

# The Internet Movie Script Database (IMSDb)



## Gattaca



Writers : [Andrew Niccol](#)

Genres : [Drama](#) [Sci-Fi](#) [Thriller](#)

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## Gattaca

Highlighted segments in yellow

A Screen Play  
by Andrew M. Niccol

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### FADE IN

A white title appears on a black screen.

*"As night-fall does not come at once, neither does oppression...It is in such twilight that we all must be aware of change in the air - however slight - lest we become victims of the darkness."*

Justice William O. Douglas

The title fades off, replaced by a second title.

*"I not only think that we will tamper with Mother Nature, I think Mother wants us to."*

William Gaylin

The second title fades off, leaving a dark screen.

Jerome tears himself away from his screen and picks up a discreet mini-vac. He vacuums between the keys of his keyboard. DIRECTOR JOSEF, 50's, a shorter, official-looking man approaches. His assistant IRENE stands at his shoulder.

**DIRECTOR JOSEF**

You keep your work station so clean, Jerome.

**JEROME**

--Next to Godliness, isn't that what they say?

The Director smiles at the notion and places a computer disc on Jerome's desk.

**DIRECTOR JOSEF**

I reviewed your flight plan. Not one error in a hundred thousand keystrokes. Phenomenal.

(placing a hand on Jerome's shoulder)

It's right that someone like you is taking us to the Belt.

(glancing to notification on Jerome's screen)

You have a substance test.

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White-coated LAMAR, forties, buzzcut, a man's man, checks JEROME's eyes with an instrument. Satisfied with his examination, he passes a transparent plastic container to JEROME. Standing directly in front of the technician with his back to camera, Jerome opens his fly. A steady stream of urine begins to flow into the container from Jerome's hidden pouch.

**LAMAR**

(staring admiringly at the discharge)

Jerome...never shy. Pisses on command.

You've got a beautiful cock. I ever told you that, Jerome?

**JEROME**

(deadpan as he continues to urinate)

Only every time I'm in here.

Jerome hands the container to Lamara who seals and label it as Jerome refastens his trousers.

**LAMAR**

I see a lot of cocks. I speak from experience.

Yours is a beautiful example. Why didn't my folks order a cock like that for me?

**Comment about his son**

LAMAR pours the urine sample into a high-tech device where it is instantly analyzed. The urine identifies Jerone while also registering a negative drug reading. The computer reads

"VALID".

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**EXT. BEACH. DUSK - THIRTY-ODD YEARS EARILER**

A starry sky. The camera tilts down to find palm trees swaying against a setting sun.

*JEROME (VO)*

*I was conceived in the Riviera. Not the French Riviera.*

The camera tilts down further to find a Buick Riviera parked in a deserted beachfront parking lot on a polluted stretch of beach.

*JEROME (VO)*

*The Detroit variety.*

Through the car's steamed windows we see Jerome's mother and father, MARIA and ANTONIO, early twenties, making love.

*JEROME (VO)*

*They used to say that a child conceived in love, has a greater chance of happiness. They don't say that any more.*

**INT. FAMILY PLANNING CLINIC. DAY.**

We focus on a crucifix dangling on a rosary. Tilting up we find the rosary clasped between MARIA and ANTONIO's intertwined hands.

*JEROME (VO)*

*Those were early days--days when a priest could still persuade someone to put their faith in God's hands rather than those of the local geneticist.*

Bathed in sweat, Maria gives a final push on the delivery table.

While still attached to his umbilical cord, the heel of the NEWBORN BABY BOY is immediately pricked by a masked NURSE. A minute drop of blood is inserted into an analyzing machine.

Even as the baby is put into Maria's arms, page after page of data begins to appear on a monitor, pulsing warning signals throughout the spreadsheets.

Two assisting NURSES exchange a look. Antonio senses something amiss.

**ANTONIO**

What's wrong?

**JEROME (VO)**

*Of course, there was nothing wrong with me. Not so long ago I would have been considered a perfectly healthy, normal baby. Ten fingers, ten toes. That was all that used to matter. But now my immediate well-being was not the sole concern.*

Antonio turns his attention from his baby to the data appearing on the monitor. We see individual items highlighted amongst the data - "NERVE CONDITION - PROBABILITY 60%", "MANIC DEPRESSION - 42%", "OBESITY - 66%", "ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER - 89%"--

**JEROME (VO)**

*My destiny was mapped out before me-- all my flaws, predispositions and susceptibilities - most untreatable to this day. Only minutes old, the date and cause of my death was already known.*

Antonio focuses on a final highlighted item on the monitor's screen, "HEART DISORDER - 99% - EARLY FATAL POTENTIAL.". "LIFE EXPECTANCY - 33 YEARS".

**NURSE**

The name?  
(typing details into birth certificate)  
For the certificate.

**MARIA**

Antonio--

**ANTONIO**

(correcting her)  
--No, Vincent Antonio.

With a computer stylus he signs the nurse's handheld screen.

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**EXT. TRACT HOME - BACKYARD. DAY.**

**2-YEAR-OLD JEROME (REFERRED TO BY HIS GIVEN NAME OF "VINCENT"**  
FOR MOST OF THE FOLLOWING FLASHBACK) running with a toy rocket falls more in clumsiness than fatigue. MARIA suddenly whisks up the toddler.

**MARIA**

(hysterical)  
Oh, Vincent, Vincent, Vincent...I can't let you out of my sight.

