

SUNRISE Scene Samples

By

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WINNER: Hollywood Screenplay Contest
Top 10%: Scriptapalooza

F.W. Murnau's 'Sunrise - A Song of Two Humans'

WGA 2015 REG # 1779325
Opening quote from
Hermann Sudermann's
'The Indian Lily',
public domain, 1911

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BLACK

FADE INTO:

JANET V.O.

"She did not burst into tears of despair. Her soul seemed neither wounded nor broken. She only thought: "I have forgiven him so much; why not forgive him this, too?" "

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

1998. Black, Alabama - population 211 - a small town stuck in the 50s and a hot, hot summer. Close up on a 10-year old girl, crouching down behind a tree, reading. In BACKGROUND we see children playing on a playground. In front of her is a serene creek - this is her hiding place. She is fragile, small, pale, weak. Knotted hair, crooked glasses. Behind her, a band of boys approach. They are older, 13.

BOY 1

Look who it is.

BOY 2

How you doin', Gaynor?

She does not respond.

BOY 2

I said, how you doin'?

He kicks her legs. She does not move.

BOY 1

You mute or somethin?

BOY 2

Probably a faggot like her brother.

BOY 1

Know what we did to your faggot brother today, Gaynor?

They laugh.

BOY 1

Wanna know what we did to your faggot big brother?

(CONTINUED)

BOY 2
Lucky he didn't die!

BOY 1
Damn right, shoulda kill't him
right then n' there.

BOY 2
Sure shoulda.

BOY 1
You a faggot too Gaynor?

Boy 2 kicks her legs again.

BOY 2/BOY 1
You's a faggot?/I said,
you's faggot?

BOY 1
Let's show her what we did to her
brother!

VOICE O.C.
Stop.

The boys look sup. Standing across the creek is GEORGE, 13.
Large for his age, he towers above the others. He is dirty,
his clothes old-timey hand-me-downs. He trails a broken tree
branch lightly through the water. The boys don't move.

YOUNG GEORGE
You go on n' git, now.

The boys still don't move.

YOUNG GEORGE
I said git, n' leave her alone from
now on.

BOY 1
Yeah? What are you gon' do about
it?

YOUNG GEORGE
Well, I'll tell ya.

BOY 1
Yeah?

YOUNG GEORGE
Yeah, I'll tell ya, sure.

(CONTINUED)

BOY 1

What you gon' say? He ain't got
nothin' to say! What you gon' say?

YOUNG GEORGE

I'm gon' say, I'm gon' shove this
stick where her faggot brother
likes it, you don't git outta here.

The smiles fade from the boys' faces. They begin to back
away. Once at a safe distance-

BOY 1

Yer a faggot, too, n' yer goin' ta
hell! Yer all gon' go ta hell!

George watches the others turn and run away.

YOUNG GEORGE

(to little girl)

You okay?

She nods sheepishly.

YOUNG GEORGE

Why you let em kick you round like
that for?

She doesn't respond.

YOUNG GEORGE

You know how ta talk?

LITTLE GIRL

Yes, sir.

YOUNG GEORGE

How old're you? Nine?

LITTLE GIRL

Ten, sir.

YOUNG GEORGE

How come you callin' me sir for?

She doesn't answer.

YOUNG GEORGE

Name's George. You gotta name?

LITTLE GIRL

Janet.

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG GEORGE
Janet. (a beat) Them boys kickin'
you around all the time?

She nods sheepishly.

YOUNG GEORGE
Say, then, how bout I meet you here
every day? Keep them boys away from
ya.

YOUNG JANET
Ain't-ain't you got school?

YOUNG GEORGE
Nah, I'm homeschooled. I live down
on the O'Brien farm.

YOUNG JANET
The O'Brien farm?

YOUNG GEORGE
Tha's tha one!

YOUNG JANET
Didn't-didn't it close down on
account o'-

YOUNG GEORGE
Nah, them big factories cain't shut
us down. Tha's been my daddy's farm
since he was a boy and his daddy's
before that n'-well, factories
cain't shut us down. We like our
milk fresh n' so do tha neighbors,
too.

