

THE SIMULACRA

Clayton Crawford

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Shooting Script

BLUE

Address
Phone Number

1 INT: GALLERY-- Day

1 *

(Fade-in)

Natural light pours into a sleek clean art gallery reception area. DORIAN (23) a clean-cut bright-eyed student dressed in his most fashionable clothes holds a large covered canvas and approaches the CURATOR (35) is a tall, professional, blonde, woman in business casual.

DORIAN
(young confident voice)
Hey, we spoke on the phone

CURATOR
(professional smile)
Dorian right? We all really enjoyed
your showcase!

DORIAN
So, how does this work? I have the
piece here

Dorian raises a covered canvas.

CURATOR
Unfortunately, there has been a
change of plans. We decided to
showcase a new artist from right
here on the local streets. He's had
such a hard life and his story is
so incredible we just can't pass up
an opportunity like this. To change
someone's life

DORIAN
Well--what am I gonna do?

Dorian holds the large canvas containing a beautiful
abstraction of his girlfriend OLIVE (21) tall-slight woman
with dark skin and hair. She is portrayed with immense
detail. The brush strokes are clean and he is obviously
disciplined as well as talented in his craft.

*

DORIAN (CONT'D)
You said this piece was perfect-
It's only been a week

CURATOR
We would love for you to keep
working on your art and maybe next
season we can showcase one of your
little portraits.
(MORE)

CURATOR (CONT'D)

You're so young and you must understand there is more a little more to art than whats on the canvas.

DORIAN

What does that mean? More to art than the art?

CURATOR

You might understand someday, but we simply aren't interested in your work right now. I'll let you see yourself out.

Dorian stuffs the painting into the case angrily and storms outside.

In the street, the painting accidentally falls out along with a few other works and they lie in the street. He bends down to pick up the work, and looks up to see a painting through the window/glass.

The painting he sees hung up on the gallery wall is a Piece of dirty Cardboard with a crudely drawn upside down smiley face. The words "GOD BLES YOU ALL" are poorly written above and below the smiley face who's drips show the poor discipline of it's artist. Should be hilariously bad in comparison.

2

INT: GHOST TRAIN BREWERY -- NIGHT

2

A small table is almost over-flowing with empty beer glasses. Dorian sits with NEIL (24) a taller, more handsome, business casual man leaning back in his seat. Dorian and Neil drink heavily throughout the scene.

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*

NEIL

That's bullshit D. I can't believe they'd screw you like that. I mean you should sue! They can't just promise you a spot and take it away.

DORIAN

They can do whatever they want Neil. If I bitch about *this* no gallery will ever give me a chance. I looked the guy up and it's fucking sad- two teeth, collapsed veins. He had to thin the paint with his piss!

NEIL

So some hobo pisses on a painting
and it's supposed to be art? Fuck
that man. I've seen your work. That
one of Olive- Gorgeous.

DORIAN

But it's a good story. People want
to think about how far that hobo
came and imagine his pain. It's all
become like a conversation piece.
IT doesn't matter if you've painted
for 16 seconds or sixteen years.

NEIL

(Friendly Teasing)

I'm sure you could think up some
fucking sob story to get those
gallery owners all teared up. Say
your mother was an alcoholic dwarf
and you sold your teeth for gas
money as a child or something.

DORIAN

(Both Laughing Easily)

Honestly I thought student debt was
bad enough. Now I've basically
gotta paint with my own *blood* just
to get noticed.

NEIL

(Secession of Laughter)

Man when I get up to New York
I'm gonna look at your legal
options.

DORIAN

I thought you hated all the rich
lawyers up there?

NEIL

Law school isn't gonna pay itself
off. It's just for a while. We
can't all go chase our dreams right
out of school man.

DORIAN

(changing the tone)

Selling teeth for gas money. Man
where do you come up with that
shit?

3 INT: SMALL APARTMENT -- NIGHT 3

Dorian in the hallway turns the light on clumsily, and throws his keys down on the table. He staggers past boxes with DORIAN written in large black marker. She is under the covers but wearing pajamas (nothing too fancy). The light of the hallway illuminates as he collapses in bed and she stirs. Places arm/leg around him.

