

—WRITING SAMPLE —

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From the feature-length screenplay

Getting It

(romantic comedy)

Original Screenplay by
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TWO SCENES:

1. inciting incident / turning point / end of first act
2. ending

EXCERPT #1:

INT. THE RESTAURANT - THEIR TABLE - JERRY AND PAULA

Paula returns. She doesn't look nervous anymore, but perhaps ready for a fight.

PAULA

(sitting)

Listen, I have to tell you something now. I'm starting a new article. A feminist one.

JERRY

Great. I've always thought of myself as a feminist, as a matter of fact.

PAULA

I see. Well, you're not going to like this, then--

(takes a breath)

I believe that love was invented by men to dominate women.

JERRY

Huh?

PAULA

I don't believe in love.

(beat)

I wanted to meet you because I'd like to study you. For my article. I want to know what happens with these notes you give out.

Jerry suddenly becomes stiff and formal.

JERRY

Oh. I see.

PAULA

(coy)

I wouldn't mind having sex with you, if that makes you feel any better.

That shocks him some more. He clears his throat and fidgets with a false air of detached interest.

JERRY

Oh. I see ...

The Waiter arrives and puts down a candle for romantic atmosphere. Jerry winces at it and starts to gesture it away, but the Waiter has left again.

PAULA

It's in the history books.

JERRY

Pardon me?

PAULA

Romantic love was invented by the medieval troubadours to get their kicks. It never existed before that.

JERRY

Yeah, well... it's a real experience to me. It's a... it's a transcending of myself, it's, it's --

PAULA
 (prodding)
 Neurotic insecurity. You need
 someone to boost your ego.

JERRY
 (a beat, offended)
 Well thanks for the diagnosis,
 Doc, how much do I owe you?
 (a beat, tries again--)
 Look, I'm just searching for a
 woman who's ideal for me.

PAULA
 Exactly. You want an ideal, not
 a real person.
 (looking for a fight)
 You men are great at making up
 lofty excuses for your selfish
 needs.

The Waiter has returned to light the candle.

JERRY
 (outraged)
 Oh yeah? And what of all the
 sacrifices men have made for love?
 Huh?

PAULA
 For "love," not for a woman.

A fight is developing-- just as the Waiter lights a match
 for the candle, Jerry in his fervor grabs his wrist--

JERRY
 (to Waiter)
 Have you ever been in love?

WAITER
 Oh, yes.

JERRY
 (to Waiter)
 Didn't you sometimes feel that
 you would do anything for your
 loved one?

The Waiter gingerly transfers the lit match to his other
 hand-

WAITER
 Well, ah, I would say...

Paula grabs his free match-hand--

PAULA
 (to Waiter)
 Sure-- and didn't you also feel
 afraid of losing her? Not having
 her to use anymore?

The Waiter is desperately trying to blow out the match while both hands are held by Jerry and Paula. They finally release him.

JERRY
 What about the experience! The
 yearning, the longing--!

Jerry grabs the Waiter's match-hand just as he's lit another one--

JERRY
 (to Waiter)
 Have you ever felt that?

WAITER
 Well I, um...

Just as the Waiter takes the match with his other hand, Paula grabs that wrist again--

PAULA
 (to Waiter)
 Yeah, and have you ever noticed it
 feels a lot like being insecure?

JERRY
 (to Waiter)
 How can that be an invention!
 Huh? That all-consuming flame
 of passion!

The Waiter drops the match as it burns his finger. It lands on the paper flowers, which burst into flames--!

All three stand there and just stare at this miniature inferno.

It fizzles out as abruptly as it started.

A few diners clap. Paula and Jerry look at them, then back at each other, embarrassed. Finally they smile at each other in challenge.

WIDE SHOT

Paula's car pulls up behind the house, just in time to see Jerry and Aaron disappear down the hill toward the roller coaster.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - NEAR THE ROLLER COASTER - NIGHT

The huge, brightly lit roller coaster fills the frame colorfully, dwarfing the figures of Aaron and Jerry as they head for the main gate.

Paula runs up behind them-

CLOSE SHOT - WITH THE THREE OF THEM

as Paula arrives-

PAULA

(apprehensive)

Jerry.

Jerry and Aaron turn as she arrives beside them, but they don't stop walking--

JERRY

(a warm welcome)

Paula! What are you doing here?

PAULA

(carefully)

Look, I'll be frank, Jerry.

This is strictly business.

A minor formality-- I...

(almost wincing to
get it out)

I need your signature on this.

