

ODE

written by Brian Mathew Kowalchuk

PG13, whimsical, comedy/drama with fantasy & mystery elements.

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BRANDON

Paul! Do you know why Greek mythology is so significant to historians?

PAUL

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

BRANDON

(drunkenly)

I never said anything of the sort! In fact, poets and philosophers are our greatest historians! Mythology is significant because it represents *the infinite*, sir. And, infinity is a poet's best friend.

(gazes below)

The Greeks had a lot of statues, you know.

Brandon reaches for the Yukon Jack bottle, pours two shots, and offers one to Paul, who DECLINES.

PAUL

I need my job, prof.
(as Brandon lifts the other in the air)
Somebody could get hurt if you keep throwing those shot glasses.

BRANDON

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

(yells down at the empty plaza)

Look out below!

(drinks, tosses the glass over the edge)

The glasses are plastic, sir.

(huge grin)

Plastic!

EXT. WELMAN COLLEGE DEAN'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

The Dean of Welman College, Professor Emeritus COLLIN SOMERSBY, 70s, stands on his back porch in his housecoat, watching the unfolding drama across the commons grounds. He is not too pleased.

EXT. WELMAN COLLEGE BUILDING ROOF

Brandon lifts another shot glass, teetering near the edge.

BRANDON
Yukon Jack doesn't mind plastic.

PAUL
(quietly)
Maybe we should get goin'.

BRANDON
(straightens, goofily)
Sir, are you offering a security
escort home? Because if you are, I
accept!
(pauses)
If, and *only if*, you present
Moonlight Road.

PAUL
(smiles)
I'll do the first verse.

BRANDON
First verse it is!

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

THE SOUND OF A SIMPLE PIANO, playing Chopsticks, is heard faintly, gradually increasing in volume.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
You really are a good student, you
know. I'm very glad you're my
teaching assistant.

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

The piano music grows a bit louder, and more sophisticated, as a full moon BECKONS.

EXT. BRANDON'S NEAR-CAMPUS RESIDENCE AN EMPTY LOT WITH A
TRAILER HOME PARKED IN THE MIDDLE - MINUTES LATER

Paul approaches the trailer home, carrying the professor over his shoulder. The lot's grass is UNCUT. A rusted, drooping, children's swing set is off to the side. A dusty 1966 Pontiac Laurentian is parked nearby.

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER

Paul enters and DUMPS Brandon on a worn, overstuffed, leather sofa, props a pillow under his head, then chuckles at a pair of pink LADIES PANTIES dangling on the NECK OF AN EMPTY WINE BOTTLE. The trailer is mainly unkempt, with bookshelves full of literary tomes, stacked piles of documents. But, it has a touch of class, some nice antique furniture, combined with contemporary artworks. An unfinished oil painting, a *self-portrait of Brandon beside a DARK-HAIRED, YOUNG GIRL*.

BRANDON

(as Paul reaches the door)

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

(fading away)

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

PAUL

What're you so stressed out about, prof?

BRANDON

Everything. You know, *all of it*. Existence. Mankind's burden. The beginning of Time.

(drifting off)

I've never had a vacation, y'know. Never. My life is not interesting anymore. I need to do something *interesting*.

Paul exits while Brandon talks himself to sleep. **The PIANO MUSIC** hits a wrong note, pauses, plays the right note, and then continues.

INT. FORT LANGLEY HIGH SCHOOL MORNING **NEXT DAY**

In a music room, a DARK-HAIRED, 15 YEAR-OLD GIRL, KATEY LARMIKE, plays the piano music. Katey is BRANDON'S DAUGHTER.

The music, and the girl, have a certain mystery. OTHER STUDENTS walk by the open door. ONE STUDENT stops, says something to Katey, but the ONLY SOUND is still the music.

EXT. DOWNTOWN FORT LANGLEY - SAME TIME

A five-sided central town square. As if time had stopped in the 1950s. Little businesses and shops, the local Court House sits in the middle.

On a corner sits MARNY'S UNIQUE FLOWERS & PLANTS SHOP. A front window sign reads: *Award-winning Hybrids - Paris Fleur de Grand Prix runner-up 1989, 1992 & 1997.* On the roof are golden CHILD ANGEL FIGURINES.

Circling the Court House, in the town's central grassy park are 5 statues, four of them for each of the local, heroic World War II soldiers, the Dumanski Brothers. The fifth statue commemorates fallen soldiers from the Vietnam War.

One of the more UNIQUE SHOPS that encircles the square is a walk-in PSYCHIC GYPSY.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP

The top part of a white FLOWER is just starting to blossom. MARNY is BRANDON'S MOTHER, AND KATEY'S GRANDMOTHER. A CLASSY WOMAN, 60s. Wonderful, warm smile with well-earned crow's feet that adorn the corners of her wise eyes.

MARNY
(examining the flower
closely)
I don't know. I don't know.

THE SHOP is quite tiny, but tastefully stocked with exotic flowers, big plants and cactus. ALLEN, 35, GAY DWARF [little person], BEARDED, GRUFF ATTITUDE, LOYAL EMPLOYEE, prepares a centerpiece on a work table.

ALLEN
You don't know what?

MARNY
(concerned)
I don't think the flower is going
to be ready for Paris.
(then)
My plane leaves in three days, and
it's barely started to bloom!

ALLEN

You keep breathing on it and the poor flower will be lucky if it even makes it to Paris!

MARNY

C'mon, Angel's Kiss Chrysanthemum. This is our lucky year. I can feel it, Allen. I can really feel it!
 (whispers to the flower)
 Let's go to France and bring back that darn trophy.

INT. FORT LANGLEY HIGH SCHOOL

KATEY'S HANDS work up the keyboard, until she hits a key that is not working. She plunks the key a few times.

A 1945 PICTURE OF A HAPPY YOUNG COUPLE sits on the piano top. The man, HUBBY, is in a World War Two uniform, and the woman is MARNY, in a Bobby Sox sweater, pleated skirt, smiling brightly.

The recess bell rings and Katey puts the picture in her school bag. ANOTHER TEENAGE STUDENT, JASON, notices as he walks by the open door.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE HUMANITIES BUILDING BRANDON'S OFFICE -
 SAME TIME

The trash can from the previous night blocks the HUNG-OVER professor's entrance into his office. An attached note reads: **Happy morning, Prof! Paul.**

Brandon unlocks his office door and enters the cluttered, but, cozy office. He sits behind his sturdy, wooden desk and picks up an aspirin bottle, shakes out five pills, then swallows them with leftover Gatorade.

JILL, A FRUMPY STUDENT, enters holding a term paper marked with a red **D-**.

BRANDON

(polite smile, then)
 Sit down, Jill.
 (she does)
 What is an adjective?

JILL

A descriptive word preceding a noun.

BRANDON

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

JILL

Subliminal.

BRANDON

(takes the paper, reads
the first part aloud)
'Answer Yes or No to the following
statement, and then justify it.
Right or Might is in the interest
of the stronger party.'
(hands the paper back)
Read your answer, please.

JILL

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

BRANDON

All of it.

JILL

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

BRANDON

Go to the second page.
(she does)
Read the last paragraph.

JILL

'Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah,
blah, blah, blah --
(looks at him)
--- blah'.
(brightly, selling it)
You're always emphasizing creative
simplicity!

BRANDON

That I am.
(nicely)
(MORE)

BRANDON (cont'd)
 But, the works that get higher marks in my class are required to -- somehow inspire -- the reader to feel as if there is insight -- *actual insight* into our human condition. Does that make any sense?

JILL
 Definitely. Prof, I'm trying to say that I think the premise is boring, and I don't care about it. I'm letting people know, I'm giving them *insight* into the fact that classical philosophical discourses are an *acquired* taste.

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

His phone rings as he changes the score to a **B-**. Jill mouths a *Thank You* and leaves. Brandon's mind is ELSEWHERE as he answers the phone.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE DEAN'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

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

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

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE BRANDON'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

BRANDON
 (into the phone)
 Okay.

He slowly cradles the phone, then takes out a bottle of New Crew COLOGNE and splashes on AN UNSEEMLY AMOUNT.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - SAME TIME

Allen is gulping down AN OVERSIZED GLASS OF WATER.

MARNY
 Honestly, Allen, drinking all that water every day!

ALLEN
Eight glasses.

MARNY
Maybe I should water the flower
more.

ALLEN
You'll drown it!

The POSTMAN, a stoner, 30s, arrives with the mail.

POSTMAN
(lingers on an envelope)
This one looks important, Marny.

Marny, **RUBS HER EYES**, opens a letter from the local bank,
which states that the mortgage on her house is PAID IN FULL.

MARNY
(totally surprised)
I own my house! Outright.
I'm out of debt. Finally!

POSTMAN
Very groovy, Marny. Way to go!

ALLEN
(irritated, in disbelief,
making the POSTMAN
nervous)
Did you just say *GROOVY* again?!

MARNY
(whispers to the Angel's
Kiss Chrysanthemum)
You see. You are lucky.
(then)
I have to go to the hospital for my
vitamin shot.

ALLEN
(as the POSTMAN leaves)
Groovy?!!
(shakes his head)
Unbelievable.

**MARNY stops suddenly and just stares at
Allen. From her POV it looks like uneven,
slightly cracked, TRANSLUCENT ICE that is
found on windswept, frozen country lakes.**

MARNY

(reaches in front of her
eyes as if to clear)
It's too bad my dear Hubby wasn't
here to share this.

ALLEN

What's wrong? What're you doing?

MARNY

(stops, composes herself)
Nothing.

Back to normal ambience, not Marny's POV.

Allen is uneasy.

INT. BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - LATER THAT MORNING -
CONTINUOUS

Brandon sits behind his desk, front corner, NEAR WINDOWS.

BRANDON

Good writing, ie., poems, verse or
philosophical statements, must
include dreams and demons. Without
them, the written word is vacant,
absent, removed. In poetry, rhythm
and structure can be your best
friend. One-two-one-two. One-
three-two-four. Don't be afraid to
stand out from your spoken word
contemporaries. Although spoken
word does have it's place.

(moves to a nearby chair)
Just not in this particular class.

PAUL

(from the back)
Boo!

BRANDON

A note of dissent from our trusty
teaching assistant.

PAUL

Spoken word is already a classic
form of literature!

BRANDON

(moves on)

Who's first?

(an EAGER STUDENT raises
his hand)

Jerry. Go ahead with your bad
self.

Jerry rushes to the front of the class, brings out a CRUMPLED sheet of paper, drops it nervously, picks it up quickly.

JERRY

(takes a breath)

'In stillness, I see what you bring
In honor, I know what you truly
desire
The opera diva, of course, stands
poised to sing
I am ready, she is ready, to put
our hands into the raging fire.'

The class settles in to listen, as Brandon stands and walks from the classroom.

JERRY (CONT'D)

'Onward, my friend, trouble is near
What dreams and demons you have
brought forth ...'

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE SECRETARY'S OFFICE - 11:30 AM

Brandon peeks his head around the corner, sees the SECRETARY who waves. He walks past her desk, knocking on it for good luck, and ENTERS the Dean's office.

INT. DEAN SOMERSBY'S OFFICE

QUIRKY and LIKEABLE, Sommersby sits behind his desk, hands pursed against his mouth, ponderous, as Brandon stands before him.

BRANDON

I shouldn't have been on the roof
last night, sir. It won't happen
again.

SOMERSBY

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

BRANDON

(paces)

The shot glasses were plastic.
Plastic!

SOMERSBY

(sniffs the air, sneezes)

Mind if I say something?

Brandon glances out a window. A CROW in the sky being chased by a SPARROW.

SOMERSBY

Late spring is a grand season. The best of all.

BRANDON

I prefer Autumn. Not so much light.

SOMERSBY

Are you not happy at Welman College, young man?

BRANDON

Yes, I'm happy. Just, not so young. Not so --- not so --

SOMERSBY

Why don't we focus on the happy part?

Brandon stares out the window.

EXT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

Marny drives into the parking lot in her faded two-tone, 1964 Volkswagon van, with flower decals.

INT. DEAN SOMERSBY'S OFFICE

Somersby pushes a thin legal document toward Brandon.

SOMERSBY

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

BRANDON

I'm not sure I want to.

SOMERSBY

The money's good. In fact, it's excellent. But, the faculty board, and I, have a concern. It has nothing to do with your teaching ability. Your creative writing class is one of Welman College's most popular ever.

(pause)

You see, there was another talented professor who spent time on that roof out there. He also liked guns. Had a very nice revolver. The bullet entered and exited the sides of his head in a very nice straight line.

(puts his finger to his temple, pulls the trigger)

Kapow!

(dryly)

A *Psychology* professor.

(then)

What do you want out of life, Brandon?

BRANDON

(overly eager)

A really, really interesting vacation! Hula girls in grass skirts. ENORMOUS, UNUSUAL beverages with pineapple wedges!

SOMERSBY

That's what you want out of life?

BRANDON

(grins)

How could it be better than *that*?

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

DOCTOR JOE'S HAND pushes the plunger on a hypodermic needle.

When DOCTOR JOE, 50s, BAD TOUPEE, withdraws the needle, he sees Marny **blinking**.

DOCTOR JOE

(looks closer)

What's with the blinking?

MARNY
(RUBS HER EYES)
 It's nothing, really. Probably
 allergies.

Doctor Joe picks up an ophthalmoscope and flashes it ON.

DOCTOR JOE
 Let's have a look.

INT. BRANDON'S OFFICE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Brandon is taking a NAP when his phone RINGS.

BRANDON
 (answers flatly)
 Yes.

MARNY (OVER THE PHONE)
 Brandon, it's me. Just your mom.
 Are you busy?

BRANDON
 No, what's up?

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL HALLWAY PAY PHONE

Marny wears a HOSPITAL GOWN and is talking on the pay phone.

MARNY
 Well -- I -- I'm in the hospital.

BRANDON (OVER THE PHONE)
 In the hospital?

MARNY
 I'm sure it's nothing. Listen,
 sweetie, I want you to pick Katey
 up from school.

INT. BRANDON'S OFFICE

BRANDON
 (pause)
 I guess I could do that.

MARNY (OVER THE PHONE)
 Of course you can.

EXT. FORT LANGLEY HIGH SCHOOL - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Katey is standing by the street curb, looking around, wondering where her ride is.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL EXAMINATION ROOM

Doctor Joe is writing on Marny's chart, as AN ORDERLY turns on the X-ray viewing monitor, and puts up Marny's X-rays.

DOCTOR JOE
 (has a look, frowns)
 Okay.
 (checks her forehead for
 fever, then)
 We'll need to run more tests.
 You'll have to stay overnight.

MARNY
 But, my plane leaves for *Paris* in
 three days, Doctor Joe!

DOCTOR JOE
 We'll know more in the morning.