A bell RINGS. JANET hurries to get up but trips.

YOUNG GEORGE
Here, let me help ya.

He leans down and grabs her hand, pulling her up. They look
at each other, hands still interlocked. George begins to
shake her hand.

YOUNG JANET
Tha's-tha's fer class.

YOUNG GEORGE
I'll walk ya.

Their hands are still together, still shaking. George
smiles. Janet smiles meekly back.

(CONTINUED)

After George's father dies, he grows cold and distant. This scene is our first glimpse into his raging emotional abuse, and its first hint of becoming physical.

INT. FARMHOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

JANET V.O. CONT.

But one day, everythin' changed.

The screen reads FEBRUARY 2011. George sits in his recliner in the living room, drinking a beer. Crickets chirp. Janet enters the room, wearing pajamas.

JANET

George?

He doesn't answer.

JANET

George? I got some news.

George grunts.

JANET

Ya know when we was young, and we used to talk about one day if we had a baby if it would get your hair?

George is silent.

JANET

Ya know cuz-cuz you had such nice hair and mine was always-it was always such a mess-

GEORGE

Get on with it.

JANET

I'm havin'-we, we're havin' a baby.

He's silent. He slowly drinks the last sip from his beer bottle, and smashes it on the floor.

JANET

Oh! Oh my-you-you dropped-here, let me clean that-

She drops to the floor, shocked, and begins to sweep up the smashed glass with her hands. She cuts herself.

(CONTINUED)

JANET

Ouch! Let-let me just go get the broom-

GEORGE

What you go gettin' pregnant for, Janet?!

JANET

It-I didn't mean-and I thought-

GEORGE

You thought what, huh?

JANET

I thought maybe-you would be excited-it would help-

GEORGE

Help what!

Janet looks at him, bewildered and frightened. Her eyes fill with tears. She chokes them back.

JANET

I'll-I'll just go get the broom.

She turns to leave. A beat.

GEORGE

You been to tha doctor?

JANET

No.

GEORGE

Yer gonna go. Get this all sorted out.

JANET

What do you mean, sorted out?

GEORGE

We cain't be havin' no baby round here.

JANET

(whiny)

You don't-you wouldn't-I-I want to have a baby, George. I been wantin' that since we met, n' you know it.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

Ya have? Ya wanted a baby?

JANET

*(She mistakes his tone for him
acknowledging a
misunderstanding)*

Yes!

A beat.

GEORGE

Well, YOU can have one, then.

He walks out the front door. Janet collapses in tears. We watch her on the floor, surrounded by broken glass, and the camera pans up away - through the fireplace, out of the chimney, over the farm as George walks over the fields - until we see nothing but lonely, rolling farmlands as far as the eye can see, under:

JANET V.O.

Even though he came back, my George was gone for good. From then on he would come home late, and leave again at sunrise...

(CONTINUED)

George demands that Janet see a doctor to get rid of their child.

INT. TRUCK - DAY - TRAVELING

Janet looks out the window sullenly as George drives his 1999 Chevy. The windshield is crusted with dirt and the dash is littered with coke cans, chip bags and a George Bush bobblehead. A Dallas Cowboys air freshener hangs from the rearview mirror.

INT. HOSPITAL

Classic doctor's room. Janet sits on the bed, her legs swinging, rustling the paper. George is in a plastic chair, feet up on the bed.

Enter Margaret.

MARGARET

Hello, hello! How are you both today?

GEORGE

(noticing her looks, hastily
puts his feet down)
Oh, hello. Ain't never seen you here. You new?

MARGARET

I am, I am, I just transferred here from New York. Are you both from around here?

GEORGE

Born n' raised!

MARGARET

Wonderful! So lovely to meet you both. I'm really enjoying Alabama so far.

GEORGE

(smiling)
Well, we're glad ta have ya.

Janet appears lifeless.

MARGARET

So what seems to be the problem?

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

Well, ya see, my wife here-she
seems ta think she's havin' a baby.

MARGARET

Wonderful!

GEORGE

Thing is, we don't want one.

MARGARET

(to Janet)

You don't want one?

