

The City, and April

By

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1. INTRODUCTORY CREDITS OVER FILM - DUSK.

Panorama of rugged bush terrain with looming city skyline emerging in the background.

JOHNNIE (NARRATION)

Let me tell you a memory I remember
most clearly.

2. EXT. CITY - NIGHT.

Sounds of a train stopping, doors opening and finally the footsteps are heard as JOHNNIE walks off a train and onto a train platform.

JOHNNIE, a twenty-four year old man, is standing by a train station with his vintage, brown, shabby Globite suitcase in his hand. He looks confused and innocent - just like a toddler would if he or she were lost. He has rough, messy short brown hair. He is wearing a flannelette, long-sleeved shirt and rough dirt-stained and tattered jeans with tattered boots poking out at the bottom. JOHNNIE puts his suitcase on the ground, and hurriedly rummages through his flannelette shirt pockets. In the third pocket he looks through he finds a train ticket. He unscrunches it and reads. He perks his head and ears as he hears another train in the distance.

JOHNNIE (NARRATION)

My mind was racing. Where did I
come from? Why was I on a train?
...What am I doing here?

He stands still and watches as a train rolls by. After it has passed he looks beyond the station and is looking at the city lights in the near distance. He, in awe, gazes dreamily at the lights.

JOHNNIE (NARRATION)

And then I saw the city.

JOHNNIE breaks from this awe-ridden state and puts the ticket back in his pocket and begins to leave the station. He maneuvers awkwardly through masses of men and women in bleak, black business attire. He does not fit in.

3. EXT. CITY - NIGHT

JOHNNIE leaves the train station with his suitcase and begins to walk through the city. He has a look on his face as if he is nervously in search of something. He eyes the grandiose buildings and watches the people in restaurants and walking by laugh and chit-chat with their friends and lovers. He is in awe but is slightly bewildered. It is clear that he has never been in such a place. Nobody notices him, but he stands out. It appears as if those around him take for granted the city that they live in.

JOHNNIE (NARRATION)

I knew I wanted to be here.
Absolutely be here.

4. INT. HOTEL FOYER - NIGHT.

JOHNNIE checks into a backpackers hotel. He books a room just for himself. He slides keys off the doorkeeper's desk and walks down the hallway.

5. INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT.

JOHNNIE Walks into his room and slumps his suitcase onto the floor. His suitcase spills open and inside is a deep-purple-coloured book poking out.

He walks over to a large man-sized window and stands casually by it. He looks at the city city lights once more, and once again has a look of admiration in his eye.

JOHNNIE (NARRATION)

I was tired but buzzing with fascination. I stood by the window in my hotel room until the bright city lights and the silhouettes of passers-by blurred into one another like a nervous oil painter's sketch.

6. INT & EXT. DAILY ROUTINE - DAY.

JOHNNIE walks out of the hotel smiling. He looks freshly-showered. He has his hair brushed to the side. He is awkwardly attempting to, but not quite, fit into the business-like city clothing attire.

He watches the sun twinkle on city skyscraper windows. He smiles.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNIE (NARRATION)

Every day for the next few weeks, I
spent my time absorbed in the city.

Slow-paced montage of JOHNNIE'S whereabouts of the day:

Watches the waitress at an independent cafe make a love
heart in the froth of a coffee.

Chuckles as he watches a busker juggle fiery pins.

Takes photographs by a wharf, and catches his reflection in
the water and smiles.

Sits on a bench by himself at sun-down.

7. INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT.

JOHNNIE is puckered out in his clothes asleep on his bed.
Pan from him sleeping to his open suitcase with the book
poking out.

JOHNNIE (NARRATION)

And every night, I fell contentedly
asleep. In a heartbeat.

FADE OUT.

8. INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT.

JOHNNIE is looking at a girl inquisitively. He takes out his
camera and takes a photograph. He takes a photo of her just
like he would take a photo of something beautiful he would
see in the city. The woman looks up just as he is taking it.
JOHNNIE awkwardly puts the camera onto the table and looks
out of a window, blushing.

JOHNNIE (NARRATION)

She was beautiful. I snapped a
photo so that I could hold on to
her face.

