

# Rachel

by  
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FADE IN:

EXT. THE BEACH - OCEAN CITY, NJ - DAY

It's winter. Desolate. Cold. The water is grey. The tide low.

RACHEL, 26, appears against the sky. The sanguine beauty of her red hair leaps around in the wind, licking at her sad eyes, her ashen cheeks and listless lips.

A man's HAND reaches up to cup her cheek.

JEREMY

Hey. Whatcha thinkin'?

JEREMY, 26, a bookish, overweight man-boy with a face that only a mother could love, is laying prostrate on a drainage pipe with Rachel straddled over him.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

What's on your mind?

Jeremy puts his hands behind his head - somehow relaxed in this bizarre position they're in.

Rachel shrugs, unable to explain her thoughts.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

What?

No response. Jeremy shakes Rachel by the waist - playful.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Wha-aaaa-t?

**Nearby**, a bold MAN in a leather jacket and small CHILD, bundled up against the cold, are walking up from the water.

Rachel likes play, so joins in with Jeremy, but --

RACHEL

Whoap!

She flubs, and face plants on the sand.

The man, J.J., 40s, a modern Viking - perpetually warm and restless - can't believe his eyes.

J.J.

Rachel?

Rachel hops up, unharmed, but startled to see J.J.

RACHEL

J.J.?

Jeremy is by her side, checking for bumps and bruises.

JEREMY

Rachel, are you okay?

Rachel and J.J. stand awkwardly - they are steeped in history.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Hi. Whose this?

Jeremy unwittingly cuts through the tension between Rachel and J.J. with an outstretched hand:

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Jeremy.

J.J.

(shaking hands)

J.J.

JEREMY

J.J.?

J.J.

Yup. Like your favorite pair of jammie jams.

JEREMY

Oh, right. J.J. You were one of Rachel's instructors at the Paul Mitchell School.

Rachel is impressed with Jeremy's recall; but for J.J. the comment ignites a glimmer of hope.

J.J.

(to Rachel)

You mentioned me? All good, I hope.

No comment.

JEREMY

Some rough years from the way she tells it. What brings you all the way down here on a day like to today? If you don't mind me asking.

J.J.

Eh, the wife.

RACHEL

Faye?

J.J.

Pregnant again, and going stir  
crazy.

Rachel seems relieved. She beams down at the child, ZACH (6).

RACHEL

Is this Zach?

J.J.

Yup. Big guy now, huh, big guy?

Rachel nods enthusiastically, like she has a vested interest  
in the child's well being.

ZACH

Daddy, I'm cold.

J.J.

Sorry, buddy, we're going.  
(to Rachel & Jeremy)  
You guys headed up?

Jeremy thinks it's a good idea, but Rachel is wholeheartedly  
against it.

EXT. DOWNTOWN OCEAN CITY - LATER

RACHEL and JEREMY are riding bikes down the main drag. All  
the stores they pass are closed for the season.

JEREMY

Why didn't you ask him for a job?

RACHEL

Whaaaat? Silly.

Rachel rides in easy circles around Jeremy who struggles to  
keep pace.

JEREMY

Rachel...You need a job. He  
probably needs stylists. Problem.  
Solution. It's not that difficult  
if you just think about it.

RACHEL

I thought about it.

Jeremy doesn't believe her.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
 Jer-emy...He flunked me. No  
 license, no  
 ("snip snip")  
 End of story.  
 ("forget it")

Jeremy, exhausted, stops his bike.

JEREMY  
 Ray-chel, I don't know what this...  
 (mimicking Rachel's hand  
 gestures)  
 Means. Use your big girl words.

That shuts Rachel up good.

INT. RACHEL'S MOM'S CONDO - LATER

A slim BOX is waiting on the table.

RACHEL & JEREMY come in from the cold. Jeremy takes off his coat and shoes, but Rachel twirls around in the entry way until she sees the box.

RACHEL  
 What's this?

JEREMY  
 Oh, your mom left that for you. She got it at the office party, but she - well, we - thought you might like it.