Maria frantically listens to her young son's heartbeat. For his part, Vincent appears surprised by the attention. Maria

places a portable oxygen mask over Vincent's mouth.

*JEROME (VO)*

*I was born Vincent Antonio Luca. And from an early age I came to think of myself as others thought of me - chronically ill. Every skinned knee and runny nose treated as if it were life-threatening.*

**INT. DAY CARE CENTER. DAY.**

MARIA and ANTONIO drop off dark-haired 2-YEAR-OLD VINCENT at a Day Care Center.

*JEROME (VO)*

*And my parents soon realized that wherever I went, my genetic prophecy preceded me.*

While HEALTHY CHILDREN play outside on tricycles, clamber over jungle-gyms and finger-paint, the PRE-SCHOOL TEACHER shows Vincent into a room where CHILDREN WITH OBVIOUS DISABILITIES sleep on mats.

Maria wheels around and marches out of the center with Vincent in her arms. Antonio follows close behind, pleading with his wife to see sense.

*JEROME (VO)*

*They put off having any more children until they could afford not to gamble - to bring a child into the world in what has become **the "natural" way.***

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**EXT. GENETIC COUNSELLING OFFICE BUILDING. DAY.**

ANTONIO, MARIA and 2-YEAR-OLD VINCENT exit a packed commuter bus and enter a Genetic Counselling office building bearing the sign - "**PRO-CREATION**".

**INT. GENETIC COUNSELLING OFFICE. DAY.**

A GENETICIST stares into a high-powered microscope as ANTONIO, MARIA and 2-YEAR-OLD VINCENT are shown into the office by a NURSE. On the counter beside the Geneticist is a glass-doored industrial refrigerator containing petri dishes arranged on racks several feet high.

**GENETICIST**

(to the nurse, without taking his eyes from his binocular microscope)  
Put up the dish.

While Antonio and Maria take a seat in front of a television monitor, the Nurse puts a labelled petri dish under a video-equipped microscope. The Geneticist swings around in his chair to greet his clients.

Four magnified clusters of cells - eight cells on each cluster - appear on the television screen.

**GENETICIST**

Your extracted eggs...

(noting the couple's names from data along the edge of the screen)

...*Maria*, have been fertilized with...

*Antonio's* sperm and we have performed an analysis of the resulting pre-embryos.

After screening we're left with two healthy boys and two healthy girls. Naturally, no critical pre-dispositions to any of the major inheritable diseases. All that remains is to select the most compatible candidate.

Maria and Antonio exchange a nervous smile.

**GENETICIST**

First, we may as well decide on gender.

Have you given it any thought?

**MARIA**

(referring to the toddler on her knee)

We would like Vincent to have a brother... you know, to play with.

The Geneticist nods. He scans the data around the edge of the screen.

**GENETICIST**

You've already specified blue eyes, dark hair and fair skin. I have taken the liberty of eradicating any potentially prejudicial conditions - premature baldness, myopia, alcoholism and addictive susceptibility, propensity for violence and obesity--

**MARIA**

(interrupting, anxious)

--We didn't want--*diseases*, yes.

**ANTONIO**

(more diplomatic)

We were wondering if we should leave some things to chance.

**GENETICIST**

(reassuring)

You want to give your child the best possible

start. Believe me, we have enough imperfection built-in already. Your child doesn't need any additional burdens. And keep in mind, this child is still you, simply the *best* of you. You could conceive naturally a thousand times and never get such a result.

**ANTONIO**

(squeezing Maria's hand)  
He's right, Maria. That's right.

Maria is only half-convinced, but the Geneticist swiftly moves on.

**GENETICIST**

Is there any reason you'd want a left-handed child?

**ANTONIO**

(blank)  
Er, no...

**GENETICIST**

(explaining)  
Some believe it is associated with creativity, although there's no evidence. Also for sports like baseball it can be an advantage.

**ANTONIO**

(shrugs)  
I like football.

**GENETICIST**

(injecting a note of levity)  
I have to warn you, Mr Luca, he's going to be at least a head taller than you. Prepare for a crick in the neck in sixteen years time.

Antonio beams proudly.

**GENETICIST**

(scanning the data on the screen)  
Anything I've forgotten?

**MARIA**

(hesitant about broaching the subject)  
We want him--we were hoping he would get married and have children. We'd like grandchildren.

**GENETICIST**

(conspiratorial smile)  
I understand. That's already been taken care of.  
(an afterthought)

Now you appreciate I can only work with the raw material I have at my disposal but for a little extra...I could also attempt to insert sequences associated with enhanced mathematical or musical ability.

**MARIA**

(suddenly enthused)  
Antonio, the choir...

**GENETICIST**

(interjecting, covering himself)  
I have to caution you it's not fool-proof.  
With multi-gene traits there can be no guarantees.

**ANTONIO**

How much extra?

**GENETICIST**

It would be five thousand more.

Antonio's face falls.

**ANTONIO**

I'm sorry, there's no way we can.

**GENETICIST**

Don't worry. You'll probably do just as well singing to him in the womb.  
(rising to end the appointment)  
We can implant the most successful pre-embryo tomorrow afternoon.

Maria is staring at the four magnified clumps on the screen.

**MARIA**

What will happen to the others?

**GENETICIST**

(reassuring)  
They are not babies, Maria, merely "human possibilities".

