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EXEC. PRODUCER: Jerry Bruckheimer
DIRECTOR: Paul Schrader

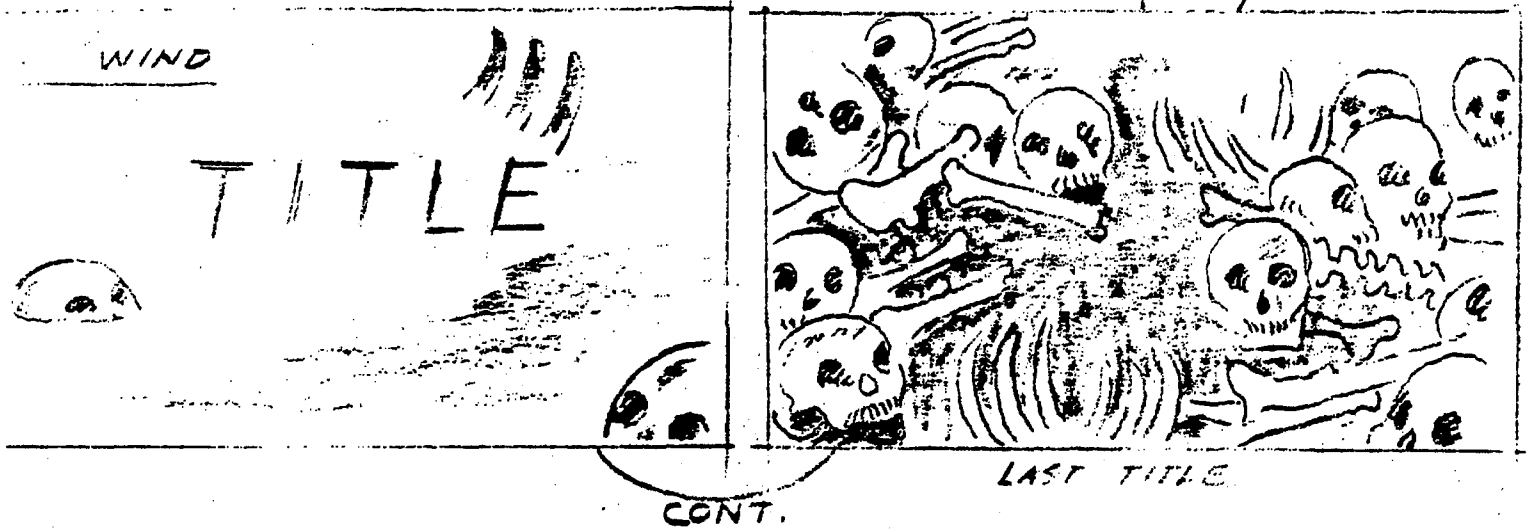
CAT PEOPLE

Final Draft Screenplay

Written by

ALAN ORMSBY

CAT PEOPLE



PROLOGUE

1. CREDITS.

Empty expanse of desert sand which blows away revealing a strewn mass of bleached bones.

BLUE BACKING



PUSH IN TO



LAST
TITTLE
1985

CUT



CUT

1A EXT. TREE - DAY

Camera tilts up from bones to Desert village matte.
Push into leopard perched on rock overlooking village.

STAND DOLLY



2 EXT. VILLAGE DAY

A dolly across live action scenes in the village. Dolly begins with overhead shot of women drawing clay pots from a dry well. The pots contain mud and little water. The women are wrapped against the heat. The earth is parched and cracked.

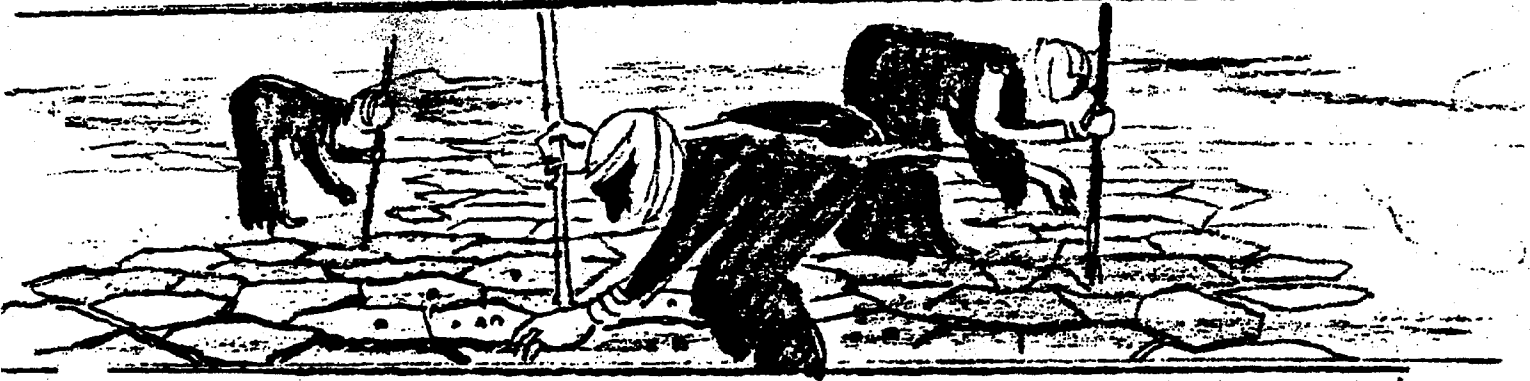
SAME



2 CONTINUED

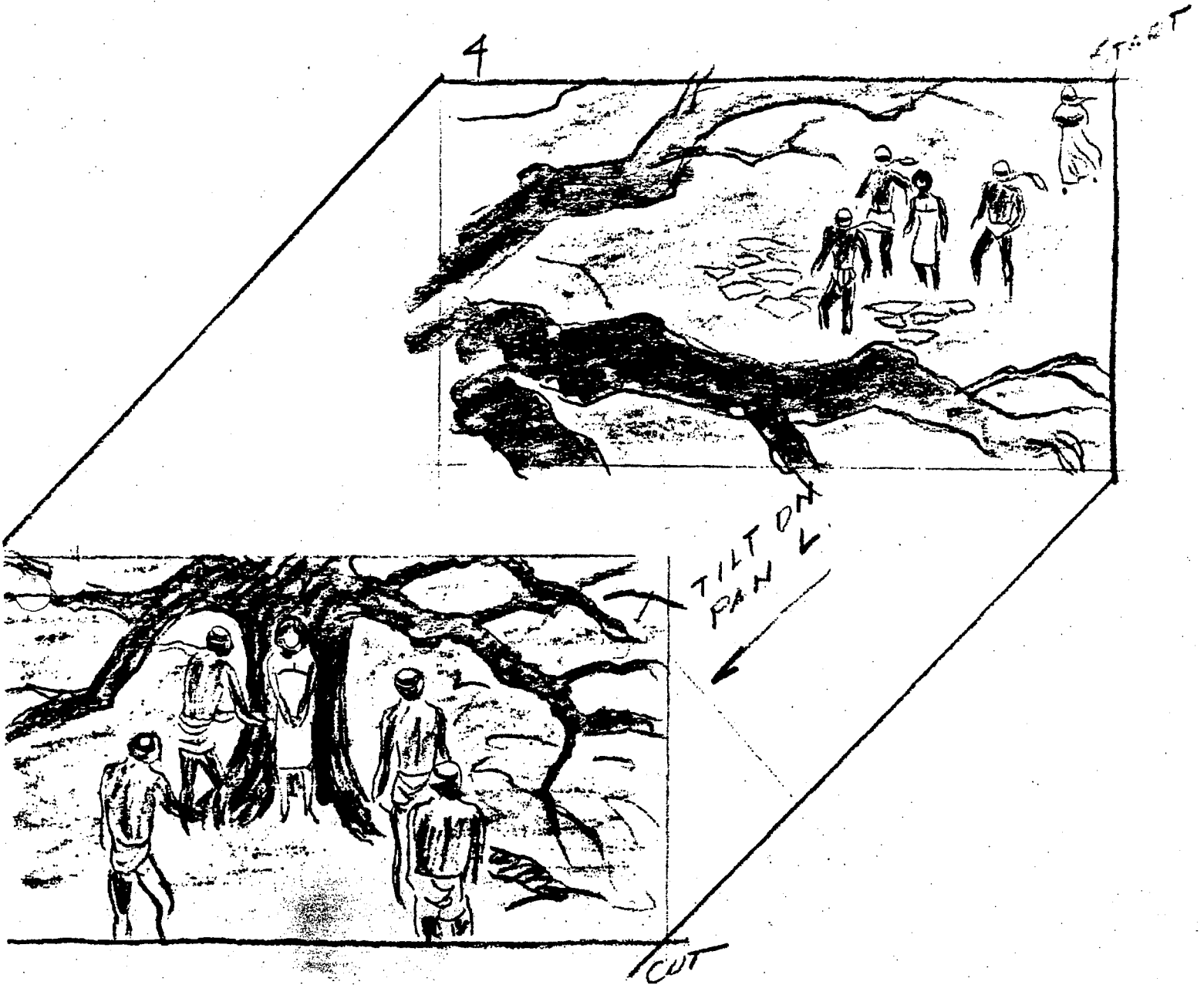
Dolly tilts up as it continues. Reveales parched stalks of corn. Further along, emaciated wild dogs pick over an already clean animal carcass.

2 2



CONTINUED

Dolly continues. Reveals village women picking beetles out of cracked earth.



4 EXT. TREE - DAY

High shot through branches of GIRL and warriors approaching tree. Tilt down, as she is tied to the tree trunk.



5 EXT. TREE - LATE DAY

Blue backing. Girl tied to tree as sun sets in dust storm over indian village.



5A EXT. TREE - NIGHT

GIRL tied to tree, moonshining through dust storm.

BAV

5A contd.



5A contd.

pull back to fuller shot revealing mother watching GIRL.

EXT. TREE - NIGHT

C.U. of GIRL looking of to leopard o.s.



7

POV

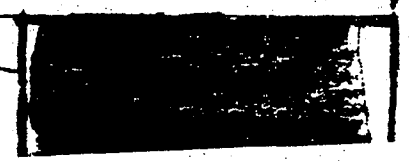
EXT. TREE - NIGHT

GIRL'S p.o.v. of leopard approaching her.



ALTERNATE
9

UP? I



8 EXT. BASE OF TREE - NIGHT
 The leopard rears up and places his front paws on either side of the Virgin's head.
 Live action against blue screen.



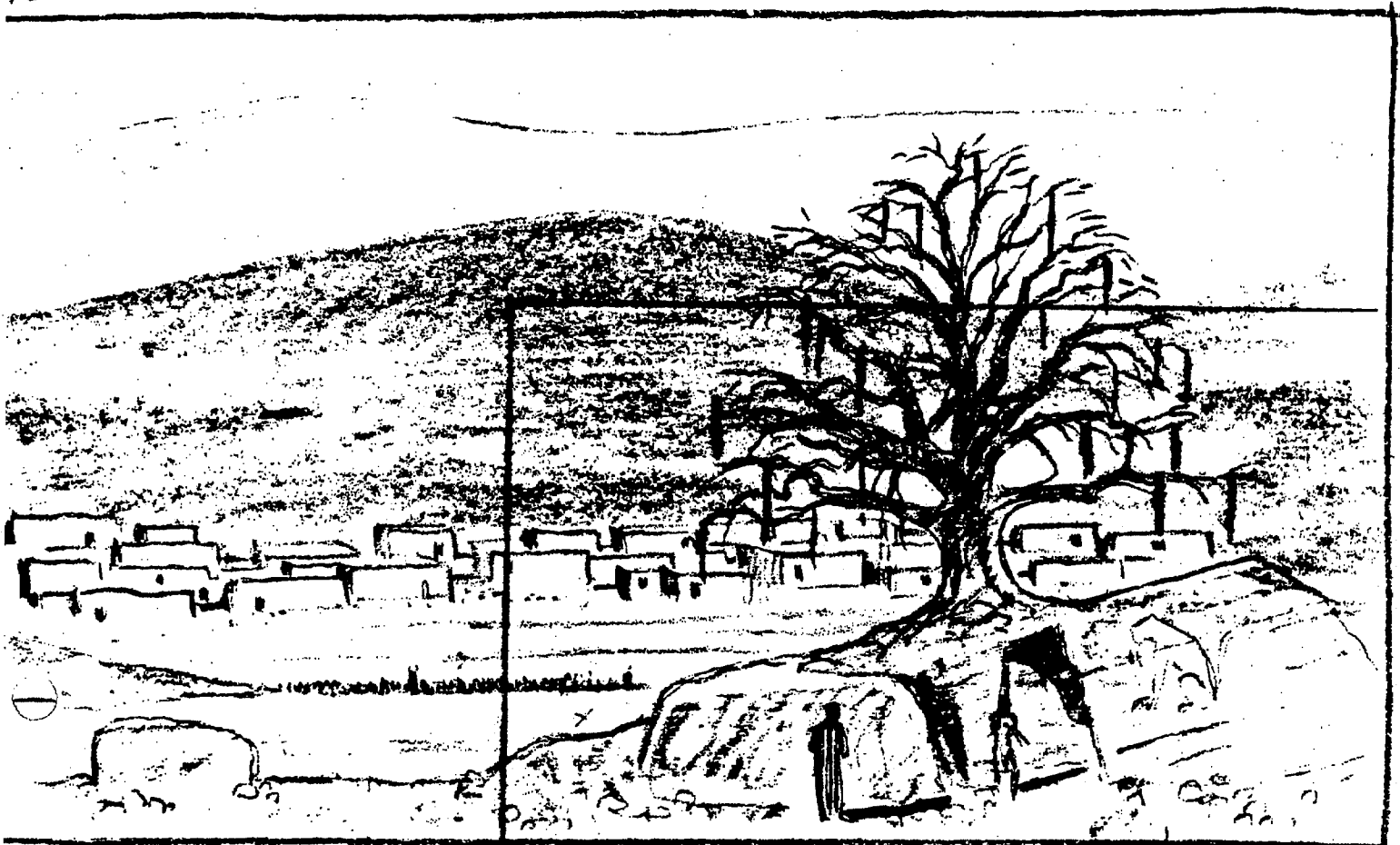
9 EXT. BASE OF TREE - NIGHT
 Over leopard's shoulder to Virgin. She looks him in the eyes without fear.
 Live action against blue screen.



CONT

SHADOW OF LEOPARD OVER





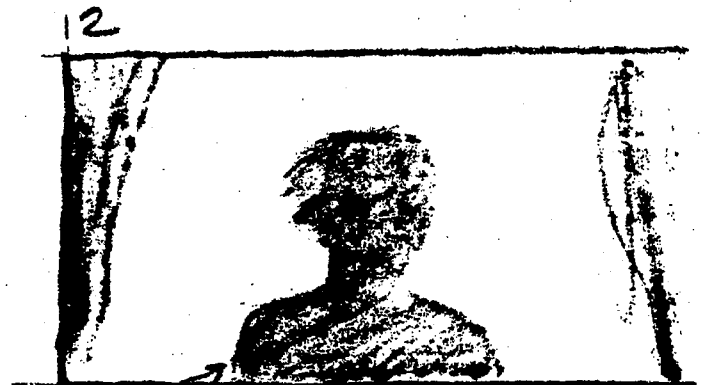
10 EXT. TREE/CAVE - DAY

MATTE SHOT. Mother and Girl approach cave, Girl stops at entrance.

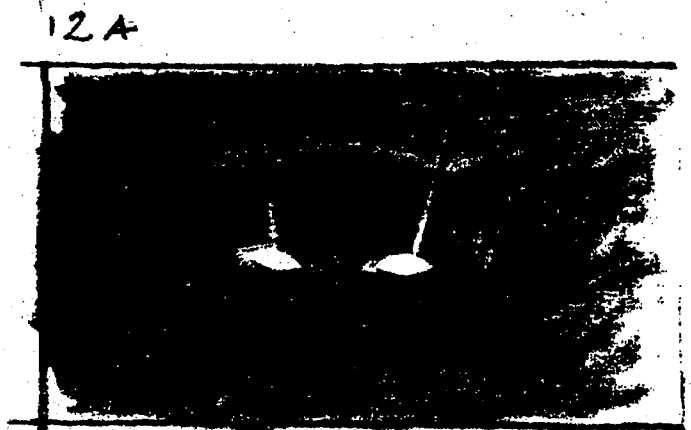
11 INT. CAVE - DAY
Girl's p.o.v. of
leopard in back of
cave.



