

## THE OUTSIDER -- Synopsis for Motion Picture or Play

*H.L. Menchen said of Theodore Dreiser's writing:*

*He understood well the psychology of the outsider in rising American cities, his loneliness, his desires, and the cost exacted of him for the realization of his dreams. Robert H. Elias, Theodore Dreiser; Apostle of Nature*

THE OUTSIDER defines this "loneliness" that Dreiser knew well and described in his many novels. This screenplay, targeted at the adult audience, takes place in 1932 Chicago.

Against the dire warnings of his PARENTS, HUGO and MYRA PRESSER, JOHN PRESSER, 20, arrives in Chicago by bus. John wants to establish a career in writing. His meager funds will last for one week.

November 1932. The Great Depression rages. Failure to find a job will mean, John will be forced to give up writing and to return to Indiana and a dead-end job in his father's Fixit Shop.

After wandering icy streets in search of a room, John stops before an old boarding house. A sign in the window reads ROOM TO LET.

The LANDLADY informs him that this room has a distinguished history. It's the same room Theodore Dreiser occupied when he wrote "THE GENIUS" in 1917.

Room 401, a corner room, overlooks the Starlite Diner across the street. Soon, John meets the luminous EVELYN HART, a waitress at the diner. Evelyn becomes a confidante to the quiet and worried young man. She falls in love with John. While John is mildly interested, his first love must be his writing and his dream to become rich and famous as soon as possible.

Evelyn faces two rivals: SYLVIA HAYWORTH, wealthy, beautiful publisher who would love to add John to her collection of young devotees and another more dangerous antagonist -- Room 401 itself. Seductive, addictive, and powerful, the room enables John to write faster and faster, ultimately to write a novel in one night.

As John rides a streetcar to Hayworth Publishing to deliver the precious novel, he falls asleep. NATE TAGGERT, a homeless man steals the package. John awakens in a panic to discover the package missing. He leaps from the trolley to chase Nate into an alley. A fight ensues and Nate hits his head on a brick. Nate dies. John retrieves his novel and manages to escape the dreadful alley without detection.

Then follows John's fast rise to fame as a novelist. But Sylvia demands another novel, at what cost? John must decide. Resist or lose his life and Evelyn. The choice defines a fundamental change in John's values and his decision to marry Evelyn and return to his family.

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