

THE SHAPE OF WATER
A FAIRY TALE FOR TROUBLED TIMES

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Address
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FADE IN:

TITLE:

***"When I pronounce the word Future,
the first syllable already belongs
to the past."***

Wislawe Szymborska

MUSIC FADES IN (SOLITUDE by Duke Ellington).

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Asleep on the sofa: ELISA. Roughly 30- but ageless: child-like eyes, dark, lush hair and a thin, beautiful mouth slightly curved into a smile. Her face is lit by an ever changing beam of light.

An alarm goes off: An EARLY CARD-FACE clock reads:

9:45 PM.

Elisa gets up, goes to the kitchen: We see that light and sound are emanating from her FLOORBOARDS.

She drops three eggs into a pot of boiling water and heads for the bathroom. On the way there- she picks up an egg timer and winds it up, casually.

INT. ELISA'S BATHROOM

She disrobes- On both sides of her neck: two keloid scars, diagonal and about three inches long.

She steps into the bathtub: Water overflows and hits the tiled floor.

She sinks in. A deep sigh.

She sets the egg timer to **TWO MINUTES**.

She sighs- then rubs her hand with soap, plants her two feet on the base of the tub, sighs and goes to work on herself, gently, slowly-

-but with the timer ticking away-

She's almost there when the timer DINGS. Opening her eyes, she sighs, puts the timer away, and gets up, out of time.

THE SHAPE OF WATER 2.

BOILING EGGS. THREE OF THEM.

A WALL CLOCK- its minute hand slides into position- TACK!: 9:55 pm.

A quiet PIANO song plays over images of-

EGGS floating in water, in intense slo-mo. Dancing like ghostly shapes.

Still steaming, they are picked up by Elisa. Her hair is wet and she nervously looks at the clock on the wall.

CLACK! 10:00 PM

An ambulance light illuminates the apartment, its siren fading rapidly.

She wraps one of the eggs real careful- like a sacrament- and places it neatly next to a flat sandwich, a salt shaker and a bumped-up thermos in a steel lunch box. It all fits perfectly- as it has fit hundreds of times before.

The other two eggs and a carrot go onto a small plate.

She opens three locks on her door and-

INT. APARTMENT CORRIDOR - NIGHT

-exits her apartment. She goes to the door across. Music emanates from inside.

She uses a key to let herself in.

INT. GILES APARTMENT - NIGHT

Full of cats and books. ENTIRELY full of them. Here and there are half-finished illustrations, large original art from ADS and work tables with paint materials.

Illustrations depict happy men standing next to jet-finned cars or homemakers marvelling at the sight of a new vacuum cleaner.

Shirley Temple dances in a tux on a CONSOLE TV.

Hard at work at a drawing table is GILES: late 60's, refined and prim: wool vest, bow tie and tortoiseshell glasses.

GILES

Did you hear the sirens?

THE SHAPE OF WATER 3.

Giles is coloring an illustration of a happy family around a JELL-O BRIGHT RED, MOLDED GELATINE.

GILES (CONT'D)
A fire. Ten blocks away- the
chocolate factory. Can you smell
the Cocoa? Tragedy has never
smelled so good.

A cat MEOWS. Elisa Signs. We then realize that she is mute.

GILES (CONT'D)
Stella - just had kittens. Popped
out like grapes- all in a row, the
horny little bitch.

Elisa puts the eggs and carrot down on a side table.

GILES (CONT'D)
Thank You, Dear-
(beat)
Wake me up when you come back-
We'll have breakfast.

She gives him a peck on the cheek.

INT. APARTMENT CORRIDOR - SAME

Both sides of the corridor are blocked by FILM CANS.

Music and LIGHT pour through the cracks between the floorboards: Elisa squeezes past the cans and reaches a small doorway. Next to it: a DUMBWAITER.

She exits. The snowflakes inundate the corridor.

EXT. ARCADE CINEMA AND TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

She stands at top of a fire escape. Gentle snow falls. The city lights glow in the distance.

ELISA climbs down. She exits past the ARCADE CINEMA MARQUEE.

The cinema owner, MR. ARZOUMANIAN, is hanging a banner that reads: "SCIENTIFICALLY AIR CONDITIONED."

MR. ARZOUMANIAN
(Armenian accent)
"Scientifically," Elisa- eh? You
like that?

THE SHAPE OF WATER 4.

She smiles at him and signs her approval. A FIRE ENGINE GOES BY- In the horizon- ten blocks away: a fire.

MR. ARZOUMANIAN (CONT'D)
I came up with it!

Elisa dances / walks past closing or closed shops (bit like Gene Kelly on the sidewalk in SINGING IN THE RAIN)...

EXT. BUS BENCH / TV REPAIR SHOP - NIGHT

Snow and mud cover the streets. Waiting patiently on a bus bench in front of an appliance store: ELISA.

On TV: MARTIN LUTHER KING. KENNEDY. RUSSIAN SATELLITES. CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS on other monitors. THEN- A WAVING AMERICAN FLAG. PROGRAMMING ENDS.

She looks at her watch: 10:05 pm.

INT. CITY BUS - NIGHT

Elisa, on the bus, looking out a window with great longing. Out the window: the entire world passes by- reflections of neon and passing cars.

She sits there- almost entirely alone-

The bus stops.

EXT. PITTSBURGH CITY BUS - NIGHT

HELICOPTER SHOT: The bus moves past downtown and onto a bridge and then- to the outskirts of the city- visible now, circa 1963.

EXT. 1345 HALLOWAY BUILDING- NIGHT

A SQUARE, SQUAT, MODERN building.

SUPER: **HALLOWAY RESEARCH LABORATORY.**

ELISA climbs out of the bus and enters.

INT. 1345 HALLOWAY LOBBY- NIGHT

A large clock reads: 10:55 pm

THE SHAPE OF WATER 5.

A ROW OF ELEVATORS (WITH A MURAL REPRESENTING FUTURE AND PROGRESS ABOVE THEM).

The doors open and a crowd erupts out of them.

Another crowd boards immediately. MPs card everyone going in.

Elisa enters the elevator. Right behind her comes ZELDA, a plump African American woman in her 40's, running fast as she can with low heeled shoes in one hand and a paper sandwich bag in the other.

ZELDA
Hold it, hold it!!!

She gets in- next to ELISA.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The elevator goes down, down, down until it opens into:

INT. THE LONG CORRIDOR / HERDING AREA - NIGHT

The long corridor is, well, pretty long- several blocks long. Out of a James Bond movie, in fact.

GOLF CARTS move in and out of it and into bifurcating alleys full of REINFORCED STEEL DOORS, each bearing a number and a letter (B-67, C-25, etc).

About a DOZEN MPs guard the corridor.

From a vantage point CONTROL CENTER, DAVID FLEMING, bespectacled, dry- cold fish- head of security, a bureaucrat, watches the crowds.

There are TWO PUNCH CLOCKS, one reads "OUT" (under it the snaking line of workers leave).

Another one reads "IN" and there stand Elisa, ZELDA and-

YOLANDA
Gotta punch in before eleven, dummy-
You mind?

Elisa uses sign language to ask for more time. We realize then that Elisa is MUTE.

ZELDA
Don't let her push you, honey, you
take your time...

CLACK!! 11:00 PM

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - SAME

Elisa and Zelda get dressed in their JANITORIAL garments.
Change their shoes to low-heeled ones.

ZELDA

Made pigs in a blanket. Fresh dough-
good sausages and Brewster just ate
'em up. No thank-yous- no yum-yum-
no nothing.

(beat)

But if farts were flattery- the man
would be Shakespeare-

Fleming enters.

FLEMING

May I have your attention, please?
Today, we are receiving a new team
and asset in B-33. Those with
clearance for corridor "B," no
changes. Everyone else, please re-
route through the cafeteria and
lockers-

(makes a round gesture with
pen)

Via the common area, and so on and
so forth.

Groans.

FLEMING (CONT'D)

I know it's a bit more footwork,
but there you have it. Thank you
all.

The SMALL ARMY of cleaners takes their service carts and
moves out into the enormous corridor.

MONTAGE:

-ELISA mops. Behind her- a GROUP OF SCIENTISTS and a TEST
SUBJECT try a remote control that moves a giant arm!!

-Empties garbage pails unto her cart.

THE SHAPE OF WATER 7.

-Moves through the COMMAND CENTER picking up garbage. On the TV's: all kinds of super-secret experiments- rockets, engines, labs, etc.

INT. ENGINE ROOM - NIGHT INT. "B" CORRIDOR - NIGHT

ELISA removes chewing gum from the floor in a giant lab where a MASSIVE JET ENGINE sits.

A group of scientists ready for a test. One of them asks her to step aside.

She looks back- the scientists stand up behind a glass screen, wearing protective eye and ear gear.

As she exits the room, the turbine turns, sucking the air out in a spectacular fashion.

She almost gets sucked in. She slides, almost comically, on the floor, heading towards the turbine - like a Keaton or a Lloyd. But she holds to the door and barely makes it out-

CORRIDOR "B"

ELISA exits the rocket jet lab, panting, trash bin in hand.

ZELDA is calmly mopping with another cleaner, younger, African American YOLANDA.

ZELDA
You alright, Hon?

They observe as a group of people escorts a MASSIVE AND COMPLEX STEEL CYLINDER. Twice the size of an iron lung and more elaborate.

It is escorted by 4 MP's, a thin, nervous man (DR. HOFFSTETLER) and a square-jawed, steely-eyed man dressed in a black, immaculate suit and tie: RICHARD STRICKLAND, 30's.

His left hand is in a black silk sling and covered by a black leather glove. In his right hand: an electric CATTLE PROD.

As the cylinder goes by, Elisa gazes into a small window- the interior is illuminated and full of water. A *large figure* swims in the liquid.

Something bangs the metal surface of the cylinder and emits a horrible, inhuman cry.

Strickland opens a PORTHOLE and shows the cattle prod- ZAPPPP!! It discharges a crackling arc of energy!!

The figure inside, recoils. A pair of WEBBED PALMS hits the glass!!!

Elisa is startled, but curious.

Strickland locks eyes with Elisa-

-and moves further down the corridor.

Into door **B-33**.

Elisa takes a few steps towards it. Strickland closes it. And LOCKS IT from the inside.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

WATER.

RIPPLING.

SHIMMERING WATER.

Reflecting Elisa's face.

ZELDA

Will you look at that-

CAMERA pulls back to reveal: the lavatories. Elisa cleans the black stone counters. Zelda points to the urinals.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Some of the best minds in our
country- Peeing all over the floor,
the walls-

(points up)

There's pee on the ceiling!! How
big a target do they need, you
figure?

ZELDA resumes mopping the checkered floor.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

My Brewster, no one ever called him
a great mind, even he hits the can
seventy percent of the time.

Suddenly, Strickland enters. His shirt's top buttons and tie undone. Sleeves rolled. In his hands: the cattle prod and a plastic bag of GREEN HARD CANDY.

THE SHAPE OF WATER 9.

He places them on the sink. Removes his leather glove: His left hand is covered in *thick, criss-crossing scars*. A couple of his fingers are mangled.

STRICKLAND

Please- don't stop on my account.
You ladies seem to be having a good time.

His eyes make contact with Elisa's.

ELISA tenses. Strickland goes to the urinal and proceeds to piss.

Elisa moves into a stall, pretending to work. She looks at the cattle prod.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Alabama Rod- Four inches longer than regulation.

You can hear his stream bouncing off the tile. ZELDA winces, looks at Elisa.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

High-voltage, low-current electric shock- Delivers a mighty bite.

Strickland washes his hands. Notices something. Takes a piece of candy and enters a stall. He reorients the toilet paper roll-

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Name's Strickland. Robert Strickland. I'm to become a familiar face around here. Lab B-33.

(looks at Elisa)

Coordinating security with Fleming.

Looks at toilet roll.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Sheets always pointing down. Folded. For hygiene and esthetics.

He leaves. Elisa notices a small drop of blood left behind by the cattle prod.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF PITTSBURGH - DAWN

It's snowing gently. The streets are muddy and the road glistens with black ice. Giles and Elisa walk down the street. We see beauty parlors, locksmiths, etc.

GILES

This used to be the garment district- Twenty years ago: Wools, linen, cotton-
(points at a store)
There- You could get the finest Persian silk- red as blood- A short man, very well groomed- Mr. Amir- he used to sell it by the yard. He died - of fear-

They cross the street towards a DINER being renovated called "JOE THE PIE GUY."

