

TWO WEEKS IN FALMOUTH

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FADE IN:

EXT. A WINDING COASTAL ROAD - FALMOUTH, MA - DAY

A weather-beaten compact car makes its way along the narrow road.

The car makes a turn and heads toward a beach area.

It pulls over and parks.

Out steps ELEANOR ADAMS (70s), in khaki pants, a blouse under a jacket, and a floppy hat for the sun. She is prim, English.

She opens the trunk and removes an easel and a wooden sketch box.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Eleanor sits on a weathered driftwood stool, her easel angled toward a sun-bleached dune dotted with wild beachgrass and goldenrod.

Her brush hovers over the blank canvas, capturing the solitude of the place.

The dune transforms into:

EXT. THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN - DAY

-- in disrepair, with a single radio tower on the crest of Mount Lee.

SUPER: 1967

LESTER (V.O.)

You're not number one at the box office anymore, Robert. That's Sean Connery.

ROBERT (V.O.)

Never heard of him.

LESTER (V.O.)

Yes, you have. Are you going to take the offer or not? They need to know.

INT. LIVING ROOM - THE MANSION

A sun-faded living room, more museum than home. Framed movie posters line the walls—Robert Morgan in tuxedos, swashbuckler garb, and cowboy hats.

On the velvet couch, ROBERT MORGAN (70s) cradles a phone, his tailored robe and slicked-back hair a stubborn nod to his silver-screen days.

ROBERT

What's the offer again? I wasn't listening.

LESTER (V.O.)

Seventeen-week tour in the best summer theaters on the east coast.

ROBERT

Summer theater. Good God. Why me?

INT. LESTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Lester (60s), has the phone cradled on his shoulder as he examines a document. Thinning hair, a loose tie, and an open vest.

LESTER

We need to re-establish your reliability.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

ROBERT

But... summer stock... Barns and flies and hay and cows...

LESTER

Two grand a week.

ROBERT

I made seven grand a week at MGM.

LESTER

Yes, and I used to have hair.

Robert considers.

ROBERT

And I get to pick the play?

LESTER

You get to pick the play. And, hopefully, there will be a role for your co-star because the producers signed her already.

ROBERT

Who?

LESTER

Tiffany Quinn.

ROBERT

I was in a picture with her -- what the hell was it called... A western, I think...

LESTER

"Reckoning At Dawn."

ROBERT

Right. She's a sport. All right.

LESTER

You'll do it?

ROBERT

Yes -- only if I can do a play of my choosing. That's the deal. They can take it or leave it.

Robert hangs up the phone with a violent cough. He makes his way across the room to a desk and opens a drawer.

He pulls out a faded, yellowed, frayed-edged playbill from a stack of old clippings and theatrical programs.

The cover reads: DESIRE IN THE BOUDOIR. ARLINGTON THEATRE. Boston. Week Beginning Apr. 14th, 1912.

He stares at it through vacant eyes.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Once more unto the breach.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

The rehearsal hall is a vestige of New York's theater district -- a peeling tin ceiling, scuffed floors, and yellowing posters from long-closed Broadway shows. Tape on the floor outlines an invisible stage, a promise of grandeur against the worn-out reality.

Behind the desk is the director, DEL EVERTON (30s), no jacket but a tie, vest, and rolled-up sleeves.

Next to him is JULIE MORSE (20s), script girl.

CHAUNCEY FRANKLIN (50s), debonair actor, graying temples, three-piece suit, reads a racing form.

CHAUNCEY

Does Mister Morgan know that
Tiffany Quinn is out and Lilly
LaRue is in?

DEL

I tried calling him, but he was
already in transit.

ALICE KIRKWOOD (19), perky, smartly dressed in a business jacket and skirt looks up from her VARIETY newspaper.

ALICE

Isn't Robert Morgan too old to be
playing the leading man I'm in
love with?

DEL

This is summer stock, Alice.
Audiences just want to see major
movie stars. They could care less
about anything else.

CHAUNCEY

Mister Morgan's character only
feigns romance with you to get at
your mother. Didn't you read the
play?

ALICE

Only my lines.

All eyes turn toward the door as it opens.

A reaction of disappointment as they see actor JAMIE WARREN (18), a dapper young man with a small brown bag in hand enter.

CHAUNCEY

Ah. The new boy. You're late.

JAMIE

I was here an hour ago.

Jamie delivers the brown bag to Del.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
Two jelly donuts and a blueberry
muffin, Mister Everton.

DEL
Thank you, Jamie.

Jamie notices Alice at the craft table. He joins her and
pours himself a coffee.

JAMIE
We haven't met yet. I'm Jamie
Warren.

ALICE
Alice Kirkwood.

JAMIE
I saw you at the callbacks. You
were wonderful.

She's pleased with the compliment.

ALICE
Thank you. What did you do last?

JAMIE
High school graduation.

Puzzled.

ALICE
I haven't heard of that. Where did
it play?

JAMIE
No, I mean, I just graduated high
school. This is my first
professional play!

An embarrassed laugh from Alice.

ALICE
Oh, of course! What was I
thinking? Congratulations.

A mutual attraction blossoms.

JAMIE
Thank you. Is this your first
show, too?

ALICE

My seventh. I started acting when
I was eight.

Jamie is genuinely impressed.

JAMIE

Wow!

ALICE

I've never played in summer
theater before. We're even on that
count. It's going to be fun.

JAMIE

Especially working with two
legends. Morgan and LaRue.

ALICE

You're playing the butler?

JAMIE

And I'm understudying Mister
Morgan.

ALICE

Maybe if he gets a cold we'll be
able to play a scene together.

Jamie is mesmerized.

JAMIE

Why wait? We can play anytime.

ALICE

I beg your pardon!?

JAMIE

No! I --

ALICE

What the hell!?

JAMIE

I meant --

She turns and marches to her chair.

He mutters.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Oh, God, I didn't mean it like
that.

DEL

We may as well get started. As you know, "Desire in the Boudoir" was first produced in Boston back in nineteen-twelve, and from what I could find out, this will be the first professional production since then. We're updating the timeline to the nineteen-thirties, for that Noel Coward look.

The door opens, and ROBERT MORGAN strides in, a relic of Hollywood's Golden Age. His cashmere coat billows, his polished shoes tap a slow rhythm, and his fedora shades eyes that have smoldered on a thousand movie screens.

ROBERT

"Desire in the Boudoir," I take it?

DEL

Mister Morgan.

ROBERT

Sorry, I'm late. My driver was detained in traffic, and thus, so was I.

DEL

Del Everton. Welcome. This is the cast... Alice Kirkwood, who plays Peony Actona...

ALICE

Mister Morgan.

ROBERT

Charmed.

DEL

Chauncey Franklin, who plays Duarte Actona...

Robert shakes hands with Chauncey.

ROBERT

Did we work together once?

CHAUNCEY

"Six Bullets To Dodge." No lines.

ROBERT

And you were wonderful in it. How nice to see you again.

DEL

And this is Jamie Warren, who
plays the butler.

ROBERT

A pleasure. The butler.

JAMIE

Yes, sir. This is my first
professional job.

DEL

Jamie will also be understudying
you... though I'm sure he'll never
need to go on.

Robert pauses... an awkward smile from Jamie.

ROBERT

Congratulations.

JAMIE

Thank you.

ROBERT

Where is Miss Quinn?

DEL

(uneasy)

Well, there was a... development.
Tiffany got a movie offer.

ROBERT

Oh. That's a disappointment. Who's
the replacement?

DEL

(a beat)

She's... uh... a familiar face.

ROBERT

Wonderful. Anyone I know?

DEL

Lilly LaRue.

ROBERT

Say that again?

DEL

Lilly LaRue.

ROBERT

My ex-wife!? My ex-bloody wife!?
Have you lost your senses!?

DEL

Why are you angry?

ROBERT

Why am I -- what a stupid
question. We're divorced, that's
why!

DEL

But it's a well-known fact that
you both still love each other and
get along with each other, and --

ROBERT

Still love each other!? Lilly's
publicists fabricated that
nonsense twelve years ago so the
public wouldn't turn on us!

DEL

But --

ROBERT

You're in the business. Were you
born last Tuesday!? You should
know crap from credibility.

DEL

You really don't love each other!?

ROBERT

I hate that cow, and she hates me
even more. Fire her!

DEL

She signed already.

ROBERT

Who cares!? Lilly LaRue! Pay the
bitch off and send her back to
Rodeo Drive!

EXT. LITTLE ISLAND - FALMOUTH - DAY

Eleanor sits before her easel in a secluded cove. The
craggy coastline hugs the dark, restless water. Sunlight
fights through a canopy of old, twisted trees.

Though the cove sparkles in the morning sun, Eleanor's brush spreads storm clouds over the canvas. Gray, angry waves devour the shore.

A muffled alarm clock RINGS.

Eleanor digs into her carpetbag and lifts a large alarm clock, which she silences.

INT./ EXT. FALMOUTH - COASTAL ROAD - ELEANOR'S CAR - DAY

Eleanor's car drives with careless ease along the winding, narrow road.

NEWSMAN (V.O.)

In Roxbury today, a group known as The Mothers for Adequate Welfare chained themselves to the doors of the welfare offices on Blue Hill Avenue. They claimed they were tired of having their checks cut off without warning or investigation... because of lying officials. When the police arrived, a crowd gathered and violence erupted. Stones were thrown at the police, who proceeded to fire at the protesters. With this, Boston joins many other cities engulfed in race riots...

Eleanor winces at the sad news.

She changes the station.

DJ (V.O.)

You are listening to WDFS, Classical Falmouth. Let's cruise toward the summer season with Debussy's "Clair De Lune."

Eleanor's car winds through the lush countryside. Debussy's 'Clair De Lune' spills from the speakers, softening the hard edges of a world cracking beneath the weight of its own unrest.

EXT. A ROAD LEADING TO FALMOUTH - DAY

The car heads toward the town, seen in the distance as the music continues.

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - DAY

The Falmouth Playhouse stands like a quiet chapel of dreams. Gray shingles, weathered and wise, hold secrets of countless summer seasons.

Eleanor's car pulls up to the front doors.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - MAIN LOBBY - DAY

REID HALL (30s), Stage Manager, dressed for grunt work, thumbtacks a list to the wall.

Eleanor enters, carpetbag in hand.

REID

Hot off the press, the '67 summer season.

ELEANOR

What are they carting out this year?

Her eyes scan the announcements.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

"Miss Mabel"... "The Pleasure of His Company"... "Summer and Smoke"...

REID

Check out June nineteenth to July first.

Her face contorts.

ELEANOR

"Robert Morgan starring in Desire in the Boudoir?" Never heard of it.

REID

Must be a new play.

ELEANOR

I thought Robert Morgan had gone the way of silent pictures.

She heads off toward the auditorium.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

A rehearsal is in full swing. Robert and Chauncey have scripts in hand. Neither actor is at performance level.

ROBERT

Monsieur Actona, if you wish to defend your honor and reputation, I shall not stand in your way.

CHAUNCEY

Ho, there! I would expect not. You are an Englishman.

Chauncey turns to Del.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

Must I say, "Ho, there?" It sounds like something out of Knights of the Round Table.

DEL

If it's in the script, we say it. Again, please.

ROBERT

Monsieur Actona, if you wish to defend your action and duel it out, that is your prerogative. I, on the other hand, won't stand in your way.

Chauncey turns to the director.

CHAUNCEY

We say what's in the script, right?

Robert blinks, as if the words he just said evaporated from his mind.

ROBERT

Your line, old fellow.

CHAUNCEY

Yes, I know, but you just said that --

DEL

Let's move along. We can discuss it later.

LILLY (O.S.)

We can discuss it now if you like.

They turn to see LILLY LaRUE (70s), framed in the doorway in her best seductive pose.

An echo of old Hollywood glamour draped in mink and diamonds, Lilly is a star. And she knows it.

LILLY (CONT'D)

I'm in no hurry.

She sweeps into the room and breezes past Robert without any acknowledgment of recognition.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Del, darling. You are Del, aren't you?

DEL

I am.

LILLY

Lilly LaRue.

ROBERT

Oh, God.

A dramatic realization at the sound of his voice.

She turns and takes several hesitant steps toward him.

LILLY

Could it be? The years have been harsh and unforgiving... but could it be? Robert?

ROBERT

Lilly.

LILLY

Thank God. I heard rumors that you were dead.

ROBERT

I heard rumors that you soon might be.

Lilly leans in, her lips brushing his cheek -- a kiss that feels more like a loaded weapon than affection.

LILLY

Still as droll as ever.

If looks could kill, they would both drop dead.

DEL

Tell you what. Let's all take five
and allow Lilly to get settled.

Del and the others drift to the craft table like
townsfolk clearing the street before a showdown.

LILLY

It's good to see you again, Robby.

ROBERT

Your sincerity is underwhelming.

LILLY

I know all about underwhelming,
darling. I discovered the meaning
on our honeymoon.

EXT. ELEANOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A modest Cape Cod home, its weather-worn gray shingles
blending into the coastal twilight.

INT. ELEANOR'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eleanor sits at the kitchen table, a plate of untouched
food in front of her. She pours a glass of wine.

A small radio on the counter fills the room with the
soft, tinny strains of Bach's Cello Suite No. 1 in G
Major.

Her gaze drifts to a framed black-and-white photograph on
the hutch—a handsome RAF pilot from World War Two, frozen
in youthful pride.

INT. SANITARIUM - NEW YORK CITY - LOBBY - NIGHT

Dimly lit and uninspired.

Robert appears at the glass door.

