

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

WELCOME TO VERNAVILLE

Written by

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Draft 5

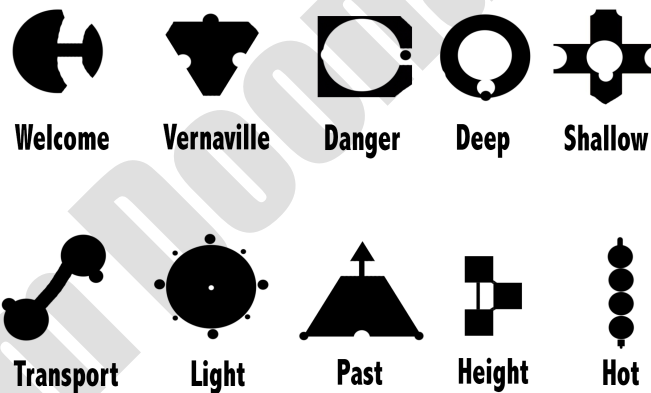
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There are multiple times throughout the script where 'visual icons' are referenced (this will always be in italics).

These visual icons are as simple as they sound - they are small shapes/icons that represent certain things in a purely visual way, they each have real world connotations without having actual linguistic connotations.

These are some rough examples (although these have just been made quickly in Photoshop. I have attached words to these examples, but only because these words have very definitive, objective connotations:



EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. DAY.

A COUPLE crouch behind a red subcompact car at the side of a quiet country road. They unscrew the car's number plate, replacing it with a similarly shaped metallic plate made up of horizontal black lines, akin to a bar code.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR. DAY.

The COUPLE drive down a long, straight road. The PASSENGER has an open book on their lap: a type of translation dictionary, with phrases listed next to numerous little visual icons. They listen intently to the radio.

RADIO PRESENTER

I think what is equally as incredible as the society existing, is that it existed in parallel to our society for so long without us knowing, like the two rungs of a train track. And despite the disparity, and disconnection, in our ways of living we have always been developing at the same pace.

RADIO CO-PRESENTER

Well, yes, but, to hijack your analogy, it would be more apt to call us the train track and them the train. It is less a coexistence as a co-dependence. They take from us exactly what they require and we congratulate them for being able to survive without the exact things they chose to leave behind. In reality, without utilising the product of our communicative society they would still be fighting over fire. The triumph of human evolution owes its merit to the formation of language, as does every byproduct that human evolution has-

The car drives past a road sign plastered with two large visual icons. The radio immediately crackles and the voices become an INSTRUMENTAL CLASSICAL MUSIC track.

The PASSENGER closes the book on their lap: on its cover is a copy of the road sign. Underneath the icons is their translation, and the book's title: WELCOME TO VERNAVILLE.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE PARTY. NIGHT.

The red subcompact car rolls past an ordinary semidetached brick house. The COUPLE stare out of the car window like they're at Jurassic Park.

A girl in her early 20s, JANE DOA, leans on the front wall of the house. The car disappears down the road, and after a BEAT, JANE enters the house: loud INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC and blue lights blast through the open door.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE PARTY. NIGHT.

Blue fluorescent light fills a room full of party-goers: an eclectic mix, each dressed in unique plain clothing. They dance to the beat of a loud TECHNO INSTRUMENTAL; nobody speaks, they all have their eyes closed. Musical euphoria.

The song transitions in to a LOW, DRONING WHIR and the BEAT slows down as though about to flatline. The dancers follow the BEAT and lower themselves to the floor. The room becomes empty above waist height, other than:

JANE DOA and JOHN DOE, early twenties, stand at opposite ends of the room. They both look out of place; awkward bystanders. They watch as the dancers lower themselves with the BEAT.. until their eyes meet. Their eye contact lasts a mere second but time slows down. Neither looks away until..

The SONG'S BEAT drops again and the dancers spring to their feet - blocking JOHN and JANE's eye line.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS STOP. DAY.

JANE DOA sits on a bus stop bench next to a short concrete pillar. She looks at a book, in which is a double page spread of a digital painting; a complex collage of colours dotted with a few small visual icons. A distant PANTING increases.

JOHN DOE runs up to the bus stop breathlessly. He stops to look at the concrete pillar: on its surface is a sun dial, blank other than a few small icons where the hour lines should be. The gnomon's shadow is near approaching one of the icons - a bus isn't far off.

JOHN sits down on the bench next to JANE and catches his breath. A BEAT. JOHN glances at JANE and recognises her.

JANE notices, but on her glance JOHN looks away. Another BEAT. JOHN looks at JANE's book. JANE keeps her eyes down, but adjusts the book to give JOHN a clearer view. Without looking at each other they smile.

CUT TO:

EXT. POND. DAY.

