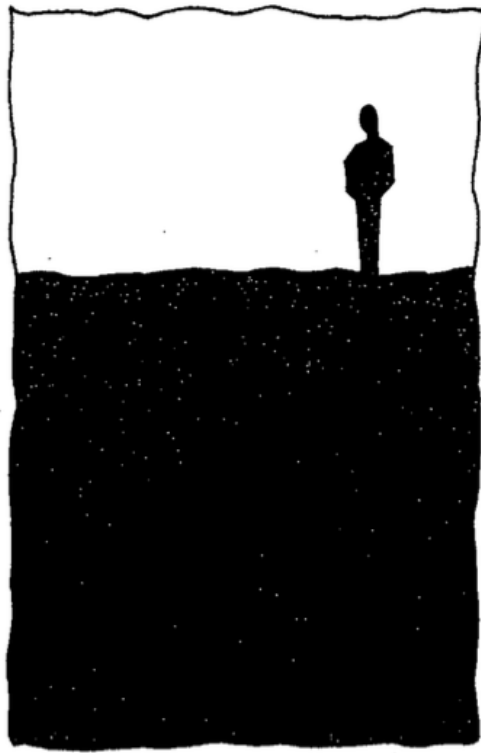


UNCLE CHARLIE



by Ted Foulke

FIRST DRAFT - 07/06/10

UNCLE CHARLIE is a prequel to STOKER.

The former was written with the assumption the reader is
familiar with the latter.

If the reader is not... Apologies.

- Ted Foulke

CLOSE ON a row of black and white piano keys, polished to a mirror shine.

For a moment they sit silent, undisturbed.

CLOSE ON a pair of hands, entering frame.

Pale and delicate. Clearly feminine.

They touch down soundlessly on the keys, slip naturally into the appropriate configuration, and begin to play.

The piece is reflective. Mournful. It's the one India played before her father's funeral, similar to but not the same as *Gnossienne No. 4* by Erik Satie.

As the music casts its spell and the opening credits roll, we dissolve back and forth between the present and the long-distant past...

GRAINY FLASH: A BEACH, SOMEWHERE ALONG THE COAST... LOOKS LIKE CALIFORNIA... WAVES CRASHING TO OUR LEFT, CLIFFS TOWERING TO OUR RIGHT...

FAR AWAY DOWN THE SAND, A TINY FIGURE COMES TOWARDS US, MOVING IN SLOW-MOTION...

Fingers... Music...

GRAINY FLASH: IT'S A SIX-YEAR-OLD BOY IN SWIM TRUNKS, RUNNING AS FAST AS HIS LITTLE LEGS WILL CARRY HIM...

Fingers... Music...

GRAINY FLASH: HIS FACE IS CLENCHED AND TWISTED, HIS FOREHEAD SLICKED WITH SWEAT, HIS TINY CHEST HEAVING WITH EFFORT...

Fingers... Music...

GRAINY FLASH: THE LITTLE BOY THROWS A LOOK OVER HIS SHOULDER... AND WE REVEAL A SECOND FIGURE... LARGER AND DARKER... CLOSING IN FAST BEHIND HIM...

Fingers... Music...

GRAINY FLASH: THE BOY DIGS IN DEEP FOR A FINAL, DESPERATE BURST OF SPEED...

Fingers... Music...

GRAINY FLASH: THE BOY IS FAST BUT NOT FAST ENOUGH... AND BEFORE WE KNOW IT, THE DARK FIGURE IS UPON HIM, SWOOPING IN LOW WITH ARMS OUTSTRETCHED...

Fingers... Music...

GRAINY FLASH: DARK HANDS FILL THE FRAME... THE BOY OPENS HIS MOUTH TO SCREAM... AND THEN HE'S SNATCHED OFF HIS FEET...

Fingers... Music...

GRAINY FLASH: AS HE'S YANKED UP AND AWAY AND OUT OF SIGHT, WE HEAR HIM CRY OUT AT LAST... A WRETCHED, ANIMAL SOUND... CAUGHT SOMEWHERE BETWEEN FURY AND DESPAIR...

CLOSE ON the hands as they stop abruptly mid-chord, lifting quickly off the keys.

WE PAN UP to reveal IT WAS NOT INDIA PLAYING THE PIANO.

It's a stranger. Someone we've never seen before.

CLOSE ON A WOMAN.

Hooded eyes. Honey hair. A face carved from alabaster.

Exquisite.

WE PULL BACK to find her sitting at an upright piano in the living room of a 1920's Craftsman bungalow.

It's a small room. Spare. White wood trim and hardwood floors. A brick fireplace and a cozy fire. The furnishings, while few, are fine, chosen with care.

The woman cocks her head, looking toward the back of the house, as though she's heard something.

After a moment she rises, walks out of the living room.

When she moves (as she must) her movements are poised and precise, graceful without effort, as though from long years spent at the barre.

In a tartan skirt and tailored blouse, a simple gold chain around her neck, she might be a minister's wife, or a model from one of the nicer catalogues. Brooks Brothers maybe.

Whatever she is, she is also (as it happens) north of 50.

The woman walks into the kitchen off the living room (also small, also spare). She goes to the basement door, opens it.

The woman looks down into the darkness below, listening.

After a moment she descends, keeping one hand on the railing and the other on the wall, feeling her way. At the bottom of the concrete stairs, she stops. The hand on the wall finds a switch, turns it on.

Light.

The woman peers into the depths of the small, low-ceilinged space, its farthest corners still soaked in shadow...

Something's there.

Resting on the floor against the wall at the back.

Long and flat. Box-like. Made of metal.

A cage.

The length of a coffin but just 10 inches high.

Inside, on her back, IS A TEENAGE GIRL.

Covered in filth.

Tied with rope.

Her mouth sealed with duct tape.

She can only tremble as the woman comes closer...

And closer...

The woman is almost to the cage when, somewhere upstairs, we hear the sound of the doorbell.

The woman stops, listening.

The girl in the cage listens too...

Her gummy, red-rimmed eyes look up to the light shining down from the top of the stairs. Ever so slightly, they widen with what looks like hope.

A moment passes... Then another...

The doorbell rings again.

The woman turns and goes, leaving the girl alone (for now).

She reaches the stairs, flicks off the light, walks back up the steps, taking her time...

The woman moves back through the kitchen, back across the living room, past the piano...

She reaches the front door, opens it...

And finds EVIE and INDIA STOKER standing on her front porch.

Evie is encased in fur, a single gloved hand pulling its collar close around her throat.

India stands behind her, wearing a red wool overcoat from the Madeline collection.

On her feet are a pair of black and white saddle shoes.

Evie shivers in the early December chill...

India does not.

The woman stands motionless in the doorway, looking at them.

Mother and daughter return the favor. Then -

EVIE
Miss Price?

The woman folds her hands primly before her.

WOMAN
Yes?

Evie smiles, exhales. Relieved.

EVIE
Thank goodness! I wasn't sure we
had the right address...
(then)
India's here for her piano lesson.

The woman's eyes flick to India.

Only then does she smile too.

Meet MISS PRICE.

SMASHCUT TO WHITE WORDS ON A BLACK SCREEN:

UNCLE CHARLIE

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON a pair of eyes.

Dark and inscrutable.

WE WIDEN OUT to reveal a lush charcoal portrait, skillfully rendered on a sheet of creamy high bond paper.

It's India, exactly as we just saw her, down to the last eyelash...

The likeness is remarkable.

CLOSE ON a pair of hands, entering frame.

Strong. Masculine.

One of them holds the paper in place while the other - a piece of charcoal between long, tapered fingers - adds a line of shadow beneath her jaw.

WE WIDEN OUT again, revealing we are in...

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - DAY

There he is: UNCLE CHARLIE.

Sitting at a small roll top desk under the (barred) window, all alone in his basement room. A ray of sunlight cuts across India's face as he finishes his sketch.

The room is much as we last saw it: tiny, pleasant, and chockablock with knickknacks.

His desk alone hosts a multitude of items, including but not limited to a word-a-day calendar, an old brass lamp, several boxes of stationery, plastic cups filled with pens, a silver toast rack cum organizer, and a transistor radio.

Uncle Charlie uses a finger to smudge the charcoal a bit. Then, satisfied with his efforts, he rises, sketch in hand.

As he turns to face the wall over the bed, WE SWIVEL AROUND HIM TO REVEAL DOZENS OF SKETCHES TAPED TO ITS SURFACE...

INDIA.

India, India everywhere...

Except not quite.

Some Indias have long hair and some have short hair... Some have red hair and some have black hair... Some have full lips and some have fuller lips... Some have dimples and some have freckles...

A thousand combinations. A thousand variations. All on the same theme.

The only thing they have in common are the eyes...

He is almost positive about the eyes.

Uncle Charlie tapes the latest sketch to the wall and stands back, hands on hips, to admire his collection.

As he does so, we might register the complete absence of portraits from India's younger years.

Then again, we might not.

(Back to the artist.)

He looks much as he did the first time we saw him, at his brother's funeral: hair short, shirt tucked, loafers shined.

Smiling a little smile.

Uncle Charlie extends a hand, gently straightens the one piece of paper sitting dead center on the wall.

It is the only one without a sketch.

We see that it's trimmed in ribbon (white). We see that there's writing on it (black).

We do not see what it says.

Uncle Charlie sighs and turns toward the window, looking out at the view. After a moment he closes his eyes, letting the late November sunshine warm his handsome face.

We are suddenly outside the basement window, looking in.

WE SLOWLY PULL BACK to establish...

EXT. WRENFIELD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

"Wrenfield Institute. A Home Away From Home. Founded 1875."

Exclusive. Discreet. A private facility where wealthy families can send their genetic disappointments to be sheltered, fed, and finally forgotten.

The architecture is massive and Victorian, gray and gloomy. Hedged in on all sides by a thicket of gnarled trees.

A sight to chill, even on the sunniest of days.

As we pull farther and farther back from the window, Uncle Charlie's face grows smaller and smaller, until it's one more brick in the wall.

UNCLE CHARLIE (V.O.)

When you close your eyes... what do you see?

INT. WRENFIELD - DR. WALKER'S OFFICE - DAY

We're in what resembles a generously turned-out study. Venetians blinds and Persian rugs. Framed diplomas papering the walls. A handsome fireplace, currently unused.

Uncle Charlie lies on a leather psychiatrist's couch near the windows, looking out toward the lawn.

Sitting across from him is a formidable-looking older man in a neutral suit and tie. Meet DR. FRANCIS WALKER (60's, silver hair, gold-rimmed glasses).

DR. WALKER

I think the more appropriate question is, what do you see, Charlie? When you close your eyes?

UNCLE CHARLIE

(looking out the window)
Nothing.

DR. WALKER

Charlie, oftentimes, when we ask someone a question about themselves, it's merely in the hopes we'll be asked the same question in return. We're less interested in the other person's thoughts than we are in being invited to share our own.

Uncle Charlie finally turns to him.

UNCLE CHARLIE

Oftentimes, I have no idea what you're talking about.

DR. WALKER

(beat)
Is there something you'd like to share, Charlie?

Uncle Charlie merely smiles.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)

Charlie, we've known each other for many years now -

UNCLE CHARLIE

Over 25 and counting.

DR. WALKER

Yes - a long time. And I would like to think that within that time, you and I have forged an understanding based on trust. Mutual. Trust.

UNCLE CHARLIE

(still smiling)
Are you saying you don't trust me, Dr. Walker?

DR. WALKER
No, Charlie -

UNCLE CHARLIE
"No" you don't trust me?

DR. WALKER
What I'm saying -

UNCLE CHARLIE
Because that would hurt my feelings.

DR. WALKER
What I'm saying, Charlie -

UNCLE CHARLIE
Badly.

DR. WALKER
What I'm saying, Charlie, is that I would like to think - I would like to hope - that you and I are past the point of playing games.

He peers at Uncle Charlie over the rims of his glasses.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)
I'd like to believe that's the case.

UNCLE CHARLIE
So would I, Doctor. So would I.

DR. WALKER
(nodding)
Good. Then we are in agreement. So, one more time - what do you see when you close your eyes?

UNCLE CHARLIE
I don't know. I don't remember the last time I closed my eyes.

DR. WALKER
Then perhaps you can close your eyes now. And tell me what you see.

UNCLE CHARLIE
You want me to close my eyes?

DR. WALKER
Yes.

UNCLE CHARLIE
Right now?

DR. WALKER
Yes, Charlie. Right now.

UNCLE CHARLIE
Okay. But only because I trust you.

DR. WALKER
Thank you, Charlie.

UNCLE CHARLIE
You're welcome.

Uncle Charlie closes his eyes, and Dr. Walker lets slip a long, silent sigh.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Now what do I see... What do I see...
(beat)
I see eyes.

DR. WALKER
Eyes?

UNCLE CHARLIE
Yes. I see eyes. Looking at me.

DR. WALKER
Are they male or female?

UNCLE CHARLIE
Female. Definitely.

Dr. Walker takes a moment to respond.

DR. WALKER
Alright. What else do you see?

UNCLE CHARLIE
I see skin... It's smooth. Supple.

DR. WALKER
And?

UNCLE CHARLIE
Hair... Soft. And thick.

DR. WALKER
And what else?

UNCLE CHARLIE
Lips... Pink and parted.

Dr. Walker shifts in his seat.

DR. WALKER
And what else can you tell me about
her face?

UNCLE CHARLIE
(cracking an eye)
Who said I was talking about her
face?

Beat.

DR. WALKER
Charlie?

UNCLE CHARLIE
Yes, Doctor?

DR. WALKER
Tell me something -

UNCLE CHARLIE
Yes, Doctor?

DR. WALKER
Are we talking about India?

UNCLE CHARLIE
No, Doctor...
(beat)
We're talking about your wife.

As an angry blush snakes its way up the doctor's throat,
they're interrupted by a knock at the door.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Speak of *le diable*.

The door opens, and a handsome middle-aged woman looks in.

DR. ONDINE MAILLARD (60's, French accent) is also as we last
saw her, on the steps of the institute, waving good-bye the
day Uncle Charlie's brother came to take him home.

DR. MAILLARD
Sorry to interrupt...

UNCLE CHARLIE
Bonjour, Dr. Maillard!

DR. MAILLARD
Bonjour, Charlie...

DR. WALKER
(impatiently)
Yes? What is it?

DR. MAILLARD

I promised Charlie we'd have our appointment tonight, but then I remembered I have to prep for group as well. Do you think I could borrow him a little bit early?

DR. WALKER

Now?

DR. MAILLARD

If you don't mind.

Dr. Walker looks to his patient. Clearly they're far from finished.

UNCLE CHARLIE

Pretty please?

DR. WALKER

(beat)

Fine. Yes, of course... That's fine.

It's not fine, but Dr. Walker chokes that thought down.

DR. MAILLARD

Super!

(to Uncle Charlie)

Ready?

UNCLE CHARLIE

And willing! *Allons-y!*

Uncle Charlie hops up from the couch, heads for the door.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)

See you, Doc!

DR. WALKER

Yes, Charlie... See you.

Uncle Charlie walks past Dr. Maillard and out into the hallway. She remains, lingering at the door.

DR. MAILLARD

(quiet)

Are you mad?

DR. WALKER

No.

DR. MAILLARD

Don't be mad.

DR. WALKER
I'm not mad.

He waves her away, shoulders sagging.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)
Go on.

Dr. Maillard stays where she is, eyebrows raised.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)
My love, I said go on! Enjoy
yourselves. If that's possible...

She gives him a look that's tender and knowing and closes the door, leaving her husband alone with his thoughts...

Whatever those might be.

INT. WRENFIELD - HALLWAY - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Maillard walks briskly down a hallway lined with linoleum, her white consultation coat rippling. Uncle Charlie keeps pace, animated, like a boy who's been let out early from school.

UNCLE CHARLIE
I got a phone call today...

DR. MAILLARD
(expecting this)
Did you?

UNCLE CHARLIE
Yes...

DR. MAILLARD
And?

UNCLE CHARLIE
And were you aware they said "no"
to the swimming pool?

DR. MAILLARD
Yes, Charlie. I was aware...

They pass a MALE NURSE carrying a tray of pill cups.

MALE NURSE
Hey, Charlie!

UNCLE CHARLIE
Hey, Bobby!
(continuing)
(MORE)

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Were you aware they also said "no"
to the badminton court?

DR. MAILLARD

Yes, Charlie. I was aware...

They pass a FEMALE DOCTOR next.

FEMALE DOCTOR

Staying out of trouble, Charlie?

UNCLE CHARLIE

Always!

(continuing)

My attorneys said...

They pass an old man clipping his toenails on a bench. He ignores them completely.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)

That's the spirit, Mr. Foster!

