

# Falling To Grace

An Original Screenplay By  
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Based On The Life  
And Art Of  
Brom Wikstrom

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FADE IN

EXT. DRIVEWAY -- AFTERNOON (1977)

Ominous gray clouds flow across the late afternoon sky. Slivers of blue appear faintly in the distance.

BROM WIKSTROM, 24, shoulder length greasy hair, scraggly beard, shivers in a hand-powered wheelchair, perched at the top of a sloped driveway. He stares blankly at the empty street below.

A few GIGGLING children play in a yard across the street.

A vast railroad yard looms in the distance. The sounds of BOXCARS CONNECTING competes with the children's PLAYFUL LAUGHTER.

A car turns the corner, cruises down the street toward Brom's driveway.

Brom bows his head, murmurs quietly.

A driving, howling rain begins as Brom lurches his body forward causing the wheelchair to roll down the driveway. As the chair careens down the pavement the car speeds up, moving closer to the driveway, on a certain collision course.

EXT. STREET -- CONTINUOUS

The wheelchair, wobbling wildly, hits the street just as the car arrives.

The driver slams on the brakes as the wheel chair hits a pothole, flips over, catapulting Brom into the side of the now stopped car.

The horrified driver leaps out of his car, crouches over Brom.

Brom GROANS in extreme pain, blood gushing from his forehead.

The curious children dash over, stop dead in their tracks, stare at Brom.

DRIVER

Have your mom call an ambulance!

The kids hurry off as Brom gazes at the driver, his eyes filled with deep sorrow. A distant railroad horn BLARES.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. OPEN BOXCAR -- LATE AFTERNOON (1975)

A continuation of the same RAILROAD HORN, INCREASINGLY LOUDER.

Brom, cigarette between his lips, huddles near the open door of the boxcar, knees squeezed into his chest, bundled in an army surplus coat. To the side of him sits a tattered backpack and a large artists portfolio.

To Brom's left sits, MICHAEL "MILO" MILOVICH, long straight hair framing a round, red cheeked, pleasant face. He struggles to light a smoke, one match after another extinguished instantly in the bitter, cold wind.

MILO

Brom.

Brom lazily turns his head toward Milo.

MILO (CONT'D)

Outta matches man.

Brom, arms folded tightly, leans over to Milo, moving his face close enough so that the two cigarettes come together, successfully lighting Milo's.

Milo leans back, takes a satisfying drag off of the smoke.

MILO (CONT'D)

New Orleans gonna be a whole lot warmer than this.

BROM

Better be.

Milo takes another hit off of his smoke.

MILO

This is gonna be one outrageous party man.

BROM

One of these days I'm gonna get my shit together... but I'll work on that after Mardi Gras.

EXT. MIDWEST -- AFTERNOON

The train cruises full-speed down the tracks through the wheat fields and cattle ranches of the great American heartland.

INT. BOXCAR -- DUSK

A SCREECHING of the boxcar wheels jar Brom and Milo, waking them from a sound sleep. The train sits still, perched on a bridge spanning the Mississippi River. The New Orleans skyline fills the background.

Milo looks in awe as Brom excitedly whips out his sketch pad, captures the scene in pencil.

MILO  
Where we gonna stay tonight?

BROM  
Wherever the vibe leads us.

MILO  
Far out.

INT. FLOPHOUSE HOTEL LOBBY -- NIGHT

Cramped, shabby lobby couldn't be more contrasted than it is with the appearance of CELIA, a gorgeous young woman with perfect skin, wavy blonde hair, and the smile of a Miss America.

Celia looks up at the boys, her smile turning into a slight frown.

CELIA  
The owner's not overly fond of hippies.

BROM  
I'm an artist not a hippie.

CELIA  
That particular nuance might be lost, even on him.

Brom reaches into his pocket, whips out a small wad of bills.

BROM  
We have enough cash for two weeks.

Celia slaps a room key down on the counter.

CELIA  
U.S. currency trumps hippie every  
time.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Two single beds, barely enough floor space to put their belongings down. Brom notices a small picture frame near the window, picks it up.

