

A PROSE HOME MOVIE

Written by

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An Adaptation of J.D. Salinger's Franny and Zooey

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TITLE: NEW YORK CITY 1956

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

A classic UPPER EAST SIDE bathroom. Nothing less. ZOOEY GLASS, 25, slight of body but handsome, sits in an OVERFLOWING BATHTUB. He reads a TYPEWRITTEN LETTER propped up against his knees. There are several, folded and unfolded, pages of yellow paper. A DAMP CIGARETTE is balanced on the ledge- it keeps burning as ASHES FALL into the water.

TITLE: UPSTATE NEW YORK 1951

INT. RURAL COLLEGE - OFFICE - DAY

BUDDY GLASS, 35, typewrites on yellow paper.

BUDDY (V.O.)

I'm to write and tell you that you have your Whole Life Before You and that it's criminal if you don't go after your Ph.D. before you go in for the actor's life in a big way.

Buddy gets up to look out a window. It's SNOWING over rural land.

BUDDY (V.O.)

It happens to be one of those days when I see everybody in the family, including myself, through the wrong end of a telescope.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

The room is not impressively large, even by Manhattan apartment-house standards, but its accumulated furnishings give it the appearance of a banquet hall. There is a Steinway grand piano (kept open) and too many radios.

Zooey, 5, gives a performance to an audience of kids seated on a rug. They are BEATRICE GLASS, WALTER GLASS and WAKER GLASS. This is the GLASS FAMILY.

Buddy, the second eldest by a decade, is half watching by the bookshelf as he leafs through a book on Zen Buddhism.

SEYMOUR GLASS, towering, the eldest of all Glass children, holds a baby in his arms. This is FRANNY GLASS, the youngest of all Glass children. He rocks her while keeping her close- pure affection, infinite adoration.

The one man show ends. The kids cheer, clap, praise. Franny runs up to Zooey to hug him. Seymour, with the baby in one hand, raises Zooey's arm to the sky.

Zooey, proud, is all smiles.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. RURAL COLLEGE - OFFICE - DAY

BUDDY (V.O.)
I wish to God I had some idea what
will happen to you as an actor.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Seymour passes Franny to Buddy.

Buddy, inaudible, starts reading to Franny from his book.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. RURAL COLLEGE - OFFICE - DAY

BUDDY (V.O.)
Will you be content with that
standard box-office schmalz? Or
will you dream of something more?

EXT. RURAL COLLEGE - CAMPUS - DAY

Buddy walks through the snowstorm in a suit jacket and scarf.

BUDDY (V.O.)
I take it for granted you know that
for all the years I've been moving
my literary whore's cubicle from
college to college, I still don't
have even a B.A.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. BEACH - FLORIDA - DAY - FLASHBACK

Seymour, pale, at the beach on a beautiful day. A vast ocean screams of endless possibilities.

BUDDY (V.O.)
It's three years, to the day-

INT. HOTEL - FLORIDA - DAY - FLASHBACK

Seymour sits at a desk in a simple beachside hotel room. The window is open, the ocean breeze makes the curtains sway. A girl is asleep on one of two twin beds.

Seymour raises a caliber 7.65 automatic and fires a bullet through his right temple.

BUDDY (V.O.)
since Seymour killed himself.

Blood explodes all over the room.

INT. PLANE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Buddy, window seat, view of CLOUDS. We can't see his face.

BUDDY (V.O.)
I wept like a slob on the plane for
five solid hours.

Buddy exits the airport, laughing uncontrollably as he walks towards a woman.

BUDDY (V.O.)
But when I got off the plane a few
minutes later and the Bereaved
Widow came toward me all in
Bergdorf Goodman black, I had the
Wrong Expression on my face.

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Seymour and Buddy watch Franny and Zooey read. Zooey tries to get up, Buddy makes him sit back down. MRS. GLASS, in a MIDNIGHT BLUE KIMONO, walks in then out.

BUDDY (V.O.)
There are times when I think you've
forgiven Seymour more completely
than any of us have.

Franny fusses, Seymour signs "5" more minutes with his hand.

BUDDY (V.O.)
Waker once said you were the only
one who was bitter about Seymour's
suicide and the only one who really
forgave him for it.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Zooey crying.

BUDDY (V.O.)
The rest of us, he said, were
outwardly unbitter and inwardly
unforgiving.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. RURAL COLLEGE - OFFICE - DAY

A knock at the door that goes unanswered. Buddy doesn't even look up.

