocks the door.

He opens the door and looks in.

He turns on the porch light and shafts of light stream in the blinds showing some of the living room.

He steps in.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

David enters the door.

The couch has been pushed out of the living room into the kitchen. The coffee table and the lamp are nowhere to be seen.

On the floor are all the pages of Carinne's manuscript laid out and covering the floor spreading out (or toward) a focal point at the end of the living room.

At the focal point of the pages on the floor is a lone, small chair, and in that chair, slumped over forward is Carinne.

DAVID

Carinne?

He can barely get her name out.

She doesn't move.

Then louder he speaks.

DAVID

Carinne?

He sees her barely sit up.

She doesn't turn as she speaks.

CARINNE

David? Have you come to be a witness?
Glance at me with your grey eyes?

DAVID

Carinne...

He takes off his shoes.

CARINNE

All my days are trances. All my days are
trances.

He steps carefully on the pages moving toward her.

DAVID

Are you...

CARINNE

All my days are trances. All my days are
trances.

He slowly moves up to her.

She sits, repeating those words, not looking toward him.

He is right behind her.

He comes around the side of the chair to see her.

He kneels down to look at her in the darkness.

She holds the gun aimed at her forehead.

She turns to look at him.

CARINNE

My love.

He drops to his knees.

DAVID

No...

CARINNE

I have heard it's better to put it in your
mouth, but the metal against my teeth is
bothersome.

She puts the barrel to her mouth.

CARINNE

If I do it wrong, I could shatter my teeth.

She puts the barrel to her temple.

CARINNE

I've read the temple is no good. More likely to live – and as a vegetable.

She puts it back to her forehead.

CARINNE

If I can hold it tight enough – if I can hold it tight enough – this way should work.

DAVID

No...

She starts to cry.

CARINNE

I'm so scared I'll screw this up, too – leave you with an invalid to clean up after.

DAVID

I'm not – no...

CARINNE

I don't want to mess this up for you – I want to get this right...

He breaks down crying.

DAVID

Carinne you're hurting me –

CARINNE

No – I don't want that –

DAVID

Please don't – don't take you away from me.

CARINNE

I didn't mean to – I just can't – I can't – it's too hard for me –

DAVID

Carinne –

CARINNE

I can't finish the way you want me to.

He reaches out to her.

DAVID

Carinne... I don't care about the story –
I just want you.

CARINNE

It's all I am. Please help me.

DAVID

Carinne...

CARINNE

Please – do it for me.

DAVID

-- no –

CARINNE

I wanted us to go together. I dreamed we
could...

DAVID

Carinne.

CARINNE

Do it – for me...

DAVID

Give me the gun.

She points it at him.

DAVID

Take me or give it to me.

He leans forward and closes his eyes.

He reaches with both hands and touches the barrel. He guides it to his forehead.

DAVID

Take me before you if you must.

CARINNE

My love...

He gently pulls the gun from her hand.

He puts it on the floor behind him.

She stares at the wall ahead of her.

CARINNE

Do you see it before us. The precipice.
And you hold me as I hang out over it. I
can fly over the edge if not for your
grasp.

She faces the wall and holds out her arms as wings.

He grabs her in her chair and holds her.

She stares at the wall.

She moans.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – BEDROOM – DAY

David sits up in bed and looks around. He's still wearing his clothes from the night before.

He's alone.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – DAY

David steps into the living room. The couch is back where it should be.

He looks around.

He sees the gun lying on the floor, papers swept up into a pile.

He's alone.

He sits quietly on the couch.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – KITCHEN – DAY

David is on his cell phone.

DAVID

Carinne Reynolds... yes... her middle
name... g— I don't know. Look – she

doesn't have any family... yes, yes I'm family – her only family.

He waits.

DAVID

Fine. Ok, so you don't think she's there. Fine. I'll try St. Vincent's. You've been remarkably unhelpful.

He hangs up.

He slams his fist onto the counter.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – BEDROOM – NIGHT

David is still wearing the same clothes from earlier, although by the facial hair, it's been a few days.

He is asleep.

He awakens as he hears scratching and rapping from the sliding glass door.

He slides out of bed cautiously.

DAVID

Carinne?

The curtains are drawn on the sliding glass door.

He walks up to them in the darkness.

He pulls them back quickly.

There is nothing and no one out there.

He opens the sliding door and steps out.

EXT. DARK STREET – NIGHT

David wanders along the street. He wears the same clothes and has no coat and no shoes on.

In an open field off the side of the road he sees what looks like a person wrapped in a white sheet lying in the field.

He walks out into the field slowly.

DAVID

Carinne!

He runs toward the sheet.

He nears it. It looks like someone lying motionless.

He is right on it.

He grabs at the sheet and pulls it back to reveal a mound of dirt.

He drops the sheet and looks around.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – BEDROOM – NIGHT

David is in bed asleep.

He wakes up to here footsteps on the carpeted floor. Then they stop.

He looks up to see Carinne standing in the bedroom doorway.

She is wet. He can't make out her face well in the darkness.

She's holding the gun at her side.