12 INT. CAVE - DAY
Leopard's p.o.v. of girl at
entrance of cave.



12a INT. CAVE - DAY
Leopard's eyes glowing.



13 INT. NEW ORLEANS AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY - THE PRESENT

13

IRENA GALLIER, age nineteen, moves through the crowded terminal looking lost and confused. She carries a heavy, frayed suitcase.

(CONTINUED)

The cavernous feeling of the terminal and the scurrying of the crowd clearly contribute to her unease.

POV SHOT: Irena, moving across the polished floor.

Someone is watching her.

POV begins following her from a distance (her back to us) as she crosses toward the pay phone.

A well-dressed, collegiate-looking "Moonie" intercepts her, thrusting a leaflet into her hands and gesturing for money. Irena moves on, bypassing his outstretched hand.

POV sidesteps the Moonie and continues after Irena, who stops at a bank of pay phones, takes a coin from her purse and starts to insert it in the machine.

POV moves swiftly to Irena. A man's hand enters frame stopping Irena from inserting the coin.

Irena turns, startled:

Behind her is PAUL GALLIER, thirtyish, in a black suit with a clerical collar. For a moment she thinks he is another panhandler and pulls back her hand.

IRENA

I'm sorry, I have no change --

PAUL

I'm Paul.

She doesn't know what to say: She is embarrassed; tongue-tied; happy; confused --

IRENA

I -- I'm Irena --

Paul smiles.

PAUL

I know.

He puts his hands on her shoulders and, looking in her eyes, draws her to him. But he doesn't kiss her; instead, eyes open, he presses his cheek softly against hers and holds her there a moment, his lips close to her ear.

PAUL

Welcome home.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (2)

13

Irena is about to pull back but Paul, suddenly brisk and businesslike, lets her go and picks up her bag, as though it weighed nothing.

PAUL
How was your flight?

IRENA
Oh -- I hate flying --

They begin walking toward the terminal exit.

PAUL
Me too.

IRENA
But I wanted to get here as fast
as I could...

The rest of their conversation is drowned out by the terminal sounds and they recede until they are lost from view.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. GALLIER HOME - DAY

14

Moving into view through the cab window. The house is two-storied, plain, with a balcony on the upper floor, the overgrown yard shaded by large brooding trees and enclosed by an iron-spiked fence.

The cab stops. Paul and Irena get out. Irena is dazzled by the house and looks at it through the fence, wonderingly, like a child. Paul pays the driver and picks up the suitcase.

IRENA
It's wonderful --

PAUL
It is now --
(opens the gate)
Does it look the way you remembered?

IRENA
I was too little to remember. But
it looks the way I imagined.

PAUL
Maybe that's the same thing.

He gestures for her to precede him to the house. She hesitates, briefly, then enters. He closes the gate.

15 INT. GALLIER HOUSE - DAY

15

The door opens and FEMOLLY, an immense Spanish woman, bursts out.

FEMOLLY

You're here at last! I'm so glad!
Let me look at you, little girl --

Irena is practically yanked into the house by Femolly who hugs and kisses her while she talks and touches Irena's hair and appraises her clothes with quick glances. Femolly is one of those people whose conversation can distract you from noticing their real intentions.

PAUL

Femolly, this is my sister Irena --

FEMOLLY

I can see that! Look at those eyes, I'd know Gallier eyes anywhere -- Oh, Paul, she's a lovely, lovely little thing. Your brother has driven me crazy waiting for you.

PAUL

Femolly keeps me out of trouble.

FEMOLLY

(playfully)

And that's a full-time job, honey, and you better believe it!

IRENA

Fem -- ?

FEMOLLY

-- molly -- Femolly, like tamale. F-E-M-A-L-E! See, I was an orphan too. So they didn't put a name on the birth certificate, just 'Child, Female' -- Now, the woman who raised me, God rest her soul, she couldn't read English too good, so she thought it was pronounced 'Femolly!' So here I am! Female, Femolly, Femolly, Female!

She laughs heartily. Irena smiles. Paul watches Irena.

16 INT. GALLIER DINING ROOM - NIGHT

16

Paul and Irena at table.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

Paul has changed out of his clerical collar and sits with his sleeves rolled up. The overhead chandelier isn't working properly: several bulbs are out, the others send down a spray of weak yellow light.

Paul is saying grace.

PAUL

For what we are about to receive,
may the Lord make us truly thankful,
and bless us --

A pause. Irena looks up to see if he is finished and sees him looking at her. He continues:

PAUL

-- and for what we have already
received this day let us also give
thanks. For without God's guidance
our long-lost sister would not be
here tonight.

Femolly sniffs away a tear.

PAUL

Fate wrenched us apart as children;
Thy mercy restores us today; for
this mending, we thank Thee, Amen.

FEMOLLY

(crosses her heart)

Amen.

Paul and Irena smile at one another.

Femolly begins serving dinner.

IRENA

Oh! I forgot to call the Robinsons!

She starts to get up, nearly bumping into Femolly.

FEMOLLY

Watch out, this is hot!

PAUL

Why now?

IRENA

They care about me and --

PAUL

Can't you call them after dinner?

(CONTINUED)

16

CONTINUED: (2)

16

IRENA

(nervous chatter)

Yes, I -- of course. I don't want them to worry, they've been really nice. You'd like them. Janice works in a nursery school -- at least, part-time, she has three children -- and Arnold is a CPA. Extremely mellow. The only time he loses his temper is around April fifteenth and then he --

PAUL

(cutting her short)

Did they ever tell you how our parents died?

IRENA

Yes.

Pause. The mood has changed.

PAUL

What did they tell you about me?

IRENA

Not much. I knew I had a brother, but I was only four. I can remember fantasizing about you when I was still at the orphanage --

PAUL

(interested)

Fantasizing?

IRENA

You know -- about you coming to rescue me and everything. Daydreams.

PAUL

Yes, I had the same dreams.

CUT TO:

17

INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

17

Paul precedes Irena up the stairs. At the top of the stairway against the wall is a glass-panelled breakfront; through the glass various items are visible on shelves; children's toys, circus props. etc.

(X)

(CONTINUED)

17

CONTINUED

17

PAUL

We used to practice together.

(X)

IRENA

Practice? For what?

Paul opens the breakfront, giving Irena a wait-and-see smile. (X)
He takes a stack of pictures from the breakfront and hands them to her.

PAUL

For the circus.

She leafs through the pictures: faded yellow shots of small travelling circus, the Gallier Family Circus. Also in the pile are folded posters and handbills from the shows.

PAUL

When Grandfather started the circus, he had only one wagon, a double-tiered one, it's shown there somewhere -- yes, that's it --

She is looking at a very faded shot of the circus.

PAUL

See? The apes were on top and the cat was kept below. The chimp used to tease the cat by throwing its garbage down through the bars --

Irena continues through the pictures, stopping at a shot of her parents, Phillip and Nora Gallier. He wears a lion tamer's outfit and holds a whip. Nora is dressed as his assistant. Irena is touched by the picture and by her parents' hopeful expression.

IRENA

Oh, look, they're so young --
Mother looks so happy --

Phillip and Nora bear a striking resemblance to Paul and Irena. Paul's tone has become sad.

PAUL

By the time it ended, we had accumulated six wagons. I remember the last tour.

(CONTINUED)

IRENA

I envy you.

He looks at her as if this were a crazy idea.

IRENA

I wish I'd known them...

She is looking at the pictures. He takes two or three rubber balls from the breakfront and begins juggling them. He stares at her as the balls travel a patterned arc in front of his face.

PAUL

(sing-songy, as
he juggles)

'Some little mice sat in a barn to
spin;
Pussy came by, and popped her head
in:
"What are you doing, my little
men?"'

He waits for her to answer the question.

IRENA

(starts as Paul
helps her along)

'Weaving coats for gentlemen.'

PAUL

'Shall I come in and cut your
threads off?'

(pauses for answer,
then continues)

'Oh, no! King sir, you will --'

PAUL AND IRENA

'-- snap our heads off!'

He juggles the balls faster and faster; Irena watches, entranced.

He watches her as she watches him.

CUT TO:

19 INT. IRENA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 19

Through open doors a balcony is visible and then dark starred sky.

Panning room, we see Irena's unpacked suitcase; some personal effects on the dresser top, and Irena, in bed, asleep.

CUT TO:

20 INT. LIVING ROOM/BOTTOM OF STAIRS - NIGHT 20

Paul stands at the base of the stairs, one hand on the balustrade. He stares up the stairs at the second floor.

Femolly sits across the room in a rocking chair. The chair creaks as she rocks.

Paul takes one step.

Femolly stops rocking.

They do not look at each other and neither speaks and yet it is as if they were arguing.

Paul silently mounts the stairs.

CUT TO:

21 INT. IRENA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 21

The door opens slightly, spilling light into the room, and Paul silently enters, closing the door behind him.

He moves to the foot of the bed, leans on the bedstead, stares down at Irena.

Silently he leaps onto the bedstead, balanced there on all fours like the gargoyle in Fuseli's Nightmare.

Sound of his breathing.

FADE OUT.

Sound of high heels clicking on pavement.

22 EXT. FRENCH QUARTER - NIGHT 22

A HOOKER makes her way down a street occupied by massage parlors, triple-X rated theatres, bars, etc.

She enters a massage parlor and hurries up the stairs.

CUT TO:

23 INT. MASSAGE PARLOR LOBBY - NIGHT

23

Soft muzak. The MANAGER stands behind a counter containing marital aids: dildoes, other sex-oriented paraphernalia. Hooker enters.

MANAGER

What took you so long? He's been waitin' forty-five minutes!

HOOKER

Fuck off, I had to get a babysitter --

MANAGER

Room twelve, hurry up.

She takes a clean towel and moves off down the hall, pausing to straighten her wig before entering room twelve.

CUT TO:

24 INT. ROOM TWELVE - NIGHT

24

RUTHIE (HOOKER)

Sorry I'm late...

There is no one in the room.

It's a small room, claustrophobic, dimly-lighted, with one window (barred), a sink, a bed, a bathroom. The bathroom door is closed. The customer's clothes (black) are folded neatly over the back of a chair.

She knocks lightly on the bathroom door.

RUTHIE

I'm Ruthie. Did he tell you the house rules?

(undresses as she talks)

Okay, the massage alone is twenty-five dollars -- and for twenty-five dollars that's all you get. Tipping is allowed if you desire any personal services.

As she undresses she notices a wallet in his folded pants. With no change in tone, she looks through his wallet as she talks.

RUTHIE

A massage is one half-hour.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: (2)

24

She screams.

Gets her hand on the knob. Pulls door open and dives into hallway, dragging her maimed foot.

In the hallway Ruthie pulls door shut with a slam as sound of growl within, builds to high-pitched shriek and something crashes hard against the door.

Ruthie looks at her foot: Shredded; bleeding; bones visible. She starts to scream...

CUT TO:

25 EXT. MASSAGE PARLOR - EARLY MORNING - PRE-DAWN

25

An ambulance idles by the curb and a small crowd, under the containment of several POLICEMEN, has started to gather as a second truck pulls up. In the truck are OLIVER YATES, ALICE MOOR, JOE CREIGH. Oliver driving.

POLICEMAN

Get that truck outta there!

OLIVER

I'm Doctor Yates, New Orleans Zoo.
Bill Searle called, said you had
a stray cat in there --

CUT TO:

26 INT. MASSAGE PARLOR - EARLY MORNING

26

Oliver, Alice and Joe, move down the hallway with BILL SEARLE, thirtyish, in a city worker's uniform. The The Leopard can be heard howling in b.g.

BILL

-- it's a goddamned black Leopard
is what it is, don't ask where it
came from, 'cause we don't know.

He stops at a door and knocks. The Manager peers out.

BILL

Candid Camera.

The Manager steps back reluctantly to let them in. Oliver, Alice and Joe look puzzled, but follow Bill into the room.

CUT TO:

The wallet contains cash, but no identification. She takes a twenty and puts it in her purse.

RUTHIE

We accept Visa, Master Charge,
American Express -- but not for
tips.

We hear a noise -- a slight scraping, indistinct.

Ruthie replaces the wallet and resumes undressing, keeping her eye on the bathroom door.

RUTHIE

Well, that's not really true. You
can put tips on Visa if you want.

She slips off her skirt and blouse and unhooks her bra. She sits on the edge of the bed, unhooks her stockings from her garter belt and starts to roll them down.

She stops.

There is something on the bed beside her: A pink, membranous fragment that resembles uncooked chicken flesh. She prods it with her finger: Under it the spread is stained with a trail of bloody mucus.

The trail runs down the side of the bed and drips into a little clotted pool on the floor.

She stares at it in disgust; leans over for a better look.

Notices something sticking out from under the bed: Something that looks like a coiled length of wet black rope.

She nudges it with her foot.

It moves. Flicking back and forth. We hear a growl.

The bed starts to tilt as if something were standing up beneath it.

Something huge.

RUTHIE

Shit!

She leaps for the door.

Something grabs her foot. Tearing sound.

(CONTINUED)

27

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

27
(X)
(X)

A small narrow room equipped with a TV monitor which is hooked up to the various rooms -- an obviously amateur job.

ALICE

Let's hear it for voyeurism.

MANAGER

Strictly security.

Bill and the others gather around the monitor.

(X)

Thanks to fish-eye optics almost the whole of room twelve is visible. It appears to be empty.

BILL

Where'd he go?

MANAGER

Back under the bed.

BILL

Scared the shit outta the john that was in there; musta split stark naked.

(X)

ALICE

How'd it get in there anyway?

BILL

Fire escape.

MANAGER

There's no fire escape and the window's got bars on it.

OLIVER

Back door?

MANAGER

Locked.

(CONTINUED)

27

CONTINUED:

27

JOE

Musta come in the front.

MANAGER

I think I would've noticed.

OLIVER

Wait, wait, wait, look here --

On monitor: The black Leopard emerges slowly from (X)
beneath the bed.

JOE

Holy shit.

ALICE

He's enormous.

BILL

Hundred-seventy pounds? Hundred-
eighty?

OLIVER

More like two hundred. Yeah. He's
real big. Reeveeeal big. Okay,
let's go with the ketamine straight.
Two thousand milligrams. Let's
knock him down quick and get him
in the squeeze cage. Probably
have to intubate him, too. Can
we get to that window from the
outside?

CUT TO:

28

EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING - EARLY MORNING

28

An extension ladder reaching from the alley to the win-
dow of room twelve has been set up.

At its base are Oliver, Bill, Alice, Joe, some firemen,
policemen, city workers, one of them carrying walkie-
talkies.

A spike metal fence shuts out the crowd, among which
is now a TV crew in the process of setting up.

(CONTINUED)

28

CONTINUED:

28

Oliver is checking a tranquilizer rifle and preparing to climb the ladder.

ALICE

(to Bill, indicating
walkie-talkies)

If we could borrow that pair of
hand-helds, we could assist from
the monitor.

BILL

Good idea.

He goes to get them.

OLIVER

He won't get sluggish for five or
ten minutes. I'll have time to
get back inside and give you a
hand.

Bill returns with hand-helds.

BILL

Got room for this?

OLIVER

I'll make room.

He takes walkie-talkie, starts up the ladder.

ALICE

Be careless.

OLIVER

You too.

They smile at each other. He continues up the ladder.

The spike metal fence is just below him: If he fell
he'd be impaled on it. Crew members watch from the
ground where they hold the ladder steady. The TV crew
is filming the climb. The Leopard's growls can be
heard echoing down the alley.

CUT TO:

29

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - MORNING

29

Alice and Bill enter, stand before monitor.

(X)

(X)

In the next room: The Leopard paces the room in a
frantic circle. His growls can be heard in here, too.

CUT TO:

30 EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING - EARLY MORNING 30

Oliver at the window. Dust and the ornate bars obscure his view. Juggling his equipment, he reaches through the bars to clean the window. Squeak of his hand against the glass.

