

DAYS OF HEAVEN"

by Terry Malick

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SETTING

The story is set in Texas just before the First World War.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

BILL: A young man from Chicago following the harvest.

ABBY: The beautiful young woman he loves.

CHUCK: The owner of a vast wheat ranch ("bonanza") in the Texas Panhandle.

URSULA: Abby's younger sister, a reckless child of 14.

BENSON: The bonanza foreman, an enemy of the newcomers.

MISS CARTER: Chief domestic at the Belvedere, Chuck's home.

McLEAN: Chuck's accountant.

GEORGE: A young pilot who interests Ursula.

A PREACHER, A DOCTOR, AN ORGANIST, VARIOUS HARVEST HANDS, LAWMEN, VAUDEVILLIANS, etc.

"Troops of nomads swept over the country at harvest time like a visitation of locusts, reckless young fellows, handsome, profane, licentious, given to drink, powerful but inconstant workmen, quarrelsome and difficult to manage at all times. They came in the season when work was plenty and wages high. They dressed well, in their own peculiar fashion, and made much of their freedom to come and go."

"They told of the city, and sinister and poisonous jungles all cities seemed in their stories. They were scarred with battles. They came from the far-away and unknown, and passed on to the north, mysterious as the flight of locusts, leaving the people

of Sun Prairie quite as ignorant of their real names and characters as upon the first day of their coming."

Hamlin Garland, Boy Life on the Prairie (1899)

DAYS OF HEAVEN

1 INT. CHICAGO MILL - SERIES OF ANGLES

WORKERS in a dark Chicago mill pound molten iron out in flaming sheets. The year is 1916.

2 EXT. MILL

BILL, a handsome young man from the slums, and his brother STEVE sit outside on their lunch break talking with an older man named BLACKIE. By the look of his flashy clothes Blackie is not a worker.

BLACKIE

Listen, if I ever seen a tit, this here's a tit. You understand? Candy. My kid sister could do this one. Pure fucking candy'd melt in your hand. Don't take brains. Just a set of rocks. I told you this already.

STEVE

Blackie, you told me it was going to snow in the winter, I'd go out and bet against

it. You know?
(to
Bill)

There is
nothing,
nothing in
the world,
dumber than a
dumb guinea.

BLACKIE

Okay, all
right, fine.
Why should I
be doing
favours for a
guy that
isn't doing
me any
favours? I
must be
losing my
grip.

(pause)

I got to give
it to you,
though.
Couple of
guys look
like you just
rolled in on
a wagonload
of chickens.
You ever get
laid?

STEVE

Sure.

BLACKIE

Without a lot
of talk, I
mean? 'Cause
I'm beginning
to understand
these guys,
go down the
hotel, pick
something up
for a couple
of bucks.

It's clean,
and you know
what you're
in for.

3 EXT. ALLEY

Sam the Collector's GANG swaggers around in the alley behind a textile plant. ONE of them has filed his teeth down to points and stuck diamonds in between them. ANOTHER wears big suspenders. Sam and Bill appear to know one another.

SAM

Hey, Billy,
you made a
mistake. You
made somebody
mad. Nothing
personal,
okay? It's
just gotta be
done. You
made a
mistake.
Happens in
the best of
families.

BILL

I paid you
everything I
have. Search
me. The rest
he gets next
week.

SAM

Listen, what
happens if I
don't do
this? I gotta
leave town?

BILL

I could do
something,
you know. You
guys wanta do
something to

me, I know
who to tell
about it. You
guys ought to
think about
that.

SAM

You maybe
already did
something.
Maybe that's
why you're
here, on
account of
you already
done
something.

BILL

I haven't
done
anything.

SAM

Then you're
all right,
Billy.

RAZOR TEETH

You got
nothing to
worry about.

SAM

Cut it out,
Billy, all
right? You
know what can
happen to a
guy that
doesn't wanta
do what
people tell
him? You
know. So
don't give us
a lot of
trouble.
You're liable
to get
everybody all

pissed off.

Sam, a busy man, checks his watch.

4 NEW ANGLE

Bill puts his hand on the ground. Sam drops a keg of roofing nails on it and, his work done, leaves with his gang. Bill sobs with pain.

5 EXT. LOT BEYOND MILL

Bill and Steve drag a safe by a rope through a vacant lot beyond the mill. Blackie walks behind.

BLACKIE

You know what
I'm doing
with my end?
Buy a boat.
Get that? I
had a boat. I
had a nice
apartment, I
had a boat.
Margie don't
like that. We
got to have a
house. "I
can't afford
no house," I
said. She
says, "Sell
the boat." I
didn't want
to sell my
boat. I
didn't want
to buy the
house. I sell
the boat, I
buy the
house. Nine
years we had
the house,
eight of them
she's after
me, we should
get another
boat. I give

up.

STEVE

Same as
always, I do
all the work,
you gripe
about it.

Suddenly FOUR
POLICEMEN

surprise them
from ambush.

Bill lets go
of the rope
and starts to
run. Steve
does not give
up

immediately,
however, and
they shoot
him down.

Bill picks up
Steve's gun
and fires
back. Three
of the

Policemen go
chasing after
Blackie, whom
they soon
bring to
heel. The

FOURTH stays
behind taking
potshots at
Bill while he
attends to
Steve.

6 TIGHT ON STEVE

Steve, badly wounded, is about to
die.

STEVE

Run. Get out
of here.

BILL

(weeping)

I love you so

much. Why
didn't you
run. Don't
die. Steve
dies. Bullets
kick up dust
around him.
He takes off
running. One
of the
bullets has
caught him in
the shoulder.

7 INT. SEWER

ABBY, a beautiful woman in her late twenties, attends to Bill's wounds in a big vaulted sewer. Her sister URSULA, a reckless girl of 14, stands watch.

BILL

(weeping)

They shot the
shit out of
him. My
brother. I
couldn't
believe what
I was seeing.

ABBY

Hold still,
or I can't do
anything.

BILL

I love you,
Abby. You're
so good to
me. Remember
how much fun
we had, on
the roof...

8 EXT. ROOF - MATTE SHOT

Bill and Abby flirt on the roof of a tenement, happily in love. The city stretches out behind them.

9 INT. BED - QUICK CUT

Abby lies shivering with fever. Bill spoons hot soup into her mouth. Ursula rolls paper flowers for extra change.

BILL (O.S.)

(continuing)

... even when
you were sick
and I was in
the mill.

10 INT. MILL - QUICK CUT (VARIOUS ANGLES OF OTHER WORKERS)

Bill works in the glow of a blast furnace. He does not seem quite in place with the rest of the workers. A pencil moustache lends a desired gentlemanliness to his appearance. He looks fallen on hard times, without ever having known any better--like Chaplin, an immigrant lost in the heartless city, with dim hopes for a better way of life.

BILL (O.S.)

I won't let
you go back
in the mill.
People die in
there. I'm a
man, and I
can look out
for you.

11 EXT. SIDING OUTSIDE MILL

Along a railroad spur outside the mill, Abby and Ursula glean bits of coal that have fallen from the tenders.

BILL (O.S.)

We're going
west. Things
gotta be
better out
there.

12 EXT. TENEMENT

A POLICEMAN, looking for Bill, roughs Abby up behind the tenement where they live. Suddenly Bill runs out from a doorway and slams him over the head with a clay pitcher full of water.

POLICEMAN

What'd you
do?

Bill shrugs, then hits him again, knocking him unconscious, when he reaches for a gun. Abby calls Ursula and they take off running, Bill stopping only to collect some of their laundry off a clothesline.

13 EXT. FREIGHT YARDS

They hop a freight train.

14 CREDITS (OVER EXISTING PHOTOS)

The CREDITS run over black and white photos of the Chicago they are leaving behind. Pigs roam the gutters. Street urchins smoke cigar butts under a stairway. A blind man hawks stale bread. Dirty children play around a dripping hydrant. Laundry hangs out to dry on tenement fire escapes. Police look for a thief under a bridge. Irish gangs stare at the camera, curious how they will look. The CREDITS end.

15 EXT. MOVING TRAIN

Abby and Bill sit atop a train racing through the wheat country of the Texas Panhandle.

BILL

I like the
sunshine.

ABBY

Everybody
does. They
laugh. She is

dressed in
men's
clothes, her
hair tucked
up under a
cap. They are
sharing a
bottle of
wine.

BILL

I never
wanted to
fall in love
with you.

ABBY

Nobody asked
you to.

He draws her toward him. She pulls
away.

BILL

What's the
matter? A
while ago you
said I was
irresistible.
I still am.

ABBY

That was
then.

She pushes her nose up against his
chest and sniffs around.

BILL

You playing
mousie again?

ABBY

I love how
nice and hard
your
shoulders
are. And your
hair is
light. You're
not a soft,
greasy guy

that puts bay
rum on every
night.

BILL

I love it
when you've
been
drinking.

ABBY

You're not
greasy, Bill.
You have any
idea what
that means?

BILL

Kind of.

They share the boxcar with a crowd of other HARVEST HANDS. Ursula is among them, also dressed like a man. Bill gestures out at the landscape.

BILL

Look at all
that space.
Oweee! We
should've
done this a
long time
ago. It's
just us and
the road now,
Abby.

ABBY

We're all
still
together,
though.
That's all I
care about.

16 EXT. JERKWATER

The train slows down to take on water. The hands jump off. Each carries his "bundle"-- a blanket and a few personal effects wrapped in canvas. TOUGHS with ax handles are on

hand to greet them. The harvesters speak a Babel of tongues, from German to Uzbek to Swedish. Only English is rare. Some retain odd bits of their national costumes, they are pathetic figures, lonely and dignified and so far from home. Others, in split shoes and sockless feet, are tramps. Most are honest workers, though, here to escape the summer heat in the factories of the East. They dress inappropriately for farm work, in the latest fashions.

BILL

Elbow room!
Oweee! Give
me a chance
and I'm going
to dance!

Bill struts around with a Napoleonic air, in a white Panama hat and gaiters, taking in the vista. Under his arm he carries a sword cane with a pearl handle. It pleases him, in this small way, to set himself apart from the rest of toiling humanity. He wants it known that he was born to greater things.

17 NEW ANGLE

Bill comes upon a BIG MAN whose face is covered with blood.

BILL

Good, very
good. Where
you from,
mister?

BIG MAN

Cleveland.

BILL

Like to see
the other
guy.

Bill helps him to his feet and dusts him off. A TOUGH walks up.

TOUGH

You doing
this shit?

(pause)

Then keep it
moving.

BILL

Oh yeah?
Who're you?
The Tough
hits Bill
across the
head with his
ax handle.

TOUGH

Name is
Morrison.
Bill looks
around to see
whether Abby
has seen
this. She
hasn't. He
walks dizzily
off down the
tracks.

18 NEW ANGLE

He takes Abby by the arm.

ABBY

What happened
to your ear?

BILL

Nothing. She
is a sultry
beauty--
emancipated,
full of
bright hopes
and a zest
for life. Her
costume does
not fool the
men. Wherever
she goes they
ogle her
insolently.

EXT. WAGONS
The FOREMEN
of the
surrounding
farms wait by
their wagons
to carry the
workers off.
A flag pole
is planted by
each wagon.
Those who do
not speak
English
negotiate
their wages
on a
blackboard.
BENSON, a
leathery man
of fifty,
bellows
through a
megaphone. In
the
background a
NEWCOMER to
the harvest
talks with a
VETERAN.

BENSON

Shockers!
Four more and
I'm leaving.

BILL

How much you
paying?

BENSON

Man can make
three dollars
a day, he
wants to
work.

BILL

Who're you
kidding? Bill
mills around.

They have no
choice but to
accept his
offer.

BENSON

Sackers! Abby
steps up.
Benson takes
her for a
young man.

BENSON

You ever
sacked
before?

She nods.

Transcriber's Note: the following
seven lines of dialogue between the
NEWCOMER and the VETERAN runs
concurrent with the previous six
lines of dialogue between Benson and
Bill and Abby. In the original script
they are typed in two columns running
side-by-side down the page.

NEWCOMER (O.S.)

How's the
pussy up
there?

VETERAN

Not good.
Where you
from?

NEWCOMER (O.S.)

Detroit.

VETERAN

How's the
pussy up
there?

NEWCOMER (O.S.)

Good.

(pause)

The guys
tough out

here?

VETERAN (O.S.)

Not so tough.
How about up
there?

NEWCOMER (O.S.)

Tough. *****

BENSON

When's that?

ABBY

Last year. He
waves her on.
Abby nods at
Ursula.

ABBY

You're making
a mistake,
you pass this
kid up.

BENSON

Get on. He
snaps his
fingers at
her. Bill
climbs up
ahead of the
women. Anger
makes him
extremely
polite.

BILL

You don't
need to say
it like that.
Benson
ignores this
remark but
dislikes Bill
from the
first.

20 EXT. PLAINS

Benson's wagons roll across the
plains toward the Razumihin, a

"bonanza" or wheat ranch of spectacular dimensions, its name spelled out in whitewashed rocks on the side of a hill.

21 EXT. BONANZA GATES (NEAR SIGN)

The wagons pass under a large arch, set in the middle of nowhere, like the gates to a vanished kingdom. Goats peer down from on top. Bill looks at Abby and raises his eyebrows.

22 EXT. BELVEDERE

At the center of the bonanza, amid a tawny sea of grain, stands a gay Victorian house, three stories tall. Where most farm houses stand more sensibly on low ground, protected from the elements, "The Belvedere" occupies the highest ridge around, commanding the view and esteem of all. Filigrees of gingerbread adorn the eaves. Cottonwood saplings, six feet high, have recently been planted in the front. Peacocks fuss about the yard. There is a lawn swing and a flagpole, used like a ship's mast for signaling distant parts of the bonanza. A wind generator supplies electric power. A white picket fence surrounds the house, though its purpose is unclear; where the prairie leaves off and the yard begins is impossible to tell. Bison drift over the hills like boats on the ocean. Bill shouts at the nearest one.

BILL

Yo, Beevo!

23 TIGHT ON CHUCK

CHUCK ARTUNOV, the owner--a man of great reserve and dignity, still a bachelor--stands on the front porch of the Belvedere high above, observing the new arrivals.

24 EXT. DORMITORY

Benson drops the hands off at the dormitory, a hundred yards below, a plain clapboard building with a ceiling of exposed joists. Ursula sees Chuck watching them.

URSULA

Whose place
is that?

BENSON

The owner's.
Don't none of
you go up
around his
place. First
one that does
is fired. I'm
warning you
right now.

In the warm July weather most of the hands forsake the dorm to spread their bedrolls around a strawpile or in the hayloft of the nearby barn.

Abby and Bill slip off to share a cigarette. Ursula tags behind.

25 EXT. ROCK

Bill lifts a big rock. Abby applauds. Ursula kneels down behind him. Abby pushes him over backwards.

26 EXT. BARN

Ursula gasps as Abby tumbles off the roof of the barn and falls through the air screaming:

ABBY

Urs! She
lands in a
straw pile.

27 TIGHT ON ABBY AND BILL

Bill takes Abby by the hands, spins her around until she is thoroughly dizzy, then grasps her across the chest.

BILL

Ready? She
giggles her
consent. He
crushes her
in a bear hug
until she is
just on the
verge of
passing out,
then lets her
go. She sinks
to the grass,
in a daze of
sweet
intoxication.

28 EXT. LANTERN - NIGHT

Bill looks deeply into Abby's eyes by
the light of a lantern that night.
They have made a shallow cut on their
thumbs and press them together mixing
their blood like children.

BILL

You're all
I've got,
Abby. No,
really,
everything I
ever had is a
complete
piece of
garbage
except you.

ABBY

I know. They
laugh. He
bends to kiss
her. She
pulls away.

BILL

Sometimes I
think you
don't like
men.

ABBY

As

individuals?
Very seldom.
She kisses
him lovingly.

29 EXT. WHEAT FIELDS - DAWN

The sun peers over the horizon. The wheat makes a sound like a waterfall. It stretches for as far as the eye can see. A PREACHER has come out, in a cassock and surplice, to offer prayers of thanksgiving.

PREACHER

"... that
your days may
be
multiplied,
and the days
of your
children, in
the land
which the
Lord swore
unto your
fathers to
give them, as
the days of'
heaven upon
the earth."
The
harvesters
spit and rub
their hands
as they wait
for the dew
to burn off.
They have
slept in
their coats.
The dawn has
a raw edge,
even in
summer.

30 TIGHT ON WHEAT

Chuck looks to see if the wheat is ready to harvest. He shakes the heads; they make a sound like paper. He snaps off a handful, rolls them

between his palms, blows away the chaff and pinches the kernels that remain to make sure they have grown properly hard. Tiny sounds are magnified in the early morning stillness: grasshoppers snapping through the air, a cough, a distant hawk. He pops the kernels into his mouth, chews them up, and rolls the wad around in his mouth. Satisfied, he spits it out and gives a nod. The Preacher begins a prayer of thanksgiving. Two ACOLYTES flank him, one with a smoking censer, the other with a crucifix. All repeat the "Amen." Benson makes a tugging signal with his arm. A Case tractor--forty tons of iron, steam-driven, as big and as powerful as a locomotive--blasts its whistle. This is the moment they have been waiting all year for.

31 OTHER FIELDS - SERIES OF ANGLES

A SIGNALMAN with two hand flags passes the message on from the crest of a nearby hill. In the far-flung fields of the bonanza other tractors answer as other crews set to work. Abby and Bill join in, Bill reaping the wheat with a mowing machine called a binder, Abby propping the bound sheaves together to make bunches or "shocks." A cloud of chaff rises over the field, melting the sun down to a cold red bulb. Abby is well turned out, in a boater and string tie, as though she were planning any moment to leave for a picnic. Bill, too, dresses with an eye to flashy fashion: Tight dark trousers, a silk handkerchief stuck in the back pocket with a copy of the Police Gazette, low-top calfskin boots with high heels and pointed toes, a shirt with ruffled cuffs, and a big signet ring. While at work he wears a white smock over all this to keep the chaff off. It gives him the air more of a researcher than a worker. The

harvesters itch madly as the chaff gets into their clothes. The shocks, full of briars, cut their hands; smut and rust make the cuts sting like fire. Nobody talks. From time to time they raise a chant. Ursula, plucking chickens by the cookhouse--a shack on wheels-- steals a key chain from an unwatched coat. Benson follows the reapers around the field in a buggy. He keeps their hours, chides loafers, checks the horses, etc. The harvesters are city people. Few of them are trained to farming. Most-- Abby and Bill are no exception--have contempt for it and anybody dull enough to practice it. Tight control is therefore exercised to see that the machines are not damaged. Where the others loaf whenever Benson's back is turned, Bill works like a demon, as a point of pride.

32 CHUCK AND BENSON

Lightning shivers through the clouds along the horizon. Chuck looks concerned. Benson consults a windsock.

BENSON

Should miss
us.

CHUCK

They must be
having
trouble over
there,
though. Abby,
passing by,
lifts her hat
to wipe her
face. As she
does her hair
falls out of
the crown.
Women are
rare in the
harvest
fields. One

so beautiful
is
unprecedented.

CHUCK

I didn't know
we had any
women on.

BENSON

(surprised)

I thought she
was a boy.
Should I get
rid of her?

CHUCK

No.

33 MONTAGE

A COOK stands on the horizon waving a white flag at the end of a fishing pole. Ursula bounds through the wheat blowing a horn. Benson consults the large clock strapped to the back of his buggy, then fires a smoke pistol in the air. Their faces black with chaff, the hands fall out in silence. They shuffle across the field toward the cookhouse, keeping their feet close to the ground to avoid being spiked by the stubble.

34 EXT. COOKHOUSE - STUBBLE FIELD IN B.G.

The COOKS, Orientals in homburgs, serve from planks thrown across sawhorses. The hands cuff and push each other around as they wash up. The water, brought up fresh in wagons from the wells, makes them gasp. An ice wagon and a fire truck are parked nearby. Most sit on the ground to eat, under awnings or beach umbrellas dotted around the field like toadstools. The Belvedere is visible miles away on the horizon. Bill is carrying Abby's lunch to her when a loutish DUTCH MAN makes a crack.

DUTCHMAN

Your sister
keep you warm
at night?
Bill throws a
plate of stew
at him and
they are
quickly in a
fight. No
fists are
used, just
food. The
others pull
them apart.
Bill storms
away,
flicking
mashed
potatoes off
his shirt.

35 EXT. GRAIN WAGON - STUBBLE FIELD IN B.G.

Bill and Abby sit by themselves in
the shade of a grain wagon.
Demoralized, Abby soaks her hands in
a pail of bran water. Bill inspects
them anxiously. They are swollen and
cracked from the morning's work.

