

B E A R S   I N   T H E   D A R K

b. b. brown

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Registered WGAE

FADE IN

INT MANSION BALLROOM            SPRING 1980s            EVENING

A huge costume party progresses. CHRISTINA MARIE STOUT BLANCHARD, 60s, oversees the event. She exudes dignity in spite of her Mae West costume.

CHRISTINA

I don't know why I had to have such unexpected children.

HEWLETT FREDERICK "HEWIE" BLANCHARD, late 20s, wears an open-faced chicken costume.

HEWIE

Not now, Momma.

CHRISTINA

You're too carefree with other people's lives, Hewie. You don't think things through.

HEWIE

(grinning)

Yes, I do, Momma. I think about the important stuff and let the unimportant take care of itself.

CHRISTINA

Another of your sister's extravagant costume ball. Hundreds of her close, personal friends scattered across the Estate. And you blithely mention that you've dragged in yet another wedding guest.

HEWIE

You'll like him, Momma.

The orchestra knocks out a fanfare.

HEWIE

(continuing)

There's my cue.

Hewie slips away, tugging off his costume as he scurries through the crowd. Turning away, Christina sighs.

CHRISTINA

My children can be so discourteous.

Hewie's appearance on the dance floor sparks applause. CLAIRE, early 20s, joins him, and they strike a pose. The orchestra plays, and the two weave lightly across the floor.

Standing by the dance area with the crowd jamming itself against him on either side, JOSEPH JORDAN, early 40s, watches Hewie whirl across the floor.

Joseph wears a cloak and the mask of a ferocious beast. Perspiration runs down his face to soak his collar. His breathing is labored.

INT JOSEPH'S P.O.V.

Costumed strangers elbow Joseph as they push for a better view of the dancers. He glances left and right, searching for a way out. There's a terrace. He shoves his way towards the exit.

EXT MANSION TERRACE

Joseph enters gasping, yanks off the mask and cloak, and sucks at the night air.

JOSEPH  
Damn! Idiot! I hate goddamn parties.

He rubs away perspiration with a sleeve and looks at the lawn. Dramatically lit by floodlights, most of the lawn is a desert garden, a complex consisting of sand, boulders and desert plants, as well as a shallow pool filled by rivulets.

There's a rustling of satin from the shadows of the terrace. A YOUNG MAN and WOMAN in costume emerge from the darkness. The young woman shades her eyes from the floodlights.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Is it? Not at one of her sister's costume balls?

MARIE RUTH ROSETTE BLANCHARD, late 30s, steps into the light on the lawn. Cradling a liquor bottle, she stumbles several times while marching through the sand. They laugh.

YOUNG MAN  
It's her.

YOUNG WOMAN

Drunk as a skunk.

JOSEPH

She could hit her head on those  
rocks.

Feigning he isn't there, they turn to the ballroom.

YOUNG WOMAN

People choose the lives they live.

YOUNG MAN

There's always a freak floating  
around these Blanchard affairs.

They exit.

JOSEPH

Sanctimonious shits.

A light flashes to one side of the terrace as a door  
opens and two waiters enter. Although on ground level,  
they are close to where he stands. Taking a hurried  
break, one gulps liquor, the other smokes.

SMOKER

The bitch is stinking. Stumbling  
around in the sand.

DRINKER

Wish I had a few million. I  
wouldn't sober up till the world  
turned blue.

They watch her weave amid the boulders and cacti.

SMOKER

If I weren't on the job, I think  
I'd go nosing. She's probably so  
pissed she wouldn't know if you  
were a man or a horse.

DRINKER

You'd have to do it like a horse.  
(continuing; gulping liquor)  
Bet her breath would knock you  
limp.

SMOKER

Not just her breath.

The smoker thumps his lit cigarette on the finely  
manicured lawn.

SOKER  
(continuing)  
Damn sluts will gut you like a  
fish.

DRINKER  
Rich sluts?

SOKER  
All sluts.

DRINKER  
I know that's right.

They exit into the house. Joseph watches them go.

JOSEPH  
Filth.

EXT POOL IN DESERT GARDEN

Marie stands by the pool. Having stripped except for a partially unbuttoned blouse, she wraps a piece of clothing around her bottle and holds it securely. Joseph appears.

JOSEPH  
Excuse me.

Marie draws herself up with dignity and glares, daring him not to look.

JOSEPH  
(continuing)  
Do you need help?

MARIE  
Are you sure you can see  
everything?

Glancing her over, he takes a quick inventory on his fingers.

JOSEPH  
It all seems there.

MARIE  
Damn right, I'm all there.

JOSEPH  
Uh huh. May I ask why you're all  
there out here?

MARIE

I'm gonna swim with the goddamn fish. Is that fucking all right?

He looks into the pool. There are no fish.

JOSEPH

Your fish. Sure they don't mind?

MARIE

Fuck, yeah, they're my pals. Drink all the time and never complain. Who the hell are you?

JOSEPH

Nobody. My name's Joseph.

MARIE

Okay, Joseph Nobody, have a drink and we'll swim with the fish.

JOSEPH

I prefer to admire fish from a distance. Live ones anyway.

MARIE

Fuck you, I know your type.

JOSEPH

What type is that?

Unwrapping the mouth of the bottle, she sips as she speaks.

MARIE

So proper. All the time watching. Think no one's looking and bang drop your pants and slip it in. Just you be careful with me. Cause I'm fucking dangerous, you--

She stops, her eyes blink, then her body tilts to one side.

MARIE

Shit.

He catches her and lays her softly on the white, dry sand. She is unconscious. Covering her with his jacket, he lifts her into a fireman's carry. With her on his shoulder, he finds her naked buttocks beside his head.

JOSEPH

How bright the moon shines tonight.

He spreads a handkerchief over her buttocks and holds it with one hand, then exits at a trot.

INT SERVANT AREA

Entering a side door, Joseph meets SERVANTS who rush to assist. A BUTLER throws a cloak over Marie.

One servant, the Smoker seen earlier, tries to take her. Joseph turns his free shoulder into the man's chest and pushes. The Smoker stumbles backward.

JOSEPH

(to Butler)

Where do I take her?

The Smoker angrily confronts him again.

SOKER

I'll take her.

JOSEPH

You saw her and didn't do a damn thing to help. So, get out of my face.

The Smoker reacts guiltily when the Butler looks at him.

BUTLER

You saw her?

Mad at being exposed, the Smoker grabs Joseph's free arm. There's a blur of movement as Joseph wrenches the man's arm round in its socket and thumps his blood-red face against the floor.

Still cradled securely across Joseph's shoulder, Marie moans.

MARIE

Tell the Goddamn pilot to watch the bumps.

A MAID indicates an ELEVATOR.

MAID

This way, sir.

Joseph follows the Maid. The Butler indicates the

Smoker to  
the other SERVANTS.

BUTLER  
Get him out of sight.

Then he follows Joseph to the elevator.

INT ELEVATOR

Joseph enters the small elevator with the Maid, the Butler, and a SECOND MAID. They squeeze together as the doors shut. Marie mumbles inarticulately.

JOSEPH  
(to her buttocks)  
Yes, dear, it was a lovely party.  
But you shouldn't swing from the  
chandelier without a net.

The Maids hide smiles. The Butler, however, doesn't appreciate the humor.

JOSEPH  
(continuing)  
Couldn't resist, old fellow.

INT BEDROOM CORRIDOR

A Maid leads him from the elevator to a bedroom door. Other FEMALE SERVANTS swarm around Joseph. They pull Marie away and take her into the bedroom. The door shuts firmly in the men's faces.

The men stand about awkwardly. Joseph turns to the Butler.

JOSEPH  
It was fun while it lasted.

The Butler puts his formal face back on.

BUTLER  
If you don't mind, sir, who are  
you?

JOSEPH  
Jordan. Friend of the family.

BUTLER  
I don't recognize the name. And I'm  
familiar with all of the

Blanchard's house guests.

JOSEPH

I'm a friend of Hewie Blanchard.

BUTLER

Of course, sir. I should have known.

JOSEPH

He invited me to stay. Until the wedding. I'm sort of an afterthought.

BUTLER

Naturally, sir. If you will, the entertainment is downstairs.

JOSEPH

I hate parties. Who was the lady?

BUTLER

She was--the lady is Ms. Marie Blanchard, eldest child of Mrs. Christina Blanchard.

JOSEPH

Is she like this often?

BUTLER

The ball, sir, is downstairs.

Nodding, Joseph points a finger at the elevator. Following his finger, he walks over and presses the call button. He smiles at the Butler, who watches him.

When the doors open, he follows his finger into the elevator. As the doors close, Joseph leans out and waggles his finger goodbye.

INT ELEVATOR

Alone in the elevator, Joseph slumps against a wall.

JOSEPH

That was a pornographic fairy tale.  
In stereo.

The elevator doors open. He steps out.

JOSEPH

Hope that I didn't damage that bastard waiter too much. No way to start a holiday.

INT BEDROOM HALLWAY

Joseph walks toward a door but slowly comes to a halt. Hit by sudden, acute pain, he leans his head against a wall and holds up his arms to block out the light. Then he rhythmically bangs his head on the wall.

JOSEPH

Did the best--I could. Nothing to feel--guilt about.

He shoves himself away from the wall. His body becomes rigid as he struggles with the internal stress. After a few moments, he relaxes greatly and sighs.

JOSEPH

(continuing)

No pain, no gain.

INT HEWIE'S BEDROOM

Pieces of luggage sit unpacked. Joseph enters slowly to the center of the room, where he pauses. His hands go to his abdomen.

JOSEPH

Marvelous. Now, it's cramps.

He opens a handbag and takes out a pill bottle. Gulping pills with a large drink of water, he sits on the bed and clenches his hands.

JOSEPH

(continuing)

Damn pain. Damn fool grabbing at me.

Tightly closing his eyes, he rocks back and forth.

JOSEPH

(continuing)

God. Why am I such an idiot?

There is a firm, short knock at the door.

CHRISTINA (O.S.)

Mister Jordan?

JOSEPH

Who is it?

CHRISTINA (O.S.)  
It's Christina Blanchard, Hewie's  
mother. May I speak to you?

JOSEPH  
Why not?  
(to himself)  
It's only pain and suffering.

Joseph stands and daubs perspiration from his face.  
Taking a deep breath, he opens the door.

CHRISTINA  
Mister Jordan, I apologize for your  
room not being prepared. If you  
wish, I'll take you to it now.

JOSEPH  
Very kind of you. I'm--

He winces from pain. She steps into the room.

CHRISTINA  
Is something wrong?

JOSEPH  
Nothing. Upset stomach.

They move slowly toward the door.

CHRISTINA  
Mister Jordan, I must apologize for  
my daughter, Marie--

Hewie, stripping off his shirt, bursts through the  
doorway. Running into them, he stops and grins  
boyishly.

HEWIE  
Damn. I forgot to check about get-  
ting you a room.

JOSEPH  
Good of you to notice.

HEWIE  
I got busy.

CHRISTINA  
You always do.

HEWIE

Woof woof. I'm in the doghouse.

Christina starts to speak, but Hewie cuts her off.

HEWIE

(continuing)

Have you heard about Marie's latest? Drunk, naked, dancing in the desert garden. Some putz carted her in, then punched out one of the waiters. Wish I'd seen it.

JOSEPH

You're not concerned about your own sister?

Glancing at his Mother, Hewie shrugs.

HEWIE

Why? Did you meet her?

CHRISTINA

He, as you put it, is the putz.

HEWIE

No kidding. Did you really punch that guy?

JOSEPH

No, I twisted his arm a little.

HEWIE

Damn! I'd have given anything to see you in real action.

JOSEPH

I thought you'd seen me in "real action" in class.

HEWIE

You know what I mean, Joseph.

JOSEPH

Yeah. Could we go, Mrs. Blanchard?

HEWIE

What's wrong, Joseph? Depression? Did you take your medicine?

CHRISTINA

Oh, shut up, Hewie.  
(taking Joseph's arm.)

Go find two or three silly girls  
and dance their legs off.

They exit.

HEWIE  
(sulking)  
What did I say?

EXT ESTATE GROUNDS MORNING

An electric cart whizzes along a network of paths which links together the Blanchard Estate giving access to every corner. There are also footpaths. Hewie drives quickly, Joseph endures grimly.

HEWIE  
A one hundred acre garden. Three generations's worth. A tad more flowers, shrubs, and earth than you see at the University, eh, Joseph?

Joseph holds tight as the scenery flashes by.

HEWIE  
(continuing)  
We're impressive as hell. Wildlife Area. Underground workshop. Greenhouses. Riding Trail and Stables. Desert Garden, Japanese Gardens, Chinese Garden.

JOSEPH  
(growling)  
Traffic cops?

HEWIE  
Momma's the cop, Georgie's the judge.

