

"North of Hope"

A Screenplay
by

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Based on the novel by the same title

FADE IN:

1 EXT. THE EDGE OF SOVEREIGN LAKE (1890) -- MONTAGE --
EVENING

1

Exquisite beauty and utter loneliness.

Heavy snow falls through majestic pines and white birches on the edge of a frozen lake. High above, a ghostly moon rises in the clouds. This is Northern Minnesota, but it's so desolate that it could be another world -- a land of snow-bearded giants and silver light.

The wind picks up.

The trees begin blowing.

A blizzard sweeps down.

2 EXT. MIDDLE OF SOVEREIGN LAKE (1890) -- A SHORT TIME LATER

2

Streaking snow.

Swirling. Raging.

Amazingly, across the middle of the frozen lake, a man is walking -- desperately forcing himself to take one step after another. In his gloved hand is an old Dietz lantern. Though it's lit, the tiny gleam is worthless in the horror that surrounds him.

This is FATHER ZELL. He is in his late fifties and has a thick beard. He wears an old parka and on his feet are wooden snow shoes. Strapped on his shoulder is a leather case. He is bent almost double against the wind.

He is in the last struggle of his life. All his concentration is on making one foot follow another. But it's clear that his strength is almost gone.

Suddenly, he falls to his knees. For a moment, it seems as though he will never rise again. But then, almost miraculously, he gets up and keeps going.

FRANK (V.O.)

What is it that makes a man give away his life? Does it happen silently, ten thousand times until the last whisper is gone? Or does he wake up one morning in strength and say, I think this is a good day to die.?'

CU FATHER ZELL'S FACE

It's becoming incrustated with snow and ice.

(CONTINUED)

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

The year was 1890 and his name was Father Zell. He was a Catholic priest. I first heard the story when I was a child. It haunted me so much that it became a recurring dream.

Father Zell stops and looks around. The snow is blinding.

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

Why did he do it? The old people had told him a blizzard was coming.

(beat)

Sovereign Lake is nineteen miles long and three miles wide. In the winter it's covered with a foot of ice. To cross the lake would have saved him a day of walking. But then, the blizzard came.

(beat)

The story haunted me because of what the Ojibwa saw. Three hunters were coming home that day.

Suddenly, ahead he sees a dim light. Like a drowning man, he begins stumbling toward it.

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

The blizzard was the worst of the winter. Darkness was falling when, suddenly, out on the lake a light appeared. As they watched, it grew brighter and brighter.

Father Zell falls to his knees, crawling toward the light.

POV FATHER ZELL

Ahead of him, golden rays shimmer through the blowing snow. The light is so lovely that it brings tears to his eyes.

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

They said they'd never seen a light like that before. And nothing in their world could have made it. They said it was from another world and each one remembered it until the day he died. They called it the Light of the Great Spirit.

As Father Zell crawls, the exquisite light surrounds him. He stops and stares up into it with a look of joy. The golden light grows as bright as the sun.

And there is singing...

(CONTINUED)

FADE TO GOLD

FADE IN:

3 EXT. MIDDLE OF SOVEREIGN LAKE (1890) -- DAY 3

Five Ojibwa stand looking down at a frozen body.

FRANK (V.O.)

Father Zell had promised that he would celebrate Mass with them -- the Ojibwa people that he loved.

Next to Father Zell lies the leather case...open...its contents strewn. Wafers of bread and a broken flask. Red wine stains the snow.

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

Beside him on the snow was broken bread and poured out wine...the symbols of a Life that overcame death.

CU FATHER ZELL'S FACE

In death his face is filled with peace. Slowly the body fades away, like a ghost in the morning.

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

And that began the legend of Father Zell and the Great Spirit Light of Sovereign Lake.

(beat)

Whatever it was, that light has never been seen again.

TILT UP

4 EXT. MIDDLE OF SOVEREIGN LAKE (MODERN DAY) -- EVENING 4

A late-model, Chevrolet sedan with Florida license plates and chains on the rear tires is driving across the frozen lake. It's evening and its lights are on. The car moves slowly between two long lines of highway cones.

FRANK (V.O.)

Getting across the lake in winter is easy now. There are satellite weather reports and the county sets up cones to mark the safest path. Driving on the lake saves 45 minutes compared to the road.

5 INT. CHEVROLET -- CONTINUOUS 5

Behind the wheel is a good-looking man in his mid forties. This is FATHER FRANK HEALY. Though he's a priest, he doesn't look or dress like one.

(CONTINUED)

Frank loves to be casual and loves to be outdoors. He's wearing jeans and a plaid mackinaw.

POV FRANK

On the white shore in front of him stands a lovely, little Catholic church covered in a robe of snow and ice from the steeple to the ground.

FRANK (V.O.)

Strangely, it was Father Zell's death that brought life to the little church that he had planted.

(beat)

Somehow we've got to find that life again.

6 EXT. GREAT SPIRIT LIGHT CATHOLIC CHURCH -- MOMENTS LATER 6

Slowly, the Chevrolet pulls off the lake and onto a small road leading up to the little church. Fifty yards down the road is a two-story building. Several cars are parked in front and lights are burning inside. Close to the church, in a grove of pines, sits a double-wide mobile home. Lights are on there too. But, the church is dark as Frank parks in front of it. A sign reads: GREAT SPIRIT LIGHT CATHOLIC CHURCH -- OJIBWA RESERVATION.

Frank gets out of the car and looks at the beautiful, ice-covered building. Suddenly, his eyes narrow.

FRANK

Now there's an interesting addition.

He walks closer. Attached to the steeple is a satellite dish. Frank stares at it thoughtfully, then takes out a key, walks to the front door and unlocks it. As the door creaks open, snow falls all over him. After brushing himself off, he goes inside.

7 INT. GREAT SPIRIT LIGHT CATHOLIC CHURCH -- CONTINUOUS 7

The last rays of the sun shine through simple, stained glass windows. As beautiful as the church is outside, the inside is a freezing shambles.

All the pews are stacked against a wall. In the middle of the room sits a large, steel work table covered with a variety of small, electric appliances. Around them is a scattering of tools. Straight down from the ceiling hangs a black cable attached to a cheap television set. Several heavy-duty extension cords run across the floor...then up to a window and out of the building. The only thing in place in the whole church is a large crucifix hanging at the front.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

(to himself)

Now, I've seen churches turned into antique shops, restaurants and beauty salons...but never a Sears appliance repair center.

Suddenly, the lights turn on. Out from a back room walks an old priest in his seventies. This is MONSIGNOR ADRIAN LAWRENCE, known simply as Father Adrian. He is one of Frank's oldest friends, his mentor and now his new boss as Frank joins this parish.

FATHER ADRIAN

God loves small appliances, Frank. Waffle irons are one of his great gifts to the world.

Frank's unpleasant surprise at the state of the building is mitigated by joy at seeing his old friend.

FRANK

Father Adrian...

They hug warmly.

FATHER ADRIAN

I could say, welcome to your new repair center.

FRANK

Hey, I like that.

FATHER ADRIAN

I'm afraid it doesn't look much like it did when you were a boy.

FRANK

I don't remember a satellite dish.

FATHER ADRIAN

Belongs to Caesar Pipe. Lives next door in the double-wide. He's the reservation policeman. Runs a repair business in his spare time.

FRANK

So, I take it you knew about all of this?

FATHER ADRIAN

Well...not exactly. He asked to use the back room to store a few things. I guess his business grew.

He leads Frank into the back room.

8 INT. CHURCH BACK ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

8

The back room is jammed with parts storage bins. There's hardly room to walk.

FRANK

I'd better go talk to this guy.
We're having a service here tomorrow.

FATHER ADRIAN

I just came from his house. His
wife says he's out on his rounds.
Best she can do is get him here at
six AM.

Frank groans.

FATHER ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Look, we can put this off. You could
start next week.

FRANK

Adrian, these people have waited ten
years to have a functioning church.
We're going to have Mass here tomorrow
if we have to hold waffle irons on
our laps.

(beat)

I'd better get started cleaning up.

As Frank turns toward the door, Father Adrian stops him.

FATHER ADRIAN

Wait, let's eat first. I brought
sandwiches and hot coffee.

Father Adrian opens a basket and begins taking out food and
placing it on a small table.

FATHER ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Wish this could be a fancier welcome
home party...

FRANK

Seeing you again is all I need.

Frank finds a couple of chairs.

FRANK (CONT'D)

It's freezing in here. Where's the
furnace?

Father Adrian points toward a hulking monster against a wall.

FATHER ADRIAN

Over there.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FATHER ADRIAN (CONT'D)

(beat)

But, there's a little problem.

Frank stares at him.

FRANK

No, don't tell me.

FATHER ADRIAN

The blowers not working. I turned it on an hour ago.

Frank walks over and stares at it.

FRANK

You mean this guy fixed every toaster on the reservation and didn't fix this?

FATHER ADRIAN

I think you should spend the night in town. I've got a nice room ready for you.

FRANK

Thanks, but I brought my sleeping bag and a cot. I said I was going to stay here three nights a week and I meant it. The people need to know we're back in business.

FATHER ADRIAN

All right, but just don't pull a Father Zell on me.

Frank laughs.

FATHER ADRIAN (CONT'D)

I'm serious. If it gets too cold, there's a medical clinic across the way run by a wonderful couple named the Pearsalls. They've got an extra room. Pound on their door and they'll take you in.

FRANK

Adrian, you've forgotten that I grew up here.

FATHER ADRIAN

And you've spent over twenty years in Florida.

FRANK

So, you think I've gotten soft.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER ADRIAN

Just remember people don't expect to
come to church and find a frozen
priest...

(beat; thoughtfully)

Unless, of course, they're
Episcopalian.

Both men laugh as they sit down to eat.

9 EXT. FROZEN ROAD THROUGH FOREST -- NIGHT 9

Moonlight shines down on a deserted, forest road. Suddenly,
there is the sound of grinding gears.

Then, headlights appear.

A battered pick-up truck careens into view, sliding around a
corner. It scrapes against a tree, then bashes into another
tree knocking out a headlight. The driver backs up,
straightens out and just keeps on going.

10 EXT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- NIGHT 10

Fifty pick-up trucks and cars sit in the parking lot of a
shabby, two-story building. This is The Homestead, a down
and dirty country/western bar. C&W music wails from inside.
Into the parking lot slides the pick-up. It veers into a
space, scraping a car as it comes to a stop.

The door opens and the driver gets out. He's a good-looking,
powerfully built Ojibwa man in his late twenties wearing
dirty work clothes. This is ROGER UPWARD. It's obvious
that he's high on something. His eyes are bloodshot and as
he weaves through the parking lot toward the building he can
barely stand up.

11 INT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- MOMENTS LATER 11

The place is full of Minnesota rowdies and it's constant
karaoke time. A beautiful girl of twenty-five is on a small
stage wailing away at the Dixie Chicks number, "Sin Wagon."
And she's not bad. But whether she's good or not doesn't
really matter. Beautiful girls get a lot of forgiveness.
And this girl is gorgeous -- in jeans that are so tight they
could've been painted on and a top that shows way too much
cleavage. This is VERNA JESSEN and the crowd loves her.

As she sings, her attention is focused on a huge, brutal-
looking man behind the bar. This is JUDGE BIGELOW, the owner
of the place. He smiles at her indulgently. Verna smiles
back. Next to the Judge is his bartender, a tough-looking
man nick-named TOAD. Toad is a midget and he does his job
walking up and down a special ramp.

JUDGE BIGELOW

She's not half-ass bad, is she, Toad?

(CONTINUED)

TOAD

Nope. If you could keep her sober
she might win state.

JUDGE BIGELOW

What're you talkin' about? You ever
heard her sing sober?

Toad shakes his head.

JUDGE BIGELOW (CONT'D)

Well, I have and she's freakin' awful.

At that moment, into the bar walks Roger Upward. Instantly, both Toad and the Judge are on the alert. Upward stares at Verna as he weaves his way onto a stool. On stage, Verna sees him and grows tense, but keeps on singing. Cautiously, Toad moves up to Roger.

TOAD

Hey, Roger, what's doin'?

Roger doesn't look at him. He just keeps staring at Verna.

ROGER UPWARD

(just above a whisper)

Gimme a scotch. Make it a double.

Toad glances over at the Judge who nods. A double scotch is poured and placed in front of him. He downs it in a single slug. As he listens to the song, he begins mumbling the words. Suddenly, tears are in his eyes. The Judge motions for Toad to hit him again. Another double is poured and stuck in front of him. Roger barely notices.

12 INT. CHURCH BACK ROOM -- NIGHT

12

Moonlight shines into the back room of the church. Frank lies on the cot in a light sleeping bag. He's so cold that he's shaking. Finally, he sits up. His teeth are chattering. He gets out of the sleeping bag and picks up a flashlight. Walking over to the furnace, he shines it on a thermometer.

FRANK

Five degrees never felt this cold
when I was a kid.

(beat)

What is the matter with this furnace?

He stares at the monster. Suddenly, he steps back and kicks it. Then, he kicks it again. Suddenly, the furnace blower roars to life.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(very pleased with
himself)

Well, look at that.

(CONTINUED)

But, then it makes the sound of a dying rhinoceros and goes completely dead.

FRANK (CONT'D)
NO. DON'T TANTALIZE ME LIKE THIS.

He pounds on it with his fist. Nothing.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Okay. So violence is not the answer.

He places his hand on it.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Oh, God, I pray that this furnace
would start working RIGHT NOW!

Still nothing.

FRANK (CONT'D)
What am I doing? I'm letting a
furnace turn me into a Pentecostal.

Shivering and rubbing his hands together, Frank walks over and looks out the window. Fifty yards away is the clinic. And the lights are still on.

13 INT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- NIGHT

13

Tears are streaming down Roger Upward's face as he downs his third drink. He's still watching Verna. But, she is ignoring him. If anything, she's increased her sexy focus on the Judge.

Suddenly, Roger stands up and slowly begins walking toward her. Instantly, the Judge moves out from behind the bar. But when Roger is a few feet away from the stage, he simply stops. And there he stands, silently crying, looking at her.

Verna tries to continue, but she's shaken. Finally, she can't go on.

VERNA
Roger, you're makin' a damn fool of
yourself.

But, Roger doesn't move.

VERNA (CONT'D)
GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE AND LEAVE
ME ALONE! JUDGE, I CAN'T SING LIKE
THIS.

Roger takes a step closer. The normally rowdy crowd is silenced.

(CONTINUED)

ROGER UPWARD
 (quietly)
 Verna, come home. I love you.

Verna recoils.

VERNA
 WILL YOU GET THIS DRUG FREAK OUTTA
 HERE?

The Judge moves up behind Roger. Gently, he puts his hand on his shoulder.

JUDGE BIGELOW
 Come on, Roger, it's time to go.

Roger turns and looks at the huge man. There's so much sorrow on his face that the Judge looks away.

JUDGE BIGELOW (CONT'D)
 Tell you what. The drinks are on me. How 'bout that?

Slowly, Roger allows himself to be led to the door. Suddenly, Verna is no longer the beautiful, sexy singer. She's tense and jittery and looks awful.

VERNA
 Okay, okay, let's get that music goin'. Toad start it over.

Toad moves to the machine and punches buttons.

VERNA (CONT'D)
 I want everybody to clap. Let's get some energy goin' in here.

The song starts over.

VERNA (CONT'D)
 Come on. PUT YOUR HANDS TOGETHER!

She begins singing and clapping, but the crowd is no longer with her and she knows it.

14 EXT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- MOMENTS LATER 14

Gently but firmly, the Judge shoves Roger out the door and shuts it behind him. Like a man lost in a fog, he begins weaving toward his truck. Reaching the pick-up, he climbs inside.

15 INT. OLD PICK-UP TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS 15

From under the seat, he pulls out a small paper bag and an old revolver. Laying the gun beside him, he opens the bag, takes out a pharmaceutical bottle and unscrews the lid.

(CONTINUED)

He pours several pills into his hand. These he downs in a single gulp. Then, he starts the engine.

16 EXT. OLD PICK-UP TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS 16

Roger backs out of the space, then guns it. The truck leaps forward out of control and races through the parking lot straight into the forest -- where it crashes into a tree.

17 INT. OLD PICK-UP TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS 17

Roger lies draped over the steering wheel, bloody and unconscious. Suddenly, from far away, there comes an odd sound.

It's drums pounding a strange, disturbing beat.

Slowly, Roger awakens.

He hears the sound and his eyes grow wide. He stares into the forest, trying to make them focus.

POV ROGER

Moonlight shines through eerie mist. The drums get louder. Roger is terrified.

SFX

Then, he sees them. Drifting toward him are dozens of vague, mist-shrouded forms. Closer and closer they come until the truck is surrounded. Roger knows who they are and why they are here. They are the Old Ones. The Ancestors. The dead of the tribe from long ago.

ROGER

(shrieking)

STAY AWAY FROM ME! GET AWAY! LEAVE
ME ALONE!

The misty faces move close to the windows. Roger cringes. There's nowhere to hide. Then, the oldest one reaches out his hand.

The drums are much louder.

Inch by inch, smoky fingers begin passing through the glass. Roger screams. He picks up the gun and starts shooting. The glass breaks, but the ghosts remain.

18 EXT. GREAT SPIRIT LIGHT CATHOLIC CHURCH -- REAR -- NIGHT 18

The rear door of the church opens and Frank Healy steps outside. He is shivering and the night air cuts into him. Quickly, he begins walking toward the clinic and the beckoning lights inside.

