



THE DIVING BELL AND THE BUTTERFLY

Adapted Screenplay by
RONALD HARWOOD



Blackness. Silence.

The blackness slowly, very slowly, begins to lighten.

As if at a distance THE SOUND OF TWO VOICES, a man's and a woman's chatting, little more than intermittent murmurs.

Then, suddenly close:

A FEMALE VOICE

(urgent)

Look! He's waking -

A MALE VOICE

Page Dr. Cocheton. Quickly.

Almost immediately:

THE FEMALE VOICE

Dr. Cocheton, come to room 119 please,

Dr. Cocheton to room 119, please -

A SUDDEN FLASH: the faces of TWO NURSES, one male, the other female. Then, just as suddenly, blackness again.

THE MALE VOICE

No, no, Jean-Dominique, open your eyes -

Like a flickering eyelid a picture begins to take shape: a small, bare hospital room, the faces of the NURSES either side of a bed, both looking down expectantly, directly into CAMERA.

THE CAMERA IS JEAN-DOMINIQUE BAUBY, KNOWN AS JEAN-DO.

As his eyes open he sees first the foot of his bed, then curled, paralysed hands on the yellow sheets, the IV pole hanging over him, and THE TWO NURSES, smiling, leaning towards him.

THE FEMALE NURSE pats his cheek.

FEMALE NURSE

(gentle)

Jean-Dominique?

(a flicker)

No, no, keep your eyes open, you've been asleep for a long time, you're waking up now. Can you hear me?

Brief silence, then the sound of a door opening and closing. Another figure suddenly appears, the NURSES giving way for him as he comes close to the head of the bed.

He's DR. COCHETON, mid-30s, handsome, confident. He wears a white coat, stethoscope round his neck. He looks down at JEAN-DO.

DR. COCHETON

Monsieur Bauby? Excellent. Now, open
your eyes wide - try to keep them open -
good man -

A piercing light. It's THE DOCTOR'S ophthalmoscope shining directly into JEAN-DO'S eyes. He switches it off.

DR. COCHETON (cont'd)

(slowly, reassuringly)

Don't be alarmed. You're in a hospital. I'm
a doctor. My name's Cocheton. These are
nurses. We're here to take care of you. Do
you remember what happened?

INT. CAR - DAY

QUICK FLASH: the face of a young boy (THÉOPHILE) seated in the front beside the driver (unseen), terrified, and

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

As before: COCHETON and THE NURSES.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(a whisper)

Vaguely -

DR. COCHETON

(slowly and insistent)

Do you remember what happened?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I said, vaguely -

COCHETON tries to conceal his anxiety.

DR. COCHETON

(gently)

You're in the Naval Hospital, Berck-sur-Mer. On the coast. In Normandy. You were treated first in Paris, and then brought here. Do you remember that?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I'm not sure -

COCHETON flicks a look of concern at the NURSES.

DR. COCHETON

You see, Jean-Dominique, you've had a stroke. You've been in a coma for almost three weeks. But now you're waking up and you'll be fine, I promise you. I'm just going to give you one or two simple tests. I want you to keep your eyes on me.

JEAN-DO'S eyes follow COCHETON as he edges slowly down the side of the bed to the foot, then to the other side.

DR. COCHETON (cont'd)

Good. You understand -

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Of course I understand -

DR. COCHETON

When I say blink, please blink.

(a blink)

Excellent. Now, tell me your name.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Jean-Dominique Bauby.

DR. COCHETON

Come on, try, try really hard, say your name.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I just did.

DR. COCHETON

Try saying your children's names.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Céleste. Théophile.

COCHETON glances at the NURSES who are also plainly concerned. Then COCHETON again looks at JEAN-DO.

DR. COCHETON

All right, don't worry. It's a slow process.
Your speech will come back.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I can't speak?

But COCHETON and the NURSES leave the immediate vicinity of the bed and huddle in a corner where they confer in whispers, their backs to JEAN-DO.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

Why can't you hear me?

(a dread realisation)

Oh, Christ. I can't speak.

(he looks at his curled, lifeless
hands)

I can't move. What's happened to me? I
can't remember - I - I -

(a hollow cry)

My name is Jean-Dominique Bauby.

(COCHETON and the
NURSES continue to confer)

Oh, my God -

(trying to calm himself)

All right, all right, I've had a stroke - my
speech'll come back - my memory will
come back -

(becoming drowsy)

- I'll be patient - oh, God - okay, okay - I
believe you - I believe - I believe -

His voice trails off and his eyes close.

The screen goes black.

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Blackness.

A chapel bell begins to toll seven.

JEAN-DO'S eyes slowly open to see a frayed curtain over a window admitting the first rays of dawn.

His eyes find the wall by his bed to which there are pinned a variety of items: photos of two children - a boy and a girl - posters, signed photos of two or three good-looking women (one of them SYLVIE), children's drawings, especially one of Mickey Mouse. And dozens of get-well cards. And there's an intercom nearer the door.

Then, also on the wall but close to the bed, he catches sight of a glass frame: in it a cover of 'Elle' magazine with two beautiful models in a seductive pose.

But he also sees his own very dim REFLECTION in the glass: a prostrate figure in a bed and two staring eyes.

The bell finishes tolling.

His eyes linger on the reflection.

The door opens and the FEMALE NURSE bustles in.

FEMALE NURSE

Monsieur, Bauby -

She goes to the window and, with a flick, opens the curtain to admit early morning sunlight. **As more light enters, his image in the glass frame disappears.** She turns to the bed, all smiles.

FEMALE NURSE (cont'd)

Now. Let's see -

(checking the drip feed and
tracheostomy)

- what have you been up to during the
night?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I paid a flying visit to New York. **What
happened to you?**

FEMALE NURSE

(filling in a chart)

You're doing very well. And this morning
you have an important visitor. Dr. Lepage,
your neurologist. So we want you at your
very best -

She goes to the TV set at the foot of his bed, turns it on and leaves.

ON THE TV SCREEN a cartoon of a FROG leaping about, swimming, hopping insanely to the accompaniment of appropriately jaunty music.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

If I could only be that frog.

HE CLOSSES HIS EYES. SCREEN GOES DARK. HE OPENS THEM AGAIN:

The door bursts open and DR. LEPAGE enters, smiling. He is in his 50s, avuncular, kindly, well-meaning. He is accompanied by DR. COCHETON and the TWO NURSES.

DR. LEPAGE

(as he enters)

Good morning, good morning. My name's Alain Lepage, I'm your neurologist. You know Dr. Cocheton, of course.

(sits on the bed)

Jean-Dominique - no, no, **your friends call you Jean-Do**, so that's what I'm going call you. Jean-Do. Because I want you to think of me as **your friend**, and as **your friend**...

(smiles and then becomes serious)

Jean-Do, I know how difficult this is for you. I also know that nobody has explained to you the full extent of your condition. Well, that's my job. Yes. My job.

(accepts the burden with a sentimental smile)

You've had what we call a cerebrovascular accident. It's put your brain stem out of action. The brain stem is an essential component of our internal computer, the link between the brain and the spinal cord. In the past, we would have said you'd had a massive stroke. You would very probably have died. But now we have such improved resuscitation techniques that we're able to prolong life.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Is this life?

DR. LEPAGE

(overlapping)

Yes, prolong life. I'm not going to mince words. You are paralyzed from head to toe. And, as you now must have realised, you are unable to speak.

(allows it to sink in)

You have what we call 'locked-in syndrome'.

(very clearly)

'Locked-in syndrome'.

And while he allows that also to sink in:

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(a gasp)

Oh Christ, Noirtier de Villefort -

INSERT A 19TH CENTURY IMAGE OF NOIRTIER

DR. LEPAGE

It will be of no comfort to you but your condition is extremely rare. Extremely rare. And we simply don't know the cause. You don't smoke and you're not a heavy drinker. So. I'm afraid it's just one of those things. However, apart from being totally paralysed we believe you are normal in every other respect.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Normal?

DR. LEPAGE

(overlapping)

And so there is hope. Yes, hope. We know your brain is functioning. You're able to understand us. You follow our movements with your eyes. Although I'm not entirely happy with your right eye -

(He pulls at JEAN-DO'S EYES
and slightly distorts the
picture)

- but I'll take a second opinion on that.
Good. So. We want you to take it easy for a few days -

He stands.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

What d'you think I'm doing now?

DR. LEPAGE

- and when you're stronger two beautiful young women will visit you. I envy you because when I say beautiful, I mean beautiful. They're therapists and they're miracle workers. And so, as I say, there's hope. I'll come again. Soon. You'll be well looked after. Well looked after.

And while he confers with COCHETON who takes notes -

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(echoing)

Locked-in syndrome -

The sound of bubbling water, and

**ON THE BLINK:
CUT TO:**

EXT. A DARK GREEN SEA - DAY

The sound of the bubbling water intense.

Into the murky green sea, a large diving bell of shining silver is lowered. When the diving bell is fully submerged, silence.

At the porthole a **FACE**: it's JEAN-DO but obscured **by the fog of his panicked breath on the glass**. He's hammering desperately at the porthole with his fists. Then:

A FEMALE VOICE

Jean-Do?

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Two exceptionally attractive young women, both in white tunics, are standing close together at the bedside. One is SANDRINE, petite, charming, unsentimental and with a touch of steel. The other, BÉATRICE, is shapely and chic, even managing to make a fashion statement of her tunic.

BÉATRICE watches him intently while SANDRINE smiles a dazzling, reassuring smile.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I'm dead and I've gone to heaven.

SANDRINE

Hello. My name is Sandrine.

BÉATRICE

And I'm Béatrice.

SANDRINE finds a chair and sits. BÉATRICE remains standing.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Just my luck. I've got these two by my bed
and I'm helpless.

To their tunics are pinned identical ID badges with the word:

THERAPIST

SANDRINE

I'm told you can blink your eyes. So, I want
you to blink once for yes, twice for no.

(showing him her badge)

Can you read what this says?

(one blink)

Good, Jean-Do.

BÉATRICE

I'm the physiotherapist, and my priority is
to get you to swallow. So I'll be working on
your tongue and lips -

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Sounds fun -

SANDRINE

And I'm the speech therapist. Until you can
actually speak again I have to find a way for
you to communicate.

BÉATRICE

We'll be totally honest with you. Neither of
us has ever treated anyone with locked-in
syndrome...

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Great.

BEATRICE

...which means we're going to have to work very hard.

SANDRINE

So we'd better get started -

BÉATRICE

I just came in to introduce myself. Good luck -

SANDRINE allows BÉATRICE to leave then turns her attention to JEAN-DO.

SANDRINE

Jean-Do, I want you to know that this is perhaps the most important job I've ever been given and I'm determined to succeed. With your help, of course.

(smiles)

We're going to start by finding out how much you understand. I'll ask questions and you answer. But, remember, you answer by blinking once for yes or twice for no. Ready?

(one blink; she consults a note pad)

Good. Is the sun too bright for you?

(two blinks)

Am I a man?

(two blinks)

Am I a woman?

(several rapid blinks; she laughs softly)

Is it midnight now?

(two blinks)

Are we in Paris?

(two blinks)

Are we in Berck?

(one blink)

Do you remember having your stroke?

ON THE BLINK:

INT. CAR - DAY

QUICK FLASH: THÉOPHILE, terrified, next to the driver, opening the door and getting out fast, then

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

As before: SANDRINE.

SANDRINE

Can we saw wood with a hammer?

(two blinks)

Does wood float on water?

(one blink)

Were you the editor of Elle magazine?

ON THE BLINK:

EXT. ELLE MAGAZINE BUILDING, PARIS - DAY

Rain. Heavy, noisy traffic.

A car pulls out of the traffic and draws up at an ultra-modern high-rise building with the Elle logo.

A DOORMAN rushes out with an umbrella and holds it over the passenger who emerges from the back. It's JEAN-DO but he's hidden by the umbrella.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Yes, I was the editor-in-chief of Elle magazine -

INT. PHOTOGRAPHER'S STUDIO - DAY

POV from behind the PHOTOGRAPHER, of TWO MODELS (the ones on the framed cover). Lights and assistants. THE MODELS pose in their model positions. THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S snapping with a Polaroid.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Good, good, hold it, nice, good, Angelique, look this way, that's it, hold it, lift your left leg higher, Pauline, good, chin up - hold it - terrific -

(he snaps away)

Okay. Relax -

The models break the pose. The photographer fiddles with his camera.
Behind him is JEAN-DO.

Over this :

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

And, God, what a great life it was.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER thrusts a Polaroid print at the CAMERA.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Jean-Do, how about this for the cover?

A MALE VOICE

(very brusque)

Your right eye isn't working properly.

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Close to the bed, a man in a white coat and surgical gloves, the ophthalmologist, DR. MERCIER, is taking needle and thread from a small padded box. He has a gruff manner and never once looks at JEAN-DO.

DR. MERCIER

(slowly and clearly as if to a
half-wit)

Do you hear what I say? Your right eye isn't
working properly. I'm going to sew it up.

He starts threading the surgical needle.

Rapid blinks.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Please, no.

DR. MERCIER

It will be alright.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(terrified)

You keep away from me, keep away from
me -

DR. MERCIER

It'll stop you getting an ulcerated cornea.
I'd have come to see you **sooner but I've
been on holiday. Skiing.**

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I bet you always keep your patients waiting -

DR. MERCIER

**St. Moritz is wonderful this time of year. A
little bit crowded, but** nothing like sailing
down a slope with the wind in your face.
Do you ski?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

**I know your type. Arrogant, insensitive.
Couldn't care less. To you a patient is
nothing but a pay-cheque - Yea, my skis
are under the bed.**

DR. MERCIER

Here we go.
(almost malevolent)
You won't feel a thing.

He starts to stitch JEAN-DO'S **right eye on CAMERA.**

Soon, half of the screen goes black.

He closes his good eye and the screen goes completely dark.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Now, please don't get... God, please.

**HE OPENS HIS EYES AGAIN AND HIS PLANE OF VISION HAS CHANGED.
(THE CAMERA HAS CHANGED LENSES)**

DR. MERCIER finishes stitching.

DR. MERCIER

Perfect, even if I say so myself.
(packs away his instruments
never looking at JEAN-DO.)
In six months I'll examine you again.
(still without looking at him)
You don't see double, do you?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE
(**blinking twice with
resignation**)

No.

And as DR. MERCIER turns to the door, it is flung open. Into the room come a great host of white coats led by DRS. LEPAGE and COCHETON. DR. LEPAGE pushes a wheelchair.

DR. LEPAGE
Good morning, good morning.

DR. MERCIER shoves aggressively through the mob and goes.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE
Hello, hello.
Now what torture?

The doctors approach with the nurses, orderlies, students and surround the bed.

LEPAGE leans over him.

DR. LEPAGE
(cheerful as ever)
Excellent. He's done your eye. Was he his usual charming self?
(chuckles; indicates the white coats)
These are my students. Pay no attention to them.
(to the students **in a low voice**)
First we're going to dress him. Good for the morale.
(to JEAN-DO)
And then we have a wonderful surprise for you. A wonderful surprise.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE
Let me guess, you're going to sew up my other eye -

Nurses produce a plaid shirt, old pants and a shapeless cashmere sweater.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

**I must be going mad. My plaid shirt and
my old pants make me want to cry- but if
I must drool, it might as well be on
cashmere.**

LEPAGE and COCHETON, at the foot of the bed, smiling. They are temporarily obscured as the sweater is pulled over JEAN-DO'S head and adjusted.

DR. LEPAGE

(beaming)

Chic, very, very chic. Now we're going to try
you in this wheelchair.

(to the others)

Proceed, proceed.

Two attendants come either side of JEAN-DO, take his shoulders, lift him off the bed and dump him in the wheelchair.

DR. COCHETON

Bravo!

DR. LEPAGE

Wheel him up and down, will you?

(to JEAN-DO)

I want to be sure that sitting like that won't
trigger uncontrollable muscular spasms.

