

"GRAVEN IMAGE"

by
Richard DeVeau

Richardcopy@aol.com
630-482-9636
WGA Registered

FADE IN:

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - DAY

Ridges of colored hills -- peaks and valleys of cobalt blue, raw umber, violet-red -- deeply furrowed rows, one after another.

We move back and see they're not hills at all, but brush strokes of thick, luscious PAINT.

Continuing back, it's a LANDSCAPE painting -- long ochre and red trees bending in a gray sky toward the center of the canvas.

ON it for a moment when a HAND flashes by, in its wake an enormous GASH. Then another and another in a building frenzy of swift, slashing swipes.

We continue moving back to reveal more of CHAIM SOUTINE (20), sharp brown eyes, sharp nose and chin on a tall, lanky frame, thrashing at the painting with a KNIFE; it its wake shreds of canvas flesh dangle from simple wood bones.

Once in tatters, he tosses it aside and begins to do the same to another before AMEDEO MODIGLIANI (29), finely chiseled, perfectly proportioned Mediterranean features, walks through the door and into the middle of Soutine's studio.

MODIGLIANI

Oh, shit! Not again.

He starts to head over, stops as he realizes he has a painting under his arm, quickly finds a spot to set it down and then rushes over to Soutine.

MODIGLIANI (CONT'D)

(grabbing his arm holding the
knife)
Chaim! Stop!... You can't keep doing
this.

SOUTINE

I...can not help myself. (He speaks in a
broken Russian accent.)

MODIGLIANI

What if Genest likes these?

This gets Soutine's attention.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As Soutine relaxes a bit, Modigliani gently takes the knife out of his hand, tosses it aside, puts his arm around his shoulder and steers him away from the carnage.

SOUTINE

I...I forgot about Genest. He still is coming, yes?

MODIGLIANI

He wants very much to see your work...
(gesturing toward the shredded paintings)
...if there are any left.

SOUTINE

That is what I want him to see. Just finished.

He points to his easel at the other end of the studio. On it is a still life of a RABBIT hanging by its hind legs.

The actual dead rabbit is similarly attached to the wall behind the easel.

Modigliani walks toward the painting.

MODIGLIANI

(after a contemplative pause) I see Rembrandt... But you've made it your own. The brushwork. No one else paints like this, Chaim. So emotive, so visceral. There is power in your brush.

As he gets closer to the dead rabbit, he reacts to the smell, covers his nose and quickly walks back toward Soutine.

MODIGLIANI (CONT'D)

Oh, my, powerful subject, too... Listen, come with me upstairs to my studio. We can paint one of my models.

He walks over and picks up the painting he was carrying when he came in. Soutine follows.

He turns it over and we see it's a portrait of a NUDE woman lying on a sofa. They look at it off and on as they're talking.

SOUTINE

Girlfriends you mean. I do not want to intrude.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MODIGLIANI

Don't be ridiculous!

SOUTINE

Your models, they are too... (says a Russian word) beautiful. Too perfect. You... you lust and paint. I want to just paint. No time for lust.

MODIGLIANI

But art and lust come from the same place.

Soutine points to the pubic area.

SOUTINE

Yes, I see what place. The Salon will never allow all this hair.

MODIGLIANI

To hell with the Salon! Arrogant Asses! Promoters of pabulum... Genest is working on a show for me in London.

SOUTINE

London is good. It's not America, but it's good.

MODIGLIANI

It's a step closer to America. So tell me, what do you have against beautiful women?

SOUTINE

Nothing. Beautiful women I like. Just not to paint. I like beauty to be worn off a little. Hard work. A hard life. Beauty of the soul remains... I like the stories their faces tell.

MODIGLIANI

(gesturing at the painting)
And what story does this tell?

SOUTINE

How you say... steamy? Yes?

MODIGLIANI

Yes. Steamy.

SOUTINE

Like whorehouse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Modigliani chuckles.

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

I went to the Louvre again yesterday.

MODIGLIANI

You should have told me. I would have joined you.

SOUTINE

I tried. (points to painting) You were busy. I heard through your door. You were painting with your penis again.

MODIGLIANI

Oh... I see. How long were you at the museum?

SOUTINE

Until closing.

INT. MUSEUM -- DAY (MEMORY)

Soutine is standing, like a worshipper in church, before Rembrandt's "Slaughtered Ox" painting. He's holding a sketch pad under his arm.

SOUTINE (V.O.)

I spent all day looking at his Slaughtered Ox.

BACK TO SCENE:

MODIGLIANI

Again?

SOUTINE

Yes. Look.

Soutine walks over to a long table full of drawings and sketches on paper. Picks up a couple and hands them to Modigliani.

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

How does he make something so dead look so alive? Three hundred years and the paint still looks wet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

A beef carcass. I must paint a beef carcass!

MODIGLIANI

You will. Some day, you will.

SOUTINE

When I sell my first painting, I will buy a whole beef. Hang it right over there.

MODIGLIANI

Look, if you won't come upstairs to paint with me, then come with me to the cafe. Jacob said Picasso will probably be there tonight.

SOUTINE

Picasso? Really? I will finally get to meet him?

MODIGLIANI

If he's there. And I hope he is. It's payback time.

SOUTINE

What is payback?

MODIGLIANI

Pablo has this uncanny ability to slip away from the table just before the bill arrives. I know damn well he has the money. Especially now that all those wealthy American collectors flock to him like pigeons... Which is exactly what we need, my knife-wielding friend.

SOUTINE

Pigeons?

MODIGLIANI

Wealthy American collectors.

Modigliani walks over and picks up one of Soutine's shredded canvases, shaking his head.

MODIGLIANI (CONT'D)

You can't keep murdering your children like this, Chaim.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOUTINE

Plenty left... I'll paint more. You are sure Genest is coming? Here? To my studio?

MODIGLIANI

As soon as he gets back from America.

SOUTINE

America. I cannot believe I have a chance to show work in America. It is my dream.

MODIGLIANI

You know it's mine, too... But if you destroy one more painting, I'll tell him not to come see you, I swear. Do you promise not to destroy any more work?

SOUTINE

I promise... I'll try... I'm still so grateful you are introducing me to your dealer. It is an amazing thing you do for me.

Modigliani puts his arm around Soutine's shoulder.

MODIGLIANI

I told you, we're brothers in blood and paint. Our blood is paint. Well, paint with plenty of wine and hashish mixed in for good measure.

SOUTINE

Much mixed in.

MODIGLIANI

Are you complaining?

SOUTINE

No, I like it. Not as much as you. But I like it.

MODIGLIANI

Come then. To the cafe. I have a plan. I'm going to make certain Picasso buys the food and wine tonight.

At this Modigliani is suddenly overcome by a wrenching coughing fit.

SOUTINE

(smiling)

Too much hashish?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Soutine's smile fades as he sees how long and seriously Modigliani continues coughing.

Once he stops and composes himself, his demeanor becomes very serious as he turns back to Soutine and looks him deeply in the eye.

MODIGLIANI

You can do one thing for me in return for bringing Genest here.

SOUTINE

Anything. Anything at all.

MODIGLIANI

If something should happen to me before my work is hung in an American museum, promise me you'll do everything you can to see that it does... I have no doubt you'll be rich and famous one day. Your work is unlike any other. No one paints like you do.

SOUTINE

Stop talking that way. Nothing will happen to you... Rich and famous? Me?... From your lips to God's ear.

(Trying to change the subject)

I'd be happy with enough money to buy a beef. Do you think it would be better if I hung it over there or over there?

Modigliani's urgency increases.

MODIGLIANI

You must promise me! You'll see to it that my work is shown in America.

SOUTINE

(a beat) I promise... Your work will hang next to mine. Soutine and Modigliani. Side by side.

MODIGLIANI

You mean Modigliani and Soutine. Just make certain they don't stick me in some dark corner. See to it there's plenty of light, do you hear?... I'll be watching you.

SOUTINE

From heaven?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MODIGLIANI

Heaven? From your lips to God's ear...
Now, let's eat and get drunk on Picasso.
(Patting his pocket) The hashish is on
me.

They begin to head toward the door.

SOUTINE

I'm telling you. First painting I sell,
I'm buying a beef carcass.

Modigliani holds up his own painting again as they walk out
the door.

MODIGLIANI

There are carcasses other than beef to
paint, my friend.

EXT. CAFE - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

This is a typical cafe of 1914 Montparnasse, the heart and
soul of Paris' Left Bank, home to the artists, writers,
journalists, musicians and actors who defined the term
"Bohemian."

The exterior of this particular cafe looks FAMILIAR -- it's
the very one VAN GOGH painted one starry night thirty years
earlier.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

We enter and move through an eclectic cacophony of people
talking, laughing, arguing, cavorting, milling about in
various stages of intoxication, some are dancing to the five-
piece BAND playing on a small stage in the far corner.

We come to a TABLE with 32 year-old PABLO PICASSO, black hair
raked across his high forehead, sharp, darting black eyes, 30
year-old writer and poet, MAX JACOB, balding, round
intelligent face, with round eyeglasses, Modigliani and
Soutine.

The table is a skyline of empty bottles, glasses and plates.

PICASSO

Yes, yes, of course, we've all heard it a
million times. So please, not another how-
much-we-owe-Cezanne speech.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PICASSO (CONT'D)

Let's not forget how much he owes Corot,
Courbet, Chardin...

MODIGLIANI

(interrupts)

And Modigliani!

As everyone laughs, Modigliani pulls a small print of Cezanne's painting "Boy in Red Waistcoat" from his coat pocket, kisses it, puts it back.

MODIGLIANI (CONT'D)

Ah, you laugh, but who among you doesn't
want his own name uttered among history's
hallowed?

Modigliani lights a pipe, inhales deeply, exhales a cloud and coughs.

Picasso waves the smoke from his face.

PICASSO

I'll take my hallow now, thank you.

JACOB

Yes, Pablo, we already know that about
you. But hallow is only bestowed upon the
hallowed.

PICASSO

What the hell does that mean? Hallow on
the hallowed. You know Max, you may have
some talent as a writer, but once you
start smoking that shit with him you
begin talking gibberish. Perhaps you
should write your next book in gibberish.
Oh, but wait, you already did that didn't
you?

JACOB

I'm surprised and flattered, Pablo.
Surprised that you can read and flattered
that you actually read my work. Or did
someone read it to you? Besides, you are
certainly not one to talk when it comes
to gibberish. What the hell were you and
Braque smoking when you concocted
cubism?! The very definition of
gibberish, if you ask me!

MODIGLIANI

(to Soutine) Can you believe these two
were once room mates?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOUTINE

I believe it. Yes.

PICASSO

Any language one doesn't understand sounds like gibberish to the untrained ear. Or in your case, the untrained eye. And you know I don't like smoking that shit, particularly if I'm working... How about you, Amedeo, do you paint with hashish?

MODIGLIANI

I've tried, but nothing good ever comes of it.

Picasso turns toward Soutine.

PICASSO

There you go, young man, you are now saved from the vexation of trying to paint under the influence of hashish. Take heed from your friend here.

SOUTINE

(exhaling smoke)

In Japan, warriors smoked it before battle. Believed it gave them more courage. And who doesn't want more courage to face the dark void. The void of death. And the void of the cold, blank canvas. Facing the fear that it won't give back the soul you are about to paint into it.

PICASSO

Some paintings should include your soul, and some your semen.

JACOB

Oh, God! And there we have one more reason to avoid your paintings!

Picasso looks at him, but Jacob doesn't notice as he's already preoccupied exchanging torrid gazes with one of the cafe prostitutes standing nearby.

PICASSO

Some paintings demand more from you than others. Like women. Some you live with. Others you fuck and forget.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JACOB

I don't believe I'll be forgetting her
any time soon. (turning back)
Gentlemen... and Pablo, if you'll excuse
me.

Jacob leaves the table to pursue his lust.

Modigliani's head wobbles a bit, his eyes blink slowly and he
passes out, slumping onto Soutine's shoulder.

