

DEAD RECKONING

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. NEW ENGLAND COAST - EVENING

The graceful curve of a promontory vanishes into the sea, as mansions running neck-and-neck along its shoreline are swallowed by heavy waves of fog billowing over their flagstone terraces.

INT. THE BARNARD MANSION

MRS. ALEXANDRA BARNARD sits in a large leather chair beside the library fireplace, her hands folded demurely in the lap of her simple black dress as the MAID sets a silver tea service on the arm table beside her. The maid backs away, then speaks softly as if afraid to interrupt Alex's thoughts.

MAID
Mrs. Barnard. There's
someone here to see you.

ALEX

looks up, full of grief.

MAID (O.S.)
Senator Killian is in the
foyer. He would like to pay
his respects.

For a long moment Alex simply stares into the fireplace

MAID (O.S.)
Shall I show him in, Ma'am?

Alex nods, and the maid crosses to open the big double doors to the hallway outside.

MAID (O.S.)
Please come in, Senator.

IN THE LIBRARY

SENATOR ROBERT KILLIAN is young, handsome, and possessed with a charismatic charm. He nods politely to the maid as he steps into the room.

KILLIAN
Thank you.

As the maid retreats Alex lifts her eyes to Killian solemnly -- then, as the maid closes the door, she comes up from the chair and crosses the room to the senator.

ALEX
Oh God, I've needed to see
you.

Killian folds his arms around her briefly,

KILLIAN
Are you all right?

ALEX
Now that you're here.

then holds her away at a gentle distance.

KILLIAN
I came as soon as I heard.

ALEX
None of this was supposed to
happen, Bob. At least not
this way.

ALEX

pulls away and moves to the window overlooking the ocean.
For a long moment she simply stares out toward the sea.

ALEX
(turning back to him)
I need for you to understand
that. You have to believe
me.

KILLIAN
Just tell me exactly what
happened, Alex.

Then, as the billowing fog surges against the window pane behind
her --

DISSOLVE TO:

SWIRLING MISTS OF STEAM

Glimpses of porcelain skin brush past a clear glass shower door.

IN THE SHOWER

Snatches of full bodied STRING QUARTET MUSIC mingle with the RUNNING WATER of the shower as the tendrils of steam perform a dance of veils around Alex's rare blend of patrician beauty and earthy sensuousness.

DOWNSTAIRS IN THE MANSION

A tuxedoed Quartet in the corner of the library plays on. The uniformed maid crosses quickly through the room carrying a large bouquet of roses. As she mounts the stairs, polished silverware on a formally set dining table reflects the passing swatch of blood red mingled with the muted tones of Persian carpet and damask upholstery.

IN THE BEDROOM

Alex emerges from the bath, catches at a stray lock of hair that brushes against her neck, and notices the splash of roses the maid has set on her vanity table. Humming to herself with the music, she absentmindedly lets the towel slip from her shoulders as she crosses to the table.

AT THE TABLE

There's a small envelope tucked amid the dozens of roses obscuring the vanity mirror, and Alex pulls a card from inside -- LOVE, DANIEL.

ALEX

smiles to herself, props the card against the roses, and takes up her checkbook to draft a check in a flowing, graceful hand --

THE CHECK

\$10,000 -- and a memo at the bottom, FOR YOUR NEW TOY.

IN THE BEDROOM

Taking one long-stemmed rose from the display, Alex crosses to the large, walk-in closet and spears the check to the lapel of a man's dinner jacket with the flower.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MANSION -- EVENING

A limousine pulls through the gaslit curve of the drive to come to a halt under the port cochere and deposit its passenger.

Large and sturdily built, DR. DANIEL BARNARD is a Falstaffian figure of a man with a graying beard over his tanned face. In another setting, he might be easily mistaken for a weathered sea captain instead of an eminent plastic surgeon.

Daniel crosses the drive to drape his arm familiarly around the bulky shoulders of SHERIFF NORMAN BALLOU, who is supervising several uniformed deputies spaced around the lawn.

DANIEL

Looks like you got the whole force working out here, Norman.

BALLOU

Oh, yessir, Dr. Barnard. Important night. I told the men nobody could take off on this night.

DANIEL

Well, you tell them for me I appreciate what they're doing.

BALLOU

Yessir, they know you do.

DANIEL

And you, too, Norman.

BALLOU

Glad to do it, sir. Glad to.

Ballou nods respectfully as Daniel pats him on the back and ambles over to enter the house.

CUT TO:

IN THE BEDROOM

Dressed in a simple evening gown calculated to set off her perfect figure, Alex throws a glance and the beginnings of a smile over her shoulder as she hears Daniel enter the room. He crosses to kiss her on the cheek as he starts removing his jacket.

DANIEL

Sorry I'm late. Couldn't get the damn epicanthic fold to tuck under.

Daniel's already inside the enormous closet, stripping down to his shorts and burrowing around for his tuxedo.

ALEX

Couldn't get the what?

DANIEL

Epicanthic fold.

He stretches his eyes narrow with his fingertips and bucks out his front teeth like a character in a WWII War Department propaganda cartoon.

DANIEL

So solly am rate, rady.

ALEX

Miyoko Masuguchi?

DANIEL

They want her to look more western. So I'm widening her eyes, taking the hairline back a bit...you know..

(singing to a little jig)

Snip snip here, snip snip there.

And a couple of la-de-da's.

That's how we laugh the day away

In the merry old land of Oz.

(finding his patent leather shoes)

But the right epicanthic kept drooping. And we can't very well have the glamorous Japanese star of a major American television mini-series looking like Captain Hook --

Daniel covers one eye with his shoe.

DANIEL

-- can we, matey?

(shrugs matter-of-factly)

So I had to take an extra
tuck in the little beggar.

He starts to pull on his pants, but Alex comes over to steal a hug.

ALEX

Mmmm. Well I know some folds
you could tuck into, Doctor.

DANIEL

And shall we invite our
guests onto the observation
deck to watch?

ALEX

It could be interesting.

DANIEL

They'll be showing up at our
front door any second now,
you know.

ALEX

Tell 'em my zipper got stuck.

DANIEL

And Senator Killian? What
would he think?

She throws him a warm, sultry smile.

ALEX

Well, when you've made him
the President, we can do it
in the White House.

Daniel sighs dramatically and shakes his head.

DANIEL

Alex my love, you would do it
on the grand staircase during
the inaugural ball.

Alex sticks her tongue out at him. He takes her exquisite face
in his large hand and squints at her in professional appraisal.

DANIEL

Uh huh. I can take the
little girl out of the
gutter, but not the gutter
out of the little girl.

He slaps her soundly on the bottom, and steps into the closet to pluck his dinner jacket from its hanger.

ALEX

can barely contain a look of sly anticipation as she waits for her husband to discover the check, but --

DANIEL

reappears wearing his jacket -- without the check -- and heads for the bedroom door.

IN THE BEDROOM

But he's hardly out of the closet before he makes a racing turn back to fish into the pocket of his pants and extract a small, black notebook.

DANIEL

(brandishing the notebook)
Can't tell the players
without a program.

ALEX

(scowls a little pout)
Daniel! Don't you want to
know about -- ?

But her question is lost among the silvery tones of the Quartet as Daniel disappears out the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE BARNARD MANSION - LATER IN THE EVENING

Daniel's barrel-chested LAUGH booms out over the polite but spirited CHATTER of the several dozen GUESTS filling the downstairs rooms. These people are money -- gathered by Dr. Barnard for the purpose of contributing large chunks of that wealth to their political champion --

SENATOR ROBERT KILLIAN

is the new darling of the elite. On the face of it, tonight is his night, but clearly the evening is firmly in the grasp of --

DANIEL BARNARD

Leaning comfortably against the carved marble fireplace mantle at the focal point of the room, Daniel is holding court for the senator -- regent for the future king.

Daniel slaps a guest on the back, simultaneously turning him away from the senator in a signal that the interview is finished.

DANIEL

(booming)

Well, that's what being rich is all about -- knowing what you want, and being damn sure to take advantage of what comes your way.

He turns in a whispered aside to Killian.

DANIEL

Next one up's Weldon Harmon. He couldn't tell a sweater from a swim suit, but every major retailer in the country sells his stuff.

Sharing a kind of telepathy, Daniel makes a flicker of eye contact with Alex to indicate the next supplicant he's chosen to meet the senator.

ALEX

Moving easily through the crowd, working the room in tandem with Daniel like a magician and his shill, she acknowledges her cue and slips her arm through the arm of WELDON HARMON to gently guide him toward the mantle.

ALEX

I haven't kept you waiting all night have I, Weldon? Come on, I want you to meet the senator.

HARMON

(chomping at the bit)

Good. I've got something to say to him.

AT THE MANTLE

Daniel snaps two glasses away from a passing waiter, pours the contents of one into the other, and returns the empty to the tray as Alex arrives with Weldon Harmon in tow -- then, in lieu of a hello shoves the double Scotch into Harmon's hand.

ALEX

Senator, I'd like for you to
meet Weldon Harmon.
Weldon...Senator Robert Killian.

Killian thrusts out a vigorous hand.

KILLIAN

Weldon. You're just the man
I've been waiting to see.
You know, I am very concerned
about the unfair importation
of foreign textiles.

He took the words right out of Harmon's mouth -- and Daniel's beaming like a proud father.

ALEX

With a wink from Daniel, Alex releases Harmon's arm and peels off to return to crowd. As she passes her husband, though, she pinches him in the ribs and whispers in his ear.

ALEX

(taunting)
"What toy?" said he.
"Wouldn't you like to know?"
said she.

But Daniel's attention is fixed on the senator, and Alex resumes her role as mistress of the manor, working the room.

IN THE ROOM

Royalty exiled to the corner of the salon, PIXIE ELLISON-CAMPBELL is on the long side of eighty, aglitter with estate jewels -- and swigging beer straight out of a can.

Alex drops into the sofa to catch her breath, and lays a hand on Pixie's lace covered knee.

ALEX

Well, what do you think?

She gestures toward the handsome senator standing at the mantle.

PIXIE
I think he's the Mad Doctor's
finest creation.

ALEX
(laughs)
Oh no, Mr. Killian was born
with his good looks.
(conspiratorial)
But it was Daniel who made
him into a United States
Senator.

PIXIE
That is exactly what I mean.

Pixie grabs her cane and starts to rise. Alex quickly cuts her eyes to Daniel -- where she gets a definite "NO".

ALEX
(trying to distract her)
Pixie, dear, let me get you
another drink.

Alex turns aside to tug urgently at the sleeve of a passing waiter. But as she turns back to Pixie -- the old lady is already halfway across the room making a beeline for Senator Killian.

AT THE MANTLE

Daniel steels himself as he sees Pixie steaming toward them under full sail. She jams her finger into the senator's ruffled, silk shirtfront.

PIXIE
So you're the young Robin
Hood who wants to take all my
money away and give it to the
poor!

There's a sudden hush in the room. Daniel gulps, but Killian is quick to respond.

KILLIAN
My dear lady, you must know
that is the art of politics.
Money from the rich -- Votes
from the poor.
(winks)
And I promise to protect each
one from the other.

Daniel booms out a laugh as a smitten Pixie beams a girlish smile back at the senator.

CUT TO:

INT. BAY HARBOR YACHT CLUB

Alone except for the WAITERS in the dining room, Daniel and Alex are seated at a table overlooking the harbor.

Daniel is polishing off the remains of an enormous breakfast, and busily jotting notes in his little black book. Alex, meanwhile, is practically bouncing in her seat waiting for him to finish.

DANIEL

You sure you don't want something to eat? Crab omelette?

ALEX

(groans)

Please...Aren't you finished yet?

DANIEL

It was your idea to come to the club for breakfast, you know.

Daniel returns matter-of-factly to his breakfast and his notebook, but Alex launches into one of her histrionic displays.

ALEX

You are the most annoying husband! First you come home all of five seconds before a United States senator is arriving for dinner. Then I am forced to hold my breath through an entire evening -- while you insist on playing like you do not know that it's your birthday and that I gave you a present.

Daniel smiles and pulls the check from the pages of his notebook.

DANIEL

Oh, you mean this?

ALEX

Yes!

Suddenly the Waiter is standing beside their table popping the cork on a bottle of champagne.

ALEX
Happy Birthday to you,
Happy Birthday to you,
Happy Birthday you old tease,
Happy Birthday to you!

DANIEL

lifts his champagne glass to drink -- and notices a broad yellow ribbon attached to its base.

DANIEL
What is this...?

Daniel stands up and begins to follow the trail across the dining room floor and out the door leading to the docks.

ALEX
Go on, go on.

With a conspiratorial wink to the waiter, Alex takes the bottle of champagne from the cooler and trails along behind him.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE YACHT CLUB - MORNING

The yellow ribbon winds out onto the terrace, drops to the rocks beneath the walkway, climbs back up onto the wooden steps leading down to the pier, and meanders its way along the railing toward the docks where slip after slip is filled with an expensive private yacht.

ALEX
Follow the yellow brick road.
Follow the yellow brick road.

Daniel is undulating down the docks ahead of Alex like a giant, discombobulated dancing bear. As she comes up beside him, he snatches away the champagne bottle to take down a slug.

ALEX
Hey! We're going to need
that --

He skips over a mooring line and follows the twisting ribbon. Alex takes off after him, but Daniel's already reached the end of the pier where --

ON THE DOCK

Still holding the ribbon in one hand and the champagne in the other, Daniel is standing at the edge of the dock staring down at something in the water. Alex catches up, beaming a huge smile as she retrieves the champagne and holds the bottle out at arm's length to upend it over --

THEIR P.O.V.

Nestled snugly against the shoulder of the pier, its yellow ribbon snaking up from the stern and champagne dribbling over its sides, is a hand-crafted thirty-eight foot all wood sloop.

ALEX (V.O.)
-- for the toy.

ON THE DOCK

As the last of the champagne drips over the boat, Daniel is already climbing over the brilliant, oiled teak gunnel.

DANIEL
Where did you find it?

ALEX
I didn't exactly. It was found for me. This is the first time I've seen it, in fact. Happy birthday, darling.

DANIEL
And the check?

ALEX
Well, classic is only another word for old. I'm sure it'll need new...what-ever-they-are's. And, besides --

Alex flashes him a coy wink as she climbs over the side.

ALEX
-- it's your money anyway.

DANIEL

I know. But it's the thought that counts.

IN THE SLOOP

Daniel rubs his fingers over a brass plaque fixed to the stern plate.

DANIEL

Look at this. Martinsen Boat Yards. 1925. I'll bet this lady could tell some stories.

ALEX

Scott Fitzgerald and Zelda. A pair of Afghan hounds on the foredeck. Afternoons with the British ambassador. Lunch in Bar Harbor and on to Marblehead for tea with the President. Wouldn't it be wonderful?

DANIEL

You just had dinner with a future President, didn't you?

ALEX

That's exactly what I mean. The reality isn't nearly so romantic. See, there's even a little Tiffany vase here.

She fingers an exquisite blown glass vase gimballled to the bulkhead beside the cabin door.

VOICE (O.S.)

And a rose for Emily.

ALEX'S P.O.V.

The cabin door swings open to reveal the tanned, shirtless body of KYLE ROTH smiling a hearty welcome as he drops a wilted carnation into the vase. Smaller than Daniel, Kyle is closer to Alex's age, and has the dark, windblown look of the gypsy.

DANIEL

His expression darkens, all the fun suddenly sucked away.

