

Ode

written by Brian Kowalchuk

Hybrid ensemble dramedy with a touch
of magic realism.

sunsetmanagement.brad@gmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. YORKTOWN, ARIZONA - WELMAN COLLEGE - NIGHT

SUPER: Early May - 1999

A rustic college campus with an Ivy League ambience on the outskirts of a sleepy town.

The sort of town where everyone kind of knows everyone else. Kind of.

Coyote howls in the rustic, high desert landscape.

EXT. WELMAN COLLEGE - CENTRAL QUAD - NIGHT

A statue of THE BIG COWBOY stands in the quad. Magnificent. Dignified. Sort of.

Empty shot glasses lay scattered in the grass near an office trash can. Suddenly, another shot glass bounces off the trash can rim from above.

EXT. WELMAN COLLEGE - BUILDING ROOF OVERLOOKING QUAD - NIGHT

A bottle of Yukon Jack whiskey sits on the roof's ledge, along with a line of unused shot glasses.

A HAND reaches for the bottle, pours another shot.

The glass is raised in the air by BRANDON LARMIKE, 55, a disheveled, but likeable, campus literature professor.

BRANDON
(to The Big Cowboy statue
below)
For you, sir ---

He downs the shot, then pretends the glass is a grenade. Pulls the pin, launches it into space.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
--- and the horse you rode in on!!

SFX: When it glances off the trash can below, surrounding night air ripples mysteriously away and appears to explode distantly. Reminiscent of World War Two Army cannon fire.

Brandon peers curiously into the foreboding darkness.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Huh.

INT. ALLEN'S APARTMENT - OVERLOOKING THE QUAD - NIGHT

Full of GOTHIC FURNISHINGS, including memorabilia featuring warlocks, vampires, ghosts, and zombies.

A particularly cool movie poster is titled Shape Shifter Warriors.

By a window...

ALLEN, 35, a bearded dwarf (little person).

Watching Brandon intently.

Allen is regally and gruffly gay, wears over-sized rings on his fingers, and has black eyeliner. In his hands is a book titled The Illuminated Path.

Nearby diary has scrawlings from the Crimean Gothic language.

EXT. WELMAN COLLEGE BUILDING ROOFTOP - NIGHT

A part-time, uniformed security guard, PAUL, African-American, approaches Brandon.

His uniform is TOO BIG and has way too many items on the belt, ie. two pepper sprays, two sets of handcuffs, two batons, etc.

Muttering to himself, Brandon gazes into the darkness.

BRANDON

That's never happened before.

PAUL

You've been spending an awful lot of time up here lately, prof'.

BRANDON

(turns, brightens)

Ah hah, my trusty teaching assistant! Do you know why Greek mythology is so significant to historians?

PAUL

I thought it was only significant to poets and philosophers, sir. You've said that in class.

BRANDON

(drunkenly)

I never said anything of the sort!

Lights a good cigar, puffs grandly.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

In fact, poets and philosophers are our greatest historians. Mythology is significant because it represents the infinite. And, infinity is a poet's best friend!

(gazes below)

The Greeks had a lot of statues.

Reaches for the Yukon Jack bottle, pours two shots, offers one to Paul, who declines.

PAUL

I need my job, prof'.

Brandon downs both shots, launches glasses over the edge.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Someone could get hurt if you keep tossin' those things.

BRANDON

Built on a foundation of truths!
But, more importantly, myths are human. So, very, very human.

(delightedly)

The glasses are plastic, Paul.
Plastic!

EXT. WELMAN COLLEGE - DEAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Dean of Welman College, Professor Emeritus COLIN SOMERSBY, 85, stands on the porch in his housecoat.

Observing the unfolding drama across the way.

Not too pleased.

EXT. WELMAN COLLEGE - BUILDING ROOF - NIGHT

Teetering near the edge, Brandon lifts another shot glass.

BRANDON

Yukon Jack doesn't mind plastic.

PAUL

Maybe we should get goin'.

BRANDON

Sire, are you offering a security escort home? Because if you are---

Steps back.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
I accept! If, and only if, you
present Moonlight Road.

PAUL
I'll do the first verse.

BRANDON
First verse it is!

As Paul takes off his guard hat, preparing to quote the poem, his demeanor changes to that of formal nobility.

SFX: Faintly... of a piano simply playing Chopsticks.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
You truly are a brilliant scholar,
you know.

PAUL
Thanks.
(takes a moment)
'Walk with me, O, moonlight road
we've many more miles to travel
.. it seems as though the gravel
and stones beneath my feet are
hungry, ravenous for the light that
shines from this brilliant orb
which rules the night.'

SFX: Piano music grows a bit louder, more sophisticated, as a full moon seems to beckon Paul's words.

EXT. BRANDON'S NEAR CAMPUS RESIDENCE - NIGHT

An unkempt lot with a trailer home haphazardly set in the middle. Uncut grass.

Rusted, drooping children's swing set off to the side, near a battered 1964 Pontiac Laurentian car.

Carting Brandon over his shoulder, Paul goes inside the trailer.

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Messy.

Filled with bookshelves full of literary tomes and stacks of documents. But it has a touch of class, some great antique furniture, a few contemporary works of art.

A pair of ladies panties dangles on an EMPTY wine bottle.

Paul dumps Brandon on a worn, overstuffed leather sofa, props

a pillow under his head.

An unfinished oil painting leans against a wall: a self-portrait of Brandon beside a DARK-HAIRED, TEENAGE GIRL.

BRANDON

I need less responsibility. These students, classes, creative words. Wearing me out.

As Paul heads for the door.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

I'm worn out. Defeated. Nothing left to offer.

PAUL

What're you so stressed about, prof'?

BRANDON

All of it. Existence. Mankind's burden. The beginning of Time.
(drifting off)
I've never had a vacation, y'know. Never. My life is not interesting anymore. I need to do something interesting.
(then)
Before I die.

Paul leaves quietly.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

(barely audible)
Something interesting. Before I die. Something interesting. Something interesting.

SFX: Piano music hits a wrong note, pauses, plays the right note and continues.

INT. YORKTOWN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL - MUSIC ROOM - NEXT DAY

The ONLY SOUND is still the music.

The dark-haired girl from the unfinished oil painting is at a piano, playing the Chopsticks music.

She is KATEY LARMIKE, 15, and is Brandon's daughter.

Like her piano playing, Katey has a certain mystery.

Other students stop at the open room door, say something, then move on when Katey doesn't notice.

EXT. DOWNTOWN YORKTOWN - DAY

As if time had stopped in the 1950s.

Quaint businesses and shops.

Local Court House in the middle of a five-sided central square.

On a corner is MARNY'S UNIQUE FLOWERS & PLANTS SHOP and its front window has a sign:

Award-winning Hybrids - PARIS
Fleurs de Grand Prix runner-up
1977, 1984 & 1993.

On the roof are golden child cherub figurines.

On another corner is a neon-lit PSYCHIC GYPSY shop.

In front of the Court House are statues honoring World War Two soldiers, and also those from the Vietnam War.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Tastefully stocked with exotic flowers, unique plants, local flora and fauna, cactus, and regular types of flowers.

The top of a solitary white Chrysanthemum is starting to bloom, and is being examined by MARNY.

Marny is Brandon's mother and Katey's grandmother. A classy woman, 77, wonderful, warm smile. Well-earned crow's feet adorn the corners of her learned eyes.

MARNY

I don't know. I just don't know.

ALLEN prepares a floral centerpiece on a work table.

He is a fiercely loyal employee.

MARNY (CONT'D)

Paris. It's such a long way to go at my age.

ALLEN

You could definitely win this year, Marny. That Chrysanthemum is exceptional.

MARNY

(fondly, to her flower)
Angel's Kiss Chrysanthemum. Shall we go to Paris one last time?

SFX: In a corner. A flickering image OF AN OLD BUILDING AT THE END OF A GRAVEL ROAD appears. Then is gone. Unseen.

INT. YORKTOWN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL - MUSIC ROOM - DAY

KATEY'S HANDS work up the piano keyboard until she hits a key that's not working. Continues to plunk it.

The class bell rings and a cool fellow student, JASON, 17, strolls by the room's open door, notices her plunking.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - OUTSIDE BRANDON'S OFFICE - DAY

Hung-over from the previous night, Brandon nearly falls over the trash can he was trying to toss shot glasses into. An attached note to the can reads: Happy morning, prof - Paul

Unlocking the office door, Brandon enters the cluttered room and sits behind a vintage, wooden desk.

Shakes several pills from an Aspirin bottle, washes them down with leftover Gatorade.

JILL, a frumpy student, comes in holding a term paper marked with a red **D-**.

BRANDON

Jill. Please, sit down.

She does.

Slides over her term paper to him, which he ignores.

BRANDON

What is an adjective?

JILL

A descriptive word preceding a noun.

BRANDON

And what adjective would you use to best describe your term paper?

JILL

Subliminal.

Glancing at the paper, he reads the first part aloud.

BRANDON

'Answer Yes or No to the following statement, and then justify it. Right or Might is in the interest of the stronger party.'

(MORE)

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 (slides the paper back
 over)
 Read your answer, please.

JILL
 (clears her throat, reads)
 'Yes. Blah, blah, blah, blah.'

BRANDON
 Keep going.

JILL
 'Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah--'

BRANDON
 Go to the second page. Last
 sentence.

JILL
 'Blah, blah, blah, blah---
 (glares at him)
 --- blah'.
 (he grimaces)
 You're always emphasizing creative
 simplicity!

BRANDON
 That I am.
 (nicely, sort of)
 But, the works that get higher
 marks in this class are required to
 somehow *inspire* the reader to feel
 as if there is insight-- actual
 insight-- into the human condition.
 Does that make any sense? Any sense
 at all?

JILL
 Prof'. I'm trying to say that I
 think the premise is boring. I'm
 giving people *insight* into the fact
 that classical philosophical
 discourses are an *acquired* taste.

BRANDON
 Huh. Anarchy in the classroom.
 (sighs, reaches for the
 term paper)
 I suppose that's worth something.

Changes the score to a **B-** as his desk phone rings.

Jill mouths a *Thank You*.

Leaves as Brandon takes the call.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - DEAN SOMERSBY'S OFFICE - DAY

SECRETARY for the Dean's office is on the phone.

SECRETARY

The Dean wants to see you after
your first class, Brandon.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - BRANDON'S OFFICE - DAY

Brandon hangs up the phone, lifts a bottle of New Crew
cologne, splashes on AN UNSEEMLY AMOUNT.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Marny gazes wistfully out a window at the roof of the Welman
College building Brandon was on.

MARNY

Why is Brandon going on that roof
so much? Was he drinking again?

ALLEN

Rumor has it he's on the verge of a
nervous breakdown.

MARNY

Is that why he's drinking so much?
A nervous breakdown?

A mail carrier, CECIL, an aging stoner, delivers the mail.

Hands an envelope to Marny.

CECIL

This one looks important.

It's a letter from the bank stating the mortgage on Marny's
house is PAID IN FULL.

MARNY

I own my house. Outright. Out of
debt! After fifty-five years!

CECIL

Very groovy, Marny. Way to go.

ALLEN

(irritated, in disbelief)
Did you just say GROOVY? Again?
Groovy?! Are you fricken kidding
me?!

Cecil hastily departs.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
 Can you believe that guy? Groovy.
 What is this, the fricken Sixties?

SFX: Flickering near the back door. Vintage video images of The Eiffel Tower, tourists taking pictures, couples in romantic embraces.

Unseen by Marny but Allen catches a glimpse before it disappears.

Marny becomes light-headed, manages to steady herself.

ALLEN
 Are you okay?
 (she nods)
 Follow your path, Marny. To France.

She picks up a 1944 framed picture of herself, exuberant in a Bobby Sox outfit. PREGNANT. In the arms of her handsome husband, HUBBY, who wears a World War Two soldier's uniform.

MARNY
 It's too bad my Hubby wasn't here
 to share this. We own the house.

Rubs her eyes.

MARNY (CONT'D)
 Well, alright. I'll follow my path.
 To France! I'll have to get a
 booster shot. Yuck.

INT. BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Brandon stands gazing out a window overlooking The Quad.

BRANDON
 Good writing, ie., poems, verse or
 philosophical statements must
 include dreams and demons.
 Without them, the written word is
 vacant, removed. In poetry,
 rhythmic structure is your friend.

Motions with his hands, as if directing an orchestra.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 One-two-one-two. One-three-two-
 four. Don't be afraid to stand out
 from your spoken word
 contemporaries.

From the back of the classroom...

PAUL
Spoken word stands out!

BRANDON
A note of dissent from our trusty
teaching assistant. Acknowledged.
Now then, who's first?

An eager student, JERRY, raises his hand.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Jerry. Go ahead with your bad self,
Jerry.

Jerry rushes to the front with a crumpled sheet of paper.

JERRY
(reads)
'In stillness, I see what you bring
With honor, I know what you desire
The opera diva stands poised to
sing
I am ready, she is ready, to put
our souls into the raging fire.'

As the class settles in to listen, Brandon strolls out.

JERRY (CONT'D)
'Onward, my friend, trouble is near
What dreams and demons you have
brought forth---'

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - DEAN SOMERSBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Peeking his head around the corner, the secretary waves
Brandon in.

INT. DEAN SOMERSBY'S OFFICE - DAY

SOMERSBY is at his desk, hands pursed against his lips,
ponderous.

BRANDON
I shouldn't have been on the roof
last night, sire. My apologies.

SOMERSBY
That's not my concern, Brandon.
Quite frankly---

BRANDON
The shot glasses were plastic.
Harmless. In fact---

SOMERSBY
That's not the issue.

Outside a window, birds build a nest in a tree.

SOMERSBY (CONT'D)
Late Spring is a grand season.

BRANDON
I prefer Autumn. Not so much light.

SOMERSBY
Are you not happy at Welman
College, young man?

BRANDON
I'm happy. Just not so young. Not
so-- not so--

SOMERSBY
Shall we focus on the happy part?

Brandon stares out the window at the ROOFTOP he was on the
previous evening.

SOMERSBY (CONT'D)
Is there something out there that
interests you?

EXT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Marny drives onto the parking lot in her vintage Volkswagon
van that is covered with flower decals.

MARNY'S POV

Dark and blurry.

Getting out of the van, she has to lean over to catch her
breath.

INT. DEAN SOMERSBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Somersby pushes a thin legal document forward.

SOMERSBY
This is a new, four-year contract,
Brandon. But, I don't want you to
sign it just yet.

BRANDON
Not sure I want to.

SOMERSBY

The money's good. But, the faculty board and I have a concern. A serious concern. Nothing to do with your teaching ability. Your creative writing class is one of Welman College's most popular.

