

Two Weeks In Falmouth

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FADE IN:

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

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

It turns toward the beach and pulls over.

Out steps ELEANOR ADAMS (70s), prim, English, in khaki pants, blouse, light jacket, and floppy sun hat.

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

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Eleanor sits on a weathered driftwood stool. Her easel faces a sun-bleached dune dotted with beachgrass and goldenrod. Her brush hovers over the blank canvas.

EXT. THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN - DAY

The sign stands in disrepair. A single radio tower rises from the crest of Mount Lee.

SUPER: 1967

LESTER (V.O.)

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

ROBERT (V.O.)

Never heard of him.

LESTER (V.O.)

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

INT. LIVING ROOM - THE MANSION - DAY

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

On a velvet couch sits ROBERT MORGAN (70s), tailored robe, well-groomed hair, phone cradled to his ear.

ROBERT

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

LESTER (V.O.)

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

ROBERT

Summer theater. Good God. Why me?

INT. LESTER'S OFFICE - DAY

LESTER (60s), thinning hair, loose tie, open vest, cigar smoldering in an ashtray, balances the phone on his shoulder as he studies a document.

LESTER

We need to re-establish your reliability.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

ROBERT

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

LESTER

Two grand a week.

ROBERT

I made seven grand a week at MGM.

LESTER

Yes, and I used to have hair.

Robert considers.

ROBERT

And I get to pick the play?

LESTER

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

ROBERT

Who?

LESTER

Tiffany Quinn.

ROBERT

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

LESTER

"Reckoning At Dawn."

ROBERT

Right. She's a sport. All right.

LESTER

You'll do it?

ROBERT

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

Robert hangs up, seized by a violent cough.

He crosses to a desk and opens a drawer.

Inside: a faded, yellowed, frayed-edged playbill among
old clippings and programs.

The cover reads:

DESIRE IN THE BOUDOIR

ARLINGTON THEATRE

421 Tremont Street, Boston Mass.

Week Beginning Apr. 14th, 1912.

He stares at it.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Once more unto the breach.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

A worn rehearsal space -- peeling tin ceiling, scuffed
floors, yellowing posters from long-closed Broadway
shows. Tape outlines a stage on the floor.

Director DEL EVERTON (30s), tie and vest, sleeves rolled
up, sits behind a desk.

Beside him, JULIE MORSE (20s), script girl.

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

CHAUNCEY

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

DEL

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

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

ALICE

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

DEL

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

CHAUNCEY

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

ALICE

Only my lines.

All eyes turn as the door opens.

JAMIE WARREN (18), dapper, enters with a small brown bag.

A flicker of disappointment crosses the room.

CHAUNCEY

Ah. The new boy. You're late.

JAMIE

I was here an hour ago.

Jamie hands the bag to Del.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Two jelly donuts and a blueberry
muffin, Mister Everton.

DEL
Thank you, Jamie.

Jamie spots Alice at the craft table, joins her, pours himself coffee.

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

ALICE
Alice Kirkwood.

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

She smiles at the compliment.

ALICE
Thank you. What did you do last?

JAMIE
High school graduation.

Puzzled.

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

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

An embarrassed laugh from Alice.

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

They hold each other's gaze a beat too long.

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

ALICE
My seventh. I started acting when I was eight.

Jamie is genuinely impressed.

JAMIE

Wow!

ALICE

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

JAMIE

Especially working with two legends. Morgan and LaRue.

ALICE

You're playing the butler?

JAMIE

And I'm understudying Mister Morgan.

ALICE

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

Jamie is mesmerized.

JAMIE

Why wait? We can play anytime.

ALICE

I beg your pardon!?

JAMIE

No! I --

ALICE

What the hell!?

JAMIE

I meant --

She turns and marches to her chair.

Jamie stands there, mortified.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

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

DEL

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

The door opens.

ROBERT MORGAN strides in. Cashmere coat. Polished shoes. Fedora low over his eyes.

ROBERT

"Desire in the Boudoir," I take it?

He removes the hat.

DEL

Mister Morgan.

Robert surveys the room.

ROBERT

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

DEL

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

ALICE

Mister Morgan.

ROBERT

Charmed.

DEL

Chauncey Franklin, who plays Duarte Actona...

Robert shakes Chauncey's hand.

ROBERT

Did we work together once?

CHAUNCEY

"Six Bullets To Dodge." No lines.

ROBERT

Yes. You were wonderful. How nice to see you again.

DEL

And this is Jamie Warren, who plays the butler.

ROBERT

A pleasure. The butler.

JAMIE

Yes, sir. This is my first professional job.

DEL

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

A beat.

ROBERT

Congratulations.

JAMIE

Thank you.

ROBERT

Where is Miss Quinn?

DEL

(uneasy)

Well, there was a... development.

Robert studies him.

DEL (CONT'D)

Tiffany got a movie offer.

ROBERT

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

DEL

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

ROBERT

Wonderful. Anyone I know?

The cast shifts uneasily.

DEL

Lilly LaRue.

Silence.

Robert goes still.

ROBERT

Say that again... I dare you.

DEL

Lilly LaRue.

ROBERT

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

DEL

Why are you angry?

ROBERT

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

DEL

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

ROBERT

Lilly's publicists fabricated that
nonsense twelve years ago so the
public wouldn't turn on us!

DEL

But --

ROBERT

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

DEL

You really don't love each other!?

ROBERT

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

DEL

She signed already.

ROBERT

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

EXT. LITTLE ISLAND - FALMOUTH - DAY

Eleanor sits at her easel in a secluded cove. The sea glitters beneath a clear blue sky. Sunlight filters through twisted trees onto the sand.

On the canvas: storm clouds gather. Gray waves crash against a painted shore.

A muffled alarm clock RINGS.

Eleanor reaches into her carpetbag, pulls out a large alarm clock, and silences it.

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

The compact car moves along the narrow coastal road.

NEWSMAN (V.O.)

In Roxbury today, a group known as The Mothers for Adequate Welfare chained themselves to the doors of the welfare offices on Blue Hill Avenue. They claimed they were tired of having their checks cut off without warning or investigation... because of lying officials.

Eleanor grips the wheel, listening.

NEWSMAN (V.O.)

When the police arrived, a crowd gathered and violence erupted. Stones were thrown at the police, who proceeded to fire at the protesters. With this, Boston joins many other cities engulfed in race riots...

She changes the dial.

DJ (V.O.)

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

Debussy's "Clair de Lune" fills the car.

EXT. A ROAD LEADING TO FALMOUTH - DAY

The car approaches town in the distance. Debussy drifts over the countryside.

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - DAY

The Falmouth Playhouse stands under a bright sky. Gray shingles weathered by countless summers.

Eleanor's car pulls up to the entrance.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - MAIN LOBBY - DAY

REID HALL (30s), stage manager, dressed for grunt work, thumbtacks a notice to the wall.

Eleanor enters, carpetbag in hand.

REID

Hot off the press, the '67 summer season.

ELEANOR

What are they carting out this year?

She scans the announcements.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

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

REID

Check out June nineteenth to July first.

Her face tightens.

ELEANOR

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

REID

Must be a new play.

ELEANOR

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

She heads toward the auditorium.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

Rehearsal in progress. Robert and Chauncey hold scripts as they work through the scene.

ROBERT

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

CHAUNCEY

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

Chauncey turns to Del.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

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

DEL

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

ROBERT

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

Chauncey turns to Del again.

CHAUNCEY

We say what's in the script, right?

Robert hesitates.

ROBERT

Your line, old fellow.

CHAUNCEY

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

DEL

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

LILLY (O.S.)

We can discuss it now if you like.

They turn.

LILLY LaRUE (70s) stands framed in the doorway, draped in mink and diamonds. Lilly is a star. And she knows it.

LILLY (CONT'D)

I'm in no hurry.

She sweeps past Robert without acknowledging him.

LILLY (CONT'D)

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

DEL

I am.

LILLY

Lilly LaRue.

ROBERT

Oh, God.

Lilly pauses. Turns slowly.

She takes a few measured steps toward him.

LILLY

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

ROBERT

Lilly.

LILLY

Thank God. I heard rumors that you were dead.

ROBERT

I heard rumors that you soon might be.

Lilly leans in. Her lips brush his cheek.

LILLY

Still as droll as ever.

If looks could kill, they would both drop dead.

DEL

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

JULIE

Five minutes, everyone.

