

THE JAMES KING VERSION

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FADE IN:

TITLE CARD: "A TRUE STORY"

INT. FLUSHING, NY - PRINCE STREET - ADA'S BEDROOM - DAY

ADA COPELAND, a 102-year-old African American, watches live TV coverage of MARTIN LUTHER KING's speech at the Lincoln Memorial.

MARTIN LUTHER KING (V.O.)

(on TV)

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

Her son WALLACE, age 66, takes a seat beside her. He touches his mother's hand.

WALLACE

You hear that, mother? A Georgia slave and the son of a Georgia slave. That could be us he's talking about...

Ada nods, smiles and closes her eyes. She hears Dr. King's voice in the darkness.

MARTIN LUTHER KING (V.O.)

... My four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

LATER

Wallace takes Ada's meal tray and sets it aside. She motions for him to sit.

ADA

Your father, he would have liked that speech. He would have found it agreeable.

WALLACE  
Hard not to...

ADA  
But he'd say we should go farther.  
He had his own ideas about these  
things.

Wallace's light-skinned hand pats Ada's dark brown hand. He smiles.

WALLACE  
I suppose he did.

Ada smiles and nods.

WALLACE (CONT'D)  
We haven't talked about him for a  
long while.

ADA  
I know.

WALLACE  
Could you tell me the story?

Ada thinks about it.

ADA  
Telling the story... believing the  
story... and understanding the  
story are different things.

Wallace smiles.

WALLACE  
You do the telling. I'll do the  
rest.

Ada nods and smiles.

TITLE CARD: "ADA COPELAND"

INT. SMALL SCHOOLHOUSE - DAY

SUPER: "GEORGIA - 1874"

A 13-year-old Ada sits with perfect posture at a small desk in a one-room school. Six other African American children of varying ages sit near her.

Ada listens attentively to her TEACHER, a young light-skinned African American woman.

ADA (V.O.)

I was one of the lucky ones. Not many of us got any education at all.

The teacher holds a small blackboard with "Geology" written on it.

TEACHER

Can anyone tell me what this word is?

Ada raises her hand. Her eyes shine as she waits for the teacher to call on her.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Ada.

ADA

Geology. It's a type of science.

EXT. SCHOOLHOUSE - DAY

Five of the students scramble out of the doorway and run off down a dirt path. Ada exits with her teacher.

They pause in front of the doorway, Ada holding a book across her chest. Ada nods as the teacher talks to her.

TEACHER

Ada, you have such good posture.

She reaches for Ada's schoolbook and balances it on Ada's head.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

But you ain't done growing yet. Balance this book on your head 30 minutes every day and your body will thank you for it.

ADA

I'll try.

Ada gives the teacher a wave goodbye. She adjusts the book slightly, balancing it as she heads home.

INT. MILDRED COPELAND'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ada, her mother MILDRED, and her Aunt ANNIE say grace at a small table bearing a modest meal.

ADA

... and grant that we may feast in  
paradise with thee. Amen.

They eat quietly.

ADA (V.O.)

We were very poor. My mother tried  
her best. Her sister Annie helped,  
but it was very difficult for us.

ANNIE

I heard there'd be more field work  
come next week.

ADA

Do I have to?

MILDRED

Once school is out. How much more  
time do you have?

ADA

Five more weeks.

They hear distant GUN SHOTS and WHOOPING outside. Mildred and Annie exchange worried looks.

ADA (V.O.)

Us being poor wasn't enough for  
some people.

EXT. SCHOOLHOUSE REMAINS - DAY

Ada, her teacher, and Annie watch wisps of smoke rise from the charred remains of the schoolhouse. Annie shakes her head.

ANNIE

They won't let us have anything.

TEACHER

(looks at Ada)  
I'm so sorry, child.

ANNIE

This place... I can't do this  
anymore.

Ada stares blankly at the ashes. A tear crosses her cheek.

ADA (V.O.)  
Your father said that it was a  
mistake to think women were weak  
and men were strong.

Annie takes Ada's hand and pulls her away. She sets a brisk pace. Ada glances back while struggling to keep up with Annie.

ADA (V.O.)  
He might've had Annie in mind when  
he said that.

EXT. SMALL CHURCH - DAY

Annie lets Ada's hand go as they approach their church.

ANNIE  
We're gonna pray for something  
better. And then we're gonna do  
something about it.

They enter the church.

ADA (V.O.)  
She meant it, too. Took her awhile,  
but she raised enough money to make  
her way to New York. She sent for  
me as soon as she could.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

SUPER: "TEN YEARS LATER"

A 24-year-old Ada hugs a frail Mildred.

ADA (V.O.)  
I stayed on as long as I could to  
help my mother.

They face each other holding hands.

MILDRED  
Don't worry about me. I'll make do.

Ada hugs Mildred again.

ADA  
We'll send for you as soon we can.

Mildred looks doubtful, but nods and hugs Ada once more.

ADA (V.O.)  
 Sometimes we say things we know  
 aren't the whole truth. Even to  
 people we love.

Ada picks up a small bag and boards the train.

ADA (V.O.)  
 Maybe especially to people we love.

As the train pulls out, Mildred and Ada wave to each other.  
 Smiles on both their faces.

ADA (V.O.)  
 If you mean good by it, it can be a  
 kindness.

EXT. NEW YORK - TENEMENT BUILDING - DAY

Ada glances at a small piece of paper in her hand and then at  
 the "149" above the building's doorway.

An African American man wearing a Pullman porter's uniform  
 emerges from the building and walks past her.

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ada knocks on a door. It opens. Annie smiles and brings Ada  
 in for hug.

ANNIE  
 A full-grown woman! I can't believe  
 my eyes!

INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT

Annie and Ada catch-up while sitting on a small divan,  
 sipping water.

ANNIE  
 For now, you can help me with my  
 laundry work.

Ada nods and smiles.

ANNIE (CONT'D)  
 And I've put an advertisement in  
 the newspaper for you to work as a  
 nursemaid.

ADA

Oh, Auntie... all this! I don't know how to thank you.

ANNIE

(chuckles)

Don't thank me yet. The families that respond to the advertisement won't know you're a negro. Some of will send you on your way as soon as they see you are.

Ada nods.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Present yourself as a proper Christian, an educated woman, and you'll get hired.

Ada smiles.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Won't make as much as one of them Irish nursemaids, but it'll be more than you'd ever see back home.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CHURCH - DAY

Ada and Annie, wearing their Sunday best, approach a church. A sign reads: "Union American Methodist Episcopal Church." Annie detains Ada for a moment.

ANNIE

Reverend Cook is one of the most prominent negroes in New York and he knows his bible. You mind what he says.

They enter the church.

INT. CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

Amongst 150 other parishioners, Annie and Ada gaze at their dynamic pastor, REVEREND JAMES COOK.

REV. COOK

... his disciples came unto him:  
And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying...  
Bless-ed are the poor in spirit:  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(MORE)



REV. COOK (CONT'D)

Bless-ed are the meek: for they  
shall inherit the earth.

Ada closes her eyes, nodding and smiling, retreating briefly into a quiet, content place. She opens her eyes and looks at her fellow parishioners as they listen raptly to Cook.

REV. COOK (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Bless-ed are ye, when men shall  
revile you, and persecute you, and  
shall say all manner of evil  
against you falsely...

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Rev. Cook shakes hands with parishioners as they leave the church. Annie escorts Ada to him.

ANNIE

Reverend, this is my niece Ada  
Copeland, just arrived from  
Georgia.

REV. COOK

Miss Copeland, welcome to our  
congregation... and to our little  
community.

ADA

Thank you, Reverend Cook.

REV. COOK

Please join us on one of our Sunday  
outings. We don't have many folks  
from Georgia up here, but I'm sure  
you will be welcome.

Ada smiles and turns to leave with Annie.

THE NURSEMAID'S TOIL - MONTAGE

-- In a well-appointed Manhattan townhome, Ada changes a white infant's cloth diapers.

-- Ada rinses off the diaper in a basement sink and throws it into a clothes pile next to a manual washer/wringing machine.

-- Ada washes clothes and runs them through the wringer.

-- Ada serves eggs and bacon to a well-dressed MAN reading a newspaper. He ignores her. She returns to the stove, laying on more bacon and eggs.

-- Ada scrubs the floor next to a toilet.

-- Ada washes dishes.

-- Ada mops the kitchen floor.

-- Precariously balanced on a stool, Ada dusts the top of a cabinet.

-- Ada, in different clothes, dresses a one-year-old blond, blue-eyed boy. He smiles at her, then makes a face. A WET FART. Ada shrugs and begins to undress him.

-- Ada brings a tea set to the lady of the house. The lady entertains several friends. They ignore Ada.

-- Ada, in different clothes, dresses a three-year-old boy. He smiles at her and starts to make a face. Ada shakes her finger at him. He shrugs and runs off to the bathroom.

-- Ada brings a lunch tray to the lady of the house. The lady, visibly pregnant, shifts uncomfortably to receive the tray. She offers a small smile and nod to Ada.

-- Ada, in different clothes, changes the diapers of a baby girl.

-- Ada and Annie, in Sunday clothes, stand on a sidewalk watching traffic. The three-year-old blond boy holds Ada's hand and smiles at her. The boy's parents arrive and lead him off.

-- Ada retrieves a five-dollar bill from a table next to the man of the house. He peruses a book, smoking from a pipe.

MAN

Thank you, Miss Adie. Monday morning, then?

ADA

Yes, sir. First thing, Monday.

-- Ada collapses into her bed at Annie's apartment. A book -- Thrice Through the Furnace -- sits on her bedside table, next to an oil lamp.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

SUPER: "SPRING, 1887"

Ada and the congregation sing a hymn: "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

ADA

Can we find a friend so faithful  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness,  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Ada senses something.

She glances back and sees a man across the center aisle looking at her. He wears a Pullman porter's jacket and sports a well-trimmed beard, thinning blond hair and blue eyes.

ADA (V.O.)

That was the first time I saw your father. It was not love at first sight. Honestly, I didn't know what to think.

They both quickly return their eyes to their hymn books.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Following behind the blond man, Ada and Annie wait for their turn with Rev. Cook. The man, JAMES TODD, mid-40's, shakes hands with Cook.

REV. COOK

Welcome. I believe you are new to our congregation.

JAMES TODD

Yes, Reverend. May I introduce myself -- James Todd from Baltimore.

Cook regards James' Pullman jacket.

REV. COOK

I see you're a Pullman porter...

JAMES TODD

Mr. Pullman has recently moved me into the dining car service.

Cook ponders James' appearance a bit more.

REV. COOK

The contours of Mr. Pullman's devotion to our race are consistent if nothing else.

James nods grimly, with resignation.

JAMES TODD

So it is.

REV. COOK

Please join us in the Park this afternoon. Some of our West Indies parishioners will treat us to a Cricket match.

JAMES TODD

Cricket? My grandmother tried many times to explain it to me.

REV. COOK

She is from the West Indies?

JAMES TODD

Yes, from Dominica.

Cook nods in understanding and shakes hands with James.

REV. COOK

You are always welcome here, Mr. Todd. I hope to see you again this afternoon.

JAMES TODD

I look forward to it.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - CRICKET FIELD - DAY

Ada and Annie share a bench, cooling themselves with hand fans. Several yards off to the side, James fans himself and chats with another parishioner MOS.

ADA (V.O.)

Don't think I was a foolish young girl. Back then, it didn't matter what you looked like. If you had a single drop of negro blood, and all the rest white, you were a negro as far as anyone was concerned.

ADA

(to Annie)

That man over there. He could pass as white easily.

ANNIE

He would not be the only fair-skinned negro in this city. I've come across others.

(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

And if he is a Pullman porter, then  
he is most certainly a negro.

ADA

Hush! He's coming this way.

James approaches the bench and offers a slight bow.

JAMES TODD

Ladies, may I offer my greetings  
this fine day?

They nod politely.

JAMES TODD (CONT'D)

I see you have captured yourself a  
fine piece of shade here. May I sit  
with you for a few moments to allow  
the blood to cool?

ANNIE

You may.

James takes a seat next to Annie.

JAMES TODD

My thanks, Miss?

ANNIE

Purnell. Annie Purnell. This is my  
niece, Ada Copeland.

Ada nods politely.

JAMES TODD

A pleasure to make your  
acquaintances. James Todd, at your  
service.

He gestures at the Cricket match.

JAMES TODD (CONT'D)

I suspect this game has much to  
offer, but the rules confound me.

He grins warmly. The ladies laugh.

ADA

It seems we have something in  
common, Mr. Todd.

James begins talking to them, pointing at the field. Annie  
and Ada exchange glances as James continues talking MOS.

ADA (V.O.)  
 I'd never seen a blond, blue-eyed  
 negro before, but why should I  
 doubt him? Why would any white man  
try to pass as a negro?

EXT. TOUR BOAT - DAY

Ada's congregation enjoys a fall outing, crowding the rails  
 of a tour boat as it passes under the Brooklyn Bridge.

ADA (V.O.)  
 We saw each other a few Sundays  
 more, and then he'd be out west for  
 a few months, and then back again  
 for a few weeks.

James stands next to Ada, pointing at something, talking  
 excitedly MOS. His left hand gently embraces Ada's gloved  
 hand. They exchange a brief glance, and he continues talking.

ADA (V.O.)  
 He said that was the life of a  
 Pullman porter. Those times he came  
 back --I had his full attention.

Annie, standing nearby, sees their moment and smiles to  
 herself.

ADA (V.O.)  
 We got to know each other pretty  
 well, I suppose.

INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Snow falls outside Annie's living room window. Inside, over a  
 dozen congregation members crowd the room. In the middle of  
 the scrum, Ada and James face each other.

They exchange rings as Rev. Cook, standing between them,  
 smiles.

REV. COOK  
 I now pronounce you man and wife.

A young man plays a happy tune on a small organ in the room.

Ada and James kiss and face their guests, smiling.

ADA (V.O.)  
 Everyone I knew was there for us.

Annie begins serving slices of cake to the guests. A young lady, HENRIETTA WILLIAMS, assists her.

ADA (V.O.)

Even though none of your father's friends or relatives attended, he seemed so happy.

James heartily shakes hands with Reverend Cook.

ADA (V.O.)

It was genuine. Wherever he was, he fit in.

Children in the room grab at bowls containing bonbons and other sweets. A proliferation of more food adorns another table.

ADA (V.O.)

I have never doubted that wherever he went, he never felt himself as a stranger.

INT. BROOKLYN - VINEGAR HILL APARTMENT - DAY

James holds the door as two workers carrying empty crates exit. One of the men gives James a suspicious look. James closes the door and walks over to Ada.

