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REUBEN, REUBEN

Screenplay by

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Based on

The Novel by Peter DeVries

and

The Play by Herman Shumlin

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FADE IN:

1. EXT. SUBURBAN GARDEN - DAY

The CAMERA is MOVING SLOWLY across a country club lawn in which nature has fought a losing battle with affluence -- the hedges and shrubs are manicured, the flowers preen in overarranged patterns. The CAMERA barely allows us a view of the rear end of a neo-colonial building -- and in a moment brings us to a slightly sloping lawn, disfigured temporarily by six rows of folding chairs occupied by suburban wives in the mid-thirties to mid-forties age group. Casually and expensively dressed, their attention is focussed on a platform whose chief ornament is a lectern, behind which stands a hulk of a man. His clothes are also casual, but definitely not too expensive. His corduroy jacket is unbuttoned, revealing a white shirt with a visible stain in the midriff section. One button is missing and the shirt is not too neatly tucked into trousers that were pressed -- oh, not more than six months ago. A thick head of hair falls loosely over his forehead and in several other directions. His age? Difficult to guess. Either side of forty.

We hear his voice well before we see him, for the CAMERA is MOVING SLOWLY among the women toward the lectern. And it is a voice that commands attention. Sonorous, slightly accented (British, but not too upper class) and it is declaiming ---

THE DECLAIMER

'That sempiternal slut, the sea,  
Spits and hisses in my father's sleep  
Sprawls, crawls, sucks her soft sod,  
sand gums, moans,  
At the full moon caught among the rocks  
Like a lozenge in her broken teeth, mumbles,'

The CAMERA SEARCHES the faces of the women as they listen. Their expressions are respectful, intent -- and some are trying to hide the fact that they are not completely comprehending ---

THE DECLAIMER

'Fumbles at the lock, the salt sill  
Where my father snores into the tide  
all night,  
Blowing the little fishes back to  
Blatherskite.  
And I, a dull and muddy-mettled Pascal,  
Think how all her white limbs and his red  
hunger came to this

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE DECLAIMER (cont'd)  
A night hag riding the Atlantic deep  
While he dreams of brooms in his  
disreputable sleep.'

The CAMERA is back now on the Poet. He looks out at his audience that is maintaining a deferential silence; not absolutely certain that he has finished. The Poet speaks; his tone is slightly ironic; self-mocking.

POET  
You may applaud now. I'm quite  
through.

Embarrassed laughter from the women, then loud applause. It goes on. He holds up a restraining hand.

POET  
Enough. Sufficient.  
(the applause dwindles)  
And now, I believe that the modest  
stipend you are paying me for this  
random reading of some of my more  
minor poetry entitles you to a  
brief question and answer period.  
I say 'brief' because the cocktail  
hour is fast approaching. Are  
there any questions?  
(hesitancy among  
the women)  
No questions? Then may I ask a  
question of you. Did any of you  
lovely ladies understand a line  
of my poetry?

There are various mumblings from the women -- "Oh, yes --"  
"Yes, of course --" "Most of it --"

POET  
I'm glad to hear it. Usually when  
I have finished and look out over  
that sea of suburban faces I catch  
expressions you often see on the  
faces of cattle who don't quite  
understand what is happening to  
them.

Nervous titters from the women. Then one raises her hand.

WOMAN #1  
Mr. McGland.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND

Yes, my dear.

WOMAN #1

In your closing poem, Mr. McGland, you speak of your father. Would you tell us a little of your background? There are so many conflicting stories.

MC GLAND

Which I help promulgate. The truth is, I was one of eight children. My father, an impoverished weaver in the north of Scotland, was half Welsh. So was my mother -- her other half, Irish. Therefore, I suppose you could say there is more Welsh rain in me than Scotch mist.

Polite laughter. Another woman is emboldened to speak up.

WOMAN #2

Mr. McGland, we would be very interested to know who is your favorite author?

MC GLAND

I am.  
(laughter)

WOMAN #2

I mean, whom do you read?

MC GLAND

Everything by everybody.

LUCILLE

Oh, Mr. McGland, not everybody. Do you read Harold Robbins and that ilk?

MC GLAND

Yes, my dear, I read Harold Robbins but I don't inhale.  
(laughter)

LUCILLE

(laughing)  
Are you confessing a fondness for trashy writers?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND

My dear lady, there are no trashy writers, only trashy readers. Do I see another hand?

WOMAN #3

Can you sum up for us, Mr. McGland, the moral standards of today as portrayed in present day literature as opposed to the writings of--oh--a century ago?

MC GLAND

I not only can, I will. A hundred or so years ago Hester Prynne of The Scarlet Letter was given an A for Adultery. Today she would rate no better than a C-plus.

(laughter. He waves it aside)

Another woman raises her hand.

WOMAN #4

Mr. McGland ---

MC GLAND

At your service.

WOMAN #4

So much has been written about ---  
(seems a little flustered)

I mean -- I mean there have been so many stories -- uh, that is -- one hears so many -- rumors -- myths ---

(her voice trails off)

MC GLAND

My dear Mrs. ---?

WOMAN #4

Weyburn.

MC GLAND

My dear Mrs. Weyburn, I realize that your highly developed sense of delicacy makes it difficult to say outright that you are interested in my private life ---

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A mechanical "Oh, no" from Mrs. Weyburn which he waves aside.

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
All I will say on that subject  
is that given a little money,  
education and social standing,  
any man with any style at all  
can make a mess of his love life.

WOMAN #1  
(voice from the rear)  
And women? What about women?

MC GLAND  
Women? Any woman with any gumption  
at all can make a shambles of her  
marriage.

The women don't quite know how to take this. A few  
nervous laughs -- some murmurs of protest ---

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
I exaggerate you think? Very  
well. How many women here haven't  
made a shambles of their marriage?  
May I see a show of hands?

Now there is really nervous laughter, plus some wild,  
intentionally flamboyant waving of hands. An attractive,  
smartly dressed woman in the first row stands up.

BOBBY SPRINGER  
I imagine that this is the ideal  
time for me as Chairlady of ---

LUCILLE  
(voice)  
Chairperson, Bobby.

BOBBY  
Sorry, Lucille, as Chairperson of  
the Woodsmoke Women's Literary  
Club to jump in and thank you,  
Mr. Gowan McGland for an enchanting,  
informative and cultural afternoon ---

MC GLAND  
Thank you, Mrs. Springer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

(very formal)

And since I understand that you are to be in our midst for a little while longer, to express the hope that we will have the privilege of again hearing the lilting words of a poet who has become -- oh, how shall I put it ---?

MC GLAND

(the self-mocking tone)

'A legend in his own time' will do very nicely, Mrs. Springer.

BOBBY

A legend in his own time.

MC GLAND

Thank you again, Mrs. Springer.  
And may I ask one last question?  
(expectant look  
from the women)

Is anybody here driving past the Dew Drop Inn? I need a lift.

There are cries of "I am --" "It's only a little out of my way --" "Mr. McGland, would you mind signing one of your books--" as a goodly portion of the women converge on the poet.

2. EXT. THE DEW DROP INN - LONG SHOT - DAY

an old-fashioned New England Inn which has more or less been converted into a motel. There is a one story ground floor addition containing a row of bedrooms. A car has drawn up to the addition and in the LONG SHOT we see McGland exiting from the car. He turns and thanks his driver with a courtly bow. Then, inserting a key, he enters one of the ground floor rooms.

3. INT. - MC GLAND'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

as McGland comes in. The room looks fairly comfortable. It is furnished with fake antiques. McGland opens the bathroom door. As he leaves it open, we see him inspecting his face in the medicine chest mirror. He doesn't look happy with what he sees. He slaps his face

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

with some after-shve lotion. Then he spreads some tooth-paste on a brush, which he wields for a maximum of five seconds. A quick swish of tap water and then he is back in the bedroom.

He removes his jacket, throws it on a chair; then, he notices the stain on his shirt. He rips it off, opens a drawer of the dresser. We see exactly two shirts. He yanks one of them, hastily dons it. Then he notices that it, too, has a large stain. Looking annoyed he starts to unbutton it, then makes a "oh, hell with it" gesture. He looks at his watch; walks impatiently to the window, raises one of the slats of the Venetian blind, peers out. Dissatisfied with what he sees he flings himself on the bed, stretches out, and his hands clasped behind the back of his head, stares up at the ceiling.

In a moment, there is a discreet knock on the door. He springs to the door.

MC GLAND

(a whisper)

Bobby?

WOMAN'S VOICE

(also sotto voce)

Yes.

He opens the door and Bobby Springer slides in and into the arms of McGland. They kiss passionately. Then --

MC GLAND

I was beginning to think you weren't coming.

BOBBY

I had to spend a little time throwing people off the track.

(laughs)

You should have heard me tearing you down with my sister-in-law. I said I don't know if he's a clean poet or a dirty businessman.

Instinctively he tries to cover the stain on his shirt with his hand.

BOBBY (cont'd)

He reminds me of a waltzing bear, I said. Things like that. And

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY (cont'd)  
I'm afraid I was very nasty about  
your poetry. I said it was very  
derivative.

MC GLAND  
(not at all  
perturbed)  
Of whom? I doubt if you know  
the name of any other poet.

BOBBY  
(kissing him)  
Of course not.

The phone rings. McGland picks it up.

MC GLAND  
Hello? -- Yes. -- Who? Mrs. Who?  
-- Hacksby?

In the b.g. Bobby reacts. First surprise, then anger.

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
Oh, with an X. H-A-X. I'm  
relieved to hear it -- Oh, thank  
you. I enjoyed my poetry too.  
(Bobby's lip curls)  
Tomorrow night? -- Oh, well, I  
-- I'll have to have a peek at  
my engagement book. Hang on,  
will you?

He pushes the receiver under the pillow, turns to Bobby.

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
Who the hell is Mrs. Haxby?

BOBBY  
(grimly)  
My sister-in-law, Lucille.

MC GLAND  
Really?

BOBBY  
Unfortunately.

MC GLAND  
She's asked me to dinner tomorrow  
night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

Say you're busy.

MC GLAND

Are you stark, raving mad? A free meal, and me a starving poet?

He retrieves the receiver from under the pillow.

MC GLAND

Mrs. Haxby, I'd be delighted. Thank you -- no, I don't think I know that restaurant. But I do hope it's expensive.

(laughs)

Thank you, Mrs. Haxby with an X. Looking forward.

He hangs up, faces a tight-lipped Bobby.

MC GLAND

She's picking me up "sevenish," she said. She has a lovely voice. Has she the breasts to go with it?

BOBBY

Gowan, I warn you, stay away from Lucille.

MC GLAND

Why?

BOBBY

Dr. Haxby, that's why. -

MC GLAND

(unconcerned)

Medical sort, is he?

BOBBY

Dentist. The best.

BOBBY

Movie stars come all the way from Hollywood to have Jack work on them.

MC GLAND

And because movie stars come all the way from Hollywood I'm supposed to avoid his wife? I don't get the logic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

The logic is he'll kill you. I happen to know what he did to another man who made a play for Lucille.

MC GLAND

What makes you think I'm going to make a play for Lucille?

BOBBY

Because I've known you for only a few days, but I know you're a sonofabitch. I also know Lucille.

MC GLAND

Was she wearing narrow black slacks with a crease you could slice cheese with?

BOBBY

(tight-lipped)

I thought you didn't notice any other woman.

MC GLAND

I noticed that she has a flat ass. Women with flat asses lack warm natures. The curve is missing from the temperament too.

BOBBY

Well, I'm going to see to it that Carl and I join you at dinner.

MC GLAND

Good. I'll feel well protected. And now ---

He starts to unbutton the top buttons of her blouse.

MC GLAND

(cheerfully)

And now -- to work.

BOBBY

(sardonically)

Oh, charming.

She starts to pull back, but McGland persists, holding her tight. After a moment, she stops resisting.

## 4. INT. LOBBY - THE DEW DROP INN - DAY

at the reception desk. A middle-aged man, bordering on elderly, is behind the desk, distributing mail into various slots. In front of the desk, off a bit to the side, a thin, tall, old New England type man is sprawled in a chair. He looks to be in his early sixties; spots of gray in his hair; wire-rimmed glasses. At the side of his chair a large English sheep dog is asleep, his snout resting on his outstretched paws. The man behind the desk pauses, looks at a letter, turns. His name is Harry Pycraft, his companion's, Frank Spofford.

PYCRAFT

Aha! There's one for me. Can you believe it?

SPOFFORD

(curtly)

No.

Pycraft examines the return address.

PYCRAFT

My second wife. You can guess what she wants.

SPOFFORD

Money.

PYCRAFT

An' she ain't gonna get it. She was a cold compress. When I put my hand on her knee she would pry it off, the way you pry an abalone off a rock out West.

SPOFFORD

(dryly)

You're perfec'ly right, Harry. Don't give her a cent.

At this point McGland enters.

MC GLAND

Mr. Pycraft ---

PYCRAFT

Yes, Mr. McGland?

Reuben, who has been sleeping against his master's feet, suddenly leaps upon McGland with obvious affection, his

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

tail wagging and his tongue licking McGland's hand. Spofford, who had been listening, fascinated, to the colloquy between Pycraft and McGland, rises, and admonishes the dog --

SPOFFORD

Easy, Reuben, easy -- Can't hardly believe it. Reuben usually don't take to strangers. Downright hostile, mostly. Speaks well for you Mr. -- McGland I think Harry said your name was.

MC GLAND

(nods)

Naturally, an English sheep dog recognizes a compatriot in a foreign land. Back home, he wouldn't give me the time of day. Beautiful example of the breed. Wouldn't surprise me if he dressed for dinner.

SPOFFORD

Wouldn't surprise me none neither.

PYCRAFT

(as McGland starts  
out with chair)

Oh, Mr. McGland -- post card came for you today.

MC GLAND

(taking card)

Thank you.

(he looks around)

I wonder if I could borrow that chair for a bit.

PYCRAFT

Chair in your room, ain't there. Two if I'm not mistaken, Mr. McGland.

MC GLAND

(with aplomb)

You're not mistaken, Mr. Pycraft. And they're both splendid examples of fake American Colonial, but unfortunately they're too frail for what I have in mind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PYCRAFT

May I ask what you have in mind?

MC GLAND

Certainly you may. I suffer, Mr. Pycraft, from acute arthritis in the back of my neck. It is particularly acute when I -- ah -- have engaged in some -- ah -- strenuous. My doctor recommended traction and supplied me with an orthopedic collar on which my head reposes like that of John the Baptist on a platter.

PYCRAFT

I get the picture, but where does the chair ---

MC GLAND

I'm coming to that, Mr. Pycraft. The collar is equipped with straps, by means of which I am supposed to suspend myself from some sturdy object.

PYCRAFT

I still don't understand where the ---

MC GLAND

And I need a sturdy chair to stand on to prevent me from hanging myself, although I confess there are times I don't know why I bother.

PYCRAFT

Take the chair, Mr. McGland, though I'd 'preciate if you removed your shoes afore you ---

MC GLAND

Certainly, Mr. Pycraft. And thank you.

PYCRAFT

(tartly)

And I'd also 'preciate if you allowed me to finish a sentence once in a ---

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND

Sorry about that, Mr. Pycraft...  
(on his way out)  
There'll always be an England,  
won't there, Reuben.

He leaves. Spofford looks at Pycraft.

SPOFFORD

Poet fellow, ain't he? Famous,  
kinda?

PYCRAFT

(shrugs)  
To me he looks just like anybody  
else. In fact, worse.

5. INT. - MC GLAND'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

CLOSE SHOT - POST CARD

lying on the night table. OVER THIS, McGland's voice:

MC GLAND'S VOICE

No, I'm not surprised particularly  
to have heard from you ---

The CAMERA is now on McGland, who is talking on the phone.  
He is standing on the sturdy chair, wearing the orthopedic  
collar whose hooks are attached to the cross beam which  
holds up the ceiling.

MC GLAND

What does surprise me is that  
there was no postage due on your  
card -- Now really, Edith, what's  
the sense of my coming to New York.  
What have we got to talk about? --  
Lunch? Frankly, Edith, I can't  
afford to buy your lunch -- You'll  
buy me lunch? That doesn't sound  
like you, Edith -- Tell you what,  
Edith, if I can raise the train  
fare to New York I'll call you.  
Collect, of course. Good-bye --  
no, I don't love you. No more  
than you love me ---

## 6. EXT. MOTEL - SPOFFORD - DAY

is exiting with Reuben at his heels. After a few steps Reuben suddenly leaps from Spofford's side, dashes down the row of doors, stops at one of them, scratches at the wood, barking and yelping.

SPOFFORD  
(running toward Reuben)  
Reuben! -- What the devil are  
you doing! Get away from there --!

He arrives at the door just as it opens, revealing McGland, holding the orthopedic collar in his hand.

SPOFFORD  
Oh -- sorry, Mr. McGland.

MC GLAND  
Not at all. I'm flattered.

