

A painting of a street at night. The scene is dominated by a deep blue color palette. A full, bright white moon hangs in the sky. A streetlight on the left casts a yellow glow. In the foreground, a car is partially visible, with a bright yellow light reflecting off its surface. The overall mood is quiet and atmospheric.

*North Coast  
Nocturnes*

JAMES  
EDWARD  
MAXWELL

*8 Short Stories  
& One Screenplay*

# NORTH COAST NOCTURNES

8 Short Stories

& One Screenplay

by James Maxwell

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Late at night, or under a full moon, what is it that touches you? What inspires you to create, to make a difference in your world, to reach out with your work? What drives your eagerness to communicate, to share your world, your desires with those of another?

What is it you want to do with your time, with your energy?

Do you require help to question what you can't find on you own?

Or is it to simply share in this mystery that surrounds us?

These are my concerns. Are they any different than your own?

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## *Instinct*

Look out over the ocean then squint. See how your focus has improved. I ask you isn't instinct another manifestation of love? You might meet it when there is danger or discovering you've entered an intimate attachment. It could be that flash of recognition of a possible relationship – partnering, bonding. Hey! Protecting your offspring or of a connection that brings meaning to one's life. You know instincts down to the soles of your feet. It arrives unannounced yet we recognize instincts are so ever-present. Could that be why acknowledging them asks us to go deeper into understanding ourselves?

So you city-folks put your hyper-vigilance aside and don't be frightened when I now ask you to turn your back on the ocean, then let your eyes run uphill. Don't focus on the bridge over the river look up into the dark thick forests of redwood, fir and pine that mix into one. Anticipate the glint off the road that reaches for the ridge top that hugs the slope just above the fog covered river. That's the way to go – climb east for miles through forests, miles of rain in the fall, chill in winter. Go ahead feel the heat from the summer sun baking the cool greenery. It pulls mists out of trees to swarm in cool mornings, pulls sweat from our bodies in the afternoons. When the summer heat dominates every shadow it pulls moisture off the ocean inland transforms it into fogs and gray skies. With those our moods swell up in reaction – we can choose to acknowledge and endure them as dues we pay to stay. We belong here, make this place our home. Or not.

I've heard you ask where do all those driveways lead? Those dirt tracks that extend into the forest like veins leaving a main artery? Surely to someone's home their

cabin, a building site, to the hole in the forest's canopy. The sunlight that penetrates to the forest floor is an assertion against the dark. It encourages grasses wildflowers huckleberries, the life that decorates our front our back yards but what really happens are islands of light – stages for the comedy or drama in our lives. They are the meadows.

And there it is that big meadow, down the drive through a thicket of brambles, the tangled underbrush and a second-growth forest, towards an old farmhouse, three hundred feet from the road. You seldom hear the sound of a car or truck pass by — the growth is so thick. The price to live here with the protection of the redwood curtain is to daily rediscover the wonders of it. Funny how we each have a conception of what “worth” is.

Yes it is quite a broad meadow that slopes south, five acres long running east to west, three acres wide north to south. Built on the northerly edge of the expanse to catch the most of summer sun the old farmhouse shows it is aging as one who has been distressed by many decades and by countless more families. On the western edge a weathered barn sags rarely used except as a playground for children. The packed clay ring road tilts forty feet downhill of the farmhouse, it circles the meadow rutted by cars and winter rain, dusty in summer, as wide as a small pickup truck. It returns up to the farmhouse. Look below the southern most edge of the road and find that large pond that fills with runoff water from a spring that still supports the once thriving farm. One driveway north, connected to the meadow is an old roadhouse-diner that comes alive now and again. Hidden from the road sheltered within the forest it is open on weekends inviting locals for food, music and dances. On all sides of the meadow, the forest stands thick, dark – a tangle of what cannot be seen.

Another driveway a mile west of the meadow leads to a smattering of smaller parcels. The left fork in the road brings you to a clearing squeezing in a one bedroom cabin, its porch, with just enough room for two cars a small space to turn around and a lean-to that serves both as woodshed and workshop. It too is surrounded on all sides by the thick forest. An older couple who works in the coastal village lives there with their dog. The wife and husband decided the old dog needed a companion.

She was born into a litter of four – sold when weaned to this couple as playmate for their large hound-Black Labrador mix. She was the colors of river sand and bleached underbrush grays in a charcoal black coat mixed into a pattern of dark clouds. Snowy whites tips to her downy large ears matched her eyes the color of a winter sky. A beauty of a beast. For a time they chained her to the porch. She learned to play as she bonded with the old black hound who seemed to calm the enthusiastic pup. She weighed one hundred pounds by the time she came into heat. The couple surprised by her size, wary they couldn't handle the responsibility of large Hound and Husky/Malamute puppies had her spayed. The dog knew, upon waking from the surgery something essential was missing. Her unease became curiosity for she spent days on the porch looking into the blackness of the forest around her. What was out there? What was missing?

In the fall she roamed the forest bordering the clearing with the hound making circles around the cabin, marking their scents along paths gradually expanding their range. She learned of deer, of skunks and salamanders, owls from their droppings, mushrooms she must never smell again. She identified birds by their calls and songs and the mountain lions that were afraid of man as their screeches were frightful warnings to stay away. Bears from their markings on trees, the scent of their urine, she found their fur tangled on branches. Then there was that something that laid deep under her consciousness – bears of all animals were the most dangerous. They would kill

her without hesitation. In spite of this she liked where she lived enjoyed her companion. She was content yet kept a watchful eye.

On one of their ramblings a distance from their home they came across a pack of raccoons whose stance suggested they would attack. The hound's barking and her throaty growl, her show of teeth did not keep them at a distance. The leader of the raccoons jumped for her. His claw penetrated deep into the downy layer of fur beneath her coat. It stung her shoulder. Clawing and biting at her back it found no hold. She snatched at his tail then yanked. The tail came off in a surprise of blood spurting. The raccoon shrieked, his companions fled throughout the underbrush as she ripped his body apart.

Filled with rage and with her reaction to the fight she ran through the forest to regain her calm forgetting the old hound standing there. Finding the neighboring ring road the long dirt track below the large meadow she raced toward a distant wide spot then turned around lengthening her stride stretched her body to her limit. At moments not one of her feet touched the earth. She turned around and began again besting her ability. Almost flying to free her body from the stress of that kill, the scent of blood. She walked the rest of it out of her. Finally all she could do was pant. She heard an eagle cry looked up to see it high above the tree tops looking down at her, calling for her prey to run in fear so she could catch them. Then the dog ran the dirt track again to fill that empty place inside her raced against herself – raced, ran returned to run for days after.

A year later after the old hound had died she found his scent in the forest. She returned to the meadow and the long dirt track. She ran at full speed again. After several racing laps she knew something had changed, a scent was added. That was when she first spied the boy at the crest of the meadow the pale grasses nearly hiding his body. He had been watching her.

When she stopped to look did she scare him? So quick he ran to the house. Heard a door bang shut.

She was surprised – no not quite that – had an immediate curiosity. She went home to her porch, the old couple, the fading scent of her missing companion. Alone she looked out at the forest's blackness.

When she returned to run again she looked for the boy could hear his shouts to a companion but could not catch sight of them. The meadow grass was high. Her run halfheartedly she anticipated watching him. His scent was new to her and she did not understand his fear.

On another visit to the meadow she thought she heard the eagle again but it was the mother calling the boy to her. The call was high, crisp, sharp, it sounded like the eagle's. The boy answered her. She heard a door bang shut.

Several visits later she crawled through the dry meadow grasses on her belly looking for an opening to watch for him. The mother saw her coming slammed the door behind her then came back out with a sharp voice and waved a towel in the air. That sent her running home. Looking back the dog saw the boy next to the mother. This time she smelled or saw no fear in him or the mother.

In time she knew the boy was looking for her. His footprints were next to hers on that dusty road. She felt a need for caution. They met on a path and he spoke to her. She liked the sound of his voice.

He was fascinated – she looked like the wolf in his storybook, but pretty and really big. She sat down. He turned to the farmhouse and walked away looking back to see her sitting there.



Was she smiling at him?

One day discovering her at rest by the barn he called to her and she came. He stroked her ears.

She smelled his face, his arms — his scent like milk, sweet cream. She sat down and accepted his touch, wagged her tail.

The boy thought she had the softest fur he had ever touched — her panting was almost loud. He led her over to a watering trough by the barn. They walked together easily.

She noticed the mother not moving. Watching. When the mother was no longer in sight she brought the boy a stick and offered to play. She knew she must be careful of him he wasn't very big and not fast.

The mother referred to the dog as she, but later changed that – called her Girl. In time stretching out the 'rl' in Girl to a mock-growl, Girrrll but always with warmth with a smile, always the mother smiled. The dog held back, knew a mother's power then as time passed they shared affection — for both of them the boy came first.

He would proclaim, “Let's go to the pond.” The dog took his meaning intact and would run down to the small wooden pier ahead of him awaiting an inevitable stick to be tossed into the water. Her first jump would amaze him with the size of her splash and how much water she got on him shaking herself dry. He would laugh and they would run to their next adventure exploring the activities around the outside of the road-house next door then running. Always running.

At the barn there would be rabbits to chase all year long and apples to harvest and eat in the summer. He tossed her an apple – she'd have none of that. She would

rummage in the lean-to next to the barn. Once, she brought out a two-by-four five feet long. She took one end and the boy knew immediately that it was tug of war they would play. She would never let go until he dropped his end.

The dog outweighed the boy by twenty-five pounds. When she and the mother sat in the cab of the pickup waiting for the boy to join them the dog was a head taller with her ears bent from touching the headliner. Uptight from waiting for the boy the mother gently touched the dogs shoulder wanting her attention.

“Listen here, Girrlll” the dog looked at her, “that boy is the love of my life and at times even though he makes me so mad, I imagine I would just about die without him. So when I'm not around you just have to watch out for him just like I do. You just have to. . .” The mother's eyes started to well up. “So would you please . . .

The dog licked her face.

During the day she explored the land while the boy was at school. When he got home they played with a stick – sometimes he'd brandish it as if a sword before he threw it. They lounging on the floor before bedtime he lay half on the dog's body. She did not move loving his companionship. Absentminded the boy would run his fingers under the chain at her throat feeling the softness of her fur. One time she swooned, her attention seemed to disappear. He stopped. Had he somehow offended her?

Something set him off said over dinner concerning what he was learning at school. He demanded the chain around the dog's neck taken off, “Unfair” he rose to his feet, “unfair, unfair!” His dog should not be treated just like in the ancient “co loss-um” like a “slave.” He slapped the table. No amount of his mother's reasoning was calming. They shouted at one another driving the mother to put both fists on the table. The boy went to bed without dessert. The dog looked at him after he closed his bed-

room's door behind them. She was confused by their shouts. What was wrong? Then he massaged her ears like he wanted his touched then everything was fine.

The older couple, who first raised the dog, drove into the driveway one day – parked. Marge got out of their car stood leaning on the hood, taking in the boy and the dog in the sunny yard. The boy's mother stepped out of the house greeted Marge went over to the open window to speak with the old man in the passenger's seat. "Been missin' that dog," Edger said. "Thought she might be dead. Maybe a bear got her. But here – next door, so to speak – all along. Good to see her with your young pup. I guess she found her spot."

Marge said, "Edgar pointed at your pickup when you drove by us in town. I couldn't catch your attention. There she was, our Beauty with your boy's arm around her – both happy as could be. I washed her bed. Got it in the trunk if you want it?" The boy's mother met her there, Marge pulled out a horse blanket tied with twine and handed it to the boy's mother. The older woman returned to her driver's seat. The old man said to the boy, "She's a sweet one, and sure does have a mind of her own."

The boy tried to bring the dog over to the car but Girrrlll held back. The boy went up to his window, "I didn't know she was yours. She showed up one day liked to run on the dirt track down there." He pointed unable to hide his fear — mumbled, "You want her back?" The woman leaned over to speak to him out the old man's window. "Don't you worry, honey. She loves you more than she does us. It's OK."

The late winter rains were incessant, the meadow grasses had been beaten down, the pond flowed over the dam into the gully now a running stream. The air washed clean carried a chill. The dog smelled daffodils and when the sun came out hit-

ting the meadow for the first time in months she ran – she could hear frogs, insects buzzing. Evenings over the weekends the roadhouse came alive with the noise of cars, talkative people, laughter, dance music. Girrrll's job was to stay at home with the boy.

Her dream distressed her — day was night, and she was wet, running to get away from something unidentified. She was running for her life. Something was chasing her — something bad — something frightening. She had snapped at it — snapped at it again, almost had it, but her tongue got in the way. She shook tried to grab at it with her mouth. It kept coming at her — a big black unknown. Deadly. Growling thrashing through the meadow grasses it was behind her. She moaned in fear.

The mother stood ashen faced statue-still throat frozen, looking down at the huge dog in spasm. Her boy had crawled out of bed now on hands and knees over the whimpering dog ripping at her blanket on the floor. Near the dog's head he was about to stroke her, as the mother found her voice whispered the boy's name — “Carl.” The boy looked up as the dog's eyes popped open. In a split second the dog had jumped rigid to her feet awake and ready to run or attack. The animal was vibrating — tongue out her eyes wide. “Don't move, baby — don't move.”

The dog backed away sat on her haunches almost befuddled — panting in exhaustion. After a few of the boy's heartbeats, “It's all right, Girrrll,” the boy followed her on his knees. Put his arms around the dog's neck. She did not move a muscle had the look of surprised as she connected the expressed panic in the mother's eyes. Hugging the dog the boy said, “It's all right, now. I have nightmares too. It's OK. I'm here. OK. — OK. It's OK.”

That dream pestered Girrrlll the whole day. She walked the ring road. On guard. Later she knew what caused her dream, the day before she had caught a whiff of bear and at the time she couldn't place it.

“I have to work tonight,” she said when he got home from school. “You don't need a sitter anymore you're a big boy now. I'll be at work and the restaurant's number is by the phone if you need me.”

“When will you come home?”

The boy's young mother was manager and barkeep at the roadhouse the reason she could call the farmhouse home and her walk to work was five minutes away.

“I want you asleep when I get in. It will be late when we close the bar. I'll shut all the windows and pull the curtains closed after our dinner. I want you in your pajamas and ready for bed when I leave. Teeth brushed too. I want you in bed by nine at the latest. I will phone you to remind you, bedtime.” She repeated, “nine.” She made a mental note to feed the dog. As she did for a few years she walked the ring road by the farmhouse along the side of the meadow then the joining driveway to the bar and roadhouse.

### SALMON & STEAKHOUSE – “On the River Road”

The Full-Moon Boogie was a monthly dance held spring through fall bringing families, young couples and singles to eat drink visit and cavort through dancing to a mix of country, boogie and rock music. Children would slumber in cars as their parents embraced on the dance floor. One parent or the other would check on their kids throughout the night. Whole families would have dinner together. Children would lie under the grand piano listening to music in a whole new giggly way before taken to the family's

car to sleep or catch a nap under their parents' table. Their parked cars filled the spaces around the roadhouse in places on both sides of the driveway lined the highway before the turnoff into the dancehall with the overflow on a good night filling parts of the farm's ring road.

At the farmhouse, music muted by the trees would float up across the meadow. The boy thought the high notes seemed to hang there longest. Then the light of the moon would pull his attention to the sky and keep it there until an emotional clarinet or an electric guitar sung out haunting honky-tonk reminding him of his mother at work at the roadhouse.

His mother would leave the bar after closing. The boy had accompanied her there any number of times but he didn't like having to fall asleep under a table behind the bar. Then the discomfort of being carried home half-awakened by a kindly stranger as he was put into bed — couldn't quite remember the drive or walk home at that moment in bed but glad when his blanket was tucked in.

This time he was happy he didn't have to go.

“Apple pie is in the fridge, you can cut yourself a piece before bedtime. Keep it to one glass of milk. We need enough for cereal in the morning. You are on your own, Carl, I trust you. You can do this and Girrlll will be here. Remember how long you stay out doors after school all alone? It will be less time than that when you put yourself to bed. Do this for momma, please?” She waited for the nod of his head. “That's my big boy. “

She looked around the room, “What's wrong with Girrlll, she was glad to see you when you got home, now she's trotting from room to room? You didn't bring another rabbit inside, did you?”

“No.”

Lasagne was for supper, and the dog finished off his broccoli. The mother didn't say anything about that. He was almost glad when she left the house. He wanted to do some drawing and he had that new comic book she gave him after dinner. Girrrlll was interested in his book his drawing on the floor — in everything. Her ears were especially active. She wanted to go out to pee and came back in when he called. The drawing was telling him vast stories when his eyelids drooped and reminded him of bed. Resisting for the longest time, he climbed into bed, but did not turn off the overhead light.

Girrrlll woke him with a loud bark as she jumped off his bed. She shouted barks through the windowpane at something outside. He saw his reflection in the windows and nothing outside. The dog ran through the dining room into the kitchen on to his mother's room and then back to him pleading, whimpering. She barked at him to do something or do the something that she wanted. He was confused. She returned to each room of the house barking in one, growling in another – so many howls and snarling growls. The boy thought she sounded like a family of dogs.

“What's wrong, Girrrlll” he attempted to get out of bed but her single bark told him to stay. She put her paws on the sill to look out the closest window every so often she would turn to look at him. He knew not to move. Something was out there. Curiosity got the best of him.

He jumped out of bed switched the light off so he could see outside. The dog bayed as if in pain of his doing that.

The bear was busy with the apple tree in the front yard. She knew the dog couldn't get to her and she shook the branch so hard it broke in half, pulled the dangling part to the ground. Apples bounced in the moonlight.

Girrrlll saw a cub amidst the scattered apples. The boy shouldered up to the dog's side to see what was out there. The dog forced him down on the floor, and half sat on him. She let out a howl so high from deep within her so loud so primal it was timeless. The bear turned toward the sound and started for the window as Girrrlll repeated the howl of a mother who would die fighting for the life of her offspring.

Her call was answered. Immediately that call spread. Along the road nearest to the farm's driveway in the back end of a van a large dog chained protecting his master's tools answered the howl for help sent his strong loud and clear call soaring into the air. A dog in a station wagon near the hall protecting children in the back of the car answered in higher pitch. All those dogs in cars by the roadhouse lifted their sentry howls their yips their answers yelped their support to Girrrlll's call. Small and large dogs kept in cars chained in the back of pickup trucks, the many old, young voiced they were ready to fight to do what was right for another. And they were coming.

The music makers did not hear the din outside.

The bear knew there was no way but retreat. The North, the East, and part of the South was full of howling dogs that would prevent her cub's escape. They ran down the ring road west connected to a logging road crossed the main road and disappeared into the forest next to the river.

Soon the din subsided all the sentries went back to their charges settled their children by calming themselves and keeping their eyes and ears open. As the evening at the roadhouse turned into night the music turned into the blues and slow dancing.

Girrrlll was waiting. The house was in bright full moonlight as the mother arrived home. The dog circled then smelled the tall stranger with her — quickly found him familiar then went out to pee. The mother excused herself gestured to the bathroom.



The man sat waiting at the kitchen table. The activity of the evening faded and moonlight lit the kitchen flooding the room with light blue and indigo shadows. The dog barked to be let in and stopped at her water bowl by the door. The mother walked through the kitchen then to her surprise of the lit bedroom — the boy stretched out on the floor. “What are you doing up at this hour? I told you I wanted you asleep.”

“I needed to draw this story down. I want to remember it.”

The man stepped aside at the bedroom door for the dog to pass. She circled behind the boy sat beside him on her haunches. They both looked up at the mother and the man.

The mother's suspicion getting the best of her – “You want to tell me something?”

“Nothin' to tell,” the boy said while rolling up his drawing.

A thought crossed the mother's mind looking down at them — did the dog just confirm that?

One late summer afternoon the mother had deposited her boy the dog at the beach under the bridge below the little town. She told them she would get groceries and be back to pick them up in no time. The beach was filled with children running in all directions and families watching over them. The mother had no fear for his safety and she knew the dog would raise quite a ruckus if anything bothered her boy.

They liked the beach. The river ran into the little bay just below the road back to their meadow. Depending on the tide, the river cut through the sand bar making two sandy beaches one with access to the breakers and open sea – the other hugged the shore the paths leading up the cliffs to the top of the headland the village, the opposite direction to the parking area along the slow moving river.

The dog crossed the stream in four jumps the boy got to the other shore with his jeans wet above his knees. They would invent play with other children running and falling chasing making sure the smaller children were included and watched out for by one or two adults. Tag — everyone screamed in laughter. Sun-seekers would point out the boy jumping and the big dog appeared to be dancing. They witnessed the laughter they infected in the other children amused at their antics.

Later that day they crossed the stream back to the other beach to look out to sea, choosing a driftwood log as a back rest dry sand to warm them. The sun dipped closer to the horizon. Some of the families started to leave — smiled as they passed.

The beach cleared almost empty of people. The boy reached out for the dog got on his knees to be tall enough to reach her shoulders. Both his arms hugged her. The dog did not resist. Whispering into her ear, “She forgot me once, you know. It was almost dark when she came for me. You were not with me then, and I got scared she'd never come. But, I've got you now, and I'll never be afraid.”

The dog lowered her head not finding anyway to comfort him and reveal what she knew of him. How he played; how he took time to choose his next movement — his eyes so fast, the scent of him — and those noises, happy like water falling into the pond. He could never hide anything from her, his kindness, even his delight to be alive, but what was he telling her? She did know something was important to him.

“I'm going to give you another name. Girrrll that name is so . . . weird, nuts — and it is just not you. You are more than that to me.” He pointed out to sea. “There's your name, see?”

The dog followed his finger to the ocean. What he pointed toward was vast she couldn't understand. “No, not that,” he said guessing that she didn't get it. “There,” his finger almost touching the light then touching that light again. That strip of sunlight re-

flected that made a path across the ocean toward them — “that's you, that's your name, Sea Shine.” He looked into her face to see if she saw what he saw.

The boy got to his feet then jumping almost sang her name, “Sea Shine” repeatedly. The dog got up to follow him whichever direction he may go but sat tail immobile.

“What's the matter Girrrlll – I mean, Sea Shine?” He knelt next to her put both arms around her neck again. “Don't you like it?” He questioned her face. “Do you want another name?” His touch meant everything to her.

She was busy with her insides. It was like she was tumbling over one thing and another putting things in an order of memories along with the new connecting with her breathing slowing her heart beat – alert to changes.

They faced one another not caring how close their noses almost meeting. What was important was their eyes looking back into each other. Faces so different, a human child of the present moment and the beast a slip away from a wolf – summer blue eyes into eyes of winter skies. She was the first to sigh. Instinct proved true as in running she had to give up everything for whatever would happen next – and that old emptiness was filled up with him. Her tail wagged in recognition.

He heard his mother's high pitched call, “Carl!”

Sea Shine heard it like the eagle's cry “Mine, are you ready to run!”

He dusted the sand off his jeans. She shook her coat free of sand and spray. “Coming,” he called. They started toward the voice at the top of the embankment. Trudging up the sand bank with each foot fall they sank back a little.

“We're going to have spaghetti with fresh tomatoes and grated cheese. Michael is coming for dinner.”

“Who?”

“You'll remember him.”

“I've changed Girrrll's name.”

“What?”

“Her name. It's new. A better one. I found it in the ocean. Sea Shine. Her name is Sea Shine. She likes it.”

“That's nice,” the mother held her pause, “I like it, too.”

They found pictures inside themselves, each one's picture of arriving home was different.

The pickup's engine was running, the headlights pointed toward the hill up to the bridge to the ridge road and their meadow. The sun sat on the edge of the horizon like a silver coin standing on its edge. It made a bright path.

The dog took the lead. Her boy followed.

The dog jumped into the back of the pickup – the boy climbed in after her.



## Chapter 2

# *Sitting On The Fence*

Back when the sun was not quite so hot on our skin – and the scent off the sea reminded the village to stop working – go play. This young man had just turned thirty and was fierce in focus on his career. He did turn right and slow down on Main Street rather than heading left to his painting location. Within one block he noticed the big man perched there. Fifty years old, maybe older – a leather cowboy hat shading his face with a stubble beard. A thick braided pony tail hung past the man's shoulder blades. The painter saw the man had claimed his position. His back lit from the southern sky. The heels of his cowboy boots gripping the lower slat of the fence anchoring him in place. He was clean, stylish in his way, dark like he had some sun. The younger man questioned, “Is the size of that nose indicative, or just impressive?”

His painter's mind settled on Mediterranean. He passed him. Thought him kind of out of place in this logging village of Finns, Portuguese, Norwegian, and retirees. There were new arrivals too, like the painter, those workers who were fresh from the cities. The wounded white kids that escaped the incessant war in Vietnam trying desperately to be hippies, but in secret wanted to return to the land, and work – “Give Peace a Chance, brother.” The dark man was balanced, secure there. What were his big hands

doing? One hand turning a heavy gold ring on his other, twisting it round and round on his index finger. What was this man doing on the scenic Main Street? In the middle of the village, right across from the hotel, in the middle of the morning? A man sitting on the fence.

Suddenly a flash reminded the painter he had heard about him before he saw the man there. He had first noticed his bigger than life presence when the man walked into the dark Cellar Bar one evening becoming the raucous center of attention. The painter didn't connect that he was the man on the fence, the man in the hat and pony tail that the painter was told about – a man he “just had to” meet. Then he got it! That's the man – but not today. The painter was on his way to capture the light.

The painter refocused on his work sitting back to plan the progress of his painting. Hunkered in the back of his station wagon, tail gait down, rear window lifted. He leaned against the spare tire as a back rest, stretched his legs apart facing his painting and palette. The twisted cypress clinging to a cliff over the sunlit sea was blocked in. Then that which was not seen but must be shown – the north wind that trained the cypress to lean south and the resistance to the woman pace walking her dog away from the wind. Pushed by the strength of it that wasn't seen that peaceful day, the painter made sure the dogs fur was ruffled to his satisfaction. Then his mind would meander to other thoughts. The sea needs white caps, come back at dusk when the wind picks up to indicate them. Push back hat, loosen scarf, expose neck, feel sun, so warm. Clean brush. Ok! Good – make sky bluer. How big are white caps?

On Main Street the big man with his back to the sun referred to this fence as his office. Curious locals heard a definite New York City accent as he said he made his home here. Anchored there on the fence, holding court to those folks in the soft gray flannel fogs off the little bay. He was there during southern warm breezes that wiped the sky over the village a clear blue, but not ever during rain. He was there on his fence, weekday mornings, nursing steaming coffee, visiting with people until lunch. Villagers engaged him in conversations until they shook hands, "See you again". Then another stepped up having waited or held back, stayed some distance off at times waiting on the other side of the street for a conversation to end to make their own connection with him. When they met him, it was his black-olive eyes that held them, that and his intense interest in them.

His name fit – Victor – for he dispensed his conviction on whomever he met that an individual's life mattered. "Yours does! And you should be seen, respected. Right off," he would jump into it, "so tell me about yourself? Where do you come from? What do you do here?" And he wouldn't let you go until you did just that, and he was not afraid to share who he was.

The big man had an obvious limp, and an exuberant laugh the painter would never have expected. Everybody in the isolated village who had not exchanged greetings with him were standoffish, a bit scared as he unnerved them. In time the painter too walked away from the man holding the best of questions from their meeting, "So why should I be afraid? Ever?" Victor's style peeled back his purpose revealing the street-smart wisdom he carried, and in time the town learned to value him.

Alone with his painting, the painter's mind would chatter in the midst of a brush stroke. He would bow his head in submission to that inner voice. 'Sometimes things are very funny-peculiar – not funny 'Ha, Ha,' but curious-funny, and sometimes so sad

this painful-comic 'funny.' AHHHH! It's ironic I won't admit even to myself that I am in pain. At times so painful that I have to find a way to bury it. Alcohol, sex, and shit, yes! Painting, this painting. Denial they call it. I've been called rude then shunned, if they see how sad I am I'm abrupt with them – I walk away. I know they don't want to pile another hurt upon me. Some resort to pity. And they think that it helps. I really don't like that, or do I like anyone I pity. So mostly they/we don't say anything, don't share that we/they understand, and don't quite open up warmly to you/me, but keep everybody in suspicion, at a distance. They don't really want to get too close to anyone. Do I want closeness? What am I hiding? Oh I don't know why. God – I love to paint. All this beauty, the world just drops away . . . everything except light – color – paint. It's then I remember, serenity, love.'

But the man on the fence knew the painter from his symptom, and would have said to him to complete his thoughts, "And you are left alone, isolated, and sometimes you don't know why. The pain is still there, and comes back. There are so many hurts, pains, stuffed tragedies way too many to list, but pain like this has become epidemic. All over the world." The big man saw this all too often, and recognized the knot of it. Saw the addictions that kept pain down also that choosing that solution to the problem would kill never removing the pain. As the big man had first hand knowledge of the descent into addiction, and knew enough to recognize ideas were just as debilitating. Found the answer, the cure saw it; we have to reach for the original pain – feel that completely and let it fall away. Then allow yourself the freedom, the time to detoxify. It wasn't easy but he experienced it was possible, and he had the tools, the acumen to set the stage for that to happen.

He had first arrived to the village on vacation from his job in the East, spent years working with the Veterans Administration, drug addicts with the wounds like his from



the Korean War, then kids in the Juvenile Halls of New York and Philadelphia – helping the drug addicted incarcerated in a state prisons. It became too much. He visited a friend living here. Then choosing to have his home near the village. He watched and saw the people here were just as addicted, but to ideas.

So there it is, finally said – this not spoken aloud village secret that wasn't so silent. Victor had moved to this pretty little village to our outlying community that would support a crucible for his work. He would visit the East Coast, work/visit family, return to this new home. Upon arriving he would turn his attention to those close by and devise his plan to detox the emotional pain of twelve locals at a time.

Victor made his contacts sitting there on the fence, made his list of names, noted his appraisal from their conversations, names of those he asked to join him and phone numbers of those agreed to commit for ten or twelve weeks. This information set up his calendar for meeting weekly at his home until each person had one evening lasting from two to three hours each to tell the group why they were there, what they hoped would be their outcome. When everyone had told their story there would be a final “Marathon,” a three day intensive Friday through Sunday. Sleep was not permissible until after the first twenty-four hour session. Then four hours of sleep then the continued Marathon of speakers and listeners.

The cost was next to nothing considering what you would get from the experience of telling your life story to a committed group in an isolated location to listeners who could not get away from the truth. And yes the considerable wisdom of a man like Victor. They all knew from others who participated in one of his groups before that Victor's work was about helping people to change what didn't work in their lives into the possibility of something better. How stuffing down one's pain didn't work, for each one of them was bearing, enduring their story as a living painful example. The “Marathon” was

about getting to the place where the participant understood, realized they had given their power away to an idea, another person, an ideology – and to find they could feel that pain, a phantom pain and let it go, to replace the ineffectual avoidance of it with the experience that they were in charge of their feelings. Free to create their life.

All this is what the painter learned from those villagers around him, and what Victor explained before the painter committed to joining the group of twelve. “We will meet at my place, 7:00PM Wednesday, you'll be home by 10:30PM unless you stop at the Cellar Bar.

Three weeks later during the group meeting the painter spoke up after he told everyone there why he joined them, and what he hoped for in the way of peace of mind. “Sorry Victor but I might miss next week's meeting,” the painter explained. “I have to go to L.A. for a Doctor's appointment with the orthopedist who treated me for my shattered arm. Then I have a meeting with the lawyer who is helping me sue that crazy fucker who shot me. I just stopped him from strangling a cat. Ten days later – bang. I'm driving south tomorrow. I've got two days until the doctor checks me over and the following day I have a meeting with the lawyer, those are the important contacts. I may have to drive all night to get back here for “group.” I'll do my darnedest to be here, I don't want to miss anything.”

“I don't recall a law suit, or do I?” The big man paused, wanted to slow the young man down, “What is, what is this again?”

“I like the doctor, but I hate all the L.A. shit – the drive, but my neighbor set it up with the lawyer. She wants to help me cover my ass from my loss of work and expenses, money really. Evidently the asshole's family is loaded. I'd just rather be here and not remember any of that painful craziness down there, but she's pushing for this,

says it is right that I get some money, he ruined my career there. Made me run for my life . . . run away . . . here.”

“You'll never put that behind you, being shot is a memory. It is split and tied up with your body's reaction to a wound, it is like being in a war. Your war. You have been at war with yourself. Yes it was a terrible shock. That trauma in your life is in the past, not who you are or what you are doing this moment, today, this week. You're tied up making it not meaning so much, bringing that moment into the present. You're an artist – you don't just make things, but make your next moment, carry your life forward.” The painter's stare went blank, Victor got that, and went on, “So what are you going to do? You're gonna get enough money to buy that dream house. Just how much extra will it cost to erect a tall chain-link fence surrounding it to make you believe you will be safe from that man's retribution.”

Two days later the painter left a message on Victor's machine. “I phoned the lawyer, told him to drop the lawsuit. Told him I didn't want to be another target for this guy's crazy-ass mind. I'm happy to be here and out of the spotlight. I did cover my tracks, only a handful of people in LA know I'm here. The lawyer did say he'd stop proceedings, and he added since we last spoke the guy escaped from the mental ward of the prison. And he reminded me, tried to comfort me told me as crazy-making and fighting mad as that kid was, he wouldn't last a week on the street.” The painter added, “I canceled the appointment with the Orthopedist. I'm not going. I'm OK. I'll see you all Wednesday. I'm so glad I'm home. Victor, thank you. Oh! Right – it's . . . me.”

The Marathon had ground rules:

No one can speak of what happened in the dedicated room we share during the Marathon. Your sleeping bags should be rolled up and placed behind the couches.

Your toiletries will be stored under your chair, or if you're sitting on a couch behind your feet. Ask permission to leave the room and tell either Victor or his go-to person in the room your reason. Meals and snacks, coffee and tea will be served in the kitchen. No food or drinks in this room. You will be informed of how much time before you return to do your work. You may not use the phone. You will be called to the outer room if there is an emergency. Treat each person as if they are your brother or sister. Ask if someone needs a hug. Don't interrupt. We will not leave here until everyone has spoken and completed what we together have set out to do.

Their meeting was in a big older redwood craftsman home, two floors, kitchen, dining room and living room and ample restroom on the lower floor, with an enclosed mud room for dirty shoes adjoining the front door, a large deck outside the dining room faced south towards the sun. The three bedrooms and bath upstairs was off limits. It was at the end a long driveway to the clearing where all the cars could easily park. The volunteers worked in two to four hour shifts. Two helpers would be stationed in the kitchen to help Victor and his "go-to" at any minute, others would show up with prepared food to help serve and clean up at the appointed time. There were enough volunteers to work so only two other people were needed there each night, but three showed up, sometimes five people were bringing and serving food during meals.

Victor's twelve filed into the living room from the kitchen, stowed their gear by their seats and met back in the dining room. They knew each other well enough after thirteen weeks to befriend one or two in the group. Trust had built along with a few affections. All held Victor in awe of his understanding their concerns and his compassion for them individually. They knew enough about each other now they could play at banter and at times joke. Laughter also held them together. They knew they shared something quite spectacular.

The support team – volunteers from those people who had attended other Marathons, would cook their best recipes, run errands, baby sit – keep this group safe from outside intruders, answer phones, cut, stack and stoke the wood heat stove for three days and two nights, keep a silence when serving food and not interact with the group members, even if they knew them well, not engage them other than respond to a direct question. When the door closed they would visit quietly with one another, reminisce of their time in Marathon, share stories - keep laughter quiet. Grateful to take part in this. To give back.

When the door to the living room closed behind Victor's twelve, the kitchen helpers relaxed, knew there was nothing more they could do, but lend them support going about their tasks. In four hours that door would open for the group's taste of freedom from focus, then drinks and snacks. Four more hours later they would have a dinner break. The next set of volunteers would take over, six or eight hours later the door would open for breakfast. And a new support staff would be there.

The group had had breakfast that morning and a lunch. After twenty-four hours of talk they bedded down in that same room for a four hour nap. Victor left the room then and with a cup of coffee, took a walk around the property, decompressing he called it, exhaustion and concern on his face.

A new support team arrived, an older man and two younger women showed up at the kitchen door the evening of the second day, bringing boxes and bags of food for the next meals. Breads, chips, spreads, dips, honey, butter, mayonnaise for sandwiches. Fresh salads – greens and pasta, huge casseroles like the lasagne the old man brought. It served twenty with left-overs for the next day, there were roast chick-

ens, broccoli with small white onions, Brussels sprouts with hazel nuts, small garden-fresh new potatoes steamed. Foods prepared for loved ones. The women set the table for all the food knowing the group would find a place to put their plates on their laps to eat and visit.

The two young women set the table as the old man filled a wood box near the stove with the kindling he brought, taking two trips to retrieve and stack the logs for the heat stove.

“I've got an acquaintance in that room,” the man said, “a young fellow I told about Victor, a new neighbor up the ridge road, nice kid, a little older than my boy but not by much. New to town. I told him he just got to meet Victor. My dog took a shine to him, he's talented, A painter. Our dog, Beauty, and my wife, Marge met him on the road. After a couple times she invited him over for dinner. We visited his studio. We have a paintings of Marge and Beauty walking by the buckled-over Cypress at the end of the logging road south of town. From the first I could tell something was itching at him, how his eyes darted about, like something was trying to get his attention when he spoke, but he was nice, kind. Marge said he was too sad, that wasn't right. Said that wrinkle above his eyes shouldn't be there for one that young. She likes Victor for what he done for our boy, and for me. I'm really glad for me. I hope he can work his gift on all these kids here.” He sat at the table while the young women positioned the food. Covered the full salad bowls, the roast chicken, with bright colored dishtowels. One young woman knew him as she caught his eye and smiled in understanding.

“Those kids, those damaged kids, my heart goes out to them. It starts early, you know. Young parents who don't know they are not prepared to love a child, they falter and give up loving their kid, treat it not as a little person but as an obligation, a duty to keep the child from crying, clean, fed, trained for the table. Parents, people that don't get it that they are indifferent to the individual, calling it kid, the boy, the girl. Not capa-

ble of active loving, but cold, narcissistic, duty bound, distant, pride-less people. A child knows love by instinct, recognizes, knows when he or she is not loved, experiences a hopeless isolation, and a shell goes up out of protection from an indifferent world. It is amazing that a few of them can see that love is what they need, and they find a way to give it to another as they know how painful it is without it. A little human capable of love right from the start. Some spend their life giving what they never got. Some will run out of energy from the exertion to keep up the illusion they are loved, some of them melt down from the effort. Turn to drugs to stop the pain. It is a rare few people who see this and make a safety net to catch them. That's why I'm here. You too, I imagine. Victor holds a safety net. He held one for me, then he held one for my son, I'm sixty. Edgar is the name, who are you? What brings you here? How long has it been since your group?"

At 11PM the group would be woken, asked to freshen up for a two hour dinner, then back to work with breaks for snacks, breakfast, lunch, more snacks and perhaps a dinner before everyone would go home – with longer beards, sweaty clothes wrinkled from having slept in them, disheveled hair. They would not return home the same people who came in those clothes.