(glances out the window at the rooftop)

There was another talented professor who spent time on a roof. He liked guns. Had a very nice revolver. The bullet entered and exited the sides of his head in a very nice straight line.

Puts his finger to his temple, pulls the trigger.

SOMERSBY (CONT'D)

Kapow!

(dryly)

A *Psychology* professor.

(then)

What do you want out of life?
What's important to you?

BRANDON

Well--- I'd like a really interesting vacation. With hula girls in grass skirts. And those beverages with umbrellas and pineapple wedges!

Not exactly what Somersby wanted to hear.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

A DOCTOR'S HAND pushes the plunger on a hypodermic needle in Marny's arm.

Hand belongs to DOCTOR JOE, a quirky doctor with an uneven hairpiece.

Concerned about Marny's eye-rubbing.

DOCTOR JOE

What's with the eye stuff?

MARNY

Oh, probably just allergies.

Doctor Joe picks up an ophthalmoscope, flashes it ON.

DOCTOR JOE

Let's have a look.

Doctor Joe's NURSE chews bubble gum, blows an impressively expanding bubble.

MARNY

Doctor Joe. I have been working *for decades* to grow a flower that might win the Paris Fleur De Grand Prix. I've finished second *three times*. But, this year, the flower we have, which is doing its darndest to bloom on schedule, might be the best of all!

(sweetly, but with labored breathing)

My plane leaves in three days.

DOCTOR JOE

I need to run more tests. We'll know more in the mornin'.

Nurse's bubble expands even LARGER.

INT. BRANDON'S OFFICE - DAY

Snoozing at his desk.

Brandon fumbles to answer his ringing phone.

BRANDON

Yes, yes.

MARNY (OVER THE PHONE)

It's me. Just your mom.

BRANDON

Hey. What's up?

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

In a HOSPITAL GOWN, Marny talks on a pay phone.

MARNY

Nothing really. I--- I'm in the hospital.

BRANDON (OVER THE PHONE)

In the hospital?

MARNY

(keeps rubbing her eyes)
I'm sure it's nothing.

Shivers abnormally.

MARNY (CONT'D)
Listen, I want you to pick Katey up
from school.

INT. BRANDON'S OFFICE - DAY

BRANDON
I guess I could do that.

MARNY (OVER THE PHONE)
Of course you can.

EXT. YORKTOWN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Standing on a sidewalk by the street, Katey waits.

INT. BRANDON'S PONTIAC - DAY

Puffing on A CIGAR, Brandon sees Katey, steers the car over.

As he reaches across and opens the passenger door, clouds of
cigar smoke billow out.

Annoyed, Kate steps back from the smoke.

BRANDON
Hey! Grandma couldn't make it.
C'mon, get in!

She hesitates.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
You still playin' Chopsticks?

Stepping forward, Katey slams the car door SHUT, walks
angrily away.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Here we go.

Tosses the cigar, drives up beside her.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
I got rid of the cigar!

From her backpack...

Katey takes out a SKETCH PAD and black marker pen, writes:
SMOKE LINGERS! PLUS COLOGNE!

Holds it up so Brandon can read it.

Flips the page over, writes: **WHERE'S GRANDMA?**

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 (quietly)
 In the hospital.

Katey runs away, down the street.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 Stuff. Always stuff!

As he puts the car in gear, it backfires and stalls.

Tries to restart it.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 C'mon, c'mon.

Thick smoke leaks from the hood.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 C'mon, you piece of junk!

Gets out of the car as his daughter rapidly disappears.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 Katey, wait! Dammit.

Kicks the curb, hurting his foot, then limps over and opens the car hood... is instantly engulfed by black, oily engine smoke.

EXT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Katey strides determinedly through the emergency entrance.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - RECEPTION DESK - DAY

Approaching a nurse, she takes out the sketch pad and marker pen, writes: **MY GRANDMA IS MARNY LARMIKE.**

RECEPTION DESK NURSE
 And you are?

KATEY
 Katey.

RECEPTION DESK NURSE
 Why do you write when you can talk?

No response from Katey.

Nurse dials number on desk phone, hands it to Katey.

KATEY (INTO THE PHONE)
 Grandma?

MARNY (OVER THE PHONE)
Hi, Katey pie! Everything's
alright.

Katey tries to say something, but can't.

MARNY (OVER THE PHONE CONT'D)
I'll be home tomorrow.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - MARNY'S ROOM - DAY
Still holding the phone, Marny is very concerned.

KATEY (OVER THE PHONE)
Promise?

MARNY
Promise. Is your father with you?
(silence)
What happened? Tell me what
happened.

KATEY (OVER THE PHONE)
Cigar. Smoke. Cologne!

Phone call disconnects.

Marny goes to a window, looks down to the sidewalk.

Major concern lines her face.

Coming into view, Katey looks up, clutching her backpack.

Sees her beloved grandma.

Smiling bravely, Marny waves.

HER POV dark and blurry, the sidewalk seems to undulate.

Katey just stands there.

MARNY
Dear God.

Shivers, eyelids fluttering unnaturally.

EXT. YORKTOWN SIDE STREET - DAY

Brandon's face is smudged with oil and grease.

A tow truck operator, UNCLE VLADIMIR, a cowboy hat-wearing individual with an unidentifiable accent, hoists up the front end of Brandon's disabled car.

UNCLE VLADIMIR

Yah, the wife won't let me watch NFL game no more. Not like when we got married! You tell me what wrong with spendin' afternoon in front of tube on Sunday football.

Trying to flick a glob of grease from his tweed jacket, Brandon smudges it further.

UNCLE VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

(tosses him a rag)

You should let mechanic take care of dirty work, chief.

Finishes hoisting the car up.

BRANDON

I've worked on cars before, Uncle Vladimir.

UNCLE VLADIMIR

Yah, I can tell.

A STRAY DOG urinates on the car's back tire.

UNCLE VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

Hey!

Dog barks back, continues to urinate.

BRANDON

Perfect.

EXT. UNCLE VLADIMIR'S SERVICE STATION - MINUTES LATER

From under Brandon's hoisted-up car.

UNCLE VLADIMIR

Well, professor, it look like oil filter housing crack. Oil spill on exhaust. That where black smoke come from. Anyways, it take three day to order part from Tucson.

BRANDON

Think it's worth fixing?

UNCLE VLADIMIR

Sure, still a buncha miles left on 'er.

Tosses over a set of keys.

Nods at a vintage '55 Ford F100 pickup truck.

UNCLE VLADIMIR (CONT'D)
You borrow. She ride rough, but,
does job.

A SHINY, GOLD KEY seems out of place.

BRANDON
What's this one for?

UNCLE VLADIMIR
I got yacht moored up at Lake Santa
Claus. The Green Monster. You can
take 'er out fishin' if you like.
(lowers his voice)
Kinda look like you could use
fishin' vacation, pardner.

BRANDON
(gets in the truck)
Thanks, Uncle Vladimir. I might
take you up on that.

UNCLE VLADIMIR
Green Monster. Like from Boston,
you know. Like Massachusetts over
there. She's moored with other
yachts.

Starting the truck, Brandon grinds it into gear, drives off
with a weak grin.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - EARLY EVENING

Katey helps close up shop for the day.

After checking the dirt thermomete, Allen carefully puts the
Angel's Kiss Chrysanthemum in its special place in the walk-
in refrigerator.

Adjusts the flower's position slightly.

The stray dog trots by the shop's front door, glances inside.

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Finishing brushing his teeth furiously, Brandon takes a swig
of mouthwash, slushes it around, spits into the toilet.

Flushes the toilet, accidently knocks his hair brush in the
bowl. Reaches in to rescue it, brushes his hair without
rinsing the brush, splashes on a ton of New Crew cologne.

PHONE rings as he grabs a jacket, heads for the door.

Answering machine comes ON and he stops.

BRANDON'S OUTGOING MESSAGE
 'Nobody's here to talk. I'll
 consider returning your call. But,
 don't count on it.'

Machine beeps, his mother's VOICE is heard.

MARNY'S VOICE
 I wish you'd change that message.
 Anyway, it's just me again, Mom.

Frowning, Brandon goes to the phone, presses the SPEAKER
 button.

MARNY'S VOICE (CONT'D)
 Katey is not going to live with you
 until you stop the cigars and
 cologne. All that drinking and
 running around.
 (very labored breathing)
 It's time for you to start being a
 better father.

BRANDON
 What did the doctor say? What's the
 matter?
 (then)
 Are you dying?

MARNY'S VOICE
 Brandon--- why would you ask a
 question like that? What's going on
 with you lately? I wanna know.

BRANDON
 I'm fine. Everything's good. I
 asked that question because---
 because you mean so much to me.
 (then)
 You're my only friend.

MARNY'S VOICE
 (still labored breathing)
 Well, you should have other
 friends. Brandon? Are you
 listening?

He just stares into the phone.

EXT. MOOKIE'S HIDEAWAY BAR & RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A working-class bar in the town square.

Its neon sign blinks off and on: 1/2 PRICE HAPPY HOUR ALL DAY
 LONG!!

Uncle Vladimir's truck parked outside.

INT. MOOKIE'S HIDEAWAY BAR & RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Blearily finishing a drink...

BRANDON
Keep 'em comin'.

Bartender pours another drink, slides it over.

BARTENDER
By the way, nice cologne.

Downing the drink in two gulps...

BRANDON
Aaahhhhhh!

EXT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - NIGHT

A friendly, 1940s era, brick house with a grand front porch.
Only a few lights are on.

INT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

In her grandmother's bedroom, an open suitcase on a cedar chest has a plane ticket to Paris, which Katey is having a look at.

Also a tourist brochure for Normandy Beach in France.

INT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Television beams an episode of The Tonight Show with Jay Leno as Katey comes downstairs and sits at a classic Steinway piano.

Starts to play Chopsticks.

INT. MOOKIE'S HIDEAWAY BAR & RESTAURANT - CLOSING TIME

At the bar, Brandon is drunk, slumped over.

Bartender taps his shoulder, puts the bar tab down.

BARTENDER
Time, Mr. Larmike.

BRANDON
(drunkenly lifts his head)
Yesh. Of coursh.

Adds a tip to the tab, signs unsteadily, practically falls off the bar stool.

At the door, the BOUNCER stops him.

BOUNCER
We'll drive you home, boss. Uncle Vladimir lent you the truck, eh?

BRANDON
(swaying on his feet)
I'm okay ta drive-- boss.

Bouncer takes the truck keys from Brandon's hand before he staggers outside.

Across the street.

The stray dog barks at Brandon.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Hey, I know you!

Dog growls menacingly.

Getting down on his hands and knees, Brandon growls back.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
You think you're the only one who can growl?

Departing bar patrons aren't sure what to make of Brandon as he howls like a deranged wolf... and the dog slinks away into the shadowy night.

EXT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Light shines from Marny's window.

RADIO D.J. (V.O.)
More late night melodies from KJME radio in Yorktown, Arizona. Here's one for the ages. Old Blue Eyes.

MARNY'S SHADOW traces on the curtains as Frank Sinatra's *Summer Wind* plays on a transistor radio in her room.

SINATRA (ON THE RADIO)
*"A summer wind came blowin' in
across the sea ..
It lingered there and touched your
hair and walked with me .."*

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - MARNY'S ROOM - NEXT DAY

Doctor Joe examines a new set of X-rays.

Rubbing her eyes again, Marny looks very worn-down, shivering uncontrollably.

DOCTOR JOE

It's not good, Marny. Not good at all.

EXT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - STREET OUT FRONT - DAY

In the passenger seat of Uncle Vladimir's truck, Brandon sleeps off his drunken night

Climbing into the truck's loading bed, Katey BANGS on the cab roof.

KATEY

Go!

Waking abruptly, Brandon frantically moves over and starts the truck.

Katey keeps pounding on the roof.

KATEY (CONT'D)

GO!! GO!!

Accidentally jamming the truck into reverse, Brandon forcefully lets out the clutch and Katey ends up on her butt.

Jamming on the brakes, Brandon finds another gear and somehow the truck lurches forward.

BRANDON

Sorry, sorry.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - MARNY'S ROOM - DAY

With a sterile mask over his face, Brandon stares at his mom through blood-shot eyes.

Marny has an oxygen mask on, an IV attached to her arm.

MARNY

You look so tired, sweetie.

SFX: To Brandon, her words sound like they are coming from an empty cave.

BRANDON

Tell me what the doctor said.

MARNY

I can't go to Paris. Maybe you can go. Katey's too young. Allen has to mind the shop.

Brandon hears the SOUND OF HIS OWN BREATHING.

MARNY (CONT'D)

Anyway, they don't know what I have, Brandon. I should probably write a will.

POV BRANDON

Continues to hear himself breathe as he exits the room.

MARNY (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

He passes by Katey in the hall, doesn't notice that she sticks her tongue out at him.

EXT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Ripping off the sterile mask as he gets to his truck, Brandon inhales and exhales deeply several times.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - DAY

BRANDON'S FACE stares at the Angel's Kiss Chrysanthemum.

It's bloomed a bit more since the day before.

Spilling dirt on the floor, a nervous Allen.

ALLEN

Dammit!

BRANDON

You sure you can you manage the shop if I go to Paris?

ALLEN

Marny wouldn't let you represent her flower in Paris. Get real.

BRANDON

What if I just get the hell outta here?

EXT. OUTSIDE THE FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Uncle Vladimir's truck screeches away, Brandon driving.

Waiting around the corner for the truck to leave, Katey joins Allen in the shop.

Truck drives halfway around the town square.

Noticing the stray dog trotting along the sidewalk, Brandon slams on the brakes.

Rolls the window down, barks at the dog.

STRAY DOG
Hello, Brandon.

Brandon's jaw drops and the dog GRINS.

STRAY DOG (CONT'D)
Follow me, buddy!

Darts away, then stops in front of the Psychic Gypsy Shop as Brandon catches up in the truck.

BRANDON
(reads the shop sign)
'Crystal energy. Curses Granted.
Reverse Curses. Aura Cleansing.
Chakra Balancing. No Voodoo. Free
Zodiac key chain Tuesdays and
Wednesdays.'

Dog LAUGHS.

Brandon glances inside the open shop door, looks around to see if anybody in town is watching him.

Coast is clear.

INT. PSYCHIC GYPSY SHOP - DAY

FANTASY SEQUENCE:

When Brandon enters, it's like stepping into a Jamaican beach vacation dream. A line of exotic, bikini-clad women dance seductively, blowing air-kisses at him. He air-kisses them back as he is handed a tropical alcoholic beverage with a chunk of pineapple wedged on top.

BACK TO REALITY:

Seated at a table, eyes closed, Brandon air-kisses the shop PSYCHIC GYPSY, AN EDGY WOMAN who wears too much sparkling blue eye make-up.

Etched into the table are the words: *Crimean Gothic*.

