

LOVESICK

An original screenplay

by

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FADE IN

EXT. SUBURBAN ROAD. NIGHT

A black limo with smoked glass windows creeps along a tree-lined road and pulls up outside the garden gates of Nick's house.

A BAILIFF, with a shaven head and wearing a Bluetooth, a black suit and tie and gleaming white shirt, quickly gets out of the car, slamming the door.

EXT. NICK'S HOUSE. NIGHT

He strides up to the front door of the house and leans on the bell until a bedroom light comes on. He takes a document from inside his jacket.

A light comes on in the hallway. Then NICK, 45, fit and intense, yet vulnerable, opens the door.

BAILIFF
(Estuary English)
Nicholas Smith?

NICK
Who wants to know?

BAILIFF
I'm serving you this injunction on
behalf of Sean Wolfe.

He thrusts the document in Nick's face then immediately turns his back and leaves.

The papers scatter at Nick's feet as he angrily stares at the departing back.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

In the darkness, the comforting peace of shallow breathing is broken by the harsh ringing of the bedside telephone.

ANNE, 40, turns on the bedroom light. Her motherly appearance and attitude still show signs of her original beauty.

She feels for the receiver and fumbles it to her ear.

ANNE
(into phone)
Hello?

PETER (V.O.)
Sorry to wake you Anne. I need to
talk to Nick. It's urgent.

Anne turns to find the other side of the bed empty.

ANNE
(shouts)
Nick. Nick.

Footsteps clatter up wooden stairs and Nick enters the
bedroom.

ANNE (CONT'D)
It's Peter. I do wish he didn't
treat me as your secretary.

Nick takes the phone.

NICK
(into phone)
Hey. What's up?

PETER (V.O.)
Turn on the news.

INT. NICK'S KITCHEN. DAY

A muted TV shows a news programme.

Nick puts on the kettle and spoons coffee into a cafetière.
Reaching into the fridge, he fumbles around, hesitates,
then pulls out a carton of orange juice. He pours a glass
and speaks almost under his breath.

NICK
Fuck it.

He goes back to the fridge and takes out a bottle of
expensive vodka and tops up the juice with booze. He raises
the glass in a toast.

NICK (CONT'D)
Sean Wolfe M.A ... The Lord giveth
and the Lord taketh away. Blessed
be the name of the Lord.

He gulps the drink, makes himself another and looks out the kitchen window onto his lush garden as he sips and sips.

He carefully rinses out the glass, replaces the bottle and closes the fridge door.

INT. PETER'S OFFICE, TV CENTRE. DAY

The door opens and Nick enters the cluttered office with files and books everywhere. A new PC looks incongruous in this bookish environment.

PETER, although about the same age as Nick, comes from another time - is Bohemian in appearance and attitude.

PETER

Well ... it's finally happened.
We're free.

NICK

I had another High Court
injunction this morning.

PETER

He definitely died yesterday.

NICK

How do you know it's not just
another of his disappearing
tricks?

PETER

We have an informer there - an ex-
employee with a grudge.

NICK

I didn't know that.

PETER

I've spoken to our lawyers. We can
ignore all the injunctions now.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE TV CENTRE. DAY

In the busy street, the black limo with smoked glass windows sits on double yellow lines, its engine running. A traffic warden approaches but ignores the car, as if it wasn't even there.

PETER (V.O.)

Come on! It's *our* time now. We ought to celebrate with a drink.

BACK TO SCENE

Peter searches his desk drawers until he finds a bottle.

NICK

Too early for me.

PETER

What's left to do?

NICK

I still need to find out about those two missing years. And -

PETER

Right, do it.

NICK

I'm still researching that *Arena* thing.

PETER

Now, Nick. Before Wolfe's family can organise themselves into putting more legal gags on us.

NICK

They are hardly Wolfe. The sons are spoiled brats. They won't have his power, surely. Nor his motivation.

PETER

We need to get the programme out before the gutter press publishes their sensationalised, dirty version of his life.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE TV CENTRE. DAY.

The ominous car is still sitting there, purring, watching. A window motors down and a cigarette is tossed out before the window closes again.

NICK (V.O.)

Surely it -

PETER (V.O.)

I know this is going to sound selfish, but I need a big success. You know what it's like under the new regime here - succeed or die.

The long cigarette butt burns on the pavement below a sign showing the penalty for litter.

BACK TO SCENE

Peter opens a window, leans out, lights up and takes several puffs on his pipe before returning to his desk.

NICK

Surely it would be quicker to get someone in Greece to research?

PETER

No. It must be you. Despite your time-consuming perfectionism. You're the one with the rest of his life at your fingertips.

NICK

I don't like leaving Anne to cope with Sarah on her own again.

PETER

Another thing.

There is a pause until Nick becomes aware he's being addressed. He looks up questioningly.

PETER (CONT'D)

I've saved the best for last. You'll love this.

NICK

(ironically)
Of course I will.

PETER

All the information about Wolfe on the Net has disappeared

He rolls his chair up to his PC and types.

INSERT

Peter Googles:

Wolfe, Sean, novelist.

The screen comes up:

*Your search - **Wolfe, Sean, novelist** - did not match any documents.*

BACK TO SCENE

NICK

Jesus. How?

PETER

I don't really understand. One of the cyberpunks upstairs talks about ...

He types again, then reads from the screen.

PETER (CONT'D)

"A polymorphic code sent anonymously by email. An information warrior with a software bomb. Probably programmed to be sent automatically on Wolfe's death."

NICK

What can be done? What can I do?

PETER

Nothing. It's worse than regular computer viruses. The name and location of anyone trying to access data on Wolfe are immediately transferred back to his organisation. The virus acts like a bug. A sort of listening device that radios back. Or so the nerd says. Anyway, I found out too late.

NICK

Thank God I'm a Luddite and have paper copies of all my research information at home.

PETER

Yes, good old printed paper. That can't be infected or compromised. Let's do it quickly. And keep in touch? I will worry, you know? And talking about pages of print, maybe you can trace those novels Wolfe didn't have the courage to publish.

NICK

That really would be a bonus. You really believe the *romans à clef* rumours too?

INT. OFFICE IN NICK'S HOUSE. DAY.

The upstairs office is full of neatly arranged books and files and there are other shelves stacked with video tapes to feed the VCR, audio tapes, floppy discs, DVDs.

In pride of place, is a row of hardback novels, a matched set. They all bear the name S.Wolfe.

The walls are covered with photographs of Wolfe, heavy set and spectacles in hand, up to the age of 35 and several of him, now with a full beard, in his late 50s. The latter are blurred, having been blown up from long lens pictures.

One wall of the office is cork-lined and covered with newspaper clippings about Wolfe, and a large chart. This is neatly divided into years and in small careful handwriting obsessively details Wolfe's life history.

In stark contrast to the surrounding detailed mass of information, the years 1986 to 1988 are startlingly blank, virgin white space.

Raised voices outside the office precede Nick bursting in and closely followed by Anne.

NICK

... tried to get out of going. But it's my job.

ANNE

Your obsession. We can't even have a discussion without you trying to seek sanctuary in here. Look at it. It's not even an office. It's a shrine to Wolfe.

NICK

Wolfe's life and work are my
life's work. You knew that when we
first met.

ANNE

You always go too far. Take things
to excess.

NICK

I intend this programme to be a
definitive text. The standard for
future biographers.

ANNE

It's only a TV programme.

NICK

Knowing a writer's life is
essential to understanding his
work.

ANNE

That's your theory.

NICK

I'm also going to Greece for you.
For both me *and* you.

ANNE

And?

NICK

What do you mean '*and*'?

ANNE

I do have a daughter, you know.

NICK

Who I instantly fell in love with...
When I said *you* I mean both of
you.

Nick starts taking files down from a shelf and searching
through them impatiently.

Anne slaps the papers out of his hands.

ANNE

You don't mean anything. We don't
mean anything. The moment you
started drinking at thirteen -

NICK

Sixteen.

ANNE

Whatever. The moment you started drinking you stopped growing ... emotionally. Look at the way you fell for me. You acted like a lovesick teenager.

NICK

I fell in love with you. Totally. Utterly. What is wrong with that?

ANNE

Sometimes I suspect it's just because I looked like Lily did in the book.

NICK

It was *YOU* I loved.

ANNE

And now? You just don't care.

NICK

Of course I care.

ANNE

Holding back your tears is not caring. Showing emotion is not a sign of weakness, Nick.

NICK

I'm doing a job to support a family. Give you both security.

ANNE

What if the Wolfe organization sued you for libel? Just as he did so many other small people. We would lose everything. Our home.

She sweeps her hand around the room.

ANNE (CONT'D)

This office, with your twenty odd years of research on Wolfe, is the only thing you value.

NICK

It's my job.

There is a pause while they both try and calm themselves.

ANNE

I don't want you to go. All you're after is those unpublished novels you think are still on the island. If they exist ... if the island exists. I don't want you to go.

Nick fails to react.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Okay. Go then. To hell.

NICK

If you feel like that, I won't go.

Nick picks up the phone, punches in a number and pushes it into Anne's hand.

NICK (CONT'D)

You tell Peter.

ANNE

Don't try and lay it on me.

She crashes down the receiver.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Go to Greece. And don't come back. Not until we are more important than your work. Not until you need us.

Nick continues ransacking his research materials, not reacting. This reignites her passion.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Bugger off. Lay the ghost. Screw it.

She slams out of the office crying. The door immediately opens again.

ANNE (CONT'D)

And don't think I've forgotten you wanted to name our daughter Lily. That really is sick.

She slams the door shut again, this time, finally.

Nick sits at his laptop and brings up a collection of photographs.

INSERT

On the screen, one by one, appear colour photographs from 1980 of Wolfe with President Carter, John Updike, John Fowles, Mick Jagger - the two are hugging - and finally Michele Pfeiffer.

Another picture shows Wolfe at the wheel of a '57 Chevrolet.

BACK TO SCENE

One of the fading newspaper clippings on the wall has the headline:

British Novelist Makes £2m Hollywood

Killing

EXT/INT. CAR, FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE. DAY

Nick's Volvo travels down a long straight road in flat countryside.

An avenue of poplars gives a strobe effect to the bright sunlight.

Inside the car, Nick picks up a small audio recorder from the passenger seat and speaks into it.

NICK

There is another side to this giant of English literature. He is a man of mystery. What was it that made him change from the accessible, public figure to a recluse - in self-imposed exile on his own Pacific island? Sitting like a spider at the centre of his vast financial web.

He stops recording when he has to use both hands to overtake a farm tractor and trailer. He looks in the rear-view mirror and sees a black limo following him. Then he starts recording again.

NICK (CONT'D)

Note. Mention his being a big society figure. Parties, nightclubs and stuff. Big charity bashes with 'A list' celebs. Oh

NICK (CONT'D)

yes. And on that subject tell how he was the person who originated the much quoted, 'All the politicians who can't be bought can be rented.' So his influence spread from political friends through the Home Office and the police. He actually got off on silencing his critics. But that pleasure grew into a habit which he indulged so much and for so long, that it developed into a full-blown addiction.

The car recedes into the distance towards the sun until it seems consumed in its fire.

EXT/INT. CAR, DOLOMITE MOUNTAINS, ITALY. DAY

A deep gorge cuts through the mountainous country. A narrow road follows the turns of a milky river in spate. The car slows and pulls into a passing point.

