

"CIG"

By

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EXT. MARIA'S APARTMENT'S WINDOW - NIGHT

A drooping dandelion sits in a glass next to an ashtray, which contains a smoldering cigarette butt.

MARIA (25), a kind and creative young woman, picks up the dandelion, gazes at the stars, and closes her eyes.

MARIA

I wish I could quit...

She gently BLOWS on the flower, causing its seeds to disperse into the night sky.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The dandelion's seeds float across the moonlit sky.

EXT. CIGARETTE FACTORY - LATER

The flakes fly above the gates of a bleak gray factory. A billboard reads: "WELCOME TO SMOKISS CIGARETTES INC.".

ON THE FACTORY ROOF

The seeds fly through a cloud of black smoke until one lone seed is drawn into the factory by a ventilator.

INT. CIGARETTE FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

The seed travels through greasy machines and conveyor belts transporting THOUSANDS OF CIGARETS... until it alights on a piece of paper carrying tobacco.

It gets pulled into a machine that spits out a CIGARETTE.

A pair of curious eyes blink open as a face appears on the cigarette. - The dandelion seed serves as its forelock.

We'll call him CIG.

A mechanical arm grabs him, and thrusts him and other cigarettes into a box.

CROSS FADE TO:

EXT. CIGARETTE VENDING MACHINE - DAY

The pack of cigarettes sits in a cigarette vending machine. Our cigarette BREATHES from inside his box.

QUICK TIME-LAPSE:

The sun rises and sets, people pass by...

-- Until Maria's reflection appears in the glass of the vending machine.

<BEEP BEEP>

The spring inside the machine rotates and releases the box.

INT. CIGARETTE BOX - DAY

The lid opens, Maria's fingers grab a cigarette. It's dark again.

<CIG BREATHING>

<KEYS OPENING A DOOR>

<FOOTSTEPS>

Cig jumps. A thin crack of light fills the box. He jumps again, the lid opens.

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Cig peeks out from the box, taking in his surroundings.

Maria's cozy apartment is filled with musical instruments, Cig focuses on the pictures hanging on the walls.

Maria picks up Cig and brings him close to her lips.

He focuses on her mesmerizing eyes, but from MARIA'S POV, he's just a regular cigarette.

Maria turns toward her "STOP-SMOKING" calendar on the wall. She takes a deep breath and puts him back inside the box.

INT./EXT. CIGARETTE BOX - DAY

Darkness - Maria SIGHS.

Maria opens the box, grabs a cigarette and closes the lid.

Back to darkness.

<A MATCH BEIGN LIT>

Cig jumps and opens the lid.

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Cig catches a glimpse at Maria leaning out the window and enveloped in smoke, but can't figure out what's going on.

Maria comes back toward him, tears off a page of the "Stop-Smoking" calendar and throws it in the trashcan.

QUICK MONTAGE BEGINS

- The box opens and closes repeatedly, as Cig anxiously watches Maria selecting other cigarettes instead of him.

- Frustrated, Maria bites her nails as she reads a book on how to quit smoking.

- Maria encompassed by smoke. What's she doing?

- Maria is back at reading and chews a pencil.

- The book now sits on the armrest as Maria compulsively eats chips from a big bag.

- More cigarettes disappears, more clouds of smoke near the window... Until finally cigarette is left alone in the box.

MONTAGE ENDS

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Maria interlaces her fingers and takes one deep breath. She picks up her guitar and begins HUMMING a gentle tune.

Cig closes his eyes swaying to the rhythm.

FANTASY SEQUENCE BEGINS

INT. KITCHEN - STOVE - DAY

Cig, now wearing a chef's hat, prepares a sauce.

AT THE KITCHEN TABLE - LATER

Maria carefully pours a drop of wine into Cig's tiny glass -- using an eyedropper.

Cig and Maria enjoy a romantic candlelit dinner.

CLINK! Their glasses touch as they cheer.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Maria and Cig gaze into each other's eyes. She lays on a beach mat, while he relaxes on his floating cigarette box.

She playfully blows air to make the box spins, Cig's sunglasses fall off.

FANTASY SEQUENCE ENDS

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cig looks around --where is she? Until Maria comes back from the kitchen, plunges on the sofa and turns on the TV.

Cig looks at her with admiration as she falls asleep.

Cig is lost in her beauty, until he's distracted by a DRAMATIC JINGLE from the TV.

ON TV:

A GIRL who's the same age as Maria smokes a cigarette and grows sick in just one breath.

Large text repeats "CIGARETTES KILL".

Cig looks sad at Maria.

A HIGH-PITCHED SHRIEK startles him as a kettle whistles.

Maria wakes up, stretches her arms and looks at Cig.

She takes the box and moves toward the kitchen.

AT THE STOVE:

Maria puts the box on a shelf above the stove. She takes a cup and puts a tea bag inside.

He struggles to escape from the box.

Maria pours steamy water into the cup.

Cig notices a matchbook nearby. Oh-no!

Maria puts a spoonful of sugar into the tea and mixes it. He watches as the steamy vortex forms in the cup.

She lights a match.

Heartbroken, Cig looks at Maria one last time, he closes his eyes --AND JUMPS INTO THE TEA.

INT. TEACUP - CONTINUOUS

Cig passes away with a proud smile on his face.

FADE TO BLACK:

A BEAT

Cig GASPS back to life. His blurry vision adjusts and he sees Maria aiming a hammer at him.

Cig closes his eyes, bracing for the worst.

BANG, BANG, BANG!

Cig peeks and sees Maria smiling at him.

ANGLE

Maria just framed Cig on into the wall, a handwritten sheet says "MY LAST CIGARETTE"

-- Maria plays the guitar gazing at Cig.

-- Cig looks at her, in love.

He's proud, happy, and with her.

THE END