INT. BRANDON'S 1966 PONTIAC LAURENTIAN

Brandon, puffing on A CIGAR, sees Katey, steers the car over. He reaches across, opens the passenger door and clouds of SMOKE billow out.

BRANDON
 Hey, monopod!
 (Katey steps back to avoid
 the smoke)
 Grandma couldn't make it.
 (Katey frowns)
 C'mon, get in!

Katey is very hesitant.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 You still playing Chopsticks?

Katey steps forward, slams the door SHUT and starts walking.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 (tosses the cigar)
 Here we go.

Drives the car up beside Katey.

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

Katey stops, takes a large NOTE PAD and a thick black marker from her backpack, and writes: **SMOKE LINGERS! PLUS COLOGNE!** She holds it up so Brandon can read it. Katey turns over the page, writes another note: **WHERE'S GRANDMA?**

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

Katey turns away and starts RUNNING.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
Stuff. Always stuff!

As he grinds the car in gear to catch up with Katey, the vehicle backfires and STALLS.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
(tries to restart it)
C'mon, c'mon.
(smoke starts pouring from
the hood)
C'mon, you stupid piece of junk!

Frustrated, he gets out of the car, and SHOUTS OVER at his quickly departing daughter.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Katey, wait!

Katey turns a corner and disappears behind a row of BUILDINGS. Brandon kicks the curb, hurting his foot, then limps over and opens the car hood. He is instantly engulfed in a HUGE plume of thick, black engine SMOKE.

EXT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL - MINUTES LATER

Katey strides QUICKLY through the hospital's front entrance.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL NURSE RECEPTION DESK

Katey approaches the desk, takes out her large writing pad and writes: **MY GRANDMA IS MARNY LARMIKE.**

DESK NURSE
 (reads the note)
 And you are?

KATEY
 Katey.

DESK NURSE
 (picks up a phone, dials a
 number)
 Marny?
 (hands the phone to Katey)

KATEY
 Grandma?

MARNY (OVER THE PHONE)
 Hi, Katey pie!

Katey wants to say more, but, DOESN'T.

MARNY (OVER THE PHONE CONT'D)
 Everything's alright, honey. I'll
 be home tomorrow.

KATEY
 Promise?

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL MARNY'S ROOM

**MARNY'S POV. TRANSLUCENT ICE VISION EFFECT
 RETURNS.**

MARNY
 (again reaches in front of
 her eyes)
 I promise. Is your father with
 you?

KATEY (OVER THE PHONE)
 No.

MARNY
 Why not? Katey?
 (silence)
 What happened?

KATEY (OVER THE PHONE)
 Smoke. Cologne.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL RECEPTION AREA

KATEY

Room?
 (takes a breath)
 Number?

MARNY (OVER THE PHONE)

Third floor. Almost in the middle.
 Facing West.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL MARNY'S ROOM

Marny hangs up the phone and goes to her window, drawing back the curtains. Major CONCERN lines her face as she looks down to the sidewalk, and waits.

Moments later, Katey walks into view, looking up, arms folded around her backpack. She SEES her grandma and stops.

Marny rubs her eyes, squints, then smiles bravely and waves.

MARNY

Dear God.

EXT. FORT LANGLEY STREET - AN HOUR LATER

Brandon sits on the sidewalk, watching A TOW TRUCK OPERATOR raise his disabled vehicle in the air. Brandon's face is covered with OIL and his clothes are SMUDGED with grease.

TOW TRUCK OPERATOR

Yah, the wife just won't let me watch the games no more. Wasn't like that when I married her. You tell me what's wrong with spending afternoon in front of the tube on Sunday, during NFL football season.

Brandon tries to clean a glob of grease from his tweed jacket. The tow truck operator finishes raising the car, spits out a stream of chewing tobacco juice.

TOW TRUCK OPERATOR (CONT'D)

You really should let the mechanics take care of the dirty work, chief.

BRANDON

I've worked on cars before.

TOW TRUCK OPERATOR
 (chuckles, pats him on the
 back)
 Yah, I can tell.

The tow truck operator turns and sees **A STRAY DOG** urinating on Brandon's back tire.

TOW TRUCK OPERATOR
 Hey!

The dog barks back, and continues to urinate.

BRANDON
 (dryly)
 Perfect.

EXT. UNCLE VLADIMIR'S SERVICE STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

The Service Station owner, a cowboy hat-wearing Russian, UNCLE VLADIMIR, peers up from under Brandon's jacked-up vehicle.

UNCLE VLADIMIR
 Well, professor, it looks like oil
 filter housing cracked.
 (stands up, wiping his
 hands)
 All the oil spill on exhaust.
 That's where black smoke come from.
 Anyway, it take three days to order
 part from Phoenix.

BRANDON
 You think she's worth fixing?

UNCLE VLADIMIR
 Sure, them Pontiac Laurentians are
 good vehicles. Still a buncha
 miles left on 'er.
 (takes keys out of his
 pocket, nods over at a
 banged-up '65 Ford F150
 pickup truck)
 She rides rough, but, she gets job
 done.

Uncle Vladimir tosses over the keys. Brandon notices a SHINY, GOLD KEY that seems out of place.

BRANDON
 What's *this* for?

UNCLE VLADIMIR

I got yacht moored up at Lake Santa Claus. You can take 'er out fishin' if you like.

(lowers his voice)

You kind of look like you could use peace and quiet, pardner.

BRANDON

(gets in the truck)

Thanks, Uncle Vladimir. I might take you up on that.

UNCLE VLADIMIR

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

Brandon starts the truck, grinds it into gear and moves on with a weak grin.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - 5:55 P.M.

Katey helps Allen close up shop for the day. Allen carefully puts the Angel's Kiss Chrysanthemum in it's own special place in the walk-in refrigeration area. He checks the thermometer, adjusts the flower position slightly.

The STRAY DOG trots by the open front door, glances inside.

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER - EVENING

Brandon finishes combing his hair in the bathroom mirror. He takes a swig from the Listerine bottle, slushes it around, spits it out and inhales sharply. He blows his nose into a tissue, tosses it into the toilet bowl.

As he flushes the toilet, he accidentally knocks his hair brush into the bowl, forcing him to hurriedly reach in and rescue it. He rinses the hair brush with hot water, brushes his hair, then splashes on a ton of New Crew cologne.

THE PHONE RINGS as he grabs a leather jacket, and heads for the front door. The answering machine comes ON and he stops.

BRANDON'S OUTGOING MESSAGE

'Nobody's here to talk to you. Leave a message, and I'll consider returning your call. But, don't count on it.'

The machine beeps and his mother's VOICE is heard.

MARNY'S VOICE

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

(Brandon moves toward the
phone)

Brandon -- Katey is not going to
live with you until you stop the
cigars and cologne. And all that
drinking and running around! It's
time for you to start being a
better father.

Brandon presses the SPEAKER button.

BRANDON

I know.

MARNY (THROUGH PHONE SPEAKER)

There you are.

BRANDON

What did the doctor say? Are you
alright?

(then)

Are you dying?

MARNY (THROUGH PHONE SPEAKER)

Brandon -- why would you ask me
that kind of question?!

(then)

What's going on with you these
days? I want to know.

BRANDON

I'm fine. Everything is good. I
asked you the question because you
mean so much to me. More than you
realize. More than anything.

He waits for a response, but there isn't any. Instead, Marny
quietly hangs up and Brandon is left with the DIAL TONE.

EXT. MOOKIE'S HIDEAWAY BAR & RESTAURANT - 15 MINUTES LATER

A lively bar in the town square. A neon sign reads: *1/2
PRICE HAPPY HOUR DRINKS AND BAR MENU BEFORE 9:00 P.M.*

Brandon parks the truck and goes in.

INT. MOOKIE'S HIDEAWAY BAR & RESTAURANT MOMENTS LATER

Brandon saddles up to the bar.

BARTENDER

JD on the rocks, Coke back,
professor?

(grins)

Nice cologne.

BRANDON

(absently)

And a menu, please. You know how
we do it.

The bartender pours the drink, and Brandon downs it in one gulp, cheerily emitting a satisfied, exaggerated AAAHHHHH, ignoring the Coke.

EXT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - LATE EVENING

A friendly two-story, 1940's era, brick house, with a great front porch, on a corner lot. Only a few lights are on.

INT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME

Katey stands in her grandmother's bedroom. There are two open, empty suitcases on a cedar chest. A PARIS PLANE TICKET sits nearby, on a lamp table.

Katey enters the living room, where a TV beams an episode of The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson. She sits at a piano, on top of which is the World War Two picture of MARNY AND HUBBY.

She starts to play CHOPSTICKS.

INT. MOOKIE'S HIDEAWAY BAR & RESTAURANT - 1:30 A.M.

Brandon is slumped over at the bar. The bartender taps him on the shoulder, Brandon lifts his head.

BARTENDER

Time, Mr. Larmike.

BRANDON

(slurs his words)

Yes. Of course.

The bartender puts the check down, Brandon adds a tip, signs unsteadily, almost falls off his bar stool.

EXT. MOOKIE'S HIDEAWAY BAR & RESTAURANT

At the door, the BOUNCER stops him.

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

BRANDON
(swaying on his feet)
I'm okay to drive, partner.

The bouncer smiles and reaches into Brandon's pocket, removing the keys while Brandon NOTICES THE STRAY DOG, which is eyeing him from across the street.

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

The dog starts to growl.

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

The dog BARKS.

Brandon gets down on his hands and knees and BARKS BACK.

EXT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

Light shines from Marny's window.

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

MARNY'S MOVING SHADOW traces on the curtain as *SUMMER WIND* plays on a transistor radio perched in the open window.

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

EXT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL - *NEXT MORNING*

NIGHT has changed to DAY outside Marny's window.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL MARNY'S ROOM

Doctor Joe examines the new set of X-rays. Marny looks out the window, **RUBBING HER FACE absently.**

DOCTOR JOE
I don't know about this.

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

Brandon, hung-over, snoozes in the front passenger seat of Uncle Vladimir's truck.

Katey comes out, and gets into the truck's loading bed. She BANGS on the cab roof.

KATEY
Go!

Brandon wakes abruptly, wild-eyed, frantically moves over and starts the truck. Katey keeps pounding on the roof.

KATEY (CONT'D)
GO!!

Brandon accidentally jams the truck into reverse, and when he lets out the clutch, Katey ends up ON HER BUTT. Brandon grimaces, quickly shifts to the proper gear and the truck lurches forward.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL MARNY'S ROOM - MINUTES LATER - CONTINUOUS

Brandon has a sterile mask over his face, looking at his Mom through blood-shot eyes.

MARNY
You look so tired, Brandon.

BRANDON
Tell me what the doctor said.

MARNY
I can't go to Paris.
(then)
(MORE)

MARNY (cont'd)
 Maybe you can go. Katey's too
 young. Allen has to mind the shop.

HER WORDS SOUND TO BRANDON LIKE THEY ARE COMING FROM A HUGE,
 EMPTY CAVE.

MARNY (CONT'D)
 Anyway, they don't know what I
 have, Brandon. But it's not good.
 I should probably write a will.

Marny continues to talk, but now **Brandon can only hear the
 sound of his own breathing.** He gets up and walks out of the
 room. Still only hearing himself breathe, he comes upon
 Katey sitting in an alcove down the hall.

Katey stands up, walks right by him to her grandmother's
 room. Still wearing the mask, Brandon takes the stairs down
 and EXITS the hospital.

EXT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL PARKING LOT

Brandon gets into his truck breathing much too heavily. He
 rips off the sterile mask.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - MINUTES LATER

Brandon is STARING at the Angel's Kiss chrysanthemum, which
 has bloomed a little more since the day before. Allen
 nervously spills dirt on the floor.

ALLEN
 Dammit!

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

ALLEN
 (pauses, then)
 Marny wouldn't let you represent
 her flower in Paris, Brandon. Get
real.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE FLOWER SHOP

Brandon gets into the truck and drives away. Katey, who has
 been standing around the corner, comes into the store and
 hugs Allen.

The truck drives half-way around the town square, and Brandon sees the STRAY DOG trotting along the sidewalk. He barks at it.

DOG
 (stops)
 Hello, Brandon.
 (Brandon's jaw drops and
 the dog smiles)
 Follow me, buddy!

The dog darts down the block and STOPS right in front of the PSYCHIC GYPSY SHOP. Brandon catches up in his truck, parks.

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

The dog LAUGHS. Brandon glances inside the open store door, looks around to see if anybody is watching.

INT. PSYCHIC GYPSY SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

FANTASY SEQUENCE. *When Brandon enters the shop, it's like stepping into a Jamaican beach vacation dream. He is still dressed in his regular clothes, but, a LINE OF BEAUTIFUL, BIKINI-CLAD WOMEN dance seductively, blowing air kisses. He air-kisses them back as he is handed a tropical alcoholic beverage with a chunk of pineapple wedged on top.*

INT. PSYCHIC GYPSY SHOP - SAME TIME

Brandon is seated at a table, air-kissing the PSYCHIC GYPSY, AN INTRIGUING WOMAN WHO WEARS TOO MUCH EYE MAKE-UP. The Psychic Gypsy has hold of his hands.

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 Look at your hands.
 (Brandon's eyes blink
 open)
 Look at your hands, you fool!

The stray dog peeps his head around the corner, panting.

PSYCHIC GYPSY (CONT'D)
 (glares at the dog)
 Go away, I'm busy.
 (MORE)

PSYCHIC GYPSY (CONT'D)
 (the dogs growls, but,
 slinks away)
 You, what is your name?
 (before Brandon can
 answer)
 Never mind, I don't care.

BRANDON
 My hands.

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 What about them?

BRANDON
 You told me to look at them.

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 Give me ten dollars.

BRANDON
 (puts ten dollars in her
 jar)
 My mother. *Something's very wrong.*
 I think she's dying.

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 How do you know?
 (Brandon has no answer)
 Death is always whimsical!
 (Brandon stares at one of
 his hands while she
 examines the other)
 Your soul is lost.
 (when she looks up at him,
her face EXPANDS outward)

BRANDON
 You don't understand. I want to
 bear her burden.
 (leans forward)
*I want to replace her death with
 mine.* Do you know how to do
 something like that? Are you
 listening to me?

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 (sizes him up, ENORMOUS
 smile)
 Yes, of course. How much money do
 you have?

Brandon takes out a clump of paper money, straightens a few
 bills as THE COLORS CHANGE.

BRANDON

About a hundred, maybe one twenty.

Brandon starts hearing the sound of his own, exaggerated breathing again. The psychic gypsy picks up the truck keys, singles out the GOLD BOAT KEY, says something.

BRANDON

**(his words sound like they
are coming from a huge,
empty cave)**

What? I'm sorry, what?

She picks up a pitcher of water, pours it on Brandon's head.

PSYCHIC GYPSY

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

(stands up)

You may depart.

BRANDON

(squints through the
water)

Is this part of your technique?