Janet is silent.

GEORGE

That's right, we cain't really be
havin' a baby right about now.

MARGARET

Alright, well, there are many
things we can do here, but first we
need to administer a proper
pregnancy test just to be sure. If
you wouldn't mind just answering a
few questions, Mrs. o'Brien-

GEORGE

Janet.

MARGARET

Janet, wonderful, if you wouldn't
mind just answering a few
questions-we can get started. Would
you like George to stay? I often
find that women who have support
and encouragement have successful
results.

GEORGE

Yeah, I'll stay.

MARGARET

Wonderful. Now, when was the last
time you two had intercourse?

GEORGE

Uh-uh-lately it's been-just the
once, bout two months ago, I guess-

(CONTINUED)

MARGARET

Oh. Alright. And the first day of
your last menstrual cycle, Janet?

Janet looks at George.

GEORGE

I don't know-how would I know?

JANET

I don't know.

MARGARET

Can you estimate?

JANET

I guess-bout a week before
Christmas.

MARGARET

Alright, I'll just have you go into
the restroom just down the hall,
and urinate in this cup. Urinate
for about three seconds before you
begin to gather the urine, and then
just leave it in the window.

She hands her a cup, smiling brightly. Janet takes it
soberly and leaves then room, slowly.

GEORGE

So, how long ya been here?

MARGARET

Just about a week!

GEORGE

Oh! And uh, how're you n' the
mister likin' it?

MARGARET

(giggles)

There's no mister. But I'm liking
it wonderfully. Everyone is really
nice.

GEORGE

Ya makin' friends alright?

MARGARET

Yes, actually, I am! My neighbor
invited me to this little karaoke
place down on Main called Rosco's,
have you been there?

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

Naw, I never been there. Don't get out much.

MARGARET

Oh.

GEORGE

I, uh, live down on the O'Brien farm. Tha's my farm.

MARGARET

Oh, no way! I've never been on a farm.

GEORGE

Yer pullin' my leg!

MARGARET

(giggling)

I'm not! I was born and raised in the city. I've never been-anywhere, really, anywhere rural.

GEORGE

Well you should-I mean-you should see me-see the farm sometime.

MARGARET

I'd love that!

(CONTINUED)

On Janet's private tour of the farm, she convinces George to allow her to guide him in selling the farm and investing the profits.

EXT. FARM

George and Margaret are walking the fields together, laughing:

GEORGE

(laughing)

So then he stopped n' went back to see what it was he killed n' he kept sayin, dinner is free tonight! Just caught my dinner!

Margaret laughs.

GEORGE

So when he gets out the truck n' goes back to see - turned out it was a damn traffic cone!

George has cracked himself up - Margaret laughs along.

GEORGE

Yep, that's Alabama for ya. Just a bunch o' rednecks tryna eat for free.

MARGARET

(giggling)

It's a beautiful place. Truly. I can see why you've stayed for so long.

GEORGE

Mhmm, sure is pretty. But I bet you there's a whole lotta pretty places out there.

MARGARET

Your farm is exquisite, George. How many acres is it total?

GEORGE

213.

MARGARET

I'm no expert - but I would say that amount of land would bring in a high six-figure return. Maybe seven.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE
(whistles)
Imagine that. Mmm. Seven figures.

MARGARET
Oh, but there is so much more to be made with...proper investments and connections. I've turned one hundred thousand into one million.

GEORGE
Yeah? You could help me with that stuff?

MARGARET
Absolutely. Helping people find places to invest their money is so rewarding to me. I would love to help.

GEORGE
Well. I sure would like a pretty red car like yours.

MARGARET
Listen, before you say anything to anyone, let me get my real estate friend Mayer on the phone. He's in New York, but he's worked everywhere. He really knows his stuff. And...don't say anything to Janet. I don't want her to feel any stress.

GEORGE
You sure are nice to Janet. Sure a nice thing you did for her today.

MARGARET
Oh, it was my pleasure. I didn't want her to be bored with all our financial talk.

GEORGE
I tell ya, makes me wish I was pregnant to get a spa day. Sure ain't been massaged by a real massager before.