GILES (CONT'D)

Every night, for weeks, he would dream of a black dog- standing at the foot of his bed. Smiling. He couldn't take it...

CUT TO:

INT. "JOE THE PIE GUY" DINER - DAY

Giles and Elisa stand before a Stainless- steel AUTOMATIC PIE VENDING DISPLAY. Infinite choices of bright-colored pies, one more vivid than the next, turning on its own "lazy Susan."

GILES

What are these flavors? Where's the key lime?

Elisa points at a neon-colored pie.

GILES (CONT'D)

You have got to be joking. That is not a color found in nature.

His gaze drifts subtly to the PIE GUY at the register. He's manly, masculine, like a construction worker. With pie.

PIE GUY (O.S.)

Thank you. Come again, y'hear?

Elisa watches Giles watching the guy, his glances filled with longing. Finally the pie vendor comes over.

PIE GUY (CONT'D)
What can I get you folks?
(then)
I seen you in here before, right?

GILES
(pleased)
Indeed you have. And you, would you
be the famous "Joe" himself?

PIE GUY
(pure Pittsburgh now)
There is no "Joe." They send 'em
pies down from Buffalo- we unpack
'em, display 'em, that's all.

GILES
Well. You do it very well if I may
say so myself.

BEAT.

PIE GUY
What can I get you?

GILES
Mercy me, we haven't ordered yet,
have we? We'll have two pieces of
the key lime, please.

He watches Pie Guy pack them up, admiring his muscular arms.

GILES (CONT'D)
Perhaps you can answer a burning
question for us, why do they make
them in such bright colors?

PIE VENDOR
Folks like 'em, I guess. Seems like
the brighter the better.
(beat)
It's the future.
(fake Southern folksy)
"Thank you. Come again, y'hear?"

CUT TO:

EXT. GILES' APARTMENT - DAY

They eat their pie. In the corner, the kittens nurse.

GILES

Do you think he meant it? "Come again"?

Elisa rolls her eyes.

GILES (CONT'D)

I know, I know...

(then)

This pie is rather sordid, wouldn't you say?

Elisa gestures while barely eating: "yes." She shows him her tongue: GREEN.

GILES (CONT'D)

Perhaps for later... We could go back- try a different flavor.

He puts the pie away in the fridge- takes one of his pills and pours the rest of the milk on a cat's plate.

Elisa consults a TV GUIDE. Changes channels.

On TV- Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers Dance: "Heaven... I am in Heaven..."

GILES (CONT'D)

Oh, look at her! To be young and beautiful and have found your perfect match.

While sitting, he tap-dances. Elisa joins him in a beautiful, little foot choreography- without leaving the sofa.

Fred Astaire dances with Ginger. Music overpowers the upcoming scene.

CUT TO:

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alarm goes off: 9:45 PM.

EGG TIMER in the F.G. In the B.G. Elisa taking care of Business in the bathtub, just getting there this time at the "DING!"

BOILING EGGS

Projector light from cinema below.

INT. CITY BUS

-Elisa awaiting the bus-

INT. CITY BUS

-Elisa seated.

INT. 1345 HALLOWAY LOBBY - NIGHT

She hurries in.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Crammed. Elisa in it.

INT. ELEVATOR CUBE - NIGHT

The elevator descends rapidly.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

CLEANING CARTS inundate the long corridor.

INT. SERVICE CORRIDOR TO LOADING AREA - NIGHT

Elisa and three other WORKERS push laundry carts down a tunnel to a-

INT. LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

-Loading Dock where there are several waiting trucks.

Nearby- Yolanda and Zelda are smoking.

ZELDA

Hey, hon- Want a ciggie?

She shakes her head.

YOLANDA

Having a break.

Elisa looks at a VIDEO CAMERA above them.

YOLANDA (CONT'D)

Don't worry, we push it up.

They point at a dirty broom.

ZELDA
Blind spot.

She offers a cigarette, Elisa takes it, lights it up.

Suddenly- a scream and three shots. Everybody's on the move!!

INT. LONG CORRIDOR - SAME

Employees converge.

B-33! The door bursts open.

They see FIGURES moving in the distance: urgent, hushed.

Then the ALARM LIGHTS start buzzing and blinking all around them.

ZELDA
What the fuck?

They see STRICKLAND stagger out - with a security guard - clasp his bleeding hand. Blood squirts from it!!

FLEMING and HOFFSTETLER follow.

FLEMING
He's losing blood!! Quick!!

He looks at ELISA- then presses an EMERGENCY BUTTON- BAMMMM!!!

-HEAVY STEEL DOORS shut the area hermetically.

ZELDA
Lunch is early today, I guess.

INT. EMPLOYEES CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Zelda eats merrily.

ELISA takes out one of her eggs and cracks it, peels it and puts salt on it.

YOLANDA
It was two shots- you hear'em?

ELISA raises three fingers. Scribbles in her notebook: "Not deaf."

YOLANDA (CONT'D)

And a scream. What do you think happened in there? Think the Russians broke in?

ZELDA

If they did, this meatloaf will kill them.

FLEMING approaches their bench.

FLEMING

Zelda, Yolanda- Come with me.

ZELDA

Right now?

YOLANDA

I'm eating- you mind?

Fleming points at Zelda and Elisa.

FLEMING

You and you. Now.

Zelda crams a few French fries and obeys.

ZELDA

Whatever it was - looks like we're gonna clean it up.

INT. LONG CORRIDOR - NIGHT

ONE OF THE STAINLESS STEEL DOORS OPENS!!

Elisa and Zelda hurry BEHIND Fleming. They drag their mop and bucket trolleys behind with stern efficiency. ZELDA still munching on a half sandwich out of a paper bag. They stop in front of **B-33**.

FLEMING

You have twenty minutes, y'hear?
Clean- mop and so on and so forth
and then get out. Hand me your
cards. Both of you, c'mon-

He punches them into a CLEARANCE READER by the door. It beeps. Fleming enters a few numbers. Out of the corner of her eye, Elisa registers the digits. Fleming slides the card again- THE MULTI-CHAMBERED LOCK GYRATES.

The machine clacks and the door opens.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Inside, they find Hoffstetler. He turns- startled- and-
-caps his FOUNTAIN PEN- puts it away!

FLEMING

Dr. Hoffstetler. Thought you went
with Strickland.

HOFFSTETLER

Just... documenting the incident--
(beat)
Did they find them?

FLEMING

He's at the hospital- is all I
know...
(to Elisa and Zelda)
In and out. Twenty minutes.

ZELDA

Yes, sir.

Fleming and Hoffstetler exit.

The place is covered in blood. THE CYLINDER has been
installed against a wall, on a pedestal- and is now connected
to the pipes and ducts. It lies open...

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Sweet dancing Jesus on the head of
a pin- what the fuck went on in
here? That's blood, hon- I tell you-
may be all gunked up- But that's
blood...

Zelda moves closer to the operating table: A leather strap is
snapped- it lies there, bisected violently.

Surgical instruments are everywhere- the cattle prod lies on
the floor.

BULKY VIDEO RECORDING EQUIPMENT lies scattered around a SMALL
VIDEO STATION.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Get going, Hon.

A SHALLOW CEMENT POND surrounded by a GRATE and with a TILED
wall with chains seems empty, but it is hard to tell in the
half-light. Something moves inside. Something big.

ELISA looks into a monitor. On it, a small "loop" plays over and over again: Strickland being attacked by a blurry shape moving from the gurney. Zelda pours water and starts mopping the blood right away.

ZELDA (CONT'D)
Elisa, girl! Help me mop it. Sooner
we get out of here the better...

Elisa throws one last bucket of water under a counter.

-as the water flows back, it carries- THREE SEVERED HUMAN
FINGERS.

Zelda picks up one-

ZELDA (CONT'D)
That a cigar?

-a gold wedding band falls off of it.

ZELDA (CONT'D)
Aaagh!! Sweet mother of Mercy-
don't touch that!! It's a finger!!
They're all fingers!!

She looks around for something to pick them up with. Finds a pair of surgical tweezers and urges ELISA to use the now empty sandwich paper bag.

Elisa picks them up and they collect them all.

ZELDA (CONT'D)
I'm gonna call somebody. Stay here.
I'm gonna call somebody.

She leaves- Elisa stays. Something BIG moves in the holding tank behind her.

She looks deep into it. ONE DROP of blood spirals downward in the liquid.

She moves in. There's a trail of blood in the water.

A figure emerges slowly out of the water: A slender, sleek AMPHIBIAN MAN. Looking at her. He's beautiful- almost unreal- blood flows from three diagonal cuts on his chest.

Elisa's shocked but not scared.

The creature makes direct eye contact with her.

Curious and somewhat pleading.

He floats towards her.

ZELDA and TWO MP's come back.

The Amphibian man retreats to the back of the pool, scared.

MILITARY POLICE
Where are the body parts?

Elisa offers him the sandwich bag.

She looks back at the pool-

Nothing.

POV of the creature: Elisa looking in.

The creature, in the darkness. Markings glowing faintly. Eyes staring out.

GILES (PRELAP)
You saw this with your own eyes?

INT. GILES APARTMENT - DAWN

Giles is cooking.

GILES
With your own eyes?

She nods vigorously, then signs.

GILES (CONT'D)
I do believe you, darling, but are you sure it wasn't... an animal-- a dolphin or-

Elisa scribbles: "Person/Fish" Giles serves her a plate.

GILES (CONT'D)
Spaghetti for breakfast- sort of off, wouldn't you say? But I do hope you don't mind... I have a deadline...

Giles picks up his drawing- shows it to Elisa.

GILES (CONT'D)
You like it?

Thumbs up.

GILES (CONT'D)
It's not bad, is it? For being
shit?

And heads out.

GILES (CONT'D)
This thing- are you sure it was
alive? I once saw a siren- at a
carnival: a dead monkey sewn to a
dry fish. Looked real to me.

Elisa signs, "It was real."

CUT TO:

INT. JOHNSON & CAAN PUBLICITY - SAME

Giles enters the lobby of a large, sleek ad firm. He's
greeted by-

BERNIE, (Elegant, 60's, beautifully fitting tie and suit)-
with two kisses on the cheeks.

INT. JOHNSON & CAAN PUBLICITY - SAME

Giles uncovers his work.

THREE YOUNG AND HIP ART DIRECTORS look at the illustration of
the family dining around the Jell-O mold.

ART DIRECTOR 1
(looks at Bernie)
The client wanted photographs,
Bernie- you sold us on this-
(beat)
This is a relic-

GILES
What did he call it, Bernie?

BERNIE
I like it.

ART DIRECTOR 2
You like it? New flavors are all
green: celery, lime, apple- all
green. Green's what's coming.

Hands him a green Pantone swatch.

GILES

But- I was told red.

Bernie presses his shoulder; be quiet.

BERNIE

Giles can make it work.

GILES

No I can't: I'd need to start almost from scratch.

ART DIRECTOR 2

We need it by Monday. Can you do that?

ART DIRECTOR 3

Monday. But better. Make it about something.

ART DIRECTOR 1

Get involved.

ART DIRECTOR 2

Make it more you.

GILES

More me?

Bernie pulls Giles aside.

GILES (CONT'D)

What on earth are they talking about? 'make it more you'?? It's fucking gelatin! What next? They'll want me to wear a pink star? March to the showers?

(beat)

I am an artist!! Fuck them!!

Beat. And then-

BERNIE

They won't clear your check, Giles.

Beat. And then-

GILES

Can they do that?

BERNIE

I'm a symbol, Giles, a masthead. I don't call the shots anymore.

(beat)

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)
They won't clear your check until
you deliver the new painting.

Long, long pause. Giles looks at Bernie.

GILES
Monday, was it??

CUT TO:

DISSOLVE:

INT. ELISA'S BATHROOM

WATER.

RIPPLING.

Elisa fills the bathtub but- instead of entering the water-
she stares at it, mesmerized.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LONG CORRIDOR

Elisa heads down the corridor.

INT. LAB - DUSK

She uses her clearance card, then quickly punches in the
numbers to open the door.

She enters. The Amphibian Man is there, floating gently in
the water.

He senses her, hides- scared.

She knocks on the glass- beckoning, then gestures: "My
name... is... Elisa" SUBTITLES appear.

Nothing.

She repeats the gesture. Nothing.