The others drift toward the craft table.

LILLY

It's good to see you again, Robby.

ROBERT

Your sincerity is underwhelming.

LILLY

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

EXT. ELEANOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A modest Cape Cod home. Weathered gray shingles fade into
coastal twilight.

INT. ELEANOR'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eleanor sits at the table. A plate of untouched food in
front of her.

She pours a glass of wine.

A small radio on the counter plays Bach's Cello Suite No.
1 in G Major.

Her eyes settle on a framed black-and-white photograph on
the hutch -- a young RAF pilot in uniform.

INT. SANITARIUM - NEW YORK CITY - LOBBY - NIGHT

Dim. Institutional.

Robert appears at the glass door -- locked.

He TAPS a quarter against it.

A NURSE (50s) rounds the corner.

NURSE

We're closed.

A muffled Robert answers.

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

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

She unlocks the door.

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

Robert steps inside.

ROBERT
I'm here to see someone.

INT. SANITARIUM - PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

Sparse. A bed. A rickety chair. A narrow dresser.

A dead flower droops in a pot on the windowsill.

An OLD MAN (88) sits in a wheelchair facing the dark
window. Only his profile visible.

Robert sits opposite him.

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

The Old Man doesn't respond.

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

The silence stretches.

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

He waits.

His gaze drifts to the bare walls.

INT. SANITARIUM - NEW YORK CITY - LOBBY - NIGHT

The Nurse walks Robert to the door.

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

NURSE
 I don't know, sir.

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

A beat.

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

Robert pauses at the door, turns back to her.

ROBERT
 Can we really be sure?

He exits.

The Nurse watches him disappear into the dark.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

Lilly and Robert rehearse with scripts in hand. Lilly plays full-out. Robert does not.

Del watches.

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

ROBERT (CONT'D)

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

Robert guides her toward a metal chair.

LILLY

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

ROBERT

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

LILLY

Robert, when do you intend to
start acting?

ROBERT

What the hell does that mean?

LILLY

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

ROBERT

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

LILLY

A little professionalism would be
a start.

ROBERT

Oh-ho! You saved that barb!

LILLY

What do you mean?

ROBERT

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

Lily explodes.

LILLY

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

ROBERT

You were fired!

Del steps between them.

DEL

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

LILLY

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

JULIE

Five minutes, everyone.

Lilly turns and heads for the craft table. The others
give her space.

Robert follows.

Jamie and Alice watch, riveted.

ROBERT

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

Their voices drop.

LILLY

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

ROBERT

Why did you?

LILLY

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

ROBERT

This show? Broadway? You're
delusional.

LILLY

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

ROBERT

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

LILLY

I have never had my face lifted.

ROBERT

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

LILLY

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

ROBERT

True. You got remarried, right?

LILLY

Yes. I finally found true love with Marvin.

ROBERT

Marvin?

LILLY

Doctor Marvin Zimmerman. A doctor.

ROBERT

A doctor of what?

A pause.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Plastic Surgery?

She remains awkwardly silent.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

You must get a family discount.

In a low voice.

LILLY

Go to hell, Robert.

ROBERT

Eventually.

She strides back to the marked set.

LILLY

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

EXT. REHEARSAL HALL - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

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

Jamie exits.

JAMIE

There you are.

ALICE

Here I am. Just getting some air.

JAMIE

Del said three minutes.

ALICE

Thanks.

JAMIE

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

ALICE

How did you mean it?

JAMIE

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

ALICE

That's what you thought, huh?

She slips inside, leaving Jamie alone.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

Del and Julie sit behind the table, facing the cast.

Alice enters. Jamie follows a beat later.

DEL

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

Robert looks up.

DEL (CONT'D)

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

ROBERT

What does "in the round" mean?

DEL

The stage is circular.

ROBERT

On all sides!?

DEL

Yes.

ROBERT

Where's the audience?

DEL

All around it.

ROBERT

How does one get on and off "it."

DEL

You run down an aisle --

ROBERT

Through the audience?

DEL

Yes... and then up a ramp --

ROBERT

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

DEL

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

LILLY

Within spitting distance.

ROBERT

So my back will be to the audience?

DEL

You'll move about so everyone can see.

JULIE

And in some theaters, the stage rotates.

ROBERT

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

DEL

Yes.

ROBERT

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

DEL

Mister Morgan, I assure you --

ROBERT

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

DEL

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

LILLY

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

EXT. THEATER GO-ROUND - NIGHT

A large round green tent theater.

A wooden marquee reads:

WEEK OF JUNE 13-18 ROBERT MORGAN DESIRE IN THE BOUDOIR CO-STARRING LILLY LaRUE.

INT. DRESSING ROOM BUILDING - NIGHT

Lilly, dressed in a glamorous 1930s aristocratic costume, passes Robert's dressing room as he steps out. He wears heavy pancake makeup, a dark toupee, and evening clothes.

LILLY

Good embalming job, Robby.

He brushes past her.

EXT. ARTISTS ENTRANCE - THEATER GO-ROUND - NIGHT

Jamie paces beside the closed canvas flap leading into the tent.

He mutters to himself.

JAMIE

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

Alice watches him.

ALICE

Jamie.

JAMIE

Sir.

He turns.

ALICE

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

JAMIE

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

ALICE

And I would love to get that soda.

JAMIE

You would!?

ALICE

Tomorrow?

JAMIE

Sure!

ALICE

See you on stage.

She exits.

Jamie exhales.

JAMIE

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

INT. THEATER GO-ROUND STAGE - NIGHT

A sold-out audience surrounds a simple stage set in the round. Four ramps lead to the stage.

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

EXT. THEATER GO-ROUND ARTISTS ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Lilly, Chauncey, and Robert wait in costume as the amplified ANNOUNCER speaks inside the tent.

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

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

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

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

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

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

INT. THEATER GO-ROUND STAGE - NIGHT

Lilly paces, immersed in the scene.

LILLY
Sterling... oh, Sterling...

Robert steps onstage to wild APPLAUSE.

ROBERT
Winnifred, my darling.

He takes in the tent poles and canvas walls.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Oh, how I love the décor of this home. Early Barnum and Bailey, I think.

Lilly is stunned.

The audience bursts into LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE.

Lilly is lost as she speaks with great force.

LILLY

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

A low motorized HUM.

The stage begins to REVOLVE.

ROBERT

What the hell!?! We're moving!

LILLY

Excuse me?

ROBERT

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

LILLY

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

APPLAUSE.

Robert turns outward, addressing the audience.

ROBERT

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

The audience LAUGHS.

Lilly leans in, teeth clenched.

LILLY

What the hell are you doing!?
(in character)
You are but a foolish boy of twenty-five.

(MORE)

LILLY (CONT'D)

It is not meant to be between us.
Hush. Here comes Duarte.

Chauncey ENTERS.

CHAUNCEY

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

Robert backs up.

ROBERT

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

LILLY

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

He keeps backing up.

ROBERT

Oh no. How distressing.

A loud whisper from Lilly.

LILLY

Wrong blocking.

Robert takes one step too many --

He disappears off the edge of the stage.

Lilly SCREAMS.

INT. THEATER GO-ROUND ORCHESTRA PIT - NIGHT

Robert lies on the cement floor, eyes closed.

The audience murmurs above.

LILLY (O.S.)

Rober -- Sterling! Sterling --
Robert Sterling!

His eyes open.

Blurry figures peer down from the stage.

Del and a STAGE HAND scramble in beside him.

DEL

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

STAGE HAND

He's breathing... I think.

ROBERT

Hmm?

DEL

Is anything broken? Can you move?

Del and the Stage Hand help him sit up.

ROBERT

Oh, Christ.

Del hovers over him.

DEL

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

ROBERT

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

Robert pushes himself to his feet.

DEL

Orchestra entrance under the stage.

INT. THEATER GO-ROUND STAGE - MINUTES LATER

Lilly and Chauncey stall.

LILLY

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

CHAUNCEY

Pyramids?

The audience APPLAUDS and CHEERS as Robert strides down the aisle and climbs onto the stage.

He waits for the APPLAUSE to fade.

ROBERT

Now. Where were we?

The house erupts -- CHEERS, APPLAUSE, a standing ovation.

Robert flashes a smile.

He turns to Lilly.

He stifles a cough.

EXT. THEATER GO-ROUND - LATER

Robert and Lilly sign autographs beneath the tent lights, surrounded by fans.