MARGARET
(giggling)
Well, we'll have to fix that, won't we?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

14.

They walk O.C.

(CONTINUED)

George and Janet begin their sexual affair.

INT. "ROSCO'S"

George looks around nervously, until he spots Margaret sitting at the bar. She is drop-dead-hot in a tight black dress. The bartender hands her a glass of red wine and she takes it, turning around and spotting George. He smiles, and her returning grin is one of great satisfaction. He joins her at the bar.

MARGARET
You made it!

GEORGE
I did.

MARGARET
Is Janet with you?

GEORGE
Naw, no, she's at home.

A beat.

MARGARET
Good.

CUT TO:

They are sitting at the bar, clearly many drinks later, laughing hysterically at the man singing karaoke. George leans over and yells over the music,

GEORGE
You gon' sing anything?

MARGARET
(yelling back)
What?

GEORGE
You gon' sing anything?

MARGARET
Oh, god no!

GEORGE
How come?

(CONTINUED)

MARGARET
Because, I'm not THAT drunk!

GEORGE
(pushing his beer toward her)
Well finish this then.

She looks at him slyly.

GEORGE
I dare ya.

Coyly, she downs his beer and gets up, walking over to the karaoke DJ and whispering in his ear. He nods, and the opening notes of Bad Company's "Feel Like Makin' Love" begin to play.

DJ
This pretty lady would like to
dedicate this to George. You're a
lucky man.

She stumbles onto the makeshift stage and begins a very drunk, very sexy rendition of the song, wrapping her legs around the mic stand, flipping her hair, etc. We see close up shots of her, oozing sex. The camera cuts to George's face many times; he is grinning stupidly, embarrassed-ly, hungrily. Halfway through the song, the original recording continues over-

INT. MARGARET'S HOUSE/FOYER

George and Margaret stumble through her door, kissing passionately. A close up of her thigh, his belt, her neck; short, sexy shots of them entering her house, throwing off her coat, etc. George lifts Margaret up and pushes her against the wall. The camera pans down their bodies and once it hits the floor, Margaret's dress joins it.

(CONTINUED)

Margaret flies her con-partner Mayer in to seal the deal on George's farm.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Margaret and Mayer speed along the highway...

MARGARET

So I told him you sold Bill Gates' house for \$40 million and that you could sell his farm.

MAYER

For fuck's sake. How'd you meet this guy?

MARGARET

I'm his wife's OBGYN.

MAYER

You - you are fucking - and conning - a pregnant woman's husband?

Silence.

MAYER

You are sick, Margaret. I mean, I'm sick but you're - you're a special kind of sick.

MARGARET

I think we're looking at about \$1.2 million from one guy in 7 months. Our last one took 3 years.

MAYER

Still.

Margaret has pulled into the valet at the Hilton.

MAYER

Hey, where are you going?

MARGARET

I booked you a room.

MAYER

What? I'm staying with you!

MARGARET

No, you aren't. George drops by all the time, and he has to think we are business acquaintances.

(CONTINUED)

Mayer exits the car and grabs his bag. He leans back down into the car-

MAYER

Mmm. And what are we, exactly?

MARGARET

Business acquaintances.

MAYER

I love you too.

She pushes him out of the car and begins to pull away.

MAYER

(calling after her)

See you tomorrow, pookie! (to himself) What a bitch.

(CONTINUED)

Mayer convinces a young millionaire, Fletcher, that George's farm sits atop an untapped oil reserve and sells it to him for \$10 million. Mayer tells George he sold it for \$1.2 million, and brings him his cut in a duffel bag.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY (MORNING)

Mayer is approaching George, who waits for him on the porch. He hands him the duffel bag.

GEORGE

Thanks.

MAYER

My pleasure doing business with you. Would you like to check the bag?

GEORGE

Nah. I trust ya.

Mayer smiles.

MAYER

Fletcher will be down in 30 days, so you've got a little time to sort yourself out. Where are you going to move?

GEORGE

Don't know...but I don't need no more time. I can't wait to leave. Fletcher can have this whole house n' - n' everythin' in it.