She pulls up a chair and sits down in front of the cylinder.
She opens her lunch box and peels an egg. Pours salt on it
and eats it, slowly.

The Amphibian Man moves towards the glass- interested.

She shows him the egg.

The Amphibian Man looks intrigued. She signs: "egg."

The Amphibian Man repeats it: "egg."

She eats it. The Amphibian Man mimics her.

She smiles. He smiles back. They look at each other.

"My name's Elisa," she signs. He observes and then mimics it perfectly.

"My name's Elisa," it signs.

She laughs.

It laughs and pirouettes in the water.

She takes one of the hardboiled eggs and puts it into the cylinder via a PNEUMATIC FEEDING TUBE.

The creature swims to it and plays with it and then-

-SNAPPING its retractable lips/jaw. It devours it in a single move.

Elisa smiles.

INT. CORRIDOR

Elisa slips back out of the lab.

ZELDA (O.S.)

Elisa!

She turns to see Zelda hurrying towards her.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

What were you doing in there? I've been looking everywhere for you. Strickland wants us.

(beat)

You feeding that thing?

CUT TO:

STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - NIGHT

STRICKLAND's sitting down in his office (his fingers covered by clean bandages with a stain of blood and iodine)- he looks pale and pissed.

STRICKLAND

(reads a file)

Zelda D. Fuller. What does the "D"
stand for?

Elisa and Zelda sit in front of him, like girls at the
principal's office.

ZELDA

Delilah- on account of the bible.

STRICKLAND

A traitor.

ZELDA

Beg your pardon?

STRICKLAND

Delilah- betrays Samson. You know
that?

Zelda raises an eyebrow. Strickland takes a HARD GREEN CANDY
from a plastic bag. Chews on it.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

She lulls him to sleep and cuts his
hair- Philistines torture him,
humiliate him and burn his eyes
out.

ZELDA

Guess my mama didn't read the good
book close enough.

STRICKLAND

That thing you saw. In the tank- It
is not human.

(beat)

It's a dangerous, filthy thing- Not
to mention a state secret.

(beat)

You don't go near it in B-33, you
hear me-? You clean, you mop and
get the hell out of there. Do you
understand?

ZELDA

We do, sir-

STRICKLAND Turns, almost violently- "He is not talking to
her."

ZELDA (CONT'D)

I answer on the account that she
can't talk.

STRICKLAND's ears prick up.

STRICKLAND

Deaf?

Elisa signals.

ZELDA

Only mute, sir.

STRICKLAND

I had not noticed.

(reads file)

Elisa Esposito. Esposito. Doesn't
that mean "Orphan"?

Elisa nods.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Found in a riverbed by Our Lady of
Sorrows in Putnam...

(looking up at Elisa)

Really?

She nods.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

You've done well for yourself,
considering.

He looks straight at Elisa then, offhand:

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Zelda- would you mind? Giving us a
minute?

ZELDA

You read sign language?

STRICKLAND grabs a pencil and a notebook and slaps it in
front of Elisa. Zelda leaves...

STRICKLAND

So- it was you that found my
fingers.

Elisa nods. He moves close to her. Sits on his desk.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
I should thank you... Was in
surgery for three hours- They
rebuilt the first phalanx- here. It
shattered. Sutured the tendons...
Not sure it'll take...
(looks at it longingly)
There was mustard on it.

He places the sandwich bag on his desk.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
A sandwich bag. Was that the best
you could do?

He touches the scars on her neck.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
Scars- on your neck- That what
damaged your voice box?

Elisa writes: *SINCE I WAS BABY.*

Strickland looks away.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
Now- Who would do that-
(beat)
to a baby?
(beat)
Sickening- Wouldn't you say, Elisa?

Silence.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
Well, you wouldn't- would you? Say
anything.

His hand bleeds a little. Drops of bright blood stain the
wood on the desk.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Elisa and Zelda put their uniforms away. Elisa readies to
leave.

A 1960's SURVEILLANCE CAMERA pans across the locker room. It
settles on Zelda and Elisa.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME

STRICKLAND watches them both, intrigued, intent.

VIDEO SCREEN: Elisa walks away. Strickland ZOOMS IN on her.

INT. STRICKLAND'S HOME - NIGHT

A perfect, Good-Housekeeping-cover style dinner. At the table: Strickland, his wife ELAINE and their two kids, TIMMY, 8, and TAMMY, 6. All around them: moving boxes: opened, closed, half-unpacked. Elaine talks non-stop.

ELAINE
Meatloaf, your favorite, Sweetie...
(beat)
Are you feeling better?

Strickland slices the meatloaf, grunts.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
I've been opening boxes all day-
Feels like home already, right?

STRICKLAND
I wouldn't know. I just hope we're
out of here soon.

Items are silently passed: corn, green beans with fried onions on top, a GREEN Jell-O mold.

ELAINE
Did you see the Jell-O salad?
(beat)
They came out with these new
"savory" flavors. This is celery, I
think. Or maybe "Italian."

Strickland wolfs down his food with absolute disregard for taste or mastication.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
You just put in real celery,
walnuts and some tuna and you're
done.

Her VOICE fades out and a GRUNT fades in.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STRICKLAND'S BEDROOM

Strickland mounts ELAINE. Rhythmic. Mechanical. Like an athlete training for a marathon.

ELAINE

Oh...

He covers her mouth. Keeps pumping. She tries to talk.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

(muffled)

Richard--

STRICKLAND

Shh- No. Don't speak. I want you in silence.

ELAINE

Honey- your hand is bleeding- It's- oh-

STRICKLAND

Shh- In silence.

He pumps away. Presses his hand. She looks up at him, confused. He pushes her face away from him.

Averts his eyes.

And keeps on pumping.

GILES (PRELAP)

Maybe this is the only life it knows. Maybe it was bred for this. Like those white rats in the labs.

DISSOLVE:

INT. GILES' APARTMENT - DAY

Giles is blocking of the RED JELL-O.

GILES

What would we know? Fish seem to like that sort of thing- tanks-

She signs: "Not a fish. Human / fish" and she adds "The eyes."

GILES (CONT'D)

The eyes- what about them?

She signs: "Sadness."

GILES (CONT'D)

What do you think it is? A "he" or a "she"? What is it?

Elisa scribbles on a note pad: **ALONE.**

CUT TO:

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT

She selects a few LP's and a small portable turntable.

INT. BUS

She holds onto her small treasure trove of music and the portrait of the Amphibian Man.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Elisa pushes her cart out, crosses paths with Yolanda and Zelda.

ZELDA

You're early. You're never early.

Elisa shrugs, nonchalant.

INT. LAB - SAME

Elisa enters the lab. She takes out her turntable and approaches the holding pool.

She holds out the portrait of the Amphibian Man.

The creature emerges slowly from the water. Looks at her and the portrait.

On the soundtrack: "Embraceable You."

Elisa has set up the portable turntable in front of the cylinder.

The Amphibian Man looks at her, weakly.

The Amphibian Man moves slowly - tentatively- towards the glass- fascinated.

The Amphibian Man cannot understand the music, but it obviously enthralls him.

Elisa dances while the Amphibian Man watches.

Slowly, he swirls in the tank. Rhythmically.

She shows him the drawing Giles made of him. It moves close to the glass. Fascinated. Tries to touch it through the glass.

She comes over and puts one hand up against the glass, he puts a hand up "against" hers. Her smile turns wistful, wishing he were outside the glass. She keeps her hand there.

Quietly, Hoffstetler enters the lab and watches how, as the music ends-

-The Amphibian Man bangs on the glass to ELISA: "play a different record." Zelda comes over, fascinated in spite of herself.

ELISA signs- asking him to "point." The AMPHIBIAN MAN points. Elisa turns the record around. Music plays. The AMPHIBIAN MAN swims, delighted!

Hoffstetler watches. Mesmerized. Moved.

GENERAL HOYT (PRELAP)
"Oxygen osmosis- dioxide exchange.
Double pulmonary system."

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND CENTER

Strickland stands in front of a BANK of MONITORS. An off-color ooze seeps through his bandages. Next to him Hoffstetler.

GENERAL HOYT
What exactly does this mean?

On the monitors: SIX FIVE-STAR GENERALS in a STRANGELOVE-LIKE meeting room. ALL B&W.

HOFFSTETLER
*Sir- This specimen- the asset-
There's nothing like it in the
world. We are trying to figure out
how does it breathe- In two
atmospheres. His blood chemistry.
The morphology of his pulmonary
system... This is knowledge that
would give us a great edge in- the
space race. I believe that.*

STRICKLAND
Permission to speak freely, sir.

GENERAL HOYT

Permission granted.

STRICKLAND

When we found that thing- the asset in that- pardon the expression- shithole of a river in the Amazon, Sir. We all thought we could learn from it.

(beat)

Now, We've carried the package upstream through South America to Texas and now here. That thing is feral, Sir. And every day we keep it alive is another day we are vulnerable to infiltration.

HOFFSTETLER

We need it alive. To test its systems. Osmosis, chemical exchange.

GENERAL STRAUB

Strickland- the Russians- Those Godless bastards- they are engaged in some pretty flaky shit.

(beat)

Hell- last I heard they were trying to have a fella move an ashtray with his mind... That's pretty flaky right there, wouldn't you say?

Strickland sees where this is going.

GENERAL STRAUB (CONT'D)

Now, they send dogs up into space- we laugh.

(beat)

But next thing you know- a Ruskie- a fucking heathen- is floating up there- Alone and unsupervised... Doing God knows what.

GENERAL HOYT

Son, it's simple: this asset- Moscow wants it, we want it.

STRICKLAND

(faint smile)

I understand, sir.

GENERAL HOYT

We'll be with you tomorrow, son. We
want to lay eyes on the asset.

STRICKLAND

Looking forward to it, sir.

GENERAL STRAUB

We'll make our decisions then--

CUT TO:

EXT. BROWNSTONE BUILDINGS STREET - DAY

HOFFSTETLER climbs the steps of his building.

Children battle with snowballs outside.

INT. HOFFSTETLER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Austere. Impersonal. Hoffstetler grabs a small pen knife from
his desk and gets on his hands and knees.

He uses it to lift a set of floorboards. They reveal a neatly-
fitting BLACK CASE.

He opens the case: a passport, a LEATHER NOTEBOOK, some
equipment, cash, etc.

He takes his FOUNTAIN PEN and unscrews the cap, REVEALING A
SMALL PHOTOGRAPHIC LENS.

He connects the side of the pen to the SPOOLER and proceeds
to unload a PHOTOGRAPHIC REEL hidden in the pen.

INT. BATHROOM DARK ROOM - SAME

Hoffstetler prints the lab photographs.

EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

Holding a manila envelope, DR. HOFFSTETLER is sitting on a
bench. Freezing. A BURLY RUSSIAN heads toward him, slipping
on the icy surface.

BURLY RUSSIAN

The sparrow nests on the window
sill.

HOFFSTETLER
And the eagle makes-

THE BURLY RUSSIAN falls on his ass. HOFFSTETLER sighs.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)
(in Russian)
Fuck.

INT. CAR - DAY

HOFFSTETLER drives. THE BURLY RUSSIAN produces a few FORTUNE COOKIES.

BURLY RUSSIAN
(in Russian, ST)
Fortune cookies.
(off Hoffstetler)
They taste good and are fun to read.

Offers one- HOFFSTETLER refuses.

BURLY RUSSIAN (CONT'D)
(in Russian, ST)
And these here are your lucky numbers- 15, 33, 27.

Hoffstetler sighs.

EXT. BLACK SEA RUSSIAN RESTAURANT - DAY

A cheesy Russian restaurant, with a flashing GREEN neon sign: a boat in a sea storm.

INT. BLACK SEA RUSSIAN RESTAURANT

Inside a smoky back room with a 360-degree soot-stained painted mural of Russian folk scenes.

A VIOLIN DUO plays to each table.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

In front of a HUGE LOBSTER TANK- two older RUSSIANS, including LEO MIHALKOV, a severe man with slow, deliberate speech (in Russian with subtitles), and an OLDER man with bad teeth, drink vodka and smoke while playing chess.

They turn as Hoffstetler enters the room, behind him THE BURLY RUSSIAN.

MIHALKOV

"Bob." How are you?

The group laughs. Not Hoffstetler. He responds in flat but fluent, unaccented Russian.

HOFFSTETLER

Freezing- On a bench? In the Winter.

