

"SAM I AM"

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HARTFORD HOUSE - PORCH - DAY

Rests a thinking man's three-story, eleven thousand square foot dream home of gables, bricks, brackets, and balconies. Twenty-five rooms in all.

Here, on its elongated porch stands...

SAM CLEMENS, age 49, an American scribbler.

SUPER: "Hartford House. 1885."

At his feet sits his family, the Clemenses:

LIVY, his dainty, yet strong-willed wife, age 39.

SUSY, Sam's eldest daughter and favorite, age 13.

CLARA, the over-shadowed, middle-child, age 11.

JEAN, the baby, is an adorable little girl with long dark curls. A big white bow holds her hair on top, age 5.

Livy edits Sam's manuscript as the three girls observe over their mother's narrow shoulders.

Sam starts to pace.

LIVY
Tsk. Tsk. Tsk.

SAM
What?

Livy pencils out a paragraph.

LIVY
Sheer indulgence.

SUSY
Whoops!

SAM
What you doin' there?

LIVY
Girls, what does Momma always say?

GIRLS
When in doubt...

LIVY
Strike it out!

Livy crosses out another paragraph.

Sam grimaces. Aghast, he searches for sympathy upon his children's faces yet finds none.

SAM
Dear woman, I bring you no ill
will. Yet, each strike from your
pencil is like a thick leather whip
cross my bare back.

Livy grins and Xes out more.

LIVY
Smack! Sam, how does that feel?

SAM
Livy?!?

CLARA
Yikes.

Jean looks up at Sam all sad.

JEAN
Uh-oh.

SAM
Girls! There's a sparkle of
sadistic glee in your Momma's eyes.
As if, my pain causes her great
satisfaction.

Livy crosses out another paragraph. Then, she looks up and eyes her husband.

LIVY
I thought you knew that about me?

SAM
Susy. Jean. Clara. Children... must
we remind Momma who I am?

SUSY
America's Shakespeare!

CLARA
A celebrity.

JEAN
My Pa!

Sam scoops up Jean.

SAM
True, I am all of the above.

Sam tickles her hard.

JEAN
Stop that Papa!

Sam does.

SAM
If I must...

Sam squeezes Jean.

Jean whispers into his ear.

JEAN
I think Momma likes it.

LIVY
Don't feed into him children. His
vanity does not require it.

Livy finishes the manuscript. In character, she reads aloud
and acts out Sam's written words.

LIVY (CONT'D)
(as Jim)
*Nemmine why, Huck. But ya Pa ain't
comin' back no mo.*

The children draw closer and closer.

SAM
(as Huck)
Why, Jim?

LIVY
(as Jim)
*Doan' you 'member de house dat was
float'n down the river?*

SAM
(as Huck)
Ya.

LIVY
(as Jim)
*En dey wuz a man in dah, kivered
up...*

SAM
 (as Huck)
What man?

LIVY
 (as Jim)
En I went in en unkivered him.

SAM
 (as Huck)
You didn't let me come in.

LIVY
 (as Jim)
Kase dat wuz him, ya Pa. Stone cold. Hmm?

SAM
 Well?

Sam waits for his muse's approval.

Livy ponders.

SAM (CONT'D)
 First thoughts?

LIVY
 Hmm.

Sam swallows hard.

SAM
 Any thoughts?!?

LIVY
 It's brilliant...

SAM
 Yet?

SUSY
 Uh-oh!

Sam starts to pace the stoop.

LIVY
 A few insignificant changes and the story will flow so much better.

SAM
 Ahh! That.

Sam waves his hand as if swatting down a fly.

SAM (CONT'D)

Details.

LIVY

The difference between the almost right word, dear, and the right word is a large matter. 'Tis the difference between good and great.

SAM

Is it tiresome to be so right, all of the time?

Livy caresses the cover of the manuscript with her tiny fingers. The title page reads, The Adventures of Huck Finn.

LIVY

Sam, you have a true gift of breathing hellfire into your characters. They are so flawed, wrong, and alive.

CLARA

Is it good, Momma?

SUSY

Of course it is, silly. Papa wrote it.

Sam pats the head of his eldest daughter.

SAM

Thank you, child.

CLARA

I mean... Will people like it enough to buy it?

SAM

Is that important to you, Clara?

LIVY

Girls, your father wants it both ways. He wants to awe his critics and his fans.

SAM

So!

LIVY

Samuel Clemens, it is more important if the story rings truth.

SAM

Does it?

Livy taps her finger on her husband's pen-name, Mark Twain.

LIVY

It does. Or as Huck would put it,
human beings can be awful cruel to
one another.

(beat)

Sam gazes down at the woman he loves.

SAM

Some more than others.

The front door opens as...

KATY LEARY appears, 29, a sturdy first generation Irish-American, who is a loyal family servant.

KATY

Dinner.

LIVY

Thank you, Katy. We will continue
this conversation later.

Katy nods and leaves.

Sam offers his wife a hand up.

SAM

Your righteousness, can I be of
assistance?

LIVY

How gentlemanly of you.

Their children GIGGLE at their play-acting.

LIVY (CONT'D)

Now girls. Watch out for boys like
this one.

SUSY

Why Momma?

LIVY

Their vanity shall be their
downfall.

Sam tugs up his wife.

SAM
True, impertinence.

He hugs Livy hard. Then, he whispers in her ear.

SAM (CONT'D)
I love you.

Livy pushes him off and gathers their children.

She and the three girls head inside the house.

Sam stands back and watches.

SAM (CONT'D)
Mrs. Clemens, come back here...
with my heart.

Susy turns.

SUSY
Papa, you can have mine.

SAM
Thank you, dear.

Livy nods down at her daughter. Then, she looks back at Sam.

LIVY
There is love in this house, isn't
there?

The three girls hold hands as they enter into...

THE ENTRANCE HALL

Their mother follows them in.

ON THE STOOP

Sam stands still now... alone.

The large, brown wooden front door CLOSES behind him.

SOUND: CLICK.

Sam, looks content with his present world. He turns out
towards his groomed, picture-perfect grounds. Proudly, he
grasps his lapels and stares out to what is his.

SAM
Hmm... I reckon I'm the luckiest man
alive.

Livy appears bent over in a nearby window.

LIVY
You coming, luv? Our suppah' is
getting cold.

EXT. HARTFORD HOUSE - LATER DAY

The red-bricked monstrosity looms in the background as Livy
storms across the front yard.

SUPER: "Four years later..."

LIVY
I'm going to kill him.

SUPER: "Hartford House. 1889."

Livy climbs the porch and enters her home.

INT. HARTFORD HOUSE - ENTRANCE HALL - SAME TIME

Livy slices between CONSTRUCTION PEOPLE and SERVANTS that
hold up flowers, fabrics, and correspondence.

She sees beyond these people to GEORGE, their butler.

LIVY
Where's Sam, George?

George points with his head.

GEORGE
On the kitchen phone, Mrs. Clemens.

Livy nods and cuts into...

THE DINING ROOM

Katy and other SERVANTS lift the long dining room table.

KATY
One. Two. Three. Lift!

The staff moves the large table closer to the wall.

LIVY
Katy, what's all the fuss?

KATY
We're getting ready for tonight's
performance.

Livy notices a small stage is being constructed in the
drawing room.

LIVY
Ah, yes. Susy's play.

KATY
They're rather good.

Livy nods.

From the drawing room, in a huff, Clara, now 15, approaches.

Livy raises her hand and motions her to stop.

LIVY
Later, Clara. I need a word with
your father first.

Clara stops and pouts.

CLARA
Fine!

Livy storms into...

THE KITCHEN.

The COOK and KITCHEN STAFF prepares the day's supper.

Sam is in the corner on the telephone in mid-conversation.

SAM
Paige. You know I'm just an Old
River Rat.

LIVY
(to the staff, overly
polite)
May I have a word with my husband,
please?

The staff look to one another then flees.

Sam notices Livy's state as she picks up two long knives from
the nearby block table.

Livy examines them hard. Then, she jabs and thrusts the
blades into the air.

LIVY (CONT'D)

Ah! Ah!

SAM

Uh-oh. Livy is here. And her actions give me a chill. Can I call you back?

Sam hangs up and pushes his back against the wall.

SAM (CONT'D)

Hi, honey.

LIVY

When were you going to tell me?

SAM

About what?

LIVY

My money.

SAM

So, you've been to the bank?

LIVY

My personal accounts have been emptied. My inheritance is gone.

SAM

Not gone, luv. Re-invested.

Livy starts to shake as she looks at the knives.

LIVY

I better put these down.

She does.

LIVY (CONT'D)

Re-invested! In what now?

SAM

It's a sure thing.

LIVY

Put it back.

SAM

I don't think I can.

Livy slams down her tiny hand hard atop the block table.

SOUND: SMACK!

LIVY
Put it back!

SAM
But...

LIVY
Sam, I'm tired of your get rich
quick schemes.
(motions with her hands)
Come here.

Sam does, one small step at a time, like a small child afraid
of receiving his punishment.

SAM
Remember, my huckleberry. The house
is full of witnesses. Don't do
anything rash.

Livy caresses Sam's cheek with the back of her hand.

LIVY
Don't worry. I won't.

Then, with cat-like speed, she yanks Sam's moustache hard.

SAM
Ow!!!

Sam uses his fingertips to make sure his moustache is still
there and attached.

SAM (CONT'D)
That hurt.

Livy turns and storms out of the kitchen.

LIVY
Good. Call Paige. I want back my
money!

George appears in a narrow doorway.

Sam sees him and shrugs his shoulders.

SAM
Women.

George shakes his head and turns around.

INT. HARTFORD HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR LANDING - LATER

Sam sneaks up the stairs.

From nowhere, Clara appears. She startles her father.

SAM
Great Jupiter's ghost!

CLARA
Hi, Papa.

SAM
Oh, hi sweet child.

Sam nervously looks around the second floor.

SAM (CONT'D)
Is Momma around?

CLARA
Downstairs.

Sam relaxes.

SAM
Good.

CLARA
You in the doghouse again?

SAM
Looks that way, child. Come, let's
talk.

He sits in a wooden bench built into the wall. Then, pats the
wood beside him.

SAM (CONT'D)
Sit for a spell.

Clara does.

SAM (CONT'D)
You excited about tonight?

CLARA
Hmm. I like the acting. But I never
get the best parts in Susy's plays.

SAM
Then, you should write some of your
own stuff. You, as the star.

CLARA
Sure. I can do that!

SAM
Of course you can.

Clara bursts up.

CLARA
I better get to it.

Clara hurries down the stairs.

SAM
Sound advice. Get writing. Hmm.

Sam looks up to the third floor.

SAM (CONT'D)
I don't mind if I do. Besides, I
need to find a good place to
shelter up.

Sam pops up and climbs the steps to...

THE THIRD FLOOR

As he approaches his writing slash billiard room, he hears a
loud CRACK! coming from within.

INT. BILLIARD ROOM - SAME TIME

Sam slowly opens the door and peers in.

Susy, now 17, plays pool.

SAM
Hey girl!

SUSY
Hi, Pa.

Susy lines up her next shoot.

SAM
Mind if I join you?

SOUND: CRACK!

SUSY
Nope.

The cue ball bounces off two bumpers. Then, it drops the ball Susy was aiming at in the side pocket.

SUSY (CONT'D)
Though, you know, I like to win.

Sam grabs a pool stick from the wall and examines its straightness as he raises it like a lance.

SAM
As do I, child. As do I.

SUSY
Good. Small wager then?

SAM
Our normal bet?

SUSY
Deal. I will rack them.

Susy does. Then, she takes a bill from her pocket and lays it flat on the table's edge.

SUSY (CONT'D)
Here's my fiver.

SAM
A fellow River Rat.

Sam liberates a fiver from his wallet and slams it down hard on the table.

SAM (CONT'D)
Let's see what you got.

POOL SHARK MONTAGE:

- A) Susy breaks up the colored balls with great velocity.
- B) She makes shot after shot.
- C) Sam reacts to every made shot.
- D) Susy lines up the eight ball.
- E) Sam chalks his stick.

SAM (CONT'D)
I despise being hustled.

SUSY
I learned from the best.

SAM
Perhaps... but there's no need to
run the table on your old man.

SUSY
I like to win.

Susy purposely misses.

SUSY (CONT'D)
Damn.

SAM
I will accept your pity.

Sam lines up his shot.

SUSY
Who's Sieur Louis de Conte?

Sam misses his first shot.

SAM
Mother...

SUSY
Pa!

SAM
You been snooping around here,
girl?

Sam looks back to his writing desk in the corner.

SUSY
Why Joan of Arc? You're an Anti-
Catholic. You hate the French.
Yet...

SAM
I want to write a book about a
French-Catholic-Martyr?

SUSY
Yes.

SAM
Joan is different. By far, the most
extraordinary person the human race
has ever produced. A fascinating
character.

SUSY
Normally, you've trouble writing
women.

Sam CHUCKLES.

SAM
Well, I based her traits on
someone, close. Someone, I cherish.

Susy HITS her last shot and the eight ball drops into the
corner pocket. Then, she scoops up the money.

SUSY
I thought I liked her.

EXT. HARTFORD HOUSE - BILLIARD ROOM'S BALCONY - LATER

Sam prepares a cigar. As he STRIKES his match, he sees...

REV. JOSEPH H. TWICHELL, an old family friend, mid-40s, as he
travels down the street.

SAM
Joe!

Sam hurries through his home and down his stairs. He starts
to sing, Battle Hymn Of The Republic.

SAM (CONT'D)
*Mine eyes I have seen the glory of
the coming of the Lord.*

Sam reaches the first floor.

Livy is waiting for him.

LIVY
My Mississippi River Rat... Where
do you think you're going?

Sam flies straight by her.

SAM
*He's trampling out the vintage
where the grapes of wrath are
stored.*

LIVY
Sam. You're impossible.

SAM
I need a word with the man who wed
us!

LIVY
Poor Joe.

EXT. HARTFORD HOUSE - PORCH - SAME TIME

Sam emerges from his home.

Rev. Joseph H. Twichell is across the street. He sees Sam but continues on.

SAM
Joe!

Joe quickens his pace.

Sam crosses the street in a rush to cut off Joe.

SAM (CONT'D)
Joe!

Sam cuts him off.

SAM (CONT'D)
Forgive me! Reverend Joseph
Twichell of the Asylum...
Congregational Church.

Joe stops. He wears a broad mischievous smile.

JOE
Ahh, yes. Sam Clemens, a cherished
member of my flock. I thought you
were dead.

SAM
Rumors of my death have been
greatly exaggerated.

JOE
So it must be my sermons?

SAM
I've only missed a few Sundays.

JOE
A few?!? It's not wise to lie to a
man of god.

SAM
Joe, sometimes I think you're worse
than me. And I'm abominable.

JOE
So, what's all the fuss?

SAM
Susy's new play is today.

JOE
Is it?

Joe pulls out his pocket watch.

JOE (CONT'D)
What time?

SAM
Seven bells.

JOE
Harmony and I will be there.

SAM
I'll save both of you a seat.

Joe nods his thanks and moves on.

Sam crosses the street halfway and turns back to Joe.

SAM (CONT'D)
You know Joe... I mean Reverend
Twichell.

Joe turns.

SAM (CONT'D)
There's more than a pinch of
showmen in you.

JOE
Well, a good friend of mine once
told me... No sinner is ever saved
after the first twenty minutes of a
sermon.

SAM/JOE
So, it's best to stretch them out.

Sam nods and takes a deep low bow. Then, he pops up.

SAM
See you tonight, Joe!

Joe waves back with his hat.

JOE

Looking forward to it, Sam. I hope
to see you once again in church!

Sam waves back to Joe as he walks away.

SAM

Some day!

Sam heads to his home when he sees Jean, now 9, through the
Conservatory's glass.

She's dressed as Cupid.

SAM (CONT'D)

Jean, the play isn't for hours yet.

INT. HARTFORD HOUSE - CONSERVATORY - SAME TIME

Sam enters a room of framed glass, lush green ferns and a
small running fountain. The room appears as a slice from a
dark tropical rain forest.

Jean knees before the fountain. She uses its rippling water
as a pseudo mirror.

SAM

Jean, what you doing all alone in
the Jungle? You on some Tiger hunt?

JEAN

Nope. Just practicing my lines.