Rachel opens the box - it's a LEATHER BOUND JOURNAL. She flips through the pages.

RACHEL  
 It's empty.

JEREMY  
 It's a journal.

Rachel shrugs and tosses it on the counter. Jeremy can't wrap his head around her caprice; he sits at the house computer - his face cast in a cold blue light.

Rachel opens the fridge.

RACHEL  
 What do you want for dinner? Ooo, champagne.

JEREMY  
That's not dinner.

Rachel tries to unscrew the top of cheap bottle of Andre. She uses her teeth to try to naw it off:

RACHEL  
Yeah, but I want it.

JEREMY  
(pounds his fist)  
Damn!

Rachel is startled by Jeremy's outburst.

JEREMY (CONT'D)  
Chris Christie is our new governor.

\*POP\* The bubbly is open - but these are not good times.

RACHEL  
Sorry.

JEREMY  
Now you see why I told you to vote?

Rachel sets down the bottle and goes to Jeremy. Every BUBBLE that rises to the surface bursts.

EXT. MIRROR MIRROR SALON/J.J.'S HOUSE - DAY

FAYE, late 30s, very pregnant and stressed is trying to wrangle ZACH into the car. He is trying to play tag.

RACHEL passes them - parking in the driveway/parking lot. Faye pays no mind to the visitor.

Rachel gets out - shades her eyes from the sun - and takes it in.

J.J.'s SALON is in the detached garage behind the HOUSE he lives in with his family. This makes Rachel very happy. She waves to Faye, who is counting to 3 for Zach. Faye puts on a smile and points to the salon.

INT. MIRROR MIRROR SALON - CONTINUOUS

J.J. is alone - cleaning up after an appointment.

The BELL JINGLES announcing RACHEL'S entry.

J.J. stops.

Rachel curls her hand into a wave.

RACHEL  
Hi.

J.J.  
Hi.

O.S. A door BANGS. Two hair stylists, ROBBIE and NOAM come out of the back room mid-conversation. They break off when they see:

ROBBIE  
Rachel!

RACHEL  
Robbie? Hi! Noam!

ROBBIE  
Come'ere, doll face.

Robbie swoops Rachel up in a big hug, and spins her around. Then Noam takes his turn.

J.J. looks on with longing for contact with Rachel.

NOAM  
What's a worldly gal like you doing down here? I always pictured you haunting city cafes, starving for your art. Queen of the Bohemes, style.

RACHEL  
Ehg, the city...  
("it stinks")  
Not for me.

NOAM  
Well, it's great to see you. We're going out for Yuengs and Wings. Wanna come?

Rachel looks to J.J. for an answer.

J.J.  
I'll catch up to you guys in a bit.

ROBBIE  
...Right. Okay. Well, see you around, Rachel?

Rachel, uncommitted, nods. Robbie and Noam each give her a kiss on the cheek as they leave.

Rachel and J.J. are alone again - they keep their distance.

RACHEL  
Robbie and Noam, huh?

J.J.  
Yup. Robbie and Noam. Great guys.  
Great stylists. ...Rachel -

RACHEL  
Maybe...have room for one more?

J.J. looks at her cockeyed - he wasn't expecting this.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Not to cut hair. No, I know...I'm  
terrible. But shampoo. I was always  
very good at that.

J.J.  
I see. You're here for a job.

RACHEL  
Yeah. Jeremy's idea.

Rachel feels unburdened now that J.J. knows her intent. She comes into the room, turning around to admire at 360 degrees.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
The place is great. Faye's here.  
And the kids. So great. You guys  
must be really happy.

Rachel spots the styling stools and sits in one. It spins. She spins.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
You guys have plans for the  
holidays? Whoop!

Rachel tumbles out of her seat and eats linoleum.

J.J. rushes to her side, helps her up.

He holds her for too long - too close. J.J. can't believe Rachel's suddenly so close. Rachel can't look at him.

J.J.  
God, I missed you so much.

He kisses her deeply, and passionately. Rachel pushes back, her voice cracks.



RACHEL

J.J., please...All I want is a job.