JOSEPH  
I wish they were here.

HEWIE  
This is the whirlwind tour. There's yet another lawn party and supper today in honor of Toni's wedding.

JOSEPH  
If you don't stop whirling, I'm going to hurl.

EXT STABLES

They find CHRISTINA ANTOINETTE "TONI" BLANCHARD, 29,  
mounted  
and working a horse in the ring. She wears a tailored  
riding  
outfit that suits her perfect figure perfectly.

Riding a saddle horse long out of training, she lightly  
snaps its flank with her riding crop when it breaks  
stride. Hewie parks the cart where they can watch from  
it.

HEWIE

God, Toni's milking it today. I  
told her you'd be here. She wants  
to impress you, the knavish vixen.

She finishes with the horse and cools it. As the horse  
plods  
about the ring, Toni motions for Hewie to approach.  
Jumping  
from the cart, he bows extravagantly.

HEWIE

(continuing)

Empress Toni summons. Be right  
back.

Hewie trots over and walks alongside Toni. Joseph gets  
out  
of the cart and walks to nearby blooming azaleas.  
Crouching  
by them, he stares intensely, as if to memorize each  
detail.

Behind him, Marie pops out of the greenery from a  
footpath, wearing a cap and dark sunglasses. Looking  
about, she sees Joseph by the azaleas. She strides  
swiftly to him and snaps at him.

MARIE

Your name is Jordan?

Surprised, he stands.

JOSEPH

Yes. My name is Jordan.

MARIE

You carried me to the house when I  
passed out last night?

JOSEPH

I did? You're the lady?

MARIE  
Don't be sarcastic.

JOSEPH  
I'm not.

She stares at him suspiciously. He studies her openly.

JOSEPH  
You're Marie. Hewie's other sister.

She makes a sound that is either a cough or a laugh.

MARIE  
Wouldn't he like to forget it. All right, Mister Jordan, to business. Thank you for what you did last night. Not so much for me as for saving Mother from another embarrassment. What reward would you like?

JOSEPH  
Not a thing.

MARIE  
Don't try jacking up the price.

JOSEPH  
You want a price tag on helping you?

MARIE  
Yes, Goddamn it.

JOSEPH  
This is a novel situation.

She crosses her arms impatiently.

JOSEPH  
(continuing)  
Well, if you have to compensate me for a spontaneous human gesture, then do so by seeking treatment for your drinking problem.

MARIE  
I am not a drunk.

JOSEPH

Yeah, you only drink until you pass out.

MARIE

Do you want the money or not?

JOSEPH

No, I might be tempted to spend it. A bad habit. You always want more.

MARIE

You're so very funny. Name a price.

JOSEPH

A serious price for a not-so-serious rescue of a very serious lady.

Marie looks as if she might explode.

JOSEPH

(continuing)

We'll go on a date. You pay for everything and drink nothing. Is that fucking serious enough?

MARIE

A date?

JOSEPH

And you have to keep your clothes on.

MARIE

You're demented.

JOSEPH

No doubt about it.

MARIE

Fine, we'll go on a date. A burger, a movie, an ice cream parlour. How's that, asshole?

JOSEPH

You make the rules, Ms. Blanchard.

MARIE

Damned straight, Mister Jordan.

She stalks toward the footpath.

JOSEPH

By the way, you look good wearing

clothes.

MARIE

Piss off!

Marie exits.

HEWIE (O.S.)

Bitch.

Joseph turns to Hewie and snaps at him.

JOSEPH

Don't call her that.

HEWIE

Why not?

JOSEPH

She's an alcoholic, not a bitch.

HEWIE

Not much difference.

PAULETTE, 14, enters to them in a cart. She speaks to Joseph in a brisk, patronizing manner.

PAULETTE

Ms. Georgina Blanchard requests that Mister Joseph Jordan visit her in the Cottage.

HEWIE

Damn, Joseph! An audience with the crazy lady in the tower.

She glares at Hewie.

JOSEPH

Who the hell?

PAULETTE

She's Chairwoman of the Board of the Blanchard Medical Corporation.

HEWIE

Remember? Momma runs the Estate, Georgie runs the corporation.

JOSEPH

Georgie, the judge.

HEWIE

And you're their little helper,  
aren't you, Paulette?

PAULETTE

You can fu--  
(catches herself)  
You can mind your own business,  
Mister Hewlett Blanchard.

Hewie salutes her elaborately. Joseph moves to her  
cart.

PAULETTE

Are you ready, Mister Jordan?

HEWIE

If you see a hatchet, Joseph, watch  
out. Georgie likes fresh meat.

Joseph is thrown against the seat as she slams down on  
the accelerator. They hear Hewie laughing.

EXT GEORGIE'S COTTAGE

Paulette's cart whirls along a path to a cottage.  
Hopping out, she pertly escorts Joseph to the front  
door, knocks, and opens the door. He hesitates.

GEORGIE (O.S.)

(commanding)

Don't waste time. Come in.

Paulette nods, and he steps in.

INT GEORGIE'S COTTAGE

There are a few plants, little furniture, and several  
excellent artworks. And there are books. Shelves are  
piled, tables are covered, and the floor is stacked  
with books.

In a manual wheelchair, between two stacks of books,  
sits a  
plump, wizened woman, GEORGINA BLANCHARD, 75, who  
scrutinizes Joseph closely with bright, level eyes. She  
speaks in a bell-like voice that comes from an era when  
such things were admired.

GEORGIE

Please have a seat, Mister Jordan.

He takes the only chair not filled with books.

GEORGIE  
(continuing)  
I'm Georgina Blanchard. You're one  
of Hewie's University friends?

JOSEPH  
Yes.

GEORGIE  
You aided my niece, Marie, last  
night?

JOSEPH  
Yes.

GEORGIE  
And has anyone thanked you?

JOSEPH  
Christina. Marie.

GEORGIE  
Let me add my appreciation. You  
can't know how rare it is for some-  
one to act as you did.

JOSEPH  
Really?

GEORGIE  
Has anyone offered a reward?

JOSEPH  
Marie.

GEORGIE  
Yes, she wouldn't want to owe  
anything to anyone.

JOSEPH  
So I noticed. Who does?

GEORGIE  
Did you take it?

JOSEPH  
What?

GEORGIE  
The reward.

JOSEPH  
No. I mean yes. I mean we worked it

out.

GEORGIE  
What, may I ask, did you work out?

JOSEPH  
We're going on a date.

GEORGIE  
A date?

JOSEPH  
A date.

GEORGIE  
You mean a sexual liaison, don't you?

JOSEPH  
(irritated)  
No, I don't, dammit. We're going on an old fashioned date.  
(calms)  
However, she's not to drink alcohol.

GEORGIE  
You are very peculiar, Mr. Jordan.

JOSEPH  
Seems to be the general opinion.

GEORGIE  
Why not take the money? We've got plenty. You can use it, can't you?

JOSEPH  
(angrily)  
Hell, yes, I could use money. I could use a lot of money. That's the important thing, isn't it? To have and use lots of money?  
(stands)  
But I don't want to take it!

Startled, Georgina shrinks back.

JOSEPH  
(continuing; sits)  
I'm sorry. I have a bad temper. That was inexcusable. I'm very sorry.

She stares at him. He becomes embarrassed.

JOSEPH  
(continuing)  
May I go now, please?

GEORGIE  
Please let me apologize, Mister  
Jordan.

He would speak, but she raises a hand.

GEORGIE  
(continuing)  
I spend the bulk of my time with  
people obsessed with profit and  
power. Not a lovely bunch. They  
teach you, by example, the dreadful  
habit of trusting no one.

JOSEPH  
I understand, Ms. Blanchard.

GEORGIE  
Do you like to talk?

JOSEPH  
Very much. Santayana said the point  
of talking is to talk, not to  
communicate.

GEORGIE  
(laughs)  
He was right. Then let's talk.  
First, my friends call me Georgie.

EXT PETTING ZOO

BARNYARD ANIMALS, nuzzling CHILDREN and PARENTS for  
food or petting, wander idly in a fenced area. To one  
side, children are led about on ponies. Portable  
display cages hold smaller or exotic animals.

Hewie and Joseph stand with a female ANIMAL HANDLER by  
an open display case. Several children watch from a few  
steps away.

JOSEPH  
I love animals. Except spiders.

The children watch as a tarantula climbs from his hand  
along his arm toward his shoulder.

HEWIE

I can take'em or leave'em.

JOSEPH

Little spiders. My father used to kill black widows with his fingers. But they scare me.

HEWIE

With his fingers?

JOSEPH

You have to get'em before they sit.

Toni enters to Hewie.

HEWIE

Sit?

ANIMAL HANDLER

(to children)

You must be gentle with tarantulas. They're hurt easily.

TONI

(to Hewie)

Do you think they'll kiss on the first date?

HEWIE

Shut up.

She leans annoyingly close and whispers.

TONI

I'm going to steal your boyfriend.

Hewie shoves her away with an elbow.

TONI

(to Joseph)

Come with me, Joey. Social duties call.

The Handler removes the tarantula.

HEWIE

He prefers being called Joseph.

TONI

Joey Joey Joey. Sounds like rubber being stretched.

JOSEPH

Every day of my life.

TONI

Come along, Mister Joe Joey Joseph  
Jordan.

Toni takes Joseph's arm.

TONI

(continuing)

There's dear ole Old Dad to meet,  
whom you haven't met, yet.

He goes reluctantly, glancing back to Hewie as if for help. She speaks quickly and with gaiety.

TONI

(continuing)

Don't be tense. We keep Old Dad hobbled in the cellar and only let him out to check how high his pile of money has grown. But he's washed and shaved and his claws trimmed, so you should be able to get a good look. If he doesn't throw nasty things.

JOSEPH

Who is this person?

TONI

Old Dad's a distant member of the family who works for the Corporation. Oh, yes, I hear that you're addressing our dear Auntie as "Georgina". Old Dad will be so interested. You will grovel a bit, won't you? Just for me?

Hewie frowns as he watches them leave.

HEWIE

And he exits with an unstable biped attached to his arm.

EXT SHADE OAK

EUGENE BOYCE "OLD DAD" LANCELEIT, 65, holds court under a large oak tree. He sits in an electric-powered wheelchair of the latest design. GUESTS who hate him make pilgrimage to "pay their respects".

Next to him stands DANIEL DECKELMAN, 51, youngish-

looking, Toni's fiance, divorced, heir to a financial kingdom. Inflexibility glints beneath his polish.

Toni enters and unapologetically pushes her way through the crowd to Old Dad's chair.

TONI

Old Dad, my dear. Here's a new friend of the family.

OLD DAD

Indeed?

TONI

Daniel, dear.

She pecks Daniel on the cheek.

TONI

(continuing)

This is Mister Joseph Jordan. A friend of Hewie's.

DANIEL

(smiles)

Another of Hewie's friends.

TONI

Joseph, this is my fiance, Daniel Deckelman. And this is Eugene Boyce Lanceleit, known as "Old Dad" to one and all.

JOSEPH

Good day, sirs.

OLD DAD

How did you meet Hewie, Mister Jordan?

JOSEPH

At the University.

OLD DAD

You teach classes there?

JOSEPH

I teach private classes in judo.

OLD DAD

Do you have many students?

JOSEPH

A handful.

OLD DAD  
Do you have another occupation?

JOSEPH  
I work as a groundskeeper for the  
University.

Eyebrows go up at this.

OLD DAD  
Really.

JOSEPH  
My job allows me to audit whatever  
classes I wish.

DANIEL  
A scholar.

OLD DAD  
How admirable.

On one side of the small crowd surrounding Old Dad,  
Marie wanders nursing a drink. She listens.

TONI  
He could make tons of money if he  
opened his own school.

OLD DAD  
Yes, I've heard that martial arts  
schools can be profitable these  
days. How much do you charge per  
student?

JOSEPH  
Nothing. I teach because I enjoy  
teaching, not for profit.

Toni winks at Daniel.

OLD DAD  
You're not afraid of making money?

JOSEPH  
It takes the joy out of teaching.

Bored, Joseph studies the oak tree.

JOSEPH  
(continuing)

Besides, I don't need or want too much money.

OLD DAD

Too much!

Marie laughs loud enough to be heard across the lawn.

OLD DAD

(continuing)

The root of evil and all that? Toni seems to have brought us a saint.

JOSEPH

Hardly. I'm a practical person.

DANIEL

Practical?

OLD DAD

Oh, really.

JOSEPH

Having money is like having children: the more you have, the more the responsibility.

OLD DAD

Are you frightened by responsibility?

JOSEPH

Power. Power frightens me.

OLD DAD

My God! An idealist. Cage him before he hurts himself.

Old Dad laughs, as does the crowd, but his eyes are mean.

OLD DAD

(continuing)

Wait twenty years. Wait until you've endured hardship, and you shiver in the snow instead of playing in it. Then you'll see things differently.