SAM

In costume? The play isn't for
hours, child.

JEAN

I can't make any mistakes.

SAM

The day's imperfections are what
matter the most.

JEAN

No. No. No. Susy won't like that at
all. Last time...

SAM

Jean. You be you. Kind and caring.

JEAN
But Susy.

SAM
Jean. Tonight you will be
surrounded by friends and family.
All of whom, adore you. Especially
Susy.

JEAN
Really?

SAM
Really.

JEAN
Papa?

SAM
Yes, girl.

JEAN
Why is it that Susy and Clara are
so smart. So special, and I'm not?

Jean's eyes focus on the floor.

Sam uses the tip of his fingers to raise up Jean's chin.

SAM
You are perfectly made.

JEAN
I am?

Sam nods his agreement.

SAM
God and I shook on it.

JEAN
Is that one of your tall tales?

SAM
Nope! Now, what about us focusing
on that Tiger Hunt?

Sam lowers and gets on all fours.

Jean hops on his back.

JEAN
Ride!

SAM
Aw!! Girl, what did you have for
lunch?

JEAN
Shh, Pa. We're completely
surrounded by man-eating tigers.

Sam with Jean on his back crawls into the deep foliage.

SAM
Well, then, we better be gettin'.

INT. HARTFORD HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - LATER NIGHT

A packed house watches the opening night of A Love Chase.

The cast stands on the stage. The dining room's blood red
curtains are drawn and loom in the background.

Sam sits next to Livy. He holds her hand tight. They watch
their children perform in wonderment and delight.

At the end of the play, the room of friends and family reacts
with thunderous APPLAUSE and get a standing ovation.

Joe and his wife, HARMONY, clap their hands and nod their
approval of the play to the Clemens.

Sam nods back with pride.

SAM
That was rather good.

LIVY
They're growing up way too fast.

Livy leans into Sam.

Sam leans into Livy.

SAM
Kisses?

Livy coughs hard.

Sam offers her a drink.

SAM (CONT'D)
You alright?

LIVY
Yeah, just a tickle in the throat
is all. Kisses makes everything
better.

Nearby, ignites the white powder from a tri-pod camera.

SOUND: POOF!

Woof. The camera captures the cast members of A Love Chase.
Their black and white image frames the screen. Forever now,
captured in time.

INT. HARTFORD HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - MONTHS LATER NIGHT

Sam in his striped pajamas stands before his bed of ornate
angels he and Livy purchased in Europe. He detaches a wooden
angel from one of its posts.

SUPER: "Months later..."

SAM
I have been on the verge of being
an angel all my life. Hmm.

Sam replaces the wooden angel back to the post.

SAM (CONT'D)
On the verge.

Livy enters in her night wear. Her eyes are swollen and red.
She's been crying.

LIVY
Well, it's all gone.

SAM
I know.

Livy stands at a long distance to her husband.

LIVY
Sam, you promised.

SAM
I did. I just never thought...

LIVY
We are ruined. We must sell the
house.

SAM
No, Pond has offered a solution.

LIVY
That showman!?! What now?

SAM
A world tour.

LIVY
A world tour? Of course.

SAM
Seventy-one cities, on four
different continents.

LIVY
Seventy-one?

SAM
Yep. In a year, we're as good as
new.

LIVY
One year? Sam.. the children. Their
schooling? Their friends?

SAM
Seeing the world is a much better
education on a young mind.

She coughs hard. She starts to wheeze.

SAM (CONT'D)
You alright?

LIVY
Yeah. Just worn down by the gossip.

SAM
Pond thinks this tour will spark
book sales.

Livy slaps down her foot.

LIVY
Don't.

SAM
Don't what?

LIVY
Place a rosy lining on this.

Sam stares away.

SAM
What I did, I did for our family.

Livy tears up.

LIVY
No... you didn't. You did it because
you think you're smarter than
everyone else.

SAM
I never said...

LIVY
Sam!?!

Livy coughs some more.

LIVY (CONT'D)
I deserve to be mad. And you will
not rob me of this emotion.

SAM
Rose bud. You're right.

Livy points at Sam.

LIVY
And you deserve to feel awful about
your deceitful actions.

Sam looks down at his feet.

LIVY (CONT'D)
I'm going to go sleep downstairs.

Livy leaves.

Sam sits down on the edge of his bed and speaks to the wooden
angel on the bedpost.

SAM
I'm fallen in her eyes now. Why am
I so damn stubborn? Hmm.

INT. HARTFORD HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - LATER DAY

Sam sits in a sheet-covered sofa. Around him, the household
staff covers wood furniture with big white sheets.

Joe wanders in.

JOE
We're going to miss you, Sam.

SAM
I shall miss your sermons.

JOE
Hmm.

SAM
Ahh.. Joe. How are the church
coffers?

JOE
Sam, the royalties from your books
made you rich. Livy's inheritance
made you rich. How has it come to
this?

SAM
Easy come.

JOE
Easy go?

SAM
Oh, we're just shutting down our
dream home until after the world
tour. Saves us some money.

JOE
Yeah.

SAM
What's with the long face Joe. I'm
not destitute yet. One must
remember, I come from a long line
of failed men.

JOE
On this world tour, Sam. You need
to soul search. Ask yourself why
you found it necessary to
jeopardize the health and well-
being of everyone that loves you.

SAM
Pick'n you up a souvenir would be
much easier task.

JOE
Soul Search, Sam! Make it right
with Livy.

SAM
Hmm. I shall try. Thanks for
stopping over, Joe.

Joe goes to leave. Then, he stops.

JOE
Sam?

SAM
Yes, Joe. This sermon on sin is not
yet over?

JOE
The Devil's weapons are pride,
envy, gluttony, and...

SAM
Greed.

Sam clears his throat.

SAM (CONT'D)
Don't you worry about me. I'll be
back on top!

Joe walks out. He reaches the foyer.

JOE (O.S.)
That's your pride talking!

EXT. HARTFORD - TRAIN PLATFORM - LATER DAY

Sam and Livy walk to their awaiting train.

Mr. POND, the world tour's manager greets them.

POND
Mrs. Clemens.

Pond nods his hat and bows.

LIVY
Mr. Pond.

POND
History awaits.

Pond nods to Sam. Then, he leaves to board the train.

LIVY
I don't trust him.

POND
He's our golden goose, imagine him
laying a big fat...

Livy cuts him off.

LIVY
Enough.

Livy moves to the train without speaking another word.

SAM
Hmm. There was a time when Mother
used to enjoy my tall tales.

Then, Susy appears amongst the boarding passengers.

Sam's spirits brighten.

SAM (CONT'D)
Susy!

Susy rushes to her father and gives him a much needed hug.

SAM (CONT'D)
I wish you were coming with us,
dear.

SUSY
I don't.

SAM
What? Why? You would get to see the
world.

SUSY
Yes... the world... from the seat
of a train, steamer or trolley car.

SAM
It's still the world.

Susy reads from the Clemens' travel itinerary.

SUSY
Your itinerary includes... An around
the world tour, one-hundred and
twenty-two shows in seventy-one
cities, in Australia, New Zealand,
India, South Africa. Timbuktu.

SAM
Timbuktu!?!?

Sam grabs the itinerary.

SAM (CONT'D)
Aye, you got me girl.

SUSY
Why so grand?

SAM
I have substantial debts that need
my attention.

Clara appears surrounded by porters carrying her large
leather bags. Clara waves to them.

SUSY
At least, you will have Clara to
take my place.

Sam eyes Susy.

Susy eyes Sam.

The two share a laugh at Clara's expense.

SUSY (CONT'D)
She's always has been an over
packer.

SAM
She gets that from my mother.

SOUND: STEAM WHISTLE blows.

SUSY
Time for you to board. Now,
remember to take care of Momma.

SAM
Watch over Jean.

SUSY
I will. She's turned into the most
interesting creature.

SAM
She's so pure. Good hearted.

SUSY
She is.

Sam boards the train. Before he reaches the steps, he hears.

SUSY (CONT'D)
Restore our family to greatness,
Mr. Clemens.

SAM
I shall squeeze ever last dollar
out of this trip, dear.

Susy goes to him, and grabs him by his lapels.

SUSY
No. Not that. Write. Not as the
caricature slash con man of Mark
Twain. Write as the pure and un-
paralleled genius of Samael
Langhorne Clemens.

Sam is visibly shaken as his eyes full with tears.

SAM
Is this my pep talk?

SUSY
Pa, I will always be proud of you.
No matter what.

Tears stream down Sam's cheeks.

SAM
You may wish to share those
sediments with your mother.

SUSY
No.

SAM
No?

SUSY
I told her this was your penitence
not hers. I asked her to stay home
with Jean and I.

SAM
You did?

Sam sees his wife through the train's open window as Livy
moves down the aisle to take her seat.

SAM (CONT'D)
She's quite a woman, isn't she?

SUSY
It's not too late to win her back.

SAM
Sound advice. How did you get so
bright.

SUSY
Mother.

Sam grins as he boards his train. As he takes his sit, he
sees Susy still standing on the platform. He moves to a
window and sticks his big head of hair out.

The train's engine comes to life in a cloud of steam. The
noise is deafening.

SAM
I love you, girl!

Susy smiles, as she stops and turns back.

Sam waves as the train starts to depart.

Susy rushes to the very end of the platform.

SUSY
I love you too, Pa!!

Sam nods his appreciation.

SUSY (CONT'D)
Now, get!!!

Steam pours out of the train engine's chimney.

INT. WORLD TOUR STAGE - LATER NIGHT

Sam stands on a spotlighted stage as he smokes and talks.
He's all dressed up in his white cashmere suit.

SAM
If voting made any difference, they
wouldn't let us do it.

Note: Pause different camera angle.

SAM (CONT'D)
Sometimes I wonder whether the
world is being run by smart people
who are putting us on, or by
imbeciles who really mean it.

Note: Pause different camera angle.

SAM (CONT'D)
To succeed in life, you need two
things, ignorance and confidence.

Sam blows a big cloud of cigar smoke at the CAMERA.

EXT. CRUISE SHIP - MAMALA BAY - NIGHT

In the distance lays the lights of Honolulu. To the right,
the steep cliffs of Diamond Head jets up from the ocean.

EXT. CRUISE SHIP - DECK - MAMALA BAY - SAME

Sam in a tux appears with two folding chairs in hand. With
great difficulty, he sets both up.

SAM
Damn things should come with an
instruction manual.

Livy appears in a fine dining dress.

LIVY
Sam. Those chairs getting the
better of you?

Sam steps aside. Both folding chairs are laid out and face
the ocean and Honolulu.

SAM
I showed them who's boss. May I
offer you a seat?

Livy grabs Sam's hand and cautiously takes her seat.

LIVY
Hoo. These wooden contraptions have
minds of their own.

Sam sits as the chair MOANS.

SAM
It's beautiful, isn't it?

LIVY
Enchanting.

SAM
Though, it's changed.

LIVY
Who hasn't?

Sam looks to Livy.

SAM
You.

LIVY
You forget, I am impervious to your charms.

SAM
Are you?

Sam looks out to the distance.

SAM (CONT'D)
Livy. I am sorry.

LIVY
I know.

SAM
Poor men always feel the need to prove themselves.

LIVY
Why?

SAM
I don't understand it myself. Me, like my characters are so flawed, so self-absorbed, so...

LIVY
Broken?

Sam nods.

LIVY (CONT'D)
Samuel Clemens, look at everything the world has given you. Fame. Family, and me.

SAM
I know. Yet, I feel to be such a failure.

LIVY
Failure?!? How?

SAM
You're my muse. My Calliope. The only critic I care about.

LIVY

And?

SAM

Something died in your eyes for me
with the bankruptcy.

LIVY

I care less about the money we
lost, Sam. But, the deceit?

SAM

I know. Before we left Hartford,
Joe warned me about the Seven Sins.

Livy leans her head closer to Sam's.

LIVY

Did he say anything about Grace?

Livy kisses Sam hard on the lips. Then, she stops and pulls
back. She eyes him hard.

LIVY (CONT'D)

Grace is offering an undeserving
forgiveness.

SAM

Would you?

LIVY

I know you have always put me up on
a pedestal, Sam. I too, are like
you. Frail, flawed, and broken.
When our baby boy died...

SAM

Sweet Langdon.

LIVY

A piece of me died with him.

SAM

He was such a darling child. His
big cubby cheeks.

LIVY

Sam, we are not long for this
world. All we have is TRUST in each
other, and the love from the
children we've created.

SAM
Olivia Langdon Clemens... I love
you with all my heart!

Livy moves in for another kiss.

LIVY
You Old River Rat, you better.

INT. THEATRE STAGE - NIGHT

Sam stands in the light on a darken stage.

SAM
Though I would like to see my old
ancestor, Satan. I have no special
regard for Satan, but I think I can
claim to have no prejudice against
him. May even be that I lean a
little his way on account of his
not having a fair show. All
religions issue bibles against him
and say the most injurious things
about him. But we never hear his
side. We have only the evidence for
the prosecution. And yet, we have
rendered the verdict. Now to my
mind this is irregular. It is un-
English. It is un-American. It is
French.

The CROWD erupts in LAUGHTER.

SAM (CONT'D)
I've heard a good deal all my life
about heaven and hell. And as near
as I can figure it, if a man goes
to heaven he will put in all his
time improving himself. He will
study and study and study and
progress and progress and progress
and if that isn't hell I don't know
what is.

The CROWD erupts in LAUGHTER.

SAM (CONT'D)
Well that California get-rich-quick
disease of my youth spread like
wildfire.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

It produced a civilization which has destroyed the simplicity and repose of life, its poetry, its soft, romantic dreams and visions and replaced them with a money fever, sordid ideals, vulgar ambitions and a sleep which does not refresh. It has created a thousand useless luxuries and turned them into necessities and satisfied nothing. It has dethroned God and set up a shekel in His place. Oh the dreams of our youth, how beautiful they are and how perishable.

The crowd looks at one another and ponders.

Sam senses the need to change the direction. He pulls out his cigar and lights it. He deeply inhales.

SAM (CONT'D)

Man is really the most interesting jackass there is.

(nod to Hal Holbrook)

EXT. SOUTHAMPTON STATION, ENGLAND - LATER DAY

In a cloud of steam, the Clemens' train arrives.

Sam and Livy depart. Hand in hand, they talk and walk down the platform once again in love.

SUPER: "August. 1896."

Livy looks stunning.

SAM

The tour was more successful than imagined. We will be able to pay back our creditors... dollar for dollar.

LIVY

Good. For I'm ready for home.

SAM

Me too, luv. Me too.

A MESSENGER appears amongst the departing passengers.

MESSENGER

Mr. Twain?

SAM

Yes.

The messenger hands him a telegram. Then, he leaves them with a snap of the heels and a nod.

LIVY

What is it? Another message from the Queen?

SAM

No. Susy.

Livy reacts.

LIVY

What does she have to say?

SAM

She's not well.

LIVY

Not well!?!

EXT. STEAMER SHIP - DAYS LATER NIGHT

A deeply worried Livy and Clara gaze out to sea as the ship they are on heads back to America.

SAM (V.O.)

Livy and Clara sailed back the very next day.

EXT. STEAMER SHIP - GANGPLANK - LATER DAY

Livy and Clara hurry down the gangplank.

At its bottom waits Joe in a dark suit with his hat in hands. His eyes are swollen and red for he's been crying.

Livy's knees buckle.

LIVY

Dear God. Susy's gone.

SAM (V.O.)

Hmm. It is one of the mysteries of our nature that a man or woman, all unprepared, can receive a thunder-stroke like that and live.

(MORE)

SAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The last thirteen days of Susy's life were spent in our own house in Hartford, the home of her childhood and always the dearest place in the earth to her. About her she had faithful friends, family, good ole' Reverend Joe. All had known her from her cradle and who had come a long journey to be with her. But not me. No. I was elsewhere.

EXT. FLORENCE, ITALY - FUTURE DAY

Italian theme music plays over a series of images from Florence. Each shot covers the various locations the characters shall stroll through. The last shot is the imposing façade of Santa Croce Church.

SUPER: "Florence, 1904. Eight years later."

INT. SANTA CROCE CHURCH - DAY

Walks a TOUR GUIDE before Michelangelo's Grave near the Crucifixion and Dante's Cenotaph.