SOUTINE

Too much wine and hashish. Or is it
hashish and wine? Better get him home.
Nice to finally meet you, Mr. Picasso.

PICASSO

Please, call me Pablo. I would like to
visit your studio sometime. You seem wise
beyond your years, Chaim. I'm curious to
see if your work is as well.

Soutine begins to dig into his pocket.

PICASSO (CONT'D)

Don't be silly, I'll take care of the
bill.

SOUTINE

Thank you Mr. Pic... Pablo. I will be
honored to have you come to my studio. We
must do it soon. Good evening.

Picasso nods and tips his glass as Soutine stands, helps the
limp Modigliani to his feet, wraps his arm over his own
shoulder and gets him up while struggling with balance.

He maneuvers his rubbery legged charge through the cafe and
out the door.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CAFE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

As soon as they are out the door, Modigliani stands perfectly
straight and walks completely soberly.

MODIGLIANI

I knew I could get the cheap bastard to
finally pay up!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Modigliani breaks out laughing and, as Soutine's surprise wanes, he joins in.

They continue walking and laughing down the street, fading into the darkness.

INT - SOUTINE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Soutine in his bed asleep, tossing and turning. He's DREAMING.

Soutine as a CHILD, drawing on the wall with a piece of fireplace charcoal. The image is a beautifully articulated face of a woman.

As he steps back from the wall to admire it, he's suddenly pummeled by fists.

VOICES yelling, "A Jew must not paint!", over and over.

He tries stopping the fists but to no avail. He drops to the floor, rolls into a ball, gasping and holding his stomach.

He AWAKENS in the same fetal position with real pain in his stomach.

INT. - MODIGLIANI'S STUDIO - DAY - ESTABLISHING

Portraits and nudes hanging on the walls. Paintings stacked in many rows. Stone sculptures, mostly of heads, in various stages of completion litter shelves and floor.

Modigliani is painting at his easel. Soutine, his subject, is facing him, sitting by the windows.

SOUTINE

You are Jew, yes?

MODIGLIANI

You know I am. So?

SOUTINE

What do you think of the commandment to not create graven images? That Jews must not paint or sculpt?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MODIGLIANI

Ours was not a religious family. But I have done a bit of reading of the Torah on my own. More so lately.

SOUTINE

It is what I was raised to believe.

MODIGLIANI

So you never painted or drew as a child?

SOUTINE

But I did. A lot.

MODIGLIANI

Without consequences then.

SOUTINE

Consequences? What are consequences?

MODIGLIANI

Nothing bad happened when you painted or drew.

SOUTINE

Bad things did happen, yes... Many times.

CUT back and forth between the SCENES Soutine is describing and Modigliani's STUDIO, the portrait progressing with each cut.

INT. SOUTINE'S CHILDHOOD HOUSE - DAY (MEMORY)

SOUTINE (V.O.)

I was ten of eleven children. When my older brothers would find me drawing, they beat me. Destroyed my work...I was always finding new places to hide my drawings. They hit me constantly... I nearly died once.

BACK TO STUDIO SCENE

MODIGLIANI

Your own brothers!?

SOUTINE

No, not them... I was 16.

EXT. SOUTINE'S CHILDHOOD VILLAGE STREET - DAY (MEMORY)

SOUTINE (V.O.)
One Sabbath, after temple, I asked the
rabbi if he would let me paint his
portrait.

BACK TO STUDIO SCENE

MODIGLIANI
The rabbi. You asked the rabbi if you
could paint him? More balls than brains,
my friend. He beat you then.

SOUTINE
Not him. His son. Several days later.

EXT. SOUTINE'S CHILDHOOD VILLAGE STREET - DAY (MEMORY)

SOUTINE (V.O.)
With two of his friends... They left me
for dead... I didn't walk for weeks.
Doctor was not sure if I ever would.

BACK TO STUDIO SCENE

MODIGLIANI
Damn! That must have been some beating.

SOUTINE
It was. But that beating got me here. To
Paris.

MODIGLIANI
How?

INT. SOUTINE'S CHILDHOOD HOUSE - DAY (MEMORY)

SOUTINE (V.O.)
According to the law, the rabbi needed to
pay my mother for what his son did to me.

BACK TO STUDIO SCENE

MODIGLIANI

An eye for an eye...

SOUTINE

An eye, a cheek, a nose, skull, jaw,
legs, arm and ribs... I protected my
fingers.

MODIGLIANI

It was a large sum of money, then?

SOUTINE

No, not much. But do you know what my
mother did with the money?

MODIGLIANI

Tell me.

SOUTINE

She sent me to the art academy with it.
From there I come here, to Paris.

Modigliani laughs.

MODIGLIANI

I bet that pissed off your rabbi.

INT. SOUTINE'S CHILDHOOD HOUSE - DAY (MEMORY)

SOUTINE (V.O.)

My mother was pissed off more. She told
the rabbi a gift like mine had to come
from God, that it made no sense to her
for God to give someone a gift and not
let him use it.

BACK TO STUDIO SCENE

MODIGLIANI

I think your mother was right.

SOUTINE

Do you? But I still feel... guilty. Old
habit, I guess. Trying to fight it my
whole life... That's why I need to know
what you think. As an artist and a Jew.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MODIGLIANI

Now I know why you keep destroying your work.

SOUTINE

(after a long pause and a sheepish expression)
Well? Should Jews paint or not?

MODIGLIANI

I'd ask your rabbi to explain Bezalel.

SOUTINE

What is a Bezalel?

MODIGLIANI

Not what, who. Bezalel was a man, an artist. I guess you could say he was the first Jewish artist. You must know the story of Moses receiving the commandments, the stone tablets. When he came down from the mountain he threw them to the ground in anger, smashing them to pieces?

SOUTINE

What Jew does not know this story? Christians know this. Everyone knows this.

MODIGLIANI

Well, Moses went back up the mountain again and God created a second set of tablets.

SOUTINE

(chuckling)
So that is how artists started creating work in series.

MODIGLIANI

While he was up there that second time, God also gave Moses instructions for making the temple, the ark, the tabernacle, the priests' clothing, candlesticks, curtains... everything. The list is quite long and the details are incredible. Exact sizes, colors, materials and designs. All requiring sculpture, painting, metalworking, weaving, every art form imaginable. And then God says to Moses, I've got just the artist to do it all, and his name is...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Gesturing toward Soutine.

SOUTINE

Bezalel. But what does this mean?

MODIGLIANI

Don't you see? Moses is standing there and in his hands are the commandments God just made, right?

SOUTINE

Yes.

MODIGLIANI

Well, does it make sense to you that he would also be telling Moses to break one of those very same commandments by creating art?

SOUTINE

But is it okay to create art only for the temple?

MODIGLIANI

But that's not in the commandment. It simply says you shall not make an image of anything in heaven or earth or in the waters below.

SOUTINE

Well that pretty much covers everything. So the rabbi was right.

MODIGLIANI

How can he be right? The temple contained sculptures and weavings of angels, images of pomegranates, carvings of horns, almond flowers and buds, bells and more.

SOUTINE

I'm confused.

MODIGLIANI

Most people simply either don't know or choose to ignore the rest of the commandment, which I think is the key. It says that you shall not bow down to them or worship them.

SOUTINE

So you're saying it's not just about the creation of art, but whether we worship it or not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MODIGLIANI

That's what I think a graven image is.

SOUTINE

That's all there is to it?

MODIGLIANI

That and the fact that the text says God himself gave Bezalel all his artistic talents and skills. They were a gift from God.

SOUTINE

That is what my mother told the rabbi.

MODIGLIANI

I told you she was right. Why would God give artists their gifts and then make it a sin to use them? You should read it for yourself.

Modigliani stops painting, walks over to a shelf, pulls down a book, walks back and hands it to Soutine.

MODIGLIANI (CONT'D)

Here, take this.

SOUTINE

A Bible? (He flips through some pages.)
A Christian Bible?

MODIGLIANI

It's translated from the original Hebrew. Has all the books of the Torah in the same order. Same chapters and verses. Just skip the last half. But don't tell Jacob I said that.

SOUTINE

Max Jacob is a Christian? I thought he was a Jew.

MODIGLIANI

He's as Jewish as they come. He just thinks we ignored the Messiah when he came. So he converted to Catholicism. He thinks it completes his Jewishness. Fulfills it. He's very adamant about it.

SOUTINE

So, I'm okay then? With God?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MODIGLIANI

I don't think you're creating graven images. (chuckling) Not unless you start dancing naked around your paintings while worshipping and praying to them.

SOUTINE

I only pray they sell.

MODIGLIANI

Well then... I just may have an answer to that prayer.

SOUTINE

Huh?

MODIGLIANI

Genest.

SOUTINE

(excitedly)

He is coming?!

Modigliani nods.

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

Why didn't you tell me sooner?! When?!

Soutine leaps from his seat nearly knocking Modigliani's easel and palette into his lap.

MODIGLIANI

Hey, take it easy! He'll be here the day after tomorrow. Now sit down so I can finish this.

SOUTINE

Not now! Must get ready!

He bolts out the door.

MODIGLIANI

(to an empty studio)

And that's why I didn't tell you sooner.

INT. MONTPARNASSE BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

Soutine is waiting his turn.

BUTCHER
And what can I get you, sir?

SOUTINE
A chicken, please.

BUTCHER
Certainly. I have some beautiful, plump
ones right over here.

He walks toward the window with several chickens hanging by
their feet on a rack of hooks.

SOUTINE
No, no. How you say, skinny. Very skinny.
With a long neck... And blue.

The butcher gives him a "you-must-be-insane" look.

BUTCHER
You're not serious.

SOUTINE
Very. What about that one... No, not blue
enough.

The butcher gives in.

BUTCHER
Wait here. I think I have what you're
looking for in the back.

He leaves, returns moments later with a chicken that fits
Soutine's description. Holds it up.

BUTCHER (CONT'D)
How's this?

Soutine is delighted.

SOUTINE
Perfect! I'll take it.

The butcher wraps the fowl, hands it to Soutine, his look of
puzzlement never leaving his face.

After paying, Soutine pulls a pencil from his pocket, grabs a
piece of butcher paper from the counter and starts writing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

This where I live. Please tell me when
you get others. Just like this.
Understand?

BUTCHER

Sure. Why not. Its your stomach.
Just do me a favor, will you?

SOUTINE

What?

BUTCHER

If anyone asks where you buy your
poultry, don't tell them! Okay?!

Soutine walks out making a face that matches the Butcher's.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Soutine is painting the chicken, which is now hanging by its
neck in the spot where the rabbit was earlier.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - DAY

EMILE GENEST, tall, thin, early forties, determined eyes
behind half-round spectacles hanging from his angular nose.
Very well-dressed, but in a deafeningly loud PLAID suit.

Hands folded behind his back, slowly strolling among the
stacks of paintings, occasionally picking one up for a closer
look.

Modigliani is sitting in a nearby chair, his legs crossed,
smoking a cigarette. A bemused look on his face.

Jacob is standing against the wall behind him, watching
Soutine, who is alternately standing, sitting and pacing, his
anxiety is palpable.

As Genest picks up one of the chicken paintings...

SOUTINE

Careful! It's still wet.

He carefully puts it back down, admiring it as he does.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENEST

You were right, Amedeo, this is powerful work. The energy. The palette. The brush.

He turns to Soutine.

GENEST (CONT'D)

Mr. Soutine, I'd be honored to be your dealer, that is if you'll have me. If so, I'd like to take the entire contents of your studio. What do you say?

Soutine goes pale.

SOUTINE

You...want...everything?

Soutine faints.

Jacob is at first concerned as Soutine passes out, but after seeing that he's otherwise fine, begins to laugh.

MODIGLIANI

(chuckling)

I think that's a "yes", Emile.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Soutine, Modigliani, Genest, and Max Jacob sitting at a table.

Genest pulls out a checkbook register from his briefcase and begins writing.

GENEST

This should cover your rent and art supplies for the next three months. And I'll send another every three months or so thereafter.

SOUTINE

How do I pay you back?