BUDDY (V.O.)
Enough. Act, Zachary Martin Glass,
when and where you want to, since
you feel you must, but do it with
all your might. If you do anything
at all beautiful on a stage,
anything nameless and joy-making,
anything above and beyond the call
of theatrical ingenuity, Seymour
and I will both rent tuxedos and
rhinestone hats and solemnly come
around to the stage door with
bouquets of snapdragons.

Buddy removes the letter from the typewriter, folds it into an envelope.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Zooey folds the letter into an envelope. He starts tapping it back and forth along the tub edge.

After a few tries, it FALLS into the water. He reaches in quickly to grab it.

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Franny, now a grown woman, sleeps soundly on the couch.

Zooey, hair combed wet, stands barefoot in the entrance.

He watches Franny sleep.

A SMALL PEA-GREEN CLOTHBOUND BOOK rests beside her. Zooey is about to pick it up when Mrs. Glass whispers to him from the doorway.

Mrs. Glass, in the same MIDNIGHT BLUE KIMONO, looks like after all these years she had never left the building at all.

Without a word, she motions him to the kitchen.

TITLE OVER BLACK: ONE WEEK EARLIER

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - HALLWAY - DAY

Franny, with a suitcase and handbag, exits a bedroom. She stuffs the pea-green clothbound book into her handbag and walks out the door. It slams.

INT. YELLOW TAXI - DAY

Franny reading the book, as the car passes CENTRAL PARK.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DAY

Franny reading the book, seated on the floor underneath BLUE and GOLD painted ceiling CONSTELLATIONS.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DAY

Franny holds the book in one hand, and dials a number from her phone book under "Buddy" with the other.

He doesn't pick up.

EXT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DAY

Franny lights a cigarette. A LITTLE GIRL in a stroller is pushed by with a DOLL in her lap. She turns the doll's head around to look at Franny.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DAY

Franny dials Buddy, again. He doesn't pick up, again.

She leaves a message.

FRANNY
(into phone)
Buddy--

She places the book to her chest.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

I know that Zooey and I have been up there on a million weekends in the last couple of years, and though we've talked, we've all agreed not to say a word. Today is the first time I've really wanted to speak up. The deeper I dive into this book, the more I lose the courage of my convictions.

She hangs up and heads towards the train platforms.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - CONNECTICUT - DAY

Twenty some young men wait for their dates to arrive. They stand in hatless, smoky little groups of twos and threes and fours inside a heated waiting room. Their voices are collegiately dogmatic.

LANE COUTELL, in a Burberry raincoat, is one of the few boys waiting in the cold on the open platform.

FRANNY is the first girl to get off the train. Lane spots her immediately. He walks towards her with suppressed excitement.

FRANNY

Lane!

Franny throws her arms around Lane and kisses him.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Did you get my letter?

Before he can answer / in the same breath-

FRANNY (CONT'D)

You look almost frozen, you poor man. Why didn't you wait inside? Did you get my letter?

Lane picks up her suitcase.

LANE

Which letter?

FRANNY

You didn't get it? I mailed it Wednesday. Oh, God! I even took it down to the post--

LANE

Oh, that one. Yes. This is all the bags you brought? What's the book?

Franny looks down at her hand holding the book.

FRANNY

This? Oh, just something.

She quickly opens her handbag and stuffs the book into it.
She follows Lane down the long platform.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Zooey sits on the WINDOW LEDGE, hair still wet, reading a
TYPEWRITTEN MANUSCRIPT.

Mrs. Glass is opening and closing cupboards in search of an
item she will never find- most likely misplaced a decade ago.

MRS. GLASS

I don't suppose you've spoken to
your little sister yet.

She turns to look at the cat, BLOOMBERG, who makes an
entrance.

ZOOEY

No I have not spoken to my little
sister yet. How about getting the
hell out of here now?

MRS. GLASS

Why haven't you?

Zooey continues reading without looking up.

MRS. GLASS (CONT'D)

I don't think that's nice, Zooey. I
don't think that's nice at all. I
asked you particularly to please go
see if there's anything--

ZOOEY

In the first place, Bessie, I just
got up about an hour ago. In the
second place, I talked to her for
two solid hours last night, I don't
think she frankly wants to talk to
any goddamn one of us today. And in
the third place, if you don't get
the hell out of this kitchen while
I'm practicing my lines, I'm going
to set fire to these goddamn ugly
curtains.

