

F O R   Y O U R   C O N S I D E R A T I O N

# THE SHAPE OF WATER

**BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY**

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&

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# THE SHAPE OF WATER

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FADE IN:

1

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT / RIVER FOOTAGE - NIGHT

1

We float at the bottom of a river. Surrounded by water.

Fish swim away. Debris floating in the water-

*And, then, a lamp floats by-*

*A coffee pot-*

*A shoe.*

GILES / NARRATOR

If I spoke about it- If I did- what would I tell you, I wonder? Would I tell you about the time...? It happened a long time ago- in the last days of a fair Prince's reign... Or would I tell you about the place? A small city near the coast but far from everything else... Or would I tell you about her? The princess without voice...

(beat)

Or perhaps I would just warn you of the about the truth of these facts and the tale of love and loss and the monster that tried to destroy it all...

*Camera pushes and we see: An entire apartment underwater.*

*Objects and furniture float, gently suspended, defying gravity.*

*Asleep on/above her bed -- half floating, half weighed down: ELISA. Roughly 30, but ageless, with child-like eyes, dark, lush hair and a thin, beautiful mouth slightly curved into a satisfied smile.*

*She slowly settles/drifts down on the mattress below as an early digital alarm clock lazily floats over a night table nearby...*

SUDDENLY: The alarm goes off!

10:45 PM

*-Elisa opens her eyes. Lifts the mask, looks around: No water at all.*

Slowly, she gets up. An ambulance red light briefly illuminates the apartment, its siren fading rapidly.

Barefoot, she heads to the bathroom: We see that light is emanating from her FLOORBOARDS.

Music and dialogue leaks up through the floorboards too.

She readies the bathtub

DIALOGUE  
 "... No God could be pleased with  
 the death of a child at the  
 altar..."

Camera goes through floor into-

1B INT. CINEMA - SAME 1B

-the ornate ceiling- and into-

The cinema: The STORY OF RUTH plays to an-

-almost empty theater- One patron or two are asleep.

**TITLE: THE SHAPE OF WATER.**

1C INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - SAME 1C

Elisa 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 casually winds it.

2 INT. ELISA'S BATHROOM 2

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

DIALOGUE  
 "...Who's the man?"  
 (beat)  
 Mahlon, the Judean artisan..."

The voices from below continue as 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 again and goes to work on herself, gently, slowly-

-but with the timer ticking away-

She's almost there when the timer DINGS.

3

INT. KITCHEN, ELISA'S APARTMENT - SAME

3

A WALL CLOCK- its minute hand slides into position- TACK!  
10:55 PM.

Elisa rips off a leaf from a wall calendar and opens a window, letting the fresh air in. Her hair is wet and she nervously looks at the clock on the wall.

The Calendar leaf back reads: **"Time is but a river flowing from our past."**

CLACK! 11:00 PM

Elisa stares at a WALL OF SHOES. Chooses a GREEN PAIR.

Shines them, quietly- alone- at the table. Puts them on. Another siren goes by.

CLACK! 11:01 PM

She takes out 3 hardboiled eggs- still steaming- out of a pot. Uses the calendar sheet to pack one, plus saltines and a small mustard and a half pickle sandwich on a paper bag.

Two eggs and a half sandwich go onto a small plate.

She undoes the three locks on her door (light & music intensifies still emanating from the floorboards) and-

4

INT. APARTMENT CORRIDOR - NIGHT

4

-exits her apartment. We see the "shadowing" of old brass letters -some are still there- they read "DELIVERIES"

She goes to the door directly across from hers (similar sign: "PROCESSING"). A TV can be heard inside.

She uses a key to let herself in.

5

INT. GILES APARTMENT - NIGHT

5

Full of books. ENTIRELY full of them. Here and there are half-finished illustrations. Large original art from ADVERTISEMENTS. Two cats- SNOWFLAKE and LILLIE stroll lazily.

GILES

(over sirens)

Did the sirens wake you up?

Hard at work at a drawing table- is GILES: late 60's, refined and prim: wool vest, bow tie and tortoiseshell glasses. When he speaks he has a ever-so-slight stutter (which gets worse when he gets nervous).

GILES (CONT'D)

It's a fire. The chocolate factory.  
It rained a little - not enough to  
put it out... Rains are late this  
year... You smell that? Toasted  
cocoa. Tragedy and delight- hand in  
hand...

Giles is coloring an illustration of a happy family around a BRIGHT RED JELL-O MOLD. A sign reads: THE FUTURE IS HERE!!

On his forehead: THREE pairs of eyeglasses. He raises one and lowers another one- grabs a brush. We see a *toupee* resting on top of an acrylic paint box.

Elisa puts the eggs and carrot down on a side table. He caresses/taps her cheek.

GILES (CONT'D)

Oh, Darling child. I'd waste away  
to nothing without you looking  
after me. I am the proverbial  
starving artist am I not?

*Shirley Temple dances on the stairs with Bojangles on "The Little Colonel".*

GILES (CONT'D)

Oh- watch that- Bojangles- the  
stair dance.

He slides his chair to see better.

GILES (CONT'D)

Will you look at that? Very hard to  
do. Cagney did it- different- but  
beautiful- we should watch that one  
day...

Elisa looks at the TV. Does a few tap steps. Sirens go by.

GILES (CONT'D)

Elisa: Wake me up when you come  
back. Breakfast's on me, Child.

He goes back to his painting. Looks in the mirror and smiles.

Paints the smile on the father figure in the ad.

6 INT. APARTMENT CORRIDOR - SAME

6

Both sides of the corridor are blocked by FILM CANS.

Elisa- low heeled shoes in one hand and a paper sandwich bag  
in the other- moves past the cans and reaches a red door.

She exits.

7 EXT. ARCADE CINEMA AND TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

7

She stands at the top of a fire escape. A breeze blows by.  
The city lights glow in the distance.

Looks at her watch: 10:55

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

She takes the steps in Bojangles fashion.

She takes the steps in Bojangles fashion.

The cinema owner, MR. ARZOUMANIAN, is changing the marquee  
lettering for THE STORY OF RUTH, helped by an ASSISTANT.

MR. ARZOUMANIAN

Elisa- when yoo bring the rent-  
stay for the bible moovie, eh?  
Theatre's empty...

A FIRE ENGINE SCREAMS BY- On the horizon- A couple of blocks  
away: the fire: A Glowing SIGN Sputters: ANNELY'S chocolate.  
A few people hurry towards the scene. Elisa crosses the  
street.

7A OMITTED

7A

8 EXT. TV REPAIR SHOP / BUS STOP - NIGHT 8

Elisa looks at a shoe store window. On display on a little rotating platform: a pair of SILVER DANCE shoes. She starts whistling a happy tune.

Elisa dances around- and then sits down on- a bus bench in front of an appliance store.

A CLOCK signals 11:05

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

The bus arrives.

9 INT. CITY BUS - NIGHT 9

Elisa, still whistling. Almost entirely alone, on the bus (except for a FAT GUY snoring) looking out the window with great longing.

POV Industrial landscape passes by- reflections of fire and smoke against blue steel night sky.

She uses her beret and scarf as a pillow.

She closes her eyes.

10 OMITTED 10

10A EXT. OCCAM RD - NIGHT 10A

BUS drives by a huge clock and plaque that reads: OCCAM AEROSPACE RESEARCH CENTER.

The time: 11:55

11 EXT. 1284 OCCAM RD. BUILDING - NIGHT 11

A SQUARE, SQUAT concrete structure. Employees rush towards the building.

ELISA climbs out of the bus- walks in. THRONGS OF WORKERS walk out-

12 OMITTED 12



12A INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT 12A

Elisa in an elevator- goes down, down, down until it opens into:

Her watch: 11:58

13 INT. HERDING AREA - NIGHT 13

WORKERS are moving out. A GOLF CART arrives with MP's

Elisa runs and barely makes it. Yolanda, a Latin girl, protests.

A PUNCH CLOCKS, Standing in line we see ZELDA, a plump African American woman in her 30's. She signals Elisa to get in.

Elisa runs and barely makes it. Yolanda a Latin girl, protests.

YOLANDA

Hey- watch it, Dummy!!

ZELDA

Leave her alone, Woman. I was keeping her place.

YOLANDA

I get reported- I come looking for you and the mute...

ZELDA

You do that, Yolanda. You do that.

Elisa checks in-

CLACK!! 12:00 PM

CUT TO:

14 INT. LOCKER ROOM - SAME 14

Elisa, Zelda and others get dressed in their JANITORIAL and KITCHEN / SERVICE garments.

Change their shoes to low-heeled ones.

All around them: Propaganda posters: "Loose Lips Sink Ships" etc

ZELDA

My feet are killin' me already- We  
ain't started and my feet are  
already killin' me-

15 OMITTED 15

15A INT. LONG CORRIDOR 15A

6 cleaning ladies walk down the corridor in 2 lines of 3.  
They split off and walk into the adjacent labs. Behind them  
Elisa and Zelda follow and continue down the corridor.

16 INT. LONG CORRIDOR (GREEN SCREEN, NOT TRANSLIGHT) 16

ZELDA

I wear 'em low-heeled shoes and it  
hurts just the same. My toes get  
all bunched up- and I feel like  
dyin'. Lord.

Zelda and Elisa push into a long corridor full of  
SLAUGHTERHOUSE-STYLE DOORS, each bearing a number and a  
letter (B-67, C-25, etc).

A GROUP OF SCIENTISTS walks alongside a MAN IN A CANVAS  
ASTRONAUT SUIT. They carry a multitude of canvas DUCTS  
extruding from it.

About a DOZEN MP's guard the corridor.

17 INT. JET ENGINE LAB - SAME 17

Elisa removing a piece of chewing gum. Zelda empties a WASTE  
BASKET.

ZELDA

Made Brewster pigs in a blanket  
tonight before leavin'. Fresh dough-  
the good sausages- thick- and Boy,  
he just ate 'em up.

(beat)

No thank-yous- no yum-yums- not a  
peep, tho- Man is silent as the  
grave. But if farts were flattery,  
honey- he would be Shakespeare-

17A INT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME

17A

Zelda and Elisa empty waste baskets.

ZELDA

Then I get home and I make him  
breakfast. Bacon and eggs and  
buttered toast. I butter the man's  
toast, Elisa. Both sides- As if he  
were a child... And I don't get a  
"Thank You"

18 INT. LAB - SAME

18

Zelda picks up a waste basket and a few pieces of paper-

ZELDA

Hey- Lou- Lou! You boys mind  
throwing the trash in the bin?  
That's what it's for...

A BESPECTACLED MAN (Dr. BOB HOFFSTETLER) measures the  
temperature of the water with a long, industrial thermometer.  
He eyes Zelda.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Yes. That's what it's for... Hard  
to believe, uh?

LOU

Alright. Alright. Sorry Zelda.

Elisa and Zelda mop and sweep around a group of workers  
readying a big Filter/storage TANK of massive proportions  
next to a tiled HOLDING POOL.

Roughly 20 men working at the same time.

Fleming supervises the entire operation.

The WORKERS are making a mess.

Elisa signs Zelda.

ZELDA

I don't know Honey. I don't know  
what they're doing.  
(purposefully loud)  
Mostly making a Goddam mess is what  
I'd say...

Hoffstetler whispers in Fleming's ear.

FLEMING  
 (dabs his nose)  
 Zelda, please- Watch the volume.  
 And, there's no call for the  
 blaspheme, please-

ZELDA  
 Yessir, sorry, Mr. Fleming, Sir-

FLEMING  
 (claps his hands)  
 A moment of your time- Today, we  
 will be receiving a new team and  
 asset here in T-4. This here is Dr.  
 Robert Hoffstetler...

Zelda and Elisa look at each other.

FLEMING (CONT'D)  
 I don't want to bolster - or  
 overstate the matter-  
 (proud laughter)  
 -but this may be the most sensitive  
 asset ever to be housed in this  
 facility...

Hoffstetler looks at Elisa.

Everybody suddenly turns to attention. The sliding steel door  
 opens and MP's pour in-

Fleming thumbs them out. The door slowly slides opens and-

Zelda and Elisa pick up their carts and- as they exit-

-they see a group of SPECIALISTS wheel a MASSIVE STEEL  
 CYLINDER into the room. It's twice the size of an iron lung  
 and more elaborate.

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

In his right hand: an electric CATTLE PROD.

The CYLINDER SHAKES!! SOMETHING LARGE MOVES INSIDE!! IT  
 HOWLS!! A WEBBED HAND slams against the glass!!!

A WEBBED PALM HITS THE GLASS!! Elisa jumps, startled.

HOFFSTETLER  
 (to Fleming)  
 They have to leave-

FLEMING

Yes- yes-

HOFFSTETLER

You: help me move the cylinder into  
the compressor! There!

They exit. Elisa sees a large form moving in the tank as they-  
-close the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

19

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

19

ZELDA

Will you look at this?

Elisa removes dirty towels from the multiple towel racks and  
puts on fresh ones. Zelda points to the urinals.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Look- Some of the best minds in our  
country- peeing all over the floor  
in this here facility.

(beat)

There's pee freckles on the  
ceiling!! How do they get it up  
there?

ZELDA resumes mopping the checkered floor.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Just how big a target do they need,  
you figure? They get enough  
practice that's for sure. My  
Brewster, no one ever called him a  
great mind, even he hits the can  
seventy percent of the time.

Suddenly, Strickland enters. In his hands: the cattle prod  
and a plastic bag of GREEN HARD CANDY. He places them on the  
sink. They start to leave, but -

STRICKLAND

No. No. That's alright... Go on-

He washes his hands with the precision and care of a surgeon  
preparing to operate.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
 You ladies seem to be chatting  
 enjoyably. Girl talk no doubt.  
 Don't mind me.

He makes eye contact with Elisa. Chews on the candy.  
 Methodically.

ELISA looks at the cattle prod.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
 Look but don't touch-  
 (beat)  
 That lovely dingus there is an  
 Alabama Howdy-do...

Strickland goes to the urinal and proceeds to piss- his hands-  
 clenched in a fist, rest on both his hips.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
 Molded grip handle. Low-current,  
 High-voltage electric shock cattle  
 prod- That's for you to know, not  
 to tell.

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

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
 I'm Strickland. Security.

ZELDA  
 Fleming's security.

STRICKLAND  
 Not while I'm here.

On the stressed word, a momentary hitch in his stream.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
 Saw you both at T-4.

ZELDA  
 We're cleared, Sir.

STRICKLAND  
 I know. I checked.  
 (beat)  
 Doesn't it get lonely? The  
 graveyard shift?

ZELDA  
 Gets quiet. That's for sure.

She offers him a clean towel. "NO"

STRICKLAND

Man washes his hands before or  
after *tending to his needs*. That  
tells you a lot about that man.

(beat)

He does it both times? Points to a  
weakness of character...

Picks up the rod. Weirdly beams at the two cleaners.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Ladies? Very pleasant chatting with  
you both.

Elisa notices a small drop of Red blood left behind by the  
cattle prod. It lazily extends on the wet, white surface of  
the sink.

CUT TO:

19A OMITTED 19A

19B INT. "B" CORRIDOR - SAME 19B

SWEET LORRAINE by Jon Erik Kellso starts.