Several in the crowd unconsciously nod their heads.

JOSEPH

I doubt it.

OLD DAD  
You will. Now--

Old Dad prepares to dismiss him.

TONI  
(interrupting)  
Did you know that Saint Joseph  
spent several hours closeted with  
Georgina? Alone.

Old Dad leans forward as though about to spring.

OLD DAD  
Did you, now? Did you? About what  
did you speak?

Marie enters, grabs Joseph's arm, and quickly walks him  
to a cart.

MARIE  
Get in.

Joseph does, Marie hops into the driver's side, and the  
cart lurches forward. Shouts chase them.

OLD DAD (O.S.)  
Stop, damn you!

TONI (O.S.)  
He's mine! I found him!

EXT ESTATE GROUNDS

Joseph looks at Marie. Driving with one hand, she holds  
a GLASS in the other. The wind lifts her hair gently.

JOSEPH  
Where're we going?

MARIE  
You'll see.

JOSEPH  
Why does your family constantly  
drag me places? Hewie, Georgina,  
Toni, you.

MARIE  
You rescued me. I've rescued you.  
We're even. I can't drink and drive  
and talk and think all at the same

time so shut up and enjoy the ride.

They stop by a doorway of woven bamboo that leads into a large area hidden by evergreen shrubs and trees.

JOSEPH

What's this?

MARIE

The Garden of Christina Blanchard.

JOSEPH

I thought the whole Estate was her garden.

MARIE

This is her special garden. Now, stop dawdling.

She disappears through the bamboo doorway. Surprised, Joseph follows.

EXT CHRISTINA'S GARDEN

The woven bamboo is a meter deep, then the shrubbery beyond makes a sharp turn to the left. Marie is not in sight. Guided by bamboo sleeves, Joseph goes through another doorway.

He steps onto a footbridge and enters a small, enclosed space. Two screens frame a stage on which stillness and movement contend. Various plants are circled by bricks to left and right stage. In the center sit a small tree and a stone.

On and beside the stone lie hand tools, suggesting that they've been abandoned in mid-task. In front of the stage, giving it both unity and vitality, runs a stream.

MARIE

This garden's for my elder brother, George Herbert. This tree only blooms briefly in early spring.

JOSEPH

Why did you save me from "Old Dad"?

MARIE

You "saved" me last night, so I returned the favor.

JOSEPH  
And now we're even.

MARIE  
Is your pride satisfied?

JOSEPH  
Yes. Is yours?

Ignoring the question, she walks off the footbridge and through another bamboo doorway in the shrubbery.

They step upon a stone footbridge that arches over a small pond. The flashing colors of Koi are seen in the water. A small hill lies to one side.

Over stones at the head of the hill, a waterfall rushes down a path of stone becoming a stream that whirls away, turns a corner, and disappears beneath a hedge.

MARIE  
Hidden pumps circulate the water.

JOSEPH  
Even nature needs a helping hand sometimes. Another memorial?

MARIE  
Yes, for a younger brother. Jeff.

JOSEPH  
What happened?

MARIE  
Suicide. Does that tell you something about our family?

JOSEPH  
Not really.

EXT ESTATE GROUNDS

They exit the hedge from a blind spot, giving the impression that they've popped out of nowhere.

JOSEPH  
Alice returns from Wonderland. May I visit again?

MARIE  
Bring a tent. Camp out.

JOSEPH  
I guess our date is off.

MARIE  
Can't have everybody.

EXT SHADE TREE EVENING

Supper tables sit on the lawn. At a table under the oak tree are Old Dad, Daniel and Toni, Joseph and Marie, Hewie and Claire.

Also, there is a Japanese national, ISHIKAWA, 50s, a deferential man being forced into retirement, who is visiting the gardens for one last time.

Servants clear as needed. Dessert is distributed. And Old Dad blathers to his captive listeners.

OLD DAD  
I'm grateful to Mister Ishikawa for suggesting SEVEN SAMURAI, a classic which proves the absolute necessity of honor in life.

Ishikawa politely hides a yawn.

OLD DAD  
(continuing)  
Yes, the samurai is to be admired for his cleverness, precision, and ruthlessness. He knew what he wanted and let nothing stand in his way. We businessmen, American and Japanese, know this as the principle of life.

Marie, drinking deeply, leans over to Joseph.

MARIE  
The only thing Old Dad admires is his own ass.

Joseph nods. Toni, absolutely bored out of her wits, turns to Joseph.

TONI  
(loudly)  
Did you know, Mister Joseph Jordan, that my fiance comes from a family with a history of true financial

power?

Old Dad glares as if to melt her.

TONI

Daniel's family is not at all like we Blanchards. We sell things. We don't pull the strings of power. We are mere nouveau riche.

Old Dad tries regaining control of the table by turning to Ishikawa.

OLD DAD

I believe you know everyone, Mister Ishikawa, except for Mister Joseph Jordan.

(smirking)

He's a groundskeeper at the University.

JOSEPH

Sir.

ISHIKAWA

Do you have a specialty in gardening, Mister Jordan?

JOSEPH

No, I lack specific training. The Blanchard gardens have made me feel my ignorance keenly.

ISHIKAWA

(enthused)

They're beautiful, aren't they? Very special.

JOSEPH

Have you--

OLD DAD

(interrupting)

Mister Jordan is also an idealistic martial arts instructor.

ISHIKAWA

What do you teach?

JOSEPH

Judo.

Ishikawa nods approvingly.

ISHIKAWA

Have you visited the Kodokan in  
Toyko?

JOSEPH

(sadly)

No, I've never been to Japan.  
Perhaps one day.

MARIE

What's the Kodokan?

JOSEPH

Where the first judo classes were  
taught. It's a world center for  
judo players.

ISHIKAWA

The arts of the samurai and the  
arts of the garden.

(sadly)

Both can create beautiful lives.

OLD DAD

Beauty. How can one put stock in  
beauty. It appears momentarily, and  
disappears just as quickly, leaving  
nothing but a fading memory?

JOSEPH

Whole civilizations appear and dis-  
appear while beauty continues.

OLD DAD

Philosophical pandering. Wealth and  
power drive civilization. Art fol-  
lows in their wake.

JOSEPH

Horseshit. Burckhardt proved--

OLD DAD

NONSENSE.

Toni tries to keep from laughing at Old Dad's sudden  
angry display. Hewie grins like a kid at a puppet show.  
Joseph has his hands in his lap and, as Marie can see,  
they are clamped into fists.

OLD DAD

(continuing)

Art couldn't exist without

responsible people guiding it in the proper direction.

JOSEPH

Yeah, propaganda that glorifies smug, cynical bastards like you.

They glare at each other.

CLAIRE

How about a few hands of bridge?

The tension eases for a moment. Then Toni speaks.

TONI

Mister Jordan, have you ever actually had to protect yourself in the street?

MARIE

Can't you stop being a bitch for the length of a meal?

TONI

Sister dear, everyone's finished dining.

DANIEL

Toni, a man shouldn't have to roll in the dirt to prove himself.

TONI

But, Daniel, action in battle reveals one's true self, doesn't it? Just for the sake of argument--

MARIE

SHUT UP.

There's another brief quiet.

HEWIE

(angrily)  
Joseph killed an armed robber with a single blow.

One of Joseph's arms snaps up, as if to ward off a blow. The others are startled. He lowers his arm slowly, then grits his teeth and stares at the table.

HEWIE

(continuing; proudly)  
It was a convenience store robbery.

Two gunmen in masks came in while Joseph was there. He disabled one and killed the other.

Joseph glances at Marie, then looks away.

DANIEL

Superb.

CLARE

The courage it took.

Toni has been taken by surprise. There's almost a look of wonder on her face. It's quickly hidden.

OLD DAD

(reluctantly)

It was well done.

JOSEPH

(shaken)

My actions were the result of training. Mere reaction. I struck one in the throat and he asphyxiated. He was fifteen. I interceded only because the other one--on probation for rape--was about to shoot the store owner for the hell of it.

TONI

Magnificent.

JOSEPH

The boy who died was fifteen years old.

TONI

Did he have a gun?

JOSEPH

Yes, but--

TONI

(interrupting)

Then it was his own fault.

OLD DAD

Quite right.

TONI

But let's go back to an earlier topic. Beauty.

Marie stiffens.

HEWIE

Would you shut up?

DANIEL

Toni.

TONI

But we have an expert on beauty at the table. Marie is an artist. She made great personal sacrifices for her art. She even produced and starred in a porno film, which demonstrates how far she'll sacrifice personal dignity to art.

Joseph turns to Marie. With chin out, trembling, she stares back.

JOSEPH

That must have been a time of great pain.

TONI

There might have been some physical discomfort, but at least she wasn't lonely.

Christina enters.

CHRISTINA

I'm so sorry for being delayed. How is everything?

OLD DAD

Fine, Christina. Just fine.

INT JOSEPH'S ROOM LATE NIGHT

Joseph enters. He is exhausted and confused.

JOSEPH

Medication. First, I'll medicate, then I'll meditate. Can't think any further.

Joseph stops. Toni sits on his bed, nude, with the SHEETS barely covering her thighs.

JOSEPH

(continuing)

You and Marie seem to have a lot in

common.

She licks a finger and thumb, then slowly wets and pinches both nipples.

TONI  
Ready for dessert?

JOSEPH  
I'm not up to it.

TONI  
I can get you up.

JOSEPH  
(rambling)  
It's not that you're not beautiful,  
and sexy, because you are...

TONI  
Is it because I'm dangerous? I am.

JOSEPH  
I don't doubt it, Mistress. But,  
please, no.

TONI  
You don't want me? Rather Marie? Is  
the old and dissipated more to your  
taste?

JOSEPH  
She is neither. Look. Please. I  
can't think.

Toni stands and walks to him.

TONI  
Are you sure you don't want me?

JOSEPH  
(urgently)  
Yes. No. I don't want you. I mean I  
don't want to have sex with you.

She snaps a solid right his jaw. He is dazed. Then she pushes him to the floor. Sweeping her clothes from a chair, she runs from the room shouting.

TONI  
Rape! Rape! Help! Rape!

INT ESTATE INDOOR POOL EARLY MORNING

Christina speaks as Georgina does with her water exercises. Paulette attends Georgina as needed.

CHRISTINA

Joseph didn't seem to mind being hit as much as being accused of something he hadn't done.

GEORGIE

Who doesn't?

CHRISTINA

As a child, Toni was always claiming someone had cursed her or hit her or stolen a toy.

GEORGIE

Got away with it, too.

CHRISTINA

Well, no one believed her last night. After Toni had raised the household, Mister Lanceleit, who usually defends anything she does, told her to shut up and let people sleep.

Georgina laughs, choking slightly on the water.

CHRISTINA

(continuing)

Poor Joseph was completely disoriented. Marie came to his defense immediately.

GEORGIE

Interesting.

CHRISTINA

Yes. Hewie ran to me this morning because Joseph spoke of leaving. Who could blame him? With Mister Lanceleit's abrasive behavior at dinner and Toni's absurdity afterwards. Not to mention Marie's escapade on his first night here.

Georgina finishes her exercises, and Paulette helps her from the pool into a wheelchair.

GEORGIE

It's hard to credit that all her

pyschological evaluations have shown her as little more than high-spirited.

CHRISTINA

Yes, it is.

GEORGIE

And you say Marie defended him?

CHRISTINA

According to Hewie, whom I think is a bit jealous.

GEORGIE

Oh?

CHRISTINA

Hewie brought home a friend to impress his family, only for his family to take away his friend.

GEORGIE

He'll get over it. You say Joseph never drinks?

CHRISTINA

He was responsible for the care of an alcoholic relative as a teenager, so Hewie says. It left a mark. Besides, he takes strong prescription medication.

GEORGIE

(musing)

Do you think Joseph is attracted to Marie?

CHRISTINA

I'd say he respects certain of her qualities.

GEORGIE

An alcoholic and a cranky monk. Well, girl, that's a beginning.  
(winks)

I have a notion.

INT ESTATE ART STUDIO MORNING

Marie sullenly nurses a drink. Christina enters. Their footsteps echo as they walk.

MARIE

You've had them keep the room clean  
and the supplies fresh.

CHRISTINA

In case you wanted to work.

MARIE

Yeah, I'll just crap on a canvas.  
That'll excite the critics.

CHRISTINA

Please, dear.

MARIE

Okay, Momma, no disgusting images  
before noon.

CHRISTINA

I've come about a matter that can  
not be put off.

MARIE

Death?

CHRISTINA

Toni's wedding.

MARIE

(nodding)  
Hypocrisy.

Christina pauses.

MARIE

(continuing)  
Go ahead, Momma, I'm listening.

CHRISTINA

This incident of the other night--  
naked and intoxicated on the front  
lawn--is typical. A little alcohol  
is like lighting a fuse.