Nearby, Jamie and Alice watch.

JAMIE

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

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Alice... I was wondering...

ALICE

Yes?

JAMIE

Sunday -- when we make the jump to
Falmouth. Would you like to ride
along with me?

ALICE

I thought I was. In the company
van.

JAMIE

I barely made it here from New
York in that van.

ALICE

There was plenty of room.

JAMIE

No, it's Chauncey and his
sandwiches. He puts garlic and
onion on everything.

ALICE

True.

JAMIE
I bought a car!

ALICE
What?

JAMIE
Yeah! Will you?

Alice considers.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
It's only a twenty mile jump.

ALICE
Sure!

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - DAY

Reid Hall waits outside with NORM HADLEY (30s), dressed in a dark suit.

The marquee reads: ROBERT MORGAN DESIRE IN THE BOUDOIR Co-starring LILLY LaRUE, June 20-July 2.

A limo pulls up. The driver opens the door.

Robert steps out.

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

ROBERT
Good morning.

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

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

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

Norm smiles.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Has Lilly arrived yet?

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

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - MAIN LOBBY - DAY

Robert surveys the lobby. He turns -- nearly colliding
with Eleanor as she enters with her carpetbag.

ROBERT
How very rustic.

ELEANOR
I beg your pardon?

ROBERT
Not you, madam. I meant the lobby.

Eleanor holds his gaze.

REID
Eleanor, this is Robert Morgan.

ELEANOR
Yes. I know.

REID
This is Eleanor Adams, head of
wardrobe.

ROBERT
A pleasure.

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

She walks off. Robert raises an eyebrow.

EXT. A ROAD ON CAPE COD - DAY

A Volkswagen Beetle sits on the shoulder.

Jamie leans over the open trunk.

JAMIE

The guy said he never had a lick
of trouble with it!

ALICE

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

JAMIE

A broken thing.

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

JAMIE (CONT'D)

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

With a slight laugh, Alice smiles.

ALICE

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

She slips her arms around his neck and kisses him.

ALICE (CONT'D)

And lucky.

JAMIE

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

They sit on the side of the road.

ALICE

Do you mind if I ask you a
personal question?

JAMIE

I don't mind.

ALICE

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

JAMIE

I tried to enlist. My brother's
there.

A beat.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
They wouldn't take me. I'm
diabetic.

ALICE
Oh.

Another beat.

She smiles.

ALICE (CONT'D)
What made you want to be an actor?

JAMIE
Did a play in school... they said
I was good at it... so I did
another... and another... and here
I am.

ALICE
Playing a role and understudying a
movie legend. How does that
happen?

Jamie hesitates.

JAMIE
My uncle is one of the producers.

Alice laughs.

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

She shows him a warm smile.

A van approaches.

The passenger door swings open. Del steps out.

DEL
I just made twenty bucks.

JAMIE
Huh?

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

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - NIGHT

The theater is lit. The parking lot is full.

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

The audience LAUGHS.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - STAGE - NIGHT

Robert and Lilly play the scene. Lilly sips champagne.

LILLY
 I'll drink to that.

The audience LAUGHS.

Robert stalls.

Silence.

ROBERT
 I have a hunch it's my line.

The audience LAUGHS.

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

Uneasy LAUGHTER.

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

The audience erupts in LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE.

Lilly fixes him with a look and feeds him his line.

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

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

He COUGHS.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

The curtain falls.

APPLAUSE.

LILLY

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

ROBERT

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

LILLY

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

Robert watches as she storms off.

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The lot is nearly empty. Eleanor approaches her car.

Across the lot, Norm paces beside Robert's limo.

ROBERT (O.S.)

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

Eleanor makes her way toward the dramatic SHOUTING.

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

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

EXT. GROUNDS NEXT TO THE PLAYHOUSE - NIGHT

Robert stands alone, whiskey bottle in hand.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR (O.S.)

What are you doing!?

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

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

Those lines are not in the play.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

You two had words tonight?

ROBERT

She had words. I listened.

ELEANOR

What did she say?

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

You have to learn your lines to do that.

ROBERT

I know my lines.

ELEANOR

You didn't tonight.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

You care?

ELEANOR

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

She turns and walks away.

Robert watches her disappear into the dark.

A faint smile.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

Robert and Lilly play before a full house.

ROBERT

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

Robert falters.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

A ruse...

LILLY

...to get to me?

ROBERT

Yes! To get to you.

(to the house)

I knew it was something like that.

The audience LAUGHS.

Robert glances toward the wings.

Eleanor stands there, watching.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Yes. Well. I shall...

LILLY
Leave?

ROBERT
Yes, that's right. I shall leave.

Robert exits.

Chauncey passes Eleanor and enters.

CHAUNCEY
I heard another voice.

LILLY
Did you, dear?

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

A KNOCK on the door.

LILLY
Enter.

Jamie Warren, as Giles the butler, enters carrying a
small silver tray.

JAMIE
A telegram for you, madam.

He presents the tray.

LILLY
For me?

Chauncey steps forward.

CHAUNCEY
No, for me.

He snatches the telegram.

LILLY
Duarte!

The audience GASPS.

CHAUNCEY
That is all, Giles.

JAMIE

Sir.

Jamie exits, closing the door behind him.

INT. THE AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The theater is empty.

A single Ghost Light glows center stage. A work light burns overhead.

Robert sits on the sofa, script in hand.

He studies the page.

He closes the script. Silently mouths a line.

Nothing. He opens the script again.

ROBERT

Damn.

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Better late than never.

Robert looks up.

Eleanor steps out from the wings.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

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

ROBERT

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

She approaches.

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

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

She sits beside him.

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

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

A beat.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

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

She extends her hand.

ELEANOR

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

He gives her the script.

She flips through it.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Ah, yes. This scene was ghastly. Top of Act Three.

ROBERT

Eh... refresh my memory...

ELEANOR

The garden scene.

ROBERT

Right.

A pause.

ELEANOR

You enter.

Robert rises slightly, projecting.

ROBERT

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

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

ROBERT
I'm playing it too big.

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

ROBERT
Probably. I most likely didn't
listen.

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

Robert settles. Smaller now.

ROBERT
Winnifred. I had a feeling that --

ELEANOR
Just a bit more volume. A bit.

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

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

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

ELEANOR
But hurt her, you did, and I
should hate you for it.

(MORE)

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

But I am just as much to blame for
I never tried to stop you. Here,
in this garden... all those secret
rendezvous... I can never forgive
myself.

Robert moves closer.

ROBERT

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

He kisses her.

A long beat.

Eleanor pulls back.

ELEANOR

There is no kiss in this scene.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

You must stay true to the author's
intent.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

I don't think so.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

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

She rises and steps toward the wings.

Robert follows.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

And your lines?

ROBERT

I'll work on them tonight.

ELEANOR

When will you sleep?

ROBERT

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

A faint smile touches her lips.

EXT. LITTLE ISLAND - DAY

Robert's limo is parked at the end of the road near a narrow footpath. Norm leans against the hood.

Robert and Eleanor walk toward the shoreline.

ROBERT (V.O.)

This is a beautiful spot.

ELEANOR (V.O.)

It's called "Little Island."

EXT. LITTLE ISLAND - THE SHORELINE - DAY

Robert and Eleanor face the sea.

ROBERT

This would be an excellent location for a picture.

ELEANOR

What kind?

ROBERT

One where I make fewer mistakes.
Beautiful spot.

ELEANOR

I've painted this island.

ROBERT

Painted? Are you a painter?

ELEANOR

A hobby, really.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

Not my paintings, Mister Morgan.

ROBERT

Please. Call me Robert.

ELEANOR

And you may call me Eleanor.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

From my voice!?

ROBERT

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

She laughs.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

How many paintings have you done?

ELEANOR

Almost one hundred.

ROBERT

Impressive. Are you working on something now?

ELEANOR

I'm going to paint Nobska Light.

ROBERT

Where's that?

ELEANOR

Out on Nobska Road. A beautiful lighthouse.

They walk along the shoreline.

ROBERT

How long have you been painting?

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

I'm very sorry to hear that.

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

Dear God. When did he...

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

I see.

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

How long have you been at the
Playhouse?

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

I see.

ELEANOR

What about you? Were you in the
war?

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

They wouldn't take you?

ROBERT

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

Eleanor's hand rises to her chest.

ELEANOR

My God, I never heard that.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

What did you do for them?

