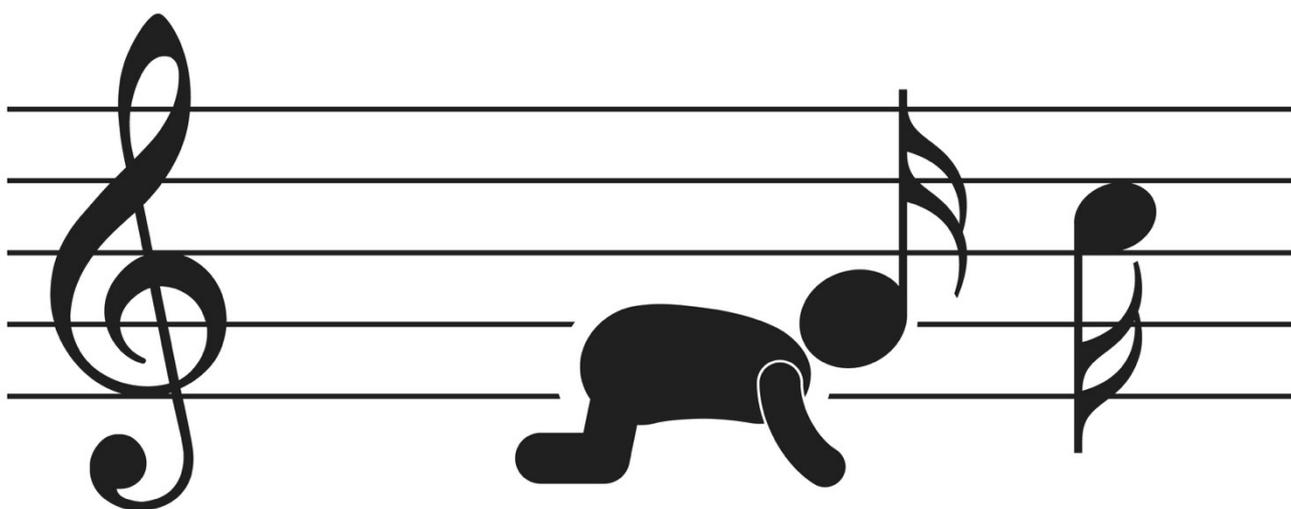


# ANNETTE



**A FILM by  
Leos Carax**

**ORIGINAL STORY by  
Ron Mael & Russell Mael**

**OPENING CREDITS**

We hear the murmur of an audience getting seated before a show.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE (CARAX)

Ladies and gentlemen,

We now ask for your complete attention.

If you want to sing, laugh, clap, cry, yearn, boo or fart

Please, do it in your head, only in your head.

You are now kindly requested to keep silent and to hold your  
breath until the very end of the show.

Breathing will not be tolerated during the show.

So, please take a deep, last breath right now.

Thank you.

The audience takes a deep last breath.

SONG (first recorded human voice ever)

"Au Clair de la Lune"

# PROLOGUE LOS ANGELES

## EXT. THE VILLAGE MUSIC STUDIO - NIGHT



Traffic at night in front of the L.A music studio.

Waveforms, following sound, superimposed on picture.

## INT. THE VILLAGE MUSIC STUDIO - NIGHT

IN THE CONTROL-ROOM:

A man (Carax), sitting behind the mixing console, waiting for something to start on the other side of the windowpane.

Close-up of VU meters on a mixing console: the needles react to offscreen sounds— instruments tuning up, feedback, amplifiers and mikes being plugged in and tested, chorus girl warming up, etc.

CARAX *(to his young daughter, Nastya, sitting behind him)*  
 Tu viens Nastya?  
 Ça va commencer.  
*(Into the mike)*  
 So... May we start?

SPARKS *(offscreen)*  
 So may we start?  
 High time to start...

IN THE LIVE ROOM:

Starting the song "So May We Start?":  
Hands on drums, hands on keyboards.

SPARKS  
One, two, three, four!

### **SO MAY WE START?**

SPARKS & CHORUS GIRLS  
*So may we start?*  
*So may we start?*  
*It's time to start*  
*High time to start*

Sparks put their coats on to go out of the studio.

*They hope that it goes the way*  
*—it's supposed to go*  
*There's fear in them all but they*  
*—can't let it show*  
*They're underprepared but that*  
*—may be enough*  
*The budget is large but still*  
*—it's not enough*

### **INT. MUSIC STUDIO: CORRIDOR - NIGHT**

Sparks leave the recording studio, still singing... and the Chorus Girls join in.

SPARKS & CHORUS GIRLS  
*So may we start?*  
*May we start, may we, may we now start?*  
*So may we start?*

The main actors (Adam Driver & Marion Cotillard) join in, and sing along.

MAIN ACTORS, SPARKS & CHORUS GIRLS  
*May we start, may we, may we now start?*  
*It's time to start*  
*May we start, may we, may we now start?*  
*High time to start*  
*May we start, may we, may we now start?*

### **EXT. MUSIC STUDIO - NIGHT**

They leave the building and continue singing outside, walking on the sidewalk

## MAIN ACTORS, SPARKS &amp; CHORUS GIRLS

*We've fashioned a world, a world  
—built just for you  
A tale of songs and fury  
—with no taboo  
We'll sing and die for you  
—yes in minor keys  
And if you want us to kill too  
—we may agree*

*So may we start?*

*May we start, may we, may we now start?*

*So may we start?*

*May we start, may we, may we now start?*

*It's time to start*

*May we start, may we, may we now start?*

*High time to start*

*May we start, may we, may we now start?*

Simon Helberg joins in.

## MAIN ACTORS, SPARKS &amp; CHORUS GIRLS

*So close all the doors and let's  
—begin the show  
The exits are clearly marked  
—thought you should know  
The authors are here so  
—let's not show disdain  
The authors are here and they're  
—a little vain*

Chorus Boys, Carax and Nastya, join in here.

The actors and Sparks kneel down, as for a prayer.

ALL

*Now...*

*The music resounds and all*

*—the flames are lit*

*So ladies and gents, please*

*—shut up and sit*

*The curtains of our eyelids*

*—lazily rise*

*But where's the stage, you wonder*

*Is it outside?*

*Or is it within?*

*Outside? ... Within?*

*Outside? ... Within?*

They ALL stand up and start walking and singing again:

ALL  
*So may we start?*  
     *May we start, may we, may we now start?*  
*So may we start?*  
     *May we start, may we, may we now start?*  
*It's time to start*  
     *May we start, may we, may we now start?*  
*High time to start*  
     *May we start, may we, may we now start?*  
 (...)

Towards the end of the song, Adam and Marion change while walking and singing (trainees hand them their coat or jacket, a helmet, a wig, etc.)

Still singing, the other singers watch as:

—Henry McHenry (Adam) goes to a powerful bike parked on the sidewalk, puts his helmet on, and rides off

—The Accompanist (Simon) walks away down the street

—Ann Defrasnoux (Marion) gets in the back of a SUV (door opened by the driver). The car drives off.

SPARKS  
 Bye Henry!

NASTYA  
 Bye Henry, good luck.

SPARKS  
 Bye Ann... Bon Voyage!

CHORUS BOYS & GIRLS  
 Bye!... Bye-bye!... Good luck!... Bye-bye!

**TITLE APPEARS (MOTION**

**LOGO) ANNETTE**

1<sup>ST</sup> ACTLOS  
ANGELES  
(NOWADAYS)**INT/EXT. ANN'S CAR THROUGH L.A. - NIGHT**

Ann Defrasnoux is in the back of her chic car (the star soprano is being driven to the opera house where she is to perform). She bites into a red apple.

While Ann vocalizes, a Chorus (offscreen) sings:

**TRUE LOVE A**

*True love always finds a way  
A way, a way  
But true love often goes astray*

**EXT. HENRY'S BIKE FREEWAY. - NIGHT**

Henry is riding his large motorcycle on a L.A freeway.

The famous comedian is on his way to the theater where he is to perform his one-man show.

*Astray, astray*

**INT/EXT. ANN'S CAR THROUGH L.A. - NIGHT**

*True love always finds a way  
A way, a way  
But true love often goes astray  
Astray, astray*

**EXT. LOS- ANGELES / HENRY'S THEATER - NIGHT**

Henry arrives at his theater, the Orpheum Theatre.  
The billboards announce:

**THE APE OF GOD / HENRY McHENRY / SOLD OUT**

**EXT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT**

Ann arrives at the opera house, the modern Walt Disney Concert Hall.

On the gigantic frontage:

**THE FOREST  
ANN DEFRASNOUX**

**INT. HENRY'S THEATER: BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

Henry, backstage, pacing the corridor as he's getting ready to go on stage. All he is wearing is a green toweling bathrobe (hood on his head), which makes him look like a boxer before the fight—especially as he seems very concentrated and does a little dance in front of a wall, boxing the wall.

But unlike any sportsman, he's eating a banana and smoking a cigarette at the same time. (It's all part of his pre-show ritual.)

Sporadically, he seems aggressive, almost angry.

We hear distant impatient cheering and clapping growing. And then the intro music to Henry's show.

HENRY (*mumbling*)  
Yes, "laugh, laugh, laugh..."

**INT. OPERA HOUSE: ANN'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT**

Ann, alone in her dressing room, is getting ready to go on stage.

Lying on the floor, she's doing strange breathing exercises.

ANN  
One, two, three, four five, six seven, eight, nine, ten...  
One, two, three, four five, six seven, eight, nine, ten...

**INT. HENRY'S THEATER: BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

The ANNOUNCER and the FEMALE STAGE MANAGER are standing behind a mike stand.

ANNOUNCER  
Ladies and gentlemen, are you ready?  
No! No one is ever ready for... a mildly offensive evening with... The Ape of God! Here with his triumphal new show, the world infamous Henry McHenry!

Henry crushes his cigarette and banana in an ashtray.

Still in his bathrobe, he enters the stage through a glass corridor full of smoke.

### **INT. HENRY'S THEATER: ON STAGE - NIGHT**

At first, we can hardly see him. Because of the semidarkness on stage, but mostly because of the dense smoke emitted by smoke machines.

On stage: a high stool with a mike and a glass of whiskey.

Henry, coughing, angry, grabs the mike on the stool.

HENRY (*mumbling to himself*)  
This smoke... shit!

He loudly takes a sip of whiskey.

HENRY  
What is this fucking smoke supposed to mean anyway?  
I think I'm getting allergic to it.  
Wish they'd use laughing gas instead, would make my life easier.  
Or even better, cyanide gas.

Henry now faces the audience (the smoke dissipates). He seems ill at ease, hesitant, reluctant. (The public loves his unique blend of introversion and extraversion.)

He takes his time; he's in no hurry to make people laugh. He talks into the mike, his lips touching the mike, almost in a whisper.

HENRY  
So... I'm here to make you laugh tonight.

AUDIENCE  
Waooh!

HENRY  
Yes, "Laugh, laugh, laugh..."  
Not sure I can do it tonight.

AUDIENCE  
Ooooooooooh...

HENRY  
Not sure I should even try...  
Making people laugh is a disgusting, deceitful trick anyway.

## THE ZYGOMATIC RAP

HENRY

*Yes...  
Why should I activate your ventromedial prefrontal cortex  
So your fifteen facial muscles will contract  
So your fucking zygomatic muscle will react  
While your epiglottis half-closes your larynx  
—CLAP!*

Yes, why the fuck should I?  
Why should I make you...

Suddenly: lights! music! Chorus Girls!

Henry sings his (rock) refrain, with the Chorus Girls:

### LAUGH LAUGH LAUGH (A)

HENRY & CHORUS GIRLS

*Laugh, laugh, laugh?  
But don't make me, don't make me, don't make me  
Can't stand to hear you  
Laugh, laugh, laugh  
'Cause You bore me, you bore me, you bore me*

*First, I'll make you  
Gasp, gasp, gasp  
But don't worry, don't worry, don't worry  
You probably will not  
Choke, choke, choke  
Kick the bucket, kick the bucket,  
Kick the bucket, kick the bucket.*

The music stops. The stage goes back to semidarkness.

While the audience claps and cheers, Henry takes a few pages (his contract) out of one his bathrobe pockets... studies it a few seconds...

HENRY

Hu... hum...

Well of course, I've heard the rumors too.

They say my show kills.

But relax, see my contract?

Save your breath.

Says so here: "Mr. Henry McHenry is not allowed to make the public laugh to death"

Henry pretends to hang himself with the mike.

HENRY  
 Can't make your alveoli pop tonight  
 No dislocated jaws, no belly explosions.  
 However, asthmatics, keep your inhalers in position!

**OK, READY, LAUGH!**

HENRY  
 Ok?!...

AUDIENCE  
**OK!**

HENRY  
 Ready?

AUDIENCE  
**READY!**

HENRY  
 Laugh!

AUDIENCE  
*Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!*  
*Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!*

Henry stops the audience's singing, with a big wave of his arm (like a conductor).

HENRY  
 Ok, shut up...

### **7B. INT. OPERA HOUSE: THE STAGE – NIGHT**

A few seconds away from the beginning of the opera.