ABBY

I ran a
stubble under
my nail.

BILL

Didn't you
ever learn
how to take
care of
yourself? I
told you to
keep the
gloves on.
What can I do
if you don't
listen? Bill
presses her
wrists
against his
cheek,

ashamed that
he can do
nothing to
shield her
from such
indignities.
In the b.g. a
MAN with a
fungo bat
hits flies to
SOME MEN with
baseball
gloves.

BILL

You can't
keep on like
this.

ABBY

What else can
we do? She
nods at the
others.

ABBY

Anyway, if
they can, I
can too.

BILL

That bunch?
Don't compare
yourself to
them. She
flexes her
fingers. They
seem lame.

BILL

You drop off
this weak. I
can make
enough for us
both. It was
a crime to
bring you out
here.
Somebody like
you.

(pause)

Right now,

what I'm
doing, I'm
just dragging
you down.

(pause)

Maybe you
should go
back to
Chicago.
We've got
enough for a
ticket, and I
can send you
what I make.
He seems a
little
surprised
when she does
not reject
this idea out
of hand.
Perhaps he
fears that if
she ever did
go back, he
might never
see her
again.

BILL

What's the
matter? She
begins to
cry. He takes
her in his
arms.

BILL

I know how
you feel,
honey. Things
won't always
be this way.
I promise.

36 ABBY AND BILL - CHUCK'S POV

The men knock out their pipes as
Benson's whistle summons them back to
their stations.

BENSON

Tick tock!
Tick tock!
Nothing
moving but
the clock!
Bill pulls
Abby to her
feet. He sees
the Dutchman
he fought
with and
shoots him
the finger.

ABBY

You better be
careful.

BILL

Of him? He's
just a sack
of shit.

ABBY

Stop it! He's
liable to see
you.

BILL

I want him
to. He's the
one better be
careful.

37 TIGHT ON CHUCK

Chuck looks on. Something about her
captivates him, not so much her
beauty--which only makes her seem
beyond his reach--as the way she
takes it utterly for granted.

38 MONTAGE (DISSOLVES)

The work goes on through the
afternoon. The pace is stern and
incessant, and for a reason: a storm
could rise at any moment and sweep
the crops flat, or a dry wind shrivel
them up. A series of dissolves gives
the sense of many days passing. In any
moment and sweep the crops flat, or a

dry wind shrivel them up. Animals-- snakes and gophers, rabbits and foxes--dart through the field into the deep of the wheat, not realizing their sanctuary is growing ever smaller as the reapers make their rounds. The moment will come when they will every one be killed with rakes and flails. The wheat changes colors in the wind, like velvet. As the sun drops toward the horizon a dew sets, making the straw hard to cut. Benson fires his pistol. A vine of smoke sinks lazily through the sky. As the workers move off, the fields grow vast and inhospitable. Oil wells can be seen here and there amid the grain.

39 EXT. ABBY'S ROW

Bill helps Abby finish up a row. Thousands of shocks stretch out in the distance. Benson comes up behind her, making a spray of the stalks that she missed.

BENSON

You must've
passed over a
dozen bushels
here. I'm
docking you
three
dollars.

BILL

What're you
talking
about? That's
not fair.

BENSON

Then leave.
You're fired.
Abby is
speechless.
Bill squeezes
the small
rubber ball
which he
carries

around to
improve his
grip and
swallows his
pride.

BILL

BILL

Wait a
minute.

BENSON

You want to
stay?

(pause)

Then shut up
and get back
to work.

Benson
leaves. Abby
covers Bill's
embarrassment.

BILL

I guess he
meant it. She
turns her
back to him
and goes
about picking
up the sheaf
Benson threw
down.

BILL

He did. Ask
him. If you
can't sing or
dance, what
do you do in
this world?
You might as
well forget
it. Ising or
dance, what
do you do
this world?
You might as
wellu rorget
it.

40 EXT. STOCK POND - DUSK

Their day's work done, the men swim naked in a stock pond. Their faces are black, their bodies white as a baby's. A retriever plunges through the water fetching sticks.

41 EXT. ROAD - DUSK

Some bowl with their hats on in a dusty road and argue in Italian.

42 EXT. BELVEDERE - DOCTOR'S WAGON - DUSK

A physician's wagon stands in front of the Belvedere. Bill hunts nervously through it for medicine to soothe Abby's hands. Not knowing quite what to look for, he sniffs whatever catches his eye. Suddenly the front door opens and Chuck steps out with a DOCTOR, a stooped old man in a black frock coat. Bill, surprised, crouches behind the wheel. As they draw closer their conversation becomes faintly audible.

CHUCK (O.S.)

How long you
give it?
DOCTOR (o.s.)
Could be next
month. Could
be a year.
Hard to say.
Anyway, I'm
sorry.

CHUCK (O.S.)

Got to happen
sometime.
They shake
hands

43 NEW ANGLE - DUSKI

The Doctor snaps his whip at the horses. Bill grabs hold I The Doctor snaps his whip at the horses. Bill grabs hold of the back of the wagon and lets it drag him away from the

Belvedere.the Belvedere. -

44 EXT. BARN - DUSK

Ursula and Abby case the barn for dinner. Abby points at a pair of peacocks strutting by, nods to Ursula and puts a finger over her lips. Ursula, with a giggle, follows one while Abby stalks the other.

45 EXT. RAPESEED FIELD - SERIES OF ANGLES - DUSK

The peacock, a resplendent white, leads Abby through a bright yellow rapeseed field. It keeps just out of reach, as though it were enticing her on. as though it were enticing her on. 'U All at once she looks up with a start. Chuck is standing in front of her, dressed in his habitual black. The Belvedere rises behind him like a castle in a fairy tale. She remembers Benson's warning that this is forbidden ground.

ABBY

(afraid)

I forgot
where I was.

CHUCK

Don't worry.
Where you
from?

ABBY

Chicago.

CHUCK

We hardly
ever see a
woman on the
harvest.
There is a
small rip in
the side of
her shirt,
which the
camera
observes with

Chuck. She
pulls her
sweater over
it.

CHUCK

You like the
work?

(she
shrugs)

Where do you
go from here?

ABBY

Wyoming and
places. I've
never been up
that way. You
think I'll
like it? He
shrugs. Shy
at first, she
begins to
open up.

ABBY

That dog
belongs to
you that was
running
around here?
That little
pointer?

(he
nods)

What's his
name

CHUCK

Buster.

ABBY

He seems like
a good dog.

CHUCK

I think so.

ABBY

He came over
and tried to
eat my bread

from lunch.

CHUCK

Maybe I
should keep
him penned
up.

ABBY

(smiling)

You asking
me?

46 EXT. SPIT - DUSK

Bill finds Ursula roasting a peacock
on a spit. She has arranged some of
its tail feathers in her hair.

BILL

You're
getting
prettier
every day.

URSULA

Aren't you
sweet!

BILL

Depends how
people are
with me.
Where's Abby?
I found her
something. He
holds out a
jar of salve.
Ursula
shrugs.

BILL

She mention
anything to
you about
going back?

(pause)

What? Ursula
has no idea
what he is
talking
about.

47 EXT. STRAW STACK - MAGIC HOUR
MOST OF THE WORKERS ARE FAST ASLEEP AROUND THE STRAWP±LU

Most of the workers are fast asleep around the strawpile, their bodies radiating out like the spokes of a wheel. A few stay up late to shoot dice in the back of a wagon.

48 EXT. SEPARATE STACK - MAGIC HOUR

Abby and Bill have laid their bedrolls out by a stack away from the others. A fire burns nearby. Abby look at the stars. Bill shines his shoes. The straw is fragrant as thyme.

ABBY

I've had it.

BILL

You're tired,
that's all.
I'm going to
find you
another
blanket.

ABBY

No, it's not
that. I'm not
tired. I just
can't.

BILL

Don't you
want to be
with me?

ABBY

You know I
do. It's just
that, well,
I'm not a
bum, Bill.

BILL

I know. I
told you
though, this
is only for a

while. Then
we're going
to New
York. Then
we're New
York.

ABBY

And after
that?

BILL

Then we're
there. Then
we get fixed
up.

ABBY

You mean
spend one
night in a
flophouse and
start looking
for work.
They are
silent for a
moment.

BILL

You should go
back.

ABBY

And leave
you? I
couldn't do
that.

(pause)

Someday, when
I'm dying,
I'd like
somebody to
ask me if I
still see
life the same
way as
before--and
I'd like them
to write down
what I say.
It might be
interesting. I

Suddenly they
look around.
The chief
domestic at
the
Belvedere, a
churlish lady
named MISS
CARTER,
stands above
them with a
salver of
fruit and
roast fowl.

BILL

(suspicious)

What's going
on? Who sent
it? She nods
up toward the
Belvedere and
sets it
down. I

BILL

What for? She
withdraws
with a shrug.
She does not
appear to
relish this
duty. Bill
watches her
walk back to
the buggy she
came down in.
Benson waits
beside it. U

BILL

(to
Abby)

She's the
kind wouldn't
tell you if
your coat was
on fire. U

49 NEW ANGLE - MAGIC HOUR I

Abby, with the look of a child that

has wandered into aI magic world,
digs in. Bill looks on, suspicious of
the_ motives behind this generosity.

50 EXT. FIELD WITH OIL WELL - URSULA'S THEME
- MAGIC HOUR

A bank of clouds moves across the
moon. Ursula roams the fields, keen
with unsatisfied intelligence. The
stubble hisses as a hot wind blows up
from the South, driving bits of grain
into her face like sleet. From time
to time she does a cartwheel.
Equipment cools in the fields. Little
jets of steam escape the boilers of
the tractors. Ursula stops in front of
a donkey well. It nods up and down in
ceaseless agreement, pumping up
riches from deep in the earth.

51 EXT. BEDROOM WINDOW - MAGIC HOUR

The camera moves through the bedroom
window to find Chuck asleep on his
pillow. The wind taps the curtain
into the room.

52 EXT. FATHER IN CHAIR - QUICK CUT

Chuck dreams of a Biblical figure
with a long plaited beard. U52EXT.
Chuck dreams of a Biblical figure
with a long plaited beard, in a frock
coat and Astrakhan hat, sitting in a_
chair on the open prairie, guarding
his land with a brace of guns. This
man will later be identified as his
FATHER.

53 EXT. FIELDS - DAY

The next day Benson yells through a
megaphone from atop a stool.

BENSON

Hold your
horses! I The
huge tractors
start up with
a bang.
Despite

Benson's
warning a
team of
Percherons
breaks free.
Threshing,
the
separating of
the wheat
from the
chaff, has
begun.

54 EXT. SEPARATOR - SERIES OF ANGLESI

Sixty foot belts connect the tractors to the separating machines, huge rattletrap devices that shell the wheat out at deafening volume. Benson tosses bundles down the hissing maw, squirts oil into the gears, tightens belts, chews out a MAN who's sliced a hand on the driveshaft, etc. Bill works on the straw pile at the back of the machine, in a soft rain of chaff, spreading it out with a pitchfork. Ursula helps stoke the tractor with coal and water. When nothing is required of her she sneaks off to burrow in the straw. Gingerbread on the eaves of the tractors gives them a Victorian appearance. Tall flags mark their position in the field. Abby moves quickly, without a moment's rest, sewing up the sacks of grain as they are measured out at the bottom of the separator. A clowning WORKER comes up and smells herU like a flower.

55 EXT. GRAIN ELEVATORSU

Fully laden wagons set off toward distant grain elevators.U

56 EXT. COUCH ON RIDGE

Chuck and McLEAN, his accountant, sit on a ridge away from the chaff, in the shade of a beach umbrella. Chuck keeps track of operations through a telescope. Our last view of Abby, we

realize, was from his POV. A plush Empire couch has been drawn up for his to rest in. At a table beside it, McLean computes the yield.

MCLEAN

This must be wrong. No, dammit, nineteen bushels an acre. Chuck sails his hat out in the stubble with a whoop. McLean leans over his adding machine, cackling like a thief.

MCLEAN

Say it goes at fifty-five cents a bushel, that means a profit of four dollars and seventy-five cents per acre. Multiply by twenty thousand and you're talking over six figures. I

CHUCK

Big year.

MCLEAN

Your biggest ever. This could make you the richest man in

thePanhandle.

(pause)

You ought to
get out while
you're this
far ahead.
You'll never
do better. I
mean it. You
have nothing
to gain by
staying. U
nothing to
gain by
staying. I

CHUCK

I want to
expand. I
want to run
this land
clear to the
Oklahoma
border. Next
spring I
will.

MCLEAN

And gamble
everything? U
(he
nods) I
You're crazy.

CHUCK

I been out
here all my
life. Selling
this place
would be like
cutting my
heart out.
This is the
only home I
ever had.
This I is
where I
belong.
Besides, I
don't want to
live in town.

I couldn't
take my
dogs.I

57 CHUCK'S POV - TELESCOPE MATTE

Chuck takes another look at Abby
through the telescope. 25

58 EXT. BUGGY

Bill drinks from the water barrel at
the back of Benson'sU buggy, his eyes
fixed on Chuck's distan

BILL

Big place
here.

BENSON

The
President's
going to pay
a visit next
time he comes
West.U

BILL

Got a smoke?

BENSON

No.I Bill
puts his hat
back on. He
keeps wet
cottonwood
leaves in the
crown to cool
himself off.

BILL

Why's that
guy dragging
an expensive
piece of
furniture out
here? Reason
I ask is he's
going to ruin
thefinish and
have to strip
it.I Benson

hesitates,
uncertain
whether he
might be
divulging a
confidence.

BENSON

He's not
well.

BILL

What's the
matter with
him? I Benson
immediately
regrets
having spoken
so freely. He
checks his
watch to
suggest Bill
should get
back to work.
This
uneasiness
confirms
Bill's sense
that Chuck is
gravely ill.

59 EXT. SEPARATOR - DUSKI

Abby is sewing up her last sacks by the separator that evening when Chuck walks up, still in the flush of McLean's good news. The others have finished and left to wash up. He sits down and helps her. Shy and upright, he does not know quite how to behave with a woman.

CHUCK

Probably be
all done
tomorrow.

(pause)

You still
plan on going
North? She
nods and
draws her

last stitch.
Chuck musters
his courage.
It must be
now or never.

CHUCK

Reason I ask
is maybe
you'd like to
stay on. Be
easier than
now. There's
hardly any
work after
harvest. The
pay is just
as good,
though.
Better in
fact.

ABBY

Why're you
offering me
this? My
honest face?
Chuck takes a
moment to
compose his
reply.

CHUCK

I've watched
you work.
Think about
it.

ABBY

Maybe I will.
She backs off
toward Bill,
who is
waiting in
the distance.

CHUCK

Who's that?

ABBY

(hesitant)

My brother.

Chuck nods.

60 NEW ANGLE - DUSK

She joins Bill. He gives her a melon,
wanting to pick up her spirits.

BILL

This is all I
could find.
You feeling
better?

(she
shrugs)

What'd he
want? They
look at each
other.

61 EXT. RIVER - DUSK

As Bill and Abby bathe in the river
that evening, he tells her what he
seems to have learned about Chuck's
state of health. Down the way Ursula
sits under a tree playing a guitar.
Otherwise they are alone. They all
wear bathing suits, Bill a shirt as
well.

BILLU

It must be
something
wrong with
his lungs.

(pause)

He doesn't
have any
family,
either. his
lungs. I

(pause) I

ABBY

So what? Bill
shrugs. Does
he have to
draw her a
picture? A
shy, virginal
light has
descended

over the
world. Cranes
peer at them
from the
tamarack.

BILL

Tell him
you'll stay.

ABBY

What for?
Bill is
wondering
what might
happen if
Chuck got
interested
enough to
marry her.
Isn't he soon
to die,
leaving a
vast
inheritance
that will
otherwise go
to waste?

BILL

You know I
love you,
don't you?
ABBY Yes.
Abby guesses
what is going
through his
mind, and it
shocks her.

ABBY

Oh, Bill! He
takes her
into his
arms, full of
emotion.

BILL

What else can
we really do?
I know how
you feel, but

we keep on
this way, in
five years
we'll be
washed up. He
catches a
stick
drifting by
and throws it
further down
stream.

BILL

You ever
think about
all those
ladies
parading up
and down
Michigan
Avenue? Bunch
of whores!
You're better
than any of
them. You
ever think
how they got
where they
are? He wants
to breathe
hope into
her. He
thinks of
himself as
responding to
what she
needs and
secretly
wants. When
she does not
answer he
gives up with
a sigh.

BILL

Let's forget
it.

ABBY

I know what
you mean,

though. He
takes her
hand, with
fresh hope of
convincing
her.

BILL

We weren't
meant to end
up like this.
At least you
weren't. You
could be
something.
I've heard
you sing. You
have a lot of
fine
qualities
that need to
come out.
Ursula, too.
What kind
of people is
she meeting
up with,
riding the
rods? The
girl's never
had a clean
shot-- never
will. She
oughta be in
school.

ABBY

(nodding)

You wouldn't
say this if
you really
loved me.

BILL

But I do. You
know I do.
This just
shows how
much. We're
shit out of
luck, Abby.

People need
luck. What're
you crying
about? Oh,
don't tell
me. I already
know. All on
account of
your unhappy
life and all
that stuff.
Well, we
gotta do
something
about it,
honey. We
can't expect
anybody else
to. Abby runs
into the
woods.U

BILL

Always the
lady! Well,
you don't
know how
things work
in this
country. This
is why every
hunkie I ever
met is going
nowhere.

(pause)

Why do you
want to make
me feel worse
than I
already do?

BILL (CONT'D)

(pause)

You people
get hold of
the guy
that's
passing out
dough, give I
him my name,
would you?

I'd
appreciate
it.

62 TIGHT ON BILL

Bill skims rocks off the water to calm himself down. He feels that somehow he did not get to say what he wanted to.

63 EXT. WOODS BY RIVER

Abby is dressing in the cool woven shade of the woods when Ursula, her face caked with a mask of river mud, jumps from the bushes with a shriek, scaring the wits out of her sister.

64 EXT. BELVEDERE - DUSK

On their way home they pass the Belvedere. A single light burns on the second floor. Abby picks cornflowers to put in her hair. Bill runs his hand down her back.

ABBY

Why're you
touching me
that way? He
shrugs.
Muffled by
the walls of
the house,
above the
cries of the
peafowl, they
can faintly
hear Chuck
singing to
himself.

BILL

He's singing.

ABBY

He can't be
too sick if
he's singing
to himself.

BILL

He might be
singing to
God. They
look at each
other and
smile. It
does not
appear that
she has held
what he said
by the river
against him.
Bill stands
for a moment
and looks up
at the
Belvedere
before
passing on.

65 EXT. SEPARATOR, LAST SHEAVES, RATS

Work goes on the next day. As they
near the last sheaves of unthreshed
grain, hundreds of rats burst out of
hiding. The harvesters go after them
with shovels and stones. The dogs
chase down the ones that escape.

66 BENSON AND CHUCK

Benson and Chuck smile at each other.

BENSON

We should be
done around
four. They
improvise a
chat about
past
harvests.
Years of
shared
hardship have
drawn them
close. Chuck
trails off in
the middle of
a
reminiscence.
Something
else weighing

on his mind.

CHUCK

(shyly)

You put her
on the
slowest
machine?
Benson nods.U

67 NEW ANGLE

The threshing is done. A bundle is pitched into the separator backwards, snapping it abruptly to a stop. The drive belt whips along the ground like a mad snake.

68 EXT. PAYROLL TABLE

All hands line up at the payroll table. McLean gives out their wages in twists of newspaper. Chuck and Benson shake their hands.

69 TIGHT ON BILL AND SORROWFUL MAN

A SORROWFUL MAN shows Bill a picture of a woman.

SORROWFUL MAN

And I let
somebody like
that get away
from me.
Redhead. Lost
her to a guy
named Ed.
Just let it
happen.
Should've
gone out
there outside
the city
limits and
shot him. I
just about
did, too.

(pause)

If you're
knocking
yourself out

like this, I
hope it's for
a woman. And
I hope she's
good looking.
You
understand?

70 TIGHT ON ABBY AND URSULAI

Abby snatches a cigarette out of Ursula's mouth, takes a drag and throws it away. When Ursula goes to pick it up, she stamps it out.

ABBY

Don't spend a
cent of that.

URSULA

Why don't you
leave me
alone?U

ABBY

I'm not going
to sit around
and watch you
throw your
life away.
Nobody's
going to look
at you twice
if you've got
nothing to
your name.
Ursula
dislikes
meddlesome
adults. She
takes out a
pouch of
tobacco to
roll another
cigarette.
Abby swats it
out of her
hand and
chases her
off.