INSERT: PICTURE FRAME

An image of Jesus Christ holding His Sacred Heart. At the bottom it reads: "Whatsoever is prayed for in My name shall be granted."

Brom blows the dust off of the frame, finds a nail sticking out, carefully hangs it on the otherwise empty and tattered wall.

Milo glances at the frame, frowns.

MILO  
Take that thing down man. Chicks  
won't dig that.

BROM  
I've been real lucky in that  
department lately.

MILO  
This is New Orleans man. There are  
tons of babes are out there just  
waitin' for us.

EXT. BOURBON STREET -- NIGHT

No place like this on the planet. Narrow streets jam-packed with drunken revelers, lined with two and three story buildings. Wrought-iron balconies dangerously over-loaded with celebrating tourists.

Live JAZZ flows from every drinking establishment on the street, producing an odd discord that matches the diverse crowd.

Brom and Milo emerge from a bar, plastic cups in hand, bounce in their step, grinning from ear-to-ear.

Milo becomes momentarily distracted, mesmerized by a charismatic, colorfully dressed street preacher.

PREACHER

Have a good ol' time, luxuriate in  
wine, women and song...

He shakes a small metal can, coins JINGLE.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

... but give a little of that hard-  
earned cash for our brothers and  
sisters that are stuck out on these  
angry streets.

Milo grabs a few coins from his pocket, pauses for a moment, stuffs them back into his pocket, hurries to catch up with Brom.

Brom and Milo, beaming with excitement, make their way through the crowd. They stroll over to a group of college-age kids, seamlessly joining in.

A young woman casually passes Milo a joint. He takes a huge hit, holds it in, finally exhales.

Out of nowhere appears Celia. She strolls over to Brom as if he's the only person on Bourbon Street.

CELIA

Where will you be heading when all  
of this debauchery comes to an end?

BROM

I'm stayin'.

Celia sizes up the crowd, then produces a joint, fires it up, takes a hit, passes it to Brom who does the same.

Celia grabs Brom's hand and they blend in with the others, boogieing to the music, slopping liquor out of their cups, gazing into each others eyes, totally enamored.

Brom dances fluidly, gracefully, drawing a few admiring glances from others in the crowd. Brom loves to dance, he loves pretty girls, and it shows.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREET -- NIGHT

Music faint in the distance, Brom and Celia stroll arm-in-arm, stopping to passionately make out.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- MORNING

Celia lies asleep on the tiny bed while Brom sits scrunched against the wall sketching her.

Celia opens her eyes, yawns, smiles at Brom.

CELIA

Do you want to draw me or do you  
want to have your way with me?

Brom drops his pad, dives under the sheets, and they begin to make love. Youthful, energetic, acrobatic, passionate and NOISY love.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE -- AFTERNOON

Brom and Celia sip coffee, munch on beignets, bask in the intense New Orleans heat.

CELIA

Brom Wikstrom, you are one naughty  
boy.

Brom flashes a sheepish grin.

BROM

I'll try to fix that.

CELIA

Not too hard I hope.

A RUCKUS in the near distance. A group of late-night stragglers stumble arm-in-arm, BLARING out bar songs. Milo leads the group, stops when he spots Brom at table. He looks at Celia then back to Brom.

Milo, obviously wasted, gawks at Celia.

MILO

You're by far the best looking babe  
Brom's ever been with.

CELIA

Well aren't you a silver-tongued  
hombre?

The group wanders off leaving Milo behind.

MILO  
Party's movin' over to some dudes  
pad.

BROM  
We're going to the Warhol exhibit.

Milo rolls his eyes.

MILO  
Later.

Milo trots off to catch up with the group.

CELIA  
We're going to an Andy Warhol  
exhibit?

BROM  
You wanna?

Celia nods.

CELIA  
Am I really the best looking babe  
ever?

BROM  
I don't even remember who's in second.

INT. NEW ORLEANS ART MUSEUM -- AFTERNOON

Brom and Celia stroll past painting after painting.