PSYCHIC GYPSY

(points to the door)

Depart!! Leave the money.

Brandon puts his remaining cash on the table. On the way out, he picks up A DISCOUNT FLYER.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL MARNY'S ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Marny is in a deep sleep in her darkened room when she suddenly opens her eyes and smiles softly.

EXT. LAKE SANTA CLAUS - SAME TIME

Many row boats are moored at various points around a whimsical municipal lake, which features a huge STATUE OF SANTA CLAUS in the middle.

Brandon stands on the shore, looking around. ONE OF THE LOCALS is getting out of a paddle boat.

BRANDON

Excuse me. Where are the yachts?

LOCAL

Ain't no yachts around here.
What's the name of the boat?

BRANDON

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

LOCAL

I reckon not.
(then)
The Green Monster's right over
there, mister. Uncle Vladimir's
boat, right?

A nearby fluorescent green, wooden ROW BOAT has the words
GREEN MONSTER embossed on the side.

LOCAL (CONT'D)

(chuckling)
Yah, that Uncle Vladimir tells
everybody it's a damn yacht! I
guess beauty's in the eye of the
beholder.

EXT. LAKE SANTA CLAUS - AN HOUR LATER

Brandon sits slumped in the boat, in the middle of the lake,
looking at the Santa Claus statue. The lake is illuminated
with facility lights. His fishing pole line dangles in the
water. It is raining, and his cigar is soaking wet.

BRANDON

(to his cigar)
I reckon not.
(throws the cigar,
bouncing it off the Santa
Claus statue's nose)
Statues!

INT. PSYCHIC GYPSY KITCHEN - SAME TIME

In a darkened kitchen, as if coming out of A TRANCE, the
seated Psychic Gypsy blinks, then picks up the cash Brandon
left on the table, puts it in her purse, stands up.

She takes a leftover chicken drumstick from a plate, eats the
remaining meat, tosses the bone into a soup bowl. The bowl
BEGINS TO VIBRATE.

EXT. LAKE SANTA CLAUS

Suddenly, Brandon's fishing line takes a huge dip, and line begins spooling out of the reel.

BRANDON
 (stands up, yanks back on
 the rod)
 Merry Christmas, fish! HAH!

He takes a step to brace himself, and his foot goes right through the bottom of the boat. The fishing rod drops into the water and disappears. The boat starts to SINK as the rain increases in intensity.

INT. PSYCHIC GYPSY KITCHEN

The Psychic Gypsy puts a fork on the bowl, mumbling to herself, but the bowl keeps vibrating.

Suddenly, she gets very angry, picks up the bowl and throws it against the kitchen wall with great force, where it shatters into pieces. She sits down, sighs, stares at the bone on the floor. IT STARTS TO JUMP UP AND DOWN.

EXT. LAKE SANTA CLAUS

A SERIES OF STILL SHOTS INCREASING IN DISTANCE as the boat completely sinks and Brandon starts swimming to shore.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL MARNY'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Marny has regained consciousness. She turns to look outside a window, where *an unusually precise, glorious BURST OF LIGHTNING pierces the rain clouds.*

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER - AFTER MIDNIGHT

Brandon, very pale, huddles in a chair, **RUBBING HIS EYES**, a blanket draped over his body. He shivers uncontrollably.

INT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - SAME TIME

A drop of water falls from the kitchen ceiling. It lands in a roasting pan held by Katey. She stares up at the ceiling, waiting for the next one.

INT. PSYCHIC GYPSY SHOP - DEEP INTO THE NIGHT

The Psychic Gypsy slouches on her storefront window couch, awaiting customers. The bone lies nearby, STILL.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL MARNY'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

The nurse removes a thermometer from Marny's mouth, has a look, turns to the doctor, surprised.

NURSE

Fever's gone.

MARNY

I feel superb! By the way, did you see that amazing lightning strike last night?

The nurse looks at the doctor.

DOCTOR JOE

The sky was clear last night, Marny.

MARNY

Really? I could have sworn --
 (changes the subject)
 Doctor Joe, I appreciate what you are doing. Your staff has been wonderful, but, I have been working for years to perfect a flower -- well, maybe not perfect it -- but, to grow a flower that might win the Paris Fleurs De Grand Prix! I've finished second *three times* over the years. That's three too many. But, this year, the flower we have, which is doing it's damndest to bloom on schedule, shows the best potential of them all!
 (sits up, brightly)
 My plane leaves tomorrow.
 (sweetly)
 I'm not rubbing my eyes anymore.

Doctor Joe pauses thoughtfully, then picks up the ophthalmoscope.

DOCTOR JOE

Shall we have a look then?

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER - SAME TIME

Brandon dumps scrambled eggs from a frying pan onto a plate, grabs a piece of toast, pours a cup of coffee and sits down. After nibbling on the food and glancing at the newspaper, he dials a number on his phone, using the SPEAKER OPTION.

INT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME

Katey is playing Chopsticks on the classic Steinway piano, when the phone rings. She keeps playing with one hand, and answers the phone, using the SPEAKER BUTTON.

BRANDON (THROUGH PHONE SPEAKER)

Hello?

(then)

Katey? You there?

Katey plays the music louder.

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER

BRANDON

(into the speaker)

Do you want to visit Grandma with me?

(raises his voice)

Katey!

KATEY (THROUGH PHONE SPEAKER)

NO!!

BRANDON'S POV. THE TRANSCULENT ICE VISUAL EFFECT OCCURS.

BRANDON

(quietly)

Got it.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE CHESS ROOM - A HALF HOUR LATER

Paul supervises a chess game setup between TWO CLASSMATES.

CLASSMATE ONE

So, the knight moves in an L shape.

PAUL

Only piece that can jump over
another.

CLASSMATE ONE

What about the Queen, I thought she
could move in any direction?

CLASSMATE TWO

Only the knight can jump over
another piece, moron. Didn't you
hear what he just said?

Brandon bumps into the door as he enters the classroom. Paul
notices.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE BRANDON'S CLASSROOM

PAUL

(as Brandon sorts through
documents on his desk)
I hear Uncle Vladimir introduced
you to the Green Monster.

BRANDON

(distracted)
Where are my corrected papers?

PAUL

Prof. Hey, prof.
(Brandon looks up)
He uses really thin plywood as the
floorboard.
(grins)
Sinks every time. Happened to me.

BRANDON

(**blinks rapidly**)
Interesting.

PAUL

He's going to pretend that he's
angry. And, he'll ask you to pay
for the damage.

Brandon goes to the window, gazes out at the John Wayne
statue, waves a hand in front of his eyes.

BRANDON

Why do we have so many statues in
this *dusty little town*?

PAUL
 (watching Brandon closely
 with concern)
 Don't ask me, you were born here.

BRANDON
 It's a rhetorical question.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL

Katey occupies a chair in the nurse's station. Marny peeks her head around a corner.

MARNY
 (playfully)
 Knock, knock.

When Katey looks up, Marny steps around the corner, fully dressed in her street clothes.

MARNY (CONT'D)
 Hey, you!

Katey runs into her grandma's arms, joyful. They HUG warmly.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - A SHORT TIME LATER

Marny, Katey and Allen stand around the Angel's Kiss Chrysanthemum, which is starting to bloom quite nicely.

ALLEN
 She sure is looking good, Marny.

MARNY
 We have a chance. We have a real
 chance this time!
 (notices Katey is silent)
 Katey pie, Allen's offered to stay
 at the house with you when I'm in
 Paris.

Katey takes her writing pad and writes: **I'm almost 16,
 Grandma.**

ALLEN
 Or not.

MARNY
 And your father is only minutes
 away.

Katey rolls her eyes.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE BRANDON'S CLASSROOM

Brandon ends his lecture.

BRANDON

(cleans his reading
glasses, squinting)

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

(puts his glasses back on,
BLINKS a few times)

-- is, uhmm, is. For example, here
is a phrase that I very much like.
*Miles to go before I sleep. Miles
to go -- before I sleep.*

(uses EYE DROPS)

Now, I'm going to ask what may seem
to be an easy question, but,
whoever puts their hand up will not
know the answer, I assure you.

(smiles, waits)

Why is there *something* rather than
nothing?

Nobody raises their arm.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

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

(then)

Of course, resistance only takes
the creative process to a certain
point. Like words. But, words are
more than resistance. Words, at a
certain point, are all we writers
truly have. Respect words, and
they will not desert you. Dishonor
words, and you will be at a place
that is much more than just a
simple loss.

(quietly)

That's all for today.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL NURSE RECEPTION DESK

Brandon approaches the nurse's station.

NURSE

Your mother checked out about an hour ago, Brandon. Must have been one of those 24 hour bugs.

BRANDON

Except it was 48 hours.

NURSE

True.

EXT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - MINUTES LATER

Brandon drives up in the truck.

INT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME

Brandon watches through the front door as Katey cleans and cuts potatoes, making dinner.

Brandon opens the door, stands there.

BRANDON

Where's grandma?

Katey ignores him, as Marny comes into the kitchen, holding up a blouse.

MARNY

Do you think I'll look like a dork if I wear this?
(smiles at Brandon)
Clean bill of health.

BRANDON

(tilts his head to the side, rubs his jaw)
You need a ride to the airport tomorrow?

EXT. PHOENIX INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NEXT MORNING

The truck pulls up curb side at the baggage drop.

INT. TRUCK

MARNY

Two years, one month since your father passed away, Brandon.

BRANDON

(squints at the sun)
And Katey honest and truly still
hasn't used more than one word in a
sentence in all that time?

MARNY

Sometimes, when she's sleeping.
She'll say things like, I saw a
marshmallow in the sky today,
daddy.

THE SOUND OF A FEW NOTES being played on a piano FADES IN.

MARNY (CONT'D)

(a bit emotional)
Or, marigolds are nice flowers,
grandpa.
(then)
I don't want to cry before I get on
the plane, Brandon. You two, just,
try to find a way to be nice to
each other, okay? Check in on her
while I'm gone. She's a young
lady, professor. So, treat her
with respect. Now, would you open
my door and wish me luck, please?

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

BRANDON

(blinking)
Good luck.

MARNY

(touches his forehead)
Go home and take a few aspirin.
(pause)
One of these days Katey has to move
back in with you. It's time to
move forward with our lives.
(then)
Happiness is a *measure* of
contentment, Brandon, not constant
nirvana.

INT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - **TWO YEARS, ONE MONTH, EARLIER**

A MAN IN HIS EARLY 70s, KATEY'S BELOVED GRANDFATHER, sits
beside Katey on the piano bench. Brandon stands off to the
side. **MUTED COLORS, browns, blacks and stark whites.**

GRANDPA
Ready, pumpkin?

KATEY
Ready, grandpa.

GRANDPA
Brandon?

BRANDON
You guys have at it, dad.

Katey sticks her tongue out at Brandon, then starts playing the chord changes for **Chopsticks**. Grandpa comes in on cue with his single finger, playing the upper keys. At the end of the sequence, Katey and Grandpa take a breath, then start again, picking up the tempo, concentrating harder, not wanting to make a mistake. This continues until they finally get going TOO FAST to play, and end up just pounding bunches of random keys, GRINNING AND LAUGHING LIKE FOOLS.

Brandon watches through a glass of wine, chuckling.

INT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - PRESENT MORNING

THE MUTED COLORS ARE GONE. Katey puts the 1945 picture of her grandparents into her school backpack, and heads out.

EXT. BUS STOP - MINUTES LATER

Katey waits for the school bus as Brandon drives by in the truck, RUBBING HIS EYES.

EXT. UNCLE VLADIMIR'S SERVICE STATION

Brandon forks over \$300 CASH.

UNCLE VLADIMIR
Plus, two hundred to fix boat.

BRANDON
I'm on to you, Uncle Vladimir.

UNCLE VLADIMIR
(feigns anger)
What do you mean, on to me? My boat is destroyed! Finished!

The employees and others are laughing.

BRANDON
 (uses eye drops)
 I'm not in the mood for comedy.

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

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

Uncle Vladimir looks like he's ready to explode, when he suddenly changes his demeanor, guffaws, and whacks Brandon on the back.

UNCLE VLADIMIR
 Okay, you win. I fix Green Monster
 myself.
 (then)
 You gotta admit, it's funny
 practical joke, eh?

BRANDON
 Yes, very funny joke. Ha, ha.

He gets into the Pontiac and drives off, laughing out loud.

UNCLE VLADIMIR
 What's with him?

EXT. PARIS, FRANCE

A jumbo jet plane flies over the city, on descent to landing at CHARLES DE GAULLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - SAME TIME

MUTED COLORS, blacks, browns and high contrast whites, LIKE BEFORE.

From KATEY'S POV, the school bus passes the Fort Langley's quaint church.

EXT. FORT LANGLEY CHURCH - TWO YEARS, ONE MONTH, FEW DAYS EARLIER

SAME MUTED COLORS. OLDER MEN in World War Two uniforms serve as pallbearers for the grandpa's funeral casket as it is loaded into a hearse. Katey holds Marny's hand. Brandon is also a pallbearer, fierce tears in his eyes.

INT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT TERMINAL - PRESENT TIME

Marny guardedly holds her competition flower. She gets waved over by an AIRPORT OFFICIAL and they go to an interview room.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL INTERVIEW ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

AIRPORT OFFICIAL

I am sorry, madam, but, we must quarantine your flower for twenty-four hour.

MARNY

Twenty-hour hours? This has never happened before. You must understand, these flowers are very delicate!

AIRPORT OFFICIAL

Je comprends. I understand.
(shrugs)
New regulations. C'est la vie.

INT. SCHOOL BUS

Katey continues to stare out the window as JASON, 16, COOL TEENAGE GUY, sits beside her. OTHER SCHOOL KIDS whisper and point at Katey.

Jason frowns, then also looks out the window.

JASON

I like looking out windows, too.
(Kate doesn't respond)
In fact, I do it all the time.
(still no response)
I know you only talk one word at a time. I think it's cool.

Katey looks at him skeptically, then writes on her writing pad: **You do?**

Jason glares over at the other school kids who are still staring.

JASON (CONT'D)

Yep.

(glances at the writing pad)

Mind if I write something on that?

(she hands it over, a quizzical look as he writes in large letters)

I think most people talk too much anyway.

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

JASON (CONT'D)

(then)

Anybody got a problem with that?

Everyone grows quiet and they look away. Jason has the kind of presence that people respect, but, not out of fear.

KATEY

(smiles)

Thanks.

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

JASON

Quarterback. Sorta. How come you're not a cheerleader?

She makes a face then moves her fingers like she's playing a keyboard.

KATEY

(tosses her hair back)

Amadeus.

JASON

(laughs)

Nice!

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL QUARANTINE WAITING AREA

Marny is seated in a row of seats outside of the windowed quarantine room, where her nicely-blooming flower stands among OTHER NICE FLOWERS. Dedicated FLOWER OWNERS occupy nearby seats.