19 EXT. MEDICAL CLINIC -- MOMENTS LATER

19

Frank approaches the front door. But when he gets near, he begins hearing voices. Inside, a man and a woman are arguing. Exactly what they're saying he can't tell. But it's intense. And the male voice sounds drunk.

Cautiously, Frank walks over to a window and peeks inside. A slender woman with long hair is turned away from him. Though her face isn't visible, it's obvious that she's very beautiful. (This is LIBBY PEARSALL.) She is arguing with a short, heavy-set man in his forties who is drunk. (This is TOM PEARSALL.)

LIBBY

Tom, we can't keep operating this way. You're driving us into the ground. The HMO demands an accounting. I've got to send them a report.

He takes a drink from a flask.

TOM

TO HELL WITH THE HMO. LOOK, DAMMIT, WHO IS THE DOCTOR HERE? AM I THE DOCTOR OR NOT?

LIBBY

You don't have to talk to them every day on the phone.

TOM

Screw'em. Hang up on'em.

LIBBY

(disgusted)
You're drunk. Go to bed.

TOM

NOT UNTIL YOU ANSWER MY QUESTION.
WHO IS THE DOCTOR HERE?

LIBBY

(glaring at him)
You are, Tom. You're the doctor.

TOM

Awright, tha's better.
(beat)
I am the doctor.

The woman turns and her face becomes visible to Frank.

CU FRANK'S FACE

(CONTINUED)

A look of stunned amazement comes into his eyes. He stares at her. Though she is in her forties, she is absolutely gorgeous.

Suddenly, it's as though time stands still. He knows her.

CU LIBBY'S FACE

SFX - A MORPH BEGINS

She begins to change. The silver in her hair vanishes. The tiny lines and shadows disappear. From being in her mid-forties, she becomes sixteen years old again.

She smiles.

PULL BACK

20 INT. THE HOPE THEATER (1971) -- NIGHT

20

The only illumination is the smoky, flickering light from a projector. A movie has already started. Libby is standing in front of a seat looking down at someone. Several of her teenage girlfriends are behind her.

LIBBY AT SIXTEEN

Are these taken?

Looking up at her is a sixteen-year-old Frank Healy. Next to him is one of his buddies.

FRANK AT SIXTEEN

Uuh....no.

The girls sit down. Frank continues staring at her. She's so beautiful that he can hardly speak.

LIBBY AT SIXTEEN

(a loud whisper)

You're Frank Healy.

FRANK AT SIXTEEN

Yeah.

LIBBY AT SIXTEEN

I'm Libby Girard. My family just moved to town.

(beat)

I saw you play last Friday night. You made some great passes. You're kinda the star of the team.

Frank turns crimson.

FRANK AT SIXTEEN

Well...not really...

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY
I love football.

Suddenly, half a dozen people begin "shhing" them. Libby giggles, then gives him a ravishing smile and turns toward the screen. Frank just keeps on looking at her.

FRANK (V.O.)
From the time I was a child, as far back as I can remember, I wanted to be a priest. A hero like Father Zell, risking my life helping people. The call was so clear that I thought it came straight from Heaven.

(beat)
But how could a call from Heaven vanish in a split second? And it did -- totally and completely -- the first instant I saw Libby Girard. One look into her eyes and the idea of becoming a priest took on a horror like eating road kill.

(beat)
The truth was, at that moment, and for the only time in my life...I had fallen in love.

Once more the sixteen-year-old Libby turns, looks at him...and smiles.

CU LIBBY'S FACE

SFX - ANOTHER MORPH BEGINS

The smile fades.

Slowly, the lines and shadows reappear along with the silver in her hair. The marks of life and sorrow. Once more Libby is a mature, yet still beautiful woman. As he stares at her, strange emotions -- even a kind of fear -- are in Frank's eyes.

Suddenly, Libby looks up toward the window. Quickly, Frank turns away. But it isn't quick enough.

21 INT. MEDICAL CLINIC -- MAIN ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

21

A startled look comes to Libby's face.

LIBBY
There's someone outside.

TOM
Well, tell'em we're closed. You'd think at one o'clock in the morning they'd get the idea.

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY

We're a medical clinic, Tom. In case you've forgotten we're here to help people.

She hurries to the door and opens it.

22 EXT. MEDICAL CLINIC -- CONTINUOUS

22

Frank is vanishing into the darkness. Libby calls after him...

LIBBY

Wait. It's all right. Come back. Do you need help?

He stops in his tracks. There's no escaping now. Slowly, he turns and walks back. Step by step, his face becomes visible in the light. Libby is so shocked that she can hardly breathe.

FRANK

Hello, Libby.

Tears begin to rim her eyes.

LIBBY

(a whisper)
Frank? Frank Healy?

FRANK

It's been a long time.

And then, she is in his arms, hugging him, holding him close, unable to say anything. Behind them, Tom appears at the door.

TOM

Who's out there? What's goin' on?

Libby forces herself to pull away and turn toward her husband. She's so full of emotion that she can hardly speak.

LIBBY

Tom...do you know...who this is?
(beat)
It's Frank Healy. My dearest friend from high school.
(to Frank)
Frank...this is my husband, Tom.

FRANK

(embarrassed)
Pleasure to meet you.

Frank extends his hand. Tom grunts and gives it a limp shake.

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY
 (to Frank)
 What are you doing here?

FRANK
 I'm the new priest over at the church.

TOM
 Did you say, priest?

FRANK
 That's right.

LIBBY
 I heard someone was coming, but I
 didn't know who it was.

FRANK
 Well, it's me.
 (to Tom)
 I'm sorry to trouble you so late.
 The furnace isn't working and Father
 Adrian said you might have a spare
 room available. It'd just be for
 one night.

Libby grabs him and pulls him into the building.

LIBBY
 Of course, we have a room.

23 INT. MEDICAL CLINIC -- MAIN ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

23

When they are inside, in the light, she stares at him. Once
 more tears well in her eyes.

LIBBY
 Oh, Frank, it's so good to see you.
 I've thought you...so often over the
 years.

The words are spoken with a disturbing intensity that is not
 lost on either of the men. Frank reddens.

FRANK
 It's good to see you too, Libby --
 and to meet your husband.

She reaches up and touches his hair.

LIBBY
 Look at you. Silver in your hair.
 You look so distinguished.

Suddenly, Libby is self-conscious, running her fingers through
 her own hair.

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY (CONT'D)

I look terrible. We had a hard day.

FRANK

No, you look...wonderful...
even...better than I remember.

(trying to cover with
Tom)

Back in high school, all the guys
had crushes on Libby. The day she
moved to town hearts started breaking.

TOM

So, I've heard.

Tom scrutinizes Frank through bleary eyes.

TOM (CONT'D)

Why'd you get assigned to this
godforsaken place? You do somethin'
nasty and get banished from the
Vatican?

LIBBY

(mortified)

Tom!

TOM

Hey, it's an honest question. You
never know these days.

FRANK

(laughing it off)

I was a teacher and a coach at a
boys school for twenty-three years.
Then, it got shut down because of
budget problems. I tried a big church
but didn't like it. Decided to come
home.

Tom grunts.

TOM

Lovely.

(beat)

Look, wish I could stay and talk all
night, but I'm tired and I gotta go
to bed.

He heads up the stairs.

TOM (CONT'D)

Gotta conserve my strength to help
all the sick Indians.

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY

(when he's gone)

You'll have to forgive him. Things haven't been going so well lately.

FRANK

I understand. No problem.

She begins bustling around, trying to get control of her emotions and finding it very difficult.

LIBBY

So, you don't have any heat over there? You must be freezing. Would you like some tea or coffee? There's scotch. But I guess you figured that out.

FRANK

Libby, I'm fine. I know you're tired. Just point me toward the spare room. I don't want to be any more trouble.

LIBBY

Trouble?

Once more, she is fighting back tears.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

You are no trouble.

(beat)

I'm going to make some hot chocolate. That was your favorite. I remember.

FRANK

Libby...

LIBBY

Don't say another word. I'm going to do it. So, just sit down and relax. We have so much to talk about.

CROSS FADE TO:

MONTAGE -- SLOWLY CIRCLING TO VIEW FACES AND EYES

Frank and Libby are seated across from each other at a small table. As she talks, Libby has never been more beautiful. Frank can't stop looking at her. As their faces appear, only fragments of the conversation are heard. The true meaning of what is taking place is not in words, but in their eyes. It is the dawn of joy.

Circling to her face...

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY (CONT'D)

...I got my nursing degree in Chicago. Till then, things hadn't gone well for me. I wanted it to be the start of a whole new life...

Circling to his face...

FRANK

...So, they asked me to coach the swimming team and I loved it. Teaching was wonderful. When the school closed I felt lost...

Circling to her face...

LIBBY

...She lives across the lake. The last time you saw her, she was just a baby. She's twenty-five now and so beautiful...

(beat; with sorrow)

But she's had a hard time...

Circling to his face...

FRANK

...I love the Ojibwa people. When I was a boy I used to hang around the old men while they were fishing. I helped them paint the church.

(beat)

Libby, it's just wonderful to see you again.

The MONTAGE ENDS with the jarring ring of a telephone. Libby gets up and answers it.

LIBBY

Clinic.

As she listens, an awful look comes into her eyes.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Oh, my God...

(beat; listening)

The doctor's asleep. He's really not in shape...

(beat)

All right, all right. We'll get there as fast as we can.

She hangs up and runs toward the stairs.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

There's been a shooting at a bar.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY (CONT'D)

The paramedics are all the way across the county. I've got to get Tom over there.

FRANK

What can I do to help?

LIBBY

Get his medical bag. It's behind that counter. Then, you can drive us.

24 EXT. MEDICAL CLINIC -- MOMENTS LATER

24

Libby helps Tom outside. Frank is right behind them carrying the bag. The doctor is not doing very well.

TOM

This's a helluva thing. I've warned these Indians a hundred times 'bout guns. Reservation's full of 'em. Indians, guns and booze -- they just don' mix.

LIBBY

It didn't happen on the reservation, Tom. And we don't know who it is.

TOM

Oh, it's Indians. It's always Indians.

They go to a late model BMW parked in front. Libby and Tom get in the back, Frank slides in behind the wheel.

25 EXT. ROAD NEXT TO CHURCH -- MOMENTS LATER

25

The BMW eases out on the frozen lake, into the path between the cones.

26 INT. BMW -- CONTINUOUS

26

When Tom realizes what they're doing, he panics.

TOM

Wait. Where're we goin'? No, I don' wanna go this way. Not over the ice. Take the road.

LIBBY

We can't. We've got to get there fast.

TOM

I don' care. I hate the ice.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

It's perfectly safe. It's a foot thick except at the mouth of the river and that's marked off with barrels.

TOM

(moaning)

We're gonna drown. We're all gonna die.

FRANK

(he can't help it)

Hey, if we go in, don't worry. I spent twenty years as a swimming coach.

Libby laughs.

TOM

Very funny. You hear him, Libby? A funny priest. Your high school screw's a comedian.

LIBBY

(utterly disgusted)

Tom, shut up!

27 EXT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- NIGHT

27

The BMW pulls into the parking lot of The Homestead. The doors open. Frank, Libby and Tom get out. Frank carries the medical bag. A crowd is gathered in the forest nearby.

As they rush toward it, they see an old pick-up truck. Both doors are open and the windows are blown out. Verna is leaning inside through the driver's door and she is hysterical. Near the truck stand the Judge and Toad.

LIBBY

OH, MY GOD, IT'S ROGER'S TRUCK!
VERNA!

28 INT. OLD PICK-UP TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

28

In the truck, lying on his back, covered with blood is Roger Upward. Kneeling next to him on the passenger side is a regal-looking Ojibwa man in his early fifties. This is CAESAR PIPE. His fist is stuffed under Roger's back. Tom stares dumbly at the mess.

TOM

Look at this. Didn't I tell you?
Indians, booze and guns.

Libby takes control.

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY

Let me through.

Libby moves to the driver's side of the truck.

CAESAR PIPE

(calmly)

There's a hole in his back. If I take my hand out it's gonna start gushing.

LIBBY

Tom, give me the bag.

TOM

Hey, wait a minute. I'm the Doctor.

LIBBY

Not while you're drunk. Just stand back.

Libby searches through the bag, pulling out a Vaseline gauze bandage. Pushing Verna aside, she leans into the vehicle.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Verna, move. You're in the way.

VERNA

DON'T LET HIM DIE. PLEASE DON'T LET HIM DIE.

LIBBY

Judge, keep her back.

The Judge pulls Verna a few steps away. Libby unwraps the bandage and hands it to Caesar. Then she rips off Roger's shirt.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Put the bandage on the exit wound. Keep pressure on it with your hand. Does anybody have any blankets?

WOMAN #1

I do.

LIBBY

Get them.

A woman runs toward a nearby car. Tom stands looking confused. Everyone ignores him.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

I want to get him out of the truck so I can take a look at the injuries. Caesar keep the pressure on his back.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Okay, on three. Lift him up.
One...two...three.

Caesar Pipe, Frank and several other men lift Roger out of the truck. The woman runs up and spreads blankets on the ground.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Lay him on his side.

Gently, the men lay him on the blankets. Roger is moaning.

TOM

The man's in pain give him some morphine.

LIBBY

He's drunk and high on drugs. I can't give him morphine.

Verna is praying.

VERNA

Oh, God, please, oh, God, please,
oh, God, please...

Libby inspects the wound and then covers Roger with several blankets.

LIBBY

(to Toad)

What happened here?

JUDGE BIGELOW

We don't know. He came in, had a few drinks, caused a little problem and we had to make him leave. Guess he shot himself. Music was loud and nobody heard it. So it was awhile before he was found.

VERNA

Oh, God, I did this to him. It's my fault. He just wanted me to come home.

Tom stares stupidly, as Libby tries to get Roger's vital signs. Frank leans close to the dying man.

FRANK

Roger, I'm a priest. My name is Frank.

(CONTINUED)

ROGER

(very weak)

Father...I'm not gonna make it.
They're coming for me. They were
here before and they're coming back.

FRANK

Hang on. Don't give up.

ROGER

I'm...scared. I've done....a lot of
bad things.

FRANK

We've all done bad things. God will
forgive you if you ask Him. That's
why He sent His Son, to take our
sins away.

Roger's eyes are filled with fear.

ROGER

(a whisper)

Jesus, help me. Forgive me...

He continues whispering. Suddenly, his eyes are filled with
peace. The fear is gone. Frank begins giving the last rites
of the church. When Verna sees this she goes crazy.

VERNA

WHAT IS HE DOING? NO, NO, NO...NOT
THAT. NOT THAT?

The Judge keeps her from rushing forward.

LIBBY

(to the Judge)

Take her inside.

The Judge picks up Verna who is screaming and crying and
carries her toward the building.

29 INT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- LATER

29

Verna sits at the bar with a drink in front of her, staring
at nothing as though she is a block of stone. Frank, Libby
and Tom enter. Libby is struggling not to cry. Her hands
and clothes are covered with blood.

LIBBY

Verna, this is Father Frank Healy.
He's our new priest. Maybe you could
talk to him.

Verna doesn't move or speak. Her eyes are cold.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE BIGELOW

You want to wash up? There's a rest room right through there.

Libby heads toward it.

JUDGE BIGELOW (CONT'D)

Drinks are on the house.

FRANK

None for me.

TOM

(mumbling)

Damn paramedics. Took'em an hour to get here. Not that it woulda mattered. Had a hole in his back the size of a baseball. He'da died in a trauma center. Gimme a scotch.

The Judge pours him a scotch. He downs it.

Slowly, Verna looks up at him. It's as though something horrible is coming alive in her. Suddenly, with a shriek she leaps off the stool and goes after Tom. Clawing at his eyes and hitting him.

VERNA

YOU DRUNK SON OF A BITCH. YOU DID THIS TO HIM AND THEN YOU LET HIM DIE.

Tom falls back hard onto the floor with Verna on top of him.

TOM

GET HER OFF ME. SHE'S CRAZY.

Frank and the Judge pull Verna off. Once more, the Judge picks her up and starts carrying her out shrieking.

JUDGE BIGELOW

Don't worry, it's gonna be okay. I'll take care of her. She'll be all right.

Libby has heard the screaming and rushes into the room.

LIBBY

No, I want to take her home.

Suddenly, all of Verna's rage is directed at her mother. She spits at her.

VERNA

I DON'T HAVE ANY HOME. MY HOME IS HELL.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE BIGELOW

Why don't you come back tomorrow,
Mrs. Pearsall?

The Judge carries Verna out. Libby fights back tears. Tom struggles up off the floor.

TOM

Try to save somebody's life and this
is the thanks you get. Come on.
Let's get outta here.

He stalks toward the door.

30 INT. CHURCH BACK ROOM -- MORNING

30

It's very early morning and COLD. Frank who has had almost no sleep and is bleary-eyed, stands next to Caesar Pipe who looks as refreshed as though he'd just come back from a long vacation. Both men are in parkas. Every time they exhale there is steam. The front of the monster furnace has been removed and parts are spread out on the floor.

FRANK

So, what do you think?

Caesar grunts negatively.

FRANK (CONT'D)

That doesn't sound good.

CAESAR PIPE

It's just kind of weird.

Frank stares at him, but nothing more is forthcoming.

FRANK

What's kind of weird?

CAESAR PIPE

See this?

He points to a tiny part.

CAESAR PIPE (CONT'D)

I'd be able to fix the whole thing
right now, except this little whingy's
broken. Looks like it got bashed.
Mystery to me how it could've happened
hangin' up here on the wall.