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 Look at your hands. Look at your
 hands, you fool!

As Brandon's eyes blink open, the stray dog peeps its head
 around the corner, panting.

PSYCHIC GYPSY (CONT'D)
 (glares at the dog)
 Go away, I'm busy.
 (the dog slinks away)
 You, what is your name?

Brandon is fascinated by how his hands look.

PSYCHIC GYPSY (CONT'D)
 Stop looking at your hands! Give me
 ten dollars!

He puts ten dollars in her tip jar.

BRANDON
 My mother. Something's very wrong.
 (leans forward)
 I think she's dying.

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 Death is always whimsical.

Examines one of his hands.

PSYCHIC GYPSY (CONT'D)
 Your soul is lost.

BRANDON
 My mom. She's everything. I want to
 bear her burden. I want to replace
 her death with mine. Would you know
 how to do something like that?

As the Psychic Gypsy sizes him up, her face EXPANDS OUTWARD
 with an ENORMOUS TOOTHY SMILE.

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 Of course. How much money do you
 have?

Taking out a clump of cash, Brandon clumsily sorts through
 it, and WE HEAR the sound of his own breathing again.

SFX: SCENE COLORS AND CONTRAST shifts.

BRANDON
 About a hundred.

Picking up the truck keys, the Psychic Gypsy selects the gold
 boat key, says something.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 What? I'm sorry, what?

She picks up a pitcher of water, pours it on his head.

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 Go spend time on the Green Monster.
 It is a good boat. Uncle Vladimir
 is my dear friend.

Stands up abruptly, emphatically gives him the gold boat key.

PSYCHIC GYPSY (CONT'D)
 You may depart!

Grinning enthusiastically and shivering through his dripping hair...

BRANDON
 Very interesting. Now this is
 interesting!

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 Depart! Leave your money!!

Dumping his clumped cash on the table, Brandon picks up a Psychic Gypsy shop discount flyer on his way out.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - MARNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

In her darkened room Marny sleeps restlessly, shivering.

SFX: SCENE COLORS AND CONTRAST shift. A wall flickers with black and white images of World War Two soldiers partying in a dance hall.

Her eyelids flutter abnormally.

EXT. LAKE SANTA CLAUS - NIGHT

Mostly small boats are moored at various points around a quaint municipal lake, which features a STATUE OF SANTA CLAUS in the middle.

Brandon stands on the shore.

Shivering without control, eyelids fluttering abnormally.

A LOCAL gets out of a paddle boat.

BRANDON
 Excuse me. Where are the yachts?

LOCAL

Ain't no yachts around here.
 (hacks, spits)
 Lookin' for somethin' in
 particular?

BRANDON

The Green Monster.
 (looks around)
 I haven't been here since I was a
 kid.

LOCAL

I reckon not, mister.

Points over at a fluorescent green, wooden ROW BOAT with the
 words GREEN MONSTER embossed on its side.

LOCAL (CONT'D)

Green Monster's over there. Uncle
 Vladimir's boat, right?

BRANDON

Right.

LOCAL

Yah, that Uncle Vladimir tells
 everybody it's a damn yacht.

Face evaporates as he stares at Brandon.

LOCAL (CONT'D)

I guess beauty's in the eye of the
 beholder.

Brandon can't stop shivering, or the fluttering eyelids.

BRANDON

Interesting.

INT. PSYCHIC GYPSY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eyelids fluttering, the Psychic Gypsy shivers uncontrollably
 while picking up the cash Brandon left on the table.

Takes a leftover chicken drumstick from a plate, eats the
 remaining meat, tosses the bone into a soup bowl.

Bowl begins to vibrate.

Outside the shop, rain pours down.

EXT. LAKE SANTA CLAUS - NIGHT

Now raining heavily.

The lake's stark facility lights BLINK ON, vibrate in a surreal manner.

In the middle of the lake, smoking a cigar, Brandon is slumped in Uncle Vladimir's row boat.

Fishing pole line dangling limply in the water.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
I reckon not, mister.

Glares at the Santa Claus statue.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
In the eye of the beholder.

Sheets of rain soak him, and his cigar goes out. Throws the cigar, bouncing it off the Santa Claus statue's nose.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Statues!

INT. PSYCHIC GYPSY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Putting a spoon on the bowl's rim, the Psychic Gypsy mumbles in Crimean Gothic language, but the bowl keeps vibrating.

She gets angry, picks up the bowl and throws it against a wall where it shatters to pieces.

The chicken bone bounces onto the floor, where it jumps up and down.

Outside, lightning flashes.

EXT. LAKE SANTA CLAUS - NIGHT

Lightning flashes.

Brandon's fishing line takes a huge dip, and line spools rapidly out of the reel.

Stands up, yanks back on the rod.

BRANDON
Merry Christmas, fish! HAH!

Takes a step to brace himself and his foot goes right through the bottom of the boat.

Fishing rod drops into the water, disappears.

Boat starts to sink as rain increases in intensity.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - MARNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

At the window, Marny hypnotized by the intense rain and lightning, eyelids lightly fluttering, more relaxed.

SFX: An unusually glorious surge of multi-colored lightning bursts from the clouds and strikes UPWARDS.

EXT. LAKE SANTA CLAUS - NIGHT

SERIES OF STILL SHOTS increasing in distance as the row boat completely sinks and Brandon struggles to swim to shore.

INT./EXT. PSYCHIC GYPSY SHOP - NIGHT

Psychic Gypsy crawls to her storefront couch, exhausted, eyelids fluttering.

Chicken bone on the kitchen's floor motionless.

Shop's pink neon *OPEN* sign blinks in the darkness.

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Very pale, Brandon huddles in a chair, squinting to watch TV, blanket draped over his shoulders.

Shivering harshly, eyelids fluttering.

POV dark and blurry.

INT. YORKTON GENERAL HOSPITAL - MARNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Marny sleeps peacefully.

EXT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Kate enraptured by misty colors drifting in the now peaceful rain, as runoff water courses through street gutters.

INT. ALLEN'S CAMPUS APARTMENT - OVERLOOKING THE QUAD - NIGHT

Allen on his sofa, reading, interior lights fluctuate.

Heavy rain CRACKS the apartment's huge window overlooking the campus quad.

Allen looks over, mutters in Crimean Gothic language.

Crack DISAPPEARS.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - MARNY'S ROOM - NEXT DAY

While his nurse blows a huge bubble gum bubble, Doctor Joe takes a thermometer from Marny's mouth, has a look.

DOCTOR JOE
Fever's gone.

MARNY
I feel superb! By the way, did you see that colorful lightning strike last night? And the wonderful rain?

Nurse's bubble bursts.

DOCTOR JOE
The sky was clear last night, Marny.

MARNY
Really? I could've sworn-- now listen Doctor Joe-- I appreciate your concern, but the flower we have this year could be the best ever. The best ever!
(sits up, brightly)
My plane leaves tomorrow.
(sweetly)
Not rubbin' my eyes anymore.

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER - DAY

Brandon dumps scrambled eggs from a frying pan onto a plate, but most of the eggs end up on the floor.

Awkwardly pours a cup of coffee, spilling it everywhere, doesn't notice.

Bumps into a chair on his way over to the home phone, clumsily dials a number using the SPEAKER OPTION.

INT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Katey plays a variation of Chopsticks on the piano, and the phone rings.

Keeps playing with one hand, answers the phone using the SPEAKER OPTION, but doesn't say anything.

BRANDON (THROUGH PHONE SPEAKER)
Kate? You there?

She bangs the piano keys harder, louder.

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER - DAY

BRANDON (INTO THE PHONE)
You wanna go visit Grandma with me?
Katey?

KATEY (THROUGH PHONE SPEAKER)
NO!!

The call disconnects.

POV BRANDON... blurry darkness returns.

BRANDON
Got it.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Paul plays a game of chess by himself in the empty classroom.

Hair askew, clothes disheveled, Brandon wanders in.

Dumps a bunch of documents on his desk; half of them scatter on the floor.

PAUL
I hear Uncle Vladimir introduced
you to the Green Monster.

BRANDON
Yep, uh huh.

Rubs his eyes vigorously.

PAUL
He uses really thin plywood on the
floorboards.
(grins)
Sinks every time. Happened to me.

BRANDON
Interesting. Very interesting.

Makes his way to a window, squints at The Big Cowboy statue, trying hard to focus.

PAUL
He's going to pretend that he's
angry and ask you to pay for the
damage.
(then)
You okay there, prof'?

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - NURSE'S STATION - DAY

Katey waits anxiously.

Marny peeks her head around a corner.

MARNY

Hey, you.

Steps out, fully dressed in street clothes.

Katey rushes into her arms for a hug.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Marny and Allen are admiring the Angel's Kiss Chrysanthemum, which is blooming superbly.

ALLEN

Looking good, Marny.

MARNY

We have a chance. We have a real chance this time!

Silent and sullen, Katey stands off to the side.

MARNY (CONT'D)

Katey pie, Allen's offered to stay at the house with you when I'm in Paris.

On her sketch pad, Katey writes **WHAT. EVER.**

ALLEN

Or not.

MARNY

And your dad's only minutes away.

As Katey grimaces and rolls her eyes...

ALLEN

Bring me back a souvenir, Marny. Something special.

MARNY

Something special?

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Brandon lectures beside a window.

Not his usual self at all.

BRANDON

You see--- the thing about creative writing in philosophy is -- or -- or poetry is---

Takes his glasses off, clumsily uses eye drops.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

--- is, uhmm -- is---

Students glance at each other quizzically.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

For example. 'Weeping willow in the sun, how far do you go when you run, when the air rustles and murmurs, does it take you to your dreams?' Do you notice how the words -- how the words sort of--

(sighs)

I'm going to ask what may seem to be an easy question. Emphasis on 'what may seem to be'.

(then)

Why is there *something* rather than *nothing*?

Nobody raises their hand.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Good. You are waiting. Showing resistance. And that, my scurrilous scribes, is where creativity starts.

(coughs coarsely)

Of course, resistance only takes the creative process to one level.

Gazes out the window at the building rooftop across the quad.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Like words. But, words are more than resistance. Words-- at a certain point-- are all we have. Respect words, and they will not desert you. Dishonor words and you will be at a place that is more than just simple loss.

FOCUS ON the rooftop's edge.

From her desk, Jill follows Brandon's gaze, apprehensive.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - RECEPTION DESK - NIGHT

Brandon wearily approaches the nurse's station, unsteady.

NURSE

Your mother checked out a few hours ago, Brandon. Are you okay?

EXT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - NIGHT

Brandon drives up in Uncle Vladimir's truck.

INT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

As Katey washes and cuts potatoes for dinner, Brandon opens the kitchen door, clears his throat.

Ignored by Katey.

Marny flutters in, holding up a boldly patterned blouse.

MARNY

Do you think I'll look like a dork
if I wear this in Paris?

No response from Katey.

Brandon shrugs.

MARNY (CONT'D)

Paris, France, here I come!

EXT. TUCSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - EARLY NEXT MORNING

Uncle Vladimir's truck pulls over at the departure curb.

INT. TRUCK - EARLY NEXT MORNING

In the passenger seat, Marny stares at her plane ticket.

MARNY

Two years to the day since you told
Katey about the fire station. You
remember, after we played the
piano.

In the driver's seat, Brandon is rather absent.

BRANDON

And she hasn't used more than one
word in a sentence since?

MARNY

Then you told her, your adopted
daughter, that you needed more
space. To figure things out. Alone.

SFX: SOUND of a few notes being played on a piano.

MARNY (CONT'D)
 (misty-eyed)
 I don't want to cry before I get on
 the plane. Now, open my door and
 wish me luck.

Carefully picks up the Angel's Kiss Chrysanthemum as Brandon shuffles to the other side of the truck, opens her door.

BRANDON
 Good luck.

Marny touches his forehead.

MARNY
 You gonna be okay?
 (no answer)
 One of these days Kate has to move
 back in with you, sonny boy. It's
 time to move forward with our
 lives.
 (then)
 Happiness is a measure of
 contentment, not constant nirvana.

SFX: SOUND of piano playing continues.

INT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - **TWO YEARS EARLIER**

MUTED COLORS, browns, blacks and stark whites.

At the Steinway piano, Marny sits beside Katey on the bench.

Brandon stands off to the side, sipping a glass of wine, bemused. Something on his mind.

MARNY
 Ready, pumpkin?

KATEY
 Ready.

MARNY
 Brandon?

BRANDON
 Have at it, guys.

Katey sticks her tongue out at him, starts playing chord changes for Chopsticks. Marny comes in on cue with her single finger, playing the upper keys. At the end of the sequence, they take a breath and start again, picking up the tempo, concentrating harder, not wanting to make a mistake.

This continues until they finally get going TOO FAST, and end up pounding random keys, grinning and laughing like fools.

Brandon drains his glass of wine, pours another.

After a big gulp, he glances at Katey uncomfortably, grins awkwardly.

EXT. YORKTOWN HIGH SCHOOL BUS STOP - BACK TO PRESENT MORNING

Katey waits for the school bus.

Brandon drives by in Uncle Vladimir's truck, his head overlooking the steering wheel.

Squinting mightily to see, straining to use eye drops.

EXT. PARIS, FRANCE - CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - NIGHT

An American Airlines jumbo jet lands on the tarmac.

EXT. UNCLE VLADIMIR'S SERVICE STATION - DAY

Brandon's Pontiac is ready.

He forks over a bunch of cash to Uncle Vladimir.

UNCLE VLADIMIR
Plus, two hundred to fix boat.

BRANDON
I'm on to you, Uncle Vladimir.

UNCLE VLADIMIR
What you mean, on to me? My boat destroyed! Finished!

A MECHANIC tries not to laugh.

BRANDON
I'm not in the mood for comedy.

UNCLE VLADIMIR
Not in mood for comedy? Do I look like clown?!

BRANDON
Actually, yes, you do look like a bloody clown.

Uncle Vladimir guffaws, and whacks Brandon on the back.

UNCLE VLADIMIR
 Okay, I fix Green Monster myself!
 You admit, it's funny joke, eh?

BRANDON
 Yes, very funny joke. Ha, ha.

Gets into his car and drives off, laughing madly.

UNCLE VLADIMIR
 What's with him?

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Katey doodles on her sketch pad as JASON, the cool fellow student who glanced at her in the music room, sits beside her.

OTHER SCHOOL KIDS whisper and point at them.

JASON
 I know you only talk one word at a time. I think it's cool.

Katey is skeptical, writes on her pad: **YOU DO?**

Jason glares at the school kids still staring.

JASON (CONT'D)
 Mind if I write somethin' on that?

Takes the sketch pad and marker pen, starts writing.

JASON (CONT'D)
 Sometimes people talk too much.