She lifts it up and points it to her head.

She pulls the trigger.

David wakes up with a start. She isn't there.

He jumps out of bed and turns on a small lamp in the room.

He quickly slams the bedroom door shut.

He quickly pulls the bed and throws it against the door to barricade it.

He quickly pushes the bed over to more effectively block the door.

He falls into a sitting position against the wall next to the door.

He gasps for air.

He pulls his legs up to his chest.

His eyes are wide and stare ahead.

He grips his temples.

He looks small in the room.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – DAVID'S OFFICE – NIGHT

David is sitting at his keyboard typing away quickly. He looks tired and disheveled but he continues to type.

He types the words:

“Greg sits at his keyboard creating her story again. No more sleep at night. He mustn't. Dark night can only bring visions of joy departed. Not a dream by day for a weary, broken heart, and in life and light he may find rest. In truth, he still searches for a clue from her.

He continues, tapping out the letters that he knows will conjure her; the words that will make her take form – make her live. Make her come back through his waiting door.

He senses that he's standing over a precipice. He calls to her: ‘is this the last time? Last time...’”

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – BEDROOM – NIGHT

David wakes up upon hearing something. He looks terrible as though he's been up for days and hasn't really slept.

He looks toward the sliding glass door.

Carinne is there. She's in a white sheet. She has a content look on her face. She motions to him.

He reaches out his hand into the darkness. He reaches toward her.

EXT. LAKESIDE – DAY

David walks through a grove of trees toward a lake.

He looks disheveled. The lake looks beautiful.

He's on the edge of the lake.

He kneels down and looks into the water.

He sees his reflection and nothing more.

He looks across the lake.

DAVID
Where are you?

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – BEDROOM – DAY

David wakes up. He's in bed and he looks disheveled.

He rolls out of bed.

He staggers.

The gun is next to the bed on a nightstand.

He stares at it.

The gun is waiting for him.

He stares at it.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – KITCHEN – DAY

David is on his phone. He looks disheveled.

DAVID

I didn't expect to get your voice mail. I don't know why.

He pauses.

DAVID

Look – I just sent you something I wrote. Please – could you read it and talk to me about it? Thanks. Bye.

He puts the phone down.

ACT 3

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Wendy sits next to David on the couch. David is somewhat disheveled.

Wendy is reading a manuscript. She's on the last page.

She flips to the title page.

It's titled "Carinne".

A dedication is at the bottom of the page: "To Carinne 'For her soul gives me sigh for sigh'"

WENDY

Wow. I thought it best that I read the ending again with you here.

David watches at her.

WENDY

I know you better now. Thank you for sharing this with me.

DAVID

A wise person once told me that you can know everything about the writer through the lines on their pages.

WENDY

I read that nugget of wisdom in these pages, too. True, all true. For inspired writers anyway.

DAVID

Thank you for taking the time to go through it.

WENDY

My pleasure – "pleasure", is that the word?

He gives a half smile.

DAVID

Well...?

WENDY

Powerful. Great, actually.

DAVID

But...?

WENDY

I had real trouble empathizing with the Carinne character. Greg was right – it's selfish.

David nods.

WENDY

I like this Terrie person. I have an odd affinity for her. I wonder why.

DAVID

I hope you're flattered by it.

WENDY

Yes – that's exactly how I took it after I got over the initial shock. Thank you by the way. I come off smart and sensitive. You were very good to me.

DAVID

Of course. I value you very much.

She holds up the manuscript.

WENDY

This story though – it cuts off in the middle of a thought – it's not finished.

DAVID

I know.

WENDY

What do you think happened to Carinne?

DAVID

I don't know. She could have run off – she could have... I don't know.

WENDY

She was headed to -- bad ending.

DAVID

I know.

WENDY

When stray dogs are sick they will often go off and be alone to die.

DAVID

Yeah.

WENDY

I'm sorry – I didn't mean to say – just an observation.

Pause.

DAVID

I can't finish this. I don't know how.

WENDY

I think I know how the story ends.

DAVID

I don't – please tell me.

WENDY

This Greg character in your story. He's not prone to irrationality. He's not like Carinne.

DAVID

No, I guess not.

WENDY

I think she's a lesson for him.

DAVID

Yes... How?

WENDY

I think you know how.

David shakes his head.

He begins crying.

She hugs him.

DAVID

I miss her.

Pause.

WENDY

But you'll be Ok.

DAVID

Really?

WENDY

Because I said so.

He smiles.

She takes his hand in hers.

She smiles.

WENDY

And the ending...

DAVID

Yes?

WENDY

Here's how it ends...

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING - CLASSROOM - DAY

David walks into the classroom. 24 NEW STUDENTS are in the class. He carries a folder of papers.

He is enthusiastic.

DAVID

You all look like you're in a good mood.

Some students acknowledge.

DAVID

Which tells me you're ready for the
writer's post mortem!

He holds up the folder.

Some students groan.

DAVID

And nothing speaks post mortem like a
little Poe to ponder. "All that we see or
seem is but a dream within a dream."

FADE OUT