KYLE (O.S.)
Happy Birthday, Doctor!

ALEX

Standing at the bulkhead beside the flower vase, Alex remains impassive, yet unconsciously as graceful as the sailboat itself.

ON THE BOAT

As Kyle moves to shake hands with Daniel, Alex sways back a little like some dark shadow just crossed her path.

ALEX
(hissing to Kyle)
What are you doing here now?

KYLE
(loudly)
Look, I know it's a private party. And really, honestly, I planned to be off. But, well, I brought her in so late yesterday that, uh... Well, I fell asleep so, what can I say -- here I am.

DANIEL
You brought her in?

KYLE
Meet Kyle Roth, yacht broker.
(beat)
Say, as long as I'm here, why don't we take her out once around the bay. I can show you the old girl's peculiarities.

DANIEL
Kyle, I don't think this is a good time to ...

But he's disappeared into the cabin --

KYLE (O.S.)
(sings)
Because you deserve the best today...

-- and comes out a second later carrying two gaudy, souvenir shop t-shirts. He tosses the larger shirt to Daniel, who holds it up so that CAP'N is spread across his chest.

But with the second, smaller MATE shirt, Kyle moves to hold it up to Alex himself, his hands resting hungrily on her shoulders.

KYLE
There'll never be a better
time than right now.

He hits the starter button. The engine GRINDS and COUGHS, but never quite catches.

AT THE STERN

Kyle lifts the cover from the engine compartment to reveal an old diesel motor caked in grease.

KYLE
Now this is the first thing
you're going to have to get
fixed. Gave me more trouble
coming up the coast.

He tinkers with something deep in the compartment, and the old diesel comes to life.

KYLE
Hey! Cast off!

ALEX AND DANIEL

share a helpless look. She squeezes his arm.

ALEX
It is your birthday, darling.
Just try to have a good time.

Reluctantly, Daniel uncleats the line and flings it with a desultory toss onto the dock.

KYLE (O.S.)
That's the spirit.

CUT TO:

IN THE BAY

The sloop rounds the breakwater under power. But as her bow snaps upward against the waves, Kyle shuts down the engine.

DANIEL

We may never get that old
gunk pot started again.

KYLE

Isn't this what it's all
about? The wind at our
backs, the creak of timbers
as our stalwart ship slips
through the hiss of the sea.

Alex rolls her eyes heavenward.

ALEX

Oh, give us a break.

Kyle laughs as he brushes deliberately close by her on his way forward.

KYLE

Ready about, sailor.

He lets the sheets go. The sails luff and swing to the other side of the boat.

THE BOAT

The well-founded sloop rolls with the swells until she catches a strong gust of wind that fills her sails with a resounding POP.

KYLE

Here we go! Daniel, uncleat
the main halyard.

As the sails fill, Daniel succumbs to the lure of the boat. He falls to with the lines, and suddenly the sleek wooden hull noses out toward open water.

ON DECK

Leaving the sailing to the men, Alex works her way forward along the weather rail where the the wind whips her hair into a streaming pennant, and the bright sun turns her skirt into a gossamer veil.

KYLE (O.S.)

Let's see what she's made out
of.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE: THE MARTINSEN SAILING

There is nothing but the sloop in the open sea under a mackerel sky as the boat slices through the water with no other craft in sight.

But as the Martinsen tacks against the wind -- suddenly her sails empty, and she plows her nose deep into the oncoming waves.

DISSOLVE TO:

ONBOARD THE MARTINSEN

As the the hull settles heavily into the water, Kyle scrambles forward to haul on the lines.

KYLE

Come on, turn her to port.

But even the telltales tied to the shrouds are dangling limply, unmoved by even the slightest breeze.

KYLE

All gone.

Kyle secures his lines and sits in a heap on the steps.

ALEX

Welcome to the doldrums.

KYLE

Aye. We could be here for months, madam. Waiting for relief from the tropical trades.

(brightens)

Or...there's something else we could do.

Without leaving his perch, he swings his lean body around to reach through cabin top hatch and retrieve three bottles of beer.

KYLE

Blessings, my children.

He tosses a beer to Daniel at the stern and, somewhat more gently, passes one across to Alex.

KYLE

Grog all 'round.
Ancient wisdom of the sea,
you know. When becalmed --
make the most of it.

DANIEL

Well, we ought to pick up an
offshore soon. Then we can
bring her around and head back.

KYLE

Meanwhile, I know not what
course others may take, but
as for me...I haven't had a
shower in two days, and I'm
going swimming.

Kyle drains his beer in one swallow, then hops down into the well
and starts to shrug out of his jeans.

KYLE

C'mon, you two.

ALEX

I think I'll sit this one
out. I feel a strong wave
of modesty coming on.

KYLE

Oh, don't be such a prude. A
little skinny dipping among
friends never hurt.

ALEX

You are not at Boy Scout
camp, you know.

KYLE

Okay, tell you what. If
it'll make you feel better,
boys'll stay on this side and
girls on that one.

(over his shoulder to Daniel)

You coming?

In an instant, Kyle's bare bottom disappears over the side as he
executes a perfect dive into the ocean.

DANIEL

Even before the water's closed over Kyle, however, Daniel turns
to stare hard at Alex.

DANIEL

What's he doing here?

IN THE BOAT

Alex seems shocked by the question.

ALEX

What's he doing here? He's
ruining your birthday
obviously.

But her sarcasm falls flat.

ALEX

(sighs)

I thought I had it worked out
so perfectly. Kyle promised
to bring the boat in, I asked
the boys at the club to
arrange for the ribbon, and
that's it. The whole plan.
And I did not know he was
going to spend the night on
board.

DANIEL

He invited himself in and you
went right along with it.

ALEX

What was I supposed to do,
give him a tip and tell him
to get lost?

DANIEL

That might have worked.

ALEX

I don't believe you're saying
this, Daniel. Kyle was your
friend. You used to like
him. "Wonder what's become
of good ol' Kyle?" Well good
ol' Kyle's here, and you're
acting like a spoiled child
who doesn't want to share his
birthday cake. You're
supposed to be having fun.

Alex turns away from him and makes her way toward the bow to find
a spot on the gunnel and settle in. Drawing her knees up under
her and sipping her beer, she has chosen to deliberately ignore
him, and turns her face to the sun.

DANIEL

For a long moment, Daniel merely watches his wife.

DANIEL

(through his teeth)

Okay, Alex. We'll have fun.

Shrugging out of his coat and pants, Daniel mounts the stern ladder and cannonballs into the water with a huge splash.

IN THE WATER

Kyle is lying back in a float and gazing off toward the sailboat.

KYLE'S P.O.V.

Long and lean, Alex blends with the lines of the boat like she was built into it, crafted by the same artistry that shaped the sleek hull.

IN THE WATER

Daniel breaks the surface quietly behind Kyle, who apparently has his eyes fixed on the boat.

DANIEL

Beautiful, isn't she?

Kyle twists around quickly to face him, betraying only for an instant that he knows exactly what Daniel means.

KYLE

(covering)

Oh. Yeah. I was lucky to find her for you. Only a dozen of those babies built, you know.

DANIEL

Alex.

KYLE

You're lucky there, too.

DANIEL

Look, Kyle. Let's get something straight. Keep away.

Daniel paddles over to face Kyle head on.

DANIEL

And keep away from the old crowd. I'm trying to raise serious money here, and I don't want these guys worried about what their wives are up to. You understand?

KYLE

Loud and clear.

DANIEL

Good.

Now, Alex says I'm supposed to be having fun.

Daniel suddenly eases into a stealthy crawl toward where Alex lies on the boat -- and Kyle slips in a little ways behind him like a hungry crocodile silently stalking his prey.

ON THE BOAT

Her eyes closed against the sun, Alex lies on her back beneath the rail -- unaware of the dark shapes coming toward her just under the surface of the water.

ALEX

With her hands folded on her tummy, her beautiful, relaxed body sways gently with the rolling of the boat.

Suddenly though, a dark shape breaks from the water and bursts up to the level of the deck, hands clutching at Alex's bare legs and arms as Daniel rakes her off the deck --

DANIEL

Have fun, Alex!

-- and she crashes into the ocean with a startled SCREAM and a SPLASH.

UNDER WATER

Alex thrashes her arms and legs, struggling to right herself as she plunges upside down into the water. As she manages to twist around, she opens her eyes and looks instinctively, desperately, for the daylight.

HER P.O.V.

What she sees is the murky outline of two bare legs and a headless torso treading water above her. Fighting to hold her breath now, Alex pulls hard against the water to claw her way upward.

ON THE SURFACE

Alex explodes through the surface, flailing her arms and grabbing for the salvation of the body.

HER P.O.V.

Salt stinging her eyes, she still can't see clearly, but there's the blurred color of flesh immediately ahead, and just as she starts sinking back into the water she throws out her arms to clutch at it.

ON THE SURFACE

Alex locks her arms around the shoulders of the body and pulls herself tightly into --

KYLE

who likewise throws his arms around Alex and pulls her close, using only the powerful kicks of his legs to keep them both afloat.

KYLE AND ALEX

For a long moment they look deep into each other's eyes as she lets herself melt into his embrace, her hands clinging to his neck and shoulders as if he might suddenly disappear -- another few seconds, and the sea around them is going to start vaporizing.

DANIEL

Odd man out, Daniel treads water nearby as he stares at his wife in Kyle's arms -- and he doesn't miss the ardent look on her face.

IN THE WATER

An instant later, though, Alex stiffens and shoves herself away from Kyle, floundering as best she can in her clothes toward the stern of the boat, where --

DANIEL

is already standing on deck and staring down at her.

ON THE BOAT

Still beautiful in spite of the sopping clothes clinging to her, Alex pauses halfway up the transom ladder to reach out her hand for Daniel's help --

HER P.O.V.

-- but he's looking at her as if he's just dredged some primordial slime up from the sea floor.

And from somewhere on the water, there's a mocking laugh as Kyle starts singing.

KYLE (O.S.)

Oh there was an old sailor
who lived in Nantucket.
Singing yo heave ho and a
bottle of rum...

ON THE BOAT

Avoiding her husband's condemning look, Alex snatches up one of the new t-shirts and sashes her way forward into the cabin.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CABIN

Safely inside, she closes the door behind her -- and in the shadows of the cabin, sways back against the locker to fight the rush of scattered, pounding heartbeats that are flushing color into her cheeks.

HER P.O.V.

As her eyes adjust to the dim light, Alex looks around the cabin to see mounds of dirty clothes strewn everywhere, an old leather suitcase open on the bunk, and beer cans and remnants of food tossed in every corner -- the cave of a man who's lived alone here a lot longer than the few days it would take to ferry the boat up the coast.

IN THE CABIN

Steadier now, Alex unbuttons her wet skirt and lets it drop to the floor, then slides out of her damp underwear and tugs the soggy jersey blouse over her head. She pulls on the extra large CAP'N t-shirt and stretches it down to cover her bare bottom. It's long enough, but still not quite suitable for going on deck, so Alex casts about for something else to put on underneath.

ON THE BUNK

Opening the leather suitcase, she rummages around until she settles on a pair of stretch gym shorts.

But as Alex turns away to step into the shorts -- a .357 Colt Python starts a slow slide from inside one of the pockets of the suitcase behind her.

IN THE CABIN

Suddenly, though, the boat rocks hard to port as a fresh gust of wind buffets the side. Alex catches her balance, pulls the shorts snug on her hips, and turns for the cabin door.

CUT TO:

ON DECK

Opening the cabin door, Alex sees Daniel and Kyle standing a few feet apart, back to back like duelists as both men are scanning opposite views of the horizon.

Once again, the boat rocks from side to side, and Alex's hair is whipped across her face by a strong gust of wind.

KYLE

Weather's picking up. Looks like a squall coming toward us.

ALEX

Then let's get out of here.

DANIEL

(pointing off in his direction)

This is more than a little squall. It's turning pretty dark over here too.

Alex comes completely on deck and, like the men, searches the sky.

THE HORIZON

The breeze is getting steadier now, toying in violent bursts with the mast flag as the sky along the horizon darkens to a cobalt blue.

ALEX (V.O.)

Didn't somebody listen to the radio?

ON DECK

Kyle turns toward both of them with a sheepish grin, and gestures toward a gaping hole in the instrument cluster.

KYLE

That was the second thing you were going to have to fix.

DANIEL

All right, let's make sail and head in as far as we can.

FORWARD

Kyle scrambles to grab the lines and haul up the sail, immediately catching a stiff breeze that knocks Alex off her footing as the boat heels over and slaps hard against the oncoming waves.

IN THE WELL

Daniel brings the sloop about, running with the wind as all three of them try to settle into secure spots.

ON THE WATER

Turning toward the only bright spot of sky over the unseen shoreline, the boat pitches sharply as the waves whitecap all around them.

RACING WITH THE SQUALL

The gathering storm is riding up fast on their heels, whipping spray over the transom as the boat nosedives into a trough and the first sheet of hard rain rakes over the deck.

DANIEL

(ducking the avalanche of water)
We're sure as hell not
outrunning it.

KYLE

Turn her northeast. I've got
an idea. There's the old
lighthouse. Should be maybe
five miles over that way.

DANIEL

Shellcroft Island?

KYLE

That's it. Nobody there
anymore. We can at least
ride out this squall.

THE BOAT

shifts course, headed straight for an ever darkening sky, and the tiny dot of an island on the horizon where --

THE LIGHTHOUSE

A brooding, dark phallus thrusts itself defiantly into the slate sky from the top of a steep bluff plunging abruptly into the sea.

THE BOAT

Driven as much by the rain as by the wind, the sailboat approaches the island where the lighthouse stands shrouded in gray isolation.

KYLE (V.O.)

(shouting)

There's a cove on the leeward side, I think. Probably some kind of dock there.

The Martinsen suddenly pitches violently up as a huge wave slaps against her bow.

ON BOARD

Daniel stares at the island, where the sea is relentlessly pounding the jagged rocks crumbled from the sheer stone cliffside.

DANIEL

(against the wind)

We can't secure in this weather.

KYLE

It's either that or ride it out in open water.

DANIEL

(after a moment)

Okay. Let's go for it.

Both men lean into the tasks at hand, Daniel holding fast at the helm while Kyle fights the wind to mount a storm trysail.

THE SQUALL

tosses the craft around like a cat with a small beetle, shoving the Martinsen sideways toward the island rocks.

THE LEEWARD SIDE

The boat doubles around the point, Daniel hugging the shore as closely as he dares while they look for some place to tie up.

KYLE

(suddenly pointing)

Over there! Two points off
the starboard.

DANIEL

Got it.

ON THE SLOOP

Daniel leans into the wheel to bring the boat around toward the protection of the cove.

DANIEL

Reef in some sail. We don't
want to hit this thing full speed.

Kyle hauls in on the trysail, but at the same time the storm starts to give way as if it's tired of the game, scuttling off in search of bigger prey.

KYLE

(glancing up)

Couldn't have come at a
better time.

DANIEL

It's not over yet.
That's just the first squall.

KYLE

Let's get anchored before
she comes back for more.

IN THE COVE

Against still heavy seas, the sloop edges its way toward the snagged tooth of a pier jutting out from the mouth of the cove.

Coming in as much sideways as forward, the boat's being pushed by the waves toward the broken planks. Grabbing up a boat hook, Kyle leans out to stave off the bow. But as he does, the stern swings hard into the pier, the force of the blow knocking Daniel backward so that his head CRACKS against the transom.

KYLE

seizes the opportunity to leap onto the dock and cast a hitch around what's left of a rotted piling, then hurdles over the missing planks to throw the line through a forward cleat.

IN THE BOAT

Alex is kneeling beside her husband as Daniel shakes his head clear.

DANIEL

(pushing her away)

I'm fine. I'm fine.

Alex backs off, wary of her husband's refusal.

ON THE DOCK

Kyle's tying up on the pier, and shouts to Alex in the boat.

KYLE

Alex, you get out now and go
up to the lighthouse, huh?
See what our accommodations
are like. We've gotta put
her on anchor out there or
she'll tear herself to pieces
against this dock.

With another glance to her husband as he pulls himself up from the deck, Alex steps gingerly onto the slippery pier.

KYLE

jumps back into the boat, pops open the bosun's locker to rummage around inside --

KYLE

Here. You may need this.

-- and tosses her a small crowbar.

KYLE

We're trespassing, you know.

ON THE PIER

Alex catches the crowbar and starts to pick her way along the dock.

KYLE

(calling after her)

Oh, and tell 'em I want a hot
bath and a very dry martini
waiting in the room.

He flashes her a grin and a wink, then turns to help Daniel up.

KYLE

C'mon old man. We've got
work to do.

ALEX

makes her way to the shore, coming at last to the base of some
wooden steps driven into the mossy rocks.

HER P.O.V.

Twisting its way up the bluff above her, the wooden staircase
crawls over and through the rocks, disappearing entirely at times
only to emerge briefly into flat switchback turns.

ALEX

picks her way very carefully from one slimy board to another as
she makes the climb toward the top of the plateau.

IN THE BOAT

Kyle moves aft to pull the inflation cord on a small rubber
dinghy that immediately fills with a WHOOSH.

KYLE

You get ashore. I'll drop a
hook out in the cove, then
bring the dink back in.

DANIEL

(emphatic)

No.

(but still dizzy)

No. I'm okay.

Moving a little slowly, Daniel reaches out to cast off the line
tying them to the pier, and the two men start to maneuver the boat
toward the center of the cove to drop a storm anchor.

CUT TO:

ALEX

Beside her, running parallel to the steps and set into a long cleft in the rocks down to the sea, there's a rusted steel cable stretching up to a winch house which she can just see poking out over the crest.

Grabbing what's left of a rickety wooden railing, she hauls herself up toward a few tufts of grass sprouting at the top of the cliff.

At last she reaches the top of the stairs, and steps onto the plateau fifty yards from the old lighthouse.

HER P.O.V.

Ahead is a stone and masonry tower tapering up to its weathered, wooden turret of shattered glass panes. An overgrown path leads from the lighthouse to some storage sheds and what used to be an outhouse, now pushed nearly horizontal by the constant winds. At the far end of the plateau there's a low barracks once used by the Fish and Wildlife Service but now offering shelter only to the few goats who remain on the island. Further still, just at the leading point of the land, there's a large metal cube of a building which houses the light's modern replacement, a radio signal beacon that beams its silent electronic warning to ships at sea without any need for relief or supplies or vacations.

ON THE PLATEAU

Even though the first squall has passed, the wind still whips the top of the plateau in violent gusts, snapping at the loose boards of the outbuildings and uprooting anything but the most tenacious plant life.

Still dressed in her t-shirt and borrowed shorts, Alex hugs herself as she leans into the stiff breeze for the hike across the open space to the lighthouse.

AT THE LIGHTHOUSE

Rounding the corner of the stonework building, Alex approaches a door plastered with warning signs: CONDEMNED. KEEP OUT. NO TRESPASSING.

ALEX

For the first time, she becomes aware of the small crowbar she's been tightly gripping all during the climb. She stands for a moment looking at the hasp and padlock fixed between the door and its frame. Not entirely sure which end of the tool to use, she raises it toward the lock -- just as a strong gust of wind SLAMS the old door open.

Alex jumps back startled, then cautiously looks inside, noticing that the screws on the hasp were barely fixed into the door anyway. In fact, the screws have been removed and replaced so many times that the holes are much too large, and about the only thing holding the door closed was mildew.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE LIGHTHOUSE

Once inside, even in the fading light, it's clear that Alex is not the first illegal visitor. The main room fireplace is gagged with discarded beer cans, and wads of paper food wrappers are skittering across the wooden floor like ghostly mice.

Melted onto the stone mantle is the stub of a candle beside an old box of kitchen matches. Alex manages to light the candle and, with cold, quivering fingers, pry it loose to take a look around the room.

HER P.O.V.

The room is perhaps thirty feet in diameter and faced with the same stone as the exterior walls except for one partially boarded up window. Near the fireplace is a small stack of wood, a picnic table, and a single bench, one legless end propped up on concrete cinder blocks. The only other furniture in the room is a broken down old sofa squirting up geysers of dirty cotton through its tweedy maroon fabric.

IN THE ROOM

Alex starts to sit on the sofa, but something deep inside emits a high pitched SQUEAK and she thinks better of the idea.

Her candle leading the way, she searches the darker side of the room: the remains of a cot mattress that's probably equally full of disembodied squeaks, a Styrofoam ice chest with one can of beer still inside, and a doorway opening onto a stone staircase that spirals up to the room above.

ALEX

As she passes the door, though, a sudden GUST OF WIND whistles down the staircase to snuff out her candle. Alex shivers, manages to relight it, and pokes her head tentatively into the staircase to look for the source of the wind.

ALEX'S P.O.V.

The darkness giving way to her candle, Alex climbs the stairs and finds herself in the second, smaller room. Like the main room below, it has a wooden plank floor and a single window covered haphazardly with old boards -- one of which has blown loose and BANGS rhythmically like a bellows puffing out cold blasts of air.

ALEX

slaps the board back into place, and turns to look at the room around her.

IN THE ROOM

In the center there's another cot mattress, and the ubiquitous beer can litter, but otherwise no furniture. It might as well be a castle keep and, indeed, the curving stone steps give the place a certain medieval atmosphere.

Where the stone steps end, however, there's an iron ladder leading straight up to a closed hatchway in the ceiling. Mounting the ladder, Alex climbs rung by rung until she can just reach out to shove the trap door open.

IN THE TURRET

Shards of glass TINKLE as the trap door swings back and Alex pokes her head through the opening.

The turret itself is the smallest room, completely surrounded by glass windows, or windows which once were glass, for several of the thick panes are now lying shattered on the floor. In the center there is the cylindrical light housing, its fittings corroded now, and one giant, cracked Fresnel lens staring out to sea like a blinded cyclops.

KYLE (O.S.)

Hey, the party's downstairs!

Alex reacts with a start, losing her hold on the ladder, dropping down a rung or two -- and once again finds herself being supported in Kyle's arms.

THE UPPER ROOM

Kyle holds on for a second longer than necessary after Alex regains her footing.

KYLE
And we've got a patient
who needs some looking after.

ALEX
(a small gasp)
Daniel.

Alex manages to pull away, and heads for the stairs.

KYLE
(following her)
Aw, nothing serious.
A little sympathy ought to
put it right.

IN THE MAIN ROOM

Daniel is sitting on the bench, leaning on the picnic table and probing tenderly at the back of his head. Also on the table is a kerosene lantern, a couple of blankets, and a few other items from the boat.

Alex rushes over to her husband, but again he shrugs her off.

DANIEL
I'm okay. I just got a
little dizzy on those stairs.

Kyle's NOISILY raking the beer cans out of the fireplace.

KYLE
(with an edge)
Tough ol' bird, aren't you Dan?

ALEX
(sharply)
He's exhausted.

Alex starts pawing through the things on the table, looking for something to bandage Daniel's head with.

ALEX

And I think we could all use something hot to drink. Not to mention a little food.

He straightens up from the fireplace and heads for the door.

KYLE

All right, you two see what you can do about getting a fire started. I'll play pack animal and schlepp up some supplies, okay?

Without waiting for a response, he pushes out the door and heads off down the path.

ALEX AND DANIEL

For a long moment in the abrupt silence of Kyle's leaving, neither of them move, neither looking at the other.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ISLAND

As he makes his way toward the staircase, though, the genial smile disappears from Kyle's face and he turns back to level a menacing stare toward the lighthouse.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LIGHTHOUSE

At last Alex grabs up one of the blankets, tucks it around Daniel's shoulders, and daubs at his head with a handkerchief.

ALEX

At least let me keep you from getting pneumonia. Doctor.

DANIEL

You're certainly being concerned all of a sudden.

Daniel suddenly stands up and moves to the fireplace to kick the cans aside and throw in some of the paper wrapping and a couple of boards.

ALEX
Of course I'm concerned.
You're hurt and I want to
take care of you. And what's
this, all of a sudden?

DANIEL
It looked to me back there
like you and Kyle were having
your own party.

He puts a match to the few boards, but nothing catches.

ALEX
Daniel, you are being
ridiculous. What are you
talking about?

Daniel whirls around to face her.

DANIEL
I'm talking about what's been
going on between you and Kyle.

For an instant, Alex is stunned by the look on his face -- half in shadow, but with his eyes glinting from the flames.

ALEX
(forcing a laugh)
I think that bump on your
head is more serious than it
looks.

He reaches to pick up the crowbar she left on the table, and Alex reflexively takes a step away from him.

DANIEL
Forget it. Let's just get
through tonight. We'll talk
about it when we're alone.

He stalks past her out the door.

ALEX

Left standing by herself in the center of the room, she takes a deep breath, trying to pull herself together.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ISLAND - DUSK

Daniel is standing inside one of the storage sheds ripping violently at the old shelving and interior boards with the crowbar. A board CRACKS loudly as it's ripped from its place, and Daniel flings the plank outside.

ALEX

Huddling against the wind, Alex rounds the lighthouse and comes to stand outside the shed. Sidestepping a jagged piece of lumber as it comes hurtling out, she peers into the gloom where Daniel is furiously tearing at the boards.

ALEX

No. Let's talk about it now.
Don't you think we ought to
finish this conversation?
Before Kyle gets back.

Another plank RIPS free and lands with a SMACK on the top of the pile beside her feet.

ALEX

Daniel, say something to me.
You started this with your...
your own warped...jealousy.

THE SHED

His only response is a loud SCREECH as he violently tears the rusted nails from a section of shelving.

ALEX

All right. What is it? You
think Kyle and I are having
some sort of affair? Don't
you see how ridiculous that
is? The man hasn't even been
around since...what...last
March?

The NOISE from inside the shed suddenly stops, and Daniel turns toward her, his eyes quickly scanning her face.

DANIEL (O.S.)

(after a moment)

Yes. I thought it was finished. I thought you were through with him. But you're not, are you? You used the boat as an excuse to bring him here again.

He's holding a long board studded with nails. Alex tries to gauge his reaction, backing away from the shed a bit.

ALEX

Of course I brought him here. Why not? I knew if anybody could find that damned old boat, Kyle could. Does that make him...make me some sort of criminal?

Daniel comes out of the shed and picks up an armload of wood, stalking back to the lighthouse without so much as a glance at Alex.

DANIEL

I know what you've been up to, Alex.

ALEX

(calling after him)

I haven't been up to anything, Daniel, except trying to arrange a surprise for your birthday. And obviously it was a mistake.

With no response forthcoming, she gathers up a few boards and follows him back to the lighthouse.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LIGHTHOUSE

Daniel dumps the boards onto the stack with a CLATTER, then hunkers down to arrange the fire.

Alex comes over to stand silently behind him for a moment, then adds her wood to the stack and kneels down beside him.

ALEX

(biting her lip)

All right. When Kyle and Marian were breaking up, Kyle would sometimes...sometimes he would come over to the house. Just to talk. He was hurt, I guess, and...

DANIEL

Uh huh.

ALEX

Well that's what happened. We talked.

But Daniel clearly isn't having any of it.

ALEX

(pleading)

Daniel, Kyle doesn't mean anything to me any...he doesn't affect me the way...

IN THE ROOM

But suddenly the old door BANGS open and Kyle appears in the entrance. Still shirtless, his dark hair clinging to his face in damp ringlets, carrying a full bottle of Scotch in one hand, and his browned body draped with gear, he looks like a marauding pirate returned from looting the boat.

Alex glances up to him, and Kyle returns her look with a hard, brilliant gaze that cuts right through her thin t-shirt.

KYLE

Party time.

DANIEL

The glance shared between Kyle and Alex has taken only an instant, but Daniel is alert now to even their slightest exchange -- and he's seen it.

KYLE

notices Daniel's pitiful, smouldering fire. With something like a smirk, he douses the logs with a liberal dose of kerosene from a can he's salvaged from the boat, and the fireplace instantly comes ablaze.

IN THE ROOM

Kyle swaggers over to the picnic table and drops the rest of the gear in a heap, digging into it to turn on a small, pocket-sized radio for some very faint MUSIC and a lot of STATIC.

KYLE

The word, my friends, is that
the main storm will make
landfall in a couple of
hours.

Keeping up his patter, Kyle produces a roll of hard salami, some cheese, crackers, a tin of sprats, and what's left of a box of cookies, busying himself with laying out the food as if it were the Last Supper.

KYLE

But the word is also that
it's going to be a real
humdinger. Gale force stuff
coming down from the Arctic.
Small craft warnings all
along the coast, of course.
And Coast Guard's advising
the big ships to head into
the wind and grit their
teeth. So we might as well
fasten our seatbelts for a
bumpy night.

He looks overhead toward the turret above them.

KYLE

Too bad we can't light the
biggest birthday candle of
'em all, huh?

(suddenly, dramatically)

Ah! Which reminds me.

He digs into his jeans pocket and produces a small jewelry box, handing it across the table to Alex.

KYLE

I couldn't let the day go by
without bringing you a little
something as well.

ALEX

glances at Daniel like a guilty child asking for permission.
But Daniel says nothing, and the temptation of the box is too
great for Alex to resist.

Fixing her eyes on Kyle, she reaches up a little tentatively to take the box, moving as cautiously as if she were trying to steal the bait from a spring-loaded trap.

KYLE

Well, open it. I promise it
doesn't bite.

THE BOX

is a velvet Cartier clutch, elegantly unadorned by wrapping. As she lifts the lid, the firelight catches the golden gleam of a small, exquisite charm.

ALEX

The color drains from her face, though, as she draws out an intricate chain with a tiny giraffe dangling at the end.

KYLE (O.S.)

Here, let's show it off.

KYLE

beams and comes over to take the charm from Alex's hands.

BY THE FIRE

Before she can stop him, Kyle's moved behind her to clasp the chain around her neck.

DANIEL

slides his eyes from the giraffe charm at his wife's throat, to her face, to Kyle's hands resting lightly on her shoulders.

HIS P.O.V.

Kyle lingers, hovering over Alex with his hands poised, ready to plunge under the t-shirt and take her there in front of her husband.

IN THE ROOM

But Kyle suddenly breaks his reverie and moves quickly back to the table where he again takes up a knife and busily carves off slices of salami.

Daniel looks hard at Alex, waiting for some explanation.

ALEX

We...we went to the zoo one day. It was...

KYLE

That's right. Took the afternoon off and went into the city. Nothing better to do. I was telling Alex she ought to stick her neck out a little bit. Take a few risks. Have some fun. It got to be a kind of joke, you know.

Satisfied with his table, Kyle sloshes some Scotch into three Styrofoam cups and, with a flourish, gestures to the food.

KYLE

(lifting his glass)

Now. If you're ready, Oysters dear, we can begin to feed.

KYLE'S P.O.V.

But his toast is met with a cold silence. Alex has her eyes fixed on the floor. Daniel is staring intently at her -- the giraffe charm at her neck glittering in the firelight. For a long moment there's no sound except the scratchy MUSIC on the little radio.

ALEX

(softly)

He knows.

IN THE ROOM

Kyle shoots her an reassuring grin, as if to say "he doesn't know a thing".

KYLE

Well, look now, Dan, it was only a couple of visits to the zoo. A walk in the park. I was pretty down at the time, and your wife here was just being a good friend.

But Alex comes suddenly to her feet, and snaps off the radio.

ALEX

No, no, no. He's not an idiot, Kyle.

DANIEL

His back to both Kyle and Alex, Daniel starts to speak in a low, calm voice.

DANIEL

How long has it been going on this time? A week? A month?

KYLE

How long has what been going on?

Daniel shakes his head and crosses over to stand on the opposite side of the table. Kyle still has his hand resting on the buck knife stuck into the salami.

DANIEL

Okay, I'll give you the case history.

With a last hard look at Kyle, Daniel turns away to pace across the room, a detective piecing together his case.

IN THE ROOM

Stepping in and out of the shadows cast by the fire, Daniel's getting into his stride, the confident physician in command of the situation.

DANIEL

Lover here shows up one day on the arm of our good friend the widow Marian. Everybody takes him for a gigolo right off the bat, but no matter.

He struts around the room -- a stereotypical gigolo.

DANIEL

Everybody likes Marian, so it's her business. Pretty soon we forget where Kyle comes from because, if the truth be known, he seems like a pretty decent guy.

He gestures toward Kyle, his exhibit A.

DANIEL

He's educated, he doesn't pick his nose in public, and he can sail like nobody's business. So good ol' Kyle becomes one of the gang. Somewhere along the line, of course, we forget to ask Kyle just what it is that he does for a living.

Daniel pauses by the old sofa, then stretches out on it full length and props his arms behind his head.

DANIEL

But he's got that one covered. A little college English teaching somewhere or other. Investments here and there. Just a healthy young man making his way in the world, right Kyle?

He cocks an eye at Kyle, but there's no response.

DANIEL

Only the healthy young man is making his way with all the wives. Diddling one right after the other.

Alex is still standing in the shadows beside the fireplace, her eyes never leaving Daniel's face.

DANIEL

Now most of these women are smart enough to keep it recreational. Afternoon stuff sandwiched in between the tennis lessons and the charity teas. They know they're sitting on a good thing, and no matter what a great lay Kyle may be, he's not good enough to throw away your whole life for.

Daniel sits up on the sofa and faces Alex.

DANIEL

But then one day he hits the jackpot. He slides into the sack with you. He punches your buttons and you come on like a rutting sheep.

He resumes his pacing, circling around behind Kyle, but keeping his eyes on Alex.

DANIEL

He tells you to come away with him. Get rid of the old man -- me, that is -- and the two of you can live quite nicely on the divorce settlement. But then you start to remember where you came from, what you were before I found you, and things are getting scary.

ALEX

I told him to leave me alone.
I told him I never wanted to see him again.

DANIEL

(leveling at her)
You just can't leave him alone, though, can you?

The flames momentarily turn to embers as a sudden gust of wind threatens to kill the fire, and the approaching storm breaks over them with a resounding crack of THUNDER as a LIGHTNING FLASH sucks into the room through the tattered boards covering the window.

ALEX

Frantically searching from one man to the other, Alex's face twists into a tight knot until she manages to drag up from her throat the desperate CRY of some cornered creature --

ALEX

Aaaaaaaaaa!

-- and bolts across the room to run up the curving stone staircase.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

LIGHTNING flashes the color of scraped bone turn the island into a bleak solitaire set in the heavy limbo of a billowing sky.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MAIN ROOM

Alone with each other, Daniel and Kyle stand at opposite sides of the table.

Wind WHISTLES through the chimney flue, and the fire flutters once more to dying embers before rekindling into a blaze.

Daniel reaches for a Styrofoam cup of Scotch and takes a long drink.

The stones of the room itself still seem to ECHO Alex's anguish, and the window boards GROAN under the changing pressure of the storm.

Kyle releases his grip on the handle of the buck knife, and lets it fall with small, dull CLACK onto the picnic table.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TURRET

The wind scrapes its way across the broken glass panes, the menacing, resin-coated MOAN of a tense bolero.

Somewhere below, a door SLAMS, and Alex peers through the rain-spattered turret glass to see --

HER P.O.V.

Visible for only an instant far below, a figure shrouded in a yellow rain slicker strides off down the path and disappears into the night.

IN THE TURRET

Now cowering in a dark corner of the turret, her knees tucked up to her chin and the t-shirt pulled down over her legs, Alex's bright, feral eyes stare out toward the trap door.

CUT TO:

THE STAIRCASE - P.O.V.

Slow, steady FOOTSTEPS mount the staircase, spiraling with the stone wall until the ECHO STOPS and they climb the iron ladder leading to the open trap door of the turret.

Rising through the trap door opening, the view is even with the floor, where tinkling CHIMES of raindrops hammer at the glass shards.

Ahead is the base of the light housing, a cylindrical barrier beyond which Alex is coiled in a tight ball.

For a moment, the inexorable climb halts, focused on the animal eyes that stare back from the shadows -- a look of fear, of impatience, pent-up hunger, and heat.

IN THE TURRET - P.O.V.

Suddenly, explosively, the view bursts from the open hatchway and crosses in bold, quick steps toward the almost fetal form crouched against the wall.

At the same moment, Alex uncoils, her arms rising eagerly to match the oncoming embrace and --

IN THE TURRET

-- she throws herself into Kyle, clinging to his back like a woman drowning as the wind-driven rain molds the second skin of her t-shirt to her body.

KYLE'S BACK

Talons claw into his flesh, the hands restlessly traveling -- until they plunge inside the back of his jeans and the long fingers snake beneath the denim.

KYLE

pulls away, sliding to his knees and drawing down Alex's damp gym shorts to expose the jewels of moisture condensing on her thighs.

ALEX

Her head rolls to the side, beads of perspiration glistening on the bow of her neck.

KYLE

buries his head between her legs, his large hands pulling gently at her inner thighs to separate her.

ALEX

thrusts herself against the railing and shoves her hips into him, rocking first from side to side, then hooking her quivering legs over his back to clench him even more tightly into her.

KYLE

The drenched ringlets of his dark hair form a course shadow between Alex's legs as her low MOAN escapes into the storm to mingle with the HOWL of the wind stroking the glass panes.

ALEX

Tearing desperately at her own t-shirt, she peels it off and throws her arms wide -- suspended now only on the powerful rocking motion of Kyle's face beneath her.

KYLE

His tongue slides teasingly up her bare belly, slowly tracing a line toward her breasts as Alex's fingers twine themselves in his hair.

ALEX

throws her legs around his waist, her back arched as she twists from side to side to offer Kyle first one breast, then the other -- guiding his head with her hands and writhing to expose ever raw nerve and slope of her body to sensation.

ALEX AND KYLE

Suspended wholly by Kyle's arms, his head at her breast, Alex's hands tear hungrily at the button fly of his jeans -- thrusting inside to grasp him as the sinews along her wrist strain powerfully and her fingers tightly encircle their grip to draw him into her.

IN THE TURRET

Kyle drives Alex back into the inner railing. The warmth of her naked body instantly fogging an imprint on the glass behind as her skin sucks away from the window, then flattens into the thick pane once more, rhythmically, repeatedly sliding against the frosted mirror while the BOOMS OF THUNDER roll over them.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

The storm RAGES outside -- and two steaming, nude bodies standing at the top of the lighthouse strobe together with the LIGHTNING FLASHES, their fractured images reflected in all directions by the multiple faces of the turret glass.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE UPPER ROOM - LATER

Kyle stands facing the window looking out at the storm lashed island. Alex's nude body lies rigidly on the mattress, staring up blankly like a stone figure carved on a sarcophagus.

KYLE

Just like old times, right?

A tear begins to form in Alex's eye.

ALEX

A mistake...a horrible mistake. I didn't mean for this to happen.

KYLE

(laughs)

Oh no, of course you didn't.
That's why you asked me to
come. Why you called me in
Florida.

(smiles)

I knew there was more to it
than just bringing in an old
boat.

ALEX

No. I didn't plan this. Not
at all. I didn't want to
see you again. I just thought...

KYLE

That you couldn't live
without me. I know.

ALEX

But I was living without you.
I had it all worked out. I
was making it work with
Daniel. Being good. Keeping
everything...reasonable. And
faithful.

Suddenly she sits up and slams her hands hard on the mattress,
digging them into the ticking and coming up with wads of dirty
stuffing trailing from her fingers.

ALEX

And look at me. Look! With
my husband right downstairs!
Daniel's right. I'm, nothing
but a cheap slut who can't
stop herself. Who can't get
out of the gutter.
Everything he says about me
is true. It's all true!

She begins to sob convulsively, cringing into herself as she
crushes the mattress stuffing into her eyes.

Kyle comes over to kneel beside her. He gently lays her down and
caresses her shoulders while he speaks in a soothing, hypnotic
tone.

KYLE

You have it all wrong, Alex.
You've been listening to
Daniel too long. You know
Daniel. He's only interested
in power. He doesn't love
you, he owns you.

ALEX

He says he made me.

KYLE

Because he did a little
touch-up work on this
beautiful body?

He runs a finger from the hollow of her elbow to gently trace the
curve of her breast

ALEX

Because he gave me everything
I have.

KYLE

And made you pay a price for
all of it, didn't he? "Be
beautiful for me, Alex, and
I'll give you anything. Look
good on my arm, Alex, and
I'll buy the world for you.
But never, never have any
feelings, Alex."

Alex nods almost imperceptibly.

KYLE

Well that's all over with
now. You've paid the price
and you're entitled to some
happiness. We're going to
have each other. Be
together. Like we always
wanted.

Alex shudders, a tiny voice barely escaping from her lips.

ALEX

He couldn't possibly forgive
me now.

KYLE

Oh I don't think he's going
to cause a problem there. In
fact, I'm sure he won't
(staring off)
No problem at all.

He lies down beside her, wraps his body around hers, and softly
strokes her hair as she closes her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE ISLAND - NIGHT

There's the tremendous CRACK of a zig-zag LIGHTNING BOLT striking somewhere nearby. The storm is even more violent than before, lashing furiously at the island and churning the sea beyond into a tumult.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE MAIN ROOM

Daniel sits at the picnic table writing in his little notebook. As yet another electric blue light flashes through the room, he rises, tosses a couple of more planks into the fireplace, and pokes the flames alive.

The fire begins to glow brightly. Kyle appears at the bottom of the steps. Every nerve in Daniel hears him, but he does not turn around.

KYLE

For a moment he waits motionless in the darkness, then crosses the room to stand behind Daniel and to warm himself at the fire.

Outside, the wind HOWLS even louder, a fierce beast clawing at the door to be let in.

Crossing back to the table, Kyle tosses a shot of Scotch into a cup and drinks it down.

KYLE

We'd better check on the boat.

DANIEL

I'll go.

He fumbles for the matches and lights the kerosene lantern on the table, throwing a look at Kyle to say "and you can stay here with her" before he heads for the door.

KYLE

It may take both of us.

Daniel nods -- this is no time to argue -- and opens the door to the screaming wind.

Kyle quickly takes up a long, sealed beam flashlight and follows Daniel outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ISLAND - NIGHT

Daniel's lantern casts a feeble pool of light on the slippery rock path leading away from the lighthouse.

Behind him, Kyle throws the long beam of the flashlight toward the entrance to the steps leading down to the pier.

KYLE
Let's stick close. Those
steps aren't very secure even
when they're dry.

Daniel again nods silent agreement as he tugs his coat collar up against the rain and bends forward into the wind.

Still lagging behind, Kyle tries to pick out the flagstones ahead of them with the flashlight beam, but the driving rain turns the grass, rock, and mud of the plateau into the same murky gray.

AT THE EDGE

As the two men squeeze past the rusted cyclone fence at the rim of the island, Daniel holds back. Below them is a sheer drop into nothing, and the just visible beginnings of the wooden steps set into the cliff wall.

For a moment at the edge both men regard each other -- who goes down first with his back to the other? -- but Kyle pushes past and takes the first step onto the darkness of the staircase.

ON THE STAIRS

Playing the sealed beam ahead, Kyle picks his way step by step down the cliff, testing his weight at each board, waiting for the soggy earth to give way beneath his foot.

A few steps behind, Daniel holds the lantern high over his head, and reaches out his hand to feel for a guard railing that isn't there.

FROM BELOW

The dark mass of the island blots out the sky -- and clinging to its side, two dim lights inch their way down the invisible steps toward the ocean cove below.

KYLE AND DANIEL

work their way carefully around the hairpin turn of a switchback that suddenly plunges at a steep angle to the next level of steps leading down.

KYLE'S FOOT

hangs over nothing, then descends to rest on the leading edge of a wooden step. Testing it for stability, he brings his weight down on the step -- but the board suddenly shifts, sliding away with the mud squeezed out beneath it.

KYLE

As his heel digs into the old board, it splits in two. His knee buckles, one leg shoots out from under him, and Kyle falls backward with a thud as the flashlight clatters down the steps.

DANIEL

A half pace behind, Daniel reaches out to grab at Kyle, but there's nothing to hold onto -- and the other man now has both legs dangling in space.

KYLE

twists around onto his stomach to throw one arm at the steps and claw uselessly at the mud.

DANIEL

can see that Kyle's whole body is going to slip over the edge in another instant.

Without hesitating, he raises his foot -- and stomps hard on Kyle's outstretched hand.

KYLE

winces in pain and his eyes flash up to Daniel's face.

DANIEL

(shouting)

Hang on!

ON THE STEPS

Keeping all his weight on the one leg that's pinning Kyle's hand to the board, Daniel crouches until he can reach down and lock onto the man's wrist with his free hand.

Still holding the lantern with his other hand, Daniel heaves backward to anchor himself in the mud, and tugs Kyle over the lip of the steps.

For a long moment both mud covered men lie exhausted on the steps, each breathing heavily as he searches the other's eyes.

Some primal, tacit understanding passes between them, and after a moment they struggle up and look at the steps disappearing ahead of them.

THEIR P.O.V.

Somewhere below, the flashlight beam streaks out toward the ocean.

KYLE AND DANIEL

Feeling their way as much as seeing, the two men inch down the staircase toward the flashlight -- until Kyle can reach out and snap it up from teetering on the edge, grabbing at it as if it were some fleeting apparition.

KYLE

Halfway down the stairs now, he shines the beam toward the cove and the boat below.

THEIR P.O.V.

Designed merely for unloading supplies, the tiny cove was never intended as a safe harbor. Even though it's on the leeward side of the island, giant ocean waves are battering the boat -- and she's overriding her anchor like a bucking horse rearing up against a tether line!

KYLE (V.O.)

Jesus. The scope is straight down!

ON THE STEPS

Hurrying as much as they can on the treacherous path, Kyle and Daniel slip and slide their way down to the pier.

ON THE PIER

The pier itself is an exploding mine field of loose boards driven up through the gaps in the walkway with each crash of the waves.

DANIEL

We've got to set a stern hook.

Uprighting the little rubber dink, they drag it to the water and time their launch against the pounding waves.

DANIEL

Hold it fast.

IN THE DINK

Daniel clambers aboard and takes up the oars while Kyle secures the dink against the pier. Then as an outgoing wave drops the level of the little boat, he leaps in and shoves them off.

ON THE WATER

Making as much vertical movement as forward progress, the dink slogs its way toward the pitching sailboat as Daniel pulls hard on the oars to fight the waves that are driving them backward toward the pier.

THE SLOOP

Each successive wave tosses the bow of the boat high in the air as it strains against its line to lift the anchor right out of the water, then crashes down into a trough with explosive force.

As Daniel and Kyle come alongside, Kyle makes a grab for the ladder and leaps the gap to haul himself up and over the gunnel.

ABOARD THE SLOOP

Dropping into the cockpit, Kyle steadies himself against the rail and hand-over-hands his way toward the forward hatch.

As a wave crashes over the bow, Kyle shoves the hatch cover back and drops down to reach inside and come up with an anchor and rope.

Half standing and half crawling, he makes his way back to the cockpit to lower the anchor over the side to Daniel waiting in the dink.

DANIEL'S P.O.V.

The sharp flukes of the anchor twist menacingly like a double bladed guillotine hanging over his head as Kyle lowers the hook down.

DANIEL

Trying to hold the dink steady, Daniel dodges as the heavy anchor just misses him to drop into the boat.

KYLE

hanks one end of the anchor rope onto a stern cleat and lets the coil tumble into the dink.

DANIEL

rows toward the mouth of the cove, drawing out a long length of anchor rope as he moves farther and farther from the boat.

AT THE MOUTH OF THE COVE

With the rope almost taut now, Daniel heaves to and pitches the hook over the side.

THE SLOOP

As the stern anchor grabs hold, the boat pitches violently up again, still trying to tear its bow hook free of the bottom.

ABOARD

Kyle is heading for the cabin door, but Daniel hauls himself over the side and drops into the cockpit.

DANIEL

(breathless)

That ought to hold her.

KYLE

(shakes his head)

We've got to lengthen the
road on the bow!

He nods up front where the bowsprit is scribing sharp, jerking points against the wall of rain.

ON THE BOW

Fighting total exhaustion, both men work their way forward, Kyle manning the windlass and Daniel hanging over the bowsprit to play out the anchor chain.

KYLE'S P.O.V.

Daniel is stretched out on the bowsprit with his back to Kyle as the younger man hefts the heavy windlass bar in his hand.

DANIEL
Let 'er go!

ON DECK

Kyle shoves the bar into the windlass and releases the ratchet, freeing the anchor.

THE SLOOP

At last, the bow chain starts to lengthen and the violent pitching of the boat subsides.

DANIEL

breaks into a huge, tired grin --

DANIEL
We did it!

-- and twists around to find --

DANIEL'S P.O.V.

-- Kyle standing over him with a murderous look and the windlass bar raised high.

ON DECK

Suddenly, Kyle brings the weight of the windlass bar down hard -- but Daniel reacts instinctively, just managing to roll away from the full force of the blow as the windlass bar glances off the side of his head.

THE SLOOP

At the same time, the wind catches the boat amidships to heel it hard over to port, and --

THE BOOM

breaks free to swing across the deck in a slashing, lethal arc.

ON DECK

Daniel struggles to come to his feet just as Kyle ducks the boom and levels another blow that THUDS into the teak.

As the boom scythes over their heads, both men take wild swings at each other. But on uncertain footing and both of them dodging the boom, neither lands a solid punch until, as the boat heels sharply from one side to another, the two men are sent sprawling across the boards like broken dolls scrambling for holds on the slippery deck.

But it's Kyle who finds his footing first and, steadying himself with one hand on the mast, he takes aim at Daniel again with the bar.

Blood pouring from his scalp, Daniel scrabbles on all fours to tackle Kyle's ankles and yank him off his feet.

Kyle crashes to the deck, and the windlass bar clatters over the side. For a moment he's stunned, and Daniel uses the opportunity to escape, dragging himself over the pilot house to drop into the well on the far side.

IN THE COCKPIT

Daniel reaches for the cabin door, but before he can open it, Kyle's diving over the pilot house to land on his shoulders and drag him down to the deck.

Daniel rolls over and drives an elbow into Kyle's face, groping blindly with his other hand for something to hit him with. But Kyle brings his knee hard up into Daniel's crotch, sommersaulting him backwards with a CRASH as his legs tangle in the wheel and spin it hard.

THE BOAT

Driven by the sudden shift in the rudder and the wind slapping against her, the sloop lurches sharply.

IN THE COCKPIT

Kyle's just coming to his feet, his eyes glaring at Daniel tangled in the wheel. But he can barely stand, and the sudden lurch of the boat pulls his legs out from under him so that he topples into Daniel on the deck.

The deck of the cockpit is awash with red tinted sea as both men slide helplessly from side to side across the narrow beam, each of them fighting vainly for some hold on the other. But they're nothing more than grappling arms and legs, fists and feet flinging dream-like punches at the air -- until at last neither has the strength to move and they lie panting and twined in deadlock with each other like spent lovers.

DANIEL AND KYLE

Two drenched faces only inches apart. For a long, awkward moment they simply look at each other, then suddenly both of them start to speak at once.

KYLE

Look...I...

DANIEL

I think...we'd better...

But it's clear that both have run out of steam, and simultaneously they make feeble motions to dismiss the absurdity of their situation -- a gesture that causes each to break into a scattered, wry smile which, as they infect each other, becomes the punch-drunk-helpless relief of giddy LAUGHTER.

Managing to disentangle themselves, each one leans back against the lockers on opposite sides of the well and lets his rubbery legs splay out on the deck between them as the rain, the waves, the twitching exhaustion, and the convulsions of laughter wash over them.

IN THE COCKPIT

After a while Kyle makes a motion toward his mouth with his cupped hand as if taking a drink, and gestures weakly toward the cabin. Daniel nods, and the two of them winch themselves up onto their feet.

Kyle fairly stumbles to the inclined door. Clenching onto the brass dogs and twisting them aside, he has to use all his strength and his whole body to pull against the weighted sea hatch. Finally, though, he tugs it open and sweeps his arm wide to usher Daniel inside where it's dry.

KYLE AND DANIEL

"After you -- No, after you" they make an exaggerated pantomime of politeness to each other, until Daniel accepts the courtesy with something like a bow and takes a step inside.

AT THE DOOR

But as Daniel ducks down to squeeze his large frame through the opening -- Kyle SLAMS the door hard, catching Daniel's head between the heavy door and the bulkhead to CRACK it like an egg.

DANIEL

His body slumps, the knees buckling beneath him and his head sliding down the jamb to lodge at the corner of the deck.

KYLE

There's no trace of the smile, none of the laughter, as Kyle throws all his weight against the heavy door -- One! Two! Three! -- times battering it into Daniel's head with a sound like THUNDER CLAPS, until he can see a thick tide of viscous, dark red ooze steaming out onto the teakwood deck.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE ISLAND - MORNING

The main storm has passed, leaving behind an uneasy truce between gray skies and a gunmetal ocean.

IN THE COVE

The boat rides between its two anchors like a gentled colt, tossing its head in protest now and then, but making no attempt to leap the bounds of its corral.

Near the pier, almost lost among the flotsam of the storm, the Martinsen's little dink is turned turtle on the rocky shore.

THE LIGHTHOUSE

The stone tower has withstood this storm like so many others, a grizzled old hermit standing sentry at the edge of the island, kept company only by the accusatory CRIES of the gulls swooping around its head.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LIGHTHOUSE

The SHRIEK of the gulls reverberates in the empty second floor room where Alex is coiled in a tight knot on the old mattress.

She opens her eyes and, for a moment, seems bewildered by her surroundings as the gray sunlight pries at the gaps in the window boards to reveal the barren room.

Both the room and the previous day and night are all too real, though, and Alex pushes herself up to a sitting position. Only then does she realize that she's covered with a heavy yellow rain slicker, and that her clothes have been laid out to dry on a narrow ledge beneath the window.

IN THE ROOM

Alex pads quietly to the head of the stairs and listens for a moment, but there's no sound from the room below.

Moving to the window, she starts pulling on her skirt, jersey blouse and shoes as she shivers against the morning chill.

AT THE WINDOW

The outside world is as bleak and foreboding as the room itself. In fact, it's hard to tell the gray of the island beyond from the pumice colored grime caked on the window pane.

The smears on the window have another effect, though, turning the pane into a hazy, half-silvered mirror in which Alex can see herself. The face that looks back at her seems older than it should, weathered and pale like the room itself. But there's a warm glow glinting at her throat -- the tiny gold giraffe around her neck.

CUT TO:

THE MAIN ROOM DOWNSTAIRS

Kyle is standing at the fireplace holding a small pail of water suspended on a stick over the flames.

Hearing a footstep behind him, Kyle turns and lights up with a huge, radiant smile.

KYLE

(hamming it up)

But, soft! what light
through yonder window breaks?

HIS P.O.V.

Alex is standing at the foot of the stairs, a little bleary eyed and still wrapped against the chill in her big yellow rain slicker.

KYLE

It is the east, and Juliet is
the sun.

IN THE ROOM

He turns his attention to taking the pail out of the fire, setting it on the table and dumping in half a jar of instant coffee.

KYLE

Coffee's on. Come and get it.

Drawn by the steaming aroma, Alex shuffles over to the table. Kyle comes around to give her a kiss.

ALEX
Where's Daniel?

KYLE
(casually)
Dunno. Wasn't here when I
came down. Maybe he went out
to get more firewood. We're
down to our last twig here.

Alex looks at the old sofa where Daniel had been sleeping. A blanket is still there, and tucked between the arm and back is the handkerchief she held to his injured head.

ALEX
Maybe he went to the boat?

KYLE
(shrugs)
Yeah, maybe. Could be.

But something in the tone of her voice makes him turn and look inquiringly at her.

KYLE
Hey, don't worry. He's not
going to leave without us.
Daniel is a reasonable man.
He knows these things happen,
and that you just have to get
through them.

He comes over to put his arm around her.

KYLE
Besides, don't you know ol'
Dan's going to have more
women coming after him than
he can shake a stick at?

He draws her down to sit beside him on the sofa.

KYLE
There's absolutely no reason
for you to feel guilty.
What you do have to feel,
though, is happy. We're
together! You and me!
(a wink)
And remember what we all used
to say -- today is the first
day of the rest of your life.

Kyle wraps his hands around her shoulders, massaging and kneading the muscles of her neck.

KYLE

Of course, there are a lot of things we have to talk about. Like where to live for one.

Suddenly, he stands and paces back to the table, fiddling with the food, oblivious to Alex's taut indifference.

KYLE

I'll be going back and forth to Florida for a while. Did I tell you I've got a line on a real estate business in Key West? You'd like it in Florida. Anyway, there's some properties I'd like to talk to the old crowd here about.

(lecturing)

You see, the trouble with most people is, they don't get out and take advantage of the opportunities.

Do what has to be done.

(quoting)

Who hesitate and falter life away,
Lose tomorrow the ground won today.

Alex has been silent, but suddenly she rises and heads for the door.

ALEX

I want to see Daniel.

KYLE

(nonchalant)

He'll be back.

ALEX

(very insistent)

I want to see my husband.
I have to see if he'll talk to me.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LIGHTHOUSE - LATE MORNING

Alex throws open the door and steps outside.

ALEX

Daniel! Daniel!

But her voice is practically lost in the steady breeze that sweeps across the plateau. Jamming her hands in the pockets of the rain slicker, she rounds the lighthouse and heads for the path.

ON THE PATH

Kyle comes up behind her and lays a hand on her shoulder -- causing Alex to whirl around to face him.

ALEX

Maybe he's hurt. Maybe he went out last night while we were.... Maybe he couldn't find his way back in the storm.

Gently but deliberately, Kyle shepherds Alex toward the far end of the island where the transponder and wildlife barracks stand.

KYLE

No. I think Dan probably didn't sleep too well and took a little walk this morning. I'll bet we're going to find him sitting on a rock out there staring at the ocean.

He hugs Alex tighter to his side. She submits, but keeps her hands thrust firmly into the pockets of the rain slicker without returning his affectionate squeeze.

Alex's eyes are fixed on the buildings a hundred yards away at the far end of the island, searching for any sign of movement or color that might indicate Daniel as she tugs at the leash of Kyle's arm to quicken their pace. Abruptly, though, he comes to a stop and his hand tightens on her shoulder.

KYLE

Look at this. Hard to believe, isn't it?

Kyle crouches down to pinch the stem of a small wild flower gently between his fingers --

KYLE

After all that last
night, here's this little
life that survived.

-- and rips it with a tearing SNAP out of it's anchoring rock.

KYLE AND ALEX

He thrusts the flower at her in a misfit schoolboy offering.

For a moment, their two eyes lock in a gaze, then the wild flower
is cast to the wind as Kyle pins her arms and crushes her into
his chest for a kiss.

KYLE

I want you.

At the far end of the island, though, there is a loud BANG. Alex
tears away from the kiss to twist toward the barracks building,
where --

HER P.O.V.

The wind is just driving a wooden door closed.

ON THE ISLAND

Alex pushes herself away and starts to run toward the barracks.
For a moment, Kyle stands his ground, shouting into the wind
after her.

KYLE

And now I'm going to have you!

CUT TO:

AT THE BARRACKS

Alex runs to the door and throws it open.

ALEX

Daniel! Are you in here?

IN THE BARRACKS

Ahead of her is a gloomy darkness filled with musty cobwebs spun over the recesses of stalls flanking either side of a long aisle.

ALEX

Daniel, stop hiding.

But there's no response except for the slight fluttery movement of something in the shadows at the far end.

Taking a step inside, Alex moves down the long center aisle, peering around each of the dividers as if she expects to find her husband crouching in one of the stalls playing hide-and-seek.

AT THE DOORWAY

As Alex moves deeper into the corridor, Kyle's faceless silhouette looms in the doorway behind her -- then moves forward to shadow her noiselessly.

ALEX

Almost holding her breath, Alex cautiously picks her steps over barely seen debris littering the floor, her tread kicking up small clouds of long undisturbed dust.

As she approaches the end, feeling her way in the darkness, she suddenly trips over something --

ALEX

Owww!

-- and stumbles off balance clutching at her shin.

IN THE BARRACKS

Kyle is right behind her, his hands reaching out to catch her as she falls -- and Alex lets out a startled SHRIEK.

Twisting around to find Kyle grinning over her, Alex suddenly breaks into tears.

ALEX

Oh, Christ. What have we done? Where's Daniel?

KYLE

He'll turn up. I promise
you.

(searching the floor)

What the hell is this,
anyway?

Whatever Alex stumbled over is still lodged on the floor. Kyle reaches over to kick open the far door and let a little light into the room.

ON THE FLOOR

Gathered in a pile on the floor are several ceramic insulators, a rusted pair of lineman's pliers, small boxes of leftover electronic parts, some scrap sheet metal, and the large spool of cable that cracked Alex in the shins.

KYLE

(laughs)

See, nothing in here but us
and a bunch of junk.

(shoving aside the heavy spool)

Come on, let's get out of
here.

ALEX AND KYLE

He helps her to her feet and they push through the door Kyle opened to step outside.

CUT TO:

ON THE ISLAND

Ahead of them is the edge of the bluff, and the sea beyond. Close to one side is the metal cube of the transponder housing.

Alex hobbles over to lean against the side of the unit and massage her leg.

KYLE

(with a snort at the transponder)

So much for the romance of
being a lighthouse keeper.

Just visible inside the louvered metal doors of the housing, small colored lights blink rhythmically atop a panel of switches and dials, a two-way telephone is nestled in its cradle, and there's a constant electronic HUM that vibrates through the whole structure.

ALEX

At least it's warm.

Kyle RATTLES the securely locked door.

KYLE

Okay, no way he could get in there.

Kyle stretches out his hand to help her -- and Alex nods a weary acceptance.

ALEX

Releasing his hand as soon as she's on her feet, though, Alex walks over to the rim of the cliff to look down to the rocks below.

HER P.O.V.

It's nearly a straight drop more than a hundred feet down to the sea crashing against the jagged boulders. For a long moment, Alex scans the formidable terrain -- but there's no sign of movement, nothing but the unrelieved gray-green mud studded with moss covered rocks.

ALEX

He's out here somewhere.

ALONG THE RIM

Alex is constantly looking down as she picks her way around the mossy edge of the cliff.

ALEX

I'm sure of it.

Kyle holds back a little, following just beyond her shoulder on the inside to subtly but definitely herd her along.

KYLE

Well maybe he's hiding over there somewhere spying on us. Or maybe he's waiting to jump out and grab you. Or maybe he flew to the moon. Or maybe he just doesn't give a damn. Did you think about that, Alex? Maybe he's given you up so that you and I can be together like we wanted.

Kyle's very presence is forcing Alex to walk on the crumbling edge of the plateau as he maneuvers her toward a v-shaped cleft.

Suddenly at the cleft, Alex stops dead still and GASPS, her face frozen in shock as she looks straight down in front of her.

HER P.O.V.

At her feet are muddy scrapes in the grass where something or someone has gone over the edge. Halfway down the cliff face between the rim and the ocean there's the wet blotch of a shape protruding from a rough outcropping of stones -- and the harder she looks at it the more the shape takes on human form, it's back arched up on a boulder and one leg kicked sideways at an impossible angle.

ALEX

(breathes)

Oh, my God.

ON THE CLIFF

Alex inches her way along slippery grass and mud toward the edge.

KYLE

(alarmed)

Alex, what are you doing!
Stop!

ALEX

It's him. He's down there..

Kyle rushes up beside her.

KYLE

You can't get down there!

ALEX

He might be hurt.

KYLE

Alex, he's not hurt.

ALEX

We don't know that.

KYLE

Alex, he's dead.

The intensity of Kyle's tone stops Alex cold. She twists around to stare at him.

ALEX

Are you sure?

HER P.O.V.

Standing at the rim of the cliff, Kyle's dark figure blots out the sky.

KYLE

(calm, deliberate)

Believe me. He's very, very dead.

ON THE CLIFF

Kyle stretches out his arms to hold her --

KYLE

We've got what we wanted now.
Each other. There's nothing
anybody can do to stop us.

ALEX

(evenly)

You killed him.

-- and he flashes her one of his shy, charming grins.

KYLE

Let's just say I took
advantage of an opportunity.
(gestures at the cliff)
It'll look like an accident.
No one will ever know the
difference. And we get
what we've wanted. What
you've always wanted.

Alex glances down, and for the first time realizes the precarious position they're in standing on the rim.

AT THE RIM

Kyle wraps her in his arms.

KYLE

This was the perfect time to do it. He wasn't going to die on his own, you know. I had to carry him all the way out here, but the set up is perfect.

He takes her face in his hands.

KYLE

Just like you said. He wandered off at night and couldn't find his way back in the dark. Understand? By the time anyone finds him, there'll no way on earth they could prove it wasn't an accident...

But Alex is still staring down at the body and doesn't seem to be listening.

KYLE

Listen to me. You have to believe it was an accident. You have to tell them that.

Alex snaps to attention.

KYLE

Tell them you never saw Daniel after you and he went to sleep. Together. This morning he was gone, and that's all you know. It was an accident.

She forces a nod, and Kyle relaxes his grip.

KYLE

That's better.

ALEX

(after a moment)

But I did see him. Last night.

KYLE

You were with me.

Alex shakes her head.

ALEX

Uh uh. I went downstairs.
You were asleep. I wanted to
talk to him, but...

She winces like a puppy expecting a swat.

KYLE

What? But what?

ALEX

He...he just sat there. He
sat at the table writing in
that little notebook he
always carries.

Kyle frowns, as a sick feeling starts to crawl into the pit of
his stomach.

ALEX

I stood there at the bottom
of the stairs and I...I
waited for him, I don't know,
to say something to me. To
yell at me, or hit me, or
something. But he was like a
ghost just sitting there
under the lantern light,
smiling and writing in that
little notebook. I've never
seen that kind of look on his
face before.

(seeing the scene)

He put the book in his
pocket and then...he just
turned away from me. He
turned away and looked at the
fire, and it was as if I
wasn't there.

She turns and looks straight into Kyle's eyes.

ALEX

But I was. He saw me, but I
wasn't there. That's when I
came back to you.

There's a self-possessed glaze about Kyle as he releases Alex and
turns his attention to the cliff plunging away into the sea.

KYLE

(under his breath)

He put the notebook in his pocket.

ALEX

(nods)

His pants pocket.

KYLE'S P.O.V.

Halfway down the sheer cliffside, Daniel's muddy leg juts out from behind the rocks.

ON THE CLIFF

Kyle moves quickly to the edge, drops to his hands and knees and starts backing into the cleft, kicking his toes into the loose sod below him for something like a secure foothold.

Alex takes a step back from the edge as Kyle disappears over the side.

KYLE

slithers feet first down the crumbling slope until he comes to a tentative stop on a shallow ledge ten feet below the rim.

HIS P.O.V.

Below him, lacy strands of moss rappel over the lip into the nothingness between the ledge and a tumor of granite swelling out of the concave, packed mud wall that forms the cliff face.

CUT TO:

ON THE CLIFF FACE

Kyle spiders his way along the narrowing ledge looking for a way down, each grip of his fingers vanishing into a handful of crumbling loam that sends little rivulets of dirt cascading to the sea.

Below the windblown rim, there's a eerie hush broken only by the rales of Kyle's heavy breathing and the nearly silent hiss of his shoes scraping for purchase in the soil as each tenuous probe finds less and less solid ground to stand on.

Kyle flattens, counterpoised and motionless against the wall, craning only his neck to look at what awaits him below.

HIS P.O.V.

What awaits is a twenty foot drop to yet another, smaller ledge. If he misses, nothing will stop him from hitting the sharp, upthrust pylons of granite below, where Daniel's body is wedged.

KYLE

takes a step into the void and releases his grip.

THE CLIFF FACE

Kicking out from the wall like a skydiver, he plummets vertically until he lands on the ledge. The shock crumples his legs, and only his frantic, scrambling fingers manage to keep him from rebounding over the side.

Twisting around to sit, Kyle catches his breath and searches the rocks below for Daniel's body.

HIS P.O.V.

Below and a little to one side, almost hidden by the surrounding boulders, there's the hump-backed arch of Daniel's broken spine draped over a granite altar -- and on one cock-eyed hip splayed comically out to the side there's the bulging outline of his notebook stuffed in the rear pants pocket.

KYLE

pulls himself together and scans the cliff face for a way to bridge the chasm between his ledge and the rock outcropping where Daniel's body leers mockingly at him, daring him to risk the jump. It might be leaping distance straight across -- but if he doesn't make it, there's a sure drop down into a murky pool of trapped rain water.

KYLE

(calling)

Alex! I need some rope!

ATOP THE PLATEAU

Uncertainly, Alex backs away from the edge --

KYLE (O.S.)

Allleexx! The cable.

Get the cable!

-- then runs toward the barracks.

INT. THE BARRACKS

Alex stumbles into the room, feeling her way around in the dark until her hands latch onto the spool of electrical cable.

ON THE PLATEAU

Lashing the end to one of the support struts on the transponder, Alex lets the cable unspool as she rolls the core toward the rim of the cliff.

KYLE

Balanced on the narrow ledge, Kyle is anxiously staring up at the rim above, where --

HIS P.O.V.

He can see nothing but tufts of grass bowing and weaving in a precarious dance along the edge until -- the cable spool suddenly appears, then launches itself over the rim to drop straight down towards him.

KYLE

dodges as the heavy spool ricochets off the cliff wall, bounces at his feet, and topples into the rain water pool far below.

KYLE

That's it. Now hold it steady.

He tests his weight on the rope, then wraps it once around his waist and edges carefully over the side to rappel downward towards Daniel's body.

CUT TO:

ON THE RIM ABOVE

Only the broad vista of the sea is visible now as Alex shrinks further back from the edge and pulls the rain slicker tighter around her. But the cold wind that's whipping across the plateau is nothing compared to the chill grip of fear that's closing around her heart.

CUT TO:

KYLE

picks his way carefully over the rocks to Daniel's body. A vulture pecking eagerly at carrion, he shoves his hand into Daniel's back pocket --

KYLE
I've got it!

-- and looks up to the cliff rim to see --

HIS P.O.V.

-- the loose, untied end of the cable snaking freely through space toward him!

KYLE
Allllleeeexxxx!

CUT TO:

ATOP THE PLATEAU

By now, though, Alex is running as fast as she can down the path, shying away from the lighthouse to make a mad dash for the head of the cove staircase.

CUT TO:

ON THE CLIFF FACE

Kyle hesitates uncertainly -- frozen for an instant where he is. Crouching low on the rocks, every muscle concentrated and his eyes riveted on the ledge, Kyle is counting heartbeats as he calculates risking the jump back to scramble up the cliff after Alex.

CUT TO:

ON THE STAIRCASE

Alex bolts onto the staircase and runs down two steps at a time until her own hurtling momentum almost sends her over the edge.

Forcing herself to slow down, she maneuvers around a narrow switchback and plunges forward, her eyes flicking from the steps ahead of her to the choppy cove and the waiting sloop.

At last, breathlessly, she reaches the final ladder-like incline and dives toward the rocky beach to head for the pier.

THE PIER

Alex's wobbly legs fight for balance on the pier as she strains to tow the dinghy to the water, until at last she can tumble into it and take up the shipped oars.

IN THE DINK

Pulling with all her strength against the choppy water, she rows a crooked course toward the sailboat, all the while throwing fearful glances back to the head of the staircase.

The dink screeches its rubber nose into the boat, and Alex kicks it free as she clambers up the side to chin herself over the gunnel and tumble in a heap onto the cockpit deck.

ON THE SLOOP

An illusion of safety. Hidden from view in the well, returned to a familiar, reassuring world of brightwork and handcrafting, Alex collapses on the deck in exhaustion. But the moment passes, and she struggles to her feet to work her way forward.

ON THE BOW

The anchor chain GROANS against its track as Alex fumbles to insert a handle in the windlass and crank the hook to the surface.

ALEX

(a desperate incantation)

Come on. Come on.

She's using all her might to lean into the windlass and drag the heavy anchor from the bottom. Still, though, her eyes are fixed on the stairs where --

KYLE (O.S.)

Alleexxx!

THE STAIRCASE

Kyle storms over the edge, pausing for an instant to survey the cove, then running pell-mell down the stairs three at a time while --

ON THE BOAT

The bow anchor just breaks the surface as Alex abandons the windlass and heads aft.

Diving into the cockpit, she punches frantically at the starter button for the diesel engine. The old motor makes a few valiant GRINDS and water-logged SPUTTERS, but shows no signs of coming to life.

KYLE

has hit the bottom of the stairs and tears across the beach stones toward the pier.

ALEX

casts an anxious look toward the dink -- drifting away from the boat, trailing one of its oars limply over the side like a broken wing while the other sets its own free course toward the mouth of the cove.

KYLE

reaches the pier and makes a running dive for the water, knifing under the waves to come up swimming in long, effortless strokes straight for the sailboat.

ALEX

Another punch on the starter button, another GRIND -- and for an instant the engine catches!

AT THE STERN

The ENGINE churns once, stirring up a smoke-filled maelstrom of bubbles that dies almost as suddenly as it appears.

IN THE COCKPIT

Alex gooses the throttle and leans against the starter as if the force of her weight alone could bring the engine to life.

AT THE STERN

The prop reluctantly kicks itself around as the engine SPUTTERS and DIES -- then at last with an EXPLOSIVE POP, revs up full and churns the water to a frothy foam.

ALEX

twists the wheel hard to starboard and shoves the throttle forward, unaware as --

THE STERN ANCHOR LINE

draws taut -- and the sloop goes nowhere.

ON THE BOAT

Kyle rises dripping from the water, heaving himself over the side in one massive movement like a primeval beast awakened to slither up from a dark lagoon.

ALEX

shrinks back against the cabin door, trying to put as much room as possible in the cramped cockpit between herself and Kyle.

IN THE COCKPIT

But Kyle's making no move toward her. Instead, he reaches over to shut down the engine, then calmly takes a seat near the wheel and fixes her with a quizzical glare and an enigmatic smile.

KYLE

Guess you didn't hear me.
I was asking for a little help. Here I am halfway down a cliff, a fuckin' Alpine peak, and what I'm doing down here is, I'm risking my neck in order to save yours.

He catches the puzzled look on Alex's face.

KYLE

Oh yes, yours...because, you see, if Daniel has anything nasty to say in that little book of his, then you and I are both going to go to jail. Jail is not a place you particularly ever want to be, Alex. Especially you.
(ruefully)
Believe me, you don't want to be there.

Behind her back, Alex's hand is fumbling for the door latch, cranking it open quietly, secretly, as she waits for an opportunity to make her move.

KYLE

(brightly)
So here I am doing my best for us, and all I ask for is a little help from the woman who loves me.

He sighs melodramatically.

KYLE

No villain need be! Passions spin
the plot:

We are betrayed by what is false
within.

(laughs)

But then, our new relationship
is just beginning, isn't it?

He rises slowly and stretches out his muscles in a gesture that's somehow intimidating even though he still makes no move toward her.

KYLE

And maybe we need to...work
out the lines of communication,
do you think? Get a better
understanding of, uh, just
what our situation is.

Alex has found the handle, and in a single movement, opens the door and twists around to duck inside.

But Kyle is faster. Even before she's halfway around, he's cut the distance between them in one swift stride -- flinging the door wide open with such force that it BANGS against the bulkhead and rebounds violently after him as he steps into the cabin behind her.

MATCH TO:

INT. THE CABIN

Alex backs away as Kyle's form swells into the cabin, and the door SLAMS closed behind him with the awful finality of a tomb sealing.

KYLE

You see, I plan for us to be
together for a long, long time.
A happy...successful...life.
That's what you want, too,
isn't it?

Alex nods.

KYLE

I thought so. There's so much at stake, don't you see? All that money, and just the two of us.

(frowns)

So you can understand why I was a little puzzled, can't you? I mean, here I've done this all for us and...

He makes a gesture of emptiness as if to say "everything vanishes."

ALEX

(fumbling)

I thought...I'd bring the boat around, and we could...

KYLE

Uh huh.

ALEX

I...I knew you'd know what to do.

KYLE

Oh, very good. Very good.

(shaking his head)

But not right. You see, we're not communicating.

And that's not the way to go about this. No. Not at all.

For a moment, Kyle seems lost in his thoughts, staring fixedly down at the stove and rhythmically turning the propane fire on and off.

KYLE

No. And that's what I was thinking down there. I thought, "Alex doesn't understand me. We really ought to get to know each other better."

Suddenly, he turns to her with one of his patented smiles.

KYLE

You can see how I might have thought that down there all by myself, can't you?

Keeping an eye on the flames, Alex offers a barely perceptible nod, not sure quite how to respond.

KYLE

Then I remembered, "It's Alex who told me all about the notebook. Well, now, if she hadn't, we could be in big trouble."

So, I did what I came to do.

He turns slowly toward her, extracting the little wallet-sized notebook from his pocket and holding it up for her to see.

KYLE

And do you know what I found in this notebook?

(with a quiet smile)

Nothing. Nothing at all.

Then suddenly, violently, Kyle drives the notebook stiff-armed into Alex's chest with the flat of his hand -- knocking her backward onto the bunk.

KYLE

Not a Goddam thing! Numbers, names, money! A fuckin' little black book. Garbage! Nothing! He never said anything about us!

And just as quickly, he becomes very quiet and methodical, towering over her as he reaches out to jerk the rain slicker down around her shoulders and trap her arms.

KYLE

So now I think you and I'd better start communicating.

In another rapid movement he pins her against the bunk with one hand slammed into her chest, while the other hand tears the skirt away from her waist.

KYLE

We're going to understand each other.

A knee driven hard into her groin separates her legs.

KYLE

You need me.

Her underwear rips off as if it were made of tissue paper.

KYLE

You want me.

Alex is spread-eagled, her neck bent awkwardly against the curving wall of the hull, her hips propped on the edge of the bunk, and her feet dangling above the deck.

Kyle stands dominantly between her legs.

KYLE

And you know, don't you Alex.
You cannot live without me.

He traces his fingers up her inner thigh, first in a halting, teasing line that causes her skin to quiver -- then harder, pinching the tender flesh white in small, vicious bites between his fingernails.

ALEX

Pain tears well up in her eyes as she stares helplessly up at Kyle and the muscles of her face tighten.

Then, Kyle's hand locks onto the nape of her neck and jerks her toward him. Alex GASPS.

KYLE (O.S.)

From now on, we'll be
together.

The hand moves to the front of her neck just above the giraffe charm, his thumb resting on her throat as her head is knocked back into the wall by the force of his thrusts.

KYLE (O.S.)

That's what you've wanted
from the beginning. We've
got it now. We've got it
all.

KYLE

There's no trace of affection, no satisfaction in Kyle's expression. His jaw is set, his eyes cold and impassive as he pounds relentlessly at Alex in steely, rough thrusts propelled by the leverage of his muscled legs.

KYLE

We should have a big wedding,
don't you think? Show them
all how much in love we are.

ALEX

Her eyes half closed, she lets her head loll to one side and tries to focus through her tears.

KYLE (O.S.)
There won't be any doubts.

HER P.O.V.

There, not two feet away is Kyle's leather suitcase -- and the butt of the pistol just peeking out of it's inside pocket.

ALEX

Alex shrugs her arm out of the rain slicker, caressing her hand up to his shoulders and running her fingers through his hair.

Slowly, carefully, she starts to extract her other arm from the rain slicker. Rocking with Kyle's movements now, no longer resisting him as she tries set him off guard, willing herself into a semblance of passion while she snakes her arm out toward the gun.

KYLE (O.S.)
Oh, we'll have to wait a
while. But I'm going to love
to watch their faces.
(a laugh)
Mrs. Alexandra Barnard Roth.

She strokes his neck and tilts her face up to kiss him.

KYLE (O.S.)
I'm going to love it.

THE SUITCASE

Her fingers claw along the bunk, dragging the suitcase a little closer until she can just reach the handle of the gun, teasing it out of its hiding place, but --

KYLE'S HAND

suddenly strikes out to clamp around her wrist, tightening in a strangulation grip until her fingers release their hold on the pistol.

KYLE'S FACE

lights up with a smile -- the smile of a tiger.

KYLE

I think...we're going to
understand each other now.

ALEX

Her eyes widen and her face colors as Kyle's thumb presses down slowly, almost gently on her throat.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, lookit here.

ANOTHER VOICE (O.S.)

(laughs)

Saved! Shit, maybe we can
trade, y'think.

Alex cuts her eyes toward the port hole light, but there's nothing outside except darkening gray sky.

IN THE CABIN

Kyle straightens up, taking the gun in his hand but still holding Alex by the throat.

VOICE (O.S.)

(calls)

Hey! Anybody home?

OTHER VOICE (O.S.)

Sir? Ma'am?

Wake up, you fuckers!

There's a metallic CLANG on the hull near Alex's head as a half empty beer can ricochets off the light.

VOICE (O.S.)

Awww. Too bad. They're all
gone away.

Kyle presses his thumb to Alex's throat and gives her a small, warning shake of his head -- don't say a word!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SLOOP - DUSK

A heavy fog is rolling onto the island, thick mist that almost obscures the mouth of the cove, and emerging through it is a twenty-five foot inboard-outboard Thunderbird with a trio of TEEN-AGERS on board. They're obviously rich, well-bred kids - who're also clearly drunk.

One of the two boys, RON and a girl, CHRIS, are straddling the gunnels of the Thunderbird like wobbly bronk riders while they dip their paddles ineffectually in the water. The third boy, MIKE, strikes a pose at the wheel, a beer in one hand and a captain's cap set rakishly over one eye.

MIKE

(shouting an order)

Prepare boarding party.

RON

Yeah. Party time!

CHRIS

(finishing off a beer)

It sure beats spendin' the
night at the lighthouse.

Ron and Chris lean into their paddles, turning the bow of the Thunderbird toward the Martinsen. Ron bucks along on the gunnel as if he could add to the momentum.

RON

Go, go, go, go, go...

Chris takes up the chant, and all three kids rock back and forth trying to help the boat along.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CABIN

Kyle and Alex are both frozen in place. Suddenly, there's a sharp THUD as the Thunderbird rams into the sloop.

RON (O.S.)

Ooops!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BOATS

The force of the hit knocks Ron backward out of his saddle into the water between their boat and the Martinsen.

He goes under -- but manages to hold his beer safely aloft.

Mike and Chris rush to the near side of the boat, laughing at Ron, but also grappling drunkenly to tug the Thunderbird alongside the sloop.

RON

Hey, watch it! You're gonna
crush...

As the Thunderbird squeezes in, Ron and his beer both disappear under the water like bobbing corks.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CABIN

Kyle backs away from Alex -- still holding the gun on her as he edges toward the cabin door.

ALEX'S P.O.V.

She's staring straight into the muzzle of the Python.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BOAT

Mike and Chris are casting lines around the cleats to secure their Thunderbird to the Martinsen. But as they finish their job, they look up to see a dripping wet Ron already coming over the transom and grinning down at them from the deck of the sailboat.

RON

What took you guys so long?
(grins)
I'm damn near outa beer.

He takes a swig -- and gags on the salt water.

RON
Yeetch.

Chris wriggles her bikini clad body under the railing and splats onto the deck.

RON
Oh yes, I think it's time to resupply.

He heads directly for the cabin door.

RON
Whata you wanna bet they've got some good stuff in here?

But Mike calls out to him as he's scrambling aboard from the Thunderbird.

MIKE
Hey wait a minute, Ron. This isn't ours?

RON
Aww come on, Mike. You can see there's nobody here. And it's not like I'm gonna take anything that's worth anything. Just some booze.
(a light in his eyes)
And maybe a little dope if they've got it, huh Chris?

He puts his hand on the cabin door latch --

RON
(confidently)
Besides. She's derelict. We've got fifty percent salvage rights. Law of the ocean.

-- and pulls the door open to find --

HIS P.O.V.

-- Kyle glaring back at him.

KYLE
Something you had in mind.

ON DECK

Ron gulps and starts backpeddling a couple of steps. Kyle's still got his gun arm pointing at Alex in the cabin. After a moment, though, he lets the door swing closed behind him as he tucks the Python into the waistband at the small of his back, and steps out to plant his feet firmly on deck, his eyes searching the faces of the three kids.

RON

Hey, now wait a minute.
Don't get outa joint. We
asked if somebody's here.
(looking to the others)
And nobody says anything, so
like we're coming on because
we're in trouble and we need help.

KYLE

What trouble?

RON

Well, uh, our motor quit.
We've been paddling for...I
don't know...hours, and we're
not gonna make it back
tonight so we thought...

MIKE

(jumping in)
We thought maybe you could
help, you know. Maybe tow us.
I mean, we didn't mean
anything. Hey, it's your boat.

All three nod in eager confirmation.

KYLE

Maybe you'd better just go
back the way you came. Now.

RON

We can't. I mean, it's
gettin' dark and, well...

He makes a motion as if he's paddling, but Mike's already headed for his boat and gesturing for the other two to follow.

MIKE

It's okay. It's okay. We'll
just go on up to the
lighthouse. We can stay
there tonight.

Kyle shakes his head --

KYLE
No you won't.

-- and takes a step toward them. The three kids stop in their tracks.

RON
(temper flaring)
Look, we're not gonna bother
you any. We'll just stay
outa your way, that's all.
C'mon, guys. All we're gonna
do is go to the lighthouse.
Is that okay with you, huh?

Kyle looks hard at the gutsy kid, and something like a thin smile of self-recognition comes to his face.

KYLE
You. See those rocks up
there?

He nods Ron toward the far point of the cove.

RON
Yeah, sure. So what?

KYLE
See the man standing just to
this side of 'em?

RON'S P.O.V.

Clouded by the oncoming fog, there could be anything up there.

RON
(uncertain)
Uh, yeah.

KYLE

jerks his head toward the cliff on the other side of the cove.

KYLE
And the man over there?

THE KIDS

stare as hard as they can at the bluff.

CHRIS

(suddenly)

Yeah. Yeah! I see him.

KYLE (O.S.)

And see the one at the top
of the stairs?

MIKE

(breathes)

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

ON DECK

Kyle draws the Python from his waistband and holds it pointed
directly at Ron.

KYLE

And see this?

The kids freeze, barely letting their hearts beat.

KYLE

Well, those men are federal
agents. D.E.A. Each one of
them has a rifle with an infra
red scope. And each one of
them's drawing down right now
on all three of your heads.

Their eyes flick from one side of the cove to the other.

KYLE

And they're real edgy, 'cause
we're expecting a big drop to
come in here tonight. And
you don't want to be around
when the shit goes down, do you?

Ron finally finds a voice again.

RON

So...so what are you doing
here?

KYLE

I'm the bait.

(a slight grin)

And you're standing right in
the middle of the trap.

MIKE

(sincerely)

Uh, look. We don't have a motor. Maybe...maybe you really could help us out, and then, you know, we're like gone real quick. I mean, it's a real fast boat.

CHRIS

(disparaging)

When it runs.

MIKE

It's probably something real simple.

(tentative)

You wanna take a look?

Kyle considers for a minute, then tucks the Python back into his belt and waves a sign to each flank of the surrounding bluff. The kids visibly relax.

Mike scrambles over the side into his Thunderbird and pops the cover off the inboard. Chris tumbles in after him and heads for the wheel to GRIND on the starter button.

Ron hangs back for a second to eye Kyle a little suspiciously. But when the man makes a sudden move toward the boat, Ron's over the side in a flash.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CABIN

Alex has pulled on some shorts, and stands leaning her ear toward the door to hear the sound of the Thunderbird's ENGINE CHOKING.

KYLE (O.S.)

Throttle rod's loose. Back off a second.

The Martinsen rocks a little as Kyle goes over the rail, and she can hear the hollow THUNK as he jumps down into the Thunderbird.

KYLE (O.S.)

Lemme have a look at it.

Alex cringes away from the door, moving softly, quietly as if she were suspending herself on the water itself, until she can crawl over the bunks converging at the bow and open the passageway into the forward locker.

With a last, hesitant look at the cabin door, she ducks forward inside the anchor locker where --

IN THE ANCHOR LOCKER

In the near total darkness of the hold, Alex wriggles on her hands and knees past coils of rope, life jackets, and assorted gear -- suddenly CLANKING loudly against an unseen anchor. She sucks in her breath and freezes for an anxious moment.

CUT TO:

ON THE THUNDERBIRD

Kyle is arm deep in the engine compartment, though, as the muffled CLANK sounds from somewhere behind him.

KYLE

All right. Give her a shot.

Chris leans on the starter, and the engine WHEEZES.

KYLE

Hold on. Hold on.

CUT TO:

IN THE LOCKER

Alex struggles up the steep interior slope of the bow toward the hatch. Bracing herself against a pile of gear, she feels in the darkness for the hatch above her head and cautiously shoves it upward.

CUT TO:

ON THE BOW OF THE MARTINSEN

Stealthily, the hatch cover rises half an inch...an inch...and Alex's eyes peer out from within.

HER P.O.V.

Twenty feet away, Kyle is hunched over the Thunderbird's engine with his back toward the sloop.

ALEX

takes a deep breath and quietly slides the hatch cover back far enough that she can slip her head and shoulders through the opening.

ON THE THUNDERBIRD

All three kids are gathered around Kyle like interns watching a master surgeon as he tinkers with the engine.

On the bow of the sloop behind them, Alex rises from the locker and crouches low on the foredeck to slither toward the anchor chain.

Suddenly, though, Kyle comes upright and strides forward to the starter button.

ON THE SLOOP'S BOW

Alex quickly drops out of Kyle's view over the side, stretching her full length along the bowsprit like a figurehead as she holds tightly onto the anchor chain to ease herself down toward the water.

Behind her, the Thunderbird's engine COUGHS, almost coming to life as --

IN THE WATER

-- Alex drops into the sea, her SPLASH covered by the engine noise.

HER P.O.V.

Somewhere ahead of her is the pier, and her escape route up the staircase. But the growing darkness and the gathering fog have turned the sea and sky and land into the same amorphous mass.

ALEX

Pushing away from the boat and taking a last look over her shoulder to be sure, Alex sinks under the surface and kicks herself forward in a smooth underwater breast stroke.

ON THE THUNDERBIRD

The kids are looking downcast -- and more than a little worried as they throw anxious glances toward the mouth of the cove and the "snipers" on cliffs surrounding them.

Kyle, too, looks strangely puzzled as he stares down at the engine as his eyes follow the path of the fuel line.

KYLE

(realizing the problem)

Shit. You guys are working
on an empty tank.

In an angry, swift movement, he snatches the hose free and reconnects it to the spare gas tank.

MIKE

(accusatory)

Chris...

CHRIS

Well, Ron was supposed to...

RON

Don't look at me. It's
Mike's boat.

CUT TO:

ON THE PIER

As Alex comes out of the water and drags herself onto the land, she hears the distant engine ROAR to a start, and throws a fearful look over her shoulder.

HER P.O.V.

Hidden in the mist shrouded cove, though, all she can see are the fuzzy halos of the Thunderbird's running lights changing from red to green as it banks around to head out to sea.

MATCH TO:

ON THE MARTINSEN

Kyle stands on deck watching the Thunderbird's lights fade as the boys chug their way to the mouth of the cove -- and as soon as their safely out of sight, he throws open the door of the cabin to storm inside --

CUT TO:

IN THE CABIN

Alex is missing!

In a rage, he overturns the bunk cushions and slams open lockers much too small to hide her, working his way toward the forward locker where --

IN THE FORWARD LOCKER

Kyle looks overhead to see the open hatch, and reaches up to hoist himself out on deck.

ON DECK

The air is close around him, the sea lapping gently against the sides of the boat as he stands alone on the deck and begins to growl out Alex's name, first in the low, guttural tone of a wounded animal, then rising to an enraged howl that reverberates off the bluffs.

KYLE

Aaallleeexxx...

MATCH TO:

ON THE ISLAND

At the head of the staircase, Alex hardly pauses as Kyle's CRY ECHOES around her. Stumbling forward, she finds the stones of the pathway and races toward the far end of the island.

HER P.O.V.

Ahead of her, the ghostly shapes of the barracks and the transponder housing rise out of the fog like a brace of derelict ships.

THE TRANSPONDER

Drawn by the faint electronic HUM resonating on the mist, Alex blunders her way to the transponder housing.

A few inches inside the louvered metal service doors, red, green, and amber lights glow and wink along a panel of gauges and dials. To one side there's the two-way radio telephone resting in its cradle -- a link with the Coast Guard station on the mainland.

ALEX

feels her way around the corner of the building until she can grab the handles of the door, twisting and tearing at them with all the strength she's got left -- but these doors are designed to stay locked, and nothing budes.

CUT TO:

THE HEAD OF THE STAIRS

Kyle pounds up the last few steps. He pauses for an instant at the top to glance toward the far end of the island, then draws the pistol from his belt and heads straight for the darkened lighthouse.

CUT TO:

AT THE TRANSPONDER

Alex has given up on the doors and is now trying to squeeze her long fingers through the ventilation louvers.

THE TELEPHONE

Her fingers stretch, twist, just touch the phone -- and tip it from its cradle so that the phone drops onto the cement floor inside the transponder housing. The radio phone chirps an electronic BEEP and a voice answers through the static.

VOICE

Coast Guard 102.

Coast Guard 102.

ALEX

presses her mouth close to the louvers, ready to answer.

VOICE (V.O.)

This is Coast Guard 102. Do
you read me? Who is this?

She starts to speak -- then, deliberately, consciously stops herself.

VOICE (V.O.)

Do you read me? This is the
Coast Guard. Do you read?

CUT TO:

THE LIGHTHOUSE

Kyle comes out of the lighthouse, and makes his way toward the far end of the island.

HIS P.O.V.

Fog completely obscures the far end of the island now -- but he flicks on the flashlight, and the sealed beam suddenly punches a tight hole through the mist.

CUT TO:

ALEX'S P.O.V.

She can see the distant shaft of light raking its way toward her.

VOICE (V.O.)

This is the Coast Guard. Do
you read?

AT THE BUILDINGS

Alex carefully moves away from the transponder, crawling toward the barracks until she can wriggle inside the open door.

CUT TO:

IN THE BARRACKS

Not daring to stand up, Alex claws her way over the construction debris by the door.

Outside, slow, deliberate FOOTSTEPS crunching on the gravel pathway pause somewhere between the two buildings.

Alex crouches inside a stall halfway down the aisle and listens to the footsteps outside moving first toward one end, then turning back and walking steadily toward the open door.

ON THE DOOR

Suddenly Kyle's dark form blots out the doorway, and the beam of light arcs through the interior to flood first one stall and then another as it moves inexorably toward her.

ALEX

As the shaft of light slashes away from her -- Alex makes a break for the far door, and the light whips around to search for the NOISE of her movement.

CUT TO:

THE BARRACKS

She explodes outside just as a GUNSHOT splinters the wooden planks behind her.

THROUGH THE DOOR -- KYLE'S P.O.V.

Within a few steps, though, she's merged with the fog, vanishing like the insubstantial whisp of an apparition.

ON THE PATH

Alex is running blindly full blast toward the lighthouse end of the island, while behind her --

KYLE

is loping through the fog with the controlled, predatory stalk of a cheetah.

ALEX'S P.O.V.

Both sound and image muted by the fog, it's impossible to tell just how close Kyle may be, but Alex senses his presence like prey senses the eyes of the hunter.

THE OUTBUILDINGS

The lighthouse, the shed, and the small winch house cantilevered over the bluff are the only places to hide.

CUT TO:

KYLE

Shrouded by the fog, Kyle isn't far behind her. As he comes to a stop at the group of outbuildings, he lets his eyes search each one for any sign of movement.

He moves methodically to the shed -- and splinters the rotten door off its hinges with one powerful kick.

INSIDE THE SHED

Some small creature lets out a terrified SQUEAL in the darkness -- and suddenly the tiny room turns brilliant red with the FLASH of Kyle's gunshot.

CUT TO:

ON THE OCEAN

Mike, Ron, and Chris hear the distant GUNSHOT on the island. They split an anxious look -- and get the hell out of there, as Mike shoves the Thunderbird's throttle full out.

CUT TO:

THE WINCH HOUSE

Kyle steps over to the winch house -- once more slamming a kick into the door, and shining his flashlight inside.

HIS P.O.V.

The light burns into every crevice of the six-by-six room -- but Alex isn't there.

KYLE

As he backs away from the door, suddenly the low, moaning tocsin of the FOGHORN blares forth from the transponder building, an unnerving, repetitive cadence that fills the already tense atmosphere on the island.

With a quick glance toward the lighthouse, Kyle moves to the head of the stairs.

THE STAIRCASE

Kyle's flashlight plays down each flight of steps toward the cove, but there's no sign of Alex.

ATOP THE PLATEAU

Pacing along the rim, Kyle walks slowly from the stairs to the shed to the winch house again, inspecting each one until it's clear that there's only one place left for Alex to hide -- the lighthouse itself.

KYLE

There's a self-satisfied smile on his face now. He has her. There's no where else she can run.

THE LIGHTHOUSE

The door gapes open to a black interior. Kyle's flashlight shoots inside. The picnic table with its collection of gear from the boat. The dying embers in the fireplace. The old stuffed sofa.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE LIGHTHOUSE

Kyle steps inside and checks behind the door, then walks slowly toward the kitchen area. Nothing moves.

KYLE

His eyes follow the curving path of the stone stairs leading to the second room.

ON THE STAIRS

The Colt Python thrust out in front of him and the flashlight leading the way, Kyle mounts the stairs as the mournful inflection of the FOGHORN marks a countdown with each deliberate footstep.

IN THE UPPER ROOM

Kyle hugs the wall as he emerges into the second story room and shines the light around the perimeter.

HIS P.O.V.

Like the ground floor, nothing moves except the old wooden boards CREAKING under his footsteps. The shelving along the wall and the dry planks covering the window sag with weary lifelessness, and in the center of the room beneath the trap door, the discarded mattress lies dormant like a moldering corpse.

KYLE

lifts his eyes to the turret hatchway above his head. It's open, the trap door thrown back against the floor.

ON THE LADDER

Kyle rises toward the turret. Lifting himself up into the room, he stands for a moment just beside the open hatch and casts his eyes around the cramped space.

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS

-- from which Alex's determined eyes stare out.

CUT TO:

KYLE'S P.O.V.

Straight ahead is the base of the cylindrical light housing -- behind which Alex must be cowering just as she was last night.

KYLE

It's finished Alex. Nowhere else to go.

(as if to a child again)

All gone.

Reaching for the heavy trap door, he swings it back up --

KYLE

But you know...I can't take a chance on you now.

-- and, with an ironic little laugh, lets it drop into place with a resounding SLAM.

KYLE

Guess I just can't afford to
stick my neck out that much.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE WINCH HOUSE

Wedged in the blackness of a cleft in the rocks four feet below the entrance, Alex clings to the rusted winch cable, climbing hand over hand until she can swing her feet up to the doorway and climb out.

HER P.O.V.

Ahead of her the glow of the flashlight is faintly reflected in the turret windows.

ALEX

comes to her feet and trots across the open space headed directly for the lighthouse door.

CUT TO:

IN THE TURRET

The Python held ready, Kyle advances around the light housing as the FOGHORN howls its funereal tattoo.

He edges around the cylinder to the far side -- and Alex isn't there.

KYLE

For a moment he's puzzled, but his consternation quickly turns into a renewed anger at somehow having been tricked.

Stalking around the far side of the light housing, he grabs for the trap door and flings it open to find --

HIS P.O.V.

Alex is standing below the opening -- the lit kerosene lantern lifted in both hands above her head, and a look in her eye that's as murderous as Kyle's.

IN THE ROOM

Kyle thrusts the Colt through the opening and squeezes the trigger, but --

ALEX

-- as the SHOT goes wild, Alex hurls the kerosene lantern hard at the wooden floor she's soaked with kerosene.

THE LANTERN

shatters, spraying FIRE over the floor and the old mattress.

IN THE ROOM

The dry, rotten timbers of the floor, the plank shelving and beams along the walls, the boarded-up window, and the mattress virtually explode into a raging conflagration.

KYLE

(screams)

Aalleexx...!

ALEX

For a long moment, Alex hangs back at the head of the stairs watching the flames race up the walls to ignite the joists of the turret floor -- and Kyle's anguished face staring down at her from above.

KYLE'S P.O.V.

Below him there is an engulfing sea of fire, and even now the flames are licking at the edges of the trap door hatchway.

ALEX

turns and runs down the stairs, headed outside where --

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LIGHTHOUSE

-- the lighthouse has already become an inferno as the flue effect of the hollow building sucks the racing flames up into the turret.

Alex dashes breathlessly into the open ground, then almost reluctantly turns back toward the building to see --

THE TURRET

-- Kyle trapped in the turret room, flattened against the glass far above her. Behind him, the flames shoot out of the trap door like a blast furnace.

ON THE GROUND

Alex stares intently at the turret as the fire completely fills the room itself. The glass panes shatter in EXPLOSIVE BURSTS -- and Kyle disappears from view.

ALEX

As she watches the lighthouse immolate itself, the rich orange of the fire cuts through the swirling mists of fog to reflect on her face, turning the tiny giraffe charm at her throat into a warm, glowing jewel.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE COAST GUARD STATION - DAY

A Coast Guard cutter and the Martinsen are docked side-by-side at the pier. On board the cutter, four crewmen are carefully maneuvering two stretchers laden with dark, plastic body bags toward the pier.

SHERIFF BALLOU (V.O.)

(a thick, downeast accent)

Now, Mrs. Barnard, I know
you don't feel much like talking.
But if we're gonna do
anything about this...well,
we need all the information
now that you can give us.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COAST GUARD STATION

An olive gray blanket pulled tightly around her shoulders, Alex sits in a straight-backed wooden chair, her eyes lowered to the paper cup of coffee resting beside her on the plain metal desk.

ALEX

I understand.

Sheriff Norman Ballou shifts his considerable weight uncomfortably astride the wooden chair across from Alex. Bright sunlight glares through the uncurtained window behind him. Outside, the crewmen are carrying the two body bags toward a waiting coroner's van parked among several police cars on the dock.

SHERIFF BALLOU

(checking his notes)

About these men who were
up on the hill there.

ALEX

(nods)

Yes. Three of them, I think.

Ballou looks up for a moment, glancing across the room.

HIS P.O.V.

Mike, Ron, and Chris are standing near the door together with their parents and a deputy. All three kids nod, solemnly affirming Alex's statement.

IN THE ROOM

Ballou turns back to Alex, gently coaxing her.

SHERIFF BALLOU
Did you get a good look at
them, Mrs. Barnard?

ALEX
(shaking her head)
No. No I didn't. I was
already on the boat.
And...there was so much fog.

SHERIFF BALLOU
But Mr. Roth, he was still
on the island?

ALEX
Yes, we'd left some things in
the lighthouse, and Kyle
went back for them. I didn't
want to leave because we
hadn't...found Daniel yet.
Kyle insisted.

ALEX

bites her lip, takes a deep breath, and looks straight at Ballou.

ALEX
(flatly)
There were shots. Someone
yelled. I couldn't
understand what was said.
Then, the lighthouse
simply...exploded.

She turns away to look out the window. The second of the body
bags is being loaded in the coroner's van and the door closed.
Tears swell in Alex's eyes.

ALEX
Norman, I...

BALLOU

nods sympathetically and lays a consoling hand on her shoulder.

SHERIFF BALLOU
That's all right, Mrs. Barnard.
You go home now and get some rest.

He rises and looks toward the door.

SHERIFF BALLOU
And don't worry. I'll take
care of everything.

IN THE ROOM

Mike, Ron, Chris, and their parents are being escorted outside
by the deputy.

BALLOU (O.S.)
Yessir. We sure are gonna
miss an influential man like
Dr. Barnard around here.
Come election time, we sure
are gonna miss him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE BARNARD MANSION - THE PRESENT

Alex is still standing by the window facing Senator Killian.
Behind her, the thick fog has completely obscured the view.

KILLIAN
You lied to the police?

ALEX
Do you think they would've
believed the truth? That I
didn't intend for anything
like this to happen.

KILLIAN
But you did intend for
something to happen, didn't
you, Alex? You called in
Kyle Roth.

ALEX
For the boat. That was all.

KILLIAN
Come on, Alex. Anyone at the
club could have gotten just
the boat you wanted.
But Roth?

ALEX

I thought I could control him.

KILLIAN

Oh yes, Alex, you're good at that. Controlling men.

ALEX

I didn't tell him to kill Daniel!

KILLIAN

But you knew he was crazy in love with you. And you knew how dangerous he could be.

ALEX

No, I didn't know. But I found out. He almost killed me.

KYLE

What did you expect? The man's a full-blown lunatic.

ALEX

You're acting as if I told him to kill Daniel. As if I was the murderer. But it was Kyle. All his doing.

KILLIAN

That's right, Alex. Put the responsibility onto someone else.

ALEX

All I did was take advantage of the opportunity. A divorce would never have worked. What would voters think if Senator Killian married the divorced wife of his patron and trusted advisor? Besides, as soon as Daniel found out about us, you'd be back to practicing law in Southbridge, and I'd be a well-dressed waitress. Or worse.

Alex throws her arms around him and presses her body close to his.

ALEX

But this way, we can have it all. Don't you understand? Kyle did us a favor!

But Killian unlocks her arms and pushes her away.

KILLIAN

Where did you get the idea
that we were going to get
married?

ALEX

That's what we always wanted.
What you wanted.

KILLIAN

Alex, we had a couple of
afternoons together. We had
a good time. Maybe, I was
even falling in love with you
a little. You were beautiful.
I was flattered. But I was a
fool. You've made a career
out of being available for
one man after another. And
then when you had him, used
him to get what you want.
Well I know what you are,
lady, and there is no way in
hell I'm going to stand in
that long line and let you
use me until the next sucker
comes along.

Killian turns away and heads for the door. Alex is frozen in
place, but she manages to drag out a plaintive cry.

ALEX

Use you? I'm in love with you.

He opens the door and strides out into the foyer.

ALEX

(screams)

I want a partnership with
you. A life together!

He pauses for only a second at the open front door --

KILLIAN

(without turning back)

Alex, life with you
wouldn't last very long.

-- then walks outside to his waiting limousine.

EXT. THE DRIVE

Killian gets into his limousine. A uniformed deputy sheriff mounts his motorcycle and flips on his flashing red lights to escort the senator's car away.

EXT. THE BARNARD MANSION

A pained, distraught Alex watches from behind the window as the flashing red lights reflect in the glass, and the heavy fog swirls against the panes to at last dissolve her face as --

FADE OUT