Tall trees reflect on the still water of a large pond. JOHN and JANE walk along its bank a few feet apart, only looking at each other in fleeting glances. JOHN carries a large twig. Across the pond is a red sign with rows of visual icons.

They cross a wooden bridge over a narrow river adjacent to the pond. They stop halfway across and JOHN snaps his twig in half. They drop their PooH sticks in to the river and turn to watch them float upstream. One twig gets caught in shrubbery and JANE raises her hand in victory.

They look down at their reflections in the water. On the bridge parapet their hands edge closer together, a moment broken only by-

Countless rubber ducks appear from under the bridge. They disappear up stream, all adorned in unique decorations - a duck race. JANE and JOHN watch them; bewildered and amused.

CUT TO:

INT. SQUASH COURT. DAY.

A MOTHER, late 30s, and DAUGHTER, 11, stand facing each other in the middle of a squash court. The MOTHER replicates a squash serve, moving in slow motion, and the DAUGHTER mimics her movements - clearly a lesson. After a BEAT the DAUGHTER serves the ball. The MOTHER watches closely and then rectifies her technique by demonstrating a different way of holding the racket.

MOVE TO:

INT. ADJACENT SQUASH COURT. DAY.

JOHN and JANE smack the ball, with no technique at all, in a clumsily energetic game of squash. They wear plain, sweat-drenched active wear and are both breathless.

JANE hits a lob shot which sends JOHN running backwards, straight in to JANE's path. They come together in a playful scuffle and end up on the ground. They lie close together, their sweaty faces beaming. They smile as they catch their breath.

CUT TO:

EXT. JANE'S PARENT'S HOUSE. DAY.

JANE stands at the gate of her parent's house: it is tall and aesthetic. She waits for JOHN who looks at his reflection in a car window; its registration plate too looks like a bar code. JOHN brushes down his suit, straightens his tie and pats down his hair. JANE gently grabs his hand and pulls him towards the house.

JANE tries to unlock the front door with her key but it doesn't fit - she presses the door bell.

JOHN looks a nervous wreck. JANE smirks at him and links her arm in his.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

A small, radio-esque chrome device sits in the corner of JOHN's sparsely furnished living room. It projects colourful, atmospheric lighting and plays an upbeat INSTRUMENTAL. JANE and JOHN dance arm in arm - completely out of rhythm but care free.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S HALLWAY. DAY.

JOHN, in a dressing gown, leans on the wall of his hallway. JANE puts on her shoes and kneels down to tie them; passing JOHN some letters from the floor. On the front of the letters (in place of an address) are a small floor plan of JOHN's street with his house highlighted red, above a few visual icons. JOHN puts the letters to the side and subtly takes a key out of his pocket.

JANE steps outside and turns towards JOHN - he puts the key in her hand and closes the door. JANE, startled, looks down at her hand. A BEAT. She smiles and unlocks the door with it.

JOHN stands on the other side, beaming. They hug.

CUT TO:

INT. SQUASH COURT. DAY.

JOHN and JANE play another game of squash - this one is a bit more controlled, slightly more serious.

JANE wins the rally and runs over to a 'scoring system' by the court entrance: a thick, horizontal wire pole split in to two colours (red and yellow). Marked along the wire are small black lines, an equidistant gap between each one, and attached to it is a small white tube. JANE pushes the tube one line to the left so that it moves further to the red side of the wire.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S LIVING ROOM. DAY.

JOHN and JANE sit on the sofa with dinner on their laps. The sofa is positioned opposite an arm chair, which faces the window - nothing in the room is facing any particular direction. The small chrome device plays an INSTRUMENTAL song, but louder is the sound of JOHN'S CHEWING.

JOHN shovels his dinner in to his mouth. JANE eats slowly, glancing scornfully in JOHN's direction. JANE sets her plate down and walks to the chrome device. She hovers her hand above it and slowly raises it - the SONG'S volume rises. She sits back down.

JOHN doesn't take the hint so JANE mimics him, guzzling her food. JOHN catches on and smiles - JANE stares forward straight-faced. JOHN carries on eating, this time mockingly in slow motion. He daintily bites the food and dabs his lips on a napkin. JANE tries not to smile.

CUT TO:

INT. ART GALLERY. DAY.

JOHN and JANE stroll through a rustic art gallery. They stop in front of a colourful, modern mosaic painting similar to the one in her book. JANE examines it closely but JOHN only feigns an interest, side-eyeing JANE impatiently.

JANE turns to JOHN and he pretends to be examining it. He turns to meet her gaze and they both nod approvingly at the painting. JANE moves on and JOHN frowns at the artwork - he doesn't 'get it'.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILL PATH. DAY.