Frank shakes his head, totally disgusted.

FRANK

Maybe some jerk kicked it.

(CONTINUED)

CAESAR PIPE

Who'd be stupid enough to do that,
Father?

FRANK

Oh, there are some pretty stupid
people in the world.

A slow smile comes to Caesar's face.

CAESAR PIPE

Yeah, I guess so. Anyway, I'm going
to Berrington tomorrow. I'll get a
new part.

Frank turns away

FRANK

It's FREEZING in here. I can't ask
people to sit through a Mass.

CAESAR PIPE

Won't bother us if you can handle
it. Saw those Florida license plates.

Frank looks at him.

FRANK

I can handle it.

(beat)

Well, at least we can get the rest
of the church cleaned up.

CAESAR PIPE

My small appliances won't add to the
worship experience?

FRANK

Probably not.

31 INT. GREAT SPIRIT LIGHT CATHOLIC CHURCH -- CONTINUOUS

31

The men enter the main sanctuary and begin removing Caesar's
tools and equipment to the back room.

FRANK

I take it you knew that young man,
Roger Upward.

CAESAR PIPE

Since he was born.

FRANK

Why'd he commit suicide?

CAESAR PIPE

He didn't.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

Somebody said he shot himself.

CAESAR PIPE

It was an accident. He told me while we were waiting for the doctor.

FRANK

So, how'd it happen?

CAESAR PIPE

High on drugs and booze. Started hallucinating. Said he saw the ancestors coming to take him away. Shot out the windows. When he tried to crawl out the back, he shot himself.

FRANK

History of drug abuse?

Caesar shakes his head.

CAESAR PIPE

Clean until six months ago. Fine young man.

FRANK

Why the change?

CAESAR PIPE

Don't know. Maybe bad female associations.

FRANK

We make our own choices, Caesar.

CAESAR PIPE

You're right. But a pretty woman sure can skew the process.

A slightly haunted look comes to Frank's eyes. He turns toward the black cable that hangs from the ceiling.

FRANK

About this cord...

CAESAR PIPE

I could run it outside down the roof.

FRANK

I was thinking maybe the satellite dish needs to go.

CAESAR PIPE

But it's such a good place for it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CAESAR PIPE (CONT'D)
 If I stick it off in the trees I
 can't pick up anything.

FRANK
 (wearily)
 Okay, for right now just get it up
 so I won't have to see it every time
 I face the congregation. The way I
 feel this morning I might want to
 use it to hang myself.

Caesar smiles and starts working on the cord.

32 EXT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- MORNING

32

The Homestead parking lot is empty. The Pearsall's BMW pulls in and parks. Libby gets out. She looks tired and emotionally drained, but resolute. Roger Upward's truck is gone, but his blood is still on the snow. With a great heaviness of heart, Libby walks toward the building.

From a second floor window, Verna is watching. Her eyes are distant and strange. As she stares down at her mother, her face hardens and she turns away.

Libby walks up and tries to open the door, but it's locked. She knocks. Toad's voice comes from inside.

TOAD (O.S.)
 We're closed.

LIBBY
 It's Mrs. Pearsall.

A moment later, the door opens and Toad looks up at her.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
 (calmly)
 I'd like to see my daughter.

Toad steps back and she enters.

33 INT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- CONTINUOUS

33

Judge Bigelow enters the empty bar from the back room. He's wearing a bathrobe and slippers. Toad has been cleaning up the place. He continues working.

JUDGE BIGELOW
 Hello, Mrs. Pearsall.

LIBBY
 I'd like to see Verna.

The Judge glares at Toad.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE BIGELOW

You mind? Could we have a little space in here?

Toad shrugs and leaves the room. When he's gone, the Judge turns back to Libby.

JUDGE BIGELOW (CONT'D)

Could I get you a drink or somethin'?

LIBBY

Judge Bigelow, would you please tell Verna that I'm here?

JUDGE BIGELOW

(very uncomfortable)

Look, she saw you drive in and she doesn't want to come down.

LIBBY

(remaining totally calm)

Why not?

JUDGE BIGELOW

I don't know. I guess she's still not feelin' too good.

LIBBY

Are you telling me that she's too ill to speak for herself?

JUDGE BIGELOW

Mrs. Pearsall, I'm not the problem here. I'm just tryin' to help.

Libby stares at him. He can't quite return the gaze.

LIBBY

I'm her mother. All I want is a few minutes with her.

JUDGE BIGELOW

It isn't my decision. If it was up to me you could go up there right now. You know what she's like, when she gets in one of her moods.

Libby is very upset, but she realizes that she has no options.

LIBBY

(weary)

Would you tell her I love her. And if she needs anything...would you tell her to call?

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE BIGELOW

I sure will give her that message.
Now don't worry. It's gonna be all
right. Just give her a little time.

In great pain, Libby turns away.

34 EXT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- MOMENTS LATER 34

Libby leaves the building and walks to her car. She's about to get in, when she glances up toward the second floor window. For a split second, she sees Verna looking down. When Verna realizes that her mother has seen her, she turns away. For a moment, Libby continues gazing up at the window with a deep longing in her eyes.

35 INT. GREAT SPIRIT LIGHT CATHOLIC CHURCH -- MORNING 35

Twenty members of the Ojibwa tribe have come to the service. The group includes: Caesar Pipe, his wife and teenage son. Everyone is wearing coats and exhaling steam. Up at the front, Frank is celebrating the Mass with his back to the congregation. He's wearing his robe over his parka which makes him look like he weighs four hundred pounds.

Libby slips into the church and sits down at the back. Frank turns toward the congregation. As the people line up to receive the Host, Frank looks at Libby. She doesn't get into line.

36 EXT. GREAT SPIRIT LIGHT CATHOLIC CHURCH -- LATER 36

The service is over. Frank is at the door greeting his parishioners.

FRANK

Remember, I'm staying at the church
Saturday, Sunday and Monday nights
if anyone wants to confess or just
come in and talk. God bless you.

Finally, the last of them is gone. Frank looks out toward the lake. Libby is waiting for him. He takes off his robe, and walks over to her.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Good morning.

LIBBY

The robe over the parka is an unusual
fashion statement.

FRANK

So I've been told.
(beat)
How are you?

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY

I feel like I've been beaten to a pulp.

FRANK

How's Verna?

LIBBY

Not well. I went over and tried to see her. She wants nothing to do with me. I'm very worried.

They begin walking beside the frozen lake.

FRANK

She loved this young man?

LIBBY

I suppose. As much as she can love anyone. They were living together.

(beat)

We've been having trouble with her for years. Drugs, alcohol, you name it.

Tears well in her eyes.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

I just don't know what to do. When I try to get close, she pushes me away. All I know is that I love her.

They walk on for a moment in silence.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

So, welcome to your new church, Father Healy. Your first night in town and you get stuck with an old friend whose life is going to hell.

She looks up at him with such vulnerability that it melts his heart.

FRANK

Libby, finding you is a gift.

LIBBY

Is it?

FRANK

More than you know.

She searches his eyes. But, he only smiles and turns away.

37 EXT. MAIN STREET, HOPE MINNESOTA -- DAY 37

Frank drives slowly down the main street of Hope, Minnesota. Snow is piled up on the curbs. This is a small town and on Sunday afternoon there's even less traffic than normal.

38 INT. CHEVROLET -- CONTINUOUS 38

Frank's eyes search the buildings for memories. But many of the stores are boarded-up up.

FRANK (V.O.)

The settlers named this Hope. My family lived here for three generations. Now the town is dying and I am alone.

39 EXT. STREET OF OLD HOUSES -- MOMENTS LATER 39

Frank's car turns onto a street of large old homes. He pulls up and stops in front of one of them.

40 INT. CHEVROLET -- CONTINUOUS 40

He stares longingly at the old house.

FRANK (V.O.)

Why do we go back to the houses of our childhood? Why do we sit in our cars and stare at them when we know that the people we loved are gone?

(beat)

I was an only child. My mother died in that front bedroom when I was eight years old. Every day at school, I dreamed of seeing her face in the window when I came home.

41 EXT. STREET OF OLD HOUSES -- CONTINUOUS 41

Slowly, Frank's car pulls away.

42 EXT. HOPE CEMETERY -- MOMENTS LATER 42

The Chevrolet drives through the gates of the town cemetery. A short distance down a small road it stops. Frank gets out. His parka is open. Under it he's wearing a black suit and a priest's collar. He walks over to some graves. The largest stone is marked "Healy." On it are the names of his mother and father. A sorrow from long ago returns to Frank's eyes.

43 EXT. ST. ANNE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH -- AFTERNOON 43

St. Anne's is the largest Catholic church in the diocese. It's a beautiful, stone building constructed a hundred years ago. Next to it a spacious parish hall.

(CONTINUED)

The parking lot is full of cars. Upbeat music is coming from inside.

Frank's Chevrolet pulls into the lot. He gets out, then, takes off his parka and leaves it in the car. As he walks toward the parish hall, he straightens his jacket. A resigned look comes to his face as he enters the building.

44 INT. PARISH HALL -- CONTINUOUS

44

Frank slides into the hall, trying to keep as low a profile as possible. Several hundred people are enjoying a wonderful, potluck dinner. The kids and some of the adults are playing games of chance spread out around the room. The crowd ranges in age from little children to the elderly. Across the front wall is a banner that reads: SUPPORT CATHOLIC CHARITIES.

Frank tries to remain inconspicuous against a back wall. But, Father Adrian sees him. He gets very excited and waves for him to come forward. This is the last thing that Frank wants to do and shakes his head. So, Father Adrian heads for a microphone.

FATHER ADRIAN

All right, I've got an announcement.
Everybody stop talking for a minute.
Stop the games. This is the noisiest
crowd.

The crowd quiets.

FATHER ADRIAN (CONT'D)

I have a wonderful treat in store
for all of us? A very special person
has just come into this room. You
older people will remember him because
he got into plenty of trouble around
here when he was a boy. Now, he's
come back after twenty-three years
to become pastor of our reservation
church. I want you to give a big,
St. Anne's welcome to our own
Father...Frank...Healy.

The crowd is on its feet clapping and cheering. Frank waves.

FATHER ADRIAN (CONT'D)

No, you don't, Frank. You're not
staying back there. You come up
here right now and say 'hello' to
everybody.

With a resigned smile, Frank makes his way through the cheering crowd toward the front.

45 INT. PARISH HALL -- LATER

45

Frank is standing near the food table. Several older ladies are in line taking their turns greeting him. They include MRS. BOSE, a large lady in a flowered dress.

MRS. BOSE

Frank Healy.

She gives him a voluminous hug.

MRS. BOSE (CONT'D)

I guess I better call you Father Frank from now on. It's so good to see you. You were the smartest student I ever had.

FRANK

That's frightening, Mrs. Bose. You have my profound sympathy.

They both laugh. Another older lady, MRS. ERNEST, sticks a heaping plate of food in his hands.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Oh, I'm never going to be able to eat all of this.

MRS. ERNEST

Well, you sure had better try because every lady who made something on that plate is watching you.

With a groan, Frank digs in. Father Adrian sidles up behind him and whispers in his ear.

FATHER ADRIAN

See those mushrooms? Whatever you do, don't put one of'em in your mouth. Every time Mildred Tusow makes'em the whole church gets the runs.

But, at that moment, up walks MILDRED TUSOW herself.

MILDRED TUSOW

Father Frank, you got some of my mushrooms. It's the best batch I've made in years. I want you to taste one right now and tell me what you think of it.

(beat)

Go ahead. You're going to love them.

Father Adrian gives Frank an evil smile and walks away. Frank stares at Mildred...then, down at the mushrooms.

46 EXT. PARISH HALL -- AFTERNOON

46

Frank walks out of the hall, greeting people as he goes. Suddenly, a man in his sixties with a sallow face approaches. This is MR. SACKETT.

MR. SACKETT

Welcome back, Father.

FRANK

Thank you.

MR. SACKETT

Just got one question. Why're you wasting your time out there with the Indians? That church is nothing but a money drain. I thought we'd closed it down permanently. If those people want to go to church, why don't they come here to St. Anne's?

Instantly, Frank's anger rises, but he manages to control it.

FRANK

It's a long way, especially in summer when you have to drive around the lake.

MR. SACKETT

Doesn't make any difference. You'll never get more than twenty of 'em inside a church no matter where it is. I give you six months and you'll be back here at St. Anne's full time.

FRANK

(coldly)

I don't think so, but thanks for your opinion.

Frank turns away.

47 INT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- AFTERNOON

47

Half a dozen people are inside. Toad is at his station behind the bar. The door opens and Tom Pearsall enters. He walks up to Toad.

TOM

Where is he?

TOAD

Upstairs.

Tom walks through the bar to a door at the back.

Judge Bigelow is seated at a table. He's wearing reading glasses and going over receipts. Tom enters. The Judge glances up at him, then back down at the papers. Tom goes to the refrigerator, gets a beer, then sits down across from him.

JUDGE BIGELOW
Helluva thing last night.

TOM
Yeah, helluva thing. Where's Verna?

JUDGE BIGELOW
Sleeping.

TOM
How's she doin'?

JUDGE BIGELOW
(working the receipts)
I got her feelin' good again.

TOM
Decided to make a trip to Chicago.

JUDGE BIGELOW
When you goin'?

TOM
Tonight.
(beat)
Been thinking about doubling the amount of product I bring back. Can you handle it?

JUDGE BIGELOW
Absolutely.

TOM
I just don't want to flood the distribution channels before you're ready.

JUDGE BIGELOW
I told you, I was ready a month ago. I got people on four reservations wantin' to know when I can start delivering.

TOM
Well, maybe it's time for a little corporate expansion.

Suddenly, into the room walks Verna. She's disheveled and very high on drugs.

(CONTINUED)

There is a dreamy, distant look in her eyes. She sits down and stares at Tom as though he isn't really there. The Judge gets up and carries the papers to a filing cabinet.

TOM (CONT'D)

How're you feeling?

VERNA

Feeling?

(beat)

I'm not feeling...anything.

(beat)

And that's very...very...good.

TOM

I'm going to Chicago tonight. Just a short trip. Thought you might like to come along.

VERNA

You want to take me...

(beat)

To Chicago?

TOM

It'd give you a chance to see your psychiatrist down there.

She stares at him.

TOM (CONT'D)

You haven't been to him in awhile and you know how much he helps you. So, what do you say? You want to go?

She looks over at the Judge.

JUDGE BIGELOW

Why don't you do it? It'd give you a little break.

Verna looks absolutely lost. Tom pats her arm.

TOM

I'll be around at ten o'clock, sweetie. Can you have her ready, Judge?

JUDGE BIGELOW

She'll be waiting.

As Tom leaves, Verna takes out a cigarette. She has a hard time lighting it because, suddenly, her hands are shaking.

49 EXT. OLD DANCE HALL -- EVENING 49

It's dusk. Frank's Chevrolet pulls up outside an abandoned dance hall on the edge of town. He gets out and stares at the place. It's in bad shape. Slowly, he walks around the building, looking at it. In the back, he finds an unlocked door and goes inside.

50 INT. OLD DANCE HALL -- CONTINUOUS 50

The walls are covered with graffiti. The ceiling is half fallen in. Dirty snow covers the floor. But, as Frank stands in the dim light, he isn't seeing the building the way it is now. He is in the past...hearing the sound of slow-dance rock.

FLASHBACK BEGINS

51 INT. DANCE HALL (1972) -- NIGHT 51

Lights flash from a mirror ball. The hall is full of teenagers dancing cheek to cheek. Into the hall walks sixteen-year-old Frank with Libby. They're laughing. As Frank looks at her, it's obvious that he is head-over-heels in love. And Libby knows it.

LIBBY AT SIXTEEN

This is my favorite song. Come on,
let's dance.

She takes his hand and leads him out onto the floor.

FRANK AT SIXTEEN

I'm afraid I'm not very good at this.
I've never done it before.

LIBBY AT SIXTEEN

You've never been dancing?

FRANK AT SIXTEEN

Not really.

She moves in close.

LIBBY AT SIXTEEN

Well, I'll teach you. Just put your
arms around me like this.

She guides him. Then, she puts her arms around his neck. Suddenly, his face is in her hair, and he's in heaven.

LIBBY AT SIXTEEN (CONT'D)

Now, we move together.

They begin dancing.

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY AT SIXTEEN (CONT'D)

See, it's easy.

Frank's eyes are closed. It's as though he's in a dream. What he doesn't see is Libby's face. She's not into dancing with him at all. Her attention is focused on a powerfully built older guy who's with another girl. This is VERNON JESSEN. He's twenty and has "bad boy" written all over him.

As Frank and Libby dance, she slowly maneuvers them toward Jessen's location. When they are near, she and Vernon exchange looks.

Frank is still living in the dream world of Libby's hair, when he is jarred back to reality by a hand on his shoulder. He looks up and sees Vernon Jessen.

VERNON JESSEN

My turn. I'm cuttin' in.

Frank stands dumbfounded as Vernon and Libby begin to dance. It's obvious that she's really into it. Every move is smooth and tight and sexy. Frank is so shocked that, for a moment, he doesn't know what to do. Finally, he wanders off the floor. Several guys nearby have seen it all. They snicker at him.

BOY #1

Looks like you've been replaced.

As the full realization hits him, Frank creeps into the darkness. For a moment, he watches Vernon and Libby dance.

FRANK (V.O.)

As I watched Libby dance with Vernon Jessen I couldn't understand what had happened. Had he felt sorry for her dancing with someone as clumsy as me? But, down deep I knew it was more than that.