*
*

4 INT: SMALL APARTMENT LIVING ROOM -- THE NEXT MORNING 4

Olive and Dorian are eating breakfast and watching TV. Olive wears her Nurse's uniform and looks ready for work.

OLIVE

Well what if you sold some of your pieces at the art crawl they do every Thursday?

DORIAN

Those are just for people who can't sell their work anywhere else

OLIVE

But what about like your undergrad stuff?

DORIAN

I don't know. I mean its like a progression of how far I've come... Did you know Neil was taking that job in New York?

OLIVE

Yeah... He told me the other day.

DORIAN

When?

OLIVE

Uh- We ran into each other at Pepper Place. Last Saturday... He said he might be able to get you a job. It's a temp job but...

DORIAN

(Snorts dismissively)

A temp job. I just can't believe he's just giving up on his dream. He was gonna help people.

OLIVE

I know... but at least he won't
have to worry about money... also
it's almost the end of the month. I
was thinking given the
circumstances-

DORIAN

You know I can't ask my Parents
Olive. They basically disowned me
last time.

*

Olive takes his hand and looks apologetically at him. They
sit for a beat then Dorian stands up and gets a beer from the
fridge. Olive stays where she was and Dorian comes back to
the table and throws the cap onto it sloppily. Olive picks up
the set of keys and plays with it nervously.

*

OLIVE

(Reacting to the Beer)

I'm just tired of working overtime
at the hospital, and I think you
should take the temp job or sell
your paintings during the crawl. I
need a break Dorian and anything
would be better than drinking your
morning away...

*

DORIAN

And that's fine. Okay. Fine.
(Drinks)

OLIVE

Fine.

5 EXT. ART CRAWL-- DAY

5 *

Large painted canvases are propped up on tables around
Dorian. A sign reading (all paintings 200\$) sits companion-
like next to smoking Dorian.

*

He chain-smokes cigarettes and drinks from a brown paper bag
obviously harried.

*

A CHILD (6) runs down the sidewalk and grabs one of Dorian's
paintings.

*

*

CHILD

Don't mind if I do

*

*

He takes off but Olive and Neil are approaching happily, and
Neil grabs the piece from the kid.

*

*

NEIL

Looks like you lost something.

*
*

They are joyful to a painful degree juxtaposed to Dorian.

OLIVE

Sorry we're late. How'd it go? Sell
anything big yet? (her cheer fades)

DORIAN

(Frustrated)

How does it look like it's going
Olive?

NEIL

You didn't sell any?

DORIAN

Not a single fucking one.

OLIVE

Well you are asking 200\$, and I
thought you quit smoking?

DORIAN

I've been painting my whole life,
and I'm already selling my soul on
the street corner, at least let me
ask a fair price.

*

OLIVE

Calm down. Maybe after some
lunch and a cup of coffee
you'll feel better

DORIAN

No just go. I'm gonna sell a
goddamn painting.

Dorian waits for them to leave and cracks open a pint of
something in a bag. Then he crosses out the second "0" in
\$200 and resumes his seat sadly.

6

INT: SMALL APARTMENT BEDROOM -- NIGHT

6

Dorian faces away from Olive who faces straight up at the
ceiling. A soft moonlight falls through a large window onto
them favoring Olive. They lay in bed.

OLIVE

And you still didn't sell any?

DORIAN

I don't wanna talk about it.

OLIVE

When is the last time you painted?

DORIAN

Huh?

OLIVE

I said, "When is the last time you painted?"

DORIAN

It's been a while. It's just hard with everything going on.

OLIVE

But when exactly did you stop?

DORIAN

I don't know

OLIVE

It was before the gallery rejected you. It's been months.

DORIAN

If you knew why did you ask?

OLIVE

You haven't touched any of your art supplies since you moved those boxes in here.

DORIAN

Have you been snooping through my shit?

OLIVE

Our shit. If you aren't going to paint you might as well get rid of that stuff. It's blocking the whole fucking hallway.

Dorian lays silent for a few moments. He rolls over to look at Olive. She keeps looking straight up at the ceiling.

DORIAN

I don't know what to say.

OLIVE

Just do something for both of our sake. If you want to paint- paint! But do something Dorian please.