JOHN, in hiking gear, kneels down on a beaten hill path tying his shoe lace. There is a weathered sign next to him full of small visual icons JOHN stands up; startled that there is no one near him.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILL PEAK. DAY.

JANE and TWO FRIENDS, all in hiking gear, stare out at a sweeping landscape. They are sweaty and out of breath.

JOHN appears from the path behind and walks straight past them, clearly exasperated. JANE follows him.

JANE puts her hand on JOHN's shoulder to stop him but he pushes it away and faces her, shooting daggers. They stare at each other: JOHN is angry, JANE is confused. JANE scrunches her eyes questioningly. JOHN shakes his head.

A BEAT. JOHN walks away, JANE watches him leave helplessly. The TWO FRIENDS walk over beside her.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

JOHN and JANE sit on opposite ends of the sofa. It is night and the room is dark.

JANE walks over to the chrome device and presses it, turning on a soft lilac light. She looks at JOHN. After a moment he looks back at her.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S LIVING ROOM. LATER.

The chrome device plays a romantic STRING INSTRUMENTAL. JOHN and JANE slow dance intimately in the middle of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. SQUASH COURT. DAY.

JOHN and JANE play a competitive game of squash, it's clearly no longer for fun. They play with technique and look in it to win it.

CUT TO:

EXT. JOHN'S GARDEN. DAY.

JOHN's house casts its shadow over a small concrete garden. JANE hunches over a canvas on a wooden easel in the corner.

She wears worn overalls and paints carefully using a tiny rigger paintbrush. Her tongue sticks out in concentration.

JOHN stands a few feet away from her, watering plants with a long hosepipe. The water stops and JOHN spots a kink in the hose. He shakes it, then again - then yanks it, the hose disconnecting from the tap on the side of the house. For a split second the tap spurts water every which way; some splashes in JANE's face and she shuts her eyes in shock.

JANE opens her eyes and looks at her painting - it is smudged and spoiled. She doesn't move, JOHN stands next to her awkwardly.

A BEAT. They look at each other - JOHN, unsure what to do, cracks a smile. Bad idea.. JANE grabs the top of the canvas and slams it on the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE. DAY.

JANE storms through to the hallway and picks up her shoes. She turns around, but on seeing JOHN she does a 180. They pause, JANE's back facing JOHN.

JOHN can't tell, but JANE is crying. On the mantle piece next to her are small wooden models of two of the Three Wise Monkeys: 'speak no evil' is missing.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S LIVING ROOM. LATER.

JOHN and JANE sit on the sofa. JOHN's head rests on the wall, JANE's on his shoulder. They both stare in different directions.

CUT TO:

EXT. POND. DAY.

JOHN and JANE walk alongside the duck pond. JANE stares at the water, JOHN stares at the floor. Their hands hang between them, only a few inches apart but never touching.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE. MORNING.

John leans on the kitchen counter, a kettle nearing the boil behind him. JANE sits in the living room eating a bowl of cereal, she is dressed and has her shoes on. The kettle whistles and JANE walks in to the kitchen.

JOHN pours boiled water in to a mug and a metal flask. JANE puts her bowl in the sink, pauses a moment, then picks it back up to wash it before putting it away in the cupboard. JOHN passes her the metal flask and she starts walking away - but JOHN grabs her hand and gently pulls her back. They hug.

JANE lets go of JOHN and walks in to the living room. She puts a rucksack on her back and picks up two full carrier bags of clothes. JOHN follows her slowly. As she opens the front door the rucksack strap slips off her shoulder, JOHN pulls it up for her before taking a step back.

They look at each other. A BEAT. JOHN smiles, though it seems to pain him to do so. JANE leaves, closing the door behind her.

They both stand still for a moment on opposite sides of the door. JOHN looks at the ground, JANE fumbles with something in her hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. JOHN'S HOUSE. MORNING.

JANE unhooks JOHN's house key from her key chain and posts it through the letterbox. As though she's just planted a bomb she turns and paces off - her eyes tear-filled. She doesn't look back or stop walking until-

JANE hears something and stops. In the distance is a voice..

DRIVER

(quiet, as though
sharing a secret)

It's been nearly two years, I don't know
what else we can learn by staying any
longer. And, honestly, I think the
silence is driving me insane-

The voice gets clearer until eventually the COUPLE (from scene 1) appear round the corner, their path meeting JANE's. As soon as they see JANE they stop speaking - but JANE heard enough. She stares at them in utter bewilderment. They walk past her, her teary eyes follow them. The couple get in the red subcompact car a little further down the road.

As they drive away JANE looks shell-shocked. As though instinctively she lifts up her hand and touches her mouth. She glances back at JOHN's house. She looks torn between two worlds.

FADE OUT:

THE END.

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