Mrs. Glass lights a cigarette then brushes imaginary tobacco flakes from her kimono.

MRS. GLASS

I happen to know that the little book she carried about the whole house with her yesterday is the root of this whole business.

Zooey puts his manuscript down and glances at her. He grins.

ZOOEY

How'd you figure that out?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY - ONE WEEK EARLIER

An ISOLATED TABLE in a popular downtown college restaurant. Yale and Harvard students on dates. Salads and snails.

Franny and Lane with two untouched MARTINIS.

Lane looks around the room with a palpable sense of well-being at finding himself in the right place with the right looking girl. Franny, extraordinarily pretty in a cashmere sweater and flannel skirt, smiles and sips her martini.

FRANNY

Oh, this is marvelous!

She looks only at her glass.

LANE

Anyway, I think I've got the paper in my room. If we get a chance over the weekend, I'll read it to you.

FRANNY

Marvelous. I'd love to hear it.

Lane nods.

LANE

I mean I didn't say anything too goddamn world-shaking or anything like that.

He shifts position in his chair.

LANE (CONT'D)

But - I don't know - I think the emphasis I put on why he was neurotically attracted to the mot juste wasn't too bad. I mean in the light of what we know today. Not just psychoanalysis and all that crap, but certainly to a certain extent. You know what I mean. I'm no Freudian man or anything like that, but certain things can't just pass over as capital-F Freudian. I mean to a certain extent I think I was perfectly justified to point out that none of the real good boys- Tolstoy, Dostoevski, Shakespeare, for Chrissake- were such goddamn word-squeezers. They just wrote.

Lane looks at Franny expectantly.

FRANNY

You going to eat your olive or what?

LANE

(coldly)

No. You want it?

Franny knows from Lane's expression that she has asked the wrong question.

FRANNY

If you don't.

Lane extends his glass. Silence comes over the table. Franny takes a cigarette from Lane's pack. Lane lights it for her and one for himself.

LANE

This guy Brughman thinks I ought to publish the goddamn paper somewhere. As a matter of fact I don't think there's been really any incisive jobs done-

FRANNY

You're talking like a section man.

LANE

(with measured quietness)

I beg your pardon?

FRANNY

I'm sorry. But you are. You really are.

Lane is irritated.

LANE

I am? How does a section man talk, may I ask?

FRANNY

Well, I don't know what they are around here, but where I come from, a section man is a person that takes over a class when the teacher is busy having a nervous breakdown or at the dentist. He's a graduate student or something. If it's a course in Russian Literature, he comes in, in his little button-down collar shirt and striped tie, and starts knocking Turgenev for about a half hour. Then, when he's finished, when he's completely ruined him for you, he starts an argument with you and gets this terribly benign expression on their--

LANE

You've got a goddamn bug today- you know that? What the hell is the matter with you?

FRANNY

I'm sorry. I'm awful. I've just felt so destructive all week.

LANE

Your letter didn't sound so goddamn destructive.

Franny, very pale, is suddenly on her feet with her handbag.

FRANNY

Would you excuse me for just one minute?

LANE

What's the matter? You feel alright? Anything wrong, or what?

FRANNY

I'll be back in just a second.

Franny leaves the room without asking directions.

Lane, alone at the table, sits smoking and taking conservative drinks of his martini.

INT. RESTAURANT - BATHROOM - DAY

The bathroom is as large as the dining room. It is unattended and unoccupied. Franny stands in the middle of the tiled floor. Pale, her brow is beaded with perspiration, her mouth open.

Abruptly, and very quickly, she goes into the furthest stall. She sits down, brings her knees towards her, and makes herself into a compact unit. She presses her hands to her eyes, then breaks down crying. The crying is almost endless-sounds of deep grief, confusion, breath unable to get to the top.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A room lit only by a lamp. A late night course. Franny and Zooey in pajamas. Buddy and Seymour in button down shirts.

To be, SEYMOUR

Satori BUDDY

Is to be? SEYMOUR

Seymour and Buddy wait for Franny and Zooey to answer.

