WOLF TOWN

Written by
Kelsey Ford & Emily Howell

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CINEMA IS FICTION

LOS ANGELES. NOVEMBER. 1955.

INT. ON-SET. “THE DEADLY KISS”. INTERROGATION ROOM.

GRACE [25] appears through the lens of a movie camera. She’s dressed to play “Iris”, a Doctor in a white lab coat and glasses. Her short, blond hair is swept back off her face. She sits with her shoulders pulled back and legs crossed at the ankles. Her eyes are focused on the ACTOR across from her, dressed as “Paul”, a committed murderer. A handcuff dangles from the Actor’s wrist as he enjoys a piece of chocolate cake on a small plate. Grace is disgusted by him. When he talks, his mouth is full of cake.

ACTOR
A woman’s voice changes, when she’s really been with a man.

Grace replies in a prim accent. It sounds aristocratic, almost British, except that she’s not British.

GRACE
A woman should keep her secrets.

The director, NIKOLAS [45], round and short with an old-fashioned fisherman’s hat over his bald head. He speaks with a thick, Greek accent.

NIKOLAS
Iris. Paul. Ready?

Grace turns to Nikolas, alert, focused. The Actor clips his handcuffs back on. The make-up artist looks to Grace. There’s nothing to touch up. She takes the plate of cake from “Paul” and checks his face. The set settles.

NIKOLAS [O.S.]
Action!

Note: Grace does not change her voice or posture to play “Iris”.

IRIS
Paul.

PAUL
Yes.

IRIS
Tell me about that day.

PAUL
Which?

IRIS
The day you killed your wife.

PAUL
It’s disappointing that’s the day you want, Iris. I was hoping for something a little more--

IRIS
Please, it’s Dr. Borg. A little more, what?

Paul scrapes the chair across the floor, closer to the edge of the table.

IRIS (CONT’D)
Did you mean to kill her? Do you remember how it felt to stab her?

PAUL
I have a story for you.

Paul moves his chair again, until he reaches the edge.

PAUL (CONT’D)
This is two summers ago. There was this woman at the supermarket. Green eyes, like you.

Iris stays silent. He inches the chair again. He’s now a couple feet from Iris.

PAUL (CONT’D)
She noticed me watching her. Her eyes dilated, but she didn’t say anything.

IRIS
What was it about her?

Paul’s smile is distant and cruel. He pulls his chair closer, again. Less than a foot away.

PAUL
I remember what I was thinking.

Iris keeps staring at him, wary of his next move. Paul grabs her. As he talks, he mimes the actions along her throat.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I thought about taking her home, into my kitchen, opening my knife drawer, taking out the slimmest knife, pulling her toward me and slowly, so so slowly, running the knife along her neck until the blood slipped out. I pictured it so it became as if I could, as if maybe even I had.

When he finishes, he leans down to kiss Iris on her neck. She tries to pull away. He tightens his grip. They struggle. Iris suddenly kisses him.

NIKOLAS
Hold it. Hold it. Cut!

Grace pulls back from the kiss. Nikolas turns to his wife and Assistant Director, PATRICE [45], an intense woman with glasses dangling around her neck. She checks her watch, raises a bullhorn to her lips.

PATRICE
That's a cut! Moving on.

The crew echoes her.

CREW
Moving on!

The set bustles around Grace as she steps off the stage. A few crew members fall silent as she passes them. One of the men lets his eyes slip down her body. She notices.

MRS. MUNROE [50s], the costumer, walks Grace to her trailer.

GRACE
There was a small crease in my collar this morning.

MRS. MUNROE
I didn't notice.

GRACE
Will you make sure it's pressed again?

MRS. MONROE
Yes of course dear.

GRACE
Thank you.

The door to Grace's trailer swings shut behind them.

INT. STUDIO COMMISSARY. DAY.

A bead of sweat runs down the graying temple of a journalist, TOM HASKELL [40s]. He stares down at his wristwatch. Nervous. He can hear the watch hands TICK.

Grace enters in a navy blue dress and white kid gloves. She is pristine - not a hair out of place. She's followed by RUPERT ALLEN [40s], a smooth talker wearing an expensive suit. Tom rises. He wipes his sweaty hand on his pant leg before extending it to Grace.

TOM HASKELL
Tom Haskell.

GRACE
Pleasure to meet you Mr. Haskell. I hope that I did not keep you waiting.

TOM HASKELL
No, not at all. You're right on the dot.

GRACE
You know my publicist, Mr. Allen.

Rupert and Tom nod toward each other.