GENEST

I'll deduct these expenses against sales. And if your work begins selling as I think it will, you'll no longer need these checks. I'll be sending you sales checks instead, minus my commission, of course.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hands him the check. Soutine is nearly giddy.

SOUTINE

From your lips to God's ear.

MODIGLIANI

So tell me, Emile, when will we see the Americans? When are they coming here?

GENEST

Ah...I've been wondering how to tell you this, so I'll come right to the point. Things don't look so good right now. American collectors are staying away from France, away from most of Europe for that matter. Their newspapers are filled nearly every day with ominous forbodings of a war here. Hope they're wrong. But nothing I say will convince them otherwise.

MODIGLIANI

What will you do, then?

GENEST

If they won't come to us, we will go them. I'll be making trips twice a year to America to bring new work from both of you and several other artists. It's a bigger and more costly risk for me. And it will be a much slower process to make sales, but I have no other choice. We'll just have to wait and see. Only a few artists with a growing international reputation like Picasso's are making strong sales in America right now. Some are buying his work without even seeing it! Can you imagine?

JACOB

That's the last thing that blowhard needs. His ego is already large enough for its own orbit around the sun... I can't believe Americans like that cubist rubbish. Cubism is a fad, nothing more. It will go the way of all other "isms," short lived and long forgotten.

Jacob tips his head back to swallow the last of his drink. He finishes and everyone's eyes are fixed BEHIND him on Picasso.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JACOB (CONT'D)
 (realizing he's there and just
 overheard) Oh-oh.

Jacob looks embarrassed. Picasso dismisses him with a wave, a somber look on his face, and sits down hard.

MODIGLIANI
 Pablo, don't take Max so seriously. He
 wasn't...

PICASSO
 (abruptly) War has been declared!

JACOB
 What? Are you sure? What happened?

PICASSO
 King Ferdinand's assassination last month
 started all the posturing and alliances
 we've been hearing about. Hungary just
 invaded Serbia. France declared war on
 Germany, and the German army is on its
 way to Belgium as we speak. We are at
 war, gentlemen.

Everyone is stunned.

PICASSO (CONT'D)
 They're already calling up the reserves.
 Braque leaves in a week. Fucking Germans!

The whole table begins talking excitedly at once, except Genest, who looks ghost-white, rigid. Modigliani notices.

MODIGLIANI
 Emile, what's wrong?

Everyone stops talking, all eyes on Genest.

GENEST
 I'm... I'm an officer... in the reserves.

INT. MONTPARNASSE BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

Soutine is once again waiting his turn.

BUTCHER
 And what can I get you, sir? Oh, no, not
 you again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Without a word, the broadest smile we have ever seen on his face, pointing an extended hand full of francs, we already know what Soutine is pointing at before we see the gutted BEEF carcass hanging from hooks.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - DAY

We hear BUZZING flies. Lots of them.

A FLY (POV) makes its way across the studio and lands on the beef CARCASS hanging by its spread-eagled hind legs in a corner.

A large number of finished paintings of the carcass are leaning helter-skelter all around.

Soutine is standing back from his easel, glancing intently back and forth between the beef and the canvas.

All at once he lunges at the painting in progress with a brush full of paint, slashing, jabbing, attacking the canvas, working very quickly. He steps back for a moment or two, loads up his brush and begins another assault.

This is how he always paints.

He continues until...

...KNOCKING on the door in the background, growing LOUDER.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE SOUTINE'S STUDIO DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Three MEN and a WOMAN standing by the door.

WOMAN

There, can you smell that? God, what a stench!

She puts a handkerchief to her nose.

MAN #1

It doesn't seem to be too...

He's interrupted as Soutine opens the door.

They all react as the odor HITS them.

They enter the studio, each covering their nose in some manner.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

SOUTINE

Ah, Mrs. Sourette, what brings my favorite landlady here this time, I wonder.

MAN #1

Mr. Soutine, I'm Mr. Labonte from the Montparnasse Office of Health and Sanitation. This...this thing...

Pointing to the carcass.

SOUTINE

It is called beef.

LABONTE

This carcass has become a health hazard, Mr. Soutine. And I have orders to remove it from these premises immediately and dispose of it properly.

He pulls some documents from his inside coat pocket and hands them to Soutine, who briefly glances at them before dropping them to the floor.

SOUTINE

Art is more important than health! Look around, Mr. Labonte, what do you see?

LABONTE

I see a health hazard, Mr. Soutine.

SOUTINE

Ouch. You sure you're not an art critic?

LABONTE

I don't profess to know anything about art, Mr. Soutine. And you apparently know nothing of the dangers rotting flesh poses to your health and the health of everyone around you!

He gestures to the two other men who begin to pull on their work gloves and move toward the beef.

SOUTINE

(frantic)

No! Wait! I am not done with it!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He rushes back to his easel and begins to paint frenziedly.

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

A few more minutes! Wait! Stop!

The two men begin to remove it and after some effort have the carcass in tow, dragging it across the studio and out the door.

LABONTE

If I have to come here again, Mr. Soutine, you will receive a substantial fine. And if I come here after that, you will be arrested...I suggest you paint flowers, Mr. Soutine. Even the rotting ones smell good. Good day, Mr Soutine.

He storms out.

MRS. SOURETTE

I warned you, didn't I? One more complaint about you, and out you go, Mr. Soutine! You'll have to find another stall for your livestock.

Soutine stops painting and looks at her.

SOUTINE

Speaking of livestock. How would you like to pose for me, Mrs. Sourette?

She flusters and leaves, slamming the door behind her.

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

Guess not.

Soutine rushes to the window, looks below to see the men loading the carcass onto a truck bed.

He runs to his easel and drags it closer to the window and begins painting where he left off, glancing back and forth between the scene below and his canvas.

EXT. MONTPARNASSE STREET - NIGHT

Soutine and Modigliani are walking together.

Modigliani is carrying a large empty burlap sack over his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOUTINE

How long will the war last do you think?

MODIGLIANI

No telling. If the Americans enter, they say that could shorten it. But who knows...

SOUTINE

I hope and pray it is soon... Where are we going?

MODIGLIANI

You'll see. Almost there.

SOUTINE

You hear from Genest?

MODIGLIANI

Not for a while now. I'm sure the Germans are keeping him pretty busy... Okay, here we are.

They stop in front of a CONSTRUCTION SITE. We see a partially finished building among some piles of lumber, brick and stone.

SOUTINE

Here? Why here?

Modigliani walks onto the site. Soutine hesitates, then joins him.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - MOMENTS LATER

MODIGLIANI

This, my friend, is my art supply store.

He walks over to a PILE of limestone blocks and begins to pick through them. Soutine follows.

He hands the burlap sack to Soutine

MODIGLIANI (CONT'D)

Here, hold it open for me.

He begins dropping the stones he's selected into the bag.

SOUTINE

So this where you get the stone for sculpture. You steal it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MODIGLIANI

Not stealing. Appropriating. Well, yes, from here and a few other sites. Since the war, nothing's being built or finished.

SOUTINE

Don't you feel guilty? You're stealing... Wait, we're stealing. I'm stealing!

MODIGLIANI

Don't worry. No one cares about a few missing stones. And no, I don't feel guilty. These will become works of art. Buildings come and go, but art is forever... That should do it. You take one end, I'll take the other.

Soutine and Modigliani pick up the bag, leave the site and begin walking in the direction they came from.

Soutine looking at Modigliani, shaking his head.

SOUTINE

Appropriating?

They walk away, gradually fading from view and earshot.

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

Okay. You're standing before the judge. You say, Oh, no, your honor, we were not stealing, we were appropriating. And he says, oh. Okay. Then this is not a jail cell, it's a hotel room with bars.

MODIGLIANI

(Laughing) How many years do you think I'd get?

SOUTINE

If they saw your last painting, they will lock you away forever.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - DAY

CARD: A YEAR LATER

Soutine is sitting at his easel next to a small table with a still life he's painting. It's an empty yellow plate with two forks leaning upsidedown opposite each other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On the canvas, the same scene with the addition of two small gutted fish lying in the middle of the plate, the two forks resting on their glistening, gray-silver bodies.

Modigliani enters and quietly observes for a moment.

MODIGLIANI

Where are the fish?

SOUTINE

Ate them. But I remember what they looked like. And tasted like.

MODIGLIANI

When did you eat them?

SOUTINE

Two days ago.

MODIGLIANI

Was that the last time you ate?

On Soutine's affirmative nod.

MODIGLIANI (CONT'D)

We'll have to do something about that. As for me, I've switched to a liquid diet. (off the wine bottle in his hand)

SOUTINE

Damn war. Nothing is available. And what is available costs too much money.

MODIGLIANI

We must feed the army. There's your solution; (chuckling) join the army, then you'll eat.

SOUTINE

Don't laugh. I thought about it. But they would never take me.

MODIGLIANI

Your stomach?

MODIGLIANI (CONT'D)

(on his nod)

Well, I've thought about it too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOUTINE

The Army would love you. Except for that occasional cough, you are physically fit.

MODIGLIANI

(long pause, then quietly)

The coughing's not so occasional any more. Sometimes there's blood... I've been to the doctor. They're certain... I've got consumption. Tuberculosis is what they're calling it now. Funny huh, same disease, new name, same end result. Perhaps now that they know its name they can cure it... There's a lot of power in knowing a thing's name.

Soutine goes white.

SOUTINE

No...not...no...

MODIGLIANI

You must promise me you'll tell no one. No one! Especially not Jean. Not now... Now that she and I are about to have a child. I'll tell her in time. Just not yet.

Soutine sits down hard, melts into his chair.

MODIGLIANI (CONT'D)

(more upbeat)

But that's not why I'm here.

He pulls an envelope from his breast pocket and hands it to Soutine.

MODIGLIANI (CONT'D)

I just got a letter from Genest. He sent us some money and instructions for me to buy these.

Soutine opens the envelope and pulls out the contents.

SOUTINE

Train tickets? To Provence?

(with growing excitement)

The South of France! Really?!

The ocean...the beaches...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MODIGLIANI

Emile wants us to paint landscapes. As many as we can, as big as we can. He says it's what the Americans and Brits are looking for. Thinks they'll be easy sales when he returns. You love to do landscapes. And I'm sure I can find a young local model willing to be part of a landscape. So, what do you say?

SOUTINE

the sun...the olive trees...

MODIGLIANI

We leave in two days. So we must go to the cafe tonight.

(showing some money)

You can eat. I can drink. We can smoke. And then I have a lot of good-byes to make.

SOUTINE

You mean hearts to break.

MODIGLIANI

Tears are just another bodily fluid.

SOUTINE

You are incorrigible.

MODIGLIANI

Incorrigible? Really? Someone's been practicing their English. I'm impressed.

SOUTINE

The name fits, yes?

MODIGLIANI

I'm thinking of having it engraved on my calling cards... To the cafe, then! One more night of bliss and blisters. Then we leave for Provence.

They begin to leave the studio.

SOUTINE

Provence. Amazing...the meadows...the cliffs...the food...the olive trees...

They are out the door and we hear O.S.

MODIGLIANI (O.S.)

You already said olive trees.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SOUTINE (O.S.)
There are lots of them.

EXT/INT. MOVING TRAIN - DAY - ESTABLISHING

Soutine and Modigliani are sitting across from each other.

Modigliani is reading a letter.

Soutine is eagerly gazing out the window at the passing countryside. He turns toward Modigliani.

SOUTINE
So, what does Emile say? How is he?

MODIGLIANI
(off the letter)
Says he's well. Doesn't get much sleep.
Hates the muddy trenches, the gas
attacks, the limited wardrobe...

MODIGLIANI (CONT'D)
(looks up)
He misses his plaid suits.

SOUTINE
I feel guilty.

MODIGLIANI
I thought we resolved that graven image
thing.

SOUTINE
Not about that. About this. What we are
doing now. Heading for the warmth of
Southern France to paint while he's over
there dealing with all of that. And God
knows what else.

MODIGLIANI
I know...But we owe it to him, and to
every other soldier with him, to live in
the freedom they're fighting for. We're
doing this for Emile.