He pulls the handle -- locked.

He TAPS a quarter against the glass.

A NURSE (50s) rounds the corner.

NURSE

We're closed.

A muffled Robert answers.

ROBERT
I've come all the way from
California. It's important!

NURSE
Visiting hours are -- Oh, my God!
You're Robert Morgan!

She unlocks the door.

NURSE (CONT'D)
I've seen all your movies. You and
Lilly LaRue... still in love, even
after the divorce...

Robert steps inside.

ROBERT
I'm here to see someone.

INT. SANITARIUM - PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

Sparse and drab. A bed, a rickety chair, a narrow
dresser.

A dead flower in a pot on the window sill.

An OLD MAN (88), in a wheelchair faces the black window.
Only his profile visible -- bald, wisps of gray hair.

Robert sits opposite him.

ROBERT
I haven't been here in five years.
It's amazing how much time you
don't have when you've nothing to
do.

The Old Man doesn't respond.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
My last movie... eh. The writing
was on the wall. I don't do
realism well. Three-strip
Technicolor or black and white
with gloss and filters is where I
was best. Those days are gone. Of
course... you wouldn't have
believed they actually happened in
the first place.

He stares in silence as if waiting for an answer.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
I'm doing a play. Not here in New York. Summer theaters. Barns, circus tents... I wish you could be there... full circle, so to speak.

Robert waits for a response.

His gaze wanders to the bare walls.

INT. SANITARIUM - NEW YORK CITY - LOBBY - NIGHT

The Nurse walks Robert to the door.

ROBERT
I noticed the theatrical posters had been taken down in his room. Any idea why?

NURSE
I don't know, sir.

ROBERT
I'll send over new ones. I'd prefer they stay up.

A pause.

NURSE
Yes, of course...it's sad that he won't even know they're there.

Robert pauses at the door and turns to her.

ROBERT
Can we really be sure?

He exits.

The Nurse watches as he fades into the dark.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

Lilly and Robert rehearse, scripts in hand. Robert's delivery is flat-Lilly is in full performance mode.

Del watches with intensity.

ROBERT

Winnifred, I had a feeling that I would find you here. That was quite a display you put on in front of the others.

He leads her to a metal chair.

LILLY

You call my broken emotions a "display?" We've done wrong, Sterling. God, help us; we've done wrong. I can never forgive myself for what I've done to my own daughter... allowing her to believe that you loved her.

ROBERT

I did love her... but when I met you, I realized the love I had for her was not complete...

LILLY

Robert, when do you intend to start acting?

ROBERT

What the hell does that mean?

LILLY

You sound like you're reading this for the first time.

ROBERT

It's our second day of rehearsals, what do you expect!?

LILLY

A little professionalism would be a start.

ROBERT

Oh-ho! You saved that barb!

LILLY

What do you mean?

ROBERT

I was there the day Gary Cooper said that to you on the set of The Story of Doctor Wassell!

Lily explodes.

LILLY

Coop never said that, it was C.B.
DeMille -- and then I quit!

ROBERT

You were fired!

Del rushes between them.

DEL

Let's take a little break. Lilly,
I'm sure Robert will be fine.

LILLY

Don't get your hopes up. He was
forgetting lines before you were
born.

Lilly spins away, heading for the craft table. The other
actors keep their distance.

Robert follows.

An astonished Jamie and Alice are glued to the argument.

ROBERT

You know I'm always like this
until I get the blocking down.

They lower their voices.

LILLY

Honestly, I didn't want to do this
annoying little play.

ROBERT

Why did you?

LILLY

I was told us appearing together
would be the hottest ticket of the
summer. Maybe even Broadway.

ROBERT

This show? Broadway? You're
delusional.

LILLY

Not this one, Robby. Something
better -- without you. Why are you
doing it?

ROBERT

The offers in Tinsel Town dried up. Like your facelift.

LILLY

I have never had my face lifted.

ROBERT

I thought my co-star was Tiffany Quinn. Imagine my surprise.

LILLY

I wasn't thrilled to see you either. But we don't have to talk offstage.

ROBERT

True. You got remarried, right?

LILLY

Yes. I finally found true love with Marvin.

ROBERT

Marvin?

LILLY

Doctor Marvin Zimmerman. A doctor.

ROBERT

A doctor of what?

She doesn't want to answer.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Plastic Surgery?

She remains awkwardly silent.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

You must get a family discount.

In a quiet tone.

LILLY

Go to hell, Robert.

ROBERT

Eventually.

She storms back toward the marked set.

LILLY

Enough with the break, let's get
this show on the road.

EXT. REHEARSAL HALL - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

An unmarked metal door in an alley. Alice leans against
the wall, eyes closed.

Jamie exits the building.

JAMIE

There you are.

ALICE

Here I am. Just getting some air.

JAMIE

Del said three minutes.

ALICE

Thanks.

JAMIE

You've been avoiding me for three
days and I feel terrible. I'm
sorry for what I said before...
about "why wait?" I really didn't
mean it the way you took it.

ALICE

How did you mean it?

JAMIE

I just thought that maybe -- we
could get a soda or something... a
date, I guess. That's all.

ALICE

That's what you thought, huh?

She enters the building and leaves Jamie behind.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

Del and Julie are behind the table and face the actors.

Alice enters, followed a moment later by Jamie.

DEL

Now, we've blocked Act 1. Today,
we do the second set of blocking.

This catches Robert's attention.

DEL (CONT'D)

As you know, some of the theaters we play will be in the round, and others classical proscenium. We will stage the play for both.

ROBERT

What does "in the round" mean?

DEL

The stage is round.

ROBERT

On all sides!?

DEL

Yes.

ROBERT

Where's the audience?

DEL

All around the stage.

ROBERT

How does one get on and off the stage?

DEL

You run down an aisle --

ROBERT

Through the audience?

DEL

Yes... and then up a ramp --

ROBERT

Ramps!? What the hell do I look like to you -- some kind of half-assed acrobat!?

DEL

It's fun, and the audience is right there in front of you.

LILLY

Within spitting distance. You better be good, Robby.

ROBERT

So my back will be to the audience?

DEL

You'll move about so everyone can see and in some theaters, the stage rotates.

ROBERT

"Rotates!?" As in "spins around!?"

DEL

Yes.

ROBERT

If you wanted a long-playing record, you should have hired The Beatles!

DEL

Mister Morgan, I assure you --

ROBERT

Two sets of blocking. I assume I am being paid for two plays?

DEL

One play. The plot and the dialog don't change from night to night.

LILLY

You think he's going to do the same dialog night after night?

EXT. IVORYTON PLAYHOUSE, MAINE - NIGHT

A large sign out front reads: JUNE 5-10 ROBERT MORGAN in DESIRE IN THE BOUDOIR Co-Starring LILLY LaRUE.

INT. IVORYTON PLAYHOUSE - DRESSING ROOM AREA - NIGHT

Lilly, in glamorous nineteen-thirties aristocratic attire, passes Robert's dressing room just as he emerges.

She is astonished to see him with layers of heavy pancake makeup and a dark toupee. He is in evening clothes.

LILLY

Good embalming job, Robby.

He brushes past her.

INT. IVORYTON PLAYHOUSE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

A nervous Jamie paces behind the flats, bathed in the muted amber and blue wash of the pre-show lights.

He mumbles under his breath.

JAMIE

"A telegram for you, madam....
Blah blah, blah blah... "Sir." A
telegram for you madam.... Blah
blah...

Alice watches as he paces and silently recites his lines.
Her face softens watching him shake with fear.

ALICE

Jamie.

JAMIE

Sir.

He turns to see her.

ALICE

Jamie, you know your lines. Just
sit back and enjoy the ride.

JAMIE

When I've been in a bunch of shows
like you, I'll be able to enjoy
the ride.

ALICE

And I would love to get that soda.

JAMIE

You would!?

ALICE

Tomorrow?

JAMIE

Sure!

ALICE

See you on stage.

She exits. His elation dissolves into nerves.

JAMIE

"A telegram for you, madam....
Blah blah, blah blah... "Sir."

INT. ON THE IVORYTON STAGE - NIGHT

The curtain rises to an upscale, nineteen-thirties LIVING ROOM. Chauncey enters, in the role of DUARTE ACTONA, wearing white tie and tails and a top hat in his hand.

CHAUNCEY
Winnifred! Winnifred, we'll be
late for the opera.

LILLY (O.S.)
Coming, my love!

Lilly enters to enthusiastic APPLAUSE.

LILLY (CONT'D)
Duarte, let us not go this
evening. I am feeling unwell.

CHAUNCEY
Unwell? What has come over you, my
dear?

LILLY
I'm not sure.

CHAUNCEY
I am sorry, my darling. You have
forgotten that we invited that
young scallywag, Sterling
Duffield, to accompany us this
evening.

Lilly perks up.

LILLY
Oh!? Oh, I did forget. I shall
force myself to go. Duarte,
perhaps you could secure a cab for
us.

CHAUNCEY
Certainly, my dear.

He exits.

LILLY
Sterling... oh, Sterling...

Robert enters, and the APPLAUSE is tremendous.

Robert turns and gives a slight bow to the audience,
which brings many to their feet as they continue to cheer
and clap wildly.

Robert mutters through a smile over the din knowing the audience won't hear a word.

ROBERT

It's the embalming job. Makes me look thirty years younger when you're sitting out there.

He turns and bows as the APPLAUSE continues.

EXT./INT. JAMIE'S CAR - DAY

Jamie's well-traveled Volkswagen Beetle chugs along the country road, coughing up puffs of exhaust.

In the passenger seat, Alice appears concerned.

ALICE

The company has a van for the stage manager and supporting players. You know, like us.

JAMIE

And Chauncey. Chauncey who puts garlic and onions on everything. I'm not even going to give it a try. That's why I bought this. A hundred bucks!

ALICE

A hundred?

JAMIE

And the guy said he never had a lick of trouble with it.

ALICE

He did? Do you think it will last through the entire summer?

JAMIE

Sure! It's just loud.

EXT. ROADSIDE HOT DOG STAND - DAY

A small food trailer. Jamie leaves the counter with two Cokes in his hands. He joins Alice at a picnic table.

JAMIE

Here you are.

He takes a seat.

ALICE

Thank you. Do you mind if I ask you a personal question?

JAMIE

I don't mind.

ALICE

Why aren't you in the service? I mean, with the war and everything.

JAMIE

They wouldn't take me. Diabetic.

ALICE

Oh, I see.

A sip and a change of subject.

ALICE (CONT'D)

What made you want to be an actor?

JAMIE

Did a play in school... they said I was good at it... and it was nice being someone else for a change. So I did another... and another... and here I am.

ALICE

So, this is your first professional gig, and on top of playing a role, you're understudying a movie legend. How does that happen?

Jamie hesitates.

JAMIE

My uncle is one of the producers.

Alice laughs.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

But he said he wouldn't have pushed for me if I wasn't any good! I still had to audition!

She shows him a warm smile.

EXT. THEATER-GO-ROUND - NIGHT

A huge, round, green circus tent-like theater. The wooden marquee out front reads WEEK OF JUNE 12-17 ROBERT MORGAN DESIRE IN THE BOUDOIR WITH LILLY LaRUE.

INT. THEATER GO-ROUND STAGE - NIGHT

A sold-out audience.

The stage is set for "the round" with just furniture.

Four ramps lead to the stage.

One end of the stage drops off seven feet into the empty orchestra pit.

EXT. THEATER GO-ROUND ARTISTS ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Lilly, Chauncey, and Robert, in costume, wait for their entrance. They speak OVER the AMPLIFIED announcer, heard in the background.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Ladies and Gentlemen,
welcome to tonight's
performance at the Theater
Go-Round.

ROBERT
Look at this place. From a
Hollywood sound stage to a
tent.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Please do not obstruct the
aisles that lead to the
stage, as they can hinder
the performers. Also, there
is no flash photography
allowed.

LILLY
It's not so bad. Van
Johnson was here last week.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
And now, please enjoy
tonight's play... Robert
Morgan in "Desire In The
Boudoir," co-starring Lilly
LaRue.

ROBERT
Good. Now we'll have
something in common to talk
about at the Polo Lounge.

INT. THEATER GO-ROUND STAGE - NIGHT

Lilly paces, engulfed in the scene.

LILLY
Sterling... oh, Sterling...

Robert steps onto the stage to wild APPLAUSE.

ROBERT
Winnifred, my darling.

He sees the tent poles and glances at the canvas walls.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Oh, how I love the décor of this
home. Early Barnum and Bailey, I
think.

Lilly is stunned -- her eyes bulge.

Robert smiles. The audience loves it as they burst out
LAUGHING and CLAPPING.

Lilly is lost as she speaks with great force.

LILLY
Whatever... are you talking about,
you bastar -- fool?

A low, motorized HUM and the stage starts to REVOLVE.

ROBERT
What the hell!? We're moving!

LILLY
Excuse me?

ROBERT
We must tell your husband the
truth... if we ever stop spinning!

LILLY
Don't be a fool. What we had was
over long ago.

APPLAUSE from the audience. Robert addresses them.

ROBERT
Yes, it was in all the newspapers.
Variety especially did a number on
me. She got a mansion in Beverly
Hills, my Rolls Royce, and the
cat!

The audience LAUGHS.

Lilly speaks through gritted teeth.

LILLY
What the hell are you doing!?
(in character)
You are but a foolish boy of
twenty-five. It is not meant to be
between us. Hush. Here comes
Duarte.

Chauncey ENTERS onto the stage.

CHAUNCEY
Winnifred, I was thinking... Oh!
Sterling. There you are. I just
phoned for a cab.