Finishes, then stands and holds up the pad so all the other students can read: **MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS.**

JASON (CONT'D)
 Anyone got a problem with this?

Everyone grows quiet.

Jason has the kind of presence that people respect.

KATEY
 Thanks.

Writes on her pad: **Aren't you a football player?**

JASON
 Quarterback. Sorta. Hey, I like the way you play piano.

Katey tosses her hair back.

KATEY

Amadeus!

JASON

(grins)

Damn straight.

INT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIR TERMINAL - QUARANTINE ROOM - NIGHT

As Marny guardedly holds her competition flower, an AIRPORT OFFICIAL approaches.

AIRPORT OFFICIAL

I am sorry, mademoiselle, but we must hold your flower for twenty-four hour.

MARNY

It's very delicate. Tres delicate.

AIRPORT OFFICIAL

Je comprends. Regulation. C'est la vie.

Puts her Chrysanthemum in a glass-walled room with several other Fleurs De Grands Prix contest entries... whose owners sit nearby... none of them pleased.

Marny keeps an eye on her flower.

A CUSTOMS OFFICIAL enters the quarantine room with a water pitcher.

A gaunt, androgynous female beside Marny, LYNNE RODNEY, isn't at all happy with the situation.

LYNNE RODNEY

What's he doin'? I hope he's not gonna water our damn flowers!!

Marny takes a bottle of water from her purse.

KNOCKS on the quarantine room window to get the Customs Official's attention.

MARNY

Hey, monsieur. Monsieur!

All of the other flower owners immediately form a line behind Marny with their own containers of watering fluids.

The Customs Official examines a pathetic-looking dandelion, comes to the door.

Marny hands over her bottle.

MARNY (CONT'D)

It's the big white one. Le grand
blanc fleur.

(points)

Over there.

Other flower owners crowd the door.

CUSTOMS OFFICIAL

(raises his hands)

Arete, arete! Okay!

(to Marny)

'Ow much water, mademoiselle?

MARNY

About half the bottle. Le half.

Lynne Rodney dramatically lifts a water bottle high overhead.

LYNNE RODNEY

THIS is for the dandelion!

EXT. YORKTOWN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Katey's bus is at the high school. Other buses, cars and trucks disperse their student passengers.

On the sidewalk, Katey and Jason are having a chat.

JASON

Come by one of our practices. I can
throw the ball really far. We don't
hardly ever win. But, when I throw
that ball, it's a thing of beauty.

(grins)

Nobody hardly ever catches it! Best
part is watchin' coach get mad and
blow his whistle. His cheeks get
all bulged out. Pretty funny. But I
don't care if we don't win, Katey.
It's just football.

She strolls away.

KATEY

Okee dokee.

JASON

You gonna play piano later?

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Brandon wears dark sunglasses and blows smoke from a cigar out a classroom window toward The Big Cowboy statue.

At the front of the classroom, Jill reads from her new writing assignment.

JILL

'Query. Should the local government bring back public debates in Town Square Park in order to revitalize Yorktown's shrinking intellectual community? Give reasons for Pro and/or Con answers.'

(pause)

Pro. Blah, blah, blah, blah.
And/or, Con. Blah, blah, blah---

BRANDON

Thank you, Jill. Got it. Blah, blah, blah.

Tosses the cigar out the window.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Does anybody know why Yorktown has so many damn statues?

Another of his unique students stands up.

UNIQUE STUDENT

My understanding is it started in World War Two to honor the Harris brothers. Local war heros.

BRANDON

What about The Big Cowboy statue? What's the deal with that?

UNIQUE STUDENT

Actually--- some folks say it was your father.

Brandon did not know this.

BRANDON

Yes, of course. My father.

INT. YORKTOWN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL - MUSIC ROOM - DAY

A PIANO TECHNICIAN tunes the piano as Katey waits.

PIANO TECHNICIAN

You gonna enter the Juilliard showcase?

KATEY

Juilliard?

The piano technician takes out a pamphlet, hands it to Katey.

PIANO TECHNICIAN
 Juilliard Music School in New York
 City. They're comin' here next
 week. Lookin' to give out
 scholarships.
 (finds a troubled piano
 key)
 Ah, hah!
 (makes an adjustment)
 That should do it. Anyways, I've
 heard you play. You should give it
 a shot.

Picks up his tools and exits as Katey plunks the piano key.

SOUNDS OF THE FOOTBALL TEAM approaching. Player's cleats
 clatter on the polished granite floor as they pass by.

Katey doesn't notice Jason in the doorway, as she tinkles
 with the keyboard.

JASON
 Hey.

KATEY
 (happy to see him)
 Hey.

EXT. YORKTOWN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - MINUTES LATER

A HAND grips a FOOTBALL.

The hand pulls the football back, then chucks it into the air
 in a high arc with tremendous speed. The ball arcs down some
 sixty yards later where it bounces off the hands of its
 intended RECEIVER.

THE HUGE HEAD OF THE FOOTBALL COACH appears.

COACH
 Oh, for the love of --

Blows his whistle hard, his face reddening to a deep crimson
 and cheeks blowing out LIKE BALLOONS... his entire face about
 to explode.

COACH (CONT'D)
 Catch the darn thing!!

Gives Jason another football.

COACH (CONT'D)
 Toss 'em an easy one, Snake.

Jason casually launches another high-arcing missile at the
 receiver, who lets it fly over his head.

COACH (CONT'D)
Unbelievable.

Blows his whistle again.

And his cheeks BULGE out humongously.

Over at a nearby grassy knoll, Katey is doubled up with laughter.

EXT. WELMAN COLLEGE - THE QUAD - NIGHT

Under a blanket on a bench near The Big Cowboy statue.

Brandon shivers, eyes fluttering.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - NIGHT

In a cafeteria worker uniform, Jill has coffee with Paul.

JILL
Do you think he'll actually jump
one of these days? You should talk
to him.

PAUL
We talk all the time.

JILL
That's not what I meant. Tell him
we *care*. Really mean it when you
say it.
(touches his arm)
Do it soon, Paul.

EXT. PARIS, FRANCE - LE HOTEL DU MOTEL - NEXT MORNING

A boutique hotel on the banks of the glistening Seines River.

INT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL - MARNY'S ROOM - MORNING

Refreshed, Marny sets her fully bloomed Angel's Kiss
Chrysanthemum near a window, turning it toward the sun.

On the bedside night table is the World War Two picture of
her and Hubby.

EXT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL - MORNING

Marny passes through the lobby.

EXT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL - VALET AREA - MORNING

She approaches a Citroen convertible automobile with a magnetic door sign: *Sebastien Tours*.

Is greeted pleasantly by SEBASTIEN, 20, the owner.

SEBASTIEN
Bonjour, 'ello.

MARNY
Are you available for a tour?

SEBASTIEN
(opens the passenger door)
But of course. Eiffel Tower?

MARNY
Normandy. The cliffs. Where the
invasion took place. Do you go
there?

EXT. NORMANDY - THE AMERICAN CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

In front of one of the white crosses, off to the side by itself. The epitaph reads:

*HERE RESTS IN HONORED GLORY
COMRADE IN ARMS
KNOWN BUT TO GOD*

Marny is there.

MARNY
Is this you, Hubby? I've always
wondered.

Plucks a HANDFUL OF GRASS from beside the grave site, carefully puts it in a napkin in her purse.

Wanders to the edge of the cliffs overlooking the English Channel. Skies are moody and cloudy, and the waters below grey and deep.

Rusted World War Two landing craft dot the beach, and a concrete German gun turret attracts a few tourists.

MARNY (CONT'D)
I wish I knew if you made it up
this hill. Or were you down there,
in all the water and noise and
madness? You can't imagine how many
times I wish I could have been
there with you, my love. It rips
apart this old, ragged soul. But
maybe you did make it up here.

(MORE)

MARNY (CONT'D)

And you were dry. And had time for
a cigarette or two.

Blows her nose, waves at a young girl passing by, holding
hands with her parents as they stop in front of another white
cross.

Turns back to the ocean.

MARNY (CONT'D)

So, yes, I'm in Paris again. For
the flower competition, yep.
Probably the last time, hon'.
These long trans-Atlantic airplane
rides aren't as easy as they used
to be.

(up to the clouds)

Most of all, I miss dancing with
you. All these decades later, and I
still miss dancing with you. Do you
miss dancing with me? Probably not.
Probably lots of pretty girls to
dance with up there. In all those
fluffy clouds. Anyway, I finally
paid the mortgage off.

INT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL - MARNY'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

A FRENCH MAID pours WATER into Marny's flower pot, totally saturating the dirt.

EXT. CLIFFS OF NORMANDY - AFTERNOON

Up in the clouds.

MARNY (V.O.)

Brandon seems so lost. Do you think
you could visit him in a dream or
something? Help him figure things
out. Because he doesn't listen to
me. He says he does but he doesn't.

A last gaze at the solitary white cross.

MARNY

Anyway, I'm in Paris again, and I
want to go back home. I want to go
back home and dance with you in my
dreams.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - DAY

In an essay, Jill scribbles BLAH, BLAH, BLAH.

Other students sit on their desks, hanging out.

A concerned Paul glances at his watch.

Brandon comes in, DRAINED.

Goes to his desk, sets down a stack of marked papers, turns awkwardly to address the class.

BRANDON
Sorry I'm late.

Faints.

EXT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Brandon stands defiantly outside the emergency room door.

BRANDON
I'm fine.

PAUL
If you don't go in, I will carry you. That's a promise!

BRANDON
Physical threats are manifestations of a weak mind.

PAUL
Not gonna say it again, prof'.

INT. YORKTOWN HOSPITAL - DOCTOR JOE'S OFFICE - DAY

Doctor Joe repairs his torn toupee... nurse rushes in.

NURSE
We have a situation! In the emergency room!

INT. YORKTOWN HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Paul CARTS Brandon, who is rigid as a board, inside.

Fumbling to straighten his hapless toupee, Doctor Joe joins the chaos.

DOCTOR JOE
Gentlemen, may I be of assistance?

PAUL
He fainted. In class. He's also practicing to be a statue. Sorry, an *interesting* statue.

BRANDON
(still rigid)
And your point is?

Paul pats him on the shoulder, leaves.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
They were plastic!

Doctor Joe touches Brandon's forehead.

DOCTOR JOE
How long have you had this fever?

BRANDON
My problem is I smoke too much,
doc'. Guaranteed.

DOCTOR JOE
Stop talking so much, Brandon.

POV BRANDON... hears his own breathing.

BRANDON
Perhaps a bit too much Yukon Jack.
I can switch to beer, if you think
it'll help.

Doctor Joe illuminates Brandon's eyes with an ophthalmoscope.

DOCTOR JOE
What's all this about a statue?

BRANDON
I want my life to be interesting.

DOCTOR JOE
We're going to keep you overnight.
(hands him a hospital
gown)
Now be an interesting statue and
put this on.

BRANDON'S POV blurs as he struggles to put on the gown.

BRANDON
Hey, you ever been to Lake Santa
Claus? Uncle Vladimir has a boat.
You should take it out some time.
You know--- fishing!

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - DAY

A subdued Paul finishes addressing the class.

PAUL
 Anyway, I suggest we read or write.
 Or, you know, whatever.

The silence is uncomfortable, everyone sensing the seriousness.

EXT. PARIS, FRANCE - LE HOTEL DU MOTEL VALET - NIGHT

The Citroen drops Marny off.

INT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL - MARNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

After making sure the napkin with the cemetery grass is still in her purse, Marny goes over to her flower.

Notices the pot has been moved.

When she touches the pot's soil, water oozes to the surface.

MARNY
 Oh, no!

INT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL - CONCIERGE DESK - NIGHT

Nobody around.

Carefully setting down her flower pot, Marny urgently pounds the front desk bell.

Finally, a sleepy NIGHT CLERK approaches.

NIGHT CLERK
 Oui, madame.

MARNY
 I need dirt! Dirt!
 (shows the flower pot)
 My flower! There's too much water!
 Somebody, un person dans mon room--
 -- don't get me wrong--- The Fleurs
 de Grand Prix is tomorrow!
 (tries to calm down)
 I need fresh dirt. If I don't have
 any now, TOUT DE SUITE, my flower
 will die. This is my best flower
 ever. This flower, right here!

Yawning, the night clerk points to a banquet room.

MARNY (CONT'D)
 What! What are you pointing at?!

NIGHT CLERK

Allez a la chambre.

(Marny hesitates)

Take your flower to the room,
madame.

She cautiously goes to the banquet room door.

MARNY

Here?

The night clerk imitates the action of turning the door knob.

Opening the door, Marny peeks in.

INT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL - BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

The room is filled with FLOWER AND PLANT OWNERS, in panicked stages of changing the water-saturated dirt for their plants.

Grabbing a bag of dirt, Marny cautiously changes the dirt for her Chrysanthemum flower.

Lynne Rodney hovers over a dead, shriveled dandelion, forcefully patting down new dirt in its pot.

Marny continues to work on her flower, very worried.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - EXAMINATION ROOM - NIGHT

In a hospital gown and attached to a rolling IV cart, Brandon glances out down the hallway.

Stops a nurse hurrying by.

BRANDON

If a tree falls in the forest, does
it make a sound?

NURSE

Excuse-me?

BRANDON

Would you like me to answer that?
Yes, of course the tree makes a
sound! It doesn't matter if no one
is there to hear it! It amazes me
people struggle with this premise.

Extends a trembling hand.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Brandon. Larmike.

(triumphantly)

As in Mike!!

NURSE

Are you waiting for a chest X-ray?

BRANDON

A result, yes! That would be me.

NURSE

You can go. We're understaffed!

SFX: As she rushes away, Brandon tugs at a loose thread on his hospital gown and it floats to the floor ... resonating with lights that paint the walls with a vague impression of a countryside building... and a statue of PANDORA.

Brandon has to lean against a wall as his energy gets sapped.

BRANDON

So. We're good then.

Breathless, squints at the dreamy wall impression.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Interesting. Very interesting.

EXT. PARIS - LE HOTEL DU MOTEL VALET AREA - NEXT DAY

LYNNE RODNEY'S EYES lurk over a bush off to the side.

EYES DIP DOWN as Fleurs De Grand Prix contestants, including Marny, depart the hotel on the way to the competition.

BEHIND THE BUSH

Lynne Rodney finishes digging out a superb WILD ROSE from the ground, her dead dandelion in a clump nearby.

She sneakily transplants the wild rose into an empty flower pot, glances over the bush to see if anyone has noticed.

The coast is clear, and she dashes to a waiting taxi.

EXT. PARIS CONVENTION HALL - DAY

CONTESTANTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD stream into the convention hall carrying their flowers and plants.