DORIAN

I don't even know what art is anymore Olive. I'm sorry I don't have some amazing story. I'm sorry I dedicated my life to learning to paint rather than shooting up heroin.

OLIVE

Stop making excuses. I'm *tired* Dorian. I'm exhausted all the time.

DORIAN

Oh yeah it's really fucking hard to change some bedpans isn't it. Then you have to step past the boxes in the hallway. Remember when you wanted to model? Now you wear the same thing everyday and only think about money.

OLIVE

Shut UP! Stop feeling sorry for yourself and realize I'M NOT THE PROBLEM. I've been supporting you for so long, and I'm tired. I'm tired of this city and this life and your fucking entitlement. It's not my fault nobody wants your art. I didn't make you go to all those useless years of art school. Your paintings are decoration, I'm real, I'm right here, and you don't care.

7

INT. SMALL OFFICE CUBICLE -- EARLY MORNING

7

Dorian (shaved but still pale and worn) sits in an office chair at a desk full of paper and folders. Neil stands over him with a friendly smile.

DORIAN

Thanks again for the work Neil. Olive and I... I'm sure you know. The last few weeks have been... Thanks.

NEIL

Remember it's only temporary. I
have no pull here when I head up to
New York.

DORIAN

Anything is good right now. Also
thanks for being so good to Olive.
I honestly don't know what we'd do
without your support.

*
*

NEIL

You don't need to thank me D...

*
*

Neil begins to explain the process by which Dorian should
sort the folders. This will be slowly muffled as Neil focuses
on the view of Sloss Furnace from the window right next to
him. View should be framed like a painting of Sloss.

NEIL (CONT'D)

(Muffled Slowly)

Basically, you take all the
receipts from this year and put
them in the corresponding file for
each of the people here. Then
organize the receipts according to
date, with the first date being the
most recent and the last being well
the latest. Of course you then
organize the folders according to
alphabetical order. Get all that...
D... D?

NEIL (CONT'D)

(Loud and Clear)

DORIAN!

DORIAN

Yeah! Yeah I got it.

NEIL

It kinda looked like you were
drifting off there

DORIAN

No. No. I got it. Don't worry.

Dorian shuffles the papers around aimlessly and moves to a
focus out the window-- which should be a view of Sloss.

Close on Dorian asleep in his chair in the afternoon
sunlight. A sketch of Sloss is in the shot on the one of the
folders.

*

A7 INT. SMALL OFFICE CUBICLE--DAY

A7 *

NEIL

Jesus. Dorian wake up

Dorian jerks awake, and flips over the folder with the sketch on it. He's bleary and bewildered but also slightly ashamed.

DORIAN

Yeah, Yeah whats up?

NEIL

Did you get anything done? Christ.

DORIAN

Uh yeah they are all like in the right people's folders.

NEIL

Are they even in chronological order? Come on man I had to pull a lot of strings to get you this job, and I still need a solid recommendation to get out of this place! Then my boss has to tell me you are out here sleeping?

*
*

DORIAN

Look it's done. I'm sorry I-- I didn't get a lot of sleep last night.

NEIL

You did half the job, left your desk to go smoke what must have been a pack of cigarettes, and stared out the window all day! I can't help you if you wont even try.

Dorian collects his things and stands up, but Neil stops him. *

DORIAN

You know what Neil I don't need your help. I don't think this job is gonna work out. It's bitch work and I'm sorry, but I didn't dream of filing receipts my whole life! So thanks, but I can't do this.

*

NEIL

Dorian we're trying to help you.
Stop (hushed) pissing away every
fucking opportunity you get to grow
up. You have to be realistic
Dorian. Just because you think your
an artist doesn't mean Olive should
have to starve with you.

DORIAN

You don't know anything about us
Neil.

*

NEIL

Look you don't want to do this.
Just think for a second. Act like
an adult Dorian.

Dorian pushes past Neil and exits.

*

8

EXT. OUTSIDE SMALL APARTMENT -- TWILIGHT

8

Dorian's Boxes are thrown carelessly outside of the shut
door. Art supplies spills out of certain damaged boxes.
Dorian sets down a half empty pack of tall-boys, and tries to
open the door. His key won't fit in the door, and he starts
pounding and kicking it.