Robert backs up.

ROBERT
Ah. Wonderful. I shall wait in the
garden for the fair Peony.

LILLY
Peony is not joining us. She is
under the weather.

He continues to back up.

ROBERT
Oh no. How distressing.

A loud whisper from Lilly.

LILLY
Wrong blocking.

Robert takes one too many steps and disappears from the
stage with a loud GASP of fear from the audience.

Lilly SCREAMS.

INT. THEATER GO-ROUND ORCHESTRA PIT - NIGHT

Robert has fallen onto the cement floor. His eyes are
closed. He hears the muffled, nervous BUZZ of the
audience... and Lilly's voice.

She tries to remain in character.

LILLY (O.S.)
Rober -- Sterling! Sterling --
Robert Sterling!

His eyes gradually open. He sees the blurry image of Lilly and Chauncey staring down at him from the stage.

DEL and a STAGE HAND crouched over, emerge from under the stage and enter the pit.

DEL

Oh, My God! Robert! Robert, can you hear me!? Robert! Oh, no! Robert!? Is he dead?

STAGE HAND

He's breathing... I think.

ROBERT

Hmm?

DEL

Is anything broken? Can you move?

ROBERT

Oh, Christ.

DEL

What is it? What's wrong!? Tell me! Speak to me!

ROBERT

How the hell am I going to get back on that stage without looking like a total idiot?

THEATER GO-ROUND STAGE - MINUTES LATER

Lilly and Chauncey vamp as best they can.

LILLY

Duarte, I think we should take a cruise on the Nile. Think of all the... big pointed stone things we can see.

CHAUNCEY

Pyramids?

The audience APPLAUDS and CHEER as Robert walks down the Star Aisle and steps onto the stage.

He waits for the APPLAUSE to die down.

ROBERT

Now. Where were we?

The house erupts with CHEERS, APPLAUSE, and a standing ovation. Robert flashes his smile at the audience.

He turns to the scathing Lilly. He suppresses a COUGH.

EXT. THEATER GO-ROUND - LATER

Outside the tent, Robert and Lilly, surrounded by adoring and excited fans, sign autographs.

A short distance away, Jamie and Alice watch.

Alice
Look at that. After every
performance...isn't it wonderful?

Jamie
Maybe one day we'll be big stars
like they are.

A young girl approaches Alice with her program book.

Young Girl
May I have your autograph?

Alice
Of course!

She signs. Jamie smiles.

Jamie
Alice... I was wondering...

Alice
Yes?

Jamie
Sunday --

Young Girl
Thank you.

The happy young girl departs with her autograph.

Jamie
When we make the jump to Falmouth.
Would you like to ride along with
me?

Alice mulls it over for a moment.

Alice
Sure!

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - DAY

Reid Hall waits at the front of the building. With him is NORM HADLEY (30s), dressed in a dark suit.

The poster out front reads: ROBERT MORGAN DESIRE IN THE BOUDOIR CO-STARRING LILLY LaRUE. JUNE 19-JULY 1.

A limo enters the parking lot and drives toward them.

The car stops, the driver exits and opens the back door. Robert climbs out as Reid greets him.

REID

Mister Morgan. I'm Reid Hall,
Stage Manager here at the
Playhouse.

ROBERT

Good morning.

REID

This is Norm Hadley. He'll be your
driver for your engagement here.

NORM

Any time of the day or night, your
wheels will be ready to go, sir.

ROBERT

Encouraging. My wheels haven't
been ready to go day or night
since nineteen fifty-nine.

Norm is puzzled.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Has Lilly arrived yet?

REID

Not yet. This way, sir. I'll show
you to your dressing room.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - MAIN LOBBY - DAY

Robert scans the surroundings and turns to a door just as Eleanor enters carrying her carpetbag.

ROBERT

How very rustic.

ELEANOR

I beg your pardon?

ROBERT

Not you, madam. I meant the lobby.

Eleanor doesn't crack a smile.

REID

Eleanor, this is Robert Morgan.

ELEANOR

Yes. I know.

REID

This is Eleanor Adams, head of wardrobe.

ROBERT

A pleasure.

ELEANOR

Any issues -- a missing button, a tear, stitching up a hem, anything you need, that's what I'm here for. Just try not to fall apart.

She nods curtly and walks away.

Robert raises an eyebrow, caught off guard.

EXT. A ROAD ON CAPE COD - DAY

The Volkswagon Beetle has pulled over at the side of the road. Jamie leans over the engine.

ALICE

We should have taken the van with the others. What's wrong?

JAMIE

A broken thing.

He pulls a belt, split in two, from the engine.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I guess we can't go anywhere without this. Maybe I could tie it together...

With a slight laugh, Alice smiles.

ALICE

You don't know much about cars, but you're cute.

To Jamie's surprise, she puts her arms around his neck and gives him a romantic, passionate kiss

ALICE (CONT'D)

And lucky.

JAMIE

I guess buying this piece of junk turned out to be a good thing after all.

They kiss again. A van approaches.

The passenger door opens and Del steps out.

DEL

I just made twenty bucks.

JAMIE

Huh?

DEL

I bet Chauncey that car wouldn't make it from Cohasset to Falmouth.

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - NIGHT

The theater is lit. The parking lot is full.

ROBERT (V.O.)

Winnifred, how else can I say it?
Your husband is a buffoon, and I
am in love with you.

The audience LAUGHS.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - STAGE - NIGHT

Robert and Lilly are engaged in the scene. Lilly drinks a glass of Champagne.

LILLY

I'll drink to that.

The audience LAUGHS.

Robert is silent. He struggles for his line. The silence is awkward.

ROBERT

I have a hunch it's my line.

The audience LAUGHS.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Drink up, me hearty, for the
Spaniards will soon be on top of
us!

Uneasy LAUGHTER from the house.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
That's from an old picture of
mine.

The audience explodes in LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE. Lilly is
furious as she feeds him his line.

LILLY
I shouldn't drink in the
afternoon...

ROBERT
Oh. Right. You shouldn't drink in
the afternoon, Winnifred. It
doesn't become you. You tend to
forget your lines.

He COUGHS and drops character. Lilly takes note.

BACKSTAGE

The curtain falls as Lilly and Robert step off the stage
to APPLAUSE.

LILLY
My God, Robert. Learn your lines.
Stick to the script.

ROBERT
Lilly, we're in a barn. People
don't care. They want to see a
star in a play and then go to the
fish shack and crack open a clam.

LILLY
You play the fool out there
because you can't act! You're a
star, Robert. A personality.
You're not an actor. You never
were an actor.

She storms off and leaves him cold and speechless.

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The lot is empty except for Eleanor's car. A distance away, she sees Norm pacing next to Robert's limo at the side of the theater.

Robert's LOUD VOICE echoes from somewhere in the darkness beyond.

ROBERT (O.S.)

I hurl you back into the dark
abyss you slithered out from --
you Socialite Queen who reins over
every snob who ever wore a satin
chemise evening gown!

Eleanor makes her way toward the dramatic SHOUTING.

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

You shrew-beast in heels! You
witch who casts spells upon
unsuspecting hapless men who will
lose their life savings keeping
you afloat on your ocean of two-
timing duplicity!

EXT. GROUNDS NEXT TO THE PLAYHOUSE - NIGHT

Eleanor sees Robert, whiskey bottle in hand, screaming.

ROBERT

When I lie on my deathbed, I shall
find no comfort in knowing that if
I had never met you, my life would
have lasted another five years at
best. Possibly six.

ELEANOR

What are you doing!?

Caught off-guard, Robert spins around to see Eleanor.

ROBERT

Reciting lines appropriate to the
occasion, what does it look like?

ELEANOR

Those lines are not in the play.

ROBERT

Correct. They are from the first movie I made with Lilly, called "The Happy Divorce." If I had known then what I discovered five pictures later, she would still be a waitress at the Formosa Café.

ELEANOR

You two had words tonight?

ROBERT

She had words. I listened.

ELEANOR

What did she say?

ROBERT

That I couldn't act. I was nominated for an Oscar!

ELEANOR

You have to learn your lines to do that.

ROBERT

I know my lines.

ELEANOR

You didn't tonight.

ROBERT

I did. I just... skirted around a few of them here and there.

ELEANOR

My advice is to go back to your hotel and study them so you can get through the next performance without "skirting" around. Your car is waiting. I suggest you get out of this night air.

ROBERT

You care?

ELEANOR

I care about the theater having to return a sold-out Box Office because the star came down with a head cold. Goodnight.

She turns and leaves.

Robert watches her disappear into the dark.

The hint of a smile appears on his lips.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

Robert and Lilly play before a full house.

ROBERT

So you know. My love for Peony was
only a ruse... only a ruse...

He draws a blank as he locks onto Lilly's leering eyes.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

A ruse...

Lilly feeds him the line.

LILLY

To get to me?

ROBERT

Yes! To get to you.

(to the house)

I knew it was something like that.

The audience LAUGHS.

He sees Eleanor as she watches from the wings.

She is not laughing.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Yes. Well. I shall...

LILLY

Leave?

ROBERT

Yes, that's right. I shall leave.

He EXITS as Chauncey steps past Eleanor and ENTERS.

CHAUNCEY

I heard another voice.

LILLY

Did you, dear?

CHAUNCEY

A most suspicious voice. It
sounded like... another man.

A KNOCK on the door.

LILLY

Enter.

Jamie Warren, as Giles the butler, opens the door and steps into the room.

JAMIE

A telegram for you, madam.

He hands her the message on a small silver tray.

LILLY

For me?

Chauncey steps forward.

CHAUNCEY

No, for me.

He grabs the message.

LILLY

Duarte!

The audience GASPS.

CHAUNCEY

That is all, Giles.

JAMIE

Sir.

Jamie exits and closes the door behind him.

THE AUDITORIUM

The audience is gone. The hall is eerily quiet. With the Ghost Light planted center stage, a work light from above remains on.

Seated on the sofa, Robert studies the script.

FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE

His eyes are glued to the page. He closes the book... silently mouths a line... and stalls out.

He opens the book to see the line.

ROBERT

Damn.

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Better late than never.

He sees Eleanor enter from the wings.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

That was one of the worst performances ever given on this stage, and that's saying a lot considering the age of this theater.

ROBERT

If nothing else, I appreciate your honesty, Miss Adams.

She approaches him.

ELEANOR

Mrs. Adams. And as long as we're being honest, Mister Morgan, I don't think that even Laurence Olivier would attempt to play twenty-five at his age.

ROBERT

I don't know. He might give it a try in Falmouth.

She sits next to him on the sofa.

ELEANOR

What happened to you out there tonight? All those asides to the audience... why would you do that?

ROBERT

In a movie, I only had to learn the pages being shot the next day. Usually, it was just two or three pages -- five at the most.

Eleanor's edge is lowered as she senses his sincerity.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

But this... this is one hundred and ten pages... and I'm on most of them. Who the hell can do that?

She extends her hand.

ELEANOR
It's easier when you run lines
with someone. Here...

He gives her the script. She thumbs through it until she
finds the page she wanted.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Ah, yes. This scene was ghastly.
Top of Act Three.

ROBERT
Eh... refresh my memory...

ELEANOR
The garden scene.

ROBERT
Right.

A pause.

ELEANOR
You enter.

Robert speaks with his usual stage bravado.

ROBERT
Winnifred! I had a feeling that I
would find you here.

ELEANOR
We are not at Madison Square
Garden, Mister Morgan. Do you know
what the difference is?

ROBERT
I'm playing it too big.

ELEANOR
Precisely. Didn't your director
ever tell you to tone things down?

ROBERT
Probably. I most likely didn't
listen.

ELEANOR
From the top, please. As if you're
playing for a camera.

Robert strikes a realistic, heartfelt, and serious tone.

ROBERT

Winnifred. I had a feeling that --

ELEANOR

Just a bit more volume. A bit.

ROBERT

Winnifred. I had a feeling that I would find you here. That was quite a display you put on in front of the others.

Eleanor is, in a word -- brilliant in the role. Lilly's acting cannot come close to the simplistic integrity that Eleanor brings to life.

ELEANOR

You call my broken emotions a "display?" We've done wrong, Sterling. God, help us; we've done wrong. I can never forgive myself for what I've done to my own daughter... allowing her to believe that you loved her.

ROBERT

I did love her... but when I met you, I realized the love I had for her was not complete. It was not whole. It was not true. I never intended to hurt her. I swear, I never intended that.

ELEANOR

But hurt her, you did, and I should hate you for it. But I am just as much to blame for I never tried to stop you. Here, in this garden... all those secret rendezvous... I can never forgive myself.

Robert moves closer... Eleanor is under the spell...

ROBERT

We are both prisoners in mortal shells who were cheated because we did not live in different times. Soul mates barred by cruel reality. All we have... is hidden love... and this garden... hidden by the shadows of early morning twilight...

He kisses her. A long, quiet moment. Eleanor pulls back, reality settling in.

ELEANOR

There is no kiss in this scene.

ROBERT

True, but didn't you sense there should be?

ELEANOR

You must stay true to the author's intent.

ROBERT

He's long dead; he won't mind.

ELEANOR

I don't think so.

ROBERT

No, he is. I was a pallbearer at his funeral.

ELEANOR

I meant I don't think that it doesn't matter. It does.

She rises from the sofa and steps toward the wings.

Robert jumps up.

ROBERT

I was thinking about touring the town tomorrow. Would you be my guide?

ELEANOR

I think not. We have a show tomorrow, and you have some studying to do.

ROBERT

The crew call is not until six. We have all morning and all afternoon to see the sights.