Removing the petri dish from beneath the lens of the microscope, he points out the four minuscule specks.

**GENETICIST**

Smaller than a grain of sand.

**DISSOLVE TO**

**INT. TRACT HOME. DAY.**

A red pencil draws a mark on a doorway at the height of a child's head. The child moves away and the name, "ANTON 11" is

written beside the mark by proud father, ANTONIO.

*JEROME (VO)*

*That's how my brother, Anton, came into the world - a son my father considered worthy of his name.*

There is little physical similarity between 11-YEAR-OLD ANTON and 13-YEAR-OLD VINCENT standing beside him, apart from their height. In fact Vincent is mortified to see that his younger brother's mark is a fraction of an inch higher than the mark beside his own name, "VINCENT 13". Vincent runs from the room.

#### **EXT. BEACH. DAY.**

13-YEAR-OLD VINCENT and 11-YEAR-OLD ANTON sit together on a windswept beach.

Anton picks up a broken shell and deliberately slices the tip of his thumb with the sharp edge. He hands the shell to Vincent who hesitantly follows suit.

*JEROME (VO)*

*By the time we were playing at blood brothers I understood that there was something very different flowing through my veins.*

The two brothers press their thumbs together, merging the blood.

*JEROME (VO)*

*And I'd need an awful lot more than a drop if I was going to get anywhere.*

#### **EXT. BEACH. LATER IN THE DAY.**

While ANTONIO and MARIA doze under a beach umbrella, ANTON and VINCENT enter the water, diving through the waves. From above we watch their two young bodies swimming beside each other beyond the breakers.

*JEROME (VO)*

*Our favorite game was "chicken". When our parents weren't watching, we used to swim outside the flags, as far out as we dared. It was about who would get scared and turn back first.*

Suddenly VINCENT stops swimming, pulling up sharply in the water, exhausted and fearful. He watches ANTON swim on into the distance.

*JEROME (VO)*

*Of course, it was always me. Anton was by far the stronger swimmer and he had no excuse to fail.*

**INT. SCHOOL - CLASSROOM. DAY.**

A TEACHER gives a physics lesson. The bespectacled 13-YEAR-OLD VINCENT has his arm energetically raised at each opportunity but is never called upon. Eventually he lowers his arm in defeat.

*JEROME (VO)*

*My genetic scarlet letter continued to follow me from school to school. When you're told you're prone to learning disabilities, it's sometimes easier not to disappoint anybody.*

**EXT. STREET. NIGHT.**

13-YEAR-OLD VINCENT stands at a cul-de-sac at the end of a long, straight deserted street. He places a basketball in the middle of the street to represent the SUN and begins to unwind the huge reel of string attached to the ball. 11-YEAR-OLD ANTON walks a pace behind him. Several yards along the trail a bead is threaded through the string to represent the planet MERCURY.

**ANTON**

How many astronauts are there, anyway?

Vincent ignores him and continues to reel out the string.

**ANTON**

I bet I could be one.

Vincent stops and regards his younger brother with contempt.

**VINCENT**

You're standing on Venus.

Anton lifts his foot. There is a bead beneath it.

**INT/EXT. CAR / SATELLITE DISH. DUSK.**

VINCENT has developed into a handsome 17-YEAR-OLD. His spectacles hidden, he and a YOUNG WOMAN are necking in the front seat of a beat-up car, parked overlooking a huge satellite dish.

*JEROME (VO)*

*I was popular enough until it got around that I wasn't a long-term proposition.*

The love-making intensifies. The YOUNG WOMAN moves down Vincent's chest and unzips his fly.

*JEROME (VO)*

*Those who didn't know already could easily find out for themselves. It was certainly no problem coaxing the information out of me.*

We remain on Vincent's face as he climaxes. The YOUNG WOMAN turns her head away from the spent Jerome and, out of his view, trickles semen from her mouth into a clear specimen vial.

*JEROME (VO)*

*I didn't blame them. You need to know if a prospective husband can qualify for a mortgage or life insurance or can hold down a decent job.*

**INT. HOME. DAY.**

In the living room of their modest home, the dark-haired, 17-year-old, bespectacled VINCENT sits opposite his PARENTS. The crestfallen Vincent has a book on his lap entitled "CAREERS IN SPACE".

**MOTHER**

(trying to break it gently)

Vincent, you have to be realistic. A heart condition like yours--

**VINCENT**

--I don't care. I'll take the risk.

**MOTHER**

It's not just *you* they have to be concerned about. Perhaps we could get you one of those new pacemakers. They're not perfect but--

**FATHER**

(letting his frustration show)

For God's sake, Vincent, don't you understand. The only way you'll see the inside of a space ship is if you're cleaning it!

Vincent looks at his father in disbelief.

On a dinner table on the other side of the living room, 15-YEAR-OLD ANTON looks up from the biological specimen he is studying with a magnifying glass.

**INT. PERSONNEL OFFICE - WAITING ROOM. DAY.**

17-YEAR-OLD VINCENT hides his glasses in his pocket as he enters a WAITING ROOM. He gazes around at other APPLICANTS.

*JEROME (VO)*

*My father was right. It didn't matter how much I lied on my resumé, my real C.V. was in my cells. Why should anybody invest all that money to train me, when there are a thousand other applicants with a far cleaner*

*profile? Of course, it's illegal to discriminate -  
"genoism" it's called - but no one takes the  
laws seriously.*

As Jerome enters the office, we focus on the doorhandle he has just touched.