MARIE

I need protection from the  
stupidity and flatulence that fill  
Toni's parties.

CHRISTINA

Yes, dear.

MARIE

What am I supposed to do? Move off the Estate?

CHRISTINA

Yes, dear. At least, temporarily.

MARIE

That's like tearing me out of the family album.

CHRISTINA

Please don't exaggerate. You were always so responsible as a child.

Although not in the habit of touching her children, Christina steps closer to Marie.

CHRISTINA

(continuing)

You are flesh of my flesh, and will always be part of this family. But we cannot have you getting drunk and swimming with the fishes on the Toni's wedding day. Besides, you killed the last batch of fish that way.

MARIE

Fine. If that's what you want.

CHRISTINA

It's not quite all, dear.

Marie waits.

CHRISTINA

(continuing)

Georgina and I have been discussing the matter, and we feel you should have a companion until the wedding.

MARIE

A bodyguard? Someone to snatch drinks out of my hands?

CHRISTINA

No, dear, we simply want to provide you with a stabilizing influence.

MARIE

Who?

CHRISTINA

Someone we think you respect.

MARIE

Who?

CHRISTINA

Mister Jordan.

MARIE

(stunned)

Joseph?

CHRISTINA

I've spoken with him, and he has agreed.

MARIE

Are you paying him to do this?

CHRISTINA

Yes, of course, dear.

MARIE

I thought he didn't like money.  
What a hypocrite!

CHRISTINA

His exact words were, "If she can stand me, I can stand her."

MARIE

Terrific.

CHRISTINA

Anyway, Hewie says that Joseph has some rather unfortunate medical expenses.

MARIE

He won't take money for helping me, but he'll take it for keeping me on a chain.

CHRISTINA

(exasperated)

I'm sorry, Marie, but we didn't put that terrible chain around your neck.

MARIE

Jesus Christ!

Marie paces the room, spilling her drink at every turn,

nodding her head in an internal debate as she strides back and forth.

CHRISTINA

Forgive me, dear--

MARIE

(interrupting)

I agree. If we do as I say.

CHRISTINA

How do you mean?

MARIE

We'll fly to London and won't return until the wedding. We'll use my flat.

CHRISTINA

Very well, I'll speak to Mister Jordan.

MARIE

Swell. I'll pack my whips.

INT PRIVATE JET LATE MORNING

Marie, drunk, is enjoying the sensation of flying. Joseph is rooted in a chair. They are alone.

MARIE

Mister Dowd. That's what I'll call you, the rabbit's drunken buddy.

(in a baritone)

Mister Nice Guy. Mister Perfect.

JOSEPH

What do I call you?

MARIE

Whatever.

JOSEPH

That's not very fashionable.

This strikes her as so funny that she spills most of her drink. She rings for the female FLIGHT ATTENDANT who quickly appears.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Yes, Ms. Blanchard?

MARIE

Call me Marie, Goddammit. Georgina  
is Ms. Blanchard.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Yes, Marie.

She holds up her glass and shakes it. Joseph looks at  
the attendant, who thinks he wants something.

MARIE

Keep the fuck away from him. He's  
mine, not yours. Built like a  
horse. Could make love to an  
elephant.

She winks at Joseph as the attendant exits.

MARIE

(continuing; winks)  
Free advertising, Mister Dowd.

JOSEPH

A little too free.

MARIE

Pardon me all to hell.

The attendant returns with a drink.

MARIE

(continuing)  
Thanks, honey. Forget what I said  
about Mister Dowd here. Actually  
he's no bigger than my little  
finger. But you keep off him.

The attendant smiles tightly and exits.

MARIE

(continuing)  
Suit you any better?

JOSEPH

I'll have to admit the first was  
more impressive.

MARIE

Wishey-washey, Mister Dowd. Wishey-  
washey.

Standing, Marie starts down the aisle but immediately  
returns.

MARIE  
(continuing)  
There's something we gotta get  
straight.

JOSEPH  
Yeah?

MARIE  
I'm going to the restroom.

JOSEPH  
I'll have the pilot announce it.

MARIE  
When I come back, I'm going to take  
a nap. A nice, long nap.

JOSEPH  
Best idea you've had.

MARIE  
What I want to know is...why in  
hell did you agree? I'm gonna make  
you earn it. But why the hell did  
you do it? The money, I mean.

JOSEPH  
I couldn't find any reason not to.

MARIE  
Well, that flatters me all to hell.

JOSEPH  
Besides, your mother needed the  
help. I wanted to help her.

MARIE  
Momma's a right good man.

JOSEPH  
And I thought I might be able to  
help you.

She is momentarily speechless.

MARIE  
I don't need...ANYBODY'S HELP.

She exits.

JOSEPH  
I need all I can get.

INT LONDON TAXI AFTERNOON

Joseph and Marie sit in the rear as the taxi rolls through the streets. Joseph stares out the window. Marie, sobered greatly, searches the sidewalks as if trying to find someone she knows.

EXT ST. STEPHEN WALBROOK

The taxi stops before a small stone building with a dome that is partially obscured by workmen's canvases. Marie hops out immediately.

MARIE

Come on, they'll be closing for the day soon.

Joseph follows her up the stone steps.

INT ST. STEPHEN WALBROOK

Marie and Joseph enter quietly. No one else is in sight. She steps as if treading on eggshells.

MARIE

This is St. Stephen Walbrook. It's a city church. By Wren.

Columns follow the roundness of the dome in an open circle. Simple, wooden chairs fan around the center facing inward.

MARIE

(continuing)

I always make pilgrimage here first.

The carved wooden pulpit, lovely but not elaborate, sits at the edge of the circle facing inward, as if to share the space and not to dominate it.

MARIE

(continuing)

It restoreth my soul.

In the center lies a huge, round, roughly-shaped marble weighing at least a ton that, by its very circular mass, binds the entire building into a single artwork. It's an intimate and human church.

They sit. She is still. He studies her.

INT MARIE'S FLAT EVENING

The flat is one flight up with a bath, kitchen, and two rooms, one with a couch, TV and vcr, the other with two single beds. There are wide, tall windows in each room.

Paper and pens, as well as other paraphenalia of the artist, lie about. Rough studies are haphazardly pinned to the walls. Liquor, videotapes, etc., are scattered across the top of a work table.

MARIE (O.S.)  
We're home, dear.

Marie enters, followed by Joseph with the luggage. While he dumps his luggage on one bed, she pours herself a drink.

MARIE  
(continuing)  
Anything to say about our little love nest?

JOSEPH  
Are these yours?

Marie stalks to the drawings, rips them down, and tears them to pieces. He is shocked.

JOSEPH  
(continuing)  
Don't do that. Please, let me have them.

She collects the pieces and stuffs them into a garbage bin.

MARIE  
You want art? I'll show you art.

Knocking the videotapes around, she finds one and goes to the TV room.

MARIE  
(continuing)  
Come on.

Turning on the TV and VCR, she puts in the tape, and then points to the couch.

MARIE  
(continuing)  
Sit.

Joseph obeys. Sitting as close to him as she can without being in his lap, she grips his arm as if to keep him, or perhaps herself, from escaping.

MARIE  
(continuing; hoarsely)  
Here we go.

The tape begins. They are images of MEN and WOMEN at a costume party wearing outrageous and ribald costumes. A YOUNG MARIE appears, dressed in little more than sheer lace and feathers, with a young STUD in hot pursuit.

MARIE  
(continuing)  
That's me. Can you believe it?

A WOMAN dressed in tights affixed, with an overcoat hiding a fake penis and pubic hair, flashes the guests.

JOSEPH  
Who are these people?

MARIE  
Who do you think? They're porn stars. Pardon me, adult film stars.

JOSEPH  
Could you loosen your grip? My arm is going numb.

MARIE  
Sorry.

Young Marie quarrels with the stud.

Marie no longer looks at the screen.

Various ADULT STARS group for a variety sexual gymnastics.

Joseph watches but occasionally resorts to deep breathing.

Young Marie wrestles with the stud. Her comparatively mild scenes, unlike the graphic ones with the porn stars, are beautifully shot.

Joseph looks at Marie, who stares at the floor.

The video ends and she cuts off the TV. Then she sits on a small table in front of Joseph and leans forward with her arms on his legs.

MARIE

Like it?

JOSEPH

Very good. Weren't you making a point about men and women?

MARIE

Yeah, they fit together so well. In so many ways.

She climbs on his lap.

JOSEPH

I mean, weren't you trying to make a serious point?

MARIE

Memory fades, probably. The important thing is, did you get horny? Did it excite you?

JOSEPH

That's what they're supposed to do.

MARIE

Answer the question.

JOSEPH

Yes. I got excited.

MARIE

Then let's do it.

JOSEPH

No.

MARIE

No?

JOSEPH

No.

She slaps him. Fire blazes in his eyes and he stands.

JOSEPH

(continuing)

You and your sister share extremely

irritating habits.

He exits toward the bedroom. Marie follows.

MARIE

Why push me away? Because I drink?

JOSEPH

Because I'm not A GODDAMN ANIMAL ON  
A LEASH.

He slams the door.

MARIE

No, you're a FUCKING MARBLE PILLAR.

INT OLD DAD'S ESTATE OFFICE AFTERNOON

His office is a claustrophobic, little hole, where Old Dad can imagine himself chairman, emperor, god. He enters and slams the door. Crossing to his desk, he throws down heavy paper folders.

TONI (O.S.)

My, my, you're really a bear today.

Toni emerges from a deep shadow cast by a heavy metal file cabinet. He glares angrily.

TONI

(continuing)

Careful. You might let an honest feeling slip out.

Old Dad's expression turns into a casual sneer as he settles on his throne.

OLD DAD

What do you want?

TONI

To needle you. Needling you is one of the trivial pleasures of my life. And you deserve it, you nasty old man.

OLD DAD

Nasty! I'm ambitious, I'm practical. You're the one who's little more than a whore.

TONI

Baby, you make me hot when you talk

dirty.

He scowls.

TONI

(continuing)

I think of myself as a trained weapon. You aim me at a target. I snare'em, fuck'em, extort'em. It's been an invigorating relationship. Don't spoil it by being a hypocrite.

She places a finger on his lips as he begins to reply.

TONI

(continuing)

Your personal life is that of a virtuous schoolboy. "Great pleasures make great sins." Or some such Puritanical crap.

OLD DAD

Great pleasures rarely go unpunished.

She makes a dismissive gesture.

TONI

By the by, why so irate just now?

OLD DAD

Those servants were whispering about "Ms. Marie and her lover". How dare they gossip about their employers. Who cares if it's true? If I had control, they'd know their place.

TONI

What fun would that be?

OLD DAD

Christina coddles these fools. Soon, she'll have us serving them.

TONI

Horrors. And what if that Mister Jordan--just another servant, after all--were to spawn a few brats out of Marie. Who knows how far from the corporate throne you'd be pushed?

He is deadly silent. She prepares to go.

TONI

(continuing)

My dear, you've maneuvered yourself into leverage position. The throne awaits. But then, how much longer before Georgina retires? A hundred years? Two hundred? Bye!

She exits. Old Dad sits motionless in the glare of the work light on his desk.

OLD DAD

We'll see who shivers in the cold.

EXT ESTATE GROUNDS

Georgina and Christina have tea and pastries. Georgie relishes her pastries. Christina, sitting quietly, eats none.

GEORGIE

I've been considering Toni.

CHRISTINA

Toni?

GEORGIE

We don't discuss her much these days. But I've begun to feel that that was a sore mistake.

CHRISTINA

How do you mean?

GEORGIE

Her pretense to an aggressive self-sufficiency. It's lulled us. Lulled me. In reality, she has a very fragile personality.

CHRISTINA

She's been evaluated several times. We've done everything the doctors advised.

GEORGIE

True enough. But doctors, as well as the vaunted institution of modern medical science, do occasionally make mistakes. You've

already lost one child to their arrogance.

CHRISTINA

Yes, I lost Jeff. But should I blame the doctors? They tried to help. Perhaps, they didn't know enough at that time.

Georgina regrets what she's said, but Christina interrupts her before she can speak.

CHRISTINA

(continuing)

I'm an ignorant woman, Georgina. A waitress when I married into the Blanchard family, and little more than that I am still.

GEORGIE

Hardly so, my girl.

CHRISTINA

With proper education, I might have dealt with those complex tortures of the mind that took my Jeff. As it is, I can only accept and go on.

GEORGIE

As you say.

CHRISTINA

We've strayed. Why do you mention Toni?

GEORGIE

Because of Joseph, I think. Yes, Christina, because of Joseph. Something about him prompts me to reflection.

CHRISTINA

He's an unusual person.

GEORGIE

He has--he has sparked a sense of guilt in me.

CHRISTINA

For what, dear?