ELEANOR

And your lines?

ROBERT

I'll work on them tonight.

ELEANOR
When will you sleep?

ROBERT
I never sleep. It's a waste of
time.

A hint of a smile appears on her lips.

EXT. LITTLE ISLAND - FALMOUTH - DAY

Robert's limo is parked at the end of the road that leads
to the footpath. Norm leans against the hood.

Robert and Eleanor are seen at a distance.

ROBERT (V.O.)
This is a beautiful spot.

ELEANOR (V.O.)
It's called "Little Island."

LITTLE ISLAND - THE SHORELINE

Robert and Eleanor face the sea.

ROBERT
This would be an excellent
location for a picture.

ELEANOR
What kind?

ROBERT
One where I make fewer mistakes.
Beautiful spot.

ELEANOR
I've painted this island.

ROBERT
Paint? Are you a painter?

ELEANOR
A hobby, really.

ROBERT
I collect art. I truly appreciate
a good painting. To be able to
create an image from a blank
canvas is a gift from God.

ELEANOR
Not my paintings, Mister Morgan.

ROBERT
Please. Call me Robert.

ELEANOR
And you may call me Eleanor.

ROBERT
Eleanor... I can tell from your
voice that you are a wonderful
painter.

ELEANOR
From my voice!?

ROBERT
Yes. Don't ask how -- I just can.
Your voice is lyrical -- like
brush strokes.

She laughs.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
How many paintings have you done?

ELEANOR
Almost one hundred.

ROBERT
Impressive. Are you working on
something now?

ELEANOR
I'm going to paint Nobska Light.

ROBERT
Where's that?

ELEANOR
Out on Nobska Road. A beautiful
lighthouse.

They stroll the shoreline.

ROBERT
How long have you been painting?

ELEANOR
Since the war -- my husband was
severely wounded when his plane
crashed on a bombing raid in
nineteen-forty.

ROBERT

I'm very sorry to hear that.

ELEANOR

He lost both legs and spent the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

ROBERT

Dear God. When did he...

ELEANOR

Four years ago... but truth be told... he was gone long before that.

ROBERT

How horrible... for both of you. You were in England during the war?

ELEANOR

No. We moved here to America in thirty-two. When England went to war with Germany, he joined the RAF.

ROBERT

I see.

ELEANOR

Painting became a sort of therapy, I suppose. Even more so after he came home.

ROBERT

How long have you been at the Playhouse?

ELEANOR

Eighteen years. Before that, I was at the Cape Playhouse for seventeen years.

ROBERT

I see.

ELEANOR

What about you? Were you in the war?

ROBERT

First World War, yes. Navy, but never saw combat. I was turned down for the Second World War.

ELEANOR

They wouldn't take you?

ROBERT

They said I was too old...
although a few my age were able to
enlist. I think it was because I
had already hosted two heart
attacks.

Eleanor's hand unconsciously covers her own heart -- a
quiet, empathetic gesture.

ELEANOR

My God, I never heard that.

ROBERT

The studio kept it from the
public. Can't have a matinee hero
with a bad heart. But I went
overseas and entertained the
troops every chance I could... and
as close to the front lines as
possible. Those boys at the front
were always cheated out of the big
camp shows like Bob Hope. Those
were the kids I wanted to see.

ELEANOR

What did you do for them?

ROBERT

I just signed autographs and told
all the raucous Hollywood stories
from my past that I could
remember.

She laughs.

They reach some boulders. Eleanor sits on one as Robert
stares out to sea.

ELEANOR

What made you decide to do a
summer play... and why "Desire in
the Boudoir?"

No response.

He is lost in thought.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Robert?

ROBERT

"Desire in the Boudoir." It was the first time I was ever hired to act. It was a very big deal for me. My first professional job. A brand new play with Broadway aspirations.

ELEANOR

When was this?

ROBERT

Nineteen-twelve. So long ago.

ELEANOR

So this isn't your first time playing "Sterling Duffield?"

Trance-like, Robert watches the waves.

ROBERT

Oh, yes, it is.

ELEANOR

What role did you play before?

Robert's expression hardens. The CRASH of the WAVES fills the silence.

FOSTER (V.O.)

The butler!

FLASHBACK:

INT. SCRANTON THEATER - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

HOWIE HENDERSON (19), later to take the name of Robert Morgan, is dressed as an Edwardian butler.

Mouthing his lines in silence, he holds a small silver tray in hand.

FOSTER (O.S.)

Where's the butler!?

HOWIE

Oh! Here, Mister Foster!

RONALD FOSTER (40s), a refined bundle of nerves, rushes up to him as he waves a small piece of paper in hand.

FOSTER

Were you planning on going out there with no telegram?

HOWIE

Sorry, Mister Foster.

FOSTER

This is press night. You want to ruin everything!?

HOWIE

It's just that I'm so nervous --

FOSTER

Nervous!? You're only the butler!

HOWIE

It's my first time on stage, sir --

FOSTER

My entire reputation is on this. If anyone should be nervous around here, it's me.

HOWIE

I'm sure I'll --

FOSTER

If it dies, I die. The critics will make sure of it. One more bomb and I'm finished. No backer in the country will touch me.

HOWIE

Mister Foster --

FOSTER

If this doesn't go well, I'll be directing dinner theater in Poughkeepsie for the rest of my life.

HOWIE

Really!? Oh, my God... I don't want to let you down... but I'm next out there. What if I'm no good!?

FOSTER

No one will care. You're a bit part.

HOWIE

But you told me Stanislavski said
there are no small parts --

FOSTER

I lied. There are -- and you've
got one. Pull yourself together!

ON THE SCRANTON STAGE

The actors in the characters of Winnifred and Duarte are
in the middle of a scene.

DUARTE

I heard another voice.

WINNIFRED

Did you, dear?

DUARTE

A most suspicious voice. It
sounded like... another man.

A KNOCK on the door.

WINNIFRED

Enter!

Howie Henderson opens the door and steps into the room.
He has the "deer in the headlights" expression.

HOWIE

A telegram for you, madam.

Howie holds the silver tray chest-high.

WINNIFRED

For me?

DUARTE

No, for me.

Duarte moves to grab the message. Howie snatches it from
the tray.

WINNIFRED

Howie! I mean... Giles!

DUARTE

That is all, Giles.

Overcome with nerves, Howie assumes the dialog of Duarte
as he reads the message.

HOWIE

I should have known. This is not a telegram but a hand-written note from Sterling Duffield!

DUARTE

What did you just say!?

(whispers)

That's my line, you little fool!

(stage voice)

That is all, Giles!

Howie turns to Winnifred.

HOWIE

Do you think that after all these many months, you had me fooled?

Duarte tries to jump in and take over.

DUARTE

Do you think I did not --

HOWIE (CONT'D)

-- know about the secret garden meetings!? Did you, my dear?

Duarte is stupefied.

Howie's breathing grows rapid. His eyes dart to the footlights. He's a trapped animal.

HOWIE (CONT'D)

I knew. I knew all the time.

Winnifred is unsure whom to respond to. She faces Duarte.

HOWIE (CONT'D)

I watched from the attic window. I saw everything.

An exasperated Winnifred turns to Howie.

HOWIE (CONT'D)

Look me in the eye and tell me I did not see what I am telling you I saw.

Duarte grabs Howie by the shoulder and shakes him wildly.

DUARTE

Stop saying my lines, you dolt! Who the hell do you think you are!?

The audience LAUGHS.

As if someone snapped a finger, Howie breaks out of his trance with a look of horror on his face.

HOWIE

Oh, my God. What did I do!?

Winnifred and Duarte struggle to get into character.

WINNIFRED

Goodbye, Giles.

DUARTE

Yes. Be gone with you!

HOWIE

I just... I... oh, God...

Horrified, Howie slinks to the door, opens it, and exits.

SCRANTON THEATER - BACKSTAGE

Covered with sweat from his breakdown, he turns and sees Ronald Foster glaring at him.

FOSTER

Well, that's it then. You've just killed us both.

Overcome with anxiety, Howie rambles at the pace of a machine gun.

HOWIE

Mister Foster, I'm sorry -- I don't know what happened! I learned all the lines, not just mine -- the whole play -- so I'd never miss a cue. I thought it would help, and I figured if --

ON THE SCRANTON STAGE

Winnifred is attempting to speak with Duarte, but Howie's voice is carrying from backstage.

WINNIFRED

I can explain it all, Duarte. You see, I -- that is to say I was --

HOWIE

-- I knew everyone's cues I thought I could also help them if they lost their place, so you see I was thinking of everybody, not just myself --

WINNIFRED (CONT'D)

(shouts)

Oh, will you shut the hell up back there!?

The audience continues to LAUGH.

SCRANTON THEATER - BACKSTAGE

Ronald Foster speaks quietly.

FOSTER

You're fired. I don't even want to see you for the bows.

HOWIE

I don't know what came over me.

FOSTER

Just go.

HOWIE

I'm sorry, Mister Foster...

Dejected, he walks away.

END FLASHBACK.

Robert continues to stare out to sea.

ELEANOR

You were Howie Henderson.

ROBERT

The play closed that night and was never performed again...

ELEANOR

Until now.

ROBERT

It broke Ronald Foster. Finished him off in the theater. One year later, unable to get another show produced... he put a gun to his head and pulled the trigger.

He turns to Eleanor.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

It was all because of me.

ELEANOR

That's why you're doing this play.
You feel you owe it to him.

ROBERT

To him because he had great hopes
for "Desire in the Boudoir," which
I deprived him of... and to myself
to prove that I could do it. But
I'm a disaster now, same as I was
then. Nothing has changed.

He manages a smile.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I'm not feeling sorry for myself,
no, no. Facts are facts.

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - DAY

Lilly steps out of her car as Del makes his way down the
steps, suitcase in hand.

LILLY

Del, darling. Are you off so soon?

DEL

It's been a rough two and a half
weeks. My work is usually done on
opening night.

LILLY

We're not out of the woods yet.

DEL

I know, but I'm due back in the
city to start a new show. I hate
to go because I'm concerned about
Robert. Something seems "off."

LILLY

Something is always off with him.
In the old days, it was his pants.
Now it's his mind.

DEL

Hopefully, things will come
together.

He kisses her on the cheek.

DEL (CONT'D)

Good luck.

LILLY
We'll need more than that.

He heads for a waiting car.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - BACKSTAGE - DAY

Lilly arrives at the wardrobe room with a gown over her arm. She KNOCKS and peeks inside.

LILLY
Hello?

The room is empty.

She continues down the hallway as Reid Hall approaches from the other direction.

LILLY (CONT'D)
Reid, have you seen the wardrobe lady?

REID
No, I haven't.

He passes by as she heads for her dressing room.

INT. LILLY'S DRESSING ROOM DOOR - HALLWAY - DAY

She is about to enter when she hears Robert's muffled voice reading lines. It comes from his dressing room across the narrow hall.

ROBERT (V.O.)
It was not whole. It was not true.
I never intended to hurt her. I swear, I never intended that.

She leans closer to the door. Her brow furrows as she notices the improvement.

ELEANOR (V.O.)
But hurt her, you did, and I should hate you for it.

Lilly is stunned. Her face grows harsh.

She FLINGS the door open.

INT. ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

She discovers Robert seated at his makeup table, and Eleanor, script in hand, on a small loveseat.

ROBERT

All these years, and you still
don't know how to knock?

He turns to Eleanor.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

She always knew when I was with
another woman.

LILLY

Yes, but this is the first time
you were upright.

ELEANOR

Miss LaRue, if you think --

LILLY

The only thing I think, honey, is
that you must let out this gown
before the show tonight. Pronto.

Eleanor hands Robert his script, takes the gown, and leaves the room.

ROBERT

What's the matter, Lilly? You're
remarried. Why so rude because I
had someone in my dressing room?

LILLY

I don't care who you sleep with --

ROBERT

Lilly, dear. We were running
lines. Fully clothed.

LILLY

Why was she running lines with you
-- and why was she reading my
part!?

ROBERT

Because you were not here.

LILLY

I'm here now.

He smiles.

ROBERT
And you must admit that she's
better than you.

Lilly exits, SLAMMING the door.

INT. WARDROBE ROOM - DAY

Surrounded by racks of costumes and shelves of wigs and hats, Eleanor has the gown laid out on a table as she removes stitches.

Lilly enters, controlling her temper.

LILLY
I forgot to tell you. Let out one
inch from the waist.

ELEANOR
Two inches.

LILLY
Two!?

ELEANOR
I saw last night's performance.
Two should do it.

LILLY
I have not gained two inch --
did it look bad?

ELEANOR
Not at all. The dress simply
seemed... surprised.

Eleanor glances at her "matter-of-factly."

FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE

The evening performance is underway.

Robert ENTERS to find Lilly seated on a stone bench in a garden setting under soft blue and amber lights.

He is transformed and at the top of his game.

Aided by this, Lilly's performance matches his.

ROBERT
Winnifred. I had a feeling that I
would find you here.
(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

That was quite a display you put
on in front of the others.

LILLY

You call my broken emotions a
"display?" We've done wrong,
Sterling. God, help us, we've done
wrong. I can never forgive myself
for what I've done to my own
daughter... allowing her to
believe that you loved her.

ROBERT

I did love her... but when I met
you, I realized the love I had for
her was not complete. It was not
whole. It was not true. I never
intended to hurt her. I swear, I
never intended that.

INT. THE WING - STAGE RIGHT - NIGHT

Eleanor watches, transfixed.

LILLY (O.S.)

