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The Horse Whisperer / Casting Office
3000 W. Olympic Blvd., Bldg 4, Suite 2205
Santa Monica, CA 90404

THE HORSE WHISPERER

**Screenplay by
Eric Roth**

026159

Based on the Novel by Nicholas Evans

**Revised by
Richard LaGravenese**

Second Draft

1/21/97

INT. MACLEAN FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - MORNING.

Grace is putting on her boots on a bench beside a back door. She is wearing her mother's outfit. As she slides the boot on, we see behind her a row of framed photos - Robert, Grace and Annie in happy times.

She slaps a note on the refrigerator, with a magnet - "Gone riding. Back around 10. Love, G. "

EXT. MACLEAN FARMHOUSE ; BACK ENTRANCE - MORNING.

Grace slips on her jacket and hat as she comes down the steps, her feet hitting the walk...

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - MORNING.

Annie's feet hit the ground, running - her breath showing in the cold air. She passes other joggers with ease. She crosses the street and heads for an elegant CPW building.

INT. MACLEAN'S NEW YORK APARTMENT - MORNING.

Dressed in running clothes, Annie opens her door and picks up several newspapers that were delivered. She carries them into the kitchen and sits them beside a huge stack of publications, magazines, papers, etc...Knowing she must read all of them at some point, she breathes a disgusted sigh. She thumbs through the POST as she pours herself a cup of coffee. Something catches her eye and she snarls:

ANNIE

That little shit!

She dials a portable phone and moves through the apartment as she talk:

ANNIE

Hi Lucy?..Did I wake you?..Have you read the Post?..They've got a little item about me and Fiske. He's saying I fired him and that I faked the new circulation figures..Ha, ha...Oh please..It's the last act of a desperate gnome...Set up a phone call with Don Farlow for 9:30..

Throughout the phone call, Annie is selecting clothes, turning on her shower, undressing...

CONTINUED:

He's a massive figure beside her but she shows no inhibition. She enters, touching his muzzle. He plays with her by nudging her back.

GRACE

You are such a punk..

We follow her hands smoothing his muscular frame. Her hand winds up and around his neck as she nuzzles against him, kissing his neck. Pilgrim responds by nuzzling her chest and stomach with such a force, it pushes her against the stall wall and causes her to laugh..

GRACE

Stop...Will you stop...!

EXT. DYER HORSE FARM - MORNING.

They lead their horses, now saddled and ready, from the barn. Pilgrim tosses his head, prancing, playing with the snow.

GRACE

Show-off.

The girls mount the horses and ride off together..

INT. ANNIE'S MAGAZINE OFFICES - MID-MORNING.

Annie, casually dressed, enters the empty offices of her magazine. She turns on the light revealing a large row of stalls and glassed in private offices. Everywhere we look, we see indications of the kind of magazine she edits.

She strolls to her office - the largest - surrounded by windows. The office walls are covered with photos, most of which are COVER STORIES ON ANNIE.

{One photo is of Annie's father MARTIN. A BRITISH AMABASSADOR with his young daughter on his lap, her arms affectionately around his neck. Her mother stands rigid behind them, posing like a member of the royal family}

Annie sits and takes a breath. The only photo on her desk is a family portrait, taken when Annie was given the Crystal Award - Robert, Grace, herself and the Award. She checks her watch - it is almost 9:30.

INT. MACLEAN FARMHOUSE; MASTER BEDROOM/CLOSET- MID MORNING.

A WALK-IN CLOSET of the master bedroom; one side is Annie's, one side is Robert's.

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Pause. There is a lot unspoken but understood between them. Annie's other phone line rings. Robert hears it as well.

ROBERT

OK. We'll see you later then.

ANNIE

Yeah. Bye.

Annie picks up the other line and her manner brightens, her energy boosts...

ANNIE

DON! My love, how are you?..Did you hear about Fiske?...NO, suing is too civilized. Can't we get your friend at Le Cirque to serve him a fatal piece of poached salmon?..Ha, ha....That's even better....

EXT. CONNECTICUT COUNTRYSIDE - MORNING.

Long Shot of the girls riding at an easy pacing, talking all the time. Grace is an elegant rider, quite self-assured for a 13 year old.....We come into the scene at the moment the girls have just shared a secret or a fantasy. Judith is giggling uncontrollably. Grace laughs as she says:

GRACE

...Oh come on! You think the same thing!

JUDITH

I just could never say it!

They stop at the end of the field, facing the woods.

GRACE

Do you want to go around by the old road?

JUDITH

Why don't we just cut through the woods?

Grace nods. They ride into the woods, continuing their talk.

EXT. WOODS - MORNING.

The girls ride down, along a stand of hickories and poplars to a RIVER. They stop the horses and their conversation, to listen to the sound of the water. Below them, off in the distance, they can just make out a two lane country road.

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CONTINUED:

LUCY

Hold on..
 (presses hold)
 Gottschalk.

The room goes dead quiet, instantly. Then erupts in laughter as everyone realizes it. Annie, however, waves her hand as she takes the phone..

ANNIE

Quiet..Quiet!

Everyone obeys. Annie presses SPEAKER PHONE.

ANNIE

David?

DAVID GOTTSCHALK (VO)

Who's there?

ANNIE

Everyone. Working overtime. Just for you.

DAVID GOTTSCHALK (VO)

Did you speak to Farlow?

ANNIE

Yes. We're suing.

DAVID GOTTSCHALK (VO)

Is that absolutely necessary? It'll just make it a bigger story..

ANNIE

David, he signed an agreement that he wouldn't talk to the press and he's libeled me by saying I faked the figures. You're not going soft on me, are you?

Silence. Gottschalk doesn't immediately respond. Everyone waits. Covert looks between characters suggest this is interesting - has Annie over stepped her bounds with the magazine's owner? Annie waits without a shred of anxiety - even though she might have some. Finally;

DAVID GOTTSCHALK (VO)

Well.. I suppose we could use another good public feud..

ANNIE

Exactly...

Everyone silently acknowledges Annie guts and influence.

CONTINUED:

Grace, directly behind Judith, tries to turn Pilgrim to avoid being hit by the errant horse.

..What follows, we see from Grace's perspective. The details that form the images and sounds of Grace's mind are fast, disembodied, almost surreal as -

Judith's horse bulldozes into Pilgrim, taking his legs out from under him, sending both horses careening down the icy slope. Grace hangs onto Pilgrim's neck. Judith, her leg helplessly tangled in the stirrup, is dragged, her head bouncing on the frozen ground.

They slide all the way back down to the COUNTRY ROAD. Pilgrim is the first to find his legs and stand. Grace manages to sit up in the saddle. She sees Judith's horse stumbling back onto it's feet, one of it's legs broken at the ankles, walking in confused circles, dragging Judith - her face bleeding, her leg hanging from the stirrup.

GRACE
(frightened)
Jude - you OK?

JUDITH
(softly, crying)
I'm okay..I'm okay...

She tries to extricate her leg from the stirrup.

Grace sees it before she hears it. A GLINT off of steel. We then hear the rumbling SOUND of a TRUCK coming around the bend..The Girls on their horses in the middle of the road...The Truck, an 18 wheeler carrying logging equipment, comes around the turn..Grace grabs the bridle, trying to get Judith's horse out of the road..The driver, seeing them, lays on the air horn. The Horses bolt at the sound, the bridle slipping out of Grace's hand...

GRACE
JUUDE!!!

...The horses turn apart. The Driver starts furiously downshifting, trying to brake...He seems to get it under control when suddenly THE TRUCK SKIDS on some ice. It begins to slide, out of control, the truck bed and the cab jack-knifing. The truck literally plows over the helpless Judith and her horse - the horse going down on the pavement, Judith disappearing under him. The truck's cab, like a mythic monster, heads right for Grace and Pilgrim...Grace looks right into the Driver's helpless, frightened eyes...Suddenly, Pilgrim rears up at the truck, sending Grace flying, bouncing her off the pavement and under the wheels of the truck.

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HAMMOND, the local veterinarian, hides a hypodermic needle in her jacket pocket, quietly walking into the water.

A Policeman are going into the water downstream from Pilgrim, whose chest is heaving, blood drips into the water. He watches Liz. She is almost to him when suddenly he bolts, running upstream.

The Policeman behind him shouts and waves his arms. Frightened, Pilgrim wheels back toward Liz, who manages to stick the hypo in his neck. He rears, knocking her down, then runs out of the river, the hypo still in his neck. He runs for the sanctuary of the woods.

INT. TRAIN - LATE MORNING.

Annie sits on a train - her lap top out, notes beside her, her cellular phone, ever-ready. The train passes through beautiful countryside but Annie is focused on an editorial she's writing.

The train pulls into a station and stops, causing Annie to take a break and stretch her arms and neck. She looks out the window for the first time and sees:

A MAN, his hands in his pockets, waiting on the platform. She watches as the Man holds out his arms to his two young children, who are getting off the train. He picks them up as his wife enters the scene, kissing him and wrapping her arm around his waist. The children talk a mile a minute and the father listens to every word.

Annie doesn't even realize she is staring. As they leave the platform, she turns back to her laptop. As the train begins to move again, Annie returns to work.

HER CELLULAR PHONE RINGS. She answers.

ANNIE

Yeah?...Hi. I made the 1:00 so...

The expression on her face sinks into a stunned panic.

INT. HOSPITAL, CONNECTICUT - DAY.

Annie is running through the corridors, her bags in tow. She sees Robert standing in the corridor talking to a DOCTOR. She runs for them.

When she appears, Robert and the Doctor stop their conversation. Robert looks to Annie, who is waiting for news.

ANNIE

WHAT!?

(CONTINUED)

EXT. WOODS - DAY.

Pilgrim is sedated, lying in his own blood in the snow, surrounded by Police and trackers. He is being attended to by LIZ HAMMOND, who is dictating to her assistant;

LIZ

..His skull, cheek, and nose are severely fractured...He has a deep chest wound..I'm not even sure it can be closed..

LOCAL TRACKER

(deadpan, local accent)
Animal should be put down - anybody can see that.

Liz looks up to him, resentfully, but knows he's right.

INT. GRACE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY.

Camera moves from Grace's face down her body to Robert's hand, which rubs her good leg. He looks at her lovingly, pushing the hair from her forehead.

Annie, needing to do something, tenderly straightens Grace's blankets. It is plain to see where her leg had once been. Robert can't look. Annie, one to face her fears, bravely looks at it head on. She notices the I.V. Bag and rises on:

ANNIE

That's bag's almost empty.

ROBERT

(looking)
No, it's got a little left. They'll be in to change it.

ANNIE

(as she exits)
Robert, you leave it up these people...!

Robert is about to respond but Annie is already out the door. We hear the O.S. DIALOGUE as Robert listens.

ANNIE (O.S.)

Excuse me, my daughter needs a new I.V.

NURSE (O.S.)

We have her down, we'll be right in.

ANNIE (O.S.)

I'd like it taken care of now please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIZ (cont'd)
 want to take too much of your time but I
 have to talk to you about Pilgrim..

Annie hears the name as if it's some distant echo she can't quite identify; Liz speaks quickly as Annie watches Grace breathing in her sleep-

LIZ
 It's not good. I've never seen an animal with these injuries still breathing. I know this is difficult to hear right now I'd like your permission to put him down. It's the really best thing we can do for-

That was too much information for Annie;

ANNIE
 Wait, uh..I..I don't understand. Start again - He's alive...

LIZ
 Yes..but he's in a tremendous pain...

ANNIE
 Well, of course, right...

ROBERT
 What is it?

LIZ
 (overlapping)
 We really shouldn't wait..

ANNIE
 (overlapping)
 Hold on Liz..
 (to Robert)
 Something about Pilgrim...

The Doctor pokes his head in:

DOCTOR
 (overlapping)
 Mr. and Mrs. MacLean..

ANNIE
 (overlapping)
 - put him down. She's says..

ROBERT
 (overlapping, to Doctor)
 Yes. Hi..
 (to Annie)
 Tell her you'll call her back...

(CONTINUED)

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ANNIE

I'm going to get all the nurses
names..It's good to know all their names.

Robert nods. But neither of them move. They stand motionless for a beat, then Annie begins to break down and eases herself into Robert's arms.

Robert embraces her, kissing her head, with an almost fatherly comfort. His expression tells us it's the moment he's been expecting..and wanting. Now she'll be all right, in his arms. Whatever distance between them, whatever problems felt insurmountable last night on the phone, are now, for the moment - for Robert - gone.

But Annie's expression tells us something different. Her instinct to hold him was honest...but the effect isn't the same anymore. Something doesn't feel right. Something isn't working anymore about his comforting embrace.

ANNIE

I should go get some of her things.

ROBERT

No, let me go.

ANNIE

(gently pushing away)

No, I'll go. You stay... In case she wakes up.

INT. THE UNIVERSITY ANIMAL HOSPITAL, RECOVERY STALLS - NIGHT.