In tow is a large group of AMERICAN TOURISTS led by an Italian TOUR GUIDE with slicked back hair.

TOUR GUIDE

Form an orderly line. We will all get a chance to see the Old Masters.

Sam and Joe stroll by. Wearing fashionable suits, they slice through the long serpentine line of tourists.

A COUPLE at the end gawks.

WIFE

Was that Mark Twain?

Husband stares at the back of the white, bushy-haired man as he heads toward the restroom.

HUSBAND

Nah. What would he be doing here?

INT. SANTA CROCE CHURCH - RESTROOM - SAME

Stands SAM CLEMENS, now 67, America's foremost author and humorist. Under his pen name of MARK TWAIN, he's one of the world's most prominent celebrities.

Though, time has made him bitter.

Before him now is a long porcelain trove.

He PISSES.

SAM

Ahhhhh!

Yellow urine hits the white porcelain trove.

Sam's eyes shift from the trove to the CAMERA. A sly, little smile crawls across his hairy lips.

SAM (CONT'D)

Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, the only earthly certainty is oblivion.

Sam finishes up and gives the CAMERA a wink.

REVEREND JOSEPH TWICHELL, Joe is now 65, Sam's lifelong friend stands at another trove. He has yet to start.

Sam looks over at him.

SAM (CONT'D)

Anything more than two shakes, Joe, means your just playing with it?

JOE

Huh. Sam, my bladder has its own mind.

SAM

Joys of advanced age.

Sam moves to the sink to wash his hands.

SAM (CONT'D)

I find singing helps.

Sam starts to sing, Battle Hymn Of The Republic.

SAM (CONT'D)

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

SAM/JOE
*He's trampling out the vintage
 where the grapes of wrath are
 stored.*

Joe PISSES.

JOE
Ahhhh. Hallelujah!

SAM/JOE
*Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory!
 Glory! Hallelujah!*

Joe joins Sam by the sink and mirror.

SAM
His truth is marching on.

JOE
 Whew. Thanks.

Sam messes with his mustache. He leans closer to the mirror's reflection of his famous face.

SAM
 I've become decrepit.

JOE
 Me too. But it beats the
 alternative.

Joe washes his hands.

SAM
 Ah! Life would be infinitely
 happier if we could only be born
 old and gradually approach youth.

JOE
 Youth. Your favorite subject.

SAM
 Why shouldn't it be?

Joe dries his hands and smiles.

SAM (CONT'D)
 I wrote Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn
 for adults exclusively. The mind
 that becomes soiled in youth can
 never again be washed clean.

JOE
Grit. Dirt. Subjects you know
about.

Joe laughs as he looks at Sam in the mirror.

SAM
Who in their right mind handed you
a church.

Joe points towards the ceiling with his forefinger.

JOE
Complain to my boss.

Sam shakes his head.

SAM
I doubt that will do a lick of
good.

JOE
More sight seeing?

SAM
If we must.

They leave the restroom and emerge in...

THE NAVE

Together they start walking through it.

A long line of tourists passes Michelangelo's tomb.

Sam motions.

SAM (CONT'D)
Religious relics to our left.
Religious relics to our right.

JOE
It is a six-hundred year old
Church. What did you expect?

SAM
These Italians worship the dead.

JOE
No. They worship life.

SAM
You know, I despise optimists, Joe.

Joe smiles.

JOE
And I disdain those who whine and
wallow, Sam.

SAM
Less Old Testament judgement, if
you please.

JOE
Our Maker...

SAM
Our? You know how I detest
theology.

JOE
For one that thinks so little of
God, He appears to be seldom absent
in your works.

They continue walking through the Church to...

THE CLOISTER

SAM
I have perfect love for the
approving spirit of God, our maker.

JOE
What if He's not so approving?

Sam sighs.

SAM
I suppose I will find out one way
or the other, in the end.

JOE
Have you ever believed?

SAM
Almost, but it immediately drifts
away from me again.

JOE
And the Bible?

SAM
I don't believe a word of it was
inspired by God any more than any
other book.

JOE

Really?

SAM

Really. It's entirely the work of man from beginning to end, atonement and all.

Joe laughs awkwardly.

They continue walking through...

THE SQUARE

As hundreds of pigeons take flight into the sky.

SAM (CONT'D)

Life is a tragedy. Count the graves of those no longer here. Gone like Langdon and Susy. Where?

JOE

What of hope? What of Heaven?

SAM

The after-life? I have seen no proof.

JOE

That's why it's called Faith, Sam. The Lord grants us free will. To follow Him, or turn our backs.

Sam and Joe exits the Square and walks down towards...

THE RIVER ARNO

Al Duomo looms in the background.

SAM

I'm leaning toward the latter. I was robbed of my greatest treasure, my lovely Susy in the midst of her blooming talents and personal graces. You want me to believe it is a judicious, a charitable God that runs this world. Why, I could run it better myself.

Sam stops and removes a cigar from his suit's pocket.

JOE
Heaven is what YOU make of it, Sam.
Is that it?

SAM
My heaven...

Sam lights his stogie and inhales. Then, he exhales a big cloud of blue smoke.

SAM (CONT'D)
Is home, like Hartford. When the
kids were young.

EXT. RIVER ARNO EMBANKMENT - SAME

Their walk continues toward the Holy Trinity Bridge.

JOE
How's your writing?

SAM
Good. God is my new meat.

Joe stops.

JOE
Fascinating subject.

SAM
Supposing it is.

JOE
What do you hold sacred, Sam?

SAM
My mind.

Joe shakes his head.

JOE
Trust in the LORD with all thine
heart and lean not unto thine own
understanding.

They cross the...

HOLY TRINITY BRIDGE

SAM
Ah! The simplicity of the unknown.

JOE
It's called Faith.

SAM
Faith. Yes, I know the word. God's
faith grants angels eternal
happiness unearned, yet requires
his children to earn it.

JOE
The joys of free will.

SAM
There's nothing free about it, Joe.

JOE
It's in the journey.

SAM
Religion is only delusion and
hypocrisy. Created when the first
con man met the first fool.

JOE
That's harsh.

They move into Florence's...

ARTIST DISTRICT

JOE (CONT'D)
Mr. Clemens, you think of yourself
as an atheist.

SAM
It's a popular movement. So,
enlighten me, Reverend Twichell.

JOE
Actually, you're an agnostic.

SAM
An agnostic?

JOE
An atheist believes there's no God.
An agnostic does not know, or
believes that one cannot know
whether God exists. So there's...

They approach the a door in the city's walls at...

FORT BELVEDERE

SAM
Doubt. Doubt, indeed.

JOE
You see, I believe what my eyes
don't. That's where we're
different.

SAM
Blind faith. Sounds divine.

Sam enjoys his stogie.

SAM (CONT'D)
Let's move to another subject.

JOE
Yeah. Before this turns into a fist
fight.

Their path takes them down...

AN ALLEY OF TREES

Sam and Joe travels a few steps in silence.

JOE (CONT'D)
How's your autobiography coming?

SAM
Not enough auto or biography.

JOE
You lost for words?

SAM
Ah! Funny, isn't it?

JOE
Indeed. You being your favorite
subject.

SAM
I thought this next book would be a
breeze. Yet I wish to play with the
structure.

JOE
Why?

SAM
A typical biography starts you at
the cradle and drives you straight
for the grave.

JOE
Life is linear.

SAM
Well, a straight arrow shot from A
to B allows no side excursions.

JOE
Yours will be different?

SAM
I wish to start my tale at no
particular time of my life. Wander
a bit about the thing that
interests me for the moment. Then
drop it at the moment my interest
starts to pale.

Sam pulls out his timepiece.

SAM (CONT'D)
It's already three.

JOE
So, we done frolicking around
Florence?

SAM
Seems that way.

Joe looks out over the city's landscape.

JOE
I see why you came here. It's
lovely.

SAM
We came here for Livy. The doctors
claimed this climate would be
beneficial to her health.

JOE
And?

Sam peers out into the distance.

SAM
She has her good days and bad.

EXT. VILLA DI QUARTO, ITALY - DAY

Establishing: a beautiful 15th Century Villa with lush Tuscan gardens, low-cut bushes, and sprawling green grounds lies at the bottom of Monte Morello.

EXT. VILLA DI QUARTO - GROUNDS - DAY

This surrounds a yellow box-shaped building with green window shutters: dense groves, red roses, mossy walls, and gravel walks shut in by tall laurel hedges.

SUPER: "Villa Di Quarto, 3 miles outside Florence."

EXT. VILLA DI QUARTO, ITALY - DAY

Sam and Joe's car carries them along the gravel drive leading to the 15th century palatial villa.

SAM

So Joe, what do you think of it?

JOE

It's rather comfortable as European comfort goes.

SAM

Though god himself could get lost in it.

JOE

Sam.

Sam laughs as the car stops.

The two enter the villa.

SAM

Okay, I made my point.

INT. VILLA DI QUARTO, ITALY - FOYER - DAY

Sam and Joe cross the tiled foyer and head into...

THE PARLOR

There, LIVY CLEMENS, now 58, rests in her wheelchair. Livy's frame is petite and her face is flawless, near angel-like in appearance. She wears a silk dress and her hair is plain, combed down and done in a coil. She appears frail.

Sam eyes his wife. Concern covers his face.

SAM
How are you dear?

LIVY
Drained as usual.

Livy's breath is laborious.

LIVY (CONT'D)
So, what did you think of Florence,
Joe?

JOE
As I remember it, grand and old.

LIVY
Sounds a lot like us.

She states to cough as she laughs.

SAM
You mustn't get all wound up, my
love.

Livy looks up at Sam.

LIVY
Take me out to the gardens.

SAM
Now? It's rather warm.

LIVY
I wish to see more of the world
than this odd monstrosity of a
house.

Joe moves to her and gives her a peck on the cheek.

JOE
I will let you two be alone. I need
to catch up on my correspondence.

Livy grabs Joe's hand.

LIVY
You're a good man, Joe.

Joe smiles down.

JOE
Enjoy the gardens.

LIVY
They beckon me.

Joe heads out of the parlor. As he does.

JOE
There's a sense of age and
innocence about this place.

LIVY
(to husband)
How was it?

SAM
Fine.

LIVY
And Joe?

SAM
There's no man on this green earth
I prefer to be with.

LIVY
I'm glad he came.

SAM
Me too. He cares. Yet there's such
hypocrisy surrounding his desired
subject.

LIVY
But there's no inconsistency in
him.

SAM
No. He walks and talks what he
believes is the truth.

LIVY
I've always liked him.

Sam pushes Livy in her wheelchair through the French doors
leading to...

THE TERRACE

SAM
May I interest you in a stroll,
Mrs. Clemens?

Livy smiles up at her husband of thirty-four years.

LIVY
Sam, you always know the wrong
thing to say.

Sam HUMS an old Southern tune as he and Livy head down a
gravel path deeper into the gardens.

EXT. VILLA DI QUARTO - GARDENS - DAY

Sam parks Livy's wheelchair by the fountains.

LIVY
These are magnificent.

SAM
Heavenly.

LIVY
Have you seen the girls today?

SAM
Not yet. I think Isabel has taken
them to the city to shop.

LIVY
That's good.

Appears KATY LEARY, now 50, stout and Irish. She's the
Clemens long-time servant. She carries a wool shawl.

LIVY (CONT'D)
Uh, oh. Here comes Mother.

KATY
Mrs. Clemens, there's a nip in the
evening air.

SAM
It's nearly eighty degrees out.

Katy wraps Livy with the shawl.

KATY
There. This will make me feel
better.

SAM
Ms. Leary, where would we be
without you?

KATY
More importantly Mr. Clemens, where
would you be without this
wonderful, wonderful woman?

LIVY
Katy, you baby me so.

Katy eyes Sam.

KATY
Someone has to.

Katy returns to the home.

KATY (CONT'D)
I've cleaning to do.

SAM
(sarcastically)
She's a godsend.

LIVY
She knows us too well.

SAM
Hmph. You may be right.

Livy rests in a wheelchair. Sam sits in a chair beside her.

In the pink rays of twilight, Livy's face looks white and her
lips look blue.

Livy speaks with her eyes shut.

LIVY
When I'm gone. I want you to..

SAM
Livy... I can't imagine it. You're my
gravity.

LIVY
Even so. That day is coming.
(coughs)
Soon.

SAM
But.

LIVY
I don't have the energy for this
Sam.

SAM

Hmm. You and Joe are the only ones left that call me, Sam.

LIVY

It's your name idiot. Samuel.

SAM

Says so on our marriage certificate.

LIVY

It sure does.

SAM

Smartest decision of my life.

LIVY

Mine too.

SAM

How has it all gone by so quickly?

Sam SNAPS his fingers.

SAM (CONT'D)

What happened to our quiet days in Hartford?

LIVY

The big front porch. Watching our children grow.

SAM

Time. I have wasted so much of it. Away from you and the girls.

LIVY

Wasted? You created different worlds, Sam. Hmm, through your stories you lived countless lives.

SAM

So have you.

LIVY

I gave your career a push when I had to.

SAM

You know, this was a partnership.

LIVY

Was it?

Livy starts to WHEEZE. Then she turns away.

SAM

Why did you pick me? You had so many better suitors.

LIVY

The truth?

SAM

We're too old for lies.

LIVY

In you... I saw a man who desperately needed to be loved.

SAM

And that's what you have done. You made me better.

LIVY

We made each other better.

SAM

Thank you.

LIVY

For what?

SAM

This. Our lives. Our family. Helping me write my stories.

LIVY

Don't be silly.

SAM

I'm such a blundering, outspoken fool.

LIVY

Sometimes. After too much drink. But I love all of you.

SAM

I...

LIVY

Hush. I'm tired Sam. Wheel me back to my bed.

INT. VILLA DI QUARTO - LIVY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Enters Sam and Livy's surviving children, JEAN, now 24, homely, awkward girl, uncomfortable in her own skin, and CLARA, now 29, the opposite of her sister. Clara is dazzling and overconfident to the point of rudeness. Together, they come in with several shopping bags in their hands.

Their arrival startles Sam as he rests in a comfy chair beside his wife's four-post bed.

Sam looks at his children disapprovingly. Then he notices...

ISABEL LYONS, age 41, his secretary, stands in the doorway. She looks tan and pretty in her white summer dress and her dark hair rolled up in a bun.

SAM
Good evening, Ms. Lyons.

ISABEL
Mister Clemens.

Clara drops her bags at her mother's feet. Her dark and flawless features and movements radiate sophistication.

Livy wakes.

CLARA
Mother, you would not believe how beautiful the stores are. I found a great scarf for my performance. And this...

Clara, with flair, removes a second scarf from her bag.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Will give you some much needed color.

Clara holds up the scarf. Then she wraps it around her mother's neck lovingly.

CLARA (CONT'D)
There. Perfect.

SAM
How much did this shopping excursion cost?

LIVY
Sam, hush. Thank you, dear.

Jean sheepishly stands in the background. She is beautiful too. Yet, lacks the confidence her older sister possesses.

LIVY (CONT'D)
Jean, what did you find?

JEAN
Nothing. These bags are Clara's. I have everything I need.

LIVY
Contentment is natural wealth...

Sam pulls out a stogie and smells it.

SAM
Ahh!

JEAN
Not in here Dad.

SAM
Of course not.

Sam bends down and gives his wife a peck on the cheek.

SAM (CONT'D)
Excuse me, dear.

LIVY
You smoke that thing outside.

SAM
Girls, watch over Mother. As I exercise my lungs.

Sam heads back out to the gardens to enjoy his cigar.

INT. VILLA DI QUARTO - LIVY'S ROOM - SAME

Clara is gone. Jean and her mother remain.

Livy is propped up in her bed.

Jean stands with her back to her mother by the windows.

JEAN
I am not well, Mother.

LIVY
Neither am I dear.

Jean turns.

JEAN
Not in body, but in mind.

LIVY
You must not overexert yourself
with worry.

JEAN
Are you dying Momma?

LIVY
We're all dying dear. Just some
faster than others.

Jean crawls up into bed with her mother.

JEAN
I miss Susy, Momma.

LIVY
I do too.

Tears form down Livy's cheeks.

LIVY (CONT'D)
I think I'm going to get a chance
to see her soon.

