

ACT IScene 1

SETTING: First Class seating on an international "red-eye" flight. We see only a small section of the cabin: two rows of seats, one behind the other. Each row is two seats wide. The windows of the aircraft (not represented) would be left of these seats. The aisle runs on the right.

AT RISE: HUGH KENNAN sits in the front row window seat. He has an airline blanket pulled up to his chin. He is trying to fall asleep. WHAT'S-HER-NAME sits in the row behind him, on the aisle. KENNAN is unaware of WHAT'S-HER-NAME. WHAT'S-HER-NAME appears to be unaware of KENNAN. We hear the faint rumble of the engines throughout. KENNAN is speaking into a handheld voice recorder.

KENNAN

How come this always happens when I most need the rest? I need sleep, I need sleep, and yet there's always that one thing that just has to -- before you can -- as if I don't have enough to -- my mind is racing! I'm exhausted, wrung out --

(The FLIGHT ATTENDANT enters.)

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Would you like another blanket, Mister Kennan?

KENNAN

(To FLIGHT ATTENDANT.)

If you would. I think I'm freezing to death.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

I'll see what I can find.

(The FLIGHT ATTENDANT exits.
KENNAN resumes his dictation.)

KENNAN

I should be a an emotional wreck by now, I would be if I wasn't me so much, if I wasn't used to pressure, I should be sleeping like a baby but for this . . . this letter I owe you, this letter I'm somehow obligated to -- because of

KENNAN (Cont.)

something Oriel said over a year ago . . . well, who knows when she said it . . . or why . . . who knows why she was even on the subject, but somehow I have to pay for it, on some red-eye flight, too tired to think, on my way back to Paris, on my way back to a country American eighteen year olds can't even point to on a map. . . . So here you go. It's yours. In one take, first and final draft.
Dear . . .

(KENNAN pauses, trying to arrange his thoughts.)

. . . whoever you are.

(He switches off the recorder. Pause.)

I wonder what time zone I'm in?

(KENNAN is on the brink of sleep.)

WHAT'S-HER-NAME

(Not looking up.)

We're in Atlantic Savings Time.

KENNAN

(Mumbling.)

Atlantic Savings. . . .

(KENNAN drifts off. WHAT'S-HER-NAME looks up and sees that he is asleep.)

WHAT'S-HER-NAME

(Sings.)

MONSIEUR KENNAN,
MONSIEUR KENNAN. . . .

(No response.)

DORMEZ-VOUS?
DORMEZ-VOUS?

(No response.)

SONNEZ LES --

(KENNAN snaps awake.)

KENNAN

Les matines are not sonnez, and I am trying to sleep.

WHAT'S-HER-NAME

Who stops you from sleeping? Go to sleep if you want to sleep.

KENNAN

I want to sleep.

WHAT'S-HER-NAME

But something keeps you. What is it?