*JEROME (VO)  
If you refuse to disclose, they can always  
take a sample from a doorhandle...*

Vincent hesitates before shaking the PERSONNEL OFFICER's outstretched hand.

*JEROME (VO)  
...or a handshake...*

We focus on Jerome's envelope attached to his application form sitting on the Manager's desk.

*JEROME (VO)  
...even the saliva off your application form.*

Sitting opposite the manager, Jerome's face falls. The manager puts a clear, plastic cup in front of Jerome.

*JEROME (VO)  
But for the most part we know who we are.  
And if all else fails, a legal drug test  
can just as easily become an illegal peek  
at your future in the company.*

Vincent saves the Manager the trouble and exits the office, leaving the cup where it sits.

#### **EXT. BEACH. DAY.**

17-YEAR-OLD JEROME walks up the beach to find 15-YEAR-OLD ANTON sitting with the YOUNG WOMAN Vincent had previously dated.

*JEROME (VO)  
I didn't blame Anton for his free ride. You  
can't blame someone for winning the lottery.*

The Young Woman hastily departs.

LATER the two brothers face each other on the sand. Anton is the more statuesque of the two.

**ANTON**  
(cocky)  
You sure you want to do this?

Vincent's answer is to walk towards the water. Anton smiles mockingly at his brother's grim "game face" and

follows.

From an aerial view we watch VINCENT and his younger brother, ANTON, swim beyond the breakers.

*JEROME (VO)*

*It was the last time we swam together.  
Out into the open sea, like always,  
knowing each stroke towards the horizon  
was one we had to make back to the  
shore. Like always, the unspoken contest.*

We watch the two young men swimming stroke for stroke. They swim far out, beyond the point. Suddenly ANTON starts to slow, his strokes becoming labored until he becomes motionless in the water. He begins to sink like a stone. VINCENT, realizing Anton is no longer beside him, turns back to lend support. Vincent takes him in a lifeguard hold and begins to nurse him back to shore. Finally the two boys are coughed up onto the shallows. They collapse, just beyond the waterline, exhausted, gasping for air. ANTONIO and MARIA arrive on the scene. ANTON is the first to recover while VINCENT clutches his side, his face screwed up in pain. Maria kneels down and starts to administer to Vincent but his father, Antonio, is unable to conceal his anger and contempt for Vincent.

**ANTONIO**

Vincent, you damn fool! You could have killed Anton with your ridiculous contest! Why should he risk his life to save yours?! When are you going to get it through your thick head--you can't compete with your brother! Why try?!

Maria takes Antonio aside. Anton and Vincent exchange a look.

**ANTON**

Why didn't you say anything?

**VINCENT**

Why didn't you?  
(staring back at his father knowingly)  
It's okay. It's the way they want it.

*JEROME (VO)*

*It confirmed everything in the minds of my parents - that they had taken the right course with my younger brother and the wrong course with me. It would have been so much easier for everyone if I had slipped away that day. I decided to grant them that wish.*

**INT. HOME. NIGHT.**

ANTON stands at the mantelpiece in the dimly-lit living room. He gazes at a framed family portrait - Vincent's face has been

torn out of it. He suddenly spies VINCENT exiting the front gate, carrying a suitcase. Anton goes to shout Vincent's name but the words don't get out.

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**INT. GATTACA. DAY.**

VINCENT empties garbage into a dumpster adjacent to Gattaca. His attention is drawn to something in the trash. A discarded manual on Celestial Mechanics and Navigation. He wipes food residue off the corner.

**INT. ASTRONOMY & TELESCOPE SHOP. DAY.**

A forest of telescopes on tripods in an astronomy shop. VINCENT enters the store with a bucket and squeegee and immediately goes to clean the storefront window. The STORE OWNER looks up from his tabloid - "STAR" magazine.

**OWNER**

Where's Earl?

**JEROME**

He fell. Lucky it was only the second floor.

The owner nods and returns to his magazine. When he looks up again one of his tripods is missing its telescope and Jerome is nowhere to be seen.

**INT. IN-VALID HOUSING PROJECT. NIGHT.**

JEROME returns to his bare apartment. He removes the cloth covering the bucket to reveal a dumpy-shaped telescope snugly wedged inside. He starts to pour over his collection of textbooks. Other tattered space paraphernalia adorns the wall.

*JEROME (VO)*

*Of course the best test score in the world wasn't going to get me in the front door unless I had the blood test to go with it.*

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**INT. IN-VALID HOUSING PROJECT. NIGHT.**

GERMAN leads VINCENT through a maze of corridors.

*JEROME (VO)*

*For the genetically superior, success is easier to attain but is by no means guaranteed. After all, there is no gene for fate. And when, for one reason or*

*another, a member of the elite falls on hard times, their genetic identity becomes a valued commodity for the unscrupulous. One man's loss is another man's gain.*

He gives a conspiratorial nod to another passing DNA BROKER, both men carrying their palm-top computers.

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**NB: FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SCREENPLAY "VINCENT" IS REFERRED TO AS "JEROME".**

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**INT. HOUSING PROJECT - APARTMENT. DAY.**

JEROME practises writing with his right hand, trying to replicate Eugene's signature.

**EUGENE**

(wheeling by, looking over Jerome's shoulder at the signature)

It needs work.

