

**WHAT DREAMS MAY COME**

*Based on the novel by Richard Matheson*

Screenplay by

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Director: Vincent Ward

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## 1 INT. PEDIATRIC WAITING ROOM - DUSK 1

Warmly lit room, crammed with cozy sofas, ancient wing chairs, and coughing, sneezing, whining CHILDREN. Infant to pre-teen, each with a parent or two, the racket is something, the motion constant. In one corner, a CASTLE with clockwork moving figures keeps a few youngsters occupied. Toys in use, parents at the edge of their patience. PAN the walls now, to feature...

... fanciful ARTWORK, everywhere. Vivid colors, somewhat fantastical reality. Keep PANNING to a MURAL, set close to the floor, children's height. Slightly surreal garden, an Italian villa overlooking from a hillside. And facing the mural... \*

... an eight-year-old girl with serious eyes and the stub of a yellow crayon is carefully enhancing the mural. She has found a rear-view figure of a small nude boy, and is drawing a stream of pee, from where his hidden organ might be releasing it. Nearby, her mother, a bird-like, overdressed woman looks the other way, speaking in low, irritated tones to her cellular phone. Into the bedlam of the room, strolls... \*

... a doctor in white coat and dangling stethoscope. CHRIS NIELSEN is 45, cheerful and loose against the tension of this maelstrom. Keen eyes, a soft and decidedly likable smile as he scans his file on the move. Every parent locks focus, please God, me next. Noticing this, he grins...

CHRIS

And the lucky winner is... Jacobs!

The girl with the crayon looks up. She's the winner. Palms the crayon, self-consciously. The mother has heard her name, and shoots an imperious hand up, wait a minute, I'm finishing here. Chris just goes up to the girl...

CHRIS (soft)

Hey, Stacey. I'm Dr. Nielsen.

Looks at the mural. Sees that the boy is now peeing. \*

CHRIS

Ah, thank you. I bet he feels better now. \*

MRS. JACOBS (O.S.)

Stacey Jacobs! What in the world were you thinking!!

Chris turns to the mother's outraged eyes. Smiles.

CHRIS

My kid used to say, "What's the difference? You weren't looking anyway." \*

The mother doesn't know what to do with that. But she doesn't like it.

MRS. JACOBS

We had a four o'clock.

Chris looks back. Only into Stacey's eyes.

CHRIS

Well, I'm training all these kids to get sick on schedule, but it's tedious work.

(to Stacey)

You like rabbits?

Stacey shakes her head.

CHRIS

Who asked you?

Can I win a smile here? Almost.

CHRIS

Sure you like rabbits. I can prove it.

Holds out his hand, she takes it. He leads her to an area where four very large rabbits inhabit four messy cages, beneath a huge print. Points to an enormous Belgian Hare... \*

CHRIS

You wanna take him home?

She looks up. Really?

CHRIS

Too bad, he's mine.

Now they're grinning at each other. He's walking her out of the waiting room, down a corridor, as the mother follows.

2 INT. PEDIATRIC EXAMINING ROOM - DUSK

2 \*

Like the waiting room, the examining room is lined with prints. Is this a pediatrics office or a gallery? \*

CHRIS

Head still hurt?

STACY

All the time.

3 INT. PEDIATRIC EXAMINING ROOM - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

3 \*

He nods, understands. But it's not a big deal. They have entered into an examining room. Art here, too. Swoops her up onto the table. Stares in her eyes, real close.

MRS. JACOBS

She's had a cat-scan and an MRI.

He pulls the MRI from its manila envelope. Slides it into a brightly lit vertical display screen. Eight views of Stacy's brain.

CHRIS

More photos than a supermodel. No glasses, ever?

MRS. JACOBS

She doesn't need glasses, we're changing  
pediatricians because the other doctor couldn't find  
anything.

Now he looks over. First time. But there's no impatience in his eyes. Gentle look, gentle  
voice...

CHRIS

Well, we'll figure this out.

And holds the look. Until she knows he will. The intercom BUZZ.

NURSE (O.S.)

Mrs. Nielsen on four.

But he doesn't jump up. Just turns back to Stacy...

CHRIS

Cup your hands over your nose and mouth, like this.  
And breathe in and out... not fast, just regular.

Stacy tries. Chris nods, good, real good. Points to the flashing light on the cordless  
phone.

CHRIS

That's my wife. Let's see if you can do that longer  
than she can talk. Which is really an achievement.

The kid laughs. Chris gestures, keeps it going. Great! Lifts the phone...

CHRIS

White dress, black shoes. No underwear.

\*

4 INT. FINE ARTS MUSEUM EXHIBITION - DUSK

4

ANNIE NIELSEN, 37, petite and sleek. Jet black hair cut short and soft, she is genuinely  
lovely. She holds her cordless phone as she paces anxiously along the wall of the art  
gallery. The paintings she passes are 19th century.

ANNIE

Christy, I've got a meltdown.

CHRIS (O.S.)

... okay, your choice on the shoes, no pressure.

She's in no mood to fool around.

ANNIE

The eight pieces from Germany never showed, the night before the opening! I've gotta choose replacements...

Two young ASSISTANTS still hanging and lighting paintings. To the side, WORKERS on LADDERS are nailing exhibition SIGNAGE which reads "Restorations of Romantic Landscapes - A Retrospective".

ANNIE

... and get 'em down here, and re-hang, and re-light...

5 INTERCUT CHRIS

5

Stacy still breathing into her hands across the room. Chris calmly pulling from the drawer of a small corner desk, a large plastic sheet of mounted SLIDES...

ANNIE (O.S. distraught)

I can't believe it's our Double-D anniversary, and I'm ruining everything!

He pulls the MRI from the display screen and replaces it with the sheet of slides. We now see the slides are of paintings, perhaps four dozen, across the top is scrawled SUBMISSIONS. As Stacy's mother watches, outraged by his change of focus, Chris begins to scan the slides with an expert eye...

ANNIE (O.S. edge of tears)

I can't leave this, Christy, I... God, I'm so sor...

CHRIS (soft)

Okay, we take the Hudson Rivers, that gives us three, right...?

6 INTERCUT ANNIE

6

She is standing now at the entrance to another room, her anxious eyes falling on a grouping of paintings with dark and disturbing themes, trying to hold back tears, nodding at the phone, maybe, yeh.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Then. let's do the Hollenbeck, the Peters 16, 19 and ... 23, maybe.

She's calming, his soothing voice talking her through it.

ANNIE

Better than the Murphy's, y'think?

CHRIS (O.S.)

Absolutely. More distinctive, huh?

ANNIE

You're right, but they're all the way out in Fairfield,  
and I've got nobody to send...

CHRIS (O.S.)

I'll drive out after work, pick 'em up, drop 'em by...

She can't even believe how much she loves him.

ANNIE (playful)

You'd do that for me?

CHRIS (O.S.)

Only if you are incredibly grateful.

**A.7 INTERCUT CHRIS - CHRIS' OFFICE - DUSK**

**A.7 \***

He has taken the cordless phone into his office for privacy.

\*

CHRIS (joking)

Hey, this gives us a chance to show yours.

Chris glances at a painting by Annie which hangs in his corridor. A strikingly original rendering of a blurred FEMALE FIGURE as an old fashioned WASHING MACHINE floating through a ghostly 19th Century romantic landscape. Overtones post-modernist version of a Dali meets German romanticism.

CHRIS

'Maytag by Moonlight'. I'll bring it right over.

ANNIE (O.S.)

Yeh, it just fits right in.

CHRIS

Hang it. It's too sexy to leave out.

**B. 7 INTERCUT ANNIE**

**B. 7**

Clinging to her phone. Talking to the man she loves.

ANNIE

Sexy.

He's made her smile. He alone can do that.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Makes me think of your body.

He is breathing hard, provocatively into the phone. She laughs.

ANNIE

That's quite the compliment.

Hear his moan of excitement.

ANNIE

Okay, weirdo, I'll be home late, but I'll be there. I'll bring my tool kit.

7 INTERCUT CHRIS. 7

Re-entering the examining room. She'll be all right now. Murmurs...

CHRIS

G'bye. I love you.

Hangs up. Looks to Stacy, who is still breathing into her hands, but has obviously been following the conversation with great interest. He does more heavy breathing to encourage her to keep it up. She giggles, and keeps going. Mom is dumbstruck, but he ignores her. Tells the kid...

CHRIS

My wife restores pictures. And paints her own. Paintings are the most interesting things in this world... next to your brain.

And makes the CUT sign. Stacy stops.

CHRIS

Feelin' better?

The kid thinks about it. And nods. Slightly amazed. He's not, turns to Mom...

CHRIS

Any migraines in your family?

8 INT. CAR, CALDECOTT TUNNEL - NIGHT 8

Chris driving the freeway. On the seat next to him is a long, thin GIFT, wrapped in reflective paper, with a gold bow, and a CARD tucked in which reads 'DD Anni'. Light BLURRS past. He enters an endless, darkly-lit TUNNEL.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I said, "G'bye. I love you." I'll always remember that.

Easing around a curve. Something wrong up ahead, sudden HORNS, tires SCREECHING...

CHRIS (V.O.)

... what a lucky break.

... hear the CRASH, see a Porsche FLIP over, SKIDDING on the shoulder, two other cars COLLIDING, a wheel comes OFF and ROCKETS back STRAIGHT AT us, and...

...MISSES somehow. The tunnel traffic SWERVING to avoid the pile-up, SAILING past, horns BLARING, except for Chris, who...

... pulls OFF onto the shoulder. SLAMS to a stop. GRABS his black medical bag from the seat and RUNS toward the disaster. Everything a chaos of lights and horns, Chris RACING to the upside-down Porsche, a young woman inside, terrified, blood on her face. Chris...

... YANKS the door OPEN, with a CRUNCH of metal grinding metal.

CHRIS

I'm a doct...

WOMAN

GET ME OUT OF H...

The word lost in the CRASH of another car joining the pile-up, Chris WHIRLING to see...

... something HURTLING AT US, and...

BLACK SCREEN.

Silence.

9 INT. KITCHEN, WOODSIDE - MORNING - FLASHBACK

9

CLOSE on the stove top, butter sizzling in a skillet. One egg breaks into the pan, two, three. PULL BACK to see...

... Annie yawn. Keeps one eye on the bacon, which looks nearly done. Another on the toaster.

ANNIE

You have to eat something.

REVERSE ANGLE... two children. At the table is MARIE, 8, delicate, with caramel hair and huge quiet eyes. She reads a Garfield book and ignores her bagel. At a counter in the corner is IAN, 13, rugged, rangy, a jock. Beautiful sleepy face. \*

IAN

I don't. Actually.

He is languidly working on a half-finished MODEL of an aircraft carrier. \*

IAN

I'll get something at school.

ANNIE

Yeh, and I know what you'll get.

IAN

Have to carb up, Mom, gotta a game.

CHRIS (O.S.)

And a math test.



ANGLE... Chris has been watching from the doorway His son puts the last touches on a repair to a minor fitting.

IAN  
I'm ready, I'm cool.

Chris looks down. Doesn't know what to do with that lie. And seeing this...

IAN (softer)  
I was up till two-thirty, it's the best I can do. I can't worry about it n...

MARIE (overlapping)  
Mommy, if you pick me up, I won't have to wait a million hours at his incredibly boring game.

Puh-leeze? Just for me? Annie wants to, but...

ANNIE  
I'm sorry, baby, I've got this meeting. Angie will swing by, on the way to get your brother. I'll let her take the van...

Does that help? Marie looks down, as if a light dimmed out. Staring blankly at her book. On impulse...

ANNIE  
But I will see your chorus thing tomorrow.

The chocolate eyes come back up.

MARIE  
You sure? I thought you couldn't.

Annie goes, strokes her baby's hair...

ANNIE (murmurs)  
I don't want to miss it. I'll work it out.

The nanny-housekeeper ANGIE pokes her head in. She is young, Latina...

ANGIE  
We're late, guys. I'll pull the van out...

And disappears. Both kids stand, pull their books together. Ian looks to his dad...

IAN  
I didn't forget what we said. We'll get it all straight tonight, I promise.

He means that. Serious and contrite and responsible all at once. His dad nods, tonight. The tall boy kisses his shorter mom. Ambles off. Marie is slower. Gives her mom a grateful kiss and hug. A quicker one for dad, and she too is gone. Annie glances to her husband...

ANNIE  
You want his breakfast?

A small smile, for she knows the answer. He looks to the bacon and eggs.

CHRIS  
I'm depressed. But I'm not ready for suicide.

10 EXT. CALDECOTT TUNNEL - NIGHT

10

BRIGHT, blinding FLASHES. When they subside, we are looking DOWN on the accident scene in the tunnel. The flashes were welding sparks, as firemen cut away part of an overturned car to remove a female corpse.

CHRIS (V.O.)  
I should have known the breakfast was a dream.  
Should have known right away. Just the fact that the  
kids were there.

From our AERIAL VIEW, we see paramedics loading a man's body into the back of a waiting ambulance. We move down, as if following them. SMASH CUT TO...

11 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

11 \*

BRIGHT, flickering LIGHT. It is the strobing of a faulty fluorescent tube. As it clears, our view is...

HIGH ANGLE from the ceiling of a brightly-lit room. A figure lies motionless in the bed below, curled on its side. Tubes, monitors, the works. As bad as it gets.

CHRIS (V.O.)  
The funny thing was, it wasn't really a dream. But a  
memory.

Our VIEW SHIFTS slightly, bobbing up and down. As if the POV of a helium balloon. But always watching the body in the bed.

CHRIS (V.O.)  
Can you really dream a memory? So perfect?

Below us, the body SPASMS, a small but frightening movement. A deep growling in its chest.

CHRIS (V.O.)  
It was the last breakfast, of course, we never saw  
them again. Four years. Why would I dream it  
now?

The body below curls unconsciously closer to a fetal ball.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I was still dreaming, I could prove that. Like I always proved a dream was a dream. I could make myself fly.

And we begin to drift DOWN now, in a graceful series of slow arcs, like a feather settling toward earth. Toward the body.

CHRIS (V.O.)

But why dream this? Was it part of the accident dream, the Porsche in the tunnel?

Closer. The body rolls its face away from us. The tubes stretch to their limits.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Or was the accident real? And I'm dreaming in a hospital. Even on... an operating table.

Still closer now. Right down to the FACE. It is Chris' OWN. Horribly battered, barely recognizable. Our POV STARTLES slightly. Then, settles in for a closer look.

CHRIS (V.O., hushed)

God, I never had a dream like...

A desperate RATTLE comes from the body's throat. It seems to want to open its eyes, but they are swollen shut. And from somewhere...

MALE VOICE (V.O., gentle)

Chris, do you know what's happened?

The voice is young and easy. As direct as it is kind.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Uh. I ate something really gross before bed?

We are trying to look around...

CHRIS (V.O.)

Who are you? A doctor? Are you operating on me, am I hallucinating under anesthetic...?

Our POV WHIRLING in all directions...

CHRIS (V.O.)

Why can't I see you?

12 OMITTED

12

13 EXT. LAKE MAGGIORE - DAY- FLASHBACK

13 \*

Chris floating on his back in a pale azure lake. All around are mountain peaks, villages dotting the shoreline. In the distance, a city we can't know is Lugano. The light is liquid and creamy and bathes the setting into something beyond perfection. And Chris...

... rises. Walks to shore, to where his towel and duffel bag lie. He is younger in this place, but somehow the same. As he begins to towel off, he squints at the sun-splashed lake, because a small SAILBOAT is approaching, 16 feet, a Lido, one-handed by...

... a young woman. In a bikini. Jet-black hair.

ANNIE (calls out)  
'Scuse me, sir...!

Chris has to smile to himself. Sir, huh? Not the way he sees himself. She sure is pretty.

ANNIE (calling louder)  
Which way is Switzerland?

He laughs. She has sailed closer. He thinks about it, and points toward Lugano across the lake.

CHRIS (calls out)  
Just keep sniffing, till you smell money! Or you step  
in chocolate! \*

She nods, like that was sensible advice. Waves a thank-you. And sails away.

As he watches.

14 INT. FRONT HALL, WOODSIDE - NIGHT

14

We are in the front hall of a comfortable home. A hallway lined with art. Our POV looks around, VOICES, low and grave from a room somewhere. But here...

...a DOG comes running, a female German Shepherd, BOUNDING into the room, only to ... STOP. Stare directly at us. A strange, worried look. The dog begins to slightly edge away with what could only be a whimper...

CHRIS (V.O.)  
Ginger? Ginger, you see me?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)  
She does. Dogs are different.

And we look up, whirling, in every direction...

MALE VOICE (V.O.)  
Can you see me now, Chris?

... and we can. A blurred SHAPE at the end of the hall. Scarcely even discernible as the silhouette of a man.

CHRIS (V.O.)  
Is that you, the blur?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

I'll get clearer when you want me to. Are you confused about how you got home so fast? Do you know how many hours, how many days...?

CHRIS (V.O.)

Dreams don't deal in time, Doc. Time doesn't count.

We are staring so hard at the blur. Trying to make the focus a little sharper. When we can't, we FLOAT toward the distant voices, the dog tagging along, as we pass...

... a door jamb with a smudge of PAINT. We stop. Look at it. It is the doorway to Annie's STUDIO, we see the large room in darkness, covered easels, canvasses lean against the walls. Back to the paint smudge...

CHRIS (V.O.)

She always does this, there's paint everywhere.

Chris' hand reaches out. Tries to wipe the smudge away. \*

CHRIS (V.O.)

I always have to clean it up. \*

But the paint won't budge. He moves on... \*

15 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

15

... Into the living room. A dozen friends, family, circulate. Speaking in low tones. Casting glances toward a far sofa where CINDY, Annie's best girlfriend, comforts her. There is intelligence and sympathy in the liquid blue eyes that stare into Annie's, the strong fingers that clasp Annie's hands.