Inside the car, Nick unfolds a large scale map. He flips through some notes then annotates the map, including a few question marks.

EXT. CITY STREET. DAY

A rundown street of shops is slightly cheered by the bright orange evening sunshine. On one corner is a huge 1930s cinema. Plastic lettering above the entrance suggests the current film is *The Lovers*.

Anne is walking along holding hands with her four-year-old daughter. They are so similar that, apart from the age difference ... they could be twins. SARAH is energetically skipping along as they happily chat to one another.

They are oblivious of a black-suited HEAVY watching from the black limo that is following them.

A top floor window of one of the building suddenly flares with the reflected sun.

Sarah is surprised and excitedly points up.

SARAH

Look, Mummy, the house is on fire.

ANNE

No, it's just the sun reflected by the window. It looks like flames, though, doesn't it?

The black limo continues to follow them.

EXT. CROATIAN COASTLINE. DAY

Nick is out of his car talking to a tripod mounted digital camera. A small mic is clipped to his tee shirt.

In the background is a beautiful village of red-roofed houses in well-kept gardens. Beyond that, a glittering sea.

NICK

I'm now at the half-way point of this literary journey of discovery. Following in the footsteps of the hero of Wolfe's last published novel. I had a strong feeling of *déjà vu* when I first found this place. It is, of course, straight out of that famous chapter thirteen. I must admit to a tremendous feeling of excitement at what I may be going to find in Greece.

He checks the recording on playback.

INT. HOTEL ROOM, CROATIA. NIGHT

Nick is lying on his bed listening on his mobile with his laptop on his stomach.

PETER (V.O.)

She's doing the best she can, a day at a time. All she wants is Sarah's happiness. The same as you, Nick.

NICK

I know. Anne has been my rock. But -

PETER (V.O.)

No 'buts', Nick.

NICK

Sorry.

PETER (V.O.)

Anyway, where are you?

NICK

Near the Greek border.

PETER (V.O.)

The programme, you fool.

NICK

I've had some ideas on how to get across the strong autobiographical nature of his novel. Especially one thing.

PETER (V.O.)

Give.

NICK

The rumours that he fathered a child when he was still at school.

PETER (V.O.)

I'll ask our lawyers how best you can present that.

NICK

Any more injunctions, heavies?

PETER (V.O.)

Just concentrate on your filming ... and take care.

NICK

Will you go and see Anne again? Persuade her to take my calls?

EXT. COASTLINE, GREEK MAINLAND. DAY

Nick is sitting at the open door of his car, again pouring over maps and files of notes. He scans the coast with binoculars then goes back to his maps. He picks up his audio recorder.

NICK

I seem to be getting nowhere. The places he describes of the hero's journey here were fairly easy to find compared to this. His descriptions of the journey through Greece to his destination are vague. The novel was set in a mainland village but I think he was being deliberately misleading about that. All his previous books were set in secret domains, the archetypal sacred combs, metaphorical islands, clearings in forests. So that's what I'm looking for now. Somewhere off the Peloponnese peninsula and a fairly long ferry journey from Athens. Wolfe couldn't resist, break a lifelong habit, of playing games with his readers and be deliberately opaque and lay false trails. It was a weakness he had. A potentially dangerous obsession. But if you play games there are rules that your opponent knows or can work out scientifically, by extrapolation or inference.

He switches off the recorder.

NICK (CONT'D)

Jesus. Where's the keep it simple for Chris'sake.

He rewinds to the beginning and starts over-recording.

NICK (CONT'D)

I think I'm getting somewhere ...

EXT. CAR, COUNTRY ROAD, GREEK MAINLAND. DAY

Nick's car travels along a deserted minor road and halts at a fork. It then takes a right.

When he has gone out of sight, a black limousine arrives, slows, then takes the left fork. It soon returns at speed and screeches round the turn. It fails to make the corner and has to do a three-point, dust-churning, turn then speeds after Nick.

An old farmer in a wreck of a van approaches the limo from the other side of a blind corner. The limo is on the wrong side of the road and sideswipes the van, which slowly rolls over and over. After a few moments silence, the driver's door creaks open. He crawls out, finally stands and staggers away.

A loud explosion and the vehicle disappears in a ball of flames.

The limo drives off without slowing.

EXT. COASTLINE, GREEK MAINLAND. DAY

Grey-brown mountains divide the unblemished blue sky from the flat blue sea. A crescent-shaped island a mile across the strait is startling in the vivid greenness of the pine forest that covers all but the littoral zone and the white-walled, red-roofed houses of a fishing village.

Nick is standing next to his car looking at the island through his binoculars. He is taut with excitement, his mouth in a rictus grin. He unfreezes, punches the air, spins round and round triumphantly.

This performance is observed from a distance through another pair of binoculars.

INT. MAINLAND TAVERNA. DAY

Nick is leaning on the counter, a small cup of Turkish coffee by his side with some bread and olives. He is enjoying a phone conversation.

NICK

(into phone)

Yes, yes. I'm sure it's right ... Of course I'll be careful but no one will be expecting anyone ... Anything your end? Any more injunctions, heavies? ... Okay. As soon as I have anything.

EXT. GREEK ISLAND. DAY

Nick meanders round the fishing village absorbing the atmosphere and sometimes referring to a crude tourist map.

He stops to question everyone who seems amenable.

On a wall, a dilapidated poster advertises a film at the local cinema in both Greek and English. It is *The Lovers*.

EXT. BEACH. DAY

The strait between the island and the mainland is flat calm. Near the shore the surface of the water breaks and LILY, 40, bursts up to the air.

She wades ashore pulling back her long blonde hair. She is wearing a light long-sleeved tee shirt with her bikini bottom. Her breasts and gluteal muscles of her slim frame are made more libidinous by their very concealment.

EXT. LILY'S COTTAGE. DAY

Lily is wearing a sweatshirt, shorts and espadrilles, but her hair is still damp as she goes in through the pea-green door, after pausing to deadhead an enormous ancient scarlet geranium in the small courtyard.

LATER

Nick walks past Lily's cottage without giving it a moment's attention.

INT. ISLAND TAVERNA. DAY

Nick talks to PROPRIETOR #1 behind the bar who nods toward an OLD FISHERMAN sitting in a dark corner. Nick asks something, then buys a drink and takes it over to the fisherman and, after another question, sits at the table. As they talk, the proprietor brings Nick a cup of coffee. Nick smiles his thanks then returns to his conversation, with an expression of urgency on his face.

INT. ISLAND HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT

Nick is doing another of his talking heads to his camera.

NICK

... break through. I've found the island. And I'm absolutely sure it's the right one. In *The Magician* he included a list of poems which referred to the moon. I thought the list was just another of his post-modern

NICK (CONT'D)

literary devices, like puzzles,
Chinese boxes, intertextuality,
and so on. But in reality, it was
a clue. The island is indeed
shaped like a crescent moon.

Nick holds the tourist map up to the video camera.

NICK (CONT'D)

But the irony is that for ages the
moon has symbolised a warning
against self-indulgence and
dangers in personal relationships.
And Wolfe came here newly married
and successful.

He switches off the camera and sits and thinks for a while,
then starts recording again.

NICK (CONT'D)

But now for the biggy. Today I
talked to an old islander, a
fisherman, the crazy one, he's
called, who, in his ramblings,
mentioned Wolfe living on the
island. Listen, I have it here.

He unclips the mic from his tee shirt and places it next to
his audio recorder which he starts to play. There is some
incoherent Greek in an old man's fragile voice, then Nick
asking a question.

NICK (CONT'D)

(in hesitant Greek)

Tell me about the time from 1986
to 1988.

He clips the mic back on his tee shirt.

NICK (CONT'D)

It is an amazing conversation. At
first it would seem to be senile
ramblings.

INT. TAVERNA. EARLIER THAT DAY. FLASHBACK

Nick and the proprietor are at a table with the old
fisherman.

NICK

Calemera.

FISHERMAN

Calemera.

NICK

(to proprietor)

Can you ask him what he knows about Wolfe and what happened from 1986 to 1988. Oh, and what he wants to drink? And one for yourself.

PROPRIETOR

(in Greek)

This man is from the BBC in London. He will give you money ...

MATCHING DISSOLVE

PROPRIETOR (CONT'D)

(in English)

The man is crazy. He speaks about Aristophanes, Plato, Aristotle and Mr Wolfe. He talks about Mr Wolfe's new form of drama. One which has no audience and is the same as reality. A metatheatre. Do you understand the Greek word *meta*?

NICK

Change. And you didn't give me any from the drinks. What else did he say?

PROPRIETOR

This you will not believe.

NICK

What?

PROPRIETOR

(to fisherman in Greek)

Russian roulette?

FISHERMAN
(in English)
Yes.
(in Greek)
Suicide ... or murder.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. HARBOUR. DAY

Sitting on a wall, Nick is on his mobile, watching the passers-by. Glancing at his watch, he suddenly directs all his attention back to the phone.

ANNE (V.O.)
Hello?

NICK
(into phone)
It's me. How are you? I miss you both.

ANNE (V.O.)
Was that an emotion I heard?

NICK
Can we please sort things out?

ANNE (V.O.)
It's down to you. We survived without you before.

NICK
I'm sorry.

ANNE (V.O.)
Are you drinking?

NICK
I'm sorry about everything. I promise things will be different. But I've found the island. And listen to this. Wolfe was involved with murder. Some sort of snuff theatre. Like snuff movies.

ANNE (V.O.)

I said when you left, you can only return when Sarah and I are more important than your work. And, by the way, I found her crying in her sleep.

NICK

I think I'm being followed. Have you noticed any -?

He stares in disbelief at the phone and its disconnected signal.

He looks up and idly watches Lily in the distance - just another attractive woman. Then he looks at her again, in sudden recognition.

EXT. STREET.DAY

He rushes down the street in the direction Lily went, but he has lost her.

INT. ISLAND HOTEL ROOM. DAY

Nick is lying on the bed, naked and sweating, searching through a novel and making notes into his digital recorder.

NICK

I had an immediate feeling of recognition. A jump inside my body. A displacement. A certainty that I had met her before, but deep down knowing I hadn't.

He pauses in his dictation to have time to think.

NICK (CONT'D)

She fits his description - hair, colouring, height, build. I can hardly believe it. It's as though I've become a character in Wolfe's novel. She's so beautiful. Yet she is different. She is the heroine of Wolfe's novel but twenty years older. I can't believe she's still here. But it's further evidence, the clincher, that I've found the right island.

Nick switches off the recorder to converse with himself in private.

NICK (CONT'D)

In the flesh. The woman of my dreams. My soul mate. My anima. My Lily. My God.

INT. EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE, TV CENTRE. DAY.

Peter is sitting in front of a top TV EXECUTIVE'S large, black, almost empty desk, a schoolboy in front of a headmaster immaculately incongruous in Armani clothes, too fashionable for his years - his seventh decade.

EXECUTIVE

It is not the financial aspects: you did well to send him on a solo mission. It not only obviates the cost of a film crew but makes him more mobile and inconspicuous. Good decision. No. It is a matter of timing. The programme must be finished next week.

PETER

But the real story is just breaking. *If*, it's true, and I emphasise the word 'if', then Wolfe was involved with murder. Which would explain Wolfe's missing years. Nick has found the island, the setting of the book, and now thinks he's found the heroine of the novel.