J.J. shakes his head, and lifts Rachel up off her feet. She presses back against his chest, but, really, she doesn't resist. With their eyes locked, he carries her into the back room marked "PRIVATE."

INT. RACHEL'S MOM'S CONDO - LATER

JEREMY and Rachel's MOM are playing an intense game of Scrabble when RACHEL comes home.

With her coat still on (as usual) Rachel makes herself at home in the scene. She looks at Jeremy's tiles and whispers something in his ear.

JEREMY

That's not a word.

RACHEL

They use it in Allure all the time.

Mom finds the humor in that, but Jeremy is unamused.

Rachel takes herself out of the game. A bit petulant, she sticks a lollypop in her mouth.

INT. RACHEL & JEREMY'S ROOM - THAT NIGHT

The lights are out. Moon light pours in. JEREMY is asleep. RACHEL lies awake next to him. They are squeezed into a twin bed. Rachel sits up and looks out the window.

She drapes herself over Jeremy's slumbering body, closes her eyes and tries to match her breathing to his. His breaths are quick and unceasing like a cat or an asthmatic.

Rachel can't keep up. Her breath is like the ocean - long, full inhales - a pause - and out...

Opening her eyes, Rachel spots the JOURNAL on her night stand. Trying not to wake Jeremy, she grabs it.

Draped over Jeremy, basking in moonlight, Rachel writes:

RACHEL (V.O.)

Why do people bother to journal? I guess it's just to see if we've really changed or evolved over time but -

Jeremy snorts and mutters, but quiets again soon enough.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

But if no one else is meant to read it, the pages may as well die when the writer does. They may as well have never been given life at all. Unless ...what? A mental exercise? Catharsis? ...Seems silly. What can be gained from looking back when the very momentum of life teaches to move forward, always forward?

Rachel puts the journal aside, and lays back down next to Jeremy. She wraps his arm around her and tries sleep again.

INT. MIRROR MIRROR SALON - DAY

Rachel's eyes are closed but she is fully awake, alert, her senses guiding her through messaging shampoo into a CLIENT's pliant head.

The client, a woman, moans a little - feeling the tensions of her day being washed away by Rachel's hands.

INT. MIRROR MIRROR SALON - LATER

It's the end of the day, and RACHEL is exhausted. The guys, ROBBIE and NOAM, are packing up, but Rachel is still trying to work out all the tension she absorbed into her hands from other people.

She manages a wave goodbye to Robbie and Noam as they "peace out."

J.J. puts \$50 under Rachel's nose. Cautious, she takes it.

RACHEL

What's this?

J.J.

Customers love you.

J.J. hugs Rachel around the waist; but Rachel arches back, not willing to commit to closeness. The money is a handy diversion.

RACHEL

Righteous. That one woman was having, like, a --

(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
 ("orgasm")  
 Hairgasm.

J.J. is overwhelmed by Rachel's scent. He sticks his face in her hair.

J.J.  
 God, I wish I could lie in bed with you all day. Take in every drop of you.

RACHEL  
 Heh. Heh. Well.  
 (squirms out of his grasp)  
 Good luck finding the time for that.

Rachel decides it's time to go. J.J. is a gentleman though, and helps her with her coat.

J.J.  
 How would you feel about coming to the convention in April?

He hands Rachel her bag.

RACHEL  
 Oh, you know, April. That's so far away. I can barely make plans for tomorrow, let alone, what's that? Like 1, 2, 3, 4 --

J.J. takes Rachel by the shoulders.

J.J.  
 Rachel. Relax. No pressure.

There's something about the way J.J. can just toss things off that makes it okay for Rachel to exhale, and laugh at herself for overreacting.

INT. RACHEL & JEREMY'S ROOM - LATER

JEREMY is at his computer, looking very serious and ghoulish in the pale blue light.

RACHEL comes in carrying bags of FAST FOOD and sucking down a MILKSHAKE. She kisses Jeremy hello with the straw still in her mouth.

RACHEL  
 How was your day?