They wander into a room marked with a sign that simply reads,  
"WARHOL EXHIBIT."

EXT. CITY PARK -- AFTERNOON

Brom and Celia walk hand-in-hand through City Park, surrounded  
by oak trees with limbs that reach the ground, ponds, and  
lush, green, well manicured lawns.

BROM  
I had a job painting signs for a  
drug store. It was cool. Made some  
good dough.

Celia leans against an oak tree.

BROM (CONT'D)

All I want to do is be a commercial artist. Signs, illustrations. That's how Warhol started you know.

Brom, one pencil in hand, a thicker one in his mouth, transfers her radiance to the sketch pad.

INSERT: SKETCH PAD

The drawing looks remarkably like Celia, beautifully drawn. He beams with pride, turns it toward her.

BROM (CONT'D)

What do you think?

She breaks into a smile, blushes a bit.

EXT. BUSY CITY STREET -- MORNING

Brom, wearing a clean, thrift-store suit, portfolio in hand, walks into the "INDUSTRIAL ELECTRIC" building.

EXT. CITY PARK -- AFTERNOON

Brom and Celia lie on their backs on a tattered blanket, her head resting on his chest.

BROM

I'll be transferring designs onto large sheets of asbestos but when there's an opening I can switch to the art department.

CELIA

We need to celebrate but I have to work tonight.

BROM

Bummer.

Celia gazes lovingly into Brom's eyes.

CELIA

I absolutely adore the drawing of me.

Brom smiles proudly.

EXT. BOURBON STREET -- NIGHT

Music, crowds, neon lights. Brom and Milo stagger down the street, drinks in hand.

MILO

That chick in there wanted you man.

Brom ignores Milo, stumbles to a phone booth, slides a quarter into the slot, dials. BUSY SIGNAL.

He turns head back, sees Milo mosey into a club, arm around a young woman. Brom smiles, teeters off into the crowd.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Brom wakes up, MOANS in excruciating pain. Milo enters from the bathroom.

BROM

Kill me please. Put me out of my misery.

Milo reaches into his pocket, offers Brom part of a joint.

MILO

Take a toke man. Cures the hangover, every time.

Brom waves him off.

BROM

I can't party like this anymore. I gotta get my act together.

MILO

Lemme know how that goes. I'm gonna go soak up some rays.

Milo turns, leaves.

Brom covers his mouth, dashes into the bathroom. The dreadful sounds of RETCHING and PUKING filter through the air.

Brom comes through the door, drenched in sweat, towel wrapped around his face. He spots the framed picture of Christ, pauses for a moment, contemplates it. He picks up the drawing of Celia, speaks directly to the picture of Christ.

BROM

Please give me the strength to trust  
you and put my future in your hands.  
I give you my best drawing ever as  
an offering of my faith.

With that Brom places the drawing into a waste basket, puts a match to it, watches it burn, performs a SIGN OF THE CROSS. After the flame is out he pulls on a pair of shorts, tee-shirt, bolts out the door.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER BANK -- AFTERNOON

Milo lounges on a towel, thumbing through a tattered magazine. Brom flies past him, SCREAMING like Tarzan, peeling off his shirt as he runs.

Brom leaps forward in a graceful, athletic dive into the muddy river.

Milo looks up just as the water SPLASHES.

Brom does not resurface. Milo waits a moment, concern washes over his face.

Milo charges down to the river, sees nothing in the murky water.

He finally spots a motionless Brom just beneath the surface, reaches in, yanks him out of the river, drags him ashore.

As Brom's face breaks the plane he GASPS, fighting for air, spitting water, COUGHING, CHOKING, GAGGING.

MILO

What's wrong man?

BROM

I can't move. Nothing moves. Nothing works.

Milo looks around, frantic, no one in sight.

MILO

Don't go anywhere. I'll get help.

Milo sprints away from Brom, up the bank toward the road.

Brom lies motionless, face filled with anguish. He struggles to move his arms and legs. Nothing.