THE INN

by

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FADE UP ON:

EXT. THE INN, CHESAPEAKE BAY - MEMORIAL DAY - 1988

This two-story Colonial Manor, built in 1849, has only been refurbished twice. Once, after the Civil War and now, after some hard weather has taken down a small portion of the building. The construction hasn't stopped the SUMMER TOURIST from flocking here on the busiest weekend of the year.

A sprawling stretch of manicured lawn, peppered with white lounge chairs, leads from the Inn to the boat filled waters of Maryland's Eastern shore.

From one of the chairs, an upscale woman glances up from her book and over to the CHILDREN playing in the gazebo. This is HELEN'S MOTHER. She takes off her sunglasses for a better look. Her expression sours.

MOTHER
Did Helen go back inside?

FATHER is admiring the boats. Doesn't look away from them.

FATHER
Mr. Finberg says he doesn't mind.

MOTHER
I don't understand why she doesn't play with the other children.

FATHER
I guess they don't interest her.

Mother puts her sunglasses back on and settles into her book.

MOTHER
Our daughter is a strange bird.

INT. THE INN, LOBBY - SAME TIME

HELEN MARTIN, 10, stubborn, curious, sits with a group of seniors. SYLVIA, 70s, heavy-set with a Southern drawl, picks from a box of chocolates as she tells her story.

SYLVIA
Shortly after leaving my fiancee, he was incredibly heart-broken the poor thing, I joined up with the Billy Rose Aquacade.

YOUNG HELEN
What's an aquacade?

SYLVIA
You've heard of the Rockettes?

YOUNG HELEN
Sure. My parents took me to see them at Christmas.

SYLVIA
Well, we were just like them, except we danced in the water.

Sylvia turns to CHARLIE, 80s, frail, sitting next to her.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
I was a real looker back then, wasn't I Charlie?

CHARLIE
Prettiest girl on the line.

SYLVIA
Charlie was one of my many suitors.

OLD MAN
(joking)
If Charlie was who you ended up with, it must have been a sorry lot.

SYLVIA
On the contrary. Charlie just worked harder than the others for my affections. Didn't you, dear?

The waiter, ROLLINS, 30s, African-American, brings by a pitcher. His demeanor is dignified, yet warm.

ROLLINS
More iced-tea?

Glasses raise and Rollins pours.

SYLVIA
Mr. Rollins, would you see if there's anymore of that Smith Island cake available to have with our tea?

ROLLINS
Yes, ma'am.

Helen perks up when a TEENAGE BOY comes in the room. It's not who she was expecting and her expression deflates. Rollins leans into her and speaks confidentially.

ROLLINS (CONT'D)
Don't you worry, Miss Helen. He'll be here shortly.

HELEN
(going red)
I don't know what you mean.

CHARLIE
I was a widower and didn't think I'd find love again. Not until I saw this glorious creature rise up from the water.

YOUNG HELEN
What's a widower?

CHARLIE
It's when your wife passes on before you do.

YOUNG HELEN
I'm sorry your wife died, Charlie.

Charlie takes Sylvia's hand.

CHARLIE
Don't be. I've been blessed to have two wonderful women in my life.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Helen, we have a new guest. Would you like to help check him in?

YOUNG HELEN
Coming, Mr. Finberg.

Helen jumps up and hurries behind the front desk where MR. FINBERG, 80s, the proprietor, checks in a MALE GUEST.

MR. FINBERG
Could you please get a key to one of the cottages?

Helen pulls a footstool over to a wall of keys. Stepping high on her toes, she grabs the key to COTTAGE FIVE and brings it back to Mr. Finberg. He's about to hand it over when a WOMAN'S VOICE CALLS OUT.

MARTHA
NO, FATHER!

Mr. Finberg freezes as MARTHA FINBERG, 50s, stern, years of disappointment etched on her face, hurries over and takes the key away from him.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
That's Cottage Five.

MR. FINBERG
(confused)
How did that get up there?

MARTHA
(to the guest)
I'm sorry. Cottage Five is under construction.
(under her breath)
Go lie down, Father. I'll take it from here.

Old Mr. Finberg nods, then shuffles off. Martha puts the key to Cottage Five in her pocket and turns to the wall to grab another. She bumps into Helen.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
I thought I told you not to come back here. Go on.

Helen slowly backs out, but keeps an eagle eye on Martha as she reaches for the BELL on the counter.

BING! - Helen's eyes shoot over to the door. A moment later the bellboy, ALEX, 15, walks through it. Helen can barely contain herself.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
Alex, please show Mr. Kennedy to Cottage Nine.

ALEX
Yes, ma'am. This way, sir.

EXT. WOODS AT THE BACK OF THE INN - AFTERNOON

Up ahead through the trees are a cluster of cottages. Alex walks MR. KENNEDY toward Cottage Nine. Helen follows them at a distance.

MR. KENNEDY
I heard things got pretty hairy around here during the storm.

ALEX
Took out the entire dock, as well as the north side of the Inn.

Kennedy stumbles over a fallen branch but catches himself. Seeing her opportunity, Helen hurries up to him.

YOUNG HELEN
Can I help you with your suitcase, sir? I've been authorized by Mr. Finberg to help the guests.
(extending her hand)
Helen Martin, at your service.

The charmed guest shakes it, then hands her the suitcase.

MR. KENNEDY
Not too heavy for you?

YOUNG HELEN
I'm stronger than I look.

Alex rolls his eyes and off they go. Helen practically drags the suitcase as she works to keep up.

YOUNG HELEN (CONT'D)
Hey, Alex. I heard the employees were having a party tonight.

ALEX
Not your kinda party, kid.

YOUNG HELEN
I'm much more sophisticated than my years. So, how 'bout it?

ALEX
It's a free country.

YOUNG HELEN
Excellent!

They arrive at Cottage Nine and Alex unlocks the door. Mr. Kennedy takes his suitcase from Helen and hands her a dollar.

MR. KENNEDY
Thank you for your kind service.

He disappears inside.

YOUNG HELEN
Can I help you with your--

Alex stops Helen from following him in.

ALEX
You got your dollar, now get lost.

YOUNG HELEN
I wasn't doing it for the money. I...I...

ALEX
What? Spit it out!

YOUNG HELEN
I wanted to be near you.

ALEX
Oh, fuck off, will ya?

Her eyes fill with tears and she takes off running. Crumbling under a tree, Helen bawls her little eyes out.

EXT. SAME - THAT EVENING

Helen is finally cried out. She pushes herself up and starts back through the darkening woods toward the inn.

AT THE BACK PATIO - LAUGHTER. The employee's party is in full swing; Alex flirting with a TEENAGE GIRL. Not wanting to be seen, Helen backtracks through the thick-foilaged trees. She soon finds herself in unfamiliar terrain.

The SOUND of UNRELENTING TYPING gets her attention. There's a faint light coming from one of the cottages. COTTAGE FIVE. Helen makes her way over.

EXT. PORCH, COTTAGE FIVE

Crossing to the window, Helen rises high on her toes, peering in. The only source of light is a desk lamp. She can barely make out the MAN, 30s, sitting at the desk.

Helen walks quietly to the door and sees it's ajar. Through the open crack, she watches as broad shoulders pound away at the typewriter. EXASPERATED, he tears the paper out, crumples it, and sends it to the floor.

As he places in a fresh page, Helen gently pushes the door into...

INT. COTTAGE FIVE

Helen takes a cautious step in as he types away.

YOUNG HELEN
Excuse me...

The man ignores her, fiercely typing.

YOUNG HELEN (CONT'D)
(a little louder)
Excuse me.

Still nothing.

YOUNG HELEN (CONT'D)
HELLO!

The man turns. His face lost in the shadows. Helen takes a step back.

YOUNG HELEN (CONT'D)
I think I'm lost. Can you tell me how to get back to the Inn?

Helen can feel his anxious eyes barreling into her.

YOUNG HELEN (CONT'D)
I don't think you're supposed to be in here.

He says nothing. Helen looks around. The place doesn't look under construction.

YOUNG HELEN (CONT'D)
(presses him)
Did Miss Finberg give you the key?

Nothing. Helen walks forward and extends her hand.

YOUNG HELEN
Helen Martin. I sometimes help out Mr. Finberg with odd jobs and stuff.

There's a hesitation, then his unsure hand reaches out. Helen gives it a shake. Pulling his hand away, the mysterious man turns back to his typewriter but doesn't type.

YOUNG HELEN
What are you writing?

No answer. The brazen young girl leans over the typewriter and reads.

YOUNG HELEN (CONT'D)
We didn't move. We didn't breathe. The silence was more frightening than the explosions could ever be. At least when the bombs were dropping, we knew what to expect. Silence was an en...en...

MYSTERIOUS MAN
Enigma.

YOUNG HELEN
What does it mean?

MYSTERIOUS MAN
Mystery. Make a left off the porch and walk straight ahead. The Inn's right there.

YOUNG HELEN
Can I watch you write?

She takes a step back.

YOUNG HELEN (CONT'D)
I won't bother you. I promise. I'll just stand right here.

After a moment, the man returns to typing. Helen cranes her neck forward, trying to read. She can't help herself--

YOUNG HELEN (CONT'D)
Were you a soldier or something?

The typing stops.

MYSTERIOUS MAN
You said you weren't going to bother me.

YOUNG HELEN
You can't type and talk at the same time?

MYSTERIOUS MAN
(beat)
I was a war correspondent.

YOUNG HELEN
What's a corresponded?

MYSTERIOUS MAN
Correspondent. Someone who goes where the fighting is, so they can write about it.

YOUNG HELEN
Like a reporter?

MYSTERIOUS MAN
Yes.

YOUNG HELEN
Can anybody be a war correspondent?

MYSTERIOUS MAN
No.

YOUNG HELEN
Why not?

MYSTERIOUS MAN
Most people don't have the stomach for it.

YOUNG HELEN
I bet I could do it. I don't scare easily.

MYSTERIOUS MAN
I can see that.

Helen picks up a chair and sits next to him.

YOUNG HELEN
Tell me what it's like.

Her proximity makes him uncomfortable and he walks to another part of the room to pour himself a drink.

YOUNG HELEN (CONT'D)
What's the most exotic place you've ever been? Did you see actual fighting? Were you ever hurt?

He turns to her, his face in shadow.

MYSTERIOUS MAN
You sure you want to hear this? It's not as romantic as you think.

Helen nods. A jittery hand throws back the drink before he speaks.

MYSTERIOUS MAN (CONT'D)
You'll never be more alive than you are in all that death and you'll feel guilty as hell for it. When the fighting's over and you have to come home...no one you love will understand that. So you'll withdrawal into a bottle, because that's the only thing that does understand. For awhile, anyway. You'll become resentful and cruel and those that loved you will stop loving you. You'll find yourself all alone with the remnants of a once relevant life. You'll be a shadow of yourself.

Helen takes that in. Then...

YOUNG HELEN
How's the pay?

He manages a laugh.

MYSTERIOUS MAN
Not half bad.

IN THE DISTANCE, Helen's worried parents CALL FOR HER.

FATHER/MOTHER (O.S.)
HELEN..? HELEN!

YOUNG HELEN
Holy, crap! What time is it?!

Helen hurries to the door, stopping briefly.

YOUNG HELEN
Can I come back again? I'd like to find out more.

MYSTERIOUS MAN
...You'd better go...Helen.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

A relieved Mother spots Helen heading toward them.

MOTHER
There she is!

Father takes her firmly by the shoulders.

FATHER
Where have you been, young lady?

SMASH CUT TO:

IN ROUTE TO COTTAGE FIVE

Helen tries to calm her parents as she follows them there.

YOUNG HELEN
Dad, there's no reason to get weirded out! He was just letting me read his story, that's all.

They're now at the cottage. The lights are off. Father goes to the door, KNOCKING HARD.

FATHER
This is Mr. Martin. Helen's father. Could I have a word with you?

MOTHER
(to Helen)
This had better not be another one of your stories.

Father opens the door into...

COTTAGE FIVE

...and flips on the light. No man. No typewriter. Confused, Helen walks over to the empty desk.

YOUNG HELEN
He was right here just a minute ago.

MOTHER
Let's go.

INT. THE INN, LOBBY - MINUTES LATER

Helen's pissed off parents march her through the lobby toward the stairs.

YOUNG HELEN
You have to believe me. He was there! In cottage five. I swear it!

Hearing this, a concerned Martha looks up from behind the front desk.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE, SECOND STORY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Helen's parents sleep soundly. In the adjoining bedroom, Helen's awakened by ANGRY VOICES coming from outside. She gets up and goes to the window.

Looking down, Helen makes out Miss Finberg and someone who could be the Mysterious Man. They're having a heated discussion. Helen strains to hear, but can't. She works to get the window open WHEN--

Martha looks up and Helen quickly backs away. After a moment, she inches back to the window. Martha says something to the man, then heads inside.

Helen watches as the Man starts back toward the cottages. As he gets to the tree line, he looks back at Helen. She waves to him. He nods, then walks into the woods, blending into the night.

The SOUND of ARTILLERY SHELLS EXPLODING and we...

CUT TO:

EXT. ALEPPO, SYRIA - PRESENT DAY

MORTAR FIRE pounds the remaining life out of the village. HELEN MARTIN, 30s, breathless, runs with CIVILIANS toward the safety of a building. A ROCKET EXPLODES from behind just as she gets into the doorframe. Helen glances back at the bodies of those who weren't lucky enough to make it.

