

# ANNETTE

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY  
Original Story by Ron Mael and Russell Mael



**Based on a fake story**

**2 MEN**

**1 WOMAN**

**1 BABY**



**3 STARS**

**1 GHOST**

**1 MIRACLE**

**2 CRIMES**

**37 SONGS**



## PROLOGUE (Los Angeles)

*The audience is greeted by the authors and actual cast members, singing “So May We Start?”*

### **1A. INT. THE VILLAGE MUSIC STUDIO - NIGHT**

Close-up of vu-meters on a mixing console: the needles react to off-screen sounds — instruments tuning up, feed-back, amplifiers and mikes being plugged in and tested, etc.

IN THE CONTROL-ROOM:

A man, sitting behind the mixing console, is waiting for something to happen on the other side of the windowpane (his young daughter and his dog are at his side.)

The man (Carax):

So may we start?

IN THE LIVE ROOM:

Hands on drums, starting the song "So May We Start?"

Hands on a piano starting to play the tune

Hands on a cello... etc.

The Sparks start singing the song (live) —as they put their coats on to go out:

## **So May We Start?**

So may we start?

So may we start?

It's time to start

High time to start

We hope that it goes the way —it's s'posed to go  
 There's fear in us all but we —can't let it show  
 We're underprepared but that —may be enough  
 The budget is large but still —it's not enough

### **1B. INT. MUSIC STUDIO: STAIRCASE - NIGHT**

The Sparks leave the recording studio, still singing... down the staircase (the acoustic of their voices changes). The main actors (Henry, Ann, and The Accompanist —*out of character*) join in, and sing along:

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?)*

We've fashioned a world, a world —built just for you  
 It's full of songs & fury —with no taboo  
 We'll sing and die for you —in minor keys  
 And God knows we'll kill for you —just wait and see

### **1C. EXT. MUSIC STUDIO - NIGHT**

*The Village - Music Studio - West Los Angeles*

BACKWARD TRACKING SHOT:

They leave the building (change of acoustic again) and continue singing outside, walking on the sidewalk (more of the actors of the film join in, and sing along.)

**[Credits on images]**

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?)*

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

Now...  
*(Same melody, but slower now, and a cappella :)*  
 The music resounds and all —the flames are lit  
 Ladies and gentlemen please —shut up and sit  
 The curtain of our eyelids —slowly rises  
 But where's the stage you wonder —outside, or within?  
 Outside?... Within?... Outside?... Within?...

*(Back to original rhythm:)*  
 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?)*  
*Etc.*

Still singing, the actors and the Sparks watch as:  
 —Henry goes to a powerful bike parked on the sidewalk, puts his helmet on, and rides off (big vroom from the bike)  
 —Ann gets in the back of a chic car (door opened by the driver). The car drives off.



Over the last credits and the title of the film, we hear:

The murmur of an audience getting seated before a show, and the amplified ANNOUNCER'S VOICE:

*Ladies & gentlemen, please take your seats so we may start.*

*The authors and actors of the show ask for your complete attention.*

*If you want to sing or laugh, or clap or fart  
Please do it in your head —only in your head.*

*You must now turn off all electronic devices, and are kindly requested to hold your breath until the very end of the show. Breathing is not allowed during the performance. So please take a deep, last breath right now.*

*Thank you.*

# 1<sup>ST</sup> ACT

## LOS ANGELES (NOWADAYS)

[The actors are now the characters: make-up, hair, costume, etc.]

### 2. EXT. HENRY'S BIKE THROUGH L.A. - NIGHT

While Henry McHenry is riding his large motorbike through Los Angeles (the famous comedian is on his way to the theatre where he is to perform his one-man show)...

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

... and Ann DelGreco is in the back of the chic car (the rising star soprano is being driven to the opera house where she is to perform)

— The Chorus sings:

### True Love Always Finds A Way (Chorus)

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

*And when it does, the consequences can be most unfortunate  
And when it does, the consequences can be devastating*

**4. EXT. HENRY'S THEATE - NIGHT**

Henry arrives at his theater (the old Hollywood Art Deco Pantages Theatre.)

**5. EXT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT**

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

**6A. INT. HENRY'S THEATER: BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

Henry, backstage, pacing the corridor as he's getting ready to go on stage (but we don't know that yet.)

All he is wearing is a green toweling bathrobe, which makes him look like a boxer before the combat —especially as he seems very concentrated and has 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  
... Then a voice in a mike, introducing him:

ANNOUNCER

And now, a mildly offensive evening with... The Ape of God!  
—Mr Henry McHenry!

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

Henry, still in his bathrobe, enters the stage. But at first, we can hardly see him. Because of the semi darkness on stage, but mostly because of the dense smoke emitted by smoke-machines. We can only hear his voice —coughing, angry.

HENRY (*as mumbling to himself*)

This smoke... shit... I'm not a fan...

He slowly emerges through the smoke —not really facing the (large) audience yet, still mumbling to himself.

Think I'm getting allergic to it. And what is this fucking smoke supposed to *mean* anyway? Wish they'd use laughing gas instead, would make my life easier. Or, better yet, cyanide gas.

He 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; we can hear his breathing.

## Why Am I A Comedian? (1)

*(Talking)*

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

*(A few people start laughing)*

Yes, "Laugh, laugh, laugh"

Not sure I can do it tonight

Not sure I should even try

*(Talking/rapping now)*

Making people laugh is a disgusting trick anyway

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 should I?

Why should I make you...

Suddenly: lights! music! chorus girls!...

Henry sings his (rock) refrain, with the chorus girls:

*Laugh, laugh, laugh?*

*Don't make me, don't make me, don't make me, don't make me!*

*Can't stand to hear each-of-you*

*Laugh, laugh, laugh*

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

*I'll first make you*

*Gasp, gasp, gasp*

*But don't worry, don't worry, don't worry, don't worry*

*You probably won't*

*Choke, choke, choke*

*Kick the bucket, kick the bucket, kick the bucket, kick the bucket.*

End of refrain: it was a very sudden, unexpected and thrilling burst of energy. The stage goes back to semi-darkness.

*(Talking/singing)*

Yes I know, I know, relax, save your breath:

I'm not allowed to make you laugh to death.  
 Alas, alas —says so on my contract  
 No last gasps tonight —not tonight  
 And can't make your alveoli pop tonight  
 No dislocated jaws, no belly explosions  
 However, asthmatics, keep your inhaler in position!

**OK?**

*(AUDIENCE: **OK!!**)*

**READY?**

*(AUDIENCE: **Ready!!**)*

**LAUGH!**

AUDIENCE *(all singing-laughing)*  
*Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!*  
*Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!*

HENRY  
 OK, shut up!

#### **7A. INT. OPERA HOUSE — ANN'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT**

Ann is getting ready to go on stage.  
 She's lying on the floor of her dressing room, in a strange position, doing strange  
 breathing exercises, while making strange guttural sounds.

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

HENRY  
 So, might you ask, yes, why?... Why did I become a comedian?  
*(Talking/singing now)*  
 Yes, why did I become a comedian?  
 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  
 —'til I ask you: "Have you ever noticed?"

(Well sure —but not only that)

To convey with a smile  
 these deep seated feelings of hatred & humiliation  
 that we all seem to be sharing?  
 —when (*now singing:* )  
*All the Catholics hate the Muslims*  
*And the Muslims hate the Catholics*  
*And the Tutsis hate the Hutus*  
*—and everybody hates the Jews!*

Well, no, no —not me.

Someone in the audience yells:

SO WHY?!

And the audience starts singing:

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

HENRY  
 No, no, no  
 Though I've come from poverty and severity  
 And now have reached big money and obscenity

AUDIENCE  
***So why did you become a comedian?***  
***For the fame? The fame?***

HENRY  
 No, no, no  
 Though fame is like a flame, glorious, superfluous  
 (So nice being famous for being infamous)

AUDIENCE  
***OK, so why did you become a comedian?***  
***Fear of death? Of death?***

HENRY  
 Oh, no, no  
 Coz you see I have sympathy for the abyss  
 (So must never cast my eyes towards the abyss)

... and he "casts his eyes" towards a woman on the front row, with a big *décolleté* on a generous bust:

*(Mike against his mouth)*  
Lady, that's quite an abyss you've got...

AUDIENCE  
***So... why did you become a comedian?***  
***For the women? The women?***

HENRY  
No, no, well...  
*(Not singing:)*  
OK, let me explain.