EXECUTIVE

I can not alter the schedules. They are the end product of complex and extensive advance planning. I found you a window and that is when the programme must go out. Complete in your eyes or not.

Peter stares angrily at his feet.

EXT. ISLAND VILLAGE. DAY

Nick wanders aimlessly through the labyrinthine village alleys.

Rounding a corner, he comes across a house that is noticeably in far better repair than its neighbours. It has an expensive hardwood front door, and the walls have recently been rendered and painted.

Nick surreptitiously examines it from all sides. There are expensive fittings and wrought ironwork.

He moves to a vantage point up an alley. He focuses in on the now revealed satellite dish on the bright red-tiled roof.

When he continues his meanderings he passes a taverna and in a short while sees another house that looks superior to its neighbours. He returns to the taverna and enters.

He and PROPRIETOR #2 come and stand at the door and they both look at the newly painted house and talk. The proprietor gesticulates with hunched shoulders and opened palms.

PROPRIETOR #2

It began twenty years ago. Before I came. Several islanders won the lottery, they say.

NICK

How much? Are you sure?

PROPRIETOR #2

Who knows? I know those people are not liked, Maybe because of jealousy, I don't know.

NICK

But?

PROPRIETOR #2

There are stories, There are always stories in a small place like this. Small and incest ... I am sorry -

NICK

Incestuous?

PROPRIETOR#2

Incest ... uous.

NICK

Stories about what?

PROPRIETOR #2

That they were paid to keep
silent.

He puts a forefinger to his lips. There is a long silence
and Nick fidgets with impatience.

NICK

Silent about what?

Again, there is no response. Nick urgently pulls out a
fistful of paper euros.

NICK (CONT'D)

Please, this is very important,

Proprietor #2 is surprised at the quantity of money on
offer.

PROPRIETOR #2

I don't know - it was something to
do with a foreigner. A writer. I
don't know. I'm an outsider here.
Another foreigner, still, after
twelve years. They don't tell me
things. But I hear things. When
the customers have had too much to
drink and their mouths become
loose.

NICK

What do you hear?

PROPRIETOR #2

Silence. What you say?

(in Greek)

A conspiracy of silence.

(in English)

A conspiracy of silence.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF VILLAGE. DAY

A distant figure is walking along the road close to the
seashore. As it comes to a church it pauses, looks at a
map, looks around then takes a footpath alongside the
church and starts climbing a ridge towards an olive grove.

The old trees are alive with the noise of cicadas.

Closer, the figure is seen to be Nick. He enters the pine
forest above the grove.

EXT. PINE FOREST. DAY

Nick is sitting on the needle covered floor of the forest, resting against a pine tree. He looks down on the village through a break in the trees. He talks into his recorder.

NICK

It is as though I've been here before. The exact view. And I have a sudden feeling of desolation. Of being in a void. Suicidal, almost. It took me a while to work it out but now I know. It's exactly the same scene as Wolfe described in the novel. Where the hero goes to shoot himself with a double barrelled shotgun. But, of course, lives to tell the tale. It's amazing how -

Suddenly he stops talking and listens hard. He looks all around as though he feels he's being watched. Among the trees is nothing but more trees.

He continues his recording.

NICK (CONT'D)

The murder. Could the person who died in Wolfe's theatre be the author he was accused of plagiarising, who then disappeared? I must get the dates checked. Only connect.

INT. NICK'S SITTING ROOM. DAY

Anne sits on the sofa, arms clenching her abdomen, crying uncontrollably.

Peter gets up from his chair to sit next to her. He is embarrassed. He goes to put an arm round her shoulders then changes his mind.

PETER

I know ... I know ... but he does need to know what happened during those missing years.

ANNE

Why? Why?

PETER

To leave a blank space, when the rest of Wolfe's life is so well documented, looks like laziness or incompetence or -

ANNE

Maybe nothing happened.

PETER

Or plain bad journalism. It would hurt my reputation ... and his.

EXT. HILLSIDE. DAY

Nick rapidly descends through the olive grove towards the shore road, occasionally jumping from boulder to boulder, like an energetic, joyful child.

He sees a woman coming up the road and stops as he recognises the same sweatshirt and jeans that Lily was wearing when he first saw her by the harbour. Then she is close enough for him to confirm it's Lily's face.

He pauses behind a tree until she has gone further up the road towards the village. Then he follows her.

EXT. ROAD AND VILLAGE. DAY

He follows her into the village. She stops on the terrace of a restaurant.

Nick retraces his steps to put a greater distance between them as Lily orders and drinks an orange juice. She looks idly around but her eyes do not hesitate as she scans past him.

Nick raises his small digital camera and zooms in to take a snap.

At last she finishes her drink and pays the waiter.

Nick keeps a safe distance as he follows her until she enters the door of her cottage.

Nick watches for a long time from a safe distance.

There is an indeterminate movement at one of the cottage windows, possibly a face, but it is too far away to be sure.

Finally, Nick gives up his vigil and wanders away, lost in thought.

INT. ISLAND HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT

Again, Nick is lying on his bed with his laptop, books and files of notes spread around him. He is on his mobile.

NICK
(into phone)
Anne, it's me. How are you?

ANNE (V.O.)
Worried.

NICK
How do you mean?

ANNE (V.O.)
I've been talking to Peter. He said people can get an injunction even before a libel has been published.

NICK
I know, he told me. It's called prior restraint. It's nothing for you to worry about.

ANNE (V.O.)
How can you say that?

NICK
It's used very rarely. And we would know about it.

ANNE (V.O.)
How?

NICK
The judge has to make public who the injunction is against.

ANNE (V.O.)
What if the judge is a crony of -?

NICK
Trust me. Us. Peter has excellent written legal advice.

ANN (V.O.)
Who from?

NICK

From the consultant on *COPS* - a Chief Inspector Coulson ... I love you.

ANNE (V.O.)

If you really meant that you'd give up and put your family first. You're not even getting any hard facts are you?

NICK

No. Some of the locals say they have never heard of Wolfe, some have heard the name but know nothing about him, some won't talk to me.

ANNE (V.O.)

I can understand that.

NICK

I'm wondering if the person who died in Wolfe's theatre was the author he was accused of plagiarising. Who disappeared. I must get the dates checked.

ANNE (V.O.)

I think a car follows us when we're out shopping.

NICK

Don't worry. I get that way too. This is Greece, the home of mythological creatures. How is Sarah?

ANNE (V.O.)

Asking where you are.

NICK

Kiss her goodnight for me?

EXT. CAFÉ TERRACE, VILLAGE. DAY

Nick is sitting in isolation on a busy café terrace, once again idly watching the tourists drift about.

There is a loud scraping sound behind and he quickly turns his head to see Lily dragging a chair to his table.

Before he has time to register surprise she speaks, as though they are old acquaintances.

LILY

Hello. Do you mind if I sit at your table? It's crowded here today.

They lock eyes. The look goes on and on. With no embarrassment.

Nick struggles to find a reply but is pre-empted.

LILY (CONT'D)

Don't worry - I know you know.

She allows time for the aftershock to die away.

LILY (CONT'D)

But I don't know you ... or your name.

NICK

I'm Smith, Nicholas Smith. Nick.

Lily sits there waiting for him to continue, her eyebrows slightly raised so that the pale blue irises are completely surrounded by startling white cornea. The eyes do not flick away to check out the passers-by. They are direct and honest and are completely concentrated on her almost victim of hypnosis.

NICK (CONT'D)

I'm sorry ...

LILY

What? Sorry you're Nick Smith?

NICK

No, I'm sorry because I have an advantage over you.

Lily smiles.

LILY

Oh, I shouldn't think so.

NICK

No. Um. Yes. You see ... I've seen you before. I've seen you here on the island already.

LILY

Not as often as I've seen you.

NICK

How do you mean?

LILY

I knew you recognised me at the taverna up the road a couple of days ago.

NICK

Jesus. Then you know why I'm here?

LILY

I don't know why you're wasting your time. Or the TV licence payers' money.

Nick is even more surprised.

LILY (CONT'D)

Nothing happened here twenty years ago. You are wasting your time. I knew Wolfe, of course, and he spent those two years writing his last novel. He did not disappear.

An insistent shout from the edge of the terrace.

FISHERMAN

Mr Nick! Mr Nick!

It is the old fisherman he'd quizzed in the taverna. In the full light of day he is dishevelled and slightly mongoloid in appearance.

Nick is torn between going to him and staying with Lily.

Reluctantly he gets up.

NICK

Excuse me just a moment.

He goes across to the Greek. After shaking his head, he turns back to his table only to find Lily has disappeared.

INT. ISLAND HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT

Nick is showering and getting ready for bed when there is a knock at the door. He pulls on a shirt and shorts before opening it to the HOTEL MANAGER.

MANAGER

Good evening. A boy brought this.

He hands Nick a note and waits to see if a reply is needed.
Nick reads:

INSERT

Yannis tomorrow at 7

There is no signature but a simple line drawing - of a lily.

BACK TO SCENE

Nick grins at the manager and gives him a ten euro note from his pocket.

NICK

(in Greek)

Thanks.

EXT. CASTELLI BEACH. DAY

The flat calm of the sea is suddenly shattered as Nick surfaces. He brushes the water from his face then begins a leisurely breaststroke towards the shore.

A figure walking along the shore catches his attention. From a distance it seems like Lily, but as he swims closer he sees the woman is much too young.

He calls out but there is no response.

Nick begins a fast crawl but by the time he gets to the shore the woman has disappeared.

EXT. TERRACE, YANNI'S RESTAURANT. NIGHT

Nick is sitting over in the far corner of the terrace, idly twisting an empty wine glass and watching the patterns of light made by the guttering candles in their glass holders.

He looks up and stands as Lily arrives in a simple long-sleeved, black cocktail dress and with gold jewellery set off by her tan.

They order drinks when the WAITER arrives.

NICK

How's your day been? I thought I saw you near Castelli beach when I was swimming.

LILY

You're very abstemious: tonic water.

NICK

I like the hint of quinine. Somerset Maughamish? Sundowners on the veranda of some far-Eastern plantation house?

LILY

And you're here for the same reason as Maugham? Collecting material for your fictions?

NICK

No. This is serious biographical research. I've been fascinated by Wolfe for years. Since reading his first novel in fact.

The waiter comes back and Lily and Nick look at their menus for the first time and discuss them with the waiter, who takes their order then leaves them alone.

NICK (CONT'D)

Thanks for the invitation.

LILY

You're buying.

NICK

Why -?

LILY

Because you can put it on your expense account.

NICK

No. Why did you invite me?

LILY

Not just because you're a fit looking man. But because the social life on Spetses is non-existent. A big zilch, zero.

NICK
Thanks a bunch.

LILY
So? What do you think?

Nick looks at her blankly.

LILY (CONT'D)
You think he disappeared in the
late eighties and was hiding here?
Why? Why would he do that?

NICK
I don't know, there are theories ...

LILY
Such as?

NICK
I have an open mind. I just want
to find out the truth. Fill in the
gap in his biography before it's
filled with rubbish by the
tabloids. And I'm certain there
are unpublished manuscripts
somewhere. I'd like to find them.
I really would.

LILY
Why?

NICK
I think they may be *romans a clèf*.
Novels about real people. But
disguised.