CUT TO:

31 INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - MORNING 31
(X)
On monitor: The Leopard stops pacing, stares at window. (X)

ALICE
(into walkie-talkie)
Oliver? He knows you're there.

CUT TO:

32 EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING - EARLY MORNING 32

From the room can be heard the Leopard's growl: low, phlegmy, like the hiss of a snake about to strike.

OLIVER
(into walkie-talkie)
I hear him; he doesn't sound overjoyed.

33 INT. - MORNING 33

On monitor: The Leopard freezes, begins backing into a corner out of camera range. (X)

ALICE
(into walkie-talkie)
You're scaring him, what're you doing? Oliver?

34 EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING - MORNING 34

OLIVER
(into walkie-talkie)
Cleaning the window.

ALICE'S VOICE
(on walkie-talkie)
What?

OLIVER
(into walkie-talkie)
Cleaning the --

Crash!

(CONTINUED)

34

CONTINUED:

34

Glass explodes out as the Leopard's paw breaks through the window. Oliver pulls back, nearly falling, the hand-held plummets to the alley below --

The Leopard's arm strikes out in frenzied downward arcs tearing at the ladder, chopping out hunks of wood, glancing off Oliver's pants' leg, ripping out shreds of fabric --

CUT TO:

35

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - MORNING

35

(X)

BILL

Jesus Christ, he's going out the
goddamn window!!!

CUT TO:

36

EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING - MORNING

36

The Leopard is forcing its head out under the bars; we can see its foamy, gnashing jaws -- Oliver rears back, still off-balance, trying to get ahead --

The Leopard lunges as --

Oliver fires!

Explosion of smoke -- scream from the Leopard as it falls back into the room --

CUT TO:

37

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - MORNING

37

(X)

Alice, amazed, as on TV monitor: the Leopard races in frenzied circles, leaping up walls, over the bed, shattering furniture, slashing sheets, the bed, howling, slobbering, leaping directly at the monitor screen as if at the room's hidden camera.

(X)

ALICE

Jesus!

Monitor goes black.

(X)

CUT TO:

38

INT. IRENA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

38

Irena sits up in bed as if awakened from an anxious dream.

IRENA

Paul?

CUT TO:

39 INT. HALLWAY BY DOOR TO PAUL'S ROOM - MORNING 39

Irena knocks on Paul's door. No answer. She opens the door.

IRENA

Paul?

No one is there. The bed is made. She closes the door.

CUT TO:

40 INT. ROOM TWELVE - MORNING 40

Slow motion as the door opens and Oliver, Joe, Alice enter, carrying net.

They wear protective suits and look like spacemen or fencing instructors.

The room is a shambles: their feet crunch over the shards of glass and plaster as they advance.

The Leopard lies stunned on the floor. It groggily lifts its head.

Leopard's POV: from the floor, an odd angle, warped as if seen through drugged eyes: Oliver and Creigh approaching and -- in slow motion -- tossing the net over camera --

CUT TO:

41 INT. GALLIER KITCHEN - MORNING 41

Femolly watching TV. Irena, now dressed, enters.

FEMOLLY

Morning!

IRENA

Good morning. Where's Paul?

FEMOLLY

Oh, they needed him down at the mission, bright 'n' early --

IRENA

(disappointed)

He was going to show me the sights.

FEMOLLY

You got eyes! You can see 'em for yourself! Pick yourself up a guidebook, they sell 'em all over town --

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

41

CONTINUED:

41

FEMOLLY (CONT'D)

-- have yourself a good time,
 don't worry 'bout him! Try this
 coffee now, see if you like it
 with chicory --

She gives her coffee.

CUT TO:

42

INT. MOVING BUS - MORNING

42

Irena studies her guidebook. A man stares at her. She looks away at the advertisements over the windows. Morris the Cat stares moodily back at her.

CUT TO:

43

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER - JACKSON SQUARE - DAY

43

Irena admires the Cathedral of St. Louis, shading her eyes to scan its gray spires. Taking out a small pad, she begins to sketch.

Irena looks at the amateur paintings lining the fence: clowns, boats and sunsets; flowers, kittens; leopards on black velour. Also: Clint Eastwood, Barbra Streisand, etc.

CUT TO

43-A

CAT SHOP IN JACKSON SQUARE - DAY

43-A

44

OMITTED

(X)

44

45

EXT. PENTECOSTAL MISSION - LATE DAY

(X)

45

A large, peeling wooden building with a neon sign. Parked in front is a red Mercedes. Irena enters church.

(X)

45-A

INT. PENTACOSTAL MISSION - LATE DAY

45

A BEJEWELED WOMAN, wearing a black dress and diamond rings, approaches Irena.

(X)

(X)

BEJEWELED WOMAN

Yes, can I help you?

IRENA

I'm looking for Paul Gallier.

(CONTINUED)

45-A CONTINUED:

45-A

BEJEWELED WOMAN

I don't believe he's in today.

IRENA

He's my brother...

BEJEWELED WOMAN

Oh. Well, I can take you to his office, if you'd like to wait --

IRENA

No, that's fine.

Irena walks away.

CUT TO:

46 INT. GALLIER KITCHEN - MORNING

46

Femolly is munching a piece of cold pizza and watching the "Morning News" on TV. Irena enters, carrying sketch pad.

FEMOLLY

Look who's up before the rooster!

IRENA

Isn't Paul back yet?

FEMOLLY

He'll be back; you sit down and eat now, you're too thin, look like a skeleton --

IRENA

I'm worried about him.

FEMOLLY

No reason to! He gets called away sometimes, that's all; it's his work. Preacher's like a doctor, got to tend to the sick --

TV ANNOUNCER

(low in b.g.)

-- the Leopard has been taken to the New Orleans Zoo where it will be quarantined while tests are made and until its owners, if any can be found --

Femolly flips the channel:

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

FEMOLLY

John Davidson's s'posed to be on
here somewhere --

(flips the channel)

Not many men are like your brother
Paul; give their lives to God, not
many.

John Davidson appears on the screen. Femolly serves
Irena, her eyes glued to the TV screen.

CUT TO:

47 INT./EXT. MOVING CAB - DAY

47

Irena is seeing the sights by cab. The DRIVER pauses
at a red light. Irena sees something across the di-
vided road.

IRENA

What's that?

DRIVER

Nothing, the zoo --

The light changes; he starts up --

IRENA

Wait, I want to go there --

DRIVER

What for? It's a dump -- You want
a zoo? Go to the Bronx. Let me
show you the French Quarter --

IRENA

I've seen the French Quarter. Now
stop. Please.

The cab stops; Irena pays her fare and gets out.

She stares at the zoo; then walks toward it.

CUT TO:

48 EXT. NEW ORLEANS ZOO - DAY

48

Southern Victorian Gothic: red brick, vine-wrapped
buildings; porticoes; animal figures in bas-relief;
Roman letters titling exhibits. An old zoo, too small
and too crowded.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

A security guard watches as a cluster of Spanish nuns, escorting children, pass through the turnstile. The nuns are speaking Spanish; the children are whispering and laughing.

Their laughter and whispers remain in b.g. as Irena puts her token in the turnstile slot (clank) and pushes on through.

Irena's POV: as she progresses through the zoo. Animal and spectator sounds subtly combining, remain constant in b.g.

Irena passes the gift shop on her way to the exhibits.

On front of some of the cages are speakers, mounted on poles, which play recorded messages when a plastic key is inserted.

As Irena wanders on, bits and pieces of these recorded speeches (in Oliver's voice) drift in and out of hearing.

By the orangutan cage --

OLIVER'S VOICE

(from speaker)

... fewer than three thousand
Orang are left in the wild as man
continues to destroy their natural
habitat -- Ollie was bred in
captivity, a product of artificial
insemination as is now usually the
case. Today's zoo is a modern ark,
fighting to guarantee the survival
of endangered species and serving
as a breeding ground for others...

Irena moves on.

She passes a row of glassed-in reptile cages. Under the artificial light the foliage looks Edenically green and bright; snakes coil sleepily over rocks and lush foliage.

As a python gulps down a live white rat, Irena turns away, moving on to the next cage, where she sees --

A keeper, squatting inside the cage, cleaning the glass from the inside with a container of 409. He smiles and winks at Irena.

Startled, she moves on.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (2)

48

Another exhibit: a bevy of blue-assed mandrills pick mites from one another's coats and glare at the spectators.

Irena continues on.

Set apart from the other exhibits she sees another cage. She approaches curiously, and sees a sign:

"This animal under quarantine; do not feed."

Irena's POV: approaching the cage. Through the bars she sees the black Leopard.

Nearby, Joe and Alice are working.

Irena stops and stares at the Leopard.

It rises groggily and stares back at her through the bars.

Irena takes out her sketch pad and begins to draw.

CUT TO:

49 INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY

49

Including: a lab, several cubicle-like offices; an operating theatre for animals needing surgery; a pharmacy. Various animals under treatment and/or quarantine, visible in cages. Animal sounds in b.g.

Close on: an enormous snake (Anaconda-sized) that is in the process of shedding its skin. Oliver is assisting by plucking away, with tweezers, the filmy eyelids which have not yet fallen away. The snake hisses and shoots out its tongue.

Oliver conducts this operation matter-of-factly, but the snake clearly makes BRONTE JUDSON, a zoo administrator, nervous. Bill Searle is also in the room, watching as Oliver works on the snake.

Bronte is one of the "New Southern Blacks": Unctuous, prosperous, political, well-to-do.

OLIVER

When he's out of quarantine, we'll free up one of the other exhibits and give our new Leopard some extra space.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Better disarm him first.

BRONTE

What does that involve?

OLIVER

(letting the snake
uncoil into a glass
cage)

No big deal. Clip the talons, do
a root canal. File and cap his
fangs. We have a dentist in town
does the work. Radenauer.

BRONTE

Tom Radenauer?

OLIVER

He does people, too.

BRONTE

I know, he's my dentist. Shit,
Oliver, we don't have the funds
for this. You know what's coming
down these days. Aren't there
any other alternatives?

OLIVER

Not really. We don't know its
history, so it's useless for
breeding. We could try to trade
it to another zoo, but its behavior
is so erratic I doubt we'll find
any takers.

BILL

You could euthanize it.

BRONTE

What's that, kill it?

OLIVER

It's not an acceptable alternative.

BRONTE

What would it cost?

OLIVER

I said it's not acceptable.

BRONTE

Well, can't we discuss it at least?

(CONTINUED)

OLIVER

Listen, I'll put up with being understaffed and underbudgeted and I'll put up with the fact that half the exhibits were built in 1901 and are falling apart, but I'm not putting up with this other shit, and certainly not for the sake of your budget.

BRONTE

Hey, calm down, okay? I just asked!

Alice and Joe enter, Joe is wet with Leopard vomit.

ALICE

Looks like we have a gourmet Leopard on our hands. He threw up in the cage; Joe found pizza in the vomitus.

BRONTE

Leopards eat pizza?

JOE

They're scavengers. He probably raided a garbage can before he got to that massage parlor.

ALICE

Doesn't look like he went there out of hunger.

JOE

Maybe he was horny.

OLIVER

Always a possibility. What else?

ALICE

Nothing. No ascariasis, no distemper, no encephalitis. Whoever owns him takes good care of him.

OLIVER

They sure do. He's a superb cat.

BILL

'Superb cat' -- he's a menace.

CUT TO:

Oliver, in broad-brimmed hat and apron trundles a wheelbarrow of leftover greens towards the zoo kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

50

Across the way, Joe is on his way home.

JOE

Manana, man!

Oliver waves back. Joe continues out, singing. His voice echoes through the zoo.

CUT TO:

51 INT. ZOO COMMISSARY - NIGHT

51

Oliver wheels in the barrow of greens and turns on the fluorescent overhead lights.

The commissary is a large (underground?) building, with shelves of "Camel Chow," "Lion Chow," others. There is also a heavy metal door leading to a walk-in freezer.

There is a large stove, an enormous meat grinder, several smaller freezers and some long tables for cutting, etc.

A purplish bug light dominates the room's center. Its bulbs are clotted with dead insects.

Oliver is checking over the various menus (written on slates in grease pencil) for the following day.

He puts a cassette on, and listens while he continues working. The cassette is of Dylan Thomas reading "Fern Hill" which Oliver is trying to memorize.

DYLAN THOMAS' VOICE

'Up to the swallow thronged loft
by the shadow of my hand,
In the moon that is always rising,
Nor that riding to sleep
I should hear him fly with the high
fields
And wake to the farm forever fled
from the childless land.
Oh as I was young and easy in the
mercy of his means,
Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the
sea.'

This plays while he works, echoing through the room. He recites along, stumbling a bit as he goes.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

51

He looks in bins marked: "Meal Worms," and "Maggots" and "Crickets" (or "Locusts"): Huge bins each filled with the crawling insects.

In a freezer bin, he looks at a plastic bag containing severed rat limbs and heads.

He marks the menus on the slates as he works.

O.S.: The Leopard roars. Oliver looks out the window.

His POV: The Leopard cage.

Irena's silhouette can be seen near the cage. She moves her head as if talking to the Leopard.

Oliver grabs a large flashlight and runs from the kitchen.

The tape plays on.

52 EXT. LEOPARD CAGE, OTHER ZOO AREAS -NIGHT

52

The flashlight beam sweeps Irena at the cage.

OLIVER

Hey!

She runs. Oliver follows. The Leopard rises, hissing.

Oliver pursuing Irena.

Glimpses of her through the bars of intervening cages. The weaving flashlight beam throws out Piranesian patterns of shadow as it cuts through the bars.

Growling uproar of animals as Irena passes various cages.

She darts down an alley.

Oliver halts at the alley entrance and beams the light ahead: A cul-de-sac. The beam spotlights a vine-covered brick wall.

Irena's purse and sketch pad lay scattered on the ground.

No Irena. Oliver, puzzled.

He upturns the light: Irena clings to the vines several feet above the ground.

The light reflects on her eyes. Oliver approaches, holding the light on her face.

(CONTINUED)

OLIVER
Get down from there.
(beat)
Come on, I won't hurt you.

She climbs to the ground. He continues holding the light on her face.

OLIVER
What the hell were you doing back there?

IRENA
Sketching.

OLIVER
Sketching.

She picks up the pad and holds it out: Rough-line drawings of the Leopard's face and eyes, various views.

OLIVER
Why'd you run away like that?

IRENA
You scared me.

OLIVER
Uh-huh. But you weren't scared of the Leopard. That animal could kill you in a second.

IRENA
You can sense how an animal feels.

OLIVER
Oh, you can.

IRENA
Sometimes. We're all connected. Please, would you mind -- ?

She motions for him to lower the light. He does.

OLIVER
Who are you?

IRENA
(picking up her purse)
Irena Gallier. Who are you?

OLIVER
I'm the curator here.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (2)

52

OLIVER (CONT'D)

And the next time you want to sketch,
we're open from ten to six. That's
six P.M. -- what's wrong?

IRENA

Nothing -- I feel sort of -- dizzy --

She stumbles, he grabs her. She tenses at his touch, he
feels it, too.

OLIVER

You're -- burning up --

He feels her forehead; she closes her eyes; presses her
forehead into his palm --

IRENA

Your hand feels so cool --

OLIVER

Come with me --

IRENA

No, I --

OLIVER

Come on, I don't bite --

53 INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - NIGHT

53

White mice stare fearfully out through the wire mesh of
their cages.

Irena reclines in Oliver's chair, her feet on his desk,
her eyes closed, a wet cloth draped across her forehead.

Oliver gets aspirin from the cabinet. He studies her
closely while they talk.

OLIVER

Take these.

IRENA

I don't believe in medicine.

OLIVER

It's aspirin.

IRENA

No thank you. I'm exhausted, that's
all.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

IRENA (CONT'D)

I flew in the day before yesterday and then I ran around sightseeing and forgot to eat and suddenly you started chasing me and I just got overexcited --

OLIVER

I do have that effect on women.

IRENA

Really?

OLIVER

Uh -- little humor there.

IRENA

Oh.