SOUTINE
Okay. I will do anything for Emile... I
would even wear one of his plaid suits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MODIGLIANI

You're a better man than I.

(off the letter)

He says when he puts on his gas mask, he calms himself by imagining he's standing in the field of gladiolas he planted behind his house...

(looking up)

He asks if we could send him a small painting of gladiolas to help him complete the illusion.

SOUTINE

Let's paint his own gladiolas, yes?

MODIGLIANI

Great idea.

SOUTINE

We can do it as soon as we get back in a few weeks.

EXT. WWI WESTERN FRONT BATTLEFIELD - DAY - ESTABLISHING

The battlefield from a HIGH panoramic view. Smoke, fiery explosions, rolling tanks and running men scramble through the scorched, pockmarked earth. We move forward and down until we are inside a TRENCH and moving through it.

We see rows upon evenly stacked rows of pairs of boots protruding from the trench wall -- all that's visible in these temporary graves for the fallen. Two soldiers add one more comrade to the dirt morgue.

Wounded men all about, other soldiers hastily scurrying left, right, up and over the trench walls as we hear war's chaotic cacophony; MACHINE GUN fire, exploding SHELLS, shouts of ORDERS, others of PAIN.

We come to a BUNKER, go down several sandbag steps and enter.

INT. BUNKER - DAY

MAJOR Emile Genest and several other officers are standing around some maps and charts attached to the sandbag walls. He looks older. Harder. Haggard, but alert. Clearly in command.

A SOLDIER bursts through the door, quickly salutes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLDIER

Major! The Huns have advanced more than 300 meters! They're moving their artillery forward, sir!

OFFICER

(to Emile)

Sir, we must pull back and retrench quickly!

GENEST

(pointing to a map on the table)

Let's move to here. And let's send out the 7th and 11th Squadrons to flank them here and here.

Just as a cannon SHELL (POV) falls through the air, obliterating the bunker.

When the debris settles and some of the smoke clears, among the aftermath, we see a small painting of GLADIOLAS and we move closer until the flowers fill the frame...

EXT. CLOSE-UP OF GLADIOLAS

As we pan back out to see they are on a CASKET

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

With full military fanfare, Genest's casket is being lowered into its grave.

A large number of people -- and the widow, the children, Soutine, Modigliani, Picasso and Jacob -- are standing around it.

The weeping widow with a Gladiola in her hand steps toward the lowering casket, places the flower onto it.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

A wet-red-eyed Soutine is standing at his easel painting a vase full of GLADIOLAS set on a nearby table.

He's wearing one of Genest's plaid suit jackets over his shoulders as he works.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Several canvases of various versions of the flowers are scattered around the room and on the floor.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

Modigliani is sitting alone at a table, hunched over a nearly empty bottle, staring vacantly as he mechanically lifts the glass to his lips between coughing jags.

Suddenly, he stands, flips the table over and begins to SCREAM.

He starts ripping and tearing off his clothes until he's completely naked, then runs, still screaming, out of the cafe and into the night.

EXT. MONTPARNASSE STREET - DAY

Soutine is part of a work crew digging a DITCH along the side of a road.

They are finishing up for the day and begin to form a line to receive their pay. The foreman is handing money to each man.

It's Soutine's turn.

FOREMAN

(sternly)

Here. And don't bother coming back!
You're too damn slow!

Soutine nods acknowledgement while looking into his hand at the meager coins he's received and begins to walk away.

As he's leaving, he perks up at the sight of one of the workers and quickly walks over to him.

SOUTINE

Excuse me, please, but, your face... I
must paint your face.

WORKER

Get the hell away from me, you lunatic!

SOUTINE

No, I insist. I must paint you. Please
come to my studio, now, please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WORKER

I swear, if you don't leave me alone
I'll...

SOUTINE

Look, I'll pay for your time. Here, I'll
give you this.

Showing him the money.

WORKER

Are you mad? You just worked all day for
that.

SOUTINE

Art is more important than money. You
will come, yes?

WORKER

You'll pay me? Just for sitting? While
you paint me?

SOUTINE

Well, standing, but, yes. It won't take
long. Here, (hands him some money) half
now and the rest when we are finished,
yes?

WORKER

You're daft, pal. But why not? Sure, lead
the way.

They walk off together.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Soutine is painting the worker's portrait.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO LATER

The portrait is finished and the worker stares at it as he
gets ready to leave. He turns to Soutine before he's out the
door and takes Soutine's hand and shakes it vigorously.

WORKER

Here.

Soutine notices what the worker had slipped something into
his hand -- the MONEY he handed him earlier.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WORKER (CONT'D)

After seeing what you do here, I feel honored that you chose to paint me. It's not right that you pay me.

And before Soutine can respond he's gone.

EXT. MONTPARNASSE BUTCHER SHOP -DAY

Soutine walks out the door with some fish wrapped in paper and a very large MANTA RAY in his arms. He's beaming. People around him are a bit repulsed as they give him and the ray a wide berth.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - DAY

Soutine is painting the manta ray that's now hanging on the wall while he's eating some cooked fish with his other hand.

EXT. COURTYARD OF MODIGLIANI'S STUDIO-DAY - ESTABLISHING

Many finished sculptures and raw stones are strewn about. We hear HAMMER hitting chisel before we see PIECES of limestone flying through the air, following them to Modigliani, covered from head-to-toe in dust, a bandana across his nose and mouth as he works away.

Soutine and JEAN, Modigliani's mistress/model, early 20s, very pretty and very pregnant, are sitting at a small table in a corner of the courtyard.

SOUTINE

He hasn't painted in weeks.

JEAN

He's does that. More so lately. Drops all his painting to sculpt.

SOUTINE

Look at him. It consumes him.

JEAN

He only stops to eat, drink, pee and smoke.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Behind them we see Modigliani begin a long, wracking coughing fit.

JEAN (CONT'D)
(soberly)
And to cough.

SOUTINE
How is he doing?

JEAN
He's...(she begins to get teary) ..the
blood...

SOUTINE
What does the doctor say?

JEAN
(gaining composure)
It's what he doesn't say... It's getting
harder for Amedeo to hide it. He hates
that more than the pain, I think.

SOUTINE
He is just trying to spare you... spare
us.

JEAN
I'm tougher than I look.

SOUTINE
I'm not.

Modigliani stops coughing, pulls his bandana back on and
begins where he left off.

JEAN
He loves to sculpt more than anything.
Says it's his true calling. Since his
childhood in Italy. But he really started
in earnest about five years ago. Taught
himself, mostly.

SOUTINE
Five years ago? Something happen?

JEAN
Two things. Well, three things. First, he
saw African art for the first time.

SOUTINE
I still haven't seen any. Not in person,
anyway. Only pictures.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JEAN

Picasso's got some nice pieces. He'll show you. You're one of the few people he actually seems to like... Where was I? Oh, the second thing that happened was Amedeo seeing Brancusi's work... That's why we moved here, you know.

SOUTINE

What's why?

JEAN

To be closer to Brancusi. His studio is on the next street. Do you know him?

SOUTINE

Only by reputation. Is it true he walked from Romania to Paris?

JEAN

Yes. Says a lot about him, don't you think?

SOUTINE

Much... What was the third thing?

JEAN

Meeting me, of course.

SOUTINE

You are his muse.

She tries to smile, but her eyes suddenly go dead. She stares off into space. After a long pause...

JEAN

I love him, Chaim. There will be nothing for me... Nothing to live for if he dies, you know.

SOUTINE

(points to her belly)
Nonsense. There is the baby.

JEAN

(she rubs her swollen stomach
and after a pause)
Neither one of us can live without him.

SOUTINE

(greatly pained)
But I'm here. I know it's not much, but I can help...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She looks at him with love, pity, gratitude and doubt, and forces a smile.

JEAN
You're sweet, Chaim. But...

She touches his cheek.

JEAN (CONT'D)
We all die sometime.

He takes her hand.

SOUTINE
Please, no more death talk.

MODIGLIANI
Hey, what's going on over there?

As he puts down his tools and pulls off his bandana and walks toward them.

SOUTINE
You blind? We are planning to run off together.

MODIGLIANI
Oh, is that all. I thought it was something serious.

SOUTINE
So, what is the reason this time?

MODIGLIANI
Reason for what?

SOUTINE
For stopping. Is it to eat, drink, smoke or pee?

MODIGLIANI
None of the above.

Grabbing Jean.

MODIGLIANI (CONT'D)
To fuck!

SOUTINE
(to Jean)
You left that one off your list.

As he gets up to go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JEAN
No, Chaim, don't go.

MODIGLIANI
(muffled by Jean's neck)
Go!

She slaps Modigliani playfully.

JEAN
Don't be rude!

SOUTINE
No, really. I must go.

Modigliani stops pawing Jean.

MODIGLIANI
No, stay. I'm only kidding.

SOUTINE
I know. But I need to be somewhere.

MODIGLIANI
No you don't.

SOUTINE
I really do. I have a job.

MODIGLIANI
A job? A painting job? For money?

SOUTINE
For money, yes.

MODIGLIANI
Wonderful! Who's portrait are you painting?

SOUTINE
Ah, he, he's... a railroad baron.

Soutine begins to walk out of the courtyard.

MODIGLIANI
Wonderful! Could turn into a patron if you play your cards right.

SOUTINE
Good day to you both.
(pointing to the sculpture as he walks by it)
Hey, you missed a spot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Soutine quickens his step in response to Modigliani's move to mockingly throw a stone at him.

MODIGLIANI
I won't miss you!
Wait! Before you go...

Soutine stops halfway out the door.

SOUTINE
Yes?

MODIGLIANI
Come to my studio tomorrow evening. We'll
have dinner and you can paint my
portrait. Bring your brushes.

SOUTINE
Finally! I'll be there.

MODIGLIANI
Good luck with your railroad baron! (as
Soutine leaves)

INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

We are looking at a red pillbox HAT with a railroad company LOGO. We pan back to see it's on Soutine's head, which he's currently admiring in a window's reflection.

SOUTINE
(To his reflection) Greetings, Mr.
Railroad Baron. Nice to meet you.

He's so preoccupied with his visage that he fails to hear...

WOMAN
(increasingly agitated)
Oh, porter...porter...porter! Porter!!!

Soutine finally realizes she's calling him.

SOUTINE
Yes, madame. Coming madame.

WOMAN
Are you deaf?

SOUTINE
No, madame. Sorry. What can I do for you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WOMAN
(incredulously)
I need you to carry this, of
course.

It's a huge steamer trunk.

SOUTINE
(wide eyed)
Yes, madame.

WOMAN
Be very careful with it. And hurry, I
have a taxi waiting.

She heads from the platform into the station.

Soutine struggles greatly to lift the trunk.

He finally does, and with great strain and a few bumped
travellers, maneuvers through the station to the front
entryway and out onto the street.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE TRAIN STATION - MOMENTS LATER

She's already sitting in the CAB and from the window:

WOMAN
Well, it's about time!

Soutine puts the trunk down a bit harder than he intended.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
I said be careful, you imbecile!

The cab driver helps him load it into the back of the taxi.

Soutine walks over to the window, expectantly holding out his
hand.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
(hands him one coin) You are completely
inept. That's all I'll give you. You
should seriously reconsider your career
choice, young man. You are ill suited for
this line of work.

Soutine is stunned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He storms to the back of the cab, elbows the driver aside before he can close the lid, yanks the trunk out onto the street, steps up onto it and begins jumping up and down.

A CROWD begins to gather.

The woman gets out of the cab and is now hysterical.

The train STATION MASTER, Soutine's boss, pushes through the crowd.

STATION MASTER

Mr. Soutine! Mr. Soutine! Stop this at once!

Soutine finally stops, the trunk unscathed, and gets down. Not because of the Station Master, but because he has tired himself out.

STATION MASTER (CONT'D)

Have you lost your mind?! Your behavior is completely unacceptable! You're fired!

Soutine simply stares at him as his chest heaves with each breath.

STATION MASTER (CONT'D)

Give me your hat and leave at once! I should have you arrested.