MALE VOICE (V.O., simply)

You've died, Chris.

Annie's eyes are red, her face is hollow. She stares through her friend, into a misery and fear so profound she can scarcely contemplate it.

CHRIS (V.O., quietly)

You have to be a dream, Doc. If I were dead, would I need you to tell me?

A beat. Before...

MALE VOICE (V.O., quietly)

Guess you do. Everybody's different.

The voice sounded more uncertain than omniscient. That makes us turn toward the blurred shape. Which is now by the mantle.

CHRIS (V.O.)

How come I see everyone, Doc.? Everyone but y...

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

... I'm the one you don't want to see. You don't want to be dead.

We are drifting toward the shape, which gets no clearer as we come closer. On the mantle are two PHOTOGRAPHS in simple frames. Ian, flashing his jock give-a-fuck grin.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

How long was it before she could put these pictures back up?

Our POV hesitates. As if stopped by the question.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Are you supposed to ask questions? Why would you care anyway?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Sorry. I was curious.

And our VIEW moves to Marie's photo. Thoughtful pose, no smile.

16 INT. MARIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

16

CLOSE on Marie, alone, propped up on pillows, hugging her well-worn STUFFED TIGER. Her face sheens with sweat. Pull back to see her daddy with his stethoscope to her chest. Now her side. Now lower.

CHRIS

I'm gonna keep doing this till you tickle.

She doesn't smile. Keeps watching with those serious eyes that seem so old. He takes off his jacket. Sits down on her bed.

CHRIS

Well, 104 is no fun. But it's going down.

And stays quiet. Just smiling at her. Until the silence makes her say so directly...

MARIE

Don't you have to go somewhere?

He stares at her. So sad to hear those words. Shakes his head.

CHRIS

You said you wanted to learn chess. I could teach you that.

Only her eyes smile. But they do. So clearly, it melts him straight through. As her quiet mouth says...

MARIE

You could teach me that.

17 EXT. SEQUOIA - DUSK -FLASHBACK

17

Hard rain filtering through giant trees. Two SHAPES running toward us in dim light, they are shouting, laughing, swearing. Crashing across the underbrush, they are Chris and Ian, racing each other through the downpour to...

... slam against a huge TRUNK. This tree is so big, its canopy so thick, the rain scarcely trickles here. Still laughing, they crouch together in its protection. Catch their breath.

Then, silence. Gazing up, leaning back against the bark, each other. Good to be there.

IAN

Man, I'm glad you didn't listen to Mom.

Which makes his father turn. Hmmn?

IAN

Well. She didn't want us to do this. Cos...  
y'know... grades, and stuff.

And stuff. Chris staring at this boy. Until he decides to say...

CHRIS

Well, your mom and I did talk.

That sounds almost ominous in its quietness. The boy alerted.

CHRIS

And we always listen. To each other.

A full beat.

IAN

What did you talk ab...

CHRIS

... about whether you staying at Head-Royce. Is the  
best idea.

The kid so shocked, he can scarcely comprehend. Flickering across young eyes, resentment, fear. But mostly, astonishment. A betrayal he could never have believed possible. By the one person he'd known he could always trust.

18 INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY -FLASHBACK

18

An organ plays. A Lutheran cross stands sentinel above a bank of flowers. PAN the pews of the chapel to find CHILDREN among the adults. Nearly a hundred. For this is no ordinary funeral. Through the glass walls, brilliant sunlight lends ironic counterpoint. PAN quickly to the first row, to the aisle, where...

Chris holds Annie's hands in his. Real tight. They are stunned, uncomprehending as they gaze at their children's coffins. The music stops. A slender, scholarly MINISTER rises to the podium. Behind him, flowers rest on TWIN CASKETS. The crowd wants to be quiet

for him. But there are open sobs that spring up here and there. And the minister waits. He surely understands. CLOSE on him now...

MINISTER

Tragedy. Is a word we hear too often. A word...  
that has lost its true meaning. Until today.

He seems, himself, almost too sad to continue.

MINISTER

When death claims our children...

CLOSE now on one of the coffins, pass through its side to see IAN, eyes closed. He is beautiful, at peace. A breath of air blows mysteriously across the still face. Somewhere, a woman begins to CRY hysterically, and we cut...  
BACK TO Chris. Holding onto Annie.

19 EXT. DRIVEWAY - MORNING - FLASHBACK

19

Their last morning. Angie has pulled out the chevy van. Both kids are climbing in, as...

...Chris RUNS out to catch them. Marie has forgotten her lunch again. He hands it to her through the open window...

CHRIS

Your mom puts healthy stuff in here, huh? So don't  
trade it away for chips and cookies.

Marie cuts him a look. Hears this a lot.

CHRIS

Love you.

She leans out. Kisses his cheek. His son hasn't turned.

CHRIS (to Ian)

You, too, Sport.

Ian knows it's for him. A manly wave, without turning. And Angie PULLS AWAY...

Chris stands. Watching them go. Seeing his children's heads through the glass, he looks uneasy.

Wishes he'd said more. Then again he always does.

20 INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

20

A different day, a different funeral home. It is another funeral. A MONSOON of rain cascades beyond the glass. There is only a single CASKET now, larger, full-sized. All the mourners are adults. Annie sits with Cindy today, her eyes frightened, struggling to hold back tears. RACK FOCUS to the back of the hall, center aisle, two figures stand...

Chris. And his blurred companion, who has now taken on a clearer image. A body in a workshirt and jeans, a cowboy's body, not one we'd expect. We see now that his hands



are those of a black man. The face is still blurred, as through frosted, slightly distorted glass.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Where were you just now? In your mind.

And without turning...

CHRIS

The kid's funeral. I was sitting... right up there, but...

And stops. Because...

MALE VOICE (V.O., softly)

It's not their funeral today, Chris.

He looks now. To the cowboy.

CHRIS (whispers)

Thanks for coming. But I still can't see you.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

At least you're willing to see yourself. You're losing your fear.

Chris looks down. He can see himself now, as we see him. He flexes his hands, watching them move.

CHRIS (whispers)

Fear.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

That you disappeared.

Chris begins to walk down the aisle. His companion stays with him.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

You didn't. You only died.

A coffin of polished rosewood rests beneath a splash of flowers. The rain pounds harder. Chris stops now. Just behind Annie. Just at her shoulder. While on the podium...

MINISTER

... a woman who lost her only children, four short years ago...

And Annie's tears come. She can't help it now. At her side, Cindy glares bullets at the minister on the podium. But here, in the aisle, Chris crouches beside his wife. The minister drones on.

CHRIS

Shhhh, baby, it's okay. He's an idiot, but he doesn't mean to hurt us.

He reaches a hand toward her face...

CHRIS

He just doesn't know what to say.

And it stops. Just short. Fingertips would give anything to caress her hair, less than an inch away.

CHRIS

Jesus, Doc, this is the god-damnedest dream.

Chris starts to cry, too. And there they are, husband and wife. Silently crying their hearts out. For love of each other.

CHRIS

Fess up, Doc. If I was dead. Could I cry?

Shakes his head. It tears him to shreds to see her like this.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Given all this. Be surprised if you didn't.

21 INT. ANNIE'S STUDIO - DAY

21

Chris in Annie's sunlit studio, alone with the cowboy, whose features we still can't see. He walks from canvas to canvas, taking it all in.

COWBOY

Any of these yours?

Chris has to laugh, in spite of himself.

CHRIS

Annie's the artist. I tried, when I was young. The images were so clear in my mind... but, putting them onto canvas...

The cowboy stands in front of an easel, a large landscape of a lake ringed by forest and mountain. In the far hills, a few simple brushstrokes suggest a dwelling. On a closer promontory, stands a small, lone silhouetted FIGURE. Clouds roll over the peaks, a soft mist. It is a work in progress, almost finished, but...

...The lower right corner of the painting has not been completed. Part of it contains sketches of trees not yet painted in. Part of it remains completely blank.

CHRIS

It's a present. For me.

There are two large prints hanging nearby, each of a forested lake. Clearly, Annie has borrowed elements from these for her painting.

CHRIS

It was for our Double-D anniversary. Kind of our... special day.

All around are dozens of other prints, clippings, tear-outs, masterpieces from which she has also taken inspiration.

CHRIS

It's her version of our place.

COWBOY

Your place.

Chris points to a large blown-up photo of LAKE MAGGIORE. We recognize it from Chris' memory of meeting Annie in her sailboat.

CHRIS

It's where we met. And where we're going to... retire, I guess. Live our lives out. Just be old farts together. Maybe here...

...and points to the tiny dwelling on the far hillside of the painting. Nearby, clipped to the easel is a snapshot. Young Annie on her sailboat. Chris points to the lake in Annie's painting, the same sailboat floats on the water. Then...

CHRIS

And this was our first picnic, stuff like that.

Near the sailboat, picnic things on the bank. No human figures, there. Only the one, in foreground, the MAN seen at the crest of a hill. Looking down on all of it.

CHRIS

That's me, I think.

The cowboy points to a blank section in the lower corner, by the picnic. There is a pencil sketch, the outline of a huge tree.

CHRIS

She never finishes things on time. That always used to bug me.

COWBOY

Used to?

And turns his blurry face toward his companion. A beat of silence.

CHRIS

Figure of speech.

22 INT. BEDROOM- DAY

22

Annie at the writing desk. Opens the cloth-bound book. It is a blank journal. Empty pages.

CHRIS (loud)  
Doc, the funeral's over! Why is this going on past  
the funeral?

Annie glances up. A stray thought? It was almost as if she heard something. He steps up  
behind her. Right behind her. It seems to break her reverie.

CHRIS (softly)  
How you doin', babe?

She lifts her pen. Begins to write in the book. He reads over her shoulder, and we hear her  
inner voice...

ANNIE (V.O., writing)  
Dear Diary...

Thinks. But only an instant. Writes...

ANNIE (V.O., writing)  
I'm writing in your bullshit pages because my shrink  
is crazier than I am. He thinks you're therapy!

His hands come up. Why is he afraid to touch her? He's wondering that.

ANNIE (V.O., writing)  
He figures, if two babies can hammer me into a  
psycho ward, what'll I do with this? He's so dumb.

CHRIS  
Jesus, Annie, what have I done?

ANNIE (V.O., writing)  
He's so dumb, he thinks he pulled me through the  
breakdown...

CHRIS (whispers)  
What have I done to us?

ANNIE (V.O., writing)  
When it was only Christy. Always. Only Chris.

Almost overcome by that. Keeps going..

ANNIE (V.O., writing)  
I was looking through his postcards. Paintings were  
his obsession, you know. I think he loved them  
even more than I do.

CHRIS  
Annie..

ANNIE (V.O., writing)  
He used art as another way to love me, to help me.  
To keep us always together...

More than he can bear..

CHRIS  
I'm here, babe. I still exist.

And she stops. His eyes flicker at that. Why did she stop?

CHRIS  
You're thinking of me. Keep thinking of me.

And the pen is frozen in mid-air.

CHRIS  
C'mon, with me, you were always with me. We  
finish each other's sentences, remember us? I still  
exist.

It is a strange look on her face, all right. Like listening for a sound from another planet.

CHRIS  
I STILL EXIST!

She shudders. He leans down, lips right to her ear. The barest whisper.

CHRIS  
... I still exist.

She is suddenly at the edge of tears. He won't move, not an inch.

CHRIS  
Write it down.

C'mon! C'mon babe...

CHRIS  
Write, "This is Chris, I still exist."

And as if moving by itself, her hand SCRIBBLES something violently. But she won't look down.

CHRIS  
Read it.

She looks. It says - THSICRS - ISTILEXST.

CHRIS  
God bless you, darlin'. You are the best, you are  
my ba...

... she CRUMPLES the paper in anguish. LURCHES from the desk, her chair FLYING back, Chris instinctively DODGING its path. Annie THROWS herself on the bed, miserable and desperate. Curls herself in a fetal ball. Not unlike Chris in his hospital bed. He can only watch. His heart breaking. And breaking again. He climbs up on the bed, behind her trembling back...

... and lies down. Inches away. Gets his mouth as close to her ear, without quite touching.

CHRIS

You know what this is gonna be like? When I wake up?

No change. Nothing.

CHRIS

I'm going to wake up screaming, and you'll hold me close.

And on this. Her breathing slows.

CHRIS

And when I tell you the dream. We will laugh.

His hand caressing her hair, without touching, an inch away.

CHRIS

And we will make love.

We see her face so clearly. Tormented, torn to pieces.

CHRIS

And everything... I ever promised you... will be...

23 INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT / FLASHBACK

23

From beneath the sheets, Chris sits BOLT UPRIGHT in bed, GASPING a strangled SHRIEK in the dark, and...

... she is THERE, startling AWAKE beside him, LUNGING to GRASP him, to hold him CLOSE as he knew she would. Her eyes frightened for him, and seeing her so near, so loving, so terrified for his sake...

... he begins to LAUGH. To laugh with the release of everything inside him. He looks at her lovely face, and draws her close.

ANNIE (murmurs)

No, Chris.

He stops. She looks deeply into his eyes. From so near.

ANNIE

This is the dream. I'm not here.

Her lips part. She moves closer.

ANNIE  
I love you, Christy. I always will.

Her eyes close. Her mouth almost to his...

ANNIE  
Good-b...

24 EXT. CEMETERY - SUNSET

24

BLINDING sunlight. A grassy slope. Chris standing, his hair and clothes unaffected by the breeze that tousles...

... Annie's hair. She is kneeling on the grass. Not far away. She has a bundle of flowers wrapped in newspaper. They are very pretty.

CHRIS (murmurs)  
Jesus, God, when does it end?

COWBOY (V.O.)  
There's no rules. It ends when you want it to.

He is there. The black cowboy with the features we can't quite see. Although this time, we nearly can.

CHRIS  
Where were you?

COWBOY  
Someplace else.

For the first time, the cowboy's mouth can be seen to move. His words seem more spoken than voice-over. Something else is gone, that slight resonant timbre that made his voice seem enhanced. He is becoming more like us.

COWBOY  
What do you think, I'm some figment of your imagination?

The cowboy looks down. Scratches the back of his blurry head.

COWBOY  
It's all real... You, me. Her. Everything... is real.

And shrugs.

COWBOY  
That's the point. If there is a point.

Chris starts down the hill. Toward the woman he loves. But the cowboy doesn't move.

## COWBOY

Reality is. When you're tired of hurting the both of you. You'll leave.

Well, Chris has to smile at that one. And shake his head. He's reached her now. Standing behind her kneeling form. Nearby, we see two tarnished PLAQUES, the names of his children. The dates of their lives. But just now, Annie is cleaning bits of dirt and grass from a shiny new plaque. It says: CHRISTOPHER JAMES NIELSEN. 1953-1998. BELOVED FATHER AND HUSBAND. FOREVER. \*

CHRIS (murmurs)

Forever.

And Annie's fingers reach for that word. The bronze letters. Rest tenderly on them. He leans so close above her...

CHRIS

Don't worry, babe. I'm not leaving you alone. I'm not going anywh...

His fingers CLOSE on her shoulders, and she SHRIEKS an agonized HOWL from the depths of her soul, he clutches TIGHTER and she screams LOUDER until he realizes, and...

... lets go. Annie, shattered, dissolves in tears.

Chris stares down at her. He knows. He has known, against his denial, even before this. A small bitter smile...

CHRIS

G'bye. I love you.

And GONE. Annie alone in frame. A deep, cleansing breath. She is better now, somehow. Almost startled by that. Wondering why.

REVERSE ANGLE... the hillside is empty above her. No husband. No cowboy. The breeze a little stronger now, as she...

... unwraps the flowers, so carefully. There is a plastic vase set into the earth before the plaque. She places them there. The breeze blows a few petals free. But that's all right.

She folds the newspaper that wrapped the flowers. Compulsively, absently, meticulously. Marine folding a burial flag. She tucks it away.

Kiss her fingertips. Touch his name.

And she, too, is gone. Walking slow. Down the hill.

25 INT. ANNIE'S STUDIO - LATE AFTERNOON

25

Annie, arms folded, stares at her painting of the lake. The present she never gave him. Her hand reaches, her fingertips nearly touch the lone figure at the crest of the hill. They move over the water, past the cottage, the sailboat, the picnic things, and finally to...



... the uncompleted corner. She lifts four SKETCH PENCILS from the easel's tray. Chooses one, and begins to SKETCH in the empty space a NEW TREE, much larger and grander than all the others. She sets the other pencils down in the tray, next to a painted woods, just below the crest of a hillside, as we CUT TO...

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

26 OMITTED

26

27 OMITTED

28 SUMMERLAND - EXT. HILLSIDE - LATE AFTERNOON

28

CLOSE on Chris, his eyes DARTING, here, there, where am I? PULL BACK to reveal...

...a WOODS of vibrant color. Too vibrant, surrealistically so. He looks around, this can't be real. Reaches out, touching a brilliant leaf, only to find it is...

...paint. Not painted, but made completely of paint. Which comes off on his hand. A flower, a tree trunk, the same, and suddenly...

...a RUSTLING, he WHIPS around, as something moves through the paint foliage to reveal itself as...

...a young DALMATION. So incongruous in this bizarre place. Chris squints, he could almost swear...

CHRIS

Katie...?

Katie WOOFs happily. Trots over for a cuddle as Chris sinks down to embrace the dog...

CHRIS (amazed)

God, it is you. But so young...

He looks around...

CHRIS

Katie, what...what is this place...?

Utterly, confused, disoriented...

\*  
\*

CHRIS

I screwed up, I'm in dog heaven.

Katie WOOFs again, and his eyes return to her. So happy to see her, he can't keep from beaming.

\*

CHRIS (so softly)

Hey. If I had to pick a dream. I could have done worse.

29 INT. ANNIE'S STUDIO, WOODSIDE - LATE AFTERNOON / FLASHBACK 29

CLOSE on Katie, the Dalmatian, but not as we've seen her. She is old here, blind and in pain. Trembling on her soft blanket bed in the corner of Annie's studio. Crouched next to her...