(beat)

Do I have to keep this on? My hair's getting wet, it'll all frizz up --

She removes cloth.

OLIVER

It'll help reduce your temperature.

IRENA

(takes brush
from purse)

It's already down. Feel.

He feels her forehead.

OLIVER

Just because you feel cooler to the touch doesn't mean the fever's gone. I'll get a thermometer --

She brushes her hair while she talks; it crackles under the brush. Oliver is fascinated.

IRENA

Please don't bother; I'm okay. I've always had a weird metabolism.

He looks dubious.

IRENA

Really. I just need something to eat and I'll be fine. What about you? Want to have dinner with me?

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED: (2)

53

OLIVER

Sure, ah -- if you feel --

IRENA

I feel hungry.

OLIVER

Well, I know a reasonably good
steak place...

IRENA

I don't eat meat.

CUT TO:

54 INT. OYSTER BAR - NIGHT

54

The counter man cuts oysters for the patrons standing
at the bar.

At a table, Irena and Oliver finish a meal. She ex-
pertly extracts the bones from broiled fish and sucks
them clean.

IRENA

You don't look like a curator.

OLIVER

I look exactly like a curator.

IRENA

(laughing)

No, you don't either.

OLIVER

No? What do I look like?

IRENA

I don't know, I'll have to look at
you some more.

OLIVER

You can look at me if I can look
at you.

IRENA

What do I look like?

He smiles as if to say: I know, but I'm not telling,
it's too sexy.

(CONTINUED)

IRENA

(laughs)

Now I'm embarrassed.

(to get out of it)

So tell me what a curator does.

OLIVER

Veterinary work. Research. Buys animals, sells animals, arranges the exhibits. Maybe gets an occasional expedition if we luck out on a donation or a grant.

IRENA

An expedition? Like into the jungle? That would be exciting!

OLIVER

Usually it's the bureaucratic jungle. We purchase most of our exhibits from animal dealers.

IRENA

How long have you worked at the zoo?

OLIVER

Ten -- uh -- no, eleven years now. I've always been into zoology, though, since I was a kid. Always preferred animals to people. What about you?

IRENA

Oh, I'm looking for a job. My brother Paul is supposed to help me, if he ever gets back; he's been gone for two days now.

OLIVER

What kind of job are you looking for?

IRENA

Well -- commercial art. And I'm good with children, I used to take care of my foster parents' kids --

OLIVER

Foster parents?

She hesitates.

OLIVER

I'm sorry, that just sort of -- popped out.

(CONTINUED)

IRENA

It's all right.

OLIVER

(fumbling)

I didn't mean to, uh, pry --

IRENA

My real parents committed suicide when I was four.

OLIVER

That's -- terrible.

IRENA

Actually it was a murder/suicide. My father shot my mother and then he shot himself. It's fucked up my life quite a bit.

OLIVER

Yes, I -- can imagine.

IRENA

He would have shot me and Paul, too, but Paul got us out of the house before he could.

OLIVER

Why -- what made him do it?

IRENA

Love.

(pause)

My mother was in love with another man.

OLIVER

I'm sorry.

IRENA

It was much harder on Paul. He was ten when they separated us. He searched for me all that time.

OLIVER

Well, I'm -- glad he found you.

Pause.

She smiles. He wants to get off this subject.

OLIVER

Look, uh, how would you like to work at the zoo?

(CONTINUED)

54

CONTINUED: (3)

54

IRENA

Oh, that would be fascinating! But I'm not really qualified --

OLIVER

You're qualified to work in the gift shop; they need some extra help in there. If you're interested, I could pull a few strings --

IRENA

Could you?

OLIVER

Sure. I'll talk to the curator.

CUT TO:

(X)

55
and
56

OMITTED

55
and
56
(X)
57

57

EXT. ZOO - BY LEOPARD CAGE - DAY

Oliver and Alice are tutoring Joe on the Leopard's diet, mixing the ingredients in a stainless steel container.

OLIVER

One fast day, one light day, five days regular feed. Vary it, but keep it balance. Some viscera, some muscle meat --

ALICE

A few bones now and then, plus the vitamin supplements oughta mellow him out.

OLIVER

Oh, and I've been saving this --
(takes out plastic baggie, extracts a stiff dead rat)

Little extra protein never hurts.

He sees Irena entering the zoo, hands the rat to Alice.

OLIVER

Here, I'll be back.

He hurries off to Irena.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

57

Alice watches the two of them.

ALICE

Who's that?

JOE

You know Oliver.

Alice nods, tosses the rat into the mix.

JOE

Heeeey, delish!

Alice is still watching Oliver and Irena. So is the Leopard.

CUT TO:

58 INT. GIFT SHOP - DAY

58

Oliver watches Irena explore the aisles. Glass mobiles chime softly in the breeze. There are long tables holding cups, saucers, ashtrays, all decorated with animal designs. Kliban cats on cushions, books, posters, pennants.

Plastic gorillas, candles in the shape of elephants, giraffes, black panthers. Also boxes of pralines, other New Orleans souvenirs.

OLIVER

It doesn't pay much, I have to admit.

IRENA

I like it. You can hear the animals.

She tickles a mobile with her fingers and laughs. Oliver watches, mesmerized.

OLIVER

'Oh as I was young and easy in the
mercy of his means,
Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like
the sea -- '

Pause. She looks at him.

IRENA

What's that about?

OLIVER

(shrugs)

Music.

CUT TO:

59 EXT. ZOO - DAY

59

crowded with customers. The Leopard howls.

CUT TO:

60 INT. GIFT SHOP - DAY

60

A cub scout troop blasts through the place as Irena tries to cope with a jammed cash register. Alice stops at the counter.

ALICE

You have to hurt it or it won't respond.

She pounds on the register: It opens.

IRENA

Thanks.

ALICE

De nada. I'm Alice.

They shake hands.

ALICE

You're Oliver's friend.

IRENA

Ah -- well -- we just met a few days ago, actually.

ALICE

You're not from New Orleans.

IRENA

New England. Mostly.

ALICE

Don't worry, we're just as crazy down here. Seen much of the city?

IRENA

No, I'd like to.

ALICE

Let's have a drink after work. Maybe I can help you work out a little 'itinerary.' Ciao!

CUT TO:

61 INT. NEW ORLEANS BAR - NIGHT

61

Alice and Irena seating themselves at a small table. A group of businessmen ogle them from the bar, smile and wave. Irena smiles back.

ALICE
Jesus, don't encourage these
assholes, please...

IRENA
How do you not encourage them?

ALICE
I tell them I'm gay.

IRENA
What if they believe you?

Across the room, a strange-looking Woman in a fox-fur coat is watching Irena as she sips her drink.

ALICE
I should be so lucky. If you want
to get laid, you can do better
than that, believe me.

IRENA
I was just being friendly, I
wasn't trying to get laid...

ALICE
Occasionally they're compatible.

IRENA
I wouldn't know.

ALICE
Horrors. How come?

IRENA
I've just never met anyone I
liked enough to -- have sex with.

ALICE
Never?

IRENA
Not so far.

ALICE
Really? You're still a virgin?

(CONTINUED)

IRENA

You make it sound so -- perverse.

ALICE

No, not at all. Incomprehensible, maybe, especially these days. So, at least, you must have come close --

(a beat)

-- once or twice?

IRENA

Mmm -- once or twice.

ALICE

How close?

IRENA

Well...

ALICE

'Well' -- come on --

IRENA

The first parents I loved with, well, the mother was okay, but the father was kind of...

ALICE

A letch?

IRENA

He always used to grab me when I went by --

ALICE

Overhand or underhand?

IRENA

Underhand.

ALICE

Know the type.

IRENA

Then there was this one boy...

The Woman who has been watching them has appeared at the table. She stares at Irena with strange, slanted eyes.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (2)

61

WOMAN
Mi hermana --

IRENA
(startled)
What?

WOMAN:
Mi hermana.

She reaches out as if to take Irena's hand. Irena pulls away.

The Woman turns and slowly walks away.

ALICE
Friend of yours?

IRENA
No, I -- I never saw her before.
What did she say?

ALICE
'Mi hermana' -- uh -- 'my sister.'
Probably drunk. So go on.

IRENA
I don't remember what I...

ALICE
This boy you liked.

IRENA
(still troubled by
the Woman's appear-
ance)
Oh... we -- you know, petted and
stuff like that. He wanted to go
all the way, so did I, but -- I
got scared, he looked so --

ALICE
Yes?

IRENA
... Huge...

ALICE
God, what's his name? Quick!

Alice laughs. Irena laughs, but she is still clearly disturbed by the Woman's appearance.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (3)

61

IRENA

I guess I'm a romantic at heart.
When it's right, it'll happen and
it will be... magical.

ALICE

Hey, I'm not knocking it. Here's
to the magic!

(drinks)

I lost mine on safari. Really
amazing. We spent more time in
the tent than we did in the bush.
Maybe I should rephrase that.

CUT TO:

62 EXT. ZOO - LATE DAY

62

Various quick scenes of keepers putting animals into
their bunkers for the night.

63 EXT. MONKEY HOUSE - LATE DAY

63

Tony, a Gorilla, is watching a small black and white
portable TV. Joe shuts it off; Tony makes angry
noises.

JOE

Now you behave, or you ain't
watchin' your soaps tomorrow.
I mean it, Tony!

Tony calms down. Joe raises the guillotine door and
Tony lumbers into the bunker.

Joe lowers the door back into place.

CUT TO:

64 INT. ELEPHANT CAGE - LATE DAY

64

Alice hoses down the elephant. The elephant makes
mincing little steps and curls its trunk in the spray.

CUT TO:

65 EXT. BEAR BUNKER - LATE DAY

65

Oliver checking one of the menus, written in grease
pencil on a slate. He rubs out part of it, writes
in something new.

CUT TO:

66 INT. GIFT SHOP - LATE DAY

66

Irena takes inventory. Music: the lullaby, slowly building, played so that we almost-but-not-quite recognize it.

She counts a stack of T-shirts, all of the same pattern, a silk-screened lion's face above the legend "Born Free." The image flips repeatedly by as she counts.

O.S., the Leopard howls.

Irena, troubled, stops counting. She looks around the shop.

Her POV: the shop. Something seems out of place. O.S., the Leopard howls.

Irena looks out the window. The Leopard howls.

CUT TO:

67 INT. LEOPARD'S CAGE - DAY

67
(X)

Joe attaches a thick hose to a spigot. Alice and Oliver approaching.

JOE

Relax, pussycat, ya gotta go in back so I can hose out some of that panther shit.

Leopard moans and paces.

JOE

C'mon, cooperate now, okay?

Irena enters.

She reaches the Leopard. We hear the lullaby from the gift shop, as if we were hearing it in her mind.

Oliver and Alice stop by the cage.

OLIVER

(to Joe)

Need some help?

JOE

He won't go in the bunker.

IRENA

He's afraid.

(CONTINUED)

Oliver smiles tolerantly at Irena.

The Leopard stops pacing, stares at Irena; presses its face to the bars, makes sounds as if trying to speak to Irena.

Joe, Alice and Oliver, watch, amazed.

Irena stares into the Leopard's eyes; suddenly she seems startled --

Her POV: the Leopard. Something wrong with his eyes --

She looks closer: the eyes are human! Irena screams.

Bam!

The Leopard races wildly about the cage, screeching, thrusting its claws through the bars.

OLIVER

Jesus, give me the prod, get him
in the bunker.

The Leopard screams, an almost human cry, and leaps about the cage like a demon.

Joe loops the prod strap around his arm for a better grip.

Irena stares, frozen.

Alice turns the wheel that raises the bunker door.

Joe jabs with the prod, trying to drive the Leopard back.

The door lifts creakily to reveal the rear

Joe tentatively turns his attention away from the Leopard.

The Leopard seizes the prod in its jaws and yanks hard.

Joe is pulled forward, off-balance, against the cage, his head colliding with the bars, his outstretched arm drawn in between them --

Irena -- suddenly realizes with horror what is about to happen --

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: (2)

67

Oliver -- a split-second of hesitant confusion --
and --

The Leopard leaps forward, sinks its fangs into Joe's
upper arm, pulls with all its might, twisting and yank-
ing from side to side and up and down --

Pulling Joe repeatedly against the bars; he screams.

A wrenching sound --

And the cage explodes with white smoke as Oliver blasts
the Leopard with a CO2 cartridge --

And Alice tries to pull Joe away from the jaws.

The Leopard is a shadow in the ballooning smoke, still
holding Joe's arm, and pulling -- harder, harder.

A thick tearing sound --

as Joe's arm comes loose from the socket, over the
sshhh of the CO2, over Alice's screams -- and the
pressure on Joe relaxes and he slumps sideways to
the ground, ashen-faced, blood spurting from the
empty shredded sleeve he drags behind --

In the smoky cage we can see the vague form of the
Leopard, shaking its head back and forth and scream-
ing like a demon, the severed arm wagging in its jaws
like a jointed snake --

Irena: stunned. A gurgling sound draws her attention
to the ground.

Her POV: a stream of blood runs from Joe's sleeve
toward her feet; the blood, speckled with dirt, runs
toward her heels, splashing her ankles, calves.

CUT TO:

68 EXTERIOR HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - DAY

68
(X)

Oliver gets in his truck, Alice following him and get-
ting in on the passenger side.

ALICE
26 years old. Only 26 goddamn
years old! Why?

He backs out with a screech of tires.

CUT TO:

69 EXT. OLIVER'S HOUSE - NIGHT 69

The truck squeals into the driveway, Oliver rushes into the house. Alice follows.

CUT TO:

70 INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE - NIGHT 70

Oliver goes to a gun cabinet, takes down rifle, begins to load it.

We glimpse the interior, briefly: the modestly-appointed living room; a stairway; a bird in an elaborate cage.

Gun loaded, Oliver starts out. Alice throws her arms around him, buries her face against his shoulder.

Oliver remains rigid, not allowing the emotion to penetrate him. Alice slowly removes her arms from around him.

OLIVER

You don't have to come.

ALICE

Yes. I do.

CUT TO:

71 EXT. ZOO - NIGHT 71

The truck skids to a halt and Oliver and Alice get out and make their way to the Leopard cage.

Oliver cocks the rifle, lifts it to his shoulder, advances slowly to the bars.

Looks in.

Dark. Very silent.

The Leopard is gone.

Frantically, Oliver moves from one side of the cage to the other: No Leopard.

He takes out keys, unlocks the door, swings it open, enters --

Shadows of the bars stripe Oliver's legs as he walks around the cage, his footsteps echoing on the concrete.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

71

No Leopard.

He peers in through the bunker door: Lying on the floor in a spittle-thick pool is a fragment of dark, wet, dissolving flesh.

But no Leopard.

OLIVER

Call the police.

CUT TO:

72 INT. GALLIER HOUSE - NIGHT

72

The door is unlocked as Irena enters. Lights are on in the kitchen, plates are on the table.

IRENA

Femolly?

No answer. She climbs the stairs.

CUT TO:

73 INT. IRENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

73

She enters, removes shoes, sees Joe's dried blood on them, throws them across the room, sits on bed, weeps.

Sees sketch pad on bedside table, thumbs through it, stopping to examine the sketches she made of the Leopard.

The balcony door opens and -- Paul enters, silently. He is pale, unshaven, eyes huge and glistening.

Irena looks up, startled.

IRENA

Paul -- where were you?

PAUL

In prison.

IRENA

Prison? What for?

PAUL

I was praying -- for the condemned.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

IRENA

I -- forgive me, I'm so confused,
I saw a man killed today --

O.S. sounds of police sirens.

PAUL

I didn't think you were ready,
but you are. I knew when I saw
you with him.

He locks the bedroom door.

IRENA

Who?

He smiles.

IRENA

Oliver?

PAUL

You want to fuck him, don't you?
You dream about fucking him and
your body burns, it burns all
along your nerves, in your mouth,
your breasts, your cunt -- there's
no aphrodisiac like the smell of
prey.

IRENA

Stop it --

PAUL

Each time it happens you tell
yourself it's love, but it isn't:
It's blood. It's death. And you
can't be free from the nightmare,
except with me. And I with you.
I've waited so long for you --

IRENA

Don't touch me!