Rachel gets comfortable on the bed with her fries and shake.

JEREMY

Hmm. What?

Jeremy looks back at Rachel, but she shrugs as if, "I didn't say anything." Jeremy goes back to his rapid fire typing. Rachel turns on the TV. **Sex and the City.**

Jeremy scarfs down food between thoughts. For Rachel, eating requires all 5 senses, and thus tends to look erotic.

RACHEL

How would you feel about an open relationship?

JEREMY

Hm. What? Wait - what?

He whips around, full of angst. Rachel, caught like a deer in headlights, sucks from her empty cup, and nods at the TV:

RACHEL

The TV.

Jeremy considers the show, and deems it unworthy of attention. He turns back to his task.

JEREMY

I don't know. Ask me when I have a job.

Rachel unwinds her scarf. She grabs her JOURNAL and flops down on her stomach to write - her eyes boring a hole into the back of Jeremy's head.

A FANTASY takes over: Rachel & J.J. making love in candlelight.

RACHEL (V.O.)

Sometimes I want to curl into J.J.;  
sometimes I want to reach out and  
be physically affectionate with  
him. But it's absurd.

Back in reality, Rachel's MOM has come home and stopped in the doorway to say:

MOM

Hello, kids.

Rachel and Jeremy look up.

RACHEL

Hi, Mom!

JEREMY

Hi, Nancy.

Mom walks on down the hall, and "the kids" pick up where they left off.

RACHEL (V.O.)

It's somewhat amusing how affectionate he can be with me.

Rachel's mind picks up on a memory: her & J.J. having sex against the wall - Rachel's red hair aflame against the black salon smocks. Their actions unreasoned and unplanned, just pure instinct and desire.

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

Holding my hand, hugging me for minutes after not seeing me for days, a few hours; holding me, cuddling with me in whatever odd tangle we end up in afterwards. I was wondering what exactly it is he gets from me, but considering what he said about needing secrets to stay sane, and how harried he feels between work and home, I suppose he takes from me what I get from an empty house: "me time." No hassles, no worries, no constraints or need for reservations - to just be. I miss that.

In the present reality, Rachel tears out the page. She opens the window, sits on the sill and begins twisting the paper into a stick.

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

I supposed it's a bit sad how detached I am from any sense of intimacy with him...

She lights the paper on fire - watches it burn.

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

Even as a friend. I withhold hugs, while he says things, unprompted. It's difficult not to take them at face value.

Jeremy smells the smoke and looks back. Sometimes, like right now, he loves Rachel's absurd, impulsive behavior.

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

The other day, he said that when I'm not around, it isn't just the sex he misses, it's having conversations with me too. And they are interesting; from them I've been able to understand and things in a new light and articulate them in different terms.

Rachel's MOM stops in the doorway - laundry basket in hand.

MOM

Whatcha up to, hun?

RACHEL

Burning paper.

MOM

Well...Not for too long, okay? We don't want to run the thermostat down.

Mom goes about her business.

Jeremy gets up from his computer, stretching and laughing. He comes to the window and kisses his ridiculous girlfriend. He tries to run his fingers through her hair, but they snag.

RACHEL

Ow!

JEREMY

Did you burn yourself?

RACHEL

No. My hair.  
(pulling his hand out)  
Ow, ow, ow.

JEREMY

Sorry.

Jeremy lifts his hand again, but drops it. He sulks back to his computer.

Rachel can't tell him to come back. She reconsiders the burning embers in her hand - tosses them into the night, and consults the moon. It's a mere sliver.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A LOCAL PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

A full moon. The playground is deserted...except --

RACHEL throws her head back in ecstasy. She and J.J. are hidden underneath the jungle-gym castle. She grabs onto the grates above her, and for a moment her eyes flash open.

The MOON. The moon.

RACHEL

Stop, stop.

Rachel's body goes slack. J.J. pulls her down and hugs her to him.

J.J.

Too much?

Rachel, terrified, shakes her head.

J.J. (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

He strokes her hair, and she looks to him for reassurance.

RACHEL

I had a thought.