Ada surveys the jumble of boxes and furniture in their new apartment. James puts his arm around her and smiles.

JAMES TODD

One of the movers did not approve.

ADA

Him and many others. They think you are white, James.

JAMES TODD

I suppose you can't blame them. Appearances can be deceiving.

(beat)

Foolish, idle people will say and think what they want.

ADA

As long as our people understand, I won't mind it.

JAMES TODD

We don't make the rules. We just find a way to live with them.

They begin arranging the furniture.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY - DAY

SUPER: "FALL, 1889"

James pauses on the walkway to look back at the Manhattan skyline. He buttons the top two buttons of his porter's jacket and retrieves a porter's hat from a small valise.

He gives the hat bill a tug down as he raises his head to look ahead. Carrying a flat package and the valise, he continues on toward Brooklyn.

INT. VINEGAR HILL APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DUSK

In bed, James holds Ada in his arms as she nurses an infant. James smiles as he grazes his index finger knuckle softly against the baby's cheek. The baby breaks contact and wails.

Ada reattaches him and he quiets.

ADA

Well, have you decided on a name?

JAMES TODD

Just now, yes. Le-roy.

ADA

Le-roy?

JAMES TODD

Yes, my mother would call me that whenever I became too demanding for her liking. It's French.

ADA

French?

JAMES TODD

Yes. It means "the king."

ADA

Our little king.

(winces)

Ow! Little devil, too.

INT. VINEGAR HILL APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

SUPER: "ONE YEAR LATER"



James cradles LE-ROY in the crook of his arm before setting him in a crib and joining a pregnant Ada on the divan.

Ada glances at the Pullman porter's jacket draped across a valise next to the divan.

ADA

Annie said she would come if I need her. You needn't worry.

James takes Ada's hands in his.

JAMES TODD

I can't help it. Every night, when I lay my head on the pillow, my prayers go up to Heaven for you and him...

ADA

James...

JAMES TODD

It can't be helped. I only think of you when I'm gone.

ADA

You are a ridiculous man...

JAMES TODD

One who loves you...

They embrace. James slowly disengages. He puts on his jacket, picks up the valise, blows a kiss to Le-roy and opens the door.

EXT. VINEGAR HILL APARTMENT - HUDSON AVENUE - NIGHT

SUPER: "JANUARY 1891"

A man carrying a valise makes his way up Hudson Street. He leans into the cutting wind of a fierce blizzard. The streetlights -- all lights -- cut off suddenly.

INT. VINEGAR HILL APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Annie lights an oil lamp. A KNOCK on the door.

ANNIE

Ada! He's here!

Annie rushes to the door and opens it. The man, covered in snow, removes his scarf. DR. EDWARD KIDD, white, muttonchops, enters the room.

DR. KIDD  
Am I in time?

ANNIE  
Lord, I hope so. Right this way...

Annie leads him to the bedroom.

INT. VINEGAR HILL APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lit only by Annie's oil lamp, Ada lies on the bed, sweating, breathing fast. Le-roy cries loudly from the crib next to the bed. Outside, the wind HOWLS.

Kidd grabs Ada's blanket and tosses it off. Annie hands him the lamp. Kidd sees Ada's distended belly, her knees raised and spread apart.

DR. KIDD  
Madam, be still. I must bring the lamp close to examine you.

He leans in with the lamp. After a moment, Kidd withdraws and hands the lamp back to Annie. He opens his bag, removing a pair of forceps. His eyes meet Annie's.

DR. KIDD (CONT'D)  
I will need more light... rags... and a basin of water.

Annie sets the lamp on the bedside table and hurriedly leaves the room.

EXT. BEDFORD-STUYVESANT - TOWNHOUSE - DAY

On a bright summer day, the Todd family examine the facade of their new residence. James cradles baby GRACE with one arm and carries the valise with the other.

ADA (V.O.)  
We bore your father's absences as best we could. He did bring his best self when he was with us, and he kept a decent roof over our heads, kept us fed and happy.

Ada struggles with a mewling, sickly Le-Roy draped across her shoulder.

JAMES TODD  
 (smiles at baby)  
 Miss Grace -- how does it strike  
 you? A step up for us, I believe.

ADA  
 Mr. Le-roy does not agree. He has  
 not taken to his weaning well.

They walk up the steps. Movers bearing boxes follow.

ADA (V.O.)  
 Some absences were harder than  
 others...

EXT. BEDFORD-STUYVESANT - TOWNHOUSE - DAY

On a chill fall day, James and Ada, wearing black, slowly descend the steps of the townhouse. James carries baby Grace, whose tiny hand grabs at his graying beard.

ADA (V.O.)  
 When Le-roy died, your father came  
 back as soon as he could.

They reach a mortician's carriage parked in front. It bears a small coffin. The carriage driver nods to them, snaps the reins and the carriage begins to slowly roll away.

ADA (V.O.)  
 But I don't think he ever forgave  
 himself for not being there.

The Todds follow the carriage on foot.

COMINGS AND GOINGS IN THE BED-STUY LIVING ROOM - MONTAGE

With each iteration, the furniture and decorations evolve to reflect increasing prosperity.

ADA (V.O.)  
 It affected us something terrible.  
 But no amount of father's comings  
 and goings would come between us  
 and the family we wanted to raise.

-- Dr. Kidd dons his coat, picks up his valise and tips his hat to a smiling Annie, who holds a sleeping Grace. A newborn baby CRIES off-screen.

ADA (V.O.)  
Your sisters and brother...

-- James enters, sets his valise down and drops to one knee. Two-year-old Grace rushes to him. Ada cradles one-year-old ELLA, rocking her gently as she smiles at James.

-- Dr. Kidd dons his coat, picks up his valise and tips his hat to a smiling Annie, who holds hands with toddlers Grace and Ella. A newborn baby CRIES off-screen.

-- James enters, sets his valise down and drops to one knee. Grace and Ella rush to him. Ada cradles one-year-old SIDNEY, rocking him gently as she smiles at James.

-- James enters, sets his valise down and drops to one knee. Grace, Ella, and Sidney rush to him. Ada rests a hand on her belly's bulge. James raises an eyebrow and smiles.

ADA (V.O.)  
And then you came... we were so  
happy then.

-- As the children scamper around, James and Ada survey the living room, now crowded with cribs. Henrietta Williams, wearing servant's attire, sweeps the floor.

EXT. PRINCE STREET HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: "SPRING, 1897"

James, a very pregnant Ada, six-year-old Grace, five-year-old Ella, and four-year-old Sidney hold hands in front of their new house, which occupies its own large lot.

ADA (V.O.)  
It got crowded where we were. So,  
We moved to Queens, to this house.

JAMES TODD  
(to Ada)  
I think this one will do nicely.

ADA  
The children and I will certainly  
need all the space.

They walk to the front porch. Henrietta greets them at the door.

JAMES TODD  
Miss Williams! We are so happy you  
are joining us.

Henrietta nods and moves to assist Ada up the porch steps. Movers carrying boxes follow them into the house.

ADA (V.O.)

You were born in this room a few weeks later.

INT. PRINCE STREET HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ada and James lay together. Ada rests her head on James' shoulder and glances up at him.

ADA

I am content... now. But you are gone so much.

JAMES TODD

Mr. Pullman has my body for the next few years. You have my heart and soul. You know that, right?

Ada nods. He draws her in tightly.

JAMES TODD (CONT'D)

When I'm away, I think of moments like these -- your arms around me and your breath on my face and the pressure of your lips against mine. My whole heart then is as it is now, full of love for you. No one ever loved a woman as much as I do you.

Ada emits a small laugh.

ADA

Really? When you talk like that, it makes me think you should work in theatre... And not in some noisy dining car.

James grins and effects a pose, raising his arms theatrically.

JAMES TODD

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players: they have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts."

Ada eyes him curiously.

ADA  
What was that?

JAMES TODD  
In Chicago a few weeks ago, the company treated us to a matinee of Shakespeare. As You Like It.

ADA  
And you remembered it?

JAMES TODD  
Just the one part. It... struck me.

ADA  
Lord, you surprise me sometimes.

INT. PRINCE STREET HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DUSK

A KNOCK on the front door. The four Todd children run to the door and open it. An African American couple enters, wearing masquerade ball masks.

REVERSE ANGLE

The couple sees a large living room crowded with mask-wearing partygoers.

A well-dressed woman gracefully approaches the couple. She raises her mask briefly and smiles -- it is Ada.

ADA  
(glances back)  
James, come! The Johnsons are here.

A masked James rushes up and extends his hand. He escorts the couple into the crowd, exchanging small talk.

Henrietta loads a cylinder of RAGTIME MUSIC onto a gramophone. Another young lady walks past, carrying a tray of drinks.

Grace, Ella, Sidney, and two-year-old Wallace clamber up a stairway, pausing at the top to watch the party through the railings. Grace, who has a mask, teases Ella, who does not.

INT. PRINCE STREET HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

James sits before a fireplace, reading a book. Ada rushes in, displaying a newspaper, The New York Age. She hands it to James and points at a personal announcement.

JAMES TODD

(reading)

On Tuesday evening, a masquerade party was given at the residence of Mrs. Ada Todd on Prince Street. A goodly number gathered, and many varieties of costumes were represented.

James hands the paper back to her and smiles.

JAMES TODD (CONT'D)

A lady of society. It seems you have arrived!

James laughs with Ada. His laugh provokes a short coughing fit. He reins it in and grins sheepishly.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A doctor leans over a reclining James, listening with a stethoscope pressed on his chest. An assistant enters the room and hands the doctor a heavy, dark glass plate.

He holds it up to a light and peers carefully through it.

INT. PRINCE STREET HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

James, his valise and jacket next to him, kneels on one knee to bid Wallace good-bye. He looks over his brood, smiling with forced bravado.

JAMES TODD

Off again, my children. I will miss you.

(to Ada)

I will write soon... You will be in my thoughts at all times.

He lifts the valise with no small effort, looks once more at his family, turns and leaves. Toddler Wallace lingers in the doorway, watching his father board a carriage.

ADA (V.O.)

The tuberculosis had set in by then. That was the last time I saw him.

INT. PRINCE STREET (1963)- BEDROOM - DAY

102-year-old Ada pauses to take a drink of water. She closes her eyes and leans back.

WALLACE

Did he ever explain why he... you know --

ADA

-- No, he did not.

WALLACE

It doesn't seem right.

ADA

It wasn't. He'd say it was on account of this "cold and prejudicial world." But it was wrong all the same. Deep down, I think he knew that.

Wallace thinks about this in silence.

ADA (CONT'D)

It's hard to understand what is really in any man's heart. I'm not sure he understood himself any better than I did. But I know that when we were together, he loved us, all of us.

Wallace nods.

WALLACE

But why couldn't he --

Ada raises her hand.

ADA

I'm tired, son. I need to rest for awhile.

NEW ANGLE - MOMENTS LATER

Wallace extracts from a cabinet drawer a large leather-bound book. He glances back at a sleeping Ada.

INT. PRINCE STREET (1963)- LIVING ROOM - DAY

Wallace opens the leather-bound book. We glimpse the cover: "National Academy of Sciences: Biographical Memoirs of Clarence King"



Wallace looks at a black and white photo on the first page of the book.

THE PHOTO

A well dressed man with a neatly trimmed beard and receding hairline sits at 45-degree angle to the camera.

WALLACE

He turns the page and retrieves a folded, yellowing letter. He opens it, and smoothes it out.

At the top of the letter: "My dearest Ada."

INT. DOCTOR CRAIG'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: "PHOENIX, ARIZONA - FALL, 1901"

Dr. R.W. CRAIG peers sympathetically across his desk at a much thinner James.

DR. CRAIG

...there's nothing for it, I'm afraid. If you stay here and rest, you may have a few more months.

James understands and offers a brief chuckle.

JAMES TODD

If only I could be as candid with my family as you have been with me...

EXT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

James shuffles out of the office and into the harsh sun beating down on a dusty Phoenix, Arizona street. He slowly climbs aboard a personal carriage.

The carriage driver snaps the reins, and the carriage rolls down the street.

INT. HUMMINGBIRD HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

James, pen poised in his hand, takes a deep breath, and settles in to write.

JAMES TODD (V.O.)  
 My dearest Ada. There is much I  
 must tell you, but first I urge you  
 to open the family bible and write  
 this name on the inside cover...

On the paper, he writes: "Clarence King."

JAMES TODD (V.O.)  
 Clarence King.  
 (beat)  
 For this is my true name.

CLARENCE KING pauses and exhales a deep breath. He gazes  
 through his window at the mountains in the distance and  
 returns to writing. We follow his gaze out the window.

TITLE CARD: "CLARENCE KING"

EXT. NEBRASKA PLAINS - DAY

SUPER: "NEBRASKA - 1863"

A wagon train bumps along a rutted path. Clarence on  
 horseback, glances up to see two riders approaching from the  
 front. One of them -- JIM GARDINER -- waves his hat.

JIM  
 Clare! Clare!

Clarence snaps his reins to move his horse closer to the duo.  
 With Jim is the wagon train's OVERSEER. They meet ahead of  
 the wagons.

OVERSEER  
 Herd a buffalo 'bout a mile up.  
 We're gonna have to stop while it  
 passes.

CLARENCE  
 You saw it, Jim?

JIM  
 It's incredible. C'mon!

Jim turns his horse and motions for Clarence to follow.

CLARENCE  
 Wait, I need something.

Clarence rides back along the trail, passing several wagons before hopping off his horse and scrambling into the back of a wagon. He emerges a moment later, carrying a rifle.

EXT. NEAR THE HERD - MOMENTS LATER

On a gentle ridge, Clarence and Jim, on horseback, watch thousands of buffalo rumble across the plains. The herd extends for miles up and down a shallow valley.

JIM  
Something, isn't it?

CLARENCE  
Don't see that back east, that's  
for certain.

Jim turns to Clarence.

JIM  
Thanks, Clare.

CLARENCE  
For what?

JIM  
Bringing me along.

CLARENCE  
Well, don't thank me yet. Long way  
to go before we get to California.  
Injuns, Mormons, who knows what  
else might cross our path...

Clarence snaps his reins and takes off toward the herd. He aims his rifle at a stray and fires. The wounded bull turns and charges, plowing into Clarence's horse, toppling it.

Clarence cowers under his crippled horse as countless buffalo stampede overhead. Then darkness.

LATER

Jim struggles to move the haunches of Clarence's dead horse. Clarence pulls himself free from under the horse. His left leg pants are torn and his leg is bleeding.

Jim extends his hand and pulls Clarence up.