... Marie, with her huge dark eyes. She studies her friend, carefully, all over. Katie's pain registers in the little girl's expression. But she will not cry.

MARIE

When she goes to the hospital, I'm going too.

In the doorway, her parents side by side. This moment shared, like all others. It is the mother who steps forward. Crouches at her daughter's side.

ANNIE

Katie isn't going there to get well, sugar.

Marie doesn't understand. Or doesn't want to.

ANNIE

They give her a shot. That doesn't hurt. And she falls aslee...

MARIE

... you're going to kill my dog?

CHRIS (O.S.)

Baby...

But Annie raises a hand, without turning. Not angry at him. Just... I'll handle this. Never wavering from Marie's eyes...

ANNIE

I'm going to help her die, yes.

Winds her fingers. Around a smaller hand.

ANNIE

She hurts bad, and nothing can help that. I'm going to stop it, because I love her.

The stare holds. The dark eyes harden.

MARIE

You're going to kill my dog.

But Annie won't blink. Won't cop out.

ANNIE

You be angry, if you want. Death does that.

Something passes between them. It carries acceptance. And trust.

MARIE

What'll happen to her.

ANNIE

She will go. Where we all go. And how can that be bad?

Marie's eyes cloud with feeling.

MARIE

When she goes to the hospital. I'm going, too.

ANNIE

Yes, you are.

30 SUMMERLAND - EXT. LAKE /HILLSIDE - LATE AFTERNOON

30

Chris and Katie where we left them in the paint woods. They are a few steps from the crest of a hill, and as they climb it...

CHRIS (murmurs)

... where we all go. That can't be bad. Can it?

They reach the crest, Katie BARKS. And Chris FREEZES. Because he is looking down on a vista which is...

ANNIE'S PAINTING. The lake, the forest, the mountains, the cloud-strewn sky. All made only of paint. But three dimensional, countless miles wide and deep and high. Unwittingly, Chris' own posture at the top of the hill has become the precise figure in Annie's painting, completing the image. A stunned, forever moment.

CHRIS (to Katie)

Maybe I'm not in your heaven after all, girl.

Emotions swim in his eyes.

CHRIS

Maybe you're in mine.

31 SUMMERLAND - EXT. LAKESIDE - LATE AFTERNOON

31

Near the foot of the hill now. A deep forest, a rippling lake, made entirely of paint. Three-dimensional, surrounding us, yet very still. HEAR a crunching, as...

Chris and Katie come around the hillside, on a dirt-brown path just above the lake. Chris soon finds he is Mired in paint above his knees. He looks down the path, to see...

... a FIGURE moving toward him, walking across the SURFACE of the lake. Even from here, the cowboy's body. Chris squints...

\*

CHRIS (calls out)

Albert...?

Half a beat. And then the cowboy waves, cheerily. He's walking effortlessly, but moving FAST, as if he were on one of those airport moving walkways. CLOSE enough now for us to see... \*

... Albert's face, for the first time. He is indeed black, a boyish 25, sleepy eyes, roguish good looks. A glint of mischief, but yes, angelic all the same. Chris taken a back by this face. So Albert laughs...

ALBERT

Last time you saw Albert Lewis, he was 63,  
stretched out in a cardiac ward.

He grins, so cowboy-handsome, Chris has to smile in spite of himself.

ALBERT

Well, old Katie looks better too, huh? Who the hell  
wants to be 63 when they don't have to? You figured  
I'd look old and decrepit, huh? \*

Chris just blinks, confused, delighted, dumbfounded.

CHRIS

Well, white hair, at least. That was the one part you  
said would turn white. \*

Albert laughs. Chris remembering how much he loves this guy. And then he realizes something more... \*

CHRIS

And you... you were there, just now, when I...

Go ahead, say the word.

CHRIS

... when I died, yeh.

Albert grins, yep. Chris keeps trying to stand on top of the paint-mud like Albert, but he can't.

ALBERT

I thought you recognized me, when you kept saying  
'Doc,' Me being your favorite doc of all time. \*

From Chris' face. That he is.

CHRIS

Well, on the one hand. You did give me my first  
job...

His arms already opening, reaching...

CHRIS

On the other. You croaked before you taught me  
much. Can you hug a guy in heaven?

Guess so. Because Albert GRASPS him tight. So tight. They look at each other. Very softly...

CHRIS

Well. Maybe you taught me a little.

Maybe. Chris looks around, still trying to step out of the paint.

CHRIS

Nice place you got here.

ALBERT

Nice place you got. We all paint our own surroundings here, at least "painting" is what we call it. But you're the first guy I know to use real paint.

Albert taking it in. It is magical, impossible. And in such complete and exquisite detail.

ALBERT

We're pretty insecure, at first. So we see ourselves somewhere safe, comforting.

Chris' eyes moving everywhere. In absolute wonder. Paint SUCKING around his thighs.

CHRIS

But there's so much here she didn't paint, like that bird...

The BIRD is lavender, huge, majestic. A raven the size of a condor. Motionless, like everything, on a high branch.

ALBERT

Annie gave you a start. Sorta like handrails to hang onto. But you're creating an entire world, here. From your imagination, from other paintings you love... anything you want.

CHRIS

If it's a whole world. How come nothing really moves?

Staring at the creature. Its frozen, regal elegance.

ALBERT

That bird will fly when you want it to.

And then. It DOES. The lavender bird FLAPS its great wings and SOARS effortlessly into the painted sky. And Chris laughs with delight.

CHRIS

Can I make him do a barrel-roll?

ALBERT

You're the painter now!

The bird sails UP into an airplane LOOP, then DIVES into a barrel-roll, flecks of paint flying from its wings, and as it SWOOPS over our head...

... it SHITS a massive glob of purple paint that SMACKS Chris square in the face. Albert ROARS with laughter. Chris grins, wiping a clear space for his eyes.

CHRIS  
Now why would I do that?

ALBERT  
You wouldn't. I did that.

Scrapes his finger in Chris' purple glob. Tastes it. Not half bad...

ALBERT  
See, when two of us are together, it's like dual  
controls. Nice give-and-take, don't y'think.

Looks around.

ALBERT  
Didn't Annie paint you guys a house, somewhere?

And there it is. Through the mist. Miles away. A graceful Italian villa. It looks pretty  
grand. When he turns back...

32 OMITTED

32

33 OMITTED

33

## A. 34 SUMMERLAND - EXT. LAKE SURFACE - SUNSET

A. 34 \*

Albert STRIDING across the surface of the lake. Katie trots happily at his side. No sweat. Albert PEERS down, as if looking below the surface, at...

\*  
\*

## B. 34 SUMMERLAND - EXT. LAKE FLOOR

B. 34 \*

Chris jumps into the water and sinks to the bottom.

\*

He trudges along the bottom of the lake. He is not in a good mood.

\*

CHRIS

\*

Last time you pick the short cut.

\*

Even though he is under water, we hear his words clearly (with only a slight gurgle), as does...

\*  
\*

## C. 34 INTERCUT ALBERT

C. 34 \*

...Albert on the surface. Despite the distance between them, they seem able to hold a completely normal conversation.

\*  
\*

CHRIS (O.S.)

\*

Why am I not drowning? Am I really here?

\*

Albert thinks about that. Calls down...

\*

ALBERT

\*

Well. What do you mean by 'you' anyway? I mean, are you your arm or your leg...?

\*  
\*

## D. 34 INTERCUT CHRIS

D. 34 \*

...slogging along, feeling miserable.

\*

CHRIS

\*

Partly.

\*

ALBERT (O.S.)

\*

Really? If you lost all your limbs, wouldn't you still be you?

\*  
\*

CHRIS

\*

If I could surface, I'd be Bob...But, I'd still be me.

\*

ALBERT (O.S.)

\*

So what is the 'me'?

\*

CHRIS

\*

My brain, I suppose..

\*



E. 34 INTERCUT ALBERT

E. 34 \*

ALBERT

But. It's just a body part, like your heart or your  
fingernail. Why is that the one that's 'you?'

\*  
\*  
\*

F. 34 INTERCUT CHRIS

F. 34 \*

CHRIS

Because 'I' am sort of a... voice. In my head...

\*  
\*

(struggling)

The part that thinks...and feels...and is conscious of  
things...

\*  
\*  
\*

Chris is partially submerged.

\*

...CHRIS (muffled)

...including that there is a 'me' to be conscious of.

\*  
\*

He starts to rise to the surface of the water.

\*

## 34 SUMMERLAND - EXT. LAKESIDE - SUNSET

34

...break THROUGH the surface. Albert and Katie stand right there waiting on the bank. \*

ALBERT (not missing a beat) \*  
 So your consciousness is you. If that disappears, \*  
 you don't exist. If it's still around, you do. That's \*  
 why you're still here. \*

Chris rises out of the water up to his chin. \*

CHRIS \*  
 So, am I in the water? \*

Albert grins. \*

Chris continues to rise, pausing as the water comes to his chest level. \*

CHRIS \*  
 Am I still in the water? \*

As Chris steps out of the water, Albert turns and squints up... \*

...toward the villa. From here, we can see that it has... \*

CHRIS \*  
 No windows. \*

Albert thinks about that. Interesting.

ALBERT \*  
 What aren't you ready to see, I wonder. In or out? \*

And starts off toward the villa. Chris stands a beat, working on that. \*

## 35 SUMMERLAND - INT. VILLA - SUNSET

35

They sit at a paint table in a paint room, each holding a paint mug of steaming coffee. \*  
 Chris stares down at the stuff. \*

ALBERT \*  
 Drink, willya? Just think, it's coffee if you want it to be. \*

Chris is scared, but he takes a sip. Makes a HORRIBLE face. Brown paint all over his mouth. \*

ALBERT \*  
 Why is this so hard? Look... \*

Look... \*

ALBERT

Your brain is meat. It rots. And disappears. Did you really think that's all there was to you?

Chris staring. because...

CHRIS

You're saying consciousness does not reside in the brain.

ALBERT

You reside there, while the body exists. Like you're in your house, right now.

Gestures all around...

ALBERT

You're in your house. But that doesn't mean you are  
your house.

Don't you get it?

ALBERT

When the house falls down. You get out and walk  
away.

The most beautiful smile.

ALBERT

That's all that happened.

Chris looks down at his chest, his legs...

CHRIS

Looks like I brought it all with m...

ALBERT

You see a body, because you're comfortable seeing  
one. Like the lake, the bird, we're seeing what we  
choose to see.

36 SUMMERLAND - INT - VILLA - SUNSET

36

...So Albert stands up. Takes his coffee to the solid wall. Smiles an enigmatic smile,  
and...

... with one finger. Draws the outline of a huge square WINDOW in the paint. Then,  
places his hand against the interior of the square...

... PUSHES it out, as if it were solid stone. As light FLOODS in, the paint wall  
CRASHES on the ground outside the cottage. Chris looks through the window to see that  
now...

...the whole World below is REAL. Paint lake has become WATER. Paint forest has  
become TREES. Chris is awestruck at Annie's world come ALIVE, the most dazzling  
landscape he has ever seen. SOUNDS of nature POUR through the window.

ALBERT

Congratulations. Nice choice.

Chris looks at him. I did this?

ALBERT

Thought is real, physical is the illusion. Ironical, huh?

As he stares down at the incredible WORLD he has created from Annie's painting...

CHRIS

Where does God fit in all of this? Does he live here too?

And turns to his friend. As if the cowboy has the answer. Albert smiles gently...

ALBERT

We don't know much more about that than you do.

(sighs)

Maybe he's just...up there, somewhere. Shouting down that he loves us. Wondering why we don't hear. You think?

They gaze at each other. A nice moment for them.

ALBERT

Now drink the coffee.

And, without thinking, Chris does.

CHRIS

Needs cream.

ALBERT

Don't push your luck.

They smile at each other. And in that moment of silent connection...

They sip their coffee. Like friends anywhere.

37 SUMMERLAND - EXT. LAKESIDE - SUNSET

37

Chris, Albert and Katie stroll by the water's edge. Chris glances down and sees FOOTPRINTS in the sand trailing off into the distance.

CHRIS

Whose are those?

ALBERT

Don't ask me. You put 'em there.

Curious, Chris follows the footprints which lead towards thick bushes. The footprints continue on, but suddenly, a slight movement behind leaves, and..

...A PEACOCK darts from the bushes. The bird flies towards Chris in a vibrant burst of color. Chris pivots with the peacock as it flies past towards the lake, his eye suddenly CATCHING...

... ANNIE, naked, DARTING from bushes to gracefully DIVE into the lake. Only the briefest glimpse, but he knows it's her. As he watched, thrilled, mesmerized...

...her body GLIDES beneath its rippling surface, sensual, exquisite, free. He glances up to see if Albert sees her too, but when he turns back...

...the fantasy is GONE. Concentric circles spread out in ripples from the place he imagined her dive.

CHRIS

ANNIE!

He is so lost. In such despair.

ALBERT

You're just making yourself feel worse, there's no point t...

CHRIS

The point is, that's all I've got!

The anger sets Albert back.

CHRIS

And even a mirage is better than nothing at all.

ALBERT

Fantasies. Are not what you need right n...

CHRIS (hard)

There's just one thing I need. And I need her bad.

Staring at each other. A tough moment.

ALBERT (softly)

That'll change in ti...

CHRIS

To hell with time! Time's not that thing on my wristwatch anymore, is it? Time disappeared on me. And wherever it is, it won't make me need Annie any less.

\*

Silence. The breeze becoming a wind we can HEAR. The sound of what's pent-up inside.

ALBERT

You'll feel differently. And so will she.

Chris glares at his friend. A sudden SILENCE. No wind at all. And just above a whisper...

CHRIS

Man. You don't know us.

And from the heart...

ALBERT

Wish I did.

How can he make him understand?

ALBERT

You can't reach her. No matter what y...

CHRIS

SHE HEARD ME! SHE WROTE IT DOWN, 'I  
STILL EXIST'!

That ECHOED across the lake and off the mountains. Like the voice, the anguish, of God.

ALBERT

That time in her room, yeh. You were still close  
enough to just barely connect...

And a finger comes up. To remind.

ALBERT

And it was hell. For her.

Remember? And darkly, Chris does.

ALBERT

At this point, it's like you're a different species on a  
different planet. Forget it.

Do you hear that...?

38 SUMMERLAND - EXT. LAKESIDE - SUNSET

38

...Chris hears it. Can't accept it. Looking around in frustration, he sees...

...FOOTPRINTS once more. These lead along the shoreline, stretching into the distance.  
And there by the waters edge, a pile of...

...children's things. Clothes, toys, a STUFFED TIGER. A tiger we've seen. In a child's  
sick bed.

CHRIS

MARIE...

And he RUNS, fast this time, RACING along the shore after the footprints, which finally  
round a bend, and...

...vanish. He WHIRLS, SHOUTING...

CHRIS

AL-BERT!!



Straight INTO the FACE of Albert, who has somehow appeared inches behind him. Holding...

...the stuffed tiger. Chris takes it from him with great tenderness. Strokes the worn plush of its fur...

CHRIS

Is she here? Are my kids here?

ALBERT

Well, 'here' is big enough for everyone to have a private universe. But that's not why you haven't seen them. Is it.

Strange tone to that. As if he knows something.

CHRIS

Look, what are you implying? I want to see my chil...

ALBERT

...when you do. You will.

And walks out of frame. Chris staring after him. Katie WOOFs, and they follow.

39 - EXT. FOREST - SUNSET

39 \*

Strolling now through leafy green woods, a thick canopy of foliage above. They turn a bend in the path, and suddenly...

They stop. Stare at each other. Chris moves past Albert through the grass, into...

...nothing. Or nearly so. The carpet of green simply ENDS. Nothing beyond it but clear WHITE, and some thick, grainy, charcoal COLUMNS rising to the heavens. As Albert catches up, Chris is staring upward at...

...a gigantic SKETCH of a TREE. We recognize it as a finished sketch of the new tree Annie had begun after Chris had left her in the cemetery.

CHRIS

This is completely new. The canvas was blank, here.

ALBERT

You're sure.

CHRIS (admiring)

Look how huge it is. It's incredible.

He looks back to his friend.

CHRIS

How can I see what was drawn. After I died?

Realizes...

CHRIS

You look pretty surprised. For an expert.

Albert sure does. He looks at Chris. A little sideways.

ALBERT

You and Annie. A long courtship?

Strange Question. So off the point.

CHRIS

No. Actually. From the first...almost, moment. It felt like...

ALBERT

...soul mates.

More strange words. But Chris rather likes them.

ALBERT

Because you are.

Are?

ALBERT

...soul mates, it's extremely rare, but it exists.

Chris blinks. Leans his hand against the charcoal trunk.

ALBERT

...it means two people who are so much alike, they're almost one. Sort of ...twin souls. Tuned in to each other...

And looks up. To the magical tree.

ALBERT

Apparently. Even in death.

Pulling back. Chris looks at his hand...

ALBERT

...pretty romantic stuff.

...it is now filled with a clump of soft charcoal. He starts to pack it, angrily, like a black snowball, and...

ALBERT

I mean, you're actually reaching each other, through her painting, it's..

...FLINGS it a MILE in the air, to disappear in distant forest. That brings a silence.

CUT TO:

40 OMITTED

40 \*

\*

\*

41	OMITTED	41
42	OMITTED	42
43	INT. ANNIE'S STUDIO - DAY	43

Annie sits on the floor of her studio, with her knees drawn up, leaning back against Ginger. Writing on the journal in her lap...

ANNIE (V.O., writing)

Sweet Christy. It's already nearly one-thirty, and I've still got the pharmacy, the grocery, calls to return, well, a few... cook our supper, nice and slow... drink some wine. And then, it'll be dark.

Runs her hand back through Ginger's fur. Studies the page.

ANNIE (V.O., writing)

Nothing to it.

