MAN OF SORROW

by

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Based On A True Story

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Principato-Young Entertainment
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FADE IN:

EXT. LONDON -- WEST END - NIGHT

SUPER: “Friday, April 5th, 1895 - London”

Dusk.

DESPERATE FOOTSTEPS scurry along cobblestone streets.

SMOKE from steamboats drift across the burnt orange sky.

Dozens of panicky ARISTOCRATIC MEN cross a bridge, SUITCASES in hand.

Long lines form outside train and waterway ticket booths -- no women in sight.

EXT. CURZON STREET - NIGHT

Fashionable area -- the Mayfair district in London.

A HANDSOME ARISTOCRAT (31), prim and proper, like Sal from *Mad Men*, sprints with a small piece of LUGGAGE.

In the distance, the English Channel -- the Handsome Aristocrat dashes toward it.

EXT. TICKET BOOTH -- ENGLISH CHANNEL - NIGHT

The Handsome Aristocrat slides ONE SHILLING across the counter -- out of breath.

HANDSOME ARISTOCRAT
Night ferry to Calais. One, please.

The TICKET SALES CLERK (60), doesn’t pick up the shilling --

TICKET SALES CLERK
All sold out.

HANDSOME ARISTOCRAT
There’s no more ships this evening?

TICKET SALES CLERK
Not unless you want to swim there.

He chuckles, then looks at the man -- eyes turn suspicious.

HANDSOME ARISTOCRAT
What about by train?

The clerk recognizes him.

TICKET SALES CLERK
You's one of them. Ain't ya?

The Handsome Aristocrat flees, leaving his shilling behind.

The clerk picks it up, pockets it.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

CLOSE UP on a black blur of RUNNING BOOTS -- and then,

A WHACK!

The Handsome Aristocrat tumbles down the stoney street.

His FACE SKIDS AGAINST THE GROUND.

Then, he hears the sound of footsteps --

A shadowy figure,

Moves closer and closer to the Handsome Aristocrat --

A LANTERN OF LIGHT moves over his face, revealing --

A LARGE GASH across the Handsome Aristocrat's cheek --

It slowly bleeds.

MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)
Weren't trying to flee London now,
were you?

The Handsome Aristocrat looks up, into the light --

BLINDED BY IT -- as we hear,

THE WHIPPING OF A HORSE -- SLAP! -- and the WHEELS OF A CARRIAGE, rolling.

EXT. OSCAR WILDE HOME - NIGHT

A horse and carriage pass by --

16 TITE STREET. Chelsea, London.

STARING OUT FROM A THIRD FLOOR WINDOW of the Wilde house is,

OSCAR WILDE (41), stoic-looking and flamboyantly dressed in a PURPLE PIN-STRIPED SUIT. His shoulder-length, chestnut hair, wavy and light.

INT. OSCAR WILDE HOME -- NURSERY - NIGHT

Quaint bedroom nursery.

Oscar bends his head away from the window -- and sees his two sons --

CYRIL WILDE (9) and VYVYAN WILDE (8), getting ready for bed -- taking their time as all boys do.

VYVYAN
Why can't we come to the theater with you, father?

OSCAR
Young Irishmen need their rest to grow.

Cyril climbs into bed --

OSCAR (CONT'D)
No matter how tall their father is.

VYVYAN
When I grow up, I shall be taller than you, father.

OSCAR
With your confidence, no doubt you shall.

Oscar picks up Vyvyan, tosses him into bed -- COVERS HIM WITH A BLANKET -- he's now hidden.

Vyvyan laughs.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Cyril, do you hear something?

Oscar begins to tickle Vyvyan through the blankets.

VYVYAN
(laughing)
Father! Father! Enough, please!

OSCAR
I must be going deaf because I can't hear a peep.

CYRIL
The libel trial ended today.

Oscar is caught off guard -- stops tickling Vyvyan.

OSCAR
Who told you this?

CYRIL
I heard grandmother tell mother.

OSCAR
Little pigs have big ears.

Vyvyan pokes his head out from the covers -- his hair a mess.

CYRIL
Is everything alright?

OSCAR
Perfectly predictable, Cyril.

Cyril isn't satisfied -- his face, worrisome.

A firstborn child, through and through.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Now. How about a story before bed?

Oscar grabs a book of short stories --

Written by him.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
The Selfish Giant, perhaps?

VYVYAN
Not that again.

OSCAR
Does my writing no longer interest you, Vyvyan?

VYVYAN
That one is too sad.

OSCAR
All great art is tragic.

VYVYAN
Sing us a lullaby.

OSCAR
Cyril?

Cyril nods -- he wants that, too.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I suppose I'm outnumbered.

Oscar puts the book down.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Very well. What will it be this evening?

VYVYAN
Táimse im' chodhladh!

OSCAR
"I'm asleep. Don't wake me."
(beat)
Something I wish you both would adhere to each morning you come rushing into my bedroom.

Oscar, grinning.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Now then.

Oscar clears his throat -- begins to sing in Irish.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Tráthnóinín déanach i gcéin cois leasa dom. Táimse i m' chodhladh is ná dúisigh mé.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Oscar's singing continues, into the hallway --

It's slow, soothing -- as if sung from the hills of Dublin to calm a raging sea.

Coming up the stairs, holding a CANDLE is --

CONSTANCE WILDE (36), somber-looking and fair-skinned, her head covered with a navy blue bonnet.

She inches closer to,

THE CHILDREN'S NURSERY DOOR -- which is cracked open.

Constance peers through -- sees Oscar singing to the boys.

She takes in the peaceful moment.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A MAID (20s), finishes clearing the table of plates, dishes.

Constance sits at the table now -- like a statue.

Oscar ENTERS.

OSCAR
Ready Constance?

Constance eyes the Maid.

The Maid quickly EXITS.

CONSTANCE
I won't be joining you this evening.

Her words sting.

OSCAR
People will always believe lies, Constance. But you mustn't.

CONSTANCE
Doesn't matter if I believe. What matters is the public opinion.

OSCAR
By that logic, we should all keep someone else's diary.

CONSTANCE
This is not a joke, Oscar.

OSCAR
A fallacious scandal? That's the biggest joke of all.

CONSTANCE
You lost today, Oscar. Don't you know what that implies?

OSCAR
It's not true.

CONSTANCE
And what about your reputation?

OSCAR
There are people in London who want only the ruin of me.

Oscar takes her hand.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Please come. I need you there beside me, Constance.

CONSTANCE
I'm sorry, Oscar.

Constance slips her hand away from his.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
I can't.

INT. QUEENSBERRY CARRIAGE - NIGHT

Two men in TOP HATS -- their heads wobble with the uneven, bumpy ride.

One is JOHN SHOLTO DOUGLAS, 9TH MARQUESS OF QUEENSBERRY (50), thin, stoic with a dastardly twinkle in his eye.

The other is EDWARD CARSON (38), pale-faced, hair slicked-back and big open forehead.

QUEENSBERRY
How quickly can we proceed?

Carson, hesitates.

CARSON
We must first draft a letter to the Director of Public Prosecutions. Then, the judge will issue--

QUEENSBERRY
Fine. Draft it at once. And send over our witness statements. No doubt that will convince him.

CARSON
Sir, perhaps we wait for--

QUEENSBERRY
Wait?

CARSON
These are grave charges.

QUEENSBERRY
I'll have no miscarriage of justice.

CARSON
But your son, Lord Douglas--

QUEENSBERRY
Is as good as dead to me.
(beat)
Draft the letter. At once.

EXT. HAYMARKET ROYAL THEATRE - NIGHT

A grand, lit up MARQUEE:

“AN IDEAL HUSBAND by OSCAR WILDE”

Dozens of TOWNSPEOPLE scurry in the streets outside the theatre -- a rich part of the city.

At the theatre ticket booth, a small sign reads:

“Tonight’s performance: Sold Out”

O.S. LAUGHTER is heard as we go into --

INT. HAYMARKET ROYAL THEATRE - NIGHT

Oscar stands at stage center, in front of a lavish, red, CLOSED CURTAIN -- LAUGHTER coming from the sold out crowd.

A SPOTLIGHT shines on Oscar. He carries on, lustrously --

OSCAR
This is why I adore theatre.

TUXEDOS and GOWNS fill up the audience.

OSCAR (CONT’D)
One of the few places where you can publicly mock the hypocrisy of London’s high society.

More LAUGHTER ensues.

OSCAR (CONT’D)
I do hope the show delights you. And do forgive the actors. I’ve watched this performance a dozen times and still, they fail to capture my waggish riposte.

Oscar BOWS as the crowd APPLAUDS, with gusto.

He EXITS stage left.

INT. STAGE LEFT - NIGHT

APPLAUSE continues as Oscar watches the curtain open --

Then, lines of DIALOGUE -- Oscar's written words -- spoken.

His face lights up like a child.

INT. HAYMARKET ROYAL THEATRE - NIGHT

The opening scene of *An Ideal Husband.*

On stage, we see a brilliantly lit room full of GAUDY GUESTS.

ACTRESSES playing the characters,

MRS. MARCHMONT (30s) and LADY BASILDON (30s), sway across the stage -- their gowns brushing against the floor.

We enter in the middle of their conversation --

MRS. MARCHMONT
I come here to be educated.

LADY BASILDON
Ah! I hate being educated.

MRS. MARCHMONT
So do I. It puts one almost on a level with the commercial class, doesn't it?

CHUCKLES from the audience.

MRS. MARCHMONT (CONT'D)
But dear Gertrude Chiltern is always telling me that I should have some serious purpose in life.
(beat)
So I come here to try to find one.

INT. GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

Back stage -- some time later,

Inside a dimly lit room with GREEN LAMPS and flowery-print sofas, we hear HEAVY PANTING --

Then faintly see, on the other side of the room,

Oscar on the couch having sex with --

LORD ALFRED “BOSIE” DOUGLAS (19), strikingly handsome, youthful -- the most beautiful man in London.

Oscar KISSES the back of Bosie’s neck as he lies behind him, thrusting.

Fingers gripping his shoulder, until --

LATER

After sex.

Oscar buttons up his shirt -- pulls his SUIT JACKET over his shoulders --

BOSIE
No wonder you always speak of pleasure.

Speckles of sweat run down Bosie’s bare torso as he pulls up his trousers.

OSCAR
Pleasure is the only thing worth having a theory about.

BOSIE
And me?

Oscar LIGHTS A CIGARETTE -- puffs out his first drag.

BOSIE (CONT’D)
Am I not worth a theory?

OSCAR
You deserve a whole philosophy. In the Greek school of Adonis. I envy the face God gave you.

Bosie takes the cigarette from Oscar -- blows a drag out.

OSCAR (CONT’D)
Wish I had the pleasure of gazing at it every day.

BOSIE
And if I granted your wish? My face for yours.

OSCAR
I’d quite like that.

They kiss.

Slowly, tenderly this time.

BOSIE
Let's run away. Tonight.

OSCAR
Don't be absurd, Bosie.

From awestruck to anger -- Bosie's beauty ends where his intellect begins.

BOSIE
What's so absurd about that?

OSCAR
I will not continue to be the wedge between you and your father.

BOSIE
Don't call him that.

OSCAR
Fine. Lord Queensberry.

BOSIE
What do you care about him? After what he's done to you.

OSCAR
Promise me you won't --

THE DOOR OPENS --

Revealing,

ROBERT "ROBBIE" ROSS (25), cute, slightly chubby and a tad effeminate. He sees Oscar and Bosie, gladly interrupts --

ROBBIE
It's finished. Come, Oscar.

Bosie sneers at Robbie -- somebody's jealous of someone here.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
Now, Oscar.

INT. LOBBY -- HAYMARKET ROYAL THEATRE - NIGHT

Oscar greets two WOMEN PATRONS (50s) as they exit --

Robbie stands nearby.

WOMAN PATRON #1
Really the most delightful time
I've had at the theatre in years.

OSCAR
Abundantly appreciated, madame.

WOMAN PATRON #1
I should know. I've seen so many--

She pauses.

WOMAN PATRON #1 (CONT'D)
Dreadful plays in my lifetime.

OSCAR
A very brief lifetime, indeed.

The elder woman is flattered -- she coos.

WOMAN PATRON #2
Surely you're becoming one of
London's most accomplished writers.

Another WOMAN'S VOICE from behind Oscar chimes in --

WOMAN'S VOICE
He is London's greatest writer.

The Woman Patrons look behind Oscar and see --

Oscar's mother, LADY WILDE (73), dressed in a gaudy PINK GOWN, complete with a FEATHERED HAT. Decadence, personified.

WOMAN PATRON #2
Speranza! How proud you must be.

LADY WILDE
As proud as any mother can be.

Oscar kisses his mother's hand.

LADY WILDE (CONT'D)
Ladies, will you excuse us?

The two women CURTSEY, then walk away.

Lady Wilde walks with Oscar -- Robbie trailing behind them.

OSCAR
Anything to alter this evening,
mother?

LADY WILDE
That actress who plays Gertrude.

OSCAR
You didn't like her?

LADY WILDE
Positively dull. Reciting your poetry like an ill monkey.

OSCAR
I rather adored her.

LADY WILDE
You adore all actors. Which is dangerous. We writers must never fall in love with our actors.

As if Lady Wilde is just as popular as a writer as her son -- clearly, she's not.

OSCAR
Perhaps you could write something then?

LADY WILDE
Oh, Oscar. Don't play games. I 'm merely looking out for your art. You must understand that.