(beat)

Later I found out from one of her friends that she had planned the whole thing.

Vernon is about to kiss her. And it's obvious that Libby wants it. With a look of incredible pain, Frank walks out the door.

52 EXT. DANCE HALL (1972) -- LATER

52

Sixteen-year-old Frank sits alone in an old pick-up truck. The door to the dance hall opens. Libby and Vernon walk out holding hands. She is laughing. Going over to a sleek muscle car, they get in and drive away.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK (V.O.)

Vernon had been her target all along. But he was older and didn't seem interested. She used me to make him jealous. Six months later she was pregnant and they got married.

Tears run down Frank's cheeks.

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

That was the first and only dance of my whole life. As long as I live, I'll never forget that night -- the softness of the music, the hurt...and the perfume in her hair.

FLASHBACK ENDS

53 INT. OLD DANCE HALL -- EVENING 53

Frank takes a last look around the dilapidated room, then, turns toward the door.

54 INT. MEDICAL CLINIC -- NIGHT 54

Libby is setting up equipment for their next day's appointments. Her work is feverish. She's very tense. Tom walks into the room eating a pizza. She drops a glass tray and it breaks.

LIBBY

Damn it!

She begins cleaning it up.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

You're eating down here again. This place is impossible to keep clean. We almost didn't pass our last inspection.

TOM

(with his mouth full)

Hey, I'm sorry. I forgot.

LIBBY

You didn't forget. You do it all the time.

TOM

Want some?

LIBBY

NO.

(CONTINUED)

TOM
All right. I'm throwing it away.
See? It's gone.

He throws the half eaten pizza in the trash. Libby still glares at him. He comes close and puts his arm around her. She seems to freeze. He steps back.

TOM (CONT'D)
Look, I know you're really upset,
but everything is gonna be okay.

LIBBY
(fighting back tears)
How can you say that? Nothing is
going to be 'okay.'

TOM
Libby, I'm going to do something for
all of us and you've got to trust
me.

She stares at him, not trusting him at all.

TOM (CONT'D)
I'm taking a trip to Chicago for
medical supplies and I want to leave
tonight.

Libby can't believe what she's hearing.

LIBBY
Like hell you are.

TOM
Now, I said you've got to trust me.

She blows up.

LIBBY
My daughter's life is falling apart.
I can't stop crying. And you're
going to Chicago to pick up medical
supplies?

Instantly, he becomes sweetness and light.

TOM
Will you take it easy?

He tries to put his arms around her again. She shoves him away.

LIBBY
DAMN YOU! GET AWAY FROM ME!

(CONTINUED)

TOM

I saw Verna this afternoon at Judge Bigelow's.

LIBBY

What? Why didn't you tell me?

TOM

That's what I'm trying to do now.

LIBBY

How is she? What did she say?

A deeply troubled look comes to his face.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Tom, I want to hear every word.

TOM

(the words seem to
come hard)

She's pretty sick, honey. I can't understand where it comes from, but she despises you. It was hard for me to listen to her. All she could talk about was how she never wanted to see you again. It was disjointed...crazy.

Libby is heartbroken.

LIBBY

Oh, God...

He puts his arm around her. This time she doesn't pull away.

TOM

I didn't want to tell you because I didn't want you to be hurt you any more. Now, don't blame yourself for this. She's been close to a breakdown for a long time.

LIBBY

WHO ELSE AM I SUPPOSED TO BLAME?

TOM

I got her to go with me to Chicago to see Dr. Winter. That's the real reason for the trip.

Hope comes to Libby's face.

LIBBY

I want to go along.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

Sweetheart, if you show up tonight,
she won't even come downstairs.
You've got to let me do this my way.

Libby is heartbroken. She can't stop crying.

LIBBY

Do you think he'll put her in an
institution?

TOM

I don't know. But we'll talk on the
phone before any decision is made.

Tom walks over to a cabinet, takes out a bottle of scotch
and starts to pour himself a drink. Libby rushes up and
grabs it from him.

LIBBY

NO. You're not doing that if you're
driving tonight.

TOM

Okay...okay.

She puts the bottle away.

TOM (CONT'D)

Listen, while I'm gone, if you get
really depressed and need some company
that new priest seems like a fine
man.

LIBBY

He is.

TOM

And good looking too. Bet he was
real good looking when he was young.

(beat)

Now, tell me the truth, Libby. We've
always been honest with each other.
Did you ever sleep with him?

Libby stares at him.

LIBBY

NO. I said he was just a friend and
I meant it.

TOM

I mean, it wouldn't bother me if you
had. A couple of hot blooded young
kids...

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY
Tom, we didn't sleep together.

TOM
 (with a gentle smile)
 Well, if you didn't, I'll bet you
 wanted to.
 (beat; with soft
 understanding)
 Maybe you still do. I saw the way
 you were looking at him.

LIBBY
 SHUT UP, TOM. HE'S A PRIEST.

He gets close, but he doesn't touch her.

TOM
 (softly)
 Libby, Libby...you can't hide your
 feelings from me? I can read you
 like a book. I'm just saying whatever
 you want, it's okay. Our
 relationship's been pretty rocky
 lately, but I trust you. If you
 need a little excitement it wouldn't
 bother me at all.

Libby can't stand to hear another word. She starts screaming.

LIBBY
 WE'VE NEVER SLEPT TOGETHER AND WE
 NEVER WILL. WHY DO YOU HAVE TO TURN
 EVERYTHING INTO UGLINESS?

She storms up the stairs and slams the door. Tom watches
 her go with a cold, satisfied look in his eyes.

55 INT. LIBBY'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

55

Alone in her bedroom, Libby is distraught. For a moments
 all she can do is pace and stare like a caged animal. Slowly,
 her rage dissipates into sorrow. Going to a closet, she
 takes out a scrap book and opens it.

On a center page is a clipping with a senior picture of Frank
 and a headline that reads: STAR ATHLETE AND HONOR STUDENT TO
 GO TO SEMINARY.

CU LIBBY'S EYES

In them is incredible longing.

FLASHBACK BEGINS

It's between classes. The drive in front of a beautiful, Catholic seminary is full of students (all male). Out the front door comes Frank Healy. He's twenty now and much more sophisticated. Suddenly, his eyes widen in surprise.

On the drive sits Vernon Jessen's muscle car. But it doesn't look nearly as sleek as it did at the dance hall. It's filthy, there's a scratch on the side, a crack in the windshield and the engine is running very hard. Reluctantly, Frank walks over and looks inside.

Libby (now twenty) is behind the wheel. Though, she's beautiful, her clothes are shabby, the kind a poor farm woman might wear. Tension and a desperate hopefulness are in her eyes. On the seat beside her is BABY VERNA, now three years old.

LIBBY AT TWENTY

Hi!

FRANK AT TWENTY

Hi!

LIBBY AT TWENTY

You don't look glad to see me.

FRANK AT TWENTY

Oh...I am.

(beat)

What are you doing here, Libby?

LIBBY AT TWENTY

It's been a long time. I thought we'd just come and visit. I wanted you to meet my little girl.

(beat)

Verna, this is Uncle Frank.

The baby stares up at him.

FRANK AT TWENTY

Where's Vernon?

LIBBY AT TWENTY

Back at the farm. Look, I just had to talk to you. It's lunch time. I brought a picnic. Is there someplace we could go for a few minutes?

Frank looks very uncomfortable. Some of the students stare at Libby as they pass.

FRANK AT TWENTY

Look, I'm really not supposed to go off campus without permission...

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY AT TWENTY
Just for lunch?

FRANK AT TWENTY
Especially with...a woman who isn't
in my family...

She's close to tears.

FRANK AT TWENTY (CONT'D)
Okay. There's a park half a mile
from here. West on highway 40.
I'll meet you there in fifteen
minutes.

She nods and drives away. Looking very guilty, Frank cuts
across the campus.

57 EXT. PARK -- DAY

57

Frank walks through the deserted park. Libby's car sits
near a stream in a grove of trees. As he approaches, he
sees that she has a blanket spread and a beautiful lunch
laid out. Baby Verna is playing quietly nearby.

LIBBY AT TWENTY
I've got ham and turkey sandwiches,
coleslaw slaw, dill pickles and a
lot of other stuff. There're soft
drinks and beer in the cooler.
(beat)
Ham or turkey?

FRANK AT TWENTY
Uh, turkey.

He gets a soft drink. She hands him a plate with a big
sandwich.

LIBBY AT TWENTY
I'm leaving Vernon.

FRANK AT TWENTY
(not looking at her)
I'm sorry to hear that.

LIBBY AT TWENTY
But you're not surprised.

FRANK AT TWENTY
I was surprised when you married
him.

LIBBY AT TWENTY
I was pregnant.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK AT TWENTY

I guess that's a good enough reason.

LIBBY AT TWENTY

No, it wasn't. It never is.

He glances at her, but can't hold her gaze.

LIBBY AT TWENTY (CONT'D)

Frank, I'm twenty years old and I feel like an old woman. Can you imagine what life is like on that awful farm? I feed the chickens, I feed the goats, I feed the cows. Vernon feeds the cows and butchers the chickens and his mother gathers the eggs and cooks the chickens and herds the cows. How did this happen? How did I get trapped in this kind of life? Do you know anything about goats, Frank?

FRANK AT TWENTY

No.

LIBBY AT TWENTY

They STINK. And they NEVER stop making noise.

FRANK AT TWENTY

Sounds pretty bad.

Frank takes a bite of the sandwich. There is silence for a few moments.

LIBBY AT TWENTY

It's been years since we've seen each other, but I think about you all the time. And I just had to talk to you.

(beat)

I told myself, he's studying to be a priest and you're only asking for trouble. But, it's like I couldn't help it. It's like if I didn't talk to you, I'd die.

(beat)

Do you ever think about me, Frank?

FRANK AT TWENTY

Sure. You're hard to forget, Libby.

LIBBY AT TWENTY

Am I?

As she struggles for words, there is a quaver in her voice and confusion in her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY AT TWENTY (CONT'D)

I need to know...is there a chance we could ever...get together? I mean...I'm so lonesome for you. It's like nothing I've ever felt before and I'm wondering if it's love. Do you know what true love feels like, Frank? I'm not sure I know. Can you tell me?

Frank's mouth is dry.

FRANK AT TWENTY

'Fraid I can't help you there.

LIBBY AT TWENTY

Anyway, I just couldn't stand it anymore not seeing you. So, I went to the bank and asked your dad when you were coming home on vacation. He said you might be staying here.

FRANK AT TWENTY

I've got a job this summer as a swimming coach at a camp near here.

LIBBY AT TWENTY

Aren't you ever coming home again?

There is longing, hurt and fear in her eyes.

FRANK AT TWENTY

(gently)

I love it here, Libby. This is my home now.

LIBBY AT TWENTY

Are you going to be a priest for sure?

FRANK AT TWENTY

Probably.

LIBBY AT TWENTY

But not for sure?

FRANK AT TWENTY

Probably for sure.

LIBBY AT TWENTY

So, in other words, there's no chance for us...

He looks straight into her eyes.

FRANK AT TWENTY

There's no chance.

(CONTINUED)

Silently, she begins crying.

LIBBY AT TWENTY

Sometimes...Vernon gets drunk...and hits me...just like my father used to do.

FRANK AT TWENTY

That means you've got to leave him. You can't stay one day longer.

LIBBY AT TWENTY

I know.

FLASHBACK ENDS

58 INT. LIBBY'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS 58

There are tears in Libby's eyes as she closes the scrap book. She hears the front door of the clinic slam shut and walks to the window. She watches as Tom gets in the BMW and drives away.

59 INT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- NIGHT 59

As usual, the place is rocking. Judge Bigelow presides from a tall stool behind the bar. Toad is pouring drinks. Among the people at the bar is Caesar Pipe. A young guy is singing karaoke and he's awful. The crowd is laughing at him.

Suddenly, into the room from the back walks Verna. She looks absolutely horrible. She's tried to put on make-up, but it's streaked and smeared. Her hair is tangled and her eyes look wild.

At first, the crowd doesn't really notice her as she makes her way toward the bar. When people do see her, they whisper to each other. Judge Bigelow walks up to her, but she pushes him away.

Going behind the bar, Verna takes down a bottle of scotch. She tries to pour herself a drink, but her hands are shaking so badly that more goes on the counter than in the glass.

Suddenly, she starts SCREAMING and in one second goes completely insane.

With the bottle of scotch, she begins smashing other bottles. Glass flies everywhere. The crowd around the bar yells and dives for cover. The Judge and Toad move toward her.

JUDGE BIGELOW

VERNA!

But she's like a cornered animal. The bottle is broken. She slashes at them with it.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE BIGELOW (CONT'D)
GIVE ME THAT!

VERNA
GET AWAY FROM ME. DON'T TOUCH ME.

A strange look comes into her eyes. Turning the bottle in her hand, she slices her own arm from the elbow to the wrist.

VERNA (CONT'D)
(calmly)
I want to die. It's time for me to die.

Caesar Pipe jumps over the bar and grabs her. She shrieks and kicks at him. The Judge grabs the bottle. The wound on her arm is gushing blood.

CAESAR PIPE
GIVE ME YOUR BELT. GET A TOWEL.

Toad gives him his belt, then a towel. Verna is still screaming and kicking. The Judge holds her while Caesar applies a tourniquet.

JUDGE BIGELOW
(to Toad)
Call the paramedics.

CAESAR PIPE
No, it'll be faster if I take her to the hospital myself. You ride along and hold her.

60 EXT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- MOMENTS LATER 60

Tom's BMW pulls into the parking lot just as Caesar's old police car heads out with its lights flashing. Staring after it, Tom goes inside.

61 INT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- MOMENTS LATER 61

Toad is cleaning up the mess. Music is playing, but the crowd is still shaken. Tom sits down at the bar.

TOM
Looks like somebody had some fun.

TOAD
It was Verna. She went nuts. Came in, wrecked the place, and slashed her arm with a bottle. Caesar and the Judge are taking her to Berrington. You can catch'em if you hurry.

(CONTINUED)

TOM
 (shrugging)
 There's nothin' I can do. Crazy
 bitch.
 (beat)
 I'm headin' out. Gimme one for the
 road.

62 INT. FATHER ADRIAN'S HOUSE -- SITTING ROOM -- MORNING

62

Father Adrian lives in an old Victorian home with five bedrooms. He begins each morning the same way, in the sitting room, relaxing in a huge recliner chair, eating a plateful of waffles while he watches the morning news. The ANCHOR is a beautiful, young woman in a red dress. While Father Adrian stares at the television with rapt attention, around him bustles his housekeeper, MARCELLA TATZIG, dusting furniture.

MARCELLA TATZIG
 Only nine socks in the wash this
 morning, Father. Where's the other
 one?

FATHER ADRIAN
 Maybe under the bed?

MARCELLA TATZIG
 I looked under the bed.

FATHER ADRIAN
 Then, I don't know, Marcella, but
 it'll appear.

MARCELLA TATZIG
 This house needs new insulation.
 Morning's like this, it's drafty.
 Cat'll be up on the furniture all
 day.

FATHER ADRIAN
 That's not good.

MARCELLA TATZIG
 I saw a TV special on insulation.

FATHER ADRIAN
 I saw a TV special on getting rid of
 cats.

Frank enters the room. He's dressed for the day in casual clothes.

FATHER ADRIAN (CONT'D)
 Frank...good morning.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

Morning, Adrian. Morning, Mrs. Tatzig.

MARCELLA TATZIG

If you're ready for breakfast, I've got waffles, Father. Waffles every morning. That's all he ever wants.

FRANK

(laughing)
Waffles will be fine.

Marcella leaves the room.

FATHER ADRIAN

TV people are smart, Frank. Have you ever noticed how smart they are?

FRANK

I don't think so.

FATHER ADRIAN

As the world gets worse and worse, the anchor ladies get prettier.

FRANK

I never noticed that.

FATHER ADRIAN

It's true. I'm sure they planned it that way. It's just easier to hear about everything going to hell from somebody in a tight, red dress.

(tongue in cheek)

She looks good in red, doesn't she, Frank?

FRANK

She does.

FATHER ADRIAN

Why doesn't she wear red more often?

FRANK

I don't know. Maybe you should write a letter and tell her how much you like it.

FATHER ADRIAN

Should I sign it 'Monsignor' or is just plain 'Father' adequate?

Both men laugh. Marcella brings in a plateful of waffles.

MARCELLA TATZIG

Sit down right here.

(CONTINUED)

Frank sits and begins to eat.

MARCELLA TATZIG (CONT'D)
You believe in angels, Father?

FATHER ADRIAN
Marcella, don't start in on angels.
Let the man eat his waffles in peace.

MARCELLA TATZIG
I was in the appliance section at
WalMart. For a split second I saw
this beautiful face reflected in the
top of a new waffle iron.
(glaring at Father
Adrian)
The kind with the non-stick surface.

FRANK
(laughing)
I think it was a sign, Mrs. Tatzig.

FATHER ADRIAN
Don't encourage her.

MARCELLA TATZIG
I think so too.

The door bell rings. Marcella goes to answer it. In a moment, she returns.

MARCELLA TATZIG (CONT'D)
(to Frank)
There's a lady to see you, Father.

Frank wipes his mouth and goes out into the hall.

63 INT. FATHER ADRIAN'S HOUSE -- HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

63

In the doorway stands Libby Pearsall. She's very tense and looks exhausted.

FRANK
Libby, what's the matter?

LIBBY
Verna attempted suicide last night.

FRANK
Oh, dear God. Is she all right?