EXT. UTAH - WEBER VALLEY - DAY

As the wagon train pauses near lush fields tended by Mormon settlers, a carriage approaches. Clarence, his leg bandaged, limps toward it.

He sees a square-jawed middle-aged man, BRIGHAM YOUNG, descend from the carriage and walk toward Jim and the overseer. Clarence hops over to join the small conclave.

BRIGHAM YOUNG

... be kind and understanding with my people and you may enjoy the bounty of our land. The road ahead, the great salt desert, will be difficult. In your encounters with the Indians, heed this advice -- give 'em a biscuit instead of a bullet. You won't regret it.

Young shakes hands with Clarence and the others and returns to his carriage. Jim gives Clarence a nudge.

JIM

Might say that advice applies to buffalo as well...

CLARENCE

Was that --

OVERSEER

Brigham Young.

Jim and Clarence look at each other.

OVERSEER (CONT'D)

Met him the last time I passed through. Said the same thing then, too.

CLARENCE

What do you reckon?

OVERSEER

Reckon he's right.

CLARENCE

He's not like what I expected.

The overseer spits some tobacco juice.

OVERSEER

Nope. You come out this way, you got to leave them prej-a-dices behind you. Everything's a surprise out here. Might as well open your mind to it, cause it's a fact, it is.

EXT - NEVADA - DAY

Passing through thickening scrub pine, the wagon train ascends a hill. A small town comes into view. Jim, on horseback, beckons Clarence.

JIM

Clare, get up! I think we're coming up on Carson City.

Clarence arises from the back of the wagon next to Jim's horse. He peers around the bonnet.

EXT. CARSON CITY STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Clarence and the overseer stand next to some luggage and other belongings.

OVERSEER

Sure you want to get off here? We'll be in California by noon tomorrow.

CLARENCE

Nothing for it. Jim is to meet with an old classmate at the Comstock mine. There'll be teamsters and other wagons passing through. We'll finish the journey with one of them...

Jim approaches with a new horse for Clarence. He hands the reins to him.

JIM

Try not to kill this one...

EXT. GOLD HILL - HYDE RESIDENCE - DAY

Clarence and Jim hitch their horses to a post in front of a house in a small mining town. A young man, WILLIAM HYDE, steps out of the house onto the front porch.

WILLIAM

I'll be damned. A couple a Yale men  
come west. Welcome, boys!

JIM

Will!

Jim and William embrace. William shakes hands with Clarence.

WILLIAM

Come on in, we're just about to  
eat.

INT. HYDE RESIDENCE - DINING TABLE

William's father, OLIVER, leans back in his chair and lays  
his napkin on the table. He looks over at Clarence.

OLIVER

Willy tells me you boys are headed  
to Sacramento.

CLARENCE

Yessir. One of our professors has  
given us letters of introduction to  
the head of the California  
Geological Survey.

OLIVER

You mean to say you've come all  
this way on the merest of hopes for  
employment?

CLARENCE

Well, we want to be geologists.  
This is probably the best  
opportunity to get a start.

Oliver grins and nods.

OLIVER

Well, if its geology you're  
interested in, you need to see our  
operation here. Biggest silver mine  
and foundry going...

INT. PIONEER FOUNDRY - DAY

Clarence gingerly accepts a silver ore specimen from the  
FOUNDRY OPERATOR.

## FOUNDRY OPERATOR

That one's typical. Pulled it from the Ophir deposit, 'bout 300 feet down.

Clarence holds the ore in a sunbeam. Crystals of quartz and flecks of silver glitter.

## CLARENCE

You can see the silver...

Clarence displays it Jim and William, then hands back the ore to the Foundry Operator.

## LATER

William escorts Clarence and Jim to a small bunk room in the Foundry.

## WILLIAM

Sorry fellows. Not much room for guests in the house. Hope this will do...

## CLARENCE

This'll do just fine. Thanks...

They unload their backpacks and settle in for some rest.

## INT. PIONEER FOUNDRY - NIGHT

Darkness and howling wind. A crackling sound. Clarence wakes suddenly, his eyes wide. Swirling smoke and flames everywhere.

## CLARENCE

Jim! Get up!

Clarence leaps over to a sleeping Jim and shakes him awake.

## EXT. PIONEER FOUNDRY - MOMENTS LATER

Clarence and Jim, stumbling, coughing, clothes on fire, tumble out the front door of the burning foundry.

They roll on the ground and beat the flames off their tattered, charred clothes. William and Oliver arrive, still in their pajamas.

They help Clarence and Jim get up. As Jim beats a few remaining cinders off his clothes, they watch the foundry collapse in flames.

EXT. SIERRA NEVADA HIGHLANDS - DAY

SUPER: "CALIFORNIA, 1865"

Clarence, on a narrow cliff ledge in the Sierra Nevadas, laden with surveying equipment and geological instruments, winces as the rope he holds tightens.

Below him, at the other end of the rope, a similarly laden Jim struggles to replace his foot-hold on the cliff face. He dangles briefly a hundred feet above a boulder field.

Jim gains a foothold and continues to climb.

EXT. MOUNTAINTOP - DAY

Clarence peers through a mounted theodolite at a snow-capped range of mountains.

CLARENCE

Horizontal -- 17 degrees, 30  
minutes, 43 seconds.

He pauses and looks around at the vista before him.

Jim scribbles in a notebook and then takes measurements with a barometer.

Jim points at two peaks in the distance.

JIM

What about those two?

Clarence consults his own notebook.

CLARENCE

Unnamed as yet...

They pause, standing, considering the peaks.

JIM

Well, we've run out of names of patrons, politicians and people we like. You think Professor Whitney will mind if we indulge ourselves?

They look at each other, smile and nod.

CLARENCE

Seeing as we named the tallest one of all after him, I can't see how he could object.

(MORE)



## CLARENCE (CONT'D)

(beat)

You want the one on the left or the one on the right?

LATER

They begin stowing their instruments.

Packing completed, they give the two peaks a last look before heading down the mountain. We stay a moment with the sight of the peaks.

CHYRONS ABOVE EACH PEAK

-- "Mt. Gardiner, 12,907 feet"

-- "Mt. Clarence King, 12,905 feet"

INT. SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY - VISALIA POST OFFICE - DAY

The CLERK removes a leather pouch from a scale and hands it to Clarence. Clarence opens the pouch and peers inside -- gold coins.

CLERK

Where ya headed?

CLARENCE

Mariposa.

The Clerk pushes a paper toward Clarence. Clarence signs it, takes the pouch and strings it across his chest. The Clerk glances past Clarence at the sound of JANGLING SPURS.

CLERK

Careful out there...

Clarence nods. He turns and sees TWO BANDITS leaning on other side of the doorway. They watch Clarence exit.

EXT. VISALIA POST OFFICE

The two bandits watch Clarence ride out of town. After he disappears, they exchange a glance and head to their horses.

EXT. SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY - DAY

Wearing a white neckerchief, the brim of his hat blown back, Clarence urges his horse KAWEAH to a full sprint.

CLARENCE  
Yah! Kaweah, Yah!

Clarence turns his head. Two dust plumes a half-mile back encircle a pair of horsemen.

A GUNSHOT and a WHISTLING bullet. Clarence ducks and looks back again.

THE BANDITS

An angular man with a red sash and buckskin breeches, BANDIT #1 spurs his horse.

BANDIT #2, sneering, slouches forward, holding a crumpled felt hat with one hand and the reins in the other.

Bandit #1 levels a revolver and fires it.

BANDIT #1  
Hold on, you bastard!

CLARENCE AND KAWEAH

Clarence flinches at the shot and crouches low, urging more from Kaweah. The horse accelerates. Clarence chances another glance back.

The bandits are no longer in pursuit. One of their horses is collapsed on the ground.

Clarence rises in his saddle and compels Kaweah to slow. He wipes brow sweat with his shirt sleeve. He sees a small village in the distance.

INT. VILLAGE HOTEL - NIGHT

Clarence awakens at once -- the sound of HOOFF CLOPS and JANGLING SPURS outside his window. He looks at his pocket watch: "10:35."

Clarence grabs his pistol and creeps toward the window. He sees the red-sashed bandit enter the HOTEL MANAGER's office. Clarence leans his head outside the window and catches snippets of conversation.

BANDIT #1 (O.S.)  
Has his horse give out?

HOTEL MANAGER (O.S.)  
...headed for Mariposa... seven in  
the morning.

BANDIT #1  
... Could take him here.

HOTEL MANAGER (O.S.)  
No, Antone, not within a mile of  
the place. 'Sta buen? ...

Clarence leans back from the window and watches discreetly as the bandits re-emerge and walk their horses out of the town.

EXT. STABLE - NIGHT

Clarence strokes Kaweah's neck. He looks at his pocket watch: midnight. He calms the horse, whispering to him gently.

CLARENCE  
Easy, Kahweah. Easy there...

Clarence leads Kaweah out of the stable. At Kaweah's first step into the rocky street, his horseshoes clatter noisily. Clarence flinches and draws the horse back inside.

Clarence strokes his chin for a moment, thinking. He begins to disrobe.

LATER

In his underwear, Clarence inspects items of clothing tied to Kaweah's hooves. He ties his shoes together and slings them over the saddle. Barefoot, he leads Kaweah out of the stable.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Holding Kaweah tightly by the bit, Clarence looks back and sees the distant outline of the village. They pause on the dusty path. Clarence unties the clothes on Kaweah's hooves.

EXT. OAK GROVE - MOMENTS LATER

Fully clothed and astride Kaweah, Clarence peers carefully ahead as they walk slowly along a dusty path.

Clarence pulls Kaweah up short. Ahead, he sees a smoldering campfire and two sleeping figures. One SNORES loudly.

Clarence unholsters a pistol and gently cocks back the hammer. He urges Kaweah forward. They pass silently by the sleeping bandits.

As Clarence and Kaweah exit the campsite, Clarence turns in the saddle, keeping his pistol leveled at the unmoving forms.

EXT. HILLSIDE TRAIL - NIGHT

Clarence rides Kaweah down into the moonlit valley. He pats the horse a few times on the shoulder.

CLARENCE

Don't know about you, boy, but that had me keyed up to a high pitch.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Clarence lays the bag of gold coins on a desk. An older man with a large white beard, JOSIAH WHITNEY, makes a notation in a notebook and looks up at Clarence.

WHITNEY

Glad to have you back, Mr. King.  
Anything to report?

Clarence, exhausted, shakes his head "no" and walks to a nearby bunk, lays down, and falls asleep. Whitney sees this and nods. He writes in the notebook.

In the notebook: "Monthly wages delivered by CK. Arrived early, nothing to report."

THE WONDERS OF THE LAND - MONTAGE

-- In a flower-decked meadow, Clarence and three Native American men sit around a small fire, eating roasted rabbit. One of the men rises and taps Clarence's shoulder, motioning for him to follow.

-- Clarence and the man hike upwards through thickets and past boulders. They emerge, sweaty and tired, into a vast forest of Sequoia trees.

-- At the base of the "General Grant" Sequoia, the man holds the end of a string against the trunk. Clarence rounds the trunk, trailing out the measuring string until the ends meet.

-- As Clarence winds in the string, they gaze upwards at the massive tree. Clarence looks at the man in gratitude.

CLARENCE

Thank you for bringing me here.

-- The man pats the tree and nods.

-- Clarence, on his stomach, peers over the edge of a granite cliff. A creek flows through the valley, thousands of feet below. Clarence stands and surveys and surveys the sights from the crest of Yosemite's Half-Dome.

-- In a dark tunnel, on horseback and holding a string, Clarence crouches as he turns Kaweah around. At the end of the tunnel, in sunlight, Jim reels up the string.

-- In a Sequoia forest, Jim continues to reel up the string as Kaweah bears Clarence out of the end of an enormous, hollow, fallen Sequoia.

JIM

76 feet. In the saddle.

-- On the windswept, snow-covered summit of Mt. Shasta, Clarence aims his theodolite to the north. In the far distance Mt. Reed and the Three Sisters volcanos loom.

EXT. GOLD PANNING AREA - DAY

As MINERS pan a stream behind him, Clarence uses a rock hammer to carefully chip away at an escarpment. He carefully extracts a fossil and brushes it clean -- an ammonite.

CLARENCE

Yah-hoo!

He does a little dance, gently cradling the fossil. A miner rushes over to him.

MINER #1

Gold? Did-ja find gold?

Clarence shows him the fossil.

CLARENCE

An ammonite!

The miner scrunches his face.

MINER #1

An ammy-what?

INT. CABIN - DAY

Clarence lays the fossil on a desk where Josiah Whitney is working. Whitney examines it as Clarence brings a map over. Clarence points to a spot on the map.

CLARENCE

Here. A few yards from a group of gold miners.

Whitney looks up at Clarence.

WHITNEY

Jurassic, I'd say.

Clarence nods and grins. Whitney sets the fossil down, stands and shakes Clarence's hand.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Was hoping it would be me, but you did it, young man. You just fixed the age of California's gold bearing strata.

Clarence beams. Whitney chuckles.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

You'll make a fine geologist yet, Mr. King.

INT. WASHINGTON DC - STANTON'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: "WASHINGTON, DC - 1867 - Secretary of War Edwin Stanton's Office"

Next to a large conference table, Secretary of War EDWIN STANTON and a young man are greeting Clarence and another gentleman, Senator JOHN CONNESS.

Stanton nods toward the young man, JOHN HAY.

STANTON

Senator Conness, Mr. King, this is John Hay. He's been helping me out the last few weeks.

Conness raises an eyebrow at John Hay.

CONNES

You were Mr. Lincoln's secretary, weren't you, son?

JOHN HAY

It was my privilege, sir.

CONNESS

Indeed...

LATER

Gathered around the table, the men conclude their discussion.

STANTON

Mr. King, I've seen some things in my time here. But I don't have a proper means to describe your... sublime audacity.

Clarence smiles, but is unsure. He glances at John. John grins and gives the slightest of nods.

STANTON (CONT'D)

Two months in this swamp, and you and the Senator here have gotten the Congress and the Army Corps to agree to fund the most ambitious scientific survey in this nation's history.

Conness pats Clarence on the leg.

CONNESS

He is a persuasive fellow, Mr. Secretary. And he did name a mountain after me...

(chuckles)

But I'm sure you'll agree our western lands need surveying and study. We were lucky to stumble onto gold in my state, but who knows what a systematic, scientific study will uncover.

STANTON

You don't have to convince me Senator.

Stanton signs a document and passes it to John. He inserts it into a portfolio and hands it to Clarence.

STANTON (CONT'D)

Congratulations, Mr. King, you are now in charge of the Federal Geological Survey of the 40th Parallel.

They shake hands.