A banner announces: **1999 INTERNATIONAL FLEURS DE GRAND PRIX!**

Marny beams excitedly as she enters the hall.

Lynne Rodney proudly totes her stolen wild rose past A MAN IN TEARS who has dropped his flower pot and stands distressed among the broken pieces, strewn dirt, bent flower.

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Still in his hospital gown, Brandon sits at a TV tray, slurping soup, watching a local TV news program.

Blanket draped over his trembling shoulders.

LOCAL TV NEWS ANCHOR

The shooter is in Yorktown central jail. Neighbors are surprised because the suspect lived quietly. We'll be right back!

A restaurant commercial for Mother's Day begins with a drab picture of BARNEY'S STEAK PALACE, situated in a nondescript Yorktown shopping mall.

COMMERCIAL VOICE-OVER

Make your Mother's Day one she'll remember with a swell meal at Barney's Steak Palace!

A cliched still-picture of GRINNING RESTAURANT STAFF.

COMMERCIAL VOICE-OVER (CONT'D)

Treat your wonderful mom to Angus beef filet mignon steaks from Tibet, and--- Chinese lobster tails from Nebraska!

Brandon squints hard to see the TV images.

Very labored breathing, his face inches from the screen.

INT. PARIS CONVENTION HALL - DAY

A DIGNIFIED (SORT OF) PANEL OF JUDGES inspects the various entries, examining leaves for flaws, smelling the petals, touching the stems.

The HEAD JUDGE sees a flower he particularly likes, points a finger at it. The FLOWER OWNER starts clapping and then bows to the judge, who could care less.

One of the other judges records the contestant's entry number in a ledger.

AT MARNY'S TABLE

The Angel's Kiss Chrysanthemum has bloomed PERFECTLY, drawing admiring looks and attention from other contestants.

Marny leans forward, sees the judges approaching.

Her table wobbles dangerously and her flower almost falls off.

At the table beside her is Lynne Rodney and her ill-gotten, wild rose.

MARNY

Where's your dandelion?

LYNNE RODNEY

Not sure what you mean. Dandelion?
I don't even like dandelions. They
make me nervous. Why would you ask
about a dandelion?

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Brandon is laying on his couch.

Totally exhausted.

TV still on, he clicks over to an ESPN Classic replay of the 1964 Cassius Clay-Sonny Liston championship boxing match.

Cassius Clay is raising his hands in the air, doing a victory dance, surrounded by celebration.

CLAY (ON TV)

I'm the greatest fighter who ever
lived! I upset Sonny Liston! I'm
King Of The World!

Brandon picks up a hand mirror, lifts up an eyelid, tries to see if there is something underneath it.

Reaches clumsily for an eye-drops dispenser.

Squirts most of the eye-drops on his cheeks.

CLAY (ON TV CONT'D)

I'm pretty! I must be the greatest!

INT. PARIS CONVENTION HALL - MARNY & LYNNE'S TABLES - DAY

The Head Judge selects Lynne Rodney's wild rose.

HEAD JUDGE

Congratulation, mademoiselle. You
are a finalist.

Marny is shocked.

Lynne Rodney remains nonchalant as the judges turn their attention to Marny's elegant, superb Angel's Kiss Chrysanthemum.

All the judges are impressed.

HEAD JUDGE (CONT'D)
Exquisite. Qu'est-ce que c'est ici,
madame?

MARNY
Elle s'appelle Angel's Kiss.
Chrysanthemum.

HEAD JUDGE
Merveilleux. You are a finalist.

She is absolutely thrilled.

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Without looking at the TV, using the remote, Brandon changes the channel to a local Country & Western station.

A fat, square man sings slightly off-key: King Of The Road.

BRANDON
(sings along)
"I ain't got no cigarettes!"

The song ends to polite audience applause as Brandon gets up and wanders over to his living room window.

The TV program host, MARVIN MELVIN, claps for the fat, square man as he strolls offstage.

MARVIN MELVIN
Thank you, brother. Boy, that's
some fine singin'.
(more polite applause)
Got that right. Ain't none of that
country rock music, which I call
crock. And then they add rap, which
equals crap!!

Scattered audience laughter.

Brandon glances out his window, sees the STRAY DOG trotting down the sidewalk.

MARVIN MELVIN (CONT'D)
'Course, sometimes a bit of crap is
good for the soul.

EXT. BRANDON'S TRAILER - ON THE SIDEWALK - NIGHT

The stray dog notices Brandon at the window, barks at him.

Brandon throws open his front door, steps outside with a broom.

BRANDON
You want trouble?

Dog barks again.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Don't you bark at ME!

Dog starts to trot away, looks back.

STRAY DOG
Follow me to the building roof!

BRANDON
Okay, that does it. Ain't no dog
gonna tell me what to do!

Chases after the dog, waving the broom aggressively.

EXT. WELMAN COLLEGE - THE QUAD - NIGHT

Panting heavily in the crisp evening air, the dog stops
beside The Big Cowboy statue.

Staggering into the clearing, Brandon drops to his knees.

The dog growls menacingly as Brandon crawls toward it.

BRANDON
I'm the prettiest thing that ever
lived! I must be the greatest!

Creeped out, the dog pees on The Big Cowboy statue, then
dashes away into the night, yelping feverishly.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - SECURITY OFFICE - NIGHT

After smearing mustard on a Twinkie, Paul has a bite. Hears
the dog yelping, grabs his guard hat and flashlight.

EXT. WELMAN COLLEGE - THE QUAD - NIGHT

Brandon wanders over to The Big Cowboy statue.

BRANDON
That dog peed on you, did you
notice? Probably not.

BIG COWBOY STATUE
Dogs pee on me all the time.

Flabbergasted, Brandon looks around to see if anyone else saw
the statue talk.

Nope.

Just him and the statue in the ghostly quad.

BIG COWBOY STATUE (CONT'D)
 But, I never let a little pee spoil
 my day, bucko.
 (points ominously)
 The building roof is waiting.

BRANDON
 Yes. I suppose I should get up
 there.

BIG COWBOY STATUE
 Check this out.

Waves his arm grandly.

SFX: In mid-air. A visual image appears of a tiny, deserted Arizona rural town. Streets overrun with weeds and sagebrush. Buildings rundown. Rusted railroad car on broken tracks. A grain elevator no longer operational.

BRANDON
 Why you showing me this?

Paul's FLASHLIGHT illuminates the area and the visual image disappears.

PAUL
 Talking to statues, prof? Now
that's interesting.

BRANDON
 Did you see the images of that
 town? Just now. In the air.

A little unnerved, Paul takes a deep breath.

PAUL
 I love this fresh air. Keeps a
 man's blood flowin', nice and
 clear. Helps him think!

BRANDON
 Please. No manly physical activity
 lectures.
 (then)
 The Dean wants me to sign a new
 contract.

PAUL
 And the problem with that is---

BRANDON

Certainty.

(a revelation)

That's what's wrong with statues.

They're too certain!

Lights a cigar, blows out the smoke emphatically.

PAUL

C'mon, prof--- let's go.

BRANDON

In the hospital today, I wasn't certain I would leave. In fact, I wasn't certain of anything.

PAUL

I can say with certainty you've got class tomorrow.

On her way home from work at the cafeteria, Jill notices the activity, hears the discussion.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Look--- we need you around. You're different, but we like that. We like that you actually care-- you know-- about words.

Jill gets closer, pleased with Paul's effort to be understanding and sympathetic.

PAUL (CONT'D)

We need you, prof'. But you need to stay off that roof! It's just not *interesting*.

BRANDON

Thank you, Paul, you are too kind. Now then, manly fresh air.

Inhales deeply, exhales up toward a glistening full moon.

JILL

(steps forward)

'Weeping willow in the sun, how far do you go when you run?

When the air rustles and murmurs does it take you to your dreams?

Weeping willow in the sun does it take you to your dreams?'

BRANDON

Marvelous, Jill. Absolutely splendid.

JILL

He's right, prof', we do need you.
Literature needs you. Yorktown
needs you! And so does the world.

BRANDON

Nobody should ever need anybody.

She takes his arm, and they all start to stroll away.

JILL

What would the world be like if
nobody ever needed anybody?

Brandon stops, looks back at The Big Cowboy statue.

BRANDON

My father died fifty-five years
ago. I was still in my mother's
womb. June 6th. 1944.

INT. KATEY & MARNY'S HOUSE - NEXT DAY

Katey tapes the Juilliard Music School scholarship showcase
pamphlet on the refrigerator.

Notices on the street outside...

Jason drive up in a 1967 Mustang fastback muscle car. Half
the paint is faded, and the other half is primer, but the
vehicle is in good mechanical condition.

EXT/INT. JASON'S CAR - DAY

As Katey approaches, Jason leans over, opens her door.

JASON

We got a full tank of gas.

Katey suddenly remembers something, dashes back in the house.

Comes out clutching her sketch pad and gets in the car.

Scribbles on the pad: **Almost forgot!**

Putting the car in gear, Jason holds the clutch in while he
revs the engine.

JASON (CONT'D)

Ready?

KATEY

Ready!

He drops the clutch and smokes the hell out of the tires.
Then lets off after the car gets going.

Katey likes the action.

JASON
Love spinnin' them tires.

On her pad, Katey writes: **Cool. Where we goin'?**

JASON (CONT'D)
Lake Santa Claus. You been there?
(she shakes her head)
You scared to go on boats?
(shakes her head again)
Good, 'cause I got the hook-up. I
know this guy, Uncle Vladimir.

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER - DAY

Brandon, still in his disheveled hospital gown, opens the living room drapes and is shocked by the bright sunlight.

Fumbles his way to the kitchen, opens the refrigerator door and reaches for the milk bottle.

But it's empty.

BRANDON
Perfect.

EXT. BRANDON'S PONTIAC - DAY

At his car door, Brandon fumbles with the key, having trouble locating the keyhole.

With his face AN INCH away, he finally gets the key in. Opens the door, gets behind the wheel, barely functional.

EXT. YORKTOWN GROCERY MARKET - MINUTES LATER

As Brandon pulls the Pontiac up curb side, he hits a parking meter with the front bumper.

A COUPLE WITH A CHILD IN A STROLLER are startled.

MAN
Watch where you're goin', mister!

BRANDON
(waves meekly)
Sorry.

WOMAN

Isn't he that wacky college
teacher?

BRANDON'S POV... everything is a TOTAL BLUR, with substantial
darkness around the edges.

EXT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ENTRANCE - DAY

The dented Pontiac drives up.

Brandon gets out unsteadily, leans on the hood, breathing
heavily.

A hospital employee walks near.

BRANDON

Excuse me.

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE

Yes?

BRANDON

I cannot walk. I cannot see. I ---

Collapses.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - BRANDON'S ROOM - DAY

Shades in the room are drawn.

Doctor Joe examines Brandon's eyes.

BRANDON

What's it like to die?

DOCTOR JOE

I don't know, Brandon, but, we
shouldn't have released you.

SUDDENLY Brandon's vital signs monitor beeps alarmingly and
starts flashing BLUE.

EXT. PARIS, FRANCE - LE HOTEL DU MOTEL VALET - NIGHT

Holding her Angel's Kiss Chrysanthemum as a limousine
arrives, Marny is in an elegant evening gown.

Dressed in a tacky tuxedo, Lynne Rodney shows up with her ill-
gotten wild rose.

LYNNE RODNEY

Mind if I hitch a ride, girlie?

MARNY

Well--- okay. But you have to tell me where you got that damn rose. I'll admit it was clever to---

A concerned HOTEL PORTER briskly approaches.

HOTEL PORTER

Pardonne, Mademoiselle Larmike. There ees an importante phone call for you. From Arizona. Yorktown. Doctor Joe!

INT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL - FRONT DESK - NIGHT

Marny picks up the phone receiver.

MARNY

Yes, hello?

DOCTOR JOE (THRU THE PHONE)

(uncharacteristically serious)

Brandon lost consciousness a short time ago, Marny. We --- we could be losing him.

MARNY

Is he in the hospital? Why is he in the hospital?

DOCTOR JOE

You should be here.

MARNY

I'll catch the first flight out.
(to Lynne Rodney)
My son's in trouble.

Holds out her flower.

MARNY (CONT'D)

Would you mind representing me?

LYNNE RODNEY

(takes the flower)
I'd be damn honored.

MARNY

(to front desk person)
I need my luggage. Can someone help?

The front desk person chimes the desk bell rapidly.

A BELL BOY rushes over.

EXT. LAKE SANTA CLAUS - DAY

The Green Monster has been repaired. Chained and padlocked at its pier.

Jason looks inside a used tire nailed to the pier and finds the gold key.

JASON

Here we go.

(unlocks the padlock)

Uncle Vladimir is a great guy,
letting us use his boat for free.

KATEY

(sniffs the air)

Paint?

JASON

Probably stink weed.

EXT. PARIS, FRANCE - CHAMPS ELYSEES - NIGHT

Marny in a taxi as it drives past the Arc de Triumphe.

INSIDE THE TAXI

MARNY

You know, my husband helped to
liberate France in World War Two.

Starts to HUM a few bars of music.

MARNY (CONT'D)

What's the name of that song?

DRIVER

Pardonne?

MARNY

You know, from the movie,
Casablanca. Humphrey Bogart and
Ingrid Bergman.

DRIVER

Paul Henreid, Claude Rains, Peter
Lorre. Fantastique!

MARNY

(hums a bit more)

The song, you know, when the Nazi
soldiers are in Rick's Cafe. They
start singing the German anthem,
and then the French Resistance
leader gets up.

DRIVER
 La Marseillaise!
 (sings)
 "Allons enfants de la patrie .."

MARNY
 That's it. That's the one.

DRIVER
 "Le jour de gloire est arrivee.."

His voice becomes clearer and more confident.

Tears form in Marny's worried eyes.

EXT. LAKE SANTA CLAUS - DAY

Jason rows the boat, Katey in the bow, as they glide along the smooth, silvery lake.

JASON
 So you are gonna enter that
 Juilliard showcase.

Looking out over the magical water, Katey doesn't respond.

JASON (CONT'D)
 I didn't mean to make you
 uncomfortable, Kate. We don't have
 to talk.
 (she shrugs)
 You know that orphanage on the
 other side of town? Across from the
 fire station. That's where I live.

Katey writes on her pad: **I KNOW WHERE THE FIRE STATION IS.**

JASON (CONT'D)
 I'm doin' pretty good though, you
 know. All things considered.
 (points into the water)
 Look, a turtle!

KATEY
 (excited)
 Where?!

Takes a step, and plunges through the boat's floorboards, into Jason's arms.

As the boat starts to sink, they kiss innocently.

JASON
 (into her eyes)
 Never seen a turtle before?

KATEY
 (into his eyes)
 Nope.

The sketch pad floats away, unnoticed, as their faces remain close while the boat continues to sink.