He reaches for Soutine's hat and Soutine pushes him away, hard.

SOUTINE

(to the hat) Consider this my wages!

Still panting and seething, he turns to the woman.

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

Madam, I can only hope that one day a small speck of empathy is able to find it's way into your tiny, black, barren heart. And thank you very much! You are correct. I am ill-suited for this work. You have convinced me to return at once to the work for which I am suited. (tossing the coin) You keep it. The education you've just given me is worth paying for.

He spins on his heels and walks away, the crowd parting as he storms off down the street, hat in hand.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

With the porter's hat on his head, a mirror set up by his easel, he's painting a self portrait.

SOUTINE
 (to the mirror)
 Nice to see you again, Mr. Railroad
 Barron.

INT. MODIGLIANI'S STUDIO - EVENING

There's a KNOCK on the door.

Modigliani, looking more pale than we've seen him, walks over to open the door for Soutine.

MODIGLIANI
 Come in, come in, my friend. I have a
 surprise for you.

He turns and waves his arm in the direction of a full dinner on the table with a large roasted goose at the center, surrounded by bowls and plates of potatoes, vegetables, cheese, bread and bottles of wine.

SOUTINE
 Where did you get all this?

MODIGLIANI
 The butcher likes my work.
 (pointing to each related item)
 So does the grocer, the farmer, the
 cheese maker, the baker and the wine
 merchant. As long as they do, my skinny
 friend, we will eat. I refuse to become a
 cliché--the starving artist.

They all sit and begin eating.

SOUTINE
 Artists give birth to so much life.
 Beauty comes into this world every day
 because we create it. We should be living
 like kings. Not starving. The world is
 upsidown.

MODIGLIANI
 Always will be.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEAN

Seems a bit cynical.

MODIGLIANI

Not a cynic. A cosmic realist. I believe in a balanced universe. It's exactly as you said, we create beauty and sometimes even transcendence. We give birth to life. But, because we give birth to so much beauty, to so much life, our own lives are taken in return. There must be a balance. Our work becomes eternal. But our time here on earth is shortened significantly as a result.

INT. MODIGLIANI'S STUDIO-CONTINUED-LATER

The table has been cleared. Soutine is at the easel painting Modigliani's portrait. Jean is sitting at the table, knitting something very small.

Soutine is depicting a much healthier looking Modigliani on his canvas than the model before him.

MODIGLIANI

What do you think of this new passion for photography, Chaim?

SOUTINE

Haven't thought too much about it. Are you troubled by it?

MODIGLIANI

No. Just the opposite. I see it as an opportunity. Photography liberates painters like us. We have been released further from the dictum to paint an exact likeness. We can look deeper than the surface for inspiration. Transcend the physical. Paint with the eyes of our hearts and minds and souls.

SOUTINE

Ah, yes, I understand. Capture the essence of a person or thing.

MODIGLIANI

Or the essence of nothing. The very paint itself can become the subject. The way it wicks, blends and bleeds. See, paint is alive. It bleeds...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MODIGLIANI (CONT'D)

But here I am rambling again. Too much wine. And much too tired, my friend. (as he slowly and painfully stands)
Perhaps we can complete our sitting tomorrow.

SOUTINE

No need. Nearly done. I will finish it in my studio.

MODIGLIANI

Well then let's have a look.

Modigliani walks slowly over to Soutine's easel, trying to hide his obvious pain and discomfort.

In the background, Jean's face registers deeply troubled concern as she watches him.

She and Soutine exchange a quick knowing glance.

MODIGLIANI (CONT'D)

Well, now. You've certainly captured my essence, Chaim. And you were quite kind about it, too. I'm afraid I look a lot more vacant than this.

SOUTINE

Not to me.

MODIGLIANI

That's all that food and wine talking...
I have a gift for you.

As he turns and reaches for the portrait of Soutine we saw Modigliani paint two years earlier and hands it to him.

SOUTINE

(pointing to the easel)
Then I will bring that one back in exchange tomorrow.

MODIGLIANI

Until tomorrow then.

Soutine picks the canvas off the easel as he heads out the door, a canvas in each hand.

Modigliani holds the door open for him, pats his back as he walks out.

They exchange "good-nights" and Soutine leaves.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - LATER THAT NIGHT.

Soutine is in bed. He's DREAMING. He's flying, soaring over treetops and houses at will.

Suddenly he begins to fall, hitting tree branches, one after another with a THUD as he hits each branch.

The thuds grow LOUDER as he awakens to BANGING on his door.

We hear JEAN calling his name from the other side.

JEAN (O.S.)
Chaim! Chaim! Wake up, Chaim!

Soutine rushes to the door, stumbling a bit and opens it. Seeing Jean's very harried face, Soutine grabs her hand and they both run down the hall, up the stairs and into Modigliani's studio.

INT. MODIGLIANI'S STUDIO - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

The doctor is standing over Modigliani. He covers his ashen face with the sheet as we enter.

The doctor turns toward Jean and Soutine.

DOCTOR
I'm sorry...

Soutine is stunned, frozen, speechless.

Jean immediately throws herself onto Modigliani's body, whispering "no's" between gut-wrenching sobs.

After a few moments, Soutine goes over to her and gently lifts her away. She collapses into his arms.

She seems to calm down a bit. Her EYES turn toward the WINDOWS.

She suddenly bursts free of Soutine's arms, runs toward the windows and without hesitating CRASHES right through them.

Soutine rushes to the shattered window and from his POV, her body is in the courtyard below, pierced and locked in death's embrace with one of Modigliani's sculptures.

INT. JEWISH TEMPLE - DAY

Modigliani's funeral. The temple is packed. Soutine, Picasso and Jacob are sitting together.

Soutine stares intently at several praying rabbis, barely sees or hears the service going on around him.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Soutine at his easel painting rabbis. He's wearing a prayer shawl.

He stops painting, HURLS the canvas he's working on against the wall, does the same with the shawl after tearing it from his shoulders.

He begins sobbing, falling to the floor in a fluid heap.

EXT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO BUILDING - DAY - ESTABLISHING

It's called La Rouche or "The Beehive" as it was nicknamed, due to its completely ROUND shape, standing four-stories tall.

Soutine walks out the front DOOR and heads down the street.

EXT. MONTPARNASSE STREET - DAY

Soutine is walking along slowly, head down, hands in his pockets.

He walks some distance, turning left at one corner, right at another.

Suddenly there's a great EXPLOSION.

A nearby BUILDING bursts into flying bricks and debris, smoke and fire.

Another building explodes.

All hell breaks loose, buildings, streets, carriages exploding all around, people SCREAMING and RUNNING in every direction. BODIES here and there.

Soutine dives for cover.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hears AIRPLANE engines overhead and LOOKS up to see several through the smoke.

EXT/INT. GERMAN WWI BIPLANE - DAY

One of a squadron of planes. The PILOT in front and the BOMBARDIER in back dropping one BOMB after another by hand. He holds each bomb, turns a RING on the back end to arm it, aims and drops.

PILOT
(turning around and yelling
over the engine noise)
Don't waste them all on houses. Save some
for something interesting.

BOMBARDIER
(pointing)
You mean like that?

It's La Rouche. From the air the round building with its courtyard in the center looks just like a target with a bulls-eye. The plane TURNS and heads for it.

EXT. HOUSE ROOFTOPS - MOMENTS LATER

Some French citizens have taken to their rooftops with rifles, others lean out windows, all firing at the planes.

EXT/INT. BIPLANE - MOMENTS LATER

As it gets closer to La Rouche, a bullet hits the pilot in the HEAD.

The plane banks hard and the Bombadier hastily releases the bomb in his hand before reaching into the front cockpit, pulls the pilot's body back and off the control stick.

He then sits back into his own seat and pulls the duplicate control stick, leveling and regaining control of the plane.

From the bomb's POV, we're falling and heading right for the building, as the roof grows closer we go THROUGH it, into a studio, slam through a painting before lodging into the FLOOR. It doesn't go off as we see the BOMB'S RING was never turned to make it live.

EXT. BACK TO STREET SCENE - MOMENTS LATER

Soutine is still looking up. The planes are gone.

The plane ENGINES fade and the bombing finally stops. Rifle fire then stops.

The quiet is eerie. The devastation horrific.

Soutine emerges from his cover. With a panicked look on his face, he begins to run full tilt all the way back to the studio building.

EXT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO BUILDING - DAY

He stops as he reaches the building and is visibly relieved to see that it is unharmed. He goes to an exterior wall and kisses it. Looks skyward before entering the door.

INT/EXT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO/BUILDING - MORNING

Soutine is in bed. A growing commotion is heard outside his window.

He gets up and looks out to see the street filled with people walking with carts, wagons, the occasional automobile and truck, all loaded down with their owner's possessions. It's an exodus.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Soutine, Max Jacob and Picasso are sitting at a table.

The cafe is nearly empty.

JACOB

It seems everyone is leaving Paris.

SOUTINE

Everyone but us.

PICASSO

Can't blame them. I hear the Germans are only a few miles away as we speak... What a shame.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACOB

Will you be leaving for Spain, Pablo?

PICASSO

No. I promised Braque I'd keep him company.

JACOB

How is he?

PICASSO

His wounds have completely healed. And the headaches are much less frequent now.

JACOB

(lifting his glass)
To Braque!

They toast.

SOUTINE

To Modigliani.

They toast again.

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

(looking around)

This place just doesn't feel the same without him. I keep expecting him to walk through that door at any moment.

JACOB

What will you do, Chaim?...I can lend you some money...

SOUTINE

Oh, no thank you, Max. You are too kind. The train station master has gone off to fight. I think I can get my old job as porter back. I still have the hat.

JACOB

(smiling)

Watch your temper and you just may last more than one day this time.

PICASSO

What you need is a good art dealer, Chaim. Perhaps I can talk to someone for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JACOB

Am I hearing things?! Pablo Picasso. THE Pablo Picasso is actually offering to help another artist?

PICASSO

Understand, Chaim, I can't make any promises.

SOUTINE

I am grateful for your offer, Pablo. Thank you. But not even the best dealer in the world will convince people to buy art while we're in the middle of a war. Not when so many don't know where their next meal is coming from. Or whether their husbands, fathers and sons will ever return home.

PICASSO

But that's actually when people need art the most. The war affects the world. But not everyone in the world is in the war. We need beauty. Art can heal.

JACOB

But you're only talking about the wealthy and privileged, Pablo.

PICASSO

Not always. But yes, those who buy art tend to be wealthy, whether there's a war or not.

JACOB

Money is insulation. The more of it one has the more silent the rest of the world's troubles become.

PICASSO

You're a bigot, Mr. Max! And a hypocrite! The presence or absence of wealth has nothing to do with character. You shouldn't hate the rich simply because they have money. It's what they do with that money that counts. That's what should shape your opinion.

JACOB

How am I a hypocrite?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PICASSO

The wealthy you appear to disdain are the very same people who buy your books, your poetry, your magazine articles and your paintings.

JACOB

While I may be suspicious of their power, I never said I didn't like their money.

SOUTINE

(lifting his glass)

To money! And to the end of this wretched war.

They toast.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DUSK

Soutine is working as a baggage porter.

He carries luggage for a passenger, who gets into a waiting taxi, and from the window hands Soutine a coin.

As the taxi leaves, Soutine looks into his hand and frowns.

SOUTINE

(to himself)

Looks like I'm eating from memory again tonight.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Soutine is painting a still life of empty plates, bowls and cups.

INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Soutine is standing against a wall, staring at the floor. He looks tired.

The station has only a few people.

He looks up to see a WOMAN walking toward him, carrying a tiny VALISE, perhaps ten inches square, in both hands held in front of her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

From the look on his face, he's not only wide awake now, he appears to be SMITTEN.

She seems to be walking in slow motion and, to his disbelief, comes right up to him.

WOMAN

Excuse me, could you take my bag please?

SOUTINE

You...you want me carry that?

WOMAN

What's the matter, too heavy for you?

She smiles. He melts.

SOUTINE

I charge extra for something that size.