The woman picks up her wine glass and walks toward the man,
pulls out a chair, and sits across from him. JOHNNIE shyly
looks here in the eye with an expression of innocence.

JOHNNIE

I just thought...

Without JOHNNIE knowing, the woman slides the camera off the
table and keeps it on her lap.

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN
(Finishing off his sentence)
...You'd take a photo of me? I
would too, if I had a camera...
(Laughing) So I'll use yours!

The woman snaps a photo.

APRIL
We're even now. I'm April.

JOHNNIE
(Smiling) I'm Johnnie.

APRIL smiles. JOHNNIE smiles.

9. EXT. PICNIC - DAY.

JOHNNIE and APRIL are smiling, laughing, and pecking each other's cheeks.

JOHNNIE (NARRATION)
We were perfect together, I
thought.

10. INT. APRIL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

JOHNNIE and APRIL are kissing, cuddling and giggling in APRIL'S bed.

APRIL
Night Johnnie.

JOHNNIE
Night.

JOHNNIE AND APRIL comfortably nuzzle each other.

11. INT. APRIL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT.

JOHNNIE (NARRATION)
One night, I don't remember.

JOHNNIE and APRIL are having a fight in her kitchen. She is yelling at him and he is upset and awkward.

APRIL
Just dry them and then put them in
the cupboard. It's not hard. I
don't want them sitting in the dish
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

APRIL (cont'd)
rack for me to put away in the morning.

JOHNNIE
It saves you wiping them if you just wait. I'm just suggesting something...

APRIL
Yeah, that's great Johnnie. But this is my place and my dishes. I'll do it how I like, what's the fucking point in arguing with me?

JOHNNIE
I'm going to sleep.

APRIL
Don't help then, jerk.

12. INT. APRIL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Wide, still shot of JOHNNIE and APRIL in APRIL'S bed. She is crying and staring at the ceiling. She is greatly distressed. He is asleep on the opposite side of the bed, looking uncomfortable.

13. INT. APRIL'S BEDROOM - DAY.

The next morning, JOHNNIE is awoken by APRIL putting on a jacket. JOHNNIE sits up in bed, smiles, and says hi. APRIL brushes him off.

JOHNNIE
Hi.

APRIL
(Fed up) I'm going out with friends. Let yourself out. Bye.

JOHNNIE looks through the front window and she walks out onto the street.

14. EXT. WHARF - NIGHT.

JOHNNIE and APRIL are walking together by a harbour. JOHNNIE tries to grab APRIL'S hand, but she retreats her hand and keeps it by her side. JOHNNIE has an innocent, sheepish expression on his face, and APRIL looks angry. APRIL sits down and JOHNNIE does the same.

(CONTINUED)

APRIL

You don't remember do you? The fight last night? No? No bells ringing?

JOHNNIE

(Confused) What?

APRIL

You only remember things that make you happy. We have the best time together and you seem to remember them fine. But when we fight and argue you just lose that memory. Just like last night.

JOHNNIE

I... I don't know. I'm sorry.

APRIL

(Angry) It's like you have no past. I'm starting to think it's not okay, Johnnie. I tell you about my family and my friends and funny stories from when I was a kid. You've got nothing. Nothing to show who you are. It's like you're living solely in the present and filtering what you remember. You know: the bad things are just as worthwhile as the good. (Upset and crying) Will you even remember this conversation?

JOHNNIE

(Upset) I don't know.

APRIL stands up and leaves, leaving JOHNNIE sitting by himself. JOHNNIE, distressed, watches as APRIL walks off. JOHNNIE looks at the city lights in the distance. His face is shocked. After a prolonged gaze at the city lights, JOHNNIE begins to mumble the words that APRIL told him. JOHNNIE stands up and runs as fast as he can from the wharf, continuing to mumble under his breath the words that APRIL told him.

JOHNNIE (NARRATION)

"The good things are just as worthwhile as the bad". I repeated it over and over in my head, just hoping to remember it.

15. INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT.

JOHNNIE runs into his hotel room, still mumbling the words that APRIL told him. He grabs a texta from a shelf and spots a book in the muddle of clothes lying outside of his suitcase. He hurriedly picks it up and begins to scrawl on it's front cover "The good things are just as worthwhile as the bad". He drops the book on the floor. He stands by his window and looks below at the people walking in the streets. He takes off his jacket and tosses it onto the floor, not meaning to cover the book by doing so.

16. INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY.

JOHNNIE wakes up in a happy mood (forgetting the bad events of the prior night again). He yawns and stretches. He reaches over to the telephone and calls APRIL.

JOHNNIE

Hi April! It's me! How are you?

APRIL

No, Johnnie.

JOHNNIE

What's wrong?

APRIL

That's what's wrong.

APRIL hangs up. JOHNNIE puts down the phone slowly and stares at the wall upset and confused. He has a shower and comes out. As he retrieves his shirt from the floor it dislodges the book. It opens up and inside has drawings and writing, and it appears to be dated like a diary. He is intrigued. What's this? He's thinking. He bends down to pick up the book and closes it so that he can read the cover. He scan's over what he had written on it the previous night.

JOHNNIE (NARRATION)

When I read it, the prior night flashed in my mind. I remembered.

JOHNNIE plonks himself onto the side of his bed and begins flicking through all of the pages. He looks bewildered.

JOHNNIE (NARRATION)

This has all happened before. All of my lost memories... This book is my safe - storing the moments my mind has chosen to not hold on to.

JOHNNIE flicks to the last entry and then to a new page. He reaches over to grab a pen from a side-table near his bed and begins to write something.

17. EXT. APRIL'S HOUSE - DAY.

JOHNNIE runs out of his hotel room clenching the book. JOHNNIE runs to APRIL'S house with the book. He knocks on APRIL'S door. APRIL opens the door. Without saying a word, he hands over the book. She hesitantly takes the book. JOHNNIE walks away and leaves APRIL staring at his back.

JOHNNIE (NARRATION)
The book would speak for me.

18. INT. APRIL'S BEDROOM - DAY.

APRIL reads the cover and then opens the book to read the first page, dated from 1982. She realises what the book is. The book records every bad memory of JOHNNIE'S because JOHNNIE cannot remember them. April stares at the book as a tear rolls down her cheek.

FLASH TO:

19. INT. JOHNNIE'S OLD BEDROOM - NIGHT.

In the outback, in a shabby, cabin-sized house. JOHNNIE is a child (no older than ten years old), wearing a similar flannelette shirt that he was in the introductory train scene. He is kneeling, sobbing in front of his bulky, reprimanding father (it is assumed). They are in his bedroom. It has very little possessions, a few books here and there, but no toys or anything a regular, happy child would have. The floor is made of dry floorboards, and the walls are made of wood. There is an old radio in the corner playing slow jazz. The atmosphere is empty and bleak. There is a bottle of Jack Daniels spirits lying half-empty by his bed post. His father has a belt strap wrapped around his right fist and is teasingly threatening to clobber JOHNNIE.

FLASH TO:

20. INT. APRIL'S BEDROOM - DAY.

APRIL turns the page, not able to stand finishing the rest of that entry. She continues to skip each page, taken aback at the quantity of horrible incidents that JOHNNIE has been involved in. Finally APRIL reaches the last page. It reads:

(CONTINUED)

"I love a girl, but she can't bear my crumbling memories". APRIL begins to sob. She shuts the book and stares at the wall in front of her. She is disturbed. Her hand quivers as she picks up the phone to call JOHNNIE. She trembles as she speaks.

APRIL
Johnnie?

JOHNNIE
Hi.

APRIL
Let's go for dinner tonight, love.
To the restaurant where we met.

21. EXT. OUTSIDE THE RESTAURANT - NIGHT.

APRIL is walking toward the restaurant. JOHNNIE is a few metres behind her and sees her. He runs up and hugs her from behind. She turns around surprised, and he kisses her on the cheek. He chuckles. APRIL squeezes JOHNNIE and hangs her head on his shoulder. Her eyes are watering.

APRIL
I'm so sorry, Johnnie.

JOHNNIE
What for?

APRIL
(Sobbing) I love you.

Through her watery eyes, April manages to smile just a little.

JOHNNIE (NARRATION)
And of course, I'd forgotten once more. I'm happy to say that I remember almost everything from then on. The city, and April.