GEORGIE

For not making certain of the ones

I love most.

She glances at the empty pastry plate.

GEORGIE

(continuing)

I'll have to swim for a solid month to work off this indulgence. Christina, I feel something venomous and reptilian slithering under the surface of our garden. We must look to it.

INT MARIE'S FLAT NIGHT

Neither Marie nor Joseph can sleep. Joseph has transferred to the couch. Marie paces the bedroom. The door is closed between them.

Joseph lies on his back with his knees bent. His arms wrap around his legs, pulling them tightly to his chest. He rocks back and forth.

JOSEPH

It won't stop.

In her room, Marie turns out the light and lies on one of the two beds. She is still for a moment. Then she twists into another position. Suddenly, she rolls out of bed and turns the lights back on.

She snatches up paper and pencil and tries to sketch. After a few quick strokes, she tears up the page and starts over. This repeats, and she tosses away the pencil and paper. Making a drink, she wipes away tears of frustration.

MARIE

How can I work in these circumstances? People waiting for me to make a mistake.

Joseph sits up and smacks his head with the palms of his hands. Then he grips his hair, hides his face with his forearms, and curls into a ball.

JOSEPH

(sing-song)

Pain pain, go away.  
Don't come back  
Any other day.

He rocks.

JOSEPH

That fool waiter--it wasn't my  
fault. Old Dad--what a  
sanctimonious pinhead. Oh, God.  
Marie, Marie, aren't we a pair?

He hops up and paces. Then he sits against a wall,  
"hiding". He wipes his eyes and crosses his arms  
tightly against his chest. Finally, he closes his eyes  
and sings low.

JOSEPH

(continuing)

I can see clearly now  
The rain's gone  
I see all obstacles  
In my way  
All of the dark clouds have  
Passed me by

It's gonna be a  
bright bright bright  
Sunshiny day

INT MARIE'S FLAT MORNING

Rising early, Marie sits beside Joseph and watches him  
sleep. Her eyes are dark and tired. He lies pale and  
twitching in the morning light, as an animal does in  
sleep.

MARIE

I do not need to become involved  
with another man.

She gives him a good shake.

MARIE

(continuing)

Daylight's wastin'.

His fingers open in a spasm, then press into a fist.

MARIE

(continuing)

Shall I go forth alone, nanny dear-  
est? Who'll protect my mythical  
virtue?

Joseph opens his eyes, but they are void of content. He  
tries to speak but his tongue and lips do not function

correctly.

JOSEPH  
Clast goin' me?

MARIE  
What?

JOSEPH  
Been gar mosee dif.

MARIE  
Joseph, what's wrong?

She checks his forehead for temperature.

JOSEPH  
Not well speak. Early day.

MARIE  
Are you okay? Do you need anything?

JOSEPH  
New brain.  
(laughs)  
Be good.

She picks up the telephone, but his hand lightly touches her.

JOSEPH  
Wait.

She puts the phone down.

JOSEPH  
Not serious. Eat. Caffeine. Be  
okay. Okay?

MARIE  
You're the nanny.

He grins.

INT STREETSIDE EATERY

Marie and Joseph finish breakfast.

JOSEPH  
I'm sorry if I alarmed you. I have  
a bipolar mood disorder. It  
flusters the brain, affects  
judgment, confuses speech.

MARIE

Bipolar? Like manic depression?

JOSEPH

(continuing)

Sneakier. More erratic. Only recently diagnosed. I'm still in a kind of transition phase. I've spent most my life being ignorant of my own infirmity. What a mess.

MARIE

I can identify with that. Does the medication help?

JOSEPH

Sure. With medication, I have a chance for a real life. Not just day to day survival.

He drains his coffee.

JOSEPH

What's on the agenda?

MARIE

What would you like to do?

JOSEPH

Me?

MARIE

Is there someone else I'd be speaking to?

JOSEPH

Good point.

MARIE

Well?

JOSEPH

I like Michelangelo's sculptures.

MARIE

You show unexpected taste. What else?

JOSEPH

I enjoy studying ancient cultures. To see how they persist into the present.

MARIE

England's the place for that. It's full of ancient crap. How about the Tower of London this morning, Michelangelo this afternoon, and Bath tomorrow.

JOSEPH

Bath?

MARIE

It's a town. They stash old Roman ruins in the ground there.

JOSEPH

Okay.

MARIE

Let's go.

EXT BAKER STREET UNDERGROUND STATION

Leading Joseph at a fast clip, Marie enters the station from a crowded street.

INT UNDERGROUND TRAIN

Marie and Joseph stand amid a CROWD. Neither says anything. She glances at him surreptitiously.

INT UNDERGROUND COMPLEX

Marie changes from one station to another without hesitation with Joseph scurrying behind.

INT TOWER HILL STATION

Marie leads Joseph from the train as soon as the doors start to open.

MARIE

Stop dawdling.

EXT TOWER OF LONDON

The rigid complex is a double-walled square of fortified stone. Marie leads down a path. Joseph follows while hurriedly glancing through a guide book.

MARIE

An impressive pile, what?

JOSEPH  
(reading)  
"The Princes in the Bloody Tower."  
"Colonel Blood and the Crown Jew-  
els."

MARIE  
Forget the bloody jewels. You want  
to see the past in the present?  
Follow me, Watson.

JOSEPH  
Okay, Sherlock.

INT THE WHITE TOWER

Marie wanders through the various chambers with Joseph.

MARIE  
The White Tower has an enormous  
collection of ancient weaponry—for  
slicing and dicing people. I knew  
you'd want to see it.

JOSEPH  
How thoughtful.

There are crossbows by the score and dozens of saddles,  
spurs, lances, pollaxes, and rifles. A whimsical group  
of pistols have faces carved on the butts. Of course,  
there are suits of armour made for knights, kings, and  
their horses.

JOSEPH  
(continuing)  
Look at this guy.

He indicates a jester's suit of armor. It is complete  
with mock ram's horns and pince-nez glasses.

MARIE  
Court jester.

JOSEPH  
Reminds me of Old Dad.

Marie laughs loudly, and TOURISTS stare. Joseph slips  
away to another exhibit case. Puzzled, he stares at the  
case until Marie joins him.

JOSEPH  
(continuing)

What's this?

MARIE

What do you think?

JOSEPH

I don't know.

In the display case set two suits of armor. One is full-sized, the other much smaller. The smaller suit was made for a four or five year old child.

MARIE

Father and son.

Attached to a stone wall hangs what might be a gigantic mouse trap. Fascinated, Joseph studies a sign placed beside it.

SIGN READS: "BEAR TRAP".

INT PUB NOON

Marie sips a large beer, while Joseph has a glass of water. She makes a face whenever drinking.

MARIE

Nothing more romantic than killing machines all in a row.

Joseph is too thirsty to answer. He drinks the entire glass of water. She watches incredulously but says nothing.

MARIE

(continuing)

What did you think of the future?

JOSEPH

Future?

MARIE

Past, present, future--you'll always find killing machines.

JOSEPH

That's paltry cynicism.

MARIE

Everybody says I'm a cynic. What impressed you the most?

JOSEPH

You're not a cynic, you're a frustrated idealist.

MARIE  
(irritated)  
Answer my question.

JOSEPH  
What was the question?

MARIE  
What impressed you the most?

JOSEPH  
The bear trap.

MARIE  
Bear trap?

JOSEPH  
Yes.

MARIE  
Do I have to ask why?

JOSEPH  
You don't know?

MARIE  
I wouldn't ask if I knew.

JOSEPH  
They didn't use it on bears. They used it to catch poachers. Men. Maimed for life over a rabbit, a deer, or a bird.

MARIE  
What about all those wicked fighting instruments? You're a trained fighter. What did you think?

JOSEPH  
I don't know.  
(frowning)  
I couldn't help wondering if they put the same effort into making scalpels and bedpans.

Marie laughs uproariously. The CROWD in the pub looks. Joseph, embarrassed, waits for her to stop laughing.

JOSEPH  
(continuing)  
Marie, it wasn't that funny. It  
wasn't even a joke.

She can't stop laughing.

JOSEPH  
(continuing)  
Should I jot it down for future  
reference?

He props his chin in his hand and waits. She runs down.

MARIE  
(gasping)  
Thank you. Thank you, Joseph. I  
haven't laughed like that in a long  
time.

JOSEPH  
Glad to be of service.

Marie wipes her eyes.

JOSEPH  
(continuing)  
The Tower of London is no St.  
Stephen Walbrook. Kind of the  
opposite.

MARIE  
I guess St. Stephen needs its  
stones soaked in blood to give it  
romance.

JOSEPH  
Mind if I ask you a personal ques-  
tion? Something off the subject of  
blood and killing.

MARIE  
What?

JOSEPH  
Why don't you go back to painting?

MARIE  
That's too personal.

She takes a big drink.

MARIE

(continuing)  
You want to see Michelangelo's work  
some time this decade?

JOSEPH  
Yes, Mistress.

MARIE  
Then move it.

She exits.

JOSEPH  
And I thought I was scared.

INT VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM AFTERNOON

Marie and Joseph stand before plaster casts of the  
"David",  
"Moses", "Medici Brothers", and "Angry and Dying  
Slaves".

MARIE  
Plaster cast models.

JOSEPH  
Marvelous.

MARIE  
Ain't it though.

There is a bench for studying the "David" at close  
quarters. Marie sits and stares at his feet.

MARIE  
(continuing)  
Great toes.

In silence, Joseph slowly examines the figures. Marie  
looks at her watch.

WATCH READS: ONE THIRTY.

Joseph stands at a distance from the "Slaves" to com-  
pare them. Marie looks at her watch.

WATCH READS: TWO TEN.

Joseph stands in front of the "Moses". Marie sits with  
her hand hiding the "David" from view. She looks at her  
watch.

WATCH READS: TWO FORTY-FIVE.

She exits. Surprised, Joseph glances at the figures, then follows.

EXT VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

Joseph catches up to Marie and walks beside her.

JOSEPH  
What's wrong?

MARIE  
You stay, I've got to walk.

JOSEPH  
I want to go with you.

EXT MAIN THOROUGHFARE

They walk quickly down the sidewalk.

JOSEPH  
Are you in training?

MARIE  
What?

JOSEPH  
Slow down.

MARIE  
Sorry.

She slows down. He takes her hand as they walk.

JOSEPH  
Why did you leave?

MARIE  
He's too damned perfect.

JOSEPH  
Who?

MARIE  
Michelangelo.

JOSEPH  
His work is perfect. Not Michelangelo.

MARIE  
That's a real comfort.

INT RESTAURANT

Marie and Joseph enter a restaurant and are led to a table. A WAITRESS gives them menus.

MARIE  
Whiskey and soda.

WAITRESS  
Sir?

JOSEPH  
Water.

WAITRESS  
Lager?

JOSEPH  
Tap water.

MARIE  
Like horses drink. Big horses.

WAITRESS  
Oh, excuse me.

Waitress exits.

MARIE  
You made an impression there.

He shrugs as he looks over the menu.

JOSEPH  
Why did you leave?

MARIE  
Don't give up, do you?

JOSEPH  
Not easily.

MARIE  
Bad memories. Michelangelo's work reminds me in nasty detail of every incomplete, unfinished, worthless day.

The waitress sets the drinks down.

WAITRESS  
Would you like to order?

MARIE

I'd like a perfect life. To go.

JOSEPH

What's the special?

WAITRESS

Sea bass.

JOSEPH

Two orders, please.

MARIE

And another of these.

She holds up the whiskey. The waitress exits.

JOSEPH

Tell me about it.

MARIE

What?

JOSEPH

The bad memories. Or did you forget?

MARIE

You don't leave a girl any privacy.

JOSEPH

That cuts two ways.

MARIE

Not a lot to say. I worshipped art. Unfortunately, all the artists I met were only concerned with their reputations. And then I met my husband.

JOSEPH

Husband?

MARIE

My first and only. The taste of copulation by formal contract was bitter enough to cure me for life.

The waitress brings their food as well as Marie's whiskey, lays it out, and exits.

MARIE

(continuing)  
My loving husband. He's an artist,  
too. He talked me into financing an  
"adult" film. In order to  
"transcend the boundaries of  
bourgeois convention." I was young,  
daring, idealistic. Stupid.

She takes a stiff drink.

JOSEPH  
Christina feels a profound  
satisfaction with her gardens at  
the  
Estate. Is that how your artwork is  
for you?

(CONTI

NUED)

MARIE  
It was.

JOSEPH  
Then why don't you go back to  
painting?

MARIE  
Why the hell am I supposed to go  
back to puttering with paints and  
brushes? You can't control your own  
life and you're trying to run mine.  
Am I a machine? I've lost--

She chokes off. PATRONS look. Wiping her eyes, she  
points a finger at him.