EXT. VILLA DI QUARTO - GARDENS - NIGHT

Sam strolls the gardens as a rich cloud of smoke follows him.
This is when he sees Joe sitting on a stone bench.

Joe smokes his pipe.

Sam deeply inhales.

SAM
Ahhhhh, tobacco. The greatest smell
on earth.

JOE
How's Livy?

SAM
As good as expected.

JOE
I hate the fact that I must leave
tomorrow.

SAM
You all packed up?

JOE
Harmony is the packer. Though, I do
take pride in the fact that I
didn't forget my toothbrush.

Joe smiles up at Sam. It's contagious.

SAM
Give Harmony my love.

JOE
I shall.

SAM
What time is your train?

JOE
Three.

SAM
Good. There's one more place I
would like you to visit.

INT. VILLA DI QUARTO - LIVY'S ROOM - DAY

Joe gently knocks on her door.

Livy awakens.

LIVY
Come in.

JOE
I wanted to say good-bye.

LIVY
This maybe the last one, Joe.

Joe sits on a corner of her bed.

JOE
May I say a prayer for you?

LIVY
If that makes you more comfortable
with leaving, yes.

Joe grasps her hand and closes his eyes.

JOE
Livy, what are you clinging to?

LIVY
My family.

JOE
God shall watch over them.

LIVY
I'm not a believer anymore, Joe.
Not after Langdon and Susy.

JOE
Yet, there's such goodness and
wonder in you.

LIVY
Hmm.

JOE
Oh, Marvelous One. When shall the
dust return to the earth as it was,
and the spirit shall return unto
God who gave it. Vanity of
vanities, saith the preacher, all
is vanity. And moreover, because
the preacher was wise, he still
taught the people knowledge, yea,
he gave good heed, and sought out,
and set in order many proverbs. The
preacher sought to find out
acceptable words, and that which
was written was upright, even words
of truth. He did try, as I. Amen.

Joe opens his eyes and kisses her hand.

LIVY
Do you feel better?

JOE
I do.

LIVY
Good.

JOE
I shall miss you, Olivia.

LIVY
Yeah, Joe. Your thoughts and
prayers should be for Sam.

INT. VILLA DI QUARTO - LIVY'S ROOM - DAY

Clara speaks with her mother.

CLARA
Mother. I am so sorry.

LIVY
Hush, child. Your father is a
difficult, depressive man.

CLARA
But.

LIVY
We all have regrets. I've had
printer's ink on my fingers ever
since I met that man. Yet, my name
won't be remembered.

CLARA
He's utterly self-absorbed.

LIVY
He's a lot like you.

CLARA
Mother!

LIVY
I'm sorry. I'm tired.

Clara gets up and wanders to the door.

CLARA
I know. I wish I was more like you.

LIVY
You're perfect the way you are.

As the door closes, Livy whispers to herself.

LIVY (CONT'D)
(laborious)
The burden of watching over our
household shall soon be yours.

INT. VILLA DI QUARTO - LIVY'S ROOM - LATER

Sam wanders in.

Livy is in her bed.

SAM

What do you think of my magazine article?

Livy coughs.

LIVY

Quaint. Who's going to edit your work when I'm gone?

SAM

Darling, don't say such things.

Livy looks out the window.

LIVY

Exhaustion and shortness of breath seem to be my life these days.

SAM

This afternoon, I must go with Joe.

LIVY

I know. Have fun. Make the most of each and every day.

INT. CAR - DAY

Joe eyes the villa one last time as he leaves with Sam.

JOE

I hate that I must go.

SAM

It was kind you came.

JOE

Still.

Sam gazes out of the car.

SAM

I'm scared too.

EXT. WOODS - APENNINE COLOSSUS' OLD MAN - DAY

Joe and Sam gaze upon a statue of greatness.

JOE

It's gorgeous. Imagine, three-hundred years old.

SAM
I feel as old.

JOE
It's breath-taking.

SAM
Giambologna regretted making it here. One of the greatest masterpieces sculpture has ever offered the world... though few stumble upon it in these woods.

JOE
It's one with nature.

SAM
Hmm. Still an artist requires an audience to survive.

Sam frolics around, dances about. He hums the Battle Hymn Of The Republic.

SAM (CONT'D)
Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. Where is my audience? Hmm.

Sam halts before the towering statue.

SAM (CONT'D)
I wish to write one true line again before I die.

JOE
You have written thousands. You're the Lincoln of our Literature.

SAM
Hmm. I don't feel it. My readers want boys with straw hats, corn-cob pipes, fishing.

JOE
Playing hooky.

SAM
Watching steamboats ply the Mississippi River.

JOE
It's your gift.

Sam stares up at the statue's face.

SAM
That's my youth, Joe. I'm much
older now. I have tasted death.
Hmm. I think my next book will be
much darker.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Joe and Sam walk side by side through the woods on a narrow
path as they return from their visit to the statue.

JOE
Why Joan of Arc?

SAM
Why not?

JOE
You're an Anti-Catholic. You hate
the French. Yet.

SAM
I write a book about a French-
Catholic martyr?

JOE
Yes.

SAM
Susy asked me the same question in
Hartford.

JOE
And?

SAM
Joan's different. By far, the most
extraordinary person the human race
has ever produced.

Joe turns to face Sam.

JOE
Dark stuff.

SAM
My new stuff is even darker.

JOE
Do you have a title for it?

SAM

A Mysterious Stranger. Livy is editing the beginning of it.

JOE

What's it about?

SAM

I've grievances towards your boss.

JOE

Oh. That again.

SAM

He had no right taking my Langdon or Susy. No right!

INT. VILLA DI QUARTO - LIVY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Livy looks over Sam's papers. She has a pencil in hand.

LIVY

How many times must I scold you about your indulgences, Sam?

SAM

Details.

LIVY

Sam?

SAM

You're the machine that spins my stories. My observations enhanced by your direction. Your focus. Your precision.

Livy starts to cough and wheeze. Tiny blood drops land on Sam's manuscript. She takes her palm and smears them off.

SAM (CONT'D)

I shouldn't go.

LIVY

The new villa sounds perfect. Plus, our agent is expecting you tomorrow.

SAM

Yet.

LIVY
Take the girls. Make it an
excursion. Enjoy the day.

SAM
Okay. We'll be back by supper.

Livy closes her eyes.

LIVY
Good. See you then.

INT. VILLA DI QUARTO - KITCHEN - DAY

As Clara and Jean have breakfast, Sam strolls in.

SAM
Who's up for a picnic?

His children look up and smile.

JEAN/CLARA
Yes!

EXT. ITALIAN COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Sam, Clara, and Jean sit within an open carriage as it
travels through gorgeous green countryside.

The DRIVER gives the team of four white horses a loud CRACK
from his whip. Road dust is everywhere.

DRIVER
(in Italian)
Faster now.

Besides the driver sits ALFONSO, Sam's real estate agent, a
bookish forty-something with glasses. The man clenches onto
his briefcase with dear life as the coach accelerates.

Sheepishly, the agent looks back into the coach.

SAM
Steady, Alfonso.

Sam laughs. His forearm rests on a wicker picnic basket.

SAM (CONT'D)
There's commissions to be had.

The coach jostles.

SAM (CONT'D)
This is the land of Raphael,
Titian, Michelangelo, and Da Vinci.

The coach hits a big bump.

CLARA
Oh!

Everyone jumps up a bit.

SAM
Why no paved roads?

CLARA
Those were all artists, Father. You
know how they despise real work.

Sam laughs as he eyes Clara.

SAM
I suppose you're right, child. Hmm.

JEAN
Why don't we celebrate Susy's
birthday anymore?

SAM
Hmm, that's right. It would've been
two months ago.

CLARA
Closer to three. But we really
mustn't speak of such things. Susy
is gone.

JEAN
Where?

SAM
She's with Langdon and your grandad
I suppose. Hmm. Though, it is utter
blasphemy not to celebrate her
memory and sheer innocence. Jean,
what do you remember of your
sister?

JEAN
Her beauty.

Jean eyes Clara.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Her unselfish ways.

SAM

And Clara, what do you recall of
your sister?

CLARA

She was your favorite.

SAM

I love you all... equally.

CLARA

Father? Susy is watching down.

SAM

Well if she is, let's recall and
share a pleasant memory of her.

JEAN

Oh, I know. The dress-up and acting
in one of her plays.

SAM

Yes!

JEAN

Or us playing hide and seek in the
old house. In the jungle room.

Sam looks out into the passing fields of gold lit splendor.

SAM

Yes, Jean. I see her now. Look!

JEAN

I see her too, Pa. Running.
Catching fireflies! In a new white
summer's dress.

SAM

Splendid, Jean. Splendid. How about
you Clara?

CLARA

What?

SAM

Do you see anything?

CLARA

I see a field. Barren of people.

SAM

Look harder, child. Remember her.
Re-create her in your mind's eye.

Clara looks out and smiles.

CLARA
I see her.

SAM
You do?!? What's she up too?

CLARA
Playing. We're all young again.
Chasing soap bubbles in a field.

JEAN
No doubt produced from your old
pipe, Pa.

SAM
Clara, tell us more about these
magnificent soap bubbles.

CLARA
We're at the Farm.

SAM
Yes?

CLARA
Chasing after soap bubbles of every
imaginable size. High up in the
sky, they linger and float.

JEAN
What's Susy doin'?

Clara looks to her Sister.

CLARA
Susy is... So fast. So pretty. So
perfect.

JEAN
That's our Susy.

Clara starts to tear up.

CLARA
Susy is about to catch her first
bubble... pop!

Clara leans back.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Hmm, she's gone now.

SAM
Yes. She is. But the memory of her
will remain.

Sam points to daughters' heads and hearts.

SAM (CONT'D)
As long we live, dear ones, Susy
shall be with us.

JEAN
Sure. But it's not the same, Pa.

SAM
No. I would much rather have her
here, in the flesh. Her face,
sandwiched between...

The carriage hits another big bump.

Sam's body lifts high off his seat.

SAM (CONT'D)
Mother!

JEAN
Pa!

CLARA
Tsk. Tsk.

SAM
Hmm. Susy sure missed out on
getting all her inners jostled
about on this god awful road.

Sam looks to the driver.

SAM (CONT'D)
Can this journey get any worse!?!

AGENT
We're almost there, Mister Twain.
See. Villa de No Ombra. There it
stands!

The agent points up to the hill's crest. With his other hand,
he makes a kissing gesture, SMACK!

AGENT (CONT'D)
The estate holds a breathtaking
view of the city.

CLARA
Ah, Florence.

Sam looks down to Florence.

SAM
Breathtaking indeed.

EXT. VILLA DE NO OMBRA - DAY

Sam, Clara, and Jean walk the groomed grounds. Their picnic blanket and basket are seen in the background.

Jean sprints ahead. She has a camera in her hands and its case drapes her neck.

JEAN
It has a swimming pool.

SAM
Great.

CLARA
And your own chapel.

SAM
Amusing.

Sam's eyes span the grounds. Then his attention rests upon his eldest daughter's face.

Clara nods her approval for the property.

CLARA
I think Momma will love it.

INT. VILLA DI QUARTO - FOYER - NIGHT

Enters Sam, Jean, and Clara.

SAM
Livvy, I think we found it!

Sam HUMS as he crosses the floor.

Jean and Clara follow him. There's no staff in sight.

They approach...

THE STAIRWELL

Sam climbs the stairs with Clara and Jean in tow.

SAM (CONT'D)
Where is everyone?

EXT./INT. LIVY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Katy holds an oxygen mask against Livy's face.

Isabel is at her side.

ISABEL
It's not working!

KATY
Mrs. Clemens, breathe! Please.

Livy grasps.

The two prop her up more.

Livy appears lifeless and paler than ever. Her frail body leans forward in the bed. Her lips are blue.

Sam rushes to her.

SAM
No!!!

Katy and Isabel step back.

Sam reaches his wife and holds her dearly. He caresses her hair and stares into her lifeless eyes. Then, he weeps.

SAM (CONT'D)
I ruin everything I touch.

From behind, Jean pulls out her camera and SNAPS off a picture of her dead mother.

CLARA
No. No. No. No.

Clara wanders about.

JEAN
Momma's gone.

EXT. MANHATTAN, NEW YORK - LATER NIGHT

Establishing shot of the city's skyline.

SUPER: "New York City. 1905."

EXT. CHELSEA HOTEL - NIGHT

Panning down from the top floor, we pass rows of rectangles of golden light until we reach the lobby's wide windows.

INT. CHELSEA HOTEL - LOBBY - SAME

Near the window, Jean stares down at a crumbled photograph of her frail mother in her deathbed. She sits beside her father who is smoking a cigar.

JEAN
I am not well, Pa.

Sam exhales.

SAM
I know. Yet, must you always look at that?

JEAN
Seeing her, comforts me.

Sam fatherly takes the photograph from Jean.

SAM
Dear child, every photograph of Mother is better than this one.

JEAN
Why can't I be like everyone else?

SAM
Common?

Sam straightens his daughter's wild hair.

SAM (CONT'D)
No, dear. You're extraordinary.

JEAN
You mean weird. Epileptic.

SAM
Hush, now.

Jean turns toward the dark windows. The street view captures the city at night.

JEAN
Why does God take away those we love the most?

Sam's eyes shift from Jean to the CAMERA.

SAM
Because he's cruel.

Jean starts to slowly rock back and forth in her chair.

SAM (CONT'D)
Jean.

Jean continues to rock.

SAM (CONT'D)
Jean!

Jean snaps out of her daze and stops.

JEAN
What?

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE BROWNSTONE - DAY

With her head down, Jean rushes through the crowded New York streets until she steps upon the Clemens' current residence. She pauses at the front gate.

Then, Jean turns and eyes the countless STRANGERS of all cultures and classes. To her, they appear to LAUGH and MOCK her mere presence. She races up the steps.

SUPER: "November 26, 1905. JEAN."

Jean reaches for the front door's large metal handle. Her hand trembles wildly as she reaches for it. She stops and stares down at her trembling hand.

JEAN
Stop that!

Then, she stops the tremors with her other hand.

INT. FIFTH AVENUE BROWNSTONE - JEAN'S BEDROOM - SAME

Jean CRIES in her bed. The lights are off. The room is dark.

An EEEEEKKK comes from the direction of her closet.

JEAN
Who's there?

In the nearby darkness, a person BUMPS into a table.

SUSY (O.S.)
Now, who put that there?

JEAN
Susy!?!

Susy STRIKES a match and lights a candle.

SUSY
Who else would it be?

Susy sets the candle on the table.

Jean pops up and embraces her sister. Then, she steps back.

JEAN
You haven't gotten any older.

Susy prances about the room. Then, she turns toward Jean.

SUSY
No, I haven't. Quite ideal,
actually. So, how have you been?

JEAN
Momma's gone.

SUSY
I heard.

JEAN
Haven't you seen her?

SUSY
It's a big place.

JEAN
Hmm. So, how are ya?

SUSY
No complaints. In the other world,
there is no more pain. Just joy.

JEAN
Really?!? Can you take me?

SUSY
Silly girl. Enjoy this side first.
Anyways, you'll be seeing me on the
other side soon.

JEAN
Really? How?

SUSY
Someone in this house is trying to
kill you.

Jean reacts. She slowly turns to the door.

JEAN
Pa!?!

SUSY
Don't be silly.

JEAN
Then who?

SUSY
The Help.

JEAN
The Help?!?

SUSY
Yep. Jealous lot the Help. You
better keep you eyes on them.

JEAN
I will.

SUSY
Well, I better be going.

JEAN
Bye, Sis.

SUSY
Watch out for that Isabel. I'm not
liking the way she's eyeing Papa.

INT. FIFTH AVENUE BROWNSTONE - JEAN'S BEDROOM - LATER DAY

Sam reads Jean pagers from his autobiography.

Jean sits in a chair facing the windows.

Sam paces as he reads to her.

SAM
What a wee little part of a
person's life are his acts and his
words! His real life is lead in his
head, and is known to none but
himself.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

All day long, and every day, the mill of his brain is grinding, and his thoughts, which are but the mute articulation of his feelings, not those other things are his history. His acts and his words are merely the visible thin crust of his world, with its scattered snow summits and its vacant wastes of water-and they are so trifling a part of his bulk! A mere skin enveloping it. The mass of him is hidden-it and its volcanic fires that toss and boil, and never rest, night nor day. These are his life, and they are not written, and cannot be written.