A line of recovery stalls with various sick and hurt animals. Liz, exhausted, asleep, on a chair outside a stall. There's a slight scratching sound. A hoof against the stall. It gets louder, awakening Liz. She gets up and looks inside the padded stall:

Pilgrim is lying in the stall, heavily bandaged. He is waking up. His first instinct is to kick at the padded stall walls. He looks at Liz, his eyes filled with madness - enraged to still be alive.

INT. GRACE'S BEDROOM IN FARMHOUSE - NIGHT.

Annie opens the door and enters, flicking on the light. Camera is on her back, as she places a small suitcase on the bed and opens it. She begins her task with cool efficiency. Opening drawers and closets, assessing what should be taken, what isn't necessary.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Robert and Annie are having a cup of coffee. In the silence, they search for things to say. Until:

ROBERT

I saw Judith's parents while you were at the apartment...

(Annie listens)

I wanted to say something...

(beat)

But I..I was so relieved that Grace was still...that is it wasn't our daughter..

ANNIE

We're very lucky.

ROBERT

(nods)

The funeral's on Friday.

He rises and crosses to the self-help coffee' dispenser as he continues...

ROBERT

Oh, uh..I meant to tell you...Alex brought that fabric over...

ANNIE

OK.

ROBERT

It's on the table by the phone. I didn't know what to tell him...

(returns to table, sits)

..Whether or not we were...

(beat)

..if we still we're thinking of redoing the couch.

Annie just nods. She senses Robert is looking for some kind of reassurance but she can't give it to him..He continues;

ROBERT

...And uh... Mario called about moving the wisteria?

ANNIE

Oh. Right. I'll call him.

Pause. Annie looks at her husband as he stares off to the side, deep in his thoughts. She can sense he's sinking as he fidgets with the napkins. She remembers;

MEMORY:

CONTINUED:

ROBERT

I love you.

ANNIE

Do you? Do you really?

They turn to each other and kiss.

END OF MEMORY.

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - PRE-DAWN.

Annie and Robert sit silently at the table in an empty hospital cafeteria, a lifetime later.

INT. GRACE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAYBREAK.

The room's light are dimmed. Dawn is being to break through.

Grace, slowly, opens her eyes coming out of sedation. She takes a moment to figure out where she is...to remember.

She uses her hands to hoist herself up, but she's unsteady and knocks into her bedside table - Knocking the Good Luck Charm from India off the table. It rolls under the bed, with a water tumbler. Grace never sees the Charm.

Grace looks where her leg once was. She feels the blanket, the empty space where her leg once was...just like her mother did (and her father couldn't). Instead of self-pity, she's oddly fascinated.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GRACE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER THAT DAY.

Daylight pours in. Robert and Annie enter. Robert, loaded with gifts, immediately crosses to Grace, on the side of her good leg. Annie takes her position beside the lost leg. Robert kisses his daughter;

ROBERT

Hi, sweetheart..

Annie's hand finds Grace's hand, and holds one of her fingers tightly. Grace responds by wrapping her hand around her mother's. They exchange a look of respect and gratitude.

GRACE

Have you heard from Judith's parents?

ROBERT

No, not yet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

You all go ahead. I'll be up by
Christmas.

INT. CENTRAL PARK WEST APARTMENT - NIGHT.

The three sit at a dinner table, eating dinner. Grace picks
at her food. Robert can't help staring at her. Annie east,
watching them both.

ROBERT

Do you want something else, honey? We
order something else?

GRACE

No, I'm just not that hungry.

ANNIE

Why don't you go lie down?

GRACE

I don't want to lie down. I've been lying
down enough.

ROBERT

You want to watch some television?

GRACE

(edgy)

Maybe..look - just...

Robert and Annie wait. She doesn't continue. She rises,
reaching for her crutches. Robert moves to help.

GRACE

I got it! I got it!

She exits into her room. Annie looks at him disapprovingly.

INT. ANNIE AND ROBERT'S BATHROOM/BEDROOM- NIGHT.

Annie and Robert stand before their separate sinks, talking
to each other through their separate mirrors, as they wash up
for bed.

ANNIE

You've got to stop doing that?

ROBERT

Doing what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

OK.

Grace looks up to her mother. What is unspoken between them is the understanding that today will be difficult and there's nothing either one can do about it.

ANNIE

You'll be fine.

Grace nods and turns to the school. Annie watches her go.

INT. GRACE'S SCHOOL - MORNING.

Grace makes her way through the hall. It is the first time she has had to maneuver through a crowd. Some of the younger children are especially unconscious. Grace sweats her way through, trying to maintain her balance and her sanity.

As Grace slowly moves along, whatever small faith she had that she could get through this day, begins to diminish.

INT. ANNIE'S OFFICE - DAY.

Annie moves about the office, hands in pocket, in front of her wall of windows. LUCY and her staff sitting around the office. Annie is speaking to a YOUNG WOMAN staff member;

ANNIE

..I don't care what he told you! The man's a liar! The man's an actor, for Christ's sake. They're all liars! They'll say anything to get a cover..

The Young Woman looks insulted. AN ASSISTANT comes in to give Annie a note;

EXT. GRACE'S SCHOOL - DAY.

Annie is crossing an empty school yard. Grace is sitting on the ground, her back against a wall, her "legs" in front of her. She has been crying. She looks up to her mother.

GRACE

It's too hard.

Annie kneels before her sympathetically brushing her hair away;

ANNIE

Oh honey..What happened?

(CONTINUED)

INT. BEDROOM - SAME NIGHT.

Grace enters.

GRACE

Dad?

Both Robert and Annie look up.

ROBERT

What sweetheart?

GRACE

(beat)

I want to see Pilgrim.

Robert and Annie exchange an anxious look.

EXT. DYER HORSE FARM, CONNECTICUT - DAY.

It's raining. The MacLeans car is parked by the barn. They are walking towards the stables under their umbrellas as Liz runs to greet them.

LIZ

Hello...

(to Grace)

It's so good to see you. How ya doing?

ROBERT

She's doing just great, aren't you kiddo?

GRACE

I'm fine.

LIZ

Well come on. He's out back now..

(leads them)

Mind how you go. It's pretty muddy back there.

GRACE

Why is he in the back? Why isn't he in the barn with the other horses?

Liz stops causing everyone to stop. She turns to face Grace, realizing she doesn't know. She looks at Robert and Annie, accusingly. She tries to explain:

LIZ

Well, Grace..you see..Pilgrim just..isn't the same horse he used to be.

(to the parents)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Journals, Therapies, Accidents, Histories...We sense she's been at it a while.. *

She locates an ITEM TITLE - HORSE WHISPERERS. Interested, she brings it up on the screen. *

INT. NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY - NIGHT.

Annie sits in the huge reading room, books spread out before her, under a green reading lamp. Her voice tells us what she's reading:

ANNIE (VO)

"...It was in America that horses first roamed..."

In the books, we see pictures, lithographs, paintings and drawings...

ANNIE (VO)

"...A million years before the birth of man, they grazed the vast empty plains of grass and crossed to other continents over bridges of rock...They first knew man as the hunted knows the hunter, for long before man saw horses as a means to killing other beasts, man killed them for meat..."

ANNIE'S VO CONTINUES OVER;

INT. PILGRIM'S STALL - NIGHT.

Pilgrim stands in his stall. Camera explores him through the moonlight seeping into the cracks of the stall's slats:

ANNIE (VO)

"...The alliance with man would forever be fragile - for the fear he'd struck into their hearts was too deep to be dislodged....Since that Neolithic moment when a horse was first haltered, there were those among men who understood this..." *

INT. GRACE'S ROOM - NIGHT. *

Grace sits alone in her darkened room, staring out the window but not looking at anything. There's a discomforting distance in her expression. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RONA
(playfully)
Kind of trouble I'm in the mood for.

TOM
Oh-oh...Maybe I better get back in the truck.

Rona lets out a hearty laugh as they enter the horse arena.

EXT. HORSE ARENA, CALIFORNIA - DAY.

Inside the corral, a small black thoroughbred is being worked by Tom. As he rides and narrates into a radio microphone to the crowd, we sense this is a man of good humor and great skill - guileless, sensible, of the earth.

TOM
...It's always kind of interesting to hear the horse's side of the story...

The crowd laughs warmly. He directs his comments to a WOMAN wearing an expensive Ralph Lauren western outfit, standing outside the corral..

TOM
Now if he was cranky or lazy, like you say he is, we'd be seeing his tail twitching there and his ears back, maybe. But this isn't a cranky horse, it's a scared horse. You see how braced he is up around the neck there...He just doesn't know which way to turn..

The Woman nods. Tom turns the horse on a dime so that he always stays facing the circling thoroughbred..

TOM
You see how he keeps pointing his hindquarters in at me? Well, I'd guess the reason he seems reluctant to move out is because when he does, he gets in trouble for it.

THE WOMAN
He's not good at transitions, you know? When I want him to move from a trot to a lope, say...

TOM
(smiles)
Well, I'm sure that's what you think but that's not what I'm seeing. You may think
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

She nods, but he can see she's upset, feeling foolish. He walks the horse over to her, turns off the microphone and speaks sympathetically:

TOM

Look, the truth is it's all about self preservation. These animals..

(with great affection)

...well, they just have such big hearts, you know? There's nothing they want more than to do what you want them to do. But when the messages get all confused, the only thing they know to do is try and save themselves....Now, why don't you go saddle him up and see what happens.

Feeling better, and not a little attracted to this heartfelt man's man, the Woman smiles and reaches for his hand to climb over the rail. Her horse lets her come right up to him and stroke his neck. Tom comments;

TOM

They won't ever hold a thing against you. They're the most forgiving creatures God ever made.

Turning on his mike and turning back to the crowd, he says:

TOM

OK, who's next?

A Young Boy leads a mule into the ring. Tom smiles:

TOM

Now God has another idea entirely with the mule.

The crowd laughs.

EXT. THE FAIRGROUNDS - LATER THAT DAY.

Tom has finished his "show". People are shaking his hand, thanking him, as he walks away from the corral, towards a trailer.

The Woman in the Ralph Lauren approaches:

WOMAN

Excuse me.

He faces the Woman:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

I don't any woman in New York. But from what I hear, most of them are wound up.

RONA

The number's by the phone.

He nods but doesn't move. He just looks at Rona and smiles. She's a good woman. But Tom hopes she doesn't want anymore than what they have together. Rona notices him looking and smiles:

RONA

What are you looking at, young man?

TOM

How long were you married?

RONA

Long enough.

TOM

You ever miss it?

RONA

Does a horse miss a saddle?

TOM

Sometimes.

She chuckles, shuts the water off and crosses back to him, sitting beside him.

RONA

Well as a matter of fact, I don't...most of the time.

She starts unbuttoning his shirt.

TOM

You know, Rona, we weren't all that good together even when we were good together.

RONA

Honey.... I was always good.

Tom smiles as Rona leans in. They kiss.

INT. ANNIE'S OFFICE, N.Y.C. - MORNING.

Annie is looking over a magazine cover with Lucy and her staffers. She is unhappy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

Well, see, truth is ma'am, I help horses with people problems. *

ANNIE

Well, you know, however you want to put it - I got your information from the publisher of the article. I called Montana and your sister-in-law, I think, gave me this number. *

(trying to be charming) *

I'm been hot on your trail you could say because I was hoping you'd consider coming to New York and taking a look at my daughter's horse and possibly-.. *

TOM

Ma'am, I'm very sorry about your problems and I appreciate what your daughter must be going through but I'm afraid you've misunderstood whatever it is you read. I don't do that sort of thing. *

ANNIE

Well, if you could just come for the day. New York's only a few hours by plane, I'd have you home by dinner.. *

TOM

Look, even if it was nearer, that's just not what I do. I give clinics. And I'm not even doing them for a while. I'm heading back to Montana right now. I got a ranch to take care of ... *

ANNIE

(interrupts, abruptly) *

I'll pay for your fare. I'll send you to Montana first class. *

TOM

(getting impatient) *

Ma'am, first class to Montana is a waste of good money. Now, am I being too polite here or when I say NO in Utah does that mean YES in New York City? *

Annie is taken aback. Tom feels badly.

TOM

I...I don't mean to sound insensitive. I understand your situation. But there's nothing I can do. You just called the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE
What about him?

ANNIE
Well..how you feel all right about
telling Liz to put him down...

GRACE
I think we should. It's not fair to let
him suffer. He's not much use anymore.
He'd hate living like that.

ANNIE
I think that's... a very compassionate
and... mature way of looking at it.

GRACE
Moa?

ANNIE
Yeah?

GRACE
Maybe they should put me down too.

ANNIE
What?

GRACE
I mean, I'm not much use anymore. Why
can't they be compassionate to me?

What frightens Annie most is the calm and apathy in Grace's
voice. She's surrendering...Annie, for the first time in a
long time, feels she's losing control.

