

ROOFTOP

by

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1. ROOFTOP YEAR 1 -- MID FALL -- CLEAR NIGHT

Rooftop, empty, in the fall. CAMERA holds on the door and then PANS to follow FIRST and SECOND as they go across the roof. As the door opens and FIRST and SECOND emerge onto the roof...

FIRST

Yes!

(Glad he could get the
door open.)

This will be better.

We see SECOND carries a small telescope.

SECOND

By two stories.

FIRST

It's something. Less light
pollution.

SECOND

(Snorts.)

It's something.

SECOND begins gesturing towards the stars, silently identifying them and working his way around the sky. Clearly, he is more knowledgeable than FIRST, who looks up aimlessly.

SECOND has turned and is no longer facing the CAMERA, but still is facing FIRST. FIRST points to one star in particular...

FIRST

So is that one the north star?

Without looking...

SECOND

Yeah. Just give me a second.

FIRST waits a few seconds, then pulls out his phone.

SECOND

Aww, don't cheat. Give me a second
to figure it out.

FIRST

There's an app for this--I swear I
used to have it.

SECOND

Come on!

FIRST gives up looking for it.

FIRST

Fine. But give me the telescope then.

SECOND still has his back to the CAMERA. He puts the telescope up to his eye...

SECOND

But...I've just found our reference point.

FIRST tries to follow the telescope's line of sight.

FIRST

Which one?

SECOND

The north star, of course.

FIRST

But you just said it's--give me that!

(Not angry yet, a friendly sort of annoyed.)

FIRST reaches for the telescope. SECOND takes a small step away, but FIRST grabs the telescope and accidentally hits SECOND in the eye--SECOND was still trying to look through it. SECOND dramatically recoils.

SECOND lets go of the telescope to put his hands over his eye. FIRST also lets go, backing away. They let go at the same time; the telescope clatters to the floor, breaking.

SECOND

God--Come on man!

FIRST

Ah, um. I'm so sorry. Are you okay? What--um...I'm so sorry.
(Agitated and chaotic.)

SECOND straightens and takes his hands away from his eye. He looks completely fine, though he blinks heavily.

SECOND

Yeah, I'll be fine. God, though...

SECOND looks down at his telescope and grunts. He leans down and picks it up, inspecting it.

SECOND
My telescope can't say the same.
(Irritated.)

FIRST
I'm sorry. I really am.

SECOND
Yeah, whatever.

SECOND rubs his eye again and turns toward the door.

SECOND
Let's just go...I've got a midterm tomorrow.

FIRST
We just got here.

SECOND
Yeah, and my telescope's broken.

SECOND opens the door.

FIRST
Well, which one's the north star at least?

SECOND turns back and leans on the doorframe. We view this argument side on, a full shot with FIRST on one side of the frame and SECOND on the other.

SECOND
I told you which one's the north star.

FIRST
You told me two different stars were the north star. Which one is it?

SECOND
Well, which way is north?

FIRST
I don't know.
(Loudly.)

SECOND turns away like he can't be bothered.

SECOND

I was gonna show you before you--

FIRST

I said I'm sorry--

SECOND has his back to FIRST, about to go through the door, but he doesn't. He's irritated. He's talking over his shoulder but isn't really looking at FIRST either. FIRST is staring at his back.

SECOND

And now my telescope is broken--

FIRST

You said it was fine.

SECOND shakes his head in dismay, turns to look at FIRST, and waves the broken telescope at him.

SECOND

Yeah, it's just fine.
(Shaking his head.)
God.

SECOND, still shaking his head, leaves FIRST on the rooftop.

FIRST is angry, disappointed, and mad at himself. He paces the rooftop, then storms out through the open door, slamming it behind him.

CAMERA holds on the door and we hear footsteps storm downstairs. The title FADES IN on the door. We hear softer footsteps come back up.

FIRST peeks out the door, then reemerges onto the rooftop. He is alone this time. He looks up rather cautiously at the stars, then tries to find a comfortable place to sit. After he chooses a place and sits down, he fidgets uncomfortably, and then eventually gets up to leave. As he puts his hand on the door...

CUT TO:

2. ROOFTOP YEAR 1 -- MID FALL -- DIFFERENT, CLEAR NIGHT

It's a different day. There are some small clues--such as some fallen leaves--but otherwise, it is the same.