OSCAR
Of course. As you always do, mother.

LADY WILDE
I'll speak to the director.

Before he can tell her not to, she kisses him on the cheek.

LADY WILDE (CONT'D)
Good night, son.

INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT

Oscar, calm, collected -- rides with Robbie -- who gazes out of the carriage window, a tad anxious.

OSCAR
A true gentleman never looks out the window while riding, Robbie.

Robbie grins -- the grin that skirts the truth.

EXT. OSCAR WILDE HOME - NIGHT

As Oscar steps down from his carriage, a swarm of JOURNALISTS flock to him -- shouting out questions, one after another --

Oscar cuts his way through the small crowd with Robbie --

JOURNALIST #1
A word about losing the libel suit?

JOURNALIST #2
Have you had any contact with Lord Queensberry since the trial ended?

JOURNALIST #3
Do you love your wife?

Now at his front door, he turns to respond --

OSCAR
(to Journalist #1)
No.
(to Journalist #2)
No.
(to Journalist #3)
Yes.

Oscar smiles, proudly -- as if he enjoys the pestering.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

Doors SLAM shut as Oscar and Robbie enter.

ALFRED (40s), the butler, locks the doors behind them.

OSCAR
Put a fire on in the library, Alfred.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

A decadently furnished room -- filled with shelves and shelves of BOOKS.

A writer’s heaven.

On the wall above Oscar’s WRITING DESK, hangs a replica of

GUIDO RENI’S painting, “SAINT SEBASTIAN”

The piece depicts a muscular, almost naked 26-year-old Sebastian, pierced by two arrows, and tied to a tree post.

His arms raised above his head -- as well as his helpless gaze up to heaven -- accentuate his youthful-sex appeal.

Oscar pours two glasses of WHISKEY.

Hands one to Robbie, then takes a seat on a PLUSH COUCH.

He runs his hands over the silky smooth fabric.

OSCAR
Isn't this lovely? Imported from Paris. Finest silk available.

Robbie, unimpressed.

ROBBIE
I've spoken to Sir Edward Clarke.

OSCAR
And?

ROBBIE
He suggests you leave. At once.

OSCAR
I'm innocent. Why should I leave?

ROBBIE
Because. The law desires it.

OSCAR
The English have a miraculous power of turning wine into water.

Oscar stands -- goes to Reni's painting.

ROBBIE
Oscar.

OSCAR
Saint Sebastian was shot with arrows for proselytizing his faith. But this wasn't what killed him. Did you know that?

Robbie shakes his head.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
After surviving the arrows of persecution, he publicly criticized the pagan Roman emperor Diocletian's corrupt leadership. This act, this undermining of authority, cost him his life.

Oscar focuses in on Sebastian's wounds.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Wounds to the soul don't heal as easy as the flesh.

He drinks the remaining whiskey left in his glass.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I'm not fleeing from London's corrupt authority.

ROBBIE
This impending criminal trial--

OSCAR
Is unjust.

ROBBIE
But it's against you.

OSCAR
And already, you speak as though I've lost. Have you no faith in me?

ROBBIE
Don't twist my words.

OSCAR
Then stop presuming to know my fate.

Robbie is startled.

ROBBIE
I'm on your side, Oscar. I've known you for nearly ten years. Have I not been a loyal friend?

OSCAR
The best friend, Robbie.

ROBBIE
Then take heed. That's all I ask.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

Oscar sees Robbie off -- closes the front door behind him.

INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Oscar trudges up the stairs -- Cyril stands in the hallway, waiting for him.

OSCAR
Why are you still awake?

CYRIL
You're in trouble, aren't you?

Oscar walks up to him -- leans down to his eye level.

CYRIL (CONT'D)
I'm not a child. You can tell me.

OSCAR
I'm fine, Cyril. Just the price of fame in this society.

CYRIL
What do you mean?

OSCAR
People adore living another man's life. They see the lack of fame and ingenuity in their own and they wish theirs to be different. Without every acting differently.

CYRIL
But all those newspaper men --

OSCAR
Never mind them. And if any one of them come up to you, begging for a word, you have my permission to smack them swiftly in their gut.

Cyril smiles -- feeling reassured.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I am so proud of you, son.

Oscar kisses his son's forehead.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Now, off to bed.

EXT. QUEENSBERRY HOME - NIGHT

Queensberry sits in a lounge chair -- fast asleep.

A BANGING KNOCK AT THE DOOR!

Startles him awake -- he rushes over to the door, opens it.

It’s Bosie, his son.

The two exchange harsh looks.

LATER

Bosie, fuming -- paces beside the FIREPLACE.

Queensberry sits calmly in his lounge chair.

BOSIE
This is not about justice.

QUEENSBERRY
Of course it is. And I intend to do my public service.

BOSIE
This coming from a man who’s been divorced. Twice. Whose reputation is met with snickering every time he enters a room!

Queensberry springs up from his chair --

Gets in Bosie’s face.

QUEENSBERRY
Watch your tongue, boy.

BOSIE
Or what? What more can you do to him?

QUEENSBERRY
He’s tainted you. I won’t stand for it any longer.

Queensberry stands to leave the room.

BOSIE
I’ll stand as his witness.

This stops Queensberry.

BOSIE (CONT’D)
Against you.

QUEENSBERRY
Get out.

Bosie grabs his coat, hat, and EXITS.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The moonlight drifts through the window of Oscar and Constance's bedroom, revealing --

Oscar and Constance in bed.

Constance turns --

BLOWS OUT THE CANDLE on the night stand beside her.

Then situates herself under the covers. There's a good distance between them.

CONSTANCE
Do you find me attractive, Oscar?

OSCAR
What kind of silly question is that?

CONSTANCE
I must know.

She looks to him --

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
Do you?

Oscar strokes her cheek with the back of his hand.

OSCAR
You're the most radiant woman in all of London.

LATER

Constance is asleep -- Oscar, still awake.

Their backs turned to one another in bed, now.

Distance still between them.

Oscar looks to the nearby closet floor, sees a --

SMALL SUITCASE

He could run away right now.

He could leave whatever fate is or isn't to come.

His eyes wander around the walls of the bedroom --

Lit by the MOONLIGHT -- speckles of dust gently dance amidst the ray of light shooting into the room.

Light illuminates the intimate space of the small bedroom.

As his eyes travel into each corner -- he gets out of bed, then walks over to the window.

His face now bathed in prisms of moonlight.

OUTSIDE

He sees a DOCK WORKER (30s) near the English Channel, off in the distance.

Just below the night horizon.

The Dock Worker unties two large ROPES that are wrapped around two WOODEN BEAMS erected out of the water.

Oscar watches the scene, intensely.

The Dock Worker hops in the boat, picks up a WOODEN OAR, pushes himself and his boat away from the dock.

Then begins to row --

Further and further away from the shore.

Oscar could flee right now -- but he doesn't.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Galloping HORSES POUND against the pavement -- swiftly moving through the streets.

A BLACK CARRIAGE follows behind them.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Constance pours TEA for Oscar -- Lady Wilde sits with him.

INT. NURSERY - DAY

Cyril hears the sound of the horse and carriage --

He sits up in bed -- Vyvyan still asleep.

A POUNDING AT OSCAR'S FRONT DOOR.

Cyril runs to leave the nursery --

His FOOTSTEPS make the WOODEN FLOOR CREAK.

INT. STAIRWAY - DAY

Cyril dashes down the steps.

Frantic.

Blocking him at the bottom is Constance.

CYRIL
Who's here?

CONSTANCE
Go back upstairs.

CYRIL
No! What's happening?

CONSTANCE
Cyril!

He struggles, shoves, pushes to get by his mother --

As Constance holds him tight.

Alfred runs over to help her -- picks up Cyril --

CYRIL
No!

INT. FOYER - DAY

TWO POLICEMEN stand in the foyer, by the door. One of them begins to put handcuffs on Oscar.

LADY WILDE
Is that really necessary?

OSCAR
Just doing their job, mother.

Oscar acts as if this is a play -- and he's an actor.

Playing the part of a man being arrested.

A surreal moment.

A LOCKING and SNAPPING of the HANDCUFFS.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Much heavier than they look.

Lady Wilde -- cold but proud -- leans in to kiss her son.

INT. OSCAR WILDE HOME -- NURSERY - DAY

Alfred stands by the door -- as Cyril runs over to the window, stands beside his brother Vyvyan.

It's similar to the opening shot of Oscar, only this time Cyril and Vyvyan stand at the window -- gazing out at,

Oscar being forced into the rear of the POLICE CARRIAGE --

EXT. OSCAR WILDE HOME - DAY

As the POLICE CARRIAGE pulls away -- Oscar peers out the back window -- waves to Constance.

Who stands in front of the steps of her home, alone.

EXT. BOW STREET MAGISTRATES' COURT - DAY

Oscar steps out of the prison carriage --

POLICEMEN escort him inside.

INT. BOW STREET MAGISTRATES' COURT - DAY

Oscar stands before a HIGH DESK, behind it, sits --

The MAGISTRATE (60s), in a white powdered wig and a large black robe.

He reads the charges --

MAGISTRATE
Under section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde, is hereby arrested for charges of gross indecency. The trial date is set for three weeks from today. April 27, 1895. Bail is set at 5,000 pounds.

He bangs the gavel.

Oscar's lawyer, SIR EDWARD CLARKE (40s), in a full suit with a full beard, stands beside him -- whispers in his ear.

CLARKE
Don't worry. We'll make bail.

Oscar is taken away.

INT. HOLLOWAY PRISON - DAY

Oscar is put in a jail holding cell -- a small pile of PRISON CLOTHES, beside him.

A GUARD opens the door -- Oscar steps out.

INT. JAIL SHOWERS - DAY

NAKED PRISONERS shower next to Oscar -- they scoff at him.

He tries to ignore them.

Oscar turns on one SHOWER -- FREEZING WATER SPRAYS OUT.

Hurriedly, he begins to scrub himself with soap as,

He hears a LAUGH -- looks up, and sees,

THE HANDSOME ARISTOCRAT

Oscar knows this man.

It is --

ALFRED TAYLOR (31), sly-looking, yet handsome. He waves at Oscar.

OSCAR
Taylor?

INT. HOLLOWAY PRISON - NIGHT

Oscar in his cell. Still curious why Taylor is in prison.

A NIGHT GUARD walks by, doing his rounds.

Oscar jumps up -- goes to the bars,

OSCAR
Excuse me, sir?

NIGHT GUARD
Quiet.

OSCAR
There's a man here. Another prisoner, Alfred Taylor --

Night Guard HITS THE IRON BARS WITH A BILLY CLUB --

NIGHT GUARD
I said quiet!

INT. HOLLOWAY PRISON - DAY

Days later.

Oscar wakes up -- stubble pushes through his cheeks.

FOOTSTEPS approach Oscar's cell, revealing --

The HEAD PRISON GUARD (50s), who knocks a CROWBAR against the iron bars, startling Oscar.

HEAD PRISON GUARD
You made bail.

EXT. HOLLOWAY PRISON - DAY

Oscar steps outside -- Clarke follows him.

ROBBIE'S CARRIAGE, awaits.

He opens the carriage door for Oscar --

OSCAR
Who came up with the money?

CLARKE
Bosie.

EXT. LAW OFFICE - DAY

A sign out front reads:

"CLARK AND ASSOCIATES"

Through the window, Oscar and Robbie sit, side-by-side.

Clarke, behind his desk, filing through DOCUMENTS.

INT. LAW OFFICE - DAY

Clarke hands over a DOCUMENT for Oscar to sign.

CLARKE
I swore to the magistrate you wouldn't leave London until the trial began.

Oscar picks up a pen to sign it.

OSCAR
First they want me gone. Now they demand I stay.

CLARKE
We need to discuss your defense.

OSCAR
Not guilty.

CLARKE
I know Bosie helped collect money for your bail, but I must insist, he can take no part in this trial.

OSCAR
Nor do I want him to.

CLARKE
Perhaps I should make myself more clear.

Robbie lowers his head.

CLARKE (CONT'D)
You saw how he damaged you in the libel suit. He's irrational. He runs his mouth to the press. We can't have any of that this time around if we are to prove your innocence to a jury.

OSCAR
So what are you suggesting? Bosie leave London?

Of course that's what he wants.

CLARKE
Not suggesting. More imperative. Before any groveling journalist gets to him.

OSCAR
And you wish me to tell him?

ROBBIE
He will only listen to you, Oscar.

EXT. HAYMARKET ROYAL THEATRE - DAY

Oscar saunters by, and sees --

HIS NAME HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM THE THEATRE MARQUEE --

He also notices one more change:

“AN IDEAL HUSBAND” by Oscar Wilde is,

“CANCELLED”.

EXT. WEST END APARTMENT - DAY

Oscar languidly approaches an --

ORNATE, BEAUTIFUL FOUR-STORY BUILDING.

A bright light illuminates the entrance.

He steps inside.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

A door swings OPEN -- revealing OSCAR.

Bosie hugs him --

BOSIE
I’ve missed you, so!

OSCAR
I shall repay you the bail money.

BOSIE
And I will not accept.

Bosie’s infectious smile, glows.

BOSIE (CONT’D)
A gift is a gift.

OSCAR
I’ve missed your face.

BOSIE
Weeks move slowly when you can't see the one you love.

Bosie pours Oscar a glass of whiskey -- hands it over to him.

OSCAR
Bosie. We need to talk.

