

SCREENWRITING SAMPLES

by
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INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DAY

The desk is littered with photographs, newspaper clippings, an assortment of mementoes, and awards. They tell the story of a complicated life.

An aging gentleman, GEORGE, sits reading from a worn piece of paper.

GEORGE

(reading)

I am not afraid to die. Life ends. It is a gift we did not ask for and one we cannot hold on to. From the moment I was born I began my slow walk toward this place. I am but a fleeting moment of consciousness in an ever-expanding universe. And yet, for that very brief instance I felt at the very center of it all. I am not afraid to die because I never lived. I've seen a lot through these eyes and understood very little. My hands have touched but rarely felt. I've walked across the earth but never left my home. Pain scares me and I did all I could to avoid it. I am not as smart as I think I am and I am not as good as I think I am. I've lied and cheated when cornered. I have tried to be a good man and often failed. I did little evil but not for lack of trying. I never fully accepted the justice of man and never understood the justice of God. I am a coward and this is where I've come to die.

George puts the paper down and looks up straight into the camera.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD: "CHAPTER ONE: HEAVEN AND HELL"

EXT. MOJAVE FLATS - LATE AFTERNOON

CLOSE UP OF A SHOVEL SLICING THE GROUND.

A man in his mid-thirties, JOHN, is digging a hole in the middle of the desert.

Despite the heat, he is determined to get the job done.

Next to him is what looks like a black body bag.

He pauses to wipe the sweat off of his brow. A sound in the distance catches his attention.

He looks in the distance and sees something. Fear flashes in his eyes.

JOHN

Damn it!

CUT TO:

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

A woman in her late twenties, GRACE, is lying in bed. Her eyes take up the entire frame. They spring open. The angle widens to reveal her pain.

She hurries out of bed.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Grace falls to her knees and leans over the toilet bowl.

She's sick.

CUT TO:

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - OFFICE - MORNING

George is sifting through piles of old photographs, letters and other keepsakes.

That which does not end up in the trash he hands to John who places it neatly inside a box.

The two work in silence until John speaks.

JOHN

What do you think happens to a person after they die?

GEORGE

Is that what your next movie is going to be about?

JOHN

I never know what my movies are about.

George takes a long look at his young friend.

GEORGE

Don't make it about religion.

JOHN

Why is that?

GEORGE

You're too young.

JOHN

Death doesn't always have to do with religion.

GEORGE

Death is at the brink of human knowledge. Beyond that you have faith in something or faith in nothing. In either case it's faith.

JOHN

Can't death just be the end of it all?

GEORGE

Maybe. At your age. At my age I like the "virgins waiting for me in heaven" story.

JOHN

You're not taking my question seriously.

GEORGE

It's not a serious question. Silly questions get silly answers.

-----SAMPLE-END-----

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

A loud bang is heard coming from the loading dock. One of the workers, RAUL comes out with his hand up.

RAUL
My bad, I'm sorry boss.

RYAN
You Mexicans have to be more careful. This stuff may look like junk but I assure you it's not.

RAUL
No problem boss.

Raul disappears back inside the truck.

Stan walks up to Ryan angrily and takes him aside.

STAN
Can I talk to you?

RYAN
Sure.

STAN
That's just wrong.

RYAN
What?

STAN
Raul and Marco are both good workers.

RYAN
I just told them to be careful.

STAN
I know but they have names. You can't call them Mexicans.

RYAN
I thought they were Mexicans.

STAN
So what if they are, you can't just call them that. It's rude.

RYAN
You are saying that because you are racist.

STAN

I am not racist! You are the one calling them Mexicans.

RYAN

What's wrong with that? I wouldn't take offense if someone called me American.

STAN

It's not the same.

RYAN

Yes it is. You have a problem with Mexicans, so you think I used the term in a derogative sense when I was actually using it to emphasize their proud heritage.

STAN

You are such a liar. Plus not all Hispanics are from Mexico. What if they are from Guatemala?

RYAN

Than he would have said: "No, I'm actually from Guatemala but thanks for the compliment". Just like if someone called you an American you can say no I'm actually Canadian.

STAN

So I can just call you American from now on and you would be fine.

RYAN

Sure. But since you happen to know my name that would be stupid.

STAN

You don't know their names?

RYAN

They didn't come to mind at the time.

STAN

You're a racist.

-----SAMPLE-END-----

INT./EXT. COUNTRY ESTATE - DAY

Tracking motion toward JON's silhouette. He is standing in the doorway looking outside. It's a bright sunny day.