Victor would not have slept during the Marathon.

Just as the smoke from Edgar's firewood lifted above the Craftsman's chimney a full moon crested the redwoods – 4AM – the painter began the first of his accounts of his descent into the darkest moments of his life. Rather than the facts held within his sobs, watch his body language. A man proud of his height began to shrink into his seat, he would look toward the questioner looking for details in his story to understand him better and the painter's skin began to glisten with perspiration as he answered half embarrassed, half laughing at himself, bringing the room to laughter, and everyone's eyes would moisten. His usual defense of using his charm to deflect too much scrutiny

fell away, and his posture took on the softness that the others having gone before would recognize and could identify sharing his passage into confusion. Their faces would soften and open toward him. Looking to Victor for guidance, the painter would be encouraged from the big man sitting more erect, his face in an interested encouragement. A nod to continue. The painter would finish his account of his childhood, his family, early schooling and his confusions, the furrow in his brow deepened. Another story would present itself to follow on the heels of that story into his teenage years, and tumble into another of high school, joining the Air Force. Then early twenties, his first love, crossed love, confusion of what expected of being a man, fear of loss, the dangers to letting go his defenses, his eyes red, puffy, pain, indifference, more pain.

The face across the room from him had her hands held up to her face, eyes wide holding back her sorrow.

He would wince at times not revealing to the group all the details, he'd pause then, shiver. Then shutting down as if to catch his breath, as his shoulders sagged with the weight of lack of sleep. Again the group's heightened interest would bring more questions and tears would well up in him and infect the group. Boxes of tissues were passed to one another, some would turn their faces away to protect themselves of finding a judgment within themselves countermanding their genuine interest in another human. A disruption in the flow of the room would segue to a silence when embarrassment became palpable. The awkward silence would suddenly bubble into nervous laughter. Asked to continue his story, he chose successes in college, finding what he loved most to do in life, then scholarships, a showing of his work in galleries, reviews in newspapers, a job offer in TV. Focused work bringing awards that completed his dream of success. Pride, pride, pride, that spilled out of his mouth like a flood of self-recrimination. The loss of a new love crashing in betrayal, a clinical depression, wiping his nose stained his shirt sleeves. Loss, more losses. His sobs began with his parents



lack of support, indifference. His drugs proscribed were mood elevators. Unexpected laughter as the irony of his situation hit him. He shook off the elation and returned to the hunched over experience of sitting crumpled on the couch in that room. More until the final straw, being shot by a neighbor, knowing someone wanted him dead, and he couldn't see any reason to go on, there was no love, at rock bottom.

Victor stood up, letting his presence to be felt looking as if indifferent and to leave the room – he walked toward the door. The painter took this action with no defenses in place as the final straw that broke him, confirmation of his worst dream, being alone. He lost the hope to hold to some light, to his soul, holding nothing back he shook from the darkest place within him. Cried. So black. Like he was falling, sobbing, pleading for unconsciousness, until he realized Victor was there holding him. He caught his breath between sobs, and the light of the room returned, those faces ready to be recognized, then he caught by the big man's eyes, the painter whispered, “. . . I got it.

“I've changed.”

That night, twelve people piled into the Cellar Bar for a late night drink and then home to their separate beds. They were surprising alert, for the bartender knew who they were and was still surprised to see them, having been one of the first of Victor's groups. They huddled together in the far end of the bar, smiles looking at one another with clean, clear tired eyes. Hugged one another like family when they departed.

The Marathon was not magic, but about how a person puts their life in order. Victor picked particular people for his group whose wounds and strengths were ingredients to bring about new possibilities. Like learning to listen. What we would do with that experience was our responsibility.

Do you think that is why life in the village for the next few weeks was easier? Not unlike running your hand over fresh milled lumber that has been sanded smooth, and the scent of it so clean, so new.

You could find Victor sitting on the fence his back to the sun, harvesting his next twelve.



“Commitment is the daily triumph  
– Integrity over Skepticism”

Victor Biondo 1919-1988



## *Seedling*

Well – yes you're lucky I'm open. I usually deliver the mail in the late afternoon. You've caught me at a good time. All our incoming is sorted for the boxes here and the oversize packages I deliver in the afternoon. Do you need a postal box? I've got five empty. Sorry no small sizes left just two medium and three large ones. Here's your paperwork to fill out. I will need your driver's license, or Apassport. Do you want it for six months or a year? Need a pen? I'll take cash or check.

Welcome to the valley, nice bunch of people hereabouts. Good and quiet, nothin much to do except . . . live. Bring your outgoing posts, drop them in the box by 3:30PM for the pickup headed to the county seat's main Post Office.

Oh! We did just have our annual Harvest Fair. Got ya some of my photos right here.

Ya! I print them out there at home. I'm all digital now. Uh Huh, the colors are really good, archival you know.

This is what interested me. As the photographer I knew that the moment my camera's shutter snapped for the second time, it was the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Here – these two photographs are my evidence. Hee, hee. Seems to me that these both together are tangible records of the histories among the people involved. All the relationships that before these particular impressions I caught were previously unsuspected. Isn't photography just . . . great? It was as if my first photograph showed the surface veneer of everything present and my next where the real faces were revealed. Deeper, you know . . . like . . . depth.

I am the official postmaster here in Boonefield, I'm also our county's record keeping photographer for our local fair grounds. I know about delivering mail, I never read your messages. Hee, hee. But when I develop my photographs it is hard to keep my eyes shut. You hear what I'm saying?

I usually deliver Peter Seedling's mail. I think he is a happy man, even though he apologizes for being near sighted and squints with difficulty at the return address when I hand him his mail.

Peter is pushing fifty, overweight, mortgaged up to his receding hairline from staying on at a dead end warehouse job. I can count his bills. His wife does not call him by his real name, Peter. She seems to prefer overlooking his many complaints of gaining weight by nicknaming him Pumpkin. Their three children climb all over their parents. Peter clearly lavishes everything he can financially on them. He jokes with the folks hereabouts how his kids look remarkably like his poker playing buddies down at the vineyard. "They're family," he laughs. He and I joke around too, because, hee, hee, I delivered his doctor's lab test that announced his vasectomy reversal was successful. He showed me, used his index finger to repeatedly point at the POSITIVE. I don't keep track of time. Why?

I deliver pounds of horticulture and newsletters, 4-H and gardening magazines to his address. I hear him laugh to himself at what his lifestyle must look like to outsiders, and giggles at what his wife nags him about. He usually smiles at what his friends say about his family. I think he is a happy man because down deep inside, Peter Seedling knows who he is — and he told me. Peter is a natural born farmer.

As postal workers, we pray: "Please, don't kill the messenger." As photographers we plead to our subjects, "Say, CHEESE." I don't rightly know what farmers say. What do you do?

Here, in my first photograph, the giant pumpkin slumps to one side, swollen with gravity. A blue first place winning ribbon is rubber cemented high up on its pebbly skin. See, where my finger is? That's the warehouse scale in back lit digits showing the phenomenal 643 pounds. That's our colorful banner, it looms over the entire scene, it reads: Boonefield County Fair. I'm really happy with this one. I didn't need to use the unsharp mask in Photoshop.

Peter Seedling is there on the right of my photo – that guy, yes. His first place blue ribbon is firmly pinned on his chest pocket. He has removed his bottle-bottom glasses and squints a sheepish smile in the direction of my camera. Peter shakes hands with Paul Webbercore, that tall man with the winning smile on his left. Paul is our representative on the Fair's governing council. Peter and Paul have just exchanged surprise at the final weight of Peter's giant pumpkin. As an aside, Paul asked if this was Peter's fifth or sixth blue ribbon.

Paul loves to have his photograph taken. Our local real estate agent, the wall behind his desk is crowded with smiling pictures that demonstrate Paul has been in charge of many moments. I can take credit for a number of those photos. Paul is a man who never has a sweaty palm, and his smile is helped along by six expensive upper crowns. He got them on the cheap in Mexico.

To the far left of the photo is Mary Margaret Seedling, Peter's wife of fifteen years. She, I think, is extremely attractive. I think she is just . . . beautiful. Mary Margaret must have taken extra effort dressing this morning knowing that she might be in her husband's winning photograph. OMG! I cannot help but think, living doll – Barbie. Drop dead gorgeous, I say. Though I don't know why anyone would say "drop dead" along with "gorgeous."

This is the tenth year I've been taking photographs for the fair. As postmaster, I've known Peter since before he was married.

For the past fifteen years Mary Margaret must have watched her husband's attention in the fall and winter turn from his spring and summertime gardening to marketing the seeds from his giant pumpkins. Drying seeds dot her cookie sheets and any flat vacant surface. Heat streams from her door when I need a signature for one of her deliveries. Seeds are all over the furniture inside her double-wide. After seven years of marriage I think she decided Peter's lack of attention needed a nudge. So she got double D breast implants and bleached her hair. Five years ago, after the birth of her third child, she had a tummy tuck, liposuction and lip injections. She is quite generous with informative about her transformations. The ladies at the beauty parlor all take note of her procedures.

Peter's obsession with his seeds and its domination of Mary Margaret's house and back yard garden, probably justified Mary Margaret's commitment to the local beauty parlor which, incidentally, is next door to Paul Webbercore's real estate office.

This first photograph captures a rare moment of lack of frenetic motion with Mary Margaret's children, they stand in front of her. The children, Marky, seven; Rachel, five; and Nathan, six years old, have just been promised ice cream and corn dogs if they behave, or bed with no supper if they, she tells them, "Make so much as a move."

"OK now," I said, "here goes."

In unison, they said, CHEESE when I asked.

In a row behind the grossly distorted pumpkin, lined up are Peter's three friends who have worked with him down at the vineyard for the last fourteen years. Every Thursday they play poker in the back room of the beauty parlor. On the left, Ralph Marque, the tall, large eared Frenchman is married to Eunice, not in the picture. She manages the beauty parlor. Ralph is the vineyard's production foreman. Ralph's heroism became the talk of the valley eight years ago when he, while visiting rushed Mary

Margaret to the hospital for an emergency appendectomy. Peter was so grateful for Ralph Marque's presence, Peter named that year's winning pumpkin, The Ralph.

In the middle of the three friends, George Washington Hamilton stands chest out; he is shorter in stature than his friends. His coffee colored face with his white grin, black eyes and muscle hugging shirt make him stand out from the other men. They cheerfully fit into my photographic composition. George runs the garage at the vineyard and with his forklift also helps move Peter's pumpkins around the garden or hoists them into a truck when they are ready to show at a competition. Sometimes Mary Margaret has George over during the week to move furniture. George is unmarried and lives in an apartment over the dentist across from the beauty parlor here in Boonefield. I hear he is by far the best poker player and excels in Fish – playing against Peter's children when he comes to Peter's and Mary Margaret's for dinner. George's laugh is high pitched and one's attention is drawn to its unexpected duration. He really loves getting mail. After Peter and Mary Margaret, George's best friend is Andrew Knox, who is on George's left. Over there – our right.

Andrew Knox first introduced giant pumpkin growing as a small business to Peter fourteen years ago. Andrew's well tended garden is on the lot next to Peter's. The Knoxes are divorced; his ex-wife Sal, also not in the picture, moved back east. Andrew admits to being a slob, so he hires Mary Margaret to clean his house once a week when he has a day off. Rumor has it that Andrew usually loses at poker on Thursday but his enthusiasm for the game seldom flags. He is the lead foreman of field workers at the vineyard. A redhead, he is usually covered up while in the sun. When he laughs his ears wiggle. He has no front teeth, but that does not limit the width of Andrew's smile shown here, happy in my first photo.

Hey! Now, this is where it really gets interesting. It . . . hee, hee, is like detective work. Forensics – you feel me?

Photo number two shows Andrew Knox's left hand caught reaching into his crotch. His other arm is akimbo. His toothless smile shows what cannot be denied – that he is experiencing something close to a spiritual relief.

George Washington Hamilton's puffed up muscularity has relaxed. His focus has moved to his right, he looks toward Mary Margaret's five-year-old, Rachel. George's face reveals pure tenderness. Please look twice at how his left hand reaches to share his experience with his friend Andrew Knox. Even though it was a warm afternoon when I took this photo, it is debatable if the perspiration on George's dark handsome face, particularly the drops on his upper cheeks, how else could be interpreted as tears of joy. His other hand does press against the center of his chest. What do you think? Is this gesture as significant to you as to me? I nod my head too. Ya!

On the left of these three friends, Ralph Marque is intently watching Peter and Paul Webbercore in the right of the photo. One may interpret Ralph's face to reveal some . . . skepticism. He has his right hand up to his cocked head with a finger in his floppy ear. What is curious is that his other hand anchors defiantly on his hip. I believe Ralph Marque's hand is in a fist. Do you get that?

In the lower left of this photo Mary Margaret's children are in blurry motion. Marky, the seven-year-old, has bolted, his large left ear and one foot are his only body parts in focus still in the frame.

Rachel, the five-year-old, holds her hands behind her back. She is twisted to look between Mary Margaret and the pumpkin to catch the eye of George Washington Hamilton. Rachel's black pigtails are in pink ribbons. In profile, her coffee and cream colored skin and her long eyelashes contrast with her mother's thigh high, white plastic stiletto boots. The child's feet are firmly planted. I believe Rachel's smile is playful, but beautifully wise. It is her dress still in motion from her twist toward Mr. Hamilton that blurs out of focus. I regret I tried to Photoshop this.



Nathan is at the right of Mary Margaret's children, the little carrot top's left hand is caught reaching into his crotch. His other arm is akimbo. His front teeth are growing in, his smile shows clearly that he experiences something close to a spiritual – what would you call it?

This is not one of Mary Margaret Seedling's best photos. Her tongue attempts to clean lipstick off her teeth. The long fingernail on her little finger seems to poke at an unseen bother in the lower center of her mouth. Her other hand is hidden; I believe her body language suggests there is something wrong with her underwear. Her eyes look upwards, inward. Her image here suggests to me she has just experienced something that promoted her . . . disbelief?

On the far right, Paul Webbercore keeps Peter's hand in his. However, Mr. Webbercore has twisted his head and shoulders to leer back at Mary Margaret Seedling. Is it either his stressful contortion or – What do you think? Is it accurate to assume his face shows a somewhat distorted . . . for lack of a better word – lust? How do you see that?

In the micro-minute between my first photograph and this, Peter's face seemed to light from within.

I was compelled to shoot this picture forgetting to announce my intention, for suddenly Peter appeared focused, determined, his eyes no longer squinting. Inwardly he was more animated. I had to act.

Notice Peter's mouth is slightly ajar. See how his smile takes precedent, he dominates this photograph. He looks right into my lens.

Before I snapped the shutter, Peter Seedling had reached his free hand into his pocket and retrieved a small pumpkin seed. You can see the little seed clearly in the palm of his hand, facing us.

As his photographer, I can attest to the fact that Peter spoke to me at the very moment I snapped this photo.

"Just wait till you see what we do next year with this little squirt."

Here's something I'm doing now I'm back at work, I've sent copies of the photos off to everybody in them. You can purchase any of my fair photographs at the fair-grounds office.

Thanks for coming in. Have a nice day.

By the way we'll be a having a full moon tonight . . . hee hee, you better stay inside while it's a rising. One never can count on who'll you meet on the roads at night round here, abouts.

On the bulletin board to the right of the post office front door.

The Post Office announces the arrival of our beautiful new stamps featuring fruits and vegetables. There is a poster featuring stamp images.

Another poster features one of a giant pumpkin:

The US Post Office added this limerick to promote that stamp.

Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater,  
Had a wife and couldn't keep her.  
He put her in a pumpkin shell.  
And there he kept her very well.



## *ECLIPSE XXX*

So why stay home, Sweet Cheeks? It's the weekend. Ronnie you are under twenty-one and there won't be another eclipse for three years, let alone on a weekend. Phone Bobby to keep you company. So go, the both of you go. It's dark now and it's warm. There's just too much confusion surrounding endorphins that work overtime at your age and those urges you feel to get laid, screwed, fuck at are at odds with the "wanting-love."

You look old enough. Nineteen seventy five is an amazing year, antibiotics can cure anything. You have a desire to go – so go, go. Let go! It's that irresistible full moon Boogie, a coastal tradition that has played out for years. Plant yourself out there in that herd of overheated people whose reasons are not clear but they have to dance to get the hell out of their heads. Drink. They will strut their stuff, keep your eyes open, sex is aplenty!

One, two, three beers, then get touched, fondled, fooled-with, it is all a joke; feel what it is like to surrender to an other's body. It is your reason to be. It's primal sweaty play. Go on, lose yourself in that unabashed hunger – enter that hotter than 98.6 soup. It won't matter what happens tonight. We don't want to care. Life is what this Boogie is, it has given us a full moon with a total lunar Eclipse on a late Spring night along this sparkling river. You might look back on the moment as a socially accepted orgy. Overlook that you may regret to remember being foolish, but if you do – blame it on the moon.

There in that dark, low ceiling red-lit bar, I'll see you – you might not see me, but you will spy loggers, fishermen, carpenters, young professionals – single women, schoolteachers, waitresses, nurses, cooks, kitchen helpers. All of us are too long in waiting for “It! Love”. Drinkers, dancers in their twenties, thirties, forty, fifties, movers and shakers, first daters, married folks. The band is composed of gods of seduction, whose rhythms and trills tackle your spine with their low-down honky-tonk, and awakens your passions to move in a grind of synchronicity with that other person's spine that does more than attract you, it magnetizes its passions to yours. Music like nothing you've ever felt, like you've dived into eternity. You realize your “magic parts” are wet when the moon crests the late night redwoods. It will be full, the color of ivory. The eclipse is moments away, the moon will turn red. So dance.



The gardener took his shirt off, and hung it on the fence, as his watering hose made rivulets into Apatch of greens. The man picked up the slow flowing stream to let it run over his head. Shivering, he let it flow over his pale chest, his suntanned arms. A ringing sound caught his attention. He put the hose back along the row of beets, passed through his garden's gate without shutting it behind him. The Gardner hurried down the well worn trail through the meadow to the hard packed earth that doubled as his parking area by his nearby cabin. Was it the phone? He wasn't sure. The garden was alive with sounds, the pines surrounding the meadow tussled with its fir and red-wood neighbors in the wind. He couldn't tell what he had heard, but talking to another person at the moment would brighten his day. He'd lost time in the garden, didn't know the hour. No. The phone was silent, it must have been his imagination.

No sound, save for the cat's tongue cleaning himself on the man's bed, then it looked up at him as if to question why he was inside.

He opened his fridge, scoped out the makings for dinner. Thought: Don't go overboard with picking the garden clean, pick just what you need for tonight.

He dried his face, throat, chest and arms with the kitchen towel, looping it around the handle of the refrigerator.

The clock on the stove showed a little past four-thirty.

The man's shadow stretched across the garden, he bent for a time weeded a row of beets that ran the length of the fence. Stood, put his shirt on, buttoned it, rolled the sleeves to his elbows. Crouched again, returned to weeding until Apang of hunger brought his attention to face the sun now behind the trees. His fist-full of beet greens and scallions for his salad, a zucchini, a sprig of broccoli would find its way into a stir fry. Glad to return to his cabin for the evening, he was more in his body than in his mind, and that was OK. Tomorrow is Sunday – nothing scheduled.

An exhale let a smile soften his face he felt content with where he was in life – steady jobs for two hotels and extra bucks as a landscaper for high-end real estate rentals on the weekends. Paid cash for everything, enough to have breakfast out every weekday morning, a couple of beers after work. Liked working in his own garden while it was still light and weekends. Paid his rent, his bills on time, heard the women chatting in the bar that he cleaned up pretty good. Rumor had it he was a bookworm, a hermit, but that wasn't true, more of a loner save for his cat. He dated but didn't like the scene. However there was one hunger he didn't think would ever be fulfilled, for he only had the longing and no image of who or what would complete this unknown. He could not find any similarity to his situation in literature, stories, legends or even Fairy tales. Must have fallen through the cracks fellow, you missed out? His smile wasn't

sad, it held his wonder. What was missing? He thought many people in the world live their whole lives, and won't have stories attached to them. His eyes wrinkled, he had learned to live alone, never understanding his personal power of attraction, or how to follow through.

The eclipse would be tonight.



The boys had their backs to the packed bar taking in all the action, an empty bar stool between them. Ten o'clock the room was at capacity. The red lights took away colors, making everyone's light side red, their shadows a murky black. All the tables were taken, one woman busy in a lap dance on a big guy who may have been her husband laughing together. Two plane-faced girls in a tight embrace having so much fun. Single dancers swaying arms on high. The couples so close, so thick, the boys couldn't see the other side of the room. Single hotties moved along the bar in search for partners, pretty girls of all sizes, and their sexy predators.

At the second beer for both of them they noticed getting hit upon to dance. Bobby, the older was the first to smile at the grinning girl who stood in front of him posing as a glamor-girl. He set his beer on the bar, had to raise his voice above the crowd to tell his younger partner, Ronnie, "Watch this would ya?" The boy nodded as he saw them slip into the crowd, he turned to face the barkeep, lost in the music, dancing while drying a glass.

Girls walked on by him, their appraisal was just as much as a come-on, an invitation to follow. Wary of the hungry looks, Ronnie had been suddenly rejected by his girlfriend in college for his best friend. He was suspicious of the species.

The boys were construction framers for a contractor building a new home near the village, Bobby, five years older had been working this particular job for two months before Ronnie was hired between semesters from college. Bobby never attended college. They worked together, liked one another, partied, and bar hopped. Ronnie passed for twenty-one.

“Way too fast for me.” Bobby said, catching the bar with his hands from his speed burrowing through the crowd to reach his friend, “That one's a terror.”

Ronnie pushed his friend's beer toward him.

“Hey boys!” A girl's voice cut through the din. They faced a diminutive beauty in bright red lipstick. She put her hand out waited for Bobby to shake it. “I'm Fay, and yours?”

Bobby answered. She then shook Ronnie's hand and said again, “I'm Fay,” she was all business.

She cocked her head to one side while she studied the two boys up and down, the boys got her. She had a leather coat with a fur collar under one arm, but otherwise was scantily dressed. Her clothes, high-heels, her jewelry said it all. Rich-girl.

She ordered a shot of Tequila, knocked it back in one gulp, then asked, “You boys, you ever been to Paris?”

•



He looked toward the western horizon, the sun behind the redwoods – air cool off the ocean stirred the trees. The cat had pounced on something. The gardener shooed the cat away, picked the caterpillar, and placed it in an old paint can filled with beer with a collection of snails shells. If I must kill them at least let them drown happy. Rolled his shirt sleeves down, he did hear his phone ringing, and ran.

The cat raced with him. At the doorway he let it go ahead.

“Hello, Yes,” he had planned to see the eclipse. “No, not going out this evening . . . Yes, important to see it.” The Gardner didn’t want conversation to interrupt witnessing how he knew it would make him feel. “I know eclipses spook horses.” He wanted to write in his journal, as the speaker went on. He mentioned, “There won't be another here for fifteen years or so. Where are you going to watch it from? . . . Thanks for calling. See you Monday. Coffee? 7:30?”

So warm in his house, he opened the front door for fresh air. A smile flew across his face, as he spied his cat, a thought bubbled up that he was a scaredy cat. That little guy might make himself scarce tonight.

The man enjoyed preparing meals from his garden for those who knew him as a friend. He liked to mix in fresh spices, herbs he grew, testing them in his own meals. Switched on his radio, a new FM station no static, KMFB, he was glad Late Night Liz was the DJ, She had always surprised him on how the songs she chose, one after the other held a message, told a story. She featured Roberta Flack's “The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face,” followed by Sinatra's “Ol' Devil Moon.”

Just when I think, I'm

Free as a dove

Old Devil Moon

Deep in your eyes

Blinds me with love

Oh, blind me with love

Washed up his dishes, then while drying them, had to stop everything to lean against the sink to listen to “Nights in White Satin.” Their music confirmed the band being named “Cream” for a reason, full on orchestra with strings. How I love you, Yes, I love you, Yes, I love you, Oh! How I love you, Oh! How I love you. In the momentary silence that followed the last chord, he remembered to breathe.

On his couch, cat near by, he planned to read the paper until he would watch the eclipse from his garden. The radio would be his other companion. Tomorrow he planned he would plow up a new area in the meadow, close enough to use the hose for watering both patches. He would plant this summer garden according to the cycles of the moon, but tonight it would be Moon music.

He fell asleep.



The girl laughed at her empty shot glass. The boys felt their beer. She had laid claim to them with her coat on the bar stool between them. How many shots had she had? She had paid for all of them. The boys did not keep track. The room had loosened up all the dancers, the alcohol encouraged bodies to touch. Other bodies pressed to the bar to order drinks, hips pushed into hip, sweaty bare arms brushed

against moist skin. The music, the melody lost to the beat of the rhythm, the heat of the room. The scent of heated bodies pored onto the dance floor, into the red lights and black shadows, mixed up with boogie music like “Cripple Creek.” The din, loud enough for the boys to stop talking, trying to catch what the other was saying – Hey why bother? Laugh.

At the music break, Fay focused on Bobby, held his eye with hers, then she first stroked his crotch, then his chest, poked a hole in his T-shirt with her bright red finger nail to get at his left nipple, then pinched it. Then while fondling it for the entire time turned to pull Ronnie's head down closer to hers and kissed him. Strangers watched faces frozen. Her tongue explored Ronnie's mouth, her teeth found his lower lip, held on to it. Then she let him feel she had let him go. Her left hand found his penis already full. She stepped back, nearly stumbled. She didn't want the space between the three of them to be so far apart.

Above the redwoods, the eclipse was marking the moon with a red glow when the three of them left the bar. She drove her Mustang, the boys followed in Bobby's pick up.



Meg. Her face found its place in his dream like a projection of an old 8mm movie, jerky, flickering, turning and fading away. He was sweet on her since grade school. She lived down the block. So easy, so natural, so fun to be with her, and her family, all the way through high school. She was the first to tell him, I love you. He was shocked to feel what the idea did to him. She had meant it. Meg. He was afraid to say it back to her. He liked her mom more than he did his own. Both his dad and hers were Army WWII tough guys, hard to read unknowns. Growing up was confusing.

The gardener was lulled deeper by the cat's purring. Meg, his high school sweetheart and their first attempts at love making, the pressure of her tongue caressing his ear. Her lips on his eyelids. Sweetness. What she let him do for her. Pictures flickered past one after another. The touch of his fingers on her skin. The romance of being together, the trust, telling one another everything. Images held still. Nervous laughter. Sincere laughter. Childlike giggles. In time her conversation turned to wanting children, he got spooked. He wasn't ready to be a dad. It terrified him. No. No! Tears, so many tears. Tears. Who is it sobbing? More tears. He had to leave her, his home town, so confused with himself. He was running. Running away. Darkness then space so much space. So much tension, labored breathing. Confusion.

He heard a gentle sound of a voice and it took his fear away.



Drunkenness had overtaken Ronnie, he couldn't quite close the pickup's door, so he left it ajar raced after Bobby. Up the stairs toward the girl fumbling with a key at the dark house's front door. He bounded falling up the steps on the heels of his friend.

Fay inside the darkness beyond the door, stopped at a staircase, lit by outside lighting, was framed with distorted window pane shapes on the wall leading to the dark upstairs. She stepped in front of Bobby stopped him with a hungry kiss. His hands roamed her body connecting with desires that she urged with her body for more.

Ronnie stumbled forward touched both them to feel, to know, some clarity but was a drunken witness.

She brought him into their hot embrace. Hands not tentative groping not polite, direct. She fumbled with the boy's belt buckles. Bobby struggled to unhook her bra. Zippers going down, a button torn away, shoes tossed aside reverberated on the tile floor.

Bobby surprised at the sight of Ronnie in his underwear.

The girl stepped between them, began to pull off the boy's remaining cloths and they in turn helped her pull her dress over her head. She pointed upstairs and they followed, clothing dropped along the staircase. Three bodies knocked into railings. Walls shook from the impact of crashes into one another, underwear pulled off, while fumbling, while falling. All naked when they entered a large bedroom.

Bobby had to say something to slow the passion down, "Who are you?" He asked.

"Someone you will not forget," she answered, grabbed his buttocks, pulled him to her belly to belly.

"Come on," was his chance to assert some of his own power. Ronnie attempted to shake off his drunkenness, held on to the couple.

"I am your world's best dream." She then let her guard down. "I'm in my third year at Berkeley majoring in engineering. Inventions – always studies of studies, of procedures of studies, assessments of how things work. Studies, reports, more study. Calculus. How things appear to work. Make them work. Tests, many tests. Calculations. Shit? Come on, I'm on holiday." She pulled away from the boys, tossed the large pillows off the bed onto the thick carpeted floor. She stumbled as she piled them together. Pulled Ronnie by his penis to sit in the center of the top pillow. Then while still holding his cock pushed him down to lay his back lower than his hips, told him to spread his legs.

Ronnie bent his head back to see his partners upside down.

Bobby intrigued with the action, held on to a burp he didn't want to taste.

The girl grabbed Bobby's penis and lead him to climb the little pillow-pile to stand over, straddled Ronnie's hips.

The boys caught each other's eyes with no clue what was happening.

She directed the older boy to sit, legs astride his friends legs, and she helped him to position his butt the same level as his friend, shoulders lower just like Ronnie. Then told them to pull their bodies together. Bobby was thinking about being asshole to asshole with his friend, lifted himself to his elbows.

Ronnie felt their testicles touch.

She mounted them both.

Ronnie surprised at the determination on her face as she manipulated his penis into her vagina then bent forward to force Bobby into her anus.

Bobby eyes opened wide at her perfect back being stretched taunt as both her arms reached for the ceiling, her fingers clasped in her ecstatic state. The three of them as one – screwed.

Ronnie heard her say, "Look at me boys, I'm the Eiffel Tower."

As the girl's front door closed behind them, the boys descended, the moon lit steps to their car. Ronnie nearly sober, told Bobby at his driver's door, "We gotta talk. Fuckin' sick. I don't want to ever in my life go through anything like that again. Not good. So fuckin' fucked up!"

Bobby didn't understand what his friend had meant.



His eyes opened to his blurry reading lamp, then beyond its illumination – from the black of his dream, then a deep midnight blue, then lighter like a royal blue until his living room was flooded with the blue in moonlight. He became aware he'd been asleep in a fitful dream. But, that beautiful voice was still there, right outside his open door. So cheerful like when a child is skipping, like a chicken clucking over her brood, soft distant. His cat was sound asleep between his legs. His newspaper kept him warm from the cool evening entered through his open front door. Was it a real voice? So beautiful, so present it carried that message he so longed to hear. Back to his present awareness, it was real. It was outside his front door. Right there.

He sat upright, the cat jumped off the couch. The gardener planted his feet on the floor, he looked, yes socks but his shoes were at the end of the couch. He stood, wobbled, one leg was more asleep than the other. That voice was in conversation with someone pleased, happy, almost joyful. He had to see. Soft. Gentle. Who?

Making tentative steps, by the time he reached his front door his body had awoken. He ran to the voice. In less than five paces he heard water splash and saw he was in the center of the large puddle in front of his cabin. Feet wet, cold, it was not until he reached the dry ground near his truck did he realize he had left the garden hose running. Looking back at his cabin door the full moon above the roof so serene, so defined he could almost see mountains and craters, together with the moving reflection of the moon in the puddle as if it was about to enter his open door. The puddle emptied

at a tiny waterfall at the corner of his cabin, fell onto stones then rippled down his drive way.

He didn't feel the fool, or disappointed he had missed the eclipse. He took in the two moons along with his confusion. One moon so very distant and the reflection rippling in the water about to enter his front door.

"I've had this wrong this whole time," he whispered to himself, "it's reflections I've been in love with, what's not real is what I wanted. I've been taught to want. "No! That's crazy making. I see this now! I didn't understand. Wanting means I don't have it. I'm right where I am. It's the earth who loves me. I can say I love the earth and mean it. Not the moon, that's just extra, A partner who hangs on to the earth. To life. No, no, my love of the moon has compounded my confusion. The earth gives to me so much more, so much better than anything I could ever give it, could offer in return. I'll use the moon – won't be seduced by it. I'll lavish my love on where it will do the most good.

"Here. At home."





## *The River of Time*

"Go ! That was the signal. With wobbling care I would step down onto the worn wet paving stone, gain my balance then try again for the firmest spot to place my other foot. It was darker, greener as if covered with a dripping moss.

"Let me know when you reach the bottom." She said, her metallic Swiss accent piercing the darkness.

I took a moment to let my eyes accustom to the eerie blue/black light. The next stone appeared, darker, wetter, more slippery than the last. When I felt balanced, I had to direct my foot in the darkness to reach and make a firm connection with blind trust leading to my next step. Sand, I connected with sand. Both my feet were firmly stationed in sand. Dry sand. It was as dark as charcoal. "I'm here!" I called back up to her.

"Can you see some light?" Brigitta's voice filtered down to me.

"Wait! Yes, something dim quite a ways off."

"Head for it." She sounded casual.

Curious, I trudged toward a glow that grew as I approached. It turned a light washed out blue, I stood in the opening, I called up to her, "I think I'm here."

"Good." She said, "You are now deeper than you have ever gone during all your sessions in hypnosis."

For six months I worked with Brigitta as my hypnotist. I was not making the kind of progress I wanted with my talk therapist. I have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD. (Military service I imagine.) I joke aggravated by life. So I sought out Hypnotherapy. I had heard results that hypnosis was more immediate. I took the plunge.

An hour into our first meeting Brigitta said, "The subconscious is a frightening place to visit without company."

I said, "Ok. Let's go."

At first, two sessions a month was all I could handle. The impact of discovering my inner life had characters that inhabited my sub-conscious thrilled me. I needed time to calm the disturbing contradictions I discovered. Like Al, the character who comforted me when I fucked up. We gave him another job. Al would only comfort me now when I did something worthy of praise. I no longer did I fuck up and then get comfort. He was eager to please with his new assignment. Within two weeks I understood the value of my last journey. I looked forward to the next. My talk therapist said that alone was a huge step we would have had to take weeks.

What I intend, my friendly Reader, is to take you through is my most significant session. One where there were twelve people in the room at the time. Brigitta's husband, George, also a hypnotherapist, and ten in all clients, those who had previously been hypnotized. This "Intensive" would focus on each individual's concerns for as much as three hours. This particular weekend was called the Mother's Day intensive, "An Empowerment." We arrived Friday evening and left Sunday afternoon. We would sleep over in accommodations reserved for guests.

All the other participants had had their time before I got my turn. I told them I felt I was out of touch with why I wasn't content. How I sensed I had lost my purpose, didn't really know what to do next. I was not happy.

This particular hypnotherapy session would be where I found the seeds to what drove me to ask for psychological help in the first place. I have not been the same since that deep down discovery.

"Look at your feet. What do you see?" Her voice reached me as if from an out of sight speakerphone, disembodied, a far away touch with the outside world where my body lay hypnotized on her massage table.

The sandy soil beneath my feet was composed of small stones and ceramic shards. Adjusting to the soft blue light, I picked up what appeared to be a broken piece of a Chinese Willow Ware pottery, in green. Carefully painted on it was a small wooded island with a dock. It floated in space, appeared as an emerald green drawing in a sea of foggy blue.

I told Brigitta what I had found, described the image in detail. "The shard is no bigger than my thumb."

"Good." She said, "That's where we'll go."

"Where?"

"To the River of Time of course."

I looked back at the shard and was enveloped into its image, hovering over that emerald green island.

"I want you to call your guides to you." She said, "You are going to need every ounce of help you can get. You will need all of them. This will be a perilous voyage for you; we must travel back before you were born. Back before you were in your mother's womb. Back when you signed the contract that allowed you to be on this

earth." I remember my heart beat speeding up. "You will read the pact you signed to be alive, then we'll see if you have fulfilled that contract in this life. Or, we'll know the reason why you haven't. Do you understand what this means?"

"I – I no . . . how?"

"Call your guides to you, do that now."

I had grown to love my guides. They were real personalities to me; more real in this unreal world, for they loved me unconditionally. There was Bill and Bob who I met during my first introduction into my sub-conscious when I was working on my relationship with my undemonstrative father. Bill protected me with language and reason, Bob with simple actions. They were there for me, at my side in a scary confrontation with my father's anger. Al was the guide that comforted me when I failed. He was willing to die for me if need be. Remember, Brigitta facilitated a new job for him to comfort me when I succeeded. I was amazed how my life shifted after that. The Golden Man was there as a personal goal, an ideal I wanted to be like. The King of Hearts was an authority on love. I even had a respectable architect, on first introduction I was struck with his compassion. There were some shadowy female figures there as well, undefined at this time. All the guides came forward. They all stood together, at the ready for me in that blue/black light of moonless night.

We met at the image, now real, at the little dock, all of us. Suddenly there was a red sailed Chinese junk we were to board. The Sails were billowing. I was both on the deck with my friends and in the sky. We flew high towards the horizon following the River of Time.

I became over anxious. I called to Brigitta.

"Are you in danger?"

"No."

"What do you see?"

"I'm sitting crosslegged on the deck in the center of the boat. All my guides are standing up around me. I can't see anything except their legs; I can't see the banks of the river. My back is stiff with fear."

"Why don't you look over the railing?" She asked.

I crawled over to the rail, got to my knees and looked out at a huge flood of white water crashing toward us. I was frozen to the spot. I started to sweat, my throat closed in fear. We would be overtaken at any moment. One of my guides tapped me on the shoulder and suggested I look where we were going, rather than where we had been. I turned to look the opposite direction, the river was like glass before us. I told Brigitta what had just happened to me.

She must have whispered to someone in the group, then to me said, "That fits." I heard her husband, George ask for a pencil and paper. There was a delay, then I heard her say something about writing something down. There was a long pause.

I was on that river.

"Now stay focused." She told me, "I want you to look for an imposing building. It is the library where the contracts are kept that everyone who has ever lived have signed. It is high up on a cliff over the river. There should be a dock at its base. You can pull the boat in there."

The boat was rocking, moving along high cliffs on both banks, the river must have been very deep; I couldn't see any ripples. Dawn was breaking.

I pointed at the ancient fortress first, high up on the top edge of the cliff, dark against a pale orange sky. The stone dock appeared next. We headed for shore. All of us were standing ready to debark when the boat softly bumped the dock. We made a line walking up the narrow path on the cliff. I was at the lead but did not feel like a leader.

It appeared to be a deserted ruin when we reached the top, an ancient stone abbey, a dark crumbling landmark, but it looked neglected. In the shadows a figure appeared. Completely covered in a hooded robe he stood defiantly in front of the abbey's entrance blocking our way.

"Max, what's happening?" I heard Brigitta's voice.

She brought me to my senses for a moment. "Sorry! We're here. There's this guy who won't let us in."

"He just probably wants to know why you're there. May I speak with him?"

"Sure."