But hurt her you did, and I should
hate you for it. But I am just as
much to blame for I never tried to
stop you.

She mouths the lines as Lilly speaks them.

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

Here, in this garden... all those
secret rendezvous... I can never
forgive myself.

INT. ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Robert removes his toupee and reaches for a jar of cold
cream when he GAGS. His hand grabs a tissue and barely
gets it to his mouth when he has a violent COUGH.

The tissue has a large spot of blood on it.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

Eleanor's muffled voice on the other side of the door.

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Are you decent?

He tears several tissues from the box.

ROBERT

Just a min-

He COUGHS again. More blood. He waits. Nothing.

He crumples the bloody tissues into his fist as the door opens. A forced, casual smile.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Yes?

The door opens, and Eleanor enters.

She takes his costumes off the rack.

ELEANOR

You were magnificent tonight.

Robert turns to her. He doesn't need to speak. His eyes show his relief and gratitude.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Truly. What you did out there
was... pure brilliance. There's no
other word for it.

She kisses his forehead, gathers the costumes on her arm, and exits, closing the door behind her.

He opens his hand to see the blood-soaked tissues.

EXT. NOBSKA LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

The majestic lighthouse sits on a hill near the ocean, surrounded by a white split-rail fence. Next to it is the wooden shingle-covered Lightkeeper's house.

Within the rail fence, in the middle of the yard, Eleanor sits at her easel.

She traces pencil outlines onto the canvas.

ROBERT (O.S.)

Hello!

Eleanor looks in the direction of the voice and is astonished to see Robert as he leans over the rail on the lighthouse catwalk.

They SHOUT at each other.

ELEANOR

My God! What are you doing up there!?

ROBERT

I thought I could be in your painting!

ELEANOR

Get down from there before you fall!

ROBERT

I'll have you know that in "Horatio of England," I climbed to the topmast of a forty-four gun square-rigged warship!

ELEANOR

That was a movie -- and it was over thirty years ago!

ROBERT

Ah! You saw it!

ELEANOR

Robert! Please get inside!

ROBERT

I rather like it up here!

He shades his eyes from the sun and leans further over.

ELEANOR

Oh, my God!

ROBERT

I think I can see the theater from here... or is that a garage? I really can't tell!

Eleanor SLAMS her pencil onto her wooden table.

NOBSKA LIGHTHOUSE - LANTERN ROOM

The CLOMPING of footsteps on metal stairs. Eleanor emerges from the spiral staircase and, huffing and puffing makes her way around the huge lamp.

Through the open door, she sees Robert on the catwalk. Next to him is a silver Champagne chiller stand. The bottle is in the ice-filled bucket.

He holds up two Champagne glasses in his hand.

ROBERT
Care to join me?

She steps through the door and onto the catwalk.

ELEANOR
Are you out of your bloody mind?

NOBSKA LIGHTHOUSE - CATWALK

She clings to the wall and stays clear of the rail.

ELEANOR
I don't like heights.

ROBERT
Heights are the same as being on
land. There's just a little more
space in-between.

ELEANOR
That's a stretch.

He hands her a glass.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Isn't it a bit early?

ROBERT
I thought you might be concerned
with the hour. I have orange juice
as well.

He pulls a small bottle of orange juice from the bucket.

Eleanor gives up with a laugh.

ELEANOR
You have an answer for everything,
don't you?

Robert hands her the bottle of juice.

ROBERT
Of course...

He pours Champagne into her glass.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
And once in a while, the answer
might actually be the truth.

She tops it off with a splash of orange juice.

ELEANOR
How did you get up here?

ROBERT
The Lighthouse Keeper is a fan.

He pours Champagne into his glass.

ELEANOR
I suppose fame does have its advantages.

ROBERT
No, no. He's a fan of money.

Eleanor has a quiet chuckle.

Robert stares off toward the distant town.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
This is a beautiful place... this Falmouth.

ELEANOR
How does it compare with Beverly Hills?

ROBERT
It doesn't. In Beverly Hills, you have astounding mansions filled with superficial people. This place is another world... filled with streets right out of a Rockwell.

He turns to her.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
And lovely people.

He toasts her glass.

ELEANOR
You, sir, are a charmer.

ROBERT
No, not really. I'm rather new at this.

ELEANOR
New at what?

ROBERT

Being nice to someone.

ELEANOR

I find that hard to believe.

ROBERT

People usually act like they love me... like they care... but none really do. They love the movie star.

ELEANOR

I see.

ROBERT

You're different. You don't give a damn about celebrity. You may not believe this, but you're the first real... and honest person I've ever met since fame knocked on my door.

They stroll the catwalk.

ELEANOR

Lilly appears to be honest with you.

ROBERT

That didn't start until she filed for divorce... and she's been brutally honest ever since.

ELEANOR

Why the Champagne?

ROBERT

Because you opened my eyes. Last night's performance was far better than the first night at Ivoryton. You brought that out.

ELEANOR

I just read lines with you.

ROBERT

No. You lived them. There's a difference. I found emotion inside me that had been dead for years. I wish I had known you long before.

ELEANOR

When you were at the top, you never would have spoken to a seamstress.

He thinks a moment.

ROBERT

You're probably right... and I can't help but think I'd be a better man today if I had.

She stops and faces him.

ELEANOR

There's nothing wrong with you, Robert.

ROBERT

Oh, there is. I'm just an illusion covering up someone who once existed.

ELEANOR

Howie Henderson?

ROBERT

He's steering this ship of a façade... but all the lifeboats are gone.

ELEANOR

Are they?

Their eyes meet.

EXT. NOBSKA LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

Eleanor works on her painting -- the sketch is complete. While the sky is bright and clear, she paints it as dark and ominous on her canvas.

Robert sits on a blanket on the grass - Champagne bucket next to him and glass in hand.

ROBERT

Do you sell any of your paintings?

ELEANOR

I do. In fact, I have a show that starts Sunday at the Falmouth Artists Gallery.

ROBERT

You don't say?

ELEANOR

It runs for a month, but the opening party is this Sunday... wine and cheese. Could you come?

A pause.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

We don't have any performances Sunday.

ROBERT

I know. I don't think I can.

Eleanor hides her disappointment.

ELEANOR

That's all right. Art shows are not everyone's cup of tea.

ROBERT

It's not that. It's just...

ELEANOR

You don't owe me an explanation.

ROBERT

Will this new painting be ready for your opening?

As she paints the dark sky, her tone seems to match.

ELEANOR

I think so. One more sitting should do it. My husband painted.

ROBERT

Did he?

ELEANOR

He was quite amazing. His work was lifelike... as good as a photograph, some would say. I'm not half as talented.

ROBERT

Different styles don't mean one is better than the other. It just means they're different. That's all.

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - NIGHT

The audience filters in through the front doors.

INT. ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

A REPORTER (30s), notepad in hand, sits across from Robert and Lilly on the loveseat.

Lilly is in costume for Act One, a silk gown laden with a diamond necklace and matching bracelet, and Robert wears a robe, under which his white bow tie and evening shirt are seen.

REPORTER

This play is the talk of the summer season here on the Cape.

LILLY

Is it?

REPORTER

Indeed it is. Morgan and LaRue, together again, is big news.

LILLY

Just for the play, darling. I am happily married to a doctor of medicine and have been for several years.

ROBERT

And I am happily unmarried.

REPORTER

One of your most popular pictures together was "Felicity Swoons" for RKO. It's now regarded as a classic.

LILLY

Yes.

REPORTER

The director of that movie coined the moniker, "Hollywood's most joyous couple."

ROBERT

Is there a question?

REPORTER

Yes, sir! Does it surprise you that it has stuck with you, even years after your divorce?

ROBERT

I wasn't aware of that. I usually get rid of anything that is stuck to me. Isn't that right, Lilly?

LILLY

Film is timeless. Audiences see our old pictures today and forget how much water has passed under the bridge.

ROBERT

Enough to drown in.

REPORTER

Is there a chance we may see you reunited on the big screen?

LILLY

That will depend on the script.

Robert doesn't respond. His brow furrows, and he seems ill at ease.

Lilly senses something is wrong.

A rap on the door -- KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

REID (O.S.)

Fifteen minutes, Mister Morgan.

LILLY

I'm afraid we must get ready. It's been lovely chatting.

REPORTER

Thank you very much for the interview. It will be in tomorrow's edition.

Lilly stands and helps the reporter to the door.

LILLY

How nice.

REPORTER

I'm looking forward to tonight's performance. Break a leg!

She opens the door for him.

LILLY
Thank you. Goodbye, darling.

He exits. Lilly closes the door.

LILLY (CONT'D)
Are you all right?

Robert nods, "Yes."

LILLY (CONT'D)
You don't look good.

ROBERT
I'm fine, Lilly. I'll see you on stage.

She remains unsure as she pauses at the door and watches him. Robert stifles a gag and waves her off as he grabs a wad of tissues with his other hand.

She exits.

The moment the door closes, Robert has a coughing fit that he can't stop.

ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - BATHROOM

He throws the bloody tissues into the toilet and FLUSHES the evidence away.

As he washes the blood from his shaking hands and his mouth, he stares into the mirror -- an expressionless reflection glares back at him.

ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - MAKEUP TABLE

His hands still shaking, he picks up the phone and dials.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

REID (O.S.)
Five minutes, Mister Morgan.

ROBERT
Right.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Operator. How may I assist you?

ROBERT

I need Long Distance, please. Los Angeles.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Thank you, one moment, please.

As he waits, he lights a cigarette.

LONG DISTANCE (V.O.)

Long Distance, how may I direct your call?

ROBERT

I would like Hollywood, 1125.
Mister George Sanders.

LONG DISTANCE (V.O.)

One moment please, while I connect your call.

CLICK.

BEEEEEP... BEEEEEP...

Robert takes more tissues and stuffs them into the pocket of his robe.

GEORGE (V.O.)

Hello?

ROBERT

George!? Bob here.

GEORGE (V.O.)

Yes, Bob. How are you?

ROBERT

Listen, George... I think I'm going to need you out here sooner than we thought.

GEORGE (V.O.)

You need me now?

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

REID (O.S.)

Places, Mister Morgan! Places for curtain!

EXT. A SMALL CAPE HOUSE - DAY

Norm sits behind the wheel of Robert's limo parked in front of the small, unassuming home.

A sign hangs from a timber frame in the front yard: DR. HENRY WOLFE, MD.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Robert buttons his shirt as he stands next to the examination table.

DR. WOLFE (40s), dressed in a white lab coat, fills out a paper at his desk.

DOCTOR

I need to run a few tests, but the results will most likely be what you already know.

ROBERT

Two physicians in Los Angeles and one in New York seem to concur that my doing this play was not the best of ideas.

The doctor turns to Robert.

DOCTOR

How long did they give you?

ROBERT

Weeks. Weeks ago.

The doctor is concerned and silent.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

The blood bit is new. That means I'm getting closer, doesn't it?

DOCTOR

Yes.

ROBERT

So far, I've been relatively all right.

DOCTOR

Yes. But things will turn on a dime very quickly. How bad is the pain?

ROBERT

Not too bad. They gave me little blue pills.

DOCTOR

Morphine pills.

The doctor goes to his medicine cabinet.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

A time will come when the pills won't help you.

ROBERT

Well... can't be any worse than the reviews I got at Ivoryton.

He takes out a small glass bottle with a dropper.

DOCTOR

When the pills no longer help, take this. Liquid morphine. Just one little drop under your tongue. No more.

The doctor pauses.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I've seen all your movies, sir. I've enjoyed them for many years.

ROBERT

Thank you.

DOCTOR

I'm very sad we had to meet under these circumstances.

ROBERT

Well... won't be the first time I closed out of town.

He heads for the door.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

But it'll be the last.

INT. THE LIMO - DAY

In the back seat, Robert stares out the window as the outside passes in a blur.

EXT. FALMOUTH ARTISTS GALLERY - NIGHT

A classic Colonial on Main Street. Light pours out from the many glass bay windows. A sign outside reads: ELEANOR ADAMS - LANDSCAPES IN FALMOUTH June 25-July 30

INT. FALMOUTH ARTISTS GALLERY - NIGHT

Eleanor's paintings hang from the walls. They all have dark skies, no flowers in bloom, and choppy seas.

The room is filled with patrons, many holding wine glasses. Small groups engaged in conversation, others studying the landscapes.

Eleanor is transformed from her usual drab work clothes into a beautiful evening dress, diamond earrings, and perfectly coiffed hair.

She converses with several people when she notices an older mustachioed man with a beard, hat, bolo tie, and cane viewing the Nobska Lighthouse painting. Robert in an expert disguise.

She turns to a lady next to her.

ELEANOR
Excuse me, won't you?

She crosses the room and approaches Robert.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Good evening.

He keeps his eyes on the painting.

ROBERT
Hmmm.

ELEANOR
This is the newest. Finished it yesterday.

He speaks in a quiet, weak southern accent.

ROBERT
My, my... and on the wall already.
Imagine that. Paint's hardly dry.

He sidesteps to the next painting. He squints his eyes and moves in for a closer look.

ELEANOR
Is something wrong?

ROBERT
All these paintings have an aura
of... melancholy about them.
Gloomy skies, sad ocean... No
flowers. Not much happiness.

ELEANOR
I paint them as I see them.

ROBERT
Oh. Pardon me. Are you the artist?

ELEANOR
Yes, I am.

ROBERT
I wasn't criticizing, mind you.
Just making an observation.

ELEANOR
I understand.

ROBERT
Do you see the world like this?

ELEANOR
Most of the time.