MAYER

And your wife?

GEORGE

(laughing)

He can have her too! (a beat) Naw, I'll send her a little somethin' after I'm gone, help her get set up somewhere where she can get a job. I think it'll be good for her anyway.

MAYER

Good of you.

Mayer extends his hand. They shake.

(CONTINUED)

MAYER
Good luck, George.

Fletcher stops by for a surprise visit to inspect the house, finding Janet alone. Assuming she is a housekeeper, he tells her he just bought the farm for a steal. This scene is the aftermath:

CLOSE UP of Janet's hand grabbing suitcases out of the closet - then CLOSE UPS of her throwing things into them haphazardly - clothes, toothbrushes, emptying a shoebox of small money, the baby's new things. Out the window we see the sky is now black. Janet hears the front door - her head snaps up in fear. She is silent. George enters. Sees her suitcases.

GEORGE
What you doin'?

Janet's paralyzed, fearful composure breaks, and she sobs.

GEORGE
(*angrily*)
I said what you doin'?

JANET
(*hysterical, in between sobs*)
You're-you're-you're marryin' her!
N' you didnt even - even tell me!
You're leavin'! You're leavin'! Me
n' your-your baby! You sold my
house!

GEORGE
(*finally snapping*)
THIS IS MY HOUSE!

He slaps her. Sensing danger, she begins to edge her way to the door. In a rage, George picks up her bags and throws them back in the closet.

GEORGE
You don't know NOTHIN'! N' you
ain't just runnin' away! You ain't
goin' nowhere! I'm the one who's
goin'! You can't stop me!

JANET
You're gonna have to pay child
support anyways! Where you gonna
get the money if you don't have the
farm?

GEORGE
I'm a millionaire now! I got all
the money in the world!

They stare at each other. Janet's hand touches the doorknob - and George lunges toward her. She screams and flies out the door -

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

He chases her over the fields - Janet too panicked to scream or cry or see where she's going - she just runs as fast as she can with her hugely pregnant stomach. She enters the woods, George close behind her - she runs into their childhood clearing by the creek, toward the school, but she can't outrun him. He reaches forward and grabs her ponytail, pulling her to him, standing behind her and covering her mouth. A terrifying struggle, Janet's muffled scream - they sink to the ground. His knees are in the creek, and we can hear the oddly peaceful trickling. George has snapped; he forces Janet's face down into the water. He watches his hands clasped around her head, holding it under, and he hears a voice.

BOY 1

Look who it is.

George looks up, startled - and sees YOUNG Janet sitting under the tree, book in hand, bullies by her side. He is hallucinating the day they first met.

BOY 2

How you doin', Gaynor?

George looks back down at the real Janet, still struggling against his hold. He lets go as though shocked. Janet drags her head up and gulps air, choking -

GEORGE

(quietly)

I'm sorry.

- but she doesn't waste a second. She pulls herself up and runs back toward the house. George realizes what he's done and follows her, yelling all the way:

GEORGE

JANET! JANET! Please! I'm sorry, I
- I don't know what happened to me,
I'm sorry! Janet, please, I swear I
won't hurt ya, just stop - just
talk to me! Janet!

But Janet has entered the house through the kitchen's screen door and when George follows her in -

INT. FARMHOUSE/KITCHEN

- she is turning to face him, holding a kitchen knife.

JANET
(voice shaking) You stay away
from me.

GEORGE
Janet, I -

JANET
Don't you say my name! You stay
away -

She backs up, still facing him with the kitchen knife, to the closet where George threw her bags. Knife in one hand, eyes on George, she leans down and heaves her two bags onto her shoulder.

GEORGE
Janet-

JANET
Stay back. I'm leavin' you.

GEORGE
Where you gon' go?

Janet has shifted her way to the front door. She fumbles for the doorknob behind her and steps into the night. George races to the -

EXT. FARMHOUSE

- front porch. Janet has backed her way, still brandishing the knife, to the truck. She unlocks it and throws her bags in.

GEORGE
Where you gon' go, Janet? Quit
actin' stupid n' come inside!

Janet heaves herself into the truck - George gets louder.