PAUL

I'm the only one who can touch
you. And you're the only one who
can touch me. We're safe together,
because we're the same --

(CONTINUED)

IRENA

I'm not like you!

PAUL

You know you are, you've always known! You knew as a child when they called your name, and you knew in the dark when the others were dreaming and you could never sleep --

O.S. police sirens coming closer; howling of dogs --

IRENA

You're insane!

PAUL

Not me, I'm not in love --
(takes off his
belt)

What will you do, will you leap
through his hoop?

He circles her like a lion tamer, cracking the belt
at her like a whip.

PAUL

Take his head in your mouth,
like an egg?

(cracks whip)

Mi hermana!

IRENA

You're not my brother... Who are
you? Who are you!!!

He smiles, then, in a strange voice, still smiling,
he begins to hum the tune -- the lullaby -- that Irena
heard at the Leopard cage.

She stares, horrified.

Then breaks away; he lassos her with the belt, yanks
her back, pins her arms behind her, forces her face-
down on the bed. He tears at her skirt, forcing him-
self between her legs. She struggles to turn sideways
as he attempts penetration; he sinks his teeth into
the back of her neck, drawing blood; she screams;
reaches back, clawing at his eyes, raking his face;
he loosens his grip; she throws him off, stumbles out
onto the balcony --

(CONTINUED)

73

CONTINUED: (3)

73

On balcony: sound of sirens, dogs, closer now --

She retreats, clutching balustrade. He advances.

She hears the dogs, the sirens, turns to spot them; he lunges; she pulls back, falls from balcony --

In midair -- she falls, headfirst, twists her body right-side-up and lands --

On all fours; she stumbles to her feet; runs.

Paul leaps down behind her.

CUT TO:

74

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

74

Irena running, Paul closing fast.

Ahead, the lights of a police car.

(X)

IRENA

(waves
her arms)

Help! Help me!

She runs down the middle of the road; the police car swerves and screeches to a halt. (X)

CUT TO:

75

INT. GALLIER HOUSE - NIGHT

75

Femolly, bleary-eyed, in nightgown, is being questioned by a Detective while Oliver watches. Alice brings hot tea to Irena.

FEMOLLY

I was sleepin', I didn't hear any-
thing --

DETECTIVE BRANT

(enters)

Miss Moore, Mr. Yates? I want you
to see something.

CONTINUED

75 CONTINUED: 75
They exit with Detective Brant.

CUT TO:

76 INT. GALLIER KITCHEN - NIGHT 76
Brant leads them through to the basement door.

BRANT

At least we know now where the
Leopard came from.

They enter basement.

CUT TO:

77 INT. GALLIER BASEMENT - NIGHT 77

Oliver, Alice and Brant climb down the winding stone steps to the basement, ducking to avoid hitting a tangled overhead maze of corroded pipes, and make their way across the wet, uneven floor toward the yellowish glow of an unshaded dangling lightbulb beneath which stands a policeman, a handkerchief to his nose.

Alice and Oliver stop, horrified, not just by the smell, but by the sight of a caged-off area, bars and wire, the bars lodged into the cellar's thick cross-beams, the wire covering the bars -- which occupies one whole corner of the basement.

Alice and Oliver cover their noses and peer into the cage: At the bone-littered floor, pieces of dark, withered flesh, and the huge chain, one end of which is bolted to the wall, the other to a thick metal collar. Clearly the cage was meant to house some large and dangerous animal. Brant, who ignores the odor, watches their reaction. Alice, to overcome disbelief, reaches through the bars toward a large yellow bone.

BRANT

The dogs picked up the scent
real strong --
(points)
Look at that.

A large bone inside the cage. Alice reaches in.

(CONTINUED)

BRANT

Don't touch that, it's human
remains --

Alice pulls back quickly.

BRANT

There's pieces of three, four
bodies in there. Probably others
buried around --

ALICE

God.

BRANT

I expect Gallier killed them
first, possibly as part of some
ritual, then fed them to the
Leopard. We've found some others,
too, over the years. Mostly
prostitutes, female runaways,
half-eaten, genitals torn out --

ALICE

But why?

BRANT

Listen, who knows. Gallier's
been in and out of psycho wards
since he was twelve. He's a
religious fanatic.

OLIVER

Where would he get a cat like
that? How did he learn to handle
it?

BRANT

He was raised around them.
Least, until he was ten -- his
folks were carnival people.
Lion handlers, until they blew
their brains out one night.

ALICE

What about Irena? Is she involved?

OLIVER

She hadn't even met her brother
until a week ago.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: (2)

77

BRANT

We have no reason to suspect her. In fact, it looks like he planned to kill her, too. If I was her, I'd find me another place to live.

OLIVER

I'll take care of her.

BRANT

Anyway that's not our main problem. Our main problem is that we got a leopard out there and he likes human flesh.

OLIVER

You mean a leopard that has been trained to like human flesh.

BRANT

Yeah. And the maniac who trained him.

CUT TO:

78 EXT. GALLIER HOUSE - NIGHT

78

Femolly, cuffed, is put in the back of the police car. She stares out through the wire mesh screen at Irena, who waits for Oliver to emerge from the house.

Femolly and Irena make eye contact, and hold it, until the police car zooms off into the night, Femolly staring out the rear window until she's out of sight.

Oliver emerges from the house, carrying Irena's suitcase.

OLIVER

Ready?

She nods "yes."

He starts to take her arm; she pulls it away, not angrily, but as if she were afraid for him to touch her.

CUT TO:

79 EXT. OLIVER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

79

Oliver and Irena pull up in the truck. Oliver carries her suitcase as she limps into the house.

CUT TO:

80 INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

80

They move across the living room to the stairs.

OLIVER

(climbing stairs)

I used this room as a darkroom for a while, but I think you'll be comfortable.

CUT TO:

81 INT. UPSTAIRS ROOM - NOW IRENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

81

A spacious, simply decorated room with large windows and darkroom equipment on a table. Oliver puts down her suitcase.

OLIVER

I'm going to grab a couple hours sleep. We're going out first thing in the morning.

She says nothing.

OLIVER

If you need me, I'm right down the hall.

(starts out;
lingers)

We'll find him, Irena.

IRENA

(more to herself
than to him)

He couldn't be my brother. My brother couldn't have done... those things.

OLIVER

No, I'm sure he couldn't. Good night.

He goes.

She sits on bed, touches back of her neck where she was bitten, looks at her fingers.

CUT TO:

82 INT. OLIVER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

82

He takes off his shirt and trousers and gets into bed in his underwear. Sets clock for five A.M.; turns off light; lies there lost in thought.

CUT TO:

83 INT. IRENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

83

Lights out. Irena in bed, also wide awake. Shadows of curtains billowing on wall. Rustling of tree limb, O.S.

Sound of rustling limb continues over.

CUT TO:

84
and
85

OMITTED

84
and
85
(X)
86

86 INT. OLIVER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Irena enters, goes silently to his bedside.

Oliver is asleep, naked, the sheet barely covering him.

Sound of clock ticking.

Irena stares at his body.

He turns in his sleep.

Irena moves back, silently.

Crouches by the foot of the bed -- watching him. Fuseli revisited.

CUT TO:

87 INT./EXT. HELICOPTER - DAWN

87

Oliver, Alice, Bill and a pilot, flying low over the bayous searching for the Leopard.

On the ground policemen and dogs also search.

CUT TO:

88 OMITTED

88
(X)

89

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

89

Irena puts on bathrobe, exits bathroom and enters living room.

(X)

It's the first time she's seen the room by light of day. She begins to explore.

There are primitive masks on the walls; framed photographs; plants. Irena studies the photographs.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

89

Animal shots; shots taken on expeditions; landscapes; Oliver with native tribesmen; Oliver and Alice, smiling, arms around one another's waists.

A small noise attracts Irena's attention.

Her POV: The bird in its cage, shuffling on its perch. It cocks its head, looks at her.

She smiles. Moves toward the cage.

IRENA

Don't be afraid.

Keeping her eyes on the bird, she opens the cage door. Reaches in.

The bird flaps wildly about. Irena reaches for it.

The bird skitters frenziedly; Irena laughs; begins playing with the bird, moving her hand this way and that like a kitten until -- the bird drops to the bottom of the cage, dead.

Irena is distraught.

CUT TO:

90 EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREET - DAY

90

Irena, carrying a small box, goes to the door of a shop, enters.

CUT TO:

91 INT. AVIARY - DAY

91

Irena enters, bell clangs, bird sounds from store. A woman approaches.

SALESWOMAN

We're closing.

Irena opens the box: The dead bird is inside.

IRENA

Please -- do you have another one like this?

SALESWOMAN

Aww, poor thing. Well, let's see --

(CONTINUED)

91

CONTINUED:

91

She guides Irena to the birds.

Suddenly they begin to squawk and scream and flutter violently in their cages, smashing themselves against the wire mesh.

Irena looks around, horrified, at the birds, as if they were somehow accusing her.

CUT TO:

92

EXT. ST. LOUIS CEMETERY - LATE DAY

92

Three tourists, a man and two women (TED, CAROL, BILLIE) make their way among the tombstones.

CAROL

Billie? Me'n Ted're goin' back to the hotel and take a nap before dinner, okay?

BILLIE

Fine, darlin', don't do anything I wouldn't do!

TED

Is there anything you wouldn't do, Billie?

Whoops of laughter from Billie, who likes to be thought of as naughty.

But as soon as the other two have gone, she looks lonely and forlorn.

Her chagrin at being the third wheel on a week-long tour emerges as she shuffles through the graveyard.

BILLIE

Uh! So dreary --

She stops; sees someone O.S., smiles --

BILLIE

I'm sorry, were you talking to me?

CUT TO:

93

OMITTED

93
(X)

94

INT. OLIVER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

94
(X)

The dead bird, wrapped in a napkin, lies on the table.

Irena at window, looking out. Her suitcase, half-packed, is open on the couch. Oliver puts in bird in a shoe box: (X)

OLIVER

Ten minutes is the maximum mourning period for parakeets.

She ignores him; turns away from the window; continues packing.

OLIVER

What are you doing?

IRENA

I can't stay here.

OLIVER

It wasn't your fault --

He touches her; she pulls away.

IRENA

You don't understand! Something's happening to me!

OLIVER

I do understand. It's been terrible for you --

IRENA

I don't mean that! I'm going to be like him.

OLIVER

Like who?

IRENA

Paul. I'm going to be crazy too.

OLIVER

You're not. Even if he is your brother, that doesn't mean you're the same. You never even met him until a few days ago. You know me better than you know him!

IRENA

I don't know what to do.

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED:

94

OLIVER

Stay here -- with me -- I want
you to, Irena. Very much.

IRENA

Why?

He crosses to her; she wants to move; can't; he caresses her cheek; her hair.

She embraces him; holds him tightly.

He holds her face in his hands; looks at her; she is crying. He kisses her. She responds hungrily at first; then stiffens and pulls back.

IRENA

Don't -- don't --

He kisses her again; tenderly; she pulls away; rises; putting distance between them.

IRENA

What if I said you could never
make love to me, Oliver? Would
you still want me to stay?

OLIVER

I'd still want you to stay.

DISSOLVE TO:

95 INT. BILLIE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

95

Paul's face as he sits naked on the edge of the bed, staring gloomily at the floor. Curtains billow into the room. Very dim blue light. Billie, also naked, reclines on bed beside him. She lightly strokes his back and chest.

BILLIE

Don't be upset, baby, it happens.

PAUL

I like you, Billie.

BILLIE

Well, that's no problem, hon, I
like you, too.

PAUL

But you don't understand...

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

95

She sidles up to him, runs her hands down his stomach to his groin.

BILLIE

You're just a little nervous. Lie back. Relax.

He lies back down on the bed.

PAUL

Every time I pray it won't happen. I don't want to --

BILLIE

Ohhh, it's no big deal -- relax, relax, mama make it all better.

She kisses his chest, abdomen, groin.

Paul stares upward as Billie goes down on him.

BILLIE

Oh, that's better, much much better.

Paul moans. His mouth opens grotesquely, as if he were suppressing a scream.

He raises his hands to his face, his fingers bent like claws.

O.S., Billie moans as Paul starts to come.

Red screen.

Sound of running water.

96 INT. BILLIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

96

Paul lies naked on the bathroom floor. His skin has taken on a whitish pallor; large sections of it are peeling.

He opens his eyes. Realizes where he is. Rises shakily.

97 BATHROOM MIRROR

97

throwing back his reflection as he rises from the floor. The water is running full blast in the sink.

He turns it off.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

97

A flap of greyish membranous flesh adheres to his stomach. He peels it off.

Raises it to his mouth with both hands. Eats it.

Nearly gags as he swallows it down. Wipes off his face.

Turns to bathroom door; opens it.

CUT TO:

98 INT. BILLIE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - PAUL'S FACE

98

as he surveys the room. A look of horror, but not surprise.

The room is a shambles. Walls laced with blood. Pieces of Billie's body tangled in the blood-soaked sheet.

Paul makes his way across the room, stepping to avoid a severed hand, and stops by a chair where his folded clothes are draped. He dresses, his eyes avoiding the carnage.

He puts on his clothes, his watch, winds it, slips into his shoes, goes to door, opens it, using cloth to prevent prints, exits.

CUT TO:

99 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

99

Crowded with policemen, onlookers, as Oliver and Alice enter, cross to Detective Brant.

OLIVER

George?

BRANT

Got us another one.

ALICE

The Leopard? In here?

BRANT

She came back late last night with a tall, dark-haired guy. Our guy puts the actual time of death at around three.

OLIVER

Can we take a look?

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

99

BRANT

Have you had breakfast?

CUT TO:

100 EXT. GALLIER HOUSE - NIGHT

100

Paul. He hides in tree watching the house.

His POV: A POLICEMAN attended by a German shepherd, on guard by the front door. The yard has been dug up. A pile of dirt and tools are in evidence. The workmen have quit for the day. (X)

The dog begins to bark and pull at the leash. The Policeman follows as the dog guides him toward the tree where Paul was hiding.

He unholsters his gun as the dog pulls him along.

They go to the tree. No one is there.

101 INT./EXT. MOVING CAR - MORNING

101

The sun rising over Lake Pontchartrain as Oliver and Irena move rapidly down the highway. The back seat is filled with fishing gear.

102 EXT. JETTY HOUSE - MORNING

102

As they cross the jetty to the house, YEATMAN BREWER, sixtyish, a cracker, greets them at the door.

YEATMAN

Hey, Oliver -- I opened 'er up
and aired 'er out --

OLIVER

How you been, Yeatman?

YEATMAN

Just pootin' around, how 'bout
yourself? My, my, that's a purty
little thang you got there, no
foolin' --

OLIVER

Yeatman helped me build this
place --

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

102

YEATMAN

(to Irena)

Yeah, we got ourselves 'bout half-shot one Sa'urday morning an' all, tacked the damn thing up -- that's how come it looks like a big ol' foot done come down on that side of the roof there.

CUT TO:

103 INT. JETTY HOUSE - DAY

103

Oliver and Yeatman bringing their things in; Irena exploring. Some of Oliver's photographs, in enlarged versions, are mounted on the walls: Pictures of animals, landscapes, etc.

OLIVER

Yeah, we used to come here on weekends, fish, have cookouts, go swimming, have ourselves a time --

Irena pushes aside the beaded curtain and looks into the bedroom.

IRENA

And bring your girlfriends?

YEATMAN

Shit, no, never brought no damn women here an' all --
(realizing his error)
Uh -- just ladies --

CUT TO:

104 EXT. LAKE - DAY

104

Oliver, Irena, fishing from shore. Irena reels in a catch, the fish flops around in the shallow water on the shore.

CUT TO:

105 INT. JETTY HOUSE - NIGHT

105

Oliver watches Irena, moves close to her.

(X)
(X)

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED:

105

IRENA

Listen --

OLIVER

(studying her)

What?

IRENA

Don't you hear it?

Very tenderly, he leans over and kisses her neck.

OLIVER

Yes.

He kisses her ear; moves his hand up toward her breast. She closes her eyes, is trying not to respond, but can't help herself.

He kisses her on the mouth, moves his hand down her body.