JASON
 (a bit breathless)
 What does it feel like? I mean, to see a turtle the first time?

KATEY
 (also breathless)
 It's wonderful.

Boat stops sinking because the lake is only a few feet deep.

KATEY (CONT'D)
 (points into the water)
 Look, a fish!

Jason looks and she splashes water into his face, both laughing.

Because it is love, innocent and magnificent true first love.

INT. PARIS CONVENTION HALL - FLEURS DE GRAND PRIX - NIGHT

Final awards presentation.

A contestant walks away from the podium stage with a Third Place Trophy for an intriguing-looking, miniature apple tree.

On stage, at a microphone...

HEAD JUDGE
 Le deuxieme place, second place.
 Lynne Rodney, wild rose! Las Vegas,
 Nevada!! USA!!

Audience applauds as Lynne Rodney leaps onto the podium and grabs the trophy.

Becomes subdued.

LYNNE RODNEY
 This is difficult to celebrate. But thank you. Thanks very damn much.

EXT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - DAY

Jason's Mustang peels away as Katey goes into the house.

INT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - DAY

In the kitchen, Katey sees a red light blinking on the answering machine.

INT. PARIS CONVENTION HALL - FLEURS DE GRAND PRIX - NIGHT

Audience buzzes with anticipation.

HEAD JUDGE

And now-- le premiere place, first place--

(opens an envelope)

Marny Larmike! Angel's Kiss
Chrysanthemum. Yorktown, America!

CAMERAS FLASH AND SUPERB AUDIENCE APPLAUSE!

Lynne Rodney goes to the podium again, accepts the trophy gloomily.

LYNNE RODNEY

Marny had to leave for personal reasons. I know she'd be damn honored. You understand? This was her dream. She'd be damn honored.

Audience murmurs.

Judges exchange glances.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Quietly lingering in the hallway outside Brandon's room... students from his class, especially Jill and Paul.

A world away...

By herself in a corner, Katey.

EXT. TUCSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - JUST BEFORE DAWN

Faint sunlight barely peaks over the low desert mountains.

Allen drives Brandon's Pontiac away from the airport.

In the passenger seat, Marny, a world away.

INT. BRANDON'S PONTIAC - SAME TIME

Uneasy silence hangs in the air.

KJME DISC JOCKEY (ON THE RADIO)
 Five o'clock in the a.m. on KJME
 and here's a song for all you
 really early morning people. The
 late John Lennon, Across The
 Universe.

JOHN LENNON (ON THE RADIO)
 "Words are flying out like endless
 rain into a paper cup .. they
 slither while they pass .. they
 slip away across the universe.."

Marny turns the radio volume down.

MARNY
 Have you spoken to Kate?

ALLEN
 She's at the hospital.

Noticing the Psychic Gypsy discount flyer on the front seat,
 Marny has a look.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
 Brandon lost sensation in his arms
 and legs, Marny.

Then Marny digs in her purse.

Brings out the napkin containing the HANDFUL OF GRASS from
 the American Cemetery in Normandy.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
 They really don't have a clue.

Marny sets the napkin on the dashboard.

MARNY
 You wanted something special.

INT. YORKTOWN HOSPITAL - OUTSIDE BRANDON'S ROOM - DAY

Accompanied by a DUTY NURSE, Allen and Marny head into
 Brandon's room without waking a sleeping Katey.

The students become alert.

INT. BRANDON'S ROOM - DAY

In the darkened room.

Brandon half-conscious in the hospital bed.

Marny gently touches his forehead.

DUTY NURSE
 (examining Brandon's care
 chart)
 Technically, visiting hours are
 over, Marny.

ALLEN
 What do you mean, technically? Are
 you kidding me?

Entering quietly, Katey observes intently.

BRANDON'S POV... dark and blurry... the whispering that's
 going on is scratchy.

DUTY NURSE
 He's stable now.

EXT. SUNDAY MORNING - YORKTOWN CHURCH - NEXT DAY

Church bells call the faithful.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Organ music plays.

The church is packed full, including all the students from
 Brandon's class.

Marny and Katey seated at a front bench.

At the back, Jason in a shirt and tie, looking dapper.

A RATHER UNORTHODOX-LOOKING PREACHER at the pulpit. Signals
 the organist to stop playing.

PREACHER
 Good morning, faithful.

People in the church mumble, *good morning*.

PREACHER (CONT'D)
 As you know, this is a non-
 denominational church. We believe
 God is there for all who seek
 spiritual comfort, and guidance.
 (then)
 I ask that we bow our heads in
 prayer for Professor Brandon
 Larmike, and also his mother and
 daughter. Please know our best
 thoughts and wishes are everywhere.

Sitting off to the side, the Psychic Gypsy glances guiltily
 at Allen.

He frowns angrily back.

SFX: Outside the church. Light moves swiftly into darkness, then opens on a new day.

EXT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - BRANDON'S ROOM - NEXT DAY

No evidence of movement from Brandon.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - DR. JOE'S OFFICE - DAY

At Doctor Joe's desk, Marny GLARES at him.

DOCTOR JOE

It could be a hysterical reaction to stress or chronic fatigue compounded by mid-life crisis or --

MARNY

Or what?

DOCTOR JOE

I don't know.

(takes a breath)

Last year, at the Taffy Clinic in Tucson, a few patients had symptoms similar to Brandon's. Sudden loss of sight combined with distortion. Unexplained loss of muscular sensation.

MARNY

And?

DOCTOR JOE

I've heard they developed a protein-based carbon particle that stimulates neuroreactors in the brain stem which has shown promise. But what Brandon has seems different. More--- I don't know--- it just seems different.

Marny paces restlessly.

DOCTOR JOE (CONT'D)

Marny, this doesn't even have a name yet--- IF it's the same thing. The Taffy Clinic program was allegedly being funded through a federal grant.

(then)

I'm not sure the damn clinic is even there anymore.

MARNY

Doctor Joe, is this what I had?
Could Brandon die from this?

No answer.

EXT. MARNY AND KATEY'S HOME - DAY

Clutching a carry-on bag, Marny gets into her Volkswagon van.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - BRANDON'S ROOM - DAY

AN ORDERLY empties the trash bin, which stirs Brandon.

BRANDON

(croaks)

I don't suppose you have a cigar.

ORDERLY

This is a non-smoking room, sir.

BRANDON

How 'bout a beer? What do you say,
chief? One beer.

Orderly moves on, passing Katey on the way in.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

A beer. Hello?

KATEY

It's me.

Rubbing his eyes fiercely, Brandon brightens.

BRANDON

Two words. A sentence!

KATEY

Yep.

BRANDON

Nice. What happened?

Katey pulls back the window drapes.

Her entire being merges with brilliant sunshine that streams into the room.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Wow.

SFX: Appearing in the sunshine... hazy, fleeting images of Brandon and Katey leaning against his Pontiac.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 Hey, can you see that? Kate? You
 still here?

The images disappear when she steps out of the sunshine.

KATEY
 You gonna be okay?

POV BRANDON... squinting at Katey's shadow... hears his own
 breathing again.

BRANDON
 How come you started usin'
 sentences again?

KATEY
 Grandma went to Tucson.

BRANDON
 You started using sentences because
 Grandma went to Tucson? Why'd she
 go to Tucson?

KATEY
 I-- I have to go to school. Do you
 need anything?

BRANDON
 I could use a hug.

On the verge of tears, she gives him a little hug.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 Do you want to say more things?

She does, but instead quickly walks out of the room.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - DAY

At the front of the class, Paul makes an announcement.

PAUL
 A substitute teacher will be here
 shortly. Let's represent our best.
 (to Jill)
 None of that blah, blah, blah
 stuff.

JILL
 That's not fair.

OTHER STUDENT
 Yeah. Brandon don't got no problem
 with blah, blah, blah.

PAUL
Don't got no? Brandon ever hear you
talk like that?

OTHER STUDENT
(mimics him)
Brandon ever hear you talk like
that?

A passive-aggressive substitute teacher, PROFESSOR BING,
enters stiffly and goes to Brandon's desk.

PROFESSOR BING
The name is Bing. Professor Bing.

OTHER STUDENT
(under his breath)
Whoop-dee-doo.

PROFESSOR BING
Is there anybody here with a paper,
some sort of presentation?

With the exception of Jill and Paul, ALL THE STUDENTS raise
their hands.

PROFESSOR BING (CONT'D)
(to Paul)
What about you?

PAUL
Sorry, prof'. I've been at the
hospital a lot.

PROFESSOR BING
Very well. And, I would prefer
'professor', as opposed to 'prof'.
(to Jill)
And you?

Paul makes discouraging hand motions to Bing who IGNORES him.
Jill has seen the hand motions and is not amused.

JILL
I have something that Brandon-- I
mean-- Professor Larmike-- has
already marked.

PROFESSOR BING
Please.

Jill goes to the front of the class, unfolds a paper, reads.

JILL
"A theoretical examination of the
structure of a predisposed,
(MORE)

JILL (CONT'D)
 linguistic imprint involving use of
 a transmorphosynthetic state." Pro
 and Con."

(glares at Paul)
 Pro. Blah, blah, blah, blah.

Professor Bing raises his eyebrow, unimpressed.

JILL (CONT'D)
 Con. Blah, blah, blah---

PROFESSOR BING
 You have got to be kidding.
 Professor Larmike lets you get away
 with that?

JILL
 I can justify it.

PROFESSOR BING
 Sit down.

Jill staunchly ignores Paul as she returns to her desk.

EXT. TUCSON, ARIZONA - DOWNTOWN - DAY

Marny stares through the window of a locked door at an
 abandoned office building.

A hand-written sign in its window reads: The Taffy Clinic (janitor
 usually here in the morning).

Another sign: OFFICE FOR LEASE

Undeterred, Marny knocks several times with no answer. Then
 pounds on the door to no avail.

Looks around, sees a motel down the street.

INT. YORKTOWN HIGH SCHOOL - PIANO ROOM - DAY

Katey plays a new song on the piano, her mind elsewhere.

Only single notes, but, it's compelling.

Jason, in football uniform, sits by his melancholy
 girlfriend.

JASON
 You playin' that for Juilliard?
 You should, it's good.
 (stands, grabs his helmet)
 Comin' to practice?

Katey remains quiet.

JASON (CONT'D)
 Your dad's gonna make it, Katey.
 (crouches beside her)
 He's a grinder. Just like you.

INT. YORKTOWN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL - NEXT DAY

A banner at the entrance to the performance theater announces: Juilliard Scholarship Opportunity Showcase.

On stage, a competing student finishes playing a lackluster version of Somewhere Over The Rainbow on a piccolo.

The audience claps supportively as the JUILLIARD REPRESENTATIVE looks at her watch, bored.

A Master Of Ceremonies gets to the stage microphone.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES
 And now, with her own rendition of
 Chopsticks-- Katey Larmike!

Katey comes on-stage to polite applause, and tapes A PICTURE OF BRANDON to the baby grand piano before sitting.

At the back of the theater, Jason is the last to finish clapping. Katey knows it's him, which calms her as she starts to play Chopsticks.

The audience chuckles a bit, but, settle down as she gets into the song more.

EXT. TUCSON, ARIZONA - THE TAFFY CLINIC - DAY

Staring at her watch, an impatient Marny sits against the front door.

A JANITOR unlocks it.

INT. YORKTOWN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE THEATER - DAY

As her concentration improves, Katey's music approaches new heights.

INT. TUCSON, ARIZONA - THE TAFFY CLINIC - DAY

The office has many moving boxes, some full, others not.

JANITOR
 That program was discontinued
 several months ago, Mrs. Larmike.
 (MORE)

JANITOR (CONT'D)

We only had one doctor on staff anyways. Last I heard, the guy was in Bermuda or Tennessee, somethin' like that.

INT. YORKTOWN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE THEATER - DAY

Katey brings the composition to a tremendous crescendo and the audience gives her a resounding ovation.

The Juilliard representative remains seated, but, applauds approvingly.

EXT. TUCSON, ARIZONA - THE TAFFY CLINIC - DAY

Marny comes out with the OFFICEFORLEASE sign.

Bashes it to pieces on a cast iron fence.

A local news van happens to be in the area, and pulls over.

EXT. YORKTOWN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Beside Jason's car.

JASON

New York City after high school.
That's great.

KATEY

It's only an interview.

JASON

It's still great.

KATEY

Yeah, maybe. Can I get a lift to the hospital?

JASON

Can I show you somethin' first?

EXT. DOWNTOWN YORKTOWN - DAY

Jason stops the car near a stout, plain, three-story house.

It's an orphanage.

A FEW ORPHANS linger on the porch steps.

Across the street is the town's fire station.

INT. JASON'S CAR - DAY

Jason points whimsically to a tiny window in the orphanage's attic.

JASON

Up there, that's my spot. I wish I had parents. At least one, anyway.

KATEY

I understand.

Turns to look over at the local fire station.

KATEY (CONT'D)

I was abandoned by my mom over there. Then she disappeared, whoever she was. Brandon isn't my real father.

FLASHBACK:

Brandon carries Katey as a newborn baby wrapped in a blanket.

From the fire station and into his Pontiac.

KATEY (CONT'D V.O.)

He used to be a volunteer fireman. After the cops said it was okay, he just picked me up and took me home. Not much room in the orphanage for little babies, I guess.

A police officer waves at Brandon as he drives away.

FLASHBACK ENDS

Katey gets out of the car to collect herself, and Jason joins her.

JASON

How'd you find out?

KATEY

Brandon got drunk one day, while me and Grandma played the piano. Then he told me. And then he said he needed more space in his life and I had to move in with Grandma Marny.
(to the orphanage)
What's it like living there?

JASON

It's home. It's alright. But you don't wanna live there. Hey, I think I know Brandon. Isn't his car always breakin' down?

KATEY
 (rolls her eyes)
 Yep, that's him.

JASON
 Doesn't seem like such a bad guy.

KATEY
 You're really cool, you know.

JASON
 I dunno. I just try to live this
 life. I just try to survive.

KATEY
 (kisses his cheek)
 You're still cool.

One of Jason's orphan pals gives him a thumbs-up.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - NURSES STATION - DAY

A local Tucson TV commercial blares as Katey comes in.

TV (COMMERCIAL SPOKESPERSON)
 Only three more days 'til Mother's
 Day, folks. Treat her to a nice
 dinner at Barney's Steak Palace.
 Get them Nebraska lobster tails!!

TV IMAGE CUTS TO

A LOCAL TUCSON NEWS REPORTER standing outside Frank's Super
 Motel, where Marny is staying.

TV IMAGE CUTS TO

Marny bashing the OFFICE FOR LEASE sign on the cast iron fence
 outside The Taffy Clinic.

Which gets the attention of everyone in the nurses station.