With God? FRANNY

Before he said... BUDDY

Let there be light. SEYMOUR

The lights go out.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. RESTAURANT - BATHROOM - DAY

Abruptly, Franny stops crying. Her face is tear-streaked and expressionless as she picks up her handbag from the floor, opens it, and takes out the small pea-green clothbound book. She puts it on her knees, gazes at it, then picks it up and presses it to her chest firmly.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Franny, smiling, walks briskly back to her chair where Lane waits. Lane slowly gets up with a napkin in his hand.

FRANNY
God, I'm sorry. Did you think I
died?

Lane pulls out her chair for her.

LANE
I didn't know what the hell
happened.

He goes back around to his own chair.

LANE (CONT'D)
Your eyes are bloodshot. You O.K.
or what?

Franny lights a cigarette.

FRANNY
I'm marvelous now.

A WAITER brings Lane frog legs, and Franny a glass of milk. Franny keeps smoking.

LANE
You smoke too much.

Franny takes a long drag. A sip of milk.

LANE (CONT'D)
How's the play?

FRANNY
I don't know. I'm not in it. I
quit.

LANE
You quit?

FRANNY
Yes.

LANE

I thought you were so mad about the part. What happened? They give it to somebody else?

FRANNY

No.

LANE

Well, what happened?

Silence at the table.

LANE (CONT'D)

You didn't quit the whole department, did you?

Franny nods and takes another sip of milk.

LANE (CONT'D)

Why, for God's sake? I thought goddamn theater was your passion. It's about the only thing I've ever heard you--

FRANNY

It started embarrassing me. Like I was a nasty little egomaniac.

Franny finishes her glass of milk.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

It seemed like such poor taste to want to act in the first place. I'm just sick of ego ego ego! My own and everybody else's. I'm sick of everybody that wants to get somewhere, do something distinguished, be somebody interesting.

Lane sits back to better make his point.

LANE

You're just afraid of competing.

FRANNY

I'm afraid of not having the courage to be an absolute nobody.

The waiter comes and goes.

LANE

What's the book anyway?

Franny stays silent.

LANE (CONT'D)
Is it a goddamn secret?

FRANNY
Oh, I don't know. Something called
the Way of the Pilgrim.

LANE
Who wrote it?

FRANNY
Some Russian peasant, apparently.
You never know his name. He just
tells you he's thirty three, got a
withered arm and his wife is dead.

LANE
Any good?

FRANNY
It starts out with the peasant
wanting to find out what it means
in the Bible when it says you
should pray incessantly. You know-
without stopping. So he starts out
walking all over Russia, looking
for somebody who can tell him how.
And what you say if you do.

Franny watches Lane dismember the frog legs.

FRANNY (CONT'D)
The starets- these very advanced
religious people- tell him about
the Jesus Prayer. Lord Jesus
Christ, have mercy on me.

Franny is no longer looking at Lane, but over his shoulder.

FRANNY (CONT'D)
They tell the pilgrim that if you
keep saying the prayer over and
over again- the prayer becomes self
active. The words get synchronized
with your heartbeats, and then
you're actually praying without
ceasing.

LANE
(shortly)
What is the result?

FRANNY

What?

LANE

I mean what is the result to follow? All this synchronization business and mumbo-jumbo. You get heart trouble?

FRANNY

You get to see God.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Lane--

Franny stands up.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Would you excuse me again for just a second?

She walks briskly through the dining room, the same route as before. She stops short at a small COCKTAIL BAR at the far end of the room. She puts her hand on the bar, then lowers her head. A bartender stops wiping a glass. She puts her hand to her forehead. She faints, collapsing to the floor.

INT. RESTAURANT OFFICE - DAY

Franny is on the couch in the manager's office. Lane sits beside her. His face is suspended anxiously over hers. Pale, now, too.

She wakes up.

LANE

You feel any better?

FRANNY

Am I supposed to say where I am?

(beat)

Where am I?

Lane laughs.

LANE

Do you think you will be alright if I leave you for one minute? They're all running around looking for spirits of ammonia and doctors to bring to you.

FRANNY

Fine.

LANE

Okay, I'll be right back. Don't move.

Alone, Franny lies still, looking at the ceiling. Her lips begin to move, forming soundless words.

They continue to move.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

The phone rings. Mrs. Glass keeps smoking as Zooey waits for her to answer.

It rings again.

ZOOEY

Who the hell keeps calling at this goddamn hour?

MRS. GLASS

Lane.

Zooey looks delighted.

MRS. GLASS (CONT'D)

It may interest you to know that he's called up here five or six times since Franny got home - twice this morning before you were even up. He's been very sweet, and he's terribly concerned and worried about your sister.

