

THE THING ABOUT LOVE  
"The First 13 Pages"

Written by

Joe Eatherton & Nicole Wachter

1915 Palaco Grande Pkwy  
Cape Coral, FL 33904  
920-277-4537  
joe.screenplays@gmail.com  
www.joeeatherton.com

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Lake Superior.

A one-carat diamond engagement ring in its box held by a man's soft hands that haven't seen a day of hard work.

WILL, 22, slightly chubby, looks up expectantly hopeful. He's down on one knee in the sand holding the ring box.

GINA, a young brunette about his age, is standing in front of him; she is taken aback.

GINA

Oh, Will... we need to talk.

Will's expectant hopefulness turns to dread. A wave CRASHES.

INT. GITCHE GUMEE TAVERN - LATER THAT NIGHT

A mural of Lake Superior.

The bell above the door RINGS as Will mopes in. He takes a seat at the bar. He looks with melancholy at the mural to his left. He sighs, then leans back and looks up at the ceiling; he sees glow-in-the-dark stars haphazardly aligned.

The BARTENDER, a seasoned brusque woman, approaches Will --

BARTENDER

Whaddya want?

-- and interrupts him from his star-gazing.

WILL

What do I want? I want passion and excitement -- fire and fireworks! I want lazy walks along Lake Superior and sex on the beach! I want that which poetry has testified to over time. That which Shakespeare wrote about in sonnets! I want someone who loves me as much as I love her.

BARTENDER

How 'bout a beer?

Will slumps from his previous passion.

WILL

Sure.

The bartender fills a pint glass. Will looks around the bar; happy couples talk and laugh, cuddle close and kiss.

The bartender sets the beer before Will. He turns toward the couples and hoists his beer for a toast.

WILL (CONT'D)

To you, lovers! You fortunate souls, for you have found the one... your one! Your one whose arms'll hold you when you're weak and weary. Whose lips'll kiss you when life is bleak and dreary! Your one. Your one-in-eight-billion in this great big world.

Will takes a drink. A NON-DIEGETIC SONG about the hope and folly of love begins. Then a journey, taking off through the window of the bar and off to --

I/E. THE WORLD - CONTINUOUS

Michigan's Upper Peninsula -- the U.P. -- then off to Chicago, Los Angeles, Sydney, Hong Kong, Moscow, a small Iraqi village, Venice, Paris, New York.

Within these various locales are scenes of lovers kissing, courting, a celebrity couple posing faux-love for a photo op, of marriages, of a man with a veiled woman walking behind him, lovers cuddled in bed, an elderly couple holding hands seated on a bench watching the sunrise, then returning to the U.P. and flying into --

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Will sleeps wearing last night's clothes. When the alarm clock changes to 6:00 a.m., the NON-DIEGETIC SONG becomes DIEGETIC from the clock and rouses Will. Will GROANS as he flops his hand on the snooze button. The SONG STOPS.

INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

SOPHIA, 22, long blonde hair in a pony-tail. Athletic. She's attractive even in her discombobulated-yet-peaceful slumber.

When her alarm clock changes to 6:00 a.m. the SONG PLAYS FROM THE CLOCK where it had left off. She awakens and turns off her alarm; the SONG becomes NON-DIEGETIC again.

EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The first light of a beautiful day. The curtains in Sophia's window of a lakeshore home fly open to reveal her smiling face as she looks out onto --

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- a breath-taking view of Lake Superior.

Begin MONTAGE:

-- IN HIS BEDROOM, Will gets ready for his day. Standing in front of the mirror, he struggles to button his pants. He shakes his belly in disgust.

-- IN HER BEDROOM, Sophia happily gets ready for her day.

-- AT AN OVERLOOK OF LAKE SUPERIOR, Will photographs two eagles silhouetted by the sunrise; he takes them in with appreciation yet sadness. He gets an idea! He pulls a pen and notebook from his back pocket and writes, "Two winged souls born free to fly." As he stops to think, Sophia jogs by.

-- AT A GAS STATION, Will finishes pumping gas.

-- IN HER CAR, Sophia drives singing and bobbing along with the SONG playing on her radio.

-- NOW IN HIS CAR, Will listens to the SONG on his radio. As he exits the gas station, Sophia pulls in. The SONG becomes NON-DIEGETIC again.

-- IN A COFFEE SHOP, Will pours cream and sugar into one of three coffees. Sophia waits in line. A man taps her shoulder and points; she crouches to tie her shoe as Will walks past.

End MONTAGE. The NON-DIEGETIC SONG FADES OUT over --

EXT. SUPERIOR PHOTOGRAPHY - LATER THAT DAY

The exterior and signage give an air of the creative and artistic hippie movement of a time long ago. Photos in the window are that of weddings, babies, and scenic panoramas of the U.P., articulated by extravagant wooden frames. In the corner, a brown cardboard sign: Earl's Burls.

INT. BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tell-tale wooden floors of a small-town downtown business. The room is cluttered with many photos, empty frames, and burl creations. EARL, 63, an eternal hippie, sits at a table hand-sanding his latest burl creation.

Will enters via the back door, tray of coffees in hand. He hands Earl a coffee.