(continuing)

My attorneys said the Board
actually refused - refused - to
hear more of my proposals...

They pass a SECURITY OFFICER leaning against a wall.

SECURITY OFFICER

How ya doing, Charlie?

UNCLE CHARLIE

Staying out of trouble, Frank!

(continuing)

No one in their right mind would
turn down a free swimming pool...

DR. MAILLARD

Not everyone has your vision,
Charlie. Or your generous nature...

As they start down a long flight of stairs -

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)

And if that nature insists on
satisfaction, I'm sure you will
come up with a clever solution...

UNCLE CHARLIE

Such as?

DR. MAILLARD

Well...

(half-serious)

We could use a new roof for one...

They turn a corner at the bottom, almost running into TWIN SISTERS (90's) in matching robes, arms linked at the waist.

SISTER NUMBER ONE
Good evening, Charlie!

UNCLE CHARLIE
Good evening, Miss Sherwood!

SISTER NUMBER TWO
Good evening, Charlie!

UNCLE CHARLIE
Good evening, Miss Sherwood!
(continuing, sotto voce)
No offense, Dr. Maillard, but why
settle for a new roof when you can
have the Sherwood girls sitting
poolside in string bikinis?

Dr. Maillard chuckles despite herself.

DR. MAILLARD
Oh Charlie... I'm afraid you will
just have to find other ways to
keep yourself amused...

They reach the end of another long corridor, pushing through
a set of swinging doors...

INT. WRENFIELD - KITCHEN - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

The institute's main kitchen. Enormous. Stainless.

Uncle Charlie and Dr. Maillard stand on the same side of an
island in a far corner. Both wear chef's aprons.

On the island in front of them are pots, pans, bowls, spoons,
knives and a range of ingredients precisely arranged.

In the background, kitchen staff prepare dinner for the
patients. They've seen Uncle Charlie in here before, so they
pay him no mind.

DR. MAILLARD
So! We begin.

Uncle Charlie starts pulling a chicken breast apart.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)
Ah-ah-ah! Leave the chicken on the
bone, please. Always on the bone...

UNCLE CHARLIE
Apologies...

DR. MAILLARD

We dust the entire chicken in
flour. Like so...

She demonstrates, dipping a breast in a bowl of white flour.
Uncle Charlie observes and follows suit, mirroring her
movements, all the way down to her arched pinky finger.

UNCLE CHARLIE

Like this?

DR. MAILLARD

Yes. *Bon...*

Dr. Maillard moves to a giant 8-burner stove, turns on the
gas beneath a frying pan.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)

Next, we *sauté* in oil and butter
until every side of the chicken is
a nice golden brown...

Uncle Charlie plops the breasts in the pan, turning them over
with tongs when necessary. Dr. Maillard looks on approvingly.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)

Very nice...

She turns on a second burner beneath a large steel pot.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)

Then we put the chicken in the pot!

QUICKCUTS as Uncle Charlie adds ingredients per instruction.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)

L'oignon...

UNCLE CHARLIE

Onion...

DR. MAILLARD

Le jambon...

UNCLE CHARLIE

Ham...

DR. MAILLARD

La purée de tomate...

UNCLE CHARLIE

Tomato purée...

Uncle Charlie shifts slightly, moving closer to Dr. Maillard.

DR. MAILLARD
L'ail...

UNCLE CHARLIE
Garlic...

He shifts again, closer now.

DR. MAILLARD
Arrête!

Uncle Charlie stops, looks at Dr. Maillard.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)
Charlie, a chef needs her space.

A beat, then he moves over a little.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)
Much better.
(continuing)
Le stock de poulet...

UNCLE CHARLIE
Chicken stock...

DR. MAILLARD
Les champignons...

UNCLE CHARLIE
I never could stand mushrooms...

DR. MAILLARD
(snapping her fingers)
Then leave them out! Easy!
(continuing)
*Now le thym... et les feuilles de
laurier...*

UNCLE CHARLIE
Thyme, bay leaves...

DR. MAILLARD
Et le pinot noir...

Uncle Charlie picks up an open bottle next to the stove.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)
Ah-ah-ah!

Dr. Maillard raps his knuckles lightly.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)
If you don't mind...

Uncle Charlie hands her the bottle, grinning cheekily.

UNCLE CHARLIE
Pardonnez-moi...

DR. MAILLARD
Thank you!
(to the pot)
So you don't get thirsty, my little
chickens...

She pours the wine in. Uncle Charlie puts the lid on the pot.

UNCLE CHARLIE
Pour combien de temps?

DR. MAILLARD
About 45 minutes...
(looking at her watch)
Merde... Which means that I will be
the one to finish this dish.

She starts moving quickly, taking off her apron.

UNCLE CHARLIE
I can stay...

DR. MAILLARD
Mais non.

UNCLE CHARLIE
Just this once...

DR. MAILLARD
(firm)
No, Charlie. You must go and get
ready for your own dinner...

A member of the kitchen staff walks by, a tray of something
unrecognizable held high.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)
(teasing)
I'm sure it's not to be missed.
(then)
I must go. And then I will return,
season to taste, and Dr. Walker and
I will enjoy our *coq au vin à la*
Charlie!

Uncle Charlie sighs, starts removing his apron as well.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)
Charlie?

Dr. Maillard gestures to the island and stovetop, both
littered with dirty cookware.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)
S'il vous plaît...

Uncle Charlie dutifully re-ties his apron strings.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)
Thank you, Charlie! Goodnight!

And she's gone, out through the swinging doors, Uncle Charlie watching after her.

UNCLE CHARLIE
(quiet)
Bonne nuit, Dr. Maillard... Bonne nuit...

Then he turns to the sink, turns on the taps, and starts washing the dishes alone.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Good morning, ladies and gentlemen... Today is Tuesday, November 29th...

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - DAWN

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, lying in bed, wide awake and fully dressed, listening to the loudspeaker on the wall overhead.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
The temperature outside is currently 42 degrees, so please be sure to dress warmly... And have a lovely day...

Uncle Charlie swings himself upright, walks over to the dresser, pulls out his navy blue sweater, puts it on.

He selects a red magic marker, turns to the wall calendar, carefully puts an "X" through Tuesday, November 29th.

Then he picks up his word-a-day calendar, peels off yesterday's page, reads aloud from the new one.

UNCLE CHARLIE
"Increment (noun): the quantity, usually small, by which a given variable increases or is increased..."

He crumples the old page, tosses it in the wastebasket, puts his hands in his pockets, turns toward the window.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Increment, increment, increment...
Increment, increment, increment...
Increment, increment, increment...

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, looking out at the view, face solemn and still.

BEGIN MONTAGE

INT. WRENFIELD - DINING ROOM - MORNING - MONTAGE

Tile floors. Stucco walls. Folding tables in rows.

Those who can manage it work their way through the serving line. Those who can't sit waiting patiently to be served.

Uncle Charlie leaves the line with a tray in each hand, both loaded down with eggs, sausage, pancakes and orange juice. He makes his way to the more coveted tables by the windows...

Reveal the Sherwood twins, sitting next to each other.

SISTER NUMBER ONE
Good morning, Charlie!

UNCLE CHARLIE
Good morning, Miss Sherwood!

SISTER NUMBER TWO
Good morning, Charlie!

UNCLE CHARLIE
Good morning, Miss Sherwood!

He's barely set the trays down before they're falling to. Uncle Charlie takes a seat on the other side of the table.

SISTER NUMBER ONE
Aren't you having breakfast, Charlie?

UNCLE CHARLIE
I've already eaten, Miss Sherwood.
I'm just here to keep you company...

They flash matching grins, cheeks stuffed like chipmunks.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Here... Let me cut up those sausages for you...

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - MONTAGE

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, looking out at the view.

MALE NURSE (V.O.)
Arberg... Bailey...

INT. WRENFIELD - SUNROOM - LATE MORNING - MONTAGE

Like a greenhouse, floor-to-ceiling windows on three walls out of four. Tables with plastic tablecloths sprinkled throughout. A couple of orderlies pacing the room.

Reveal Uncle Charlie, orchestrating a game of Hearts with three male patients. One of them - Clarence (50's, bald with a fringe) - wins the last trick.

Uncle Charlie's face is a pantomime of surprise.

UNCLE CHARLIE
Wait a minute... Did somebody shoot
the moon?

Clarence titters.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Did somebody shoot the moon,
Clarence?

Clarence titters again. The other players look down at their hands, mouths open, doing the math.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Was it you, Clarence?

Clarence nods, pleased with himself.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Was it yooouuuu, Clarence? Did
Clarence shoot the moon?

Clarence cackles, nodding some more. Uncle Charlie reaches over, pinches his fat little cheek.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Yes, you did, Clarence... YES, YOU
DID... YES! YOU! DID!

Around the room, patients start looking over, curious.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
(loud)
Clarence shot the moon!

Then, beating time on the tabletop -

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Clarence shot the moon! Clarence
shot the moon! CLARENCE SHOT THE
MOON! CLARENCE SHOT THE MOON!

The room needs no encouragement, even if most of them have no
idea what he's talking about.

EVERYONE
CLARENCE SHOT THE MOON!!! CLARENCE
SHOT THE MOON!!! CLARENCE SHOT THE
MOON!!! CLARENCE SHOT THE MOON!!!

Clarence rises stiffly, taking a little bow to increasingly
frenzied applause. The orderlies begin to mobilize, gently
shushing and quieting everyone down.

WE PAN to the doorway... And find Dr. Walker watching.

His eyes sweep the crowd, then settle on Uncle Charlie.

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, laughing and clapping, eyes alight
with mischief.

CLOSE ON Dr. Walker, eyes hidden behind glasses, their lenses
alight with only the fluorescents on the sunroom ceiling.

At last he turns and walks away, the sound of Uncle Charlie's
laughter dying behind him.

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - MONTAGE

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, looking out at the view.

MALE NURSE (V.O.)
Baxter... Cross...

INT. WRENFIELD - GYMNASIUM - DAY - MONTAGE

Black rubber mats, school bus yellow tiles. Uncle Charlie and
a dozen other patients stand in rows doing stretches. A GYM
INSTRUCTOR (40's, male) barks out bored encouragements.

GYM INSTRUCTOR
Alright, people... Put your arms up
over your heads and reeeaaaaach...
That's right... Reeeaaaaach...

The people reach.

GYM INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)
You can do it, people... Reach for
the sky, waaaay up hiiiigh...

The people reach.

MALE INSTRUCTOR
Now I want you to waggle those
fingers, people... That's right...
Waggle 'em... Waaaaggle 'em...
Waaaaaaaaggle 'em...

Now they waggle and they reach.

CLOSE ON a sea of waggling fingers.

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - MONTAGE

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, looking out at the view.

MALE NURSE (V.O.)
Davis... Freeling...

INT. WRENFIELD - DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON - MONTAGE

Lunchtime. Reading a frayed hardcover (His Private Character
by Albert Ross), Uncle Charlie sits alone by the wall.

Eyes on the page, he reaches for his tray, picks up half a
peanut butter and jam sandwich, takes a bite, puts it down.
He reaches for his milk carton, takes a sip, puts it down.

Still reading, he reaches for his napkin, dabs his mouth.
O.S., someone starts shouting obscenities.

Uncle Charlie puts his napkin down, turns a page, oblivious
to the noise and the tumult.

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - MONTAGE

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, looking out at the view.

MALE NURSE (V.O.)
Gilman... Harkness...

EXT. WRENFIELD - FRONT LAWN - AFTERNOON - MONTAGE

The grounds crew swarm the wide front lawn, raking and
bagging the last of the fall leaves. One of them drives a
small tractor back and forth across the grass, its large
utility cart stacked with bags of dead foliage.

Uncle Charlie rides on the edge of the cart, hopping off to help whenever they come to a stop.

It's cold out, so he's wearing his blue quilted hunter's jacket and a yellow knit cap, a pair of red gloves on his hands to keep warm.

As the cart bounces and jolts over the rough terrain, Uncle Charlie shouts and whoops and waves every chance he gets.

WE PAN UP to a second floor window...

There's Dr. Walker again, looking down on the scene.

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - MONTAGE

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, looking out at the view.

MALE NURSE (V.O.)
Jackson... Kittredge...

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - DUSK - MONTAGE

As night falls we find Uncle Charlie at his desk, about to begin a letter.

He rifles through several boxes of stationery, picks out a piece of paper (blue) and an envelope (also blue). He chooses a pen. Ballpoint this time. Blue (to match).

Pulling a 1947 Encyclopedia Britannica "PLANTS TO RAYM VOL. 18" from a nearby stack, he flips it open to a page marked with a strip of torn loose leaf.

CLOSE ON Prague, a map of the city on one page, a fact sheet on the page opposite, large chunks highlighted in yellow. Uncle Charlie takes a moment to review, then begins to write.

CLOSE ON the ink as it hits the page.

UNCLE CHARLIE (V.O.)
*My Dearest India... Greetings from
Stare Mesto... That means "Old
Town" in Czech...*

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - MONTAGE

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, looking out at the view.

MALE NURSE (V.O.)
Lyedecker... Masters...

INT. WRENFIELD - DINING ROOM - NIGHT - MONTAGE

After dinner, dessert is served. Warm apple pie and vanilla ice cream. As the patients tuck in, we hear the strains of "Softly and Tenderly (Jesus Is Calling)," sung in a shaky but strident mezzo-soprano.

WE PAN ACROSS the room until we find the individual responsible for tonight's entertainment: a FEMALE PATIENT (blue hair, pink cardigan), standing near a battered piano.

Over the clink of forks and spoons, she launches into the popular hymn's not-so-popular third verse.

FEMALE PATIENT

*Time is now fleeting
the moments are passing...
passing from you and from meeee...
shadows are gathering
deathbeds are coming...
coming for yoooouuuu and for
meeee...*

A couple of diners start to cry. The orderlies mobilize.

FEMALE PATIENT (CONT'D)

*(unfazed)
Come home, come ho-oh-oh-ome...
Ye who are weary
Come ho-oh-ooome...*

WE PAN to her left and find Uncle Charlie, providing accompaniment on the piano.

As the singing and sobbing continue, his mouth curls up at the corners.

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - MONTAGE

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, looking out at the view.

MALE NURSE (V.O.)

Oakley... Paige...

INT. WRENFIELD - DINING ROOM - NIGHT - MONTAGE

We find the patients gathered in a cluster after the meal.

A nurse - the one Uncle Charlie and Dr. Maillard passed in the hallway - stands before them, a mail cart by his side and a letter in his hands.

MALE NURSE
Rosings... Where are you, Mr.
Rosings?

An elderly patient hobbles forward to get his mail.

MALE NURSE (CONT'D)
Here you go...

He reaches into the cart, pulls out a large parcel next.

MALE NURSE (CONT'D)
Sherwood...

The twins reach forward, grasping. The nurse holds the parcel up to his ears, shakes it playfully. Then he hands it over.

MALE NURSE (CONT'D)
There you go, ladies. Enjoy...

We reveal Uncle Charlie, another face in the crowd, waiting patiently for the next name to be called.

MALE NURSE (CONT'D)
Stanforth...

The nurse hands a postcard to a YOUNG WOMAN in a wheelchair.

YOUNG WOMAN
Thank you.

MALE NURSE
You're welcome. And...

He picks up the last letter, looks at the name on the front.

MALE NURSE (CONT'D)
And Williams.
(then)
That's it for today...

The patients disperse, most grumbling. The nurse pushes his cart over to Uncle Charlie, a sympathetic look on his face.

Then, in unison -

MALE NURSE / UNCLE CHARLIE
"Sorry, Charlie."

It has the ring of a very, very old joke.

The nurse puts out a hand and Uncle Charlie gives him India's letter.

MALE NURSE
I'll make sure this goes out
tomorrow...

Uncle Charlie nods, gives him a half-hearted wink.

UNCLE CHARLIE
Thanks, Bobby.

Then he turns around and walks back to his room.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Attention, ladies and gentlemen...
Tomorrow will be Wednesday,
November 30th...

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Uncle Charlie drapes his hand towel over the footboard, drops
his toothbrush in an old mint julep cup on the dresser.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
The forecast calls for clouds with
a chance of rain, and a high of 40
degrees...

He sits down on the edge of the bed, takes off his loafers.
He sets them on the floor, side by side.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
So please be sure to dress
warmly...

Uncle Charlie lies down, still fully dressed, his head in the
exact center of the pillow.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Pleasant dreams and we'll see you
in the morning... Goodnight...

He reaches out a hand, turns out the light.

CUT TO BLACK

END MONTAGE

UNCLE CHARLIE (V.O.)
Last night I had the most
incredible dream...