LIBBY
I think so. She's in the psychiatric
ward at Berrington Hospital. They
wouldn't let me see her until this
morning?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY (CONT'D)

I'm on my way down there right now.
Tom has gone to Chicago.

(beat)

Would you go with me?

FRANK

Let me get my coat.

64 EXT. BERRINGTON HOSPITAL -- DAY 64

Frank and Libby hurry up the steps toward the entrance to the hospital.

65 INT. BERRINGTON HOSPITAL -- PSYCHIATRIC WARD -- MOMENTS LATER 65

They get off an elevator and walk to a door marked: SPECIAL CARE. A smaller sign reads: Press Button For Attendant. Libby presses. A few moments later a small window opens. The face of an attendant appears behind steel mesh.

LIBBY

We're here to see Verna Jessen. I'm
her mother, Libby Pearsall, And
this is Father Frank Healy.

The door opens. Libby and Frank go inside.

66 INT. PSYCHIATRIC CONSULTATION ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER 66

Libby and Frank are waiting in a consultation room. The door opens and a young, resident psychiatrist enters. This is DR. PELLA.

DR. PELLA

I'm Doctor Pella. You're Verna's
mother?

LIBBY

Yes, and this is Father Healy.

DR. PELLA

Pleasure to meet you both. We're
trying to coax Verna out of her room.

LIBBY

How is she?

DR. PELLA

Well, it took forty stitches to close
the wound, but, physically she's
going to be fine.

(beat)

She's...very depressed. As I
understand it, there's been a recent
death of someone that she loved.

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY

Yes.

DR. PELLA

Your daughter has a serious drug and alcohol problem, Mrs. Pearsall. We can only keep her here fourteen days. That's all her HMO will allow. She's going to need a long-term resident program.

The door opens. Verna enters the room. She appears haggard and is wearing a robe that's three sizes too large. Her arm is bandaged. She refuses to look directly at anyone.

LIBBY

Verna...

Libby moves toward her and tries to hug her. Verna flinches and pulls back.

DR. PELLA

Why don't we all sit down and talk for a few minutes.

Verna sits next to Dr. Pella across from Libby and Frank.

LIBBY

You remember Father Healy?

Verna looks at Frank. He smiles at her.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

I've been so worried about you, Sweetie. What happened? Can you talk about it?

Verna says nothing. She just keeps looking at Frank as though she wants to say something but can't. Tears rim her eyes.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Verna, I love you. Whatever's wrong, we'll work through it together.

No response. Libby gropes for some point of contact.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Your father was going to take you to Chicago. Did you see him last night?

Suddenly, Verna turns on her mother with an awful intensity.

VERNA

What did you say?

LIBBY

I said, Tom was going to take you...

(CONTINUED)

VERNA
You called him... 'MY FATHER.'

In her face there is such hatred and contempt that Libby is shocked.

VERNA (CONT'D)
 HE IS NOT MY FATHER. DON'T EVER
 CALL HIM THAT AGAIN.

LIBBY
 I just meant...

VERNA
 SHUT UP. I DON'T WANT TO TALK TO
 YOU. WHY DID YOU COME HERE?

Jumping up, she rushes to the door. It's locked. She pounds on it.

VERNA (CONT'D)
 LET ME OUT, DAMN IT!

Dr. Pella stands.

DR. PELLA
 All right, all right. Let's take it
 easy. I'll open the door.

Unlocking the door with a key, he leads Verna out. In shock, Libby stares after her daughter.

67 INT. CHEVROLET -- DRIVING THROUGH BERRINGTON -- AFTERNOON 67

Frank is behind the wheel. Libby is next to him, crying silently. He sees a charming restaurant and slows the car.

FRANK
 Hey, you know what? I'm hungry.
 Let's stop for lunch. My treat.

68 INT. CHARMING RESTAURANT -- AFTERNOON 68

The restaurant is almost empty. Frank and Libby sit at a small table eating lunch by candlelight. In spite of her sorrow, Libby has never looked more beautiful and vulnerable.

LIBBY
 Do you remember when I came to visit
 you at the seminary?

FRANK
 Yes.

LIBBY
 I embarrassed you horribly, didn't
 I?

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

Don't worry about it. That was a long time ago.

LIBBY

Have you ever wondered what our lives would have been like if you had gone away with me that day? That's what I wanted you to do -- get in the car with me, drive away and never look back.

Frank doesn't answer.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

You made the right choice, Frank. I would have turned your life into hell.

FRANK

I don't believe that.

LIBBY

It's true. I destroy everything I touch.

FRANK

You're a nurse. You touch people all the time to bring healing.

LIBBY

But I can't heal myself or anyone I love. Look at the men I've married. You knew Vernon. He didn't love me. All he wanted was a good lay. And after awhile, I wasn't good enough. That's when he started to beat me.

FRANK

Libby...

Libby's pain registers deeply in Frank's eyes.

LIBBY

No, don't stop me. I'm trying to face the truth. Aren't priests supposed to hear confessions? Well, this is mine.

(beat)

My second husband was even worse. He was a rich, Chicago attorney twenty years older than I was. He paid for nursing school and I thought it was such a wonderful gift.

Libby pauses for a moment. The next words are so difficult that she can hardly speak them.

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY (CONT'D)

But, while I was away at class, he was molesting my daughter.

Tears fill her eyes.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

You know what's so horrible? When she told me about it I didn't believe her. You see what I mean? I destroy things. I was her only hope and I let her down.

(beat)

Finally, I caught him. But, the damage was done.

(beat)

We went to counseling for years trying to deal with what had happened. I thought we had worked it through. But maybe there are some hurts that just never go away.

FRANK

You're carrying so much sorrow, Libby.

LIBBY

Then I met Tom. I was nursing at a Chicago hospital. Verna was going to a girls school.

(beat)

He was a doctor in the emergency room. He seemed like such a friendly, caring person. And he was good to Verna.

(beat)

When he wanted to marry me, I said 'yes.' I didn't really love him, but I told myself that my daughter needed a father.

(beat)

The truth was that I needed a man. After a couple of years he started drinking. Maybe it's my fault. Maybe I do this to people.

FRANK

No, that wasn't your fault. That was his choice.

LIBBY

A year ago he was arrested for prescribing drugs to addicts. He says he didn't know they were addicted. They were just patients who needed help.

Frank looks at her without saying anything.

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY (CONT'D)

I know, I know, how could anybody be stupid enough to believe that? But, for awhile I did. A Chicago court gave him probation and community service. We chose to do it here.

(beat)

Ever since he was arrested, the drinking has been much worse.

FRANK

Why haven't you left him?

LIBBY

I'm 44 years old. I've been married three times. I told myself I was going to make this one work no matter what. And until recently Verna seemed to love him.

(beat)

I don't want to live this way anymore, Frank. I want to change my life, but I don't know how.

(beat)

All I know is that, ever since I can remember, I've never been happy or at peace...except when I was thinking of you.

She reaches out and takes his hand

LIBBY (CONT'D)

When I saw you there in the darkness...it was like a gift from God. For the first time in so long...I felt joy.

As Frank looks into her eyes, it's as though his heart is melting. It's so clear what she wants, and down deep he knows that he wants it too.

69 INT. ST. ANNE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH -- EVENING

69

Frank enters the sanctuary of St. Anne's. The church is large and beautiful...and empty. As he walks down the center aisle, he is deeply troubled. His gaze focuses on the crucifix above the altar. Going to the front pew, he kneels and begins to pray. But, he's only been there a moment, when someone slips in and kneels down beside him. He looks over. It's Father Adrian.

FATHER ADRIAN

Sorry to disturb you, Frank, but I am deeply troubled and I need your help.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

What's the matter, Adrian?

They sit together in the pew.

FATHER ADRIAN

I've been having terrible thoughts.
And I can't seem to get rid of them.
They're like flies buzzing in my
head.

FRANK

What kind of thoughts?

FATHER ADRIAN

Those kind.

FRANK

(puzzled)
Those kind?

Father Adrian's eyes bore into him.

FATHER ADRIAN

Lewd visions, Frank.

FRANK

You mean...?

FATHER ADRIAN

Exactly. The lewdest.

FRANK

(struggling with this)
Somehow...I'm having a hard time
imagining you with a lewd vision,
Adrian.

FATHER ADRIAN

Well, I've got them. This can happen
to old men, you know. You turn 75,
you think you've left something in
the past, then it whips back on you
like you were a sixteen-year-old.

FRANK

Do you have any idea what's causing
these...thoughts?

FATHER ADRIAN

Absolutely. It's that anchor lady
on TV.

Frank stares at him. The old man is so serious and childlike
that he finds it almost impossible not to smile. He covers
his mouth with his hand.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER ADRIAN (CONT'D)
 I've been drifting on the brink for
 days. And then that red dress pushed
 me over the edge -- right down the
 slippery slope.

Father Adrian notices that Frank is hiding a smile.

FATHER ADRIAN (CONT'D)
 Please, Frank, don't laugh. This is
 deadly serious.

FRANK
 Well, if you feel it is...then it
 is.

FATHER ADRIAN
 What's my penance, Father?

FRANK
 You want penance?

FATHER ADRIAN
 Absolutely. Something to cleanse
 the mind. Kill the flies.

FRANK
 Okay. All right.
 (beat)
 Something like this calls for a
 serious act of contrition.

FATHER ADRIAN
 Very serious.

FRANK
 Well, how about ten hail Marys...
 (beat; thinking)
 And a month without the morning news.

Father Adrian looks absolutely stricken. The wind goes out
 of him.

FATHER ADRIAN
 Ooooh. Oh, Lord, help me. Just
 waffles and Marcella Tatzig.
 (beat)
 All right, I'll do it.
 (beat)
 But pray for me, Frank, pray that
 I'll have the strength to get out of
 bed in the morning.

Frank laughs. But soon, the laugh fades. Suddenly, he's
 overcome with weariness.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Now, is there anything I can help you with? You seem troubled.

FRANK

Are you sure you're really having a problem with anchor ladies, or was that just an excuse?

Father Adrian only looks at him and smiles. Frank is silent for a moment. He struggles to find words.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Anyway, you're right about the past.

(beat)

I'm facing something, Father...and it's making me question everything.

The look on Father Adrian's face isn't childlike anymore. It's filled with a shrewd compassion.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I know all the answers that a priest is supposed to give. But suddenly, they don't work anymore.

(beat)

As I look back, I wonder. Was I really called to the priesthood? Or was I just a lost kid searching for a family?

(beat; struggling to control his emotions)

I've been lonely, Adrian. For a long time. Maybe all my life. I took vows, but does God really care what we promise? Maybe all that matters is finding whatever happiness we can.

As Father Adrian looks at Frank his eyes are filled with compassion.

FATHER ADRIAN

I'll make you a deal. You pray for me and my TV problem. And I'll pray for you and your vows.

70 EXT. CEMETERY -- POV FRANK -- MORNING

70

Frank is looking down at the casket of Roger Upward as it hangs over a dark hole in the snow. A hundred people are gathered for the funeral. Among them is Caesar Pipe. Libby is at the outside edge of the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

When we gather around an open grave,
our minds are filled with questions.
Does God exist? Does he love us?
Does he care at all?

(beat)

Some religious people say that we
shouldn't ask those questions. But
I say, if God is real he can handle
every one of them.

(beat)

As I stand over Roger's grave I have
no profound answers for you this
morning...except to tell you this.

(beat)

I was with him when he died. And I
know that he found peace. All of
his fear left him the moment that he
asked Jesus Christ to forgive his
sins.

(beat)

While our questions may go
on...Roger's have been answered.

(beat)

I know this, because I saw it in his
eyes.

71 EXT. CEMETERY -- LATER

71

The funeral has ended, the crowd is moving away. Libby
approaches Frank.

LIBBY

That was beautiful.

FRANK

Anybody who says death is just a
normal part of life is lying.

LIBBY

Comforting people that way is a
wonderful gift.

(beat)

Frank, I've been absorbing all of
your time. I'm sorry.

FRANK

Don't be. I was thinking I should
go to the hospital and see Verna.
Maybe she'll talk with me. Do you
think she would?

LIBBY

(brightening)

She might. I think she liked you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY (CONT'D)

(beat)

Listen, once a month I take a group of elderly patients down there for therapy. We're going this afternoon. Do you want to go along?

FRANK

When are you leaving?

LIBBY

In two hours from the clinic.

FRANK

I'll be there.

Libby smiles. It's like a touch of sunshine.

72 EXT. DESERTED SAW MILL -- DAY

72

Caesar Pipe's police car pulls up to a deserted saw mill. A dirty jeep is already there. Two men are standing beside it. They are agents SCHALL and RIETH. But, they look like red-necks. Caesar gets out of his car and joins them.

CAESAR PIPE

I'm Caesar Pipe.

AGENT SCHALL

I'm Agent Schall. This is Agent Rieth.

The men shake hands, but there isn't a lot of warmth between them.

CAESAR PIPE

Took you guys long enough to get here. I've been calling the capitol for three months.

AGENT RIETH

We're backlogged.

AGENT SCHALL

So, we hear you've got a little problem.

CAESAR PIPE

No, I've got a big problem. I've had three drug related deaths in the past year. Somebody's pumpin' pills into the reservation and it's killing our young people. Whoever's doing it probably thinks they can get away with it because we're just Indians and the Minnesota Bureau of Investigation won't give a damn.

(CONTINUED)

AGENT SCHALL

Look, Pipe, you've had three deaths. You know how many we've had in Minneapolis? Why don't you talk to the Feds?

CAESAR PIPE

Because I'm talking to you. My people hate federal agents. And if you know fifteen minutes of American history you'll understand why.

AGENT RIETH

Well, I don't know what we can do for you. We'll put in a request for special funding...

CAESAR PIPE

No, no, no. You're not gonna pull that crap on me. That's the same thing as tossing us down the sewer.

AGENT SCHALL

Hey, all we can do is what we can do.

They start toward their car.

CAESAR PIPE

You might like to know that I've spoken with Senator Jacobs in Washington.

Both agents look very skeptical.

AGENT SCHALL

You've spoken with Senator Jacobs?

Caesar nods. The look of skepticism deepens.

CAESAR PIPE

You don't believe me? Here's a letter.

He pulls a letter from his pocket and hands it to them. They read it.

CAESAR PIPE (CONT'D)

If I don't get what I need, he's going to intervene with your director.

AGENT RIETH

How do you know Jacobs?

CAESAR PIPE

We were roommates in college.

(CONTINUED)

The agents look at each other.

AGENT SCHALL
Okay, maybe we could begin a
preliminary investigation.

CAESAR PIPE
Excellent. It's gonna be great
working with you guys.

73 EXT. MEDICAL CLINIC -- AFTERNOON

73

Libby has gathered six old people for the trip to the hospital. They're rather excited to be making the journey. It's a bright spot in their lives. The group includes: BERT and MILLIE LABONTE, ELAINE TANKER, ANNIE FUSCOW, STUART PRITCH and ED BUCKTIE.

LIBBY
Okay, everybody got your paperwork?

The people nod and hold up their papers. Frank walks up.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
Let's get in the van. Father Healy
is going with us today.

The people are pleased.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
Father, would you drive?

FRANK
My pleasure.

74 INT. VAN -- DRIVING ON COUNTRY ROAD -- LATER

74

Snow has started to fall. As the van moves through the countryside the old people are engaged in a spirited conversation.

MILLIE LABONTE
This has been the most horrible
winter.

ELAINE TANKER
Awful.

ANNIE FUSCOW
Depressing.

MILLIE LABONTE
Worse than last year.

ED BUCKTIE
One night above zero since December.

(CONTINUED)

ELAINE TANKER

Dreadful.

BERT LABONTE

Worse coming.

STUART PRITCH

Are the roads icy, Father?

FRANK

No, they're clear.

ED BUCKTIE

Just wait. They'll be icy if this snow keeps up.

MILLIE LABONTE

I don't mind the cold, but I hate the snow.

ELAINE TANKER

I hate the cold.

ANNIE FUSCOW

I hate the cold and the snow.

STUART PRITCH

I hate the winter. Everybody's so grouchy.

ED BUCKTIE

There isn't the old friendliness anymore, not in any season. In the old days people were friendlier.

BERT LABONTE

There isn't the friendliness and there isn't the respect for age.

STUART PRITCH

There isn't the patriotism.

ED BUCKTIE

There isn't the ambition.

MILLIE LABONTE

There isn't the quality of food.

ANNIE FUSCOW

Especially potatoes. You take potatoes. Where can you buy a good potato nowadays?

ELAINE TANKER

And prices, my lord.

(CONTINUED)

ED BUCKTIE
Horrible prices.

MILLIE LABONTE
Dreadful prices.

BERT LABONTE
Worse coming.

STUART PRITCH
Do you know how much you can pay for
a good baking potato? You can pay
as much as thirty cents.

ED BUCKTIE
That's criminal.

MILLIE LABONTE
I paid fifty cents for ten pounds of
russets in 1955.

ANNIE FUSCOW
Where will it all end?

MILLIE LABONTE
It's outrageous.

ELAINE TANKER
It's depressing.

STUART PRITCH
It's the Democrats.

Throughout this exchange, Frank and Libby trade looks.
Finally, they burst out laughing and just can't stop. The
old people can't figure out what they think is so funny.

75 INT. PSYCHIATRIC CONSULTATION ROOM -- AFTERNOON

75

Frank waits alone in the consultation room of the psychiatric
ward. The door opens and Verna enters. She's dressed and
appears a little stronger, but she still doesn't look good.

VERNA
Where's my mother?