DAVID
HELEN!

Behind a nearby gutted truck, DAVID BOUCHARD, 40s, nice looking, cameras around his neck, is holdup. David waits for a break in the GUNFIRE and hurries to her.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(heavy French accent)
Are you alright? Have you been hit?!

Helen glances down. She's covered in blood.

HELEN
It's not mine.

A CHOPPER swoops in FIRING onto the street. David pushes her back, covering her body with his.

DAVID
We need to find a way out of here!

Just then a SYRIAN REBEL rushes into the street, shooting his M-16 at the helicopter. This is their chance.

DAVID (CONT'D)
GO, GO!

Moving fast, they dart in and out of the rubble, bodies, and into the building across the street.

INT. BUILDING

In the lobby is a thrown-together triage center. Wounded everywhere. Young and old.

DAVID
I'll see if there's a back exit.

As David passes through the room, the photographer in him must record what he sees and he starts taking pictures.

A DOCTOR raises his bloody hand and waves Helen over.

DOCTOR
You! Come here!

Helen makes her way over to the doctor, who has his hands on the gushing wound of a YOUNG BOY.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Hold it down!

Helen drops to her knees and presses down on the wound as the doctor moves to another casualty. The boy looks up at her. He knows he's dying. She can see it in his eyes. Helen doesn't know how to reassure him.

The boy's eyes slowly close. He's gone. Helen sits back and exhales. David's gentle hand touches her shoulder.

DAVID
Time to go.

Helen nods and David helps her to her feet.

INT. MAKESHIFT MEDIA CENTER - EARLY EVENING

Battle weary, Helen and David enter what was once a school. Another REPORTER stops them at the door and motions.

REPORTER
Your cell phones.

DAVID
What for?

REPORTER
The regime has been using the satellite signals to trace our whereabouts.

DAVID
Jesus.

HELEN
Can we use the internet?

REPORTER
No internet, either.

HELEN
How are we supposed to get our stories out?

REPORTER
I guess you can try a carrier pigeon.

INT. SAME - LATER THAT NIGHT

All around the room, journalists sleep or work. Over in the corner, and very quietly, Helen and David are slow dancing to the SOFT MUSIC on a laptop.

DAVID
Happy Anniversary.

HELEN
Happy Anniversary.

They kiss softly.

DAVID
I never want to stop kissing you.

HELEN
Then, why are you talking?

They kiss a little harder. Helen moves her hand into David's shirt and he quickly pulls away.

DAVID
(laughing)
You're hands are cold.

David gets his overcoat off the chair and puts it on her. They continue to dance.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Next year, I'm finally taking you out for a proper date.

HELEN
You know what I would really love right now?

DAVID
The Pappardelle from Babbo's Restaurant in Greenwich.

HELEN
With a bottle of the Etna Rosso.
(beat, guilty)
I'm sorry we didn't make it home.

David pulls her in to him, gets serious.

DAVID
After this...I want to stay home. Start a family.

Helen tightens.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I'm getting tired, my darling. And I want to be a young man for our children.

HELEN
Let's not do this now.

DAVID
If not now, when?

HELEN
David... This is who I--

DAVID
No. It's just a job.

HELEN
You can't really think that. What we do matters.

DAVID
Don't we matter?

HELEN
Of course.

DAVID
Then you can't expect us to give up living. This is not living.

HELEN
Can we talk about this later? We'll talk about it later. I promise.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Can you turn that shit off now?! Some of us are trying to sleep!

David hits a key on the computer and the music stops.

HELEN
I'm gonna work for awhile.

DAVID
Don't stay up too long.

Helen grabs her laptop. She takes it over to one of the tiny tables and moves the small chair, opting to kneel. Helen opens her laptop and starts to write.

BEING TYPED ON THE SCREEN

After twenty minutes of shelling, the streets went silent. No one knew what to expect. The silence was an... <u>Enigma</u>.

BACK TO SCENE

As Helen continues to write, from somewhere behind her, a MAN is talking. Something bothers Helen about it, but she can't put a finger on it. Then she realizes... No one seems to be answering. Her fingers stop typing.

MAN TALKING (O.S.)
I'll have to get back to you on that.

Helen turns. To her shock, the man is using his cell phone. The word STOP barely leaves her mouth WHEN --

A MASSIVE EXPLOSION!

Helen is blown back. Everything around her goes sky-high. The walls are ripped away. The night sky is where the ceiling used to be.

Helen steadies herself and rises up into the devastation. The half-alive stumble about unsure where to go, what to do.

Helen looks to where her husband was. Nothing now but a pile of destruction. Helen struggles through the shattered concrete and splintered furniture to get to him...

And then the world goes silent.

There lays David. Bloody and battered. And he isn't moving.

HELEN
David..?

His eyes flutter open.

HELEN (CONT'D)
DAVID!

Helen hurries over and kneels beside him. The first thing she sees is the piece of shrapnel sticking out from his neck. Helen tries to remove it but it's only making things worse.

HELEN (CONT'D)
(yelling out)
Can someone help me!

But there is no one. Helen looks back at David. He has the same look in his eyes as the young dying boy.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Oh, Jesus. David, stay with me!
Stay with me!

David works hard, trying to mouth something.

HELEN (CONT'D)
What? What is it..?

With every ounce of strength, David tries to speak. He can't. His eyes look up at her one last time before closing.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Oh, no, please, don't...

Helen hugs him tightly in her arms, rocking back and forth, too stunned to even cry.

EXT. MAKESHIFT MEDIA CENTER - NIGHT

The burning ruins of the one time school.

EXT. ALEPPO, SYRIA - DAWN

The devastated city.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE - DAY

A beautiful fall day.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dark, morose. Sympathy cards cover the entry table. Piles of unopened ones next to them. On the desk, the answering machine has 32 messages. Dead flowers are everywhere.

There's a blanket and pillow on the couch. On the coffee table, empty food containers, photo albums, used tissue.

IN THE BEDROOM

The curtains are closed tight. Helen is asleep in bed, David's coat draped over her. On the nightstand, a near empty wine bottle and glass.

The PHONE RINGS.

Helen winces.

It RINGS again.

Her hand reaches out and gropes for the phone. She answers.

HELEN
What?

CONCEIRGE (on phone)
Mrs. Bouchard?
(MORE)

CONCEIRGE (on phone) (CONT'D)
I know you didn't want to be disturbed... But there's a Judith Fox here and she said she wouldn't leave unless I phoned you first.

HELEN
You've phoned me. So, tell her to go away.

CONCEIRGE (on phone)
(heard through receiver)
Like I told you, Mrs. Bouchard isn't seeing anyone.

JUDITH'S VOICE
(heard through receiver)
Give me the fucking phone.
(into phone, forceful)
Helen, I'm-coming-up!

The line goes dead. Helen sighs, then works to get up.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

JUDITH FOX, 50s, fire-red hair, well put together, hits the BUZZER. She presses the BUZZER longer the second time.

JUDITH
Helen, open the goddamn door!

The door opens and there stands Helen, looking pale and disheveled. Judith is taken aback.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
Jesus. When was the last time you bathed?

HELEN
If you've come to lecture me, then turn back around.

Helen walks away, but leaves the door open. Judith follows her inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Judith looks around at her living conditions.

JUDITH
At least open the window so we can get some fresh air.

HELEN
(half-joking)
I don't trust myself next to an open window.

JUDITH
Please don't talk like that. I know you're making fun, but I don't like it.

HELEN
Do you want something to drink?

JUDITH
Water would be fine.

Helen goes to the kitchen.

Judith picks up a jacket from the floor and drapes it across a chair. She moves to the coffee table and straightens some things. She comes across a stack of PHOTOS and looks through them. She stops at one of DAVID.

Helen walks back in.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
He had a good face. Strong, but kind.

Helen hands Judith the water, then goes to the couch.

HELEN
That was our last vacation together. We went to France to see his sister. She's invited me to come stay with her, if I like.

JUDITH
You should go.

HELEN
(beat, thinks)
Do you think we'll remain friends? It's not like David and I had children, so there's no real family connection.

JUDITH
You will if you want to.

A tense moment.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
You need to get out of this apartment.

HELEN
Do I?

JUDITH
I'm not saying you have to start seeing people... but you do need to get outside and walk among them.

HELEN
(sarcastic)
Maybe you're right. I've given David's death way too much time.

JUDITH
I know you're hurting.

HELEN
You know nothing. When you leave here, you get to go home to Jerry.

Judith comes over and sits next to her.

JUDITH
You're right. I have no idea what you're going through. But I know that I love you. And I don't like seeing you like this.

HELEN
I deserve it.

JUDITH
Why would you say that?

HELEN
He went because of me. David's dead because I wanted us to go.

Judith takes her hand.

JUDITH
He was there to do a job. A job that he loved. A job he was doing long before he met you. He knew the risks.

Helen shakes her head, doesn't buy it.

JUDITH FOX
Helen? Helen, look at me.

Helen does.

JUDITH
An explosion killed David. Not you. And anything else you're telling yourself right now, won't change that fact.

Helen gets up, walks to the window. Judith can sense there's something to be said.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
What is it?

HELEN
If I could just talk to him one more time. Tell him I was wrong. Tell him he was most important.
(beat, harsh)
But I can't. And he'll never know.

JUDITH
He knows.

HELEN
(turns to Judith)
I'm not coming back to work.

JUDITH
I'm not asking you to.

HELEN
I mean it. Find yourself another writer. I'm not writing again. Not another word.

JUDITH
You don't have to do anything you don't want to.
(said to lift her spirits)
But you do need to bathe. Let me run you a bath?

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Freshly bathed, Helen puts on her robe. To her surprise, she does feel better. And then she sees the shaving cream and razor on the sink.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Judith empties dead flowers into a garbage bag as Helen emerges from the bathroom.

JUDITH
How 'bout I hire someone to come clean this for you?

HELEN
I need to get out of here.

JUDITH
Come stay with me for awhile.

HELEN
I need to get out of the city. I can't think clearly in New York.

JUDITH
How 'bout your mom in California?

HELEN
I'd rather walk on hot coals.
(beat)
I was thinking of a little Inn on the Chesapeake Bay. I used to go there with my parents...

EXT. NEW YORK APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Helen steps out into the sunlight for the first time in weeks.

INT. HELEN'S CAR, HOLLAND TUNNEL - DAY

Helen breaks from the RUSH OF TRAFFIC for the tunnel.

SERIES OF SHOTS OF HELEN'S CAR

Merging onto the Jersey Turnpike.

The Pulaski Highway.

Summit Bridge Road. The trees have turned. The leaves are a magnificent shade of crimson, burnt orange, and yellow.

Crossing into Maryland.

A left on Ocean Gateway. A right onto St. Michaels Road, Chesapeake Bay.

INT. HELEN'S CAR / EXT. ST. MICHAELS - AFTERNOON

Helen drives through the charming main artery past taverns, chowder shacks and antique stores. She pulls over in front of a little market and goes in.

MOMENTS LATER

She comes out with a paper bag. Clearly a bottle.

INT. HELEN'S CAR / ROAD LEADING TO THE INN - EARLY EVENING

Helen rolls down the window and breathes in a wave of nostalgia. The next bend and the Inn comes into view. Except for the time of year, nothing much has changed.

Helen pulls up and parks. She shoves the bag into her purse.

INT. THE INN, LOBBY

GUESTS gather having pre-dinner cocktails. With her overnight bags, Helen walks to the front desk and Martha Finberg, now eighty-two, greets her. The face is older but Helen immediately recognizes her.

MARTHA
Welcome to the Inn.

HELEN
Miss Finberg?

MARTHA
Yes.

HELEN
You're probably not going to remember me. I'm Helen Martin. My parents and I used to come here every summer when I was a kid.

Martha studies her face.

MARTHA
You used to help my father behind the desk.

HELEN
Yes, that's right. That was me.

MARTHA
How are your parents doing?

HELEN
My father passed away a few years back. My mother remarried. She lives in California now.

MARTHA
Give her my best.

The phone RINGS and Martha answers.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
The Inn at Saint Michaels...

Helen looks around as Martha speaks.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
You missed the exit. Double back and get off at Ocean.

She hangs up.

HELEN
What was the name of the bellboy that used to work here? Was it Alan?

MARTHA
Alex. Alex is the general manager now.

HELEN
No kidding. Good for him.

MARTHA
Are you just passing through or would you like a room?

HELEN
One of the cottages.

MARTHA
The cottages were closed down after the summer season. But there's plenty of rooms here in the main house.

HELEN
Something in the back?

Helen gets out a credit card and hands it to Martha.

MARTHA
You're Helen Bouchard now? Will your husband be joining you?

An uncomfortable shift of her shoulder.

HELEN
...No.

As Martha does some punching in on the computer, Helen waits patiently, keeping control of her emotions. Martha hands her back her credit card and a keycard and Helen quickly takes them.

MARTHA
Do you need help with your luggage?

No answer from Helen as she hurries to the stairs.

INT. SUITE SIXTEEN

Helen enters, leaning back against the door to catch her breath. The room is lovely with it's four-poster bed, colonial furniture and large bay window with a window seat. Helen could care less.