INT. WRENFIELD - DR. WALKER'S OFFICE - DAY

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON Uncle Charlie, lying on the couch.

UNCLE CHARLIE

I don't remember where I was or who
I was... That's not important...
What's important is that when I
looked down at my left foot, my big
toe was made of hamburger... Isn't
that funny?

Maybe, but Uncle Charlie looks disturbed by the thought.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)

What's even funnier is that after I
got over the initial surprise, I
leaned down... and I took a bite.

(beat)

What do you think it means, Doctor?

Another beat... Then he bursts out laughing.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)

No wait - don't answer that. Don't
answer that... I was only playing.
I only made that up to amuse you...

Uncle Charlie takes a breath, wipes his eyes.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)

The truth is... The truth is I
don't have dreams anymore... Not at
night anyway. Now I seem to do all
my dreaming during the daytime.
That's when dreams are most useful,
I think... When you're awake.

(beat)

When I was little, and Richie would
babysit me, and we were all alone
in the house, I used to dream
there'd be a knock on the door. And
when we opened it, we'd find a
state trooper standing on the front
porch... And with tremendous
delicacy, he would tell us there'd
been an accident out on the
freeway... And they were all gone.
Just like that. Mother. Father.
Auntie Gin. The baby...

(beat)

Poor little thing...

Uncle Charlie goes quiet, eyes focused on something no one
else can see.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)

And then we'd walk around the house
together deciding what we were
going to keep and what we were
going to throw away.

(MORE)

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)

And I'd always remind Richie to set
aside one or two things for
charity, just for appearance's
sake...

(then)

I think it's important to appear
charitable... Don't you?

Uncle Charlie lifts his head, looking across the room,
wondering why Dr. Walker's so quiet today.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Doctor?

AND THAT'S WHEN WE SWIVEL AROUND HIM TO REVEAL IT'S NOT DR.
WALKER HE'S BEEN TALKING TO.

It's the old man from Munch's "The Scream."

(Or at least, it looks like him.)

Mouth hanging, eyes staring. Chin flecked with drool. A
constellation of dandruff on thin, sunken shoulders.

Propped up in a wheelchair, the old man's hands sit curled in
his chest, like he was pulling up a lap blanket and froze mid-
pull...

Horrifying.

We've got a second to absorb this before -

DR. WALKER (O.S.)

Charlie?

Uncle Charlie looks to the door.

UNCLE CHARLIE

(pleasantly)

Dr. Walker!

WE PAN to the doorway and find Dr. Walker. Stunned.

He looks from Uncle Charlie to the man in the wheelchair.
Then back again.

DR. WALKER

Charlie... What are you doing in my
office?

UNCLE CHARLIE

Mr. Dribbles and I were playing
psychiatrist.

DR. WALKER

What -

UNCLE CHARLIE
I was me and he was you.

DR. WALKER
(flabbergasted)
Charlie...

UNCLE CHARLIE
Mr. Dribbles does a wicked
impression of you, Doctor. It's
quite uncanny...

Dr. Walker's color begins to rise.

DR. WALKER
Charlie -

UNCLE CHARLIE
(pointing)
Look - he's doing it now!

Dr. Walker looks at the other man. Clearly he's not doing
anything but foaming at the mouth.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Mr. Dribbles, you are wicked!

DR. WALKER
Charlie!

UNCLE CHARLIE
He's still working on the speech
impediment, but the rest is dead
on.

DR. WALKER
I don't have a sp-

Then, with difficulty -

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)
Charlie, we both know you're not
supposed to take Mr. Drib - Mr.
Drysdale out of the sunroom without
telling someone first...

UNCLE CHARLIE
I thought he might appreciate a
change of scenery. I know I would.

DR. WALKER
I want you to take Mr. Drysdale
back to the sunroom, please...

UNCLE CHARLIE
Now?

DR. WALKER
YES, CHARLIE - NOW.

UNCLE CHARLIE
(innocently)
Very well, Doctor.

Uncle Charlie gets up and goes over to Mr. Drysdale, starts wheeling him from the room. Dr. Walker steps aside at the door to let them pass.

As they're standing eye-to-eye -

DR. WALKER
And Charlie...

UNCLE CHARLIE
Yes, Dr. Walker?

DR. WALKER
You and I will be discussing this
further.
(beat)
In the meantime, I don't want to
catch you in here again.

UNCLE CHARLIE
Alright... You won't.
(then)
Come along, Mr. Dribbles. We know
when we're not wanted...

As the two men start down the hallway, we hear a piano, and the opening notes of Liszt's *Grandes Études de Paganini*, S. 141: No. 4. *Étude in E Major*.

It's light and brisk. Slightly mad-making.

Halfway down the hall, Uncle Charlie comes to a sudden stop. As Dr. Walker looks on, he starts wheeling Mr. Drysdale's chair around and around and around...

OVERHEAD SHOT of Uncle Charlie and Mr. Drysdale, spinning in circles, Uncle Charlie laughing all the while...

Then he hops up on the back, riding the chair down the hall like a kid on a supermarket cart, patients and orderlies hugging the walls as they pass...

As he disappears from view, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. MIDDLE BEND - AFTERNOON

The music continues over SHOTS of the town, quiet and picturesque.

The main street. The post office. The high school.

The "Welcome to Middle Bend" sign.

The police cruiser behind the "Welcome to Middle Bend" sign, Sheriff Howard inside, sipping coffee, waiting for speeders.

A 1920's Craftsman bungalow, nestled on a quiet cul-de-sac.

CLOSE ON the bungalow's black front door.

CLOSE ON a row of black and white piano keys.

CLOSE ON a pair of hands (pale and delicate), leaping and stretching with astonishing speed.

As they bang out the final chords, WE WIDEN OUT to...

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Finished with a piece famous for technical difficulty verging on physical improbability, India removes her hands from the keys, places them modestly in her lap.

Miss Price, seated to the right of the piano on a gray metal folding chair, says nothing.

(Note: aside from the fact that India has removed her coat, both women are dressed exactly as they were at the beginning of the movie. This is the first scene, continued.)

India sits patiently, waiting for her critique. After a moment, Miss Price raises a delicate eyebrow.

MISS PRICE

Well.

(beat)

It seems you are already quite proficient.

India remains silent.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

India?

No response. Miss Price tries again.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Have you been studying long?

India nods. Once.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
With whom?

INDIA
Mr. Andrews.

MISS PRICE
And where is Mr. Andrews now?

India sticks out a finger, plunks one of the piano keys.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
India?

Beat.

INDIA
Dead.

MISS PRICE
I beg your pardon?

INDIA
He died.

MISS PRICE
Oh. I see.

Beat.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Of what?

No response.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
India, I asked you a question,
please.

India shrugs.

INDIA
I don't know.
(beat)
He was old.

MISS PRICE
I see.
(then, thoughtfully)
And were you very sorry, India?

India shrugs again.

INDIA

He said he was going to teach me a
Brahms concerto.

MISS PRICE

But then he died.

INDIA

Yes.

MISS PRICE

How rude.

Surprised, India exhales slightly. It's the closest we've
heard to a laugh. Ever.

Miss Price smiles. (Progress.)

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

Well I promise I'll teach you
everything you'd like to learn
before I die...

Almost imperceptibly, India smiles.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

Shall we shake on it?

India looks down at the proffered hand, considering. Then she
looks up, finally meeting her new teacher's gaze.

INDIA

I believe you.

MISS PRICE

Good - it's a deal.

(then)

Now let's go back to those first
few arpeggios, please. Your
fingering is clever, but not quite
correct...

India readies herself, hands suspended above the keys.

Miss Price takes a moment to drink everything in: hair, skin,
lips, ears, eyes. And those delicious shadows where the
girl's collar meets her throat...

India turns to her, expectant.

INDIA

Miss Price?

Then, momentarily quenched -

MISS PRICE

You may begin.

As India's fingers hit the keys, we hear only the sound of a car door slamming.

SMASHCUT TO:

INT. CAR - DUSK - LATER

Bundled up in her winter coat again, India settles into the passenger seat of a classic Jeep Grand Woody.

As she fastens her seatbelt, WE PAN ACROSS her to RICHARD STOKER (late 40's). Handsome, rumpled, possessed of a kind face and a few extra pounds, India's father looks a lot healthier than the last time we saw him, bloody, beaten, and being rolled semi-conscious into the back of this very car.

RICHARD

How'd it go?

INDIA

Fine.

RICHARD

Just fine?

INDIA

(beat)

I have homework to do.

RICHARD

Is that her?

India looks out the passenger window. Miss Price is standing in her doorway, outlined by the light from within.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Your mother got her name through the high school. I think she used to teach in the music department... Back when they had one.

He waves. Miss Price lifts a hand, holds it still, drops it, and then stays where she is. Richard drops his too, an odd look on his face.

INDIA

Can we go now?

RICHARD

(shaking it off)

Home again, home again...

He turns the engine over.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Jiggity jig...

EXT. MIDDLE BEND - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

WIDE ON the Jeep, driving through town as the sun sinks.

INT. CAR - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

Pretty quiet in here.

RICHARD
So what was she like?

INDIA
Who?

RICHARD
Miss Price.
(looking over)
Your piano teacher.

INDIA
Nice. I guess.

RICHARD
So you liked her...

Beat.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
It sounds to me like you liked her.

INDIA
Yes.
(grudgingly)
I liked her.

Richard grins in a way that seems inappropriate. Then again, these expressions of approval might be few and far between.

RICHARD
Good...
(nodding to himself)
Good, I'm glad...

They drive in silence for a moment.

INDIA
She said she wants to see me three times a week.

RICHARD
Three times a week! My word...
(smiling again)
She must think you're something
special.

Silence.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Don't you think?

INDIA
I think you should turn on the
wipers.

RICHARD
What's that?

INDIA
The wipers. It's raining.

RICHARD
Oh. Right you are...

Richard flicks the wipers on, glances at his daughter. She's
turned away from him now, staring out the passenger window.

INDIA
Watch the road, please.

Richard starts to say something, changes his mind. He sighs,
knowing they won't say another word the rest of the way home.

CLOSE ON the rain as it hits the car windows, the noise
growing louder and louder...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

CLOSE ON the rain as it slams against a tiny (barred) window,
way up near the basement ceiling.

WE PAN DOWN past a crumbling concrete wall...

To the teenage girl in a cage.

She looks tired. Weak. (But not too weak for terror.)

There's a sudden crack of lighting.

The girl opens her eyes, startled. She looks up...

CLOSE ON MISS PRICE, LOOMING OVER THE CAGE.

If she could, the girl would scream and scream and scream...

Dressed as we last saw her (tartan skirt, tailored blouse), Miss Price gives her young guest a clinical once-over.

MISS PRICE

We're looking a little worse for the wear, aren't we?

(beat)

Ah well... I suppose we didn't have much time left anyway. We wouldn't want you to lose all your lustre.

She walks back to the bottom of the staircase, to what looks like an oversize umbrella stand set against the wall.

Needless to say, it's not used for umbrellas.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

There is, obviously, another advantage to our parting ways at your earliest possible convenience...

As Miss Price roots around inside the stand, we hear the ominous sound of metal against metal. Then she finds what she's looking for.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

(triumphant)

More room!

She produces a four-foot-long pole, solid steel, the width of a javelin, blunt on one end. At the other end, there's a rather nasty-looking point.

It appears handmade, and made with care. Miss Price examines the pointy bit, running her fingers along its jagged tip.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

One day I hope to have enough room for all of you. But until that day comes...

(regretfully)

I'm afraid I must pick and choose.

CLOSE ON the girl, eyes bulging as she watches Miss Price close the distance between them. The older woman positions herself above the cage, knees bent, like an athlete.

Holding the pole vertically, Miss Price threads the business end through the bars on top of the cage, the tip hovering an inch above the girl's once pretty pink sweater.

CLOSE ON the girl, teeth gnashing at the duct tape.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Now hold still, my dear...

CLOSE ON Miss Price, licking her dry lower lip.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Hold. Still.

Adjusting the pole a centimeter or two, she centers it directly over the sternum, right above the narrow cavity between the girl's shuddering breasts.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Don't move a muscle...

CLOSE ON the girl, screaming now, the sound guttural and torn beneath the tape...

CLOSE ON the tip of the pole, touching down, pinning sweater to skin...

CLOSE ON the girl, vibrating with fear, her eyes squeezing shut as the tears flow and flow...

CLOSE ON Miss Price, eyes wide, not going to miss a moment...

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Almost... Almost...
(then, satisfied)
There.

CLOSE ON MISS PRICE AS SHE THRUSTS DOWNWARD, GRUNTING WITH EFFORT, GIVING IT EVERYTHING SHE'S GOT.

CUT TO BLACK

INT./EXT. WRENFIELD - DAY

It's raining.

SHOTS of water pouring down the slate roof... Sluicing down the drainpipes and sheeting down the drive... Puddling in the garden and plop-plopping into a bucket under a leak in the empty sunroom...

SHOTS of Wrenfield's various denizens, peering out of various windows, hypnotized by the deluge...

An old woman.

A young man.

A tired nurse.

A bored orderly.

In the distance, the rumble of thunder...

The storm's about to get worse.

DR. WALKER (V.O.)
Let us understand one another,
Charlie. I am concerned - have been
concerned - that you are not
progressing as you should during
your time here at Wrenfield...

INT. WRENFIELD - DR. WALKER'S OFFICE - DAY

Uncle Charlie is sitting (up this time) on the psychiatrist's couch. Dr. Walker is in his chair, legs crossed, a thick manila file (closed at the moment) balanced on his lap.

A fire crackles in the fireplace. However, the temperature in Dr. Walker's office remains several degrees below zero.

UNCLE CHARLIE
How thoughtful.

DR. WALKER
It's not thoughtful. It's my professional responsibility. And in that, I'm afraid I've been... remiss.

Dr. Walker taps the file, contemplative.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)
You are not required to stay here, Charlie.

UNCLE CHARLIE
True.

DR. WALKER
You have been free to leave since the day you turned eighteen.

UNCLE CHARLIE
Also true.

DR. WALKER
Yet you choose to remain.

UNCLE CHARLIE
I like the fish sticks.

Dr. Walker allows himself a thin-lipped smile.

DR. WALKER

Ordinarily, we would not tolerate such a thing. However, your financial contributions to the institute - duly appreciated - have convinced the Board it is in their best interests to offer you food, shelter, and counseling for as long as you wish.

UNCLE CHARLIE

Duly appreciated.

DR. WALKER

Having said that, what one might describe as your Little Lord Fauntleroy period... is now at an end.

Beat.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)

We have rules at Wrenfield, Charlie. And as long as you choose to stay with us, you will obey them.

(then)

This is a clinic, not a kingdom.
You are a patient, not a prince.

(beat)

Do you understand what I am saying?

UNCLE CHARLIE

What I understand is that many educated people consider alliteration a cheap rhetorical gimmick, and I can't say I disagree.

Dr. Walker allows himself a slightly larger smile this time.

DR. WALKER

Considering your formal education begins and ends at the pre-school level, I'll take that with a grain of salt.

The gloves, it seems, are off.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)

From this point forward, you and I will commit ourselves - thoroughly and aggressively - to the advancement of your mental well-being.

(MORE)

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)
Any interests, activities, or
distractions I deem detrimental to
that goal will be off-limits
without exception.

In the pause that follows, Uncle Charlie holds himself very
still.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)
Starting tomorrow, your kitchen
privileges are revoked. Your
grounds crew privileges... revoked.

TIGHT on Uncle Charlie, as the blows land one by one.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)
Your library privileges... revoked.

TIGHTER.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)
Your gymnasium privileges...
revoked.

TIGHTER.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)
Your sunroom privileges... revoked.

TIGHTER. Right up to the iris.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)
Your visitation privileges... also
revoked.

(beat)
Although obviously you will not be
much affected by this.

The doctor makes a sound like a laugh swallowed whole.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)
In addition, your room will be
stripped of all items I consider
unnecessary to your advancement.
That will include but not be
limited to your books, your piano,
your radio, your watercolors, your
drawing tools and, naturally...

(tapping the file again)
...what I already hold here in my
hands.

(beat)
Can you guess what these are,
Charlie?

Uncle Charlie's eyes move to the file. And stay there.

The wind picks up outside, rattling the glass in their panes.

UNCLE CHARLIE

Yes.

Dr. Walker throws a glance at the fire (still crackling).
Uncle Charlie looks at the fire too. Then back at Dr. Walker.

DR. WALKER

Will you? Or shall I?

Beat. Then, a whisper -

UNCLE CHARLIE

You do it.

DR. WALKER

Very well.

Dr. Walker rises from his chair, walks over to stand in front of the fire. He opens the file, revealing a loose stack of papers. He holds one up for inspection.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)

Just between us, Charlie, you do
have talent...