Oscar doesn't know how to transition --

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Sir Edward Clarke thinks it best for you not to be present for the trial.

BOSIE
But I've already told my father. I will take the stand. Against him.

OSCAR
You spoke to Lord Queensberry?

BOSIE
Of course. To request he not press charges against you.

OSCAR
I specifically asked you not to, Bosie.

BOSIE
Don't speak to me like some penniless valet. I just bailed you out of prison.

So much for a gift being a gift.

OSCAR
And I appreciate that gesture. But perhaps it's better if you leave London until the trial has ended.

BOSIE
If I take the stand my father will surely lose.

OSCAR
Any testimony implying an improper relationship with you will not be seen as --

BOSIE
I bail you out of jail and you want me gone?

OSCAR
It's not what I want, it's what's necessary.

BOSIE
Necessary? You. The great Oscar Wilde. Who lives for pleasure. Can't bear to see his precious public think ill of him.

OSCAR
I don't care about the public. I care about us.

BOSIE
Then why wouldn't you leave with me? Before your arrest last week? I asked you then and you denied me. Now you want me to go alone?

OSCAR
Please understand.

BOSIE
I understand.

Bosie can't even look at Oscar now.

OSCAR
I do love you, Bosie.

Oscar reaches out to touch his shoulder --

Bosie backs away from him.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I'll see you after the trial.

Still no response.

Oscar opens the door -- LEAVES.

Immediately, Bosie begins to whimper -- already regretful.

He grabs a SUITCASE -- begins to pack.

Throwing clothes in it -- haphazardly.

INT. NURSERY - DAY

The same scene with Oscar's sons -- they pack, quickly.

Racing against time.

INT. OSCAR WILDE HOME -- KITCHEN - DAY

Oscar ENTERS to find a packing commotion.

From the butler to the maid, everyone's taking items out of cupboards, and placing them in LARGE TRUNKS.

OSCAR
What's going on?

MAID
Don't you know, sir?

OSCAR
Of course not, that's why I'm bloody asking!

Constance ENTERS.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Constance. What's happening?

CONSTANCE
They're holding an auction. For the house.

OSCAR
Who is?

CONSTANCE
The city. Lord Queensberry's creditors are demanding payment and all our accounts have been emptied.

OSCAR
That's impossible.

CONSTANCE
I've already spoken with Mr. George.

OSCAR
Then I'll speak with him.

Constance grabs a NEWSPAPER --

CONSTANCE
This was posted in the Daily Telegraph, this morning.

THE AD READS:

Auction for the property of Oscar Wilde. 16 Tite Street, Chelsea, London. On Wed., April 24, 1895.

OSCAR
But that's tomorrow.

CONSTANCE
I know. Cyril, Vyvyan and I are moving into my brother's house.

INT. OSCAR WILDE HOME -- NURSERY - DAY

The door opens, revealing Cyril and Vyvyan packing.

VYVYAN
Father!

Vyvyan runs over -- jumps into Oscar's arms.

VYVYAN (CONT'D)
Are you coming with us?

OSCAR
Father won't be able to right now.

Cyril looks like he's been betrayed.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I promise, Cyril. After the trial. We'll get our life back.

VYVYAN
Why must you go on trial, father?

OSCAR
Because some bad men wish to destroy me.

VYVYAN
But why?

OSCAR
That doesn't matter.

CYRIL
Yes, it does!

Cyril, a mess.

CYRIL (CONT'D)
Boys at school are talking. Saying horrible things.

Oscar comes to Cyril, kneels down beside him --

OSCAR
They want to hurt us, to steal our happiness. But they can't if we refuse to give it up.

Oscar hugs both his sons -- together, at once.

EXT. BANK OF ENGLAND - DAY

A bustling scene.

PEDESTRIANS, CARRIAGES going in all sorts of directions.

Well before traffic lanes. You can't tell which direction carriages, horses or people are going.

At the corner of the square is the BANK OF ENGLAND. TWO TALL PILLARS sit, side-by-side, next to the ENTRANCE.

INT. BANK OF ENGLAND - DAY

High ceilings.

Echoes of polite voices.

And everyone dressed to the nines -- apropos of London.

Oscar ENTERS --

Immediately, the mood changes.

BANK PATRONS and EMPLOYEES behind counters look at him as if he's already been convicted.

They've all read the papers, no doubt.

Oscar heads over to MR. GEORGE (40s), who sits behind a square-wooden desk.

MR. GEORGE
Mr. Wilde!

OSCAR
What's the meaning of this, George?

Oscar shoves the NEWSPAPER AD in his face --

MR. GEORGE
Please lower your voice, Mr. Wilde.

OSCAR
I will not!

Oscar takes a seat.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
My house is being auctioned?

MR. GEORGE
Your creditors have all backed down. Your funds have been depleted.

OSCAR
How is that possible?

MR. GEORGE
I warned you months ago. Not to trust the personal credit lines of local businesses.

Oscar remembers.

MR. GEORGE (CONT'D)
Hotels. Restaurants. You and your friends--

He says 'friends' as if they shouldn't be called friends.

MR. GEORGE (CONT'D)
Have been reckless.

OSCAR
What about proceeds? From the play?

MR. GEORGE
You forfeited your proceeds with them the day you were arrested.

OSCAR
There must be something I can do.

MR. GEORGE
Are you listening to me, Mr. Wilde? Your name carries no monetary leverage anymore.

Mr. George, quieting to a whisper -- leans in to him.

MR. GEORGE (CONT'D)
You're bankrupt.

EXT. MEN'S TAILOR SHOP - NIGHT

The sun has just hidden itself behind London's town square.

Oscar stands outside a tailor shop, gazing at his reflection in the window.

Through the window on display, is the same PURPLE PIN-STRIPED SUIT he was wearing in the opening.

He looks down at the dark suit he's in now -- vastly different from the suit he sees in his reflection.

EXT. OSCAR WILDE HOME - NIGHT

Completely dark now. STARS light up the night sky.

INT. OSCAR WILDE HOME - NIGHT

In the foyer -- Oscar stands alone.

Constance and his sons are gone.

As are the butler and maid, and the rest of the servants.

There's a few things left behind.

Oscar surveys the room -- goes into the STUDY.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

A large OIL PAINTING OF OSCAR WILDE hangs above the fireplace. He looks like royalty in it.

His eyes circle the painting -- taking in its scope.

He goes to his WRITING TABLE -- takes a seat.

Runs his hands along the desk --

There's INK, PENS, and BLANK PAGES -- as if inviting him to write more.

He goes over to a CUPBOARD nearby, pulls out a HIDDEN STASH OF LETTERS.

He goes through the pile of letters,

One after another, until he reaches an --

OLD FAMILY PHOTOGRAPH -- in black and white.

We see parents and three children -- recognize Oscar as the middle child, only seven years old here.

The resemblance is uncanny.

Also in the photo is Oscar's older brother Willie, and younger sister, Isola -- two people we have yet to meet.

Nostalgically, he gazes at the photo -- then,

Stuffs the photo in his suit jacket pocket -- as well as the hidden stash of letters.

Goes upstairs.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Oscar packs a few clothes -- puts them in a small suitcase.

EXT. OSCAR WILDE HOME - NIGHT

From outside, THROUGH A BLURRY WINDOW -- we see Oscar surveying the bedroom.

Similar to the first time we saw him, in the opening scene, only now this isn't home anymore.

Then, the bedroom lights go out.

EXT. LONDON -- WEST END - NIGHT

The NIGHT FERRY is about to leave the dock.

Bosie is at the ticket booth, buying a ticket.

He boards the ferry.

Waves part as the vessel makes its way through the water.

EXT. MIDLAND HOTEL - NIGHT

We see through the second floor window of the Midland Hotel, Oscar sitting on the bed, and Robbie standing nearby.

INT. BEDROOM -- MIDLAND HOTEL - NIGHT

Robbie grabs his COAT, puts it on, ready to leave.

ROBBIE
I've paid for the room for the next week. You can stay here during the trial. Hopefully the press won't bother you too much.

Oscar, silent.

Deep in thought.

OSCAR
Do you ever think God in creating man, may have overestimated his ability?

Robbie smiles.

ROBBIE
All the time.

Robbie kisses Oscar on the cheek --

There's a connection here -- a history between them.

Robbie EXITS.

Oscar looks around the room -- alone again.

INT. HOTEL DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Later that evening -- a DINING ROOM HOST (30s), who is dressed in a tuxedo, stands behind a small wooden podium.

Oscar approaches --

OSCAR
Still serving dinner?

DINING ROOM HOST
Of course, sir.

He looks at Oscar funny, recognizes him.

He escorts Oscar to a table -- seats him.

PIANO MUSIC is heard softly in the background, as we see --

The Dining Room Host whispers to the --

HOTEL MANAGER (50s), who sees Oscar, and makes his way inconspicuously to Oscar's table.

HOTEL MANAGER
You are Oscar Wilde, I believe?

OSCAR
I am.

HOTEL MANAGER
I do apologize sir, but you must leave this hotel at once.

OSCAR
But I'm a guest. Room--

He reaches for his pocket --

HOTEL MANAGER
Let's not cause a stir, Mr. Wilde.

OSCAR
May I inquire as to why?

The Hotel Manager doesn't respond -- only looks around, to see if others are watching.

Oscar picks up his GLASS OF WINE -- stands to leave.

HOTEL MANAGER
What are you doing?

OSCAR
I have yet to finish my wine.

The Hotel Manager grabs the glass from him -- it SPILLS. Oscar picks up his NAPKIN, wipes his hands, and LEAVES.

Every leering eye in the room turns to him.

EXT. MIDLAND HOTEL - NIGHT

Oscar walks, suitcase in hand, to HOTEL CLEMENT -- this one, a little less upscale. He hasn't stayed here before.

INT. HOTEL CLEMENT -- LOBBY - NIGHT

A DOORMAN lets Oscar in.

Oscar walks up to the front desk. Drops his suitcase.

A HOTEL CLERK (20s) writes in a reservation book.

OSCAR
Any available rooms, this evening?

The Hotel Clerk still writing, hasn't seen who it is yet.

HOTEL CLERK
Yes, sir.

Then he looks up, surprised -- not in a good way.

OSCAR
Since it's nearly midnight, I insist to pay only a partial night rate.

HOTEL CLERK
Mr. Wilde! I--

OSCAR
You know my work? Was beginning to think all of London had forgotten me.

HOTEL CLERK
Sir, we cannot house you here.

OSCAR
That's preposterous, why not?

HOTEL CLERK
On account of Lord Queensberry. His men came in, and threatened to ransack the hotel if you stayed here.

Queensberry has gone to every hotel in London.

HOTEL CLERK (CONT'D)
I am deeply sorry.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

THUNDER and RAIN now fall, as Oscar walks alone on the streets, suitcase in hand --

Nowhere to go.

EXT. WILLIE'S FLAT - NIGHT

Oscar knocks at the door -- a lone street lamp illuminating his shadow across the sidewalk.

The door opens --

OSCAR
Hello, Willie.

WILLIE WILDE (43), thin beard, burly, and shorter than Oscar, is stunned to see his younger brother.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Give me shelter, brother.

Oscar is dripping wet.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Please.

INT. SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

A much different scene from Oscar's home.

The home is meek-looking -- the sitting room is the living room is the dining room, sort of thing.

Willie's wife, LILY WILDE (40), in a night robe, kisses her husband, then leaves the two brothers alone.

Oscar and Willie both warm their hands by the fire.

The fire CRACKLES.

OSCAR
How have you been, Willie?

WILLIE
We manage.

Code for poor.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Mom said you traveled to America.
What was it like?

OSCAR
Impulsive people with blind passion.
(beat)
I quite loved it.

Willie snickers.

Another long beat.

WILLIE
Will you still write after all this criticism?

Oscar thinks for a moment.

OSCAR
With my writing, I learned to ignore criticism. Any artist must, if they truly want to express the soul. If one constantly stops to take in all criticisms, one is stifled. The critic of my work only concerns himself with what makes sense in the mind. Because of this, they cannot see the soul -- where all art lives, and thrives.

Willie, clearly not tracking.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Am I boring you?

WILLIE
Not at all.

OSCAR
You always were a terrible liar, Willie.

Willie grins -- Oscar's right.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Why has it been nearly two years since we've seen each other?

WILLIE
Your life is extraordinary. Ours is not.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A low-ceiling room.

Oscar bends his neck as to not hit his head -- he walks over to his bed, plops down.

He pulls out a pen and letter.

Begins writing --

OSCAR (V.O.)
My dear Bosie. I felt we parted on undesirable terms, so I wanted to make clear my feelings for you. There are such wide abysses of space and land between us now. And as Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote, “When you gaze long into an abyss the abyss also gazes into you.”

EXT. PARIS CAFE - DAY

The sun shines down on Bosie, who reads Oscar’s letter at a small table outside a cafe.

OSCAR (V.O.)
But our love is not like this. I pray we both cling to this knowledge. That we love each other, deeply. I feel that it is only with you that I can do anything at all. But until the current storm passes, I pray you understand my wishes. Good night, dear Bosie. Ever yours, Oscar.

EXT. OSCAR WILDE HOME - DAY

SUPER: “Wednesday, April 24, 1895 -- Three days before the trial.”

The auction is about to begin -- a mad scene.

Like modern day Paparazzi, CROWDS gather outside the home as POLICEMEN try to keep them under control.