FIRST emerges from the door again, turning the handle very slowly, opening it very hesitantly, and then finally slipping out as if expecting the roof might not be empty. It is empty.

FIRST sighs and then returns to the spot he took in the previous scene. He fidgets again, but less. As he finally settled and stares up at the stars, we hear sudden laughter in the distance. FIRST jumps, tries to last a few moments longer, but then is too nervous and gets up to leave. After he is upright and as he takes the first step back to the door...

CUT TO:

3. ROOFTOP YEAR 1 -- LATE FALL -- AFTERNOON (OVERCAST, ABOUT TO RAIN)

Another new day.

We hear regular footsteps as the CAMERA holds on the door before FIRST emerges onto the roof again, at a regular pace, with no hesitation but looking stiff, carrying a book. Even if he has to force himself, he's going to enjoy his time on the roof.

As he sits down, a siren goes by. He only momentarily hesitates to open the book.

CAMERA cuts beneath FIRST as he opens his book. Another siren flies by but this time he gives no reaction. We may notice, however, his breathing is exceptionally steady--too heavy not to be forced.

CAMERA cuts above FIRST so we can see the text of his book and the top of his head as he looks down. After a moment, a drop of rain falls and blots on the page. FIRST snaps the cover closed and looks up at the sky.

FIRST

Come on!

(Pause.)

Any more for me.

Another drop falls on his arm. CAMERA backs up and as he stands...

CUT TO:

4.1 ROOFTOP YEAR 4 -- POST-BRUNCH 1

POST-BRUNCH scenes begin mid-conversation. During the conversation, the CAMERA cuts between the speakers.

FIRST, THIRD, FOURTH (female), and FIFTH are scattered causally across the rooftop. FIRST has an apple.

FOURTH

See, I don't think you can do it together.

(Shaking their head.)

The way I see it, you each take it in turns.

FIFTH

Why--why not together?

FOURTH

You can't really do it together. I mean, what would that mean? Once somebody gets it, everybody will. Inspiration.

FIRST gestures with his apple in agreement.

5. ROOFTOP YEAR 1 -- EARLY WINTER -- AFTERNOON (OVERCAST AND SNOWING)

FIRST emerges onto the rooftop while it snows. He walks to the middle of the roof, raises his arms, and holds the pose for a moment. The CAMERA moves via drone so that we look directly down on FIRST from above. He spins in a circle, arms out. He laughs.

CUT TO:

6.1 ROOFTOP YEAR 4 -- POST-BRUNCH 2

POST-BRUNCH scenes begin mid-conversation. During the conversation, the CAMERA cuts between the speakers.

FIRST, THIRD, FOURTH, and FIFTH are scattered causally across the rooftop, different from POST-BRUNCH 1.

THIRD, FOURTH, and FIFTH look expectantly at FIRST when THIRD says to him...

THIRD

Come on then, give us one.

FIRST
It can be anything? Any number?

THIRD
Yeah.

FIRST shrugs, thinking...

FIRST
How many leaves are on the average
tree?--The average oak.

Everyone looks puzzled by this question. They don't know.

THIRD
Well, you've got to know the
answer...

FIRST
And I do.

THIRD
Okay then. I say...
(Shrugs.)
I say--

CUT TO:

7. ROOFTOP YEAR 1 -- SPRING -- DAY

FIRST, carrying an untouched apple, emerges onto the rooftop. As he eats the apple, quickly, he inspects the roof. He peers over the sides, listens, looks up at the sky, kicks, and when he finishes his apple he shrugs agreeably and leaves the roof.

BEGIN:

8. ROOFTOP YEAR 1 -- SPRING MONTAGE -- DAY ONLY

This montage is warm and lighthearted. FIRST gets the chance to use the rooftop to relax, listen to music, and read. Notably, he does not go out at night.

FADE TO:

9. ROOFTOP YEAR 1 -- SPRING -- MORNING

FIRST opens the door, which we watch from outside as usual. He comes onto the roof carrying a card. He walks to the middle of the roof and nods proudly, glancing around.

Then FIRST kneels, sets down the card--we realize it is the backside of a postcard--and pulls out a pen.