(looks at Burly)

And he shows up late. Why can't we just meet here? The code- the bench and we always meet here- the same restaurant. It's the same booth!

MIHALKOV

I could change my mind.

HOFFSTETLER

But you don't.

MIHALKOV

Ours is an ungrateful lifestyle. I embrace this small Luxury...

(pours a drink)

So- Tell us, "Bob"-

HOFFSTETLER

Dimitri, Comrade- my ears need a rest, yes? "Bob, bob, bob" Who names himself with one syllable?

Dimitri/Hoffstetler offers him his notebook: in it diagrams and anatomical notes.

Hoffstetler hands him the manila envelope.

MIHALKOV

What is this?

HOFFSTETLER

Layout of the laboratory. 360- where the asset is being studied. For the operation. We must extract as soon as possible.

MIHALKOV

I will clear it with Moscow.

HOFFSTETLER

*I cannot be too emphatic: time is
of the essence.*

MIHALKOV

You seem agitated.

HOFFSTETLER

*This creature, Comrade. There is
nothing like it on earth. When we
lose it- If we lose it- it will be
gone forever.*

MIHALKOV

*You are becoming like our American
friends... neurotic.*

MIHALKOV pours him some Vodka.

MIHALKOV (CONT'D)

*Have a lobster. They boil them
right here. They squeak a little
but they are so soft and sweet.*

GOODBYE by Benny Goodman swells on the soundtrack.

CUT TO:

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Elisa feeds an egg to the Amphibian Man in the holding pool.
Delicately, he chews the shell.

Together, they listen to the turntable while she eats her
sandwich.

She notices a large SCAR on its side (similar to that of a
kidney donor). It's bleeding.

She touches it. The creature recoils.

She signs, "Does it hurt?" He nods, slowly attempts to sign,
"Hurt."

They look at each other. She picks up a clean towel and
cleans the wound. The creature looks at her, longingly.

Lovingly.

The song ends. Elisa starts picking up her stuff.

She signs, "I have to go." The Amphibian Man looks sad. She
signs, "I'll come back."

She is picking up her things when the DOOR begins to OPEN.
She takes her stuff and hides.

Strickland ENTERS. Elisa watches him go over to the pool,
staring down the creature. Then he holds up his fingers.

Elisa can't hear what he's saying, he's speaking in a low
voice to the creature. He cattleprods it- makes it go wild,
CHARGING at the side of the pool. Then he beats it with the
cattleprod- using it as a baton.

Strickland steps back, watching, impervious. He pulls out a
gun and points it at the creature. But doesn't fire. He
laughs at the creature's obvious distress.

Elisa's horrified to realize she left one of the BOILED EGGS
out. It's inches from Strickland's foot.

She can barely breathe.

The DOOR opens. Dr. Hoffstetler enters with the GENERALS.

STRICKLAND
Bring it out to the plinth.

One of the Generals kicks the egg. HOFFSTETLER follows it
with his eyes: "What is this?" He picks it up. Curious.

ELISA hides.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR "B" - SAME

ZELDA pushes her cart down the corridor. Sees Elisa's
abandoned.

Looks around.

ZELDA
Elisa?

CUT TO:

INT. LAB - SAME

Technicians hover, chain the creature onto a CONCRETE RAISED
PEDESTAL. Dr. Hoffstetler supervises.

GENERAL HOYT
Good God.

GENERAL STRAUB
(matter of fact)
Bigger than I pictured.

STRICKLAND
Isn't it?

The chains are tightened by three WINCH motors.

Elisa watches from her hiding place.

GENERAL STRAUB
And it can breathe outside the
water for how long?

STRICKLAND shows him a CHRONOMETER. Ticking.

STRICKLAND
Thirty minute intervals. It's been
out now oh, about... twenty eight
minutes- so we should start to see
the effects.

They wait. The creature suffers.

GENERAL STRAUB
How are you holding up in glorious
Pennsylvania, Strickland?

Beat.

STRICKLAND
It's a godforsaken backwater dump,
General, but I stomach it for God
and country.

They all laugh.

The creature starts breathing heavily. Goes into spasms.

GENERAL HOYT
I was hoping to play a little golf
while I was in town, but no such
luck. You couldn't have arranged
warm weather for us, Strickland?

STRICKLAND
Probably saved my own life, sir...
You would've killed me on that golf
course...

The General snickers.

GENERAL HOYT
You got that right.

The creature starts to wail.

HOFFSTETLER
Sir. I would advise-

STRICKLAND
(cuts him off)
There, you can see, we're starting
to challenge its system's
threshold...

GENERAL STRAUB
Mmm hmm.

They watch as the creature struggles to breathe.

HOFFSTETLER
Put him back in, sir?

STRICKLAND
Not yet. Let us go over the limit
for once, Hoffstetler.

The creature starts convulsing. Elisa steps out from behind
the monitors, ready to act. Hoffstetler sees her. His eyes
stop her.

HOFFSTETLER
Sir, it's not advisable-- its
pulmonary system is already--

Strickland waits: looks at the chronometer.

STRICKLAND
A minute more.

He looks right at the creature, who's gasping, in agony. The
second hand on the chronometer crosses the minute mark.

The creature faints and releases a large pool of blue urine
on the slab.

Elisa, watching, is in agony, barely able to restrain
herself.

HOFFSTETLER
Sir?

Strickland returns his attention to Hoffstetler- looks at the
stopwatch and nods: "now."

The techs rush around to get the creature back into the tank.

Elisa exits.

INT. CORRIDOR "B"

ZELDA

What the fuck you think you were
doing??

Zelda is frantic. Grabs Elisa by the arm. Pulls her away.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - SAME

ZELDA

Are you out of your mind?
(beat)
You can't be going in there, you
hear me? I cannot lose my job. God
knows Brewster can't support us...

Elisa cannot stop fretting. She holds, and then releases, a
silent scream. She looks around with utter impotence.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

I am not covering for you, you
hear! I see you in there again.
I'll tell- I swear.

STRICKLAND (PRELAP)

I wanted you to see it for
yourselves before we proceed.

INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - SAME

GENERAL HOYT

What's the next step?

Hoffstetler hands folders to all of them.

HOFFSTETLER

I believe we can harvest more
tissue and ready some tests-

STRICKLAND

To learn how the thing breathes,
Sir- there's a thick joint
cartilage separating the primary
and secondary lungs. The X-rays are
inconclusive...

GENERAL HOYT

And?

STRICKLAND

The next step is really
vivisection.

HOFFSTETLER

I disagree.

STRICKLAND

Scientists- sometimes they are like
artists: falling in love with their
playthings.

(beat)

To learn what we need, Sir- We have
to kill it.

Hoffstetler pales.

GENERAL HOYT

This is not a petting zoo. Crack
the damn thing open. Learn what you
can and wrap it up.

GENERAL STRAUB

Keep up the good work, Strickland.
We might just have to bring you up
to DC when this is over.

STRICKLAND

That would be tremendous, sir.

Hoffstetler is devastated.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - DAY

Giles pays for a pie at Joe's.

JOE

Key lime pie again?

GILES

I am becoming quite partial to it,
I must say.

JOE

You're English, right?

GILES

And you- are very perceptive, young man.

Joe comes over with a slice of pie.

GILES (CONT'D)

Well, what is this?

JOE

Lemon meringue, try it- on the house.

GILES

Perhaps I will.

Giles allows himself a tiny bit of a flirt. Musters a bite of the terrible pie.

GILES (CONT'D)

To what do we owe the pleasure?

Joe signals to someone in the kitchen, be right there.

JOE

We're celebrating,--

GILES

Pray tell...

JOE

I got engaged today.

Giles tries not to betray his embarrassment.

JOE (CONT'D)

To that little lady over there.

GILES

(smiles, covering)

Well she's... a very lucky girl.

He waves at the girl, keeping up appearances as Joe moves off. Giles spits the pie bite on a napkin.

Elisa enters- frantically signs at Giles.

GILES (CONT'D)

Calm down, my darling, whatever it is, it can't be that--

She signs, he gasps.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND JOE'S - SAME

GILES
Dear god, really?
(then, off Elisa)
You want to- what? "Get him out?"
How?

Elisa takes Giles' arm. Signs.

GILES (CONT'D)
No-

Elisa signs.

GILES (CONT'D)
Because it is breaking the law!
That's why. We're probably breaking
it now- talking about it...

He walks away. She runs in front of him. Signs.

GILES (CONT'D)
Weak? You're weak?

She gestures again. Giles translates.

GILES (CONT'D)
"I have always been weak. I
probably will always be weak. But
he is weaker- and alone... And lost-
"
(beat)
They don't care about him. They
don't see what I see. He is sad.
And in pain. They think he is a
thing. With no emotions."

Realization dawns on Giles.

GILES (CONT'D)
"He is the loneliest thing I've
ever seen. And it needs me. It is
as if all that I've been, all that
I've done brought me here. To help
him or let him fade and die. And I
will not let it die..."

Giles is deeply moved now, but won't budge.

GILES (CONT'D)
Elisa- It is not even human...

Long pause. She trembles in rage as she signs:

GILES (CONT'D)
"And if we don't do something.
Neither are we."

CUT TO:

EXT. CANALS - DAWN

ICE FLOATS down the RIVER.

ICICLES hang on dry tree branches.

SNOW FALLS.

In near-darkness, Giles and Elisa walk the canals under twin umbrellas.

Elisa signs- points at the CINEMA MARQUEE, Visible a couple of blocks away.

GILES
This leads to the sea, yes, but the
ice won't melt for at least two
weeks, Elisa. What would you do
with it in the meantime? Where
would you keep it?

Elisa thinks.

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Elisa scrubs her bathtub clean. She looks at the egg timer,
puts it away in the cupboard under the sink.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

Freezing, Hoffstetler waits. The car arrives. BURLY RUSSIAN
climbs out.

BURLY RUSSIAN
The hopes all fade...

HOFFSTETLER
(already climbing in)
...as the spring recedes. Let's go.

INT. BLACK SEA RUSSIAN RESTAURANT - SAME

MIHALKOV

*Moscow will not support your plan.
too risky. Too soon.*

HOFFSTETLER

*Comrade-- I have found that this
creature- It can communicate. It-
it responds to language- to
music...*

MIHALKOV pulls out a small black steel case and places a
SMALL, CLOCKWORK DRIVEN DEVICE- a "Popper" (we will see it in
action soon).

MIHALKOV

*We are left with two choices,
Dimitri, One: You must delay the
procedure, a week, minimum...*

HOFFSTETLER

That is not possible.

MIHALKOV

Which brings us up to option two.

Takes the "Popper".

MIHALKOV (CONT'D)

*Israeli "Popper" will buy you five
minutes dark. Then-*

Opens the small case. Inside: two syringes full of silvery
liquid.

MIHALKOV (CONT'D)

You inject it with this-

HOFFSTETLER

We kill it. No one learns.

MIHALKOV

We don't- they don't. We win.

INT. CAR - DAY

HOFFSTETLER looks at the syringe. Deep in thought.

BURLY RUSSIAN cracks a fortune cookie and reads it.

BURLY RUSSIAN

"If you work hard. Your future will
change."

HOFFSTETLER- thinking.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

-Elisa, distraught, mops

-Elisa cleans toilets, scrubs dirt off stall doors

-Elisa pushes the laundry basket out to the dock

Next to her: ZELDA pushes hers.

She turns and sees Elisa's lips moving- as if counting.

ZELDA

What is that- What are you doing?

Elisa signals her to be quiet.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

You're counting the steps? Why are
you counting the steps?

(silence)

Elisa? Elisa?!

Beat.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Whatever you're doing, you better
stop--

Waiting for the basket to be unloaded, she sees the two
employees smoking under the BLIND SPOT above. Elisa leaves.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Elisa!

CUT TO:

INT. CINEMA - DAY

THE STORY OF RUTH is playing to an almost empty theatre: two
sleeping BUMS and-

GILES

So I drive down the ramp- at
exactly 05:03 am.

(MORE)

GILES (CONT'D)

(beat)
Shifts are changing- we have five
minutes...

Elisa signs.

GILES (CONT'D)

Yes. There will be towels in the
back.

She signs.

GILES (CONT'D)

Wet towels. Yes. That's what I
meant. Of course.

Mr. Arzoumanian walks up to them.

MR ARZOUMANIAN

(Armenian Accent)
Free poopcorn, eh?
(beat)
I make poopcorn every night. throws
it next day- Nobody wants to see
this film.