In a daze, Jean stares out the windows.

SAM (CONT'D)

Jean, what do you think?

JEAN

I see Susy sometimes.

Sam stares up from his manuscript.

SAM

In your mind?

Jean turns away from the window. She eyes her father.

JEAN

No. Here in this house.

Sam clears his throat.

SAM

You do? What does she say?

JEAN

She talks about the other side.

SAM

Does she like it there?

JEAN

Not really. Says she's too young for it.

SAM

True. Say, the next time she's here... can you invite me over?

Jean nods.

SAM (CONT'D)
Good. I would love to see her.

JEAN
She wants to see you too.

SAM
Dandy. Any mention of your mother?

JEAN
Suzy's checked all over. But she
can't find her there.

SAM
Ohh. Anything else she shares?

Jean moves to her father. She looks up and grasps his arms.

JEAN
She doesn't like Isabel, at all.

SAM
Isabel... Why?

JEAN
She says you're getting to smitten
on her.

SAM
Me?!? Smitten?

JEAN
Yep.

SAM
Nonsense.

JEAN
Don't you still love Momma, Pa?

SAM
Of course, I do, child. She was the
love of my life. My anchor. But now
she's gone.

JEAN
Where? Susy can't find her.

SAM
I don't know. I wish I did.

JEAN

Susy says....

Sam interrupts Jean.

SAM

Shh, girl. Susy is gone too. What you see in your mind's eye is an apparition, a phantasm.

JEAN

Ghosts?!? No, Pa. Susy is real.

Sam takes his hand and combs through his daughter's hair.

SAM

Shh. It's okay, girl. But let Susy rest in peace. Okay?

Jean says nothing. She just smiles up.

SAM (CONT'D)

Good.

Sam leaves the room.

Jean looks around the room at various objects of interest: her books, her brushes, her four-post bed. Then, her full attention moves to her closed closet door.

Jean walks toward the closet. She stops. Then, she gently KNOCKS twice on the wooden door.

The door replies back with a single KNOCK.

Opens ERRRR the closet door.

Susy stands within the darkness.

SUSY

I told you.

INT. FIFTH AVENUE BROWNSTONE - BEDROOM - LATER DAY

Jean lays asleep in her bed. She wears a white night gown. She stirs. Awakens, her eyes inspect her room. Various objects of interest, she inspects. She pops out of bed.

She picks up a brush off of her vanity and combs her hair.

She comes to a full stop before her window that faces the street. The window is steamed over.

Jean brushes her hair when an image of her mother Livy appears in the glass.

LIVY
Good morning, Jean.

Jean draws closer to the pane of glass.

JEAN
Momma?

LIVY
Who else would I be?

Jean looks over her shoulder. Then, she whispers.

JEAN
I don't like it here.

LIVY
I know child. That's why I am here.

JEAN
Really?

LIVY
Why would I lie?

JEAN
Hmm. Where have you been?

LIVY
Around.

JEAN
Where? Susy can't find ya.

Livy shrugs her shoulders.

LIVY
I found her.

JEAN
Wow. Is she with you?

LIVY
Sure is. Come. Take a leap of faith, straight out this window.

JEAN
That doesn't seem so safe.

LIVY
I will catch you.

JEAN
Promise?

LIVY
Sure. But dying is nothing, dear.
Now, living. That's hard.

Jean ponders this.

JEAN
Okay.

Livy disappears.

Jean opens up the window. Wind wildly blows her hair and the long sheer curtains about.

JEAN (CONT'D)
I'm coming Mother!

Jean leans her body out the window. Ominously, two floors below stands a tall wrought iron spiked fence.

LIVY (O.S.)
Then come.

Jean wiggles over the radiator at the window base. Her hand slips off the smooth marble. BAM! Her long forearm presses hard against the hot radiator coil.

JEAN
Ouch.

Jean falls to the floor. From there, she stares up at the swaying white sheers and the open window.

SOUND: LIVY'S LAUGHTER.

LIVY (O.S.)
Dear child, you can't even manage
you our demise. Pathetic.

JEAN
Momma, don't go.

LIVY (O.S.)
I've better things to do today to
pass my time.

The wind SLAMS the window closed.

Jean stares at her burned forearm. Then, she WEEPS when she looks up to the closed window.

JEAN
I hate it here.

INT. FIFTH AVENUE BROWNSTONE - FOYER - DAY

Isabel and Sam stand near the door in the marble foyer.
Sam wears a formal dress attire.

SAM
How do I look?

Isabel steps closer and adjusts his bow-tie.

ISABEL
Better.

SAM
Good. Old River Rats must look
their best.

ISABEL
You're not that old.

SAM
Age is an issue of mind over
matter. If you don't mind, it
doesn't matter.

Isabel lingers in for a kiss.

ISABEL
Age doesn't matter. I'm attracted
to your cleverness.

INT. FIFTH AVENUE BROWNSTONE - STEPS - SAME

Between the white wooden bannisters, Jean watches her father
and Isabel flirt below in the foyer.

SAM
Hmm.

ISABEL
You look good and fit to me.

SAM
Do you wish to come?

ISABEL
Where?

SAM
Some boring Society dinner.

INT. FIFTH AVENUE BROWNSTONE - FOYER - SAME

Sam and Isabel lean closer to one another.

Jean's heavy feet CLIMBS stairs. Then, she quickly SLAMS her bedroom door.

SAM
I fear this home has become her
prison.

ISABEL
I will speak to her in the morning.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
Tonight...

Isabel looks around the room.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
I plan on staying up late.

Sam grabs his hat from a nearby table. He plops it on his head and tips it brim.

SAM
Good.

Sam looks into the nearby mirror and likes what he sees.

INT. FIFTH AVENUE BROWNSTONE - JEAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jean sits before her vanity's mirror as Isabel combs her long dark hair with a big brush.

Jean eyes Isabel via the mirror.

JEAN
Are you trying to get your hooks
into my Pa.

Isabel continues to comb.

ISABEL
What? Why would you say such a
thing?

JEAN
You like his fame. His fortune.

ISABEL

Jean! My intentions are honorable.
Don't you miss having a mother?

Jean grabs Isabel's brush.

JEAN

Papa's love, his only love... is
his own words. His creativity.

ISABEL

Your father is a brilliant man.

JEAN

Maybe. But you shall never be my
mother.

Katy KNOCKS on Jean's door before she enters.

JEAN (CONT'D)

Susy?

KATY

No, Jean. It's Katy.

JEAN

Ah! Susy's has been visiting me.

Katy eyes Isabel.

KATY

Really?

Isabel starts to brush Jean's hair again as Katy grabs some
dirty clothes off of the ground.

JEAN

Yep.

KATY

Susy's gone, Jean. Remember?

JEAN

Nope. I saw her alive as day, in
this very room.

Katy backs away from Jean and Isabel.

ISABEL

Jean, we all attended your
sister's...

JEAN

She's not dead!

KATY
Susy's in heaven now.

JEAN
Liar!!!

Jean pops up and attacks Katy. Then, with all her might SLAPS Katy hard with the back of her hand.

Katy drops to the floor. She lands on her bottom.

Isabel goes to Katy's aid.

ISABEL
Jean!

Isabel attempts to help Katy up.

Jean looms of them both.

KATY
Why Jean?!?

JEAN
Who am I?

KATY
The sweet little girl in bows that
I helped raise.

JEAN
Who are you?

KATY
Katy Leary. The person that changed
your diapers.

JEAN
Nah, the both of you are just the
Help. Nothing more.

Isabel attempts to guide Jean to her bed.

ISABEL
Jean, you should rest.

JEAN
Bed? I'm not my father.

Katy and Isabel exchange looks.

ISABEL
I'm going to call the doctor.

Katy rubs her hurt sore jaw.

KATY
For who?

Jean moves to the windows and sings.

JEAN
But I'm a fly. A happy fly. No
matter. If I live. Or if I die.

INT. FIFTH AVENUE BROWNSTONE - JEAN'S BEDROOM - LATER DAY

From the same window, Sam looks peers at a cab.

Isabel escorts Jean down the steps into it.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE BROWNSTONE - CURB - SAME

Jean sees her father in her window and waves bye.

Then, she sees him draw the curtain.

ISABEL
Jean, this is for the best.

JEAN
Who's best?

ISABEL
Your father...

JEAN
My father is a self-absorbed man.
An artist. His own deity. You and
me are mere morals. Made purely for
his entertainment, nothing more.

INT. FIFTH AVENUE BROWNSTONE - JEAN'S ROOM - SAME

Sam turns away from the curtained window.

Clara sits on the edge of Jean's bed.

CLARA
Jean should've been
institutionalized ages ago.

SAM
She's your sister!

CLARA
So? The best doctors in New England
will watch over her.

SAM
That's what I'm worried about.

CLARA
Our family grows smaller.

SAM
We could not overcome her
afflictions.

CLARA
We?

SAM
What?

CLARA
Well, it looks like its just me and
you now. I doubt that I was your
first choice. Hell, not even your
second.

SAM
I love you all equally.

CLARA
Love?!? What do you know of love?
You love your wit. Your words.
Nothing else.

Clara pops up off the bed and storms out.

SAM
Clara! Where are you going?

CLARA (O.S.)
As far away from you as possible!

Sam stumbles back until he hits the bed.

SAM
On the very verge of being an
angel. Hmm... more devil, I suppose
than angel or father.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - TUNNEL - LATER DAY

Sam and Joe stroll through a tunnel.

SAM

God is vindictive. He gives you a wife and children whom you adore, only that through the miseries which He will inflict upon them He may tear the palpitating heart out of your breast and slap you in the face with it.

JOE

Vindictive? No, it was just their time, Sam.

SAM

To make matters worse, I found that all their lives my children have been afraid of me! Have stood all their days in uneasy dread of my sharp tongue and uncertain temper. All the concentrated griefs of fifty years seems colorless by the side of that pathetic revelation. Vindictive is He.

JOE

And who in this tale is He?

SAM

What?

JOE

Who plays this vindictive god in your story, Sam? You are it's creator.

SAM

What are you talking about?

JOE

When was the last time you visited Jean?

Sam stops at the tunnels midpoint.

SAM

Joe, I can't go there.

JOE

Why? She's your daughter.

SAM

I can't see my sweet Jean surrounded by a punch of lunatics.

JOE
That's your pride talking again.
She's your flesh and blood and she
needs you.

Sam walks on.

SAM
I know. Soon. A week or two. I'm so
close to finishing this new story.

JOE
Sam! Your story is your life!

As Sam approaches the other end of the tunnel, sunlight
engulfs him.

EXT. CRAIG COLONY - KATONAH, NEW YORK - LATER DAY

Jean walks the grounds in a pretty dress.

SUPER: "Craig's Colony, New York State's Custodial
Institution for Epileptics."

As she walks near the gardens, she hears her father's voice.

SAM
You look well.

JEAN
Father! I feel well. Most my days
are spent outdoors, hiking.

SAM
Good. This place is different than
I imagined.

JEAN
How so?

SAM
More hotel than...

JEAN
Mental Asylum?

SAM
Yes. I suppose.

JEAN
Here, we focus on healthy life
habits and exercise.

SAM
You good enough to come back home?

JEAN
You need me there?

SAM
Never more. Plus, Clara wants you
at her wedding.

JEAN
Wedding?

EXT. STORMFIELD - DAY

The mansion's name derives from a short story of his Captain Stormfield's, Visit to Heaven.

SUPER: "October, 1909. Clara's Wedding at Stormfield."

SERIES OF CUTS: HOME TOUR

- A. Stormfield Mansion.
- B. The interior ground floor.
- C. Billiards room decorated with caricatures of Sam.
- D. Sam's study.
- E. French doors open to garden terraces and fountain.
- F. On the lawn, white circular tables dot the green grounds.
- G. Posing for a picture, Mark Twain, in Scarlet Cap and Gown, Clara as a Bride, Jean as her Bridesmaid, and Clara's GROOM.

EXT. STORMFIELD - CHRISTMAS TIME - DAY

Jean and Sam walk along the same grounds now white with snow.

SUPER: "December 23, 1909."

SAM
I am sorry Jean.

JEAN
About what?

SAM
The past.

JEAN
Oh, that. It is forgotten.

SAM
Dear child, how can it be?

JEAN
History, Papa. Isabel is gone.

SAM
History? Okay. Let's discuss the
near future then. When, I'm gone.

JEAN
You shall never leave me.

SAM
I wish that was true. But my end
will come. Just like Mother's.

They both grow quiet.

JEAN
I miss her.

SAM
So do I child. So, do I.

JEAN
I never realized how much I relied
on her. Until she was gone.

SAM
Yeah. I wasted so many of my days,
recreating the past. Not enjoying
the present.

JEAN
The present. It's such a tiny
thing.

Sam stops walking and looks at Jean.

SAM
Sandwiched between regret and fear.

JEAN
Be here now. With me.

SAM
I am.

JEAN

Good. Then close your eyes, Papa.
Breathe.

Sam does so. Then he raises his hands over his head, and twirls a bit.

JEAN (CONT'D)

Breathe!

Sam laughs.

SAM

I'm trying.

INT. STORMFIELD - CHRISTMAS TIME - DAY

Christmas MUSIC plays.

Jean walks through the home and HUMS along.

SERIES OF CUTS: HOME FOR HOLIDAYS

A. Folded over newspaper reads, "December 23, 1909."

B. Nice fire in fireplace.

C. Pan over STORMFIELD decorated for the holidays.

D. Sam and Jean trim a Christmas tree.

E. Sam asleep in chair near fire.

F. Jean covers Sam with a blanket.

INT. STORMFIELD - SAME NIGHT

Sam wakes as Jean attempts to cover him.

SAM

You're wearing yourself out dear.

JEAN

This Christmas must be perfect.

SAM

Why?

JEAN

It just must.

SAM
Are you afraid it may be my last?

JEAN
Remember.

SAM
What?

JEAN
The present.

SAM
You're my present.

JEAN
See you in the morning, Pa.

SAM
Merry Christmas, my little angel.
Sleep tight.

EXT. STORMFIELD - FROM THE ROAD - NIGHT

Snowflakes flutter about the grounds. A freshly-made snowman stands sentry. Everything appears perfect.

EXT. STORMFIELD - CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING

SUPER: "Stormfield, 6:30 a.m."

SERIES OF SHOTS: HOME TOUR

- A. Home heavily decorated for the holidays.
- B. Big red bows on greens.
- C. Poinsettias litter our journey.
- D. Christmas trees are everywhere.
- E. We travel through the formal living room.
- F. To the foyer.
- G. The stairs.
- H. Then we climb the steps.

The bathtub faucet RUNS. The sound of the water draws us in. When we reach the second floor, it stops. We continue down the long hall.

Katy RAPS on Jean's door.

KATY
You ready to dress?

JEAN
No, Katy, you can wait an hour, for
I am going to lie in bed and read.

Katy goes away. Walks down the long hallway, and stops. She ponders a bit. Then she moves on with her day.

INT. JEAN'S BATHROOM - SAME

Jean bathes in the tub. Steam is everywhere. She smiles at us through it. She is welcoming.

Hold on her smiling face.

Then suddenly and violently she is seized by an epileptic seizure attack. We witness this. This is nothing for us to do but painfully watch, wait, and hope.

Jean's body slams into the sides of the tub, again and again. Bath water splashes out and about. She looks at us in agony. Her eyes scream, help me! Help me!

We can do nothing but watch. We see her body freeze up. Then the top half of her body slips underneath the water.

Her alarmed face inches below the water with big bubbles. She struggles but she can't move. Smaller bubbles escape from her mouth as Jean drowns.

Her face now appears angelic and at peace.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY - LATER

SUPER: "Stormfield, 7:30 a.m."

Katy returns to the bedroom. It is empty. Miss Clemens was not there.

Katy sees the bathroom door ajar. Slowly, she pushes it wide open.

KATY
Jean?

She sees Jean's lifeless body beneath the water and screams.

KATY (CONT'D)

No!!!

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

Sam appears in his pajamas. He sees Jean submerged.

SAM

Dear god, no.

He yanks her out of the water.

SAM (CONT'D)

Jean. Sweet Jean.