WILL  
Good morning, Uncle Earl.

EARL  
Will, my boy! How'd it --

He turns and sees Will's expression.

EARL (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry.

Will acknowledges Earl's sympathy as Earl takes a lit joint from the ashtray and inhales a solid drag. Then, with a fatherly touch, he clasps Will's shoulder.

EARL (CONT'D)  
Will, a tree in the forest,  
although lush with berry, bears not  
that which is sought by the eagle.

Will discreetly struggles to comprehend that.

WILL  
Thank you, Uncle Earl. That means  
an awful lot to me.

Earl returns a nod, a wink, and a CLICK from his mouth.

WILL (CONT'D)  
Where's Aunt Jane?

The door to the darkroom flies open!

AUNT JANE  
(with a flourish)  
Here I am!

Enter AUNT JANE, 60, a flowing whirlwind of long, gray, wavy hair, and a long, flowy skirt! Will can't help but chuckle, despite his mood. She kisses Earl's forehead, draws a toke from Earl's joint, and takes a good look at Will.

AUNT JANE (CONT'D)  
Gina said No?

WILL  
Yes.

AUNT JANE  
She said Yes?!

WILL  
No, she said No.

Aunt Jane cradles Will as would a mama grizzly.

AUNT JANE  
My poor wittle Willy Woobsie! You  
tell your Auntie Jane all about it.

WILL

Well --

Aunt Jane grabs a coffee, then drags Will by the hand into --

INT. SHOWROOM - CONTINUOUS

Immaculate, well-ordered, with a hint of Hippie. Will follows Aunt Jane around as she readies the store to open.

WILL

When Gina said she wanted to talk about the future, I thought she meant our future together.

AUNT JANE

What did she say?

WILL

She's taken a job in New York. That if she stays in Marquette, she'll never forgive herself. Apparently, I'm not enough to keep her here.

Aunt Jane looks upon Will with sympathy.

WILL (CONT'D)

Oh, Aunt Jane, I wish I were dead!

AUNT JANE

Literally?!

WILL

Well, no, Aunt Jane, figuratively. But still!

Aunt Jane returns to flitting about the showroom.

AUNT JANE

Will, it's for the best! You moved here from Chicago because you want to live in the U.P. If Gina doesn't, then it wasn't meant to be! And let's be honest; you were trying awfully hard just to make it work with her.

WILL

Why wouldn't I?! I love her! And I thought she loved me.

AUNT JANE

Will, I didn't say this to you before because you're free to be with whoever you want.

(MORE)

AUNT JANE (CONT'D)

After all, you are a grown man, Woobsie. But it takes both of you trying! Do you honestly think Gina was a good match for you?

WILL

Aunt Jane, I thought she was my one!

Aunt Jane stops her flitting.

AUNT JANE

Will, I know you believe that in this great big world of eight billion people there is the one for each of us, but the thing about love is... it happens when it happens... and not before.

WILL

(skeptical)

Love happens when it happens and not before?

AUNT JANE

Take your Uncle Earl and me! We didn't find each other our first time around the block. Hell, not even the second or third time! But when the time was finally right, when the stars aligned in their cosmic benevolence, your Uncle Earl and I, we found each other! Will, you, too, will find love... when the time is right... when it happens... and not before.

WILL

Well, when will the time be right for me, Aunt Jane?

AUNT JANE

How the hell would I know?

INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Simplistic white with wood accents, shiplap, and barn doors; a stairwell to the second floor. Family photos on the walls and the mantle. Sophia enters via the front door.

SOPHIA

Grandma, I'm home!  
(no response)  
Grandma?

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sophia walks in, a little worried.

SOPHIA  
(calling out louder)  
Grandma?

Still no response. Dread comes over Sophia.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sophia walks up the steps; she's focused on a door slightly ajar at the top of the stairs.

SOPHIA  
Grandma?

Sophia slowly pushes the door open; she sees the bed is made. She sighs in relief.

GRANDMA (O.S.)  
Sophia!

Sophia jumps!

SOPHIA  
Jesus!

At the bottom of the stairs stands GRANDMA, 70. She's a spry woman, yet has years of grey in her hair.

GRANDMA  
Is everything okay?

SOPHIA  
Yeah, Gram, you just startled me.

Grandma smirks.

GRANDMA  
You thought I was dead in there,  
didn't you?

Sophia walks down the stairs.

SOPHIA  
Of course not! I just wasn't sure  
where you were. Where were you?

Grandma is wearing gardening gloves and knee pads, holding a spade, and is covered in dirt from head to toe.

GRANDMA  
I was trying out for the Lions.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sophia follows Grandma in. Grandma walks over to the sink, takes off her gloves, and washes her hands.

SOPHIA  
Grandma, the doctor said you should  
be taking it easy!

GRANDMA  
Those weeds ain't gonna pull  
themselves, Sophia. Besides, that  
was three months ago and them  
doctors don't know nothin'.

SOPHIA  
That's right, Grandma. Them doctors  
go to school for twelve years to  
not know nothin'.

GRANDMA  
Sophia, it was just a little  
stroke.