Elisa stands in front of door T-4. She takes out her  
clearance card and is about to use it but stops.

The door opens. It's HOFFSTETLER.

HOFFSTETLER

May I help you?

He removes surgical gloves. She moves back.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)

Oh! You're... not in uniform- Did  
you forget something?- Inside?

She signs: "Excuse me" And walks away.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)

Wait- Wait!

Hoffstetler watches her go

19C INT. BUS - DAWN 19C

Elisa leans her head on the window. Dawn bathes her. The light grows and grows- cleansing and magical.

DISSOLVE TO:

20 EXT. STREETS OF BALTIMORE - EARLY MORNING 20

Busy streets. A VAN Pulls up- Out climb Giles and Elisa.

GILES

Yeah. I'm wearing the hair. Watch out for that car...

Giles straightens his toupee (now on his head) Elisa signs.

GILES (CONT'D)

Does it look good?

They cross the street towards "DIXIE DOUG PIES."

CUT TO:

21 INT. "DIXIE DOUG PIES" DINER - DAY 21

Giles and Elisa stand before a glass and Stainless-steel, PIE VENDING COLUMN/DISPLAY.

GILES

It was eternal, see? Tantalus never even achieved the escape of death. The fruit on the branches was always just out of reach...

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 yeew. Y'all come back, y'heah?

Elisa watches Giles watching the guy, his glances filled with longing.

GILES

...the water in the stream always receded just when he stooped to drink. And that's why we say things like, look at those tantalizing pies-

(Elisa signs)  
(MORE)



GILES (CONT'D)

I don't like the colors either, but they taste alright. Try it. My treat. You want cold milk?

At the COUNTER:

PIE GUY

Welcome to Dixie Doug's, folks. That'll be all?

GILES

For the moment.

PIE GUY

Hey- I've seen you in here before, right?

GILES

Oh, well- I- yes- I've been here. A couple of times as a matter of fact.

PIE GUY

Partial to key lime pie?

GILES

A craving I indulge in. It cannot possibly be good for me. Nothing I like is...

PIE GUY

Oh, no- It's a mighty fine pie, key lime.

GILES

And the color is so vivid!!

PIE GUY

Vivid! Now, there's a word I- there's a word for ya...

GILES

A vivid word! It most certainly is.

Elisa rolls her eyes.

GILES (CONT'D)

And would you be the famous "Dixie Doug" himself?

PIE GUY

Heck, no. Pies are trucked down throughout the country. It's called "franchising", see?

(MORE)

PIE GUY (CONT'D)

There's thirty-two Dixie Doug's all over the country.

He indicates the illuminated glass column that rotates to display the pies. He shrugs.

PIE GUY (CONT'D)

They give us the spinners, the signage- That there's "Pie Boy" our mascot. They tell us what we gotta say- What to wear and such- there's a manual lays it all out. They figured out what people like, scientifically. I don't really talk that way, I'm from Ottawa.

GILES

You had me completely fooled.

(beat)

"That's-a-great-a-pie..." The Little guy is Italian is he?!

PIE GUY

I guess so-

GILES

How clever!

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

PIE GUY

Well, Thank yewww. Y'all come back now, y'heah?

22

EXT. GILES' APARTMENT - DAY

22

They eat their pie and watch NAME THAT PRICE (or any morn/noon game show). Cats beg for pie.

GILES

"Y'all come back" Do you think he meant it? He had noticed me- you heard that yourself.

Elisa rolls her eyes. Stops eating.

GILES (CONT'D)

Well, this pie is rather sordid, but- Don't spit it out- We could try a different flavor next time.

Elisa hands him the half-eaten pie and wipes her green tongue w a napkin.

GILES (CONT'D)

Well- you wanna save it- for later?

Elisa channel-surfs: EARLY CIVIL RIGHTS PROTESTS ON THE NEWS.

He puts the pie away in the fridge- (We see that there are about half a dozen half-eaten multi-colored pie slices) He pours the rest of the milk on a cat's plate.

GILES (CONT'D)

(looks at TV protests)

Dear God- Change that awfulness- I don't want to see all that-

ELISA CHANGES CHANNELS to Betty Grable Dances PRETTY BABY from Coney Island. GILES moves the antenna around until the image is clear. Elisa gives him "thumbs up"

GILES (CONT'D)

There- Now- That's better... Oh, would you look at Betty! To be young and beautiful. If I could take this brain of mine- this heart- and put in it- If I could go back in time, when I was eighteen- I didn't know anything about anything- I- would give myself a bit of advice, I tell you-

He sighs. She signs.

GILES (CONT'D)

I'd say: Take better care of your teeth and fuck. A lot more.

She elbows him.

GILES (CONT'D)

It's very good advice

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

CUT TO:

EGG TIMER in the F.G. In the B.G. Elisa taking care of business in the bathtub

BOILING EGGS

Calendar ripping

SHINING SHOES. PUTTING THEM ON.

24-26A OMITTED

24-26A

26B INT. BUS - SAME

26B

Elisa leans on the seat in front of her on the bus

ZELDA  
(prelap)  
Short people are mean. Mean...

27 INT. LONG CORRIDOR - SAME

27

Zelda empties the WASTE BASKETS in the corridor.

ZELDA  
Short people are mean... mean...  
You listen to me- they have a  
grudge- a big chip on their tiny  
little shoulders. I've never met a  
short man that stays nice all the  
way through, no, Sir- mean little  
backstabbers, all of 'em. Maybe  
it's the air down there, not enough  
oxygen or something.

ELISA, sweeps - Keeping an eye on - T-4.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
My Brewster- he's no Towering Titan-  
and he never raises his chin. He  
gets angry- you get the eyes. But  
the chin stays down...

They hear gunshots. And screams. Muffled voices.

T-4! The door bursts open.

They see FIGURES moving in the distance: urgent, hushed. MP's hurry down the corridor

They see STRICKLAND stagger out - clasping his bleeding hand.  
Blood squirts from it!!

HOFFSTETLER  
Help! He's losing blood! Find  
something for a tourniquet.

Two MP's rush towards Hoffstetler.

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

-HEAVY STEEL DOORS shut the area hermetically.

ZELDA  
Come on. Come on. Let them help  
them. Come on Elisa

28 INT. AUTOMAT / CAFETERIA - NIGHT

28

Elisa and Zelda pick up food from an automat. Yolanda eats on  
a bench nearby.

ZELDA  
Think the Russians broke in? I  
don't think so. And If they did,  
Duane's meatloaf will kill them  
all, honey.

28A BENCHES: They eat. Elisa seasons an egg from her bag.

28A

ZELDA  
It was two shots- you hear'em?

ELISA raises three fingers. Zelda steals tater-tots from  
Elisa's tray and surgically removes the bacon from her own  
meatloaf.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
Alright- Three- and that scream.  
Heavens. Whatever goes on in this  
place...

FLEMING  
(approaching)  
You two. Come with me.

ZELDA  
Now, Mr Fleming, Sir? Any chance we  
might conclude our dinner?

FLEMING

Now. Grab your carts and bring your code cards.

29 INT. LONG CORRIDOR - NIGHT 29

Elisa and Zelda hurry BEHIND Fleming. They drag their trolleys behind with stern efficiency. They stop in front of T-4. Fleming's nose is still runny.

FLEMING

Heavens to Betsy: we're in a pickle. We're in a real pickle now...

He punches their cards into a CLEARANCE READER by the door. It beeps.

The machine clacks and the door opens.

30 INT. LAB - NIGHT 30

FLEMING

You will have exactly twenty minutes, to render this- this lab immaculate and so on and so forth. Do you understand? Twenty minutes.

He dabs his nose and exits. The place is covered in blood. THE CYLINDER is now open attached to a large PUMP...

An operating table is in the center of the room.

ZELDA

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

The cattle prod lies on the floor.

Zelda pours water and starts mopping the blood.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Help me mop it, Hon. 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- TWO SEVERED HUMAN FINGERS.

Zelda picks up one-

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
That a cigar?

-a gold wedding band falls off of it.

It rolls away.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
Aaagh!! Don't touch that!! It's a  
finger!! They're all fingers!!  
(beat)  
I'm gonna call somebody. Stay here,  
Honey. Jesus Lord, fingers.

She leaves- Elisa stays. She looks for the gold band.

She looks inside the cylinder: A drop of water floats in the water.

She sees-

-a figure, crouching in the dark: A slender, sleek AMPHIBIAN MAN. Looking at her. Varied markings seems to glow and outline its body.

Elisa's shocked but not scared.

The bleeding creature makes direct eye contact with her.

Its EYES kick back light, like a coyote's caught in the headlights.

She moves towards it- cautiously. The creature hisses at it and cowers.

The lab door slides open- ZELDA and TWO MP's rush in.

The Amphibian man retreats.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
Where are the fingers?

Elisa offers him the paper bag. HAND ME DOWN MY WALKING CANE by B Goodman starts.

GILES

I do believe you, darling, but are you *sure* it was alive? I once saw a mermaid- in a carnival tent. It was a monkey sewn to the tail of a fish. Looked real to me.

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

GILES (CONT'D)

I apologize. But I have a deadline- You know the Corn Flakes- they were created as a cure for masturbation.

She pushes the plate away. He pushes it back. "Eat"

GILES (CONT'D)

It doesn't work.

Giles looks at a TV GUIDE.

GILES (CONT'D)

Oh, Alice Faye just started...

Elisa switches channels: a scene in a Dance Hall with Alice Faye singing "You'll never know..." She stops eating the cereal.

GILES (CONT'D)

She was a huge star- And one day- one day she just couldn't take the bullshit, the backstabbing, anymore and she just walked away from everything. Just walked away- To live the way she wanted to-

Giles dances a few steps to picks up his drawing- shows it to Elisa.

GILES (CONT'D)

Ta-da! You like it? It's not bad, is it? For being shit? Now, eat, go to bed. Rest- I get paid- we get pie! OK, not pie. I get pie. You get whatever you want. My treat. Wish me luck.

He heads out. Elisa watches intently as Alice Faye croons

A classy AD AGENCY. GILES hands the finished drawing to BERNARD (60's, well-groomed and dressed)



BERNIE  
Green. They want the gelatin to be  
green now.

GILES  
But I was told red.

BERNIE  
New concept. All the new flavors  
are green: Celery, apple, Italian.  
That's the future now. Green.

An ELEGANT SECRETARY gives him a document to sign. Hands him  
a Pantone swatch.

BERNIE (CONT'D)  
And they want them happier- the  
family.

GILES  
Happier? The Father looks like he-  
he just discovered the missionary  
position... And the kids look like  
the have electrodes up their- What  
are they happy about?

BERNIE  
Giles.

GILES  
What are they happy about?

BERNIE  
The future, Giles.  
(shift)  
Sorry, you know how it is. You do  
what they say, then they change  
everything. Too bad- this is nice  
work.

GILES  
It is nice work, isn't it? One of  
my best.

Giles nods, gravely. Bernie moves closer.

BERNIE  
How are you holding up? Are you  
drinking?

GILES  
Not a drop.

BERNIE  
Getting any work since you left  
Klein & Saunders?

GILES  
Since I was asked to leave. By you.

BERNIE  
We're not gonna get into that now.  
I like you. You know I do.

Giles nods.

BERNIE (CONT'D)  
Are you painting? Your own art?

That well dried a long time ago.

GILES  
I want back, Bernie.

BERNIE  
We'll see. Now- do this. The client  
wanted photographs. Photographs's  
what's coming- I sold them on this-  
Can you have it Monday? Green?

- 33 INT. LONG CORRIDOR - NIGHT 33  
Elisa pushes her cart down the corridor. Stops in front of T-4. Hoffstetler and his LAB CREW exit. She takes her lunch bag- opens the door.
- 34 INT. LAB - NIGHT 34  
She enters.  
The lab is quiet. She notices that a side hatch from the cylinder is open towards the holding pool.  
She hears a metallic noise.  
Moves towards the pool  
The water ripples. Chains clink. The three long chain lines emerge from the waterline.  
She sits down on the edge of the pool. She opens her lunch box and peels an egg- slowly.  
She watches the water move, finishes peeling it. She takes a bite.

The Amphibian Man's head emerges from the water.

They stare at each other.

He submerges towards her. The chains grow taut- they are attached to his neck.

Then the creature is revealed in full: beautiful, Majestic. Pure.

She extends her arm: presents another egg to him. It hisses- expanding his gills!!

She recoils. Slowly she places it on the edge of the pool.

She offers the egg, signing "egg" toward it.

The creature grabs the egg with its webbed hand and swims away with it.

She watches his swim.

IN THE CORRIDOR

Zelda is in the corridor.

ZELDA  
Elisa.

Elisa signs.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
What am I doing here? What are you doing here?

Elisa signs

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
Okay. Cleaning. Hey honey, Mr. "I pee with my hands on my hips" wants to see us both. I don't know why. Lord it better be short, because it is late and my feet are killing me.

35

INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - NIGHT

35

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. Behind him: a bank of security monitors.

STRICKLAND

(reads a file)

Zelda D. Fuller. How long have you two known each other, Zelda?

ZELDA

About Ten years, Sir.

STRICKLAND

No siblings, Zelda?

ZELDA

No, Sir...

STRICKLAND

That's not common, is it? For your people?

ZELDA

Momma died after me- After I was born.

STRICKLAND

What does the "D" stand for?

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

ZELDA

My "D"? Delilah, Sir- on account of the bible.

STRICKLAND

Dee-Li-lah. . .

ZELDA

Beg your pardon?

Strickland takes a HARD GREEN CANDY from a plastic bag. Sucks on it.

STRICKLAND

Delilah- she betrays Samson- Lulls him to sleep, cuts his hair- Philistines torture him, humiliate him- burn his eyes out. Turned him into a *thing*-

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

STRICKLAND  
 And you-  
 (reads Elisa's file)  
 Elisa... Elisa Esposito. Doesn't  
 Esposito means "Orphan"?

She nods.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
 (reads file)  
 Our Lady of Sorrows Orphanage in  
 Putnam... Putnam?

ZELDA  
 They found her- by the river- in  
 the water...

STRICKLAND  
 That what they told you, uh?

Elisa nods.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
 It was you that found my fingers?

She nods. Hands him back his ring. Puts it on the other hand.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
 Three hours in surgery - They  
 rebuilt the first phalanx- here-  
 sutured the tendons. Don't know if  
 it's going to take-  
 (beat)  
 There was mustard on them.  
 (beat)  
 A paper bag. Best you could do?

ZELDA  
 It's all we had...  
 (beat)  
 I answer mostly, on account that  
 she can't talk.

Long pause.

STRICKLAND  
 What do you mean she can't talk?

ZELDA  
 She can't.

STRICKLAND  
She can't? Is she deaf?

Elisa signs

ZELDA  
Mute, sir.

STRICKLAND's ears prick up. He is suddenly interested-  
animated.

STRICKLAND  
Mute.  
(points at scars)  
That what did it? Cut your voice  
box?

Elisa signs. Zelda translates:

ZELDA  
She sez: Since she was a baby...

STRICKLAND  
Who would do that to a baby? This  
world is sinful. Wouldn't you say,  
Dee-li-lah  
(beat)  
Well- lemme say this upfront.