He walks away. Elisa hands Giles her ID.

GILES

For the Booth?

She nods.

GILES (CONT'D)

Finally a challenge worthy of my
gifts. It will be my finest hour.
(beat)
I'll need some money for materials.

Elisa gestures.

GILES (CONT'D)

It will be flawless, stop worrying.
Eat your poopcorn.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHNSON & CAAN ILLUSTRATION - DAY

BERNIE

Is it ready?

Giles carries the covered illustration to Bernie.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

You matched the color swatch?

GILES

Matched it precisely.

BERNIE

The clients are already here...

They reach the meeting room. The Art Directors await outside, frantic. They reach for the covered illo. Giles holds it back.

GILES

My check. Or you don't get it.

ART DIRECTOR 1

Bernie- his check- quick!

Bernie hands the check over. They rush in, position the illo on a stand.

ART DIRECTOR 2

After research indicated the change of color, we sampled three groups-

Giles leaves. Bernie turns back into the meeting room. The execs are impressed with the banter.

ART DIRECTOR 3

Based on this survey impressions we generated, this image is the future for your company's most wanted flavors.

They uncover the image. A collective gasp.

The illustration is that of the happy family contemplating a MASSIVE JELL-O PENIS & BALLS- green.

BERNIE

Well, you did ask him to put more of himself into it...

IN THE ELEVATOR

Giles smiles. The doors close. LATIN music starts.

CUT TO:

INT. GILES APARTMENT - DAY

On TV, Carmen Miranda dances with Bananas on her head.

Giles finishes reproducing Elisa's ID card, using his skills as a draftsman.

He holds up the finished ID.

GILES

A perfect match, if I do say so...

Then he glues his own picture and fills the name-

GILES (CONT'D)

Michael Parker. That sound like a good, trustworthy name, does it not?

He fills in date of birth, etc.

GILES (CONT'D)

Age? Shall we say, fifty five?

Elisa looks at him.

GILES (CONT'D)

Fifty six?

Silence.

GILES (CONT'D)

Well, there is no need to be rude, my dear. Fifty seven will do.

CUT TO:

INT. HOFFSTETLER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Hoffstetler opens his secret stash and pulls out the syringe case and a small clock-driven black mechanism.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The SERVICE CARTS are coming out.

INT. CORRIDOR "B" - SAME

Camera tracks them.

ZELDA

Elisa- you better talk to me-
Elisa!

Elisa moves away.

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

Hoffstetler enters into a stall. Opens the metal case w the syringe. Readies it. Puts it back in and into his pocket.

Thinks.

INT. SORTING AREA - SAME

Elisa grabs a laundry cart and fills it with towels. She wets them.

INT. LOADING DOCK - SAME

Elisa uses the broom to push the camera slowly.

INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE

Strickland eats hard candy and signs authorization papers for the surgery. Behind his back- the camera shifts gradually in the loading dock.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Hoffstetler marches towards Strickland.

HOFFSTETLER

We need to delay the procedure.

STRICKLAND

Impossible.

HOFFSTETLER

I need more time.

STRICKLAND

You don't have more time. We're done. You're done. I want it dead, you hear me? Dead. And I want out of here. Surgery goes on. As planned.

He leaves. Hoffstetler sees the camera MOVE on the loading docks.

INT. CORRIDOR "B" - SAME

Hoffstetler pulls out the "popper" and sets it for FIVE minutes. He attaches it magnetically to the FUSE BOX of the corridor. He-

-looks at his watch and syncs it.

He sees Elisa pushing the laundry cart towards the lab.

INT. LOADING DOCK - SAME

Hoffstetler sees the broom and the camera. He gets it.

INT. THE LONG CORRIDOR / HERDING AREA - DAY

End of shift. Everybody is punching the clock. Zelda looks around. Yolanda holds the elevator.

YOLANDA

Zelda- what are you waiting for?

ZELDA sees ELISA's card- checked out- on its slot, but no sign of her anywhere.

ZELDA

Have you seen Elisa?

Yolanda rolls her eyes. The elevator starts beeping. Zelda signals her to "go."

Heads back into the complex.

EXT. HILLSIDE LEADING TO LOADING DOCK - SAME

Amidst a gentle snowstorm, Giles drives the van.

He approaches the building complex.

INT. LAB - SAME

Elisa approaches the holding pool. Quietly. The Amphibian Man is half in, half out.

When it sees her, it retreats. Scared.

She sits by the edge of the pool. She sinks her hand-
-into the water- The creature SWIMS unnervingly fast toward
it. GRABS IT!! Elisa is a bit startled, but then holds the
Creature's hand back. Caresses it.

The Amphibian Man raises its head above water, looking at
Elisa with huge, pained eyes. He hates mankind, but not her.

Hoffstetler quietly enters the room.

She signs with her free hand. "Me" and then "Elisa."

Beat, then-

He signs: "Me." And then: "Elisa."

She signs, "I'm going to help you." It doesn't understand.

It holds her hand and leans forward, like a puppy needing to
be caressed. She softly holds its back and it leans on her.
Closing its eyes.

Its wounds bleed: Red blood tinting the water. Elisa washes
it away and holds him back. Tears roll down her eyes.

Hoffstetler watches, mesmerized and moved. He moves a piece
of equipment- makes a noise.

Elisa turns and spots him: caught. A terrifying moment of
silence.

HOFFSTETLER

No- No- wait-

(looks at his watch)

In two minutes, the lights will go
out. Are you taking it to the
loading area?

Stunned, she nods.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)

Someone will help you there?

She nods.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)

Good. Listen to me- there are
certain things you need to know...

INT. CORRIDOR "B" - SAME

The "popper" counting down.

INT. VAN - SAME

Giles readies his documents and takes the hill towards the loading docks...

... and a guard booth.

INT. LAB - SAME

Hoffstetler helps Elisa get the creature in the cart.

HOFFSTETLER

There are things you need to know:
Its water temperature must stay
between seventy and eighty degrees
at all times. And it should be kept
in seventy-five to eighty-percent
salinity...

Elisa reaches for her notebook.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)

(stopping her)

No. Memorize it. Memorize it all.
And as soon as the lights go out-
meet me at the loading area-

He leaves.

INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - SAME

Strickland turns to the monitors and sees Hoffstetler coming out of the lab. He frowns but-

SECRETARY

Sir, you need to sign this week's
release forms...

-gets distracted.

EXT. SECURITY BOOTH NEXT TO LOADING DOCKS - SAME

It's snowing. Giles' pulls up in the van.

GUARD

This is a restricted entrance, sir.

GILES

Laundry Pick up.

GUARD

You don't look like a laundry guy
to me.

GILES

Well- I should be flattered then-

GUARD

Do you have a clearance pass?

Giles produces his forged ID.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Michael Parker. Is that you?

GILES

I am indeed. Michael Parker. Fifty
seven just as it says right there.
(beat)
Fifty seven.

INT. CORRIDOR / LOADING DOCKS - SAME

Hoffstetler emerges from the corridor and stops below the
security camera.

He looks at his watch: the second hand ticking away.

INT. CORRIDOR "B" - SAME

The "popper" counts down to 9... 8... 7...

INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - SAME

Strickland reviews the monitors. Sees the van next to the
Security Booth. Concerned. He exits into the-

INT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME

-command center.

STRICKLAND

Fleming! Lock down B Corridor!

Fleming heads towards him.

EXT. SECURITY BOOTH NEXT TO LOADING DOCKS - SAME

As the Guard examines the pass- The snow SMUDGES the FAKE ID,
The ink runs.

GUARD
Step out of the vehicle, sir.

GILES
Oh, dear- it was the ink- wasn't
it? It was water-based.

The Guard pulls out his gun.

GUARD
Out of the vehicle. Now.

GILES
But it's snowing.

GUARD
I will not repeat it.

GILES
Before I do- tell me: was it a good-
umm- forgery? Up until the ink ran-
was it? The ID?

GUARD
It was good.

GILES
How good? Average? One of the best
you've ever seen? The very best?

GUARD
Out. Now.

The Guard cocks his gun. Enters the guard shack and picks up
a phone.

INT. CORRIDOR "B" - SAME

3... 2... 1... POP!!! It CLICKS open and emits a strong
discharge. Melts the fuse box with a spark.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME

Lights go off. EMERGENCY RED LIGHTS TURN ON.

Strickland pulls out his gun. Fleming does the same.

They signal the MP's.

INT. CORRIDOR "B" - SAME

Elisa emerges from the lab, pushing the laundry basket.

ZELDA (O.S.)

Elisa!

She freezes, turning to see Zelda in the corridor.

MP (O.S.)

What are you doing here?

Zelda turns. An MP is coming down the corridor toward her. If he looks to his right, he'll see Elisa.

MP (CONT'D)

B is off limits until further notice.

Zelda does not look at Elisa who's still unseen by the MP.

ZELDA

Oh, this is B? I wanted C...

MP

This way, come with me. I'll have to write you up...

The MP escorts Zelda. They pass right by B, leaving Elisa unseen. She hurries off.

EXT. SECURITY BOOTH NEXT TO LOADING DOCKS - SAME

The lights go out. The guard hangs up the phone and opens the driver's door.

GUARD

Out. Now!

Giles turns away to fumble with his seat belt.

GILES

I take great pride in my work.

Suddenly (while Giles is turned around), Hoffstetler pops out from behind and plunges the syringe into the Guard's neck. He falls down and out of sight.

HOFFSTETLER

Go!! Now!!

GILES

Who--

HOFFSTETLER

She's waiting for you at the dock!!

The van enters the complex.

INT. LOADING DOCK - SAME

Elisa and Hoffstetler load the Laundry Cart in the Van. Giles helps.

HOFFSTETLER

Leave! You have one minute before
the power comes back!

GILES

(looks at Elisa)

Who is this? Dear God, Elisa! You
run a nest of spies!!

INT. CORRIDOR "B" - SAME

Strickland, Fleming and the MP's overtake the corridor and
enter -

INT. THE LAB - SAME

The cylinder is empty. Hoffstetler joins them, playing dumb.

HOFFSTETLER

What's going on?

Strickland stands there. The lights come back: The creature
is gone.

EXT. SECURITY BOOTH NEXT TO LOADING DOCKS - SAME

The lights come back as the van speeds away from the complex.

INT. VAN - MOVING - SAME

Amphibian Man looks weakly out at the lights of the city,
cradled in Elisa's arms. It's gasping for air.

Giles drives like a bat out of hell.

EXT. PITTSBURGH STREET - SAME

The van stops. Morning traffic has just started. A NEWSPAPER VAN, a MILK TRUCK, etc. Only a few people out on the street.

EXT. ARCADE CINEMA AND TENEMENT BUILDING - DAY

Elisa and Giles manoeuvre the Creature into the trash dumbwaiter and then up- up- into-

INT. ELISA'S BATHROOM - SAME

Elisa pours SALT into the tub, checking the temperature.

Giles helps her to slowly put the Creature into the waiting, drawn bath.

The Creature breathes easier once it's in the water.

GILES

When in disgrace with fortune and
men's eyes
I all alone beweepe my outcast
state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my
bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my
fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in
hope,
Featured like him, like him with
friends possessed...

Elisa smiles up at Giles. Sits by the side of the Amphibian Man.

GILES (CONT'D)

You're welcome, my dear.

Elisa caresses the creature's back and notices many "double fanged" scars.

She FLASHBACKS to:

THE CATTLE PROD

THE DROP OF BLOOD IN THE SINK.

She helps the creature into the water.

STRICKLAND (PRELAP)

How the fuck could this happen?

INT. CORRIDOR "B" - SAME

Strickland examines the fuse box. Fleming produces the "Popper." Strickland looks at it.

FLEMING

A "Popper," Israeli made.

STRICKLAND

The Russians.

FLEMING

(nodding)

They're suckers for Israeli gadgets. Hate the Jews, can't get enough of their stuff...

STRICKLAND

What'd they leave behind in the way of evidence?

FLEMING

Vehicle track marks, sir. We are analyzing the treads as we speak.

(beat)

My men are, at this moment, poring over surveillance tapes, looking for any--

STRICKLAND

I want to see them.

FLEMING

I assure you, my men are more than--

STRICKLAND

I want to see them myself. All of them.

FLEMING

There are hundreds of hours of--

STRICKLAND

Just get me the goddamn tapes!