(FIRST OTS)

FIRST writes "Thanks for the peace but not the quiet" on the left side and "Here" on the first line of the address. It is unstamped. We see FIRST begin to flip the card but before we see the other side...

(FIRST HIGH ANGLE)

The card is out of frame. FIRST stands and the CAMERA TILTS to a MEDIUM SHOT of FIRST. The CAMERA is STATIC as FIRST leaves as usual. Once FIRST is gone, the CAMERA TILTS and VERTICALLY TRACKS so that we look down at the top of a postcard. It is a rooftop overlooking an unmistakable city, presumably the home of FIRST.

The wind picks up; we see the card flutter up. The moment it begins to move...

FADE TO BLACK.

10. ROOFTOP YEAR 2 -- EARLY FALL -- LATE AFTERNOON

It's fall and windy. The rooftop is empty. CAMERA holds on the door, waiting for someone to come out. After a moment, we hear one quick patter of steps followed by two slower ones.

FIRST emerges cheerfully onto the roof, carrying a deck of cards and a blanket. He holds open the door for two friends, SIXTH and SEVENTH (both male), who come hesitantly onto the rooftop. They peer around and behind the door nervously, then slowly walk forward and stand in the middle of the roof.

FIRST

What do you think?

FIRST throws out the blanket as SIXTH says...

SIXTH

I...thought it would be bigger, honestly.

FIRST kneels and tries to shuffle the cards on top of the blanket. It's windy.

SEVENTH

I thought it would be smaller.

FIRST laughs.

FIRST
This is what it is.

The wind ruffles the far edges of the blanket.

FIRST
Sit on that end, I'll try dealing.

SIXTH and SEVENTH reluctantly move over to the blanket. SIXTH crouches down and holds it with his hand. SEVENTH puts his foot on the other corner.

SEVENTH
I don't know about this--they'll
blow away for sure.

SIXTH
Yeah, it's too windy.

FIRST looks up from shuffling the cards--not very well--and is tremendously disappointed.

SIXTH
Come on. Let's go back inside.

FIRST
Guys...

SEVENTH
Nah. It's cool, sure,
(Referring to the roof.)
but it's cold too. I'm going
inside.

SIXTH
Same.

SEVENTH and SIXTH leave, watched by FIRST. Then he puts his cards into a pocket and lays on the blanket, staring up at the sky.

CUT TO:

11. ROOFTOP YEAR 2 -- EARLY WINTER -- OVERCAST AFTERNOON

FIRST emerges onto the rooftop bundled for winter: wearing a coat, a scarf, a hat, and gloves. We can see well only his face. After the door opens, FIRST walks straight forward to the CAMERA, which HOLDS until we see an EXTREME CLOSE UP, then follows FIRST at this distance, filling the frame with the face for the duration of the scene.

FIRST walks across the roof to the far edge and stares out. After a minute, he scrunches his face; drops to a flat, placid expression; sighs; and rolls his head back.

FIRST

What more do you want, hm? WHAT
MORE DO YOU WANT!?

FIRST resumes a placid expression, takes a few deep breaths, and leaves the roof. The CAMERA does not follow him to the door; we see the back of his head, and the rest of him, in frame by the time he opens the door. When he puts his hand on the handle...

CUT TO:

12.1 ROOFTOP YEAR 4 -- POST-BRUNCH 3

POST-BRUNCH scenes begin mid-conversation. During the conversation, the CAMERA cuts between the speakers.

FIRST, THIRD, FOURTH, and FIFTH are scattered causally across the rooftop, different from POST-BRUNCH 1 and 2. FIRST and FOURTH both hold apples. One is red and one is green.

They are all quiet for a minute. It is not awkward.

FOURTH

You know what I need? A rubber
duckie.

FIRST nearly chokes while taking a bite of his apple. He and FOURTH are exes. There's some tension, but it's not bad.

FIRST

A what?

FOURTH

A rubber duck. To talk to.

FIFTH nods in agreement, looking at FIRST...

FIFTH

A rubber duck.

FIRST

I don't know what that means.
(Shaking his head.)

THIRD

Me neither.

THIRD looks between FOURTH and FIFTH. FIFTH looks at FOURTH to explain but she is amused. Perhaps she shrugs. FIFTH decides to explain...