STANTON (CONT'D)

A final word of advice: the sooner you get out of Washington, the better. You are too young a man to be seen about town with this appointment in your pocket. There are four major-generals who want your place.

EXT. TRANS-ISTHMUS RAILWAY STATION - DAY

SUPER: "PANAMA, THREE MONTHS LATER"

Clarence and Jim fan themselves on the rear deck of the last car. Clarence looks at his pocket watch and sighs.

CLARENCE

Four hours delayed...

Sweating profusely, Jim shakes his head.

Clarence watches an African American boy tug at his mother's blouse. She carries a tiny infant in her arms.

The boy leads his mother off the train and scampers away from her toward a drink stand.

The train jerks forward unexpectedly and begins to slowly roll away.

The woman, alarmed, frantically looks back and forth between her son at the stand and the train. She rushes back to the train and hands the baby to a surprised Clarence.

The train picks up speed as she runs back to retrieve her son. They hustle back, but cannot catch up.

Clarence stares at them and then at the baby, now crying. The mother and son stare back. They wave. Clarence raises the baby's arm and waves back.

The train rounds a bend and Clarence loses sight of the mother and son. He looks at the crying baby. He turns to Jim.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

I just convinced Washington to put twelve scientists and 20 soldiers under my command. But only now do I understand the true meaning of responsibility.



EXT. PANAMA CITY - DAY

Parasol in one hand and baby in the other, Clarence makes his way through dingy crowded streets. The baby cries pitifully, grasping at Clarence's shirt.

Clarence pauses in front of an adobe home. He enters the building.

INT. THE ADOBE HOUSE - DAY

A dark-skinned JAMAICAN LADY, in her late thirties, greets Clarence. Nearby, a relative nurses an infant.

CLARENCE

Madam, I could not help but to hear you speaking English in here. I find myself in a most unusual predicament.

Clarence, dripping sweat, breathing heavily, regards the baby in his arms.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

This poor infant is hungry and separated from his mother...

JAMAICAN LADY

I don't suppose you are the father by the looks of you.

CLARENCE

Well, the thing is...

LATER

She laughs loudly as Clarence finishes explaining.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

... And I don't even know the child's name, the mother's name...

JAMAICAN LADY

Don't you worry, mister. Give me that baby and go back to the station to wait for the momma.

Clarence nods and hands her the infant.

CLARENCE

I am most grateful. I will return as soon as possible.

LATER - NIGHT

Clarence arrives back at the adobe house with the mother and son in tow. The mother cries with happiness as she takes back her infant from the smiling Jamaican lady.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)  
 (to Jamaican lady)  
 God bless you, madam!

JAMAICAN LADY  
 Ah mister, it was nothing.

She smiles sweetly.

Clarence pauses to take in the moment before hurrying off.

EXT. RENO, NEVADA - SURVEY CAMP - DAY

SUPER: "NEVADA - ONE MONTH LATER"

Clarence, Jim and several other men gather round a field table. Clarence holds forth. The men listen.

CLARENCE  
 90,000 square miles of land...  
 every mountain, valley, creek bed,  
 dry gulch, mesa. This is our task  
 for the next five years.

A man carefully unloads a saddle pack of tagged rocks into a padded and segmented crate.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)  
 Our efforts will supply  
 universities here and in Europe  
 with tens of thousands of earth and  
 ore samples to study.

A botanist writes beneath a pressed flower in a large book.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)  
 We will inventory new plant species  
 and share those with botanists  
 around the world.

Several of the men gather survey instruments and mount their horses.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)  
 Through science and hard work, we  
 will uncover the true value this  
 land.

Clarence watches as the men ride away.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

And when we are done, the west will  
be ripe for development.

A young African American man, JAMES MARRYATT, brings Clarence a bowl of soup. James ladles soup into several more bowls and brings those to other members of the team.

LATER

Clarence watches as James carefully raises a barometer and studies it.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Mr. Marryatt, I think you have the  
scientist's curiosity in you.

James holds the barometer.

JAMES MARRYATT

When I was at sea, the first  
officer had something like this.

CLARENCE

Did you learn its usage?

James laughs.

JAMES MARRYATT

Oh no, sir. They would not put such  
a valuable item in the hands of a  
seven-year old runaway.

Clarence nods and smiles. He reaches for his theodolite and sets it before James.

CLARENCE

Do you know its purpose?

James studies it for a moment.

JAMES MARRYATT

It reminds me of the sextant they  
used. Angles and degrees and  
such... to determine position.

CLARENCE

Indeed.

Clarence nods, lost in thought. He snaps out of it.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Mr. Marryatt, you are too good of a cook to relieve you of that duty, but if you find the time, you are welcome to learn the usage of these devices and the art of the surveyor.

James smiles.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PLATEAU - DAY

James aims a theodolite at a distant peak. He walks away from it. Black clouds above him. The RUMBLE of distant thunder echoes in the mountains.

Clarence hands James a barometer.

CLARENCE

(points)

Down there, by that ledge. Should be the last one.

Clarence approaches the theodolite and peers through it.

Then -- a loud CRACK and brilliant whiteness.

NEW ANGLE

The whiteness fades into James Marryatt's face. James is yelling, but there is no sound. Imperceptible at first, the sound slowly rises in volume.

JAMES MARRYATT

Mr. King! Mr. King!

ON CLARENCE

He winces, glancing over at his right arm. His clothes are tattered, smoking. He raises his right arm toward James. It is scorched, black.

EXT. MAIN CAMP - NIGHT

Clarence, his left arm pulled across James's shoulder, hops along as James bears him into the camp.

JAMES MARRYATT

Mr. Gardiner! Mr. Emmons! Hurry!

James drags Clarence into the camp. Men run to them and assist Clarence into a tent.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO - SURVEY OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: "SAN FRANCISCO, 1868"

Clarence and James sit across a table from each other. Piled on the table are boxes containing ore samples. James reads sample tags and Clarence writes in a notebook.

A man arrives and hands a telegram to Clarence. He reads it, looks at James.

CLARENCE

It says a woman has arrived in San Francisco and is looking for a son named Marryatt.

James looks terrified.

EXT. DOCKS - NIGHT

Clarence and James walk along a sea-side street. Clarence enters a boarding house. James, apprehensive, shivering in the cold, remains outside. Clarence exits and rejoins him.

CLARENCE

James, this is foolish. You need to help.

James shakes his head.

JAMES MARRYATT

You didn't see what I saw. It was her.

Clarence sighs.

CLARENCE

Ghostly spectres and supernatural happenstance... it was just a dream...

James shakes his head, sure.

JAMES MARRYATT

It was her.

FLASHBACK - INT. SAN FRANCISCO BOARDING HOUSE - NIGHT

SUPER: "THREE NIGHTS BEFORE"

James awakens.

JAMES MARRYATT

Ahh!

Clarence, in a bed nearby, wakes and turns to face him.

CLARENCE

Go back to bed.

James, wide awake, quietly rises and ventures out of the room and into a stairwell.

STAIRWELL

James descends the stairs, peering intently left and right. As he turns to descend the next flight of stairs, he sees a ghostly apparition of a young woman ascending the stairs.

Although there is something familiar about her, her features are difficult to discern. She smiles. He reaches for her as she ascends. She passes through him before disappearing.

James stands, frozen, a tear coming down his cheek.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. DOCKS - NIGHT

Clarence escorts James into another boarding house.

CLARENCE

Spirits or no, let's get to the bottom of this.

INT. QUAYSIDE BOARDING HOUSE - NIGHT

Clarence and James face us, transfixed. After a moment, James takes a step forward PAST us. We stay with a flummoxed Clarence.

REVERSE ANGLE

James and a woman hug tightly.

The woman raises her head from James' shoulder, smiles and laughs.

JAMAICAN LADY

Look at you! And how is that baby?

She holds her arms out. Clarence hesitates, his composure dissolving. He breaks free of his stupor and moves to embrace James' mother, the same woman who came to his aid in Panama.

A perplexed James watches. His mother gives him a look. Clarence releases her and steps back. He has tears in eyes, but he manages a smile at James.

CLARENCE  
I... I'll just...

Clarence signals his exit from the family reunion. The Jamaican lady laughs and hugs her son again.

INT. PULLMAN DINING CAR - NIGHT

SUPER: "TWO MONTHS LATER"

Clarence and James enter an empty dining car.

CLARENCE  
... it will be all right.

James shakes his head "no." Clarence bids him to sit at a nearby table. James reluctantly takes a seat.

A uniformed African-American WAITER appears. He addresses Clarence but nods his head toward James.

WAITER  
Sir, the dining car is only for --

Clarence holds his hand up.

CLARENCE  
-- Whites. I know. But there is no one here to object. He is my employee and he has not eaten all day. I take full responsibility.

Clarence smiles kindly at the waiter.

WAITER  
I'm sorry, sir. I could lose my job. The Pullman company --

Clarence's expression hardens. He stands and faces the waiter.

CLARENCE  
Blast George Pullman and his rules!

He pauses and regains his composure, resigned to the reality.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry. I know it is not your doing.

(MORE)

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

(sighs)

The paradox of George Pullman's porters: None but the negro may work in his cars, but never will service be extended to your brothers.

Clarence looks at James. Then at the waiter.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Is there no possibility for us to share a meal somewhere on this train?

The waiter considers the request. He looks both ways and motions for Clarence and James to follow.

INT. TRAIN CAR - PORTERS' ROOM.

Clarence and James huddle over a narrow table. They sit on the edge of stacked, folding bunk beds. Six sleepy-eyed African-American porters occupy the bunks.

The waiter sets two plates of food down on the table.

CLARENCE

Thank you...

Clarence looks at him, waiting.

WAITER

Robert.

CLARENCE

Robert. Thank you, Robert.

The men in the bunks stir.

WAITER

Thank you.

Clarence does not understand. The waiter smiles.

WAITER (CONT'D)

For not calling me "George."

The men in the bunks mumble assent. Clarence begins to understand. He looks around. The waiter turns to leave.

CLARENCE

Robert. If you could scrounge up some more food...



Clarence nods toward the sleepy men.

LATER

A stack of eight empty plates on the table. The men in bunks are all awake, listening to Clarence.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

There are certain women, I am informed, who place men under their spell without leaving them the melancholy satisfaction of understanding how the thing was done.

Clarence smiles, as if remembering.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

They may have disagreeable features, and a pretty permanent absence of mind; without that charm of cheerful grace before which we are said to succumb. Yet they manage to assume command of our souls...

(beat)

It is thus with mules.

The men LAUGH.

JAMES MARRYATT

He knows it, too... that man has spent more time on the back of a mule than I care to remember.

EXT. VIRGINIA CITY STREET - NIGHT

Clarence, decked out in tight doeskin trousers, a vest and coat, pastel-shaded gloves, and a white tie walks with a similarly clad Jim Gardiner. Snow falls.

JIM

I was thinking tonight, I'd ask her. What about you?

Clarence shakes his head, "no."

CLARENCE

She's a fine, gal, Jim, but don't you think we should wait a bit? It's only been three months we've known 'em.

Jim opens the door to a social club. Piano music plays as they enter.

INT. SOCIAL CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Two women, ELLEN "DEANY" DEAN and JOSEPHINE ROGERS, smile and extend elbows to their escorts, Clarence and Jim.

LATER

Clarence and Jim dance with Deany and Josephine. Clarence whispers something to Deany. She laughs. Clarence spins Deany.

LATER

Jim, Josephine, Deany and several other people sit at a table sipping drinks. Clarence, standing with one foot propped up on a chair, holds forth.

CLARENCE

So there the three of us waited in  
a small camp tent. Trapped by a  
blizzard, out of rations, starving.

An INEBRIATED MAN walks past the table and tips his hat to Clarence and then Deany.

INEBRIATED MAN

Kingy! Deany! Kingy and Deany!

Clarence grins and waves him off. Deany blushes.

CLARENCE

(perfect mimicry of the  
inebriated man)  
But ole Kingy, he has an idea,  
he has...

Jim and the others laugh.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

We'd seen a grizzly a few days  
before. Figured he'd leave tracks  
in the snow... And sure enough, he  
had.

Clarence takes a sip.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

I tracked him to a nearby cave, lit  
a torch, and ventured in.

(beat)

(MORE)

## CLARENCE (CONT'D)

That I did this with only a single shot Ballard says something about the state of our hunger.

Clarence acts out the rest.

## CLARENCE (CONT'D)

The torch in one hand, the gun in the other, I inched along into the darkness... and then... a pair of yellow eyes emerged from the shadows, glimmering in the torchlight... followed by the loudest growl. I closed my eyes and fired...

Clarence takes a seat and sips from his drink.

## DEANY

Well? You can't stop there!

Clarence shrugs and grins and gives Jim a look.

## JIM

He brought back the biggest haunch you ever saw. We ate it. Raw.

## DEANY AND JOSEPHINE

Ewwwww!

## EXT. MEADOW - DAY

Near a parked carriage, and amidst flowering jonquils and other signs of spring, Clarence and Deany picnic on a plaid blanket.

Clarence extracts a small box from his pocket and turns to Deany. He raises up on one knee and opens it.

She smiles, shakes her head "yes" and hugs him.

## EXT. CARRIAGE - DAY

Deany grasps Clarence's arm as they ride back into town.

## CLARENCE

... of course, you'll need to meet my family.

## DEANY

I'm at a disadvantage there. You've told me precious little about them.

CLARENCE  
Where should I start...?

DEANY  
Well, what's the first thing you  
remember from your childhood?

Clarence thinks for a moment. A small smile creases his face.

CLARENCE  
Patty-cake...

FLASHBACK - INT. NEWPORT - KING RESIDENCE - LIBRARY - DAY

A six-year-old Clarence smiles and laughs while playing patty-cake with CONSTANCE, his African-American nursemaid.

CONSTANCE  
..Pat it and prick it, and mark it  
with "B." Put it in the oven for  
Baby and me!

CLARENCE (V.O.)  
My nursemaid Constance raised me.  
She was delightful.

EXT. KING RESIDENCE - DAY

On a street facing a stately house's gambrel roof and dormer windows, a well-dressed young man boards an open carriage.

CLARENCE (V.O.)  
My father was away on business in  
China most of the time.

A young pregnant woman, FLORENCE KING watches, red-eyed and sniffing into a handkerchief.

CLARENCE (V.O.)  
He died over there when I was six.  
My mother, Florence, a widow at 22,  
grieved not only for my father, but  
also for two daughters, my sisters,  
who died in infancy.

The carriage leaves, revealing two sunlit witnesses: a six-year-old Clarence, holding hands with Constance. He smiles at her.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. CARRIAGE - DAY

A rider swiftly approaches the carriage. He wears a SERGEANT's uniform

THE SERGEANT

Mr. King!