INT. CENTRAL PARK WEST APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Annie sits alone at the kitchen table, nursing a glass of
wine.

Robert enters and sits opposite her, wearing a tuxedo - his
tie and collar undone.

ANNIE
How was the dinner?

ROBERT
(Wry)
All our "favorite" people were there
saying all their "favorite" things about
their "favorite" subjects. I thought to
myself, we've been friends with these
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNIE

About us going someplace warm...
Someplace Grace'll have to wear shorts or
bathing suits or summer dresses....

Robert looks at her and realizes it's a bad idea. He nods,
again, getting the message. Silence. In that silence, Annie
looks at him....and makes a decision:

ANNIE

Robert, I want to take Pilgrim out to Mr.
Booker. Drive him out to Montana...With
Grace.

Robert is confused...and a little worried.

ROBERT

I don't understand. You just said he said
no.

ANNIE

He did but..I think I can change his
mind.

ROBERT

That's the craziest thing I ever heard.
Absolutely not.

ANNIE

Robert, Grace isn't adjusting to school,
And she can't sit in this apartment all
day... I think it would be good for her.

ROBERT

(at a loss)
No! What are you - you're serious about
this?

ANNIE

I've called Liz. They can set me up with
a trailer for Pilgrim. I thought we'd
stay at motels along the way..

ROBERT

(overlapping)
You've already made arrangements!?

ANNIE

No. I was just researching. Calm down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANNIE (cont'd)

trust everything's going to work out just
by pretending it will.

ROBERT

I'm not pretending anything!

Beat. Robert just stares at her. He looks concerned...almost
worried. Annie gets uncomfortable.

ANNIE

What?

{It is very difficult for Robert to say;

ROBERT

I thought...well, ever since the
accident, I just thought we...

He stops. Annie knows where's he headed and prays to God he
doesn't continue. He doesn't.} A thick silence hangs between
them.

ROBERT

I really wish I could understand why you
think this is so necessary.

ANNIE

(frustrated)

Robert, we're losing her...We're losing
her.

(He listens)

I don't care what the doctors say. The
truth is, they don't know anymore than we
do - less, when it comes to Grace.. This
may not sound sensible or...logical
but..nobody's suggesting anything better.
I can't explain it Robert..I just have
this feeling...this.. annoying, bloody
feeling that if..if, somehow, Pilgrim can
be made all right ...then so can Grace.
I just know it!

Robert can feel the strength of her will. He can find no way
around it.

ROBERT

What if she doesn't want to go?

ANNIE

She will if you think she should.

ROBERT

And you think it's best if I don't come.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE'S MUSIC, ON THE SOUNDTRACK, bringing us to:

EXT. A HIGHWAY, IN PENNSYLVANIA - DAY.

Annie's Suburban drives along Route 80, pulling the horse trailer behind.

INT. SUBURBAN - DAY.

Grace, in the back seat, wearing her headphones, listening to her music (maybe LIZ PHAIR OR HOLLY COLE). Detached. Non-committal. As trucks pass by, their tires slapping the pavement, she reacts and turns to the other window.

Annie, in sunglasses, shifts her attention between the road and her rear-view mirror - checking on Grace.

EXT. HIGHWAY IN - EARLY EVENING.

The Suburban drives as the sun begins to set.

EXT. A MOTEL IN OHIO - NIGHT.

The Suburban and Horse Trailer are parked in the lot.

INT. MOTEL ROOM, OHIO - NIGHT.

A small furnished motel room with two twin beds.

Grace sits up in bed watching TV, with no expression. A sitcom with canned laughter serves as a hypnotic drug.

Annie enters from the bathroom, after showering, drying her hair. Grace doesn't bother to look up.

ANNIE

You want to take your bath?

(Grace shakes head NO)

We have to get up early tomorrow. You may not have enough time to-

GRACE

Fine - I'll take my bath..

She begins moving off the bed.

ANNIE

No, I don't mean you have to. It's just that we may not have enough-

GRACE

- enough time tomorrow. I know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

...Ok, listen - let's do this...When I get to the next motel I'll see if they have a fax. If not, I'll call you tomorrow to-

Annie continues O.S. when we hear a shifting, a rocking in the trailer behind them. As if Pilgrim made a sudden move. Grace quickly turns her head. Annie looks in the rear view at Grace.

ANNIE

Uh Lucy, look I have to go. OK..Later.

Annie hangs up and smiles at Grace through the mirror. Grace reaches for her walkman and headphones. Annie offers;

ANNIE

Grace!...GRACE!

Grace lowers one side of her headphones;

ANNIE

Would you like to put your music on up here?

Grace shrugs. Annie shrugs it off as well. Grace replaces the headphone. Annie turns on the radio - nothing but country or gospel or religious talk shows..She shuts it off. Frustrated, Annie looks up ahead and sees:

A TRUCK STOP DINER.

Annie yells to be heard through the headphones;

ANNIE

IT'S ALMOST LUNCHTIME. ARE YOU HUNGRY!?

GRACE

(shrugs)
Whatever you want.

ANNIE

Fine!

GRACE

Fine.

Annoyed, Annie pulls onto the gravel and stops, talking to herself-

ANNIE

Fine!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Silence. Annie exits past her to the car.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER.

Grace is asleep in her twin bed. Once again, Annie is wide awake. The clock reads: 4:55 AM. But Annie can not sleep. Camera moves away from Annie, past her side of the bed, to the other side of the room.

WE SEE THE SHADOW OF A WOMAN coming towards the bed. She comes in camera angle and we follow her to back to the bed, which has now transformed into -

A BED FROM THE PAST, IN WHICH A TEN YEAR OLD ANNIE IS SLEEPING WITH HER YOUNGER BROTHER GEORGE.

WE ARE IN MEMORY.

The Woman gently shakes little Annie awaken.

WOMAN

Annie..Annie sweetheart..wake up.

The little girl, with sleep in her eyes, turns and sees her.

WOMAN

Bad news I'm afraid..You're Daddy's gone.

END OF MEMORY.

Annie, in present time next to Grace, thinks of this as she stays awake. Putting her jogging parka on over her nightgown, she goes outside. *

EXT. IOWA MOTEL - NIGET. *

She crosses the motel parking lot to the horse trailer. She looks in through the siding at Pilgrim, checking on him. She sees he is caught his halter on the side of the van. She crosses to the trailer door, hesitates, then opens it. Pilgrim looks at her. Gathering her courage, she climbs inside. He is still, looking at her. She carefully frees his halter. And suddenly he bares his teeth, biting at her. She stumbles back out of the trailer, slamming the door shut. She stands leaning against the trailer - wondering is she's out of her mind for attempting this. *

DISSOLVE TO:

CONTINUED:

But, Annie drives up to sign only to find a CLOSED SIGN. The park was closed at six. Annie stops the car. She's hit a brick wall once more. Silence. Finally, Grace speaks with her usual sarcasm;

GRACE

Great idea. So now what?

Beat. Annie's patience snaps;

ANNIE

How long is this going to go on?

GRACE

What?

ANNIE

You know what I mean?

(turn to the back seat)

Is this it now? Is this the way we're going to be from now on?

Ignoring her, Grace edges to the passenger side and exits the car. Annie gets out of the driver's side and walks around as she speaks:

ANNIE

Do you want us to turn around and go back home? Do you?

GRACE

What are you asking me for? You didn't ask me if I wanted to come in the first place - now I get to decide? Forget it!

She begins to turn away. Annie grabs her arm.

ANNIE

Who do you think I'm doing this for? I'm doing this for you!

GRACE

Bullshit! It's about you! About you deciding! About you always being right! You always getting everything your way, controlling everybody - like we work for you or something!

ANNIE

I don't believe this!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

action to take - Annie, for the first time is frozen, standing still - and with that, comes a rush of emotion.

She sits with her back against the monument and begins to weep. For Grace, for Robert, herself, for the tombstones, for everyone.

A FLASHLIGHT shines on her face. It is a PARK RANGER.

PARK RANGER

You okay, ma'am?

ANNIE

(wipes face)

Yes. Fine.

PARK RANGER

That young lady is getting a little worried.

Annie realizes she left Grace alone as it got darker.

ANNIE

I'm sorry. I'm sorry...

Annie rises and is escorted back to the Suburban by the Ranger. She sees:

Grace is sitting in the front seat now, waiting for her - like a little girl lost.

INT. SUBURBAN - CONTINUOUS.

Annie gets into the driver's seat. Buckles up. Grace holds back tears.

ANNIE

You buckled up?
(Grace nods)
You cold?

GRACE

Little.

Annie reaches into the back seat and pulls a blanket out, handing it to Grace, making sure it covers her. Grace turns towards the window and closes her eyes. Annie starts the car.

EXT. MONTANA , BACKROADS - MORNING.

C.U. on Pilgrim's head in the trailer as we PULL BACK to reveal the Suburban coming down an empty, seemingly infinite stretch of two lane road in Montana.

EXT. ANOTHER MONTANA BACK ROAD - CONTINUOUS.

From outside the Suburban, we see, but cannot hear, Annie hitting the steering and cursing in frustration.

INT. SUBURBAN - CONTINUOUS.

Annie, panting, looks ahead and sees nothing but empty space, above and below - as if the earth and sky met with nothing in between.

She sighs and starts the car again. As she moves forward, she senses an almost indistinguishable rise in the road - as we follow her POV up the road through the windshield to reveal:

POV - A BREATHTAKING VALLEY just beyond the rise, hidden from view only a few yards before. THE DOUBLE DIVIDE RANCH sits nestled in the valley, a few miles away. Annie is impressed.

EXT. THE DOUBLE DIVIDE RANCH - DAY.

At the far end of the valley, down along a creek, stands an OLD RANCH HOUSE, beyond which a vista of distant mountains.

Men are working in the corral, saddle horses standing nearby, trying to get a sick calf to suckle a cow. One of the men is Tom Booker, working along side his brother FRANK, and his nephew, JOE. Frank is a good man - solid work ethic, Christian fearing, wry sense of humor. With the build of a football player, his strength never overwhelms his boyish, good natured heart. Joe is eleven, wearing his cowboy hat like a badge of honor. The three men seem as inseparable to each other, as they are to the land. As they work:

JOE

Can we take a look at Bronty's foal when we're done here, Dad?

FRANK

Sure. As long as she don't mind.

JOE

There's a kid at school says we should've imprint-trained him.

Tom and Frank don't say anything. Just nod, knowingly.

JOE

He says if you do it soon as they're born, it makes them real easy to handle later on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She extends her hand. Tom shakes it, nodding, staring at her curiously.

ANNIE

It's uh..beautiful country. I had a little bit of a hard time finding the place. There are no signs.

TOM

Plenty of signs - just none of them printed. Why do I get the idea you're not just passing through?

ANNIE

Well..OK..here it is...Uh..I'd like you to take a look at my horse. Now- it won't take long and if, after that, you still don't feel..

TOM

Were you thinking of personally driving me back East?

ANNIE

Oh no. He's here. I brought him along. And my daughter too. Were staying at Petersen's.....

TOM

You mean you hauled him all the way out here? Just like that?

ANNIE

(slightly taken aback)
Well...yes....I had a trailer. It's not like I made him run along side the car.

TOM

All by yourself?

She nods. Tom cannot help be impressed by her guts and fortitude.

Camera cuts away for a moment to a window in the ranch house, through which DIANE - Frank's fiery, loyal pioneer wife - looks at the duo with suspicion.

Back to Tom and Annie;

TOM

I uh..ha, ha..I don't think I ever met a lady quite like yourself and I appreciate all the pains you've gone through to-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Grace hops back to the bed in front of the TV. Tom nods and puts his hat down - noticing the prosthetic leaning against the window, near her bed. He hears Annie on the phone and looks to the other room, the door ajar - seeing only her legs, seated on the edge of her bed, as she talks. Her foot taps impatiently.

TOM

First time in Montana?

Grace, rudely nods, still looking at the TV.

Beat. Tom doesn't like her manner, but can easily see through it. He sits.

TOM

She gonna be long?

GRACE

Probably. She's on the phone twenty three hours a day.

TOM

What does she do?

GRACE

She's an editor.

TOM

Mmm. An editor.

GRACE

Not like books or literature or anything. Just a magazine...Just in case she hasn't told you - which I'm sure she hasn't - I don't want to be a part of this, OK?

Tom just sort of nods. A beat or two later, Annie enters.

ANNIE

Sorry about that. Hi. Grace, this is Mr. Booker...Have you looked at Pilgrim?

Tom sees Grace turn away, just as Annie enters. He takes a moment. He could say no right there, but something stops him.

TOM

Uh, no. I was gonna take look now.

ANNIE

You want us to come with you? I just have to run to the main house and give Mr. Petersen a check.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Except, Grace is made even more uncomfortable by the intimacy. She turns away and walks to the corral, to lean on a post - as if she doesn't care. Tom turns to Annie.

TOM

I have to be honest. I still feel you made a long trip for nothing.