With a flourish, he turns the paper around, revealing Uncle
Charlie's last portrait of India.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)

Truly.

And tosses it on the fire.

What happens next is this: Uncle Charlie remains frozen on the couch, unblinking, watching as Dr. Walker throws one drawing after another into the fire...

Not all at once. One by one.

A QUICKFIRE MONTAGE

Dimpled India - burning.

Freckled India - burning.

Long-haired India - burning.

Short-haired India - burning.

On and on until there's a single piece of paper in the file.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)

There is one item left, Charlie.

For the first time in what feels like forever, Uncle Charlie's eyes leave the fire. They meet Dr. Walker's, then sink down to the file in his hands, and to what lies therein.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)

It is my firm belief that destroying this will be the first and perhaps most important step on your road to recovery. We cannot entertain delusions that do not serve, Charlie. Fantasy must bow to reality. And this particular fantasy - unhealthy, unsubstantiated, completely unnatural... has gone much too far.

More alliteration.

UNCLE CHARLIE

(absently)

There you go again...

Dr. Walker holds the paper out to him.

DR. WALKER

I know it will be difficult. But it must be done.

Slowly, Uncle Charlie gets up from the couch, starts moving toward Dr. Walker. He stops in front of the fireplace, reaches out, takes the paper from Dr. Walker's hands.

Only now do we see the white ribbon around its edges.

Uncle Charlie holds it before him, eyes skating over the printed words again and again.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)

Charlie?

Uncle Charlie turns toward the hearth as if on autopilot, is about to throw the paper on the fire -

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)

Wait.

(beat)

I'd like you to read it aloud first.

His eyes on the flames, Uncle Charlie recites from memory.

UNCLE CHARLIE

"Mr. and Mrs. Richard Whitby Stoker... are pleased to announce the birth... of their new baby girl..."

(MORE)

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(beat)

Miss India Anne Stoker."

DR. WALKER

Thank you. Now do it.

Into the fire it goes.

Dr. Walker immediately heads back to his chair, already thinking about the brandy he's going to enjoy as soon as this little fuck leaves his office.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)

Be sure to enjoy yourself tonight,
Charlie. Tomorrow will be a fresh
start...

(then, smiling to himself)
For both of us.

Uncle Charlie says nothing, staring into the fire as the last
corner of India's birth announcement curls into ash.

WE FADE OUT on the flames reflected in his eyes.

INT. WRENFIELD - NIGHT - LATER

VARIOUS SHOTS in and around the institute, as another day comes to a close...

A nurse at the nurses' station, putting on her coat...

A night guard at the entrance, settling down on an old loveseat, sports section in hand...

A janitor in the dining room, wringing out his mop... He pushes his cart over to the doorway, reaches for the light switch, turns out the light...

The lights go out in the kitchen...

The sunroom...

The gymnasium...

One by one the institute's maze of halls, stairs, and passages go dark... And quiet.

CLOSE ON an orderly, strolling down a corridor in the residence wing. He stops at every door, giving the knobs a jiggle, making sure they're locked for the night.

He jiggles one knob in particular (also locked) and moves on to the next, but we remain...

WE PASS slowly through the keyhole, into the room on the
other side...

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

It may be dark but we know immediately where we are.

The rain has now stopped. Moonlight floods the small space, revealing a neatly-made bed...

But no Uncle Charlie.

WE PAN from the bed to the small roll top desk under the (barred) window, finding something we didn't expect...

The desk has been swung back like a door on hinges, revealing a sizable hole in the wall behind it.

WE MOVE towards the hole, and then we are inside...

INT. WRENFIELD - TUNNEL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

It's clearly man-made, a passage hand-scratched out of packed earth and rock. Surprisingly roomy - about three feet high and two feet across - it feels like it's been in use for a long, long time.

A string of Christmas lights have been strung along the ceiling, lighting the way, powered by a long cord leading back to Uncle Charlie's room. The bulbs - cheap and cheery - blink red and white and green... Festive.

WE BEGIN MOVING deeper into the tunnel...

Three feet beyond the entrance it makes a sharp right-hand turn. We continue on our (virtual) hands and knees, pausing briefly to notice what's lining the tunnel walls...

Or rather, who...

INDIA.

India, India everywhere...

Except younger. Much younger.

The tunnel walls are covered - from floor to ceiling and down the other side - with dozens of baby portraits...

Different mouths, noses, chins.

But all with the same eyes.

We continue on our way, crawling deeper into the tunnel, as the subjects in the sketches gradually grow older... India as a toddler... India as a child... India in her early teens...

And just as we're about to reach India as she is today, the tunnel turns right again and stops.

We're now in a small dark space, lined with metal.

A vertical slice of light, maybe two feet high, is in front of us. WE MOVE toward the light, emerging from a stainless steel lower cabinet and into...

INT. WRENFIELD - KITCHEN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

...The main kitchen, only steps from the island where Uncle Charlie and Dr. Maillard have their cooking class.

(Note: we've now left Uncle Charlie's room on the basement level, tunneled our way along the outside of the building, and re-entered the institute through the kitchen wall.)

We look to our left, just in time to see the kitchen's swinging doors stop swinging.

INT. WRENFIELD - DR. WALKER'S OFFICE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Walker awakens with a start.

He's slumped in his chair, an empty glass in one hand. He looks around, wipes the spittle from his lips, checks his watch... It's late.

Then he looks toward the office door. It's open a crack.

Dr. Walker listens for a moment. Then he gets up out of his chair, starts walking toward the door.

That's when we hear it too.

INT. WRENFIELD - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A head pokes out into a darkened hallway. It's Dr. Walker, looking left and right.

Music. Very faint, and coming from somewhere nearby...

After a moment's hesitation, Dr. Walker leaves his office (and its light) behind, feeling his way in the dark, his shoes making a dry squishing sound on the linoleum...

The music gets louder as he moves down the corridor. "Hush, Hush, Sweet Charlotte," sung by the incomparable Patti Page. An eerie melody, more so when it's echoing down a deserted hallway in the dead of night...

Dr. Walker frowns.

DR. WALKER

Hello?

(commanding)

Who's there, please?

No one answers.

He takes another step forward. Then another.

At the end of the hall, at the top of the stairs leading down to the first floor, he can just make out a small object sitting on the ledge beneath the window...

That's where the music is coming from.

DR. WALKER (CONT'D)

Hello?

As he moves closer, the object comes into focus: it's a transistor radio, tuned to an oldies station, the volume turned up just high enough to be heard...

Dr. Walker comes to a stop at the top of the stairs, his gaze locked on that little radio, playing its lovely tune...

He's about to step forward and snap it off, when his eye is caught by something underfoot...

He looks down, then sinks to his knees. With hands that suddenly seem less than sure, Dr. Walker picks up a single sheet of paper off the floor...

He stands, angling it a bit so he can see better, the only light in the hall coming from the moon beyond the windows...

CLOSE ON the sheet of paper.

It's a charcoal portrait...

Of Dr. Maillard.

His wife.

Dr. Walker looks up from the sketch, horror and alarm dawning at the exact same time...

THEN, FROM OUT OF THE DARKNESS, MR. DRYSDALE COMES ROCKETING TOWARDS US IN HIS WHEELCHAIR, SAD MOUTH LOCKED IN A SILENT SCREAM...

DR. WALKER BARELY HAS TIME TO TURN HIS HEAD BEFORE THEY COLLIDE... SENDING DOCTOR, CHAIR, AND MR. DRYSDALE HURTLING OVER THE LANDING AND DOWN THE LONG CONCRETE STAIRWAY...

QUICKCUTS OF DR. WALKER'S CATASTROPHIC FALL...

Limbs...

Shoes...

Bars...

Bones...

Spinning wheels...

Flailing hands...

A brutal sound like pumpkins smashing on pavement...

THEN SILENCE. It's over.

Dr. Walker and Mr. Drysdale lie motionless at the bottom of the stairs, limbs linked like pretzels.

CLOSE ON the landing, back at the top. Dr. Maillard's portrait descends into frame, falling gently through the air, coming to rest near the first step down.

CLOSE ON a red-gloved hand, reaching into frame, collecting what belongs to him.

CLOSE ON Mr. Drysdale's ruined chair, one of the wheels still spinning. Then it slowly comes to a stop.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

We're in a long white-washed hallway, stinking of ammonia. Florescent lights above, tiles the color of cookies 'n' cream below. It's a hospital. Obviously not Wrenfield.

WE MOVE down the hallway, past medical personnel going about their medical business, and stop on a woman. She's seated on a bench, head buried in her hands.

UNCLE CHARLIE (O.S.)
Dr. Maillard?

The woman looks up, her expression bewildered, beaten.

We reveal Uncle Charlie standing next to her. He's wearing his blue quilted hunter's jacket, and his old yellow suitcase dangles from one hand.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Dr. Maillard?

She stares at him a moment, unseeing.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Dr. Maillard, it's me. It's
Charlie.

DR. MAILLARD
Charlie... How are you?

UNCLE CHARLIE
I came to say good-bye.

It's like she's seeing him for the first time.

DR. MAILLARD
Yes... Yes, I had heard you were
leaving us...

UNCLE CHARLIE
Only for a little while. After
everything that's happened...
(beat)
I need time.

DR. MAILLARD
Yes... Yes, I understand.

Her eyes, suddenly feverish with unnamed fears, scan his.
She opens her mouth, a question on the tip of her tongue...

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)
Charlie?

UNCLE CHARLIE
Yes, Doctor?

Then she shuts it, closing her eyes, putting a hand to her
forehead as though feeling for the temperature.

DR. MAILLARD
I'm sorry...
(shaking her head)
Won't you sit down?

She gestures to the bench beside her. Uncle Charlie sits.

UNCLE CHARLIE
How is he?

DR. MAILLARD
The same. Exactly the same. And
likely to remain so...
(beat)
Or so I am told.
(then, turning to him)
(MORE)

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)

Charlie... I would like to
apologize to you. We've had to miss
our lessons this last week. I know
how much you enjoy them. I do too.
But my place is here... Naturally.
(then)
You understand, don't you?

She looks stricken suddenly.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)

You forgive me, don't you?

UNCLE CHARLIE

(softly)
Absolument.

Her eyes wander away down the hall, toward a closed door.

DR. MAILLARD

(to herself)
I have gone over it many times, in
my head, and I still don't... I
still don't understand how...
(beat)
How could this have happened?

Dr. Maillard waves her hands in the air, a heartbreaking,
helpless gesture that seems both Gallic and universal.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)

Dr. Walker is...

Her mouth twists in grief, her face folding in on itself.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)

My husband is...

Uncle Charlie puts an arm around her, pulls her to him.

UNCLE CHARLIE

(murmuring)
There, there... There, there...

She allows him to comfort her, and a moment passes them by...

Then Dr. Maillard pulls away, taking a deep breath, her
professional facade settling back into place.

DR. MAILLARD

I will allow you to say your good-
byes, Charlie. I know you were -
are - fond of him... In your way.

She stands, dries her eyes.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)
Au revoir, Charlie. I will see you
upon your return... Triumphant, no
doubt.

Then she turns on her heels and walks away.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

There's a soft knock at the door. It opens.

We're suddenly over Uncle Charlie's shoulder, looking at an
old man lying in bed across the room.

What's not hidden under the sheets is a mess of braces and
bandages. A network of tubes spread out from the bed like
tentacles. An army of machines stand sentinel behind it.

UNCLE CHARLIE
Hello, Doc.

He shuts the door gingerly, comes to stand over the bed.

UNCLE CHARLIE'S P.O.V.: Dr. Walker. His eyes are open, but
the pupils are unmoving, unfocused...

It would appear nobody's home.

Uncle Charlie finds a chair, pulls it up to the bed. He sits
down, leaning in very, very close.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
I realize it's not the fresh start
you had in mind, Dr. Walker. But it
is a new beginning... Technically.
For both of us...

As Uncle Charlie continues his beside chat, his tone is
subdued, respectful of the man and the circumstances.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
"We cannot entertain delusions that
do not serve..."

He shakes his head wonderingly.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
How right you were, Doc. That's why
I've decided to leave Wrenfield for
awhile. Because I need to know. I
need to know for sure...
(then)
I guess you could say you've
inspired me.

A single tear drops from the corner of the good doctor's eye.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Dr. Walker! Why are you crying? Is
it for Mr. Dribbles?
(beat)
Well, I think he's probably happier
now... Wherever he is...

Smiling to himself.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Or maybe you're going to miss me...
Is that it?
(then)
Don't worry, Doc - I'll be back.
And when I return, your wife and I
are going to bake you a quiche.
We'll make sure it's nice and soft,
so you don't have to chew...

Another tear leaks from the old man's eyes.

Uncle Charlie reaches out, puts his hand on Dr. Walker's
chest, right over the heart. Then, sincere -

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Goodbye, Dr. Walker... And
remember, whatever happens next,
it's thanks to you.

Then he picks up his suitcase and leaves the room, closing
the door quietly behind him.

CLOSE ON Dr. Walker, face streaked with tears. But who or
what he cries for, he simply cannot say.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

WIDE ON the red brick facade as we begin to hear a stripped-
down version of the Gnossienne-like piece from the beginning
of the movie.

The front door opens and a small figure emerges, carrying a
yellow suitcase. He trots down the steps and gets into a taxi
parked at the curb...

INT. TAXI - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The music continues as Uncle Charlie climbs into the
backseat. The TAXI DRIVER (50's, about what you'd expect)
turns around from the front.

TAXI DRIVER
All set, Mr. Stoker?

Uncle Charlie fastens his seatbelt.

UNCLE CHARLIE
Yes. All set.

TAXI DRIVER
So where to now?

UNCLE CHARLIE
Have you ever heard of a town
called Middle Bend?

The driver pretends to think for a moment.

TAXI DRIVER
No. Can't say I have.

UNCLE CHARLIE
Well that's where we're going.

The driver turns around and starts the car, shooting Uncle
Charlie a look in the rearview mirror.

TAXI DRIVER
You been there before, I hope...

UNCLE CHARLIE
No. Never.
(then, smiling)
But not to worry. I know the way.

EXT. TAXI - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The cab takes off down the street as the music rolls on,
setting out for parts unknown...

CUT TO:

EXT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON - SAME

WIDE ON the little bungalow. We notice a holiday wreath
(spray-coated white) has been nailed to its black front door.

'Tis the season.

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS

Dressed in a white blouse, a gray sweater vest and matching wool skirt, India is seated at the piano, tentatively working her way through the now-familiar *Gnossienne*-like piece.

(Note: This is the fourth time we've heard this piece. It's the one India played before her father's funeral, the one she played with Uncle Charlie before Whip's murder, and the one we heard Miss Price playing at the beginning of the movie.)

India taps out a few more notes, then stops mid-measure.

MISS PRICE (O.S.)

Well? What do you think?

India looks to her right.

INDIA

What's it called?

Reveal Miss Price, perched on her folding chair. Today she's wearing a plaid skirt and a green cashmere sweater, a very simple broach (gold) pinned just beneath her collarbone.

MISS PRICE

It doesn't have a name yet. I only finished it a little while ago.

INDIA

You write music?

MISS PRICE

Yes... Among other things.

Miss Price reaches toward the stand above the piano keys, starts gathering up the pages of hand-written music.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

(casually)

I have an idea... We could call it "India's Theme." Wouldn't that be nice?

(then)

What do say, India?

India appears to ponder this.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

Take your time. Think on it.

(then)

Meanwhile, you can bring this home with you. And start practicing.

INDIA

What about the Brahms?

MISS PRICE

Oh, there'll be plenty of time for Brahms. He's not going anywhere...

(smiling)

And neither am I.

India observes her piano teacher. Then, seemingly neutrally -

INDIA

What else do you do, Miss Price?

Miss Price stops shuffling pages.

INDIA (CONT'D)

I mean... in your spare time.

Beat.

MISS PRICE

Well... I write music, of course. And I like to spend a few hours in the garden, weather permitting...

(then)

And I collect things.

Beat.

INDIA

Like butterflies?

MISS PRICE

Yes. Like butterflies.

They both turn to look at the living room wall behind them.

It's covered, floor to ceiling, with dozens of picture frames in various shapes and sizes.

Within each frame, in lieu of photographs or paintings, are orderly rows of butterflies, each pinned at the center with a tiny silver stick pin.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

It's odd... I'd never thought of myself as the collecting type. But once you start, it's not so easy to stop...

WE PAN ACROSS her vast collection, past the Monarchs and the Swallowtails, the Cabbage Whites and the Hairstreaks. It's an impressive assemblage. Very beautiful. And very dead.

MISS PRICE (O.S.)(CONT'D)

(dreamy)

There are so many types and varieties... All of them different. Unique. Each deserving of its own worship and attention...