Sorry bear with us, please bear with us -

He is wheeled back and forth across the small room.

COCHETON

He needs a cushion behind his head -

A cushion is placed behind his head, changing the angle of vision. All present smile proudly. A NURSE is about to applaud but stops herself.

DR. LEPAGE

Excellent, excellent.

(to JEAN-DO, beaming)

You can handle the wheelchair.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

**You can handle the wheelchair. It has the
ring of a life sentence.**

DR. LEPAGE

That is very good news. Very good news,
indeed.

(to the nurses)

Blankets. We don't want him catching cold -

They cover JEAN-DO in blankets.

INT. ELEVATOR, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Descending. There's a mirror that covers one entire side of the elevator but LEPAGE, COCHETON and an ATTENDANT obscure most of JEAN-DO except that he can see his lifeless hands on the arms of his wheelchair, and a rug covering his legs.

As the elevator shudders to a halt -

DR. LEPAGE

And now for the surprise -

INT. MAIN HALL, HOSPITAL - DAY

Large, echoing. Other patients in wheelchairs. Gurneys bearing prostrate patients being pushed at speed.

One wall is lined the entire length with glass-fronted cupboards. **A stained-glass window depicts Empress Eugenie, the wife of Napoleon III, the hospital's patroness.**

JEAN- DO, accompanied by LEPAGE and COCHETON, is wheeled slowly by the ATTENDANT out of the elevator, down the length of the hall towards the far end where open double doors admit winter sunshine.

In the glass-fronts of the cupboards he catches glimpses of his reflection: mouth twisted, hair tousled, one eye sewn shut, the other bulging. But this image is seen intermittently, in one glass-front after the other, almost like a cubist painting.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Oh my God, who's that? It's a monster! No,
no, it's me! Is that my surprise? To see
myself? I look as if I've emerged from a vat
of formaldehyde. Christ, if only they could
hear me! I don't want this! I don't want to
see myself!

The last of the images of JEAN-DO and his entourage in the glass-fronts of the cupboards as he is wheeled towards the open double doors and out into the pale sunlight.

EXT. TERRACE, HOSPITAL - DAY

JEAN-DO emerges through the double doors on to a large, tiled terrace overlooking a grey sea.

The terrace is empty but for the silhouette of an elegant woman standing a little distance away, the sun behind her.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(a whisper)

Sylvie -

Slowly he is pushed towards her. She takes a step forward but stops, trying vainly to control her reaction at seeing him. She is slim and vibrant. Her name is SYLVIE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD, late 30s.

She gazes at him with infinite sadness.

LEPAGE moves towards SYLVIE and looks at JEAN-DO.

DR. LEPAGE

Isn't this a wonderful surprise, Jean-Do?
Your first visitor. Your wife.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

She's not my wife. She's the mother of my children.

DR. LEPAGE

(to SYLVIE)

We're going to leave you. He understands everything. Everything. If you ask a question, make it a yes-or-no question. He'll blink. One for yes, two for no. Just keep talking to him. I'm sure you have a lot to say **to each other...**

He stops, realizes his clumsiness and goes quickly followed by the others,

The gentle sound of the sea. A soft breeze ruffles SYLVIE'S hair. She leans towards him and, gently, caresses his face.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

If only I could feel that.

She is usually a woman of great energy and vivacity, but she's subdued now.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

Yes, you're trying not to let me know that I'm horrible to behold. I know. I've seen myself.

SYLVIE

(at a loss)

Oh, my dear.

Silence.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Talk to me, Sylvie. I'll just listen. I long to hear your voice.

A brief silence. She kneels beside him.

SYLVIE

They tell me you're doing -

(takes a breath)

Everyone sends their love. And their prayers.

(brief silence)

I didn't bring the children. I thought I should see you first. They're both well. They miss you. Céleste prays for you every night. Do you want me to bring them, do you want to see them? One blink for yes, two for no -

(a blink)

You want to see them.

(a blink)

As a matter of fact, everyone we know is offering up prayers for you. Even those who don't believe in God.

(she smiles)

Oh. Laurent wants to visit. Do you want to see him?

(one blink)

I'll tell him. Although he doesn't talk to me much anymore. Your friends deserted me. All of them. They sided with you.

(MORE)

SYLVIE (cont'd)

And then - and then with her. I suppose it's only natural. But it makes me angry. I can't help it.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(Blinking twice.)

No, no, it was all my fault, I'm a bastard -

Brief silence.

SYLVIE

(awkward)

Has - has she been to see you?

(two blinks)

Your father's not strong enough to come all this way -

(one blink)

I've met the speech therapist. Sandrine. I **like** her. She thinks she can help you -

Silence. Somewhere, very distant, the sound of a train.

Impulsively, she takes hold of his paralysed hand and kisses it gently for a long moment.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

If I could only feel that kiss -

SYLVIE

(looking up at him)

I'm pleased we were able to stay friends.
Are you pleased?

One blink. She gazes at him. Silence. Then:

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I am plunged into despair.

Her image gets blurry, watery.

SYLVIE

Please don't cry.

EXT. BERCK RAILWAY STATION - DAY

Bleak. **Strange. Isolate.**

On the nearest platform, SYLVIE, alone, waiting. Tears stream down her cheeks.

On the opposite platform, A MAN with A BOY holding hands.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I can see her now. I know Berck station. It's the most depressing place in the world. Well, it certainly was when I had my holidays here as a child. Berck, God help me. The end of summer. Waiting with my father for the Paris train. It was desolate then and it'll be more desolate now.

(distant sound of a train; THE BOY bounces a ball)

I treated her so badly. And the children. And now I will never be able to make amends. Never. Oh God. **This is hell.**

The sound of the train nearer. Then:

FEMALE NURSE'S VOICE

Naughty, naughty, my hand's between your legs -

INT. HOT TUB ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL- DAY

A blurry watery image of Jean-Do's body, and nurses hands as his hair is being washed in a therapeutic bathtub.

He is twisted and turned by the MALE and FEMALE NURSES.

HIS EYES swing to the ceiling, to the wall, to the room, to the ceiling again.

Other patients are also being bathed.

A paralysed arm comes into a view, a lifeless leg.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Up, down, up. I'm finding this funny. I really am. I'm forty-two years old and I'm being handled like a newborn babe, cleaned up, turned over -

(he is turned face down, looking at the bed head and undersheet)

- my private parts wiped and swaddled.
(MORE)

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

I can't remember when I last laughed so much -

(he's swung on to his back,
sees the NURSES fussing
over him)

But, as **someone's** poet said, only a fool
laughs when there's nothing to laugh at -

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

CLOSE on Beatrice's mouth.

BÉATRICE

Blow me a kiss

She brings into the frame A HAND MIRROR that reflects JEAN-DO'S flaccid mouth.

BÉATRICE is holding the mirror in one hand and, with the fingers of her other hand she massages his mouth.

BÉATRICE'S VOICE

You understand? A kiss. I want you to blow
me a kiss -

(she lets go of his mouth)

Try.

(no movement)

All right. It's early days. But that's what I
want you to work at.

She puts away the mirror. JEAN-DO sees her now.

BÉATRICE

When you're resting or watching TV, or any
time at all, I want you to work at blowing
me a kiss. Okay?

(blows him a kiss as if flirting
with him)

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(as he blinks)

Yes.

BEATRICE

And one other thing you have to practise as
much as possible.

(MORE)

BEATRICE (cont'd)

And that's sliding your tongue to the back
of your palate. That's how you'll learn to
swallow again. Watch.

She **closes her eyes**, opens her mouth, and moves her tongue. It's erotic.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

This just isn't fair.

BÉATRICE

You try it.

She picks up the mirror.

IN THE MIRROR - JEAN-DO'S MOUTH

BÉATRICE'S VOICE

Open your mouth.

(nothing)

Come on, I'll help -

(HER HAND holds his chin
and opens his mouth)

Try sliding your tongue backwards.

(nothing)

Go on, try, Jean-Do.

(a slight movement of his
tongue)

Great, Jean-Do. Good! You moved your
tongue. That's wonderful. Work on it, every
day, all day, and you'll be able to swallow.

Again -

(again the slight movement)

Amazing -

She puts away the mirror and begins to move his head from side to side.

BÉATRICE

You'll be able to swallow and you'll be able
to move your head like this, on your own,
sooner than you think.

(massages his cheeks and
neck)

Can you feel my hands on your face?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(two blinks)

No.

BEATRICE

Never mind, you will, you will.

(continues to massage)

Jean-Do, we're all very sorry for what's happened to you.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(deeply felt)

Believe me, so am I.

BÉATRICE

We're so honoured to have you here. I'm a regular reader of Elle. I love it. But I just wish all the models didn't look like boys.

(she continues to massage)

I want you to know I have a strong faith. I pray for you every day.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(suddenly aggressive)

Oh, for Christ's sake stop! There's no point. Prayer won't work! My muscles won't work. I'll never be able to swallow and you know it. Give up. Now. **Don't waste your time.** Pray for someone else -

BEATRICE

(kissing him on the head,
oblivious to his dismay)

Okay, see you tomorrow.

ON THE BLINK:

EXT. THE DARK GREEN SEA - DAY

The diving bell submerged, floating aimlessly. Desolate. Silent. There is no face at the window. Hold, then:

SANDRINE'S VOICE

I want you to look at this -

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

OPEN TO:

Big letters, written on cardboard, move across the screen.

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C - D

Y - W - V - M - X - B - F - G - J - K - L - Q - Z

SANDRINE'S VOICE

As you can see it's not the alphabet we learned at school. These letters are in the order of the most frequently used in the language. You understand?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(one blink)

Yes.

Sandrine is showing him a card with the new alphabet.

SANDRINE

I've talked to a host of colleagues and I hope I've come up with a viable system. This is how it works. You think of something you want to say to me. When you're ready, blink, and then I'll recite this alphabet - very slowly - letter by letter. When I get to the first letter of your word, blink. I'll write it down and then we'll go on to the next letter and then the next. Sometimes I'll be able to guess what you want to say. In that way we'll form words and sentences. Two other things: blink twice when the word is formed as if you're hitting the space bar on a keyboard, and blink rapidly if we make a mistake. All right?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(a blink)

Yes.

SANDRINE

I know it sounds terribly arduous but, believe me, we'll become expert very quickly.

(MORE)

SANDRINE (cont'd)

And your friends and family can use it, too,
so the whole world will be open to you. Do
you want to try?

(a blink)

Have you thought of something you want to
say?

(after a moment, a blink)

Good. So, let's begin. E -

(a blink)

E is the first letter -

(rapid blinks)

E is not the first letter -

(a blink)

Okay. It's difficult, I know, so let's go slowly.

E - T - A - O - I -

(one blink)

I is the first letter?

(two blinks)

'I' is the first word?

(one blink)

Good.

(she writes it down)

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C - D -

Y - W -

(a blink)

W -

W?

(a blink)

(she writes it down)

E - T - A - O - I - N - U -

(a blink)

U -

(rapid blinks)

Not U. Another mistake. Okay.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

This is a nightmare, It'll never work.

Slowly, he closes his eye.

ON THE CLOSING:

EXT. A DARK GREEN SEA- DAY

Wide. The murky green sea is all there is.

The diving bell comes floating into the shot.

SANDRINE'S VOICE

All we need is practice. Tomorrow we'll
start again from the beginning -

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. TERRACE- DAY

OPEN EYE TO:

(THIS SCENE WAS MOVED and edited to play in this part of the script)

Jean-Do's view of a gray day at the beach.

SANDRINE'S VOICE

Jean-Do, an old friend of yours is here to
see you.

His wheelchair is turned so he can see a scholarly, bespectacled man,
PIERRE ROUSSIN, in his 50s, approach, his footsteps echoing. He is an
intense, nervous man.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I know you, you're Pierre Roussin.

ROUSSIN tries to conceal his shock.

ROUSSIN

You don't remember me?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Of course I do.
(one blink)

SANDRINE

(to ROUSSIN)

He blinks once for yes, and twice for no.
Do you want me to leave?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(blinks twice)
Please. No.

ROUSSIN

You can stay

Roussin lights a cigarette.

ROUSSIN

I heard what happened to you. And I just wanted - no, I was compelled to come and see you because of what happened to me. In a way, I know what you're going through and I thought I could be of some help.

(he stares at JEAN-DO)

Being taken hostage is not so different from what you're going through.

(turns to Sandrine)

Am I right?

SANDRINE

Hostage?

Awkward silence.

ROUSSIN

Sorry, am I allowed to smoke?

SANDRINE

You're already smoking.

ROUSSIN

(to Sandrine)

Anyway, Jean-Dominique was kind enough to give me his seat on a flight to Hong Kong. Then, unfortunately for me, the plane was high-jacked and I remained a hostage in Beirut for four years, four months, two weeks, five days and seven hours.

(He smiles nervously.)

(to Jean-Do)

I've been told you have locked-in syndrome. They kept me in a cellar. Very small. Dark. It was hard to breathe. I called it my tomb. Yes.

(to Sandrine)

I know a lot about wines. I used to recite aloud the wines of the Bordeaux classification of 1855. That's what preserved my sanity. Or what passed for sanity.

He lights a new cigarette off the old one. He smiles at the memory, but it's more of a twitch than a smile.

ROUSSIN (cont'd)

Of course there were times I was in despair. Suicidal. Angry. The beatings, the filth, the cruelty. The passage of time was the worst. But I survived. I survived because I held fast to my own humanity. That's all I could do because that's all I had. And that's all you have, Jean-Dominique.

(fervently)

Cling to your own humanity and you'll survive.

I just had to come and say that to you. Face to face. In person. I know it sounds ridiculous but I felt it was - I felt it was my duty. Tell yourself every day that the human spirit is indomitable. Christ knows why. It has no reason to be. But it is. Indomitable.

(silence)

I just had to say that to you in person. Good-bye.

(a blink.)

SANDRINE

Good-bye, thank you for coming.

Roussin walks away.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I am ashamed I never called him after he returned from Beirut. But I felt too guilty playing editor in the frothy world of fashion magazines.

EXT. A DARK GREEN SEA- DAY

A small diving bell sinks to the dark green bottom.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Now he is a free man, and I am the prisoner.

BLACK:

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

OVER BLACK:

SANDRINE'S VOICE

Let's start from the beginning.

OPEN TO:

JEAN-DO's POV: Close on Sandrine.

SANDRINE

(slowly)

E - T - A - O - I

(a blink)

I.

(two blinks)

I is the first word?

(a blink)

OK.

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C - D -

Y - W -

(a blink)

W.

E - T - A -

(a blink)

A.

E - T - A - O - I - N

(a blink)

N.

E - T -

(a blink)

T.

(two blinks)

SANDRINE (cont'd)

(saying words)

'I - want - '

(two blinks)

(MORE)

SANDRINE (cont'd)

'I want'. You're doing brilliantly, Jean-Do.

What do you want? E - T -

(a blink)

T.

(writes it down)

E - T - A - O -

(a blink)

O.

(two blinks)

'I want to' - E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R -

P - C - D -

(a blink)

D.

(writes it down)

E - T - A - O - I -

(a blink)

I.

(writes it down)

E -

(a blink)

E.

(she writes it down; two blinks)

'Die'. 'I want to die'?

(outraged, unexpectedly fierce)

How dare you! That's a terrible thing to say.

I'm not putting up with that. You think of something else. You do not want to die!

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I do want to die. **I really do.**

SANDRINE

(overlapping)

That makes me very angry. There are people who love you and care for you. I'm a complete stranger and yet I care for you.

And you're alive. So, don't say you want to die. It's offensive. It's - it's obscene.

(long silence; she stares menacingly at him)

You want to go on with this?

(nothing; she stands)

Right. I'll come back another time and see if you've changed your mind.

And as she turns to march out of the room **he closes his eye.**

BLACK: CUT TO:

EXT. AUTOMOBILE GRAVEYARD - DAY

Snow. Silent. A crane is swinging the chassis of a car through the air.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I'm not saying another word. Ever again. I
am not even going to blink. I am locked in. I
am as good as dead.