He looks at Annie. Annie has no more words - just an ever present pleading in her face.

Tom watches as Grace makes a small, naked movement - putting her hand on her cheek, like a hurt child.

He can't help but see these three beings connected by one wound.

TOM

But before I even think about it, I need to know something here and now. It's a question for Grace here.

Grace stiffens.

TOM

When I work with a horse, it's no good just me doing it. It doesn't work that way. The owner needs to be involved too.

ANNIE

Well, that'll be a little complicated-

TOM

You can make it as complicated or as easy as you like. But she's the one whose gonna be riding him, am I right? So here's the deal. I'm not sure I can do anything but I'm prepared to give it a go-

(to Grace)

-if you'll help.

(Grace gives a bitter laugh.)

You have a problem with that?

GRACE

Isn't it like, obvious?

TOM

Not to me. Either you want to or you don't.

ANNIE

Look, I'll talk to Grace and call you later-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Oh hell, I don't know...According to Tom,
she's a pretty determined woman. Must've
thought it was worth it.

DIANE

(sits down)

I guess they'll want feeding and all, out
here all day long.

TOM

I don't believe they'll expect that.

DIANE

What, they ain't going forty miles into
Choteau everytime they want a hamburger.

FRANK

Mixed salad.

DIANE

What?

FRANK

(slyly)

I believe women from New York eat mixed
salads. Aint' that right Tom?

Tom hides a grin - he knows Frank into teasing her now.

TOM

I believe so. Saw it on a television
show, once.

DIANE

Well that's just what we need on a cattle
ranch - a vegetarian from New York.

Everyone eats. Beat.

JOE

When you figure on branding?

FRANK

Weekend after next...

TOM

If the weather holds.

Franks nods. Silence again. Everyone eats. Beat.

JOE

What's an editor do anyway?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

paperwork. Suddenly he stops, looking over the paperwork, into space. A thought passes by. We don't know what.

FADE OUT;

EXT. THE RANCH, A CORRAL - DAYBREAK.

First light of day. Pilgrim stands stock still in the middle of the corral. Tom, motionless, is crouched on his haunches in the corral - watching him.

TOM'S POV; As Pilgrim moves, he can see that the horse is stove up. *

He softly tosses a handful of dirt at Pilgrim's withered legs...Pilgrim, sensitive to the slightest provocation, bucks, wheeling away from him. Then stops. Tom sits on his haunches again...and watches him. *

Frank appears, exiting from the barn (perhaps). *

FRANK

Tom? *

TOM

Yeah. *

Tom leaves Pilgrim, hooking up with Frank - the two brothers go off, discussing the ranch work that is ahead of them.. *

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE RANCH - ANOTHER DAY. *

Annie and Grace arrive in the Suburban. They exit. As they heads towards the ranch, they see in the distance: *

Pilgrim standing along the fence of a round pen. Tom stands in the pen, holding a rope, looking at Pilgrim. *

EXT. THE ROUND PEN - DAY. *

Tom stands in the pen with Pilgrim. He looks to see Annie and Grace approaching but makes no acknowledgment. He turns his focus back to Pilgrim. *

Annie and Grace appear. Grace takes a position (that is to become her regular spot) a distance away from the pen. Annie moves in closeer, beside SMOKEY (a ranch hand) with one leg up on the pen fence. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At the top of the hill, with the ranch spread out endlessly before him, Tom sees Frank on his horse, chasing strays. Tom whistles. Frank waves back. In the near distance, a pickup truck is parked on the range.

Joe and the TWINS are throwing food pellets out of the back of the truck. Cattle come from across the range for the food. What begins as a handful of cows becomes dozens, then hundreds - the truck virtually disappearing among them.

Tom stops for a moment to look out at his ranch. Far off in the distance, he sees Annie's Suburban coming along the road to the ranch. He watches as Annie's distant figure gets out of the car with Grace. Annie instinctively turns and looks across the land. Even though there is such a distance, there's a sense Tom and Annie are looking at each other.

Tom sees Joe driving Franks' truck, slowly moving off the range - the Twins in the back, the cattle following. Tom sits on his horse atop the hill.

EXT. THE DOUBLE DIVIDE - ANOTHER DAY.

Pilgrim, his scarred head above water, legs moving in odd syncopation, swimming. We discover he is in a pond, tethered to a pole...Except for the sound of his legs in the water, everything is quiet and focused on Pilgrim.

SMOKEY, holds the pole, walking on the outside of the pond, leading Pilgrim back and forth as he swims. Tom, crouched by the pond, silently concentrating on Pilgrim...

Grace watches, off by herself...Annie stands beside Joe. She can't help be intrigued by the sight. She asks Joe;

ANNIE

I thought horses were afraid of water?

Joe doesn't answer her. Grace likes that. Annie, frustrated, feels she has the right to simply shout out to Tom:

ANNIE

Is that to get his strength back?

Tom pays her no mind - concentrating on Pilgrim.

Suddenly, Annie's CELL PHONE rings, jarring the proceedings. Tom turns as Annie. She hides her embarrassment by answering it, walking away. Tom gives her a look. Grace is loving this. Tom turns back to Pilgrim...After a few moments -

Tom, taking the rope tether, unhooks it from the pole. He starts to lead Pilgrim out of the water. Pilgrim, fearful,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SMOKEY

..He don't really want to run. Don't know where he's going...All this open space scares the daylights out of him.

Confused, Pilgrim stops running and walks, in no particular direction.

SMOKEY

My guess is he's spent his life in a six-by-eight stall..He's forgot what it's like to be a horse...

Smokey ambles off and she turns back to see Tom crouching on his haunches, sitting in the grass, just waiting. Pilgrim walks back towards the ranch, stops a distance from Tom, looks at him...Annie, needing to know exactly what's going on, crosses down the hill to him.

ANNIE

So what now? Should we leave?

Tom continues watching Pilgrim. Annie looks at him, sitting there motionless and feels like a idiot. Clearly she doesn't understand all this and clearly no one thinks this is the time to explain it to her.

ANNIE

Well, we're going to go then...

Without looking at her, Tom just nods. Annie, awkwardly, walks back up the hill to where Grace is...

ON THE GRASSY HILLSIDE, Grace is watching the scene by herself as Joe appears, staring at her leg...It makes her uncomfortable. She turns to him with a curt, impatient tone;

GRACE

What?

Their eyes meet. Joe is so guileless, Grace is taken off guard when he asks in such a compassionate voice;

JOE

Does that hurt you?

Grace tries to think of an answer - and of how to say it:

GRACE

Only when I kick somebody.

Her gentle delivery makes him smile. She smiles, then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Annie works at her computer, surrounded by work. She notices the time, gets a thought and dials the phone...

ANNIE

Hello, Mr. Booker...Oh, hello Frank, This is Annie McLean..I was wondering, has-...

(listens)

Uh-huh...And Pilgrim?....

(listens)

Still?..Uh-huh...

(politely cheery)

OK then. Thank you.

She hangs up, pauses, then speaks to the window but loud enough for Grace to hear -

ANNIE

He's still sitting in that damn field.

GRACE

(w/o looking at her)

I think they call is a pasture.

Annie looks at her as if to say the last thing I need know is a lesson on the local lingo...

ANNIE

Let's go see what's going on, then get something to eat.

*
*

EXT. DOUBLE DIVIDE RANCH - DUSK.

The sky is changing colors, the temperature has dropped. Tom is still sitting in the grass, although someone has brought him a blanket for his shoulders. Pilgrim is in the pasture, but now - he too is motionless, looking back at Tom.

The sound of a car makes Tom turn to see Annie driving up. She gets out, stands by the car with a proprietary air, watching Tom and Pilgrim. Grace remains in the car. There's a sound. She turns to see Diane coming out of the house...

DIANE

There's coffee inside...I was just bringing this to Tom.

ANNIE

Which you mind if I did? I'd like to talk to him.

Diane, knowing full well Tom ain't in a talking mood, hands her the cup..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Standing there, Annie has the impulse to respond to this suggestion but has no idea what to say and saying it wouldn't make much sense since Tom is already out of ear shot.

Diane appears from the house and calls out: *

DIANE

Mrs. MacClean - why don't you and daughter stay for dinner? *

ANNIE

Oh uh, thank you, no, we don't want to impose. *

DIANE

No imposition. Plenty of food. Gonna get pretty dark soon. Hard to find a place. *

Annie looks up to the alien sky and realizes she's right. She looks to Grace, who doesn't seem to oppose the idea. *

INT. RANCH HOUSE/ KITCHEN - NIGET. *

Everyone sits around the kitchen table. Joe, still ewearing his hat, eyes Annie and Grace with acute curiosity. *

DIANE

Joe, take off that hat - I'm not going to say it again. *

Joe obeys. Diane puts the last of the serving plates on the table - pork chops, potatoes, gravy, peas, bread...And a big bowl of mixed salad. The boys can't help eyeing how the "vegetarians" will act. *

Annie and Grace eye the food. Annie reaches out for a serving ladle, picking up Grace's palte to serve her as Grace reaches for a piece of bread, when: *

FRANK

Dear Lord, we are humbly thankful for *

Annie and Grace freeze as Frank continues his prayer - they notice everyone's heads are bowed slightly. *

FRANK

these gifts. For the blessings on our home, our family and our guests..Bless those that aren't as fortunate. Bless all God's creatures. *

EVERYONE

Amen. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK (cont'd)

Would you mind passing that salad young lady?

DIANE

How's Petersen's holding up for you?

ANNIE

(lying)

It's fine. Comfortable. I still can't get used to how dark it gets around here, though. When we leave the ranch, I always hold my breath until I can see the motel.

FRANK

(innocently)

You know, Tom, while you're working on that horse of theirs, Annie and Grace should move into the old Creek house.

Diane and Tom react accordingly; Diane hiding her annoyance, Tom hiding his surprise and pleasure.

FRANK

Nobody's using it. Silly for her to be driving back and forth when she don't know her way around that well...

ANNIE

Oh, I don't kn-

FRANK

Hell, I know Petersen's. Old place is as good as falling down around your ears.

DIANE

(overlapping)

They're already all settled in Frank.. Anyway, I'm sure Annie wants her privacy.

FRANK

It's got doors, Diane. Private as can be. Tom?

TOM

I don't have a problem with that. It's up to Annie.

ANNIE

Well, it's is worth it, really? I mean, how much longer do you think you need to work with Pilgrim?

TOM

That's up to Pilgrim.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

Well, it's good that you're there.. *

Robert didn't mean to validate his separation from them.

ROBERT

So, how are you doing in Marlboro
country? Is the magazine complaining at
all? *

ANNIE

Yeah but nothing I can't handle. Lucy
tells me she thinks Gottschalk's plotting
but what else is new. *

ROBERT

When are you coming home?

ANNIE

You know, I just asked that myself
tonight. He doesn't know. *

ROBERT

Well then... maybe I will take some
time...come visit. *

ANNIE

OK. *

Beat. Annie knows Robert needed an invitation from her. But
she can't do it. Robert tries again: *

ROBERT

I miss you, Annie. *

ANNIE

I know. We miss you too. *

ROBERT

Goodnight. *

ANNIE

Night. *

Awkwardly, they hang up. Grace exits the bathroom.. *

GRACE

Did you ask him to come visit? *

ANNIE

You already did.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

What we're doing here Grace is trying to get him to learn how to be a horse again..

He cracks the flag, the horses move together...

TOM

The others already know, see.. That's how they are in the wild - herd animals..

(cracks the flag)

..When they've got a problem, like they have now with me and this flag, they look to each other... But old Pilgrim there has forgotten. I'm the rock and they're the hard place. He thinks he hasn't got a friend in the whole wide world..

C.U. on GRACE, who clearly feels the same way... but wants desperately not to. She watches him ride off towards Pilgrim who has stopped like all the others at the far end of the ring. He stands by himself, tossing his head, snorting, not wanting to be around other horses. Tom cracks the flag, keeping them moving. Pilgrim does his own private dance.

Tom rides by Grace and hands her the stick;

TOM

Holds this for a minute...

Grace stiffens. She doesn't want to but she's afraid to say no to Tom. He just insists by tossing it to her...

TOM

Hold onto it, go on...

She's forced to catch it. He turns and rides away, chasing down Pilgrim, trying to edge him toward the herd. For a moment, he has him breaking to the left with the horses. But as soon as he's clear of Tom, he separates himself and comes to stop on his own.

Tom rides back to Grace, taking back the flag.

TOM

We'll get there Grace.

As he says this, he flashes a small, reassuring smile and a little wink. Grace melts just a little. As he rides away;

Annie appears, having come from the Creek House. She calls: *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANNIE
 (laughs)
 Branding?
 (sarcastic)
 I haven't branded in years.

Tom chuckles.

GRACE
 I'll come.

ANNIE
 Uh, I don't honey. Branding? Oooh....I
 think we'd just be in Mr. Booker's way.