J.J. chest rumbles with laughter. Sexy-time over.

J.J.

At a time like this? Well, there's your problem right there.

J.J. starts to straighten his clothes out.

RACHEL

No. I need to think more. Jeremy is always telling me that.

J.J.

Yeah, well, Jeremy isn't here is he?

J.J. gets up and holds his hand out to Rachel.

J.J. (CONT'D)

Come on. We should get back.

Without thinking, Rachel takes J.J.'s outstretched hand.

EXT. MIRROR MIRROR SALON/J.J.'S HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

There's a get-together in full swing at J.J.'s house. All the characters in their lives are in attendance.

RACHEL and J.J., bearing gifts of BEER and SNACKS are welcomed back into the merriment.

Faye maybe suspects something, but she's definitely mad that J.J. forgot to pick up something that was on the list.

Jeremy is having a grand ole time talking with the guys, and the party continues in time to:

RACHEL (V.O.)

When we got back from the playground I bummed another cigarette and sat on the steps trying to look ponderous, but all I could see was that damned moon. It was full, and I looked at its face for a long time and said, "She's grinning."

Everybody except J.J. laughs at Rachel.

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

Of course, I got angry when everyone said that it's a man in the moon. Why should that be when the moon is full of female energy?

Everyone except J.J. dismisses Rachel. The party resumes without their participation.

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

It's not fair that men should get both the sun and moon. J.J. pointed out that we are on Mother Earth. "So what?" I asked. "Is the universe acting out some love story, and she has to be stuck between the two?" He said yes, but I was pissed off and wanted to claim the moon for women.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RACHEL'S MOM'S CONDO - DAY

A PAPER-CUTTER slices. RACHEL is chopping up the pages of her journal into tiny squares.



RACHEL (V.O.)

It seemed wrong to me that the Earth is essentially a perfect being, balanced in death, decay, rebirth, and life, but her entire existence depends on staying stuck

(- slice -)

between one male body that in its brilliance and brightness of pure energy will burn itself out one day, and another

(- slice -)

supposedly male body that is essentially dead except for its power to control gravity. How does that work? How does that translate? If more women are born and we live longer, how is it possible for one female to get caught between two males?

Slice. Slice.

Rachel's MOM comes into the doorway.

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

Of course, there's no reason to believe this triangle has anything to do with how genders interact, or love is experienced.

MOM

Whatcha got goin' on in there?

The question snaps Rachel back into the now.

RACHEL

Huh? Oh, I was just wanted to see how many little pieces of paper I could make from these bigger ones.

MOM

Oh. So...How many?

Rachel picks some up from the pile - sprinkles them back into place.

RACHEL

Kind of a lot. Not as fun as confetti, though.

Mom comes into the room. Happy to get more than two words out of her daughter, she kisses Rachel's head.

MOM

How are things going? How's work?

RACHEL

Eh, work is work. ...One of these days I'm going to sew J.J. mouth shut, though.

("jabber jabber")

Just the same stories over and over again.

("kill me")

Seriously. And every time he introduces himself to someone it's always, "J.J. like your favorite pair of jammie jams." I don't know why he doesn't just go by Jasper. I mean, Jasper Mateo - come on, that's the most hairstylist name I've ever heard.

Mom is comforted by her daughter's babble.

MOM

Well...you seem like you're happy.

Rachel agrees by tossing up her "confetti."

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

RACHEL arabesques across the aisles on a shopping cart.

JEREMY shuffles behind her, trying to catch up.

Rachel looks to see if he's with her, and...

RACHEL

Whoop!

The cart bumps into a display case, and Rachel goes down.

Chuckling, Jeremy helps her up, and brushes her off.

JEREMY

You're such a goof.

Jeremy gives Rachel a quick peck on the lips, which Rachel tries to turn it into more. Jeremy fends her off.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Come on. We're in public.

RACHEL

So?

Jeremy picks something up off the shelf and considers it.

JEREMY  
What should we get?

RACHEL  
("I don't know")  
I'm not hungry.