Another contestant, ALICE, 40s, joins Marny. Alice lives near Marny and is acquainted from previous Fleur de Grand Prix competitions. Alice's flower is an unusually BRIGHT ORANGE tulip.

MARNY

Orange Tang again?

ALICE

One teaspoon, twice a week. Are you staying at Le Hotel du Motel again?

MARNY

Like always.

ALICE

Claude the Concierge still works there.

(sighs)

Il est un bon garçon.

MARNY

(looks around)

No comment.

ALICE

You need to have more fun, Marny.

MARNY

I have fun, Alice.

(then, concerned)

Life is fun.

EXT. FORT LANGLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

The yellow school bus carrying Jason and Katey arrives at the high school. Several other buses, cars and trucks are also dispersing their PASSENGERS.

Katey & Jason step down from the bus.

JASON

You should come by one of our practices. I can throw the ball real far.

(grins)

Can't really do anything else. Can't run or tackle. We don't win much.

(grins again)

But, when I throw that ball, it's a thing of beauty. Nobody hardly ever catches it. The best part is watching the coach lose his temper. *You have to see him blow his whistle!*

(then)

I don't get all crazy if we don't win, Katey. It's just football.

KATEY

Okee --

(starts walking away)

-- dokee.

JASON

You gonna play the piano this afternoon?

She turns, nods up and down exaggeratedly, smiling.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL QUARANTINE WAITING AREA

A different AIRPORT OFFICER enters the quarantined area with a pitcher of water.

MARNY

What's he doing? I hope he's not going to water our plants.

He starts to water Alice's tulip.

ALICE

He is!

She takes a bottle of ORANGE WATER from *her* purse as Marny knocks on the window to get the AIRPORT OFFICER'S attention.

MARNY

Hey, monsieur! Monsieur!

Alice turns to THE OTHERS in the room.

ALICE

He's going to water our flowers!

ALL of the other FLOWER OWNERS immediately stand up and rush forward with their own containers of fluid.

The AIRPORT OFFICER notices them just as he is about to water a rather pathetic-looking DANDELION. He stops when he sees the commotion and comes to the door, opens it.

AIRPORT OFFICER

Oui?

MARNY

We prefer to irrigate our own, if you don't mind.

(hands him her container,
points)

It's the white one with the nice petals. Le grand blanc fleur. Une petite de l'eau, s'il vous plait.

ALICE

(hands him her bottled
water)

Et, pour l'orange fleur.

The OTHER FLOWER OWNERS crowd the door.

AIRPORT OFFICER

(raises his hands)

Arete, arete! Okay!

(everybody calms down, to
Alice)

How much of this, mademoiselle?

ALICE

(flirting, points to a
mark on the bottle)

Oh, about right there, monsieur.

(under her breath)

And, I wouldn't worry about that skinny dandelion.

Marny pokes her in the back. A TALL, GAUNT MAN lifts his water bottle high over his head.

TALL, GAUNT MAN

(dramatically)

THIS is for THE DANDELION!

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Brandon wears DARK SUNGLASSES and blows smoke from a cigar out the classroom window. Feet up on a desk, he gazes at the opposite building's ROOFTOP, near the John Wayne statue.

Jill stands at the front, reads from her new writing assignment.

JILL

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

(pauses)

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

BRANDON

Thank you, Jill. Thank you. We get the point. Blah, blah, blah.
(coughs, tosses the cigar out the window)

Does *anybody, anybody at all*, know why Fort Langley has so many damn statues?!

ANOTHER OF HIS UNIQUE STUDENTS raises a hand.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Yes.

UNIQUE STUDENT

(stands)

It started in World War Two to honor the Dumanski brothers. Also, in the 1960s, Fort Langley elected a mayor who smoked a lot of pot.

Everyone in the class chuckles, except Brandon.

BRANDON

But, what *is* a statue, aside from a mere physical construction?

**BRANDON'S POV. THE TRANSLUCENT ICE EFFECT
as he takes off the sunglasses.**

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 What does it say about *us*, this
 need of ours to erect permanent
 images of *things*?

INT. FORT LANGLEY HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

A PIANO TECHNICIAN tunes the piano as Katey patiently waits.

PIANO TECHNICIAN
 (plunking away at the keys)
 Are you entering the Julliard
 showcase?

KATEY
 Julliard?

PIANO TECHNICIAN
 (takes out a pamphlet)
 Julliard Music School in New York
 City. You didn't see this?
 (Katey shakes her head as
 she peruses the pamphlet)
 Coming here next week. Do it every
 year. It's a regional event.
 They're looking to give out music
 scholarships.
 (finds the right note for
 the troubled key)
 Ah, hah!
 (as he packs his tool box)
 I've heard you play. You should
 give it a shot.

He exits and Katey sits down to practice. THE SOUND OF THE
 FOOTBALL TEAM IN FULL GEAR is heard approaching, the player's
 cleats chattering on the polished granite floor. Katey
 doesn't notice Jason in the doorway, as she takes out the
 1945 World War Two picture of her grandparents. She plays a
 few notes on the piano as A FEW OF THE FOOTBALL PLAYERS
 jostle each other around good-naturedly.

JASON
 Hey, Katey.

KATEY
 (looks up, smiles)
 Hey.

EXT. FORT LANGLEY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - MINUTES LATER

A HAND grips a FOOTBALL. The hand pulls the football back, then chucks it into the air in a high arc with tremendous strength. The ball arcs down some 60 yards later, where it bounces off the hands of it's intended RECEIVER, and then off the hands of ANOTHER RECEIVER WHO FALLS down.

THE HUGE HEAD of the FOOTBALL COACH appears.

FOOTBALL COACH
For the love of --

The coach takes out his whistle and blows really hard, his face immediately reddens to a DEEP CRIMSON, his cheeks blow out LIKE BALLOONS -- his entire face looking like it's about to explode.

FOOTBALL COACH (CONT'D)
What are you guys doing out there?!!
(gives JASON another football)
Toss 'em another one, Snake.

Jason casually launches another high-arcing missile at the two receivers, who COLLIDE again.

FOOTBALL COACH (CONT'D)
Unbelievable.

The coach blows his whistle, and his cheeks BULGE out again.

Jason looks over to a nearby knoll where Katey is doubled up with laughter. Jason grins back.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL QUARANTINE WAITING AREA - EVENING

All of the flower and plant owners are in various states of SLUMBER, except for Alice. She nudges Marny.

ALICE
Marny. Marny!

MARNY
(wakes with a start)
What, what?!

ALICE
I can't sleep in this stupid place!
Let's get out of here. Let's go
check in.

MARNY
(drowsy, looks around)
I'm not leaving my Angel's Kiss
here unattended.

ALICE
It's fine. I talked to the
quarantine people. They won't
touch the plants without our
authorization.

MARNY
Right.
(closes her eyes, snuggles
against her luggage)

ALICE
Marny.

MARNY
No.

ALICE
Marny, we're in Paris, France!

MARNY
You go, Alice, I'm fine. I'll
watch your flower.
(yawns)
By the way, I booked a tour guide
tomorrow. Are you happy now? I
might have fun.

Alice pats her friend on the shoulder.

ALICE
I hope you win this year. You
deserve it.
(whispers excitedly)
I'm gonna visit Monsieur Claude!

EXT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL MARNY'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Marny is REFRESHED as she sets her almost fully bloomed
flower near a window, turning it toward the sun.

Outside is the glistening Champs Elysees.

A romantic, French love song, *LA VIE EN ROSE*, plays.

Marny exits the hotel and sees Alice having brunch with an ELEGANT GENTLEMAN, the hotel's concierge, CLAUDE.

EXT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL VALET AREA

Marny goes up to an older model Citroen convertible automobile with a sign on it's front door: SEBASTIEN TOURS. She is approached by SEBASTIEN, a friendly, handsome TOUR GUIDE, 30s.

SEBASTIEN

You are Marnee?

MARNY

Oui. Et tu Sebastien?

SEBASTIEN

(takes her hand, kisses
it)

Correct. Oui.

(smiles warmly)

Shall we see *Paris*?

MARNY

(goes to the passenger
door, gets in)

Lead on, MacDuff.

SEBASTIEN

(after he gets in and puts
the Citroen in gear)

Oo' is MacDuff?

MARNY

A very noble, Shakespearean
character. Where are we starting?

SEBASTIEN

The Louvre. Avec - with Mona Lisa!

MARNY

Oh, how wonderful.

INT. LOUVRE MUSEUM

LA VIE EN ROSE continues through THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE OF SHOTS.

THE MONA LISA. Marny is enthralled by the painting. Sebastien stands beside it and tries to imitate Mona Lisa's enigmatic smile. He doesn't succeed but Marny manages to deliver a pretty good impersonation.

EXT. LE PARIS CATACOMBES

Marny and Sebastien stand in stunned silence amid the millions of human skulls and bones in the vast underground tomb.

EXT. TOUR BOAT RIDE ON THE SEINES RIVER

Sebastien takes a picture of Marny with the Eiffel Tower in the background. Something he says makes her smile.

EXT. SEINES RIVER NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL

The boat approaches the island featuring the fabulous cathedral as Sebastien and Marny clink glasses of red wine in salutation.

INT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL MARNY'S ROOM - SAME TIME

A FRENCH MAID **pours WATER ONTO Marny's flower.**

EXT. LE SACRE COEUR - AFTERNOON

Establishing shot of the famous church on a hill. ARTISTS paint in the street. A SILENT WORSHIPPER says a prayer.

LA VIE EN ROSE ends.

EXT. THE WEST BANK - EARLY EVENING

Marny and Sebastien have dinner at an outdoor cafe.

SEBASTIEN

Hemingway and Gertrude Lawrence once got drunk here, at this very table. Do you believe me?

MARNY

No.

(blushes)

I mean -- yes, of course!

SEBASTIEN

It's true.
 (grins, holds up tickets)
 Free opera tickets.

EXT. PALAIS L'OPERA - EVENING

The magnificent exterior of the opera house. A SOPRANO can be heard singing Donizetti by Roberto Devereux.

INT. PALAIS L'OPERA ORCHESTRA SEATS

When Marny looks at Sebastien, he is grimacing as the RATHER SHRILL SINGER performs on-stage.

EXT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL - END OF THE DAY

Marny hands Sebastien A HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL. He gives her a cheap miniature Eiffel Tower replica souvenir.

SEBASTIEN

Pour votre amabilité. For your kindness.
 (then)
 You would like me to see you, a votre boudoir?

MARNY

(considers, then)
 If I were a little younger, Sebastien, and you a little older.
 (kisses his cheek)
 Now, allez-vous before I start to swoon.

Sebastien bows, kisses her hand.

SEBASTIEN

Mademoiselle.

MARNY

(wistfully, a longing)
 Sir.

INT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL MARNY'S ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Marny sets down her keys on the night table, then goes over to the flower. Right away, she notices the plant has been moved. She touches the soil, and WATER oozes to the surface.

MARNY
 (alarmed)
 Oh, no!

She picks up the potted plant and hurries to the door.

INT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL CONCIERGE DESK

Nobody is at the desk. Marny hurriedly rings the bell several times. Finally, a SLEEPY NIGHT CLERK approaches.

NIGHT CLERK
 Oui, madam.

MARNY
 I need dirt! *Dirt!!*
 (points to the flower pot)
 My flower! There's too much water!
 Somebody, un person dans mon room.
 Don't get me wrong, there's nothing
 missing.
 (exasperated)
 The Fleurs de Grand Prix judging
starts tomorrow.
 (raises her voice)
 I need some fresh dirt! If I don't
 have any right away, tout de suite,
 TOUTE DE SUITE, my flower will
 perish! I have been working *all my*
life to create a special flower.
This flower is it!!

The night clerk rests his chin on his hand, then points to a banquet room.

MARNY (CONT'D)
 (looks over, sees nothing)
 What! What are you pointing at?!

NIGHT CLERK
 Go to the room.
 (she hesitates)
 Take your flower, and go to the
 room.

Marny hesitantly picks up her flower and walks to the banquet room door.

MARNY
 Here?

The night clerk nods diplomatically, then imitates the action of TURNING the door knob.

Marny opens the door and peeks in.

INT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL BANQUET ROOM

The room is half-filled with FLOWER AND PLANT OWNERS, in various stages of changing the water-saturated dirt for their plants. Alice sees Marny and waves her over.

ALICE

Where have you been, girl? All hell has broke loose!

MARNY

Where's the dirt?

ALICE

New maids! They watered our plants. Nobody told them not to. Did you leave a note?

Marny grabs a bag of dirt and carefully starts to change the dirt for her plant. She looks over at the GAUNT MAN, who is staring at his soaked, now-dead dandelion. He has changed the dirt, and is carefully patting it down. He looks up at Alice and frowns.

ALICE (CONT'D)

You might want to change the plant, too, there, Freddie.

GAUNT MAN

I happen to like my plant, *exactly* the way it is.

(glances at Alice's plant, which has seen better days)

You're one to talk --- Claude.

Alice opens her mouth, but, has no retort as Marny works on the Angel's Kiss chrysanthemum, very worried.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - NEXT MORNING

CLOSE-UP of Jill scribbling BLAH, BLAH, BLAH in her notebook. Other students sit on their desks, chatting and joking. Paul is concerned. The clock on the wall shows 10:20 a.m.

Brandon enters, looks DRAINED. He goes to his desk, sets down his papers, etc., turns to address the class.

BRANDON
Sorry, I'm late.

HE FAINTS.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL OUTSIDE THE EMERGENCY
ROOM - MINUTES LATER

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

Brandon stands there, BLINKING, defiant.

BRANDON
Physical threats are manifestations
of a weak mind!

PAUL
Ohh -- give me a break, dude.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL DOCTOR JOE'S OFFICE
Doctor Joe is doing paperwork when A NURSE enters quickly.

NURSE
Doctor Joe, we have a situation!

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL NURSE RECEPTION DESK
Paul CARRIES Brandon, who is rigid as a board. Doctor Joe approaches with the nurse as Paul sets Brandon down.

DOCTOR JOE
May I be of assistance, gentlemen?

PAUL
He fainted in class.
(then)
He's also practising to be a
statue. Oops, sorry --- an
interesting statue.

BRANDON
(still rigid)
And your point is?

Paul shrugs at Doctor Joe and leaves.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
They were plastic!

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL EXAMINATION ROOM

A HAND checks Brandon's pulse. It belongs to Doctor Joe.

DOCTOR JOE
Hmmm.

BRANDON
It's simple, I smoke too much.
Guaranteed.

Brandon hears his own breathing, and THE VOICES sound like they're coming from A DEEP, EMPTY CAVE.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Perhaps, a bit too much Yukon Jack.
(rubs his eyes)
I can switch to wine, if you think
it will help.

DOCTOR JOE
(illuminates Brandon's eye
with the ophthalmoscope)
What's all this about a statue?