**JEROME**

(rueful)

You had to be a right-hander.

**EUGENE**

*No one orders southpaws anymore.*

**INT. HOUSING PROJECT - APARTMENT. DAY.**

A pair of spectacles lie on the bed. JEROME, still wearing his twin casts, sits behind an optometrist's portable examining device. GERMAN hovering in the background, an OPTOMETRIST custom-fits JEROME with gossamer thin contact lenses.

*JEROME (VO)*

*Myopia is a dead giveaway - one of the earliest and most justifiable of the quality-of-life corrections. Anybody with impaired vision is certain to be suffering from all the other deficiencies of a "nonadvantaged" birth.*

**GERMAN**

(inspecting the lens in Jerome's eye)

It's no good. I can see an edge. He may as well walk in there with a cane.

---

**EXT. GATTACA. DAY.**

JEROME, scarcely able to disguise his delight, exits Gattaca, trying not to stare at the superb specimens who are now his "colleagues".

*JEROME (VO)*

*The majority of people are now made-to-order. What began as a means to rid society of inheritable diseases has become a way to design your offspring--the line between health and enhancement blurred forever. Eyes can always be brighter, a voice purer, a mind sharper, a body stronger, a life longer. Everyone seeks to give their child the best chance but the most skilled geneticists are only accessible to the privileged few.*

In a nearby park MODEL CHILDREN from MODEL PARENTS play together.

*JEROME (VO)*

*Anyone who is the product of an altered DNA is proudly referred to as a "DAN", "self-made man or woman", "man-child".*

#### **INT. HOUSING PROJECT - APARTMENT. NIGHT.**

JEROME wheels EUGENE out of their housing project. He takes in the neighborhood for the last time. We focus on a POOR COUPLE cradling an INFANT.

*JEROME (VO)*

*Those parents who, for moral or, more likely economic reasons, refrain from tampering with their offspring's genetic makeup or who fail to abort a deprived fetus condemn their children to a life of routine discrimination.*

We glimpse other PEOPLE in the neighborhood. They appear poor but, for the most part, physically normal. However a pall of gloom hangs over them.

*JEROME (VO)*

*Officially they are called "In-Valid's"\*. Also known as "godchildren", "men-of-god", "faith births", "blackjack births", "deficients", "defectives", "genojunk", "ge-gnomes", "the fucked-up people".*

[\* "IN-VALID" pronounced as in "an invalid license"]

*JEROME (VO)*

*They are the "healthy ill". They don't actually have anything yet - they may never. But since few of the pre-conditions can be cured or reversed, it is easier to treat them as if they were already sick.*

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**INT. GATTACA - COMPUTER COMPLEX. DAY.**

In the vast room of COMPUTER PROGRAMMERS we pull-focus to discover that we have been filming the complex through the transparent specimen bag containing JEROME'S EYELASH.

On the mezzanine floor overlooking the scene of the crime, the INVESTIGATOR holds the bag, transfixed by the lash. The lead homicide detective, DETECTIVE HUGO, finishes interviewing a GATTACA SECURITY GUARD and approaches the Investigator. A large telescope in the background.

Although Hugo is deferential to his more youthful superior, his body language betrays his displeasure. Hugo clearly does not relish the Investigator's involvement in his case.

**DETECTIVE HUGO**

I take it you're thinking along the lines of a robbery gone sour--a thief disturbed in the act?

The Investigator merely shrugs.

**DETECTIVE HUGO**

(skeptical)

Of course that doesn't jibe with what we found. This was an angry killing.

**INVESTIGATOR**

(glancing to the profile in Hugo's hand)

Who knows with these "deficients"? His profile indicates a proclivity for violence.

**DETECTIVE HUGO**

(trying to appear co-operative)

I'll run a crossover on the eyelash for any family or associate connections--

---

**INT. EUGENE'S CONDO. NIGHT.**

EUGENE talks irritably on the phone, examining a container from a newly opened case of hair bleach.

--You don't understand, they'll make the connection, they'll Hoover again. We should cut our losses.

**EUGENE**

(angrily grabbing a tray from Jerome's hands)

Where is your head, Jerome? You're acting

like a guilty man. They won't marry the eyelash to you. They won't believe that one of their elite navigators could have suckered them for the last five years.

**JEROME**

They'll recognize me.

**EUGENE**

(scoffing)

How could they recognize you?

(referring to the torn photo of  
20-year-old Vincent on the wall)

I don't recognize you. Anyway, you don't have a choice. You run, you may as well sign a confession, turn us both in right now. No, we stick this out-- find out what we can but change nothing. This is a minor inconvenience is all it is. We've taken worse heat than this.

(angry now)

Jesus, if I'd known you were going to go belly up on me at the last fucking gasp, I wouldn't have bothered. You can't quit on me now. I've put too much into this.

(returning the samples to the fridge)

Besides, this stuff is *mine*. I had other offers, you know. I could have rented myself out to somebody with a spine. You want me to wheel in there and finish the job myself?

(meeting Jerome's gaze)

We'll take off all right, from pad 18 just like we planned.

**INT. CONCERT HALL - AUDITORIUM. NIGHT.**

JEROME and IRENE step over feet, apologizing as they go, eventually finding their seats in a box in a sold-out concert hall.

On the stage below, a YOUNG PIANIST - a teenage prodigy - has already taken his place at the keys of a grand piano. The pianist removes his white gloves and begins to play - an extremely complex and beautiful piece we have never heard before. IRENE looks to JEROME. He is clearly caught up in the music.