She rises, goes to her easel. We see she has now painted brilliant FALL COLORS onto the huge tree. Reds, golds, orange. Leaves are falling gently. Piled on the ground. And on top of a nearby hill she has painted...

...a small mound of EARTH. With a SLIT in the ground beside it. And KNEELING there...

...the tiny figure of a WOMAN. Her head bowed in lamentation.

Annie touches the paint with her finger. Still wet. And our VIEW PANS up to...

...the lake. At the foot of the mountain. Which BECOMES...

44 EXT. LAKE MAGGIORE - DAY / FLASHBACK

44

...the azure lake we've seen before. Mountain peaks, villages dotting the shoreline. Lugano, white and miniature in the distance. The younger Chris reclines on his elbows...

... looking out across the water. Maybe searching for a sailboat.

ANNIE (O.S.)

Can I sit here?

He STARTLES from his reverie. Turns to see the younger Annie in her shorts and halter and smile. She carries a picnic basket and a blanket.

CHRIS

Uh, actually, no. Unknown ancestors of mine had purchased all this land, with the express restriction that only I could u...

ANNIE

How about if I say please?

CHRIS

That's the one exception.

Good. She doesn't mind that he's trying a little hard. She likes him. Settles on the bank, spreading out her blanket...

CHRIS

Did you find Switzerland?

She begins to unpack.

ANNIE

I did, and I claimed it for Missouri.

Out is coming a red cloth. And napkins, and cups.

ANNIE

Like Columbus. Planted my little flag, sold beads to the natives...

She looks up at him, with the most wonderful smile.

ANNIE

They had sandwiches there. I brought you some.

And out they come. Lay them neatly in a row. Once more, the dark eyes, the brilliant easy smile, a slender hand extended...

ANNIE

I'm Ann Collins.

He's staring so hard, it's a beat before he takes her hand.

CHRIS

... sure, the one who discovered Switzerland. It's in all the papers.

Is it? She holds his hand. Until he remembers to say...

CHRIS

... uh, I'm Chris Nielsen. And I always preferred Vasco da Gama to Columbus. Or almost anyone.

Almost. She seems so comfortable in his awkward silence. As if she could just sit there forever, without speaking.

CHRIS

How did you know I'd be here again?

ANNIE

I didn't. It was quite a risk. Escaping from Switzerland and all.

They just hold the look. And...

ALBERT (O.S.)

You okay...?

45 SUMMERLAND - EXT. HILLSIDE - SUNSET

45 \*

... and we MATCH CUT to the same view of the lake. Chris turns easily. The dream of Annie, gone. Albert and Katie are there, slightly concerned.

CHRIS

She brought me sandwiches, y'know.

He looks down the hillside to the lake. Albert wants to take Chris out of his reverie...

ALBERT

Let me show you something.

46 SUMMERLAND - EXT. CLIFFSIDE - SUNSET

46

...we stand atop a CLIFF. An endless SHEER DROP to a vast POPPY FIELD, which stretches up the side of a gentle hill. Beyond, in far distance, is a ring of mountains.

ALBERT

See that hilltop? Can you get there in...oh, 8 seconds?

CHRIS

If I give myself some incentive.

\*

\*

And a vision of Annie APPEARS on the hilltop across the poppy field. She is SHAKING OUT their picnic basket.

CHRIS

Okay, I'll fly.

ALBERT

Uh...I don't think so.

Chris cuts him a look.

CHRIS

Can if I want, right ?

ALBERT

Well. I think you're more comfortable keeping it real. You're not superman. Just think of running real fast, like the Road Runner.

Chris looks back to Annie. Blanket FLAPPING in the wind.

CHRIS

I'll handle this...

And DIVES OFF the cliff, body arched like a mighty superhero, only to...

...DROP like a ROCK, flapping his arms uselessly, SCREAMING his guts out, he picks up terrifying MOMENTUM, only to...

47 SUMMERLAND - EXT. POPPY FIELD HILLSIDE - SUNSET

47

... HIT the ground RUNNING, TEARING across the poppy field toward the flapping blanket at WARP SPEED, occasionally trying unsuccessfully to take flight again, he BLASTS up the hillside, straight...

...INTO the flapping blanket, which PLASTERS itself across his face and body, BLINDING him as he WHIZZES by, drastically OVERSHOOTING the mark to DISAPPEAR over the hilltop, and...

48 SUMMERLAND - EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - SUNSET

48

... REAPPEAR in far distance, out-Roadrunnering the Road Runner, ZOOMING up the side of a majestic MOUNTAIN to...

## 49 SUMMERLAND - EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - SUNSET

49

...stop. At the summit. Slowly, he peels off the blanket to GULP at the sight..

CHRIS (softly)  
Where did she go?

...staring down from the top of the world.

CHRIS  
AL-BERRRRRTTTT!

Huge, resounding, world-record ECHO. Followed by...

ALBERT (O.S., clear, but miles away)  
You overshot, goofball!

We're looking around. A little scared.

CHRIS  
GET UP HERE!

Bigger echo. Then...

ALBERT (O.S., distant)  
You're a camper! I'll send a flare!

And POOF, the most exquisite fluorescent rainbow. Chris marking it. Got it.

And then he turns. And sees on a hilltop below him...

## 50 SUMMERLAND - EXT. MOUNTAINTOP - SUNSET

50

Something that was never there before. It is bright with the colors of autumn.

CHRIS (quietly)  
The tree. She's painted it.

Suddenly, Albert and Katie appear beside him. Staring along with Chris at the huge AUTUMN TREE, a real tree now, with leaves as bright as those Annie had painted. Chris gazes down, awed by its majesty.

CHRIS  
My mom said. Only God can make a tree.

And softly, almost to himself...

CHRIS  
...I think Annie does it better.

He looks to his friend. Albert smiles back. No words are needed. In the silence...



\*

Chris looks back down at Annie's tree. A single LEAF drops, floats down slowly.

CHRIS

So beautiful.

And with that, a WIND COMES, and blows...

...all the leaves from the tree, they SCATTER in a dazzling, thrilling burst of confetti. Some of the leaves blow toward us, SWIRL around us, and now...

...the tree is BARE. A SKELETON of stark, barren branches. Chris is struck by this. Overcome by the intensity of his longing for Annie. His despair at their separation.

CHRIS

I ruined her tree. I don't deserve to live.

Despondent, follows the flight of the last leaf, as it flutters to the ground near by. Onto...

...a small mound of dirt we hadn't noticed. The slit in the earth beside it. Annie's rendering of...

...his own GRAVE. The headstone. BELOVED FATHER AND HUSBAND. FOREVER. And...

...Chris SINKS to his knees beside the grave. As he bows his head, he has unknowingly assumed the pose that Annie's own lamenting figure bore in her final addition to the painting. We DISSOLVE TO...

51	OMITTED	51
52	OMITTED	52
53	OMITTED	53
54	INT. ANNIE'S STUDIO - LATE NIGHT	54

Darkness. A light FLICKERS on, revealing...

... the silent studio. Annie walks into frame, still wearing an oversized basketball jersey as a nightshirt. Haunted eyes. She stands before our painting. Hugs herself.

The magnificent AUTUMN TREE. She touches a leaf, testing that it is still WET. Wipes it AWAY, which does not smear the branch beneath, protected by its hard glaze. For some reason she can't explain, she LIFTS a can of SOLVENT from the table, and...

...SQUEEZES a line of liquid over the top of the tree. As the solvent RUNS DOWN, it DISSOLVES ALL the leaves, until what is left begins to emerge as...

...the same STARK SKELETON of branches that Chris was left with after the wind. The trees in both worlds identical once more. And staring at what she's done, bewildered...

ANNIE (V.O.)

I've ruined your tree. And I don't know why.

55 SUMMERLAND - HANGING GARDEN - MORNING

55

Chris, in a HANGING GARDEN, which is a more elaborate version of Annie's garden. Nearby, we see a MARBLE TERRACE, overlooking a large serene POND. Chris is pacing, agitated. Something is wrong, but he doesn't know what. \*

LEONA (O.S.)

Excuse me...

He looks up to see a young Asian WOMAN, perhaps Thai, early 20's. Lovely and delicate, her hair black and shining like Annie's.

LEONA

Albert has to work, he asked me to be with you.

Dark, serious eyes. Perhaps concerned she's been too forward.

LEONA

Will that be all right?

He smiles, afraid his mood offended her. She glides forward in her sarong. Above her breast, a metal tag that says LEONA. He stares at it, and her, as if trying to recall something.

CHRIS

Leona. Such a pretty na...

LEONA

He said, you've been quite isolated. Would you care to see others? Perhaps a city?

His look lingers. And not because she's lovely. Something else.

CHRIS

I would, but travel makes me nauseous.

And now she smiles. A dazzling, ultra-feminine smile of grace. She takes his hand...

LEONA

So, you be Dorothy. And I'll be Glenda, the Witch of the North.

He blinks Charmed, but uncomprehending.

LEONA

That means. You can close your eyes.

He does. Our screen BLACK. In an instant...

LEONA (O.S.)

I didn't mean forever.

56 SUMMERLAND - EXT. CITY - LATE AFTERNOON

56

Open to find we are on an enormous STAIRCASE. People are sitting and talking, strolling, Chris and Leona appear, dressed as before, except that now Chris' face, hands, wardrobe are clean, fresh and handsome. He looks down at himself, a little stunned by the tranformation... \*

LEONA

You clean up real nice, Mister. \*

He looks up into her friendly smile. Grins, gestures at the others... \*

CHRIS

Well, we have company. \*

That they do. And lots of it. As they walk down the stairs, he is looking everywhere... \*

LEONA

You've been painting your own world. When we live together, we have to have a common vision.

She points into distance, across a lovely WATERWAY, where a glittering CITY is built among precipices and enormous gardens. Striking, imaginative architecture. Tiny silhouettes of moving figures in the sky.

CHRIS

Nice to think people can be together, get along...

LEONA

There's strength in numbers. When we tap into everyone, we can figure out things no computer could dream of.

Smiles at the thought.

LEONA

...If computers could dream.

She keeps hold of his hand, but in a completely innocent, nonsexual way. More like a little girl. Katie taps along as they continue to descend the stairs...

CHRIS

So there is...work to do, huh? I like that.

LEONA

Albert, for example, is sort of a missionary. Saving  
lost souls.

CHRIS

Like me?

LEONA (laughs)

Hardly. They're the ones who can't...well, can't get  
here.

She glances over. How is he taking that?

CHRIS  
You mean they're in hell?

LEONA  
In a way. Maybe not what you think. My work, on the other hand, is with animals...

They look up to see a FLYING female BULLDOG and her FIVE flying PUPS pass over them.

Hear a WOOF. They look down. Katie is walking at Leona's side, in a perfect 'heel' position.

LEONA  
Katie's an old friend.

A. 57 INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN - EVENING

A. 57 \*

...Annie's head bowed, bending over something in the same posture that Chris used at the grave. But she is not kneeling. She is writing in a book.

ANNIE (V.O.)  
Dearest Christy. I don't know how this day unraveled on me...

PULL BACK to see Annie, jotting in the journal which rests on her kitchen counter.

ANNIE (V.O.)  
I was so proud of how I held together through this... endless afternoon. People, Business. Thinking only of making our evening meal. Writing to you. But coming home...

She turns away now and we see the preparation of an elaborate meal in progress. Mixing bowls, vegetables chopped and waiting, pots simmering.

ANNIE (V.O.)  
... I began to lose it. I thought... of your last night... and how I missed our precious anniversary...

Watch her face. As this flickers behind her eyes.

ANNIE (V.O.)  
This was Double-D, more important than a thousand shows, I should have walked out...

57 SUMMERLAND - EXT. STAIRCASE - LATE AFTERNOON

57 \*

Back to Chris and Leona. See far below us that the stairs DISAPPEAR into fog. Along the way, there are areas where people gather. With a single motion of her hand, Leona sends Katie RACING OFF to play with a group of other DOGS. When Leona looks over,

she finds Chris is now distracted, agitated, as if some unknown thing is disturbing him. She says only...

LEONA

Albert says to cheer you up. You have difficulty adjusting to...

CHRIS (quietly)

... to losing my wife, yeh.

LEONA

... and your children?

He turns. On the way that sounded.

CHRIS

They died years ago. That's one of the reasons I'm worried about my wife.

Leona thinks about that. As if it is surprising, and very interesting.

CHRIS

They were killed in a terrible collision. Our nanny was driving, it wasn't her fault, she barely survived...

LEONA

And your wife...?

CHRIS

Well, my daughter. Had asked her to drive.

Ah. Leona understand now. Nods, more with comprehension than sympathy. He follows Leona's eyes now...

... to a group of LITTLE GIRLS playing. One has her back to us, her long red hair flying in the breeze, mostly obscuring the face of a girlfriend, who SUDDENLY, is partially revealed, as...

... MARIE. In the time it takes Chris to gasp, the first girl's hair no longer obscures the face, and...

it is NOT Marie, after all. Leona watching his profile, through all of this. He draws a breath...

CHRIS

It was the trucker's fault. But my wife believed... if she'd been driving the kids, her protective instincts would have...

And his voice trails off.

LEONA

Does your wife blame herself for your death? Do you think?

He glances at her. Odd, he never thought of that.

CHRIS

Can't imagine why she would. She's pretty busy blaming herself for the kids.

A. 58 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A. 58 \*

Two candles light a table. Set for one. See now that the kitchen has been darkened, turned into a setting for a romantic meal. Annie sits alone with her untouched supper. Staring at a flame.

ANNIE (V.O.)

If I'd walked out that night, for our Double-D. You would have never been in that tunnel. Doing me a favor.

She lifts a fork. It remains poised in the air.

ANNIE (V.O.)

A whole family lost in car crashes...

Tries a bittersweet half-smile.

ANNIE (V.O.)

Enough to make a person buy a bike.

58 SUMMERLAND - EXT. WATERWAY - SUNSET

58 \*

Back to Chris and Leona. They have arrived at the water's edge. People float by playfully. Children are swimming. Leona ushers Chris onto a flat boat. Takes a long pole and pushes them OFF into the river, as...

..Katie JUMPS aboard. Just in time. Leona studies Chris' face. How increasingly distracted, anxious he has become.

LEONA

Are you all right?

He doesn't answer. So lost in thought, he seems not to hear her. We hear a CHOIR, coming somewhere from the shores, singing in DIFFERENT LANGUAGES. The effect is mesmerizing, and the sound washes over Chris, as he steadies himself in the boat.

A. 59 OMITTED

A. 59 \*

59 SUMMERLAND - EXT. RIVER - TWILIGHT

59

As Chris and Leona drift, Katie sits at Leona's feet, having her ears stroked tenderly by the young woman. But Chris seems ever more distracted, concerned.

LEONA

Where were you, just now?

CHRIS

Hmmmm?

LEONA

Your mind's been wandering all afternoon.

Oh. Well...

CHRIS

I was just thinking. About someone.

She studies him.

LEONA

Your wife. Must have loved her children. Very much.



Said lightly. Out of the blue. He looks up to her eyes.

CHRIS

Very much. But you don't have to break in half to love your kids.

She stares in his eyes. More VOICES are singing now, always in a striking blend of different languages.

LEONA

Tell me a memory of your own. Say, with your daughter.

Hold the look.

60 INT. MARIE'S ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

60

Eight-year-old Marie, propped up by pillows in her sick bed. By her side is a chessboard, which Chris, sitting at the foot of the bed, studies intently. As he concentrates on his next move...

... she turns to the MARIONETTE STAGE on her night table. Beautifully designed out of cardboard, hand-painted by Annie with 19th century backdrops. A large STAIRCASE rises up from center stage and disappears into painted clouds. On either side of the stage is a hand-painted mural of a maze-like CITY rising like a bridge above a WATERWAY that circles the stage. Angelic marionettes obscure the painted clouds and touch down where cardboard waves lap at the edge of the proscenium.

As Chris ponders his next move, Marie begins moving a flat boat across the cardboard waves, past Annie's painted backdrop, a fanciful creature-filled rendition. Marie lifts a PENCIL, and...

\*

... DRAWS a flowing mustache on a half-man, half-flying fish figure...

CHRIS (O.S., soft)

Hey. That's someone else's art.

MARIE (matter-of-fact)

What's the difference? You weren't looking anyway.

Which was her point. The logic of an eight-year-old. When she glances up, she has his full attention. Points to the angels and clouds, Mom's vision of heaven...

MARIE

Is this where we go when we die?

He laughs.

CHRIS

No, baby. That's a dream, a beautiful one. But you know dreams...

Waiting for her to finish. She clears her throat.

MARIE

... aren't real.

Exactly. She hugs her stuffed tiger. The one we saw on the Summerland shore. He looks at his watch.

CHRIS

It's past midnight.

She looks from the stage to the chessboard.

MARIE

I haven't won yet.

CHRIS (smiles)

Well, it's your first time pl...

MARIE

... no, I like that I haven't won. It means you're not cheating, and when I win, I'll really win.

Still staring at the board.

MARIE

I just want to play until I do.

He moves his Rook. To Queen's Bishop six.

MARIE

Unless you want to stop.

She's reading his eyes in a way we now find oddly familiar.

CHRIS

I want to play. Until you win.

61 SUMMERLAND - EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

61

It is fully night now. A shadow from the moon passes over the boat as we emerge from a large arched mass. As the boat pulls into the night sky we pull back to reveal an enormous city forming a bridge over the river. This is the same bridge and city Annie painted on each side of Marie's puppet stage. The clouds in the sky perfectly match those on Marie's walls.

CHRIS

She died three months later. We played every night, and it meant the world to me.

His smile has an inner light. Because maybe he is starting to realize.

CHRIS

She never won.

Leona clears her throat.

LEONA

I didn't look like this. In the body. You know.

Shakes her head. No, I didn't.

LEONA

We flew to Singapore once. And my daddy smiled  
at the flight attendant. Who looked like this. And  
wore this name tag. Leona.