LILY
I know what a *roman a clèf* is.

The hors-d'oeuvres arrive and they continue the dialogue
hardly noticing the meal. They are completely focussed on
one another in the increasingly busy restaurant.

LILY
So? What else?

NICK
Well, I've heard someone died ...

LILY

What? Russian roulette? ... The metatheatre? ... Those old chestnuts?

Nick looks a little shamefaced.

NICK

I think

LILY

How about 'The Other Woman' theory: that Wolfe was screwing the wife of a friend?

NICK

That is another theory, yes.

LILY

The Fatty Arbuckle story?

NICK

How come you know all of this?

LILY

I collect the stories. There used to be websites full of them until they disappeared a few weeks ago. I find them very amusing because they are so outrageously untrue. I told you before - nothing happened from 1986 to 1988. He was here writing a novel - the big one. Then, with the shedloads of money from Hollywood, he moved to the other side of the world. And that was the last time I had any contact with him.

NICK

So why all the secrecy?

LILY

Why can't you just be content with your success at tracing him to this island? Use that for your documentary and be satisfied.

NICK

Because there is more, I know it. It's in his books. In the games he plays with his readers.

LILY

Christ! Is the age of conspiracy theories turning into one of games theory - in ordinary life? Christ, I give up.

There is a pause in the conversation as the waiter clears away the dishes. Nick nods at his enquiry.

NICK

Tell me about yourself.

Lily plays with her hair.

LILY

If you think Fatty Arbuckle was innocent just look at the titles of some of his films: *Fatty's Magic Pants*, *He Did and He Didn't*, *His Alibi*.

Nick laughs, then his eyes flick between her eyes and her mouth.

LILY (CONT'D)

What a giveaway.

A small commotion from a neighbouring table takes them both away from their own, insulated world for a moment.

LILY (CONT'D)

Myself? I try to live in the present, Nick. The past is history, the future a mystery ... all that stuff?

The waiter comes back with two glasses of brandy.

WAITER

(in Greek)

With the compliments of the owner.

NICK / LILY

(together)

Thanks.

Nick pushes his brandy glass towards Lily. Their fingers briefly touch. She smiles.

LILY

Can't say I blame you. *Metaxa*. Awful stuff.

As the waiter watches from the doorway, Lily pours Nick's brandy into her own glass, then knocks the whole lot back in one gulp. But her eyes stay dry and on Nick.

He sips his coffee and gives her an enquiring look over the rim of the cup.

LILY (CONT'D)

Smile, Nick, learn to smile.

NICK

I've read that in one of his books.

LILY

"Il faut imaginer Sisyphe heureux?"

NICK

How could Sisyphus be happy spending his whole life pushing a boulder up a mountain, watching it roll back down, and pushing it up again? And again.

LILY

Come on. It's such a lovely night. I'm dying for a swim.

As they walk away, down the alley, their voices fade slowly.

NICK

How did you feel when Wolfe's death was announced last month?

LILY

It has been such a long time since I saw him. As I said, I live for today, Nick. Tonight, rather.

EXT. HIDDEN BEACH. NIGHT

Nick and Lily keep a polite distance as they both strip naked on a deserted sandy beach. Lily has nothing on under her long-sleeved dress and doesn't bother to remove her jewellery so is first into the water.

They wade out then swim, talking and laughing.

Lily speeds away from Nick, then deliberately allows him to catch her. In an aura of phosphorescence, Lily floats up and kisses Nick fully and fast.

NICK

Mmmm. What was that for?

LILY

For being irresistible.

NICK

It's you that's -

LILY

Can I say something and then leave it at that?

NICK

As you're skinny-dipping with me, your slightest wish is my command.

LILY

We live soft lives. In the past, people suffered from ignorance and harsh physical and social conditions. Now, the natural need for hazard and violence and lack of security have to be supplied by sport ... or by art.

Nick has not been paying attention. He is too intent on Lily's sea-lubricated flesh.

LILY

(downbeat)

That's it.

EXT. LILY'S COTTAGE. NIGHT

Nick walks with Lily up to the door of the cottage. In the dim light from a window, he puts his arms around her and gives her a long kiss. He starts to pull away.

NICK

Well, goodnight Lily. You're so beautiful. Literally, the woman of my dreams.

LILY

In that case you can come in and dream some more ... or not.

NICK

Are you sure?

LILY

I have something for you.

INT. SITTING ROOM/CORRIDOR, LILY'S COTTAGE. NIGHT

They softly enter the almost bare sitting room with its tiled floor.

Nick sees the back of a slim figure with a mass of blonde hair asleep on the sofa.

Nick takes in some naïve paintings of the village hung on the whitewashed walls.

Aware of a movement he turns back to the sofa. He is shocked to see Lily transformed into a twenty-year-old.

Then the real Lily moves beside the younger version.

LILY

This is my daughter Celia. Celia ...
Nick.

Nick is speechless at the vision of beautiful mother and fresh, equally beautiful, nubile daughter. Together at the same time.

LATER

MOS. The three are lounging around with coffee and Armagnac, pistachio nuts and olives, and languid conversation.

Nick eyes the brandy for a while, then picks up the bottle and holds it out to the women. They refuse and he pours himself a generous measure.

Music from a CD player fades in.

CELIA

... as well as birthdays, every year
you pass through the exact time
and day of your death.

NICK

Thanks a bunch. I'd never
considered things that way.

LILY

God, Celia. What a morbid thought.

NICK

It's a piece of knowledge you can never erase. However much you try.

CELIA

Today's lesson: seize the day.

LATER

Head back, mouth open, Nick has fallen asleep on the sofa.

Lily and Celia look at one another and giggle. Then they pick up his legs and lay him out and cover him with a light blanket.

CELIA

(whispering)

Spoilsport.

Turning out the light, they leave him snoring in the faint moonlight.

LATER

Nick wakes up with a start and looks around, disorientated.

After his eyes have adjusted to the darkness, he feels his way to a door and opens it gently.

The next room is flooded with light from the full moon. He sees Lily and Celia curled up with one another in bed - like spoons. He looks and looks, listening to the sound of light breathing.

Smiling, he quickly turns away to another door. He goes in the bathroom.

To the sound of the flush, Nick comes out, is about to go back to the sitting room when he changes his mind and listens again at the women's bedroom door.

Hearing nothing, he goes back to the sofa and covers himself with the blanket.

LATER

Nick turns in his sleep, then wakes at a soft sound.

He sees someone else in the room.

NICK
(whispering)
Hello?

He sits up.

NICK (CONT'D)
Lily?

He is silenced by a blonde head covering his face.

INT. SITTING ROOM, LILY'S COTTAGE. DAY

Nick comes to on the sofa and blinks in the shaft of sunlight that woke him.

He sees his clothes scattered on the floor.

Lifting up the blanket, he stares down at his naked body.

A foot pushes open the door and Lily comes in with a tray laden with breakfast.

Nick is about to speak but is silenced by a kiss on the mouth.

EXT. HIDDEN BEACH. DAY

A sailboard elegantly tacks and jibes its way out to sea. It turns, catches the wind and speeds into shore. Hanging on to the very end of the boom, the body almost skims the water.

Near the shore, Lily lifts the centreboard with her foot and releases the sail. The board beaches itself on the sand and Lily drops the mast and steps ashore without getting her feet wet.

Nick comes up to her, in her habitual long-sleeved T-shirt.

NICK
That looks amazing.

LILY
Not really. It's only a beginners board. You can't get up much speed. Want to have a go?

NICK

I've never done it.

LILY

Really? It's an amazing sensation.
Just you and the board and the
sail and the wind. Close to
nature.

NICK

Is it hard?

LILY

Mainly balance. Let me rest and
I'll give you a lesson.

They walk up the sand and sit on their towels, leaning
against a sail locker.

Nick checks that the beach is deserted before placing a
hand on the inside of Lily's brown thigh and kissing her.

He becomes increasingly ardent until Lily breaks away.

LILY

(panting)

I'm sorry, darling. I can't.

Nick looks hurt and annoyed.

LILY (CONT'D)

I came on this morning. I didn't
realise I was due. I don't keep
track - being celibate for so
long.

NICK

The moon and women. It's fine.

LILY

Not that I don't want to. I look
at you and melt. All you need is a
tan and you'd be perfect.

LATER

Close to the shore, Nick stands on the sailboard, leans
down to pick up the rope attached to the mast, wobbles then
falls back into the sea.

He climbs on the board and tries again with the same
result.

Lily swims up and they both use the board as a float.

LILY
Have a rest. You need to do things
slowly.

NICK
I can't get over how she's the
spitting image of you.

LILY
But she's too naive, too virginal,
living here all her life. She
needs educating - by someone with
knowledge of the world.

NICK
Why do you say that?

LILY
To stop her clinging to me.

Nick stares out to sea.

NICK
She's like a younger twin, if
there could be such a thing.

LILY
Yes. She's my daughter without
doubt. My side of the family have
very dominant genes.

He turns his attention back to Lily.

NICK
What about the other half of her
DNA?

LILY
Some other time. Please, I
promise.

Lily leans across the board and kisses him.

NICK
But I want to know everything
about you.

LILY
Me? Really? Or Sean Wolfe?

Nick pushes himself away from the board and quickly swims ashore.

Lily follows, abandoning the sailboard. She catches up with him.

NICK

I'm fascinated by him as a writer.
And I love his work. The two are
inseparable.

He sits and Lily snuggles up to him. After a while he puts his arms around her and pulls her even closer.

NICK (CONT'D)

But it's you in my arms. My love
for you is to do with Eros rather
than agape.

LILY

What's agape?

NICK

It's Greek. Brotherly love.

LILY

If I tell you one thing, will you
stop questioning me? We ought to
be getting back. I have to get the
early *Flying Dolphin* to Athens
tomorrow.

NICK

I'm not prying. I've had this
thing about you ever since I read
his first novel. And found you in
it.

Nick cups a breast in his hand.

LILY

Mmmm. I like your hand there.

NICK

What one thing were you going to
tell me?

LILY

It was back in the mid-eighties.
His book based on *The Tempest*?
Well, I was Miranda and Wolfe was
my real-life Prospero - the
magician. He transformed my life.
Controlled it too. Held my destiny
in his hands. My future up his
sleeve.

NICK

So it was a *roman à clef*? What
other real people were disguised
in the novel?

LILY

Lots of Oxford University friends.

LILY

Aren't they all?

NICK

But that doesn't explain the
missing years. Why nothing is
known of him from '86 to '88. When
there has been so much published
about his life up till then and
since - about his ecological
Utopia in the Pacific.

LILY

Because nothing happened. He came
here in 1980 with his new wife.
From 1986 to 1988 he was busy
writing his Booker Prize winning
novel. It completely took over his
life.

NICK

The book was never published in
full. All those blank pages were
more than a postmodern device.

LILY

So? Only a bad writer publishes
every bit of their work. Now stop.

NICK

I want to carry on. With this
anyway.

Nick starts to pull the strap of her bikini top off her shoulder.

NICK (CONT'D)

Do you know what -?

LILY

Stop talking and concentrate on what you're doing.

INT. LILY'S BEDROOM. DAY

Nick comes to, alone in the bed, and blinks in the shaft of sunlight that woke him.

Music filters into the room.

He turns and sees a cold cup of black coffee on the bedside table.