CLOSE ON India, her eyes moving down the rows of shimmering *papilionoidea*.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

Most of these were harvested locally, of course. But I've been known to travel farther afield... when occasion requires...

(beat)

When I'm after something special.

CLOSE ON Miss Price.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

I find the rarest kinds are always worth the effort.

Another beat. Then Miss Price waves a hand.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

Anyway, it's a minor passion of mine...

INDIA

(softly)

*Then when I was distraught/
And could not speak/
Sidelong, full on my cheek/
What should that reckless zephyr
fling/
But the wild touch of thy dye-dusty
wing...*

Miss Price lets those words hang in the air. Then -

MISS PRICE

Are you a collector, India?

INDIA

Me?

(blushing for some reason)

No.

MISS PRICE

No?

India shakes her head.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Well... maybe someday.

India turns from the butterfly wall.

INDIA
Do you think so?

MISS PRICE
Oh yes... Something tells me you
might enjoy it.

Miss Price holds her with a steady gaze.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
But remember, my dear - when we
find the thing that speaks to our
spirit, be it Brahms or
butterflies, we must always follow
the golden rule...

She smiles, intimate, as India waits with baited breath.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Practice, practice, practice.

Then, still smiling, she hands India the sheet music.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Now go home. And make me proud.

CLOSE ON India, close to charmed.

EXT. STOKER RESIDENCE - NIGHT - LATER

WIDE ON the Stoker mansion, silhouetted against the stars.

A looming dark mass at the top of a hill, four or five
chimneys stabbing the night sky, a handful of windows lit
from within...

Welcome home.

The Jeep Grand Woody makes its way up the long drive, pulling
into the gravel turnaround at the front of the house.

INT. STOKER RESIDENCE - FOYER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The front door opens. India enters first, her school satchel
in one hand and Miss Price's composition in the other.

Not stopping to take off her coat, she vanishes through the
parlor doorway, almost colliding with MRS. MCGARRICK (50's)
as she emerges from the back of the house.

MRS. MCGARRICK

Oh!

(recovering)

Good evening, Miss India... How was school?

No response. The housekeeper looks to the front door, left wide open. Richard appears next, shrugging off his coat.

MRS. MCGARRICK (CONT'D)

Mr. Stoker! Let me get that for you...

She helps him out of his coat, drapes it over her arm.

RICHARD

Thank you, Mrs. McGarrick. Brrrr!
It's getting cold out there...

MRS. MCGARRICK

Don't I know it...

Richard takes a few steps toward the carved staircase at the far end of the foyer, looking up to the second floor landing.

RICHARD

Is...

MRS. MCGARRICK

Mrs. Stoker said she wasn't feeling well, sir. She went to bed early...
Hours ago...

They both hear the unmistakable sound of a door clicking shut somewhere upstairs.

Mrs. McGarrick goes bright red.

MRS. MCGARRICK (CONT'D)

Sorry, sir...

Richard turns away from the stairs, forcing a smile.

RICHARD

Was there any mail today?

O.S., we hear India begin to practice her new piece.

MRS. MCGARRICK

Yes! It's right here...

She goes to a small table by the front door, picks up a stack of envelopes, starts toward him. Richard meets her halfway, takes the mail, starts leafing through it.

MRS. MCGARRICK (CONT'D)

Oh! This came too.

Richard freezes, looking up slowly to the envelope she's just now pulling from the safety of her apron pockets...

It's blue.

RICHARD

Thank you, Mrs. McGarrick.

He takes the envelope from her, aware she's watching, her curiosity palpable. It's obvious they have an arrangement.
It's equally obvious Mrs. McGarrick has no idea why.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

(pointed)

Is there anything else?

MRS. MCGARRICK

No, Mr. Stoker.

(beat)

I'll go see about dinner then.

RICHARD

Thank you, Mrs. McGarrick.

Only when she's gone does he examine the envelope, the familiar penmanship, the all-too-familiar return address...

Richard turns the letter over and over in his hands, then puts it in the pocket of his corduroy sport coat.

INT. STOKER RESIDENCE - PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

India is at the black baby grand, still in her red overcoat, test driving her own theme. Richard appears in the doorway.

RICHARD

That sounds pretty...

India keeps playing, brow furrowed.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I haven't heard that one before,
have I?

INDIA

(distracted)

It's new.

RICHARD

I like it.

(then)

India?

She stops playing, puts her hands in her lap, looks at him.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
I was just going to ask if you
wanted to eat now.

India continues to stare. Then, with a trace of irritation -

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Fine.

Beat.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
(covering)
I'll ask Mrs. McGarrick to set
aside a plate for you...

He's no more than two steps away when the music starts up again, as if there'd been no interruption at all.

INT. STOKER RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Sounds of carving and chewing. SHOTS of empty chairs.

WE CUT TO the head of the table, find Richard eating dinner.
(Roast chicken tonight, with a side of boiled baby potatoes
and overcooked green beans.)

The room is cavernous and dimly lit, shadows in every corner.
We can still hear India practicing O.S., already much
improved.

Richard takes another bite, chewing thoroughly. He's clearly
used to eating by himself, no one to keep him company...

Well, almost no one.

CLOSE ON a blue envelope, propped against a pair of crystal
salt and pepper shakers, set right in front of his plate.

CLOSE ON Richard, still chewing, eyes on that envelope.

**GRAINY FLASH: A LITTLE BOY IN SWIM TRUNKS, RUNNING TOWARDS US
DOWN THE BEACH...**

CLOSE ON the envelope, still unopened.

CLOSE ON Richard.

**GRAINY FLASH: THE BOY RUNS PAST CAMERA... AND WE REVEAL A
SECOND BOY BEHIND HIM... ABOUT 17 YEARS OLD... RUNNING FULL
OUT... TEARS STREAMING DOWN HIS ANGUISHED FACE...**

TIGHTER ON the envelope, India's name along the front in a beautiful cursive.

TIGHTER ON Richard.

GRAINY FLASH: THE OLDER BOY REACHES FORWARD... AND SNATCHES THE LITTLE ONE OFF HIS FEET...

HE HOLDS ON TIGHT AS THE BOY STRUGGLES TO GET FREE, FLAILING AND KICKING VICIOUSLY... BEATING AT HIS BROTHER WITH HIS FISTS...

Richard reaches forward, picks up the blue envelope, and we discover we are now in...

INT. STOKER RESIDENCE - RICHARD'S STUDY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard's sitting behind his desk in his swivel chair (leather, custom), Uncle Charlie's letter in his hands.

He opens the pencil drawer, takes out a key, unlocks the bottom drawer on the right, pulls the drawer out.

CLOSE ON the contents of the drawer: a small cardboard box, a large bundle of letters tied with string, and a handgun.

Richard removes the bundle of letters, sets it on his desk.

In what feels like a well-rehearsed routine, he unties the string, adds the blue envelope to the bundle, ties it up again, sets the bundle back in the drawer, closes it, locks it, puts the key back where it belongs.

Then he gets up, setting his chair in motion, and leaves the room. The chair continues to do a slow rotation behind the desk...

As the back of the chair clears the window behind it, WE STAY ON the glass, looking out into the night, as though we're expecting to see something there...

Or someone.

INT. STOKER RESIDENCE - PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON India's back. She's still at the piano, still familiarizing herself with the new piece.

RICHARD (O.S.)
Goodnight, India.

Over her shoulder, we reveal Richard in the parlor doorway.

Without looking up from the keys -

INDIA

Goodnight.

Richard goes, turning out the lights in the foyer beyond, leaving India to sit alone in the meagre pool cast by a small lamp atop the piano.

WE SLOWLY PULL BACK through the big picture window behind her, until we are outside looking in...

On the ledge beneath the window, so far down at the bottom of frame it's almost out, IS A MAN'S HAND...

HIS FINGERS (LONG AND TAPERED) TAP SOFTLY ON THE SILL, _
QUIETLY KEEPING TIME WITH THE GIRL BEYOND THE GLASS...

SLOW FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON a pair of eyes.

Dark and inscrutable.

WE WIDEN OUT, revealing a portrait of India on a sheet of college ruled notebook paper. It's extremely stylized, like something out of a comic book.

We become aware of background noise. Chatter. Laughter. A MAN'S voice cutting through the din.

MAN (O.S.)

Reynolds?

VOICE NUMBER ONE (O.S.)

Here...

CLOSE ON a pair of hands, entering frame.

One of them holds the paper in place while the other - a black magic marker between long grubby fingers - adds shadow beneath her jaw.

MAN (O.S.)

Robinson?

VOICE NUMBER TWO (O.S.)

Here!

WE WIDEN OUT again, revealing where we are...

INT. MIDDLE BEND HIGH - HOMEROOM - MORNING

CLOSE ON a TEENAGE BOY, biting down on his lower lip. He's drawing in his notebook, oblivious to the noise and the tumult, his desk piled with markers and pens.

MAN (O.S.)
Sparrow?

TEENAGE BOY
(to himself)
Here...

MAN (O.S.)
Claude Sparrow?

The boy raises his head. Meet CLAUDE SPARROW (17), a spindly-looking kid with a sweet face and dirty Chucks, a haircut that looks like his stepfather did it in the bathtub.

CLAUDE
(louder)
Here!

Reveal MR. FELDMAN (40's, aka India's 8th Period English teacher) at the front of the class, taking attendance.

MR. FELDMAN
Please speak up next time, Mr.
Sparrow...

WE WIDEN OUT, revealing a room full of seniors at Middle Bend High School, doing whatever it is seniors do during homeroom.

MR. FELDMAN (CONT'D)
Summerland?
(beat)
Claire Summerland?

Mr. Feldman looks around. No Claire. He makes a note.

MR. FELDMAN (CONT'D)
Not here...

Back to Claude. He just made a mistake. He shakes his head, annoyed, reaches for his white-out pen.

MR. FELDMAN (CONT'D)
Stoker?

As casually as possible, Claude leans forward and looks down the row of students to his left. We follow his look and find India seated next to the window, hands folded in front of her, staring out at the view.

Through the glass, we see snow falling thick and fast.

INDIA

Here.

CLOSE ON Claude, eyes large and lovesick, telling us all we need to know. The bell rings...

INT. MIDDLE BEND HIGH - HALLWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Arms loaded with notebooks and magic markers, Claude darts out of homeroom and into the hallway, ducking and weaving around the other kids...

CLAUDE'S P.O.V: India up ahead, moving quickly, on her way to class, about to disappear...

Picking up the pace, Claude slips between students, racing to catch up, eyes locked on the object of his affection...

He's almost sprinting, trying to squeeze between two cliques, when he runs smack into a varsity letterman jacket. Down he goes, hitting the lino hard, notebooks flying...

Dazed and winded, Claude struggles to stand.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Watch where you're going,
fuckwad...

WE SWIVEL AROUND Claude to a pair of cross-trainers, AND THEN PAN UP TO CHRIS PITTS (17), still a few months shy of his rendezvous with a baseball bat.

Pitts shakes his head, pitying. Then he and his crew start walking away. Nothing to see here.

PITTS

Dumb fuck.

Claude slowly rises, students streaming past on all sides. He looks down the hallway, straining to find India over the heads of the crowd... But she's gone.

OUT ON Claude as the bell rings for first period, and then continues ringing as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. MIDDLE BEND HIGH - FRONT ENTRANCE - AFTERNOON

WIDE ON the front entrance, now blanketed in snow. The doors open, students emerging to a winter wonderland.

Our attention is caught by a girl in a red wool overcoat, making her way down the walk to the street.

PITTS (O.S.)
Watch this shit...

Reveal Pitts and his buddies on the far side of the front lawn, horsing around in the snow. Pitts is packing a snowball, his eyes on that red coat...

CLOSE ON India, eyes forward, threading her way through the drifts along the concrete...

CLOSE ON Pitts, making sure that snowball's nice and hard...

CLOSE ON India, avoiding an icy patch...

CLOSE ON Pitts, snickering...

CLOSE ON India, oblivious...

CLOSE ON Pitts, taking aim...

SMACK!

WE HEAR THE CRUNCH OF ICE MEETING SKIN AS A SNOWBALL THE SIZE OF AN ORANGE SLAMS INTO PITTS'S FACE, ONLY HALF AN INCH ABOVE HIS RIGHT EYE...

Pitts screams in pain and drops the snowball, grabbing at his face with both hands.

PITTS (CONT'D)
FUUUUUUUUCK!!! Fuck fuck fuck fuck
FUCK!!!

Holding his face, he scans the front lawn furiously.

PITTS (CONT'D)
WHO THREW THAT!?! WHO FUCKING THREW
THAT!?!

Pitts's P.O.V: Sweeping left then right... Left then right... Students everywhere. Could have been anyone.

PITTS (CONT'D)
FUCK!!!

Far away, at a safe distance now, we see India disappearing down the sidewalk. From the crowds and the noise outside Middle Bend High, we...

SMASHCUT TO:

EXT. MIDDLE BEND - THE HOLLOW - AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS

White sky, white snow, black trees.

We hear the crunch of footsteps before we see her.

India appears at the right edge of frame, starts working her way across it.

We seem to be in a small forest of some kind, a stretch of wild growth smack in the middle of town (what we'll refer to as "the hollow").

It's quiet here. Peaceful. India is the only thing that moves, a splash of crimson against a black and white canvas, no noise but the sound of her saddle shoes in the snow.

She stops, takes a deep breath, drinking in the utter stillness...

Then she whirls around, eyes narrowed.

SOMEONE'S THERE.

She can't see them but she knows instinctively she's no longer alone. India's eyes rake the horizon for movement, color, anything that might betray location.

WE MOVE AROUND her slowly, starting a 360, India turning with us as she scans her surroundings. She's almost three-quarters through a full rotation when she zeroes in on a tree, maybe 30 feet away...

It's old and twisted, thick enough for someone to stand behind and not be seen.

Like a cat on carpet, India begins moving toward it...

Closer... Closer...

She reaches the tree and waits a beat, listening...

Then she jumps behind it.

CLAUDE (O.S.)

JESUS!

We reveal Claude hiding on the other side, looking like he just crapped his pants.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Jesus... You scared the shit out me!

India says nothing, watching him carefully.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Holy Moly...

Flushed with embarrassment, he laughs nervously.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Wow... You really surprised me...
(beat)
Holy Moly...

Whatever "patter" he's got planned, it's dead on arrival.

INDIA
What are you doing out here?

CLAUDE
Nothing...

INDIA
You were following me.

CLAUDE
("offended")
I wasn't following you...

She lifts an eyebrow.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
(beat)
Okay I was following you...

India turns and walks back toward the path. Apparently that's all she needed to know.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
(astonished)
Hey!

She doesn't look back. Claude runs to catch up.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Hey... Don't you want to know why?

INDIA
Why what?

CLAUDE
Why I... Why I was following you.

INDIA
Not really.

CLAUDE
Oh.

They walk a ways in silence.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Do you even know who I am?

INDIA
Claude Sparrow.

CLAUDE
(pleased)
Yeah... Claude...

INDIA
You sit four rows to my right in
homeroom, three seats behind me in
Calculus, and as close to me as
possible at lunch and school
assemblies.

CLAUDE
(very pleased)
Yeah... Yeah, that's me!

India keeps walking, Claude trailing like a puppy.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Well, I was wondering...

INDIA
What?

CLAUDE
I was wondering if uh...

INDIA
Yes?

CLAUDE
I was wondering if you were going
to Winter Formal...

India stops, turns around, their faces less than two feet
apart. Claude tries not to swoon.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
...And if so, whether you'd
consider going.
(beat)
With me.

India's face remains completely impassive.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
As my date.

Beat.

INDIA

No.

CLAUDE

Oh. Okay.

He looks down, crushed.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Well...

(beat)

Well I... I wanted you to have this
anyway...

He roots around in his shredded messenger's bag, pulls a
crumpled piece of loose leaf from its depths.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

I uh... I made it. For you.

He tries smoothing out the creases, gives up, hands it over.
India takes it from him, looks down.

CLOSE ON the magic marker portrait we saw earlier.

CLOSE ON India's face. It's clear the gift has made an
impression, but we have no idea what kind.

Neither does Claude.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

(squirming)

Anyway...

India lifts her eyes, looks into his.

INDIA

Thank you.

Claude just nods, gulping a few times. India looks down at
the portrait again.

INDIA (CONT'D)

It's beautiful.

He grins, hopeful again.

CLAUDE

I'm glad you -

But she's already moving down the path. Ahead of her, we can
see the sidewalk and the street not far away.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

(waving)

I'll see you tomorrow!

India doesn't turn around. Claude waves again anyway. When she gets to the sidewalk, she turns left and disappears.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
(quietly)
See you tomorrow...