Leaving her things by the door, Helen heads for the window. She opens it and takes an inhale of the cool air.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Soaking in the tub, Helen stares at the photo of David in her hand. She finishes the last of the wine in her glass and reaches for the bottle to refill it.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

The room is dark, except for the flutter of the T.V. The empty bottle sits on the nightstand. Helen can barely keep her eyes open. She grabs the remote and CLICK --

BLACKOUT:

EXT. A COUNTRYSIDE PATIO, FRANCE - DAY

At an outdoor table, a LARGE GROUP eats, laughs, and enjoys the day. Among them are Helen and David. DAVID'S SISTER, 30s, stands and lifts her glass into the air.

DAVID'S SISTER
To having my brother back at home, even though it's temporary. And to having his beautiful wife here with him...knowing that is forever. To David and Helen.

ALL
David and Helen!

A happy Helen takes David's hand in hers.

HELEN
I want you to know...

DAVID
Yes..?

HELEN
It's important that you know...how much I--

HARD CUT TO:

INT. THE INN, SUITE SIXTEEN - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Helen is forced awake. A LIGHT from somewhere outside has hit her square in the eyes.

Irritated, she throws the blanket off and stumbles to the window. She's fusing with the curtains when she catches sight of a MAN walking about, smoking a cigarette.

Helen watches him. His shoulder's are hunched, his head down... but there's something familiar about him. The man stomps out his smoke and heads back toward the lit cottage.

The PORCH LIGHT goes OFF. Helen closes the curtains and the ROOM GOES DARK.

INT. SUITE SIXTEEN - MORNING

A hung-over Helen messes with a coffee pot that isn't working right. Her frustration takes her to the phone, were she dials the front desk.

HELEN
I'd like to order some room service... Why not..? What if I don't want to go to the buffet..?

INT. THE INN, DINING ROOM - MORNING

GUESTS move through the buffet as Helen enters. A fat, BALD MAN in his late 30s, greets her. Helen glances down at his name tag. It reads - ALEX T.

ALEX
Table for one?

HELEN
Yes.

ALEX escorts Helen to one of the smaller tables. She sits.

ALEX
Would you care for coffee?

HELEN
Thanks.

Alex gets a nearby pot and as he pours for her...

HELEN (CONT'D)
You broke my heart, you know.

ALEX
(startled)
Excuse me?

HELEN
I was ten. I used to follow you everywhere like a little puppy and you told me to fuck off.

ALEX
I-I don't remember that. But I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings.

HELEN
I survived.

ALEX
(a bit uncomfortable)
Help yourself to the buffet when you're ready.

He starts to go.

HELEN
Oh, Alex.

Alex turns back.

HELEN (CONT'D)
There's a man staying in one of the cottages. Could you ask him to keep the porch light off at night?

ALEX
The cottages were closed down after the season.

HELEN
I don't know what to tell you, cause he was out there and he had the porch light on.

ALEX
You must have seen headlights from the road.

HELEN
(adamant)
I know the difference between headlights and a porch light.

ALEX
(now he's concerned)
You saw a man go into one of the cottages? He had a key?

HELEN
I guess I didn't see him go in...

Now Helen isn't sure at all of what she saw.

ALEX
If the lights from the highway are bothering you, we can get you another room.

HELEN
No... It's fine. Forget it.

Alex walks away and Helen goes over to the buffet. Rollins, now in his 50s, is tending to guests. He smiles broadly at Helen as she moves up in line.

ROLLINS
Miss Helen! Oh my goodness, look at you all grown up. Miss Finberg told me you were back here for a visit. How's life been treating you?

HELEN
(dry)
Couldn't be better. Yourself?

ROLLINS
Couldn't be better. How 'bout I make you one of my special omelets?

HELEN
Just...some dry toast, thanks.

ROLLINS
(with a wink)
A little under the weather this morning?

HELEN
You could say that.

ROLLINS
Then allow me.

Rollins gets a glass of orange juice, breaks an egg into it, then hits it with Tobasco. He stirs, then hands it to her.

ROLLINS (CONT'D)
Drink this slowly and you'll feel right as rain.

HELEN
(looks at the glass)
If only it were that easy.

INT. SUITE SIXTEEN - DAY

Helen sits on the bed, trying to concentrate on her book. She can't and puts it down. Grabbing the clicker, she turns on the T.V. CNN comes on...a war torn area appears on screen. She immediately CLICKS it off.

Next, she's over to the mini-fridge. Opening it, she eyes the small bottles of booze. Too early. Even for her. Helen shuts the refrigerator door and glances out the window at what seems like a beautiful fall day.

EXT. THE INN - DAY

Helen gets into her car and pulls out of the parking lot.

INT. HELEN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

As she drives away from the Inn, Helen glances back.

HELEN
Huh. I guess you can see the road from my room.

EXT. ST. MICHAELS, MAIN STREET - DAY

Bundling her coat around her, Helen walks the quaint street. A little antique store gets her attention and she goes in.

INT. ANTIQUE STORE - DAY

As Helen browses, the STORE OWNER comes over.

STORE OWNER
Is there anything I can help you with?

HELEN
Just looking, thanks.

STORE OWNER
Let me know if you have a question about any of the pieces.

The owner heads to the front and Helen continues looking. She comes across an old IBM typewriter from the 1960s. Her hand reaches down and presses a key. She moves on to a lovely little bud vase. She picks it up, admiring it.

CUT TO:

The owner wrapping the vase and placing it in a bag.

STORE OWNER (CONT'D)
Enjoy your vase.

HELEN
Thank you.

Helen takes the bag and leaves the store.

EXT. THE INN - EVENING

As Helen walks back to the Inn, she notices a strange thing. Martha Finberg emerging from the woods. She looks distraught. Helen calls over to her.

HELEN
Miss Finberg? Is everything alright?

Martha gives her a quick, unfriendly look, then heads inside.

INT. THE INN, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Dressed for dinner, Helen arrives at the RECEPTIONIST's desk.

HELEN
Table for one.

FEMALE RECEPTIONIST
This way.

The girl leads Helen to a table near the window.

HELEN
Can you have the waiter bring me a bottle of the house Cabernet?

FEMALE RECEPTIONIST
I'll have it sent right over.

The girl goes. Helen opens her menu.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAME - LATER THAT NIGHT

Helen pushes away her half-eaten plate of food, opting to finish the wine instead. A YOUNG COUPLE at the next table gets her attention. She can't help but watch them. They're deeply in love. She's surprised at how much it angers her.

ROLLINS (O.S.)
I was just on my way out when I saw you sitting here.

Helen glances up to see Rollins approaching. He's dressed in street clothes.

ROLLINS (CONT'D)
How are you finding your stay? Is it everything you remember?

Helen nods.

ROLLINS (CONT'D)
How long will you be with us?

HELEN
Sorta taking it day by day.

ROLLINS
Nothing pressing to get back to?

HELEN
(thrown)
What? What's that supposed to mean?

ROLLINS
Nothing. I just meant...

He can see that she's bothered.

ROLLINS (CONT'D)
I'm sorry if I offended you.

HELEN
Please have the waiter bring me the check?

ROLLINS
I really didn't mean anything by--

HELEN
Would you bring me the goddamn check!

Everyone in the room turns. Helen gets up.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Just charge it to my room.

And she's out of there.

ROLLINS
Helen?!

EXT. THE INN, BEACH - NIGHT

Helen can't get away from the Inn fast enough. As soon as she gets to the waters edge, she lets loose a PRIMAL SCREAM! Helen plops to the sand, catching her breath.

HELEN
I can't take much more.

She lays back, looking up at the heavens. Looking for solace. For relief. For an answer. Nothing but stars in the sky. An exhausted Helen closes her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SAME - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

The FOG HORN abruptly wakes Helen. She looks around, unsure of where she is. And then it all comes back. Pushing herself up, Helen brushes off the sand and heads back toward the Inn. The COLD WIND blows and she pulls in her sweater.

Off through the trees, something gets her attention... A PORCH LIGHT from one of the cottages is on.

HELEN
Headlights, my ass.

With determination, and looking to take her anger out on someone, Helen makes her way through the trees toward the light. Getting closer, she hears the SOUND of a TYPEWRITER. There's something eerily familiar about all of this.

Helen finds herself in front of COTTAGE FIVE.

The TYPING STOPS as if waiting for her next move.

EXT. COTTAGE FIVE - CONTINUOUS

Helen quietly steps up onto the porch and goes to the window. The dirty glass gives everything inside a distorted feel.

Helen peeks in WHEN--

A SHADOW crosses from inside. Helen pulls back, out of view. She waits a moment then cautiously leans in again.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

A MAN paces.

Helen goes to the door. She raises her hand to knock, but stops herself. Not sure why, she reaches for the door knob, gently turning it. A CLICK as the door unlatches. Helen slowly pushes it open.

THERE

At the bar, his back to her, the man pours a drink. Helen takes a step forward and CREAK - the floorboards groan underfoot...

The MAN SWINGS AROUND. Helen isn't sure what she's seeing. The man looks very similar to the man she met as a girl.

Her mind races for an explanation.

HELEN
Have...have we met?

The man says nothing. Helen's hand reaches back for the open door. As soon as she feels it, Helen turns and gets out of there.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Helen hurries for the Inn. She glances back behind her and trips over something. Helen shakes it off and regains her footing, walking straight into--

MARTHA. Helen SCREAMS.

MARTHA
What are you doing out here?

INT. THE INN, MARTHA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

There's a sitting room, bedroom off to the side, and a small kitchen. Martha pours a glass of brandy and brings it to a seated Helen.

HELEN
You don't understand...
(beat)
I think this was the same man I met as a girl. But he hasn't aged. I mean, how is that even possible?

Martha starts to laugh.

MARTHA
Is that what all the drama is about?

Helen feels a bit ridiculous.

HELEN
This is funny because..?

MARTHA
You're thinking of Mr. Bennett. Jackson's father. He used to do his writing here during the summer. That's who you saw when you were a girl. That's who you remember.

HELEN
So, you're saying...That's his son out there?

MARTHA
Yes. He rents the place from time to time.

HELEN
My god, they look alike.

MARTHA
There's a strong resemblance, yes.

HELEN
There certainly is.

Helen take a sip of the brandy and laughs at herself.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I don't know what the hell I was thinking. I haven't been in my right mind lately and I guess I just let my imagination get the best of me.

MARTHA
Rollins mentioned there was also an incident at dinner this evening.

The light mood changes.

HELEN
I...yes. I behaved badly.

Martha puts the stopper back in the brandy bottle and puts it away.

MARTHA
Maybe coming back here wasn't such a good idea, dear.

Helen's a bit surprised. Is she being asked to leave?

HELEN
Well, I'm...

Helen puts her glass down then rises.

HELEN (CONT'D)
...I'm sorry for all the trouble I've caused.

Martha escorts her to the door.

MARTHA
I'm just thinking about what's best for you.

HELEN
Please tell Mr. Bennett that I'm sorry for barging in on him like that.

MARTHA
I'll be sure to let him know.

Martha opens the door.

As Helen walks away, she turns back to say something. But Martha doesn't wait, shutting the door before she speaks.

With an exhale, Martha locks the door and heads back inside. She catches her reflection in the mirror and stops. Her eyes register astonishment at how old she looks. Martha lifts her hand to her face and her fingers move across the deep lines.

EXT. THE INN - EARLY MORNING

The still bay shimmers with the first rays of light. Seagulls scatter and shoot into the sky.

INT. THE INN, SUITE SIXTEEN - MORNING

Helen zips up her packed suitcase and leaves it by the door. She grabs her room key and heads out.

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

The place is bustling with hungry guests. Helen moves up in line and is soon greeted by Alex.

ALEX
Table for one?

HELEN
Could I just get a coffee to go?

As Alex pours coffee into a to-go cup, Helen leans in.

HELEN (CONT'D)
You really should have said something.

ALEX
Excuse me?

HELEN
I get that the guy wants his privacy, but if you had just given me a head's up, I wouldn't have made a complete ass out of myself last night.

Alex stares at her, baffled.

ALEX
I must have done a real number on you when you were a kid. I'm sorry I broke your heart like that.

Now Helen looks baffled.

EXT. THE INN - MORNING

As Helen walks through the parking lot with her luggage, her eyes go to the cottages. Placing her bags in the trunk, Helen is about to go to the driver's side when she changes her mind and starts toward the woods.

EXT. THE INN - MORNING

Helen makes her way through the trees. Soon, she finds herself in front of Cottage Five. Helen musters some courage and walks up to the door. She KNOCKS.

HELEN
Mr. Bennett?

Helen waits a moment, then KNOCKS again.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Mr. Bennett, I'm sorry to disturb you. I'd just like a moment of your time.

No one seems to be home. Helen turns to go and walks straight into JACKSON BENNETT.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Son-of-a..!
(catching her breath)
You didn't have to sneak up on me like that!

Jackson doesn't say a word. His eyes lock on Helen, a penetrating, unwavering stare.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Well, I'm...I'm glad I ran into you...

Up close, Helen can see just how handsome he is beneath the five-o'clock shadow.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I-a just wanted to explain my behavior last night.

JACKSON
Not necessary.

He starts to walk past, lightly brushing against her.

HELEN
Wait.

He stops. But doesn't look at her.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I wanted to apologize for bursting in on you like that. It was very rude of me and I wanted to say how sorry I was.

Helen waits for his response. None comes.