BRANDON
(squints)
Probably the cigars and alcohol.

DOCTOR JOE
(sets the ophthalmoscope
down)
We're going to keep you overnight.
(tosses him a hospital
gown)
Now be an *interesting* statue and
put this on.

Brandon examines the gown as his **TRANSLUCENT ICE VISION EFFECT RETURNS.**

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

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - HALF HOUR LATER

PAUL
 (finishes addressing the
 class)
 And, uh, I have no update. I
 suggest we read. Or, do whatever
 you want. Just don't leave.

There is awkward silence, everyone sensing the seriousness.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 I'll set up a chess board.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL EXAMINATION ROOM -
 HOURS LATER

Outside street lights are ON. Brandon, still in the hospital
 gown, glances down a hallway. He stops A NURSE hurrying by.

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

NURSE
 Excuse-me?

BRANDON
 Would you like me to answer that?
 (without waiting for her)
 Of course the damn tree makes a
 sound. *It doesn't matter* if no one
 is there to hear it! It *amazes* me
 that people struggle with this
 premise.
 (puts out his hand)
 Brandon. Larmike. As in Mike.
 (laughs)

NURSE
 Are you waiting for a chest X-ray?

BRANDON
 A result, yes! That would be me.

NURSE
 (quickly)
 You can go. The X-ray was
 negative. Sorry for the delay.
 We're understaffed!

Brandon watches her leave, looks down at his gown, tugs at a loose thread.

BRANDON
 (looks around, squinting)
 So, we're good then.

EXT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL - MORNING

The GAUNT MAN'S EYES are seen lurking over a bush off to the side. He dips down as CONTESTANTS FOR THE FLEURS DE GRAND PRIX, including Marny and Alice, depart the hotel.

EXT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL BEHIND THE BUSHES

The GAUNT MAN finishes digging around a beautiful ROSE growing behind the bush. His dead dandelion lies in a clump nearby. He places the rose in an empty flower pot, smiles, then looks up to see if he's been caught. The coast is clear.

EXT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL VALET AREA

The Gaunt Man passes CLAUDE on his way to a taxi.

CLAUDE
 Beautiful flower, sir. Good luck
 at the show.

GAUNT MAN
 Merci vous, merci vous! Claude,
 right?

EXT. PALAIS DE SPORTS PARIS, SOUTH

CONTESTANTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD stream into the huge convention hall carrying their flowers and plants. A big banner announces the 1998 INTERNATIONAL FLEURS DE GRAND PRIX.

Marny and Alice are yapping excitedly as they enter. The Gaunt Man proudly carries his stolen rose past A WOMAN IN TEARS who has dropped her flower pot, and stands distressed among the broken pieces, strewn dirt and bent flower.

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER

Brandon, **still in HOSPITAL GOWN**, sits with a TV tray, a blanket over his shoulders, slurping tomato soup, SQUINTING at a local news program.

LOCAL NEWS ANCHOR

The shooter is in Fort Langley central jail. Neighbors are surprised because the suspect lived quietly, and was friendly toward others. We'll be right back!

A RESTAURANT COMMERCIAL FOR MOTHER'S DAY begins with a drab shot of BARNEY'S STEAK HOUSE, situated in a nondescript shopping mall.

COMMERCIAL VOICE-OVER

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

(video changes to a cliched shot of GRINNING restaurant STAFF)

Treat your wonderful mom to a classic Angus Beef filet mignon steak, and Manitoba lobster tail!

INT. PALAIS DE SPORTS MID-AFTERNOON

A DIGNIFIED (SORT OF) PANEL OF JUDGES is inspecting the various entries ie., examining leaves for flaws, smelling the petals, squeezing the stems, etc.

THE HEAD JUDGE sees a flower he particularly likes, points a finger at it, and the OWNER starts clapping, and then bows to the judge, who could care less. One of the other judges records the contestant's entry number in a ledger.

INT. PALAIS DE SPORTS MARNY & ALICE'S TABLE

Marny's flower has bloomed PERFECTLY, and stands magnificently on the table, drawing looks and attention from other contestants. Alice leans forward on the table and sees the panel of judges coming their way.

ALICE

Here they come, Marny!

The table swerves dangerously.

MARNY
Alice, take it easy.

ALICE
(notices the Gaunt Man has
a different flower)
Cheater!

He turns up his nose.

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER

Brandon clicks over to an ESPN Classic replay of the 1964 Cassius Clay-Sonny Liston championship boxing match. Clay is pounding Liston with ease.

PLAY BY PLAY ANNOUNCER
Liston is getting hit with all the punches in the book! What's going on here, Lou?

Brandon picks up a hand mirror, **LIFTS UP AN EYELID**, tries to see if something is underneath it.

Cassius Clay is off his stool, raising his hands into the air, starting to do a victory dance.

PLAY BY PLAY ANNOUNCER
That might be all, Lou. Get up there! Get in the ring!

Clay's cornermen jump into the ring wearing their CASSIUS CLAY jerseys.

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

EXTREME CLOSE-UP of Brandon's face two inches from the screen.

CLAY (CONT'D)
I'm pretty! I must be the greatest!

INT. PALAIS DE SPORTS MARNY & ALICE'S TABLE

The head judge selects the Gaunt Man's rose as A FINALIST. As he grovels his thanks, Alice snorts in disgust.

ALICE
 You've got to be kidding me.
 That's not his flower!

MARNY
 (as the judges near their
 table)
 Don't make a scene.

The judges stop by Alice's flower BRIEFLY, then move on to Marny's flower. The Gaunt Man chuckles at Alice, who sticks her tongue out at him.

HEAD JUDGE
 (impressed with Marny's
 flower)
 Exquisite. Q'est que sait ici?

MARNY
 Elle s'appelle Angel's Kiss.
 (to Alice)
 How do you say hybrid, Alice?

ALICE
 (nervously)
 In French? En Francais?
 (pause)
 We're from Arizona. Near, you
 know, Fort Langley?

Marny and the Head Judge laugh and Alice is puzzled.

HEAD JUDGE
 Actually, I 'ave a friend who live
 in Fort Langley. Uncle Vladimir.
 He's Russian. A little bit crazy.
 (to Marny)
 Congratulations. You are a
 finalist. See you aujour d'hui,
 tomorrow.

Marny beams, THRILLED.

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER - AS THE EVENING DEEPENS

Empty food containers litter the floor beside Brandon as he changes the channel to RFD TV, a local Country & Western channel.

A heavy-set crooner, BOX CAR BOB, is warbling away on a version of *King Of The Road*.

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

The song ends to polite audience applause as Brandon wanders over to his living room window, which faces the street.

PROGRAM ANNOUNCER
 Coming to you live from beautiful downtown Fort Langley, the Mid-West Country Hour. And now, he's here, folks, Marvin Rainwater!

MARVIN RAINWATER
 (applause)
 Thank you. Thank you. You all know I'm from the old school. Hank Williams, George Jones, Conway Twitty.
 (more polite applause)
 Got that right. Today, they got country music with rock music, which equals crock. And then they add rap, which equals crap!!

Scattered laughter as Brandon sees the STRAY DOG trotting down the sidewalk.

MARVIN RAINWATER (CONT'D)
 'Course, sometimes a little crap is good for the soul.

Marvin starts singing an obscure country ballad, his voice not much better than Box Car Bob's.

EXT. BRANDON'S TRAILER ON THE SIDEWALK

The stray dog is looking at Brandon who is looking back at the dog. The dog BARKS.

INT/EXT. BRANDON'S TRAILER

Brandon opens the FRONT DOOR and steps out.

BRANDON
 You want more trouble?

The dog barks again.

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

The dog starts to trot away, then turns back.

DOG

*Follow me to the building roof.
That's an order, pilgrim!*

BRANDON

What?!!

(mutters)

Okay, that does it.

Brandon goes back inside, looks around, grabs a broomstick.

On TV, Marvin Rainwater finishes his song and thanks the audience. A primitive sign fills up the screen: **DON'T GO AWAY. WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK!**

EXT. DOWNTOWN FORT LANGLEY - MINUTES LATER

The dog is ahead of Brandon, glancing back.

BRANDON

Dogs aren't going to tell me what to do! You're not even supposed to talk!!

The dog starts running when Brandon DASHES FORWARD, wielding the broomstick.

EXT. WELMAN COLLEGE CENTRAL COMMONS AREA - MOMENTS LATER

The dog pants heavily as it stands beside the JOHN WAYNE STATUE, it's breath visible in the crisp, evening air. The full moon beckons as Brandon staggers into the clearing, out of breath, raising the broomstick in a threatening manner.

The dog growls menacingly, as Brandon creeps forward.

BRANDON

(imitating Cassius Clay)

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

Nervous, the dog barks once, then dashes away into the night.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE SECURITY OFFICE

Paul is SMOKING A JOINT. He HEARS the stray dog barking, grabs his guard hat and flashlight.

EXT. WELMAN COLLEGE CENTRAL COMMONS AREA

Brandon wanders closer to the John Wayne statue.

BRANDON

(to the statue)

Do you know why the world goes
'round?

(no response)

Hey, does that dog ever pee on YOU?
Probably not. Probably not John
Wayne.

JOHN WAYNE STATUE

Dogs pee on me all the time.

(Brandon is rendered
speechless)

But, I never let a little pee spoil
my day, bucko.

(points ominously)

The building roof is waiting.

BRANDON

(becomes serious)

Yes, I suppose I should get up
there. Care to join me?

JOHN WAYNE STATUE

You have to do it alone.

Paul's FLASHLIGHT illuminates the area.

PAUL

Talkin' to the statues, prof? Now
that's interesting.

BRANDON

(rubs his eyes)

I would make a *great* statue.

PAUL

(takes a deep breath,
exhales)

I love this fresh air, boy. Keeps
a man's blood flowin', nice and
clean, helps him *think!*

BRANDON

(holds up a hand in
protest)

Please. No manly physical activity
lectures.

(MORE)

BRANDON (cont'd)
 (uses EYE DROPS)
 The Dean wants me to sign a new contract.

PAUL
 And, the problem with that is.

BRANDON
 Certainty.
 (then)
 That's it! That's what's wrong with statues! They're too certain!
 (wearily)
 Certainty can be such an unforgiving state. We professors cannot display uncertainty, Paul. Otherwise our students will lose faith. The other faculty will lose faith. And your own loss of faith will not be far behind.

(paces)
 I don't care about money. I just want to be able to stand before this -- this *gigantic, enormous* world -- this *gigantic, enormous* eternity -- and have faith! This *gigantic, enormous* eternal world that nobody tells us about in high school.

(then)
 This -- this -- *real* world, where all of the innocence gets stripped away as we age!! Just -- stripped away -- forever. Until the end of time.

PAUL
 (under his breath)
 I have to find a different job.

BRANDON
 In the hospital today, I wasn't certain I would leave. In fact, there wasn't *anything* I was certain about.

PAUL
 Well, I can say with certainty you've got class tomorrow.
 (then)
 And I can also say this.
 (takes a breath, exhales)
 Look. We need you around, prof.
We need you.

(MORE)

PAUL (cont'd)
 (lowers his voice)
*You're different, and we like that. We like that there is a professor who *actually seems to care about this gigantic, enormous eternal world.* We like that you understand that sentences are not just a bunch of damned words thrown together for convenience.*

(raises his voice)
 This damned world needs people like you, prof'. BUT YOU NEED TO STAY OFF THAT ROOF! IT'S JUST NOT INTERESTING!!

BRANDON
 (chuckles)
 Thank you, Paul, you are too kind. Too, too kind. Now then, manly fresh air.
 (inhales deeply, exhales up toward the full moon)
 Let us leave the evening to this .. *cold-hearted orb that rules the night .. removes the color from our sight ..*

He starts to walk away.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Red is grey, and yellow, white but, we decide which is right ..

PAUL
And, which .. is an illusion!

BRANDON
 (stops, turns)
 It's a question of balance.

PAUL
 Yes. Balance!

INT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME SATURDAY - NEXT MORNING

Katey checks a pamphlet on the refrigerator, regarding the upcoming Open Showcase for the Julliard School of Music. The showcase is Tuesday, which she CIRCLES on the calendar.

Jason drives up out front in a 1969 Camaro Z28 muscle car. Half the paint is FADED, and the other half is primer, but, the vehicle is in good mechanical condition.

Katey grabs her purse and heads out the door.

EXT. JASON'S CAR

Jason leans over and opens her door.

JASON
I got a full tank of gas.

Katey suddenly remembers her writing pad, and runs back into the house. After a few moments she comes running back to the car with the pad, gets in.

She scribbles quickly: **Almost forgot!**

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

JASON
Ready?

KATEY
(brightly)
Ready!

Jason drops the clutch and smokes the heck out of the tires. After the car gets moving, he slows down.

JASON
I like spinning the tires, but, I don't go over the speed limit.

Katey writes on her pad: **Cool. Where are we going?**

JASON (CONT'D)
Lake Santa Claus.
(Katey looks puzzled)
You never been there?
(she shakes her head)
You scared to go on boats?
(she shakes her head again)
Good, because I got the hook-up. I know this guy, Uncle Vladimir.

INT. BRANDON'S TRAILER - LATE MORNING

Brandon, still in his dishevelled hospital gown, opens the living room drapes for light, which is SHOCKINGLY bright.

Fumbling his way to the kitchen, he opens the refrigerator door and reaches for the milk bottle. It is not there, but, on the counter. EMPTY.

BRANDON

Perfect.

EXT. BRANDON'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Brandon is at his car door, fumbling with the key, having trouble locating the key hole. With his face AN INCH away, he finally gets the key in. He opens the door and sits behind the wheel, barely functional.

EXT. RALPH'S SUPERMARKET - MINUTES LATER

As Brandon pulls the Pontiac up curbside, he HITS a parking meter with his front bumper. A COUPLE WITH A CHILD IN A STROLLER are startled.

MAN

Hey, watch where you're going!

BRANDON

(waves weakly)

Sorry.

WOMAN

Isn't he that wacky college professor?

POV from Brandon's EYES. Everything is a TOTAL BLUR, with substantial darkness around the EDGES.

EXT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ENTRANCE

The Pontiac unsteadily drives up to the entrance. Brandon gets out cautiously, and leans on the hood as a HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE walks near.

BRANDON

Excuse me.

EMPLOYEE

Yes?

BRANDON

I need assistance.

DOCTOR JOE (OVER THE PHONE CONT'D)
Brandon is in rough shape.

MARNY
Talk to me, Joseph.

DOCTOR JOE (OVER THE PHONE CONT'D)
It's -- we don't really know yet.
He lost consciousness a short time
ago -- and -- actually, Marny, we
could be losing him.

INT. LE HOTEL DU MOTEL CONCIERGE DESK

From where Alice is standing, she hears Marny say, "*I'll take the first plane out.*" Alice comes over and Marny holds out the competition flower.