ROBERT

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

She laughs.

They reach a cluster of boulders. Eleanor sits.

Robert remains standing, looking out at the water.

ELEANOR

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

No response.

The waves crash against the rocks.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Robert?

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

When was this?

ROBERT

Nineteen-twelve. So long ago.

ELEANOR

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

Robert watches the water.

ROBERT

Oh, yes, it is.

ELEANOR

What role did you play before?

Robert's expression shifts.

FOSTER (V.O.)

The butler!

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. SCRANTON THEATER - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

HOWIE HENDERSON (19), dressed as an Edwardian butler, stands with a small silver tray in hand.

He silently mouths his lines.

FOSTER (O.S.)

Where's the butler!?

HOWIE

Oh! Here, Mister Foster!

RONALD FOSTER (40s), a refined bundle of nerves, rushes toward him, waving a slip of paper.

FOSTER

Were you planning on going out there with no telegram?

HOWIE

Sorry, Mister Foster.

FOSTER

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

HOWIE

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

FOSTER

Nervous!? You're only the butler!

HOWIE

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

FOSTER

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

HOWIE

I'm sure I'll --

FOSTER

If it dies, I die. The critics will make sure of it.

(MORE)

FOSTER (CONT'D)

One more bomb and I'm finished. No backer in the country will touch me.

HOWIE

Mister Foster --

FOSTER

If this doesn't go well, I'll be staging third-rate melodramas in Poughkeepsie for the rest of my life.

HOWIE

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

FOSTER

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

HOWIE

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

FOSTER

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

INT. ON THE SCRANTON STAGE - NIGHT

Winnifred and Duarte are mid-scene.

DUARTE

I heard another voice.

WINNIFRED

Did you, dear?

DUARTE

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

A KNOCK on the door.

WINNIFRED

Enter!

Howie enters with the silver tray. He stops just inside the doorway. Forgets to move.

A beat.

He steps forward -- too fast.

 HOWIE
 A telegram for you, madam.

The tray rattles in his hands.

 WINNIFRED
 For me?

 DUARTE
 No, for me.

Duarte reaches for the telegram.

Howie pulls it back.

 WINNIFRED
 Howie! I mean... Giles!

He unfolds the telegram. His eyes scan it.

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

Duarte stares at him.

 DUARTE
 What did you just say!?
 (whispers)
 That's my line, you little fool!
 (stage voice)
 That is all, Giles!

Howie turns to Winnifred.

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

His breathing quickens.

He takes a step forward -- blocking Duarte.

 HOWIE (CONT'D)
 I knew. I knew all the time.

Winnifred and Duarte exchange a look.

HOWIE (CONT'D)
I watched from the attic window. I
saw everything.

He glances toward the footlights.

The audience stares back.

 HOWIE (CONT'D)
Look me in the eye and tell me I
did not see what I am telling you
I saw.

Duarte grabs his shoulder.

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

The audience LAUGHS.

Howie freezes.

The tray slips from his hand and CLATTERS to the floor.

 HOWIE
Oh, my God. What did I do!?

He backs toward the door.

Misses the handle. Finds it.

Exits

INT. SCRANTON THEATER - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Howie bursts through the door. He's pale. Breathing hard.

Foster waits.

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

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

INT. ON THE SCRANTON STAGE - NIGHT

Winnifred tries to continue the scene with Duarte.

Howie's voice carries from backstage.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>WINNIFRED I can explain it all, Duarte. You see, I -- that is to say I was --</p> | <p>HOWIE -- I knew everyone's cues I thought I could also help them if they lost their place, so you see, I was thinking of everybody, not just myself --</p> |
|--|---|

WINNIFRED (CONT'D)
(shouts)
Oh, will you shut the hell up back
there!?

The audience continues to LAUGH.

INT. SCRANTON THEATER - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Foster steps closer to Howie.

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

HOWIE
I don't know what came over me.

FOSTER
Just go.

HOWIE
I'm sorry, Mister Foster...

Howie walks off down the corridor.

END FLASHBACK.

Robert stares out to sea.

ELEANOR
You were Howie Henderson.

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

ELEANOR
Until now.

ROBERT

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

A beat.

He turns to her.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

It was all because of me.

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

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

He forces a small smile.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

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

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - DAY

Lilly steps out of her car.

Del comes down the steps, suitcase in hand.

LILLY

Del, darling. Are you off so soon?

DEL

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

LILLY

We're not out of the woods yet.

DEL

I know, but I'm due back in the city to start a new show.

(MORE)

DEL (CONT'D)

I hate to go because I'm concerned
about Robert. Something seems
"off."

LILLY

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

DEL

Hopefully, things will come
together.

He leans in and kisses her cheek.

DEL (CONT'D)

Good luck.

LILLY

We'll need more than that.

Del heads toward a waiting car.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - BACKSTAGE - DAY

Lilly walks down the corridor, a satin gown draped over
her arm.

She stops at the wardrobe room. KNOCKS. Peeks inside.

Empty.

She continues down the hall.

Reid approaches from the opposite direction.

LILLY

Reid, have you seen the wardrobe
lady?

REID

No, I haven't.

He continues past her.

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

Lilly reaches her door. From across the narrow hall,
Robert's voice carries through his closed door.

ROBERT (V.O.)

It was not whole. It was not true.
I never intended to hurt her. I
swear, I never intended that.

Lilly pauses.

ELEANOR (V.O.)

But hurt her, you did, and I
should hate you for it.

Lilly steps closer to Robert's door.

She throws it door open.

INT. ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Robert sits at his makeup table. Eleanor sits nearby with
the script.

ROBERT

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

He glances at Eleanor.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

She always knew when I was with
another woman.

LILLY

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

ELEANOR

Miss LaRue, if you think --

LILLY

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

Eleanor hands Robert the script.

She takes the gown and exits.

ROBERT

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

LILLY

I don't care who you sleep with --

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

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

ROBERT
Because you were not here.

LILLY
I'm here now.

He smiles.

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

Lilly storms out, SLAMMING the door.

INT. WARDROBE ROOM - DAY

Racks of costumes line the walls. Shelves hold wigs and
hats. The gown lies spread across a worktable.

Eleanor removes stitches at the waist.

Lilly enters.

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

ELEANOR
Two inches.

LILLY
Two!?

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

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

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

Eleanor continues working.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

The evening performance is in progress.

Lilly sits on a stone bench in a garden setting under blue and amber lights. Robert faces her.

He is transformed and at the top of his game.

ROBERT

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

LILLY

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

ROBERT

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

INT. THE WING - STAGE RIGHT - NIGHT

Eleanor stands in the shadows, watching.

LILLY (O.S.)

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

Eleanor mouths the words in time.

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

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

INT. ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Robert removes his toupee.

He reaches for a jar of cold cream.

A cough -- violent.

He grabs a tissue. Coughs into it.

He pulls it away.

Blood.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Are you decent?

He crumples the bloody tissue into his fist as the door opens. He forces a smile.

ROBERT

Yes?

Eleanor enters and lifts his costumes from the rack.

ELEANOR

You were magnificent tonight.

Robert meets her eyes.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

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

She kisses his forehead.

She exits, closing the door.

Robert opens his hand.

Blood-soaked tissues.

EXT. NOBSKA LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

A white lighthouse rises on a grassy hill above the ocean. A split-rail fence surrounds the yard. Beside it stands the shingled Lightkeeper's house.

Inside the fence, Eleanor sits at her easel.

She sketches light pencil lines across the canvas.

ROBERT (O.S.)

Hello!

Eleanor looks up.

Robert leans over the lighthouse catwalk railing.

ELEANOR

My God! What are you doing up there!?

ROBERT

I thought I could be in your painting!

ELEANOR

Get down from there before you fall!

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

Ah! You saw it!

ELEANOR

Robert! Please get inside!

ROBERT

I rather like it up here!

He shades his eyes and leans farther over the railing.

ELEANOR

Oh, my God!

ROBERT

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

Eleanor SLAMS her pencil onto the sketch box.

INT. NOBSKA LIGHTHOUSE - LANTERN ROOM - DAY

Footsteps CLANG on the metal stairs.

Eleanor emerges from the spiral staircase, catching her breath as she circles the massive lamp.

Through the open door, Robert stands on the catwalk.

Beside him: a silver Champagne bucket, the bottle packed in ice.

He holds up two glasses.

ROBERT

Care to join me?