She hands him the release agreement form. He takes it and looks at it as they continue through the gates and head for the roller coaster, straight ahead.

PAULA

(continuing)

It, uh, gives me the rights
to your story.

(a deep breath,
plunges in)

Now look, I know what you're
going to say...

Jerry hands the paper back and she takes it.

PAULA

(continuing)

And I want you to know I'm willing
to offer a substantial--

She glances at the paper and stops in mid sentence--

INSERT - THE PAPER

Jerry has already signed it.

PAULA

She stops, incredulous. Jerry and Aaron continue on,
then stop and turn back--

JERRY

Coming with us?

THREE SHOT - WALKING

As Paula catches up.

PAULA

(suspicious)

What's the catch? Huh?

Jerry smiles and hugs her lightly.

JERRY,

That's something I like about
you, you know? You're always
ready for a fight.

She looks at him. He looks completely candid and at ease-not
looking for anything.

PAULA

(more subdued)

You know this may make you,
um, "well known", don't you?

JERRY

Ah-- speaking of making each other
famous-- I've got another story for
you. My experiment is going to be a
big controversy pretty soon. You can
have first crack at it.

Something magical is going on between them. We read their
expressions. There's a bright, unveiled look in Jerry's
eyes. He is right there with Paula, just soaking her in
exactly how she is. And he's happy.

A veil seems to have lifted from Paula's eyes too. She returns his look. For the first time she looks vulnerable, willingly vulnerable, undefended.

A strong undercurrent of affection flows between them, as they arrive at the end of the lineup at the roller coaster.

AARON

(to Paula)

Should I get you a ticket?

PAULA

(noticing where she is)

Oh, uh, yeah, okay. Just a minute, I have to make a phone call.

She goes to a phone booth nearby. Aaron watches her and smiles. Jerry is looking at the roller coaster.

AARON

That's great.

JERRY

What?

AARON

The affect you have on Paula.

JERRY

I'm not doing anything.

AARON

Exactly.

PHONEBOOTH - PAULA

PAULA

(into phone, hesitant)

Listen, I got the release--
Yeah, yeah. But listen, um, I want to hold off on the article for a bit. I have a... a new angle, I think.

(there's YELLING over the receiver)

I don't know yet. I might want to do a rewrite. Okay?

(YELLING continues)

You're a pal. Bye.

AT THE ROLLER COASTER LANDING

The next batch of people prepare to get on. Jerry and Aaron are soon to get on too, as they watch Paula hurrying to meet them.

A few cars down from them we SEE someone we recognize-- the Waiter from the restaurant, with a girl. Jerry sees him too, and without hesitation he steps over to him and shakes his hand. The Waiter is surprised but he really looks pleased as Jerry hustles jauntily back to join Aaron and Paula.

Aaron ushers the two of them onto the car together and stands back. Jerry gives him a look.

AARON

I'd rather watch.

THE FRONT CAR - PAULA AND JERRY

Jerry and Paula sit in the front car. The roller coaster starts to move, and we STAY MOVING WITH THEM.

They hold hands on the bar. They look only at each other.

There is love in Paula's look, uncertainty in her voice--

PAULA

(warily)

You know I... I don't need you.

JERRY

(a happy discovery)

Yeah, you know-- I don't need you either.

PAULA

(happily)

I'm fine as I am.

JERRY

(with love)

Me too...

As the train finally reaches the summit, they lean slowly toward each other, just about to kiss, till suddenly--

Whoahhh! Their eyes widen in alarm as WHOOSH! they plummet straight down, out of view.

FULL SHOT - THE ROLLER COASTER - NIGHT

SCREAMS of delight from both Jerry and Paula as the train careens around the bends at break-neck speed. We DON'T SEE them anymore, just the train and the maze of track. And as the excited screams continue, we TILT UP SLOWLY toward the dark night sky...

Soon all that fills the screen is the--

STARRY HEAVENS

We HOLD on the heavens as the SCREAMS of delight slowly recede from us, fading away, and now replaced by a new background sound -- the BEEPS and BOOPS and CLICKS of Jerry's computer. And finally, in VOICE OVER, the familiar sounds of Jerry and Paula working the controls together...

JERRY'S VOICE (V.O.)

Come on, come on...

PAULA'S VOICE (V.O.)

Up there!

JERRY'S VOICE

Great! Whoa! Slow down!

PAULA'S VOICE

Whew! Almost passed it! There--!

JERRY'S VOICE

How's the angle?

PAULA'S VOICE

Good.

JERRY'S VOICE

Okay, got it!

BEEP!

FADE OUT.