Jean's unresponsive face rests on his shoulder. Water trickles out and down her lips and cheek.

Sam turns her over. Nothing.

Sam checks her vital signs.

SAM (CONT'D)

She's happy now, Katy. She's with her mother and sister, and if I thought I could bring her back by just saying one word, I wouldn't say it.

Katy, still in the doorway, WEEPS.

Sam turns to her.

SAM (CONT'D)

Help me get her to her bed.

Katy does.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Jean looks at peace in her bed, covered with blankets. Her hair still wet. She looks asleep.

Sam looks to Katy.

SAM

Please call Joe. Tell him what happened.

Katy leaves to do so.

Sam sits on the side of the bed. He bends down and rubs his fingertips through her wet hair.

SAM (CONT'D)
Regret.

He clears throat.

SAM (CONT'D)
Fear.

Sam closes Jean's eye lids.

SAM (CONT'D)
She's happy now.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATER DAY

Joe stands outside the very same bathroom by the door. It is ajar. In sight, he sees a bright white porcelain bathtub empty of water. It is an eerie reminder.

Sam approaches. He is dressed in black.

SAM
Jean's gone too.

JOE
I'm sorry, Sam.

SAM
Don't be. She finally found peace.

Sam places his arm around Joe.

The two walk together down the corridor.

SAM (CONT'D)
You must read my latest, Letters
from the Earth.

JOE
What's it about?

SAM
Many things, Joe. Though mainly,
how your god is a killer.

BEGIN DREAM
SEQUENCE:

INT. ALDINE CLUB - FOYER - NIGHT

MUSIC: a song like Eddie Vedder's version of The Beatles,
You've Got to Hide Your Love Away.

CHATTER and LAUGHTER pours out from...

THE CLUB'S DINING ROOM

A long banner on wall reads, "THE SOCIETY OF ILLUSTRATORS
CELEBRATES MARK TWAIN."

INT. ALDINE CLUB - ENTRANCE FRONT - NIGHT

Vast dark paneled banquet room. Here we drift down through
the reams of chalky white smoke of the dark paneled room.
Below the smoke we see lines of tuxedoed MEN. They sit at
white draped tables. Their food untouched before them.

SOUND: LAUGHTER

MUSIC: a song like Eddie Vedder's version of The Beatles,
You've Got to Hide Your Love Away.

Clad in formal wear of long-tailed black coat and white vest,
is Sam. He sits at the head table.

Beside him is ANDREW CARNEGIE. He stands, raises his hands
high over his head to silence the audience.

CARNEGIE

It has been a quarter of a century
since his classic The Adventures of
Huckleberry Finn, but the man next
to me remains the country's most
famous and beloved writer.

Much applause.

CARNEGIE (CONT'D)

The slouching, white-suited.

Andrew looks down and smiles broadly at his dear old friend.

CARNEGIE (CONT'D)

Frizzy-haired storyteller. He is
why we're here. To celebrate his
life, and his works.

SAM

Frizzy-haired. At least I have
hair, you old robber...

Suddenly, the back doors of the room loudly burst open.

SOUND: BANG!

The room turns at once.

They see the costumed spectacle of a young woman dressed as the Miracle of Orleans, JOAN OF ARC. She looks exactly like Susy, use the same actor.

Joan wears underneath a ceremonial white robe, the armor of a 15th-century French soldier. Her hair dark and cut short. Her figures pure and angelic.

SUPER: "SUZY."

SUPER: "Maybe."

Joan's eyes are fixed on the author, as she glides up the aisle between the tables.

As she passes, the stunned on-lookers watch.

Sam has every appearance of a man who had seen a ghost.

SAM (CONT'D)

Susy?

Joan nods yes then no. She addresses the room.

JOAN

I don't know anything about this man. At least I know only two things. One is, he hasn't been in the penitentiary, and the other is... I don't know why.

The room bursts out in LAUGHTER.

Sam's voice is broken, and his words come slowly.

SAM

Who are you?

JOAN

You know who I am?

SAM

Livy?

Joan nods yes then no.

Sam looks toward her, then the crowd. There's absolute silence - puzzling silence.

The surrounding audience doesn't know whether it is time to laugh, to keep silent, or to summon the hotel security.

Sam realizes the situation. This is a joke. He opens his mouth to let them off the hook as he studies Joan's attire.

SAM (CONT'D)

There's an illustration, gentlemen -
a real illustration.

JOAN

They can't hear you.

SAM

What?

JOAN

We're no longer of this world.

SAM

I'm dead? Now that's reassuring.

JOAN

Is it?

SAM

I was done with it. To succeed in
this life, you need two things.
Ignorance and confidence. The I-
word I lack.

JOAN

Then come. Be done with them.
They're such self-absorbed fools.

Sam stares at the frozen faces.

SAM

But.

Joan SNAPS her fingers and the room of tuxedoed guests and
the boy disappears.

JOAN

Ah. Better. Now come.

SAM

How?

JOAN

Time and space are irrelevant. Mere
labels to justify the unknown.
Let's go play.

SAM
Where to?

JOAN
To a time when you weren't so
cynical.

SAM
Good l-u-c-k there.

JOAN
Luck has nothing to do with it,
Sam.

SAM
Where are we going?

JOAN
Only to the places you have been.

SAM
Okay. I prefer the past.

Joan smiles.

JOAN
Come. There's nothing left for you
here.

SAM
Am I dreaming?

JOAN
Awake. Asleep. Alive or dead. You
shall soon witness... The difference
is razor thin.

Sam's formal wear is gone. Now he wears his customary white
three piece cashmere suit.

JOAN (CONT'D)
I prefer you dressed in white.

SAM
So am I your pawn?

JOAN
We're all pawns in a game we never
asked to play.

TRANSITION: the room morphs into nature. The drawing room
turns into woods. The red carpet changes into a dirt path.

DISSOLVES TO:

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - DAY

Before them is a crooked bend of the mighty Mississippi.

SAM

Ah. I know these waters.

JOAN

You should. You described them so wonderfully in your books.

Time moves by. It is only seconds for them but the scenery and the day changes to night like time lapse photography.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - NIGHT

The time lapse photography ceases with the sound of a WHISTLE HORN. Around the bend a steamboat lit up like a tall birthday cake floating on the water.

Sam and Joan watch the boat's paddle wheel SMACKS! the water.

SAM

When I was a boy, there was but one permanent ambition among my comrades. That was, to be a steamboat pilot.

JOAN

I know.

SAM

Am I dead?

JOAN

Not yet.

SAM

Then what is this?

JOAN

Your race never knows good fortune from ill. They're always mistaking the one for the other.

SAM

Are you not human?

JOAN

Human? Don't be vulgar.

SAM

No.

JOAN

I witnessed your lot born from the clay. I am not limited like you.

SAM

You seem so real. So, human.

JOAN

I told you... I am not. I am more.

SAM

So, what's the difference in you and me?

Joan doesn't seem to understand how he could ask such a strange question.

JOAN

The difference between man and me? Man, is a museum of diseases, a home of impurities. He begins as dirt and departs as stench.

SAM

I don't understand.

JOAN

One can't compare things which by their nature and by the interval between them are not comparable.

Sam remains still and quiet.

JOAN (CONT'D)

You seem puzzled Sam. So I will expand it. Man, is made of dirt. I saw him made. I am not made of dirt. He comes today and is gone tomorrow. I am of the aristocracy of the Imperishable. I last.

SAM

Who are you really?

JOAN

I told you.

SAM

You are not Joan.

JOAN

True. I can take any shape I please. Do you have a preference?

SAM
No. But why did you choose to be
her?

JOAN
She was your favorite.

SAM
I loved my children... equally.

JOAN
Sure you do.

SAM
How do you travel back?

JOAN
My mind creates! Do you get the
force of that?!?

Joan SNAPS her fingers.

EXT. PARIS - NIGHT

Within a carriage, Joan and Sam sit.

JOAN
Whatever it desires!

SERIES OF CUTS: PARIS NIGHTLIFE

A. Joan and Sam ride in fast carriage.

B. They pass sign that reads, "Rue de Rivoli."

C. They pass by the Column of July.

SAM
How?!?

JOAN
The Column of July!

SAM
On this site once stood the grim
Bastille.

JOAN
That grave of human hopes and
happiness. A political prison.

SAM

A dismal place within whose
dungeons so many young faces put on
the wrinkles of age.

JOAN

So many proud patriots grew humble.

SAM

So many brave hearts broke. Hmm.

JOAN

Human life!

The carriage stops at the steps of The Trocadéro Palace.

EXT. THE TROCADÉRO PALACE - SAME

The palace's form is that of a large concert hall with two wings and two towers. Its style is a mixture of exotic and historical references, generally called "Moorish" but with some Byzantine elements. The space between the Palais and the Seine is set with gardens, and an array of fountains.

JOAN

The old Trocadéro Palace was built
during the Exposition Universelle.

Sam steps out of carriage. Sees the opposite bank of Paris.
The city is aglow. Illuminates the night.

SAM

Beautiful.

JOAN

Paris is more than a destination.

SAM

It's a state of mind.

JOAN

Music, maestro?

INT. TROCADÉRO - CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

Sam and Joan walks side up side toward the stage. The candle lit hall contains a monstrous pipe organ. Its dull metal piping lines the wall.

JOAN

Man thinks he is the Creator's pet.
Believes the Creator loves him and
listens.

SAM

It's a quaint notion.

Joan sits before it. She stretches her fingertips like some
concert pianist, then she plays Chopin's, Funeral March.

JOAN

What too dreary? Perhaps you prefer
Toccata and Fugue in D Minor.

SAM

Who died?

Joan looks up at Sam.

JOAN

You, old boy. You.

She continues to play.

Sam wanders out of shot.

SAM

I was dead before I was born and it
never inconvenienced me a bit.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE:

INT. SAM'S STUDY - DESK - SAME

Sam's writing desk is, as if, he just left it.

MUSIC PLAYS: Like Verve's Bittersweet Symphony.

POV is inside empty room with various objects of interest.

Long lines of editions of Sam's leather-bound books fill the
bookshelves. The last book, standing on its spine, next to
Joan of Arc, is Carlyle's French Revolution.

Clara passes by the door's opening. She HUMS with the MUSIC.

SUPER: "CLARA."

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

We see Clara, now 35. Her belly shows that she is with child.

She is Sam's only surviving daughter. She walks down the corridor. She turns into...

SAM'S BEDROOM

Inside, Sam's DOCTOR, late 50s, hovers over his bed. He removes a Stethoscope from his leather bag.

Sam, now 75, rests. His white-unruly hair still defiant, yet he lies frail in his bed.

The doctor examines Sam's lungs and heart with his stethoscope. He steps back and frowns.

DOCTOR

His lungs are ruined and his heart
beats slow.

CLARA

Tobacco.

DOCTOR

He doesn't have much longer.

The doctor looks at NURSE BAKER.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Nurse. Call me when you see the
signs.

Nurse Baker nods.

CLARA

So, there's nothing left for us to
do?

The doctor puts his stethoscope back in his case.

DOCTOR

Make him comfortable. That's all.

CLARA

Thank you, Doctor. May I have a
moment alone with my father?

DOCTOR

Of course.

Everyone but Clara clears the room.

CLARA
Hi Papa. I'm here. The last of us.

She draws closer.

CLARA (CONT'D)
To remember the wonderful childhood
you had provided us. The
interesting people that passed in
and out of our home in Hartford.

She gets up.

CLARA (CONT'D)
But I will not be the last one
long. You see, a child grows inside
of me.

KNOCK on door.

ALBERT PAINE, 48, arrives. He is Sam's handpicked biographer.
Bookish, big-eared who wears his hair parted down the middle.

PAINE
Are you okay?

CLARA
Yes.

PAINE
How's your father?

CLARA
Not well.

Paine walks up to the bed, peers down at Sam, long and hard.

Sam laboriously takes a breath. His eyes are closed.

PAINE
I see.

CLARA
Mr. Paine.

Albert turns.

PAINE
Yes?

CLARA
It is very important to me that the
world remembers Mark Twain. Not Sam
Clemens.

Albert's attention returns to Sam.

PAINÉ
Of course.

Sam mumbles to himself.

SAM
Joan? I want to go home.

BEGIN DREAM
SEQUENCE:

EXT. HARTFORD HOUSE - DAY

Joan and Sam stand silently before the Hartford House.

JOAN
Home.

SAM (V.O.)
I can't look upon that house yet. I
keep upon my feet, and that is
something... restless and unsettled.

SERIES OF SHOTS: HOME TOUR

- A. Empty Foyer.
- B. Empty Parlor Room.
- C. Empty Kitchen.
- D. Empty Study.
- E. Empty Bedrooms.

SAM (V.O.)
Eighteen years of my daughter's
life were spent in there.

JOAN
Are you afraid to enter your very
own home?

Sam looks at the second story windows. Then he peers at Joan.

SAM
Susy died under that roof.

JOAN
So?

SAM

The best of my life was experienced
within those hallowed halls. It's
sacred.

JOAN

Sacred?

SAM

To us, our house... had a heart. A
soul. And eyes to see us with.

JOAN

Impossible.

SAM

Yet true.

JOAN

Go on.

SAM

It was of us, and we were of its
confidence and lived in its grace
and in the peace of its
benediction.

Second story window opens.

Susy pops out of window.

SUSY

Papa!

Sam waves up, whispers.

SAM

She's not real.

JOAN

What is reality? But a common
belief.

SAM

She died because of me.

JOAN

That's not true, Sam. You were not
responsible for her demise. Spinal
meningitis was the culprit.

SAM

The child was taken away when her mother was within three days of her. Livy would have given three decades of her life for the sight of her, one last time. Alive. Hmm. The unassuageable misery.

JOAN

The circumstances of her death were sad. Pathetic. The same with Livy and Jean.

SAM

My brain is worn to rags rehearsing them. The mere deaths would have been cruelty enough. Without overloading it with wanton details. The last time I saw Susy was at the station waving profusely at our departing train. Never to see her again, that sacred face.

JOAN

Well. Here's your chance.

Joan disappears.

Sam enters his old home. He hears Susy's heavy footsteps upstairs. He catches a glimpse of her from below.

INT. HARTFORD HOUSE - DAY

Upstairs, Susy dances room to room.

She stops in her parent's room. Here she pays homage to her mother when she sees her long white nightgown hanging down a cracked closet door.

Susy runs over and kisses it. She removes her current clothes. She puts on the white nightgown over her head. All the while, she continues to dance and HUM.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Sam slowly climbs the steps leading to the second floor.

Susy rushes down the steps and embraces him.

SUSY

Papa! It's so good to see you.

Sam squeezes her tighter.

SAM
You too, dear.

Susy pulls back and smiles.

SUSY
I'm restless today. Full of
wistfulness. Look! I found Momma's
gown.

Susy dashes up the remaining steps.

SUSY (CONT'D)
Ah! My feet must move to this
music.

Sam hears no music. He sees the fever has taken her.

SAM
Dance my dear, dance!

Susy delirious rants as she opens another window.

She peers out.

SUSY
Where is White Head the Great?
Where've you gone?

SAM
White Head is here. Before you.

Susy dances. Beams of sunshine cut through the room's
darkness. She jumps in and out of the light. The fever has
completely taken her.

SUSY
Father!!! Dance with me.

MUSIC PLAYS: Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini.

SUSY (CONT'D)
Do you hear it too? Music. Such
wonderful music.

Susy peers into a large mirror as they dance together. She
stops, separates from her father toward the mirror. Closely
she examines her own face.

SUSY (CONT'D)
Papa. You destroyed all this. Our
hopes. Our dreams. You stole them
through your stupid speculation.

SAM
I only wanted what was best for us.

SUSY
Well... you sure failed that mission.

SAM
My dear child.

Susy stops dancing.

SUSY
I hate you.

Susy disappears as the empty white nightgown falls to the
floor in a heap.

SAM
Don't leave.

Sam examines it, but she is gone. Only fabric remains.

Joan wanders into the shot.

SAM (CONT'D)
Why be so cruel?

JOAN
Lord? I shall never fully
understand your race. He stopped
caring about this experiment of
His, eons ago!

SAM
Joan. You're an abundant tormentor,
showing me all those I hurt.

JOAN
Susy died... mindless and happy.

SAM
And I was half a world away.