INT. SITTING ROOM, LILY'S COTTAGE. DAY

Celia is sitting cross-legged on the floor engrossed in laying out a pack of cards, in the shape of an eight on its side. Each card is medieval in design.

A Dylan CD is on.

She looks up as Nick opens the door from the bedroom.

CELIA

Hey, come in. Hope the music didn't wake you.

NICK

(sleepily)

Where's your mother?

CELIA

She went for the hydrofoil hours ago. She instructed me to look after you. Coffee?

NICK

Please.

CELIA

She left you this.

She hands him a piece of paper.

INSERT

The handwritten note says.

There are no MSS here. As far as I know, all his papers are at Princeton. But here is the answer to the question you haven't asked. This is where Wolfe lived:

Villa Poseidon

Celia will tell you how to get there.

The Panayotises are good friends of mine. You can try them. Mention my name. Hope they are of some help.

BACK TO SCENE

Celia comes in with a tray.

CELIA

Have this. It's fresh from the bakery and the honey is from Mount Parnassus.

Nick points to the cards on the floor.

NICK

What's that you're doing? Some game?

CELIA

Don't you know the Tarot?

NICK

Odd bits, I suppose.

CELIA

That's like saying you're aware of odd bits of your life.

NICK

Do you take it seriously then?

CELIA

It's not what I think of it. It *is* serious.

NICK

What do those picture cards mean?

From the middle of the pattern Celia picks up a card showing a young man standing at the edge of a cliff.

CELIA

This is zero. The Fool is the innocent who moves along the pattern of cards, through life. By solving each problem, he becomes enlightened, educated, possibly, you know, redeemed ... Tell me what zero means to you.

NICK

I suppose most of my associations are with horror. The Twin Towers and Ground Zero. Pol Pot's year Zero and the genocide in Cambodia.

CELIA

Zero, nought, nothing, nothingness, nemo - the complete opposite of being, the ego.

NICK

Go on.

CELIA

You've taken a journey through Europe, from London to here, haven't you? And you are an innocent outsider here.

NICK

Are you implying I'm foolish?

CELIA

Aren't you reckless and irresponsible? Haven't you allowed your obsession with work to trash what's most important to you? A woman? A child?

NICK

What's the next card?

Celia picks up a picture of a man in magician's robes, standing in a bed of roses and lilies.

CELIA

The Magus, or Magician.

NICK

What's the symbolism of roses and lilies?

CELIA
I'll show you another time.

NICK
Wasn't there a movie called *The Magus*?

CELIA
A notorious one.

NICK
Notorious?

CELIA
Woody Allen said that, if he had to live his life all over again, he would do everything exactly the same except go and see *The Magus*. He employs female helpers.

NICK
Woody -?

CELIA
The Magus Tarot card, idiot.

NICK
Go on.

CELIA
Aren't you being controlled by Wolfe? Sent on journey here by a message sent through the ether from the other side of the world? The announcement that he was dead? Upside down it symbolises lies, deception, tricks.

NICK
That one looks interesting.

CELIA
It's called The Lovers.

Celia hands him the card of a man with two women and a serpent.

Their fingers touch.

NICK
Who are they supposed to represent?

CELIA

You and me and my mother, maybe?

NICK

Yeah. Sure.

CELIA

Why not? Who was it said
'everything is permitted'?

NICK

What does the man with the lantern
mean?

CELIA

The hermit suggests a guard and
hidden danger.

NICK

Talking about hermits, how often
did you hear from Wolfe - when he
was still alive?

CELIA

Me? Never. Lily? Not for over
twenty years.

NICK

Go on.

Nick points to a card showing a spoked wheel.

CELIA

The Wheel of Fortune. Obviously,
good luck follows bad. Chance,
destiny, hazard. If you should get
your programme made, what then?

NICK

Hazard. That's a word that means
whatever you want it to: luck or
danger ... what does the future have
in store for me?

CELIA

I can't tell you.

NICK

Can't or won't?

CELIA

Okay. Won't. I don't want to do your head in, but something is happening.

Her face is now flushed and she is breathing harder.

NICK

Why won't you, for God's sake?

CELIA

But I don't want the responsibility of giving you rampant Tarot paranoia. Come back tonight.

NICK

Where are -?

CELIA

Tonight.

As Celia sweeps up the cards, one accidentally drops on the floor. A picture of a tower, struck by lightning and in flames.

EXT. ROCKY SEASHORE. DAY

The flat sea is beginning to be disturbed by the daily wind. In the distance a figure can be seen swimming a relaxed crawl towards the shore.

The overhead sun oppresses with its blinding light and the cicadas give a shrill metallic beat to the slow passing of time.

Nick wades ashore and lies on a flat rock, momentarily exhausted.

When he's recovered, he leans on one elbow and looks around contentedly at the enchanting scenery. He sees the full moon low in the sky, faint in the daylight. It becomes magnified, its craters become more and more distinct.

His attention is then taken by a distant, anomalously regular outcrop of rock from a peninsula running into the sea directly below the moon. He looks harder and discovers the outcrop is manmade. Quickly dressing and picking up his towel, Nick starts the long walk along the shore to investigate.

LATER

Close to, he sees a cylindrical tower, the remains of an old windmill, its sails long gone. On it's far side it is rent top to bottom by a jagged split.

As he moves closer, into the shadow, the partially blocked sun bathes the tower in a fiery light.

Nick is mesmerised.

EXT. ISOLATED SIDE OF ISLAND. DAY

In a dense pine forest, Nick walks along a dusty path adjacent to a high wall. He carries his bag of film equipment.

He comes to a tall metal gate and rings the bell. The gate buzzes open and he walks up a cobbled path, patterned with naturally coloured pebbles, through a lemon grove, then through a garden lush with bougainvilleas and geraniums and palms. The air is rich with birdsong.

As he reaches a pillared and freshly painted villa, the front door opens. He is expected.

INT. VILLA. DAY

A smiling, elderly woman in clothes more suited to Athens moneyed society than island life leads him through the exquisitely designed and furnished home and out to the back.

EXT. VILLA GARDEN. DAY

A terraced garden drops down to the sea, a jetty and an expensive white yacht.

Nick questions MRS PANAYOTIS and she shakes her head each time. Then they talk sporadically as she leads him to a corner of the garden. Unlike the lushness of the rest of the garden, the earth here is barren and scorched.

Nick starts filming it.

MRS PANAYOTIS

... and when we bought the villa from Mr Wolfe we found evidence of a large fire, burnt scraps of paper and things. Nothing will

MRS PANAYOTIS (CONT'D)
grow here. We try everything, but
nothing grows, not even weeds.

FADE TO BLACK

CELIA (V.O.)
Don't be shy. There's no one
around and it's dark anyway

FADE IN

EXT. ROCKY SEASHORE. NIGHT

Nick strips off and joins Celia in the sea where they tread
water.

They are close to the ruined tower.

Celia pushes a roll-up between Nick's fingers.

NICK
What is it?

CELIA
Don't get it wet. Best skunk. Part
of your education.

NICK
No thanks. I don't.

CELIA
You drink, don't you?

NICK
Alcohol is legal. Drugs aren't.

CELIA
Alcohol is a drug.

NICK
I'm no junkie.

CELIA
Try it. The combination of sex and
dope will blow your mind.

NICK
Doesn't your mother mind?

CELIA
We share everything.

She reaches for the joint, inhales deeply then puts her mouth to his and blows out the smoke.

She hands back the joint.

CELIA (CONT'D)

I bet you've never been skinny-dipping with a nymph at one hand and a joint at the other.

She floats on her back, allowing Nick to gaze longingly at her breasts.

NICK

Why is this happening?

CELIA

You believe in sexual equality don't you? Well maybe I'm making a move on you instead of the other way round. Or maybe this is happening because the Tarot ordained it.

They kiss. There is a faint hiss as the joint drops into the sea. Celia breaks away.

CELIA (CONT'D)

Hey, that dope cost.

Nick puts his arms around her.

NICK

I don't want to hurt Lily.

CELIA

I'm just doing what she did. Like mother like daughter. I was jealous - till now.

NICK

You're full of surprises.

CELIA

Too right. Do you want to go back to the shore or do it here?

NICK

Huh?

CELIA

Make love like fish or amphibians?

EXT. TERRACE, YANNI'S RESTAURANT. NIGHT

Nick and Lily watch their waiter skilfully fillet a fish at their table. All three share a joke before the waiter goes inside.

NICK

So how was Athens?

LILY

The usual. Choked with people and traffic fumes. And fast food joints.

NICK

Did you get whatever you wanted to do - done?

LILY

In record time. I couldn't escape fast enough. What have you been up to?

He hides his guilt by gazing directly into her eyes.

NICK

Relaxing, writing, swimming. Went to see Mrs Panayotis and you were right - nothing. Oh, and I had my fortune told.

LILY

(unimpressed)

Oh, Celia.

The waiter puts a bowl of salad in front of them and Nick smiles in thanks.

LILY (CONT'D)

Fortune or misfortune?

NICK

Mostly the latter.

LILY

Typical Celia.

NICK

In the land of the Muses I don't know whether to be amused or bemused. But you sound a bit cynical.

He sips his drink

LILY
Aren't you? With your profession
being all about seeking the truth?

NICK
A lot of it seemed to fit.

LILY
Oh, it's clever all right. But
juvenile. You know, a need to find
some sort of meaning in a godless
society.

NICK
It's not all fairy tales. What
does the Tower card mean?

LILY
An edifice destroyed by a bolt of
lightning. It's also named *La
Maison Dieu*, The House of God.

The waiter tops up their wine glasses.

INT. SITTING ROOM, LILY'S COTTAGE. DAY

Lily pours two glasses of wine.

LILY
Amuse yourself. It won't be long.

NICK
Thanks. I'm hungry.

When Lily has left, he wanders aimlessly around the room.

LILY OS
Put some music on if you want.

Nick doesn't bother to reply. He looks at the paintings then, almost on impulse, searches the bookshelves and files, examining anything that could be manuscripts. His attention is then taken by one book in particular. The spine simply reads, *The Tarot*. He quickly flips through it. Although the cards are of a different style, he recognises some of the subjects from Celia's reading.

Then he stares at a familiar card to him, The Tower struck by lightning.

He flips on and after seeing stylized pictures of The Sun and The Moon, his attention is held first by the card Death, then The Hanged Man. This hanged man is far from the usual corpse suspended by the neck from a gibbet. This one is dressed as a medieval fool, ridiculously hung up by the ankle, an object of derision.

Looking back a page, the card Death is not only the usual skeleton with a scythe.

INSERT

At first the picture seems a chaotic, meaningless jumble, but focusing onto the almost infinite detail, it shows all the evils of history and imagination. Dante's circles of hell morph into Nazi death camps, then the horror of *The Heart of Darkness*, then disembowelments in human abattoirs.

At its centre a human figure grows into a view of himself standing in Lily's sitting room, reading a book.

BACK TO SCENE

The sound of Lily coming back into the room brings Nick back to present reality. With his back turned, he quickly replaces the book.

INT. SITTING ROOM, LILYS COTTAGE. DAY. LATER

The remains of lunch litter the table. Lily is stretched out on the sofa, her head in Nick's lap. He strokes the flesh between her sweatshirt and shorts.

NICK

Now this is what I imagine an island paradise should be like. I could stay here for ever.

LILY

What about Anne and Sarah?