FRANK
Taking patients to therapy.

VERNA
You came up here by yourself?

FRANK
Yeah, I thought it might be a chance
to get to know you a little bit.

(CONTINUED)

She looks at him for a long moment, deciding whether she wants to do this. Then...

VERNA

Let's go outside. There's a yard
where us loonies can walk around.

76 EXT. HOSPITAL YARD -- MOMENTS LATER

76

Verna and Frank walk together in a yard that's surrounded by a high, chain-link fence. Several security cameras constantly scan them. The snow has stopped, but a frigid wind is blowing that cuts through Frank. Verna doesn't seem to notice it.

VERNA

Beautiful, isn't it? Sort of like a
dog run. If we're good we get fifteen
minutes out here twice a day.

Suddenly, tears well in her eyes.

VERNA (CONT'D)

When is Roger's funeral?

FRANK

It was this morning.

VERNA

(her voice trembling)
Was it...nice?

FRANK

I think so. A lot of people came.
(beat)
Everybody tells me he was a good
man.

VERNA

Oh, he was -- a really good man. He
was so good to everybody.

FRANK

Did you love him?

VERNA

Yes...
(beat)
very much.

She stops and leans on the fence with her face against the chain link. She's almost too weak to go on. The wind whips around them.

FRANK

Did he love you?

She nods.

(CONTINUED)

VERNA

He loved me and I kept jilting him.
Over and over. And every time, he
wanted me back.

(beat)

Oh, God, I treated him like crap.

Suddenly, she starts to sink to the ground. Frank catches her under the arms. By gripping the fence in front of her, he holds her up. But his hands are bare and the fence is freezing cold.

VERNA (CONT'D)

That's what I do when people are
good to me. I treat them like crap.

FRANK

Who besides Roger?

VERNA

My mother.

It's a real effort to continue holding her. Frank's hands are going numb, but he refuses to let go.

FRANK

Who else?

VERNA

Nobody else is good to me.

FRANK

Tom?

Her body stiffens.

VERNA

Tom's not good to me. Everybody
thinks he's been such a great
stepfather, but he's not good to me
at all.

FRANK

Do you know why you treat your mother
like crap and why you treated Roger
like crap?

VERNA

I love my mother. I loved Roger.

FRANK

That's why.

Slowly, Verna stands on her strength and turns to face him. He rubs his hands. She doesn't notice his pain.

(CONTINUED)

VERNA

What do you mean?

FRANK

When you love people, you want to take them into your soul. You want them to know what you're really like. So, you make them feel like crap because then they'll understand how you feel.

(beat)

You've got to stop feeling like crap, Verna, otherwise you'll never be decent to the people you love.

She stares at him.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Has your doctor here talked to you about these things?

VERNA

He's not much of a talker. He's more of a chemist.

FRANK

Doesn't he get into why you feel so bad about yourself?

VERNA

I don't let him.

FRANK

Why?

VERNA

There're things I can't talk about with anybody.

FRANK

What things?

Suddenly, anger flashes in her eyes.

VERNA

Why should I tell you? They're too awful. They'd hurt people.

FRANK

Not telling will be much worse.

VERNA

When you love people you don't want to hurt them.

FRANK

Real love can handle the truth.

(CONTINUED)

Verna stares at him.

VERNA

Why am I talking with you about this?
What do you know about love? You're
just a priest.

(beat)

I'm cold. I'm going back in.

The conversation is over. Frank watches as Verna walks away.

77 INT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- NIGHT

77

It's a week night at the Homestead. No karaoke. The place is almost empty. Toad is behind the bar. Agents Schall and Rieth are in a booth nursing a couple of beers. They're dressed in expensive suits with open collars. Judge Bigelow walks out of the back carrying two plates loaded down with burgers and fries. He sets them on the table in front of the men.

JUDGE BIGELOW

Anything else I can get you guys?

AGENT RIETH

This is gonna do it.

AGENT SCHALL

Hey, I heard your bartender call you judge. You really a judge?

JUDGE BIGELOW

Naw. Twenty years ago I was a justice of the peace, but I hated justice and didn't like peace much either so I quit.

The men laugh.

AGENT SCHALL

You got a nice, roomy place here.

JUDGE BIGELOW

Thanks. I like it.

AGENT RIETH

You makin' as much money as you want?

JUDGE BIGELOW

Aw, I couldn't stand to make a dime more. Where would I spend it?

AGENT RIETH

Well, whatever you're doin' we could help you do a lot better.

The Judge's eyes narrow.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE BIGELOW

Oh, yeah?

AGENT SCHALL

You got a minute to hear a business proposal? It'll put fifty grand a month straight into your pocket?

JUDGE BIGELOW

Not interested. You guys enjoy your burgers.

He starts to walk away.

AGENT RIETH

Wait. Take a look at something.

Rieth pulls out a thick notebook and opens it. Inside are photos of "Gentlemen's Clubs" and they're well populated with seductive, naked women. Judge Bigelow stares at it.

JUDGE BIGELOW

What's that?

AGENT SCHALL

We're in the business of starting up 'Gentlemen's Clubs' across the mid-west. We look for going establishments like yours where we can set up a turnkey operation. We guarantee that within one year your personal take will be at least fifty grand a month.

JUDGE BIGELOW

Is that right?

AGENT SCHALL

That's right. And we've got plenty of references. These are the clubs we've set up in Michigan and Wisconsin.

The Judge sits down in the booth and begins paging through the notebook.

JUDGE BIGELOW

Well, this is interesting, but we've got a little problem in this county.

AGENT RIETH

What's that?

JUDGE BIGELOW

All the girls are plug-ugly. Nobody'll want to see'em naked.

(CONTINUED)

The men laugh.

AGENT RIETH

Whatever talent can't be found
locally, we import. This is a quality
operation.

JUDGE BIGELOW

So, you think my place might make a
good skin joint?

AGENT SCHALL

That's not what we call them. We
choose high class names like 'The
Slippery Thong.'

(beat)

But you do have an outstanding
location.

JUDGE BIGELOW

Awright, I'm interested. Gimme your
pitch.

78 EXT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- LATER 78

The front door of the bar opens. The two agents walk out,
smiling. From the inside, Judge Bigelow waves to them and
shuts the door.

79 INT. THE HOMESTEAD BAR -- CONTINUOUS 79

The Judge walks up to the bar and sits down. He lays two
business cards in front of him.

TOAD

What was that all about?

JUDGE BIGELOW

I'll tell you what that was about.
Those were two NARCS under-cover
trying to sell me a bill of goods so
they can hang my ass.

TOAD

You sure?

JUDGE BIGELOW

I can smell a NARC a mile away.
They always appeal to your greed.

He tosses the business cards in the trash.

80 EXT. ICE FISHING HUT ON LAKE -- NIGHT 80

A small ice fishing shack sits in the moonlight on the frozen
lake. Frank's car and Caesar Pipe's car are parked close
by.

Frank and Caesar are seated on stools fishing through a hole in the ice. Frank is bundled in his parka and still looks like he's freezing. Caesar is in shirt-sleeves and appears comfortable. As he stares at the hole in the ice he softly hums the song "People." A small pile of fish is next to him. Suddenly, there's a strong tug on his line. With a satisfied grin, he pulls out yet another large fish.

FRANK

This isn't just humiliating anymore,
it's absolutely disgusting.

Caesar laughs, drops the fish on the pile, then re-baits his hook.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We're using the same bait, the same
hooks, the same lines and all the
fish are going to you.

CAESAR PIPE

(with perverse
satisfaction)

Yep.

He drops in the baited hook and starts humming "People" again.

FRANK

Well, are you going to tell me why?

CAESAR PIPE

Old Ojibwa secret.

FRANK

(rolling his eyes)
Here we go. A tourist story.

CAESAR PIPE

(shrugging)
You don't think we have secrets?

FRANK

Of course you have secrets. All
right, what is it?

A ruminative look comes into Caesar's eyes.

CAESAR PIPE

I must consider whether the Ancient
Ones would want me to tell a white
man.

Frank just stares at him.

(CONTINUED)

CAESAR PIPE (CONT'D)

All right. I have permission. But you must promise not to tell a living soul -- on your honor as a priest.

FRANK

Sure, fine.

CAESAR PIPE

Say it.

FRANK

Okay, okay, on my honor as a priest I won't tell a living soul. So, what's the secret?

CAESAR PIPE

(with true gravitas)

They...love...Streisand.

FRANK

What?

CAESAR PIPE

I hum Barbra Streisand songs to them.

FRANK

You're kidding.

CAESAR PIPE

They're especially partial to her early stuff.

FRANK

Caesar, have you been smoking something funny? I've been thinking about bringing in Catholic Charities to help counsel people with drug problems and you may be first on the list.

CAESAR PIPE

Fine just keep fishing your way.

Frank stares at him. Then...

FRANK

It's gotta be Streisand? I mean, why not Sinatra?

CAESAR PIPE

(with a deadly serious look)

They hate Sinatra.

Frank sits for a moment in silence, then very self-consciously begins humming "The Way We Were." He sounds awful.

(CONTINUED)

After a moment...

CAESAR PIPE (CONT'D)
Were you serious about that Catholic Charities thing? We could use all the help we could get.

FRANK
Be quiet, I'm humming.

After another pause.

CAESAR PIPE
Sometimes Wayne Newton works.

82 INT. LIBBY'S LIVING ROOM ABOVE THE CLINIC -- NIGHT 82

Libby is alone. She pours herself a drink and slowly sips it. Walking to the window, she looks out.

POV LIBBY

Frank's car pulls up at the church. He gets out, then pulls a long string of fish from inside the car. She watches as he goes into the building.

83 INT. LIBBY'S BATHROOM -- MOMENTS LATER 83

As Libby stares at herself in the mirror, her eyes are filled with sorrow and longing. She begins brushing out her hair.

84 INT. GREAT SPIRIT LIGHT CATHOLIC CHURCH -- LATER 84

Frank is continuing the church clean-up. Suddenly, the front door opens and Libby enters. She's wearing a long, dark coat. Her make-up and hair are perfect and she is absolutely gorgeous.

FRANK
Hi.

LIBBY
Thought you were only staying out here three nights a week.

FRANK
Oh, I won't be here long. I was out fishing with Caesar, caught my limit and thought I'd stop in for a few minutes. There's just so much clean-up to do.

LIBBY
I'll help.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

Thanks, but you've got enough to worry about. Anyway, I'm heading back into town in a little while.

LIBBY

When you're finished, why don't you come over? You must be hungry. I could make you a sandwich.

FRANK

I appreciate that. Maybe some other time.

LIBBY

(wistfully)

If you change your mind, I'll be up late. I don't sleep well when I'm out here alone.

She turns toward the door.

85 EXT. GREAT SPIRIT LIGHT CATHOLIC CHURCH -- LATER

85

The steeple of the church is a dark silhouette in the moonlight. The lights are off inside. Frank walks up to his car, takes out his keys and opens the door. But, then, he looks over at the medical clinic. The lights are still on. He debates with himself. He knows this is the moment of decision. Every logical thought in his mind tells him to get in the car and drive away.

But, he can't.

Instead, he closes the door, puts the keys in his pocket and heads toward the clinic.

86 EXT. MEDICAL CLINIC -- MOMENTS LATER

86

Frank knocks on the clinic door. In a moment, it opens. Libby stands in front of him wearing a lovely robe.

LIBBY

Hi.

FRANK

I'm sorry. It's too late. You're ready for bed...

LIBBY

No, no, I stay up half the night. Come on in.

FRANK

I really shouldn't...

Before he can escape, she pulls him inside.

As Libby pours drinks for herself and Frank, her hand is trembling. But, from where he is sitting on the couch, he doesn't see it. All he can see are the lines of her body through the robe.

LIBBY

Are you sure you don't want any food?
I've got all kinds of things in the
refrigerator.

FRANK

Thanks, but no. Just one drink and
then I've got to leave.

She hands him the drink and sits down beside him. As he sips, all he can do is look into her eyes.

LIBBY

I'm so glad you came.

She takes a deep breath as though desperately searching for courage.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

There's something that I have to say
to you. And I just can't hold it in
any longer.

FRANK

Libby...

LIBBY

No, please don't talk. I'm not
expecting anything. Just listen.

As Frank looks at her, her beauty and vulnerability seem to grow with every passing second.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Once, long ago, I told you that I
didn't know what love was. I do
now.

(beat)

Love is something that cannot die.
Though sorrow comes...though years
may pass...it goes on and on. That's
how we know it's real.

(beat)

Frank, I have loved you from the
first moment I saw you. But, there
was so much pain and hurt inside
that I thought you could never love
me. I still don't think so. But,
now there's nothing to lose.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY (CONT'D)

And if I died tomorrow, this is what
I would want you to know.

(beat)

I love you. I have always loved
you.

She moves close to him. Her eyes glisten with tears.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Would you give me the greatest gift
that you could ever give?

FRANK

I'd give you anything I could, Libby.

LIBBY

Then, kiss me.

(beat)

Just once.

(beat)

And if we are never alone again I
will remember it always.

He looks from her eyes to her lips. There is nothing in his
life that he has ever wanted more.

Slowly, he bends toward her.

Their lips meet.

At first they barely touch.

But, then, they are lost in a kiss of such passion that it
burns the past away. Gone are all the years of loneliness,
of lost desire. Gone is everything but love. And with his
arms around her, Libby is lost in him.

Suddenly, he pulls away.

FRANK

I've...I've got to go.

He stands and moves toward the door. She rises behind him.

LIBBY

Frank...

He turns.

Her robe has dropped to the floor and she is naked. Every
mystery that he has longed to see is revealed.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

(just above a whisper)

I love you, Frank.

(CONTINUED)

He can't take his eyes off her.

As though in a dream, as though he is no longer in control of his own body, he moves to her. Then, he stands as though not knowing what to do.

Looking into his eyes, she reaches down and lifts his hand. Gently, she draws it toward her breast. Her face is filled with passion.

His fingers almost touch her...

But, then, he draws back.

FRANK
(in quiet agony)
No...

He turns away. He is trembling. He covers his face with his hands.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Oh, God...oh, God...

As she watches his agony, tears come to Libby's eyes.

LIBBY
Frank...
(beat)
forgive me.

Crying, she puts her arms around him from behind and presses close. But, he reaches down and gently breaks her hold. As he turns toward her, his eyes are filled with tears.

When she looks up at him, she realizes that the moment is gone forever. Covering her face, she begins to sob. Gently, he picks up the robe and wraps it around her. As she sobs, he holds her in his arms.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
Don't leave me. Oh, please...
(beat)
Just hold me.

He holds her.

88 INT. LIBBY'S LIVING ROOM ABOVE THE CLINIC -- LATER

88

The lights are off. Moonlight shines in through the window. Frank is seated on the couch with Libby in his arms. She is wrapped in the robe and asleep. Frank looks down at her with incredible love. Though she does not hear, he whispers...

(CONTINUED)

FRANK
 (whispering)
 I will love you forever. You are
 the only one that I have ever loved.

89 EXT. MEDICAL CLINIC -- A SHORT TIME LATER 89

The door to the clinic opens and Frank steps out into the cold moonlight. As he walks toward the church, his agony is very great.

90 INT. GREAT SPIRIT LIGHT CATHOLIC CHURCH -- MOMENTS LATER 90

Frank enters his church. Moonlight shines in through the stained glass windows. Slowly, he walks to the front. When he reaches the altar he falls to his knees.

He looks up at the crucifix. His eyes are filled with tears. But, slowly, into them comes peace.

Suddenly, Frank hears a car out on the road. Getting up, he walks to a window.

POV FRANK

A black BMW glides past and pulls up in front of the clinic. As Frank watches, Tom gets out and enters the building.

91 INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM -- DAY 91

Frank lies asleep in bed in his room at Father Adrian's. There is a knock at the door. Slowly, he begins to awaken. It's like coming back from the dead. The knock comes again.

FRANK
 (really groggy)
 Yeah?

FATHER ADRIAN (O.S.)
 It's me. You've got a phone call.

FRANK
 Come on in.

The door opens and Father Adrian steps in.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 What time is it?

He gropes for his watch.

FATHER ADRIAN
 Eleven o'clock.

FRANK
 I didn't mean to sleep this long.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER ADRIAN
I didn't want to bother you. You
were out pretty late.

Frank gets up and puts on a robe.

FRANK
Who's on the phone?

FATHER ADRIAN
Mrs. Pearsall.

FRANK
Where is it?

FATHER ADRIAN
This way.

Father Adrian leads him out.

92 INT. UPPER HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

92

Frank picks up the phone. Father Adrian stands watching.

FRANK
Libby?

INTERCUT WITH LIBBY WHO IS ON A CELL PHONE AT THE CLINIC

LIBBY
Frank...I'm so embarrassed...about
last night...

FRANK
Look, don't be...

LIBBY
But, I am. It was my fault.

FRANK
No, I was the one who came over there.
Libby, nothing can stand in the way
of our friendship.

LIBBY
Thank you for saying that.
(beat)
I wouldn't call, but I think there's
a problem.

FRANK
What is it?

LIBBY
Tom came home last night.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

I know. I saw him drive in.

LIBBY

He's been in an ugly mood ever since he walked in the door and all he wants to do is argue.

FRANK

Do you want me to come out there?

LIBBY

No. I'm all right. But we got a call from Dr. Pella. He wants to meet with Tom and me this afternoon. There was something in his voice. I'm scared. Would you go with us?

FRANK

Sure, what time?

LIBBY

We're supposed to be there at four.