The crane drops the car on a great mound of other dead cars. No sound as it bounces and settles, and the snow continues to fall. But then a strange noise, the noise of a clockwork toy.

EXT. TERRACE, HOSPITAL - DAY

A TOY MOTORCYCLE on a table top travelling in circles. And when it nearly falls over the edge A HAND reaches out and saves it.

The hand belongs to LAURENT, 42, shaggy, untidy, bear-like. A crash-helmet on a chair.

Spring weather. THE FEMALE NURSE sits a little apart. She knits from a pattern and pays no attention to them.

This area is an extension of the terrace. In the distance, out at sea, a lighthouse with red and white stripes. A light aircraft drones overhead.

LAURENT

Hope you like it. I didn't really know what to bring. I would have asked Sylvie to suggest something but -

(breaks off, sits opposite JEAN-DO)

I haven't seen her much since -

(breaks off)

I've just bought a new Honda. A Fireblade. You won't believe the acceleration.

(awkward pause)

And you know what? I couldn't remember something. When we were kids did you want to go in for motor bikes or Formula One?

(MORE)

LAURENT (cont'd)

(lost in thought for a moment)

I was always faithful to bikes. God knows how I ended up in advertising.

(suddenly)

Shit! I almost forgot -

(searches his pockets)

While I was out here waiting for you, a little beauty came up to me and she gave me this -

(takes the alphabet card, pen and note pad from his pocket)

She said you were depressed. I said, 'I'm not surprised', and she said I had to cheer you up.

(shows the card to JEAN-DO)

She explained how it works. She said we could talk to each other. Seems complicated to me. You want to try?

(no response; he sits facing JEAN-DO)

Okay. I just read the letters and you blink, is that right? Okay.

(at speed without looking at JEAN-DO)

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C - D -

(stops, looks up)

Shit, I forgot to see if you were blinking.

Let's try again. I'll slow down -

(and again he doesn't look up at JEAN-DO)

E - T - A - O - I - N - U -

It's hard to read and look up at you at the same time.

(looks up, just stares at JEAN-DO; long silence)

Don't you want to play?

(nothing)

What about a better view of the sea?

(calling to the NURSE)

Is it all right to move his chair?

FEMALE NURSE

Of course -

He wheels JEAN-DO to a vantage point from which he can look at the sea and the lighthouse.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I'm so tired. And I'm so happy I don't have to answer him back. Poor fool, we can both drown.

LAURENT

How's that?

He begins to lope aimlessly. JEAN-DO doesn't bother to follow him so LAURENT just comes and goes in and out of JEAN-DO'S line of vision.

LAURENT (cont'd)

I've never been a good hospital visitor. I'm the sort who brings the patient grapes and then eats them. What **an awful** thing, Jean-Do. You of all people. Everybody's talking about it. I was in Café de Flore last night - no, the night before - the usual crowd. I don't know who it was but I heard someone say, 'Did you know that Jean-Do Bauby is now a complete vegetable?' And someone else said, 'Yes, I heard, a complete vegetable.' And I wanted to say, 'I'm going to see him and I bet you he's not, I've heard his mind is working perfectly.'

He breaks off. He's out of JEAN-DO'S eyeline. But JEAN-DO swivels his eye to find LAURENT looking helpless and forlorn.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(outraged)

A vegetable? A vegetable? Who said I was a vegetable? Who?

LAURENT

I'm an idiot! Christ, **I'm sorry.** I hope I haven't upset you. But you know me -

He turns away and gazes at the sea.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(outraged)

Did they say what sort of vegetable?
(MORE)

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

A carrot, a potato, a pickled cucumber,
what sort of vegetable?

LAURENT

(glancing at JEAN-DO)

I'll have to be getting back soon.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Go please, get back.

LAURENT

Coming here on the autoroute I did over a
180.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Whatever sort of vegetable they say I am I
bet I've still got a higher IQ than that **bum** in
the Café.

The hell with you and the hell with him.

Long silence.

LAURENT

Should I go? I don't want to tire you.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Yes, go, go on, go. A vegetable, a
vegetable? **I am tired.**

LAURENT

(calling to the NURSE)

I'm leaving now.

(to JEAN-DO)

Good-bye, Jean Do. Would you like me to
come again?

Silence.

LAURENT smiles crookedly, picks up his crash-helmet. **Walks away
leaving a view of the lonely sea.**

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(sarcastically)

Can't wait. Love your helmet.

ON THE BLINK:

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

VERY CLOSE ON JEAN-DO'S EYE AS IT OPENS.

HIS POV: On the TV: constant color bars and a high pitch tone. Moonlight streams through the window; the drapes have been left open. His wall filled with photos. The ceiling. The clock on the wall reads 2:27 am.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

A nurse will be in before the world comes
to an end.

CLOSE ON JEAN-DO'S EYE AS IT CLOSES.

BLACK screen and the constant sound of the TV.

CLOSE ON JEAN-DO'S EYE AS IT OPENS.

HIS POV: The same as before. The clock on the wall 3:49 am.

BLACKNESS. The constant high tone of the TV finally ends.

His POV opens to A NURSE who is leaving the room after finally having turned off the TV. The clock on the wall 4:34 am.

On the dark TV screen, partially lit by the moon, JEAN-DO can see his own reflection.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

Today it seems to me that my whole life
was nothing but a string of small near
misses: the women I was unable to love,
the chances I failed to seize, the
moments of happiness I allowed to drift
away. A race whose result I knew
beforehand but in which I failed to bet on
the winner.

CLOSE ON HIS EYE AS IT CLOSES

BLACKNESS. The sound of footsteps.

His POV opens to: The clock on the wall 5:01 am. A NURSE turns on the TV. An early morning program is beginning. Dawn light on the window.

CLOSE ON JEAN-DO'S EYE AS IT CLOSES

ON THE CLOSING:

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

SANDRINE enters the room and sits, her manner stern.

SANDRINE

Are you feeling any more co-operative?

(nothing, then a blink)

Good. I'm not going to apologise for what I said. I meant every word of it. So I don't want any more of that nonsense about dying. Understood?

(one blink; she sits beside him)

Right. We're going to master this, Jean-Do. Think of something to say. Blink once when you're ready.

(after a moment, a blink)

I'll begin.

(slowly)

E - T -

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(a blink)

Yes.

SANDRINE

T.

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H -

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(a blink)

Yes.

SANDRINE

H.

E - T - A -

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(a blink)

Yes.

SANDRINE

T - H - A -

E - T - A - O - I - N -

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(a blink)

Yes.

SANDRINE

N.

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C - D -

Y - W - V - M - X - B - F - G - J - K -

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(a blink)

Yes.

SANDRINE

K. Thank. Thank you?

(looks at him, smiles)

Is that what you're saying? Thank you?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(a blink)

Yes.

ON THE BLINK:

INT. BUTTERFLY CHRYSALIS / EXT. A FIELD OF WILD FLOWERS - DAY

A Dark and blurry image. Still for a moment. Then, movement. A shudder. An awakening, mysterious and auspicious.

The chrysalis begins to crack open **and bright day light burns the screen. Slowly the image adjusts.**

Summer landscape. Golden, idyllic, breathtaking colors. The flowers sway in a gentle breeze.

The Camera suddenly takes flight. It flies, hovers, floats, soars above the dancing wild flowers. We hear the amplified sound of butterfly's wings flapping. And after some moments of this beautiful and spectacular sight:

SANDRINE'S VOICE

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P -

SANDRINE'S VOICE reciting the alphabet becomes a soft, constant background accompaniment to what follows, and with her changing tempi and rhythms it is like a musical accompaniment. **The Butterfly's wings flapping as percussion.**

SANDRINE'S VOICE (cont'd)

What are you thinking now?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I've only just realized that there are only two things apart from my eye that aren't paralysed.

SANDRINE'S VOICE

And they are?

The Camera settles on a flower close to the calm water where a Butterfly, of glorious colors, sees it's own reflection.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

My imagination.

SANDRINE'S VOICE

And?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

My memory.

Imagination and memory are the only way I can escape my diving bell.

THE BUTTERFLY takes flight.

SANDRINE'S VOICE

Your diving bell?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Never mind. It's my private joke.

The BUTTERFLY'S **POV soars** and swoops into the sky. SANDRINE'S recital of the alphabet more dominant now.

EXT. SKI SLOPE - DAY

The butterfly's POV continues flying, revealing snow-capped mountains. The alphabet music continues.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I have realized I can imagine anything, anyone, anywhere,

Insert images (stock)

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)
I can build castles in Spain, steal the
Golden Fleece,

A woman opens up the bed sheets to the camera

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)
visit the women I love,

JEAN-DO and a WOMAN on the beach as in "from here to ETERNITY"

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)
let the sea wash over me on the isle of
Martinique, bow before Ozymandias, king
of kings -

A black dot comes haring down the slope. The butterfly's POV gets closer. It's a man skiing.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)
- I can imagine anything, anything at all.

Sudden silence.

CLOSER - THE SKIER - JEAN-DO

He's wearing goggles with orange lenses and a ski cap. He **smiles** with exhilaration as he makes the descent.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)
And now I want to remember myself as I
was. Handsome, debonair, glamorous.
And devilishly attractive -

He swerves to a halt, raising snow. He pushes his glasses on to his forehead and pulls off his ski cap. He smiles while he catches his breath.

VERY CLOSE - JEAN-DO

As he was, aged 42, at his peak, splendid, fit, tanned:

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)
Yes, glamorous **and very handsome, at
least some people thought so-**

And as JEAN-DO, the skier, laughs joyously

INT. ELEVATOR, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

JEAN-DO'S REFLECTION IN THE ELEVATOR MIRROR, full on, a dreadful sight in his wheelchair, a rug covering his lap, his head lolling, his one eye staring at himself, the other clumsily stitched closed.

SANDRINE stands behind him, watching him.

The elevator doors part; his image disappears. **Jean-Do is wheeled into the shot by Sandrine. As they walk away, the elevator closes.**

EXT. TERRACE, HOSPITAL - DAY

In sunshine SANDRINE with her note book sits facing JEAN-DO.

SANDRINE

(at some speed now)

E - T - A - O - I -

He blinks, blinks twice.

SANDRINE (cont'd)

I.

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H -

He blinks.

SANDRINE (cont'd)

H.

E - T - A -

He blinks.

SANDRINE (cont'd)

A.

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C - D -

Y - W - V -

He blinks.

SANDRINE (cont'd)

I have?

He blinks.

Sandrine continues to recite the alphabet and write down Jean-Do's words, letter by letter. But this is now a fluent conversation.

In the background, Sandrine's recital of the alphabet soon becomes the musical accompaniment. The repetition of the letters is sung to the tune of "Frere Jacque, Frere Jacque, Dormez vous, Dormez vous, Somez les matines, Somez les matines, Ding, Dang, Dong..."

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I have made a rule. I will never feel sorry for myself again.

SANDRINE'S VOICE

I'm pleased to hear **that**.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

And something else.

SANDRINE'S VOICE

What?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I think I've found a reason for all this.

SANDRINE'S VOICE

A reason?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Yes. But I need you to do me a favour.

SANDRINE'S VOICE

What's the favour?

SANDRINE

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C
(a blink)

ON HIS BLINK:

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Sandrine is on the phone.

SANDRINE

Is this Betty Mialet?

BETTY'S VOICE

Yes, this is she.

SANDRINE

My name is Sandrine. I'm a therapist at Berck-sur-Mer Naval hospital. I'm calling on behalf of Jean-Dominique Bauby. He's one of my patients.

BETTY'S VOICE

Jean-Do? How is he?

Sandrine looks at Jean-Do and puts her head close to Jean-Do's so he can hear in the conversation.

SANDRINE

Comfortable but -

INTER CUT
WITH:

INT. OFFICE, ROBERT LAFFONT PUBLISHING - DAY

BETTY

(interrupting)

It's too terrible, I hear he's a complete vegetable -

A woman in her late 30s, CLAUDE MENDIBIL, **lets herself into the office**, and Betty signals her to have a seat. Claude is a brunette, attractive, discreetly dressed in dark colors but with flair. She has a reserved, modest quality and a hint of unexplained sadness.

SANDRINE'S VOICE

That's not absolutely accurate. He wonders if you would do him a favour -

BETTY

(to Claude)

One moment.

(to Sandrine)

Of course, anything, anything -

SANDRINE'S VOICE

He says he has a contract with you for a book. Is that right?

BETTY

He said that? He can speak, I thought he couldn't speak -

SANDRINE'S VOICE

He can. In a way. I'll explain later. **About** this book -

BETTY

Yes, he's got a contract with us, but now, **given** the circumstances -

SANDRINE'S VOICE

(interrupting)

He wants to fulfill it -

BETTY

I beg your pardon?

SANDRINE

(**looking and smiling at Jean-Do**)

He wants to write the book.

BETTY

(to Sandrine)

You can't be serious -

SANDRINE

I am. So is he.

BETTY

(**confused**)

But it's simply not possible -

Claude looks at Betty with amazement.

SANDRINE'S VOICE

I assure you, it is, but do you think you can find someone to take his dictation?

(brief silence)

Someone who's patient and -

(breaks off)

Are you still there?

BETTY

(looking at Claude transfixed)

Yes, yes, I'm still here.

SANDRINE'S VOICE

You understand? It has to be someone -

BETTY

(interrupting)

Yes, I understand. I'll get back to you.

Betty slowly replaces the receiver. Claude looks up and smiles. Betty just stares at her.

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Close on CLAUDE. As the camera pulls back we discover SANDRINE sitting with her by the bed. Claude is holding the alphabet.

SANDRINE'S VOICE

Betty Mialet said Claude was sent from heaven. She said it was a miracle her being in the office just when I called. She said no one could be more perfect.

CLAUDE

(a smile)

Betty always exaggerates.

CLAUDE (cont'd)

I will have to practise some more. I'll work with Sandrine -

SANDRINE

Any time -

In the background their voices recite the alphabet.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

It won't take long -

CLAUDE

I hope not because I want to - **I want to help.**

She breaks off. Awkward pause.

SANDRINE

Claude has taken a room in a hotel in Berck. Perhaps you ought to discuss a routine.

The recital of the alphabet begins to fade.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

The nurses wake me at five a.m. I'll think of what I want to write then I'll memorize it. You can come at eight -

CLAUDE

Yes -

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I'll dictate it to you.

CLAUDE

Of course.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Thank you.

Brief silence.

CLAUDE

I'll do my best for you.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I know you will.

Can we begin my book tomorrow?

EXT. REAR SCREEN PROJECTION - DAY/NIGHT

Various images of collapsing icebergs, endless deserts, Brazilian rainforests, and other landscapes keep changing like in a slide show as

THE BUTTERFLY darts, hovers and soars in the foreground.

SANDRINE'S VOICE begins to recite the alphabet and, after a moment, **CLAUDE'S VOICE** joins in, a duet, arrhythmical and sometimes cacophonous.

THE BUTTERFLY alights on a flower

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

JEAN-DO's POV of his window. A wan glow announces the break of day.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Through the frayed curtain of my window, a
wan glow announces the break of day. My
heels hurt, my head weighs a ton, and
something like a giant invisible diving-bell
holds my whole body prisoner.

A NURSE comes in and opens the curtains.

THE WINDOW. Rain.

CLAUDE writes.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

My main task now is to compose these
bedridden travel notes **from a castaway**
on the shores of loneliness.

CLOSE ON JEAN-DO

INT. MAIN HALL, HOSPITAL - DAY

CLAUDE wheels JEAN-DO down the hall towards the open double doors,
their reflections in the glass-fronted cupboards. **Jean-Do looks at the**
stained-glass window that depicts Empress Eugenie.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

This Naval Hospital has in its time been a
home to children with tuberculosis,

A GLIMPSE OF EUGENIE, WEARING A HAT WITH YELLOW RIBBONS, A
STRIPED DRESS, AND A SILK PARASOL, FLOATING DOWN THE HALL.

a fat farm, a school, a place where, so
legend has it, the great Diaghilev
rehearsed his Ballet Russe.