FIFTH

It's a rubber duck--that you talk to. Rubberducking--talking it out--helps you figure out a problem. So-so

(Turning to FOUTH.)
what's the problem?

FIRST

Before that,
(FIRST gestures with the apple to FOURTH)
you talk to yourself?

FIRST means this to be funny. FOURTH shrugs, not offended.

FOURTH

Not at all. I talk to a duck. Or in this case, three friends.

FIFTH

I do too.

THIRD

Me as well.

FIRST shrugs.

FIRST

So what's the problem?

CUT TO:

13. ROOFTOP YEAR 2 -- EARLY WINTER -- OVERCAST AFTERNOON

We do not see FIRST enter onto the roof. For once, we see FIRST, alone, already sitting on the roof. The CAMERA maintains a MEDIUM shot.

FIRST

It's gonna go well, isn't it?

FIRST looks out of frame forward-right (our near-left).

FIRST

Why shouldn't it? I've got a plan.
I've got balance. It'll be fine.

FIRST looks away and takes two breaths, then back.

FIRST
 I didn't bring you here to talk to
 you. What am I doing?
 (Pause.)
 It's okay. It's fine. It can be
 part of the plan.

FIRST smiles and nods, mind made up.

(FIRST WIDE)

We can now see he is speaking to a small, potted plant. It
 looks rather sad in the cold.

FIRST
 That's what I'll do.

CUT TO:

6.2 ROOFTOP YEAR 4 -- POST-BRUNCH 2 (CONTINUED)

POST-BRUNCH scenes begin mid-conversation. During the
 conversation, the CAMERA cuts between the speakers.

FIRST, THIRD, FOURTH, and FIFTH are scattered causally
 across the rooftop, the same as POST-BRUNCH 2. We pick up a
 few lines after where we left off.

Everyone is leaning forward, animated and engaged.

THIRD
 I know what it is. I go back on my
 previous answer. There aren't
 twenty thousand leaves. I can say
 with confidence, every oak tree
 has exactly...0 leaves--in the
 winter.

Everyone reacts, both disappointed and half-satisfied.

FIFTH
 And--and on the first day--of
 spring-- exactly one--for the
 healthy trees, at least.

THIRD
 And two. And three. If you pick
 the right moment.

FIRST chuckles...

FIRST
Fair enough.

CUT TO:

14. ROOFTOP YEAR 2 -- LATE SPRING -- IRONICALLY SUNNY

CAMERA maintains a WIDE shot so we see the whole roof. FIRST storms onto the rooftop, alone, and is upset but not too emotional yet.

The plant is on its side off near the edge of the roof. It had been left up there and forgotten.

FIRST walks into the middle of the roof and clenches his teeth, breathing deeply. He looks around and spots the plant. He walks over, kicks it as hard as he can, pinches his face, and sits down. He puts his head in his hands.

FIRST
Fuck the plant, I've got my own ears.

FIRST looks up at the plant, eyes bloodshot, perhaps crying.

FIRST
Why do I do this to myself? Why?
What do I hope to gain? So what?
What for? What? ...What? What?
What?

FIRST takes a deep breath, then leaps to his feet. CAMERA pulls back jerkily to a FULL shot of FIRST.

FIRST
So what?

FIRST looks around the roof, as if speaking to ghosts...

FIRST
So what? So what? So what? You know what--fuck!

FIRST drops his head, turns, and leaves the roof. The CAMERA holds on the door and does a TIMELAPSE of about five hours, until after sunset. Then the door opens and FIRST emerges, pillow under his arm. His eyes are even more bloodshot than before.

CAMERA TRACKS FIRST as he goes to the middle of the roof, pauses for a moment to decide where to lay down, then sets out his pillow and lays down to sleep.

CAMERA ends on an MEDIUM CLOSE UP of FIRST, eyes closed, head on his pillow without a blanket.

FADE TO BLACK.

15.1 ROOFTOP YEAR 3 -- EARLY FALL -- NIGHT

CAMERA holds on the door, which is opened by FIRST. Though it is dark, the roof is well-lit. He emerges in formalwear and holds it for his date, who comes out behind him. She is also formally-dressed, in a beautiful red dress. She is FOURTH.