HELEN (CONT'D)
The normal response is "No problem. Apology accepted".

JACKSON
(no emotion)
No problem. Apology accepted.

Jackson gives her a curious glare.

HELEN
Okay, then. I guess we're good.

Helen shakes her head and starts back toward her car.

ABOUT HALF WAY THERE

She starts to get really annoyed.

HELEN (CONT'D)
(mocking)
No problem. Apology accepted. What a condescending bastard.

Helen whips around and with determination, heads back to Cottage Five. She stomps up the porch and KNOCKS hard, but doesn't wait for the door to be answered. She opens it.

INSIDE

Jackson turns to her, surprised.

JACKSON
Can I help you with something else?

HELEN
Yeah. If you don't want to accept my apology, then don't! I'm a big girl. I can take it.

JACKSON
Good to know.

HELEN
And just for the record... The reason I was acting like a crazy person last night, because under normal circumstances I'm very rational, the reason I ran outta here like a chicken with my head cut off...I met your father when I was a girl. And, well, you... you look just like him. It's unnerving how much so...I mean the whole scene is like an acid flashback or something...

Jackson takes her in, intrigued.

HELEN (CONT'D)
But I thought you'd like to know... I wanted to tell you...That your father made quite the impression on me. Changed my life, really. If it wasn't for him, I never would have been...I never would have become...

Quite suddenly, Helen's overtaken by emotion and she's not sure how to handle it.

JACKSON
Are you all right?

Helen musters the words.

HELEN
Doesn't matter. Sorry to have disturbed you.

She quickly leaves.

EXT. THE COTTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Helen walks away from the cottage. She picks up the pace and starts to run...

Past the Inn and across the parking lot...

Helen gets to her car, fumbling to get her keys out of her purse. She leans against the car and the tears finally come. Hard. In the distance the FOG HORN sounds. A terribly lonely moment.

CAR DOORS SHUT and VOICES can be heard. Helen looks up and nods at the GUESTS walking by her. Once they've gone, she brushes away her tears and gets out her keys.

JACKSON (O.S.)
I didn't mean to offend you.

A startled Helen looks up to see Jackson standing there.

HELEN
Where the hell did you come--?!

JACKSON
I'm sorry. I was a real ass.

HELEN
It's not you. It's me. I thought if I came back...I don't know what I thought. My decision making hasn't been very stellar these days.

JACKSON
I think you're just supposed to say "No problem. Apology accepted".

HELEN
(a smile)
No problem. Apology accepted.

JACKSON
So, my father made quite the impression on you, did he?

HELEN
Yeah. Yeah, he did.

JACKSON
How so?

HELEN
(recites)
At least when the bombs were dropping, we knew what to expect. The silence was...an enigma.

Jackson gives her a curious look.

HELEN (CONT'D)
It was from something he was working on. And when I read it, well, I just knew that's what I wanted to do with my life.

JACKSON
You're a journalist?

HELEN
I write for the New York--, well, used to write. I used to write for the Times.

JACKSON
But you don't anymore?

Helen looks down. He can see it's a tender subject.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
You don't need to answer that.

HELEN
I prefer not to.
(beat)
Your father. Is he still alive?

JACKSON
No.

HELEN
I'm sorry to hear that.
(beat)
Miss Finberg told me you also come here to write.

JACKSON
Martha talked to you about me?

HELEN
Well, she had to say something after I rambled on like an idiot.

Jackson gives her a questioning look.

HELEN (CONT'D)
It's nothing. But I have worn out my welcome.

JACKSON
She asked you to leave because of me?

HELEN
It wasn't just that.

JACKSON
I'll have a talk with her.

HELEN
I wish you wouldn't.

JACKSON
It was an honest mistake.

HELEN
You don't need to. Really.

JACKSON
It's done. I'm sorry, I didn't get your name.

Helen extends her hand.

HELEN
Helen.

There's a brief hesitation before Jackson gives her his hand. Helen shakes it firmly.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Nice meeting you, Jackson.

JACKSON
Nice to meet you, Helen.

Their hands release.

HELEN
Would you like to go inside? Buy you a cup of coffee.

JACKSON
I really have to get back to work.

HELEN
Another time, then.

Jackson starts to walk away. Helen calls after him.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Thanks for making sure I was okay. I appreciate it.

Jackson turns back to her.

JACKSON
I'll be done early this evening. Would you...like to come by later..?

HELEN
(thinks)
All right.

Jackson nods, then turns to leave.

OVER AT THE INN

Alex carries a box from the house to a shed. He catches sight of Helen alone at her car.

INT. SUITE SIXTEEN - LATER THAT EVENING

At the mirror, Helen finishes the last touches on her make-up. She backs up and checks out the dress that she's chosen. For the first time in awhile, Helen's looking forward to going out and she's not sure how she feels about it.

INT. THE INN, LOBBY

Martha's checking in a GUEST when she sees Helen coming down the stairs. When Helen doesn't head into dinner, but toward the back exit, Martha becomes alarmed. She motions over Alex.

MARTHA
Watch the front desk for me.

EXT. WOODS BEHIND THE INN - NIGHT

A beautiful night. Lots of stars. Helen starts toward Cottage Five. The light from inside guiding her way.

EXT. COTTAGE FIVE

Helen climbs up the stairs, straightens her dress, then gently KNOCKS on the door.

JACKSON (O.S.)
Come in.

INT. COTTAGE FIVE - CONTINUOUS

Helen comes in, closing the door behind her. Jackson's at the table pouring two glasses of whiskey.

HELEN
Not a fan of whiskey.

JACKSON
And you call yourself a writer.

HELEN
Is that a challenge? Cause if that's a challenge, then I accept.

Jackson brings over her drink.

JACKSON
Bottoms up.

He knocks his back. She knocks her's back, making a face.

HELEN
That'll put hair on your chest.

Helen notices the old typewriter on the desk and goes over.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Your father's?

JACKSON
Yeah. I like the feel of it.

HELEN
So we both followed in his footsteps.

JACKSON
Quite by accident. I was over there working on a novel when the war broke out. I had never thought of being a journalist but there I was in the middle of everything, so it seemed like the logical thing to do.

She notices the stack of typed pages beside the typewriter.

HELEN
Is this what you're working on? Can I take a peek?

JACKSON
Actually, I'm kinda...I'm kinda at a loss as to the direction it's taking, so I'd prefer it if you didn't.

HELEN
(pressing him)
Can you tell me what it's about?

JACKSON
It was supposed to be a love story, but now...

HELEN
You're writing a romance novel?

JACKSON
You don't like love stories?

HELEN
No, it's just... You come off more Jack London than Jane Austin.

Jackson watches her as she continues to walk around, stopping at an old BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTO of a LOVELY GIRL, 20s, with flowing dark hair.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Is this your mother?

JACKSON
No. I'm just using the photo for inspiration.

Helen leaves the photo and looks for somewhere to sit. She settles into a chair. Tries to make small talk.

HELEN
So, um,...do you come here often?

JACKSON
A reasonable amount.

HELEN
Where do you live, when you're not here?

JACKSON
I'm from a small town in Illinois.

HELEN
You have family there?

JACKSON
No. Everyone is gone.

HELEN
Everyone? No brothers or sisters?

He shakes his head.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Wow. Sorry. I'm guessing you're not married?

JACKSON
Let's talk about you, how's that?

HELEN
Okay. I'm an only child. Spent most of my childhood in North Carolina. My father built boats. He loved boats. I think he loved boats more than people. He passed away four years ago. My mother remarried a man from San Diego. She met him on-line. Which is just as well. We don't get along.

JACKSON
You're too much like her, I bet.

HELEN
(thinks about that)
I guess we're both set in our ways. But she has absolutely no sense of humor.

JACKSON
And you're just a barrel of laughs.

HELEN
Yeah, okay. I have to work on that.

JACKSON
You live in New York?

HELEN
How'd you know that?

JACKSON
You said you worked for the Times.

HELEN
Oh, right. Yes.

JACKSON
You're here on vacation?

HELEN
(matter-of-fact)
My husband just died and I couldn't stand being in the apartment anymore.

Helen looks at Jackson, stunned.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I can't believe I just blurted it out like that.

Jackson takes a seat on the corner of the bed, near her chair.

JACKSON
How did he die? If you don't mind me asking?

HELEN
We were in the middle-east, covering a story. There was an explosion and...he was killed right in front of me.

JACKSON
I know that isn't easy to carry around.

Off his look.

HELEN
You've been through it too?

There's a moment when Jackson is going to say something. But instead...

JACKSON
How about another glass of that swill?

HELEN
Sure.

Jackson takes her glass and walks toward the table to pour another drink.

JACKSON
I think we could use some music, don't you?

Jackson motions over to an old record player.

HELEN
I didn't see that there.

Helen goes over. As she leafs through the record collection - Jazz, Blues, Swing, Jackson walks over. As he passes the lamp, the bulb DIMS then CRANKS UP again. Very subtle.

HELEN (CONT'D)
You have an impressive collection.

Jackson picks BILLIE HOLIDAY and puts it on. Her MELODIC VOICE crackles off the vinyl.

JACKSON
May I have this dance?

HELEN
Thanks, but no thanks.

JACKSON
(teasing)
You don't know how?

HELEN
Of course, I know how.

Jackson extends his hand.

HELEN (CONT'D)
You're going to make me do this, aren't you?

JACKSON
Come on.

Helen takes his hand and Jackson guides her to the center of the room. They start to slow dance. Helen's not at all comfortable, so she talks.

HELEN
What paper did you write for?

JACKSON
Freelance, mostly.

HELEN
I don't recall reading any of your articles.

JACKSON
They're out there. Somewhere.

HELEN
Where were you stationed?

JACKSON
I-a-moved around a lot with a group of flyers. How 'bout you?

HELEN
Kandahar, Kabul, most recently Aleppo.

JACKSON
Is that where your husband was killed?

HELEN
(nods)
Your father told me that only a certain kind of person could do what we do.

JACKSON
Most people don't have the stomach for it.

Helen looks up at Jackson. Her eyes find his.

HELEN
It really is uncanny.

Looking deep into his eyes, Helen starts to feel safe. She begins to breathe easier and her body relaxes into his. With tenderness, Jackson pulls her in closer and the weight of her world melts away as Helen buries herself deep into his chest.

Jackson rests his cheek against hers. Helen closes her eyes.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I miss him.

JACKSON
I know.

EXT. COTTAGE FIVE - SAME TIME

Standing just outside, watching Helen and Jackson dance, is a sad and lonely Martha. She turns and heads back toward the Inn.

INT. COTTAGE FIVE - LATER THAT EVENING

Curled up in a chair, Helen listens as Jackson finishes reading from Jack London's "In a Far Country".

JACKSON
...Well, he would have company. If Gabriel ever broke the silence of the North, they would stand together, hand in hand, before the great White throne. And God would judge them, God would judge them. Then Percy Cuthfert closed his eyes and dropped off to sleep.

Jackson closes the book.

HELEN
Nice.

JACKSON
Can I get you another drink?

HELEN
No. Nothing more.

Helen gets up.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I'm gonna get going.

JACKSON
You sure? The night's still young.

HELEN
I'm exhausted and I need to sleep.

Helen gets her wrap...

HELEN (CONT'D)
Thank you for a lovely evening.

EXT. COTTAGE FIVE - MOMENTS LATER

From the doorway, Jackson watches her head back to the Inn.

INT. SUITE SIXTEEN, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Wearing only her slip, Helen's at the mirror wiping away at her make-up. There's a KNOCK at the door.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dressed in a robe, Helen answers the door. There stands Rollins with a tray of tea and pie.

ROLLINS
Miss Finberg thought you might care for a slice of the chef's rhubarb pie. It's on the house.

HELEN
That's very nice of her but, no thanks.

ROLLINS
Why don't I just leave it. You might change your mind later.

Helen motions him in. Rollins carries the tray over to the table.

HELEN
Rollins...I'm sorry about how I spoke to you yesterday. I don't know what got into me.

ROLLINS
Don't you worry about that. We all have bad days. Would you like me to pour you a cup of tea?

HELEN
I...yes, thanks.

As Rollins pours...

ROLLINS
Mr. Bennett isn't well.

HELEN
Excuse me?

Rollins sets down the tea pot and turns to her.

ROLLINS
Mr. Bennett isn't a well man.

HELEN
What do you mean? Is he sick?

ROLLINS
He is, what my mother used to refer to as...a troubled man. I don't think it's in your best interest to have anymore interaction with him.

HELEN
Is he dangerous?

ROLLINS
Not to anyone but himself. But Miss Finberg would prefer it if you didn't see him again. The Inn can't be responsible if he was to do or say anything... objectionable.

Helen takes it in, not sure if she's totally buying it.

HELEN
You can tell Miss Finberg that I've dealt with far more dangerous things than a lonely writer with too much time on his hands. But thank her for her concern.

Rollins nods.

ROLLINS
If you can put the tray in the hall when your finished..?

HELEN
I will.

Rollins goes. Helen thinks about what was said, but quickly dismisses it.

EXT. COTTAGE FIVE - SAME TIME

Jackson sits on the steps, smoking a cigarette. He looks up at Helen's room. Her light goes off.

INT. SUITE SIXTEEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Something startles Helen awake. At the foot of the bed stands a male figure.

HELEN
(disorientated)
David?

Jackson steps out from the shadows and into the soft moonlight. Helen quickly sits up.