A SHOT OF NIJINSKY JUMPING.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

They say it was here that Nijinsky leapt
twelve feet into the air. No one here now
leaps into the air.

PATIENTS ON THEIR GURNEYS AND WHEELCHAIRS.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

These days we are all elderly, enfeebled
or, like me, rigid and mute. A battalion of
cripples.

EXT. TERRACE, HOSPITAL - DAY

Early summer sunshine. CLAUDE wheels him **along the empty terrace which resembles Antonioni's "la Ventura"**. He glimpses corners of the building, a section of the grand façade.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

**But I like being wheeled to the place I call
Cinecitta, a perpetually deserted terrace,
a vast series of balconies that open onto
a landscape heavy with the poetic and off-
beat charm of a movie set.**

EXT. SUBURBAN BERCK - LONG SHOT - DAY

Seen through a haze.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

And I enjoy seeing the suburbs of Berck
that look like a model train lay-out.

CLAUDE continues to write.

EXT. SHORE & SEA - DUSK

JEAN-DO and CLAUDE by the sea, enjoy the view. In the distance, buildings, and nearer, the sea.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

A handful of buildings at the foot of the sand dunes give the illusion of a ghost town in a Western.
As for the sea itself it foams such an incandescent white that it might be the product of the special-effects department.

EXT. TERRACE- DUSK TO NIGHT

JEAN-DO is in his wheelchair on the terrace as the sun is setting and the light slowly fades. CLAUDE is taking dictation.

The lighthouse can be seen in the distance.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

But my favorite sight of all is the lighthouse, tall, robust, reassuring in red and white stripes. I place myself under the protection of this brotherly symbol, guardian not just of sailors but of the sick
whom fate has cast to the far edge of life.

CLAUDE closes her notebook. It's the end of a workday. She leaves Jean-Do alone to enjoy the view.

The lighthouse beam switches on, and the light sweeps across Jean-Do's face.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

Warmly wrapped up, I can linger here until nightfall, watch the sun set and the lighthouse take up the torch.

The beams continue to sweep. As the light passes,

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Blackness.

A MALE VOICE

Christ. **What's that?**

Silence.

JEAN-DO'S eyes open to see two men in overalls backing into the room carrying packages. JOUBERT, aged about 45, is the one who asked the question. The other, FOURNEAU is aged 20.

They put down their boxes and turn to see JEAN-DO.

They freeze and look at him horrified.

FOURNEAU

(a whisper)

Is it a man or a woman?

JOUBERT

A man. I think.

(plucking up courage)

Excuse me, but did you order a speaker-phone?

JEAN-DO blinks.

FOURNEAU

He winked at you.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Yes, I've got gay locked in syndrome, and I am nuts about your friend.

JOUBERT

(loudly)

Did you order a phone with a speaker?

JEAN-DO blinks again.

FOURNEAU

Let's get out of here -

SANDRINE comes quickly through the door.

SANDRINE

Who let you in? **What are you doing?**

JOUBERT

We're from Telecom France. Someone ordered a speaker-phone.

SANDRINE

Yes, we did. You should have gone to Reception first.

JOUBERT

There was no one there.

SANDRINE

Just install it by the table, please. Thank you.

(they begin to unpack the equipment; to JEAN-DO)

We'll let people know you've got a phone now. They'll have to book a time for their calls. We'll make sure someone's with you.

(by heart)

E - T -

(a blink)

T.

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H -

(a blink)

H.

Thank you?

A blink. She smiles. JOUBERT and FOURNEAU watch and listen fascinated.

JOUBERT

Excuse me, madame, can't he speak?

SANDRINE

Don't talk about him as if he weren't here.

Ask him.

JOUBERT thinks about it but then decides to get on with his work.

FOURNEAU, intrigued by JEAN-DO, hovers.

FOURNEAU

(to SANDRINE)

Madame, excuse me, but, if he can't speak what's he want a phone for?

She ignores him.

JOUBERT

Perhaps he's a heavy breather.

They laugh. SANDRINE looks at them fiercely but JEAN-DO'S VOICE can also be heard laughing,

Jean-do closes his eyes.

INT. NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Empty hallways, empty swimming pool, empty therapy area.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Sunday. I dread Sunday. No therapists, no visitors, a skeleton staff.

Beatrice walks down an otherwise empty main hall, past the stained-glass window depicting Eugenie.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

Sunday is a long stretch of desert.

IMAGE OF DESERT

We hear chapel bells tolling.

EXT. PATH TO CHAPEL - DAY

JEAN-DO is being wheeled by BÉATRICE, unseen, along a bumpy, cobbled path, open to the sky, that leads to the chapel.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

But today, Béatrice nobly suggests she takes me to Mass. I have tried to explain to her that I am not a religious man. This cuts no ice with her. 'It will do you good,' she says. She reminds me of a woman I once knew called Joséphine.

They approach the chapel doors. The service is in progress.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

JEAN-DO is wheeled in and remains at the back. BÉATRICE moves in beside him and sits.

The priest, an elderly man, FATHER LUCIEN, is saying Mass.

There are not many in the congregation.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I suppose it isn't quite true to say I'm not religious. All over the world people are praying for me.

INSERT IMAGE OF CELESTE PRAYING

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

Top of the list is my daughter, Céleste, who prays for me every night. And Béatrice, of course. The most diverse deities have been enlisted to help me.

INSERT IMAGE OF MONKS CHANTING

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

In Nepal, I'm told, they chant a mantra for me. In a Breton chapel they burn candles,

INSERT IMAGE OF A CAMEROON HOLY MAN

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

and a Cameroon holy man has procured for me the goodwill of Africa's gods: **I have assigned him my right eye.** All of them. And I can't deny that I have attempted to organise this vast spiritual energy to support my existence. It may not be admirable, it may even be a touch hypocritical, but I'll try anything.

The Communion bell rings. FATHER LUCIEN elevates the Host.

JEAN-DO watches BÉATRICE crossing herself, eyes closed, devout in prayer.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

FADE IN:

The service is over, the congregation filing out, passing by JEAN-DO to shake hands with FATHER LUCIEN on the way out.

BÉATRICE

We'll let them go. Father Lucien wants a word with you.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(on his face)

A-ha! The hidden agenda.

FATHER LUCIEN, in the entrance, shakes hands with the last member, and then comes to JEAN-DO.

He and BÉATRICE exchange a look of understanding.

FATHER LUCIEN

I'm very pleased to see you here, Jean-Dominique. I came to visit you a few days ago. I brought the Blessed Sacrament to give you Communion. But you were asleep.

BEATRICE

E - T - A - O - I -

Jean-Do blinks.

BEATRICE (cont'd)

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C - D -
Y - W -

Jean-Do blinks.

BEATRICE (cont'd)

E - T - A -

Jean-Do blinks.

BEATRICE (cont'd)

(guessing)

I was?

(to Father Lucien)

I was.

(pause)

He was.

FATHER LUCIEN

Would you like me to give you Holy Communion now?

(no response)

(MORE)

FATHER LUCIEN (cont'd)

Would you like me to say a blessing over you?

(no response)

'Heavenly Father, have mercy on Jean-Dominique, who is cruelly afflicted. Help his body to heal, keep his spirits buoyant, and help him to find faith, through your son, Jesus Christ, our lord.

He makes the Sign of the Cross over JEAN-DO.

BÉATRICE starts the alphabet which soon fades.

BEATRICE'S VOICE

(seeing Jean-Do blink every so often)

Father, I'd like you to know there are monks in Bordeaux who regularly dedicate their prayers to me -

FATHER LUCIEN

(pleased)

Do they, indeed -

BEATRICE

(reading)

But the results have been unremarkable.

FATHER LUCIEN

We must be patient -

BEATRICE'S VOICE

(on Jean-Do blinking)

Yes, the doctors say that, too. But about these monks.

FATHER LUCIEN

Yes?

INSERT IMAGE OF JEAN-DO IN HIS HOSPITAL BED, EYES OPEN IN DISTRESS, WE HEAR A LOUD RINGING

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Recently, seven of their brothers had their throats cut by Islamic extremists in Java and my ears hurt for several days. What do you make of that?

BACK IN THE CHAPEL

FATHER LUCIEN

(a little nonplussed)

I'm not sure.

(sits beside JEAN-DO)

But Jean-Dominique, I want to suggest something to you. In a few weeks time, I shall be leading a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes. Dear Béatrice and I thought you might want to be part of it -

CLOSE ON JEAN-DO

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Lourdes?

FATHER LUCIEN

There have been some miraculous cures.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

No, Father. I've been to Lourdes -**EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS, PYRENEES - DAY**

A convertible driving rather too fast under a grey sky.

Magnificent, dramatic scenery.

CLOSER - JEAN-DO & JOSÉPHINE IN THE CONVERTIBLE

They're driving at speed. **Music in the car is loud. (U2 Baby Light My Way)**

JEAN-DO, a little younger, and dressed in an earlier style, is in the passenger seat and, at the wheel, an attractive young woman, wrapped up against the wind, JOSÉPHINE.

JOSÉPHINE

I am not turning back, it's my car, I'll drive where I like -

JEAN-DO

(overlapping)

You said you wanted a dirty week-end -

JOSÉPHINE

I never said any such thing -

JEAN-DO

We can't have a dirty week-end in Lourdes,
it doesn't seem right -

JOSÉPHINE

You've got a one-track mind -

JEAN-DO

Well...

JOSÉPHINE

I want to see the Madonna!

JEAN-DO

You don't -

JOSÉPHINE

I do -

JEAN-DO

Please.

EXT. NARROW STREET, LOURDES - DAY

Filled with an unbroken column of mostly paraplegics in wheelchairs
shepherded by nuns, priests and volunteers.

Along the side, trying to push their way through, JEAN-DO and JOSÉPHINE.
She is dressed all in pink: sneakers, jeans and sweatshirt.

A NUN walks down the column:

THE NUN

(calling out repeatedly)

If it rains everyone into the basilica!

JEAN-DO and JOSÉPHINE walk alongside the helpless and the badly
handicapped.

They have to stop to wait for a jam to clear.

JEAN-DO smiles at a paraplegic who sticks his tongue out. JEAN-DO,
deeply embarrassed, turns away.

And then a chant starts:

PILGRIMS

Appear to us, Madonna! Appear to us!

And Ave Marias are chanted.

CLOSER - JEAN-DO & JOSÉPHINE

The chant and prayers continuing.

JEAN-DO

Joséphine, there's no way I'm going on with this.

JOSÉPHINE

- Pity, it could do a sinner like you a lot of good -

JEAN-DO

Don't be so sure, it might be dangerous.
What if someone in perfect health happened to be here when the Madonna appeared? One miracle, and he'd end up paralyzed.

A dozen heads turn to see them.

JOSÉPHINE

You're **an imbecile**.

JEAN-DO

Thank you -

JOSÉPHINE

And a blasphemer -

JEAN-DO

Thanks again. You can go by yourself -

And he leaves her, struggling through the wheelchairs, and

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFÉ, LOURDES - EVENING

JEAN-DO and JOSÉPHINE finishing drinks and snacks at a crowded sidewalk café. Some customers in wheelchairs. Handicapped people passing, priests, nuns.

JOSÉPHINE

You don't know what you missed -

JEAN-DO

That's true -

JOSÉPHINE

It was very moving. And the Basilica is amazing. It's huge -

JEAN-DO

Yes, I read in the guide book it could take a dozen Jumbo jets. And if you're at the back you need binoculars to see the priest.

JOSÉPHINE

Let's go shopping.

She gets up and goes into a souvenir shop. Jean-Do follows her and looks into the store which is filled with kitsch, a jumble of religious medals, Swiss cuckoo clocks, cheese platters and in the centre a bust of the Madonna with a halo of blinking lights.

JEAN-DO

Oh please, Joséphine, don't buy any souvenirs, you've got such bad taste -

INT. SOUVENIR STORE, LOURDES - EVENING

JOSÉPHINE gasps.

JOSÉPHINE

Look! Here's my Madonna!

JEAN-DO

(entering the store)

Forget it-

JOSÉPHINE

I don't want anything more to do with you -

JEAN-DO

(taking out his wallet)

Okay, okay, I'll give it to you as a present -

JEAN-DO, sour faced, is counting out money while the SHOPKEEPER demonstrates the winking lights.

SHOPKEEPER

Madame has a wonderful eye. This
Madonna is the only one of its kind in the
whole world. And it has been blessed by
the Cardinal.

JOSÉPHINE

(moved)

How wonderful. Thank you.

JEAN-DO, not so impressed, hands over the money.

INT. SMALL HOTEL ROOM, LOURDES - NIGHT

The Madonna, lights winking, sits on the dressing table.

In bed, side by side, JEAN-DO, sullen, and JOSÉPHINE gazing at the bust in
reverie. They are both naked.

Bob Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone" is the music score.

After a moment:

JEAN-DO

I can't make love to you with her looking at
me.

JOSÉPHINE

I agree.

JEAN-DO

I wasn't stating a fact, I was making a
complaint. Let me turn her off -

JOSÉPHINE

No.

(a sickly, sentimental smile)

The only one in the whole world. Blessed
by the Cardinal.

Brief silence. JEAN-DO comes to a decision.

JEAN-DO

Joséphine, when we get back to Paris
we're going to have to split up.

JOSÉPHINE

(unperturbed, not even looking
at him)

Because of my Madonna?

JEAN-DO

No. Because of everything.

JOSÉPHINE

You're right. It's for the best.

(turns her back on him, slides
down under the bedclothes)

Turn off the lights. But not my Madonna.

He does so.

The room is dark but for the winking lights of the Madonna.

Josephine seems to be asleep immediately.

Exasperated, he gets out of bed and as he starts to dress

EXT. SHOPPING STREET, LOURDES - NIGHT

Bob Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone" carries over to this scene.

JEAN-DO walks alone along the street.

Youths drink beer and guzzle hamburgers. Pilgrims, many of them
handicapped, walk in groups led by priests and nuns with lighted candles.

He comes to the souvenir shop and stops dead.

SOUVENIR SHOP WINDOW

There in the centre, the identical Madonna with its lights winking.

The Madonna blinks away.

INT. REHAB CENTRE - DAY

JEAN-DO'S POV **of himself** in a large brightly painted room once used as a
ballet studio with mirrors and barres lining the walls.

JEAN-DO is tethered to a board raised to a vertical position. He sees
himself and either side of the board stand BÉATRICE and SANDRINE.

Reflected in the background, the room, filled with PATIENTS of all ages in splints, on crutches, using Zimmer frames, others trying out artificial limbs, still others in harnesses of varying complexity. Noisy and echoing.

Bob Dylan's music morphs into:

SANDRINE

(making the L sound)

La - la - la - . Come on, Jean-Do.

BÉATRICE

If you learn the L sound you'll learn to swallow.

(barbed)

And you'll learn to say Lourdes, too. La - la -

(he struggles)

La - la -

(he makes a gurgling sound)

Nearly -

SANDRINE

Again -

JEAN-DO

(managing)

La - la -

SANDRINE

Good. Again.

JEAN-DO

La -

BÉATRICE

Ten times and then we'll let you rest -

JEAN-DO

La - la - la -

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

ON THE TV SET a mindless QUIZ GAME.

CLAUDE enters with papers.

CLAUDE

All right to turn this off?

(a blink; she turns off the TV)

The call will be coming in about ten minutes.

(she sits beside the bed)

I've typed up the passage. You want me to read it to you?

She starts the alphabet.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

No, I want to read it. A book is only real when it's read.

She holds up a page of typescript for JEAN-DO to read.

INSERT - THE TYPESCRIPT

Just long enough to read the first few words:

'The last time I saw my father was, I think - '

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

The last time I saw my father was, I think...