He arranges the symmetry of his desk implements.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
You clean that lab. You get out.

Arranges the pens- turns towards Elisa.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
The thing we keep in there, is an  
affront. Do you know what an  
affront is, Zelda?

ZELDA  
Something offensive, Sir.

STRICKLAND  
That's right- That's right- And I  
should know.  
(beat)  
I've dragged that filthy thing- out  
of the river muck in South America  
and all the way here-  
(beat)  
And along the way we didn't get to  
like each other much.

He takes two- three pain pills...

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
 You may think that thing looks human- Stands on two legs, but- we're created in the Lord's image. And you don't think that's what the Lord looks like, do you?

ZELDA  
 I wouldn't know, Sir. What the Lord looks like.

STRICKLAND  
 Well, human, Zelda. He looks like a human. Just like me... Or even you. A little more like me, I guess...

A RED PHONE rings. He picks up.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
 General Hoyt. Thank you for calling me back.

Signals them to leave.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
 I am, Sir- much better. Pain pills, is all- Thank You. Two fingers, yes- but still got my thumb, my trigger and my pussy finger-  
 (laughs)  
 Yes, Sir- That's right- Looking forward to your visit, Sir. Decisions have to be made about the asset, Sir.

From his window he watches as-

-POV: Elisa walks away.

36-37 OMITTED

36-37

38 EXT. STRICKLAND'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DAWN

38

Fleming is pulling in. He drives a bottle green, jet-finned Sedan. Strickland climbs out.

STRICKLAND  
 Pick me up tonight. Nine thirty.

FLEMING

Twenty one hundred and thirty hours-  
yes, Sir.

Strickland gives him a look. Moves away.

The Milk Truck is going by. A UNIFORMED MILKMAN is leaving  
cream and milk at his doorstep.

STRICKLAND

I'll take that.

Strickland picks it up.

39

INT. STRICKLAND'S HOME - EARLY MORNING

39

All around, however, half-open moving cardboard boxes. Noise  
everywhere. Breakfast chatter- the TV is on (A COOKING SHOW).

At the table: Strickland- drinks milk straight from the  
bottle, tense as fuck- his wife ELAINE and their two kids,  
TIMMY, 8 and TAMMY, 6.

She places, in front of him, a product-placement-picture-  
perfect omelette.

STRICKLAND

No pancakes?

TIMMY

Dad? Guess what?

ELAINE

I've gone through half the boxes.  
Can't find the griddle. But I made  
you cheese and broccoli omelette,  
Sweetie, your favorite.

Strickland clumsily- painfully- eats, grunts.

TIMMY

Hey, Dad- Guess what? Guess what?

ELAINE

Are you feeling any better? Does it  
hurt?

STRICKLAND

Just a little. Pills help.

TIMMY

Guess what? We are burying a time  
capsule- at the new school.

(MORE)



TIMMY (CONT'D)

And I wanted to ask you- Do you think we'll all have jet packs, in the future?

STRICKLAND

That's right, Son. The future is bright. You gotta trust in that. This is America.

Grunt. Strickland wolfs down his food. Elaine leans in.

ELAINE

Wash your hands real good sweetie. And come upstairs...

40

LATER

40

Strickland throws the Omelette in the garbage. Takes a pill with his milk. Grabs a cookie. He washes his hand at the sink. Turns off the TV

Strickland climbs the steps.

41

INT. STRICKLAND'S BEDROOM - DAY

41

Elaine closes the curtains.

ELAINE

I kinda like it here. The kids like the lawn. Plus- DC is just half an hour away, isn't it?

He shows her his hands: clean. She smells one and kisses his bandaged fingers. Pulls out a breast and allows the clean hand to touch it.

STRICKLAND

It's still Baltimore, Elaine-

Strickland mounts ELAINE. Rhythmic. Mechanical. Like an athlete training for a competitive sport. His face shows no emotion.

ELAINE

Oh-

He sees her neck - touches it, traces lines

ELAINE (CONT'D)

Richard--

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

STRICKLAND

Shh- Silence. Don't talk. I want you in silence.

ELAINE

Honey- your hand's bleeding- oh-

STRICKLAND

Shh- Shh- in silence.

He interrupts her with a vigorous thrust. In and out like a piston pump. Presses his hand. She looks up at him, confused.

He pushes her face away from him. And pumps harder.

41A INT. LAB - DUSK 41A

Alone, the Amphibian Man tries to reassemble the broken eggshells. Signs: "egg"

42 INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - DUSK 42

Elisa takes 5 hardboiled eggs out of the pot of water.

Elisa readies a portable turntable. Grabs a record from a collection of dozens.

43 OMITTED 43

44 OMITTED 44

45 INT. LAB - SAME 45

Elisa enters the lab. Starts cleaning a mess around the operating table. Hoffstetler is changing in the B.G. Tosses his lab coat into a tall and narrow laundry cart. Leaves, along with the last lab assistant.

Elisa places the eggs by the edge of the pool.

Excitedly she takes some LP records (from a carrier) and a portable player.

The creature emerges slowly from the water. Takes an egg and starts peeling it.

Elisa shows him the record and signs: "record"

He is curious and vigilant. Watches her carefully as she takes the record and plays it: Glenn Miller's LOVER'S SERENADE

His bioluminescent markings light up.

She lifts the needle. Music stops.

The creature reacts as if to magic.

Needle down, music back: Excitement!! Markings light up!!

The creature admires the music, tries to snatch it mid-air.

She smiles-

He smiles back

46 OMITTED 46

47 MONTAGE 47

-Five eggs. Boiling. Dancing slowly in the water.

-Elisa sets all five Boiled Eggs on the edge of the pool.

-The creature emerges. Does the sign for "egg".

-Elisa chooses new records.

-Her locker room is filling up with LP's

-Elisa travels on the bus with more eggs and records.

-Elisa mops- a smile on her face. Zelda watches, concerned.

-Elisa readies her bath- mesmerized by the water.

-Giles watches as Elisa "borrows" extra eggs from his fridge.

-Elisa packs all 7,8,9 eggs in her paper bag.

-Elisa shows a new record to the creature in the cylinder.

-She mops while the music plays

Quietly, Hoffstetler enters the lab just as the song ends:

The Amphibian Man bangs on the glass to ELISA and signs: "play a different record." His markings brighten.

ELISA signs- asking him to "point." The AMPHIBIAN MAN points. Elisa turns the record around. "MOONGLOW" by Benny Goodman plays.

Elisa dances in front of the cylinder.

The AMPHIBIAN MAN swims, delighted!

Elisa walks over and puts one hand up against the glass, slowly, the creature puts a hand up "against" hers. His markings active and color- changing.

Her smile turns wistful. She keeps her hand there. Leans her forehead on the glass.

Hoffstetler watches- a tray of raw fish in his hands- Mesmerized. Moved.

CUT TO:

48 EXT. BROWNSTONE BUILDINGS STREET - DAY 48

HOFFSTETLER Arrives in a YELLOW CAB. Climbs the steps of his building. AN OLD MATRON smokes watches children play outside.

HOFFSTETLER

Good morning Mrs. Peabody, how is the gout?

She signals "So-so"

49 INT. HOFFSTETLER'S APARTMENT - DAY 49

Austere. Impersonal. Hoffstetler lights a cigarette- looks out the window to-

49A EXT. STREET POV - DAY 49A

-the empty street.

49B INT. HOFFSTETLER'S APARTMENT - SAME 49B

-He 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 a set of blueprints.

50 OMITTED 50

51 EXT. SAND PILES - DAY 51

Holding a manila envelope, DR. HOFFSTETLER smokes a cigarette. He is sitting on a concrete block in an industrial distribution centre. Looking at his watch. A Dark SEDAN stops- a BURLY RUSSIAN climbs out of the passenger seat and heads toward him.

BURLY RUSSIAN  
The sparrow nests on the window sill.

HOFFSTETLER  
What?

BURLY RUSSIAN  
The sparrow nests on the window sill.

HOFFSTETLER  
And the eagle takes the prey-

BURLY RUSSIAN  
(in Russian)  
Uhhh. What?

Hoffstetler sighs. Gets up.

HOFFSTETLER  
(in Russian)  
That's the password: "And the Eagle takes the Prey" Let's go.

52 INT. SAND PILES - DAY 52

THE BURLY RUSSIAN enters the car. Hoffstetler is squeezed tight.

53 INT. BLACK SEA RUSSIAN RESTAURANT - DAY 53

THREE RUSSIAN VIOLINISTS, dressed in "authentic" Gipsy garb play Ochi Chernye in a "classy" Russian restaurant.

HOFFSTETLER and BURLY RUSSIAN enter and head for-

54 OMITTED 54

55

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

55

Waiters come in an out of a busy kitchen.

Sitting in front of a HUGE LOBSTER TANK: LEO MIHALKOV, a severe man with slow, deliberate speech (in Russian with subtitles) drinks vodka and smokes.

Hoffstetler & BURLY RUSSIAN enter.

MIHALKOV

"Bob." *How are you?*

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

HOFFSTETLER

*I was sitting like a moron on a concrete block in the middle of nowhere for an hour. I took three taxis to get there. Again.*

(looks at Burly)

*Why can't we just meet here? It's the same restaurant every time!!*

MIHALKOV

*I could change my mind.*

HOFFSTETLER

*But you don't.*

MIHALKOV

*But I could-*  
(pours a drink)  
*So- Tell us, "Bob"-*

HOFFSTETLER

*Dimitri, Comrade- Not "Bob." Who names himself with one syllable?*

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

Hoffstetler hands him the Blueprints.

MIHALKOV

*What is this, Dimitri? Sit- Sit-*

HOFFSTETLER

*Anatomical notes- and- Layout of the laboratory where the asset is being studied. Everything we need for the extraction.*

MIHALKOV

*I will pass it on to the  
directorate.*

Mihalkov opens a bottle of vodka. Pours.

MIHALKOV (CONT'D)

*Distilled four times- arrives by  
diplomatic valise. Minsk. Isn't  
that your hometown?*

HOFFSTETLER

*We must do it as soon as possible-  
(beat)*

*This creature, Mihalkov- I think it  
may be able to communicate.*

MIHALKOV

*Communicate.*

HOFFSTETLER

*With us. I have reason to believe  
it is intelligent. It- it responds  
to language- to music...*

*(beat)*

*Will you please pass that up also?*

MIHALKOV

*I will.*

A WAITER brings three plates of steaming lobster tails and a filet mignon and a pot of butter. The Burly Russian eats.

MIHALKOV (CONT'D)

*Now- eat, Dimitri. They call this  
"Surf-"*

BURLY RUSSIAN

*"...and Turf".*

MIHALKOV

*"Surf and Turf" A feast. They boil  
the lobsters right here. They  
squeak a little but they are so  
soft and sweet.*

KISSING MY BABY GOODBYE by Jon Erik Kellso starts.

55A INT. HERDING AREA - NIGHT 55A

Elisa checks her time card. Strickland- calmly smoking a cigarette- watches her. She sneaks an uncomfortable glance. He smiles. She moves away.

56 OMITTED 56

56A INT. LAUNDRY AREA - NIGHT 56A

ELISA and ZELDA sort the towels, lab coats and dirty linens into thin, tall laundry carts. YOLANDA and 3 OTHERS do as much.

Elisa fills up itemized sheets- tears them up and puts them in the bags.

57 INT. LOADING DOCK - NIGHT 57

-Loading Dock where there is a LAUNDRY TRUCK.

They load the soiled sheets and towels.

Nearby- A couple of African American and Latin workers are smoking. A cafeteria worker (Duane) offers a drag-

DUANE

Hey, Zelda, want a smoke?

ZELDA

That shit's not good for you, Duane.

DUANE

Feels good.

ZELDA

It does, doesn't it?

She looks at Elisa.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

C'mon Elisa, just one.

Elisa shakes her head, looks at a VIDEO CAMERA above them.

DUANE

They can't see us, they push that camera up at break time. With the broom-



Lou points at a dirty broom.

LOU  
This here's a blind spot.

DUANE  
Hey, Elisa, how come you always  
taking all them boiled eggs at the  
cafeteria? Can't nobody eat seven  
eggs a day.

ZELDA  
Mind your own, Duane. Leave her  
alone.

DUANE  
Girl can't speak but she sure can  
eat.

58 INT. LONG CORRIDOR - NIGHT 58  
Elisa pushes her cart down the corridor.

59 INT. LAB - NIGHT 59  
Elisa enters the lab with her cart and equipment. Closes  
behind her- hears a plaintive whimper- not unlike that of a  
whale.

Much to her surprise- The Amphibian Man is on a plinth.  
Chained to a large METAL PLATE ON THE FLOOR. Chains on his  
neck and arms, force him to kneel.

He looks at her. She looks around: Surgical instruments are  
ready. Lights are centered on the creature.

The creature howls in pain- gasping. Elisa drops her lunch  
bag-

-an egg rolls out-

She moves closer- tries to free him when-

CLACK! The DOOR begins to OPEN. She picks up her stuff and  
hides.

Strickland ENTERS. Removes his jacket. Pops a few sticks of  
gum in his mouth. Pulls out the cattle prod.

The creature howls for help. Strickland raises the  
cattleprod.

STRICKLAND

Miss me? I took a candy break.  
This? Is it this that scares you?  
You should be used to it by now...

He shocks the creature.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

There you are again. Making that  
god-awful sound. Is that you  
crying? Is that what it is? You  
hurting? Huh? Or maybe you're  
angry? Yeah. Maybe you'd like to  
get another bite at me.

Elisa watches him go over to the plinth, staring down the  
creature.

The creature's fins "fluff up" and change colors. It hisses.

Strickland sucks his candy and cattleprods it- makes it go  
wild.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

I can't tell- Are you begging?  
'Cause to me it's just the worst  
fucking noise I've ever heard.

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

Strickland picks up the egg. Looks around.

Elisa hides, she can barely breathe.

CUT TO:

60

INT. CORRIDOR "B" - SAME

60

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

Looks around.

ZELDA

Elisa?

HOFFSTETLER goes by in a Golf cart. By his side: a FIVE STAR  
GENERAL, Fleming and a group of MP's and technicians await by  
T-4.

CUT TO:

61

INT. LAB - SAME

61

Strickland walks towards the bank of medical monitors.

Elisa tenses.

The door opens. Hoffstetler et al, enter.

STRICKLAND  
General Hoyt! Welcome, Sir!  
Everything's ready. Good to have  
you here, Sir!

Technicians pour in. Elisa hides.

GENERAL HOYT  
Good God. Is that it?  
(matter of fact)  
Much bigger than I pictured.

STRICKLAND  
Ain't that something? Ugly as sin.  
The natives in the Amazon  
worshipped it-

GENERAL HOYT  
Well- It sure doesn't look like  
much of a God right now, does it?

Strickland takes a pill or two. Hoffstetler Examines the  
creature: BLOOD in his hands.

STRICKLAND  
They were primitives, sir. Tossed  
offerings into the water; flowers,  
fruits, crap like that... Tried to  
stop the oil drill with bows and  
arrows. That didn't end too well.

HOFFSTETLER  
What happened? He's bleeding. You  
cannot keep doing this-

STRICKLAND  
It's an animal, Hoffstetler. Just  
keeping it tame.