Tears stand in his eyes now. Everywhere, the sound of the CHOIR...

LEONA

He told me, Asian women are so lovely. And so  
graceful. And intelligent.

CHRIS

He didn't mean onl...

LEONA

It was just something he said. And what I thought  
was... I want to grow up... to be that.

Tears on her face now. For some reason, that makes him very happy.

CHRIS

Do you still play chess?

She shakes her head. And as she does, another IMAGE appears... \*

...the face of 8-year old MARIE, as she looked on Earth. It fades. And from the beautiful  
Asian face his daughter now uses... \*

MARIE (LEONA) \*

I think I waited. For my partner.

He wraps his fingers around her hand. Brings it to his lips. Slowly, now...

... she slides her arms around her daddy's neck.

Holds him. So tight.

HIGH ANGLE... the city from above, an immense and intricate web of light, bouncing off  
the water, surrounding their boat, shimmering as each chord is struck.

CROSS-FADE TO... \*

## 62 SUMMERLAND - EXT. HANGING GARDENS - NIGHT

62

Chris back in the hanging garden, alone among vines and flowers, lost in the feelings that flood through him. The premonition that has been growing through the day. He steps onto...

...the marble terrace, overlooking the pond. Night stars twinkle in the water. We PUSH INTO his troubled eyes...

63 OMITTED

63

64 OMITTED

64

65 OMITTED

65

66 OMITTED

66

## 67 INT. ANNIE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

67

Annie's dressing table. PAN across it to her diary. Opened to a page where once she had written: IN THE MIDDLE OF THE COURSE OF MY LIFE, I FIND MYSELF IN A DARK FOREST, FOR THE STRAIGHT WAY IS LOST...

\*  
\*

Keep PANNING. Strewn across the table, a multi-colored cascade of PILLS. A carton of sour cream. A metal bowl.

ANNIE (V.O.)

I swear that California is the strangest place.

Our ANGLE ROTATES to see inside the bowl. A mashed-up pastel-streaked PASTE. Some crumbled bits of pill remain.

ANNIE (V.O.)

They sort of push you into it, so that you can get it done before your shrink commits you. Thoughtful legislation, there.

See her now. In her prettiest nightgown. Her face scrubbed clean, actually shining. The happiest we've seen her, except in dreams.

ANNIE (V.O.)

Mine is suspicious. Another week, he might commit me. For my own 'safety.'

She sits at the mirror. Studies her face. As if really looking at it for the first time.

ANNIE (V.O.)

I owe this to myself, Christy. Even if I can't forgive myself.

She picks up a hairbrush. Studies it, too. Everything looks new tonight. Everything has her attention.

ANNIE (V.O.)

I had the husband and the love I was meant to have.  
Two spectacular children. Blessings no one would  
dare expect from anything as arbitrary as life.

She tosses her head fearlessly. Begins to brush the black hair. Hard. To make it shine...

ANNIE (V.O., brushing)  
And the truth. Is simply. That it's over. Just this  
one...loose...end...to ravel up.

There. She does look quite beautiful. Not that she would ever be satisfied. Stares at this  
face...

ANNIE (V.O.)  
A truth that embarrasses psychiatrists, religionists  
and the brave.

... for the last time.

ANNIE (V.O.)  
But not you. And not me.

Stands. Gathers up the bowl.

ANNIE (V.O.)  
It's a bitch being last. Poor planning.

Takes it to her bed. A box of flat crackers. Her open journal. She takes it in her lap, lifts  
her pen...

ANNIE (V.O.)  
I don't get to say good-bye. You're dead, and I  
blew that.

She dips her finger in the paste, tastes it, makes a face.

ANNIE (V.O.)  
God, the smell alone could kill you.

Oh, well. Scoops a cracker into the mix. Begins to write...

ANNIE (V.O.)  
I don't get to say good-bye, but I'll tell you what...

Sadness. For the first time.

ANNIE (V.O.)  
Across whatever distance there is...

Actual tears. Which make her stop. How foolish.

ANNIE (V.O.)  
... I send you my love.

Kiss her fingertips. Touch the words.

## 68 INT. GARDEN/GREENHOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

68 \*

The floodlit greenhouse, the hanging vines and blossoms. A couple sits, leans back against him. They are gazing at a travel folder. Bora Bora, lush and primal and exotic.

ANNIE

A little expensive, yeh. But it's our first Double-D.  
Shouldn't it be somewhere incredible?

She looks back at him. He seems transfixed by the images.

CHRIS

I've never been anyplace like it.

ANNIE (softly)

Well, that's my role. To bring adventure into your life.

He wraps his arms around her. And his legs. She is safe now in his cocoon.

CHRIS

How come I got so lucky?

ANNIE

You taught me the one thing. The only thing. Worth remembering.

And she stares at him. Her silence prompts an expectant...

CHRIS

Which is...?

ANNIE

I forget.

She yawns. And snuggles nearer. Puts her nose against his, looks in his eyes, from an inch away...

ANNIE

Oh yeah. It was... never give up.

And softer...

ANNIE

Never. Give up.

She kisses him. So beautifully.

ANNIE

Never give up

Closes her eyes. Whispers...

ANNIE

...never.

69 SUMMERLAND - EXT. VILLA GARDENS - NIGHT

69 \*

Chris blinks, from his reverie. He stands at the terrace railing, looking down at the pond. Stars are reflected in the water, all the stars. He looks up, to see the canopy. Breathtaking. A vision of perfect heavens.

ALBERT (O.S., softly)

Hey.

Chris startles to see him sitting on the stone railing, which had been empty a moment before. He smiles at his young friend...

CHRIS

Where you been?

ALBERT

Far away. I was working. I got called back.

Intense look. One Chris can't interpret.

CHRIS

There's no words to thank you.

Thank me?

CHRIS

... for finding Marie.

Oh. Albert's eyes go down. A sudden flash of panic...

CHRIS

She's all right, isn't sh...

ALBERT

Marie's fine, she wishes she could be here. She sends her love.

(looks up)

Especially now.

The gentleness of that. As ominous as any words Chris has ever heard. Albert motions, come sit beside me. Hesitantly, Chris does, eyes on the cowboy's all the way.

ALBERT

We're going to go through a very hard thing, right now. And I'm with you, okay? You're not alone in...

Stopped by the look in Chris' eyes. Better come out with it.



ALBERT

Chris, Annie's dead. She... she killed herself.

A stunned moment of non-reaction. And the wave of pain floats over Chris. What she must have gone through.

ALBERT

It's not a thing I ever expected.

CHRIS (so quietly)

Well, like I said. You don't know us.

Albert's pain seems as great as his own.

CHRIS

Is that an occupational hazard of soul mates? One's not much without the other?

But Albert is just staring. Eyes hollow, even frightened. Chris puts a hand on his arm.

CHRIS

She's okay now, it's over.

ALBERT

You don't underst...

CHRIS

...she won't cling like I did. When do I see her?

Albert looks in his eyes.

ALBERT

Never. Chris, you never see her.

And everything. Stops.

ALBERT

She's a suicide. She goes to another place.

CHRIS

You're punishing her? For what?

Rage that is outrage.

ALBERT

It's not punishment, Chris. There's no crimes and no judges here, we're all equals. There's only...

This is so hard.

ALBERT

... reality. The way things work.

CHRIS

And reality is what? Suicides go to hell? No  
goddamn judgment there!

\*

He WHEELS away, white gravel FLYING, WHIRLS back, to...

ALBERT (calmly)

You want to fight? Should I get us some knives, or  
something?

Well. Should I?

ALBERT

You can hide from this. Or you can understand it.  
You just can't change it.

Talk. Now.

ALBERT

What you call 'hell'... is for those who don't know  
they're dead.

A non-compute. Albert figured that. At least he has his attention.

ALBERT

They can't realize what's happened to them...  
because they were too self-absorbed in life. They  
won't let go of the world they've built around  
themselves.

CHRIS

But Annie's not like that, so it doesn't apply t...

ALBERT

...no. Suicides are different.

Different. How to explain this...?

ALBERT

Suicides don't go someplace else because they were  
immoral or selfish, or anything like that. They go.  
For a very different reason.

He looks from Chris' eyes into the still fountain. The reflection of all those stars.

ALBERT

Each of us has an instinct... that there is a natural  
order. To our journey.

He swirls his fingers in the water...

ALBERT

Annie's violated that. And she won't face it.

And the starry reflections DISAPPEAR. He glances up. The stars are gone now, from the sky as well.

ALBERT

Won't accept, won't realize, what she's done. So she'll spend eternity playing that out.

CHRIS

You're still saying she's in hell.

ALBERT

Everyone's hell is different, it's not all fire and pain. The real hell is your life gone wrong.

CHRIS

Where is she?

ALBERT

In denial. That's a big place, Chris, as infinite as this one.

Chris looks down. When his eyes come up. They are not to be fucked with.

He raises his hand to the sky and the stars glow BRIGHTER, bathing the garden with the silver of a thousand moons.

CHRIS

I'm her soul mate. I can find her.

And suddenly, the stars FLASH WHITE HOT as a thousand SUNS, flooding the garden with brilliant, unbearable light.

ALBERT

You don't understand how this w...

CHRIS

It's not about understanding. It's about not giving up.

Steps up to the cowboy. In his face.

CHRIS

You say there's no rules. How about that autumn tree, you were pretty surprised that came through to me, weren't you?

No answer. Because he was.

CHRIS

If there's no rules, how do you know every suicide's the same? That Annie can't realize she's dead.

Silence.

ALBERT (quietly)  
I don't know. All any of us here know. Is what we,  
and others, have seen.

And...

ALBERT  
And nobody. Has ever seen. A suicide brought  
back.

CHRIS  
Then, stick around, sonny.

One finger up. Right at Albert's eyes.

CHRIS  
Cause you ain't seen nothing yet.

A long look. A longer one. A murmured...

ALBERT  
Gotta find us a tracker.

And searing day is NIGHT once more. A cooling breeze. A smile...

CHRIS  
What are we waiting for?

70 SUMMERLAND - INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAWN

70

Cathedral ceiling with walls of translucent marble. Like the Beinecke Museum at Yale, but the size of St. Peter's Basilica. A thin layer of WATER coats the floor. The entire space is a single READING room, but with narrow niches of books all the way up the walls. Small FIGURES not tied by gravity FLOAT idly in the air, casually searching through the stacks. Most readers are reading as fast as they can turn pages. An odd, mesmerizing sight.

Albert and Chris are in a small SAILBOAT moving along the shallow water. Albert spots his target and both men begin to LEVITATE up into the stacks of books towards a lone figure.

The man is well past fifty, with a long, hard body, salt and pepper brush cut. His face is angular and leathery, with small ice blue eyes. Maybe this guy was Sheriff in Dodge. He reads only one book, through round gun-metal rimmed spectacles. And he hasn't turned a page yet.

ALBERT (softly)  
Hey.

And FLOATS UP to the TRACKER. So Chris does the same. The man peers down at Chris through the gun-metal glasses. No smile.

TRACKER  
This the guy who doesn't give up?

Chris nods, once. It is.

TRACKER

Anyone ever tell you too much persistence can get kinda stupid?

CHRIS (points to Albert)

Constantly.

But the Tracker keeps looking only at Chris.

TRACKER

I hear the same thing. I also hear I read too slow, and don't need glasses. My eyes being a figment of my imagination.

Now he smiles, just a little.

TRACKER

You'll hear a lot of smart stuff around here. It's usually right. Don't let it screw you up.

CHRIS

I won't.

The Tracker nods, a little slowly. No, I don't guess you will.

TRACKER

Your wife love you strong?

Just the words choke Chris up to the top. He nods, yeh. Very strong. And reading that conviction...

TRACKER

We'll find her.

Tears stand in Chris' eyes. This man is now a god he would follow anywhere.

TRACKER

One thing.

Anything.

TRACKER

When you find her. Nothing will make her recognize you. Nothing will break her denial, it is stronger than her love, in fact reinforced by her love. Denial twists everything around and uses it, do you follow me?

Chris does.

TRACKER

You can't outsmart it, you can't beat it.

CHRIS

I understand.

TRACKER

But you can say everything you long to say.  
Including good-bye. Even if she can't understand it.

Watches Chris thinking. About what that might be like.

TRACKER

And you can satisfy yourself. That you didn't give  
up. And that has to be enough.

CHRIS

Get me there.

Hold the look. Strong as the Tracker's own.

CHRIS

I'll decide what's enough.

The Tracker doesn't look happy with that. But he doesn't seem surprised.

CHRIS

Can we start soon?

TRACKER (quietly)

Close your eyes.

One last look. And Chris does. Our screen BLACK. In scarcely a second...

TRACKER (O.S.)

Thought you were in a rush.

OPEN onto ...

71 INT. LIBRARY EXIT WATERWAY PASSAGE - DAY

71 \*

Chris, Albert and the Tracker are in a small boat, navigating a claustrophobic waterway still  
inside the library. Floating down a tunnel of books, limitless shelves rising above us.

CLOSE on Albert asleep. Snoring lightly.

CHRIS (watching Albert)

He's a sweet kid.

TRACKER

He is that.

Chris intent on Albert, doesn't see the Tracker's laser eyes studying his profile.

CHRIS

He's charming. In a way I never found him in life.

Glances up to the Tracker's gaze.

CHRIS

I guess because I never knew him young. Sort of a role-reversal, age-wise. He's still my mentor, but now he's a kid.

TRACKER (quietly)

I wouldn't say kid. He's quite a missionary.

The boat begins to ROCK a little. The water starting to get a bit faster.

CHRIS

Has he really saved souls? I mean, from hell.

TRACKER

Two, that I've seen, but only from the border. Still, that's work to be proud of, don't you think?

Stares in Chris' eyes. And from out of the blue...

TRACKER

Were you proud of your own kids?

CHRIS

Of course.

TRACKER

Well, that's an easy bullshit answer. You wanna put some thought behind it?

A beat. Chris doesn't back down an inch.

CHRIS (quietly)

I said. Of course.

The look holds.

TRACKER

I like a sore point. They can be helpful.

Chris still irritated. More than irritated.

TRACKER (simply)

It's juice.

No smile. No smile at all.

TRACKER

Juice is strong. It connects.

Connects.

TRACKER

Makes you alert, sharp, a better receiver. For Annie.

CHRIS

Receiver. For...

TRACKER

She's sort of the transmitter, sending thoughts of you. You're the receiver. I read your reaction and know the territory.

Small smile of irony.

TRACKER

Any signal is stronger where there's no interference. Your wife's signal is loving...

Follow?

TRACKER

So you may get it clearest. Where there's nothing like it around.

A. 72 EXT. RIVER - DUSK

A. 72 \*

The boat EMERGES onto a VAST riverway. Heavens are black, nothing but darkness ahead. The boat ROCKS, current really MOVING now. As Chris HANGS ON, he looks up into the dark skies, which seem to grow angrier, and...

...a GHASTLY FALLING FIGURE, plummets through the heavens, half-glimpsed, disappearing into mist. Chris shudders slightly. We're heading someplace ominous, he knows that.

CHRIS

How do you do this? Track her.

TRACKER

I'm watching you

Which makes Chris glance over. To the ice-blue eyes.

TRACKER

What did you think I tracked? It's a mental landscape. Yours.

Calm gaze. Behind the gun-metal glasses.

CHRIS

What did you do in life?

TRACKER

In the body? You mean, the last time?



Chris blinks. Remembers...

CHRIS (softly)  
Oh, yeh. Rebirth.

TRACKER  
Yep, we do it again, sometimes. Only if we choose to. Last trip, I was in the same line of work I do here.

CHRIS  
You were a shrink.

That popped straight out. So does the Tracker's easy chuckle.

TRACKER  
Fairly observant. You might could do this work yoursel...

The boat rocks, and Chris turns to glimpse a gigantic TIDAL WAVE in far distance, moving toward us.

CHRIS  
My God.

Albert is JOLTED awake, the three men hanging on for dear life. Only the Tracker seems calm. Laughs.

TRACKER  
...were you expecting physical danger? That would be illusory, anyway. What could it do, kill you?

Chris' eyes cut to him.

TRACKER  
...no, there's real danger in Hell. Which would mean, of course...

Smiles. With nothing amused behind it.

TRACKER  
...losing your mind.

Suddenly, from BENEATH the surface, human FIGURES begin APPEARING...

CLOSER to the rim, faster, FASTER...

CHRIS  
You want to expl...

TRACKER  
...you're going to meet some forceful minds, and there's always the risk that they co-opt your sense of

reality. Make you believe what they do, that their world is real.

Pulls out a calico bandana. Wipes his glasses with it. More figures are surfacing now, perhaps there are fifty.

TRACKER

Once you lose your consciousness. Even for an instant. There's really no way back.

Puts them back on, carefully. The figures converging on our boat, reaching up to the railings, and...

TRACKER

That becomes your world. Forever.

...PULLING our boat suddenly OVER, FLINGING Chris and the others FREE as they go...

72 EXT. UNDERWATER -DUSK

72 \*

...UNDER the surface, and we CUT TO...

...Chris' POV, as we rise back up, breaking the surface to see...

...the huge WAVE CRASHING down on us, and we go...

...PLUNGING DOWN in the roiling water, Chris TUMBLING now, deep, his mind going to...

73 EXT. DRIVEWAY - MORNING - FLASHBACK

73

Standing in his driveway. The last moment he saw his children.

The van PULLS AWAY. He can see their faces, then the back of their heads.

And he stands alone. Wishing he'd said more.

74 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

74

CLOSE on a computer monitor, which sits on Annie's bedroom desk. The words CASH FLOW. Items, numbers...

ANNIE (O.S.)

Because he's drowning, that's why!

SEE the bedroom now, lined with art. He's sitting on the edge of their bed, with a cold bottle of beer. Outside the window it is POURING RAIN. \*

CHRIS

Look, I talk to him at least as much as you do, I'm the one he studies w...

ANNIE

Great! Be rational with me, be constructive, be positive, just like you are with Ian, I swear it makes me crazier than it does him!

She is pacing, bouncing off walls, her work forgotten. Gesturing so hard with her Diet Coke that it sloshes from the can and onto her hardwood floor.

CHRIS

It's a new school, a harder school. He needs to organize, manage his time, make the commitment...

ANNIE

He is 13 years old, he needs to hang with his friends, he needs to play his sports, which he loves, vege-out at the tube, read a book he actually likes once in awh...

CHRIS

He needs. To learn. Priorities.

She has stopped pacing. Behind her, we see two panels. One of paradise. The other, a wild, disturbing, imaginative vision of hell. Bleak, surreal, with hybrid flying or crawling creatures. \*

ANNIE

Which are what, exactly?

CHRIS

You do your labs, you turn in your math, you prepare in advance for tests. You meet your responsibilities, and then y...

ANNIE

... and then you live your life. That's how you did it, and it took you through Med School, and it's not him. He's a different person, Christy, stop paying lip service to respecting that, and actually notice it, one time.

Silence. He feels attacked, and he's angry.

CHRIS

And you're saying. He's going through all this. So he won't let me down?

Her arms folded across her chest. This whole thing is tearing her apart. The vision of Hell looms above her. \*

ANNIE

It's a lot worse. He's into you so deep, he thinks he's letting himself down.

Shakes her head. The frustration has her at the edge of tears.

ANNIE

You tell him he can do it. And when he can't he thinks he's shit.

A whisper...

ANNIE

Now, how sick is that?

75 OMITTED

75

76 OMITTED

76

77 EXT. SEQUOIA - DUSK - FLASHBACK

77

Ian and his father. Beneath the huge tree. Rain is pouring, like a waterfall. The disbelief and betrayal in the boy's eyes.

IAN

How can you just take me out of my school, it's my life, you always say th...

CHRIS

How do you feel?

The voice is honest. But there is no tenderness in it.

CHRIS

More than I want you in or out of any school, I want to know that.

Only silence. In a way, they seem more distant now than ever. The father looks down at his hands. The rain.

IAN

Don't you think I can make it, if I dig in?

CHRIS

I don't have a clue, and neither do you, and so what? How do you feel? When you go to the bed at night?

IAN

Real scared.

Chris nods his head, unblinking. Okay.

IAN

But that doesn't mean give up. I mean, you always taught me to dig in, believe in myself...

CHRIS

Well, do you?

A sigh that is almost a sob escapes from the boy.

IAN

These other kids, they don't have to put in the time I do... and when I come to the test... it just...

He won't cry. But it isn't easy.

IAN

... it just goes. And I don't get the grades I studied for. So I'm like killing myself to hang in there, but every day, I see... how...

He has to say it. It's too late not to.

IAN

I'm not as good. As anybody else.

The father reaches out. Puts his hand over his son's.

CHRIS

So I did a pretty great job, huh? Helping you believe. In yourself.

IAN

It's not your fault I suck.

Chris sits back. Absorbs that shot. And then...

CHRIS

I don't know what school you belong in, or what work you'll do, or who you'll marry, or...

No. I don't.

CHRIS

But I know. I believe in you.

And he smiles. Because that's true.

CHRIS

You are the best guy.

He chokes a little on the feeling of that. Which makes him smile again.

CHRIS

And if I were going through hell. There's not another man I'd want with me.

78 OMITTED

78

79 OMITTED

79

80 OMITTED

80

## A. 81 EXT. SHORE - DUSK

A. 81 \*

AERIAL VIEW of white-capped water POUNDING onto black volcanic terrain. CUT TO..

CLOSE on Chris as he WASHES up on the forbidding fog-covered SHORELINE. Still bodies lie along the water's edge. As Chris picks himself up, he sees the Tracker already on his feet. Looking back to the surf, he now sees Albert being washed up nearby. Chris goes to help the young man to his feet, and as he does, he catches a glimpse of...

...The Tracker watching them. For some inexplicable reason, he seems displeased. The three climb the brow of a small hill, and see...

...as if growing out of the earth itself, the fog-shrouded skeletons of...

## 81 EXT. SHIP GRAVEYARD - DUSK

81 \*

...SHIPS. Just the faint sound of a bell tolling slowly. Chris is clearly worried now, just a feeling about this place that he doesn't like. Looks to Tracker...

CHRIS

How are we doin'? Getting any signals...?

The Tracker's face is dark and cold.

TRACKER (quietly)

Actually. Not a ripple.

Chris considers this.

CHRIS

That's because I was thinking of somebody else.

Albert puts his hand out for Chris' and begins to lead him. Chris is confused. Chris glances back to the Tracker, who simply turns away. Chris lets go of Albert's hand. They walk on in silence.

They are approaching the eerie SHIP GRAVEYARD where ocean liners with their sides gutted out, now visible through the fog, JUT out from the crusted earth. Cargo ships lie toppled on one side, rusted. The bow of a cruise ship is thrust through the volcanic floor.

They come to a gigantic AIRCRAFT CARRIER. Part of its hull has been stripped away, and as we pass alongside, we see fleeting IMAGES of tormented FIGURES in cubicles that were once staterooms, now exposed to our view.

All along the endless hull are DRAWBRIDGES and massive ELEVATOR PLATFORMS, where people are trying to get onto the deck of the ship, which TOWERS above us.

CHRIS

My God, these poor people...

Approaching now a GASH in what must have been the massive cargo HOLD. Voices within begin to RISE, sounds of anger, bitter QUARRELS, savage, vindictive, from THOUSANDS of throats, a terrifying cacophany. Closer, to see through the gash...

...SHAPES in restless, constant movement, SHOUTING at each other in SCREECHING hysterical tones. No one could follow a word of this, and still they SCREAM at one another, always without physical contact, but often from a distance of barely inches. Closer now...

...Their clothing hangs from their bodies, their faces are distorted, distended with rage into caricatures, bloated or hollow, shaped by the venom that POURS into their unbearable babble...

...They begin to turn on us, eyes glinting, fingers stabbing out, SHRIEKING at us now, in increasing numbers. Albert just squares his shoulders...

ALBERT

Come on, she could be in there...

Chris watches the young man, prepared to plunge into this horror. And...

82 INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY - FLASHBACK

82

Brilliant sunshine. The bank of flowers across twin caskets. A hundred children among the mourners, tearful, confused, no way to cope with the meaning of something that could not happen. And in the front pew...

... Chris leans to kiss Annie's face. Then he rises. A ripple of murmurs, a wave of hushes, and it is silence that escorts him up the carpeted steps. To the small podium. He looks down first, to gather himself. When he looks up...

... everyone is waiting. So he looks to the only person who matters. She's waiting, too.

CHRIS

There's a man I've never got to know.

Yes, she nods. Tell them that.

CHRIS

The man. He was growing up to be.

He swallows. So that he won't cry. Waits.

CHRIS

He's a good-looking, clear-eyed young fella, maybe 25. I can see him clear...

Shakes his head. Boy, he sure can.

CHRIS

He's a guy men want to be around. Because he has integrity, you know. He has character. And you can't fake that...

Can't. Shakes his head again. He won't cry. Won't do that to Annie.

CHRIS

And he's a guy. Women want to be around.

Oh yes, they do.

CHRIS

Because there's a tenderness in him. And the kind of respect and loyalty and courage that women respond to. See, he's the best husband this guy...

The very best...

\*

CHRIS

And a father...

This is where he loses it. Right here, but he keeps going...

CHRIS

See, that's where he really shines. Because he looks in his kid's eyes... and the child knows that his daddy sees him...

Stops one last time. For a new reason. Because this is the part he most needs to say.

CHRIS

... sees him. And sees how he is wonderful. And then... the child knows he's wonderful... and that's the start he needs.

Can you all see that?

CHRIS

This is quite a guy. Ian never got to meet. God bless his soul.

83 EXT. SHIP GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

83

Back at the hell of the maddened mob in the ship's hold. Albert urging us on...

ALBERT

Let's do it...

Chris glances back to the Tracker, who simply turns AWAY. When Chris looks back, Albert is only a few feet from the opening, from the SNARLING, BELLOWING mass of them, and on reflex, Chris...

... FLIES across the distance, THROWS an arm OVER Albert's shoulder, AROUND his throat, pulling him backwards with all his strength...

CHRIS

Don't...

Albert struggling in Chris' grasp, turning to face him, eyes wild, as...

CHRIS

Don't do it, son.



And on that word. Everything stops. The CRIES of the fury are all around them now. But they see nothing, hear nothing. Only...

CHRIS

We don't have to. Your mother's not in there.

\*

Chris watches as tears well in his son's eyes. They are alone in the insanity of this place. Nothing makes sense. Except to hold him strong by the shoulders, and tell him...

And across the face of our black cowboy FLICKERS another image. The face of Ian as the 13-year-old we knew on Earth.

CHRIS

There's not another man I'd go through hell with...

Which makes his son laugh through his tears. Chris leaning close enough to whisper...

CHRIS

So I can't afford. To lose you.

Kisses his son's face. Ian the cowboy slides his arms around his dad. As his sister did before him. Holds him tight enough to crush the two of them. Into one. Looks into his eyes...

IAN (ALBERT)

Can you handle me this way? Can I be who I want to be?

The feeling floods through his father. From his heart...

CHRIS

That's all I ever wanted.

The words he had never said. The ones his son needed to hear.

...suddenly, a huge ELEVATOR PLATFORM drops into frame from above, with a SCREECHING of pulleys and chains. It settles to the earth, beside us.

TRACKER (softly)

Elevator to hell. Going up.

PEOPLE are coming from all over. CLIMBING onto the platform. The Tracker turns to Ian...

TRACKER

So long. Wish us luck.

Chris is stunned. Ian seems to have anticipated this, but is defiant...

IAN (ALBERT)

I'm not leaving.

Leaving? Chris' double-take. What is this?

TRACKER

I'm not really giving you a choi...

CHRIS

...what are you saying?

The Tracker stays with Ian's eyes. You gonna tell him? Apparently not. All the Tracker sees there is rebellion. Turns to Chris...

TRACKER

Ever since you began to suspect 'Albert' was your son, you've lost all signal from your wife.

CHRIS

I'll concentrate harder.

TRACKER

You don't know how. You're all mouth and no chops. All you're good for, is your wife loves you. And your boy's a decisive distraction.

CHRIS

I know you shrinks dearly love to shove everybody arou...

TRACKER (to Ian)

...we're going down to the bottom, this is his last shot.

Short, sharp breath from the kid.

IAN (ALBERT)

He's never been anywhere like th...

TRACKER

...neither have you. I've got a better chance of watching one than two.

That scores. Ian holds his breath. The GEARS of the elevator's machinery GRIND, the metal SCREECHES. It RISES, two feet off the sand, horribly full, ready to go...

TRACKER

...last shot, his last shot. You want him clear?

CHRIS

Ian, screw this guy, he doesn't even know us. He's not family...

Ian glares at the Tracker, fierce and pleading at once...

IAN (ALBERT)

I can't leave him, he's my father!

TRACKER

And if he never sees her? Never says good-bye...?

CHRIS (to Ian)

We do it without him, we do it together. She's your mom.

Ian helpless. Looks from one to the other. Then **THROWS** his arms around his father. Murmurs close...

**IAN (ALBERT)**  
When you get there, don't listen to him...

Don't listen to him. Hugs Chris tight.

**IAN (ALBERT)**  
You get her, you get her out. You can do it!

Stares in his fathers eye

**IAN (ALBERT)**  
I believe in you.

Jesus. Could almost make a man believe in himself. Ian lets go, and the Tracker...

...PULLS Chris ONTO the platform. They sit on the edge, legs dangling, the Tracker holding him strong, as Chris stares at his son, only inches away.

**IAN (ALBERT)**  
Did you stop to think why I chose to be Albert?

And Chris is struck by this. Because he hadn't.

**IAN (ALBERT)**  
He's the only guy I ever saw you listen to. You never listen to me.

HOLD on Chris. As the truth of this hits.

**IAN (ALBERT)**  
Listen to me now. Think about Mom.

Machinery RATCHETING, the platform TREMBLES, the GRINDING increases. SHOUTING above it...

**IAN (ALBERT)**  
ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED...

And the elevator LIFTS OFF, Chris, the Tracker, all of them SAILING UP toward the deck many storeys above us. Albert SCREAMS after them...

**IAN (ALBERT)**  
...WHEN WE DIED!

And he is alone.

84 OMITTED

84

85 OMITTED

85

86 OMITTED

86

87 OMITTED

87

88 OMITTED

88

A. 89 EXT. PLATFORM ELEVATOR - NIGHT

A. 89

Chris perched on the edge of the platform. Oblivious to the Tracker, the damned surrounding them, the horrific CLANGING noise. As they RISE, we catch brief GLIMPSES of tormented FIGURES in cubicles that once were staterooms, now exposed to our view...

\*...a WOMAN dressed in black, a tiny child's COFFIN strapped to her back, endlessly searching through dozens of pairs of children's SHOES...

...another WOMAN sitting alone, SOBBING piteously, then STOPPING abruptly, looking around, with sly paranoid eyes to see if anyone is watching her outburst, then CONTINUING her hysterical WAILING...

...four MEN, each SCREAMING soundlessly, their bodies STRAINING to give vent to their rage and anguish, their screams silent because their faces have NO MOUTHS...

And as we keep RISING we see Chris oblivious to it all, thinking only of his son's words. We PUSH INTO his blank, staring eyes...

89 EXT. HOSPITAL SOLARIUM - DAY - FLASHBACK

89 \*

CLOSE on a slender, shaky hand. Slash SCARS on her wrist. She STRIKES a match to life.

ANNIE (O.S.)

I'm teaching myself to smoke.

SEE her now as she lights the cigarette, aided by a man's cupped hand. In the B.G., a hospital SOLARIUM, sunny, patients and their visitors.

ANNIE (laughs)

And the doctors call it an affirmation of life!

The man's hand strokes hers. Gently. She seems not to notice.

CHRIS (O.S.)

It beats imitating statues.

She nods, guess so. When she looks up, we see his eyes.

CHRIS (softly)

You said "divorce." You got my attention.

She stares in those eyes. Doesn't know how to do this. We can hardly hear...

ANNIE

...yeh, well, why do you want to be saddled with some psycho who tried to kill herself?

CHRIS

I've got bad taste. It's my Constitutional right to exercise it.

He really loves her. She can see that. Makes things harder.

ANNIE

I think maybe... we're too... different. To be together.

Draws on her smoke. Sees how much she's hurting him. Which kills her.

ANNIE  
For one thing. Why aren't you in here?

CHRIS  
You mean, wh...

ANNIE  
... why didn't you go nuts? Your children died.

CHRIS  
I remember. I remember the silence.

He takes her hand. She lets him, but her eyes stay shaky. And wary.

CHRIS  
I thought. I was s'posed to be strong.

ANNIE  
For me.

CHRIS  
For me. For us. Just on general principles.

Ah. She takes another puff

CHRIS  
I loved them. And they're gone. And life has to  
either...go on, or not.

ANNIE  
And you chose life.

He nods, I guess. She looks at him with real compassion. Murmurs...

ANNIE  
Sometimes. When you win, you lose.

Gets to her feet. In her hospital gown. Stubs OUT her cigarette, on a SMASH CUT TO...

90 EXT. PLATFORM ELEVATOR - NIGHT

90

Chris on his platform, SOARING up, the horrific SOUNDS, his blank stare, as suddenly  
the grinding MACHINERY...

...CLANGS to a stop, and we are JOLTED with its force. A familiar hand on Chris'  
shoulder...

TRACKER  
C'mon. It's our private deck.

They are stopped at the vast MAIN DECK of the gigantic ship. He pulls Chris OFF the  
platform, ONTO...

## 91 EXT. CARRIER DECK - NIGHT

91

...the lip of the massive DECK, as the elevator SOARS UP, carrying everyone else AWAY.

We are alone. A small weather-beaten sign says HELL.

CHRIS

Must be the place.

Stretching out across the deck are what seem like COBBLESTONES in the dimness. Chris starts to cross them at a brisk pace...

TRACKER (O.S. calling out)

Take it easy!

CHRIS

No problem...

...the deck beneath his feet becomes UNEVEN. He hears a strange muffled GRUNT, and glances down to see that he is not standing on a cobblestone at all, but a...

...living HUMAN FACE. Which peers up at him from beneath the sole of Chris' shoe.

FACE

Excuse you?

Chris nearly has a heart attack. He looks up to see an OCEAN of human faces protruding from what once were stones. Packed together like sardines. Some laughing, some moaning. Most of them basically bored and accepting of their lot.

FACE

Son! Welcome!

Chris' eyes DART down...

CHRIS

Dad??? Omigod, Dad...?

FACE (proud)

Son...

A heart stopping moment. Chris chokes up, overwhelmed...

CHRIS

Dad.

FACE

Son.

CHRIS (squinting)

Dad?

And bending down, catching the light...

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*



CHRIS  
...you...you don't look like my...

\*  
\*

FACE  
You are Benjy, arn't you?

\*

Oh.

CHRIS  
Uh. No sir, I'm terribly sor...

FACE  
It's all right. They never are.

The Tracker has caught up now. Tugging on Chris' arm, let's go. And as they head off, Chris begins...

\*

FACE (O.S., calling after)  
Don't worry. It's only a matter of time...

...HOPSCOTCHING across the sea of faces, Chris APOLOGIZING to everyone, trying to be gentle, suddenly SEEING...

...ANNIE'S FACE nearby, among the others. Chris blinks. My God!

CHRIS  
ANNNIEEEEE!

And BOLTS toward her, the Tracker in pursuit , as....

TRACKER  
Chris, DON'T!

...Chris LUNGES toward Annie's face, which suddenly...