She steps through the door onto the catwalk.

ELEANOR

Are you out of your bloody mind?

EXT. NOBSKA LIGHTHOUSE - CATWALK - DAY

Eleanor keeps one hand on the wall, avoiding the rail.

ELEANOR

I don't like heights.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

That's a stretch.

He hands her a glass.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Isn't it a bit early?

ROBERT

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

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

Eleanor laughs despite herself.

ELEANOR

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

He hands her the juice.

ROBERT

Of course...

He pours Champagne into her glass.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

And once in a while, the answer
might actually be the truth.

She tops it off with a splash of orange juice.

ELEANOR

How did you get up here?

ROBERT

The Lighthouse Keeper is a fan.

He pours his own glass.

ELEANOR

I suppose fame does have its
advantages.

ROBERT

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

Eleanor smiles.

Robert looks out over the distant town.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

This is a beautiful place... this
Falmouth.

ELEANOR

How does it compare with Beverly
Hills?

ROBERT

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

He turns to her.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

And lovely people.

He lightly taps his glass to hers.

ELEANOR

You, sir, are a charmer.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

New at what?

ROBERT

Being nice to someone.

ELEANOR

I find that hard to believe.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

I see.

ROBERT

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

They walk slowly along the catwalk.

ELEANOR

Lilly appears to be honest with you.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

Why the Champagne?

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

I just read lines with you.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

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

He considers that.

ROBERT

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

She stops and faces him.

ELEANOR

There's nothing wrong with you, Robert.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

Howie Henderson?

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

Are they?

They hold each other's gaze.

EXT. NOBSKA LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

Eleanor paints at her easel.

The sky above is bright and clear. On her canvas, dark clouds gather.

Robert sits on a blanket in the grass. The Champagne bucket rests beside him, glass in hand.

ROBERT

Do you sell any of your paintings?

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

You don't say?

ELEANOR

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

A beat.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

We don't have any performances Sunday.

ROBERT

I know. I don't think I can.

Eleanor keeps painting.

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

You don't owe me an explanation.

ROBERT

Will this new painting be ready for your opening?

She adds another stroke of dark paint to the sky.

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

Did he?

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

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

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - NIGHT

Patrons enter through the front doors.

INT. ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

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

Lilly wears her Act One silk gown, diamonds at her neck and wrist.

Robert sits in a robe, white bow tie and evening shirt visible beneath.

REPORTER

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

LILLY

Is it?

REPORTER

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

LILLY

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

ROBERT

And I am happily unmarried.

REPORTER

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

LILLY

Yes.

REPORTER

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

ROBERT

Is there a question?

REPORTER

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

ROBERT

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

LILLY

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

ROBERT

Enough to drown in.

REPORTER

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

LILLY

That will depend on the script.

Robert shifts in his chair.

A rap on the door.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK.

REID (O.S.)

Fifteen minutes, Mister Morgan.

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

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

Lilly stands and walks the reporter to the door.

LILLY
How nice.

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

LILLY
Thank you. Goodbye, darling.

The reporter exits.

Lilly closes the door and turns back to Robert.

LILLY (CONT'D)
Are you all right?

Robert nods, "Yes."

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

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

She hesitates.

Robert presses a hand to his mouth, stifling a gag.

He gestures toward the door.

Lilly exits.

The door closes.

Robert doubles over.

A violent coughing fit.

INT. ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Robert drops the blood-soaked tissues into the toilet.

FLUSH.

He grips the sink.

Water runs.

He scrubs his hands. Rinses his mouth.

He looks up.

His reflection stares back.

INT. ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - MAKEUP TABLE - NIGHT

Robert returns to the table.

His hands tremble as he lifts the phone and dials.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

REID (O.S.)

Five minutes, Mister Morgan.

ROBERT

Right.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Operator. How may I assist you?

ROBERT

I need Long Distance, please. Los Angeles.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Thank you, one moment, please.

As he waits, he lights a cigarette.

LONG DISTANCE (V.O.)

Long Distance, how may I direct your call?

ROBERT

I would like Hollywood, 1125. Mister George Sanders.

LONG DISTANCE (V.O.)

One moment please, while I connect your call.

CLICK.

BEEEEEP... BEEEEEP...

Robert pulls fresh tissues from the box and stuffs them into his robe pocket.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Hello?

ROBERT
George!? Bob here.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Yes, Bob. How are you?

ROBERT
I think I'm going to need you out here sooner than we thought.

EXT. A SMALL CAPE HOUSE - DAY

Robert's limo is parked at the curb.

Norm sits behind the wheel.

A wooden sign hangs from a timber frame in the yard:

DR. HENRY WOLFE, MD.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Robert stands beside the examination table, buttoning his shirt. DR. WOLFE (40s), in a white lab coat, writes at his desk.

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

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

The doctor looks up.

DOCTOR
How long did they give you?

ROBERT
Weeks. Weeks ago.

A moment.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
The blood bit is new. That means
I'm getting closer, doesn't it?

DOCTOR
Yes.

ROBERT
So far, I've been relatively all
right.

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

ROBERT
Not too bad. They gave me little
blue pills.

DOCTOR
Morphine pills.

The doctor crosses to a medicine cabinet.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
A time will come when the pills
won't help you.

ROBERT
Well... can't be any worse than
the reviews I got in Cohasset.

He takes out a small glass bottle with a dropper.

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

He hands it to Robert.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Mr. Morgan, I have to say this. If
you go on with this performance,
you may not survive the week.

A beat.

Robert slips the bottle into his pocket.

He exits.

INT. THE LIMO - DAY

Robert sits in the back seat. The town drifts past the window. He watches it go.

EXT. FALMOUTH ARTISTS GALLERY - NIGHT

A Colonial building on Main Street. Light spills from tall bay windows.

A sign near the entrance reads: ELEANOR ADAMS. LANDSCAPES IN FALMOUTH JUNE 25-JULY 30

INT. FALMOUTH ARTISTS GALLERY - NIGHT

Eleanor's paintings line the walls.

Dark skies. Rough seas. Bare branches.

Guests move through the room, wine glasses in hand. Small clusters talk quietly.

Others stand close to the canvases.

Eleanor stands among them in an evening dress, diamond earrings catching the light, hair neatly styled. She speaks with a small group.

Across the room, an older man -- mustache, beard, hat, bolo tie, cane -- studies the Nobska Lighthouse painting.

Eleanor notices him.

She turns slightly toward the woman beside her.

ELEANOR
Excuse me, won't you?

Eleanor crosses the room to the older man.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Good evening.

He studies the painting.

ROBERT
Hmmm.

ELEANOR

This is the newest. Finished it yesterday.

He speaks in a soft Southern accent.

ROBERT

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

He steps to the next painting. Leans in. Squints.

ELEANOR

Is something wrong?

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

I paint them as I see them.

ROBERT

Oh. Pardon me. Are you the artist?

ELEANOR

Yes, I am.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

I understand.

ROBERT

Do you see the world like this?

ELEANOR

Most of the time.

He moves to a painting of an empty ballroom -- streamers, tables set, orchestra stands onstage.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

I don't see any people.

ELEANOR

Because you're seeing it the way I see it. Before the war, my late husband and I would attend all the dances here in town. After the war, I didn't go to any for many years. When I finally did to help with the refreshments... this is how it appeared to me. It was as if I were alone in that room.

Robert studies the painting.

ROBERT

That's very sad.

Eleanor smiles.

ELEANOR

Any more questions, Robert?

He lowers his voice.

ROBERT

You know it's me!?

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

I wouldn't miss it.

ELEANOR

But why the disguise?

ROBERT

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

Eleanor meets his eyes.

ELEANOR

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

He straightens, back into character.

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

EXT. NOBSKA LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

The lighthouse beam sweeps across the dark ocean.

Robert and Eleanor walk along the path. The limo waits in the distance.

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

ROBERT
How many did you expect to sell?

ELEANOR
Honestly? None.

ROBERT
None!?

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

ROBERT
I see.

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

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

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

They continue walking.

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

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

But that would be a lie.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

Are you a philosopher?

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

I didn't see that one.

ROBERT

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

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

The living room set.

Robert and Lilly face Chauncey and Alice.

Alice sits with her back to them, shoulders shaking.

CHAUNCEY

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

LILLY

Yes, Duarte.

CHAUNCEY

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

ROBERT

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

CHAUNCEY

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

ROBERT

Oh?