SALLY (O.S.)

Mr. Strickland, sir?

Strickland's secretary, SALLY, rushes toward them.

SALLY (CONT'D)

I have the generals.

Strickland's expression sours.

GENERAL HOYT (V.O.)
Strickland!

INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE

Strickland sits hunched in front of the bank of monitors as the generals berate him.

GENERAL HOYT (V.O.)
This is a fuck up of major proportions!

GENERAL STRAUB (V.O.)
You had one job!

STRICKLAND
We are doing everything we can to--

GENERAL STRAUB (V.O.)
You damn well better be!

GENERAL HOYT (V.O.)
If this thing falls into Russian hands, forget Pittsburgh, you will never see the outside of a latrine again, do you understand me?

STRICKLAND
Yes, sir.

Strickland morosely picks at his soiled bandages.

CUT TO:

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Inside the bathroom, Giles sketches Elisa, asleep leaning against the tub, holding the creature's hand.

He looks at his watch, puts down his pad, gently shakes Elisa.

GILES
Wake up, my darling. Time to go to work. Keep up appearances.

She looks over at the Creature, signs.

GILES (CONT'D)
He seems fine. A little subdued perhaps...
(MORE)

GILES (CONT'D)

then again, I don't know him in his natural habitat, he may never have been the life of the party.

She signs.

GILES (CONT'D)

Of course, I'll stay here the whole time and... well, goodness knows what we'll do. Does he enjoy a good story?

(then, off Elisa)

Music, ah, yes, of course... perhaps something to soothe the nerves -- does he have nerves?

She kisses him.

GILES (CONT'D)

Do be careful, my dear.

Giles keeps drawing.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Elisa enters to find that each worker now has to be "wanded" with a giant, blinking wand, then step into a box, like a clunky, oversized version of the thing at the airport, and wait for some kind of laser to go up and down their bodies.

At the punch in, a Security Guard issues new clearance cards.

Elisa joins Zelda in line. MP's process workers finishing their shifts.

Some workers are being pulled off to one side and taken through a DOOR. No one's coming out.

ZELDA looks at Elisa.

ZELDA

That's good, you keep that up.

Elisa signs, what?

ZELDA (CONT'D)

(sotto)

Looking like you don't know shit. Lord help me if they ask me if I do. I am not a good liar-- except to Brewster. Takes a lot of lies to keep a marriage going...

LOVER'S SERENADE by Glenn Miller starts in the soundtrack.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Amphibian Man awakens, looks around, and rises from the tub, stepping gingerly out into the room.

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Giles is asleep on the sofa as the Amphibian Man creeps in from the bathroom, dripping.

Amphibian Man walks past Giles, staring at him as he goes. Then his eye lands on the sketch Giles was working on: more Jell-O. Amphibian Man examines it before moving on.

As he's walking, the lights from the cinema below illuminate his feet. He stares down at them, moving in the lights, mesmerized. Then he leans down to the floor to LISTEN.

INT. CORRIDOR - APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

The Creature comes out into the narrow corridor.

It walks it and exits onto-

EXT. FIRESCAPE LADDER - NIGHT

It's snowing. The creature looks at the city- at the neon lights- tries to trap some snowflakes.

A couple of ambulances go by. The colored lights illuminate the Creature.

Its hand is now GLUED to the metal railing (like a wet tongue on a cold post in winter) and, as he tries to unstick it, the other one gets stuck. Its freezing. The Creature yanks. Goes a bit crazy and squeals!!

Its hands are torn. In pain, it retreats into the corridor.

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Amphibian Man enters the kitchen. Smells food. Sees a pie box, reaches inside, picks up the pie, takes a bite. Spits it out, drops the pie.

He looks along the counter-top, sees a box of crackers, picks it up, shakes it, sniffs, sets it down.

He gets to the refrigerator, struggles with how to open it, finally figures out the handle and opens it to see... a plate of bloody raw mackerel!

Ravenous, he scarfs down the mackerel. Fish guts run down his chin. Still hungry, he surveys the rest of the refrigerator. Finds the eggs. Takes one out, licks it, takes a bite. It cracks and he sucks in all he can. Eats the rest of the eggs.

He opens the freezer, finds FROZEN STEAKS. Takes them out. He examines one, KNOCKS it against the counter, takes a bite of it with the paper on. It's frozen but okay. He jumps on the counter and eats it.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Strickland watches a surveillance tape. He's got a stack of tapes as tall as he is that he has watched and an equal stack left to watch. He writes numbers: 4:58 AM.

4:59 AM

5:03 AM

Barely anything happens, but his eyes never leave the tape.

STRICKLAND (PRELAP)
It all took less than twenty
minutes...

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Strickland talks to Fleming in front of the main window in the command center.

STRICKLAND
I want to concentrate on the tapes
between 4:55 and 5:15. I'll need
the files on the entire tech team-
the lab team and everyone in
security detail.

Behind the glass, in the corridor: the employees punch out their cards. Amongst them: Zelda and Elisa.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

In my opinion, we are looking at a highly-trained team.

FLEMING

Special forces?

STRICKLAND

Without a doubt.

EXT. ARCADE CINEMA AND TENEMENT BUILDING - DAY

Elisa climbs up the steps of the fire escape ladder. She sees the flesh of the fish on the railing.

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Elisa enters. Giles rouses himself from the couch.

GILES

Oh, my dear, home already, is it that late?

She takes off her coat.

GILES (CONT'D)

I stayed awake as long as I could but, well I'm not a young man, you know.

She signs.

GILES (CONT'D)

It ate everything in your kitchen-even that terrible pie...

(beat)

Clear proof that it is not human.

She goes to the bathroom door, gently opens it, enters the

BATHROOM

Inside, the Amphibian Man, in the tub, opens his eyes.

She enters, kneels by the tub. She reaches out, touches his face. He licks her hand affectionately.

GILES (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Will you want breakfast? I have some spaghetti left...

Elisa rises, goes to the door and gently closes it.

INT. ELISA'S BATHROOM - DAY

Elisa comes back to the tub. She kneels down, looks at the creature. She reaches out, touches its face. It touches her. Water drips down her shirt from its hand. The creature stares at where the shirt now clings to her breast. She looks down at it, blushes. It reaches out to touch her. Embarrassed, she gets up, gets a towel and folds it into a "pillow," lies down next to the tub, taking the creature's hand. They close their eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alarm clock buzzes: 9:45 PM.

Elisa awakens in the bathroom. The Amphibian Man is looking at her.

She smiles.

She touches the water. It's cold. Opens the faucet. The Amphibian Man watches attentively at the operation.

She holds his hand. He holds her. She shows him how to open or close it.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Elisa, alone on the bus. She smiles. Touches her hand, where the creature touched her.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Giles touches the temperature in the bathtub. He uses a thermometer. Sits on a small chair by the tub.

He sketches the fish man.

GILES

We're both relics, it seems.

The creature looks at him.

GILES (CONT'D)

When I was a kid- My father and I-
we saw a turtle in the middle of
the road.

(MORE)

GILES (CONT'D)

He picked it up- he was afraid for it. We drove it to a pond about a mile away. A nice pond. And we placed it by a camphor tree. "It's gonna live happily here" my father said." And we left. But that night I realized what we've done- We had decided for it. We had no idea where it lived or what it was doing in the middle of the road. Was it searching for its young? Coming or going?

(beat)

Where were you going, when they picked you up, I wonder?

The creature stares blankly.

INT. LONG CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Elisa stands in line to punch the clock- she can see Strickland in the Command CENTER. But he's not watching her this time, he's glued to the screen in front of him.

INT. COMMAND CENTRE - NIGHT

Strickland, watching, numb with boredom, finally sees something on the tape -- Hoffstetler.

He freezes on Hoffstetler. He writes down the time: 5:08 am.

Rewinds all tapes to that time.

The camera on the dock moves. There is a reflection in a window pane in an office. You can see the shape of the person moving the camera: a blur.

A clue.

He toggles between two moments on the same camera: Sees that someone moved it. Clearly

EXT. LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

Strickland, with Fleming, notices a couple of WORKERS smoking under the camera, goes over to them.

STRICKLAND

You.

They hurriedly stub out their cigarettes.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
You smoke out here. Because the
camera doesn't catch it.

Worker one gives worker two a look.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
Do you move it?

One of them reluctantly nods.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
Do you always meet at the same
time?

WORKER
(nods)
End of lunch break.

Strickland thinks.

STRICKLAND
I want the names of every person
who comes out here to smoke, every
person who knows about this place.

WORKER
I don't--

STRICKLAND
Hoffstetler. Doctor Hoffstetler-
has he ever joined you?

Confused looks- "Who?"

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
You will write the name of every
person you've ever seen smoking
here-
(to Fleming)
-and then each of those people will
write the names of every person
they've seen, understand?

WORKER
Are we gonna get in trouble?

STRICKLAND
Not unless you've stolen property
from the United States government.

He stalks off, followed by Fleming.

WORKER

Does he mean like... paper clips
and stuff?

INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Strickland shows Fleming the freeze frame with the reflection
on it.

STRICKLAND

Send the image to the photographic
department. See if they can have it
blown up.

Outside, Elisa empties a garbage can. They don't even see
her.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

And Hoffstetler, I want you to
shadow him, day and night and
report directly to me.

EXT. PARK BENCH - NIGHT

HOFFSTETLER is not even sitting on the bench. He awaits a
car. Climbs immediately inside.

INT. CAR - SAME

They drive in silence. Then-

HOFFSTETLER

*You should've turned right- Where
are we going?*

BURLY RUSSIAN

Today we meet somewhere else.

INT. OFFICE RUSSIAN EMBASSY - NIGHT

MIHALKOV waits in a large, wood-panelled office, surrounded
by phones (one of them red).

Hoffstetler sits. Burly stands by.

HOFFSTETLER

*Why are we here? When is my
extraction?*

MIHALKOV

*First things first... you are sure
the asset was destroyed?*

HOFFSTETLER

The-- yes--

MIHALKOV

*Because that is not what is heard-
how do you say? Through the
vineyard...*

HOFFSTETLER

*The Grapevine. It's dead. If you
hear otherwise it is because the
Americans want to hide it.*

MIHALKOV

Hide it?

HOFFSTETLER

*Out of shame. Now when will you get
me out of here? They are beside
themselves and it cannot be long
before they, stupid as they are,
become aware.*

Long silence. A fly goes by. Finally Mihalkov nods, unclear if he's convinced.

MIHALKOV

We will let you know.

(shrugs)

*The paperwork alone- You have no
idea...*

CUT TO:

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Fish man walks past a sleeping Giles and opens the fridge:
empty.

He closes it and waits.

Opens it again: empty still.

INT. CORRIDOR - APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Fish Man steps out into the hallway.

He sniffs more as he moves toward Giles' door. He stops at the door, inhales deeply.

INT. GILES APARTMENT - NIGHT

Amphibian Man enters timidly. He sees the drawings of himself, stares at them. He licks the paper, takes a bite. Spits it out. He catches sight of himself in a mirror and comes closer, staring, fascinated with how he moves and the image moves. He reaches out to touch it. Then he licks it.

He looks over at the TV where GENE KELLY is dancing. He goes over to it, mesmerized by the music. He projects his mouth and sucks the TV screen, like a bottom-cleaning fish would do with a fish tank glass wall.

He hears a HISS. He disengages and turns, sees a pissed-off tabby baring its fangs, hair standing on end. Nearby, a Siamese rubs itself on a carpeted post and a giant grey cat snoozes on top of the couch. Amphibian Man stares at the cats.

One of them approaches the creature.

They challenge each other. Hiss and fluff- hair and scales.

Quickly. He looks around: There's a lot of cats. More food.

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - SA

Giles awakes and he goes to his apartment. There-

INT. GILES APARTMENT - SAME

Amphibian Man has one of the cats, the skinny Siamese one, between his teeth.

The Creature's paws and face are covered in blood.

Shocked- horrified, Giles tries to stop the Creature.

The Amphibian Man lunges.

Nothing appears to have happened. But then, blood starts trickling from a deep cut in Giles' arm.

GILES

Oh-

He examines the cut: a long gash along his forearm. Blood pours freely from it.

CUT TO:

INT. EMPLOYEES CAFETERIA - DAY

Elisa and Zelda are eating alone.

Hoffstetler joins them with his tray. The conversation is maintained sotto-

HOFFSTETLER
They're watching me- don't look-

He discreetly signals FLEMING- monitoring in the B.G.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)
When will you release him?