Lots of angry SHOUTING and SHOVING.

MR. BULLOCK (50s), the auctioneer, flips through an inventory list. On the document, we see many items --

A MANUSCRIPT OF POEMS

AN AUTOGRAPHED COPY OF *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*

THE OSCAR WILDE LIFE PORTRAIT OIL PAINTING

Mr. Bullock signals to a Policeman -- who BLOWS HIS WHISTLE.

MR. BULLOCK
(reading)
By order of the sheriff of the city of London, it is hereby my duty, to auction all the articles in this house, 16 Tite Street, Chelsea.

A loud BURST OF CHATTER and CHEER from the crowd as,

Robbie arrives -- horrified.

MR. BULLOCK (CONT'D)
First. An oil painting. Of Oscar Wilde. Do I hear seven pounds?

One MALE BIDDER (30s) raises his hand -- while an ANGRY WOMAN hollers, interrupting.

ANGRY WOMAN
No one wants a painting of a sodomite!

MALE BIDDER
They do in Paris!

Half the crowd LAUGHS.

MR. BULLOCK
Do I hear eight pounds?

Robbie fights his way into Oscar's home.

INT. OSCAR WILDE HOME - DAY

The scene inside is even worse.

PEOPLE rummaging through desks, drawers, everything.

An OLD MAN fights over some OLD PHOTOGRAPHS and LETTERS with another OLD WOMAN.

A POLICEMAN tries to break them apart.

ROBBIE
You can't buy those!

OLD MAN
Everything's for sale!

ROBBIE
(to Policeman)
The sale of private letters is unlawful. You must stop this!

POLICEMAN
Take it up with Bullock.

RESUME OUTSIDE AUCTION

Mr. Bullock BANGS his auction gavel --

MR. BULLOCK
Sold! Eleven pounds.

The painting of Oscar -- taken away.

MR. BULLOCK (CONT'D)
Next up. A signed copy of The Picture of Dorian Gray. Do I hear two pounds?

No one bids.

MR. BULLOCK (CONT'D)
One pound?

Nothing, still.

MR. BULLOCK (CONT'D)
Ten shillings.

His autograph, his book, his name -- worth nothing now.

EXT. OLD BAILEY COURTHOUSE - DAY

SUPER: "Saturday, April 27, 1895 - The Trial - Day One"

A MOB OF JOURNALISTS and CROWDS OF PEOPLE, desperately try to get in -- everyone wants a seat to the trial of the century.

A CARRIAGE pulls up -- police try to barricade people from storming it.

Out comes Clarke, then Oscar --

Volume meter goes through the roof.

EVERYONE SCREAMING OBSCENITIES, POINTING, SHOUTING, EVEN HITTING AT OSCAR.

Oscar covers his head --

He rushes up the steps of Old Bailey Courthouse.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A sea of WHITE-POWDERED WIGS and BLACK ROBES line the back wall.

In front of them, a WITNESS BOX -- slightly raised, and almost in the center of the room.

JUSTICE “JUDGE” CHARLES (60), who doesn’t look happy to be there, presides.

Among the spectators seated in the balcony of the courtroom are Lady Wilde and Robbie.

On the main floor -- Clarke sits with Oscar on the left.

PROSECUTOR CHARLES GILL (45), clean-shaven and eyes that scowl, begins his opening statement -- on the right.

Queensberry sits at Gill’s desk.

GILL
My lord. Gentlemen of the jury. I must beg you to dismiss from your minds anything you may have heard or read about the defendant, and to abandon all prejudice towards either side.

Oscar leans in to Clarke --

WILDE
Forget a scandal? In London?

GILL
And to approach this case with absolutely open minds, carefully and impartially. On the counts under section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885, it is the prosecution’s intention to show that these acts of gross indecency--

Interrupting --

JUDGE
Proceed, Mr. Gill. The court is well aware of the charges.

GILL
As your lordship pleases. Gentlemen, I assure you that the evidence I shall call will justify you in finding Mr. Wilde, as well as other prisoners brought to testify, guilty on all accounts.

LATER ON

CHARLES PARKER (21), handsome and afraid, in the witness box.

He looks like Bosie -- only slightly more effeminate.

GILL (CONT'D)
State your name.

PARKER
Charles Parker.

GILL
And how did you come to know the defendant?

PARKER
As a valet. Two years ago I was out of employment and went with my brother one evening to St. James's Restaurant.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. ST. JAMES'S RESTAURANT -- BAR - NIGHT

Parker sits at a bar with his brother WILLIAM PARKER (23), scruffy and not as attractive.

Alfred Taylor -- the Handsome Aristocrat from the beginning,

Walks over to Charles and William.

PARKER (V.O.)
Mr. Taylor came up and spoke to us. He passed the compliments of the day, and asked us to have a drink.

Drinks are poured for the Parker brothers --

PARKER (V.O.)
We got into a conversation with him. He spoke about men.

The Parker brothers face turn -- as if not understanding.

GILL (V.O.)
In what way?

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Parker, terrified now, resumes speaking.

PARKER
He called attention to the prostitutes who frequent Piccadilly Circus.

GILL
At that time, did you understand what Mr. Taylor was suggesting?

PARKER
I understood what he alluded to.

GILL
And what was your reply?

PARKER
I said that if any old gentleman with money took a fancy to me, I was agreeable.

GASPS from the crowd.

GILL
Did Mr. Taylor mention the defendant, Mr. Wilde, at that time?

PARKER
He did.

GILL
And when did you first meet him?

PARKER
The next day at a restaurant in Rupert Street. Solferino's.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. STAIRWAY -- SOLFERINO'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Parker and his brother make their way up the stairs -- following Taylor.

A door swings open --

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

A nicely decorated dinner table for four is set. No one is seated though.

PARKER (V.O.)
We waited for Mr. Wilde there.

Oscar steps into the room -- shakes hands with the brothers, and with Taylor.

PARKER (V.O.)
I remember the table was lit with red-shaded candles.

The candles reflect a devilish light across Wilde's face.

Wilde pours CHAMPAGNE for all three men.

Parker sits beside Oscar.

PARKER (V.O.)
We drank champagne and brandy and coffee afterwards.

Under the dinner table -- Parker makes the first move.

His hand drifts over to Oscar -- caresses his thigh.

GILL (V.O.)
All of you partook?

PARKER (V.O.)
Yes.

Parker smiles at him -- perfectly fine with this sort of behavior.

GILL (V.O.)
And who paid for the meal?

PARKER (V.O.)
Mr. Wilde.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Oscar makes eye contact with Parker -- shakes his head.

That's not how it went.

GILL
Of what nature was the conversation?

PARKER
General, at first. But later, Wilde said of me, “This is the boy for me.”

Lady Wilde stares at Parker -- unflinching.

PARKER (CONT’D)
Then he asked if I would go to the Savoy Hotel with him. And I consented. So Mr. Wilde drove me to the hotel.

GILL
Alone?

PARKER
Except for the jarvy.

Slang for drivers.

PARKER (CONT’D)
My brother and Mr. Taylor stayed behind.

GILL
Did Mr. Wilde offer you more to drink there?

Clarke rises --

CLARKE
Objection, my lord! This witness has been coached!

GILL
That’s absurd!

Judge addresses Gill.

JUDGE
Have you guided this witness in his testimony, whatsoever Mr. Gill?

GILL
I have not, my lord.

JUDGE
Overruled, Mr. Clarke.
(Clarke sits)
Proceed.

Gill steps in closer to Parker --

GILL
Did he offer you more to drink?

PARKER
Yes. We had liquor. Then Wilde asked me to go into his bedroom with him.

Lady Wilde drops her head -- pretends not to hear.

GILL
I know how difficult it is for you, Mr. Parker. But will you let the jury know what occurred there?

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. BEDROOM -- SAVOY HOTEL - NIGHT

In the flashback, we see the opposite of Parker's testimony.

Oscar sits in a chair beside the bed -- drunk.

Parker starts to undress -- removes his shirt.

PARKER (V.O.)
I was drunk. Sitting in the chair. And Mr. Wilde approached me.

Parker walks over to Oscar -- parts his knees, stands between them.

He leans down -- KISSES Oscar's neck.

PARKER (V.O.)
He tried to kiss me. I refused.

Parker continues to kiss Oscar's neck, lips -- clearly leading him on -- then pulls Oscar up, shuffles him over to the bed.

Oscar falls face down on the bed --

PARKER (V.O.)
He then took me to bed. And committed the act of sodomy upon me.

Parker unbuttons his pants -- pulls them down.

His naked buttocks, exposed --

As Parker climbs on top of Oscar.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Parker is sweating now -- the entire courtroom is in shock.

GILL
With your consent?

PARKER
I couldn't stop him.

Oscar looks to his mother above -- who still can't bear to lift her head.

GILL
And did Mr. Wilde offer you compensation? After you left him?

PARKER
He did. Five pounds.

IN THE BALCONY OF THE COURTROOM

Robbie turns to Lady Wilde, whispers --

ROBBIE
He's been offered compensation to say this, Lady Wilde. There's no truth in it, I assure you.

LADY WILDE
Doesn't matter if it's true or not. Look at the jurymen.

They look disgusted, sickened.

BACK ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE COURTROOM

GILL
Apart from the money, did Mr. Wilde ever give you any presents?

PARKER
Yes. He gave me a cigarette case and a gold ring. I don't suppose boys are different to girls in acquiring presents from those who are fond of them.

GILL
And you pawned the cigarette case and the ring?

PARKER
Yes.

GILL
When did you cease your occupation with Mr. Taylor?

PARKER
In August of last year. I went away into the country.

GILL
Until you were acquainted with Mr. Taylor, had you ever been mixed up with men in the commission of indecent acts?

PARKER
No. Never.

GILL
Your witness, Mr. Clarke.

Gill takes a seat.

Clarke stands -- goes over to the witness box.

CLARKE
Mr. Parker, you say positively that Mr. Wilde committed sodomy with you at the Savoy hotel?

PARKER
Yes.

CLARKE
But you have been in the habit of accusing other gentlemen of the same offense.

PARKER
Never. Unless it has been done.

CLARKE
I spoke with your employer, when you were a valet. He stated that you had stolen some clothes from him. Is that true?

PARKER
They were not clothes. They were shirts and collars.

CLARKE
I call them clothes.

PARKER
I sent them back immediately once he asked me to.

CLARKE
A man of great character.

Stifled CHUCKLES echo throughout the room.

CLARKE (CONT'D)
Tell me, Mr. Parker. Was the door locked during the time you describe?

PARKER
Excuse me?

CLARKE
On the first visit to the Savoy Hotel. With Mr. Wilde.

Parker, hesitating --

PARKER
I believe Mr. Wilde locked the bedroom door, yes. But I'm not sure if he locked the adjacent door to the sitting room.

CLARKE
And there was no concealment about your visit there? You did not attempt to avoid any of the servants?

PARKER
No.

CLARKE
And what about at St. James's Place?

Clarke, pauses.

CLARKE (CONT'D)
Weren't Mr. Wilde's rooms on the ground floor there?

PARKER
Yes.

CLARKE
And there were hotel servants running about? Calling on you should you need anything?

PARKER
Yes, of course.

CLARKE
Do you suggest that in rooms on the ground floor, sometimes not locked, with servants and staff all around, and windows to the outside easily visible -- it is here that this kind of illegal conduct went on? Again and again?

PARKER
Yes.

Clarke picks up a STATEMENT -- reads it.

CLARKE
You told the police there were sometimes multiple men, too? That Mr. Wilde called upon?

PARKER
Yes. Many of them are witnesses in this case.

CLARKE
How fascinating. What kind of man would want to make no concealment about his visit to a man who he claims is paying him? To commit the most vile act against man?

Parker doesn't answer.

CLARKE (CONT'D)
Nothing more, my lord.

INT. COURTROOM HALLWAY - DAY

Clarke and Oscar walk together -- heading for a back door exit, to avoid the crowd on the steps.

CLARKE
There's too much corroboration with Mr. Taylor, already. And there will be more witnesses like Parker this afternoon, I'm afraid.

OSCAR
What if I were to pay a visit to Taylor in prison?

Clarke understands what he wants to do --

CLARKE
As your lawyer, I cannot advise such a thing.

OSCAR
Who said you were advising me? I brought it up myself.

INT. BOW STREET PRISON - DAY

A JAIL DOOR SLAMS SHUT -- Taylor, who is SHACKLED IN CHAINS, takes his seat -- opposite Oscar.

OSCAR
Look quite different than the last time I saw you.

In the shower, naked?

Yeah -- clothes makes a difference.

TAYLOR
What do you want, Oscar?

OSCAR
These male escorts of yours are making you look like some social pervert.

TAYLOR
So I've heard.

OSCAR
I understand the prosecution is calling you in to testify.

TAYLOR
They are.

OSCAR
Do you intend to discuss our arrangements?

TAYLOR
Is that what you call them? Arrangements?

A long beat.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
Funny. Secrets are perfectly acceptable most of the time. But as soon as one gets out -- we are appalled. As if we're not guilty of keeping them, too.

OSCAR
A jury does not look kindly on gentlemen such as us.

TAYLOR
Gentlemen. Is that what we are?

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Everyone FLOODS back in -- GAVEL BANGING, commences.

Oscar takes his seat.

Across the courtroom -- Queensberry is speaking with Parker. Then, Parker leaves the court --

LATER

EDWARD SHELLEY (21), tall, slim and pale skin, sits in the witness box.