TOM
 As long as you don't get in the way of
 the branding iron, it doesn't matter too
 much.

Annie smiles. She turns to Grace, questioningly. Grace says
 matter-of-factly, to prove her point:

GRACE
 I watched Margo Neuberger get a tattoo.

Tom squints. Annie shrugs and nods..

ANNIE
 OK.

As Grace and Annie walks to the car, Tom says:

TOM
 Hey, Grace - maybe we can get your mom to
 put me and you branding on the cover of
 her magazine. Start a whole new fashion
 craze.

They continue walking as Grace smiles, enjoying being singled
 out for his joke.. Annie responds, almost flirtatiously.

ANNIE
 Try not to fall off your high horse, Mr.
 Booker...

Tom tips his hat and rides off...Annie smiles and
 nods...Grace doesn't like their sudden familiarity. Or her
 mother's coy manner. As they enter the suburban, Grace asks
 point blank;

GRACE
 Did you call Dad today?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

- ANNIE IS STILL TRYING TO SAY "HYAH" !! WITH THE PROPER FORCE. SHE CLAPS HER HANDS, PUSHING THE CALVES ALONG, KNEE DEEP IN COW SHIT..

- GRACE CLOSES HER EYES AND THE IRON TOUCHES THE CALF'S HIDE.

TOM

That's good..firm but gentle..
 (Grace opens her eyes)
 It hurts but he'll get over it.

Grace smiles proudly.

TOM

You handled that pretty well. Think it's time you earn your keep around here. So, when we're not working and when you don't have your therapy, I'd like you to help out with the horses...Rubbing them..Cleaning up the stalls..You think you can handle that?

Graces knows him well enough to know;

GRACE

That's not a question, is it?

TOM

You're catching on.

Grace smiles.

- Annie turns and, not looking where she's going, trips over a calf, falling down. And calves, coming down the chute, start to run towards her. Suddenly, Tom grabs her by the leg and pulls her to safety. He helps her up and dusts her off.

TOM

(not wanting to smile, but..)
 You OK?

ANNIE

It is cocktail hour yet?

Tom laughs. She takes a big breath.

EXT. THE RANCH - LATE AFTERNOON.

The ranch is colored in amber light

Near the house; two long tables pushed together to make one long one... A gentle breeze ruffles the tablecloth. Everyone

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ELLEN BOOKER (cont'd)

could another way..and another until he
got back to where he started and that's
where he put his roots down..That's where
my husband and I ranched and raised Frank
and Tommy...

She motions proudly to Tom who looks up. Annie smiles to him.
He looks to her with gratitude for the respect she's showing
his mother.

ELLEN BOOKER

Quite a different life from what you
know, I expect..Which place to you call
home?

ANNIE

Well, I was born in London but my father
was an ambassador and we moved constantly.
I've lived in a lot of places but I don't
really know what I'd call home.

Tom listens to this.

ELLEN BOOKER

An ambassador! My! That's very important.

ANNIE

He was a wonderful man.

She looks to Tom and he can sense a sadness around this in
her eyes

DIANE

(to Grace)

...I sure hope you're gonna eat more than
that young lady..You're a growing girl.

GRACE

I've never eaten this much in my life.

DIANE

Probably never worked so hard, neither.
Those arms of yours are gonna be pretty
sore tomorrow. I'll give ya a little bit
a ointment I make. It's a magic recipe my
Mama gave me.

FRANK

We used to call Diane's mother Medicine
Woman. None of us never went to the
doctor was when she was alive.

Annie and Ellen listen in....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

At first, Annie and Grace appear to be embarrassed for the boy but soon they can't help but be won over by his guilelessness. He finishes and everyone applauds. Hank's wife asks:

HANKS' WIFE

That's was lovely. Who wrote that, Joe?

JOE

I wrote it myself ma'am.

FRANK

Now son, you tell'em where it came from.

JOE

Be honest I can't say I did it all myself. My grandma helped me get the words right.

Oooo's and aah's and smiles and conversatiogn erupting over each other.

Only we see, Grace looking over to Joe who gives her a kickass, shy grin...

TOM

(raising his beer)

Well, I'd like to welcome Annie and Grace to their first branding...

FRANK

And next time Miss Annie, you can run down the calves..

ANNIE

I'll drink to that...

Everyone toasts and drinks..Annie and Tom exchange a look. She smiles, but not in a alluring way - rather, in a grateful way. Grateful for this brief moment of community and good feeling. And somehow, Tom knows what's she's feeling.

No one notices this silent exchange - except for Diane, who sees everything that's going on.

INT. RANCE HOUSE; DINING ROOM - NIGHTFALL.

The Women are bringing in dishes and plates and food from the tables through the house and into the kitchen. Annie is among them, feeling apart of the group. She enters carrying a large bowl, that held the corn.

Diane is replacing newly cleaned forks and knives in her dining room drawers, above which are several FAMILY PICTURES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DIANE

No. See, Frank and Tom were raised near the Clark's Fork River, right between the Pryor and Beartooth Mountains. Beautiful piece of land. But they had this uncle Ned - useless man, never interested in ranching. And when the grandparents died, he left for the city and sent word through lawyers he wanted his claim to the land so he could sell it. Three years of ligation broke their father. Frank took it all in stride but Tom...Tom loved that land..I don't think he ever got over it - His home being sold out from under him. Seeing his father like that. Once he and Frank got their folks set up in a new place, Tom left..went off. We didn't see him for years..

Annie is intrigued by what she's learning about Tom. Something outside the window catches her eye. She watches:

POV;

Tom and Frank, on either side fo Ellen, are escorting her to a car that will drive her home.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT.

Annie wanders out, passing Grace and Joe on her way. The two are sitting in a glider. As Annie exits OC, we hear them;

GRACE

Why do you always wear that hat?

JOE

Because it fits my head. You want to try it on?

Grace doesn't know if she should.

Annie continues towards Tom who's sitting in a rocker playing with the twins.

TWINS

Show us again! Come on! One more time!
It's my turn now!

TOM

All right, all right - Hold out your finger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNIE

Thank you.

He sits back down. Annie crosses her arms over her chest, looks around, unconsciously swinging her foot. Tom watches her leg. Annie notices him watching;

ANNIE

What?

TOM

You ever just stand still for a minute?

ANNIE

You stand still too long in New York you get hit by a bicycle messenger.

(smiles wryly)

You know, sometimes, I get the feeling Mr. Booker, that you're laughing at me. Why is that?

Tom shrugs. Annie waits a beat, then:

ANNIE

That's your cue to say you're not laughing at me.

TOM

Oh I see, you write both sides of the conversation?

ANNIE

It's a man's world Mr. Booker. Most women have to.

TOM

Well, maybe I am laughing a bit..I just thought, as long as you're here, it would be nice for you to relax into the place a little.

ANNIE

(understanding)

Well...It's beautiful country, I'll give you that. And I could see having some kind of..vacation place. Retreat. But I don't know how you do it full time. Don't you miss the rest of the world?

TOM

What's there to miss?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

Hello?

INT. CENTRAL PARK WEST APARTMENT - NIGHT.

INTER CUT; Robert, alone, in the vast apartment.

ROBERT

I thought you guys were going to call me.

ANNIE

Oh Robert I'm sorry. We were so tired from the branding. Grace barely made it to her bed and I didn't have the energy to take my clothes off.

ROBERT

Oh well,..branding will do that to you.

ANNIE

Everything all right.

ROBERT

Huh-huh. You?

ANNIE

Fine. Actually, today was a good day. You should have seen her.

ROBERT

I wish I did.

The sound of self-pity was too obvious for both of them, so Robert quickly re-groups, resorting to something he knows is important to her;

ROBERT

Well, uh the real reason I called, actually, was to tell you I saw Lucy at Jo-Jo's tonight and she seems very worried.

ANNIE

About what?

ROBERT

Apparently, Gottschalk's been seen around town lunching with some very prominent magazine editors. Lucy said she tried to call you but no one answered so she faxed you the list of names. She said some of them have contracts up fairly soon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM
(smiles)
You sleeping all right in that house? *

ANNIE
I don't sleep all right anywhere. But the house is fine.

Tom walks his horse across the creek to her, comfortable in the silence. Annie moves about, uncomfortable in the waiting.

ANNIE
Whose R.B.? *

Tom is finding Annie's blunt curiosity more endearing.

ANNIE
I found this old cello case filled with bills and receipts.. *

TOM
Sorry about that. I thought everything got cleared out. R.B. is my wife..ex-wife..Rachel. We used to live in that house together. *

ANNIE
I thought you lived in Chicago? *

TOM
I thought you were an editor, not a reporter? *

Annie smiles and nods, realizing she's asking too many questions..She tries to casually reach out to touch the horse's head, but it's too abrupt and the horse tosses his head away, taking a couple of steps back. Annie is embarrassed. *

ANNIE
I have a way with animals. *

TOM
It's all right. He's young. Just hold out your hand a little lower so he can get the smell of you.

ANNIE
Oh yes: I forgot.

She does and the horse sniffs at her hand..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She crosses the creek. She turns, giving him a small wave. He touches his hat. She runs off. Tom watches her go, head down, concentrating...

INT. CREEK HOUSE - DAY.

A tense Annie is having a difficult phone with DAVID GOTTSCHALK;

ANNIE

...David, we've been behind a day or two before. But Lucy just Fedexed me all the material and it'll be approved by the end of the day..

DAVID GOTTSCHALK (VO)

If nothing goes wrong. If the faxes don't go down. If the phone lines are opened. I can't have this magazine hitting the streets by the skin of it's ass, Annie.

During David's lines, Diane has entered, carrying fresh towels - she crosses into the bathroom.

ANNIE

Oh come on! This is such bullshit! The work is getting done, David. Lucy keeps me on top of everything.

DAVID GOTTSCHALK (VO)

Lucy isn't you. We're losing something without you being here. Ncw, I know this is a rough time for you but I think we should make another arrangement.

Without Annie's awareness, Diane re-enters and takes her time leaving, so she can take in all of Annie's things ; her business "office", books, etc...

ANNIE

What the hell does that mean? How much more do I have to do to prove how important this magazine is to me?

DAVID GOTTSCHALK (VO)

If this magazine is so important to you Annie, why are you in Montana?

Diane can't help but notice a slight vulnerability in Annie.

DAVID GOTTSCHALK (VO)

Look, this is what we're going to do. Finish up this issue. I'll set up a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

into the arena, crossing to the middle of the ring. Something in his demeanor tells us that fun and games are over.

Pilgrim and Tom stand there, motionless, eyeing each other. Pilgrim snorts and takes a few, small steps backward. Tom takes a beat, then starts slowly towards Pilgrim, lifting the flag and "cracking" it. At the sound, Pilgrim whirls away from him and runs, around the arena. He starts to slow, looking at Tom. Again, Tom cracks the flag and Pilgrim runs, round and round the arena...like a ringmaster, Tom keeps Pilgrim moving, cracking the flag.

Something about Tom's demeanor tells us it isn't going well.

EXT. THE RANCH - DAY

Tom, carrying a saddle, comes around the side of the barn. Through the slats, he sees Grace working in the barn, watering a horse. She has stopped and is looking through the cracks of Pilgrim's stall at him. She turns and sees Tom through the slats. She goes back to work as Tom comes to the barn door.

TOM

Come and take a ride with me.

EXT. THE RANCH - DAY.

They walk towards his pick-up truck.

TOM

Can you drive?

GRACE

Drive? I'm not old enough yet.

TOM

(throws her keys)

It's never too soon to start.

He enters the passenger side.

GRACE

I can't..

TOM

I don't have all day.

She hesitates and gets into the truck.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - DAY.

Grace doesn't know what to do.

(CONTINUED)

EXT. DOUBLE DIVIDE - DAY. *

The truck is parked at the foot of a mountain. Grace, very pleased with herself, sits beside Tom on the cab's roof, looking around them at the great Montana. After a beat; *

TOM *

Where did you get Pilgrim from? *

GRACE *

We bought him in Kentucky. My mother and I took a trip down there to see him. *

TOM *

That must have been pretty special. *

Grace nods. It is a pleasant memory. He motions for her to be quiet. An old ELK with a prodigious rack of antlers, has come down out of the mountains. Seeing them, he stops in his tracks, dead still. They watch each other. Then the elk turns and runs back up into the mountains. Tom smiles at Grace who smiles back - partly because of the elk, partly because she's alone with Tom. *

GRACE *

Are you afraid of anything? *

TOM *

(thinks) *

Getting old. Not being of much use, I guess *

(beat) *

What went on out there, Grace? With Pilgrim? *

Grace doesn't say anything. Tom nods then; *

TOM *

You see, Grace, I've got a problem.. When I'm working with a horse, I like to know it's history. Now, most times, the horse can tell you pretty much the whole story, but sometimes he can be so messed up in his head that you need more to go on. You need to know exactly what went wrong. Often times, it's the obvious thing, but something that went wrong just before that, maybe even some little thing... *

Grace is quiet. She doesn't want to think about that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

The answer's no.