Grabbing (as for support) one breast of each of the two women, he gets up from the guy's knees, and walks back towards the stage.

*(Talking —introspective)*  
You see, my serial pussy days are over  
Because, well... I've just met someone  
Someone so... *(He can't find the words to describe her)*  
It all went so fast  
And now, I'm engaged  
*(Applauses, whistles)*  
I know, I know —marrying a girl when you're as young and immature as me, it's like... like swimming the Atlantic with a concrete block tied to your left testicle.

*(Talking/singing)*  
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 DelGreco, the opera star

There's a silence in the audience... They're surprised... not sure if it's real or a joke... Then some whistles, cheers. But a woman shouts:

**"Oh, no!"**  
*(Laughs)*

HENRY *(Talking/singing:)*  
What? What's wrong, lady?  
Anna and me? —you disagree?



What is it? —blasphemy?  
 Why? Is she too perfect?  
 (AUDIENCE: *Yes, yes, yes!*)  
 And I? Some loathsome insect?  
 (AUDIENCE: *Yes, yes, yes!*)

HENRY  
 OK...

#### **6E. INT. OPERA HOUSE — THE STAGE – NIGHT**

Ann, facing the stage curtain that separates her from her public.  
 The curtain starts to open...

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

HENRY  
*(More introspective now, pacing the stage, his back to the public  
 —as if he was really alone, having a monologue)*  
 Yes, 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 —that's a little more puzzling  
 But sometimes it's best to not ask too many questions.  
*(Applauses —they seem to wake him up)*

Oh, well...

*(Facing the audience again. Back to talking/singing)*  
 Wish that she could be here now  
 But she's at the opera tonight  
 Opera, where *everything* is... *Sacred*  
 First she dies and dies and dies  
 And then she bows and bows and bows  
 She'll be bowing now 'til dawn  
 Anna, dear, I love you so  
 But all that bowing's got to go  
 Take a last bow —enough!  
 Make it seem more off the cuff

Someone in the audience, yells again:

*But Henry, you didn't answer : why?  
Why did you become a comedian?*

AUDIENCE (*singing*)  
*Yes why did you become a comedian?  
So why did you become a comedian?  
So why did you become a comedian?  
—Hey, Henry?*

*The music stops. Silence:*

**HENRY** (*not singing*)  
... 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.

But the deep silence is suddenly broken with:

### **LOUD GUNSHOTS**

Screams of panic in the audience  
... as Henry, hit by each invisible bullet, staggers through the stage.  
He falls, "dead".  
Silence now.

But he gets back on his feet (sounds of relief in the audience) and takes a bow.

**HENRY**  
Well, that's it for tonight!  
(*Audience screams "OH NO NO NO!"*)  
Yes, yes, yes... coz I'm sick and tired of making you

(*Refrain again: lights!, music!, chorus girls!, etc.*)  
Laugh, laugh, laugh  
But don't leave me, 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  
'Cause I'm cocky, 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

He leaves the stage as the audience cheers, and the chorus girls go on singing the refrain without him:

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

*Laugh, laugh, laugh  
'Cause he's Henry, he's Henry, The Henry  
See, he didn't make you choke, choke, choke  
Or kick the bucket, kick the bucket, kick the bucket, kick the bucket*

*He needs to hear you  
Clap Clap Clap  
Coz 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!*

(The audience sings the "laugh, choke, clap" parts with the chorus girls)

**CUT TO:**

**A very different audience:**

### **7. 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 on stage, Ann the soprano star "bows and bows and bows."

### **8. EXT. OUTSIDE ANN'S OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT**

Henry on his bike, approaching the opera.

He passes by the public coming out from the show, drives round the theater.

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, takes off his helmet, and pulls a second helmet out of the bike's back-case.

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.)

He's waiting for her. They grasp each other's hands, eagerly, tenderly, but with some of the awkwardness of new lovers.

Photographers are taking pictures, calling their names ("Ann! Henry!") so that they'll face the cameras. (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.)

PHOTOGRAPHERS (*singing*)

*How 'bout a smile, Ann?*

*Give us a smile, Ann!*

*How 'bout a smile, Ann?*

*Give us a smile, Ann!*

*Henry, please, step inside!*

*Step inside, Henry. Step inside, Henry!*

*Step inside, Henry. Step inside, Henry!*

Ann asks Henry (mutely and apologetically) to comply with the photographers. He poses with her, just for a few seconds: 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.

While they pose, they whisper to each other:

ANN

How did the show go?

HENRY

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

ANN

Good boy.

HENRY

And how did *your gig* go?

ANN (*with her shy smile*)

I... I Saved Them.

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

Henry puts the extra helmet on her head, hiding her face from the photographers. He takes from her the flowers she was given and hands them to one of the photographers, puts his own helmet on—they climb on the bike, and take off.

## **9. EXT. OUTSIDE LA, IN A FOREST - 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 TRACK-IN 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, happy to be back together even after such a short separation.

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*

**10. EXT. ON THE ROAD BACK TO LA - EVENING**

**SONG CONTINUED**

As they drive back on Henry's bike, racing through the evening.  
Her arms are 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*

**11A. EXT. ANN'S HOUSE – NIGHT**

**SONG CONTINUED**

Ann's house. Above the pool, behind a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor window (Ann's bedroom): we can see the couple embracing.

**11B. INT. ANN'S HOUSE: BEDROOM – NIGHT**

As they make love.

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

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

The song ends with their (singing) orgasm outcry.

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

After Sex.  
Semi-darkness.

Henry re-emerges from the bathroom, naked. Ann is still in bed.  
He approaches, 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.

Ann gets it... he's about to tickle her... she hides underneath the sheets:

Oh no no no no...

Henry jumps on the bed, and starts tickling her.

ANN (*starting to laugh*)  
Not the throat, please Henry!...  
No!... Not the feet, Henry!

## **13. INT. ON TV - DAY**

### **Show Biz News**

CONNIE O'CONNOR:  
Connie O'Connor here for Show Biz News, with the announcement that the elegant, refined soprano star, and the provocative and often offensive comedian were married after a whirlwind romance. The party took place on Henry's beloved

yacht. So, the quirky couple, often referred to as “Beauty and The Bastard”, has finally tied the knot.

CHORUS:

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

#### **14. INT. ANN’S OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT**

The audience waits impatiently for the opera to start and for Ann DelGreco to appear.

Her long-time piano accompanist (The Accompanist) is in the orchestra: while the instrumentalists tune their instruments, he sings of his devotion to her, but also of his desire to be a conductor someday. He's a gentle man, but an ambitious one.

### **I'm An Accompanist**

*I'm an accompanist, I'm an accompanist,  
I'm an accompanist for Ann, for Ann  
Ann's the one with the genius and 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  
For Ann*

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

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

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

The orchestral intro overlaps on (silent) images of:

Henry, in his black toweling bathrobe, doing his pre-show ritual (banana & cigarette)... then entering the stage (the smoke, etc.)



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.

### **16A. INT. ANN'S OPERA HOUSE: STAGE - NIGHT**

The orchestra finishes the intro while the curtain slowly rises,

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

... Ann appears: beautiful, spectral.

### **Aria**

She starts singing, at first on stage, among the fake trees:

*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?*

Now the back of the stage opens up on... a real forest (it's night).

### **16B. EXT. REAL FOREST - NIGHT**

Ann enters the real forest (back to her public), going deeper and deeper into it  
... She's alone in the dark forest, slowly moving forward among frightening trees.  
... Is she being followed? She's not sure...

ANN  
*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*

*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*

Ann is now coming back, out of the real forest and towards the stage again.

**16A. INT. ANN'S OPERA HOUSE: STAGE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)**

The rear of the stage closes down behind her —she's back in the fake forest again, on stage.

ANN  
*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*

**17. EXT. HENRY'S BIKE THROUGH L.A. - NIGHT**

Shots of Henry on his bike:  
 —racing though the night  
 —close-up: his face behind the helmet; his eyes.

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

BACKSTAGE:

Henry, his bike helmet in one hand, follows a long corridor (he passes many of the opera technicians): Ann's voice becomes clearer and clearer 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).

Out of complete darkness, 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.

The Accompanist (playing the piano), who was watching Ann, notices Henry's arrival: he watches Henry watching 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.

A few seconds of silence. Then, thunderous applause.

Henry looks at the public: so different from *his* public, so much more chic and controlled. For a few seconds, he imagines, over this image of well dressed people, clapping with restrained manners, the sound of his own public: loud, laughing, whistling, no restraint.