Ann, her back to the stage curtain that separates her from her public. She slightly bends over, in a prostrate posture. Shivering, hands around her elbows.

The curtain starts to open...

### **ARIA INTRO**

### **6C. INT. HENRY'S THEATER: ON STAGE - NIGHT**

We're back with Henry on stage. He's wiping his face with a tissue.

HENRY  
 Yes, why... why did I become a comedian?

**SO WHY DID I BECOME A COMEDIAN**

HENRY

*To entertain some balding men?  
To bring a touch of levity to tragic times?*  
Not me

*To bring some joy to those who have none?  
To cast a skeptical eye toward common knowledge?*  
Uh uh

*To make you notice what you've always surely noticed  
never noticing you noticed until I ask you:  
"Have you ever noticed?"*  
Hmm sure —but not only that

*To convey with a smile  
these deep-seated feelings of hatred and humiliation  
we all seem to be sharing, when...*

*All the Catholics hate the Muslims  
And the Muslims hate the Catholics  
And the Tutsis hate the Hutus  
and everybody hates the Jews!*

The audience laughs and claps.

Henry goes to the high stool to drink more whiskey.

Someone in the audience yells:

So why Henry?!

WOMAN IN THE AUDIENCE  
Yes, why Henry?

HENRY  
Why?

And the audience starts talking/singing:

**SO WHY DID YOU BECOME A COMEDIAN?**

AUDIENCE  
*Yes, why did you become a comedian?  
For the money?  
For the money?*

Henry takes a lighter and a few \$100 bills from his pocket.

HENRY

*Oh no, no*

*'Cause I come from poverty and severity*

*And now have reached big money and obscenity*

AUDIENCE

*So why did you become a comedian?*

*For the fame?*

*For the fame?*

Henry starts burning the \$100 bills.

HENRY

*Oh no, no*

*Though fame is like a flame, glorious, superfluous*

*So nice being famous for being infamous*

AUDIENCE

*OK but why did you become a comedian?*

*Fear of death?*

*Fear of death?*

HENRY

*Oh, no, no*

*'Cause you see I have sympathy for the abyss.*

...

***A-B-Y-S-S!!!*** You illiterates!

That's why I must *never... never* cast my eyes towards the abyss.

He "casts his eyes" on a woman in the first row.

HENRY

Lady, that's quite an abyss you've got...

The lady nervously laughs.

AUDIENCE

*So why... why did you become a comedian?*

*For the women?*

*For the women?*

HENRY

Oh no...

OK, let me explain.

He walks to the back of the stage, lost in his thoughts.

**INTROSPECTIVE 1**

HENRY

You see, my serial pussy days are over  
 Because, well... I've just met someone  
 Someone so...  
 It all went so fast  
 I just moved into her tiny hidden palace  
 —'cause, yes, she's a queen  
 And now, I'm engaged

AUDIENCE

Oouh...

HENRY

I know, I know: marrying a girl when you're as  
 young and green as me, it's like... swimming  
 the Atlantic with a concrete block tied to your  
 left testicle.

*Well yes now, I'm engaged  
 Copped out in my early age  
 So who, you ask, would marry me?  
 Who would be the least likely?  
 No, this ain't a joke so far:  
 Yes, Ann Defrasnoux, the opera star*

WOMAN IN AUDIENCE

OH NO!

HENRY

*What? What's wrong, lady?  
 Ann and me? —You disagree?  
 What is it? —Blasphemy?  
 Why? Is she too perfect?*

AUDIENCE

*Yes, yes, yes!*

HENRY

*And I? Some loathsome insect?*

AUDIENCE

*Yes, yes, yes!*

HENRY

OK... I'll accept that!

**INT. ANN'S OPERA HOUSE: STAGE – NIGHT**

Slow motion, Ann on stage, beautiful and spectral. She acts nervous and fearful, moving as if trying to escape from a frightening situation.

HENRY

First time I fell in love, woke up next to the girl...

**INT. HENRY'S THEATER: ON STAGE – NIGHT**

Henry, pacing the stage, lost in his thoughts.

HENRY

... rushed out to buy myself the biggest motorbike I could find,  
and escaped, fast and far.

**INT. ANN'S OPERA HOUSE: STAGE – NIGHT**

Ann starts singing the Aria.

HENRY (*offscreen*)

But Ann the soprano has changed me,  
I have changed...

How? I'm still not sure...

Time will tell...

What I see in her is obvious.

What she sees in me, hmmm, that's a little  
more puzzling...

**INT. HENRY'S THEATER: ON STAGE – NIGHT**

The Chorus Girls get close to their mikes.

**OPERA BOWS**

HENRY

*Wish that she could be here now*

*But she's at the opera tonight*

*Opera, where everything is... Saaaacred!*

CHORUS GIRLS

***A-MEN!***

HENRY

*First she dies and dies and dies*

*And then she bows and bows and bows*

*She'll be bowing now 'til dawn*

*Ann, dear, I love you so*

*But all that bowing's gotta go*

*Take a last bow—enough!*

*Make it seem more off the cuff*

Audience laughing and clapping.

WOMAN IN AUDIENCE  
But Henry, you didn't answer: why?

AUDIENCE  
**Yes, why did you become a comedian?**  
**So why did you become a comedian?**  
**Yes, why did you become a comedian?**  
**Hey, Henry?**

The music abruptly stops. Silence.

Henry, facing the audience, mouth touching the mike.

HENRY  
Why?... I'll tell you why: to disarm people.  
"Make them laugh"—it's the only way I know to tell the truth  
without getting killed.

Lost in his thoughts, he turns his back to the audience and slowly walks towards the back of the stage.

HENRY  
Anyway, every fuckin'....

The deep silence is suddenly broken by loud gunshots.  
Screams of panic in the audience... as Henry, hit by each invisible bullet, staggers through the stage... He falls, "dead."

But after a few seconds, Henry slowly gets back on his feet.

Sounds of relief in the audience, and laughs.

WOMAN IN AUDIENCE  
Henry, you bastard!

MAN IN AUDIENCE  
Fuck you, Henry!

Henry picks up his mike.

HENRY  
See, I too can die...and then.... bow  
Ok, well, that's it for tonight!

AUDIENCE  
Oh no, no, no!

HENRY

Oh yes, yes... 'cause I'm sick and tired of making you...

Lights! music!... Henry and the Chorus Girls sing:

**LAUGH LAUGH LAUGH**

HENRY & CHORUS GIRLS

*Laugh, laugh, laugh*

*But don't leave me, don't leave me, don't leave me*

*Can't bear to hear you*

*Laugh, laugh, laugh*

*'Cause you bore me, you bore me, you bore me*

*But I need to hear you*

*Clap, clap, clap*

*Yes, I'm cocky, I'm cocky, I'm cocky*

*Want each-one-of-you to*

*Clap, clap, clap*

*Like a loony, like a loony, like a loony, like a loony*

Henry throws his mike in the air.

He air-kisses the Chorus Girls and walks to the back of the stage. He drops his bathrobe to the floor, moons at the audience and leaves the stage.

Screams and claps from the crowd.

The Chorus Girls go on singing on their own.

CHORUS GIRLS

*We promised that you'd laugh,*

*We promised that you'd laugh*

*We promised that you'd laugh, laugh, laugh, laugh*

*Laugh, laugh, laugh*

*'Cause he's Henry, he's Henry, The Henry*

*He didn't make you choke, choke, choke*

*Or kick the bucket, kick the bucket, kick the bucket*

*He needs to hear you*

*Clap, clap, clap*

*'Cause he's Henry, he's Henry, The Henry*

*Wants each of you to*

*Clap, clap, clap*

The audience, now standing, claps and sings along.

**EXT. HENRY'S BIKE ON L.A. STREET- NIGHT**

Henry on his bike, riding fast.

CHORUS GIRLS

*So let's hear it, let's hear it, let's hear it, let's hear it!*

**EXT. HENRY'S BIKE TO OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT**

Henry on his bike going through a tunnel.

**INT. INSIDE ANN'S OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT**

It is the end of the opera, and the very refined audience is clapping with great enthusiasm (but control) as Ann the soprano star "bows and bows and bows" on stage.

**EXT. VIP EXIT ANN'S OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT**

Henry drives past the public coming out of the opera.

As he slows down, approaching the *sortie des artistes*, he can see a crowd, flashes.

He parks, a bit away from the crowd. Still wearing his helmet, he watches from a distance:

Ann, surrounded by admirers and photographers, signing autographs. She notices him, and is visibly moved.

He comes down from the bike, and walks towards Ann.

She rushes through a few last autographs and, helped by security men, pushes her way through the crowd to go meet him (in her arms, a bunch of flowers offered by her admirers).

They grab each other's hands, eagerly, tenderly—but with some of the awkwardness of new lovers. Henry pulls up his helmet's visor, and they exchange a short kiss.

(They're both extremely shy people, but deal with their shyness very differently: she stays discreet, but complies politely with the basic rules of celebrity; he deals with his insecurity and anxiety by being provocative.)

While the photographers are taking pictures, calling their names, they exchange a few words, whispering:

ANN

How did the show go?

HENRY

I killed them... destroyed them... murdered them.

ANN  
Good boy.

HENRY  
And your "gig"?

ANN (with her shy smile)  
I... *I Saved Them.*

HENRY  
Well, you die so magnificently...  
Honey, you're *always* dying!

PHOTOGRAPHERS (*Shouting*)  
Ann! Henry!  
How 'bout a smile!  
Give us a smile!  
Over here!... That's it!... Alright... Over this way!... this way...

### **HOW 'BOUT A SMILE**

PHOTOGRAPHERS  
*How 'bout a smile, Ann?*  
*Give us a smile, Ann!*  
*How 'bout a smile, Ann?*  
*Give us a smile, Ann!*

*Henry, please, in the frame!*  
*In the frame, Henry!*  
*Helmet off, Henry!*  
*In the frame, Henry!*  
*Helmet off, Henry!*

Ann asks Henry (mutely and apologetically) to comply with the photographers. He then poses with her, clowning: he leans his face on her shoulder and closes his eyes—which embarrasses her, but she loves him so... He's like a kid in love.

PHOTOGRAPHERS  
*How 'bout a smile, please?*  
*How 'bout a smile, please?*  
*And give us a smile, please!*  
*Give us a smile, please!*

Henry, your helmet!  
Take off your helmet!

Henry takes the flowers from Ann's hands and majestically throws them into the air.

**EXT. FOREST AMONG CANYONS - DAY**

Beauty and silence of nature (no dialog, no music).

Henry and Ann taking a lovers' walk in a forest, holding hands. Again, we feel the strong love and this touching shyness between them.

For a few seconds, they separate: he stops to light a cigarette. She goes on walking, slower. As he catches up with her:  
 slow POV TRACKING SHOT towards Ann's back (as she's walking)  
 —a feeling of sensuality (her naked neck, shoulders) and menace (is he going to hit her, strangle her?)

He puts his hand on her neck, and they resume their walk.

Now holding hands, both looking in different directions, they start singing:

**WE LOVE EACH OTHER SO MUCH**

HENRY

*We love each other so much  
 We love each other so much  
 We're scoffing at logic  
 This wasn't the plan  
 We love each other so much*

ANN

*We love each other so much  
 We love each other so much  
 Counterintuitive, baby  
 And yet we remain  
 We love each other so much*

HENRY & ANN

*Counterintuitive, baby  
 And yet we remain  
 We love each other so much*

**EXT. ON THE ROAD - EVENING**

They're driving back home on Henry's bike, racing through the night, Ann's arms lovingly embracing his torso.

HENRY & ANN

*We love each other so much  
 We love each other so much  
 So hard to explain it  
 So hard to explain  
 We love each other so much*

**EXT. ANN'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

They park the bike in the big garden in front of the house, and go towards the house, holding each other lovingly.

**EXT. ANN'S HOUSE: POOL - NIGHT**

Ann's house, above the pool. Behind the 1st floor bay window's curtains, we can see the shadow of the couple embracing.

**INT. ANN'S HOUSE: BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Henry is carrying Ann in his arms, from the window to the bed.

As they make love:

HENRY  
*We love each other so much*

HENRY & ANN  
*We love each other so much*

ANN  
*Speak soft when you say it*  
*Speak soft when you say*

HENRY & ANN  
*We love each other so much*  
*Speak soft when you say it*  
*Speak soft when you say*  
*We love each other so much*

The song ends with their (singing) orgasm outcry:

*So much... so much... so much... so much... so much...*

**INT. ANN'S HOUSE: BEDROOM & BATHROOM - NIGHT**

After Sex. Semidarkness. Henry is taking a shower.

Ann, still in bed, bites into an apple.

Henry re-emerges from the bathroom, in a black bathrobe. He approaches Ann, hands in the air in front of him—again as if he was going to strangle her, but this time playfully, impersonating a vampire in an old horror movie.

HENRY  
Tickling time...

ANN  
Hmm... No no no...

She tries to hide underneath the sheets... but Henry jumps on the bed, and starts tickling her.

ANN (*trying not to laugh*)  
Henry!  
No, no, no!  
Henry please, not my feet, not my feet!  
No, no, no!  
Stop it!