MARNY
No water.

ALICE
(takes the flower)
What's happening?

MARNY
Brandon's in trouble.
(goes to the front desk)
I need luggage assistance, please.

The FRONT DESK PERSON hits the desk bell twice in rapid succession and a BELL HOP comes running over.

EXT. LAKE SANTA CLAUS - AFTERNOON

The Green Monster has been fixed and is padlocked at it's usual place at the pier. Katey stands by as Jason looks inside a used tire and finds a key.

JASON
Here we go.
(unlocks the padlock)
Uncle Vladimir is a great guy,
letting us use his boat for free.

KATEY
(sniffs the air)
Paint?

JASON
 (also sniffs)
 Probably stink weed.

EXT. PARIS ON THE WAY TO THE AIRPORT

MARNY IN A TAXI as it passes L'Arc de Triumphe.

INT. TAXI

MARNY
 You know, my husband helped to
 liberate France. He was a G.I.
 paratrooper, 101st Airborne.
 (the taxi driver nods)
 He passed away, two years ago.

DRIVER
 I'm sorry for your loss.

MARNY
 I was always so worried he would
 perish in the war. But, it was
 cancer. From smoking. Never
 smoked before the war.

DRIVER
 I quit smoking last year. In
 France, this is not easy.

MARNY
 (starts to quietly HUM a
 few bars of music)
 What's the name of that song?

DRIVER
 Pardonne?

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

DRIVER
 Paul Henreid, Claude Rains, Peter
 Lorre. Fantastique.

MARNY
 (hums a few MORE bars)
 The song, you know, when the Nazi
 soldiers are in the bar, drinking.
 (MORE)

MARNY (cont'd)
They start singing the German
anthem, and then the French
Resistance leader gets up.

DRIVER
La Marseillaise!
(starts to sing, quietly)
"Allons enfants de la patrie .."

MARNY
That's it!

DRIVER
(continues, as Marny hums
along)
".. Le jour de gloire est arrivee
.."

As he sings, the driver's voice becomes louder and more
confident.

Marny is misty-eyed as she simply hums softly.

EXT. LAKE SANTA CLAUS

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

JASON
So you are going to enter that
Julliard showcase next week.
(she nods)
That picture you put up on your
piano, is that your grandparents?

She doesn't respond, just looks out over the lake.

JASON (CONT'D)
I don't mean to make you
uncomfortable, Katey. We don't
have to talk.
(she shrugs)
Remember I told you I like to look
out of windows, too?
(she nods)
You know that orphanage on the
other side of town?
(she nods)
That's where my window is.
(Katey looks down)
I'm not looking for pity, Kate. I
just know how tough life can be
sometimes, that's all.
(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)
 (suddenly, he points into
 the water)
 Look, there's a turtle!

Katey STANDS up, excitedly.

KATEY
 Where?!

She takes a step, and plunges through the boat's floorboards,
 INTO JASON'S ARMS.

As the boat starts to sink, they KISS BRIEFLY, innocently.

JASON
 (gently)
 Never seen a turtle before?

KATEY
 (into his eyes)
 Nope, never.

Katey's NOTE PAD floats away, unnoticed, as their faces
 remain close while the boat continues to sink.

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

KATEY
 (also breathless)
 It *wonderful*, Jason.

EXT. LAKE SANTA CLAUS

From a distance. The boat stops sinking because the lake is
 ONLY FOUR FEET DEEP. After a lingering moment, Katey points
 into the water.

KATEY
 (shouts)
 Look, a fish!

Jason looks and Katey splashes water into his face, laughing.

INT. PALAIS DE SPORTS FINAL AWARDS SHOW

A CONTESTANT walks away from the trophy podium with her Third
 Place Award for an intriguing-looking CACTUS.

The Head Judge steps up to the microphone.

HEAD JUDGE

Le deuxieme place, second place.
Max Bailey, red rose! Melbourne,
Australia!

Audience APPLAUDS as THE GAUNT MAN approaches the podium to accept his award. Alice's jaw drops.

The Gaunt Man is given the trophy, but when he speaks into the microphone, it doesn't work. He taps and blows into it, but gets nothing. When he glances at Alice, she gives him a mocking thumbs-up.

EXT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Jason drops Katey off, and she waves goodbye as he drives away in a cloud of dust.

INT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME

Katey walks in and sees the RED LIGHT blinking on the answering machine.

INT. PALAIS DE SPORTS

HEAD JUDGE

(microphone is working)
And now, le premiere place, first
place.

(opens an envelope)
Marny Larmike! Angel's Kiss
Chrysanthemum! Fort Langley,
Arizona. United States of
America!!

CAMERAS FLASH AND APPLAUSE. Alice goes to the podium and checks if the microphone works. It does.

ALICE

(gathers herself)
Marny had to leave for personal
reasons, so, I accept this award on
her behalf. I know she would truly
be honored.
(then)
It was her dream.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL HALLWAY OUTSIDE
BRANDON'S ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Katey and Paul sit in chairs, quiet. A few other students from Brandon's class, including JILL, linger nearby.

EXT. PHOENIX INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - VERY LATE EVENING

Allen is driving Brandon's Pontiac away from the airport, with Marny in the passenger seat.

KJME DISC JOCKEY (ON THE RADIO)
It's two thirty in the morning on
KJME and here's a song for all you
people out there who love the
night. The late John Lennon,
Across The Universe.

The ex-Beatles classic starts playing.

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

INT. BRANDON'S VEHICLE

The music continues over the radio.

LENNON (ON THE RADIO)
*".. Pools of sorrow, waves of joy
Are drifting through my open mind
.."*

MARNY
Have you spoken to Kate?

ALLEN
She's at the hospital.

MARNY
(turns the radio off)
What about Doctor Joe?

ALLEN
Brandon still has no sight, Marny.
And, his hearing is almost gone.

MARNY PICKS UP THE **PSYCHIC GYPSY DISCOUNT FLYER.**

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

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL HALLWAY OUTSIDE
BRANDON'S ROOM - A HALF HOUR LATER

Marny and Allen come down the hallway. Katey SLEEPS on a lounge chair, Paul reading in another. Allen joins them.

Marny ENTERS Brandon's room.

INT. BRANDON'S ROOM

Brandon is sleeping in the darkened room, as Marny goes over to him. She touches his hand, as the DUTY NURSE enters with his chart. THEY SPEAK IN HUSHED TONES.

DUTY NURSE
He needs to rest. Technically,
visiting hours are over, Marny.

MARNY
What do you mean, technically?

Katey stands in the doorway, observing intently.

INT. BRANDON'S ROOM

POV from Brandon's eyes. Muted light. The WHISPERING that's going on is scratchy, as he also hears his own BREATHING.

DUTY NURSE
He's stable now.

EXT. SUNDAY MORNING FORT LANGLEY CHURCH - NEXT MORNING

CHURCH BELLS are calling the faithful. Marny and Katey enter the church in their Sunday best.

INT. CHURCH

ORGAN MUSIC PLAYS. The church is packed FULL. Marny and Katey walk to a front bench, past Paul and all the students from Brandon's class. Jason enters and sits at the back. His hair is slicked down and he wears a shirt and tie.

A RATHER UNORTHODOX-LOOKING PREACHER enters and goes to the pulpit. He signals the organist to stop playing.

PREACHER
Good morning, faithful.

The people in the church mumble, *good morning*.

PREACHER (CONT'D)
As you know, this is a non-denominational church. God is there for all of us, so, we welcome everyone who seeks spiritual comfort, and guidance. Before we start, I'd like us all to bow our heads and say a silent prayer for Professor Brandon Larmike, and let his mother and daughter know that our best thoughts and wishes are with them.

The PSYCHIC GYPSY, sitting in the front row, bows her head for a brief prayer, then turns and glances at Marny.

EXT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL BRANDON'S ROOM

No movement inside Brandon's room. *THE DAY FAST FORWARDS INTO NIGHT, THEN MORNING.*

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL DOCTOR JOE'S OFFICE -
NEXT MORNING

Marny sits at Doctor Joe's desk, GLARING at him.

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

MARNY
Or what?

DOCTOR JOE
(takes a breath)
Last year, at the Taffy Clinic in Minnesota, they were working on a few patients with symptoms similar to Brandon's. Sudden loss of sight *combined with distortion*. A disintegration of the hearing.

MARNY

How is the light distorted?

DOCTOR JOE

(shrugs)

There's a protein-based carbon product that stimulates neuroreactors in the brain stem which has shown some promise. Marny, this disease doesn't even have a name yet.

(then)

It's not contagious, we know that.

MARNY

Doctor Joe, could Brandon die?

DOCTOR JOE

(goes to a window, looks out)

The treatment program was being funded through a federal grant. A decision was made to divert the funding to a school program. As a consequence, *Washington is withholding final approval* on the clinical study drug.

(finally)

Yes, Brandon could die.

MARNY

(pauses, then)

How much of an improvement did the clinic patients show?

DOCTOR JOE

(turns)

Substantial. It was *substantial*.

EXT. MARNY & KATEY'S HOME - AN HOUR LATER

Marny sets down a CARRY-ON BAG in her Volkswagon van when Alice drives up, holding THE FIRST PLACE TROPHY.

ALICE

There you are! I've been calling all day, Marny.

MARNY

Alice, I'm off to Washington, D.C. and I'm running late!

ALICE
 (gets out with the trophy)
 Marny, you won!

MARNY
 Won what? What are you talking
 about?

ALICE
 The Fleurs de Grand Prix! First
 prize! Here's the trophy! And,
 you're not going to believe who
 finished second.

MARNY
 (takes the trophy)
 I'm losing Brandon.

She gets into the van and quickly drives away.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL BRANDON'S ROOM

Brandon's bed is angled up, and he seems a bit better. AN
 ORDERLY is emptying his trash bin.

BRANDON
 I don't suppose you have a cigar on
 you, there, partner.

ORDERLY
 (politely)
 This is a non-smoking area, sir.

BRANDON
 How about a beer? What do you say,
 chief? One beer.

The ORDERLY leaves and Katey enters.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 Not even a beer?

KATEY
 Maybe you shouldn't be drinking
 beer, Dad.

BRANDON
 Ahah! Seven words. One
 apostrophe. A full sentence!

KATEY
 Yep.

BRANDON
 (delighted)
 Nice! What happened? How come you
 started usin' sentences again?

**POV FROM BRANDON'S EYES. TRANSLUCENT ICE
 EFFECT. Vague, fleeting IMAGES OF A WOODEN
 BUILDING, A BACK COUNTRY GRAVEL ROAD.**

KATEY
 Grandma went to Washington.

BRANDON
 You started usin' sentences because
 Grandma went to Washington?

At the window, **Katey's entire being merges with brilliant
 sunshine streaming into the room.**

BRANDON
 (shields his eyes)
 What's she doing in Washington?

KATEY
 I'm not sure. But -- do you need
 anything?

POV REVERTS BACK TO NORMAL ROOM AMBIENCE.

BRANDON
 I could use a hug.
 (Katey gives him a little
 hug, on the verge of
 tears)
 Go to class.
 (she nods, still hugging
 him)
 Don't cry for me, Argentina.

Katey takes out a Kleenex tissue, tries to smile.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE BRANDON'S CLASSROOM - SAME TIME

Paul makes an announcement.

PAUL
 Dean Somersby has asked me to
 inform you that a substitute
 professor will be here today.

JILL
When is Brandon coming back?

PAUL
Let's be on our best behavior.
(to Jill)
None of that blah, blah, blah
stuff, Jill.

JILL
That's not fair.

OTHER STUDENT
Yeah, leave her alone, man!
Brandon don't got no problem with
blah, blah, blah.

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

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

A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER, PROFESSOR BING, ENTERS. A meek, mild-mannered individual with a short temper.

PROFESSOR BING
My name is Bing.

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

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

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

PROFESSOR BING (CONT'D)
(to Paul)
You, sir.

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

PROFESSOR BING

(nods, then)

Very well. And, I would prefer
'professor', as opposed to 'prof',
please.

(to Jill)

And you?

JILL

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

Paul makes discouraging hand motions to Bing, who IGNORES
him.

PROFESSOR BING

Please.

Jill takes her place at the front of the class, unfolds a
document, reads.

JILL

"A theoretical examination of the
structure of a predisposed,
genetic, linguistic imprint
involving the use of a
transmorphosynthetic state,
henceforth referred to as the
neural correlate. Pro and Con."

(glances at Paul)

"Pro. Blah, blah, blah, blah."

(Bing raises her eyebrows)

"Con. Blah, blah, blah, blah .."

PROFESSOR BING

Excuse me.

JILL

Yes?

PROFESSOR BING

You're kidding, right?

(Jill is silent)

Professor Larmike lets you get away
with that garbage?

JILL

It's not garbage.

PROFESSOR BING

Sit down.

JILL
I can justify it.

PROFESSOR BING
(sharply)
Sit down!

Jill glares at Paul as she returns to her desk.

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - LATE AFTERNOON

DOWNTOWN with it's clutter of government buildings, including the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) building.

INT. FDA BUILDING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICES OFFICE

Marny sits, anxiously watching the clock, which ticks toward 5:00 p.m. ET.

The SECRETARY is getting ready to leave for the day.

MARNY
Are you sure the director won't be back today?

SECRETARY
Yes.
(trying to be nice)
Mrs. Larmike, as I've already told you, even if he was it wouldn't make a difference.
(then)
It's *impossible* to release a drug, or get it approved, on this short notice without, literally, an act of Congress.
(added emphasis)
An act of Congress.

MARNY
But, couldn't the director simply release the drug from the Taffy Clinic program in Minnesota?

SECRETARY
(sits beside Marny, takes her hand)
You must understand, people come in here *all the time*, with lives at stake.

(MORE)

SECRETARY (cont'd)
 It breaks my heart *not to be able to tell them*, that yes, we can authorize a medication that might sustain, or even cure, a loved one's life.

MARNY
 (gets up)
 But, it's my son, my only child!

SECRETARY
 I know, Mrs. Larmike. But you don't have to give me an attitude.

INT. FORT LANGLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL PIANO ROOM

Katey tentatively plays A NEW SONG. Only single notes, but, it is compelling. Jason, in football uniform, holding his helmet, sits, listening. Katey pauses, stares at the keys.

JASON
 You going to play that for Julliard?

KATEY
 (quietly)
 Maybe.

JASON
 I like it.
 (stands)
 Comin' to practice?

KATEY
 I have to go to the flower shop.

JASON
 (pauses, then)
 Your dad's going to make it, Katey.
 (comes over to her,
 crouches down)
 He's a scrapper. Just like you.

INT. FORT LANGLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE THEATER
NEXT MORNING

A notice at the entrance announces the *Julliard Scholarship Opportunity Showcase*. On stage, a young SINGER-SONGWRITER finishes an original tune. The audience claps supportively as the JULLIARD REPRESENTATIVE looks on.