Ann stands up, and bows... bows... bows.

## **19. INT. ON TV - DAY**

### **Show Biz News**

CONNIE O'CONNOR:

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

CHORUS:

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

### **While Ann is pregnant**

Months pass. Ann is more and more pregnant —and Henry more and more anxious.

## **20. INT. ANN'S HOUSE: COUPLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

The couple asleep (shot with long exposure): we see that Ann is very still during the night (her huge immobile stomach is the center of the shot); Henry, on the contrary, is very agitated

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Henry hides his anxiety from Ann. He has dark thoughts, visions:

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

*Ann, very pregnant, bowing on stage —her nightgown soaked with blood*

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**22. INT. MATERNITY WARD - NIGHT**

*A nurse hands Henry his new-born baby  
... its face is made-up as a clown's!*

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**23. ANN'S HOUSE: COUPLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Henry wakes up in the night: Ann is asleep next to him. But all he can distinguish in the dark is: her hair, and a big white balloon (her pregnant stomach covered by the white sheet)

**24. INT. MATERNITY WARD: DELIVERY ROOM - NIGHT**

Ann is on the delivery bed; Henry is by her side. They are surrounded by the doctor and nurses.

**She's Out Of This World!**

## NURSES

*Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in  
Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in  
Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in  
Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in*

## THE DOCTOR

*Push Ann, push Ann!  
That's it.  
Push Ann, push Ann!  
That's it.*

Ann is in labor, panting—but obviously, nothing much is happening. 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 un-usefulness) makes him say something strange and inappropriate, with no intention of being funny:

HENRY (*in a low voice —non singing*)  
Doctor, am I doing... everything right?

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

## DOCTOR

Here she comes!

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:

*Push Ann, push Ann!  
That's it!  
Push Ann, push Ann!  
That's it!  
Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in  
Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in*

Henry and Ann are now gazing intensely at the arms of the doctor working at pulling the baby out...

Henry sees something first:

Shit, Ann... she seems completely naked!

Ann has a last howl of laughter... and the baby comes out!

DOCTOR & NURSE  
Here she is!

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

ANN & HENRY (*singing*)  
She's out of this world!  
Welcome to the world, Annette!  
She's out of this world!  
Welcome to the world, Annette!

**FADE TO BLACK**

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

### A FEW MONTHS LATER LOS ANGELES & AT SEA

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.

#### [ A NIGHTMARE — NIGHT :

*Henry sprawled out on the couch at home, watching TV, drinking whisky and eating potato chips.*

*He vaguely sings:*

*Tonight, while she's dying & bowing  
I'm baaaaaby-sitting!*

*But suddenly anxious, he looks around... Where **is** the baby?*

*And then, terrified, he realizes: he's been **sitting** on the **baby!** ]*

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...

### Calm Before The Storm (Chorus)

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

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

#### 25. INT. ANN'S HOUSE: COUPLE'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

The couple in bed, asleep. The baby is between them, awake: calm —looking at one parent, then the other.

**26. INT. ANN'S HOUSE - DAY**

Henry, bare-chested, alone with the sleeping baby.

He's playing with her, gently moving her into different positions: on his forearm, in the palms of his hands, etc. He smells her nice scent, kisses her on the head.

He looks at himself, at both of them together, in a mirror.

The baby opens her eyes. They look at each other: Henry's expression is pensive. He smiles at the baby —loving but solemn.

With the baby resting still on one of his forearm, he pours himself a glass of whiskey — drinks it. Then pours another.

**27A. EXT. LOS ANGELES: FREEWAY - DAY**

Ann's car is stuck in traffic jam —a barely moving 405 Freeway.

**27B. INT/EXT. ANN'S CAR ON BLOCKED FREEWAY - DAY**

She asks her driver to please lower the (classical) music playing on the car radio. She wants to take a nap (she seems exhausted, tense).

She leans back on her seat. On the small TV monitor mounted into the headrest facing her: the news (mute) (**27C. INT. TV NEWS - DAY**)

Through the tainted side-window, she can see the driver of the nearby car (Driver A), talking on his cell-phone. Both cars are moving at an even snail's pace. The low music is soothing. Ann tries to relax, eyes half-closed...



**(ANN'S BAD DREAM)**

The classical music on the radio slowly turns into a song:

**Six Women Have Come Forward**

Driver A, still on his cell, now singing

—and then other drivers in other nearby cars, also on their cells, singing:

DRIVER A

Six women have come forward

DRIVER B

Each with a similar story

DRIVER C

Subjected to Henry McHenry's torments

DRIVER D

Witnesses to his dark mind

DRIVER E

Why now?

DRIVER F

Why now?

**27D. INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY**

On the small TV screen facing Ann:

six women sitting next to each other at a press conference. They're singing:

WOMAN 1

Each of us has come forward

WOMAN 2

All with a similar story

WOMAN 3

Subjected to his torments,

WOMAN 4

witnesses to his dark mind

WOMAN 5  
And his anger,

WOMAN 6  
his anger!

**27B + 27D CONTINUOUS**

Alternating between different freeway drivers on their cells, and the six women:

Six women have come forward /  
Each of us have come forward  
Each with a similar story /  
All with a similar story  
Subjected to Henry McHenry's torments/  
Subjected to his torments,  
Witnesses to his dark mind and his anger /

Why now?  
Why now?

**27E. INT. ACCOMPANIST'S HOME - DAY**

The Accompanist, watching the news at home:

ACCOMPANIST (*on his cell phone to Ann*)  
Ann, are you alone now?  
There's something you need to know now  
That six women have come forward  
And all with similar stories  
That Henry was abusive, that Henry was violent and angry  
I tried to warn you  
I worry about you, Ann

**27B. INT/EXT. ANN'S CAR ON BLOCKED FREEWAY – DAY (CONTINUOUS)**

Ann, asleep at the back of her car.

**27D. INT. PRESS CONFERENCE – DAY (CONTINUOUS)**

JOURNALISTS ON TV (*questioning the 6 women*):  
Why, why come forward now?  
Yes, why, why only now?

Women singing:

WOMAN 1  
I, I feel for Ann

WOMAN 2 & 3  
She must be warned

WOMAN 4 & 5  
McHenry is not, not what he seems

WOMAN 6  
So charming that I, a woman with sense  
I quickly became, a moth to a flame

THE 6 WOMEN  
*A moth to a flame!*

#### **27F. INT/EXT. ANN'S CAR ON EMPTY FREEWAY – DAY**

Ann awakes (but, as we'll soon understand, she's only awakening in her dream.) The song continues. The car is now going at a good speed, on an empty highway.

But, some engine seems to be coming towards the car, at high speed... yes, a big powerful motorbike, rushing straight towards Ann's car!... we now recognize Henry, on his bike...

DRIVERS & WOMEN (*off screen*)  
Six women have come forward /  
Each of us have come forward  
Each with a similar story /  
All with a similar story  
Subjected to Henry McHenry's torments/  
Subjected to his torments,  
Witnesses to his dark mind and his anger /  
His anger

The song ends, as the collision with Henry's bike seems inescapable...

#### **27G. EXT/INT. ANN'S CAR ON FLUID FREEWAY - DAY**

Ann (really) wakes up, distraught. She sees her car is now going at a good speed (no engine rushing towards it), on a fluid highway. She opens the window for air.

**28A. EXT. ON THE ROAD TO LAS VEGAS - EVENING**

Henry speeding through the night on his powerful bike...

**28B. INT. ANN'S OPERA HOUSE: ON STAGE - NIGHT**

... intercut with slow-motion shots of: His vision of Ann on stage, dying, again and again:

- strangled by Othello (as Desdemona in *Othello*)
- dying of tuberculosis in the arms of Alfredo (as Violetta in *La Traviata*)
- stabbed by José (as Carmen in *Carmen*)
- cutting her own throat with a knife (as Cio-Cio San in *Madame Butterfly*)
- leaping into the flames (as Norma in *Norma*)

**29A. INT. LAS VEGAS THEATER: BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

Before the show: Henry in his black toweling bathrobe, doing his usual pre-stage routine (smoking while eating a banana, etc.), except he seems haunted rather than concentrated (is he a bit drunk? Bummed out?)

ANNOUNCER (*off screen*)

And now, a mildly offensive evening with... The Ape of God!  
—Mr Henry McHenry!

The audience: clapping, cheering, etc.

**29B. INT. LAS VEGAS THEATER: STAGE - NIGHT**

The stage: as before, we hardly make out Henry at first (semi darkness, dense smoke.)  
We hear his voice —coughing, angry:

Fucking smoke!