JOAN
You can't have it both ways, Sam.
It's either family or fame.

(MORE)

JOAN (CONT'D)
 Not both. And the world knows Mark
 Twain's choice.

END DREAM
 SEQUENCE:

EXT. STORMFIELD - ENTRANCE - DAY

Joe arrives. As he HUMS a familiar tune, he grabs the door's
 knocker. CLANG! CLANG!

Joe looks around and waits with his hat in his hands. He
 hums, Battle Hymn of the Republic.

JOE
*Mine eyes have seen the glory of
 the coming of the Lord. Hmm. Saying
 your final good-bye, is hard.*

INT. STORMFIELD - FOYER - SAME

From down the hall, Katy appears. Slowly, she approaches the
 main door.

Mr. Paine is behind her.

PAINE
 No reporters, Katy.

Katy nods and then she opens to door.

KATY
 Reverend Twichell. Welcome.

JOE
 Katy... I wish it was under better
 circumstances.

Katy escorts him in.

PAINE
 Thank you for coming.

JOE
 He's been my best friend for forty
 years. How could I not?

PAINE
 True.

JOE
 Upstairs?

PAINE

Yes.

Joe heads to...

THE STAIRWELL

PAINE (CONT'D)

Reverend Twichell?

Joe turns back to the foyer.

JOE

Yes.

PAINE

May I have a word with you after?

JOE

Of course.

Joe climbs the stairs.

EXT. SAM'S BEDROOM - SAME

As Joe opens, Sam's bedroom door.

JOE

Sam, you lazy old... man.

Joe wanders in.

Sam stirs and opens-up his eyes.

SAM

Susy?

JOE

No, Sam. It's Joe.

SAM

Joe.

Sam brightens.

Joe plops down next to him.

JOE

What do you wish to talk about?

SAM

How I hate the human race.

JOE
Hate?

SAM
Go. I don't want you to see me like
this, Joe.

JOE
Like what?

SAM
Weak. Full of hate. And...

JOE
Near death?

Sam nods.

SAM
Go.

JOE
Okay. You rest. I'll be back.

Joe heads to the door.

SAM
Joe?

Joe turns.

JOE
Yes, Sam.

SAM
I don't hate the *entire* human race.

JOE
Good.

Sam falls back asleep.

Joe leaves Sam's room. Then, he heads down the stairs to...

THE FIRST FLOOR

Katy approaches him.

KATY
Reverend Twichell. Mr. Paine is
waiting for you in the study.

JOE
Thank you, Katy.

Joe takes a few steps toward the study. He turns back to Katy.

JOE (CONT'D)
The house seems so quiet.

KATY
I know. I half expect him to come storming down those stairs. All in a great big huff.

INT. SAM'S STUDY - DAY

Joe enters Sam's study.

JOE
When is A Mysterious Stranger being published?

PAINE
Never.

JOE
What? The story is brilliant.

PAINE
I agree.

JOE
Then why?

PAINE
Mrs. Clemens feels his work is slipping. Intellectually.

JOE
Slipping? Impossible.

PAINE
She wishes me to focus on his autobiography.

Joe grabs a book from the shelf.

JOE
Mr. Paine, to the living we owe respect. But to the dead we owe only...

PAINE
The truth.

JOE
Correct.

PAINE
Voltaire?

Joe nods and returns the book to the shelf.

JOE
When you borrow a line.

PAINE
Take from the best. Hmm. Wise
advice.

Joe looks out a window to the spring day and the sprawling
green grass.

JOE
Poor Sam. Poor Jean. Poor...

Clara wanders in.

CLARA
Hi, Joe. I heard you were here.

Joe turns. He sees her belly.

JOE
I believe congratulations are in
order.

Joe and Clara hug.

CLARA
They are.

JOE
I wish he would be here to see it.

CLARA
Me too.

Clara looks at Mr. Paine.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Albert. May I have a word alone
with my spiritual advisor.

PAINE
Of course.

JOE
Spiritual advisor? You're as bad as him.

CLARA
I know.

Joe eyes Sam's manuscript on the desk.

JOE
His latest work?

Clara nods yes.

CLARA
It's brilliant. And bitter. Full of such pain.

JOE
Well, he started it after your mother's death.

CLARA
Yes. But his readers want Twain.

JOE
Lazy days spent by the river?

CLARA
Exactly.

JOE
He's outgrown the persona he created in his youth.

CLARA
Well, if this story is published, it will ruin him.

JOE
How is that?

CLARA
It's anti-god?

JOE
Not surprising. Yet, is it a worthy read?

Excitement enters Clara's voice.

CLARA
It is. So different from his previous work.

JOE
You should let his readers decide
then.

CLARA
Joe. He uses the Devil as a
narrator who betters God.

JOE
Once again. Sounds like him. Hmm.
It appears your father no longer
wishes to be Mark Twain.

CLARA
The world wants more Mark Twain.
Not Sam Clemens. His book on Joan
of Arc proved that. What a colossal
failure that was.

JOE
Some stories take time until
they're appreciated.

CLARA
Time. He doesn't have much left.

JOE
No. He doesn't.

Darkness fills Sam's study.

BEGIN DREAM
SEQUENCE:

INT. DARKENED STAGE - NIGHT

Within the darkness we hear Joan. Her tone is both angelic
and articulate. She whispers at first. Then her voice grows
and echoes.

JOAN (O.S.)
Sam! Sam! Sam!

SAM (O.S.)
What?

Sam's features slowly appear.

JOAN
Let's travel some more?

SAM
Where?

JOAN
Everywhere.

EXT. OUTDOOR PAVILION - DAY

A mass of humanity dressed in dark-colored clothes separates as Sam in his white suit slices through them. He and Joan at his side are heading towards a large stage.

SAM
Are all these men and women here
for me?

JOAN
You showed them a world bigger than
themselves. Your words moved people
Sam. Moved them from hate, to the
path of a better understanding.

SAM
Hmm. No one reads my words anymore.

JOAN
That's not true.

SAM
Look at all these people. This is
incomparable. All a praise-hungry
author could desire.

Sam reaches the stairs, stops, and turns. Everyone is gone.
The pavilion is deserted except for Joan.

SAM (CONT'D)
What happened?

JOAN
Fickle lot. They grew bored and
moved on.

SAM
Oh.

JOAN
Well, you're the only audience I
care about.

She climbs up the stairs and moves across the stage.

JOAN (CONT'D)
You wish to see a performance? Then
you shall see a performance! The
trick is to hold their attention.

She removes a small piece of fluff resting on her shoulder.

JOAN (CONT'D)
But, after all, it is ridiculous to
ask. When one remembers how
childish their poms, and what
shadows they are!

Joan's clothes change into a circus clown.

Spheres appear from nowhere. Each holds a familiar face to
Sam: literary colleagues, lifelong friends, and family
members.

Joan tosses the balls up one after another.

Then she adds another and another. She sets them up and
whirls them in a slender bright oval in the air.

JOAN (CONT'D)
So, come forward Sam Clemens. Let's
see your life.

More spheres appear. Traps more alarmed faces.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Little by little these little
darlings steal from you. A spoonful
at a time.

The oval lengthens. Joan's hands move so swiftly that they
are just a blur and not distinguishable as hands, and
hundreds of balls travel through the air.

The spinning oval reaches up twenty feet in the air and
shines and glistens.

SAM
Oh, Joan, how can you do these
things?

JOAN
Man's mind clumsily and tediously
and laboriously patches little
trivialities together and gets a
result, such as it is.

SAM
And your mind is different?

JOAN
My mind creates! Do you get the
force of that?!? Creates anything
it desires, and in a moment.

(MORE)

JOAN (CONT'D)
Creates without material. Creates
fluids, solids, colors.

SAM
What can you create?

JOAN
Anything, everything.

The spheres cease in mid-air. Each sphere possesses a loved one of Sam's whose face is in dread.

Sam looks at Joan as if to beg her to please stop.

SAM
No.

Joan winks at Sam and at that very instant the spheres drop, CRASH! down hard to the stage's hard wood floor. Each burst into in shards of broken glass. One by one, it erases the tiny faces within them.

SAM (CONT'D)
No!!!! Susy! Langdon! Livy!!
Jean!!!

Joan still in costume brushes off imaginary dirt from her hands. Then, from under her sleeve, another sphere appears.

JOAN
But wait. There's more.

SAM
Clara!

JOAN
Last one. Came quite unglued when
her mother died.

SAM
She blamed herself.

JOAN
We both know who's the true
culprit. Right, Sam.

The sphere slips out of her hands.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Oops.

Clara's sphere falls to the ground, CRASH!

JOAN (CONT'D)
Gravity.

SAM
You bitch!

Joan walks ahead.

JOAN
What is man? Fragility. Look! They
returned from where is that they
came. Dirt.

Sam knees down before the broken glass.

SAM
Why torture me so?

JOAN
Out of necessity. Each stole too
much of you. You're a self-absorbed
artist. Are you not?!? Don't you
wish to be America's Shakespeare?

From his knees, Sam scoops up the broken glass.

SAM
When Shakespeare died in Stratford
it was not an event. It made no
more stir in England than the death
of any other forgotten theatre-
actor would have made.

JOAN
Forgotten.

SAM
Nobody came down from London.

JOAN
Nobody?

SAM
There were no lamenting poems, no
eulogies, no national tears, there
was merely silence, and nothing
more.

JOAN
Then, we shall have a loud
audience!

INT. MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM, AUSTRALIA - NIGHT

Mark Twain lectures in a thousand-seat theater palace of red velvet and polished wood.

Sam watches on. He can't hear a word just LAUGHTER.

Sam takes a seat on the aisle.

To his right, an AUSSIE buckles over.

AUSSIE

Oy. If you get any funnier, I'm
going mess myself.

The face morphs into Joan's.

Sam reels back in his seat.

JOAN

What? Too blue collar for you?

EXT. HOTEL WALDORF-ASTORIA, NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

Underneath the gaslights carriages travel up and down the narrow dirt street.

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL - BALLROOM - NIGHT

At a Black Tie Affair, elegant men and fashionable women linger about Sam and Joan.

JOAN

You prefer sophistication?

SAM

I remember this?

JOAN

You raised money for the Keats-
Shelley Memorial in Rome.

SAM

Yes.

Sam masterfully grabs a flute of Champagne from a passing waiter carrying a tray.

SAM (CONT'D)

Near the Piazza di Spagna at the
base of the Spanish Steps.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)
Stands a beautiful museum built to
pay homage to words.

Sam downs glass.

SAM (CONT'D)
Ahh! I shall miss alcohol.

He looks around, and waves at a pretty woman.

JOAN
You're too comfortable here.

EXT. RIVERBEND - DAY

Sam and Joan stands at a bend of the Mississippi River.

SAM
Majestic. Isn't it?

JOAN
The River?

SAM
Of, course.

JOAN
What does it represent?

SAM
Freedom.

JOAN
Freedom?

EXT. MIDDLE OF MISSISSIPPI RIVER - NIGHT

Joan and Sam stand on raft.

Ghostly human faces look up at them from the depths of the
murky waters. Like Frodo and Sam as they pass through The
Dead Marshes.

JOAN
(oar in hand)
Freedom?

She bends down.

JOAN (CONT'D)
There's much more blood attached to
this river.

The images in water appear. The passing faces of Native Indians, Negro Slaves, Spanish Conquistadors, French Traders, and American Settlers.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Than freedom.

SAM
True. Though Huck wouldn't have had much of an adventure without it.

JOAN
Why did you put Huck and Jim on a raft to escape?

SAM
To me, the river always represented freedom.

JOAN
The freedom of reaching the Free States?

Sam nods.

SAM
The river carries us away from society. From what is known, to what...

JOAN
Isn't.

SAM
Mark Twain become a slave to his own vanity. White cashmere suit. White hair and big bushy mustache. A humorist. That's what the masses want... entertainment.

JOAN
What do you want?

SAM
More freedom.

JOAN
How did you come to think of writing Letters from the Earth?

SAM
The thought came after I lost Livy.

JOAN
And what was that?

SAM
F' god.

JOAN
F' god. Oh! Feels good doesn't it.
Though you hope He has a sense of
humor. Hmm...

Joan stares down at the murky brown waters.

JOAN (CONT'D)
He doesn't, by the way.

SAM
No?

JOAN
Learned that one the hard way.

SAM
I'm sure you did.

JOAN
Oh, well. Heaven and hell... I have
friends in both places.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE:

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - DAY

From a deep sleep Sam awakes in his bed. Still drowsy he slowly gauges where he is. His bedroom night table is crammed with medicine bottles and books.

Nurse Baker rises from a chair beside his bed.

SAM
F'god.

NURSE BAKER
Well, look who's awake. How are you
today, Sam?

SAM
(wheezes)
Joe. I need to see, Joe.

NURSE BAKER
You rest. I'll bring him here.

The nurse leaves.

Sam drifts back off.

INT. STORMFIELD - PARLOR - NIGHT

Clara and Joe sit near the fireplace.

CLARA

I loved my mother. Everyone did.
She was perfect. Until she grew
ill.

JOE

Her condition was not your fault.

CLARA

True.

EXT. VILLA DI QUARTO, ITALY - DAY

We traverse the tranquil grounds by air. We pass the lush
green lawn, the colorful gardens, then follow a gravel path
that leads to two open French doors.

SUPER: "Florence, 1904."

CLARA (V.O.)

But I aided in her decline.

INT. VILLA DI QUARTO, ITALY - PARLOR ROOM - SAME DAY

Clara stares into the mantel's mirror.

CLARA (V.O.)

I was responsible for her care. But
one day, I snapped.

Sam enters the room.

SAM

How's your mother today?

CLARA

She seems better.

SAM

Better. Good. I have a mountain of
pages she can edit.

CLARA
The pages can wait.

SAM
What? Nonsense. Mental nourishment,
is what she needs.

CLARA
Your words aren't going to fix her
heart.

SAM
What!?! Blasphemy.

Livy enters the room, wheeled in by Katy.

LIVY
What's with all this fuss?

Clara turns.

CLARA
Mother you need to rest.

Sam turns.

SAM
Nonsense.

Clara eyes Sam.

CLARA
She is not your slave!

SAM
What? Slave?!? How dare you say
such a thing. I love her.

LIVY
Now. Now. Don't fight.

SAM
Look what state you placed your
mother.

CLARA
Me?!? You! You've used her all up.

Sam rushes at his daughter.

SAM
You, ungrateful bitch!

LIVY

Sam, no!

Sam slaps Clara hard against her face.

Clara takes it.

CLARA

Thank you, Father. You finally
found the courage to do something,
yourself.

Clara grabs the end of a table and flips it over.

Sam and Livy react.

CLARA (CONT'D)

It feels good. Doesn't it. Doing
something all by yourself.

Sam eyes her hard. Then he looks at his wife.

Clara storms out of the room. As she does, she says.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Stop enabling him, Momma! His
vanity will be YOUR downfall.

LIVY

What just happened?

Livy grabs her chest.

LIVY (CONT'D)

Oooh!

SAM

Livy!?!

CLARA (V.O.)

That day, I gave my mother a heart
attack.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE:

INT. SAM'S STUDY - DAY

Joe listens to Clara.

JOE

She was already sick, Clara.

CLARA

And I made her worse. She never fully recovered after that. Hmm, I miss her so much.

JOE

You father is joining her. Soon. Will you miss him too?

CLARA

I can't imagine a life without him.

Clara pops up from her chair. She walks toward a framed picture of her family: Sam, Livy, Susy, Jean, Clara with their dog Flash outside the Hartford House.

CLARA (CONT'D)

I've outlived them all.

She stares hard at it. Two in the photo remain, Sam and her.

Enters Nurse Baker.

NURSE BAKER

Reverend Twitchell. He's asking for you again.

Clara looks to Joe.

Joe looks to Clara.

CLARA

You better go.

INT. STORMFIELD - DAY

Sam lies in his death bed and dreams.

SAM

Susy?

Joe enters.

JOE

Sam... You awake?

SAM

Susy?

JOE

I wish I were.

Joe sits beside the author he adores.

JOE (CONT'D)

I want more time with you, Sam. One more excursion. You can even bad talk the Lord, all you want.

Sam stirs in bed.

JOE (CONT'D)

I'm reading Letters from Earth now. The story fascinates me. Noble poetry. And a wealth of obscenities.

Sam MUMBLES from his dreams.

SAM

Susy. It's okay. You will feel no more pain.

Joe gets up.

JOE

Nothing is ever routine with you. Is it, Sam?

Joe stands by the door.

JOE (CONT'D)

Even death. Sleep well, my friend. Sleep well.

Joe closes the door.

BEGIN DREAM
SEQUENCE:

EXT. VILLA DI QUARTO, ITALY - DAY

In the Gardens, Livy rests in a wheelchair.

Sam sits in a chair beside her.

In the pink rays of twilight, Livy's face looks white and her lips look blue.

LIVY

When I'm gone. I want you to...

SAM

Livy... I can't imagine it.

LIVY
Even so. That day is coming.
(coughs)
Soon.

SAM
But?

LIVY
I don't have the energy for this
Sam.

SAM
Hmm. I miss our quiet days in
Hartford.

LIVY
The big front porch. Watching our
children grow up.

Sam wheels her through garden. As he does, he cries.

Livy looks up.

LIVY (CONT'D)
Sam, we will be together soon.
Until then, love our Clara.

INT. SAM'S ROOM - DAY

Clara enters Sam's room.

CLARA
You need me, Father?

Sam is fast asleep in bed. He mumbles nonsense.

Clara sits near him. She checks his vital signs.

Clara takes his lifeless arm. Then, she rests it on her
pregnant belly.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Here. Our family grows, Papa.
Another pretty little girl for you
to tout on and chase about.

She gently returns Sam's arm to his bed. Then, she rises. She
leans over the bed.

Sam looks so small, so unalive.

SAM
Love Clara. I shall.

CLARA
You have. I know I wasn't your
favorite, Pa. But you have always
been good to me.

Clara reaches for the lamp. She switches it off.

Darkness fills the room.

CLARA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Thank you.

BEGIN DREAM
SEQUENCE:

EXT. VILLA DI QUARTO, ITALY - DAY

Sam and Joan appear in a sitting room with Livy.

Livy sits in a chair reading over some of her husband's
words. She stops and laughs.

LIVY
Oh, Sam. You're too clever for your
own good.

SAM
Ah.

He looks to Joan.

SAM (CONT'D)
Thank you.

LIVY
For what?!?

SAM
She can hear me?

Joan smiles then she disappears.

LIVY
Of course, I can hear you. I've not
gone deaf yet!

Sam rushes to his wife and covers her with kisses.

SAM
I miss you so, so much.

LIVY
Miss me? We had breakfast together
you old fool.

Sam pulls back.

SAM
I am a fool.

LIVY
You okay?

SAM
I'm sorry.

LIVY
For what now?

SAM
Everything. Anything.

LIVY
Sam, you up to something?

SAM
No. No more. I'm sorry about Paige.
The money. About dragging you on my
endless lecture tours.

Livy bounces up.

LIVY
Don't be.

SAM
But.

LIVY
When I said for better or worse.

Sam clears throat.

LIVY (CONT'D)
I was expecting far more... better!
But...

Livy caresses his chin. With cat-like reflexes, she acts to
pull his long moustache but doesn't.

Sam reacts.

LIVY (CONT'D)
Gotcha!

SAM
You sure did.

LIVY
We built something together. Didn't
we?

SAM
A family.

LIVY
A good one.

She gives him a peck on the cheek.

SAM
I am unworthy of you.

Livy wanders out of the room.

LIVY
Tell me something I don't know.

Joan reappears.

JOAN
She loved you.

SAM
I owe her everything.

JOAN
She knows.

EXT. VILLA DI QUARTO, ITALY - GARDENS - DAY

Sam and Joan stand in the Gardens.

SAM
Joan.

Joan turns.

JOAN
Yes?

SAM
Why all this?

He waves his arms broad and wide.

SAM (CONT'D)

This ornate journey through my not-so-perfect life.

JOAN

Because. It's almost time to say your goodbyes.

SAM

I don't comprehend.

JOAN

All will be revealed soon.

SAM

So, we're getting close to the end?

Joan nods.

JOAN

Come on, Sam. Let's see some fun. Soap bubbles.

SAM

Soap bubbles?

END DREAM
SEQUENCE:

INT. SAM'S STUDY - DAY

Birds outside the study CHIRP as Joe reads aloud from Sam's leather bound journal.

JOE (V.O.)

It is a cozy nest, and just room in it for a sofa, table, and three or four chairs, and when the storm sweeps down the remote valley and the lightning flashes behind the hills beyond, and the rain beats on the roof over my head, imagine the luxury of it!

Birds CHIRP.

BEGIN DREAM
SEQUENCE:

EXT. QUARRY FARM - HILLTOP - DAY

Atop a lush wood of green foliage stands Sam Clemens' writing cottage on Quarry Farm, the Clemens' summer residence.

Birds SINGS.

EXT. SAM'S OUTDOOR STUDY - DAY

Clemens' outdoor study built to mimic the pilot house of a riverboat: 12 feet across, with eight sides and a large window in each face.

SUPER: "Quarry Farm. 1885."

Joan and Sam stand within the hilltop writing cottage.

JOAN

Since we have perched away up here
on top of the hill near heaven I
have the feeling of being a sort of
scrub angel and am more moved to
help shove the clouds around, and
get the stars on deck promptly, and
keep all things trim and ship-shape
in the firmament than to bother
myself with the humble insect-
interests and occupations of the
distant earth.

SAM

My words.

JOAN

Your words.

SAM

Hmm. Fine view.

JOAN

There's more of your words.

SAM

It's as if I just left it.

Sam sees his handwriting on the table. Then he looks down the hill. Where children are playing near the house.

SAM (CON'T) (CONT'D)

Susy!

Sam hurries out the down the hill.

Joan reads from the paper on Sam's desk. It is held down but an ashtray paperweight.

JOAN (V.O.)

Jim and me, we found an empty section of log raft. And we went off down that river together. We'd run nights, and laid up and hid daytimes. We just let that raft float wherever the current wanted it to.

Sam runs down the hill. He sees children and a younger version of himself playing with his pipe. He blows soap bubbles out of it.

The small children, Susy, Clara, and Jean, GIGGLE as they run here to there to pop them.

The scene warms Sam's heart.

SAM

Thank you Lord!!! Thank you. I remember this. I remember this.

Sam looks up the heavens.

SAM (CONT'D)

You see here? I did not fail at all things.

Sam runs faster.

SAM (CONT'D)

There were times when I was an endearing father.

Joan appears.

JOAN

There's a certain pathos clings about these blowing of soap bubbles.

Joan uses her forefinger to pop a few of these smoke-charged soap-bubbles that escape the children's wrath.

Sam sees Susy.

Susy laughs as she uses her arm to karate chop some bubbles.

SAM

Susy, with her manifold young charms and her iridescent mind, is as lovely a bubble as any we made that day, and as transitory.

JOAN

She passed, as they passed, in her youth and beauty, and nothing of her is left.

SAM

But a heartbreak and a memory of that long-vanished day.

JOAN

It is human life.

SAM

We're blown upon the world. We float buoyantly upon the summer air a little while, complacently showing off our grace of form and our dainty iridescent colors. Then we vanish with a little puff.

SOUND: PUFF!

JOAN

Leaving nothing behind but a memory.

SAM

And sometimes not even that.

JOAN

A soap bubble is the most beautiful, most exquisite thing in nature.

SAM

I wonder how much it would cost to buy a soap bubble, if there was only one in the world.

Joan pauses as she sees a circling bubble.

Sam watches his girls play.

SAM (CONT'D)

Beautiful. They were so beautiful. Hmm... I can go now, Joan. Take me where you may.

JOAN

Sam. I am a soap bubble too. See.
As a proof of it I will show you
something fine to see. Usually when
I go I merely vanish. But now I
will dissolve myself and let you
see me do it.

Joan stands straight up, and thins away and thins away.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Good-Bye.

Joan thins more until she is a soap-bubble, except that she keeps her shape.

We can see through her as clearly as through a soap-bubble, and all over her plays and flashes the delicate iridescent colors of the bubble.

The bubble floats up. Then it slowly lingers down, strikes the green grass two or three times before it bursts.

Puff! In her place is vacancy.

JOAN (V.O.)

We're running out of time Sam.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE:

INT. SAM'S BED - DAY

Blackness. Birds CHIRP back and forth.

Sam's eyelids open. As he hears the birds he sees familiar faces hovers over him. He looks at them one by one and smiles.

The last one is Clara's.

Clara is on the edge of his bed.

CLARA

Father?

SAM

I tried.

He takes her hand. Weakly adds.

SAM (CONT'D)

Honest, I...

He sinks back into a deep sleep.

CLARA

Papa!?!

She draws closer to him.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Papa!!!

BEGIN DREAM
SEQUENCE:

EXT. RIVERBED - TWILIGHT

Sam and Joan stand side by side, holding hands.

SAM

What is next Joan?

JOAN

The truth.

SAM

I thought we were beyond that.

JOAN

Oh, Sam. I wish I held such powers
to stay with you. But I don't.

SAM

You're leaving me again?

JOAN

I must.

SAM

Don't go.

JOAN

I must. And we shall not see each
other again.

SAM

In this life, right Joan? We shall
meet in another, surely?

JOAN

There's no other, Sam.

Joan drops hand and turns.

SAM

What?

JOAN

Life itself is only a vision, a dream.

Sam looks dumbfounded.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Sam, you know in your heart I speak the truth.

SAM

But, but, the paper I chased as a boy?

JOAN

Blank.

SAM

Blank? Impossible...

He ponders it.

SAM (CONT'D)

We have seen the past. Seen it in its actuality. It's realness.

JOAN

It was a vision, it had no existence.

SAM

A vision? A vi...

Joan repeats herself.

JOAN

Life itself is only a vision, a dream.

Sam awakens with electric energy.

SAM

By God! I had had that very thought a thousand times in my musings!

JOAN

Nothing exists. All is a dream. God, man, the world, the sun, the moon, the wilderness of stars, a dream, all a dream. They have no existence.

SAM

A dream?

JOAN

Nothing exists save empty space,
and you!

SAM

Me?

JOAN

And you're not you, you have no
body, no blood, no bones, you're
but a thought. I, myself have no
existence. I am but a dream, your
dream, creature of your
imagination. In a moment you will
have realized this, then you will
banish me from your visions and I
shall dissolve into the nothingness
out of which you made me....

Sam ponders all this more.

JOAN (CONT'D)

As you ponder this, I am perishing
already, I am failing, I am passing
away. In a little while you will be
alone in shoreless space, to wander
its limitless solitudes without
friend or comrade forever.

SAM

Forever.

JOAN

For you will remain a thought, the
only existent thought.

Sam's reaction.

JOAN (CONT'D)

And by your nature
inextinguishable, indestructible.

Joan's voice begins to fade as she slowly becomes thin and
transparent.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Strange, that you should not have
suspected that your universe and
its contents were only dreams,
visions, fiction!

SAM
Strange, indeed, because they're so
frankly and hysterically insane,
like all dreams.

A nearly transparent Joan smiles at us one last time.

JOAN
Sanity and happiness are an
impossible combination.

Joan is now gone.

SAM
My words. Funny.

JOAN (V.O.)
Thank you for making me, Sam.

SAM
How can this be?

Sam looks at his hand as it slowly becomes transparent.

SAM (CONT'D)
Nothing exists but thought,
vagrant, useless thought.

Sam disappears near the river's moving, rippling waters.

JOAN (V.O.)
Dream well, Sam.

SAM (V.O.)
I shall miss you.

JOAN (V.O.)
Hmm. I shall miss you too, Sam.

SAM (V.O.)
Fame is a vapor, popularity an
accident, the only earthly
certainty is oblivion.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE:

INT. STORMFIELD STAIRWELL - NEXT DAY

The House is in mourning. All wear black.

SERIES OF CUTS: MOURNING

- A. A black veil Clara mourns.
- B. As the household staff withdraw, she walks to Sam.
- C. In the background Sam rests comfortably within a coffin.
- D. Clara enters the room.
- E. Sam's open coffin.

INT. STORMFIELD LIVING ROOM - DAY

SERIES OF CUTS: GOOD-BYES

- A. Clara sits in a chair beside Sam's open coffin.
- B. Sam wears his customary white cashmere suit..
- C. Morning sun pours in and lands on the dead authors face.

Clara bends down and kisses her dead father's cheek. Each time, she says a name.

CLARA

I love you, Pa. I love you, Ma. I
love you, Susy. I love you, Jean.
Good-bye. For now.

She closes the casket's lid.

INT. WHITE BLANK SPACE - DAY

Bright light surrounds Joan and Sam. Silently, they stand in a white space. Each turns and embraces one another.

JOAN

I must go.

SAM

I shall dream better dreams. Ones
with you still in them dear.

JOAN

It doesn't work that way, Sam. I
wished it did.

She embraces him.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Good-bye. It was a unique journey.

SAM
Yes, it was. For Life is short.

JOAN
So, break the rules.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE:

INT. STORMFIELD - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The door opens.

Clara comes out. She adjusts her veil as she nods to the awaiting men to prepare her father's coffin.

Joe is in the background.

INT./EXT. STORMFIELD - THE PROCESSION - DAY

A song plays like, Pearl Jam's, Just Breathe as the door opens, PALLBEARERS appear.

EXT. STORMFIELD - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Makeshift pallbearers carry Sam's coffin out of his home in silence. House staff stands in the background with fresh tears in their eyes.

Joe wanders out.

Slowly, the coffin is placed in the back of village's hearse. Drawn by white horses. Halo effect on hearse pings. Bright beams of sunshine bounce off its shiny black polished exterior. A horse NEIGHS. We see the snouts of the team of white horses.

EXT. STORMFIELD - FRONT GROUNDS - SAME

Starts the little procession of three carriages.

We see them pass us. One by one, down the long driveway. They're leaving us. The horse drawn carriages move further and further away. As if, the story is over.

The closing song continues to play as Eddie-like lyrics sing the line, I'm a Fool you see.

EXT. STORMFIELD - FRONT YARD - SAME

From the far right corner, a lively Sam Clemens re-appears in shot and waves at the departing hearse.

We see the back of his white unruly hair and matching white suit. He looks magnificent almost angelic in white again. Full of life. Reborn!

Sam turns and smiles at the CAMERA. He walks closer and closer, until he brushes by it. As he passes it, he raises his long forefinger to his lips.

SAM

Shh!

EXT. FRONT YARD - SAME

Departs the carriages in a straight single line.

Sam smiles and gives the CAMERA a wink as he passes by. He goes to reenter his home.

The CAMERA faces the departing carriages as Stormfield's big black door closes and BANGS! behind us. The CAMERA turns and frames the door.

EXT. STORMFIELD - SAME

Hold on big black door that centers the front porch. Then sheepishly it reopens. Sam's big head sticks slowly out. The rest of him soon follows. He walks onto...

THE FRONT PORCH

Sam's eyes shift from his feet to the CAMERA. A sly, little smile crawls across his hairy lips. His hands rest on his lapels. He examines us, hard.

SAM

What? Oh, I forgot. Tada!

He gives us a deep low theatrical bow, then bounces up.

SAM (CONT'D)

I pray you enjoyed yourselves.

Sam smiles and removes a long, brown cigar from inside his suit pocket. He plops it in his big mouth. Then, he gives the CAMERA a quick wink.

In the shadow of the doorway is his entire family.

SAM (CONT'D)

Now get!

Sam nods a good-bye. This time, he closes the door for good.

A long bout of silence follows, no less than twenty seconds. Hold on the door until it becomes awkward for the audience.

Then we hear a CREAK, CREAK, CREAK of one of the patio's rocking chair. Pan slow right.

Here sits Joe. He smiles at the CAMERA as he HUMS, Battle Hymn Of The Republic.

JOE

*Mine eyes have seen the glory of
the coming of the Lord.*

Then, he looks around the palatial grounds of Twain's Stormfield estate. SNAP! The scenery transforms instantly to Sam's Hartford Home.

JOE (CONT'D)

Heaven is what you make of it.

Joe's face morphs into Joan's.

JOAN

Sam's mind chose... Home. Hartford.

Joan smiles at us one last time. Then, she disappears.

The abandoned rocking chair on the Hartford porch slows.

SOUND: CREAK. CREAK. CREAK.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END