The Sergeant pulls alongside the carriage.

THE SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Beggin' your pardon, Mr. King, Ms. Dean... it's Private Newty. He deserted.

Clarence nods.

THE SERGEANT (CONT'D)

He's taken half the surveyin' equipment with him...

Clarence's eyes narrow.

CLARENCE

How far along has he got?

THE SERGEANT

'Bout a twelve hour lead on us, I reckon.

Clarence turns to Deany, shrugs. She nods, understanding. Clarence snaps the reins and the carriage accelerates. He turns and shouts back at the Sergeant.

CLARENCE

Get my horse ready... three days supplies...

(to Deany)

Apologies, my dear. The family history will have to wait...

INT. NEWPORT - KING RESIDENCE - LIBRARY - DAY

SUPER: "NEW ENGLAND - SIX MONTHS LATER"

Clarence and Deany sit on a couch, holding hands.

CLARENCE

She will test you. But I know you will do well.

DEANY

You wouldn't throw me to the lions,  
would you?

Clarence laughs.

CLARENCE

Her disposition is naturally high-  
strung. Do not let that affect you  
and you will be fine.

INT. NEWPORT - KING RESIDENCE - TEA ROOM - DAY

Clarence leaves Deany with his mother, Florence, as a servant  
brings the pair some tea.

CLARENCE

Deany is very interested in our  
family history. Perhaps you could  
share it with her while you become  
acquainted.

FLORENCE

Of course, dear.

Clarence exits. Florence smiles -- and is off to the races.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

My side of the family came over on  
the Mayflower...

LATER

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

...and, of course, my grandfather,  
Asher Robbins, was a U.S. Senator  
for many years...

LATER

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

...and Clarence has no doubt told  
you my mother, Sophia Little, was a  
famous abolitionist. Why, we often  
hosted Frederick Douglas himself in  
this room...

LATER

Deany's hand shakes as she holds her cup above the saucer.  
Tea spills.

Barely pausing, Florence primly sips her tea.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

... Clarence's father died when he was six. He was often away. In China. That was where he died.

LATER

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

...after his family's trading business went bankrupt, I had little choice but to remarry into the Howland family. They were flour merchants...

LATER

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

...when Mr. Howland died three years ago, the business collapsed. And so here we are: me, my mother, my step-son, and Clarence's brother and sister by Mr. Howland...

Deany summons the will to speak.

DEANY

How do you --

FLORENCE

-- and I shouldn't forget the staff. My step-son's nurse, a cook and two maids.

DEANY

How do you manage all this?

Florence raises her eyebrows.

FLORENCE

Clarence, of course.

Deany, pale, barely registers this.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

As I am sure he has told you...

(beat)

So tell me, my dear, what do you bring to this union other than your rosy cheeks and gay laugh?

DEANY

I... I'm a schoolteacher.

Florence waits for more, her brow furrowing.

EXT. NEWPORT - KING RESIDENCE

A carriage takes a distraught Deany away. Clarence stands and watches her departure. He opens his hand and sees the engagement ring.

INT. WHITE HOUSE DINING ROOM - DAY

SUPER: "THE WHITE HOUSE - NINE YEARS LATER"

At a dining table, Clarence and nine other men turn toward a man at the head of the table, President RUTHERFORD B. HAYES. Hayes stirs his lemonade and nods toward Clarence.

HAYES

Mr. King... I've heard you are something of a raconteur.

Clarence looks about nervously. Hayes glances at an index card.

HAYES (CONT'D)

"The trouble with King" -- someone said -- "is that inattention is impossible in his presence. That his description of a sunset spoils the original."

(beat)

Do I have that right?

Clarence offers a shrug. Hayes smiles.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Come then, Mr. King, and treat us to one of your mountain-climbing tales...or perhaps even... yes... tell us of the King of Diamonds. That's the one...

MURMURS of assent around the table. Clarence stands.

CLARENCE

Can hardly say "no" under the circumstances...

(smiles)

The survey of the 40th parallel was drawing to a close -- five years of mapping and assessing the nature and characteristics of the western lands. The end goal being the opening of the land's riches for exploit...



INT. SAN FRANCISCO - BANK OF CALIFORNIA - DAY

SUPER: "SAN FRANCISCO - 1872"

Two scruffy looking men -- PHILIP ARNOLD and JOHN SLACK -- deposit a bulging canvas sack in front of a bank teller, who peers into it. The teller's jaw drops.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

But there is no more fertile ground  
for exploit than the avarice of  
men.

INT. BANK OF CALIFORNIA - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The teller, accompanied by SLACK and ARNOLD, pours the contents of the sack into a silver basin on WILLIAM RALSTON'S desk. A bronze nameplate with Ralston's name adorns the desk.

RALSTON's eyes widen at the sight of hundreds of raw diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and garnets.

NEW ANGLE - MOMENTS LATER

The miners sit across from Ralston, gesticulating as they tell him their story MOS. Ralston takes notes, nodding.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

The miners told Mr. Ralston of a deposit in the shadow of a mountain many miles away, where diamonds and gems littered the ground in great abundance. Their sack represented but a small portion of the site's riches.

NEW ANGLE - MOMENTS LATER

The miners and an effusively smiling Ralston shake hands near the door to his office.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

The miners were reluctant to disclose the location of their mine despite Ralston's urgings. As Ralston gathered investors and provided the necessary financial inducements, the miners agreed to an investigation by experts.

Ralston beckons a clerk to enter his office and begins dictating instructions MOS.

INT. MANHATTAN - OFFICE OF CHARLES TIFFANY - DAY

Sixty-year-old CHARLES TIFFANY examines a small clear stone with a jeweler's loupe. He sets it down and pulls from a small pile of stones a red gem and examines it.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

Ralston fancied himself no fool. He first procured the opinion of no less an eminence than Charles Tiffany himself. Not only did Tiffany pronounce the stones genuine, he opined that the small sample he was given was worth over \$150,000.

INT. BANK OF CALIFORNIA - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Ralston nods along as he reads a portfolio elaborately decorated with Tiffany and Company designs. He sets it down and begins to open the first in a large stack of letters.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

As word of the find and Tiffany's opinion leaked out, every financier west of Queens was beseeching Ralston for a share of the mine. But he would not yield -- he had to be sure.

EXT. NEAR BROWNS PARK COLORADO - DAY

Three men on mules -- Slack, Arnold, and an exhausted, blindfolded HENRY JANIN -- pause at a sandstone mesa in front of a conical mountain.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

Ralston selected Henry Janin, the foremost mining engineer in the land. A man of impeccable credentials, having a perfect record in assessing the value of over six hundred mines.

Slack reaches over and removes Janin's blindfold.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

For their part, the miners insisted that Janin not be allowed to see the outside world for the duration of their travels to and from the site.

EXT. THE FIELD OF DIAMONDS - DAY

Janin slowly drags a small garden spade through a sandy anthill. He squints and picks up a small gem, holding it up in the sunlight.

He places the gem in small box split into many tiny compartments and then makes an entry in a notebook.

INT. BANK OF CALIFORNIA - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Janin hands a portfolio to Ralston. Ralston peruses it for a moment and smiles.

RALSTON

A "rajah's ransom" you say...

Janin nods confidently.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

Janin's report was effusive in its report of the site's riches. Ralston, no doubt, was much pleased with the selection of his mining engineer.

Ralston withdraws from his desk a fancy certificate emblazoned with the words "San Francisco and New York Mining and Commercial Company" and "1000 Shares."

Ralston signs the certificate and slides it over to Janin.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

He would have done better had he retained a geologist instead.

EXT. BANK OF CALIFORNIA - EXTERIOR STEPS

Slack and Arnold, now sporting bowlers and fine clothes, emerge from the bank. Each carries a leather valise. They pause and give each other modest smiles of deep satisfaction.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

Ralston bought out the conniving duo and proceeded to offer shares of the mine to every moneyed person from San Francisco to London. Lord Rothschild himself pleaded for a share.

INT. PULLMAN DINING CAR - DAY

SUPER: "UTAH, FALL, 1872"

As a train makes its way across Utah's terrain, Jim Gardiner enters the dining car and surveys its inhabitants. One empty seat. He takes it.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

The news of the diamond mine spread like wildfire. To our team and myself, this news produced a considerable sense of dismay. If the mine were located within the bounds of our survey, all would ask: "How did we miss it?" Five years of our hard-earned, back-breaking work would be called into question.

Jim eyes the man across the table -- Henry Janin. Janin reads a newspaper with the headline "Diamond Fever!"

CLARENCE (V.O.)

But fate, cruel to many but kind to others, would show her merciful side to our little band of scientists.

Janin lowers the paper and glances at Jim.

JIM

Good day, sir. Do you mind?

JANIN

Not at all.  
(extends hand)  
Henry Janin.

Jim raises an eyebrow, pauses for the shortest of moments, then extends his hand.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

Fate was kind indeed, for it had placed my oldest friend and dearest colleague across the table from the man who held the key to unlock the secret location of the mine.

A light-skinned African American, wearing a white, stiff-collared, starched shirt, appears and fills their glasses with water and moves to the next table.

NEW ANGLE - MOMENTS LATER

Jim and Janin eat and converse in merry fashion MOS.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

Jim quickly convinced Janin to meet  
me in San Francisco.

INT. OFFICE OF THE 40TH PARALLEL SURVEY - DAY

Jim, Clarence and Janin share a laugh around a small table  
where tumblers of whiskey sit. Clarence rises and walks over  
to a window, his hands clasped behind him.

CLARENCE

Thirty-six hours in a private car  
with the shades drawn. Five days on  
a mule, blind-folded. And there it  
was.

(turns to Janin)

Extraordinary, isn't it?

Janin does not quite understand.

JANIN

Yes, never have I seen such riches.

CLARENCE

That's not what I mean.

(smiles warmly)

Do you not find it odd that  
diamonds, rubies, emeralds and  
other gems would be found together?

JANIN

Well, I...

CLARENCE

I wonder what fortuitous sequence  
of geological processes could  
account for such variety in one  
remote location.

Doubt creeps across Janin's face.

JANIN

I suppose it is odd...

CLARENCE

Unprecedented may be a better word.

(chuckles)

But the earth's secrets are many.  
Who knows for sure?

Clarence, still smiling, sits and leans toward Janin.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Mr. Janin, I have two questions for you.

JANIN

Of course, Mr. King.

CLARENCE

The weather during your travel there -- what was it like? And, once you were blindfolded and in the saddle of that mule, in what direction do you best suppose you were heading?

JANIN

In daytime, bright sun appeared at the edges of the train car shades and my blindfold. As for my direction, the morning sun was generally on my left and the for the afternoon, on my right. So, south, I believe.

The men carry on their conversation MOS.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

Janin's story, and our own recollections from years of surveys, narrowed the search to a lonely mesa in the Wyoming wilderness.

Janin bids them goodbye and leaves the office. Clarence and Jim exchange smiles.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

As winter loomed, Jim and I determined to investigate the matter without delay.

EXT. WYOMING TRAIN STATION - DAY

SUPER: "THREE DAYS LATER"

As the train steams away, King, Jim, and four other men lead mules laden with camping gear, pick-axes and shovels to a hitching post outside one of the small town's few buildings.

## INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Clarence and Jim converse excitedly with the hotel manager and two guests MOS. One guest points his arm repeatedly in one direction. The manager nods in agreement.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

The bits and pieces we extracted from train car attendants and from the people at the outpost -- these confirmed our suspicions. Janin and the two miners had indeed passed this way a few weeks before.

Another man, seated nearby, reads a newspaper. He tilts his head slightly toward the conversation between Clarence and the manager.

## EXT. NEAR BROWNS PARK, COLORADO - STREAM - DAY

The six men pause their mules in front of a stream bed where a small cross has been posted. The men and mules emit steamy gushes of breath in the cold, windy air.

Clarence dismounts his mule and approaches the cross. It bears a firmly tacked piece of paper. On it: "Water Rights Claim" at the top and "Henry Janin" at the bottom.

Clarence raises his head and peers into the distance. Above the stark mesa, a small conical mountain protrudes.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

Weary and cold as we were after six days on the back of a mule, the removal of all doubt about our destination brought us great comfort in that moment.

## EXT. CAMPSITE - THE FIELD OF DIAMONDS - DAY

Clarence and his men each apply themselves to their tasks -- taking measurements, digging carefully in the soil, picking at rock outcroppings.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

At first, we found but a few diamonds. But the next day, we began in earnest to do a proper investigation. And as we covered more ground, the anomalies mounted.

Clarence leans over a small cluster of rocks and smiles. Glistening in the sun, a tiny diamond, sitting on the top of a rock, comes into focus. He picks it up and laughs.

Jim waves Clarence over. He points to a cross section of an anthill that he has exposed. Clarence peers closely at a spot that Jim highlights with his spade tip.

A small ruby sits at the bottom of diagonal tunnel extending to the surface.

JIM

This is the third anthill where I have found something like this.

CLARENCE

Looks like they pushed a stone down with a rod or stick.

JIM

Yep. Always a tunnel or some trace of disturbance between the stone and the surface, and always in a straight line...

Clarence nods in understanding.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

We documented this incongruity and other geologic improbabilities.

(beat)

There could be no doubt -- the land had been salted with gem stones.

EXT. BLUFF OVERLOOKING MESA - DAY

Eight men with rifles peer over the edge of an outcropping of rock. They see, in the distance, Clarence's team at work in the field of diamonds.

A ninth man, J.P. BERRY, wearing city clothes and astride a horse, hands his binoculars to one of the group and rides off.

EXT. CAMPSITE - THE FIELD OF DIAMONDS - DAY

Berry rides his horse into Clarence's camp and dismounts. Clarence approaches him cautiously. They exchange greetings MOS.



CLARENCE (V.O.)

This was J.P. Berry. City-dressed and very much out of keeping with his surroundings. The scoundrel said he had posted spies at a number of key junctions. Our movements had been detected. At first I thought the truth would dissuade him.

BERRY

Have you found any carats?

CLARENCE

None that nature provided in this place, but many that have been seeded by the hand of men.

BERRY

You say it's a swindle? What a chance to sell short!

CLARENCE

No! It's bad enough as it is.

Berry and Clarence discuss the matter further MOS.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

With some men, no amount of reason will suffice when there is profit to be made.

LATER

Berry rides off at dusk. Clarence and his team gather around a campfire to confer.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

But Berry could not profit without first disclosing the location and setting off a stampede of greed to this desolate place in the dead of winter. Men would die in their futile quest.

(beat)

We had to act quickly.