He emerges through the smoke, yelling at some invisible technicians backstage:

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, and someone shouts:

"That was *not* funny!"

HENRY

You're right... not funny.

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

*(Silence)*

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

*(The audience yells : "No, no, no!")*

Yes, yes... You see, my house was broken into last night  
—bastards, stole all my jokes.

*(A few laughs. But Henry seems more and more tense)*

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

*(He interrupts himself)*

No, the truth is... something happened... this morning...  
something... impossible... I... no... unsayable...

*(He interrupts himself again)*

Ok, the truth is... I'm sick... Being in love makes me sick...

*Sick... And... well...*

*(He interrupts himself again)*

No... The true truth is...

He takes the mike off the stand, and moves closer to the audience... Silence. Then, in a  
very low voice:

This morning, I... I killed... My wife —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...

He sits on the stage floor.

HENRY *(taking off his shoes; then his socks)*

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

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

I didn't mean to... god knows I didn't mean to... She woke up, so  
beautiful... *(He mimes the scene, as if in bed with Ann)*... 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  
then 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  
these *dirty words*... to be *wicked & bold*... so out of character...  
With that very shy smile I loved so much... But I couldn't her...  
'Cause, yes, being in love makes me 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:

*Enough!*  
*Come on, Henry, drop it!*  
*Yeah...*  
*Enough!*

HENRY  
 Hmm? Am I letting you know more than you care to know about me? Her? Sex? Death?

He returns to his recollection (still lying on the floor):

Yes, no desire, zero... So I was looking for something, anything to... "change the subject"... to spare us both this dreadful moment of rejection... That's when the idea came to me... I remembered how extremely ticklish she is, she was... especially on the soles of her feet... So I thought: I'll tickle her, to "change the subject"... I grabbed her (*He's on the floor, miming the whole situation*)... locked both her legs under my arms, and started to tickle the sole of her feet... I saw 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... and... and...

Henry is miming the scene, alternatively playing himself and Ann: he tickles gently... he tickles stronger —then throws himself on the floor and becomes Ann: Ann on her back, fighting him, not wanting to laugh... starting to laugh a little...

HENRY (*with Ann's voice*)  
 Stop it Henry... no... not my feet!

He kneels again: he tickles wild... tickles without mercy —then throws himself on the floor again, becoming Ann again: Ann laughing... more and more... reaching ecstatic hilarity...

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!

But to no avail... He then embraces the invisible body... Both Henrys are now lying on the floor, motionless, a statue of a loving couple... The silence becomes deafening.

Henry very slowly rises his face, devastated. He remains sitting on the floor.

HENRY

I had tickled her to death.

*(A few hesitant boos)*

I then tried to kill myself... the same way... tickling the soles of my feet... *(He vaguely mimes the act of tickling his bare feet)*

Didn't work...

*(A few scattered laughs in the deafening silence)*

Henry stands back up, facing the audience:

This is how I killed my wife.

And he takes a short bow.

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

*That was sick!*

*You're sick!*

*Poor Ann!*

*Poor Annette!*

**HENRY**

I sense some animosity

Am I right or is it me?

Am I overreacting?

A group of people sing:

*You must've bitten*

*Something bitter*

*In your cradle!*

*Bitten, bitter, cradle!*

Music starts playing, and Henry goes back to his singing routine:

So why did I become a comedian?



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

AUDIENCE

*You're not! You're not!*

*Not anymore!*

*Bitten, bitter, cradle!*

HENRY

So why did I become a comedian?

AUDIENCE

*You're sick! You're sick!*

*An asshole! An asshole!*

*Bitten, bitter, cradle!*

He goes to a small synthesizer at the corner of the stage, and pushes a button: amplified canned laughter comes out of the speakers. He puts the volume up to cover the insults and boos.

HENRY

Ok?... Ready? Laugh!

He pushes another button: we hear an amplified audience singing-laughing (as in Henry's first act):

AUDIENCE (*recorded*)

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!

HENRY

You've been great, but gotta go.

By the way, here's how to bow properly.

He bows again, this time slowly, ceremoniously, imitating Ann's way of bowing but in a very exaggerated way.

HENRY

Goodnight, everybody!

He leaves the stage as the audience yells its hostility, and the chorus girls sing the refrain:

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

*Coz he's Henry, 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, kick the bucket*

## **29C. INT. LAS VEGAS THEATER: BACKSTAGE & CORRIDORS - NIGHT**

Backstage: Henry, enraged, starts to sing "You used to laugh"  
—going through the labyrinthine corridors towards his dressing room...

### **You Used To Laugh**

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?!

But suddenly, Henry turns back... walking towards the stage again...

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

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

## **29D. INT. LAS VEGAS THEATER: STAGE - NIGHT**

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

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

Henry sings while pacing the stage with rage:

Do you think I care?  
You think I care

what losers think of me now?  
 You think I care?  
 You think I care what losers yell at me now?

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

## THE AUDIENCE

*(Louder)*

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

HENRY

Well you better laugh  
 Or I may display a certain level of rage!  
 If you don't laugh  
 You gonna feel the fire of my rage

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

AUDIENCE / HENRY

*We used to laugh*

***Fuck off, fuck off, Fuck out of here!***

*But now we sure ain't laughing at you no more*

*We used to laugh*

***Fuck off, fuck off, Fuck out of here!***

*But now we see you as you are, you are scum!*

*You got a problem*

**What's your problem?**

*A big old problem!*

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

*You got a problem,*

**What's your problem?**

*A big old problem!*

**Your fucking problem?!**

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

Ann alone in her room, in front of mirror, pensive, distraught:

ANN (*whispering to herself*)  
Henry, I'm worried about you.  
I'm worried...

Pacing the room, she starts to sing:

### **The Girl From Topeka**

There was a girl from Topeka  
Utterly plain, a little plump  
She sang alone, in her bedroom  
Wild acclaim from those four walls

But she didn't want to be there  
She didn't want to be there  
She didn't want to be there —no more

She had the voice of a goddess  
But these vocal cords you must finesse  
Hours a day she would struggle  
Until her voice became —her kingdom

Oh yes she wanted to live there  
Only wanted to live there  
Really wanted to live there —forever

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, sovereignty

But she never listened to those who came to her and whispered:  
"You're a flame to me  
—a flame to me, a flame to me, a flame to me"  
She was a queen and shouldn't queens renounce love and keep  
men out of their palace?

—off their palace, off their palace, off their palace?  
A queen should not become a moth to a flame

Many years have passed, I'm Ann Del Greco  
Opera's my world and I'm its star  
So why am I so worried  
Is love a fatal wager?  
The loss of all I conquered —my kingdom?

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

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

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

That's it, Annette!  
*(Singing:)*  
One leg then the o-ther  
One leg then the o-ther

### **31A. EXT. ANN'S HOUSE: AROUND THE OUTDOOR POOL - NIGHT**

## **Lalalala**

Beautiful pool, shining in the night (underwater lights), with big floating toys in it (a swan, a dolphin, a boat, etc.)

Ann with the baby in her arms, singing "Lalalala", while joyfully dancing round the pool... faster and faster...

### **31B. EXT. ON THE WAY BACK FROM LAS VEGAS - NIGHT**

[ Intercut with: Henry on his bike, driving faster and faster through the night... ]

### **31A. EXT. ANN'S HOUSE: AROUND THE OUTDOOR POOL - NIGHT** **(CONTINUOUS)**

Ann with the baby in her arms, now spinning like a Whirling Dervish dancer... until they fall to the ground, drunk from the spinning, laughing.

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.

She sees Henry parking the bike, and heading for the house. Is he drunk?

### **32. INT/EXT. ANN'S HOUSE: STAIRCASE, BEDROOM, POV POOL AREA - NIGHT**

Henry sings, as he goes up the staircase and into the couple's bedroom:

## **My Star's In Decline**

What goes up  
Must come down  
My star's in decline

He looks through the window, sees Ann with the baby in her arms, by the pool area. Ann and the baby are looking up at the window, at him.

Once profound  
For a clown  
My star's in decline

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

## **(song continued)**

Henry is suspended in the air, sitting on some piece of machinery high above the stage, above Ann (who's singing her Aria). He's like a gargoyle, or a clandestine passenger hidden in semi darkness —singing while he smokes a cigarette and watches Ann (and her audience.)

(The piece of machinery which supports him swings a little, adding to the feeling of vertigo and drunkenness.)