Elisa watches from her hiding place.

GENERAL HOYT  
(flips through folder)  
"Oxygen osmosis- dioxide exchange."  
What are we lookin' at here, Son?

HOFFSTETLER

This creature, Sir- I've never seen anything like like it. Ever. It can alternate between two entirely separate breathing mechanisms...

STRICKLAND

Mudskipper can do that.

HOFFSTETLER

You want to put a man in space for days, weeks even, he's going to have to endure conditions the human body just wasn't made for. But this- This means long-term survivability in space. *This gives us an edge against the Soviets.*

GENERAL HOYT

How long can it breathe outside the water?

STRICKLAND shows him a CHRONOMETER. Ticking.

STRICKLAND

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

They wait. The creature suffers.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Reality, is, Sir- We don't know jackshit about this thing-

GENERAL HOYT

Soviets want it- We know that much. Those cockeyed bastards- They send a dog up into space- We get a laugh. But next thing we know- they send a *human* up -- a Ruskie, orbiting our planet, doing God knows what? And then who's laughing? Krushchev. That's who- We let him put a dog in space, he laughs, puts a commie in space, he laughs, puts missiles in Cuba. Have we learned nothing?

STRICKLAND

Give'm a dog, they take Cuba.

GENERAL HOYT  
You got that right.

They laugh. The creature spasms in pain.

HOFFSTETLER  
Sir. I would advise-

They watch as the creature struggles to breathe.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)  
We need to get him back in the  
water--

STRICKLAND  
Let us go over the mark for once,  
See where it takes us.

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

Strickland waits: looks at the chronometer.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
Scientists- they are like artists:  
They fall in love with their  
playthings.

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

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
Now- Over here, Sir- right here-  
you see?  
(mirror signals his  
ribcage)  
The creature has a thick jointed  
cartilage separating the primary  
and secondary lungs- Am I  
explaining this correctly, Bob?

HOFFSTETLER  
(overlapping)  
Yes- but we've been able to get-

STRICKLAND  
It makes the X-rays inconclusive...

HOFFSTETLER  
In principle, yes but, See? This-

STRICKLAND

Sir- If we want to get the edge on the Soviets- and I know we can- we have to vivisect this thing. Take it apart. Learn how it works.

HOFFSTETLER

No- no- That would defeat the purpose-

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

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

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)

Sir? He's passed out- Please.

General Hoyt glances at Strickland, who checks the stopwatch and shrugs.

Relieved, Hoffstetler gives the signal, and the techs rush around the creature. He uses his keys to free it from the collar and manacles.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)

Put him in the tank- The tank. Let him pressurize.

(beat)

General Hoyt, Sir: You cannot- under any circumstance- kill this creature. You cannot-

GENERAL HOYT

Count these with me, Son- there's five of them: That means I can do whatever the hell I want. You wanna plead your case? I'll listen

(beat)

But, end of the day, it is my damn decision.

The three of them leave.

Elisa steps out. Follows them.

62

INT. CORRIDOR "B" (GREEN SCREEN)

62

ZELDA

What were you doing in there?? What were you doing in there??

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

63

INT. LOCKER ROOM - SAME

63

ZELDA

Are you crazy? Are you out of your  
damn mind?

(beat)

I will not lose my job. God knows  
the last time Brewster brought home  
a dollar...

Elisa looks around with utter impotence. She signs.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

If your involved- I'll get blamed!  
I'll get sacked!! Yes- i will be!!

Elisa signs.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Just to be on the safe side. I'm  
black! They don't need any other  
reason-

Elisa walks away- grabs a bucket and a pail.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

So listen to me: I am not covering  
for you, you hear! You shouldn't be  
in there when you shouldn't be in  
there- And that is that.

64

INT. COMMAND CENTER / STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - SAME

64

Elisa enters the command center- grabs a trash bin and  
watches-

-as GENERAL arguing with Strickland and Hoffstetler.

Elisa climbs the steps. Watches-

-reads their lips-

As they move around, the subtitles pop in and out.

STRICKLAND: **Untamed- dangerous-**

STRICKLAND

(complete line)

That thing is untamed- Dangerous-

HOFFSTETLER: **No. We cannot kill it- We cannot-**

STRICKLAND: **Russian infiltration-**

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
 (complete line)  
 Every day we keep it here, we risk  
 Russian infiltration. We should get  
 it over with.

HOFFSTETLER: **No- we must- please-**

HOFFSTETLER  
 No- we must wait- please.

The General thinks, facing the window and then turns and delivers his answer. A beat.

Hoffstetler is upset.

Elisa pretends to pick up trash. Looks up: The General and Strickland go by.

GENERAL HOYT  
 Crack the damn thing open. Learn  
 what you can and close shop here.  
 Give yourself a good pat in the  
 back, Strickland. You've done it.

STRICKLAND  
 Thank you, Sir.

She looks up: Hoffstetler stands alone in the glass office.

64A INT. WATER CYLINDER, CREATURE 64A

The creature floats gently. Blood flows from his side

GILES  
 (prelap)  
 Get him out???

DISSOLVE TO:

65-67 OMITTED 65-67

67A OMITTED 67A

67B OMITTED 67B



|     |                              |     |
|-----|------------------------------|-----|
| 67C | OMITTED                      | 67C |
| 67D | OMITTED                      | 67D |
| 67E | OMITTED                      | 67E |
| 68  | INT. GILES' APARTMENT - DAWN | 68  |

GILES  
 What are you talking about? No- No-  
 Absolutely not.  
 (she signs)  
 Because it is breaking the law!  
 That's why.

Giles is getting dressed- in his best suit. He grooms himself incessantly, checks his elbows for wear. Readjusts the hair.

GILES (CONT'D)  
 We're probably breaking the law  
 right now, just- talking about it.

He walks away. She runs in front of him. Stops him: Signs.  
 Giles translates.

GILES (CONT'D)  
 Alone? What if he's alone? What  
 about it? We're all alone! If I- If  
 I took you to a Chinese restaurant-  
 would you save every crab?  
 (beat)  
 "It's the loneliest thing you've  
 ever seen..." Well there you go-  
 you just said it. It's a thing- A  
 freak-

She signs.

GILES (CONT'D)  
 I understand what you're-

Pushes him. Signs.

GILES (CONT'D)  
 OK, OK, calm down- I'll repeat it-  
 to you.  
 (repeating out loud)  
 "And what am I? I move my mouth -  
 like him- and I make no sound- like  
 him. What does that make me?"  
 (MORE)

GILES (CONT'D)

(beat)

"All that I am, all that I've been-  
ever- brought me here- to him."

(beat)

"Him??" What are you talking about?  
That *thing*? It's a "him" now?

She pushes him and re-signs, violently: "HIM"

GILES (CONT'D)

Hey! Watch it!

(beat)

"The way he looks at me. He doesn't  
know what I lack... Or how I am  
incomplete. He just sees me for  
what I am. As I am. And he is happy  
to see me, every time. Every day."

(beat)

"And now I can either save him now  
or let him die. Never see his eyes,  
see me again. I will not let that  
go..."

He holds her hands.

GILES (CONT'D)

I am leaving- stop talking. This is  
important for me, Elisa- Maybe a  
second chance for me- I have to go-

He picks up the illustration.

GILES (CONT'D)

And when I come back I- We will not  
talk about this. Again. There's  
nothing we can do. What are we,  
Elisa? You and I? Nothing. What can  
we do? Nothing.

(beat)

And- I am sorry. But it is not even  
human.

She trembles in rage as she signs. Subtitled: "If we don't do  
something... Neither are we."

69-72 OMITTED

69-72

72A EXT. AD AGENCY / PARK- DAY

72A

BERNIE

Giles!

GILES  
Hey- I was waiting-

BERNIE  
I know, I'm sorry-

GILES  
We're going in?

BERNIE  
Not right this second- you're  
early.

GILES  
No. It's Monday. You said Monday-

BERNIE  
I know- I know I said that- You  
should've just mailed the art.

GILES  
Why? I wanted to show it to you. To  
the team- In person. It's some of  
my best work-

BERNIE  
This is not a good time. Maybe  
later.

Giles figures it out.

GILES  
Sure. No problem. What time is good  
for you, Bernie?

Bernie removes his eyeglasses. Saddened.

CUT TO:

73

INT. DIXIE DOUG'S PIES - DAY

73

Giles drinks milk on the counter. By his side: his art.

PIE GUY  
You painted that?

He comes to Giles table, carrying a slice of pie. Giles nods.

PIE GUY (CONT'D)  
Wowee- You're good.

GILES

Not as good as a photograph,  
apparently. But it is good, isn't  
it?

PIE GUY

Pfft- I couldn't paint that. Here:  
on me.

Serves him the pie.

GILES

For me?

PIE GUY

It's not key lime- but it's good.

GILES

Thank You.

PIE GUY

Don't mention it. We don't get many  
like you in here. You seem very  
educated. I like talking to you.

GILES

Oh, well- The thing is... That's  
the thing, I really come here for-  
mostly- For the-

PIE GUY

The conversation... And the pie is  
mighty fine, ain't it?

GILES

OH, mmmh- I work alone and my best  
friend is not much of a...  
conversationalist.

An African-American couple with their kid, enters.

PIE GUY

See? That's part of the job here.  
Like being a bartender. You serve  
people pie, listen to their  
problems. Get to know them.

Quickly, before he loses his nerve, Giles reaches out and  
sets his hand on top of one of Pie Guy's hands.

GILES

I would like- to know you. Better.

Pie Guy, beginning to get a glimmer of what's going on, slowly pulls his hand away.

PIE GUY  
What are you doing, Old man?

Giles realizing his mistake, freezes.

GILES  
I- er- you- bought me pie.

PIE GUY  
I bought pie- For everyone. 'cause  
I got engaged last night. To that  
young lady over there.

Points at a YOUNG WAITRESS.

GILES  
I see...

The Pie Guy addresses the African-American family.

PIE GUY  
Hey, no- Not the counter- Just take  
out. You can't sit there. You want  
something, you order, you take it  
out.

MOTHER  
But it's empty... The counter is-

PIE GUY  
All reserved. All day. You don't  
sit down.

The family leaves.

PIE GUY (CONT'D)  
"Y'all come back, Y'hear?"

GILES  
You don't have to talk to them like  
that.

PIE GUY  
You should leave too. And don't  
come back. This is a family  
restaurant.

Giles spits the pie. Starts leaving.

PIE GUY (CONT'D)  
Hey- You left this-

Picks up Giles painting

GILES

No. Keep it. It's perfect for you.

(beat)

I- I never understood why they are so damn happy anyway. So happy about a- *slab* of animal... protein- in- in that shade of green- *that* should come with a warning label..

(beat)

But I guess they smile because that is their future- Your future. Just like your pies- These horrible pies. Turning around in their nice, shiny glass towers- But tasting like ashes in my mouth. Have you ever seen a real key lime pie? It's not green. It's actually beautiful. Who makes these pies?! Who makes them?? What are they- really? Shit. Bright, fake-colored shit. Made by no one. Eaten by no one... You don't even know where they come from... Do you? You don't even know that...

He leaves

PIE GUY

They come from Albany, Faggot.

CUT TO:

74

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - DAY

74

Elisa scrubs her bathtub clean.

A knock on the door.

She opens: it's Giles.

GILES

I have... no one else- you are the only person that I can talk to...

Elisa is moved. Signs "Me, too..."

GILES (CONT'D)

Whatever this thing is... You need it... So- Just tell me what to do.

They embrace.

CUT TO:

75 EXT. SAND PILES - DAWN 75  
 Hoffstetler waits. Smoking.  
 The car arrives.

76 INT. BLACK SEA RUSSIAN RESTAURANT - SAME 76  
 The main room of the restaurant now. Empty.

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

HOFFSTETLER  
*What--*

MIHALKOV  
*There is not enough time.*

HOFFSTETLER  
*But I have told you, they will kill  
 it-- And it is sentient. I am sure  
 of that now. Did you tell them  
 that?*

MIHALKOV  
*I did.*

HOFFSTETLER  
*And?  
 (beat)  
 I can do it. Myself and two  
 operators.*

MIHALKOV  
*No.*

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 (CONT'D)  
*We have only two choices, Dimitri,  
 One: You must delay the procedure,  
 a week, minimum...*

HOFFSTETLER

*That is not possible.*

MIHALKOV

*I understand. Which brings us up to option two.*

Takes the "Popper."

MIHALKOV (CONT'D)

*Israeli "Popper"- you set it next to a fuse box- it will buy you five to ten minutes in the dark: no cameras- no containment doors- Then-*

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

MIHALKOV (CONT'D)

*You inject it with this-*

HOFFSTETLER

*Inject it?*

MIHALKOV

*Kill it. Destroy it- Are you all right?*

HOFFSTETLER

*I came to this country- to learn what I could- as a patriot, yes- but also as a scientist. This creature- It should not be killed. Not by them. Not by us.*

*(beat)*

*There is still so much we can learn-*

He pushes the syringe box towards Mihalkov.

MIHALKOV

*We don't need to learn. We need Americans not to learn. They don't learn, we win.*

Mihalkov pushes the syringe box back.



78

INT. CADILLAC DEALERSHIP - DUSK

78

STRICKLAND is admiring a beautiful Cadi 1962 Coupe: All Fins. Jet tail lights. Sleek metal body.

DEALER

Cadillac DeVille. Best car ever made. V8, 390 CID, clean, crisp like a fresh dollar bill. Climb right in-

STRICKLAND

I am just idling around.

The Dealer (blue suit, blue tie) opens the door using a blue handkerchief.

DEALER

AM/FM stereo sound, Air conditioner, power windows, power breaks, power steering, power seats...

(beat)

All deluxe interior appointment choices. 143 options. The Taj-Mahal on wheels.

STRICKLAND

I'm not sure about the green.

DEALER

Oh, no. Not green, my friend.

(beat)

Teal.

STRICKLAND

Well, Teal looks green to me.

DEALER

But it isn't, see? It's a limited edition. Twelve coats of paint. Polished by hand. All authentic chrome detailing. Four out of five successful men in America drive a Cadillac.

STRICKLAND

That a fact?

DEALER

This here is the future. And you strike me as a man who is heading there.

STRICKLAND

Where?

DEALER

Why- The Future. You are the man of  
the future.

(beat)

You belong in this car.

Strickland climbs in.

CHICA CHICA BOOM starts in the soundtrack.

CUT TO:

|       |  |      |
|-------|--|------|
| 78A   | MONTAGE  | 78A  |
|       | -STRICKLAND drives his brand new car. He smiles. Other Cars honk at him.   |      |
|       | -Drivers give him the "thumbs up"  |      |
|       | -He is in a dream.   |      |
| 78AB  | -ELISA AND ZELDA MOP THE CORRIDOR.   | 78AB |
| 78B   | OMITTED  | 78B  |
| 78C   | -STRICKLAND ENTERS THE COMPLEX. GOES BY THE GUARD SHACK.   | 78C  |
| 78CaA | -VIEW FROM CARGO AREA IN CINEMA. IN THE BACK ALLEY GILES <del>8CaA</del><br>A STENCIL TO LETTER THE SIDE OF THE VAN: LAUNDRY. BY HIS<br>SIDE: THE LAUNDRY SHEET WITH THE LOGO. | 8CaA |
|       | He lays the paint.   |      |
| 78CA  | - STRICKLAND PARKS HIS CAR.  | 78CA |
| 78CC  | OMITTED  | 78CC |
| 78CD  | - GILES PULLS THE STENCIL AND ADMIRES HIS HANDIWORK.   | 78CD |

78CE - STRICKLAND CLEANS A SMALL SPOT ON THE FIN. 78CE  
 He crosses the parking lot, like a king-  
 -and goes by the smoking employees.