She signs.

ZELDA
When the ice clears in the canals.

Hoffstetler holds Elisa's hand.

HOFFSTETLER
Is it well?

She nods. He sighs.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)
Is he eating regularly?

CAFETERIA EMPLOYEE
Elisa!! You have a phone call!!

Elisa gets up and heads to the payphone.

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - DAY

She finds Giles there, bleeding from the wound.

GILES
He didn't mean to, darling, he was
just hungry.

Elisa's eyes widen in horror- there's a pool of blood under Giles' feet.

GILES (CONT'D)

He's scared. He ran out... go after him.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Elisa looks down the hallway, empty.

THE FIRESCAPE LADDER

Empty.

OUTSIDE

She looks first one way, then another down the street. Behind her, she can hear the MOVIE from the CINEMA.

She sees the back door- open.

INT. CINEMA - DAY

Elisa enters. It's dark. THE STORY OF RUTH plays on the empty theatre. She looks out over the seats. No one. No patrons.

Save for one.

She goes down to where Amphibian Man cowers, hiding, like a dog that's been bad. Wheezing.

She reaches out, touches him. He looks up, grateful. Mercy.

He wheezes. He's beginning to have trouble breathing. She takes his hand. They go back

UPSTAIRS

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - DAY

The Creature approaches Giles- Mortified.

It practically crawls. It retracts its claws and covers its head and then holds Giles' head. Leans on him- tenderly. Giles, eyes still full of tears, touches the creature's arm, forgiving.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Elisa gets Fish Man settled back in the tub where he can breathe.

He leaves a HANDFUL of scales in her hand.

Worried, she looks at the Creature. He looks weak.

She checks his pulse.

She touches his heart.

Her hand lingers. He reaches out, touches her breast.

He "blushes," changing colors.

He touches her neck- her twin scars.

Flustered, she gets up.

LATER

Elisa is alone in her bedroom. It's dark but she's awake, wired.

Next to her bed: the egg timer.

She gets up, disrobes, heads for the

BATHROOM

She pulls the curtain back on the bathtub. Amphibian Man opens his eyes. She gets in, pulls the curtain shut.

They make love.

CUT TO:

INT. LONG CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Elisa and Zelda mop.

ZELDA
Why you smiling, girl?

Elisa tries to suppress her smile.

ZELDA (CONT'D)
Stop looking like that.

Elsa signs, like what?

ZELDA (CONT'D)
Like you got a secret. These folks don't like secrets. Leastways ones that aren't theirs.

MP (O.S.)
You two. Come with me.

They look up to see the MP beckoning at the end of the hall.

ZELDA
(*sotto* as they follow)
Whatever you do, no more smiling.

INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Strickland is tired. He looks it. This is clearly routine. He rubs his eyes and almost yawns as he speaks-

STRICKLAND
If you know something about what transpired here that night, if you saw anything out of the ordinary, it is your obligation to report it. Any detail- no matter how small or trivial...

Silence.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
Trivial means unimportant.

ZELDA
I didn't see nothing out of the ordinary, no- Or trivial.

She looks to Elisa who's saying nothing.

ZELDA (CONT'D)
Neither did she.

STRICKLAND
Hoffstetler- Dr. Hoffstetler- did either of you see him coming in or out of the lab?

ZELDA
Well, he works there- doesn't he?

STRICKLAND
I mean in a different way- doing something-

Elisa signs.

ZELDA
(translates)
Trivial?

He looks at Elisa who stares back at him. Her imperturbability mocks him.

STRICKLAND

So- did you see anything?

He pushes pen and paper to her. She shakes her head: "no." and pushes the paper back.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

(mockingly)

Course you didn't... What am I thinking?

Guffaws. Beat.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Here I am now- interviewing the fucking help-

(beat)

You can go- Just get out of my office.

Elisa fumes quietly and then signs violently.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

What did she say?

She is clearly saying "Fuck you."

ZELDA

I didn't catch it.

Elisa nudges Zelda and signs again- even angrier.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

She said "Thank you."

Elisa looks at Zelda angrily- goes for the pen and paper. Zelda gets her up and out.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Thank you, sir-

Strickland watches them leave. Something's bothering him. He looks down at his bloody bandage, unwraps his finger: it's starting to turn black.

INT. STRICKLAND'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Strickland, grim, watches ELAINE vacuum the house.

ELAINE

I was thinking now that we're
settled maybe we could get the kids
a p-u-p-p-y.

TAMMY, playing with her Barbies- snaps-

TAMMY

We can spell, Mom.

ELAINE

Wouldn't that be sweet?

STRICKLAND looks like he could kill himself.

STRICKLAND

Puppy becomes a dog.

ELAINE

Well, yes...

STRICKLAND

Dog's a wild animal. We
"domesticated" the damn things--

ELAINE

Language. Little pitchers have big
ears...

STRICKLAND

Thousands of years ago, but every
year, without fail, someone's "best
friend" -- kills a person, just
rips their throat out.

ELAINE

Robert, the children!

STRICKLAND

And you can't know which one it
will be. Rover, Spot, Riley...
Snakes in the grass. You think they
understand you, you think they
care? They'll eat your hand as soon
as they'll take a shit in your
yard.

ELAINE

Robert!

The PHONE RINGS. Elaine turns off the vacuum cleaner.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

Take that off the hook, Tammy.

STRICKLAND

No!

He strides toward the

KITCHEN

He snatches up the phone.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Hello?

ELAINE (O.S.)

During dinner?

STRICKLAND

Yes, General, as of this afternoon
we do have a very promising lead...
I'm headed there now. I can brief
you in the morning... I share your
concern, General.

He has to hold his phone a little out from his ear for the
expletive-laced response. He hangs up.

ELAINE (O.S.)

Do you really have a lead, dear?

Strickland vomits into the sink.

ELAINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

What was that, Robert, I couldn't
hear you.

CUT TO:

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Elisa sits astride Amphibian Man in the tub. She makes a
sign, "rain." She points out the window. Amphibian Man tries
to copy it. She smiles. She turns the faucet on, then makes
the sign for "water." He signs back.

The tub's filling up. She moves and some sloshes over onto
the floor. She dumps some salt in from a giant salt box. She
looks around the bathroom, getting an idea. She gets up,
opens the faucets on the sink- takes the transparent shower
curtain lies it on the floor- sealing the cracks- and uses a
towel to stuff the space between the door and the floor.

The water continues to run.

CAMERA GOES BELOW

Into the theatre-

Water pours from above and onto the empty seats and the scattered customers.

CUT BACK:

Elisa is lying on top of/in front of Amphibian Man in the tub as the water level outside the tub comes up even with the top - now the entire BATHROOM is immersed in water. Her eyes are closed, feeling him underneath her and the water on her face.

The light from the projector plays on their bodies.

CUT TO:

INT. GILES APARTMENT - DAY

Giles is finishing a beautiful drawing of the Amphibian Man embracing Elisa. He hears fierce knocking.

He gets up to find out that his floor is covered in water.

He goes to the -

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

-Hallway.

MR. ARZOUMANIAN is knocking on Elisa's door. Arzoumanian uses a copy of the key to open the locks-

MR. ARZOUMANIAN

Elisa!! Elisa!! What is going on??
It is raining in the theater!!

Giles goes to him. Calms him down.

GILES

I'll deal with it. Let me deal with it... I'm sure there's nothing to worry about- broken pipe-

MR. ARZOUMANIAN

You deal with it- make sure it doesn't happen again or no more rental- no apartments.

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - SAME

Water spilled all over. Giles threads carefully.

Knocks on the bathroom door. Noises. The door opens. Water pours out.

GILES

My darling, are you all right?

She nods, beaming. She kisses him on the cheek and heads back toward the bathroom.

He watches her go, wistful, lonely.

EXT. BROWNSTONE BUILDINGS STREET - DAY

HOFFSTETLER, lugging two empty suitcases into his building, hears the PHONE RING inside. Hurriedly, he shoves the suitcases behind the stairs, rushes in.

INT. HOFFSTETLER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Hoffstetler rushes inside, grabs the RINGING PHONE.

MIHALKOV

Extraction in forty-eight hours.

HOFFSTETLER

Understood.

Long silence.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)

Is there something else?

MIHALKOV

*The asset... when you injected it,
how did it react?*

HOFFSTETLER

How did it--

MIHALKOV

*In animals the poison works
instantaneously while for humans
there is a delayed reaction. I just
wondered...*

HOFFSTETLER

It was instant.

MIHALKOV
You're certain.

HOFFSTETLER
Yes.

MIHALKOV
I see.
(then)
Be ready, Dimitri.

He hangs up. Hoffstetler pales. He gets up, goes outside.

EXT. BROWNSTONE BUILDINGS STREET - DAY

Hoffstetler retrieves the suitcases, brings them inside.

Watching from across the street: FLEMING.

CUT TO:

INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - DAY

Strickland sits in front of the bank of monitors / Generals, frayed.

STRICKLAND
I believe I have identified the
mole.

GENERAL HOYT
But the asset.

STRICKLAND
Still in the wind, sir.

GENERAL STRAUB
Our men in Berlin are trying to
decode Russian communications. Of
course, we maintain complete
deniability.

(beat)
Seventy two hours from now- this
will be over. You will be
relocated. And it won't be D.C. I
can assure you that.

(beat)
As far as we're concerned, you
don't exist and this never
happened.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOCKS / CANAL - DAY

Almost no snow. NO ICE in the RIVER. Snow turns into rain.

Icicles MELT on the branches.

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Giles stares out the window watching the rain.

GILES
Rain, not snow, Elisa...

Elisa comes in, back from work.

GILES (CONT'D)
There you are, I was starting to--

She goes straight to the bathroom. Giles follows her. In the
BATHROOM

Elisa looks down on Fish Man. He looks grey, weak. She gets
down on the floor, takes his hand. He barely responds.

GILES (CONT'D)
He's not well, my dear.

She looks up, not wanting to hear it, afraid.

GILES (CONT'D)
It's time.

She knows.

DISSOLVE TO:

EGGS.

Boiling.

Dancing slowly in the water.

INT. KITCHEN, ELISA'S APARTMENT - DAY

She peels a pile of boiled eggs for the AMPHIBIAN MAN. He
looks at them but is not hungry.

She sits down and starts dining on her modest chicken noodle
soup. She looks at him with great longing.

Suddenly, she sings, quietly:

ELISA

You'll never know just how much
I've loved you... You'll never know
just how much I care...

AMPHIBIAN MAN doesn't react, she puts down her spoon and continues- with her impossibly sweet voice:

ELISA (CONT'D)

And if I tried, I still couldn't
hide my love for you... You ought
to know, for haven't I told you
so... A million or more times

She gets up and sings to him- The Walls of the kitchen vanish and she stands, dressed in a sequined gown, surrounded by a musical stage.

ELISA (CONT'D)

You went away and my heart went
with you I speak your name in my
every prayer...

AMPHIBIAN MAN gets up, suddenly sparkling, dreamy and attentive. He moves close to her and gently takes her in his arms.

ELISA (CONT'D)

If there is some other way to prove
That I love you, I swear I don't
know how...

They move close to each other and dance gently, in perfect harmony.

ELISA (CONT'D)

You'll never know if you don't know
now...

At the end of the song / choreography, everything goes back to normal.

They eat in silence.

DOCTOR (PRELAP)

It's dying...

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A DOCTOR examines Strickland's hand. His finger is now black.

DOCTOR

All this is necrotic tissue...

He looks up at Strickland with "sympathetic doctor" face.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

You may need to lose it.

Strickland violently yanks his hand back.

STRICKLAND

Fuck you.

DOCTOR

(taken aback)

I-- I'm very sorry, Mr. Strickland,
but, if we don't amputate, you run
the risk of--

STRICKLAND

Fuck you.

(gets up)

You're not cutting off my finger!

He walks out, cradling all his digits.

INT. ELISA'S BATHROOM - DAY

In the tub, the Fish Man wheezes as if he was on dry land.
Elisa pours water onto him but it doesn't help. Helpless, she
looks out the window at the RAIN beginning to come down
outside.

GILES (PRELAP)

He isn't the freak, you know. We
are...

EXT. ARCADE CINEMA AND TENEMENT BUILDING - ROOF - DAY

GILES (V.O.)

...The world for him is infinite-
fluid- it has no shape...