ZOOEY

Not like some people we know, eh?

MRS. GLASS

I never said--

ZOOEY

Well I hate to disillusion you, but I've sat by the hour with him and he's not sweet at all. He's a charm boy and a fake.

MRS. GLASS

Oh, it's impossible to talk to you!

ZOOEY

You're so stupid, Bessie. I can tell you one thing. He's probably worried because he minded leaving the goddamn football game early - worried because he probably showed he minded and he knows Franny is sharp enough to have noticed.

MRS. GLASS

You're getting so much like Buddy used to be when he was your age.

Zooey is still.

MRS. GLASS (CONT'D)

If you don't like somebody in two minutes, you're done with them forever.

Bessie gives him a long look.

MRS. GLASS (CONT'D)

You can't live in this world with such likes and dislikes. Regardless of what you may think, young man.

Zooey looks at her steadily then smiles and looks back down at his manuscript.

Mrs. Glass sighs. She lights a fresh cigarette.

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

FRANNY awakens with a jolt. She wears a tailored BEIGE TIE-SILK DRESSING GOWN WITH A PATTERN OF MINUTE PINK TEA ROSES covered partly by a BLUE AFGHAN. She squints at the morning sunlight. Zooey stands by the window, illuminated, with a CIGAR in his mouth, in the cloud of his own smoke.

FRANNY

Why is it so sunny?

ZOOEY

I will bring the sunlight wherever I go, buddy.

FRANNY

Why'd you wake me up?

ZOOEY

I'm opening a parish and I needed your blessing...

FRANNY

Stop it.

Zooey stares at her through his cigar smoke.

ZOOEY

You look like hell, you know that?

FRANNY

You could have sat there all morning without saying that.

Zooey sits on the bench of the STEINWAY piano. He is small behind its all black Steinway enormity. He starts playing The Kinkajou by Jack Hylton.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Please don't bang on the keys.

ZOOEY

(while playing)

Dick Hess called up here about one o'clock last night. He wanted to meet for a drink.

FRANNY

Don't bang the keys.

ZOOEY

First of all, he knows I don't drink. Second, he knows I was born in New York and that if there's one thing I can't stand, it's atmosphere. Third, he knows I live about seventy goddamn blocks from the Village. And fourth! I told him three times I was in my pajamas and slippers.

FRANNY

Did you go?

Bloomberg appears in her lap.

ZOOEY

I have no goddamn will power.

The piano music plays into-

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BAR - WEST VILLAGE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A candle lit bar. Cocktails, overflowing and old-fashioned, slide across the bar. Faces can barely be made out. Dick and Zooey sit at the busy bar.

ZOOEY (V.O.)
I sat there for two solid hours
while he told me what a superior
son of a bitch I am-

Hess has multiple rounds. Zooey's ashtray overflows.

ZOOEY (V.O.)
and what a family of psychotics and
psychopathic prodigies I come from.

A GLASS BREAKS. Zooey waves down the bartender for a drink.

ZOOEY (V.O.)
Then, when he's done analyzing me,
and Buddy, and Seymour, both of
whom he's never met-

Dick opens a BRIEFCASE and pulls out a MANUSCRIPT.

ZOOEY (V.O.)
he shoves a new hour long script
under my arm.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Zooey closes the lid to the piano.

FRANNY
You have two scripts now! That's
just marvelous. What do you think
you will do?

ZOOEY
Go to France this summer to make a
picture.

FRANNY
You did not tell me! That's so
exciting! Zooey!

ZOOEY
It's not exciting. I'd hate like
hell to leave New York. I was born
here. I went to school here. I've
been run over here, twice, and on
the same damn street. I have no
business acting in Europe.

Franny is up now. Standing, she pats the couch in search of a lost item. Her discreteness is given up by her annoyance.

FRANNY

Why does everything disappear in this house!

ZOOEY

What do you think you're doing with the Jesus prayer?

Franny tries to cut in, but there's no way.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

There's no difference between greed for material or intellectual treasure and greed for spiritual treasure.

FRANNY

(icily with a faint tremor)

May I interrupt now, Zooey?

Zooey picks up a SNOWGLOBE and flips it upside down.

FRANNY

You're saying I want something from the Jesus prayer - which makes me just as acquisitive as someone who wants a coat, or to be famous, or to be dripping in prestige!