He smiles to himself, turns around...

THERE'S SOMEONE THERE.

CLAUDE JUMPS, TAKING A STEP BACKWARD.

CLAUDE'S P.O.V.: A MAN, STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PATH, JUST A FEW YARDS AWAY, IN A BLUE QUILTED HUNTER'S JACKET...

SMILING A LITTLE SMILE.

He starts moving toward Claude, the latter looking like a deer in headlights...

Then, at the last possible second, Claude silently shuffles aside... And the man passes him by.

Claude's eyes stay locked on the stranger's back as he walks up the path. When he gets to the street, he takes a right, appearing to go in the opposite direction from India.

CLOSE ON Claude, frozen in the snow, breathing hard, watching until the man disappears from view.

EXT. MIDDLE BEND - STREET - AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS

We find India walking along the sidewalk, just moments after her encounter with Claude in the hollow.

She turns into a tree-lined cul-de-sac, deep in the residential part of town. The houses look proud, well-kept.

WIDE ON India as she stops, unlatches a charming little gate, starting up the short stone path to Miss Price's bungalow.

MISS PRICE (V.O.)
Well this is an interesting
development...

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - DAY - LATER

India's at the piano, looking back toward the kitchen. Miss Price enters with a plate of freshly-baked cookies, setting them down on top of the upright.

MISS PRICE
I baked these for after...
(winking)
To keep up our strength.

She sits down in her chair to the right of the piano bench.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Now... what did you tell him?

INDIA
"No."

Miss Price claps her hands together.

MISS PRICE
Well-played!
(then)
Boys like to be kept on their toes,
my dear. Never underestimate the
thrill of the chase! Let him ask
you a second time... And then say
yes!

INDIA
But I don't want to go.

MISS PRICE
Why ever not?

India appears stumped by the question.

INDIA
Because...

MISS PRICE
Have you ever been to the Winter
Formal?

INDIA
No.

MISS PRICE
Well I think it sounds like fun!

INDIA
(like she's never heard
the word)
Fun?

MISS PRICE
(wistful)
When I was a young girl, I had
quite a few beaux, believe it or
not. Nothing too serious...
(MORE)

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

I was much too focused on my other interests. But I did allow one or two to woo me from time to time...

Miss Price gives her a mock-coy look.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

Just to keep my hand in.

India looks doubtful.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

Of course it's entirely up to you, my dear... But if you've never been to a dance before, I say go. Find out what the fuss is about. And who knows? The right boy, the right dress, the right music... there under the twinkling lights...

(beat)

It might be a night to remember.

She smiles at the girl, reassuring.

INDIA

(finally)

I'll consider it.

Miss Price nods, approving.

Then India casually reaches for a chocolate chip cookie.

Just as casually, Miss Price reaches out and raps her hand, the noise like a tiny firecracker.

MISS PRICE

I said after.

India stares at Miss Price, her mouth a perfect "O." Then she looks down at her hand. Then back up at Miss Price.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

(even)

Did that surprise you, India?

Miss Price studies her young pupil carefully.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

(nodding to herself)

Yes... I think it did.

Miss Price leans in closer. She can smell the girl's skin now. It's young and fresh. Like baby powder and rose petals.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
(soft, intimate)
I wonder what you're thinking right
now...

Then her lips pull back from the gums, and Miss Price smiles
a smile like no smile India's seen before.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Do you want to hit me, India? Is
that it? Do you want to hit me
back?

India swallows. Once.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Yes... I think you do.
(beat)
Alright, India. Go ahead.

Miss Price lays one of her exquisite hands down on the piano
keys.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Hit me.

India looks at the hand lying before her. Easy as pie.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Do it, India... Do it.
(beat)
You deserve to have your revenge,
don't you?

India looks up at Miss Price, then down again.

CLOSE ON the hand. It's vulnerable. Defenseless.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Go on. I won't stop you. There's no
one here to stop you...

CLOSE ON India.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Do it, India...

CLOSE ON Miss Price.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Do it now...

And in the space of a second, INDIA STRIKES...

SWINGING HER LEFT ARM UP AND AROUND, SHE AIMS NOT FOR THE
HAND BUT FOR MISS PRICE HERSELF...

IN A BRILLIANT DISPLAY OF ANIMAL REFLEXES, MISS PRICE
SNATCHES INDIA'S HAND OUT OF THE AIR, JUST SECONDS FROM HER
OWN SOFT CHEEK...

MISS PRICE CAN FEEL THE BREEZE ON HER SKIN, KNOWS HOW CLOSE
SHE CAME TO BEING SMACKED FULL ACROSS THE FACE...

NOW IT'S THE TEACHER'S EYES THAT WIDEN WITH SURPRISE...

India tries to pull away but the older woman holds her hand steady, her grip like iron, shockingly strong...

CLOSE ON India, senses tingling, still looking distinctly cool for someone who just tried to knock her piano teacher to the floor...

CLOSE ON Miss Price, eyes glittering, thrilled and outraged all at once...

It's a spellbinding standoff, both of them wondering what happens now, what comes next...

Then -

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Fascinating.

At last, she lets go of India's hand.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
I think that will be all for today,
India.

Miss Price stands, folding her hands before her. She's composed again, in control.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
We'll pick up where we left off
next week, alright?

Exit Miss Price.

CLOSE ON India.

Lesson's over.

INT./EXT. CAR - DUSK - LATER

Richard pulls up in front of Miss Price's house, sees India already waiting at the curb. She opens the door, gets in.

RICHARD
Finished early today, huh?

No answer as she fastens her seatbelt.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Is something wrong?

India looks at her father, her face like glass.

INDIA
No.

RICHARD
Are you sure?

INDIA
Yes.

She looks out the passenger window, back toward the house.

INDIA (CONT'D)
Miss Price says I'm coming along
nicely.

Richard allows himself a moment to beam.

RICHARD
Well of course she did... You're my
daughter, aren't you?

CLOSE ON India, still looking back at the house.

INDIA
Yes...
(beat)
I am.

INT./EXT. CAR - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

The Jeep takes off, India staring out the passenger window,
thinking her private thoughts.

**INDIA'S P.O.V.: A MAN, WEARING A BLUE QUILTED HUNTER'S JACKET
AND A YELLOW KNIT CAP...**

**He's walking down the sidewalk, the same sidewalk we saw her
walking along after leaving the hollow...**

**It's getting dark so she can't make out his face, but there's
something about the man that gently snags her attention...
And won't let go...**

India cranes her neck, trying to keep him in view, but the
Jeep picks up speed, carrying her away...

WIDE ON the car, growing smaller and smaller, India's little
face looking back at us through the window...

We stay with the man as he continues down the sidewalk, back toward the hollow, hands shoved deep in his pockets.

He starts whistling a little tune, one that's become hauntingly familiar...

BEGIN MONTAGE

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Darkness... Then light.

CLOSE ON a pair of white Tretorn tennis shoes, stepping down into frame.

WE PAN UP from the shoes to Miss Price, standing at the bottom of the stairs, dressed in simple gray sweats and holding a pair of industrial work gloves (size extra-small).

Her expression neutral, attention focused somewhere beyond camera, Miss Price starts putting on her gloves...

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY - MONTAGE

Lunchtime. We're moving down an aisle, folding tables filled with students on either side.

We turn left, heading for one table in particular. There's Claude, sitting alone by the wall, reading a comic book.

A shadow falls across the page...

He looks up.

CLAUDE'S P.O.V.: India.

CLOSE ON Claude, mouth suddenly going dry...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DUSK - MONTAGE

The man in the yellow knit cap turns right off the sidewalk and enters the hollow, whistling all the while. He begins walking down the path, loafers sinking in the snow...

CUT TO:

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT - MONTAGE

We find Miss Price on her hands and knees, down on the floor, cleaning out the long metal cage.

Armed with a scrub brush and an oversize scouring pad, she's more than a match for the clots and the clumps.

She holds up a hank of hair, taking a moment to reminisce.

Then she sighs, tucking the hair into a black plastic trash bag with the rest of the garbage...

CUT TO:

INT. MIDDLE BEND - VINTAGE SHOP - DAY - MONTAGE

We're moving down an aisle, dresses of all sheens and shades crowding in on both sides.

We look to our left: India is one aisle over, facing camera.

We see her eyes over the rack as she examines what's hanging there. She finds something, pulls it out for inspection, but we can't see what it is...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HOLLOW - NIGHT - MONTAGE

The man makes his way across a backdrop of bare trees and blue-black night, still whistling, yellow cap just visible...

CUT TO:

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Attaching a rubber hose to a faucet used for laundry, Miss Price begins hosing down the floor, careful to direct the flow toward a metal drain in the middle.

CLOSE ON a wash of black and brown liquids, flooding over the concrete and swirling down the drain...

CUT TO:

EXT. MIDDLE BEND - STREET - DAY - MONTAGE

India is standing outside the dress shop, waiting patiently in her red coat, a large shopping bag over one arm.

A spotless, pea-green 1965 AMC Rambler pulls up next to her.

INDIA'S P.O.V.: It's Miss Price behind the wheel. Her piano teacher leans over, rolls down the passenger window.

MISS PRICE

Well! What have you got there?

INDIA

It's for the formal.

MISS PRICE

Oh, India! That's wonderful! I'm so excited for you...

A car honks politely behind them. They both turn their heads.

REVEAL Richard, pulling up in the Jeep. He waves.

INDIA

(apologetic)

I have to go.

MISS PRICE

Well have a lovely time, my dear...
And I expect to hear everything!

INT./EXT. CAR - AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS - MONTAGE

Richard looks over as India climbs in next to him.

RICHARD

All set?

INDIA

Yes.

She sets her bag down carefully by her feet.

RICHARD

What'd you get?

INDIA

(beat)

Miss Price says hello.

Richard looks forward through the windshield. India's piano teacher is still sitting in her car, watching them.

RICHARD

That's some car...

INDIA

Can we go home now, please?

RICHARD

Yes, we can... Home again, home
again...

He puts the car in drive, starts moving out into traffic.

As he does so, India just happens to glance back at the
vintage dress shop...

THERE HE IS AGAIN, THE MAN IN THE BLUE JACKET AND YELLOW CAP.

HE'S STANDING INSIDE THE DRESS SHOP, LOOKING AT HER THROUGH
THE WINDOW, THE GLASS DISTORTING HIS FEATURES.

He waves to her, but the Jeep is already pulling away...

INT./EXT. MIDDLE BEND - VINTAGE SHOP - SAME - MONTAGE

Uncle Charlie waves until the car is out of sight. Then he
just happens to look out to the street in front of the
shop...

AND SEES MISS PRICE LOOKING BACK AT HIM.

SHE'S JUST STANDING THERE, STARING AT HIM OVER THE ROOF OF
HER CAR.

MISS PRICE'S P.O.V.: a man in a blue jacket and a funny-
looking hat, staring back at her through a store window.

Unlike India, she can see the stranger clearly, and it feels
like a fist around her heart.

UNCLE CHARLIE'S P.O.V.: After a long moment, India's piano
teacher breaks eye-contact, turning and hurrying across the
street.

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie. Something's been registered, but he
doesn't know what.

Not yet.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HOLLOW - NIGHT - MONTAGE

We're behind him now, on the man's back, as he makes his way
through the hollow. We can see streetlights shining up ahead.

Almost there, he picks up his pace, still whistling...

CUT TO:

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Darkness... Then light, as a lid swings open above us,
revealing Miss Price, looking down.

MISS PRICE'S P.O.V.: A dozen more trash bags, cooling in her
deep freezer. She starts hauling them out one by one...

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON - MONTAGE

We're moving down an aisle, hovering low over a floor thick
with scraps of colored paper and bits of sculpting clay.

WE PAN UP to a wooden artist's easel, facing away from us.

WE PUSH PAST the easel, and find Claude hard at work in the
school art room, a plastic palette in one hand and a paint
brush in the other, another one tucked between his teeth.

He's a picture of concentration, the winter sun pouring in
through the long windows behind him. We get the feeling he's
decided this particular canvas demands his very best.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

You gonna be much longer?

Engrossed, Claude doesn't answer. Reveal a JANITOR (grizzled,
uniform) standing nearby, leaning on a push broom.

JANITOR

Hey! Don't ignore me...

CLAUDE

(to himself)

Just one more minute...

The janitor shakes his head, goes back to working that broom.
Claude takes the brush out of his mouth, stands back to
admire his unseen work, pleased...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HOLLOW - NIGHT - MONTAGE

The man emerges from the hollow onto an empty sidewalk, makes
a right, starts heading down the street...

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON - MONTAGE

WIDE ON the janitor, pushing his loaded cart down an empty hallway. He makes a slow right turn at the end...

CUT TO:

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - MONTAGE

We hear them before we see them, the noise harsh and sliding... Heavy.

CLOSE ON two black trash bags, dragging across a kitchen floor. They bulge oddly.

WE PAN UP to Miss Price, opening her back door. She pokes her head outside, making sure she's alone...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - MONTAGE

WIDE ON the man coming towards us down the sidewalk. As he passes under the street lamps, he disappears and reappears... disappears and reappears...

He steps off the sidewalk, starts cutting across a wide snowy lawn...

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - SUPPLY ROOM - DUSK - MONTAGE

The janitor shoves his cart in a corner, mops his brow. He taps his pockets, takes out his smokes, lights up.

While he savors that first drag, WE PUSH PAST him, through the door at the back, down a narrow flight of stairs...

CUT TO:

EXT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - MONTAGE

We hear them before we see them, the noise harsh and sliding...

CLOSE ON two black trash bags, dragging across concrete. WE PAN UP to Miss Price, making her way to the AMC Rambler.

Somewhere nearby, a dog barks.

Miss Price looks sharply over her shoulder. She waits a moment, starts moving again.

Her car is parked outside the garage at the back of the house. Miss Price drops the bags behind it, slips the key in the trunk, lifts the lid...

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BASEMENT - DUSK - MONTAGE

It's dark down here. Industrial. Gray walls and gray floors. We wander through a series of spaces, drawn by a flickering light up ahead...

It's the boiler, mammoth in size, keeping the school toasty during this cold December.

WE MOVE around it to a spot against the wall, warm and snug and out of sight.

CLOSE ON a stack of blankets, a small cooler, and a yellow suitcase...

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT - MONTAGE

CLOSE ON the man, moving steadily across the lawn.

WE SLOWLY WIDEN to reveal the structure directly in front of him, dark now except for one or two security lights...

MIDDLE BEND HIGH SCHOOL.

Uncle Charlie's new home away from home.

We hear the sound of a doorbell...

CUT TO:

INT. STOKER RESIDENCE - FOYER - NIGHT - MONTAGE

CLOSE ON the front door. A hand reaches into frame, opens it.

Claude is on the porch, hair slicked, wearing an obviously rented tuxedo, and holding a plastic sandwich container.

Inside the container is a wrist corsage. It's a single red rose, ringed by a collar of white baby's breath.

CLAUDE

Hello. Um... Is India home?

CLAUDE'S P.O.V.: Mrs. McGarrick in the doorway. Shocked...

CUT TO:

INT. STOKER RESIDENCE - FOYER - NIGHT - CONT. - MONTAGE

Claude and Mrs. McGarrick stand next to each other in the foyer, both looking toward the grand staircase, their mouths falling open for entirely different reasons.

CLOSE ON the stairs, as a pair of white satin ballet flats steps silently down into frame.

WE SLOWLY PAN UP from the shoes, past a gorgeous explosion of tulle (white), a delicately fitted bodice (white), and bare shoulders anchored by a long soft wrap (white on white)...

To India, paused halfway down the stairs.

Then, serene -

INDIA

I'm ready.

END MONTAGE

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT - LATER

WIDE ON the high school, lit up like a Christmas tree.

Students and teachers, formally dressed, stream up the shoveled walk and mill around the front doors. We hear the sounds of a rock band playing inside.

Down the street, something that looks a lot like a Le Car finds just enough room to park. Claude gets out, jogs around to the other side, opens the door.

CLOSE ON a pale hand sliding into his, a red rose lashed to the wrist.

WE PAN UP to India, emerging gracefully from the car.

CLAUDE

Sorry we couldn't park any closer...

He looks down. They're still holding hands. Whoa. He gulps. India removes hers.

INDIA
I don't mind.

Grinning like an idiot, Claude gestures toward the school, looking more maitre d' than man about town.

CLAUDE
Shall we?

As they start making their way down the sidewalk, we hear the sound of a door closing...

RICHARD (V.O.)
Hello? Anybody home?

INT. STOKER RESIDENCE - FOYER - NIGHT

Richard is standing in the foyer, removing his coat and scarf. He looks around, wondering why the house is so quiet.