He pats the head of Reuben, who is slobbering all over him.

SPOFFORD  
C'mon, Reuben, we've got a long  
walk home.

MC GLAND  
Mind if I walk a ways with you.  
That traction loosened my neck  
and stiffened my legs.

SPOFFORD  
I'd be delighted. And so would  
Reuben, eh, Reuben?

The three of them start away, the CAMERA with them. Reuben never leaves McGland's side, occasionally leaping at him to demonstrate his affection.

SPOFFORD  
I know who you are, and it wouldn't  
hurt none for you to know who I am.  
(extends his hand)  
I'm Frank Spofford and any friend  
of Reuben's is a friend of mine.

McGland laughs; shakes Spofford's hand. They walk.

SPOFFORD  
Poet feller, I hear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND

That's what people say.  
(ruefully)  
I make no such claim.

SPOFFORD

Well, I'm a chicken farmer. I'm not going to say 'a mere chicken farmer' like you might expect, because in the first place I lack the humility for it, and in the second there's nothing mere about running a poultry ranch. Nothing could be less mere if you want the truth.

MC GLAND

Oh, I do. There's nothing I cherish more than the truth. I don't practice it, but I cherish it.

(they smile at  
each other)

6A. EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

SPOFFORD

Poetry. Hell, in high school, I was forced to read a poet -- Tennyson -- A feller countryman, I believe, of yours and Reuben's.  
(Reuben barks)  
Didn't care for him much.

MC GLAND

Neither did I. I've always maintained that reading Tennyson is like drinking liqueur. You're likelier to get sick on it than drunk.

6B. EXT. BIRCH HILLS - DAY

Spofford smiles at him. They like each other.

MC GLAND

Am I correct in assuming that you're one of that endangered species, a native New Englander?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPOFFORD

I'm worse than that. I'm the most displaced of all displaced persons, your native son in a modern town. And -- can you believe it? -- I got displaced by staying put!

(a look from McGland)

I saw this town where I was born grow from eighteen hundred neighbors to twenty thousand strangers -- all of 'em swarmin' in from New York and thereabouts. Look there --!

He points, and from their POV we see the entrance to a plush subdivision, complete with an iron grill gate and a swaying wooden placard bearing the painted legend: "BIRCH HILLS."

SPOFFORD (cont'd)

That's where they live. And in other subdivisions with names like Vineyard Acres and Orchard View -- all named, God help me, after the woods and the grapevines and the apple trees they bulldozed out of existence to make way for the new culture.

(McGland nods sympathetically)

And the wives!

MC GLAND

Don't stop. I'm particularly interested in hearing about the wives.

SPOFFORD

Well, they're the kind of women who put 'ish' behind everything and 'sort of' in front of it.

(McGland smiles knowingly)

'What size fowl did Madam have in mind? How many pounds?'  
'Sort of -- fivish.'

MC GLAND

I know. I'm invited to dinner tomorrow night 'sort of sevenish.'

## 7. EXT. MODERN CHURCH STREET - DAY

SPOFFORD

And look what they did to our  
beautiful little town with these  
modern monstrosities.

McGland stops in his tracks, his attention caught by a  
glass and brick church set back from the street.

MC GLAND

Its style is modern, but you will  
admit that it's a handsome building.

SPOFFORD

I don't admit a thing. I like  
old churches and old thinking.  
Modern, did you say? That there  
church is so modern I hear they're  
thinking of making divorce a  
sacrament.

## 8. EXT. OLD FASHIONED FARMHOUSE - LONG SHOT - DAY

The kind with a veranda that runs clear around the house.  
Gabled and turreted, but freshly painted. It stands on  
the summit of a gently sloping lawn. A lone sheep is  
nibbling on the grass. And now, McGland, Spofford and  
Reuben come into view.

SPOFFORD

Well, looks like we're home. Oh  
-- that there sheep ain't one of  
ours. Belongs to the Dalrymples  
down the road. They think it's  
sheik -- is that how you pronounce  
it? -- to raise sheep.

(points to animal)

That look like wool to you?

MC GLAND

(prepared for anything)

It isn't?

SPOFFORD

(a rigorous shake  
of the head)

Forty percent polyester. Reuben  
won't even bother to bark at that  
sheep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND  
(smiles, extends  
his hand)  
Well, can't tell you how much  
I've enjoyed ---

SPOFFORD  
Wait, this should be fun ---

He points to a car which has come to a stop in front of the house. McGland gives him a questioning look. A svelte woman, wearing the inevitable tailored slacks, is emerging from the car.

SPOFFORD  
That's Mrs. Beauseigneur.  
Pussy Beauseigneur.

MC GLAND  
Commuter type? One of the  
'ish' people?

SPOFFORD  
(nods)  
But I kinda like her. She's  
one of the few among the tribe  
who cooks chicken without wine.

McGland gives her another look. She is standing by the steps, but makes no move.

MC GLAND  
Why is she hesitating?

SPOFFORD  
(chuckling)  
She's trying to drum up enough  
courage to tackle Mare.

MC GLAND  
Mare?

SPOFFORD  
Mary. My daughter-in-law, Mare.  
She and George run the business  
since my wife died. I kinda  
take it easy.

MC GLAND  
If I may ask, what is it about  
your daughter-in-law that requires  
tackling?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPOFFORD

Well, Mrs. Beauseigneur is here to try and buy some chickens and Mare isn't going to sell her any. Mare won't sell to any commuter.

(McGland looks puzzled)

It's because of Mrs. Springer.

MC GLAND

(even more puzzled)

Because of Mrs. Springer?

SPOFFORD

You know Mrs. Springer? Bobby Springer?

MC GLAND

(cryptically)

Barely.

In the b.g. Mrs. Beauseigneur is pacing slowly back and forth, but does not ascend the porch steps.

SPOFFORD

Well, Mrs. Springer has a son called Tad and Mare and George have a daughter, Geneva, which makes her my granddaughter. It's surprising to see how a young girl can turn into a beautiful young woman, like a flower that you see one day all curled up in a hard little ball, and the next morning you look and the petals have opened wide and it shines like the sun itself. She --

(pauses)

Would you like me to get to the point?

MC GLAND

Oh, please.

SPOFFORD

It's just that when I get on the subject of Geneva -- Well, she and Tad hit it off. So much so that Bobby Springer hustled Tad off to England to college.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPOFFORD (cont'd)

Evidently the daughter of a chicken farmer wasn't good enough for the son of a man who commutes to New York every day and has an air-conditioned office and takes three-hour lunches. Well, Mare took it worse than Geneva who went off to a fancy girls school in Pennsylvania someplace, but Mare now lives for only one thing -- to see Mrs. Springer come into our place in her tailored dungarees and ask for a couple of fryers. Just once. The only way Mare can vent her spleen is by taking it out on all the commuters. They stand for the Springers and the Springers stand for them. Oh, look -- she's taking the leap.

From their POV we see Mrs. Beauseigneur approach the retail counter.

9. EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

arranged as a store. There is a long counter. Behind it are shelves containing boxed eggs. Mrs. Beauseigneur stands at the counter, punches a bell. In the b.g. we can see Spofford and McGland. They have seated themselves on rocking chairs.

Mare and George make an appearance. George stays in the b.g. With Mare, what else can he do? Mare fastens a deadpan glance at Mrs. Beauseigneur, who adopts a nervous manner of false bonhomie.

MRS. BEAUSEIGNEUR

Good evening. Getting quite coolish, isn't it?

(no answer from Mare)

I'd like a few of your wonderful fryers. Last week, when you didn't have any left, my husband was so disappointed. He says no one else has such delicious ones as you have. Four, please?

MARE

We're out of fryers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. BEAUSEIGNEUR  
Oh. Then can I have two broilers?

MARE  
We're out of broilers.

MRS. BEAUSEIGNEUR  
Oh, dear.  
(pause, then with  
some desperation)  
My husband isn't really a commuter.  
He gets off at Stamford. Why, we  
don't even take the New York Times,  
except on Sundays.

MARE  
Occupation?

MRS. BEAUSEIGNEUR  
Investment adviser.

MARE  
Place of residence?

MRS. BEAUSEIGNEUR  
Vineyard Acres, we're practically  
neighbors.

(a little apologetic  
laugh)  
Oh, I know we're making it a bit  
crampedish for you, but --  
(nervous laugh)

You see, Lester telephoned me  
just now to ask could he bring  
a friend, a classmate home for  
dinner. I thought, Gawd, the  
house is an absolute shambles,  
and I'm not a short order cook.  
But maybe if I could fricassee  
a few --

(puts her hand on  
Mare's arm. Mare  
pulls away)  
As I say, his office is in Stamford.  
If you ever need any advice on  
investments --

(an idea hits her)  
He's thinking of driving in on the  
Thruway. Not taking the train at  
all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARE

Sorry. No chickens.

MRS. BEAUSEIGNEUR

(desperation time)

Then I'd better make an omelet.  
Two dozen eggs, please.

MARE

We're out of eggs.

MRS. BEAUSEIGNEUR

(exploding)

I didn't jilt your daughter.  
My husband didn't jilt your  
daughter. Yet you make us drive  
clear to town for chickens --  
frozen ones at that! -- because  
somebody else did. If that isn't  
paranoid, what is!

She storms out, slamming the screen door.

10. EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH - DAY

as Mrs. Beauseigneur rushes down the steps and into her  
car. McGland and Spofford watch. Reuben runs after her,  
barking furiously.

SPOFFORD

Poor woman, half the wives in  
Woodsmoke are in analysis because  
of Mare. Care to come in and  
meet Mare?

MC GLAND

Not today, thank you. I don't  
think I'm up to it.

SPOFFORD

Know what you mean. You'll like  
George, though. A modest man.  
If you know George there's no  
point in his being anything else.

Reuben is back on the porch now. SOUND of a motor  
turning, but not too successfully.

SPOFFORD (cont'd)

Well, I drop in on Harry Pycraft

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPOFFORD (cont'd)  
quite often -- he's the only  
drinking crony I have left --  
so I guess I'll be seeing you.

MC GLAND  
(sincerely)  
I hope so. Thank you for the  
walk and that -- little scene.  
It was grandish.

They smile and shake hands. SOUND of the motor -- it  
sputters and dies out.

SPOFFORD  
Poor Pussy Beauseigneur.

He goes into the house. As McGland is about to start  
off, a very distraught Mrs. Beauseigneur comes back.

MRS. BEAUSEIGNEUR  
And now on top of everything my  
car won't start.

MC GLAND  
(gently)  
There is no God, Mrs. Beauseigneur.

MRS. BEAUSEIGNEUR  
(looking vindictively  
toward the house)  
Aren't they the most wretched people!

MC GLAND  
Oh, I don't know. I like Mr.  
Spofford. His stories are longer  
than Lent, but I like him.

MRS. BEAUSEIGNEUR  
(eyes him speculatively)  
You don't know anything about cars,  
do you?

MC GLAND  
I don't know what gives you the  
right to talk to me that way.  
But, yes it's true. I know  
nothing about cars.

MRS. BEAUSEIGNEUR  
They'll never let me use the phone

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. BEAUSEIGNEUR (cont'd)  
to call the Automobile Club, so  
I'd better give it another try.  
Oh, well ---

As she goes off, Spofford comes out carrying a paper bag  
in a furtive manner. He hands the bag to McGland.

SPOFFORD  
Can you see that Mrs. Beauseigneur  
gets this?

MC GLAND  
What is it?

SPOFFORD  
A chicken. I snuk it past Mare.  
It'd be worth my life if ---

MARE'S VOICE  
(from house)  
Frank!!

SPOFFORD  
May God have mercy on my soul.

He runs back into the house.

SPOFFORD (cont'd)  
I deny everything ---!

SOUND of motor sputtering and dying. Mrs. Beauseigneur  
returns.

MRS. BEAUSEIGNEUR  
It's no use ---

MC GLAND  
(hands her the bag)  
This may brighten things up a bit.

She looks into the bag; shrieks -- when she speaks her  
tone is as if she had discovered jewels.

MRS. BEAUSEIGNEUR  
Oh my God -- chicken!! How did  
you ever manage --

MC GLAND  
I may not know cars, but I do know  
chickens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. BEAUSEIGNEUR  
How can I ever thank you ---?

MC GLAND  
(as he leads her off)  
There must be a way.

They walk on.

11. INT. BURGUNDY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

CLOSE SHOT - AN ALMOST EMPTY BOTTLE OF WINE

is being lifted from its chilled home in an ice bucket by a large masculine hand. A quick CUT to a fuller shot shows five people seated in an obviously expensive restaurant. McGland is seated in the middle. On his right is Lucille, on his left, Bobby Springer. The husbands of the aforementioned, C.B. Springer and Dr. Haxby are seated on the flanks. Dr. Haxby is pouring what's left of the wine into the glasses of Bobby and McGland. The latter gives evidence of having imbibed rather freely during the evening, but it is not apparent in his speech. The husbands are the suburban type. Both in their early forties, well-groomed, self-confident. Dr. Haxby looks like a handsome ex-prizefighter. As he pours, his wife, Lucille is addressing McGland.

LUCILLE  
-- it's just possible we'll be  
able to rustle up a ticket for  
you. Jack hates ballet.

DR. HAXBY  
(pouring)  
I don't hate ballet, Lucille.  
I loathe it. Big difference.

LUCILLE  
(to McGland)  
So if you don't mind escorting  
me ---

Bobby's lips tighten almost imperceptibly.

MC GLAND  
Not so fast. What group is it?  
The kind whose dances depict

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
contemporary phenomena such  
as slum clearance?

LUCILLE  
(laughing)  
But they do it beautifully.

MC GLAND  
Without me, I'm afraid. Going  
to New York tomorrow.

Dr. Haxby pours the remainder of the wine for McGland.

BOBBY  
Gowan, you say you like to work  
nights. Do you think it's wise  
to ---

MC GLAND  
My dear, it really doesn't matter.  
Sometimes I write drunk and revise  
sober and sometimes I write sober  
and revise drunk.

He smiles at her, sips the wine. A waiter sets the check  
before Dr. Haxby.

DR. HAXBY  
Well, I may not get the acclaim  
you writing fellows do, but my  
work requires a steadier hand  
and much earlier hours, so I  
guess I'll sign off ---

MC GLAND  
(as Haxby examines  
the check)  
I often think -- with no great  
affection -- of the dentist in  
my home town. He was a great  
believer in pulling teeth to save  
other teeth, as you chop down one  
tree to give another a chance.

Lucille laughs, seems to lean ever so slightly closer to  
McGland.

CLOSE SHOT - UNDER TABLE

Lucille's left hand is now resting on McGland's right knee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Over this is heard Dr. Haxby's voice.

DR. HAXBY'S VOICE  
I don't want to sound chauvinistic ---

MC GLAND  
Oh, please do.

FULL SHOT - LUCILLE

McGland's expression has not changed -- gives no sign that he is aware of Lucille's hand on his knee. Dr. Haxby places a credit card on the check. The waiter picks it up.

DR. HAXBY  
Well, dentistry in America is several light years ahead of our colleagues in Europe.

CHARLEY SPRINGER  
It isn't only dentistry, Jack. Take this ad campaign we're doing for speed reading.

MC GLAND  
Eh?

SPRINGER  
Speed reading. Accelerated reading.

McGland looks blank.

SPRINGER (cont'd)  
(nods)  
I gather it hasn't made any headway in England.

MC GLAND  
I don't think they've even heard of it. I figure we in the British Isles are from fifteen to twenty years behind the cultural decline going on everywhere else in the world.

Lucille and Bobby laugh.

CLOSE SHOT - UNDER TABLE

Lucille's hand is now halfway up McGland's thigh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Now Bobby's hand appears on the scene. It comes to rest on McGland's right knee. Over this ---

SPRINGER'S VOICE  
You may laugh, but it's done  
wonders. Loomis, for instance ---

FULL SHOT - TABLE - MC GLAND

is giving full attention to Springer as if both his knees were not in protective custody.

SPRINGER  
Loomis of Allied Fertilizer came to us in a state and said he simply could not get his work done because of the reports piling up on his desk. He was actually desperate. Well, six months in the workshop and he can read all he has to for the day in an hour. He's a new man.

MC GLAND  
A new man? Good. I don't think I would care to have met the old one.

SPRINGER  
And our star pupil, a graduate of the University of Vermont, read 'War and Peace' in fifty-five minutes. He was clocked by a neutral committee.

MC GLAND  
He read it the way your fertilizer man now reads reports. He did not read the book as a book.

During this, Dr. Haxby's credit card has been returned with the check. He signs it, the waiter leaves.

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
I, for one, would want to read Fitzgerald's 'Tender Is The Night' as slowly as possible. I would pay vast sums to a course that could teach me to read the books I love at a snail's pace.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Springer and Dr. Haxby exchange glances, as they rise to leave.

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
(getting up)  
Why restrict your course to  
Reading? Why not Listening?  
The Minute Waltz in five or six  
seconds, or ---

He stops short as Dr. Haxby drops a twenty dollar bill  
on the table as a tip, but goes on quickly ---

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
A man could go to the opera and  
by nine o'clock he could be home  
back in bed with his wife -- or  
if he's lucky -- somebody else's  
wife.

The women laugh; so do their husbands but nowhere near  
as heartily. The women start for the coat room, followed  
by Springer. Dr. Haxby and McGland bring up the rear.

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
I've heard about some of your  
latest triumphs, Doctor. An  
abscessed tooth is no longer a  
goner. That right?

Dr. Haxby gives him a quick but shrewd glance.

DR. HAXBY  
Not necessarily. Why? Concerned  
about something?

MC GLAND  
(much too casual)  
Oh, twitch or two on one side.

DR. HAXBY  
Next time you're in New York  
drop in the office and we'll  
have a look.

MC GLAND  
That's very kind of you. I know  
your reputation -- and -- uh --  
I mean at the moment ---

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HAXBY

Nonsense. We get enough from those who can pay to write one off to international relations once in awhile.

MC GLAND

(brightening)

Well, as it happens, I may be in New York tomorrow -- uh -- if I can manage it ---

DR. HAXBY

Fine, call the office. We'll squeeze you in ---

MC GLAND

Thank you. Thank you ---

(slaps his coat pocket)

Excuse me, I think I left my cigarettes on the table ---

He turns and walks quickly back to the table, the CAMERA with him. His eyes are focussed on the twenty dollar tip Dr. Haxby has left. He looks warily around. Everyone is engrossed in their own business. Deftly, McGland palms the bill; then he searches deep into his pants pockets. All he can come up with are three silver quarters. He hesitates a moment, then leaves the three quarters on the table, walks nonchalantly away.

The CAMERA takes us to where his group is congregated at the coat room. The women are donning their wraps.

MC GLAND

(to Haxby)

Thank you, Doctor, for a lovely dinner --

(a deprecatory

gesture by Haxby)

and a stimulating and profitable evening.

12. EXT. FASHIONABLE UPPER EAST SIDE RESTAURANT - NEW YORK  
- DAY

The entrance to the restaurant is a revolving door. Two figures are in the process of exiting through the door. The man's voice is familiar. It belongs to Gowan McGland.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND

Thank you, Edith, for a lovely lunch.

Now, McGland and Edith emerge into the sunlight. She is an extremely chick, attractive and intelligent looking woman somewhere in her mid to upper thirties.

MC GLAND (cont'd)

And quite a dull afternoon if you don't mind my saying so.

EDITH

(not at all offended;  
British accent)

Not at all.

MC GLAND

You said on the phone you wanted to discuss something important.

EDITH

I do indeed.

MC GLAND

You want a divorce?

EDITH

No. No.

MC GLAND

Why not? If I were married to me I'd want a divorce.

EDITH

I like being Mrs. McGland. It's something much more important I want to talk to you about. How about my hotel? We can walk or take a taxi. It's no more than half a mile.

MC GLAND

That's not a walk, it's a journey. We'll take a cab. My treat.

EDITH

How nice. And how unexpected.

She starts to hail a cab.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND

Oh -- just a minute. I -- forgot  
my cigarettes.

He turns and walks through the revolving door.

13. INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

as McGland makes his way to an empty table (evidently the one he and Edith had just vacated). He sees a waiter approach the table on which several bills (the tip) are laying. McGland stops short as the waiter gracefully slides the bills off the table and into his pocket. McGland shrugs philosophically, turns on his heels.

14. EXT. RESTAURANT - EDITH - DAY

is waiting at the curb. The door revolves and there is McGland. He approaches Edith.

MC GLAND

Let's walk.

15. INT. HOTEL LIVING ROOM - DAY

as Edith and McGland enter. He looks around. For a hotel room, it is lavishly furnished.

EDITH

And if you're going to ask how  
can I afford it, the answer is  
I'm not paying for it.

MC GLAND

Ah. 'I'm not paying for it,'  
the five most beautiful words  
in the English language.

EDITH

Didn't really pay for lunch, either.  
(he looks at her  
questioningly)

A big American publisher wants me  
to write your biography, Gowan.

(he looks startled)  
And here I am from London, all  
expenses paid. So would you like  
a drink on the house?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND

Desperately.

She points to a gift basket on the table, containing liquor bottles.

EDITH

There's Scotch, Vodka, Gin and something called Bourbon. What would you like?

MC GLAND

All of them.

EDITH

Should have remembered.

MC GLAND

Who the hell is interested in a poet who's still alive? Can't they wait till I'm dead?

EDITH

(pouring)

When you're dead they'll bring out the paperback.

MC GLAND

Come to think of it, most poets worth a damn -- Shelley, Keats, Byron, Chatterton, Dylan Thomas, Brendan Behan -- all died terribly young. I suppose they expect me to do the same.

EDITH

Gowen, darling, they're counting on it.

He laughs harshly, drinks, then ---

MC GLAND

But why you? There are much better writers than you.

EDITH

Of course. But who knows you better than I do.

MC GLAND

What does any wife know about any husband?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDITH

I know enough about you to know  
why you haven't written a line  
of poetry in five years.

He stares at her, then plunks down dejectedly on the sofa.

EDITH (cont'd)

I know why you're content to eke  
out a miserable living lecturing  
and charming women and harrassing  
their husbands ---

He looks at her stonily, then holds out his empty glass.

EDITH (cont'd)

(as she refills)  
You're one of those unfortunate  
creatures, Gowan, who combines  
tremendous ambition with over-  
powering sloth.

MC GLAND

Sloth? If you mean laziness,  
say it.

EDITH

I prefer sloth.

(hands him drink)  
You're like a little boy who  
dreams of becoming a great  
symphonic conductor -- bowing  
to thunderous applause, a lock  
of his hair falling over one  
eye -- the crumpled shirt front,  
the tailcoat drenched with sweat  
-- but never never bothers to  
dream of the backbreaking work  
required to reach the podium.  
Not to mention the hours of  
grueling rehearsal.

MC GLAND

Are you quite through?

EDITH

The trouble with you, Gowan, is  
that you've always wanted un-  
earned fruits.

MC GLAND

You're so damn perceptive, no

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
wonder our marriage failed.  
(looks glumly  
into his glass)  
I've read most of the literature  
on 'sloth,' and I'm convinced  
nobody knows very much about it.  
But its victims, we know.  
(ruefully)  
Apathy and aspiration. A curse  
and a cross.

He drinks, looks straight ahead.

EDITH  
So you turned to poetry.

MC GLAND  
I had to. Every bone in my  
body cried out against the  
inhumanity of regular employment.  
In desperation -- poetry. It  
wasn't regular and it wasn't  
employment.

Edith looks at him, sits down beside him on the couch.  
He stares moodily ahead. She reaches over, strokes his  
hand. He looks at her.

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
We had our moments, didn't we,  
Edith?

EDITH  
(has to think)  
Yes. Few and far between --  
but moments.

MC GLAND  
What I remember most vividly was  
our little cottage in Wales.  
Evenings -- before it got dark  
-- You'd go for a walk by the sea.  
(wry smile)  
I, of course, was too lazy. I'd  
watch you from the cottage doorway  
-- far below, your head bound in  
a scarf, your hands plunged into  
the pockets of your red wool coat...  
I couldn't wait till you got back --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)

(a beat)

What do you remember?

EDITH

(after a moment)

The wrangles -- the battles --  
We'd not only throw things,  
clawing and kicking at one  
another -- I remember once  
crossing to Dublin on the ferry  
from Holyhead. We tried to  
throw one another overboard  
into the Irish Sea.

(a beat)

I remember finally coming to  
our senses, panting at the  
ship's rail, surprised we had  
so much feeling for one another.

Her voice trails off.

MC GLAND

(slowly)

Yes we did, didn't we?

The both fall silent. He drinks; looks at her -- rather  
speculatively. He puts his hand over hers.

MC GLAND

(as softly as he  
can manage)

Edith ---

She turns her face to look at him. His look is  
unmistakable.

EDITH

(not unkindly,  
but firmly)

No.

MC GLAND

Not even for old time's sake?

EDITH

Especially not for old time's  
sake.

(she gets up)

Besides -- I'm not here alone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND  
No?

EDITH  
No.

A beat.

MC GLAND  
A younger chap, I take it.

EDITH  
Younger than you.  
(a beat)  
Younger than I, for that matter,  
the bastard.

MC GLAND  
Oh, how nice for you. What does  
he do? I mean, besides being  
youthful.

EDITH  
He's an actor.

MC GLAND  
(reproachfully)  
Oh, Edith.

EDITH  
It's all right, he's not a very  
good actor. He should be here  
any minute. You'll like him.

MC GLAND  
(consults his watch)  
No time. Have to call my dentist.  
(gets up)  
Is there a phone book handy?

Edith indicates the drawer of the desk on which a  
telephone reposes.

EDITH  
Still having trouble with your  
teeth, Gowan?

MC GLAND  
(opening phone book;  
a deep sigh)  
Teeth are a pain in the ass,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
and I'm not trying to be funny.  
(flipping through  
pages)

Lost three more since I last  
saw you. One in a fight and  
two to natural causes. Just  
five left in my upper jaw. I  
lose two more, a dentist told  
me, and there won't be enough  
left to hang a bridge on ---

EDITH  
Oh, poor Gowan.

MC GLAND  
(dialing)  
Smiles are now an obsession  
with me. I can spot capped teeth  
at ten feet, a bridge at twenty --  
(into phone)  
Hello? Dr. Haxby's office?

Edith walks into the bedroom.

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
This is Gowan McGland -- Dr. Haxby  
said to call and you'd squeeze me  
in -- What? -- Oh, I see -- No,  
I won't be here tomorrow, but  
I'll be in touch with Dr. Haxby  
in Woodsmoke. Thank you.

He hangs up, as Edith comes back in.

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
(annoyed)  
The twit can't see me today.  
Emergency surgery on some patient  
whose teeth scattered in a car  
crash or something.  
(grimaces, places  
finger on upper lip)  
And wouldn't you know it, as soon  
as I hear he can't take me, my  
tooth starts to hurt.

EDITH  
I'm sorry, Gowan.  
(holds out a small  
rectangular object)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND

What's that?

EDITH

A mini tape recorder.

MC GLAND

What the hell do I want with a mini tape recorder or a mini anything for that matter.

EDITH

(suspiciously  
offhand)

Oh, any stray thought you might have from time to time -- an anecdote, say -- bits and pieces you think I could use in your biography ---

MC GLAND

Just a bloody moment! What makes you think I'm going to authorize a biography of myself, by you or anybody else?

EDITH

Your permission isn't absolutely necessary, Gowan. But it would be most helpful -- and decent.

MC GLAND

Decent? Why decent?

EDITH

Well, you owe it to me.

(he looks at her)

After all, we were married for six years and for two of them I made you almost happy. I was miserable all six.

McGland is silent, then gives her a searching glance.

MC GLAND

How much are you going to make on the book?

EDITH

A pisspot full, I hope.

MC GLAND

And of course you'll be mopping

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
up lecturing around the world  
after I'm gone.

EDITH  
It crossed my mind, yes.

MC GLAND  
In short, you'll make more money  
writing about me than I did myself  
on my poetry.

EDITH  
I don't see how I can avoid it.

She looks at him. He looks at her; then ---

MC GLAND  
Well, the irony of it appeals to  
me. Give me that damn machine.  
(takes it from her;  
shoves it into  
his pocket)  
Besides, I don't give a damn  
what anybody says or thinks  
about me when I'm gone. You're  
not only a lousy writer, but a  
slow writer. Before you've  
finished I'll be dead.

EDITH  
(mock eagerness)  
Oh, will you, Gowan! That would  
be such a boost for the book!

MC GLAND  
(growls)  
I've got a good mind to blackmail  
you into bed.

The door buzzer sounds.

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
Oh, shit.

Edith opens the door to admit an impeccably dressed,  
youngish man, complete with wavy hair and square jaw.

EDITH  
Hello, darling.  
(kisses his cheek)

(CONTINUED)

. CONTINUED:

EDITH (cont'd)  
Alvin, this is Gowan McGland.

ALVIN  
(a 180 degree smile)  
Mr. McGland, I'm honored.

MC GLAND  
You are? I'm depressed. You're  
too damn good-looking.  
(to Edith)  
I need a double Scotch before I  
shove off to Woodsmoke.

Edith puts her arm around his waist as they walk toward  
the liquor setup.

EDITH  
(sotto voce)  
Dazzling smile, hasn't he?

MC GLAND  
(grim satisfaction)  
One cap and a small bridge.

Edith laughs.

16. INT. GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL - DAY

The CAMERA is looking through the plate glass window of  
a restaurant. The bar is in the forefront. We can see  
that one of the customers at the bar is McGland.

17. INT. RESTAURANT - AT BAR - DAY

The ANGLE is on McGland, who is well on the way to being  
drunk. His shirttail is halfway out, his tie askew, his  
hair mussed. He is the cynosure of all eyes as he  
engages the attention of the bartender, who is tolerant,  
but bored.

MC GLAND  
Have you ever thought of those  
icebergs banging around up there  
through the long arctic night?  
Of the stars boiling away at ten  
million degrees Fahrenheit? Of  
giant redwoods standing silent  
since before the birth of Christ?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARTENDER

What about 'em?

MC GLAND

Don't you realize how they make our petty unrealities, our shabby little shams and chicaneries -- which leads me to ask you for another Scotch. Despite medical science I regard it as the only effective cure for a toothache.

BARTENDER

(looking at  
wall clock)

Your train leaves in three minutes from track twelve.

MC GLAND

In that case, I'll take this with me.

He makes a dignified albeit slightly unsteady exit carrying his glass of whiskey.

18. EXT. TRAIN - DAY

as it rushes through suburban greenery.

19. INT. TRAIN - DAY

The ANGLE is on McGland slouched in an aisle seat. He is slurping Scotch. His condition is -- well -- regrettable. Several occupants of the car exchange glances and those headshakes with which people deplore public spectacles. McGland is aware of this, and his jaw muscles tighten. Obviously seized with the desire to outrage he draws out a pocket comb, dips it into his Scotch and begins to comb his hair.

Most of the onlookers remain under his spell. The CAMERA MOVES UP CLOSE to McGland's face. The defiance in his expression suddenly fades, the comb stops in mid-air. Something o.s. has caught his attention. The CAMERA MOVES ACROSS THE AISLE to a young woman. She's reading a magazine. Her face has the chiselled beauty of a fashion model, but none of the plastic quality that usually goes with it. There is a freshness, an intelligence -- even a touch of innocence that is unobjectionable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

In short, she is lovely to look at -- and to wonder about. Aware of McGland's intent gaze, she quickly averts her eyes and lowers them again to her magazine.

The CAMERA is back on McGland. The defiance, the anger is gone. He seems unable to take his eyes off the girl, whose nose is now buried in the magazine. There is longing in his expression, but strangely enough, no lust, no lasciviousness. Just a sense of shame that this lovely young girl has seen him in this condition. He tries to sit up a bit straighter, but is not altogether successful.

He is startled by the sound of a door sliding open and shut. We hear a mechanical voice calling, "Tickets please." The ANGLE WIDENS to take in the Conductor, ticket punch in hand. He starts collecting and punching tickets. McGland starts to fumble in his pockets, but can't seem to come up with what he is looking for. And now the Conductor stands over him.

CONDUCTOR

Ticket, please.

More fumbling by McGland. Fruitless. He looks up at the Conductor.

MC GLAND

(apologetic mumble)

Must be someplace...bought two-way ticket Woodsmoke this morning...

(more fumbling)

Can't seem to ---

The Conductor's expression is impassive. A final fumble, then ---

MC GLAND

Well, we'll just have to ---

He removes his wallet from his inside coat pocket. He -- and the CAMERA -- look into the wallet, which is completely empty. An apologetic smile aimed at the Conductor and McGland pockets the wallet and starts to fish in his pants for loose coins. The Conductor twirls his ticket punch impatiently on a forefinger. A look of desperation is creeping into McGland's eyes when a soft, female voice is heard -- "Conductor --"

The ANGLE WIDENS to include the girl in the blue linen

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

suit across the aisle. He bends his head the better to hear the girl's whisper.

GIRL  
(a lovely, low voice)  
-- I'll pay his fare when you  
get around to my seat.

The Conductor hesitates a moment, then nods, walks on. McGland in the meantime has been staring at the back of the seat in front of him. His Adam's apple moves once convulsively. He can't bring himself to look at the girl, who is pretending to be involved in her magazine. Finally, gripping the arms of his seat, McGland attains an upright position. Two uncertain steps and he is standing at the side of the girl's seat. But speech he cannot yet manage. After a moment, the girl looks up from her magazine, gives McGland an understanding smile.

MC GLAND  
(almost inaudibly)  
-- don't know how to thank ---

She cuts him off with a vehement shake of her head.

GIRL  
(a gentle whisper)  
I heard you read at my college  
last year -- I figure it's the  
least I can do.

A quick smile, then she resumes her reading. McGland stands a moment, then gropes his way down the aisle.

20. INT. MEN'S WASHROOM - TRAIN - DAY

as McGland comes into the scene, opens the door.

21. INT. WASHROOM - DAY

as McGland enters. He stands a moment, then grips the bar that runs across the opaque window, swaying as the train pounds down the tracks -- and the tears stream down his cheeks.

22. EXT. PORCH OF SPOFFORD HOUSE - DAY

Spoofford is sprawled in a rocking chair; Reuben lies

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

outstretched at his feet. At arms length from the chair is a small round table on which stands a bottle of Bourbon and a bowl of cracked ice. Spofford is sipping from a highball glass. Suddenly Reuben springs to his feet, his tail wagging, his eyes fixed on something o.s. He starts to bark. Spofford follows Reuben's gaze -- and we see McGland ascending the porch steps.

SPOFFORD

(rising)

Gowan! Glad to see you, friend.  
Easy, Reuben ---

For Reuben is slobbering all over McGland, who doesn't seem to mind.

MC GLAND

It's tea time. Thought I'd pop  
in --  
(eyeing bottle)  
for a drink.

SPOFFORD

Happy you popped by. No fun  
drinking alone.  
(as he pours)  
If I knew you were coming I'da  
gotten some decent bourbon.  
This is just everyday stuff.

MC GLAND

It's the only time I drink.

His attention is now diverted to Reuben, who, barking loudly, is trying to embrace McGland with his paws.

MC GLAND

He looks like a cockney, but his  
bark is definitely upper class.

SPOFFORD

I guess he's just trying to show  
his feelings -- like a true member  
of the Spofford family. Got that  
from my father. 'I don't hold  
with reserve,' he used to say.  
'Reserve is for Scandinavians.  
If we can't express the emotions  
God give us then we don't deserve  
them. We're only on loan to one  
another, so let's show our feelings  
while we can.'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND  
(trying to ward  
off Reuben)  
He would have been very proud  
of Reuben I think.

23. EXT. SALES AREA - MARE & GENEVA - DAY

MARE  
Nobody wears shorts in this  
weather.

GENEVA  
Oh, Mom, stop it. I'm not the  
least bit cold.

MARE  
Go upstairs and put some clothes  
on. You look half naked.

GENEVA  
I'm just going to the post  
office to mail a letter. Not  
even a letter, a post card ---

MARE  
Letter, post card or whatnot,  
you're going to put something  
on. George, talk to your  
daughter.

Her husband George, carrying a crate of chickens, is  
crossing the yard.

GEORGE  
You look wonderful.

Mare glares at him and marches into the retail storeroom.

GENEVA  
(following)  
Mother, please don't be upset ---

Screen door slams behind her.

24. EXT. FARMHOUSE - PORCH - DAY

McGland is staring like a man transfixed toward the sales  
room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND

(voice constricted)

That girl -- I was wondering ---

Spofford follows his gaze. From their POV we see talking to Mare the beautiful young girl from the bar car. She is wearing white tennis shorts.

SPOFFORD

Oh, my granddaughter, Geneva.  
Did I tell you about her?

MC GLAND

At some length.

SPOFFORD

Thing of beauty, ain't she?  
Got her looks from my father.  
He was a rangy man with a long  
face and the brightest blue eyes  
you ever see, so it was a shame  
they were not better lined up  
than they were ---

Geneva comes out of the storeroom, followed by Mare ---

GENEVA

Gramps, will you get Mom off  
my back. She ---

She stops as she sees McGland. She gives him an uncertain smile.

GENEVA (cont'd)

Oh, hello, Mr. McGland ---

McGland, who has been staring at her like a little school-boy, seems unable to find his voice.

SPOFFORD

You two know each other?

GENEVA

(a conspiratorial  
smile to McGland)

We have met, yes.

MC GLAND

(recovered now)

We were on the same train the  
other day coming up from New York.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
I had misplaced my return ticket  
and found myself inexplicably  
out of cash. Your granddaughter  
was good enough to ---

GENEVA  
It was nothing.

MC GLAND  
Anyway, I'm glad to have run  
into you. I want to pay you  
back.

GENEVA  
Oh, there's no hurry. It was  
a privilege to ---

MARE  
(cutting in, sharply)  
Just a minute. Paid for his  
ticket, did you?

MC GLAND  
Yes, she ---

MARE  
(to Geneva; brusquely)  
Take the money.

By this time McGland has removed a check from his wallet.

MC GLAND  
An advance from Yale University.  
(to Mare)  
I wonder could you cash it for me?

MARE  
(not too friendly)  
How much is it?

MC GLAND  
(looking at check)  
Three hundred dollars.

MARE  
Ain't no more'n forty dollars in  
the till.

GENEVA  
(laughing; to McGland)  
If you'd care to take the rest in  
chickens and eggs ---

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND  
I'll go to the bank in the morning.  
Or perhaps Mr. Pycraft will cash  
it for me at the motel.

SPOFFORD  
Not old Harry. He won't cash  
no Yale checks. He don't believe  
in higher education.

GENEVA  
(starting down  
the steps)  
Excuse me, I've got to get to  
the Post Office before it closes.

MC GLAND  
(setting his glass  
down)  
I'm going that way.

GENEVA  
Oh, that would be lovely.

McGland nods to Mare, who is stone-faced, turns to  
Spofford.

MC GLAND  
Thanks for the drink, Frank.

SPOFFORD  
What for? You didn't finish it.

But McGland and Geneva are already on their way, with  
Reuben right with them.

MARE  
Is he that poet fellow who's  
raping all the women in Woodsmoke?

SPOFFORD  
Yep. You'll have to wait your  
turn, Mare.

She slams the screen door behind her.

25. EXT. WOODSMOKE LANE - DAY

MC GLAND AND GENEVA  
walking down one of Woodsmoke's lanes. There are

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

attractive houses on both sides of the lane. Most of them have well-manicured lawns. On quite a few of them people (mostly women) are sunbathing. Strangely enough, McGland seems shy.

MC GLAND

Why am I lingering on in Wood-smoke? I realize I'm behind enemy lines, but only as a scout patrol. There are still so many questions about American life I'd like answered. Like -- how long have people been wearing plastic clothes? And are they really spun out of soybeans and flu germs? Is it true that flowers bought at the supermarket are guaranteed?

GENEVA

(amused)

You're trying very hard, aren't you, Mr. McGland, to live up to your reputation as a cynical, cruel man.

MC GLAND

That's not true. When you get to know me I'm really as sweet and kind as a woodcutter in a fairy tale.

Geneva laughs. McGland seems pleased that he is amusing her. She pauses, as they are now in front of the Post Office, a small neo-colonial edifice.

GENEVA

Well, here we are ---

At this moment, there is an o.s. shout of "Geneva!" It's a male voice. They turn their heads to see an attractive young man in a jogging outfit approaching them at a lope.

GENEVA

Tad ---!

She seems happy -- and just a bit flustered, which doesn't go unnoticed by McGland. Tad is now at Geneva's side. He jogs in place as he bends to kiss her on her cheek. Indeed, during the entire time he never stops jogging in place.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENEVA

I had no idea you were back from Oxford. Oh. Tad -- this is Gowan McGland. Gowan -- Ted Springer.

TAD

Mr. McGland, I'm so happy to meet you ---

He extends his hand as does McGland, but as Tad is still jogging contact is a little awkward, but they finally do manage to shake hands.

TAD

(knees high)

Sorry to have to keep bouncing up and down like this, but I've just done four miles, with four more to go, and if I'd stop cold now I'd pull a hamstring..

MC GLAND

I sympathize. I imagine a pulled hamstring is not a pretty sight.

TAD

Mr. McGland, do you know that I took a course in your poetry last term?

MC GLAND

No, I didn't know. People delight in keeping me in the dark.

Geneva looks closely at McGland, realizing his reaction to Tad is not too friendly. Tad seems unaware.

TAD

(ruefully)

I flunked it.

MC GLAND

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. Why didn't you cheat?

TAD

Wouldn't have helped. For instance, that poem of yours -- the one that begins --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAD (cont'd)

'How deep your warming stream my  
storkleg  
Who measures true, a ruler in your  
bed...'

MC GLAND

Oh, yes. 'The River,' I called it.

TAD

Well, frankly, I don't understand  
it. What does it mean, Mr. McGland?

MC GLAND

(cheerfully)

It means that I was short of money,  
dashed it off and sold it at an  
outrageous price to an editor who  
didn't understand it either.

A pause. Tad turns his attention to Geneva.

TAD

You look absolutely beautiful.

MC GLAND

Thank you. Oh -- you mean Geneva.  
Well, I quite agree. She does.  
Absolutely beautiful.

A slight, awkward pause, then ---

TAD

(to Geneva)

I'll call you.

(to McGland)

I suppose I'll see you Saturday.

A smile and he sprints away. They watch him a moment.  
Then ---

MC GLAND

He seems a pleasant enough young  
man. What is he like --  
stationary?

GENEVA

(curious)

What did he mean, see you Saturday?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND

Oh, his mother is giving sort  
of a do Saturday night.

(looks at her)

Why don't you come?

GENEVA

(a little laugh)

I doubt very much if Mrs. Springer  
will ask me.

MC GLAND

It's me the party's for. I'm the  
guest of honor. Bobby asked me  
if there's anybody I'd particularly  
want invited. And I particularly  
want you.

Geneva ponders this. She laughs grimly.

GENEVA

It's tempting.

(a beat)

I'll see. I'm -- not quite sure  
about the date.

(extends her hand)

Thank you. I'll let you know.

She smiles, starts away ---

MC GLAND

Oh -- Miss Spofford -- Geneva ---

She stops, turns:

GENEVA

Yes?

MC GLAND

That -- uh -- little incident  
on the train the other day ---

(Geneva looks  
uncomfortable)

Your behavior -- your attitude --  
your generosity --

GENEVA

(deprecatingly)

Oh, well ---

MC GLAND

I just want you to know that I  
-- forgive you.

(CONTINUED)

25. CONTINUED:

She stands non-plussed for a split second, then smiles warmly, starts for the Post Office.

26. EXT. SPRINGER HOUSE - NIGHT

Ablaze with light. After a moment, in a LONG SHOT, McGland, Geneva and Reuben come walking into the scene. Geneva says something to Reuben, who assumes a sitting position. McGland and Geneva are walking slowly toward the front door.

GENEVA

Gowan - - I'm terribly nervous.

MCGLAND

Why?

(reassuringly)

There's going to be nobody here more beautiful than you or more elegant than I. We'll be in full command.

They enter house.

27. OMIT

28. OMIT

29. INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Groups have formed, men seeking the company of other men, women huddled together for comfort. Only the younger set is mixing. The camera seeks out Gowan and Geneva, standing near a very, very modern painting.

MCGLAND

What do you think, Geneva? Was that painted or puked?

Before Geneva can respond, she is interrupted by Tad.

TAD

Geneva, there's a whole bunch of kids you went to high school with. They've been waiting for you.

(takes her hand, to lead her off)

Excuse us - - Oh, hello Mr. McGland (to Geneva)

You look ripping.

Geneva looks back apologetically as she is led away by Tad. McGland watches them as Bobby approaches.

(CONTINUED)

29. CONTINUED:

MCGLAND

Your son, how long was he in  
England?

BOBBY

About a year.

MCGLAND

I've lived there all my life  
and I've never once said rip-  
ping.

BOBBY

(ignoring the remark)  
What on earth made you bring  
Geneva Spofford?

MCGLAND

(simply)  
I'm in love with her.

Bobby looks at him. Is he serious? But McGland's eyes are on  
Mr. Springer, who, looking handsome in a plaid madras jacket  
with silk lapels, is dispensing hors d'oeuvres to guests. McGland  
goes right on.

MCGLAND

If I may borrow a word from your  
son, your husband looks ripping in  
that jacket. And I love the way  
his thick gray hair exactly matches  
the carpet. Did you decorate the  
entire house around him?

BOBBY

Oh, shut up.

MCGLAND

Do you mind pointing out the  
nymphomaniacs to me.

BOBBY

(drily)  
Not to worry. They'll make them-  
selves known.

At this point, with a rustle of silk, Lucille glides into the  
scene. She kisses McGland on the cheek.

LUCILLE

Gowan, isn't this a lovely party?  
(links arms with  
McGland)  
Bobby you go be a hostess. I'll  
take care of Gowan.

(CONTINUED)

30. EXT. PATIO - NIGHT

A small dance floor has been laid across the stones. A fourpiece combo is furnishing the disco beat for the young dancers. Tad and Geneva are prominent in the SHOT. The CAMERA MOVES to the sliding glass doors, on the other side of which several guests are watching the young dancers.

31. INT. DINING ROOM - AT SLIDING GLASS DOORS - NIGHT

Lucille and McGland are to one side, watching.

LUCILLE

(after a moment;  
referring to Tad  
and Geneva)

Don't they look wonderful together?  
Poor Bobby, she's fighting a losing  
battle.

MCGLAND

(eyeing the dancers)  
I detest their music. I loathe  
their language. I despise their  
politics - -

(stops; smiles  
ruefully)

In short, I hate their youth.

Lucille kisses him on his cheek.

32. INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE SHOT - HAXBY

Sitting amongst some men. The action between Lucille and McGland is not lost upon him.

33. OMIT

34. INT. SPRINGER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE SHOT - BOBBY

Carrying a tray laden with liquor and brandy. As she offers her wares to her coffee drinking guests, she sneaks a glance into the patio.

35. INT. SPRINGER PATIO - NIGHT

The disco-ing is going in full force. Geneva and Tad are still partners.

36. OMIT

37. INT. SPRINGER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

GROUP OF WOMEN

Clustered around McGland. They are chattering away. McGland tries to look attentive, but we know that he is in the throes of boredom. One of the women is saying - - -

WOMAN

- - Rimbaud was my favorite nineteenth century poet until I read someplace that he stopped writing at the age of nineteen, went into business and made a fortune.

(a beat)

He sold out.

She looks at McGland for confirmation of her indignation.

MCGLAND

People are always talking about selling out. I assure you I can't wait to sell out. It's just that I can't seem to find any buyers.

The women laugh to show that they don't believe he's serious. Lucille comes into the scene with a full martini glass.

LUCILLE

Here you are, Gowan - - -

MCGLAND

(heartfelt gratitude)

Oh, thank you. Thank you.

Lucille leads him away.

(CONTINUED)

37. CONTINUED:

LUCILLE

How did you ever get involved with  
the geriatric set? My God, what  
was the conversation like?

MCGLAND

Well, it leaned rather heavily toward  
laxatives.

The CAMERA finds Haxby who watches as Lucille and McGland try  
to find a spot for privacy. Lucille leads McGland toward the  
garden - - and seclusion. The CAMERA is on Haxby's face as  
they disappear.

38. OMIT

## 39. INT. SPRINGER'S DEN - NIGHT

It is empty. After a moment, Geneva comes in, looks around for her wrap. As she picks it up from a chair Bobby's voice is heard o.s. Her tone is tight, vexed.

## BOBBY'S VOICE

Is it simply that you don't know  
where to draw the line, Gowan?  
Or that you don't care? Do you  
refuse to accept that there are  
limits to what we can get out of  
life, even as a sexual anarchist --?

Geneva stands rooted to the spot.

## 40. INT. SPRINGER'S HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

BOBBY SPRINGER AND MC GLAND

She is pacing as she talks. McGland, liquor glass in hand, stands, back propped up against the wall. His expression is one of patience.

## BOBBY

-- but must go on grabbing,  
grabbing, grabbing and again  
grabbing.

## MC GLAND

(his tone flat;  
without contention  
or irony)  
Would you like to add 'at every-  
thing in skirts'?

## BOBBY

(angrily)  
You can't talk down to me like  
that, Gowan!

## MC GLAND

My dear, I am merely trying to  
help you grope for the moral  
bromide that I have coming to me  
and that it is your unpleasant  
task to dish out. I respect you  
for that.

## BOBBY

Are you completely amoral, Gowan?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She stands non-plussed for a split second, then smiles warmly, starts for the Post Office.

26. EXT. SPRINGER HOUSE - NIGHT

Ablaze with light. After a moment, in a LONG SHOT, McGland, Geneva and Reuben come walking into the scene. Geneva says something to Reuben, who assumes a sitting position. McGland and Geneva are walking slowly toward the front door.

GENEVA

Gowan -- I'm terribly nervous.

MC GLAND

Why?

(reassuringly)

There's going to be nobody here more beautiful than you or more elegant than I. We'll be in full command.

They enter house.

27. INT. FOYER - NIGHT

Bobby Springer comes through a door leading to the living room.

BOBBY

(her tone annoyed)

Well! At last!

MC GLAND

I do hope we're not intruding.  
We were walking past and saw  
the lights ---

BOBBY

Everyone has been asking where  
the hell is the guest of honor ---

MC GLAND

A good question. May I ask one  
of my own?

(points to abstract  
painting)

What is that? Was it painted or  
puked?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY  
(to Geneva; a patently  
insincere smile)  
Geneva, I'm so pleased Gowan  
brought you.

GENEVA  
Thank you -- uh -- what a lovely  
room.

BOBBY  
Oh, thank you.  
(an apprehensive  
glance at McGland)

MC GLAND  
No comment.

BOBBY  
(linking arms with him)  
If you don't mind joining the  
others --  
(to Geneva)  
Just throw your wrap on a chair  
or something.

28. OMIT

29. INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

FULL SHOT

Groups have formed, men seeking the company of other  
men, women huddled together for comfort. Only the  
younger set is mixing. The CAMERA seeks them out.  
Tad is holding forth ---

TAD  
-- Eight miles in fifty-one  
minutes, which makes for little  
over a six-minute mile. Oh ---

Something o.s. has attracted his attention. From his  
POV we see Bobby, Geneva and McGland. A waitress bearing  
a tray is offering them hors d'oeuvres.

TAD (cont'd)  
Oh, there she is ---

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He sidles through the crowd to their side. Unfortunately, he catches Geneva with her mouth full.

TAD (cont'd)  
Geneva, there's a whole bunch of kids you went to high school with. They've been waiting for you.

(takes her hand;  
she is still  
chewing)

Excuse us -- Oh, hello, Mr. McGland --

(to Geneva)  
You look smashing.

Geneva, still not able to talk, looks back apologetically as she is led away by Tad. McGland watches them. Then ---

MC GLAND  
Your son, how long was he in England?

BOBBY  
About a year.

MC GLAND  
I've lived there all my life and I've never once said 'smashing.' Is there anything you can do about getting me a drink.

Bobby signals to a black-tied waiter.

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
In the meantime, do you mind pointing out the nymphomaniacs to me.

BOBBY  
(dryly)  
Not to worry. They'll make themselves known.

The waiter arrives.

MC GLAND  
I'll have a Vodka martini with a twist and an onion and an olive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAITER

(after a beat)

Yes, sir. On the rocks or straight up?

MC GLAND

Surprise me.

A quick glance at Bobby and the waiter leaves.

BOBBY

What on earth made you bring Geneva Spofford?

MC GLAND

(simply)

I'm in love with her.

Bobby looks at him. Is he serious? But McGland's eyes are on Mr. Springer, who, looking handsome in a plaid madras jacket with black silk lapels, is dispensing hors d'oeuvres to guests. McGland goes right on.

MC GLAND

If I may borrow a word from your son, your husband looks smashing in that jacket. And I love the way his thick gray hair exactly matches the carpet. Did you decorate the entire house around him?

BOBBY

Oh, shut up.

At this point, with a rustle of silk, Lucille glides into the scene. She kisses McGland on the cheek.

LUCILLE

Gowan, you beast. Did you just get here?

MC GLAND

Not at all. As a matter of fact, I'm on my way out.

LUCILLE

No, you're not. It's really a lovely party.

(links arms  
with McGland)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCILLE (cont'd)  
 Bobby, you go be a hostess.  
 I'll take care of Gowan.

Bobby doesn't look too pleased, but Lucille is already leading McGland away. From the opposite direction comes the waiter with McGland's drink on a tray. McGland, without missing a step, neatly snares the glass.

MC GLAND  
 (to waiter)  
 Thank you. And don't go too far.

30. EXT. PATIO - NIGHT

A small dance floor has been laid across the stones. A fourpiece combo is furnishing the disco beat for the young dancers. Tad and Geneva are prominent in the SHOT. The CAMERA MOVES to the sliding glass doors, on the other side of which several guests are watching the young dancers.

31. INT. DINING ROOM - AT SLIDING GLASS DOORS - NIGHT

Lucille and McGland are to one side, watching.

LUCILLE  
 (after a moment;  
 referring to Tad  
 and Geneva)  
 Don't they look wonderful together?  
 Poor Bobby, she's fighting a losing  
 battle.

MC GLAND  
 (eyeing the dancers)  
 I detest their music. I loathe  
 their language. I despise their  
 politics --  
 (stops; smiles  
 ruefully)  
 In short, I hate their youth.

Lucille kisses him on his cheek.

32. INT. SPRINGER'S HOUSE - COFFEE TABLE - NIGHT

CLOSE SHOT - HAXBY

sitting amongst some men. This action between Lucille and McGland is not lost upon him.

## 33. INT. SPRINGER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

## GROUP OF WOMEN

clustered around McGland. They are chattering away. McGland tries to look attentive, but we know that he is in the throes of boredom. One of the women is saying ---

## WOMAN

-- Rimbaud was my favorite nineteenth century poet until I read someplace that he stopped writing at the age of nineteen, went into business and made a fortune.

(a beat)

He sold out.

She looks at McGland for confirmation of her indignation.

## MC GLAND

People are always talking about selling out. I assure you I can't wait to sell out. It's just that I can't seem to find any buyers.

The women laugh to show that they don't believe he's serious. Lucille comes into the scene with a full martini glass.

## LUCILLE

Here you are, Gowan ---

## MC GLAND

(heartfelt gratitude)

Oh, thank you. Thank you.

## 34. INT. SPRINGER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

## CLOSE SHOT - BOBBY

carrying a tray laden with liquor and brandy. The scene is the dining room. As she offers her wares to her coffee drinking guests, she sneaks a glance into the garden.

## 35. EXT. SPRINGER'S PATIO - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

The disco-ing is going full force. Geneva and Tad are still partners.

## 36. INT. SPRINGER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

## OVERHEAD SHOT - BUFFET TABLE

Sumptuous, of course. There is a long line of people helping themselves. The CAMERA CONCENTRATES on Lucille, who is filling two plates. Now, she leaves the table and nears Haxby, her husband, who is standing nearby. Naturally expecting that the second plate is for him, he takes a step forward -- but Lucille goes right past him -- as if she hadn't seen him. Haxby stares after her, following her progress -- and from his POV, we see Lucille, carrying the two plates, approach a group of older people who have surrounded McGland. The women, of course, are silverhaired with the obligatory blue rinse; the men run to baldness, paunches and stooped shoulders. Haxby sees Lucille hand McGland one of the plates, then observes the pantomime of McGland making his excuses to the group and leaving with Lucille.

## 37. INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

filled with diners. Most have their plates on their laps. The CAMERA goes to Lucille and McGland who have entered the room with their plates.

## LUCILLE

That's the second time tonight  
I rescued you. How did you ever  
get involved with the geriatric  
set?

## MC GLAND

You know me -- utterly defenseless.

## LUCILLE

My God, what was the conversation  
like?

## MC GLAND

Well, it leaned rather heavily  
toward laxatives.

The CAMERA ZOOMS to Haxby who watches as Lucille and McGland don't try to find a spot in the dining room, but, Lucille leading the way make for the sliding glass doors leading to the garden -- and seclusion. The CAMERA is on Haxby's face as they disappear.

## 38. OMIT

29. CONTINUED:

Bobby doesn't look too pleased, but Lucille leads him away.

CONTINUED:

BOBBY (cont'd)

What is it about you? I wish I knew. I mean my own sister-in-law? My husband's sister! I saw the way you looked at her. That -- that carnivorous stare --!

MC GLAND

(dubiously)

'Carnivorous?' I don't know about that. I stared at her carnivorously, you say. Was it before or after dinner?

BOBBY

C. B. is jealous enough. But Lucille's husband --! I warned you about Jack before -- he'll demolish you. Gowan, I ---

She stops short, as a youngish, middle-aged man approaches her with outstretched hands.

REVEREND

Mrs. Springer --

(clasps her hands)

A delightful party. Thank you so much.

BOBBY

Thank you for coming, Reverend.

McGland is partially hidden behind Bobby.

REVEREND

I'm sorry I didn't get to meet the guest of honor. He -- ah -- didn't seem to be very much in evidence tonight.

MC GLAND

(stepping into the clear)

That's because he's very shy, Reverend.

REVEREND

Oh --?

BOBBY

This is Gowan McGland, Reverend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY (cont'd)  
Gowan -- Reverend Clayton of our  
All Saints Episcopal Church.

REVEREND CLAYTON  
(a hearty handshake)  
How do you do, Mr. McGland.  
An honor.

MC GLAND  
(friendly)  
Hi.

REVEREND CLAYTON  
I understand you are going to  
be in our midst for a bit.

Geneva appears in the b.g. She pauses.

MC GLAND  
Yes -- I believe so.

REVEREND CLAYTON  
If you'd care to attend services  
tomorrow you'd be most welcome.

MC GLAND  
We-ell ---

REVEREND CLAYTON  
Even though your stay is limited  
we want you to feel a member of  
our congregation.

MC GLAND  
Fine. Who is she?

BOBBY  
(eyes raised  
to heaven)  
Oh, Gowan --!

REVEREND CLAYTON  
(not quite sure  
he heard right)  
Eh! -- Oh -- ah ---  
(a little laugh)  
The famous McGland sense of humor.  
Or should I say, infamous?

MC GLAND  
I accept either version, Reverend.  
Thank you very much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REVEREND CLAYTON  
(after a beat,  
turns to Bobby)  
Well, goodnight -- and thank you  
again, Mrs. Springer.

An exchange of uneasy smiles, and he leaves. Bobby  
immediately wheels on McGland ---

BOBBY  
Really, Gowan --!

Stops as she sees Geneva who has stepped forward.

BOBBY  
Oh, Geneva. Ready to leave --?

41. EXT. DESERTED LANE - NIGHT

Reuben is trotting along. Suddenly he stops, looks back.  
The CAMERA FOLLOWS his gaze to where McGland and Geneva  
are ambling along. Reuben lopes back, licks the hand  
of McGland who is speaking ---

MC GLAND  
No, no, Geneva, no need to apologize.  
I brought you to the party and I'm  
taking you home. A glorious  
beginning and a happy ending.

GENEVA  
I really am sorry. Every time  
I looked around for you the  
musicians started to play or  
something -- and well, you know ---

MC GLAND  
I do indeed.

They walk in silence a moment.

GENEVA  
And Tad and I -- we hadn't seen  
each other for so long.

MC GLAND  
(nods understandingly)  
And I was glad to see that his  
acne has cleared up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENEVA  
(looks at him)  
How did you know?

MC GLAND  
I didn't. I just assumed.  
After all, no sensitive youth  
escapes it. I still remember  
vividly my sensations when I  
discovered that the skin eruption  
covering my face was called imp -  
et - i - go. Surely, I felt,  
this was no disease, but the  
name of a river in American  
Indian country, something you  
found love on the banks of, you  
know ---

(reciting)  
'The Impetigo winds lazily through  
valley lands, dwindling to trickle  
in the fall but overflowing its  
banks in the spring when the  
tributary streams, swollen by  
melting mountain snows --'

Geneva laughs. McGland looks pleased at her reaction.

GENEVA  
Still, acne or no acne, the year  
away has done wonders for Tad.  
Oxford has really matured him.

MC GLAND  
It has? Well, fortunately, it  
did no such thing for me. I  
say 'fortunately' because I think  
maturity is highly overrated.

GENEVA  
You went to Oxford?

MC GLAND  
Oh, I did much better than just  
go to Oxford. I was expelled  
from it.

Again, Geneva laughs. Again McGland looks pleased.  
They are now approaching the Spofford home. Geneva  
looks at McGland.

GENEVA  
Well --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENEVA (cont'd)  
(extends her hand)  
Thank you once more.

MC GLAND  
(almost a schoolboy)  
May I see you again?

GENEVA  
(just a moment's  
hesitation)  
Why, yes -- of course.

MC GLAND  
When? Tomorrow?

GENEVA  
Tomorrow I'm going to church.

MC GLAND  
(incredulous)  
Church?

GENEVA  
Well, my folks are Congrega-  
tionalists, Grandpa's an atheist  
and I don't know what I am, but  
Tad asked me if I would go with  
him. All Saints, I think.

MC GLAND  
What a coincidence. I've been  
asked, too. Any plans after  
church?

GENEVA  
Well, Tad's going to run his  
eight miles ---

MC GLAND  
Bless him. May I walk you home  
from church? Not even Reverend  
Clayton can frown on that, can he?

A small assenting smile from Geneva. Then ---

42. EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

GENEVA  
Goodnight, Gowan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She leans forward, kisses him lightly on the cheek, motions to Reuben, walks quickly up the porch steps, her hips swaying slightly. The screen door closes behind her, but McGland still stands, eyes fixed on the door.

43. INT. DARKENED ROOM - NIGHT

Sound of a key in the latch. The door opens. A large shadowy figure enters, switches on the light, revealing McGland looking thoughtfully depressed. He removes his jacket, flings it onto a chair. A bottle of Scotch and two tall glasses rest on top of the dresser. He pours himself a really stiff drink. After a slug, his eyes fall on an object lying close to the bottle. He picks it up. It is the tape recorder his wife had pressed upon him. He looks at it, picks it up, sets it down again. Another slug from his glass, and he once more picks up the recorder. He smiles a small, grim smile, then presses the "on" button. It is a moment or two before he speaks into the recorder ---

MC GLAND

(rather halting)

Edith, my dear one, here is a chapter for your filthy book -- I am in love, Edith. Picture this scene if you will. We are standing at the portal to her modest home. To my horror I find myself saying to this twenty-year-old girl, 'May I walk you home from church tomorrow' -- Can you believe it? Like some bumpkin in a turn of the century book written by a woman novelist. A book that can be read by the entire family -- and it has come to this. I am going to church tomorrow. Yes, church. Just to be in the same spirit-chilling edifice with -- to breathe the same stale air as this strapping girl with hair like ripe wheat and rousing breasts. With hips that sway like a bell when she walks, and big round eyes the color of butterscotch. A radiant creature, Edith, her fair skin

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
glowing with that light that  
seems to shine from inside  
healthy young girls. And when  
a set of white teeth adds its  
wattage in a burst of laughter  
the general effect is almost  
too much.

(a beat)  
I know you will understand,  
Edith, if I pause for a drink.  
Several in fact ---

He fills the tall glass, holds the recorder close to the  
glass as he drinks so the sound of slurping can be  
recorded on the tape. Then ---

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
Yet there is no rationalization  
for my infatuation. You know  
that I have been shot twice  
through this country and back  
by avaricious lecture agents,  
and every campus was an infernal  
Eden, a paradisaical hell of  
girls. Rich girls flaunting  
both their expensive flesh and  
the wherewithall to buy and keep  
it. Poor girls cradling their  
books on their arms as one day  
they would their infants. Girls,  
girls, girls --

(another slug  
of whiskey)

But Geneva -- I hope, Edith, you  
will have the decency not to use  
her real name -- But Geneva is  
like none of these somehow --  
How my heart bleeds for the raw  
youngsters she must entrance and  
torment. I see her standing in  
sawed-off denim slacks and bare  
feet at which these miserable  
youths must promptly in spirit  
kneel, moaning her name, whilst  
their arms in fancy encircle  
thighs that are like the pillars  
of a temple. There is after all  
no aphrodisiac like innocence.  
Edith, I ---

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is the sharp rap of knuckles on the door ---

A WOMAN'S VOICE

Gowan ---

MC GLAND

Hell!

He presses the off button on the recorder, opens the door to admit Lucille who peers from one side of the room to the other.

LUCILLE

All right, where is she?

MC GLAND

Who?

LUCILLE

Whoever you were talking to.  
Oh, I heard you speaking, Gowan.  
I couldn't quite make out what you  
were saying, but I distinctly  
heard you.

MC GLAND

Oh.

(holds up recorder)  
I was confiding a few thoughts  
to this contraption.

LUCILLE

(delighted)  
You were composing a poem.

MC GLAND

(has to think about  
this a moment)  
Well, yes. Of a sort.

LUCILLE

May I hear it?

MC GLAND

No, you may not.

Lucille shrugs, kicks off her shoes, starts to unzip her dress.

MC GLAND

Just to make conversation, may I  
ask the whereabouts of your husband?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCILLE

(pulling her dress  
over her head)

Oh, Jack's in one of his deep  
sleeps which means nothing can  
wake him until three o'clock  
when he'll make his nightly  
pilgrimage to the bathroom.  
So --

(consults her  
wrist watch)

-- we have, allowing for travel  
time, a few minutes under an hour.

She reaches behind her, unsnaps the hooks of her bra --  
and her breasts plop into view. In a CLOSE SHOT they  
would fill the screen. McGland can't help staring.

LUCILLE

What seems to be the trouble?

MC GLAND

Oh, I just thought of a line  
I might be able to use sometime  
-- somewhere. With your  
permission I'd like to tape  
it, so I won't forget.

LUCILLE

(cautiously)

What is it exactly?

MC GLAND

Well -- a woman is undressing  
for her lover. She reaches  
behind her, unsnaps her bra,  
and --

(talks into recorder)

'Released from their supports her  
breasts dropped like hanged men.'

He looks at Lucille for her reaction. She is silent a  
moment.

LUCILLE

You're a shit. You know that,  
don't you?

MC GLAND

Yes, I do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCILLE

Are you going to dedicate it  
to me?

MC GLAND

If you like.

Lucille thinks a moment.

LUCILLE

Well, why not? It might guarantee  
me a sort of immortality.

She stretches out on the bed, extends her arms to him.

LUCILLE

(faint smile)

Take me.

MC GLAND

Where to?

LUCILLE

Why don't we find out? I'm just  
as curious as you are.

She pulls him down beside her.

44. INT. CHURCH - DAY

SHOOTING from the rear toward the altar. The choir is singing a hymn, with the congregation joining in. The CAMERA strays among the worshippers. We have a SHOT of Geneva and Tad singing away. And a view of the Springers and their guest, Gowan McGland. Bobby is singing, C. B. is mumbling and Gowan is inspecting his nails.

45. INT. CHURCH - ALTAR - DAY

CLOSE SHOT - A WAFER

being dipped into a glass of wine. The ANGLE WIDENS to reveal that the rite of Communion is in progress with Reverend Clayton doing the dipping and the placing of the wafer on the tongues of the communicants. In the line, nearing the Reverend are the Springers and McGland. Directly behind McGland are Geneva and Tad. Two people accept the wafer, move on, then Bobby and C. B. are the recipients. Now it is McGland's turn. The Reverend dips and offers the wafer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND  
(gently, but firmly)  
No, thank you, I'm on a diet.

We linger a moment on the Reverend's face.

46. EXT. WOODSMOKE STREET - MALL - DAY

McGland and Geneva are sauntering along. McGland is speaking and his tone is slightly defensive ---

MC GLAND  
-- but I spoke so softly I'm  
sure only Reverend Clayton heard.

GENEVA  
I heard.

MC GLAND  
My dear, I meant for you to hear.

GENEVA  
You did? Why?

MC GLAND  
In your presence, Geneva, I'm  
like a schoolboy. And schoolboys  
equate naughtiness with manliness.  
I was trying to impress you with  
my macho quality.

GENEVA  
Poor Reverend Clayton. That look  
on his face.  
(a beat)  
Tell me, Gowan, do you believe in  
God?

MC GLAND  
What I do believe is that he's no  
Christian.

GENEVA  
Who?

MC GLAND  
God.

GENEVA  
(a nervous giggle)  
He's no Christian?  
(he nods)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENEVA (cont'd)

Would you care to develop that?

MC GLAND

Well, I think I said it best in some light verse I couldn't get anyone to publish. How did it go again --? Let's see -- yes. 'He makes a world in which one thing eats another. Then sends his only begotten son to be our brother. Wish he'd make up his mind instead of leaving us in the lurch. I doubt he says his prayers, or ever goes to church.'

He looks at her for her approval. She is silent.

MC GLAND (cont'd)

(wryly)

It's the sort of thing we repent on our deathbed.

The honk of an automobile turns their heads. A car has pulled up. Lucille is behind the wheel. Haxby, his expression dour, sits beside her.

LUCILLE

Lift?

McGland looks at Geneva, who shakes her head.

MC GLAND

No, thank you.

With a wave of her hand Lucille drives off. McGland looks after the departing car.

MC GLAND

Not a bad looking wench that.

Geneva looks at him closely.

GENEVA

Better looking than Bobby Springer?

MC GLAND

(well aware of Geneva's look; shrugs)

They're indistinguishable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
(they resume walking)  
Why did you ask?

GENEVA  
Well, as it happens, my major  
at college is psychology.

MC GLAND  
It is? I'm sorry to hear that.

GENEVA  
So it shouldn't be too surprising  
that your case interests me.

MC GLAND  
(sensing what  
is coming)  
Oh, I'm a case, am I?

They walk in silence just a moment.

GENEVA  
Doesn't it bother you that you're  
almost as well known as a womanizer  
as you are as a poet?

MC GLAND  
No. What does bother me is that  
neither pays very well.

GENEVA  
You know of course that the  
accepted psychoanalytical  
explanation is that consciously  
or subconsciously womanizers  
are trying to prove something  
that they aren't. They're  
fighting what --  
(a significant pause)  
they really are.

From McGland's expression we gather that he doesn't know  
whether to be amused or angry. In view of Geneva's charms  
he decides on the former.

MC GLAND  
Well, this has really been a  
red-letter day for me. In the  
space of a few minutes I've been

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
accused of both blasphemy and  
homosexuality.  
(a beat)  
I don't know of which I'm prouder.

GENEVA  
I'm not accusing you of anything,  
Gowan, I'm merely pointing out  
the conflicts that must ---

McGland interrupts by laughing tolerantly.

MC GLAND  
Oh my darling Geneva ---

Geneva looks at him.

GENEVA  
A hundred years ago they laughed  
at Freud.

MC GLAND  
Well, if you ask me, he's still  
good for a chuckle now and then.

GENEVA  
There. That attitude is typical ---

47. EXT. INDELICATO'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Again McGland interrupts. They have approached a  
restaurant whose neon sign proclaims it. "INDELICATO'S."  
McGland takes her arm.

MC GLAND  
Look, why don't we discuss this  
over a glass of wine.  
(leading her into  
the restaurant)  
Just two little girls letting  
their hair down ---

48. INT. INDELICATO'S RESTAURANT - DAY

CLOSE SHOT - BOTTLE OF WINE

snug in its jacket of straw resting on a table. McGland's  
voice can be heard over the scene. But first, a FULLER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHOT of the barroom. On the small side, several booths and four tables, about half of them occupied. It is evidently a working man's place. At the bar sits a middle-aged woman in a soiled trench coat and a Hussar's hat. Her companion is a thickset man with a red neck that overflows his shirt collar, which is opened out over his coat.

The CAMERA now concentrates on McGland and Geneva sitting at one of the tables. McGland is talking rather rapidly, as if by holding the floor he is temporarily at least keeping Geneva from holding forth ---

MC GLAND

-- always been interested in the affinity between men of genius and their mistresses from the lower orders, so to speak -- Van Gogh with the chit he gave his ear to, Brahms with his prostitutes and didn't Moussorgsky spend a lot of time whacking about with tarts? And then there was ---

GENEVA

(forcefully)

I wasn't talking about men of genius, Gowan, I was talking about you.

MC GLAND

(sipping his wine)

Oh, thank you very much.

GENEVA

Chasing everything in skirts, what is it but a basic hostility toward women? By promiscuous pursuit you make them look promiscuous and thus unworthy of pursuit.

MC GLAND

(a sip and a sigh)

Van Gogh, Brahms, Moussorgsky -- lucky chaps to have been born before psychoanalysis.

GENEVA

You do have these hostilities toward us. You see the way

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENEVA (cont'd)  
you're twisting your napkin.  
Whose neck are you wringing?

MC GLAND  
Yours.

GENEVA  
All right. Fine. That's better.  
The thing is I don't judge you  
when I say those things. We all  
have a dash of the opposite in us.  
Women of the masculine, men of  
the feminine. It's nothing to  
be ashamed of.

At this point, their attention is attracted to the bar,  
to the Hussar-hatted woman and the thickset man. They  
are laughing loudly and the man has put his arm around  
the woman's waist.

MC GLAND  
(indicating the man)  
Well, there's no doubt he's  
hetero-sexual.

However, his remark has the misfortune of falling into a  
sudden silence, and the man hears it. He turns his head,  
gives McGland a long look and takes the few steps to the  
table.

THICKSET MAN  
Was you referrin' to me, bud?

MC GLAND  
(a friendly smile)  
Why, yes. I just said you were  
heterosexual.

THICKSET MAN  
That's what I thought.

He gives his trousers a hitch and his chest swells up  
like a blowfish.

THICKSET MAN (cont'd)  
Care to back up them insinuations  
with a little action and maybe see  
if there's some truth in them?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND  
(laughing good-naturedly)  
Apparently you misunderstood the term. It simply means that in your case things are exactly as they seem ---

THICKSET MAN  
Hell business is that of yours? Hell do you think you are anyway? I'm just as normal as you any day as I'm ready to step outside and prove --!

He clutches McGland's jacket and pulls him up to his feet. Geneva springs to her feet.

GENEVA  
Take your hands off him. He was merely paying you a compliment. All that heterosexual means is ---

THICKSET MAN  
I know damn well what it means, even though maybe I ain't got his education. What I have got is --  
(taking a fighting stance)  
an educated left hook and a right cross.

GENEVA  
I won't permit ---

MC GLAND  
Please, Geneva. I see I'll have to deal with this cretin on his own terms.  
(to the man)  
I don't imagine, sir, that you're familiar with the Marquis of Queensbury rules?

THICKSET MAN  
That last remark is gonna cost you, bud. Here or outside?

MC GLAND  
Right here will do nicely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He takes a stance, both hands held high, close to his mouth to protect his teeth.

GENEVA

Gowan --!

But both men are now circling each other, waiting for an opening.

MED. SHOT - BARTENDER AND HUSSAR-HATTED WOMAN - AT BAR

WOMAN

Jerry'll clobber him. I feel sorry for that poor slob.

BARTENDER

I know his type. He's actin' tough 'cause he expects me to step in and stop it.

As if to corroborate him, the circling McGland passes the CAMERA and throws a quick backward glance at the bartender, as if to say, "What's keeping you?" The bartender flashes a "What did I tell ya" look at the woman.

WOMAN

Well, ain't ya?

BARTENDER

(relishing the situation)

Not right away.

The ANGLE WIDENS to include the combatants who have not yet struck a blow.

GENEVA

Please -- Please ---

At this juncture, the thickset man feints with his left, then sinks his right fist into the pit of McGland's stomach. With a loud "poof" from McGland, all the air leaves McGland's lungs. He bends over double. The thickset man is about to deliver the coup de grace when Geneva steps between them ---

GENEVA

You lousy bastard!  
(slaps his cheek smartly)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Slaps his other cheek with her other hand. Blood flows from his nose. He bends his head and Geneva delivers a karate chop to the back of his head.

GENEVA  
(flailing away  
with both hands)  
You goddam gorilla!

THICKSET MAN  
Blood --! I'm bleeding blood --!

GENEVA  
(grabbing McGland's  
hand)  
C'mon, we're leaving ---

MC GLAND  
(stoutly)  
No, I haven't settled with that  
clod yet ---

GENEVA  
Oh, come on --!

She yanks him out of CAMERA range.

49. EXT. INDELICATO'S - DAY

as Geneva and McGland emerge. He still looks sick.

GENEVA  
Are you all right?

MC GLAND  
No, I am not all right. I never  
was all right. I never will be  
all right.

GENEVA  
Oh, poor Gowan.

MC GLAND  
Why -- why must you always be  
present at my greatest humiliations?  
Penniless and drunk on that damn  
train -- Bent over double and  
gasping for air from a low blow  
to the stomach ---

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENEVA

Gowan, do you suppose I think less of you because you can't fight? On the contrary, I ---

MC GLAND

(outraged)

Can't fight! Can't fight.  
Damn you, Geneva, I'm known in every pub in Wales and in half the counties of Scotland as one of the great barroom brawlers of modern times --!

GENEVA

Gowan, please, I ---

MC GLAND

Let me tell you something. I'd rather mix it up in a good rough and tumble than write a great poem!

GENEVA

Please, Gowan, don't get worked up ---

He looks so unhappy that she cups his face in the palms of her hands, smiles soothingly at him. He looks at her, then draws her to him, kisses her on the lips. He draws back, looks at her. Her expression is difficult to read.

MC GLAND

(after a moment)

You elude me. You let me kiss you. No resistance, but no response. You're a puzzle. A blend of emotion and restraint.  
(looks at her)  
Warmth and withdrawal. Yes, I feel that warm current running under ice, seeking out the wretch in a man.

She is silent. He keeps looking at her. Then, they start a slow walk down the street. When McGland finally speaks, his words ring true; his sincerity apparent.

MC GLAND (cont'd)

(quietly)

And I am wretched -- miserable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)

Ever since I saw you on that train -- so beautiful, so cool, so unattainable. Ever since I haven't been able to think of anybody or anything else -- Do you know what you have done to me? You have reduced me, at the end of a misspent life, to that most contemptible of creatures -- a lovesick swain. I find myself thinking thoughts that no power on earth or hell could bring me to express to you in words. Thus, you will never know that I find myself mumbling inanities like -- 'I will get the Holy Grail for her' -- 'I will slay a dragon' -- 'I will shower twice a day.' I will --  
(stops, looks  
at her)

Are you going to let me go on rambling like this?

GENEVA

(touched, but  
troubled)

No, Gowan. I wish you would stop.

MC GLAND

Just one last idiocy. I keep saying to myself, 'I don't see how I can go on living without her. Really, I can't.'

He stops walking, looks at her.

MC GLAND (cont'd)

(simply)

Will you go back to the motel with me?

GENEVA

No, Gowan. I'm sorry.

MC GLAND

(after a beat)

Do I appear ridiculous to you?  
A pathetic wreck? A figure of fun?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENEVA

(gently)  
No, Gowan, you really don't.

MC GLAND

But you won't go back with me?

GENEVA

I can't, Gowan. I'm sorry.

MC GLAND

(a beat)  
I understand. I won't badger you.

(kisses the back  
of her hand)  
Good-bye, Geneva. No, don't  
bother to see me home. I'll  
find the way.

He turns and walks slowly away from her. She looks after him, not moving.

50. INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

as McGland enters, slamming the door behind him. It doesn't quite close. He is in a foul mood. He throws his jacket on the bed. His eyes fall on the tape recorder. He snatches it from the table with an angry gesture.

MC GLAND

(into recorder)  
Edith, you don't know what I've  
just been through. All I will  
say now is that I'm going away  
somewhere where I'm not known  
and for a solid week will do  
nothing but howl like a dog.

With his free hand he picks up his neck-stretching harness which has been lying on a chair.

MC GLAND (cont'd)

(into recorder)  
Just let me say this about Geneva  
Spofford. Somehow or other I'm  
going to take her out for a ride  
in the country, in a densely wooded  
section, as they say in the tabloids,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
and there stuff her damned breasts  
into my mouth, first one and then  
the other, and then -- oh, to hell  
with it, Edith, my neck is killing  
me ---

51. EXT. WOODSMOKE STREET - GENEVA - DAY

is walking down the street, her expression thoughtful.

52. INT. - MC GLAND'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

McGland is standing on a straight-back chair. He throws one end of the rope of his orthopedic harness over the rafter, catches it and begins to knot it to the hooks of the leather straps. Then he tests the knot to make sure it is secure. He is about to slip his neck into the noose-like collar when the door flies open and Geneva rushes into the room ---

GENEVA  
(frantically)  
Gowan, don't!

She runs to the chair, knocking it out from under him with a force that sends him sprawling to the floor. She flings the overturned chair out of the way and drops down beside him.

GENEVA  
(to the bewildered  
McGland)  
Gowan, how could you do a thing  
like that? Oh, how awful. Oh,  
Gowan ---

She crushes his body to hers, uttering broken phrases --  
"Oh, my poor Gowan --" "I had no idea -- you --"  
"I didn't dream, Gowan -- my sweet Gowan --"

The CAMERA is now CLOSE on McGland's face. He has now recovered from the initial shock of what had been, after all, a mutual surprise, and as Geneva continues to murmur endearments -- "My darling, I could never forgive myself --" "How you must have suffered --" he realizes the turn in his fortune. A gleam comes into his eyes ---

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENEVA  
(rocking him)  
Why would you want to do a thing  
like that?

MC GLAND  
(a martyr's tone)  
Nobody wants to.

McGland lies in a half-reclining posture, with his head  
on her breast.

GENEVA  
(stroking his hair  
and kissing his  
cheek)  
I'm with you now -- I'm with  
you, darling Gowan.

MC GLAND  
(softly)  
I can hear your heart beat.

He moves his free hand tentatively upward along her arm  
and then to the top of her blouse. Expertly, his fingers  
work all the buttons. There is no resistance, vocal or  
otherwise, from Geneva who is still rocking him in her  
arms. The CAMERA is on McGland's face. We see a look  
of subdued but grateful triumph.

53. INT. COLLEGE LECTURE HALL - DAY

McGland is at the lectern facing an audience of women  
seated on rented, folding chairs. Geneva is in the back  
row.

MC GLAND  
'-- These liquid lakes and brooks  
unlocked and chuckling in the sun  
Will lure me out of doors, my singular  
and plural woes put by,  
A ram into her thicket gone will hymn  
my season's favor in her arms  
Where we together all the green-  
grained summer lie.'

His voice fades out impressively, a moment of silence,  
then applause from the audience.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)

Thank you. May I leave you  
with one final thought.

(a beat)

We are all members of one big  
country, searching for a native  
treasurer. Thank you again and  
good afternoon.