He raises his voice.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Giles! Giles -- here, please!

The doorknob rattles.

It opens.

Jamie enters and stops. Robert stares at him.

Silence.

Jamie stands rigid.

Lilly watches Robert.

Robert doesn't move.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. SCRANTON THEATER - NIGHT

The living room set.

Ronald Foster, in an ill-fitting butler's costume, stands
with a script in hand.

Scattered LAUGHTER from the audience.

Peony stops crying and turns.

Sterling stares at Foster, thrown.

STERLING

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

Foster looks down at the script.

FOSTER

My love, I thought - damn!

He flips pages.

The audience LAUGHS.

The actors remain still.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Sir. You called?

STERLING

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

INT. SCRANTON THEATER - BACK OF THEATER - NIGHT

Howie Henderson, eyes red, stands at the back row in his
coat and bowler.

FOSTER (O.S)

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

STERLING (O.S.)

To what end?

FOSTER (O.S.)

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

The audience LAUGHS.

Howie watches.

INT. ON THE SCRANTON STAGE - NIGHT

Foster lowers his script. He looks at the other actors.

Then -- out to the audience,

FOSTER

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

INT. SCRANTON THEATER - BACK OF THE THEATER - NIGHT

Howie doesn't move. The LAUGHTER swells. Tears run down his face.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

Robert stares at Jamie.

Chauncey clears his throat.

JAMIE

...You called, sir?

ROBERT

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

JAMIE

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

ROBERT

To what end?

JAMIE

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

Alice rises from her chair.

ALICE

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

ROBERT

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

Robert turns to Lilly.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

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

CHAUNCEY

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

LILLY

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

ROBERT

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

Lilly crosses downstage.

LILLY

Dare I think it...

She turns.

LILLY (CONT'D)

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

CHAUNCEY

Yes! Yes! I was!

THE AUDIENCE

Leans forward.

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

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

BACK TO SCENE

Lilly turns away from him.

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

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

LILLY
How much did he promise you in
return?

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

ROBERT
Quite a family you have here,
Winnifred.

Lilly faces them.

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

CHAUNCEY
Winnifred -- we can start over.

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

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

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

CHAUNCEY
Very well! You leave me no choice!

Chauncey pulls a pistol from a pocket in his jacket.

The cast GASPS!

THE AUDIENCE

GASPS!

BACK TO SCENE

Robert steps in front of Lilly.

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

Chauncey shoves Jamie aside and rushes offstage.

The door SLAMS.

LILLY
No, Duarte! No!

She moves to follow.

Robert catches her arm.

A gunshot.

BANG!

Silence.

No one moves.

Robert stands still.

Tears gather in his eyes.

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

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

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

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

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

The OLD MAN sits in his wheelchair facing the window.

A fresh flower rests on the sill.

NURSE
There we are.

She turns the wheelchair toward the posters.

The other side of the Old Man's head comes into view --
scarred from an old bullet wound.

He looks at the posters.

Still.

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

No response.

NURSE (CONT'D)
I hope you do.

ORDERLY
(quietly)
Is this man the same Foster who's
on those posters?

NURSE
Yes.

ORDERLY
Robert Morgan the movie star?

NURSE
One and the same.

ORDERLY
He knows this man?

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

The Old Man continues to stare at the posters.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

Robert stands motionless.

The gunshot echoes in his head.

A breath.

Alice drops to the floor in tears.

Lilly turns to him.

ROBERT
Winnifred?

LILLY
Sterling...

She falls into his arms.

ROBERT

It's over now. It's over.

They kiss.

The curtain falls to wild APPLAUSE.

It rises again.

Chauncey, Alice, and Jamie step forward and bow.

APPLAUSE builds.

Lilly enters and curtsies.

The APPLAUSE SWELLS.

Robert steps into the light.

APPLAUSE and CHEERS.

He bows.

He takes Lilly's hand. They step forward together.

A final bow with the company.

The curtain falls.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

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

LILLY

You froze out there. What happened?

ROBERT

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

LILLY

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

ROBERT

You're right. I will.

Lilly walks off.

Nearby, Jamie and Alice steal a quick kiss.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Jamie!?

JAMIE

Yes, Mister Morgan?

Robert crosses to him.

ROBERT

Might I have a word with you,
Jamie?

JAMIE

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

ROBERT

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

Alice smiles and slips away.

Robert rests a hand on Jamie's shoulder and steers him
toward the dressing rooms.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

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

JAMIE

Of course, sir.

INT. WARDROBE ROOM - NIGHT

Eleanor sews a button onto a shirt.

Lilly appears in the doorway.

LILLY

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

ELEANOR

I'm afraid I can't.

Lilly steps inside.

LILLY

I beg your pardon?

ELEANOR

I said I'm afraid I can't.

LILLY

It was not a suggestion.

ELEANOR

And my answer is not up for debate.

LILLY

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

ELEANOR

Oh, stuff it.

She keeps sewing.

LILLY

Just who the hell do you think you are?

ELEANOR

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

LILLY

I don't believe what I'm hearing!

ELEANOR

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

LILLY

I am sure you will find a way.

ELEANOR

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

LILLY

Just who the hell do you --

ELEANOR

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

LILLY

What!?

ELEANOR

I've heard less noise at a trough.

LILLY

OH!

ELEANOR

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

LILLY

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

Lilly storms out.

Eleanor continues sewing.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Reid stands at the stage manager's podium, making notes.

Lilly marches up to him.

LILLY

You! Stage manager!

REID

Miss LaRue.

LILLY

I want her fired.

REID

Who?

LILLY

That woman.

REID

What woman?

Lilly steps closer, livid.

LILLY

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

REID

Eleanor? That's impossible.

LILLY

No one says "impossible" to me!

REID

There's no way I can do that.

LILLY

Why!?

REID

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

Lilly fumes and barrels down the hall.

LILLY

God! Do I hate stock!

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The lot is almost empty.

A few cars file out toward the street.

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

Robert, now in a suit, studies himself in the mirror.

He opens a small box and shakes two blue pills into his palm. He adds one more.

A light KNOCK on the door.

ROBERT

Come in.

Eleanor enters, annoyed.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

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

ELEANOR

How can you tell?

ROBERT

That expression was part of my repertoire for years.

ELEANOR

You have no idea what I just went through --

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

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

Robert rises abruptly, grabs his hat.

ROBERT

Nonsense. The night is young!

He crosses to the door, holding it open.

ELEANOR

Robert, I don't think --

ROBERT

Your carriage awaits. Move along!

He guides her out into the hallway.

INT. THE LIMO - NIGHT

Norm drives along a dark road.

In the back seat, Robert hands Eleanor a small ribbon-wrapped box.

ELEANOR

What's this?

ROBERT

You'll see.

She unties the ribbon and opens the box.

Inside: a corsage.

ELEANOR

It's beautiful.

ROBERT

Ah! So you do see it!

ELEANOR

Of course, I do.

ROBERT

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

She lifts the corsage and smells it.

He gently takes it and pins it to her blouse.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

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

ELEANOR

It's lovely.

ROBERT

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

She laughs.

ELEANOR

What if it's a big sand dune?

ROBERT

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

She laughs again.

ELEANOR

Very well.

She looks out the window.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Do you mind telling me where we're going?

ROBERT

A little place I found.

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

When you're a movie star, you can
pull strings others can't even
begin to pluck.

ELEANOR

What's that supposed to mean?

EXT. A ROAD IN FALMOUTH - NIGHT

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

EXT. FALMOUTH GRANGE HALL - NIGHT

The limo pulls up to a large barn-like hall. Light glows
from the windows.

Big Band music plays inside.

No other cars.

Norm steps out and opens the rear door. He offers Eleanor
his hand as she exits.

ELEANOR

The Grange Hall?

Robert joins her.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

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

ROBERT

It is peculiar, isn't it?

He leads her toward the front doors.

INT. GRANGE HALL - NIGHT

Robert and Eleanor enter a large ballroom.

At the far end, a Big Band orchestra plays a slow number.

The CONDUCTOR lowers his baton and gives them a small bow
before resuming.

Eleanor looks around.

A long table holds punch bowls, cakes, and cookies.

Streamers hang from the walls and ceiling.

Chairs line the perimeter.

Robert takes her hand and leads her onto the dance floor.

He places a hand at her waist.

They begin to dance.

ELEANOR

I can't believe this.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

It does.