"How do you do." Her voice was modulated, respectful. As if she had made this request many times before. "I'd like to introduce my friend, Max. He has made this journey to the library, for he has forgotten what it was that he signed as a contract to be alive. You can see he has made considerable effort as he has brought along all his guides for he is quite sincere in seeking this information. Do you think it would be possible for him to meet whoever is in charge to make his appeal?"

The shadowy figure turned and disappeared into the darkness of the ruin. I glanced around at my guides, their faces open to anything. Two figures similarly dressed appeared and waved us to follow them.

"It's a go." I called up to her.

We were ushered down into an old stone chamber. There were many corridors off this main room. A figure dressed as the others stood in the center. I knew he was in charge.

I said, "I'm named James Maxwell. James Edward, actually. Somehow I have forgotten what I had promised to achieve in my life. I'm confused by my forgetfulness and wondered would it be possible to see my contract so I can go back into my life and be clear what I'm supposed to do. I do want to do this life right."

The room filled with hooded figures who streamed into the room from the many corridors. All were dressed the same, hooded and no faces. But I recognized one from the many figures from his posture. He stepped forward and led me and my guides down one of the corridors. At large wooden double doors he stopped and told me I could take one of my guides in with me to witness what was in my contract. Only one. I chose Bill, he was the most adept at language. We stood before the doors. The throng of robed figures at our backs.

As he swung open the doors, I lost my breath. I had never imagined such vast space, cliffs that reached from the depths of darkness to a vaulted sky morning sky with a larger than life bright moon. Space seemed to go on forever. The sky was a brilliant blue, but the cliffs were in dark shadows. Large birds soared so high above, they were tiny, and there were birds circling far, so far below from where we were standing. I described the scene to Brigitta and the group of people back around the table and my body. But I really was there, next to that chasm feeling the chill of the atmosphere.

The hooded figure took the lead. Bill and I followed along Apath that clung to the dark cliff face. I felt a cold wind on my cheek. A chasm deeper than any earthly canyon kept me hugging close to the wall. The figure stopped before an old distressed wooden handle in the cliff face, he pulled out a drawer two feet long and a foot tall. A rolled up parchment filled the compartment. My contract.

Bill and I lifted the document out of the drawer, he unrolled it and as I speed-read it. I remembered. It fit me like my own skin.

"There is a darkness

You must call light

Grow beauty"

I was so shaken by the sense it made I had Bill read it again aloud so I could hear it.

I heard Brigitta ask George to write it down as I repeated it line for line for George to get it right. "No commas, no periods. It is on very old parchment."

She announced, "Max, say good bye now and come back into the room here."

In an instant I was back into her living room, under a blanket on the massage table. Though still in deep hypnosis, I felt no need to move or change my position on the table. I was awash with the mystery of my contract, amazed at so many possible meanings. The cool blue of the River of Time faded to my memory, I could feel the warmth of the room.

"How do you feel?"

"I'm bollixed. I don't know what I'm feeling."

"Do you feel you are fulfilling your contract?"

"NO!" That was immediate. "I can't. Something has always held me back from . . . whatever would enable me to do that. Its like I've always been side tracked, disappointed. No, I've always been wrong."

"Where in your body are you wrong?"



"Well. Where? Everywhere. Nowhere. I don't know."

"Max," I felt her hand on my shoulder. I sensed George's was touching my other.  
"Go into your heart and ask where?"

I physically shook. My reaction jolted me as I saw what my heart looked like.

"What? Max - what's going on?"

"My heart is covered with chains. Rusty iron and sheets of steel cover it. I don't even see anything except my blood and guts locked in metal. What does it mean?"  
Sweating, I was cold beneath the blanket.

"Hang on there." She said. "Just a moment." I felt them move away and the others in the room placing their hands on my body to comfort me. I heard Brigitta whispering with George.

"Max," she finally said returning to my side. "We have to go back before you were born again. We have to progress forward from there to see when the chains were put on. Then we can remove them. It must be very painful I know, but you must go through this. It's the only way."

No resistance, "Yes."

She took me back down the familiar steps, down into that moist darkness. When I told her I saw the light, she said, "That light is now the first moment you knew you were alive in your mother's womb."

"Yes." It was quite clear. "Yes, Yes, I'm here. Wait something is wrong. There are bugs, something like insects are biting me." My body smarted with the stings. "It's like acid." My arms and hands became tense and contorted. My fingers gnarled into root-

like claws. "I have to protect my self." I doubled over into a fetal position on the table. "I have to cover myself to be safe. I'm doing it. I'm the one doing it. It's the only way."

"Max, you must straighten out for us to heal you. I know it's hard but you must try to open up and relax back on the table."

I felt George patting my shoulder, the other people around the table, their hands comforting me. I settled back under the blanket but I was shaking.

Brigitta's voice lifted in command. "I ask for all my guides and the rulers of the cosmos to assist me in healing Max of this affliction, the chains that bind his heart."

Silence. I waited. Nothing. More nothing. Silence.

"Max," she whispered. "George is now going to kiss your heart. That will break the chains and you will be free to be reborn. We will all birth you into this loving room with all your new friends."

I felt George lean over me. I felt his breath through my tee shirt. I felt the pressure of his mouth kissing the spot over my heart. In an instant all the rusting chains burst apart.

I hid it, that I was so embarrassed. I couldn't express it, but I felt it for what it was. I had been running a racket on myself. A sob story I told myself but never brought it to mind. Till then.

At that moment of the kiss on my heart, I had to change.

I cowered at my self-pity. I had no right to sentence myself so, considering my achievements in spite of life's odds against me.

Yes, I was “re-birtherd” – yes, we all danced around happy that each one of us had been empowered to go on with their new life. Reborn. All so New-Age. I really felt fucked up and cowered.

We were all re-birtherd that weekend, or as it appeared.

Yes, I won't forget the River of Time, or my contract:

"There is a darkness

You must call light

Grow beauty"

Nor, will I forget the conversation after my session. One of the other participants asked me. "Max, did your mother, during her pregnancy, did she suffer with Toxemia?

"I believe she did tell me often that she had. Yes. Why?"

"Well, I don't believe I mentioned it, but I'm an emergency nurse in the intensive care nursery at a Pediatric Hospital. What you described and acted out on the table was what babies act like that are born to toxemic mothers. They shiver from the acidic nature of the condition."

Curious, as I heard myself say with, finally no self-pity, "Oh."

Today, I am so glad I signed that contract.

Go.

That's the signal.



## *Soul Retrieval*

Spoken inside my head:

I am screaming, are you a masseuse or a sadist? You're HURTING. I can't tell if you're helping. Too, too much – I am not a victim. Must I submit to this?

This guy is usually good at avoiding my old injuries, my trick knee, my tennis elbow, but my feet, Oh my feet – I won't make a noise, not a peep. I will endure this. I can't stand it. EEEEEEEEEEE! Uh! God. No, let up. Oh shit, now the other foot? Save me, love me. Help!

Hey, I'm paying good money for this. You said you need clients. I came to you to feel good. Massage is my one and only luxury.

Stephen, I know you introduced yourself as a Sioux Indian, but I am not Custer. My toes don't go that way. Don't get back at me through some sidetracked karma mixup. OOOOOOOOhhhh, PLEASE – stop.

Jesus! Stephen, look up at my face, can't you see this is excruciating. I'm not enjoying . . . the pain is beyond – this isn't what I –

*Aquamarine water, shimmering ripples on the bottom of the pool, and fallen leaves brush along my small brown arms. My face slips through the pond's surface. Summer warms my cheeks, I sputter. I am nine years old and I can see underwater. Wow! I blink my eyes, squint into the black green shadows of the campground. I search for affirmation. I can't find my father, and I suddenly realize I don't need him. I'm swimming. It's fun. I am me, and I'm free.*

Back in the room and on the table:

"Hey! Where did you go?" Stephen said, his hand on my chest.

"Amazing, I was a kid again. I experienced the first time I knew I was independent. I felt fresh, whole, beautiful and free. I was swimming. I was nine years old, and it was summer."

"Your foot just gave up all the tension I found. It's as soft as a baby's now. You really let something go."

"I've never had anything happen like that, like a hallucination. Can't we stop for a moment and talk?" I am now up on my elbows.

"Roll over on your stomach. I've got more to do."

"Hold on a minute. Has anyone else experienced, told you anything like this happened to them, with you?" I hesitate lying back down, then roll over.

He doesn't think too long. "Not during one of my massages, but they have when I performed a soul retrieval." He squirts out lotion. "How is this temperature?" He slathers me; he waits for my response, slaps the back of my thigh.

I wince, then retreat into the memory of the shimmering pond.

For the next half hour I don't speak. I am in my body, but my mind is wondering. A question bubbles up: *Can I, how do I make sense of this? There must be some, somewhere, OUCH, something, an explanation, a bang for the buck in . . . Christ Stephen!*

*Is this a sadomasochistic relationship?*

He said, "I like the way they swirl A patterns in the foam on mocha lattes here." Rain spatters the window by Stephen's and my table. Steam coats the inside of the window, the few streaks of water which trickle down the window are from condensation. He leans over his coffee, "By the way, I called my teacher. I told him about our massage session and your memory of swimming. He said it was a spontaneous soul retrieval. It doesn't happen often, but its more than likely that you got one of them back." He positions his napkin carefully rests the spoon face up next to his latte. "What did you order?" He adjusts the scarf around his neck. Squints through the steamed up window, "A weather front is heading this way."

"House coffee, black. What do you mean, one of them back?"

"My tribe, the Lakota Sioux, practice soul retrievals on any member who has had a traumatic experience." He leans over the table and he takes up my peripheral vision. In a tone that is meant just for me he says, "When you're near death your soul leaves to protect itself. Like when passing out from shock or pain or like when something is simply too much for you to handle, your soul goes away to protect itself. Then when you've physically healed you walk around like you're not same person. So our families get together, asks the tribe to make a ritual to invite that soul that left to come back. This is because we want the whole person and not the shell that person became after the accident, wound, being knocked out. Sometimes when it's ready, a soul will return on its own. Like yours did. We have many souls."

He lazily stirs his latte as he looks around the humid coffee shop. I sit back into my chair. I'm hooked on this idea because since that massage, I've been swimming everyday at our local health club like a happy kid and I can't get enough of it. During that massage something I know opened up in me.

"So –" I start to search for a way to engage him.

"So?" His face flashes interest for the next bit of conversation.

"So, what does it entail?" It blurts out of me.

"What?" His surprise drives me forward.

"A soul retrieval," I stammer. "Another, – a ritual one."

"You mean, what do I do? You want me to perform your ritual, don't you?"

"Well, what is it you do formally to retrieve a soul?"

"What's your schedule? I've got another month before I move to Hawaii." He pulled out a day calendar.

Knowing I committed, I brought out mine.

As he searched for a date, a shadow from a large diesel cargo van went around the corner of the building. I wonder if my eyes are playing tricks on my mind. *Did that logo suggest it was a "Turnip delivery . . . what"?*

"You will have to put your cat away." He demanded while hanging his wet coat on the hook inside my front door.

"Why, are cats disruptive to your ritual?" I pick up my cat, hugged him in defense, my little friend.

"No. Allergies." He let that fall. "I like 'um – I just can't stand them."

I'm driven to be a good host. "If I put him in the bedroom, will that be ok?"

"Fine." He scanned the room. "I'll have to move your furniture around. I need to dance around you while you lay on my rug." He stroked his rolled up package. "This rug is a gift from my family. I call it my magic carpet." He smiled as he shook it free.

It must be old, the colored stripes appeared faded as if the sun had bleached it – the edge frayed as well, the size of a double bed, a humble rug, home made.

My cat didn't seem to mind the move, the bedroom was far better than the storm slapping the trees outside. I avoided looking into my mirror. My suspicion of being hoodwinked had attached itself to my mobile lower lip. I shut the door. Adjusted the thermostat to raise the room's temperature.

*I really do want this to work. I need to believe in that little swimmer inside me and perhaps something more.*

Stephen had pushed the sofa back and rolled out his woven rug in the space left vacant in my living room. His basket of other ritual objects rested on the hearth of my fireplace.

"Where's your CD player?" Searching, he circumnavigated my living room.

"I don't have a CD player, just an old tape and radio combo."

"This is, unexpected, we can't do this then." His face fell. "We have to have drumming during your journey." He was visibly distressed.

I flash on a solution. "My laptop's got a CD, a music player program. We can use that."

"We need it pretty loud."



"I'll take the speakers off the computer in my office, just wait! I'll hook them up to the laptop." As I go about doing this, I try, unsuccessfully, not to listen to a sassy little voice inside that is digging at me. "You are in for it." It rasps.

"Put the speakers over here. Yes, this will be perfect," he pointed, "This is where your head will rest. Let's put it up loud. Can we get the electrical cords cleared out of the way? I have to flow between you and the drumming. Can you make it louder? Turn it up. Well, OK. I can live with that."

He waved me over to his rug. "Lie down on your back." His hand stopped me. "Take your shoes off first." Looming over me, he is a large man, master of my situation.

Fat on the floor, "May I keep my eyes open?" I said looking up at him. I am grateful there are no mirrors in my living room. The drum beats.

"Sure. No problem." He reached into his basket.

He starts to chant while he lights a rolled up stalk of sage with his green plastic butane lighter. When the sage starts to crackle he blows the blaze out, the smoke and vapors track the path he takes with it over my body as his voice drones a chant over my feet, torso, arms, and head, then down my other side.

I hear my inner sassy voice start up, "Isn't it ironic that . . ." I hold my face blank. Then suppress my panic from the idea that my smoke detector might go off.

The drumming from my laptop blares unabated as he turns out the lights leaving my hall's light on. It makes the living room's corners a shifting show of Steven's jerking shadows.

He removes a drum from his supply basket and his chanting rises more evocative of a word rhythm in time with this real drumming. The CD seems to be playing along with him.

He sneezes then apologizes, "Allergy."

I try to find my reflection in one of my windows. I feel I need a witness to this, but no such luck.

I watch my observations jab into my assessments of what might be happening. I see he has replaced the stick he has been using to drum with a rattle. The sound pitch becomes metallic against the blaring CD. He chants as he dances around me. He streams an unrelenting garble of the undecipherable, his song persists. My resistance to what is happening is caught in my throat.

Finally, he says, "Ok, we're ready."

"Oh – I . . . ."

"Just stay there. I'm going to lie down next to you now. It's ok." He straightens himself out next to me on the blanket.

"Uh – sure." I feel uncomfortable.

As he settles himself, he pushes his shoulder into mine. I move away.

"No, don't. I have to be touching you this way. Let me."

I don't resist as he again pushes into me with his shoulder. Then his elbow finds my tennis elbow and makes its hard presence known, then his right knee knocks into mine and also his right ankle bone.

"Don't move." His voice commands.

I don't move – I wait.

I wait. I don't experience anything. Nothing. Good, the smoke is clearing. Goodness, there are no flies on my ceiling. I hear intensity increasing in the drumming from

the CD. My cat is probably asleep by now. It's been a long time since – the rain has let up – wait, I've never been in bed with someone who hasn't moved when I've been this uncomfortable. Is he asleep. Do I hear him breathe? What does he smell like? My ankle bone . . .

"Got it." He sits up as if a phone just rang.

"What do I do?" I scoot away from him.

"You don't need to do anything, I just need some paper, and . . . do you have any crayons?" He is all business.

The lights in the living room are back up full. I bring him blank printer paper, a pencil and the crayons I keep for visiting children. As I disconnect my laptop from the speakers, Stephen is busily hunched over my dining table. My cat's arm appears and scratches through the bottom of the bedroom door. I crook my neck over Stephen's shoulder to see what he is drawing but react to seeing my face reflected in the window. My tongue is against the inside of my cheek pushing out. I don't believe I ever felt so dumb, "Would you like some tea?"

"Thanks. Can't. I have to meet Ashley at nine."

Do I really need to know all that?

"Come, sit down here next to me. I'll show you what I saw."

I sit at the table. He points to his finished drawing, a vertical rectangle with a straight line that splits the center. A double door way? A small circle, like a doorknob fits half way up inside the line indicating an open and a closed double doors. Another line on the other side of the composition outlines a suggested red shape that is seen going through the open door into perspective. The red crayon got an intense work out. Stephen's finger repeatedly taps the red crayon scribbled area as he catches my eye.

"That's who you are. That's the soul that is ready to return to you." His back straightens. He is proud. "You are that red carpet."

I should not be surprised, and I am not. My reaction is flat, like – "so?"

"Your soul is ready to come back but you must make an effort to ask it to return and you must practice what it offers you in the way you were in the past. It won't come back unless you want it to. This is very important." He taps the red again.

Right. I'm a rug. I have reached the bottom of . . . my patience . . . what?

"Well - Stephen, I don't know what to say."

"Yah, I understand." He grins. "It's wonderful. I'm sorry I can't draw this any better. But, this is what I saw. You are a red carpet to your people, isn't that great?"

"My. Well. . . " I do not tell him what this rug really feels.

"I gotta be on my way. It's almost nine. Do you want a massage this next week. It will be your last before I leave the mainland."

"Sure." What can I say?

He flips through his date book. "How's Thursday?"

I look at mine, "Fine. 2 pm?" I see the moon will be full.

"Its Good. That will be \$125 for this evening's session."

After I closed the door behind him, I swear I saw wings on that check.

I ran across that drawing Stephen did five years ago. At the time, I considered throwing it away, but I put it in the bottom of my old tee shirt drawer to dismiss it. When I rediscovered it there, I was surprised. It looked like a different drawing.

I've heard from Stephen over these last few years. He's genuine when asking about how I'm doing. A mutual friend tells me he still practices massage and retrievals.

It's a respectable time now to look back upon things that stand out in my life. I am still swimming. I think that is truly amazing. An affirmation. I remembered my father over-using the word when talking to me, "perspective." It resonates with me now. I use it. I've even written a memoir.

Since that time with Stephen, I've searched out my traumas. I imagine where my souls would have gone, but to no avail have I found any.

My swimmer's soul is still with me. The red carpet soul is as well. I think I've nailed the time it went away, but there are some other contenders, or perhaps I really do have more souls I need to invite back.

Was one when I fell out of love? I was awash with so much grief. I had invested so much of myself in the beauty of that love that when I was betrayed the shock and pain made me turn off. It's possible. One friend said the mood elevator my psychologist prescribed made me walk around like a zombie.

Or was it in college, when I was knocked out by the center's elbow to my temple during our losing game of street basketball? Huh? I haven't played basketball since. I may not have needed that soul.

It could have been when my dog was poisoned and almost died. I know I changed the moment I drove her to the vet over those clogged freeways racing against time. I told her frothing in the back seat, "Whether you live or die we are getting the hell

out of here.” She lived. I methodically disengaged from my life in L.A. Like a robot I sold everything and went on the road like someone wounded searching for a new place to live.

Maybe it is as simple as many souls need homes and we've made room for them. Or Hey? There are some that overstay their welcome. I'm glad to see them go.

Perhaps some souls act just like cats, some showing up when you least expect them, or scratching under the door for attention. I'm not accustomed to ask this of visitors. “Have you any thoughts to share?”

I've got Stephen's email if you're interested.



## Chapter 7

# *Bigot's Bane*

Spring 1963

Mother and son hurried to the front gate, she moved to the mailbox, a seven is carefully painted on it, “We’ve got to rush sweetheart, a skeleton crew will be here in little over an hour.” She gathered the junk mail and postal envelopes. While sorting them, the boy heard her. “Holy crap! This won’t go over well.” She held up that one to reread the address. “Damn Health Inspector.” Her face a scowl, she did not know where to put the letter, the other mail went into her brief case. That one she clenched in her fist. She remembered Chef Paulo’s words, “Things can change in a heartBEAT”

Her boy, close by, touched the gold on the sign proclaiming the name of the restaurant in script, gold leaf with royal purple drop shadow, a blackish green background – “Seven Lemons”. Below that declared:

Classic French Country Cuisine

Paulo Gramarye – Chef

and the phone number.

The gangling teen examined his finger-tip for a sign of paint, looked at his mother – the boy’s lower lip twitched, he was not aware he did that. The restaurant’s sign was glossy, framed as if it were a museum’s painting. Beneath that a smaller sign dangled: Restaurant is open for dinners in the spring and fall – Breakfast, lunch and dinners in summer – Closed for winter – We host special occasions.

A ginger cat brushed up against the boy's leg. "He's one of ours, the restaurant's I mean. There are four of them, outside cats on the property. Madam takes care of them. This one we've named "Red". We've never had a grass snake or a mouse in the house." She giggled at herself, then turned serious. "I've got to deliver these pay checks, make sure Madam gets this letter." She waved it over her head as they walked the path to the house. "And of course I'm going to show you everything, then we'll get back home for supper with Edgar, dad. I think you will like our plan, it's a Win – Win, for all of us honey." The boy looked back at the cat stretching in the sunlight.

This grand home was built for a logging baron in the 1890s carried great dignity across its gracious lawn, two stories with a pitched roof and attic windows, wide stairs lead to an ample porch. The impressive stain glass in the front door showed colors, but in the windows lace curtains were pulled closed and hid the interior. Next to the door a gold frame was anchored to the wall, "Menu" written large, then a space for the bill of fare, but there was nothing listed save for "Closed Mondays". The house was quiet.

" You've got the job, Baby. I am so proud of you. Marge and Edgar, and Ronnie – all together. Arn't you just – happy?" The woman let the two of them inside, she held tight to that one letter.

The cold vestibule carried the scent of lemon. The boy asked, "Marge, mom? When do I get paid?" His mother placed her briefcase in the cubby of a podium standing to the left of the double doors that led into the somber deep red dining room. Silence. To their left, a door marked Office. She held tight to that letter.

"The second and last Friday of each month," she answered in a warm well rehearsed voice. "Let me show you the kitchen, that's where you'll be helping Chef Paulo with the wedding dinner."



The boy sensed his mother's anxiety by the way she gripped that envelope.

The dining tables, dark and polished, both square and circular, appeared as sentries at their posts in the L shaped room, wide as the whole house. Victorian high backed chairs lined the walls between windows as mute observers. Four polished red-wood pillars equalized the space, held high the dark gray ceiling. The woman's footfalls resounded on the hardwood floor, but muffled when they followed the oriental runner that led to the kitchen.

Behind the swinging doors his mother switched on the lights, the kitchen came ablaze like a searing summer sun hitting white cabinets and stainless steel surfaces. So intense, their eyes winced. The kitchen was huge, took over the back of the whole house.

The boy's face reacted as if in outrage that the light caused him surprise and pain. His mother smiled, reached to stroke his animated face, then ran her hand through his dark curls. Her smile held for a heartbeat then faded.

"Your face, my dear, I do so love you, We've got to do something about that. You would never win at poker."

Embarrassed, the boy's head made a little shiver as his eyes looked away from her, his lower lip pulled to his right then his brows furrowed. He looked to the ceiling, his body stiffened.

"Do you want some water?" She took two glasses down from a cupboard, filled them, then went to a refrigerator, removed two lemon peels from a container, dropped one each into the full glasses, handed a glass to her boy. "Ronald, Ronnie, come look out these windows. You can see the whole bay and the mouth of the river. If you stand on your tip-toes and look out over the sinks and salad station at what's under these

windows you can see the tops of the seven lemon trees Chef Paulo planted years ago. That's when he first put in the garden. Come look."

The garden extended wider than the house, it was as deep as it was wide. The green expanse dropped away below the house at an incline, so the bay, the weather was what one saw through the windows first. Everything growing in the garden could be seen, estimated. Paths through the garden were narrow, made for harvesting. The tops of the seven lemon trees appeared as a dotted line, caught the sun and the reflected heat off the house. An herb garden stretched in partial shade under an old crab apple tree, and in full sun.

She said, "The most required vegetables the leafy greens, romaine, lettuces, chard and kale are in rows on the left, closest to the screened porch, and the kitchen door. Squashes, beans, peas are planted in the center; beets, carrots, turnips, root crops are on the right."

She pointed, "Look down at the bottom of the garden, you'll find patches for different kinds of berry bushes will grow in cages, and the large area covered with straw is a defenses to keep snails from the asparagus, yams and potatoes.

"I imagine you'll spend a considerable amount of your time there by the fence in the composting area, part of your new job. You'll tend the garden too, I think. See how green that area is? That's the cat mint, or cat nip. We want to keep our furries happy."

The boy lifted himself to be closer to the window.

She continued, "The wind blows from the North, rain comes from the South, so the compost pile's unpleasant odors from it won't reach our patrons. That fence and gate hide the alley, the garbage tins and a back entry into the garden. That is the pump house on the right. That circular concrete cover is to our well. Those pipes run the water uphill into a holding tank at the side of the house." She paused, "Don't worry,

you won't have anything to do with the tank, you will be asked to hand water the garden.

“What you can't see from here, sweetheart, is just below us. That's the door into the root cellar under the house, we keep what is harvested safe there. We store products the kitchen makes and sells before labeling and distribution, jams, jellies, pickles, and baked goods in our air tight locker. There's a freezer, lots of storage space, bins for root crops, and a mini kitchen workplace for Chef Paulo to mix his potions and poultices, herbal concoctions that he makes for clients, and special requests. He dries our spices down there. You'll go inside one of these days.” She moved away from the windows.

“It's big,” the boy offered. He stumbled over a rubber mat on the immaculate floor. He looked to see if anyone was watching him. His face attempted to find someone to blame for his being awkward. Ronnie followed on his mother's heels.

“This is Chef Paulo's work station,” she walked around an ample stainless steel table with a hanging rack dangling pots, pans, spoons, all sparkling clean. The right wall had portable wooden chopping blocks, and racks for many knives hung next to the outside exit into the porch and the garden. “From here he can work in private with his back to everyone,” She then moved, “or here on the other side, he can see everything that is going on in the kitchen. And back there,” she pointed across the expanse of the room, “the West end of the kitchen, that's the table and benches where the staff have their coffee breaks, visit, and taste the foods we make.” She brought the boy's attention back to where they stood. “Below this East window he has his own little sink and a small range, his fridge is small, below the counter.

“Inside that long wall,” she pointed just past where they entered the kitchen, “hides the walk-in freezers and refrigerators. They muffle the noise of the kitchen from the dining room. Shelves of plates and glassware are against the opposite wall over

the garden windows. The center island to the room has the ranges, grills, and prep spaces. The other side of the island is dedicated for the pick-up plates and dishes for the waiters. Dinner carts are rolled over to the right beside the door. You are Chef Paulo's new gopher, you're going to have to scurry throughout this busy kitchen." She added, "I am so proud.

"Let's go upstairs." She clicked off the lights, looked back to see if all of them were off, then pushed on the door holding it open for her son to pass into the dining room.

She muttered to herself, reminded of the letter in her fist, "House of secrets . . . I just hate this. I wonder how the team will respond to . . ."

The boy came to a halt. "Is that . . ." he said pointing to a large sepia photo in a gold frame on the wall between windows. "Isn't that . . .?"

His mother added, "Just like dad's, the same photo he has in his office at the mill. Union Lumber Company in the 1880's, A party of loggers in the woods north of town, on a giant redwood stump the size of a small dance floor. This one and the others in the house Chef Paulo got when he bought the place. It adds something to the feel of the restaurant, doesn't it? We live in history, sweetheart. We're part of it."

Back in the entry, they walked around the guest's coat and hat racks, then after picking up her briefcase shifting the letter into her other hand, she held the office door open for him. "The staircase to the second floor is in here." She showed him her office under the stairs, the inside cellar door, where she did her bookkeeping, the copy machine, the file cabinets. She walked behind Madam's desk, placed the letter from the Health Inspector, central, the first thing Madam would notice coming into this room. Ronnie took it all in. She tucked her briefcase with checks to be signed, under her desk.

At the top of the stairs, the quiet of the house was palpable. Light reached in through the windows on either side of the hallway but cast Apath of light up the wall at the West end of the building. They walked on plush carpet, making no sound. “No one is here now so I will show you one room then we’ll go. You must look out of every hall window. So unique, I think this piece of property is on the highest ground in the village.

“The end of the house here, looks over the tops of the trees that line this end of the street, and you can see the sea’s horizon in the distance beyond Portuguese Hall where the couple will be married, and closer to us the post office, the cross street to the market, and the mail box just below us.

“Here is the guest’s bedroom,” she opened the door to an other era.

His eyes widened, it could have been a movie set from Hollywood in a nineteen twenty’s movie. He sniffed the air, “Its dry up here.”

“We won’t go in, you can get an Idea what the other rooms are like. Chef and madam’s room is so much larger of course, that’s here just across the hall. They have their own bathroom and sitting area a fireplace too – and the view from their windows overlook the garden, the bay, and west to the village. There are five bedrooms in all, two are packed high with storage, we’re not going in there. The other belongs to a young couple, you’ll meet them at work in the kitchen. They prepare dishes with Chef Paulo, both study pastry with the chef. You will understand in time how important it is that you work with good people, respected professionals. Do you need to use the restroom? It is right here.” She could tell by his face before he spoke he did not.

“No! What’s next?”

“Have you any questions? You start day after tomorrow, Thursday, right after school – you can walk here by 3:30PM, can’t you?” She waited for his nod. “Your dad or I will pick you up about 8:00PM. Chef Paulo said he’d make you dinners. The wed-

ding is a week from Sunday, I am so happy for you, you will be part of what will become a young couples most important days. The restaurant will be open again, this following Sunday is the first day of spring. I'm so excited for you."

As they descended the stairs, Ronnie said, "Marge – mom? I don't want to get a haircut."

Edgar pushed his plate away, "Thank you Ronald for being so understanding about this plan." The boy's father put both his elbows on the dinner table, leaned forward. "I'm so proud that you see the bigger picture. When your advisor at school told us you were college material, and you were so much smarter than, well, some other students, your mom and I had to take things more seriously. Financially that is."

The boy fidgeted in his chair.

"That's when we decided to come up with this plan. We have been concerned about your high school anyway. They just teach you and then turn you out to run loose, no concern about how you behave in the community. You've proven to us you are a respectful person, but these 'shooting hoops' hour after hour until dinnertime. Well, we can do better. All of us can."

Edgar looked to his wife. "Your mom and I have started a savings account for your college, and you've got to work with us on this. By the time you graduate from High School, four years from now, we should have a tidy nest egg for you, and you are going to add to it with your after school job. Marge looked at the numbers and she thinks you will make more than enough to replace your allowance, and we will deposit that usual weekly amount into your college account along with what extra we can. Anything you can deposit on top of that only helps out in the long run."

Marge wiped something from her eye, Edgar's face was firm in his pride of his son. Ronnie's mind raced against his memory of their last conversation. He didn't want to revisit his reaction at hearing that he would no longer be getting any allowance.

In the brilliantly lit kitchen, the chef stood tall, a mountain of a man, salt and pepper beard, white cap, white coat. His two hundred seventy pounds on a six foot five inch frame wrapped in white. He looked down on Ronnie looking at the boy's daddy-long-legs. The spindly teen stood before the chef in rolled up jeans and a baggy sweat-shirt. The big man scanned the boy. Paulo kept his voice low, aware of his accent he slowed down his speech, his tone lifted to the positive in pitch as he finished each thought, "Well my fine young man, it is either that or a hairnet. It is up to you. You also cannot wear sneakers like that in here, it is too slippery here, you need some sturdy shoes, one with grippers on the soles. I will have one of the kitchen staff show you theirs. Can't have you falling."

The big man was not prepared for the time it took or the content of the messages that the boy's face projected in reaction. He both liked and knew this boy to be quite bright in that moment, but couldn't make out anything solid or understandable in that young face's message. "Marge, your mother, tells me you really appreciate the food. She told me she loves to watch you eat."

"Yah, I suppose." He looks up at the big man, not afraid to meet his eyes, and with the speed of a jet plane passing close by, a light flickered in the boy's eyes before his blink reset his mind. "Ok! Mister – Chef Paulo, sir? I'll get a haircut and some rubber sole shoes. Will I get a white cap like the others?"

Friday, Ronnie had his hair cut and new shoes when he showed up to Seven Lemons for work. Chef Paulo introduced him to the kitchen crew, the boy knew his mom's friend, Connie, she had a daughter two grades behind him. He didn't know that she was the Chef's "second in command". The others, he knew he'd have to ask their names several times, but they seemed nice. Two of them were seniors in high school.

Ronnie became attentive as each worker showed him their speciality at the restaurant, their warmth and interest they showed reassured him. Chef Paulo was right, his new shoes kept him from slipping in front of the grill. His hat was a little big, but he liked the style. He got to clean and peel carrots, and potatoes, and empty the compost stored in the screen porch into the bin at the bottom of the garden. Lunch with the crew was fun, and the dinner was really good. Edgar came for him at the promised time. All the waiters would show up for the wedding party the following Sunday. He met all the cats.

Saturday a crate of two dozen doves sat cooing at the end of the Chef's work station, Ronnie arrived at 9:00AM ready for a full day's work. His face reacted with interest to the talkative birds.

As Chef Paulo cleaned his workspace as he spoke to Ronnie, placed a large porcelain bowl in the center, several towels, and a butcher's sheers handy. He smiled at the boy, "The old Portuguese gentleman asked for this traditional wedding dinner for his granddaughter. It was served at his own wedding, and his daughter's too. He wants the same meal for his daughter's daughter." The Chef paused, "Squab with figs. Any chef is challenged with this ceremonial banquet as he has to make these differing foods work together successfully as it is those that are getting married who must work at steadfastness to the making of a harmonious family. Ah! This will be the most auspicious day for a wedding, the Spring equinox, the first day of spring.



“The chef, he is the one to make with the magic, in harmony with all this, isn’t he?” The big man smiled. “The squabs come from a ranch in the valley. The freshly canned whole figs, all the way from the old man’s brother in Santiago, Chile. The salad and vegetables are from our garden.”

He picked a bird from the crate, gently wrapped its wings flat against its back with a warm towel, held it out to the boy to examine. “A squab is a young Rock Dove, you may know them as pigeons, these are the most peaceful of creatures.” Out of the corner of his eye he caught the boy’s reaction as he cut off the birds head and held its body over the bowl as the birds heart pumped out its remaining blood.

Ronnie’s shock only showed on his face, for the boy saw how quickly the bird became an object, and the surprise was how orderly the Chef performed this task. The boy saw no pain, no struggle to keep alive. His observations were held at a distance from his emotions. He knew he was learning something quite important concerning life and death. Being quiet was no problem.

One at a time, the big man proceeded to retrieve the remaining birds from that crate and wrapping them dispatched each head with kitchen sheers, held it as it bleed out, and lined them together on steel trays. Their heads were placed like olives in a kitchen bucket. The boy could hear the kitchen was busy, conversations continued. The boy did not make a peep.

“Bring me another pen from the back porch, we’ll make a production line of this. There are four more crates out there. It is a big wedding party.” He watched the boy do as he was told, knew how his heart could be beating to the speed of escape and any clutter in his mind would be pushed aside to be open to what was to come next.

As the chef proceeded with the second crate of birds, he spoke softly to the boy, “We all have to eat, and so it goes that something must give of itself for us to go on.”

He faced the boy to see his reaction. The chef did not react to Ronnie's facial tremor and inspired the big man to proceed with as much fatherly love he could.

“These little birds have never touched their feet to the earth, they have been given the best of foods, the cleanest of water. They have been nourished and protected by their mothers who have been well cared by the family that raises these birds. They have all been loved. You may say this little bird has the purpose in life, to give theirs to others. These are the most innocent of creatures – what better food than to serve the newly married young couple. And what better garnish than figs, the most fertile of fruits to symbolize, encourage the abundance that will come from their love, from their bodies' union.” The boy blushed.

The Chef knew the boy was going to be all right.

They proceeded in this way until all the trays were lined up ready for the cold locker.

“When you come in tomorrow I will show you how to pluck them. Thank you for your help. So now as I store this important blood ready for its next use, you may clean the table, and I'll give you your next chore.”

When Ronnie got home that evening he went straight to bed. Woke up to pee, looked out the black window. He remembered the doves, drew a mental picture as he returned to bed. One hundred circles lined up in rows, as he settled himself to sleep, he saw the circles turn into zeros.

Sunday, Ronnie learned to pluck feathers, accompanied by the older boy. There on the screen porch to hold in the feathers from flying, he got it down to a disciplined science just before Edgar came to pick him up. His father had to wait with the chef

over a brandy until all the wet feathers were raked, gathered, and packed into the bin marked compost. Ronnie would return the following Saturday.

Monday, Chef Paulo published the menu for his staff. The guests will be honored with: choices of wines from the inland valley, a chardonnay and a cabernet. Two squab per serving, stuffed with a mushroom and walnut spiced cornbread dressing, roasted, glazed with sweet chili and bourbon. Three whole figs for each guest – one flayed open, all dressed with my special wedding glaze, and our usual garnish of a wedge of lemon with sweet chili. The vegetable, brazed new potatoes with rosemary in butter sauce. The pastry chefs are inspired by cornbread. The salad chef is working his magic on his contribution, he assures me he will use his delicious white spicy dressing. The dessert chef is busy, in heavenly conversation, creating his *pièce de résistance* of the meal, flaming ice cream. After dinner, they will have local champagne to make with the congratulations and toasts. All this including drinks, dinner and desert for kitchen and serving staff as well.”

Tuesday, the restaurant was dark. Chef and Madam were out of town. Ronnie was at school, he later shot hoops.

Wednesday, the cleaning crews spent a whole day scrubbing the kitchen, windows, drains, then moved on to the dining room and vestibule washing windows. The kitchen staff took all the plates from their cabinets and cleaned the shelves. The crews then continued into the night shampooing rugs, waxing floors, tables, and the house’s woodwork. Ronnie recalled those zeros, worked through his algebra homework.

Thursday, a two week supply of fresh linen arrived for the dining room, towels for the kitchen, aprons and garments for the staff. Chef Paulo and Madam filled their closets. Ronnie, Marge and Edgar spent the evening playing Canasta.

Friday, the waiters appeared at noon for instructions from Chef Paulo and Connie, they were shown their fresh aprons, told to polish their shoes, reminded them no facial hair, and asked them to practice their smiles. Connie placed a list, a timeline of the sequence for serving the wedding guests on the refrigerator that held the chilled water pitchers and lemon peels. Ronnie looked forward to working that day.

Saturday, Chef Paulo was doing a happy tap dance, spoon held high, in sheer delight, his mouth in a tight smile, speechless from savoring a flavor. His little dance jiggled his massive shape, the joy of his invention finally burst forth, infecting glee throughout the kitchen. Everyone there looked at the big man, began to smile, and each took a deep breath of gratitude. This wedding would really be fun.

Turning to face the room, Paulo sought out where the boy was. Washing lettuce at the far end of the room, Ronnie had looked up, then stood to get a better view of the room and the commotion from the Chef's dance.

Paulo waved to have him come to him. "So, my fine young man, this is what I'm working on. It is a savory wedding sirup for our squabs, a glaze for the dressing, the figs, for a little puddle on the plate. Would you kindly taste this, and give me your impression?" He held out a full spoon level to Ronnie.