THE AMPHIBIAN MAN

Is WEAK. He stands on the rooftop, under the rain. SOAKING.

HIS GILLS AND FINS extend.

Elisa watches. Giles approaches.

GILES

Him, he hasn't changed. We are the anomaly. We happened.

Elisa signs.

GILES (CONT'D)

I know.

(beat)

Are you sure?

She nods.

GILES (CONT'D)

She gets up, goes out, he follows her into the

LIVING ROOM

GILES (CONT'D)

"We cannot keep him, or what difference is there between what we do and what they did in the lab?"

He holds her.

GILES (CONT'D)

All right then, tomorrow.

CUT TO:

EXT. BROWNSTONE BUILDINGS STREET - DAY

Bandaged, Strickland waiting inside a car. Next to him, with binoculars: Fleming.

FLEMING

He's been in and out a few times.
Two days ago he bought two suitcases...

Strickland eats a HARD CANDY. Crunches it.

Hands Strickland the binoculars.

FLEMING (CONT'D)

There he is-

Hoffstetler exits his building, carrying a leather suitcase.

STRICKLAND

Follow him.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK BENCH - SAME

Hoffstetler sitting on the bench. The car pulls up.

The BURLY RUSSIAN climbs out. In silence.

HOFFSTETLER gets up, takes a couple of steps. Stops.
Evaluates the immobility of the Burly Russian.

HOFFSTETLER

No password today?

The Burly Russian raises his hand- in it: a gun. He fires twice.

One bullet hits the bench, the other one hits Hoffstetler's cheek- taking a gash of skin off. A third bullet hits his hand, blows off his fingers. A fourth one hits his gut.

Hoffstetler falls down.

The BURLY RUSSIAN comes to finish the job. He raises his gun and-

-his face explodes out. Literally, a quarter of it flies away.

The DRIVER comes out and pulls out a gun, two shots down him.

Hoffstetler turns to see-

STRICKLAND walking rapidly towards him.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)

Strickland, thank God!

STRICKLAND

You son of a bitch!!

He pistol-whips him.

CUT TO:

INT. CONCRETE BLOCK - DAY

Hoffstetler comes to. He is tied to a chair. Blood has pooled by his feet. His shirt is ripped open and the bullet hole in his gut is pouring dark liquids and blood.

He is in intense pain.

STRICKLAND

The car your friends were driving
had Diplomatic plates. Russian
Embassy.

(beat)

What's your name?

HOFFSTETLER

Strickland- you know me- I'm-

STRICKLAND

Don't lie. You don't need to. Not
anymore. You're dying.

(beat)

Now the only question is if you die
with or without pain.

HOFFSTETLER

Please- listen to me.

STRICKLAND

I will. But it depends on what you
want to talk about.

He puts his finger INSIDE Hoffstetlers' gut injury and he fingers it aggressively. Hoffstetler screams in pain. Strickland releases him. Grabs his candy bag and takes one candy.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

This candy. I love it. Sometimes, I
just bite right into it- chew it to
pieces. But when I really like it,
is when I take my time. Then I can
make it last. I can make it last a
really, really long time. I want to
know the names, ranks and location
of the entire strike team.

Hoffstetler laughs weakly.

HOFFSTETLER

The strike team?

STRICKLAND

The ones that took the asset.

Hoffstetler says nothing. Strickland goes for the wound again.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
Names! Ranks! Now!

HOFFSTETLER
(weak)
No names, no ranks, just...

STRICKLAND
What?

HOFFSTETLER
(faint)
Clean.

STRICKLAND
(shaking him)
What, you bastard?!

But it's too late. Hoffstetler is gone.

INT. COMMAND CENTER

Back at command, Strickland, grim, quickly makes his way to his office. Sally intercepts. Hands him an envelope.

SALLY
The lab sent this, sir.

He opens it: The Blow-up:

It is a blurry image, still but he seems to make out a face.

Elisa's?

Impossible.

INT. COMMAND CENTER

Strickland runs through the command center to the check in CLOCK:

TWO CARDS were not checked in: ELISA'S AND ZELDA'S.

Strickland bolts!!!

CUT TO:

EXT. KIND OF CRAPPY ROW HOUSE - DAY

Strickland pulls up outside a house that could use a little TLC. He looks at it, compares to the address in his hand, walks up, rings the bell and KNOCKS.

Zelda comes to the door.

ZELDA
(surprised)
Mr. Strickland, what--

He barges past her into her house. Her husband BREWSTER sits in his Barca-lounger. We get the feeling Brewster does a lot of sitting.

ZELDA (CONT'D)
Can I make you some coffee, sir?

Strickland sits. He and Brewster size each other up.

STRICKLAND
That story about Samson. I'm afraid
I never quite told you how it
ends...

He pulls out his gun.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
Well Zelda... After the Philistines-
torture him and blind him- Samson
asks God for the strength he needs-
and at the last minute- he is
spared. For Samson is a good man
and a just man and the Lord gives
his strength back to him. One last
time. And he holds the columns of
the temple with his powerful arms
and crushes them- and he brings the
whole building down on the
Philistines.
(beat)
He kills them all. He dies. But he
gets every single one of them
motherfuckers.

Cocks the gun.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
Now, do you know what that story
means? For us?
(beat)
(MORE)

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

It means that if I know something
you're not telling me, you will
tell me. Either before or after I
bring this particular temple down
upon our heads.

(beat)

Now, I suggest you simply tell me
what it is you know.

ZELDA

I'm sorry, Mr. Strickland, if I
knew anything about Elisa I would
surely tell you, but--

BREWSTER

Gal done stole that thing right out
the lab! Whatever it is! I hear
them talking and talking and I have
made my mind about it!!

They both look over, a little stunned that he's spoken.

BREWSTER (CONT'D)

Mute girl took it. She's who you
want to interminate.

STRICKLAND

Thank you very much, Mr. Fuller.

BREWSTER

Don't say nothin' of it.

STRICKLAND

I'd like to use your phone if I
might.

Brewster points to the kitchen.

As Strickland heads in, Zelda glares at Brewster. In the

KITCHEN

Strickland picks up the (green) phone, dials.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

This is Strickland. I need backup
and a containment unit to 426
Pine...

CUT TO:

INT. ELISA'S BATHROOM - SAME

Elisa looks into the water, in the tub. The creature moves weakly- emerges to take a better look at her.

She gestures. The creature extends its hand.

Elisa helps it out.

CUT TO:

EXT. CRAPPY ROW HOUSE - NIGHT

It's begun to RAIN. Strickland starts the car, pulls away.

INT. CRAPPY ROW HOUSE - NIGHT

Zelda reaches for the phone. Brewster, faster than you'd think on his feet, slams it down.

ZELDA

I have to tell her--

BREWSTER

You will do no such thing.

He rips the phone off the wall.

ZELDA

He's going after her--

BREWSTER

And she deserves to be gone after,
she broke the law. And she dragged
you into her trouble right along
with her--

ZELDA

She loves him.

BREWSTER

(snorts)

Loves him? Loves him...

Zelda stares at him, hating him and all he isn't. She grabs her coat and goes.

BREWSTER (CONT'D)

Zelda! Zelda! Do not leave this
house--

But she's gone.

EXT. CRAPPY ROW HOUSE - NIGHT

Zelda RUNS from the house in the rain.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Strickland drives toward Elisa's.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Dripping, Zelda runs as fast as she can until she gets to a
PAYPHONE

Inside, she struggles to get the change in, dials.

ZELDA

Elisa, honey, you gotta listen to
me, make a sound in the phone if
you can hear... good. He's coming
for you. You got to go now and take
that thing with you.

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Elisa hangs up the phone.

GILES

What is it?

She signs.

GILES (CONT'D)

Now?

(off Elisa)

Oh my god, what do we-- All right,
first we get the-- No, that's not
it, first... Oh, I am not cut out
for this kind of thing- hurry,
hurry -- get a blanket--

EXT. ARCADE CINEMA AND TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Strickland is already pulling up as -

EXT. ARCADE CINEMA AND TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Round back, Elisa and Giles are carrying Fish Man, wrapped in
a blanket.

EXT. ARCADE CINEMA AND TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Strickland bashes open the door. No one there.

STRICKLAND

Dammit.

He looks out the window, sees the pie van peeling away, heading for the canals.

He runs out.

EXT. ARCADE CINEMA AND TENEMENT BUILDING

Strickland comes running out. Fleming is pulling up, gun in hand, The flashing lights of police cars illuminate the distant streets- rapidly approaching.

STRICKLAND

They're going to the docks! Tell them!

He picks up his cattleprod from the car and runs down the street.

Fast.

EXT. DOCKS / CANAL - NIGHT

Rain. Falling on them: Giles, Elisa and the Amphibian Man.

Elisa takes the Creature to the edge of the water.

The Amphibian Man looks at the waters- murky, dark and cold and then at her: "Is he to go alone?" he seems to ask.

Elisa signs fast- very fast- obviously in great pain.

She turns.

The Amphibian Man lets out a quiet, heart-breaking whimper and moves towards her.

Giles is moved. Deeply moved.

She signs fast and pushes him back.

The creature stands in the rain- streaks of it running down his face and cheeks, like tears- so many tears.

Slowly- deliberately, he signs back at her.

"I need" and then points at her-

Elisa cries openly. Moves to him and places her hands on his chest- gently at first and then, pushing him back, crying- pushing him back-

-towards the water. The Creature looks at her. She turns her back.

The Creature hesitates.

Caught between freedom and her.

STRICKLAND arrives. Distant sirens are heard now.

He shoots twice in the air.

STRICKLAND
Move away from that thing!

Elisa looks at him. Strickland raises his revolver. The Creature reacts at the sight of the cattleprod- afraid and defensive.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
I cannot let him go! Move away from
him or I will shoot.

He cocks the trigger.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
Here we are-
(laughs)
You got me going there for a while-
you fucking bitch! I bet you're not
even a mute!!

He cocks his gun. He points the gun at the Creature, ready to shoot. Elisa sees it. With a silent scream, she throws herself in front of Amphibian Man, taking the bullet in her chest. He grabs her as she falls.

Giles picks up a piece of wood from the floor. Hits Strickland- twice. Strickland loses the gun and the cattleprod.

Goes for the gun.

Strickland shoots again, grazing Amphibian Man on the shoulder, then his cheek. He's about to fire again when--

Giles picks up the cattleprod and shocks Strickland: hard.

Strickland misfires one last time. Turns the gun to Giles.
Holds him at bay.

Distant red and blue lights flash. Strickland gets up- points
it at the Amphibian Man.

CLICK- CLICK- The gun is empty.

The Amphibian Man deploys one of his finger claws and
swiftly, calmly, rips Strickland's throat.

Strickland falls down, bleeding.

PATROL CARS arrive.

The Russian VAN pulls up.

The Creature looks at Giles and then moves towards Elisa.

He embraces her tenderly: their eyes meet.

STRICKLAND is dying.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
I can't see- I can't-

His eye sockets are like small ponds of water.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
My eyes- are full of rain...

His hand touches Giles' shoe.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)
I don't want to go like this- Don't
let me go alone... Don't leave me.

Giles moves his foot. Looks down at him. Walks away.

Giles looks at the Creature, lifting Elisa's inert body from
the ground. He half looks at Giles.

One last time

Who waves him Goodbye and whispers.

GILES
Rough winds do shake the darling
buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too
short a date:
(MORE)

GILES (CONT'D)

Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven
shines,
And too often is his gold
complexion dimm'd...

Policemen pour out of the cars, guns blazing.

The Creature stands on the edge of the pier, holding Elisa.

He jumps into the water and disappears.

Policemen and Russians stand there looking at each other.

Giles moves to the edge of the pier- looks down.

UNDERWATER

Elisa and the Creature sink softly, gracefully.

GILES (V.O.)

And every fair from fair sometimes
declines,
By chance or natures changing
course untrimm'd;
By thy eternal summer shall not
fade...

He kisses her- a kiss so gentle- and then lets her body float
away from him-

-holding her but by the hand. Her head, crowned by a halo of
hair.

And just as he releases her-

-the scars on Elisa's neck open- Revealing gills.

GILES (V.O.)

Nor lose possession of that fair
thou owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st
in his shade...

She opens her eyes and looks at him. Alive.

He embraces her and swims with her-

-Away.

Until they become small, blurry figures and they disappear in
the distance.

Los Angeles, Winter, 2016