ROBERT

Even in empty rooms, there's life.

ELEANOR

How is that?

ROBERT

Spirits all around us... dancing with us here... from other times, from other memories.

ELEANOR

Memories?

ROBERT

We're never really alone.

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

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

She rests her head against his shoulder.

They continue to dance as the music plays.

EXT. GRANGE HALL - NIGHT

Norm stands beside the limo.

Through the window, Robert and Eleanor move across the empty dance floor inside.

Norm watches.

A faint smile.

EXT. LITTLE ISLAND - FALMOUTH - SUNRISE

Robert and Eleanor walk along the rocky shoreline as the sun lifts over the water.

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

Ah! The happy memories were
allowed in again?

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

Sunflowers in the dunes.

ROBERT

That'll work.

He coughs, presses a fist to his mouth, swallows it down.

ELEANOR

You should see about that cough.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

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

They continue along the shoreline.

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - PARKING LOT - SUNSET

The limo turns into the lot and heads toward the rear of the theater.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - STAGE DOOR - SUNSET

The stage doorman, ED (70s) sits on a tall stool beside a small table with a sign-in book. A pipe rests in the corner of his mouth. A battered fedora hangs nearby.

On a small black-and-white television, a younger Robert and Lilly appear in evening clothes mid-argument.

ROBERT (ON TELEVISION)

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

Robert enters, signs the book.

LILLY (ON TELEVISION)

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

Ed lowers the volume.

ED

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

ROBERT

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

He heads down the hall.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Made a mint at the box office,
though.

INT. OUTSIDE ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - SUNSET

Robert opens his dressing room door.

Reid approaches, holding a note. He hands it to Robert.

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

ROBERT
Thank you, Reid.

Robert steps inside.

INT. ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - SUNSET

He closes the door, crumples the note and drops it into
the wastebasket.

A wave hits him.

He steadies himself against the makeup table.

He takes a small pillbox from his pocket, flips it open,
and swallows a blue pill.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

JAMIE (O.S.)
Mister Morgan?

ROBERT
Come in.

Jamie steps inside.

JAMIE
Is this for real, Mister Morgan?

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

JAMIE
Not even Alice.

Alice appears in the doorway.

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

ROBERT
 Alice. I have asked a favor of Mister Warren.

ALICE
 Oh.

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

Jamie slips past her and heads down the hall. Alice watches him go, then turns back to Robert.

ALICE
 What was all that about?

ROBERT
 I gave him some acting tips.

THE AUDIENCE

A full house. Programs rustle. Low conversation.

INT. THE WING - STAGE LEFT - NIGHT

Lilly stands in costume for Act One. Chauncey waits behind her.

She glances across the stage to the opposite wing.

Empty.

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

Reid slips past Chauncey and leans in to whisper to her.

Lilly recoils.

LILLY (CONT'D)
 What the hell!? Why!?

She looks across the stage again to see Jamie -- in costume for Sterling.

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

Reid hurries to the podium.

He grips the microphone, switches it on.

REID

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

INT. WARDROBE ROOM - NIGHT

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

REID (V.O.)

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

Eleanor stops.

INT. THE AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Confused murmurs ripple through the house.

INT. WARDROBE ROOM - NIGHT

ELEANOR listens.

REID (V.O.)

The role of Sterling Duffield will
be played this evening by Jamie
Warren. The role of the butler
will be played by Howie Henderson.

The audience reacts -- scattered groans, whispers.

Eleanor stands still.

INT. THE WING - STAGE LEFT - NIGHT

Lilly stands just offstage, rigid.

LILLY

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

INT. WARDROBE ROOM - NIGHT

Eleanor sits back in her chair. She goes still.

INT. ALICE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Alice sits at her mirror, applying makeup.

She hums to herself, unaware.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

The Living Room set.

CHAUNCEY

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

Lilly turns toward him.

LILLY

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

CHAUNCEY

Certainly, my dear.

He exits.

LILLY

Sterling... oh, Sterling...

Jamie enters.

No applause.

JAMIE

Winnifred, my darling.

He takes in the set.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

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

INT. OUTSIDE ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Eleanor knocks.

ELEANOR

Robert? Robert, are you in there?
Hello?

INT. ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Robert sits at the makeup mirror. A blood-soaked handkerchief lies on the table.

In his hand: a small bottle of liquid morphine.

His fingers tremble. The bottle slips --

He catches it.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Robert? Are you there? Is
everything all right?

Robert stares at his reflection.

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Muffled applause and laughter drift from inside the theater. Crickets fill the dark.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

The play continues.

CHAUNCEY

I heard another voice.

LILLY

Did you, dear?

INT. THE WING - STAGE RIGHT - NIGHT

Eleanor stands just offstage, watching.

CHAUNCEY (V.O.)

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

A KNOCK at the stage door.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

Lilly turns toward the door.

LILLY

Enter!

The door opens.

Robert steps inside - dressed as the butler, playing his own age.

The house erupts -- APPLAUSE and CHEERS.

Lilly and Chauncey miss a beat.

ROBERT

A telegram for you, madam.

He crosses to Lilly and presents a small silver tray.

She doesn't move.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

For you, madam. A telegram.

LILLY

For me?

CHAUNCEY

No, for me!

He snatches the message.

LILLY

Chauncey! Duarte!

The audience GASPS.

CHAUNCEY

That is all... ah, Giles.

ROBERT

Sir.

Robert exits, closing the door behind him.

INT. BEHIND THE SET - NIGHT

Robert grips the edge of the flat.

His hand slips. He catches himself.

The dialogue onstage warps -- stretched, hollow.

Applause thuds as if underwater.

CHAUNCEY (O.S.)

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

Robert looks up.

Young Howie Henderson steps out from behind the scenery.
He moves carefully. Quietly.

He stops inches from Robert.

Robert leans in to the face of his younger self.

The image trembles. His eyes close.

A beat.

They open.

He is alone.

INT. ALICE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Alice faces the mirror, applying lipstick.

She glances at the clock: 8:20. She presses her lips
together and hurries out.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

APPLAUSE from the house.

Onstage lights fade to black.

Alice rushes in from the hallway.

REID

You always cut it close.

She flashes a grin.

ALICE

And I never miss a cue!

Alice moves into place.

Lilly and Chauncey step offstage.

CHAUNCEY
You know, right?

ALICE
Know what?

The lights come up. Alice makes her entrance.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

The Garden set. Alice paces.

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

Jamie enters.

JAMIE
Peony.

Alice turns.

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

JAMIE
I was... detained.

Alice gathers herself.

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

JAMIE
Peony...

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

FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - STAGE DOOR

Muffled applause from the stage. Ed stands at the desk, phone to his ear, writing a message.

ED

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

He hangs up, slips the note into his shirt pocket. He glances at the wall clock.

8:40

The same clock.

10:30

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

The Living Room set. Alice sobs on the sofa.

Jamie faces Lilly and Chauncey.

STERLING

Giles! Giles, come in here,
please!

INT. THE WING - STAGE RIGHT - NIGHT

Eleanor watches from the shadows.

INT. BEHIND THE SET - NIGHT

Robert turns the doorknob.

It doesn't move.

He tries again. Harder.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

Lilly sees the doorknob RATTLE.

INT. BEHIND THE SET - NIGHT

Robert grips the knob, forces the door.

It gives.

He steadies himself -- and steps on stage.

ROBERT
Sir. You called?

INT. THE WING - STAGE RIGHT - NIGHT

Eleanor releases the breath she's been holding.

JAMIE (V.O.)
Indeed I did. Tell me again what
you overheard the master saying to
young Peony the other day.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

Robert stands centered. Composed.

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

JAMIE
To what end?

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

A few GASPS from the audience.

JAMIE
Thank you, Giles.

ROBERT
Will that be all, sir?

JAMIE
Yes, Giles. Thank you.

Robert exits.

Lilly watches him go.

INT. BEHIND THE SET - NIGHT

Robert slips through the door and closes it. His back presses against the flat. He draws in air -- shallow, unsteady. Sweat beads at his temple.

CHAUNCEY (O.S.)
So now you will accuse me of
wanting to murder you, eh!? Have
you no shame, sir?

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The audience spills out of the theater talking over one another. Car doors SLAM. Headlights flare on, one by one.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

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

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

Reid intercepts them, holding out a note.

REID
Your agent again. Called the stage
door this time.

Robert snatches the note without breaking stride.

ROBERT
Thank you.