The boy let the big man feed him. The boy's eyes closed as a symphony of orchestrated synapses played out on his face, wonder, curiosity, pleasure, a bumpy passage from the unexpected piquant to pungent, a sweet resolve, then what could have been ecstasy. The boy's face flickered, then his expressive hand rose involuntarily as if following along to a most beautiful voice in operatic music and held it there while a finishing note brought his eyes to open wide.

He found the big man's face close to his, a tear in the bearded man's eye. "Marge, your mom, she has spoken the truth."

One hour before the wedding banquet began, everything was running smoothly as planned. The kitchen was prepared for the guests to arrive. The wedding was at that moment taking place at the Portuguese Hall four blocks away. After, the bride changed her dress, then all attending would walk, a wedding parade with flags from the old-country, a throng of people celebrating through the center of the village finishing at Seven Lemons on the porch. Speeches would be delivered by both sets of parents. The bride would throw her bouquet into the crowd gathered on the front lawn. The families would enter the restaurant with all those invited for dinner. The three bars in the village would be celebrating long into the night. The moon would rise at 9:00PM.

The waiters had arrived at noon to dress and set the tables. They were placing the longest table, and chairs that would face the room. It would present the old gentleman, his wife, their daughter, mother of the bride and her husband, the bride and groom, and the boy's parents. That extended table was against the long wall. Behind them hung a photo portrait of the bride decorated with white roses, and the groom's portrait with the earthy greens of seaweed – he is a fisherman. The wedding couple would be seated central beneath the portraits. They would look over the party, and the party could look at them.

Chef Paulo was whistling washing his hands; Connie was sweeping up crumbs from the cornbread stuffing that had fallen out of one of the squabs. The salad chef was at the table in the back of the kitchen having coffee with the pastry chefs. The dessert chef had just returned from an errand, and was hanging up his coat, confident that his preparations made during this last week were safe in the deep freezer, ready for serving with a flaming flourish. The salad chef was loading his full plates onto the serving carts. The other kitchen helpers, the prep boy and clean up girl, the closest in age to Ronnie, were in the back garden smoking. It was 4:30PM when the commotion began in the vestibule.

“This is most unfair, rude and unacceptable. This event has had weeks of promoting this wedding party, newspapers, and you, you . . . ample time . . . no excuse. Rude! Thoughtless!” Madam’s high pitched voice rose in volume enough for the whole house to hear her, warning the kitchen that trouble had descended.

Ronnie had never seen Madam before, only photos – he was stopped cold. His first impression was she had the shape of the fire-hydrant next to the high school. Through the swinging doors into the kitchen, Madam escorted a thin man dressed in a dark suit with really black hair and a thin mustache. The boy thought, his skin – so pale. The man kind of stomped into the room; Madam at the same speed. She looked really scary.

Dressed in black with white lace under her chin. She was not as tall as the man, and she had no waist. She seemed so solid, so angry. He did not want her to look at him, for her hair net plastered her hair flat to her head, and she wore librarian shoes. The boy stayed clinging, back to the sink beneath the windows.

Ronnie knew something was wrong, the man gestured his impatience with a clip board. This man, a head taller than Madam wasn’t calm. The boy realized she was being helpful bringing him to the Chef. Ronnie imagined her actions were how the people

acted when coming up against a bad guy in a movie. Her mouth was kind of smiling, but her eyes sure did not.

“It is my charge, my duty to this county and state health organizations, to inspect these premises, specially when suspicion has been aroused due to your compost pile. We found a rat. A brown rat at the entrance to your alley from the street. Dead with signs of infection, we tested it, the results are it died from *Leptospira*, or Well's disease, it causes Meningitis. I'm here to take samples from your well, your compost, and your garden. We require oversight as how you use that compost on food you grow, and serve to the public. And, I see by your past menus, you profit greatly. I knew you would be here today, and we both know you will be open for business this coming Tuesday. An inspection of each restaurant in the village has been ordered.”

Chef Paulo Gramarye said, “We've just had our yearly scrub down, just this last week, look around if you like. We are expecting within this coming hour to be running at full speed for this banquet, and I'm sure you understand we cannot give you our undivided attention. We have cats that patrol the property and have for years, we've never had a rodent problem. I have no worker that can accompany you at this time for your task. Could we do this Monday? Yes, Monday, That would be most convenient.”

“I can shut you down any time I want, I may have just cause right now. Stop complaining, I must do this now. I will call the police for assistance if I need to. If you won't cooperate – I will make a citation.” His chest expanded toward the Chef, his eyes defied the big man.

“I've always had my suspicious about you, this big house, your fancy foods. How people come all the way from the big city just to eat here. I don't get it. I've have reports you make salves for local people in your basement – non prescriptions. Pretty little bags of leaves for under pillows, gifts for cats, herbal teas. I will require samples to test of all your products. Something is not right here. All my buzzers have been going

off on this establishment for the last eight years and each time you have proven to my superiors on paper you run a clean business. I don't think so. I've left this place each time, suspicious. You seem to believe you can put life style before the law." As if thinking out loud, he said, "I need to get an accountant in here as well.

"And you attract people to you that are loaners, non-church goers, suspicious people I see gawking at buildings on the street, city strangers. And these people you hire," he looked around the kitchen, "they come from someplace else, they don't fit in here, they stick to themselves. Look how they comb their hair. I don't get it. You are all a bunch of . . . and NOW I see you have a young boy in here, now. No, no! WRONG! You, you, you . . . are all a queer bunch of . . ." He spat out. "Faggots!"

At that moment, immediately to the right of the Health Inspector, the Madam, seen from behind, was looking out the window into her garden. Her voice dry, matter of fact, with a dollop of sarcasm, Ronnie heard, "Health . . . Inspector."

Then in a heartbeat she simply turned, used the weight of her whole body in unison with her right fist to connect with the inspector's temple, she stumbled with the force, caught her balance as the man crumbled to the floor after hitting the other side of his head on the edge of the central steel table. The clock over the door to the dining room read 4:35PM. Madam shook out the pain in her right hand.

Silence.

Paulo stepped forward and put two fingers to the fallen man's neck, examined his eyes. "Like a light bulb – out! Steady heart beat," He looked up to his staff around him. "His neck isn't broken, nor is his skin where he hit the table. Don't move him just yet." The Chef stood over the man. Face immobile, his eyes alight, Paulo looked somewhere into the distance.



For what?

For possibilities?

Madam said, "I don't have a grain of sand size of remorse." Her face was blotchy red. The kitchen staff moved as if in slow motion to their stations in the kitchen.

The Chef said to the men, "Move him to the bench, place him on his back, raise his head and chest with the cushions." They carried the limp form at the Chef's request.

Connie, stood alert awaiting orders from the Chef who hurried with his list of demands. "Bring me fresh arrow bane, and Bane berries, pick them fresh from the garden, not dried from the root cellar. Just fresh leaves no branches, two or three leaves of the arrow bane will do." Connie's face showed concern. "Yes," he said, "right, I know that can be poisonous, and that is beneath the crab apple, and I only need a handful of the Bane berries, they are next to the fence by the rosemary. I'll prepare them for the brewing here." The chef directed her, his hand flicked her on to do her duty. "Hurry please, some lemons too. The man will be fine. We cause no harm today, there is no need for alarm." The outside door slammed shut.

"Kindly bring me the punch bowl," the Chef asked of the young girl in the wet apron, "then go into the root cellar to my herb cabinet and bring me jars marked Myrrh, Valerian Root, and about seven large frozen poppy seed pods. I have the poppy's milk here in my lock box, and most other ingredients I may need."

When they returned, he ordered, "Grind the poppy pods into Apaste. Draw a cup and a half of blood from the inspector's ankle, I don't want him to know we've drawn any. That will help with any swelling. We only need two tablespoons from Ronnie here." His hand rested respectfully on the boy's shoulder. "Then start our largest kettle to a rolling boil."

To the boy, “Quickly now – Ronald, Ronnie, I need to ask you this. Are you a virgin?”

The boy held up his hand as if asking a question of his teacher. His face contorted. “Does my hand count?”

Chef Paulo had to shake his head, “Just what is it you learn at school?” His head twisted around to see what is being done with the unconscious health inspector. Back to the boy, “I require some of your blood.”

Ronnie did not hesitate, “Sure. I, I but I . . . last night . . . then again this morning . . .” his face wide open.

The Chef said, “not to worry.” He paused for a heart BEAT “That is too much information anyway. This won’t hurt too much, just think of this as one of your many rites of passage.”

The boy’s face drew a blank, but it altered when he spied Connie with a basting syringe, sending a stream of cleansing water spurting from its needle.

She asked as she approached him, “How does it feel having all the properties of magical beginnings?” Her smile carried that of someone about to be in love.

The Chef bent over the Health Inspector, resting on the bench at the end of the kitchen table. He felt for a pulse, opened the man’s eyes to look again at his reaction to light. Pulled on the man’s tongue to check his gag reflex. OK. He carefully dripped, counting a drop at a time, the milky poppy elixir onto the man’s tongue, the man swallowed without resistance, as if asleep. The big man’s hand held another bottle in reserve.

The Chef’s face showed growing confidence as he continued until that bottle was empty. He re-examined the man; then administered in the same manner the Valerian

Root tincture, one full dropper, one drop at a time. The Inspector took five little swallows. Paulo examined the man's eyes, checked his pulse again.

He looked up at Madam, his staff, and Ronnie's worried faces, and assured them, "He'll wake up tomorrow morning."

He told Connie, "You may now start to harvest his blood, a cup and a half, bring it over to my work station after you're done." Handed her a precious bottle. "Mix the poppy paste with a tablespoon of this Myrrh. Rub that poultice onto his puncture point, he won't notice a thing in the morning. He will feel no pain. There will be no mark, only a smudge of dirt." He handed her another small bottle marked Essence of Arnica, "And rub this onto his temples. The mark of Madam," he smiled at his wife, "and the spot where he impacted the steel table. Cover those areas with the poultice as well. Thank you so much, my dear."

Two waiters carried the limp inspector through the dining room into the office behind Madam's desk. They positioned him onto her chair. He looked as if he had just fallen asleep from the half-full glass from the whiskey bottle Madam placed in front of him. She locked the door behind her. One of the waiters told the Chef in passing, "Not a care in the world."

"What time is it?" Someone asked. Every head turned to the clock, their watches, then they faced Chef Paulo.

"We all know there is no such thing as time, only what is of importance at the moment. Giving our all to the young couple is what we must do. This is a family's most important day of love to which we can contribute."

The Chef looked at his team, and continued. "Creating a Bigot's Bane we will dutifully carry out after the party has left our charge. I do need you here when we do that, we must stand together, hatred has infected so many people. We can enact a cure to-

night for those people we serve. So, know we have been confronted with having two important tasks this evening, this equinox. The first is easy to perform as we are ready to serve the young couple. To dissolve hatred is our act of faith this evening, we will begin that rite after 10PM under our full moon.

“One of you run upstairs and watch from the West window, the moment the wedding procession reaches the post office, come down and tell us. This will give us fifteen minutes for all of us to hurry and finished with our duties. Ready at our posts.”

The Madam touched the Chef's arm and he bent down to listen to her message. As she left the kitchen to take her post at the front of the restaurant, Chef Paulo caught Ronnie's eye and motioned him to join him on the back porch.

“Yes, sir, Chef Paulo, sir,” the boy sputtered. “I'm ok, sir, I'm basted, or harvested, what . . . sir?” His face . . .

The big man lowered his head to the eyes of the boy's, “There are three importing things you must remember about today. The first is you have proven yourself to be an honorable young man, you can think and act for others before your own needs. For this you have my appreciation and great respect. The second is you are an important member of this team whose purpose is to nourish the love of others, and protect the innocent from the wounds perorated by hatred. Do you understand? And call your mother. Tell her not to expect you until after midnight, and that I will be the one to drive you home.”

Madam was at her position by the podium as the first of the guests entered. She had removed her hairnet, letting go a cascade, gorgeous waves of curls that framed her face. She smiled when the old gentleman and his wife stepped up in front of her, she motioned a waiter to take the couple's coats, then suggested he lead them to their

important position at the long table. As they walked away the old man commented, “You are quite beautiful this afternoon, Madam Gramarye.” His stylish wife nodded in agreement. Madam’s demure smile, awaited her next guest.

When the guests were all but seated the waiters greeted each person, handed each of them a menu, poured glasses of water with a thin slice of lemon peel. They returned to present each table with open wine bottles, white and red, and covered baskets of warm toasted corn bread with a plate of honey butter spread. Conversation and laughter lifted the attitude in the room. The wines, the flavorsome cornbread with small bits of Habanero pepper and aged cheddar cheese, started conversations, warmed the guests, set their palettes for the feast to come. Merry conversations spanned the tables. Laughter from the dining room, eased some of the concerns in the kitchen. Ronnie may have been the only person present concerned for the Health Inspector.

The serving carts were lined up against the wall, ready for the five waiters to deliver chilled and fresh salads to the diners. Hot plates with squab were in the warming ovens, the figs were still chilling waiting for the signal to be put together flourished with the sauce, and in a little puddle with the lemon-chili garnish.

Chef Paulo was behind the swinging doors listening for the moment after the Old man’s speech and his toast to the young couple to signal his staff to start their preparations. This would provide enough time for the parents to have brought their friends to laughter, embarrassing the young couple, for the room to recognize the love the young couple had for each other, for the best man to have his say about his friendship for the groom, a favorite joke, and his good wishes on his friends life together. The maid of honor would have to stand, giggle, say something and be admired for her beauty. Off color jokes arrived from young curs, shouts of encouragement from the crowd, then when a lull –

The Chef whispered, "Now! The salads." The waiters burst through the doors with the carts of food for twenty dinners. Immediately they returned to the kitchen for the remainder. In the kitchen, the staff sped with their intention to make each dinner plate a work of art.

Salad plates were moved out of the way on the tables or removed, waiters poured more wine adding open bottles to the tables. They presented each diner their meal. An aroma of well being filled the room. Waiters hovered over the room pouring wine, adding bread, filling water glasses, answered requests for more, more, more. Then the old man lifted himself out of his seat and told his audience the significance, his history with this menu and the symbolism of the food they were eating. There was no prayer, only a moment of silence. The food brought praise from the first mouth that could communicate. The waiters had no problem smiling, nor did those remaining standing in the kitchen, who also sighed – for the moment.

Before coffee was served, Madam went into her office to look at the Health Inspector. "Out", she heard her voice echo back at her. She phoned the kitchen, reported her reaction including his steady pulse, no movement, the clear unresponsive eyes, and that she is not going to touch the man's tongue.

The Old man left his chair and went into the kitchen to speak with the Chef. "Better than I remembered, just the best." He held tight the Chef's hand, "So good, so fine. You are an artist of food, sir. Bless you for your part in my children's happiness . . ."

No – it was not that long for their eyes to have met, to have understood there was a clue to their future, when they retreated to the closeness of the Chef's little kitchen sink next to the East window. No one heard their voices. How much time did these two need to hear what was also important?

The Old man urged the Chef to follow him. “Come on, you need to hear how so very good this all is.” The Chef put on a clean apron, followed him into the dining room.

As the Old man sang Paulo’s praises, the audience responded with applause. The big man moved among the tables shaking hands, smiling warmly, he headed for Madam in the vestibule doorway. They entered her office, he held her tenderly for a heart beat, then examined the Inspector. Shortly, double knocks brought their attention to the door. Madam opened it for two young men, “friends of the groom,” they said.

The plan agreed upon – became secure. Madam locked her office door behind her. The two young men returned to their tables. She and Chef Paulo stood together in the doorway to the dining room. Not touching, he and she watched the dessert Chef at the bride and groom’s table. With great panache he performed along with the five waiters alighting the golden meringue atop the frozen french vanilla, chocolate encrusted, ice cream with one-hundred-fifty proof rum now aflame. He then moved on to each of the remaining tables. Each blaze lit up the faces at the tables for a count of five, then a waiter snuffed it out. Enough warm rum would be left circling the platter for the diners to wrestle with spoons for it. There was enough dessert for everyone.

The guests emptied the restaurant, sated, happy, hopeful. Yes, they wanted more.

After the last guests had left, the staff sat down to their dinners in the kitchen. They breathed relief. The waiters gathered their tips, brought the dishes and linens into the kitchen. Madam switched off the front door light, and vestibule as a signal, the two young men returned in a moment and spirited the limp Inspector into a waiting car.

At the door to the kitchen, she turned off the dining room lights.

The staff ventured smiles as they began cleaning up from what was a major event. Connie even laughed in relief. Ronnie was happy, and smiled.

"I've added the arrow bane and bane berries into our boil," the Chef said.

"Do we have enough blood?" The salad chef asked. "I will give more."

"I've a pint in storage in your little fridge if you need some." Connie chimed in.

The big man offered. "I'm going to add mine with the Madam's."

It was only the two high school students who did not have something in that fridge. "You can take some of mine," the boy said.

The girl turned away, her nose up, "Gross. So, not me."

The large caldron was steaming full boil on the gas range central in the kitchen.

"OK by us," the young woman spoke for the pastry chefs. "Will it work if we mix ours together as one contribution," she said, "we're getting married in the fall."

"They don't need to know that," the young man pulled at the young woman's sleeve.

"Count me in," the dessert chief added.

Chef Paulo made a show of the linen covered blood bowl, "The innocence of doves" he offered. "We will mix this all together, doves and inspector, with your contributions, each of you will stir these with yours. We stand, the fuel of our lives together representing our intention, our coven. We must add this a little at a time for our entire contribution to cook and mix, not congeal. This amount of Bigot's Bane must last us for a complete season, our contribution to end the epidemic of bigotry.

"Let's begin, I'll show you," the big man proceeded with a pencil thin stream of dove blood into the steaming caldron. It was pulled into the rolling boil, slowly it tinted



the color of the water. He dipped the bowl into the steaming brew to wash the remaining blood from it, took the cup and a half of the inspector's harvest, performing the same slow task and passed the large spoon to the next person in line to make their donation.

By 10:30PM they finished, turned off the stove, waited until 11 for the boil to subside. Two of the men moved the caldron onto the screen porch bathed in moonlight. The last touch to enact the Bigot's Bane would be to add, in the light of the full moon, Ronnie's contribution.

They opened the screen door onto the garden. Four cats entered and took their places at each corner of the room. The kitchen staff circled the cauldron, letting the moonlight bathe Ronnie's blood as it was added, a drop at a time. Chef Paulo began the paternoster to charm the formula into working its magic. Madam and the kitchen staff joined in. Ronnie was dumbfounded that they all knew this verse. In a whisper, they repeated it seven times. Some had their eyes closed as in respectful prayer, others in delight of the moment. They acted as if they have performed the ritual many times. After the fifth incantation, Ronnie could mimic the last line.

Pioc suas éno

ìocfaidh tú as

After Ronnie was delivered home that night, the Chef stayed in the car to talk with Marge as Ronnie went indoors. Edgar stopped reading when Ronnie lingered in the living room telling him how the wedding banquet went. The father saw exhaustion in his boy's face. Marge turned off the front porch light. Ronnie said, "Good night Marge, mom, Edgar, dad. See you at breakfast. I'm really tired out."

As Ronnie closed his bedroom door, he heard Edgar's softened voice ask Marge, "So what did his grandfather have to say?"

Instantaneously Ronnie's mouth puckered like pulling the cords closing the little cinch bag where he kept his marbles, he caught his reflection in his bedroom window and understood for the first time how his face might betray him.



Two weeks later the County Sheriff showed up at Seven Lemons. Ronnie was in the garden feeding the seven flowering lemon trees one cup each from the supply of Bigot's Bane. This was his Wednesday chore each week and would continue throughout the season. He would inoculate the lemons to dispel any hatred their consumer may possess. Chef Paulo reminded him, "hatred is a possession and not one's natural state."

The sheriff and his two rather tall deputies were standing over the table at the end of the kitchen interviewing the Chef, the staff and were about finished with their interviews when Ronnie entered from the garden into the kitchen.

They asked the boy to join them, Ronnie took off his white hat and held it in both hands as the Sheriff asked, "Can you describe what you experienced during the time the health inspector entered the kitchen during the afternoon of the Spring Equinox, before the wedding party. What is it that you can tell us?"

Ronnie looked at the Sheriff, at the kitchen staff, every one, at Madam, at Chef Paulo. His open faced said, "Gosh, Sheriff, I don't remember that. I know that in two weeks it will be my birthday, I'll be fifteen. I've got a job after school that makes my

mom and dad happy, and I'm happy too," The boy smiled, "and I've learned how to scrub vegetables and pluck feathers."

*fin*

Author's note: The next time you sit down at a table with a glass of water with a lemon peel in it, and if you think, "I just hate that, but I'll drink it anyway." You are about to take the cure. – jm

Note to the Dear Reader:

I really appreciate that you want more. So here as promised is a little bit.

The groom's buddies spirited the Health Inspector away to a fishing boat in the harbor north of town, motored north under the full moon well beyond the cape heading up toward Eureka. They were told if the man died while in their charge to toss him overboard well out to sea. But the man didn't die, kept sleeping like a baby, at dawn the second day off the coast of Oregon and still asleep, they sailed to Bandon, the nearest port. The fishermen knew of a restaurant that served a biker's bar close to the pier that opened later in the day, left the odd man snoring there leaned against the entry then headed home." –jm

///// Hatred is a signal at a crossroad to violence and prejudice

or to understanding and tolerance./////

James Maxwell



## *Ravens*

On the darkest night in the blackest month of the year, a surprised raven laid only three eggs. Exhausted she sheltered them from the morning rain; warmed them with her body. Her mate relieved her so she could eat — was glad when she returned. Her nest swayed. Perched hidden by needles and cones in a crook on a slight arm of an old cypress. Close enough to town to salvage food, high enough away from cats, raccoons and rats. First lit with morning light the nest gently moved, sheltered from the ocean wind. The eggs a speckled blue-green hatched in late February to a false spring and a full moon. The parents were prepared to tend their offspring for the next forty days. This was their tenth year of birthing chicks.

The first hatchling was the singer — she became courageous with her verse. The largest male was beautiful and knew it — he would be a natural leader. The second male was born free from any expectation — he would be the first to fly.

When they first communicated their curiosities to their parents, the singer wanted to be a song bird, the beautiful bird wanted to dance on the neighboring roof, the other male asked how far it was to the moon and may he fly there now.

The parents imparted they could be anything they wanted because they were Ravens and had everything they needed to be who they are.





## Chapter 8

# *Jump*

A 110 minute Screenplay

FADE IN:

A silent cloudless blue sky – a dot appears central in the distance. The dot grows, the tiny image of a bird appears, as it increases in size a distant sound of someone's easy running grows proportionally with the increased size of the bird. Volume increases, includes controlled breathing. We hear footfalls on sandy soil. The bird, an Eagle, screams as it fills the screen and exits at the top of the frame. Blue sky.

2 – LONG SHOT

Eagle's point of view in flight, we look down on the red desert terrain. The cliffs of the Vermilion Mountains of North Central Arizona loom in the distance. There is no sign of civilization, nor do there appear to be any roads or trails. The sound of the runner does not vary pace. The eagle screams again.

3 – LONG SHOT

Angle on eagle as it searches for the sound of the running figure.

4 – MOVING SHOT

A tracking camera finds a moving dot in the distant landscape. As the speed of the eagle/camera hones in on the running figure, we hear the scream of the eagle as the figure continues running.

5 – CLOSE IN

POV is on the running figure. He is a twelve year old Navaho Indian Boy. He does not break stride, we see him react to the eagle. The sound of his breathing and his foot falls do not change.

WE MEET WILLIAM WHITEHAWK, HERE AT 12 YEARS OF AGE, LATER HE APPEARS AT 18 YEARS OF AGE AND IN HIS EARLY THIRTIES. HE IS WILLY TO HIS FAMILY ON THE RESERVATION. WILLIAM AS ADULT. WILLY TO FRIENDS IN

LONDON, AND BILLY TO THE LADIES. HE CALLS HIMSELF WILL. AS A CHILD THERE IS A SWEETNESS TO HIM, AS AN ADULT HE REPRESENTS THE PHYSICALLY FIT, and THERE IS A MELANCHOLY BEAUTY ABOUT HIM.

## 6 – FULL SHOT

We see the direction his path takes from the POV behind, between the boy's feet. We hear the sound of the distant eagle's call.

## 7 – CLOSE UP

A weathered middle-aged Navaho man reacts with a knowing nod on hearing the eagle's call.

UNCLE JOHNS - IS A COLORFULLY DRESSED GRAY HAired NAVAHO MEDICINE MAN. UNCLE TO THE RUNNING BOY, WILLIAM WHITEHAWK.

## 8 – CLOSE ON PAN OF PATH

The camera follows the running boy. He jumps to avoid a desert tortoise in his path. The boy does not break stride. We see the boy disappear from the POV over the desert tortoise left in the boy's dust. The sound of his foot falls retreat.

## 9 – CLOSE IN ON

Uncle JOHNS caught in the midst of a medicine ritual holds fine gray ashes which sift through his finger. He looks toward the sky, searches for the eagle. JOHNS is framed by the red desert mesa against the cloudless sky. His silver and turquoise jewelry contrast his ashen colored hands held against his intense emerald green velvet shirt. Ashes are moved by a breeze.

## 10 – CLOSE IN

The boy runs toward the dolling backward camera. He wears a baseball cap, the image of the cartoon Roadrunner is on his soiled gray tee shirt. He wears jeans and moccasins. The boy runs with easy purpose. His controlled breathing and the sound of his pace continues. He runs past the camera. The camera turns up to the sky to find the eagle in flight.

## 11 – LONG SHOT

We focus on the ground from the eagle's POV. We fly past the running boy, then over a rise in the terrain to see an old pick-up truck in the distance, the figure of Uncle JOHNS over a smoking fire. As the camera, the eagle's POV passes the medicine man. It veers off to reveal the bridge at Lee's ferry and the

Grand Canyon in the distance. The camera tips up to the intense blue sky against the horizon. Flies and banks as the eagle in flight.

## 12 – CAMERA FADES IN (A busy MONTAGE)

Gray sky, sounds of traffic, the camera pans down on a city scape during snow-fall. Montage of Budapest, – we move from the castle on the hill overlooking the Danube River to the spire of St. Stephen's gothic cathedral that looms against the sky. Doves in a circle eating bread crumbs. A white hawk, stark still as the gargoyle next to it, we look out over the city on the parapet of the church. Foot steps through dirty snow, church bells mix with the sounds of people milling on the street. Boat horns off the Danube, people walk hunched over, there is purpose in their direction. What first appeared to be a charming winter scene soon reveals dirt, trashcans and dogs, and soiled tattered clothing. Charm and debris are mixed together in the montage. This is Budapest in 1956.

## 13 – CLOSE UP

The angle is on a 12 year old girl, Ruth Magen. She is bundled up from the cold huddled against her parents.

RUTH MAGEN, WE SEE HER HERE AT TWELVE YEARS OLD, LATER AT SIXTEEN AND AGAIN AT TWENTY SIX. SHE IS SMALL, HAS HIGH CHEEK BONES, BLACK HAIR, GREEN EYES. SHE IS EQUAL PARTS PIETY AND IMP.

Wind blows Ruth's coat open to reveal a white confirmation dress. She looks up to her mother's face. The mother's eyes motion directs Ruth to something in the distance, the girl turns.

## 14 – MONTAGE CHURCH

We see St. Stephen's Cathedral, camera pans to door opening and worshippers stream inside while the church bells ring, snow falls, traffic horns and boat whistles. The camera pans to the spire against the sky. The white hawk shakes its shoulders from the cold.

## 15 – LONG SHOT

The hawk's POV, we look down to see the square in front of St. Stephen's. The stream of people entering the cathedral. The camera pans out over the snow clad city scape, but it does not miss the smoke stacks sending columns of pollution skyward.

## 16 – FULL SHOT



The interior of the cathedral, the CAMERA lingers over the details of the vaulted ceiling, smoke from the incense burning, all the candles as the main source of light. Gothic stained glass windows send colors flickering over the congregation. The church crowded with worshipers.

#### 17 – CLOSE UP ON CONGREGATION

We find the girl and her family are in prayer. Ruth and her family are in prayer, her eyes open and she peeks over her praying hands to see what is around her.

#### 18 – CLOSE UP

Ruth's POV, we see old women focused, busy praying over their beads, women's heads covered with dark scarves. The sound of droning prayers pervade the atmosphere.

#### 19 – CLOSE UP

Ruth Magen reacts to the drone with an uncomfortable shiver. Something catches her eye outside the picture frame. She smiles recognition.

#### 20 – MOVING PAN INTO

A niche in the cathedral, candles are lit, There are fewer praying figures, those there kneel in front of an iron rail. White lilies surround the statue of St. Rita. The white marble sculpture of the Saint is carved as a fourteen year old girl. Her eyes are downcast, her hands open in supplication for mercy. The sculpture depicts the Saint in an undecorated night dress. There is a rise in the emotional volume of one of the women's prayers, then the intensity of her prayer lowers as if she was catching herself from being too loud. Her supplications melt in the somber scene.

#### 21 – CLOSE UP

We see Ruth's family in their pew. Coming out of her prayer the mother suddenly misses her daughter. She abruptly stands, grabs for her husband's attention.

#### 22 – MONTAGE OF ACTION

The mother and father frantically search the church, row by row, interrupting prayers. They cast frightened glances across the aisle at one another. Finally discover their daughter on her knees, praying in front of St. Rita. The girl turns and smiles at her parents. The candle light flickers on her face. She is lovely, the im-

age of happiness. Sounds of small prayer bells pervade the scene. Image fades to white.

## 23 – FADE INTO

The red desert of Arizona and a stand of grayish green pinion pine. The Vermilion Mountains fill the background. Against strong shadows, a Navaho woman, in traditional dress, harvests pinion pine cones. She picks them off the ground. The boy we have previously seen running, vigorously shakes a tree behind her. The older man, UNCLE JOHNS squints his eyes, searches the distant horizon. We hear wind through trees. The boy stops mid action when he notices the older man's focus. CAMERA TRACKS to watch the boy, he too studies what he hears.

DIALOGUE Spoken in Navaho – subtitles:

JENEDA WHITEHAWK, WILLIAM WHITEHAWK'S MOTHER -  
SISTER TO UNCLE JOHNS. SHE IS SMALL IN STATURE,  
COMPACT. HER EYES REVEAL HER EVERY THOUGHT AND  
EMOTION, HER MOUTH IS SET FIRM.

UNCLE JOHNS:

(To Jeneda)

He will go on from here one day.  
Soon he must own his own time.  
He is good at medicine dancing.  
(He refers to the boy, William Whitehawk.)

WILLY:

Can I go to school then?  
I like school.

JENEDA:

Going on from my nest is natural, but not medicine dancing.  
(She scoffs)

He is my legacy to the world.  
Not yours brother, not yours.  
I may live the Navaho way, but I want him to drink in the  
whole world.

## 24 – CLOSE UP ON WILLIAM

The boy reacts to his mother's statement. He shouts to her and Uncle Johns as he runs from the scene.

WILLY:  
So, I am not here, am I?  
You talk like I am not here.  
So, I am not here.

## 25 – FULL SHOT OF THE THREE FIGURES IN SCENE

The boy runs from the tree line. POV between Jeneda and Uncle Johns.

JENEDA:  
(Exasperated,  
she stands her ground against Uncle JOHNS.  
She spits out her lines.)  
JOHNS, he is my boy,  
he is better at mathematics than medicine dancing.  
He stays in school.  
School is what I live to give him.  
If you really want to help, own his own time as you say,  
help him how to discover his own mind.  
Not your mind,  
not anyone else's mind,  
but . . . his.

## 26 – LONG SHOT ON THE DESERT

We see the vast desert from the eagle's POV. Closer in, Will is running, we see what was distress, change to his love of the moment of running. During the time the hawk/CAMERA passes him, the CAMERA passes the boy it tips up to a white sky. Through the sound of the wind, we hear Will's distant laughter.

## 27 – FADE IN FROM WHITE SKY

Warm light of lit candles inside of St. Stephen's cathedral, Budapest, the knave for the St. Rita. Ruth Magen is now sixteen. In partial shadow, she is silhouetted against the white statue. She prays in front of the iron gate protecting St. Rita. Next to Ruth, an old woman covered head to foot in black murmurs her prayers. Ruth is in a pale dress, her head covered with a printed scarf. Candles blaze in front of them. The sound level is a buzz, a drone of prayers from the main cathedral.

28 – CLOSE UP ON RUTH MAGEN AND OLD WOMAN  
DIALOGUE Spoken in Hungarian - Written subtitles:

OLD WOMAN:

(She appears at her wits end.  
Speaks under her breath.)

Endure, endure, forever  
endure.

It is so hard, so hard, St. Rita.

I'm about to break.

To endure this life feels like punishment.

The old woman crosses herself, sadly gets up and leaves frame. As she goes she pats Ruth's shoulder. Her action is not compassion but pity. Ruth reacts to woman as if she was touched with a chill. She returns her attention to the statue.

RUTH MAGEN

(Whispering to the Saint)

So, you see I don't know what to do.

I either make my father happy by going into the convent.

Or make my mother happy  
by going to live with Aunt Kadar, in Paris.

St. Rita, I'M STUCK.

Where am I in this.

Apa has always said he could see me  
in the white dress of a novice.

His smile so big.

Whenever Mutti hears him go on about the convent,  
she swats her apron down, her eyes go up.

She goes back to her kitchen.

Mutti says the Aunt Kadar would teach me to sew and  
tailor clothes

so I would have something to fall back upon,  
make money for my very own.

I do want something of my very own, St. Rita.

I wonder - is being a nun, forever?

I maybe - I'm -

I need your help.

I'm to talk with Mother Superior  
about entering the convent -

OFF CAMERA, we hear a commotion from the cathedral. Shouting interrupts Ruth's prayer, she rises moves toward the sound. She quickly returns and crosses herself in front of the saint. Her head scarf falls off.

29 – FULL SHOT

CAMERA SWEEPS cathedral's main nave, focused on smoke drifting down onto uncrowded pews. It frames a tapestry hanging near the front door. The tapestry is smoldering partially still afire, and is being stamped out by two nuns and a young priest in full vestment. The Mother Superior enters the scene.

MOTHER SUPERIOR:  
How did this get started?

30 – PAN from central cathedral TO CLOSE UP

Angle on action from POV center of church between two nuns, the priest at a distance left, and Ruth coming into view, right. CLOSING IN the young priest stooping down to retrieve a foot ball sized smoking incense brazier from behind the tapestry.

31 – CLOSE IN

Figures against tapestry. The priest fumbles with the burning embers using a handkerchief folded as a hot pad. He quickly reassembles the incense burner and brings to a proper gesture for swinging it side to side while walking and praying down the central isle.

PRIEST:  
I - I - .

(He leaves the nuns, moves down the isle.)

RUTH:  
(She blurts out to the Mother Superior, innocent of the congregation.)  
He dropped his flaming -  
(She searches for the word for the incense burner.)  
- purse.

32 – CAMERA PULLS BACK

Laughter bubbles up then erupts from the congregation. CAMERA retreats to show people turning around to see who called the burner a “purse”.

### 33 – FULL FRAME

The priest, red-faced, the two nuns pounding on the smoking tapestry as Ruth, without her head scarf suddenly appears in the center of the isle, pale like the statue of St. Rita, arms out, palms open asking for mercy from the Mother Superior for the embarrassment for inflaming the tittering congregation. Mother Superior leaves the nuns and takes Ruth by her ear. They exit the twittering throng while the priest mumbles prayers, steps forward sheepishly blessing everyone present. Guilty laughter subsides. FADE OUT on swaying smoking incense burner – gray smoke.

### 34 – FADE IN TO FULL SHOT ARIZONA HORIZON then down to

Shoelaces and running shoes on red earth track. CAMERA pans up to show Uncle Johns with Willy, eighteen years of age, at a reservation high-school. They are next to a concrete path that leads around a flagpole to the front steps of the modest high school. They are on a road that leads into the desert on one side of the school and also around the other side of the building. In front of the school a group of native people are hanging around a utility table. Anglo men wearing track warm-up clothing, golf shirts and caps. One of the men holds a stop-watch another a starting pistol. They sit on top of the table. Near by, a man stands apart, he wears a hooded sweat shirt with a University of Arizona Logo, his hands firmly planted into his sweatshirts pockets, his baseball cap also shows the U.A. Logo. Seven Navaho boys, in running gear warm-up in a circle. They are looking, gesturing for Willy to join them. On the steps of the high school students are drumming as two girls practice a dance at the bottom of the steps. The school's teachers stand, arms crossed, at the top of the stairs. Johns picks up the shoes and hands them to Willy.

UNCLE JOHNS:

(In Navaho - English subtitles)

I sage smoked these at dawn,  
they are blessed now.

You can go on and win your race.

Willy sits on the dusty ground, he forces on the shoes. Willy looks nervously back at the high school, those gathered. Quickly ties the shoes with a double knot.

WILLY:

You say that like you have given me permission to win.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
Not just me alone.  
All things have.  
Even your mother.  
Now go jump to it.

Willy runs off to join the waiting runners. The drumming from the high school increases in speed and volume.

35 – FULL SHOT

The CAMERA rises, hovers about 10 feet over Uncle Johns, it shows Willy meeting the young men in a circle and shows Uncle Johns as he turns his back to the crowd. Hiding his behavior out of sight of those at the High School, Johns reaches into a pouch at his waist, brings out a handful of gray ash. It sifts through his clenched hand and mixes with the wind.

36 – CLOSE UP

Johns' hand is gray from the ash against his colorful shirt. When the trickling airborne ash is gone, he slaps his hands together.

UNCLE JOHNS  
(In Navaho - English subtitles)  
You are as free as eagle, young man. OWN your time.

37 – FULL SHOT RUNNERS

Runners lining up along a crude chalk line. Drumming continues, The eight runners fidget at the line. Willy is in the middle of the pack. The Anglos at the end of the line position themselves as judges. The boys are bunch near the man with the starting pistol. The man in the sweatshirt with the University of Arizona logo on his cap whispers into the ear of the man with the stop watch. They seem to be sizing up Willy. Drumming continues in volume and speed. Drumming increases. Boys shakes themselves to get loose, they get into starting position.

38 – CLOSE UP

Willy's POV – we look down at his feet, he looks over at the feet of his rival's shoes next to him, then up at the boy's face who grins and gives Willy the finger. We hear drumming and Willy's heart BEAT

39 – FULL SHOT

The CAMERA focuses into the distance where the race will be run, it closes in on the road to the side of the high school. The sun is high and the sky clear. A dust devil spins in the distance.

#### 40 – CLOSE UP

Over the boy's shoulder, Willy looks back at Uncle Johns whose back is turned away. Sound of Uncle Johns chanting with drummers. Willy looks over at the man with the starting gun. Drumming continues. Willy looks down at his sweating palms, he wipes them on his loose fitting shorts. The starter's gun shop stops the drumming momentarily.

#### 41 – POV THE STARTING LINE

Backs of boys running into the distance, Willy still at starting line then races to catch up with them. Breathing and heart beats mix with drumming and chanting.

WILLY:

In Navaho - English subtitles.)

(To himself -under his breath.