ABBY

You want me
to cut a
switch?

71 SERIES OF ANGLES - FESTIVITIES - DUSKU

There are feats of strength and prowess as workers from the many fields of the bonanza join to celebrate the harvest home: boxing, wrestling, barrel jumping, rooster bouts, bear hugs, "Crack the Whip" and nut fights. Two tractors, joined by a heavy chain, vie to see which can outpull the other. Chuck lifts the back wheel of the separator off the ground; Benson replies by holding an anvil at arm's length; they tease each other about showing off. A GYMNAST does flips. They all seem happy as kids on holiday.

72 NEW ANGLE

Bill and Ursula share a cigarette.
Ursula tries on his sunglasses.

URSULA

We going to
stay?

BILL

If she wants
to.

URSULA

You'd rather
go?_ Bill,
after a
moment's
thought,
shrugs.

BILL

She's the one
has to say.
You put
aspirin in
this?

URSULA

No. She hands

back his
sunglasses.

BILL

Keep them.

73 EXT. MUD PIT - DUSK

Two TEAMS of harvesters have a tug of war. The losers are dragged through a pit of mud. Cradling handfuls of slime, they chase the winners off into the dusk.

74 BILL AND ABBY - DUSKI

Bill finds Abby sitting off by herself, wanting no part of the festivities. This is the first time since their arrival in Texas we have seen her wearing a dress.

BILL

Sunny Jim,
look at this.
My first ice
cream in six
months. And
the lady even
asks do I
want
sprinkles on
top, thank
you. Big,
deep dish of
ice cream.
You couldn't
pay me to
leave this
place, Got
you one, too.
You should've
heard the
line I had to
give her,
though.
Oowee!

ABBY

Good, huh?

BILL

Great.

ABBY

Now you're
trying to
coax me. You
never used to
act like
this. Bill
throws down
the bowls of
ice cream. In
the distance,
some MEN
compete at
throwing a
sledge
hammer.

BILL

For as long
as I can
remember,
people been
giving me a
hard time
about one
thing or
another.
Don't you
start in,
too!

ABBY

You want to
turn me into
a whore?

BILL

We don't have
to decide
anything
final now.
Just if we're
going to
stay. You
never have to
touch him if
you don't
feel like it.
Minute you

get fed up,
we take off.
Worst that
can happen is
we had it
soft for a
while.

ABBY

Something's
made you
mean. She
walks off,
uncertain
what Bill
really wants.

BILL

Or else we
can forget
it. I'm not
going to
spend the
whole
afternoon on
this, though.
That I'm not
going to do.

75 ISOLATED ON CHUCK

Chuck watches from a distance,
fearful that tonight may be the last
he will ever see of her.U

76 TIGHT ON ABBY, EFFIGY, MARS, ETC.I

The harvesters shape and dress the
final sheaf as a woman. The LAST of
them to finish that day carries the
effigy at the end of the pole to the
Belvedere. His mates follow behind,
jeering and throwing dirt clods at
him.U Aby watches. We sense that
anything she sees mightI figure in
her decision.U Mars hangs low and red
in the western sky._

77 URSULA AND DRUNK

Ursula is looking at her figure in a
pocket mirror whenU a DRUNK appears

behind her.I

DRUNK

See what happens to you? Little shit. Get out there and make that big money and don't spend time dicking around.

78 EXT. PIT OF COALS - DUSKU

A feast is laid on. ONE PERSON rolls a flaming wheel down a hill. ANOTHER sets off a string of firecrackers. GERMANS pelt each other with spareribs. Ursula spears hogsheads out of a pit of hot coals. The YOUNGER MEN tease her. She is too much of a tomboy to interest any of thm seriously. The effigy sits off in a chair by itself. • 1

79 TIGHT ON ABBY AND CHUCK - DUSKCHUCK
AWAITS ABBY'S ANSWER.I

ABBY

There's a problem. I have to keep my baby sister with me. Someday_ my baby sister with me. Someday I'm going to save up enough, see, and send her to school.

(pause)

My brother, too. I can't leave him.I Abby fears she has asked too much.

Chuck
hesitates,
but only to
suggest he
still has the
prudence he
long since
has
abandoned.

CHUCK

There's work
for them,
too.

ABBY

Really?

80 EXT. BONFIRE - DUSK.

A bonfire burns like a huge eye in the vat of the prairie night. The band strikes up a reel. Chuck and Abby lead the dancing off, as though to celebrate their agreement. Their giant shadows dance with them. Soon the other harvesters join in.

81 TIGHT ON BILL - DUSK

Bill watches Abby dance--it almost seems in farewell to their innocence. After a moment he turns off into the night.

82 MONTAGE - NIGHT

The effigy is held over the flame at the end of a pole until it catches fire. The harvesters prance around in the dark, trading it from hand to hand. The MUSICIANS, drunk and happy, bow their hearts out.

83 TIGHT ON BILL - DAWN

While the others pursue their merriment, Bill walks the fields by himself, trembling with grief and indecision. Dawn is breaking. The eastern sky glows like a forge. Suddenly he comes upon a wolf. He catches his breath. The wolf stares

back at him for a moment, then turns and pads off into the stubble.

84 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - DAWNEEXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - DAWNU

Early the next morning the HARVESTERS wander by the hundreds down to the railroad tracks to catch a train for the North, where the crops are just now coming into maturity. A subtle feeling of sadness pervades the group. Bill gives his sword cane away to a MAN who seems to have admired it. The MAN offers him money, but he declines it.

85 EXT. TRAIN - URSULA AND JOHN - LATER

Ursula says goodbye to her favorite, a redhead named JOHN. She is hoarse, as always.

JOHN

Why don't you
come with us?

URSULA

They won't
let me. So
when am I
going to see
you again?

JOHN

Maybe in
Cheyenne. She
nods okay.
They both
know they
will never
see each
other again.
On a sudden
impulse she
gives him a
love note.

JOHN

What's this?
She takes it
back

immediately,
but he
snatches it
away from her
and, after a
brief,
giggling
scuffle, hops
aboard the
train, now
picking up
speed. Ursula
runs along
behind,
cursing and
throwing
rocks at him.

86 TIGHT ON BILL AND ABBY

Bill and Abby look on.

BILL

I told her,
"none of my
business Urs,
I just hope
you're not
rolling
around with
some redhead
is all." She
looks me
over. "Why?"
she says,
"What've you
guys got that
redheads
don't?" I
pity that
kid. Ursula
runs up and
throws
herself
tearfully
into Abby's
arms.

BILL

What's the
matter?

What'd he do?
Bill starts
off after the
train.

87 EXT.-"SHEEP POWER"

Abby tends a washing machine driven
by a sheep on a treadmill. Chuck
watches from the front steps of the
Belvedere.

ABBY

I'm just
about done
with this.

CHUCK

Good.

ABBY

So what's
next?

CHUCK

Next?

ABBY

There's
nothing else
you want
done?

CHUCK

Not that I
can think of.
Not right
now. Miss
Carter, the
housekeeper,
steps out on
the porch and
pours a
bucket of
milk into a
cream
separator.

ABBY

How about the
cream?

CHUCK

She takes
care of that.
He nods at
Miss Carter,
who
conspicuously
lets the
screen door
clap shut as
she goes back
inside. She
misses no
opportunity
to express
her disdain
for these
newcomers.
She and
Benson are
the only
employees
seen at the
Belvedere.
Several dozen
others have
stayed on
after the
harvest but
they keep to
their
quarters down
at the dorm.

ABBY

You mean I'm
done for
today?

CHUCK

(uncomfortably)

Something
else might
come up. In
truth, Chuck
does not want
to see Abby
degraded by
menial labor,
considering
her more a
guest than an

employee.
They look at
each other.
Abby does not
know quite
what to make
of him

ABBY

Well, I'm
going back to
the dorm.

CHUCKU

Is everything
okay down
there? In the
way of
accommodations,
I mean. U She
nods and
waves
goodbye. I

88 EXT. BARN

Down by the barn Bill teaches Chuck
how to shoot dice. Chuck feigns
interest.

BILL

I like to
gamble, and I
like to win.
I make no
bones about
it. Got to
where the
guys on
Throop Street
wouldn't even
lag pennies
with me on
account of I
was such a
winner. I'm
starting out
level with
you, you
understand.

CHUCK

Have you ever
been in
trouble with
the law? Bill
looks around.
Abby would
think it
impolitic of
him to speak
so openly
with Chuck.

BILLI

Nothing they
could make
stick. My
problem has
always been
not having
the
education. I
bullshitted
my way into
school. They
gave me a
test. It was
ridiculous. I
got in
fights. Ended
up paying for
a window.
They threw me
out. Don't
blame them
either.
Still, I
wanted to
make
something of
myself. I
mean, guys
look at you
across a
desk, you
know what
they're
thinking. So
I went in the
mill.
Couldn't wait
to get in

there. Begin
at seven, got
to have a
smile on your
face. Didn't
work out,
though. No
matter what
you do,
sometimes
things just
don't go
right. It
gets to you
after a
while. It
gives you
that feeling,
"Oh hell,
what's the
use?"

(pause)

My dad told
me, forget
what the
people around
you are
doing. You
got enough to
worry about
without
considering
what somebody
else does.
Otherwise you
get fouled
up. He used
to say
(tapping his
temple) "All
you got is
this." Only
one day you
wake up, find
you're not
the smartest
guy in the
world, never
going to come
up with the
big score. I

really
believed when
I was growing
up that
somehow I
would. I
worked like a
bastard in
that mill. I
felt all
right about
it, though. I
felt that
somewhere
along the
line somebody
would see I
had that
special
gleam. "Hey,
you, come
over here."
So then I'd
go. They are
silent for a
moment.

CHUCKI

You seem
close to your
sister._

BILL

Yeah. We've
been together
since we were
kids. You
like her,
don't you?

(pause)

She likes
you, too.
Chuck looks
down, feeling
transparent
in the
pleasure he
takes at this
news.

The camera moves back to reveal Abby listening in from the other side of the barn. Her eyes are full of tears. How can Bill prize her so lightly?

BILL (O.S.)

Don't get the
wrong idea,
though.

90 ISOLATED ON BILL - LATER

Bill sits on the ground reading his Police Gazette. Abby walks up and without a word of explanation, slaps him. He jumps up and protests but quickly tapers off. She turns on her heel and leaves. Bill sits down feeling misunderstood and abused. Does she think all this pleases him?

1

91 EXT. FAIRY RINGS (PRAIRIE)

Chuck, out for a stroll with Abby and Ursula, shows them a fairy ring--a colony of mushrooms growing in a circle thirty feet across.

URSULA

I heard you
farmers were
big and dumb.
You aren't so
big. Where do
they learn
how to?

ABBY

They're so
darling! Can
you eat them?
Chuck nods.
Abby snaps
the mushrooms
off flush at
the ground.
The music
underscores
this moment.
She smiles at
Chuck as she

eats the dark
earthy flesh.

92 EXT. POST

They pitch rocks at a post and
exchange intimacies. Abby has grown
more lively.

ABBY

You know
sometimes I
think there
might have
been a mixup
at the
hospital
where I. was
born and that
I could
actually be
the
interesting
daughter of
some big
financier.
Nobody would
actually
know. I

(pause)

Are you in
love with me,
Chuck, or why
are you
always so
nervous?

CHUCK

(Stumbling)

Maybe I am. I
must be.

ABBY

Why? On
account of
something
I've done?

CHUCK

Because
you're so
beautiful.

ABBY

What a nice
thing to say.
Look, I hit
it. Did you
see? She goes
right on with
their game,
as though she
attached no
great
importance to
his momentous
declaration.

93 TIGHT ON CHUCK AND ABBY - LATER

Chuck takes Abby's hand for the first
time. Abby, startled, gives him a
gentle smile, then lets go.

ABBY

What about my
shoes? Aren't
they pretty?
U94EXT. SWING

94 EXT. SWING

Bill sits in a swing and plays a
clarinet. The music flows out across
the fields like a night breeze from
the city. Abby, passing by, glowers
at him, as though to ask if things
are going along to his satisfaction.

95 ASTRONOMICAL SIGHTS (STOCK)

Jupiter, the Crab Nebula, the canals
of Mars, etc.

CHUCK (O.S.)

It turns out
that people
might have
built them.
Does that
surprise you?

ABBY (O.S.)U

No.

96 EXT. RIDGE - DAWN

They are on a ridge opposite the Belvedere looking at the heavens through Chuck's telescope. Abby tingles with a sense of wonder. Chuck has opened a whole new world to her.

ABBY

You know so
much! Would
you bring my
sister up
here and tell
her some of
this stuff?

97 EXT. FATHER'S GRAVE - NIGHT

Nearby the grave of Chuck's father stands in helpless witness to Abby's deception. A cottonwood tree rises against the cold blue sky, still as a statue.

98 TIGHT ON BOOK - FLASHBACK

A hand turns the pages of a book from Chuck's childhood. The text and VOICE reading it are in Russian, the picture of Russian wood folk and animals.

99 EXT. VIRGIN PRAIRIE - FLASHBACK

Chuck's father rushes around marking off his property with stakes.

100 EXT. UNFINISHED SOD HOUSE - FLASHBACK

Chuck, ten years old, scours up the blade of a scythe. Family effects -- a big green stove, a bird cage, a table stacked with melons and a mirror--stand waiting in front of their half-finished sod house. We see no sign of Chuck's mother.

101 EXT. PLOWED FIELD - FLASHBACK

A plow folds back the earth. The roots of the prairie grass twang like harp strings. The plowing done, his

father sows the seed. Poverty requires that for a harrow he drag a tree branch in back of his ox. Over his shoulder he carries a rifle. Chuck blows a horn to chase the blackbirds off the seed. A scarecrow is rigged to his back, to make him more intimidating.

102 CHUCK AND FATHER - FLASHBACK

Chuck's father has caught smallpox. His face is covered with sores. Chuck wants to embrace him, but the father wards him off with a long stick as he passes on some last instructions in Russian.

103 EXT. RIVER - FLASHBACK

The father stands on a ledge above the river, filling his pockets with rocks to weight him down.

CHUCK (V.O.)

My father
caught
smallpox when
I was eleven.
I fished him
out of the
river and
buried him
myself.

104 EXT. SAND BAR - FLASHBACK

Chuck drags his father's drowned body across a sand bar with a rope.

105 EXT. FATHER'S GRAVE - FLASHBACK

Chuck heaps the last bit of earth on his father's grave. The stove stands as a marker.

ABBY (O.S.)

So who raised
you?

CHUCK (O.S.)

Nobody. Did
it myself.

106 CHUCK AS BOY - WITH COYOTE, INDIANS -
FLASHBACK

Famished, Chuck eats from the carcass
of a coyote. Some INDIANS watch him
from a ridge.

ABBY (O.S.)

From the time
you were a
kid? How?

CHUCK

Worked hard,
didn't fool
around. I
never saw a
city. Never
had time. All
I ever did is
work. He digs
a post hole
with a shovel
twice his
size.

107 PAN OVER HILLS-DAWN

The camera pans across Chuck's vast
domain.

CHUCK (O.S.)

I gave my
life to that
land. But
what do I
really have
now? It'll
still be here
when I'm
gone. It
won't
remember me.

(pause)

I'd give it
all up for
you. I could
make you
happy, too, I
think-if only
you'd trust

me. The
camera
settles on
Ursula,
playing with
a dog on a
seesaw Chuck
has built
her, then
begins to
move again,
to a long
shot of Chuck
and Abby on
the ridge by
the
telescope.
Chuck is
proposing.

108 EXT. DORM

Abby has told him of the proposal.
Bill broods over an unlit cigarette.
Is this a great blessing or a great
misfortune which has befallen them?

ABBY

He's asked me
to marry him.

BILL

I never
really
thought he
would.

ABBY

I thought you
wanted me to.

BILL

Before I did.
You cold?
Abby is
shivering.
Bill takes
off his
jacket and
slips it over
her
shoulders.

BILL

What're you
thinking?

ABBY

We've never
done anything
like this.

BILL

Who'd know
but you and
me?

ABBY

Nobody.

BILL

That's it,
Ab. That's
all that
matters,
isn't it?

ABBY

You talk like
it was all
right. It
would be a
crime.

BILL

But to give
him what he
wants more
than
anything?
Two, threeI
months of
sunshine?
He'll never
get to enjoy
his money
anyway.
What're you
talking
about? We'd
be showing
him the first
good times of
his life.

ABBY

Maybe you're right. At each hint of consent from Abby, Bill feels he must press on.

BILL

You know what they're going to stick on his tombstone? "Born like a fool, worked like a mule." Two lines. Abby cannot say the proposal is devoid of principle. The idea of easing Chuck's imminent death gives them just the shade of a good motive. This would be a trade.

ABBY

What makes you think we're just talking about a couple of months?U

BILL

Listen, the man's got one foot on a banana peel and the other on a roller skate. What

can I say?
We'll be gone
before the
President
shows up. He
straightens
his coat and
smooths back
his hair, to
make her
smile,
without
success. BILL
Hey, I know
how you feel.
II Hey, I
know how you
feel. I feel
just as bad.
Like I was
sticking an
icepick in my
heart. Makes
me sick just
to think
about it!
heart. Makes
me sick just
to

ABBY

I held out a
long time. I
could've
taken the
first guy
with a gold
watch, but I
held out.

(pause)

I told myself
that when I
found
somebody, I'd
stick by him.

BILL

I know. We're
in quicksand,
though. We
stand around,

it's going to
suck us down
like
everybody
else.

(pause)

Somewhere
along the
line you have
to make a
sacrifice.
Lots of
people want
to sit back
and take a
piece without
doing
nothing. He
waits to see
how she will
respond. Half
of him wants
her to turn
him down
flat. Abby is
bewildered.

ABBY

Have I ever
complained?
Have I said
anything that
would make
you think...

BILL

You don't
have to. I
hate it when
I see you
stooped over
and them
looking at
your ass like
you were a
whore. I
personally
feel ashamed!
I want to
take a .45
and let

somebody have
it.

(pause)

We got to
look on the
bright side
of this, Ab.
Year from
today we got
a Chinese
butler and no
shit from
anybody.

(pause)

Some people
need more'n
they have,
some have
more'n they
need. It's
just a matter
of getting us
all together.

(pause)

I don't even
know if I
believe what
I'm saying,
though. I
feel like
we're on the
edge of a big
cliff. Abby
looks at the
ground for a
moment, then
nods.

109 TIGHT ON CHUCK

Chuck lies in bed, daydreaming.

110 TIGHT ON ABBY AND URSULA

Ursula decorates Abby's hair with
flowers and tells her how pretty she
looks.

111 EXT. RIVER BANK

The wedding takes place along the
river. The Preacher has come back

with his ACOLYTES. A chest of drawers serves as the altar. Benson is the best man--a joyless one. Ursula bounces around in a beautiful gown, looking for the first time like a young woman. The BAND practically outnumbered the guests: ELDERS from the local Mennonites, the MAYORS of a few surrounding towns decked out in sashes and medals, etc.

112 TIGHT ON ABBY AND BILL

Bill kisses the bride on the cheek. Each believes she is going through with this for the other's sake. They whisper back and forth.

ABBY

You know what
this means,
don't you?

(he
nods)

We won't ever
let each
other down,
will we?

BILL

I love you
more than
ever. I
always will.
I couldn't do
this unless I
loved you.

113 SERIES OF ANGLES

The Acolytes ring an angelus bell. Chuck slips a sapphire on her finger. The Preacher, with outstretched arms, reminds them all that they are witness to a great event.

114 SKY - ABBY'S POV

Abby, frightened, looks off at the rolling sky, wondering how all this looks in the sight of heaven.

115 INT. BEDROOM - DUSK

From her pillow, Abby watches Chuck shyly enter the bedroom. He comes over and sits down beside her.

CHUCK

You're
wonderful.
She is silent
for a moment.
The wind
moans in the
rafter

ABBY

No. But I
wish I were.
(pause)
Listen. It
sounds like
the ocean.
They smile at
each other.

116 EXT. BELVEDERE - DUSK

Bill watches the lights go out in the Belvedere. A lump rises to his throat. How exactly did this happen? He sets his jaw, vowing not to give way to weakness or jealousy. This is the price they have to pay for a lasting happiness.

117 TIGHT ON ABBY, CHUCK, ETC.

The next morning the newlyweds set off on their honeymoon. Chuck tells Bill to move his things from the dorm into the Belvedere. Abby, a basket of cucumbers under her arm, waves goodbye, angling her wrist so that Bill and Ursula can see the diamond bracelet Chuck has given her.