DORIAN

(Builds)

Olive. Open the door. I need to get
this stuff inside. Olive. It's
freezing. OLIVE. Olive don't
embarrass me like this. OLIVE.
OLIVE OPEN THE FUCKING DOOR. OLIVE!
FUCK.

He starts kicking the boxes spilling more supplies and slumps
against the wall facing his ruined boxes. He cracks a beer
and lights a cigarette. Then he reaches for his phone and
calls someone.

DORIAN (CONT'D)

Hey Neil, man Olive kicked me out.

NEIL

(Clearly)

I know

DORIAN

What? What do you mean you know?

NEIL

(Cut to Neil in the house.)

Look I'm in the house. You need to calm down or I might have to call the police.

DORIAN

(Heard through the phone)

Are you kidding me? The police?

NEIL

We don't even recognize you, and we can't keep wasting our time on you while you waste your life. Figure your shit out.

DORIAN

(Cut Back to Dorian)

PUT OLIVE ON THE PHONE RIGHT NOW. FUCKING NOW NEIL (on the verge of tears)

DORIAN (CONT'D)

PUT THAT CUNT ON THE PHONE RIGHT NOW (full of anger).

DORIAN (CONT'D)

Please- Please. I-I didn't mean that. It's just... it's been so hard. I don't know anything anymore. I love you Olive. Tell her I love her. Tell her I-I just don't know who what to do.

NEIL

Just go away Dorian.

Dorian slumps against the exterior of the apartment, and cracks open his last beer. With a cigarette dangling from his mouth. Loudly he speaks at the door from his position next to it.

DORIAN

Enjoy my sloppy seconds

*

9

INT. PUBLIC BUS -- NIGHT

9

Dorian sits in the back of a bus alone but surrounded by his ruined boxes. The only light comes from the windows and is therefore constantly shifting all the time. He pulls out his phone. It rings for a while.

Close on the contact: "Mom" it keeps ringing until- after a while- he ends the call.

*

Dorian's transformation from the clean shaven but sickly looking young man happens with montage footage around the city and three nights on the bus. He loses boxes with each passing day.

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*

*

10

EXT: 5-POINTS SOUTH-DAY

10

Dorian picks up a cigarette butt. He's sitting next to his box mixing paints with his fingers on a sliver of cardboard in front of him. A few beaten up paintings are laying in front of him the same from the art crawl

*

DORIAN

Hey, could you spare some change?

STRANGER

How much for the painting?

*

*

DORIAN

Whaya got?

*

STRANGER

10?

*

*

DORIAN

Yeah sure.

*

*

The stranger hands down the money, and Dorian hands him the piece. Before giving it away Dorian takes one last look at the painting then looks at the money in his hand.

*

*

*

11

EXT. UAB - DAY

11

Dorian is in the city and he looks up to Olive walking along a glass hallway. She doesn't see him, but he watches her stop and talk to someone. Close on his face looking up-mouth open. Then she is leaving the building accompanied by Neal- he whispers something into her ear and she laughs, but Dorian can't hear it. A voice cuts through the moment. The voice belongs to NURSE (youngish male nurse) smoking a cigarette.

NURSE

Are you here for the needle exchange?

DORIAN

What?

NURSE

It's right through here.

The Nurse flicks his cigarette on the ground and exits the frame. Dorian enters the RED door.

*
*

12 INT. BATHROOM STALL -NIGHT 12

13 Dorian sits on the toilet with his arm tied off with a belt, and he's smacking the veins in his left arm. He reaches into the box and pulls out the needle and rips it out of the sterile package with his teeth. He brings the needle to his arm- CUT TO: Needle fills up with blood.

*
*

14 INT. GALLERY -- NIGHT 14

Dorian stands (close over his shoulder on the painting) looking at his painting on the wall of the gallery that rejected him before.

*

CURATOR

We recently stumbled upon this exceptionally talented artist in the streets right outside this very gallery. He's obviously trained, but like so many artists he's been tragically under-appreciated. The subject for this piece was his long time love- who abandoned him to the street. He's been selling off everything he owns just to feed himself, but he saved a few precious paints and brushes to craft this magnificent work of American art. Is it true you used your own blood to make the red?

DORIAN

Yes

*

(Cut to Black)
(Roll Credits.)