LOCAL NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)
 The woman, Marny Larmike, a
 Yorktown resident, apparently
 destroyed the sign to protest the
 discontinuation of federal funding
 for the much-loved medical clinic,
 often a last resort for people with
 rare medical disorders.

Strolling by in the background...

Marny makes goofy faces at the camera.

AT THE NURSES STATION

Katey scribbles down the name of the motel.

LOCAL NEWS REPORTER (ON TV)
At this time, no charges have been
filed. Back to you in the studio.

Looking stern, Doctor Joe comes out of Brandon's nearby room.

Signals a nurse over.

When Katey approaches the room, the nurse shakes her head.

INT. ALLEN'S CAMPUS APARTMENT - NIGHT

The grass from the American Cemetery in Normandy rests on a
bejeweled metallic platter with ancient coins.

Thick clouds of incense burn in centuries-old holders.

Allen wears a long robe emblazoned with the names and symbols
of mythical heroes like Zeus, Apollo and Hercules.

He chants song words in the extinct language, Crimean Gothic,
invented by Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq in 1589.

Cemetery grasses begin to form a pattern.

INT. TUCSON, AZ - FRANK'S SUPER MOTEL/MARNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

On the bed.

Marny stares up at the ceiling.

Bed-side phone rings and she reluctantly answers.

MARNY
Yeah, what is it?
(silence)
If this is the press, no more
interviews.
(still silence)
Hello?

KATEY (OVER THE PHONE)
It's me. Come home, please.

MARNY
Katey? When did you start talking,
sweetie?

KATEY (OVER THE PHONE)
Come home, grandma. You have to
come home now!

INT. ALLEN'S CAMPUS APARTMENT - NIGHT

The blades of cemetery grass have formed two capital letters, an O and a D.

Another letter begins to form as Allen continues to chant the hypnotic Crimean Gothic song words.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - NEXT DAY

The Psychic Gypsy wanders in cautiously, apprehensive.

Only Allen is there.

PSYCHIC GYPSY
Is the woman here?

Allen speaks harshly using the Crimean Gothic language: It shows up subtitled and translated into English on the screen.

ALLEN (CRIMEAN GOTHIC)
I knew it was you. All along, I
knew it.

PSYCHIC GYPSY (CRIMEAN GOTHIC)
I didn't know what I was doing!

ALLEN'S HEAD expands and contracts in threatening shapes.

ALLEN (CRIMEAN GOTHIC)
Your greed is creating problems for
my friends!

Picks up a cactus plant, comes at her menacingly.

ALLEN (IN ENGLISH)
You better fix this!

The Psychic Gypsy runs out as he throws the cactus after her, narrowly missing as it crashes on the sidewalk.

ALLEN (IN ENGLISH CONT'D)
She's at the hospital!

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

In the hallway outside Brandon's room, the Psychic Gypsy paces anxiously.

Waiting for Marny, who comes out.

PSYCHIC GYPSY
Can we talk? Please.

EXT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Arriving out front.

A Harley-Davidson motorcycle with a sidecar and Nevada plates driven by Lynne Rodney.

She unloads a box with extensive foreign postage from the sidecar, takes it to the shop's front door. Knocks, no response. Leaves the box, rumbles away on the motorcycle.

Allen steps outside, watches the motorcycle disappear down the road.

INT. PSYCHIC GYPSY SHOP - KITCHEN - DAY

Paying rapt attention, Marny is seated opposite the Psychic Gypsy at the same table Brandon sat at.

PSYCHIC GYPSY

He said he wanted to bear your burden. To replace your death with his. I never heard of this before!!

MARNY

And.

PSYCHIC GYPSY

I told him to take a ride on Uncle Vladimir's boat. You know Uncle Vladimir, right? Anyway, after he left, a little while later, I -- well -- a chicken bone started to shake.

MARNY

A chicken bone started to shake.

PSYCHIC GYPSY

I swear with every fiber of my being, I can't cast a spell! I was just trying to get his money.

Reaches for a cash box, takes out a wad of bills.

PSYCHIC GYPSY (CONT'D)

To pay rent. You can have it back.

MARNY

I don't want the money, and, I'm not blaming you. Did you say anything else to him?

PSYCHIC GYPSY

Look at your hands.

MARNY

What?

PSYCHIC GYPSY

I said that. Look at your hands!!

Marny does so.

PSYCHIC GYPSY (CONT'D)

Put ten dollars in my tip jar. You don't have to do it.

Marny puts ten dollars in the tip jar.

PSYCHIC GYPSY (CONT'D)

Lower your head.

As Marny lowers her head, the Psychic Gypsy eyes the MONEY.

PSYCHIC GYPSY (CONT'D)

You don't understand, I have no training.

MARNY

Please. Continue.

Psychic Gypsy picks up a water pitcher.

DUMPS WATER on Marny's head.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - BRANDON'S ROOM - DAY

Brandon stirs.

Surprised and amazed, a nurse filling out his chart looks up.

INT. PSYCHIC GYPSY SHOP - DAY

The Psychic Gypsy searches in the fridge as the stray dog comes in, sits in a corner, unnoticed.

PSYCHIC GYPSY

I don't have any chicken.

MARNY

Does it have to be chicken?

Psychic Gypsy holds up a fried pork chop.

PSYCHIC GYPSY

I have this.

MARNY

Will a pork chop work?

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 You don't get it! I have no control
 over what happens!

Angrily takes a bite of the pork chop, drops the bone into a cereal bowl.

Marny squints, and starts rubbing her eyes vigorously.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - BRANDON'S ROOM - DAY

BRANDON'S POV

His eyes open up to a dark, shadowy view that suddenly switches to normal.

BRANDON
 (waves to the nurse)
 Hello, there.

INT. PSYCHIC GYPSY SHOP - DAY

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 I told him his soul was lost. And
 took the rest of his money.

Smashes the cereal bowl against a wall.

Pork chop falls to the floor and the Psychic Gypsy waits for it to move.

It doesn't.

MARNY'S POV

The room begins to blur and darken.

PSYCHIC GYPSY (CONT'D)
 (breathing heavily)
 And then -- and then --- it's hard
 to remember anything else.

As Marny shivers, so does the Psychic Gypsy.

PSYCHIC GYPSY (CONT'D)
 I sat out front, on the couch,
 waiting for something to happen.
 I waited all night.

SFX: Light flickers at the shop's front door. Images of World War Two soldiers climbing the cliffs of Normandy Beach. The images vaporize as they...

... drift into Marny... who begins to vaporize.

The Psychic Gypsy lays on the floor, exhausted.

PSYCHIC GYPSY (CONT'D)
Nothing happened. I swear. Nothing
happened.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - DAY

In front of the students amid an air of hostility.

PROFESSOR BING
Anyone else?

The only one to raise a hand, is Paul.

PROFESSOR BING (CONT'D)
Begin.

Paul stands, quietly reads from a sheet of paper.

PAUL
"Query: Discuss the relevance of
spoken word in today's society.
Pro and Con." Pro. Spoken word
dates back several centuries.

The class isn't paying attention.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(clears his throat)
In fact, it's worth noting that---
(glances at Jill)
--- blah, blah, blah, blah.

It's a startlingly wonderful moment; for Jill, in particular.

She beams from ear to ear.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Con. Blah, blah, blah---
(to Bing)
-- blah.

PROFESSOR BING
Sit down.

PAUL
You don't want to hear the rest?

Brandon appears at the door, as Bing finally loses his
composure.

PROFESSOR BING
Sit! Down!!

BRANDON
I'll take it from here, prof'.

Bewildered, the professor marches out in a huff.

OTHER STUDENT
Binngggg.

Everyone gathers around Brandon as Jill hugs Paul.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - NIGHT

The box that Lynne Rodney delivered is being opened by Marny and Allen.

It contains the Fleurs De Grand Prix championship trophy that Marny won.

And also Marny's Angel's Kiss Chrysanthemum, which is in rough shape.

A sheet of paper with LE HOTEL DU MOTEL letterhead is taped to the trophy and reads: Bien Joue Madame Larmike!! YOU WON!!

MARNY
Incredible. How utterly fabulous.

WIPE DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - NEXT DAY

A storefront banner advertises a Mother's Day special: HALF DOZEN CARNATIONS ONLY \$9.99!!

IN THE FRONT WINDOW

The Fleurs De Grand Prix championship trophy glints in the sunlight, beside a refreshed Angel's Kiss Chrysanthemum.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - DAY

A freckled, young boy, BOBBY, is at the cash register holding a long-stemmed rose.

And only a wrinkled-up dollar bill.

BOBBY
It's my mom's day tomorrow, Mrs. Larmike.

MARNY
I know, sweetie. And this rose is free today. Just for you and your mom.

BOBBY
Gee, thanks!

Skips gleefully out of the shop.

Cecil sticks his head in, drops off the mail.

CECIL
Far-out and groovy that Brandon's
out of the hospital, Marny.

Waits for Allen to yell at him for saying "far-out and groovy".

But Allen is working on something at his table.

CECIL (CONT'D)
And that trophy. Woo hoo!!
Congratulations!

Bows grandly and leaves.

MARNY
What are you working on, Allen?

SFX: A brilliantly colored, nuanced rainbow arches through the store.

Unnoticed by Marny but Allen caught a glimpse.

He lifts up the bejeweled metallic platter with the blades of cemetery grass that have now formed the word ODE.

ALLEN
This. Does it mean anything to you?

It obviously does, but Marny suddenly becomes light-headed and must lean on a counter for support.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
What's going on?

MARNY
Nothing. I'm okay.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - DAY

At a window, Brandon stares at a roof's edge across the quad.

PAUL
While you were away, I gave the class a written assignment. One sentence, one 'and', one comma, twenty words or less. A Mother's Day quotient, if you will.

BRANDON
 (absently)
 Was there a query?

PAUL
 Of course. 'Query: What is a mom?'
 (to the class)
 Who wants to start?

Without raising his hand, Jerry eagerly rushes to the front.

JERRY
 (reads from a crumpled
 sheet of paper)
*A mother is a simple reminder,
 comma, of the difference between
 right and wrong.*

OTHER STUDENT
 You don't read the comma.

PAUL
 But not bad.
 (to rest of the class)
 B minus?

JILL
 B. It's truthful.

Paul looks around for disagreement.

There isn't any.

PAUL
 Done. Next.

ANOTHER STUDENT walks up to read, Brandon turns to watch.

ANOTHER STUDENT
*A mother is someone who gets wiser
 as you grow older.*

Looks at Brandon, who points to Paul.

PAUL
 No 'and'. I doubt there was a
 comma.

ANOTHER STUDENT
 I didn't say 'and'?

BRANDON
 It's a C-.

ANOTHER STUDENT
 Not even a C? Really?

BRANDON

Sorry. And it's cliched. Next,
please.

EXT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

SOUND TRACK plays: The enigmatically fragile ballad, *Into Dust* by Mazzy Star.

Driven by Allen, Marny's Volkswagon van pulls up to the emergency entrance.

Marny gets out with an overnight bag.

MARNY

I'll be fine. Watch the shop.

The van drives away, concern written all over Allen's face.

After savoring the world for a long moment, Marny squares her shoulders and enters the hospital.

Carrying the bejeweled metallic platter with the cemetery grass ODE word on it.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Emotions running high, Jill is at the front of the class.

JILL

(reading)

*My mother and father were meth
addicts, so my great aunt raised
me.*

Everyone waits for her to say blah, blah, blah, but she doesn't.

Instead, Jill returns to her desk with proud tears running down her face.

BRANDON

A+. That's how it's done.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - NURSE STATION - DAY

A reception nurse greets Marny.

RECEPTION NURSE

What brings you here, flower lady?

Straining to maintain her equilibrium...

MARNY

I was wondering if maybe--- if
maybe--- you had a room--- with a
view of the open fields. And the
clouds in the skies.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - DAY

AND ANOTHER STUDENT

(reading)

*A good mother provides beauty, and
grace. Or at least tries to.*

PAUL

Two sentences.

AND ANOTHER STUDENT

I know. And I don't care what the
grade is.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - MARNY'S ROOM - DAY

On the building's corner.

With a view of the resplendent, high desert landscapes.

Setting down the bejeweled ODE metallic platter, Marny opens
her overnight bag.

Takes out the World War Two picture of herself and Hubby,
puts it on the night table.

Touches Hubby's image tenderly.

MARNY

And I never stopped loving you.
Ever.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE - BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - DAY

BRANDON

Paul. Your turn.

Getting to the front, Paul doesn't read from anything.

PAUL

(misty-eyed)

My mom -- my mom worked one full
time job and two part-time jobs,
for twenty years ---- so I could
attend this school. She ain't
around no more.

BRANDON
(quietly, respectfully)
And that's how it's done.

Dean Somersby's secretary sticks her head in the room with a look that could be better.

INT. DEAN SOMERSBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Somersby pushes an envelope across his desk to Brandon.

DEAN SOMERSBY
Here's a copy of your new,
guaranteed, four-year contract,
Brandon. We're happy to have
included the raise, and we look
forward to your continuance.

Brandon slips the envelope in his jacket pocket.

BRANDON
Good to be back.

Not much more from Somersby, who looks like he wants to say something very important.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
What.

EXT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - DAY

A steady stream of people walk away with bunches of every kind of flower.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Most of the flowers are gone.

Allen is at the cash register, staring into space, even though the register drawer is FULL OF MONEY.

With the last bunch of white carnations, Cecil approaches quietly.

CECIL
(barely audible)
How much, Al?

ALLEN
Marny's favorite flower is a white carnation. Did you know that? I don't think most people even know that.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

A LONG LINE OF PEOPLE, including Uncle Vladimir and the Psychic Gypsy, is in the hallway leading to Marny's room.

A hushed atmosphere.

Paul keeps an eye on things.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - MARNY'S ROOM - DAY

A darkened room filled with magnificent flowers and plants: aureate window light softens the ambience.

In her hospital bed, Marny is propped up on pillows, and still has a sparkle in her eyes.

In a corner, Katey huddles with Jason.

A local Irish woman, OLGA, pays respect bedside.

OLGA

I'll never forget the time you brought me flowers when I had my first child, Marny. It meant so much. We were so poor.

MARNY

It was your first-born, Olga. And they were only a few sticks of Baby's Breath.

Allen brings in the Fleurs de Grand Prix trophy.

Removing his hat, Cecil puts his white carnations in the trophy's cup.

Carrying a sheaf of papers, Brandon arrives.

MARNY (CONT'D)

Brandon, would you be a doll and come closer, please?

He goes over.

BRANDON

Well, this is interesting.

MARNY

(whispers)
We need to talk. Alone.

BRANDON

(to the others)
Hey, guys, we need a few moments.

Everyone else files out.

Light in the room is golden, sublime.