JEREMY  
You can't think of anything you  
want?

Rachel shakes her head "no." Jeremy shakes his head like "I just don't know what to do with you."

INT. RACHEL'S MOM'S CONDO - LATER

RACHEL and JEREMY come in with only two grocery bags between them.

MOM is in the kitchen.

MOM  
Hey, kids.

RACHEL  
Hi, Mom!

JEREMY  
Hi, Nancy.

MOM  
You guys hungry?

RACHEL  
Starved.

Jeremy rolls his eyes at Rachel as he sets down the bag. Mom checks the contents.

MOM  
Not much to go with here.

Jeremy points the finger at Rachel.

RACHEL  
Don't blame me. I told you just get  
whatever.

Jeremy moves around Rachel as he puts the groceries away. Coming down to Rachel's level, Jeremy sticks his tongue out at her.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Use your big boy words.

O.S. A car horn HONKS.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Oh, shit. That's J.J. and  
everybody. Can you tell them I'll  
be a minute? I have to pack real  
quick.

Rachel runs out of the room, instantly high on giddiness.

INT. RACHEL & JEREMY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A SUITCASE is flung open on the bed. RACHEL indiscriminately  
throws clothes in to it. Jeremy comes in, and takes his  
habitual seat at the computer. He's going to miss Rachel.

JEREMY  
How long is the convention?

RACHEL  
I think we'll be back Sunday. Wait.  
Yeah, Sunday.

JEREMY  
Do you have to go?

RACHEL  
Everybody's going.

Jeremy isn't swayed. O.S. the HORN BLOWS.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
It's already paid for. He even gave  
me a bonus. Cash. Under the table.

Rachel loves tax-free money. She snaps her suitcase shut, and  
takes it in hand.

JEREMY  
I'll miss you.

Rachel bends down to kiss Jeremy goodbye. O.S. The HORN.

RACHEL  
You'll hardly know I'm gone. Bye.

She rushes out of the room. Jeremy misses her already. He  
looks around a spots her JOURNAL on the bed.

JEREMY  
Hey, you forgot...

O.S. The front door SLAMS.

JEREMY (CONT'D)  
...Your journal.

It beckons Jeremy.

He picks it up, but is reticent to open it. He inspects the outside, and notices something very odd. He opens it.

Almost all the pages are torn out. Only a few blank pages in the back, and the first journal entry remain. Aloud:

JEREMY (CONT'D)  
Why do people bother to journal? I  
guess it's just to see if we've  
really changed or evolved over time  
but -

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. J.J.'S JEEP - SIMULTANEOUS

Rachel jumping in and the gang (J.J., Noam, and Robbie) heading off.

JEREMY  
But if no one else is meant to read  
it, the pages may as well die when  
the writer does. They may as well  
have never been given life at all.  
Unless ...what? A mental exercise?  
Catharsis? ...Seems silly. What can  
be gained from looking back when  
the very momentum of life teaches  
to move forward, always forward.

Jeremy considers the passage.

JEREMY (CONT'D)  
Shit. I've got to start reading  
Allure.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LUXURY HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

The room is dark and sumptuous. Candles are lit.

J.J. leads RACHEL in from the hall. The scene disorients her.

RACHEL

Whoa.

J.J., a little embarrassed, scratches his noggin.

J.J.

I, uh, thought something special  
was in order - for the occasion.

Special? It's straight out of Rachel's fantasy. She's  
stunned.

J.J. puts his hand on the small of her back to guide her  
inside.

But she won't budge.

J.J. (CONT'D)

You alright?

RACHEL

I...I should go back to my room.

She tries to flee, but bumps right into J.J. Undeterred, J.J.  
caresses Rachel's back.

J.J.

What for?

RACHEL

Uhm...the phone? Won't Faye call?  
What if Jeremy calls?

J.J.

Don't worry.  
(whispers in Rachel's ear)  
We're down at the bar.

His breath gives her goose bumps. She can't deny it, and  
doesn't want to. Being with him like this feels right.