INT. PAPINOUS APARTMENT, PARIS - DAY

A LARGE MIRROR reflecting JEAN-DO gazing at photos stuck haphazard into the ornate gold frame. He's mixing lather in a bowl with a shaving brush.

Among the PHOTOGRAPHS: a boy in a turn-of-the-century sailor suit, a pretty woman in her 20s holding a baby, more recently in colour a girl in riding gear, (Céleste) and another of a boy (Jean-Do) aged 11, in black and white on a miniature golf course.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

...a week before my stroke. He was unwell -

PAPINOUS

Leave me be, who cares what I look like?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I do.

JEAN-DO puts aside the bowl and takes a large towel from a radiator where it's been warming.

He approaches his father, known as PAPINO, seated hunched in a red armchair and wearing a dressing gown.

PAPINO is 92 years old, but still astonishingly handsome with a plume of white hair crowning his tall frame.

JEAN-DO wraps him in the towel.

PAPINO

I'm terrified.

JEAN-DO

Of what?

PAPINO

You shaving me.

JEAN-DO

Why?

PAPINO

You were always so damned clumsy.

MME. BAUBY, aged about 60, looks in.

MME. BAUBY

Coffee?

PAPINO

No.

JEAN-DO

No, thanks.

MME. BAUBY

Don't tire him. He's not well.

She goes.

JEAN-DO

How can a shave tire you?

PAPINO

Ask her.

(after a moment)

Your mother was prettier.

JEAN-DO

That wouldn't be difficult.

JEAN-DO collects the bowl and shaving brush.

PAPINO

Don't be rude about my wife. She looks
after me like a baby.

JEAN-DO

(while he applies the lather
with a brush)

You mean she feeds you every four hours?

PAPINO

Very funny. Do you remember your
mother?

JEAN-DO

You always ask me that and I always say
the same thing: not really.

He massages the lather in with his fingers.

PAPINO

What are you reading at the moment?

JEAN-DO

Re-reading. The Count of Monte Cristo.

PAPINO

Why?

JEAN-DO

Because I'm thinking of writing a modern
version.

PAPINO

Of the Count of Monte Cristo?

He gives PAPINO the final lather.

JEAN-DO

Vengeance will still be the driving force but I'm setting it in today's world. And Monte Cristo will be a woman. The Countess of Monte Cristo.

PAPINO

I don't want to read it.

JEAN-DO

I haven't written it yet.

JEAN-DO (cont'd)

But I've got a contract with a book publisher. And there's a character who fascinates me. Obsesses me, really, but I don't know why. Do you remember Noirtier de Villefort?

He finishes covering PAPINO'S face in lather and takes up a razor.

PAPINO

No. If you cut me, I'll sue.

JEAN-DO

Keep still.

PAPINO

I'm going to call you Sweeney Todd.

JEAN-DO

Thanks.

PAPINO

You know who Sweeney Todd was?

JEAN-DO

Yes.

PAPINO

He was an English barber -

JEAN-DO

I know -

PAPINO

- who made minced meat of his customers and turned them into meat pies. Typically English. They've never known what good food is.

JEAN-DO

Be quiet, Papinou, or I will cut you.

He shaves him.

PAPINO

The doctor came yesterday.

JEAN-DO

And?

PAPINO

He says I'll live to be a hundred.

JEAN-DO

Good. **I'll give you a great party. We'll celebrate.**

PAPINO

I won't attend. Who wants to live to be a hundred? That's just doctors' bullshit. Doctors are the biggest bullshitters on the planet. Politicians come second.

(JEAN-DO adds lather and continues the shave)

Don't tell a soul. I still miss your mother.

JEAN-DO

I won't. It's our secret.

PAPINO

You should have married Sylvie.

JEAN-DO

What difference would that have made?

PAPINO

You wouldn't have left her so easily. And your children -

JEAN-DO

Do we have to talk about this?

PAPINO

I know what I'm talking about. No one had more affairs than I did. Well, perhaps maybe Casanova, but no one else. Having an affair with another woman is no reason for leaving the mother of your children. There are no standards anymore.

(JEAN-DO laughs)

It's not funny, it's true. And bring your children to see me. Sylvie brings them, you should -

JEAN-DO

Please, change the subject -

He wipes off the lather, takes up a bottle of cologne.

PAPINO

What you putting on me, Sweeney?

JEAN-DO

An aphrodisiac.

PAPINO

You want me to smell like a tart.

JEAN-DO

Christian Dior. Eau de Sauvage.

PAPINO

Good. That'll make the girls come running.

JEAN-DO

I'm sure they would, if they had the chance to smell you.

He applies the cologne. PAPINO winces, feels his face.

PAPINO

Let me look at myself.

JEAN-DO helps him to his feet and guides him to the mirror. He examines the shave.

PAPINO (cont'd)

Not bad. My God, they don't make them like me anymore.

(MORE)

PAPINOU (cont'd)
(looking at JEAN-DO in the
mirror)

I wanted to tell you something.

JEAN-DO

What?

PAPINOU

Can't remember.

JEAN-DO

It'll come back.

PAPINOU

I'm not so sure. Nothing comes back
anymore. Everything's lost. Soon, I'll be
lost. I want to sit down. **I am tired.**

JEAN-DO guides him back to the chair and as PAPINOU is about to sit, he
stops. They are close to each other.

PAPINOU (cont'd)

I remember what I wanted to say to you.

JEAN-DO

I'm listening.

PAPINOU

(struggling to find the words)

**Jean-Dominique, I am very proud of you. I
really am, you have made me very proud
indeed.**

PAPINOU sits. JEAN-DO is still, just looks at him.

EXTREME CLOSE-UPS OF HIS FATHER'S FEATURES

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

He had never said that to me before. Ever.
And I suppose that's why it haunts me. A
father's approval. I found it comforting then,
and I find it even more comforting now.
What children we all are, **we all need
approval-**

PAPINOU sits heavily.

PAPINOU

And something else.

JEAN-DO

Yes?

After a moment:

PAPINOU

Can't remember -

He chuckles.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(a revelation)

But I remember!

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

JEAN-DO'S POV OF CLAUDE holding up the last of the typewritten pages.

CLAUDE

What? What do you remember?

Claude picks up her notebook and starts writing

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

**... memory is like a jigsaw puzzle with
pieces missing.**

Jean-Do blinks his dictation.

CLAUDE'S VOICE

A very black fly...

INT. REHAB CENTRE - DAY

EXTREME CLOSE UP OF JEAN-DO'S EYE WIDE OPEN.

A big black Fly sits on his POV.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

**A very black fly settles on my nose. I
waggle my head to unseat him. He digs
in. Olympic wrestling is child's play
compared to this.**

His field of vision is to his right, seeing the other patients doing their exercises and therapy.

Also present in the background, DR. LEPAGE and DR. COCHETON with NURSES talking to patients and observing their progress.

Slowly, JEAN-DO'S POV turns and, as he does so, SANDRINE and BÉATRICE come into view, standing over him, watching, amazed.

He turns his head a full 90° to his left and sees in a mirror close to him, his own image, tethered to his board, a fly on his nose. SANDRINE, BÉATRICE and again, beyond him, much of the room and the other patients. **SANDRINE swats the fly from his nose.**

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

Thanks.

BÉATRICE

When did you start doing that?

SANDRINE

**E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C - D -
Y - W - V - M - X - B - F - G - J**

(he blinks)

J.

E - T - A - O - I - N - U

(blinks)

U.

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S -

(blinks)

S.

E - T -

(blinks)

T.

E - T - A - O - I - N

(a blink; she guesses)

N. Just now?

He blinks.

BÉATRICE

A miracle! Jean-Do, you can turn your head! You're amazing.

(calling)

Dr. Lepage -

JEAN-DO'S POV turns and sees Dr. Lepage as he joins them.

DR. LEPAGE

Good morning.

JEAN-DO'S POV slowly turns from side to side.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

A miracle! He only said good morning once!

DR. LEPAGE

A-ha! Progress, progress.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

That's better.

DR. LEPAGE

How's the tongue?

SANDRINE and BÉATRICE bend over him and BÉATRICE opens his mouth, all this seen in the mirror.

SANDRINE

Roll your tongue, Jean-Do.

He moves his tongue rather well.

BÉATRICE

I knew you would do it. I've been praying for you.

DR. LEPAGE

Can we go further with his speech?

SANDRINE

The movement of the tongue is crucial so there's hope. You'll be saying the whole alphabet before long, won't you, Jean-Do?

Jean-Do grunts what could be taken as a yes.

BÉATRICE

We're going to work really hard on your swallowing now. I promise you in no time at all you'll be able to eat normally.

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

ON THE TV a football game.

THE MALE NURSE is adjusting JEAN-DO'S feeding apparatus, attaching a tube of brownish liquid to a tube that leads into JEAN-DO'S stomach.

THE MALE NURSE

A nice nourishing meal. I'll come back later
and see how you're doing.

(he makes the final
adjustments)

Bon appetit.

TV COMMENTATOR'S VOICE

(mounting excitement)

Lupin has the ball, beautiful pass, crosses
to Renaud - he's going to score - he's got
an open net - he's going to score -

But at this climactic moment, THE MALE NURSE switches off the TV and leaves the room

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(looking at the feeding tube)

**Bon appetit. Saying that to me is like
saying Merry Christmas to someone on
August 15th. Béatrice better hurry up and
have all her prayers answered. I want to
swallow, I want to eat. But where? And
what shall I have tonight?**

Jean-Do continues to eye the brownish liquid in the tube, and then closes his eyes

INT. GRAND PARIS RESTAURANT - NIGHT

From a high angle we see SIX WAITERS carrying platters filled with assorted gourmet dishes. Like dancers in a minuet, they glide in the spacious, ornate room.

The camera takes flight and we hear the fluttering of wings. It floats from tray to tray, mimicking a butterfly in a field of flowers.

The camera settles on a large platter of oysters on a bed of ice, lemons, brown bread and butter, which is being offered to JEAN-DO, wearing casual chic, the only customer.

He nibbles thinly-sliced salami off a tooth-pick while sipping a glass of champagne.

JEAN-DO takes up a shell, unhooks the oyster with a fork, slides it into his mouth. He closes his eyes as the oyster slips down his throat. He smiles. He opens his eyes.

He looks across the room, and sees **CLAUDE** looking beautiful. Their eyes meet, and he invites her over to savor his treats. He immediately slides an oyster into her mouth. He is able to show his charm, generosity, and his connoisseurship by sharing his feast.

Each taste that **JEAN-DO** will experience seems to be an overwhelming experience, sending him into ecstasies of silent delight and profound pleasure.

THE SOMMELIER approaches with a bottle of Chablis. **JEAN-DO** examines the label, nods. **THE SOMMELIER** pours for him to taste which he does and nods again.

CLAUDE happily watches **JEAN-DO** enjoy his feast.

THE WAITERS, as if choreographed, serve him a medley of gastronomic pleasures with expertise, elegance and theatricality.

WAITERS wheel a serving station on which rests a silver salver with a grilled sole.

One presents it for **JEAN-DO**'s approval. **JEAN-DO**, nods, sips his wine, and watches the man expertly and speedily fillet the fish **and serves it to them**.

JEAN-DO with child-like anticipation sprinkles a little salt, squeezes lemon and then eats elegantly and delicately, **always making sure Claude is also enjoying**.

The red wine is produced, shown, and decanted. **THE SOMMELIER** lights a small candle under the decanter to check the colour and consistency of the wine. **JEAN-DO** smiles admiringly. He pours it for **JEAN-DO** to taste.

Jean-Do and Claude toast.

A **WAITER** serves them a magnificent steak, another spoons on Béarnaise sauce, and yet another piles exquisite pomme frite on the plate. **JEAN-DO** makes the first cut and the knife slides down the steak as if going through butter. Then he tucks in hungrily eating at terrific speed, cleaning up the juice on the plate with a chunk of bread.

An enormous cheese tray is produced. **JEAN-DO** points to five assorted cheese which are served to him. He eats and drinks.

He eats an enormous, exaggerated soufflé and drinks a sweet wine.

JEAN-DO

What a coincidence to find you here.

CLAUDE

It's amazing to me too. It seems like it was just yesterday when I first heard your name.

EXT. PARIS STREET, LEFT BANK - DAY

Sunshine. People, cars, bustle.

Somewhere a phone is ringing.

Claude walks purposefully down the street.

The phone continues to ring.

She turns into a house with a sign:

Éditions Robert Laffont

INT. OFFICE, ROBERT LAFFONT PUBLISHING - DAY

BETTY

(interrupting)

Yes, I understand. I'll get back to you.

Slowly she replaces the receiver.

CLAUDE looks up and smiles. BETTY just stares at her.

CLAUDE

Good morning -

(disconcerted by BETTY'S stare)

Something wrong?

(BETTY continues to stare)

You said to come in today, remember?

You said you may have a book for me to edit. Is it a bad time? Have I come on the wrong day? I'm sure you said -

BETTY

No, no, it's the right day and it's absolutely the perfect time. In fact, the timing is quite extraordinary. Do you believe in fate?

CLAUDE

I'm sorry?

BETTY

Fate, coincidence...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. GRAND PARIS RESTAURANT - NIGHT

CLAUDE

... destiny, divine will, serendipity, chance,
azar?

(CLAUDE shrugs, smiles
crookedly)

Does the name Jean-Dominique Bauby
mean anything to you?

JEAN-DO AND CLAUDE laugh as they sip coffee and cognac and eat petit
fours in absolute bliss.

The sound of a steady, high pitch alarm.

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

It's the feeding machine beeping. The tube of brownish liquid is almost
empty. Jean-Do slowly closes his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. TERRACE, HOSPITAL - DAY

A bright summer day.

JEAN-DO'S in his wheelchair and has a view of the sea, the dunes and the
lighthouse. Sound of distant laughter. And a plane overhead.

After a moment:

SYLVIE'S VOICE

Sweetheart?

JEAN-DO slowly swivels his head to see SYLVIE standing a short distance
away, holding the hands of their two children, THÉOPHILE, 10, and
CÉLESTE, 8.

All three are apprehensive but SYLVIE is more her old self now, exuding energy and vitality. She wears dark glasses and looks wonderful in fashionable summery clothes. She carries a voluminous beach bag.

The children stand and stare at him.

SYLVIE squeezes a smile.

SYLVIE

Hello. So. Here we are.

(awkward silence)

It's Father's Day today. Happy Father's Day.

SYLVIE lets go of their hands. Neither of the children move, just stare at JEAN-DO, shocked and uncomprehending.

Then THÉOPHILE bursts into tears. SYLVIE immediately holds him to her and comforts him but CÉLESTE runs to JEAN-DO and smothers him in noisy kisses.

CÉLESTE

You're my Pop, you're my Pop, you're my Pop -

(stops, steps back, stands
gazing at him with an angelic
smile)

I rode a new pony yesterday. His name is Pom-pom. They let me take the jumps. I didn't come off.

She continues to smile while THÉOPHILE shudders in the aftermath of tears. With a little nudging from SYLVIE he gathers courage to go closer to JEAN-DO.

C.U. OF JEAN-DO'S FACE

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I guess that even a rough sketch, a shadow, a tiny fragment of a dad is still a dad.

He stands beside CÉLESTE just staring. Then he takes out a handkerchief from his pocket and wipes JEAN-DO'S mouth.

THÉOPHILE

You're drooling -

EXT. PATH TO THE BEACH - DAY

SYLVIE, unseen, wheels JEAN-DO along the path towards the beach and the sea. The two children walk beside him, THÉOPHILE silent, but occasionally dabbing JEAN-DO'S mouth with a handkerchief, CÉLESTE singing softly.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Father's Day. My son wiping the saliva that escapes my closed lips. We have never before fitted this made-up holiday into our emotional calendar. But I suppose there's a first time for everything. Locked-in syndrome. **Yet, I'm filled with joy seeing** them living, moving, laughing -

EXT. SAND DUNE & BEACH - DAY

The family are settled in the embrace of a dune open to the sun but protected from the wind, a promenade café nearby.