The tremor in her voice amounts to an impediment.

ZOOEY

All right, take it easy. Take it easy.

FRANNY

I don't need the famous Zachary Glass to tell me that!

Zooey is scanning a bookshelf. The rows are labelled with each of the seven Glass children's names. He stops at WALT.

ZOOEY

Walt's theory was that the religious life, and all the agony that goes with it, is just something that God sicks on people who have the gall to accuse Him of having created an ugly world.

FRANNY
I never heard that.

ZOOEY
I know you think my intention is to take the prayer away from you. It's not. You can sit on that couch reciting the preamble to the Constitution for the rest of your life for all I care--

FRANNY
That's beautiful. Just beautiful.

ZOOEY
Beg pardon?

FRANNY
Oh, shut up. Just go on, go on.

ZOOEY
What I don't like at all is this snotty crusade you're leading against everybody. What I don't like- and what I don't think either Seymour or Buddy would like either- is the way you talk about people. I mean you don't just despise what they represent, you despise them. It's too damn personal, Franny.

FRANNY
Zachary Glass! You don't know a single--

ZOOEY
If you're going to war against the system, just do your shooting like a nice, intelligent girl - because the enemy's there, and not because you don't like his hairdo or goddamn necktie.

Silence.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)
Not only is the way you're going around your prayer tenth-rate religion, you're having a tenth-rate breakdown, too.

Franny throws the blue afghan to the floor.

FRANNY

Just stop it, Zooey! Just stop it!

ZOOEY

I've seen a couple of real breakdowns, and the people who had them didn't pick and choose the place they--

FRANNY

Will you shut up, please?

ZOOEY

You keep talking about ego. My God, it would take Christ himself to decide what's ego and what isn't. It's God's universe, buddy, not yours, and he has the final say about what's ego and what's not.

Franny starts to sob. Zooey is back at the window, searching towards the sky.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

Franny. If you're going to say the Jesus Prayer, say it to Jesus. Not to Seymour.

Zooey looks at Franny crying.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Franny. I'm very sorry. Nothing can be done.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

Do you want me to try to get Buddy on the phone for you tonight? I think you need to talk to somebody. I'm no damn good for this.

Franny just sobs.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

Franny. What about it? Shall I try?

Franny shakes her head without raising it. She replies, inaudibly.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

What?

FRANNY

I want to talk to Seymour.

He looks at her for another ten seconds. Then leaves the room via the hall, closing the door behind him.

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - HALLWAY - DAY

The hall has been set up for renovations. NEWSPAPER scattered on the floor. PAINT is already splattered throughout. Zooey tries to walk carefully across but steps into it. He leaves WHITE FOOTSTEPS.

He is looking down as he COLLIDES with Mrs. Glass.

MRS. GLASS
I thought you'd gone! Don't you
have a date?

Zooey is visibly sweating.

MRS. GLASS (CONT'D)
Why are you perspiring? Didn't you
just take a bath? What have you
been-

ZOOEY
I'm late now, fatty. Come on, step
to one side.

MRS. GLASS
Did you talk to Franny?

ZOOEY
She's crying, or was when I left.

MRS. GLASS
Again? What happened?

ZOOEY
Come on, now. I mean it. Get it out
of the way.

Mrs. Glass, reluctantly, steps aside. But not before a final order.

MRS. GLASS
Change that shirt, young man!

Zooey walks across the hall and into the room his two eldest brothers had shared.

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - BUDDY AND SEYMOUR'S BEDROOM -
DAY

Zooey closes the door behind him as tightly as possible. This is the first time he's set foot in this room in several years. The room is unsunny, unlarge. A maple wood "set": two day beds, a night table, two boyishly small, knee-cramping desks, two chiffoniers, two semi-easy chairs. Three oriental rugs, extremely worn, scattered on the floor. Then BOOKS-everywhere. Tall cases line the walls, beyond capacity. Overflow piled in stacks on the floor. No space for walking, none for pacing.

He glances scarcely inside, then turns around deliberately. He faces a BOARD as long and wide as the door itself. Every inch is decorated with quotations. Zooey stands close enough to read - expressionless. Small lettering:

The happiness of being with people. - Kafka
It loved to happen. - Marcus Aurelius
O snail
Climb Mount Fuji,
But slowly, slowly! - Issa

After a moment, Zooey turns around, walks over and sits down at SEYMOUR'S DESK. He places his cigar on the desk, it burns. He covers his face with his hands.