TOM

You haven't heard the question yet. Truth is, you'd be doing me a favor. I got all these eager young colts need riding and poor old Rimrock here is feeling kind of left out..

ANNIE

Poor thing.

TOM

He's be grateful, he'd take real good care with you.

ANNIE

Is this how you're going to make me pay my phone bill?

TOM

No ma'am, I'm afraid that's extra.

She gives him a crooked smile.

EXT. THE RANCH; PASTURE - DAY.

Annie, in Levis and a jacket, rides Rimrock beside Tom across the pasture. We overhear them in the midst of talking..

TOM

...Relax your center..It's just sitting in a bucket..

ANNIE

Yeah, it's been a while but I..I remember the basic ideas...

TOM

OK. I'll stop talking then...

He rides a few steps ahead as Annie realizes she doesn't remember. She just went into automatic "I don't have to be told anything" mode.

ANNIE

Actually, I never rode Western.. I'm sorry. Go ahead..

TOM

Well, he don't know that. Just sit the horse.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

EXT. THE MOUNTAINS - DAY.

They ride through a narrow pass with sheer rock walls, riding by a waterfall..

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

They ride across a meadow, cattle stepping lazily aside to let them pass. And as they ride alongside each other, appreciating the silence...

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

They ride up along a sloping ridge covered with pine trees. They come to the rim of a high bluff. They stop. They look out at the twin valleys that gave the ranch its name..And they can just see the old CREEK HOUSE hidden in the shade of some trees along the creek...

Tom looks over at Annie, who is looking out over this beautiful vista.

ANNIE

It's a whole other world you have going
on here. It just..goes along, doing what
it has to...And you're a part of it...
you just...wake up and...and there you
are...And everything that seems
like..life or death some place else -
doesn't affect any of this one bit.

Tom is impressed by her feelings. He sees her saddle cinch needs fixing and gets off his horse.

TOM

Lift your leg.

Annie complies once she realizes what he's doing.

ANNIE

How long did you live here with your
wife?

TOM

Five years. My son was born here.

ANNIE

(opens her eyes)
Son?

TOM

Yeah. I haven't seen him in a while. He
used to come to the ranch over summers

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TOM

I hear that! See, I knew she was never going to be a rancher but I wanted to try - thought maybe she'd give music lessons to the kids in town or at the school, maybe even recitals..My son would grow up here. Maybe have one or two more. I'd teach'em what I could.. They'd play with my brother's kids. All grow up together... And even if they all decided to go out into the world, they'd always know where home was - cause we'd keep it for 'em...

ANNIE

That's very important to you, isn't it? Home.

TOM

Yeah, I think it is. And I don't mean everybody's got to be married, have kids - It's more like, knowing where you're from, where you belong, what feeds you, where you can go no matter what happens...Knowing what you're supposed to be doing while you're here.

ANNIE

How did you find out all that?

Tom looks right into her eyes and confesses without a shred of self-consciousness:

TOM

I got lost.

They smile.

EXT. CREEK HOUSE - NIGHT.

The world is in silhouette. Off in the distance, we see Tom standing by his horse, offering his hand to Annie, helping her off. There's an awkward moment, neither of them wanting the day, or the moment, to end.

INT. CREEK HOUSE - NIGHT..

Grace is standing by the window, looking out at them. Their movements indicate an intimacy that upsets her.

EXT. CREEK HOUSE - NIGHT.

After a beat;

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOE

You sure?

Angry, determined, Grace tries to swing her leg onto the horse. She can't do it. Tears of frustration on her face. She tries again. She manages to pull herself halfway on, her prosthetic leg buckles and she falls. Frigthened, Joe runs to her.

JOE

You OK?

She gasps to catch her breath. He reaches to help her up. She pulls her hand away. Embarrassed, she "runs" off. Joe remains still. He hears little VOICES. He turns and sees the TWINS having been watching the whole thing from a small hill. As they run off, he yells, threateningly;

JOE

You better not say anything!!!

EXT. CREEK HOUSE - NIGHT.

We follow Joe running towards the creek house, fastening a good shirt. He's dressed and cleaned for dinner. He's late.

INT. CREEK HOUSE; KITCHEN - NIGHT.

Annie is in the midst of making a spaghetti dinner. She's a little frazzled but she's on top of it. Grace enters wearing a lovely dress - it is the first time we have seen her in a dress. Annie hears her enter before she sees her, asking;

ANNIE

Honey, would you see if anybody wants-

Annie notices Grace standing there, in her dress. She stops.

ANNIE

You look really pretty.

Grace is a little self-conscious but grateful. She begins taking forks out of her dress pocket.

GRACE

I thought there were too many forks on the table.

ANNIE

Well, one was for salad...

(CONTINUED)

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS.

Annie has dropped a hot pot into the sink, after pouring the tomato out of it, and into a terrene.

TOM
Everything under control?

ANNIE
(laughs)
Not really..I'd forgotten how long it's been since I've done this..And I couldn't get any Parmesan cheese.

TOM
You got an easy crowd out there. Just as long as it's hot. Can I do anything?

ANNIE
Just make yourself comfortable. *

TOM
I am comfortable. *

ANNIE
Ha, ha..all right, well, uh I guess you can bring out the pasta.. *

She undoes her apron and crosses towards the bowl. Tom's eyes never leave her. It's the first time he's seen her in her dress, sans apron. As she lifts the bowl to hand to him, she realizes he's been looking at her. There's a silent moment, then; *

TOM
You missed a button. *

ANNIE
Huh? *

She looks for it. Tom crosses to her and buttons it, then takes the bowl. *

ANNIE
Thank you. *

They're quiet for a beat as they exchange a look. Suddenly, Grace enters - she clearly doesn't like the two of them being alone. Annie quickly covers; *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANE
Ain't brain surgery.

ANNIE
It's pretty impressive. Where I come
from, you'd be a goldmine.

Diane doesn't know how to accept that but inside she's
bursting with pride. She focuses on the Twins who fight;

TWINS
This is MY fork...That's YOUR fork, ya
idiot!

DIANE
Hey. You stop that kind of talk at the
table.

FRANK
I'll have another round of that spaghetti
if may?

ANNIE
Absolutely. I made enough for an army.

DIANE
I uh..I like the sauce very much. Maybe I
get the recipe.

Annie is so pleased and is about to reply but Grace, noticing
Tom smiling at Annie: *

GRACE
It's from a jar. *

There's an odd silence as a deflated Annie serves Frank.

FRANK
Thank you.

Finally, Diane saves it;

DIANE
Well, I tried jar sauce once - wasn't
this good. Ya gotta know which brand to
buy. I'd like to get the name of this
one.

Annie is grateful. Grace feels foolish.

TWIN (SCOTT)
Can we see the dead body on the screen?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE

Oh, God- I think it was the fourth or fifth time I'd been there so all I remember was the heat and how incompetent the photographer was...

She laughs as she directs this last line to Diane, who just smiles. And Annie realizes that's not what she meant at all. This woman is starving for glimpses into this other life.

ANNIE

But uh, Egypt is, well it's like nothing else. It's like going back in time.

(Diane listens)

I remember as a kid trying to imagine what a kid my age, centuries ago, walking over that same ground, was wondering about or if they had the same problems as me...and I felt, connected to.. to time itself, almost. Ha, I never realized how hard it was to describe.

DIANE

I'd love to go there one time... .

ANNIE

You and Frank ever take a vacation?

DIANE

Soon. We're going to Branson Missouri to see my cousin Emma married. Frank loves it there.

Annie can sense the disappointment in her voice, and at the same time, the comfortable resignation.

Suddenly, from inside, they hear LOUD OVERLAPPING. VOICES as the children fight.

TWIN (SCOTT)

IT WAS MY TURN..

JOE

YA JUST HAD A TURN. IT WAS NOT.

TWIN (SCOTT)

WAS SO!

LIVING ROOM;

Diane and Annie enter to find Joe and Scott fighting, as Tom tries to break them up...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Voices everywhere. Yelling. "Thank you's"!! During which, Grace quickly turns and exits. Annie eyes follow her out of the room, but with her guests and the chaos, she doesn't know whether or not to leave.

FRANK

Dinner was delicious. Thank you.
(to Twins)
Say thank you!!

Diane and Frank usher the kids out. Tom holds onto Joe until they're gone, then lets him go.

JOE

Sorry ma'am. I thank you for dinner. It was very good.

ANNIE

Did Grace try to ride, Joe? *

JOE

(hesitates)

I expect you should talk to Grace about that Ma'am. And if I did anything wrong, then I am sorry.

Ever the gentlemen, Joe exits..Annie looks to Tom. He's about to leave, when he stops and says:

TOM

Don't let her turn you away.

Tom exits.

Annie stands and faces Grace's closed door. Slowly, she lowers herself to her knees and sits on them, thinking....reminiscent of Tom, waiting for his moment with Pilgrim, in the field.

INT. CREEK HOUSE; GRACE'S ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT.

We don't know how long Annie waited, but she knocks gently, then enters to find Grace, in her nightgown, on her bed, with the night stand light on. Her prosthesis is against the wall.

ANNIE

Grace?...Is everything all right?
(no answer)
Can we talk?

GRACE

About what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GRACE

NO YOU STOP IT! Stop pretending like you care! Like this really isn't about you and Tom!

ANNIE

(angry)

WHAT?! ...How can you-...

(at a loss)

I'm sorry if my friendship with Tom bothers you so much, but I happen to value having someone to talk to, especially when my own daughter ignores me night and day because no matter what I say, it's wrong and no matter what I do, it's wrong...I'm sorry I'm such a disappointment to you.

GRACE

Well you now you know what it feels like.

Beat

ANNIE

I don't deserve that. I have never looked at you as a disappointment. If I'm on your back to do better, if I push you to try harder it's because I want you to be the best you can be..

GRACE

FOR YOU! Because I'm YOUR daughter which means you're the BEST mother! Isn't that what you're always talking about in interviews - having it all, the great career, the great family...Proving everybody wrong. Wanting everybody to think you're this perfect woman!

Beat. They're both exhausted.

ANNIE

Listen, if...if there's a part of you as parent that...that takes pride in your child - that, you can look at them and see something you've accomplished as well..if that's wrong, then I'm sorry.

(no answer)

But it wasn't my intention. I don't push for me. I do it for you....So you don't waste half YOUR life feeling like you don't where you belong.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

GRACE

Whoever going to want me? Nobody will.

ANNIE

That's not true.

GRACE

Why should they?

ANNIE

Because you are... one of the most
 ..incredible, bravest.. most beautiful
 women I have ever met. The efforts you
 make. Your courage and your dignity..

(laughs thru tears)

I don't know where you got it? I honestly
 don't how I would have handled all this
 if I were you...

*
*

Grace is so grateful, they cling to each other even harder.
 As as the tears subside, Grace manages to admit...

GRACE

I'm sorry...about what I said. It's just
 that - all those times you and Daddy were
 trying for another kid, I..I used to pray
 at night that it would work. And not
 because of you guys or that I wanted a
 brother or sister..but..just so I
 wouldn't have to be...

ANNIE

What?

GRACE

So special. Because I was the only one.
 You both wanted me to be so good at
 everything, so perfect and I wasn't. I
 was just me. And now I've completely
 ruined everything, anyway...

*
*

They both start crying again as Annie rocks her gently..

ANNIE

Sshhhh...sshhhh...

*

They hold each other as if for dear life...

DISSOLVE TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE
 OK Grace...
 (click)
 Operator?...I'm ready.

EXT. RIDING ARENA - LATER THAT MORNING.

Annie and Grace are standing by the arena fence. Frank, Joe and the Twins are sitting on the fence rail. Joe is holding a saddle and a bridle, standing in some shadows in the empty arena. Pilgrim comes running into the ring. Out of habit, he starts circling the ring. He sees Tom holding a saddle. Pilgrim walks towards him. Curious, he stops, looking at him. Tom puts the saddle down, sitting crossways on it. Pilgrim walks towards him again. He stops, looking at Tom again. Tom just sits there, playing with the bridle. Pilgrim walks around him. Tom doesn't show him any interest. Pilgrim comes closer. He looks at the saddle. He runs off. He stops, looking back. Tom just sits. Pilgrim walks back over. Tom, stands and shows him the bridle. Pilgrim comes closer, sniffing it. He rubs his nose against the leather. Tom pats his head. Then, in one quick, but deft motion, he puts the bridle on him. Pilgrim tosses his head, but it doesn't seem to bother him. Grace and Annie watch intently. Tom takes the reins, walking Pilgrim around the ring. He walks him to the saddle. Pilgrim paws at it with his hoof. He turns and runs off. Tom lets him go. Pilgrim runs around the ring, slows down, looks over at Tom. Tom picks up the saddle. Pilgrim, cautiously, comes back over. Tom, with the saddle, walks away from him. Pilgrim, again curious, follows him. He nudges Tom. Tom stops. Pilgrim comes around to take a good look at the saddle. Tom rubs his back. And gently, like laying down a sheet, puts the saddle on his back. Pilgrim shuffles slightly at the touch. Tom quickly cinches it. Taking up the reins, he walks Pilgrim around the ring again. He starts to jog. Pilgrim jogs with him. And in the middle of the jog, Tom grabs onto the saddle horn, and without breaking his stride, pulls himself back up onto his back. He lays across the saddle, letting Pilgrim feel his weight. He sits up, and without letting him break his stride, he urges Pilgrim with his thighs, keeping him in the jog, riding around the ring.