WOMAN

Sounds fair.

She hands him the valise.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Follow me.

She glides through the station with Soutine following.

He nearly knocks over a couple of people and barely notices. His eyes are completely glued to her.

They exit the station.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE TRAIN STATION - MOMENTS LATER

There is a waiting car, the driver is holding open the door for her.

She turns toward Soutine, who hands her the valise as she gets in with his eager help.

The driver closes the door and heads around to his seat.

She opens the window, hands him some money with a small CARD that he doesn't notice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WOMAN

I'll be by your studio tomorrow, Mr. Soutine. If that's all right with you, of course. Shall we say...two o'clock?

He's stunned, a puzzled look on his face. Can't form the words.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Yes, I know who you are.

SOUTINE

But how...do...who are you?

The car begins to pull away. She leans out the window.

WOMAN

Look in your hand, silly!

She pulls her head back into the car and he watches as it rides out of sight. He looks at the card which says, ROSE GENEST.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

He's at his easel, smiling ear to ear, painting a portrait of Rose Genest from memory and has clearly captured every detail.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - DAY

Soutine is shirtless and frantic.

The studio is neater than it's ever been.

He's scurrying around looking for something. He then sits down on his bed, head in hands.

Out of the corner of his eye he spots a pair of his long-john underwear folded on top of a dresser.

He walks over, picks them up, finds a pair of scissors and begins cutting.

When he's finished, he's created a SHIRT out of the underwear and puts it on.

We hear a KNOCK on the door. He puts on his jacket as he walks toward it.

EXT/INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Rose is at the door. Soutine OPENS it gestures her in.

SOUTINE

Welcome, Miss or Mrs., Genest?

Soutine stands a bit awkwardly. He closes his jacket self consciously, as Rose enters and starts to look around.

ROSE

Miss.

Soutine smiles at hearing this.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Is it always this neat, Mr. Soutine?

SOUTINE

Please, call me Chaim. And, well...no.

ROSE

I thought not. Most of the artists I know tend to be a messy lot, especially in their studios.(Looking at the paintings) I see you've been keeping busy... Very busy.

She notices the painting of herself on the easel.

ROSE (CONT'D)

My goodness... I'm flattered, Chaim. You've really captured me. And after only seeing me for a few moments. It's as though I were here posing for it.

SOUTINE

You were... Have you been in many artists' studios?

ROSE

Quite a few. I worked with my uncle, Emile.

SOUTINE

Ah, Emile was your uncle. Of course. I can see the resemblance now. Around the eyes. The mouth. But I don't recall seeing you at his funeral.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSE

Regrettably, I was not able to attend. I was in America at the time. On business for my uncle, in fact.

SOUTINE

Business? You work in your uncle's art business?

ROSE

I was his assistant manager. I travelled with him to America on several occasions. And when he was killed, his will stipulated that the art business be placed in my hands. He raised me to love art and he taught me how to conduct an art deal. And if I do say so myself, I'm quite the deal maker... Surprised?

SOUTINE

A bit.

ROSE

Most of the men I deal with are, too. Which is to my advantage, actually. But they find out the hard way that I'm not to be trifled with.

SOUTINE

What about Emile's wife? How does she feel about you taking over her husband's business?

ROSE

In the beginning my aunt was a bit old fashioned. She wasn't sure a woman should be running a business. But now she's my strongest ally.

SOUTINE

I am impressed.

ROSE

Women are becoming much more prominent in many fields today, Chaim. Fields which, until recently, were not open to us. Particularly in America. In fact, the Albright Art Gallery in New York appointed a woman as its permanent director. And they say that all American women will be able to vote in elections soon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOUTINE
(softly)
You have my vote.

ROSE
Pardon?

SOUTINE
What does all this have to do with me?

ROSE
Well, everything.

SOUTINE
Huh?

ROSE
I'm about to make another trip to
America, to meet with a number of
collectors and curators. I want to
include your new work, Chaim.
Particularly some of these paintings...
I'm leaving in a few days.

SOUTINE
You want to show my work? In America?

ROSE
Yes, Chaim, I do. When my uncle brought
all of your earlier paintings to our
gallery a couple of years ago, I was very
moved, particularly by your portraits...
Thank you.

SOUTINE
For what?

ROSE
For bringing such beautiful things into
the world.
(gesturing toward her portrait)
And for this, silly.

SOUTINE
You are welcome. But one thing I must ask
you.

ROSE
Yes?

SOUTINE
Will you take Modigliani's work to
America too?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ROSE

I was planning to. I have already spoken with his relatives and the arrangements have been made.

SOUTINE

Wonderful!...And I should be thanking you.

ROSE

For including Amedeo's work?

SOUTINE

Well, for that and...

(pointing to her portrait)

...because I have not enjoyed painting anything as much in quite a long time.

They look into each other's eyes for a long moment.

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

America! I can't believe it! I am...speechless. And feel a little faint.

ROSE

(chuckling)

My uncle told me about your little episode. But please, don't faint yet... I've saved the best news for last.

SOUTINE

Really? What news could be better?

ROSE

(a bit apprehensively)

Well, I'm not sure how to say this. But, well, here goes. When most people look at a painting, all they see is a landscape, or a still life, or a portrait. Others may see the physicality of the paint, the color, the texture. But what I see...that is, what I've come to see after looking at your work nearly every day for more than two years now, I see...well, I see more.

She gives him a look that's equally shy, sultry and serious, and moves toward him.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I see your passion, your spirit, even your sense of humor... I believe I can see into your heart, Chaim...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ROSE (CONT'D)

All I need to do is gaze into your paintings. It's as though I already know you. Have always known you.

SOUTINE

You are full of surprises, Miss Genest.

ROSE

Rose. Please... call... me... Rose.

He moves closer, their eyes locked and longing. Lips soon follow.

EXT. PARIS STREET - MORNING

Soutine and Rose are walking arm in arm along the bank of the Seine River, entranced by each other, talking and laughing.

SOUTINE

And then my mother turns to my brother and says, I love you, but it's a good thing we don't have a mirror in the house.

They laugh.

ROSE

Your mother sounds like an incredible woman.

SOUTINE

She is. She has always believed in me.

ROSE

It must have been hard on your parents. Raising eleven children. What does your father do for a living?

SOUTINE

He is a clothes mender.

ROSE

A tailor.

SOUTINE

No. He wishes he was a tailor. Sews buttons, torn seams. He makes very little money. Pennies per week if he is lucky.

ROSE

How did you all survive?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOUTINE

We all worked.

ROSE

What about school?

SOUTINE

I was the only one to go. My mother came into bit of money and sent me. It only made my brothers hate me more.

ROSE

They picked on you?

SOUTINE

Constantly...But all that is behind me. It feels like a bad dream, now. But enough about me. What was childhood like for you?

ROSE

My parents died when I was very young.

SOUTINE

I am sorry...

ROSE

Oh, don't be. I had a wonderful childhood. My aunt and uncle raised me as their own. They couldn't have children. They said I was God's gift to them. And they spoiled me.

SOUTINE

(ogling her)

Nothing looks spoiled from here.

ROSE

Behave... Life was good for me growing up. Uncle Emile's art business provided a comfortable living. I was always surrounded by beautiful things. Luscious paintings. Sublime sculpture. And I got to meet so many wonderful artists.

SOUTINE

It does sound idyllic.

ROSE

It was...But I would have given it up in a heartbeat to have my parents back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOUTINE

How old you were when they died?

ROSE

Four.

SOUTINE

What happened, if you don't mind my asking?

ROSE

Of course I don't mind. I want you to know everything about me...And I want to know everything about you, too.

They are now walking among the crowded street markets packed with merchants and their wares, Soutine stops at a flower vendor, buys a flower and hands it to Rose.

SOUTINE

For you. Although it pales to your beauty.

ROSE

My, my, aren't you the smooth one. How many women have fallen for that line?

SOUTINE

You are the only woman I have ever been with.

ROSE

Ever?

SOUTINE

Ever. Well, unless you count Sarah.

ROSE

Sarah?

SOUTINE

Yes. An older woman.

ROSE

An older woman, huh? How much older?

SOUTINE

I was eight. She was twelve. I had such a, how you say, crush?

ROSE

(giggles)
You mean crush.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SOUTINE

Yes, crush. Sarah, and now you.

ROSE

Why so long between women?

SOUTINE

I am married to my work.

ROSE

I'm happy to be your mistress then.

SOUTINE

Mistress? You kidding?

ROSE

Just another crush?

SOUTINE

There is no more to crush. You have crushed all of me. And you've done it using only your eyes.

INT. PARIS - MUSEUM - AFTERNOON

Soutine and Rose are walking through the galleries.

Soutine is passionately animated as he shows her each of his favorite paintings.

SOUTINE

There is no one like Rembrandt. Will never be.

ROSE

Except for you, of course.

SOUTINE

I dare not lick his paint-spattered boots.

ROSE

Nonsense! It's clear you've internalized his work, his motifs. But you're taking them somewhere else, somewhere new. I think your work is opening entirely new doors in painting.

SOUTINE

You are too kind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSE

No, I'm not. Just truthful. Mark my words, in the future artists will point to your work and say you were their inspiration. Just as you're doing now with Rembrandt.

SOUTINE

You make me blush.

ROSE

Well, if that makes you blush, wait 'til you see what I have planned for you later.

Their gaze steams the air between them.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Rose's FACE and we slowly pan back until we see she is completely naked, posing as a model in the middle of the room.

We continue back, gradually revealing Soutine's moving easel, rocking canvas, flying brush, hand, arm, shoulder, until we see that he too is completely naked.

JEAN

I've never done this before.

SOUTINE

That makes two of us.

JEAN

I thought all artists painted nude models.

SOUTINE

God rest his soul, Modigliani kept trying to get me to. But I never did. Until now.

JEAN

Then we're both virgins, in a manner of speaking.

SOUTINE

Not any more. In any manner of speaking.

She blushes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

Do you need a break?

JEAN

From what I can see, I think you need one. Unless you intend to paint with that.

He looks down at his groin.

SOUTINE

I don't think it can hold a brush.

JEAN

But it has so many other talents... Why don't you bring it over here for another... audition.

He throws his brush and palette down and hastily wipes his hands on a rag.

SOUTINE

The sacrifices we artists make for our art.

He rushes to her, she to him and they tumble onto the bed.

INT. CAFE - MORNING

Soutine and Rose are sitting at a table, a half-eaten meal in front of them, lost in each others eyes and silly grins.

Soutine sips some of his coffee, suddenly grimaces, grabs his stomach, doubles over and falls to the floor.

Rose rushes to his side.

ROSE

Chaim! What's wrong?!

SOUTINE

(through tightly clenched teeth)

Get...Doctor...

ROSE

(to the puzzled-looking waiter)
Get a doctor! What are you waiting for?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAITER

It wasn't the food. I'm certain. It can't be. It...

ROSE

Do it! Now!

The waiter rushes off.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Soutine is in bed. Rose is in a chair at his side. The doctor is standing at the foot of the bed.

DOCTOR

How long have you had this stomach pain, Mr. Soutine?

SOUTINE

Most of my life. Since childhood.

DOCTOR

Well, it looks like you have an advanced stomach ulcer.

SOUTINE

Bad?

DOCTOR

Left untreated, it could become perforated. If that happens, without immediate surgery, you could bleed to death.

ROSE

What can we do?

DOCTOR

I'm going to put you on a special diet.
(as he hands her three pieces of paper)
I've written it down. These two you'll need to take to the apothecary. Drink this solution before every meal. It will help alleviate further irritation of your stomach lining. And this one is to be used only when the pain gets bad. Go easy on that, it's very powerful and very addictive. What do you do for a living, Mr. Soutine?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOUTINE

I am an artist. A Painter.

ROSE

An amazing painter.

DOCTOR

I see. Spend much time in the cafes?

SOUTINE

Some.

Rose shoots him a look.

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

Okay. A lot.

DOCTOR

Well, then you won't like what I have to say next. You must refrain from alcohol of any kind. That goes for coffee, too.