NICK

I try not to hurt others any more. And what they don't know ...

LILY

I hope you're not going to tell me it's part of men's basic nature to spread their genes as widely as -

NICK

You were part of me and my life long before I met Anne.

LILY

You fell in love with a character from fiction. A fantasy figure.

NICK

I know. I'm not ashamed to be a romantic. I can't imagine my life without you.

LILY

Would you be prepared to prove your love? Give up everything for me? Stop trying to find out about the so-called missing years?

There is a long, thoughtful silence.

NICK

Can I ask you something?

LILY

What?

NICK

Celia didn't tell me what the Justice card signified if it was upside down.

LILY

It means its opposite. The law as obstacle.

NICK

Really?

LILY

Why the 'really'?

NICK

I'm well acquainted with bailiffs and their writs and injunctions.

They sink into a comfortable silence as Nick fondles her hair.

NICK (CONT'D)

Another thing. Was Wolfe sick?

LILY

In what way?

NICK

Something he could not bear his public knowing about. Some sort of shameful disease.

LILY

Why don't you believe me? He did not disappear. There is no two-year-gap in his life.

NICK

But something happened, I know his work as well as he did, better even.

LILY

Can't you forget your obsession with Wolfe for one evening?

NICK

A disease like leprosy? Syphilis?

LILY

That IS sick. Sick, sick, SICK.

NICK

If he wasn't sick then was someone else? Again, something that needed to be hidden, like insanity ...

LILY

... the 'Mad Woman in the Attic' theory? I like that, Greek ... Attic. That's good, that.

NICK

Maybe. Or like in *Tender is the Night*. Scott Fitzgerald never described what happened in the bathroom with the heroine the night of the party. Yet it haunts the whole of the novel.

LILY

And was a reference to Zelda's madness ... I know. But please Nick, don't spoil things ... us. Enjoy the moment. You have to go back to London so soon.

NICK

Yes. It's criminal the programme's
been brought forward. I'm worried
it'll be a rush job.

Nick's hand has strayed down inside Lily's shorts. She
closes her eyes and lets out a long shallow breath. Her
hand moves to the inside of his thigh.

NICK

Do you know the exact sexual
perversion in the Fatty
Arbuckle -?

Lily pushes herself away with a cry of rage and rushes into
the bedroom. The lock is turned.

EXT. ROCKY SEASHORE. DAY. SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Nick meanders along the shoreline in the bright sunshine,
but is oblivious of his surroundings.

LILY (V.O.)

Can I ask you something?

NICK (V.O.)

Of course.

LILY (V.O.)

Why do you have problems relating
to women?

In the distance, Nick sees the tower no longer dominated by
the moon which is now high in the sky.

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY. LATER

Nick returns to the village and goes up to Lily's cottage.
His knock is immediately answered by Celia.

CELIA

Hi. Come in.

Nick quickly enters.

INT. SITTING ROOM, LILY'S COTTAGE. DAY

They kiss briefly.

CELIA

Lily had to go to Athens again
yesterday. But I'm expecting her
back anytime.

Nick sees a PC is on.

NICK

What are you up to?

CELIA

Playing word games.

She starts typing.

INSERT

On the PC screen appears:

MYSTERY

by

CELIA

She types again and the letters rearrange themselves.

MY STERY

by

CELIA

The first 'E' becomes fuzzy and changes to '0' and the name
Celia jumbles around to become:

MY STORY

by

ALICE

A fuzzy letter appears before the word Alice and defines
itself as (M).

MY STORY

by

(M) ALICE

Nick laughs.

NICK (O.S.)

Can I?

He types in 'LILY', Celia presses more keys and *Searching* is displayed on the monitor, then,

LILY: Lilium L, Liliaceae, Herbs, rarely shrubby, sometimes climbing.

CELIA (O.S.)

Press F3.

Nick does so and sees:

LILY: N.T. St. Matthew 6:28, 'Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not neither do they spin.

He presses the key again.

LILY: with the ROSE, symbols of Tarot card, The Lovers. A man with two women.

Nick mumbles something to himself.

CELIA (CONT'D O.S.)

Sorry?

NICK (O.S.)

Oh, nothing. Just one of those odd coincidences, associations.

CELIA (O.S.)

What?

NICK (O.S.)

The word rose. I remember a phrase, 'the spectre of a Rose'. From a poem that also contains 'Zero summer'. You know, going back to our talk about the meaning of zero? Strange I should have forgotten that. 'Zero summer.' I've never worked out fully what it means.

CELIA (O.S.)

Well, here's what rose means.

The letters of the word 'ROSE' rearrange themselves back and forth to 'EROS', over and over.

CELIA (O.S.)
Here's something that should
appeal to you.

On the screen appears:

Contemporary Literary Theory

by

S. Wolfe

1 Feminist Criticism

2 Structuralist Theories

3 Poststructuralist Theories

(i) Barthes

(ii) Deconstruction

Celia punches a key and 'Deconstruction' becomes capitalised then brackets are inserted which lift part of the word where it hovers;

(CON)

DE STRUCTION

The lower line then joins up:

DESTRUCTION

BACK TO SCENE

CELIA

They say that the study of language is the only relevant philosophy left. Well, computers are doing that for us.

NICK

Except when they were trying to write a programme to respond to speech they found that the word 'no', with all its intonations and contexts, had about a hundred different meanings, one of which was yes.

CELIA

When we were swimming and you
turned down my offer of sex, no
meant no.

Celia puts on a pretend scowl as she makes for the door.

CELIA (CONT'D)

Let's go out for pizza.

EXT. HILLSIDE. DAY

Nick films the forested landscape of the island and across
the strait.

Putting down the camera, he opens his laptop and starts
typing.

INT. SITTING ROOM, LILY'S COTTAGE. NIGHT

Remains of a meal litter the table in the shadowy room.
Lily and Nick are swaying to music, wrapped in each other's
arms.

The number finishes and Lily puts on another CD. As she
returns and goes to put her arms round Nick's neck, the
sleeves of her baggy sweatshirt fall back to expose her
elbows.

Nick is suddenly repulsed. He has seen the minute stigmata
of horror. The soft flesh of the inside of her elbows has
puncture marks and bruises.

Nick grabs her arm and pulls her towards a table lamp to
examine her more closely.

NICK

WHAT'S THAT?

LILY

It's not -

NICK

They're NEEDLE tracks.

He roughly grabs her other arm and examines the elbow.

NICK

And BOTH arms.

LILY

It's not what you think, Nick, for
God's sake ... I'm no junkie.

Nick is frozen there, staring into her eyes,

LATER

MOS. Nick and Lily are calmly sitting talking over coffee.
Strangely, the atmosphere is light as the sound fades up.

NICK

So why didn't you tell me?

LILY

I didn't want to worry you. In any
case, we used protection. I didn't
even tell Celia the real reason
for going to Athens.

NICK

And the test?

LILY

Negative. Probably. They want to
run another test for hepatitis C.
Come here.

NICK

I'm sorry I misjudged you. I
panicked.

LILY

I know. We shouldn't have had
unprotected sex.

NICK

I've had so many friends die.

LILY

You should have known the needle
marks were recent. You hadn't seen
them before, had you?

NICK

Sorry. It's just that there were
so many.

LILY

The doctor had trouble finding a
vein.

NICK

Sorry.

She goes across to Nick and snuggles up to him, her facial beauty marred by exhaustion.

LILY

Will you stay tonight? Just to sleep? Please?

Nick pats her comfortingly, as one would a child.

EXT. AMPHITHEATRE ON HILLSIDE OF ISLAND. DAY

High up in the amphitheatre are two isolated figures. Close to, it is Nick and Lily lounging on the ancient blocks of stone. His head is in her lap.

NICK

But I have to go back sometime.

There are strange, ghostly sounds of children at play, seeming to come nowhere.

LILY

Really? Can you? And miss -?

NICK

Okay, okay.

He raises both hands in surrender.

NICK (CONT'D)

See?

Slowly pulling away from them, the amphitheatre is revealed to be a football stadium. A few kids are kicking a ball around and shouting instructions to one another.

NICK (CONT'D)

Do you really think the Tarot is childish?

LILY

I think the Tarot is more of a truth than language. The cards are signs, symbols that have lasted for centuries. Language is always changing. New words come into use, others become obsolete some words change meaning. Signs are ancient. Animals communicate through signs,

LILY (CONT'D)
 such as courtship displays.
 Animals don't need language

NICK
 So movies or photographs are true
 and writing isn't?

LILY
 Of course. Who reads books these
 days?

INT. PETER'S OFFICE, TV CENTRE. NIGHT

Peter is on the phone.

PETER
 (into phone)
 Time is not on our side. Nor are
 the top floor executives for that
 matter.

NICK (V.O.)
 I know. I just need a few more
 days. You've seen all the film -?

PETER
 Yes. All seven hours. You don't
 believe in moderation, do you?

NICK (V.O.)
 I'll be back to oversee the final
 edit. Don't worry. I'll have the
 shape of the programme, the climax
 and resolution.

PETER
 Anne came to see me. She still
 thinks she's being followed.

NICK (V.O.)
 I'll phone her again.

PETER
 No need. I got Coulson to set her
 mind at rest.

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY

Nick leaves his hotel and walks through the village to
 Lily's cottage.

EXT. LILY'S COTTAGE. DAY

He knocks on the door. When there is no reply to another knock, he pulls himself up to momentarily look through a gap in the window blind. Something moves inside. At the sound of rapidly approaching footsteps from inside Nick returns to the door. The pea-green paint of the door and frame is starting to peel. They slowly part to reveal Celia's face in shadow, the eyes wide open questioningly.

CELIA

Please Nick, you can't come in.
It's the wrong time.

NICK

What's going on?

His voice is louder than intended. He lowers it.

NICK (CONT'D)

For Christ's sake, what is it?

CELIA

Please go.
(close to tears)
If you feel anything at all for
us, just go ... you can come back
tomorrow.

NICK

No.

He suddenly shoves the door inwards, knocking into her shoulder.

INT. SITTING ROOM, LILY'S COTTAGE. DAY

The room is almost in darkness. It takes a while to adjust from the bright light outdoors. A small movement attracts Nick's attention to a corner of the room.

Lily crouches there, in the foetal position. She is partly covered in a blue blanket. Her whole body shakes.

As Nick approaches, he involuntarily covers his nose and mouth at the smell. There are vomit stains on her clothes and her nose is snotty. The rest of her face has a sheen of greasy sweat. Her bloodshot eyes are helpless and cowed.

NICK

What the hell is going on?

He turns to Celia, waiting for the answer which finally comes in a whisper.

CELIA

What the hell do you think? She's withdrawing, bigtime, from an OD.

Nick's head jerks round, facing but not seeing the everyday objects in the room as if they would provide an answer; a picture, a book - *The Magus*, by John Fowles - a window, a door.

Suddenly he rushes out of the front door which bangs to behind him.

NATURAL WIPE TO
BLACK

FADE UP

INT. ISLAND CHAPEL. DAY

The complete darkness is broken by the opening of a door as Nick enters the Greek Orthodox chapel.

His agitation slowly subsides as he looks around the cool haven. Half a dozen wooden chairs allow only a small congregation. Bottles of oil and spent matches and a disposable cigarette lighter litter a window sill. Fresh flowers and ferns have been wedged on top of the pictures, one of moulded silver metal and a Last Supper.