SOPHIA  
A little stroke?! Grandma, you were  
in the hospital for three weeks!

GRANDMA  
Exactly, Sophia! A big stroke  
would've killed me.

Grandma pours herself and Sophia a cup of coffee.

SOPHIA  
I just worry about you, Gram.

GRANDMA  
I know you do, angel --  
(takes a sip)  
-- but there's no use in worrying  
about an old coot like me. The Good  
Lord will take me when he's damn-  
well ready! And he better be damn-  
well ready!

INT. SUPERIOR PHOTOGRAPHY - DARKROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Will and Aunt Jane pull photos out of solution and hang them.

WILL  
Think if I give Gina a few days --

AUNT JANE  
Then I'd think you're a fool!

WILL  
Thanks for not sugar-coating it.

AUNT JANE  
You put too much pressure on love,  
Woobsie. Be patient!

Will watches a photo of a young woman in his pan develop.

AUNT JANE (CONT'D)  
Give it some time. It'll become  
clear to you.

Will pulls the photo out of the solution and is awestruck by  
the young woman which is Sophia!

WILL  
You're right, Aunt Jane!

AUNT JANE  
Of course I am! I've got too many  
years of wrongs to not be a woman  
this wise.

DING-DING!

AUNT JANE (CONT'D)  
Be a dear and get that, Woobsie.

Will is still struck by the woman in the photo.

AUNT JANE (CONT'D)  
Woobsie! A customer!

WILL  
Oh... yeah!

INT. SHOWROOM - CONTINUOUS

Will walks through the curtain still staring at the photo.

SOPHIA (O.S.)  
Hello!

WILL  
How may I --

Will lowers the photo and sees Sophia. He's stunned!

SOPHIA  
Help you?

WILL  
Help me?

SOPHIA  
No, that's your line.

Will sets the photo on the counter.

WILL  
Oh, yes!  
(acting smooth)  
How may I help --

SOPHIA  
Oh! Are my photos done?

WILL  
Uh, yeah! Well, almost. I was just  
processing them.

SOPHIA  
What do you think?

WILL  
(fixated on Sophia)  
Think of what?

SOPHIA  
The photo!

WILL  
I love it! I... I like it! I mean,  
it's a nice photo. Well, it's more  
than nice... That's Chapel Rock,  
isn't it?

SOPHIA  
(impressed)  
Yes, it is!

Sophia pulls some film out of her camera bag.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
Anyway, I wanted to drop off some  
more film. Now you'll call me?

WILL  
You want me to?

SOPHIA  
Yes, when my photos are done.

WILL  
Oh... yeah... of course! I'll call  
you when your photos are done.

SOPHIA  
Thanks! I'll be waiting for you.

Sophia leaves. Will looks at the photo again.

WILL  
And I've been waiting for you my  
entire life.

EXT. DOG PARK - LATER THAT DAY

Two labs wrestle playfully.

JOSIE (O.S.)  
So, Gina said No. I should've told  
you she would and saved you the  
embarrassment. You jumped the gun  
this time, Will.

JOSIE, 22, dressed in bold clothing, sits on a bench next to  
Will. Josie throws a ball; the two labs run after it.

WILL  
Yeah. Well, I guess it wasn't meant  
to be.

Josie raises an eyebrow and eyes him suspiciously.

JOSIE  
You guess it wasn't meant to be?

WILL  
Well, yeah! That's how it goes  
sometimes, right? How many times  
have you told me that?

He looks at Josie as earnestly as he can.

JOSIE  
Something's up. All the other times  
you've been dumped you were  
devastated -- it's the end of the  
world! Gina dumps you, and you're  
okay with it? I'm not buying this!

WILL  
What? I am okay with it!

JOSIE  
You've already fallen for someone  
else, haven't you?

Will's eyes look away.

WILL  
I have not!

Josie grabs Will by the cheeks and brings his face to hers.

JOSIE

Look me in the eyes and tell me that!

Will looks her in the eyes, then looks away.

WILL

I have not.

Josie throws Will to the ground; she roughhouse-punches him!

JOSIE

Admit it!

WILL

There's nothing to admit!

JOSIE

Get him, boys!

Josie holds Will's arms down as the dogs lick Will's face. He struggles to break free, then caves.

WILL

Alright! Yes! I admit it! And she's beautiful and smart and funny and everything I've looked for. Now get off me!

Josie pushes the dogs away and gets off Will. Will stands and wipes the slobber off his face with his sleeves.

JOSIE

Does she have a name?

WILL

Aunt Jane says it's Sophia.

JOSIE

Sophia didn't tell you her name is Sophia?

WILL

This is why I wasn't going to tell you! Whenever I tell you I've met my one you tell me to get my head out of the clouds.

JOSIE

No, I tell you to pull your head out of your ass! And I tell you that because whenever you're single and you see someone you're attracted to, right away -- BOOM -- she's your one!

WILL

So I'm a romantic! So I think in  
this great big world of eight  
billion people, for each of us  
there is the one! And to settle for  
a life devoid of that magic makes  
it a life unworthy of living!

JOSIE

I think you said that when you  
thought I was your one.