SOUTINE

No alcohol?

DOCTOR

None.

SOUTINE

Even wine?

DOCTOR

Yes, even Wine. Any beverage with any amount of alcohol, Mr. Soutine. I'm sorry.

SOUTINE

You're sorry.

DOCTOR

You can get dressed. You should come back here the moment you feel things getting worse. Look for blood in your stool. It's vital you don't delay in that case, Mr. Soutine. If you start to bleed internally...well...

ROSE

Don't worry, we will.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOCTOR
Good. Milk, Mr. Soutine...
(as he begins to leave)
Drink lots of milk.

SOUTINE
(with a smirk)
Breast milk okay?

The doctor is already out the door.

DOCTOR (OS)
Breast milk is fine.

Rose slaps Soutine's arm in mock disgust.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Soutine and Rose are sitting at the table with glasses of MILK and BOILED POTATOES on their plates. Nothing else.

Soutine pours some strange-looking liquid from a medicine bottle into a glass, lifts it...

SOUTINE
Cheers.

...drinks it down, grimaces.

SOUTINE (CONT'D)
Oh, God! I don't know which is worse,
that or the pain.

ROSE
(poking her potato)
Before you decide...
(she begins to smile)
...you'd better try the food!

Soutine looks up to see her smile turn into a giggle and in no time they're both nearly falling off their seats with laughter, the kind of laughter that brings release and relief.

EXT. PIER - DAY

Soutine and Rose are walking arm and arm toward a docked ocean liner.

They reach the ramp, throngs of people saying good-byes to each other, some boarding, others remaining on the dock.

Those already on the boat's deck are waving to those standing below.

They melt into each other.

SOUTINE

I will miss you terribly.

ROSE

Not half as much as I'll miss you. You'll have your work to keep you occupied. I'll have nothing to do but sit around in my cabin thinking of you.

The ship's HORN summons passengers.

SOUTINE

You better get on board.

ROSE

Now I'm not so sure I want to.

SOUTINE

My loss is America's gain. Art's gain. Our gain. It will only be a few months.

ROSE

Sounds like an eternity. It'll certainly feel like one.

SOUTINE

Already does.

They're interrupted by the ship's PURSER.

PURSER

All aboard!

PURSER (CONT'D)

Best get aboard folks. We're weighing anchor in five minutes.

SOUTINE

I have your portrait to keep me company.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSE
I'll write you.

They reluctantly pull themselves apart and she heads up the ramp, turning and waving every few steps.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Don't forget to take your medicine.

SOUTINE
I won't forget.

Once she's on deck, she mouths "I love you." He responds in kind.

The ramp is removed, ropes untied, and the ship begins to move away from the pier.

Soutine and Rose continue to wave long after the ship has moved too far away for them to possibly see each other.

EXT. PIER - NIGHT

Soutine is still standing in the same spot staring out into the black ocean.

INT. MUSEUM - DAY

Soutine is admiring Rembrandt's painting entitled, "Jewish Bride."

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Soutine is painting his version of "Jewish Bride", but we can see that the couple's faces are Rose's and his.

EXT. MONTPARNASSE STREET - DAY

Soutine is painting the large, stone cathedral across the street.

EXT. MONTPARNASSE POST OFFICE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

Soutine walks in.

EXT. MONTPARNASSE POST OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Soutine emerges with a big smile, a letter in hand, walks over to a sidewalk bench, sits, looks at the letter's envelope.

EXT. MONTPARNASSE STREET - BENCH - CONTINUOUS

The ENVELOPE. It's from Rose.

He opens it. It contains a letter and a check.

He begins reading.

ROSE (V.O.)

My Dearest Chaim, I have the most wonderful news! Through one of my best collectors here in New York, I met a wonderful gentleman, Mr. Albert Barnes. Having made his fortune in business, he is now a dedicated and passionate art collector who is building a museum in Philadelphia to house his growing collection. He fell in love with your paintings! He purchased every canvas I brought with me. Can you believe it, Chaim? A museum! And he wants even more of your work! He said he is planning to make the trip to Montparnasse sometime next year. I know how much you can use the money, so I've enclosed his check. Buy lots of milk, my love. Take good care of my stomach. I so wish I were with you to celebrate this wonderful news. But I will be home soon and I comfort myself with those thoughts. By the time you get this letter, I should already be on my way to you. I only wish the ship had wings. Continue painting, my love. Forever yours, Rose.

Soutine, smiling broadly, folds up the letter, kisses it and puts it in his coat pocket as he stands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kissing the check in his other hand, he walks across the street and into the BANK.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

A copious array of food set out on a table. Soutine at his easel is painting it, his brush in one hand and a large goose drumstick in the other as he chews and paints, the look of pure bliss across his face.

INT. PARIS HABERDASHERY - DAY

Soutine, dressed in a new suit, is looking at hats. The clerk is standing nearby.

He spots a gray bowler, points to it.

SOUTINE

That one.

CLERK

Certainly, sir.

The clerk hands it to him. He goes over to the mirror, puts it on, admires his reflection.

SOUTINE

Perfect.

CLERK

Would you like to purchase it, sir.

SOUTINE

Yes. And a dozen more just like it.

CLERK

(puzzled look)

A dozen, sir?

SOUTINE

Yes. Exactly like this. Understand?

CLERK

Yes, sir. A dozen of the same hat.

SOUTINE

(hands him a card)

Deliver them to this address, please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hands him cash peeled from a fat roll.

CLERK
(Now he knows he's serious) Certainly,
sir!

INT. PICASSO'S STUDIO - DAY

Picasso and JUAN GRIS, 30, tall and angular, are talking.

PICASSO
But that is also true of Oceanic art,
isn't it?

They're interrupted by a KNOCK on the door.

EXT/INT. PICASSO'S STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Soutine is knocking. Picasso opens the door.

PICASSO
(gesturing him in)
Ah, Chaim, welcome, my friend, welcome.
My, my, look at you. I almost didn't
recognize you.

INT. PICASSO'S STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Soutine enters, eyes darting around this large studio, walls and floors cluttered with paintings and sculpture. Shelves strewn with brushes, tubes of paint and painting supplies, pottery, ceramics and other eclectic objects.

PICASSO
Chaim, I'd like you to meet Juan Gris.
Juan, Chaim Soutine.

They shake hands.

SOUTINE
Mr. Gris. Pleasure. I saw your show at
the Sagot Gallery two years ago. Your use
of collage was inventive and the effect
was stunning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRIS

Why, thank you! It was a small show and a small gallery. I'm surprised you saw it. Please, call me Juan.

SOUTINE

(in front of the painting)
Ah, the famous Les Demoiselles. This is what started it all for you, no?

PICASSO

Time will tell.

SOUTINE

I see Cezanne's influence. His late work.

PICASSO

Yes. He's in there.

(turning to Gris)

Don't let his youth fool you, Juan. Chaim here has an old soul.

(turning back to Soutine)

There's something else about you, Chaim. I can't quite put my finger on it, and it's not just the new suit and hat, either.

SOUTINE

But I thought you didn't like Cezanne?

PICASSO

What gave you that idea?

SOUTINE

The night I first meet you. In the cafe. Three or four years ago. I was with Modigliani. Max Jacob, too. You said something about not needing to pay homage to Cezanne, as many believe we should.

PICASSO

Ah, yes. I remember now. That was the night Modigliani pretended to pass out in order to get me to pay the bill.

SOUTINE

You knew?

PICASSO

Of course I knew. And I knew Max was in on it too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOUTINE

It was that obvious?

PICASSO

Well...No. Not really...
Jacob finally told me.

They laugh the way friends do.

PICASSO (CONT'D)

But I never actually said we shouldn't honor Cezanne. I did however say that I was tired of hearing people go on and on about how much we owe him. To say so has become such a cliché. Spouted by every artist, hack, critic and poser as if it were an original revelation.

SOUTINE

I see.

PICASSO

But, to actually deny that Cezanne is the father of us all...well, that would be a lie... Besides, you know me well enough by now. I enjoy acting the role of the contrarian. Particularly when I have an audience.

SOUTINE

(smiling)

I don't think it's an act.

He turns back to the painting.

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

I also see another influence here.
African?

PICASSO

It is. I think African art is some of the most pure and primordial art in the world.

SOUTINE

Can I see your collection?

PICASSO

Through here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Walking into another room full of African masks hanging on the walls, African statues and carvings all about. A few of Picasso's own sculptures in various stages of completion.

PICASSO (CONT'D)

See how they simplified the features to mere planes and angles. They're poetry. Pure geometric poetry.

Soutine is stunned silent.

PICASSO (CONT'D)

Braque and I were greatly moved by these. As I see you are now. Some scientists and philosophers believe all of human civilization actually began in Africa.

GRIS

I guess you could say we cubists are influenced by the father of painting, Cezanne, and the mother of civilization, Africa.

SOUTINE

A beautiful marriage. And such lovely children.

GRIS

Who are your influences, Chaim?

SOUTINE

Rembrandt, mostly. But I also love Ingres, Raphael, Goya, El Greco. Even Fouquet and Courbet.

GRIS

Magnificent list.

SOUTINE

Wonderful artists. But they are mere youths compared to the Africans, yes?

PICASSO

Yes and no. Although some of these masks are indeed very old, others just like them are being made today. African culture has remained unchanged for millennia. Untainted by the rest of the world. I believe it's the reason for their art's visual purity.

A woman enters carrying a tray with a bottle of wine, glasses and some food.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

PICASSO (CONT'D)

Ah, refreshments. Please, Olga, place it over there. Thank you. Gentleman, some wine?

SOUTINE

None for me thanks. Doctor's orders. I can only drink milk.

She nods, departs. They sit on a sofa and chairs in front of the table now holding the tray.

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

Juan, what have you been working on since the Sagot show?

GRIS

I just finished a collaboration with the writer, Pierre Reverdy. I illustrated his latest book. And the American writer, Gertrude Stein, wants me to do the same with her book once she's finished.

PICASSO

Ah, the infamous Miss Stein. Now there's a character for you.

SOUTINE

You know her?

PICASSO

Unfortunately, yes. I painted her portrait last year. It took ninety sittings! Can you believe it?

SOUTINE

Ninety? Why?

PICASSO

I just couldn't capture her. She's impenetrable. It was most frustrating. Several months and many tries later I was finally able to finish. Never has anyone I've ever painted been so elusive.

SOUTINE

Now that is a portrait I must see. And I'm sure she loved it when you finished.

PICASSO

No. As a matter of fact, she didn't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

SOUTINE

You're not serious! After all that? What did she say?

PICASSO

She said it didn't resemble her.

SOUTINE

What did you do?

PICASSO

I looked her straight in the eye and said, Gertrude, one day it will!

They're laughing as Olga enters with a glass of milk, places it in front of Chaim and he thanks her.

GRIS

Where are you showing, Chaim?

PICASSO

Chaim was represented by Emile Genest just before the war broke out.

GRIS

Ah. Tragic loss. A wonderful patron of the arts. I'm sorry.

SOUTINE

Thank you. But did you know he had a niece who worked with him and has since taken over his gallery and art business?

PICASSO

Yes, I met her once. Rose is her name, isn't it?

SOUTINE

Yes. She's on her way back from America now. Sold a number of my paintings to an American collector. Modigliani's too.

PICASSO

That explains the new clothes. What a delightful turn of events. Congratulations, Chaim! Can you tell me which collector?

SOUTINE

His name is Barnes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

PICASSO

Of course. I know him. He bought one of my paintings several years ago. Woman with Cigarette was the title. He's not a fan of cubism, however. At least not yet. I can see why he would like your work. And certainly Amedeo's. But I still don't think that is all that's responsible for that sparkle I see in your eyes, Chaim.

SOUTINE

When Rose returns from her trip, I am asking her to marry me.

PICASSO

There it is! That's what's different about you. You're in love! Now that is a delightful turn of events, indeed! One that requires a toast.

Lifting glasses.

PICASSO (CONT'D)

To your career and your marriage, may they both be fruitful and multiply!