...BECOMES instead the face of a laughing CREATURE, but Chris' hurtling MOMENTUM...

92 EXT. SEA OF FACES - DUSK

92

...BREAKS THROUGH the surface, as the deck GIVES WAY, and he is suddenly...

\*

...FALLING, bodies once trapped by the surface crush FALL WITH him, everyone REACHING, SCREAMING OUT, as they break free, Chris joining in the SHRIEKING as he FALLS...

\*

93 OMITTED

93

94 OMITTED

94

95 OMITTED

95

## A. 96 EXT. ANNIE'S - DAY

A. 96 \*

CLOSE on Chris PLUNGING INTO water from a great height, disappearing, and we CUT TO...

AERIEL VIEW from HIGH above looking down through the partially-destroyed RUIN of a great OVERTURNED CATHEDRAL, fragments of walls and spires overgrown with rotting creeper vines, and FALLING through the space between us and the water and ash below...

...BODIES which tumble, and disappear like snowflakes before they reach the ground. CUT TO...

## B. 96 EXT. UNDERWATER

B. 96 \*

...Chris FLAILING underwater in near-backness. As he churns, an OBJECT floats near him, wreathed in bubbles, closer, we see it is...

...the VAN, his children INSIDE, as he last saw them, he LUNGES toward them, but the van is GONE in blackness...

Strange SOUNDS now, SHAPES in the dark, Chris WHIRLING this way and that, frightened, his mouth OPEN, he...

...BREAKS the surface. Still in darkness, he can't breathe, GASPING as if trying to suck air from inside a plastic bag, completely panicked, until...

TRACKER (O.S., calm)

She's here. You've found her.

And a FLARE of LIGHT breaks through the blackness, illuminating the mist and ash. Chris SUCKS in a lungful of air, BLINKING against the light, to see...

...the Tracker on dry land. Chris PULLS himself from the water. Exhausted, he sinks down beside the Tracker to see that they are beside...

## 96 EXT. ANNIE'S DAY

96

...simple suburban HOME in disrepair. Patchy, dying lawn, a pitted driveway, a rusted mailbox. The place so tiny and alone against vast surroundings. The prison of a private hell.

TRACKER

Impressive.

\*

Chris still struggling to catch his breath.

\*

TRACKER

That jolt of fear for her. It connected.

And points up the densely overgrown driveway. To the nearly-hidden house.

TRACKER

She's in there.

Chris blinks. Hardly able to absorb the words. Fighting all of his exhaustion, Chris squints up at the place, disbelieving...

\*

CHRIS

It looks like our home in Woodsi...

TRACKER (quick)

Don't even think that.

Strong enough to bring Chris' eyes over.

TRACKER

It's an illusion, the whole place, her illusion. You get sucked into it... you can wind up like the folks on that ship.

CHRIS

... that can't happen, can it? Not to her.

A long stare. That doesn't get any easier.

TRACKER

Suicides can get pretty tortured. Pretty committed to... punishing themselves.

Has to say this.

TRACKER (quietly)

You don't want to push her that way...

Because it can happen.

TRACKER

You want to see her, tell her what's in your heart...

(softly)

... and then go.

A beat.

TRACKER

Two minutes, three, tops.

What?? Chris can't believe he heard that.

TRACKER

I knew you could get us here. You're a competitor with a big ego...

Chris just stares. Who is this guy?

CHRIS

How would you know the first thing about me?

The Tracker studies him. Tilts his head.

TRACKER

You called your son "Albert." Who was that?

CHRIS

The first doctor I ever practiced under. He was like a father.

TRACKER

Brilliant mind, wasn't he? His words were gold?

Now Chris isn't talking at all.

TRACKER

Do you recall what he practiced, before he turned to pediatrics?

CHRIS

Child psychia...

And stops. Cold.

TRACKER (helpful)

... psychiatry. And he was always a slow reader. But these... used to be rimless.

(beat)

And the rest of me. Used to be black.

He puts the spectacles in his protégé's lap. And Chris' eyes grow wide. Albert the Tracker leans close...

TRACKER

Do you know why we chose to look so different? Me, the children...

Chris is wondering just that.

CHRIS

The package doesn't count? One's as good as another...

TRACKER

...even more. The old baggage, old roles of authority. Who's the teacher, who's the father? Gets in the way. Of who we really are.

(smiles)

To each other.

And Chris is watching that smile. The love behind it.

TRACKER

I've been waiting for years. For the chance to watch out for you. And I'm watching out for you now.

All his heart in this. A father's wisdom.

TRACKER

This isn't like the rest of hell, son, you've got no defense against Annie.

None at all. You know this.

TRACKER

If losing yourself, and your soul... if being swallowed by hell itself... could possibly save her. I'd say, go for it, kid. And I'd be there cheering you on.

Shakes his head. Puts his hand on Chris' shoulder.

TRACKER

You're stubborn, you're an asshole, I know that look...

And waits, with perfect timing, until Chris' smile begins...

TRACKER

But you've got your children back now. And they need you.

He watches the smile die. Good.

TRACKER (whispers)

Three minutes.

97 HELL - EXT. ANNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

97

Chris coming up the driveway. Tangled, overgrown vegetation has surrounded this place, like a rotting jungle, forming a canopy that completely shields the cathedral walls and crater from view. We could be in suburbia now, except that the house itself seems to have stood without maintenance for fifty years. Trash barrels overflowing.

As he walks, he begins to murmur absently to himself, as if not knowing why...

\*

CHRIS

...in the middle of the course of my life...I find  
myself in a dark forest...for the straight way is  
lost...

\*  
\*  
\*

He goes to the door. Stares at it for a beat... and when he knocks...

...it drifts OPEN. He stares into the dingy, unlit hallway.

98 HELL - INT. ANNIE'S HALLWAY - DAY

98

CHRIS (calls out)

Hello...?

No answer. No sound.

CHRIS (louder)

Hello? Your door is open.

Silence. He walks in. The hardwood floor is blistered and buckled, large frightening CRACKS run the length of the walls. Into the living room...

99 HELL - INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

99

... the rugs are stained, the furniture hideously chipped and grimy, the mirror above the mantelpiece is shattered in a fine cobweb of refracting fragments. Through the yellowed glass door, we see the garden.

A figure kneeling by roses.

He is frozen now. Staring. He can only see her from behind. Watch her as she tends a flower bed of dying blossoms. And at last...

... he crosses the room. Quietly, slides open the glass door. But even this gentle sound causes her to...

100 HELL - EXT. ANNIE'S GARDEN - DAY

100

... WHIRL on her knees, gasping, startled. Her hair hangs untended, her face hollow, haunted. But she is still Annie.

CHRIS (light)

Sorry, I sure didn't mean to scare y...

ANNIE

Who are you?

He has to shake off the disbelief at actually being with her. His longing to run to her. The shock of her suspicion and fear and, above all else, non-recognition. From somewhere, he finds a smile.

CHRIS

I'm your neighbor.

She squints. My what??

CHRIS

I bought the Gorman's place two months ago, I just moved in.

ANNIE

I never heard they sold their house.

Her hands clutch her garden tools, arms instinctively crossing her chest.

CHRIS

You're Annie Nielsen, yes? They told me all about  
y...

ANNIE

... like, what? What did they say?

His smile gets warmer, calmer. Against every emotion.

CHRIS

Let's see. You're a widow. A talented artist, work  
for a...museum, right?

Her wariness is childlike, exaggerated. How can this man know these things?

CHRIS

Mrs. Gorman admires your...

Looks to the flower bed. It breaks his heart just to see the condition of...

CHRIS

... your roses.

And Annie bites her lip. Glances down at them.

ANNIE

They were so handsome. But now... there's no  
water pressure in the neighb...

CHRIS

... there is at my house.

She looks up at him. As if he has spoken in a language she can't quite make out.

CHRIS

I could bring some water over.

ANNIE

The electricity is out, too. And the gas. And the  
telephone. Everything is cold, and I have to go to  
bed at nightfall, because I can't find any... candles...

CHRIS

All my utilities are working. So are everyone else's.

She blinks. A non-compute.

CHRIS

Don't you think it's odd that all your services are  
out, and you're the only one?



ANNIE

Other things are missing, too. All my clean clothes, and the books I want to read. Worst of all, some of my favorite paintings, the ones I have to work on...

CHRIS

You can come to my place, we'll call the phone company. And all the others.

ANNIE

I don't leave the house.

Said simply. As if a small detail.

CHRIS

Could I ask wh...

Annie SCREAMS, a blood-stopping shriek from her soul. He sees a huge TARANTULA crawling toward her over a nearby rock. As her scream CONTINUES, he goes to her, takes the garden trowel from her hand, and intercepts the path of the lumbering spider, scooping it up in the trowel. Her eyes wide, horrified...

ANNIE

They're everywhere now! Every day!

He flings the tarantula through space, to disappear in the dense trees across the yard. Her panic eases. He crouches down near her now, not too close. Reaches to hand back the trowel, which she can't bring herself to touch. But when she looks to his eyes...

ANNIE

Thank you.

She still looks frightened. He nods, gently.

CHRIS

You're very welcome. You say your paintings are mis...

ANNIE

Most of my precious ones. The ones that... remind me.

He stays quiet. The slightest questioning in his eyes.

ANNIE

Remind me of my husband. And my children. That's why I never leave.

CHRIS

Because... they might return...?

And on this. Her eyes go blank. A curtain has fallen.

CHRIS

I hope that's true. With all my heart.

He waits. She's not even looking at him anymore. Suddenly...

ANNIE

It's not, you know. Once you're dead, you disappear.

His eyes trying so to connect with hers. And so she looks down. At the hands in her lap.

CHRIS

My wife committed suicide. After my children died.

No response. No movement. He can't see her face.

CHRIS

She was... the loveliest person.

He leans ever so slightly closer.

CHRIS

Don't you think that's sad?

She draws a sharp breath. Her delicate jaw sets in what looks like anger. Very quiet with...

ANNIE

Don't you have to leave?

She still hasn't looked up.

CHRIS

I like it here, with you. But I'll leave, if you want me t...

ANNIE

... I do.

CHRIS (softly)

All right.

But he doesn't move. Instead...

CHRIS

The last day I saw my wife. It was our anniversary. But not...

ANNIE

... I thought you were leaving.

... still quiet. But very firm. Very definite.

CHRIS

In a minute. I just thought... in case there was another spider...

Silence. She is still looking down, but her anger is evident.

CHRIS

... not a wedding anniversary. It was... a different kind of day. That no one else knows.

101 EXT. HOSPITAL GARDEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

101

Landscaped grounds of Annie's hospital. We see patients, strolling shakily with family or attendants. Some pushed in wheelchairs. The sunlight is warm. And over by a bed of tulips...

... a woman sits on the grass. In her hospital gown. Staring blankly at the flowers. A man approaches now. Kneels beside her. She doesn't look up, but we know she recognizes him. He speaks very quietly...

CHRIS

I need to talk to you today. But you don't have to talk back.

Just as well. She doesn't seem to hear him. He takes from his pocket... a slim envelope...

CHRIS

This is an air ticket. One-way. For one person. For me.

He opens the envelope. He puts the ticket in her lap. Her eyes do not leave the tulips.

CHRIS

My hanging around isn't helping you. And it's killing me. So this... is kind of... D-Day.

And slowly, her eyes go to the ticket. Read it.

CHRIS

D for decision, I guess.

And her eyes come up to his. Questioning.

CHRIS (quietly)

About divorce.

Oh. Her lips part...

ANNIE

That would be two D's, wouldn't it?

She watches his slow smile. The one that competes with the tears pooling in his eyes. He whispers...

CHRIS

I stand corrected.

Her eyes moving over his face. Showing no expression of her own. His tear falls, and she looks at it curiously. He wipes it away.

CHRIS

See what happens? When you only say one thing in a month.

Staring at each other now. He doesn't know what to say. Hates himself for that.

CHRIS

Cindy called. She said everything's waiting for you. All the artists, curators, they'll wait to meet with you. When you're better.

Whatever interest Annie may have had in this conversation has vanished. She looks back to the tulips.

CHRIS

I told her that the museum... one of those meetings... was what kept you from...

Can he even finish the sentence?

CHRIS

... driving that day. And that going back would mean that you weren't sorry, and you weren't wrong, and would be... betraying your children.

Something flickers across Annie's eyes. Some spark of something. He's watching that...

CHRIS (low)

She told me you were crazy. I told her she was dumb. And she hung up.

Annie turns. Slowly. To him.

CHRIS

What's true in our minds is true. Whether other people know that or not.

She looks at him with curiosity. Like an object she'd never quite noticed before.

CHRIS

That's how I realized. I'm part of the problem. Not just because I remind you...

He shakes his head slowly. No, it's not that. It's...

CHRIS

... because I didn't join you. So I left you alone.

That's what he came to say. He clears his throat. He slides back a little, he's leaving now. But he stops. To look in her eyes. And whisper...

CHRIS

Don't give up. Okay?

The looks holds. When he starts to stand, her hand STABS out. CLUTCHES at his wrist. Slowly, slowly, she brings his hand to her lips...

... kisses his fingers. It is a good bye he never expected, and his heart breaks inside him. And she...

... releases his hand. Lifts the ticket from her lap, and...

... TEARS it savagely in two. His breath catches, and she tears it again, and again, and AGAIN. She looks up. As deep into him as she can see.

ANNIE (whispers)

Okay.

102 HELL - EXT. ANNIE'S GARDEN - DAY

102 \*

Annie kneeling in her private Hell. By her dying roses. Her eyes flat, completely unmoved.

ANNIE

So you reconciled, that's very romantic.

Looking in his eyes.

ANNIE

But she still killed herself.

As if she's made a point. She looks down at her gardening tools. Begins to lay them out, side by side...

ANNIE

She gave up. In the end.

CHRIS

Nothing wrong with that.

ANNIE

Her husband didn't think so.

CHRIS

Well, he's an idiot.

Said with such complete conviction. Her eyes come up.

CHRIS

Being strong, not giving up... that was just his place to hide.

She considers this. And looks away. To the roses.

CHRIS

He pushed the pain away so hard... he disconnected himself. From the person he loved the most.

She reaches to one. Touches a petal, which falls.

CHRIS

That's his crime. And he's gonna pay for it. Forever.

She SNAPS off the blossom. What's left of it.

CHRIS (softly)

Sometimes. When you win, you lose.

He can't reach her. He looks down at his hands in despair. Strangely, this brings her eyes to him.

CHRIS

And when he saw his children again, they knew he hadn't grieved them like their mother...

He tries to draw a breath. The air is like razor blades in his lungs. And she's watching this.

CHRIS

Something else had come first. Some vision of... himself. Of what he was supposed to be. And that left...

He looks up at her. For this is what he came to confess.

CHRIS

... a distance.

Now his eyes fill. Just when he didn't want them to. The words sound strangled...

CHRIS

And that's the one thing. In the end. You just can't bear.

ANNIE

You said your children were dead.

He nods. They are.

CHRIS

You can see the dead again. In dreams. If you really want t...

ANNIE

I want to see Christy.

So strong. He can't keep his hopes from rising.

CHRIS

It's not hard. I can show you how.

I can. Her eyes alight for the first time.

CHRIS

It's like... painting a picture. We can do it together.  
If you close your eyes.

We see her mistrust, her fear. But her desire overcomes, and slowly... her eyes flutter closed. Our screen BLACK.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Do you remember. Where you were married?

Silence.

CHRIS (O.S., whisper)

Open your eyes.

103 HELL - INT. CHURCH - DAY

103 \*

BURST of sunlight through brilliant stained glass, the organ playing, the church resplendent with flowers, pews filled with everyone in their Sunday best, here to wish them well. All are restless, expectant, we PAN up the red carpet of the center aisle, through the open doors at the rear of the hall, to...

... the antechamber. A lone figure stands in semi-darkness. Perfect wedding dress of pure white. Annie's black hair shines beneath its veil. She is beautiful, looking everywhere, dumbstruck at the flawless detail of this "dream." As another figure...

... steps beside her. He wears a morning coat. She blinks in wonder at the sight of him. Whispers his name...

ANNIE

Christy...?

His eyes move over her face.

CHRIS

And who else. Would you be marrying? In your dreams.

Tears stand in her eyes. She reaches to touch his face.

ANNIE

I've missed you so.

We can feel her heart pounding.

ANNIE

How can this be, you're...

She can't say the word.

CHRIS

I'm no more dead than you are. See...?

He kisses her mouth. So tenderly. Her eyes close, and she gives all her heart to this kiss. And when it ends...

ANNIE

There was this man. In our garden. And he said,  
"close your eyes..."

CHRIS

Sounds like good advice.

He leans to her, and as her eyes flutter closed, he kisses them. The organ plays "Here Comes the Bride."

Her heart seems about to burst. She folds her arm tight through his. He murmurs close...

CHRIS

Left foot, first.

And off they go. Down the center aisle. One step at a time, as everyone's breath stops just to see them. The MINISTER is waiting, the same slender, scholarly figure who spoke at their children's funeral. And when they reach him...

... he smiles. Into the hush of this chamber.

MINISTER

Christopher and Ann. What God has joined together. Nothing... can tear apart.

The couple holds each other's hands. Stares into each other's eyes.

MINISTER

They have their own vows. Ann...

So she takes a breath. Holds on tight.

ANNIE

I don't know how this is happening. I know...it's  
only a dream...

Shakes her head. Tells him...

ANNIE

But I will hold this precious dream. In my heart.  
Forever.

His turn now. She's waiting, eyes shining. He takes his breath. Murmurs...



CHRIS

Don't you see, Annie? This is all real. That man in the garden...

Her eyes have only an instant to flicker in puzzlement, before...

CHRIS

... it's me.

Her eyes widen. With sudden comprehension. Her lips part in...