118 EXT. PRAIRIE

They steer out across the prairie in a 1912 Overland auto. Ursula runs after them, slaps the back fender and hops around on one foot, pretending

the other was run over. Abby laughs.
She knows this stunt. When they are
gone Ursula turns fiercely on Bill.

URSULA

I hate you.

BILL

What for?
Don't be any
more of a
pain in the
neck than you
gotta be,
okay? She
swings at him
with her
fist. He
pushes her
away.

BILL

You think I
like this?
I'm doing it
for her!

URSULA

You scum.
Bill slaps
her.

BILL

Still think
so? She
throws a rock
at him and
runs off. He
catches her,
repenting of
his meanness.

BILL

I know you
can't
understand
this, but
there's
nothing I
want except
good things
for Abby and

you. Go ahead
and hit me
back. She
hesitates a
second, then
slaps him as
hard as she
can. Blood
glistens on
his lip. He
does not say
a word in
protest. She
looks at the
wound,
horrified,
then throws
her arms
tight around
him.

119 EXT. PIERI

Abby and Chuck disembark from a
paddleboat steamer at a pier along
the river. Chuck looks excited.

120 EXT. YELLOWSTONE POOL

Chuck and Abby have gone to
Yellowstone Park for their honeymoon.
Abby wades in a pool, wreathed by
mists from the underworld. She
carries a parasol to protect her from
the sun. The trees in the vicinity
are bare of leaves.

121 EXT. ANTLERS - FREEZE FRAME

Chuck kneels with a box camera to
photograph a large pair of antlers
lying on the ground.

122 SERIES OF STILLS (STOCK)

This photo becomes the first in a
series from their Yellowstone trip:
fishermen displaying sensational
catches by a river, buggies vying
with early autos on rutted roads, the
giant Beupre who stood eight feet
tall, etc. Each of the pictures bears

a caption. Together they make a little story.

ABBY (O.S.)

We saw
grizzly bears
and a boar.
The bears
scared me the
most. They
eat garbage.

(whispering)

I was so
lonesome. I
missed you.

123 TIGHT ON BILL AND ABBY

Bill and Abby kiss, renewing old ties.U

ABBY

There was a
mountain
partly made
of glass,
too, but we
didn't get to
see it. And a
petrified
tree.

BILL

We'll go
back.

ABBY

Can we?
Because
there's a
whole lot I
didn't get to
see. Bill
straightens
up. Chuck
sits down on
Abby's other
side.

124 EXT. DINNER TABLE UNDER NETI

They are having dinner on the lawn in

front of the Belvedere. A fine mesh net is spread above them like a tent to keep the insects out. Ursula sits on Bill's lap. He puts a hand up the back of her shirt and they play as though she were a ventriloquist's dummy.

125 TIGHT ON RABBIT

Bill displays a rabbit which he trained in their absence to perform a card trick.

BILL (O.S.)

I have you
now, Ed. Only
thing that
can beat me
is the ace of
spades. (His
name's Ed..)
Her name's
Abigail.
Hungarian
name.

(mumbling)

Andrew drew
Ann. Ann drew
Andrew. From
the whole of
a spread deck
it picks the
ace of
spades.

126 NEW ANGLE

Abby and Chuck applaud. Ursula cranks up the victrola and puts on a record. Bill strokes the rabbit.

BILL

You know why
I like him?
He minds his
business and
isn't full of
baloney.
Chuck turns
to Abby and,
for nearly

the first
time, smiles.

CHUCK

He's funny.
Bill holds a
plate up for
Abby to see.
Limoges
china. Abby
rolls her
eyes and
spits out a
cherry pit.
They eat like
pigs, with no
respect for
bourgeois
manners.

URSULA

You have any
talents,
Chuck?

CHUCK

No, but I
admire people
who do.

ABBY

That's not
so. He can do
a duck. Show
them.

BILL

Stand back.
Get the women
and children
someplace
safe. Chuck,
feeling it
would be
wrong not to
enter the
spirit of the
occasion,
does his
imitation.
The likeness
is

astonishing.
Abby wipes a
bit of food
off his chin
with her
napkin. Bill
drums on the
table with
his spoon.

ABBY

You saw how
modest he
was?

BILL

How'd you get
along so long
without a
woman? Chuck
shrugs.
Ursula makes
a gesture as
though to say
by
masturbating.
Chuck does
not see it.
Billy laughs.
Abby slaps
her. The
rabbit jumps
out of the
way.

ABBY

Don't you
ever behave
that way at
table!

(to
Chuck)

She's
adopted. I
had nothing
to do with
her
upbringing.
I'd trade her
off for a
yellow dog.

(to
Ursula)

Now eat. You
want to
starve to
death?

URSULA

That's what
you'd like.
Abby,
overcome with
impatience,
throws her
food to the
dogs. Ursula
catches a
grasshopper
and holds it
out to Chuck.

URSULA

You give me a
quarter to
eat this
hopper? Chuck
does not
reply. She
pops it into
her mouth
anyway,
enjoying his
look of
shock. Bill
throws down
his fork.

BILL

All right,
okay,
nobody's
hungry
anymore.
What's the
worst thing
you ever did,
Chuck?
Besides
missing
church and
that kind of

stuff. Chuck
thinks about
this.

CHUCK

Once I turned
a man out in
the middle of
winter,
without a
cent of pay.
For all I
know he
froze.

BILL

If you went
that far, he
must've
deserved it.
What else?

CHUCK

He didn't. I
fired him out
of
resentment.

BILL

Well, you're
the boss,
right? That's
how it works.
Got to make
decisions on
the spot.
Anyway, this
guy-what's
his name?--if
I know his
kind, which I
do, he's
probably
doing okay
for himself,
got a hand in
somebody
else's pocket
for a change.
Is that all?

CHUCK

All I can
think of
right now.
How about
yourself?

BILL

(to
Abby)

He wants to
know. I'm not
going to
count setting
Blackie's on
fire either.
He had it
coming.

BILL (CON'T)

(pause)

Once I
punched a guy
while he was
asleep. Chuck
looks
surprised.
Bill glances
at Abby,
worried that
he might have
said too
much.

BILL

I was just
kidding.
Actually a
guy I know
did, though.

ABBY

Maybe he did
it to you.

BILL

Yeah. I think
so. Chuck
gets up to
ring for Miss
Carter. Bill
looks him up
and down.

Chuck, though
older, is
physically
more
imposing.

URSULA

Can I have
the rabbit?

BILL

Get serious.
I can win
money with
him. She
licks his
ear. He
laughs.

URSULA

I want that
bunny.

BILL

You still
believe in
Santa Claus.
Bill closes
his eyes as
he feels the
soft fur of
the rabbit.
Ursula looks
around to
make sure
Chuck is
gone, then
wings a roll
at Bill. It
bounces off
his forehead.
He retaliates
with a pat of
butter.

127 BENSON

Benson watches from another hill. He
finds his displacement by these
newcomers a humiliating injustice.

128 NEW ANGLE

Chuck returns to the table and draws
Bill aside.

CHUCK

Almost
forgot.
Here's your
pay. Bill
takes the
envelope
Chuck holds
out. Then, in
a spasm of
conscience,
he gives it
back.

CHUCK

What's the
matter?

BILL

I got no
right to.

CHUCK

Why? Bill is
momentarily
at a loss for
words.

BILL

I haven't
worked hard
enough to
deserve it. I
been goofing
off. I

CHUCK

Don't be
silly.

BILL

Give it to
charity or
something.

(pause)

Don't worry.
I always know
to look out
for myself,

because if I I
don't, who
will? See
what I'm
driving at?
Chuck sees a
sense of
honor at work
in Bill here,
and though he
considers the
gesture
misguided and
a little
grand,
admires him
for it.

129 EXT. BASESU

They play a game with big lace
pillows for bases. The rules are
unintelligible.

130 NEW ANGLE

Bill is expert at throwing knives. As
the others watch, he goes into a big
windup and pins a playing card to the
side of the house. U Everyone seems
happy and congenial. They have
reached some kind of plateau. Chuck's
ignorance of the ruse does not cause
the others to treat him with less
respect. They seem themselves almost
to have forgotten it.

131 BILL AND ABBY'S POV - LATERU

Benson collects the bases, a job he
doubtless feels is beneath him. The
Doctor's wagon, unmistakable even at
such a great distance, thunders away
from the Belvedere.

132 TIGHT ON BILL AND ABBYU

Bill and Abby, waiting for Chuck to
join them for a swim, U look
questioningly at each other. S

133 EXT. RIVER

Ursula, in her bathing suit, jumps from a ledge above the river. She holds a big umbrella over her to see if it will act as a parachute. Bill and Chuck have a water fight. Abby wades in the shallows with a parasol.

134 TIGHT ON ABBY AND URSULA - LATER

Abby is teaching Ursula how to kiss.

ABBY

Too like a
mule.

URSULA

(trying
again)

What about
that?

ABBY

It's got to
be--how
should I say?
-- more
relaxed. They
laugh and
kiss again.

135 NEW ANGLE

Farther up the slope Bill and Chuck wring out their bathing suits. Bill, thinking of the Doctor's visit, puts a hand on Chuck's shoulder. This time Chuck does not stiffen or ease it off.

BILL

You okay?

CHUCK

Sure. Why?
Bill shrugs,
beaming with
admiration
for this man
who does not
burden others
with his
secrets.

BILL

I appreciate
everything
you've done
for Abby. I
really do.
You've given
her all the
things she
always
deserved. I
got to admit
you have.
Chuck looks
off,
embarrassed
but oddly
pleased. Bill
snatches up a
handful of
weeds and
smells them.

.

136 CRANE SHOT

Returning home they portray the movements of the sun, earth and moon relative to each other. Abby is the sun and keeps up a steady pace across the prairie. Chuck, the earth, circles her at a trot, giving instructions. Bill, with the most strenuous role of all--the moon--runs around Chuck while he circles Abby.

137 EXT. PRAIRIE - SERIES OF ANGLES

They play golf on the infinite fairway of the prairie. Bill and Abby make a team against Chuck and Ursula. Nightingales call out like mermaids from the sea.

BILL

You liking it
here?

(she
nods)

Feel good?

(she

nods)
Feels good to
feel good. He
smiles,
satisfied
that he has
done well by
her, and lets
a new ball
slip down his
pant leg to
replace the
one he
played.

138 NEW ANGLE

Ursula, meanwhile, grinds Abby's ball
into the dirt with the heel of her
boot. She winks at Chuck. Chuck
smiles back.

CHUCK

What's your
mother like?

URSULA

Her? Like
somebody that
just got hit
on the head.
She used to
pray for me.
Rosary, the
stations,
everything.
"Hey, Ma," I
tell her, "I
ain't
crippled."
They don't
know, though.
They say
you're in
trouble. They
don't know.

(pause)

My dad, the
same way.
Thought the
world owed

him a living.
He drowned in
Lake
Michigan.

139 EXT. BELVEDERE

They walk home. Bill stays behind to
work on his strokes. Ursula sends the
dogs after the balls.

BILL

You shag
them, not
those dogs.
They might
choke or run
off with
them.

URSULA

Who made you
the boss?
Shag them
yourself.

BILL

Listen, some
day all this
is going to
be mine. Or
half is.
Somebody like
that, you
want to get
on his good
side, not
give him a
lot of gas.
You want to
do what he
says. He
steps off a
few paces of
his future
kingdom and
draws a deep
breath.

BILL

This reminds
me of where I

came from. I
left when I
was six.
That's when I
met your
sister. He
looks at the
land with a
new sense of
reverence. He
snatches up a
handful of
grass and
rolls it
between his
palms.

BILL

I can't wait
to go back to
Chicago,
bring them
down for a
visit.
Blackie and
them. There's
a lot of
satisfaction
in showing up
people who
thought you'd
never amount
to anything.

(pause)

I'd really
like to see
this place
run right. I
got a lot of
ideas I'd
like to try
out.

140 BILL'S POV AND TIGHT ON BILL

In the distance he sees Chuck put his
arm on Abby's waist and whisper
something in her ear. This intimacy
rubs him the wrong way. He gives his
clubs to Ursula and starts after
them.

141 INT. KITCHEN

Bill finds them in the kitchen. Chuck goes into the other room to look for something. Abby lifts the cigarette out of Bill's mouth, takes a drag and does a French inhale. Bill kisses her.

ABBY

Nobody's all
bad, are
they?

BILL

I met a few I
was wrong on,
then.
Suddenly they
hear Chuck's
footsteps.
They pull
back just in
time, Abby
returning the
cigarette to
him behind
her back.
They chat as
though
nothing had
happened.

BILL

I have a
headache. I
probably
should've
worn a hat.
Abby rolls
her eyes at
this
improvisation.
No sooner
does Chuck
turn his back
than Bill's
hand darts
out to touch
her breast.
He snatches

it away a
moment before
Chuck turns
back.
Together they
walk into the
living room.

BILL

You ever see
anybody out
here?

CHUCK

Not after
harvest.

BILL

How often do
you get into
town?

CHUCK

Once or twice
a year.

BILL

You're
kidding. He
must be
kidding.

CHUCK

Why do I need
to? Bill
catches
Abby's eyes.
He frowns at
the idea of
being cooped
up with this
Mormon all
winter.

BILL

Relaxation.
Look at the
girls.
Opportunity
to see how
other folks
live. Chuck

looks at him
blankly. None
of these
reasons seems
to carry much
weight for
him. Bill
turns to
Abby.

BILL

Somebody is
nuts. I don't
know whether
it's him or
me, but
somebody is
definitely
nuts.

ABBY

Why don't I
fix tea?

BILL

Maybe I
should help
you. He
follows her
back into the
kitchen,
where he
starts to
kiss her. She
pushes him
away and
turns to
making the
tea.

ABBY

You're worse
than an
Airedale.

(raising
her
voice)

You want
jasmine or
mint?

CHUCK (O.S.)

Mint. Bill
lifts up the
back of her
dress and
looks under
it, testing
the breadth
of his
license. She
slaps it back
down. He
lifts it
again,
standing on
his right to.
She glowers
at him.

ABBY

Don't do
that.

(calling
to
Chuck)

How much
sugar?

BILL

Why not? I'm
just seeing
what kind of
material it's
made of.

CHUCK (O.S.)

One spoonful.
Bill walks
around
absentmindedly,
inspecting
Chuck's
things,
stealing
whatever
catches his
fancy. A
book, a
paperweight,
a bell--
things he
does not

really want
and has no
use for. His
conscience is
clear,
however; the
sacrifices
they are
making excuse
these little
sins. As
Chuck walks
in, Bill has
pocketed a
candlestick.

ABBY

Where's the
candlestick?
Chuck shrugs.
Bill gives
Abby a cold
look and goes
outside.

CHUCK

He's a
strange one.

ABBY

(nodding)

Once he named
his shoes
like they
were pets. It
was a joke, I
guess.

142 EXT. WELL

Bill drops the candlestick down the
well, stands for a moment, then
punches the bucket with his fist. He
looks up. Benson has seen him.

143 EXT. SAPLINGS AGAINST WINDOW - NIGHT

Outside the saplings thrash in the
wind.

144 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Abby wakes up with a gasp.

CHUCK

What's the
matter?

ABBY

I had a
dream.

CHUCK

What about?
(pause)
Was something
after you?

ABBY

I forgot it
already.

145 AERIAL SHOT (STOCK)

The camera falls through the clouds
as though in a lost fragment of
Abby's dreams.

146 EXT. BARN

Benson sulks by the barn. Chuck
approaches him.

CHUCK

You come down
here a lot,
don't you?
Always when
you're mad.
You never
change.

BENSON

It might not
be my place
to say this,
sir, but I
don't think
they're
honest
people.

CHUCK

He gets on
your nerves,

doesn't he?
He always
has.

(cutting
in)

Now don't say
something
you're going
to regret. .

BENSON

Why should I
regret it? I
think they're
a pair of
scam artists,
sir. Let me
tell you what
I've seen,
and you judge
for yourself.
Chuck, who of
course has
seen the same
things and
more, raises
a hand to
silence him.

CHUCK

Maybe you'd
be happier
taking over
the north end
till spring.
I don't say
this in
anger. We've
been together
a long time,
and I've
always felt
about you
like, well,
close. It
just might
work out
better is
all. Less
friction.

BENSON

Don't believe me, then. You shouldn't. But why not check it out, sir? Hire a detective in Chicago. It won't cost much. What's there to lose? Chuck's brow darkens as Benson goes on. For a moment we glimpse the anger that would be unleashed if ever he woke up. Somewhere he already knows the truth but refuses to acknowledge it.

CHUCK

You're talking about my wife. And so Chuck, too, becomes an accomplice in the scheme.

BENSON

Maybe I better pack my things. Benson turns and walks off. Chuck watches him go, ashamed at himself. What has this

man done but
a friend's
duty?

147 INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Abby sits at the dresser in the master bedroom. Bill walks in through the door and tries Chuck's hat on for size.

ABBY

What're you
doing in
here?

BILL

Just walked
in through
the door,
like any
other white
man. On the
bureau he
finds a
pistol. He
aims it out
the window.
All this will
soon be
theirs!

BILL

Smith and
Wesson. You
ought to see
one of these
plow into a
watermelon.
She holds a
hairbrush out
for him to
see. He looks
it over and
gives it back
without
comment. He
finds a stain
on the
tabletop.

BILL

Somebody's
been staining
this fake
inlay with a
water glass.
Actually I
don't blame
them. He
walks around
trying out
more of
Chuck's
appurtenances.
Abby, caught
up, models a
shawl before
an imaginary
mirror. She
blows a kiss
at herself.

ABBY

Don't say I
did that.

BILL

The bed
should be
over next to
the window.
Where the
view is. Bill
is already
making plans
for life
after Chuck's
demise.

BILL

Maybe we
build on a
balcony.

(pause)

First the
birds go. The
peacocks are
crowing
outside. They
burst out
laughing.
Bill checks

the mussed
bedsheets.

ABBY

That doesn't
concern you.

BILL

Why not?

(no
reply)

Look, I know
you've got
urges. It
wouldn't be
right if you
didn't. Abby
stands up,
angry.

ABBY

You think I
enjoy it?

BILL

Lower your
voice.

ABBY

You act like
it's harder
on you than
me! I never
want to talk
about this
again. Bill,
consoled,
holds an
eyelet blouse
against the
light.

BILL

I bet he
enjoys
looking at
you in this.

ABBY

I thought you
liked it.

BILL

He likes it,
too, is what
I'm saying.

ABBY

Well, it's
the style.

BILL

I see.

ABBY

What do you
want me to
wear in this
heat? A
blanket?

BILL

That's your
problem. Abby
puts on her
wedding
bracelet and
admires it.
Bill softens
at the sight
of her
beauty,
properly
adorned.

BILL

I told you
someday we'd
be living in
style. When
this whole
thing is over
I'm going to
buy you a
necklace with
diamonds as
big as that.
He holds out
the tip of
his little
finger. They
laugh, as
though they
suddenly felt

the absurdity
of all this
make-believe.

BILL

You're cute.
Maybe a shade
too cute. She
touches his
face
sympathetically,
as though to
say that she
knows the
pain this was
causing him.

ABBY

This is
terrible for
us both.

CHUCK (O.S.)

Abby? They
jump as Chuck
calls up from
downstairs.

ABBY

Down in a
minute. She
kisses Bill.

148 EXT. BACK DOOR OF BELVEDERE

Bill sneaks out the back door of the
Belvedere, only to find Benson
drinking at the well. They look at
each other in silence for a moment.
Benson's horse stands beside him, a
suitcase fixed to the saddle.

BENSON

I know what
you're doing.

BILL

What're you
talking
about?

BENSON

That boy's
like a son to
me. Don't you
forget it. I
know what
you're doing.
Benson gets
on his horse,
turns and
rides off.
Miss Carter
waves goodbye
from the side
of the house.
She and Bill
exchange a
look.

149 EXT. FRONT PORCH

Bill finds the others around front. Abby lolls in the hammock writing in her diary and eating a peach. Ursula plays the guitar. Little by little the newcomers have done the house over from the austere structure that it was. Living room furniture has been moved out onto the front lawn and there arranged as though by a child. Goats sleep on the divan. Archery targets hang from the side of the house. The porch is covered with a striped awning, bird cages and twirls of bunting. Everywhere an atmosphere of drunken ease prevails.

BILL

Nice fall
day.

URSULA

Wish I'd said
that.

BILL

(to
Abby)
Watcha doing?

ABBY

Eating a
green peach.

'Spect to die
any minute.