There are other people in **wheelchairs on the beach and bathers in the sea.**

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

At Berck, wheelchairs are as commonplace as Ferraris at Monte Carlo.

THÉOPHILE and CÉLESTE are changed for swimming and rush down to the sea, screaming excitedly.

SYLVIE

(calling after the children)

Don't go in too far.

She watches them for a moment then hitches her skirt into her panties and suns her legs. She turns her attention to JEAN-DO. He can see his own distorted reflection in her sunglasses.

SYLVIE (cont'd)

I've talked to Claude. She says the book's going well. I can't believe you're writing it. I still think you're the most surprising man I've ever known.

(she smiles)

I see you can move your head.

(MORE)

SYLVIE (cont'd)

(he shakes his head, showing off)

Would you like me to try the alphabet?

(a blink)

I've been practising with Diane - she sends her love - but I'm not very good -

(rummages in her bag, finds the alphabet, note book and pen)

You ready?

(a blink)

Have you had lots of visitors? E - T - A - O -

I - N - U - S -

(a blink)

S. E - T - A - O -

(a blink)

O. E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C -

D - Y - W - V - M -

(a blink)

M. E -

(a blink)

E.

(two blinks)

Some. Some? Is that it?

(a blink)

That wasn't so bad, was it? I did rather well. Shall I go on?

(a blink)

Who? Who's visited you?

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C - D -

Y - W - V - M - X - B - F - G - J - K - L -

(a blink)

She begins the alphabet but it soon fades into the alphabet mantra as she reads Jean-Do's words from her notebook.

SYLVIE (cont'd)

(reading)

Laurent.

SYLVIE (cont'd)

(fishing)

Anyone else?

SYLVIE (cont'd)

(reading)

People from the office.

SYLVIE (cont'd)
That's it? Who else?

SYLVIE (cont'd)
(reading)
She hasn't.

SYLVIE (cont'd)
(innocent)
Who?

SYLVIE (cont'd)
(reading)
You know.

SYLVIE (cont'd)
She hasn't been?

SYLVIE (cont'd)
(reading)
No.

SYLVIE (cont'd)
Why not? I thought she was supposed to
be madly in love with you.

SYLVIE (cont'd)
(reading)
She'll call.

SYLVIE (cont'd)
Well, I suppose that's her business.

SYLVIE (cont'd)
(reading)
It is.

She looks out towards the children having a good time in the sea. JEAN-DO
no longer sees himself.

SYLVIE (cont'd)
The kids are great, aren't they?

She turns back to him and he sees himself again.

SYLVIE (cont'd)
(reading)
Great. Thank you for bringing them.
(MORE)

SYLVIE (cont'd)

Now they know what it's like to have a
zombie for a father.

SYLVIE (cont'd)

Don't, Jean-Do -

SYLVIE (cont'd)

(reading)

**When I began a diet a week before my
stroke, I never dreamed of such dramatic
results.**

Sylvie laughs.

SYLVIE (cont'd)

I took them to see Papinou. He absolutely
adores them.

(a moment)

I think she ought to come and visit you. It
seems wrong to me that she stays away -

SYLVIE (cont'd)

(reading)

It's how she is.

SYLVIE (cont'd)

(with feeling)

That's true, that's how she is.

SYLVIE (cont'd)

(reading)

You know something? You're still able to
make me laugh.

SYLVIE (cont'd)

Thanks.

She smiles.

CÉLESTE'S VOICE

Mama, mama, mama!

SYLVIE turns and once more his reflection is lost.

The children come rushing back, find towels and dry themselves.

THÉOPHILE

Can we have ice-creams?

A sudden, hoarse rattle from JEAN-DO. They turn to him, alarmed.

SYLVIE

You all right?

(a blink)

You sure? Should I take you back?

Two blinks.

The children continue to dry themselves.

While helping them SYLVIE glances at him occasionally.

CLOSE ON JEAN-DO'S FACE

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(to himself)

**That sound was the sound of me crying.
It would take too long to tell you that I am
holding back my tears. There are no
words to express the grief that surges
over me. I, their father, have lost the
simple right to ruffle their hair, clasp their
downy necks, hug their small, lithe, warm
bodies tight against me.**

The song, "Anything," by The Animals begins.

SYLVIE

Here's some money -

She gives CÉLESTE money from her purse and she runs off.

THÉOPHILE looks at JEAN-DO, then approaches cautiously.

THÉOPHILE

You want to play Hangman?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I'd like to tell him I have enough trouble
playing quadriplegic.

A blink.

THÉOPHILE

Mama, Pop wants to play Hangman with
me. You have to help -
(MORE)

THÉOPHILE (cont'd)
 (comes close to JEAN-DO)
 I didn't want to come but I'm glad now.

**QUICK FLASH
 CUT:**

INT. CAR- DAY

CLOSE THEOPHILE, panic rising, as he scrambles out of the car and runs back down the hill.

EXT. SAND DUNE & BEACH - DAY

THÉOPHILE, finishing an ice-cream, has completed the gallows, the rope, the body, the arms, the noose and has now only the two legs left to fill in. Beside this drawing are five dashes for the word, the second dash has an 'A' and the last a 'Y'.

SYLVIE, her glasses reflecting JEAN-DO, recites the alphabet for JEAN-DO to guess a letter.

Beyond on the dune, CÉLESTE does cartwheels and handstands.

SYLVIE

E - T -

(a blink)

T?

THÉOPHILE

(excited, draws the rope)

No. The left leg. One more, only one more.

Go on, go on -

SYLVIE

E - T - A - O - I - N -

(a blink)

N?

THÉOPHILE

No!

(he draws the second leg)

I win! You're hanged, Pop! You're hanged!

SYLVIE

What was the word?

THÉOPHILE

Happy.

Suddenly CÉLESTE bursts into song: 'Poor Little Rich Girl', standing on the dune, facing the others as though she were on a stage. She cartwheels and cavorts while she sings.

SYLVIE

I don't know where she learns these old songs. I think Papinou teaches her.

THÉOPHILE

She shows off, Pop. Tell her to stop.

SYLVIE

She's having fun -

THÉOPHILE

She's showing off -

SYLVIE

Well done, Céleste!

Not far away the chapel clock chimes.

After a moment:

THÉOPHILE

When can we go home?

The clock finishes chiming.

Silence but for the sound of the sea and distant laughter.

SYLVIE

Go and change. Céleste, time to go home
soon.

The children go to change out of their swimming costumes leaving JEAN-DO and SYLVIE alone.

JEAN-DO swivels his head to see the tide receding and some bathers far out, just dots. Other are leaving the beach, trudging homeward.

He turns his head to her. SYLVIE takes hold of his inert hand and holds it tightly.

He sees himself and then he sees tears running down from behind her glasses.

Animals song ends.

EXT. PATH BACK TO THE HOSPITAL - DUSK

SYLVIE, unseen, pushes JEAN-DO in the wheelchair. Ahead of him, CÉLESTE does cartwheels. Beside him, walks THÉOPHILE.

CÉLESTE turns to JEAN-DO.

CÉLESTE

Pop, Pop, sing the Kangaroo song -

THÉOPHILE

Pop can't sing, stupid -

CÉLESTE

I'll sing it -

SYLVIE'S VOICE

Not now, Céleste -

But CÉLESTE, walking backwards, sings:

CÉLESTE

'The Kangaroo escaped the Zoo.

"Goodbye zoo!" cried Kangaroo, Cleared
the wall with one clean jump,
Leaped across with a great big thump - '

And she turns and cartwheels ahead of them.

THÉOPHILE

She's a show off -

He takes JEAN-DO'S hand and hold it tightly.

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DUSK

THE NURSES are making JEAN-DO comfortable in his bed watched by SYLVIE, THÉOPHILE and CÉLESTE.

When the NURSES retreat:

SYLVIE

Kiss Pop goodbye -

CÉLESTE

Oh!

SYLVIE

What?

CÉLESTE

I forgot to give him the fish.

SYLVIE

In my bag. I'll find it.

She rummages in her bag.

THÉOPHILE

(proud)

You've still got my Mickey Mouse -

SYLVIE produces a drawing of a fish with blue-lashed eyes and multicoloured scales, its shape like the symbol for infinity. She hands it to CÉLESTE who holds it up for JEAN-DO to see.

CÉLESTE

Do you like it?

SYLVIE

E - T -

(a blink)

T. E -

(a blink)

E. E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R -

(a blink)

R. E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R -

(a blink; guessing)

Terrific?

(a blink; CÉLESTE beams)

You want me to pin it up? I'll put it next to

Théo's Mickey Mouse -

A blink. She pins it to his wall.

SYLVIE (cont'd)

Say goodbye -

Each in turn kiss JEAN-DO, SYLVIE last.

CÉLESTE

Bye -

THÉOPHILE

Bye -

SYLVIE

Goodbye, sweetheart, I'll come again soon

-

They make for the door but THÉOPHILE returns to the bed.

THÉOPHILE

(a whisper)

I'll come again soon, too -

SYLVIE squeezes a smile and they go.

The dying sun streams in through the window.

JEAN-DO gazes at the drawing of the fish.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Now that's what I call a wonderful day.

EXT. TERRACE, HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

JEAN-DO'S POV OF A LIGHT AEROPLANE trailing an advertising streamer with the words:

BERCK - PARC À THÈME

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

**Or, I've broken my promise never to feel
sorry for myself. What do you think?**

Jean-Do turns his head towards her.

CLAUDE

You were genuinely happy.

Claude begins to take dictation. Jean-Do blinks. The alphabet accompaniment begins. **The dialogue has a parallel life that is not in sync with their actions.**

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Okay, you're right, let's leave it.

I can understand now why Betty said you were so perfect for me. You never talk about yourself. You're patient, conscientious, caring, bright -

She rubs the sun cream on his forehead.

CLAUDE

Stop it, I don't like compliments.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I'd like to find out more about your life.

CLAUDE'S VOICE

Nothing to find out. It's a life. I'm going to put some sun cream on you. **You're getting burnt.**

Claude stops putting cream on him, and rummages through her bag for a cigarette, and walks out of frame.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Married? Lovers? Children?
(she smiles)
A woman of mystery.

CLAUDE'S VOICE

That's me.

JEAN-DO looks at CLAUDE again.

Claude smokes a cigarette.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

You've no ego. And that's the real miracle.

CLAUDE'S VOICE

Yes, isn't it. What's the next chapter of the book?

She looks at the water.

BLINK, BLACK:

**SCENE
CONTINUES IN:**

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I want to remember how all this happened to me.

CLAUDE'S VOICE

Ask someone.

Claude sits down and takes dictation again.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

No. The only memory I have is of Théophile being there. And he was frightened. I wanted to ask him what he remembered but I didn't. I thought it might frighten him even more.

CLAUDE'S VOICE

You want me to find out?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

No. For some reason I think it's important that I remember.

CLAUDE

Okay.

She smiles crookedly.

(THIS SCENE WAS MOVED and edited to play in this part of the script)

The phone rings. CLAUDE reaches out and presses the appropriate button.

CLAUDE (cont'd)

Room 119.

PAPINOU'S VOICE

(filtered)

Who's that?

CLAUDE

I'm Claude Mendibil. I'm sitting with Jean-Do.

PAPINOU VOICE

(filtered)

This is his father speaking.

CLAUDE

Yes, we were expecting your call.

PAPINOU VOICE

(filtered)

So what do I do? Just talk?

CLAUDE

Yes but Jean-Do will be able to answer.
You'll hear me saying the alphabet and
then -

PAPINOU VOICE

Yes, yes, yes, Sylvie told me -

CLAUDE

Just talk, Monsieur Bauby.

PAPINOU VOICE

(filtered)

Can he hear me?

CLAUDE

Yes.

PAPINOU VOICE

(filtered)

Jean-Dominique? This is Papinou. I'm
sitting in the apartment, windows open,
trying to get some air. The heat is
appalling. How are you or is that a damn
fool question?

INT. PAPINOU'S APARTMENT, PARIS - DAY

PAPINOU, now rather well-groomed and smartly dressed in summery clothes, sits with the receiver to his ear, a cup of coffee on the table beside him.

CLAUDE'S VOICE

(at speed)

(filtered)

(MORE)

CLAUDE'S VOICE (cont'd)

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C - D -
Y -

(pause)

E -

(pause; she guesses)

Yes, it's a damn fool question.

PAPINOU

(fighting tears)

I - I miss you.

CLAUDE'S VOICE

(filtered)

E - T - A - O - I -

(pause)

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C - D -
Y - W - V - M -

(pause)

E - T - A - O - I -

(pause, she guesses)

I miss you.

PAPINOU puts the cup down and gazes out of the window.

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

JEAN-DO has trouble holding back his tears.

PAPINOU'S VOICE

(filtered)

God Almighty, this is an impossible way to
conduct a conversation. Everything goes
out of my mind. No, no, I've remembered.
I'm sending you a present. It's a surprise.

(he sips coffee)

Sylvie brought the children to see me. They
want to visit you but I think she's frightened
it might upset them too much.

CLAUDE

(answering for Jean-Do)

They've already been here.

PAPINOU'S VOICE

I didn't know. That's great.

Do you remember your mother, Jean-Do?

INT. PAPINOUS APARTMENT - DAY

CLAUDE'S VOICE

(filtered)

Not really.

PAPINOUS smiles.

PAPINOUS

Oh yes, I had a thought.

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

PAPINOUS' VOICE

(filtered)

About us. We're in the same boat. I'm stuck in this apartment. I can't get up and down the stairs. You try four flights of stairs when you're ninety-two years old. So you see, we're both locked-in cases. You in your body and me in my apartment.

(he chuckles)

Jean-Dominique, remember, in the top right-hand drawer of my writing desk there's a letter. In it are my last wishes. It's in a file marked 'Miscellaneous'.

(tearful)

I must stop now -

INT. PAPINOUS APARTMENT - DAY

Papinou stifles a sob.

CLAUDE'S VOICE

(filtered)

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C - D -

(pause)

E - T - A - O -

(pause)

E - T - A - O - I - N -

(she guesses)

Don't cry.

PAPINOUS struggles to find a handkerchief in his pocket.

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

On Jean Do.

PAPINOU'S VOICE

(filtered)

That's easy for you to say.

(with great passion)

You're my son, for Christ's sake -

Good-bye, Jean-Dominique. **I forgot, it's almost your birthday. I'll call again.**

CLAUDE'S VOICE

E - T -

Jean-Do blinks.

CLAUDE'S VOICE (cont'd)

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H

PUSH INTO EXTREME CLOSE UP OF JEAN-DO'S EYE AS IT BLINKS

INT. PAPINOU'S APARTMENT - DAY

CLAUDE'S VOICE

(filtered)

E - T - A

(a pause)

Thank you.

PAPINOU replaces the receiver and sobs uncontrollably, wiping his eyes.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

It can't be easy for him to speak to a son who he knows will never reply.

EXT. A DARK GREEN SEA- DAY

Jean-Do is floating in his diving bell.

THE MALE NURSE'S VOICE

Are you there Jean-Do?

INT. MAIN HALLWAY, NAVAL HOSPITAL- DAY

A male nurse is trying to get Jean-Do's attention.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

At times I don't know anymore.

They are stopped in front of the stained-glass window.

MALE NURSE

Jean-Do I'm going to leave you here for a second. I'll be right back.

Jean-Do blinks.

The nurse leaves Jean-Do gazing at a bust of the Empress Eugenie enclosed in a vitrine that reflects his own deformed image. Wheelchairs and gurneys come and go.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Not only am I exiled, paralyzed, mute, half deaf, deprived of all pleasures, and reduced to the existence of a jellyfish, but I am also horrible to behold. There comes a time when the heaping up of calamities brings on uncontrollable nervous laughter- when, after a final blow from fate, we decide to treat it all as a joke.