Henry licks the sole of her feet. Ann can't help laughing.

They "fight"... They kiss each other...

### **SHOWBIZ NEWS (SBN) ON SCREEN**

Images of Henry and Ann on their wedding day, on their yacht.

### **SHOW BIZ NEWS (TIED THE KNOT)**

CONNIE O'CONNOR'S VOICE  
Connie O'Connor here for Show Biz News, bringing you the latest on Anne and Henry's whirlwind romance: the two stars both at the pinnacle of their careers have officially tied the knot.

CHORUS  
*Tied the knot... Tied the knot... Tied the knot...*

### **INT. ANN'S OPERA HOUSE – NIGHT**

Before the beginning of the opera.

The musicians, in the orchestra pit, are tuning their instruments.

Ann's long-time piano accompanist (The Accompanist) is on the stage (behind the curtain), playing the piano and singing. He's a gentle man, but an ambitious one.

### **I'M AN ACCOMPANIST**

THE ACCOMPANIST

*I'm an accompanist, I'm an accompanist  
 I'm an accompanist for Ann, for Ann  
 Ann's the one with the genius, the grace  
 I'm the one with the technical expertise  
 Ah, the tease, ah, the tease, of being so near, so far  
 From the star, from the stars  
 But someday I'll join them 'cause...*

*I'm a conductor, I'm a conductor!  
 I'm a conductor, a conductor at heart!  
 It's a temp job I'm doing  
 This should only be seen as a means to an end  
 In the end, in the end, I'll lead orchestras near and far  
 Every bar, every bar, will bear my own signature*

*But I'm an accompanist, for the present, for Ann  
 That's what I do  
 I'm an accompanist, for the present, for Ann*

But now, let's listen to her sing...

The orchestra starts playing the dramatic intro to Ann's famous "Aria."

### **INT. HENRY'S THEATER: BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

The orchestral intro overlaps with images of:

Henry doing his pre-show ritual (banana & cigarettes).

The opera's music gives these images (already seen almost identically in Henry's first show sequence) a whole different weight—a sort of tragic dimension.

### **INT. ANN'S OPERA HOUSE: STAGE - NIGHT**

The orchestra finishes the intro while the curtain slowly opens.

The set is a forest at night, with fake stylized trees.

Ann appears: beautiful, spectral. She starts singing:

### **ARIA (THE FOREST)**

ANN  
*There's a chill in the air on this night  
 Where is the moon, where is the starlight?  
 Bearings lost, we're adrift on this night  
 Where is the moon?  
 Where is the starlight tonight?*

*Afraid, don't know why  
Where is the moonlight?  
Afraid, don't know why  
Where is the starlight?  
Afraid, 'fraid of you  
Something about the look in your eyes*

The back of the stage opens up on... a real forest (at night).

Ann rushes toward the back of the stage...

**EXT. REAL FOREST – NIGHT**

... and enters the real forest... walking deeper and deeper into it as she sings, cold and frightened... Is she being followed? She's not sure...

ANN  
*Hurry, dawn, I need help, I need light  
Cut short the night, I am in danger  
Though I thought that I knew him, I'm wrong  
I don't know him, he is a stranger, tonight*

*Afraid, don't know why  
Where is the moonlight?  
Afraid, don't know why  
Where is the starlight?*

Ann turns and starts to walk back towards the fake forest and the public.

*Afraid, 'fraid of you  
Something about the look in your eyes*

**INT. HENRY'S THEATER - NIGHT**

**ARIA TRANSITION**

Slow motion: Henry's plays with his mike's cable as with a lasso.

**IN A TUNNEL - NIGHT**

**ARIA TRANSITION**

Henry on his bike:

—racing though the night in the tunnel

—close-up: his face behind the helmet; his eyes.

**INT. ANN'S OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT**

BACKSTAGE:

Henry, helmet in one hand, crosses a long corridor (he passes opera technicians). Ann's singing becomes clearer and louder as he approaches the stage.

It's the end of the opera—the music is dramatic and poignant...

Henry is getting more and more tense, as if he was approaching with dread the scene of a terrible crime.

He stops near the stage (so he can see Ann performing without being seen by the public).

**FINALE**

ANN  
*I am Love!*  
*A fickle thing a finite thing*  
*I am Love!*  
*Do not approach me!*  
 AAAAAAhhh...

Ann appears from the back of the stage, staggering, stumbling towards the front of the stage—her nightgown is soaked with blood. She's dying, singing her final lines on high, heartrending notes.

ANN  
*I was Love*  
*A gruesome thing, a gruesome thing*  
*I was Love*  
*But now I'm dying*  
*Dying, dying, dying, dying... dyyyyyying!*

The Accompanist, at his piano, has noticed Henry's arrival: he watches Henry watch Ann.

Henry watching Ann singing/dying: hard to know what strong feelings he's experiencing—love and admiration for sure, but also some kind of anxiety, it seems.

Ann is dead. Thunderous applause as the curtain closes.

As Ann gets ready to bow on the other side of the curtain. She and Henry exchange short, intimate glances.

Henry then watches Ann bow to her exulting audience on the other side of the curtain (on control video screens).

AUDIENCE  
 Bravo Ann... Bravo!... Brava!

I love you Ann!

### **SHOWBIZ NEWS**

Paparazzi pictures of Ann, pregnant, walking in LA with Henry.

### **SBN (NEW BORN GIRL)**

CONNIE O'CONNOR'S VOICE

And, in Show Biz News, anonymous sources report that the singing and laughter around the Defrasnoux - McHenry household will soon be drowned out by the cries of a newborn girl.

CHORUS

*Newborn girl... Newborn girl...*

### **INT. THE COUPLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

The couple asleep (long exposure shot).

Ann (now very pregnant) is asleep, totally still during the night. Henry, on the contrary, is very agitated.

### **HENRY'S VISIONS**

#### **INT. MATERNITY WARD - NIGHTMARE**

*A nurse hands Henry his new-born baby.*

*...Its face is made-up as a clown's!*

#### **INT. ANN'S OPERA HOUSE: ON STAGE - NIGHT**

*Slow motion: Ann, very pregnant, bowing on stage—her nightgown soaked with blood.*

### **INT. THE COUPLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

The couple in bed, having sex. Ann is now 9 months pregnant.

### **INT. MATERNITY WARD - NIGHT**

Ann is on the delivery bed, with Henry by her side. They are surrounded by the Doctor and Nurses.

Ann is taking deep, painful breaths.

ANN  
Oh merde...

### **SHE'S OUT OF THIS WORLD (PART 1)**

NURSES  
*Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in*  
(...)

THE DOCTOR & NURSES  
*Push Ann, push Ann*  
*That's it!*  
*Push Ann, push Ann*  
*That's it!*  
(...)

Ann is in labor, panting. Henry is sweating profusely, even more than his wife. He seems not just worried about the delivery, but seized by deep personal angst.

Nervousness (and his sense of uselessness) makes him say something strange and inappropriate, with no intention of being funny:

Doctor, am I doing everything... right?

...which sends Ann into a fit of laughter... which triggers much stronger contractions...

NURSE  
Yes, Ann!... yes, keep on laughing, that's great!

DOCTOR  
She's coming!  
She's coming!

Henry is visibly reassured by the fact that he has been useful.

The Nurses and the Doctor advise Ann at the same time now, singing:

DOCTOR & NURSES  
*Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in*  
*Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in*  
*Push, push, push, push, push, Ann*  
*That's it! That's it!*  
*Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in*  
*Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in*  
*Push, push, push, push, push, Ann*  
*That's it! That's it!*  
(...)

DOCTOR  
She's almost there!

Henry leaves Ann's side, to go see what's "going on."

HENRY  
Shit Ann... she seems completely naked!

Ann has another howl of laughter...

NURSE  
Yes, yes, yes!... Laugh, laugh Ann, laugh!

DOCTOR  
Great Ann! Keep on laughing!

NURSE  
Laugh, laugh, laugh, yes Ann!

DOCTOR & NURSES  
There she is!

Henry cuts the umbilical cord, with a huge, frightening pair of scissors.

The baby passes from person to person...

It is like a real baby, but something makes it extraordinary, a subtle and indefinable strangeness. A mystifying little creature. A poetic baby.

## **SHE'S OUT OF THIS WORLD (PART 2)**

DOCTOR & NURSES  
*She's out of this world!*  
*Out of this world*  
*Welcome to the world, Annette!*  
*She's out of this world!*  
*Out of this world*  
*Welcome to the world, Annette!*

Henry takes the baby and delicately places her on Ann's chest.

**HENRY**  
*She's out of this world*  
**DOCTOR & NURSES**  
*Out of this world....*  
**ANN**  
*Welcome to the world, Annette!*  
**HENRY**  
*She's out of this world*  
**DOCTOR AND NURSES**

*Out of this world....*

**ANN**

*Welcome to the world, Annette!*

## 2<sup>nd</sup> ACT

(A FEW MONTHS LATER)

LOS ANGELES & AT SEA

### ELLIPSIS A: SECOND ACT

Henry seems changed. At times he shows a new anger; he drinks more. And strangely (after his daughter's birth), he has more and more morbid thoughts. Are his recent family life and happiness suffocating him? Is his "domestic bliss" in conflict with his work—his sense of comedy and provocation? Is he becoming jealous of his wife's growing success? He loves her, and the baby, but...

### EXT. ANN'S HOUSE: THE POOL - DAY

The beautiful pool, with baby swim floats, an inflatable ball, etc.

Sounds of baby Annette babbling and laughing.

### INT. THE COUPLE'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

The couple in bed, asleep. The baby is between them, awake, calm. She slowly looks at one parent, then the other.

### EXT/INT. ANN'S HOUSE: POOL & LIVINGROOM - DAY

Henry is in the garden, bare-chested, smoking a cigarette. The baby is lying asleep on his forearm. He makes slow movements, like a dancer exercising.

HENRY  
This is a baby.  
This is *my* baby.

FADE TO

### EXT. THE CITY (LA) - DUSK

FADE TO

### INT. ANN'S HOUSE: LIVING ROOM - DUSK

A glass: whiskey flows into the glass.

HENRY  
 Tonight, while she's singing and dying  
 I'm baaaaaby-sitting!

**HENRY'S VISIONS**

**INT. ANN'S HOUSE: LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

*Henry sitting on the sofa, his feet on a coffee table, watching TV with a glass of whiskey in hand.*

*But suddenly, panicked, he looks for the baby... Where did he leave her? ... He stands up abruptly: yes, he was sitting on the baby!  
 (He was "baby-sitting").*

**EXCERPT FROM KING VIDOR'S THE CROWD**

*A theater audience laughing their heads off.*

**FADE TO**

**INT. ANN'S OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT**

*Ann on stage, "dying" while singing:*

*...Dyyyyinnnnng!*

**FADE TO**

**EXCERPT FROM KING VIDOR'S THE CROWD**

*The theater audience laughing their heads off.*

**FADE TO**

*Ann on stage, bows, as she is acclaimed by her audience.*

**INT. ANN'S HOUSE: LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Annette sleeping on Henry's forearms (he's drinking a glass of whiskey).

**CALM BEFORE THE OPERA**

CHORUS (offscreen)  
*Something's about to break, but it isn't clear  
 Is it something we should cheer?*

*Is it something we should fear?*

**HENRY'S VISIONS**

**IN ANNETTE'S ROOM - NIGHT**

*A big gorilla (hug plush toy) tenderly holding Annette in its arms. The baby is looking at the gorilla's face, at ease, babbling.*

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Annette's eyes open. She's in Henry's arms. He looks at himself and the baby in a mirror.

Henry's expression is pensive. He smiles at the baby—loving but solemn.

CHORUS (*offscreen*)  
*Something's about to break, but it isn't clear*  
*Is it something we should cheer?*  
*Is it something we should fear?*

Henry is playing with the baby, gently moving her into different positions: on his forearm, in the palms of his hands, etc.

CHORUS (*offscreen*)  
*Something's about to break, but it isn't clear*  
*Is it something we should cheer?*  
*Is it something we should fear?*

**EXT. LOS ANGELES FREEWAY - DAY**

Cars rushing on a freeway outside LA.

**INT. ANN'S CAR ON FREEWAY - DAY**

Ann, sitting in the back of the car: she seems tense, exhausted.

ANN (*Talking to her driver*)  
 Oscar, I feel like sleeping now.  
 Please wake me up before we get there.

DRIVER  
 Sure.

She uses her steroid nasal spray, takes off her glasses and lies down on the back seat, vaguely watching TV news on the small TV monitor mounted into the headrest facing her:

Footage of Wildfires across California.

Ann tries to relax, eyes half-closed...

The driver, the freeway.

Ann is now asleep. The (low) sound of the news turns into a song.