Now that I  
Know that I  
Will never have success —again

Look at Ann  
Still on top  
Ah, but I digress —I guess

People who  
Loved my game  
Now despise my name

I pretend  
I don't care  
Where's the nearest bar

Drinking men  
Start to stare  
Weren't you once a star?  
—No?

### **34. INT. ON TV - DAY**

## **Show Biz News**

CONNIE O'CONNOR:

*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?*

CHORUS:

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

**35A. EXT. AT SEA: OUTSIDE 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...*

*A storm is rolling in...*

*A storm is rolling in...*

*A storm is rolling in...*

**35B. INT. INSIDE YACHT: SLEEPING CABIN - NIGHT**

Ann is in a sleeping 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?



## Lullaby For A Stormy Night

ANN

I will calm the sea  
 Baby trust me  
 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

Ann suddenly goes to the porthole, to hide her anxiety from the child. She goes on singing (as an aside), looking through the porthole —the water hitting the glass violently now:

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:

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

The baby is at last asleep.

### **35C. INT. INSIDE YACHT: CORRIDORS - NIGHT**

Ann goes out the cabin, frantically searching for Henry, in the captain's cabin and through and corridors.

Henry, where are you?  
 Where are you?

### **35D. EXT. YACHT: DECK - NIGHT**

She goes up to the deck.

Pitch-dark night, pouring rain, chaotic movements of the boat... She's suddenly grabbed by two arms, from behind: Henry, drunk, soaked.

HENRY (*tenderly*)  
Ann...

ANN  
Henry, you're drunk.

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

ANN  
But... I'll kill my voice out here.

But Henry forces Ann to waltz, and though she's terrified, she first doesn't dare resist.

ANN  
Henry, a storm is rolling in.

HENRY  
I'm well aware of that my dear  
... 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...*

## **There's So Little I Can Do**

ANN (*trying to pull away from Henry*)  
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.

ANN

My voice, Henry... my voice!  
Henry, don't fool around  
We could slip, we could drown

Henry don't fool around  
There's a storm, settle down  
Hey, careful!, 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?

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

She coughs, tries once again to pull away from Henry —more violently this time.

My voice, Henry... my voice!  
Is *nothing* sacred to you?

HENRY

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

Henry, holding Ann firmly against him, accelerates their waltz... more and more...

ANN  
 Henry, stop it now!  
 We could fall in  
 We could drown  
 Henry, don't fool around  
 Ah!... Once a clown...

*(Splash sound)*

### **35E. EXT. YACHT'S DECK & SEA - NIGHT**

What happened? Henry is still swirling, but alone now  
 —how did Ann so suddenly disappear?  
 He tries to steady his body —like a drunken dancer.  
 And then he hears her 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?... I'm...  
 Henry, I'm almost out of air

Henry, horrified, dazed, is paralyzed.

HENRY  
 There's so little I can do

ANN  
 Henry, help me, pull me out

HENRY  
 There's so little I can do

ANN  
 Henry, help me, pull...

HENRY  
There's so little I can do

ANN  
I'm almost out of air-r-r-r-r-r

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

### **36. EXT. AT SEA - NIGHT**

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

Henry and Annette are in a little lifeboat. Henry, still dazed, is rowing —Annette (wearing a life jacket) awake on his lap.

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

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

As Henry is putting a thermal foil blanket around Annette and trying to warm her body, he starts singing to her:

## **We've Washed Ashore**

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

Pretty baby, do not fear  
I'll provide for you  
Help is on the way, Annette

Someone's heard our calls

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

In the meantime, stars line up  
They're lining up for you  
As the moon shines down, Annette  
Shines down square on you

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.

## **Annette's Aria**

Henry, dazed and fatigued, closes his eyes and laughs.

HENRY  
Somehow I just imagined Annette was singing  
Just as the light of the moon lit her beautiful face  
How foolish! How very foolish of me.  
*(He opens his eyes again, distressed; stares at the stars  
—we hear very distant pre-recorded canned laughter)*  
Now, I can hear the stars laughing at me!  
In the morning I'll be free of all these... hallucinations.

The (moon) light on Henry's body is shadowed by... the Spirit of Ann: she appears standing above him, and sings to him 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!*

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

**FADE TO BLACK**

**Masha (little Ukrainian girl) —inspiration for Annette**

**Annette the puppet (work in progress)**



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

### (LOS ANGELES & AROUND THE WORLD)

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

Henry appears before the police for questioning.

The room is quite dark. Each time the policemen finish 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're The Police**

POLICE

We're 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 save her?

HENRY

The sea was rough and I was with Annette —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

What about that "comic" piece in which you killed her, hmm?  
Was that a prank, or something more, an aspiration?

HENRY

Everybody knows my act's filled with 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

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

Henry comes out of the building, puts on a hat and dark glasses, and walks away —  
avoiding glances from passers-by. He starts singing:

### **I'm A Good Father**

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?

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

### **(song continued)**

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.)

I'm a good father, I'm a good father,  
I'm a good father —am I?

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

He enters the shop.

#### **42A. INT. ANN'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

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

#### **(song continued)**

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

#### **42B. INT. ANN'S HOUSE: ANNETTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

He enters Annette's bedroom. The baby is in her little bed, in the dark. He unwraps the package: a magic lamp.

#### **(song continued)**

If I turn this lamp on her  
She'll look like an angel

He plugs the lamp in: projected images of planets and stars start spinning across the walls and ceiling. And as the light shines on the baby, she starts singing again—her mother's "Aria" again:

#### **Annette's Aria**

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

HENRY (*in between Annette's phrases*)  
Unbelievable.....amazing....it's really happening...  
She sings just like an angel  
When the light shines on her...  
Astounding....unbelievable.....amazing  
It's really happening, it's really happening... to me!

#### **I'm A Good Father (continued)**

Hard, so hard, to understand  
The lights on her, she sings like... like...  
And it's not an illusion, not an illusion,  
Not an illusion —at all  
And I'm a good father, mother and father,  
I'm a good father —am I?

**42C. INT. ANN'S HOUSE: ANNETTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Henry has fallen asleep with Annette in her little bed.

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

Semi-darkness. Henry pacing through the house like a ghost, bare-chested.

He sings "This Is A Baby" to rationalize why it is OK, for Annette's sake, to exploit her amazing gift for financial gain.

He seems to be "rehearsing" different versions of a speech, going from room to room, stopping in front of different mirrors.

## This Is A Baby

*This is a baby. This is my baby. My baby has a special talent that your baby doesn't have. If your baby had this gift, wouldn't you want to share that gift with the world?*

Facing another mirror:

*This is a baby. This is my baby. My baby has a special talent that your baby doesn't have. This talent deserves to be shared with as many people, in as many places, as possible. To do otherwise would be selfish. To do otherwise would ruin Annette's future. Wouldn't you share a gift like this with the world?*

### **44. INT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT**

Ann's former Accompanist has achieved his aim and is now The Conductor of a large metropolitan symphony orchestra. While conducting, he takes advantage of the musical piece's slow sections to sing a song, addressing us:

## 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 another matter...  
Excuse me a minute

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

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 passage begins again. The Conductor leads forcefully. Then:

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 —hoping, hoping  
 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  
 our affair  
 I'll always regret that.  
 I miss her. Her warmth, her voice. I miss Ann  
*(Holding back tears)*  
 Excuse me one last time

Loud passage begins again. The Conductor leads forcefully.

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

Henry standing at a window, watches The Conductor walk towards the house.

Henry opens the door to The Conductor, and takes him to Annette's room, singing:

### **It's Not Really Exploitation**

HENRY  
 Thanks for coming by  
 My conductor friend  
 Got something to show you  
 That will blow your mind

The Conductor is obviously anxious, wary of Henry.

HENRY  
 Follow me upstairs  
 As a friend of mine  
 You deserve to see this  
 It will blow your mind

Tiptoe up the stairs  
 Have no fear my friend  
 I'm not gonna play any  
 Trick of mine

They enter Annette's bedroom. It's in semi darkness —The Conductor panics: is Henry going to murder him, here and now?

THE CONDUCTOR  
 Henry... What are you...

HENRY (*interrupting him*)

Shhhh...

Now...

Watch what happens when I turn the spotlight  
on my dear Annette

You will not believe it, my friend, you will not believe your ears  
Watch what happens and I guarantee you'll end up in tears

Henry turns the little magic lamp on Annette —and she starts singing:

## **Annette's Aria**

### **It's Not Really Exploitation (continued)**

HENRY

Can you believe it?