Gill stands by.

GILL
Mr. Shelley, you were formerly employed as a clerk in the offices of M.E.M. and John Lane publishers.

SHELLEY
Yes. Mr. Wilde was in business with our firm. We were in the process of publishing his play, *Salome*.

GILL
Did your relationship extend beyond this business?

SHELLEY
Mr. Wilde invited me to dine with him at the Albemarle Hotel.

GILL
And what happened there?

SHELLEY
We had dinner in a public room. Mr. Wilde was very kind and attentive, and then he pressed me to drink. Champagne with dinner, and after, whiskey and soda and cigarettes, in Mr. Wilde's sitting room. Then he asked me something strange.

GILL
What was it he asked you?

SHELLEY
He asked me to come into his bedroom.
(beat)
I did not know what he meant. I had a lot of wine by then.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. ALBEMARLE HOTEL -- SITTING ROOM - DAY

Sitting room.

Shelley sees a STACK OF POUNDS on the end table. He counts the money to himself, pockets it.

Then turns to see Oscar -- who looks longingly up at him.

GILL (V.O.)
What happened next?

Shelley eyes Oscar -- disgusted by him.

SHELLEY (V.O.)
He put his arms around me, and kissed me.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Shelley eyes Oscar -- the same face of disgust as in the flashback.

SHELLEY
I felt degraded, insulted, and objected. Then Mr. Wilde apologized, said he was drunk.

GILL
Did you end your relationship with Mr. Wilde after that night?

SHELLEY
A few days later, yes. I wrote Mr. Wilde a letter which said I could not have anything more to do with a man of his morality.

GILL
Thank you, Mr. Shelley.

Clarke rises -- approaches the witness box.

CLARKE
About two years ago, in 1893, did you write a letter to Mr. Wilde?

SHELLEY
I do not recall.

Clarke walks back to his table --

Oscar hands a LETTER to Clarke -- from his private stash -- the ones he grabbed the day before the auction.

CLARKE
Allow me to refresh your memory. And read from one such letter you wrote to Mr. Wilde.
(reading)
“Dear Oscar, I can never forget your kindness and am conscious that I can never sufficiently express my thankfulness to you.”

Clarke stops reading.

CLARKE (CONT’D)
Did you write this letter after the alleged incident you claim to have with Mr. Wilde at the Albemarle Hotel?

SHELLEY
Yes.

CLARKE
If your testimony is true, then what is it you were thankful for?

SHELLEY
Mr. Wilde had sent me a gift. A signed copy of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

CLARKE
May we see this?

SHELLEY
Why of course, but--

CLARKE
But what, Mr. Shelley?

SHELLEY
I tore out the pages that carried the inscriptions.

CLARKE
Why would you do such a thing if you were so thankful for this gift?

SHELLEY
Because like Lord Queensberry, my father objected to my friendship with Mr. Wilde.

CLARKE
You testified that you broke off your acquaintance with Mr. Wilde?

SHELLEY
I did--

CLARKE
Then you continue writing letters of gratitude to him?

Shelley is silent.

There's more -- and he knows it.

CLARKE (CONT'D)
Mr. Shelley. Two years after you say you broke off your acquaintance with Mr. Wilde. In January, 1895. You assaulted your father and were locked up. Isn't that right?

SHELLEY
Yes.

CLARKE
And who did you send for? To bail you out of jail?

No answer.

CLARKE (CONT'D)
A brother? A sister? A close friend, perhaps?

Everyone knows the answer.

CLARKE (CONT'D)
Mr. Wilde bailed you out, did he not?

SHELLEY
Yes. But I was not in my right mind that day.

CLARKE
Perhaps you are also not in your right mind today.

EXT. OLD BAILEY COURTHOUSE - DAY

Just before dusk, and the PRESS is going wild.

Oscar comes out with Mr. Clarke, and the journalists press him for a word --

OSCAR
It's clear Lord Queensberry has corrupted these witnesses.

JOURNALIST #1
Do you believe he paid them? For their testimonies?

OSCAR
I don't believe it, I know it.

INT. CARRIAGE - DAY

Oscar and Clarke ride together.

They're in the middle of a heated discussion.

OSCAR
We've got to bring this to the court's attention.

CLARKE
Absolutely not.

OSCAR
Queensberry's prosecution is all money and intimidation.

CLARKE
This is not about you and Queensberry, Oscar.

OSCAR
Of course it is! He's funding the prosecution's case.

CLARKE
You mustn't speak to the press, again. It comes off as bitterness toward Queensberry regarding you losing the libel trial.

OSCAR
I am bitter. He's gotten me into this mess. Blackmailing old friends in hopes of tarnishing my name in court.

CLARKE
Queensberry is not the defendant this time around, you are.

Oscar, livid.

CLARKE (CONT'D)
We cannot simply point fingers. We've got to undermine every potential witness waiting to testify against you. You've got to focus, Oscar.

OSCAR
I am focused.

CLARKE
Frederick Atkins is on the witness list, tomorrow. Do you have any letters from him?

OSCAR
No.

CLARKE
Something else then? People to corroborate his employment or lack thereof?

Oscar thinks for a moment.

OSCAR
Send for Robbie. Tell him to pay a visit to the Tachbrook Street Boarding House. He knows what went on there.

INT. TACHBROOK ST. BOARDING HOUSE - NIGHT

A TALL, BROWN, THREE-STORY BUILDING. Robbie BANGS on the front door --

It swings OPEN, revealing,

MRS. MILLS (50s), weathered face and a hunch in her back.

ROBBIE
I'm looking for the landlady of the house, Mrs. Mills.

MRS. MILLS
Yes. What do you want?

INT. LAW OFFICE - NIGHT

A CANDLE burns on the desk.

There, Clarke, Robbie and Oscar surround the frail Mrs. Mills, giving her deposition to them, albeit reluctantly.

OSCAR
Please, Mrs. Mills. We need you to tell us exactly what you saw.

MRS. MILLS
I can't speak of such things in public. I'm a Christian woman.

OSCAR
Neither can you let one man's sin go unpunished, so it ruins another man's life.

ROBBIE
Just tell them what you told me.

OSCAR
We don't want to put you on the stand. We just need your testimony.

Mrs. Mills, a worried mess.

CLARKE
If you don't cooperate, we'll be forced to send for the police.

MRS. MILLS
You wouldn't?

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

SUPER: "Sunday, April 28, 1895 - Day Two"

We're in the middle of Clarke's cross-examination.

The witness is,

FREDERICK ATKINS (24), cute, clean-shaven.

There's a shameless sort of sexiness to his arrogance.

CLARKE
When did you first meet Mr. Wilde?

ATKINS
A few years ago.

CLARKE
Can you be more specific?

ATKINS
Certainly. Two years ago.

CLARKE
So on the night of June 10th, 1891, you had not met Mr. Wilde?

ATKINS
If that's more than two years ago, then no.

Snobby prick.

CLARKE
Do you recall being taken to the police that evening?

ATKINS
I do.

CLARKE
And what were you charged with?

ATKINS
Hitting a gentleman.

CLARKE
In what place was it alleged you had hit him?

ATKINS
At a card table.

CLARKE
In your room at Tachbrook?

ATKINS
Yes.

CLARKE
James Burton was living there with you, wasn't he?

ATKINS
He was.

CLARKE
Was he there to witness you hitting this gentleman?

ATKINS
Of course. We always played cards. One way to come up with rent money.

Atkins lifts his eyes -- shrewd-like.

CLARKE
Who is Mrs. Mills, Mr. Atkins?

ATKINS
The landlady. At the Boarding House.

CLARKE
And is it true that on the night before you were arrested, Mrs. Mills came into your room?

ATKINS
I don't remember that she did.

CLARKE
We have a sworn statement from Mrs. Mills that she walked in on you and Mr. Burton, this gentleman you ended up striking the next evening, naked in bed together.

Court goes crazy -- the Judge BANGS HIS GAVEL.

JUDGE
Order! Order in the court, I say!

ATKINS
That's not true.

CLARKE
And what motive does a landlady have to make up something so appalling, Mr. Atkins?

ATKINS
I--

CLARKE
Mr. Atkins. You swore under oath with Mr. Gills not twenty minutes ago, that you had never slept with any other man before. You claimed Mr. Wilde introduced you to this sordid life.

ATKINS
He did.

JUDGE
Leave the witness box at once, Mr. Atkins!

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Robbie and Oscar sit in the back of a nearly EMPTY PUB.

They toast a PINT OF BEER together -- DRINK UP.

OSCAR
This place is ghastly, Robbie.

ROBBIE
No journalist will find you here.

OSCAR
This is quite good. Reminds me of Ireland.

ROBBIE
Any desire to go back?

OSCAR
Cyril and Vyvyan have never been. It'd be nice to show them where their father grew up.

ROBBIE
Have you spoken to them?

Oscar shakes his head -- takes another swig of beer.

OSCAR
Constance forbids me to.

ROBBIE
Understandable.

OSCAR
Keeping a father's sons away from him is -- understandable?

ROBBIE
You were never that forthcoming with her. About your friendships outside the home.

OSCAR
And should I be?

ROBBIE
I'm not suggesting you should. I'm just suggesting--

OSCAR
It's the end of a century, and no one sees the necessity of secrets. They think they only exist to betray others, but that's absolutely not true.

ROBBIE
Do you honestly believe that?

OSCAR
Indeed! Sometimes it's better not to speak the whole truth.

ROBBIE
The truth relieves a man, sets him free.

OSCAR
Yet when one is in love, one always begins by deceiving one's self. On the first day of meeting Constance, I did not confess the wicked sins of my past to her.

ROBBIE
Nor should you.

OSCAR
Precisely. But rather, I deceived her, as she did me. We all do this. That's what romance is in its early stages. I don't think it evil. Quite the contrary. I see it as natural. Necessary, even.

ROBBIE
That's not how I felt years ago when I met you.

Robbie, slightly frustrated.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
Love doesn't always begin with deceit, Oscar.

INT. WILLIE'S FLAT - NIGHT

A door CREAKS open, as Oscar ENTERS -- a little tipsy.

Willie sees him -- rushes over to help him stand -- then trudges with him up the stairs.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A LANTERN burns bright beside Oscar's bed.

An ENVELOPE sits on top of his night stand.

Willie helps Oscar get undressed, as --

Lily enters with an EXTRA BLANKET.

LILY
It'll be cold this evening.

OSCAR
Thank you, Lily.

Lily EXITS.

Oscar sits on the bed -- stares at the BURNING FLAME.

WILLIE
Still fascinated with fire?

OSCAR
What?

WILLIE
In the nursery. When we were young. Taking a bath. Don't you remember? The nurse brought a lantern in. When she left the lantern set fire to your trousers.

OSCAR
Ah, yes. The flames were so big.

WILLIE
You were over-joyed.

OSCAR
And you went off screaming for mother and father.

WILLIE
All the while, you kept laughing. I never understood that.

OSCAR
Something unexpected had happened. It was exciting.

WILLIE
And it could've killed us.

Reminiscing the memory.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
You always did love a spectacle.

Willie's memory turns from nostalgic to one of concern -- an elder brother, again.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Do you see this as some sort of spectacle, too?

Oscar doesn't answer -- after his talk with Robbie, he's uncertain.

LATER ON

Oscar tosses and turns in bed -- still wondering about his brother's question.

And then, he sees the ENVELOPE -- from Paris.

He opens it, begins to read the letter.

BOSIE (V.O.)
My dear Oscar. By now the trial has begun. And no doubt you are under tremendous stress. But I do think of you. Every minute of every day. This world is without charm, without romance, when I'm far from you. I wish you would come to me. To Paris.

INT. BEDROOM -- PARIS - NIGHT

Bosie WRITES --

At a small OAK desk.

BOSIE (V.O.)
Forget about the corrupt law of London and let us be together. Like you said we would be before. Forever surely must begin when one gives in to love, fully. Yours truly, Bosie.

Bosie looks outside his window --

A calming, beautiful night view of,

THE SEINE RIVER

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

SUPER: "Monday, April 29, 1895 - Day Three"

Oscar's eyes shift to spot Taylor, who sits off to the side -- behind Queensberry.

He stands, makes his way to the witness box.

GILL
Mr. Taylor. What is your current occupation?

TAYLOR
I have no occupation. I'm in prison.

GILL
And what was your occupation before you were arrested?

TAYLOR
I am the son of a cocoa manufacturer, whose business is now being carried on as a limited liability company. My father died some time ago and he left me a fortune, along with the company. Since that time, I've had no occupation and have lived a life of pleasure.

GILL
How very fortunate of you. But have you not actually made a living also, by procuring lads and young men for rich gentlemen whom you knew to be given to this vice?

Gill turns his back to Taylor -- confident.

TAYLOR
No.

Surprised -- Gill turns around.

GILL
Mr. Taylor. I must remind you, you've taken an oath.

TAYLOR
I have not forgotten.

GILL
Did you not introduce Charles Parker to the defendant?

TAYLOR
I did. When one makes an acquaintance, one likes to introduce him to friends.

GILL
Did you know Mr. Wilde so well?

TAYLOR
Yes.

GILL
Did you tell certain lads like Frederick Atkins that the defendant was fond of young boys?

TAYLOR
No. Never!

GILL
Did you know that he is?

TAYLOR
I believe he is fond of young people. And interested in contributing to their overall welfare.

Gill looks livid -- decides to go at it another way.

GILL
Why were you in prison, Mr. Taylor?

TAYLOR
A police raid at my place of residence found a number of young men living in my rooms and sleeping in the same beds.

GILL
Did the defendant know you were so lowly of a person, Mr. Taylor?

TAYLOR
I'm not sure.
(calling out to Oscar)
Oscar. Did you know that?

Balcony LAUGHTER.

JUDGE
Silence!

He BANGS the gavel.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
Order in the court!

GILL
No more questions, my lord.

LATER

The evidence for the prosecution continues.

Three quick witnesses give their testimony.

First, is --

ANTONIO MIGGE (28), well-built and olive-colored skin.

MIGGE
I am a professor of massage, and I attend the Savoy Hotel to massage patients.

GILL
Did the defendant ever call upon you for a massage?

MIGGE
He did, indeed. One morning on going to the room, I entered after knocking. Then, saw someone in bed. At first, I thought it was a young lady, as I saw only the head, but afterwards, I saw it was a man. Sixteen to eighteen in age.

GILL
Was Mr. Wilde in bed with him?

MIGGE
Not at that moment. But he was in the room, dressing himself.

GILL
Did you perform a massage on him?

MIGGE
No. Mr. Wilde told me he felt much better that morning. And that he was busy, and could not stay to have the treatment.

AND THEN --

GEORGE FREDERICK CLARIDGE (55), a curmudgeon jeweler, is now in the witness box --

CLARIDGE
I am employed by Thornhill, Walter and Company, jewellers and silversmiths. 144 New Bond Street.

GILL
Did the defendant frequent your place of business?

CLARIDGE
Oh, yes. I supplied him with silver cigarette cases and other articles. All to be given to young men for whom he had acquaintances with.

And then, another --

JANE COTTER (30s), homely dressed --

COTTER
I am employed as a chambermaid at the Savoy Hotel.

GILL
When did you first see the defendant at your hotel?

COTTER
He occupied one of the rooms. Room 361, I believe. And Lord Alfred Douglas occupied room 362.

GILL
Was there anything odd about the room upon you entering?

COTTER
Yes, indeed. I found it necessary to call the attention of the manager regarding the condition of Mr. Wilde's bed.

GILL
How do you mean?

COTTER
The sheets were stained in a peculiar way.

She hesitates.

COTTER (CONT'D)
Then I saw Lord Douglas, naked. Coming out of Mr. Wilde's bathroom.

GASPS from the court crowd.

Lady Wilde RISES from her seat in the balcony -- storms out.

Oscar looks up, sees his mother leaving.

Then, a FLASH --

As if a photograph was taken.

But it's not a photograph, only a pencil newspaper drawing of Oscar in that pose, gazing up at his mother --

EXT. NEWSPAPER STAND - DAY

As we go to the front of a STACK OF NEWSPAPERS --

The PENCIL DRAWING OF OSCAR'S EXPRESSION FROM THE COURT,

Is the front page image, with a HEADLINE, reading:

"OSCAR WILDE AT THE OLD BAILEY -- After shocking evidence against him compels his mother Lady Wilde to flee the courtroom..."

Newspapers are grabbed -- right and left -- until the stack dwindles down to NONE.

INT. LADY WILDE'S HOME -- WEST END - NIGHT

Oscar and Lady Wilde at the dining room table.

A NEWSPAPER COPY with the front page face up, sits on top.

Oscar picks it up, flips it over --

OSCAR
You must stop coming to court, mum.

LADY WILDE
How could you be so foolish?

OSCAR
They were friends. I trusted them.

LADY WILDE
Friends you sleep with?

OSCAR
It's not as it appears.

LADY WILDE
Oh, no? Then why are chambermaids testifying against you?

Oscar doesn't answer.

LADY WILDE (CONT'D)
Appearance is everything. How many times have I told you?

OSCAR
Too many.

LADY WILDE
We live by different rules, Oscar, because of our status. Our business is the public's business.

OSCAR
I know, mother.

LADY WILDE
If you know, did you not think that fraternizing with these peasant boys--

OSCAR
Their social status is irrelevant.

LADY WILDE
It's not! When one meddles with the lowest members of society, one is brought down to their level. As is one's art.

OSCAR
My art. Is that all you care about?

LADY WILDE
Of course, not. I care for you.

OSCAR
You care about success.

A huge blow to Lady Wilde --

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Your pathetic poetry. Your ridiculous short stories. How hard did you try to get published when I was young?

LADY WILDE
Get out.

Oscar, doesn't move.

LADY WILDE (CONT'D)
Get out at once.

Oscar EXITS.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

It's RAINING now.

Oscar scurries down the dimly lit road.

Very few people out and about.

He RUNS through PUDDLES -- water splashing up, wetting his trousers.

EXT. CONSTANCE'S BROTHER'S FLAT - NIGHT

Oscar KNOCKS at the door.

An OLD BUTLER (60s) answers -- recognizes him, then goes to fetch Constance.

Constance comes to the door --

CONSTANCE
I asked you not to come here.

OSCAR
I love you, Constance. And I love my sons. Please let me in.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

By the fireplace, Constance wraps a blanket around Oscar.

He sips TEA.

She sits on the couch -- opposite him.

The fire burns between them.

OSCAR
Are they asleep?

Constance nods.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Can I see them?

CONSTANCE
I want a separation.

Oscar takes that in.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
I have filed initial paperwork.

OSCAR
You wish to go back to being a Lloyd?

Her maiden name.

CONSTANCE
Yes. The boys, too.

OSCAR
They're Wildes. Always will be. No document will ever change that.

CONSTANCE
Do you know what goes on at school? For Cyril?

Oscar doesn't.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
He's laughed at everyday. Winning the trial or not, we can't stay here. I've made arrangements to move them. To Geneva.

OSCAR
Absolutely not.

CONSTANCE
They don't have a life here anymore, Oscar. Don't you want them to have a life again?

He does.

But he's still angry.

Oscar pulls TWO LETTERS out from his coat --

OSCAR
Give these to them.

Constance takes the letters.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
My desire was never to harm them. Or you, Constance.

CONSTANCE
I wish I could go back, before all this. Before the lies were so easy to live with.

INT. WILLIE'S FLAT - NIGHT

Oscar steps through the front doors -- dripping wet.

Willie sees him --

WILLIE
Everything alright?

OSCAR
Constance is moving the boys to Geneva. She wants a divorce.

Oscar hangs up his jacket.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I go on the stand tomorrow. Better get some rest.

Oscar trudges up the steps, but Willie stops him --

WILLIE
I'm sorry for never coming to the trial. Lily preferred that I didn't.

OSCAR
I understand.

WILLIE
We pray for you though. Every night. Lily and I.

OSCAR
You really think God concerns himself with me?

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

SUPER: "Tuesday, April 30, 1895 - Final Day of Trial"

FOOTSTEPS walk slowly toward the witness box -- it is so quiet, you could hear a whisper.

As we rise up, we see the footsteps belong to Oscar --

Oscar steps up into the witness box.

Takes his seat.

A CLOCK IS SHOWN -- time passes.

Clarke is in front of Oscar, now -- questioning him.

CLARKE
Mr. Wilde. Why did you take up residence at St. James Place?

WILDE
I was writing *An Ideal Husband* at the time.

CLARKE
Don't most literary men work out of their own house?

WILDE
Perhaps. But not I. It is quieter to write elsewhere for me.

CLARKE
You have been living with your wife since you were married in 1884, at 16 Tite Street, correct?

WILDE
Yes. Until last week. When our house was auctioned.

CLARKE
Mr. Wilde. Is there any truth in any of the allegations made against you in the evidence in this case?

WILDE
No truth whatsoever.

CLARKE
Was the evidence you gave in the libel trial earlier this month in all respects true?

WILDE
Entirely true, yes.

CLARKE
Thank you, my lord.

Gill rises --

GILL
Mr. Wilde.

Walking over to Oscar --

GILL (CONT'D)
I wish to call your attention to the style of your correspondence with Lord Alfred Douglas.

CLARKE
(standing, objecting)
My lord. Any questions must be confined to the specific charges made here in this case. Not the prior libel trial.

GILL
This relates very well to the charges of this case, Mr. Clarke. I assure you.

JUDGE
I will allow it.

Back to Oscar -- Gill's looking over TWO LETTERS in hand.

GILL
I refer to passages in two letters in particular.

WILDE
Kindly quote them.

GILL
In the first, you use the expression "You slim gilt soul," and refer to Lord Alfred's "red rose-leaf lips." The second you say, "You are the divine thing I want," and describe Lord Alfred's letter as being "delightful, red and yellow wine to me."

There's a long silence.

GILL (CONT'D)
Do you think that an ordinarily constituted being would address such expressions to a younger man?

WILDE
I am not happily, I think, an ordinarily constituted being.

Crowd LAUGHS.

GILL
It is agreeable to be able to agree with you, Mr. Wilde.

WILDE
There is nothing, I assure you, in either letter of which I need be ashamed. The first letter is really a prose poem, and the second more of a literary answer to the one Lord Alfred had sent me.

GILL
In reference to the incidents alleged against you at the Savoy Hotel. And what Lord Queensberry brought up in the libel trial, for the public benefit, that you were -- I believe his words were, “a posing Sodomite.”

WILDE
That was his phrase of choice, yes.

GILL
Which the court found not to be libel, Mr. Wilde. Suggesting Lord Queensberry had merit for making such an accusation. In light of this, I have one question: do you see no impropriety in kissing a young boy?

Wilde waits a moment.

WILDE
In kissing a young boy, of course not; but I certainly do not think that one should kiss a young man of eighteen or more.

GILL
Then why did you take up with these youths? Why parade around with them all over London?

WILDE
I am a lover of youth, as Mr. Taylor alluded to.

GILL
You exalt youth as a sort of god?

WILDE
I like to study the young in everything. Youthfulness often embodies truth in ways the elderly cannot.

GILL
So you would prefer puppies to dogs, then too, I suppose?

WILDE
I think so. I should enjoy, for instance, the society of beardless, briefless barrister quite as much, if not more, than most of the wig-wearing men in this courtroom.

THUNDEROUS LAUGHS from the balcony -- a real zinger.

GILL
When did your acquaintance with Lord Alfred Douglas begin?

WILDE
In 1892.

GILL
And when did his father, the Marquess of Queensberry first object?

WILDE
Just last year. March of 1894, I believe.

GILL
Where is Lord Alfred Douglas now?

WILDE
He is abroad.

GILL
Where, exactly?

WILDE
In Paris. At the Hotel des Deux Mondes.

GILL
How long has he been there?

Oscar knows where this is headed.

WILDE
About three weeks.

GILL
The day you were arrested?

WILDE
Yes.

GILL
But why should he flee if your acquaintance with him is as innocent as you say it is?

Echoing Constance' words.

WILDE
Because the public opinion often matters more than the truth.

GILL
Had you asked him to leave London, Mr. Wilde?

No answer.

GILL (CONT'D)
Mr. Wilde. Answer my question. Did you ask Lord Alfred Douglas to leave London, after he helped bail you out of prison, three weeks ago?

Oscar waits to answer, then --

WILDE
Yes.

GILL
Have you been in communication with him since?

WILDE
Of course. He's a dear friend. These charges are founded on sand. Our friendship is founded on a rock. There's no need to cancel the acquaintance.

GILL
What did you do when you first learned that the Marquess of Queensberry objected to your friendship with his son?

WILDE
I said I was perfectly ready to cease the acquaintance, if it would make peace between him and his father. But Bosie preferred otherwise.

GILL
Bosie?

WILDE
Lord Alfred Douglas. That's what I call him. As do all his friends.

GILL
Do you think it is a decent way for a man of your age to address a man of his?

WILDE
It is a beautiful way for an artist to address a young man of culture and charm. Decency does not enter into literary expression.

GILL
Ah, yes. Literary expression.

Gill picks up Oscar's novel --

Holds it up for all to see.

GILL (CONT'D)
What is this?

WILDE
It's my novel. *The Picture of Dorian Gray.*

GILL
For those who are unfamiliar with it, it's the story of a painter who paints a portrait of a much younger man. Bosie's age, yes?

WILDE
I wrote the novel years before --

GILL
And this portrait of this young man is so beautiful, even the painter and his dear aristocratic friend Lord Henry, are bedazzled by it. Isn't that so, Mr. Wilde?

WILDE
Factually, yes. But it reads better than your banal synopsis.

GILL
Do you factually believe in the veracity of your story, Mr. Wilde?

WILDE
I have no idea what you mean.

GILL
Allow me to read a selection from the novel. The painter notes,

He clears his throat.

GILL (CONT'D)
(reading)
"Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of an artist, not of the sitter. The sitter is merely the accident. The painter, on canvas, reveals himself."

Gill closes the book.

GILL (CONT'D)
I'm curious, Mr. Wilde. Do you believe the same is true for writers?

WILDE
Perhaps. If the writer is true to himself. To his art.

GILL
It seems to be too strange a coincidence to suggest that the painter sounds very much like you, Mr. Wilde.

WILDE
That's preposterous. He's just a character.

GILL
That you created.

WILDE
From my imagination.

GILL
Does not imagination come from the likeness and metaphors and realities of our experience?

Clarke rises, upset the Judge has yet to intervene.

CLARKE
My lord! This is outrageous. Mr. Gill is using fiction in a court of law to --

JUDGE
Take your seat, Mr. Clarke.

CLARKE
But my lord!

JUDGE
Your seat!

Clarke sits.

GILL
Thank you for you testimony, Mr. Wilde.

JUDGE
This court will take a short recess. And resume with closing arguments from the prosecution and defense when we reconvene.

He BANGS THE GAVEL -- COURT ADJOURNED.

INT. WILLIE'S FLAT - DAY

Oscar finishes lunch -- Lily WASHES DISHES behind him.

Willie sits at the table, observing Oscar -- who is quiet.

Lily comes to pick up Oscar's plate --

WILLIE
Robbie came by this morning.

OSCAR
Did he?

WILLIE
He brought you a painting.

Willie goes to fetch it.

Brings it back into the room --

GUIDO RENI'S "SAINT SEBASTIAN"

Oscar's favorite.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Said he bought it at your auction.

Oscar stares at the piece -- haunted by its image now.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Closing arguments, begin.

Clarke goes first.

Stands before the packed out crowd.

CLARKE
May it please you, my lord, gentlemen of the jury. I appeal to you to set aside prejudice and to regard only the evidence which has been laid before you.

Clarke stands in front of the JURORS -- all men, all stoic.

CLARKE (CONT'D)
In disentangling the evidence with regards to the question of literature and morality, I cannot help expressing astonishment with the prosecution's arguments. Mr. Wilde is not an ordinary man. He is a man who has written poetry and prose, brilliant dramas, charming essays. A man who writes letters and is not ashamed or afraid to produce these letters. This is not the cowardice of a man who is guilty. A man who has been tempted into any sort of guilt would rather give his whole fortune, rather exile himself from his country than allow these charges to be suggested against him. Yet, Mr. Wilde did not flee. He could have left London. To be spared all this. But he didn't. Because he knew the charges were false.

Clarke walks over to Wilde -- a last pitch effort.

CLARKE (CONT'D)
Gentlemen of the jury. I trust the result of your deliberations will clear from this fearful imputation one of our most renowned and accomplished men of letters today. And in clearing him, will clear society from this stain.

Half the courtroom APPLAUDS -- Robbie, the loudest.

OSCAR
(shaking Clarke's hand)
Thank you, Edward.

Clarke, looks hopeful again -- as,

Gill stands -- pompous-like -- to give his closing remarks.

GILL
My Lord. Gentlemen of the jury. It has been argued that no man conscious of guilt would have dared to set the criminal law in motion against Lord Queensberry. Sir Edward Clarke has made a courageous and brilliant defense of the prisoner Wilde.

He bows to Clarke.

GILL (CONT'D)
But the letters from Mr. Wilde to Lord Alfred Douglas breathe an unholy passion. If Sir Edward Clarke's defense is to be taken true, then we are dealing with two men here in this case. First, the Mr. Wilde who wrote the letters, who fraternized with these youths, gave gifts to them, and was seen at the theatre, in hotels, spending days and nights together. And second, the Mr. Wilde and his eloquent words. Which are we to believe? His actions? Or his words? Mr. Wilde may be one of London's greatest writers, but that doesn't excuse his behavior. Justice exists to make immoral actions, right. So please -- I beg you, gentlemen, to express a verdict without fear or favor.

EXT. PIER - DAY

A FERRY docks --

PEOPLE exit, one after another, until we see --

Bosie -- brown suit, green carnation, and top hat -- exiting.

He walks along the dock, surveying London -- his former home.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The JURYMEN file out of the courtroom -- one after the other -- and into a PRIVATE DELIBERATION ROOM.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

No judge.

No jurors.

But still, the place is packed.

Oscar looks around the room -- surveying it --

In the balcony, his mother is no longer there.

Neither is Robbie, at the moment.

CLARKE
Come, Oscar.

Clarke stands --

CLARKE (CONT'D)
Let's have a smoke.

INT. COURTHOUSE SECOND FLOOR ROOM - DAY

OSCAR'S POV out of a second story window --

A LARGE CROWD IS GATHERED OUTSIDE THE COURTHOUSE.

He puffs on his cigarette -- blows the SMOKE at the closed window.

The smoke hits the window -- disappears in front of his face.

CLARKE
We have got them, Oscar. Don't worry. I saw it in their eyes.

OSCAR
Whose?

CLARKE
The jurymen.

Oscar continues to stare out the window -- then, he sees --

BOSIE WALKING -- on the outskirts of the crowd.

Not trying to break through.

Bosie looks content to stay there -- not coming any closer.

Fear colors Oscar's face --

EXT. OLD BAILEY COURTHOUSE - DAY

Outside, amidst the crowd --

PEOPLE ARGUE WITH ONE ANOTHER, as if they decide the verdict.

Back and forth, the banter continues.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

All quiet in the court.

The Judge takes his seat --

JURYMEN FILE INTO THE COURTROOM.

Oscar faces his impending fate -- as,

A MAN'S HAND GRABS HIS SHOULDER FROM BEHIND.

In his chair, he turns around, and sees,

HIS BROTHER WILLIE.

OSCAR
You came! How did you manage to get in?

WILLIE
Money.

Oscar smiles.

OSCAR
That's the law of London for you.

Willie grins back.

Oscar turns around.

JUDGE
Has the jury reached a verdict?

FOREMAN OF THE JURY stands, speaks.

JURY FOREMAN
We have, my lord.

JUDGE
Will the defendant please stand?

Oscar's chest rises -- he STANDS.

Clarke, too.

This is it.

EXT. OLD BAILEY COURTHOUSE - DAY

The CROWD, TOTALLY SILENT now -- waiting for the verdict to be read.

Seconds pass.

As they wait --

And wait.

Until,

THE DOORS SWING OPEN --

A COURT OFFICIAL (30s), screams the verdict, rejoicing.

COURT OFFICIAL
Guilty!

LOUD CHEERS!

It's a mix of JOYFUL APPLAUSE and ANGRY HOLLERING -- as we hear fragments of sentences from them --

CROWD
JUSTICE! SHAME! PUT HIM IN JAIL!
NO! NOW!

Then we go to BOSIE'S FACE --

About to burst into angry tears.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

OSCAR is in utter shock --

His mouth agape with incredulity.

The GAVEL BANGS.

JUDGE
Gentlemen of the jury. This case has been a most difficult one. I would have rather tried the most shocking murder case ever committed, than to be engaged in a case of this description. People who can do these things must be dead to all sense of shame, and one cannot hope to produce any effect upon them. You, Mr. Wilde, have been the center of a circle of extensive corruption of the most hideous kind among young men. The sentence of the court is that you be imprisoned and kept to hard labor for two years.

The judge BANGS his GAVEL, as CRIES from the CROWD --

CROWD
Oh! No! Shame!

Oscar, still standing --

OSCAR
May I say nothing, my lord?

The judge ignores his request,

LEAVES THE BENCH.

EXT. OLD BAILEY COURTHOUSE - DAY

It's a mad scene -- the prosecution exits, Gill, Queensberry among many.

Then, Bosie calls out from the crowd to his father --

BOSIE
Satisfied now?

A hush.

Queensberry sees his son -- approaches him.

QUEENSBERRY
Don’t make a fool of yourself.

Bosie lunges at his father, then SWINGS,

PUNCHES HIM IN THE FACE --

Queensberry goes to the ground -- as POLICEMEN blow WHISTLES, RUNNING TO THEM TO TRY AND BREAK UP THE FIGHT.

It’s CHAOS -- as the two continue to wrestle, throwing their FISTS right and left.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

JOURNALISTS SWARM IN -- trying to get a word from Oscar again.

Willie, distraught.

Robbie covers his mouth -- tears running down his cheeks.

Clarke leans in to Oscar --

CLARKE
I’m so sorry, Oscar.

He’s heartbroken -- Oscar feels it.

Oscar takes a last look at his brother, Willie -- as the COURT POLICE put handcuffs on him --

And take him away.

EXT. READING GAOL PRISON - DAY

SUPER: “Christmas Eve, 1895 -- 7 Months Later.”

SNOW covers the GATES and GROUNDS --

PRISON GUARDS stand at the entrance.

INT. MECHANICAL ROOM - DAY

Oscar is hideous now --

Bloody fingers, tangled hair, and sickly slim --

FORTY POUNDS LIGHTER THAN BEFORE.

Unkept stubble pricks out from his face.

A huge MACHINE turns -- as he and other PRISONERS' step -- keeping it moving.

Like a HUMAN HAMSTER on a WHEEL.

Oscar sweats --

Continues to,

STEP, WALK, and PUSH.

And STEP, WALK, and PUSH.

The routine of hard labor lasts six hours each day.

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

About a hundred PRISONERS fill long tables and benches.

A DOZEN GUARDS stand by, keeping watch.

Oscar sips a small cup of TEA -- along with one CRUSTY PIECE OF BREAD.

This is his dinner.

And then --

A BELL RINGS.

TIME IS UP.

His food, taken away from him -- as,

ALL PRISONERS ARE FORCED TO RETURN TO THEIR CELLS.

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

No windows.

Oscar sits on the cold floor -- in isolation.

POUNDING BOOTS hit the cement floor, louder and louder as,

A PRISON GUARD, MITCHELL HARRIS (34), walks by Oscar's cell.

MITCHELL
Time for the service, Oscar.

OSCAR
Must I?

MITCHELL
Warden rules. It's Christmas Eve.

OSCAR
Does Jesus not grow tired of celebrating himself?

KEYS UNLOCK THE IRON BAR DOOR -- and it OPENS.

Oscar walks out --

Mitchell follows him.

INT. PRISON CHAPEL - NIGHT

CANDLES light up the SMALL, PLAIN, grey room.

An ALTAR sits at the front -- a LARGE BRONZE CRUCIFIX hangs behind it.

Behind the old wooden podium is PRIEST GARY (55), in a long BLACK ROBE, with a WHITE CLERICAL COLLAR.

Oscar sits in the back row -- among a host of other PRISONERS looking just as bad as he.

PRIEST GARY
A star. That is what they were drawn to. Shining bright. For all the earth to see. Like a radiant guide telling them, "This is the way, truth, life."

LATER

ORGAN MUSIC plays -- it's the Christmas carol, "SILENT NIGHT".

One by one, prisoners come up to receive communion.

Oscar is last in line.

Unlike the rest, his hands are not open, not ready to take.

PRIEST GARY (CONT'D)
Still resisting God, Mr. Wilde?

OSCAR
Not God. Just you, Father.

Priest Gary grins -- like they have an understanding -- then blesses Oscar with the SIGN OF THE CROSS.

PRIEST GARY
Mind if I pay you a visit later?

OSCAR
Do I have a choice?

PRIEST GARY
Not really.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Mitchell opens the PRISON DOORS -- Priest Gary ENTERS, carrying a SMALL WOODEN CHAIR.

He takes a seat.

Oscar -- lying on his hard plank-of-a-bed, with no mattress, sits up.

Mitchell closes the CELL DOOR -- stands nearby.

OSCAR
So? What do you think?

Referring to his cell -- as if he decorated the dull place.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I call it night bleakness. Makes it easier to see the stars.

PRIEST GARY
Oscar. How would you feel about writing again?

Now he's paying attention.

OSCAR
That is all I have asked for since I came here, Father.

PRIEST GARY
The Warden has told me.

OSCAR
Well?

PRIEST GARY
You were baptized as a young boy, yes?

OSCAR
Yes. In a small village. Just outside Dublin.

Priest Gary sits back in his chair -- folds his arms.

PRIEST GARY
I've convinced the warden to allow writing materials into your cell. On one condition.

OSCAR
Anything.

PRIEST GARY
Read the four gospels then meet with me to discuss.

OSCAR
I beg your pardon?

Oscar considers the offer.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Is this what priests have resorted to? Blackmailing prisoners stuck in cells to read the Bible?

PRIEST GARY
(chuckles)
Not everyone. Just you.

A beat.

OSCAR
How many meetings?

PRIEST GARY
No more than a few. I simply want to hear your thoughts. No exorcisms. No extra conversions.

OSCAR
Very well.

Priest Gary pulls out a BIBLE from his pocket.

Hands it over to Oscar.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
What about my writing utensils?

PRIEST GARY
(standing to leave)
After the book of Mark, Oscar.

He's at the cell doors.

Waiting for Mitchell to unlock it.

PRIEST GARY (CONT'D)
I trust you know with all your classical education at Oxford that although it is the second of the four gospels, it is actually the first one written.

Oscar is fluent in Greek -- the original language the New Testament was written in -- but it seems he didn't know that.

The cell doors OPEN --

PRIEST GARY (CONT'D)
Merry Christmas, Oscar.

The doors SLAM shut.

Oscar flips open the Bible to --

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MARK.

He begins to read in his cell, on his bed --

INT. PRISON CAFETERIA - DAY

The next morning.

Oscar, still reading at breakfast --

INT. MECHANICAL ROOM - DAY

Oscar even tries to read while doing hard labor --

An OLD PRISON GUARD on patrol walks by him -- takes the book away -- then looks down, sees it's a Bible.

He looks to Oscar, confused.

Hands the Bible back to him.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Oscar, still reading -- this must be his fourth time through.

Mitchell walks up to his cell --

MITCHELL
Got a visitor, Mr. Wilde.

Oscar looks up -- curious.

INT. PRISON VISITOR'S QUARTERS - DAY

A barren table with two chairs.

In one chair, is Lady Wilde -- waiting to speak to her son.

Oscar ENTERS -- sees his mother.

She stands -- aghast and heartbroken at the sight of him.

THEY EMBRACE.

