

Young Man #3 Librarian

Scene Seven The Librarian and the Young Man

(Projected: exterior of the library.)

PHOTOGRAPHER. Cragin Memorial Library, built 1905, a fine example of early twentieth century Neoclassical architecture. No one talks about Dr. Cragin much. Not like they talk about Pierpont Bacon. Or Stephen Austin. Or Jonathan Coulton. Although I guess everyone will be forgotten eventually.

(Projected: interior of the library.)

The Librarian looks up at the light bulb that has gone out.

LIBRARIAN. Damn.

PHOTOGRAPHER. It's easy enough for her to put in an order. But there is an account at the hardware store and it's important to support small businesses. She could of course send someone else to get it. But she has been meaning to stop and say hello to the Hardware Store Owner. She's been intending to do so for the last two years. It's about time. She imagines how easy it would be to walk through those doors. This is the part of her that imagines a braver version of herself. Tomorrow she will be thinner, the lines will disappear from her face, she will clean the bathroom thoroughly and she will go to the hardware store. But why not now? Every day it's tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.

LIBRARIAN. Tomorrow.

PHOTOGRAPHER. She's been tomorrowing in one way or another for the past twenty years. Best not to think about it. There are always books to put away. There is knowledge. And imagination. And then the Young Man appears.

YOUNG MAN. Hello.

PHOTOGRAPHER. He says. And -

YOUNG MAN. Excuse me. Sorry to bother you.

PHOTOGRAPHER. And.

YOUNG MAN. I'm wondering if you could help me.

LIBRARIAN. Of course.

YOUNG MAN. I'm looking for a book.

LIBRARIAN. You've come to the right place.

YOUNG MAN. Of course there is the computer, but I was hoping you would know better, being how you are an expert and all and how you know how to find things.

LIBRARIAN. I will do my best.

YOUNG MAN. I am looking for books on marriage. How to have a good marriage. What to do. What not to do. How to be a good husband. How to love the right way. How to best make love. Not fiction, mind you. Or the things on the internet. More like old knowledge. The things our souls know that long ago were shared by word of mouth generation after generation and then recorded by hand and translated into a thousand languages but have been forgotten. Maybe some of the new science too. But not based on one small study and not pseudoscience and not a series of essays written on deadline by someone who doesn't know enough, who knows how to write but doesn't know how to think. Also. How to be a good father. Not the trends. Not the sexism. Or maybe some of the sexism but the kind in which it is easily recognized as such. How to be a good person. How to live life the right way. I feel like I'm trying to start my life finally with the right person and I want to try not to make too many mistakes and I want to be happy or if not happy, the other thing that we're supposed to be. Of use? Worthwhile? Honest? I want to be vulnerable and love completely. Do you have a book like that?

LIBRARIAN. Let me see.

PHOTOGRAPHER. The Librarian is quietly astonished by the Young Man.

LIBRARIAN. I should be more like him.

START

PHOTOGRAPHER. He worries he has said too much. Perhaps he could have found it all on the internet or in the online catalog. While he worries, she hands him a stack of books.

(The PHOTOGRAPHER takes a photo as the YOUNG MAN accepts the stack of books from the LIBRARIAN. It is projected.)

LIBRARIAN. Here. There are more maybe. This is a good start. Come back after you've read these. I will think on it more.

YOUNG MAN. Thank you.

LIBRARIAN. Of course.

YOUNG MAN. I really appreciate it. Really - I thanks!

(YOUNG MAN exits with a large stack of books.)

PHOTOGRAPHER. The Librarian takes a deep breath.

(PHOTOGRAPHER takes a photo of LIBRARIAN which is projected.)

LIBRARIAN. Vulnerable. Love completely. Well. Well.

PHOTOGRAPHER. She feels something rising in her. Inspiration? A call to action? She will not tomorrow today. She will today today. She takes a deep breath. She steels herself.

LIBRARIAN. I'll be back in a few.

PHOTOGRAPHER. She yells to her assistant. And she puts one foot after another towards the hardware store where my former husband is right then ordering hammers.

(The LIBRARIAN exits.)

Let's let her go. We'll catch back up with her later. A word about the Hardware Store Owner. He has been slipping from my memory, piece by piece, like a mirror shattered on the day of my death. I drag him around losing more and more of him all over town. Yesterday, it was pieces of our honeymoon. What color was the sand? Was there a jellyfish or not? I'm forgetting

breakfasts. Oatmeal, maybe bran flakes. A joke about a donkey whose meaning is lost. His mother's name. The size of his hands. Every day he is more and more like a character from a novel I read. A fictional story I'm forgetting and can never read again. Does he have gold fillings? Was there an instrument he could play? Even the love is fading as it expands. I love him because he is human and less because he is he. Maybe because I am less and less me. It is a symptom of my after-death. But enough. More life. More things to see. Pity does not become me.