MARNY
 (takes his hand)
 Are you my son?

BRANDON
 C'mon.

MARNY
 Am I your mom?

Takes the Psychic Gypsy discount flyer from under her pillow.

MARNY (CONT'D)
 I visited with this charming woman
 the other day. I don't know what
 happened when you were there. And I
 don't really know what happened
 when I was there.
 (smiles)
 We used a pork chop bone instead of
 a chicken bone. But my mortality --
 my burden -- is mine, sweetie. And
 mine only.

BRANDON
 You got better.

MARNY
 And, I'll be out of here in a few
 short days.
 (then)
 You know, Brandon, sometimes Life
 surprises us for no apparent
 reason.
 (touches his hair
 lovingly)
 But we still want to know why. We
 demand to know why. We don't leave
 any room for the mystery and magic
 and the great wonders of Life.

Brandon goes to a window, sees Katey on the sidewalk, looking
 up at him.

MARNY (CONT'D)
 We don't allow Life to lead us down
 unbeaten paths to new places and
 new adventures and new dreams. And
 we become afraid of change. We lose
 hope.
 (rubs her eyes, shivers a
 bit)

(MORE)

MARNY (CONT'D)

I'm looking forward to the future,
with a full heart, Brandon. And
yes, one day my time will come.

He turns to her.

MARNY (CONT'D)

Half the house will be yours. The
other half I'm leaving to Kate. And
maybe if you get rid of your bad
habits, the two of you can make it
a home.

Brandon gives her the sheaf of papers from his students.

BRANDON

From my class, a Mother's Day gift.

MARNY'S POV... dark and blurry... so she doesn't look at the
papers right away.

MARNY

Thank you. And thank your students
please.

(tugs his nose)

Katey needs your full attention,
professor. She's not as strong as
you may think.

Leans back in her pillow.

MARNY (CONT'D)

You're a wonderful teacher, I'm so
proud of you.

He manages a smile, sort of.

MARNY (CONT'D)

That's better.

Touches the bejeweled ODE metallic platter at her side.

MARNY (CONT'D)

Now there's something I want you to
do--- for me.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - NEXT DAY

Super: MOTHER'S DAY

Opposite Marny's room.

Katey holds the elevator door OPEN.

Moments later.

Marny in a wheelchair being rolled over to the elevator by Brandon.

INT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - GROUND FLOOR - DAY

The elevator doors open and Doctor Joe's NURSE, chewing bubble gum nonchalantly as usual, comes upon them.

NURSE

Marny, why're you outta bed?

MARNY

It's okay, nurse. Doctor Joe knows.

NURSE

(blows a gum bubble)

Never ok'd it with me. He tells me everything.

MARNY

You might want to check 'cause he told me I could go home.

Paul approaches in a HOSPITAL GUARD UNIFORM that's TOO SMALL.

PAUL

Is there a problem?

NURSE

Escort this patient back to her room.

PAUL

Of course.

Takes over the wheelchair handles from Brandon.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Pardon me, sir.

Rolls Marny back in the elevator as the nurse strolls away.

Elevator doors close.

Then reopen.

And Marny is snuck OUT of the hospital.

EXT. YORKTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - DAY

IT'S RAINING outside as Brandon helps Marny into his Pontiac's front passenger seat.

Paul quickly loads the wheelchair in the trunk.

BRANDON
 (grins at Paul)
 Hospital guard. Nice.

At a hospital side door stands Jill, in her cafeteria worker uniform.

Waving as the rain turns into a downpour.

A sullen Katey gets into the car's back seat.

EXT. BRANDON'S PONTIAC - OUTSIDE OF TOWN - DAY

Rain is lighter as the car drives along the highway.

Past magnificent rock formations in the cactus-filled landscape.

BRANDON (V.O.)
 Where's this place again?

MARNY (V.O.)
 Straight ahead. About a hundred miles.

BRANDON (V.O.)
 You sure you're up for this?

MARNY (V.O.)
 It's Mother's Day, sonny boy. We moms have rights, you know. Katie will back me up on that.

Katey remains sullen.

EXT. DOWN THE HIGHWAY - A&W HAMBURGER STAND - DAY

The business marquee sign reads:

GET MOM OUT OF THE KITCHEN TODAY!

BRING 'ER HERE!

Sun breaks through the clouds and shines on Brandon's car in the parking lot.

INT. BRANDON'S PONTIAC - DAY

Marny has a delicious bite of her juicy Teenburger, and Brandon munches an onion ring.

Staring dully out the window, Katey's french fries remain untouched.

KATEY

Why we goin' to this Sheho place?

MARNY

Because it's where I fell in love
with your grandpa. And you kids
have never seen it.

MARNY'S POV... darkening shadows... blurring... shivering...

MARNY (CONT'D)

We can go now, Brandon.

He starts the car and heads out to the highway.

MARNY (CONT'D)

Hubby was such a handsome young
man. Especially in his soldier's
uniform.

Her next bite of the burger is sloppy.

MARNY (CONT'D)

You know, we should've got Dilly
Bars-- oh wait, that's Dairy Queen.
Onward, MacDuff, once more into the
breech! Was it MacDuff that charged
into the breech? I don't remember.

EXT. SHEHO, ARIZONA - MAIN STREET - DAY

The town's population sign is rusted, its faded letters read:

Sheho - Population 349

MARNY (V.O.)

Slow down.

The town is long deserted. Streets overrun with weeds and
sagebrush. An old railroad car tilted on rusted tracks.

Buildings are rundown, windows dirty and broken. A grain
elevator, neglected.

*It's the same visual image that Brandon saw at The Big Cowboy
statue.*

BRANDON (V.O.)

This looks familiar.

INT. BRANDON'S PONTIAC - DAY

MARNY'S POV... blurred shadows are going away... her vision
brightening... returning to normal... steadying.

She points at Kereluk's General Store.

MARNY

There's Uncle Bill's store.

KATEY

We've seen the polaroids.

MARNY

Ahead about a quarter mile,
Brandon. Turn left after the grain
elevator.

Brandon glances at Katey in the rear-view mirror, concerned.

EXT. A BACK COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The Pontiac drives up an overgrown gravel road that, in years past, was well-travelled. *It matches the surreal visual image that appeared in Marny's flower shop.*

EXT. ODE - A VINTAGE BUILDING - DAY

A 1940s-style dance hall, in its better days quite grand.

On the front, over the entrance, in old-fashioned lettering is the word ODE.

Brandon parks the car and retrieves the wheelchair, but Marny stands on her own, invigorated.

MARNY

I'm fine. I'm good.

Breathes in the fresh country air, relishing the memory of the building, around which light SHIMMERS MINIMALLY.

Katey finally gets out of the car.

MARNY (CONT'D)

Back in World War Two, our mayor--
Mr. Sebulsky-- he owned the lumber
yard. Anyway, he couldn't go fight
in the war because of a bad knee.

Tenderly picks a piece of lint from Katey's hair.

MARNY (CONT'D)

So many of our boys came back, you
know, changed. It was such a
terrible war. Like all wars, I
suppose.

They stroll towards ODE.

MARNY (CONT'D)

Anyway, Mr. Sebulsky wanted to do something, to welcome the soldiers home. So with his own lumber, and his own time, he built this wonderful dance hall! Named it Ode. It was his way of honoring our troops.

Singing of the song, I'LL BE SEEING YOU, is heard faintly in what sounds like a crowded, boisterous pub.

MARNY (CONT'D)

(hums a few notes)

The best thing that ever happened to me in my life, was marrying Hubby. And, he was such a good dancer. My feet never felt like they touched the floor!

The music gets a bit louder.

But Marny is the only one who hears it.

As they get to ODE's door, Marny puts her arms around Katey and Brandon.

MARNY (CONT'D)

The next best thing that ever happened to me, was both of you.

(a gleam in her eye)

Actually, it turned out to be just as good as getting married.

Reaches out to touch the dance hall's aged wood.

BRANDON

Happy Mother's Day, mom. Love you.

Katey's head is down.

MARNY

Thank you, Brandon. I love you, too. Katey.

KATEY

What.

MARNY

Don't you love your old Grandma anymore?

KATEY

I just wish --

(hugs Marny tightly)

I love you, grandma. I really do. More than anything.

MARNY

I know, sweetheart. I love you more than anything, too.

Brandon opens ODE's front door, and it's empty inside.

When Marny looks, it's a different story.

IN BLACK AND WHITE: The hall is filled with World War Two soldiers, some with dates, singing and waltzing to the song *I'll Be Seeing You*.

Other soldiers sit around drinking, smoking, having a good time.

In the middle of the dance floor is HUBBY, in his military uniform, standing at attention, hat in hand... the other hand outstretched toward Marny.

He is in his early 20s.

MARNY (CONT'D)

Okay.

IN REGULAR COLORS: Brandon still sees nothing inside.

But notices a statue outside, around the building's corner. Goes to have a look while Katey sits down against a building wall.

Marny takes a delicate step past ODE's front door, and her lower leg gets younger **IN BLACK AND WHITE**. After another step, half her form gets younger, in style of clothes, too.

OUTSIDE

Brandon stands before a withered, frail wooden statue of the mythology goddess PANDORA holding a jewelry box with a shut lid.

BRANDON

Hey, how long has Pandora been here?!

Marny comes back out, in real life self.

MARNY

I'd forgotten about that thing! Your father put it there a few years before you were born. Bought it at a flea market.

(winks at Katey)

Everyone thinks Pandora's box released all the misfortunes of mankind. But, she shut it in time to keep one thing alive -- hope!

(MORE)

MARNY (CONT'D)

(then)

I'm going to have a dance. You kids wait in the car.

(they hesitate)

Go on now.

Brandon and Katey walk away toward the car.

MARNY (CONT'D)

Brandon!

(he turns)

What do you believe in?

Brandon has no answer, glances at Katey before they resume walking to the car.

He tries to take her hand, but, she turns away.

INSIDE THE DANCE HALL

Marny closes the door behind her as she steps fully inside and completely turns into herself as an innocent young woman.

Goes up to Hubby and they start dancing, smiling, in love forever.

OUTSIDE

As Brandon and Katey near the car... behind them...

ODE shimmers brilliantly until it finally MELTS IN AN ENORMOUS CASCADE OF NUANCED, COLORED LIGHTS.

When the light settles, the building reappears in its original form.

At the car, Brandon takes out a cigar.

BRANDON

Grandma wants us to move back in together.

KATEY

I'm not moving in with cigars. Or all that goony-goo-goo perfume.

BRANDON

(doesn't light the cigar)

People like you more when you wear cologne.

She raises an eyebrow.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Maybe you have a point. Is it okay if I smoke on the back porch? Just a few puffs. Once in a blue moon.

KATEY

Maybe.

He tucks the cigar back in his pocket.

KATEY (CONT'D)

So. What do you believe in? Do you still need more space?

BRANDON

I have absolutely no excuse whatsoever for asking you to live with grandma. None. I can only sincerely apologize. So, I am sorry, Katey. With all my heart and soul I am truly very sorry.

KATEY

You're weird, Dad.

BRANDON

I like it when you call me Dad. Thank you.

It's a nice moment.

They look back over at ODE.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Great building.

(then)

That new boyfriend of yours seems like a decent guy.

KATEY

He's cool.

BRANDON

(tilts his head)

Do you hear, umm, music?

KATEY

(listens)

Nope. Do you?

BRANDON

Probably just the wind. Y'know, the wind carries sound, sometimes great distances.

Glances over at the Pandora statue.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Hundreds and hundreds of miles, perhaps even thousands.

Katey strides quickly back to ODE, cautiously opens the front door, peeks in.

Pandora statue glares at Brandon.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Huh. Hope.

Inside ODE.

It's empty except for dusty furniture, cobwebs, old beer and whiskey bottles.

Katey gingerly looks around.

A beam of light pours through A GLORIOUS SKYLIGHT in the middle of the hall.

KATEY

Grandma?

Goes to the back door, but it's chained and padlocked.

Turns, wondering what is going on.

KATEY (CONT'D)

Grandma? Are you here?

Nothing.

Wanders over to the side windows.

All of which were painted shut, or locked, long ago.

KATEY (CONT'D)

C'mon, grandma, let's go!

Still no answer as Brandon peeks in from the front door.

KATEY (CONT'D)

(sees him)

She's not here, daddy.

BRANDON

(steps inside)

Mom?

Joins Katey under the skylight.

KATEY

I'm afraid.

BRANDON

(puts his arm around her
shoulder)

No reason to be scared, sweetie.

KATEY

What does it mean? What does it all mean?

Brandon looks up into the skylight and sees, etched into the glass, golden child cherub figurines.

The same that adorn the roof of Marny's flower shop.

BRANDON

Well-- it means--

Katey looks up into the skylight.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

It means grandma loves you. For sure. And it means I love you, for sure.

(closes his eyes)

It means life is very fragile. And it means -- it means --

Katey takes his hand.

KATEY

More than anything?

They stand there, in the deserted dance hall, just the two of them in the cobwebs and dust of years past.

BRANDON

Yes. More than anything.

EXT. MARNY'S (NOW BRANDON & KATEY'S) HOUSE - TWILIGHT

A few days later.

A furniture moving van drives away from the house, in which most of the lights are on.

Piano music is heard coming from the house, one key at a time, playing *I'll Be Seeing You*.

A dog is heard barking inside.

INT. BRANDON & KATEY'S HOUSE - TWILIGHT

Most of Brandon's belongings are in boxes, except for the self-portrait of Brandon and Katey.

At the piano, Katey is playing *I'll be Seeing You*.

Eating Chinese take-out food and marking term papers, Brandon eyes the stray dog, who looks hungry.

BRANDON
Something I can help you with?

Tosses over an egg roll and the dog devours it.

Katey begins improvising the song.

EXT. DOWNTOWN YORKTOWN - TWILIGHT

Lounging on a clear plastic sofa in her shop's display window, the Psychic Gypsy chats with Uncle Vladimir. Pink neon OPEN sign flashing.

People pass by.

Allen works late in the flower shop, making new floral arrangements.

IN THE FLOWER SHOP'S FRONT WINDOW

Marny's Fleurs De Grand Prix trophy rests beside the World War Two framed picture of her and Hubby.

Also the bejeweled metallic platter with the grass ODE lettering.

And the refreshed Angel's Kiss Chrysanthemum.

CAMERA PULLS UP AND AWAY

The Psychic Gypsy shop's neon lights disappear into the town's twinkling downtown lights, which merge into surrounding fields and high desert terrain.

As a flock of graceful geese fly past the setting sun, a voluminous stack of Cumulus clouds absorb layers of crimson and auburn against early evening stars.

KATEY'S PIANO MUSIC swells into a very different song, majestic and brilliantly alive.

FADE OUT: