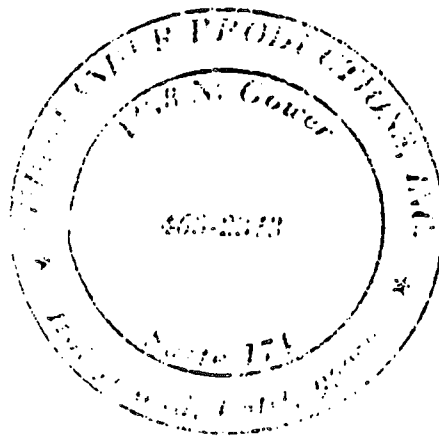




HIGHLANDER

by

Gregory Widen

1 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

1

Garish purple light spills out of side-street porno houses, illuminating a silhouette, and little else, of a MAN leaning against an alley wall.

He is waiting.

Another silhouetted FIGURE appears and approaches the first. They size each other up as best they can.

FIRST MAN
MacLeod.

The second nods.

The first without hesitation raises a sword, the intended thrust interrupted by his own death as the second with a flash of metal severs the aggressor's head.

2 INT. HUTCH - MORNING

2

A 15th century Scottish home.

A haggard WOMAN, her small CHILD clinging to a tattered apron, stands hunched over a glowing hearth. Her veined hands drag a wooden spoon around and around through a soot-covered pot of grey soup.

From an adjoining room CONOR MACLEOD, a young man dressed up in his best traditional Celtic tartan, enters.

MOTHER
My, but are you the
picture.

CONOR
(surveying himself)
It's a bit tight.

His FATHER enters with a pail of milk.

FATHER
Ah, Conor, how you look
a man.

MOTHER
Have you time for some-
thing to eat?

(CONTINUED)

2 (CONT'D)

CONOR
No, Mother. They'll be
here shortly.

Conor's father looks him over with pride.

FATHER
Your grandfather wore
that in his service to
the King, and I to fight
for the Duke.

MOTHER
Must he go?

FATHER
Aye. It is his duty. All
of ours.

MOTHER
But Ian, he's still but
a boy.

FATHER
He's a MacLeod.

CONOR
I'll be fine Mother.

3 EXT. HUTCH - MORNING

3

Several HORSEMEN gallop up through the early morning fog to
the cottage door.

Conor's father steps out to meet them.

4 EXT. HILLTOP - MORNING

4

A massive KNIGHT sits astride his horse, moorish dew cling-
ing to his helmet and breastplate. A CLANSMAN hikes up the
heather-carpeted slope to him.

CLANSMAN
They march.

KNIGHT
Is the boy among them?

(CONTINUED)

4 (CONT'D)

CLANSMAN

Aye.

5 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

5

The second kneels to examine the headless body of the first. With a CLACK a window, high on the alley wall, closes.

6 EXT. HIGHLAND PLAIN - MORNING

6

The DUKE is leading a brigade of CLANSMEN out onto the plain. Mounted VASSALS ride back and forth inspecting the line. The low fog makes it impossible to see beyond a few yards. There is an erie, smothering silence.

VASSAL #1

Is a bad day for this.

VASSAL #2

The Duke has been compromised. He will have his due.

VASSAL #1

By day's end he will have our heads.

VASSAL #2

We ride against the Sutherlands. That is all that matters.

VASSAL #1

This makes no sense to me.

CONOR

And a friend are marching through the moist heather.

FRIEND

The fog is bad. We cannot even see the sides of our own ranks.

Conor's nervousness is showing.

FRIEND

Is this your first?

(CONTINUED)

6 (CONT'D)

CONOR

Aye.

SHOUTING is heard on the plain.

FRIEND

It's begun.

7 EXT. HILLTOP - MORNING

7

The Knight, above the fog, hears the battle commence below. He spurs his horse and starts down into the mist.

8 EXT. PLAIN - MORNING

8

The two opposing clans are now one confused mass of tartan and clashing swords. The air is charged with SHOUTS of excitement, agony, and the SHRILL of bag pipes.

The fog has made each man's battle his own, each isolated with his opponent.

THE KNIGHT

Rides calmly through the fracas. He strikes and kills those that assault him, but appears disinterested in battle.

He is looking.

CONOR

Is standing above the twitching body of his friend. Alone and confused, Conor has become separated from the clan. He stumbles through the fog, seeking help.

Suddenly he is alone with the Knight.

The face of iron locks its gaze onto the boy. His fear turned to panic, Conor turns and flees.

The Knight, his resolve steeled in a raised sword, kicks his horse into pursuit.

Conor is easily overtaken and on his first pass the Knight brings his blade down hard into Conor's shoulder, slicing open most of the boy's back and knocking him face-first into the heather.

As Conor watches his own blood spew forth, he rolls over in time to see the Knight dismount and start for him.

(CONTINUED)

3 (CONT'D)

THE KNIGHT

Leans down next to Conor, his metal face nearly against the boy's. His voice slithers out of the iron in almost a whisper.

KNIGHT
There can be but one.

A CLANSMAN

Charges out of the fog and attacks the Knight, who cuts him nearly in half. ANOTHER wanders in and meets the same fate.

The battle is shifting to where they are.

Not finished yet with Conor, the Knight is finding himself forced into retreat from an ever increasing number of assailants.

A VASSAL

Sees his men being hacked apart trying to stop the now-mounted Knight.

VASSAL #1
Leave him!

The clansmen obey.

With the slap of an armored gauntlet against his steed, the Knight disappears into the fog.

The Vassal surveys the carnage before him. His eyes fall a moment on the moaning, gurgling Conor.

The Vassal turns and leaves the boy for dead.

9 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

9

A patrol car pauses at the mouth of the alley.

The figure considers his situation, then quickly shoves his sword into a near-by drain. He straightens up and waits.

AN OFFICER

Steps out of his unit and cautiously walks forward. His PARTNER switches on the patrol car's side lamps, bathing the alley in a harsh glare.

MAN IN ALLEY

For the first time we can see his face. RICHARD TAUPIN, clad in a well-cut business suit, looks exactly like Conor.

(CONTINUED)

9 (CONT'D)

The police officer, upon seeing the body, grabs instinctively for his pistol. He yells to his partner now coming into the alley.

OFFICER #1
Kevin! Get us a backup.

TAUPIN
I was merely walking by
when-

OFFICER #1
Don't move.

The officer has his pistol out and leveled.
His partner runs up, shotgun in hand.

OFFICER #2
They're on their way.

His voice cuts short as the blood flows against his shoe.

OFFICER #2
Christ.

10 INT. HUTCH - NIGHT

10

Conor lies moaning on a cot. Makeshift bandages wrap his body, stained and pasted by thick, dried blood.

The family surrounds their dying son.

A PRIEST is delivering the last rites.

PRIEST
...Libera Domine Ániman
servi tui sicut libertasi
David de manu regis Saul...

His sobbing mother holds a compress to Conor's forehead.

PRIEST
...In manus tuas domine
commendo spiritum meum...

11 EXT. HUTCH - NIGHT

11

A Vassal rides up to the hutch, dismounts, and approaches a CLANSMAN standing in the open doorway.

(CONTINUED)

11 (CONT'D)

12

VASSAL #1
Has the boy died?

CLANSMAN
He is having the last rites
now. It should be over by
morning.

VASSAL #1
Never seen anybody cut as
bad live so long. He should
have died on the field.

CLANSMAN
Tonight or tomorrow, it's
all the same.

The Vassal peers inside at the priest administering the
sacraments.

PRIEST
...Auditorium nostrum in
nomine dōmini...

VASSAL #1
This has been a dark day.

PRIEST
...Requiescant in pace...

12 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

12

There is a bustle of activity. Setting up barricades, uni-
formed OFFICERS are trying to keep NEWS CREWS and curious
ONLOOKERS at a distance.

DETECTIVE LT. MORAN

Lean, fortyish, and comfortable with the gore in front of him,
is inspecting the corpse with a MEDICAL EXAMINER.

EXAMINER
(studying body)
Real clean. No sawing
action at all. Whatever
it was did it in one
swipe.
(looks up at Moran)
Like the other one.

(CONTINUED)

12 (CONT'D)

Moran gestures to a sword, wrapped in plastic, lying nearby.

MORAN
What about that?

EXAMINER
Hasn't any blood on it.

MORAN
(looking around)
About the only thing
that doesn't.

EXAMINER
I'll give it a closer
look when I get back.

BRENNA CARTWRIGHT

Pretty but not beautiful, thirtyish, she exudes a sort of insolent intelligence.

An OFFICER sees her duck under a police barricade.

OFFICER #3
Come on Brenna, you know
better than that.

BRENNA
I'm invited.

She walks to where the medical examiner is organizing his equipment.

BRENNA
(greeting)
Mr. Levine...

The examiner turns and smiles.

EXAMINER
Hope this isn't past your
bedtime.

Brenna looks to the now-sheeted corpse, blood flowing from where the head should be.

BRENNA
Doesn't have a head,
does he?

(CONTINUED)

12 (CONT'D)

EXAMINER
This one came unassembled.

Lt. Moran is standing near.

MORAN
(no warmth)
Just show her what she came
for, Tom.

EXAMINER
(stands, taps Brenna's arm)
Come on, this is more
your line of work.

Brenna and the examiner walk the few yards from the corpse
to the sword.

EXAMINER
How's your uncle? I hardly
ever see him anymore.

BRENNA
Fine.

The examiner stops and gestures to the weapon clothed in
forensic plastic.

EXAMINER
There you go.

Brenna's expression changes to interest as she kneels down
beside it.

EXAMINER
Didn't look like it came from
"Toys-Are-Us", that's why I
called you.

BRENNA
(looks up in Moran's direction)
Didn't think it was my
buddy over there.

EXAMINER
Figured you knew more about
swords than I did.

(CONTINUED)

12 (CONT'D)

BRENNA
Claymore.

EXAMINER
Huh?

BRENNA
Scottish claymore. Take
a French epee, add twenty
pounds of ballast so it
means business, and you've
got a claymore.

EXAMINER
You're the expert.

BRENNA
(runs hand along hilt, slightly
confused)
It's in good condition.

RICHARD TAUPIN

Is being put in the rear of a patrol car. Brenna studies his
face in the half-gloom. There's something different about him.
A steadiness.

13 INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM

13

Richard Taupin is seated at a graffitti scrawled table in a
room otherwise bare of furnishings. He seems unphased by his
surroundings.

The door opens and Moran enters with bag and notebook. He
picks up Taupin's wallet on the table top and checks the
driver's license.

MORAN
This your present address?

TAUPIN
Yes.

MORAN
Mr.-
(looks at license)
Taupin, what were you
doing in that alley?

(CONTINUED)

13 (CONT'D)

TAUPIN

I was walking by when I
heard a shout. Your men
came right after.

MORAN

Did you know the victim?

TAUPIN

No.

MORAN

His name was Iman Fasil
if that jogs your memory.

TAUPIN

It doesn't.

MORAN

He was carrying a Syrian
passport and had been in
the country less than a week.

Taupin's face is stoic and controlled.

MORAN

Two days ago a Bulgarian
national was murdered the
same way. He'd also been
in the country less than a
week.

(beat)

What is your citizenship?

TAUPIN

American.

Moran paces to a corner of the room.

MORAN

Do you make a habit of
hanging out in that neigh-
borhood at night?

TAUPIN

What are you getting at?

(CONTINUED)

13 (CONT'D)

MORAN

Let's just say that in my years with this department I've seen more than one well dressed business man look for a hand job on 14th Street.

Moran places both hands on the table and leans across it.

MORAN

What were you looking for?

TAUPIN

That's none of your business.

MORAN

You're wrong.

Moran reaches into a bag on the table and removes a large broad sword; old, but in mint condition.

MORAN

Do you know what this is?

TAUPIN

I presume it's a sword.

MORAN

A claymore to be exact. You wouldn't know anything about it would you?

TAUPIN

Your murder weapon?

MORAN

It was covered with Mr. Fasil's fingerprints, but none of his blood.

TAUPIN

A mystery.

MORAN

For the moment.

Moran turns the sword over in his hand then sets it down. He rises and opens the door.

(CONTINUED)

3 (CONT'D)

MORAN

All right Mr. Taupin, we'll be in touch.

Taupin passes through the doorway without comment.

14 EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

14

Taupin out into the crisp night air. His eyes search out the darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

15 EXT. CONOR'S FAMILY HUTCH - DAY

15

A medieval sun beats down on an OLD TRAVELER making his way up the the MacLeod home. Conor's mother, scrubbing clothes in a bucket, smiles in recognition.

MOTHER

Ah Steven, it is good to see you.

TRAVELER

I only just heard of Conor. I came up from Catroch as soon as I could.

MOTHER

You're a kind man to be sure.

TRAVELER

I thought it only proper to pay me last respects to the family.

MOTHER

Steven, Conor didn't die.

TRAVELER

But I had heard his wounds were mortal.

MOTHER

They were Steven, they were. It's been a miracle it has. He lasted right through and healed. No one in the village has ever seen anything like it. Ever.

16 EXT. MEADOW - DAY

16

Perched on a heather-carpeted rise above the village a young woman, MARA, sits contemplating the intricacies of a daffodil.

(CONTINUED)

16 (CONT'D)

Balancing on a shepard's staff, Conor limps over and puts his lips to her ear.

CONOR
You're pretty today.

Mara is silent. Distant.

CONOR
I'm your future husband, remember?

MARA
I have no future husband.

CONOR
I don't understand. Not a week ago your father gave us his blessing.

This is difficult for her. Tears well in her eyes.

MARA
My future husband died in battle against the Sutherlands.

CONOR
What are you saying? I'm standing here as real as you.

MARA
You cannot be real, Conor. You had the last rites. No man has been cut half as bad and lived.

CONOR
But I did live.

MARA
Live? In less than a week you're prancing about the county like a squirrel.

CONOR
So why the crazy talk? It's a miracle it is. Saint Andrew has smiled on me. On us.

MARA
Some think not.

CONOR
Who?

(CONTINUED)

16 (CONT'D)

MARA

There's rumor in the village.
Some call it magic.

CONOR

That's mad. Surely you don't
take their word?

MARA

I don't know, Conor. It's not
natural. Maybe something has
touched you.

CONOR

You're sounding like that mad
woman, Widow Baggins.

MARA

My father has taken back my
hand.

He puts a hand to her cheek.

CONOR

Ah, Lassie...

She steps back.

MARA

Please not be touching me, Conor.

CONOR

I'll not take that kind of talk
from you. From those others
below, maybe. But not from you.

MARA

Leave me alone, Conor. Please.

CONOR

You're not talking sense, Mara!

Anger tumbles into exasperation.

CONOR

I'm sorry.

He steps for her. She moves away. Conor's face hardens with
resentment.

CONOR

If you send me away now, Mara,
I'll not come looking for you.

(CONTINUED)

6 (CONT'D)

MARA
(crying)
Do what you must.

Resigned, Conor turns and limps away.

DISSOLVE TO:-

17 INT. ANTIQUE SHOP - DAY

17

Classy antiques. Unusual. Clocks, tables, chests. Small and personal.

Richard Taupin enters and sheds his overcoat.

RECEPTIONIST
Mrs. Thompson agreed to settle for fifteen, Melvin's wants to make a pick-up at three o'clock, the coffee machine's broken, and there's a Miss Cartwright from the Smithsonian in your office.

Taupin is hardly in the mood.

18 INT. TAUPIN'S OFFICE

18

Brenna Cartwright stands in Taupin's cluttered surroundings admiring a bagpipe set neatly on a shelf.

BRENNA
Do you play?

TAUPIN
Yes.

BRENNA
Very traditional

Taupin sits down and begins sorting through a stack of papers on his desk.

TAUPIN
(impatient)
Miss Cartwright, what is it I can do for you?

BRENNA
I'd like to ask you about the claymore.

(CONTINUED)

18 (CONT'D)

TAUPIN

It's not mine.

BRENNNA

It's quite rare you know, something so common in its time so well looked after all these years.

TAUPIN

Miss Cartwright, unless you have come here to sell the sword, there's very little I can help you with. Now if you will excuse me, I have a great deal of work to do.

Brenna has taken a carving from the shelf.

BRENNNA

Byzantine?

TAUPIN

Basil the II.

BRENNNA

Charming guy, Basil. Once after beating an army of Serbians he blinded all but-

TAUPIN

-All but one out of a hundred, I know. All left to be led like donkeys back home. Now if you will please-

Brenna suddenly tosses the carving at him. Taupin snatches it out of the air with lightning precision.

BRENNNA

Good reflexes.

TAUPIN

Good day, Miss Cartwright.

19 INT. SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM DEPARTMENT OFFICE

19

A lonely, ancient room full of equal parts dust and oaken study tables.

The department SUPERVISOR sits at his desk surrounded by a handful of his staff RESEARCHERS - Brenna included. A faded, stern portrait of some forgotten curator presides over propped up feet, cold coffee, and half eaten sack lunches.

(CONTINUED)

19 (CONT'D)

BRENNA
I don't believe him.

SUPERVISOR
Why?

BRENNA
He's too cool. Too sharp. I think he's got something to do with it.

RESEARCHER #1
Oh, has your penetrating research on 9th Century Lithuanian dildos suddenly made you an expert on the criminal mentality?

BRENNA
Screw off, Larry.

The men LAUGH. They delight in baiting her. Researcher #2 opens a Budweiser and pours the beer into a medieval mug he's borrowed from the collection.

RESEARCHER #2
The cops bought it. They let him go.

BRENNA
What could they hold him for? I think they're just waiting for something concrete before they haul him in for real. We should look into it. He had to have gotten that sword from somewhere.

SUPERVISOR
Hang on a sec, you did your little favor for the boys downtown, I'm sure your uncle and the rest are perfectly capable of taking it from here.

BRENNA
I've seen nobleman swords that weren't as well preserved. It's just a hunk of peasant iron. Why would he be carrying it around in an alley?

RESEARCHER #1
Here we go. Everytime there's a murder in town we have to put up with junior D.A.

(CONTINUED)

19 (CONT'D)

RESEARCHER #2
Must be genetic.

BRENNA
Someone should check him out.
Maybe a collection somewhere
got knocked over. He has one,
he might have two.

SUPERVISOR
You see that desk? Your desk? You see
the crap piled up on it?

BRENNA
Give it a rest Ned, huh?

RESEARCHER #2
Might be interesting to see what
his family connections are. That's
a hell of a piece to be just chuck-
ing around in an alley.

SUPERVISOR
(sighs)
I swear to God Brenna, between you
and Thompson's novels I'm going to
get a bloody ulcer.

Researcher #2 lifts the mug of beer to his mouth.

CUT TO:

20 INT. TAVERN

20

An empty mug is set on the counter of a medieval drinking
establishment.

CLANSMEN, their faces and clothes smudged with a day's work in
the fields, relax and enjoy the company of their fellow VILLAGERS.
No longer requiring the use of a cane, Conor enters.

CONOR
(to owner)
Evening, Douglas.

DOUGLAS
Conor.

The tavern goes silent. Wary. The attention is on Conor.

(CONTINUED)

20 (CONT'D)

CONOR
Ale suits me.

The owner unenthusiastically fills Conor a mug. Conor takes it and walks to where four other VILLAGERS sit.

TAVERN MAN #1
We rather you not be sitting with us, Conor.

Conor looks to the next table.

TAVERN MAN #2
We be drinking alone as well.

The entire tavern spells the same sentiments.

CONOR
What's wrong with you all?

Silence.

Angered, Conor approaches the second man. As he looms above his chair the man in genuine fear pulls out a cross and thrusts it forward.

TAVERN MAN #2
Requiem acer'nam donaei-

CONOR
What are you doing man?

TAVERN MAN #2
-Et lux perpetua-

CONOR
You'll not be bringing the church into this.

TAVERN MAN #2
-Luceat ei-

The wierd display frightens Conor.

CONOR
Be quiet.

TAVERN MAN #2
-Auditorium nostrum-

CONOR
Stop.

(CONTINUED)

20 (CONT'D)

TAVERN MAN #2
-In nomine sanctus esperitu-

CONOR
Stop!

Conor HURLES his mug against the wall.
His nerves shattered, he rushes out.

21 INT. MACLEOD HUTCH

21

Conor packs a satchel with his few clothes and belongings.
He walks to the doorway where his mother and father wait.
His mother, tears on her cheek, hugs him tightly.

MOTHER
Please take care of yourself.

CONOR
Aye.

Conor turns to his father.

FATHER
I wish there was some other way.

They clasp hands.

FATHER
Goodbye, Conor.

CONOR
Goodbye.

Without looking back he passes through the doorway and down the empty path, his figure quickly fading in the moorish fog.

DISSOLVE TO:

22 INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT

22

The NOISY business-as-usual confusion at the Washington P.D. processing center.

Amongst the ding of CLANGING phones and CLACKING typewriters, a uniformed OFFICER enters something into a computer terminal. Brenna sits perched on a desk nearby.

DESK OFFICER
This is against the rules.

(CONTINUED)

22 (CONT'D)

BRENNNA

So's playing choo-choo with two
high school cheerleaders in the
middle of-

DESK OFFICER

-Okay okay.

BRENNNA

You owe me. Besides, I'm cute.

The computer returns a reply onto a printer.

DESK OFFICER

(tears off sheet)

Taupin, Richard Marshall. Born
March 16, 1945 in Church Hill,
Maryland. Received first driver
permit 1967 in Philadelphia.

BRENNNA

Church Hill, that's pretty close,
isn't it?

DESK OFFICER

Anything in Maryland is close.

23 EXT. GEORGETOWN STREET - DAY

23

Taupin steps out of a Metro station and walks the few blocks
to his brick townhouse. Climbing the front stairs, he fishes
his keys out of a coat pocket. About to insert the key he stops,
sensing something.

Backing down the steps, Taupin slips around to the rear of the
building.

24 INT. TAUPIN HOME

24

Like a spider Taupin pries open a window and slips silently
inside.

The home is dark and still.

Taupin creeps down the hallway and peers into the entryway.
There a MAN, dressed in a tuxedo jacket and nearly imperceptible
in the dim light, is crouched at the front door.

He is holding a sword.

Taupin removes a knife from his pocket and JUMPS the intruder.
the two STRUGGLE fiercely.

(CONTINUED)

24 (CONT'D)

Taupin pins the intruder against the carpet and shoves his knife firmly against the man's throat.

TAUPIN
Where is he?

Bulging eyes stare at him.

TAUPIN
Where!

INTRUDER
I don't know.

TAUPIN
What name is he using?

Taupin presses the blade. A trickle of blood rolls down the throat.

INTRUDER
Smith. Carl Smith.

TAUPIN
How many came?

INTRUDER
The last four.

TAUPIN
And the Bulgarian?

INTRUDER
He got him.
(hoarse chuckle)
He always does. Eventually.

TAUPIN
He knows I'm here. How?

INTRUDER
None of this would be happening
if you hadn't run...

The knife is pressed deeper.

TAUPIN
Answer me.

INTRUDER
(gasping)
We learned he'd found the immigration
notaries in Liverpool and traced them
to New York. Then he figured out the
birth records in Church Hill...

25 EXT. RUAL HIGHWAY - DAY

25

A city limit sign announcing the small community of Church Hill is overtaken by Brenna's sedan.

26 EXT. ROADSIDE CAFE TELEPHONE BOOTH - DAY

26

Brenna looks through a telephone book.

BRENNA
Taupin...Taupin...

Nothing. She closes the book and drums her fingers on the cover.

27 EXT. COUNTY RECORDS OFFICE - DAY

27

An 1860s stone columned affair, far more impressive than the low-lying town that surrounds it.

Brenna enters.

28 INT. COUNTY RECORDS OFFICE

28

Brenna sits sifting through a large cloth-bound book entitled Certificates of Birth: 1941-1948.

BRENNA
(reading)
Tarmin...Tatum...Taupin, Richard
Marshall. Born to William and
Karen Taupin, no address. Attend-
ing physician, Dr. Willis Kidell.

29 INT. DR. KIDELL'S HOME

29

Dr. Kidell stands at his bookcase leafing through a binder.

KIDELL
1945, that strains the memory.
(after a fashion)
Here we are, Richard Taupin.

He carries the binder to the table where Brenna sits.

KIDELL
Would you like more tea?

BRENNA
No thank you, I'm fine.

Kiddell sips his own and looks over the binder page.

(CONTINUED)

29 (CONT'D)

KIDELL

He was unusual.

BRENNA

Why?

KIDELL

Well, this is a small town, and it was even smaller then. Most all the babies I delivered were from local families. Richard's parents were just passing through when his mother's time came. I did it right here at the house.

BRENNA

Then you didn't know Richard later on.

KIDELL

No.

BRENNA

I've been trying to find somebody who knew him and any connections his family might have had with museums or historical societies.

KIDELL

Don't know about any of that. Suppose nobody does.

BRENNA

I don't follow you.

KIDELL

Poor little tyke didn't have a chance. Hopelessly premature. He died a few days after he was born.

BRENNA

The boy died?

KIDELL

Mother too. Sad case it was. The young lady just couldn't make it through labor. Never even saw her son.

Dr. Kidell removes from the binder a tattered newspaper clipping.

(CONTINUED)

29 (CONT'D)

KIDELL

My brother worked for the town paper at the time. He took this picture of the funeral.

Something in the clipping sparks Brenna's interest.

BRENNNA

Have you spoken to anyone else about this?

KIDELL

There was this one fella. Asked a lot of questions. I was out of town but I heard he spent near a full day in the records office.

BRENNNA

Would you remember his name?

KIDELL

(thinks)

Carl Smith.

30 INT. POLICE STATION

30

A police line-up.

Seven MEN, all dressed in Santa Claus outfits with bare legs, are paraded for a small, old LADY.

OFFICER

Just tell us when you see the one.

Several rows back in the dark sits Brenna's UNCLE JOE, the district attorney, and another man, his ASSISTANT.

UNCLE JOE

Forget it.

BRENNNA

I'm just curious.

UNCLE JOE

You're never "just curious".
(to assistant)

You've met my neice, Brenna.

ASSISTANT

Hi Brenna.

(CONTINUED)

30 (CONT'D)

OFFICER
(to line-up)
Number 5, lift your coat up more.

UNCLE JOE
Aren't you getting a little old for
this? You flunked out of law school

BRENNNA
(rolls her eyes)
Now there's a new topic.

UNCLE JOE
Don't they have enough for you to
do at the castle?

Brenna puts on her best little-girl angelic smile, a smile her
uncle can never refuse.

UNCLE JOE
(sighs)
Forgers do it all the time. They
take the birth certificate of some-
one who died young and use it to
get legit I.D. Usually they carry
it long enough to pass some bad
checks then dump it.

BRENNNA
Thanks.

UNCLE JOE
Call your mother. You never call her.

OFFICER
(to old lady)
Well?

OLD LADY
I don't know. I'd have to see his
thing.

31 INT. BRENNNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

31

A swath of moonlight shines in across a carafe-turned-vase,
a New England college diploma, and a police uniform hanging
from the bedpost where Brenna lies with another man, DENNIS.

BRENNNA
I can't figure out why he's doing it.
He's been Richard Taupin at least
since 1967. And the guys rich. You
should see the stuff he has in that shop.

(CONTINUED)

31 (CONT'D)

DENNIS

Maybe he's hiding from something.

BRENNA

Some guy named Smith was asking about him in Church Hill. I passed his name around with your buddies downtown but they drew a blank. So he isn't a cop. District anyway.

Dennis gets out of bed and begins putting on his uniform.

DENNIS

Probably just some exec ducking an ex-wife.

BRENNA

Dr. Kidell had a picture in his file of the funeral. The father looked just like Richard. Even had a mark on his cheek.

DENNIS

How old is Richard?

BRENNA

P.D. says 41, but he barely looks 30.

DENNIS

Find the father. That should clear things up.

He buttons his shirt. Something occurs to him.

DENNIS

Taupin, isn't that the guy Moran picked up the other night?

BRENNA

Yeah.

DENNIS

He'd want to know about all this.

BRENNA

Mr. Congeniality? Let him find his own clues. There's a journal article in this somewhere.

DENNIS

(shakes head)

Uncle Joey's little girl. Can't get the taste out of her mouth.

(CONTINUED)

31 (CONT'D)

Dennis puts on his police cap.

DENNIS

Well, the cream of society awaits.
(cocks hat to one side)
If you're ever in the neighborhood...

BRENNA

Sure.

32 EXT. RIVER EMBANKMENT - NIGHT

32

POLICE OFFICERS, their flashlights cutting the darkness, search the mud shores of a Potomac tidal basin. The glowing Jefferson Memorial can be seen in the distance.

DETECTIVE MORAN

Is supervising. An OFFICER climbs up the embankment to him.

OFFICER

They found it.

The officer leads him down to the river where a headless BODY wearing a tuxedo jacket is being put into a plastic bag.

OFFICER

It was about fifty yards downstream from the head.

Moran looks down at the body bag, its dark plastic reflecting the rhythmic rotation of squad car beacons.

OFFICER

Both were cut real clean. Like the other ones...

33 EXT. EQUESTRIAN RIDING GROUNDS - DAY

33

A steeple-chase course lies shrouded in an Arlington fog.

Across the damp grass a lone horse, heaving clouds of warm breath, leaps gracefully over a hurdle. Driving the steed hard through the course, Taupin pulls firm on the reins, bringing horse and rider to a shuddering stop where Detective Moran waits.

MORAN

There's been another murder.

Taupin lifts his eyes to the suburban treeline.

(CONTINUED)

33 (CONT'D)

TAUPIN
My condolences.

MORAN
Where were you Tuesday night?

TAUPIN
Home.

MORAN
A neighbor saw your car leave.

TAUPIN
He's mistaken.

Taupin climbs down from his horse. Moran moves close.

MORAN
Look, I don't know what the hell
you're up to, but I think I've got
a pretty good idea.

TAUPIN
Do you?

MORAN
All I need is time.

TAUPIN
I've got all the time in the world.
(looks at watch)
Except right now. If you will excuse
me, Lieutenant.

In no hurry, Taupin leads his horse away.

34 INT. MUSEUM RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

34

Brenna sits surrounded by books of old English law, colorful family banner plates, and a medieval caltrap sitting on her desk corner.

Boring quickly, she shuts the book and sighs. From another folder she pulls out a computer sheet.

INSERT COMPUTER SHEET

The police sheet has Taupin's name and motor vehicle record. Below are listed four WILLIAM TAUPINS, their hometowns and driving records. Richard Taupin's first driver permit was in 1967.

Brenna looks down the list to a WILLIAM TAUPIN of Felton, Delaware, who stopped filing for driver permits in 1967, the year Richard started.

35 EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

35

Dropping a couple of quarters into a vending machine, Brenna removes and opens up a map of the State of Delaware.

36 EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

36

Brenna steps out of her car at a small town cemetery.

Holding a slip of paper, she weaves her way through the shade covered tombs of revolutionary heroes and their descendants.

On a small rise fresh dirt lies in careless piles around an open grave.

Richard Taupin stands at the mouth of the pit.

A coffin has been brutally pulled from the dirt and lies open and propped diagonally beside a marker that reads: "WILLIAM MICHAEL TAUPIN".

The casket is empty.

BRENNA
Someone beat you.

TAUPIN
Have you taken to touring small town cemeteries, Miss Cartwright?

BRENNA
Grave robbers?

TAUPIN
Probably.

BRENNA
Who?

TAUPIN
People like that rarely leave business cards.

BRENNA
Does Carl Smith?

A flash of interest, quickly suppressed.

TAUPIN
I don't know what you're talking about.

BRENNA
I think you do. Better yet, I don't think anything was stolen because nothing was there in the first place. And I think Mr. Smith, whoever he is, now knows that.

(CONTINUED)

36 (CONT'D)

TAUPIN
You have an active imagination.

BRENNA
I've been to Church Hill.

TAUPIN
Miss Cartwright, you are
involving yourself in
matters that do not concern
you. I strongly suggest you
return to Washington and stay
out of small town cemeteries.

He starts for the gate.

BRENNA
I could find him.

Taupin stops.

BRENNA
I have friends.

TAUPIN
I doubt that.
(beat)
Good day, Miss Cartwright.

He walks on.

After only a few paces Taupin suddenly shudders to an abrupt
stop.

BRENNA
What's wrong?

He holds up an open palm to silence her.

TAUPIN
Your help may be unnecessary.

(CONTINUED)

36 (CONT'D)

The air is still.

Taupin's face is expressionless. He listens intently. Sensing. An unseen voice rides seemingly on the wind.

VOICE
(o.s.)

Good afternoon, "Mr. Taupin".

Taupin whirls around to see a large man standing with broad sword in hand. We have never seen the knight out of his armor before, but this man certainly seems to fit the bill. Wearing Levis and leather jacket in contrast to Taupin's expensive business suit, he speaks with icy evenness from a face of stone.

Taupin, naked without his own sword, is trapped against a marble wall.

KNIGHT
Long time.

TAUPIN
Not so long.

The Knight is closing in on him, sword gripped in both hands.

TAUPIN
You've been here from the start.

KNIGHT
My quarry grows clever with age. And the others, incompetent.

The Knight throws Brenna a glance.

KNIGHT
Friend of yours?

TAUPIN
Of sorts.

KNIGHT
I do hope she enjoys a good show.

The Knight leans his whole body into a two-fisted swing, clanging out a chunk of marble as Taupin ducks.

(CONTINUED)

36 (CONT'D)

A second swipe also imbeds itself in stone.

KNIGHT
So now it ends.

A thrust cuts only air.

KNIGHT
Generation upon generation.
Tens of thousands of miles.

Taupin leaps behind a tree. The Knight cuts it nearly in half.

KNIGHT
You're the last, MacLeod.
Romeriz, Lacroux, Neuvich,
those fools that followed
me, their heads all line my
shelf. All but yours.

Taupin drops to the ground in a shoulder roll to avoid a swipe.

KNIGHT
Can you feel it, MacLeod?
Can you feel it!

Taupin grabs a tree branch and raps the Knight on the knee, knocking him over.

The Knight quickly rights himself and cuts the branch from Taupin.

KNIGHT
There can be but one.

He raises his blade.

An elderly WATCHMAN, shotgun cradled in his arms, stands in the clearing.

WATCHMAN
Hey! What's going on here?

The Knight pauses a split second then with decision launches his sword spear-style firmly into the watchman's chest.

Taupin pushes past him to Brenna.

TAUPIN
Run!

Brenna is frozen in shock.
Taupin shoves her roughly toward the gate.

(CONTINUED)

36 (CONT'D)

TAUPIN

Run!

KNIGHT

MACLEOD!!

The Knight retrieves his sword from the watchman's body and lumbers after them.

Taupin and Brenna bolt from the cemetery and into the surrounding residential area.

37 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

37

Taupin leads an exhausted Brenna in a gallop down the sidewalk.

They have apparently lost the Knight. Taupin pauses at a corner. He sees a church across the street.

38 INT. CHURCH

38

Brenna enters and collapses into a pew, her labored breathing echoing off the high ceiling.

Taupin walks the length of an aisle to see that they are alone. Satisfied, he leans against a banister and considers his situation.

Trying to recover her wind, Brenna has her eyes closed and head against the back of the pew.

BRENNA

Jesus Christ.

TAUPIN

You'll be safe here. He won't kill in a church.

BRENNA

Why not?

TAUPIN

(distracted)

Tradition.

BRENNA

What the hell is going on?

(CONTINUED)

38 (CONT'D)

Taupin stares out the window, stained glass shining orange on his face. He looks at Brenna briefly, then passes through the Church's doorway without a word.

DISSOLVE TO:

39 INT. MEDIEVAL BLACKSMITH SHOP

39

A glowing horseshoe HISSES wildly as it slips into a wooden cooling bucket. Pulling it out with iron tongs, Conor lays it on a counter and pounds it even with a mallet.

Sweaty and streaked with dirt, he tosses the mallet aside and walks out into the late afternoon sunshine.

40 EXT. SHOP FRONTAGE - DAY

40

Conor leans over a water barrel and dunks his head and arms, cleaning off a day's worth of sweat and grime.

JUAN ROMERIZ

Stirring up dust with his traveling boots, this Spanish accented man stops at Conor's shop. He wears a large broad sword strapped to his waist.

CONOR
Afternoon.

ROMERIZ
Your name is Conor?

CONOR
Aye.

ROMERIZ
(bows slightly)
Juan Cid Romeriz. Chief
surveyor and alchemist.

CONOR
(notices accent)
You're not from these
parts.

ROMERIZ
I am from Spain. And I
would like a moment of
your time.

41 INT. CONOR'S HOME

41

Romeriz is seated at a table. His back to the Spaniard, Conor is preparing some food.

CONOR

I haven't much to offer,
Mr. Romeriz from Spain,
but you're welcome to what's
here.

ROMERIZ

Please go to no trouble.

Romeriz is looking at the faint, pale hint of a scar that runs from Conor's shoulder blade to his waist.

ROMERIZ

Your back, it would seem
perhaps you were injured
in battle?

CONOR

Five years past me clan
fought another over some-
thing I cannot even re-
member.

ROMERIZ

Your marks would suggest
great injury.

CONOR

I was nearly killed.

ROMERIZ

But you lived.

Conor looks up from his work in pained memory.

CONOR

I did at that.

ROMERIZ

And but for a mark you are
well as any man, no?

CONOR

Aye.

(CONTINUED)

41 (CONT'D)

ROMERIZ

I should imagine that your recovery must have alarmed your fellow villagers, perhaps giving them reason to invent an explanation. And a solution.

Something isn't right.
Conor turns and faces him.

CONOR

I was driven out.

ROMERIZ

And now you live in a small village miles away from all you knew.

CONOR

How can you know this?

ROMERIZ

(tone lightens)

First food, no? A good meal makes conversation so much easier.

Stunned with the implications of what Romeriz has said, like a robot Conor serves the meal. His eyes never leave Romeriz, who digs hungrily into the food.

ROMERIZ

Hmm, que rico. What is it you call this?

CONOR

Pheasant.

ROMERIZ

You Scots have a way with game. It still has life in it. Spirit. Back home the food is so...domestic.

CONOR

Why are you here?

ROMERIZ

I was sent by his majesty of Spain to Inverness as a consultant on matters of metal.

(CONTINUED)

41 (CONT'D)

CONOR

You're a long way from Inverness.

ROMERIZ

In my travels I heard the story of
the MacLeod boy struck down and
brought from the hand of
death by powers not of this Earth.

CONOR

You know me home. Me name.

ROMERIZ

It was time for our paths to cross.

Romeriz pulls back the sleeve on his cloak.

ROMERIZ

You see this?

He traces some discoloration on his arm.

ROMERIZ

When I was a boy a cart driven
by a drunken fool crushed me. All
thought I would die or be maimed
for life. But I healed quickly.
And like you I paid the price
for being different.

CONOR

You are the same?

ROMERIZ

Do ever feel a flow, as if some-
thing were pushing against you?

CONOR

Yes. Always.

ROMERIZ

Does it change with me in the room?

CONOR

It is less.

ROMERIZ

You feel you know me.

CONOR

I don't know why.

ROMERIZ

We are brothers.

42 EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Romeriz and Conor walk alone amongst torch-lit hutches.

CONOR

He told me there could be only one.

ROMERIZ

Some cling to sanity through time with the one continuity and tradition their lives have known: The Game.

(Conor confused)

You and I Conor, we are different from all others around us. You know this, you can feel it. We are flesh and bone like any man, but unlike our neighbors we are rather difficult to injure,

(looks away)

permanently.

CONOR

I don't understand.

ROMERIZ

You are still so very young.

CONOR

I'm twenty-two.

ROMERIZ

(shakes head)

Not even a single lifetime.

Romeriz chooses his words very carefully.

ROMERIZ

Conor. You and I, we cannot be killed.

CONOR

What?

ROMERIZ

We are immortal.

Stunned, Conor backs away from Romeriz.

CONOR

No, that can't be.

Romeriz grasps Conor's shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

42 (CONT'D)

ROMERIZ
It is as you are.

CONOR
(pushes away)
No!

This is all too much for Conor.

ROMERIZ
Listen to me. Hear the words.

CONOR
This is maddness!

ROMERIZ
It is the truth.

CONOR
No!

Romeriz suddenly draws his sword and thrusts it into Conor's heart. The boy's mouth drops open in shocked terror as his eyes roll up into his head.

A shudder, then Conor slides off the blade and crashes to the ground.

DISSOLVE TO:

43 EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

43

Brenna stops her car in front of the Washington Police Department. Getting out of her car she climbs the stairs but stops. After a moment of indecision she changes her mind and returns to her car.

44 INT. BRENNAS APARTMENT - DAY

44

Brenna lowers herself wearily into a chair, rubs her eyes, and stares absently out the window.

Reaching across to an end table, she plays back her answering machine.

Beep.

MALE VOICE
This is Dr. Wickland at GWU. Your test came back today. You can call me here at the med center if you have any questions.

(CONTINUED)

44 (CONT'D)

Click.
Beep.

SUPERVISOR'S VOICE
Brenna, where the hell are you?
The place is full of cops asking
wierd questions. What's going on?
I've got work stacking up. Get
in here right away.

Brenna stands and goes to the kitchen, returning with a glass
of wine.

Click.
Beep.

KNIGHT'S VOICE
Brenna.

She freezes in her tracks.

KNIGHT'S VOICE
My quarrel is not with you. Meet
me.

Brenna's eyes are glued on the machine.

KNIGHT'S VOICE
We have much to talk of, you and
I. Answers for the young historian.
(beat)
O'Reilly's. Tonight. I've grown to
like taverns.

Click.
Beep.

SEVERAL LITTLE GIRLS
(singing)
Happy birthday to you, happy birth-
day to you, happy birthday dear
Brenna, happy birthday to you.

Brenna is still upset from the last call.

MOTHER'S VOICE
Hi Brenna, it's mom. Me and your neices
just wanted to call and wish you a
happy birthday. Crissy made a real cute
card for you, be sure to call her. Will
you be home for Easter? Call when you
can. Love you.

Click.
Hiss.

DISSOLVE TO:

45 INT. CONOR'S HOME - DAY

45

The HISS of Brenna's answering machine becomes the HISS of cooking. Bandaged about the chest, Conor lies asleep on his cot.

Suddenly he sits up. Sweating. He looks about the room in confusion as Romeriz enters with a plate of food.

ROMERIZ

Three days you've laid there.
It's time you ate.

CONOR

(dazed)

This can't be.

ROMERIZ

You are not dead, boy. Accept it.

CONOR

This is monstrous. I'll burn in
hell for all eternity.

ROMERIZ

You'd have to die first.
(extends forkful of food)
Aqui.

Conor starts CRYING.

CONOR

What is to become of me? Am I to
wander the Earth forever like a
ghost?

ROMERIZ

You will live. Survive.

CONOR

Then they were right. I am evil.
This is God's punishment.

ROMERIZ

You have done nothing wrong Conor
MacLeod.

CONOR

Oh my God. Oh my God I'm lost.

DISSOLVE TO:

46 EXT. CONOR'S VILLAGE - DAY

46

Two days later.

(CONTINUED)

46 (CONT'D)

Nearly healed, Conor and Romeriz stand near a quietly moving stream.

CONOR

Why does he want to kill me?

ROMERIZ

You recall how I spoke of the push
you feel and how I make it less?

CONOR

Aye.

ROMERIZ

It is always less with my living.
Far or near. But if I were to die
the push would become stronger
than ever before. There is power
in this. And as long as you and I
live, The Knight can never have
it all.

CONOR

But we cannot be killed.

ROMERIZ

There is an imperfection. For all
your healing, if your head ever
leaves your neck, you are dead.
You can survive anything but steel
against your throat. Then it is
over. The end.

CONOR

How can I stop such a man?

ROMERIZ

Hide. Run to the ends of the Earth
till you learn. You must learn to
defend yourself. In this I can help.

CONOR

Why?

ROMERIZ

We are brothers. And you are a
defense-

(beat)

-of sorts.

DISSOLVE TO:

47 EXT. PENNSYLVANIA FARMHOUSE - DAY

47

An old man, MR. NORTH, leads Taupin up the drive of a rural farmhouse somewhere in the hinterland of Pennsylvania.

MR. NORTH

When your father died I saw to it that the grounds were kept up.

TAUPIN

The money in the estate was enough to cover your costs?

MR. NORTH

Oh yes, more than enough.

48 INT. FARMHOUSE

48

Furniture clad in white sheets. Dust everywhere.

MR. NORTH

Most of the furniture was put into protective storage. I'll have some boys come up and clean the place out for you.

Taupin drags a finger across a dusty window pane.

MR. NORTH

(fascinated)

You're one of William's kids, huh?

TAUPIN

His only kid.

MR. NORTH

Sure take after him. Never seen a father and son look more alike.

TAUPIN

We were very close.

MR. NORTH

The resemblance is amazing.

TAUPIN

When may I expect the cleaners?

MR. NORTH

I'll send them right up.

49 INT. "O'REILLY'S" - NIGHT

49

Coupled strangers gyrate under colored lights and recorded music. Brenna sits alone. Whatever nervousness she brought through the door with her has been turned into a comfortable cynicism by the three empty glasses in front of her.

A MAN

With something less than perfect coordination, sits down beside her.

MAN

That stuff'll put you away if you're not careful.

BRENNA

There was a Count. Count Dusan. He would invite the local peasants to his chateau, fill them full of wine, then slice their bellies so he could reuse it.

(smiles)

The symmetry of that somehow always appealed to me.

MAN

You're very macabre.

BRENNA

It's my birthday.

MAN

Happy birthday.

BRENNA

Thanks.

Brenna drains her glass and sets it down with a sigh.

BRENNA

Buy a birthday girl a drink?

50 INT. PUB - NIGHT

50

A small neighborhood tavern. Regulars chat amicably with the BARTENDER-OWNER.

TAUPIN

Sits alone at a corner table. A WAITRESS hovers over him.

TAUPIN

Lager and lime.

(CONTINUED)

50 (CONT'D)

LATER

Taupin's lager is drained. Lost in thought, he drags a finger around and around the lip of the mug.

His hand stops. It twitches. Shakes.

Taupin pulls his hand from the glass and watches it shake slightly out of control. A warning.

He WHIRLS around suddenly to see LING KAHN, Asian, standing over him.

KAHN

MacLeod.

Taupin is anxious, poised for attack.

Kahn breaks into a broad smile.

KAHN

Spare a chair?

TAUPIN

Kahn?

KAHN

Are you going to offer me a chair
or leave me standing here all night?

TAUPIN

Sit.

Kahn takes his place across the table.

TAUPIN

(unsure)

How are you?

KAHN

Head still secure to the neck.

TAUPIN

How did you find me?

KAHN

How many places this side of the
Atlantic serve lager and lime?

Taupin looks to his own glass.

KAHN

Old habits die hard.

(to waitress)

Waitress! A round of Nitzhich!

(cont'd)

(CONTINUED)

50 (CONT'D)

KAHN

(cont'd)

Peasant drool, I know. But it's the closest thing they stock to my side of the fence.

TAUPIN

What are you doing here?

KAHN

It is the gathering, my friend. The settling of old scores.

Taupin tenses.

TAUPIN

And have you something to settle with me?

KAHN

(smiles)

Not tonight. Tonight I have a drink with an old friend.

TAUPIN

It's good to see you, Kahn.

The waitress sets down two glasses.

KAHN

Come, toast with me the past.

(raises glass)

To old conquests, old loves, and to a time when we cared about either.

Kahn drains his glass.

KAHN

Waitress!

51 EXT. THE WASHINGTON MALL - NIGHT

51

Kahn and Taupin sit drunkenly on the marble steps of a closed government building.

KAHN

I'll never forget the look on that Papal commander's face when his "heretic stronghold" turned out to be a rook full of whores climbing all over Neuvich.

(CONTINUED)

51 (CONT'D)

TAUPIN

Neuvich, the clown of the crusades.

KAHN

But then rides up Pope Pius who
calmly brushes the dust from his
papal cross, climbs off his papal
horse, draws his papal sword and
asks just what the hell is going
on. And what did Neuvich, dear
dear drunken Neuvich do?

TAUPIN

Offered the Pope one of his whores.

They LAUGH.

A JOGGER stops on the gravel and listens to the strange conversation.

TAUPIN

Had a great swing with his blade.
For a Pope.

KAHN

(sighs)

Good times then. A man could
stretch his legs without bring-
ing half the world down around
his ears. Not like now.

The jogger shakes his head and runs on.

TAUPIN

(serious)

He found us even there.

KAHN

He always did.

52 EXT. ZOO - NIGHT

52

A CLINKING of chain link as Taupin and Kahn climb a fence and
tumble into the Washington Zoo.

TAUPIN

I haven't drunk this much since-

KAHN

-Since you last saw me.

(CONTINUED)

52 (CONT'D)

Kahn chucks an empty wine bottle. An unspecified animal GROWLS sleepily somewhere in the darkness.

KAHN

Come on.

53 EXT. DISPLAY AREA - NIGHT

53

Taupin and Kahn stumble through an open-air display of Asian animals. Their VOICES seem to echo everywhere.

KAHN

I love zoos. Ever since I was a kid.

TAUPIN

You were never a kid.

Kahn leans on the wall of a water buffalo pen.

KAHN

(points at one)

I knew his great-grandfather.

TAUPIN

You're insane.

KAHN

No, seriously. We used to shoot pool together in Rangoon.

TAUPIN

How do you do it, Kahn? How do you live so full of life for so long?

KAHN

Tasting and enjoying life is the only thing of value we have. All else is just marking time.

(beat)

You're marking time.

TAUPIN

I've had a few more concerns.

Kahn jams his hands into his overcoat and starts down the footpath.

KAHN

The pressure only comes when you let the taste slip into your mouth.

(CONTINUED)

53 (CONT'D)

TAUPIN
You're wrong.

KAHN
You don't run as hard, MacLeod.
You just don't run as hard anymore.

54 INT. O'REILLY'S - NIGHT

54

Late. The bar is nearly empty.

No sign of the Knight. Brenna looks at her watch, sighs, and drops a bill onto the counter.

55 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

55

Brenna has left the bar and is now walking down a dimly lit street.

She hears something and turns.

-Nothing. A breeze rustles the trees above.

After only a few more paces she hears something again.
Brenna abruptly turns-

-Right into the face of THE KNIGHT.

Brenna SCREAMS. The Knight reaches into his leather carrying bag.

A GROUP OF NOISY TEENAGERS

Exit a facing townhouse. The Knight removes his hand from the bag as they spill onto the sidewalk LAUGHING and YELLING.

Brenna moves close to the group as they walk to the corner.
The Knight follows at a measured distance.

At the corner the teenagers climb into a pickup and drive off.
Brenna bolts into the intersection. Weaving through SCREECHING brakes, she disappears into a pair of lighted glass doors.

56 INT. BUILDING

56

40 well dressed PATRONS, numbered cards pinned to their lapels, sit in velvetly plush surroundings. At the front of the room stands a thin moustached art AUCTIONEER.

Brenna BUSTLES in from outside.

AUCTIONEER
I apologize for the lateness of the hour, but I'm sure you will all agree the quality of this year's collection is well worth the time.

(CONTINUED)

56 (CONT'D)

The Knight BURSTS in with his leather carrying bag. Brenna slides along the draped back wall to avoid him.

AUCTIONEER
(holding statuette)
For this fine example of medieval
religious art, let us open the bid
at 4,000 dollars.

The Knight closes in on Brenna casually, without hurry.

AUCTIONEER
10,500 once, 10,500 twice...

Brenna raises her arm to attract the attention of a SECURITY
GUARD..

AUCTIONEER
(points at Brenna)
11,000. A bid at 11,000.

BRENNA
No, I-

The guard notices she has no lapel number and starts for her
very offically.

Being closed in on from both sides, Brenna suddenly runs across
the room to a fire exit, setting off an ALARM as she flies open
the door.

The Knight leaps after her, knocking over and OLD WOMAN in the
front row.

57 EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

57

Brenna runs the sidewalk and disappears into a Metro station.

58 INT. METRO STATION

58

Brenna runs down the platform and jumps into a subway car
just as the doors shut.

THE KNIGHT

Is also now on the platform but can only watch Brenna through
a window as the train pulls away.

59 EXT. TAUPIN'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

59

Brenna KNOCKS at the front door. No answer.

She KNOCKS harder. The unlatched door pushes open.

60 INT. TOWNHOUSE

60

Brenna stands in the doorway.

Before her is a disaster. Furniture has been smashed like matchsticks. A desk drawer's contents lie strewn in piles on the floor.

Brenna enters slowly.

BRENNA

Mr. Taupin? I have to talk to you.

Nothing has been left unturned or unbroken.

Brenna kneels and sifts through a pile of crumpled papers. She comes across an old black and white photograph. Badly streaked and faded, it shows Taupin standing beside a farmhouse. Written in the corner is "Worstick, 1928".

Brenna slips the photo into her pocket. Standing, she turns smack into Taupin.

TAUPIN

Finished?

He looks past her to the destruction of his living room. It doesn't seem to surprise him.

BRENNA

He tried to kill me last night.

TAUPIN

Where?

BRENNA

Dupont Circle.

Taupin sifts through the debris, selecting articles from it.

BRENNA

Who is he?

TAUPIN

At the moment? Carl Smith.

BRENNA

And you?

He ignores the question.

BRENNA

What will you do now?

TAUPIN

You needn't worry Miss Cartwright.
I've been at this a very long time.

(CONTINUED)

60 (CONT'D)

BRENNA
He called you "MacLeod".

TAUPIN
Not your concern.

BRENNA
I left a man dead in
Felton. But you don't
really care, do you?

TAUPIN
That bothers you?

BRENNA
He was innocent.

TAUPIN
He's dead. Whatever I may
or may not feel means
exceedingly little to him
now.

BRENNA
What about me?

TAUPIN
You?

BRENNA
I'm a witness to a murder. That
seems to put me pretty high
on your friend's chop list.

TAUPIN
Have you gone to the
police?

BRENNA
No.

TAUPIN
Why not? I'm sure they'd
love to hear your story.

BRENNA
I'd rather hear yours.

TAUPIN
(beat)
You are being foolish.

(CONTINUED)

60 (CONT'D)

BRENNA

I'm a historian, Mr. Taupin.
Only once in a lifetime do you
stare history in the face.

TAUPIN

Go home.

He walks to the doorway.

BRENNA

Why does he want to kill you?

Taupin stops, his back to her.

TAUPIN

He sees me as a threat.

BRENNA

Are you?

Taupin walks out the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

61 EXT. GRASSY KNOLL - DAY

61

On a clear rise above the village Romeriz and Conor spar with
swords covered in heavy cloth. Conor is having difficulty.

ROMERIZ

Concentrate!

Conor thrusts. Romeriz blocks.

ROMERIZ

Harder. Concentrate harder.

CONOR

Me arm hurts.

ROMERIZ

Again. Try again.

Conor strikes. Romeriz easily blocks.

ROMERIZ

Harder! You swing like an impotent
cow!

CONOR

Go to hell.

(CONTINUED)

51 (CONT'D)

ROMERIZ
Oh, the boy has a mouth,
now if only he had an arm.

Ticked off, Conor leans himself into a two-fisted swing.
Romeriz knocks it aside, but Conor recovers faster than he,
Knocking Romeriz flat on his back.

CONOR
Impotent cow.

ROMERIZ
Muy Bien!

Conor drops the sword and wipes the sweat from his face.
Romeriz pours wine from a leather bag into a goblet pulled
from his belt. He offers it to Conor.

ROMERIZ
Here my boy, from vineyards
as sweet and smooth as a young
girl's thigh.

Conor accepts the cup. Romeriz pulls himself to his feet.

ROMERIZ
It will take less effort
as you learn.

CONOR
It's like to kill me first.

Romeriz puts his arm around Conor and refills his cup.

ROMERIZ
You have a gift. One you
must protect.

CONOR
And what is this great
gift that cannot be seen
or smelt?

ROMERIZ
The Fabric of life. The spark
that allows the passing of
existence from one generation
to another.

(CONTINUED)

61 (CONT'D)

CONOR
(shakes head)
If that was meant to be an explanation Mr. Romeriz from Spain,
I'm afraid you've failed.

Romeriz puts his arm around Conor and leads him away.

ROMERIZ
Come. Enough sword play for an afternoon.

62 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

62

A friendly horse race. Their reflections bouncing off a clear glen, Conor and Romeriz dodge moss-laden ruts and leap fallen tree trunks.

Beaming, Conor pushes through a last turn and stops to wait for Romeriz, several lengths behind.

CONOR
(as Romeriz rides up)
You're no match for Scot, Mr.
Romeriz. We're raised as riders.

ROMERIZ
Point conceded, Mr. MacLeod.

Both their eyes turn to the beauty in view. Romeriz pulls a leaf from a tree and studies it closely.

CONOR
What is the fascination? It is only a leaf.

ROMERIZ
All living things pay dues,
Conor. They must be respected for that.

He pulls the leaf's points from the stalk, one by one.

ROMERIZ
As they age they contribute to a sum that is the kindling from which all future life comes. To feel it, to know it, is to be in touch with the will of every living thing.

(CONTINUED)

63 (CONT'D)

CONOR

I do not think I like the sound
of that.

ROMERIZ

It does not feel nearly as frightening
as it sounds. But the consequences of
such feelings can be very frightening.
For it gives you great strength. The
strength of knowledge. The ability
to stand between the giving of what
has always been to what will always
be.

CONOR

I feel hardly nothing.

ROMERIZ

You have not been fully trained.
But you will learn. And you will be
good, I can feel that. You have apt-
itude. This is why our friend is
so concerned.

CONOR

But why be so concerned about me?

ROMERIZ

This power is divided amongst you,
me, and others like cuts in a pie.
But the cuts are not equal. Some,
like you and he, have more. Much
more.

CONOR

And you?

ROMERIZ

I am a small player. But if by
helping you I can keep that monster
from being the last, then perhaps
my life has meant something.

CONOR

I am not ready for this.

ROMERIZ

You must be. You have responsibilities.
You must learn the rules. You can never
attract attention to yourself, never
show the side that will draw others to
you. You will always know when you are
in the presence of another. Beware.

(cont'd)

(CONTINUED)

63 (CONT'D)

ROMERIZ
(cont'd)

But most importantly Conor MacLeod, will be your battle against time. In the coming years you will see kingdoms rise then rot like wheat. People will become a transitory, pathetic lot. The only constant you will know will be the others and the tradition their greed and quest represent. But life without morality, without the ability to truly taste the sweetness of wine and love, is no life at all. That is how the others exist. Nothing more than walking corpses living only to slaughter each other in an insane quest to be the last. Keep your soul sewed to the earth. Do not become one of them.

CONOR
Of course.

ROMERIZ
You are young, inexperienced. You do not know what time can do. How it can sap all pity, all love.

CONOR
That is not me.

ROMERIZ
With the proper tools, Conor, a naive man can be much more dangerous than an evil one.

VILLAGER
Conor!

A VILLAGER approaches across the pasture.

CONOR
Yes, Darin.

VILLAGER
Hate to be bothering you like this, but me mare threw a shoe.

Conor looks to Romeriz.

(CONTINUED)

63 (CONT'D)

ROMERIZ
Go ahead, Senor.
(gestures to wine)
I have my friend to keep me company.

CONOR
I'll be back when I can

Conor sets off across the pasture.

64 INT. CONOR'S HOME

64

Romeriz enters and flops onto a cot.
Settling down for a nap, he sets his sword beneath the bed
and closes his eyes to the distant sound of CHILDREN playing.

The room is still.
Romeriz begins to drowse.

Suddenly his eyes leap open with full alertness.
His hand moves under the cot.

With an EXPLOSION the front door is lifted from its hinges
and splintered into fragments. Passing through a cloud of
sawdust enters the Knight. Without pause he topples a kitchen
shelf onto a supine Romeriz.

KNIGHT
Romeriz. What a surprise.

Romeriz is struggling under the debris.
The Knight thrusts hard onto an exposed leg.
The limb is severed.

ROMERIZ
Madonna!

The Knight begins casting aside the shelving.
With lightning speed Romeriz pulls the sword from beneath the
bed and hammers it deep into the Knight's side.

KNIGHT
Bastard!

He crashes back against the wall.
Romeriz tries to lift himself from the bed using his sword
as a crutch.

The Knight has regained a meager balance on his knees.
Blood pours from the slice in his stomach.

Romeriz pushes himself across the bed, plants his sword into
the floor and hobbles a few paces before collapsing.

(CONTINUED)

64 (CONT'D)

ROMERIZ
Oh, Santa Maria!

The Knight crawls across the bed and drops to his knees beside Romeriz.

KNIGHT
Why run?

ROMERIZ
Demonio!

The Knight's trembling hands raise his shaking sword high.

KNIGHT
To hell with you.

65 EXT. BARNYARD - DAY

65

Conor pounds at a horseshoe.

The hammer slips from his grasp as he slumps forward as if pushed.

66 EXT. CONOR'S HOME - DAY

66

Badly wounded, the Knight staggers through the shattered doorway and tumbles into the street.

A CHILD SCREAMS.

Pulling himself up, the Knight hobbles away.

67 EXT. - DAY

67

Conor is running through the village.

67 INT. CONOR'S HOME

67

Conor rushes in and shudders to a stop.

An entire wall is showered with blood.

Conor walks slowly forward. Dazed.

As he looks down something takes his attention.

It is Romeriz's severed head.

Conor moans in anguish and drops to his knees on the blood-stained floor.

His head sinks to his chest as he begins sobbing.

DISSOLVE TO:

68 INT. MUSEUM RESEARCH LIBRARY

68

Somewhere in the bowels of the museum, the RESEARCH LIBRARIAN, a wiry young man, sits at his cluttered desk. Brenna looms above him.

LIBRARIAN

Come on Brenna, your ass is already in a sling, don't drag me into it.

BRENNA

All I need is for you to check the name.

LIBRARIAN

You talked to your supervisor lately? He's burning up the place about you just dropping out of sight. That on top of the cops bugging him.

BRENNA

I'll take care of that Corey, but I need this now.

The librarian looks her over skeptically.

BRENNA

Corey, you owe me.

LIBRARIAN

It's that important?

BRENNA

Yeah.

The librarian reluctantly reaches for his keys.

69 INT. STORAGE AREA

69

Holding Brenna's photograph, the research librarian is combing through stained binders. The room is old, disorganized, and gives the impression that every fact worth knowing must be in it somewhere.

RESEARCHER

Wilson know about this?

BRENNA

I'm doing it on my own.

(CONTINUED)

69 (CONT'D)

LIBRARIAN

Good way to lose your job.

BRENNNA

Some job. Card filing and cabinet dusting. Four years in this dump and I haven't written anything for Wilson that a wounded yak couldn't do.

LIBRARIAN

I liked the bit you did about Baltic chastity belts. Too bad no one else did.

BRENNNA

It's bullshit. Everything. My job, the people I get involved with, I'm up to here with it.

LIBRARIAN

You always were hard to impress.

The librarian pulls a binder and opens it.

BRENNNA

Who is it?

LIBRARIAN

Not who. What. Worstick's a town in Pennsylvania.

70 INT. MUSEUM RESEARCH OFFICE

70

Brenna enters and sits at her desk. She is looking for something.

BRENNNA

(confused)

Chris, have you seen my notebook?

Chris is seated at the desk next to her. He points at the supervisor's door.

BRENNNA

Why, that son of a bitch.

71 INT. MUSEUM SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE

71

The high backed office chair is spun away from an an angry, entering Brenna.

BRENNA

What's wrong Wilson, huh? Not enough excitement in your own desk? What the hell were you looking for in mine?

The chair turns. Detective Moran, not her supervisor, leafs through her notebook.

MORAN

A murder.

BRENNA

You better have a warrant. That's my notebook, you've got no right to be sticking your fingers into it.

MORAN

I've got a morgue filling up with bodies. That's my right.

BRENNA

What do you want from me?

MORAN

Well, the man of the hour that we all would like to talk to about now has apparently skipped town.

(looks at notebook)

And all of a sudden the Smithsonian's ambulance chaser is an expert on missing persons.

Brenna lifts the telephone receiver.

BRENNA

I'm calling an attorney.

MORAN

You and I should talk first.

BRENNA

We've got nothing to say.

Moran presses the post on the phone.

MORAN

What are you going to tell them? That you're protecting a man who's killed four people?

(CONTINUED)

71 (CONT'D)

BRENNA

Four?

MORAN

All fashionably without heads.

BRENNA

Spare me the details.

MORAN

But there's more. Wednesday someone played javelin with the cemetery curator in Felton, Delaware. Some locals spotted two cars with D.C. plates and surprise surprise, they turn out to be registered to our own Brenna Cartwright and the ever popular Richard Taupin.

BRENNA

What are you getting at, Moran?

MORAN

You've been a busy little beaver. Especially with that records mess up in Church Hill.

(looks at notebook)

Your notes are very complete. Naturally my feeling were crushed when you didn't rush right over and tell us what you knew.

(looks up)

In fact, we're considering booking the ambulance chaser as an accessory to murder.

BRENNA

It's never stick.

MORAN

But we might just give it the 'ole college try. What with the court back ups, it could be days before you got an arraignment. But then, I'm sure the flunk-out neice of the D.A. knows all about that.

BRENNA

You're an asshole, Moran.

MORAN

I want Taupin.

(CONTINUED)

71 (CONT'D)

BRENNNA

What makes you so sure he's
the one?

MORAN

Just for laughs we raided wonder
boy's house. There was a gallon
of one of the corpse's blood in
his carpet. I think it was about
then I withdrew his name for
humanitarian of the year.

BRENNNA

What's all of this got to do
with me?

MORAN

What were you doing in Felton?

BRENNNA

Research. If your pal was there
I never saw him.

MORAN

I have witnesses that can put
the two of you together.

BRENNNA (knows he's bluffing)

Never take up poker, Detective.

MORAN

Don't be stupid, lady. Your neck
can be sliced as fast as anyone
else's.

Brenna reaches across and lifts her notebook.

BRENNNA

Why don't you wait till it comes
out in paperback?

Moran watches her leave. He lifts the telephone receiver.

RESEARCH OFFICE

Striding out into the corridor, Brenna passes Dennis, the cop
from her bedroom, leaning against the doorway.

DENNIS

I warned you.

BRENNNA

Go to hell.

(CONTINUED)

72 INT. CHURCH (WASHINGTON D.C.)

72

A PRIEST celebrates mass in a present-day cathedral.

In the rear of the church apart from the other PARISHIONERS sits the Knight. As the priest leads the parishioners through the procession of faith, the Knight alone repeats it quietly to himself in Latin, the ancient language of the church.

DISSOLVE TO:

73 EXT. ABANDONED GRAVEYARD - DAY

73

Crooked tombstones strewn across the bleached ground of a place not belonging to reality.

In full medieval tartan, Conor stands against a forceful wind.

CRACKS

Run the length plain, spewing forth steam and staggering SKELETONS. There are dozens of them, all carrying their skulls under one arm.

The skeletons press forward and trap Conor against the trunk of a dead oak. The heads break into harsh, demonic LAUGHTER. Conor puts his hands over his ears in pain as the bodies push forward.

SCREAMING, he disappears under a mass of gleaming bones.

CUT TO:

74 INT. TAUPIN'S WORSTICK HOME

74

Taupin wakes from the dream with a SHOUT.
He has fallen asleep in a desk chair.

Taupin walks to a window and looks out to the green hills. To the distance.

75 EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

75

Brenna's sedan shoots down a country highway.

76 INT. SEDAN - DAY

76

Checking her rear view mirror, Brenna notices two suspicious FIGURES in a car behind her.

77 EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

77

Brenna pulls to the side. The car from behind passes without incident.

78 INT. SEDAN - DAY

78

Brenna is driving again. Listening now to the RADIO, she casts a glance in the mirror. The same car is behind her.

79 EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

79

Passing over a rise in the highway, Brenna turns abruptly onto a service road and behind a group of trees.

THE OTHER CAR

Pauses a moment at the intersection, then drives on.

80 EXT. STOREFRONT - DAY

80

Brenna shows the PROPRIETOR the photograph. He explains something to her.

Brenna steps outside the store onto the Main Street of the very small community of Worstick.

AT A STREET CORNER

Brenna passes a small monument settled in a flower bed. It has a plaque memorializing five locals murdered in 1931.

81 INT. SEDAN

81

A mile out of town Brenna stops at a farmhouse. She checks it against the photo she found at Taupin's townhouse. They match.

82 EXT. FARMHOUSE DOOR - DAY

82

Brenna KNOCKS.

TAUPIN

You shouldn't have come.

Brenna whirls around and sees Taupin behind her.

TAUPIN

We're you followed?

He looks to the road.

BRENNA

No.

TAUPIN

No one knows you're here?

(CONTINUED)

82 (CONT'D)

BRENNNA

No. I had to talk to you.

TAUPIN

You had to do nothing!

BRENNNA

You're wrong.

TAUPIN

You're a fool.

BRENNNA

Maybe.

Pause. Taupin strides through the doorway.

TAUPIN

Come inside.

83 INT. FARMHOUSE

83

Brenna and Taupin enter. A heavy broad sword sits on the coffee table.

BRENNNA

Is this what you killed them with?

TAUPIN

You've been listening to rumors.

BRENNNA

Our cars were seen together in Felton. They're calling me an accessory to murder.

TAUPIN

You are. Now.

Beat. They're stuck with each other.

TAUPIN

There's several bedrooms down the hall. Take your pick.

84 INT. BEDROOM

84

The room is a strange decor. 18th century paintings hang beside grotesque medieval carvings.

Brenna's face softens with worry. What is she doing?

85 EXT. RURAL PAY PHONE - DAY

85

A plain-clothed POLICE OFFICER is in mid conversation.

OFFICER
No, that's the last place we saw
her. Okay, will do.

He hangs up.

PARTNER
Well?

OFFICER
(shrugs)
We keep looking.

PARTNER
Wonderful.

86 INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

86

Taupin sits at his desk. Before him is spread out blank birth certificates, driver licenses and title deeds. His eyes lift to the corridor where Brenna is. An idea has come to him.

Brenna enters.

BRENNA
What'a all that?

TAUPIN
Richard Taupin has become
cumbersome. It would be best
if he just disappeared.

Brenna walks to the window.

BRENNA
You did kill those men.

TAUPIN
Not all of them.

BRENNA
When you finish. What then?

TAUPIN
I go my way and you can write
all you want about the big bad
Mr. Taupin.

BRENNA
You make it all sound so simple.

(CONTINUED)

86 (CONT'D)

TAUPIN

The only real difficulty comes in changing over the ownership of property I've aquired. That requires certain records and most importantly a personal appearance at the county seat in Gettysburg. But that's where you come in.

BRENNA

You want me to front for you.

TAUPIN

The less exposure I receive around government buildings the better. You, as Mrs. Taupin, will attract considerably less attention than I.

Brenna is unsure.

TAUPIN

Not such a bad trade. The story of a lifetime for a few days work?

87 INT. TAUPIN'S WASHINGTON TOWNHOUSE

87

Detective Moran looks through the broken remains of the living room.

An INSPECTOR enters.

INSPECTOR

They lost her outside of Thurmont.

Moran sighs and tosses a piece of wood on the pile of debris.

MORAN

I want people in here to check over every piece of this stuff.

INSPECTOR

Figure she's with him?

MORAN

Yeah.

INSPECTOR

We ran down that Church Hill info. She's right. There is no Richard Taupin.

(CONTINUED)

87 (CONT'D)

MORAN

Any other I.D.s come up?

INSPECTOR

Not yet. Called FBI yesterday.
Thompson's going to try CIA
This afternoon.

(shrugs)

Y'never know.

Moran rises and dons his coat.

MORAN

Should have seen him the first
night. Son of bitch stood there
with a quart of blood on his
pant leg and didn't even blink.

INSPECTOR

You'd think he'd had practice.

Moran walks to the door.

MORAN

I think he has.

DISSOLVE TO:

88 EXT. FRENCH MILITARY CAMP - DAY

88

Conor, now MAJOR DUPONT of the French infantry, pours over
battle plans.

An AIDE, dressed as Conor-Dupont in 18th century European
military garb, enters the command area.

AIDE

The men are assembled, Major.

A GENERAL stands beside the major.

GENERAL

See that they are indeed ready,
Dupont.

DUPONT (CONOR)

Yes General.

89 EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAY

89

A regiment of INFANTRYMEN, pale blue coat tails tossing in
the light breeze, stand at attention.

(CONTINUED)

89 (CONT'D)

A STAFF SARGEANT presents the men to Dupont.

STAFF SARGEANT
Regiment ready for review, sir.

Dupont walks past the sargeant to the line.

DUPONT
(to soldier)
Stand straight, you are a soldier
of the King.

SOLDIER #1
Yes sir.

Dupont continues down the line. Another soldier's infantry jacket is almost hilariously mis-buttoned, one collar sticking up four inches higher than the other.

Dupont with both hands rips open the soldier's coat, spraying brass buttons onto the ground.

He moves on.

DUPONT
(to soldier)
Where is your bayonet?

SOLDIER #3
Lost it sir.

DUPONT
Where?

The soldier hedges.

STAFF SARGEANT
You heard the Major! Where!

SOLDIER #3
Whorehouse sir.

Dupont's face softens in exasperation, then toughens.

DUPONT
Your rifle. Hand it to me.

The soldier obeys. Dupont inspects the firing mechanism.

DUPONT
The flint is cracked. No spark
will reach your powder. You will
die tomorrow.

(CONTINUED)

89 (CONT'D)

He throws the rifle roughly back into the soldier's hands.

DUPONT

Tomorrow you go to battle! And
you look like children!

(beat)

The General has charged me with
seeing that you are prepared, and
prepared you will be! If necessary
you stand here all night! Sargeant!

The sargeant leaps to attention.

SARGEANT

Yes sir.

DUPONT

See to it.

SARGEANT

Yes sir.

Dupont turns briskly, then stops abruptly as if alerted by something. He whirls around and faces the young infantrymen.

His expression is quizzical as he walks the line, checking each face carefully.

One PRIVATE seizes his attention. The private is cautious.

DUPONT

Your name?

MULET

Mulet.

It is as if Dupont knows him. The two stare at each other. Dupont turns and leaves.

90 INT. COTTAGE - EVENING

90

Inside a small farmhouse commandeered for officer's quarters, Dupont (Conor) and several others eat their evening meal.

A CAPTAIN finishes his story.

CAPTAIN

(amused)

...And what a sight! That old
mare just kept falling over her
own guts till someone finally
shot her.

(CONTINUED)

90 (CONT'D)

The OFFICERS LAUGH. All but Dupont.

MAJOR
(beside Dupont)
Complete your inspection?

DUPONT
They're nothing but boys. It
will be a slaughter tomorrow.

MAJOR
(laughs)
I doubt much can change that.
The enemy has five brigades
waiting for us.

DUPONT
We need more time.

MAJOR
Won't get it.
(shrugs)
We are a sacrifice. A diversion.

Dupont pokes unenthusiastically at his plate.

MAJOR
Eat up Dupont. It will probably
be your last.

DUPONT
(rises)
Not likely.

Dupont goes to the window. Dusk shines orange on his face.
In the foreground the man Dupont encountered at the line-up,
Mulet, is chopping firewood.

91 EXT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

91

Several hours later.
Most are asleep. Mulet continues his wood splitting.
From out of the dark cottage steps Dupont.

DUPONT (CONOR)
I thought I gave orders the
regiment was to drill.

MULET
Staff sargeant detailed me to
prepare firewood for the break-
fast cooking.

(CONTINUED)

91 (CONT'D)

DUPONT

What is your position?

MULET

Second musketeer.

DUPONT

I understand you joined up in Bremen.

MULET

You seem to understand a great deal.

DUPONT

I am a Major, Private. You would do well remembering that when addressing me.

MULET

Excuse me, "sir". I thought we spoke as equals.

DUPONT

Equals?

MULET

(shrugs)

If you wish to play games, Major.

Mulet returns to his chore.

DUPONT

Wait. I think we understand each other.

MULET

We have no understanding.

DUPONT

Then it is time two of us did. You are very young. I was once young. I can help.

Mulet LAUGHS.

MULET

Help? I've seen others "help". Somehow a head always ended up on the counter.

(CONTINUED)

91 (CONT'D)

DUPONT

It can be different. It must be.

MULET

It never changes, Major.

Mulet turns to his chore. Dupont grabs his arm.

DUPONT

We must talk.

MULET

(shakes him off)

Stay out of it.

DUPONT

(angry)

Don't threaten me, Private.

MULET

(disgust)

Who do you think I am? One of your freckle faced children waiting to die tomorrow? "Threaten You"? You and I just living will always be a threat. Forever. Look at your life, Major. Look at mine. Nothing there but threat. Threats and nothingness. It's what we live for.

Mulet turns his back on Dupont.

Dupont draws his cutlass.

DUPONT

Do not turn your back on me.

MULET

You are really going to force this, aren't you?

DUPONT

Either you are with me or against me.

Mulet turns slowly, axe in hand.

MULET

Have I a choice?

The two stare into eyes empty of emotion.

Mulet's hand flinches. An attack?

(CONTINUED)

91 (CONT'D)

Dupont CUTS quickly, slicing open both of Mulet's arms.
The axe drops to the ground.

Mulet seems strangely calm.

MULET

You see Major? You are not so
different.

Dupont cuts off Mulet's head where he stands.

92 EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

92

Dupont drags the corpse across the meadow and dumps it into
a swamp.

93 INT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

93

It is very late. Only a few OFFICERS are seated in the pews.
Dupont tries to concentrate on prayer, but is distracted.

MULET

(voice flashback)

You see Major? You are not so
different...

DUPONT

I had no choice.

Dupont sighs and looks to the altar.

DUPONT

Who am I deceiving?

KNIGHT

Certainly not me.

Dupont whirls around to see the Knight, dressed as he in uniform,
sitting one row behind.

Dupont leaps to his feet.

KNIGHT

You needn't look so flushed,
Major. You are quite safe in
church.

Dupont eases his breathing.

KNIGHT

State of grace and all that.

(CONTINUED)

93 (CONT'D)

DUPONT
Tradition.

KNIGHT
It's all we have.

Dupont has backed up a few paces.

KNIGHT
All this time and still a scared
little boy.

Dupont sits down.

DUPONT
Not so scared.

KNIGHT
Perhaps not.
(smiles)
You seem to have misplaced a
private. No doubt by now his
head is stranger to his neck.

DUPONT
No doubt.

KNIGHT
You surprise me. Eliminating a
rival like that. Such are the
actions of a man of conquest. I
was mistaken. 300 years have
turned the boy's fear into ambit-
ion.

DUPONT
You're wrong.

KNIGHT
I know you very well, Conor MacLeod.
And I can see the truth beginning
to make itself clear to you. Mulet,
Romeriz, they were fools without
vision. It was destined that the
board would be cleared for the real
players.

The Knight almost seems proud of Dupont.

DUPONT
Romeriz understood. Not you.

(CONTINUED)

93 (CONT'D)

KNIGHT
Romeriz is dust.

The Knight looks to the altar.

KNIGHT
Finish your prayers?

DUPONT
Finish yours?

KNIGHT
(smiles)
Our common heritadge.
(beat)
I am your only real friend, you
know. The only one who truly
understands you.
(rises)
I look forward to the day we
meet again. And I kill you.

DUPONT
So sure?

The Knight leans forward and puts his face very near.

KNIGHT
You can't stay in church forever.

The Knight moves into the aisle.

KNIGHT
Good night, Major.

He exits.

Conor sits in the dim church alone. Very alone.

DISSOLVE TO:

94 EXT. WORSTICK CHURCH (PRESENT DAY)

Richard Taupin sits against the stone of an old Catholic church.
Taupin sighs. A long, weary sigh.

95 INT. TAUPIN'S FARMHOUSE

95

Taupin and Brenna sit at a table working on forms.
Taupin looks up from his work and studies Brenna's face without
malice.

95 EXT. CREEK - DAY

Brenna and Taupin are taking a walk along the township's outskirts.

Crossing a small bridge over a smaller creek, they encounter the elderly caretaker Mr. North and his eight year old GRANDSON. Both with fishing poles.

MR. NORTH
Morning Mr. Taupin.

TAUPIN
Same.

MR. NORTH
Such a pretty day. If I live to be 90 I'll never tire of mornings like this. Mind you I'm 74 now.

TAUPIN
No.

MR. NORTH
Yes sir. When you get older your priorities change. It's the simple things that count. Without them growing old can be a very lonely thing.

TAUPIN
I'm sure that's true.

The grandson is having difficulty baiting his line. Taupin bends down beside the young fisherman.

TAUPIN
(takes worm)
Here. The hook should go just below the head, where the meat is toughest.

GRANDSON
Thanks.

Taupin's show of affection surprises Brenna.

TAUPIN
Show you a trick.

Taupin takes a clump of leaves from the bridge and winds them around the hook.

TAUPIN
Fish are creatures of habit. They like their food where they're used to it. At the top, Hiding in old leaves.

(CONTINUED)

95 (CONT'D)

GRANDSON

Where did you learn that?

TAUPIN

My father taught me.

GRANDSON

Your father must be smart.

TAUPIN

Yes, he was.

Brenna is touched.

96 INT. TAUPIN'S FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

96

Brenna lies on her bed thinking. She puts on a robe and walks into the living room.

LIVING ROOM

Taupin sits before the fireplace, its flames reflecting on his brandy glass. Brenna moves quietly to a seat beside him.

TAUPIN

(eyes on the fireplace)

There was a man once. Just a simple woodcarver. But he understood. More than anyone he could see to the heart of it.

(beat)

It never ends. Today is the same as the first. Tomorrow will be the same as today. So much time. And all of it wasted.

(beat)

You love history?

BRENNNA

Yes.

TAUPIN

I wish I could.

97 INT. CITY HALL

97

Brenna looks through a property zoning book.

98 EXT. WORSTICK MAIN STREET - DAY

98

Walking past small town stores, Brenna allows herself a moment to window shop.

IN A SHOP WINDOW

Is a small poster advertising a community get-together. Brenna peels it off the glass and slips it into her notebook.

99 INT. TAUPIN'S FARMHOUSE

99

Brenna and Taupin go over various forms and documents.

BRENNA

The estate stuff is pretty straight forward. Just lots of forms and an appearance at the county seat.

TAUPIN

It will take some time for the forms to clear before you go to Gettysburg.

Brenna is silent.

TAUPIN

Second thoughts?

Pause.

BRENNA

No.

(beat)

So what now? We just wait?

TAUPIN

Yes.

BRENNA

Well, as long as we're stuck here.

She hands him the poster from earlier.

BRENNA

It's some sort of party the town is throwing.

TAUPIN

They do it each year.

BRENNA

I thought it might be a nice break from all of this.

(CONTINUED)

99 (CONT'D)

Taupin stacks the documents into a folder.

TAUPIN
Maybe it would do us both good.

BRENNA
There's a catch. You're supposed
to wear 19th century clothing.

100 INT. FARMHOUSE CELLAR

100

Taupin is going through an old trunk.

TAUPIN
My father was something of a
junk collector.

He comes across a long period dress and offers it to Brenna.

TAUPIN
Here, try this. I suppose they're
still making women the same as back
then.

BRENNA
It's beautiful.

TAUPIN
A little dusty.

Taupin fishes through the trunk and comes up with an old top
hat. He turns it over in his hand with stoic memory.

DISSOLVE TO:

101 EXT. COLONIAL STYLE HOME - DUSK

101

Conor and a beautiful young woman, KATHERINE, sit on the porch
steps in 1800s period dress. Other young COUPLES relax nearby
enjoying the warm summer's twilight. Katherine's MOTHER shuffles
between the couples offering lemonade, cakes, and the like.

KATHERINE
Do it again.

She is thoroughly charmed by Conor.

CONOR
All right.

(CONTINUED)

.01 (CONT'D)

Conor wraps a length of yarn about his fingers. By turning his hand over and bending his knuckles just so, the web becomes the outline of a lion.

CONOR

A lion.
(growls)

Katherine is delighted.

Conor starts to remove the yarn. Katherine touches his arm.

KATHERINE

Oh please. Another one.

CONOR

What would you like?

KATHERINE

Something pretty.

CONOR

Like you.

Conor cups his hands, bends his fingers, and comes up with a four leaf clover.

KATHERINE

That's wonderful. Where did you ever learn it?

CONOR

Far away.

KATHERINE

Kiss me.

Conor shoots a glance for the mother, then kisses Katherine softly.

YOUNG MAN

(o.s.)

You'll be leaving the girl alone.

A YOUNG MAN stands a few yards from the stairs.

KATHERINE

David.

CONOR

Do you have cause to bothering us?

(CONTINUED)

01 (CONT'D)

YOUNG MAN
That's my girl.

KATHERINE
David, we've already spoken of this.

YOUNG MAN
He's not what he pretends to be.

Conor climbs to his feet.

CONOR
You best leave, son.

YOUNG MAN
You think you're so high and
mighty, coming into town and
taking a man's woman. Well I
know about you. I know about
the things you do.

CONOR
(moving closer)
I said you best leave.

YOUNG MAN
You'd like that, wouldn't you?
(to Katherine)
Ask him about his friends. The
ones he meets in the town square.
Ask him about the blade he keeps
beneath his bed.

Conor grabs the youth's collar and pulls him close.

CONOR
(like ice)
Leave. While you still can.

The youth pushes away from the grasp.

YOUNG MAN
You don't frighten me.

CONOR
I should.

The young man throws a fist at Conor. It is easily blocked.
Conor returns with a savage blow to the chest that knocks
the young man gasping onto the ground.

Katherine runs up behind and grabs Conor's outstretched arm.

(CONTINUED)

101 (CONT'D)

KATHERINE

No! Leave him. Please don't hurt him.
Please.

COUGHING painfully, the youth climbs to his feet and staggers away.

YOUNG MAN

He's not what you think.

He turns and runs down the road.

YOUNG MAN

He's not what you think!

Katherine turns to Conor, his face still locked in ice.

KATHERINE

I don't care who you are or where
you come from.

She hugs him tightly.

KATHERINE

I love you.

Conor's face softens as he brings up an arm to hold her.

DISSOLVE TO:

102 INT. WORSTICK TOWN HALL (PRESENT DAY)

102

An auditorium has been transformed with colored lights and strung paper into a small town party.

TEENAGERS in period dress control the floor, dancing to a decidedly un-period ROCK BAND.

The OLDER GUESTS are gathered around the punch bowl talking crops or Pennsylvania politics.

BRENNA

Fitted as well as can be expected in her lace dress, enters with Taupin, himself dressed in a formal suit complete with cape.

His clothes fit perfectly.

Mr. North, comically dressed as a pirate, greets them.

MR. NORTH

Mr. Taupin! Glad you could make it.
Best get some punch before it's
gone. Near the whole valley showed
up.

(CONTINUED)

02 (CONT'D)

They go to the table.

Taupin pours a glass of punch. An ELDERLY WOMAN approaches him.

WOMAN

If I didn't know better I'd say
William Taupin.

TAUPIN

His son. Richard.

MR. NORTH

Mr. Taupin is up from Washington
to look over his father's estate.

WOMAN

You father died some years ago.
This is your first visit?

The tone is snide.

TAUPIN

Of sorts.

WOMAN

I suppose a Taupin had to show
up eventually.
(walks away)

TAUPIN

Good evening, Mrs. Butler.

She turns in surprise at his knowing her name, then walks on.

BRENNA

What was all that about?

MR. NORTH

Sorry Mr. Taupin. That's not meant
for you. Just some didn't take
much to your father.

BRENNA

Why?

TAUPIN

My father was never one for social
whirls.

MR. NORTH

Kept to himself for sure. Then with
all that business in '31.

(CONTINUED)

102 (CONT'D)

BRENNA

What business?

MR. NORTH

Family down the road from the Taupin place was murdered. All cut up they were. Horrible. Two strangers were also found with the bodies. No one ever accused William, but with his reputation as a loner and the rumors about him and some of the wives in town, folks just never forgot. Most were relieved when they heard he'd died. Sorry Mr. Taupin.

TAUPIN

Nothing to be sorry about.

MR. NORTH

Just your pappy scared some.

The rock band finishes as a PORTLY MAN in a union soldier's uniform takes the microphone.

PORTLY

All right, the kids have had their fun. Now it's time for a little more traditional dancing.

The rock band gives ground to a group of older MUSICIANS. With a nod from the union soldier they begin a folk tune with fiddles and hammer dulcimer.

The costumed guests take to the floor.

BRENNA

I don't know any of these. I'll make a fool of myself.

TAUPIN

Follow me.

Taupin starts into it with perfect grace. A faltering Brenna tries to keep up.

BRENNA

William Taupin seems to have left his mark.

TAUPIN

Yes.

32. (CONT'D)

BRENNA
And you are William
Taupin, aren't you?

TAUPIN
Yes.

They do a final turn and finish. The other DANCERS applaud.

BRENNA
You're using your son's
name.

TAUPIN
No. Just the child of
some lonely girl I gave
a ride to. When they
died I put them in a
grave with my name on it.
Twenty years later I
became the son.

Brenna is staring at him.

TAUPIN
More punch?

He leads her to a table.

BRENNA
Then you must be at least
70 years old.

TAUPIN
At least.

BRENNA
That's impossible.

Several of the ELDERLY WOMEN are watching Taupin from across
the room.

103 EXT. BUS STATION - NIGHT

103

A bus with "Gettysburg" across the front pulls to a stop at
a dark terminal. A lone passenger steps off into the mist.
It is the Knight, bound up in a leather jacket and carrying
only a long, narrow case.

.04 EXT. - NIGHT

104

Brenna and Taupin walk alone in the night outside the hall.

BRENNA

It's frightening sometimes the way you talk about other people's lives.

TAUPIN

A factor of age.

BRENNA

I hope I never get that old.

TAUPIN

You won't.

Brenna pulls away.

BRENNA

I must be insane. Leaving work, ditching cops. All to follow a murderer. A very old murderer, but a murderer just the same.

TAUPIN

Why are you here?

BRENNA

I've been telling myself it's the award winning journal article I'm going to write. But it's not.
(looks at him squarely)
It's you.

TAUPIN

I see.

BRENNA

I'm not even sure why.

TAUPIN

Hardly a reason to run off with a murderer.

BRENNA

My life has been chock full of people with complications and weaknesses. I can't stand it. But you're different. It's in your hands. A clarity.

(CONTINUED)

104 (CONT'D)

TAUPIN

You are a very perceptive young woman.

BRENNA

Just a little crazy.

A thoughtful pause.

TAUPIN

Miss Cartwright, it's time I showed you something.

105 INT. FARMHOUSE CELLAR

105

Taupin and Brenna descend the stairs to a seemingly flush wall. Taupin reaches behind a bookcase and pulls something. A press from his hand and the wall becomes a doorway.

TAUPIN

(gestures to interior)

Miss Cartwright?

Brenna steps uneasily into the darkness. Taupin follows and switches on the light.

106 INT. HIDDEN ROOM

106

Brenna's expression changes to awe.

The room is massive, a cross between a museum and an old attic. Suits of armor, Italian statuettes, Czech ironworks, Persian fetishes and a thousand other oddities from a hundred eras crowd the shelving and floor space.

The room has the look of ownership, as if civilization had taken the time to keep a scrapbook.

BRENNA

My God.

The sight is overwhelming.

TAUPIN

I had this room built some time ago.

Brenna picks up a Carolingian tapestry and runs her hand along its intricate weaving.

BRENNA

Who are you?

(CONTINUED)

.06 (CONT'D)

TAUPIN

That would be difficult to explain.

BRENNA

I'd like you to try.

Taupin picks up a Byzantine icon, brushing the dust from its shoulders.

TAUPIN

I was born Conor MacLeod in the village of Ardvrek on the Highland plain of Strathnaver in the clan of MacLeod under the King of Scotland. On the eleventh of December, 1408.

He replaces the icon.

TAUPIN

I have served in the armies of twelve nations, married nine women, fathered thirty-eight children and buried them all.

Taupin walks along the cases.

TAUPIN

I carried that rifle in World War I. This book is a 16th Century policy report for the King of Austria. The diploma is my conference of degree in Latin from Trinity College. Class of 1672.
(beat)

It goes on.

BRENNA

That's why Smith called you MacLeod.

TAUPIN

Yes.

BRENNA

He knows about you.

TAUPIN

He is older than I.

BRENNA

What could possibly be worth all this murder and destruction?

(CONTINUED)

06 (CONT'D)

TAUPIN

Sometimes I think it's just for something to do. A conquest to be the last. Something to hold onto while everything else around you withers and blows away. Something to replace the love that can never work.

BRENNA

That's insane.

TAUPIN

Perhaps. There is something more. An inheritance.

BRENNA

Of bodies.

TAUPIN

I didn't kill the watchman.

BRENNA

You killed those other two.

TAUPIN

Not the same.

BRENNA

What about that family in '31?

TAUPIN

Sometimes innocents become involved.

BRENNA

You and your buddy make a real team, don't you? Exchanging eloquent threats in iambic pentameter while hacking up all the innocents inbetween.

TAUPIN

There are differences.

BRENNA

You kill with your left hand?

TAUPIN

I haven't killed you.

BRENNA

Is that a threat?

(CONTINUED)

06 (CONT'D)

Taupin moves very close.

TAUPIN

No.

Brenna's face softens. She turns away.

BRENNA

Don't.

TAUPIN

Come here, Brenna.

BRENNA

Damn you.

He kisses her.

DISSOLVE TO:

107 EXT. TURN OF THE CENTURY CEMETARY - DAY

107

RELATIVES in period dress watch as a family member is lowered into the ground.

A very OLD WOMAN stands stoically, supported on both sides by her middle aged SONS.

MINISTER

May God commend into his kingdom
the soul of our dear departed
Jason, son of Katherine-

The old woman.

MINISTER

And brother to Howard and James-

The two middle aged sons.

CONOR

Watches the funeral quietly at a distance.

THE OLD WOMAN

As the minister continues allows her gaze to wander. She sees Conor standing at the treeline. Her eyes crinkle in disbelief. Releasing herself from her sons, she hobbles toward Conor. Confused, the brothers watch their mother leave the ceremony.

CONOR

Watches the woman approach but decides against moving. She stops a few paces away and looks over him.

(CONTINUED)

37 (CONT'D)

 OLD WOMAN
You.

 CONOR
Katherine.

 OLD WOMAN
What are you doing here?

 CONOR
I owe him this.

 OLD WOMAN
He never knew you.

The two sons come up behind. The three stand there: an old woman who could be 60 years Conor's senior and her two sons old enough to be his father.

 SON #1
Is something wrong, Mother?

 OLD WOMAN
Howard. James. This is your father...

DISSOLVE TO:

108 INT. BEDROOM

108

Taupin and Brenna lie together.

Running her hands along the contours of his body she sees the countless faint scars of bullet and sword wounds.

Taupin strokes her softly.

 TAUPIN
"Brenna". In Celtic it means
"woman with raven hair". Only
chieftan's daughters were allowed
it.

Brenna is lost in Taupin's scars.

 BRENNNA
What is it like? Being you?

 TAUPIN
Empty. And fear. Fear of those that
would kill you and fear of those that
would love you. It can never last, and
in the end you always end up destroying
both.

(CONTINUED)

.08 (CONT'D)

BRENNA
But you've known so much.
History I'll only read about.

TAUPIN
It's all the same. Half lives that
never go away.

BRENNA
What is it you want?

TAUPIN
All of it finished.

109 EXT. FARMHOUSE - MORNING

109

Taupin and Brenna stand beside her car. She has an armload
of documents.

TAUPIN
Gettysburg's an hour's drive
at most. You should be back
by nightfall.

BRENNA
Will I see you again?

TAUPIN
Be careful. Don't stay any
longer than you have to.

Pause. Brenna considers touching him but instead climbs briskly
into the car.

TAUPIN
Good luck.

110 EXT. POLICE DEPARTMENT PARKING LOT - DAY

110

Detective Moran and his Inspector walk among parked squad cars.

MORAN
Are you sure?

(CONTINUED)

110 (CONT'D)

INSPECTOR
Won't know till the
records department comes
back with it this after-
noon. Looks good though.
They found the receipt
in his townhouse. It was
pretty smeared but had
Taupin's father listed
as a signatory.

MORAN
Round up who you can
and put them on standby.

INSPECTOR
Think we should call the
local P.D. out there
first?

MORAN
No. I want this to be
all ours.

111 INT. COUNTY RECORDS OFFICE

111

Brenna is standing at a counter signing the last of a stack.

CLERK
O.K. Mrs. Taupin, that's
all I need.

The clerk fills out a small sheet and hands it to her.

CLERK
Just take this down
the hall to the regis-
trar. Hurry up though,
it's near closing time.
Most everyone's gone
home already.

A pair of Levis follow Brenna at a distance down the corridor.

112 INT. REGISTRAR'S OFFICE

112

Sealed from the corridor by a pair of doors, two CLERKS
sit in an office mostly cleared of employees.

(CONTINUED)

112 (CONT'D)

Brenna hands the slip to a clerk.

CLERK #2
I'll be right back.

She disappears into the rear area.

BRENNA
(to other clerk)
Do you have a drinking
fountain?

CLERK #3
Around the corner.

Brenna steps around and takes a drink. She looks into her reflection on the stainless steel and spends a moment fiddling with her hair.

THE CLERK

Still hasn't returned. Brenna drums her fingers on the counter top and looks around the office.

The second clerk is also gone.

Brenna sees something unfamiliar on the second clerk's desk. She steps over to it.

It is a large blood stain.

Brenna shoots a glance to the double doors. They're closed.

Brenna rushes to the doors. Someone's locked them. She struggles with the handles, then turns to see the Knight walking to her with his stained sword.

With a SCREAM she kicks a rolling office chair into him and runs down an opposite corridor.

THE KNIGHT

Flings the chair aside and knocks open the door with a SLAM of his palm.

BRENNA

Has run out of corridor. She looks back at the Knight closing the distance. CRYING in fear, she frantically searches for a way out.

The Knight is nearly upon her.

(CONTINUED)

112 (CONT'D)

In desperation she runs into a janitorial closet, closing its heavy door.

THE CLOSET

Is dark and full of old paint cans and mops. Her BREATHING is at a PANIC.

THE KNIGHT

Tries the door handle.
Stepping back, he lifts his sword and HAMMERS it deep into the wood.

BRENNA
(crying)
Oh God...

He STRIKES again. And again. Splinters smack against surrounding walls.

BRENNA
Go away! Oh God, go
away!

CRYING hysterically, Brenna presses herself against the far wall, sliding to the floor in a crouch.

THE KNIGHT

Steps back and gives the door a last two-fisted swing.
Brenna SCREAMS.
The door collapses.

113 EXT. HIGHWAY - EVENING

113

A group of unmarked police cars race by with the last light of day.

114 INT. CAR

114

At the wheel is Moran's assistant, the inspector.

114 INT. HOME - NIGHT

114

Taupin stands at his fireplace, the only light in the room, poking at it with a tong.

(CONTINUED)

114 (CONT'D)

His gaze goes to a mantle clock.
It is 10:30 PM.

The phone RINGS.

He looks to it.

It RINGS again.

He picks up the receiver slowly and places it against his ear.

KNIGHT'S VOICE
We have some unfinished
business.

TAUPIN
Are you here?

KNIGHT'S VOICE
I want you to come to
me.

TAUPIN
And if I refuse?

KNIGHT'S VOICE
Give me an address where
I can forward Miss Cart-
wright's head.

This affects him.

KNIGHT'S VOICE
Yes laddie, I have her.

TAUPIN
Should I care?

KNIGHT
You have three hours.

115 EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

115

The unmarked cars shoot by.

116 INT. HOME

116

Taupin hangs up the phone.

He looks to the sword on the table, reflecting the firelight.

117 EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

POLICE OFFICERS, placed around Taupin's house, are COCKING shotguns and CHAMBERING pistols.

Two officers take positions on either side of the door. A third, after getting the signal, kicks the door open.

118 INT. FARMHOUSE

118

The officers drop to firing positions in the doorway. The room is empty.

119 INT. FARMHOUSE BEDROOM

119

An officer BURSTS in. It's empty.

120 INT. MAIN ROOM

120

The Inspector is on the phone.

INSPECTOR
He's not here.

121 EXT. THE JEFFERSON MEMORIAL - NIGHT

121.

Spotlights separate the white marble from the surrounding blackness.

Taupin's face moves into frame.

122 EXT. MONUMENT STAIRS - NIGHT

122

Sword firmly in one hand, Taupin climb's the monument's steps.

123 INT. JEFFERSON MEMORIAL - NIGHT

123

A twenty-five foot bronze of Thomas Jefferson flanked by his quotations.

A sword in one hand and Brenna in the other, the Knight stands at the statue's base.

KNIGHT
Welcome.

Taupin stands at the entrance.

KNIGHT
Kahn sends his best.

(CONTINUED)

23 (CONT'D)

In a corner the Asian's head lies on its side, the horror of death still pressed into the face. Taupin's eyes return slowly to the Knight and Brenna.

TAUPIN

Let her go.

The Knight throws Brenna roughly against a wall.

KNIGHT

You dissappoint me.

(looks at Brenna)

I thought you'd finally gotten over that sort of thing.

TAUPIN

Leave her out of this.

KNIGHT

As you wish.

The Knight holds his sword out at a ceremonial angle. Taupin does the same. The weapons are CLANKED together twice, then pulled back into battle position.

The two begin walking a circle, poised swords waiting for an opening.

The Knight leaps first, his clash of steel RINGING off the high walls.

Another ATTACK without result.

KNIGHT

You can do better than that.

Taupin swings. The Knight jumps back. Sweat gleams from their brows.

124 EXT. JEFFERSON MEMORIAL - NIGHT

124

Two LOVERS enjoy a late night walk along the tidal basin. There is a distant CLANKING of metal.

BOY

It's from over near the memorial.

He jumps up on a rock. Several yards away can be seen two figures attacking each other.

BOY

Shit.

125 INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

125

Standing at a map of the city, Moran nurses a cup of coffee.
The phone RINGS.

MORAN

Moran. All right, get a patrol
unit out there right away. I'll
meet them.

126 INT. JEFFERSON MEMORIAL - NIGHT

126

The Knight and Taupin are PANTING heavily.

The Knight goes low. Taupin blocks. The Knight comes overhead
quickly. Taupin misjudges and the blade slices deep into his
shoulder and chest. The impact knocks him flat on his back.

The Knight looks down on his wounded prey.

A SCREECH of brakes from outside the monument. Two OFFICERS
are coming up the steps.

KNIGHT

No. Not now.

127 EXT. MEMORIAL - NIGHT

127

The officers reach the top and enter.

INSIDE

One of the officers is Dennis, who sees only a CRYING Brenna
and Taupin lying wounded on the floor.

DENNIS

Brenna?

The Knight rushes up from behind, his sword in full swing.

128 EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

128

Moran's car blows through a cross street.

129 INT. CAR

129

Moran is at the wheel.

130 INT. MEMORIAL - NIGHT

130

The Knight walks from the two officers spread out like rag
dolls on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

30 (CONT'D)

KNIGHT
(to Taupin)

Get up.

Taupin looks at Brenna and the dead policemen. A resignation sweeps over him.

TAUPIN
What's the point?

KNIGHT
This isn't done. Get up.

TAUPIN
What's the point! You have me,
finish it!

KNIGHT
I have waited forever for this.
You will not cheapen it, little
boy.

TAUPIN
(irony)
Tradition.

KNIGHT
It's all we have.

TAUPIN
Go to hell.

The Knight looks to Brenna.

KNIGHT
Perhaps Miss Cartwright would like
to play.

TAUPIN
Leave her alone.

KNIGHT
Get up.

Taupin struggles to his feet. Blood pouring from his shirt, he stands uneasily with his sword at ready.

The Knight swings. Taupin blocks.

131 EXT. MEMORIAL - NIGHT

131

Moran drives up. There is an empty police car, the door still ajar.

32 INT. MEMORIAL - NIGHT

132

Taupin is badly outclassed.

He feebly fends off an attack, but the Knight returns quickly with a savage SLICE that rips open Taupin's stomach and throws him again to the floor.

BRENNA

You bastard!

KNIGHT

Be silent.

BRENNA

Leave him alone!

KNIGHT

You will be silent!!

The voice is THUNDERING.

Taupin kneels with his forehead pressed against the floor. His teeth grind in pain.

The Knight smiles.

KNIGHT

I do hope you're enjoying this
as much as me.

MORAN

Stands in the entryway. The Knight sees him.

KNIGHT

Get out.

Moran draws his pistol.

The Knight walks toward him.

KNIGHT

This is nothing that concerns you.

Moran levels his gun.

The Knight raises his sword.

KNIGHT

You will leave!

Two EXPLOSIONS as Moran FIRES. The slugs slam into the Knight, blowing him off his feet.

He lies still.

Moran looks to Brenna. To Taupin. Then he walks closer to the Knight.

(CONTINUED)

32 (CONT'D)

TAUPIN
(hoarse)

Don't.

Taupin curls in a spasm of pain.
Moran moves closer.

The Knight lies face down, blood oozing from exit wounds
over his heart. He isn't breathing.

Moran bends over slowly to see the Knight's face.

TAUPIN
Stop. You don't understand.

The Knight suddenly rolls over and plants his sword into Moran's
chest. The pistol DISCHARGES against a far wall.

Taupin crawls for the Knight.

Moran's mouth opens but no sound escapes. The Knight, blood
pouring from his mouth and nose, thrusts deeper then retracts
quickly.

Moran slides off the sword dead.

Taupin CUTS hard against the Knight's chest. The Knight GAGS
in surprise and crumples. Taupin CUTS again, then puts the
blade against the Knight's GURGLING throat.

TAUPIN
In manus tuas Domine commendo
spiritum meum. Auditorium nostrum
in nomine Domine.

He raises the sword.

TAUPIN
Requiescant in pace.

And CUTS the Knight's head off.

Taupin drops his sword.
His breathing quickens.
A sensation sweeps over him.

Taupin drops to the floor WHIMPERING. He sucks in painful gulps
of air.

BRENNA
My God.

Taupin bolts up and looks at her without seeing.

BRENNA
Conor.

(CONTINUED)

32 (CONT'D)

Taupin is looking past her.

A blood-stained hand suddenly GRABS Brenna's shoulder. She SCREAMS. The headless body of the Knight stands beside her.

THE KNIGHT'S HEAD

Lies on the floor.

The eyes open. The face pulls into a smile.

KNIGHT

And now you know.

The eyes roll up into the skull. The face slackens.

The hulking mass standing beside Brenna sways, then collapses to the ground.

TAUPIN

Is CRYING. Not from wounds he no longer feels, but from something else.

BRENNA

What's wrong?

TAUPIN

I can't stand it. Oh God, I can't stand it!

Brenna kneels beside him.

TAUPIN

The scream of your blood. The shriek of trees. Stop it! Stop it!

Brenna SOBS.

BRENNA

What is it?

TAUPIN

I'm the last. Oh Christ, I'm the last one!

Taupin doubles over in pain. The pain of the whole world trying to force itself into him.

Brenna tries to hold him. He pushes her savagely away.

TAUPIN

Get out.

BRENNA

No!

(CONTINUED)

132 (CONT'D)

TAUPIN
I'll destroy you. I've destroyed
everything I've ever touched! Oh
God...

He doubles over in pain.

BRENNA
Conor...

He grabs his sword and threatens her.

TAUPIN
Get out!

SOBBING, Brenna runs from the memorial. Taupin is alone. Bleeding.
Crying. In agony.

FADE OUT

FADE UP:

133 INT. SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM

133

Brenna at work in the research area. She's silent. Distant.
Something is missing from her.

134 EXT. GEORGETOWN STREET - DAY

134

Brenna stands in the street before Taupin's townhouse.
A boarded up window. A for-sale sign. Taupin is gone forever.
As if he never was.

135 INT. BRENNAS APARTMENT

135

A desk. A single light. A cup of coffee.
A typewriter.

Brenna tries to force thoughts to the surface. CLACK-CLACK.
It is at last her journal article. She types a line, then rips
it from the carriage and tears it to pieces.
The thoughts won't come.

136 EXT. WASHINGTON MALL - DAY

136

Brenna sits on the expanse of grass throwing scraps to a group
of wild park cats.

(CONTINUED)

36 (CONT'D)

A shadow covers her face. She looks up.

It is Taupin.

Something has changed him. His face is less cynical. More vulnerable. More human.

He sits down the grass beside her.

BRENNNA

(after a moment)

What are we supposed to say?

The cat's eyes are all fixed on Taupin. They cautiously shrink away, frightened.

TAUPIN

The emptyness. The years and years
of void. Nothingness. Bordered only
by the quest for ultimate nothingness.
Who would have guessed?

BRENNNA

The inheritance.

TAUPIN

Not power. Not control.

Taupin holds a blade of grass as if it was speaking to him.

TAUPIN

Life. It is the gift and the under-
standing of life.

BRENNNA

You have lived forever.

TAUPIN

Life is only life when it is bounded
by death. The inheritance is death.
The gift is the finality of life.
To be part of the fabric. The inside.
(turns to Brenna)

I love you Brenna.

Brenna's chin quivers.

TAUPIN

It will be horrible. The future. I
may die tomorrow or 10,000 tomorrows.
I can promise you nothing. Nothing
but a moment. Maybe two. But a moment
of love, is that not worth a lifetime?

(CONTINUED)

36 (CONT'D)

BRENNA
(crying)

Yes.

He holds her. They hold each other.

TAUPIN
It's taken me so long. So very
long.

A jogger runs by, unaware of any life but his own.

FADE OUT

END