... an echoing SCREAM. Of purest agony

104 HELL - EXT. ANNIE'S GARDEN - DAY

104

MATCH CUT to her face, the dying echo of her shriek. Her shock, her torment at this betrayal. He is so frozen that he still holds her hands. realizing this, she PULLS them free in revulsion. Looking up in wonder and horror...

ANNIE

Whoever you are... whatever... you are...

A stumbling step backwards, and then another...

ANNIE

Did you think. You could take him from me?

A low MOAN of disgust and anguish, and she WHIRLS, RUNNING into the house, as we...

HOLD on him. Hold. Hold.

105 HELL - INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

105 \*

Annie curled in a fetal ball, sobbing softly, her eyes struggle to cope with the most intense pain she has ever known. PAN TO...

... the doorway. He stands, staring at the misery he has caused. He knows what he has to do. Quietly now, respectfully, he goes to her bed...

... climbs up, behind her trembling back. Inches away. So softly...

CHRIS

Am I catching you at a bad time, here?

He can't even smile at his own insane joke. He can only sigh, with pain that matches her own.

CHRIS

Sorry, babe. There's some things I have to say. And there's only... a few moments left. While I still can.

He looks down on her. Tries to gather his thoughts.

CHRIS

I'm sorry. For all the things. I'll never give you.

Yeah. Let's start with that.

CHRIS

I'll never buy you another meatball sub. With extra sauce.

For some reason. This seems inexpressibly sad.

CHRIS

... well, that's the big one.

Staring at her.

CHRIS (softly)

I'll never make you smile.

He wants so much to touch her. Knows he can't.

CHRIS

I wanted us to be... old, together. Just... two old ducks, laughing with each other while our bodies fall apart. Together at the end. I wanted that for us.

He points now. To a painting on the wall.

CHRIS

See, we were going to be right there. Forever.

It is a degraded version of Annie's painting of the lake. Now cracked and warped, discolored, weeping oil. As we CLOSE on it, we see...

CHRIS (O.S.)

That was our heaven, see?

...four small FIGURES we hadn't noticed before. They are huddled together, just below the cottage. Embracing.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Lots of things to miss...

Back to him, now. So near to her.

CHRIS

...books and naps and kisses and... fights, we had some great ones.

Leans, close to her ear.

CHRIS

Thanks for those.

Her haunted eyes so far away. Her hand in a small fist pressed to her mouth.

CHRIS

It's silly, being sad.

He stares down. One tortured impossible breath.

CHRIS

Thank you. For every kindness.

Wow. So many, dizzying.

CHRIS

Thank you. For being someone I was always proud to be with.

Yeah. That one, especially.

\*

CHRIS

Thank you. For our children. For the first time I saw them.

Shakes his head at that. Reliving for a moment.

CHRIS

Thank you for your guts and your sweetness. For how you always looked, how I always wanted to touch you.

He closes his eyes. Whispers to himself...

CHRIS

God, you were my life.

He looks down at her frozen profile. The distant, vacant eyes.

CHRIS

I apologize for every time I failed you.

Off the bed now, heading for the door...

CHRIS

Especially this one.

STRIDING down the hallway, fast, strong, THROW open the front door...

106 HELL - EXT. ANNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

106

And there, sitting aways down the hill, on the dying grass, a lone figure. He looks uncharacteristically anxious. Which, against every emotion shooting through Chris, brings the trace of a smile... a quiet...

CHRIS

Thought I wouldn't make it out, huh?

Albert the Tracker stretches his long legs. No smile yet on the lean features.

TRACKER

You were in there a while.

And Chris nods. Guess I was.

CHRIS

Took a while to realize. You were right.

The Tracker adjusts his gun-metal glasses. He's not happy to be right. Not happy at all.

TRACKER

Nothing you can do could ever help her. This trip was always just for you.

Chris nods once more. He knows that now. The Tracker clears his throat.

TRACKER

Did you come close...?

CHRIS

... to losing it? Giving up my hold on the "real?"

His eyes so sad above the smile.

CHRIS (softly)

... oh, yeah.

But somehow, very calm.

CHRIS

I pushed it straight to the edge. That's why I had to come out now...

A flicker of apprehension across the Tracker's eyes, because some instinct anticipates danger.

CHRIS

To tell you I'm giving up...

And in the instant the Tracker relaxes...

CHRIS

Just not. The way you think.

The Tracker freezes. To stone.

CHRIS (softly)

Go home, Al. Tell my children I love them...

I do.

CHRIS

And I won't leave their mom.

His eyes say, thanks, Al. For everything. And then...

... he's gone. The door closes **STRONG**. Forever.

**HOLD** on the Tracker. What has he done?

**107 HELL - INT. HALLWAY - DAY**

**107**

Chris stands looking around at the filth, the cracks, the melting paint. Okay, I'll deal with it. Until...

... the **SCREAM**. It continues, and he holds his ground, takes a breath. He'll deal with this, too. With anything.

Down the hall. Strong, sure steps. Into the doorway...

**108 HELL - INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - DAY**

**108**

She cringes at the edge of her bed. Horrified eyes watch another **TARANTULA**, twice the size of the first one, slowly feeling his way toward her across the sheets. She shrieks and **SHRIEKS**, and...

... he is there, scooping up the spider in his bare hands, going calmly to the glass door, setting it down on the grass, shutting the door **FIRMLY**. Safe, now. Turns to her...trembling on the bed...

CHRIS

See. I'm good for something.

He crosses the floor. Kneels down beside her bed. His face so close to her terrified eyes. But they are watching him.

CHRIS (softly)

Where are we headed, babe...?

He reaches so gently, his fingertips brush her arm, and she **RECOILS**, fearfully. But he doesn't mind.

CHRIS

In one minute, I won't know you. Any better than you know me.

But...

CHRIS

But we'll be together.

The tears pool in his eyes. He hadn't expected that.

CHRIS

Where we belong.

He folds his hand over hers. She tries weakly to pull it free, but he won't let her.

CHRIS

Good people end up in Hell. Because they can't forgive themselves.

Staring in her eyes.

CHRIS (whispers)

Hell, I know I can't.

She is staring back. Transfixed.

CHRIS

But I can forgive you.

Her eyes flicker. Her lips part.

ANNIE

For what? Killing my children? My sweet husband?

He shakes his head. Nah, not for any of that.

CHRIS

For being so wonderful. A guy would choose hell over heaven...

Leans close. So the last words can be a whisper...

CHRIS

... just to hang around you.

And with those words, a light goes out behind his eyes. He blinks, pulls back, looks around...

CHRIS

Christ, what happened to this place? Why is it so... cold?

His arms hug himself against that. And then, his gaze falls on...

... her. And with the non-recognition in his eyes, we SNAP TO...

his VIEW of her face. So close. The light dawning behind her dark eyes... a wondering...

ANNIE

Christy...?

We blink, BLACKENING the screen for an instant. She is up now, on one elbow, pure blind panic...

ANNIE  
Oh, God, HELP ME...!

Reaches out to us, blindly...

ANNIE  
Christy! Don't give up...!

And BLACK SCREEN.

Silence. In the darkness.

109 INT. ROOM - DAY

109 \*

Still BLACK. then, our eyes OPEN to see...

Chris waking. He looks around, startled. He is alone, in a room. Confused, devastated that Annie and her house are no longer there. He has lost her. He SPRINGS out of bed to see through the window...

...the hillside. The lake he knows, ringed with forest. And just below him...

...the loveliest garden.

110 EXT. GARDEN - DAY

110 \*

Chris alone in the garden. Wandering, lost, oblivious to its beauty, until a voice comes...

ANNIE (gently)  
Hey. Remember me?

He WHEELS around. She is THERE. He blinks. Is it an illusion? But when he sees her incredible smile, tears spring to his eyes.

ANNIE (whispers)  
Sometimes. When you lose, you win.

She comes to him. Her hands on his chest, his face...

... her mouth finds his. Slow and sweet. No hurry now. She doesn't stop for a while. And when she does, she stays close.

ANNIE  
Albert says it was a very close thing. It was a miracle.

He laughs softly.

CHRIS  
That's because he doesn't know us.

She has to smile back. Swallowing her own tears. Maybe that's right. Maybe it wasn't close at all.

CHRIS

What some people call impossible...

His eyes moving over her face.

CHRIS

Is just stuff. They haven't seen before.

She nods at that. Become something of a believer herself.

CHRIS

Like the view...?

CUT TO...WIDE ANGLE. It is of course, Annie's painting. Only now, for the first time, it is completely real.

On Annie. Overwhelmed by joy. High above the world they have created for each other. The most beautiful view in heaven.

CHRIS

When I was young. I met a girl by a lake. And I brought her back to my room.

ANNIE

This girl was easy, huh?

They're having the best time.

CHRIS

Nothing about her. Was ever that.

TRACKER (O.S.)

'Scuse me, lady...

They turn. The Tracker fills the doorway of the house on the gentle slope, just above them. We've never seen him happy before. It looks rather nice.

TRACKER

Ready for that surprise I promised?

She looks to Chris. Then nods to the Tracker, expectantly. We hear the WOOF. Before the Dalmatian slips past him in the doorway. Annie's eyes flash bright with astonishment. Can it really be Katie?

TRACKER

That's not. The surprise.

And from nowhere, beside him appears...

... an eight-year-old girl. Caramel hair. Annie's dark eyes. Two hearts explode in the same instant... and even so, the child can't quite believe...

MARIE

Mommy...?



Annie **THROWS** her arms out, and her baby **SLIDES** down the slope, **RUNS** to her mom's arms, **CRASHING** into Annie, sending them both **SPRAWLING** and laughing and kissing and holding onto each other for dear life. Until...

**IAN (O.S.)**

I always knew you liked her best.

In the doorway. A 13-year-old boy. Rugged, rangy, a jock. Beautiful sleepy eyes. The eyes lock to his mom's. He **SLIDES** down the hill, comes to her side, crouches down, real close. Can't keep from smiling, with...

**IAN**

Now, the next time this kid asks you to drive...

She just grabs him around the neck, kisses him so fiercely, it brings a silence that no one wants to break. So patient Katie...

... trots over. Her turn for some loving.

**ANNIE**

Are you Mommy's dead doggie...?

Katie licks her face egregiously. Annie has one arm around each of her babies now. It's all too much. And all just right.

**ANNIE**

Never had a Christmas like this.

**TRACKER**

Hey, am I the only one cryin'?

They all look around. For the moment, he is. Has to take off the spectacles to wipe at his eyes.

**TRACKER**

Annie, you gonna let these kids get outta costume?

She doesn't understand.

**IAN**

Wanna see us the way we met Dad?

She still doesn't quite get it. Looks back to her husband.

**CHRIS**

You had your rush. Take a chance.

And when she looks back, her arms are around two young adults. She startles, a little. The young woman with the Asian face smiles a lovely smile...

**MARIE (LEONA)**

We could change back. So you're not with strangers.

But Annie is just shaking her head. Staring so deep into those dark eyes. Nothing could make her give up this angel she never thought she'd see. She looks from her, to the black cowboy, and back. The softest whisper...

ANNIE

Know you guys anywhere.

Chris steps in. They embrace. Our huddled family looking for all the world like the four tiny figures in the painting on Annie's wall. And when Chris pulls back...

...Annie takes Marie's face in her hands.

ANNIE

My God. Now I've got a girlfriend.

Her daughter smiles so gently.

MARIE (LEONA)

And she'll be waiting, right here. When you get back.

The look holds. Annie's loving smile fades to bittersweet.

CHRIS

Get back? What does that...are you going somewh...

Annie shaking her head. Her smile luminous once more, she wraps her hand around his.

ANNIE

No sir, nowhere at all.

TRACKER

But she wants to, she needs t...

IAN (ALBERT) (cuts him off, sharply)

Let me do this, all right?

The Tracker falls silent. Everything. Silent.

IAN (ALBERT)

He's our father. We don't need an interpreter.

Chris looking from his wife, to his daughter, to his son. What is this?

IAN (ALBERT)

It's about rebirth. About mom choosing to go back.

And seeing his shock...

ANNIE

Don't worry, Christy, I'm not going to do this.

MARIE (LEONA)

She killed herself. There's a reason that every religion in the world talks about atonement, or karma...making amends...

Staring in his baby's eyes. So young, and suddenly so wise.

MARIE (LEONA)

We know, inside. When we need to take responsibility for what we've done. To pay our debt. Or we'll never feel right.

TRACKER

Chris, this time will pass like a heartbeat, compared to all eternity. Then, she'll be with you forev...

IAN (ALBERT)

And forever. Is a long time. To feel wrong.

And those words. Break through. They leave a silence. Chris looks to Annie...

CHRIS

Go ahead, try to tell me they're wrong. That you don't want to do this.

ANNIE

I'm not going to leave you, Christy.

He licks his lips. His throat dry.

CHRIS (real soft)

That's not what I asked.

And as they stare in each other's eyes...

MARIE (LEONA)

She'd be born to a family in Sri Lanka. She'd be a girl, healthy at first.

CHRIS (never looking from Annie's eyes)

At first.

MARIE (LEONA)

In her teens, She'd contract an illness that causes sleep deprivation.

ANNIE (staring at Chris)

Because I used sleeping pills t...

MARIE (LEONA)

Her parents would be loving and intelligent. Father  
in local government, mother an artist...

CHRIS (so quiet)

And the illness?

MARIE (LEONA)

She will die. In her thirties.

In her thirties. He stares at his wife with such love and pain.

CHRIS

How do you know this?

MARIE (LEONA)

I told you about tapping into everyone all at once.  
It's like all the juice from every brain that ever lived.

Chris tries to imagine this.

MARIE (LEONA)

It's stronger than any computer. Enough to predict  
the consequence of every event on Earth

He's nodding. Smiling. Locked to his wife's eyes.

CHRIS

So what village. Will we be in?

That hits Annie like a ton of bricks. We?

CHRIS

I left my wife alone. To go crazy. Got my own bills  
to pay.

ANNIE

Christy, you just...

CHRIS

Hell doesn't count, we screwed up on Earth. Let's  
do this together.

(to Marie)

Can we? Can we be togeth...

IAN (ALBERT)

You bet you can.

All eyes turn. How does he know?

IAN (ALBERT)

Soul mates. I had a hunch.

\*

The cowboy smile. Just for his dad.

IAN (ALBERT)

So I found one. Born in Philadelphia, a boy, both  
parents doctors. You follow in their footsteps...

Eyes locked to each other, father and son.

IAN (ALBERT)

Late twenties, you're working in Sri Lanka, you fall  
in love with and marry a young woman. Your  
devotion sustains her through her illness, and...

What more can I say?

IAN (ALBERT)

...if you play your cards right, she dies in your  
arms.

MARIE (LEONA)

It is so romantic.

The Tracker grunts. Not so sure.

MARIE (LEONA)

Well, it is.

TRACKER

If both the babies are born alive. If not, you're  
stranded on different journeys...

That quiets the room.

IAN (ALBERT)

There's more. This doctor you're going to be. He'll  
live to be old.

Of course. That hadn't occurred to Chris.

IAN (ALBERT)

You'll be with her at her death...

CHRIS

For a change.

IAN (ALBERT)

But you'll be alone, mourning her. For forty years.

All eyes on him.

CHRIS

Hey. Nothing's perfect.

ANNIE (a whisper)  
Don't do this.

CHRIS  
Could be nice. When you have a fever, I'll dry your  
face. Kiss your palms, your fingers...

Her head is shaking, her eyes filling...

CHRIS  
When you can't sleep, I'll sing you dumb love  
songs. In two languages, even.

ANNIE  
You can't do th...

CHRIS  
I'll make you smile.

I will. From his heart...

CHRIS (murmurs)  
That's your role. To bring adventure into my life.

He leans closer, as if they are alone in the world.

CHRIS  
Will you finish our home. Paint all the art. And  
have it waiting here for me?

(soft grin)  
Maybe lose the columns?

She looks back at the columns. Nods, yeh, maybe I should.

When she turns back to Chris, he is leaning closer...

CHRIS  
I like a lakeside view.

Only time for her eyes to close, her mouth to part, and as they kiss...

SMASH CUT TO...

111 INT. DELIVERY ROOM, PHILADELPHIA - DAY

111

Blur of motion, WOMAN on gurney being rushed through sliding doors, doctors and staff  
on the run, this one's a problem...

112 EXT. SRI LANKA - NIGHT

112

WIDE AERIAL VIEW of flooded plains, villages...

**113 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, JAFFRA, SRI LANKA - NIGHT 113**

A simple room, clean, but without visible high-tech support. Two mid-wives, one barely a teenager, attend a young Hindu woman in calm, but painful, labor...

RAPID INTERCUT now, between...

**114 INT. PHILADELPHIA - 114**

...gurney WHEELED into place, nurses hooking up monitors, the woman is breathing hard, in agony and really scared...

**115 JAFFRA... 115**

the woman smiling, bearing down, bravely not crying, her face bathed in sweat, the young midwife reaching under the cloth, between her legs, and... stops. Her face freezing...

**116 PHILADELPHIA... 116**

...a man and woman in mask and gown BURST into the room. He is the husband, rushes to his wife's side, clutches her hand. The woman is the senior doctor, takes her position between the writhing patient's legs..

**117 JAFFRA... 117**

...the older mid-wife has replaced the girl, all business now. the patient's eyes are bulging, she is SCREAMING now, unable to control the suddenly excruciating pain...

**118 FASTER INTERCUT between the two... 118**

... a blur of bodies, movement, hands, the women SHRIEKING, just alike, until...

**119 SPLIT SCREEN... 119**

two babies, side by side, pulled out into the world. The boy is white, but now bright red, howls with rage and life. But on the right hand side of the screen...

... the brown baby girl is motionless, lifeless, a frozen doll. A lifetime instant. The Hindu mother sits BOLT upright, GRABS her child from the mid-wife and... STRIKES a blow across the infant's back, and the child...

... GASPS, breathes, SCREAMS.

Two mothers clutch their babies. FREEZE FRAME.

CUT TO BLACK. ROLL END CREDITS.