MARIE  
You're so damned concerned about my  
"art", you can be my goddamn mod-  
el. You'll pose in the nude and  
I'll sketch your hairy ass.

She exits. Joseph stands to follow. The patrons are a  
bit surprised. He looks around, then speaks.

JOSEPH  
Please don't tell anyone that I  
have a hairy ass.

INT MARIE'S FLAT LATE AFTERNOON

Marie throws open the door to the flat, retrieves her  
sketch materials from the bedroom, and sets up in the  
next room.

Joseph waits.

MARIE

Strip.

He strips. At a wide window ledge, she sits and takes a pose leaning to one side. The light streams across her body dramatically.

MARIE

(continuing)

Like this.

He goes to the window.

MARIE

(continuing)

Nice butt.

JOSEPH

My mother bragged about my butt.  
And my teeth.

Sitting, he imitates her pose. She sketches quickly outlining his figure.

MARIE

Not bulky. Lean, like Hewie.

JOSEPH

Thanks.

MARIE

Shut up, I'm just talking.

JOSEPH

I understand.

The sketch does not go right. Marie rips it up. The shredded paper falls to the floor. Another sketch is started. It doesn't go right and is torn apart. A series of sketches find their way to the floor.

Joseph, uncomfortable, massages his legs and buttocks.

MARIE

What're you doing? Stay still.

JOSEPH

(growling)

I'm trying to massage the blood  
back into my butt.

MARIE  
(shouting)  
STOP MOVING AROUND.

More torn sketches fall to the floor. Finally, Marie stands unmoving and silent amid the shreds of her drawings. Turning away, she exits into the bedroom and shuts the door.

The direct sunlight is gone. Joseph steps from the window and looks over the sea of torn paper. Picking up a piece, he slowly tears it in two.

JOSEPH  
Our lives can become so scattered.

INT TRAIN TO BATH LATE MORNING

The train pulls away from the station. Marie sits on the aisle, Joseph sits next to the window. She fidgets.

MARIE  
Bath was built over a naturally heated spring that the Celts thought sacred.

She fidgets.

MARIE  
(continuing)  
If it turns you on, we can go to Avebury, Stonehenge, Canterbury, Warwick. Britain's full of moldy junk.

She glances at him nervously.

MARIE  
Since fucking doesn't do it for you, we might as well travel.

JOSEPH  
I like fucking. But it's nothing compared to making love.

She hides her embarrassment with a cough.

MARIE  
Whatever.

INT GEORGIE'S COTTAGE EARLY MORNING

Hewie sits opposite Georgie.

GEORGIE

There are a few questions about Toni, for which I believe you have answers, Hewie.

HEWIE

Yes, Georgie?

GEORGIE

I especially wish to discuss her life before Mister Lanceleit came to work for us.

HEWIE

Before Old Dad?

GEORGIE

I suspect you know more about the things Toni did during that period than her mother does.

HEWIE

Toni did make things rather hard for Mother.

GEORGIE

How?

HEWIE

She was always been something of a monster. Then she got bumpier and more clever.

GEORGIE

Go on.

HEWIE

As you know, Toni's at her best when she's with her horses. They seem to bring out the human in her.

GEORGIE

Christina told me that's why she enlarged the stables. The horses seemed to make contact where people didn't. But are there any circumstances that your mother might not know about?

He hesitates.

GEORGIE

(continuing)  
Spit it out, dear. It's important.

HEWIE

She has no conscience. If Toni wants something, she takes it. I don't have anything she wants, so she doesn't bother me. Besides, I don't take her seriously. But Mother can't accept that Toni has no conscience.

GEORGIE

I see.

HEWIE

Then, of course, she ran with those damned juvenile delinquents. They came from all the best families. Called themselves "The Group". Burglarized houses, smashed cars, all in a twisted game of one-ups-man-ship. That's when Old Dad stepped in.

GEORGIE

What did he do?

HEWIE

He took Toni's infractions off Mother's back. Mother had quite enough problems as it was with Marie and the Estate. And the police had become involved. Old Dad made it all go away.

GEORGIE

There were psychiatric evaluations, I believe.

HEWIE

She went to some psychiatrists, but I doubt that the original reports ever saw the light of day.

GEORGIE

Very good, Hewie. That is extremely helpful. There's another matter. How old are you?

HEWIE

(surprised)  
Twenty-seven.

GEORGIE  
I see, almost thirty.

HEWIE  
I suppose.

GEORGIE  
In that case, what I would like to know is: what are going to do with your life?

HEWIE  
I hadn't really, you know, thought it out.

GEORGIE  
Then I suggest that you start thinking it out!

He looks at her for a moment, then grins.

HEWIE  
You're tough, sarge.

GEORGIE  
I'm gonna straighten your ass out.

INT TRAIN SEAT LATE MORNING

They are on the train to Bath. Joseph dozes lightly. Marie sits beside him.

MARIE  
This man sleeps all the time. What kind of drugs is he on?

She stares out the window. Above the horizon is a massive, dark cloud. The ground beneath it seems a solid mass. Between them, tiny buildings sit on the horizon.

MARIE  
(continuing)  
We'll be crushed between earth and sky.

She exits.

INT TRAIN TOILET

Marie holds onto the sink. Tears are on her cheeks.

MARIE

I will not cry.

She pounds the wall in frustration.

INT TRAIN SEAT

Returning to her seat, she finds Joseph awake and staring at a nuclear power plant.

JOSEPH

Look, Marie, all these little farms. Then, bang, this huge nuclear plant.

Seeing how pale she is, he spontaneously strokes her cheek. She is embarrassed.

JOSEPH

(continuing)

Are you okay?

MARIE

Talk about yourself. What was your father like?

JOSEPH

Why?

MARIE

Just talk.

JOSEPH

(reluctantly)

My father was a werewolf.

MARIE

I never met anyone who was a mythological figure.

JOSEPH

The werewolf is a person caught by an irresistible force. It seeks to destroy the ones it loves most.

MARIE

So how do you live with a werewolf?

JOSEPH

Cautiously. That is, until you become the werewolf.

MARIE

What happened to him?

JOSEPH

Alzheimer's. And a series of strokes.

He considers the rich lands they're passing.

JOSEPH

He was the most creative man I've ever known. But he was subject to rages, which he explained away by saying that people "irritated" him. What was your father like, Marie?

MARIE

Died young. He was a drifter.

JOSEPH

Like you?

MARIE

I don't drift. I take the path of least pain.

He stares out the window.

JOSEPH

Hewie drifts a bit, too. Is he like his father?

MARIE

Hewie inherited all the talent in the world. My father inherited money and absolutely no talent. Hewie can do anything, then he gets bored and quits. All my father could do was find his own limitations.

JOSEPH

I see.

MARIE

What do you regret most?

JOSEPH

That my father and I were not diagnosed early. Pain and confusion ruled our lives. We've spent our precious few moments stumbling in the dark. Stumbling about fighting bears in the dark.

INT GYMNASIUM EARLY MORNING

Using boxing hand techniques and full-contact karate foot techniques, Toni pounds a canvas body bag with both hands and feet. A buzzer sounds and she stops.

Hewie emerges from a weight room and disappears into the men's showers. Toni smacks the bag idly, then grins.

INT MEN'S SHOWERS

Hewie washes. Toni enters, strips, and slips into the shower with him. Surprised, he steps back.

HEWIE

Dammit, Toni. Just what in hell do you think you're doing? I don't remember inviting you into my shower.

TONI

I haven't seen you since you were a boy. You've grown so big. And what a tight ass you have.

He turns off the water and dries quickly.

HEWIE

You need serious overhauling.

Stepping in front of him again, she rubs her body against him.

TONI

You thought it exciting the last time we were like this.

HEWIE

Do you know what I wanted to do that last time?

TONI

(whispering)  
Show me.

He knees her in the crotch. She cries out and collapses.

HEWIE

Stay out of the men's shower.

As he gathers his clothes and walks away, she rages at him from the floor.

TONI  
(screaming)  
YOU SON-OF-A-BITCH. YOU STUPID FAG  
SON-OF-A-BITCH.

HEWIE  
You're sick, girl. Get some help.

He exits.

TONI  
I'LL GET YOU AND YOUR GODDAMN  
BOYFRIEND. YOU HEAR ME? YOUR  
BOYFRIEND IS MINE.

INT OLD DAD'S ESTATE OFFICE AFTERNOON

Old Dad tries to hide his anxiety. He shuffles papers and paces around the office. Toni sits very still in a dark corner. Her eyes follow him closely.

OLD DAD  
He doesn't want to make too much money. Hah! Silly, clever thing to say. You ignore him, then he does his worst behind your back.

TONI  
And he pretends to be so forthright.

OLD DAD  
When is that fool of a University president going to call? At the amount we donate to that paper factory, he ought to have returned my call immediately. Vacation or no.

TONI  
Isn't it odd how Joseph had immediate access to Georgina? How many years was it before you met her?

He scowls.

OLD DAD  
How does he have this influence over her? Could he be a plant? Who is this Joseph Jordan in reality?

INT ROMAN BATH

Marie strolls aimlessly beside a large stone bath that is surrounded by pillars and is open to the sky. It ripples with steaming, green water. There is very little light throughout the stone complex.

Joseph, excited, looking in all directions, walks as though held back by an invisible leash.

JOSEPH

The Abbey was wonderful. What did you think?

MARIE

Depressing.

JOSEPH

Really? I thought the fan-vaulting graceful.

MARIE

You get excited about the damndest things. Go poke around. This place isn't large, we'll meet again.

JOSEPH

I don't want to leave you alone.

MARIE

I've done it before.

He kisses her cheek.

JOSEPH

Back soon.

He exits. Marie wanders in a different direction.

INT STILL POOL

Joseph finds a shallow, reflective pool with modern coins thrown in it.

INT STONE ROOM

On his hands and knees on the stone floor, Joseph stares at a tiny, yellow-encrusted pocket of water. Waves of blue and green stretch across the water.

INT DARK STONE PASSAGE

Joseph crouches and twists about on a bridge to see where the ancient, steaming waters flow.

INT MINERVA DISPLAY

Marie enters slowly. The room is particularly dark.

MARIE

Like strolling through an old  
grave.

In the middle of the room is a display case with a bronze bust of the goddess Minerva.

MARIE

(continuing)  
Minerva.

She approaches the display. It glows red in the dark from a small, direct light.

MARIE

(softly)  
Well, goddess, any advice for a  
wandering mortal?

The goddess is silent.

INT UNDERGROUND WATERFALL

Joseph discovers a canal opening. Water rushes out in a cascade that resembles a miniature waterfall.

INT MINERVA DISPLAY

The blind eyes of the bronze bust have Marie mesmerized.

INT UNDERGROUND WATERFALL

Joseph studies the stone and colorings of the canal intensely. He turns.

JOSEPH

(calling)  
Marie.

He frowns.

JOSEPH

(continuing)

Damn my stupidity.

INT ROMAN BATH

Marie leans against a pillar by the green, misty waters of the large bath. Joseph touches her arm.

JOSEPH  
You're trembling.

Taking off his jacket, he puts it over her shoulders.

MARIE  
She stared right through me. As if  
I were blind, not she.

He wraps an arm around her and leads her away.

INT TRAIN LATE AFTERNOON

Marie and Joseph are both emotionally fatigued. He sleeps deeply. She shifts nervously in her seat. Suddenly, she pops out of the seat.

She prowls the train aisle looking at PEOPLE and out the windows, then starts back to her seat. A bell sounds and the train bar opens. CUSTOMERS crowd in. Marie must pass the bar to return to her seat.

She approaches the crowd. Closing her eyes, Marie pushes her way through, then walks quickly to her seat. She gives Joseph a vigorous shake.

MARIE  
What did you mean by bears in the  
dark?

His mouth works as though talking but no sound comes out.

MARIE  
(continuing)  
Please, Joseph, talk to me.

JOSEPH  
(with difficulty)  
Bears inna nark?

MARIE  
You're always jabbering on and on,  
asking questions, now answer some.

JOSEPH

Wha was na ques'n?

MARIE

You said that you and your father  
spent your lives fighting bears in  
the dark. What do you mean?

JOSEPH

(carefully)

Pain.

MARIE

Now?

JOSEPH

Answer question. Pain.

MARIE

I don't understand.

JOSEPH

Hard to talk.

MARIE

You're doing okay. Keep trying.

JOSEPH

Bears in dark. Bears, ferocious.  
Dark, not see, blind.

MARIE

I know that.

JOSEPH

Shut up.

(closes his eyes)

Bears are pain, darkness,  
ignorance. Feelings.

MARIE

Feelings?

JOSEPH

Feelings cause pain. Feelings are  
pain.

MARIE

I don't understand.

He takes a deep, frustrated breath. As he speaks,  
though, he seems to shift gears up to fluency.