Get a move on,  
where is your mind?

Jump.

#### 42 – CLOSE UP FOLLOWING RUNNERS Hand held CAMERA

Pack of boys running. Drums and chanting diminishes as the runners leave the high school. Panting and sweating, the boys shove and knock into each other to be first on the one man wide track through the bush. Willy closes in on the pack. He chooses to not be jostled by the hostility. He takes off along side the pack and zigzags around bushes and rocks – jumps tumbleweeds like hurdles. When he passes the pack of boys there is only one boy in front of Willy, his rival. The two boys settle into a steady pace. Boy in front looks back at Willy as if to wonder why he has not made and attempt to attack him. Their pace does not vary. We hear the mixed sounds of feet hitting soil, panting for breath the low rhythm of heartbeats.

#### 43 – CAMERA HOVERS ABOVE THE BOYS

Looking into the near distance, their path heads toward a thick tangle of shrub pine.

#### 44 – FULL SHOT Camera moves with boys



On the path running with the boys – they enter the sharp tangle of pines. We hear the branches strike them as they race along. Willy's rival swiftly turns and pushes Willy hard enough for him to fall into the tangle of underbrush. The boy races ahead leaving Willy to extricate himself. He has to tear his shirt to be free from the branches. Willy has been cut on his arm. He winces from his pain, the wound is bloody but not serious. He spits on his hand and forces pressure on his cut. Giving it no more attention and now at full speed he continues running to catch up with his rival.

45 – Camera HIGH ABOVE THE DESERT

Focused on the rivals running toward the back of the high school, the pack of boys straggling not too far behind. The CAMERA swoops in on the two leading boys.

46 – FULL SHOT

Will is right at the heels of his rival as they climb a rise near the back of the high school. Willy catches up to the boy, races along side. The boy tries to strike out at him, falls in his attempt and Willy races on.

47 – CAMERA POV WILLY AS HE RUNS TOWARD THE CAMERA.

The sound of the drummers grows in volume as we return to the people in front of the high school. We see Willy speed past spectators. He spreads his arms as he nears the starting line. Chanting has mixed with cheers and drumbeats. We see Willy pass arms wide through a chest high ribbon that has broken free and accompanies him past the judges, past the high school cheers that predominate the chanting. The din begins to fade. The CAMERA closes in on Willy's smile that fills his face as he continues his running at full speed. The CAMERA lifts from his face to the sky and we see the scene from a birds eye view swooping past the high school and the crowd of spectators into the desert vista. We are soaring high above the edge of the Grand Canyon. The sounds of the race mix with the rustling of wind through feathers.

48 – FADE TO NIGHT SKY AND MASSES OF STARS camera PANS DOWN TO

Sparks from a fire as they enter the frame along with wisps of smoke. Camera follows more smoke to fire. We see Willy sitting cross legged on the left side of the screen, Uncle Johns on the other side of screen sits on a rock. They are camping out overnight.

49 – CLOSE UP CAMERA WILLY OVER FIRE FROM UNCLE Johns' POV

WILLY:

(In Navaho - English subtitles.)  
I'm scared and happy together.  
I can't wait to get to school  
and I don't want to leave.  
I cannot look at mother's face,  
my heart aches when I see myself at college without her.

50 – CLOSE UP

CAMERA FACES UNCLE JOHNS OVER FIRE FROM WILLY'S POV.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
You have two hearts.

51 – CLOSE UP WILLY.

WILLY:  
It feels that way.

52 – Camera on both men in fire light

UNCLE JOHNS:  
You can come with me.  
I will hire you as one of my dancers.  
We perform in the center ring in Pendleton.  
Rodeo fans like you young bucks.

WILLY:  
No, no, Uncle JOHNS.  
I'll take my chances at University.  
They'll teach me lots of stuff and  
they enroll lots of girls.  
And I hear scholarship guys score.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
So, you are not so full of fear after all.

WILLY:  
No, no. I really need your help,  
Uncle JOHNS,  
cities are a no-man's-land.  
I need protection this time.  
Medicine.  
Big time.  
I have to hear when I'm supposed

to make the right move.  
But just not with the girls.  
Ok?

What can you make for me so I can call on it  
where ever I go?  
So I won't be alone.

53 – FULL SHOT Willy, Uncle Johns, fire between them.

A sliver of a moon is coming over the horizon. Uncle Johns looks over his shoulder at the moon. He puts a log on the fire. Embers scatter skyward.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
If we start now  
what we do tonight  
will grow like this moon.

WILLY:  
What should I do?

UNCLE JOHNS:  
Go to sleep and  
remember your dreams.  
I'll do the medicine.

Willy moves away from the fire and covers himself with a bed roll. Uncle Johns takes a medicine drum from the shadows by where he had been sitting and a bag with feathers, rattles and bags of herbs. He places them beside the fire. He sits near the fire and watches to see if the boy is watching. He gestures for the boy to close his eyes. Johns slowly starts drumming. We see the amount of wood on the fire and the size of the stack of wood and brush near by. The camera makes a three hundred and sixty degree path around the fire. The flames illuminate only a few feet beyond the sleeper and the seated figure.

55 – CAMERAPANS

We follow the fire up to the sparks that mix with the stars while Uncle Johns drums and chants. Willy's breathing mix with the old man's drone. The wind in the trees muffle a distant call of an owl. A bark of a dog in the distance disturbs the sleeper and he coughs. Johns' drumming is replaced with a rattle that keeps time with the rhythm of his heart BEAT The old shaman fans the smoke with large feathers then tosses them into the flames. The sparks flash a brighter color.

56 – POV of A soaring BIRD over the river in moonlight, SHADOWS MIX WITH THE REFLECTIONS OFF THE RIVER – MOONlight RIPPLES THE RIVER.

57 – FULL SHOT

We see that the fire has gone out only embers remain. Willy is sound asleep and Johns softly chants as if he is far away in thought. Uncle Johns stands then moves to other side of the fire, kneels while softly chanting over the sleeping Willy.

58 – CLOSE UP

The old man whispers into the ear of the sleeping boy.

UNCLE JOHNS:

(We hear him whisper in impeccable English)

When you feel a pressure to act,

Willy . . .

jump.

FROM FLICKERING FIRE LIGHT ON HIS FACE, FADE TO BLACK

59 – PARIS – POV ACTION ON CITY STREET IN WINTER.

Contrast of dark barren trees surrounded by wrought iron decorative fences. POV of bundled up woman walking fast on side walk, cars stream by. We hear a car crash into another, honking, CAMARA looks ahead at activity forming in street. Shouting.

Ruth Magen, increases her speed to reach accident. She is concerned to be of help. She is dressed in a winter coat and low heeled shoes, she carries a large shoulder bag. Two men are shouting at one another, one car has rear ended the other. The men are about to get into a fist fight, but one man sees Ruth, is caught by her gamin like innocence. The other fighter looks at her and they drop their argument to taunt her. One man makes a rude hand gesture, the other sticks his tongue out and wiggles it at her. The other man strikes him and they continue shouting at one another. Ruth hurries past the men, climbs nearby steps to a shop. She looks back disgusted at the fighting men and enters the establishment.

60 – FULL SHOT

Angle on interior of high end tailor's shop. A window onto the street overlooks the two men fighting down the street. Two shopkeepers are against the window looking out. The bell on the door rings, the couple twist to see Ruth enter shop. The woman moves to her position in front of shelves containing fabric in carefully display bolts of cloth. The man stays in the window's alcove.

RUTH MAGEN:

(In English.)

I'm to pick up the Kadar's order.

SHOPKEEPER 1:

One moment, please.

SHOPKEEPER 1 moves out of frame. RUTH moves to look out the window.

MAN, SHOPKEEPER 2, in the alcove turns to RUTH.

SHOPKEEPER 2:

That man was so very rude.

You look shaken, are you all right?

RUTH MAGEN:

(His concern for her confuses her.)

I almost expect that from most men.

Thank you for your consideration.

SHOPKEEPER 1:

(Returning with two large packages.)

Here you are.

SHOPKEEPER 2:

Those are quite heavy, shall I call you a car.

RUTH MAGEN:

No, I'll be fine.

Thank you.

(On exit, she turns back.)

I appreciate your kindness.

She pulls the door closed behind her.

61 – PARIS STREET

We see the door close behind Ruth on the door step, as she struggles with the two bulky packages and her large handbag.

There is action on the street as Ruth passes the still arguing men. The men take no notice of the young girl as she passes but a bystander gives the girl a wold whistle. Ruth gives him the finger.

#### 62 – PARIS STREET

Back at the gate to Balenziaga Fashion House, Ruth struggles with packages. She signs the gat keeper's book and enters the back door of the building.

#### 65 – INTERIOR OF FASHION HOUSE

Ruth descends stairs passing into hallways through workshops. She stops in front of a woman in a room lit from high windows that show light from street level.

AUNT KADAR:

You've made good time, my dear.  
Let's get to work.

She takes the packages from Ruth.

RUTH MAGEN:

Madam Kadar, may I sit for a moment,  
I need to collect myself.

AUNT KADAR:

Child, if I ever collected myself I wouldn't be here.  
Lets's get to work, here's the pattern.

She hands Ruth paper with a drawn pattern and the contents of one of the packages Ruth has brought. The women open it and set out the contents, as we hear the following dialogue.

AUNT KADAR:

This fabric is worth more than two months of your salary.  
Our rule here, is:  
the wearer of this gown  
must not notice that she is wearing a gown.  
Can you stitch this so it feels seamless?

RUTH MAGEN:

I'll do - I'll try.

AUNT KADAR:  
Don't try.  
Do the impossible - make it perfect,  
make art.  
He expects nothing less.

Ruth moves to a long table underneath the windows that showers light into the room. She unwraps a silver gray fabric and stretches it out upon the table, she then flings out the paper pattern over the cloth.

#### 64 – MONTAGE

We watch Ruth's face as she works, sweats, smiles from contentment, frowns at a problem, delights as we see her resolve her task – while the light changes, we notice the contrasts of time in the room as we see Ruth's progress marking the pattern on the cloth. She organizes the cutting so that the pieces of cloth are separated in a manner so we see the progression of Ruth's work. When Ruth begins to sew, the light from the high windows have left the room and we see Ruth hand stitching fabric in artificial light. Uncomfortable, she stretches in her chair, we watch her determination. She gets up to look out the window, she pulls up a chair to see outside, we notice bars over the window, hear her sigh. Disappointed, she returns to her hand stitching.

#### 65 – BIRDS EYE POV OVER THE GRAND CANYON

SPECIAL EFFECTS: We are gently soaring above the canyon, we witness the sun going down with the moon rise. It fades to darkness and stars as the rising moon goes down, then the sun rises till noon.

Soaring over the vast canyon continues as we hear: a phone's line tone, the sound of a number being punched in and a phone ringing. Voices over canyon scape birds POV.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
Uhhhh!

People talking, chanting in to music, background like Aparty is on going.

WILLY:  
(In English)

Uncle JOHNS are you and mother coming to my graduation?  
Or, not.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
You speak in English?  
I'm rehearsing.  
I can't understand you.  
What's that noise?

WILLY:  
I'm in the dorm.  
(He raises his tone)  
It just came out that way.  
English, I guess it's simpler.  
I don't talk in Navaho much here,  
I'm so busy with finals and all.  
Are you coming down to Tucson?  
I've a place where you and mother can stay.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
How's it going with your girl from Gray Hills?  
You are really serious aren't you?

WILLY:  
I've given up on girls.  
Besides, she and I . . .  
well . . . we've got an arrangement.  
I've been accepted for graduate studies in electrical engineering  
in Massachusetts.

BEAT

M.I.T.  
I can't afford any girl now.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
What is this "Electrical Engineering?"

WILLY:  
It is the study of how things work.

UNCLE JOHNS:



I guess that would help you explain the Navaho way.

WILLY:

(His voice not intended for the phone)

Oh, Jesus-God.

I don't want to go into this right now.

Continued POV birds eye view of canyon. Bird veers off showing blue sky.

66 – BLUE FADES TO WHITE

Camera backs up to reveal white fog through main cabin's window of Channel Ferry. Sound of vibration of engines straining against the surge of waves. Passengers stand against the windows peering into the fog holding tightly to the rails. A horn sounds. Ruth Magen sits demure center in a bank of empty seats. Dressed in jeans and parka, the chair next to her is filled with a large backpack, and shopping bag. She is drawing in a sketch book. People move about the cabin.

PASSENGER'S VOICE:

I doubt we'll get to see anything till we get into the harbor.  
The weather is socked in.

As Ruth overhears the passenger's voice, she looks up.

67 – POV BEHIND AND OVERLOOKING RUTH

We see the white windows in the immediate distance and what she is drawing. Pan down to Ruth's drawing, we see sketches of women in fashion poses. Stylized heads with hats. She flips to another page we watch her sketching St. Rita as the statue we have previously seen. She then folds the pad closed and puts the drawings into her backpack. She removes a packet of papers and puts that into her coat. We recognize her passport and a letter. She caresses the letter.

68 – MONTAGE as if in mist

An elderly well dressed man in a wheelchair, Ruth is on one knee beside him in a respectable pose listening carefully. We hear him as he speaks in a quite tone to the girl.

MAN IN WHEELCHAIR:

(French with English subtitles)

This commission from Tussaud's will cement your success.  
You go on as you have here and you will own  
your own house one day.

I'm investing in you my dear.  
You may pay me back by giving  
the same amount of money  
to a young person you value  
when you reach my age.

RUTH:  
Sir, I . . .

MAN IN WHEELCHAIR:  
Go.  
Go.

## 69 – ON THE FERRY

Focus to the letter in Ruth's hand.

Ruth puts the letter into her purse. Ruth stands and moves to the nearest window. She looks out then turns her back to the window looking toward her backpack.

Close up on Ruth's face, she blinks.

70 – MONTAGE OF IMAGES. We see the familiar room in the basement of the Balenziaga Fashion Salon. An elegant woman complementing Ruth on her work. The same room, same camera angle: each frame moves in time-line – we see Ruth she is in different clothes, different light, different time through each day. She has progressively shorter hair. Each time more hip than the last. She works on different dresses. Each dress is more impressive than the last.

Elegant woman designer:  
(In French with English subtitles.)  
I want you to come to work for me.

Ruth:  
Yes, Madam.  
I'd like that very much.

71 – SOUND OF WOMEN MURMURING. POV ON fashion model in center of the room. Ruth is draping fabric around the model upon directions from the elegant woman. Ruth makes a suggestion and drapes fabric in a more becoming shape.

CLOSE UP ON RUTH'S SMILE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT.

Elegant woman clasps her hands in approval.

72 – ONE YEAR LATER POV ON Ruth in a hug under the arm of the elegant woman addressing a group of men in fashionable suits.

Ruth stands away as men individually shake her hands, the elegant man in the wheel chair kisses her hand.

POV Ruth on the phone enthusiastically speaking in to receiver while the elegant woman in the background smiles approval.

RUTH:

(She speaks in Hungarian, subtitles in English)

Apa,

I've never been so happy.

I'm a designer now.

Ruth blushes from what she hears in response.

73 – BACK ON THE FERRY POV RUTH'S FACE. She blinks. She is in the inner deck of the ferry. CAMERA backs up to see Ruth, full figure, against the white window.

The fog behind the window dissolves and we see the brilliant blue sea and the white cliffs of Dover in the distance. Ruth does not move until A passenger catches her attention and points behind her. She turns around in amazement.

74 – POV RUTH WALKING TO OUTSIDE RAILING OF FERRY

Sounds of calling gulls, vibration of ferry, waves against bow of ship. The wind catches Ruth's hair, her eyes show tears from the wind. The image of the coast line meeting the sky and water – the almost perfect day, a perfect crossing. We hear her say, shouting into the wind:

RUTH MAGEN:

(Hungarian with English subtitles)

Oh! St. Rita – this I love.

I can be me now,

And not Balenziaga.

Ruth on deck of ferry entering busy harbor, birds hovering in the air near the girl. Her presence has become more alive, playful, happier in action. She al-

most dances in response to the activity of the rolling of the ferry, the mooring of the ferry, the birds, the sky and white cliffs fading into the distance of the intense blue sea. We see her arms wide as she spins on the deck.

POV FROM THE MAST OF THE SHIP DOWN ON RUTH, HER HEAD THROWN BACK.

RUTH MAGEN:

Ja. Ja. Yes.

POV OF RUTH AND SEAGULL.

The bird hovers on the wind near Ruth, she reacts to emulate flapping wings of a bird, frightened by the girl. The seagull flies away.

Ruth looks up at the bird soaring against the cliffs then into the sky.

CAMERA ON SKY. DIMINISHING CALLS OF BIRDS THAT SOUND HAUNTING, LONGING FOR SOMETHING.

BEAT

75 – SPECIAL EFFECTS

Following wiring, racing on as if we are riding the wire. Electrical noise. Switches, rings, beeps, dial tones. We speed past telephone pole, enter switch boxes, snippets of telephone conversations, Racing through circuits back to the wire – entering a larger cable. The camera speeds along the dips and high points from telephone pole to pole. It enters a building. Montage of passage from one point of change to another. We focus on the vibration of the sound and energy. More muffled conversations in many languages, We see a picture of the energy reflected within the screen of an oscilloscope. Camera backs up to reveal William Whitehawk tapping on the screen. He is twenty-eight years of age.

76 – POV ROOM TWO MEN IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK BACK ROOM.

William is focused on a particular circuit, with three wires, he pauses then quickly disconnects one wire speedily connects an alligator clip to another and then reverses wires and connects them. CAMERA shows hands appear as sped up motion.

WILLIAM WHITEHAWK:

It's working OK now.

TELECOM OPERATOR:

Well, you sure worked magic getting this back on line.  
Thanks.  
This makes me a happy man.

William removes alligator clips from a main terminal. He disconnects the small key pad wraps the wires around it and places it into a workman's bag of electrical equipment. He is about to leave the room.

WILLIAM:

Not magic, science, mathematics.  
I'm glad you're happy.

I'll be happy when I get back at the office, and get to work out the kinks on the circuit board for the video for a new cell phone.

Do you think it could be magic if I get home without getting wet?

Operator smiles as William opens an outer door. The night sky of London looks like rain.

TELECOM OPERATOR:

(Over his shoulder, calls out to William.)

What's a cell phone?

77 – WILLIAM IN A PARKING LOT ZIPPING UP HIS BLACK LEATHER RAIN GEAR.

He removes a helmet from the seat of a fast looking motorcycle. He gets on the bike, straps the helmet secure, adjusts his bag of electrical equipment over his shoulder, starts the motor and speeds off.

CITY STREETS WET FROM RAIN.

The motorcycle zips through traffic, banks sharply as it goes around a corner, screeches to a halt avoiding a pedestrian. We see the motorcycle follow the rider to a leafy neighborhood of row houses, follow the rider to a parked car in a driveway. The rider parks next to the building, next to two other parked motorcycles. He wraps a chain between the spokes of his rear wheel and a heavy pipe that runs from the ground to the second floor of the building.

THE RIDER ENTERS THE FRONT DOOR.

78 – INTERIOR

William removes his helmet as he ascends a staircase to a long hallway. We hear laughter coming from the flat's kitchen. We hear that a photograph is being taken and do not see who says, "Hold still, wait. I gotta, don't move, I got it. I got it."

As William reaches the top of the stairs a pretty young woman in black leather backs out of the kitchen. She bumps not William and they fall in a heap in the hallway. Surprised and hooting laughter comes from the kitchen.

CLOSE UP on pretty girl photographer attempting to disentangle herself from William who is amused and not helping. The girl is NOT amused. She senses William's physical chemistry.

POV INTO KITCHEN FROM FLOOR LEVEL (WILLIAM AND GIRLS EYE LINE).

A CLOCK IN THE WALL IN THE LIT KITCHEN SAYS IT IS 11 PM.

MEG AND ROB TAYLOR - MARRIED SCOTTISH COUPLE -  
FLAT MATES OF MUGO SAND - NIGERIAN DOCTOR IN  
RESIDENCE AT NEARBY HOSPITAL, THE THREE, FLAT  
MATES OF WILLIAM. ALSO AT THE TABLE IS JOAN GIL-  
LIAN, THIRTY-THREE, ALSO IN BLACK LEATHER, SHE  
WEARS HORN RIM EYEGLASSES, SHE IS PARTNERED  
WITH RACHEL NESS - THE PHOTOGRAPHER IN WILLIAM'S  
LAP. RACHEL HAD BEEN PHOTOGRAPHING THE SCENE.

RACHEL:

Will you kindly help me up.

WILLIAM:

I'm tempted.

But I kind of like it the way it is.

RACHEL:

Joan, give me a hand here, please. Will you.

Rob, please.

WILLIAM:

I was going to go to bed.

RACHEL:

Funny man.

SHE IS HELPED TO HER FEET BY ROB TAYLOR.

RACHEL:

Thanks Rob.

ROB TAYLOR:  
William meet Rachel, Rachel – William.  
That's Joan over there.

HE RAISES HIS EYE BROWS AS IF TO WARN WILLIAM  
Feeling peckish?  
Mugo made a stew.

WILLIAM:  
Thanks.

William attempts to shake Rachel's hand, but she has retreated to the table next to Joan. Rachel fiddles with her camera, looks back at William and takes a flash photo of William with Rob in the doorway. Rob smiles but William flinches a looks to Rachel as if she had just assaulted him.

WILLIAM:  
Sorry,  
I like the idea of coming home  
finding a pretty girl falling into my lap.

JOAN:  
I do too.  
Rachel IS spoken for,  
you got a problem with that?

MEG TAYLOR:  
Girls, girls.  
William, you go wash your hands.  
Mother Taylor runs a peaceful house.  
Mugo dish up a plate for William.

Mugo Sand smiles amusement at William's discomfort. William makes a sheepish gesture that he apologizes for making a social faux pas. All the people in the room laugh at William's charm. Everyone's smiles say that all is forgiven.

79 – WILLIAM'S ROOM

His bed is unmade. A large window has a shade partially drawn. A street light is showing a pattern against the opposite wall. William drops his work satchel and his helmet on the floor and falls into bed.

WILLIAM:  
(Navaho with English subtitles)

I'm a fool.  
These London girls are so,  
so different than on the Rez.

William's eyes search his room.

CAMERA TRACKS. There is a poster of Uncle Johns playing the Cal Palace with "Wild Bill Hickcock" – a photo of William in cap and gown with his mother and uncle. One of a pretty young Navaho woman holding an arm-load of books sits on his night stand, a London A to Z paperback book also on stand next to his bed. A Navaho basket filled with keys and spare change is by his door. A Gray Hills woven rug hangs on the wall over his bed. Letter and envelop, return address Jeneda Whitesides, box holder, Lee's Ferry, AZ. A bag of roasted pinion nuts in the shell on the same stand. Pinion shells are on the carpet between bed and window. The Television sits opposite the bed. Another door leads to the toilet.

A light is under the door. We hear toilet flush and water running. William shares a toilet with Mugo in the adjoining room.

MUGO SAND:  
(From behind the door  
in Nigerian with English subtitles  
to himself)  
That Lee, girl,  
said I have a fetching smile.

We hear Mugo's belly laugh off screen. William closes his eyes.

THE ROOM FADES TO BLACK.

80 – WE ARE IN WILLIAM'S MIND, DREAMING.

POV at the Grand Canyon's edge. Day for night, there is a blue cast to high contrast footage. We look to the empty sky. We search for someone along the ridge crest, anything that we can identify. We return to the canyon's edge close in. We see Willy Grown in Navaho shirt, short pants and running shoes. He looks down at what he wears, fingers his shirt. His face shows he feels something is out of place. We see the empty landscape adjoins the canyon. Willy fidgets to diffuse what is his tension. He looks over the edge into the Chasm. We see beads of sweat forming on his brow. We hear his voice, but do not see his lips move.

WILLY:



What am I doing here?  
I'm I about to fall?"

POV INTO THE CANYON, spires of canyon look as if a city scape. Charcoal shadows slice into the river's rippling edges.

POV WILLIAM STANDING AT THE CLIFFS EDGE as if from the inside of the canyon.

We see Willy staggering from the sensation of fear of falling. We hear voice over of Uncle Johns.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
Jump.

POV VAST DISTANCE AND SIDE OF CLIFF WHERE WILLIAM STANDS AS HE LEAPS INTO THE CHASM.

We see Willy's face.

First we see him against the background of sky and landscape with river in distance. Switching to William akimbo looking at himself with cliff edge and sky in background. Switching to river looming up as Willy's body falls toward ground. We focus on Willy's face, his terror, his hair pushed away from his face by the force of the wind. We back up to see Willy coming at the camera from above. His face changes to a sorrowful acceptance and we see his arms stretch wide as to embrace the inevitable. Like the imminent approach to the ribbon at the end of a race. Then –

WILLY:  
(In English, as in his head.)  
I can fly.

WE SEE WILLY soaring like an eagle.

He zooms through the canyon. Lifts to the horizon, soars against the dark blue sky. We see him in close up. He opens his mouth to scream out of joy We hear an eagle's screech. We see his surprise and delight. We hear his voice in an amazed whisper.

WILLIAM:  
(Slowly, contemplatively.)  
My form here  
is simply what that is.  
And, this thing is just what this is.

There is no meaning here -  
nor does it matter.  
At all.

William is in flight through the Grand Canyon.

Ambiguous forms are brought into clear focus. Water ripples over rocks. Turgid rolls from the force of the river.

Rocks appear as spires, cathedrals, and faces carved in rock mix with the out of focus charcoal dreamscape. William flying above and we see the shadow of an eagle passing over the earth, and reflected in the river. An eagle screams. We see a vast distance and see William in flight heading for the horizon. Williams's arms become wings. We see him reflected together with the shapes of the canyon's contours melting into rushing water until the black takes over the screen. The horizon shows a sliver of light, it is orange and grows to reveal a daybreak. The orange creeps into the canyon. We see william speed to escape the dawn. Until he is forced to slow down by the glare of the rising Arizona sun. He slows from his flight as an eagle into a racing man at full speed. He slows to the pace of running a long distant race, then trotting, he then is walking, bent over catching his breath as the day breaks. Willy wears running togs, He is panting from exertion along a path in St. James Park caught by the early morning mist of London.

BEAT

81 – POV ON A LARGE AMOUNT OF WHITE SILK THROWN OUT UPON A TABLE. Ripples of silk fill the screen. Back up to Ruth Magen's POV.

Tall windows in a clean but spare industrial work space cast light on sewing machines, cutting tables, and racks of fabric in rolls of white to ivory. Pay hues cos in value to white are in adjoining racks.

Ruth in a seamstress smock and pants stands over the table covered by the silk, while two young women are on either side. Ruth's companions are Joan Gilliam and Lee Makes-Peace.

Joan is the sharp, bespectacled woman we met in William's kitchen. Lee is a young black woman, Twenty-six. Cute and trendy. A large photograph of Princess Diana in her wedding dress is propped up on a ladder back chair near a dressing manikin on ariser in front of tall windows.

LEE:

How did you ever get the yardage we needed?

RUTH:

Takes hold of the fabric gives it to Lee to feel:  
The original for that dress will never be woven again.  
This silk will appear close enough to fit our purposes.

JOAN:

Expensive as it is,  
we can get as much as we'll ever want.  
We'll choose a heavier lining  
to give it the look of the original drape.

RUTH:

(To Joan)  
The veil?

JOAN:

On order.

We'll have it in a fortnight.  
Do you have any leads on the gloves.

RUTH:

Get Tussaud's to send over the arms and hands.  
My guess it would be best to fit them to their figure's  
pose.  
This is set to be an imposing presentation.  
It has to look like all the photographs we carry in our  
memories.  
Tussaud's isn't Disney Land and this dress won't move.

LEE:

I still think its spooky –  
kind of sacrilegious.  
So, loved she was.  
Exploited. And we . . .

RUTH:

Lee, honey.

Working along side us. This job.  
Your skills on the sewing machine.  
Together we will put food on your table  
and you'll sleep with a full belly.  
I have dreams for us.  
I want us to go on together for years.  
I'd like that for all of us.

RUTH SMILES AT LEE.

LEE:  
Let me at it.

We watch Joan straighten out the fabric on the table as Ruth places a paper pattern over the silk. Lee begins pinning paper to fabric. We see the three women work in harmony.

82 – POV NICHE IN WAX MUSEUM.

Painters faux finishing large doors as backdrop of two headless figures, male and female, stand undressed. Workmen and manager compare royal purple carpet samples to be placed under figures. A higher official arrives with helper. One helper removes male figure and moves female figure to center of niche. Official directs workmen to compress the width of the scene. Adjust undressed female form in center of finished scene.

CAMERA IS STEADY IN WIDE ANGLE OF ROOM OF TUSSAUD'S.

POV of the back of the princess's head in fixed area of frame. We will not see the features of the princess. Spot lights and officials in background behind figure as Ruth, Lee, and Joan arrange the dress on the manikin. Men in suits frown and smile in equal proportions. They mumble among themselves. Ruth and her girls look back at the men's animation.

JOAN:  
(Quietly to Ruth)  
They've got something up their sleeves.

RUTH:  
(Whispering)  
They're worried about money.  
They've got a huge investment riding here.  
Success and public approval  
or another slip into bad taste.

LEE:  
(Caressing the dress)  
This is so beautiful.  
I could cry.

RUTH:  
I can't afford to feel on edge.

OFFICIAL:  
(Voice lifted)  
Ms. Magen may we speak with you.

RUTH:  
(Acknowledges her friends worried faces, speaking up)  
Yes sir – coming.

We see the backs of the men part for Ruth to meet in quiet conversation with the official.

We see him shake his head. Ruth's posture deflates in what may be disappointment. She brightens and touches his arm, brings her mouth up to his lowered ear. She appears to whisper. His stiffness changes to arms crossed over his chest in judgment as he steps back, a skeptical look on his face.

We watch Ruth's determination as she comes back into close view of the camera.

Ruth fiddles with the head of the manikin and repositions the veil.

The girls stand back, watch with their surprise as Ruth continues to rearrange the figure. We watch this from over the shoulder of the manikin. The girls' amazed reactions.

FOCUS ON MEN'S FACES.

The official's eyes widen, he drops his stiff pose, then a warm smile of approval crosses his features.

LONG SHOT of Ruth kneeling, working to reposition the hem of the dress. We see the full figure representing Princess Diana. Ruth has the figure's face partially recognizable, covered by the veil. Ruth has separated the manikin's hands and spread them open each side of the pose. One holds the bouquet low. The pose, symmetrical, has the other palm open, much like the pose of St. Rita in supplication. We hear someone gasp.

BEAT

83 – POV OVER SHOULDER OF LEE STANDING LOOKING OUT OF A LONG WINDOW.

Two women descend stairs onto street. Mother and daughter, arm in arm, smiling. They look back up into the window wave to Lee in the window. Lee waves back.

Lee turns to face the camera in revealing the room.

Lee appears satisfied as she moves into a well lit white room with dressing mirrors.

A wedding dress is draped over a small settee. Small taboret with fitting items – Measuring tape, straight pins, safety pins, clothes pins, chalk pressure sensitive tape. A hallway leads to the corner of a desk where Ruth Magen sits writing into a day calendar. We follow Lee to stand in front of Ruth at the desk.

LEE:

I guess that's it for me today.

RUTH:

(Looking up from her work)

Thanks for staying over.

She's very happy.

Get on home.

I'll put the dress away and close up.

LEE:

Joan's birthday is Sunday.

Do you fancy going out for a drink with us Saturday night.

RUTH:

Perfect, I need a night out.

Help me choose a little something for her.

Will you?

LEE:

Three girls on the town.

I love it.

See you in the morning.

We can go shopping during lunch.

Ruth follows Lee to the door and locks it behind her. Through the window we see Lee descending the stairs over Ruth's shoulders. The street's lights glow in the early evening light.

Lee nearing bottom of stairs looks up to see and wave to Ruth in the second floor window.

At the head of the stairs, on an elegant shiny black door between white columns, we see a simple brass nameplate. Name plate clearly states. RUTH MAGEN – GOWNS. Door opens, Ruth's head appears, raises her voice to catch Lee's attention.

RUTH:

How about Black Friar's in Whitechapel.  
I'm taken by the contrast.

LEE:

(Giggling)

Ok. That will be just fine.  
But white and black again,  
you need some color in your life, girl.

Lee looking up at black door and at Ruth who smiles and waves to Lee. Ruth hesitates then closes the door.

84 – INKY BLACK PUDDLE REFLECTIONS OF WHITE LIGHT RIPPLING AS TWO MOTORBIKES SPLASH INTO IT.

CAMERA PANS UP to see the motorbikes zoom by, stop, park, and two figures pack their helmets into the seats of the bikes and enter a restaurant.

The contrast of this montage is so strong and sever that it hast to be filmed in high contrast black and white.T

85 – POV INSIDE THE BAR William Whitesides and Mugo Sand enter through an inner vestibule door of etched glass Victorian style.

The bar is packed with stylish theater going weekenders on holiday. The bar is upscale, old and fashionable. Candles in hurricane Chimneys are on each table, drinks sit on coasters with BlackFriar's Logo. Waiters move through the room dressed with black vests, formal ties, white shirts and long white aprons. They carry drinks and dishes of food on silver trays in front of William and Mugo as they make their way to the bar. The men are dressed in motoring black leather, wind and water gear. Their faces wet from their ride. They open their jackets to adapt to the temperature of the bar. Doing so they

reveal the bright color of their shirts. Mugo's Nigerian skin is contrasted with the green scrubs indicating his hospital residency. William's shirt is an out of place red soccer jersey. Both men look around sensing they are out of their element but having reached the bar shrug to accept their lot and engage the barkeep.

WILLIAM WHITEHAWK:  
Can we get some food this hour?

BARKEEP:  
The kitchen closes at midnight.  
You will have to wait for a table.  
We don't serve here at the bar.  
What may I get you?

MUGO:  
I'll have the Lager.

WILLIAM WHITEHAWK:  
Shandy, and I'd like a glass of water as well.

86 – POV OF CAMERA VIEWS IN BAR

William and Mugo turning to watch busy pub as barkeep goes about his business.

IN ON THE DINING ROOM

William scans the room. The noise/conversation level in the bar is quite high.

There are many people. We see his concern for exits, toilettes, entrances into the adjoining rooms. He watches parties at their tables, old, young, drunks, lovers, unusual antiques and brass that decorate the pub. People entering and parties leaving. Animated waiters at tables entertaining guests. He turns to see Mugo move to face the bar.

MUGO:  
Do you fancy a drink here  
then go on down the road for a bite to eat?  
What?

POV CAMERA focuses on the backs of the men over their shoulders. CLOSE IN.

Profiles of each man with background of well lit liquor bottles behind the bar.



WILLIAM WHITEHAWK:  
I'm ready to settle in tonight.  
I'd like to eat here and go home.  
Is that all right with you?

MUGO:  
Here's our drinks.  
(To the barkeep) Thanks.  
(To William ) Yah. That's fine.  
I'm working tomorrow anyway.

CAMERA ON WILLIAM STRETCHING

He notices a well dressed woman at nearby table looking over at him then she returns to her fashionable companion's conversation.

WILLIAM WHITEHAWK:  
(Quietly in a faux British accent referring to the room.)  
A bit of the posh if you ask me.

MUGO:  
(An amused grunt.)

87 – SPECIAL EFFECTS

WHILE POV CLOSE UP OF WILLIAM'S FACE.

A flicker of homesickness crosses his face. The sounds of the room decrease in volume. The tonal clarity of the of the ambient noise levels soften and muffle. CAMERA backs up to show waist to head image of William as he takes a slow deep breath. He turns away from Mugo. He notices a vacant table laid out with silverware and linen napkins set for two. A candle in a glass chimney flickers – its flame stays the same intensity of light its flicker slows down then halts any movement.

WILLIAM'S POV

He hones in on the flame which does not flicker in its close up.

The sound level is but a whisper to the static image of the flame of the candle. The energy of the room quickly returns to normal. The camera backs up. The flame returns to its natural flicker, CAMERA sweeps the room.

88 – THE TWO FRIENDS AT THE BAR.

MUGO:

Are you Ok?  
I kind of lost you there for a moment.

WILLIAM:  
I'm just tired, hungry.  
I'm fine.  
I just thought of something, it.  
It's - nothing.

He sips on his drink and turns his back to the room. He glances over at the same table with the candle.

89 – CAMERA SCANS ROOM

RUTH MAGEN, LEE, JOAN AND RACHEL ENTER PUB.

An animated waiter greets the girl's party and ushers them past the bar into an adjoining room. The girls are in High spirits. They remove their coats as they cross the room passing William and Mugo.

90 – POV FROM BEHIND BAR

WILLIAM FACING CAMERA AND MUGO'S BACK AS THE GIRLS PASS.

William is lost in thought, Mugo is attracted by Lee, who gives him a an enticing look that translates., "What – Oh. Hello there."

91 – SPECIAL EFFECTS

POV OF WILLIAM RETURNING

CLOSE UP ON THE TABLE FOR TWO AND THE CANDLE THAT IS SLIGHTLY OUT OF FOCUS AND MOVING IN SLOW MOTION.

WILLIAM:  
Under his breath.  
The flame is simply what it is.  
And, this out of the ordinary experience is just what it is.  
There is no meaning here  
– nor does it signify any . . .

92 – FULL SHOT

Ruth removes her white suit coat as she speaks to Joan as she passes William. We see other men in the pub turn to admire Ruth, who wears a simple

off the shoulders ivory dress. The lightest color in the room, Ruth doesn't notice William as she passes him. Her voice in relationship to the noise level of the room emulates the breathy sound of wind in trees. We have heard this noise like the whispers of wings of a hawk when William appeared flying in Navaho Land.

BEAT

MUGO:

Are you sure you are all right?

You lost it again.

Do you want to go now?

WILLIAM:

I could swear I heard a bird fly by.

MUGO:

You did.

Four of them, they just walked into the back room.

I recognized two of them.

What do you mean fly by.

Are you wiggling out on me?

WILLIAM:

No.

I feel something.

Like back home when I'd get the call.

MUGO:

Call?

WILLIAM:

Intuition,

anticipation,

like when you know

when the phone rings before it rings.

A call.

MUGO:

Right, like,

"You know something is happening but you don't know what it is.

(He sings.) Do you Mr. JONES?"

WILLIAM:  
(In good humor)  
Right.

93 – QUICK flash back of Uncle Johns against the evening backdrop of the Arizona desert, William and Johns around a fire sending sparkling debris into the air.

94 – WILLIAM AND MUGO LEANING AGAINST THE BAR.

The pub is busy as before.

WILLIAM:  
I'm going to walk about a bit.  
Maybe get this kink out.  
Get my blood moving.  
I'll ask a waiter to get us a table.

MUGO:  
Sure.

95 – POV OF MUGO WATCHING WILLIAM

William moves away to examine an old stone heating stove. William catches the attention of a passing waiter and engages him in conversation. William gestures over to camera/Mugo.

96 – MUGO AT BAR

HIS RECOGNITION TO WAITER AND WILLIAM.