GEORGE
Janet!

Janet starts the car and rolls down the window.

(CONTINUED)

JANET

(choking back tears)

I loved you so much, George. That's
all I ever wanted to do. To love
you n' - n' have babies that looked
like you n' take care of you when
you got old n'...

GEORGE

Just - just come inside n' we can
talk -

JANET

You tried to kill my baby, George.
You're lucky I don't run your ass
over.

GEORGE

It's my baby too! Where you gon'
take it, huh?

Janet rolls up the window. Backs up, and drives away. George
chases her down the driveway, onto the street, yelling:

GEORGE

Where you gon' go?! Huh? N' how
ya'll gonna eat? N' live? YOU AIN'T
GOT ANY MONEY!

He screams this last phrase into the night, his truck's
taillights in the distance.

(CONTINUED)

Janet escapes to a cheap motel, and discovers that she has grabbed the wrong bag from the closet, accidentally taking George's duffel of cash.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

The receptionist deposits Janet's bags at the end of the single double bed. A wood-paneled TV with antennas straight from the 70s sits on a low table, and a moth eaten chair is in the corner. Janet looks around.

JANET

It's perfect. Thanks.

RECEPTIONIST

Well, you sleep good, now.

JANET

Hey, are you - are you hirin' by any chance, maybe?

The woman studies Janet. Then, softly -

RECEPTIONIST

Maybe. Now you just get in somethin' comfortable n' get some sleep now, honey.

She exits. Janet heaves one of her bags onto the bed and unzips it. Opens it for her pajamas - finds \$1.2 million in cash.

JANET

What the-

(CONTINUED)

After realizing that he has been swindled out of his farm, home, lover and pregnant wife - whom he tried to kill - George is found dead of apparent suicide in the creek.

INT. MORGUE

Janet shivers in the cold, grey room. Gibson stands by her side. A white sheet covers a body in front of her.

GIBSON

You don't have to do this, Janet.
We already had Jeffrey identify the
body.

JANET

No I, I want to...the last time I
saw him, we was - well, just, I
don't want it to be the last time.

Gibson nods and folds down the sheet. George lies stiff and cold, his eyes closed, a gunshot wound cleaned but obvious in the side of his head.

JANET

Oh!

She closes her eyes and sinks to the floor, sobbing.

JANET

Oh, no, no, no -

Gibson covers George and sits by Janet. He wraps his arm around her. She sobs. They sit.

(CONTINUED)

The officers investigating George's death catch Janet and Mayer and recover Fletcher's money. On George's body they found his father's will, which granted half the farm to Janet, thus nullifying the sale she had no part in. Fletcher's money is returned to him, but Janet opts to sell it anyway.

EXT. WIDE SHOT - MIAMI, FL. - DAY

Sunny view sweeping Miami. The screen reads TWO YEARS LATER.

JANET V.O.

And I never did. I sold the farm to Fletcher and drove south. I felt trapped by all the land so - I drove until I couldn't no more.

Shot of Janet on a beach chair in an adorable peach bikini at SUNSET. She is skinny, tan and healthy. She smiles at a toddler crashing in the waves.

JANET V.O.

A couple years later Fletcher was diggin' round on the farm n' struck oil. He was real nice about it n' bought me a house on the beach.

The toddler gets knocked over by a wave and cracks up laughing. Janet laughs too.

JANET V.O.

Ain't a day goes by that I don't think 'bout George. He made some real bad mistakes, but he saved me when I needed savin'. And I love him for it.

The sun bursts from behind a cloud as it sets over the ocean. Janet's face is awash in the sunshine. She pulls her sunglasses down over her face.

JANET V.O.

I always thought me n' George would live happily ever after.

Janet rises from her beach chair and knocks the sand off her behind. Then calls -

JANET

George! George, come on inside, it's time for dinner!

(CONTINUED)

The toddler runs toward her and she scoops him up and kisses his face.

JANET V.O.

And we did.

Our shot pans out and Janet gets smaller as she carries George inside their beach home's glass doors and closes them. Theme music swells as we drift out over the ocean.

BLACK.

THE END