His attention is caught by one icon in particular, the Madonna and Child.

A large eye painted in an entablature high on the wall watches Nick looking at the icon.

EXT. CHAPEL. DAY

Outside the immaculately white-painted chapel, a Tarot card, *The Lovers*, is blown along the gutter in the sea wind that can be heard in the swaying pines.

The wind sound gradually changes to the sound of waves.

Down on the shore a woman scales and guts a large fish in a bowl. She throws the dirty water over the rocks. The water is a beautiful pink from the fish blood.

The eye of the fish is still bright, its life still recent.

MATCHING DISSOLVE

INT. CHAPEL. DAY

The eye high on the chapel wall still watches Nick, who is still engrossed in the icon of Madonna and Child.

EXT. LILLY'S COTTAGE. DAY

Nick quickly enters the cottage door, which is ajar.

INT. SITTING ROOM, LILY'S COTTAGE. DAY

Celia is now kneeling in the corner with Lily in her arms, like some pieta with the ages and gender blasphemously changed. A shaft of sunlight has turned the old blanket draped around them to the same lapis-lazuli blue of the icon in the church.

The two women are in a remarkably similar configuration.

The seeming tranquillity is violently broken when Nick shakes Celia by her arm until she reluctantly looks up into his face.

NICK (O.S.)

Don't give her anything. Do you understand? No pills, no booze, nothing. Let her sweat it out. It's the best way. She'll be over the worst in three days.

LILY

(slurring)

Three days.

CELIA

(begging)

Go, please just go. You're doing my head in.

NICK

One last thing then I'll leave you in peace ... for good.

Celia just looks at his face, waiting for the question.

LILY (O.S.)
 (slurring)
 For good.

NICK
 Just what was your relationship to
 Wolfe?

CELIA
 He's my father.

LILY
 (slurring)
 He's my father.

Celia jumps in as Lily stares glassy-eyed.

CELIA
 He created us, she means ... in his
 books.

INT. ISLAND HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT

Nick is lying on the bed, surrounded by his notes and
 electronic equipment. His clothes are partly packed.

He's on the phone.

NICK
 (into phone)
 No, no, no. Wolfe wasn't that
 depraved.

PETER (V.O.)
 You can't know that.

NICK
 Of course I do. I know the man
 from his art.

PETER (V.O.)
 Like you knew Lily. Is she still
 your fantasy of female purity?

NICK
 I'm coming back.

PETER (V.O.)
 Are you fit for such a long drive?

NICK

No, I'll leave the car and fly back from Athens. I'm getting the next hydrofoil. I've done all I can ... or want to. We can put all the theories forward and let the audience decide. There are no definite answers.

PETER (V.O.)

Have you got all the angles on Lily?

NICK

She's a junkie, for Chris'sakes. A heroin addict. A waste of time. I'm coming back.

EXT. HARBOUR JETTY. DAY

Nick stands apart from the other passengers who are waiting impatiently or bored on the quay behind a barrier as the ferry docks.

There is a disturbance at the back of the crowd. Someone barges through the protests. The figure reaches Nick. It is Celia.

CELIA

Thank God I found you in time -

NICK

What's wrong? Has something happened to your mother?

Celia shakes her head violently, at a loss for words.

CELIA

No, she's sleeping. She stopped the vomiting but it exhausted her - she's still well sick. I gave her some aspirin and washed her and put her to bed and she finally went to sleep. She's in hell though.

NICK

I know. I've seen it before ... I know how it feels.

Celia tries to speak but is temporarily inhibited. She tries again.

CELIA

Nick ... please stay. You have to see her ... You can't leave like this. She desperately needs comforting - by you. You must see that.

He looks down into her face. The tears are real and her whole body is in tremor.

NICK

(flatly)

There is nothing I can do.

Celia suddenly clings to him and forces her head into his chest, vainly trying to pull him even closer.

CELIA

She gave herself to you. Allowed you to live your dreams, your fantasies. You owe her.

NICK

I don't think so.

CELIA

I beg you. Please -

NICK

No.

He disentangles himself from her.

NICK (CONT'D)

You're embarrassing us.

CELIA

Don't you think you owe me too? For keeping quiet about what we -?

NICK

Nice one ... Okay. But I'll only give her a few hours. Then I'm definitely catching the next ferry.

With the naive enthusiasm of a child, Celia picks up some of Nick's luggage, grabs his hand and pulls him through the crowd

EXT. VILLAGE STREET. DAY

As Celia and Nick approach Lily's cottage, the taverna proprietor and the old fisherman Nick had quizzed on his arrival at the island are walking away from it. But Nick fails to see them.

LILY (V.O.)
 (light, calm)
 Hi, Nick.

INT. SITTING ROOM, LILY'S COTTAGE. DAY

Nick is standing transfixed before a transformed Lily. She is as beautiful as ever, fresh and smiling. Transubstantiated.

LILY
 Thanks for coming, Nick. I knew
 you would.

Nick makes a movement towards her then manages to check his violent intent.

NICK
 Bitch. Fucking cow. How could
 you -?

He stops as his arm is nudged. Celia is offering them both glasses of brandy. Without looking, Nick places his on the coffee table.

LILY
 Have you finished?

She sits down and lights a cigarette which she uses to point to a chair, Nick hesitatingly obeys, cowed. Lily leans towards him, as if to console him.

LILY (CONT'D)
 Learn to smile, Nick.

His hatred resurfaces.

NICK
 You are crazy. Mad ... or evil. I
 don't know which. Maybe all. All
 at the same time.

CELIA
 Hey, where's your cool, Nick? It's
 only a game.

NICK

It's sick. All you did the last few weeks was just to subvert my programme? Well, it won't work. We're going ahead with it.

LILY

It was theatre. Remember the metatheatre? No scripts? No stage? No audience even? All this has been for you, darling Nick, lover. All to teach you to smile.

NICK

You really are crazy. You expect me to believe I'm an audience of one, surrounded by dozens of actors? I'm leaving. No more.

Distractedly, he picks up his brandy and gulps it down.

Then rushes out of the cottage.

LILY (O.S.)

It's not only a game, Nick, I am the game. Things happen because there is a possibility for them to happen.

INT. ATHENS AIRPORT. DAY

Nick, with his luggage at his feet, stands in the middle of a crowd looking up at the departures screen.

His mobile rings.

NICK

(into phone)

Hello?

LILY (V.O.)

One last thing I didn't tell you - you left in such a rush.

NICK

(impatiently)

What?

LILY (V.O.)

That first night? The sex in the dark?

There is a long silence on the other end of the phone until Nick gives in.

NICK

What?

LILY (V.O.)

It wasn't me. It was Celia.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE TV CENTRE. DAY

A car draws up at the gates to the studio. The window winds down and Nick shows his pass.

INT. PETER'S OFFICE, TV CENTRE. DAY

The remains of a sandwich lunch litter Peter's desk.

PETER

Some story. But the programme must wait. I'm not even going to discuss it until you've talked to Anne. Get it sorted.

NICK

I'm frightened. If I tell her what I've just told you ... she'll leave me again.

PETER

Why should you want to tell her? To clear your conscience?

NICK

I don't know. To make amends? Before you do penance you have to confess.

PETER

Don't you ever learn anything? You're not religious, Nick. You can't escape into some ritual. Get real. Go home. That's where your life is. And remember, it is a *home*, not a confessional in some house of God.

EXT. CITY STREETS. DAY

Nick's car negotiates heavy traffic.

NICK (O.S.)

Please Anne, just listen. So I can keep it straight in my head? It's complicated. First of all I want you to understand that I love you ... I now know it is possible to love two people at the same time.

The car stops at traffic lights.

NICK (O.S. CONT'D)

I love Sarah as much as I love you. I *need* you both, too. I know both these things. On the island I *thought* I loved another person. But now I realise I had allowed myself to be driven crazy. Wolfe was no magician. He was a megalomaniac who played games with people and abused the law to further his own -

A click, a pause, another click.

NICK (O.S. CONT'D)

Please Anne just lis -

INT. NICK'S CAR. DAY

Nick is alone in the car. He pulls his sound recorder away from his face, stares at it, then smashes the instrument against the dashboard.

NICK

Blah de blah de bloody blah.

EXT. NICK'S HOUSE. DAY

Nick stands waiting at the front door. It opens.

ANNE

Lost your key?

NICK

I thought it would be better to be invited in.

ANNE

It's your house. You pay the mortgage.

NICK

Can I come in? Please?

INT. NICK'S SITTING ROOM. DAY

Nick paces the room and Anne sits stiffly upright on the sofa.

ANNE

My concern is Sarah's happiness.

NICK

I know. Where is she?

ANNE

Upstairs having a nap. She keeps asking for you, when you'll be back.

NICK

Am I back?

ANNE

You can stay here, but that's all. I'm not going to let our break-up damage her or even let her see us sleeping in separate bedrooms. But there is no longer anything between us.

NICK

I promise things will be different. I've been a fool -

There is a light scampering of footsteps, the door opens and Sarah runs in.

SARAH

Daddy. Daddy.

She jumps into his arms.

NICK

Sweetheart.

SARAH

Daddy.

NICK

(to Anne)

So I can stay tonight?

SARAH

Silly daddy.

ANNE

She has a game she wants you to play.

Nick's eyes widen in fear.

INT. PETER'S OFFICE, TV CENTRE. DAY

Peter and Nick have lost their easy informal relationship. Peter is tense and prowls. Nick seems to want to escape.

PETER

You don't realise the pressure I'm under. It's not like the old days when people were left to be creative in their own artistic ways. It's not just the fact the bean counters now run things. It's no longer democratic. We must finish it.

NICK

But I'm still desperate to know what Wolfe had to hide.

PETER

INCEST.

NICK

No. No.

PETER

Come with me.

INT. CORRIDOR, TV CENTRE. DAY.

Peter and Nick, march down the corridor and into another office.

INT. COMPUTER PROGRAMMER'S OFFICE, TV CENTRE. DAY

A fresh, smart and intense young man in a suit jumps up with enthusiasm as Nick and Peter come in to have their reluctant arms pumped.

PETER

This is Nick. Nick, this is the computer expert who discovered Wolfe's software bomb.

The PROGRAMMER shakes Nick's hand again.

PROGRAMMER

A privilege. Great documentary.
I've always loved your work.
Privilege to be on board.

Nick, unimpressed, politely makes the right facial responses.

PROGRAMMER (CONT'D)

It's great, just great. I've been working all night. I've fed in all the stills, video tapes, film of Wolfe from the library and your stuff of the women ... Lily and Alice was it?

NICK

Celia. Lily and Celia.

PROGRAMMER

That's right. And it all fits.

He takes them over to a monitor where he works the keyboard.

INSERT

The screen lights up with the realistic faces of Wolfe, Lily and Celia morphing into and out of one another.

Besides the obvious twin-like similarities between Lily and Celia, both of them now can be seen to bear distinctive features of Wolfe.

BACK TO SCENE

PROGRAMMER

It's THERE. See? THERE. Lily is Celia's mother yet they are sisters.

NICK

How do you mean?

PROGRAMMER

Wolfe fathered them both. HE SCREWED HIS OWN DAUGHTER.

INT. PETER'S OFFICE, TV CENTRE. DAY

Nick and Peter are still intensely at work.