He removes the support from his face, picks up his cigar, and moves over to BUDDY'S DESK. Identical arrangement, but for a PHONE.

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The ring of a telephone. Mrs. Glass and Franny on the couch.

FRANNY
Is that our telephone?

MRS. GLASS
I'll be right back.

Mrs. Glass leaves the room. Then-

MRS. GLASS (CONT'D)
That's Buddy on the phone.

FRANNY
Where is he phoning from?

MRS. GLASS
I didn't even ask him. He sounds like he has a terrible cold.

Mrs. Glass doesn't sit back down.

MRS. GLASS (CONT'D)
Hurry up, now, young lady. He wants
to talk to you.

FRANNY
Did he say so?

MRS. GLASS
Certainly he said so! Hurry up,
now. Put on your slippers!

Franny lets herself out of PINK SHEETS.

FRANNY
(nervously)
What did you tell him?

MRS. GLASS
Just kindly go to the phone,
please, young lady.

Franny slowly rises.

MRS. GLASS (CONT'D)
Just hurry, for goodness sake!

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - HALLWAY - DAY

Franny walks through the hall, passing the hallway phone.

She walks into-

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Furniture herded to the MIDDLE OF THE ROOM. Covered with old,
paint-flecked, canvas. Newspapered floor, empty paint
buckets. Two twin beds.

The furthest bed is covered with a WHITE BEDSPREAD. The PHONE
is on a PILLOW. The hand-piece is detached, waiting for
Franny. She sits down beside it on the bed, looks away from
it, and pushes back her hair.

She lights a cigarette, puffs on it, then bravely picks up
the phone.

FRANNY
Hello. Buddy?

BUDDY (V.O.)
Hello, sweetheart. How are you? Are
you all right?

FRANNY

I'm fine. How are you? You sound as though you have a cold.

No response.

BUDDY (V.O.)

Yes and no. You know. Are you all right, sweetheart?

FRANNY

I'm fine. You sound funny, though. Either you have a terrible cold or this is a terrible connection. Where are you, anyway?

BUDDY (V.O.)

Where am I? I'm right in my element, Flopsy. I'm in a little haunted house down the road. Never mind. Just talk to me.

FRANNY

I suppose she's been briefing you by the hour.

BUDDY (V.O.)

I heard about the cheeseburger diet, the Pilgrim book, then I stopped listening. Past a point it's rude to go on listening to Bessie.

FRANNY

You sound funny. Do you have a cold, or what?

BUDDY (V.O.)

I feel wonderful, sweetheart. I'm sitting here talking to you and I feel wonderful. It's a joy to hear your voice. I can't tell you.

Silence.

BUDDY (V.O.)

Flopsy, can you think of anything Bessie could have missed?

FRANNY

Zoey has been at me all morning.

BUDDY (V.O.)

Zoey? How is he?

FRANNY

He's fine. He's just tiptop. I could just murder him!

BUDDY (V.O.)

Murder him? Why, sweetheart? Why could you murder our Zooey?

FRANNY

I've never seen anyone so destructive in my life! He's just so erratic. He goes around and around in such horrible circles!

BUDDY (V.O.)

Tell about it, sweetheart.

FRANNY

He's just a monster. And he's so bitter about things. About religion, and television. About you and Seymour. About our childhood.

She pushes her smoking things out of the way, making space for her thoughts.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

It's like being in a lunatic asylum. He's a patient dressed up like a doctor! Smoking his smelly cigars all over the house. I'm so sick of the smell of--

BUDDY (V.O.)

The cigars are a ballast, sweetheart. If he didn't have a cigar to hold onto, his feet would leave the ground. We'd never see our Zooey again.

Franny gets up slowly from the edge of the bed.

FRANNY

Alright, Zooey. Alright.

BUDDY (V.O.)

(not quite immediately)
Zooey? Franny, what is this? You there?

FRANNY

Just stop it now, please. I know it's you.

BUDDY (V.O.)
What in the world are you talking
about, sweetheart?

FRANNY
You're not being funny. If there's
anything special you have to say to
me please hurry up and say it and
leave me alone!

Silence at the other end of the phone. She sits back down on
the bed. Disturbed by it.

FRANNY (CONT'D)
I'm not going to hang up on you or
anything. But all I am is on the
receiving end. It isn't terribly
pleasant. You think everybody's
made of iron or something.