A MASTER OF CEREMONY approaches a stage microphone.

MASTER OF CEREMONY

And now, with her own rendition of
Chopsticks, Katey Larmike!

Katey enters to polite applause and tapes BRANDON'S PICTURE to the grand piano before she sits. Jason is in the back of the house, and is the last one to finish clapping.

Katey knows it's him, which calms her down and she starts to play Chopsticks. The audience chuckles a bit, but, as she gets into the song more, they settle down. Soon, the song starts to turn into something sophisticated.

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. FDA BUILDING - SAME TIME

Katey's music continues to play.

Marny is picketing on the sidewalk outside the FDA offices.
Her sign reads: FDA WON'T LET MY SON LIVE!

A SECURITY GUARD watches from nearby.

INT. FORT LANGLEY HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE THEATER

Katey's concentration level has never been better, and her song SOARS to new heights.

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. FDA BUILDING

The front door opens and the FDA DIRECTOR, accompanied by his secretary, urges Marny to come inside. Marny gives the picket sign to the security guard and enters the building.

INT. FORT LANGLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Katey brings the composition to a tremendous *crescendo*, the audience leaps to their feet.

The JULLIARD REPRESENTATIVE remains seated, but, applauds and nods approvingly.

INT. WASHINGTON, D.C. SECRETARY'S OFFICE

Marny can be heard YELLING through the walls. Pictures shake in their frames.

MARNY
 Why not? Give me one good reason
 why not!

The FDA director's muffled response is inaudible.

MARNY (CONT'D)
 Well, then call the damned Vice
 President! Where is he, the White
 House?!

Again, the FDA director's response is muffled.

MARNY (CONT'D)
 I could give a rat's ass about
 protocol!! I'm sure if it was your
 son it would be a different ruddy
 story! IS THAT NOT TRUE?!!

After a moment, Marny exits the FDA director's office and
 SLAMS the door behind her.

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. FDA BUILDING

Marny leaves the building and SNATCHES the picket sign back
 from the security guard.

MARNY
 Give me that!

She starts picketing again, but after going back and forth a
 few times, she realizes the futility of the situation. She
 takes the sign and bashes it to pieces on the cast iron grill
 of a nearby gate, then COLLAPSES to her knees with complete
 frustration. The security guard comes over and tries to help
 her up, but, Marny pushes him away.

EXT. FORT LANGLEY HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT

Katey and Jason are leaning against his car.

JASON
 New York City after you graduate.
 That's great!

KATEY
 It's not for sure.

JASON

Hey, the guy said the scholarship is yours. All you gotta do is fill out the forms.

KATEY

I dunno. Maybe.

(then)

Can I get a lift to the hospital?

EXT. DOWNTOWN FORT LANGLEY

They drive by a stout, plain residence, a sign on the front facade reads: MARK'S HOUSE. It is Jason's orphanage.

A FEW ORPHANS linger on the porch steps.

Jason stops the car, points to a single window for the top floor attic.

JASON

Up there, that's my window.

(Katey looks upward)

Do you have both your parents?

KATEY

(softly)

My mother died in childbirth, giving birth to me.

JASON

(nods)

That's pretty tough.

KATEY

I never knew the truth until my dad got drunk at grandpa's funeral, and then he told me.

(quiet smile)

My dad's nice, but strange.

Katey gets out of the car, Jason waves to THE KIDS hanging out.

KATEY (CONT'D)

What's it like living there?

JASON

It's home. I'm actually pretty lucky.

(then)

I think I know your dad.

(MORE)

JASON (cont'd)
 Isn't his car always breakin' down?
 (Katey nods)
 If my dad was around, I'd probably
 try to talk to him more.
 (shyly)
 I dunno.

KATEY
 (touches his hair)
 You're really cool, you know.

JASON
 (shrugs)
 I'm just a guy that tries to get
 by, Kate. C'mon, let's go.

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

ONE OF JASON'S PALS waves as Katey gets back into the car.
 Jason waves back with a BIG GRIN.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL HALLWAY OUTSIDE
 BRANDON'S ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Katey sees STAFF MEMBERS watching a television set, waiting
 for a Mother's Day commercial to end.

TV COMMERCIAL SPOKESPERSON
 Only three more days 'til Mother's
 Day, folks. Don't forget good old
 mom, and treat her to a nice dinner
 at Big Bobby's Palace!

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

A STAFF MEMBER points to the TV.

STAFF MEMBER
 There she is! There's Marny!

A CNN NEWS ANCHORWOMAN speaks, as video footage plays of
 Marny breaking down outside the FDA building.

NEWS ANCHORWOMAN
 The woman has been identified as
 Marny Larmike, from Fort Langley,
 Arizona. Authorities say she went
 back to her motel after they
 approached her, without further
 incident.

Doctor Joe comes from Brandon's room, with a very stern look. Katey glances into Brandon's room, and sees A LOT OF ACTIVITY around his bed. When she approaches, A NURSE closes the door before she can enter.

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S SUPER MOTEL

A second-rate motel on the outskirts of town.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Marny lays on the bed with her 1st place TROPHY, staring at the ceiling. The phone RINGS and she reluctantly answers it.

MARNY

Hello?

KATEY (OVER THE PHONE)

It's me. Come home, please.

MARNY

Katey, when did you start talking?

KATEY (OVER THE PHONE)

Come home, grandma. You have to come home now!

EXT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - **NEXT MORNING**

The 1st place TROPHY from the Fleurs de Grand Prix is displayed in the flower shop's window. The PSYCHIC GYPSY approaches, tentatively.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP

The Psychic Gypsy enters. Only Allen is there and he is reading a thick, hard cover, antique book.

PSYCHIC GYPSY

Is the woman here?

ALLEN

(glares at her)

I knew it was you. All along, I knew it.

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 (very nervous, as **ALLEN'S**
HEAD EXPANDS AND FILLS
THE ENTIRE ROOM)
 Who are you? What --

ALLEN
 (growls menacingly)
 Marny's at the hospital.
 (Psychic Gypsy runs out)
 You better fix this!!

Allen goes back to reading the well-preserved book, entitled
 WARLOCKS AND WARRIORS circa 1522.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL HALLWAY OUTSIDE BRANDON'S
 ROOM

The Psychic Gypsy paces in the hallway, then Marny comes out.

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 (approaches)
 We need to talk.

INT. PSYCHIC GYPSY SHOP - MINUTES LATER

Marny and the Psychic Gypsy are in the cluttered kitchen.

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 He said he wanted to bear your
 burden -- to replace your death
 with his. *I never heard of*
anything like that before!
 (wrings her hands)
 I told him to take a ride on Uncle
 Valdimir's boat.
 (sighs)
 After he left here, a little while
 later, I -- well -- a chicken bone
 started to shake.

MARNY
 A chicken bone started to shake?
 Could it have been an earthquake?
 We don't get earthquakes.

PSYCHIC GYPSY
 Nothing else was shaking.
 (nervous)
 I swear with every fiber of my
 being, I don't know what I'm doing!
 (MORE)

PSYCHIC GYPSY (cont'd)
I'm a phony. I can't cast a spell,
you must believe me! I'm just
trying to pay my rent.

(reaches for her purse)
You can have the money back. I
don't want to be arrested!

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

PSYCHIC GYPSY
Look at your hands.

MARNY
What?

PSYCHIC GYPSY
I said that. Look at your hands!!
(Marny looks at her hands)
Put ten dollars in my jar. You
don't have to do it.
(she does)
Then I told him to lower his head.

As Marny lowers her head, the Psychic Gypsy takes the MONEY
and puts it in her purse.

PSYCHIC GYPSY (CONT'D)
You don't understand. I have no
training.

MARNY
(head still lowered)
Please.

The Psychic Gypsy POURS WATER from a pitcher onto Marny's
head.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL BRANDON'S ROOM

Brandon STIRS. The nurse filling out his chart LOOKS UP.

INT. PSYCHIC GYPSY SHOP

The Psychic Gypsy is looking in the fridge, as *the stray dog*
enters and lies down in a corner, unnoticed.

PSYCHIC GYPSY
There's no chicken.

MARNY
Does it have to be chicken?

PSYCHIC GYPSY
(holds up a fried pork
chop)
I have this.

MARNY
Will a pork chop work?

PSYCHIC GYPSY
(yells loudly)
You don't get it! I have *no*
control over this!

The Psychic Gypsy angrily eats the meat off the pork chop,
then drops the bone into another bowl.

Marny **RUBS HER EYES.**

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL BRANDON'S ROOM

**BRANDON'S POV. HIS EYES BLINK OPEN AND THE
TRANSLUCENT ICE EFFECT IS THERE, BUT FADING
OUT.**

The nurse sets down her chart, comes closer.

INT. PSYCHIC GYPSY SHOP

PSYCHIC GYPSY
I told him his soul was lost.

She picks up the bowl and throws it against the kitchen wall
with tremendous force, shattering it. The pork chop bone
falls to the floor, and the Psychic Gypsy waits for it to
move. It doesn't.

**Marny has the strange SMILE on her face, LIKE WHEN THE
LIGHTNING STRUCK BEFORE.**

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

PROFESSOR BING
Sit down.

PAUL
(Jill beams from ear to
ear)
You sure you don't want to hear the
rest?

PROFESSOR BING
(shouts)
Sit!

Brandon ENTERS quietly, a bit ragged, but alert.

BRANDON
I'll take it from here, professor.

PROFESSOR BING
(pause, then)
Certainly.

Exits quickly.

OTHER STUDENT
Binngggg.

Paul shakes Brandon's hand and the other students stand to
greet him.

Jill is THRILLED that Paul stood up for her.

EXT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP - NEXT DAY

A storefront BANNER advertises a Mother's Day special on
roses: *One dozen long-stem roses for \$9.99.* The trophy is
still on display.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP

A FRECKLED, SEVEN YEAR-OLD BOY buys SUNFLOWERS from Marny.

MARNY
(giving him his change)
There you go.

BOY
Thanks, lady.

Marny smiles as the boy takes the bunch of flowers, which are ALMOST AS LARGE as he is. The POSTMAN sticks his head in, drops off the mail.

POSTMAN
Nice looking trophy, Marny.
Congratulations!

MARNY
Thank you.

He leaves, and Marny's **VISAGE SHIMMERS** WITH A BRILLIANTLY COLORED, TREMENDOUSLY NUANCED LIGHT.

Allen sees it happen, but continues working without comment.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE BRANDON'S CLASSROOM

Brandon is at the window, looking at the John Wayne statue.

PAUL
(approaches)
When you were away, I gave the class an assignment. One sentence, one comma, one 'and'. A Mother's Day quotient, if you will.

BRANDON
Was there a query?

PAUL
There was. *Query: What is a mother?*
(turns to the class)
Who wants to start?

Without raising his hand, Jerry rushes to the front.

JERRY
(pause, then, from memory)
A mother is the simple reminder, comma, of the difference between right and wrong.

OTHER STUDENT
Sounds like two commas.

BRANDON
Agreed.
(to rest of the class)
C minus?

JILL

C.

BRANDON

(looks around for
disagreement)

Done. Next.

The OTHER STUDENT walks up, confident.

OTHER STUDENT

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

(looks at Brandon)

BRANDON

No 'and'. But, nice. B.

OTHER STUDENT

(not too pleased)

B?

PAUL

Take it. It's not exactly
original.

EXT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

The hauntingly ethereal song, *INTO DUST*, sung by Mazzy Starr begins.

Marny bypasses the Emergency entrance in her Volkswagon van, and parks in the regular parking lot. She sits, blinking, then gets out with an overnight bag, and SAVORS the world around her for a long moment.

Marny squares her shoulders, walks into the hospital.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE BRANDON'S CLASSROOM

Jill is at the front of the class.

JILL

(speaks quietly)

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

Everyone waits for her to say blah, blah, blah; but, she doesn't. Instead, Jill returns to her seat with proud tears streaming down her face.

BRANDON

A+.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL NURSE RECEPTION DESK

A RECEPTION NURSE looks up as Marny approaches.

RECEPTION NURSE

(casually)

What brings you here, Marny?

MARNY

(polite, gracious)

I was wondering, if maybe you had a corner room -- with a view.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE BRANDON'S CLASSROOM

ANOTHER STUDENT

Mothers provide beauty, and grace.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL MARNY'S ROOM

Marny enters her room, on the building's corner. With a view on two sides. She sets down her overnight bag and goes to one of the windows, sits, looks out.

INT. WELMAN COLLEGE BRANDON'S CLASSROOM

BRANDON

Paul. Your turn.

Paul hesitates, then goes to the front of the class.

PAUL

(misty-eyed)

My mom -- my mom worked one full-time job and two part-time jobs, *for twenty years* --

(struggles)

-- so I could attend *this school*.

BRANDON

Thank you.

(misty-eyed himself)

A+.

JILL touches Paul's hand as he returns to his seat.

DEAN SOMERSBY'S SECRETARY sticks her head in the open door and looks at Brandon.

INT. DEAN SOMERSBY'S OFFICE

Somersby pushes an envelope across his desk to Brandon.

SOMERSBY

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

BRANDON

(slips the envelope in his jacket pocket)
Thanks. It's good to be back.

Somersby's expression is glum, and he glances at the Secretary at her desk, also glum.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

What.

EXT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP

A steady stream of people are walking away with BUNCHES OF EVERY KIND OF FLOWER.

INT. MARNY'S FLOWER SHOP

Allen is at the open cash register, head down, not moving. The drawer is FULL OF MONEY and most of the flowers are GONE. The Postman comes in and picks up one of the last bunches, white carnations.

POSTMAN

(softly)
How much, Al?

ALLEN

(tears in his eyes)
You know, Marny's favorite flower is a white carnation.

The Postman nods, cannot speak.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL CORRIDOR OUTSIDE OF
MARNY'S ROOM - A FEW HOURS LATER

A LONG LINE OF PEOPLE holding flowers, including Uncle Vladimir and the Psychic Gypsy, occupies one side of the hallway leading past Marny's room.

Paul keeps an eye on things.

INT. MARNY'S ROOM

The room is darkened, but a gentle light from the window softens the ambience. Marny is propped up on pillows, and she still has A SPARKLE in her eyes.

The room is full of flowers, and Katey sits in the corner with Jason. A LOCAL IRISH WOMAN pays her respects bedside.

IRISH WOMAN

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

MARNY

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

Allen enters with the Fleurs de Grand Prix TROPHY, and sets it down. The Postman removes his hat, puts the carnations in the bowl on top of the trophy, steps away.

Brandon enters carrying a sheaf of papers in a file folder. He nods at Jason and goes over to his mom.

BRANDON

(gives her a peck on the cheek)
Hello, there.

MARNY

(whispers)
We need to talk. Alone.

BRANDON

(to the others)
Hey, guys, Mom and I need a few moments.