He moves on to the next painting of an empty ballroom
decorated for a dance with streamers and table
refreshments... but no people. The orchestra stands are
on the stage... no musicians behind them.

ROBERT
Now take this painting. Why is
this grand room empty?

ELEANOR
It's a dance, and it's actually
full of people and an orchestra on
the stage.

ROBERT
I don't see any people.

ELEANOR
Because you're seeing it the way I
see it. Before the war, my late
husband and I would attend all the
dances here in town.

(MORE)

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

After the war, I didn't go to any
for many years. When I finally did
to help with the refreshments...
this is how it appeared to me. It
was as if I were alone in that
room.

Robert stares at the painting a long while.

ROBERT

That's very sad.

She smiles.

ELEANOR

Any more questions, Robert?

He whispers.

ROBERT

You know it's me!?

ELEANOR

I wasn't sure at first. You're
very subtle. I'm glad you came.

ROBERT

I wouldn't miss it.

ELEANOR

But why the disguise?

ROBERT

Because tonight is your night. Who
needs Robert Morgan signing
autographs and stealing the
limelight?

This touches her.

ELEANOR

Your secret is safe with me. A
glass of wine?

He resumes his character.

ROBERT

Why, I'd be delighted, madam.
Delighted.

EXT. NOBSKA LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

The bright beam from the light scans the ocean with sweeping precision.

Robert and Eleanor walk toward the light. The limo parked in the distance.

ELEANOR
I can't believe I sold four
paintings tonight. Four!

ROBERT
How many did you expect to sell?

ELEANOR
Honestly? None.

ROBERT
None!?

ELEANOR
I expected a lot of "I'll think it
over's."

ROBERT
I see.

ELEANOR
You didn't have to buy "Nobska
Light," Robert.

ROBERT
But I wanted to. I was there when
it was created.

ELEANOR
You'll be out of town when the
exhibit is over. I'll hold it for
you until September.

They continue their stroll.

ROBERT
About your paintings... the
loveliness, caring... the bright
rays of sunshine and the warm glow
of summer that I see in you every
day. You need to put that on
canvas.

ELEANOR

Everyone carries a dark, hidden pain inside. I put mine into my work.

ROBERT

But only a few have the gift to rise above those feelings and transform them into what should be... not what is.

ELEANOR

But that would be a lie.

ROBERT

Don't confuse a lie with hope. Hope is very important. You've been through a lot... but your husband's at peace now.

ELEANOR

Don't tell me it's time to move on. I've heard that before.

ROBERT

I would never tell you to move on. My point is that you have so much more to offer... probably more than you know.

ELEANOR

Are you a philosopher?

ROBERT

I played Voltaire in "Enlightenment on the Seine," in Technicolor and Cinemascope.

ELEANOR

I didn't see that one.

ROBERT

You didn't miss much. But tonight? I wouldn't have missed tonight for the world.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

The living room set. Robert and Lilly are opposite Chauncey and Alice. Alice's back is turned as she sits on a chair and sobs.

CHAUNCEY

Are you sure this is how you want
it, Winnifred?

LILLY

Yes, Duarte.

CHAUNCEY

And you, Sterling. I treated you
like a son.

ROBERT

Did you... or was it my family's
money that caused your over-
zealous paternal involvement as
you encouraged my romance with
Peony?

CHAUNCEY

Money, sir? Money had nothing to
do with it!

ROBERT

Oh?

He calls out.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Giles! Giles -- here, please!

The doorknob RATTLES twice and opens as Jamie enters.

Robert freezes at the site of Jamie, standing at
attention, arms at his side.

A long silence.

Nervous, Jamie turns his head to Robert, who remains
motionless. Lilly shows concern.

Robert continues to stare at Jamie.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. SCRANTON THEATER - NIGHT

In an ill-fitting butler's costume, Ronald Foster stands
in the living room set, script in hand.

Sporadic laughs emanate from the audience.

The actors in Falmouth have been replaced by the actors
of the original production.

Peony stops sobbing as she turns in amazement to see Ronald with the script in his hand.

Sterling is dumbfounded and breaks character.

STERLING
What the hell? I mean - What
the... hell took you... so long,
Giles?

Foster stares down at his script.

FOSTER
My love, I thought - damn!

He quickly turns several pages.

LAUGHTER from the audience.

The actors onstage are quite uncomfortable.

FOSTER (CONT'D)
Sir. You called?

STERLING
Indeed I did. Tell me again what
you overheard the master saying to
young Peony the other day.

REAR OF THE THEATER AUDITORIUM

In his coat and bowler, Howie Henderson watches from behind the last row. His eyes are watery and red.

FOSTER (O.S.)
I heard the master say that Peony
was to marry you and then murder
you in your sleep.

STERLING (O.S.)
To what end?

FOSTER (O.S.)
To inherit your share of the
Duffield wealth, including your
one hundred-room summer cottage in
Sussex.

The audience LAUGHS.

Howie stares at the stage in silence.

ON THE SCRANTON STAGE

A mortified Foster scans the faces of the other actors on stage and then SCREAMS at the audience.

FOSTER

Shut up! Just... just shut up! Go to hell! The lot of you!

BACK OF THE THEATER

Tears flow from young Howie's eyes as the ROAR of audience LAUGHTER swells up around him.

END FLASHBACK.**INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT**

Trance-like, Robert stares at Jamie.

Nervous fidgets from the cast.

JAMIE

...You called, sir?

Robert speaks with great calm.

ROBERT

Indeed I did. Tell me again what you overheard the master saying to young Peony the other day.

JAMIE

I heard the master say that Peony was to marry you and then murder you in your sleep.

ROBERT

To what end?

JAMIE

To inherit your share of the Duffield wealth, including your one hundred-room summer cottage in Sussex.

Alice leaps from her chair.

ALICE

I wouldn't have! I would never have done such a thing!

ROBERT

The point is not whether you would
or would not have.

Robert turns to Lilly.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

The facts are clear. You are
married to a cad.

CHAUNCEY

No! No! Winnifred! It's not true!
This is an outrageous falsehood!

LILLY

In light of the fact that my side
of the family holds all the wealth
you have been enjoying since our
union, I would tend to believe
dear Giles.

ROBERT

This begs the question, why did he
need my millions, if he had yours?

Lilly turns and takes several dramatic paces.

LILLY

Dare I think it...

She spins on her heels.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Duarte... were you planning on...
divorcing me?

CHAUNCEY

Yes! Yes! I was!

THE AUDIENCE

On the edge of their seats, caught up in the story.

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

I saw the romance between you and
this scallywag who is more of a
boy than a man. You were going to
leave me --

BACK TO SCENE

Lilly turns her back on Chauncey.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)
-- and then where would I be?

ALICE
I didn't want to do it. He put me
up to it.

LILLY
How much did he promise you in
return?

ALICE
A mere hundred thousand pounds.
But Mumsy -- it meant nothing to
me.

ROBERT
Quite a family you have here,
Winnifred.

Lilly turns to face them with tears in her eyes.

LILLY
They are not... who I thought they
were.

CHAUNCEY
Winnifred -- we can start over.

LILLY
The deed is done. It's over
between us.

CHAUNCEY
You can't divorce me! What shall I
do?

LILLY
I do not know... and I do not
care.

Chauncey's anger builds into full-fledged ham.

CHAUNCEY
Very well! You leave me no choice!

Chauncey pulls a pistol from a pocket in his tuxedo.

The cast GASPS!

THE AUDIENCE

GASPS!

BACK TO SCENE

Robert gallantly stands in front of Lilly, arms outstretched to protect her.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)
I didn't want it to end this way,
Winnifred. I didn't. I am sorry!

Chauncey shoves Jamie out of the way as he storms for the door like a deranged man.

He exits and SLAMS the door behind him as Lilly rushes after him.

LILLY
No, Duarte! No!

Robert grabs her arm and prevents her from following.

A shot rings out -- BANG!

Silence.

No one moves.

No one speaks.

Robert is transfixed. His eyes well up. The gunshot echoes over and over in his mind.

INT. SANITARIUM - NEW YORK CITY - PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

An ORDERLY helps the Nurse hang the last of the three new theatrical posters:

- Harriet Masse in One Night In Paradise. Directed by Ronald Foster

- Rex Moore in Vagabond Lover. Directed by Ronald Foster.

- Lake Life. A Summer Musical. Directed by Ronald Foster.

The OLD MAN remains in his wheelchair and faces the window. The dead flower has been replaced.

NURSE
There we are.

She turns the wheelchair to face the posters. The other side of the Old Man's head is seen -- horribly disfigured from a bullet wound years ago.

His unresponsive eyes stare at the posters.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Robert Morgan thought you would
enjoy these, Mister Foster.

The Old Man shows no emotion.

NURSE (CONT'D)
I hope you do.

ORDERLY
Wait... is this man the same
Foster who's on those posters?

NURSE
Yes.

ORDERLY
Morgan? Robert Morgan the movie
star?

NURSE
One and the same.

ORDERLY
He knows this man?

NURSE
He's been paying for Mister
Foster's care for decades.

The Old Man's gaze has not moved from the posters.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

Robert remains stoic as the final, ghostly PISTOL SHOT
rings in his mind.

He snaps out of the memory and composes himself into
character as Alice collapses on the floor in tears.

Lilly turns to Robert.

ROBERT
Winnifred?

LILLY
Sterling...

She melts into his arms.

ROBERT
It's over now. It's over.

They kiss.

The curtain falls to wild applause.

The curtain rises as Chauncey, Alice, and Jamie enter and bow to the audience.

Lilly enters and courtesies -- the APPLAUSE grows louder.

Robert steps onto the stage to CHEERS and APPLAUSE.

He bows.

Robert takes Lilly's hand and steps forward to the footlights. They bow, and step back for a final bow with the company.

The curtain falls.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - BACKSTAGE

Lilly and Robert are the last to step off the stage.

LILLY
You froze out there. What happened?

ROBERT
Just experimenting with the art of the dramatic pause. I may have overindulged.

LILLY
I think you can trim five seconds off it. Or more.

ROBERT
You're right. I will.

Lilly walks away as Robert spots Jamie and Alice stealing a quick kiss.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Jamie!?

JAMIE
Yes, Mister Morgan?

Robert approaches Jamie.

ROBERT

Might I have a word with you,
Jamie?

JAMIE

Is it about the entrance? I know I
was late. It was the doorknob...

ROBERT

Your entrance was fine. Would you
excuse us, Alice?

Alice smiles as Robert puts his arm around Jamie's
shoulder and leads him toward the dressing room.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

This needs to stay between us. I
may need your help... if things
take a turn.

JAMIE

Of course, sir.

INT. WARDROBE ROOM - NIGHT

Lilly pops her head in the door to see Eleanor sewing a
button on a shirt.

LILLY

Darling, I would like my silk gown
from Act Two cleaned between this
Wednesday's matinee and evening
performances, if you could.

ELEANOR

I'm afraid I can't.

Lilly steps into the room.

LILLY

I beg your pardon?

ELEANOR

I said I'm afraid I can't.

LILLY

It was not a suggestion.

ELEANOR

And my answer is not up for
debate.

LILLY

Who do you think you are, talking to me like this?

ELEANOR

Oh, stuff it.

She continues to sew.

LILLY

Just who the hell do you think you are?

ELEANOR

I know exactly who I am. If you don't know after an entire week here, I would say you were not paying attention.

LILLY

I don't believe what I'm hearing!

ELEANOR

Miss LaRue, there is simply not enough time to get your silk gown cleaned after the matinee.

LILLY

I am sure you will find a way.

ELEANOR

Well, one way would be to refrain from spilling everything on it during the dinner scene.

LILLY

Just who the hell do you --

ELEANOR

Honestly, you gulp and slurp as if you hadn't eaten in days.

LILLY

What!?

ELEANOR

I've heard less noise at a trough.

LILLY

OH!

ELEANOR

Oh, come now. I could hear you
loud and clear in here over the
monitor speaker.

LILLY

How dare you. I will not be spoken
to in this manner by a... a...
seamstress!

Lilly barrels out of the room.

With a smile, Eleanor calmly returns to her sewing.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Reid Hall is at the Stage Manager's podium, writing as
Lilly storms up to him in a rage.

LILLY

You! Stage manager!

REID

Miss LaRue.

LILLY

I want her fired.

REID

Who?

LILLY

That woman.

REID

What woman?

Lilly is in full meltdown.

LILLY

The woman in the costume room, who
the hell else!?

REID

Eleanor? That's impossible.

LILLY

No one says "impossible" to me!

REID

There's no way I can do that.

LILLY

Why!?

REID

Because you're a legend who's just passing through. Eleanor Adams is a permanent legend at the Playhouse. The owner would never allow it.

Lilly boils and charges down the hall.

LILLY

God! Do I hate stock!

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The lot is almost empty as the final few cars file out toward the street.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Robert has changed into a suit and faces the mirror.

He opens a small box and removes two blue pills.

He winces in pain and takes a third pill.

Several light KNOCKS on the door.

ROBERT

Come in.

Eleanor enters with a slight hint of annoyance.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

You have that "I just had words with Lilly" look on your face.

ELEANOR

How can you tell?

ROBERT

That expression was part of my repertoire for years.

ELEANOR

You have no idea what I just went through --

ROBERT
Trust me, I do. Now, get your
coat. We're going out.

ELEANOR
Out? It's eleven-fifteen -- it's
too late.

With a burst of vigor, Robert jumps from his chair and
grabs his hat.

ROBERT
Nonsense. It's only eight-fifteen
in Los Angeles.

He ushers a confused Eleanor out the door as if rushing
to meet a deadline.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
The night is young!