FIRST is, reasonably, rather nervous. FOURTH steps out and walks to the middle of the rooftop. FIRST opens his mouth to say: "What do you think" but...

CUT TO:

16.1 ROOFTOP YEAR 3 -- LATE FALL -- NIGHT

CAMERA begins on a half-open door. There is no time given to wait for it to open; FIRST is already stumbling out. He is well-dressed--but not in formalwear--and the top button of his shirt is undone. It's mostly dark but FIRST is highlighted by little light; the lighting is truly Carraviago's tenebrism. He stumbles and nearly falls. Before FIRST catches himself...

CUT TO:

15.2 ROOFTOP YEAR 3 -- EARLY FALL -- NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Directly continuous...

FIRST
What do you think?

FOURTH
It's magical.

FOURTH throws out her arms and spins quickly in a circle. We see FIRST grin and we know why--he did something similar, two years before.

She looks at FIRST, who looks back nervously, and she glances up at the sky. He does too.

CUT TO:

16.2 ROOFTOP YEAR 3 -- LATE FALL -- NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

...FIRST catches himself and straightens up. He takes two quick forced breaths through his nose--then looks around as if confused. Like a scared animal, he glances up at the snow out of frame and takes a few steps back. The CAMERA TRACKS FORWARD and ZOOMS to go from an MEDIUM CLOSE UP to a CLOSE UP. FIRST is looking up. He looks forward and then down in time with the snow which enters the frame. FIRST shivers.

CUT TO:

15.3 ROOFTOP YEAR 3 -- EARLY FALL -- NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

FIRST
You like it?

FOURTH holds out a hand for FIRST. He takes a slow, curious step forward and takes it as she says...

FOURTH
I love it.

FOURTH pulls FIRST into a passionate kiss.

CUT TO:

16.3 ROOFTOP YEAR 3 -- LATE FALL -- NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

It is still snowing. FIRST takes a long breath, frowning, and the CAMERA MOVES back to an MEDIUM CLOSE UP.

FIRST
So what? So WHAT!? It's fine.
(Single snort.)
I get my time back, at least.
(Another snort.)
I've got myself.

CUT TO:

15.4 ROOFTOP YEAR 3 -- EARLY FALL -- NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

FIRST and FOURTH separate from the kiss, breathless. FIRST looks back to see if she would kiss him again, but she lets go of him. After a moment...

FIRST
So what do you think of my roof?

FIRST and FOURTH separate. They circle each other, FOURTH inspects it, aloof.

FOURTH
I've seen taller.

FIRST
If you want a better view, don't
find a roof, find a window seat.
On a plane.

FOURTH snorts.

FOURTH
I've seen wider--and longer.

They continue to circle. FIRST shrugs.

FIRST
Less intimate, more work to
maintain.

FOURTH
Maintain?

FIRST
Maintain.
(Brief pause.)
I've got to garden, and sweep, and
stuff.

FOURTH
Stuff?

FIRST
Stuff.

FOURTH bursts out laughing. So does FIRST, quieter but equally enthused.

CUT TO:

16.4 ROOFTOP YEAR 3 -- EARLY FALL -- NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

It is still snowing. FIRST has his knees pulled up to his chest, arms wrapped around his knees. He is underdressed for the cold. It's windy. CAMERA looks down on FIRST, weeping, with a HIGH ANGLE shot. We hear through his sobs a mutter...

FIRST
God damn her. God damn her.

CUT TO:

15.5 ROOFTOP YEAR 3 -- EARLY FALL -- NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

FIRST and FOURTH continue to circle clockwise. FIRST would have just passed in front of the CAMERA, FOURTH looking straight on.

FIRST

What I bring to the table is this one.

(Throwing out his arms.)

Will it do?

FOURTH taps a finger against her chin. FOURTH is now on the right side of the frame and FIRST is on the left.

FOURTH

It'll do.

FOURTH reaches out her hand like she did before. FIRST takes a step forward, opening both his arms to embrace her.

CUT TO:

16.5 ROOFTOP YEAR 3 -- EARLY FALL -- NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

FIRST

Fuck this. Fuck her.

(Pause.)

It's too cold for this.

He stumbles to his feet. The CAMERA PANS to watch him step to the door. As he puts his hand on the handle...