Everyone files out and Paul closes the door.

MARNY
 (takes Brandon's hand)
 I want you to listen to me,
 Brandon.

BRANDON
 (looks down)
 Okay.

MARNY
 Lift your chin up, sweetie.
 (he does)
 Are you my son?

BRANDON
 C'mon.

MARNY
 (more definite)
 Are you my son?

BRANDON
 Yes.

MARNY
 Do you love me?

BRANDON
 Why're you talking like this?

MARNY
 Your daughter needs your full
 attention. She's not as strong as
 you may think.

BRANDON
 I wouldn't be so sure.

Marny takes the Psychic Gypsy discount PAMPHLET from her
 purse.

MARNY
 I visited with the psychic gypsy,
 Brandon. I don't know what
 happened when you were there.
 (he doesn't respond)
 But my burden -- my mortality -- is
 mine, sweetie. And mine only.

BRANDON
 (quietly)
 You got better.

MARNY

And, I'm still getting better.
I'll be out in a few short days.
(touches his cheek)
I have a *really good* life, Brandon.
My heart is full. *AND I'm looking
forward to the future.*
(then)
Yes, one day, my time will come,
like it comes for us all. And,
half the house will be yours. The
other half I'm leaving to Kate. In
the meantime, if you get rid of the
bad habits, maybe your daughter
will move back in with you!
(touches his hair)
It's the right thing to do,
professor.

BRANDON

(gives her the folder of
papers)
These are from my best students. A
Mother's Day gift.

MARNY

Thank you, Brandon. And, thank
your students, please.

**MARNY'S POV. THE TRANSLUCENT ICE VISUAL
EFFECT IS PRESENT.**

MARNY (CONT'D)

You're a wonderful teacher. I'm so
proud. And I know Katey is going
to grow up and lead a fine life,
with her Dad by her side.
(Brandon tries to smile)
That's better. Now, there's
something I want you to do, for me.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL CORRIDOR OUTSIDE
MARNY'S ROOM BY THE ELEVATOR - NEXT DAY AFTERNOON

MOTHER'S DAY.

Katey stands at the elevator door. When it arrives, she
enters and keeps the door OPEN. A moment later, Brandon
shows up pushing Marny in a wheelchair.

INT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL GROUND FLOOR

The elevator doors open and A NURSE from Marny's section comes upon them.

NURSE

Marny, why are you out of bed?

MARNY

It's okay, nurse. Doctor Joe knows.

NURSE

I was just speaking with Doctor Joe a few minutes ago.

BRANDON

You might want to check again.

NURSE

Actually, Doctor Joe just left for Scottsdale. He won't be back until tomorrow.

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

PAUL

Is there a problem?

NURSE

Escort this patient back to her room, please.

PAUL

Of course.
(takes the wheelchair
handles from Brandon)
Pardon me, sir.

The nurse pushes the button for Marny's floor, then walks away, occupied with her chart.

When the coast is clear, THE GROUP sneaks out the hospital's front entrance, undetected.

EXT. FORT LANGLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

IT'S RAINING outside as Paul and Brandon put the wheelchair in the trunk of Brandon's Pontiac.

BRANDON
Interesting uniform.

Paul glances back at a hospital SIDE DOOR, where JILL stands, in CAFETERIA WORKER CLOTHES. She waves at Brandon, who waves back and then gets into the driver's seat.

PAUL
(takes off the guard hat)
I got to get it back.
(smiles at Marny)
Have a good trip, ma'am.

MARNY
(very pleased)
Thank you, Paul. You are wonderful!

Brandon turns on the windshield wipers and drives away, Marny in the passenger seat. Katey in the back, SILENT.

EXT. BRANDON'S PONTIAC OUTSIDE OF TOWN - MINUTES LATER

The rain is still coming down as the car drives along the highway, past apple orchard fields.

BRANDON (V.O.)
Where's this place again?

MARNY (V.O.)
Straight ahead. About 100 miles.

BRANDON (V.O.)
You sure you're up for this?

MARNY (V.O.)
It's Mother's Day, Brandon.
We women have our rights, too, you know. Especially on Mother's Day.
Right, Kate?

Katey doesn't answer.

EXT. A&W HAMBURGER STAND - AN HOUR LATER

The sun BEGINS TO SHINE as Brandon's car drives up to the take-out window. The business marquee sign reads:

**GET MOM OUT OF THE KITCHEN,
IT'S MOTHER'S DAY. BRING HER HERE!**

INT. BRANDON'S VEHICLE PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER

Marny takes a HEALTHY BITE of her hamburger. Katey stares out the window as Brandon munches on onion rings.

MARNY

Why so glum, squirt? It's a beautiful day.

KATEY

Why are we going to this place?

MARNY

Because it's where I fell in love with your grandfather. And neither of you have seen it before.

MARNY'S POV. HER VISION SUDDENLY BLURS, DARK AROUND THE EDGES.

MARNY (CONT'D)

He was such a handsome young man. Especially in his soldier's uniform.

(takes a careful sip of root beer)

Let me finish my burger, Kate. And then, we'll visit a very special building. I just love Teenburgers!

EXT. SHEHO, ARIZONA MAIN STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

The town with a former population of 300 is DESERTED and overrun with weeds. A rusted railroad car sits on broken tracks, no longer operational. Buildings are rundown.

INT. BRANDON'S VEHICLE

Marny, squinting, points at Kereluik's General Store.

MARNY

There's Uncle Bill's store.

KATEY

We've seen the polaroids.

MARNY

Just trying to get my bearings, kiddo.

(MORE)

MARNY (cont'd)
 (pause)
 Ahead about a quarter mile,
 Brandon. Past the grain elevator.

Brandon sneaks a concerned look at Katey.

EXT. **ODE** A DANCE HALL

The Pontiac drives up an overgrown gravel road that, in years past, was well-travelled. They come to a UNIQUE building, A DANCE HALL that, in it's better days, was quite grand. On the front, over the entrance, in old-fashioned lettering is the word **ODE**.

Brandon parks the car and they get out. Brandon starts to retrieve the wheelchair, but, Marny stops him.

MARNY
 I'll be fine, Brandon. I'm good.

She breathes in the fresh country air, relishing the MEMORY of the building, around which the light **SEEMS TO SHIMMER**.

MARNY (CONT'D)
 Back in World War Two, our mayor,
 Mr. Sebulsky -- he owned the lumber
 yard. Anyway, he couldn't go fight
 in the war because he had a real
 bad knee.

(pause)
 So many of our boys came back, you
 know, changed. It was such a
 terrible war. Like all wars, I
 suppose.

(she removes a piece of
 lint from Katey's shirt)
 Anyway, Mr. Sebulsky wanted to do
 something, to welcome them home.
 So, with his own lumber, and his
 own time, he built this wonderful
 dance hall! He called it ODE,
 which means Dedication. It was his
 way of honoring our troops.

The song, *I'LL BE SEEING YOU*, is heard, very faintly.

MARNY (CONT'D)
 (hums a few notes, then)
 The best thing that ever happened
 to me in my life, was marrying
 Hubby.

(MORE)

MARNY (CONT'D)

And, he was such a good dancer. My feet never felt like they touched the floor!

She starts to walk toward ODE, and the music gets a little clearer, but only she hears it. Her arms are around Katey and Brandon.

MARNY (CONT'D)

The next best thing that ever happened to me, was both of you.

(she stops, a gleam in her eye)

Actually, it turned out to be *just as good* as getting married.

They arrive at the dance hall's front door. Marny puts her hand out to touch the wood, then turns to Brandon.

BRANDON

I love you, Mom. When were you last here?

MARNY

It's been a while.

(smiles happily)

I love you, too, Brandon.

(Katey is looking down)

Katey.

KATEY

(low voice)

What?

MARNY

Don't you love your old Grandma anymore?

KATEY

Yes, I just wish --

(she hugs Marny tightly)

I love you, grandma. I really love you. *More than anything!*

MARNY

(consoling)

I know, sweetheart. I love you more than anything, too.

Brandon opens the door to ODE, but, it's EMPTY. When Marny looks, IT'S A DIFFERENT STORY.

IN BLACK AND WHITE, the room inside is filled with WORLD WAR TWO SOLDIERS, some with dates, singing and waltzing to the song *I'LL BE SEEING YOU*. OTHERS sit around drinking, smoking, having a good time.

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DANCE FLOOR IS **HUBBY**, IN MILITARY UNIFORM, WAITING FOR MARNY, HAT IN HAND, STANDING AT ATTENTION, THE OTHER HAND OUTSTRETCHED TOWARD MARNY.

MARNY (CONT'D)
Oh, my goodness.

EXT. ODE DANCE HALL

Brandon still sees nothing, but notices A STATUE OUTSIDE A SIDE WINDOW, and goes to have a look.

INT. ODE DANCE HALL

Marny takes a step past the door threshold, and *HER LEG GETS YOUNGER, IN BLACK AND WHITE*. Another step forward and *half of her body is now YOUNGER, also in style of CLOTHES*.

EXT. ODE DANCE HALL STATUE OF PANDORA

Brandon stands before a withered, skinny, frail wooden STATUE of the Greek Mythology goddess PANDORA, holding a fancy jewelry box with a shut lid.

Through the side window, Brandon NOTICES Marny watching him. He goes back to the front door.

MARNY
I'd forgotten about that statue.
Your father put it there. Bought
it at a yard sale.
(smiles at Katey)
Everyone thinks Pandora's box
released all the misfortunes of
mankind. But, she shut it in time
to keep one thing. Hope!
(then)
I'm going to have a dance. You
kids wait in the car.
(they hesitate)
Go on now.

The door closes behind Marny as she steps inside and completely turns into herself as an innocent 18 year-old woman. She goes up to Hubby and they start dancing, smiling, IN LOVE FOREVER.

EXT. ODE DANCE HALL

BRANDON

Let's go to the car, Katey.

As they start walking, Brandon tries to take her hand, but, she shrugs it off and runs ahead, stopping beside the car's trunk.

Behind them, **ODE SHIMMERS BRILLIANTLY UNTIL IT FINALLY MELTS INTO AN ENORMOUS CASCADE OF BURSTING, COLORED PRISMS OF METALLIC LIGHT**, unnoticed by Brandon and Katey. When the LIGHT settles, the building re-appears in it's original form.

Brandon takes out a cigar and Katey glares at him.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Grandma wants us to move back in together.

KATEY

(as Brandon is about to light the cigar)

I'm not moving in with cigars.

(he hesitates)

Or all that goony-goo-goo perfume.

BRANDON

It's cologne.

(Katey raises an eyebrow)

Yeah, maybe you have a point.

(then)

Is it okay if I smoke outside?

Just a few puffs. Once in a blue moon?

KATEY

(looks over at ODE)

Maybe.

BRANDON

(tucks the cigar back in his pocket, sits on the car hood)

That new boyfriend of yours seems like a decent guy.

KATEY
 (distractedly)
 He's nice. I like him.

BRANDON
 (also looks at ODE)
 Great building.
 (tilts his head)
 Do you hear, umm, music?

KATEY
 Nope.
 (listens)
 Do you?

BRANDON
 (shakes his head)
 Probably just the wind.
 (looks over at Pandora's
 statue)
 You know, the wind carries sound,
 sometimes great distances.
 Hundreds and hundreds of miles.

While he's still talking, Katey walks quickly over to ODE, then cautiously opens the front door and peeks in.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 (still looking at the
 Pandora statue)
 Huh. *Hope.*

INT. ODE DANCE HALL

The inside is EMPTY, except for a bunch of dusty furniture, cobwebs, empty old beer and whiskey bottles, dirty ashtrays.

Katey gingerly looks around, as a beam of light pours through A GLORIOUS SKYLIGHT in the middle of the hall.

KATEY
 (softly)
 Grandma?

She sees the back door.

INT. ODE DANCE HALL BACK DOOR

The back door is CHAINED and PADLOCKED. Katey tries the padlock, which is rusted, but solid.

KATEY
 (calls out, again)
 Grandma? Are you here?

No answer. Katey wanders over to the side windows, checks to see if they have been opened recently. All of them are painted stuck, or locked shut.

KATEY (CONT'D)
 (one more time)
 C'mon, grandma, let's go.

Still no answer as Brandon looks in from the front door.

KATEY (CONT'D)
 (sees him)
 She's not here!

BRANDON
 (walks in, glances around)
 Mom?

KATEY
 I'm afraid, daddy.

BRANDON
 (joins Katey UNDER THE
 SKYLIGHT, puts his arm
 around her shoulder)
 No reason to be scared, sweetie.

KATEY
 (shivers)
 What does it mean? What does it
 all mean?

Brandon looks up at the skylight and sees, etched into the glass, golden child angel figurines, the same that adorn the roof of Marny's Flower Shop.

BRANDON
 Well -- let me see. It means your
 grandma loves you. For sure.
 (Katey looks up into the
 skylight)
 And it means I love you. For sure.
 (closes his eyes)
 It means life is very fragile. And
 it means -- it means --

Out of words, overwhelmed, Brandon cannot finish the sentence. Katey takes his hand.

KATEY
 (quietly)
 More than anything?

They stand there, in the deserted dance hall, just the two of them in the cobwebs and dust of memories.

BRANDON
 Yes. More than anything.

WIPE DISSOLVE
 TO:

EXT. MARNY'S (NOW BRANDON & KATEY'S) HOUSE - A FEW DAYS
 LATER EARLY EVENING

A FURNITURE MOVING VAN pulls away from the house, in which most of the lights are on.

PIANO MUSIC, one key at a time, plays *I'LL BE SEEING YOU*. The music stops and Katey laughs.

INT. BRANDON & KATEY'S HOUSE

Most of Brandon's belongings are in boxes, except for the portrait of himself with Katey. Katey is at the piano, shaking her head at Brandon who is eating Chinese take-out food, marking term papers, and ignoring THE STRAY DOG, who looks hungry.

BRANDON
 (glances at the dog)
 What're you lookin' at?

The dog guiltily puts his head down on his paws. Without looking, Brandon tosses a piece of chicken over his shoulder to the dog, who snaps it out of the air.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 Nice!

The dog barks and Katey smiles, then resumes playing the music, this time *improvising*.

EXT. DOWNTOWN FORT LANGLEY - SAME TIME

The Psychic Gypsy sits on a clear plastic sofa in the shop's display window, chatting with Uncle Valdimir.

People pass by, other things on their minds.

Allen works late in the flower shop, adjusting floral arrangements. Marny's trophy rests nearby.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK and the Psychic Gypsy shop's pink neon lights disappear into the town's lights, which in turn merge into the surrounding fields, forests and lakes.

As a flock of graceful geese fly past the setting sun, a voluminous stack of Pacific Western clouds absorb layers of crimson, violet and auburn light against early evening stars.

KATEY'S PIANO MUSIC swells into a very different song, majestic and BRILLIANTLY ALIVE.

the end.