HELEN (CONT'D)
How did you..? What are you doing here?

Instead, Jackson walks over and sits beside her, gently brushing the hair from her face. Helen looks into his eyes, her heart racing.

HELEN (CONT'D)
You should go.

Jackson leans into her and kisses her gently. Her lips give into his and he kisses her harder. Her body surrenders as he slowly leans her back on the bed. She peels off his shirt and they start to make love.

SUDDENLY

HELEN WAKES with a startle. She sits up and takes a deep inhale.

EXT. THE INN - DAY

Helen and Jackson take a stroll by the water. The waves lap against the shore.

HELEN (CONT'D)
So you know what his advice to me was..? Bring dry soup!

Jackson laughs.

HELEN (CONT'D)
No, I mean it. And when I got to the safe house, the cupboards were all filled with different kinds of dry soup. He told every reporter who ever worked for him to bring dry soup.

JACKSON
And you all did.

HELEN
We all did!

JACKSON
Did anyone every actually eat the stuff?

HELEN
I don't think so. Are you hungry?

JACKSON
Not really.

HELEN
Do you want to go to town or something?

JACKSON
I...I prefer to stick around here. Is that okay?

HELEN
Suit yourself.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. INN / INT. GAZEBO - LATE AFTERNOON

Helen and Jackson sit next to each other, facing the water.

JACKSON
There were eight of us who flew together. Six Americans, two English. We were dispatched to take out a factory and the plane to the right of us took fire. They were killed instantly. That pretty much ended the days of reporters going on flying missions with the military.

HELEN
I don't know why I never heard about any of this.

Jackson shakes his head, not sure either.

HELEN (CONT'D)
No female reporters flew with you?

JACKSON
No gals.

HELEN
Gals?! Did you just refer to us as gals?!

JACKSON
Girls?

She playfully slugs him. Jackson laughs as he pulls away.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Okay, Okay! Women!

HELEN
You said you weren't married, but there was a girl, wasn't there?

JACKSON
(joking)
With somebody as messed up as me, there's always a girl.

HELEN
Who was she?

JACKSON
She...I don't really want to talk about it.

HELEN
Ended badly?

He says nothing.

HELEN (CONT'D)
What happened?

JACKSON
I...I honestly don't know.

HELEN
Where is she now?

JACKSON
Not sure.

HELEN
Have you ever tried to find her?

JACKSON
For someone who doesn't want to talk about their own personal life, you sure like to butt into everyone else's.

HELEN
(beat, surprised.)
Okay. What do you want to know?

JACKSON
(backing off)
I'm sorry. You don't need to answer that.

HELEN
No, no. You're right. Ask away.

Jackson thinks a moment, then...

JACKSON
Do you think the pain of losing your husband will go away by not writing anymore?

HELEN
Do you think the pain of losing this girl will go away by writing all the time?

There's a deep connection here, a spark between them and acting on that impulse, Helen leans into Jackson. She kisses him. Jackson suddenly pulls back.

HELEN (CONT'D)
(surprised)
I'm sorry. I didn't--

JACKSON
No. Don't be...it's just...I don't want you to get hurt.

HELEN
I won't get--

JACKSON
I haven't had a day this good in a really long time. Maybe we can just..?

HELEN
Yes. We'll, just...No worries, okay?

EXT. THE INN - EARLY EVENING

They walk toward the entrance.

JACKSON
So, I'll see you later?

HELEN
I know where to find you.

Jackson gives her a smile then heads back through the woods.

INT. THE INN, HALLWAY

Helen makes her way toward her room. She slips the keycard through the lock, then enters.

INT. SUITE SIXTEEN - CONTINUOUS

To her surprise, there sits Miss Finberg.

HELEN
Unless you have urgent hotel business, I'd like you to leave.

Martha lifts her hand. In it is a BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO.

MARTHA
He came here when I was sixteen.

Martha motions for her to take the picture. Helen does.

INT. THE INN LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Rollins is speaking with a guest when commotion from the stairs tears him away from the conversation.

HELEN (O.S.)
Stay away from me, Martha!

Helen hurries down the steps and out the back door. Rollins waits for Martha at the bottom of the stairs.

ROLLINS
Do you want me to go after her?

MARTHA
No. She needs to hear it for herself.

INT. COTTAGE FIVE

Jackson is at the record player. He turns, hearing Helen come in.

HELEN
(scoffs)
My god, that old woman has completely lost it. You're not going to believe what Martha just told me.

Jackson gently removes the needle from the record and the place goes quiet.

JACKSON
What did she say?

HELEN
Well, first she tried to scare me off by telling me you're crazy and now she wants me to believe that you and your father are really one and the same. That it was you I met as a girl.
(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)
And to prove it, she shows me this old picture from the 1940's and says that it's you standing next to her. She's sure got it out for you. What the hell did you do to her, anyway?

Jackson says nothing. Helen plops down in a chair.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Can I use your phone? I left mine back in the room.

JACKSON
I don't have one.

Helen thinks a moment.

HELEN
I don't know what you want to do, but I'm gonna get a room some place else. Do you want me to make us reservations?

No answer.

HELEN (CONT'D)
You're not going to stay here, are you?

JACKSON
Do you want a drink?

HELEN
No, thanks.

Helen studies Jackson as he walks to the bar. His shoulder's are tense, his expression serious.

HELEN (CONT'D)
What's going on?

JACKSON
What do you mean?

HELEN
You don't seem very surprised by any of this.

Helen's eyes drop to the bottle of whiskey as Jackson pours. For the first time she notices the brand. It's an old brand called "White Horse". She then gets a look at the watch on his wrist. A "vintage" Rolex...

Helen's eyes zero in on the manual typewriter and the non-filtered cigarettes in a tin ash tray next to it. Helen looks over at the record player and the old albums...

Her heart beating faster, Helen takes in the entire room. She realizes that everything in here is at least sixty years old. The next few words come very slowly.

HELEN (CONT'D)
When did we first meet, Jackson?

He doesn't answer. Helen rises.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Jackson?

He turns to her, years of sadness in his eyes.

JACKSON
You were nine or ten.

Helen works hard to keep it together.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
You were lost. You came inside and read what I was working on.

HELEN
I told you all of that.

Jackson inhales and looks straight at Helen.

JACKSON
You didn't know what the word enigma meant.

Helen goes white, her mind reels.

HELEN
Is this something you and the old woman cooked up to bring in the tourists? Is that what this is? Is it?! My god. You're all nuts!

Jackson takes a step toward her. NOW SHE NOTICES that the desk light DIMS as he passes.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Stay where you are!

JACKSON
Just let me--

HELEN
I said don't take another step!

Helen turns, SLAMMING the door on her way out.

INT. SUITE SIXTEEN

Hastily, Helen throws all her things into her bag.

EXT. THE INN, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Helen can't get into her car fast enough.

BACK AT THE ENTRANCE

A worried Rollins hurries out into the parking lot.

ROLLINS
Helen! Wait!

Her ignition ROARS and Helen PEELS out. Rollins turns back to Martha, who's standing at the door.

ROLLINS (CONT'D)
I hate that she's driving in that state. Maybe I should go after her.

MARTHA
You'll do nothing of the kind.

Abruptly, Jackson's BOOMING VOICE echoes from the woods.

JACKSON
MARTHA!!

MARTHA
(to Rollins)
Go back in and tend to the guests.

Martha takes a deep inhale, then walks toward the cottages.

INT. COTTAGE FIVE - MOMENTS LATER

Like a caged animal, Jackson paces the room. He turns on Martha as she enters.

JACKSON
Why?!

MARTHA
I wasn't going to let you do to her what you did to me.

JACKSON
It's a little late to play the martyr, isn't it Martha?

Stepping up to him.

MARTHA
You think this is how I wanted my life to be? I have no one. No husband, no children. No one.

JACKSON
You have no one because you wanted me all to yourself.

MARTHA
That's a lie and you know it.

JACKSON
Is it?

Jackson pushes back.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
You could'a helped me outta of this place but you didn't! Why didn't you?!

Martha backs away, breathing hard.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Goddammit! Answer me!

MARTHA
I was...

JACKSON
You were what?!

MARTHA
I was just so glad to still have you here and God help me, I should never have encouraged you to stay--

JACKSON
THEN WHY DID YOU?!

MARTHA
Because I loved you..!

Tears flow down her lined face.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
I still do.

Jackson looks at her with pity and then backs off.

JACKSON
Just...just go.

Martha exhales and changes gears.

MARTHA
But don't kid yourself, Jackson. You're not here because of me. That was all your doing.

Jackson looks at her, confused.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
You didn't want to go.

JACKSON
Of course I did.

MARTHA
No. You're trapped here because you don't want to know how it ends.

JACKSON
What are you talking about?

MARTHA
Your book. You're afraid. Afraid to write down what might have happened to her.

Jackson quickly dismisses it.

JACKSON
You're some piece of work, you know that? Get out.

MARTHA
It's time to remember what happened to Aveline.

JACKSON
I SAID GET OUT!!

The LIGHTS in the room FLARE, blinding Martha. Objects rise then HURL themselves into the walls.

Martha gets her hand around the doorknob. Suddenly a searing pain shoots up her arm and she winces.

CUT TO:

INT. HELEN'S NEW YORK APARTMENT - NIGHT

An exhausted Helen enters. The place is sparkling. There's a note on the table...

I had the place cleaned. Welcome home, Judith.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Helen drops her suitcases and checks out the clean room. She sees David's overcoat draped across the bed. She gently moves it to the chair, then crawls into bed. The lights GO OFF.

BLACKOUT:

MYSTERIOUS MAN (V.O.)
You'll never be more alive than you are in all that death.

CUT TO:

INT. COTTAGE FIVE - THAT NIGHT IN 1988

Helen finds herself back in the cottage, watching her younger self listening to the Mysterious Man in the shadows. The man she believed to be Jackson's father.

MYSTERIOUS MAN
No one you love will understand that. So you'll withdrawal into a bottle, because that's the only thing that does understand. For awhile, anyway.

Slowly, Helen moves in between him and her younger self.

MYSTERIOUS MAN (CONT'D)
You'll become resentful and cruel and those that loved you will stop loving you.

Helen walks closer to him to get a better look at his face.

MYSTERIOUS MAN (CONT'D)
You'll find yourself all alone with the remnants of a once relevant life.

His face becomes clear now.

MYSTERIOUS MAN (CONT'D)
You'll be a shadow of yourself.

The mysterious man is clearly Jackson Bennett.

YOUNG HELEN (O.S.)
How's the pay?

Jackson manages a laugh.

JACKSON
Not half bad.

IN THE DISTANCE, Helen's worried parents CALL FOR HER.

YOUNG HELEN (O.S.)
Holy, crap! What time is it?!

Helen turns to watch her younger self hurry to the door.

YOUNG HELEN (CONT'D)
Can I come back again? I'd like to find out more.

JACKSON (O.S.)
...You'd better go...Helen.

Helen watches her younger self leave. As she turns back to Jackson, she sees him for what he really is - his luminous form stands before her. Helen is overwhelmed by the sight.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. HELEN'S NEW YORK BEDROOM - NIGHT - PRESENT

Helen wakes with a STARTLE, then turns on the lamp.

INT. APARTMENT OFFICE - NIGHT

Helen sits in front of her computer, typing...

J-A-C-K-S-O-N B-E-N-N-E-T-T

A quick search, and a long list of Jackson Bennett's come up. She narrows the search.

W-O-R-L-D W-A-R T-W-O

Another search and a series of articles come up. All by war correspondent, Jackson Bennett. She comes to an article titled - THE WRITING 69TH - and begins to read...

HELEN
Jackson Bennett was part of a group of eight reporters known as the Writing 69th. Having lived in Paris through the occupation in June of 1940, Bennett was forced to leave when his writings were discovered by the Germans. Hitching a ride with the Army Air Force, he trained with other journalists in parachuting and weapons use. According to colleagues, Bennett's ultimate goal was not to cover the war, but to get back to France...

She scans down.

HELEN (CONT'D)
(reading)
After the war, Bennett returned to Paris, then completely disappeared. Never to write again...

Helen talks to herself as she types. There's an urgency now.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Photographs of war correspondent, Jackson Bennett.

She hits enter. No images come up.

INT. JUDITH FOX'S OFFICE, NEW YORK TIMES - DAY

Judith is on the phone when she sees Helen heading her way.

JUDITH
Can I call you back?

She hangs up just as Helen enters.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
Needless to say, I'm shocked as hell to see you here.

HELEN
I need to research something in the archives.

JUDITH
You working on a story?

HELEN
No. I haven't changed my mind about writing.

JUDITH
Sure. Take all the time you want.

HELEN
Judith... I couldn't have gotten through any of this without you. You're a good friend.

Judith nods. Helen smiles back, then leaves the office.

OFFICE CUBICLE

Helen takes a seat, then types in a password.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Where was it you said you were from?
(types)
Illinois.
(scanning, stops)
There you are. And no photo.
(reads)
Jackson Bennett passed away in 1947 from what appears to have been alcohol related complications. He was found dead...

Helen reacts with utter shock as she continues to read.

HELEN (CONT'D)
...by hotel owner George Finberg after his teenage daughter alerted him that Mr. Bennett was not answering his door.

Her shaking hands type slowly on the keyboard...

Photos of the Writing 69th.