ELEANOR
Robert, I don't think --

ROBERT
Your carriage awaits. Move along!

INT. THE LIMO - NIGHT

As Norm drives along a dark road, Robert hands Eleanor a
box, wrapped with a ribbon.

ELEANOR
What's this?

ROBERT
You'll see.

She opens the box to discover a corsage.

Eleanor is flustered.

ELEANOR
It's beautiful.

ROBERT
Ah! So you do see it!

ELEANOR
Of course, I do.

ROBERT

You told me that flowers in your
paintings are never in bloom
because you can't see them.

Eleanor smells the corsage and turns to Robert.

He takes the corsage and pins it to her blouse.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

All right, then. We now have
living proof that you see flowers.
If you choose to.

ELEANOR

It's lovely.

ROBERT

I expect to see it in your next
painting... whether there are
flowers at the scene or not.

She laughs.

ELEANOR

What if it's a big sand dune?

ROBERT

Then there should be a huge
sunflower popping out of it.

More laughter.

ELEANOR

Very well.

She glances out the window.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Do you mind telling me where we're
going?

ROBERT

A little place I found.

ELEANOR

I know for a fact there's nothing
open on a Monday evening at this
hour in Falmouth.

ROBERT

Did it ever occur to you that
perhaps you don't know where to
look?

ELEANOR

What's that supposed to mean?

Robert "zips" his lips with his fingers.

EXT. A ROAD IN FALMOUTH - NIGHT

The limo turns off a main road and enters a driveway.

EXT. FALMOUTH GRANGE HALL - NIGHT

The limo pulls up to the Grange Hall - a large barn-like structure with many windows.

Lights are on inside, but no cars anywhere.

A Big Band orchestra plays MUSIC inside.

Norm exits the limo, opens the rear door, and takes Eleanor's hand as she exits.

She stares at the hall as Robert joins her.

ELEANOR

Why are the lights on inside? This doesn't make any sense.

ROBERT

It is peculiar, isn't it?

He leads her to the front doors.

INT. GRANGE HALL - NIGHT

Robert and Eleanor enter a large ballroom. At the far end is a Big Band orchestra playing a slow dance number.

The CONDUCTOR bows to them.

Speechless, Eleanor takes in the room. She sees a table covered with punch bowls, cakes, and cookies.

Streamers draped along the walls and the ceiling add the final festive touch.

Chairs line the walls.

There are no other people.

Tears fill her eyes.

Robert leads her onto the floor, puts his arm around her waist, gently pulls her close... and they dance.

ELEANOR
I can't believe this.

ROBERT
Looks a bit like that painting of yours... when the hall was crowded but you didn't see anything.

ELEANOR
It does.

ROBERT
Even in empty rooms, there's life. I believe there are spirits all around us... dancing with us here... from other times, from other memories. That's all spirits are, you know.

ELEANOR
Memories?

ROBERT
Indeed. We're never alone, dearest Ellie. We're never really alone.

ELEANOR
You're telling me to embrace my memories... to see them for the joy they once were.

ROBERT
I just wanted to dance with my arms around you. Take from it what you will.

She smiles at him and rests her head on his shoulder as they continue to dance.

EXT. GRANGE HALL - NIGHT

Norm stands by the limo, the cool night air brushing against his face. Through the window, he watches Robert and Eleanor glide across the empty dance floor. He smiles—a witness to a fleeting moment of magic.

EXT. LITTLE ISLAND - FALMOUTH - SUNRISE

Eleanor and Robert stroll along the craggy shore as the sun rises over the ocean.

ELEANOR
I don't think I have ever danced
in such a crowded ballroom.

ROBERT
Ah! The happy memories were
allowed in again?

ELEANOR
Happy memories. And new ones.
Thank you for that.

ROBERT
You can thank me by promising you
will put it on canvas the next
time you pick up a brush to
capture a moment.

ELEANOR
Sunflowers in the dunes.

ROBERT
That'll work.

He COUGHS, winces, and swallows.

A moment to compose himself.

ELEANOR
You should see about that cough.

ROBERT
It's this brisk early morning air.
How can it be chilly the last week
in June?

ELEANOR
You know what they say about New
England. "If you don't like the
weather, wait ten minutes."

They continue along the shoreline.

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - PARKING LOT - SUNSET

Robert's limo pulls into the parking lot and makes its way to the rear of the theater.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - STAGE DOOR - SUNSET

The Stage Doorman, ED (70s), perched on a tall stool, pipe in mouth and a fedora as old as he is, watches as CHAUNCEY signs his name in a book on a tall table stand.

Ed's eyes return to the small black and white portable television. On the screen is the fuzzy image of a young Robert Morgan and Lilly LaRue, in tux and evening gown, involved in a high society confrontation.

ROBERT (ON TELEVISION)

I hurl you back into the dark
abyss you slithered out from --
you Socialite Queen who reigns
over every snob who ever wore a
satin chemise evening gown! You
shrew-beast in heels!

Robert enters the stage door and signs the book.

LILLY (ON TELEVISION)

Ah ha! You think it will be as
easy as that? Do it. Divorce me.
Might I remind you my father is a
judge in this town?

Ed turns the volume off.

ED

Channel five is playing all your
pictures with Miss LaRue this week
on "Million Dollar Movie!"

ROBERT

They are misinformed. That picture
only cost three hundred thousand.

He heads down the hall.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Made a mint at the box office,
though.

INT. OUTSIDE ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - SUNSET

Robert opens the door to the room as Reid appears behind him, note in hand.

He hands him the note.

REID

Mister Morgan, your agent called
and asked you to phone him right
away. Say's it's urgent.

ROBERT

Thank you, Reid.

Robert enters his dressing room.

INT. ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - SUNSET

Robert closes the door behind him, crinkles the note and
tosses it away.

He pauses to balance himself.

Reaching into his pocket, he opens a small pillbox, and
pops a blue pill into his mouth.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

JAMIE (O.S.)

Mister Morgan?

Robert opens the door.

ROBERT

Ah, Jamie. Come in.

Jamie enters, wide-eyed and nervous.

JAMIE

Is this for real, Mister Morgan?

ROBERT

As real as the world is round,
Jamie Warren. You've told no one?

JAMIE

Not even Alice.

Alice appears at the door.

ALICE

"Not even Alice" what? Good
evening, Mister Morgan.

ROBERT

Alice. I have asked a favor of
Mister Warren.

ALICE

Oh.

JAMIE

Alice, I have to get going. I'll see you onstage!

Jamie hurries off as a puzzled Alice watches.

ALICE

What was all that about?

ROBERT

I gave him some acting tips.

THE AUDIENCE

Another full house abuzz with expectation.

INT. THE WING - STAGE LEFT - NIGHT

Lilly arrives in costume for the first act. Chauncey waits behind her.

She sees the wing across the stage. No one is there.

LILLY

Where's Robert? Doesn't he know they called places!?

Reid Hall squeezes past Chauncey and whispers in her ear.

LILLY (CONT'D)

What the hell!? Why!?

She turns to see Jamie Warren, in costume for Sterling, arrive in the opposite wing.

INT. STAGE RIGHT WING - STAGE MANAGER'S PODIUM - NIGHT

Reid arrives at the podium, white as a ghost. His hands shake as he grabs the microphone and flicks a switch.

REID

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen, and welcome to the Falmouth Playhouse.

INT. WARDROBE ROOM - NIGHT

Eleanor sews a button onto a shirt as Reid's voice booms over the speaker.

REID (V.O.)
Due to unforeseen circumstances,
Robert Morgan will not be seen in
the role of Sterling Duffield in
tonight's performance.

A stunned Eleanor drops her sewing.

THE AUDIENCE

Confused murmurs ripple through the house.

REID (V.O.)
The role of Sterling Duffield will
be played this evening by Jamie
Warren. The role of the butler
will be played by Howie Henderson.

The audience continues to mutter and groan.

INT. THE WING - STAGE LEFT - NIGHT

Lilly is mildly panicked and confused.

LILLY
Howie Henderson? Who the hell is
Howie Henderson? I've never even
met him!

INT. WARDROBE ROOM - NIGHT

Eleanor leans back in her chair. Her expression of shock changes into an expression of knowing.

INT. ALICE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Alice applies her makeup as she hums a tune, oblivious to the world

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

The play is underway in the Living Room set.

CHAUNCEY

I am sorry, my darling. You have forgotten that we invited that young scallywag, Sterling Duffield, to accompany us this evening.

Lilly perks up.

LILLY

Oh!? Oh, I did forget. I shall force myself to go. Duarte, perhaps you could secure a cab for us.

CHAUNCEY

Certainly, my dear.

He exits.

LILLY

Sterling... oh, Sterling...

Jamie enters, to no applause.

JAMIE

Winnifred, my darling.

He looks around.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I have always loved this home.
Your little place in the country.

INT. OUTSIDE ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Eleanor KNOCKS on the door.

ELEANOR

Robert? Robert, are you in there?
Hello?

INT. ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Robert is in front of the makeup mirror. A blood-soaked handkerchief on the table. His hand trembles, and the morphine bottle slips -- just slightly -- before he catches it.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

ELEANOR (O.S.)
Robert? Are you there? Is
everything all right?

He doesn't respond.

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - PARKING LOT

Muffled APPLAUSE and LAUGHTER, mixed with a symphony of
CRICKETS fill the night air.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

The play continues with Lilly and Chauncey.

CHAUNCEY
I heard another voice.

LILLY
Did you, dear?

INT. THE WING - STAGE RIGHT - NIGHT

Eleanor steps up next to the curtain and watches.

CHAUNCEY (V.O.)
A most suspicious voice. It
sounded like... another man.

A KNOCK on the door.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

Lilly turns toward the door.

LILLY
Enter!

Robert, as the butler, opens the door and steps into the
room. Dressed as the butler, he also plays his own age.

The audience bursts into APPLAUSE and CHEERS!

Lilly and Chauncey are thrown off their game as they are
taken by surprise.

ROBERT
A telegram for you, madam.

He hands her the message on a small silver tray.

Lilly is catatonic.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
For you, madam. A telegram.

Lilly snaps out of her daze.

LILLY
For me?

Chauncey steps forward.

CHAUNCEY
No, for me!

He grabs the message.

LILLY
Chauncey! Duarte!

The audience GASPS.

CHAUNCEY
That is all... ah, Giles.

ROBERT
Sir.

Robert exits and closes the door behind him.

INT. BEHIND THE SET - NIGHT

Robert is motionless. His eyes are heavy.

CHAUNCEY (O.S.)
I should have known! This is not a
telegram but a hand-written note
from Sterling Duffield!

ROBERT'S VISION

Robert turns to see nineteen-year-old Howie Henderson approach with careful, quiet steps behind the scenery.

Howie stops inches away from Robert. He places his hand on the doorknob.

Robert leans in close as he scans the face of his younger self.

Robert JOLTS as if from an electric shock.

END VISION.

He is alone.

ALICE'S DRESSING ROOM

Alice faces the mirror as she applies her lipstick.

A glance at the clock, which reads: EIGHT-TWENTY.

She smacks her lips together and hurries from the room.

BACKSTAGE

The audience APPLAUDS.

The lights on stage go to black as Alice rushes in from the hallway.

REID

You always cut it close.

She smiles.

ALICE

And I never miss a cue!

Lilly and Chauncey step off the stage as Alice rushes to the wings for her entrance.

Lilly glides past her.

CHAUNCEY

You know, right?

ALICE

Know what?

The lights on stage come up. Alice makes her entrance.

FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE

Alice paces in the Garden set.

ALICE

Keep me waiting, will you,
Sterling Duffield? As if I don't
have anything better to do. Which
I don't... but he doesn't know
that... so why does he keep me
waiting?

Jamie enters.

JAMIE

Peony.

Alice turns -- her face lights up with shock.

ALICE

What the hel-looo, Sterling. I
have been waiting for over an
hour.

JAMIE

I was... detained.

Alice struggles to get back into character.

ALICE

I... have my suspicions as to why,
but for now, I shall keep them to
myself, lest I falsely accuse.

JAMIE

Peony...

ALICE

Please. Say nothing. This moment
obviously... means... more to you
than it... does to me.

FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - STAGE DOOR

Muffled applause from the stage as Ed, phone to his ear,
writes down a message.

ED

Yep, I'm sure he's here. he's on
stage right now... yep, call you
right away. Yes, sir, I'll see he
gets the message.

Ed hangs up the phone. As he puts the message in his
shirt pocket, he glances at the wall clock. It reads:
eight-forty... which morphs into: ten-thirty.

FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE

On stage, Jamie faces Lilly and Chauncey as Alice cries
on a sofa.

STERLING

Giles! Giles, come in here,
please!

THE WING - STAGE RIGHT

A pensive Eleanor watches.

BEHIND THE SET

Robert turns the doorknob. It's stuck. He JIGGLES it again. Nothing.

FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE

Lilly sees the doorknob JIGGLE.

BEHIND THE SET

Robert gets a grip on the doorknob and gives the door a strong push.

It opens.

He composes himself before the audience can see him.

They APPLAUD his entrance.

ROBERT

Sir. You called?

THE WING - STAGE RIGHT

Eleanor gives a sigh of relief at his entrance.

JAMIE (V.O.)

Indeed I did. Tell me again what you overheard the master saying to young Alice the other day.

FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE

Robert stands tall and professional.

ROBERT

I heard the master say that Alice was to marry you and then murder you in your sleep.

JAMIE

To what end?

ROBERT

To inherit your share of the
Duffield wealth, including your
one hundred-room summer cottage in
Sussex.