RICHARD
Hello?

MRS. MCGARRICK (O.S.)
Forgive me, Mr. Stoker...

Reveal Mrs. McGarrick, bustling towards him.

MRS. MCGARRICK (CONT'D)
I forgot you'd be coming home! It must be all the excitement...

RICHARD
Excitement?

MRS. MCGARRICK
(breathless)
Miss India!

RICHARD
Yes? What about Miss India?

As she takes his things -

MRS. MCGARRICK
She just left! And looking positively stunning... Just like her mother...

RICHARD
Left for where?

MRS. MCGARRICK
The Winter Formal!

RICHARD

The what?

MRS. MCGARRICK

The dance!

He abruptly moves past her, striding to the parlor doorway.

RICHARD'S P.O.V.: An empty room. No one at the piano.

MRS. MCGARRICK (CONT'D)

He came and picked her up. Just now.

RICHARD

(turning on her)

Who did?

There's a look in her employer's eyes she's never seen before. Mrs. McGarrick's enthusiasm begins to falter. Fast.

MRS. MCGARRICK

Her... Her date...

RICHARD

What do you mean "her date?"

MRS. MCGARRICK

I -

RICHARD

What did he look like?

MRS. MCGARRICK

He was... Well... I don't know
really...

(then)

I'm sorry, Mr. Stoker, I was so
distracted by Miss India... She was
so lovely!

Richard takes back his coat and scarf.

MRS. MCGARRICK (CONT'D)

He's probably a very nice young
man...

But he's already heading for the door.

EXT. STOKER RESIDENCE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard moves quickly down the steps, Mrs. McGarrick
appearing in the doorway behind him. As he exits frame, WE
PUSH IN TIGHT on her flustered face.

MRS. MCGARRICK
I'm sure she'll be alright!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The gym ceiling is a web of twinkling lights and tinfoil stars, the effect at once homemade and winter fairy tale.

Claude and India appear in the doorway, taking it all in... The tables around the perimeter, set with flowers and favors... The dance floor in the middle, already packed with couples, the boys in black and the girls in color...

They drift around the edges, eventually gravitating toward the folded bleachers along the back wall.

CLAUDE
Do you want some punch or something?

INDIA
No.
(beat)
No thank you.

CLAUDE
Okay.

They fall silent, Claude looking at India, India looking everywhere but Claude.

Claude starts to sweat a little. He can already picture them spending the rest of the night with their backs against the bleachers, watching everybody else have a good time.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Hey! I have something for you...

She turns to him.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
It's kind of a... a surprise. But I have to go get it. Would you mind waiting for me?

INDIA
No.

CLAUDE
You sure?

INDIA
I'll be right here.

Claude smiles, starts backing away.

CLAUDE

Okay. It'll take two seconds...

India watches him go, then turns her attention back to the human slideshow in front of her.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON linoleum, checkered gray and green.

WE PAN UP to Claude, hurrying down a school hallway, the noise of the dance fading behind him.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - SAME

CLOSE ON linoleum, checkered gray and green.

A pair of men's dress shoes (black patent leather, polished), enters frame, moving at a leisurely clip...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Claude keeps going, practically skipping.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - SAME

CLOSE ON the black dress shoes, taking their time...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Claude reaches a set of gray swing doors, pushes through them. He starts down another hallway, much darker and quieter than the first.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - SAME

CLOSE ON the dress shoes, closing in behind him...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Claude turns a corner, opens a door to his left.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - SAME

CLOSE ON the shoes as they pass through the gray swing doors getting nearer by the second...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Claude moves down the aisle of the school art room, toward the cubbies stacked against the far wall.

He goes to one, pulls out a large canvas, loosely rolled and tied with string.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - SAME

As the dress shoes turn the corner, WE PAN UP QUICKLY to the classroom door we just saw Claude walk through...

It's open.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON the paper unrolling in Claude's hands.

It's our favorite subject à la Aubrey Beardsley, her fine features delicately attenuated. It's also pretty damn good.

CLOSE ON Claude, proud of his work, imagining her reaction.

THEN HE HEARS A NOISE.

Claude jerks his head around, looking back toward the door.

It's closed.

CLAUDE

Hello?

Silence.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Is somebody there?

He starts moving back across the darkened classroom.

CLOSE ON the door. It's gray metal with a large window, so teachers can see in and out.

Claude slows down as he gets closer to it, suddenly uneasy. He looks through the window, but he can't see anyone.

He reaches out, turns the knob. It won't open. Claude tries again. The knob twists but the door won't budge. Frustrated, he tries pushing on the door... It's stuck.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

We're suddenly outside the art room, looking in.

CLOSE ON Claude through the window, on the wrong side of the door.

CLAUDE

Hey! I'm locked in here!

He hits the tempered glass with his hand.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Hey!

He hits the glass again, and WE PAN DOWN from his face to the bottom of the door... to a wooden wedge.

Jammed in tight.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - SAME

CLOSE ON linoleum, checkered gray and green.

CLOSE ON the black dress shoes, entering frame, heading back toward the dance, the sounds of the party getting louder...

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT - SAME

Richard's Jeep flies down the winding road toward town.

CLOSE ON Richard, not happy. All he wants to do is eyeball this young man and leave without anyone (India) the wiser.

He steps on the gas...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

WIDE ON India, standing motionless against the bleachers, as the rock band segues into a slow number.

WE BEGIN PUSHING IN, dancing couples drifting across frame.

India looks a little bored, a little alone. She turns her head, perhaps wondering where Claude is.

Then, out of the corner of her eye, she sees something.

INDIA'S P.O.V.: A flash of white on the other side of the room, disappearing between the shifting crowds.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Claude is pressed up against the window, trying to look down the other side of the door, trying to see what's blocking it... But he can't.

He takes a step back, determined, then launches himself forward, hitting the door hard with his shoulder.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

INDIA'S P.O.V.: There's another flash of white across the room... There and then gone.

She takes a step to the right, craning for another glimpse.

INDIA'S P.O.V.: A man, moving through the crowd... Then he's gone again.

He was tall, with dark hair, wearing a black bowtie...

And a white dinner jacket.

India starts moving across the room, slowly picking her way through the crush on the dance floor.

INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT - SAME

The Jeep is out of the hills and rapidly approaching town.

RICHARD'S P.O.V.: The lights of Middle Bend on the horizon.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

BAM!

Claude hits the door again, harder this time.

CLOSE ON the door wedge, still stuck.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

India's almost on the other side of the dance floor, but there's no sign of the man in white... He's vanished.

She looks around, for some reason crestfallen. Her eyes drop to the floor.

Then, from behind her -

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

India.

CLOSE ON India, lifting her eyes directly into camera...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

BAM!

Claude hits the door again, sweat on his brow. He's not staying in this fucking room all night. No way, no how.

BAM!

As the door rocks and jolts, CLOSE ON the wooden wedge, beginning to splinter...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

We're on India's back as she revolves toward camera...

She stops, lifts her eyes to his, and feels her heart begin to race...

INDIA'S P.O.V.: More than handsome. More than striking.

Dressed to the nines.

The only man in a room full of boys.

And just three feet away.

He raises his hand, offering...

She doesn't stop to think, to ask, to wonder...

The next thing she knows her hand is in his and he's leading her out onto the dance floor...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

BAM!

CLOSE ON the door wedge, now deeply dented, and scraping backwards across the floor.

WIDE ON Claude, holding his breath, slipping through the narrow crack between door and frame. Then he's out, India's rolled-up portrait gripped in one hand.

He looks down, sees the wedge.

CLAUDE
Fuck me...

Somebody's a real asshole.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
(shouting down the hall)
Fuck you, asshole!

Then he laughs, victorious.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
YEAH!!! FUCK YOU!!!

He straightens his jacket, starts back toward the dance...

Time to find his date.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

They glide to the center of the floor, the crowd around them parting, like magic, but paying them no attention...

India feels like she's floating, every breath alarmed and alive as he gently guides her to him...

Then he puts his arm around her waist...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard rolls through a stop sign, picks up speed again.

RICHARD'S P.O.V.: The high school, ahead on the left...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Claude, rounding the corner, near enough to hear the music now...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

They begin to move...

Their dance is too slow for a waltz, too smooth for a shuffle...

He sends her out for a luxurious spin, then reels her back in... into his arms...

She looks up from his chest... and into his eyes...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Claude pushes through the gray swing doors, almost there,
when he hears someone behind him. He turns around...

But there's no one. He walks back a few steps.

CLAUDE
Is somebody there?
(beat)
Come on out, you asshole!

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard drives past the school, eyes peeled for parking...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The song is tender, yearning...

She wills herself not to tremble beneath his touch...

UNCLE CHARLIE
I've been waiting for you...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Claude is still standing in the empty hallway, listening.

Nothing.

CLOSE ON Claude, chuckling to himself. He closes his eyes,
takes a deep breath.

CLAUDE
You're the asshole, Claude. Get it
together... Please.

BEHIND HIM, A DOOR OPENS...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

She can feel his hand, down there at the small of her back...

UNCLE CHARLIE
Thinking of you...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON A BLACK BELT, SNAKING QUICKLY ACROSS CLAUDE'S THROAT
AND PULLING TIGHT...

CLAUDE'S EYES POP OPEN... HIS MOUTH DOES TOO, BUT HE DOESN'T
MAKE A SOUND...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

His other hand cradles hers, gentle, the palm cool and dry...

UNCLE CHARLIE
Dreaming of you...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

INDIA'S PORTRAIT HITS THE FLOOR AND ROLLS AWAY...

CLAUDE'S HANDS FLY UP TO THE BELT AROUND HIS NECK...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

She can feel his back, warm beneath the shirt and jacket...

UNCLE CHARLIE
Always...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON CLAUDE AS HE'S JERKED BACKWARDS, DISAPPEARING
THROUGH THE OPEN DOOR BEHIND HIM...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard slams the door of the Jeep, leaving it parallel
parked. He hustles across the lawn, trying not to sprint...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The song comes to an end and the band cranks it up...

Couples around them start breaking apart...

He holds her a moment longer...

UNCLE CHARLIE
I'll see you again...

Leaning in to whisper, so she can feel his breath on her ear...

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Soon.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON THE DOOR AS IT SLOWLY SWINGS SHUT...

INT./EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard climbs the steps, rushing through the front doors...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Then he lets India go...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - FOYER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard's about to make his way to the gym when -

MR. FELDMAN (O.S.)

Excuse me, sir?

Reveal Mr. Feldman, standing by the sign-in table.

MR. FELDMAN (CONT'D)

Can I help you?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

He pulls away from her slowly, their eyes still locked...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - FOYER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Mr. Feldman, brimming with curiosity.

MR. FELDMAN

I'm Mr. Feldman, India's English teacher... So nice to meet you!

He reaches to shake Richard's hand...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

He's moving farther and farther away...

A wave of students pass between them, blocking her line of sight...

By the time they move on, he's disappeared...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - FOYER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard's eyes are everywhere but the other man's face...

MR. FELDMAN

India is... Well she's certainly
one of our brightest -

RICHARD

Yes - have you seen her by any
chance?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON India, standing alone in the middle of the dance
floor. Dazed. Dreamy...

Then she blinks, finding herself back in the here and now.

She looks around, disoriented, a sleepwalker woken too
soon...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - FOYER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Richard, getting away from Mr. Feldman at last,
heading for the gym...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON India, wandering across the dance floor...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Richard, arriving at the gym door, eyes scanning the
crowd...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, moving rapidly down the hallway, the
gym now far behind him...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard takes a step inside the gym, and WE CRANE UP and away from him, revealing a room packed with people...

Uncle Charlie long gone and India nowhere to be seen...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie pushes through the gray swing doors, heading back to the art room...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard works his way around the edge of the crowd, trying to be discreet...

RICHARD

Pardon me... Pardon me...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie turns the final corner...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard makes his way to the other side of the gym...

No India.

WIDE ON Richard, standing against the folded bleachers, exactly where India stood earlier...

A student passes by...

RICHARD

Excuse me... are you friends with
India?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - FOYER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

India walks out of the gym and into the school foyer, the music still pumping behind her...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, stopping short...

His eyes zero in on the classroom door... It's open...

They drop to the splintered wedge beneath...

AND THEN HE HEARS A SCREAM...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

India exits through the front doors, her breath steaming the air. She walks to the bottom of the steps, looks around.

No Claude.

VOICE (O.S.)
You smoke?

She turns her head...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie backtracks in the direction of the scream...

He pushes through the gray swing doors, sees students gathering down the hall...

He comes up behind them, looks over their shoulders and into the boys' bathroom...

UNCLE CHARLIE'S P.O.V.: CLAUDE, SITTING ON THE FLOOR, HIS BACK AGAINST A DOOR ON THE WALL OPPOSITE...

LEGS OUT IN FRONT OF HIM, PANTS AROUND HIS ANKLES AND A BELT AROUND HIS NECK, HE'S BEEN SECURED TO THE DOORKNOB LIKE A DOG ON A LEASH...

EYES OPEN AND TONGUE PROTRUDING, HIS HEAD LOLLS HEAVILY TO THE SIDE, THE SKIN A STRANGE MOTTLED BLUE...

CLOSE ON UNCLE CHARLIE, NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO'S BEEN CAUGHT WITH HIS PANTS DOWN...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

India sees who it is, turns away.

INDIA
No. I don't.

WE SWIVEL AROUND her to reveal WHIP TAYLOR (17), Middle Bend's resident bad boy and aspiring date rapist.

He's standing in the shadows next to the front steps, dressed for the dance but with the tie undone (of course).

WHIP
I didn't think so. But I thought
I'd ask...

India starts down the walk toward the street, putting some distance between them...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

WIDE ON Uncle Charlie, running down the hallway...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard, exasperated, heads for the door...

But before he gets there he turns back around, back toward camera, giving the gym one last look...

OVER HIS SHOULDER WE SEE UNCLE CHARLIE ENTERING THE GYM, STOPPING JUST A FEW YARDS BEHIND HIS BROTHER...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

India walks up to Claude's car, but he's not there. She turns around, starts walking back toward the school entrance...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

IN A CALL BEYOND CLOSE, UNCLE CHARLIE MOVES OFF TO THE RIGHT AS RICHARD, FACING CAMERA, ROTATES LEFT, AND THEN WALKS OUT THE GYM DOOR...

JUST MISSING EACH OTHER...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

India is standing on the curb now, directly in front of the school. She looks back one more time, sees Whip watching...

VOICE (O.S.)
India? Is that you?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, canvassing the gym, as near to panic as we've seen him...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Feldman rushes down the hallway. Up ahead, we can hear shouts of alarm. Richard falls in step alongside him.

RICHARD
What's going on?

MR. FELDMAN
That's what I'm trying to find out,
Mr. Stoker...

The two men head down the hall, toward the crowd outside the boys' room...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

India looks toward the street, sees a pea-green AMC Rambler idling at the curb, the passenger window already rolled down.

MISS PRICE
I thought it might be you...
(then)
What are you doing out here in the cold?

INDIA
I don't know.
(beat)
I can't seem to find my date.

Miss Price looks mortified on her behalf.

MISS PRICE
You don't mean you've been abandoned, do you?

India doesn't answer.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
Oh my dear... I'm so sorry...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard and Mr. Feldman arrive at the boys' room, pushing through the students huddled in the doorway. Mr. Feldman sees Claude first.

MR. FELDMAN
Oh my god...

Downshifting into crisis mode -

MR. FELDMAN (CONT'D)

I want everyone out of this room...
RIGHT NOW.

CLOSE ON Richard, the color draining from his face. He has no idea who the dead boy is, but he knows the night has gone terribly wrong.

We hear the sound of a car door closing...

MISS PRICE (V.O.)

Why it's no trouble at all...

INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

India fastens her seatbelt, careful not to crumple her dress.

MISS PRICE

As a matter of fact, we can stop by
my house on the way...

(winking)

I've got something for you.

She puts the car in drive, taking off into the night...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - FOYER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Agitated, Uncle Charlie hurries over to the sign-in table,
grabs one of the students sitting there.

UNCLE CHARLIE

Did you see India Stoker leave?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard backs away from the boys' room, face ashen. Then he
turns and starts back toward the school foyer, breaking into
a run...

INDIA (V.O.)

What is it?

INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Miss Price winds her way through the streets of Middle Bend,
careful to obey all traffic laws.

MISS PRICE

You'll never guess!

(then)

The Brahms! I had to order it
special... It came this afternoon!

She looks over at India, smiling, conspiratorial...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie jogs down the steps, stops and looks to his right. Someone's loitering nearby, facing away from him.