Grace and Annie cheer. Tom tips his hat to them...

INT. THE BARN - DAY.

Grace is cleaning stalls, etc...She exits one of the stalls with a pail and stops - looking down the barn to where she knows Pilgrim is. She places the pail down and gathers her courage. She walks to Pilgrim's stall. She stands motionless for some moments before she opens the doors and enters...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE (VO)

..We were laughing about something, I
don't remember what...Her horse fell..

Judith's horse suddenly stumble on the ice, going down,
throwing Judith, her foot helplessly caught in the stirrup.
Her horse sliding back down the hill.

Grace tries to move Pilgrim to avoid the errant horse, but
it's too late, the horse plows into them, the horses sliding
back down the hillside onto the empty COUNTRY ROAD...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD, CT. - EARLY MORNING.

Pilgrim is first to find his legs. Judith's horse, it's leg
broken at the ankle, walks in a confused state. Judith's foot
is helplessly caught in the stirrup...

GRACE (VO)

..Judith's foot was caught in the
stirrup...she couldn't get up..she was so
scared...

(cries)

I saw this truck, coming around the
turn..

She sees the glint of the steel. The Truck suddenly appears
from around the bend..

GRACE (VO)

..He was honking, trying to get us to
move...I tried to grab the reins to get
Judith's horse out of the way....

Grace grabs the reins of Judith's horse..The horses are
spooking...

GRACE (VO)

..And the truck started skidding...

The truck skidded on the icy road, going out of control, jack-
knifing...heading right for them...

GRACE (VO)

...It was coming right at us...There
wasn't any time to do anything..It ran
right into Judith's horse...

The truck bed plows into Judith's horse...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM (cont'd)

(thinks)

I'll tell you one more thing.. When Pilgrim reared up to face that truck...you know what I think?...I think that damn horse loved you so much..he was trying to protect you....That's what I think.

Grace listens to this. As Tom holds her in silence, it's almost as if they were father and daughter...

EXT. THE CORRAL - PRE-DAWN.

Tom stands with grace in the corral. Tom's horse, Rimrock, is saddled nearby...Tom takes Grace's cane..

TOM

Let me hold that...

Grace stands, looking at the horse...

GRACE

I can't...not yet..

TOM

There's no hurry. Take you time..

She's trying so hard to be brave. After a moment, she reaches for the saddle horn. She puts her prosthetic leg in the stirrup, takes a breath and swings her leg up - slipping, falling to the ground. Tom doesn't say anything. She pulls herself back up. She repeats the action...determinedly. She swings her leg over again and sits squarely on the horse. Tom remains still, but proud.

As the day breaks, we leave them in silhouette - Tom standing, hands in pocket...Grace sitting up on the horse, proudly.

EXT. DOUBLE DIVIDE, THE PASTURE - EARLY MORNING.

Endless sky. Annie is jogging off in the distance when she looks up and stops to see: Tom and Grace, both on horses, stopped on a rolling hill. They do not see her.

Annie is filled with emotion ..pride for her daughter, gratitude for this amazing man.

As the two ride off into the distance we do a slow:

FADE OUT:

SHOCK CUT:

CONTINUED:

GRACE

I don't think you'd want me tripping all
over you in front of everybody.

JOE

(sweetly)

I wouldn't let happen.

GRACE

(affectionately)

You know, you're a good kid.

Joe smiles and helps her up. They come together and start
dancing.

Annie is watching, holding her breath with gratitude.

Tom notices Annie off by herself and crosses to her. He
extends his hand. She hesitates, looks again to Grace with
Joe, then accepts...

His hand slide to her back. Her hand to his shoulder. They
dance. Their bodies closer than they've ever been. Slowly,
she leans her head against his body.. And surrenders, for the
moment...

Diane sees them. She holds her husband fast, and buries her
head on his neck.

EXT. THE MOUNTAINS - DAY.

MORE CATTLE DRIVE MONTAGE - Taking Tom and Annie a bit
further in their intimacy; perhaps Tom takes extra special
care to explain things to Annie, or fix her saddle cinch, or
make her laugh...

EXT. THE MOUNTAINS - EVENING.

The cows stand in the pasture, grazing. Annie and Diane are
cleaning some pots and pans in the stream...

DIANE

Must be nice for to take a few days off
from your work, huh?

ANNIE

Well, I have more than a few days, ha,
ha...I uh..I'm sort of.. not an editor
anymore..right now...First time I've said
it out loud.

DIANE

They fired you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Annie and Diane resume washing the dishes in silence. Annie deep in thought. Until Diane stops. After a beat, Annie notices

ANNIE

What?

DIANE

Annie, I'm not good at this kind of talk - goes round and round a thing but never comes to it - so let's just say what it is. When you first came here, I didn't like you and I was worried. Now, I like you but I'm still worried. Tom means a lot to me and this family. Don't go looking here for whatever you looking for. Don't make that man go through something it took him a long time to see his way clear out of the first time.

ANNIE

I don't think anybody can make Tom do anything he didn't want.

DIANE

He's a good man, Tom is.. He's got a gift, come from heaven above, I swear...But he's still just a man. And a woman can lead a man into the middle of a mountain lake - and still make him think he's on dry land.

Diane's words ring in Annie's head.

EXT. THE MOUNTAINS - DEAD OF NIGHT.

Dead stillness. The cattle dark and motionless. Everyone asleep in bedrolls around the pasture.

Annie awakens, looks up at the moon, watching it go in and out of the clouds..She looks over to sleeping Grace..Then looks to where Tom is - and sees his sleeping bag is empty. Quietly, she rises and looks for him.

She starts across the grass and sees him crouched on his haunches, wearing a slicker, sitting in the grass by the stream, drinking some water. She watches him.

Tom senses something and turns. For a moment, they just look at each other - half disbelieving the inevitable is so close at hand. Annie approaches as Tom rises.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBERT

Well I uh..I can already see a change..
 (hugging Grace
 And I'm very grateful to you.

Robert is so sincere, - in that openly, modern, "express your feelings" kind of way...Tom just nods.

GRACE

Did you notice - no cane?

ROBERT

I know. Amazing.

GRACE

Can we show him Pilgrim, Tom?

TOM

Oh, we're gonna show your dad plenty. Why don't you all get settled in and we'll do the tour. Excuse me..

As Tom walks away, a nervous Robert feels compelled to say:

ROBERT

See you later!

Tom just nods and keeps walking. Annie and Robert face each other for a beat.

ANNIE

Let's bring your bags inside.

GRACE

Wait til you see this - we have the whole house to ourselves...

The MacLeans walk to the Creek House.

EXT. DOUBLE DIVIDE - DAY.

In the distance, we see the pick-up truck parked out in the pasture. Tom is standing with Robert - in jeans, now - and Grace, telling Robert about the ranch. Robert has his arms around Grace, asking questions, interested in everything..Grace is loving being with her two favorite men...

EXT. RANCH - DAY.

Grace waits in the truck as Tom leads Robert through the cows and cowshit, climbs up and hops over a wood fence. Robert follows suit - not as gracefully - and gets a splinter...

CONTINUED:

ROBERT
I understand...

DISSOLVE TO: *

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING. *

Everyone is seated around the table, eating, talking, laughing. Grace is right by her father's side. Frank's in the middle of telling Robert: *

FRANK
..We thought we lost him in the snow storm.. Told the kids. Had a funeral for the damn thing. Finally, snow stops. Starting to warm up. I go out and start clearing the truck..Goddamn if that dog doesn't jump out from the backseat covered in snow..I nearly stained myself. *

TOM
He thought it was a ghost. *

JOE
A dog ghost! *

Laughter all around. *

DISSOLVE TO: *

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT. *

Everyone is outside enjoying the night after a long day. *

Diane and Annie are on the porch. Diane is showing Annie how she does her needlepoint. Annie is genuinely interested. *

Tom and Frank and Robert are sitting out front. Grace is at Robert's feet. Joe sits on the ground in front of his father, opposite Grace. *

TOM
Is the poverty worse, now, you think? *

ROBERT
I haven't been back in over twenty years, but I wouldn't be surprised. The populations larger. *

FRANK
What were you doing over in India? *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROBERT

...and I have no idea what he's saying
because I don't understand Hindu..

Everyone is listening, with big expectant smiles. Annie
watches - having heard this story before. Her eyes gradually
shift to Tom, who is enjoying the story.

ROBERT

...So, finally I'm trying to explain to
him that I'm allergic to wool and would
he please get his sheep out of my car-

Laughter. Robert continues, giving a quick look to Annie -
who is looking at Tom...Robert lets it go, continuing his
story.

INT. CREEK HOUSE - NIGHT.

Grace is asleep. Robert sits by her bed, lit by the moon
through a window. He stares at this creature he loves so
much. He rises and enters Annie's room..

Annie is in bed as Robert enters.

ROBERT

Tired?

Annie shrugs. Robert looks at the bed. He teases.

ROBERT

Small bed. Maybe I should sleep in the
bar..

ANNIE

(teases back)
You're allergic to hay.

ROBERT

(smiles)
I apologize for the surprise but the days
only opened yesterday and I figured...

ANNIE

You don't have to explain. You have every
right to come.

ROBERT

I can see why you put your faith in him.
He's a genuine...good guy... Good at what
he does. That's rare.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Robert continues talking with some of the men. He puts out his smoke and looks over to the dancefloor. He sees Grace now dancing with Tom...His eyes search for Annie. He moves away from the men until he sees, from a distance,;

Annie, sitting by herself, amidst the crowd...No one would notice her unless they were looking for her...But Robert does - and what he sees is Annie looking at Grace and Tom...then, only looking at Tom...Smiling to herself gently...Watching his every move. Suddenly, she rises and exits out of the barn to get some air.

EXT. HANK'S RANCH - NIGHT.

Annie finds an isolated spot, behind the main house, to be by herself and catch her breath.

INT. BARN - NIGHT.

Tom and Grace continue dancing. She's in heaven. Robert approaches and Tom quickly allows him to take over. Grace loves the attention from both men. As they dance off, Tom crosses the dancefloor and is met by Hank's Wife;

HANKS' WIFE

Oh Tom, would you check the shed and see if there's anymore chairs.

TOM

Sure..

EXT. HANK'S RANCH - NIGHT.

Tom is walking alone when he turns the corner of Hank's house and finds;

Annie sitting alone, staring up at the night. They see each other. From behind the house, no one else can see them.

It is as is the fates brought them face to face and alone. Without any will to stop it, they embrace and kiss passionately. But when they look into each other's eyes, there is no joy in the kiss. Tom releases her and walks away, heading for the shed. Annie quickly pulls herself together and enters the main house through the back door.

INT. DOUBLE DIVIDE RANCH/ KITCHEN - NIGHT.

Diane is once more sitting at the kitchen table,,looking over some bills before bed. Her tape player is on softly. Tom enters and crosses to the sink to get a glass fo water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tom puts his arms around her shoulders and walks out to Pilgrim. The horse pricks up his ears as they approach. Tom motions Grace to stop a short distance from Pilgrim so as not to crowd him. Tom walks over alone, reaching to gently take hold of him. Holding him by the bridle, he puts his head beside Pilgrim's, quietly speaking to him, soothing Pilgrim's neck with this other hand...

Annie and Robert are fascinated. Anxious.

Pilgrim never takes his eyes off Grace. Tom tries to ease him forward. Pilgrim resists, lifting his head and looking at Grace so you can see the white at the top of his eye. Tom turns him away, walking him in circles, trying to calm him. He leads him back to Grace. Pilgrim tosses his head and stomps his feet.

Robert grow more anxious. Annie is calmer, more focused.

Tom climbs up on him, riding him around the arena in an easy lope. Grace watches them go round the ring. She looks at her parents and tries to smile. They try as well.

Tom dismounts and leads Pilgrim back to Grace. Pilgrim balks again, violently throwing his head, kicking...Grace's shoulders slump, she presses her hands in her pockets, fighting not to cry...

TOM

Smokey...

Smokey climbs over the rail into the ring as Tom says something to him. Meanwhile Frank reassures Grace:

FRANK

He'll be OK, Grace. Just you hang on there a minute or two. Tom'll get him, OK, you'll see...

Smokey jogs over to the gate, climbing it, and disappearing into the barn. Tom crosses to Grace.