FRANK

I'll meet you in the lobby.

Frank hangs up and turns to face Father Adrian.

FATHER ADRIAN

Is everything okay, Frank? Are you all right?

Frank looks at him and smiles. He's tired, but there is peace in his eyes.

FATHER ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Yeah. Everything's okay. I'm doing fine.

93 EXT. FOREST ROAD -- DAY

93

The BMW is parked on a deserted, forest road. A Bronco pulls up and parks behind it. The doors of both vehicles open. Tom gets out of the BMW, Judge Bigelow out of the truck

JUDGE BIGELOW

How was your trip?

TOM

No problems.

Tom goes to his trunk and opens it. Inside are several large boxes.

(CONTINUED)

TOM (CONT'D)

This should keep you supplied for awhile.

The men begin loading the boxes from the BMW to the Bronco.

JUDGE BIGELOW

We've gotta be careful. There were a couple of guys nosing around the Homestead. Wanted to make a deal with me to turn the bar into a skin club. But they were NARCS. I'm sure of it. I know a NARC when I see one.

TOM

You're paranoid. The government's not gonna send any NARCS out here. They don't care what happens on a reservation. A skin club's a great idea. And I'll bet the first one who'll want to take off her clothes will be Verna.

JUDGE BIGELOW

How's she doing?

TOM

Still at the nut house. We've got some sort of family counseling garbage to go through this afternoon. These psychiatrists are so full of crap.

JUDGE BIGELOW

I hope she's out by next week. I want to take her to the semifinals of the state karaoke competition. I think she's got a good chance.

TOM

She'll be out -- as soon as she gets tired of being sober.

94 INT. BERRINGTON HOSPITAL LOBBY -- AFTERNOON

94

Tom and Libby are waiting in the lobby. Frank enters the building and joins them.

FRANK

Hi.

LIBBY

Thanks for coming.

TOM

I still don't get why we need a priest with us.

(CONTINUED)

He turns to the elevator and pushes the button.

LIBBY
I told you, Verna likes him.

TOM
Verna likes anything in pants.

The door opens and they enter.

95 INT. LARGER PSYCHIATRIC CONSULTATION ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER 95

An attendant ushers Libby, Tom and Frank into a larger consultation room. The door closes and locks behind them. Waiting for them are Verna, Dr. Pella and two sheriff's deputies. Tom doesn't like what he sees.

TOM
Hey, what is this? What's going on?

DR. PELLA
Please take a seat, Dr. Pearsall.
Everyone, sit down.

TOM
Why are these officers here?

They sit. Libby is very tense. Verna is chain-smoking.

DR. PELLA
Verna would like to make a statement.

TOM
Is this some kind of legal proceeding?

DR. PELLA
Just let her speak.

Verna looks down at the table, then takes a long drag on a cigarette. Her hand is trembling. There is a terrible silence. Finally...

VERNA
Mother...

Another terrible silence.

LIBBY
Whatever you need to say, Verna, go ahead and say it. It's all right.

Verna gulps and snuffs out her cigarette.

VERNA
I...just don't want to hurt you.

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY
I love you, Sweetheart.

Tom is very uncomfortable.

VERNA
(getting control)
Okay...

She takes a deep breath.

VERNA (CONT'D)
(just above a whisper)
Mother...your husband...
(beat)
has been screwing me since I was
fifteen years old.

LIBBY
What?

Libby's face freezes. Suddenly, it's as though the world is in slow motion. But not for Tom.

TOM
THAT'S A DAMN LIE.

DR. PELLA
Let her finish, Dr. Pearsall.

TOM
LET HER FINISH? SHE'S LYING.

Verna continues looking straight at Libby.

VERNA
Besides screwing me, he's supplied
me with drugs.

TOM
I'M NOT GONNA STAND FOR THIS. I'M
NOT GONNA LISTEN TO ANOTHER WORD.
SHE'S CRAZY. SHE'S A DRUG FREAK.
EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT. AND SHE'S
SCREWED HALF THE MEN IN THE COUNTY.

VERNA
(quietly to her mother)
I'm telling you the truth.

TOM
I NEVER TOUCHED HER.

VERNA
I'm doing this because Father Healy
said I had to start being honest if
I'm ever going to get well.

(CONTINUED)

TOM
YOU LYING LITTLE BITCH...

He leaps across the table toward her. Instantly, the deputies are all over him. They wrestle him to the floor and handcuff him as they read him his rights.

TOM (CONT'D)
DAMN YOU, DAMN YOU, YOU CAN'T DO
THIS TO ME.

Libby sits staring in total shock as the deputies drag Tom, screaming, out of the room. Verna turns toward Dr. Pella.

VERNA
(viciously)
All right, I've done it. Now I'm
getting out of this hell-hole.

DR. PELLA
Verna, I thought we agreed that you'd
remain here until we could find a
long-term facility.

VERNA
SCREW...YOU!

She jumps up and heads for the door.

VERNA (CONT'D)
I know my rights. You've kept me
here as long as you can.

DR. PELLA
Where will you go? Back to the
Homestead?

VERNA
(in tears)
I'll never go back there.
(pounding on the locked
door)
I'll find someplace. LET ME OUT OF
HERE.

FRANK
She can stay at the house where I
am. There are extra rooms. Her
mother can stay too.

DR. PELLA
Are you willing to do that, Verna?

VERNA
YES, YES, JUST OPEN THE DAMN DOOR.
I've got to get my stuff.

(CONTINUED)

Dr. Pella unlocks the door. Verna rushes out. Suddenly, Libby turns to the doctor.

LIBBY

I...
(beat)
need a rest room.

DR. PELLA

Right over there.

He points to another door. She rushes to it, and goes in.

FRANK

What's going to happen him?

DR. PELLA

He'll stay in jail until a judge can hear the charges. Then bail will be set. Somebody'll have to put up the money to get him out. If he doesn't have any friends that could take awhile.

From inside the rest room they hear violent retching.

DR. PELLA (CONT'D)

She needs to be watched very carefully.

FRANK

I'll watch her.

96 EXT. FATHER ADRIAN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

96

It's late. There are no lights on. Suddenly, from the house there comes a woman's scream. It's long and horrible, as though from a lost soul in hell. Lights go on in second floor windows.

97 INT. FATHER ADRIAN'S HOUSE -- UPPER HALLWAY -- NIGHT

97

Bedroom doors open. Father Adrian and Marcella Tatzig look out of their rooms. Frank and Verna walk out into the hall. Everyone is in pajamas. They look toward a closed, bedroom door. From inside comes the sound of someone choking and gasping. Frank starts toward the door, but Verna stops him.

VERNA

Father, there's nothing you can do.

FRANK

Maybe she needs a doctor. She hasn't made a sound since she went in there this afternoon.

(CONTINUED)

VERNA
I'll talk to her.

Verna walks to the door, opens it, and quietly goes in.

98 INT. LIBBY'S BEDROOM AT FATHER ADRIAN'S -- CONTINUOUS 98

At first, the room appears to be empty. Then, Verna sees her mother. She's still fully dressed, crouched behind the bed on the floor.

VERNA
Mother?

Libby stares at nothing.

VERNA (CONT'D)
Mother?

Verna bends down toward her. Slowly, Libby lifts her eyes. Her mascara is streaked. She looks horrible.

LIBBY
(a whisper)
Traitor.

VERNA
What?

LIBBY
(whispering)
I...loved you...so much.

VERNA
(tougher)
Mother.

LIBBY
(whispering)
You were my life. My...best friend...

Suddenly, all the rage that is in her erupts and it's frightening.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
MY OWN DAUGHTER SCREWS MY HUSBAND...

She jumps to her feet.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
YOU WHORE! YOU FILTHY LITTLE WHORE!

VERNA
DON'T CALL ME THAT. DON'T CALL ME A WHORE.

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY
 THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU ARE. YOU'RE
 A FILTHY WHORE.

VERNA
 IF I AM, YOU MADE ME THAT WAY. YOU
 AND ALL THE ROTTEN HUSBANDS YOU
 MARRIED. WAS IT MY FAULT THAT YOUR
 SECOND HUSBAND RAPED ME WHEN I WAS
 SEVEN YEARS OLD.

LIBBY
 NO. AND WE WENT TO COUNSELING ABOUT
 THAT. BUT THIS ONE YOU DID YOURSELF.

VERNA
 HE GAVE ME DRUGS. HE SEDUCED ME.

LIBBY
 BUT YOU KEPT IT UP AND DIDN'T SAY A
 WORD FOR SEVEN YEARS.

VERNA
 I WAS SCARED TO DEATH. I DIDN'T
 WANT TO HURT YOU.

LIBBY
 LIAR. IS THAT WHY YOU KEPT SLEEPING
 WITH HIM? YOU WERE FRIGHTENED?

VERNA
 I'M AN ADDICT, MOTHER. DO YOU KNOW
 WHAT THAT MEANS? AN ADDICT!
 (beat)
 You just can't face reality. What
 you want is your nice, little dream
 world. A HAPPY LITTLE FAMILY WHERE
 YOUR DAUGHTER IS GETTING MOLESTED.

LIBBY
 OH, GOD, SHUT UP.

VERNA
 I WON'T...

99 INT. UPPER HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

99

Father Adrian and Marcella Tatzig look pale as they stand
 outside the bedroom door.

FATHER ADRIAN
 What should we do?

FRANK
 Nothing but pray. This has been
 coming for a long time.

100 INT. LIBBY'S BEDROOM AT FATHER ADRIAN'S -- CONTINUOUS

100

Both women are like animals ready to tear each other to shreds.

VERNA

YES, I'M MESSED UP, BUT I DON'T WANT TO BE THAT WAY ANYMORE. I DON'T WANT TO BE LIKE YOU. WE'RE GOING TO FACE REALITY TOGETHER NOW.

(beat)

Every time you thought Tom was taking me to that psychiatrist in Chicago we did nothing but get high and screw. He supplied me with drugs for years. He's supplying everyone. HE'S THE REASON THAT ROGER IS DEAD. THAT'S THE KIND OF MAN YOU MARRIED. THAT'S THE KIND OF MAN YOU CHOSE TO BE MY STEPFATHER.

LIBBY

SHUT UP, SHUT UP, SHUT UP...

Libby physically attacks her with such force that Verna is thrown across the room and lands in a heap on the floor. At the sound of the fall, the bedroom door is thrown open. Frank rushes in.

FRANK

OKAY, THAT'S ENOUGH!

Verna is sobbing in the corner. Libby rushes out. Frank follows her, while Marcella Tatzig goes to Verna.

101 EXT. FATHER ADRIAN'S HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

101

Libby runs from the house. Frank is right behind her.

FRANK

Libby...

As she opens the door to the clinic van, Frank grabs her.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Libby...

LIBBY

(coldly)

Let go of me.

He lets go.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

I can't spend another minute in that house with her.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK
Where will you go?

LIBBY
Why do you care? Priestly duty?

FRANK
You know it's more than that.

LIBBY
I don't believe you.

She gets in the van.

FRANK
You shouldn't be alone.

LIBBY
You think I'm going to kill myself?
Don't worry. I wouldn't give either
of them the pleasure.

(beat)
Tom is in jail. I'm going back to
the clinic.

FRANK
Let me drive you.

LIBBY
NO, I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.

She tries to close the door, but he won't let her.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
LET GO OF THE DOOR.

FRANK
LISTEN TO ME, LIBBY. This is the
most important moment in your whole
life. There are only two choices in
front of you. One leads to
forgiveness and hope. The other to
hate and despair.

LIBBY
Forgiveness and HOPE?

She laughs, but the laugh turns to rage.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
(raging)
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT TO ME? THERE'S
NO HOPE. MY LIFE IS HELL AND THAT'S
THE WAY IT'S GOING TO BE FOREVER.

(beat)
Verna's right. No more fantasies.
What I have to do, I'll do alone.

(CONTINUED)

She slams the door, starts the engine and drives away. As he watches her leave, Frank's face is filled with pain.

102 EXT. MEDICAL CLINIC -- NIGHT 102

The van screeches to a stop. The door opens and Libby jumps out. She's hardly able to breathe for sobbing. Instead of going into the clinic she rushes into the forest.

103 EXT. FOREST NEAR CLINIC -- MOMENTS LATER 103

As moonlight shines down, Libby runs through the snow-covered trees. A ghostly mist is all around her. It's almost as though she has entered another reality. She doesn't know where she is going and she doesn't care.

On and on.

Suddenly, she hears a strange, eerie sound. Somewhere close by a child is crying. Sobs echo as though out of the distant past.

Libby stops as though frozen.

And then, a voice calls to her.

VERNA AT EIGHT (O.S.)

Mommy.

(beat)

Mommy...

Libby looks around wildly. The cry becomes more desperate.

VERNA AT EIGHT (O.S.) (CONT'D)

MOMMY.

(beat)

MOMMY, HELP ME.

Terror comes to Libby's eyes.

LIBBY

Oh, God...oh, God...

VERNA AT EIGHT (O.S.)

MOMMY, I NEED YOU...

LIBBY

Verna?

VERNA AT EIGHT (O.S.)

He's doing things...and they hurt me.

LIBBY

VERNA!

(CONTINUED)

The desolate crying continues. Libby begins stumbling through the underbrush toward the voice.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
I'M COMING...

Suddenly, in a clearing, Libby sees her, standing like a ghost in the moonlight. It's VERNA AT EIGHT years old. Tears are running down the little girl's cheeks.

A horrible look comes into Libby's eyes. The little girl stares at her.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
Verna, what's happened? What's wrong?

Libby moves toward her to take her in her arms, but the child turns and runs.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
VERNA, WAIT. COME BACK.

Libby runs after her, but she can't catch her. Finally, she stumbles and falls, sobbing.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
I'll listen to you. I'll believe you this time. I promise. Oh, come back. Please come back. I'll stop him, Verna. I'll kill him if he ever touches you again. Please, please, please, give me another chance.

Libby looks up. The little girl is standing in the moonlight.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
Forgive me.
(beat)
You told me, but I wouldn't listen. All I cared about was myself. I didn't want to lose my comfortable life. So, I betrayed you. I was the traitor.
(beat)
My little girl...forgive me...

Libby reaches out to her. But, like a ghost of memory, the child in the mist slowly fades away.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
EVERY CHOICE I'VE EVER MADE HAS BEEN WRONG. OH, GOD, I WANT TO DIE.
(beat)
GOD, WHERE ARE YOU? DO YOU CARE AT ALL?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY (CONT'D)

(beat)

If you're there...help me...

She falls into the snow. Slowly the sobbing ends and Libby lies, staring at nothing.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Oh, please...help me...

104 EXT. BERRINGTON COUNTY JAIL -- DAY

104

The front door opens and Tom walks out. Across the street sits the Judge's Bronco. The huge man is leaning against it, waiting. Tom joins him.

TOM

Thanks for bailing me out.

JUDGE BIGELOW

No problem.

TOM

Stupid attorney almost screwed me.

They get in the Bronco and drive off. What Tom hasn't seen is that a half a block away sits the medical van.

105 INT. VAN -- CONTINUOUS

105

Libby is inside. As she watches the Bronco leave, her eyes are cold and dry. She does not try to follow them.

106 INT. BRONCO -- DRIVING DOWN COUNTRY ROAD -- LATER

106

The Judge turns to Tom.

JUDGE BIGELOW

I hear it doesn't look so good.

TOM

Oh, yeah?

JUDGE BIGELOW

Courts are pretty tough on this kinda thing.

TOM

It's never going to trial

JUDGE BIGELOW

What do you mean? You gonna plea bargain?

(CONTINUED)

TOM

I mean just what I said.

(beat)

I've been preparing for this kind of situation for years. I've got a plan and you're going to help me.

The Judge stares at him.

TOM (CONT'D)

Don't get jumpy, it'll be easy.

(beat)

For the rest of the day, I'm gonna go to the bars and appear to get drunk. Lots of witnesses.

(beat)

Tonight, when the bars close I'll drive out on the lake as though I'm going home. Instead, I'll head toward the thin ice at the dangerous end near the river. You know the lake better than I do. At exactly two AM you're gonna be waiting in the Bronco just this side of the warning barrels. You'll signal me with your headlights. I'll drive up, put the windows down, get out and let the car drive on by itself until it breaks through the ice and sinks.

The Judge's eyes narrow as he listens.

TOM (CONT'D)

Tomorrow morning, ice fishermen'll see the car-size hole. The police will discover the BMW at the bottom. Everyone'll think I was drunk and lost my way. They'll spend days searching for my body. But, hey, sometimes bodies aren't found until the spring.

JUDGE BIGELOW

And where will you be?

TOM

You're gonna drive me to Minneapolis. I've got a false passport. I get on a plane and fly out of the country.

JUDGE BIGELOW

I don't like this. If something goes wrong, I go down hard.

TOM

Look, you son of a bitch.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TOM (CONT'D)

You've made a million bucks off me.
If I have to face molestation charges
I'll make any deal I can to lighten
my load. Which includes telling the
whole story about your drug operation.

Bigelow is enraged but he maintains icy control.

JUDGE BIGELOW

You'd do that, huh?

TOM

In a heartbeat.

(cheerfully)

But, that's not gonna be necessary
because you're gonna do exactly what
I say.

Bigelow stares at him.

TOM (CONT'D)

(slapping him on the
shoulder)

Cheer up, Judge. By tomorrow morning
it'll all be over.

107 INT. VAN -- DRIVING ON COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

107

As she drives, Libby is on the cell phone.

LIBBY

Frank, it's Libby.