BILL

Listen, I had
a great idea.
Let's spend
Christmas in
Chicago.
Break up the
old routine.
Rhino's never
been to a
baseball game
or a horse
race. I know
guys one
month off the
boat that
have. Don't
even speak
the English
language, but
they eat it
right up.

(pause)

You're just a
young guy,
Rhino; you
oughta be
running
around
raising hell.
No offense to
the little
woman. He
bows
apologetically
to Abby. She
pinches a
dead leaf off
a plant.

CHUCK

Abby says
that in the
poor section
people eat
cats.

BILL

Did you, sis?
Well, there's
always
something
doing. I
can't begin
to tell you.
State and
Madison?
Mmmm. Lights
everywhere.
You'd love
it.

CHUCK

It can be
rough,
though.

BILL

Rough?
Listen, you
can't walk
down the
street
without
somebody
reaching in
your pocket!
You've got to
keep your
coat like
this and poke
them away.

ABBY

Bill got shot
once. The
bullet's
still in him.

CHUCK

Really?

BILL

Doctor said
he took it
out, but I
never saw it.
Hurt like a
bastard. You
got no idea

how it hurt.
Suddenly he
worries this
might
discourage
Chuck from
going.

BILL

They won't
mess with
you, though.
Big fella
like you. I
can see it
now. He
offers a
taste of the
talk Chuck is
like to
provoke on
the street
corners.

BILL

"Hey, hey,
hey. Who's
this here,
fresh out of
the African
Jungle,
moving down
the sidewalk
with a
whowhowho,
taking ten
feet at a
step and
making all
the virgins
run for
cover? Why,
it's Big
Rhino, the
King of
Beasts. He
walks, he
talks, he
sucks up
chalk." Bill
steps back

and sees, as
though for
the first
time, how
imposing
Chuck really
is.

BILL

You are big,
aren't you?
Sunny Jim!
You must've
had a real
moose for an
old lady.

ABBY

Take it easy.
But Chuck
holds none of
this against
him. He knows
it comes from
respect.

BILL

So what do
you say?

(pause)

What a sorry
outfit! Bunch
of old
ladies. You
better stay
behind. Your
mamas'd
probably get
upset. But
when the time
comes, I'm
out of here.
Hit the road,
Toad! Ursula
passes the
sandwiches
around until
there is just
one left,
Miss
Carter's.

While the
others are
talking, she
scoops up a
handful of
dirt and
pours it into
the middle.
Bill,
lighting a
cigarette,
notices
Chuck's hand
on Abby's.

BILL

Ever seen a
match burn
twice?

CHUCK

No. Bill
blows out the
match and
touches
Chuck's hand
with the hot
ember,
causing him
to yank it
away.

BILL

That's old.
Chuck starts
to cough.
Bill looks at
Abby, then
whips the
handkerchief
out of his
pocket and
puts it over
his nose, as
though to
keep from
getting
Chuck's
germs. Miss
Carter's face
goes blank as

she bites
into her
sandwich. She
jumps up and
rushes back
into the
house. Chuck
frowns. Bill
glares at
Ursula, then
turns to
Chuck and,
referring to
the dead
prairie grass
which runs
through the
front yard
right up to
the house,
continues:

BILL

You ever
thought of
putting in
some fescue
here? Some
fescue grass?
Of course, it
might not
take in this
soil. Chuck
stands up and
winds a
stole, a long
religious
scarf, around
his neck.

CHUCK

You ready?

BILL

I still have
a little of
this sore
throat. Where
you going,
though?

CHUCK

To kill a
hog.

BILL

What's the
necktie for?

(pause)

Or does it
just come in
handy?

CHUCK

Keeps the
stain of
guilt off.
Chuck nods
goodbye and
walks off,
taking a
stool with
him. Bill
sighs with
admiration.

BILL

I try and
try.

ABBY

What a
splendid
person! I've
never met
anybody like
him!

BILL

Splendid
people make
you nervous.

ABBY

They do! I
breathe a
sigh of
relief when
they step
outside the
room. Bill
puts on his
boater and

opens a copy
of the Police
Gazette. They
are silent
for a moment.

BILL

A guy ate a
brick on a
bet. Must of
busted it up
first with a
hammer. Guy
in New York
City. Where
else?

(Jumping
up)

Anybody want
to bet me I
can't stick
this knife in
that post?
Nobody takes
him up on
this. Abby
leafs through
the Sears
catalogue,
her mind
dancing with
visions of
splendor.

150 TIGHT ON CATALOGUE

Pictured. in the catalogue are bath
oils and corsets and feathered hats.
A grasshopper is perched on the page
among them, its eyes blank and dumb.

151 TIGHT ON ROSE

Bill watches her run her finger
slowly around the closed heart of a
rose. Suddenly they both look at each
other. They have heard the squeals,
faint but unmistakable, of a hog
being led to slaughter.

152 TIGHT ON STOOL - QUICK CUT

Chuck has tied the hog's feet to the inverted legs of the stool.

153 OTHER QUICK CUTS

Ursula, off by herself, skips rope. A flag on the pole by the front gate snaps in the breeze. From the branch of a lone tree the hog dangles by its hocks into the mouth of a barrel.

154 EXT. BELVEDERE - ABBY'S POV FROM SECOND FLOOR WINDOW

Miss Carter storms down the hill with her bags. Fed up, she is leaving the bonanza. Chuck tries in vain to appease her. She keeps walking, out the front gate and into the prairie on a straight course for the railroad tracks. Chuck will now be alone at the Belvedere with the newcomers and no other point of reference.

155 EXT. CLOTHES LINE

Later that afternoon, Bill catches sight of Abby's underthings rustling on the clothes line.

156 INT. STAIRS

That evening he watches her from behind as she climbs the stairs to join Chuck at their bedroom door. She nods goodnight, sensing the jealousy that is growing in him.

157 INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Chuck looks impatiently through a drawer.

CHUCK

I can't find
anything
around here.
Last week it
was my
gloves; this
week my talc.
What's going
on? He stands

and watches
Abby get
ready for
bed. She
fills him
with a deep
adoration. He
feels that in
the tulip of
her mouth at
last he has
found heaven.

CHUCK

You're
beautiful.

ABBY

You don't
think my
skin's too
fair? He
comes up
behind her
and touches
her long
hair.

CHUCK

You're smart,
too, aren't
you?

ABBY

I know what
the Magna
Carta is.

CHUCK

Can I help
you brush it
out?

ABBY

Not right
now. She is
cold to
discourage
false
expectations
in him--and
because she

feels that
she at least
owes Bill
this. Chuck,
however,
assumes the
fault must be
his own. His
naivete about
women, and
the world in
general,
protects the
conspirators-
-and protects
him, too, for
he glimpses
enough of the
truth not to
want to know
any more.

CHUCK

What makes
you so
distant with
me?

ABBY

Distant? I
don't mean to
be.

CHUCK

You know what
I'm talking
about,
though. You
aren't that
way with your
brother.

158 INT.ATTIC

Bill, eavesdropping in the attic
above them, surveys Chuck's dusty
heirlooms.

CHUCK (O.S.)

It must be
something I'm
doing. I wish

you'd tell me
what, though.

159 INT. BEDROOM

These gentle endearments, so rarely
heard from Bill, stir her deeply. She
throws herself in his arms.

ABBY

Oh, Chuck I
Please
forgive me.
Does it mean
anything that
I'm sorry?

CHUCK

(pleased)

But I don't
blame you.
Did I make it
sound that
way?

ABBY

You should.
You have a
right to.

CHUCK

It's just
that
sometimes I
feel I don't
know you
well.

ABBY

You don't.
It's true.

CHUCK

I think you
love me
better than
before,
though. She
rubs her
cheek against
his hands.
Daily she

feels warmer
toward him.
How much of
this is love,
how much
respect or
devotion,
even she
cannot say.

160 TIGHT ON BILL - LATER - NIGHT

The night throbs with crickets. Bill cracks open the bedroom door. Chuck lies asleep in a shaft of moonlight next to Abby. He hesitates a moment, but a strange compulsion drives him on. He has never done anything so dangerous, or had so little idea why.

161 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Abby wakes up to find him staring her in the face. He kisses her. Chuck stirs. Abby signals they should go outside.

162 EXT. BELVEDERE - DAY FOR NIGHT

They sneak out of the Belvedere. The night is warm.

ABBY

You're no
good.

BILL

Mmmm. But I
love you.

ABBY

I can't stand
it any more.
This is just
so cruel.
We're both no
good. I've
got to get
drunk with
you, Bill.
You know what
I mean?

Drunk. Bill
wags a
bottle. The
dogs,
awakened, bay
from the
kennel. They
wait a moment
to see if a
light will go
on in the
house, then
dart off
toward the
fields. A
plaster lawn
dwarf seems
to watch them
go.

163 EXT. FIELDS - DAY FOR NIGHT

They run through the fields, hand in hand, laughing and flirting. The moon makes Abby's nightgown a ghostly white.

ABBY

We can never
do this
again,
though. Okay?
It really is
too
dangerous.

BILL

This one
night. He
toes a sodden
old shoe.

BILL

Hey, I found
a shoe.

164 SHOE, COYOTES, SCARECROW - DAY FOR NIGHT

The shoe gleams in the moonlight. Coyotes yelp from the hilltops. A scarecrow spreads its arms against the sky. The waving fields of wheat

have given way to vast reaches of
cleanly shaven stubble, stained with
purple morning glories. Odd, large
stakes are planted among them.

165 NEW ANGLE - DAY FOR NIGHT

BILL

You want me
to spin you
around? She
nods okay. He
takes her by
the hands and
spins her
around the
way he used
to--until
they go
reeling off,
too dizzy to
stand.

166 EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY FOR NIGHT

They lie by the river looking at the
great dome of stars. Bill wants to
believe things are the same between
them as before. So does Abby--but she
knows better.

BILL

Suppose we
woke up
tomorrow and
it was a
thousand
years ago. I
mean, with
all we know?
Electricity,
the
telephone,
radio, that
kind of
stuff. They'd
never figure
out how we
came up with
it all. Maybe
they'd kill
us. She looks

at him, and
they laugh.

BILL

You sleepy?

ABBY

This is the
first time we
slept
together in a
while, Bill.

BILL

You like it?

ABBY

Of course.

BILL

Kiss me,
then.

ABBY

It's so sweet
to be able to
kiss you when
I want to.

167 NEW ANGLE

Before the marriage his lovemaking was gentle and soft. Now it has a brutal air, as though he were asserting his right to her for the last time.

168 TIGHT ON ABBY - DAWN

Dawn is breaking. Abby jumps to her feet, alarmed. They have slept too long.

169 EXT. BELVEDERE - DAWN

They have run back to the Belvedere. It seems they are safe until Chuck appears on the porch, yawning and stretching. Bill drops to the ground while Abby goes ahead. Abby appears at one side of the house while Bill steals around the other. Luckily, they have come up from the back.

CHUCK

Abby! I've
been looking
all over for
you. Where
have you
been? While
she distracts
Chuck, Bill
slips back in
the house. It
has been a
close call.

ABBY

Watching the
ducks.

CHUCK

Didn't you
sleep well?

ABBY

No.

170 TIGHT ON ABBY (DISSOLVE TO PAGE, THEN TO
URSULA)

Abby looks sympathetically at Chuck.
Her face dissolves into a page of her
diary and from there to Ursula,
balancing an egg on her fingertip.

ABBY (O.S.)

Chuck saw
Ursula
balance an
egg. He
begged her to
repeat this
trick, but
she wouldn't.

171 TIGHT ON CHUCK

Chuck tries to reduplicate Ursula's
feat. Abby, amused, reaches out and
touches his face. We wonder if,
despite herself, she might be falling
in love with him.

172 EXT. BELVEDERE

Bill watches the Doctor walk out the front door and down the steps to his wagon. Chuck follows, smiling.

ABBY (O.S.)

The Doctor
came. Chuck
looked
pleased for a
change.

173 EXT. PRAIRIE - BILL'S POV

The Doctor's wagon rolls off across the prairie.

ABBY (O.S.)

Tomorrow the
President
passes
through.
Plans have
changed, and
he can't
stop.

174 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - DUSK

They have come down to the railroad tracks to watch the President pass through.

URSULA

We should
have brought
a flag.

ABBY

Does she have
time to ride
back and get
it? Abby and
Bill hold
hands. Chuck
by now is
accustomed to
such
displays.
They seem,
however, to
make Abby
increasingly

uncomfortable.

175 MOVING TRAIN - THEIR POVS

The train bursts past at twenty yards, its great light rolling like a lunatic eye. Bill's heart pounds with excitement. Chuck holds Abby by the waist. Ursula waves a handkerchief... They cannot make out anything specific in the windows, but there is the sense of people going more important places, getting on with the serious business of their lives - while out here they stagnate. Dimly visible, on the back platform of the caboose, a MAN in a frock coat salutes them with his cane. The train has quickly vanished into the declining sun. Everything is quiet again. Ursula rushes up the grade to collect some pennies she laid on the tracks.

ABBY

Did you see
him wave?

CHUCK

He was
shorter than
I expected.

BILL

How do you
know it was
him?

ABBY

I saw! He had
a hat on.

BILL

You didn't
understand my
question.
They walk
back to the
buggy. Ursula
holds up a
dead snake
she found on

the tracks.

URSULA

You know what
I'm going to
do with this?
Take it home
and put it in
vinegar.

BILL

That was the
President,
shortie. Wake
up. Bill
watches Chuck
help Abby
into the
buggy. She is
laughing
about
something or
other. His
hand lingers
for a moment
on hers. She
does not
brush it
aside, as
once she
might have,
but to Bill's
dismay,
presses it
against her
breast. Chuck
seems to have
breathed a
hope into her
that he,
Bill, was
never able
to.

176 EXT. FIELDS

Abby and Ursula race across the
fields trying to fly a kite. Ursula
rides a tiny Shetland pony. Just as
the wind lifts the kite away, they
run into Bill. He sits by himself

observing a spear of grass. Abby drops off. Ursula rides off over the hill with the kite, leaving her alone with Bill.

ABBY

You look deep
in thought.
She touches
his cheek. He
brushes her
hand away.

ABBY

What's the
matter?

BILL

Nothing.

ABBY

There's
nothing
wrong?

BILL

No.

ABBY

What're you
so mad about
then?

BILL

Who said I
was mad?

BILL

Can't I be
alone once in
a while
without
everybody
getting all
worked up?

ABBY

You're the
only person
getting
worked up.
Some buffalo

appear on the
crest of the
next hill.
Abby looks at
them. They do
not seem
quite part of
this world
but mythical,
like
minotaurs.

ABBY

Chuck says
they're good
for the
grass.

(pause)

Stop giving
me that look.

BILL

You can't
keep your
hands off him
these days.

ABBY

What're you
talking
about?

BILL

You know.

ABBY

I haven't
touched him.

BILL

How about the
other night?
I saw you,
Abby. The
other night
by the
tracks? If
only you
wouldn't lie!
Really,
there's some
things about

you I'm never
going to
understand.

ABBY

I forgot.
Anyway it
doesn't
matter. What
are you
doing, always
trying to
trap me? Bill
paces around,
disgusted
with himself
and the whole
situation.

BILL

I can't stand
it any more.
It's just too
degrading.

(pause)

You and him.
Why do I have
to spell it
out? I
thought it
would be all
over in a
month or two.
Guy might go
another five
years. We've
got to clear
out, Abby.
They stare at
each other in
silence for a
moment.

ABBY

Why stop now?

(pause)

We've come
this far.

BILL

What?

ABBY

You heard me.

BILL

Why stay? Go ahead and tell me! I'm standing here. Bill trembles with shock and anger. The buffalo cast aware glances at them.

ABBY

You want us to lose everything?

BILL

I'm telling you I can't stand it.

ABBY

You're weak then. What about all I've been through?

(pause)

And what about him? It would be the worst thing we could do. Worse than anything so far. It would break his heart. Bill is silent for a moment.

BILL

You're getting to like him, aren't you?

ABBY

It would kill
him. Leaving
now would be
just cruel.

BILL

Would it? So
what's it
matter to
somebody in
his shape?

(pause)

In fact
you're just
leaving us
one way out.

ABBY

What're you
talking
about?
Murdering
him? Ursula
comes riding
over the
hill, without
the kite.

BILL

You watch and
see.

URSULA

I had to let
it go. One of
them started
following me,
and I threw a
rock at him.
I had a bunch
stored in my
pocket. They
take off
running after
her.

177 EXT. BELVEDERE

As they approach the Belvedere, Bill
sees Chuck standing on the front
steps. Suddenly angry, he draws Abby

to him and in plain view kisses her
on the lips.

ABBY

He can see
you! Bill
nods; he
knows. Abby
runs ahead,
angry and
alarmed.

BILL

Don't you
believe in
being honest?

178 NEW ANGLE

Abby bounds up the steps. Chuck has
bent his mind to understand all this
as mere sibling love, but here is the
greatest test so far.

ABBY

Aren't you
going to kiss
me?

CHUCK

Why?

ABBY

Today's my
birthday.
Chuck gives
her a kiss,
glad to put
aside his
suspicions.

179 TIGHT ON POINTERS, QUAIL AND PHEASANTS

Tails level, their noses thrust high
in the air, a pair of pointers prance
through the high uplands grass,
following a scent like sailors taking
in a rope. Pheasants and quail
tremble in their coveys, their eyes
big with fear.

180 EXT. UPLANDS

Chuck has taken Bill out bird-hunting. They wear heavy canvas leggings and carry shotguns.

BILL

Did you ever tell Abby the buffalo help keep up the grass?

CHUCK

I think so. Why? Bill shrugs. Chuck welcomes this opportunity to speak of his wife. He considers Bill a good friend, in fact the only person with whom he can talk about delicate matters.

CHUCK

I want to get her something nice for Christmas. Bill, who means to kill Chuck the first chance he gets, forgets this intention for a moment to give him advice.

BILL

(thoughtfully)

She likes to draw. Maybe some paints. Nothing too

expensive--
she might
want to
exchange it.
Maybe a coat.
She likes to
show off
sometimes.
She's sweet
that way.

CHUCK

I wish I knew
how to make
her happy.
Nothing I do
really seems
to.

BILL

That's how
they are.
They like to
make you work
for it. I
couldn't ever
figure out
why.

(pause)

Sometimes you
can't go
wrong,
though. You
know that one
Abby showed
you a picture
of?
Elizabeth? I
took her
cherry.

CHUCK

I know. You
told me.

BILL

Actually, I
didn't, but I
could have.
The point I'm
making is

you've got to understand how they operate. Get them thinking you can take it or leave it, you're usually okay. Suddenly the dogs stop rigid, on point. At Chuck's hiss they sink into the grass. Bill looks at Chuck's exposed back. Nobody would know. It could be made to seem like a hunting accident. He cocks the hammer of his shotgun. His heart pounds wildly. Chuck talks in a low voice to the dogs.

CHUCK (O.S.)

All right, put them up, girl. The dogs rise and inch toward the birds, as slowly as the minute hand of a clock. All at once the quail explode out of hiding. Bill jumps at the noise.

Chuck fires
twice. Two
birds fall.
The retriever
notes where.
Chuck turns
around.

CHUCK

Why aren't
you shooting?
I left you
those two on
the left.

BILL

They caught
me off guard.

CHUCK

You have to
keep your gun
up. Chuck
walks ahead.
The music
builds a mood
of tension.
Bill takes a
practice shot
into the
ground. Bill
looks around.
There is
nobody in
sight. He
turns the
sights on
Chuck's back.
It would be
simple
enough.
Though only
twenty feet
away, he
closes the
gap, to make
sure he does
not miss.
Chuck
whistles the
scattered

birds back to
their covey.
"Pheo! Pheo!"
Soon, faint
and far away,
comes a
reply—the
sweet,
pathetic
whistle of
the quail
lost in a
forest of
grass. The
mother bird
utters a low
"all is
well." One by
one, near and
far, the note
is taken up,
and they
begin to
return. Bill
holds his
breath. His
finger moves
inside the
trigger
guard. He
only has to
squeeze a
fraction of
an inch.
Three more
birds shoot
out of the
grass. Chuck
fires. At
first we
think Bill
has, but he
cannot stoop
this low. He
does not have
the heart.
Disgusted, he
throws his
gun on the
ground. Both
barrels go

off. Chuck
snaps around,
startled and
concerned.
Bill is
shaking like
a leaf.

CHUCK

What's the
matter? What
are you so
upset about?

BILL

They
surprised me
again. Chuck
sends a
retriever
after the
fallen birds,
then--in an
unprecedented
gesture--he
puts his arm
over Bill's
shoulder to
comfort him,
like an older
brother.

181 NEW ANGLE

They return home, the day's kill
slung over the back of a Shetland
pony.