Down the hallway, Empress Eugenie, wearing a hat with yellow ribbons and carrying a silk parasol, and a chattering flock of ladies-in-waiting, approach Jean-Do and appears behind him in the glass.

Eugenie runs her fingers through his hair.

EUGENIE

(gently)

There, there, my child, you must be very patient.

The municipal band begins to play a waltz.

Jean-Do's face moves and he starts laughing Eugenie soon joins in, touches his face, and she encourages him to stand up, which he does.

Close on Jean-Do, back in his wheelchair, tears in his eyes. The nurse returns and moves the wheelchair down the hallway.

INT. CORRIDOR LEADING TO REHAB - DAY

JEAN-DO is being wheeled by the **MALE NURSE**, down the corridor.

A little way along **THE FEMALE NURSE** stands by the doors to the rehab centre and she's smiling and trying not to giggle.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Hello. What's going on?

When **JEAN-DO** reaches the **FEMALE NURSE**:

THE MALE NURSE'S VOICE

Right. Now!

THE FEMALE NURSE throws open the door and **JEAN-DO** is wheeled through.

INT. REHAB CENTRE - DAY

In the mirrored room the other **PATIENTS**, **NURSES**, **CLAUDE**, **SANDRINE**, **BÉATRICE**, **DR. COCHETON**, all with their eyes on **JEAN-DO**. He can see them, of course, and he can see himself. As he appears:

ALL

(in French)

'Happy Birthday to you,
Happy birthday to you,
Happy Birthday, dear Jean-Do,
Happy Birthday to you!'

The **PATIENTS** stand beaming at him. Some applaud. **JEAN-DO** makes a choking sound.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I'm crying again -

THE PATIENTS and **DR. COCHETON** turn away and ignore him to continue with therapy and exercises.

JEAN-DO is wheeled towards **SANDRINE**, **CLAUDE** and **BÉATRICE** and they wish him Happy Birthday. Each in turn kisses him on the forehead.

SANDRINE

We each have a birthday present for you -

BÉATRICE

I'm giving you the day off from the vertical board.

SANDRINE

And my present is something entirely different.

She goes behind the chair and starts to wheel him close to a mirror.

She swivels the chair so he faces the mirror.

THE MIRROR

SANDRINE sits on JEAN-DO'S left. Both face the mirror full on. CLAUDE and BÉATRICE watch.

SANDRINE (cont'd)

My present is that, today, on your 43rd birthday, you're going to say the entire alphabet, beginning with A. All right?

(a blink)

A.

(he makes a sound; she smiles)

Good. B. Force your lips together tightly.

JEAN-DO

(an approximation)

B-b-b-b.

SANDRINE

Great. C. Just hiss. Tongue on the teeth -

JEAN-DO

(loudly and uncontrolled)

Ssssss -

The hiss alerts PATIENTS near by. They begin to watch.

SANDRINE

Excellent. D. Tongue on the ridge of the upper teeth.

JEAN-DO

Da - da -

SANDRINE

E. Tongue on lower teeth and push.

(he makes a sound)

Good. F. Upper teeth on the lower lip.

JEAN-DO

Sssh -

SANDRINE

No. Teeth on lip. Like this -

(she shows him)

That's it. Try.

JEAN-DO

Ffff -

SANDRINE

Yes. Now, G. Ga - ga - back of the palate.

(a groan; smiles again)

Okay, we'll work on that. Aich, just breathe out - ha - ha -

JEAN-DO

Ha -

DR. COCHETON and more PATIENTS begin to gather behind them.

SANDRINE

Perfect. I.

(an approximation)

We'll get there. Jay. As if you're going to sneeze -

(an approximation)

Almost. Now, kay. Tongue up in the mouth as high as you can -

JEAN-DO

Ka - ka -

SANDRINE

Excellent. L. That's too easy for you.

JEAN-DO

La.

SANDRINE

Mmmm.

Some of the PATIENTS begin to say the letters with him.

JEAN-DO

Mmmm.

SANDRINE

Perfect. Nnnn.

JEAN-DO

Nnnnn.

SANDRINE

O. Drop the jaw.

(an approximation)

P. Closed lips. Make the breath explode.

JEAN-DO

Pphhh.

He dribbles and she wipes him.

SANDRINE

(a smile)

Now Q. Like the ka.

JEAN-DO

Ka - ka -

SANDRINE

R. A dog growling.

JEAN-DO

Rrrrr.

SANDRINE

Now S. Like the C.

JEAN-DO

Ssssss.

SANDRINE

That's also too easy for you. T. Like the D
but softer.

JEAN-DO

Deeee. Teeee.

SANDRINE

Good! U. You've seen something you like.
Oooh! Or, as Béatrice would say, blow a
kiss.

THE PATIENTS join in.

JEAN-DO & PATIENTS

Oooooooooh -

Much laughter.

SANDRINE

Vee. Teeth on lower lip. Vee.

JEAN-DO

Ve. Ve.

SANDRINE

**Nearly. W. Push the sound through the
lips. Wha.**

(an approximation)

X. Put E, K and S together.

THE PATIENTS

Eksssss -

SANDRINE

(to the PATIENTS)

We know you can do it, thank you. We want
him to do it. Go on, Jean-Do.

JEAN-DO

Eksss.

A PATIENT

Bravo!

SANDRINE

The best yet. Two more. Y. Yeah, yeah.

(an approximation)

The last one. Z. Zzzz. An insect buzzing.

Tongue to the closed teeth. Zzzz.

JEAN-DO

Zzzzzzz.

She beams.

SANDRINE

You've done it, Jean-Do! Happy birthday.

Cheers, applause, banging of crutches, from THE PATIENTS.

CLAUDE

Jean-Do, I have a surprise trip for you this afternoon. Happy Birthday.

JEAN-DO'S mouth twitches. It's a smile, and

EXT. A FIELD OF WILD FLOWERS - DAY

The butterfly soaring, swooping, floating against a sky of **puffy clouds**.

EXT. ABOARD A SMALL FISHING BOAT - DAY

FROM THE SKY WE SEE:

Boats with outboard motors, some towing water-skiers, weave patterns.

A fishing boat, at good speed, moves across the water. On it are JEAN-DO and CLAUDE.

JEAN-DO'S POV - HOSPITAL & SHORE

Against the sky, the hospital. He is seeing it, seated in his wheel-chair, from a little way out at sea. The great sprawling building, the beach packed with **little specks of** carefree bathers, the sea and the cloudless sky.

He turns his head to find CLAUDE with, as usual, her note book. They are on the deck of a small fishing boat.

THE FISHERMAN at the tiller.

TWO MALE NURSES near the prow, smoking cigarettes. They have a cassette player which plays pop music (**Lou Reed's "Pale Blue Eyes"**.)

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Thank you. Nothing could be more perfect.

She smiles.

CLAUDE

I thought an outing with a new vista would
do you good.

He blinks.

CLAUDE (cont'd)

Close your eyes, I have another surprise
for you.

He closes his eyes. The screen goes dark.

CLAUDE'S VOICE

Okay, now open them.

JEAN-DO opens his eyes to see CLAUDE sitting opposite him, a book in
her hands. On the worn jacket THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO by
ALEXANDRE DUMAS'.

CLAUDE

It's not a first edition, but it's pretty old.

She begins to recite the alphabet - and make notes - which insists itself and
fades as necessary.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Thank you so much.

CLAUDE

Would you like me to read something to
you?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Chapter 59.

She turns to it.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

The coincidence frightens me -

CLAUDE

(she reads)

'They took their places either side of the
paralytic....

ON JEAN-DO

CLAUDE'S VOICE

(reading)

Monsieur Noirtier was sitting in an arm-chair, which moved upon castors, in which he was wheeled....Sight and hearing were the only senses remaining....In short, his whole appearance produced on the mind the impression of a living corpse.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(from memory)

Monsieur Noirtier was sitting in an arm-chair, which moved upon castors, in which he was wheeled....Sight and hearing were the only senses remaining....In short, his whole appearance produced on the mind the impression of a living corpse.

She looks up **and picks up her notebook.**

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

How about that? That's me to a T.

CLAUDE

Nonsense -

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Oh, yes. Noirtier is literature's first case - and the only one, as far as I know - of locked-in syndrome.

CLAUDE

Yes, but he's a sinister character, Jean-Do, he makes one shudder. Look -

She holds up the book which has a black and white illustration.

INSERT - ILLUSTRATION

The deformed, monstrous Noirtier, seated in his chair.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I make people shudder, too.

CLAUDE'S VOICE

You don't -

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Like Noirtier in his wheel chair, communicating only with his eyes. He haunts me.

CLAUDE'S VOICE

Don't make too much of it.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Come on, admit it, it's an extraordinary coincidence.

CLAUDE'S VOICE

I admit it.

JEAN-DO'S eyes turn to see the water-skier towed by at speed. The skier waves.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I should never have contemplated rewriting Dumas. **Don't tamper with a masterpiece. It was fate. It's a lesson, you see.**

EXT. A DARK GREEN SEA - DAY

Jean-Do's diving bell pulls Claude down in the opaque, green, bottomless ocean.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I didn't know Noirtier was the man I was going to become. My diving bell has dragged you down to the bottom of the sea with me.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. ABOARD A SMALL FISHING BOAT - DAY

CLAUDE

Jean-Do, there is no place I have ever been, that is more beautiful than your thoughts. And if sometimes I am at the bottom of the sea with you, you are also my butterfly.

CLOSE ON JEAN-DO'S FACE

THE FISHERMAN

Mademoiselle?

JEAN-DO swivels to see him.

CLAUDE

Yes?

THE FISHERMAN

I think we should be getting back now.

CLAUDE

Okay.

The boat starts to manoeuvre.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

After we finish this book, we'll write another one about a long-distance runner. You never know. Perhaps I'll become like him.

She laughs softly.

She stands, goes to the wooden rail and gazes out at the shore.

Jean-Do turns to see her. The hospital and shore are looming towards them, the chapel bell begins to toll.

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

SYLVIE is by his bedside with a stack of opened and unopened letters.

SYLVIE opens an envelope and takes out a letter.

SYLVIE

And this is from Roberta Bosson. She's a photographer, isn't she?

(a blink; she reads)

'Dear Jean-Do, it's one of those lazy Sunday afternoons and it's raining. Yesterday, I picked roses at dusk, and each one somehow reminded me of you. And I wanted you to know that. With love, Roberta.'

(she opens another)

From Henri.

(reading)

'Jean-Do, I know you're shamming. You just want to draw attention to yourself. Please stop immediately, come back to the office and edit your magazine.'

(MORE)

SYLVIE (cont'd)
 (smiles, takes up another)
 This is Papinou's handwriting.
 (she opens it)
 He writes, 'This is a present'. It's a
 photograph -

She shows it to JEAN-Do

THE PHOTOGRAPH

The one seen in Papinou's apartment of JEAN-DO aged 11 on a miniature golf course.

SYLVIE'S VOICE
 There's something on the back.

The photograph is turned over. On it is written:

JEAN-DO, aged 11, BERCK-SUR-MER

The sound of the telephone ringing.

SYLVIE flicks the switch.

SYLVIE
 Jean-Dominique Bauby's room.

A WOMAN'S VOICE
 (a little startled)
 Who are you?

SYLVIE
 It's Sylvie de Rochefoucauld. Who are you?

THE WOMAN'S VOICE
 Oh my God.

SYLVIE realises who it is.

SYLVIE
 (to JEAN-DO, a hoarse
 whisper)
 It's her.

She turns to look at the photos on the wall, concentrating on one of a young, beautiful woman.

THE WOMAN'S VOICE
 Yes, it's 'her', I heard that -

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Merde.

SYLVIE

(to the phone)

Well?

THE WOMAN'S VOICE

I want to speak to Jean-Do.

SYLVIE

He can't speak. You have to speak through me -

THE WOMAN'S VOICE

(overlapping)

I know he can't speak, I just meant -

SYLVIE

But he can hear you -

THE WOMAN'S VOICE

I can't speak with you there -

SYLVIE

You have to, there's no one else.

THE WOMAN'S VOICE

Shit.

SYLVIE

I beg your pardon?

THE WOMAN'S VOICE

I said shit.

SYLVIE

That's what I thought you said.

THE WOMAN'S VOICE

They told me the therapist would be there -

SYLVIE

Well, she isn't -

THE WOMAN'S VOICE

Shit.

SYLVIE

Is that all you can say?

THE WOMAN'S VOICE

Don't be clever with me, please, Sylvie -

SYLVIE

Just say what you have to say. Apart from
shit.

Brief silence.

THE WOMAN'S VOICE

Jean-Do?

SYLVIE

He's listening.

THE WOMAN'S VOICE

(with difficulty)

Darling. I know I said I'd come but I got as
far as the train station and then turned
back. I just can't face it. Please, please
forgive me.

(change of tone, almost
desperate)

Sylvie, can't you just go out of the room for
a moment? I have personal things to say, I
don't want to say them in front of you -

SYLVIE

I can't leave him.

(several blinks)

Wait a moment, Jean-Do wants to say
something.

(at speed)

E - T - A - O -

(a blink)

O. E - T - A - O - I - N -

(a blink)

N. E -

(a blink. Then two blinks)

One. E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S -

(a blink)

S. E -

(a blink)

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C -

(MORE)

SYLVIE (cont'd)

(a blink)

One sec.

(she gets up angrily)

I'm leaving the room. For one second.

She goes out but leaves the door open and her shadow can be seen. She may or may not be listening.

THE WOMAN'S VOICE

Jean-Do are you alone now?

(brief silence)

Sweetheart, I love you. I want to see you but I haven't the courage. I don't want to see you as you are now. I only want to think of you as you were. Do you understand?

(pause)

Oh God, this is so painful. You're in my thoughts all the time. Every minute of the day and night. I wish I wasn't such a coward, but I am, and that's how it is.

(brief silence)

I may go to Switzerland for a few days.

(brief silence)

You know what I regret most? That I said no when you wanted me to have your child -

SYLVIE returns.

SYLVIE

I'm back.

(silence)

You want to say anything, Jean-Do?

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(two blinks)

No.

SYLVIE

(she softens; into the speaker)

Yes, he does want to say something. He wants to say, 'I love you,' but he doesn't want to say it in front of me.

Silence.

THE WOMAN'S VOICE

Thank you, Sylvie. Goodbye.

The click of her receiver. SYLVIE presses the off button and goes to the window, her back to JEAN-DO, looking out. After a moment:

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

It's been my great fortune to have had exceptional women in my life.

INT. WAX MUSEUM - NIGHT

Great crashing chords on an organ.

Nightmarish atmosphere. Turn-of-the-century style distorting mirrors in a distorted hall, walls aslant, narrow archways, undulating ceiling. And the frightening music played on the organ at full blast.

JEAN-DO glides through an arch, sees himself distorted.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Talking about dreams is boring, especially other people's dreams. But last night, I dreamt I visited Paris's wax museum.

He wanders towards another arch over which there is a sign:

TODAY.

He enters.

There are only two wax models. One is of DR MERCIER, the ophthalmologist, grotesque, leering, with his hands covered in congealed blood.

The other is Monsieur Noirtier.

As JEAN-DO passes them, MERCIER winks and **Monsieur Noirtier cackles electronically.**

There's yet another arch and over it the sign:

A SURPRISE

BÉATRICE and FEMALE NURSES, all in outrageously sexy outfits.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

If only.

As he passes BÉATRICE crosses herself, and one of the NURSES wiggles her hips.

Above the next arch, the legend:

TOMORROW

It is an exact replica of his Room 119, but the photos and drawings **are ill-defined as if the wall melted.**

There is no one in the bed, just a hollow in the middle of the yellow sheets.

But surrounding the bed are wax models of DR. LEPAGE and DR. COCHETON, SANDRINE, SYLVIE, CÉLESTE, THÉOPHILE and CLAUDE.

He weaves his way between them, examining them closely: SANDRINE smiling, SYLVIE with frozen tears on her cheeks, the children smiling, too, the others have their hands stretched out towards the hollow in the bed as if in supplication or a benediction.