**INT. CONCERT HALL. NIGHT.**

A standing ovation. The YOUNG PIANIST on the stage bows deeply, soaking up the applause of the AUDIENCE. The pianist tosses one of his white gloves into the front row where it is caught by an adoring FAN. The second glove he tosses up to the box where JEROME and IRENE are standing. Jerome snares the glove out of the air and immediately hands it to Irene. She promptly slips

the glove on her own hand.

The glove fits snugly over her five fingers. However one finger of the glove remains unfilled. Jerome is stunned to realize that it is a six-fingered glove.

**IRENE**

(catching his look of astonishment)  
You didn't know?

**JEROME**

(trying hard to convince)  
Yes...yes...

**IRENE**

(picking up a resentment, confused)  
You're angry--

**JEROME**

Why would I be angry? It was beautiful.

He quickly turns away to lead the applause. On stage, the pianist raises his hands to acknowledge the crowd. Both his hands contain a perfectly formed extra finger.

#### **INT. IN-VALID HOUSING PROJECT - PROSTITUTE'S BOUDOIR. NIGHT.**

The INVESTIGATOR, sits up in the bed, glass in his hand. VALERIE lies on the tangled sheets, naked, making no effort to cover herself. She regards the Investigator curiously.

**VALERIE**

I don't understand you, Investigator.

The Investigator glances idly in her direction.

**VALERIE**

(teasing good-naturedly)  
You hunt us by day and fuck us by night. Do you only get it up for In-valids?

The Investigator smiles and rejoins her on the bed.

**VALERIE**

Wouldn't you be happier with one of your made-to-order whores?

**INVESTIGATOR**

(gently stroking her hair)  
You are so beautiful, are you sure you weren't altered? This is not the face, the body, of a Godchild. How could something so lovely be a product of chance?

---

**EXT. JEROME'S POOL. MORNING.**

JEROME sits at his own poolside in his robe, feet dangling over the edge, smoking a cigarette. EUGENE, from his wheelchair, is applying bleach to Jerome's hair and eyebrows with gloved hands.

At the same time, Jerome plays a sleight-of-hand game with a syringe.

**EUGENE**

How was your evening?

**JEROME**

Complicated. I couldn't stop her apologizing.

**EUGENE**

(teasing)

You *are* a catch. No doubt she's worried that she would lower the standard of your offspring.

Everybody wants to "breed up".

(idly curious)

What's wrong with her?

**JEROME**

(trying to be blasÉ)

You know how it is with these altered births --somebody told her she's not going to live forever and she's been preparing to die ever since.

**EUGENE**

You're not thinking of telling her, are you?

**JEROME**

Of course not. But she's have to know eventually.

**EUGENE**

(adamant)

She doesn't *have* to know. She doesn't *want* to know.

The camera travels down Jerome's scarred legs to find that the pool is completely drained. We now realize that it never contained water.

**INT. CRIME LAB. DAY.**

The INVESTIGATOR lifts his head from the eyepiece of an electron microscope through which he has been examining a tiny fragment of skin - the skin is identified as belonging to 20-YEAR-OLD VINCENT. DETECTIVE HUGO stands at the Investigator's side - his attitude more respectful in light of the discovery.

Detective Hugo points out a location on a computer-generated map.

**DETECTIVE HUGO**

(chagrined)

The skin flake was found in Michael's Restaurant.  
The employees are all accounted for.

**INVESTIGATOR**

A customer? Does this Michael's cater to misfits?

**DETECTIVE HUGO**

(shifting the view of the map  
to include the Gattaca complex)

No. But one or two "borrowed ladders" have  
shown up there in the past.

The Investigator understands the significance. They wander over to a blow-up photograph of the 20-YEAR-OLD VINCENT.

**DETECTIVE HUGO**

We have to consider the possibility that he's  
playing somebody else's hand.

A smile gradually broadens across the Investigator's face.

**INVESTIGATOR**

(taking a perverse pleasure in the  
slowly dawning revelation)

Of course. He's a "de-gene-erate".

(glancing to a photo of the  
Gattaca crime scene)

He works at Gattaca. Why else would we find  
the eyelash near the washroom? Nobody stops to  
take a leak during a murder.

---

**INT. CRAFT. DAY.**

JEROME familiarizes himself with the interior of a spacecraft under the supervision of DIRECTOR JOSEF and the MISSION COMMANDER. The screen that Jerome sits at is identical to the one he operates in the computer complex - displaying asteroid 951 Gaspra.

**DIRECTOR JOSEF**

--Somewhere in the dust of Gaspra is the key.  
(warming to his theme)

Back to the beginning of the book--the life we  
became. With the original building blocks who  
knows how far we can take "the godding".

**MISSION COMMANDER**

(wry smile)  
Even someone as advanced as Jerome will be  
last year's model by the time we're done.

**JEROME**  
(smiling back)  
I wouldn't get your hopes up, Commander.

---

**INT. GATTACA. MORNING.**

The INVESTIGATOR and DETECTIVE HUGO keep a wary eye on the outfitted DETECTIVES re-vacuuming the empty computer complex with their mini-vacs.