182 EXT. BACK YARD

They sit on stools in the back yard
plucking the birds.

BILL

You like to
box?

CHUCK

I never have.

BILL

Just

wondering. I
got a pair of
gloves I
brought with
me. Bill
feels oddly
better, as
though Chuck
had backed
down.

CHUCK

Abby bought
me this at
Yellowstone.
Chuck shows
Bill his
knife. Bill
reads a name
off the
handle.

BILL

That's what
she calls
you?
'Chickie?' He
gets up, his
nostrils
flaring with
anger. Chuck
thinks this
indignance is
on his
behalf.

CHUCK

Doesn't
bother me.
Should it?
Bill throws
down the
pheasant he
was plucking.

CHUCK

What's the
matter?

BILL

Don't let her
fool you,

too. She
warms up to
whoever says
please and
thank you.

CHUCK

What's the
matter? Bill,
still angry
at himself,
considers
telling him.

BILL

You really
want to know?
He would like
Chuck to know
the truth but
does not want
theresponsibility
for revealing
it. He must
find out by
accident.
Luckily they
are
interrupted
as Ursula
runs up,
pointing over
her shoulder.
A pair of
three-wing
airplanes
sputters into
view low
overhead. One
seems to be
having engine
trouble.

183 EXT. FIELD NEAR BELVEDERE

The planes set down in a nearby
field. "Toto's Flying Circus" is
emblazoned on the wings.

184 NEW ANGLE

Five PEOPLE clamber out, members of a

seedy vaudeville troupe. They swagger around, filthy with oil from the backwash of the props, looking more like convicts than entertainers. Their LEADER is an excitable Levantine. LEADER How long it take to fix? Very mooch time! Now look where you hab stuck us. Salaupe! You forget who I aim! Bill, Abby and Ursula approach the aircraft with the greatest caution, like the Indians at Cortez's ships.

185 EXT. SCREEN - NIGHT

A JUGGLER and a SNAKE CHARMER perform first separately, then jointly as a slap act. A DOUBLE TALKER weaves sentences of absolute nonsense. After a moment a black and white image appears over his face and he drops out of sight. The troupe is putting on a show to earn its supper. ONE of them stands behind the viewers -- Abby and Bill, Chuck and Ursula -- cranking a carbide projector by hand. A silent movie appears on the screen, full of extraordinary pratfalls, disappearances and other tricks of the early cinema. Chuck has never seen anything remotely like this.

CHUCK (O.S.)

How'd they do
that? Where'd
he go? There
must be a
wire. Etc. He
steps forward
to inspect
the screen,
actually just
a sheet hung
along a
clothesline,
to see
whether the
image is
coming from
behind. Bill
and Abby sit

rapt as
children,
nostalgic for
Chicago.

186 EXT. DINNER TABLE - NIGHT

Ursula serves dinner. She is excited by the visitors' city ways. They are bored with her, all except the youngest, GEORGE, a young pilot in a white scarf.

URSULA

We never hear
a thing out
here. It's
like being on
a boat in the
middle of a
lake. You see
things going
on, but way
far away,
with no
voices.

GEORGE Maybe
time to clear
out. George
puts his hand
on hers. She
snatches it
away. GEORGE

What's the
matter?
Aren't I your
type or
something?

The
Doubletalker
pokes his
fork into a
pudding. A
balloon,
concealed
beneath the
surface,
explodes to
general
delight. Down
the table

Abby and Bill
chat with the
Leader.

LEADER You do
not
understand,
sir. I am
saddled with
asses, yaays?
I, who once
played the
Albert Hall

BILL

You. hear
that? He
called me
'sir.' In
their gaiety
he carelessly
puts a hand
on Abby's
leg.

187 TIGHT ON CHUCK - NIGHT

Chuck looks on from the shadows, no longer just puzzled but angry. He has watched them behave this way a dozen times before, but tonight, with other people around, he must see it more directly.

188 EXT. STRAW STACK - NIGHT

George tells Ursula a joke. She dissolves in giggles before he can finish, as though amazed at his power to dispense illusion.

189 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Chuck, alone in the darkened living room, calms himself down by breathing through a rubber mask into a respirator. Joyful noises reach him from outside.

190 CHUCK'S POV - NEXT MORNING

The next morning Chuck looks down out his bedroom window. The troupe is

packing to leave. Still troubled, he walks to the bed and and stands over Abby.

CHUCK

What's going on, Abby? She does not respond. He yanks the sheet off. She is wearing a nightgown. She looks up and frowns. This is the first time she has ever seen him this way.

CHUCK

You know what I mean. Between you and Bill.

ABBY

I have no idea.....

CHUCK

(interrupting)

Something's not right, and I want to know what. Abby jumps out of bed and assumes the offensive. She has no other choice.

ABBY

Say it out loud. What're you worried about?

(pause)

Incest?

CHUCK

It just
doesn't look
right. I
don't know
how brothers
and sisters
carry on
where you
come from,
but...

ABBY

(interrupting)

Did you ever
have a
brother. Then
who are you
to judge?
Maybe if you
had, you'd
understand.
Anyway, times
have changed
while you've
been stuck
out in this
weed patch.

We're

*****line
missing*****

She puts on a
robe and
walks out.
Her last
argument has
worked best.
Chuck never
imagined he
was in step
with the
times.

191 EXT. BELVEDERE

Abby slips out the front door. She
looks around to make sure that Chuck
is not watching her, then heads off
to find Bill. The vaudevillians gorge

themselves on last night's leftovers,
steal flowers from the flower beds,
etc. ONE sits off by himself, playing
a French horn.

192 EXT. DORM

She finds Bill by the dorm throwing a
switchblade in the ground, a
toothbrush in his mouth.

ABBY

I have to
talk to you.

BILL

Look what I
traded off
those clowns.
For a bushel
of corn! She
draws him by
the arm
behind a
wall. She is
trembling
with fear.

ABBY

Chuck is
suspicious.

BILL

Chickie you
mean? So
what?

ABBY

Really. This
is the first
time he's
ever been
like this.
I'm scared.
All this
flatters
Chuck in a
way Bill does
not like.

BILL

What for?

Why're you so
worried what
he thinks?

ABBY

He could kill
us. I want to
live a long
time, okay? I
just got
started and I
like it. Bill
shrugs, as
though to say
he can handle
whatever
Chuck can
dish out and
a little
more.

ABBY

You might
take a little
responsibility
here. You got
us into all
this.

BILL

Did I? Well,
it never
would've come
up if you
hadn't led
him on. Led
Chickie on!

ABBY

Is that the
best you can
do? Knowing
you it
probably is.
You've made a
mess of our
lives, okay.
Don't pretend
it was my
fault. Bill
combs his

hair to calm
himself down.

BILL

Why's this
guy still
hanging on
like a
goddamn
snapping
turtle?
Because of
you. Boy,
this was a
great idea.
Right up
there with
Lincoln going
down to the
theater, see
what's on!

ABBY

Keep your
voice down.

BILL

Don't give me
that. When a
guy's getting
screwed, he's
got a right
to holler.

ABBY

You're such a
fool!

BILL

What?

ABBY

Nothing.

BILL

I heard what
you said.

ABBY

Then why'd
you ask? Oh,
how did I

ever get
mixed up with
you? Abby, in
terror of
Chuck's
finding out,
cannot
understand
why Bill
seems to care
so little.

BILL

You've gone
sweet on him.
You have,
haven't you?
Abby
hesitates.
Bill throws
his knife
away.

ABBY

I admire him.
He's a good
man.

BILL

Broad
shoulders. I
know. Very
high morals.
Why can't he
talk faster?
It's like
waiting for a
hen to lay an
egg.

ABBY

You wouldn't
understand,
though. He's
not like you.
You don't
know how
people feel.
You only
think of
yourself.

BILL

What's going
on between
us, Abby?
Think about
that. If you
figure it
out, tell me,
will you? I'd
appreciate
it.

(pause)

Lord, but you
do come on!
You talking
like this,
used to play
around right
under his
nose.
Somebody I
met in a bar,
remember? Or
maybe you
walked in,
thought it
was a church.
Well, I've
had it. I'm
clearing out.
You
understand?
They look at
each other
for a moment.

ABBY

Go ahead.
This is not
what he
expected to
hear. But now
his pride
requires that
he face the
truth and not
back down.

BILL

Okay. He
looks at her

for a moment.
He cannot be
dealt with
this way. He
turns and
walks off.

193 NEW ANGLE

Ursula flirts with George. He slips a
hand inside her blouse. She bats it
away.

194 EXT. BEDROOM WINDOW

Bill stands on the ground below the
master bedroom. Chuck leans out the
window above him. Peacocks roost on
the balcony, beneath the telescope.
The vaudevillians are loading up
their planes. Abby watches from the
porch.

BILL

I'm going
away for a
while.
They're
giving me a
lift.

CHUCK

What for? He
shrugs.

BILL

I'm wearing
one of your
shirts. Let
me take it
off for you.

CHUCK

Never mind.

BILL

I got my own.
Just wasn't
any clean
today. Bill
takes off the
shirt, drapes

it over a
post and
walks off,
hurt and
angry, but
with a sad
dignity.
Chuck is not
entirely
sorry to see
him go, nor
is Abby; she
knows that he
is getting
out just in
time. One
more episode
like last
night's and
the fuse
would hit the
powder.

195 NEW ANGLE

Bill gives Ursula his money.

BILL

We get split
up for any
reason, you
spend that on
school.

196 EXT. PRAIRIE

The vaudevillians are ready to take
off. Bill boards the plane which
George is piloting, wondering if
today's break with Abby is real or
just in anger, a necessary gesture.
With him he carries his only
possessions, a bindle and his trick
rabbit. Abby, Chuck and Ursula look
on.

CHUCK

What's eating
him? Abby
shrugs and
walks down to
Ursula.

URSULA

Why aren't we
going with
him?

ABBY

What for? To
sleep in
boxcars?

197 AIRPLANES

The planes set their wheels in the furrows, rev their engines and wobble off into the sky. Ursula waves goodbye to George.

198 EXT. PLAINS UNDER SNOW - SERIES OF ANGLES

Winter has come. Snow falls across the breadth of the plains, on the river and the dark sleeping fields.

199 EXT. SLEIGH (OR ICE BOAT) - SNOW

Chuck and Abby skim over the snow in a gaily painted sleigh (or ice boat). She is wrapped up snug in a buffalo robe, her feet on a hot brick. Pigs forage along the fences.

200 INT. CAVE

They inspect a cave with a kerosene lantern. Blocks of ice, covered with burlap and sawdust, cool shelves of preserves. Abby drops a stone into a dark pit. Two seconds pass before it hits the bottom.

ABBY

Probably
that's the
first noise
down there
for thousands
of years. She
speaks as
though she
had done it a
favor. He

puts his hand
on hers. She
presses it
against her
chest.

ABBY

You ever wish
you could
turn your
heart off for
a second and
see what
happened?

201 OTHER ANGLES

Views of backlit gems, stalactites,
salamanders in their cold dark pools,
hidden springs and other mysteries of
nature.

ABBY (O.S.)

Maybe nothing
would. They
round a
corner and
come upon an
underground
waterfall. It
flows out of
darkness back
into
darkness.

202 INT. FORGE

Bill, meanwhile, stands in a line of
panting, sweating IMMIGRANTS. On
their shoulders they carry the huge
barrel of a cannon. With a grunt they
drive it into the fiery mouth of a
forge.

203 EXT. CITY STREET

Bill stands on the corner of a big
city street, stamping his feet
against the cold. He tries to catch a
pigeon with some bread crumbs under a
box propped up by a stick, but just
as he pulls the string to drop the

trap it darts out of the way.

204 BILL AND YOUNG GIRL

Bill has an improvised conversation with a YOUNG GIRL who has run away from home. He asks her where she comes from, whom she belongs to, etc. She tells him of her hopes, then passes on. Bill gives her all the money in his pocket.

205 MONTAGE

Enthralled, Abby surveys the wonders of Babylon and Nineveh in a book about the Near East. Ursula sits with a world globe, taking a geography lesson from a traveling TUTOR. No doubt this was Abby's idea. Abby copies from a small plaster model of a Roman bust. She wants painfully to improve herself.

206 EXT. FROZEN LAKE -NIGHT

Abby and Chuck skate around a bonfire on a frozen prairie lake, carrying torches to guide them through the dark.

207 INT. CHICAGO FLOPHOUSE

Bill sits in a cold flophouse trying to write a letter. After a moment he wads it up and throws it away.

208 EXT. BELVEDERE

Abby, Ursula and Chuck are on a walk outside the Belvedere. The snow is gone. Abby's hands are stuffed in a chinchilla muff. All at once they hear a distant noise like the whoops of an Indian war party. It seems mysteriously to come from every hilltop. Abby turns to Chuck with a puzzled look.

CHUCK

Prairie
chickens.
That means

winter's
broken.

ABBY

Really? Where
are they?

CHUCK

You hardly
ever see
them. They
stand and
listen to the
birds. There
is a sense of
the earth
stirring back
to life. Abby
breathes in
with a wild
joy and hugs
Chuck tightly
by the waist.

209 EXT. TENEMENT HALLWAY

Bill is talking with a FRIEND in the
hallway of a tenement.

BILL

I can't seem
to get my
mind on
anything. I
thought, when
I came off
that place,
boy, they'd
better get
all the women
out of town
that day, you
know?
Somewhere
safe. But you
know what I
do? I sleep,
nothing but
sleep. A
PANHANDLER
approaches
them with a

hard-luck
story.

FRIEND

Okay, here's
a quarter,
but give me
some
entertainment,
okay? Not
this old song
and dance.
While the
Panhandler
performs,
Bill looks
around. Two
POLICEMEN
have appeared
in the
entryway
talking with
the LANDLADY.
Bill edges
out the back
door and down
the steps, as
though they
might be
after him. He
walks briskly
down the
alley without
looking back.

210 TIGHT ON CHUCK (DISSOLVE TO DIARY)

Chuck holds a handful of seed under
his nose. His heart stirs at the
dark, mellow smell. Into this
dissolves an image of Abby writing in
her diary.

211 EXT. FIELD

Chuck swings a barometer round and
round, checking the weather. Two Case
tractors pitch across a field like
boats on a rolling sea. Long plumes
of smoke wind off behind them. Each
tows a fourteen-gang plow. A third
tractor follows, putting in the seed.

Ursula chases a flock of blackbirds off with a big rattle. Every acre of ground for as far as the eye can see is under cultivation.

ABBY (O.S.)

They put in
the wheat the
other day.
This will be
the biggest
year ever.
There was a
scare when a
locust turned
up. Luckily
it wasn't the
bad kind.

212 NEW ANGLE

The plows have turned up a hibernating locust. Chuck stands by the tractor, inspecting it under a magnifying glass. The creature nestles like a fossil in the black earth.

ABBY (O.S.)

They sleep in
the ground
for seventeen
years, then
crawl up
around the
end of May
and spend a
week flying
around before
they die.
Chuck kicks
up the dirt
around the
plow, looking
for others.
Benson, back
from exile,
looks
concerned.

CHUCK

Nothing to

worry about.
Just shows
the land is
good.

213 SERIES OF ANGLES

Various wonders of the prairie: a charred tree, a huge mastodon bone, a flowering bush, a pelican, the rusted hulk of an ancient machine, etc.

ABBY (O.S.)

How strange
this new
world is! You
walk out in
the morning
sometimes to
find a lake
rippling
where the day
before solid
land was.

214 EXT. STONE BOAT

Chuck has laid out the outline of a 50-foot boat in whitewashed stones. He walks around the imaginary deck showing Abby where the cabins will be.

ABBY (O.S.)

Chuck wants
to build a
boat and take
us off to
Java, which
he's never
seen.

215 EXT. FIELDS

Ursula goes out to the fields with an organist named JOEY whom Chuck has hired to play for the crops. He and Ursula seem to hit it off.

ABBY (O.S.)

Last month he
brought in a

kid to play
the organ. He
claims it
helps the
crops grow.
Personally I
doubt it.

216 EXT. MIDDLE OF FIELDS

They have brought an organ out into the middle of the fields. Ursula pumps up the bellows. Joey sits in front of the keyboard and shoots his cuffs. His fingers strike the keys.

217 CLOUDS, CLOSEUPS OF PLANTS - TIME LAPSE PHOTOGRAPHY (STOCK)

Clouds build in huge toadstools. Thunder rolls across the plains. A rain begins to fall. The music seems to work a magic on the crops, to draw them forth. The seeds germinate in the darkness of the soil. Water finds its way down. Roots, tiny hairs at first, spread and grow.

218 DOLLS, TIGHT ANGLES ON THEIR FACES

Rude dolls fixed at the ends of pointed sticks--agricultural fetishes that Chuck's father brought with him from the Old World--stand around the field to join in aiding the crops.

219 EXT. BELVEDERE

Flags and bunting adorn the porch for Independence Day. Ursula sets off some fireworks.

ABBY (O.S.)

Time has
flown, and
once again
harvest is
near.

220 EXT. GREEN FIELDS (TRIFFIDS)

The bald earth has, as though by a mystery, become a sheet of grain, its

green already fading to gold. The music dies away, replaced by the whirr of summer crickets.

ABBY (O.S.)

It will be a year that we have been here. The camera holds and holds on the fields until in their vacant depths, we begin to sense the presence of a deep malevolence, still biding its time but growing every minute. Seagulls-- like strange emissaries from another world--glide back and forth over the fields in search of grasshoppers.

221 INT. LANTERN - NIGHT

Ursula takes curling irons from the chimney of a lantern where she has set them to heat, and applies them to Abby hair.

URSULA

Suppose I never fall in love, Abby?

ABBY

Don't be silly. Everybody does. What do

you think all
those songs
are about?
You need to
be careful,
though, and
not throw it
away.

URSULA

Throw what
away?

ABBY

You know,
your chances.
It's too hard
to explain to
a little
squirrel like
you.

URSULA

That sounded
just like
Bill. Don't
you miss him?

ABBY

Sometimes.
From her
tone,
however, we
sense that
she finds it
easier with
him gone.

222 INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Abby whispers something to Chuck in
bed that evening.

CHUCK

You ever said
that to
anybody else?
She giggles.

CHUCK

You're lying,
aren't you?

Well, go
right on
lying. The
camera moves
to the
window,
beneath the
eave.
Outside,
peacocks
strut back
and forth.

223 EXT. MUDDY ROAD

Bill rides an Indian motorcycle along a muddy road back to the bonanza. His rabbit is strapped to the back. He stops for a moment to look at the new fields.

224 EXT. BELVEDERE - BILL'S POV

Abby sings to herself as she beats out a carpet. Bill appears on the ridge behind her. Hope leaves him like a ghost. She looks happily settled into a new life with Chuck. All at once she turns around.

ABBY

Bill! She
rushes up and
embraces him,
but her
warmth just
seems a tease
to Bill. She
is different.
She looks
different.
The tutors
and tailors
Chuck has
brought in
over the
winter have
given her
more polish.
Her hair is
nicely
coiffed.

Where she
used to dress
in cotton
shirtwaists,
she wears
crinolines
now.

BILL

How's
everybody
been?

ABBY

Including me?
Okay. Gee,
you look
good.

BILL

Thanks. And
Chuck?

ABBY

Still the
same.

BILL

Actually I
didn't mean
it that way.
(pause)
I came back
to help out
with the
harvest. He
feels
humiliated at
not having a
stronger
excuse. But
he loves her.
He aches with
love. He
hoped their
last fight
was just
another storm
in the
romance.
Evidently it
was more.

BILL

I thought
about you a
lot. Wrote
you a letter,
but it was no
good, so I
tore it up.

ABBY

How'd you
come?

BILL

Train. He
looks her up
and down.

BILL

Nice dress.

ABBY

I'm glad you
like it. He
admires her
garden. His
familiar
cockiness
vanishes as
little by
little he
sees the old
feeling is
not there.

BILL

This is new,
too.

ABBY

The daffodils
were already
here, but I
put in the
rest. You
really do
like them? At
a shriek from
Ursula, Bill
turns around.
She runs into

his arms, and
covers him
with kisses.

URSULA

I've missed
you! I
thought about
you every
day. You
should've
written. Did
Abby show you
what she got?
Abby scowls
at Ursula.
With no
choice but to
show him, she
opens the top
button of her
blouse and
draws out a
diamond
necklace.

ABBY

(apologetically)

For
Christmas.

URSULA

Plus a music
box. He
spoils her.
Why don't
they spoil
me, too?

(whispering)

You oughta be
glad you
didn't have
to spend the
winter. You
would've gone
crazy.