**ANN'S NIGHTMARE**

**SIX WOMEN HAVE COME FORWARD**

CHORUS OF MEN

*Six women have come forward  
Each with a similar story  
Subjected to Henry McHenry's abuses  
Witnesses to his violence*

**INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY**

*A crowd of journalists facing 6 women sitting on a stage, singing into their mikes.*

CHORUS OF MEN

*Why now?  
Why now?*

THE 6 WOMEN

*Each of us has come forward  
All with a similar story  
Subjected to his abuses,  
witnesses to his violence  
And his anger,  
his anger!*

**6 SPLIT SCREENS: THE 6 WOMEN**

**CHORUS OF MEN**

*Six women have come forward*

**THE 6 WOMEN**

*Each of us have come forward  
Each with a similar story  
All with a similar story  
Subjected to his abuses  
Subjected to his abuses,  
Witnesses to his violence  
And his anger, his anger*

**INT/EXT. ANN'S CAR ON FREEWAY - CONTINUOUS**

*Ann, awake now (but, as we'll soon understand, she's dreaming she's awake), looking at the news on the TV monitor, as hypnotized.*

JOURNALISTS  
 But why?... Why only now?  
 Why come forward now?  
 Why only now?... Yes why?  
 Yes, why only now?

**INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - CONTINUOUS**

Close-up of one woman after the other, singing:

WOMAN 1  
*I, I fear for Ann*

WOMAN 2  
*She must be warned  
 McHenry is not  
 not what he seems*

CHORUS OF MEN  
*Why? Why come forward now?*

WOMAN 3  
*So charming that I  
 a woman with sense  
 I quickly became  
 a moth to a flame*

THE 6 WOMEN  
*A moth to a flame!*

**INT/EXT. ANN'S CAR ON FREEWAY / STUDIO - DAY**

*Ann, mortified, lies back on the seat and hides her face between her arms.*

CHORUS OF MEN (*Offscreen*)  
*Six women have come forward*

THE 6 WOMEN  
*Each of us have come forward  
 Each with a similar story  
 All with a similar story  
 Subjected to his abuses  
 Subjected to his abuses*

**EXT. HENRY ON HIS BIKE IN TUNNEL**

SONG CONTINUED

*On the road, some engine seems to be rushing towards the car... yes, a big powerful motorbike, rushing straight towards Ann in her car... We now recognize Henry, on his bike...*

CHORUS OF MEN (OFFSCREEN) & THE 6 WOMEN  
*Witnesses to his violence*

**INT/EXT. ANN'S CAR ON FREEWAY - CONTINUOUS**

*Ann's driver honks his horn. Ann suddenly straightens up to look at the road ahead. Her anxiety grows as she sees Henry on his bike about to collide with her car...*

THE 6 WOMEN  
*And his anger, his anger*

**EXT. HENRY ON HIS BIKE IN TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS**

*Henry speeding towards the car... the collision seems inescapable...*

THE 6 WOMEN  
*His anger, his anger!*

**INT/EXT. ANN'S CAR ON FREEWAY – CONTINUOUS**

We move back to day light.  
Anne suddenly (really) wakes up, feeling lost.

**INT. THE COUPLE'S BEDROOM - DAWN OR DUSK**

Ann asleep, in bed (in a strange, morbid position).

Henry finishes getting dressed and goes out.

**EXT. ON THE ROAD TO LAS VEGAS - EVENING**

Desert. Henry speeding through the night on his bike.

**HENRY'S VISIONS**

**ANN ON STAGE - NIGHT**

*Ann, dying again and again:*

- leaping into the flames (as Norma in Norma)*
- strangled by Othello (as Desdemona in Othello)*
- stabbed by José (as Carmen in Carmen)*
- preparing to cut her own throat with a knife (as Cio-Cio San in Madame Butterfly)*
- dying of tuberculosis (as Violetta in La Traviata)*
  
- Annette, smiling.*

**EXT. LAS VEGAS THEATER- NIGHT**

Images of Las Vegas neon signs.

**INT. LAS VEGAS THEATER: BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

Before the show: Henry in his green toweling bathrobe, hood on.  
We hear the audience (offscreen) clapping and cheering.

**MUSIC INTRO**

THE ANNOUNCER

And now, here in Vegas for the very first time...  
The Ape of God! Mr. Henry McHenry!

As Henry heads towards the double door corridor filled with smoke, the Announcer gives him a tap on the shoulder—but Henry, taciturn, doesn't react.

**INT. LAS VEGAS THEATER: STAGE - NIGHT**

Henry exits the corridor and enters the stage, coughing.

AUDIENCE

**Henry!**

HENRY (*Coughing, angry*)  
Fucking idiotic smoke!

He knocks violently on the backstage door, yelling at some invisible technicians.

Have you no sense of proportions?!

Having to be funny here... it's like trying to enjoy a blowjob in a gas chamber.

Laughter, but also a few boos...

Henry takes the glass of whisky on the high stool and starts drinking.

Someone in the audience shouts:

That was not funny Henry!

HENRY

You're right, not funny...

I'm so... too fucking tired...

I knew it, I should've cancelled the show tonight.

AUDIENCE

No, no, no!

HENRY

Yes, yes, yes...

You see, my house was broken into last night...

The bastards, stole all my jokes.

A few laughs. But Henry seems more and more tense.

HENRY

No, the truth is... now that I have my own soprano and baby...  
not sure I have it in me anymore to make sad people laugh.

*(He interrupts himself)*

No, the truth is... this morning, something happened...I did a ...  
no, no I can't say...

*(He interrupts himself again)*

No, the truth is I'm sick... Being in love makes me sick... Sick!

*(He interrupts himself again)*

Well, no...the *true* truth is...this morning, I ...

He moves closer to the audience, forgetting to keep his mike in place...

HENRY

... I killed my wife

MAN IN AUDIENCE

What? What was that?

WOMAN IN AUDIENCE

Louder, Henry!

MAN IN AUDIENCE

Can't hear you back here!

WOMAN IN AUDIENCE

Your mike Henry, your mike!

HENRY

...I killed my wife.

A few laughs, a murmur of dread. Everyone "knows" it's "a joke"... but:

1) it isn't funny

2) is it *really* a joke? Henry seems so devastated, in a daze.

HENRY

Yes, "laugh, laugh, laugh... Laugh, laugh, laugh"

So, I've said it: I killed my wife.

(...)

I didn't mean to... God knows I didn't mean to.

### INTROSPECTIVE (B)

She woke up, so beautiful... She looked at me and smiled... That smile... She is... was a very shy person you see... and I know, I knew this shy smile meant she wanted to fuck... But this time, I pretended not to get it... And I kept on pretending and so she said it, ever so shyly: "Please Henry, fuck me Henry..." I could see the effort in her smile... for her to ask *that*... to say those *dirty words*... to be *wicked and bold*... So out of character... With that very shy smile I loved so much... But I couldn't answer, I couldn't meet her desire... 'Cause, yes, being in love makes me sick... sick! I had been sleepless all night, you see, suffocating, suffocated by love... A wreck... absolutely no desire left...

Some people in the (until now deadly silent) audience start to complain...

WOMAN IN AUDIENCE

Come on Henry, drop it please!

WOMAN IN AUDIENCE

Yeah...

HENRY (*Angry*)

What? Am I letting you know more than you care to know about me?

WOMAN IN AUDIENCE

Uh uh...

HENRY

About her? Sex? Death?

He lies on the floor, takes off his shoes.

Yes, no desire left, zero... So I was looking for something, anything to... "change the subject..." to spare us both this horrible, dreadful moment of rejection... That's when the idea came to me... I remembered how extremely ticklish she is, was... especially on the soles of her feet... So I thought: I'll

tickle her, to “change the subject...” So I grabbed her legs, both of her feet under my arms, and started to tickle them...

He vaguely pretends to tickle Ann’s feet.

HENRY

I could see in her eyes she understood it all... Why I was doing what I was doing... to “change the subject...” and it seemed impossible she would laugh this time... She was hurt, and ashamed, and sad, and confused... but I persisted, I tickled gently...

He starts to alternately mime himself and Ann.

He tickles gently... tickles stronger—then throws himself on the floor and "becomes" Ann: Ann lying on her back, fighting him, not wanting to laugh... starting to laugh a little...

HENRY (*with a woman's voice*)  
"Stop it Henry..."

It wasn't working! So I tickled stronger...  
I tickled madly, I tickled wild...

The whole performance (the miming, the female laughter coming out of Henry's body) is frightening—morbid, sexual, very upsetting. The audience is stunned, in dread.

Henry/Ann's laughter gets louder... faster... the note higher and higher... until it strikes a last long high (soprano) note —"the supreme spasm"— and abruptly ends... as Henry/Ann drops motionless on the floor... Terrible silence (on stage now, and in the audience). Henry/Henry leans over his wife, panicked, dazed... trying to wake the inert body... first gently... then shaking it wildly...

HENRY

Ann... ANN... ANNNNNNNNNNN!  
NO NO NO ANN! ANNN! ANNN!  
NO ! NO ANN! NOOOOO!

I had tickled her to death.

A few vague laughs, a few claps, hesitant boos.  
Henry very slowly rises his face, devastated.

HENRY

I then tried to kill myself... the same way... tickling myself.

He vaguely mimes the act of tickling his bare feet.

But it didn't work...

A few scattered laughs in the deafening silence.

Henry stands back up, facing the audience.

HENRY  
This is how I killed my wife.

And he bows.

AUDIENCE  
That was sick!

Gradually, the audience seems to wake up... and starts to protest... more and more vocally.

AUDIENCE  
You're sick!  
Poor Ann!  
Poor Annette!

HENRY  
I sense some animosity  
Am I right or is it me?

An angry group starts singing:

AUDIENCE  
*You must've bitten  
Something bitter  
In your cradle!  
Bitten, bitter, cradle!*

HENRY  
*So, why did I become a comedian?*

But now the audience, in a fury, answers back:

You're not! You're not! Not anymore!

HENRY  
*So, why did I become a comedian?*

While Henry goes to an audio device in a corner of the stage.

AUDIENCE  
Asshole! Asshole!  
Sick, sick, sick!  
Boo!... Go home!

HENRY  
Okay?... Ready?... Laugh!

He pushes a button on the audio device: we hear a (prerecorded) amplified audience singing-laughing (as in Henry's first act):

*Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!*  
*Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!*

Henry waves at the audience to “encourage” their boos and insults.

The Announcer pushes the Chorus Girls on stage and turns off the audio device.

The Chorus Girls start singing in panic:

*We promised that you'd laugh*  
*We promised that you'd laugh*  
*We promised that you'd laugh, laugh, laugh, laugh!*

*Laugh, laugh, laugh*  
*'Cause he's Henry, he's Henry—The Henry*  
*He didn't make you choke, choke, choke*  
*Kick the bucket, kick the bucket, kick the bucket!*

HENRY

OK everybody, thank you very much... but enough already!  
 Have a goodnight!

He throws his mike in the air (much more aggressively than in his first show).

The mike lands on a table, hitting glasses and a champagne bucket.

Henry leaves the stage as the audience yells its hostility, and the Chorus Girls keep singing.

CHORUS GIRLS  
*He needs to hear you*  
*Clap, clap, clap!*  
*'Cause he's Henry, he's Henry, The Henry,*  
*Wants each of you to*  
*Clap, clap, clap!*  
*So let's hear it! Let's hear it! Let's hear it! Let's hear it!*

### **INT. LAS VEGAS THEATER: BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

Henry, alone backstage: enraged, he starts singing as he goes through the labyrinthine corridors.

### **YOU USED TO LAUGH**

HENRY

*You used to laugh*  
*But now you sure ain't laughing at me no more!*

*You used to laugh  
But now you sure ain't laughing at me no more!*

*What's your problem?  
What's your fucking problem?!  
What's your problem?  
Your fucking problem?!*

*Do you think I care?  
Do you think I care what you all think of me now?  
Do you think I care?  
Do you think I care what you wimps think of me now?*

AUDIENCE

*Henry, Henry we've had enough!  
Henry, Henry we've had enough!  
Henry, Henry we've had enough!  
Henry, Henry we've had enough!*

HENRY

*What's your problem?  
What's your fucking problem?!  
What's your problem?  
Your fucking problem?!*

Suddenly, Henry turns back and goes back on stage. The people from the audience are standing, facing the stage, still angry, booing.

AUDIENCE

*Henry, Henry we've had enough!  
Henry, Henry we've had enough!  
Henry, Henry we've had enough!  
Henry, Henry we've had enough!*

Henry sings while pacing the stage with rage.

HENRY

*My dear public,  
My dear public, you fucking headless beast!  
You're makin' me sick!  
You ruthless, unpredictable beast!*

AUDIENCE

*Get off, get off, get off the stage!  
Get off, get off, get off the stage!  
Get off, get off, get off the stage!  
Get off, get off, get off the stage!*

HENRY

*It's your problem?*

*Fuck it's not my problem!  
It's your problem?  
Your fucking problem?!*

AUDIENCE

*Get off, get off, get off the stage!  
Get off, get off, get off the stage!  
Get off, get off, get off the stage!  
Get off, get off, get off the stage!  
(...)*

HENRY

*Well you better laugh!  
Or I'll get the hell right off of this stage!  
If you don't laugh  
You're gonna feel, feel, feel the fire of my rage!*

HENRY & AUDIENCE

*We used to laugh  
Fuck off, fuck off, fuck out of here!  
Until we wised up, man you're sick as they come!  
We used to laugh  
Fuck off, fuck off, fuck out of here!  
Fuck off, fuck off, fuck out of here!  
But now we see you as you are, you are scum!  
Fuck off, fuck off, fuck out of here!  
You got a problem  
What's your problem?  
A big old problem!  
What's your fucking problem!  
You got a problem  
You've got a problem!  
A big old problem!  
A big old proooooo-blem!*

### **EXT. ON THE ROAD BACK TO LA - NIGHT**

Henry, riding his bike full speed through the desert, furious:

God damn it!... Fuck, fuck, fuck, FUCK!