THE CONDUCTOR

I can't believe it!

HENRY

Can you explain it?

THE CONDUCTOR

I can't explain it

HENRY

What do you think?

THE CONDUCTOR

I don't know what to think

HENRY

How 'bout a drink?

THE CONDUCTOR

I need a drink

A strong drink

Henry turns the magic lamp off —the baby stops singing.

HENRY

Here's my plan my sweet conductor  
We three travel 'round the world  
She performs with your piano  
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 accompany her  
You can still conduct  
When you're not with her  
We can 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

Sure it is  
This is really exploitation

HENRY

No, not really

THE CONDUCTOR

Sure it is

HENRY

It's not really exploitation  
Let me emphasize that fact  
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 CONDUCTOR  
Give me a few days  
To think it through  
For Annette's sake only  
Only for Annette

## MONTHS LATER

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

### **47A. INT. FIRST ANNETTE'S CONCERT HALL - NIGHT**

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

The baby is standing at the center of stage, which is for now plunged into darkness.

## **The Premiere Performance Of "Baby Annette"**

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

You've read about her  
You've heard about her  
But nothing will have prepared you for  
what you are about to see and hear tonight, tonight

HENRY

Ladies and gentlemen  
Welcome to the premiere performance of  
Baby Annette, Baby Annette  
I am Henry McHenry, I am Henry McHenry

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 that it is real.  
Annette is a miracle. Miracles do exist.

Without further ado, I introduce to you  
Baby Annette, Baby Annette.

He goes to the dark center of the stage, and kisses Annette on the forehead.

The spotlight slowly moves toward the baby... and she starts singing "Aria," accompanied by The Conductor. The audience sits in stunned silence.

## **Annette's Aria**

She seems tiny on stage...

But at times, she also appears as a huge hologram, as if she was bending over the whole audience.

#### **47B. INT. OTHER ANNETTE'S CONCERTS HALL - NIGHT (TO SPECIFY)**

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

#### **47C. INT. ON TV, COMPUTERS, CELL PHONES**

... The image gradually deteriorates —as it is viewed by a wider and wider audience (from TV sets, to computers, to cell phones):

—The same image, but as seen on a TV screen (HD quality)

—The same image, but as seen on a cheaper TV screen (video quality —logo of a foreign channel, Chinese or Arabic)

—the same image, but as seen on a web page (YouTube or equivalent)

——the same image, but as seen on other computers and cell phones, poorer and poorer (strong video compression, bad streaming) —with different logos and comments in different languages

By the end of the "Aria", the image has become so poor that Baby Annette seems like an abstraction, a ghost of white pixels glowing in the dark.

CLOSE-UP ON the final webpage: the view count of the video:

**37 563 201**

(Millions of people have already watched Baby Annette on the Web)

#### **49. EXT. THROUGH L.A. - NIGHT**

Henry on his powerful bike, riding carefully on a small road overlooking LA, with Annette in a kangaroo sling against his torso. He's singing:

### **Every Night The Same Dream**

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

**50A. INT. ANN'S HOUSE: HENRY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT****(Song continued)**

Henry, seated on the side of his bed, singing while undressing (the bedside lamp is on):

Adrift on an angry sea  
And in a moment of rage and stupidity  
I kill the one I love

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

Ann, forgive me  
Ann, I beg you  
Ann, forgive me

.....

**50B. INT. ANN'S HOUSE: HENRY'S BEDROOM - LATER (NIGHT)****(music continues)**

Henry is asleep, lying on half of the bed. On the other (empty) half of the bed appear ocean waves.

.....

**50C. INT. ANN'S HOUSE: HENRY'S BEDROOM - ANOTHER NIGHT**

Another night: Henry, seated on the side of his bed, undressing (only the bedside lamp is on.)

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

Henry turns off the bedside lamp, and goes into bed.

Did I kill the one I loved?  
There's no forgiveness  
Ann, I beg you

There's no forgiveness

.....

**50D. INT. ANN'S HOUSE: HENRY'S BEDROOM - LATER**

Henry is asleep, lying on half of the bed. On the other (empty) half of the bed appear images of Ann : Ann sleeping with an arm under Henry's neck... Ann lying on her back, awake... etc.

Then The Spirit of Ann rises from the bed, and sings —walking around the bed where Henry is still sleeping:

**I will haunt you Henry (2)**

THE SPIRIT OF ANN

*I will haunt you, Henry*

*For the rest of your life*

*I will haunt you, Henry*

*I'll die day after day, after day, after day*

*Night after night, after night, after night*

*I am no longer Love*

*I am now Revenge!*

**52A & 52B. INT. AIRPORTS AND PLANE - DAY**

## We Love Annette!

“We Love Annette” sings the public in London, Paris, Tokyo, Moscow, etc. as Henry, Annette, and the Conductor fly and perform around the world.

HENRY

Annette and me and The Conductor are three!

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

PILOT

Ladies and gentlemen, please make sure your seats are in the upright position. We’ll be landing shortly.

HENRY

Here in Paris

FANS

*We love Annette!*

HENRY

Here in Madrid

FANS

*We love Annette!*

*We love Annette!*

HENRY

Here in London

FANS

*We love Annette!*

*We love Annette!*

*We love Annette!*

*We love Annette!*

**52C. INT. ANNETTE’S WORLD PERFORMANCES - NIGHT**

*(Annette singing Aria in live performance in foreign city)*

**52A & 52B. INT. AIRPORTS AND PLANE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)**

FANS AT THE AIRPORT

*Bon voyage!*

*Bon voyage!*

*Bon voyage!*

*Bon voyage!*

*Bon voyage!*

*Bon voyage!*

HENRY

Here in Tokyo

FANS

*We love Annette!*

HENRY

Here in Moscow

FANS

*We love Annette!*

*We love Annette!*

HENRY

Here in Bahrain

FANS

*We love Annette!*

*We love Annette!*

*We love Annette!*

**52C. INT. ANNETTE'S WORLD PERFORMANCES - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)**

*(Annette singing Aria in live performance in foreign city)*

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



**52A & 52B. INT. AIRPORTS AND PLANE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)**

FANS AT THE AIRPORT

*Bon voyage!*

*Bon voyage!*

*Bon voyage!*

*Bon voyage!*

*Bon voyage!*

*Bon voyage!*

**52D. MINIATURE SHOT OF THE PLANE IN THE SKY****The Conductor & Annette**

In every city Annette performs in, The Conductor watches over Annette at the hotel, while Henry stays out most nights, drinking and fooling around with women.

**53. INT. RIO DE JANEIRO: LUXURY HOTEL - EVENING**

A big suite. Henry and The Conductor have two adjacent rooms.

Henry knocks at The Conductor's door, opens door and puts his head inside the room.

HENRY

Hey, my conductor 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.

—————

The Conductor and Annette alone together in the big suite. He's trying to put the baby to sleep, rocking her gently in his arms while he paces up and down beside the large window that overlooks the bay of Rio. We sense his strong attachment to the baby.

He goes to the piano, puts her on his lap, and starts playing the tune to "We Love Each Other So Much" (Henry's and Ann's love song,) only vaguely murmuring some of the lyrics.

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

The baby listens intensely and watches the Conductor's fingers moving over the keyboard.

#### **54. INT. DIFFERENT CLUBS IN DIFFERENT CITIES AROUND THE WORLD** **– NIGHT**

### **All the Girls**

We see Henry in different clubs and bars, with different women (Japanese, Russian, Brazilian, etc.) from the different countries the tour is traveling through.

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?

THE JAPANESE GIRLS  
*Will there always be*  
*For all eternity*  
*Girls like you and me*  
*For rich men like he?*

HENRY / RUSSIAN GIRLS  
Am I handsome? —no  
*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!*

HENRY  
 All the girls I see  
 Look so great to me  
 But... will I ever be  
 Lovable again?

## Back in LA

### **56A. EXT/INT. ANN'S HOUSE - EVENING**

Henry returns drunk to his luxurious villa.  
 He parks his bike, but doesn't put the kickstand right, and the heavy bike slowly falls on its side.

HENRY  
 Shit...

He leaves the bike on the ground, and goes towards the house, singing:

### **So Glad To Be Back Home**

I'm feeling just a little bit drunk  
 I'm feeling just a little bit tipsy  
 Where, you might ask, did I go?  
 That would be none of your business!

(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 home  
 Hey, Mr. Conductor friend, good to see you  
 Thanks for watching Annette  
 How is Annette?

THE CONDUCTOR  
She's fine

Annette is sitting on the floor in pajamas, playing with a toy piano.

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

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

## **We Love Each Other So Much**

### **56B + 56C + 56D..... EXT/INT. OUTSIDE & INSIDE – DAY & NIGHT**

Henry has flashes of he and Ann together, singing that song (walking together, fucking, ...)

### **56A. INT. ANN'S HOUSE - EVENING (CONTINUOUS)**

He gets furious at The Conductor (Annette watches, puzzled.)  
He sings —but tries not to sing too loud, because of the baby:

## **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 violently takes The Conductor out of the room, 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 and mine, our song!  
That was our song! That was our song!

THE CONDUCTOR

No!  
*(Then calm again:)*  
 No, Henry, *I* wrote that song  
 —for Ann, for Ann.

HENRY  
*What?!*

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

HENRY  
 You'd think you were her father!  
 You'd think you were her father!

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

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

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

HENRY  
 No!  
 This can't be true!  
*(To himself:)*  
*Could this be true?*  
*No one must know this, or I'll lose Annette*  
*No one must know this, or I'll lose Annette*

*(Then, to The Conductor, trying to appear calm:)*  
 My conductor friend, let's put Annette to bed, and then go by the  
 pool to talk this over, shall we?

THE CONDUCTOR *(worried)*  
 Sure.

## **57. INT. ANN'S HOUSE: ANNETTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Both men take Annette to her room, and put her to bed.

(Strange sight, these two "fathers" putting "their" baby to bed)

### **58. EXT. ANN'S HOUSE: AROUND THE OUTDOOR POOL - NIGHT**

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 numerous floating toys (swans, ducks, boats, balls) are half deflated.

The two men are walking around the pool.

## **Murder Of The Conductor**

Henry puts an arm around The Conductor's shoulders.

HENRY (*as if starting a discussion*)  
You see, my friend...

But suddenly, he "jokingly" pretends to push the Conductor into the pool.

CONDUCTOR (*talking/singing*)  
Henry, don't fool around  
The water must be freezing  
You wouldn't want me to drown, would you?

HENRY  
Of course not

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

CONDUCTOR (*singing now*)  
Henry, quit fooling around  
I could fall in, I could drown  
Sometimes jokes can go too far  
If I drown, I'd say that's a bit too far

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

Again, Henry puts an arm around The Conductor's shoulders----which makes the man nervous

Henry, no, quit 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, then quickly and nervously tries to get up. But Henry violently drags his body towards the pool's edge.

THE CONDUCTOR  
 This isn't funny any more!  
 Not the least bit funny any more  
 Henry, get your hands off of me!  
 What are you trying to do to me?

Henry violently throws The Conductor into the pool.  
 When The Conductor tries to come out, Henry steps on his hands and head.

THE CONDUCTOR  
 Henry, help me!  
 Henry, pull me out!

Henry, don't fool around  
 I'm fr-freezing, I'm g-going down  
 I won't tell a single soul  
 Even you can't be this c-c-cold

So it *was* you, aft-t-ter all...  
 I was r-r-right all along, after all...

HENRY  
 NO!

He gives a violent kick in The Conductor's face.

THE CONDUCTOR (*drowning*)  
 If only I had gotten Ann to love me more...  
 If only I had gotten Ann to love me more...

Henry sits down near the pool's edge, dazed.

HENRY	/	THE CONDUCTOR
There's so little I can do		
There's so little I can do		
		If only..... I'd gotten Ann to love me more
		If only..... if only...

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

The Conductor is hardly moving anymore. Henry looks up at the window of Annette's room (no light, nothing).

He gets into the pool (all dressed). He grabs the Conductor and swims with him (among the floating leaves and toys) to the shallow part of the pool, where he can touch bottom.

He maintains the Conductor's body under water, while looking at the window of Annette's room again

### **59A. INT/EXT. ANN'S HOUSE: ANNETTE'S ROOM & POV POOL - NIGHT**

Soaked, Henry goes back to Annette's room. The baby is in bed, in the dark. As Henry comes closer, he sees she's awake, looking at him (her eyes are moist.)

Annette, you're awake...

Turning his back to her, closing the curtains (he can see the pool from the window):

*How much of this did she hear?*  
*How much of the last time did she hear?*

He faces Annette again. They look at each other through the darkness, in silence. Then, calmly, silently, the baby pushes the magic lamp off her bedside table —it breaks on the floor.

Henry, distraught, kneels down and unplugs the lamp.

HENRY  
Everything will be alright now, sleep my Annette.

He leaves the room with the broken lamp.

### **59B. INT. ANN'S HOUSE: HENRY'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Singing "I have the same dream every night", he goes towards his room. He throws the lamp in the waste-basket, takes off his wet clothes, and goes into his bed.

## **Every Night The Same Dream (2)**

I have the same dream every night  
Every night the same dream...



**60. INT. ON TV - DAY****Show Biz News**

CONNIE O'CONNOR:

*Connie O'Connor here for Show Biz News with the shocking announcement that Henry McHenry has decided to end Baby Annette's singing career. She will give one last performance, at the Super Bowl halftime show. The baby will never perform again after that.*

CHORUS:

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

**61A. EXT. AT THE SUPER BOWL - NIGHT (Documentary shots)****Super Bowl  
(Orchestral)**

SLOW-MOTION:

The players fighting for the ball

The public

The majorettes

**61B. EXT. AT THE SUPER BOWL: ON STAGE - NIGHT****Annette's Super Bowl Performance**

CHORUS

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome

Welcome to the halftime show

To the thousands who are here in attendance

And the millions that are watching at home

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen

Please welcome Baby Annette

As you all know by now, this will be her last public appearance.

So, ladies and gentlemen... for all eternity: Baby Annette!

Rapturous applause from the crowd. The orchestra intro to "Aria" begins, in the darkness... A huge spotlight slowly moves on Annette... but when it's time for her to sing, she does not sing...

Silence.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen... 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... orchestra intro to “Aria”... the spotlight slowly moving on Annette... but when it's time for her to sing, she does not sing... Silence.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen... please... We ask for your patience. Baby Annette *is* a baby after all... Please, once again... Baby Annette.

... The orchestra intro to “Aria” begins, in the darkness... The huge spotlight slowly moves on Annette... but when it's time for her to sing, she does not sing. In the silence, she whispers these three words (her first words ever):

Daddy killed mommy.

**FADE TO BLACK**

# 4th ACT

## COURTHOUSE & PRISON

### 62. INT. POLICE STATION: INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

While we hear the CHORUS sing "True love always finds a way", we see time going by on Henry's body and face:

Henry sitting at the desk of the interrogation room, in semi-darkness. Then the crude light of the desk-lamp hits his face (as in during his previous interrogation scene with the police, "We're the police"): we can see that 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.

### **True Love Always Finds A Way (Chorus)**

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

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

Astray, astray  
Away, away

### 63. INT. INSIDE POLICE VAN - DAY

### **(song continued)**

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

**64. EXT. OUTSIDE COURTHOUSE - DAY**

Angry crowd in front of the courthouse, singing:

## He Is A Murderer

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 is a murderer and, whether it's death or jail  
 We'll send him far, far far away

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

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 despises us, you who despises us,  
 We will now tame, break and destroy

Henry steps inside the old courthouse —cameramen, photographers, flashes.

HENRY (*mumbling*)  
 Lights! Camera! Justice!

**65A. INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

The courtroom obviously used to be a theater or 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  
 Henry McHenry, do you solemnly swear that you will tell the  
 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

HENRY (*mumbling*)  
The truth? Yes. (*To the clerk:*) You look terrible.

A murmur of disapproval in the audience —and a few laughs.  
The judge shushes the audience.

JUDGE  
Mr. McHenry: this court won't tolerate effrontery. Clerk, please,  
once again please.

CLERK  
Henry McHenry, do you solemnly swear that you will tell the  
truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you 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.

### **65B. INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

Now, the light in the courtroom slowly fades into darkness, as the murmur from the audience subsides: only Henry is still lit; 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 judges, lawyers, police officers, people in the audience), starts singing:

### **Stepping Back in Time**

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"

I'd say, "Ann, what gives me the most joy  
Is to watch you, I'm a small boy  
Wide-eyed in my awe at your silken voice  
I admire you, never tire of you"

Henry has heard Ann's voice (we did too), singing "You're a small boy" (while he was singing "I'm a small boy"). Did he imagine it? Bewildered, he goes on singing while his eyes search for Ann through the darkness of the courtroom.