Where the speaker-phone should be there is a lever with a sign:

PULL ME

He pulls the lever and from the ceiling, like confetti, a great rain of paper descends.

They're the letters of the alphabet and they stick to the wax models and to JEAN-DO in nonsensical order.

Above the next arch, the legend:

YESTERDAY

Jean-Do sees himself sitting in a first class seat on an airplane. All of the other seats on the plane are empty. A man, Roussin, approaches the sitting Jean-Do.

ROUSSIN

Jean-Dominique, I'm sorry, but if I don't get a seat on this plane, I will miss my connection to Hong- Kong.

JEAN-DO SITTING

(as he stands up)

Please, take mine. I'll take the next flight.

(turning back at Roussin)

(MORE)

JEAN-DO SITTING (cont'd)

Oh, by the way. You're not going to Hong-Kong you are going to Beirut.

Jean-Do sees *Jean-Do* walk out the door of the plane in mid-flight, into the white bright sky

FEMALE NURSE'S VOICE

Come on, Jean-Do, your sleeping pill.

CUT TO:

INT. JEAN-DO'S ROOM, NAVAL HOSPITAL - DAY

A bright light is hitting the lens.

THE FEMALE NURSE is leaning over him with a pen-light in her hand.

FEMALE NURSE

Do you want it now?

(two blinks)

You want me to come back later?

(a blink)

Okay, it's up to you -

He turns his eyes on the photos, the cards, the drawings on his wall.

And he sees his reflection in the framed Elle cover.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I've always believed dreams only tell you about your own hidden inner life. Never about other people or the future. **I wish I knew why but for some reason I knew my wax dream was about me. I'm afraid.**

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. REHAB CENTRE - DAY

JEAN-DO on the vertical board in the upright position reflected in a mirror. The room is more or less empty but for one young man with an artificial leg exercising.

Somewhere, music is playing: an aria from Mozart's 'Don Giovanni'.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

The feeling of doom wouldn't leave. It took what I can only describe as a miracle to lift my spirits. It's dangerous to believe in personal miracles. They tend to make one feel self-important. Nevertheless, I must report that I believe something miraculous did occur -

EXT. A FIELD OF WILD FLOWERS - DAY

The sun is setting as the BUTTERFLY comes to rest on a flower, its wings fluttering.

The wings make a beating sound like a drum or a heartbeat, loud and insistent.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I began to sing.

INT. REHAB CENTRE - DAY

JEAN-DO reflected full on in a mirror, SANDRINE and BÉATRICE either side of him.

In the background, patients and nurses.

SANDRINE & BÉATRICE sing with him, softly and sweetly.

JEAN-DO

(singing not really intelligibly)

'The Kangaroo escaped the Zoo.

"Goodbye zoo!" cried Kangaroo, Cleared the wall with one clean jump, Leaped across with a great big thump. '

He pants. They beam at him.

BÉATRICE

Isn't that the most beautiful song in the world?

JEAN-DO grunts, then twitches a smile.

INT. ELEVATOR, NAVAL HOSPITAL - EVENING

A MALE NURSE and JEAN-DO descending. He can see himself in the mirror.

Faint, the sound of what may be a drum beat.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Swimming up from the mist of a coma, I can grunt. I can sing. My hearing isn't great and sometimes I think I hear my heart beating but I tell myself it's the sound of butterfly's wings. Yes, I am making indomitable progress and I may even have butterfly hearing. I can look forward to the future. Soon the summer will come to an end and I will begin my first autumn in this hospital. Nowhere else.

INT. LONG HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - EVENING

THE MALE NURSE wheels JEAN-DO down the corridor, their reflections in the glass-fronted cupboards.

The sound of pop music from somewhere.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

My life is here. A constant repetition. In this place.

INSERT SHOTS OF ROOM 119. HIS BED. THE REHAB CENTRE. HIS WHEELCHAIR. THE CORRIDORS.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

Had I been blind and deaf, or does it take the harsh light of disaster to show a person their true nature?

Their images in the glass-fronts flicker by.

EXT. TERRACE, HOSPITAL - EVENING

JEAN-DO is wheeled on to the extension of the terrace. The pop music louder.

The end of summer but still warm. The light fading.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

And today I have a visitor and I may show
off, like Céleste, so that everyone in Paris
can be told what an indomitable vegetable
I am.

As they turn the corner and the lighthouse comes into view he sees
LAURENT dancing casually with BÉATRICE to pop music from a cassette
player (a **Mambo version of "Ne Me Quite Pas."** or **Brigitte Bardot's**
"Harley Davidson")

CLAUDE sits at a table correcting typescript.

Seeing JEAN-DO, LAURENT and BÉATRICE stop. CLAUDE looks up.

LAURENT

At last! Jean-Do, how goes it?
(JEAN-DO grunts)
He's speaking! Jean-Do, you're speaking.

SANDRINE

Better than that, he can sing a song.

LAURENT

No!

BÉATRICE

(turning down the volume)

Come on, Jean-Do, sing for Laurent -

JEAN-DO

(a grunt)
Uh-uh.

CLAUDE

Please, Jean-Do, sing for me, then -

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

I said okay.

LAURENT

He was always an obstinate fellow. You
were always a stubborn bastard, weren't
you? Everything in your own time, am I
right?

(coming to close to JEAN-DO)

(MORE)

LAURENT (cont'd)

I miss you. I had to come again. But I
heard you were -

He breaks off. The lights has faded. The lighthouse beam explodes and
starts to revolve.

BÉATRICE

Tell us, Laurent. What's he really like?

LAURENT

Book lover -

CLAUDE

Yes -

LAURENT

Woman lover.

(the other laugh softly)

Car lover. Food lover. Eats like a pig but
never puts on weight. And always the best
restaurants.

(he crouches down beside

JEAN-DO)

I think about you a lot, Jean-Do. And your
red convertible. You remember? And quick-
tempered? Christ, your temper. He would
fly off the handle before I could say Berck-
sur-Mer.

(to the others)

**We've been friends for more than twenty-
five miserable years -**

(smiles)

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(grunting his song)

'The Kangaroo escaped the Zoo.

"Goodbye zoo!" cried Kangaroo, Cleared
the wall -

He makes a choking sound.

LAURENT

Are you all right - ?

BÉATRICE

He's singing -

JEAN-DO shakes his head from side to side, the choking sound more harsh and frightening.

CLAUDE

(alarmed)

He's not -

SANDRINE

(also alarmed)

Find Dr. Cocheton -

The sound of an ambulance bell.

INT/EXT. AMBULANCE (TRAVELLING) & PARIS STREETS - NIGHT

Rain. The sound of the ambulance bell loud.

JEAN-DO in the back of the ambulance, well wrapped up, seated in his wheelchair, looking through the window at the heavy traffic in Paris streets, and the buildings.

He is reflected in the pane. He has an oxygen mask over his nose and a tube attached to the corner of his mouth. AN ATTENDANT keeps an eye on him.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

**I have pneumonia. And just when I
thought -**

EXT. A DARK GREEN SEA - DAY

The diving bell floating aimlessly in the murky water.

INT/EXT. AMBULANCE & PARIS STREETS - NIGHT

As before: JEAN-DO'S reflection gazing at the passing scene.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

Like a sailor who watches the shore
gradually disappear, I watch my past
recede. **But more and more of it is
reduced to the ashes of memory.**

(suddenly seeing something)

My God!

The ambulance has slowed down in traffic opposite a high-rise ultra-modern building with the Elle logo.

A couple, a man and a woman, stand outside, in the rain, smoking cigarettes.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

That's where I worked. And the café next door where I'd drop in for a coffee. And that couple, I know them, but I can't remember their names.
(he grunts)

Something else catches his attention and he cranes and twists desperately to see.

A car, a BMW, draws up and out steps a man. The DOORMAN rushes to him with an umbrella to shield him as he hurries into the building.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE (cont'd)

That's my car! Oh Christ, my new car -

He gasps.

EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK, PARIS - DAY

JEAN-DO emerges from the building, casually dressed against the cold. He greets Paul, the doorman/valet, who hands him his keys.

JEAN-DO

'Morning, Paul.

PAUL

'Morning, Monsieur.

JEAN-DO approaches his new BMW, stops and gazes at it admiringly.

JEAN-DO

My God! Now that's what I call a car!

PAUL

Oui Monsieur Bauby. I'm sure it drives beautifully.

JEAN-DO

Sure does.

He gets into the car.

INT. BMW - DAY

JEAN-DO in the driver's seat.

JEAN-DO
(inhaling deeply)
Smell that leather. There's nothing like it.

With the pleasure of a child, JEAN-DO admires the facia and the controls.
Then he starts the engine.

EXT. PARIS STREETS - DAY

THE BMW travelling.

INT/EXT. BMW & PARIS OUTSKIRTS - DAY

JEAN-DO at the wheel, glowing. Less traffic. Opens it up on the road.

EXT. DRIVE & SMALL COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

THE BMW enters the drive and makes its way to the entrance of the house
and stops.

JEAN-DO gets out.

Almost immediately, from the house rush CÉLESTE and THÉOPHILE with a
backpack.

CÉLESTE & THÉOPHILE
Pop, Pop, Pop, Pop -

They run into his arms and he hugs them tightly. He glances up.

SYLVIE stands in the doorway.

JEAN-DO
(awkward)
Hello.

SYLVIE
Hello. Don't bring him back too late on
Sunday.

THÉOPHILE

(admiring the car)

Wow!

CÉLESTE

Next week-end's my week-end -

JEAN-DO

Absolutely -

THÉOPHILE

Are we going to a theatre?

JEAN-DO

We certainly are. And dinner afterwards.

THÉOPHILE

Oysters ?

JEAN-DO

As many as you can eat.

He gives CÉLESTE a hug and waves half-heartedly to SYLVIE.

THÉOPHILE

'Bye, Mom. Can I get in the front?

JEAN-DO

That's the best seat.

EXT. COUNTRY ROADS - DAY

THE BMW cruising smoothly. Music playing on the car radio.

"Day in the Life" by the Beatles.

INT. BMW - DAY

JEAN-DO at the wheel, THÉOPHILE, beside him, loving every second.

EXT. GENTLE HILL

The BMW comes to the brow and then descends.

INT. BMW - DAY

CLOSE JEAN-DO. A flicker of concern in his eyes. He holds the wheel a little more tightly.

EXT. RAILWAY CROSSING - DAY

The barriers are down. The BMW has to stop and wait.

INT. BMW - DAY

JEAN-DO is beginning to feel more unwell but doesn't quite know what the matter is.

THÉOPHILE
Hope it's the TGV -

EXT. RAILWAY CROSSING - DAY

A TGV flashes by. The barrier is raised.

THÉOPHILE'S VOICE
Yeah! Yeah!

INT. BMW - DAY

JEAN-DO doesn't move. Beads of sweat break out on his forehead. Sound of breathing. He's holding on to the wheel and trying to breathe rhythmically.

THÉOPHILE
Come on, Pop -

JEAN-DO reacts and the car moves forward.

EXT. ANOTHER GENTLE HILL - DAY

The music continuous.

THE BMW ascending. It suddenly stops.

INT/EXT. BMW - DAY

JEAN-DO is beginning to rock very slightly, his colour draining.

THÉOPHILE

What's the matter?

JEAN-DO

We have to stop. I don't feel well -

CLOSE THÉOPHILE, terrified.

JEAN-DO (cont'd)

Where are we?

THÉOPHILE

Near Aunt Diane's -

JEAN-DO

Are we?

THÉOPHILE

We passed the turn to her house, just back there -

JEAN-DO

Run, Théo. Run and get her.

THÉOPHILE

(terrified)

Pop -

JEAN-DO

Quickly -

CLOSE THÉOPHILE, panic rising, as he scrambles out of the car and runs back down the hill.

JEAN-DO closes his eyes in pain.

The screen goes black.

JEAN-DO OPENS HIS EYES TO SEE THÉOPHILE and his aunt, DIANE, mid-30s, **standing there**. DIANE is wearing a nurse's uniform.

JEAN-DO holds on tight to the steering wheel.

THÉOPHILE and DIANE reach the BMW.

DIANE

Théo just caught me, I was on my way to work -

(MORE)

DIANE (cont'd)

**(JEAN-DO starts to
hyperventilate)**

**Theo, help me get your dad in the back
seat.**

**Diane and Theo struggle to get Jean-Do out of the car and into the back
seat.**

DIANE (cont'd)

**Théo, go to the neighbour and tell her to
phone your mother. Quickly. I'll drive your
dad to my clinic.**

THÉOPHILE hesitates, then runs off while Diane gets into the driver seat.

The car moves off at speed.

CLOSE - JEAN-DO

The car travelling at speed.

Hyperventilating, JEAN-DO'S face is gradually, very gradually becoming
paralyzed, the cheeks drooping, the mouth twisting downwards, eyes
staring. Forehead covered in sweat.

His arms are turning inward, his eyes staring. He slowly, slowly closes his
eyes.

INT. A DARK GREEN SEA- DAY

The diving bell sinks slowly towards the interminable darkness.

BLACKNESS.

CLAUDE'S VOICE

(reading)

I had time for one last thought.

INT. ROOM, PARIS CLINIC - DAY

CLOSE JEAN-DO'S EYE.

THE POV IS NO LONGER JEAN-DO'S.

CLAUDE'S VOICE

(reading)

**'I thought we'll have to cancel going to the
theatre. We'd be late in any case.**

Slowly, more is revealed: JEAN-DO'S paralyzed face, **his right eye stitched closed.**

He lies in a bed, with tubes, an IV pole, a monitoring screen.

The room is bare of personal effects, the walls white, antiseptic.

CLAUDE sits beside him, reading from typescript.

CLAUDE

(reading)

'We'll go tomorrow night. And then I sank
into a coma.'

She looks up at him.

He blinks.

CLAUDE (cont'd)

E - T - A - O - I -

He blinks

CLAUDE (cont'd)

I. E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S -

He blinks once

CLAUDE (cont'd)

S.

He gives two blinks.

CLAUDE (cont'd)

Is. E - T - A - O - I -

A blink.

CLAUDE (cont'd)

I. E - T -

Blink.

CLAUDE (cont'd)

T.

Two blinks.

CLAUDE (cont'd)

Is it. E - T - A -

A blink.

CLAUDE (cont'd)

Is it a -

He gives two blinks.

CLAUDE (cont'd)

E - T - A - O - I - N - U - S - H - R - P - C - D -
Y - W - V - M - X - B -

A blink.

CLAUDE (cont'd)

B. E - T - A - O -

He blinks once

CLAUDE (cont'd)

O. Bo.

(guessing)

Is it a book?

He blinks

ON THE BLINK:

THE BOOK JACKET WITH THE TITLE:

LE SCAPHANDRE ET LE PAPILLON (SUPERIMPOSE SUBTITLE: THE
DIVING BELL AND THE BUTTERFLY)

JEAN-DOMINIQUE BAUBY

JEAN-DO blinks. CLAUDE hands open the book.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(reading)

'For my children, Théophile and Céleste.
And my deepest gratitude to Claude
Mendibil, whose all important contribution
to these pages will become clear as my
story unfolds.'

CLAUDE fights tears and turns away.

SYLVIE studies a small pile of news paper cuttings.

SYLVIE

These reviews, Jean-Do! You want to hear them?

Jean-Do's falling asleep to the sound of a heart beat. He breathes uneasily.

JEAN-DO'S VOICE

(blinks twice)

No.

**ON SECOND
BLINK:**

EXT. A FIELD OF WILD FLOWERS - DAY

THE BUTTERFLY in flight, the sound of its beating wings loud and thrilling.

SUPERIMPOSE CAPTION

Two days after the publication of 'The Diving Bell and the Butterfly' in 1996, Jean-Dominique Bauby died.

THE BUTTERFLY disappears. The flowers sway. The heart beat of the wings **becomes silent.**

FADE OUT.