LATER - NIGHT

Clarence and one other team member ride out of camp on their mules.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

Berry, being unfamiliar with the land would, no doubt, return to the train station via the trail on which he had come -- a winding six day journey of 150 miles.

Clarence pauses and looks up at the stars.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

We, on the other hand, had mapped this land and knew that we could reach the railway via direct passage of 45 miles through rough terrain.

EXT. BLACK BUTTE TRAIN DEPOT - NIGHT

An exhausted Clarence, his team member, and their mules wait at a tiny station. A train whistle SCREAMS and they see the engine's approaching light.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

With only the stars to guide us, we arrived after a ride of two nights and a full day. We had the jump on Berry, but our work was not over.

INT. BANK OF CALIFORNIA - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Clarence, standing next to a pale Henry Janin, hands a letter to Ralston. Ralston opens it, reads, and begins shaking his head in dismay.

CLARENCE

It would come with much better grace if you were to do it instead. But if you cannot, I intend to publish this within the hour.

NEW ANGLE - MOMENTS LATER

Ralston, visibly shaken, escorts Clarence to the door. He offers his hand.

RALSTON

Although this news is most distressing, I suspect you have done me, and the nation, a great service, and in the nick of time as it were...

Clarence exits the office as Ralston looks after him.

CLARENCE (V.O.)  
Ralston agreed to publication of my  
report. With the truth out, Mr.  
Berry could make no mischief.

INT. PULLMAN DINING CAR - DAY

Clarence, seated next to strangers, sips coffee as his table partners read newspapers.

CLARENCE (V.O.)  
Of the tens of millions of dollars  
that would have been invested in  
the mine in a matter of a few days,  
those investors were spared a total  
loss and a general financial panic  
was avoided.

One of the newspapers, The San Francisco Chronicle, bears a  
headline: "Great Diamond Hoax Debunked."

Below the headline: "We have escaped, thanks to GOD and  
CLARENCE KING, a great financial calamity."

CLARENCE (V.O.)  
I would like to think that my  
professional reputation was derived  
from years of scientific work. But  
I cannot deny that my role in the  
Diamond Hoax incident cemented that  
reputation.

Clarence looks about the dining car. Many of the passengers  
read newspapers. No one notices him. He smiles.

CLARENCE (V.O.)  
The real legacy of the debunking of  
the diamond mine hoax is that it  
ratified the work of the survey  
team and provided an unimpeachable  
example of the value of public  
investment in the pursuit of  
science...

INT. WHITE HOUSE DINING ROOM - DAY

Clarence concludes his story-telling.

CLARENCE

... and I suppose you could say that is what brings us together today, to continue the work, to expand it to cover all the lands and, in doing so, strengthen this nation.

Clarence sits. President Hayes begins CLAPPING. The others join in.

HAYES

Thank you for treating us so. I suppose you must tire of telling it.

John Hay taps a fork gently on a glass of lemonade. He nods toward Hayes.

JOHN HAY

If I may, Mr. President...

Hayes smiles and nods.

HAYES

Of course, Mr. Hay.

John looks over at Clarence and raises his glass to him. They exchange warm smiles.

JOHN HAY

Several years ago, I would have lost a small fortune but for the keen intellect of our guest of honor. But the thing I am most grateful for is the friendship of this man. Clare is easily the best and brightest of our generation. There ought to be more like him... but the Almighty could not afford it at the price.

TABLE GUESTS

Hear, hear!

Another man, HENRY ADAMS, raises a glass of lemonade toward Clarence.

HENRY ADAMS

Mr. Hay's assessment may be too modest in my view. Since I met Clare quite by chance out west eight years ago, we have been near inseparable spirits.

Henry nods to President Hayes.

HENRY ADAMS (CONT'D)

Mr. President, I dare say you have made quite the catch in bringing the most remarkable man of our time into your administration.

Hayes stands, raising a glass of lemonade.

HAYES

Quite right, Mr. Adams.  
(turns to Clarence)  
Let's all raise a glass to Clarence King, the very first Director of the United States Geological Survey.

INT. USGS DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: "TWO YEARS LATER"

Clarence sits at a large desk, reading and signing reports as staff members come and go.

Three STAFF MEMBERS come in, each bearing large handfuls of reports. Clarence leans back and sighs.

CLARENCE

Is this the last?

STAFF #1

Yes sir. We'll save the next batch for afterwards.

CLARENCE

Very good. I'll join you in the conference room in an hour.

INT. USGS OFFICES - CONFERENCE ROOM

Twenty people crowd around a large table where cake and drinks are being served. Clarence stands at the head of the table, holding a drink.

CLARENCE

I'm very proud of the job you have done and of the Agency as a whole.

(MORE)

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Think of it -- in a little over a year and a half, we have fully staffed the agency with the best geologists, surveyors, and scientists in this country; we have assayed over 2000 mines and 800 processing facilities; we have generated hundreds of reports to better inform investment and improve the efficiency of mining production.

Clarence raises his glass.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

I salute you. You have put the U.S.G.S. on solid ground.

The staff join in the toast.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

But as I am sure many of you know, I'd rather be poking around in the depths of a silver mine or making another run at Mount Whitney's summit than to draft budgets and lobby for resources. You are the experts in those essential tasks and I take my leave in full confidence of your success and that of this agency.

The staff applaud and gather around Clarence to shake his hand and bid him farewell.

INT. WASHINGTON DC TOWNHOUSE - DAY

Clarence, John Hay, Henry Adams, LOUISE HAY and CLOVER ADAMS sip tea in the drawing room of the townhouse. Each piece of the tea set bears a "5 of hearts" design.

CLARENCE

... Secretary Schurz understood.  
He's leaving too.

LOUISE

Surely you could have stayed on if you wanted to.

JOHN HAY

That was certainly Mr. Garfield's desire.

CLARENCE

I'm confident Mr. Powell will build on what we've done. The agency is well on its way. There's little more for me to do at this point. Except earn an income equal to my needs.

CLOVER

Or find yourself a lady to settle down with. Perhaps even "marry rich" as some people do.

Clover grins over her teacup at John and Louise.

JOHN HAY

Fortune or no, Lulu is the love of my life.

(beat)

Clover does have a point, though. My few attempts at matchmaking for Clare have been disasters.

HENRY ADAMS

What was it you said about the last one, Clare? "To see her walk across a room, you would think someone had tilted up a coffin on end and propelled the corpse spasmodically forward."

LOUISE

She was delightful in truth. I didn't understand it. You have such... requirements.

CLARENCE

In my mind, there is an ideal woman. Natural in the rare and ravishing charm of the feminine form; sweetly endowed with a warm, sympathetic temperament; sound in intellect; and with a undimmed soul, pure and spiritual.

HENRY ADAMS

(to Louise)

He fancies the Venus de Milo.

They LAUGH.

CLARENCE

It's true. Who could deny the  
Milo's rich femininity, her Doric  
strength, her calm warmth, her  
irradiating aura of love?

(beat)

In my mind's eye, I feel you can  
learn as much about the ideal woman  
from the Milo as from anywhere  
else.

CLOVER

If you conceive of such a creature  
in your mind, how can you be sure  
your heart will follow?

Clarence ponders her words.

CLARENCE

Then I must conceive of her in my  
heart. And seek to discover the  
similarities, not the differences.

INT. LONDON - GENTLEMAN'S CLUB - NIGHT

SUPER: "LONDON, FALL 1882"

Clarence regales John Hay and two other men with a tale.

CLARENCE

... her eyes met mine and betrayed  
a fleeting moment of happiness. For  
I saw it then -- the tenderness  
which never came, the hopes years  
ago in ashes, the whole world of  
her yearnings long buried, leaving  
only the duty of living and the  
hope of Heaven.

Clarence offers a winsome smile and sips his beer.

JOHN HAY

That was lovely, Clare. For once  
will you not squander such tales on  
conversation and commit it to the  
pen?

CLARENCE

For once, I will.

(grins)

(MORE)



## CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Our adventure this evening may yet generate another tale worth telling. Will you join us for our little ramble?

Clarence shifts his gaze over to a stout, balding, bearded HENRY JAMES, who lays his hand on John's elbow.

## HENRY JAMES

But be prepared for the unexpected, my friend. One moment my cousin is selling silver mines to the Banque de Paris, the next philandering with Ferdy here, chatting with Prince Bertie, sipping tea with Lord Kelvin, picnicking with Lady Stanley, or slumming with all manner of publicans, barmaids and other sinners.

The other gentleman, a slight, balding, bearded man -- BARON FERDINAND DE ROTHSCHILD -- leans toward John and glances at Clarence.

## FERDINAND

On the latter, I must agree. Clarence brings a certain brio to our little slumming adventures.

## JOHN HAY

I'm not surprised. Clare does have a talent for fitting in wherever he is.

(beat)

But I will have to decline. I'm a bit too conventional for your nocturnal ramblings.

INT. SOHO NEIGHBORHOOD - TAVERN - NIGHT

Clarence chats with a BARMAID in one of London's slums. Ferdinand, grinning, hangs on to Clarence's every word. Henry James looks about nervously.

The men have "dressed down" to blend in better.

## BARMAID

... enough to say that had I been kindly treated as a child and taken to Sunday school, better things might have come to me.

CLARENCE  
 (captures the local  
 accent)  
 What did you fancy yourself as?

BARMAID  
 A proper lady would have been too  
 much to hope for, don't you know?  
 I'd be happy to be one of the girls  
 at Crosse and Blackwell's, swimmin'  
 in the pickle brine.

CLARENCE  
 Factory work? Wears you down, don't  
 it? Better to see happy faces and  
 share a story here, isn't it?

BARMAID  
 Aye, but there's a more respectable  
 livin'.  
 (beat)  
 Them girls is more your type, I  
 suppose.

CLARENCE  
 Hah! Women is too one-sided, like a  
 tossed-up penny, and I want both  
 sides or none.

Henry James signals to Clarence -- a couple of roughnecks in  
 the back are paying too much attention to them. Clarence nods  
 casually and tosses a coin to the barmaid.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)  
 Night, dearie.

The three depart.

EXT. SOHO STREET NIGHT

The three men saunter down a gas-lit street. Henry James  
 chances a look behind. The same group of roughnecks exit the  
 bar and turn toward them, trailing some 20 yards behind.

HENRY JAMES  
 They are following.

As the three gentlemen approach a corner, two beefy men on  
 the opposite corner look toward them and start to converge at  
 them.

FERDINAND  
 Not to worry, gents.

Ferdinand nods to one of the two beefy men and then nods back at the roughnecks.

FERDINAND (CONT'D)

My man has it well in hand.

The three turn the corner where a coach awaits in the shadows. They board it and it takes off.

Ferdinand looks out the coach's rear cameo window as his men hold back the roughnecks.

INT. COACH - MOMENTS LATER

Henry James mops his brow with a silk handkerchief.

HENRY JAMES

If these nights slumming with you have taught me anything, Clarence, it is that you possess a remarkable facility for acquiring the nuance of accents.

(beat)

And that, should you leave us one day for America, the British barmaid will surely mourn your absence.

FERDINAND

Did you not find it curious? What the barmaid said?

CLARENCE

How so?

FERDINAND

Her desire to be one of the pickle factory girls from Crosse and Blackwell's. On the very eve of the excursion you have arranged for those girls.

CLARENCE

Perhaps we should go back and invite her as well.

HENRY JAMES

No! Your boundless empathy will be our undoing.

Clarence exchanges a glance with Ferdinand and smiles.

CLARENCE  
As you wish, Henry. As you wish...

EXT. WINDSOR GREAT PARK - DAY

Clarence and Ferdinand mingle with fifty factory girls, all dressed in their Sunday best, on the park grounds near Windsor Castle.

Ferdinand grabs Clarence's shoulder and gestures toward an approaching coach.

FERDINAND  
This is unexpected.  
(beat)  
Ladies! Do not be alarmed! Your  
Queen approaches.

The coach slows as it nears and then comes to a stop. Attendants hurry to the coach door.

FERDINAND (CONT'D)  
Good God! Come Clarence, we must  
greet her.

TITTERS and SQUEALS from the factory girls as Clarence and Ferdinand hustle over to the coach.

QUEEN VICTORIA descends from the coach, attendants assisting her. Ferdinand and Clarence bow as she approaches them.

QUEEN VICTORIA  
Baron de Rothschild! What is this  
gathering?

FERDINAND  
(still bowing)  
Your highness, may I introduce my  
American friend and chief organizer  
of this outing, Clarence King.

Clarence bows deeper.

CLARENCE  
Your highness...

QUEEN VICTORIA  
Clarence King, the mountaineer?

CLARENCE  
Yes, your highness.

QUEEN VICTORIA

Our Bertie has spoken of you, and  
your book on the Sierra Nevadas.

(beat)

We have not had the opportunity to  
read it, but we are told it is  
quite popular here.

CLARENCE

Yes, your highness, more so than  
back home.

QUEEN VICTORIA

And who are these ladies?

CLARENCE

They are employees of the Crosse  
and Blackwell pickle factory in  
Soho. With the Baron's help, we  
arranged an afternoon tea for them.

QUEEN VICTORIA

We will join them.

FERDINAND

A great honor, your highness...

The Queen, with Clarence, Ferdinand and attendants in tow,  
wades into a mass of terrified, curtseying ladies. The Queen  
gestures with her hand that the formalities are unnecessary.

One of the girls, her hands shaking, offers the Queen a  
saucer and cup.

INT. KNICKERBOCKER CLUB - DAY

SUPER: "MANHATTAN, TWO YEARS LATER"

Nestled in a leather chair, Clarence reads a newspaper. A  
WELL-DRESSED MAN walks past and pats Clarence on the crook of  
his shoulder.

WELL-DRESSED MAN

King! Welcome back. We've missed  
you!

CLARENCE

(distracted)

Good to be back --

Clarence looks up and sees John Hay enter the room. He rises  
to embrace his friend. They smile at each other.

NEW ANGLE - MOMENTS LATER

Clarence and John share a drink near one of the Club's fireplaces.

JOHN HAY  
...the Brunswick? Across from  
Delmonico's?

CLARENCE  
Yes, for the time being at least.

John studies Clarence's demeanor for a few moments.

JOHN HAY  
You do not seem at ease, Clare.

CLARENCE  
I feel unfit for life here. The  
rush and whirl of New York and the  
detestable social pressure of this  
place are thoroughly antagonistic.

John nods sympathetically.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)  
The other night, I dragged myself  
out to dinner, where I found myself  
parked between two girls. They were  
in fine form... screaming scraps of  
subjects at me in their macaw  
voices till they left my faculties  
in a state of irritated daze.

JOHN HAY  
Surely, there is someone who will  
appeal to you.