### **EXT. ANN'S HOUSE SWIMMING POOL - DAY**

Ann, in the pool, watching herself in a small mirror.

ANN

Henry, I'm worried about you.  
I'm worried...

She lets herself go in the water, on her back. She swims a slow back crawl, while singing:

**A GIRL FROM THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE**

ANN

*There was a girl from the middle of nowhere  
Utterly plain, a little plump  
She sang alone, in her bedroom  
Wild acclaim from those four walls*

**INT. COUPLE'S BATHROOM & BEDROOM - NIGHT**

**SONG CONTINUED**

Ann drying her hair with a towel.

*But she didn't want to be there  
She didn't want to be there  
She didn't want to be there at all*

*She had the voice of a goddess  
Strings, winds and horns  
Inside her chest.*

She goes to the door, opens it, listens to make sure no one's near... then goes to open a drawer: hidden under her bras, a pack of cigarettes. She takes one.

*Hour after hour,  
She would struggle  
'Til her voice became  
Her Royal realm*

She goes back to the bathroom... sits down on toilet... opens a window... lights her cigarette.

*Oh, she wanted just to be there  
Only wanted to live there  
Really wanted to live there—forever more*

On the toilet, she pisses and smokes.

*She headed west, the wild direction  
No longer plain, no longer plump  
The men were on her doorstep  
Many men were on her doorstep  
Her voice had brought her beauty and set her free*

She throws the cigarette in the toilet... wipes herself... flushes the toilet... washes her hands...

*But she never listened to those men who came and whispered:  
 "You're a flame to me"  
 —a flame to me, a flame to me, a flame to me  
 She was a queen, didn't need a king who'd put her brand new  
 palace in jeopardy  
 —in jeopardy, in jeopardy  
 A queen should never be a moth to a flame*

Ann, defeated, is lying down on her bed.

I have a wonderful gift, and a beautiful child  
 People adore me, and I adore this man  
 But... *something's wrong.*

A slight noise, coming from the door... Ann turns and sees baby Annette in the doorway: the baby, smiling, is taking her *first steps*...

ANN  
*Annette!*

Ann goes over to her, shaking off her sad mood, moved. She stretches her arms towards the baby:

ANN  
 That's it, Annette!  
*Just keep right on walking  
 One foot then the other*

### **EXT. AROUND THE POOL - NIGHT**

The pool is beautiful at night, shining (underwater lights), with big floating toys on its surface.

Ann with the baby in her arms, singing "Lalala," while joyfully dancing around the pool... faster and faster... The baby giggles.

**LA LA LA LA**

ANN  
*La, la, la  
 La, la  
 La, la  
 La, la  
 (...)*

Ann is now spinning like a whirling dervish, with the baby still in her arms. They spin until they fall to the ground, like drunk, laughing.

**OUTDOOR POOL - CONTINUOUS**

Ann now sitting near the pool, with the baby in her arms. They play tenderly together.

But their attention is snagged by a loud and menacing sound: the engine of Henry's bike slowing down as it approaches the house.

The powerful lights of the machine shine on Ann and the baby.

**INT/EXT. ANN'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Henry (is he drunk?) sings, as he rushes up the staircase and into the couple's bedroom:

**MY STAR'S IN DECLINE**

HENRY

*What goes up*

*Must come down*

*My star's in decline*

**Ah!**

*Once profound*

*For a clown*

*My star's in decline*

He steps outside the bedroom on the terrace. He can see: Ann with the baby in her arms, by the pool area. They are looking up at the window, at him, frightened.

**SHOWBIZ NEWS****SHOW BIZ NEWS 3 (SUCCESS)**

Images of:

- The happy family: paparazzi picture of Ann and Henry standing with Baby Annette, smiling in the sun.
- Tension within the couple: paparazzi picture of the couple, looking sad, pushing Annette's stroller under the rain.

CONNIE O'CONNOR'S VOICE

Show Biz News announces that Ann, Henry, and baby Annette will travel on their yacht this week, evidently in the hope of saving the couple's marriage. Could the problems be due in large part to the growing discrepancy between their respective success? We wish them the best.

CHORUS

*Respective success... Respective success...*

**EXT. AT SEA: YACHT - NIGHT**

The slender yacht is caught in a turbulent sea. A storm is approaching.

**A STORM IS ROLLING****IN CHORUS**

*A storm is rolling in...*

**INT. INSIDE YACHT: SLEEPING CABIN - NIGHT**

Ann is in a cabin with Annette, trying to calm her and put her to sleep with a song. While she sings softly, she tries not to show the baby her own growing anxiety: she feels the boat sway, and sees through the porthole the waves getting big, hitting the yacht harder and harder. And where is Henry?

**ANN**

*I will calm the sea*

*Baby don't fear*

*I will stop the storm*

*Sleep, baby, sleep*

*The world revolves 'round you*

*My little innocent*

*Sleep a perfect sleep*

*I'm always here*

*Dream a perfect dream*

*And never fear*

*Thunder, rain nor lightning*

*My little innocent*

Worried about the storm outside, Ann goes to the porthole. Big waves are violently hitting the glass. She resumes singing, trying to hide her anxiety from the baby.

*All of the danger that I feel*

*I will dispel it with some magic*

*Alakazam, I'll change the reel!*

*Look at the happy family dancing*

Ann turns back towards the baby: she is at last asleep.

*We'll look back and laugh*

*That crazy night...*

*As we walk a path*

*'Neath city lights  
The lights will shine on you  
My little innocent*

Ann takes a last look at the baby, then leaves the cabin.

**INT. INSIDE YACHT: CORRIDOR - NIGHT**

Ann, searching for Henry through the cabins.

ANN  
Henry! Henry!  
*Henry, where are you?*

**EXT. YACHT: DECK - NIGHT**

Ann goes up to the deck.  
Pitch-dark night, pouring rain, chaotic movements of the boat.

ANN  
Henry?

No one there.

But suddenly, she's grabbed by two arms, from behind: Henry, drunk, soaked.

HENRY (*tenderly*)  
Ann...

ANN  
Are you drunk Henry?

HENRY  
I'm not that drunk...  
Let's waltz...

ANN  
But... I'll kill my voice out here.  
Henry, a storm is rolling in.

HENRY  
I'm well aware of that my dear  
**... Let's waltz in the storm!**

Henry forces Ann into a waltz, while the Chorus (offscreen) sings:

**LET'S WALTZ IN THE STORM!**

## CHORUS

*A storm is rolling in...  
A storm is rolling in...  
A storm is rolling in...  
A storm is rolling in...*

## ANN

*Henry, you're drunk!  
Henry, you're drunk!*

## HENRY

*I'm not that drunk, I'm not that drunk  
Hey, where's Annette? Where did she go?*

## ANN

*Annette's asleep, she's safe below  
Henry, you're not the man I know*

Henry grabs Ann again, forcing her to waltz with him again.

## HENRY

*I'm not that drunk  
I'm not that drunk  
I'm not that drunk  
I'm not that drunk*

## ANN

*Henry, you're not the man I know  
We'll catch our death in this rain  
Henry, stop fooling around  
We could slip, we could drown*

*Henry don't fool around  
There's a storm, settle down  
Careful, hey! What if we fell?  
No one could survive this swell*

*You're quite drunk, let's calm down  
When we're safe you can be a clown  
What has gotten into you?  
What has gotten into you?*

Ann holds onto Henry, her face against his torso—but he seems elsewhere, haunted.

## ANN

*With this storm and this sea  
I feel scared, look at me  
Comfort me, hold me tight,  
Oh, what a terrible, terrible night*

My voice, Henry!  
Is nothing sacred to you?

She coughs, again and again.

Henry seems to "wake up," suddenly—surprised to see Ann trying to pull away from him. He forces her to get closer, gets violent.

HENRY  
Oh, God knows everything is—to you!  
Always trumpeting... values... The Sacred Values!  
And then *dying, dying, dying!*  
And then *bowing, bowing, bowing!*

### **INT. INSIDE YACHT: SLEEPING CABIN - NIGHT**

Annette is awake. She holds her monkey plush very tight. She listens to what's happening out there on the deck.

### **ON THE DECK - CONTINUOUS**

Henry forces Ann to waltz, faster and faster. The storm has gotten more violent, dangerously rocking the yacht now.

ANN  
*Henry stop it, stop it now!*  
*We're gonna fall, gonna die!*  
*What has gotten into you?*

Think of Annette!

Ann is violently ejected by the centrifugal spin of the crazy waltz...

**AAAAAH!**

Henry, still swirling, like a drunken dancer, but alone now...  
What happened?—how did Ann so suddenly disappear?

He tries to steady his body... falls on the deck. A huge wave hits him. And then he hears Ann's voice, coming from the sea, the waves, outside the boat.

ANN  
*Henry, help me*  
*Pull me out*  
*Henry, help me*  
*Pull me out*  
*Where are you?*  
*Help, Henry, I'm almost out of air*

Henry, horrified, dazed, paralyzed.

HENRY  
*There's so little I can do*  
*There's so little I can do*  
*There's so little I can do*  
*There's so little I can do*

### **INT. CABIN – NIGHT**

Ann's dead body, underwater, passes in front of the cabin's porthole.

### **EXT. AT SEA: LIFE BOAT - NIGHT**

The sea is now totally calm, and the rain has stopped.

Henry and Annette are on a little lifeboat. He is rowing, haunted, looking straight ahead. Annette (wearing a life jacket) is awake on his laps.

### **EXT. ON THE SHORE OF AN ISLAND - NIGHT**

Father and daughter have washed up on the shore of an island.

As Henry is trying to warm up Annette's body, he starts singing to her:

#### **WE'VE WASHED ASHORE**

HENRY  
*We washed ashore, Annette*  
*On some island, somewhere Your*  
*mother's gone, Annette I'll take*  
*care of you*

*Help is on the way, Annette*  
*Someone's heard our calls*  
*In the meantime, stars line up*  
*They line up for you*

Henry lies down on the sand. Annette stays sitting, facing the sea.

As the moon comes out from behind a cloud and shines down on the baby, the baby starts... to sing. Yes, the baby is singing, in a beautiful crystalline voice—and what she is singing is a wordless version of the “Aria” made famous by her mother.

#### **BABY ARIA (THE MOON)**

ANNETTE

*ARIA*

Henry looks at the baby, stunned. Drunk, dazed and exhausted, he lies back on the sand, closes his eyes, and laughs.

HENRY

Somehow, I'm imagining Annette is singing  
 Just as the light of the moon lit her beautiful face  
 How foolish! How very foolish I can be.  
 Now, I can hear the... stars laughing at me!  
 In the morning I'll be free of all these... hallucinations.

Clouds start to obscure the moon again. The Baby stops singing.

Henry has fallen asleep. The moonlight on Henry's body is shadowed by... The Spirit of Ann (wet, skin almost green, very long hair covered in seaweed). She is now standing above him. Turning around his lying body, sings in an uncharacteristically angry tone:

**I WILL HAUNT YOU, HENRY!**

THE SPIRIT OF ANN

*I will haunt you, Henry  
 For the rest of your life  
 Through Annette I'll haunt you  
 Her voice will be my ghost*

*I am no longer Love  
 I am now Revenge!*

The moonlight disappears again. The Spirit of Ann looks at Henry asleep  
 ... then moves towards her daughter (asleep)  
 ... then moves towards the water, takes a few steps inside the water

THE SPIRIT OF ANN

*I will haunt you, Henry  
 I'll die day after day, after day  
 I will haunt you, Henry  
 Night after night, after night*

She disappears into the ocean.

**FADE TO BLACK**

## 3<sup>rd</sup> ACT

### LOS ANGELES & AROUND THE WORLD (FALL)

#### INT. L.A. POLICE STATION - DAY

Henry appears before the police for questioning. He faces five policemen and women.

Each time the policemen have finished asking a question, they turn a crude light on Henry while he answers. They turn it off when it's time for another question—then back on again, etc.

#### WE ARE THE POLICE

POLICE

*We are the police and we have got some routine questions  
You're not suspected but we have to ask some questions  
It won't take long—how 'bout some coffee with your questions  
It won't take long, we don't have very many questions  
—Not many questions*

*Can you describe the night and how your wife went missing?*

HENRY

*There was a storm and I looked up and she was missing*

POLICE

*And did you try at all to dive in and to save her?*

HENRY

*The sea was rough and with Annette—how could I save her?  
The storm was very strong there was no way to save her  
And anyway, I had Annette, I had to save her  
I had Annette*

POLICE

*We've heard the rumors that you're somewhat of a raver Were there some problems between you that made you waver?*

HENRY

*That is an insult, I loved Ann, was always faithful!*

POLICE

*How about that "comic" piece in which you said you killed her?*

*Was that a prank, or something more, an aspiration?*

HENRY

*Everybody knows my acts are full of provocation!*

POLICE

*Well that 'bout wraps it up, we sure are grateful Henry  
It now seems clear to us there is no guilty party  
It was an act of God, that is our firm conclusion  
It was an act of God, and pardon the intrusion*

### **EXT. POLICE STATION - EVENING**

Henry comes out of the building, puts on a hat and dark glasses, and walks away—avoiding glances from passersby who recognize him.

### **I'M A GOOD FATHER**

HENRY

*Sure, I've sinned in all your eyes But  
one thing you cannot deny is I'm a  
good father, I'm a good father, I'm  
a good father—am I?*

### **EXT. A TOY STORE - EVENING**

Henry stops in front of a large toy shop: the window display shows a wide range of magic lamps, each lamp projecting its own enchanting world of light and shadows (stars, fishes, trains, water cascades, etc.)

HENRY

*My Annette will ask someday  
Where is my mother? I will say that  
I'm a good father, I'm a good father,  
I'm a good father, but—she's gone*

### **INT. ANN'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Henry climbs the main staircase (the big house now feels empty, without life). He's carrying a package wrapped in paper—a present for Annette.

HENRY

*I'm a good father, mother and father,  
I'm a good father—am I?*

### **INT. ANNETTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

He enters Annette's bedroom. The baby is in her little bed. Her nanny, CONSUELO, is sitting on a chair, facing the baby's crib (perhaps reading a story).

HENRY  
Hi, Consuelo. How's my baby Annette?

CONSUELO  
Much better, no more fever.

HENRY  
Ah! Thank you so much.

CONSUELO (*getting up to leave*)  
You're welcome, Mr. McHenry.

HENRY  
See you tomorrow?

CONSUELO  
Yes. Have a good evening.

HENRY  
You too.

CONSUELO (*To Annette*)  
Bye-bye my love.

Henry unwraps Annette's present. Annette, standing in her crib, is very excited.

HENRY  
Oh, look at what I've got for you!  
What is it? What is it Annette?  
Oh, what is that?! Look at that!  
Are you excited?

The present is a small magic lamp. Henry sets it on the baby's night stall. He plugs the lamp in: projected motifs of planets and stars start spinning across the walls and ceiling.

HENRY  
Annette, isn't it magical that...

As the light starts shining on the baby's face, she starts singing again—her mother's "Aria" once more:

**BABY ARIA (SHE'S A MIRACLE)**

ANNETTE  
*Aria*

Henry turns off the lamp: the baby stops singing—silence.  
He turns the lamp back on: the baby starts singing again.

HENRY

*Unbelievable... amazing... It's really happening...  
She sings, she's a miracle  
When the light shines on her  
Astounding... unbelievable... amazing  
It's really happening, it's really happening... to me!*

**INT. ANNETTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

**LATER**

Henry and Annette are both lying in the little crib. Henry is wide awake. Silence.

**INT. CONDUCTOR'S CONCERT HALL - NIGHT**

Ann's former Accompanist has achieved his aim and is now The Conductor of a large metropolitan symphony orchestra.

While conducting a rehearsal, he takes advantage of the musical piece's slow sections to sing a monologue:

**THE CONDUCTOR**

THE CONDUCTOR

It's a fast-changing world,  
And I am now the conductor of the city's finest orchestra,  
No longer the self-deprecating accompanist from such a short  
while ago.  
Ann would be proud of me.  
I do have my suspicions, though about why she isn't alive.  
And doubts too about something else but...  
Excuse me a minute

As a loud musical section begins, The Conductor leads forcefully.  
Then, when the music calms down again.

THE CONDUCTOR

Henry has invited me to his place tomorrow  
To discuss a matter that he says concerns Annette and Ann.  
As awkward as it is for me to attend, anything that concerns Ann  
and the future of Annette is something that concerns me.  
Excuse me one more time.

Loud music passage again. This one is louder and more energetic than the previous one. The Conductor leads forcefully, then goes back into his monologue.

THE CONDUCTOR

My love for Ann has never died.

Neither has my regret that our affair was only an affair.

I had been hoping for so long...

Then at a time when she was in despair,  
we started an affair.

But the very next week she met Henry, and that was the end of it  
—the end of me.

I'll always regret that.

I deeply miss her. Her warmth, her voice. I miss Ann

Excuse me!

Strong and brief last loud passage ending on a big final gesture of the Conductor.

### INT/EXT. ANN'S HOUSE - EVENING

Henry, standing on the balcony, watches The Conductor's taxi enter the property.

The Conductor pays the driver, and walks towards the house.

Henry goes downstairs and opens the door for The Conductor.

THE CONDUCTOR

Hey Henry!

Henry takes him up the stairs, to Annette's room, singing:

### **SOMETHING THAT WILL BLOW YOUR MIND**

HENRY

*Thanks for coming by*

*My conductor friend*

*Got something to show you*

*That will blow your mind*

*Follow me upstairs*

*As a friend of mine*

*You deserve to see this*

*It will blow your mind*

The Conductor is obviously anxious, wary of Henry.

HENRY

*Careful with the stairs*

*Have no fear my friend*

*I'm not gonna play  
Any trick of mine*

**INT. ANNETTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

They enter Annette's bedroom. Semidarkness. Annette is deeply asleep.

Henry closes the door behind the Conductor.

THE CONDUCTOR  
Henry... What do you...

HENRY (*Low, so as not to disturb the baby*)  
Shhhh!

Henry turns the little magic lamp on Annette....  
And she starts singing.

**BABY ARIA (CAN YOU EXPLAIN IT?)**

ANNETTE  
*Aria*

The Conductor, amazed.

HENRY  
*Can you believe it?*

THE CONDUCTOR  
I just can't believe it!

HENRY  
*Can you explain it?*

THE CONDUCTOR  
I can't explain it...

HENRY  
*Is it really happening?*

THE CONDUCTOR  
I don't know what to think...

HENRY  
*Is it really happening?*

THE CONDUCTOR  
I really don't know what to think...

HENRY  
*To us?*

Henry turns the magic lamp off.

HENRY  
 How 'bout a drink?

THE CONDUCTOR  
 I need a drink...  
 A strong drink.

**INT. KITCHEN & LIVING-ROOM - NIGHT**

Henry is pouring a drink. He hands the Conductor the glass of wine.

**IT'S NOT REALLY EXPLOITATION**

HENRY  
*Here's my plan my sweet conductor  
 We three travel 'round the world  
 She performs with you conducting  
 Backing her around the world*

*All the world deserves to see this  
 It's our moral duty, right?  
 Well, what do you think, Conductor  
 Am I wrong or am I right?*

*If you would consent  
 To be there for her  
 Your fame will go greater  
 Two hundred percent*

*We would tour the world  
 Show her to the world  
 Millions would go wild  
 Cherishing the child*

THE CONDUCTOR  
 This is really exploitation...

HENRY  
 No, not really.

The Conductor follows Henry, through the living room, towards the pool.

THE CONDUCTOR  
 Sure it is.

This is really exploitation.

HENRY  
No, not really!

THE CONDUCTOR  
Sure it is.

HENRY  
*You know what my future looks like  
From a money point of view  
With the income from performance  
She could have a future too*

THE CONDUCTOR  
But you're exploiting her, Henry.

HENRY  
No, not really

THE CONDUCTOR  
You're exploiting Annette.

HENRY  
No, not really!

*Please make up your mind  
Please make up your mind  
Please conductor friend  
We cannot waste time*

The small magic lamp, spinning.

**FADE TO**

**EXT. HENRY & ANNETTE ON BIKE: MULHOLLAND DRIVE - NIGHT**

Henry on his bike, riding carefully on a road overlooking LA, with Annette sitting against his chest. He's singing:

**EVERY NIGHT THE SAME DREAM**

HENRY  
*I have the same dream every night  
Every night the same dream*

**INT. HENRY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Only the bedside lamp is on. Henry, sitting on the side of his bed, sings while undressing. He takes sleeping pills.

*Adrift on an angry sea  
And in a moment of rage and stupidity  
I kill the one I love  
Ann, forgive me  
Ann, I beg you  
Ann, forgive me*

He lies down under the covers.

### **LATER THAT NIGHT**

Henry asleep. On the other (empty) half of the bed appears: Ann, lying by his side, awake. They don't touch. She watches Henry sleep.

### **ANOTHER NIGHT**

Only the bedside lamp is on. Henry, sitting on the side of his bed, smoking and singing while undressing. He takes sleeping pills.

HENRY  
*I have the same dream every night  
Every night the same dream  
She's here lying by my side  
An exercise in futility*

He turns off the bedside lamp, and goes inside the bed.

*Did I kill the one I loved?  
There's no forgiveness  
Ann, I beg you  
There's no forgive...  
(He screams, like in a nightmare)*

On the other (empty) half of the bed appears: Ann, phantasmal. She slowly rolls her body to get closer to Henry... until her body "merges into" Henry's...

Sound of the bedroom opening (offscreen).

Ann has disappeared...

The Spirit of Ann enters the room and approaches the bed. The Spirit watches Henry asleep.

**FADE TO BLACK**

# MONTHS LATER

Henry's look has changed: a cleaner haircut, a well-trimmed beard.

## INT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

### PREMIERE PERFORMANCE OF BABY ANNETTE

The green stage curtain is not open yet.

The Conductor conducts the orchestra.

A large audience sits in anticipation of Annette's first show.

Henry, standing behind the curtain, in the darkness of the stage. He's nervous, sweating.

Baby Annette, standing behind him on a small podium. She's barely visible in the darkness. She's holding her chimp plush tight.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

*You've read about her*

*You've heard about her*

*But nothing will have prepared you for*

The ANNOUNCER on the stage, facing the audience:

*What you are about to see*

*Nothing will have prepared you*

*for what you are about to see and hear*

*Tonight, tonight*

The curtain starts opening. The audience claps.

Henry is standing still behind his mike stand.

HENRY

*Ladies and gentlemen*

*Welcome to the premiere performance of*

*Baby Annette, Baby Annette*

*I am Henry McHenry, I am Henry McHenry*

While conducting from the orchestra pit, the Conductor nervously watches Henry.

Henry, also nervous, starts pacing the stage, mike in hand.

HENRY

Cynics among you may doubt that

what you are about to see is real,

That it is not faked in some way.

Let me assure you it is real.  
Annette is a miracle.  
Miracles do exist.

He walks to the back of the stage, and kisses Annette on the forehead. He grabs her toy chimp from her hands.

HENRY  
*Without further ado, I introduce to you  
Baby Annette, Baby Annette!*

He exits the stage.

The Conductor starts conducting the intro to Annette's "Aria."

The baby starts singing, slowly walking on the podium towards the audience.

The audience sits in stunned silence.

### **BABY ARIA (FIRST PERFORMANCE)**

ANNETTE  
*ARIA*

Backstage, Henry, sweating, is nervously watching the audience.

At one point, the baby magically rises in the air, floating above the stage and the audience, singing in levitation.

Kids in the audience are fascinated by Annette's performance.

### **INT. OTHER CONCERTS HALL**

While the song is sung in its entirety, we cut to different performances, in different concert halls, TV shows, etc.—as Baby Annette gains lightning attention.

Different shots with Annette bowing.

AUDIENCE  
Annette!... Annette!  
Exploitation!... It's exploitation!  
Bravo, Bravo, Bravo!  
We love you Annette!

### **INT. ON TV, COMPUTERS, CELL PHONES**

CLOSE-UP OF a video webpage: the view count of the video:

81 934 763

**INT. AIRPORTS AND PLANE - DAWN / DAY / DUSK / NIGHT**

Henry, Baby Annette, and the Conductor fly and perform around the world.

Baby Annette's crew (Chorus) sings with Henry (bodyguards, agents, secretaries, etc.).

As they all rush through different airports all around the world, they sing, along with Annette's fans:

**WE LOVE ANNETTE!**

HENRY

*Annette and me and The Conductor are three!*

CHORUS

*We're traveling 'round the world,  
We're traveling 'round the world,  
We're traveling 'round the world,  
We're traveling 'round the world  
(...)*

**INT. PLANE - DAWN / DAY / NIGHT**

Henry, Annette and the Conductor on their private jet.

The baby is asleep on the Conductor's lap.

Henry is drinking whiskey from tiny bottles.

PILOTS (SPARKS)

Ladies and gentlemen, please make sure your seats are in the upright position.

We'll be landing... *shortly*.

HENRY

*Here in Madrid*

FANS

*We love Annette!*

HENRY

*Here in Paris*

FANS

*We love Annette!*

**EXT. AIRPORT TARMAC - DAWN / DAY / DUSK / NIGHT**

Fans welcoming Annette in airports around the world.

HENRY  
*Here in London*

FANS  
*We love Annette!*  
*We love Annette!*  
(...)

FANS  
Annette!  
Annette!

**NIGHT**

Annette flying over major cities.

ANNETTE  
*ARIA*

**INT. AIRPORTS AND PLANE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)**

FANS  
*Bon voyage!*  
*Bon voyage!*  
*Bon voyage!*  
*Bon voyage!*  
*Bon voyage!*

**INT. AIRPORTS AND PLANE – DAY /NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)**

HENRY & CHORUS  
*We're traveling 'round the world,*  
*We're traveling 'round the world,*  
*We're traveling 'round the world,*  
(...)

FANS  
*Bon voyage!*  
*Here in Mumbai*  
*We love Annette!*  
*Bon voyage!*  
*We love Annette!*  
*Bon voyage!*  
*Here in Cuba!*  
*We love Annette!*

*Bon voyage!*  
*Here in Tokyo!*  
*We love Annette*  
*Bon voyage!*  
*We love Annette*  
*Bon voyage!*  
*We love Annette*  
 (...)

### **INT. LUXURY HOTEL: ACAPULCO - DUSK**

The Conductor is holding Annette in his arms. They're alone in the large suite's living room, facing the window that overlooks the bay of Acapulco.

We sense the Conductor's strong attachment to the baby.

THE CONDUCTOR  
 What a beautiful, beautiful night, hum?

Henry breaks in, putting on his coat.

HENRY  
 Hey, my friend, would you look after Annette while I go out and let off just a little bit of... steam?

THE CONDUCTOR  
 Sure, Henry, I'll look after Annette.

Henry blows a kiss to Annette and leaves the suite.

### **A LITTLE LATER**

The Conductor is at his keyboard, with Annette on his lap.

He starts softly playing the tune to "We Love Each Other So Much" (Henry and Ann's love song).

The baby listens intensely and watches the Conductor's fingers move across the keyboard.

### **WE LOVE EACH OTHER SO MUCH (LULLABY)**

THE CONDUCTOR  
*We love each other so much*  
*So hard to explain it*  
*So hard to explain*  
*We love each other so much*

*We love each other so much*  
*We love each other so much*

*Speak soft when you say it  
 Speak soft when you say it  
 We love each other so much*

Annette has fallen asleep.

**INT. DIFFERENT NIGHTCLUBS IN DIFFERENT CITIES AROUND THE WORLD  
 - NIGHT**

We see Henry in different clubs and bars, with women from different countries (Brazil, Japan, Russia).

**ALL THE GIRLS**

HENRY (with Brazilian girls)  
*All the girls I see  
 Look so great to me  
 What amazes me  
 Is what they see in me*

(With Japanese girls)  
*All the girls I see  
 In France and Italy  
 Or here in Roppongi  
 What do they see in me?*

(Dancing with Russian girls)  
*Am I handsome?—No*

THE RUSSIAN GIRLS  
*You're so handsome!  
 Charming?—Well, so-so  
 You're so charming!  
 I'm a foreign guy  
 So exotic!  
 Rich and drunk, maybe that's why*

THE RUSSIAN GIRLS  
*Hard to imagine  
 All these fucking men  
 Who hate themselves but  
 Want us to love them!*

**INT. CLUB / RESTROOM - NIGHT**

Henry, drunk, finishes taking a piss, then goes to the washstand. He looks at his reflection in the mirror.

HENRY  
*All the girls I see*

*Look so great to me  
But... will I ever be  
Lovable again?*

## **BACK IN LA WINTER**

### **EXT. IN THE HILLS ABOVE LA - DUSK**

A coyote, howling.

### **EXT/INT. ANN'S HOUSE - EVENING**

Henry returns to his villa on his bike.

He parks the bike and, swaying, walks towards the house.

### **SO GLAD TO BE BACK HOME**

HENRY  
*I'm feeling just a little bit drunk  
I'm feeling just a little bit tipsy*

Behind him, the heavy bike slowly falls on its side.  
(Henry hadn't put the kickstand properly.)

Shit...

*Where, you might ask, did I go?  
That would be none of your business!*

*(Searching for his keys)*  
Where did I put my house keys?

The Conductor opens the door for Henry.  
As always, he has looked after the baby while Henry was fooling around.

HENRY  
*So glad to be back at home  
Hey, Mr. Conductor friend, good to see you  
Thanks for watching Annette  
How is Annette?*

THE CONDUCTOR  
She's fine.

Henry enters the living room, where Annette is sitting on the floor in pajamas, playing on a toy piano.

On his way to the kitchen bar, he pats Annette on the head.

HENRY  
*There's my little Annette*  
*There's my little Annette*  
*How's my little Annette?*  
*How's my little Annette?*

He starts pouring himself a glass of whiskey.

### **WE LOVE EACH OTHER SO MUCH (ANNETTE)**

ANNETTE  
*La da di da da....*

The baby (without any change in lighting, this time) starts singing softly... and she's not singing the "Aria," but a wordless version of "We Love Each Other So Much"—the love song Henry and Ann used to sing together.

Henry stops pouring his drink... listening to his daughter sing, haunted.

### **HENRY'S VISIONS**

*Images of Ann and Henry together, (holding hands, fucking, etc.)*

Henry brutally interrupts Annette's singing and gets furious at The Conductor (Annette watches, puzzled).

HENRY  
 How does she know that song?!

### **YOU HAD NO RIGHT!**

*You had no right, you had no right to teach her that!*  
*You had no right, you had no right at all!*

He then takes The Conductor outside, into the garden, so that Annette won't hear. He goes on singing, louder, with rage:

*You had no right, you had no right to teach her that!*  
*You had no right, you had no right at all!*

*That song was our song, Ann's and my song, that was our song!*  
*That song was our song, Ann's song and mine!*  
*That was our song... That was our song...*

THE CONDUCTOR

No!  
No, Henry, I wrote that song—for Ann.

HENRY  
What?!

THE CONDUCTOR  
So I had every right to teach it to my star pupil, Annette.

HENRY  
Yeah, bullshit!

*(Getting even more furious)*  
*You'd think you were her father!*  
*You'd think you were her father!*  
*You'd think you were her father!*

THE CONDUCTOR  
Maybe... I am...  
I think I am...

For once, the Conductor stands up to Henry. Henry almost collapses, dizzy...

HENRY  
*This can't be true!*  
*This can't be true!*

THE CONDUCTOR  
Sorry Henry ...  
You see, before you came along, Ann and I...

HENRY  
*This can't be true!*  
*Could this be true?*  
*(Leaning against a tree, singing to himself)*  
*No one must know this, or I'll lose my daughter.*  
*No one must know this, or I'll lose my child...*

Slowly, he moves away from the tree, and walks back towards the house as he tells the Conductor:

Let's put Annette to bed, and then go by the pool and talk it over,  
OK?

### **INT. ANNETTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Henry is tucking Annette in her bed. The Conductor is on the side of the bed.  
(Strange sight, these two "fathers" putting "their" baby to bed).

Henry is about to kiss his daughter's forehead, but she turns her face away from him.

The Conductor kneels down, and whispers to Annette:

CONDUCTOR  
Good night, Annette.

The Conductor and the baby exchange a silent gaze.  
But Henry turns off the bedroom's light immediately.

### **EXT. AROUND THE POOL - NIGHT**

The two men arrive at the pool.

The pool is now derelict: most of the underwater lights don't work (or only in intermittent bursts), the surface is swamped with dead leaves, and the floating toys are half deflated.

The two men start slowly walking along the pool—Henry staying menacingly close to the Conductor, as if sniffing at him.

HENRY  
You see, my friend...

Suddenly, he “jokingly” pretends to push the Conductor into the pool.

### **MURDER OF CONDUCTOR**

THE CONDUCTOR  
Henry, don't fool around!  
The water must be freezing  
You wouldn't want me to drown, would you?

HENRY  
I don't know...  
What was I about to say...

CONDUCTOR  
*Shall we talk, as you'd asked*  
*I can't stay, can you make it fast*  
*Not to be impolite*  
*But it's been a long, long night*

But once again Henry pretends to push the Conductor into the pool  
—more brutally this time.

THE CONDUCTOR  
Hey Henry, no!  
Stop fooling around!  
*You're quite drunk, let's both sit down*  
*What is it you need to say?*

*Sit down, Henry!... Watch it, hey!*

Henry has pulled out the chair the Conductor was about to sit on... the Conductor falls down on his back... then quickly and nervously tries to get up... but Henry violently drags his body towards the pool's edge...

Henry orders him to shut up (the baby is sleeping in the house:)

Shhhh!

THE CONDUCTOR  
This isn't funny anymore!  
Not the least bit funny anymore!

HENRY (*Shaking him violently*)  
Shhhh!

THE CONDUCTOR  
Get your hands off me...

HENRY  
Shhhh!

THE CONDUCTOR  
Get your hands off me!  
What are you trying to do to me?  
What are you trying... what are you trying to do to me?  
Stop it... just stop it... just stop it, stop it, stop it  
Ok, ok, ok, ok, ok, stop it...

HENRY  
Shhhh!

Henry violently throws the Conductor into the pool: he kneels at the edge of the pool, so that the Conductor can't escape him.

When the Conductor tries to put his head out of the water, Henry pushes him back under water.

THE CONDUCTOR  
*Henry, it's fr-freezing,  
Henry, I'm g-going down  
I won't tell a single soul  
Even you can't be this c-c-cold*

*So it was y-you, after all...*

HENRY (*he pushes the Conductor back under water*)  
No.  
No.

THE CONDUCTOR

If only I had gotten Ann to love me more...

Henry strongly punches the Conductor's face.  
The Conductor disappears under water.

HENRY

*There's so little I can do*

*There's so little I can do*

The Conductor's body, lying flat dead on the water.

THE CONDUCTOR (*voice over*)

If only..... I'd gotten Ann to love me more

HENRY

*There's so little I can do*

THE CONDUCTOR (*voice over*)

If only...

HENRY

*There's so little I can do*

THE CONDUCTOR (*voice over*)

If only...

Henry grabs the Conductor's leg and pulls the whole floating corpse to one side of the pool. He then pulls the corpse out of the pool, and carries it further in the darkness of the garden.

### **INT/EXT. ANNETTE'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Henry, soaked, enters Annette's bedroom. The baby is in bed, in the dark. As Henry comes closer, he sees she's awake, looking at him.

HENRY

Annette, you're awake...

They look at each other through the darkness, in silence.

Then, calmly, silently, the baby pushes the magic lamp off the nightstand—the lamp breaks on the floor.

Henry, distraught, kneels down and starts picking up the broken glass.

HENRY (*whispering*)

Everything will be alright now.

I promise Annette...

**SHOWBIZ NEWS**

Images of: Henry and Baby Annette holding hands during a photocall.

**SHOW BIZ NEWS (NEVER AGAIN)****CONNIE O'CONNOR'S VOICE**

Connie O'Connor here for Show Biz News, with the shocking announcement that Henry McHenry has decided to end Baby Annette's singing career. Before they move to Europe, she will give one last performance, to be announced shortly... The baby will never perform again after that.

**CHORUS**

*Never again... Never again...Never again...*

**EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT**

It's the Hyper Bowl halftime show. A huge crowd is gathered for Baby Annette's last performance.

The ANNOUNCER is standing in a glass booth above the stadium, among a crew of technicians. Henry is standing next to him, nervous.

The Announcer sings, joined by a Chorus of footballers and cheerleaders, and a choir of little boys.

**ANNOUNCER & CHEERLEADERS**

*Ladies and gentlemen, welcome*

***Welcome!***

*Welcome to the Hyper Bowl HalfTime Show*

***Waouh!***

*To the thousands who are here in attendance*

***Welcome!***

*And the millions that are watching at home*

***At home!***

**ANNOUNCER & CHORUS**

*Ladies and gentlemen, welcome*

*Welcome to the Hyper Bowl HalfTime Show*

*To the thousands who are here in attendance*

*And the millions that are watching at home*

The Announcer and Henry start looking towards the sky.

Baby Annette, suspended on drones, descending from the sky. She greets the audience, waving her arms.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome our cherished... Baby Annette!

As you all know by now, this will be her last public appearance. So, ladies and gentlemen... Darkness... then a very sweet soft light. And then, for all eternity... Baby Annette!

The drones gently drop Annette at the center of the stadium, on the top of a high, green, monolith.

Rapturous applause from the crowd. The instrumental intro to “Aria” begins, in the darkness...

CHOIR BOYS

*Baby Annette!*

*Baby Annette!*

A huge spotlight slowly moves on Annette... but when it's time for her to sing, she does not sing... Silence.

ANNOUNCER

This is the largest audience that Annette has ever performed in front of, so some nervousness is completely understandable.

Ladies and gentlemen... Baby Annette!

Again: applause... instrumental intro to “Aria...” the spotlight slowly moving on Annette...

CHOIR BOYS

*Baby Annette!*

*Baby Annette!*

...but when it's time for her to sing, she does not sing... Silence.

In the glass booth: Henry has a nervous laugh.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen... please...

We ask for your patience. Baby Annette *is* a baby, after all...

Please, once again... Baby Annette!

Henry goes to sit down at one side of the glass booth. He lights a cigarette.

ANNOUNCER (*Not talking into his mike anymore*)

What the fuck is the little bitch doing?

The instrumental intro to “Aria” starts again...

CHOIR BOYS

*Baby Annette!*

*Baby Annette!*

Henry seems to deflate, about to collapse, not caring about anything anymore.

When it's time for Annette to sing, she does not sing.

The audience is getting very angry now.

After a few seconds of silence, Baby Annette whispers into her mike (her first words ever.)

BABY ANNETTE

Daddy...

The audience falls silent...

Daddy kills people.

**FADE TO BLACK**

# 4th ACT

## COURTHOUSE & PRISON

### EXT. ANN'S HOUSE: POOL - GREY DAY

Images of the pool, now empty, derelict, surrounded by police crime scene tape:

**CRIME SCENE  
DO NOT CROSS**

### TRUE LOVE B

CHORUS  
*True love always finds a way  
But true love often goes astray*

### INT. POLICE STATION: INTERROGATION ROOM

*True love always finds a way  
But true love often goes astray  
Astray, astray  
Away, away*

Time going by:

Henry sitting at the desk of an interrogation room, in semidarkness. The crude light of the desk lamp at times hits his face (as in during his previous interrogation scene with the police, “*We Are The Police*”).

He's changed quite a bit—seems older, puffed face.  
The light goes off.

The crude light hits his face again: he has changed even more—heavier, a beard, longer hair, etc.  
The light goes off.

### INT. POLICE VAN - DAY

Henry, handcuffed, in prison uniform, seated in the back of the police van taking him to the courthouse—a mere shadow of his former self now.

**EXT. OUTSIDE COURTHOUSE - DAY**

Flanked by police officers, Henry walks towards the courthouse among the angry crowd singing:

**HE IS A MURDERER**

CROWD

*He is a murderer, he is a murderer!  
There is no doubt at all that  
He is a murderer, he is a murderer!  
And he must pay the price and  
Whether it's first degree, or less than first degree  
The point is moot to us 'cause  
He's still a murderer and, whether it's death or jail  
We'll send him far, far, far away!*

*You are a murderer, you are a murderer!  
You killed the one that we all loved  
Near religiously, nearly religiously,  
No more will she die for us  
Who will now die for us, who will now die for us?  
No one can take her place, but  
You who despise us all, you who despise us all,  
We will now tame, break and destroy!*

The police officers push Henry inside an underground parking.

REPORTERS

Henry, over here!... What do you have to say?...  
The public has the right to know!

**INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

The courtroom obviously used to be a theater or an opera house (it has an oval shape, with a balcony—now closed to the public).

The atmosphere is solemn as Henry takes the stand.

CLERK (*Woman with runny nose*)

Please, raise your right hand.

Henry McHenry, do you solemnly swear that you will tell the *truth*, the whole *truth*, and nothing but the *truth*, so help you God?

*(She sneezes into her handkerchief)*  
*Truuuuth!*

HENRY

Yes.

The truth is... you remind me so much of my mother.

A murmur of disapproval in the audience—and a few laughs.  
The Judge bangs his gavel, one time.

JUDGE

Mr. McHenry: this court won't tolerate effrontery!

Clerk, please, once again please.

CLERK

Please, Henry McHenry, do you solemnly swear that you will tell the *truth*, the whole *truth*, and nothing but the *truth*, so help you... *(Singing) God!*

Henry stays silent a few seconds—then mumbles:

No.

You'll kill me if I do.

Again, a murmur of disapproval in the audience.  
The Judge bangs his gavel, three times.

Light and sounds in the courtroom slowly fade.

We can now only see Henry, everyone else in the courtroom is in darkness and completely motionless—as if time had stopped, except for Henry.

He stands up and, walking around the silent and dark courtroom (among the lawyers, people in the audience), he starts singing:

### STEPPING BACK IN TIME

HENRY

*Stepping back in time, I'd pull Ann aside,*

*"I'm so proud of you, I'm so proud of you"*

*Stepping back in time, I'd pull Ann aside,*

*"I'm so happy for you, I'm so happy for you"*

Henry thinks he's heard Ann's voice singing... But he's not sure... No, it can't be...

HENRY

*I'd say, "Ann, what gives me the most joy*

*Is to watch you, I'm a small boy*

ANN

*You're a small boy*

*Wide-eyed in my awe at your silken voice*

*I admire you, never tired of you"*

*Never be tired of you*

Henry has heard Ann's voice again. Or is he imagining he did? Bewildered, he goes on singing while his eyes search for Ann through the darkness of the courtroom.

His search for Ann becomes more frantic... and he finally spots her in a mirror (the "real" her, not her angry Spirit) high above him—standing alone at the balcony, looking at him. Beautiful tender Ann... Henry hasn't seen her for so long.

She's moving around the oval balcony. He moves too so as not to lose sight of her, as he goes on singing:

HENRY

*Teary-eyed, she'll say*

ANN & HENRY

*"I'm ashamed to see*

*That we both can't be, where we ought to be"*

*Crying, you will say*

*"It's so sad, you see*

*That we both can't be, who we ought to be"*

*Stepping back in time, I could step aside*

*Not allow my rage to be magnified*

*To a dangerous point where a rash act*

*What an impact, I can't grab back*

ANN & HENRY

*Now there's no more time, what a shame to see*

*That we both can't be, where we ought to be*

*No there's no more time, it's so sad to see*

*That we both can't be, who we ought to be*

THE SPIRIT OF ANN

Henry!

The voice didn't come from Ann at the balcony, but from a few feet behind him...

Henry turns around, and faces (not sweet Ann but) the angry Spirit of Ann—coming from the dais right by the Judge (who's motionless and in the dark).

The Spirit moves closer to Henry.

## COURTROOM SPIRIT

THE SPIRIT OF ANN

Henry. She won't be the one keeping you company in jail. I will!

*Day after day after day...*

*Night after night after night!*

**YEARS LATER****EXT. ANN'S HOUSE: POOL - DAY**

At the bottom of the pool: muddy waters and toads, vegetation grown wild.

**FADE TO BLACK****INT. PRISON: VISITING ROOM - DAY**

Henry in his prisoner's uniform, waiting for Annette's visit in the visiting room. He has aged quite a bit.

He is mumbling some incoherent logorrhea.

**INT. PRISON: CORRIDORS - DAY**

A PRISON GUARD is walking through the corridors of the prison, carrying Annette in his arms. She is 5 years old now—her hair longer.

**INT. PRISON: VISITING ROOM - DAY**

Henry, still mumbling.

**INT. PRISON: CORRIDORS - DAY**

The Prison Guard, still walking through the corridors with Annette in his arms.

**INT. PRISON: VISITING ROOM - DAY**

Henry stops his mumbling, and turns towards the door: through the glass panel, he can see Annette in the guard's arms. She is staring at him from behind the door.

The guard opens the door, and Annette enters the visiting room. She sits on a chair in front of Henry.

At first, father and daughter sit there, mute and distressed.

Henry is the first to break the silence:

Annette?... Annette?  
You've changed so much Annette.

ANNETTE'S VOICE

Yes.

But the voice doesn't come from where Annette is sitting...  
Henry's eyes focus on the other side of the room... he seems to be facing a tormented vision.

On the other side of the room: another Annette (a real little girl, in the flesh—not a puppet anymore) is standing, her back to the wall.

REAL ANNETTE

Yes, I have.

Although her voice is a little girl's voice, she now speaks with the words of a penetrating adolescent.

She approaches the table where Puppet-Annette is sitting in front of Henry.  
She takes the place of the puppet.

Silence, then:

ANNETTE

You too have changed.

But at least, you're safe here, yes?

You can't drink and you can't smoke here, can you?

HENRY

...No... no I can't.

ANNETTE

And... you can't kill here, can you?

*(No answer from Henry. She then has a shy smile.)*

Hum... it was a joke...

HENRY

Hum, you are my daughter after all.

No. No more killing. Only time. "Killing Time." Have you heard that expression?

ANNETTE

No. But now, you have nothing to love.

HENRY

Can't I love you?

ANNETTE

No. Not really...

Henry tries not to show how hurt he is.

HENRY *(He looks at the clock on the wall.)*

Annette...  
We don't have long.

He then starts singing—slow, low:

### SYMPATHY FOR THE ABYSS

HENRY  
*I'll sing these words to you  
I hope that they'll ring true  
They're not some magic chimes  
To cover up my crimes  
Annette, of this I'm sure:  
Imagination's strong  
And Reason's song  
Is weak and thin  
...We don't have long*

*I stood upon a cliff  
A deep abyss below  
Compelled to look, I tried  
To fight it off, God knows I tried  
This horrid urge to look below  
But half-horrified  
And half-relieved  
I cast my eyes  
Toward the abyss, the dark abyss*

Henry gets up, paces the cell as he goes on singing:

*I heard a ringing in my ears  
I knew my death knell's ugly sound  
The overbearing urge to gaze  
Into the deep abyss, the haze!  
So strong the yearning for the fall  
Imagination's strong  
And Reason's song  
Is weak and thin  
...We don't have long*

Annette violently throws her chimp plush towards her father.

For the first time, we see a real toughness in her expression. She bangs her little fist repeatedly on the table, as she sings:

*I'll never sing again!  
Shunning all lights at night  
I'll never sing again!  
Smashing every lamp I see  
I'll never sing again!*

*Living in full darkness  
I'll never sing again!  
A vampire forever!*

**HENRY**  
*Annette!—no, no, no!  
Annette, Annette no!*

For the first time, Henry sees his daughter but as *a real person, a real little girl* of flesh and blood. Father and daughter now sing in duet:

**HENRY**  
*I sang these words to you*  
**ANNETTE**  
*Can I forgive what you have done?  
I hoped that they'd ring true  
And will I ever forgive mom?  
Imagination's so strong  
Her deadly poison I became  
And Reason's song is never strong  
Merely a child to exploit  
Imagination is so strong  
Forgive you both?  
And Reason's song  
Or forget you both?  
So faint and shrill  
To take that oath?  
I stood above  
The deep abyss  
To take that oath?*

**ANNETTE (Angry)**  
*Why should I now forgive?  
Why should I now forget?  
I can never forgive!  
I can never forget!  
Both of you were using me for your own ends  
—for your own ends  
Not an ounce of shame  
the two of you, you're both to blame!  
I wish that both of you were gone  
Wish you were gone!*

**HENRY**  
*No don't blame Ann  
Wish you were gone!  
Annette that's wrong  
Wish you were gone!  
No don't blame Ann  
Both of you gone!*

Annette turns away from Henry, seeming to now sing to herself:

**ANNETTE**

*But is forgiveness the sole way*

**HENRY**

*This horrid urge to look below  
When all has gone so far astray  
God knows I tried, to fight it off  
Half-horrified, and half-relieved  
Extract the poison from one's heart  
And from one's soul, I can't be sure  
I cast my eyes down the abyss*

Annette turns to face Henry again:

*Forgive the two of you or not  
I take this oath  
Sympathy for the dark abyss  
Forgive you both?  
I take this oath  
Sympathy for the dark abyss  
I take this oath  
Forgive you both?  
Or forget you both?  
Don't cast your eyes  
Down the abyss  
I must be strong  
I must be strong!*

The guard steps inside the room.

**GUARD**

Time's up!

Henry grabs the child, hugs her. She doesn't resist his embrace, but doesn't commit to it either.

**GUARD**

No contact!

The guard steps in to separate them... but Henry hangs onto the child.

**WE LOVE EACH OTHER SO MUCH** melody

*ANNETTE (singing, sadly, to her father)  
Now, you have nothing to love*

**HENRY**

*Why can't I love you?  
Can't I love you?*

ANNETTE  
*Now, you have nothing to love*

HENRY  
 Can't I love you, Annette?

ANNETTE  
*No, not really Daddy, it's sad but it's true:  
 Now you having nothing to love*

Henry lets go of the child.  
 The guard picks her up in his arms, and leaves the room with her.

HENRY  
 Annette, my Annette...  
 Never cast your eyes down the Abyss!

#### **INT. PRISON: CELL / CORRIDOR - DAY**

Henry goes to the closed door. Through the glass panel in the door, he can see Annette in the guard's arms, her face turned towards him.

The child is getting smaller and smaller, as the guard moves away in the corridor. She waves goodbye.

HENRY  
*Goodbye Annette... Goodbye Annette... Goodbye Annette...  
 Goodbye, Annette... Goodbye...*

#### **INT. PRISON: VISITING ROOM - DAY**

Henry moves away from the door.  
 For a brief moment, his eyes catch the surveillance camera watching him... He immediately looks away.

HENRY (*mumbling*)  
 Stop watching me...

He moves to one corner of the cell, rests his head on the wall  
 (his back to the camera).

Last image: Annette's puppet and plush chimp, lying on the floor, motionless.

**FADE TO BLACK**



**EPILOGUE****EXT. FOREST - NIGHT**

As the end credits roll: the cast and the authors of the film reappear as themselves (as in the Prologue), followed by the whole film crew.

They're all walking side by side in the dark, singing:

**THE END****ALL**

*It's the end  
So we bid you Goodnight  
Safe journey home,  
watch out for strangers*

*If you liked what you  
saw —tell a friend  
If you've no friends  
—then tell a stranger  
Tonight*

*Good night, one and all  
Good night, one and all  
Good night, one and all  
(...)*