OSCAR
I'm sorry for how I treated you. The last time we spoke.

LADY WILDE
It's in the past, Oscar.

OSCAR
The past can still hurt.

A beat.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
How are Cyril and Vyvyan?

LADY WILDE
Constance has moved them to Switzerland.

Oscar turns angry now --

OSCAR
It isn't right.

She knows.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
All I used to want growing up was to be a father.

LADY WILDE
I remember. You playing house. With Isola. Dressing up in your father's clothes. How old were you then?

OSCAR
Nine. Isola was six.

Silence -- the silence that comes after someone deceased as just been brought up.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I remember where I was when she passed. The headmaster came to my classroom. I thought he came to congratulate me for scoring the highest on the Greek examination. But when I saw his face, I knew.

He stops for a moment.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
That I could never go back to before that moment. That's when I wrote my first poem.

LADY WILDE
For Isola.

OSCAR
Requiescat.

LADY WILDE
It was lovely. You were only twelve.

OSCAR
Cyril will be twelve, soon.

EXT. READING GAOL PRISON - DAY

Lady Wilde exits the grounds -- Willie waits for her beside her carriage.

WILLIE
Did you tell him?

Lady Wilde tries to remain calm, holds in tears.

She doesn't answer Willie.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Mum, did you?

LADY WILDE
He looked so pitiful. I couldn't bear to.

We don't know what their referring to -- but it isn't good.

INT. PRISON CAFETERIA - DAY

Oscar's lunch, a SMALL BOWL OF SOUP -- stares back at him.

He sips his soup -- reads the GOSPEL OF MARK.

Again.

Sitting down across from him is an --

OLD IRISH PRISONER (60s) even more hideous than Oscar. His face, black with dirt, his hands decrepid. Wrinkles and creases abound -- from ears to eyes.

A mangled mess of flesh.

Oscar stares at the old prisoner.

The only difference between them is,

Time.

INT. PRISON CHAPEL - DAY

The noon Christmas Day service is just ending.

Oscar approaches the altar -- his SHACKLES, rattle.

Priest Gary, still standing behind the podium.

PRIEST GARY
Ready to trade thoughts for some paper, Mr. Wilde?

OSCAR
Why did you ask me to read Mark first?

Innocent-like.

PRIEST GARY
Because it's short.

OSCAR
If you were trying to console me, you bloody well failed.

PRIEST GARY
I was not trying to console you.

Oscar, lost.

PRIEST GARY (CONT'D)
How did you find Jesus? According to Mark's point-of-view?

OSCAR
Wholly frustrated.

PRIEST GARY
Oh come now, Mr. Wilde. Beyond the words.

OSCAR
Am I in school again, Father?

PRIEST GARY
That is one way to see prison.

OSCAR
He deluded himself into thinking his disciples, friends, even his mother was nuts.

PRIEST GARY
So he was a loon? Christ? Our Savior?

OSCAR
I suppose so, unpleasant as it sounds.

PRIEST GARY
Good.

Priest Gary hands Oscar TWO PAGES, a PEN, and some INK.

OSCAR
That's all?

He turns back -- looks to Oscar.

PRIEST GARY
For now. Yes.

Priest Gary EXITS the chapel.

Oscar is alone.

He takes a seat on the first bench, just before the altar.

CANDLE FLAMES flicker in front of his face -- splashing him with light and darkness, simultaneously.

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Oscar begins to write a letter to Bosie --

And then --

He hears the sound of SHACKLES --

Then FOOTSTEPS --

Then, a man's FAINT SINGING.

Oscar recognizes the song --

It's the same lullaby he sang his sons in the beginning -- the heartbreaking, melodic ballad,

"*Táimse Im' Chodhladh*"

Oscar drops his pen --

He looks up -- sees the Old Irish Prisoner passing by.

Shocked something so beautiful could come from someone in so much pain, enduring so much suffering.

And then it hits him --

His sons.

The loss of them.

As if he is beginning to break down, grasp this, grieve it.

TEARS well up in his eyes but he doesn't cry here.

Instead, he fights them -- stubbornly.

He wipes his face -- proud.

But who is he trying to impress, really?

He goes back to writing.

EXT. PRISON GROUNDS - DAY

A couple dozen PRISONERS scatter across the gated grounds -- Oscar, among them.

Oscar overhears a conversation between TWO PRISONERS (30s).

PRISONER #1
How long you been here?

PRISONER #2
Ten days.

PRISONER #1
Give up counting or you'll grow crazy.

Oscar watches them both.

PRISONER #1 (CONT'D)
What'd you do?

PRISONER #2
Nothin'. I'm innocent.

PRISONER #1
We're all innocent.
(laughs)
What'd they say you did?

PRISONER #2
Kill a man.

Oscar interjects --

OSCAR
And you didn't?

The two prisoners look over to him.

Prisoner #2 shakes his head, 'no'.

PRISONER #1
That's Mr. Oscar Wilde. Used to be a famous writer. Until he gave into temptation of the loins.

OSCAR
It takes courage to give in to temptation.

PRISONER #1
Bravo to you, then.

He claps his hands together -- slowly.

PRISONER #1 (CONT'D)
Perhaps British royalty will give you a medal, someday. Medal of courage and bravery for sodomizing a bunch of young blokes.

Oscar leaps up -- ATTACKS the Prisoner #1.

THEY START THROWING PUNCHES.

Other Prisoners HOLLER, cheer them both on.

GUARDS RUSH ACROSS THE GROUNDS TO TRY AND STOP THEM.

Oscar may be bigger, but the scrappy Prisoner #1 is definitely winning now.

He takes Oscar to the ground, begins pounding on him.

BLOOD SPRAYS from Oscar's face.

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT CELL - DAY

Oscar, still bleeding -- sits on the floor.

The only light comes from a small sliver underneath the door.

DAYS TURN TO NIGHTS.

Then back to days, again.

Oscar is still in there.

MORE TIME PASSES and then --

The door opens --

THE LIGHT NEARLY BLINDS OSCAR -- the weakest and most exhausted he's ever looked.

The WARDEN (50s), stands in the doorway.

WARDEN
Ready to behave, Mr. Wilde?

INT. PRISON CAFETERIA - DAY

Oscar shovels down his small bowl of SOUP -- he's starving. The Prisoner #2, from the courtyard before, eyes Oscar,

Passes Oscar his bowl of soup --

Oscar, grateful -- begins to work on his second bowl as,

Mitchell WALKS UP --

MITCHELL
Come with me, Oscar.

INT. PRISON VISITOR'S QUARTERS - DAY

A MAN IN HAT AND COAT -- his back facing Oscar's vision, stands in the room.

The DOORS open --

Oscar steps into the quarters, as the man turns around --

It's Willie.

His face red with sorrow --

OSCAR
Willie. What is it?

Tears begin to fall.

WILLIE
Mum's gone.

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Alone in his cell, Oscar begins to sob in bed.

His tears wet the LETTERS he's spent so much time writing --

Ink runs from the pages from his tears.

INT. PRISON CHAPEL - NIGHT

Priest Gary sits on a bench at the front of the altar, turns around -- sees Oscar and Mitchell.

PRIEST GARY
Service doesn't start for another half an hour.

Oscar looks as though he's been crying for days. His eyes, puffy, with dark circles surrounding them.

He trudges closer to the priest.

Takes a seat beside him.

Priest Gary nods at Mitchell -- excusing him from the room.

Mitchell EXITS.

PRIEST GARY (CONT'D)
What is it, Oscar?

OSCAR
"My God, My God, why hath thou forsaken me?"

Jesus' last words from the book of Mark, before he dies.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Is that what you wanted me to see?

Priest Gary remains still.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Isolation. Suffering.

Silence.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
My mum's dead.

Priest Gary takes in a deep breath.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
And I am here. Unable to pay my respects at her funeral. Can there be anything more cruel for a son than that? To be dead to his mum?

PRIEST GARY
You're not dead, Oscar.

OSCAR
I am so tired of suffering, father.

There's a long beat.

PRIEST GARY
For more than ten years, I have seen men suffer as Christ did. And yet most of us avoid suffering at any cost. We hide from it, hoping it will disappear from our life. But it never does. Suffering must be embraced, fully, no matter how horrendous it is. Only then can we face who we really are.

Oscar begins to weep, softly -- Priest Gary rests his arm on Oscar's shoulder.

PRIEST GARY (CONT'D)
To own one's soul, Oscar. To own who you really are. That is all God begs of you. Sinner or saint.

INT. PRISON SHOWER - DAY

SHOWER WATER runs down Oscar's face -- his eyes, open.

He stands there, unmoved.

Taking the words of the priest in.

Realizing, slowly, that he's right.

This isn't just about religion.

Or God.

Or the Bible, even.

It's about who Oscar really is -- and he never would've come to this place without such sorrow.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Oscar writes, furiously.

Letter after letter.

To Robbie.

To Constance.

To Cyril, Vyvyan.

Even Willie.

He has so much to say now, it seems.

INT. PRISON CHAPEL - DAY

Oscar is in the front row now --

Dozens of PRISONERS sit behind him.

Priest Gary reads from the Book of Isaiah.

PRIEST GARY
"He is despised. And rejected of men. A man of sorrows. And acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from him."

INT. PRISON VISITOR'S QUARTERS - DAY

Another visitor -- Constance.

Oscar sits across from her -- describing himself.

OSCAR
I never saw myself as the one to hide. But in hearing the words of the prophet Isaiah, I felt the minister was describing my life. With you, Constance.

Constance looks as though he's finally being honest with her.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I'm so very sorry. In my heart, I thought I deserved everything. Believed no man or woman, not even you should stand in my way.

CONSTANCE
You were stubborn.

OSCAR
Can you ever forgive me?

She doesn't respond.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I miss my sons, Constance. May I see them? Upon my release?

CONSTANCE
Perhaps.

Pulling TWO LETTERS from under the table.

OSCAR
Can you give these to them?

Constance takes them from Oscar.

CONSTANCE
Are you still writing to Bosie?

OSCAR
I am.

CONSTANCE
So you refuse to give up that life?

OSCAR
I can't change this part of me, Constance.

CONSTANCE
But it's sin.

OSCAR
No. Sin is hiding.

Constance looks away -- contemplative.

CONSTANCE
Sometimes a mask tells us more than a face, Oscar.

A beat.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
Isn't that what you used to tell me?

OSCAR
I did. But this isn't a mask, Constance. It's me.

Constance stares into his eyes --

Unsure if she believes him.

EXT. READING GAOL PRISON - DAY

Constance exits the prison doors -- looks down at the TWO LETTERS in her hands -- one for Cyril, one for Vyvyan.

She thinks a moment.

Then rips them up --

Tosses both letters in the RUBBISH.

INT. MECHANICAL ROOM - DAY

Oscar, working hard -- sweating like always.

The Warden walks up to him -- pulls him aside.

WARDEN
How would you feel about working out in the garden from now on?

OSCAR
I would be most grateful, sir.

EXT. PRISON COURTYARD - DAY

A bright shining SUN-filled afternoon.

Oscar WORKS OUT IN A SMALL GARDEN -- with Prisoner #2. They're pulling weeds.

In the near distance -- Oscar spots,

ROBBIE'S CARRIAGE

He stands -- ecstatic.

Rushes over to the entrance at the gates.

LATER

PRISON ENTRANCE -- BETWEEN THE GATES

Robbie exits his carriage.

Walks over to Oscar.

They converse between the IRON BARS of the gates that separate them.

ROBBIE
Is this the hard labor you speak of in your letters?

OSCAR
Good behavior.

ROBBIE
How are you, Oscar?

OSCAR
Much better now. In the sun every other day.

ROBBIE
You look well. Better than when I first saw you here.

OSCAR
Prison makes one see the secret of life, I suppose.

ROBBIE
Which is what?

OSCAR
Suffering.
(beat)
Hidden behind everything.

Oscar looks around -- his words, contrast the beauty of the outside world.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I read in a newspaper that on the night before my arrest, some six hundred men fled London. Men like me.

Over six hundred closeted homosexuals fled that night --

This was the opening scene.

ROBBIE
You're not like other men, Oscar.

OSCAR
Aren't I?

ROBBIE
Nothing is more rare in any man, than an act of his own.

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Oscar smiles -- one of his favorites.

EXT. TICKET BOOTH -- ENGLISH CHANNEL - DAY

SUPER: "May 19, 1897"

FOOTSTEPS and a CANE tap the wooden planks of the dock, as they glide along.

Panning up, we see it is --

OSCAR -- who looks older now.

He limps.

Carrying a few pieces of LUGGAGE behind him is,

ROBBIE -- anxious and excited.

Oscar approaches the ticket booth.

TICKET SALES CLERK
Where to, sir?

OSCAR
One-way ticket to Paris.
(beat)
For two.

Oscar exchanges glances with Robbie --

Who assures him with a look,

The wait to flee was worth it.

FADE OUT.

OVER BLACK:

EPILOGUE

“Oscar met up with Bosie in Paris after he was released from prison. The two toured Italy and France, together. Shortly after a year, they parted due to irreconcilable differences.”

“Oscar Wilde died on November 30, 1900 of cerebral meningitis at the age of 46. Robbie Ross was the only friend present by his side when he passed.”

“Oscar is buried in Paris, at Père Lachaise Cemetery. In 1950, on the 50th anniversary of Wilde's death, Robbie Ross’ ashes were added to Wilde's tomb. Where they now and forever will remain.”