Clarence leans toward John.

CLARENCE  
Only last month, in California, one  
came close. I felt... something I  
had not felt before.

John raises an eyebrow.

JOHN HAY  
Will you not tell of it?

CLARENCE  
Yes. For you, alone.

FLASHBACK - EXT. CALIFORNIA - RANCHO CAMULOS - DAY

Clarence strolls through a grove of orange trees.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

City life, and the endless drudgery  
of chasing the dollar, tore at the  
fabric of my spirit and left me  
empty inside. I sought respite at  
the Rancho Camulos.

He turns to see a young, bronze-skinned Indo-Hispanic woman --  
LUCIANA -- filling a shallow basket with oranges.

Luciana glimpses Clarence, smiles demurely and goes back to  
her task. Momentarily stunned by the sight, Clarence regroups  
and walks on.

## INT. RANCHO CAMULOS - DINING AREA - MORNING

Luciana sets a glass of orange juice next to Clarence's plate  
of bacon and eggs. Clarence watches her raptly. He bids her  
"gracias" silently.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

Her name was Luciana.

Clarence discreetly watches Luciana go about her work.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

The world was all flowers and  
Luciana's face the most tender and  
grave image of Indian womanhood  
within human conception.

## EXT. STABLE - DUSK

Clarence holds the reins to two horses. He hands one to  
Luciana. They mount their horses and ride out of the ranch.

## EXT. MOUNTAIN GLEN WITH CATTLE - NIGHT

Clarence and Luciana's horses meander in the moonlight  
alongside several cattle. They pause and Clarence takes in  
the profile of Luciana's face.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

I rode with Luciana alone in the  
mountains.

(MORE)

CLARENCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I had an almost overpowering  
sensation of cramped passions  
unleashed, of space to breathe  
where there had been none.

They guide the cattle down to a herd.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PATH - MOMENTS LATER

Clarence and Luciana, on foot, walk with their horses through  
a high meadow.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

We came upon a spring high up in  
the mountains, where the oaks were  
dewy with sea fog and the orange  
poppies all aflame in the grass;  
and there we dismounted and looked  
out on the silver sea.

Clarence and Luciana stand on a ridge, looking far out to the  
ocean. A setting moon ripples its light on the calm Pacific.  
They look at each other.

END FLASHBACK

INT. KNICKERBOCKER CLUB

John listens intently to Clarence's story. Clarence pauses  
from his reverie and sits back.

CLARENCE

I escaped from her by a miracle of  
self-control. But the oceanic  
fullness of her warmth would not  
dissipate from my mind for some  
time.

John frowns slightly.

JOHN HAY

Why did you not follow your heart?

Clarence ponders the question.

CLARENCE

I did. But I lacked the courage to  
see where it would lead me.



JOHN HAY

Courage in you, my friend, is most certainly not lacking. You have always charted your own path.

Clarence smiles.

CLARENCE

My path, yes. But my mother's household, the mining investors, my creditors...

(struggles)

It is one thing to want something. But to have the thing you desire? You must also be willing to bear the consequences of having it.

John nods sympathetically.

JOHN HAY

Clare. You have done the things that most men only dream of. You are the dutiful son; the ground-breaking scientist; the fearless alpinist; an immensely gifted writer, and the kindest, sweetest friend a man could have. You are envy of all who know you. Surely, there is a version of you who will master love's complexities.

Clarence smiles.

CLARENCE

You once said that "friends are the sunshine of life." In moments such as these, I bask in your radiance and from it, I will take strength.

EXT. NEW YORK AVENUE - DAY

SUPER: "ONE YEAR LATER"

A coach pulls up. Clarence, dressed to the nines, descends. He tips his hat to the coach's other similarly dressed occupants.

The coach departs. Clarence brushes some dust off his sleeves and adjusts his clothes. Behind him, across the wide street, a sunlit Ada holds hands with her three-year-old ward.

REVERSE ANGLE

Clarence turns and stiffens. Transfixed, his mouth slowly opens.

REVERSE ANGLE

Ada, now joined by Annie, smiles at the boy. He smiles back. The boy's parents arrive and lead him off. Ada and Annie hurry off in the other direction.

ON CLARENCE

He watches, but does not move.

NEW ANGLE

Clarence remains frozen, watching, as Ada and Annie disappear around a corner.

INT. CENTURY ASSOCIATION CLUB - DAY

Nestled in a chair, Clarence reads a newspaper.

A RED-FACED CLUB MEMBER approaches, holding a copy of a magazine -- The North American Review -- in an outstretched hand.

RED-FACED CLUB MEMBER  
Brother King!

Clarence looks up at the man and smiles kindly.

CLARENCE  
Brother Charles! How are you today?

RED-FACED CLUB MEMBER  
I... it... this essay in the  
Review. Is it your work? Everyone  
says you wrote it...

Clarence peruses the magazine for a moment and grins.

CLARENCE  
The one on "the American Style?"  
(grins)  
Did you find it compelling?

The man takes the magazine back and points at the essay.

RED-FACED CLUB MEMBER  
Well, it seems to advocate for...  
for... miscegenation.

CLARENCE

I don't think the author used that word. Amalgamation of the races might be a better way of putting it.

The man looks at him, not comprehending.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

But if you prefer it, miscegenation then.

(smiles warmly)

Do agree with the author?

RED-FACED CLUB MEMBER

What? How so?

CLARENCE

His belief -- that miscegenation is the hope of the white race.

Clarence smiles. The man stares dumbfounded at him.

Then his face softens, and he slowly shakes his finger at Clarence, laughing.

RED-FACED CLUB MEMBER

You! Oh, Brother Clarence... You and your paradoxes!

The man looks at the magazine briefly and laughs again.

RED-FACED CLUB MEMBER (CONT'D)

How whimsical! I see it now!

The man walks away, laughing. Clarence's smile dissipates.

CLARENCE

(to himself)

Do you really, Brother Charles?

Clarence continues to read.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT

Clarence walks, alone.

Clarence enters the Brunswick Hotel.

INT. BRUNSWICK HOTEL - CLARENCE'S ROOM - DAY

Clarence writes at his desk.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

Most people would say that I made a decision to live two lives, between two worlds, and only at my convenience.

Clarence rises and walks over to his chifforobe. He opens the door. A Pullman porter's jacket hangs in the cabinet. He takes it and a Pullman's cap out.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

Perhaps I, for once, deceived myself in thinking it was not that at all, but that I simply aspired to find... my own fit means of expression.

Before a mirror, he puts on the jacket, then the cap, and tugs the bill down. He slowly raises his head.

James Todd stares back at him.

EXT. OUTSIDE ADA'S CHURCH - DAY

Clarence, wearing his Pullman jacket walks down a side street. He stops before Ada's Church to adjust his jacket.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Clarence and the congregation sing a hymn -- "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

CLARENCE

Can we find a friend so faithful  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness,  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

As he sings, he watches Ada. She glances back at him, and he quickly returns his eyes to his hymn book.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The congregants crowd into the center aisle as they exit. Clarence, the last in his pew aisle, pretends to forget his cap to better time his entry into the center aisle.

He picks up his cap and takes a spot in the exit line in front of Ada and Annie.

EXT. CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

With Ada and Annie following him, Clarence greets Rev. Cook, shaking his hand and conversing with him MOS.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

To live in a world where I could not follow my heart openly was not my choice. As for the choices I did make, there will always be those who cannot condone my deceit, who will say that I pursued a crooked and selfish path.

Cook nods in understanding and shakes hands again with Clarence.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

I accept their judgment.

EXT. TOUR BOAT - DAY

Clarence and Ada enjoy a fall outing, crowding the rails of a tour boat as it passes under the Brooklyn Bridge. Clarence points at something, talking excitedly MOS.

His left hand gently embraces Ada's gloved hand. They exchange a brief glance, and he continues talking.

Annie, standing nearby, sees their moment and smiles to herself approvingly.

INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Snow falls outside Annie's living room window. Inside, over a dozen congregation members crowd the room.

In the middle of the scrum, Ada and Clarence face each other, exchanging rings as Rev. Cook, standing between them, smiles.

Ada and Clarence kiss and face their guests, smiling.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

But can a choice, no matter how selfish and dishonest, be a kindness if it spares those we love from greater harms?

Clarence shakes hands with Reverend Cook.

TITLE CARD: "SECRETS"

INT. VINEGAR HILL APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DUSK

Propped up on a bed, Clarence holds Ada as she nurses Le-Roy.

ADA

Well, have you decided on a name?

CLARENCE

Just now, yes. Le-roy.

ON CLARENCE

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

It means "the king."

INT. VINEGAR HILL APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Clarence cradles Le-roy in the crook of his arm. Le-roy's hair is thicker and he is bigger than before. Clarence sets him in a crib.

NEW ANGLE - MOMENTS LATER

Clarence and Ada embrace. Clarence slowly disengages and dons his jacket. He picks up the valise, opens the door and blows a kiss to Le-roy as he exits.

EXT. HUDSON AVENUE - MOMENTS LATER

Clarence exits the apartment building and proceeds down the street.

INT. ELEVATED RAILWAY CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Clarence carefully scans the occupants of his car -- an assortment of blue-collar workers. He casually sheds his porter's jacket, folds it, and inserts it into his valise.

INT. BRUNSWICK HOTEL - CLARENCE'S ROOM - DAY

Clarence places his valise in the chifforobe. Next to the cabinet, he picks up a larger suitcase and begins packing it with his finest clothes.

INT. PULLMAN DINING CAR - DAY

The dining car door opens. We see the torso of a man in a porter's jacket, carrying a food tray, passing through the dining car.

The man sets the tray down in front of Clarence.

Clarence smiles and nods at the porter. Outside Clarence's window, desert scrub whisks by.

EXT. NATIONAL BANK OF EL PASO - DAY

Clarence and a MAN exit the bank, passing under a green sign with gold-painted letters: "National Bank of El Paso."

MAN

...not to worry, Clarence. We have many depositors and we have invested in a number of promising enterprises. She'll be on sound footing very soon.

CLARENCE

I know. I trust your judgment. Please forgive me if I seem uncertain. It is more to do with my mining operations -- they demand so much of my attention...

Clarence boards a waiting open carriage.

INT. KNICKERBOCKER CLUB - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Clarence escorts several INVESTORS out of a small conference room at the Club.

CLARENCE

Thank you, gentlemen. I look forward to our next meeting.

INVESTOR #1

Let us hope the report is more... optimistic at that time.

CLARENCE

It shall be, I assure you.

After they leave, Clarence returns to the room and gathers items from the conference room table. He puts them into a soft briefcase and dons a bowler and coat.

INT. KNICKERBOCKER CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

An ATTENDANT, bearing a bundle of letters, intercepts Clarence as he passes through the main room of the Club.

ATTENDANT

Mr. King, your mail has arrived.

Clarence takes the bundle and pauses to greet the Attendant, clasping him on the shoulder.

CLARENCE

Thank you, Joseph. You never fail to deliver some bit of good news. I am most grateful...

The Attendant smiles and nods politely. Clarence resumes his passage, exchanging sincere, hearty greetings with those who pass by.

EXT. KNICKERBOCKER CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Above an archway, the Knickerbocker Club flag billows slowly in the breeze. Clarence exits while placing the bundle inside his briefcase.

He trundles down the sidewalk, waving his walking stick to and fro.

EXT. MIDTOWN STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Clarence exits a small dress shop, bearing a large flat package along with his soft briefcase. He takes a sharp turn right and continues, with purpose, down the sidewalk.

EXT. CENTURY ASSOCIATION CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Clarence glances at the Club's blue flag with its white oil lamp logo as he strides under the Club's portico.

INT. CENTURY ASSOCIATION CLUB

John Hay and Clarence converse in private. John signals that he does not want the portfolio that Clarence passes to him.

JOHN HAY

... Clare, please. I know you are good for it.



CLARENCE

I insist, John. If only for my own conscience.

(beat)

It is now 26,000 dollars. These bank shares and the interest in my art collection will secure my debt until I repay you.

John reluctantly takes the portfolio.

JOHN HAY

We are friends, nothing can or will change that. You will always have my confidence and affection in equal measure.

John looks at the portfolio.

JOHN HAY (CONT'D)

I'm only taking this because I see what it means to you.

Clarence smiles warmly.

CLARENCE

Thank you, John.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB - DUSK

Clarence, bearing his briefcase and package, saunters into the club. Outside, the club's flag, bearing its "UL" logo, hangs limply in the still air.

INT. UNION LEAGUE CLUB DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Clarence reads an evening newspaper at a large common table where several other men sit in various states of repose -- eating, reading, chatting, drinking.

A 31-year-old TEDDY ROOSEVELT takes a seat next to Clarence.

ROOSEVELT

King! May I join you?

CLARENCE

Of course, Teddy.

(beat)

Up from Washington, I see.

ROOSEVELT

Edith has given me leave to spend some time here. My work on the Reform Commission has made me unpopular in some circles.

CLARENCE

I have heard you are making good progress. That many are upset is sure proof of that.

ROOSEVELT

A paradox I can live with.

They both grin and chuckle.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

May I ask you something about your wagon train days? I heard you had an encounter with an enormous herd of buffalo.

CLARENCE

Of course... as long you don't ask how it ended.

They LAUGH.

INT. BRUNSWICK HOTEL - CLARENCE'S ROOM - DAY

Clarence, clad in modest clothes, surveys his room. Books lay scattered here and there. A breakfast tray on a table holds a coffee pot and plate with a piece of toast on it.

Clarence reaches into a chifforobe laden with fine clothes, silk neckerchiefs, hats. He extracts his valise, opens it to confirm the contents and closes it.

Clarence picks up the flat package from its perch on a chair and gives the room a second look. Nodding to himself, he turns and exits.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY - DAY

Clarence pauses on the walkway to look back at the Manhattan skyline. He opens his valise and removes his porter's jacket. He puts it on and buttons it up.

He dons his porter's hat, giving the bill a tug down as he raises his head to look ahead. Carrying the flat package and the valise, he continues on toward Brooklyn.

INT. BEDFORD-STUYVESANT - TOWNHOUSE - DAY

Clarence rocks a sleeping baby Grace in his arms. Le-roy CRIES (O.S.) weakly from another room. Eyes filled with worry, Clarence looks up at Dr. Kidd.

DR. KIDD  
 ... his appetite is much  
 diminished. We can only pray that  
 he recovers it soon.

Clarence nods in understanding, shifting his gaze to Grace.

CLARENCE  
 (distracted)  
 Thank you, doctor.

He looks up again at Dr. Kidd, as if remembering something.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)  
 If she sends for you while I am  
 away, please come at once.