MUGO:  
(Quietly to himself.)  
A good man, but at times – a bit spooky.

MUGO'S SMILE OF WELCOME SPEAKS OF HIS AFFECTION AS WILLIAM JOINS HIM AT BAR. We follow them.

WILLIAM:  
A good man,  
at times – a bit spooky?

97 – BAR

William and Mugo gather drinks and follow the waiter across the room.

98 – CLOSE UP WILLIAM'S FACE.

He is surprised as all the tables they pass have candles with flames that have stopped in suspended animation. Time has stopped.

#### 99 – HALLWAY

Camera telescopes down the hall into a well lit dining room. Ruth Magen and party are in conversation at a table next to one the that the waiter leads William and Mugo. We see the women look up to see the waiter, Mugo and William hover over that table. Lee gives Mugo a pert smile. Joan and Rachel Moss return their conversation with Ruth as Joan looks up. We see her questioning her memory as Mugo and William take their seats at the adjoining table. She shakes a question out of her mind and returns to her conversation with Ruth and Rachel at their table.

#### 100 – THE WAITER OFFERS MENUS TO THE MEN

He removes unnecessary table ware from their table. The candle on Williams table is static. Mugo is looking over at Lee. William is fixed on the unflinching flame.

#### 101 – MONTAGE WAITER COMING WITH FOOD.

The women gaily talk among themselves. William is disquieted by the distorted and warped sound level we hear of the activity in the pub, and the static flames. Ruth nervously fidgets with the gold chain around her neck, wrapping her finger around an around it then releasing it. Then wrapping her finger again as if compulsively involved in the conversation but would prefer to be elsewhere. William mechanically eats. Joan and her friend are obvious lovers. Close up on Mugo smiling, switching to light flashing in Lee's eyes. We see Ruth's slight aggravation at Lee for being brash by flirting with Mugo at the next table. Ruth gives over to be caught by the light from the candle on her table, the pattern of the wallpaper – a fold of her linen napkin. Ruth engages Joan's friend in conversation by asking about her photo shoot's current assignment. William's face as he listens to Ruth's voice as he hears the wind in Arizona desert and the feathers of a hawk flying as it passes above his head.

#### 102 – CLOSE UP ON RUTH'S FACE

Her reaction upon seeing William standing over her table, we back up to see the table with William standing before the four women, in front of Ruth.

#### 103 – CLOSE UP ON RUTH FROM WILLIAM'S STANDING POV.

She stops fiddling with the chain around her neck stops holds it poised.

104 – CAMERA BACKS UP TO SHOW BOTH TABLES, WILLIAM IS STANDING.

Mugo's face reveals he is dumbfounded at William's behavior. Lee catches Mugo's eye. She places her hand over her mouth to suppress her surprise but reveals delight at the possibility of a conversation with Mugo. Ruth has stopped all motion. William is immovable. Joan and her friend halt their conversation and Joan brightens in recognition.

JOAN:

I remember you.

Don't you and your friend live with the Taylor's  
on Lushington Road.

I used to teach with Rob before he married Meg.  
I met you at their house on a Bank Holiday last spring,  
when was that?  
You're Billy a - a -

WILLIAM:

(still slightly in a dream state)

Right, yes, I recall you, and your friend.  
(He nods recognition, but returns his focus to Ruth.)  
Whitehawk, William Whitehawk.

Mugo has brightened at the prospect of being drawn into the next table, his impetus is Lee.

MUGO:

Right, Joan and Rachel.  
It is Rachel isn't it?

RACHEL:

You've a memory there.

MUGO:

I'm a doc, got to keep on my toes.  
Bedside manner you know.  
(He catches Lee's eye.)

CAMERA CATCHES LEE WHO IS GRINNING EAR TO EAR AT HEARING THIS.

JOAN:

(Feeling expansive to both men.)  
It's my birthday bash.

Come join us.

MUGO:

Thanks, I'm Mugo Sand,  
third year residency at West End.  
(In an aside to Lee.) I was born in Nigeria.

LEE:

Lee Makes-Peace, it's hyphenated, Birmingham.

JOAN:

This is my boss, Ruth Magen.  
Remember that name, boys.  
Ruth is on the road to fame and fortune.  
Ruth watch yourself,  
Billy Whitehawk is a charmer.  
(To William.)  
I'll bet you even have a reputation.

WILLIAM:

(Still standing)  
Now where did you get that idea.  
(He shyly smiles at Ruth.)

William pulls his chair around and sits next to Ruth who has not moved, save for turning her head toward William. Mugo takes his chair and happily faces Lee.

MONTAGE – the table and the playful conversations between Joan and Rachel, Mugo and Lee.

Ruth has quit the nervous fiddling with the chain and makes feeble attempts to join in the conversation. William is silent but attentive. At times the couple are silent together. Mugo gets up and leaves the table, Lee, Joan and Rachel are in a huddle talking about him. Mugo returns and offers to buy the table a round. He again leaves for the bar, Lee gets up and delighted trots after him. Rachel follows and later returns with the waiter, Mugo and Lee. The waiter presents a complementary desert to Joan with a single candle. Champagne cork pops. Toast to Joan, kisses on the mouth with Rachel. Ruth's little-girl-lost smile. William's steady attention on Ruth. We see all characters in playful motion save for William and Ruth who are static, seemingly frozen in their places. In time Ruth returns to fiddling with her gold chain. Slowly the couple is edited from the conversation as the other members at the table

get involved in partying and drift away into the adjoining bar. William is aware of the candles in the room behaving in slow motion. Ruth tries to escape William's gaze by focusing on the motion of the white fabric of the aprons of the busy waiters. Suddenly her finger is firmly caught in her chain. She strikes a sophisticated pose to avoid suspicion of being caught. CAMERA frames them close and personal. Background images of bar appears in slow motion.

RUTH:

(her voice in a hush.)

So is this persistence in silence  
one method of disarming women  
and make them fall in love with you?

WILLIAM:

Just because I'm not talkative doesn't mean I'm silent.  
Maybe I don't know what to say.  
And, who says women fall in love with me.

RUTH:

Well, that's what having a reputation means.

WILLIAM:

So, how does it feel?  
Being famous, I mean.

RUTH:

Well, that's just some story Joan told you,  
because I don't get . . .  
Well it is just a story

WILLIAM:

Oh! Joan tells stories?

RUTH:

You're not making this very easy.

WILLIAM:

You like men that are easy?

RUTH:

You are twisting words,  
turning things around to make me think things your way.  
Confuse me so that I don't know what



is happening to us.  
I do speak English

WILLIAM:  
What is happening to us?

RUTH:  
I -  
(She finally acknowledges her finger is firmly caught in  
the chain.)

WILLIAM:  
Let me help you.  
(He gently takes her hand and holds it firmly  
as his other hand carefully uncoils the chain.)  
Just like a young hawk caught in a net.  
(He speaks as if remembering a previous experience.)  
The feeling of being free  
comes with the cost of leaving  
those that freed you.  
(He keeps hold of her freed hand, gently holds it in both of his.)  
I want you to call me Will.  
That's what my real family calls me.

RUTH:  
I'm not going home with you.

WILLIAM:  
I know that.

RUTH:  
I think it's time for me to leave.

WILLIAM:  
Yes, I think that is wise.  
This has been an important day.

RUTH:  
You do have a charming nerve about you.

WILLIAM:  
And you,  
are perfectly capable of making up your own mind.

RUTH:

You are amazing.  
Have you ever fallen in love?

WILLIAM:  
Many times.

RUTH:  
(She appears impressed with his honesty.)  
Really.

WILLIAM:  
But, considering the importance of my heart,  
I have never, ever – jumped.

105 – Close up on Ruth's face an amusement appears, her expression changes to a sweet wonder. CAMERA back up to reveal Ruth in her ivory dress central of festooned in the formerly somber pub that now is filled with light and color. FADES

106 – TO BRIGHT SUN LIGHT through doorway, silhouette of Uncle Johns on cell phone.

107 – QUICK CUT to night light in Willy's bedroom. Willy on edge of disheveled bed on his cell phone, window behind him shows night scene under full moon in London.

WILLIAM:  
I've met her.  
She's the one.

We know it is hot. Uncle Johns is leaning against a door jam. He uses his hat to fan a breeze on his face. We see into the room from outside on a shaded porch. The red desert appears in a window behind Uncle Johns.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
Why tell me?  
Tell your mother.  
She's not English is she?

WE ARE BACK IN THE LONDON NIGHT IN WILLIAM'S ROOM

WILLIAM:  
No, Uncle JOHNS, no.  
She's Hungarian.

CAMERA ON UNCLE JOHNS SHOEING A PUPPY ON TO THE PORCH  
WHILE STILL ON PHONE.

UNCLE JOHNS:

She sounds like she might be skinny.

What about the girl from Gray Hills?

Are you honorable with her?

Your mother told me . . .

(BEAT, he listens to the silence at the end of the line.)

Ah-Ha! You're not sleeping.

Can't think straight.

Right?

108 – CLOSE UP OF WILLY'S FACE

WILLIAM:

The girl from Gray Hills rejected me, OK?

She had my baby but it's over, . She wants to raise it.

She doesn't want to see me anymore.

Mother says to wait.

She is a little girl – more than a year now.

BEAT

Gotta move on.

Ruth moves my heart.

BEAT

Not sleeping?

Can't think straight?

Uncle, you are right on.

WE HEAR THROUGH WILLY'S PHONE.

UNCLE JOHNS:

You are under a curse.

WE SEE WILLY'S CONFUSED REACTION.

109 – FAMILIAR KITCHEN IN LONDON FLAT

Early evening, Willy stares into his tea cup. He at a table with Meg looking up at Mugo, who is on a wall phone.

WILLIAM:

She didn't answer my message

yesterday nor the day before.

MUGO:

(He speaks into phone.)

Lee, great.

Lee do you recall me,

I was with William.

Yes, Mugo, we met . . .

BEAT

Great, great.

I remember how much you said you liked Tandoori.

Would you like to go out to dinner Friday?

And if you fancy a turn about Leicester Square,  
maybe take in a movie?

PAUSE

Mugo squirms - looks back at the table. Willy looks up catches his eye. Mugo looks at Meg. Meg's gesture suggests support. Mugo looks to ceiling he abruptly returns his attention to Lee's voice in receiver.

Super, Saturday is fine.

Really fine.

Great.

I'll call round about 7:30.

BEAT

Great.

Oh! My regards to Joan and Rachel,  
Ruth too.

I had fun last weekend.

(He lights up at her response.)

Great, I look forward to it.

(He hangs up the phone.)

WILLIAM:

Don't be so damn happy.

MEG TAYLOR:

You should bring her round for a . . .

(Meg brings her thumb to her chest.)

"Mom like" sizing up.

MUGO:

Maybe after I find out how much she weighs.

I'll take some measurements.

Catch a feel of a pulse or two.

WILLIAM:  
(Moans)

MUGO:  
(To Willy.)

She can't go out Friday night  
'cause she's working late at the shop  
with Joan, and I might add,  
– my soulful eyed Native American –  
Ruth.

Friday night man, Friday night.

You have a phone.

Let your fingers do some walking.

110 – WILLY'S FACE AS MUGO'S MESSAGE SINKS IN.

111 – RUTH MAGEN'S WORK ROOM. RUTH, CROSSED ARMS, LEANS  
AGAINST A CUTTING TABLE AS LEE HANGS UP PHONE.

LEE:

Umm, umm, umm, umm, um.

That man is just so fine.

(She sees Ruth watching her reaction.)

So what about your little conquest from that evening?

I heard his message on the machine.

Straight to the point.

"I'd like to see you again?"

Where are you two going?

RUTH:

(Stiffening, she readjusts fabric on table.)

I've got too much work to do.

I didn't return his calls.

LEE:

Calls.

I only heard the one.

RUTH:

I –

BEAT

LEE:  
Well, my man there,  
he and I, we got us a date.  
I am going to size that boy up one side  
and down the other.  
And, I don't wanna get home until morning.  
Umm, umm, umm, umm, um.

RUTH:  
Lee, now just be careful.

LEE:  
Now Ruth, you just get risky.

112 – NEXT DAY FRONT ROOM OF RUTH MAGEN'S SHOP.

LEE, RUTH AND JOAN ARE STANDING HAVING COFFEE. THEY LEAN  
OVER DESK LOOKING AT FASHION MAGAZINE.

LEE:  
He is such a gentle man.  
I didn't know what to do with myself.  
So attentive and charming. I just -  
(She wiggles.)

JOAN:  
He didn't touch you?

LEE:  
I didn't say that.  
I said he was  
(She rolls her eyes in pleasure.)  
gentle.

RUTH:  
(With a chill to her voice.)  
Are you satisfied now?

LEE:  
Hell no! I want more,  
more.  
Next time I want to bypass dinner.

THREE WOMEN TOGETHER:  
(Laughter,

Ruth lags behind but joins in  
with them gladly.  
Phone rings, Ruth picks it up.)

RUTH:  
Studio.  
Well,  
BEAT

yes, you did catch me.  
I - er, well no, I've never been there.  
Well, I would like to see it.  
I just.

(She looks to her friends who gesture - who?

She turns her back to them.)

I am kind of busy - back by five?

Well,

(Lee gets in Ruth's line of sight  
and vigorously nods in the affirmative.)

Ok, fine.

Lunch and the London Eye.

Well, William - fine.

I'll see you here at one.

Bye now.

Oh! Bye.

Bye.

(Because of his perseverance,  
she bends in an effort  
to pull the phone from her ear)

LEE:  
Brilliant.

GIRLS TOAST RUTH WITH THEIR COFFEE CUPS.

113 - NEXT DAY Ruth stands in front of dressing mirror in show room.

She fidgets with gold chain around her neck until she sees her nervous-  
ness. Joan enters carrying a coat.

JOAN:  
Steamed and pressed.  
Is he late?

RUTH:  
What time is it?

FRONT DOOR BELL RINGS.

JOAN:  
(Urgently)  
Now, sweetie – listen here,  
I know how hard you worked getting this business up  
and your career is on an amazing swing.  
So, just don't throw it all for some guy  
who more than likely  
simply wants a piece of tail.

DOOR BELL RINGS AGAIN.

JOAN:  
I'm not saying don't have any fun.  
Just keep your distance.  
Or what the fuck, use him.  
Just don't get involved.

RUTH MOVES TO THEN OPENS THE DOOR.

114 – DOOR WAY

Wis in a long coat and holds an umbrella for them. A taxi is at the foot of the stairs. He hands Ruth a ceremonial feather

WILLY:  
It's my Uncle's.

POV RUTH'S FACE.

RUTH:  
What a surprise.  
I like this. Thank you.

She sticks it in the waste band of her dress, feather point down. Willy's face approves: she did the right move. Ruth gives him a quick smile as they descend toward the taxi.

115 – MONTAGE

LUNCH FUMBLING WITH COATS OVER BACKS OF CHAIRS. WINE OR WATER. NAPKINS FALLING OFF LAPS. NOISE IN RESTAURANT, HALTING



CONVERSATION DURING LUNCH. WILLY HOLDS DOOR OPEN FOR RUTH BUT ACCIDENTALLY LETS DOOR GO FREE AND IT HITS RUTH FROM BEHIND. WALKING TOGETHER WILLY IN APOLOGY.

LONDON EYE IN DISTANCE. DOWN A LONG FLIGHT OF STONE STAIRS FROM BRIDGE. WILLY TAKES RUTH'S HAND TO SUPPORT HER IN THEIR DESCENT. RUTH'S FACE AS SHE SEES THE SCALE OF THE HUGE FERRIS WHEEL. COUPLES CLOSE TOGETHER IN THE BOTTOM MOST CAR. IT JERKS IN STARTS AND RUTH FALLS INTO WILLY. SHE FLINCHES TO GET AWAY AND HE SMILES. THE COUPLE IN CLOSE QUARTERS, THE CITY SCAPE GLIDES BY AS WE REACH TOP OF WHEEL. A YOUNG COUPLE IN THE SAME CAR ARE MAKING OUT THE WHOLE TIME. THAMES FROM POV CAR. LONDON EYE FROM BIG BEN. CARS AND TRAFFIC ON OTHER SHORE OF THAMES. BARGES, TOURIST BOATS GOING BY. PEOPLE IN OTHER CARS. WRAPPED UP AGAINST THE COLD AND RAIN. OTHER LOVERS OF ALL AGES AND SEXUAL PREFERENCES. RUTH PENSIVE AS THEY EXIT CARRIAGE AT BOTTOM OF LONDON EYE. WILLY CHECKING HIS WATCH AS HE TRIES TO SEE HOW RUTH HAS REACTED TO THE EXPERIENCE. HOLDS UMBRELLA AS SHE READJUSTS HER COAT AGAINST THE COLD. WILLY SAYS SOMETHING UNDER THE NOISE OFF THE RIVER AND RUTH SMILES LIKE IT WAS FUNNY. WE SEE THEM WALKING FROM BEHIND THE COUPLE. FIRST AWAY FROM ONE ANOTHER UNDER THE UMBRELLA. THEN CLOSER AS RUTH HAS SUPPORTED HERSELF WHILE SHE RE-FITS HER HIGH HEEL. WILLY PLACING HER ARM AROUND HIS. THE LIGHT GETTING DIMMER. BIG BEN STRIKING FIVE. TRAFFIC JAM AND BOBBIES.

116 – RUTH MAGEN'S STORE IN THE FOLLOWING MORNING

RUTH AND LEE ON EITHER EDGE OF SCREEN.

LEE:

Well?

RUTH:

(She shrugs.)

117 – LATER IN DAY

JOAN IS DRESSING MODEL AND RACHEL IS TAKING A LIGHT METER READING TO PHOTOGRAPH THE MODEL. RUTH IS CROSS ARMED, OPPOSITE SIDE OF SCREEN FROM JOAN, MODEL AND PHOTOGRAPHER.

JOAN:

Well?

RUTH:

(She shakes her head as to dismiss the questions.)

RACHEL:

That look's worth a thousand words.

But, which thousand?

118 – WILLY WAITING PATIENTLY AT BLACK FRONT DOOR OF RUTH MARGEN'S. EVENING.

RUTH OPENS DOOR TURNS OFF LIGHT AND PULLS DOOR CLOSED BEHIND HER. SHE WAITS FOR THE CLICK OF THE LOCK. SHE TURNS TO WILLY AND GIVES HIM A SWEET SMILE.

119 – COUPLE WALKING ARM AND ARM ALONG THAMES

MONTAGE - DUSK CHANGES TO EVENING AND LIGHTS ILLUMINATE THE SKY SCAPE. THEY STOP AT A NEWS AND FLOWER KIOSK. RUTH HAS TO THUMB THROUGH A NEW "BRIDES" MAGAZINE. SHE POINTS TO AN ADVERTISEMENT. WILLIAM RESPONDS TO HER ENTHUSIASM. SHE PUTS THE MAGAZINE BACK. THEY WALK AWAY. THE ELDERLY NEWS SELLER CALLS TO WILLIAM WHO RETURNS TO THE MAN. THE MAN WHISPERS TO WILLIAM AND HANDS HIM A ROSE. WILLIAM CATCHES UP WITH RUTH. HE HANDS HER THE ROSE. COUPLE GETS CLOSER AND CLOSER TO ONE ANOTHER THROUGH CHANGES OF LIGHT OF EVENING FINALLY HOLDING ON TO ONE ANOTHER.

THEY DUCK INTO SMALL PUB. MUSIC IS PLAYING WITH THE SEDUCTIVE VOICE OF SEAL. CLOSE UP OF PROFILES, RUTH HOLDS WINE GLASS IN BOTH HANDS. WILLY HAS WATER WITH A LEMON WEDGE. HE TAKES THE LEMON OUT OF HIS GLASS OF WATER. HE TAKES THE ROSE FROM RUTH AND STICKS IT IN HIS GLASS. WE CAN SEE SHE IS AMUSED BY HIS EFFORT. THEIR HANDS TOUCH. THEY SMILE AND HE STROKES HER FACE IN PLAY THEN IN AFFECTION. GREAT CHEMISTRY BETWEEN ACTORS. LEAVING PUB, WET STREETS, THEY GET IN CAB. WE SEE THEM CLIMB STAIRS TO DOOR. RUTH OPENS IT WITH A READY KEY AND INVITES HIM INTO VESTIBULE. SHE LEANS AGAINST HER FRONT DOOR JUST UNLOCKED IN THE FULLY LIT ROOM, HER SMILE REFLECTS HER COOL. WILLY LOWERS HIS HEAD TO KISS RUTH ON THE CHEEK. WE SEE HIS FACE AS WE SEE HER FACE HELD IN DETERMINATION. HIS FACE TELLS US SHE HAS JUST GRABBED AND IS

HOLDING ON TO HIS COCK. SHE REACHES HER HEAD UP TO KISS HIM DEEPLY ON THE MOUTH. HE IS ROCKED FORWARD PUSHING HER AGAINST THE DOOR. THERE IS A SWIFT RUSH INTO THE APARTMENT. CLOTHES ARE DISCARDED AND THE COUPLE FUMBLE ALL OVER ONE ANOTHER TO TOUCH AND BE TOUCHED. FALLING ONTO THE BED, WE SEE SOME FLUFFY PILLOWS BEING THROWN AWAY FROM THE BED AND HITTING THE WALL AND MAKING A WINDOW COVERING PART SHOWING A STREET LAMP. POV ON MIRROR OF MAKE UP TABLE WITH STATUE OF BLESSED VIRGIN, HER HANDS HELD WIDE IN SUPPLICATION. SHE IS DRAPED WITH A ROSARY. THE MIRROR, WITH VIRGIN, REFLECTS COUPLE IN BED ACTIVE IN HOT AND SEARING NAKED WILD ABANDONED GRATUITOUS SEX.

120 – POV OF WINDOW SHOWING MORNING STREET LAMP NOT LIT.

CAMERA BACKS UP TO SHOW BED. WILLY HALF NAKED SITTING ON EDGE OF BED. RUTH DRESSED COMBED AND READY FOR WORK.

RUTH:

You can let yourself out.

That was fun.

Call me again sometime.

SHE EXITS SCREEN.

WILLIAM:

(In the same pose on bed as when talking with Uncle JOHNS.

Willy's head follows after her exit, his is distressed.

Ruth has left the rose behind.)

You are breaking my heart.

120 – RUTH'S STUDIO. RUTH APPEARS TOTALLY FOCUSED, BUSY AT WORK.

CAMERA BACKS UP WE LOOK OVER THE SHOULDER OF LEE.

LEE:

You did what?

RUTH:

I simply took control of the situation.

I don't want to get involved.

LEE:

Well, honey, you are. Big time.

You just can't treat people like that.  
From what Mugo tells me that boy's  
head over heels for you.

LEE:

You've got some serious praying to do to get past this one, girl.  
Is this what they mean calling someone  
a "good catholic girl."  
Good 'cause she can say some Hail Mary's on Saturday  
to be ready for communion on Sunday and back walking  
the street on Monday?  
What's your precious St. Rita's spin  
on meaningless sex?

RUTH:

That's terrible Lee.  
I like him, he's very considerate,  
but he's been with so many women.  
No - he's not the kind of man I could settle -

LEE:

This is the pot or the kettle speaking?

121 – DRESSING ROOM RUTH MAGEN'S

JOAN AND RACHEL WITH RUTH. RACHEL IS PHOTOGRAPHING FASHION MODEL IN STUNNING WHITE WEDDING GOWN, VEIL, GLOVES AND BOUQUET. RUTH AND JOAN FUSSING WITH FOLDS AND PLACEMENT OF GOWN AND GIRL ON RISER.

JOAN:

Well I was wrong to tell you to use him.  
I think he's a good guy,  
not that I put aside he is one of the most exotic men I've  
ever seen.  
From what I know so far I'd have him as Apal.

RUTH:

I don't see how I can face him.

JOAN:

I'm not saying walk down the flower strewn isle.  
You're both adults, get over it.  
Enjoy one another.

Sorry,  
(She throws her hands up in defeat.)  
I put my foot in it the last time.  
I've no room to talk.

RACHEL:  
Ruth, this dress, it is perfect,  
like a novice nun, but so earthy.  
Well I know none of us could ever really wear this pure  
white a gown.  
But I think I could and I believe I would if I felt that pain-  
fully sweet,  
committed love for someone.  
(To the model.)  
Move your head to the left dearie.

122 – POV CLOSE UP OF RUTH'S FACE WINCING, SHE TURNS HER FACE FROM WHAT SHE SEES.

123 – INTERIOR OF ST. STEPHEN'S CATHEDRAL IN BUDAPEST

CAMERA TAKES IN STAINED GLASS LIT INTERIOR THEN SWEEPS THE PRAYERFUL CONGREGATION. IT CLOSES IN ON A SANCTUARY, THE SHRINE TO ST. RITA. THE WHITE STATUE LOOMS OVER THE SCENE. WE SEE THE BACKS OF TWO FIGURES, RUTH MAGEN'S PARENTS, AND PRAYING IN FRONT OF CANDLE LIT SHRINE, RUTH IS ON HER KNEES.

124 – POV STATUE OF ST. RITA'S VIEW OF RUTH LOOKING UP.

RUTH'S FACE SHOWS DISTRESS. WE SEE HER PARENTS IN THE BACKGROUND.

THEIR FACES SHOW CONCERN, RUTH'S MOTHER LEANS INTO HER HUSBAND. THEY FOCUS ON RUTH AT PRAYER.

125 – CLOSE UP OF RUTH'S FACE

HER LIPS MOVE WE HEAR ONLY THE SOUND IN THE CHURCH, HER FACE IS FURROWED FROM HER STRESS.

126 – BUSY SINGLES BAR IN LONDON

LEE, MUGO AND WILLY WIND THEIR WAY THROUGH ACTIVE PATRONS AND TAKE STOOLS AT BAR. WILLY IS BETWEEN MUGO AND LEE. LEE AND MUGO ARE ANIMATED, WILLY IS STONE FACED. MUGO ORDERS,

WE CANNOT DISTINGUISH DIALOGUE BECAUSE OF NOISE LEVEL OF PUB. LEE ENJOYS HERSELF LOOKING AROUND. AN ATTRACTIVE GIRL COMES UP BETWEEN WILLY AND MUGO. SHE IS A FARRAH FAWSETT BLOND GIRL, SHE TRIES TO PUT A MAKE ON WILLY. WE SEE LEE STAND BY WILLY'S SIDE BEING PROTECTIVE AND PUTS ON THE BODY LANGUAGE AND FACE TO INTIMIDATE GIRL. THE GIRL GETS THE MESSAGE AND DEPARTS. MUGO IS THOROUGHLY ENTERTAINED. WILLY HAS LITTLE ENERGY.

127 – POV OF RUTH IN BUDAPEST - HER PARENTS'S SIMPLE DINING ROOM, WINTER MORNING.

RUTH STANDS IN FRONT OF FRENCH DOORS LOOKING OUT ON WINTER FRUIT ORCHARD. THE TREES ARE BARREN. CAMERA MOVES IN ON RUTH'S BACK. A PAN INTO CLOSE UP OF THE PHONE AT HER EAR. WE HEAR THE PHONE RING AND PICKED UP.

WILLIAM:  
Whitehawk.

BEAT

RUTH:  
(Her voice shaking.)  
Willy, its Ruth.

BEAT

WILLIAM:  
(His voice is flat.)  
Ruth.

RUTH:  
Willy, don't say anything for a moment please.  
I need to tell you something.  
(She pauses - takes an audible deep breath.)

128 – CAMERA COMES AROUND HER TO FOCUS ON HER FACE. RUTH IS DISTRESSED, FRAZZLED.

RUTH:  
I'm sorry.  
I'm so very sorry.  
(Her hand tries to comfort her face.)  
I haven't been honest with you.

Honest with myself.  
I know I hurt you.  
I'm so sorry, please forgive me.  
(She fights back her tears.)

BEAT

RUTH:  
Willy, I'm so frightened, so very . . .  
I'm so scared about falling in love.  
I want so much out of life.  
I . . . I'm just terrified of what would happen  
if I fell in love  
and all that I've worked for my whole life,  
my career,  
got taken over by someone  
and I wouldn't have anything to, and -

WILLIAM:

Ruth?

BEAT

RUTH:  
(A distracted response.)  
What.

WILLIAM:

Is that what is happening to you now?

RUTH:

Well I think, yes, no, maybe, but.

WILLIAM:

Will you promise to tell me if that ever happens?

BEAT

RUTH:  
(Her face shows being lost,  
confused, hopeful,  
questioning,  
thankful, at peace.)

129 – CAMERA BACKS UP TO SEE RUTH TURN. SHE CATCHES THE EYE OF HER WORRIED MOTHER. FATHER IN BACKGROUND THROUGH DOOR INTO KITCHEN. FATHER STANDING ERECT FROM STOOPING INTO REFRIGERATOR.

130 – CLOSE UP RUTH'S FACE SHOWING RELIEF.

RUTH:

I promise.

Willy, I'm home – here in Budapest.

BEAT

There is someone here I want you to meet.

131 – POV RUTH LOOKING AT HER MOTHER. HER MOTHER SIGHS. RUTH LOOKS TO HER FATHER WHO LOOKS UP FROM REFRIGERATOR HOLDING A CHICKEN DRUMSTICK.

132 – CLOSE UP OF UNCLE JOHN'S LINED FACE. HE IS ON HIS CELL PHONE.

UNCLE JOHNS:

Budapest? I've been there.

Good stadium.

Spicy food.

Cold, dirty.

Why?

WILLIAM:

Ruth.

UNCLE JOHNS:

The skinny one?

WILLIAM:

Ya ya! She's got spunk.

Has pride.

She tells me her truth.

I can be myself with her.

UNCLE JOHNS:

You tell your mother?

What about your Gray Hills girl?

WILLIAM:



I've already told the Gray Hills girl,  
she doesn't care and wishes me happiness.  
You can tell Mother about Ruth.  
The Gray Hills girl cannot let me be me.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
That is not right.  
Have you been saying your prayers?

WILLIAM:  
(He sounds defeated.)  
Jesus.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
No, not to him.  
To your ancestors.

SILENCE.

133 – MAIN FRONT DOORS OF ST. STEPHEN'S CATHEDRAL BUDAPEST.

RUTH AND WILLY, ARM IN ARM DESCEND THE STAIRS FROM DOORS  
FOLLOWED BY RUTH'S PARENTS. RUTH CARRIES ONE RED ROSE, AN  
OBVIOUS GIFT FROM WILLIAM.

RUTH:  
I'm so glad you came. Thank you, Willy.  
What do you think of St. Rita.

WILLIAM:  
Did all 14 year old Saints wear wet tee shirts?

RUTH:  
She was drowned by the inquisition.  
She inspires me, gives me strength.

WILLIAM:  
Yours is a curious religion.

RUTH:  
That was just a sculpture representing the Saint.  
The real St. Rita is available to everyone any time.

WILLIAM:  
Does she always wear a wet tee shirt?

RUTH:  
The church provides great comfort to the worshipers.  
That's why there is so much art in cathedrals.  
I think the statue of St. Rita is so beautiful.

BEAT

WILLIAM:  
She makes me hot.

RUTH:  
(Ruth starts to playfully beat on Willy's shoulder.  
He speeds down the stairs, Ruth, after him and  
on his heels.  
Her parents at the top step,  
immobile confused.)  
You.  
(She shoves her body into him.)

134 – COUPLE PLAYFULLY PLAY AT FIGHTING ON THE STEPS TO THE CATHEDRAL

BIRDS IN PLAZA ARE DISTURBED. THEY FLY IN SWIRLS AROUND THE COUPLE. RUTH'S PARENTS ARE AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS NEAR THE DOOR TO CATHEDRAL. RUTH GLADLY SUBMITS TO WILLY'S KISS. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS THE BIRDS FLYING OVER THE FACE OF CATHEDRAL TO BLUE SKY.

135 – NIGHT LONDON, WILLY'S BEDROOM

THE DRAPES ARE SLIGHTLY APART. THEY LET ONLY A TINY LIGHT INTO THE ROOM. WILLY'S BED IS IN RHYTHM, THE HEADBOARD HITS THE WALL WITH A NOTICEABLE REPETITIVE THUMPING. A LIGHT GOES ON IN THE ROOM'S ADJOINING TOILET. WE SEE LIGHT UNDER THE DOOR, THUMPING CONTINUES.

MUGO:  
(In a mock James Dean voice.)  
Stop that this instant. You're driving me crazy.

SOUND FROM WILLY'S SQUEAKING BED STOPS. BEHIND THE DOOR TO HIS SHARED BATHROOM DOOR FROM MUGO'S ROOM, WE HEAR.

LEE:  
Get back to bed you silly man, and leave those children be.

LIGHT UNDER TOILET'S DOOR GOES OUT. WILLY'S ROOM IS SILENT. WE HEAR NEXT ROOM'S DIALOG WHILE CAMERA STAYS IN WILLY'S DARK ROOM.

MUGO:

I will my dear. But, you will have to pay.  
(We hear him laugh in a spooky villainous voice,  
then a muffled slap punctuates his dialog.)  
Take that, hah hah, and that, and that.

LEE:

Your - Oh! My -

MUGO:

And that, and that.  
(slap)

LEE:

Well, since you show it to me that way.  
(She giggles.)  
Oh! Doctor. Mercy. Mercy.

MUGO:

MUGO: Umm, umm, umm, umm, um.

BEAT

WILLIAM:

How are you? You ok?

RUTH:

Lovely, simply lovely.

136 – WILLIAM'S FLAT - KITCHEN - MORNING

THE TWO COUPLES WILLY AND RUTH, MUGO AND LEE ARE CROWDED AROUND A SMALL KITCHEN TABLE AS MEG STANDS PORING COFFEE AS ROB TAYLOR SCRAMBLES POTATOES ON STOVE.

MEG TAYLOR:

This really makes Sunday mornings all the more special.  
If we had a fourth bedroom I'd ask  
Joan and Rachel to stay over too.

ROB TAYLOR:

Something I've wanted for a long time now,  
Taylor's Love Shack, a Bed & Breakfast,

137– BIG BEN AND TIME LAPSES

STREET VENDOR WITH DAFFODILS - MONTAGE OF WORK RELATED SCENES WHERE WILLY MOVES UP THE CORPORATE LADDER. RUTH RECEIVING APPLAUSE FROM AN AUDIENCE AT SHOWINGS. COUPLE WALKING NEAR THAMES. CLOTHES CHANGE WITH SEASONS AS COUPLE WALKS THROUGH LONDON'S PARKS. DINNERS WITH COMBINATION OF FRIENDS. MUGO, LEE, JOAN, RACHEL, MEG AND ROB.

138 –BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR RUTH

BACK ROOM AT BLACK FRIAR'S [FROM FIRST MEETING]. NOISE LEVEL HIGH. RUTH AT HEAD OF TABLE SURROUNDED BY FRIENDS. WILLY ENTERS WITH THICK TUBE 4 FEET LONG WRAPPED IN BUTCHER PAPER AND TIED WITH LARGE BOW. HE COMES FROM BEHIND HER, REACHES OVER RUTH AND PLACES PACKAGE ON TABLE IN FRONT OF HER. SHE STANDS AND GIVES HIM A KISS. SHE ACKNOWLEDGES OTHER PRESENTS SOME OPENED. SHE OPENS WILLY'S. IT IS A NAVAHO RUG. THE CONTRAST IN THE ROOM IS JARRING WE CAN CLEARLY SEE THE RUG IS MEANINGFUL AND BEAUTIFUL. HER FRIENDS ARE IMPRESSED AND FINGER IT, ENVIOUS.

WILLY:

It's a Gray Hills. I thought you may like to hang it.

RUTH:

Willy, It is beautiful.

WILLY:

It's from my . . . family.

RUTH:

(rather flat)

You're, sweet love, you forever surprise me.

WILLY:

You forget I'm connected.

RACHEL:

Here comes a trifle.

(She snaps a photograph.)

THE CAKE ARRIVES LIT CANDLES AROUND - SOUND OF CAMERA SHUTTER AS PHOTOGRAPHS APPEAR AS MONTAGE - HAPPY FACES, LAUGHTER AS SHUTTER SNAPS, PLAYFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH UNDERWEAR GIFTS. JOAN WITH BRA. MUGO PANTIES ON HEAD. RUTH WITH COFFEE TABLE BOOK ON CHANEL. MEG LOOKING MOTHERLY. WAITER WEARING PARTY HAT. STREAMERS. SMILING MUGO HOLDING GRINNING LEE HOLDING HER SWOLLEN BELLY SURPRISED FACES ON RUTH AND JOAN. WILLY IN BACKGROUND CHARMING LEE AND MUGO. CAMERA FOCUS ON WILLY AND OTHER'S REACTION TO WILLY'S CHARISMA. JOAN IS SPEAKING TO RUTH.

JOAN:

You never told me.

Did the girl in Arizona ever get an abortion?

RUTH:

He told me she was considering giving it up for adoption.

JOAN:

Are you taking care - protecting yourself?

RUTH:

Very good care.

LEE FLASHES A RING ON HER FINGER FOR CAMERA. ROB AND MUGO MAKING LIKE THEY HOLD CIGARS, GROUCHO MARKS LIKE. RUTH TAKEN BY WILLY'S CHARISMA. WILLY'S LOVING LOOK OVER AT RUTH.

FRIENDS EXIT BAR GOING INTO SEPARATE CARS, EVERYONE HUGS ONE ANOTHER AND WISHES EACH GOODBYE AND HAPPY BIRTHDAY. NIGHT.

172 BIG BEN - FALL

WIND AND LEAVES BLOWING ALONG THE THAMES

LEE AND RUTH, WELL DRESSED, WALKING IN FRONT OF WILLY AND MUGO, ALSO WELL DRESSED, FOLLOWING. LEE IS QUITE PREGNANT.

139 – STEPS OF OFFICIAL BUILDING

LEE HAS WEDDING BOUQUET AND SHE WEARS A VEILED HAT, MUGO, ATTENTIVE, HOLDING ON TO HER AS SHE DESCENDS STAIRS. RUTH AND WILLY ON LEE'S SIDE HELPING CAREFULLY. CAB AT FOOT OF

STEPS. LEE ENTERS THE CAB AND SITS AS WILLY AND MUGO ARE IN CONVERSATION AT FRONT OF CAB. RUTH LEANS INTO OPEN CAB DOOR TO SPEAK WITH LEE.

140 – INSIDE CAB

RUTH:

I so wanted to make your dress.  
You look so lovely, Dear, you just glow.

LEE:

That's not what my back is telling me.  
Now what is that man doing?  
If he isn't in this cab in record time –  
Honey, you can dress me for my second marriage.  
(She shouts out the cab's door.)  
Hey, first husband get in here.  
Baby's waiting.

THROUGH CAB'S WINDOW MUGO SPEEDS INTO CAB WITH LEE. OUTSIDE RUTH AND WILLY ARM IN ARM WAVE GOODBYE TO THE COUPLE.

141 – LEAF STREWN STREET

WILLY AND RUTH ARE LEFT BEHIND HOLDING HANDS SOLITARY AT EDGE OF STREET AS CAR DISAPPEARS INTO TRAFFIC.