225 TIGHT ON ABBY

The winter's peace is gone. Abby is
sick with fear. Now that she loves
Chuck, too, she can never again be

honest with Bill. The truth of her feelings would crush him. Moreover, there's no telling how he might react. He could ruin everything, even get them killed.

226 EXT. BEDROOM WINDOW

Chuck looks on from behind the bedroom window.

227 EXT. DINNER TABLE

They dine in awkward silence. Benson has joined them. Abby, for all her winter's polish, still eats with the back of her knife.

CHUCK

How was
Chicago?

BILL

Great.

ABBY

How's
everybody
doing?

BILL

Okay. They
are silent
for a moment.
Bill senses
that nobody
except Ursula
is really
glad to see
him back.

ABBY

How's
Blackie?

BILL

Still hasn't
wised up.
Know what I
mean? He
asked how you
were doing,
though.

(pause)

I told him.
Ran into Sam,
too. He'd
been in a
fight.

ABBY

Oh yeah? Bill
can see that
her interest
is only
polite. He
knows that he
should turn
around and
leave, but he
cannot. The
sight of him
with his
confidence
gone is
painful to
behold.

BILL

His nose was
like this. He
pushes his
nose to one
side. Ursula
and Abby
laugh.

228 EXT. STOCK POND

Bill plants willow slips in the soft
earth by the stock pond. Ursula
orders a dog around.

URSULA

Look at this
dog mind me.
Sit! You've
got to say it
like hitting
a nail.

BILL

Has she asked
you anything
about me?

URSULA

No. Ursula
flirts with
him, running
the shoots
along his
back. She
waits to see
what he will
do. He gets
up and after
a short chase
catches her.
He holds her
at arm's
length for a
moment, then
kisses her.

URSULA

What'd you do
that for?
Bill wonders
himself. To
get revenge
on Abby? He
touches her
breast.

URSULA

Don't.

BILL

Why not?

URSULA

Cause there's
nothing
there.

BILL

I can be the
judge of
that.

URSULA

Then ask
first. He
kisses her
neck.

BILL

Nobody has to
know but us
chickens.

(pause)

What do I
have to say
to convince
you? You tell
me, I'll say
it.

URSULA

What makes
you think I
would?

BILL

Nothing. She
giggles and
kisses him
back. But
guilt has
caught up
with him. He
cannot go
ahead.

URSULA

What's the
matter? No
reply.

URSULA

Maybe it
would be
wrong.

(disappointed)

You still
love her,
don't you?
Bill hums a
rock off
toward the
horizon.

BILL

I should've
gone in the
church, like
my father was
after me to.

229 BILL'S POV - OUTSIDE THE BELVEDERE -
NIGHT

Chuck and Abby sit in their cozy living room playing Parcheesi. The sound of their voices is muffled. The camera draws back to reveal Bill outside the window, watching. She is comfortable with Chuck now. Apparently, he has lost his place in her heart. He wants to rush in and drag her away.

230 EXT. BEDROOM WINDOW - NIGHT

Later that night he stands under the bedroom window and wonders at the meaning of the shadows that flicker across the ceiling. After a moment he withdraws into the darkness.

231 EXT. SMALL PRAIRIE TOWN (DUCK LAKE)

Bill has brought Abby into a nearby town to make some purchases. Dressed in a chauffeur's gown and goggles, he sits against the fender of the Overland watching her move from store to store. Ursula is with her. The TOWNSPEOPLE all speak German. Their peasant costumes are freely mixed with Western dress. The signs are old German script. Two MEN carry a huge bulb through the street, to put atop a church.

232 OVERLAND AUTO

Abby walks up with Ursula.

URSULA

Listen, I'm
going to stay
and go back
with the
laundry
wagon. Abby
looks at
Bill, then
nods okay.
Ursula runs

off. Bill
opens the
door, and she
gets in.

233 EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE TOWN (DUCK LAKE)

They are stopped on the road a
hundred yards outside the town. Abby
smokes as Bill checks the radiator.
Something in his behavior leads us to
suspect he may have staged this stop.

BILL

How you been
doing?

ABBY

Me? Fine.

BILL

We don't talk
so much these
days.

ABBY

I know. She
knows what he
wants. She
cannot give
it anymore.

BILL

I said a lot
of stupid
things before
I went off.

ABBY

(politely)

I forgot
about it
already.
Bill, trying
his best to
make peace
with her,
cannot help
seeing that
she would
like to keep
things as

they are--and
not because
she harbors
any grudge.

BILL

You've
forgiven me?

ABBY

There was
nothing to
forgive. He
holds a
bottle of
liquor out to
her.

BILL

What're you
worried
about? She
takes a swig.
He laughs.
She laughs
back.

BILL

So how'm I
doing with
you?

ABBY

Fine. He
takes her
hand and
holds it like
a trapped
bird.

BILL

What's
happened? She
shrugs,
disengaging
her hand to
brush aside
her hair. She
is painfully
aware of his
suffering but
doesn't have

the heart to
tell him how
it all is.

BILL

I probably
ought to
leave. I
will.

ABBY

Already? You
just got
here. She
hasn't really
contradicted
him. He leans
forward as
though to
kiss her. She
lets him. She
wishes that
she could
give herself
to him, but
she doesn't
know what is
right. Then,
a sudden
impulse of
panic, she
gets up and
backs away.

BILL

Where you
going? He
reaches out
to catch her.
She breaks
away and
starts to
run. He walks
quickly after
her, cutting
off any
escape toward
the town.

ABBY

Why'd you

have to come
back?

BILL

I'm not going
to hurt you.
I only want
to talk with
you. She
stops and
hides her
face in her
hands. He
gently pulls
them away.

BILL

I didn't come
back to make
trouble for
you. I guess
we were
fooling each
other to
think it
could last. I
mean, What
was I
offering
you anyhow? A
ride to the
bottom.
Looking at
you now, in
the right
clothes and
everything, I
see how crazy
I was and--
well, I
understand.
It's okay. I
sort of cut
my own
throat,
actually. Her
eyes close
and her legs
give in. Bill
lets her go
and backs off

a step in
surprise. She
sinks to the
ground, as
though in a
trance.

234 TIGHT ON BILL

Bill, taken by surprise, goes up and kneels down beside her. He looks to see that she is okay. He picks a fox-tail out of her hair. Her dress has worked up toward her knees. He pulls it back down. He wants to caress her face but hesitates.

BILL

How'd we let
it happen,
Abby? We were
so happy
once. Why
didn't we
starve? I
love you so
much. What
have I done?
You're so
beautiful.
What have I
done? He
touches his
lips for a
fraction of a
second to
hers, notices
another car
approaching
down the
road. He
picks her up
like a doll
and carries
her back to
the Overland.

235 EXT. BELVEDERE - CHUCK'S POV

They have arrived back at the
Belvedere.

ABBY

I'm sorry.
She touches
his face in a
surge of
sympathy.
What has she
done to him?
He kisses her
neck and
leads her
toward the
front door.

236 CRANE TO CHUCK

The camera rises to the uppermost story of the Belvedere. Chuck has seen them. Hot tears leap to his eyes. Before Bill left for the winter he often observed such intimacies between them. Now it all looks different.

237 CHUCK'S POVS (HIGH ANGLES)

He looks around at his estate--his barn, his auto, his great house and his granary. None of them is any consolation now. For a moment it seems to him as though he lived here in some time long past.

238 INT. BEDROOM

Abby notices Chuck watching her outside the bedroom door.

ABBY

You want
something
from me?

CHUCK

No.

ABBY

Will you hand
me that
magazine? He
gives her the
magazine she

wants.

ABBY

What's the matter? He seems for a moment to consider telling her, then shrugs and goes downstairs.

239 INT. LIVING ROOM

He stumbles into a bird cage but hardly notices. The jostled birds raise a fuss.

240 EXT. FRONT PORCH

He runs into Bill on the front porch.

BILL

I've been looking for you. I have to take off again, real soon here, and... Chuck puts a hand on Bill's shoulder, stopping him. They look at each other for a moment, then he passes on. Bill seems puzzled.

241 EXT. FIELDS

Chuck walks out into the deep of his fields. The wheat, a warm dry gold, is almost ready to take in. He sits down and rests his head against a furrow, powerless to think. The wind makes a song in the infinitude of sweet clicking heads. He puts his

hands over his heart and breathes in gasps, with the dumb honesty of a wounded animal. He could not himself quite say what it is that he knows.

242 EXT. BONANZA - SERIES OF ANGLES

Late that afternoon disaster strikes as a swarm of locusts sweeps down on the bonanza. We do not see where they come from. They seem to appear out of nowhere, unnoticed. Ursula works in the kitchen, Bill by the barn. Chuck lies asleep in the field, Abby upstairs in bed.

243 ANIMALS ON BONANZA

The animals sense it first. The buffalo move off in a mass. The horses become uncontrollable. One runs around the barn in a panic. Bill watches it, puzzled. Two peacocks have a fight. A dog in the treadmill races in vain to escape, driving the machine to a feverish pitch. The shadow of a giant cloud licks over the hills.

244 EXT. FIELDS

Everything seems normal in the fields. Then, as you listen, a strange new sound begins to rise from them, a wild sea-like singing. As the camera moves over the fields and down into the wheat it swells in a crescendo until...

245 TIGHT ON LOCUSTS

Suddenly we see them up close, devouring the stalks in a fever, the noise of their jaws magnified a thousand times. They slip into the Belvedere, under the sash and wainscoting, turning up first in places it would seem they could never get into: a jewelry case, the back of a radio, the works of a music box, a bottle with a miniature ship inside, etc.

246 EXTREME CLOSEUPS

Their eyes are dumb and implacable. They seem to have a whole hidden life of their own.

247 INT. KITCHEN

Little by little they gather in numbers. Ursula first sees one on the drainboard. She swats it with a newspaper. Others sprout up. One by one she picks them up with a tongs and drops them into the stove. This method is too slow. She begins to use her fingers. She moves with a quick, nervous energy, even as she understands this is futile. At last claustrophobia seizes her. She spins around with a shriek, lashing out at everything in sight.

248 INT. MASTER BEDROOM

In the bedroom overhead, Abby wakes up from one nightmare into another. She jumps out of bed and goes to the window. The locusts pelt against the pane like shot. She throws the bolt. Suddenly a crack shoots through the glass. She jumps back and watches in horror as a sliver of the pane falls in. They are free to enter.

249 SERIES OF ANGLES

Suddenly they are everywhere: on the clothesline, in the pantry, in hats and shoes and the seams of clothing. Not a nook or cranny is safe from penetration.

250 TIGHT ON CHUCK - SLOW MOTION

Chuck, asleep in the deep of the wheat, bolts up in slow motion. His hair is seething with them.

251 EXT. BONANZA - FURTHER ANGLES

Panic hits the bonanza. Workers tie string around their pant cuffs to keep the insects from crawling up

their legs, then rush out to the fields with gongs, rattles, pot lids, scarecrows on sticks, drums and horns and other noisemakers to scare them off. Some pray. Others run around like madmen, stamping and yelling, ignored by the gathering host. A couple get into a fistfight. A storm flag is run up the flagpole. A tractor blasts out an S.O.S. The peacocks huddle under the stoop.

252 TIGHT ON CHUCK

Chuck gives Benson his orders.

CHUCK

Offer fifty
cents a
bushel for
them. Get out
the reapers.
See what you
can harvest.

253 HIGH DOWN ANGLE

The locusts snap through the air. Bill, swatting at them with a shovel, stops to gag. One has flown into his mouth.

254 TIGHT ON GEARS

They jam up the gears of the machinery with the crush of their bodies.

255 INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Abby throws a sheet over herself, but they get in under it. She thrashes around madly, then with a cry goes limp.

256 CHUCK AND BENSON

Benson reports back to Chuck. A team of horses races by, nearly bowling them over.

BENSON

We can't get

the machines
out. They're
jamming up
the gears.
There's a
good chance
they'll pass
on south,
though.
Unless...
unless a wind
comes up.

CHUCK

What happens
then?

BENSON

They'll set
down and walk
in.

257 SIGNS OF DAMAGE

The locusts devour not just the crops but every organic thing: pitchfork handles, linens on the clothesline, leather traces, flowers in the window boxes, etc. Soon a large area of wheat is eaten down to stubble. Bill looks away from a tree for a second. When he turns back it has been stripped to a wintry bareness.

258 EXT. WIND GENERATOR, OTHER ANGLES

The vanes of the wind generator begin gently to stir. Little by little the wind picks up. A dust devil spins across the yard. The grass lists by the well. A power line moans.

259 EXT. FIELDS

As the sun dips below the horizon, the locusts pour in like a living river, walking along the ground like a procession of Army ants. The roar of their wings is deafening. The air hisses and pops with their electric frenzy.

260 STOCK AND MATTE SHOTS - SUNSET

And these are but the advance elements of a main force which looms like a silver cloud on the horizon.

261 EXT. BONFIRE - NIGHT

WORKERS dump bushels of the insects into a bonfire. A MAN with an abacus keeps track of what each is owed.

262 SAME FIELDS - NIGHT

The wind has picked up. Chuck, Bill and Abby have come out to the fields with a dozen WORKERS to investigate the extent of the damage. The insects buzz around blindly in the light of their lanterns, which they carry Japanese-fashion at the ends of cane poles.

263 TIGHT ON CHUCK - NIGHT

Chuck inspects the grain.

CHUCK

There's
nothing we
can do but
wait. They're
either going
to take it
all or
they're not.
He covers his
face with his
hands. The
others shy
back at this
display of
grief,
startling in
one so
formal. Their
jostled
lanterns cast
a dance of
lights. Bill,
moved to real
sympathy,

takes him by
the
shoulders.

BILL

Come on. They
might still
lift. Hey,
I've seen a
wind like
this lay down
and die.
Don't give up
now.

CHUCK

(ignoring
him)

We could at
least make
sure they
don't get the
people on
south. He
breaks open
the mantle of
his lantern,
still unsure
what he
should do.
Some of the
flaming
kerosene
splashes onto
the crops
nearby,
setting them
ablaze. Bill
drops his
rattle and
swats the
fire out with
his coat.

BILL

What're you
doing? Watch
it! What're
you, crazy?
There's still
a chance,

don't you
see? Chuck
goes to his
horse. Bill
grabs him by
the sleeve.
Does he
really mean
to set the
fields on
fire? Chuck
pushes him
aside. Bill,
frantic,
turns to the
others for
support.

BILL

Stop him, or
it's all
going up.
They,
however, are
too uncertain
of their
ground to
intervene.
Chuck turns
on Bill.

CHUCK

What does it
matter to
you? Chuck
slings fire
out of the
broken
lantern onto
the crops
next to Bill
-- a sudden,
hostile
gesture that
catches them
all by
surprise.
Independent
of his will,
the truth is
forcing its

way up, like
a great blind
fish from the
bottom of the
sea. He
slings the
fire out
again. A
patch lands
on Bill's
pantleg. Bill
slaps it out.

BILL

What's got
into you?
They stare at
each other.
Bill backs
off like a
cat, sensing
Chuck knows
the truth,
but at a loss
to understand
how he could.

CHUCK

Why do you
care? I gave
my life for
this land.
Chuck walks
towards him.
Suddenly Bill
turns and
takes off
running.
Chuck swings
at him with
the lantern.
Bill escapes
behind the
building wall
of flame that
springs up
between them.
The whirr of
the locusts
stops for a
moment--they

seem at times
to have a
collective
mind--then,
just as
mysteriously,
resumes.

ABBY

Stop, Chuck!
Chuck leaps
on his horse.
She tries to
drag him off
but is thrown
aside and
almost
trampled
underfoot.
Now the
others join
in, trying to
knock away
the lantern
or catch his
stirrup. He
eludes them
and rides off
after Bill,
leaving a
slash of
flame behind
him in the
grain. They
tear off
their coats
to swat it
out, in vain--
already it
stretches a
hundred
yards.

264 BILL

Bill runs through the night, still
carrying his lantern. Chuck bears
down on him. Abby chases along behind
him, screaming for him to stop. Bill
realizes the lantern is giving his
position away. He blows it out and

vanishes from sight. All we can see is the thundering horseman, sowing fire.

265 CRANE SHOT

With a rough idea where Bill is, Chuck begins to lay a ring of fire around him, fifty yards in diameter.

266 BILL AND ABBY INSIDE RING

Abby spots Bill against the flames. She rushes up, gasping. They have been caught inside the ring.

BILL

What're you
doing? This
is a bad
place to talk
He throws his
coat over
Abby's head,
picks her up
by the waist
and crashes
through the
flame. They
have to shout
to make
themselves
understood.
The locusts
roar like a
cyclone.

BILL

Did you see
that? He was
trying to
burn me.
What's got
into him?

ABBY

He knows. He
must.

BILL

A whole
year's work.

All wasted!
These bugs,
once they
make up their
minds... Bill
stalls. The
fire races
toward them
through the
wheat. They
appear as
silhouettes
against it.

BILL

I need to get
out of here.
I think you
probably
should, too.

(pause)

Hell of a
life. Damned
if you do and
damned if you
don't. He
leaves. Abby
wonders if
she ought to
run after
him.

ABBY

Bill! But
this moment's
hesitation
has been too
long. Already
he is
swallowed up
in the night,
her voice
swept away in
the roar of
the flame and
the locusts,
who seem to
wail louder
now, and with
a great
mournfulness-

-like keening
Arab women--
as if they
knew the fate
shortly to
envelop them.
Abby turns
back. She,
too, has
reason to
fear Chuck
and must
escape.

267 NEW ANGLE

Benson rallies the workers.

BENSON

There's still
a chance
they're going
to fly.

VOICES

Get the
tractor out!
The pump
wagon!
Blankets!
They rush off
to find
equipment to
fight the
fire.

268 ISOLATED ON CHUCK - NIGHT

Chuck rides through the dark like a
lone Horseman of the Apocalypse,
setting his fields on fire.

269 EXT. PLAINS ON FIRE - SERIES OF ANGLES -
NIGHT

Tractors attempt to plow a firebreak.
Mad silhouettes run back and forth,
slapping at the blaze with wet gunny
sacks fixed to the ends of sticks.
Two dormitories burn out of control.
Ursula throws open the barn and lets
the horses out. They have raised

thunder kicking at their stalls. The light above the barn door pulses erratically.

270 EXPLOSIONS - NIGHT (MINIATURES)

Oil wells explode along the horizon. Huge balls of flames roll into the heavens.

271 EXT. BURNING PLAINS - NIGHT

Panic spreads among the workers as the holocaust threatens to engulf them. They throw down their tools and run for their lives.

272 ANIMALS - NIGHT

Animals flee in all directions: birds and deer and rabbits, pigs, buffalo and the horses from the barn. The locusts mill around crazily on the wheat stalks, backlit against the flame.

273 BILL - NIGHT

Bill, fleeing on his motorbike with his rabbit, holds up for a moment to watch the fire--a Biblical inferno of spectacular sweep.

274 EXT. BEDROOM WINDOW--TRACKING SHOT (CHUCK'S POV)--NIGHT

A single light burns in the Belvedere.

275 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Heaving with sobs, Abby throws her things into a bundle. She has lost Chuck forever. Their life is destroyed. She glances out the window. She still has time to get away, but she must hurry. She bolts for the door. Suddenly Chuck steps from the shadows, blocking her exit. His face, black with soot, looks gruesome in the gaslight. The locusts have chewed up his clothes. Abby is like a frightened deer. Did he see

her packing?

CHUCK

You look as
though you'd
seen a ghost.

(pause)

Where you
going?

(pause)

Off with him?
The wind cuts
gaps in the
death wail of
the locusts.
From time to
time we hear
the thump of
an exploding
well.

CHUCK

He's not your
brother, is
he? How much
does he know?
She edges
toward the
door.

ABBY

Why do you
say that?

CHUCK

Come here a
minute. Who
are you?

(no
reply)

Where'd you
come from?

ABBY

I told you.
He shakes
her. She
quivers like
a child in
his grasp.
She no longer
has the

audacity to
lie.

ABBY

How long have
you known? He
drops his
eyes.
Shamefully
long -- and
his anger is
partly just
at this.

CHUCK

What'd you
want? He
punches in
the shade of
a lamp,
extinguishing
it.

CHUCK

Tell me. He
shoves over
the chest of
drawers. She
does not
move. He
tears down
the drapes,
already in
shreds.

CHUCK

This? Show me
what you
wanted! I
would have
given it all
to you.

ABBY

Please,
Chuck.

CHUCK

Please what?
You're not
going to tell
me you're

sorry, I
hope..

ABBY

But I am.
Outside the
window fires
rage along
half the
horizon. He
sits down. He
wants to sob,
but cannot.