DR. KIDD  
 I do not recommend you leave, Mr.  
 Todd. Your wife will need you in  
 the days that come.

CLARENCE  
 I have no choice in the matter!  
 (calms)  
 But I will send for help.

Dr. Kidd nods in affirmation and exits the house.

INT. COLORADO COURTROOM - DAY

With a JUDGE looking on to his right, Clarence sits in the witness box, holding a framed geological map at his side. He waits while a LAWYER speaks.

LAWYER (O.S.)  
 Your honor, his credentials now  
 established, I move that Mr. King  
 be qualified as an expert witness  
 to testify in this matter.

JUDGE  
 Granted.

Clarence lifts the map to face it toward the judge. He draws his finger across one of its features.

## CLARENCE

The red area here identifies the geological stratum where one might expect to find copper bearing ore. My team first identified and surveyed it twenty years ago.

Clarence gestures toward the window, through which we see the Rockies looming in the distance.

## CLARENCE (CONT'D)

This stratum girdles the foothills of the Rockies in a north-south line a few miles west of where we are now and extending in either direction for over 50 miles.

Clarence pauses as the stenographer labors to keep up with him. His gaze wanders out to the mountains.

## EXT. BEDFORD-STUYVESANT - TOWNHOUSE

Clarence, in his porter's jacket and carrying his valise, approaches the townhouse door and KNOCKS.

Annie opens the door, cradling Grace in her arms. Red-eyed and weary, she motions Clarence inside.

## INT. BEDFORD-STUYVESANT - TOWNHOUSE

Clarence and Ada sit on the divan. He holds her as they convulse in sobs together.

Annie walks past an empty crib. She carefully lays Grace in an adjacent, smaller crib.

Annie looks back at Clarence and Ada. She turns and looks through a window. We follow her gaze out into the bustling city.

## EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY - DAY

Clarence pauses and packs his Pullman's cap into his valise. He resumes walking toward Manhattan.

Pedestrian commuters swarm on either side of Clarence as he navigates down the walkway's middle line.

INT. KNICKERBOCKER CLUB - DAY

SUPER: "1893"

An attendant brings a telegraph message to Clarence as he reads the New York Times. The headline: "Financial Panic."

Clarence reads the telegram: "I have failed you. The Bank has gone under."

Clarence, stricken, crumples the message.

CLARENCE  
I have lost everything.

INT. BRUNSWICK HOTEL - CLARENCE'S ROOM - NIGHT

From above, we see a disheveled Clarence as he lies on his bed, red-rimmed eyes open, near catatonic. An empty whiskey bottle and glass are on the nightstand.

We close in on him as our view spirals slowly.

INT. CENTRAL PARK - LION HOUSE - DAY

A disheveled Clarence shakes the bars of a lion cage, muttering incoherently. People walk past, looking askance at him. He sees their eyes and waves them away with one arm.

ON CLARENCE

Clarence looks to and fro as the AMBIENT NOISE of the Lion House accumulates in his head. VOICES overlap and grow louder.

Clarence freezes as a NEW VOICE intrudes on the UNREAL CACOPHONY. The NEW VOICE becomes loud and clear.

NEW VOICE (O.S.)  
James? James? Is that you, James?

INT. CENTRAL PARK - LION HOUSE

Clarence releases the cage bars and looks around for the source of the voice. He sees only a kaleidoscope of blurry, indiscernible figures walking past.

NEW VOICE (O.S.)  
Is that you, James?

Clarence sees a dark face amongst the people walking past. He lunges at the figure.

PEOPLE SCREAM and scatter. A POLICE WHISTLE BLOWS. Darkness.

INT. BLOOMINGDALE ASYLUM - CLARENCE'S PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Jim Gardiner sits next to Clarence's bed, reading aloud from a book. Clarence, propped up, listens with his eyes closed.

Clarence opens his eyes and looks sideways at Jim. He smiles slightly.

An attendant brings in tray of food and sets it on a table next to the bed.

We pull away from the room and into the hallway.

INT. ASYLUM - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

We pass by room after room of patients, some catatonic, some agitated, others sitting quietly, reading.

INT. BEDFORD-STUYVESANT - TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

SUPER: "THREE MONTHS LATER"

Clarence kneels on one knee as Grace and Ella rush to welcome him home. Ada, holding newborn Sidney, smiles at Clarence. Clarence sheds his porter's jacket and sets it on his valise.

CLARENCE

I am so glad to be with you all  
again.

GRACE

Where were you this time? Chicago?  
St. Louis?

Clarence grins sheepishly.

CLARENCE

Far away.

Grace's eyes go wide.

GRACE

San Francisco?

INT. BEDFORD-STUYVESANT - TOWNHOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Clarence stands in front of a mirror and begins buttoning his porter's jacket.

Ada appears behind him and hugs him.

Clarence turns and hugs her tightly, not letting go.

CLARENCE

My comings and goings... I  
sometimes feel lost, passing from  
one world to another, never  
pausing. There is only your warm  
touch... our children's smiles...  
to bring me peace.

Ada taps him on the shoulder a few times. He loosens his grip and looks at her.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

This toil. Always scrabbling after  
the almighty dollar. One day I will  
come home and never leave.

Ada smiles.

ADA

It can't be helped for now. I know  
that. But we look forward to that  
day.

PRE-LAP - A train whistle and the clacking sounds of a train rolling along.

INT. DINING CAR - DAY

Clarence looks at the mountains and valleys of Montana as his train passes through them.

EXT. PACIFIC NORTHWEST - OPEN PIT MINE - DAY

Clarence stands on the edge of a quarry. Below, miners hack away at rocks and load carts.

A mine employee jogs up the access slope and hands Clarence a rock. Clarence examines it.

EXT. FLORIDA PHOSPHATE MINE - DAY

Clarence samples a few grains of white soil, placing them into a small vial with a liquid in it. He shakes the vial and holds it up to check the color.

He repeats the process, taking notes with each iteration.

EXT. THE KLONDIKE - DAY

On horseback, Clarence and two other men move along a stream bank where miners pan for gold. Everyone swats at swarms of flies.

Clarence pauses his ride and looks out at a majestic mountain range. Clarence urges his horse forward.

PRE-LAP - A train whistle and the clacking sounds of a train rolling along.

INT. DINING CAR - DAY

SUPER: "1901"

Clarence looks out at the buildings of Washington, DC as his train enters the city.

INT. UNION STATION - TRAIN PLATFORM

A gray-haired John Hay embraces Clarence after he descends from the train. He takes Clarence's bag, pats his shoulder, and escorts him down the platform.

INT. WHITE HOUSE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A small gathering. Secretary of State John Hay, Louise Hay, PRESIDENT MCKINLEY, Vice-President Teddy Roosevelt, and EDITH ROOSEVELT listen to Clarence recount one of his adventures.

CLARENCE

... Private Newty put up quite a fight. As we struggled in the dust, he got a shot off. Just a singe, here.

Clarence touches his cheek.



CLARENCE (CONT'D)

I managed to get my revolver out,  
jam it in his ear and tell 'em he  
was "done."

(beat)

After we had taken him to jail and  
returned to camp, the men's morale,  
and their obedience to orders,  
improved greatly.

John beams at Clarence as he concludes his story. Teddy  
Roosevelt slaps Clarence on the back, laughing. Clarence  
grins shyly, chancing a glance at John.

We close in on John's happy face.

EXT. PRINCE STREET HOUSE - DAY

Clarence's carriage slows to a stop in front of his house.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

In a just world, free of  
unreasoning bias, unburdened with  
idiosyncratic dogma, there would be  
no cause for deception.

Clarence descends from a carriage and looks at his home.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

But that is not our world.

He coughs into a handkerchief, straightens his weary frame,  
and walks toward the door.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

That I should hide the truth from  
my friends was bad enough. That I  
have hidden it from my family is  
something that cannot be  
reconciled.

Ada opens the door and hugs Clarence. She ushers him inside  
as their children gather around the pair. The door closes.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

It is failure to suppose women all  
tender and men all strength. She is  
strong. She would see the necessity  
of what I have done. Yet, I cannot  
ask for, or expect, her  
forgiveness.

INT. PRINCE STREET HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Clarence and Ada sit together, watching their children play.

CLARENCE (V.O.)  
God sees and knows our love and I  
believe he blesses us.

INT. PRINCE STREET HOUSE - KITCHEN

Clarence coughs into a handkerchief. As his coughing fit continues, Ada approaches and tries to comfort him. When the fit subsides, Clarence looks at Ada and shakes his head, defeated.

INT. PRINCE STREET HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Clarence kneels on one knee to bid Wallace good-bye. He stands and looks over his brood, smiling with forced bravado. He exchanges a glance with Ada.

CLARENCE (V.O.)  
But while I live, this cold and  
prejudicial world would prevent Ada  
and the little ones from getting  
the property I want them to have.

NEW ANGLE

He lifts the valise with no small effort, looks once more at his family, turns and leaves.

EXT. PRINCE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Clarence boards a simple open carriage. He looks back at the house. Ada stands in the doorway, holding Wallace's hand. Wallace waves and smiles.

CLARENCE (V.O.)  
I have given her your name in case  
I do not return. But, for now, I  
have told her nothing else.

Clarence raises his hand and waves weakly. The driver snaps the reins, and the carriage rolls off.

INT. MANHATTAN CAFE - DAY

Jim Gardiner faces Clarence from across a small table. His mouth hangs slightly open.

CLARENCE

You are the only person who knows everything.

(beat)

Judge me if you must. Lay nothing at the feet of our flawed and fractured society. Put it all on me.

Jim remains dumbfounded.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

I ask only that you consider the solitary nature of the burdens I have carried... and the limits of my ability to bear them.

JIM

I... I don't know what to say.

CLARENCE

I know it is much to ask. But there is no one else who can do this.

Clarence passes a packet of documents across the table.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

The assets, what little remain, the instructions. It's all in here. My mother, Ada, my children -- their happiness and support all depend on your discretion. It won't be easy.

JIM

There's nothing you cannot ask of me, Clare. I owe you my life many times over...

CLARENCE

Thank you, old friend.

INT. TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - DAY

Clarence and Jim shake hands next to the steps to a train car. Clarence picks up his valise, turns and slowly ascends the steps.

INT. DOCTOR CRAIG'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: "SEVEN MONTHS LATER"

Clarence lies on a bed, propped up at a slight angle. Dr. Craig pours a small glass of brown liquid past Clarence's lips.

He sets the glass down next to a bottle bearing a label: "Bayer, Heroin, Cough Sedative."

NEW ANGLE

Dr. Craig listens with a stethoscope to Clarence's chest. Clarence coughs a little and motions with a weakly raised hand for the Doctor to come closer.

CLARENCE

Doctor, there is some small favor I must ask of you.

DR. CRAIG

Of course, Clarence.

Clarence motions him closer and whispers something to him. Dr. Craig bends his ear closer, listens for a moment, and then stands up with a smile on his face.

DR. CRAIG (CONT'D)

(chuckling)

I believe the heroin has gone to your head.

Clarence smiles and coughs/chuckles.

CLARENCE

Very likely, many a heroine has gone to a better head than mine is now.

Dr. Craig pats his hand gently on Clarence's shoulder as Clarence closes his eyes.

INT. DOCTOR CRAIG'S OFFICE - DUSK

Doctor Craig peers at his typewriter as he turns the roller to advance a stiff blue sheet of paper.

ON THE PAPER

Beneath the heading of "CERTIFICATE OF DEATH" the typewriter keys print "King, Clarence Rivers" next to the field "Name."

ON DR. CRAIG

Dr. Craig focuses on completing the document. The MUTED CLICKS of the ROLLER, the RATTLE of the carriage return, and the CLACKING of the keys penetrate the quiet stillness.

Dr. Craig pauses for a moment, in thought. He grins wistfully and recommences typing.

ON THE PAPER

Following the field "Description of the Deceased" the keys strike through the sub-field word "Color", deleting its relevance.

Long beat.

The keys begin again. They type the word "American."

INT. PHOENIX TRAIN STATION - DAY

A man in an Army captain's uniform walks alongside Clarence's coffin as it rolls on a cart along a train station platform. People of all stripes walk past.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

In later periods, when the composite elements of American populations are melted down into one race alloy...

An African American in a porter's uniform pulls the coffin from the front, glancing back and forth to make sure the path is clear.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

...when there are no more Irish or Germans, Negroes and English, but only Americans, belonging to one defined American race...

Two Chinese immigrant boys push the coffin from the rear.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

...that race will become conscious of its own ideals and aspirations, its own sentiments and emotions...

The group pauses next to a train car. A red-headed man in a railroad company uniform checks off an item on his clipboard and motions the group on.

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

A train whistles and belches smoke as it chugs across the high, desolate plains of Arizona.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

...and, as all other great races have done before it, that race -- the American race -- will find its own fit means of expression.

INT. PRINCE STREET HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

SUPER: "ONE YEAR LATER"

Ada balances a book on top of Grace's head and urges her forward.

ADA

Thirty minutes everyday for posture. Your body will thank you.

A PIANO TINKLES nearby. Ada approaches it and watches Ella make her way slowly through her lesson. Her teacher, an ELDERLY GERMAN MAN nods along.

ELDERLY GERMAN MAN

Good, good. Next chord, please.

Ada turns and walks toward another corner of the room. She passes Henrietta, who is busy dusting the top of a cabinet.

Ada pauses to watch Sidney and Wallace position tin soldiers in formations on the floor.

A KNOCK at the front door. Ada opens it to see a DELIVERY BOY standing there. He examines an envelope.

DELIVERY BOY

I have a delivery for a Mrs. Ada King? Does she live here?

Ada smiles and nods.

ADA

Yes. She does, young man.

She takes the envelope and watches the delivery boy descend the porch steps.

She closes the door and turns around to survey the bustle of activity in her household. Folding her arms across her chest, she smiles at the scene.

TITLE CARD: "Born into slavery, Ada Copeland King lived to the age of 103. She resided in the Prince Street house until her death in 1964. Ada never remarried."

TITLE CARD: "For three decades, Ada received monthly checks from the executors of Clarence King's estate but received no explanation about the source of the funds."

TITLE CARD: "Ada pursued legal action to obtain an accounting of the estate, culminating in a trial in 1933. She received title to the Prince Street home but failed to prove that Clarence King's estate was solvent."

TITLE CARD: "At the trial it was revealed that the Prince Street house had been purchased for Ada by John Hay. Hay and his descendants also supplied the funds for the monthly checks to Ada."

TITLE CARD: "First led by Clarence King, the United States Geological Survey -- the USGS -- continues its mission today, employing over 8500 scientists and civil servants."

FADE TO BLACK.