INT. LUXURY HOTEL SUITE - LATER

J.J. is reveling in post-coital bliss. RACHEL's head is  
tucked under the pillow. J.J. pats her on the back - "Bravo."

Rachel starts shaking; it's unclear if she laughing or crying  
until her head pops up. Definitely laughing.

J.J. pokes her skin.

RACHEL

Ow.

J.J.

You're pink.

She hides her face in feigned shame.

J.J. (CONT'D)

Really. You look like a little piglet.

Rachel swats at his arm.

J.J. (CONT'D)

Jay...I'm a redhead.

She said it so meaningfully, J.J. plays along like he got it.

J.J. (CONT'D)

Ahhhhh. Of course.

Rachel pounces on him, ready for round two.

J.J. (CONT'D)

Oh, ow, give me a few minutes.

Rachel tames her heavy petting into something gentle and sweet.

RACHEL

No. No minutes for you.

They resume their non-verbal understanding.

INT. LUXURY HOTEL SUITE - LATER

The last candle burns out. The room is cast in the pale blue light of the moon. RACHEL watches the line of smoke rise.

She rests her head on J.J.'s slumbering body and feels the ebb and flow of his breath. It's in sync with hers, but it doesn't feel right.

She gets out of bed, naked, and goes to the window to look at the MOON. She hugs her shoulders.

J.J. stirs. He turns on the bedside lamp.

J.J.

You okay?

Rachel acknowledges him, but the question is too big to answer.

Impulse tells him to go to her, so he does. He presses against her back, holding her in a long hug.

Rachel begins to cry.

J.J. (CONT'D)  
(soothing)  
Hey, hey. What's the matter?

Rachel turns into him, and cries against his bare chest. He strokes her hair and comforts her like he would a small child.

J.J. (CONT'D)  
Shhh. Shhh. It's okay.

RACHEL  
No. No it's not. I'm ruining everything.

She looks up at J.J., her eyes imploring him to believe her.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
I think I've turned Jeremy into a eunuch.

J.J. laughs. But Rachel doesn't.

J.J.  
Not literally?

Rachel shakes her head and breaks free of J.J.'s embrace.

J.J. (CONT'D)  
Oh. Phew.

He shuts the blinds, and follows Rachel to the sitting area.

Rachel flops down in a chair. She cries inconsolably - being misunderstood or dismissed makes it worse.

J.J. turns on the lamp next to her, and pulls up the ottoman for himself.

They sit, facing each other - naked - for sometime. Rachel's crying doesn't let up, and J.J. grows increasing concerned.

J.J. (CONT'D)  
What's going on, girl?



RACHEL

It's Jeremy. How can I be here? How can I be doing this when..? But I can't, J.J. I can't say anything, or do anything without - without crushing him. And he just tries so hard to please me.

J.J.

That's good. That he tries?

RACHEL

No, it's terrible. It's so terrible, J.J. Just think; a touch here, "Is that okay?" A touch there, "Is that okay?"

J.J.

Is it not okay? Has he hurt you?

RACHEL

No! It's just not anything! I can't feel anything when I have to think so hard. I can't get into it when there's nothing there, but --  
("I don't know")

Rachel searches for the words, but finds the bed.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

In four years, he's never...  
(hoping J.J. gets it)  
...turned me pink.

J.J. doesn't get it at first, so he looks to the bed for a clue. Suddenly, it dawns on him.

J.J.

You're a redhead.

Rachel nods her head, and says so sadly:

RACHEL

I'm a redhead.

J.J.

(considering)  
Rachel...

But this isn't the kind of conversation he can just throw one of his reused stories at.

J.J. (CONT'D)  
 Come on. Let's just go to bed.  
 You'll feel better after some  
 sleep.

The thought of sleeping next to J.J. scares Rachel.

RACHEL  
 Sleep? With you?

Rachel vehemently shakes her head, jumps up, and throws on her coat.

J.J.  
 Where are you going?

RACHEL  
 I have to go.

J.J.  
 Rachel. Rachel!

But she's out the door.