Helen hits enter.

POV OF COMPUTER SCREEN

Wide on the screen is a BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO of EIGHT MEN posed in front of a fighter plane. Helen pushes in on one of the men...

She leans back and stares at the screen, blown away. The man is clearly JACKSON.

IN ANOTHER CUBICLE

BRIAN, a geekish looking fellow in his twenties types away at his keyboard. He has his headset on and is listening to music. Helen appears out of nowhere.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Brian. BRIAN!

A startled Brian rips off his headset.

BRIAN
Helen!

He gets up and hugs her.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
I thought you weren't working here anymore.

HELEN
You wrote an article last year about a woman who said her husband was still living in the house. Even though he had been dead for years.

BRIAN
(where's this going?)
Yeah.

HELEN
Did you believe her?

BRIAN
(thinks)
I guess not. What's there to believe?

Helen grabs a chair and takes a seat.

HELEN
What made him come back? Did he die and then just show up the next day? How did it work?

BRIAN
You really want to hear this?

HELEN
I do.

BRIAN
From what I remember...they were very close and she was devastated at his passing. Didn't get out of bed for weeks. All she thought about was how she could see her husband again. Even thought of taking her own life at one point. And then...
(thinks)
She said that he liked to work in the garage. He made dog houses and toys for the kids and shit like that.

HELEN
And..?

BRIAN
One day...out of the blue...she heard some hammering coming from the garage. She went out there and there he was. Like he had never left.

HELEN
Was it her who made him come back?

BRIAN
I don't think they ever talked about it. If one can really talk to someone who isn't really there.

HELEN
Could she... Could she touch him? Or was he transparent, like a ghost?

BRIAN
You really are into this.

HELEN
Just answer the question.

BRIAN
She could touch him. He could touch her.

HELEN
How...How's that possible?

BRIAN
I spoke with a psychologist and he said that the mind makes it possible by filling in the blanks. Creating form where there is none. She wanted him to be real, so her mind made it so.

HELEN
So it was all in her head?

BRIAN
Maybe not. The youngest daughter said she saw him too.

HELEN
She could have just picked up on the mother's psychosis.

BRIAN
We'll never really know, will we?

Helen goes to leave, then stops.

HELEN
If you didn't believe her, why did you write about it?

BRIAN
I liked the idea. Love being so strong it could overcome even death.
(shrugs)
Call me a romantic.

INT. JUDITH FOX'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

From her desk, Judith notices Helen leaving Brian's cubicle.

INT. BRIAN'S CUBICLE - MOMENTS LATER

Judith shows up, interrupting Brian as he works.

JUDITH
What was Helen talking to you about?

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The place looks like a monastery with all the lit candles. Helen lights the last of a long row. She sits down on the couch and after a moment of gathering her thoughts, Helen begins to speak. Almost a whisper at first.

HELEN
David... I want you to come back.

Helen speaks out, more assertive.

HELEN (CONT'D)
You need to come back. For just a moment. I need to talk to you.

Louder, pleading.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Please. I'm begging you. There are things I need to tell you.

A CLAP of THUNDER and a LIGHT RAIN starts to beat against the windows. Helen digs deeper and tries again.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Please, David. I know you can do this if you really want to. So please...Come back and talk to me.

Helen cries out in frustration.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Why won't you do this? Is it because you didn't think I loved you enough?
(with desperate anger)
GODDAMMIT! I KNOW THAT IT'S POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO DO THIS! IF THAT WOMAN'S HUSBAND CAME BACK AND JACKSON IS STILL HERE--

BUZZ! - A startled Helen looks over at the door.

BUZZ! - Helen slowly gets up and goes over. She glances through the peephole, then opens the door for Judith.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I have a concierge for a reason.

JUDITH
Joe and I have an understanding.

Judith walks past Helen and looks around at all the lit candles.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
Does this have anything to do with the conversation you had with Brian?

HELEN
You are one nosey broad, you know that, Judith?

JUDITH
It's a good thing for you that I am. Tell me what's going on.

HELEN
You won't understand.

Judith plops down on the couch.

JUDITH
Try me.

Helen doesn't know where to begin.

HELEN
While I was away--

JUDITH
Can we turn on a light? This is all a bit too somber.

Helen turns on a lamp, then blows out some candles. She stops what she's doing.

HELEN
I had a, a paranormal experience.

JUDITH
(skeptical)
You saw a ghost..?

HELEN
Don't make fun of me.

JUDITH
I'm not.

Helen takes a seat beside her.

HELEN
The inn I was staying at...In one of the cottages... I saw a ghost.

JUDITH
Did it take form or was it more like an energy force?

HELEN
It took form and--

JUDITH
Male, female?

HELEN
Male.
(beat)
There was interaction.

JUDITH
(intrigued)
No shit.

HELEN
You're saying you believe me?

JUDITH
Of course I believe you. I saw a ghost once too.

HELEN
Where?

JUDITH
The theater department back in college. It was during a rehearsal of "Our Town" and I saw this female apparition down stage right. Looking right at me. We just stood there. Staring at each other. This goddamn ghost and me. And then poof! - she vanished. I never saw her again.

HELEN
Why didn't you ever say anything?

JUDITH
The same reason you were reluctant to tell me.
(MORE)

JUDITH (CONT'D)
No one takes you seriously after you confess something like that.

Judith looks around.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
Were you trying to summon this ghost here or something?

HELEN
No...I...
(feels foolish)
I thought if I was able to see him, maybe I could see David again.

JUDITH
It doesn't work that way, baby.

HELEN
But Brian said the wife in his story was able to bring her husband back.

JUDITH
Is that what he wrote? Who edited his article?

Helen gives her a look.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
There are two kinds of entities. Ones who've crossed over but come back to visit. Those usually come back in a flash or a dream or in a feeling you might get. They're here to let you know they're okay or to give you comfort.

HELEN
And the other kind?

JUDITH
The other kind, the ones who are haunting a place, the ones you can see, interact with, they never crossed over in the first place. They're stuck here for some reason.

HELEN
So, the wife didn't bring him back?

JUDITH
No. He was stuck here. Maybe he felt guilty about leaving her.
(MORE)

JUDITH (CONT'D)
Maybe there was something left for him to do. But she didn't bring him back.

HELEN
(disappointed)
Oh.

JUDITH
The good news is, David had no regrets. No unfinished business. He was able to crossover. That's a good thing.

Then something dawns on Helen. She leans back on the couch.

HELEN
If what you're saying is true, then Jackson's been stuck here all these years.

JUDITH
Your ghost has a name?

As Helen goes to answer, unexpectedly, her CELL PHONE RINGS. Both women jump.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
Oh, for crissakes!

Helen answers her phone.

HELEN
Hello?

She listens for a moment.

HELEN (CONT'D)
When?

CUT TO:

EXT. THE INN - DAY

A HEAVY RAIN comes down. The WIND kicks up and the trees outside the Inn do battle with one another.

Helen's car pulls into the parking lot and Rollins rushes out with an umbrella.

ROLLINS
Thanks for coming.

HELEN
(stepping out of the car)
How is she?

ROLLINS
She's fine. She's resting now.

They walk toward the Inn.

HELEN
This is all so unbelievable.

ROLLINS
I've been working here for thirty years and I still have trouble getting my head around it.

Rollins opens the door for Helen and they step inside.

INT. THE INN LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Rollins closes his umbrella and shakes off the rain.

HELEN
Can everyone here see him?

ROLLINS
Not everyone, no. Some of the staff. Occasionally a guest. I don't know why some can and some can't.

HELEN
Does he know that he's...

ROLLINS
Dead? Yeah, he knows. But not in the same way you and I think of it.

HELEN
What do you mean?

ROLLINS
This is what's real for him now. I don't think he knows how to be anywhere else.

INT. MARTHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

The shutters outside the window BANG around from the wind. Seated in her bed, Martha stares out at the rain. A NURSE comes in and over to the tray of food next to her.

NURSE
You need to eat something.

MARTHA
I said I wasn't hungry.

There's a KNOCK at the front door.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
Could you get that, please?

The nurse goes and after a moment, she returns with Rollins and Helen.

MARTHA FINBERG
You can go now.

The nurse leaves.

HELEN
How are you feeling?

Martha nods, then motions Helen to a chair next to her. It takes all her energy just to speak.

MARTHA
I was so young when Jackson first arrived and no one back then knew anything about post-traumatic stress disorder. I certainly didn't know how to help him with what he was going through.
(with a tired sigh)
He just wanted to be left alone. Never had a visitor, never went into town, never ate with the other guests. I did what I could to look after him. I cleaned his room. Brought him his meals. He didn't eat much. I was always trying to get him to eat.

HELEN
Why did he come here?

MARTHA
To finish his book. Morning, noon, and night, all he did was write. And the more he wrote, the more he drank. The sicker he got. Near the end, he didn't even look like himself anymore. The night he...passed, I brought out his dinner, like I did every evening. When I knocked on the door and he didn't answer...I just knew he was gone. I went and got my father and...well...

HELEN
How did you know that he was back?

MARTHA
My father closed the cottage up. Didn't think anyone would want to stay in a room where a man had just died. One day, I was heading to another cottage to change the linens and I heard typing. The way it sounded...the way the keys were being pressed...I thought I must be losing my mind, but I knew it was him...

Martha turns to Rollins in the doorway.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
Bring it to her.

Rollins goes over to dresser and gets a box.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
After they took the body away, I went in and gathered his things. Thought maybe someone would come for them. But they never did.

Rollins brings a box over to Helen. Helen removes the lid. INSIDE are the yellowed pages of a typed manuscript. Helen skims them.

HELEN
This is what he was working on?

ROLLINS
Still is. Always stopping on the same page. Page 191. The page he was working on when he died. Never goes any further. Then just starts over again.

MARTHA
Never able to finish it. I believe it's why he's still here. He either doesn't know the ending or won't face it.

Helen places the lid back on.

HELEN
I'm not sure what you want me to do with it.

MARTHA
Read it. Maybe you can help him.

HELEN
I...

MARTHA
Just read it. Please.

Reluctantly, Helen nods.

INT. SUITE SIXTEEN - DAY

Helen puts down the box and goes to the window. The UNEARTHLY WEATHER makes everything a bit unnerving. Grabbing the clicker, Helen puts on the television.

ON THE SCREEN

The WEATHERMAN points to a large weather system on the map.

WEATHERMAN
You should use the next few hours to prepare for the hurricane's arrival, which is expected to hit the northeast some time tonight...

Helen MUTES THE CHANNEL, then grabs the box with the manuscript and settles into an arm chair. She lifts out the yellowed pages and begins to read.

JACKSON (V.O.)
It was March of 1940 and the last remaining Americans gathered at the Chateau de Cande' on a regular basis, waiting to see if the war would make it's way to the French capital. It was there... that I first saw her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHATEAU DE CANDE', PARIS - DAY (1940)

The place is brimming with writers, artists and socialites. Jackson sits with a group of FELLOW AMERICANS, smoking, drinking, spouting bullshit.

FELLOW AMERICAN #1
You're being overly dramatic, Jackson. The Maginot Line will keep the Germans out of France.

JACKSON
You really think if the Germans want in, a little concrete and steel is going to keep them out?

FELLOW AMERICAN #1
I do. And if the worst happens and they get through, we'll be protected by international law.

JACKSON
When did the Nazi's ever give a shit about the law?

FELLOW AMERICAN #2
The last thing Hitler wants to do is piss off Roosevelt.

JACKSON
Well, I'm not waiting around to find out.

Just then, a STUNNING BRUNETTE, 20s, (the one seen in the photograph in Cottage Five) comes in on the arm of a PARISIAN MAN. Jackson sits up, taking notice.

JACKSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Then she walked in and all the air in my lungs was sucked right out. I couldn't breathe.

Jackson motions to the door.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Who's that with Alphonse?

The men turn to look.

FELLOW AMERICAN #2
Ava something-or-other. I think she's a painter.
(turning back to Jackson)
So, what's our time frame for leaving, old boy?

But Jackson is already out of his seat and walking toward the girl, spellbound. ALPHONSE sees him first.

ALPHONSE
Jackson Bennett. I didn't know you were still in Paris.

Even as Alphonse speaks, Jackson's eyes never leave the girl.

ALPHONSE (CONT'D)
Mon cher, ce n'est Jackson Bennett. Ill est un Americain.

AVELINE
Nice to meet you.

JACKSON
You speak English?

AVELINE
Yes.

JACKSON
Good. My French is lousy.

ALPHONSE
There's a card game at Coupole this evening. Interested?

JACKSON
Possibly.
(to the girl)
I was told you're a painter?

AVELINE
A student. I study at the Academie Julian.

Alphonse sees someone of interest.

ALPHONSE
Would you excuse me for one minute?
I have a debt to collect on.

And he's off. Neither Jackson or Aveline seem to care. There's an electrically charged moment before Aveline speaks.

AVELINE
So Jackson, what brings you to Paris?

JACKSON
I'm a writer. On good days, anyway.
I'm sorry. I didn't get your name.

AVELINE
Aveline. Aveline Dufour.

JACKSON
You are incredibly beautiful, Aveline Dufour. I think I've fallen in love.

AVELINE
Just like that?

JACKSON
Just like that.

AVELINE
You're taking a big chance. Judging me by my appearance. I could be a complete bore.

