

**Leslie Epstein**  
from *San Remo Drive*

RICHARD

(waving at smoke)

The smoke, the cigarette...

RENÉ THROWS CIGARETTE OVERBOARD AND  
RESUMES ROWING.

RENÉ

Richard I wish to say something to you. In sincerity. But I do not know if you will believe the word of this Pinocchio. This liar.

RICHARD

I am sorry. I want to apologize. I...

RENÉ

No. Please. It is nothing. What you say about my work, it does not rise above a thing that is banal. But I do not believe it is a representation of my soul. Now I will speak words from my heart.

SO SAYING, HE RAISES THE OARS AND LETS  
THE BOAT DRIFT.

I hope you will allow me to tell you I love your mother very much. She is the delight of my life. My intention is to marry her. I offer you the promise that I will do all in my power to make her happy. As she makes me happy now. Richard, I hope to be for you a father. I do not speak of Norman. I grasp what he meant to you. But know this: I will work to make up this loss, and I will make the attempt to be a good parent. I hope that in the course of time we shall perhaps respect each other and experience love among the members of our family.

RICHARD

What do you mean, respect? Love? Don't make me laugh. I saw you on San Remo Drive. I saw you through the window. Kissing her. Touching her. I know you're living in sin.

INSTEAD OF REPLYING, RENÉ PICKS UP THE  
OARS AND BEGINS TO ROW IN EARNEST.

RICHARD TWISTS ABOUT TO PEER BACK AT  
THE DISTANT SHORE.

Where are you going? You're going out, you're not going in.  
I can't even see the shore. I can't see Lotte any more.

LOTTE APPEARS, UPSTAGE LEFT, WAVING, ON  
TIP-TOES, A LITTLE ANXIOUS.

LOTTE

Yoo-hoo! Yoo-hoo!

SHE BACKS OUT OF SIGHT.

RICHARD

Stop. This is far enough.

RENÉ

(still rowing)

Far enough for what?

RICHARD

For what you're going to do.

RENÉ PULLS THREE MORE TIMES ON THE  
OARS, THEN SHIPS THEM.

RENÉ

Yes. It is far enough.

BRIEF PAUSE AS BOAT DRIFTS.

It is a pity. I have offered you friendship. But you make a  
mockery. I row, you know, to release the anger in my arms.  
These arms.

HE DISPLAYS THEM.

You are a boy, a child, nothing, Richard. There is in you  
no experience of life. But in your work, that is where you  
are already a man. And in the work of poor René? Much life.  
Little talent. When he looks in the mirror: a clown!

HE PULLS NOW ON JUST ONE OF THE OARS,  
SO THAT THE BOAT BEGINS TO SPIN ON ITS  
AXIS. WITH HIS FREE HAND HE PULLS OUT A  
CIGARETTE AND HIS LIGHTER. HE PUTS THE

CIGARETTE IN HIS MOUTH BUT DOES NOT  
STRIKE A FLAME.

Now, Richard, you will attend my words. This Mademoiselle  
Madeleine—

RICHARD

Don't mention her name!

RENÉ

This petite jeune fille, eh? The little neighbor girl. You  
will tell me how you persuaded her to take off her clothes.

HERE HE MAKES A FLAME BUT DOES NOT  
BRING IT TO THE TIP OF THE CIGARETTE.  
THE TWO OF THEM STARE AT THE BURNING  
WICK.

RICHARD

I know that trick. The flame. You want to hypnotize me.

RENÉ DRAWS UP THE OAR AND SHIPS IT.  
THEN HE GETS TO HIS FEET, TOWERING OVER  
THE BOY.

RENÉ

Oui. L'hypnotisme. Ecoutez! On your feet.

AS IF HYPNOTIZED, RICHARD OBEYS.

Turn around.

RICHARD TURNS, SO THAT HIS BACK IS  
TOWARD THE FRENCHMAN. HE HUNCHES HIS  
SHOULDER, TO AWAIT THE BLOW.

Don't budge yourself.

RICHARD

You're going to kill me!

RENÉ LIGHTS THE CIGARETTE, BLOWING  
SMOKE PAST THE BOY. THEN HE QUICKLY  
DARKS BY HIM AND TAKES HIS PLACE IN THE  
STERN.

RENÉ

Now sit.

RICHARD STILL STANDS.

Ha! Ha! I am a bad hypnotist. Now sit!

RICHARD DOES SO.

We will have, you and I, a future together. You will teach me from your knowledge the secrets of art. Perhaps one day, in a future we cannot know, the works of René will hang on the gallery walls. And I? I will teach you. My friend, you have much to learn. So. Straighten your arms. Lean from the waist. Up. Lift the arms up. Now dip them. Pull! Pull! Pull for la Californie!

AS THEY APPROACH THE SHORE LOTTE  
APPEARS, WAVING.

LOTTE

Here I am! Over here! Did you have fun, my darlings?

THE TWO MEN PICK UP THE BOAT AND CARRY  
IT TO THE BEACH, SETTING IT BY HER  
FEET. SHE EMBRACES RENÉ. THEY LINK  
ARMS, LAUGHING, AND RUN OFF, UPSTAGE  
LEFT.

LIGHTS BEGIN TO DIM. YOUNG RICARD  
REMAINS AT THE EDGE OF THE OCEAN. THE  
ADULT RICHARD SPEAKS FROM HIS POSITION  
DOWNSTAGE LEFT, LOOKING AT THE BOY AS  
HE DOES SO.

ADULT RICHARD

Was I right? Did I read this Frenchman's mind? Did he wish to kill me? Or had I projected my own thoughts onto him? I did not know. For a moment I stood there, baffled, while the waves broke about my feet.

YOUNG RICHARD AND OLD RICHARD BOTH LOOK  
DOWN AT THEIR FEET. THEN THE ADULT  
RICHARD RESUMES.

I saw them break into pieces, like a hundred thousand beads of mercury that soon re-assembled themselves beneath what seemed to me the shining mirror of the sea.

RICHARD, THE BOY, RICHARD THE MAN, BOTH  
RAISE THEIR EYES TO LOOK OUT TO THE  
SEA.

SUDDENLY SAMMY, THE RESURRECTED  
SPANIEL, RUNS ACROSS THE STAGE, STAGE  
LEFT TO RIGHT, WITH BARTIE, HIS HAIR  
FLYING, IN JOYOUS PURSUIT.

-----ALL LIGHTS OUT-----

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