CUT TO:

4.2 ROOFTOP YEAR 4 -- POST-BRUNCH 1 (CONTINUOUS)

POST-BRUNCH scenes begin mid-conversation. During the conversation, the CAMERA cuts between the speakers.

FIRST, THIRD, FOURTH, and FIFTH are scattered causally across the rooftop, the same as POST-BRUNCH 1.

FIRST has just gestured with his apple.

THIRD

I disagree.

FIRST

But it helps to see what other people do. That's not true. Even if they won't say, you can watch and that's helpful.

THIRD

I just think if you did it together, you could help each other out. Double down.

FIRST

How would you know? Have you done it?

FIRST glances at FOURTH.

FOURTH

But that's what I mean. You do it separately, people catch on. If not how to do it, how not to do it.

FOURTH glances back at FIRST. THIRD opens their mouth to speak, but...

CUT TO:

17. ROOFTOP YEAR 3 -- SPRING MONTAGE -- DAY ONLY

This montage, like the first montage, is warm and lighthearted. It is assembled such that we don't see the scenes chronologically, but instead, we get half a dozen cuts of him opening the door; then half a dozen cuts of him finding a spot (different each time) to sit and pull out a deck of cards; and finally half a dozen cuts of him practicing various magic tricks. He improves, but not ever enough that it's actually impressive. FIRST looks like he's having fun. On two rooftop visits, he brings a book, not cards.

FADE TO:

12.2 ROOFTOP YEAR 4 -- POST-BRUNCH 3 (CONTINUOUS)

POST-BRUNCH scenes begin mid-conversation. During the conversation, the CAMERA cuts between the speakers.

FIRST, THIRD, FOURTH, and FIFTH are scattered causally across the rooftop, the same as POST-BRUNCH 3. We continue immediately after FIRST has said, "So what's the problem?".

FOURTH

It's not a problem, I just figure
I need a little duckie, for my
desk.

FIFTH

How-how soon before you start?

FOURTH

Feels like tomorrow. I fly out in
two weeks.

THIRD whistles.

THIRD

You're a lucky one.
(Somberly.)
A lucky duckie.

THIRD amuses himself, if no one else. It's a sore subject.
To prevent anyone from dwelling on their post-graduation
plans, FOURTH turns to FIRST...

FOURTH

So how did you find this marvelous
rooftop?

FIRST isn't listening. He looks up after a second.

FIRST

Oh, the roof?
(Chuckles.)
We've got a history.

THIRD

(Guessing.)
I bet you tried joining a frat,
they took you up here.

FIRST shrugs mysteriously.

FIFTH

(Guessing.)
It--it was your drone. It got
stuck up here, you found the-the
way up. No question.

FIRST shakes his head.

FIRST

Nope, not the drone.

FOURTH

I have a guess, too. But I won't say.

FIRST

(Grinning.)

It's not that either.

THIRD

So what was it?

FIRST opens his mouth, beginning to say: "It--"

CUT TO:

18. ROOFTOP YEAR 3 -- LATE SPRING -- DAY

CAMERA holds on the rooftop door. We hear two pairs of footsteps. The door is opened by FIRST. He holds it open for EIGHTH, his new girlfriend. They are dressed casually for warm weather.

She takes a few steps out onto the roof like FOURTH did, FIRST still holding the door.

FIRST

Do you like it?

EIGHTH glances around, then turns back to FIRST.

EIGHTH

Not really.

Too quickly...

FIRST

Ok.

FIRST doesn't look stressed, but they glance around awkwardly for a moment. FIRST takes a deck of cards out of his pocket and then puts them back.

FIRST

Do you want to go back inside?

EIGHTH

Yeah, in a minute.--Why'd you bring a deck of cards? They'll blow away if we try to play anything.

FIRST shrugs, not flustered...

FIRST

I know that. It's just--I have
some tricks I thought I'd show
you.

(Brief pause.)

Someone once told me this rooftop
was magical. I thought...

FIRST trails off and looks at her frankly. He shrugs again.
He doesn't look stressed. EIGHTH smiles at him and takes
his hand as she walks back in through the door.

EIGHTH

Come on. Show me inside.

FIRST follows EIGHTH inside and closes the door behind
him. The CAMERA holds on the door.

FADE TO BLACK.