JACKSON
Would you like to have a cup of coffee with me, so I can find out?

AVELINE
...Now?

JACKSON
Yes.

AVELINE
I'm sorry, but I can't leave my escort.

JACKSON
Sure, you can.

INT. FRENCH BISTRO - AFTERNOON

Jackson and Aveline drink coffee, share stories and laugh together.

JACKSON (V.O.)
It was as if we had always known each other. The conversation came easy...

INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In the sparsely furnished room, on the thin mattress of a bed, the couple make love.

JACKSON (V.O.)
...So did the love making. It was like a well choreographed dance where each partner was completed by the movement of the other.

EXT. THE SEINE, PARIS - DAY

Jackson and Aveline hold each other as they walk along the river.

JACKSON (V.O.)
It was an extraordinary time. A story written by the Gods. But like all good stories, it would soon come to an end.

CUT TO:

NEWSREEL FOOTAGE OF THE GERMAN OCCUPATION OF FRANCE.

INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aveline sits at the window, reading, as Jackson pounds away on his typewriter.

JACKSON (V.O.)
The Germans marched into Paris in the early hours of June 14th, 1940. They met no resistance as the French troops withdrew to avoid a violent battle. Most shops and businesses closed down and everything was bought on the black market. In order to support us, I began writing about the occupation for the American newspapers. This was getting more and more dangerous, as the Germans didn't take kindly to the unflattering press.

Aveline puts down her book and comes over to Jackson. Wrapping her arms around him.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
I'm almost done.

She kisses him on his neck, distracting him.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Just let me finish this paragraph.

Aveline reaches down and starts to unbutton his shirt. After a moment, Jackson gives up his writing, gets up and carries her to the bed. They start to make love.

CUT TO:

INT. SUITE SIXTEEN - AFTERNOON - PRESENT

Helen pours herself a cup of coffee from the room's coffee maker, her head still in the story. She goes back with her coffee to the chair, turns on a lamp, and resumes where she left off.

JACKSON (V.O.)
The Germans were rounding up anyone who posed a threat, American or not. But I needed the money to move us south into the free zone. To get us both the hell out of France...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - A WINTER EVENING (1941)

Snow comes down outside. Even though there's a fire in the potbelly stove, both Jackson and Aveline are wrapped in an abundance of clothes. They look thinner, tired.

Jackson grabs his hat, then stuffs some typed pages into his coat. He's about to leave. Aveline stops him at the door.

AVELINE
You'll be careful?

JACKSON
I'll be careful.

AVELINE
They arrested Raymond Deiss for his writing.

JACKSON
I'm just gonna get these pages to Jacques and I'll be right back.

Jackson kisses her hard.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Don't worry.

He leaves.

EXT. PARIS STREET - NIGHT

A lonely, dark, street. Jackson wraps his coat tightly and hurries as fast as he can.

In the distance, FOOTSTEPS FOLLOW. Jackson can deduce that there are two sets. He picks up the pace. The footsteps do as well.

With one quick glance, Jackson looks back. TWO GERMAN SOLDIERS show a great interest in him. One CALLS OUT.

GERMAN SOLDIER
Sie, stoppen!

Jackson pulls out his pages and looks for a place to toss them. There isn't any.

GERMAN SOLDIER (CONT'D)
Ich sagte zu stoppen!!

With no other options, Jackson takes off running. A WHISTLE BLOWS, then SHOTS fire as Jackson disappears into a building.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Jackson clambers up the stairs to the roof.

EXT. ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Running to the front of the roof, Jackson looks down to see DOZENS of SOLDIERS appear on the street, shouting, rifles ready. He rushes to the other side of the building and heaves himself off and onto the rooftop below.

Jackson continues this process, rooftop to rooftop, finally coming to the end. The only way down is the balcony below. No choice. Jackson jumps, KNOCKING a potted plant to the street on the way down. The NOISE is deafening. The Germans heard it too. The RUNNING on the roof gets closer.

Jackson works to get up, but he's twisted his ankle. Things look bleak when just then, the balcony door opens and a MAN in his 50's, pulls Jackson into the apartment.

INT. APARTMENT BASEMENT

The man holds a limping Jackson as they hurry through the basement to the back door. The man slowly opens the door and checks the alleyway. All clear.

EXT. ALLEY WAY - CONTINUOUS

The SOUND of SIRENS erupt in the neighborhood.

The man helps Jackson down the long narrow alley to an iron grate in the ground. He lifts the grate and motions for Jackson to go down. Jackson nods his thanks, then lowers himself into the sewer.

INT. SAFE HOUSE, PARIS - NIGHT

A GROUP FROM THE UNDERGROUND makes plans as Jackson nervously sits there.

JACKSON (V.O.)
I waited for news of Aveline as members of the network plotted our escape route out of Paris and into England. Over their objections, I had made it very clear that I wasn't leaving without her.

A FRENCH MAN, 30s, suddenly appears through the door. He hurries to the apparent LEADER and whispers. The news does not look good. The Leader comes over to Jackson. He speaks unemotionally.

RESISTANCE LEADER
She was arrested. We don't know where they're holding her.

JACKSON
I won't leave without her.

RESISTANCE LEADER
It's too dangerous for you here.

JACKSON
I don't care! I'm not going.

RESISTANCE LEADER
There are people putting themselves at great risk for you. You must go when the time is right.

Jackson's emotions are all over the place. This is neither a rock or a hard place. This is a hellish decision.

RESISTANCE LEADER (CONT'D)
We will find your girl for you.

JACKSON
Promise me you'll get her out. Promise me, goddammit!!

RESISTANCE LEADER
We'll do what we can.

CUT TO:

INT. SUITE SIXTEEN - EARLY EVENING - PRESENT

Helen lowers the page 191 and sits motionless. Just then, there's a NOISE from the hall. Helen goes to the door and opens it. Rollins is leaving an old black case just outside.

HELEN
What's that?

ROLLINS
Jackson's old typewriter. Miss Finberg thought you might want it. You being a writer and all.

HELEN
(reluctant)
I don't...Martha should keep it. I have no use for it.

ROLLINS
With her having no children to speak of, I think she's worried it's just going to end up on the scrap heap or something.

HELEN
You take it, then.

ROLLINS
I think Mr. Bennett would want you to have it.
(beat)
In all the years I've been here, he's never taken to anyone like he's taken to you.

Rollins holds out the case.

ROLLINS (CONT'D)
This should be with you.

Helen nods, then takes it.

ROLLINS (CONT'D)
Oh. I hate to add fuel to the fire, but we've been told to move inland.

HELEN
How long do we have?

ROLLINS
An hour. Two at the most.

EXT. THE INN - EVENING

The HEAVY SOUND of HAMMERING as WORKERS cover the windows with sheets of plywood.

INT. LOBBY - SAME TIME

Alex BARKS ORDERS as HOTEL STAFF button down the place. Guests hurry through the lobby toward the exit. Helen makes her way through the crowd and over to Alex.

HELEN
Do you have a flashlight I could use?

ALEX
You're not thinking of going out in this, are you?

HELEN
I know why Jackson hasn't left. I think maybe I can help him.

Alex gives her a strange look.

ALEX
Who the hell is Jackson?

HELEN
Huh. Interesting.
(beat)
I just need it for a minute and then I'll be right back.

Alex goes behind the desk and gets a flashlight out of the drawer. He hands it to her.

ALEX
Don't take too long.

EXT. THE WOODS - EVENING

Umbrella in one hand, a flashlight in the other, Helen fights the rain as she makes her way toward Cottage Five.

EXT. COTTAGE FIVE

Helen climbs the steps, leaving her umbrella by the door. Slowly, Helen opens the door and shines her flashlight inside...

INT. COTTAGE FIVE

For the first time, Helen sees the room as it really is. Cold, damp and dusty. There's a constant DRIP, DRIP, DRIP from a leak in the roof. Helen walks around the tomb like room. She stops at the broken desk, touching it ever so gently.

HELEN
Jackson?

A deep inhale and Helen tries again.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Jackson. It's Helen.

A fragmentary moment as the lights fade up and the room returns to it's former state. But it quickly fades away. Helen closes her eyes and concentrates.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I'm not leaving.

As if someone had just turned on the sun, the lights come up and Jackson's room returns to it's original 1940's state. Helen opens her eyes.

JACKSON (O.S.)
What do you want?

Helen turns and to her amazement, there stands Jackson. He looks bad. Gaunt, sickly.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
What is it you want, Helen?

HELEN
The stories you told me about the war. They were pretty vivid memories.

JACKSON
So?

HELEN
What else do you remember?

JACKSON
Why do you want to know?

BANG! - A BRANCH drops onto the roof. They both look up.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
It's pretty nasty out there.

HELEN
And we don't have much time.
(pressing him now)
Before the war? What do you remember?

Jackson doesn't respond.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Why do you think you're still here at the Inn?

Nothing.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Please try and remember. I want to help you.

Jackson heads to his liquor cabinet. She follows him over.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I know what it feels like to blame yourself. I blamed myself for David's death. He didn't want to be there.
(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)
I wanted us to go. Everyday, every hour, I replay how it could have been if only I had listened to him and stayed home.

JACKSON
You didn't like the whiskey so much. I bet you like wine.

Jackson opens his cabinet and pulls out a bottle.

HELEN
We can't keep punishing ourselves.

JACKSON
I have a nice bottle of Etna Rosso.

Helen looks at him, stunned.

HELEN
How did you..?

Jackson pours, then hands her a glass. She slowly lifts it to her lips and drinks. It's exactly as she remembers.

JACKSON
What else would you like? Hey, would you like to hear some music?

Jackson looks over at the record player and the MUSIC starts.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Now that you know the truth, we're free to do what we want in here.

Helen isn't sure what he's getting at.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Just name it.
(beat)
You wanna see him? Is that what you want?

HELEN
...See who?

JACKSON
David.

HELEN
That's not possible.

JACKSON
I told you, the rules don't apply here.

HELEN
Don't do this.

JACKSON
Come on. Just say the word. And as easy as it was to taste the wine, you can see your husband.

In that moment, Helen comes to terms with David's death.

HELEN
No. David's moved on. I won't dishonor that. No matter how much it hurts.
(gets tough)
But why haven't you? Why haven't you moved on? What the hell are you so afraid of facing?

He doesn't answer.

HELEN (CONT'D)
What happened to Aveline?

Helen crosses to the photograph of the young girl and picks it up.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Is this her?

JACKSON
That's just a picture I use for inspiration.

Helen brings it closer to him.

HELEN
Are you sure? Look at it.

JACKSON
I'm sure. Put it down!

HELEN
This isn't the woman that you loved?

JACKSON
I SAID PUT IT DOWN!

The photo FLIES out of Helen's hand and CRASHES into the wall. Helen steps back, stunned.

Jackson goes over and picks up the shattered picture, putting it back in it's place. His back to Helen.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
(vulnerable)
What if it's worse than anything I could imagine?

A CRACK of THUNDER! The boards in the cottage MOAN as the WIND and RAIN pound against them.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
You should go before it gets worst.

He's right. But Helen's only got one chance at this.

HELEN
You said I could see anything I wanted to in here.

Jackson nods.

HELEN (CONT'D)
What if I wanted to see what happened to you? Could you show me that?
(beat)
You have to trust me.

Without warning, Jackson heads toward her. Helen takes a startled step back, but not before Jackson grabs her hand. He takes it and presses it firmly against his cheek.

WHOOSH!

A ROLODEX OF IMAGES FLOOD THE SCREEN.

Jackson seeing Aveline for the first time.

Them in a cafe.

Jackson running from the Germans.

In the safe house.

In the snowy countryside, hiking out of France.

Crossing the English channel, seeing England.

NOW THE IMAGES SLOW A BIT.

Jackson with the OTHER MEMBERS of the Writing 69th. Training. FLYING over Germany during a mission.

Jackson handing off a letter to a COURIER. It's addressed to AVELINE DUFOUR.

Jackson drinking hard as he writes.

Handing another letter to the COURIER.

In a BOMB SHELTER during the BLITZ.

The Courier returning all of Jackson's unopened letters.

Another FLYING MISSION. This time they take FIRE, but manage to stay in the air. Jackson looks out the window. The fighter plane next to them isn't so lucky and nose dives toward earth.

The men from the 69th loading the flag-draped casket of their fallen comrade into the back of a cargo plane.

IMAGES SLOW MORE NOW, AS IF GRINDING TOWARD THE END.

EXT. NORMANDY, FRANCE - DAY

Jackson is part of the INVASION. The VICTORIOUS ALLIES take the beach.

EXT. MILITARY CAMPSITE - NIGHT

There's a steady stream of VEHICLES moving through the camp. EXHAUSTED MEN, eat, sleep and chatter away.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

TWO OFFICERS hover over a map table, planning their next move. Jackson enters the tent and addresses the men.

JACKSON
I heard there's a unit leaving for Paris tomorrow. I was wondering if I could hitch a ride?

OFFICER
You speak any French?

JACKSON
Enough.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

Jackson peels out with a unit of men in the back of a Jeep.

EXT. FRENCH ROAD - NIGHT

The roads are littered with debris from burning German vehicles and mass casualties. The Jeep slows for a group of worn INFANTRYMEN moving past them.

EXT. PARIS - DAY

The liberated people lean out their windows, waving flags, CHEERING, as the allies reclaim the city.