IRENA

(pulling back)

No. I can't.

He smiles, offers his hand.

(X)

106 INT. JETTY HOUSE - NIGHT

106

Oliver asleep on the living room floor, curled up in a sleeping bag.

In the bedroom Irena lies in bed, wide awake.

The waves slap at the pillars of the house, below. Other sounds can be heard from the woods O.S. They should resemble the sounds heard by the children in the prologue.

Irena gets out of bed, enters living room.

She crouches, watches Oliver. Moves a few inches closer.

She stares at him; reaches under her gown, fondles her breast.

Moves her hand to her groin. Closes her eyes.

Becoming aroused, she stops herself, gets to her feet, goes to front door, opens it, goes out.

CUT TO:

107 EXT, JETTY HOUSE - NIGHT

107

Night sounds.

Standing on the jetty Irena looks out at the woods.

She walks the length of the jetty.

Starts across the field to the woods.

Stops; kicks off her slippers -- continues, barefoot.

CUT TO:

108 EXT. WOODS BY LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN - NIGHT

108

Irena walking. Breeze lifting her hair. Her eyes are bright; glistening.

She pulls off her nightgown, tosses it to the ground. Continues, naked.

Nocturnal sounds intensify, expand --

We hear strange sounds through Irena's ears: Sounds that could almost be machines, trains, or factories.

Irena's eye as the pupil begins to transform, exploding outward into the iris like ink spreading in water --

Irena's POV: The forest.

Light seeps into the dark corners of her view as her eye expands; grays diminish; blacks and whites heavily contrast, and the sources of the sounds are now revealed:

A mouse running through the grass sounds like the felling of timber.

Irena listens to this new, expanded world, and watches, as it reveals itself to her.

A supersonically loud flapping is the flight of an owl.

A loud crunching and crashing is inert life in the stump of a rotted tree --

An earpiercing siren-scream is the capture of the mouse by the swooping owl --

Another scream and crackling sound is a gator dragging a squawking bird below the surface of the lake.

(CONTINUED)

108 CONTINUED:

108

An electric hum is a fly caught in a web; a reverberant twang, the spider's feet approaching on the silken net --

Irena surveys the predatory world, and sees --

A rabbit -- hopping through the tall grass --

Irena watches its every move, her eyes now full and black as olives --

The rabbit senses her attention; its desperate breathing amplified; a slight whimpering like a frightened child --

And Irena lunges after it --

We hear a high-pitched scream -- abruptly cut short.

CUT TO:

109 INT. JETTY HOUSE - NIGHT

109

Oliver asleep.

Sound of door opening.

Sound of door closing.

Beat. Silence.

Sound of slow footsteps.

Oliver opens his eyes, groggily; lifts up on his elbows; squints into the dark --

A dark hunched silhouette is moving toward him.

He turns on the lamp.

Irena stands before him, hunched over, covered in blood, blood on her mouth, in her hair, streaking her legs, her eyes wild --

IRENA

Don't look at meeee!

She smashes the lamp.

Darkness.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

110 INT. IRENA'S ROOM/OLIVER'S HOUSE - DAY

110

Irena seated at a table, drawing with obsessed concentration. From time to time she glances in the mirror. Knock on door.

OLIVER'S VOICE

(through door)

Irena? I have to go now. I'll be back before six. Can you hear me?

IRENA

(with difficulty)

Yes.

OLIVER'S VOICE

(through door)

I love you.

Sound of his footsteps moving away down the hall. Irena goes to door, listens: Goes to window, looks out.

Her POV: Oliver emerges from front door, glances up at her window; she ducks back out of sight; he goes to truck, gets in, drives away.

Irena goes back to table, looks at her drawing. A self-portrait, but drawn as if she were changing into a Leopard: The eyes have become cat's eyes; slanted, staring; the nose is broader, the ears taper back.

CUT TO:

111 EXT. WOODS - LATE DAY

111

Sky overcast. Oliver, Alice, Bill, police, state troopers, searching for the Leopard.

BILL

The son of a bitch is probably out of the state by now, or else dead.

OLIVER

I'll believe it when I see it.

BILL

Well, I don't think you're going to see it.

OLIVER

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

BILL

We're gonna call it off. We just
can't afford the manpower anymore.
Or the time. It's been two weeks --

OLIVER

You're out of your mind...

BILL

We've got traps set, we've done
everything else we can do -- what
do you want?

OLIVER

What're you going to say the next
time he kills someone?

BILL

Don't give me that shit, Oliver,
You're the one who wouldn't shoot
the fucker when you had him in a
cage.

Oliver hits Bill, knocking him to the ground. He
immediately relents, offers his hand --

OLIVER

Sorry.

BILL

Fuck you.

He stomps angrily away.

OLIVER

He's right.

ALICE

No he's not.

CUT TO:

112 INT./EXT. MOVING TRUCK - LATE DAY

112

Oliver and Alice on their way home. Lightning and
thunder; a light rain has begun.

ALICE

How's Irena feeling?

OLIVER

Fine.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED:

112

ALICE

She needs professional help,
Oliver. You know that.

OLIVER

If you knew, why'd you ask.

Rain spatters the windshield. It continues for a few
beats. Oliver hasn't yet turned on the windshield
wipers.

ALICE

I've never seen you this way before.

OLIVER

What way is that?

ALICE

In love? I thought I'd seen you
in love -- my vanity -- but not
like this. Not so -- possessed.

OLIVER

Let's talk about something else.

ALICE

Oh, right -- right, okay.

Rain is pouring down the windshield. Alice reaches
over, turns on the windshield wipers.

ALICE

Excuse me -- just thought you might
prefer a little visibility.

Thunder. Lightning.

CUT TO:

113 EXT. OLIVER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

113

Rain. Streets, shrubbery, houses look slick, black,
wet. Rain drums on parked cars.

CUT TO:

114 INT. IRENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

114

Irena curled up, asleep. Rain coming in. She opens
her eyes, goes to window across wet floor. Looks out
at rain; lowers window; as she does --

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED:

114

Lightning flash illuminates Paul -- crouched in the limbs of the tree outside the window -- He leaps --

Crashing! through the window, scattering shards of glass -- lands on all fours, rises quickly to his feet, glass dripping from him.

Irena moves toward the door; he blocks her escape. She retreats, keeping her distance.

Rain drips from Paul's body.

Gusts of wind billow the curtains into the room, whipping them; the lamp is overturned, spreading distorted shadows.

They stare at each other. Paul pulls himself upright. He speaks to her in a Pentecostal cadence -- a subdued, intense version of his ministerial voice. Ex cathedra.

He fixes his eyes on her and, never looking away, starts to walk around her.

PAUL

Save me. Only you can stop this killing. I don't want to be the Beast. I hate the Beast. But I'm his prisoner. Make love with me. Free me to live as a man.

IRENA

Ask God to help you; I can't --

PAUL

God made me. I am His servant.

(mocking)

He maketh me to kill, but He restoreth not my soul...

(pleading)

Only you can do that. We are the same, as our parents and their parents were the same --

IRENA

I'm not like you!

PAUL

That's the lie that will kill your lover. Let me spare you that horror. Come with me.

IRENA

No!

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

Olvier doesn't love you, he loves the panther. He wants you because he fears you. Let Alice have him. She thinks his fear is courage, he thinks his fear is love. They're made for each other, and so were we... Take my hand --

IRENA

No!

PAUL

(pause)

Then we'll die together, like our parents.

He picks up a long, jagged piece of glass from the broken window.

She looks for a way out, but he has her hemmed into a corner.

She starts to cry. Softly, as if she were trying to hold it back.

PAUL

(looks at the glass)

Don't cry. Be joyful.

(moving toward her)

No more pain.

He puts the point of the glass up to her forehead.

She embraces him.

IRENA

Paul... Paul... don't... I'll go with you... we'll go together...

She begins kissing him, softly, tenderly his neck, the side of his face, his mouth. He lowers his hand. The glass drops to the floor. She sees where it has fallen.

He begins kissing her, slowly dropping to his knees and pulling her down with him. He presses his face into her groin, moves his face against her, moaning softly.

She reaches out; picks up piece of glass, raises it as if to strike him; hesitates, unable to strike, as his head moves in circles in her lap; she cries out in protest; he lifts his head; sees the piece of glass in her upraised hand as she brings it down.

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED: (3)

114

He throws up his hand, catching the glass edge on his arm. Blood spurts out; he spins wildly backward, avoiding her second slash; she gets to her feet, spins past him, runs out, slamming the door.

CUT TO:

115 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

115

Irena emerges from room, turns back, locks door with key in lock, hurries away --

CUT TO:

116 INT. IRENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

116

Paul, alone, the blood gushing from his wrist. He holds the wrist to his mouth, sucks the blood, some of it running down the sides of his mouth. He turns, sees himself in the mirror --

Paul's POV: His reflection in the mirror.

His eyes have become cat's eyes; the blood runs down his chin. He looks at his hand: The flesh on his fingers begins to split.

CUT TO:

117 EXT. OLIVER'S HOUSE - EVENING

117

Rain heavier now. Thunder. Lightning.

Oliver and Alice pull up in the truck and make a dash for the house.

The light in Irena's room is on.

CUT TO:

118 INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

118

Oliver and Alice enter, shake off the rain.

ALICE

Want me to make some coffee?

OLIVER

Yeah. I'll get some towels.

He goes upstairs.

CUT TO:

119 INT. HALLWAY - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

119

Oliver, drying his face and hands with towel, walks down the hall to Irena's room. Knocks on door.

OLIVER

Irena. I'm back. Alice is here.
Why don't you come down, we're
going to make a pot of coffee.
(sees key in lock)

Irena?

As he starts to unlock door, the light in the room -- which could be seen around the cracks of the door -- suddenly goes off.

Suddenly there is the sound of glass breaking and the light goes off...

CUT TO:

120 INT. IRENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

120

as Oliver opens the door.

OLIVER

Irena?

Loud sound of rain. The window is wide open, the curtain flaps in the wind. The floor glistens from the incoming rain and the pieces of broken glass.

Oliver enters room.

OLIVER

Irena?

He goes to window, examines it.

Door slams shut.

Oliver spins at sound of slamming door. In darkness, we hear --

A low growl -- phlegmy; hoarse.

As Oliver turns, he sees --

Paul, naked, eyes wide and glowing, teeth pointed. He squats, crouched, in the corner of the room. In the dimness, his skin looks wrinkled, peeling.

PAUL

Oliiver-r-r-r...

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED:

120

His voice is like a whispered growl, as if with speaking Oliver's name, Paul's last spark of human consciousness had vanished.

Oliver backs away in the dark toward the table holding the darkroom equipment.

Rain. Thunder.

Oliver's POV: Paul moving in the dark; crawling -- dragging himself forward on all fours -- and breathing heavily.

Stretching across the floor is a rectangular spill of gray light, mosaicked with broken glass -- Paul's shadow moves into this light -- and then a Leopard's paw slides into view, black and wet, the talons extended --

And the Leopard roars. Paul is no longer human.

CUT TO:

121 INT. DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT

121
(X)

Alice, making coffee, hears sound of Leopard from above. She freezes, listens. She knows what it is.

She hurries through the living room to the stairs.

CUT TO:

122 INT. IRENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

122

Olvier, sweat-drenched; retreating.

His hand on the table: Feeling for something useable as a weapon. There is no question now what approaches in the dark. We hear its growls, its hisses, the steady thump of its tail as it prepares to strike.

Oliver finds a large metal T-square. Taking it in both hands like an axe, Oliver continues his retreat.

CUT TO:

123 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

123

Alice coming up the stairs.

ALICE

Oliver?

CUT TO:

124 INT. IRENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

124

Oliver hears her, doesn't remove his eyes from the Leopard --

OLIVER

My gun! Get my gun!

And wham! The Leopard is on him. Growls; shrieks; the whish of the T-square as it swings through the air. The thok! as it connects with the Leopard's skull, momentarily driving it back.

CUT TO:

125 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

125

Alice practically leaping down the stairs, running to gun cabinet -- it's locked -- she picks up lamp, smashes it -- takes out pump shotgun, checks to see if it's loaded -- it's not; frantically digs through cabinet for shells -- finds them; begins to load -- sounds from upstairs.

ALICE

Oh Christ -- Christ!

Drops shells; grabs handful, runs upstairs.

CUT TO:

126 INT. IRENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

126

Oliver, back to the wall, moves toward the door.

A sudden sound; he swings the T-square; it hooks on something; a struggle; the T-square is torn from his hand; sound of T-square clattering across the floor.

Another movement from the Leopard: Oliver grabs a blanket from the bed, wraps it around his forearm, moves back --

OLIVER

Alice!

Sudden slash of claws; Oliver raises his arms; the protective wrapping is shredded to bits; Oliver moves back, overturning furniture, other objects, as obstacles to the Leopard's advance. He grabs the mattress, hauls it up before him like a shield.

Flurry of fast movements from the Leopard; explosion of stuffing from mattress, floating through the dark.

(CONTINUED)

126 CONTINUED: 126

Oliver pulls back as the claw shreds the mattress,
rakes his stomach.

CUT TO:

127 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 127

as Alice loads gun, gets to door.

CUT TO:

128 INT. IRENA'S ROOM - NIGHT 128

Oliver grabs chair; Leopard lunges -- Wham! Wham!
Wham!

Claws striking the chair; wood splintering in all di-
rections. Sparks; Oliver falling back against the wall;
Wham! the chair in pieces; Oliver sinking back; slash!
Claws raking his arms, chest, shirt --

His POV: The Leopard -- The glowing eyes, the arc of
the wet fangs.

Gunshot!

Door swings open -- Alice in hallway, rifle raised.

The Leopard sees Alice --

Springs toward broken window --

She fires! A hit!

The Leopard spins mid-air, howls, hobbles backward.

She fires! A sickening thud as the Leopard spins side-
ways, sliding in its own blood; she fires! blood sprays
the walls as the Leopard drags itself across the glass-
jagged window ledge -- screeches! as Alice fires again!
-- blowing the Leopard out the window.

Scrape of its claws as it slides over the roof.

Alice goes to Oliver -- pushes away debris -- his face
is bloody; his arms, chest, gashed. He opens his eyes,
looks up at Alice, dazed.

O.S., a howl -- human? Animal? Alice listens, frozen
-- Again, the howling.

CUT TO:

129 EXT. FRONT OF OLIVER'S HOUSE - NIGHT 129

The Leopard lies dead in a pool of blood.

Irena kneels beside it, in the rain.

She throws her head back, howls again, a mourner possessed.

IRENA

Aaaaaaooooooooooooeuuuuuuuhhhhhh!!!!

Silence.

CUT TO:

130 OMITTED 130

131 EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - EARLY MORNING 6:00 A.M. 131

Oliver enters the Administration Building. 131 (X)

CUT TO:

132 INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY 132

as a morgue locker is opened and withdrawn, revealing the Leopard's corpse, wrapped in plastic. Oliver stares at it.

Leopard's body lying belly-up on a stainless steel table under a bank of fluorescent lights.

Oliver in surgical mask goes through tools, selects scalpel.

He makes the first incision, starting under the Leopard's chin and cutting down towards the base of the tail.

Oliver, holding tongs, peels back the outer layer of pelt. He says something:

His voice: The carcass.

Beneath the pelt is a new layer of skin: pinkish, transparent, and clearly -- human.

Oliver separating the two layers of flesh. They are connected by gristly threads and he has to work the scalpel sideways between them to cut them apart.

(CONTINUED)

132 CONTINUED:

132

Oliver lifting away the top layer, revealing, under it, a partly formed Paul, distorted by the shape of the Leopard's skeleton yet recognizably an evolving human being. Oliver stares in disbelief as:

The cadaver shivers spasmodically; a half-dissected arm lifts up, flops back onto the table, the half-peeled head nods, rolls from side to side and there is a:

Loud hissing noise as the yellowish-brown steam gushes from the Leopard's insides, splattering Oliver, gurgling onto the table, spilling to the floor as the carcass collapses from within, shrinks, hissing and sizzling, until only a mucinous fleshy coil remains on the stainless steel tabletop.