CHUCK

You're so
wonderful.
How could you
do this?

ABBY

I'm just no
good. You
picked me
from the
gutter, and
this is how -
- I never
deserved you.

CHUCK

(interrupting)

The things
you told me.

ABBY

I love you,
though. You
have to
believe me.
It may sound
false
after...

CHUCK

(interrupting)

Down at the
cave. Don't
you remember?
I believed
them.

ABBY

All right.
I'm going
away. You'll
never have to
see me again.

CHUCK

Away? He gets
up, suddenly
alarmed,
walks to the
mantel and
opens a
chest.

ABBY

What're you
doing? Chuck
drapes his
neck with the
stole he used
in
slaughtering
the hog. Her
face goes
empty. He
gets his
razor strop
from the
shaving
basin. She
shrinks back
in the
corner. He
looks at her
for a moment,
then leaves
the room.

276 INT. STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Abby pursues him down the stairs. He
throws her aside.

ABBY

Where are you
doing? Chuck!
What are you
doing? I
won't let
you! Come

back! Again
he throws her
aside, and
again she
keeps after
him,
desperate to
prevent any
harm coming
to Bill.
Finally he
picks her up
and drags her
outside.

277 EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

He lashes her with a rope to a column
of the porch. She struggles vainly to
free herself. Does he intend to use
the razor on her?

ABBY

No, Chuck!
Please,
darling! It
wasn't his
fault. It was
mine. Let him
go. I love
you, Chuck.
Do anything,
only
please...

CHUCK

I'm sick of
hearing lies.
He stuffs a
handkerchief
in her mouth
and leaves.

278 TIGHT ON CHUCK - NIGHT

Chuck wanders through the night with
a lantern, calling his mare.

279 EXT. BURNT-OUT FIELDS - DAWN

Dawn breaks. Chuck rides over the
burnt-out fields looking for Bill.

The feet of his lank white mare are wrapped to the fetlock in wet burlap, to protect them from the smouldering grass. It prances warily along, without making a sound, wreathed in a mist of blue smoke. With him he carries a stool. The camera pans up to the smoke which is carrying his fortune off.

280 CHUCK'S POVS

Burnt, blind deer stand and look at him in utter terror, as though they understood his intentions. The roasted corpses of sharptail grouse, coyotes and badgers lie scattered here and there. Piles of dung burn on after the grass is out. A peacock from the Belvedere wanders around, angry and perplexed.

281 BILL

Bill is repairing his motorbike by a rock in the middle of the scorched landscape. The tires are soft as licorice from the heat. Suddenly, he looks up. Chuck has found him. He jumps behind the handlebars and fishtails off. Chuck breaks into a gallop, rides him down, knocks him to the ground with the stool, dismounts and stamps in the spokes of the front wheel to make sure he goes no further.

BILL

Who do you
think you
are? Now
you've ruined
it. What's
got into you?

CHUCK

Where you
headed?

BILL

Why do I have
to tell you?

I can come
and go when I
like. This is
still a free
country, last
I heard. Bill
stops when he
sees the
stool. Chuck
calmly strops
the razor on
his stirrup
flap. There
are no
secrets now.

BILL

What can I
say? Too late
for
apologies.
You've got a
right to hate
me. Chuck
puts the
razor away
and advances
on Bill with
the stool.

BILL

I want to
leave. You
won't ever
see me again.
I already got
what I
deserve.
There is
nothing Bill
can say to
appease him.
This will be
a fight to
the death.
Chuck lashes
out with the
stool. Bill
ducks too
late.

BILL

Watch it!
Chuck comes
at him again.
Bill throws a
punch, but
Chuck blocks
it and knocks
him down
again with
the stool.
Bill reels
back and
cracks his
head on the
bicycle
frame. This
time he stays
down.
Satisfied the
struggle is
over, Chuck
goes back to
get some
rope.

282 NEW ANGLE

Chuck shuts his eyes to mumble a prayer of absolution--in Russian. Bill in a panic, snaps a spoke out of the broken wheel and lays it against his sleeve. Chuck moves in for the kill. Bill gets to his feet. He wants to run but fear makes his knees like water. Suddenly, they are face to face. Chuck swings at Bill with the stool but misses. Bill lifts the spoke above him and drives it deep into Chuck's heart. Chuck gasps. Bill seems just as shocked. Chuck sits down to determine the gravity of his injury. Blood jets rhythmically out the end of the spoke, as though from a straw. Bill circles him, unbelieving.

BILL

Should I pull
it out? Chuck
puts his

finger over
the end of
the spoke.
Blood seeps
out the side
of his mouth,
like sap from
a broken
stem.

BILL

I better get
somebody. He
tries to
catch the
reins of
Chuck's
horse, but it
shies out of
reach, its
conscience
repelled. He
looks back at
Chuck in
anguish. What
has he done?

BILL

You were my
friend.

283 TIGHT ON BILL AND HIS POVS

The Belvedere is visible on the
horizon. Bill hesitates a moment,
then heads back on foot to find Abby.
He gives Chuck a wide berth. Then, on
a ridge in the distance, he spots
Benson.

BILL

Get a doctor!
Fast! How
much did he
see? Bill
does not stay
to find out
but takes off
running,
though not
without first
collecting

his rabbit.
Benson,
meanwhile,
bounds down
the hill to
Chuck's side.
His left
sleeve has
been burned
away. The
flesh beneath
is the color
of a raw
steak.

284 CHUCK'S POVS

Chuck sees the smoke from his fields,
the burnt deer, a circling hawk.

285 TIGHT ON CHUCK

He breathes in gulps. His eyes are
blank, like a child's marbles. He
takes Benson's hand.

CHUCK

(weakly)

Wasn't his
fault. Tell
her...forgive
them. The
locusts can
be heard no
more. The
prairie makes
a sound like
the ocean.
Chuck turns
his back and
dies.

286 TIGHT ON BENSON

Benson weeps. Whether or not he
understood Chuck's last wishes, he
seems unlikely to abide by them.

287 EXT. BELVEDERE

Bill finds Abby bound to the house
like the figurehead of a ship. He

cuts her loose. The ropes fall at her feet. She is free. They look at each other for a moment. Then, in a rush of compassion for them all, she throws her arms around him. Bill wonders if she is taking him back. Might their differences all have been a terrible misunderstanding?

ABBY

We have to hurry. Chuck's out looking right now. Oh, Bill, what have we done? He took his razor. We need to hurry. He might be coming back any minute. Bill mentions nothing of his encounter. She grabs her bindle, Bill a handful of silverware and an umbrella. After a moment's hesitation, he puts them back.

288 NEW ANGLE

They run down to the barn, where the cars are stored. The saplings in the front yard have been stripped even of their bark. Abby stops to look back at the Belvedere one last time. Chuck does not want her anymore. How could she expect him to? Bill grabs her by the hand and tugs her along.

289 EXT. BARN

Abby throws open the doors of the barn. Bill cranks up the engine of the Overland.

ABBY

Will the cops
be looking
for us, too?

BILL

Probably.
Abby stands
in the door.
She is
reluctant to
leave, though
she knows
they must.

BILL

Get in. She
notices that
Bill's lip is
cut, his
shirt soaked
with blood.

ABBY

What happened
to you?
Where's this
from? Bill
looks down.
He forgot.

BILL

Had an
accident. She
looks at him
for a moment,
not quite
trusting this
explanation.
The engine
catches with
a noise like
start- led
poultry. Bill
gets behind
the wheel.

Just as they
are pulling
out of the
garage,
Ursula runs
up, black as
coal from
battling the
fire all
night.

URSULA

Where you
going?

BILL

(breathless)

We got in a
jam. You'll
be safer
here. Say
we're headed
for town.
Take care of
the rabbit,
too. He's
yours now.

URSULA

What's the
matter?

BILL

Just do what
I say. Why're
you always
arguing about
everything?
Wait here
till we get
in touch.
Bill gives
Ursula his
wallet and a
kiss. Abby
gives her a
hug.

290 EXT. BURNT GRASS

They roar off through the burnt grass
of the prairie. Abby waves goodbye.

291 THEIR POV (MOVING)

As they crest a ridge, Benson appears in front of them, waving a hand to flag them down. Bill puts his foot on the gas. Benson sees they are not going to stop and fires at them with a pistol. Bill grabs a shotgun from a scab-bard under the dash and fires back. Nobody is hurt.

ABBY

What's the matter with him? Bill shrugs. Inside he feels a great relief. They are free at last. At last he has her back.

292 EXT. BONANZA GATES

They veer off across the prairie, towards the Razumihin gates. The music comes up full.

293 EXT. SHACK ON RIVER

They have come to a lone shack on the river, a drinking house for passing boatmen. They negotiate (in pantomime) with the PROPRIETOR for a tiny steam boat moored at the end of the pier. When the car is not enough, Abby throws in her necklace.

294 ABOARD THE BOAT

They board the boat and turn down stream. There is a phonograph on board.

295 TIGHT ON NECKLACE

The necklace sparkles on the hood of the car--a hint they are leaving behind evidence that could betray them.

296 EXT. BOAT ON RIVER - AND MOVING POVS

They glide along in the hush of evening. The reeds are full of deer. Cranes, imprudently tame, dance on the sand bars. Bill looks around in wonder. He knows these may be his last days on earth. Abby throws a sounding line. A COUPLE from a local farm seeks privacy in the willows. Other BOATMEN glide past in silence. A CHILD plays a fiddle on the deck of a scow. HUNTERS creep along the shore in search of waterfowl.

297 EXT. CAMP - DUSK

Bill sleeps under a tarp. Abby looks out across the water and bursts into sobs. She has wronged Chuck and thrown her life away.

298 THEIR POVS (MOVING) - NIGHT

They shine a lamp into the murky depths and spear pickerel with a hammered-out fork. Strange rocks loom up and give way to wide moonlit fields. They have the sense of entering places where nobody has been since the making of the world.

299 EXT. FARMHOUSE

Four LAWMEN, in pursuit, interrogate some FARMERS. Have they seen the two people standing by Chuck in his wedding portrait? Benson holds the bulky frame. There is a funereal border of black crepe at the corners.

300 EXT. ABOARD THE BOAT - DUSK

They drift idly on the flood. The phonograph is playing in the stern. Abby is back in trousers. Bill points to a white house on the shore, an image of comfort and peace.

BILL

I used to
want a set-up

like that.
Something
like that, I
thought, and
you'd really
have it made.
Now I don't
care. I just
wish we could
always live
this way. He
sees that her
mind is
somewhere
else. He
wants to tell
her the truth
about Chuck,
for
intimacy's
sake, but it
would just
put more of a
cloud over
everything.
It might even
cause her to
hate him.

BILL

Maybe you
want to write
him a letter.

ABBY

I hadn't
thought of
that.

BILL

You really do
love him,
don't you?
She does not
reply.

BILL

You want to
go back?

ABBY

(shaking

her
head)
Too late for
that. I could
never face
him again.
They look at
each other
for a moment.
He touches
her face, to
show that he
does not hold
it against
her. She
touches him
back. They
only have
each other
now. They
must save
what moments
they can.

BILL

Guess it's
you and me
again.

301 NEW ANGLE

On a sudden whim, Abby takes off her
wedding bracelet and holds it over
the water.

ABBY

Watch this.
Bill is
caught off
guard. Before
he can make a
move she
throws it far
out into the
river. They
laugh,
without
knowing why,
at this
extravagance.

302 EXT. SHORE .. TRACKING SHOTS

They gather May apples and black haws. The music from the phonograph comes up full. They dig clams from a sand bar in a playful way. We are reminded of their first days on the harvest.

303 XT. UNDERGROWTH

They make love in the undergrowth. Abby, afterwards, lies in a naked daze. The damp greens of the wilderness envelop her.

304 THEIR POV - ON CITY ON RIVER - NIGHT

Rounding a bend in the river that night, they come upon the lights of a great city. They have doused the running lamp. Except for a faint groaning of the trees along the shore, the river is silent, conveying the sounds of the city to them from across a great distance -- bells, joy-ful voices, horns, the chirping of brakes, etc.

305 EXT. CITY STREETS AND THEIR POVS - NIGHT

They sneak down an alley. There are signs of life behind a few windows, but the city pursues its gaiety elsewhere. Suddenly, they come upon a POLICEMAN making his rounds. They let him pass, then cut through a vacant lot back to the boat.

306 EXT. RIVER FRONT - DAY

The next morning finds them camped in a thicket on the river front below a factory. Bill wakes up, mysteriously happy. Their blankets are heavy with dew. Overhead, finches tilt from branch to branch. A light wind rushes through the leaves. Whatever his troubles, they seem very small to him in the great scheme of things. He looks at Abby, mouthing silent words in her sleep. He puts on a white scarf and starts down to the

boat. The slope is strewn with sodden cartons, burnt bricks and burst mattresses, an avalanche of urban excreta.

307 HIS POV

Abruptly he stops. Two POLICE OFFICERS are combing over the boat. They have not seen him. He edges back. Suddenly, there is yelling on the hill above them. Bill looks up. Benson is calling him to the attention of a car-load of POLICEMEN pulling up beside him. The Officers at the boat now spot him, too, and open fire. Bill darts like a rabbit into the thicket.

308 TIGHT ON ABBY

Abby bolts awake. Bill jumps down beside her, breathless, and begins looking frantically for the shells to his shotgun.

ABBY

What's going
on?

BILL

Keep down.
Can't explain
now. They're
here.

ABBY

Who? What're
you talking
about? Stop a
minute. He
covers her
with his body
as bullets
zoom through
the
undergrowth.
His face is
close to
hers. She
bursts into
tears.

BILL

Don't get
shot. Look
for me under
that next
bridge down.
After dark.
He empties
out the
contents of
his pockets -
- a watch, a
couple of
dollars in
change, a
ring -- and
slaps them
down in front
of her. The
Police fan
out along the
ridge above
them. He jams
a flare
pistol into
his belt and
kisses her
goodbye--
after a
moment's
hesitation --
on the cheek.
She tries in
vain to hold
him back.

BILL

I wish I
could tell
you how much
I love you.

309 EXT. MUD FLAT

Bill runs from the thicket down to the water. The Police have bunched on the other side. It seems he might be able to escape. Keeping low, he splashes across a mud flat. Suddenly he runs into a trot line that a fisherman has left out overnight. The

hooks bite into his thigh and shoulder, yanking a string of startled, thrashing catfish out of the water. He keeps running in a panic, not realizing the line is staked to the shore. All at once, he jackknifes in the air. The stake twangs loose. The Police now spot him and begin firing.

310 TIGHT ON ABBY

Abby runs out of hiding, thinking at first that the Police must be looking for her.

ABBY

Why're you
shooting?
You'll kill
him! Have you
gone crazy?
Stop! Oh,
Bill, not
you! Not you!

311 NEW ANGLE

Bill stumbles along, trying to rip the hooks from his flesh, but the fish--fighting their way back to the water--only drive them in deeper. Ahead two MOUNTED POLICE surge into the river, blocking his retreat. He empties his shotgun at them and throws it away. They hold up, astonished. He dashes across a sand bar for the deep of the river and comparative safety. Black mud clings to his feet, drawing him down like a fly in molasses. Benson goes running out into the river ahead of the Police.

BENSON

Leave him
alone. I want
him. Leave
him alone.

(firing)

There you go!
There you go!

He shoots
Bill down.
Bill turns
and looks at
him in sur-
prise. Benson
shoots him
again, point
blank.

312 UNDERWATER SHOT

Bill's blood fades off quickly in the gliding water of the river. The line of frightened catfish dances out behind him like a garland.

313 OTHER ANGLES

A dog trots off in alarm. Benson wades into shore, tears streaming down his face, his chest heaving with emotion. Abby falls to the ground in a convulsion of grief. A short way down the river PEOPLE come and go along the bridge where they were to meet.

314 ISOLATED ON ROLLER PIANO

A roller piano sits in a corner by itself, playing a fox-trot. The camera moves back.

315 INT. ARBORETUM - ATTIC

YOUNG DANCERS are learning the foxtrot in the attic of the Arboretum, a tacky Western version of an Eastern finishing school. The steps are painted on the floor as white footprints. Abby is apparently enrolling Ursula here. The headmistress, MADAME MURPHY, boasts of the school's achievements. Ursula looks trapped. Abby checks her watch. She must go.

316 EXT. BRICK STREET

Abby and Ursula walk down an empty street. Abby wears a mourning band on her sleeve. She is under the false

im- pression that Ursula likes her new home. An INDIAN PORTER carts her bags along behind them in a wheelbarrow.

ABBY

They'll teach
you poise,
too, so you
can walk in
any room you
please.
Pretty soon
you'll know
all kind of
things.

(pause)

I never read
a whole book
till I was
fifteen. It
was by
Caesar. They
laugh at her
careful
pronunciation
of "Caesar."

317 EXT. TRAIN STATION

Abby's train is about to leave. The CONDUCTOR walks by blowing a whistle. A five-piece BAND plays Sousa airs. They are practically the only civilians on the platform. The rest are SOLDIERS bound for Europe, where America has just entered the War, on fire with excitement and a sense of high adventure.

URSULA

I like your
hat.

ABBY

It doesn't
seem like a
bird came
down and
landed on my
head? Abby
takes the hat

off and gives
it to Ursula,
who lately
has begun to
take more
trouble with
her
appearance,
comb- ing her
hair free of
its usual
snarls. They
laugh at
their
reflection in
a window of
the train.

ABBY

I hardly ever
wear it. Be
sure and
write every
week. Signals
nod. A lamp
winks. There
are leave-
takings up
and down the
platform as
the train
slides away.
Abby hops on
board. A
SOLDIER next
to her sheds
bitter tears.

URSULA

You write me,
too! They
wave goodbye.

318 EXT. ARBORETUM - NIGHT

Late that evening Ursula lowers
herself out a third-floor window of
the Arboretum with a rope made of
bedsheets.

319 TIGHT ON GIRLS AT WINDOW

The other GIRLS stand in their nightgowns and wave good- bye, amazed at her boldness. She slips off into the night.

320 EXT. BACKSTAGE DOOR - NIGHT

Ursula looks in a backstage door. She can see, through the wings, a MAN dancing on stage. There is a feeling of mad excitement about the place. The person she is looking for is not here, however.

321 EXT. ALLEY - URSULA'S THEME - NIGHT

She runs down an alley. A man steps out of the shadows-- George, the pilot. She throws herself in his arms. This is our first sight of him since he left the bonanza.

URSULA

You're here!
Oh, hug me!
They kiss
madly, with
mystery. The
moonlit,
midsummer
night thrums

URSULA

Aren't we
happy? Oh,
George, has
anybody ever
been this
happy? He
rocks her
back and
forth in his
arms. They
laugh,
thinking what
lucky
exceptions
they are to
the world's
misery.

URSULA

Hurry.
They'll be
looking for
me.

322 EXT. AIRPLANE - DAWN

George bundles Ursula, giggling, into
a biplane.

URSULA

This doesn't
even belong
to you.
Suppose they
catch us?

323 EXT. PASTURE -- DAWN

From a pasture outside town the plane
rises into the vast dawn sky.

324 INT. TEXTILE FACTORY

Abby changes bobbins on a huge loom.
A pall of lint and anonymous toil
hangs over the factory. Down the way
a handsome MALE WORKER smiles at her.
She smiles back, interested.

ABBY

It seems an
age we've
been apart,
and truly is
for those who
love each
other so.
Whenever
shall we
meet?'

325 TIGHT ON MACHINERY

The shuttle rockets back and forth.
Off camera we hear Abby reading what
seems part of a letter to Ursula.

ABBY (O.S.)

Soon, I hope,
for by and by
we'll all be
gone, Urs.

Does it
really seem
as though we
might?'

326 UNDERWATER SHOT

We look from the bottom of a river up toward the light. In the foreground, dangling from the tip of a submerged limb, is the bracelet Abby threw away.

ABBY (O.S.)

'The other
day I tried
to think how
I'd look laid
out in a
solemn white
gown. Closing
my eyes I
could almost
hear you
tiptoe inlook
down in my
face, so deep
asleep, so
still.

327 EXT. FIELDS - SERIES OF ANGLES

The PEOPLE of the Razumihin rebuild the land -- raising fences and sinking a well, plowing down the stubble and putting in the seed.

ABBY (O.S.)

'I went to
Lincoln Park
Zoo the other
day. It was
great as
usual. I
enclose a
check.'

An ANONYMOUS YOUNG MAN, standing on a carpet of new-sprung wheat, looks up with a start. From the distance comes a ghostly noise--the call of the prairie chickens at their spring

rites. He listens for just a moment,
then returns to work.

THE END