SOUTINE

May this war finally end!

GRIS

And may there one day be more art collectors than there are artists to satisfy them!

The all utter agreements and drink.

EXT. OCEAN LINER DECK - DAY

Rose is leaning on the railing, gazing at the endless sea and sky.

On the horizon, a dot gradually grows to become another SHIP heading toward the liner.

The ocean liner's ALARM sounds.

Crew members scattering all about. The captain's VOICE over a megaphone. He's standing by the wheelhouse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN

All passengers are to return to their
cabins immediately. I repeat, all
passengers to your cabins.

Rose is looking a bit panicked. She stops one of the running
crew members.

ROSE

What's happening?

CREW MEMBER

Don't worry, Miss. It's the Germans. This
has happened before. They board us, look
at our passenger manifest. They may
arrest one or two and then they leave. We
are no threat to them. You'd better go to
your cabin now, Miss.

He rushes off. Rose heads for her cabin.

INT. SHIP'S CABIN - DAY

Rose is pacing nervously. She goes to her porthole window and
looks out.

The German battleship is much closer now. Its hull MARKINGS
are clearer.

A loud BANG, quickly followed by several more.

EXT. GERMAN BATTLESHIP - MOMENTS LATER

SMOKING guns.

EXT. OCEAN LINER - MOMENTS LATER

Shells HIT the water, others hit the liner.

INT. SHIP'S CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

Rose is still at her porthole when her cabin explodes.

EXT. OCEAN LINER - MOMENTS LATER

The entire ship is now engulfed in flames and smoke.

The burning hulk slowly slips into its unmarked ocean grave.

EXT. MONTPARNASSE STREET - DAY

Soutine is walking.

A newspaper HAWKER standing on the corner further down the street.

HAWKER
(loudly)
Huns sink British ocean liner bound for
Paris! All souls lost!

People gathering all around him to get a paper as he keeps repeating the headline.

Upon hearing this, Soutine breaks into a run, bursts through the crowd and grabs a paper out of the boy's hand.

HAWKER (CONT'D)
Hey, that's two centimes, mister.

Soutine ignores him, eyes voraciously consuming the text.

HAWKER (CONT'D)
Hey, mister!

Soutine sits down hard on the curb, pouring over the news, quickly turning pages.

He then stops, and after a moment, pulls the paper to his face and begins sobbing.

The hawker comes over to him. Sees how devastated he is and backs away.

HAWKER (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Never mind, mister. It's on me.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

Soutine alone at a table, a bottle of liquor in front of him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He drinks between grimaces, holding his stomach.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Soutine, obviously drunk, sitting on his bed.

He has a GUN in his hand.

He puts it to his head, closes his eyes, and remains motionless for quite some time.

He opens his EYES and sees his PORTRAIT of Rose.

After a very long pause he lowers the gun.

EXT. ALLEY BELOW SOUTINE'S STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Three THUGS with clubs and knives are moving toward a hapless, retreating, young man, about the same age Soutine was when he was beaten. They have him cornered in the alley.

The young man is pleading with the thugs, but to no avail.

They move closer, in no particular hurry. They're enjoying making him squirm.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Soutine looks at the gun in his hand and then THROWS it, sending it crashing through the window. He then drops onto his bed, sobbing.

EXT. ALLEY BELOW SOUTINE'S WINDOW - MOMENTS LATER

The thugs and their intended victim FREEZE at the sound of BREAKING glass and everyone looks up...

...to see the GUN, glinting in the faint light as it tumbles through the air.

We already know where it's going as it LANDS in the young man's outstretched HANDS.

Realization HITS everyone at the same moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Thugs SCATTER.

The young man takes a moment before realizing he is now the one with the power. He goes from grateful to be alive to vengeful in mere seconds.

He squeezes off a shot at one of the retreating thugs. CLICK. Nothing.

He aims and pulls the trigger again. CLICK.

Fortunately, they're too far away as we hear the last echoes of SHOES hitting pavement.

As the young man realizes his return to vulnerability, he begins running out of the alley and down the street in the opposite direction.

INT/EXT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - MORNING

CARD: SEVERAL MONTHS LATER

Soutine is asleep. He's DREAMING.

Crowds of people have gathered around him as he stands in front of one of his paintings, which is outrageously large, as big as a building. The crowd begins to CHEER wildly.

He awakens to raucous cheering and other SOUNDS of celebration outside his window.

He looks out to see throngs of people filling the street, laughing, cheering and shouting, although we can't make out what they're saying as they stream by.

Chaim stumbles from his bed and goes outside.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SOUTINE'S STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Still shaking off the cobwebs of sleep and hangover, Soutine exits his building and lumbers toward the crowd. He grabs one of the revellers by the arm.

SOUTINE

What's going on?

REVELLER

Haven't you heard? The war's over!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The reveller hands Soutine a newspaper he'd been carrying.

REVELLER (CONT'D)
Here, see for yourself.

The headline: WAR ENDED! ARMISTICE SIGNED.

Another passing reveller, a woman, grabs Soutine by the arm and begins dancing with him, although she's doing the dancing, he's merely stumbling along.

He's caught in the current of people moving down the street and soon fades from our view.

INT. SOUTINE'S STUDIO - DAY

Soutine, unshaven, disheveled, is standing by the window. A Piece of CARDBOARD covers the pane broken by the gun.

DUST on his easel, the dried paint and COBWEBS on his palette and brushes show that he hasn't painted anything in quite some time.

Max Jacob is sitting in a chair.

JACOB
I know it's difficult...but you've got to try, Chaim.

SOUTINE
Fire's gone, Max. The Atlantic Ocean put it out.

JACOB
It will come back.

SOUTINE
I am not so sure. I don't know if I want it back... I think I am being punished... by God.

JACOB
Punished? What for?

SOUTINE
For graven images.

JACOB
God doesn't need to punish you. You're doing it for him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOUTINE

I don't think I can paint again, Max.

JACOB

But you must. It's your gift.

(picking up a painting)

Your incredible gift. If you're to be punished for anything, Chaim, it would be for not painting.

SOUTINE

The gift comes at very high price, Max.

JACOB

All things of great value come at a great cost. Some we pay right away. Others we pay later. But pay we will.

Just as Soutine is about to reply, we hear KNOCKING on the door.

SOUTINE

Who the hell can that be?

JACOB

Landlord?

Soutine shrugs his shoulders.

SOUTINE

Rent's paid. Thanks to... her.

Soutine lumbers over and opens the door to see...

ALBERT BARNES, late forties, tall, graying temples, chiseled features, strong chin.

BARNES

Mr. Soutine?

SOUTINE

Yes.

BARNES

I'm Albert Barnes... May I come in.

Soutine is nonplussed. Gestures him in.

SOUTINE

Sure. Mr. Barnes, this is Max Jacob. Max, Mr. Barnes.

Max stands. They shake hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARNES

The poet?

JACOB

That's one of my habits.

BARNES

Well, this is a double honor, then. I've read your work, Mr. Jacob. I like it very much.

JACOB

Oh, so you're the one who bought my book. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Barnes turns back to Soutine.

BARNES

First, Mr. Soutine, I want to say how sorry I am. Rose was a lovely and very capable woman. She spoke of you constantly. And when she wasn't talking about you, she was talking about your work... I could tell she loved both very deeply.

SOUTINE

(a bit teary)

Thank you...She spoke highly of you, too.

BARNES

Ah, so you did get her letter, then?

SOUTINE

Yes.

BARNES

We weren't sure if the mail was getting through, with the war and all... Mr. Soutine, I'll get right to the purpose of my visit.

SOUTINE

Your museum?

BARNES

Yes, my museum. But more to the point, your work.

He begins looking around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BARNES (CONT'D)

I've never seen anything so powerful, Mr. Soutine. I love the paintings I already have.

SOUTINE

(warming slightly)

Please, call me Chaim.

BARNES

(nods, points to himself)

Albert...I like what I see here. And I love this.

Pointing to Soutine's portrait of Modigliani as he picks it up.

BARNES (CONT'D)

It's Modigliani, isn't it?

SOUTINE

Yes.

BARNES

I'm here to collect more of his work, too. Powerful portrait.

SOUTINE

Thank you. It is very special to me.

BARNES

Chaim, I'd like to purchase the entire contents of your studio. What's here, about fifty paintings?

SOUTINE

Sixty... There was a time I would have fainted at those words.

JACOB

You did. I was there.

SOUTINE

Seems like a lifetime ago.

BARNES

Does that mean you're not interested?

SOUTINE

Oh, no...I am. I am interested. I'm honored. Thank you. Deeply. For everything you have said and done... It's just that...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

I only wish the person who made all of this possible could be here to celebrate this moment with me. With us.

JACOB

But look, Chaim, she is here. (pointing to Soutine's painting of Rose) She's also in your heart.

Soutine nods as he considers this.

BARNES

I'd also like you to come back to Philadelphia with me. I could use your assistance. You can help me decide which paintings to hang where. Well, what do you say?

SOUTINE

Me? America? I... don't know... I'm...

Barnes is writing something on a piece of paper.

Shows it to Soutine.

BARNES

What would you say to that amount?

SOUTINE

Oh, my God! That's a lot of francs!

BARNES

No, Chaim. Dollars. Seven times the value of today's franc.

Soutine faints.

JACOB

(laughing)

Well, there you go, Mr. Barnes. It's a deal. That's definitely a "yes."

EXT. OCEAN LINER - DUSK

The ship is somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic. Soutine is standing alone on deck.

The sun is setting on the horizon.

He has a FLOWER in his hand - the same kind of flower we saw him buy for Rose in Paris.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The ship's Purser approaches.

PURSER

Excuse me, sir, but the captain wanted me
to tell you that we are there now.

Soutine thanks him, the Purser nods, quickly turns and
leaves.

After a pause, Soutine throws the flower into the sea.

SOUTINE

(quietly)

I miss you, my love. Rest in peace.

Barnes walks over to him a short while later.

BARNES

Beautiful, isn't it?

SOUTINE

One of a kind.

They stand in silence as the last rays of sun are swallowed
by the sea.

EXT. THE ALBERT BARNES MUSEUM - DAY - ESTABLISHING

A large brick and granite building with Barnes' name etched
deeply into its lintel.

A CAR pulls up to the front.

The driver opens the door, Barnes and Soutine emerge.

SOUTINE

Wow. It is bigger than I expected...It's
beautiful.

BARNES

The real beauty's inside.

They walk up the granite steps and through the monumental oak
doors.

INT. MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS

Workers carrying paintings and sculptures are busily moving
throughout the massive, high ceilinged galleries.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Soutine follows Barnes as he walks through a couple of galleries and stops in front of a plaque and points to it.

BARNES

I wanted to show you this first, Chaim.

Soutine looks closer at the plaque and begins to get teary as he sees "Dedicated to Emile and Rose Genest. Lovers of art and artists."

INT. MUSEUM - LATER

Both Barnes and Soutine have their coats off, sleeves rolled up.

They're looking at some blueprints.

BARNES

(off the blueprints)

I'm thinking that some bigger paintings would be perfect all through here and into the hallway here.

SOUTINE

Perhaps the Provence paintings?

BARNES

Yes. Excellent idea.

Modigliani's PORTRAIT of Soutine is in front of them.

One of the workers is hanging Soutine's portrait of Modigliani at the far end of the wall.

Soutine looks up from the blueprints and notices the worker.

SOUTINE

(to the worker)

No! You! Wait! Bring that here.

He does.

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

(pointing to the painting on the wall next to Modigliani's portrait)

Take that one down.

Soutine picks up his painting of Modigliani and hangs it next to his own portrait by Modigliani.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOUTINE (CONT'D)

(to himself)

There you go, my friend. Just as I
promised. Modigliani and Soutine. Side by
side forever... From your lips to God's
ear.

He steps back looking at the two portraits.

As he does it becomes TODAY, with a young art student, shaved
head, tatoos, piercings, iPod in his ears, sketch pad in his
hands, stepping back from the SAME POV we had with Soutine.

We look at the two paintings for a moment and then we...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END