78D -ELISA LOADS TOWELS INTO A LAUNDRY VAN. 78D

78DD OMITTED 78DD

78E OMITTED 78E

78F INT. LAB - NIGHT 78F  
 Elisa empties a paper basket. In the B.G. Hoffstetler and  
 other SCIENTISTS monitor the creature on the gurney.  
 Elisa approaches a small door in the far side of the lab-  
 marked SERVICE CORRIDOR.  
 Hoffstetler watches her surreptitiously.

79 INT. NARROW CORRIDOR - NIGHT 79  
 -Elisa peeks at the narrow service corridor.  
 Walks through it. Emerges into-

79AA INT. LOADING DOCK - NIGHT 79AA  
 - the loading dock...

79A INT. LOADING DOCK - SAME 79A  
 ZELDA smokes her cigarette with the gang. She watches as  
 Elisa enters the dock and looks at the VIDEO CAMERA.

80 INT. GILES APARTMENT - DAY 80  
 The music carries on. On TV, Carmen Miranda dances.

GILES  
 So I will drive down the loading  
 dock- at exactly 05:00 am.  
 (beat)  
 (MORE)

GILES (CONT'D)

Shifts are changing, yes- So we have...

Elisa signs: "FIVE"

GILES (CONT'D)

...five minutes... Five A.M. Five, five. Give me your watch. You'll move the camera... We'll synchronize our watches. Just like the movies.

(beat)

I'm so proud of you. You're not afraid.

(Elisa signs)

Oh, you are? Very? Don't tell me that! I'm terrified!

Giles finishes reproducing Elisa's ID card, using his skills as a draftsman. He holds up the finished ID.

GILES (CONT'D)

I think it's some of my best work.

Then he glues his own picture and fills the name-

GILES (CONT'D)

Michael Parker. A good, trustworthy name. Bit butch...

Loads it in a typewriter: fills in date of birth, etc.

GILES (CONT'D)

Age? I thought- fifty one?

Elisa looks at him.

GILES (CONT'D)

Fifty four?

Silence. Uses Ink to turn the "1" into a "7".

GILES (CONT'D)

Oh, you know? There is no need to be rude: Fifty seven- I put the hair on, I can pull it off. now-

He models two sweaters.

GILES (CONT'D)

This one or this one? I think this one says "Working Man" and Move Thor!

(MORE)

GILES (CONT'D)

This one- with butterscotch `tie-  
says "casual but with stylish". I  
agree. Then we're ready.

CUT TO:

81

INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - NIGHT

81

Music ends. Strickland stands in front of his wall of  
monitors- checking every detail.

He eats little candy. Spots Elisa cleaning in a corridor.

Eats candy. Drops a glass of water- on purpose. Presses an  
intercom

STRICKLAND

Sally- could you send Mrs. Esposito  
up to clean a spill?

81A

INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - NIGHT

81A

Elisa cleans. Strickland eats candy.

STRICKLAND

You know...? I can't figure it out  
myself- you're not much to look at,  
but- go figure- I keep thinking  
about you.

(beat)

And I've seen you, looking at me.  
You've been- looking at me?

He peruses his bag of candy. Offers her some.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

When you say you're mute... Are you  
entirely silent? Or do you squawk a  
little? Some mutes squawk. Not  
pretty, but-

She gathers her implements and gets ready to leave. He  
catches her. He touches the scars on her neck.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

You should know this: I don't mind  
the scars. Don't mind that you  
can't speak, either.

Uses his fingernail to scrape a small piece of candy from his  
gum.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

(beat)  
When you come right down to it- I  
like it. A lot. Kind of gets me  
going...

(beat)  
Thought you should know these  
things.

She walks away.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Hey!  
(beat)  
Bet I can make you squawk a little.

He walks away.

82-83 OMITTED 82-83

83A INT. LOCKER ROOM - SAME 83A

Elisa (bucket in hand) enters the locker room- crosses Zelda  
on the way out.

ZELDA  
Hurry up, Honey- I want to be home  
early.

Elisa looks at her watch: 4:50

She steels herself and marches out.

84 INT. MEN'S BATHROOM STALL - SAME 84

Hoffstetler opens the metal case with the syringe. Readies  
it. Puts it back in and into his pocket.

Thinks.

85 OMITTED 85

86 INT. LOADING DOCK - SAME 86

Elisa uses the broom to push the camera slowly.

87 OMITTED 87

88 INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT 88

Hoffstetler marches towards Strickland's office.

89 INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - SAME 89

HOFFSTETLER

We need to delay the procedure.

Strickland is reading a book by Norman Vincent Peale.

STRICKLAND

Knock first.

HOFFSTETLER

What?

STRICKLAND

Knock before entering my office.

HOFFSTETLER

This is urgent-

STRICKLAND

Go back out. Knock. Then I'll let you in and we'll talk. That's the protocol. Follow the protocol.

In spite of himself, Hoffstetler obeys. Knocks.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Come in.

Hoffstetler enters. He is about to talk when-

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Will you get the door for me?

Hoffstetler closes the door.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

See? That is the way. Now- Now we can talk.

HOFFSTETLER

I need more time.

STRICKLAND

No.

HOFFSTETLER

We shouldn't kill this creature...

STRICKLAND

Look- Don't let the fact that you feel like a loser now, that your competitive tendencies have been engaged-

HOFFSTETLER

I'm not competitive! I don't want an intricate, beautiful thing destroyed.

STRICKLAND

Don't let that cloud your judgement-

HOFFSTETLER

You're like a child with a transistor radio, you think if you smash it open you can look at the inside, see how it works. But you can't. It's smashed. It doesn't work. You kill the music.

STRICKLAND

Bob- I don't hear you. Music? That thing dies. You learn. I leave. Out of here. Settle down. My family settles down. Somewhere. Nicer. Real. A real city.

HOFFSTETLER

This creature- and I am certain of this- Is intelligent. Capable of language, of understanding- emotions.

Long beat. Minuscule shrug and then:

STRICKLAND

So are the Soviets, the Gooks- and we still kill them, don't we? Bottom line is, this is not a petting zoo- And I don't want to be in this shithole any longer than I need. Do you?

Hoffstetler sees the camera MOVE on the loading docks. Strickland remains unaware.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Do you?

HOFFSTETLER

No, Sir, I don't.



STRICKLAND

A-ha- So I made it so we both win.  
You can thank me later.

SING, SING, SING by Benny Goodman starts

90 OMITTED 90

91 INT. LOADING DOCK - SAME 91

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

92-93 OMITTED 92-93

93A INT. LAUNDRY AREA - SAME 93A

Elisa packs a laundry cart with wet towels.

93B INT. HERDING AREA - DAY 93B

End of shift. Throngs of WORKERS heading out. Everybody else is punching in. Zelda looks around.

YOLANDA

Hey- what are you waiting for?

ZELDA

Have you seen Elisa?

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

She looks at the "OUT" cards- Elisa's still in.

She punches it and-

-heads back into the complex.

93C OMITTED 93C

94 OMITTED 94

95 INT. LAB - SAME

95

Elisa- with the laundry cart- approaches the holding pool. Quietly. The Amphibian Man is half in, half out.

When it sees her, it retreats. Scared.

She removes her shoes- enters the water.

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

He approaches her.

Hoffstetler quietly enters the room.

HOFFSTETLER

Did you move the camera? On the loading dock?

Elisa turns and spots him: Caught! She freezes. He holds up a hand--

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)

Is that where you are taking him?  
Through the service tunnels?

(beat)

That's very smart-

Stunned, she nods. He hands her the keys to the manacles and iron collar.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)

Who do you work for?

(beat)

Please tell me you're not doing this alone.

Elisa shakes her head: "No." He pulls out a set of skeleton keys and drops them.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)

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

96 OMITTED

96

97 OMITTED

97

98 INT. LAB - SAME 98

Hoffstetler helps Elisa get the creature in the cart.

HOFFSTETLER

Water must be kept at seventy-five  
to eighty-five percent salinity.

Hands her a bottle of pills and a few scientific measuring  
trinkets.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)

His water must be kept at seventy-  
five to eighty-five percent  
salinity. Mix one of these in-  
every three days- Raw protein diet  
is a must.

(Beat)

In five minutes- I'll meet you at  
the loading dock-  
The lights will go out, so be  
prepared...

She opens a side door and enters-

98A INT. NARROW CORRIDOR - SAME 98A

The narrow service corridor. She pushes the cart. Fast.

POV: Her watch: 4:57 AM

98B INT. CORRIDOR "B" 98B

Hoffstetler exits the lab- cautiously. Then runs down the  
length of the corridor.

99 INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - SAME 99

Strickland turns to the monitors and sees Hoffstetler running  
down the corridor. He frowns but gets distracted by-

FLEMING

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

Offers him a pen.

99A INT. UTILITY INCLINED HALLWAY - SAME 99A  
 Hoffstetler pulls out the "popper" and sets it for THREE  
 MINUTES He attaches it magnetically to the MAIN FUSE BOX. He-  
 -STARTS IT. tic-tac-tic-tac-

100 EXT./INT. RAMP SECURITY BOOTH, LOADING DOCKS - SAME 100  
 Giles pulls up in the van. The Guard (eating soup) steps out.  
 GUARD  
 This is a restricted entrance, sir.  
 GILES  
 Laundry pick-up.  
 GUARD  
 Turn on the light-  
 Giles obeys, turns on the interior light in the van.  
 GUARD (CONT'D)  
 You don't look like laundry.  
 GILES  
 Thank You.  
 GUARD  
 Have your pass?  
 Giles produces his forged ID.

101 INT. CORRIDOR - SAME 101  
 Hoffstetler- moves.  
 Syringe ready in his hand.

102 INT. INCLINED UTILITY HALLWAY - SAME 102  
 The "popper" counts down...

103 INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - SAME 103  
 Strickland reviews the monitors. Sees the van next to the  
 Security Booth. Concerned.  
 STRICKLAND  
 Who's that? What's that van?

Gives him back the pen.

FLEMING  
Gosh- I don't know, Sir- A laundry  
truck?

Strickland grabs the phone. Dials

104 OMITTED 104

105 EXT./INT. RAMP SECURITY BOOTH, LOADING DOCKS - SAME 105

GUARD  
Michael Parker. Is that you?

GILES  
I am indeed. Michael Parker. Fifty  
seven just as it says right there.

He discreetly coiffes his hair.

The phone rings.

As the Guard examines the pass- The age number looks odd. He  
smudges it: 57 reveals 51.

GUARD  
Step out of the vehicle, sir.

GILES  
Oh, dear- I am not good at this-

The Guard pulls out his gun.

GUARD  
Out of the vehicle. Now.

GILES  
Would you have believed fifty-  
three?

GUARD  
I will not say it again- Out. Now.

105A INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - SAME 105A

Strickland hangs up- grabs his cattle prod- exits-

106-108 OMITTED 106-108

109 INT. COMMAND CENTER 109  
 Strickland Signals to 2 MP's. Fleming trails.  
 STRICKLAND  
 Follow me.

110 INT. LOADING DOCK - SAME 110  
 Elisa emerges from the lab, pushing the laundry basket into the loading dock.  
 ZELDA (O.S.)  
 Elisa!  
 She freezes, turning to see Zelda in the corridor.  
 ZELDA (CONT'D)  
 Are you out of your mind?!!

110A INT. INCLINED UTILITY HALLWAY - SAME 110A  
 The "popper" counting down.

111 EXT. SECURITY BOOTH, LOADING DOCKS - SAME 111  
 The Guard cocks his gun.  
 GUARD  
 Get out. Now!  
 Giles struggles with the belt.  
 GILES  
 I swear I'm not doing this on purpose. Actually, mechanical objects and I-  
 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 the--??  
 HOFFSTETLER  
 She's waiting for you at the dock!  
 Go! Now!

The van enters the complex. Hoffstetler pulls the Guard into the shack.

111A INT. CORRIDOR "B" - SAME 111A  
Strickland overtakes the corridor and enters-

111B INT. THE LAB - SAME 111B  
Strickland stands there. The creature is gone.  
He sees the SKELETON KEYS on the floor.

STRICKLAND  
(to Fleming)  
The laundry Van-

111C OMITTED 111C

111D INT. NARROW UTILITY HALLWAY - SAME 111D  
3... 2... 1... POP!!! It CLICKS open and emits a strong discharge. Melts the fuse box with a spark.

111E OMITTED 111E

111F INT. CORRIDOR 111F  
Emergency lighting in the corridor. Strickland leads Fleming and the MP's out of the lab and run down the corridor.

112 INT. LOADING DOCK - SAME 112  
Van pulls up.

They push the cart- together- towards the rear doors. Zelda opens the door, Giles comes out.

Zelda and Elisa remove towels from the cart. Hoffstetler assists.

GILES  
Elisa. Wha- who is this man? He had  
a needle and...

Elisa signs.

GILES (CONT'D)

He's with us?

113 INT. VAN CABIN 113

Looks at Elisa: The Amphibian Man is uncovered.

GILES

Oh, God- He is so beautiful!

Zelda moves the laundry hamper out of the way. Elisa and the Amphibian Man go into the van as Giles gets in the driver's seat.

GILES (2) (CONT'D)

Are we ready? Are we ready?

Hoffstetler closes the rear doors as the van pulls away. He and Zelda move off.

114 INT. LOADING DOCK - SAME 114

The Van smashes against the Teal Cadillac.

BAMMM!! It locks on the bumper.

115-116 OMITTED 115-116

117 INT. LOADING DOCK 117

The Van is stuck on the bumper. It further smashes the Cadillac.

GILES

Did I do that? Are you okay?

Finally, It rips it off.

- the bumper tumbles away.

Strickland and the MP's rush into the docks. Strickland shoots after the van. He stops.

The lights come back on as the van speeds away-

FLEMING

Guns down. We need to re-assess.

Let him work. Let him do his thing.



Strickland looks at his smashed Cadillac.

STRICKLAND

Teal...

|          |  |          |
|----------|--|----------|
| 118      | OMITTED  | 118      |
| 119      | OMITTED  | 119      |
| 120      | EXT. BALTIMORE HIGHWAY - SAME  | 120      |
|          | The van swerves through early morning traffic. Heads for a bridge- and traffic.                    |          |
| 121      | OMITTED  | 121      |
| 122      | OMITTED  | 122      |
| 123      | OMITTED  | 123      |
| 123A     | EXT. BALTIMORE BRIDGE - SAME   | 123A     |
|          | The Van swerves between cars.  |          |
| 123B-126 | OMITTED  | 123B-126 |
| 127      | INT. ELISA'S BATHROOM - SAME   | 127      |
|          | The shower curtains slides.  |          |
|          | Giles helps lower the creature into the waiting, drawn bath.                                       |          |
|          | It won't move. Elisa puts algae into the water. The creature gasps. She signs "salt" and runs out. |          |
|          | GILES  |          |
|          | Salt? What are you talking about...  |          |
|          | Salt?  |          |
| 128      | INT. KITCHEN, ELISA'S APARTMENT  | 128      |
|          | GILES  |          |
|          | Elisa!   |          |

She collects the salt shaker from the dinner table-  
Frantically she looks through the kitchen cabinets- finds a  
box of salt and she runs back. Unscrewing the shaker's cap.

129 INT. BATHROOM - SAME 129

She pours the salt, mixes it into the water. No movement and  
then-

A gasp!! The creature's gills open!! It breathes easier.  
Stirs. It looks at Elisa.

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

Giles slumps down, exhausted. She continues pouring salt on  
the floor. He points to it. They both laugh.

CUT TO:

130 INT. NARROW UTILITY HALLWAY - SAME 130

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

STRICKLAND

Israeli "Popper." Smell the ozone.  
The Russians hate the Jews, but  
can't get enough of their gadgets-  
(off Fleming)  
How did they get in?!

FLEMING

We have vehicle track marks, sir.  
We are analyzing the treads-  
surveillance footage and so on and  
so forth.

STRICKLAND

No one needs to know- We have  
twenty-four hours before I bounce  
it up-

FLEMING

I called it in.

STRICKLAND

You called it in?

FLEMING

The moment it happened, I-

Strickland's secretary, SALLY, rushing toward them.

SALLY (O.S.)  
Mr. Strickland, Sir?

STRICKLAND  
One second, Sally. You called it  
in...

FLEMING  
YES, SIR- I did.

STRICKLAND  
What is it, Sally?

SALLY  
General Hoyt is on the phone.

Strickland's expression sours.

131 INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE

131

Strickland stands in front of the bank of monitors as the  
general looks at him. Hoyt raises a single finger.

GENERAL HOYT  
That thing was our Space dog,  
Strickland. You know that-

STRICKLAND  
Sir, I'm getting it back-- I can't  
be- I don't want to be in a  
negative frame of mind, Sir.

GENERAL HOYT  
So you're feeling good?

Strickland picks at his soiled bandages. Blood drips.

STRICKLAND  
Absolutely, Sir- Cuh- Confident.

GENERAL HOYT  
You don't sound confident.

STRICKLAND  
But I am, Sir. Feeling strong.  
Getting it back.

GENERAL HOYT  
 You can get it done. You're gonna  
 get it done. For me, Son. For me.

CUT TO:

132 OMITTED 132

132A EXT. CANALS - DUSK 132A

Elisa walks by the canals with twin grocery bags.

Water trickles down the man-made structure-

A sign reads: NO SWIMMING. NO FISHING. CANAL OPENS TO SEA at  
 30ft MARK

A measuring grade on the containment walls reads: 15ft

Elisa looks at the water and then at CINEMA MARQUEE, Visible  
 a couple of blocks away.

132B INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - DAY 132B

Tunes the radio:

WEATHER MAN 1  
 Storm system is moving in from the  
 east and heavy downpours are  
 expected... A week from now...

She flips through the calendar pages and circles a date in  
 RED and writes: ONE WEEK. **RAIN. DOCKS**

Giles helps Elisa unpack the bags: SALT, SALT and more SALT.

He pulls out a postcard that reads: THANK YOU FOR BEING MY  
 FRIEND.

The postcard gets neatly set on the edge of the bathtub.

Elisa prepares to sleep leaning against the tub, holding the  
 creature's hand.

Giles smiles, turns off the light and closes the door.

133-135 OMITTED 133-135

135A INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

135A

ZELDA  
That's good, you keep that up.

Elisa signs, what?

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
(*sotto*)  
Looking like you don't know  
anything. Lord help me if they ask  
me if I do. I am not a good liar--  
(*beat*)  
Except to Brewster. Takes a lot of  
lies to keep a marriage going...

136 INT. HERDING AREA - NIGHT

136

Elisa and Zelda check in.

MP's watch everyone coming in and out.

Behind the central glass window Strickland argues, agitated  
with Fleming.

137 INT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME

137

FLEMING  
If you'll allow me, sir? In my  
opinion, we are looking at a highly-  
trained group, Sir.

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

FLEMING (CONT'D)  
I'm thinking- Conceivably- Sir-  
Special Forces and so on and so  
forth.

STRICKLAND  
Red Army Special forces?

FLEMING  
Conceivably.

Fleming nods, solemn. Dabs his runny snot.

FLEMING (CONT'D)  
A highly-trained, well-financed,  
elite group.  
(MORE)

FLEMING (CONT'D)

Infiltration took less than five minutes, Sir. Highly efficient. Fearless precision

He looks out. Elisa meets his eyes. He smiles. She turns away.

STRICKLAND

It's a theory. Run with it.

FLEMING

Yes, Sir. You won't regret it.

CUT TO:

137A INT. GILES APARTMENT - NIGHT 137A

Giles pushes away his commercial paintings and pulls out a large portfolio- Full of male nudes.

He takes a large sketch pad.

137AB INT. GILES APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER 137AB

Giles places a blank paper on his easel. He sketches the Amphibian Man.

137B INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT 137B

Giles sits on a small chair by the tub. Sketching the Amphibian man.

GILES

You are not the anomaly, are you?

(beat)

We are. We are what happened to you- did we not?

He sketches the fish man's eyes.

GILES (CONT'D)

Were you always alone? Did you ever have someone?

(beat)

Do you know what happened to you?

(beat)

'Cause I don't.

(beat)

I swear I don't- I look in the mirror and all I recognize are my eyes- in the face of this old man.

Points at himself.

GILES (CONT'D)  
Seems like I was born both too  
early or too late for my life...

Sits by the creature's side.

GILES (CONT'D)  
Maybe we're both relics.

The Amphibian Man blinks.

138-148 OMITTED

138-148

149 INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - NIGHT

149

Strickland stands outside his office- contemplating. Rolls up his sleeves.

Video images- rewinding. Strickland, watching, numb with boredom.

STRICKLAND  
4:10, 4:20, 4:30

SALLY  
Sir, General Hoyt is on the phone.

He signals her to go away.

STRICKLAND  
I know Sally. I will call him back.  
4:40.

Just then, he sees something on the tape -- Hoffstetler.

He freezes on Hoffstetler. He writes down the time: 4:40 am.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
4:50... 4:50 again.

Rewinds all tapes to that time.

The camera on the dock moves.

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

150 EXT. LOADING DOCK - NIGHT 150

LAUNDRY is being loaded.

Strickland notices a couple of WORKERS (including DUANE and LOU) 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- the camera?

One of them reluctantly nods.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Do you always meet at the same time?

DUANE

End of lunch break.

Strickland thinks.

STRICKLAND

Hoffstetler. Doctor Hoffstetler- has he ever joined you?

Confused looks- "Who?"

150A INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT 150A

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

150B INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 150B

Giles sleeps on a chair in the bathroom. Amphibian Man takes Giles' toupée, tries to eat it. Tosses it on the floor. He looks at Giles head - signs "egg" with his hands.

OUT OF THE GATE by Jon Erik Kellso starts



Amphibian Man leaves the bathroom. On the kitchen table on a piece of newspaper sits three pair of Elisa's shoes next to the Duck Brush and the shoe polish.

The green pair. Is it a frog? He grabs a green shoe and tries to eat it - Spits it out. He sees the Duck Brush - Slowly grabs for it and attempts eating it.

He pulls out the brush while chewing it. Spits it out.

Amphibian Man sniffs. He smells food somewhere in the kitchen. He turns and approaches the fridge.

Sliding his hand around the fridge, he opens the door, grabs a jar of mustard.

He licks around the jar - nothing. Drops the jar. He takes out a bottle of milk - licks around it turning it upside down as milk spills out onto the floor. He tries to suck up the last drops of milk, drops the bottle.

A leftover piece of green pie sits on the shelf. He takes out the pie, licks it, then throws it on the floor.

He opens the freezer, grabs an ICE CUBE TRAY.

He tries to lick the tray. His tongue sticks to the tray. He pulls. It won't come off. He panics!! He grabs it with his other hand, pulls it off of his tongue.

Now it is stuck to both hands. He pulls it off his Right hand, then violently flicks it off of his Left hand.

150C INT. CORRIDOR - APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT 150C

Fish Man steps out into the hallway.

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

150D INT. GILES APARTMENT - NIGHT 150D

Amphibian Man enters timidly. He sees the drawings of himself, stares at them. He crouches down, looking at each painting.

He catches sight of the TV. MR ED is on. He goes over to it, mesmerized by the music. He watches intently.

He hears a HISS. He disengages and turns, sees LILLIE baring its fangs, hair standing on end.

The Amphibian Man responds in kind. And eats LILLIE.  
SNOWFLAKE approaches the creature- hissing.

150E INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - SAME 150E  
Giles awakes and he goes to his apartment. There-

150F INT. GILES APARTMENT - SAME 150F  
Amphibian Man is finishing eating SNOWFLAKE.  
The creature's paws and face are covered in blood.  
Shocked- horrified, Giles tries to stop the creature.

GILES  
No! No! No No!! Snowflake!

The Amphibian Man hisses- and lunges.  
Giles recoils- scared. His toupee is displaced to the side.  
It all seems fine, but then, blood starts trickling from a  
deep cut in Giles' arm.

GILES (CONT'D)  
Oh dear-

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

151 OMITTED 151

151A INT. LOCKER ROOM 151A  
Elisa and Zelda are ready to leave. Hoffstetler appears in  
the shadows.

ZELDA  
Holy Jesus! What are you doing  
standing there in the shadows of  
the women's locker room??

HOFFSTETLER  
They may be watching me- and there  
are no cameras here-

ZELDA  
For good reason- what if you caught  
us in an inconvenient moment?

HOFFSTETTLER  
I need to know that he is  
alright...

He hands them a container with Algae.

ZELDA  
He is.

HOFFSTETTLER  
Good. When will you release him?

Elisa signs. A phone rings in the distance.

ZELDA  
Soon- When the rain fills the canal-  
that opens to the sea... But If you  
wanna see him- we keep him in-

HOFFSTETTLER  
No, no- I don't want to know where  
you keep him- I just want to know  
that he's well...

He slides a card. A noise. Footsteps. He moves away.

HOFFSTETTLER (CONT'D)  
If you need anything.

She takes the card. A phone rings in the distance

HOFFSTETTLER (CONT'D)  
Release him. Soon.

Elisa signs.

HOFFSTETTLER (CONT'D)  
What did she say?

ZELDA  
She said: You're a good man, Doctor  
Hoffstetler.

Hoffstetler smiles quietly. Moved.

HOFFSTETTLER  
My name is- Dimitri. Honored to  
meet you.

He leaves. Yolanda appears.

YOLANDA  
 Hey, Dummy! Phone call for you!

CUT TO:

OMITTED

163A OMITTED 163A

164 INT. APARTMENTS CORRIDOR - NIGHT 164

Elisa runs the length of the corridor.

165 INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 165

She finds Giles there, bleeding from the wound.

GILES

I'm fine. Don't worry about me. I'm fine. I'm fine... He ate pandora but not the pie. He was hungry but not stupid. He's a wild creature. We can't expect him to be anything else.

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

GILES (CONT'D)

Go find him. He's terrified. Go! Go find him.  
 (to cat)  
 You're lucky.

166 OMITTED 166

166A OMITTED 166A

166B EXT. STREET - NIGHT 166B

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

The Usher is deep asleep at the ticket office with an crossword in hand.

The theatre door is open.

167 INT. CINEMA - NIGHT

167

Elisa enters. It's dark. THE STORY OF RUTH plays in the empty theatre.

On the screen: the IDOL of a Pagan God topples. Christian Slaves are crushed and screams!!

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.

The Slave on the screen howls in pain. The creature covers his ears.

GILES' VOICE

Later, Elisa would tell me that when she saw him there- standing alone, blood-stained but unburdened and unmarred, like nature- right then, she knew that he was the one man that would never lie to her- that would never pretend to be anything other than himself....

With great care, she reaches out, touches him. He looks up, stands down- grateful. Mercy.

He wheezes rapidly. He's beginning to have trouble breathing. She takes his hand.

On the screen behind them: A moment of pious peace.

DIALOGUE

"Trouble your heart no more... Be strong through this time- for from the widow of your son will issue children, and children's children..."

168 INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - DAWN

168

Elisa readies some iodine and bandages.

GILES

I stayed awake as long as I could  
but, well I'm not a young man, you  
know. Is he alright? You sure?

Elisa leaves to go to her apartment. The creature plays with  
the cars.

GILES (CONT'D)

Where are you going? Elisa? Where  
are you going?

(to the Amphibian Man)

No. No. Kitty. No kitties. Don't  
play with the kitties.

He approaches Giles- Mortified. The Amphibian Man practically  
crawls. It retracts its claws, takes Giles hand and places it  
on its own head, and then holds Giles' head- tenderly.

GILES (CONT'D)

That's very nice. Thank you.

The Amphibian Man takes his hand and places it over Giles'  
open wounds on his arm.

GILES (CONT'D)

I- uh- thank you. Beautiful gesture  
but- ah- I don't think that's  
sanitary. Oh- ha- ha- Good boy.  
Off. Off. Not the cats. Not the  
cats.

It retreats and goes back towards the cars. Elisa returns  
with a basin of water.

GILES (CONT'D)

I think we need to clean this  
again. Interesting fella.

169 INT. BATHROOM - DAWN

169

She pours salt.

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

She touches his face. Gently.

Her hand lingers.

He "blushes," changing colors.

Water drips down.

The creature stares at her.

She blushes.

She looks at the creature. She reaches out, touches its chest. He touches her. BEADS of water rush from his skin to hers.

WATER seems to inundate her and the entire room. ENGULFING IT ALL...

Flustered, she gets up.

Leaves.

The creature watches.

She closes the door. Leans on it. Thinks. Sighs.

On the soundtrack: LA JAVANAISE by Madeleine Peyroux.

169A OMITTED 169A

169B INT. ELISA'S BEDROOM / BATHROOM - DAWN 169B

Elisa is alone- ready to sleep on the sofa. It's dark but she's awake, wired. She has her night mask on her forehead. Winds up her clock.

She eyes the bathroom door.

She gets up, disrobes.

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

His markings light up. She closes the curtain. They make love. Water splashes all around.

CUT TO:

169C OMITTED 169C

169D INT. BUS - NIGHT 169D

The Bus seems magical- bathed by multicolored lights.

Elisa leans against the cold glass and contemplates the beads of dew rolling on the window.

Camera gets closer and closer to one of them. We enter a macro view of it. The Water seems to cede and

169E OMITTED 169E

170 INT. LONG CORRIDOR - NIGHT 170

Elisa pushing her cart- wearing the red shoes- Zelda catches up.

ZELDA  
Why you smiling, hon?

Elisa tries to suppress her smile.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
Stop looking like that. What happened?

Beat. Elisa smiles. Zelda understands.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
Why?  
(beat)  
How??

Elisa makes a gesture- indicating the peculiar anatomy details.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
Does he? Have a-?  
(beat)  
Lord! Never trust a man. Pfft- Even if he looks flat down there...

Suddenly 3 MP's are standing in front of them. With them:

FLEMING  
Zelda, Elisa: Come with me.

CUT TO:

171 INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - NIGHT 171

Yolanda and Duane are leaving. Zelda and Elisa enter.

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 last Wednesday night, if you saw anything out of the ordinary, it is your obligation to report it.

Under the desk, he removes his shoes- stretches his legs.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Any detail- no matter how small or trivial it seems... Zeldelilah  
(beat)  
Trivial means unimportant.

ZELDA

I didn't see nothing out of the ordinary, no- Or trivial. My feet were hurting too much-

STRICKLAND

(to Elisa)  
What about you?

Elisa signs.

ZELDA

Neither did she.

STRICKLAND

(sotto)  
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 different-

Elisa signs.

ZELDA

(translates)  
Something trivial? No, Sir- Mmhno-

STRICKLAND

I want you to think. People get loose, people pay the price.

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

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
 (to himself)  
 What am I doing?

Guffaws. Beat.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
 Interviewing the fucking help- the  
 shit cleaners, the piss wipers- You  
 two- Just go. Leave.

Elisa fumes quietly and then signs violently.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)  
 What did she say?  
 (straight at Elisa)  
 What did you say? What did she say?

She is clearly saying "Fuck you."

ZELDA  
 I didn't catch it. I wasn't  
 looking.

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  
 You know, Elisa? For a mute, you  
 talk too much.

String Quartet No.1, Op.18 No.1 (Beethoven, Ludwig van)  
 Adagio affetuoso pre-laps.

171A INT. HOFFSTETLER'S APARTMENT - DAY

171A

A baquelite RADIO is playing the piece. Hoffstetler is  
 ironing his pants' crease with mathematical precision.  
 Doorbell rings. Opens the door. BURLY RUSSIAN and MIHALKOV  
 stand there.

HOFFSTETLER  
*Comrades. Please, come in.*

TIME CUT: Hoffstetler pours some hot tea.

MIHALKOV

*Your extraction papers... will be ready soon.*

HOFFSTETTLER

*I am very grateful... Stupid as the American are- it won't be long for them to find me.*

MIHALKOV

*Nothing to worry about.*

They come in, discreetly examine everything, open drawers.

MIHALKOV (CONT'D)

*But I have a question, then- A personal question. I am a little curious.*

Hoffstetler spots the gun in Mihalkov's waist.

HOFFSTETTLER

*Yes? Go ahead. Would you like some butter cake?*

BURLY RUSSIAN

*Yes. Please.*

Hoffstetler goes to the kitchen slices a home baked cake. Discreetly pockets the knife.

MIHALKOV

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

Hoffstetler serves the cake.

HOFFSTETTLER

*How did it--*

MIHALKOV

*React. See? In humans the poison works instantaneously while for animals there is a delayed reaction. I was curious...*

HOFFSTETTLER

*It was instant.*

BURLY RUSSIAN

*This is very good cake. You made it?*

Hoffstetler nods.

BURLY RUSSIAN (CONT'D)  
You are very good at this-

MIHALKOV  
*What did you do with the corpus?*

Hoffstetler readies the knife.

HOFFSTETLER  
*I performed an autopsy.  
Unenlightening. As Lenin said,  
there is no profit in last week's  
fish.*

MIHALKOV  
*Lenin said that?*

HOFFSTETLER  
*Um. Of course.*

MIHALKOV gets up. Puts his hat on. Goes to the door.

MIHALKOV  
*Perhaps. Perhaps you're  
misremembering. Wait for our call.  
Shouldn't be much longer.*

Canned laughter pre-laps-

172

INT. STRICKLAND'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

172

The family watches Dobie Gillis.

ELAINE  
That's a gelatine parfait.  
(beat)  
Parfait- it's a French word. Means  
"perfect" You like it?

TIMMY  
Dad- Dad- can we watch Bonanza?

ELAINE  
Bonanza is much too violent.  
(back to Strickland)  
It has little pieces of celery and  
walnut. Recipe's right out of the  
box- real convenient. They say it's  
the future of home cooking.

STRICKLAND  
Bonanza is not violent. It's real  
life. The way it was.  
(MORE)

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

The way it is. A man faces a problem. It's up to him to solve it.

ELAINE

You know what I was thinking today?  
We get 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

We can go to the park- Do something  
together?

STRICKLAND changes channels; The NEWS. Martin Luther King  
talks to a massive crowd.

STRICKLAND

Puppy becomes a dog. Dog's a wild  
animal We never "domesticated" the  
damn things--

ELAINE

Language, Richard. Little pitchers  
have big ears...

Strickland changes channels: Vietnam- Carson- Phone starts  
ringing.

STRICKLAND

They never learn their place.  
Rover, Lassie, Spot... They're  
carnivores. We never strip them of  
their nature... They'll eat your  
hand as soon as they'll take a shit  
in your yard.

ELAINE

Richard!

Phone rings. Strickland disconnects the phone-

STRICKLAND

Don't reconnect it. Don't answer  
it.

- walks away.

172A EXT. CADILLAC / STRICKLAND'S FRONT PORCH - NIGHT 172A

It's raining like hell. Strickland exits the house drink in hand- enters the car.

Takes a cigarette, lights it.

He uncovers his fingers: they are black. He presses one- it squirts a yellow liquid.

And thinks.

CUT TO:

173 INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY 173

The tub's filling up. The creature watches.

She opens and closes the HOT/COLD faucet. Tests the water.

She takes the box of algae that Hoffstetler gave her. She opens the box. She gets an idea. Smiles and looks around the bathroom.

-opens the faucet on the sink.

The sink overflows

She takes the towels- sealing the cracks- and uses a towel to stuff the space between the door and the floor. The water continues to run-

174 CAMERA GOES BELOW 174

-Into the theatre-

Water pours from above and onto the empty seats and-

-onto the scattered customers' faces.

They get up from their seats.

CUT BACK:

Elisa is floating, naked, next to the Amphibian Man- now the entire BATHROOM is immersed in water.

She embraces him- Eyes closed, feeling him underneath her and the water on her face. His markings move rhythmically like a melody.

She intakes and holds.

As the water goes above her head.

They float underwater. Contemplating each other.

CUT TO:

175 INT. GILES APARTMENT - DAY 175

Giles gets up. He absentmindedly puts on his robe- folds in his MURPHY BED and heads to his drawing table. On it: the large format sketch of the Amphibian Man (which is looking beautiful) Giles takes Iodine and cotton and removes the bandage from his arm: the wounds are gone.

He catches his reflection on his reference mirror- and is startled to discover-

SHOCK!!

-His head has hair. A lot of it. It's growing from his scalp... And his beard is darker, his skin tighter. He pulls his hair- It's his.

Looks down inside his pajama trousers.

GILES  
Well, Oh, well- Hello!

He hurries-

176 INT. HALLWAY - DAY 176

Across the hall.

MR. ARZOUMANIAN  
What is going on? I've got water pouring into the bible movie. I have four paying customers. I can't afford a refund.

GILES  
It's a pipe. It's a pipe. I'll take care of it. I'll fix it.

MR. ARZOUMANIAN  
I can't have water pouring into the goddamn bible movie.

GILES  
Alright. I'll take care of it.  
Elisa! Elisa!

177 INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - SAME 177

Water spills from the bathroom door. Giles treads carefully.

GILES

Oh, God- Elisa?

Knocks on the bathroom door. Water projecting from its entire contour. Noises. The door opens. Water pours out.

Inside the Amphibian Man and Elisa, naked, covering herself with the plastic curtain.

Giles, soaked, laughs.

In the soundtrack: Trixie Smith sings MY UNUSUAL MAN

178 INT. GILES APARTMENT - SAME 178

Giles towels his hair.

GILES

I'm toweling my hair, Elisa. My hair. And- and- look at the arm: healed. As if nothing had happened... You said he was a god. I don't know. He ate a cat...

(beat)

You know what this means? We have to keep him around- just a little bit longer. You don't want to lose him, do you?

(beat)

We cannot just- let him go- like that- We gotta keep him.

CUT TO:

179 INT. COMMAND CENTER / STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - DAY 179

Hoffstetler meets Strickland.

HOFFSTETLER

You wanted to see me?

STRICKLAND

Transcribe it, Sally.

SALLY

Right away, Sir.



STRICKLAND  
Come on up- I have a few questions  
for you.

HOFFSTETLER  
Of course.

Strickland climbs the steps to his office.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)  
Thank you.

Strickland gives him some water.

STRICKLAND  
Have a seat.

They sit.

HOFFSTETLER  
How's it going? The investigation.

STRICKLAND  
Well- we have a promising lead.

HOFFSTETLER  
Really? That's good to hear.

They sit.

STRICKLAND  
You joined us in Galveston. But  
where were you before, Hoffstetler?  
Where did you come to us from-

HOFFSTETLER  
Doctor.

STRICKLAND  
Excuse me?

HOFFSTETLER  
Doctor Hoffstetler. Protocol.  
(beat)  
Wisconsin. Madison.

STRICKLAND  
That's right- You gave up a tenure  
track position. Didn't ya? Gave it  
all up for us.

HOFFSTETLER  
I did.

STRICKLAND

I suppose you're getting ready to leave us now, then-

Hoffstetler drinks.

HOFFSTETLER

Only if the creature isn't found.

STRICKLAND

What do you think? You think we will-? Find it?

HOFFSTETLER

Well, you said you had a lead.

Long beat.

STRICKLAND

I do.

A HANDFUL OF STARS by Jon Eric Kellso starts.

179AA INT. GILES APARTMENT 179AA

Giles paints a portrait of Elisa and the Amphibian Man.

It rains outside.

Camera dollies across his window and discovers-

179A INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - DAWN 179A

The creature eyes the rain - almost pained- like a doggie who wants out.

She watches him touch the glass. She touches his shoulder. Scales come off in her hand.

179B OMITTED 179B

179C OMITTED 179C

179D EXT. DOCKS / CANAL - DAWN 179D

Elisa walks the canals- Rain.

The waters are rising, churning. Growing.

Near the 30ft mark.

179E OMITTED 179E

179F OMITTED 179F

180 EXT. BROWNSTONE BUILDINGS STREET / LOBBY - DAY 180

Raining. HOFFSTETLER, lugging two empty suitcases into his building.

Watching from across the street: FLEMING IN HIS CAR.

181 INT. HOFFSTETLER'S APARTMENT - DAY 181

Hoffstetler enters his apartment. Telephone is ringing.

HOFFSTETLER

Hello?

He looks around- tense. Out the window.

MIHALKOV'S VOICE

Extraction is ready. Same place,  
Forty-eight hours.

HOFFSTETLER

Forty eight hours???

They hang up. Hoffstetler looks out the window.

181A EXT. HOFFSTETLER'S APARTMENT - SAME 181A

POV HOFF: A car, lights on: Fleming, eating a sandwich and listening to "Norman" by Sue Thompson

182 OMITTED 182

182A INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY 182A

Sally awaits for Strickland.

SALLY

Sir, General Hoyt.

STRICKLAND  
Tell him I'm not in, tell him I  
will call him back. Don't put him  
through-

SALLY  
No, Sir- he's in your office.

Strickland looks up: Hoyt drinks coffee by the window. Looks  
directly at him.

STRICKLAND (PRELAP)  
I believe I have identified the  
mole. I will confirm and act on it.

183

INT. STRICKLAND'S OFFICE - DAY

183

GENERAL HOYT  
At this point our only concern is  
the asset. Do you have it?

STRICKLAND  
Still in the wind, sir-

GENERAL HOYT  
That won't do. You'll have to fix  
it.

STRICKLAND  
Yes, Sir. I know. But- May I ask  
one question, Sir?

GENERAL HOYT  
This wouldn't be the appropriate  
time, I don't think.

Strickland finds a loose thread- sticking out from his jacket  
lapel. Tucks at it- hides it- folds it.

STRICKLAND  
I need to ask, Sir- respectfully.

GENERAL HOYT  
Then go ahead, Son.

STRICKLAND  
You've know me for- how long?

GENERAL HOYT  
Thirteen years. Battle of Pusan.

STRICKLAND

Yes, Sir- and in all that time, I,  
I've never once-

(beat)

This is- what happened here is- A  
man is faithful, Sir- loyal,  
efficient all of his life. All of  
it- and he is- useful. And he  
expects- He has certain  
expectations in return. And he  
fails, then- *once. Only once.* What  
does that make him? Does that make  
him a failure?

(beat)

When is a man done? Proving  
himself, Sir? A good man. A decent  
man-

GENERAL HOYT

Decent?

(beat: yes)

A man has the decency not to fuck  
up- that's one thing. That is real  
decent of him. The other kind of  
decency-? It doesn't really matter.  
We sell it- Sure- But it's an  
export. And we sell it 'cause we  
don't use it.

(beat)

See? Thirty six hours from now-  
this entire episode will be over.  
And so will you...

(beat)

Our universe will have a hole in it  
with your outline. And you will  
have gone on to an alternate  
universe. A universe of shit. You  
will be lost to civilization. You  
will be unborn. Unmade. Undone.

(beat)

So- go get some real decency, Son.  
And unfuck this mess.

183A OMITTED

183A

183B OMITTED

183B

184 EXT. BATHROOM - SAME 184

BAMM!! The door opens. Strickland enters. Almost entirely out of breath- suffocating- gasping. Panicked.

He tries to calm down. Wets his face- lets the water run. Liquid oozes from his hand. He pulls at the thread and pulls at it-

-and it unravels his lapel. He gets angry and removes his jacket violently and throws it down on the floor. Then he looks deep in the mirror. Deep eye contact with himself.

STRICKLAND  
Thirty-six hours. Deliver. You deliver. That's what you do. You deliver. You don't fail-

A fly lands on his hand, rubs its legs.

CUT TO:

185-186 OMITTED 185-186

186A INT. GILES APARTMENT - DAY 186A

Giles- all energy- paints a large canvas image of the amphibian man. Elisa goes by.

She enters her apartment without saying a single word.

187 OMITTED 187

188 INT. KITCHEN, ELISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 188

Elisa rips off a leaf in her calendar: The leaf exposed now reads: **RAIN. DOCKS.**

She looks at window, Pelted by rain.

Buckets and pails on her floor pick up water from ceiling leaks.

The Creature stands under one particularly big leak in the kitchen.

Later: Elisa peels eggs for the Amphibian Man. He looks grey, weak.

Barely eats.

He looks at her- Suddenly, she whistles softly, then signs and then, finally, sings- quietly at first:

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 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. The creature wheezes.

189A INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT 189A

Zelda changes her shoes- and is about to step out when she spots: Elisa, crying her eyes out. They look at each other.

ZELDA

Elisa. What is it, honey?

190 INT. ELISA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT 190

In the tub, the Fish Man wheezes as if he were on dry land.

ZELDA

Oh- No, Honey, no- He doesn't look too good.

(beat)

This is bad. I'm going to call Hoffstetler...

Elisa pours water onto him but it doesn't help. Helpless, she looks out the window at the RAIN beginning to come down outside.

190A INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT 190A

Reading Hoffstetler's card, Zelda dials the public phone.

191 INT. HOFFSTETLER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 191

Raining. Hoffstetler closes his bags. Leaves. Closes the door. The phone rings. And rings- and rings-

191A EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT 191A

THE AMPHIBIAN MAN

Is WEAK. Giles, Zelda and Elisa help him stand under the rain. SOAKING.

HIS GILLS AND FINS extend. Gills open. It breathes!!

191B INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT 191B

ZELDA

When I was a little girl- I found a turtle sitting out in the middle of the road. Crossing it slowly. Car could run it over any minute.

(MORE)



## ZELDA (CONT'D)

So, I picked it up, took it to a pond way back behind my house... and I laid it down under a big camphor tree, and I thought... "Mmmh- It's gonna be so happy here". And I left it there.

(beat)

But that night I figured out I had no idea where it was going... Far as I know it was bringing food to its nest or- looking to *porcreate*- or escaping an owl. And maybe the worst place to keep it- maybe the place it was running from was that pond under that camphor tree.

(looks at the fish)

I didn't care. I just did what I wanted with it...

Giles Hugs Elisa:

## GILES

You love him, Honey- We know what to do... Let him go...

She nods.

191BA INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

191BA

Giles leaves Elisa at her doorstep. She spots the creature by the kitchen window. Standing under a water leak. Weak.

Elisa and the Amphibian Man head for the bathroom but pause.

191C INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

191C

She guides him to her bed.

They lie down.

She embraces him. He embraces her back.

She leans on his chest. Closing her eyes. She hears his heart.

Thump-thump-thump-thump- it becomes the rhythm of waves, the murmur of the sea.

She looks up-

-at the ceiling, that suddenly becomes a deep, dark ocean.

She raises her hand: Webbing seems to extend from her thumb to her index. She closes her eyes and smiles.

CUT TO:

192

EXT. BROWNSTONE BUILDINGS STREET - NIGHT

192

Sitting in Fleming's car- Strickland spies through a pair of binoculars. He looks ill- sweaty.

FLEMING

Sir- If you don't mind me saying so: You don't look too well.

STRICKLAND

Shut up...

Fleming lowers the window- there is a smell he can't pinpoint. FLIES walk around Strickland's hand.

FLEMING

Sir- do you smell that? I- I think is it your fingers... They're black, Sir-

Strickland snatches the binoculars.

STRICKLAND

There he is- Doctor fucking shit-bird.

FLEMING

There's no call for cursing, Sir-

Hoffstetler exits his building, opens his umbrella- carrying the leather suitcases and a baquelite radio into the rain.

STRICKLAND

Get out of the car. I'm taking it.

FLEMING

My car?

Strickland eats hard candy- mixing it with pain pills.

STRICKLAND

Get the fuck out.

FLEMING

Out of my car?

STRICKLAND

Did I stutter?

FLEMING  
No. Not doing it.

STRICKLAND  
Come again?

FLEMING  
No- no- That's it, see? You are- a  
very imposing man but-  
(beat)  
We must file- file this. Get  
clearance. Call it up- I've been  
doing surveillance. Unauthorized  
surveillance for you- I'm not  
clocking extra time I-

Rain falls outside.

FLEMING (CONT'D)  
But I draw the line here. Enough is  
enough is enough. We go back. File  
the forms and let central know what  
you're doing. We get an  
administrative package and allocate  
resources. Then- but not until then-  
you can take my car or any car you  
need.

Strickland shoots him in the face. Twice.

STRICKLAND  
You never shut up.  
(beat)  
Silence. I just want silence.

193-194 OMITTED

193-194

195 EXT. SAND PILES - NIGHT

195

Hoffstetler smokes under an umbrella. The car pulls up.

This time it stops further away. Rain backlit by its  
headlights. BURLY RUSSIAN climbs out. Stands in silence. In  
the rain.

Hoffstetler fidgets. Turns on a flashlight- Slowly gets up,  
takes a couple of steps. Stops. Evaluates the immobility of  
the Burly Russian.

HOFFSTETLER  
*It's raining like hell, isn't it-?*  
*He-he- No password today?*

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

One bullet goes clean through Hoffstetler's gut-

He pulls out his gun-

A bullet goes through his cheek!! Cigarette EMBERS floating in the air! Pulls out his gun and crawls/slips backwards on the mud. Looks for his glasses- One of them shattered.

HOFFSTETLER (CONT'D)  
*No-no- comrade- no- please-*

The BURLY RUSSIAN comes to finish the job- raises his gun and-  
 -BAMM! A quarter of flesh & bone flies away from his head.

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!

He goes for his gun. Strickland stops him.

STRICKLAND  
 You were speaking Russian, Bob.

Strickland hooks/yanks Hoffstetler around by the hole in his cheek. Takes him under a -

196 OMITTED 196

197 EXT. FILTERING STATION / SAND PILES - NIGHT 197

HOFFSTETLER  
 Augggh- What are you doing? I need  
 to go to a hospital. I'm bleeding-

His flashlight illuminates Strickland's glazed eyes.

STRICKLAND  
 What's your name? Your real name.

He drops him on the ground. The clouds in the overcast sky rumble with thunder.

HOFFSTETLER

Strickland- you know me- I'm Robert Hoffstetler-

Strickland kicks him on the wounded area. Hoffstetler grunts.

STRICKLAND

Don't lie. You don't need to. Bullet went through your gut. Shit is mixing with your blood right now- poisoning it. Blood and shit. Can you imagine? You're dead.

HOFFSTETLER

They'll find me.

STRICKLAND

Who? The same people that tried to kill you just now? Come on "Bob" You work for a government... you know they don't give a fuck about you or me-

He puts his finger INSIDE Hoffstetlers' cheek injury and hooks him aggressively. Hoffstetler screams in pain.

Excrement and blood spurt out of his wound.

HOFFSTETLER

Augh- no- Please- listen to me.

STRICKLAND

I'm gonna need the names, ranks and location of the entire strike team.

HOFFSTETLER

Strike team?

STRICKLAND

The ones that took the asset.

Zap. Kick. Kick. Zap. Hard candy.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

This candy. It's cheap candy. I love it since I was a kid. Some favor more sophisticated snacks- Nougat center and all that fu-fu shit. But not me, Bob. This is it for me.

(beat)

(MORE)

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Sometimes, if Im feeling anxious, I just bite right into it- chew it to pieces. But-

(Kick, kick)

-most of the time- I just take my time. I make it last.

Strickland shocks Hoffstetler with the Alabama Howdy-Do.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Names, ranks and location of the entire strike team.

Hoffstetler laughs weakly. Gets shocked again.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Names! Ranks! Now!

HOFFSTETLER

(weak laughter)

No names, no ranks, they...

(beat)

They just clean...

Strickland comes to an impossible conclusion:

STRICKLAND

Piss Wipers... Shit cleaners

HOFFSTETLER

(quietly, In Russian)

*I'm not one of those who left their land... To the mercy of the enemy.*

*I was deaf to their gross flattery.*

*I won't grant them my songs...*

Strickland cattleprods Hoffstetler for too long. His wound and mouth emit a bit of smoke

CUT TO:

198

INT. KIND OF CRAPPY ROW HOUSE - NIGHT

198

PORCELAIN SPARROWS IN FLIGHT adorn the walls. A lovingly-decorated, humble home.

Zelda is frying some Brussels sprouts with bacon. Knock Knock.

ZELDA

Alright Brewster. I'm gonna fix you dinner and then I'm going to run out for a little while and help a friend.

Her husband BREWSTER sits in his Barca-lounger. We get the feeling Brewster does a lot of sitting.

BREWSTER

Help with what?

ZELDA

Helping a friend.

BREWSTER

Zelda. Door.

She Lowers the burner and comes to the door.

ZELDA

Well- You could well help me answer the door, Brewster! You're laying there- not ten feet away.

BREWSTER

My back is acting up, woman.

Opens it.

ZELDA

Your back. Your back. Always your back.

(surprised)

Mr. Strickland, what--

Strickland barges past her into her house. Pops a handful of pills.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

What are you doing here--?

Strickland and Brewster size each other up.

STRICKLAND

Where is it? Where did you take it?

ZELDA

What are you talking about?

STRICKLAND

The thing in the lab. Where is it?

ZELDA

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

STRICKLAND

Would you? Perhaps you would, if you knew exactly what was at stake. If you knew that all can be taken from you- if you were to - out of some misplaced loyalty to a traitorous friend - be untruthful.

Brewster weighs his options. Half-watches TV.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

That story about Samson. I never told you how it ends...

(beat)

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 man of principle and the Lord gives his strength back to him. One last time.

And just then, Strickland grips the fingers-

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

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.

-and rips them loose!! Blood pours out. He grabs a gauze. Clamps his hand.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

He kills them all. He dies. But he gets every single one of them motherfuckers. That is his will.

Pulls out his gun.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

That's how powerful his will is.

(beat)

Now, do you know what that story means? For us, Delilah?

(beat)

(MORE)



STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

It means that if you know something you're not telling me, you will tell me. Either before or after I bring this particular temple down upon our heads. I am, for the time being, the true plight of the Negro, Zeldelilah...

Brewster's had enough.

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.

Zelda's eyes narrow.

STRICKLAND

(holding his spurting fingers)

Thank you very much, Mr. Fuller for your assistance.

BREWSTER

Don't say nothin' of it.

198A OMITTED

198A

198B INT. CRAPPY ROW HOUSE - NIGHT

198B

ZELDA

What have you done--?

(beat)

I have to warn her. He's going after her--

Brewster gets between her and the phone.

BREWSTER

You will not do such a thing, Woman. I just saved your life. Why you worry about her? Bitch deserves to be gone after, she broke the law.

Zelda pushes him. Stares at him, hating him and all he isn't.  
Dials quickly.

ZELDA

Shut up, Brewster! Shut up! For years- You don't talk and now you can't shut your mouth up. Damn you Brewster! You wouldn't understand. You couldn't understand. Not if you tried your whole life- *She loves him.*

(beat)

She loves him

On the phone now.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Giles, that you? Put Elisa on.

(then)

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. Give the phone back to Giles...

|     |                                |     |
|-----|--------------------------------|-----|
| 199 | OMITTED                        | 199 |
| 200 | OMITTED                        | 200 |
| 201 | OMITTED                        | 201 |
| 202 | OMITTED                        | 202 |
| 203 | OMITTED                        | 203 |
| 204 | OMITTED                        | 204 |
| 205 | INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT | 205 |
|     | Elisa hands Giles the phone.   |     |

GILES

What is it?

She Enters the apartment, walks to the tub and extends her hand towards the creature, helping it out of the tub.

206 EXT. ARCADE CINEMA AND TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT 206

Strickland is already pulling up.

He takes the stairs-

207 OMITTED 207

208 EXT/INT. CORRIDOR/ELISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 208

Strickland finishes climbing the stairs - takes the corridor and bashes open Elisa's door. No one there.

He looks around:

Looks in the bathroom. Algae in the tub.

STRICKLAND

Dammit.

He searches the table, picks up an egg. Checks the kitchen, spots the calendar and the note: RAIN and DOCKS.

Strickland on the phone in the corridor.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

They're at the docks, Sally. Send back up and a containment unit. We will get them.

He slams down the phone and goes out the fire escape door.

209 OMITTED 209

209A OMITTED 209A

210 EXT. DOCKS / CANAL - EARLY DAWN 210

Rain. Falling on them: Giles parks the van- takes a flashlight and goes around the van. He opens the door. Elisa holds the Amphibian Man in her lap.

GILES

Come on. We have to go. Come on.

Elisa takes the creature to the edge of the water.

The Amphibian Man looks at the waters- murky, dark and cold and then looks back at Giles.

Giles removes his hat and places the Amphibian Man's hand on his newly grown hair. The Amphibian Man takes Giles' hand and places it on his head. Giles smiles goodbye and walks away with his flashlight.

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

She signs fast- "Go. Alone. Without me."

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.

Elisa cries openly. Moves to him.

-towards the water. The creature looks at her. Hesitates.

Caught between freedom and her. She turns her back.

He looks at the murky waters.

STRICKLAND has arrived-

Giles turns. Strickland knocks him down in two moves.

She turns to warn the creature- tries to scream-

But she is mute- A painful hiss emerges from her throat- She tries again. Fails.

Strickland shoots twice. The Creature's back explodes in a cloud of blood. It falls. Distant sirens are heard now.

Elisa steps between the creature and him-

Strickland raises his revolver. Shoots a third time.

Elisa turns. She feels a hole in her coat. Elisa discovers- almost casually- that she has taken a bullet in her chest. She falls next to the Amphibian Man. She turns to the creature.

Giles picks up a broken piece of wood from the floor. Hits Strickland.

Strickland falls.

He Loses the cattle prod.

Giles runs to Elisa, cradles her.

Strickland slowly gets up. He empties the chambers and starts reloading the gun.

The creature- its bioluminescence markings ablaze- rises from the ground, heads towards Strickland.

Strickland is shocked-

Now the chromatophores in the Amphibian Man's body seem to glow and get brighter.

The Amphibian Man pushes the gun away. Around his head: a shimmering halo of bioluminescence.

STRICKLAND

Fuck- you are a God.

The Amphibian Man deploys one of his finger claws and swiftly, calmly-

-he slices Strickland's throat. Strickland falls down, bleeding. PATROL CARS arrive.

The creature looks at Giles and then moves towards Elisa. He embraces her tenderly: their eyes meet.

STRICKLAND, on the ground, is dies

Giles is with Elisa. The creature lifts Elisa from the ground with infinite tenderness. She caresses his face. He caresses her.

Policemen pour out of the cars. Zelda breaks through the group. Moves towards Giles...

The creature stands on the edge of the pier, holding Elisa. He jumps into the water and disappears.

The cops stand there looking at each other.

Giles moves to the edge of the pier- looks down. Zelda comes to his side- trembling. Tears streak her face, mixing with the rain.

ZELDA

They're together, aren't they?

GILES

Yes. I believe they are...

They hold hands.

GILES / NARRATOR

If I told you about it- What would I Say? That they lived happily ever after? I believe they did... That they were in love- that they remained in love? I'm sure that is true...

211

UNDERWATER

211

Elisa and the creature sink softly, gracefully. Fish dart by- Odd drifting objects... empty food cans, an alarm clock...

The creature kisses her- a kiss so gentle- and covers her wound with his webbed palm.

GILES / NARRATOR

But when I think of her, of Elisa- all that comes to mind is a poem. Made of just a few truthful words... Whispered by someone in love, hundreds of years ago...

(beat)

"Unable to perceive the shape of You, I find You all around me. Your presence fills my eyes with Your love, It humbles my heart, For You are everywhere."

He then lets her body float away from him-

-holding her but by the hand. Her head, crowned by a halo of hair. She gasps! Drowning! Spasms! He holds her down! She grows still.

And just as he releases her... the scars on the sides of Elisa's neck open- Revealing gills.

She opens her eyes and looks at him. Alive. He embraces her.

Blue and red lights illuminate them from above.

Camera pulls back until they become small, blurry figures shifting in and out of focus from our field of vision...

*The Shape of Water.*