PETER

It looks convincing, but they are still only computer images. What we need is some sort of positive proof that Wolfe is father to them both.

NICK

A DNA paternity test?

PETER

Exactly. I think I may be able to get someone on it. An old friend in the Oxbridge mafia.

NICK

I thought that was for politicians nowadays.

PETER

Good God no. They run the arts and sciences too.

INT. RESEARCH LABORATORY. DAY

The SCIENTIST is another keen-young-enthusiastic-eighties progeny. Just on the male side of the gender spectrum.

SCIENTIST

Yes, it could be done but it depends on things.

NICK

Like what?

SCIENTIST

Well ... I'd have to do it in my own time. The lab belongs to the company.

NICK

It's okay - I'll pay,

SCIENTIST

And I'd need samples.

NICK

Such as what?

SCIENTIST

Anything with DNA in it. Wolfe and both the women. Any ideas? Could you get blood samples?

NICK

No. But I know Lily had some blood taken.

SCIENTIST

What for and where is it?

NICK

Athens.

SCIENTIST

What were the samples taken for?

NICK

HIV tests.

SCIENTIST

That's fucking okay then. They'll have stored her serum in a deep freeze in the lab there for future research projects.

NICK

And you could get hold of it?

SCIENTIST

Sure, it'll be on the next flight. Just needs fucking money.

NICK

And the others?

SCIENTIST

What happened to Wolfe's body?

NICK

Interred on the Mount of Olives,
Jerusalem.

SCIENTIST

Bit public for a spot of grave
robbing. Was a post-mortem done?

NICK

Yes.

SCIENTIST

That's fucking okay then. His
internal organs will be kept in
the pathology lab at the hospital
there.

NICK

What on earth for?

SCIENTIST

To be sold as souvenirs of course.
He was a very famous man. These
macabre collectors will pay a high
price for anything.

Nick looks disgusted.

SCIENTIST (CONT'D)

For God's sake. Why do you think
President Kennedy's brain went
missing? And that was vital
evidence in one of the biggest
unsolved mysteries of all time.
Sold. For megabucks. So ... all we
want is some of Celia's DNA.

NICK

And then the comparative DNA
profiles will give a definite
proof of paternity?

SCIENTIST

Fuck no. A good chance but nothing
conclusive.

NICK

I thought everyone's was a unique fingerprint.

SCIENTIST

My colleagues like to tell you so. But there are plenty of identical patterns between individuals. When the tests were being developed, the company doing the R&D found many replicate patterns and they put it down to duplicate blood samples being in the coded samples. Then there was too much money at stake to come clean and admit that the tests weren't one hundred percent accurate.

NICK

Christ, another cover-up.

SCIENTIST

Sure, Simple fucking human error. It happens all the time, Chernobyl - just a couple of scientists doing an experiment they shouldn't be doing. Three Mile Island. For fuck's sake, how many times do you think WWII was nearly started by mistake? As a journalist I'd have thought you were up to speed on all that stuff.

NICK

So we couldn't prove incest?

SCIENTIST

A good lawyer would sue your fucking ass off. Hey why am I telling you all of this? I'm talking my way out of a nice little earner.

Nick stands and smilingly shakes hands.

NICK

Thanks, I owe you

SCIENTIST

It's very common you know. Just doesn't get talked about. Incest is the last taboo subject.

NICK

By the way, do you know Wolfe?

SCIENTIST

I don't get time to read novels.

INT. CORRIDOOR, TV CENTRE. DAY

Nick is on his mobile.

NICK

(into phone)

It's a no go. We'll have to just leave it in the programme as an inference for the audience to draw from the similarity of their pictures.

INT. NICK'S BATHROOM. NIGHT

Nick is bathing Sarah, watched by a smiling Anne.

Sarah holds her nose and submerges herself briefly.

SARAH

Look at me. I've learned to be a fish.

NICK

That's very clever, darling.

SARAH

Will you tell me a story.

NICK

Of course. When you're in bed. I'm an expert at fishy stories.

INT. LILY'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

In the moonlight, Lily is lying on her bed naked and asleep.

From a dark corner there is a movement. Celia is watching the sleeping figure.

She picks up the sheet from the floor and covers her mother.

INT. EDITING SUITE, TV CENTRE. DAY

Nick and Peter are watching a film on an editing machine.

A list of credits scrolls up on a screen to finale music.

Nick pauses the film and questioningly turns to Peter.

There is a thoughtful silence.

PETER

Fine. Why not? A postmodern documentary on a postmodern writer. Apt. Let the audience decide which of the theories they want to believe about the missing years and his going into hiding.

NICK

That means there's no resolution.

PETER

That makes it closer to reality. It's a documentary. Not a popular novel with a neat ending that ties up all the loose ends.

NICK

Will upstairs agree to the incest stuff? The oldest trick in the book the way to discredit a journalist is to feed him a false story which he's fool enough to publish. Maybe that is what the Wolfe pack have been up to. Feeding me false information in order to sue the arse off us. Financially kill me.

PETER

Upstairs have to agree. The programme is scheduled for tomorrow night. Nothing can stop it. And I like it. Love it.

NICK

I don't know. I'm worried.

Peter ignores this.

PETER

And unsolved mysteries last for ever. Lord Lucan. The Bermuda Triangle. The Marie Celeste. Solved mysteries become yesterday's news. And if we don't make any definite allegations, leave it open, then we can't be sued. Can we? Nick?

The question remains unanswered.

INT. NICK'S KITCHEN. DAY.

Nick and Anne and their four-year-old, Sarah, are sitting eating breakfast together, the perfect family.

NICK

It will be like a novel with blank pages at the end. The reader can write their own ending. Chose between a happy one or a sad one.

Then, out of the blue:

ANNE

What happened in Greece Nick?

NICK

What do you mean?

ANNE

I can't put my finger on it, but you've changed. What happened?

NICK

Nothing. A couple of freaks tried to screw -

Anne frowns and darts her eyes towards Sarah.

NICK (CONT'D)

Tried to mess up my programme, that's all.

Anne stares at Nick, waiting for more.

INT. LILY'S BEDROOM. DAY.

There is a gradual stirring under the sheet. The movement increases. The sheet is thrown off as Lily and Celia make love to one another with increasing passion.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE UP

INT. ANONYMOUS DARKENED ROOM. DAY

The dark and windowless room is only lit by a heavy adjustable light hanging over a circular green baize table. A card game is in progress.

As well as Heavy #1 and Heavy #2 there are other men similarly dressed in chauffeurs' black uniforms with caps and startlingly white shirts and expensive fashionable shades.

High-stake liar poker is the focus of everyone's attention.

GAMBLER #1 pushes money from his rough pile into the middle.

GAMBLER #1

Two cups.

The next player throws in his cards,

GAMBLER #2

Three pentacles.

Throwing a fifty pound note into the pot.

HEAVY #1

Shit.

He carefully places his cards on the bottom of the deck so they cannot be seen.

A mobile phone rings and all at the table grab for their inside jacket pockets. It turns out to be Heavy #2's call. He listens, he nods and, pocketing the phone, beckons Heavy #1.

As they are about to leave the room, Heavy #1 goes back to finish his drink and the upturned cards can now be seen. They are playing with an ancient pack of Tarot cards.

INT. OFFICE IN NICK'S HOUSE. DAY

A map of part of the Greek mainland and its island is roughly ripped from the wall. There is a loud clatter as video tapes are dumped into a large cardboard box which already contains a jumble of DVDs, audiotape cassettes and files.

With great effort, Nick lifts the box and, as he goes out the door, glances back. The room looks shabby now it is empty except for a directors' chair, computer and bare shelves. A few scraps of paper, drawing pins and dust are all that remain of his collection of research material.

EXT. GOLF COURSE. DAY

On a dirt track crossing the golf course, and almost hidden in the gorse, a black limo sits with its engine running. Alongside, a discarded cigarette smoulders in the dry grass.

In the distance two isolated figures are on the fairway.

Through binoculars, one of them is recognisable as the TV executive.

EXT. BOTTOM OF NICK'S GARDEN. DAY

The plants and shrubs become obscured by a thick pall of poisonous black and yellow smoke. Nick adds garden waste to the bonfire of his research material.

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE NICK'S HOUSE. DAY

At the far end of the road, a black limo is parked in isolation

MATCHING DISSOLVE

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE TV CENTRE. DAY

Another black limo watches and waits with a bubbling exhaust.

INT. PETER'S OFFICE, TV CENTRE. DAY

In the strangely quiet and deserted offices, Peter is bored. He goes to chat to his secretary as he makes them both coffees from a filter machine. She laughs at something he says.

EXT. BOTTOM OF NICK'S GARDEN. DAY

Nick roughly pulls papers out of files and scatters them on the fire. He then adds more garden rubbish to strengthen the blaze.

At the fire's heart, an intact book curls and the leaves yellow before they suddenly ignite.

ANNE

I love bonfires. The smell of
burning leaves.

Nick turns and smiles at her.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Come here. Hold me ... Mmmm ...
Tighter, I won't break.

NICK

Things will be different, I
promise.

ANNE

You've said that before. How do I
know you -?

NICK

I do mean it ... I want us to get
married.

ANNE

Why?

NICK

To make things normal. I want us
to be just like everyone else.

ANNE

Sarah desperately needs security
and comforting. By you. You must
understand that.

NICK

I'll do anything. I'll give her
much more of my time. She's my
daughter too.

Tears fill his eyes.

ANNE

Do you know that's the first time
I've ever seen you cry? Ever?

NICK

Sorry.

ANNE

And now you're smiling. Why?

NICK

I can imagine Sisyphus being
happy.

EXT. GOLF COURSE. DAY

A telephone rings inside the black car. The engine roars as the accelerator is floored and the car tears through the rough onto the fairway, cutting deep ruts in the turf. The two golfers look up in shock.

Two heavies jump out of the vehicle before it skids to a halt. They forcibly serve writs on the executive.

He runs to his golf trolley and gets his mobile.

The small grass fire where the limo was waiting now spreads to the gorse.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE TV CENTRE. DAY

A police car skids to a halt near the limousine from which two heavies emerge to join the uniformed police as they rush into the main entrance of the building.

Officials in plain clothes who have been loitering nearby join the attack.

INT. TV CENTRE. DAY

They all force their way through reception and past security guards. The pandemonium of rushing feet is reinforced by the harsh ringing of telephones. It becomes deafening.

INT. PETER'S OFFICE, TV CENTRE. DAY

Peter has a coffee mug halfway to his mouth as his own office phone starts ringing as the door is burst open by the heavies and police. The men in civilian clothes start searching the office.

POLICEMAN

I am Chief Inspector Coulson. I have a warrant to seize all material related to your documentary on Sean Wolfe. If you attempt to impede our search you will be arrested.

More men arrive with box files and plastic containers and start packing up contents of filing cabinets and discs, tapes and papers.

EXT. NICK'S GARDEN. DAY

Nick and Anne are walking hand in hand towards the house when a large black limousine skids to a halt outside the house. Heavies #1 and #2 get out.

They move quickly up to the front door. A Heavy reaches inside his jacket as though going for a gun, but pulls out a legal document.

They ring the doorbell and hammer unremittingly on the door with their fists.

Anne and Nick look in despair at the men, then at one another, then back to the bonfire.

FREEZE FRAME.

FADE OUT

THE END