142 – WILLY IN CHINA

WILLY IS WITH OFFICIALS AT HUGE POWER PLANT OPERATION'S OFFICE. WE SEE IT IS A HASSLE FOR WILLY TO COMMUNICATE WITH OFFICIALS.

143 – RUTH'S SALON

RUTH FITTING WHITE DRESS ON FAT CRYING GIRL

GIRL'S DEMANDING MOTHER IN ATTENDANCE AT RUTH'S PINNING ON WEDDING DRESS. FAT GIRL THROWS OFF VEIL AND STOMPS OUT OF THE ROOM. RUTH SEEMS AT WITS END. THE MOTHER SEEMS IN A FIT.

144 – LEE AT SEWING MACHINE

STRAIGHT PINS ARE IN HER MOUTH. SHE STOPS TO CHECK ON THE SLEEPING BABY IN A BASKET BY HER FEET. JOAN AND RUTH FUSS OVER THE BABY.

145 – A LARGE LOFT

WILLY AND RUTH LOOKING AT OPEN LOFT AS PROSPECTIVE RENTERS. REAL ESTATE AGENT GESTURING WHERE SOMETHING GOES, RUTH AMUSED, WILLY PATRONIZING AGENT BY NODDING COMPLIANCE. AGENT LEAVES. WILLY PICKS RUTH UP AND SWINGS HER HAPPILY LIKE A CHILD AROUND AND AROUND.

THEY SPIN LAUGHING IN THE EMPTY LOFT.

146 – WILLY IN AFRICA

WE WATCH HIM EXPLAINING A CELL PHONE TO A NATIVE WOMAN. HE HAS UNUSUAL LARGE AFRICAN MASK AT HIS FEET.

147 – NEWS PAPER ADVERTISEMENT

THE TIMES - RUTH MAGEN'S SHOW OF WEDDING GOWNS. WOMAN'S WEAR DAILY - A READER CIRCLES THE ADVERTISEMENT WITH A MAGIC MARKER. SHE DOUBLE TOUCHES WITH THE AD WITH FINGER.

148 – MONTAGE

A LINE OF MODELS IN WEDDING GOWNS IN LINE WAVE TO AUDIENCE AS RUTH IS BROUGHT OUT FOR A STANDING OVATION. WE SEE MUGO AND LEE AND RACHEL, MEG AND ROB TAYLOR IN AUDIENCE. RUTH SMILES TO FRIENDS BUT CLEARLY IS DISAPPOINTED WILLY IS NOT PRESENT. SHE NERVOUSLY FIDGETS WITH THE CHAIN AROUND HER NECK.

149 – WILLY HOME ASLEEP IN CHAIR.

150 – RUTH WAVING FAREWELL AT AIRPLANE IN HEATHROW.

151 – RUTH, JOAN AND LEE WITH HER TWO YEAR OLD BOY RUNNING AHEAD IN A PARK.

LEE:

That's why we've nicknamed him "Scamper."

152 – WILLY IN SAUDI ARABIA NEXT TO JEEP SATELLITE DISHES IN DISTANCE. WILLY IS ON CELL PHONE IN A SANDSTORM.

153 – LONDON LATER.

RUTH AND WILLY'S LOFT LOOKS QUITE LIVED IN. IT IS FURNISHED IN MUTED TONES. WE SEE RUTH PICK UP MAGAZINE IN WELL

APPOINTED/COMFORTABLE LIVING SPACE. LOFT IS FURNISHED IN DARK EUROPEAN ANTIQUE CABINETS AND CHESTS, CHROME AND LEATHER MODERN FURNITURE, ABUNDANT NAVAHO BASKETS AND RUGS DECORATE THE WALLS, ART BOOKS ABOUND AND NATIVE AMERICAN DOLLS OF FIGURES IN CEREMONIAL DRESS AND PURPOSE HAVE SIGNIFICANT PLACES. THE UNUSUALLY LARGE AFRICAN MASK IS NEXT TO A NICHE THAT SUGGESTS A SHRINE THAT HOLDS A GOTHIC VIRGIN MARY STONE SCULPTURE, HANDS APART LIKE ST. RITA STANDS IN SUPPLICATION AMONG FLOWERS. SHRINE HAS VOTIVE CANDLES BURNING. CAMERA PANS OPEN FLOOR PLAN FINDS A POT STEAMING ON THE STOVE IN THE KITCHEN. THE DINNING ROOM TABLE IS SET FOR FIVE. LEE AND MUGO ARRIVE WITH THEIR FOUR YEAR OLD BOY NICKNAMED SCAMPER. THEY ARE ALL VISITING IN THE KITCHEN WHEN WILLY WALKS IN WITH HIS COAT ON. HE IS PULLING HIS LUGGAGE.

WILLIAM IS EXHAUSTED FROM HIS TRAVELS.

WILLIAM:

(Upon entering room he acknowledges Ruth,  
his friends and winks at Scamper.)

I'm on automatic pilot still descending from Heathrow out of Dubai.

RUTH:

Poor guy.

(She kisses him and helps him off with his coat.)

Do you want to pass and go on to bed?

WILLIAM:

No way! I'm tough,

but scoop my face out of my plate if I fall asleep.

Here's a magic carpet my girl.

(He unrolls a small prayer rug before her from his luggage.)

WILLY STANDS ON THE SMALL PERSIAN RUG AND INVITES RUTH TO STEP UP ON IT. HE TAKES RUTH AROUND THE WAIST AND GIVES HER A PASSIONATE KISS. THEN A BRIGHTLY COLORED FEATHER FROM BEHIND HIS BACK. MUGO AND LEE GREET HIM. SCAMPER HUGS WILLY'S LEG. AT DINNER EVERYONE IS ENJOYING THE MEAL. THEY ARE HAPPY TO BE TOGETHER AND PAMPERING SCAMPER WHO IS SITTING ON A CHAIR ON LARGE BOOKS BETWEEN HIS PARENTS. WILLY IS TO THE RUTH'S RIGHT HE YAWNS HIS TIREDNESS. HE DRAWS CONCERN FROM HIS FRIENDS.



SCAMPER:

What's this?

(He holds a mushroom up for his mother to see.)

LEE:

Something good to eat.

(She takes it from him and pops it into her mouth.

(She makes a face that says, "If you don't eat it, I will, and you're missing out.")

SCAMPER:

Mom!

(His voice reveals his frustration.)

THE FRIENDS AROUND THE TABLE LAUGH IN RESPONSE.

BEAT

RUTH:

(To the room.)

I'm expecting.

HIS TIREDNESS GONE WILLY GIVES A WAR HOOP.

WILLIAM:

AAH YA! Ruth – wonderful.

Will you marry me now?

Please luv - you said some day.

Marry me.

RUTH:

As good a time as any,

I do have some dresses I can still get into.

When is it good for you?

WILLIAM:

Now – wait.

NO! After I get a good nights sleep?

LEE:

When? How long?

RUTH:

(She speaks to Lee but looks to Willy.)

Just enough time for completing the next collection.

Of course I'll be as big as a house by then.

(To Lee.)

July.

WILLIAM:

I'm, . . . July? - I'm in . . .

Are you ok? Do you want this?

Have you seen a doctor.

RUTH:

Yes, yes, YES.

This is the most important thing that has ever happened  
to me.

(To Willy.)

Us.

WILLY STANDS.

BEAT

WILLIAM:

Ruth, I love you, and,

and I'm not prepared for this feeling.

I'm feel like a child suddenly lost, facing a, a . . .

(His consternation shows.)

MUGO:

And you'll be just fine.

Each day it will get more confusing, fun,  
crazy and frightening.

But your heart will never feel empty again.

WE SEE WILLY AND LEE'S REACTIONS.

SCAMPER:

Expecting what?

154 – FADE TO DARK DREAM SEQUENCE

HANDS ARE HELD OUT, PALMS UP. SAND IS DRIFTING THROUGH THE  
FINGERS. A LIGHT IN THE DISTANCE DRAWS OUR ATTENTION AWAY  
FROM THE HANDS. WE HEAR BREATHING AS IF A PERSON IS RUNNING  
TOWARD THE LIGHT. IT IS A CAMP FIRE WE RUN TOWARD. AN OLD NA-  
TIVE AMERICAN IS STANDING OVER THE FIRE HIS BACK TO US. HE

STANDS AND TURNS. IT IS UNCLE JOHNS. DRESSED IN RED SHIRT AND BLUE JEANS, HE IS FRAMED IN DARKNESS, THERE IS AN EAGLE SITTING ON HIS LEATHER GLOVED HAND. THE EMBERS FROM THE FIRE FLY UP, THEY FOLLOW THE DIRECTION OF HIS ARM FLUNG SKYWARD, THE EAGLE IS FREE, IN FLIGHT. THE EMBERS FLICKER AS STARS IN THE NIGHT SKY. WE SEE WILLY'S SHOES FROM THE HEIGHT OF LOOKING DOWN AT ONE'S FEET OVER THE CANYON. WE/WILLY ARE AT THE EDGE OF A CLIFF OVERLOOKING A BLACK VOID. HEAR THE FEET SHUFFLE. WE SEE WILLY TEETERING AS IF HE IS LOSING HIS/OUR BALANCE. WE HEAR A VOICE.

UNCLE JOHNS:

I told you. Willy.

Jump to it.

Jump.

WILLY DIVES INTO THE VOID. FALLING. WE HEAR AN EAGLE SCREECH AS IF IT IS RIGHT NEXT TO HIS EAR. WE SEE RUTH IS FLYING NEXT TO HIM AS HE FALLS. SHE GRINS AT HIM, SHE SPEEDS AHEAD. WILLY'S FACE IS CONFUSED AND WORRIED. THE ROCKY GROUND APPEARS FAST AND WILLY SWOOPS UP. HE IS FLYING. WE SEE HIM SEARCH THE SKY FOR RUTH. HE SEES HIS SHADOW IN THE WATER AS AN EAGLE STREAKING OVER THE RIVER. LOOKING UP TO THE RIM OF THE CANYON THE SKY AND STARS ARE THE RED EMBERS AGAINST BLACK. ONE EMBER SEEMS TO GROW IN SIZE AND IMPORTANCE. WE SEE WILLY TURN HIS DIRECTION TO REACH THE EMBER. THE RED GROWS AND GROWS UNTIL IT OVERTAKES THE SCREEN. WILLY WAKES UP IN A SWEAT. IT IS MORNING. RUTH IS QUIETLY SINGING TO HERSELF IN THE BATHROOM. WILLY ROLLS OVER IN BED. HE CLOSES HIS EYES IN DETERMINATION TO RETURN TO SLEEP.

BEAT

HIS EYES POP OPEN. HE SITS UP IN BED. HE RAISES HIS VOICE SO THAT IN THE BATHROOM RUTH CAN HEAR HIM.

WILLIAM:

Today, today, I, William Whitehawk,  
make my vows to Ruth Magen and

TO ALL our offspring.

155 – GLARING WHITE GOTHIC WINDOWS

SHADOWS ARE DANCING ON A REFLECTIVE FLOOR. WE ARE AT RUTH AND WILLY'S WEDDING RECEPTION. DANCERS GLIDE BY, CAUGHT MOMENTARILY IN THE FRAMES OF THE TALL CHURCH LIKE WINDOWS. RECORDED MUSIC PLAYS ROCK AND ROLL, STING SINGS A SONG FROM "THE POLICE" AS LEE HOLDING SCAMPER ON HER HIP DO A DANCING HOP ACROSS THE FLOOR. MUGO DANCES AFTER LEE AND SCAMPER TWIRLING WITH MEG - THEY LAUGH AS THEY PASS THE CAMERA. WILLY IS CAREFULLY GLIDING ACROSS THE FLOOR IN POLITE CONVERSATION WITH RUTH'S MOTHER. JOAN AND RACHEL ACT LIKE THE MUSIC IS A FAST WALTZ AND POLKA BY. OTHER DANCERS PRANCE AND SWIRL IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH WINDOWS.

THE CAMERA CLOSES IN ON PEOPLE SITTING UNDER THE WINDOWS. THE CAMERA HAS TO WAIT FOR DANCING COUPLES TO PASS SO THE CAMERA CAN MOVE FORWARD. IT'S FOCUS IS ON THE SEATED PEOPLE UNDER THE WINDOWS. THE CAMERA PANS IN CLOSER TO FRAME THE SEATED FIGURES. HEAD TO TOE, RUTH'S FATHER TRIES TO BALANCE A PLATE OF WEDDING CAKE AND A CUP OF COFFEE.

MOVING TO THE NEXT FIGURE DRESSED IN A TRUE BLUE ENGLISH FROCK AND A SERIOUS HAT, WILLY'S MOTHER RUMMAGES INTO HER POWDER BLUE PURSE. SHE IS QUIETLY MUMBLING INTO HER BAG.

UNCLE JOHNS SITS SMILING, ATTENTIVE TO THE DANCERS. HE IS STYLISH IN A TUXEDO JACKET, BLUE JEANS AND RED SHIRT OPEN AT THROAT. HE WEARS A LARGE SILVER AND TURQUOISE NECKLACE. HIS HAIR IS COMBED AND PARTED IN THE MIDDLE. HE SITS CLOSE TO JENEDA, HIS EAR IS COCKED TO WILLY'S MOTHER IN A BLUE ON BLUE FLORAL PRINT DRESS.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF UNCLE JOHNS, RUTH SITS DEMURELY. BEATIFIC SMILE ON HER LIPS, HER HANDS REST QUIETLY ON HER LAP. SHE WEARS A CREAM AND WHITE LACE EMPIRE STYLE WEDDING DRESS. SHE APPEARS CONTENT, AT PEACE.

JENEDA:

JOHNS you should ask Ruth to dance.  
It's your place to do that here.

UNCLE JOHNS:

I don't like the "Police."

JENEDA:

Wing it.  
And, say nice things to her.  
She is now family.

THE CAMERA BACKS UP - LEE AND MUGO DANCE BY. IN CONVERSATION WITH UNCLE JOHNS, RUTH IS THANKING UNCLE JOHNS BUT SHAKING HER HEAD NO. WHILE ONE COUPLE PASSES. RUTH'S PANTOMIME ATTEMPTS TO SHOWS HER FEET HURT. JOHNS PLAYFULLY PERSISTS. RUTH TAKES HER SHOES OFF AND THEY JOIN THE DANCERS ON THE FLOOR.

ON THE DANCE FLOOR, WILLY IS PARTNERED WITH RUTH'S MOTHER. SEEING UNCLE JOHNS WITH RUTH, WILLY ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE PARTNERS WITH UNCLE JOHNS TO DANCE WITH RUTH. HE MIMES UNCLE JOHNS TO DANCE WITH RUTH'S MOTHER. RUTH IS HAVING SUCH A GOOD TIME SHE REFUSES WILLY'S ADVANCE. WILLY IS LEFT WITH A QUIZZICAL LOOK ON HIS FACE. RUTH'S MOTHER REACTS TO DISTRACTION. SHE SNAPS HER FINGERS TO CATCH HIS ATTENTION.

MONTAGE OF OTHER COUPLES THROUGHOUT THE RECEPTION.

LATER, BACK IN THE CHAIRS AGAINST THE WINDOWS, WILLY SITS NEXT TO UNCLE JOHNS, RUTH IS ON HIS OTHER SIDE. WILLY'S MOTHER WHISPERS SOMETHING INTO UNCLE JOHNS'S EAR.

WILLIAM:  
What did she say to you?  
It was in Navaho, wasn't it?

UNCLE JOHNS:  
She said, Ruth has the spirit of the Whitehawk.

WILLIAM:  
(To Uncle JOHNS but loud enough for his mother to hear.)  
I knew that the minute I saw her.  
I just had to  
. . . to jump.

RUTH:  
And, I caught him.  
(She laughs at her own joke.)

WILLY TURNS TO SEARCH RUTH'S FACE. HE SHOWS SURPRISE, PLEASURE.

JENEDA:

(To Willy, drawing away his attention.)

Well. There you are, you see.

You are not the only one in this family who is funny.

WILLY TURNS , HE LOOKS COMPLETELY DUMBFOUNDED TO THE CAMERA.

156 – SUMMER'S DAY IN THE PARK

WILLY AND RUTH BACK TO CAMERA SIT ON A PARK BENCH. THEY FACE A PATH AND A BRICK WALL. CAMERA FOCUSES ON ROSES CLIMBING UP ONE SIDE OF THE WALL THEN THE BLACK BERRIES THAT ARE ENTWINED WITH THEM.

RUTH:

It's amazing.

Our relationship.

CAMERA FACES THEM. SHE IS QUITE PREGNANT.

RUTH:

It's like we are those black berries and the roses.

I just don't know of the two which one is you, or - me.

BEAT

CAMERA RETURNS TO SEE THE COUPLE ON THE BENCH IN THE NEAR DISTANCE, THE ROSES MIXED WITH THE BLACK BERRIES.

BEAT

THE COUPLE TURNS IN PROFILE FACING ONE ANOTHER.

TOGETHER:

I do.

157 – NIGHT IN THE VESTIBULE OF THE FLAT.

MUGO AND LEE AND SCAMPER ARE ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF FRAME. WILLIAM AND RUTH ON THE LEFT SIDE OF FRAME. RUTH IS VERY PREGNANT. WILLIAM IS DRESSED FOR BUSINESS. HE HAS CARRY ON LUGGAGE AND BAGGAGE READY TO ROLL. SCAMPER WALKS ACROSS THE FRAME TO RUTH AND PUTS HIS HANDS ON HER BELLY. HE LOOKS UP TO HER TIRED BUT HAPPY FACE. LEE TAKES SCAMPERS HAND AND CROSSES TO RIGHT SIDE OF SCREEN. MUGO CROSSES

SCREEN AND PICKS UP ONE OF WILLY'S BAGS FOR THE MEN TO DEPART. WILLIAM CROSSES SCREEN GIVES RUTH A FAIR-WELL KISS. RUTH SLOWLY FOLLOWS LEE AND SCAMPER, WHO HURRIES INTO FLAT AWAY FROM THE FRONT DOOR TOWARDS THE KITCHEN. RUTH MOVES SLOW IN FOLLOWING LEE AND THE LITTLE BOY.

158 – SCREEN GOES DARK - VOICE OVER -

RUTH:

Margot was my Grandmother's name.

I've always loved that name.

I never met her,

but I saw her picture.

HEAVY DRAPES ARE PULLED OPEN AT A WINDOW. POV RUTH PULLING DRAPES APART. THE SHARP CONTRAST MAKES HER WINCE. SHE TURNS TO CONTINUE HER CONVERSATION, CAMERA BACKS UP TO MOVE TOWARD US IN THE LIVING AREA OF THEIR LOFT -

RUTH:

Grandmother's face was so kind in all her photos.

I loved her without ever having met her.

Does that make any sense?

I told Willy if its a boy he should name him.

Well it was my turn,

Margot Magen-Whitehawk is my beautiful daughter.

Do you want to meet her?

JOAN AND RACHEL, WITH CAMERA GEAR, ARE STANDING IN AN ARCH THAT LEADS DOWN A HALLWAY TO THE SLEEPING AREAS.

RACHEL:

The light in here is fantastic.

And is perfect for a family portrait.

I won't use a flash on a baby.

RUTH:

I'll get them.

Willy's mesmerized with her.

He probably won't let me get hold of her.

RUTH EXITS. RACHEL MOTIONS JOAN TO SIT ON A SOFA AWAY FROM THE BRIGHT LIGHT MARKING THE FLOOR.

JOAN:

Here I never thought she'd marry  
and now I'm as misty as some sobbing old aunt.  
The baby is more beautiful than both of them put to-  
gether.

RACHEL:  
(Dumfounded.)  
Well Ya!

WILLIAM ENTERS THE ROOM HOLDING THE BABY. RUTH FOLLOWS HOLD-  
ING A BABY'S BLANKET. CLOSE UP ON WILLY AND BABY. WILLY SPEAK-  
ING TO JOAN AND RACHEL.

WILLIAM:  
We should have named her the bubble maker.  
She spits out more bubbles than - see.  
(He holds the baby out to the women who crowd forward.)

JOAN:  
She's put on weight.

CAMERA BACKS UP TO CONTINUE ON SCENE WITH RUTH.

RUTH:  
Don't say that too loud.  
I don't want to live with some vain super model.  
(Joan reacts to Ruth's statement.)  
It's a joke.

WILLIAM:  
She seems to be soaking every thing up.  
When she's awake I can just feel her watch me.  
I've never seen someone so - new.  
Look, new bubble.  
(His face reveals his child has scored a field goal.)

CAMERA CONTINUES TO BACK UP TO REVEAL ROOM WHERE JOAN HAD  
BEEN SITTING. RACHEL GESTURES FOR THE COUPLE AND BABY TO SIT  
ON THE SOFA.

RUTH:  
How do you want us?

RACHEL:



Just be natural.  
Talk to Joan.  
Joan, here, stand next to me.

MONTAGE OF QUICK PHOTO CUTS OF CONVERSATION WITH JOAN. RACHEL TAKING READINGS AND GETTING CLOSER THEN BACKING UP TO CAPTURE FAMILY GROUP OF WILLY AND RUTH AND BABY. WE SEE IMAGES THROUGH LENS OF RACHEL'S CAMERA. FIRST WILLY ON ONE SIDE THEN ON THE OTHER. BABY IN RUTH'S LAP. THEN IN WILLY'S BABY IS HANDED BACK AND FORTH. BABY'S FACE SHOWS CURIOSITY AT THE MOVEMENT OF PHOTOGRAPHER. AT THE END OF MONTAGE BABY IS SITTING ON A NUMBER OF PILLOWS, WILLY ON ONE SIDE AND RUTH ON THE OTHER HOLDING HANDS WITH THE BABY. PHOTOSHOP REQUIRED. WE SEE FINISHED PHOTOGRAPH.

RACHEL:  
Plenty.  
I've shot two rolls and there is film in the camera.  
I think we got it.  
Let's not tire her out.

JOAN:  
I brought us some Nouveau Beaujolais, just released.  
Fun.  
It will be like a six month Birthday toast.

JOAN EXITS WHILE RACHEL PUTS GEAR AWAY. RUTH SITS ON SOFA, BREAST FEEDS BABY AS WILLY WATCHES FOR A MOMENT THEN EXITS TO HELP JOAN.

CLOSE UP ON FOURSOME COMING TOGETHER FOR TOAST. FULL GLASSES READY TO TOAST.

TOGETHER:  
To Margot.  
(They drink.)  
Here! Here!

OFF CAMERA WE HEAR -

BABY:  
Ouuuuuu!  
(A baby's sudden delight at the moment.)

THE FOURSOME REACTS IN SURPRISE AT POSSIBLE MEANING OF TIMED BABY'S COOING. THE SMILES CHANGES TO CHARMED LAUGHTER.

158 – WARMTH OF THE PAST SCENE SLOWLY CHANGES COLOR TO AN ORANGE RED DUOTONE OF GROUP. THAT SCENE BLURS TO SOLID ORANGE-RED PREVIOUSLY SEEN IN WILLY'S DREAM OVER THE CANYON. THE ORANGE-RED HAS TAKEN OVER THE SCREEN BUT SLOWLY IT MOVES OUT OF THE FRAME TO BLUR INTO A GRAY WHITE – A NEW BLUR OF A BRIGHT GREEN ENTER THE FRAME AND IT TOO LEAVES THE SCREEN TO REVEAL THE GRAY WHITE AND A YELLOW ENTERS, IT LEAVES AND A BLUE APPEARS. AT THIS TIME WE HEAR THE BABY VOICE DELIGHT AGAIN. THIS HAS BEEN A LANGUOROUS MOVEMENT. DURING THIS EFFECT WE HEAR THE SLOW BREATHING OF A BABY AT REST.

THE BLUR OF A BLUE BALL COME INTO FOCUS AS A MOBILE TURNS IN FRONT OF THE BABY'S CRIB.

ACTION ON CRIB AS BABY'S HAND REACHES OUT OF THE CRIB FOR THE BLUE BALL ON THE MOBILE.

SCAMPER RESTS HIS CHIN ON THE EDGE OF THE CRIB WATCHING THE BABY REACT TO THE MOBILE. HE IS SPEAKING OVER HIS SHOULDER TO RUTH AND LEE.

SCAMPER:

She likes the blue ones.

POV OF RUTH'S HOME STUDIO/WORK ROOM. RUTH AND LEE ARE POISED OVER A DRAWING TABLE FOCUSED ON ONE OF RUTH'S DRAWINGS.

LEE:

What did you say sweetheart?

SCAMPER:

The blue ones.

The baby always reaches for the blue ones.

On the toy. This thing.

(He points.)

RUTH:

Let me watch.

SCAMPER CAREFULLY PUTS A SPIN ON THE MOBILE.

SCAMPER:  
No wait, that's too fast.  
(He slows it down.)

RUTH AND LEE ARE AT HIS EYE LEVEL. AS THE BALL COMES CLOSE TO THE POSITION OF THE BABY HER HAND REACHES FOR THE BALL.

RUTH AND LEE TOGETHER:  
Amazing.

SCAMPER:  
Told ya.

WOMEN STAND, LEAVING CAMERA ON SCAMPERS EYE LEVEL.

SCAMPER:  
Ok. Margot.  
Really good.

BABY'S HANDS SPIN AND GESTURE IN THE AIR ABOVE THE CRIB AS IN RESPONSE TO SCAMPER'S ENCOURAGEMENT. THE BOY'S FACE SHOWS HIS PENSIVE REACTION TO BABY'S ACTION. SCAMPER'S FACE REVEALS A GENTLE ASSESSMENT, THEN A RECOGNITION OF HAVING SUDDENLY MET SOMEONE HE HASN'T UNDERSTOOD BEFORE.

159 – POV ON CANYON SCAPE

WIND RUSHING BY - FEATHERS RUSTLING - HEAVY BREATHING - AN EAGLE IN FAST DESCENT TOWARD ITS REFLECTION IN THE RIVER - THE IMAGE JERKS, STOPS, RESTARTS, WARPS, A PALE LIGHT ENTERS INTO THE FRACTURED IMAGE. THE PALE LIGHT TAKES OVER THE SCREEN. WILLY IS IN BED SWEATING. RUTH IS SOUND ASLEEP. WE HEAR THE BABY'S CRY. WILLY HOPS OUT OF BED. HE RACES DOWN THE HALL TO BABY'S ROOM. THE BABY'S CRYING IS DISTRESSED, INCESSANT. WILLY SPEEDS TO THE CRIB. THE ROOM IS IN LOW LIGHT. THE BABY IS STANDING HOLDING ONTO THE BARS THAT SURROUND THE BED.

WILLIAM:  
I know, I know.  
Life is rough.

POV ON BABY RECOGNIZING WILLIAM.

THE BABY STOPS CRYING AND COOS THAT SHE IS GLAD TO SEE HIM.

WE SEE WILLY HOLDING BABY ON HIS HIP, HE PACES AROUND THE ROOM IN RAPT CONVERSATION WITH CHILD. THE BABY IS CONTENT.

MORNING - RUTH ENTERS BABY'S ROOM. WILLY IS HOLDING BABY ON HIS LAP BOTH ARE ASLEEP.

160 – RUTH'S HANDS SCRIBBLE BLUE CHALK ACROSS A PAPER. THE FIELD OF BLUE FILLS A DRAWING OF A CHILD'S COAT. CAMERA BACKS UP TO SHOW RUTH IN HOME STUDIO AT DRAWING BOARD. AFTER-NOON LIGHT STREAMS THROUGH WINDOWS SHOWING A NUMBER OF DRAWINGS OF CHILDREN'S CLOTHING DESIGNS ON THE WALL, ALL IN THE PRIMARY COLORS OF MARGOT'S MOBILE. DISSATISFACTION AT ALL THE DRAWING CROSSES RUTH'S FACE. SHE CRUMPLES UP THE PAPER AND TOSSES IT INTO A WIRE DUST BIN THAT IS ALMOST FULL OF SIMILAR DISCARDED DRAWINGS. RUTH TAPS HER TEETH WITH A PENCIL. HER FINGER TWISTS THE CHAIN AROUND HER NECK. LOOKING UP WE SEE THE CLOCK. 2:30. SHE LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW, RETURNS TO HER DRAWING BOARD. SHE FLATTENS OUT A NEW SHEET OF PAPER, STARTS A DRAWING. IN PROCESS SHE STOPS, GETS UP AND LEAVES THE ROOM.

WE SEE INTO THE BABY'S ROOM, A QUIET SANCTUARY. THE BABY IS ASLEEP IN HER CRIB. CAMERA BACKS UP TO SHOW RUTH'S BACK. SHE STANDS IN DOORWAY INTO THE ROOM. CAMERA HOLDS ONTO THIS QUIET MOMENT FOR AN EXTRA BEAT

161 – NIGHT - WILLY WAKING HE TWISTS IN THE BED TO FIND RUTH GONE. HE ROLLS OVER. HE HEARS MUSIC SOFTLY SOMEWHERE IN THE FLAT. HE GETS UP, WE SEE HIM SEARCHING FLAT. HE COMES UPON RUTH DANCING WITH MARGOT IN LIVING ROOM. RELIEVED TO FIND THEM, HE JOINS THEIR DANCE. IN RUTH'S ARMS, BABY REACHES OUT FOR WILLY. THEY ALL DANCE IN THE DARK TOGETHER.

162 – GIGGLES OF JOAN, RACHEL, LEE AND RUTH AS THEY PASS THE BABY MARGO AROUND. THEY ARE TOGETHER IN AN INTIMATE NOOK OF RUTH AND WILLY'S FLAT. WE SEE EACH WOMAN IN PROFILE WITH BABY'S REACTION TO EACH WOMAN AS THE CHILD IS PASSED AROUND. WHEN THE BABY IS HANDED TO RUTH WE SEE THE BABY SMACK HER LIPS SEVERAL TIMES TO INDICATE SHE IS HUNGRY. THE WOMEN LAUGH IN UNISON.

163 – DARK, WILLY IN BED EYES CLOSED ASLEEP. HE JERKS AWAKE.

WILLIAM:

Ruth.

CAMERA BACKS UP TO SEE WILLY TURNING IN THE BED AND FINDING RUTH SITTING UP IN BED NURSING BABY. CAMERA FOCUSES IN ON MOTHER AND CHILD. THE COMPOSITION ALLUDES TO DUTCH MASTER'S PAINTING OF MOTHER AND CHILD. CLOSE UP ON RUTH AND BABY. RUTH CATCHES WILLY'S EYE. THE BABY, NURSING, TURNS HER FACE SLIGHTLY TO SEE WHERE HER MOTHER'S ATTENTION HAS GONE.

RUTH:

We're fine. Go back to sleep.

164 – BABY'S ROOM

POV OF BABY ON HER BACK LOOKING UP AT WILLY. WILLY, DIAPER PIN IN MOUTH, HAS A DETERMINED BUT PAINFUL LOOK ON HIS FACE. HE TURNS HIS HEAD ASIDE TO INDICATE HE SMELLS SOMETHING AWFUL. THE BABY STARTS CRYING AND HE TRIES TO COMFORT HER BUT SHE PERSISTS AS WILLY TAKES THE DIAPER FOLDS IT AND PUTS IT IN AIR TIGHT CONTAINER. WE SEE THE BABY SQUIRMING AND WAVING HER ARMS. SHE IS STILL FUSSING. WILLY COMPLETES HIS TASK OF WIP-ING THE BABY AND PUTTING ON A NEW DIAPER. THE BABY STOPS FUSSING. WE HEAR A LITTLE POOP. WILLY'S EYES WIDEN AS HE REAL-IZES THE BABY HAS FILLED THE NEW DIAPER. CLOSE UP ON BABY, SHE LAUGHS AT HER FATHER'S EXPRESSION.

165 – DARK, WILLY IN BED ASLEEP. HE JERKS AWAKE. RUTH IS NOT IN BED. EXHAUSTED, HE LIFTS HIMSELF FROM BED AND STRETCHING AND SCRATCHING HE STARTS DOWN THE HALL LOOKING IN THE ROOMS ALONG HIS PATH AS HE GOES. HE STOPS IN FRONT OF THE KITCHEN DOOR.

POV WILLY LOOKING INTO KITCHEN ALCOVE. LIGHT FROM STREET CATCHES THE SILHOUETTE OF RUTH SITTING AT A SMALL TABLE. AS OUR EYES ADJUST TO LIGHT, WE SEE SHE IS HOLDING THE BABY ON HER LAP. THE SOUND OF A PHONE LEFT OFF THE HOOK TAKES ON IN-CREASED IMPORTANCE. THE PHONE IS HALF RESTING ON THE FLOOR, ITS CORD IS TANGLED AROUND RUTH'S ARM. THE MOTHER AND CHILD DO NOT MOVE. CAMERA ZOOMS INTO MOTHER AND CHILD AS RUTH LOOKS UP TO SEE WILLY IN DOORWAY. HER FACE SHOWS SHE IS LOST IN GRIEF. CAMERA TIPS DOWN TO SEE BABY MO-TIONLESS.

POV OF DOORWAY LOOKING INTO KITCHEN ALCOVE. WILLY MOVING TOWARD RUTH AND BABY. HIS BACK TO US, HE KNEELS AT HER FEET. HER EYES ARE STILL FOCUSED ON THE DOORWAY. WILLY TOUCHES CHILD'S FACE AND HIS HAND FLINCHES, HE FEELS HER NECK FOR A PULSE. HE LOOKS UP TO SEARCH RUTH'S FACE. THE PHONE BUZZES. WILLY WRAPS HIS ARMS AROUND HIS WIFE AND CHILD AND SOBS.

166 – STREET SCENE, FLASHING POLICE AND AMBULANCE LIGHTS. RUTH IS TWISTING THE BABY'S BLANKET AROUND HER WRISTS. SHE IS MANACLED BY HER NERVOUS ENDEAVOR TO MAKE SENSE OF THE MOMENT. CREW CARRY BABY'S BODY INTO BACK OF AMBULANCE AS RUTH AND WILLY, WRAPPED IN COATS HURRIEDLY THROWN ON, ARE IN CONVERSATION WITH BLACK WOMAN AMBULANCE NURSE. WILLY HOLDS RUTH IN SUCH A MANNER TO SUGGEST IT IS HE WHO NEEDS SUPPORT. RUTH IS SPEECHLESS, SHE SHOWS SOMETHING IN HER HAS BEEN SHUT DOWN.

NURSE:

SIDS – Awful, Crib Death – SIDS.

I'm so sorry for you.

So very sorry. I doubt this will console you,  
but it is not anyone's fault.

(She scribbles in a note book, tears the page out.)

Here's a name, the number of a support group.

Just you don't take any of this on.

It happens. It is not your fault.

Really.

(She reaches out, tries to hug Ruth thinks better of it  
touches Willy's arm in comfort.)

She'll be at hospital,

you can ride with me or you can come later.

It's up to you.

RUTH NODS AND ENTERS THE BACK OF THE AMBULANCE. SHE TURNS IN AFTERTHOUGHT AND REACHES OUT FOR WILLY TO JOIN HER. HE CLIMBS ABOARD. AMBULANCE ENTERS TRAFFIC. THE STREET WHERE BRIGHTLY LIT POLICE AND AMBULANCE MET THE COUPLE IS NOW SILENT.

CAMERA LINGERS ON THE STREET AN EXTRA BEAT

167 – DAWN A LONDON PARK

WILLY, IN RUNNING TOGS, IS RACING THROUGH WISPS OF FOG ON A PATH. WE SEE HIM SPEED UP AND PUSH HIMSELF TO RUN AS FAST AS HE CAN. HIS FACE REVEALS HE IS DETERMINED AND ANGRY. HE ROUNDS A CORNER ON HIS PATH IN THE PARK. POV WE LOOK INTO DISTANCE WHERE WILLY WILL RUN. AN EMPTY SUPERMARKET'S PUSH BASKET BLOCKS HIS PATH. WE SEE HIM SLOW DOWN AND STOP IN FRONT OF BASKET. HE CATCHES HIS BREATH. WHEN HE TAKES THE HANDLES TO PUSH THE CART OUT OF THE PATH, WE SEE HIS FACE CONTORT, THE CHILD'S SEAT IS DOWN. HIS EMOTIONS GETTING THE BETTER OF HIM, HE COLLAPSES IN TEARS. CAMERA BACKS UP TO SEE WILLY ALONE IN THE FOGGY LANDSCAPE NEXT TO A SHOPPING CART. THE CAMERA CONTINUES TO BACK UP TO REVEAL THE FOGGY CITY SCAPE IN THE DISTANCE.

168 – MIRROR IN RUTH AND WILLIAM FLAT'S BATHROOM.

RUTH IS FULL FIGURE, DRESSED FOR BED. SHE IS STARING INTO MIRROR. RUTH IS HAGGARD, HER FEATURES HELD LIKE STONE IN THE REFLECTION. SHE BRINGS BOTH HER HANDS UP AND HOLDS HER BREASTS. SHE REACTS TO THE PAIN IN THEM. SHE DROPS HER HANDS TO HER SIDE IN DEFEAT. SHE STRAIGHTENS HER DEMEANOR ACKNOWLEDGES HER HAIR IS OUT OF PLACE. SHE DOES NOTHING. SHE TURNS THE LIGHT OFF AND LEAVES THE ROOM.

169 – SUNLIGHT - ARIZONA.

UNCLE JOHNS HAS HIS EAR NEXT TO A CELL PHONE. HIS FACE REVEALS HE IS BEING TOLD THE NEWS OF MARGOT'S DEATH. HE SADLY SHAKES HIS HEAD.

UNCLE JOHNS:

I'll go find your mother, tell her.  
Will you have your cell phone with you?

BEAT

UNCLE JOHNS:

Ok. No,  
I have no words.  
This is one of those sad times  
we have to live our life alone.  
We can support each other

by being in the now  
– we can bear our own lives better.

UNCLE JOHNS'S HAT IS BLOWN AWAY BY THE WIND. HE CHASES AFTER IT.

170 – SHRINE IN RUTH AND WILLIAM'S FLAT.

RUTH IS DRESSED IN BLACK, HER ARMS ARE FOLDED OVER HER BREASTS.

SHE IS SITTING IN A CHAIR FACING A SMALL STATUE OF SAINT RITA. RUTH IS NOT PRAYING.

RUTH:  
Endure. Endure, forever endure.  
So hard, St. Rita.  
I'm nearly broken.  
To endure this . . . feels like I might be dying.  
(Her voice is steady, matter-of-fact.)

A PHONE RINGS. RUTH LIFTS HERSELF FROM THE CHAIR AND TAKES THE PHONE TO THE WINDOW. POV ON RUTH'S BACK, BLACK AGAINST THE WHITE OF THE WINDOW.

RUTH:  
Lee, hello.  
No. Yes, I'm fine.  
No, really.  
What?  
No, not right now, please.  
Maybe later on.  
I'm feeling like I'm fighting off a cold.  
It's my eyes, you see, they seem to smart from  
. . . I can't determine where this pain gets me.  
Sorry, I can't be more clear.  
It just seems that nothing seems to  
matter much anymore.