As the Jeep slows, Jackson grabs his duffel bag. He nods thanks to the men, then jumps off.

As he makes his way through the crowd, men pat him on the back, women kiss him.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Jackson steps over rubble as he hurries down the street. The buildings have been damaged in the air raids. Jackson finds himself in front of his old apartment building. He pushes at the front door and goes inside.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The stairwell is covered in plaster and debris. Jackson makes his way up. The LANDLORD, 60s, peeks out from his door to see who it is.

ARRIVING ON THE THIRD FLOOR LANDING

Jackson approaches the apartment door, both nervous and excited. He takes a moment, before turning the doorknob. An inhale and he heads inside.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The place is in shambles. The furniture's been tossed. The window's blown out. No one lives here.

MAN'S VOICE
Monsieur Bennett?

Jackson turns to see the landlord at the door. The man throws his arms around Jackson.

LANDLORD
I thought that was you. It's so good to see you, my friend.

JACKSON
Aveline. Where is she?

The landlord walks over to a chest of drawers and retrieves a folded envelope.

LANDLORD
A gentleman left this for you.
(MORE)

LANDLORD (CONT'D)
He said he made you a promise before you left France. If you were to ever come back, this would explain what happened to her.

The landlord tries to hand Jackson the letter. He backs away from it.

LANDLORD (CONT'D)
This is for you. Take it.

Jackson's whole body trembles.

JACKSON
I don't want it.

LANDLORD
Take it, please.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. COTTAGE FIVE - NIGHT - PRESENT

Jackson pulls away from Helen. He's covered in sweat.

JACKSON
I don't want to know!

HELEN
What if she's alive?

JACKSON
I killed her. I killed her the minute we said hello.

HELEN
You don't know that. Please, let me find out for you.

IN AN INSTANT the room goes back to it's real state and Helen finds herself alone in the dark. She grabs the flashlight.

INT. THE INN, LOBBY - NIGHT

The place is nearly empty when Helen enters. Martha's being wheeled out by her nurse when she spots Helen.

MARTHA
Oh, thank God.
(turns to her nurse)
Go tell Rollins we can leave now.

The nurse goes.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
What happened with Jackson?

HELEN
I wasn't able to...He's still here.

MARTHA
We'll just have to take care of things when we return.

HELEN
What if something were to happen to the Inn? What happens to Jackson if the cottage is destroyed?

MARTHA
I...I don't know. But we can't worry about that now.

HELEN
(thinks)
I just need to get my things. You go on. I'll be right behind you.

Helen hurries up the stairs.

INT. SUITE SIXTEEN - NIGHT

Her cell to her ear, Helen rapidly barks orders.

HELEN
(spells it out)
D-u-f-o-u-r. I think she was arrested in '40 or '41.

Helen hangs on. She goes to the window. The last of the cars leave the parking lot and head inland.

Helen looks over at the IMAGE on the MUTED T.V. The REPORTER on screen is being BASHED about by the heavy tide.

SUDDENLY the T.V. goes out. Helen grabs the clicker and tries to turn it on again. Nothing.

HELEN (CONT'D)
(into phone)
What was that?

INTERCUT WITH

Judith in her office. She's reading from a computer screen.

JUDITH
She was taken to Montluc Prison where she was interrogated and tortured by the Gestapo...

Helen's phone cuts out for a moment.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
.....on a train that was transporting her to Germany.

HELEN
What? You're breaking up.

JUDITH
She died on the train that was taking her to Germany.

Helen exhales, defeated.

HELEN
That wasn't the news I was expecting.

JUDITH
What are you going to do now?

HELEN
I can't tell him. I guess...I just have to let it go.

JUDITH
What you need to do is get the hell out of there. We can figure this all out later.

HELEN
I'll call you when I get home.

Helen hangs up. She grabs her purse, grabs the box with Jackson's manuscript and starts out.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Oh, shit.

She hurries back to the desk, remembering the typewriter. She's about to take it, when something dawns on her. She puts down her things and --

CLICK - She opens the latch. Removing the lid, Helen stares at the old IBM formulating an idea. In a flash, she grabs her keycard and hurries out the door.

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Helen hurries down the stairs and STEPS INTO AN INCH OF WATER. The storm has moved inland now. Helen hurries through the water and over to the front desk. She goes behind the counter, searching, and finds what she's looking for. Paper.

JUST THEN the LIGHTS GO OUT.

Helen navigates the dark water back to the stairs. The structure MOANS from the water now rushing in.

INT. SUITE SIXTEEN

The keycard SLIDES through the lock and Helen enters. She fumbles around until she finds the flashlight.

The light turns on and Helen points the beam toward the typewriter. She grabs a chair and pulls it over. Shining the light on the old IBM, Helen puts in a piece of paper and lines it up. A moment later, she starts TYPING.

First, irregularly, unsure. Then the story picks up speed. There's an urgent rhythm to the way Helen attacks the keys.

BANG! - The window blows open and Helen quickly grabs the loose pages before they fly away. She places a heavy book on top of them and continues typing.

Helen pauses for a moment, gathers her thoughts, then finishes. She grabs the rest of the manuscript, the flashlight, and hurries out.

INT. THE INN, LOBBY - NIGHT

The water is higher now. About two feet. Helen wades through it, pushing floating objects out of her way. She makes her way to the exit.

EXT. THE WOODS

The farther away Helen gets from the Inn, the less water she has to deal with. But it won't be long until this area is underwater as well.

INT. COTTAGE FIVE

Helen puts down the box and takes a deep breath.

HELEN
Jackson!

Nothing but the wind.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Please, Jackson. I need to talk you! It's urgent!

The room comes to life and there stands Jackson.

JACKSON
You have to leave. It's too dangerous.

HELEN
I found your book. You did finish it!

JACKSON
What?

HELEN
You finished it the day you died. Martha was keeping it safe for you.

JACKSON
I-I don't remember doing that.

HELEN
You did. And I've read it. I know what happened to Aveline.

JACKSON
I don't want to hear.

HELEN
But it's good news. Please. Let me read it to you.

Jackson doesn't say no. Helen goes to the box and opens the lid.

JACKSON
That's my book?

HELEN
Yes. Here, see.

Helen hands him the familiar pages. The ones he wrote. Jackson stares down at the words.

JACKSON
Yes. I wrote this.

HELEN
Can I read you the last page?

Jackson nods. Helen takes out the "new" page - page 192- and starts to read.

HELEN (CONT'D)
There I stood in the place I was happiest, terrified to take the letter from his hand. But not knowing wasn't an option. If something terrible had happened to Aveline because of me, it wasn't right for me not to carry that burden. I took the letter from the landlord and asked for a moment alone. I went to the bed we used to make love on and sat. It felt safe and it gave me courage.

Jackson lowers himself into a chair, hanging on her every word.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I could barely open the envelope, my hands were shaking so. Pulling out the letter, I said a quick prayer and began to read...
(beat)
"Jackson...
(beat)
...I trust that this letter finds you well. I wanted you to know, that Aveline was released just days after her arrest. No harm came to her. We were able to get her to a house in the country. She is safe and waiting your return."

JACKSON
I don't remember that. Why can't I remember that?

HELEN
There's more.
(continues to read)
I began my search for her. But familiar faces were gone and records had been destroyed in the raids. For the next two years, I searched everywhere, always hitting a dead end. I heard rumors that she had married and moved to Spain, but I could never confirm it.
(beat)
I must now resign myself to living in a world without her and I don't know if I can bare that. Maybe just knowing she's alive...and happy somewhere...will be enough. I hope it is. I will always be grateful for the time we had together.

Helen lowers the page.

JACKSON
I-I wrote that?

HELEN
It came from your typewriter.

Jackson takes it in with a breath. Reassessing everything he thought he knew.

HELEN (CONT'D)
You have nothing to feel guilty about anymore. She was fine.

JACKSON
How do I know she still doesn't hate me for leaving her?

HELEN
Because I read your book. She loved you madly. She still does. She waits for you. Right now. She waits for you.
(beat)
You need to go to her.

JACKSON
How? I don't know how.

A HUGE GUST OF WIND rattles the cottage.

HELEN
Like you said. No rules in here. You just have to want to see her again.

JACKSON
(tearing up)
I do. Very much.

HELEN
Then...go to her.

Jackson inhales, his eyes locked on Helen. He's nervous at first, then his body relaxes. He nods...She nods.

ALL AT ONCE...

A brilliant light comes down through the ceiling and floods the room. Helen quite literally, stops breathing. It's that beautiful. After a moment, she catches her breath.

Jackson looks up into it.

Suddenly, Aveline's luminous form comes down the shaft of light and appears before him. She smiles and reaches out her hand. Before he takes it, Jackson turns to Helen and mouth the words...

JACKSON
Thank you.

Helen watches as their spirits ascend up the light. Then the room goes dark. Back to it's real state.

Suddenly, a THUNDEROUS NOISE comes from above and--

CRASH! - A tree FALLS THROUGH the roof, KNOCKING HELEN TO THE FLOOR!

The water RUSHES IN and Helen struggles to get up. But she's pinned down and the room is rapidly filling.

Panicked, Helen works to move the tree, It won't budge. The water finally rises to her chin and she takes one big inhale before it covers her nostrils.

Now underwater, it's only moments before she'll have to inhale. Everything starts to go black.

MAN'S VOICE
Get up.

Helen looks up. No one's there.

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
I said get up!

Up through the water, a glowing light radiates and DAVID'S FIGURE APPEARS in it. His voice is calm but direct.

DAVID
Not your time, baby.

Helen shakes her head. She wants to stay there with him.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I'll always be with you, Helen.
Now...Get the hell up!

With a newfound burst of energy, Helen moves the tree enough to get her head above water. She chokes in a great gulp of air.

All of a sudden, the beam from a flashlight turns in her direction.

ROLLINS
I SEE HER! SHE'S OVER THERE.

Rollins and Alex push their way through the debris and over to Helen. She's bleeding badly. Alex works to lift the tree and Rollins pulls her out.

ALEX
What happened to that guy who was just here?! Is he all right?!

Helen and Rollins give each other a look.

HELEN
He's fine.

ALEX
Are you sure?

HELEN
I'm sure.

ROLLINS
Let's go.

Rollins and Alex help her out of there.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Helen sits on the edge of the bed, buttoning up her blouse. She got some scrapes and bruises and a large band-aid on her forehead. Judith appears with a wheelchair.

HELEN
I really have to get in that?

JUDITH
Them's the rules.

HELEN
I just got off the phone with Miss Finberg. They all got out okay.

JUDITH
And Jackson?

HELEN
It looks like he's really gone. But she did say that when they rebuild, she's going to restore his old cottage. Just in case he wants to come back.

JUDITH
Did you tell her it doesn't work that way?

HELEN
Nope. Didn't want to burst her bubble.

JUDITH
What about you? What are you going to do after I get you out of here?

Helen grabs her shoes and puts them on.

HELEN
Go back to work.

JUDITH
Good.

HELEN
Eventually.

JUDITH
Do you think what you've just been through is too much of a fluff piece for you? There's a huge market for it.

There's a TAP at the door. Helen looks up and to her surprise, there stands her mother. She's years older, but still very attractive.

HELEN
Mom. I told you, you didn't need to come.

MOTHER
Of course I did. That's a silly thing to say.

An awkward moment.

JUDITH
I'm going to get a cup of coffee. Anyone want anything?

HELEN
No, thanks.

As Judith leaves, she introduces herself...

JUDITH
I'm Judith. Helen's editor.

MOTHER/MAUREEN
Maureen.

JUDITH
Nice meeting you.

Judith leaves. There's an uncomfortable silence before Maureen speaks.

MAUREEN
If this is a bad time..?

HELEN
No, of course not. Sit down.

Maureen takes a seat.

MAUREEN
How are you feeling?

HELEN
Fine. Good.

MAUREEN
Jim and I are staying at the Plaza. Maybe you'd like to have dinner or something? When you're ready. Don't put yourself out on our account.

HELEN
Why are you staying in a hotel? I have plenty of room at my place.

MAUREEN
I don't want to be a bother.

HELEN
You're not a bother.

MAUREEN
Well, I'll...I'll talk to Jim about it.

HELEN
(reticent)
I know that I don't say it enough... but I do love you, Mom Very much.

Maureen's surprised by Helen's words. She struggles with her own.

MAUREEN
I'm...I'm sorry I wasn't there for you after David's passing.

HELEN
I'm sorry I wasn't there for you after Dad died.

Awkwardly, Maureen searches for words.

MAUREEN
Can I hold you?

Helen nods. Maureen goes over and they embrace.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE, FRANCE - DAY

A beautiful spring day with a blue and and cloudless sky. CHILDREN play along the hillside, running in and out of the magnificent landscape.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE PATIO, FRANCE - DAY

Helen is escorted outside by David's sister. Family and friends rise from the table full of food and rush over, showering Helen with hugs and kisses and handing her a glass of wine.

From behind Helen comes Maureen and her husband JIM, 60s. Maureen carries a bundle of flowers for her hosts.

HELEN
This is my mother, Maureen, and this is her husband, Jim.

Introductions are made, more wine is handed out... Just then, among the crowd, Helen catches sight of DAVID smiling. Someone crosses in front of him and just as quickly as David appeared, he's gone. Helen exhales. Smiles. She can still feel him there.

FADE OUT:

THE END