As the camera reaches him Jon steps out and starts walking away.

INSERT: Jon's hand picking an orange from a tree.

C.UP on NEL's face. She is looking down reading a book, unaware of Jon's presence. Jon's hand comes into frame presenting a beautiful ripe orange to her. She smiles.

NEL
It's beautiful.

She takes the orange.

Jon smiles and sits down next to her.

JON
Do you love me?

She hesitates.

NEL
I don't even know you.

He looks down, hurt. He thinks of something and speaks to hide the pain.

JON
Isn't that what love is? Two people taking a chance to get to know each other for the rest of their lives?

NEL
It only works when we become vulnerable... and stop hiding.

Her words slice through him, but Jon refuses to let her see his pain.

JON
Maybe we should just stop overthinking everything. Sometimes you just have to close your eyes and take a leap into darkness... trusting someone will be there to break the fall.

It worked. He's feeling better. He smiles.

JON (CONT'D)
Lucky for you, I am that someone.

She looks away.

NEL
You can't win this one.

JON
We can both win.

Jon touches her chin gently and leans in for a kiss.

She stops him.

INSERT: Nel's hand covering Jon's mouth.

NEL
Not this time. I've stopped
playing.

He realizes she means what she is saying. His expression changes. He's no longer hiding his feelings.

JON
I hide because I am scared.

NEL
Of what?

JON
Rejection, pain... afraid that if
anyone saw me for who I really am
they would run away screaming.
Maybe it's not all that bad, but
what if everyone else is faking it
too? No one is revealing
themselves... why should I? Why
take a chance only to end up being
rejected?

NEL
You never gave me a chance to make
up my own mind about it...
(a sad smile)
Until I did.

She's right.

JON
Is it over?

NEL
What do you think?

JON
I know it is.

He looks down. Sadness takes over. She caresses his face.

JON (CONT'D)
Isn't quitting the easy way out?

NEL
It takes courage to walk away from
something broken... that cannot be
fixed.

Tracking motion away from Jon and Nel as they look into each
other's eyes and...

FADE TO BLACK.

-----SAMPLE-END-----

EXT. PACIFIC BEACH - DAY

CLOSE UP OF A FOOT MARKING A LINE IN THE SAND.

Adam finishes making the line and looks up.

ADAM
Do you know what that is?

JANE is standing next to him.

JANE
What?

ADAM
The edge of western civilization.
This is as far as we have gone. The
Pacific.

JANE
What about Hawaii?

ADAM
Not really. This is it. The Far
West. It ends here. We've gone as
far as we can go without starting
to come back.

A wave washes the line away.

JANE
Is that why you brought me here?

ADAM
No, that's not it.

JANE
What is it?

Adam looks into the distance and speaks without looking at Jane.

ADAM
My father's dying.

JANE
What are you talking about?

ADAM
My father is dying and I can't bring myself to feel anything.

JANE
What's the matter?

ADAM
He's got cancer. The bad kind. The inoperable kind.

JANE
That's terrible. How long have you known?

ADAM
A few weeks.

JANE
Jesus Adam, how long were you going to wait to tell me?

ADAM
Until I felt something. But it's not happening. Does that make me a bad person?

JANE
I can't believe it took you two weeks to tell me.

ADAM
Don't make this about you.

JANE
I'm not. It just goes to show the type of relationship we have.

ADAM

Don't make this about us please.

Jane looks away in shame.

JANE

I'm sorry.

ADAM

No, I am sorry. For not telling you sooner and for standing here without feeling anything. Am I bad person?

JANE

You're not a bad person. Your father is not exactly an easy person to love. Do you love him?

ADAM

I think I do. I don't like him very much, but I think I love him. I don't think he ever loved me.

JANE

In his own way he did.

ADAM

It never felt like it.

JANE

That's because his love came at a price. He never learned how to be a father.

ADAM

What do you mean?

JANE

I should stop. This may not be the right time to talk about this.

ADAM

This is the perfect time.

JANE

I'm sorry, but you're not supposed to expect anything from your children. He's always resented you for not having been as successful as he is. That's not very fatherly. You're just supposed to love your children and that's all.

Adam is silent for a moment.

ADAM

I suppose you are right.

JANE

He's a judgemental person.

ADAM

That's no excuse for the sense of relief I felt when I heard he was dying.

FADE TO BLACK.