CUT TO:

133 INT. JAIL VISITING ROOM - LATE DAY

133

Femolly is escorted in; she sits down and looks out through the wire (or glass) divider.

Irena sits on the opposite side. They stare silently at one another.

Irena looks dazed; her eyes charged with luminous intensity.

FEMOLLY

Paul's dead?

Irena says nothing, but Femolly responds as if she had answered yes.

FEMOLLY

Then you have no one.

IRENA

Who am I?

(pause)

What am I?

FEMOLLY

Why ask what you already know.

IRENA

I don't know what to do.

FEMOLLY

Live as he did. Hidden. In chains.
Never love. Pretend the world is
what men think it is.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

133

IRENA

Wait -- tell me where to go -- I don't know where to go --

FEMOLLY

(standing)

Go anywhere. It doesn't matter where you go.

(pause)

Does it?

She exits with the matron.

Irena stares after her.

CUT TO:

133-A EXT. TRAIN DEPOT - LATE DAY - ESTABLISHING SHOT

133-A

as Irena enters train depot.

(X)

134 INT. TRAIN DEPOT - LATE DAY

134

Irena at the ticket counter.

(X)

COUNTERMAN

Where to?

She puts money on the counter.

IRENA

How far north will this take me?

He looks at her, annoyed and puzzled. He starts to count the money.

134-A TRAIN PASSES BY ON BRIDGE - DUSK

134-A

CUT TO

135 INT./EXT. MOVING TRAIN - NIGHT

135

through the window: The passing landscape over Irena's reflected face: Houses, building, in silhouette; sweep of passing lights; in the distance the faint reddish wash of sunset.

Sound of train.

(X)

Across the aisle from Irena and one row up, a little girl sits crying in her Mother's lap.

CONTINUED

135

CONTINUED:

135

Irena looks in her purse for something to give to the Child: A key chain from the gift shop.

She leans across the aisle and offers it to the Child.

IRENA

Maybe she'd like to play with this?

Irena dangles the key chain: It makes tinkling sounds.

The Child smiles shyly and takes the key chain.

MOTHER

Say 'thank you' to the lady.

CHILD

(barely audible)

Thank you.

Irena nods "you're welcome" and returns to her seat.

The bus moves across the dark landscape.

Irena turns out her overhead light, reclines in her seat and stares out the window.

Gradually she closes her eyes.

Across the aisle can be heard the faint tinkling of the key chain and the Mother's whispered voice telling the Child a story:

MOTHER'S VOICE (O.S.)

When I was young, there was a girl
who lived next door on Beach Street.
She...

Irena is asleep. Her body rocks gently to the motion of the bus. The passing lights flicker over her face.

Hold on her face: Sound of bus fades out.

Irena opens her eyes as if the silence had awakened her.

She looks around the bus: It is empty, but still moving.

CONTINUED

(X)

135 CONTINUED: (2)

135

A phantom train pulls alongside the car. It is also empty -- except for Paul. The car is bathed in a ghostly neon light. (X)

Paul stands, watching his sister silently. He wears a full length black leather coat.

Seen from behind Irena, Paul floats to the right and left. Sometimes her head obscures his. He removes his overcoat; underneath he wears an open clerical shirt and jacket.

Just as it seems Paul will beckon her, the phantom car pulls away.

136 IRENA'S SECOND DREAM: THE MYTH

136

She stands in the middle of the airport terminal.

The atmosphere is hushed; unreal; a sense of expectancy hovers in the air.

Vast. Tomblike. Windows stretching to the ceiling, polished floors; people in the distance; a faint tinkling sound; distant laughter of children.

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED:

136

Paul comes toward her, dressed as he was in the opening, in black, but without the clerical collar.

He stops and looks at her.

He moves his lips in silent greeting. We hear his voice but it's not in sync with the movement of his lips.

PAUL'S VOICE

(extends hand)

Welcome home.

A pause, and then she takes his hand.

He begins leading her through the airport.

Their footsteps echo on the polished floor.

Their echoed footsteps go suddenly silent.

Irena looks down: The floor is covered with sand.

The sky can be seen beyond.

Paul guides Irena down a long corridor.

She looks back: The terminal is almost completely obscured from view by rising mounds of sand.

She looks ahead: The corridor stretches on and on.

Signs pass overhead: "Luggage Claim" (etc.)

They emerge from the corridor onto what should be the runway.

The sky is dark.

It begins to change, to lighten. Clouds race by overhead. Streaks of light illuminate what lies before them:

A vast, sandy plain under an unreal colored sky, and backgrounded by mountains.

In the middle of the plain is a large tree. Shapes huddle in its branches.

They walk toward the tree.

As Paul relates the myth, his voice does not emanate from him but seems to almost hover in the air, or to come from Irena's mind.

Gradually his voice will be overtaken by other voices, who will share in the telling of the myth.

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED: (2)

136

They will be children's voices, Leopard's voices, overlapping, continuous, as if Paul, Irena and the Leopards shared one universal voice.

PAUL'S "VOICE"

Our ancestors were the children
sacrificed to the leopards long ago.
The souls of the children grew in
the leopards until they became one.

They are approaching the tree. Irena seems to recognize it. It is the sacrificial tree from the prologue, alone on the Savannah.

Paul, walking alongside her, now appears as in her previous dream: naked, dripping water, stringy hair -- and cat eyes.

PAUL'S "VOICE"

We were gods then. Leopards with
human souls. We demanded humans to
mate with.

Irena approaches the bottom of the tree and looks up.

The tree is filled with Leopards, all colors and sizes.

The Voices now seem to come from the Leopards in the tree, overlapping, fading out, one picking up where the other left off.

Wedged in a crotch of the tree is the body of a victim, head hanging down, eyes open, partly eviscerated. A Leopard feeds on it.

Paul walks over to the tree. Lying on a lower branch is a sphinx-like woman, as in Khnopff's painting "The Caress." She has a leopard's spotted, supine body with the head (hair pulled into a bun, mildly Victorian in appearance) of a middle-aged woman. The woman is Nora Gallier, Paul and Irena's mother.

Paul leans next to his mother, pressing his cheek against hers.

PAUL'S "VOICE"

We became an incestuous race. Only
with our own kind can we have peace.
Mother with son, father with daughter,
brother with sister. Otherwise we
must kill.

The sphinx, previously expressionless, now smiles at Irena:

NORA GALLIER/LEOPARD

Irena.

The words come involuntarily from her mouth:

IRENA

Mother!

CUT TO:

137 INT./EXT. TRAIN - NIGHT

137

The train has stopped and the Woman and Child are getting (X) off. The Child remembers the key chain Irena gave to her.

MOTHER

Run quick and return it to the nice lady --

The little girl runs down the aisle of the train to Irena's seat.

Irena's purse is there;

But the seat is empty.

CUT TO:

138 EXT. PARK - SUNSET

138

from some secluded area of the park, looking out on the jogging path.

There is a slightly unreal quality to the POV: Some sense of heightened color and sound, subtle but apparent.

POV skims various joggers who pass by on their evening run.

Alice jogs into frame.

POV follows Alice as she jogs down the park path.

Trees, shrubs, a streetlamp, etc., pass before POV, intermittently obstructing our view of Alice.

POV follows Alice, moving closer and closer...

POV moves into thick dark vegetation, becoming like the cat POV Irena experienced near the jetty house.

Alice's path (we are not out of POV).

The path is bordered and overshadowed by huge dark trees filled with the twittering of nesting birds.

Alice enters path, her footfalls softer on this softer earth. She looks up as she runs:

Her POV: Black knotty limbs extend from either side to form an archway over the path. Sounds of birds loud.

Sudden silence.

(CONTINUED)

138 CONTINUED:

138

Alice -- puzzled.

Explosion of sound as birds fly en masse from trees overhead.

Alice -- baffled. She runs on, the slap of her shoes the only sound.

Loud creaking sound ahead: One of the lower branches shakes.

Alice -- nervous; fighting her nerves; continuing on.

The branch -- shakes suddenly; a black object leaps --

Alice pulls back, alarmed, as:

A black cat lands before her, runs away through the trees.

Alice recovers; laughs at herself; continues on.

The sun has almost set. Red light. Extended shadows.

139 EXT. WATER FOUNTAIN - NIGHT

139

Alice at the water fountain: Drinks lightly; gargles; slaps water on her face and neck.

She stops. Listens. Something strange.

The park is absolutely silent.

It's dark now, the sun has gone down.

And then there is a movement in the dark.

A slow snapping of twigs. The shuffle of leaves. Alice moves slowly away from the water fountain.

Begins jogging back down the path, slowly, as if to demonstrate that she is unafraid. But can't help glancing back.

CUT TO:

140 THE PATH - NIGHT

140

Alice running. The path black now; vague patchy areas of light.

And then a sound: Something running; slowly; steadily; not two feet, but four...

(CONTINUED)

140 CONTINUED:

140

Wide-eyed, Alice increases her speed. She is breathing heavily. Her feet hit the pavement, each echoing like a pistol shot.

Alice, running, whatever it is, it's gaining on her; she almost cries out, as:

TWO MALE JOGGERS pull up beside her; mild-looking men, perhaps homosexuals.

FIRST MALE JOGGER

How many miles?

Alice nods; can't speak; looks back behind them; slows to run alongside them.

ALICE

(making conversation).

I don't know... you?

SECOND MALE JOGGER.

Twenty a week. Four and a half on Mondays and Fridays -- six and a half on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

FIRST MALE JOGGER

St. Phillips is sponsoring a ten-K. Hope you'll come -- uh -- what's your name?

ALICE

Alice.

FIRST MALE JOGGER

I'm Father Harn.

SECOND MALE JOGGER

-- and I'm Father Jessup.

ALICE

Happy to meet you.

She laughs, suddenly realizing that she really is happy to meet them. The two Fathers look at one another, puzzled.

CUT TO:

141 EXT. ST. CHARLES AVENUE - NIGHT

141

as Alice and the two Fathers approach the Avenue and run alongside the streetcar tracks.

(CONTINUED)

141 CONTINUED:

141

FATHER HARN

Here's where we turn! Good night!

ALICE

Good night! And thanks --

FATHER JESSUP

Nice meeting you.

They disappear down a side street.

Alice cross the tracks on her way to the streetcar stop.

At the stop she hums to herself, some current rock song.

Another sound, behind her.

She looks: Something is moving down the sidewalk, hidden from view by trees and the parked cars. And then, briefly glimpsed, we see A WOMAN'S PALE FORM.

She stops and stares at Alice.

Suddenly a hissing shriek!

Alice spins around as the streetcar stops beside her and the doors open. Relieved, she gets on board.

CUT TO:

142 INT. STREETCAR - NIGHT

142

Alice takes a seat and looks out the window:

The woman on the sidewalk, still watching her. The woman looks like Irena, but it's too dark to tell.

The streetcar moves on.

CUT TO:

143 INT. IRENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

143

Oliver is developing prints. The red light is on. The room is still a shambles from the Leopard's attack, but some boards have been nailed over the broken window.

Oliver takes prints from the developer and clips them to a line: Pictures of the Leopard, taken during his capture and captivity; pictures of Irena taken at the jetty house.

(CONTINUED)

143 CONTINUED:

143

He studies the pictures, comparing Irena to the Leopard.

Among the pictures is Irena's self-portrait. Oliver refers to it, too, trying to reach some satisfactory conclusion.

But he is weary; unshaven. He's not thinking straight -- and the pictures tell him nothing.

CUT TO:

144 EXT. ALICE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

144

Alice exits streetcar and enters the building. She is casual, her confidence regained.

(X)

CUT TO:

145 INT. LOBBY - ALICE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

145

Woman (SANDRA) closing up as Alice hurries in.

(X)

SANDRA

Closing.

ALICE

Aw, come on, Sandy, be nice. Just a quick dip.

SANDRA

Five minutes, okay?

She gives Alice the key. Alice heads toward the pool area.

Sandy keeps working, her back to us. A sound, as if someone had entered the room. Sandy does not hear it.

CUT TO:

146 INT. POOL - NIGHT

146

Alice enters door to pool area. No one there. Alice turns on the overhead lights: The blue pool water glistens, slaps at its concrete confines.

Alice strips to her panties, dives in.

Alice underwater, trailing streamers of bubbles, dives a low deep arc, and then resurfaces.

Alice's head pops up in the pool's center. Lap of water.

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED:

146

Alice dog-paddling. She takes a mouthful of water, spits it out, shakes back her hair, begins to float.

Her POV (floating): The ceiling; the banks of fluorescent lights glowing down.

Sound of lapping water as she floats.

Alice sighs contentedly.

Sound of door closing.

Alice glances up: No one else is there.

She dismisses it, continues to float.

The lights go off.

Darkness. No sound. Even the pool filter has shut off.

ALICE

(annoyed)

Hey! It hasn't been five minutes!

Something moves at the edge of the pool.

ALICE

(squinting)

Sandy?

She swims towards pool's edge.

Her POV (moving through water): A shadow by the edge of the pool, waiting for her.

ALICE

Come on, it hasn't been --

Sound of echoed heavy breathing from the shadow.

Alice stops still.

Low, throaty growl from the shape at the edge of the pool.

ALICE

(to herself)

Oh, God...

She dog-paddles back toward the center of the pool.

She waits. Silence. Looks around.

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED: (2)

146

Shadows rippling on walls; water faintly lapping.

Only Alice's head is above water.

A shadow seems to be circling the pool.

Alice turns in a circle, dog-paddling as she follows the shadow's movements.

The diving board creaks --

Her POV pans quickly to the diving board.

Alice back-paddles as quietly as she can, back toward the other end of the pool.

Underwater: Alice's feet touch the pool's shallow end.

A movement from the diving board, as if something heavy had backed off it.

Alice, squinting at the shadow, as if trying to make it out, keeps back-paddling, trying to keep as much distance between herself and the shadow as possible.

Alice screams -- and SCREAMS louder --

The lights go on.

IRENA'S VOICE

What's wrong, Alice?

Alice looks up. Irena stands at the edge of the pool. She smiles.

ALICE

Why are you... following me?

IRENA

Following you?

ALICE

Don't deny it!

Sandra enters, looks around.

SANDRA

What's going on?

ALICE

She -- tried to kill me!

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED: (3)

146

IRENA

(looks stunned)

Kill you? I was looking for Oliver
-- I tried the hospital, but he'd
already checked out...

(smiles)

I'm sorry if I frightened you.

She nods good night to Sandy and walks out of the room.

Alice climbs out of the pool. She is shivering and shaking.

Sandra hands her her clothes: They have been ripped to shreds.

CUT TO:

147 INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

147

Oliver is asleep on the sofa, the prints scattered nearby, as if he fell asleep looking at them.

The phone rings.

He is deeply asleep; the phone continues to ring.

Gradually he sits up; looks around confused; remembers where he is.

The phone continues to ring.

Oliver starts to get up; winces in pain; his wounds have started to leak. Bloody stripes seep through his shirt.

He is more aggravated than hurt; he makes it to the phone just as it stops ringing.

He shakes his head to clear it, and goes upstairs.

CUT TO:

148 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

148

Water running full blast in sink; clouds of steam.

Oliver takes off his shirt. His body is bandaged in various places.

He peels off the old bandages, revealing the stitched wounds.

(CONTINUED)

148 CONTINUED:

148

He washes the wounds, carefully.

He squeezes medication from a tube, applies it to the wounds.

He watches himself in the mirror, as if even his reflection could no longer be trusted.

Sound of phone O.S. heard at first dimly, at last cuts through sound of rushing water.

Oliver shuts off the tap; listens; phone rings O.S. (downstairs). Oliver, not shirtless, starts down.

149 INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

149

Phone rings. Oliver on his way to stairs.

Phone stops ringing. Oliver stops; goes back toward his bedroom.

CUT TO:

150 INT. ALICE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

150

Alice, in bathrobe, listens to the phone, waiting for Oliver to answer. Sound of phone being picked up.

ALICE

Oliver? Where were you? I've been calling and calling... I didn't even know you'd left the...

Click. Dial tone. Alice dials again, gets busy signal.

CUT TO:

151 INT. OLIVER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

151

The phone has been taken off the hook.

CUT TO:

152 INT. OLIVER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

152

He puts on his bathrobe, carefully, so as not to irritate his wounds.

He exits room.

CUT TO:

153 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

153

Phone off hook in f.g. as Oliver comes down stairs. He doesn't see it at first; crosses to coffee table to pick up keys; turns; sees --

An open window that wasn't open before. He looks around the room, sees:

The phone -- off the hook.

He crosses to the phone, drops it back into the cradle; crosses to window -- lowers it back into place -- as he does --

His POV: Window. Irena's reflection in the glass, standing behind him in the center of the room. He spins around.

They look at each other: A long, tense, silent moment.

Phone rings. And again. Again.

Irena picks up phone, holds it out to Oliver. He takes it from her.

ALICE'S VOICE

(through phone)

Oliver? Is that you?

OLIVER

Yes.

Irena turns out one of the lamps.

ALICE'S VOICE

(through phone)

Are you all right? I called before --

OLIVER

(watching Irena)

Yes.

Irena turns out another lamp; only one dim lamp burning now. She starts to undress.

ALICE'S VOICE

(through phone)

Irena -- Oliver, she followed me tonight -- she tried to kill me, I swear -- Oliver?

Irena continues to undress, watching Oliver all the while.

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED:

153

OLIVER

Yes.

ALICE'S VOICE

(through phone)

She might come there -- Maybe you should leave the house. Oliver?

OLIVER

I'll be all right.

ALICE'S VOICE

(through phone)

Should I come over?

Irena turns and walks slowly up the stairs.

OLIVER

(to Alice on phone)

No. Stay there.

ALICE'S VOICE

(through phone)

Are you sure?

OLIVER

I'll call you back.

He hangs up.

Irena has disappeared up the stairs.

Oliver follows after her.

CUT TO:

154 INT. OLIVER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

154

The room is dark except for the spill of light from the hall.

Oliver enters.

Irena is in his bed. She looks at him, her eyes glittering. She smiles.

She peels back the sheet, inviting him into the bed. Pause. He watches her.

IRENA

Are you afraid of me?

Pause. Then ---

(CONTINUED)

OLIVER

Yes.

Keeping his eyes on her the whole time, Oliver unbuckles his belt, slides off his pants and underwear, drops his robe. He stands naked beside the bed, watching her for a moment, then lies down beside her.

He touches her face, gently; runs his fingers through her hair. She closes her eyes at his touch.

He touches his fingers to her lips. She rubs her lips against his finger.

He kisses her.

She encloses him in her arms.

IRENA

Be -- gentle ---

He kisses down her neck to her breasts. She moans as he kisses her nipples; sucks them; bites them gently.

Her hands -- nails digging into his back.

Her point of view; His head moving down the center of her body toward her groin.

Her face -- eyes closed, mouth open, as he goes down on her; she makes a low purring sound.

Her fingers digging into the sheet like claws.

Her knees gently opening and closing against his head.

His hands -- reaching up to cup her breasts.

Irena sitting up suddenly, drawing his face up to hers, his mouth wet, kissing him on the mouth, running her hands through his hair; down his body.

Her hands running down his chest, over the scars, toward his cock.

Irena licking his lips, his cheek -- from the motion of her shoulder we can see that she's stroking his penis.

She rises on her knees, now a little above him, edges forward, working him into her.

As he penetrates her, she cries out.

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED: (2)

154

He rises to his knees, helping her to wrap her legs around his waist, thrust against her, gently, slowly.

She winces -- briefly.

The pillows as they lay back against them, continuing to make love.

She looks up at him with glazed eyes; moves her head on the pillow from side to side, arches her back against the motion of his body -- squeezes him against her, tightly, her hands locked together behind his back, as she starts to come.

Oliver lowers his face to hers.

Dissolve to: Their faces, motionless; they hold each other tightly.

Irena is crying.

IRENA

I was so afraid...

OLIVER

It's all right... it's all right now...

She smiles at him. They kiss gently.

Dissolve to: Oliver asleep.

Irena watches him with drowsy eyes. The room is very still.

She gets slowly out of bed, so as not to wake him, and goes into the bathroom.

CUT TO:

155 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

155

She turns on the light; looks at herself in the mirror.

Touches her body.

Feels between her legs, raises her hand to her face:

There is blood on her fingers.

She turns on the tap water.

Starts to rinse off her fingers; stops --

(CONTINUED)

155 CONTINUED:

155

Her POV: The water running; the drain; her fingers, shiny with blood.

She raises her fingers to her mouth and tastes the blood.

Moves her fingers against her lips, lightly, rubbing the blood on her mouth.

Sees her reflection doing this; lowers her hand to the sink.

Rinses her fingers under the tap.

Pinkish water runs down the drain.

Sounds begin -- building slowly -- a rushing, a gurgling, like liquid boiling through a tangle of pipes.

At first it seems to come from the tap. She turns off the water.

She listens. The sounds are still there; low; throbbing.

She dries her hands on a towel and shuts off the bathroom light.

CUT TO:

156 INT. OLIVER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

156

Irena reenters.

Walks around the foot of the bed.

Stops at the foot of the bed; looks at Oliver.

He is sound asleep.

Again the sounds; growing; a drumlike beating as if we were hearing Irena's heart.

And another sound, a wind sound, repeating a rapid pattern, the intaken, exhalent breath.

Irena crawls back into bed beside him.

She closes her eyes.

Rush of sounds, combining, growing, the internal workings of Irena's body more and more resembling the sounds of some surreal forest.

(CONTINUED)

156 CONTINUED:

156

She puts her hand to her face; something funny about her hand; she lowers it slowly, looking at it with frightened eyes --

Irena's hand as she stares at it in the dim light begins to wither, to peel -- the fingers shrinking, thickening as the fingernails drop away like thick petals and the talons beneath them break through the surface of the fingertips.

Irena grimaces in pain, tries not to cry out, her face distorting grotesquely as her teeth, bloody at the roots, begin to pop from her gums, pushed out by the emerging fangs.

IRENA

Aaaaaaaoooooooooaaa!!

She sits up, violently, and we see that her vertebrae have started to shift position, are moving under the skin, the flesh covering them now almost transparent.

Oliver wakes up -- looks at her.

His POV: Irena, the fangs completing their appearance, her cheek caving in. She screams, grabs her eyes --

Oliver stares at her, frozen in horror -- as --

Her eyes peel -- the outer covering peeling away like the pulp of a grape as the yellow leopard eyes blink into place.

Oliver pulls back, petrified, as --

Irena grabs his arm, sinking the talons into his flesh, pinning him there -- and the flesh on her forehead splits -- a crack like a run in tautly stretched rubber -- and more and more cracks appear as the flesh pops, splits, tears, and we see the dark form struggling to free itself from the human cocoon, shaking its head wildly back and forth, ripping away the membrane that once was Irena, pushing its head -- black, wet as a newborn child -- through the webby covering, tearing it with its jaws, pulling the fleshy bag away and chewing it as if it were a placenta until there are only tatters left -- and a pinkish, thick pool where Irena once lay --

The leopard throws back its head, roars the triumph of its freedom, then edges toward Oliver.

(CONTINUED)

He turns away -- the Leopard slams its paws down, hemming him in between them, and eases onto his chest, looking deep into his eyes.

Sound of its raspy breathing as Oliver stares in panic at the luminous, heavy-lidded eyes.

The Leopard lowers an enormous paw to his chest. The talons unsheath like little switchblades.

OLIVER

Irenal

The Leopard snarls. Lowers its paw. Begins licking Oliver's chest, its tongue scraping the wounds inflicted by Paul.

Oliver -- winces; stiffens -- as if he were being fatally tickled.

The Leopard's head moves in slow lazy circles as it laps at the wounds; its tongue lifting the scabs, reopening the wounds.

OLIVER

Please...

The Leopard looks into his eyes with an almost casual curiosity, turning its face from side to side as if imitating his expression or the angle of his head.

Playfully it butts his chin with its forehead, knocking his head back with a thud. It yawns, slaps its tail back and forth as if getting bored.

Tentatively, Oliver lifts his hand to touch the Leopard -- and the Leopard clamps its jaws shut on his wrist. It shakes his arm back and forth, then lets it drop. Oliver's wrist is dotted with puncture marks.

The Leopard edges up to his face, opening its jaws with a hiss, and closes them tenderly on Oliver's head on the pillow. Then it licks his face -- his lips -- his nose.

Pulls back -- hisses -- raises its claws --

OLIVER

No!

The Leopard hesitates, as if deciding -- then --

Whap! it lashes out -- again, again, three or four or five blows --

(CONTINUED)

156 CONTINUED: (3)

156

Shredding the pillow, the sheet, scarring the head-board, slashing all around Oliver's head but never actually touching him -- and then it leaps from the bed -- scurries across the shadowed floor, and leaps out the window!

Oliver breathes deeply, rapidly, his whole body shuddering, trembling, covered with sweat -- he covers his face and weeps.

CUT TO:

157 EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREET - NIGHT

157

Two motorcycle cops on patrol.

As they move down the street, the Leopard suddenly leaps out in front of them, causing one of them to crash into a parked car and fly across it to the sidewalk.

The other skids to a halt; stares after the disappearing Leopard in disbelief.

CUT TO:

158 EXT. OLIVER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

158

Alice pulls into the driveway, runs up to the house. Sirens wail in b.g.

CUT TO:

159 INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

159

Alice enters.

Oliver, in khakis now, and holding rifle, is staring out the window, listening to the sirens.

ALICE

Oliver.

He looks at her.

ALICE

They spotted a Leopard near the bridge.

Oliver nods, cocks gun; follows Alice out.

CUT TO:

160 INT./EXT. TRUCK - NIGHT - MOVING 160

Oliver and Alice speeding through the New Orleans streets.

CUT TO:

161 EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT 161

Police cars block both sides of the bridge.

Aerial view: The Leopard runs down the center of the seven-mile structure.

A helicopter circles overhead; a sharpshooter prepares to take aim.

CUT TO:

162 EXT. ENTRANCE TO BRIDGE - NIGHT 162

Oliver and Alice pull up, hurry through the crowd of onlookers to the front lines where they watch the Leopard trapped on the bridge.

The helicopter circles overhead, beaming its powerful spotlight up and down the bridge.

The Leopard's POV: The blinding helicopter light flicks across, then fixes on the Leopard. Darting this way and that, the Leopard cannot escape the spotlight.

The Leopard, its eyes jewel-like from the spotlight, turns first one way then another -- finally leaps up on to the railing of the bridge.

Bullets whizzing and ricocheting -- for a moment the Leopard hovers there, then dives into the lake.

Oliver -- stunned.

He rushes to the railing; looks down.

The Leopard swims through the dark water, bullets pocking its surface.

The Leopard suddenly submerges.

More bullets; the Leopard does not surface.

Later. The bridge. Most of the crowd has gone. Alice and Oliver stand by the railing.

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED:

162

ALICE

It couldn't have survived.

He moves away from her, down the bridge.

She follows.

Another part of the bridge. Oliver surveys the distant shore.

ALICE

The closest land is Lincoln Beach,
that's over two miles away.

(beat)

Even if it got that far, the
fishermen would kill it.

Oliver looks at her: He suddenly realizes where Irena could
have gone.

He turns away from Alice and heads for the truck. Alice
follows.

ALICE

Where are you going?

He gets into the truck, starts the engine. She rushes over to
the truck, but he pulls away, leaving her there.

ALICE

Oliver! Wait!

163 INT./EXT. MOVING TRUCK - NIGHT

163

Oliver driving. Speeding around corners.

CUT TO:

163-A EXT. ROAD

163-A

The road ahead flickers under the onrushing headlights.

(X)

(X)

164 EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

164

Oliver parks the truck, takes the rifle with him, walks
towards the jetty house.

He starts through the trees.

Oliver wades closer to the house, trying not to make a sound.

He hears a sound -- a groan, or a growl, it's hard to tell
which.

He freezes; listens -- silence.

(CONTINUED)

164 CONTINUED:

164

He moves on, ducking under the overhanging limbs, pushing them aside.

Moves to push one of the limbs aside; recoils: it is a human arm.

He looks up: Lodged upside down in the crotch of the tree, arms hanging down, is the body of Yeatman Brewer.

Oliver sets down his rifle and lifts Yeatman's clawed body down from the tree.

Oliver looks up again at the house. He moves ahead.

The porch boards creak under his step. The door is open.

He hesitates; then enters the house.

CUT TO:

165 INT. JETTY HOUSE - NIGHT

165

Oliver enters cautiously.

Stops. Listens. Moves toward the bedroom.

Oliver parts the curtain and stares into the room.

His POV: Irena stands inside the room as if waiting for him. She has pulled on a shirt and jeans, but her hair is still wet. Her eyes are filled with tears.

IRENA

I killed Yeatman.

OLIVER

Yes. Instead of me.

IRENA

I love you.

OLIVER

I love you too, Irena.

IRENA

Then kill me.

He raises the gun to fire. Cocks it. She turns her face away. He stands there, gun upraised, but can't bring himself to fire and lowers the gun.

(CONTINUED)

164 CONTINUED:

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(CONTINUED)

OLIVER

I can't.

IRENA

You have to.

OLIVER

No.

IRENA

Then free me...

She begins to undress, button by button.

IRENA

Free me. Make love to me again.
I want to live with my own kind.

She unzips her jeans and removes them.

Oliver takes several coils of rope from a work chest.

OLIVER

Lie down.

She lies back on the bed. He lashes her hands to the bedstead, then her feet to the lower stead, her legs spread.

When she's tied securely, he removes his shirt, his pants, and lowers himself on top of her. He holds her head in his hands.

OLIVER

I love you.

He kisses her. She returns his kisses passionately. He enters her at their bonds as he enters her.

She turns back and forth ecstatically as her pants rise, her eyes now taking on the yellow glow of a cat's eyes.

Her hands, straining at their bonds, curl into claw-like shapes.

Her feet, moving to Oliver's thrusts, pull tautly against the ropes.

She opens her mouth, revealing the extended gums of the transformation's initial stage.

(CONTINUED)

165 CONTINUED: (2)

165

And as she comes, she howls like a Leopard -- a prolonged howl that echoes across the darkened landscape...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

166 EXT. ZOO - DAY

166

A bright sunny day. There are lots of spectators. We can hear the laughter of children, the growls and cackles of the animals.

CUT TO:

167 INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY

167

Alice enters with Otis Webber, Joe Creigh's replacement. Otis is equally young and callow, but more aggressive.

OTIS

You think it's funny? You're looking forward to a lot of little bald porcupines running around out there?

ALICE

Whose idea was it to put the crows and porcupines together, Otis?

OTIS

Well, I figured since they didn't have anything in common, they could share the territory.

They have crossed the room to where Oliver sits at his desk looking over some charts.

ALICE

Oliver, babe.

OLIVER

She kisses him on the cheek.

ALICE

Our new assistant has a new problem.

OTIS

I'm sorry, but the goddamned crows are plucking the quills out of the porcupines. I don't know what to do.

(CONTINUED)

OLIVER
Move them.

OTIS
Oh.

ALICE
Brilliant.

OTIS
Yeah -- uh -- thanks.

He exits, awkwardly, embarrassed. Oliver, lost in thought, isn't really paying much attention.

ALICE
I'm gonna get some lunch, want to come?

OLIVER
Not just now. In a few minutes.

ALICE
Okay. See you at the house.

She kisses him; exits. He sets down his reports and gazes out the window.

CUT TO:

Oliver walks casually through the zoo. He stops at the rear of one of the crowds and stares intently forward.

His POV: A black leopard stares out through the bars of the cage is a sign which reads:

Leopard, Panthera pardus. Nocturnal car-
" and at the bottom of the sign the
"Acquisition."

A smaller sign beneath it reads: "Extremely dangerous. Please keep hands away from cage."

The leopard stares at Oliver.

Leopard's POV: Moving toward Oliver through the bars, past the faces of the crowd, until Oliver's face and then his eye and then the pupil of his eye --

(CONTINUED)

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168

CONTINUED:

168

Fills the screen -- and the Leopard roars --

(X)

169

OMITTED

169

(X)

FADE OUT.

THE END