

GERMINATION

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INT. ATTIC - DAY

On Blackness... A horizontal LINE OF LIGHT appears. It widens, becoming a crack with two young EYES peering through. The eyes are curious, but wet and red from crying.

We're looking out of an old STEAMER TRUNK as the lid opens, revealing the face of SARAH (8). She opens the lid wider and looks in. The trunk is full of memorabilia: BOOKS, PHOTOS, LETTERS, and DRAWINGS.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

An impatient PROFESSOR (50) seated at his DESK examines a set of DRAWINGS. His CLOTHING and the office FURNISHINGS indicate the late 1940s.

The drawings show plans and 3D renderings of an exotic BUILDING: an enormous, flower-like structure so large its top extends into the clouds. Tiny aircraft are shown flying nearby, for scale.

A frazzled, unkempt FRED KLEIN (20) stands opposite the desk.

PROFESSOR

It's... interesting.

KLEIN

It's revolutionary! An entire city in one building! Fully self-sustaining! There's never been anything like it!

PROFESSOR

No argument there. What's this here?

KLEIN

Solar collectors.

PROFESSOR

You lost me.

KLEIN

The entire structure is powered by sunlight! No smokestacks, no trucking in coal or oil. Can you imagine it!

The Professor pushes the sketches away.

PROFESSOR

Matter of fact I can't. Klein,
look. This is beyond a pipe dream.
You want to build this... thing?
You'd better marry a Rockefeller.
You want to build a career in
architecture? Design cheaper
houses!

KLEIN

Houses?

PROFESSOR

Thousands of ex-GI's need houses.
More every day. Or is your
particular genius above such
mundane concerns?

KLEIN

No. No, of course not.

The professor looks down at the top drawing, shakes his head.

PROFESSOR

Where on earth did you get the idea
for this?

KLEIN

Something I found.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUING

Sarah picks up what at first looks like a framed picture.
Turning it over, she sees it's a narrow SHADOWBOX, containing
a single DRIED FLOWER. EMMA, Sarah's mother, calls from
downstairs.

EMMA

Sarah, your brother is very sorry!
We'll get you a new one, or
something else, okay?

SARAH

Why does he always have to wreck
everything? HE WRECKS EVERYTHING!

EMMA

Sarah, honey...

SARAH

JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!

INT. DRAFTING DEPARTMENT - DAY

KLEIN (35) sits at a large, tilted DRAFTING TABLE, one among dozens. CLOTHES and FURNISHINGS indicate the early 1960s. On his drafting table is a PLAN for a pleasant but very conventional house. Klein's BOSS looks it over.

BOSS

You fixed the kitchen! Great! Nice job.

The Boss begins to walk away.

KLEIN

Sir, one minute...

Klein produces a large COLOR RENDERING and lays it over the house plan. It's a very scaled-down version of his city-in-a-building, now the size of modest sky scraper.

BOSS

What the hell is this?

KLEIN

It's a new kind of building, designed entirely from nature. It uses power, water, and space more efficiently than any building on earth.

BOSS

Been in all of them, have you?

KLEIN

Sir, think what a project like this could do for the firm!

BOSS

Besides make us a laughing stock, you mean? Our clients don't want nature, Klein, they want steel and glass, preferably at right angles.

KLEIN

But sir, I just...

BOSS

Leave the conceptualizing to the guys that get paid for it, okay? I mean, how would you even convey what something like this would really look like?

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUING

From inside the trunk, Sarah lifts a dusty MODEL of Klein's flower-like office building. It's broken, pieces missing. She stands it up on the floor next to the shadowbox.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

KLEIN (50) sits in front of a TYPEWRITER at his dining room table, talking on the PHONE. CLOTHES and FURNISHINGS indicate the late 1970s.

The table is covered with stacks of MANUSCRIPT and color DRAWINGS showing variations on his flower-like building. A cover sheet reads: THE PETAL AND THE STEM - The Bloom Of A New Architecture.

Klein's daughters EMMA (14) and RACHEL (17) run through the room behind him, heading toward the front door.

EMMA

Mom, come on!

KLEIN

But isn't there... Sure. I understand. Right. Okay. What do I think? I THINK YOU CAN GO TO HELL!

Klein slams the phone down. Emma and Rachel stare at their father in shock. Klein's wife DORA (50) rushes in from the kitchen, dressed for work, a BRIEFCASE in one hand. The kids approach more slowly.

DORA

What is it? What's happened?

KLEIN

Change of plans. They're not going to publish it.

Klein stands, takes in the work spread over the table.

KLEIN (CONT'D)

Thirty years...

DORA

Oh, Fred...

She embraces him, but he doesn't react. She pulls away and looks at him sternly. He can barely meet her eyes.

DORA (CONT'D)

Okay. Okay. What now?

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUING

Held up to the light between small fingers: a 35mm COLOR SLIDE showing a different rendering of Klein's flower-like building.

Sarah drops the slide back into a CAROUSEL TRAY, and picks up a bound SCRIPT. She flips through it for a moment, then adds it to the other objects she's assembled on the floor. The cover reads: THE PETAL AND THE STEM: Visions For A Planned Community.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Klein (70) lies in BED, the head raised up. An IV INFUSER and CARDIAC MONITOR stand near the bed, and TUBES and ELECTRICAL LEADS run to his arms and chest. Details suggest the 1990s.

A MEAL TABLE sits in front of him, but Klein hasn't touched the food. He pushes the table away, then regards the PAPERS, NOTEBOOKS, AND DRAWINGS covering the bed: more variations on his flower-like structures.

Klein lets his head fall back, and rolls it to one side. He sees an ARRANGEMENT OF FLOWERS on a bedside table. He opens a GREEN SPIRAL NOTEBOOK and writes something on the last page. He looks at the flowers again, and his eyes close.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUING

Sarah pages through the green spiral notebook. It's filled with indecipherable doodles, notes and sketches. She turns to the last page. Her lips move as she reads something. Behind her, the door opens and EMMA (40) steps into the attic.

EMMA

Hey, birthday girl.

Emma walks over to Sarah and sits beside her. She regards the items from the trunk lined up on the floor.

EMMA (CONT'D)

What'cha doin with Grandpa's stuff?

SARAH

Nothing. Mom, what's "germinate" mean?

EMMA

Um, that's how plants grow.

Sarah closes the notebook and picks up the shadowbox with the dried flower inside.

SARAH
Did he ever build it?

EMMA
No. But he never gave up, either.
(beat)
You ready?

SARAH
Yeah.

INT. TOY MEGASTORE - AFTERNOON

Sarah, Emma, and brother STUART (10) walk down an aisle. They stop in front of a shelf stacked with "MY LITTLE PONY" TOYS.

EMMA
You know which one you want?

Sarah lets her eyes wander over the shelves, then glances down the aisle. She keeps walking.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Sarah?

INT. MINIVAN - LATER

On Sarah's lap sits a DELUXE ERECTOR SET in a huge box. She looks down at it, her hands placed protectively on top. Stuart sits next to her.

STUART
So what do you think you're gonna build with that?

EMMA
Stuart, remember what we talked about...

SARAH
A flower.

STUART
You are so stupid! You can't build a flower with an erector set!

Sarah looks at Stuart. The intense expression on her face shuts him up.

SARAH

(reciting)

Open to the sun. A home where
dreams germinate. Seeds for other
winds.

Stuart gapes at Sarah, completely off balance. She turns away and looks out the window. The passing clouds reflect in her eyes. She smiles.

FADE OUT

THE END