JOSEPH

Any memory. Any feeling. Any memory of a feeling can cause pain. I don't know why. It's like having a knife shoved in, then twisted.

MARIE

How do you deal with it?

JOSEPH

You develop habits. And you avoid emotional stress. Stress overloads the feelings. It strips away your armor.

MARIE

What about good feelings, you know, pleasant feelings?

JOSEPH

It's not about good or bad feelings. Any feeling can be painful.

MARIE

What about medication?

JOSEPH

It helps. Nothing's perfect.

MARIE

Would being in love cause pain?

JOSEPH

Being in love is maybe the worst. It's so profound, so deep.

MARIE

Then you've been in love.

JOSEPH

I had a lounge yove. A young love.

MARIE

And?

He's reluctant to speak, then growls at her.

JOSEPH

She wasn't interested. It was all one-sided.

MARIE

(snapping)

Dammit, that doesn't make sense.  
Was she an idiot?

JOSEPH

I was a freak. Something unknown.  
She wanted the safe and conventional.  
Can we stop the cross-examination?

They look away from each other.

MARIE

How did I endeavor to get where I  
am in my life? And for what?

He takes her hand and kisses it.

JOSEPH

Yeah, you're a pain in the ass.

INT MARIE'S FLAT EVENING

Joseph and Marie enter. They are subdued. While he enters the TV room, she stands in one spot. Suddenly, with a shout, she leaps on him bodily. They fall to the floor with her on top. She laughs.

MARIE

I've got you. I've got you. I've  
got you. I've got you.

JOSEPH

I noticed that.

Wrapping her legs around him, she kisses him.

MARIE

Was that painful?

JOSEPH

I know some interesting judo holds,  
if you want to play.

MARIE

I need some of your strength, Joseph.  
Can you spare it?

JOSEPH

You're the strong one in this  
group.

MARIE

Then I command you to make love to

me.

JOSEPH  
On our first date?

EXT SIDE LAWN MORNING

Colorful tents spot the lawns. workers put final touches to free-standing, medieval facades. The wedding pavillion, which imitates an island, as well as surrounding stadium seats, stand waiting.

Old Dad Lanceleit takes tea outside with an elderly lady in a red cap, MRS. PALME.

OLD DAD  
Jordan was the one who convinced Marie to go into rehab as soon as they returned from London.

MRS. PALME  
Really?

OLD DAD  
And I'm the one who convinced Christina to let him deal with Marie. I knew he'd bring her round.

MRS. PALME  
How clever you are.

OLD DAD  
A matter of judging character.  
Would you excuse me?

EXT MANSION SIDE ENTRANCE

Joseph and Christina walk happily together. When they see Old Dad approaching, Christina hides behind her formal face, and Joseph groans.

JOSEPH  
Oh, God.

Old Dad enters.

OLD DAD  
How is Marie today?

CHRISTINA  
Doing well, thank you, Mister

Lanceleit.

OLD DAD  
Good, she can rest, then make an  
appearance for the wedding.

JOSEPH  
Make an appearance.

OLD DAD  
I have good news for you.

CHRISTINA  
If you'll excuse me.

OLD DAD  
Of course.

CHRISTINA  
I'll be back, Joseph.

He nods, and she exits.

JOSEPH  
Good news?

OLD DAD  
I've arranged a full-time position  
for you with the Estate.

JOSEPH  
Oh, really.

OLD DAD  
Yes. I've spoken with the Univer-  
sity president, so you needn't  
worry about going back to your job  
there.

Appearing out of nowhere, Hewie threads his way toward  
them in a cart, dodging and occasionally pausing for  
workers.

OLD DAD  
(continuing)  
You can work for us. In the  
gardens.

JOSEPH  
You didn't need to do this.

OLD DAD  
It was my pleasure.

Old Dad exits as Hewie enters. Hopping out of the cart, Hewie embraces Joseph like a long lost brother.

HEWIE

It's great to see you. Did Old Dad tell you the news? About your new job?

JOSEPH

(raging inside)  
Just now.

HEWIE

Isn't it great?

JOSEPH

I'm dealing with it.

HEWIE

What do you mean?

JOSEPH

(loses control)  
I've just been fired. Once again. Nothing to do with me. Just office politics.

HEWIE

But you'll be working here.

JOSEPH

And my employer will be a man who can't be trusted. I'll be dangling at the end of a thread. Dangling and wondering when he's going to cut it.

HEWIE

No, no, Georgina and Momma are your employers.

JOSEPH

(continuing)  
Either way I'll still be depending on the whims of others for my livelihood. For my sanity. A misstep and it all collapses.

HEWIE

Come on, Joseph. We'll take care of you.

JOSEPH

You take care of me? When the hell  
did you ever take care of anyone  
but yourself?

Hewie is speechless.

JOSEPH

(continuing)

I could support myself. You've no  
idea what that meant. I've worked  
all my life to be self-sufficient.  
And in one moment, it's gone. All I  
have are promises and good  
intentions, while a vicious old man  
jerks a chain around my throat.

Joseph exits.

INT MAIN HALLWAY

Joseph strides angrily down the hallway. Christina  
appears.

CHRISTINA

Wait, Joseph.

She hands him an envelope.

CHRISTINA

Here is your fee, plus a bonus, for  
watching over Marie in England.

JOSEPH

Thank you.

CHRISTINA

Also, Georgina asked if you could  
visit her. Whenever it's convenient  
for you.

JOSEPH

Very well.

CHRISTINA

And, once more, thank you.

Joseph's anger fades. He becomes weary.

JOSEPH

I did what I felt anyone should do.  
Other than that, I don't know what  
to say.

Christina presses his arm and exits.

INT JOSEPH'S BEDROOM

Joseph enters. He crosses the room to the bed.

JOSEPH

This family is grinding me to pieces.

He falls face down on the bed and sleeps without moving.

EXT GEORGIE'S GARDEN AFTERNOON

Paulette drives a cart to a doorway of woven bamboo in a hedge. Joseph steps from the cart looking dour and tired. Unwillingly, he enters the doorway.

INT GEORGIE'S GARDEN

Joseph finds a large, rectangular area of raked gravel. A path of stone and wood runs down two sides, along which are wooden benches. Sprawling in the midst of the gravel are several stone groups, some of which are large.

Georgie waits on the path in her wheelchair.

GEORGIE

Good day, Joseph. How was your trip?

JOSEPH

Fine.

GEORGIE

And how are you?

JOSEPH

Fine.

GEORGIE

This is my garden. It's a dry landscape garden. "Abstraction spurs contemplation." Those rock groups are islands, and the raked gravel is the sea. That rock group is a turtle.

JOSEPH

I see. Did you pose for it?

She laughs.

GEORGIE

I'm so happy. What you've done for Marie, and the family, there's no way to repay the debt.

JOSEPH

You exaggerate.

GEORGIE

You've given Marie back her life.

JOSEPH

Marie will have to take her life back, no one can give it to her.

GEORGIE

She will. I know her.

JOSEPH

Well...good.

GEORGIE

Is something wrong? You look spooked.

JOSEPH

Jet lag. Too much sex. Whatever.

She pauses.

GEORGIE

I've heard that Mister Lanceleit has arranged for you to take a position with the Estate.

He twitches.

JOSEPH

Yeah.

GEORGIE

Did he ask if you wanted the job?

JOSEPH

No.

GEORGIE

Did he tell you what your duties would be?

JOSEPH  
Work in the gardens.

GEORGIE  
Joseph, please listen carefully.  
Mister Lanceleit is an employee.  
You are a friend. Do you follow me?

JOSEPH  
Yes.

GEORGIE  
If you want to work here, good. If  
not, then we'll help you in any way  
we can. Your decision will have our  
full support.

JOSEPH  
(suspiciously)  
And my job at the University?

GEORGIE  
If you want it, it's yours. No mat-  
ter what Lanceleit says.

JOSEPH  
Oh.

GEORGIE  
I've done some reading about this  
condition from which you suffer.  
Correct me if I'm wrong, but the  
central difficulty is dealing with  
instability.

He nods.

GEORGIE  
(continuing)  
Instability brings out the steel in  
some people. Others, it destroys.  
To be frank, I don't see how you've  
survived. You're a special person.

He says nothing. She looks at the garden.

GEORGIE  
When I was young, I always dreamed  
about traveling.

JOSEPH  
(sharply)  
Why didn't you?

GEORGIE

Too busy.

JOSEPH

You could've made time.

GEORGIE

Perhaps. But a corporation is like a family, and you have to adapt yourself.

JOSEPH

What was the first thing you said to me? "Don't waste time." You have to grab life while you can. Have you considered how much longer your health will hold out?

GEORGIE

No.

JOSEPH

Then you'd better consider it. And then if you like to travel, travel frequently, travel widely, travel now.

GEORGIE

Mister Jordan.

JOSEPH

Yes?

GEORGIE

If Marie doesn't grab you, she'll be the biggest fool in the world.

INT MARIE'S ROOM MORNING

Marie is at a drug abuse treatment center. Although comfortable, the room is small and quite bland. She wears white.

Skirt, pullover top, even the band holding her hair back, all are white.

She works on a sketch. Her face is tired, but the eyes are unwavering.

SOUND: KNOCKING ON DOOR

The door opens, and Christina enters.

CHRISTINA  
Good morning, dear.

MARIE  
Morning, Momma.

Seeing underwear lying about, Christina picks it up and runs water in the bathroom sink. She washes the underwear. Working over a sketch, Marie smiles.

MARIE  
I need some sketching material,  
Momma.

CHRISTINA  
Yes, dear?

MARIE  
A few of the guests here asked me  
to show them how to draw. I'll need  
modeling clay and equipment, too.

CHRISTINA  
That's excellent, dear. I'm sure  
everyone will benefit.

They can hear voices in the hallway, loud at times,  
soft at others.

MARIE  
Joseph seems to be taking his new  
job very seriously.

CHRISTINA  
Yes, dear. You see him all over the  
Estate from morning to dusk.  
Sometimes in the afternoons, he'll  
visit Georgina. Or he'll simply  
probe into the far corners of the  
Estate.

She sits beside Marie.

CHRISTINA  
In the evenings, of course, he vis-  
its you.

MARIE  
And I imagine that vulture  
Lanceleit keeps tabs on it all.

CHRISTINA

As does Toni.

Marie puts aside the sketch and leans against her mother. Christina, rather shyly, wraps her arm around Marie.

MARIE

Toni doesn't want him. She just wants to get a hold on him. She can't abide not controlling him.

CHRISTINA

Toni's always been that way.

MARIE

She's a fool. Joseph is special.

CHRISTINA

So are you.

MARIE

When I leave here, I would like to work in my studio. And I want to visit the gardens with Joseph. I can't think past that.

Christina closes her eyes.

CHRISTINA

No need, my child. No need.

INT GYMNASIUM

Sweat glistens on their skin as Joseph and Hewie sit on a judo mat. they rest from hard exercise with their uniform jackets open for ventilation.

With their belts draped around their necks, black for Joseph, brown for Hewie, they discuss whatever comes to mind.

HEWIE

If I intend to make a life for myself in the Blanchard Corporation--

JOSEPH

(interrupting)

If?

HEWIE

Georgie insists that I follow the path she did.

JOSEPH

Which was?

HEWIE

First, she learned how to run the Estate at a profit. White elephants like this don't usually make money.

JOSEPH

I hadn't realized that.

HEWIE

Then she studied every aspect of how the Blanchard Corporation functions.

JOSEPH

How very old fashioned.

HEWIE

I figure I might be ready to take over when I'm a hundred and three.

JOSEPH

That soon?

HEWIE

Will Marie attend the wedding tomorrow?

JOSEPH

Yes. Have you seen her yet?

HEWIE

Claire and I went this morning.

JOSEPH

How'd it go?

HEWIE

Marie is doing well.

JOSEPH

I meant--

HEWIE

(interrupting)  
We did okay. No fights, no insults.

JOSEPH

Good.

They pause to wipe sweat with towels.

JOSEPH  
(continuing)  
I love her. I love Marie

HEWIE  
Oh, really? I am so shocked.

JOSEPH  
I've nothing to offer her. My life  
consists of a long line of stupid  
mistakes and humiliating failures.

HEWIE  
That's bullshit. Marie'll be lucky  
to get you.

JOSEPH  
Let's shower.

They pick up their stuff and walk toward the shower.

JOSEPH  
(continuing)  
Toni came after me again.

HEWIE  
What'd you do?

JOSEPH  
Threw her out.

HEWIE  
Good.

JOSEPH  
She needs proper diagnosis, proper  
treatment.

HEWIE  
She needs a proper beating.

Joseph laughs.

HEWIE  
(continuing)  
She's been diagnosed up one side  
and down the other, Joseph. But I  
guess we ought to try again.

Joseph stops.