UNCLE CHARLIE
Excuse me... Do you know India
Stoker?

Whip turns around, looking amused.

WHIP
Well... yes and no.

It takes Uncle Charlie less than a second to get right up in Whip's face, hands gripping his collar tight.

UNCLE CHARLIE
Did you see her leave just now?

There's something in this man's eyes Whip does not want to learn more about.

WHIP
(rattled)
Yeah... she got into this old car.

UNCLE CHARLIE
What kind of old car?

INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

WIDE ON the old car in question, pulling into Miss Price's driveway and heading all the way toward the garage at the back of the house.

MISS PRICE
Why don't you come inside? It might
take a minute...

No answer.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
India?

INDIA
(still a little dreamy)
I don't mind waiting.

MISS PRICE
Alright... Suit yourself.

Miss Price gets out of the car, walks to her back door, unlocks it. She goes inside, leaving the door open.

CLOSE ON India, looking out through the car window...

WHIP (V.O.)
You gotta be kidding me...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Richard, right up in Whip's face.

RICHARD
I asked you a question.

CLOSE ON Whip, realizing this guy means business. He sighs theatrically, opens his mouth to speak...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HOLLOW - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

WIDE ON Uncle Charlie, racing through the hollow, feet slipping and sliding on the snow-covered path...

INT. CAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Miss Price still hasn't come back yet.

India's eyes start wandering around the car. It's clean and tidy, absent anything personal. She turns around...

There's something lying on the backseat.

EXT. THE HOLLOW - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie crashes through the underbrush, sprinting through the night in his black tie and white dinner jacket...

INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Claude's final portrait, unrolling before her eyes.

India looks up from the canvas, toward the house.

CLOSE ON the open back door.

EXT. THE HOLLOW - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

WIDE ON Uncle Charlie, tearing across camera, breathing hard, hoping against hope...

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Reveal India in the doorway, carrying Claude's portrait, about to step inside. The room is almost pitch black.

INDIA
Miss Price?

INDIA'S P.O.V.: The door to the basement, open a crack, an odd light flickering around its edges.

She steps into the kitchen, her eyes on the basement door. India sets the portrait down on the kitchen table...

And takes another step.

EXT. THE HOLLOW - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie hurtles away from us through the blackness, branches brushing by on either side...

WE CRANE UP to reveal the streetlights in the distance, where the hollow ends and the sidewalk begins...

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT STAIRS - NIGHT - CONT.

The basement door swings open, revealing India at the top of the stairs, a curious look on her face.

INDIA'S P.O.V.: The basement is ablaze with candles. Dozens of them. White and cream, thick and thin. All over the floor.

It's beautiful.

MISS PRICE (O.S.)
Do you like it?

India turns around...

Miss Price is standing behind her, eyes glistening.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
It's all for you.

THEN, IN SLOW-MOTION, MISS PRICE RAISES HER ARMS...

AND SHOVES.

EXT. THE HOLLOW - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

He's almost to the street now... Almost almost almost...

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT STAIRS - NIGHT - CONT.

SLOW-MOTION SHOT: INDIA, FALLING BACKWARDS, AWAY FROM CAMERA.

NOT REELING, NOT FLAILING... JUST FALLING... STRAIGHT BACK
THROUGH THE AIR... WHITE DRESS FLUTTERING AND FANNING OUT
AROUND HER...

DOWN AND DOWN AND DOWN...

WE DO NOT SEE THE IMPACT.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie charges out of the hollow, gasping for breath.
He hits the sidewalk, makes a sharp left...

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Miss Price, walking down the stairs, taking her
time.

MISS PRICE'S P.O.V.: India, lying face up on the floor, like
a doll dropped by a careless child...

Out cold.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

We hear him before we see him, and then he's dashing through
frame, running down the sidewalk...

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Miss Price settles India into the metal cage...

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie skids on the street, almost falling. He turns
into the cul-de-sac, sees the bungalow dead ahead...

MISS PRICE (V.O.)
My one regret...

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON an assortment of long steel spikes, poking out of the umbrella stand by the basement steps.

MISS PRICE
...and it does give me grief...

Miss Price finds the one she's looking for, pulls it out.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
...is that you and I couldn't spend more time together.

She comes back to stand over the cage.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
But something tells me we musn't tarry...

MISS PRICE'S P.O.V.: India, lying in the cage, arms folded, face beatific in the glow of the candlelight.

CLOSE ON Miss Price, rapt.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
So beautiful...

EXT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

WIDE ON the bungalow as we rush toward it, the sound of Uncle Charlie's breath pounding in our ears...

MISS PRICE (V.O.)
So unusual...

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Miss Price, about to add to her collection.

MISS PRICE
So... Oh what's the word I'm looking for...
(beat)
Ah well... Never mind.

SHE HOISTS THE SPIKE UP OVER HER HEAD, READY TO STRIKE...

THEN SHE JERKS, HER WHOLE BODY RIPPLING...

HER EYES, SUDDENLY DAZED AND UNFOCUSED, DRIFT DOWN TO HER BELLY... AND THE SPIKE STICKING OUT OF IT...

MISS PRICE DROPS THE METAL POLE... IT MAKES A LOUD CLANKING NOISE AS IT BOUNCES ON THE FLOOR AND ROLLS...

THEN SHE SLIDES SIDEWAYS AND DOWN, OUT OF FRAME...

REVEALING RICHARD BEHIND HER...

HIS FACE A MASK OF FEAR AND MURDEROUS FURY...

Shaking, he steps over Miss Price, kneels down next to the cage...

He scoops his baby out, cradling her to him...

Then he stands, starts back toward the stairs...

CLOSE ON Richard and India, making their way up the steps...

India looks young and innocent, like a child who stayed up late and nodded off in daddy's arms...

Daddy doesn't look young or innocent. He looks like he's aged thirty years. Like he'll never know peace again...

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard eases his daughter through the basement doorway, then carries her across the kitchen...

AS HE PASSES THROUGH FRAME, HEADING FOR THE DOOR, WE REMAIN, PUSHING IN ON A SHADOWY CORNER OF THE KITCHEN...

WE MOVE IN TIGHTER... UNTIL WE CAN JUST MAKE OUT A MAN STANDING MOTIONLESS AGAINST THE WALL, QUIETLY WATCHING AS HIS BROTHER CARRIES HIS NIECE FROM THE HOUSE...

EXT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Richard comes stumbling towards us down the unlit driveway, face shocked and eyes staring, his little girl in his arms...

He passes us, heading for the Jeep, haphazardly parked where the driveway meets the street...

He lays India down in the backseat, walks around to the driver's side, gets in, starts the engine, and drives away without a backward glance...

WIDE ON the Jeep, speeding down the street and vanishing into the night...

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

OUR P.O.V.: Down on the floor, looking to the side.

Suddenly Uncle Charlie crouches down in front of us, LOOKING RIGHT INTO CAMERA.

HIS P.O.V.: Miss Price, alive, eyes glazed, mouth opening and closing like a fish fresh out of water.

HER P.O.V.: Uncle Charlie.

He gets to his feet, starts removing his white dinner jacket. She watches, twitching, as he walks over to the stairs, folding the jacket neatly, draping it over the bannister.

Then he disappears from her eye-line.

TIGHT ON Miss Price, bracing for what's to come.

WIDE ON Miss Price, lying on her side on the concrete floor, a steel pole threading her mid-section.

Uncle Charlie walks around behind her, plants one foot on her hip for leverage, grabs the end of the pole with both hands, AND PULLS...

It slides free, making a thick, sucking sound.

Miss Price cries out, something gargled and unintelligible.

Uncle Charlie carries the pole over to the umbrella stand, slides it back in with the rest. Then, with surprising tenderness, he rolls Miss Price onto her back.

CLOSE ON Miss Price, looking up at him, eyes beseeching, lips spattered red. Clearly it's only a matter of time...

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, gazing down at her, his face sober, contemplative. Then he turns around and leaves.

We hear the sound of a garage door opening...

INT. MISS PRICE'S GARAGE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The door comes to a stop, revealing Uncle Charlie in the driveway, holding a clicker. He feels for the switch. Lights flicker on overhead.

Reveal a pegboard surface spanning the entire back wall, covered with tools made for cutting, slicing, hacking.

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, surveying the options. So many toys, so little time...

His eyes drop to a pile of supplies stacked below the pegboard. Then he finds what he's looking for...

INT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON a ribbon of liquid, seeping across the concrete floor, oozing around the candles, gradually turning into a flood...

We reveal Uncle Charlie, standing near the basement steps, emptying the last of the gasoline from a red 2-gallon jug.

CLOSE ON Miss Price, the gas washing beneath her, soaking hair, clothes, and skin...

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, holding one of the lighted candles...

SLOW-MOTION SHOT of the candle falling through frame, turning over and over, hitting the slicked floor...

IF MISS PRICE HAS TIME TO SCREAM, IT'S LOST IN THE ROAR OF THE FLAMES.

EXT. MISS PRICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

WIDE ON a shadowy figure, leaving by the front door and walking down the path to the sidewalk. Behind him, we can see the first signs of fire through the living room windows.

He stops at the little gate, unlatches it, makes a right. As he passes the driveway, we can see what's left of the AMC Rambler...

It's on fire, and so is the garage behind it.

Uncle Charlie exits frame but we linger, transfixed by the sounds of shattering glass, the sight of flames stretching to lick the night sky...

All evidence of his loved ones going up in smoke.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

The world looks white. Fuzzy.

A dark face appears before us, looming, saying something we can't understand.

RICHARD
(muffled)
India? Sweetheart?

CLOSE ON Richard, gradually coming into focus.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
India? It's me... It's daddy.

RICHARD'S P.O.V.: His daughter, finally opening her eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

WIDE ON a private room. India's lying in bed, wearing a white hospital gown, slowly coming to. She's lightly bruised, but other than that, she appears to be as she's always been.

Richard sits on the edge of the bed, dressed as before. He looks exhausted. Haunted. On the verge of coming apart but doing his best to keep it together...

For both their sakes.

RICHARD
How do you feel?

INDIA
(groggy)
Where am I?

RICHARD
The hospital...

INDIA
Why am I in the hospital?

Beat.

RICHARD
Your mother's here.

India says nothing. Maybe she didn't hear. Maybe she doesn't care. Hard to tell.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
She came as soon as I called her...

India looks around the room.

INDIA
Where is she?

RICHARD
She said she needed some air. But she'll be back...

Richard throws a quick look over his shoulder, back to the door. Then he leans in a little, his voice low and hoarse.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

India, I told your mother you had
an accident.

INDIA

An accident?

RICHARD

Yes - an accident.

(then, carefully)

I told her that I picked you up at
the school... and on our way home,
we hit a patch of ice... I said we
skidded on the road... And you hit
your head.

Richard offers up a ghost of a laugh.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I said you weren't wearing your
seatbelt...

INDIA

(beat)

But I always wear my seatbelt.

RICHARD

India, do you understand what I'm
saying to you?

He concentrates on keeping his voice neutral. Soothing.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I need to know that you understand.

(then)

It's very important.

Finally -

INDIA

Yes, I understand.

(beat)

"I had an accident."

Richard sags, relieved. And destroyed.

RICHARD

Good. That's my girl... Good.

Then he makes an odd choking noise. Richard turns away from
the bed, his hand over his mouth.

Beat.

INDIA

Why are you crying?

RICHARD

Because...

(turning back to her)

Because I'm happy... I'm happy
you're alright.

She allows him to pat her hand tenderly. Then -

INDIA

What time is it?

RICHARD

Why?

INDIA

What time is it?

Richard looks at his watch.

RICHARD

It's 5 o'clock. You've been
sleeping all day...

India frowns, starts getting out of bed.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

(restraining her)

No, no, no... You need to rest.

INDIA

I have to go...

RICHARD

You're not going anywhere,
sweetheart... Not for awhile.

INDIA

But I have to get ready...

RICHARD

Ready for what?

INDIA

The dance.

Beat.

RICHARD

The dance?

INDIA

The Winter Formal.

Richard blinks a few times, like he can't believe what he just heard.

RICHARD

(beat)

Why don't you lie down, sweetheart?
Try and get some sleep...

INDIA

But what about Miss Price?

CLOSE ON Richard, heart stopping.

RICHARD

What about Miss Price?

INDIA

I told her I would go...

CLOSE ON India, lying back on the pillow, her eyes sad and faraway. Almost wistful.

INDIA (CONT'D)

She'll be so disappointed.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO WHITE

Music. A piece similar to but not the same as *Gnossienne No. 4* by Erik Satie.

We're at the far end of a long hallway, lit white and bright, almost too bright to see. Down at the other end, a dark figure appears, moving slowly.

As it comes closer to camera, we realize it's two figures. One in a wheelchair, the other one behind it.

The man in the chair is a ruin. A shell of a shell.

The other appears to be as he's always been: hair short, shirt tucked, loafers shined.

Just before they reach us, Uncle Charlie silently steers Dr. Walker to the left. WE PAN with them, watching as they pass through a wide doorway...

INT. WRENFIELD - SUNROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie wheels the old man through the sunroom, past an assortment of patients making the best of a rainy day.

They park near the windows, Uncle Charlie positioning the chair so Dr. Walker can take advantage of the view.

UNCLE CHARLIE
You see? I told you, Dr. Walker...
It's springtime...

He sighs deeply, contentedly.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Everything is fresh and green...
(loaded)
Coming into bloom...

And right he is. The institute's grounds look lush and dense, washed clean of winter.

The two men share a quiet moment together, enjoying the scenery.

DR. MAILLARD (O.S.)
Charlie?

He turns his head, sees Dr. Maillard coming toward them.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)
Charlie! They said you took Dr.
Walker out of his room...

She reaches the chair, gives her husband a quick look.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)
You know you're not supposed to do
that, Charlie...

UNCLE CHARLIE
I thought he might appreciate a
change of scenery.

DR. MAILLARD
Oh. Well...

Granting him the tiniest of smiles -

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)
That was thoughtful of you.

Dr. Maillard has lost much of her brightness over the last few months. Still, she makes an effort to be cordial. With Uncle Charlie in particular.

DR. MAILLARD (CONT'D)
So... today is the day, yes?

UNCLE CHARLIE
Yes.

DR. MAILLARD
He'll be here soon...

UNCLE CHARLIE

Yes.

DR. MAILLARD

You must be excited... You've been waiting for this a long time.

UNCLE CHARLIE

Yes, I have...

CLOSE ON Uncle Charlie, turning back toward the window.

UNCLE CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(softly)

My whole life.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. WRENFIELD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

An empty road, somewhere deep in the mountains. Dark skies. Pouring rain.

A Jeep Grand Woody drives by, SPLASHING CAMERA.

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie sits on the edge of his bed, yellow suitcase at his feet, packed and ready.

EXT. WRENFIELD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The Jeep slows down in front of tall iron gates, turns in. We see a discreet sign posted on one side of the entry:
"WRENFIELD INSTITUTE. A Home Away From Home. Founded 1875."

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie... Waiting.

EXT. WRENFIELD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The car pulls up in front of the institute, windshield wipers sloshing back and forth.

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie... Waiting.

EXT. WRENFIELD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Richard gets out of the car and hurries for the entrance, holding the collar of his jacket over his head to keep dry.

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie... Waiting.

INT. WRENFIELD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Richard sits alone on a long wooden bench. A door opens down the hall. He turns his head.

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie... Waiting.

INT. WRENFIELD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Maillard leads Richard down a poorly-lit corridor.

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie... Waiting.

INT. WRENFIELD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Richard sees a door up ahead. The door is closed.

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Charlie... Waiting.

We hear the sound of a knock.

He turns his head.

We hear the sound of a door opening.

He rises.

INT. WRENFIELD - UNCLE CHARLIE'S ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

We're now standing at the door, watching him go.

He's already far away down the hall, Richard on one side, Dr. Maillard on the other.

Uncle Charlie's figure gets smaller and smaller... And then he's gone.

WE STAY ON the empty hallway as the door to his room swings shut before us.

CLOSE ON the back of the door.

There's something there.

A large canvas, secured with tape...

Claude's final portrait.

CLOSE ON India.

Her eyes dark and inscrutable.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END

Wentworth Miller

An actor and screenwriter whose credits span both television and feature film, Wentworth is perhaps best known for playing "Michael Scofield" on Fox's hit series PRISON BREAK from 2005 to 2009. PRISON BREAK is set to return to TV screens in the spring of 2017.

Wentworth's first original screenplay, STOKER, was produced by Fox Searchlight Pictures and Scott Free Productions and premiered at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival.

Wentworth can currently be seen as "Leonard Snart/Captain Cold" on the CW's THE FLASH and LEGENDS OF TOMORROW.