LILLY
How humiliating! Why did you do
it!?

ROBERT
I did it for me.

He reaches his dressing room, opens the door.

LILLY
What? Play a butler!?

ROBERT
Yes.

He steps inside and shuts the door in her face.

LILLY

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

INT. BEHIND THE SET - NIGHT

Alice pulls Jamie into a kiss behind the flats.

ALICE

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

JAMIE

Really?

ALICE

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

They kiss again.

JAMIE

Actually... you did.

She pulls back.

ALICE

When?

JAMIE

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

ALICE

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

JAMIE

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

ALICE

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

She turns and heads off down the corridor.

JAMIE

But you thought I was good,
right!?

INT. ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Robert lifts the phone and dials.

BEEEEEP... BEEEEEP...

He sits at the makeup table, loosens his tie.

BEEEEEP...

LESTER (V.O.)

Where the hell have you been!?

ROBERT

On stage. Where do you think?

LESTER (V.O.)

How did it go?

ROBERT

Wonderful! Just as planned.

LESTER (V.O.)

What did they say?

ROBERT

What did who say?

LESTER (V.O.)

The Network Executives.

ROBERT

Enlighten me.

LESTER (V.O.)

For the new series they want you
in?

ROBERT

What series?

LESTER (V.O.)

You play an aging private eye or
something like that -- who cares!?
How did it go? What did they say?

ROBERT

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

He hangs up.

He studies his reflection in the mirror.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

ELEANOR (O.S.)
Robert?

ROBERT
Come in.

Eleanor enters.

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

Robert rises to meet her --

His knees give.

He drops hard.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Robert!

She kneels beside him, gripping his arm.

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

She helps him to his feet and guides him back to the
chair. He falls into it.

His hand trembles as he reaches for the small morphine
bottle. The dropper slips, nearly falls. He steadies it.

ROBERT
Close the door.

She shuts the door.

He squeezes a dose beneath his tongue.

Eleanor grabs the phone and starts dialing.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Who are you calling?

ELEANOR
Doctor Wolfe. We need to get over
there tonight.

ROBERT

Hang up.

ELEANOR

You're bleeding.

ROBERT

I've already seen him.

She stops dialing.

He holds up the bottle.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

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

ELEANOR

Robert...

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

What do they say?

A faint smile.

ROBERT

That I shouldn't have done this
summer tour.

ELEANOR

Oh, my God.

She lowers onto the loveseat.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

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

ROBERT

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

He looks at her.

Still. Drained.

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - DAY

Jamie sits on the front steps. His Volkswagen Beetle is parked nearby.

A van pulls into the lot and stops at the curb.

Chauncey, gift shop bag in hand, steps out in summer clothes.

CHAUNCEY

You should have come into town.

He pulls a plush lobster out of his bag.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

Something to remember Falmouth by.

He goes into the theater.

Alice steps out of the van.

She spots Jamie.

Jamie rises and approaches her.

JAMIE

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

ALICE

You should be.

JAMIE

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

She glances at his Beetle.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

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

She looks back at him. Waits.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I was a jerk.

ALICE

You were.

JAMIE

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

She studies him.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Can you forgive me?

ALICE

I need to think about it.

She heads inside.

EXT. LITTLE ISLAND - FALMOUTH - DAY

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

ELEANOR

How long have you known?

ROBERT

A while.

ELEANOR

Why would you do a play knowing
all that?

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

Is he still alive?

ROBERT

Not really.

They walk along the shore, arms linked.

His steps are slower now.

ELEANOR

How have you carried on with all
these performances?

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

Does anyone else know?

ROBERT

Only George Sanders.

ELEANOR

George Sanders?

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

Oh, I see.

ROBERT

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

Robert stops. Looks out at the ocean.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

They said I wouldn't make it the entire summer. And now... it appears Falmouth is the end of the line for me. I was ready for it. I've lived brightly.

(beat)

Depth was another matter.

He turns to her.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

But then I met you. I wasn't counting on forming any attachments here. I'm sorry. The last thing I wanted was to bring you pain.

ELEANOR

You need to be in the hospital.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

You're crazy.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

Lilly doesn't know?

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

And who will be with you? Your
agent?

She takes his hands in hers.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Stay here. Stay with me.

He speaks with great sincerity.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

They're not just words, Robert.

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

Robert...

She searches his face.

ROBERT

I'd prefer you keep the better
version in mind.

They hold each other.

The waves lap the shoreline.

EXT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE - NIGHT

The evening performance is underway.

CHAUNCEY (V.O.)
Peony, we must have a word.

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

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

Chauncey and Alice stand before a garden backdrop.

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

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

INT. ROBERT'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

In heavy makeup and a dark toupee, Robert stares at
himself in the mirror.

The scene plays through the stage monitor.

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

Robert switches off the monitor.

Silence.

He grips the morphine bottle. His hands tremble.

He draws several drops beneath his tongue.

The mirror image softens, edges blurring.

He rises. The room tilts.

INT. THE WING - STAGE LEFT - NIGHT

Lilly waits in the shadows. Robert reaches her.

The curtain is down. The audience APPLAUDS.

LILLY

You're perspiring. Are you all right?

ROBERT

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

LILLY

Oh, my God, Robert. What is it?

ROBERT

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

LILLY

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

ROBERT

We did, didn't we?

LILLY

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

He takes her gently by the shoulders.

ROBERT

Let's not hate each other anymore.

LILLY

Robert --

ROBERT

Remember the good times, Lilly. We did have some.

The curtain RISES.

Lilly goes still.

She touches his cheek.

He smiles.

Lilly returns a warm smile.

She turns... and glides onto the stage.

LILLY

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

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - LATER

The garden backdrop. A stone bench center stage.

Lilly pauses.

LILLY

Chauncey? Are you about?

A pause.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Good.

She turns toward the wings and beckons.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Here... come here.

Robert enters.

ROBERT

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

LILLY

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

She takes his hands.

He falters, unsteady.

INT. THE WING - STAGE RIGHT - NIGHT

Eleanor watches from the shadows.

LILLY (O.S.)

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

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

Lilly's concern grows as Robert struggles.

LILLY

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

Robert looks toward the opposite wing.

Eleanor stands there.

The stage lights flare in his eyes.

He coughs. Bends slightly, a hand to his stomach.

LILLY (CONT'D)

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

Robert looks at Lilly.

The lights burn hotter. Her face wavers.

For a moment -- Eleanor stands before him. Silk gown.
Diamond necklace catching the light.

Robert straightens.

ROBERT

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

He leads her to a stone bench.

ELEANOR

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

ROBERT

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

ELEANOR

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

Robert moves closer.

ROBERT

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

He kisses her.

The audience APPLAUDS and CHEERS.

Robert opens his eyes.

He is kissing Lilly.

Tears stream down her face.

Robert turns toward the wings.

INT. THE WING - STAGE RIGHT - NIGHT

Robert pulls off his toupee and lets it fall.

He steps toward Eleanor. She reaches for him first -- her
hands framing his face.

He covers her hands with his own.

They kiss.

It lingers.

INT. THE WING - STAGE LEFT - NIGHT

Jamie stares across at them. A hand touches his shoulder.

He turns -- Alice.

He gathers her close. They look back across the stage.

INT. FALMOUTH PLAYHOUSE STAGE - NIGHT

Lilly stands alone under the lights. She brushes tears from her cheeks.

INT. THE WING STAGE RIGHT - NIGHT

Eleanor slips her arm around Robert's waist.

He leans into her.

They move slowly away from the stage.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LITTLE ISLAND - FALMOUTH

An overcast sky. Whitecaps break against the rocks.

Eleanor stands at the shoreline, wrapped in a down coat.

She looks out at the sea.

The wind lifts her hair.

The image stills.

Color deepens.

The gray sky warms --

Orange and gold seep into the clouds.

The waves smooth. Whitecaps vanish.

Flowers appear along the dunes.

Eleanor is no longer in a coat.

She stands in a summer dress, the fabric moving in a soft breeze. The horizon holds.

A faint texture surfaces across the sky.

Brush strokes.

The entire scene settles into oil on canvas.

The painted shoreline is bordered in gold.

A frame.

The painting hangs on a wall.

Beside it --

Another framed canvas:

Nobska Lighthouse beneath a bright blue sky.

On the catwalk stands a man in a suit.

A Champagne bottle rests in a silver bucket.

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

FADE OUT.