INTERCUT WITH FRANK AT FATHER ADRIAN'S

FRANK

Where are you? I've been trying to
reach you.

LIBBY

Tom is out of jail. Judge Bigelow
put up the money.

FRANK

Where are you?

LIBBY

Heading back from Berrington. Frank,
I'd like to talk to you.

(beat)

And I'd like to meet at a place that
you will remember.

108 EXT. OLD DANCE HALL -- AFTERNOON

108

Frank's car pulls up outside the old dance hall. The van is already there. Frank gets out and walks to the unlocked door.

109 INT. OLD DANCE HALL -- CONTINUOUS

109

He enters the building. Slowly, his eyes adjust to the dim light. Out of the shadows steps Libby.

LIBBY

Doesn't look quite the same, does it?

FRANK

It's sad to see it like this.

LIBBY

That silly mirror ball used to hang right up there. It would fill the place with stars. When I was dancing I felt like I was swirling in the universe. Did you ever feel that way?

FRANK

I was only here once.

For a moment, there is silence.

LIBBY

I've been doing a lot of thinking and a lot of crying. A lot of praying too. I've been asking myself where all the mistakes began. I know that I have to go back to that place and face the truth if I'm ever going to find a new life.

(beat)

They started here, Frank. They started right here.

Tears well in her eyes.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

They began when I broke the heart of someone who loved me to fulfill my own selfish desires.

(beat)

Will you forgive me for what I did to you that night?

FRANK

I forgave you long ago.

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY
 (just above a whisper)
 Would you say the words so that I
 could hear them?

He takes her hands.

FRANK
 I forgive you, Libby Girard, with
 all my heart.

LIBBY
 (softly)
 Thank you.
 (beat)
 I know that I can never have what I
 really want. It's too late for that.
 But there is something that I would
 like very much.
 (beat)
 Could we finish the dance that we
 started so many years ago? Would
 you dance with me?

FRANK
 I'm afraid I'm not very good at it.

LIBBY
 (fighting back the
 tears.)
 Well, let me teach you. Just put
 your arms around me like this.

He takes her in his arms.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
 And now, we move together.

They begin to dance.

SFX

Slowly, as though from far away, there comes the echo of
 music and around them flickers the starlight from a mirror
 ball. As Frank and Libby dance, they are surrounded by the
 soft ghosts of memory. Once more, he is lost in the perfume
 of her hair. But this time, her eyes are only for him...and
 they are filled with tears.

SLOW CROSS-FADE TO:

110 EXT. THE EDGE OF SOVEREIGN LAKE -- NIGHT

110

Exquisite beauty and utter loneliness.

Snow is falling through majestic pines and white birches at
 the edge of the frozen lake.

(CONTINUED)

High above, a ghostly moon is rising in the clouds.

The wind picks up.

A storm is coming.

111 EXT. MEDICAL CLINIC -- NIGHT 111

Tom's BMW pulls up in front of the clinic. There are no lights on inside and no cars outside. He gets out. He's been drinking, but he's far from drunk. In a cheerful mood, he whistles as he enters the building.

112 INT. MEDICAL CLINIC -- MAIN ROOM -- CONTINUOUS 112

Walking in, Tom turns on the lights. From a closet, he pulls out a large back-pack. Going to a storage cabinet, he removes medical utensils until he can reach the back wall. Then, he slides out a panel revealing a secret stash. He begins taking out money -- lots of it -- and loading it into the pack.

Suddenly, from out of the shadows behind him, steps Libby. For a moment, she watches without saying anything. Then...

LIBBY

Where did you get all that money,
Tom?

Tom whips around.

TOM

My god, you scared the shit out of
me. You shouldn't sneak up on a
person like that.

LIBBY

I asked you a question.

He keeps working.

TOM

Bigelow said you were staying with
that priest in town. I tried to
call you. We've got stuff to talk
about.

LIBBY

The money...where did you get it?

TOM

Look, Libby, I'm not gonna get a
fair trial. That's just the way it
is. I don't stand a chance. When a
man faces sex charges it doesn't
matter whether they're true or not.
He gets hung.

(CONTINUED)

LIBBY
YOU ARE NOT ANSWERING MY QUESTION.

He stops working and turns toward her.

TOM
WHO CARES WHERE I GOT IT? I'VE BEEN
SAVING IT FOR A LONG TIME, OKAY?

(beat)

Listen to me. I didn't do anything
to Verna. She's sick. How many
times has she lied to you in the
past? She's stolen money from us.
You remember that? And she lied
then. Are you gonna let her destroy
everything we've built together?

(beat)

Libby, I swear to you that I am
innocent. But I'm not going to stay
here and let a damn judge cut my
balls off. This money is gonna buy
us a new life.

She stares at him. He begins moving toward her. Slowly,
she backs away.

TOM (CONT'D)
Sweetheart, I've got it all planned.
We're going away tonight and never
coming back. We'll find a place
where we can start over.

LIBBY
Really?

TOM
Absolutely. Someplace where I can
make you happy.

LIBBY
(shaking her head in
disbelief)
You are amazing. How stupid do you
think I am? It makes me hate myself
that you could think that I'm such a
fool. *

TOM
Now, come on, Libby...

LIBBY
You're evil, Tom. I don't know why
I didn't see it before.

He sees the revulsion on her face and knows the game is over.
He smiles almost sadly.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

All right. Okay. You want the truth?
Do you really want it?
(beat)
Then, I'll tell you.

As he moves toward her, she continues backing away.

TOM (CONT'D)

I did screw Verna. And she was a great lay. And whatever she says now, she wanted it every single time. She begged for it. I mean, that girl has an appetite that won't quit. I figured 'better me than somebody else.'

He moves closer and closer.

TOM (CONT'D)

The only thing I'm sorry for is that it had to end.

She backs up next to a counter.

TOM (CONT'D)

Libby, you're so beautiful, but you're getting old. Think about the future. I'm the only one who's going to want you.

(beat)

And I do still want you.

He reaches for her. But from the counter behind her she picks up a large, glass bottle and SMASHES it across his head.

The blow is horrible. The glass breaks.

Tom falls unconscious to the floor. Blood is flowing.

LIBBY

YOU FILTHY SON OF A BITCH.

For a moment, she stands over him with the broken bottle. Then, she throws it down. Rushing to her purse, she pulls out her cell phone.

She is just beginning to dial when she is grabbed around the waist from behind and dragged to the floor. The phone drops.

Tom looks horrible. Blood runs down his face. She fights him, but he is too strong.

He pins her arms and drags her to a cabinet.

(CONTINUED)

From a drawer, he grabs a syringe. While she screams and struggles, he inserts the long needle into her neck.

Instantly, the drug begins to take effect. He lets go. She crashes into a table, knocking it over. Then she falls on her face.

Tom gets a compress and holds it to his bleeding head. Going to the cabinet, he continues stuffing money into the backpack.

POV LIBBY

The whole world is a spinning, clanging, crashing horror. She looks around. A few feet away is her cell phone. She reaches for it and pushes a button.

113 INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS 113

Frank is awake. He's been trying to read a book, but he's worried. Suddenly, the phone rings. He looks at the clock. 1:45 AM.

114 INT. FATHER ADRIAN'S UPPER HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS 114

Everyone is asleep in the house. Frank's door opens. He rushes out to the ringing phone and answers it.

FRANK

Yes?

INTERCUT WITH LIBBY

LIBBY

(in pain; just above
a whisper)

Frank...Frank...

Tom looks over.

TOM

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?

He kicks the phone away from her. She passes out completely. But, Frank has heard Tom's voice.

FRANK

LIBBY...

Nothing. He's desperate. He hangs up, rushes to Verna's door and pounds on it.

FRANK (CONT'D)

VERNA! YOU'RE MOTHER'S IN TROUBLE.

Verna opens the door. She's been asleep.

(CONTINUED)

VERNA

What?

FRANK

I just got a call. I think she's at the clinic with Tom. Come on, let's go.

He rushes up to Father Adrian's room and pounds on his door.

FRANK (CONT'D)

ADRIAN, ADRIAN...

FATHER ADRIAN (O.S.)

Yes...

FRANK

We've got a problem. Call Caesar Pipe and tell him to get over to the clinic right away. And call the paramedics. Tell them to go there too.

Throwing on their coats, Frank and Verna rush out of the house.

115 INT. MEDICAL CLINIC -- MAIN ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER 115

Tom's back-pack is full. He checks his watch. Time to leave. He picks up Libby, who is unconscious, and carries her out of the building.

116 EXT. MEDICAL CLINIC -- CONTINUOUS 116

Snow is falling harder. A blizzard is sweeping in.

Tom carries Libby to the BMW and deposits her in the passenger seat. Then, he hurries back inside. In a moment, he returns with the back-pack. Throwing it in the rear seat, he gets in, starts the engine and drives away.

As he heads out onto the frozen lake, the lights in Caesar Pipe's double-wide come on.

117 EXT. MIDDLE OF SOVEREIGN LAKE -- MOMENTS LATER 117

Tom's BMW drives on the path between the highway cones. The snow makes it hard to see.

118 INT. BMW -- CONTINUOUS 118

TOM

Okay, where the hell are you?

Suddenly, across the lake in the darkness to the right he sees headlights flash. He veers off the marked path toward them.

119 INT. CHEVROLET -- CONTINUOUS 119

In the Chevrolet, Frank and Verna are just about to head out onto the ice when they see the headlights of a car driving toward the dangerous part of the lake.

FRANK

Look at that.

VERNA

Somebody's outside the cones.

120 EXT. CHEVROLET -- CONTINUOUS 120

Frank heads the car out onto the ice. He drives as quickly as he can, but the slightest pressure on the accelerator makes the rear wheels spin.

121 INT. BMW -- MOMENTS LATER 121

As Tom peers through the snowy windshield, once more he sees the flash of Judge Bigelow's headlights. They're still a distance off in the darkness.

And then, it happens...

He hears a terrible cracking noise.

The car lurches.

The ice under it is giving way. Tom screams. The headlights of the Bronco flash again. They're still far away.

TOM

NO...

Slowly, the car begins to sink.

TOM (CONT'D)

YOU SON OF A BITCH. YOU MOVED THE
BARRELS. YOU'RE ON THE OTHER SIDE.

He tries to open his door. It's jammed.

122 EXT. BMW -- CONTINUOUS 122

The car is sinking quickly and the ice is tight around the door keeping it from opening.

123 INT. BMW -- CONTINUOUS 123

Tom is screaming. He fumbles to open the power window. As it slides down, the ice rises in front of his face. Water rushes in. He closes it.

124 EXT. MIDDLE OF SOVEREIGN LAKE -- CONTINUOUS

124

The Chevrolet stops a distance away. Frank and Verna jump out. The blizzard swirls around them.

VERNA
IT'S THE BMW.

As they watch in horror, it disappears. At that moment, Caesar Pipe's police car arrives with its lights on. He jumps out.

CAESAR PIPE
There was no one at the clinic.
What's happening here?

VERNA
THE BMW JUST WENT UNDER. OH, GOD,
MY MOTHER COULD BE INSIDE.

FRANK
Do you have any rope?

CAESAR PIPE
About fifty feet in the trunk.

FRANK
Get it and tie a loop at the end.

While Caesar gets the rope, Frank pulls a flashlight from his glove compartment. Verna is going crazy. Frank strips off his coat and shoes, then takes the loop end of the rope while Caesar holds the rest.

CAESAR PIPE
That water's thirty six degrees.
It'll kill you in a couple of minutes.

FRANK
Verna, there's an ambulance coming.
Get on the radio and tell'em to get
over here.

Frank rushes to the hole, fills his lungs with air and dives into the darkness.

125 EXT. UNDER WATER -- CONTINUOUS

125

Shining the flashlight ahead of him, Frank swims down through the black, frigid water. He sees the car at the bottom. Its lights are still on. Going to the passenger window he shines the flashlight inside. Libby is in the seat, unconscious.

He smashes the glass with the metal flashlight. Water rushes in. As Frank pulls Libby out through the window, he sees Tom sticking his face in the tiny air pocket at the roof.

(CONTINUED)

TOM
HELP. HELP ME.

Holding Libby, Frank swims for the surface.

126 EXT. AT BREAK IN THE ICE -- MOMENTS LATER

126

Frank slips the rope around Libby.

FRANK
PULL HER OUT.

Caesar begins pulling. Frank pushes her upward. When she's out, Frank calls to him.

FRANK (CONT'D)
TOM'S STILL IN THE CAR. I'M GOING
BACK DOWN.

CAESAR PIPE
DON'T DO IT. YOU GOTTA GET OUTTA
THERE. YOU'LL DIE.

But Frank is already gone.

127 EXT. UNDER WATER -- MOMENTS LATER

127

As he approaches the submerged car, he sees that Tom has tried to get out of the broken window. But he has jammed himself in because he has tried to take the back-pack of money with him. His mouth and eyes are open, staring in horror.

Desperately, Frank struggles to reach beneath his body through the window to open the door. In the process he drops his flashlight. Finally, he manages to get the door open and drag Tom out.

Pulling Tom along, Frank swims up through the darkness. But when he reaches what should be the surface there is nothing but ice. Dimly, he can see the lights of the cars shining through.

With all his strength, Frank swims, trying to find the hole. But it isn't there. His air is giving out and his body is so cold that he can barely move. Still, he won't let go of Tom.

No break in the ice.

Horrible cold.

His mind won't work.

His body is freezing. It feels as though he's moving in slow motion.

(CONTINUED)

Nothing but ice above him.

Finally, he can't hold out any longer. He breathes in. Water enters his lungs and he begins to drown.

Stillness.

Quietness.

The battle is over.

Suddenly, ahead of him he sees something.

A tiny point of light. As he stares at it, it grows brighter and brighter...until it shimmers like the sun.

It's most lovely thing that he's ever seen.

Then, from far away, he hears singing.

Frank reaches out. If only he could touch the light.

And then the light reaches toward him.

As the golden rays surround him with incredible brilliance, his face is filled with joy.

And the singing is everywhere.

128 EXT. MIDDLE OF SOVEREIGN LAKE -- CONTINUOUS

128

The blizzard has come full force. Snow streaks through the air as Caesar and Verna put Libby into the police car.

CAESAR PIPE

Get her clothes off.

Suddenly, Verna turns and looks into the darkness.

VERNA

Look! LOOK! What's that?

Caesar turns and looks.

Fifty feet away, under the ice, a golden light is shining. As they watch, it grows brighter and brighter. It rises and the rays sweep all around them. As they touch her, tears stream down Verna's cheeks.

VERNA (CONT'D)

Oh, it's so beautiful.

For a moment, they are everywhere...and then, they are gone.

129 EXT. MIDDLE OF SOVEREIGN LAKE -- LATER

129

The lights of an ambulance flash in the blizzard as it sits next to Caesar's car.

SLOW PULL BACK

LIBBY (V.O.)

Once I thought I knew what love was.
I thought it was an emotion so strong
that it would never die.

(beat)

Now, I know what it really is.

(beat)

Love is a choice...to honor and
cherish the life of another...to
break chains and not create them.
To give up hopes and dreams -- even
life itself -- so that others may
live.

(beat)

Love is a sacrifice...and that is
why it lasts forever.

MONTAGE BEGINS

130 EXT. SOVEREIGN LAKE -- DAY

130

From winter to spring.

1. Snow melts from the trees.
2. Daffodils begin to bloom.
3. The ice on the lake is vanishing.

MONTAGE ENDS

131 EXT. SOVEREIGN LAKE (SUMMER) -- DAY

131

The forest around Sovereign Lake is alive with color. The sun glistens through dew-covered leaves.

MOVING SLOWLY OUT OVER SOVEREIGN LAKE

The water is deep blue.

LIBBY (V.O.)

The divers found Frank's body under
the lake at the place where the light
had appeared.

At the edge of the lake stands Frank's church. It has a new coat of paint and looks beautiful, surrounded by green grass and flowers.

(CONTINUED)

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

We buried him behind the church that he loved so much. Somehow, his death made it come alive again. Now, it's full every Sunday.

132 EXT. GRAVE BEHIND CHURCH -- DAY

132

Libby stands looking down at Frank's gravestone. Above his name is a crucifix. There is a new softness in her eyes and it makes her more beautiful than ever because it comes from peace.

LIBBY (V.O.)

Tom's body wasn't found until the Spring. Judge Bigelow went to prison. The Homestead is closed. I stayed at the clinic because the people needed me. And Verna?

(beat)

Something happened to my daughter that night that no one can explain. For days afterward she couldn't stop crying. Not because of sorrow, but because of the beauty that had touched her. And in those tears there was healing.

(beat)

All of that was two years ago. Can it be that long since Frank was taken from us?

(beat)

Verna lives in Minneapolis now. She's met a wonderful young man and they're going to get married. But she comes back often. We spent months crying together and asking forgiveness. She is my best friend.

A car pulls up. Verna gets out. She walks up and joins her mother, giving her a hug. The women look down at the grave, then turn and walk away, arm in arm. There is real love between them. They wave to Caesar Pipe who is working in the garden outside his double-wide. He waves back.

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

Once I thought I knew what love was. And I thought I could never have it because I wasn't worthy. Frank showed me that I was wrong.

CRANE SHOT PULLING AWAY

The women grow smaller

As they walk toward the clinic. From above, the church is lovely. Even with a satellite dish under the steeple.

(CONTINUED)

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

His love was a glistening shadow of
Something far greater that existed
before the stars were born. It was
that Love that appeared in the
darkness...and carried him home.

The white clouds of heaven are mirrored in the lake below.

FADE TO
BLACK: