

THE EMPEROR'S CLUB

by
Neil Tolkin

Based on the story
By
Ethan Canin

Beacon Communications
120 Broadway, Suite 200
Santa Monica, CA 90401

Andrew S. Karsch
Longfellow Pictures
145 Hudson, 9th floor
New York, NY 10013

<u>Revision Color</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Page Numbers</u>
Blue	March 30, 2001	Entire Script
Pink	April 5, 2001	Cover, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 75, 75A
Yellow	April 16, 2001	Cover, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 17, 18, 43, 48, 49, 51, 52, 52A, 56, 60, 62, 69, 69A, 70, 78, 79, 81, 82, 84, 85, 89, 91, 93, 94, 94A, 95, 98, 100, 101, 106
Green	April 19, 2001	Cover, 28, 33, 35, 37, 73, 75, 75A, 109, 109A, 110
Goldenrod	April 23, 2001	Cover, 12, 13, 4, 14A, 29, 29A, 30, 38, 38A, 55, 55A, 74
Buff	May 1, 2001	Cover, 2, 2A, 21, 22, 22A
Salmon	May 2, 2001	Cover, 51, 80, 80A
Cherry	May 4, 2001	Cover, 16, 16A, 18, 18A, 29, 29aA, 29A-30, 61, 68, 73, 113, 114, 114A
Tan	May 11, 2001	Cover, 106, 107
Second White	May 21, 2001	Cover, 101, 102, 103, 103A, 104, 104A, 105, 105A, 106, 107

This material is the property of Palace Films, Inc. and is intended and restricted solely for Palace Films, Inc. personnel. Distribution or disclosure of this material to unauthorized persons is prohibited. The sale, copying, or reproduction of this material in any form is also prohibited.

© Copyright 2001
Palace Films, Inc.
All Rights Reserved

FADE IN:

1 WILLIAM HUNDERT, AGE SIXTY-FOUR

1

Sitting squarely on the edge of his bed. Eyes forward. He wears pressed grey flannels, a starched white oxford, and a striped tie. A packed suitcase and crested blue blazer sit piled beside him.

It is the morning, and the bright sun streams through the window casting a glowing shaft of light upon him.

He stares at a terra cotta plaque mounted above the door, lost in a memory.

There's a knock at the door.

ELIZABETH (O.S.)

Your chariot has arrived.

A smile. He rises and begins to gather his things.

2 EXT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - MORNING

2

It's a modest sized Victorian home surrounded by a lush, vibrant garden. A stretch limousine idles in the driveway. A CHAUFFEUR stands by the open rear door.

Hundert exits the house, suitcase in hand, weathered briefcase in the other. He's followed by ELIZABETH. She is immediately sympathetic, pretty in a very natural way.

ELIZABETH

You have your bag, your
briefcase... Your notes?

The chauffeur takes his bag. Hundert relinquishes it awkwardly. All but his briefcase. No one has ever carried his bags before.

Elizabeth watches him. There is something apprehensive in his bearing.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Everything okay?

Hundert nods.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Then have fun.

He nods. She gives him a hug and kiss. He climbs into the limo. The driver closes the door.

Elizabeth waves as the limo pulls down the gravel drive.

adored HEADMASTER WOODBRIDGE, the 58 year old potentate of St. Benedict's. Woodbridge's WIFE, younger, quite voluptuous, very sexy, sits off to the side.

A couple of boys go out of their way to walk past Mr. Woodbridge and gawk at his wife's endowments.

One boy after another passes by Hundert, waving or saying 'hello'.

HUNDERT

(to the boys)

Mr. Pierson -- Mr. Serrell -- Mr. Husted - Mr. Harnish. You've grown a foot. Forget class. Head directly to the gym and Coach Phillips.

HARNISH

Really, sir? Forget class?

HUNDERT

Mr. Harnish... You do remember our discussion of Plautus and comic irony?

HARNISH

Oh, right. Right. It was a joke...

HUNDERT

Yes, Mr. Harnish, I was joking. Good to see you back, son.

A boy suddenly darts by, cutting across the grass.

HUNDERT (CONT'D)

(grabbing him)

Whoah, whoah. Hold up.

The boy turns, sheepishly. He's fourteen, clearly a new student.

HUNDERT (CONT'D)

What is your name?

BOY

Louis.

HUNDERT

Simply Louis?

BOY

Louis Masoudi, sir.

HUNDERT

Mr. Masoudi, would you mind defining the word "path" for me?

MASOUDI

There are several definitions, I suppose.

MASOUDI

Yes, sir... It's better for the grass.

HUNDERT

No. It's better for you.

Masoudi moves on down the path. In the midst of it all, Mr. Ellerby, neophyte professor catches Hundert up.

ELLERBY

Mr. Hundert.

HUNDERT

Mr. Ellerby.

ELLERBY

I wanted to thank you.

Mr. Hundert looks at him.

ELLERBY (CONT'D)

Mr. Woodbridge let it be known that your support was instrumental in my getting this job. 'Bene exeat'.

HUNDERT

'Bene meritus'. We can always use another friend of the classics.

ELLERBY

I tell you, the way Mr. Woodbridge talks about you...

(imitating him)

"Listen to Mr. Hundert, Mr. Ellerby. He'll be running this place someday."

Mr. Hundert, a self-deprecating smile, but it clearly pleases him.

ELLERBY (CONT'D)

Do you remember your first day here?

HUNDERT

I do, indeed.

ELLERBY

So then maybe you can tell me why the prospect of facing a dozen school boys scares the bejesus out of me?

(beat)

(MORE)

STUDENT #4
Copeland Gray.

HUNDERT
And...

STUDENT #5
Martin Blythe.

HUNDERT
Is that a question, Mr. Blythe?

BLYTHE
No, sir.

HUNDERT
Then let me hear your name spoken
as your father and his father would
like to hear it. With pride.
(proud)
I am here. My life is real. Again;
your name --

BLYTHE
My name is Martin Blythe.

HUNDERT
Excellent, Mr. Blythe. Now would
you be so kind as to step up here
and read for us from that plaque
hung above the classroom door?

BLYTHE
Me?

HUNDERT
Yes, Mr. Blythe. Not Mr. Brewster
who sits to your right. Nor Mr.
Fields who sits to your left. Nor
Mr. Diebel who sits behind you.
Nor Mr. Russell who sits in front
of you. Not Mr. Mehta, Gray, or
Brill. You.

Blythe walks to the front of the class. Stands nervously before
the PLAQUE that hangs above the door. Reading

BLYTHE
(quiet)
I am Shhh... Shutruk-Nahhunte?

HUNDERT
Quite right. A little louder,
please.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

HUNDERT (CONT'D)
(with quiet force)
"De nobis fabula narratur."
(beat)
Their story is our story.

The class is spellbound. Hundert lets the moment resonate --

HUNDERT (CONT'D)
My name is Mr. Hundert. Welcome to
my class.

-- then turns to his blackboard and pull-down atlas.

HUNDERT (CONT'D)
We shall begin in Greece during the
Archaic Age, touching briefly upon
the devastating War of the
Peloponnese...

And so the semester begins.

10 EXT. ST. BENEDICT'S - DRAPER HOUSE -NIGHT 10

After dinner at St. Benedict's. Draper House is one of several
dormitories preparing for lights out.

11 INT. DRAPER HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY -NIGHT 11

In the bathroom, St. Benedict's youngest brush their teeth before
bed. Hundert, their house master, ducks his head in.

HUNDERT
Five minutes to nine, gentlemen.

The brushing hastens, and one boy turns to his sink-mate, does
his impression of a rabid dog.

IN THE HALLWAY

The preparations escalate. At the sight of Hundert, boys give up
playing grab ass and head toward their rooms. *

HUNDERT
Five minutes to lights out. *

He continues down the corridor. *

Voices draw him to one of the rooms on the hall. There stands
Masoudi, his back to the door, entertaining a couple of his
classmates. *

MASOUDI
(imitating Hundert) *
Follow the path, my good man. Walk *
where the great men before you have *
walked. *

HUNDERT (CONT'D)

They all had a first night here.
And when the lights went out at
nine o'clock, each and every one of
them wondered if the sun would ever
rise again.

*
*
*

It's quiet. Blythe is comforted. Masoudi has reappeared in the doorway.

MASOUDI

Even Bill Russell used to puke his
guts out before every big game.

HUNDERT

Eloquently said, sir.

MASOUDI

And he won 13 championships.

HUNDERT

(as he exits)

Yes. And three MVP's.

*
*

13

INT. DRAPER HOUSE - DEEPAK'S DORM ROOM

13

There is Deepak Mehta, deeply engrossed in a history book. The
bed across from him is unoccupied. Deepak looks up. Hundert
stands in the doorway.

*
*

HUNDERT

(off the book's title)

'The Carthaginians'.

DEEPAK

Yes. Hamilcar Barca, sir. He seems
like an outstanding commander.

HUNDERT

Yes, but he had the terrible
misfortune of being on the wrong
side.

Deepak smiles. Writes that down in his margin.

HUNDERT (CONT'D)

You do realize the Carthaginians
are not on the course reading list.

DEEPAK

I do, sir.

HUNDERT

(impressed)

Very good.

16

INT. HUNDERT'S QUARTERS -MOMENTS LATER

16

A wood panelled sitting room and a small bedroom. Books, objects, images that, like his classroom, reflect a life devoted to the classics.

HUNDERT

How was your trip?

ELIZABETH

We got back late. I've been chasing my tail all day trying to catch up.

She hands him the roster and then produces a small gift box from her pocket and hands it to him. *

HUNDERT (CONT'D)

What's this?

ELIZABETH

Open it.

He opens the box. Resting on a bit of cotton is a silver dollar sized stone.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Hadrian's wall. *

Hundert looks at her.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Milecastle 37 at Housesteads.

(beat)

A tiny piece of it.

Hundert rolls it around in his hand.

HUNDERT

Good-night.

Elizabeth exits. Looking out the window, Hundert can see Elizabeth and Tony walk away together.

*
*
*
*
*

HUNDERT (O.S.)
Knowledge equals Virtue.

20 ** SCENE OMITTED ** 20

20A INT. HUNDERT'S CLASSROOM - DAY 20A *

Students answer questions. *

BLYTHE
431 B.C. *

FIELD
Peloponnesian. *

21 INT. HUNDERT'S CLASSROOM 21

Under the heading PHILOSOPHICAL IDEALISM OF THE GREEKS, it is written SOCRATES: The unexamined life is not worth living. Hundert lectures to the class.

HUNDERT
Thus, Socrates marked a decisive turn away from the scientific query we have seen thus far to--

He points at Gray.

GRAY
The problem of ethics.

HUNDERT
Correct. Virtue and the health of the human soul.

21A EXT. ST. BENEDICT'S CAMPUS - FALL MORNING 21A

Hundert and a more relaxed Ellerby crossing the campus. They talk openly, becoming better friends.

HUNDERT (V.O.)
Yet the powers that be were not prepared for this self examination and as a result...

21B INT. HUNDERT'S CLASSROOM 21B

On the board is written, THE TRIAL OF SOCRATES. Hundert at the front. Beside him stands Brewster holding a basket. They each have a black rock and a white rock on the desk before them.

HUNDERT
Socrates stands accused of... Mr. Mehta?

HUNDERT

You've heard the accusations.
You've heard Socrates' defense. Now
is the time to cast your vote.

ANGLE ON the boys.

HUNDERT

Please walk forward and place one
rock in the basket Mr. Brewster
holds. The white rock for life.
The black, for death. As you see,
Mr. Masoudi, there are no gray
rocks.

21C ** SCENE OMITTED **

21C *

22 EXT. LAKE -MORNING

22

Hundert's one man scull cuts through the water.

HUNDERT (V.O.)

So Socrates is sentenced to death.

22A INT. HUNDERT'S CLASSROOM

22A

Hundert stands at his desk, a goblet of black liquid in front of
him.

HUNDERT

So two days before he is to be
executed, an old friend Crito tells
him that arrangements have been
made for his escape.

He lifts the goblet.

DEEPAK

"To not know what happens before
you are born is to be forever a
child."

*
*
*
*

24 EXT. ST. BENEDICT'S CAMPUS -MORNING 24

A crisp, clear morning. The BELL tolls nine as assorted stragglers hurry to class.

25 INT. HUNDERT'S CLASSROOM -DAY 25

This morning's class is in delightful disarray as Hundert's students fit themselves and each other with togas fashioned from bedsheets. They laugh, having fun, and Hundert is in as buoyant a mood as they are.

HUNDERT

Gentlemen, as we begin our study of the Romans, keep this in mind: Rome may not have been built in a day, but they did manage to dress in the course of one.

26 EXT. ST. BENEDICT'S MAIN GATE - DAY 26

A black Towncar passes through St. Benedict's gates and heads toward the administration building steps. A CHAUFFEUR steps out to open the rear door for his passenger --

-- and THE FIGURE OF A YOUNG BOY EMERGES. Woodbridge emerges to greet him.

But Sedgewick shakes halfheartedly. Hundert looks aside to Woodbridge; Sedgewick is in safe hands now.

WOODBIDGE

Well then, carry on, Hundert. Good to meet you, son.

He pats Sedgewick on the back and leaves. Hundert leads Sedgewick into the classroom.

The students stare, as students do.

HUNDERT

I'd like you all to meet a new addition to our class, Mr. Sedgewick Bell.

They nod, 'hellos'. Sedgewick hardly smiles, looking out with disdain.

MASOUDI

Hey Bell, where's your toga? *

SEDGEWICK *

Where are your pants? Your mother wearing them? *

HUNDERT *

Mr. Masoudi. Mr. Bell- *

Hundert walks toward the togas, Bell hanging back. *

SEDGEWICK *

I thought this was a boys school. *

HUNDERT

(turning)

Yes. *

SEDGEWICK *

So why is everyone wearing dresses? *

That silences everyone. Hundert is momentarily startled by Sedgewick's brazenness.

HUNDERT

... They are not dresses. They are togas; a loose outer garment worn by-

SEDGEWICK

Citizens of Ancient Rome. I know. Yours looks a little like one of my mother's mumus. *

Hundert sits at a faculty table with Elizabeth and assorted other faculty.

ELIZABETH

I read something about him when we received the application. Quite conservative, friend of big oil...

HUNDERT

Whoever he is, his son is a bit of a Visigoth.

Elizabeth smiles - always the passion for antiquity.

ELIZABETH

Do you foresee a problem?

HUNDERT

Maybe a few skirmishes on the frontier. Nothing serious. Once he settles in, I'm sure he'll be fine.

30A EXT. DRAPER HOUSE - DAY 30A *

The campus is sparsely populated at study hour. *

31 ** SCENE OMITTED ** 31

32 INT. DRAPER HOUSE - MASOUDI/BLYTHE DORM ROOM -NIGHT 32

THUMP! THUMP! Blythe and Masoudi sit at their desks trying to study. THUMP! THUMP! Coming loud from Deepak's room. Masoudi puts his book down.

MASOUDI

I can't listen to this. I cannot listen to this.

33 INT. DRAPER HOUSE - DEEPAK/SEDGEWICK DORM ROOM 33

Deepak sits at his desk studying Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. Or at least trying to. We hear a slow rhythmic THUMP... THUMP...

Across the room, Deepak's new roommate, Sedgewick, lies on his bed. Baseball mitt in hand, he tosses a rubber baseball off the wall before him. Julius Caesar lies closed on his chest. THUMP... THUMP... THUMP...

There's a KNOCK at the door, then it opens, cautiously. It's Masoudi, with Blythe standing behind him.

MASOUDI

Sedgewick?

Sedgewick glances over.

MASOUDI (CONT'D)
 Actually, Martin was wondering, if
 you could keep it down. He's
 trying to study.

Sedgewick looks away, continues to throw the ball.

MASOUDI (CONT'D)
 Okay. Thank you.

Masoudi closes the door. We stay with Sedgewick. Thump...
 Thump...

MASOUDI/CASSIUS (O.S.)
 "... I think it is not meet.
 Mark Antony, so beloved of Caesar,
 should outlive Caesar.

34 ** SCENE OMITTED **

34

35 INT. HUNDERT'S CLASSROOM - DAY

35

The class, texts under their arms, perform 'Julius Caesar'.
 Hundert off to the side.

MASOUDI/CASSIUS
 "Let Antony and Caesar fall
 together."

SEDGEWICK/BRUTUS
 "Our course will seem too bloody,
 Caius Cassius/ To cut the head off
 and then hack the limbs."

Sedgewick as Brutus. Monotone and lifeless. Hundert listens,
 annoyed by the lack of effort.

SEDGEWICK/BRUTUS (CONT'D)
 "Like wrath in death and envy
 afterwards/ For Antony is but a
 limb of Caesar/ Let us be
 sacrificers, but not butchers" --

HUNDERT
 Mr. Bell, this is William
 Shakespeare, not the evening news.
 The fate of Julius Caesar is at
 hand.

SEDGEWICK
 Not for me.

HUNDERT

Which Brutus had no desire to be.

SEDGEWICK

Whatever. He would have won.

Deepak raises his hand.

DEEPAK

I'm not so sure about that. Brutus' tragic flaw was that his excessive idealism, his virtue, obscured his view of the practical reality of politics. He was doomed to be outmaneuvered. Cassius did it to him, and now Mark Antony would.

SEDGEWICK

Okay, so maybe they would have got him eventually, but he would've been better off.

HUNDERT

But at what price? Remember Socrates?

SEDGEWICK

Not really.

HUNDERT

"It is not living that is important, but living rightly." He chose to die by unjust execution rather than break the law he had pledged to uphold.

SEDGEWICK

... Another genius.

The boys chuckle. Hundert stares at Sedgewick, an enigmatic furrow on his brow. The BELL rings. The boys collect their books and leave the classroom.

Hundert turns to the window, looking out to the sweeping lawns and cobblestoned paths below. Students walk to and from classes. One student cuts across the grass ignoring all paths before him... Sedgewick tosses a baseball to himself.

ELLERBY (O.S.)

Mr. Hundert.

Hundert turns, startled. Ellerby stands by the door.

ELLERBY

Everything okay?

37

INT. DRAPER HOUSE - DEEPAK/SEDGEWICK DORM ROOM

37

*

Deepak, Blythe, and Masoudi study Latin, or try to. The THUMPING is right outside their window. It stops.

BLYTHE

Fio.

MASOUDI AND DEEPAK

I am made... I become.

BLYTHE

Fis.

The door swings open. Sedgewick enters. Everything stops. He nods to all as he passes through to his bedroom.

BLYTHE (CONT'D)

Fis.

MASOUDI AND DEEPAK

You are made... You become.

BLYTHE

Fit.

MASOUDI AND DEEPAK

... He she it is made; he she it becomes, it is done.

Sedgewick reappears, a couple of magazines in hand, and flops on the sofa. It's pretty clearly some kind of exotic erotica.

BLYTHE

Plural of 'fit'.

DEEPAK

(alone)

Fiunt.

Masoudi stares at the magazine cover, fascinated. Sedgewick, without glancing away, tosses him the other magazine.

SEDGEWICK

's French.

Masoudi picks it up, begins to thumb through it. He is transfixed.

MASOUDI

Oh my God.

BLYTHE

Come on guys, we're supposed to be study-

38A

EXT. WOODED OUTSKIRTS OF ST. BENEDICTS

38A

BANG!

BLYTHE (O.S.)

Why are we doing this?

Laughter. The boys walk through the woods near the lake. Masoudi, Deepak and Sedgewick carry a rowboat painted in the St. Benedict's school colors above their head. Blythe trails along behind.

BLYTHE

The boathouse is off limits. We can't leave school property. What if that thing has holes in it?

MASOUDI

Get over it, Martin.

BLYTHE

I don't think you guys get what I'm saying. They catch us, we get kicked out and we don't get our tuition back.

DEEPAK

Martin, mellow out.

BLYTHE

I can't mellow out. I cannot get kicked out of here. I'm a legacy. My father was Mr. Julius Caesar.

DEEPAK

Your father was Mr. Julius Caesar?

BLYTHE

1930. He beat out John Cheever.

DEEPAK

The writer?

MASOUDI

No shit. Did he ever tell you what question he won on?

BLYTHE

Did he ever not tell me; "Which tribes invaded Rome in 102 BC?"... The Teutons and the Cimbri.

(beat)

They were the last words out of his mouth before he dropped me off here.

41

EXT. LAKE / DOCK - DAY

41

The four boys crammed in a rowboat. Sedgewick sits in the stern of the boat, rowing with a strong, regular stroke. Deepak and Masoudi sit in front of him. Beyond him, we see not so far away, the buildings of St. Mary's. And at the edge of the lake, a dock. And on the dock, a cluster of girls in school uniforms.

Better yet. The girls laugh and beckon them.

SEDGEWICK

Guys. What's the phone number?

ALL THE GUYS

(garbled/excited)

473-5678

The girls laugh at the awkwardness. Sedgewick is calm.

SEDGEWICK

473-5678

The blonde girl writes the number on her arm.

BRUNETTE

So... You guys feel like going
skinny dipping?

The boys eyes go wide.

SEDGEWICK

Pardon me?

They giggle...

BRUNETTE

Nothing.

Sedgewick continues to smile at them as he begins to unbutton his
shirt. Takes off his shoes, socks. Drops his pants. Stands *
there in his boxers. The girls shriek with laughter. The boys *
can't believe it. *

SEDGEWICK

So who's going to come in with me?

The girls look at each other.

SEDGEWICK (CONT'D)

Come on. It'll feel good. *

BLONDE

I don't want to get my arm wet. I
might lose your number.

Sedgewick looks her right in the eye.

SEDGEWICK

It's okay. I'll whisper it in your
ear so you won't forget.

Now it's the blonde girl's turn to be back on her heels. Their
redheaded companion, however -

MASOUDI

Mr. Hundert.

Bell smiles. A convert. Hundert gathers himself.

HUNDERT

(pointing to their rooms)

Good night, gentlemen.

43 INT. DRAPER HOUSE - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - EVENING 43 *

Hundert exits the room. Makes his way down the hall. He knows he has a problem on his hands.

44 INT. DRAPER HOUSE - DEEPAK/SEDGEWICK DORM ROOM - NIGHT 44 *

The boys sit around on the tatter furniture in the dark. Sedgewick's trunk has been dragged into the common room and the floor is littered with candy wrappers. Deepak pokes around in the trunk. Sedgewick stares out the window.

BLYTHE

(an unlikely source)

You think they were really going to take their clothes off?

MASOUDI

What do you mean? That redhead was ready to go for it.

(beat)

A redhead, think about that.

BLYTHE

But you wouldn't have gone in. Not naked.

MASOUDI

Please. You guys have never seen my emergency oar.

(beat)

You think they'll call?

SEDGEWICK

They'll call.

Deepak emerges from the trunk.

DEEPAK

I am very hungry. I have eaten the Hershey bar and there are no more sweet tarts.

Sedgewick turns back into the room.

46 INT. HUNDERT'S QUARTERS 46
Hundert sits at his desk reading a copy of Livy. He hears *
something. He looks out his open window. It's quiet. He returns *
to his book.

47 EXT. DRAPER HOUSE - DORM ROOM WINDOW 47 *
The guys watch Sedgewick serpentine across campus.

48 EXT. ST. BENEDICT'S CAMPUS 48
Sedgewick darts through the night. He disappears around the *
corner of the ADMINISTRATION BUILDING and immediately reappears, *
throwing himself flat against the wall. Mr. Woodbridge, making *
his nightly rounds, enters the shot. *

49 ** SCENE OMITTED ** 49 *

50 EXT. DRAPER HOUSE - DORM ROOM WINDOW 50
Using binoculars, the guys observe Sedgewick's predicament. *

MASOUDI

Uh-oh.

51 P.O.V. - BINOCULARS 51
Woodbridge heads on to the dining hall. Sedgewick waits a *
moment. Then disappears. *

52 ** SCENE OMITTED ** 52 *

53 EXT. HEADMASTER'S HOUSE -NIGHT 53 *
Sedgewick races toward the dining hall. But as he passes *
alongside Woodbridge's house, he SKIDS to a stop. His eyes go *
WIDE, as a thin shaft of light from inside shines down on him.
He gawks, then bolts off like the wind.

54 EXT. DORM ROOM WINDOW 54 *
Sedgewick suddenly appears over the parapet. *

SEDGEWICK
Let's go. Quick.

MASOUDI
Where's the food? *

SEDGEWICK
Forget the food. 's better than *
food. Come on. Come on. Come on. *

Sedgewick, meanwhile, takes something out of his pocket. He pauses a beat, then whispers to Blythe. *

SEDGEWICK

Get ready.

Blythe looks at him, confused, then dumbfounded, as Sedgewick lights a firecracker and tosses it on the ground nearby. *

BANG! *

Mrs. Woodbridge freezes. Ellerby freezes.

The guys freeze. And then... Ellerby is gone one way...

And the boys, the other.

They dash across the lawn, hearts pounding, following Sedgewick! Blythe is frightened, but having the time of his life!

57	INT. HUNDERT'S QUARTER'S	57	
	He's gone. His book lays on the desk.		
57A	INT. DRAPER HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY	57A	*
	Sedgewick, Masoudi, Deepak and Blythe, having just climbed back in through the window, burst forth from Brewster's bedroom and shoot down the hall. They race up the stairs toward the third floor.		*
57B	INT. DRAPER HOUSE - STAIRCASE	57B	*
	Hundert climbs the stairs from the ground floor.		*
57C	INT. DRAPER HOUSE - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY	57C	*
	The boys emerge from the stairs onto the third floor and dash into their rooms.		*
	Sedgewick and Deepak dive onto their beds.		*
	Blythe and Masoudi rush into their room, shutting the door behind them.		*
58	INT. DRAPER HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY	58	
	Hundert makes his rounds.		
59	** SCENE OMITTED **	59	*

He peeks over at Sedgewick Bell, who stands with his classmates, whispering and snickering. They cast furtive glances back at Hundert. Something is up.

She leans over and whispers to him. *

ELIZABETH *

Are you considering a response? *

62

INT. HUNDERT'S CLASSROOM - DAY

62

Hundert draws an elaborate diagram on the chalkboard illustrating the death of Julius Caesar and the subsequent political alignments through to the rise of Octavian.

Behind him, the class pays little attention. They look back at Sedgewick, and then at the clock.

The clock reads 2:44 and fifty seconds...

They grab their open text books, and follow the second hand...
5... 4... 3... 2... 1...

In unison they SLAP them together! The class breaks out laughing.

Hundert turns, burning. The laughter subsides. He zeroes in on Sedgewick.

HUNDERT

Mr. Bell. Join me at the front of the class.

Sedgewick gets up, grinning. Hundert is undaunted.

HUNDERT (CONT'D)

Perhaps you'd like to complete this diagram.

They turn to the board. Octavian stands alone after defeating his enemies. An arrow points up to a final blank slot. Hundert hands Sedgewick the chalk.

Humbled for the moment, Sedgewick stares at the board.

HUNDERT

Take your time.

Sedgewick stares... Hundert waits...

HUNDERT (CONT'D)

Anyone?

Everyone's hands go up. Hundert nods to Masoudi

HUNDERT (cont'd)

(beat)

-- but stupid lasts forever."

Sedgewick and the class see Hundert's determination. They quiet... Sedgewick turns to the board. He thinks... He peeks over at the diagram and sloppily writes, 'Augustus'. He thinks some more... It's quiet... Painfully quiet...

HUNDERT (CONT'D)

Would you like some help?

Sedgewick doesn't respond. 'Help' is not something he's used to asking for.

HUNDERT (CONT'D)

Would you?

Still no response. The students are uncomfortable.

HUNDERT (CONT'D)

Class? Chronologically, please.

CLASS

... Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius,
Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius,
Vespasian, Titus, Domitian...

Sedgewick averts his eyes.

CLASS (CONT'D)

... Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian,
Antonius Pius, Marcus Aurelius,
Commodus, Pertinax-

HUNDERT

That's enough for now.

(to Sedgewick)

Mr. Bell, you may return to your seat. I hope that this evening you will become better acquainted with your text so that you may be more adequately prepared for tomorrow's (surprise) quiz.

The students shoulders slump. Sedgewick returns to his desk in complete contrast to how he left it. The room is silent.

63 EXT. DRAPER HOUSE DORM - MAGIC HOUR 63 *

Under a dim light, Sedgewick hurls the ball against a wall, harder than usual. THUMP... THUMP... THUMP...

64 ** SCENE OMITTED ** 64 *

SEDGEWICK
 (interrupting)
 You're not married, are you, sir?

HUNDERT
 No, I am not.

SEDGEWICK
 That's why you like puttin'
 everyone in togas, right?

Hundert digests the audacious comment...

HUNDERT
 What do you mean, Mr. Bell? I
 don't understand.

Sedgewick looks at the floor.

HUNDERT (CONT'D)
 I've made plans to visit with your
 father.

Sedgewick looks up. That got his attention.

HUNDERT (CONT'D)
 What would you like me to tell the
 Senator?

SEDGEWICK
 (smirking)
 ... Tell him I said hello.

That was not the answer Hundert was hoping for.

66A EXT. WOODMERE BUS STATION -MORNING 66A

A picturesque rural bus station. Hundert climbs on the
 Greyhound.

67 EXT. INTERSTATE FREEWAY - DAY 67

A Greyhound bus travels along the highway on its way to
 Washington D.C.

68 ** SCENE OMITTED ** 68

69 EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. 69

A D.C. cab pulls up near the Senate Office Buildings. Hundert
 exits.

SENATOR BELL (cont'd)
A gift. For all you've done for
Sedgewick... Go on, take it.

*
*

HUNDERT
(taking it gingerly)
Thank you.

SENATOR BELL
... So to what do I owe the honor
of this little powwow?

HUNDERT
Your son, sir.

SENATOR BELL
Ah, Christ. What the devil has he
done now?

Hundert fingers the gun, awkwardly.

HUNDERT
Well, sir, Aristotle tells us that
all men by nature desire knowledge.
(beat)
I don't believe Sedgewick does. He
isn't learning the material.

*
*
*
*
*

SENATOR BELL
What material is that?

HUNDERT
We're studying the Greeks and
Romans. We've left the Republic and
entered the Empire.

SENATOR BELL
Ahhh...
(re: gun)
Be careful with that, by the way.
It still fires.

HUNDERT
Your son seems not to be paying
attention, Senator.

The Senator lights up the cigar... takes his time.

SENATOR BELL
Tell me..
(huge puff of smoke)
What's the good of what you're
teaching those boys?

HUNDERT
(taken aback)
... What's the good?

SENATOR BELL (cont'd)

(beat)

Now if you don't mind...

HUNDERT

(getting the point)

Good day, Senator.

The Senator nods. Hundert gets up, thoroughly belittled. He waits for a moment, then leaves.

71 EXT. WOODMERE BUS STATION - DUSK 71

Hundert's bus pulls in to the local station. Hundert exits behind a MIDDLE-AGED MAN who's welcomed home by his TWO YOUNG SONS. They run and jump into their father's waiting arms.

Hundert observes, moved by it. He catches himself staring and heads off.

72 EXT. ST. BENEDICT'S CAMPUS - DUSK 72

It's the end of the afternoon. The boys of Draper House are outside tossing a football.

Brewster leans out a dorm window.

BREWSTER

Bell! Bell!

Finally he gets Sedgewick's attention.

BREWSTER (CONT'D)

Phone for you... It's a girl!!!

And on the word 'GIRL', everyone and everything STOPS. They trade hormone-charged stares. They know what this means.

73 INT. DRAPER HOUSE - STAIRCASE 73

They stampede to the phone. Masoudi hands Sedgewick a bottle of cologne. He douses himself. They gather around him and hush as he picks up the phone. This is it.

SEDGEWICK

Hello?

GIRL (V.O.)

(secretary)

Sedgewick? Hold for your father.

ANXIETY SHOTS THROUGH Sedgewick's veins. The joy vanishes, replaced with fear. He knows what's coming. The Senator comes on the line, and there's no 'hello', just a blur of enraged GRUMBLINGS.

Hundert's boys gather around it.

WOODBRIDGE
(from behind)
Mr. Julius Caesar is a St.
Benedict's tradition.

*
*

They turn. Woodbridge and Hundert exchange a warm glance.

WOODBRIDGE
It is a contest, held each year, in
two phases. The first is a
narrowing maneuver, by means of
five written quizzes, from which
three boys of the first form emerge
victorious. The second is a public
tournament, in which these three
take the stage in St. Benedict's
hall before an assembly of the
student body, parents and invited
alumni, to answer questions about
ancient Rome posed by Mr. Hundert,
until one alone --
(he pauses for emphasis)
-- emerges triumphant.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

HUNDERT
Like Caesar himself from among
Crassus and Pompey. Hence-- "Mr
Julius Caesar."

*
*
*
*

WOODBRIDGE
Gaze upon the names of past victors-

*
*

Woodbridge steps aside for the boys to study the plaque.

*

WOODBRIDGE (CONT'D)
-- statesmen, captains of industry,
even a lowly St. Benedict's
headmaster somehow managed to
achieve this honor.

*
*
*
*
*

(turns to Blythe)
Your father was a winner, was he
not, Mr. Blythe?

BLYTHE
Yes, sir.

WOODBRIDGE
Could you point him out to us,
please?

Blythe indicates a photo in the display. A fresh faced young
man. He wears the garland of laurel.

Sedgewick glances over at it, then back to the ceiling.

HUNDERT (CONT'D)

I read it in high school. It was the cornerstone of my studies, and still serves as the foundation of my teaching.

(beat)

I thought it may be helpful in your preparation for 'Mr. Julius Caesar.'

Sedgewick doesn't respond.

HUNDERT (CONT'D)

As you know tomorrow morning is the first quiz... I suggest you begin with chapter three; the foundation of the Republic being of particular importance.

No response. Hundert stands.

HUNDERT (CONT'D)

You're an intelligent boy, Sedgewick. You have all the potential in the world. I know this is something you can do. But you're going to have to make an effort.

(beat)

Don't waste this time.

Hundert leaves.

Hold on Sedgewick. He opens the textbook.

On the inside book cover Sedgewick finds Hundert's signature, dated 1951... Hundert was the same age as Sedgewick when he signed the book. He ponders the correlation, then turns the page and the next page, and so on, until he arrives at chapter three where a BOOKMARK stops him... He begins reading.

80A EXT. ST. BENEDICT'S CAMPUS - MORNING 80A *

Students pass across the quad on their way to class. *

81 INT. HUNDERT'S CLASS - ON A QUIZ 81

It reads 'Mr. Julius Caesar Quiz #1: The Foundation Of The Republic.' Hundert distributes it to his students face down. They wait patiently like well trained terriers.

HUNDERT

Begin.

- 84 INT. HUNDERT'S CLASSROOM -DAY 84
 Another quiz, #3. The boys write away. Sedgewick works twice as hard as the others.
- 85 INT. DINING HALL - DAY 85
 The boys eat, while glancing at their Roman history notes.
- 86 INT. HUNDERT'S CLASSROOM - DAY 86
 Another quiz, #7. Sedgewick pushes himself like a high school 'miler' in a world class meet.

He pulls himself out of his reverie. Goes to answer it. It's Elizabeth. *

HUNDERT *

Hello. *

ELIZABETH *

Could I come in for a moment? *

She seems a little unsettled. *

HUNDERT *

Of course. *

ELIZABETH *

I hope it's not too late. *

HUNDERT *

No, I just got in. *

Elizabeth shakes her head. She lingers in the doorway of the sitting room. *

ELIZABETH *

I, uh... How goes your Mr. Julius Caesar? *

HUNDERT *

Good, good. Even young Bell's... *

ELIZABETH *

Making progress? *

HUNDERT *

He is. *

(beat) *

Do you want to sit down? *

She doesn't. *

ELIZABETH *

I came by to tell you something...
A piece of good news. Tony's been
offered a lectureship at his old
Oxford College. *

This is a blow for both of them. *

ELIZABETH (CONT'D) *

He's wanted to get back to England
for... *

HUNDERT *

So at the end of the year... *

89 EXT. ST. BENEDICT'S CAMPUS - EARLY MORNING 89

Hundert, still in his rowing gear, returns from the lake. He slows, looking off --

Ellerby jogging... With TWO OTHER FACULTY MEMBERS. Their LAUGHTER echoes across the quad.

Hundert continues on, and now a smile comes to his face. Across the way, at the library, Sedgewick, in his pyjamas, returns the book.

90 INT. HUNDERT'S CLASSROOM - DAY 90

Another quiz, #10. Sedgewick writes, furiously, 'trying to follow the path'.

GUYS ALL TOGETHER.
Right, Mr. Hundert.

SEDGEWICK
Come on, sir. A few swings. Show us
how it's done. Old school.

HUNDERT
Old school, huh?

Everyone returns to their positions. Masoudi hands Hundert the bat...

Hundert does a couple of wimpy warm-up stretches.

HUNDERT (CONT'D)
Been a while.

MASOUDI
(smiling; under his
breath)
More like never.

Hundert steps up to the plate, only to sigh when he finds-
Ancient Civilizations of The Mediterranean is being used as home
plate.

STUDENTS CHEERING
No batter, no stick.

He sneers at them, jokingly, and then sets himself in the box...
a la TED WILLIAMS!

The guys step back, impressed. Maybe...

SEDGEWICK
(stroking Hundert's ego)
Back it up, everybody! We got a
hitter!

Hundert looks out at Sedgewick. Sedgewick smiles.

HUNDERT
Egemus iaculatore, non iacchi-
latore!

SEDGEWICK AND THE GUYS
Hunh?

HUNDERT
(smiling-translating)
We want a pitcher, not a glass of
water.

Sedgewick smiles...

It's a ghost town out there, until the IRATE LIBRARIAN, ball in hand, marches outside to string up whoever smashed the window.

Hundert and the guys duck. Listen to her YELLING. They laugh their asses off.

96 INT. HUNDERT'S CLASSROOM - MORNING 96

Hundert writes the final 'Mr. Julius Caesar' essay questions on the blackboard. He turns to the boys who sit with open exam booklets before them.

HUNDERT

You have until noon. Good luck.
It's 9 o'clock.

97 INT. HUNDERT'S CLASSROOM - LATER 97

They write with hurried discipline. Masoudi finishes. Brings his exam over to Hundert, who nods 'thank you'. Sedgewick stares straight ahead, deep in thought. The clock TICKS...

ON THE CLOCK - 10:30 Only four boys remain: Sedgewick among them. Three finish and leave. He is alone. He looks up at the clock.

ON THE CLOCK - 11:16 The camera pans down to Sedgewick. He still writes.

ON THE CLOCK - 12:00 Hundert watches the clock. Finally...

HUNDERT

Pencil down, Sedgewick.

Hundert lets him finish his paragraph.

Sedgewick's exhausted. He closes his booklet, and with tired eyes, hands it to Hundert. He leaves.

Hundert glances down at the exam booklet, flipping through the many filled pages.

He walks over to the window and looks out. A wonderful smile comes to his face.

98 HIS P.O.V... 98

Sedgewick exits the building and heads off. And for the very first time... follows the cobblestoned paths.

99 INT. HUNDERT'S QUARTERS - EVENING 99

All the exams have been read except one... Sedgewick's.

102 EXT. ST. BENEDICT'S HALL - DAY 102

BELLS sound on a glorious day. The faculty and student body cross the great lawn to the administration building and the 'Mr. Julius Caesar' contest. Woodbridge chats with DEEPAK'S MOTHER, but when he spots Senator Bell and his GLAMOROUS WIFE arriving followed by the Senator's personal staff PHOTOGRAPHER, he quickly excuses himself and rushes over to greet them.

103 INT. DRAPER HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY 103

Hundert waits impatiently in the hall.

HUNDERT

Let's go, gentlemen! It's time.

104 ** SCENE OMITTED ** 104 *

105 EXT. ST. BENEDICT'S HALL - DAY 105

Woodbridge chats with the Senator, while the photographer snaps away.

WOODBIDGE

I happen to agree with your position vis a vis the President. There are times, Senator, when out-

SENATOR BELL

(looking off; excited)
There he is, my little gladiator.

Hundert leads the contestants through the quad. Sedgewick sees his Dad and Mom. He smiles, nervously.

His Mom approaches, giving him a motherly hug, while the Senator shakes his hand.

SENATOR BELL (CONT'D)

How are you, son?
(to Hundert)
I see you've changed the school uniform.

Everyone laughs.

HUNDERT

Mr. Masoudi. Whose head was served up to Julius Caesar on a platter upon his arrival in Alexandria?

MASOUDI

(without hesitation)
Pompey.

Polite applause, as Hundert ticks the question off and moves on to the next one. He turns to Deepak.

HUNDERT

Who composed the second triumvirate?

DEEPAK

(easily)
Mark Antony, Octavian, and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus.

Polite applause. And now Sedgewick.

HUNDERT

Who were the two principal culprits in the plot to kill Julius Caesar?

Sedgewick smiles, recalling Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar' from class.

SEDGEWICK

Brutus and Cassius.

Hundert relaxes. He returns to Masoudi.

HUNDERT

(back to Masoudi)
Which emperor sought to return all power to the Senate, only to garner even greater power?

MASOUDI

Augustus.

HUNDERT

Who introduced the professional army to Rome?

DEEPAK

Gaius Marius, sir, in 104 BC.

HUNDERT

On what hill was the infamous Tarpeian Rock?

Quick cuts.

MASOUDI
Publius Vergilius Maro... Virgil.

DEEPAK
Trajan conquers Dacia.

SEDEWICK
... Caementicum? Concrete.

MASOUDI
Postumus.

DEEPAK
The second constitutional
settlement.

SEDEWICK
... Marcus Aurelius.

The assembly is duly impressed with the zeal and difficulty of
the competition.

HUNDERT
Quiet, please.
(to Masoudi)
Who were the first Emperors to rule
over the divided empire?

Masoudi pauses.

MASOUDI
Valentinian the First, and...
Caecina?

HUNDERT
I'm sorry... that is incorrect.

A GROAN from the audience, then applause, as Masoudi departs the
stage.

Hundert repeats the question for Deepak.

HUNDERT
Who were the first Emperors to rule
over the divided empire?

DEEPAK
Valentinian the First, and Valens.

Applause. It quiets. Hundert turns to Sedgewick.

The audience quiets. Hundert glances down at his quiz sheet, then up to Deepak.

HUNDERT

How many administrative regions did Augustus divide Rome into?

Deepak pauses for the first time. He stares up at the assembly hall's ceiling... Finally...

DEEPAK

... Fourteen.

Hundert nods, relieved. Polite applause. Hundert looks at the audience. He sees the Senator. He sees Martin Blythe.

Hundert turns to Sedgewick, barely making eye contact. He does not look at his quiz sheet. In fact he turns it over. This question's from memory.

HUNDERT

Who was Hamilcar Barca?

Sedgewick goes into his routine. He looks off, then lowers his head into his hands, peeking into his toga, then down onto the soul of his sandal... his eyes searching... There's a very long pause.

The audience waits, the Senator and Mrs. Bell, as well.

SEDGEWICK

Would you repeat the question, please?

HUNDERT

Who was Hamilcar Barca?

Sedgewick is bewildered.

SEDGEWICK

I dunno.

A huge groan of disappointment. Hundert turns to Deepak, who waits, excitedly.

Deepak's Mom holds her breath.

HUNDERT

Who was Hamilcar Barca?

DEEPAK

(without hesitation)
The Carthaginian general victorious
in the battle of Drepana in 249.

(adding to Hundert)

(MORE)

SEDGEWICK

I knew you saw.

Sedgewick's eyes never leave Hundert's.

SEDGEWICK (CONT'D)

How come you didn't stand up and call me out?

HUNDERT

It's a complicated matter, Sedgewick.

SEDGEWICK

It was because of my father, wasn't it?

HUNDERT

It had nothing to do with your father.

SEDGEWICK

Sure, Mr. Hundert. Sure...

Sedgewick turns his back on Hundert. Looks out the window.

110

INT. DRAPER HOUSE - STAIRCASE

110

Hundert descends the stairs to see Ellerby outside his door. Ellerby turns at the noise of his footsteps.

ELLERBY

William, I came by to congratulate you. It was terrific. Sedgewick Bell was quite a surprise.

*
*
*

HUNDERT

Wasn't he.

*
*

ELLERBY

He came such a long way. You must be very proud of him...

(smiling)

He makes for wonderful theatre.

*
*
*
*

HUNDERT

Indeed.

ELLERBY

In fact, I would make the suggestion to you and Mr. Woodbridge that in the future more alumni are invited. Not just the parents of the finalists. All the alumni.

(MORE)

It takes Ellerby this long to realize.

ELLERBY (CONT'D)
Is something the matter, Mr.
Hundert?

HUNDERT
Sedgewick cheated.

111 INT. HUNDERT'S QUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER

111

Hundert paces the room, while Ellerby listens carefully, with great empathy.

HUNDERT
(lost)
Whereas I should've felt
betrayed... Instead, I felt an
inexplicable pity for the boy.

ELLERBY
The pressure to succeed can be
oppressive.

Hundert is silent.

ELLERBY (CONT'D)
And right or wrong, Mr. Woodbridge
felt it was in the best interests
of the school's endowment to let it
pass.

HUNDERT
(troubled)
... But at what cost?... At what
cost? Was this the intention of
our school's founding fathers?
(beat)
Finis origine pendet. The end
depends on the beginning. You and
I wear that emblazoned on our
chest, proud. Do we not?

ELLERBY
Come on, William, you didn't place
the boy on the stage. He got there
on his own merit. All you did was
inspire him to study and learn his
lessons. For that you should be
commended.

(beat)
You act as if somehow you're
responsible for this. Nothing
could be further from the truth.

HUNDERT
... Unfair?

SENATOR BELL
Yes.

HUNDERT
It's a complex situation, Senator.

SENATOR BELL
Explain it to me if you will, then.
You're the professor.

Hundert tries to muster the courage to tell him about Sedgewick...

SENATOR BELL (CONT'D)
Explain it to me.

But he has compromised himself and knows he cannot explain.

SENATOR BELL (CONT'D)
I'm sure it is complex. But I assure you, there are situations more complex. Now, I'm not asking you to correct anything this time. I'm just hoping you'll be a little more understanding, is all. Get it?

HUNDERT
Yes, Senator. I-

SENATOR BELL
Good.

And he hangs up. Hundert looks back down at Sedgewick's quiz. Hold on the A+.

*
*

HUNDERT (V.O.)
And thus young Sedgewick Bell and I began an uneasy compact that lasted out his days at St. Benedict's.

114 INT. DRAPER HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

114

Hundert walks down the hallway. He smells something. Stops. Looks around.

HUNDERT (V.O.)
He was a dismal human from that day forward, scratching at the bottom of his class.

118 EXT. ST. BENEDICT'S CAMPUS -DAY 118

FROM A GREAT DISTANCE AWAY: A graduation ceremony is in progress. There are obviously a great many people gathered, but they are all too far away to recognize. Over a loudspeaker, faint in the distance, we can hear the names of students as they are called to the dais....

Over the polite APPLAUSE...

HUNDERT (V.O.)

And though his father's influence guaranteed him a place at Yale, it was with a profound sense of failure, then, that in the spring of 1976 that I handed Sedgewick Bell his diploma.

*
*

And "Sedgewick Bell's" name rings out... to THUNDEROUS CHEERS.

119 INT. HUNDERT'S CLASSROOM - DAY 119

A new class of STUDENTS sound off in morning roll call.

HUNDERT (V.O.)

Over the following years our fortunes at St. Benedict's lifted and dipped with the gentle rhythm to which I would soon become accustomed.

120 EXT. NEWSREEL FOOTAGE 120

Gerry Ford trips on the steps up to Air Force One.

*

HUNDERT (V.O.)

Our endowment rose when the government was in the hands of the Republicans...

121 EXT. NEWSREEL FOOTAGE 121

Carter gives his inaugural speech.

HUNDERT (V.O.)

...As did the caliber of our boys when it was in the hands of the Democrats.

122 EXT. NEWSREEL FOOTAGE 122

Images of hostages in Iran, Oliver North testifying, the Gulf War, Monica Lewinsky.

MOMENTS LATER

They walk together. Their happiness at seeing each other insulates them from any melancholy.

ELIZABETH

Tony never really liked it here and I, well...

(beat)

Never trust a relationship based on a common love of middle English.

(MORE)

127 EXT. LIBRARY -MOMENTS LATER 127

Hundert makes his way to the library. A FACULTY MEMBER and a couple of STUDENTS wish him luck as he passes.

128 INT. LIBRARY/CONFERENCE ROOM- LATER 128

Hundert enters to be greeted warmly by the board of trustees. He's met them several times over the years.

MR. CASTLE is the eldest and warmest of the group.

MR. CASTLE

So very good to see you, Mr. Hundert.

HUNDERT

Likewise, to all of you. Mr. Castle, Mr. Prieb, Mr. Blair, and Miss Johnston.

They appreciate his recall of all their names.

MR. CASTLE

Please take a seat.

He does, at the boardroom table, across from them.

MR. CASTLE (CONT'D)

Let's get right to it, shall we?

HUNDERT

As you wish.

MR. CASTLE

Mr. Hundert, your contributions at St. Benedict's have been extraordinary. Your tenure is unmatched and you are adored by all.

MISS JOHNSTON

The very notion of taking you away from the classroom is one to which we've given great thought.

Hundert moves to the edge of his seat.

MR. CASTLE

A headmaster's job is a rigorous one. The travel demands and meeting schedules have become unending. One must be prepared to do battle 24 hours a day, and sometimes longer.

MISS JOHNSTON (cont'd)
One of which is to turn the 'Mr. Julius Caesar' contest into an academic homecoming event.

HUNDERT
That hardly qualifies one for-

MR. CASTLE
And then there is the matter of curriculum. Mr. Ellerby feels it is time to 'open it up'; to offer our students computer courses, modern art courses, communications courses and film theory courses.

HUNDERT
And abandon our commitment to tradition?

MR. CASTLE
(interrupting)
It is not about abandonment, sir, it is about change.

MISS JOHNSTON
We must maintain our enrollment figures.

HUNDERT
Enrollment figures, yes. But must we not also maintain our standards?

There is a pause. Mrs. Johnston looks at Mr. Castle. Hundert realizes it's over.

*
*

HUNDERT
Well then I have no choice but to hand in my resignation.

ELIZABETH (O.S.)
I don't know why you'd live there.

134 ** SCENE OMITTED **

134

HUNDERT (CONT'D)

What are you smiling at?

ELIZABETH

I was looking at your hands. You have beautiful hands. All those years we saw each other every day. I never said it. So... You have beautiful hands.

He looks at her for a long moment.

HUNDERT

You should see my feet.

Elizabeth laughs.

ELIZABETH

I'm sure.

HUNDERT

No, really. My left toe is considered -

ELIZABETH

A masterpiece.

HUNDERT

It is. There are plans to...

Hundert stops.

ELIZABETH

What?

HUNDERT

I was trying to remember if there some reason I shouldn't kiss you?

ELIZABETH

That's all over now.

HUNDERT

Well then.

He takes her head gently in his hands and kisses her full on the mouth. She responds. He takes her in his arms. A glass gets bumped, falls, breaks. Nobody cares. This could go on for some time.

137 ** SCENE OMITTED **

137

138 EXT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - DAY

138

It's a new morning.

140 INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - HALLWAY 140

She's about to close the study door behind her when she turns and looks back in.

Elizabeth P.O.V. - Hundert sits very still. The notebook remains closed on the desk. There is something deeply melancholy in his entire being.

141 EXT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - VERANDA 141

Hundert sits in a creaking porch swing, on the veranda, moving back and forth... back and forth. He is reading.

Angle on Elizabeth who watches him through the window. The telephone rings and she disappears.

We see him put the book down. Rubs his eyes. He moves slowly and for the first time in the film, he looks like an old man.

Then the back door opens.

ELIZABETH

William-

She holds the portable phone.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

It's James Ellerby. *

142 ** SCENE OMITTED ** 142

143 INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 143

A newspaper clipping from the Wall Street Journal.

The headline reads, BELL NAMED TO CHAIRMANSHIP. Underneath, the article begins, Sedgewick Bell, son of the late Senator Hiram Bell has been--

ELLERBY (O.S.)

Named to the chairmanship of East-America Steel. The country's second largest corporation.

We cut wide to reveal Ellerby and Hundert examining the article. Despite Sedgewick's past, there is a measure of pride in Hundert in seeing Sedgewick has actually made something of himself.

HUNDERT

What does all this have to do with me?

ELLERBY (CONT'D)

The proposed itinerary is all in there, I'm sure. He apologizes for not being able to talk with you directly but he is out of the country for some time.

Hundert examines the letter for a moment then

HUNDERT

But you could have administered the contest. Didn't you tell him I was retired?

ELLERBY

He asked for you and only you. He insisted on it as a condition.

Hundert looks out the window at the great lawn, at the children, his adrenaline beginning to flow.

HUNDERT

How much money are we talking about?

ELLERBY

Enough for a new 10,000 square foot library, in honor of his father.
(beat)

It would be the school's single largest donation to date.

HUNDERT

(repartee)
... And a retired professor who lacked the requisite fund-raising skills is the linchpin?

ELLERBY

(killing him)
... Yes.

A tiny victorious smile creeps across Hundert's face.

144 INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - STUDY 144 *

A box is opened. And another. Hundert searching. He stops. His eyes widen...

A stack of boxes stand before him marked CLASSICS 100--1972.

145 INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - STUDY - LATER 145 *

A cool breeze runs through the room. Boxes are open and laid out on every surface.

151 EXT. ISLAND TARMAC - DAY

151

The helicopter lands. The passenger door opens. Hundert steps out, helped down by the pilot. He hesitates, staring across the way at--

SEDGEWICK BELL, the man. Fit, handsome, elegant, suit and shoes of the highest pedigree. And except for the flesh-colored hearing aid he wears in his right ear, he is the portrait of American success. He shakes Hundert's hand the way he shakes the hands of the biggest CEOs in America: warmly and on equal terms. *

SEDGEWICK

Mr. Hundert.

HUNDERT

Sedgewick --

(a quick breath, amazed;
then, genuinely)

--What a pleasure to see you.

SEDGEWICK

I'm glad it is, sir. Frankly, I was half ready to have to duck just about now.

HUNDERT

Nonsense.

(taking him in, for a
moment speechless)

Forgive me. It's just that you--
(around)

You've done so well.

SEDGEWICK

(a smile)

Who knew? *

They get into a golf cart and drive off.

152 EXT. ISLAND PATH - DAY

152

Sedgewick winds the cart through the island, giving Hundert a grand tour, right up to the BELL ESTATE and --

SEDGEWICK

Don't let all this fool you. I'm
still the son of a pig farmer. *

153 INT. BELL ESTATE - RECEPTION AREA/FOYER

153

Hundert takes in the grandeur of it all. A BELL BOY offers to take Hundert's bag, but Sedgewick takes the bag himself and leads Hundert up the grand staircase. *

SEDGEWICK
 (taking his bag)
 Come. Let me show you to your room.

*
*
*

154 INT. BELL ESTATE - HUNDERT'S SUITE

154

And if a Presidential suite exists here, this is it, with windows and balconies offering ocean vistas.

SEDGEWICK
 Beats the shit out of Draper House,
 doesn't it?
 (beat)
 I can't believe I just said that.

HUNDERT
 Please, after forty years of prep
 school...
 (taking it in)
 It does beat the shit out of Draper
 House.

SEDGEWICK
 (he laughs)
 I'll let you get settled. The boys
 should be arriving in the next
 little while. If you need
 anything, don't be shy. And if you
 need me...
 (withdraws a deck of Roman
 history flash cards)
 I'll be down the hall cramming.

Hundert smiles.

SEDGEWICK (CONT'D)
 And, Mr. Hundert, I truly
 appreciate you coming out of
 retirement for this weekend.
 (more)

SEDGEWICK (CONT'D)
 (serious)
 I've dreamed of this. Literally
 dreamed. For years. You can't
 believe how a dishonesty like that,
 like what I did, can stick with
 you...

HUNDERT
 Yes, I can.

Men in their late thirties, wearing suits and ties, reminisce with one another, laughing away. These are energetic, successful, wealthy men in the prime of their lives.

Hundert's eyes drift across the lobby to another group. They gather around Sedgewick. And just as in his days at St. Benedict's, his presence commands attention. But he is not alone; At his side stand his two young handsome SONS, 12 and 10, and his elegant WIFE.

Sedgewick pats classmates on the back, whispers in the ear of another, grips hands, grasps shoulders, and gracefully welcomes the wives. He is the host and clearly in his element.

He catches Hundert looking his way. He politely exits the conversation and approaches with his wife and sons.

SEDGEWICK

Mr. Hundert. I'd like you to meet
my two top advisors...
(glowing with pride)
Robert and John.

They shake.

ROBERT

(older son - poised)
How do you do, Mr. Hundert?

HUNDERT

Very well, thank you.

SEDGEWICK

And my wife, Victoria.

MRS. BELL

So very nice to meet you, sir.
However, I have a bit of a bone to
pick with you.

Hundert's smile fades, curious.

MRS. BELL (CONT'D)

I have not been able to get your
former student to accompany me to a
function of any sort in over three
weeks. He's been studying night and
day.

(warmly)

You must have cast quite a spell
over these boys. *

HUNDERT

Some more than others. .

SEDGEWICK

Well then, I guess we should just hand you the laurel garland once again. Why wait 'til tomorrow?

MASOUDI (O.S.)

Not so fast, my friends.

Hundert turns. A man stands behind him; big smile, grey hair, Italian suit, gold Rolex...

HUNDERT

Mr. Masoudi, I presume?

SEDGEWICK

Masoudi?

MASOUDI

Alive and kicking, and I did not miss one of my son's T-Ball games to give anything away. Behold, plebeians.

He pulls out An Idiot's Guide To Roman History.

MASOUDI (CONT'D)

Many long and caffeine filled hours...

(to Deepak)

How are you, brainiac?

DEEPAK

Just fine, Louis. I meant to call you a million times.

MASOUDI

Same here.

(beat)

So, Mr. Hundert, played any baseball lately? Broken any windows?

(they laugh)

How are you, sir? You look great.

HUNDERT

And you, Mr. Masoudi, look successful.

MASOUDI

(reaching back)

I'd like you to meet my wife.

He grabs the hand of a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, half his age. A perfect replica of the pinup he fell in love with 25 years before.

Sedgewick looks at his watch then back at Masoudi, who looks to Deepak. The men exchange looks, glancing at their watches. They grab their spoons off the table.

WAITER
More coffee, sir?

HUNDERT
Yes, please.

As he goes back to his studying, we hear a man's voice.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Mr. Hundert?

They turn.

HUNDERT
Martin?

MARTIN BLYTHE, older but still with an innocence about him, smiles down at him.

159 EXT. BELL ESTATE - GARDEN - DAY

159

An Italian garden, manicured hedges, fountains, statuary that evokes the classical world. Hundert and Blythe walk together. Blythe limps slightly. Hundert never looks him directly in the eye.

HUNDERT
How long did you serve?

BLYTHE
Long enough.

HUNDERT
And you received the purple heart?

He nods 'yes'.

BLYTHE
Had a little run in with a piece of shrapnel outside Kuwait city...

HUNDERT
That's quite something.

BLYTHE
(shrugs)
Silly mistake.

HUNDERT (CONT'D)
When I didn't see you at dinner I thought perhaps-

BLYTHE
I wasn't going to make it? Come on, Mr. Hundert.

(MORE)

BLYTHE

Christ, Mr. Hundert. The recommendation you wrote when I applied for the Academy. It was glowing. It was... Of course you gave me my due. Why would I think otherwise?

Hundert pauses...

BLYTHE (CONT'D)

Good, Martin. I'm glad you feel that way.

And they walk in.

160

EXT. BELL ESTATE - POOL AREA - AFTERNOON

160

Fathers and sons in a rousing chicken-fight tournament. Blythe plays, as does Sedgewick and his two sons.

On opposite sides of the pool, under their own large umbrellas are Deepak and Masoudi... They study for the evening's contest.

Hundert sits off to the side, alternating between reviewing his notes and watching the activity.

Sedgewick's wife approaches. She sits down beside him. Smiles.

They stare off together at the water battles... at Sedgewick's sons.

Robert, jumps on his Dad's back victorious. They hug and high five each other.

SEDGEWICK

Alright, time to study.

ROBERT

Come on, Dad. One more game.

SEDGEWICK

I have to. Mr. Hundert's watching.

Hundert laughs. Shrugs his shoulders innocent.

161

BELL ESTATE - INT. HUNDERT'S SUITE - NIGHT

161

Hundert, showered and in his pressed St. Benedict's blazer, sits at his desk folding his questions into his briefcase. We hear a knock at the hotel room door. *

Hundert answers it. It's Sedgewick in a tuxedo. He holds a wrapped package.

HUNDERT

I saw a young boy under a great deal of pressure. And not unlike your own upbringing, my father was a very busy man.

SEDGEWICK

It's funny... Growing up, I remember travelling with my father. There wasn't a person he didn't know. He talked and told stories and was always full of advice... Always charming, always the Senator. But I can hardly remember having a conversation with him. In fact, I wondered if he ever heard a word I'd spoken.

(soft)

Years ago, I visited him in the hospital and he was very very ill. It took a moment for him to realize I was at his bedside. Then he began to cry, and through tears, he looked up and said... 'Talk to me...'

(emotional)

I wondered where to begin. But the very moment I started talking he closed his eyes... and passed away.

(bittersweet)

Without having heard a word.

There's a long quiet beat. Hundert can relate.

SEDGEWICK (CONT'D)

(shaking Hundert's hands, warmly)

Well... Thanks again, Mr. Hundert, for making this all possible.

HUNDERT

My absolute pleasure, believe me. And good luck.

SEDGEWICK

(at the door)

Much obliged, I'll need all the help I can get.

And he's gone.

162

INT. BELL ESTATE - BALLROOM - NIGHT

162

A stage has been setup with three chairs and a podium off to the side. The decorations are classically Roman.