**HUGO**  
(reading newspaper)  
My wife and I--we're thinking of starting a family.

**INVESTIGATOR**  
(shrugs, ambivalent)  
Why not?

**HUGO**  
These new personality corrections I've been reading about.

**INVESTIGATOR**  
You worried about the cost?

**HUGO**  
Not that.

**INVESTIGATOR**  
(regarding Hugo with a condescending smile)  
They said the same thing about myopia and obesity. You think your children would be less human if they were less violent, angry, spiteful? Maybe they'd be *more* human. From where I sit the world could stand a little improving.

We dwell on one DETECTIVE in particular, snatching a garbage bag from CAESAR, the janitor.

**DETECTIVE**  
Don't touch that. It's evidence.

He puts a pile of discarded paper cups aside for later testing.

---

**INT. GATTACA - COMPUTER COMPLEX. NIGHT.**

In the dimly-lit, empty computer complex, JEROME takes a last look around. He sits at his computer, one final time replaying the graphic representation of his path through the cosmos that he is on the eve of taking for real.

He notices the key missing from his keyboard. Instantly realizing the significance, he rises from his seat to flee.

**INVESTIGATOR**

Vincent--

Jerome is stopped in his tracks by the sound of his given name and the voice that calls it.

He makes no further attempt to flee but turns to face his pursuer. The Investigator steps out of the shadows.

**INVESTIGATOR**

Vincent, what are you running from?

**JEROME**

(disturbingly calm)

From Vincent.

The two men face each other for the first time in a long time. The Investigator is transfixed by Jerome's face - scarcely able to believe his eyes.

**INVESTIGATOR**

Has it been so long, you don't remember who I am?

**JEROME**

(nodding to the Investigator's badge)

Maybe it's *you* who's forgotten.

(meeting his gaze)

What are you doing here, Anton?

**It is finally apparent the Investigator is Jerome's younger brother Anton [AS WE SHALL REFER TO THE INVESTIGATOR FOR THE REST OF THE FILM].**

**ANTON**

I could ask *you* the same question.

(glancing to the impressive complex)

I have a *right* to be here, *you* don't.

Jerome smiles at him condescendingly.

**JEROME**

You almost sound like you believe that.

**ANTON**

(ignoring the remark, extending his hand)

Come with me now, Vincent. You've gone as far as you can go.

**JEROME**

(refusing Anton's hand, glancing to the telescope above them)  
There are a few million miles to go yet.

**ANTON**

(adamant)  
It's over.

**JEROME**

(shaking his head)  
Is that the only way you can succeed, Anton, to see me fail?

**ANTON**

It's for the best.

**JEROME**

(increasingly angered)  
God, even *you* want to tell me what I *can't* do.  
In case you hadn't noticed, Anton, I don't need rescuing. But *you* did, once.

Anton is clearly stung by the memory.

**JEROME**

(goaded)  
Well? You have all the answers. How is that possible?

**ANTON**

(resolute)  
You didn't beat me that day. I beat *myself*.

**JEROME**

Who are you trying to convince?

**ANTON**

(angry)  
I will prove it to you. Come swim with me now, Vincent. Now--tonight.

Jerome regards Anton with a knowing smile. Somewhere in Gattaca a phone rings.

---

**EXT. BEACH. NIGHT.**

JEROME and ANTON walk down a dune together towards the beach not far from Gattaca - an ocean beach pounded by an angry, black sea. Jerome picks up a sharp piece of shell and slices the end of his thumb. A drop of blood oozes out. He offers the shell to Anton but Anton does not take it.

Both men begin to disrobe. The brothers stand beside each other on the sand once again - Anton still the more athletically-built of the two.

Together, they enter the raging surf. Diving through the breaking waves, they begin to swim.

In the moonlit night, we watch their two bodies swimming side by side. They swim a long distance, Anton waiting for his brother to tire. But the pace does not slacken. Anton pulls up in the water. Sensing his brother is no longer beside him, Jerome also pulls up. They tread water several yards apart.

**ANTON**

(attempting to conceal his distress)  
How are you doing this, Vincent? How have you done *any* of this?

**JEROME**

Now is your chance to find out.

Jerome swims away a second time. Anton is forced to follow once again. Angry now, gritting his teeth, Anton calls upon the same determination we have witnessed during his constant swimming in the pool. He puts on a spurt, slowly reeling in Jerome.

Anton gradually draws alongside Jerome, certain that this effort will demoralize his older brother. But Jerome has been foxing - waiting for him to catch up. Jerome smiles at Anton. With almost a trace of sympathy, he forges ahead again. Anton is forced to go with him. They swim again for a long distance.

It is Anton who gradually becomes demoralized - his strokes weaken, his will draining away. Anton pulls up, exhausted and fearful. Jerome also pulls up. However his face displays none of Anton's anxiety.

They tread water several yards apart. The ocean is choppiest now. The view of the lights on the shore is obscured by the peaks of the waves.

**ANTON**

(panic starting to show)  
Vincent, where's the shore? We're too far out.  
We have to go back!

**JEROME**

(calling back)  
Too late for that. We're closer to the other side.

Anton looks towards the empty horizon.

**ANTON**

*What* other side? How far do you want to *go*?!  
Do you want to drown us both?

(becoming hysterical)  
How are we going to get *back*?!

Jerome merely smiles back at his younger brother, a disturbingly serene smile.

**JEROME**

(eerily calm)

You wanted to know how I did it. That's how I did it, Anton. I never saved anything for the swim back.