EXT. LUXURY HOTEL SUITE - CONTINUOUS

RACHEL hails a cab.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

RACHEL hops in behind the CABBIE.

RACHEL  
 Ocean City.

CABBIE  
 Maryland?

RACHEL  
 New Jersey! Ocean City, New Jersey.  
 As fast as you can.

CABBIE  
 Ai'ght, Lady, but I gotta tells  
 yous, it ain't gonna be cheap or  
 nothin' --

Rachel thrusts \$300 cash under the cabbie's nose.

CABBIE (CONT'D)  
 Ai'ght. Ocean City, New Jersey it  
 is.

The cabbie releases the break, and heads out of the drive.

Rachel lets her head fall back against the seat. She looks out of the window toward home - 100 miles away.

Slowly, her hand creeps up to cover her nose. The smell of the city and the cab are so much more pungent in stillness; or maybe it's to stop herself from crying.

Rachel takes in the sight of the MOON riding high above the bold, yellow STREET LIGHTS for a long time.

The window fogs easily in the cool spring air. In the condensation, Rachel tries to draw triangles between the moon, the passing streetlights (each one replaced by the next), and...?

Where is she in this equation? She considers the pavement whizzing by beneath her. It's clear she is not Mother Earth.

She's just a girl in a cab and the moon is so very far away. She paws at the window, wanting to hold the moon...Jeremy.

The Cabbie glances at his fair's activity in the rearview mirror and figures Rachel is probably on drugs: shrooms, maybe.

CABBIE (CONT'D)

Hey, Lady...yous ahh..ai'ght back there?

Rachel rests her head on the window sill.

RACHEL

Fine.

Rachel pulls her coat tighter over her otherwise naked body.

EXT. THE BEACH - NIGHT - LATER

Waves are crashing.

RACHEL runs onto the beach, and falls just shy of the water. She yells at the MOON:

RACHEL

Why are you doing this to me?! Why won't you just leave me alone?!

The man in the moon smiles down at Rachel benignly.

Exhausted and out of breath, Rachel hauls herself up.

She goes over the drainage pipe that her and Jeremy were on before. She collapses onto it.

Rachel is tired and her eyes want to close, but she forces them to stay open. She paws at some algae:

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
What desire doesn't lead to the  
next and the next?

Rachel looks up and demands that the moon answer her:

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Really? What need...?

No answer coming, Rachel rests her head back down on the pipe. Just as her eyes become too heavy to hold open, OCEAN SPRAY hits Rachel in the face.

INT. RACHEL & JEREMY'S ROOM - LATER

All is still. Jeremy sleeps in their tiny bed under the familiar moonlight.

RACHEL creeps in the room, and gets into bed still fully clothed. Jeremy wakes up - dazed, happy, and surprised - to find RACHEL beside him.

JEREMY  
Hey, baby. I thought you were gone.

RACHEL  
I was.

JEREMY  
What happened?

RACHEL  
Nothing.

Rachel reaches out, pawing at Jeremy's face, a bit nervous now that she has his big, round, cratered face in her grasp.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
I just had to tell you...

Jeremy waits a bit anxiously for her to finish her thought.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
I love the way you breathe when you  
sleep.

Relief.

JEREMY

You came all the way back from  
Philly to tell me that?

Rachel nods "yes." Then she changes it to a shake of her head  
"no."

RACHEL

I couldn't sleep.

As usual, Jeremy is perplexed and awed by Rachel's  
unaccountable behavior. He flaps the wide lapel of her coat  
open and closed, trying to come up with a response.

JEREMY

Well, I can see the problem right  
here. You can't wear a coat to bed.  
Why don't you...

He suggests she takes it - and maybe more - off, but she  
shakes her head "no."

RACHEL

I'm cold. Just hold me?

Jeremy acquiesces. Rachel rolls over, and Jeremy assumes the  
position of big spoon. He whispers in her ear:

JEREMY

I love you.

Rachel snores in her sleep.

Jeremy squeezes Rachel tight. He closes his eyes, following  
Rachel into the unthinking depths of sleep.

FADE TO BLACK.