JOSEPH

A black belt should be a symbol of both skill and personal growth. Removing his black belt and draping it around Hewie's neck, Joseph nods and slaps his shoulder.

HEWIE

You want me to beat her up before or after the wedding?

EXT WEDDING PAVILLON      LATE MORNING

The servants wear medieval costumes, which display or hide their figures to good effect, especially the grey-haired Butler who is proud to show-off his shapely sprinter's legs.

There are free-standing facades of castles, cathedrals, monasteries, town buildings, and farmhouses. There's even a working drawbridge that leads to the pavillion where the ceremony occurs.

And there are strolling entertainers in costume, including animal acts, jugglers, mimes, musicians, minstrels, as well as eaters of flame and fire, all of which make it hard to hear the wedding vows.

Standing before the judge, who is dressed in a heavy costume and wig, and unable to hear clearly what is said, Daniel whispers to Toni.

DANIEL

Is this supposed to be a wedding or a circus?

TONI

(giggling)  
It's supposed to be fun, Daniel, dear.

DANIEL

It's rather confusing, isn't it?

TONI

A girl has to occasionally get things her way.

Hewie and Claire watch the ceremony from the stadium

seats.

HEWIE

The judge is sweating like a horse  
in that rig.

CLAIRE

I can't hear a word. Can you ask  
those entertainers to drop dead?

HEWIE

Immediately, my love.

A few seats away, Joseph and Marie watch the judge. She is in an aisle seat with one foot in the aisle ready to leap up instantly. She bites her lips and grips his arm.

MARIE

I'm going to scream.

JOSEPH

No, you're not.

MARIE

Yes I am.

JOSEPH

You can make it.

She closes her eyes tightly.

MARIE

I can't.

JOSEPH

Yes, you can.

She clenches his arm so hard that he winces.

JOSEPH

(continuing)

If you tear my arm off, I'm gonna  
start screaming.

She giggles nervously and relaxes a bit. Meanwhile, the strolling entertainers have silenced themselves, and the judge can be heard.

JUDGE

"to be your loving and faithful  
wife..."

TONI

"to be your loving and faithful  
wife..."

Marie clamps Joseph's arm again.

JUDGE

"in plenty and in want, in joy and  
in sorrow..."

TONI

"in plenty and in want, in joy and  
in sorrow..."

Marie cries in the effort not to scream.

JUDGE

"in sickness and in health, as long  
as we both shall live."

TONI

"in sickness and in health, as long  
as we both shall live."

JUDGE

I pronounce you man and wife. Kiss  
the damned girl.

Daniel kisses Toni.

MARIE

Now.

JOSEPH

No.

MARIE

Yes.

JOSEPH

Then we'll scream together. One...  
two...

Joseph and Marie both scream their lungs out. All of the teenage girls scream, as do a few of their flustered mothers. On the wedding pavillion, Daniel's eyebrows go up in amusement. He doesn't see Toni's face twist in rage.

DANIEL

You have an odd idea of fun, my  
dear.

The noise from the strolling entertainers starts again. The crowd mills variously.

Hewie, dressed in tights and leotards, begins a dance with his partner, Claire. It is a comparatively long work, choreographed by him to Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue".

Although the teenage girls--and their mothers--hardly take their eyes from his shapely, lithe form, there are many yawns in the audience.

Joseph and Marie are watching when the Butler approaches and whispers to him. Joseph frowns.

MARIE

What is it?

JOSEPH

Nothing. Do you want to stay out here?

MARIE

My legs are about to cave in.

JOSEPH

Then I'll take you in, and run a little errand.

INT OLD DAD'S ESTATE OFFICE

SOUND: KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

Joseph enters and sits.

OLD DAD

I am forced to deal with a serious matter. You.

Joseph stands to leave.

OLD DAD

(continuing)

Sit.

JOSEPH

Fuck you.

OLD DAD

It would pay you to listen.

JOSEPH

Or what?

OLD DAD  
I'll destroy Marie.

Joseph is horrified.

OLD DAD  
(continuing)  
An unstable alcoholic? With a  
smutty background in pornography?  
How much easier could it be?  
Anything else that's needed can  
easily be arranged.

JOSEPH  
This is a nightmare.

OLD DAD  
I simply want your cooperation.

Joseph looks like a boxer who's been hit and doesn't  
know if he's still standing.

JOSEPH  
Cooperation?

OLD DAD  
You'll bid farewell to the  
Blanchard family, including  
Georgie.  
I'll provide you with an excellent  
career position elsewhere. And  
there'll be a suitable cash  
dividend. Obedience has its  
rewards.

JOSEPH  
Why?

Old Dad does nothing but smile. Joseph speaks with  
difficulty.

JOSEPH  
(continuing)  
Why do this? Just to eliminate me?

OLD DAD  
No. To eliminate a bad influence.

Joseph stands and stares at the buzzard, then he  
silently turns on his heel and exits. Toni enters from  
an adjoining room. She has changed from her wedding  
gown. There is no trace of gaiety about her.

OLD DAD

Would you stop sneaking around like that? I told you I'd take care of Jordan. Where's your husband?

TONI

He's drinking. What about Joseph?

OLD DAD

He's under control.

TONI

I don't want him under control. I want him squashed like a bug.

OLD DAD

Be reasonable.

The phone rings.

TONI

If you can't do it, then I will.

She exits.

OLD DAD

Toni!

He speaks into the phone.

OLD DAD

(continuing)

Yes? Oh, Georgie.

(pauses)

I'll be right over.

INT GEORGIE'S ESTATE OFFICE

Georgie sits behind a desk stacked with documents. There's a knock. Old Dad enters.

GEORGIE

I am forced to deal with a serious matter.

His eyebrows go up.

GEORGIE

(continuing)

At age fifteen, a psychiatric evaluation reported that Toni was in danger of developing an "antisocial

personality disorder". This report was suppressed.

OLD DAD  
I'm not sure--

GEORGIE  
(interrupting)  
Since then, every vicious or illegal act in which Toni was involved has been suppressed. By you.

OLD DAD  
All good families do the same. Am I being attacked for protecting the Blanchard family? Is Jordan behind this?

GEORGIE  
Joseph has said nothing.

OLD DAD  
I am incredulous at this--these implications that I've done something wrong.

GEORGIE  
Why did you go to such pains to protect Toni?

OLD DAD  
I could see from the start that she had tremendous potential. She was courageous and energetic.

GEORGIE  
Irresponsible and aggressive.

OLD DAD  
(angry and frightened)  
She never passed up any opportunity she could exploit.

GEORGIE  
Indifferent and lacking remorse.

OLD DAD  
She was no cringing fool afraid of taking chances.

GEORGIE  
In short, she was a mechanism you could use. Unlike me.

OLD DAD

(offended)

I have served the Corporation's interests.

She taps the documents.

GEORGIE

You've been using her for sexual blackmail of various politicians and competitors.

OLD DAD

You never understood the necessities of power.

GEORGIE

No. I wouldn't have used a sick girl to seduce and blackmail people.

OLD DAD

She's no more sick than I am. Psychiatrists are frauds. Will. The will to power is everything.

GEORGIE

So you're guilty only of excessive enthusiasm for your job?

OLD DAD

I'm just an old man who's spent the best part of his life serving the Blanchard family and the Blanchard Corporation. You've had little enough compassion in your business dealings.

GEORGIE

I played the game the way I found it. But now I find that what I thought to be a useful tool is really an infectious disease.

OLD DAD

How dare--

GEORGIE

(interrupting)

STOP. No more self-deceptions or

lies. You are retired. If you fight me, or attempt any form of revenge, I'll give this evidence to the district attorney. You can finish your miserable life in jail.

OLD DAD

I don't understand why you're doing this to me. I've given my life to the Corporation.

GEORGIE

No, you don't understand. And you never will. Get out.

INT ESTATE GYMNASIUM

Joseph enters from the men's showers wearing his uniform and goes to the mat.

JOSEPH

Focus. Focus, then exert.

He slips into a kneeling position and closes his eyes. Forcing himself to breathe deeply, he rocks back and forth on his haunches. His hands tremble uncontrollably.

INT OLD DAD'S ESTATE OFFICE - NO TIME

Old Dad threatens him.

INT JOSEPH'S BEDROOM - NO TIME

A naked Toni confronts Joseph.

INT SERVANT AREA - NO TIME

The angry servant grabs at Joseph's arm.

INT ESTATE GYMNASIUM

Joseph presses his head between his hands.

INT GEORGIE'S COTTAGE - NO TIME

Georgie stares at him.

EXT MANSION SIDE ENTRANCE - NO TIME

Hewie looks heart-broken by Joseph's reaction to Old Dad's job "offer".

INT MANSION BALLROOM - NO TIME

Joseph fights to get free of the suffocating mask and crowd.

INT MARIE'S FLAT - NO TIME

A Young Marie runs through a video landscape of flesh, while the mature Marie forces herself to endure the spectacle.

INT DRIVE-IN GROCERY - NO TIME

A teenager in a stocking mask waves a gun.

INT ESTATE GYMNASIUM

Toni enters the gymnasium. Joseph does not see her as she removes her shoes and approaches noiselessly. He exhales until he has no more air, and holds it. She's almost close enough to pounce. He inhales and stands.

JOSEPH

Too many memories. Too much pain.

TONI

Not enough pain!

He spins about and she kicks at his throat. There is a flash of movement. Now she lies with her face flat on the mat, her arm twisted behind her, and his knee jammed in her back. She struggles furiously but is helpless.

TONI

I'll kill you!

Joseph relaxes his grip and steps back. She gets up massaging her shoulder.

TONI

Nobody grinds my face in the dirt.

JOSEPH

You're sick. Get help.

He rubs his temples.

JOSEPH

Never seen so many conceited  
idiots.

Hewie enters the gymnasium. Joseph turns to him. Behind

him, Toni snatches a baseball bat off a stand and swings wildly. It glances off Joseph's head.

Dazed, he manages to bend over and raise his arms for protection. Toni mindlessly swings again, hitting him across his arms and face, and then on the back.

INT JOSEPH'S P.O.V.

His vision is blurred. Blood drips over one eye making him blink. He sees her come for him.

INT ESTATE GYMNASIUM

Screaming in anger, Toni aims a blow at his head, but Joseph stumbles to the side avoiding the bat. She comes back low and hits his leg. He cries out in pain and anger as he collapses to one knee.

She comes at his head again. He rolls away and back to his feet. With the bat raised, she rushes him.

Joseph lunges straight at her, then, when she swings, bobs down under the bat. After it misses, he stands and grabs her arm. There's a flash of movement as his body twists into a sweeping throw. Both of their bodies spin in a circle through the air.

They hit earth with Joseph's weight slamming down on top of Toni. While she's stunned, he pins her arms and holds them with one hand. His other arm snaps back. The hand is now a knifehand. Her throat is the target.

And for him a long moment, he hesitates.

INT DRIVE-IN GROCERY - NO TIME

A robber in a stocking mask lies twisted on the floor. Joseph pulls off the mask to reveal a teenager.

INT ESTATE GYMNASIUM - LATE MORNING

Toni, having caught her breath, begins to struggle. Joseph growls. He lets her sit up partially, then clenches his fist and slams her jaw. Her head snaps to the side, and she drops back unconscious.

Hewie arrives as Joseph pushes himself away from Toni.

HEWIE  
You alright?

JOSEPH

(irritated)  
What do you THINK?

HEWIE  
That you're a MESS.

JOSEPH  
Check her.  
(wipes away blood)  
What a family.

EXT GEORGIE'S COTTAGE - MORNING

The day is beautiful.

GEORGIE (O.S.)  
That whack on the head seems to  
agree you, Joseph.

INT GEORGIE'S COTTAGE

Georgie and Joseph are having tea and pastries. The pastries sit with the tea pot on a small table beside Joseph. He has a bandage on his head.

GEORGIE  
When do the stitches come out?

JOSEPH  
Tomorrow.

GEORGIE  
And your eyesight?

JOSEPH  
It was close, but I'm okay. If that first blow had been solid, I probably would've been either dead, or legally blind. It's not worth fretting about. How is Toni?

GEORGIE  
She thinks the world is picking on her.

JOSEPH  
What's the prognosis?

GEORGIE  
They can treat her.

JOSEPH  
Good.

GEORGIE  
But she'll never be quite normal.

JOSEPH  
What's "normal"?

They sip their tea.

JOSEPH  
There was a moment, Georgie, when  
I...almost hurt her.

GEORGIE  
But you didn't. Enough about hurt-  
ing and pain. Share the pastries,  
if you don't mind.

Joseph passes the plate.

JOSEPH  
Georgie.

GEORGIE  
Yes, my dear.

JOSEPH  
Your family is a real zoo.

GEORGIE  
Yes. You'll fit right in. Be-  
sides, whose isn't?

And they laugh.

BLACK

FADE TO