SHOTS of women's expressions, smiling but puzzled. Then  
the expected applause breaks out. We CLOSE IN on Geneva's  
expression, just as puzzled as the other women's.

54 EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - MC GLAND AND GENEVA - DAY  
are strolling hand in hand.

GENEVA

-- of course I loved the poetry  
-- but, Gowan, that last bit ---

MC GLAND

You mean, 'We are all members of  
one big country, searching for a  
native treasurer?'

GENEVA

Yes. What does it mean?

MC GLAND

(cheerfully)  
Absolutely nothing.

GENEVA

Then why --?

MC GLAND

It sounds profound. I work it  
or something like it into most  
of my readings. Women -- never  
fail to applaud.

GENEVA

(nettled)  
That is the most sexist remark.  
Don't men applaud too?

MC GLAND

Most men are too sensible to  
attend my readings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENEVA

Really, Gowan!

MC GLAND

You're bristling. I find  
bristling very unfeminine.

GENEVA

I'm not bristling.

MC GLAND

Then what are you doing?

GENEVA

I'm -- I'm ---

MC GLAND

Yes?

GENEVA

Don't rush me. I'm trying to  
think of exactly the right word.

54A. EXT. OPEN FIELD - DAY

MC GLAND

(magnanimously)

Take your time. The importance  
of words cannot be overstated.  
The damage they can do -- or the  
good ---

GENEVA

Are you off on another lecture?

MC GLAND

My darling, I am merely trying  
for a graceful way of getting  
you off the hook.

(bristly)

All right, then. Look around you.

(a 180 degree gesture)

Take the lowly chickweed which  
we hound from our lawns like a  
common criminal. But suppose it  
was called something like 'mist  
of morning' or -- say -- 'Mary's  
eyes.' As chickweed it would  
be plucked up with sweat and  
curses, but how carefully we

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
would trod over the grass to  
avoid trampling Mary's eyes or  
mist of morning. And there,  
gentle Geneva, you see the power  
of words.

GENEVA  
(laughing delightedly)  
Oh God, Gowan, I love you.

MC GLAND  
Are you certain that's the exact  
word you want to use? I mean,  
you wouldn't care to embellish  
it, would you, with something  
like adore or worship?

GENEVA  
No. Don't be greedy, Gowan.

He holds on tightly to her hand so that she can't walk.  
He looks at her steadily. She looks at him questioningly.

MC GLAND  
You won't take it amiss if I  
just keep staring at you.

GENEVA  
No. But you know what that  
usually leads to.

MC GLAND  
Yes. And you don't mind?

GENEVA  
No.

MC GLAND  
(looks around)  
May I ask what is your attitude  
on a little al fresco diddle?

GENEVA  
On a bed of mist of morning or  
Mary's eyes what could be  
lovelier?

Arms around each other's waists they sink to the grass.

## 55. EXT. PORCH OF SPOFFORD HOME - DUSK

The occupants of three rocking chairs are Spofford, his son, George and Mare. Reuben, chin resting on his paws, is sprawled in front of Spofford. After a moment, George breaks the silence.

GEORGE

Warm today.

SPOFFORD

It's the weather.

The screen door swings open and Geneva steps out. She looks summery and chipper.

MARE

Off again?

GENEVA

(kissing her cheek)

Afraid so.

MARE

That feller again?

GENEVA

If you mean Gowan McGland --  
yes.

Bends to kiss her father on his forehead.

MARE

That's every night two weeks  
in a row way I figure it.

GENEVA

It is? I didn't realize that.  
Thanks, Mom.

MARE

I don't get it. Is it 'cause  
he's rich and famous?

GENEVA

(laughs)

Famous, yes. Rich, no.  
(kisses Spofford)

MARE

Funny, like they usually go  
together, rich and famous, like  
-- you know -- old and lecherous.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPOFFORD

Very subtle, Mare. Very subtle.

GENEVA

(unperturbed)

And he's not all that old.  
Don't wait up. I've got my  
key. 'Night.

She scampers down the steps -- and away. The three look  
after her. After a moment ---

MARE

I just don't like him. Do  
you, George?

GEORGE

Not if you don't.

SPOFFORD

Reuben here is crazy about him.  
And he's a better judge of human  
nature than we are.

MARE

Well, I'm worried.

GEORGE

Oh, they're probably just going  
to a movie. What else is there  
to do in Woodsmoke?

56. INT. - MC GLAND'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

CLOSE SHOT - MC GLAND AND GENEVA - IN BED

Sheets drawn up to their bare shoulders, they lie side  
by side in what is apparently post-coital relaxation.  
Geneva is looking straight ahead. McGland's eyes are  
closed. Then, he opens the eye closer to Geneva, gives  
her a sidelong glance. Geneva becomes aware of it --  
laughs.

GENEVA

You know, you resemble one of  
those barnyard villains in the  
cartoons -- the foxes and dogs  
that are always on the prowl ---

MC GLAND

(ruefully)  
Yes, and who are always getting

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
their ass kicked by the smaller  
animals.

He looks at her, strokes her arm. She looks at him.

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
I -- I hanker for you.

GENEVA  
(a small smile)  
Unfortunately, the world is  
full of women and of hankering.

MC GLAND  
Yes, and they rouse more of it  
than they can satisfy.

GENEVA  
Oh, I don't know. I'm certainly  
doing my best.

MC GLAND  
But I guess we're meant to hanker.  
Without it there wouldn't be any  
art or poetry or music. No  
nothing. I sometimes think  
it's all one great mating cry,  
mostly out of season.

Geneva smiles. They look at each other. Geneva responds  
to his look. He is reaching for her when the phone rings.

MC GLAND  
Shit.  
(reaches for phone)  
Hello --  
(not too enthu-  
siastically)  
Oh, hello, Lucille.  
(a sort of resigned  
grimace from Geneva)  
Yes, I know it's been two weeks  
-- no, no, you can't. It's  
impossible -- Well, I have  
this terrible -- uh tooth-  
ache and I took two seconals  
twenty minutes ago and -- uh  
-- they're just beginning to  
work -- Yes, yes, I do -- very  
soon -- I promise -- goodnight,  
Lucille.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hangs up, looks apologetically at Geneva.

GENEVA

You're such a lousy liar.

He looks rueful. She smiles a tiny smile.

GENEVA

We better hurry before Bobby  
Springer checks in.

He looks relieved, puts his arms around her.

57. INT. GENEVA'S BEDROOM - GENEVA - NIGHT

is putting the finishing touches on her makeup. She has  
taken a comb to her hair when Mare walks in.

MARE

This may interest you. There's  
somebody on the TV from New York  
talkin' about your poet feller.

GENEVA

Really? I'll be right in.

58. INT. SPOFFORD LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

George is seated on the bed, watching the TV. Spofford  
is sitting in a chair. Mare comes in followed by Geneva.  
Geneva sits on the bed beside her father. Mare stands,  
her eyes on the set -- a man's voice is heard ---

MAN'S VOICE

-- and it isn't only his poetry  
that has made him a legend, is  
it?

59. INT. - TV SET

The set is the fake living room associated with talk  
shows. A pleasant enough young man is talking to Edith  
McGland. The following is intercut with SHOTS of the  
four people as they react and respond:

EDITH

No. His indolence, his sloth,  
are equally legendary.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDITH (cont'd)

(laughs)

He once said in an interview,  
'I am not slothful. I am not  
indolent. I'm just too lazy  
to deny it, that is all.'

(the Interviewer

laughs)

Along those lines Gowan always  
maintained that what he hated  
about writing was the paper  
work.

(Interviewer

laughs)

INTERVIEWER

I'm afraid I'm going to have  
to ask you the question without  
which no self-respecting inter-  
view is complete. How did you  
and Gowan McGland meet?

EDITH

Well, you know that for a short  
time in London Gowan was a radio  
actor ---

INTERVIEWER

No, I didn't know that.

EDITH

Oh, yes. That velvety voice  
of his, you know. Well, it  
used to be velvety until the  
drink got to it. Anyway, we  
played opposite each other in  
a radio play. Afterwards we  
had coffee together and Gowan  
spouted his contempt for the,  
as he put it, 'piece of rubbish'  
in which I have performed so  
nobly. 'Thank you,' I said,  
'I wrote it --' Of course,  
after that, naturally Gowan  
and I fell in love and two  
weeks later we were married.

MARE

(outraged)

What!! He's married!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARE (cont'd)  
(to Geneva)  
You're going out with a married  
man??

GENEVA  
Sshh.

INTERVIEWER  
If you don't care to discuss  
your marriage --

EDITH  
(laughs)  
Au contraire. It's going to  
be an important part of the  
book I'm writing about Gowan.

INTERVIEWER  
Have you been in touch with him  
lately?

EDITH  
That's no easy task.  
(laughs)  
I understand he's been cutting  
an erotic swath down the Eastern  
Seaboard. Of course, for Gowan  
that's no ---

60. INT. SPOFFORD LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

But by this time Mare has angrily snapped off the set.

MARE  
I think I've heard enough!

GENEVA  
Oh, Mom.

MARE  
Did you know he's married?

GENEVA  
Naturally. It's no big secret.  
(a beat)  
And no big deal.

MARE  
(looking at her husband)  
George!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE  
(dutifully reproachful)  
Geneva!

Spoifford laughs. The doorbell is heard ringing.

GENEVA  
That's Gowan.  
(starts for door,  
stops)  
Let me tell you just one thing  
about Gowan. He has only one  
fault -- he's worthless. But  
how many worthy pillars of  
society can hold a candle to  
him on other counts? 'Scuse  
me ---  
(and she walks out)

SPOFFORD  
(tolerantly)  
Well, I guess that gives us  
something to think about.

61. OMIT

62. INT. HAXBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE SHOT - PHONE ON NIGHT TABLE

It is ringing. A retreating CAMERA reveals that the scene is a sumptuously furnished bedroom. Lucille Haxby is sitting up in bed, reading. The bathroom door opens and Jack Haxby, toothbrush in hand, appears on the threshold. Phone keeps ringing.

DR. HAXBY  
Who the hell's calling eleven-  
thirty at night?

LUCILLE  
Answer it and find out.

DR. HAXBY  
Cris' sake, I'm doing my teeth.  
All you got to do is reach over.

LUCILLE  
I'm reading Sidney Sheldon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HAXBY

You're always reading Sidney Sheldon.

(goes back into  
bathroom)

LUCILLE

Oh, you.

(picks up the phone)

Hello -- Gowan!

(looks apprehensively  
toward bathroom;  
in a whisper)

Gowan -- are you out of your  
mi ---

The bathroom door opens, Haxby appears.

LUCILLE

Oh --

(to Haxby)

It's Gowan McGland.

DR. HAXBY

Who?

LUCILLE

He wants to talk to you.

DR. HAXBY

(grabs the receiver)

Hello -- What seems to be the

-- Oh, I see -- Upper molar?

-- Sensitive to cold water, is

it? -- Yes, it can be pretty

bad -- Well, we'd better have

a look at it. My first appoint-

ment tomorrow is ten. Why don't

you get in at nine-thirty and

we'll see what we can do.

(hint of satisfaction  
in his voice)

I'm sorry, there's nothing I  
can do right now -- See if you  
can rustle up some aspirin at  
the motel -- Goodnight.

(hangs up)

LUCILLE

He sounded awful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HAXBY

Well, he's in a good deal of pain.

LUCILLE

You don't look too unhappy about that.

DR. HAXBY

Well, I'm not exactly crazy about him.

LUCILLE

Then why the hell are you treating him. And not even charging him at that.

DR. HAXBY

Because that's my way of humiliating him, if you must know.

Lucille looks at him contemptuously.

LUCILLE

You are one first-class son of a bitch, Jack Haxby.

DR. HAXBY

(pacing)

What the hell has he got that he has all the women in Woodsmoke slobbering all over him. What is he? Who the hell is he?

LUCILLE

Well, for one thing he's not a dentist.

Haxby stops pacing to look at her, his fists clenched.

DR. HAXBY

I'm going to let that pass.

LUCILLE

(sardonically)

Thank you.

DR. HAXBY

(resumes pacing)

-- Walks around in a tweed jacket that's never been pressed --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HAXBY (cont'd)  
socks that don't even match  
and the women fall flat on  
their backs for him!  
(looks at Lucille)  
Dammit, if he rolls those eyes  
of his at you one more time  
I'll knock his block off ---

LUCILLE  
(exaggerated sweetness)  
And you won't charge him for that,  
either, will you?

DR. HAXBY  
(vehemently)  
No, it'll be free!

Lucille looks scornful; presses the sound of TV back on.  
Haxby looks at her as she watches. There is now a tiny,  
Mona Lisa-like smile on her lips. A sudden disturbing  
thought hits Haxby.

DR. HAXBY  
Turn that friggin' thing off.  
I wanna ask you something.

LUCILLE  
(not turning  
her head)  
I can hear you.

DR. HAXBY  
(after some  
hesitation)  
Has he ever --?  
(pauses; forces  
himself to speak)  
Have you jumped into the sack  
with him?

Lucille gives him a withering glance before she speaks.

LUCILLE  
My darling, can't you put it a  
bit more elegantly? 'Has he had  
his way with you?' 'Has he had  
carnal knowledge of you?' ---

DR. HAXBY  
(his suspicion growing)  
Stop stalling, I want an answer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCILLE

You're funnier than Johnny Carson,  
you know that?

DR. HAXBY

I want an answer, you slut!

LUCILLE

Slut!

(her eyes narrow,  
her lips tighten)  
And what if I said yes?

DR. HAXBY

Is it yes!

LUCILLE

Yes, it's yes! Yes! Yes!

He stands looking at her, his eyes and veins bulging.

LUCILLE

Are you going to let that pass,  
too?

DR. HAXBY

No. No, you lousy whore, I'm  
not going to let it pass!

He storms back into the bathroom, slamming the door after  
him.

63. INT. ANTE ROOM - HAXBY'S OFFICE - DAY

The receptionist looks up from her magazine as the door  
opens and a nervous looking McGland enters.

MC GLAND

Good morning. Dr. Haxby is  
expect ---

The inner door opens and a white-coated Jack Haxby comes  
in. His manner as he addresses McGland is very pro-  
fessional. It neither exudes warmth or betrays any sign  
of hostility.

DR. HAXBY

Good morning, Gowan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND  
(his tone currying  
favor)  
Good morning, Doctor.

DR. HAXBY  
I'll have Miss Thompson take  
some X-Rays --  
(opens inner door)  
Then I'll be right with you.

He ushers in McGland.

64. INT. EXAMINING ROOM - DAY

CLOSE SHOT - X-RAY

The CAMERA is PULLING BACK and we see that Haxby is examining the X-Ray by the light from a window. McGland is sitting in the dental chair. Perspiration beads his brow and his hands clutch his knees as he watches Haxby apprehensively. The dentist's assistant, Miss Thompson, is in the b.g. Finally ---

DR. HAXBY  
They both seem O.K. No abscesses,  
or even cavities.

MC GLAND  
(a sigh of relief)  
Good. Then it's probably just  
neuralgia.

DR. HAXBY  
Not exactly. What's happened  
is that the bicuspid -- that's  
the forward one -- has shifted  
position. Or I should say  
become tilted. Here, look ---

He moves the negative in mid-air so that McGland can see it against the light, and indicates something with his little finger.

DR. HAXBY  
The root has worked itself forward,  
away from the molar, while the  
tooth proper has come back toward  
the molar. The result is this  
triangular pocket in which some

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HAXBY (cont'd)  
infection has developed, causing the tenderness and pain you've been feeling. It's probably a low grade infection and we might get rid of it now with a shot of penicillin. That's no problem.

(once again McGland looks relieved)

But the thing is, it's certain to come back. The danger is that in time -- maybe a year, maybe next week -- it'll infect the molar. And we don't want that, do we? That way you might lose them both -- which would be the end of any possible bridge-work. There's only one safe thing to do.

MC GLAND  
(barely audible)  
What's that?

DR. HAXBY  
Give up the bicuspid. It's much less valuable -- in fact, it's no use to you at all. It's your molar that supplies your support on that side, and when that goes --

(an understanding smile)

When that goes you lose them all, because you won't have enough anchors left. All that stands between you and a set of false teeth is that molar. I'll be glad to pull that bicuspid now -- McGland? --

For McGland, his eyes closed, has slumped in the dental chair.

DR. HAXBY (cont'd)  
Miss Thompson, get the brandy from the cabinet and pour Mr. McGland a drink.

She scurries off. Haxby pushes aside the instrument tray and hauls McGland into a more or less upright position on the chair, murmuring as he does ---

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HAXBY (cont'd)  
It's all right, Gowan -- it'll  
be absolutely painless -- won't  
take more than ten minutes ---

Miss Thompson is back now with the brandy in a paper cup.  
McGland gulps it down ---

MC GLAND  
One more, please ---

Miss Thompson pours another. It disappears quickly down  
McGland's throat.

DR. HAXBY  
Miss Thompson, the Novocain,  
please.

The CAMERA is on Haxby's face. His expression is  
businesslike.

65. INT. BURGUNDY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The CAMERA makes its way to a rear booth at which McGland  
and Geneva are seated. McGland is attacking a martini  
glass. His look is moody. Geneva is looking at him  
intently. Then ---

GENEVA  
Here I am, all bright-eyed and  
bubbly and you're sitting there  
looking like -- like ---

MC GLAND  
(dully)  
Like what?

GENEVA  
Well, like those men -- like  
those men in ads, you know,  
who sort of wonder if they've  
invested wisely. Or think to  
themselves, if I'd only had a  
checkup six months sooner ---

MC GLAND  
My pet, only a few hours ago  
I spent the most miserable half  
hour of my life in a dentist's  
chair and I simply don't feel like ---

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He is interrupted by the entrance of the waiter bearing two dishes.

WAITER  
(setting a plate  
before Geneva)  
Veal a la Oscar for Madame --  
and --  
(setting plate  
down)  
Coq au vin for the gentlemen.  
Enjoy your dinner.

MC GLAND  
Just a minute. There's been a  
mistake.

WAITER  
I believe you asked for coq au  
vin, did you not, sir?

MC GLAND  
Yes, I did, but I did not ask  
for a child's portion.

WAITER  
Sir, I assure you, this is the  
regular ---

MC GLAND  
I ordered an entree, not an  
appetizer.  
(waves the dish  
away)

WAITER  
Of course, sir.

He departs with the offending dish. Geneva looks at  
McGland.

GENEVA  
Standing up to a waiter in a  
French restaurant. What gave  
you the courage?

MC GLAND  
(sourly)  
Three martinis and a toothache.

MED. SHOT - THE WAITER AND THE MAITRE D'

They are looking back in the direction of McGland and  
Geneva.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

it. Sections of cooked poultry fly in every conceivable direction. The platter itself, which is round, tumbles onto its rim and rolls under a table on the other side of the room, like a hubcap from a speeding car. A drumstick bounces toward a waiter who is going by just at this moment and who springs nimbly out of the way. And vegetables, salad, assorted relishes and liquor glasses all join the shambles. And great brown glops of gravy from the gravy boat stain the carpeting, on which also a ball of mashed potatoes has landed miraculously intact. From this, the CAMERA PANS to Geneva who is marching stiffly to the exit, with McGland in her wake.

66. EXT. BURGUNDY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

as Geneva and McGland come out. Both are in a state.

GENEVA

I have never, never been so  
humiliated in my life -- all  
those people staring. I recog-  
nized two couples I know ---

MC GLAND

To hell with them! If that  
sonofabitch smart ass waiter  
thought he could ---

GENEVA

Listen, Gowan. You have a  
toothache and now I have a  
terrible headache. I just  
want to go home. Please,  
please Gowan, get a taxi ---

MC GLAND

Geneva ---

GENEVA

(starting to cry)

Please ---

Miserable, McGland steps to the curb, looks around ---

67. INT. MOTEL BEDROOM - DAY

CLOSE SHOT - TWO EMPTY LIQUOR BOTTLES AND A HALF-FILLED  
GLASS

The CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal the scene as McGland's

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

motel room. Some light is slithering into the room through the not completely closed slats of the Venetian blinds. McGland is outstretched on the bed, wearing only pajama bottoms. Suddenly, he winces, sits up straight in bed. Another wince -- and he dashes toward the bathroom.

68. INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

as McGland comes in, snaps on the light. Proceeding to the mirror of the medicine cabinet, he lifts his lip as far back as he can and looks into the lighted mirror. A gasp escapes him.

69. INT. MOTEL BEDROOM - DAY

as McGland comes in and makes a beeline for the phone on the night table. He dials a digit.

MC GLAND

(into phone)

Mr. Pycraft? Who is the best dentist in Woodsmoke? -- No, thank you, I've already seen Haxby and he's in New York. Who's the best in Woodsmoke? -- O-R-M-S-B-Y.

(hangs up and starts to dial)

70. INT. DR. ORMSBY'S OFFICE - DAY

MC GLAND IN DENTIST'S CHAIR

Beside the chair stands Dr. Ormsby, a short, cherubic sort with pink cheeks and merry eyes.

MC GLAND

-- so good of you to see me --  
Wednesday afternoon -- your golf ---

DR. ORMSBY

Well, if it's an emergency. You certainly sounded urgent on the phone. I'll catch up with the boys on the back nine. Well, let's have a look ---

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And look he does. When he straightens up, his look is not quite so merry.

DR. ORMSBY  
You're absolutely right. The molar is definitely abscessed.

MC GLAND  
(looking like a  
whipped dog)  
That's not necessarily a death sentence for a tooth nowadays, is it?

DR. ORMSBY  
Oh, no. No, certainly not. But I'm afraid that's not the whole story here.

He draws up a stool in order to sit closer to McGland. He is clearly a kind man.

DR. ORMSBY (cont'd)  
This tooth as such we might save. We can go in there with antibiotics, and if that doesn't work, drain the abscess surgically. But there's something more serious than all that. Your gum damage around it. Periodontal disease has left a lot of gum breakdown that's about to cost you the tooth even if by some miracle all the other factors work in our favor. Didn't your dentist explain all this when he pulled the bicuspid?

McGland, numb, shakes his head without looking at the doctor.

DR. ORMSBY (cont'd)  
And did he have to pull it? That's what puzzles me a little. He must have known that pulling it was as good as rending you toothless, because now of course you'll be stripped clean on that side and we can't hang a bridge on what's left. I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. ORMSBY (cont'd)  
But you'll have to have them all  
-- Mr. McGland -- Mr. McGland,  
are you all right?

For McGland is staring at the opposite wall like a man  
in a catatonic trance. He manages to nod his head dumbly.  
Dr. Ormsby walks the floor as he talks ---

DR. ORMSBY (cont'd)  
I make it a rule never to run  
down predecessors. But it's  
a foolish economy not to get  
the best. Often I find people  
go to dentists because they're  
friends. Is this man a friend  
of yours?

MC GLAND  
(in a faraway voice)  
Not -- not exactly.

DR. ORMSBY  
Ah, yes. I won't ask his name  
-- I'm not interested in that  
-- but you see the importance  
of having someone who knows what  
he's doing.

MC GLAND  
(slowly --  
thoughtfully)  
I think -- he -- knew -- what --  
he -- was -- doing.

71. INT. - MC GLAND'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

It is a mess. McGland's jacket lies half on a chair,  
half on the floor. His tie lies nearby. A stray shoe  
lies dead center. McGland himself is reaching into the  
plastic bowl of ice supplied by the management. He  
drops three cubes into a tall glass. His manner is that  
of a man who has been through the worst of everything.  
Nothing more can befall him. It is time to laugh  
bitterly at his fate. Thus, as he drops the cubes  
one by one into the glass he intones ---

MC GLAND  
In the name of the Father --  
the Son -- and the Holy Ghost.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He then twists the cap from a fresh bottle of whiskey and pours a generous stream of the liquid over the cubes. A quick slug -- and the doorbell rings. With a sigh, he sets the glass down, opens the door. There stands Geneva.

MC GLAND

Ah -- Geneva.

GENEVA

Gowan, I have to talk to you.

MC GLAND

(with a sweep of  
his hand, waving  
her in)

My home is your home.

Geneva looks at the room.

GENEVA

No. Let's walk. This room is  
so depressing ---

MC GLAND

I'm sorry you think so. I rather  
like its lived-in look. However ---

72. EXT. DEW DROP INN - DAY

Geneva and McGland are walking slowly away from it.  
Silence, and then ---

GENEVA

(flatly)

Gowan, I'm pregnant.

Pause. McGland looks stunned. Then his expression says,  
"Well, one more blow." He laughs a short, mirthless  
involuntary laugh.

GENEVA

You find it funny?

MC GLAND

I don't know yet -- let it sink  
in ---

(a few steps  
in silence)

Have you told your family yet?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENEVA

No.

MC GLAND

Are you going to?

GENEVA

I don't know. I may tell Gramps.  
But not my father. Certainly not  
my mother.

(a few more steps  
in silence)

She'd say, he'll have to get a  
divorce and marry you.

This really produces a silence. McGland finally breaks  
it. There is an oblique wistfulness in his tone.

MC GLAND

Would you marry me?

Geneva looks at him. There is affection, respect and  
regret in her look.

GENEVA

(quietly)

No, Gowan.

MC GLAND

(ironically)

Good girl.

A bit of silence; then ---

GENEVA

Would you marry me?

It is McGland's turn to look at Geneva. It is a long  
look.

MC GLAND

(utmost sincerity)

My darling, I love you much too  
much to marry you.

They exchange small, sad smiles of understanding. Walk  
on.

GENEVA

(after a moment)

Well, then, what are we going  
to do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McGland thinks a moment. His expression is wry.

MC GLAND

Let's see. It's been roughly  
two thousand years since --  
I mean, do you think it's a  
little too soon to announce  
another Immaculate Conception?

GENEVA

(reproachful)

Oh, Gowan.

MC GLAND

I withdraw the suggestion.

Geneva stops, turns. They start back toward the motel.

GENEVA

Well, fortunately, it's no big  
deal these days -- abortion, I  
mean.

McGland winces.

GENEVA

You wouldn't want that?

MC GLAND

I don't mind the thought, I hate  
the word. I don't want to think  
of a child of mine -- 'aborted.'  
I wouldn't mind -- 'cancelled'  
or 'deleted' -- or even 'expunged.'  
But --

(makes a face)

'aborted.'

GENEVA

Well, I'll take care of every-  
thing whatever I decide to do.  
Don't you worry.

MC GLAND

(wryly)

It's kind of you to shield me  
from the harsh realities.

More walking in silence; then ---

GENEVA

Gowan, then don't you think it

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GENEVA (cont'd)  
would be best if we didn't see  
each other again?  
(McGland doesn't reply)  
Don't you, Gowan?

MC GLAND  
Don't I what?

GENEVA  
Don't you think it would be  
best ---

MC GLAND  
Oh, I'm sorry, I thought it  
was a rhetorical question.

They are close to the motel now. They stop. McGland  
looks at her.

MC GLAND  
Yes, I suppose it would be best.

A beat.

GENEVA  
That doesn't mean I will ever,  
ever forget you.

MC GLAND  
That's sweet.  
(a beat)  
I thank you.  
(another beat --  
quietly)  
I thank you for everything.

She looks at him. Lifts her face to his. Their lips  
meet. They kiss chastely. Then ---

GENEVA  
Think of me sometimes.

MC GLAND  
I will take it under consideration.

She smiles at him with her eyes. Then turns and walks  
away. He stands watching her until she turns the corner.

73. EXT. SPOFFORD HOUSE - DAY

Spofford, Reuben at his heels, is walking down the path ---

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPOFFORD

Come on, Reuben -- Let's go.  
We'll have a drink with Harry.

74. INT. - MC GLAND'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

McGland, whiskey glass in one hand, is talking into the tape recorder held in the other. The front door is very slightly open.

MC GLAND

(tonelessly)

-- and when she said don't you think it would be best if we didn't see each other again, I said, yes it would be best. My voice rang like a handful of false coins.

(drinks; paces)

She walked off. And like a well-cast heroine she didn't look back. And now -- my dear Edith, my first true love, I have a gift for you. The ending for your book. I will record for you the last stray thoughts, the final sensations of your protagonist, Gowan Evans McGland.

(drinks)

Yes, the moment I left Dr. Ormsby's office -- as I descended the stairs --

(smiles wryly)

'as in a dream' I knew the destination to which I was moving. I had always known that for me toothlessness would be the moment of truth. Toothlessness, I knew, was for me chief among the range of cosmic insults heaped upon man, final proof of his total and tragic ludicrousness. Yes, that would be the sign that all endurable life had for me ceased on this earth. In the long strategic retreat called life I saw myself as backing toward my grave tooth by tooth and poem by poem. No, I will go to my

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
own voluntarily, with a few of  
each still left in my head.  
(drinks)  
You wonder where I get the nerve?  
Well, I have mustered that final  
courage which consists in knowing  
courage to be useless. I will  
submit no further to the long  
outrage of human existence --  
Excuse me for a minute ---

75. EXT. STREET - SPOFFORD AND REUBEN - DAY

Reuben is trotting ahead, then keeps looking back as if  
it's important for Spofford to catch up.

SPOFFORD  
Easy -- You'll be seeing your  
friend soon enough.

76. INT. - MC GLAND'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

McGland has placed a straight-backed chair under the  
cross beam over which he has usually hung his neck-  
stretching orthopedic harness. This time, instead of  
the collar, he is fashioning a noose from a thick strand  
of rope. He gives a few tugs to test it. It seems  
sturdy enough. He throws the noose over the beam --  
Then once more he picks up the recorder and the whiskey  
glass. He thinks a moment, then speaks into the  
recorder ---

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
-- I keep thinking of Geneva.  
As we stood talking outside  
the motel I confess I experienced  
one vast, last plummet of yearning,  
the desire to reach out and take  
her. Resisting it was perhaps  
the single act of self-mastery  
I had ever performed in my life.  
(drinks; looks  
up at noose)  
Oh well, that's more reason for  
my departure now, not less. My  
remaining would serve Geneva  
more poorly than my going.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
That would be even true if she  
chooses to have the child. I can  
give my son a heritage provided  
I'm not around to spoil it.

He gulps the last of the whiskey in the glass, then steps  
up on the chair, recorder still in hand.

77. STREET - SPOFFORD AND REUBEN - DAY

Spofford is walking much too slowly for Reuben. He  
suddenly dashes from Spofford's side and sprints madly  
down the street.

SPOFFORD  
Reuben -- Reuben ---

But Reuben is now out of sight.

78. CLOSE SHOT - NOOSE - MC GLAND - DAY

is drawing the loop snugly around his neck, then looks  
straight ahead.

MC GLAND  
My very last thought, Edith --  
my very last regret is the poem  
I never finished --  
(a beat)  
You remember the one, Edith --  
the few lines we both loved so  
much -- How did it go --?  
(thinks)  
'Come let us spread a picnic on  
precipice' -- that one, Edith.  
'Eat, drink, be merry with our  
backs to the abyss' -- what  
was next? Oh, yes --  
'Till in that dusk where bats  
cannot be told from swallows,  
Gifts from threats, we'll banish  
solemn songs like this.'  
(ruefully)  
Never could finish it, could I? --  
(in a half tone)  
'We'll banish solemn songs like  
this --  
solemn songs like this --'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His eyes close. Lines deepen in his forehead. He appears deep in thought -- after a moment his lips move soundlessly. Then ---

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
 (whispering)  
 'This is our hopeless heaven --'  
 (thinks, then a  
 little louder)  
 'This is our hopeless heaven --  
 these flowers our eyes have  
 watered --'  
 How does that sound to you,  
 Edith? -- 'these flowers our  
 eyes have watered --'  
 Wait, Edith --  
 (eyes closed again  
 in thought; then --)  
 '--wine drawn from our veins --  
 tunes piped from hollowed bones --  
 (more thought.  
 Quite a bit; then  
 triumphantly)  
 'And gaiety pouring from every  
 wound --' Goddamit, Edith,  
 I like that -- 'and gaiety pouring  
 from every wound.'

O.s., barking is heard in the distance. The sound grows louder with every passing second.

MC GLAND (cont'd)  
 (with increasing  
 exhilaration)  
 Edith, will you type that and  
 send it to --- No, no, I'll do  
 it myself! There are still poems  
 to be written -- and, yes, so  
 many women to be made love to,  
 including you, my dear Edith.  
 (smiles a bit  
 sheepishly)  
 All of which means I'm just too  
 chicken to kick this chair from  
 under me.  
 (exhilarated again)  
 And why should I: Yes, why should  
 I --?

The barking o.s. is furious. He flings the recorder away from him and onto the bed. Just as his hands reach up

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

up to loosen the noose, the front door flies open from the impact of Reuben's body.

MC GLAND (cont'd)

Ah -- Reuben ---

The CAMERA is on Reuben who in his joy and excitement at seeing his beloved friend leaps toward him. The ANGLE is such that we see Reuben strike McGland's body at the knees -- knocking the chair to the floor, leaving McGland's legs to thrash about frantically, convulsively -- and we hear McGland's last words -- a strangled "Oh, shit --!"

The CAMERA PANS to the white wall. We see in silhouette McGland's body from the waist down. The legs have stopped thrashing -- they are motionless. All is quiet. Reuben runs outside the open door.

79. EXT. LANDSCAPE - DAY

In the distance, a figure appears -- Tad Springer jogging. He jogs -- jogs until another figure appears on the landscape. It is Geneva. Tad stops jogging, walks alongside of Geneva. They walk -- walk -- side by side. Getting smaller, but we can see his arm go around Geneva's waist. The CAMERA holds them in sight as Reuben happily joins them.

The CAST CREDITS rise slowly into view.

FADE OUT

THE END