171 – CLOSE UP ON WILLY'S FACE. SOUND OVER.

TELECOM SUPERVISOR:  
I want you to take some time off.  
I'm a father myself. You gotta be with your wife now.



Getting lost in work isn't doing you any good  
and I can tell you right now,  
you're not doing the company a service by being here.  
See that counselor, there's nothing wrong in that.  
This is a tough time for you.  
Your job will be here for you when you get back.  
Go home.

(At the sound of "Go home." Willy flinches as in spasm.)

172 – EVENING MEAL IN FLAT, WILLY IS SEATED OPPOSITE RUTH. THERE IS STEAMING SOUP IN FRONT OF EACH OF THEM, A SLICED LOAF OF BREAD AND BUTTER IS BETWEEN THEM. A LARGE SALAD, IN A GLASS BOWL, IS CENTRAL ON THE TABLE.

POV DOWN THE TABLE, WILLY AND RUTH ARE ON EACH SIDE OF FRAME. THEY ARE SIPPING SOUP AND QUIETLY EATING. THEY ARE NOT ENGAGED WITH EACH OTHER. CAMERA CLOSES IN ON THEM.

THEY DO NOT LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER. THEY CONTINUE THEIR MEAL. SIMULTANEOUSLY THEY REACH FOR THE BREAD AND BUTTER.

THEY TOUCH HANDS, THEY CATCH EACH OTHER'S EYES. RUTH RETRACTS HER REACH. WILLY RETRACTS HIS. RUTH PLACES HER NAPKIN ON THE TABLE NEXT TO HER BOWL OF SOUP, SHE STANDS, TURNS AWAY AND SLOWLY LEAVES THE ROOM. WILLY FOLDS HIS NAPKIN, UNFOLDS IT AND STRAIGHTENS IT ON HIS LAP AND LOOKS INTO HIS SOUP.

173 – RUTH IS STANDING AT THEIR BEDROOM WINDOW.

SHE HAS JUST GOTTEN OUT OF BED. SHE IS FACING AWAY FROM US. WILLY IN HIS NIGHT CLOTHES ENTERS THE FRAME AND SITS ON A CHAIR NEXT TO THE WINDOW AND FACES RUTH, WHO IS STANDING. WILLY IS LOST FOR WORDS, HE TAKES HER HAND. SHE DOES NOT REFUSE HIM. THEN HE CARESSES HER HAND WITH HIS FACE.

SHE SLOWLY REMOVES HER HAND FROM HIS AND BRINGS HERS TO HER THROAT TO TWIST THE CHAIN AROUND HER NECK WITH HER INDEX FINGER. CATCHING HERSELF AT THIS NERVOUS TIC, SHE LETS HER HAND DROP BACK AT HER SIDE. SHE DOES NOT MOVE. WILLY LEAVES THE POV.

174 – POV INSIDE FRONT DOOR OF THE FLAT.

WILLY IS LEAVING IN HIS RUNNING TOGS. RUTH IS IN A DRESSING GOWN, SHE HOLDS THE DOOR OPEN FOR HIM. OUT OF HABIT THEY KISS FARE WELL. THEIR EYES MEET. THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT. WILLIAM KISSES HER AGAIN, BUT DOES NOT TOUCH HER. SHE DOES NOT REFUSE. UNABLE TO MAKE A CONNECTION HE LEAVES THE FRAME TO GO RUNNING. UNRESPONSIVE, SHE CLOSSES THE DOOR BEHIND HIM.

175 – POV ON FRONT DOOR OF "RUTH MAGEN'S GOWNS".

RUTH PUNCHES IN A CODE TO OPEN THE DOOR.

POV DARK INTERIOR, RUTH SWITCHING ON LIGHTS THEN RUMMAGING THROUGH MAIL ON FLOOR AND ON DESK. SHE CROSSES TO ARCH INTO THE ADJOINING ROOM. WE SEE HER GO THROUGH ROOM TO ROOM. NO ONE IS IN THE STORE. RUTH FINGERS FABRIC LEFT ON CUTTING TABLE. SHE LOOKS UP TO HIGH WINDOWS. THE LIGHT STRIKES HER FACE BLEACHING OUT HER FEATURES.

MONTAGE - SHE IS BACK ON THE BOAT COMING TO ENGLAND THE BLUE LINE OF THE SEA MEETING THE WHITE CLIFFS.

SCREEN FLASHES TO THE BLUE OF MARGOT'S MOBILE TOY.

BACK TO BIRDS SOARING TO BLEACHED OUT SKY.

IN STUDIO - A ROLL OF WHITE FABRIC FLUNG OUT ON TABLE. IT FILLS THE FRAME.

A STREAM OF BLUE RIBBON IS TOSSED ONTO FABRIC.

HANDS ARRANGE THE WHITE FABRIC INTO FOLDS AS IF THE CLIFFS, THE RIBBON IS PLACED ON THE EDGE OF THE FABRIC. THE COLOR AND VALUE MATCH THE WHITE CLIFFS AND BLUE SEA.

RUTH IS ON THE PHONE AS SHE DOODLES SHAPES INTO A SKETCH PAD.

RUTH:

Joan, its Ruth.

Can you come in tomorrow?

I'm back at work.

I'm fine, these feelings go nowhere.

I'm back in control. Margot's gone.

That's it. We've got work to do.

No, don't. I'll call Lee.  
Get an announcement into the papers  
that we're back in business.  
By the way, how's Rachel?

176 – POV WILLY WALKING ON TRAIL UP A ROCKY SLOPE IN THE RED DESERT OF ARIZONA.

JENEDA WHITEHAWK IS SITTING WITH A SIX YEAR OLD GIRL ON HER LAP. OVERLOOKING A RED MESA IN THE DISTANCE, JENEDA IS CHATTING IN NAVAHO ON ROCK OUTCROPPING WITH THREE OTHER WOMEN, A NUMBER OF CHILDREN ARE PLAYING IN BACKGROUND NEAR JENEDA A BASKETS OF PINION NUTS PRODUCTS OF THEIR HUNT. THE LITTLE GIRL IN JENEDA'S LAP POINTS TO WILLY IN THE DISTANCE. THE CHILD DRAWS JENEDA'S ATTENTION TO HIM. JENEDA HANDS THE CHILD TO ANOTHER WOMAN SITTING ON THE ROCK. THE WOMEN ENGAGES THE LITTLE GIRL. JENEDA HOPS OFF THE ROCK, SHE WALKS STEADILY TOWARD HER SON THEN PAST HIM. WITHOUT INDICATION OF ANY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THEM HE TURNS AND FOLLOWS HER.

POV MOTHER AND SON SITTING UNDER A TREE ON THE DESERT RISE, THE VERMILION MOUNTAINS IN THE BACKGROUND. THE SKY GOES THROUGH TIME OF DAY CHANGES UNTIL DUSK. WILLY AND JENEDA WALK AWAY FROM THE RISE AND OUT OF THE FRAME.

177 – LONDON - KITCHEN OF FLAT.

RUTH AND HER MOTHER ARE PREPARING FOOD AT THE CENTER COUNTER.

RUTH'S MOTHER:

When you were a baby you slept in the same room with us.

Your father was out of the house well before dawn.

We didn't have such luxuries.

(She gestures around the room with her knife.)

RUTH:

I guess we have been fortunate - that way.

RUTH'S MOTHER:

Well I didn't work to bring in the kind of money you have.

RUTH:

My work, my art  
what have you, has always been something that has given me a purpose.  
I can count on it – my focus.  
– It's a reason to be.  
(She turns a happy face to her mother.)  
We've never talked about my career like this,  
thank you Muttie.  
I believe going back to my work  
will help me get through this  
– will help – Margot's death.

BEAT

RUTH'S MOTHER:  
I hope so, darling.  
(She continues to chop the vegetables.)  
When do you think you will want another baby?

RUTH:  
I just can't think about that right now. I'm so -

RUTH'S MOTHER:  
It is just that, perhaps,  
the thought of a new baby would help you now.

RUTH:  
Willy and I we're –

RUTH'S MOTHER:  
(Her head down, she is intent in her chopping.)  
Then you might not work so much and keep the child by you more.

BEAT

RUTH:  
I can't believe you.  
You're accusing me of neglecting Margot.  
You're trying to make me the blame for her –  
(She stops her action.  
Unties her apron as her look to her mother  
shows defiance.)  
You are?

RUTH'S MOTHER:

Well, I believe -

RUTH:

Jesus!

You stand here and tell me it is my fault . . .

RUTH'S MOTHER:

I - simply . . .

RUTH:

Fix your own God-damned dinner.

SHE EXITS TAKES HER APRON AND THROWS IT ON THE COUNTER. HER MOTHER STANDS BACK AGHAST HOLDING THE KNIFE. SHE PUTS IT DOWN, SHE HOLDS ON THE THE COUNTER DEJECTED AND SHAKES HER HEAD.

178 – WILLY, RUTH AND JENEDA, ARE SEATED NEXT TO ONE ANOTHER IN THE AIRPORT AWAITING FLIGHT AREA.

WILLY, ON THE LEFT, IS ENGROSSED IN A MAGAZINE. JENEDA SITS IN THE CENTER HER PURSE ON HER LAP, HER CARRY-ON BAG AT HER FEET WITH HER COAT PLACED OVER IT. RUTH IS ON JENEDA'S RIGHT. IT IS JENEDA WHO HOLDS HER BOARDING PASS INSIDE HER PASS-PORT. JENEDA LEANS OVER TO SPEAK TO RUTH.

JENEDA:

All people die.

Every one of us.

Many people are here to serve a purpose.  
Some people are here to sacrifice themselves  
and teach others about the importance of living.

RUTH:

Is that an old Navaho saying?

JENEDA:

No. It is my experience.

179 – RUTH MAGEN'S SALON.

RUTH IS SITTING AT A TABLE IN THE WORKSPACE. SHE IS BEADING A PATTERN ON SILK IN A CIRCULAR HOOP. LEE LEANS OVER THE TABLE

BOTH HANDS FIRMLY PLANTED TO MAKE HER POINT. LEE IS OBVIOUSLY PREGNANT.

LEE:

You just gotta cry, girl.  
You're all bottled up.  
This anger won't make it. It will eat you up.

RUTH:

I'm fine - really.  
(She looks up at Lee.)  
You're in my light.

LEE:

Honey, this flat out denial of yours  
is like a mangy  
mutt you keep out of the house.  
One day it will creep in and bite you on your butt.

180 – PUB.

MUGO AND WILLY ARE OPPOSITE ONE ANOTHER AT A TABLE. EACH HAS A PARTIALLY CONSUMED BEER IN FRONT OF THEM. BOTH MEN HAVE THEIR HEADS DOWN IN SERIOUS COMMUNION.

MUGO:

You know, Lee and I had this conversation.  
Lee is so bent out of shape over Margot's death,  
her emotions are shot.  
She loves Ruth and can't get through to her.  
She is almost guilty at being pregnant in front of her.

WILLIAM:

Oh! God.

MUGO:

Last night, after I got her quieted down.  
She suggested we give up the new baby for Ruth to  
raise.  
She'll never let it go of course,  
but you can see my problem.  
It's hard for us too.

WILLIAM:  
(His air escapes.)  
Whoosh!

BEAT

MUGO:  
I told her.  
I wouldn't allow it . . .  
because I'm racially prejudiced.  
(Willy looks up from his beer dumbfounded.  
Mugo sits back into his chair, straight faced.)  
Now, if you were Canadian?

WILLY'S JAW DROPS AND MUGO IS GRINNING EAR TO EAR.

MUGO:  
Hey! I'm kidding – just the last bit.  
The thing about Lee is true.  
I was just getting too serious. I -

WILLY SWEETLY SMILES AND ACKNOWLEDGES MUGO'S TRICK BY REACHING OVER TO TAP THE TABLE IN A RESPONSE TO SAY THAT IT WAS A GOOD JOKE.

BEAT

WILLY TURNS AWAY TO ORDER ANOTHER ROUND.

CLOSE UP ON MUGO'S FACE - CONCERN FOR HIS FRIEND SHOWING.

181 – NIGHT.

POV FROM CEILING ABOVE BED ONTO RUTH AND WILLY IN BED TOGETHER. BOTH OF THEM STARE INTO CAMERA/CEILING. WILLY ROLLS ONTO HIS SIDE TO FACE RUTH. BEAT SHE ROLLS OVER TO FACE THE WALL. WILLY ROLLS OVER TO FACE THE OTHER WALL. WE SEE BOTH THEIR EXPRESSIONS. WILLY'S EYES CLOSE, CAMERA PANS THE TO WALL OVER THE BED - IT STAYS ON A LARGE NAVAHO BLANKET. AS THE CAMERA CLOSES IN ON THE BLANKET THE FRAME GOES DARK.

182 – WILLY'S DREAM.

THE CANYON SCAPE, AN EAGLE SCREAMS, WILLY'S FACE SHOWS HIS ATTENTION IS CAUGHT BY THE SCREAM. THE SCREAM COMES AGAIN.

THE SOUND OF "EACH" IS EMBEDDED SLIGHTLY INTO THE SCREAM. WE SEE WILLY FLYING. HE LOOKS UP TO STAR FILLED SKY AND A SHADOW SILHOUETTE OF A SMALL BIRD FLIES ACROSS SCREEN. WE SEE THE SMALL BIRD SPEED AHEAD OF THE FLYING WILLY. WILLY CALLS, "WAIT!" WE HEAR HIS "WAIT!" AS IF IN HIS HEAD. BUT WHAT COMES OUT IS AN EAGLE'S SCREAM THAT WE HEAR AS, "EACH!" WILLY CALLS AGAIN. AGAIN THE EAGLE SCREAM IS "EACH!" WE SEE WILLY'S FACE REACT TO THE SOUND AND THEN THE SMALL BIRD SPEEDS, ESCAPING INTO THE DISTANCE. HE CALLS AGAIN, AGAIN THE SCREAM IS "EACH!"

183 – NIGHT, POV FROM CEILING ABOVE BED.

WILLY SITS BOLT UPRIGHT. RUTH WAKES AND REACTS TO HIM. POV FROM FOOT OF BED AT COUPLE. WILLY SWEATING IN DISTRESS, RUTH ATTEMPTS TO COMFORT HIM. HE GETS OUT OF BED. RUTH IS LEFT IN THE CRUMPLED BED. SHE PICKS UP A SMALL CLOCK ON THE NIGHT STAND. LOOKS AT IT. LIGHT OFF SCREEN FROM THE BATHROOM GOES ON AND A DOOR CLOSES LEAVING RUTH TO LOOK ABOUT THE ROOM. SHE BRINGS THE SHEETS UP TO HER NECK, NOW FULLY AWAKE. WE SEE HER TAKE THOUGHTFUL STOCK OF EVERYTHING IN THE ROOM.

184 – BIRDS EYE VIEW OF THE ARIZONA SKY.

CAMERA PANS DOWN TO SEE HIGH SCHOOL WHERE WILLY RAN HIS RACE. UNCLE JOHNS IS AT THE TOP OF THE STEPS THAT LEAD DOWN TO SOME YOUNG DANCERS PRACTICING AT THE FOOT OF THE STAIRS. CAMERA FOCUS IN ON UNCLE JOHNS AT TOP OF STAIRS. HE HOLDS A CELL PHONE.

CLOSE UP UNCLE JOHNS SPEAKING INTO THE PHONE.

UNCLE JOHNS:

Ah! A dream. Good.

A window into your hidden world. Right?

POV OF UNCLE JOHNS SLOWLY DESCENDING THE STAIRS AS HE LISTENS AND SPEAKS INTO PHONE.

UNCLE JOHNS:

You heard what?

"Each!"



BEAT

ANOTHER STEP DOWN.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
The eagle said, "EACH?"

BEAT

ANOTHER STEP DOWN.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
What does it mean?  
What do you mean, "What does it mean?"  
It means what it means.  
I can't make sense of it for you.  
I'm just a simple Medicine man.

BEAT

ANOTHER STEP DOWN.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
It means what it means for you.  
Right.  
The dream is your window.  
Yes, yours and yours alone.

BEAT

UNCLE JOHNS:  
I'm fine.

HE IS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STEPS ABOUT TO STEP ONTO THE DIRT OF THE FIELD.

UNCLE JOHNS:  
I saw your mother yesterday.  
Picture of health.  
I'm teaching class now.  
Tell Ruth I think of her.  
Take care of yourself.  
Go running. I'm glad you called.

HE SNAPS THE PHONE CLOSED. HE PUTS IT IN HIS BREAST POCKET. HE STANDS ON THE BOTTOM STEP. THE BOYS ARE IN A CIRCLE THE GIRLS STAND TO ONE SIDE WHILE OTHER CHILDREN DRUM AND CHANT.

UNCLE JOHNS:

Each.

HE LOOKS AT THE SKY.

CAMERA OVER HIS SHOULDER SPIES A DISTANT EAGLE.

UNCLE JOHNS:

An eagle saying "each" in English.

(He shakes his head, shows a profound sadness.)

UNCLE JOHNS JUMPS OFF THE LAST STEP ONTO GROUND.

CLOSE UP OF HIS BOOTS HITTING THE DIRT.

185 – PANDEMONIUM BACK STAGE AT FASHION SHOW.

CAMERA FOLLOWS A WEDDING VEIL HELD OVER BUSY ACTIVITY ON ITS PATH TO RUTH, JOAN, AND LEE. THEY ARE FUSSING OVER AND GIVING LAST MINUTE DIRECTIONS TO A WEDDING DRESS MODEL.

RUTH:

(To model)

The florist has the bouquet that matches your dress.

Remember you are number 4.

Four, OK?

THE GIRL NODS. THE WOMEN ADJUST THE VEIL, FLUFF UP THE FOLDS IN THE WHITE GOWN.

RUTH:

Four. And smile, this is your wedding day.

You are not to be a stick figure for me.

You're supposed to be happy.

Energy, energy, energy.

JOAN:

Off you go.

(She starts to make a gesture to slap the model's behind but thinks twice.)

LEE:

The girl wearing wearing number 10 is next on my list.  
I've got to pin her chemise.  
I'll do that on the staging area.

THE WOMEN LEAVE THE MODEL PRACTICING A HAPPY SMILE IN A MIRROR.

186 – POV BACK STAGE

MODELS HOLDING BOUQUETS IN A LINE OLDER MALE PRESENTERS BY THEIR SIDES. COUPLES SHOW VARIOUS FORMS OF VANITY. RUTH WALKS ALONG LINE PRIMING AND GIVING SUPPORT TO MODELS. WE HEAR A CROWD OFF CAMERA AND THE IMPRESSION OF ELECTRICITY IN THE AIR. JOAN HAS A WHITE LEATHER PRESENTERS FOLIO UNDER HER ARM AND A COMPACT HELD UP SO SHE CAN CHECK HER MAKE UP. SHE CLEARS HER THROAT.

JOAN:

Enunciate.

(She begins facial exercises that indicates she is the presenter.  
Ruth moves down the line of models.)

DURING THE ACTION WE HEAR A COMMOTION OFF CAMERA. THE LINE OF MODELS TURN TO FACE OFF SCREEN. RUTH RUNS TO MEET THE PROBLEM.

187 – POV ON PREGNANT LEE AND MALE MODEL TRYING TO REVIVE FAINTED WEDDING DRESS MODEL ON THE FLOOR AS RUTH ARRIVES.

MALE MODEL:

I don't know.

One minute she was looking at her nails  
and the next she was on the ground.

RUTH:

Get some water.

LEE:

Here use this.

(She hands Ruth a small medicine bottle.  
Ruth mimes she doesn't understand.)

I sometimes get nauseous.

(Lee shrugs.)

GIRL COMES AROUND AS THE SMALL OPENED BOTTLE IS HELD UNDER HER NOSE. THEY HELP HER TO HER FEET. A STAGE HAND BRINGS A CHAIR.

RUTH:

Who's our back up.

LEE:

She will have to be one of the helpers. I'll get on it.

STAGE HAND HELPS THAT ONE MODEL OFF SCREEN. RUTH ENCOURAGES THE LINE OF MODELS TO HAVE ENERGY. RUTH WAVES AN OK TO JOAN AT FRONT OF THE LINE. JOAN LEAVES SCREEN. WE HEAR A TITTER FROM THE AUDIENCE. SLIGHT APPLAUSE. POV RUTH LOOKING TOWARD CAMERA READY LINE OF MODELS FACING THE STAGE. OFF SCREEN WE HEAR JOAN'S VOICE.

JOAN:

Good afternoon. Welcome to Ruth Magen Gowns.

WE HEAR A STRING QUARTET BEGIN IN THE BACKGROUND. RUTH DETERMINEDLY WALKS PAST THE CAMERA OFF SCREEN LEAVING THE LINE OF MODELS STRAIGHTENING THEMSELVES. JOAN'S VOICE DIMINISHES IN VOLUME, AS HER SPEECH GOES ON UNDER THE AMBIENT NOISE OF BACK STAGE ACTIVITY.

188 – DRESSING ROOM

RUTH ARRIVES AS LEE IS HELPING MODEL OUT OF THE DRESS. WE SEE LEE IS WORKING EFFICIENTLY. ANOTHER GIRL IS BUSILY PUTTING STAGE MAKE UP ON. RUTH TAKES NOTE OF THIS.

RUTH:

Stop.

Lee. Let me help.

RUTH HELPS LEE WITH THE DRESS. RUTH IS SUDDENLY ABEAM WITH A BROAD SMILE.

RUTH:

I should have done this years ago.

POV LEE'S FACE QUIZZICAL.

RUTH'S VOICE OFF SCREEN, WE SEE LEE'S REACTION.

RUTH:

Lee, you can do something for me.

189 – POV FROM THE AUDIENCE

WE ARE LOOKING AT CATWALK. A MALE MODEL STANDS OUTSIDE CURTAIN AS MODEL ENTERS. HE BRINGS HER TO THE CENTER OF THE STAGE AND LETS HER WALK DOWN RUNWAY. JOAN DESCRIBES THE GOWN. APPRECIATIVE APPLAUSE SPRINGS FROM THE AUDIENCE. A SOFT STRING QUARTET PLAYS IN THE BACKGROUND. ELECTRICITY IS IN THE AIR. CAMERA PANS THE ROOM. WILLY AND MUGO SIT TOGETHER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CATWALK FROM JOAN.

190 – POV BACK STAGE

RUTH, DELIGHTED AT WHAT SHE SEES, HAS CLASPED HER HANDS TOGETHER. SHE HAS THEM UNDER HER CHIN AS THE NEXT MODEL STEPS FORWARD TO TAKE HER APPEARANCE ON THE STAGE. LEE'S VOICE IS OVER RUTH'S CLOSE UP. LEE IS OUT OF THE FRAME. IT CATCHES RUTH'S ATTENTION WE SEE RUTH TURN TO FACE THE CAMERA/LEE.

LEE:

How's this?

RUTH:

Lovely, simply - lovely.

LEE:

You know, it works better barefoot.

RUTH:

Fine.

191 – POV ON CATWALK

JOAN AND STAGE AS MALE MODEL STEPS OUT AND GESTURES AN INVITATION TO PERSON OFF STAGE TO ENTER AS JOAN READS FROM HER FOLIO.

JOAN:

A simple chemise

Embroidered at the throat . . .

192 – POV FROM STAGE THROUGH BRIGHT LIGHTS ON THE CATWALK THROUGH TO THE AUDIENCE.

CAMERA DOLLIES IN. WE SEE FACES IN THE AUDIENCE GASPS. THE ROOM BECOMES QUIET. FROM THE BACK OF THE HALL WE HEAR LAUGHTER, THEN A LITTLE APPLAUSE, A RUDE CAT CALL. SOMEONE IS SHOUTING DOWN SOMEONE'S RUDE REMARK. STRONGER APPLAUSE.

QUICK CUT TO RUTH'S SURPRISED FACE.

STAGE LIGHTS ON LEE'S FACE. SHE LIFTS HER HEAD IN DIGNITY.

CAMERA BACKS UP TO SHOW LEE. BAREFOOT AND QUITE PREGNANT IN A CHEMISE THAT REVEALS HER FULL BELLY. ONE OF HER HANDS HOLDS A WEDDING BOUQUET THE OTHER, A VEIL WITH BLUE RIBBON. LEE SAUNTERS DOWN THE RUNWAY. SHE IS PROUD AS AUDIENCE RESPONDS WITH A MIX OF CHEERS, AMUSED LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE. FACES ON THE AUDIENCE RESPOND TO HER AS SHE PASSES. THERE IS A MIXTURE OF DELIGHT AND EMBARRASSMENT. WE SEE HER DIGNIFIED PASSAGE PAST WILLY AND MUGO. MUGO REACTS BY STANDING AND APPLAUDING. WHEN LEE GETS TO THE FAR END OF THE RUNWAY SHE PLACES THE VEIL ON HER HEAD, POSITIONS HER BARE FEET, AND TAKES THE POSE OF ST. RITA SUPPLICATING THE INQUISITION. THE AUDIENCE HAS MIXED REACTIONS.

193 – POV CLOSE UP ON RUTH'S FACE BACKSTAGE.

SHE IS SO DISTRESSED HER FINGER HAS CAUGHT TWISTING THE CHAIN AROUND HER NECK. SHE YANKS THE CHAIN AND IT BREAKS.

194 – POV FROM AUDIENCE

LEE RETURNS UP THE RUNWAY. MUGO HAS COME NEXT TO THE CATWALK AS LEE PASSES. HIS ARMS HELD WIDE, HE SHOUTS HER NAME ABOVE THE DIN OF THE CROWD. SHE SEES HIM. SHE STOPS IN FRONT OF MUGO.

MUGO:

(Speaking so the whole crowd hears.)

Lee.

Lee, marry me again.

195 – POV CLOSE UP WILLY'S FACE.

THE SOUND OF THE AUDIENCE FADES AS WE SEE HIM CONSIDER WHAT HE HAS JUST WITNESSED.

FADE TO GRAY

196 – POV ON HIGHWAY

SMART CAR'S WIND SCREEN WIPERS STRAINING AGAINST HEAVY SLEET. RUTH IS DRIVING THE CAR IN HEAVY TRAFFIC. WE SEE OUT OF CAR'S WINDOW AT SIGN INDICATING TURN OFF TO HEATHROW. RUTH IS DRESSED FOR THE WEATHER. A CELL PHONE RINGS ON THE DASHBOARD OF THE CAR. RUTH PUSHES A BUTTON ON DASH, RETURNS HER ATTENTION TO THE ROAD.

RUTH:

Ruth here.

SPEAKER CRACKLES

WILLIAM:

Hello my dear, we just landed.

I'm on my way to customs.

How are you?

RUTH:

I - good.

I've just turned off the A-40.

Should be seeing you in about a half hour.

Terrible weather. Rough going here.

I'll talk with you later.

WILLIAM:

I, but - Ok. Looks like I'll be awhile hear too.

Careful now.

THE PHONE GOES DEAD. RUTH PUSHES A BUTTON ON THE DASHBOARD. SHE RETURNS HER HANDS TO THE WHEEL, SHE IS FOCUSED ON THE ROAD. WE SEE THE TRAFFIC'S LIGHTS - THE WEATHER.

197 – POV OUTDOORS

CAMERA FACES THE CAR LOOKING INTO THE SIDE WINDOW. CAMERA DOLLIES BACK TO SEE RUTH IN DRIVER'S SEAT AT HEATHROW PARK-

ING GATE. SHE UNROLLS WINDOW AND TAKES A TICKET, ROLLS UP THE WINDOW AS THE GATE RISES. SHE SLOWLY STEERS THE CAR THROUGH A DARK MULTILEVEL PARKING GARAGE.

198 – CAMERA FOLLOWS RUTH THROUGH THE LABYRINTH OF ESCALATORS AND CORRIDORS OF THE AIR PORT.

THROUGH OUT THIS TIME, RUTH IS SPEAKING UNDER HER BREATH, DETERMINED, LOST IN AN INNER CONVERSATION, SOMETIMES REHEARSING WHAT IT IS SHE HAS TO SAY. PASSERSBY GIVE HER SPACE AND SHOW VARIOUS REACTIONS TO HER TALKING TO HERSELF.

199 – POV INTERIOR OF BUSY WAITING AREA

NEW ARRIVALS COME IN FROM CUSTOMS. THE ROOM IS FULL, NOISY. CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE LINE OF PEOPLE WAITING. WE FIND RUTH A BIT BACK OF THE LINE. LOST IN THOUGHT SHE IS DOESN'T QUITE SEEM PRESENT.

200 – POV FROM CEILING

PASSENGERS STREAM FROM A GATE BEHIND A PARTITION. SOME OF THEM WITH HAND-HELD BAGS, SOME WITH BASKETS FILLED WITH LUGGAGE. THERE ARE ALL SHAPES AND COLORS OF PEOPLE. THE NOISE LEVEL RAISES AS THE PEOPLE STREAM FROM THE GATE.

201 – WAITING ROOM

CAMERA TAKES A POSITION FROM FLOOR LEVEL TO SHOW THE FLOW OF PEOPLE LEAVING THE CUSTOMS AREA. WE HEAR PARTIAL CONVERSATIONS UP CLOSE. THEY GREET SOMEONE AND STOP - MOVE ON TOGETHER. SOME JUST WALK ON. PEOPLE WAVE TO SOMEONE THEY SEE IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM. THERE IS AN ANXIOUS YET CONGENIAL ATMOSPHERE.

202 – POV CAMERA AT SIDELINES

PASSENGERS STREAM BY. NOISE OF CROWD DOES NOT DIMINISH. WE SEE RUTH HAS NOW MOVED TO WAIT IN LEFT SIDE OF FRAME. THE STREAM OF PEOPLE COME FROM THE RIGHT SIDE. WILLY STEPS INTO THE FRAME. HE IS DRESSED IN A LONG BLACK WINTER COAT AND PULLS A CARRY-ON BAG WITH WHEELS. HE SEES HER AND HE STOPS. SHE SEES HIM, SHE DOESN'T MOVE. THERE ARE PEOPLE PASSING BY THEM ON EITHER SIDE. THE SOUND LEVEL IN THE WAITING AREA



SCRAMBLES. THE SCENE APPEARS IN SLOW MOTION. PEOPLE PASSING IN FRONT OF CAMERA SLOW THEN STOP.

203 – POV RUTH

THE CAMERA AS WILLY. RUTH IS SHIVERING WITH ANXIETY. SHE TAKES ONE STEP BACK AWAY FROM CAMERA.

204 – POV WILLY

HIS FACE REACTS TO AN INNER DREADFUL IDEA.

205 – POV RUTH

SHE IS TRYING TO SAY SOMETHING BUT CANNOT.

206 – POV WILLY

HE IS LOST FOR WORDS, HE SEARCHES FOR SOMETHING TO SAY.

207 – POV RUTH

SHE PULLS HERSELF TOGETHER. SHE LOOKS AT WILLY WITH RESOLVE. SHE TURNS AWAY FROM THE CAMERA AND STEPS INTO THE CROWD.

208 – POV ON RUTH WALKING AWAY FROM WILLY.

209 – CLOSE UP ON HER FACE

SHE SHOWS CONFLICTION AND DETERMINATION. WILLY IS IN THE BACKGROUND. HE CLOSES HIS EYES AS IN DEFEAT AND DROPS HIS HEAD IN DEJECTION. RUTH MOVES TEARFULLY OUT OF FRAME.

SCREEN GOES BLACK. SILENCE.

BEAT

210 – SCREEN COMES BACK TO FULL LIGHT

211 – POV ON WILLY'S BLACK SHOES ON FLOOR. CAMERA PANS UP TO HIS BLACK COAT. THE NOISE LEVEL INCREASES TO NORMAL LEVELS. THE CAMERA PANS UP TO SEE RUTH WALKING AWAY IN THE NEAR DISTANCE.

THE CAMERA SWIRLS AROUND WILLY. HE THROWS HIS HEAD BACK AND GIVES A WAR HOOP FROM THE TOP REGISTER OF HIS VOICE.

WILLIAM:  
Each!

212 – POV ON AIRPORT'S ARRIVAL ROOM

WILLY AND RUTH. EVERYONE HAS STOPPED THEIR MOVEMENTS. A SECURITY GUARD IN FRONT OF RUTH'S PATH REACHES FOR HIS GUN.

RUTH TURNS AROUND TO FACE WILLY. CROWD SLOWLY RESUMES THEIR NORMAL MOVEMENT, SOUND LEVEL RETURNS TO DRONE. WILLY AND RUTH ARE STATIONARY.

WILLY MOVES FORWARD. HE STANDS SIX FEET AWAY FROM RUTH. THEY HAVE STOPPED AND ATTRACTED FEW PEOPLE AROUND THEM. SOME WITH CARTS FILLED WITH LUGGAGE. CHILDREN FIDGET BEHIND EACH OF THEM.

WILLIAM:  
Ruth, we are in so much pain.  
Each of us.  
So much - All of us -  
pain and then we die.  
If I look at all my successes,  
I don't see anybody else's.  
When I see all of my failures I spin in on myself and I'm  
filled with self pity.  
I can't walk around numb either, not caring.  
People are Apart of my life.  
What is real is - when I win I've already lost.  
When I worked hard to be a success, I lost time to  
spend with you, Margot.  
But whether I win or loose I still have to go on.  
I have to go on. Sad, happy,  
at the top of my game  
or in that pit of grief with you over Margot.  
I have to go on.  
Ruth, I want to go on.  
My whole life, up or down.  
I want to go on with you. With -

213 – POV CLOSE UP ON RUTH'S REACTION.

CAMERA MOVES IN ON HER TO SHOW HER FIST PRESSED INTO HER MOUTH, TEARS ARE FORMING. CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSER TO SHOW RUTH HAS SLIGHTLY LOOSEMED HER TENSION IN HER FIST AND HER HAND SLOWLY OPENS TO MAKE A DEFEATED AND WIMPY SLOW MOTION WAVE GOODBYE WITH A LITTLE FINGER MOVEMENT. SHE BACKS UP AND THE CAMERA WATCHES AS RUTH MAKES THE LITTLE WAVE AND MOVES AWAY.

BEAT

SHE CONTINUES HER MARCH BACKWARDS. SHE TURNS AND DISAPPEARS INTO THE CROWD.

214 - CAMERA GOES BLACK.

215 – CAMERA PANS OVER TO MAN'S HAND AGAINST A LONG BLACK WINTER COAT.

A SMALL CHILD'S HAND COMES INTO THE FRAME, IT REACHES AND HOLDS ONTO THE LARGE HAND, IT YANKS AT THE HAND FOR ATTENTION.

CAMERA ZOOMS BACK TO REVEAL LITTLE NAVAHO GIRL, SIX YEARS OLD, WHO ALL ALONG WAS PART OF THE CROWD, AND HAS TAKEN WILLY'S ATTENTION AWAY FROM RUTH. THE GIRL TUGS AGAIN AT HIS HAND. BEHIND THE GIRL WE SEE JENEDA WHITEHAWK, WILLY'S MOTHER, SHE TOO HAS BEEN PART OF THE CROWD AROUND WILLY.

LITTLE GIRL:

Cousin Willy is she going cause of me?

216 – POV CAMERA ON RUTH IN DISTANCE MIXED IN WITH CROWD. SHE HAS BOTH HANDS COVERING HER MOUTH AND IS CRYING.

217 – POV ON WILLY

HE CROUCHES DOWN TO COMFORT THE LITTLE GIRL. JENEDA MOVES FORWARD. CAMERA CLOSES IN ON JENEDA, WILLY AND THE LITTLE GIRL.

WILLIAM:

No! Sweetheart, no.  
Not ever.

WILLY LOOKS TO SEE RUTH BUT CANNOT FIND HER. HE REALIZES SHE HAS GONE, REVEALS HIS EMOTION, BOTTLES IT UP, THEN HE RETURNS HIS ATTENTION TO THE LITTLE GIRL. HE GLANCES UP AT JENEDA WHO SMILES SUPPORT. HE SPEAKS TO THE LITTLE GIRL.

WILLIAM:

We just have to go on with -

A WOMAN'S HAND MOVES INTO FRAME. IT IS PLACED ON WILLY'S SHOULDER. WILLY FLINCHES. HE LOOKS UP. IT IS RUTH, WITH GREAT POISE SHE CROUCHES DOWN TO BE ALONG SIDE HIM, EYE LEVEL WITH THE LITTLE GIRL.

RUTH:

And, who is this pretty girl?

BEAT

218 – WAITING AREA

WILLY, RUTH AND LITTLE GIRL ARE AT BOTTOM OF FRAME, JENEDA IS SLIGHTLY TO THE BACK. THE CROWD AT THE AIRPORT HAS RETURNED TO THE COMMOTION OF ARRIVALS. RUTH HAS REACHED ACROSS WILLY TO MOVE A LOCK OF HAIR AWAY FROM THE LITTLE GIRLS CONCERNED FACE.

WILLIAM:

Ruth – Emily, is my daughter from Gray Hills, Arizona.

I don't believe you ever met.

Emily Gray this is Ruth.

Ruth - Emily.

I've asked Emily if she would like  
to come to live with us.

RUTH:

Oh. Right. My

– Emily –

what a very good idea.

CAMERA STAYS ON SCENE FOR BEAT JENEDA REACTS BY SHAKING HER HEAD IN DISBELIEF. SHE STANDS WITH BOTH HANDS OUT, PALMS FACING CAMERA AS IF SHE IS FEARFUL OF SOME JUDGMENT, BUT THE LOOK ON HER FACE IS EXTREME RELIEF. HER EYE CATCHES ONTO SOME-

THING. WE FOLLOW HER LINE OF SIGHT OUT OF AIRPORT WINDOW TO SEE A PASSENGER JET LIFTING OFF INTO THE GRAY SKY.

FADE TO GRAY SCREEN

219 – GRAY SCREEN DISSOLVES TO CITY SCAPE, LONDON.

A SMALL HAWK SWOOPS FROM SKY DOWN INTO SPRING COLORED TREELINED RESIDENTIAL AREA. BIRD PERCHES ON AN IRON FENCE. BIRD'S EYE BLINKS. POV OF BIRD ON FAMILY SCENE ON STEPS IN FRONT OF A ROW HOUSE. WILLY AND RUTH ARE SITTING ON STEPS NEAR THE SIDEWALK. EMILY GRAY IS DRAWING IN WHITE CHALK AT THE FOOT OF THE STEPS. WILLY IS INTENT ON EMILY'S DRAWING. RUTH IS QUITE PREGNANT, SHE LEANS INTO WILLY. EMILY LOOKS UP AND SMILES AT THE ADULTS. SHE STANDS AND CHEST OUT TAKES AN IMPOSING POSE. WE SEE SHE HAS DRAWN A HOPSCOTCH PATH. CAMERA FOCUSES IN OF EMILY'S POISED RESOLVE.

THEN SHE JUMPS.

THE CAMERA CATCHES HER IN DELIGHT — IN MID-FLIGHT.

SCREEN FADES TO BLACK.

TITLES.

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