TOM

There's still something going on inside of him I can't reach. So me and Smokey here, we're going to try laying him down. OK?

GRACE

What does that mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

sides heaving, panting like an asthmatic, making loud rasping sounds. Tom and Smokey speak. Smokey hands him his rope. Turning, he gets a coiled lasso he left in the sand. He swings the rope in a wide loop and gets it to fall over Pilgrim's saddle horn. He pulls it tight. And he takes the other end of the rope to the far side of the arena and ties it in a quick release knot to the bottom rail. Coming back he takes the other two lines from Tom. Tom, crosses to the rail. He starts putting pressure on the rope. Pilgrim, feeling it, braces himself. The pressure tilts the saddle horn downward.

FRANK

(to Grace and Annie)

He's trying to get him to go down on his knees...

Pilgrim fights. Tom pulls on the rope. Pilgrim, slowly, begrudgingly, gives ground. Tom, brings him to his knees, but it is short lived. Pilgrim is muscling his way back to his feet. Tom pulls him down to his knees again. Pilgrim, fighting with every bit of strength, slowly gets to his feet again. But the pressure Tom is putting on the saddle is too strong and relentless and finally Pilgrim goes down on his knees and stays down. Yet Tom keeps the pressure on...Tom shouts to Smokey:

TOM

Drop the lines and come help me...

Smokey, dropping the lines, runs over. They both pull on the saddle rope.

GRACE

That's enough! Stop it!

Pilgrim snorts and foams at the mouth, fighting. But slowly, like a wounded bird, he starts giving in. He rolls over on his side and lays his head in the sand and is still. It seems like a total, humiliating surrender. Grace starts to sob, burying her face in Annie's chest. Robert feel impotent to help.

TOM

GRACE!...

Tom and Smokey stand over the fallen horse like two big game hunters at the carcass of a kill.

TOM

GRACE! Will you come here please!

Grace shakes her head "NO". Frank motions to Annie for her to let Grace go...to let her stand alone... We see that it's not

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

TOM
I'll show you.

Tom leads her across the ring, with his arm around her shoulder. Annie tries to maintain her composure. Robert remains still and focused.

Tom and Grace come to Pilgrim, lying in the dirt, his breathing plaintive. Tom speaks gently;

TOM
I want you to lay down with him. I want you to stroke him. I want you to start with his hindquarters and rub him..feel him all over..

Grace is shaking her head "NO". He speaks more firmly.

TOM
Grace, you've got to do what I say.

Grace knows there's no way out. She takes a breath and slowly kneels in the dirt beside him, with Tom's help. She lays on him, rubbing him, his hindquarters, his legs, his side, softly rubbing his neck and the wet silky side of his head.

TOM
Now, listen...I want you to stand on him.

ANNIE
What?!

Tom responds to their voices without looking at them:

TOM
PLEASE...!
(they stop)
Grace, do what I'm telling you. Stand on him..now!

Grace obeys him through her tears. She lets Tom take her hand and guide her up onto the curve of Pilgrim's belly. Then he lets go. Grace stands there with tears streaming down her face - standing on the animal she loved most in the world.

ANNIE
It's so cruel.

FRANK
No..He had the choice.

ANNIE
What choice!?!?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

But, as Robert and Grace hold each other and begin to exit, Annie manages to make eye contact with Tom...and tell him with one look, how grateful she is...and how much she loves him. And he receives it...

EXT. DOUBLE DIVIDE - DAY.

WE FOLLOW THE DAYS AFTER THIS EVENT...

Work on the ranch goes on as usual while Tom and Grace keep nurturing Pilgrim back to life.

EXT. PASTURE - ANOTHER DAY...

Grace and Annie go riding...

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL - DAY.

Robert takes an isolated hike up the mountain until he comes upon a ridge overlooking an inspiring vista. We can tell Robert is moved by the sight...Sweaty, tired, he finds a place to sit...to be still...and to consider his life.

EXT. THE RANCH HOUSE - DAY.

Frank's car is packed up for the trip to the airport that will take the Bookers to Branson, Missouri for Diane's cousin's wedding...

Grace, Annie and Robert is outside saying goodbye to the Bookers; Diane, the Twins...and Joe...Joe awkwardly shakes her hand...then removes his hat and puts it on her head. Everyone laughs. They want to hug each other, but don't know if they should...

Frank and Tom are packing the car...

DIANE

Oh Frank, don't forget the wedding present - it's behind the door in the laundry room..

(to Robert and Annie)

I got her a pasta maker from the catalogues...Not that they'll know what do with it in Branson, Missouri...Probably use it as a planter.

FRANK

Diane!

DIANE

(whispers)

Frank's touchy about his cousins.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DIANE
Good luck to you, Annie.

ANNIE
You too, Diane.

They part. Diane starts giving order as she gets in the car;

DIANE
All right, everybody in..Frank, we all
set...

Camera widens as we hear the voices of departure..see the MacLeans waving...See Tom off by himself, waving..but thinking of something else...

INT. CREEK HOUSE - NIGHT.

In the midst of packing, Annie has made dinner for Grace and Robert. In the midst of eating, Robert asks:

ROBERT
Shouldn't we have invited Tom over?

GRACE
I did. He said he had work to do until
late.

Annie remains silent.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT.

Tom exits with a small, leather satchel. He crosses to his truck, tosses in the satchel, gets in and drives off.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BARN - MORNING.

Grace enters the barn to say goodbye to Pilgrim.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS.

She moves to his stall and opens the doors...He stands there, without any fear of her. She smiles and enters. She wraps her arms around his neck, pets him and whispers..

GRACE
I'll see you home...OK?

CONTINUED:

ROBERT

(continues)

And I have two choices. I can either
fight the way things are..or accept them.

(Annie waits)

(he smiles)

See, I always knew I loved you more.
Didn't bother me. I always felt
lucky....a little amazed ..that such a
vibrant, beautiful woman would want to be
with a man like me...And I guess I
thought as long as I did everything right
- if I was the best husband I could be,
the best father...even being a good
lawyer only mattered to me because of
what it meant for us...if I could do all
that, it wouldn't make any difference if
we loved each other the same or not...I
wasn't asking for more. I told myself I
didn't need more.

(smiles)

But you don't know how you feel about me.
You don't know...if you want..a life with
me..anymore...

(bravely)

And I don't want you to come home until
you do know...

(the hard part)

...one way or the other.

Annie can not remember a time when she ever loved her husband
more than in this moment - knowing what it took for him to
say this. She would not disrespect it with denials. Her
throat is choked with tears, she swallow down. She nods.

Robert nods, feeling both pride and heartbreak in the same
moment. He picks up his bag, kisses her goodbye and exits.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY.

Annie and Robert walks towards the car to find Grace, leaning
against it - looking depressed.

ANNIE

What's the matter, honey? Gonna miss
Pilgrim?

GRACE

Tom's gone.

Both Robert and Annie are surprised.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tom, walking away from the truck with the headlights left on..he is walking right towards her. *

Annie begins movng toward him. When they meet: *

TOM

I won't apologize for this. And I won't hide it. Not for anybody.

ANNIE

I won't ask you to.

He takes her in his arms and they kiss. *

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT.

Tom leads Annie to the front door. She waits as he unlocks it. *

INT. RANCH HOUSE; STAIRCASE - NIGHT. *

Angle on their legs as they climb the stairs to Tom's room. *

INT. RANCH HOUSE; SECOND FLOOR/TOM'S ROOM - NIGHT. *

Tom leads her to his room. Annie cups his grasp on her with both hands. He opens the door for her, ushers her in, then closes the door. He hangs his hat. She turns to him. They embrace, surrendering to each other passions.. *

DISSOLVE TO: *

INT. RANCH - DAWN. *

Camera pans from Tom's window, bright with dawn, past his desk upon which his classical music is playing, over to the two lovers in bed, kissing and embracing. Then: *

ANNIE

Oh God...what are we going to do? I'm supposed to- *

TOM

Sssh...

(she stops) *

Stand still, Annie. Take what we've got...just for now. Can you do that? *

Beat. She nods. The permission Tom is giving her acts like a great burden being lifted...and for the time being, she surrenders and accepts the gift of what they feel. They kiss. *

CONTINUED:

ANNIE
Show me again.

TOM
Annie!

ANNIE
One more time...

EXT. THE MOUNTAINS - DUSK.

Annie lays asleep in Tom's arms, under a blanket. He picks up another blanket with his free hand and shimmies it under her head, laying her down. She snuggles with the blanket and keeps sleeping.

Tom takes a moment to look at her as she sleeps, gently brushing her hair away from her eyes. He's deeply in love with this woman and wants to keep her with him. But there is a sad resignation in his look. A confusion.

He rises and walks to a stream nearby. He bends down to take some water when he hears something...He looks up and sees on the other side:

A WILD HORSE giving birth to a foal in the tall grass. And a WHITE STALLION steps in between Tom and the mare, as if portecting her.

Tom rises slowly to his feet. Then stands stock still. He and the Stallion penetrate each other.

Suddenly this beautiful, powerful Stallion rears - violently. Tom remains still, but clearly the horse is treating him as an invader...

It's as if the Whisperer is now being guided by the Horse towards understanding. As Tom receives it, he remembers;

TOM (VO)
Summers are short here, Annie. There isn't much of a fall. Before you know it, the roads are closed..the nights get long..

WE BEING TO FADE OUT ON TOM...

ANNIE (VO)
I don't care! We'd be together.

TOM (VO)
Two people can't just be alone together in the world. At least not us....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM
 (pleadingly)
 Annie, please...

Tom reaches to embrace her but Annie attacks him. Punching his chest....pulling at his shirt as Tom tries to put his arms around her...

ANNIE
 NO!...NO!...YOU DON'T DECIDE
 THIS!...NO!..

Tom's heart is breaking as he manages to get his arms around her and hold her...as she breaks down and slowly, the rage passes....Annie speaks softly.

TOM
 (struggling)
 I don't know any other way Annie.

ANNIE
 (more adamant)
 Why?

Suddenly;

TOM
 You think this is easy for me!?

Annie is struck by the powerful sincerity of his words;

TOM
 It's just happens this way sometimes. I can't explain it. But I look at you and see Grace and I see Robert and no matter what you decide about him, I just know this is right. Your life isn't here and you know it..

Annie looks into his eyes and asks, softly defiant;

ANNIE
 Then what have we been doing? I mean what was the point?

TOM
 (confused by her question)
 The point was to love each other..

ANNIE
 Why?

(CONTINUED)

INT. BARN - DAY.

Tom enters the barn slowly...He crosses to Rimrock's stall..then stops. As if he is waiting. As if he knows..

Then...he hears the sound of Annie's Suburban starting up. He looks up and knows she's leaving. He waits.

EXT. DOUBLE DIVIDE - DAY.

Wide Angle of Annie driving away in the Suburban with the trailer.

INT. SUBURBAN - CONTINUOUS.

Annie doesn't look back - her eyes wet with tears - but no sobs.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS.

Tom lowers his head. It is not his way to say goodbye. And he is moved by Annie's knowing.

EXT. HIGHWAYS AND ROADS ACROSS AMERICA - DAYS AND NIGHTS.

A MONTAGE of images of Annie travelling home... *

Across different terrains, we see Annie driving - missing Tom...thinking of what she will decide by the time she gets home. Remembering IMAGES OF TOM: *

- riding on Rimrock and tipping his hat to her... *

- Sitting in the pasture, staring at Pilgrim. Ignoring her. *

- seeing her arrive at the ranch for the very first time. *

EXT. A DIFFERENT HIGHWAY OR COUNTRY ROAD - DAY. *

Annie drives, she continues remembering... *

- She and Tom in the branding... *

- She and Tom dancing around the camp fire at the cattle drive. *

- She and Tom kissing in secrecy behind Hank's house the night of the barn dance... *

EXT. ANOTHER HIGHWAY OR COUNTRY ROAD - DAY.. *

Annie continues driving and remembering; *

(CONTINUED)

EXT. LITTLE BIGHORN NATIONAL MONUMENT - TWILIGHT. *

Annie stands where she stood when she and Grace stopped here
on their way to Montana... *

She removes from her pocket the KNOTTED LOOP he made for
her...and looks at it. *

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MACLEAN CONNECTICUT HOME - DAY.

A car is driving up the driveway to the house. It stops.

Robert and Grace get out as Annie exits from the front door.
She looks beautiful - but in a completely different way than
ever before. There is a calm center to her. A softness and a
strength. She smiles and walks to meet them..

She embraces Grace as Robert looks on.

ANNIE

Oh I missed you...You look beautiful.

GRACE

So do you.

ANNIE

How's everything?

GRACE

Good.

ANNIE

(to Robert)

Hi.

ROBERT

Hi.

They kiss as Grace watches.

ROBERT

Was the trip OK?

ANNIE

Mmm. I made good time..

(to Grace)

Pilgrim's in the back. I found a new
stable but they can't take him until
tomorrow..

(CONTINUED)