Sporadic GASPS from the audience.

JAMIE

Thank you, Giles.

ROBERT

Will that be all, sir?

JAMIE

Yes, Giles. Thank you.

Robert exits under the glare of Lilly's eyes.

BEHIND THE SET

Robert steps through the door and closes it. His
shoulders collapse. He breathes heavily and is sweating
while his expression is one of peace.

CHAUNCEY (O.S.)

So now you will accuse me of
wanting to murder you, eh!? Have
you no shame, sir?

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The audience spills out of the theater. Here and there
car headlights turn on.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Robert heads for his dressing room with Lilly snapping at
his heels.

LILLY

I don't understand. What were you
thinking, Robert?

Reid passes them in the hallway and hands Robert a note.

REID

Your agent again. Called the stage
door this time.

Robert grabs the note and continues at a fast pace.

ROBERT

Thank you.

LILLY

How humiliating! Why did you do it!?

ROBERT

I did it for me.

He arrives at his dressing room door and OPENS it.

LILLY

What? Play a butler!?

ROBERT

Yes.

Robert steps inside and SLAMS the door on Lilly.

LILLY

I've seen it before, Robert. This isn't 'method acting.' You're losing your mind.

INT. BEHIND THE SET - NIGHT

Alice and Jamie kiss passionately behind the flats.

ALICE

Oh, Jamie... I'm so proud of you... you were wonderful... just wonderful...

JAMIE

Really?

ALICE

Yes. And you didn't fumble a single line.

The kissing continues.

JAMIE

Actually... you did.

Uh-oh.

ALICE

When?

JAMIE

On my entrance. You practically said, "What the hell" right there on stage.

ALICE

I was shocked to see you there, that's why.

JAMIE

That's not very professional. You should have hid your natural reaction.

ALICE

Well, you should have told me you were going on!

She storms off.

JAMIE

But you thought I was good, right!?

INT. ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Robert picks up his phone, and dials.

BEEEEEP... BEEEEEP...

He sits at his table and removes his tie.

BEEEEEP...

LESTER (V.O.)

Where the hell have you been!?

ROBERT

On stage. Where do you think?

LESTER (V.O.)

How did it go?

ROBERT

Wonderful! Just as planned.

LESTER (V.O.)

What did they say?

ROBERT

What did who say?

LESTER (V.O.)
The Network Executives.

ROBERT
Enlighten me.

LESTER (V.O.)
For the new series they want you
in?

ROBERT
What series?

LESTER (V.O.)
You play an aging private eye or
something like that -- who cares!?
How did it go? What did they say?

ROBERT
I don't think there's going to be
any series. I'll call you.

Robert hangs up. He stares at his reflection in the
mirror. A tired face stares back.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

ELEANOR (O.S.)
Robert?

ROBERT
Come in.

Eleanor enters.

ELEANOR
Howie Henderson. You were
wonderful. I think Ronald Foster
would be proud.

Robert smiles and stands to meet her. He buckles over and
sinks to his knees.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Oh, my God! Robert!

Eleanor kneels beside him. She holds onto his arm and
notices blood trickling from his mouth.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
What's wrong!?

She manages to help him stand and walks him over to the
chair at his makeup table. He plops down into it.

With shaky hands, he grabs the morphine bottle and takes the dropper out.

ROBERT

Close the door.

Eleanor closes the dressing room door.

She is astonished as he puts the morphine drop in the side of his mouth.

She grabs the phone and begins to dial.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Who are you calling?

ELEANOR

Doctor Wolfe. We need to get over there tonight.

ROBERT

Hang up.

ELEANOR

You're bleeding.

ROBERT

I've already seen him.

She stops dialing.

He holds the morphine bottle.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

He gave me this. I'll feel better in a minute.

ELEANOR

Robert...

ROBERT

I've had three doctors... four, counting Doctor Wolfe. They all say the same thing.

ELEANOR

What do they say?

He manages a smile.

ROBERT

That I shouldn't have done this summer tour.

ELEANOR

Is there hope?

ROBERT

Not anymore.

Eleanor sits on the loveseat.

ELEANOR

Why didn't you tell me last night?
When we were dancing?

ROBERT

And spoil that lovely moment?
That, my dear, is what is called
"bad timing."

The hope has indeed left Robert's eyes.

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - DAY

Jamie sits on the front steps. His Volkswagon Beetle parked nearby.

He sees the van pull into the parking lot. It stops in front of the steps. Chauncey exits, dressed in casual summer clothes, followed by Alice.

Alice sees Jamie and halts in her tracks.

Chauncey heads up the stairs and into the theatre as Jamie jumps up and approaches Alice.

JAMIE

I'm sorry for the way I acted last night.

ALICE

You should be.

JAMIE

It just went to my head. I don't know what happened. Alice... I've fallen in love with you... and I'll do anything to make things right.

She glances at his car.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I got the belt fixed. Runs like new. Kinda.

Her stare returns to Jamie... and she waits.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I was a jerk.

ALICE

You were.

JAMIE

I was wrong. Alice... I don't want
us to be like Robert and Lilly.
It's not what it's cracked up to
be.

She shows no emotion.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Can you forgive me?

Alice searches his face.

ALICE

I need to think about it.

She continues on her way. He watches as she heads into
the theater... and speaks softly, to himself.

JAMIE

I'll wait.

EXT. LITTLE ISLAND - FALMOUTH - DAY

Robert and Eleanor lean against two large boulders near
the shoreline.

ELEANOR

How long have you known?

ROBERT

A while.

ELEANOR

Why would you do a play knowing
all that?

ROBERT

To play the butler and get it
right... to atone to Mister
Foster. He directed. I let him
down.

ELEANOR

Is he still alive?

ROBERT

Not really.

They stroll arm in arm.

His walk is less steady than before.

ELEANOR

How have you carried on with all these performances?

ROBERT

I didn't expect things to get bad until late in the run.

ELEANOR

Does anyone else know?

ROBERT

Only George Sanders.

ELEANOR

George Sanders?

ROBERT

An old chum. He's in on it. He's memorized my role in case I couldn't make it to the end.

ELEANOR

Oh, I see.

ROBERT

He's flying out here and will take the play on to Hyannis.

He stops and looks out over the ocean.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

They said I wouldn't make it the entire summer. And now... it appears Falmouth is the end of the line for me. I was ready for it. I've lived a good life -- despite that for the most part it was superficial and void of meaning. I was ready.

He turns to Eleanor.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

But then I met you. I wasn't counting on forming any attachments here. I'm sorry.

(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)
The last thing I wanted was to
bring you pain.

ELEANOR
You need to be in the hospital.

ROBERT
To lie in bed and count the
ceiling tiles until the end comes?
That's not for me. I'll rally and
finish out the week.

ELEANOR
You're crazy.

ROBERT
No. I'm a movie star. Well...
maybe the two go hand in hand.

ELEANOR
Lilly doesn't know?

ROBERT
She will on Monday when I don't
show up in Hyannis. She'll be fine
with George. They're old friends.

ELEANOR
Are you going back to California?

ROBERT
Yes.

ELEANOR
Who's going to take care of you...

ROBERT
When it gets close?

She nods in affirmation.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
That's when I'll go to the
hospital, I suppose.

ELEANOR
And who will be with you? Your
agent?

She takes his hands in hers.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Stay here.

He speaks with great sincerity.

ROBERT

Eleanor... I think those are perhaps the kindest words anyone has ever said to me.

ELEANOR

They're not just words, Robert.

ROBERT

I know... but you can't be there... I don't want you to see --

ELEANOR

It won't be any easier for me to be here knowing what you are going through.

She looks into his eyes... and they embrace.

ROBERT

I don't want you to see.

The waves lap the shoreline.

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - NIGHT

The evening performance is in progress.

CHAUNCEY (V.O.)

Peony, we must have a word.

ALICE (V.O.)

If the word is to give up my love for Sterling, then the answer is no. I won't do it!

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Chauncey and Alice are in front of a garden backdrop.

CHAUNCEY

Oh, my darling girl. If you only knew what I knew... you would end this romance and never look back.

ALICE

You're jealous, Father. Jealous of Sterling's youth and vitality.

ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM

In his usual heavy makeup and dark toupee for his role of Sterling, Robert glares into the mirror.

The performance plays through the stage monitor.

ALICE (V.O.)
He is healthy, gallant, handsome,
young, and he loves me. He is
youth that will never grow old...
he is --

Robert flicks the switch, and the speaker shuts off.

He is in pain. His hands quiver as he grabs the morphine bottle. He takes several drops from the dropper.

He sees the image in the mirror grow blurry. He stumbles as he rises from his chair.

THE WING - STAGE LEFT

Lilly waits for her entrance as Robert arrives.

The curtain is down. The audience APPLAUDS.

LILLY
You're perspiring. Are you all
right?

ROBERT
I won't lie. I've had better days.

LILLY
Oh, my God, Robert. What is it?

ROBERT
We did have a lot of good times.
Didn't we, Lilly?

LILLY
Now, I'm worried... why are you
saying that?

ROBERT
We did, didn't we?

LILLY
Yes, Robert. Despite the bumps...
and there were a lot of them... we
had good times.

He takes her by the shoulders.

ROBERT
Let's not hate each other anymore,
Lilly.

LILLY
Robert --

ROBERT
Remember the good times, Lilly.

LILLY
Robert...

ROBERT
The phrase is corny as hell, but
it's true... life's too short.
Christ, I can't believe I said
that.

The curtain RISES. A paralyzed Lilly can only search
Robert's eyes.

A warm smile comes over her lips as she caresses his
cheek with her hand.

He smiles back. She gathers herself, turns, and waltzes
onto the stage in character.

LILLY
Duarte! I am calling you with an
anxious tone, and that is never a
good thing!

FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - LATER

The garden backdrop with a stone bench center stage.

Lilly pauses.

LILLY
Chauncey? Are you about?

A pause.

LILLY (CONT'D)
Good.

Lilly turns and beckons to the wings.

LILLY (CONT'D)
Here... come here.

Robert enters.

ROBERT

The garden? My darling, I have looked everywhere for you... and all along, the one place I had suspected...

LILLY

Don't say anything... just hold me.

Lilly takes Robert's hands.

He stumbles as if on uneasy footing.

THE WING - STAGE RIGHT

Eleanor, terrified, can only watch.

LILLY (O.S.)

Mind you, if we were to be discovered, my husband may demand satisfaction over pistols.

FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE

Lilly sees Robert having trouble.

LILLY

And... you know what a dead shot Duarte is... Oh, Sterling, let us... go away... far away...

Lilly's voice fades away as Robert sees Eleanor watching from the wing across the stage.

His vision becomes blurry as he COUGHS and clutches his stomach. Lilly's words become distorted.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Sterling... Sterling.... are you all right...

ROBERT'S VISION

Delusional, Robert sees Lilly replaced by Eleanor... in a strikingly beautiful silk gown and diamond neckless.

He rallies to give a flawless performance.

ROBERT

Winnifred, I had a feeling that I would find you here. That was quite a display you put on in front of the others.

He leads her to a stone bench.

ELEANOR

You call my broken emotions a "display?" We've done wrong, Sterling. God, help us; we've done wrong. I can never forgive myself for what I've done to my own daughter... allowing her to believe that you loved her.

ROBERT

I did love her... but when I met you, I realized the love I had for her was not complete. It was not whole. It was not true. I never intended to hurt her. I swear, I never intended that.

ELEANOR

But hurt her, you did, and I should hate you for it. But I am just as much to blame for I never tried to stop you. Here, in this garden... all those secret rendezvous... I can never forgive myself.

Robert moves closer.

ROBERT

We are both prisoners in mortal shells who were cheated because we did not live in different times. Soul mates barred by cruel reality. All we have... is hidden love... and this garden... hidden by the shadows of early morning twilight...

He kisses her.

The audience APPLAUDS and CHEERS.

END VISION.

Robert opens his eyes. He has been kissing Lilly, who has tears in her eyes.

Dazed from morphine, Robert rushes for Eleanor.

THE WING - STAGE RIGHT

Robert rips his toupee off, tosses it aside, and takes Eleanor gently by her shoulders.

Eleanor smiles through flowing tears.

They fall into each other's arms and kiss.

A long, passionate kiss.

THE WING - STAGE LEFT

A stunned Jamie watches Robert and Eleanor in the wing across the stage.

A hand appears on his shoulder. He turns to see Alice. She cups his face in her hands and kisses him.

He puts his arm around her, and together they turn to see Robert and Eleanor.

FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE

Lilly watches Robert and Eleanor as she wipes tears from her eyes.

THE WING STAGE RIGHT

Eleanor helps a frail Robert away from the stage.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LITTLE ISLAND - FALMOUTH

An overcast sky. The sea is choppy with white caps.

Summer is over.

Eleanor, bundled in a down coat, stares out at the ocean.

The picture transforms... first the sky has streaks through it... the streaks revealed to be brush strokes.

The picture takes on the appearance of oil on canvas.

It shows a lone woman in a summer dress that flows in the breeze on the shoreline of Little Island.

The sky is the orange and yellow of sunrise as the sun peeks over the far horizon.

The ocean is calm and blue.

There are flowers... clumps of flowers scattered away from the shoreline.

The painting is revealed to be in a gold frame on a wall.

Another painting hangs next to it:

Nobska Lighthouse... standing tall and defiant on the hill. The sky is bright blue and full of white clouds.

On the catwalk is a man in a suit.

Next to him, a bottle of Champagne rests in a silver bucket on a silver chiller stand.

His arm is raised in a dramatic wave... a fedora clutched in his hand.

FADE OUT.