Teary-eyed, she'll say "I'm ashamed, you see  
That we both can't be, where we ought to be"

Again, Ann's voice has joined Henry's on these last lyrics  
(*"I'm ashamed, you see", etc.*)

Henry's search for Ann becomes more frantic... and he finally spots her (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; so he moves too so not to lose sight of her, as he goes on singing:

Crying, you will say  
(*Ann sings with him:* ) "It's so sad, you see  
That we both can't be, where we ought to be"

#### HENRY ALONE

Stepping back in time, I could step aside  
Not allow my pride to be magnified  
To a dangerous point where a rash act  
What an impact, I can't grab back

#### ANN & HENRY SINGING TOGETHER

Now there's no more time, what a shame to see  
That we both can't be, where we ought to be

Stepping back in time, that would be sublime  
But there's no more time, to step back in time

As the last notes of the song are played, Henry and Ann stay silent, intensely gazing at each other.

ANN'S VOICE  
Henry!

Henry starts: the voice didn't come from Ann at the balcony, but from a few feet behind him... He turns around, and faces (not sweet Ann but) the angry Spirit of Ann —standing on the dais right by the Judge (who's motionless and in the dark.)

#### THE SPIRIT OF ANN

Henry. *She* won't be the one keeping you company in jail. *I will!*  
Day after day after night after night.

## A FEW YEARS LATER

**66A. INT. PRISON: CORRIDORS - DAY**

A (huge) prison guard and Annette are walking side by side, through the corridors of the prison—from gate to gate, checkpoint to checkpoint.

Baby Annette is not a baby anymore. She is 5 or 6 now, her hair longer, and her face seems astonishingly mature. Her eyes are full of sorrow, conscience, knowledge—almost like the eyes of an old woman.

**66B. INT. PRISON: VISITING ROOM - DAY**

Henry in his prisoner's clothes, waiting for Annette's visit in the visiting room. In these last few months he has aged quite a bit, and now sports a Dostoyevskian beard.

The guard enters the room and takes Annette to a chair, facing Henry.

At first, father and daughter sit there, mute and distressed (they haven't touched each other).

Henry is the first to break the silence

HENRY

Annette... you've changed... so much...

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

ANNETTE (*earnestly*)  
 So have you.  
 But at least, you're safe here, yes?  
 You can't drink, and you can't smoke —can you?

HENRY (*He tries to smiles*)  
 No, my Annette, no.

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

Again, Henry tries to smile... and Annette, as to encourage him, smiles (we haven't seen her smile for a long long time.)

ANNETTE  
 It was a joke...

HENRY  
 Ha, you are my daughter after all!

More silence, more embarrassment.

ANNETTE  
 But now, you have nothing to love.

HENRY  
 Can't I love you?

ANNETTE  
 Not really...

Henry seems hesitant as to what to say...

HENRY  
 Annette...

He looks at the clock on the wall:

We don't have long...

He then starts singing —slow, low:

## Sympathy For The Abyss

*(Work in progress)*



I'll sing these words to you  
 I hope they will 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  
*(Looking at clock again)*  
 We don't have long  
*(Now louder, more energy)*  
 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

*(More energy)*  
 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 faint and shrill  
 We don't have long.

Annette avoids looking at Henry. 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!  
 Crashing 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!

For the first time, Henry sees his daughter not as a cute puppet but as *a real person, a real little girl* of flesh and blood. Father and daughter now sing in duet:

**HENRY / ANNETTE**

I sang these words to you

## Can I forgive what you have done?

My hope, that they'd ring true

And will I ever forgive mom?

Imagination's oh 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

## 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, no shame!

—the two of you, you're both to blame

I wish that both of you were gone

Wish you were gone

**HENRY       /       ANNETTE**

Oh, don't blame Ann !

Wish you were gone

Annette, that's wrong

Wish you were gone

No don't blame Ann!

Wish you were gone

But is forgiveness the sole way

This horrid urge to look below

## When all has gone so far astray

God knows I tried, to fight it off  
Extract the poison from one's heart  
But half horrified, and half relieved  
And from one's soul, I can't be sure  
I cast my eyes down the abyss  
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  
Don't cast your eyes                Forgive you both?  
Down the abyss                      Or forget you both?  
Annette, please don't             I must be strong

The huge guard steps in:

Time's up.

Henry grabs the child, hugs her. She doesn't resist his embrace, but doesn't commit to it either.

The guard steps in to separate them:

No contact!

But Henry hangs on to the child.

ANNETTE (*singing sadly to her father, in a whisper, while the two men are fighting over her*)  
Now, you have nothing to love...

HENRY (*singing*)  
Can't I love you?  
Can't I love you?

ANNETTE (*singing*)  
Now, you have nothing to love...

HENRY (*singing*)  
Can't I love you, Annette?

ANNETTE (*singing*)  
No, not really daddy. It's sad but it's true:  
Now you having nothing to love.

Henry let's go of the child.  
The guard picks her up in his arms, and leaves the room with her.

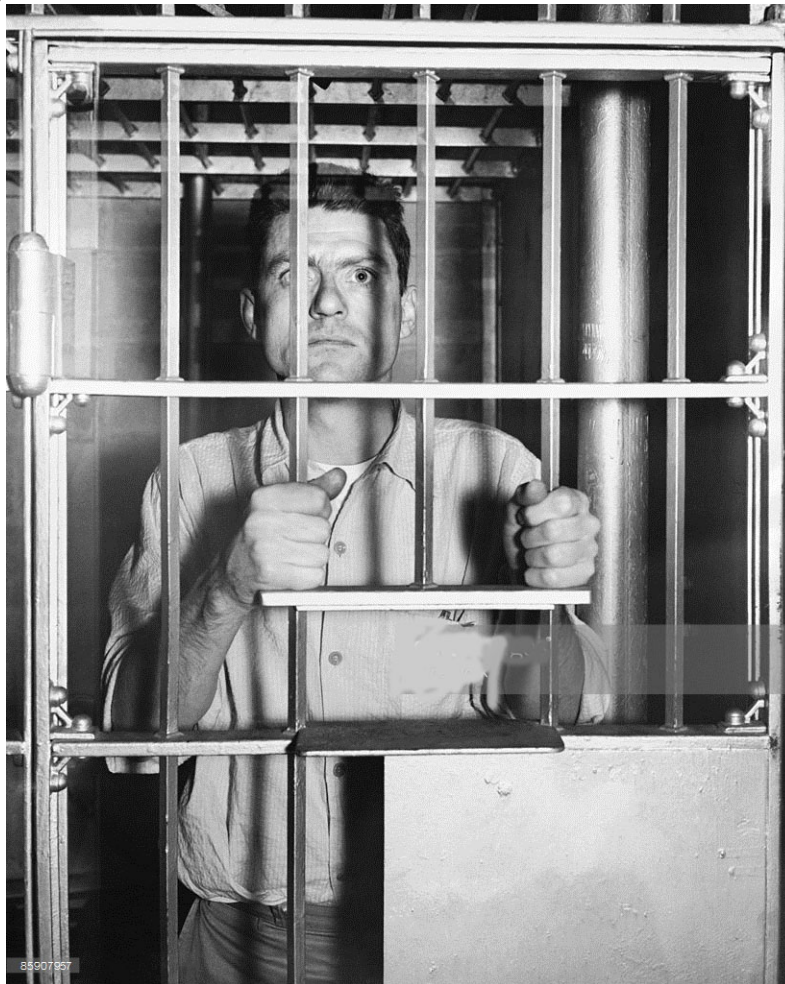
HENRY  
Annette, my Annette...  
Never cast your eyes down the abyss!

**66C. INT. PRISON: CORRIDORS - DAY**

Henry goes to the closed door. Through the small aperture in the door, he can see her in the guard's arms, her face turned towards him.

HENRY (*singing*)  
*Goodbye... Goodbye... Goodbye... Goodbye, Annette...*

The child is getting smaller and smaller, as the guard moves away in the corridor. She waves goodbye.



## EPILOGUE

### **67. EXT. SET TO SPECIFY (FOREST? OUTSIDE MUSIC STUDIO?) – NIGHT**

The end credits start rolling.

Then, towards the end:

The authors & cast members reappear as themselves (as in the Prologue), walking side by side in the night, singing:

### **It's The End**

*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 got no friends, then tell a stranger  
—tonight*

*Good night, one and all  
Good night, one and all  
Good night, one and all*