HUNDERT

Mr. Mehta, the question goes to you.

DEEPAK

Claudius, sir. *

Cheers.

MASOUDI (O.S.)

I knew that!

They laugh. Hundert turns to Sedgewick.

HUNDERT

Translate *alea iacta est*... and who uttered these words.

Sedgewick pauses... gathering his thoughts... then, unlike 25 years ago, he looks straight out at the audience...

SEDEGWICK

Alea iacta est... The die is cast. Caesar spoke these words as he crossed the Rubicon in defiance of his government.

A smile from Hundert. Cheers from his wife and the others. And BOYISH HOLLERS from Sedgewick's sons!

HUNDERT

What year were the Romans routed at Lake Trasimene?

DEEPAK

Two hundred seventeen, BC, sir.

HUNDERT

(nods correct)

Which general earned the title of Scipio Africanus Major? *

Sedgewick pauses... He nervously fingers his ear for a beat... then shows a scholarly confidence. *

SEDEGWICK

... Publius Cornelius Scipio, I believe. *

Hundert is delighted. *

HUNDERT

What is the significance of the date 330 AD?

HUNDERT (CONT'D)
Take your time, sir.

DEEPAK

... I believe... he granted
citizenship to all free male
inhabitants of the empire.

DEEPAK AND THE OTHERS (cont'd)

I destroyed Sippar, took the stele
of Naran-Sin, and brought it back
to Elam, where I erected it as an
offering to my God. Shutruk-
Nahhunte, 1158 B.C.

*
*
*
*
*

SEDGEWICK (CONT'D)

Because all of us here, I believe, care about the quality of education in this country. And not just at places like St. Benedict's, not just for our own children but for the nation's children.

(beat)

Because we all care about our country's future. About it's moral leadership. About it's fiscal leadership... Because we know that, as a generation, it is our time to lead.

Hundert is aghast. Sedgewick gathers in his wife and two sons. He looks out, humbly.

SEDGEWICK (CONT'D)

That is why we are here today. And why I stand before you now... To tell you my intention of following in the colossal footsteps of my father... and announce my bid for a seat in the United States Senate.

THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE. Some stand. Others follow, until the entire room is on their feet in support. Masoudi is the first to run up and congratulate him. Quickly, Sedgewick is mobbed. Checkbooks emerge.

MASOUDI

Screw Senator. Bell for President!

Hundert watches in utter disbelief. Around him, WAITERS whisk into the room with trays of champagne. Chairs are cleared and tables are laid down around the ballroom dance floor. Couples dance. *

He's offered some champagne by a waiter but he turns and exits the ballroom. We follow him into

163

INT. BELL ESTATE - HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE BALLROOM

163

He breathes in... wondering what to do. He glances back into the room. He sees Sedgewick surrounded by a group of classmates. He hesitates. Turns and heads into...

SEDGEWICK

What?... Oh, yeah. That was a tricky one. Good for Deepak that-

HUNDERT

He is a forgotten man, because great ambition and conquest without contribution is without significance.

SEDGEWICK

I'm sorry sir, I'm not-

HUNDERT

What will your contribution be?

SEDGEWICK

(smiles)

You heard my speech.

HUNDERT

I did...

SEDGEWICK

See, sir. I'll make you proud of me yet.

Sedgewick heads for the door. *

HUNDERT

Sedgewick, how long have you been hard of hearing?

Sedgewick stops.

SEDGEWICK

Very good. Very good. I thought you might have known. *

A long pause. Sedgewick weighs his options.

HUNDERT

Who was the poor mercenary feeding you the answers? *

SEDGEWICK

Some graduate student. Gave him a couple hundred bucks and a warm meal. *

SEDGEWICK (CONT'D)

I trust you'll keep it between us... like before. *

Their eyes meet. Hundert says nothing.

HUNDERT (cont'd)

'We live in an age', as Seneca said, 'where successful and fortunate crime is called virtue'. But as a student of history, I know there will come a moment after the noise and the parties, not tonight but sometime when you will be forced like all men to look at yourself, really look at yourself, Sedgewick. And in that moment you will be confronted by the emptiness of a life lived without principle and without virtue. And for that, I pity you.

Sedgewick takes this in. He's red in the face, quiet rage.

SEDGEWICK

Can I say, Mr. Hundert, who gives a shit. Who out there gives a shit... honestly... about your principles and your Seneca and your virtues. I mean, look at you. What do you have to show for it all?

(beat)

I live in the real world. Where people lie and cheat and scratch to get what they want. And I'm okay with that, so... I'm going to go out there and win that election. I'll worry about my contribution later.

Suddenly we hear a sound from a bathroom stall. Both men spin to it, startled. Who was listening?

The stall door pushes open and Sedgewick's eldest son steps out... Robert. He is visibly upset.

He avoids his father's shocked stare and goes to the sink where he rinses his hands, the life sucked out of him. He dries his hands, still avoiding his Dad's eyes. His face is red.

SEDGEWICK (CONT'D)

Robert.

But Robert walks out past his father without looking up.

Sedgewick looks back to Hundert, stunned.

And Hundert looks into Sedgewick's eyes one last time... And this time it is Sedgewick who feels the sting. And it is Sedgewick whose gaze falters.

Sedgewick turns and exits the bathroom.

But Blythe's not ready to forgive. He nods his head in acknowledgement, but that's it.

It's very quiet.

BLYTHE
(uncomfortable)
I've got to, uh... Deepak was
looking for me.

HUNDERT
I understand.
(beat)
Will I see you at breakfast
tomorrow morning?

A pause.

BLYTHE
... Sure.

HUNDERT
I look forward to it.

Blythe nods, then turns and heads back to the ballroom.

166 INT. BELL ESTATE - HUNDERT'S SUITE - NIGHT 166

The balcony doors are shut. And as the muffled band plays in the BG, Hundert sits at a table sipping a scotch. He stares down at the invitation, 'BREAKFAST WITH MR. HUNDERT'.

167 INT. BELL ESTATE - HUNDERT'S SUITE - MORNING 167

The doors are open, the morning sun shines in. A new day. Hundert exits the bathroom, poised; clean shaven, grey flannels, tie, and St. Benedict's blazer.

168 INT. BELL ESTATE - RECEPTION AREA/FOYER - MORNING 168

Hundert comes into the foyer, walking past a drawing room, where inside Sedgewick and his wife entertain a crush of JOURNALISTS; flashes pop, video cameras run.

Hundert tries to not let it bother him and continues on, nodding 'hello' to the desk manager.

He arrives at the banquet room doors, where he takes a big breath before he opens them. ONLY-

169 INT. BELL ESTATE - BANQUET ROOM 169

There are no boys... not a one; just a slew of messy tables and discarded napkins, two WAITERS and the MAITRE'D.

He turns to his boys, where Masoudi presents him with a BASEBALL BAT signed by all the boys, and a PLAQUE which Deepak reads to him...

DEEPAK

"Great teachers have little external history to record. Their lives go over into other lives. These men are pillars in the intimate structure of our schools..."

172A EXT. BELL ESTATE - TARMAC

172A

The helicopter sits waiting, ready to depart. A red carpet runs from the helicopter's steps to the edge of the tarmac. And lined up on either side of the carpet are all of Hundert's boys...

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

"They are more essential than its stones or beams; they will continue to be a kindling force and a revealing power: part of the necessary fabric men breathe."

Hundert makes his way up the carpet to the helicopter. As he passes each boy, they shake his hand...each handshake becoming more and more emotional, until he arrives at

MASOUDI

Louis Masoudi.

Who Hundert hugs and...

DEEPAK

Deepak Mehta.

Who Hundert hugs harder. His eyes well up. Hundert pulls away and stares at his boys one last time.

DEEPAK (CONT'D)

Thank you, Mr. Hundert.

He nods his unending appreciation, then turns and enters the helicopter.

172B INSIDE THE HELICOPTER

172B

The engines kick on, as they buckle themselves in.

Hundert stares out the window, exhilarated...

His boys stand back from the chopper, waving good-bye.

His new class, a more interesting racial mix, several young women, but the same blue blazers, the same crest. Finis Origine Pendet, the end depends on the beginning.

STUDENT #2

George Duncan.

HUNDERT

And you, miss.

STUDENT #3

Kathryn Scott.

HUNDERT

And you, sir.

The roll call continues.

178

INT. PHOTO STUDIO

178

The campaign trail. The Bell family poses for a photo. The one for the mailer. Sedgewick puts a hand on his older son's shoulder.

STUDENT #4 (O.S.)

Howard Hollander.

Robert shifts away, uncomfortable at his father's touch. Sedgewick never stops smiling.

HUNDERT (O.S.)

And you, miss.

179

INT. HUNDERT'S CLASSROOM -DAY

179

A beautiful black girl.

STUDENT #5

Tawana Carver.

STUDENT #6

Alec Matthews.

*

*

And finally

HUNDERT

And you, sir.

STUDENT #7

Steven Wong.

*

HUNDERT

Very good. Now-

A knock on the door interrupts him.