Anton stares at Jerome, aghast. The two men face each other in silence, treading water several yards apart in the dark, rolling ocean.

Jerome turns and heads back towards the shore. Anton is left alone with the terrifying realization. The only sound, the wind and the water.

**EXT. CONDOMINIUM. NIGHT.**

JEROME, dishevelled and distressed, arrives back at the condominium. He notices IRENE standing at the edge of the pool.

She turns. He approaches her. They stand several yards apart. Looking into each other's eyes, they do not speak. Jerome abruptly pulls a hair from his head - for once one of his own.

**JEROME**

(wry smile, offering the hair to Irene)

Here, take it.

Irene takes the hair, the significance not lost on her.

**JEROME**

(echoing Irene's words from their first encounter)

If you're still interested, let me know.

Irene contemplates the hair in her fingers for a moment, then deliberately lets it fall to the ground.

**IRENE**

(never taking her eyes from him, echoing Jerome's words from their first encounter)

Sorry, the wind caught it.

Once again there is not a breath of wind. The hair lies, plainly visible on the edge of the pool.

From an upstairs window, EUGENE observes the couple.

---

**INT. GATTACA - DEPARTURE LOUNGE. NIGHT.**

JEROME enters a large holding area along with his other eleven **CREW MEMBERS.**

Jerome's heart sinks as he recognizes LAMAR, greeting the crew for one final unexpected substance test. His colleagues groan good-naturedly but it is clearly far more than an inconvenience to Jerome. He looks towards the door he has just entered but there is no way back. One by one the crew are ushered behind a screen. Before he can think of a way out, it is Jerome's turn. He enters the cubicle.

**JEROME**

(as he takes the plastic cup from Lamar)  
What's this, Lamar?

**LAMAR**

New policy.

From behind, we see Jerome unzip his fly. However for once Jerome does not urinate on cue - unused to operating his own equipment in front of the physician.

**LAMAR**

(intrigued by the  
out-of-character discharge)  
Flight got you nervous?

**JEROME**

There's a problem, Lamar.

**LAMAR**

(apparently not listening)  
Did I ever tell you about my son, Jerome? He's  
a big fan of yours. He wants to apply here.

Jerome realizes he has no choice. Resigned to his fate, he begins to fill the cup.

**JEROME**

(as he urinates)  
Just remember, Lamar, I could have gone up  
and back and nobody would have been the wiser--

**LAMAR**

(cutting him off)  
--Unfortunately my son's not all that they  
promised. But then, who know what he could do.

Lamar takes the cup from Jerome in his gloved hand. Jerome anxiously watches his sample poured into the analyzer.

Confirming Jerome's worst fears, the face of 20-YEAR-OLD VINCENT appears on the computer screen. However Lamar does not look at the screen. He stares Jerome in the eye.

**LAMAR**

For future reference--  
(a brief glance to where  
Jerome has just zipped his fly)  
--righthanded men don't hold it with their  
left. It's just one of those things.

Never lookig at the screen, Lamar presses a button marked,  
"VALID".

**LAMAR**

(knowing smile)  
Have a safe trip, Vincent.

Jerome exits up a long enclosed escalator, realizing that Lamar  
has known all along.

---

We focus on JEROME's face - seeing little if any of the craft.  
Jerome's eyes are closed. His head is still - alarmingly still.  
Could the launch itself have been too much for him? He hear the  
thoguhts in his head.

*JEROME (VO)*

*We came from the stars so they say, now  
it's time to go back. If I was conceived  
today, I would not get beyond eight cells,  
and yet here I am. In a way they were  
right, I don't have the heart for this world.*

*(pause)*

*The question is, why am I having so much  
trouble dying?*

Jerome's eyes blink open. He holds the letter from Eugene in  
his hand. It contains no words, merely a lock of EUGENE'S hair  
- for once preserved solely for its sentimental value. The  
hair, weightless, floats off the page.

We focus on a porthole looking out upon a starscape.

**A STARSCAPE**

As we pan across the constellations, a title is superimposed  
upon the starscape:

*In a few short years, scientists will  
have completed the Human Genome Project,  
the mapping of all the genes that make  
up a human being.*

*After 4 billion years of evolution by the  
slow and clumsy method of natural selection,  
we have now evolved to the point where we*

*can direct our own evolution.*

The first title is replaced in the heavens by a second title.

*If only we had aquired this knowledge  
sooner, the following people would never  
have been born:*

A succession of portraits and photographs of RENOWNED and HISTORIC FIGURES fades in and out of the constellations - the accompanying titles list their affliction rather than their accomplishments.

**HOMER**

*Blind from birth*

**NAPOLEON BONAPARTE**

*Epileptic*

**COLETTE**

*Arthritic*

**LOU GERHIG**

*Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis  
(Lou Gerhig's Disease)*

**RITA HAYWORTH**

*Alzheimer's Disease*

**HELEN KELLER**

*Blind and deaf*

**STEPHEN HAWKING**

*Lou Gerhig's Disease*

**JACKIE JOYNER-KERSEE**

*Asthmatic*

**CHARLES DARWIN**

*Chronic invalid*

The face of Charles Darwin fades off and another title appears out of the stars.

*Even Charles Darwin, the man who told of  
the survival of the fittest, numbered  
amongst our frailest.*

The title fades off and is replaced by one final title in the night sky.

*Of course, the other birth that would  
surely never have taken place is your own.*

**CUT TO BLACK**