A throat clears on the other line.

SPLIT SCREEN	
RIGHT HALF SCREEN:	LEFT HALF SCREEN:
Franny puts out her cigarette.	Zooey puts out his cigar.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GLASS FAMILY APARTMENT - BUDDY AND SEYMOUR'S BEDROOM -
SAME TIME

ZOOEY
I don't think everybody's made of
iron, buddy.

FRANNY (O.S.)
Well, you'd think you did.

She waits. She listens.

FRANNY (CONT'D)
I mean, did you have any special
reason for calling me?

ZOOEY
No special reason, buddy, no
special reason.

Franny waits some more.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)
I suppose I more or less called you
to tell you to go on with your
Jesus Prayer if you want to.

FRANNY

I know.

ZOOEY

I have no goddamn authority to be speaking up like a seer the way I have been. We have too many goddamn seers in this family.

Franny straightens her back into better posture, as if it might come in handy any moment.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

Just don't forget one thing, buddy.

FRANNY

Go on.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

When you first felt the urge to say the prayer, you didn't start searching the corners of the world for a master. You came home. By rights, you're only entitled to the low-grade spiritual counsel we're able to give you here.

Franny tries with one hand alone to get a light for her cigarette. She drops the match box. She lets the SPILLED MATCHES lie.

FRANNY

Where are you calling from? Where are you now?

ZOOEY

What the hell's the difference where I am? Pierre, South Dakota, for God's sake. I just have two more small things, then I'll quit.

Franny lies down on her back.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

Did you know that Buddy and I drove up to see you in your play last summer?

Franny stands up, then immediately sits back down.

FRANNY

No, I didn't. Nobody said one single--

ZOOEY

Well, we were. And you were good.
And when I say good, I mean good.
And now I hear you're finished with
theater forever.

FRANNY

It's none of your business what I
want to do.

ZOOEY

You irritate me, Franny! You've
made the great startling discovery
that the acting profession's loaded
with mercenaries and butchers.

FRANNY

I'm not you, I'm not--

ZOOEY

Somewhere along the line, in one
incarnation or another, you not
only had the hankering to be an
actress, but a good one. You're
stuck with it now.

FRANNY

I am trying to be free!

ZOOEY

You can't just walk out on the
results of your own hankerings! The
only thing you can do now, the only
religious thing you can do, is act.

Franny now sits with the flat of her free hand against the
side of her face. A pain that cannot be named.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

And here's the last thing, I
promise.

FRANNY

Zooey!

ZOOEY

You raved and bitched when you came
home about the stupidity of
audiences. The goddamn unskilled
laughter in the fifth row.

There is a silence. Franny continues to keep her hand on the
side of her face.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

God knows it's depressing. I'm not saying it isn't. But that's none of your business, Franny.

FRANNY

Some days I walk down the hallway, and I feel Seymour walk right behind me. I never felt him on stage.

ZOOEY

I subbed for Walt one night on It's a Wise Child. Seymour told me to shine my shoes. I was furious. The studio, the audience, they were all morons. I said they couldn't see them anyway.

FRANNY

Well, they couldn't-

ZOOEY

He said to shine them anyway. He said to shine them for the Fat Lady.

Franny is standing. She has taken her hand away from her face to hold the phone with two hands.

FRANNY

He told me, too! He told me to be funny for the Fat Lady!

ZOOEY

Yes. Yes. Yes. Alright. Let me tell you something. Are you listening?

Franny looks tense. Nods.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

I don't care where an actor acts. On the radio, on the television, in a goddamn Broadway theater. But let me tell you a secret. Are you listening to me? There isn't anyone out there who isn't Seymour's Fat Lady.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

Listen to me.

Franny nods.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)
Don't you know who that Fat Lady
really is?

Franny shakes no.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)
Christ Himself, buddy.

The sound of a phone being replaced in its catch. A dial tone. Franny continues to hold the phone to her ear. Then, she replaces the phone, clears away the smoking things, draws the cotton bedspread from the bed she's been sitting on, takes off her slippers, and gets into bed.

She lies quiet, smiling at the ceiling.

INT. RURAL COLLEGE - OFFICE - DAY

Buddy - the years have left a mark on him. Unopened letters are stacked on his desk. Addressed from Zooey and Franny, to Seymour.

He typewrites.

BUDDY (V.O.)
There is so much I want to tell
you, but nowhere to begin.