Grace takes a seat. She's careful to cross her legs at the ankles so they appear long and slender. She folds her hands delicately in her lap. Tom watches her routine. He extends a pack of cigarettes.

GRACE (CONT'D)
No thank you.

Tom lights a cigarette for himself and for Rupert. Grace's attitude is as friendly as her answers are short.

TOM HASKELL
How are things going on, THE DEADLY KISS?

GRACE
Fine, thank you.

TOM HASKELL
This is your sixth film in just under four years. How do you jump from one to the next so quickly?

GRACE
I have the help of the script and director.

TOM HASKELL
What about time for yourself? What do you do when you're not working?

GRACE
I like to knit.

That was not the answer Tom was expecting. He pries for more.

TOM HASKELL
Are you knitting a gift for someone?

GRACE
No.

TOM HASKELL
No one at all?

Grace smiles. Silent.

TOM HASKELL (CONT'D)
What was it like growing up in the public eye, in Philadelphia? Your family's high profile must have prepared you somewhat, for a life in the spotlight?

GRACE
Yes - somewhat.

TOM HASKELL
Can you elaborate?

GRACE
My parents instilled in us a great sense of discipline, and that really is good preparation for any career.

Tom makes a note.

TOM HASKELL
Your father was an Olympic rower and your mother a physical education teacher. Did they hope you'd follow in their footsteps?

GRACE
In what way Mr. Haskell?

TOM HASKELL
To be athletic.

GRACE
Well. As I mentioned, they wanted us to be disciplined and athletics was a way to teach discipline.

TOM HASKELL
But you were not athletic, yourself. You were a myopic child with a chronic cold, weren't you?

Grace nods, flatly.

TOM HASKELL (CONT'D)
How did it feel to be the weak child, in such a strong family?

The question cuts into Grace, but she tries not to show it.

GRACE
I excelled in other areas.

TOM HASKELL
Like?

GRACE
The theater.

TOM HASKELL
Do you think of settling down?

GRACE
No.

TOM HASKELL
Not at all?

Grace smiles. Silent. Tom repositions himself in his chair - frustrated with her.

TOM HASKELL (CONT'D)
What can we expect to see from you next? There are rumors you will star in HIGH SOCIETY. That seems a natural role for you.

GRACE
I haven't seen the finished script.

TOM HASKELL
Does that role interest you?

GRACE
Possibly.

TOM HASKELL
You would be starring opposite Scoop Bingham again. You have become a popular on-screen couple.
(beat)
Do you care to comment?

GRACE
No I do not.

Tom takes a long drag off his cigarette. He looks to Rupert, who shrugs hopelessly. Grace smiles. Pleased with herself.

EXT. STUDIO LOT. DAY.

Rupert and Grace walk across the lot in the bright sunlight.

RUPERT
You've made me the enemy of every columnist in Hollywood.

Grace nods - her mind elsewhere.

RUPERT (CONT'D)
But it's worth it.

They enter another building.

INT. STUDIO LOT. PHOTO SHOOT.

The room buzzes in preparation. Rupert enters ahead of Grace, holding the door open for her. The photographer, WILLIAM [30], has rugged, all-American good looks. He takes a light meter reading.

Rupert motions for William to walk over.

RUPERT
Grace, this is William Freeman.

GRACE
Hello William Freeman.

Grace shakes his hand, intrigued.

A P.A. approaches them.

P.A.
Grace.

GRACE
Yes.

P.A.
I'll take you to change now.

Grace nods goodbye and follows the P.A. out of the room. William watches her leave.

INT. DRESSING ROOM.

Grace pulls a sweater over her head. She wears a pair of slacks and plain loafers. She can't get her head straight. She squeezes her eyes tight and jumps around, trying to loosen her limbs. She moves her mouth in some kind of a theater exercise.

INT. STUDIO LOT. PHOTO SHOOT. CONT'D.

William walks over to his camera. He takes another light meter reading.

Grace steps back into the room. Her hair is brushed back, off her face. She looks fresh and clean-scrubbed. She steps under the lights. A make-up artist powders her face.

A PHOTO PRODUCER approaches Rupert, eating a cookie and drinking a cup of coffee.

PHOTO PRODUCER
Are we just getting her in the sweater?

RUPERT
She insisted. She has photo approval.

William looks through his lens at Grace. She gives him a direct, sensual gaze beneath her cold exterior. He notices. He snaps a photo.

INT. CROWDED BAR. LOS ANGELES. NIGHT.

A LIVE BAND plays. Under the red lights, a woman in a low-cut dress shakes her breasts to the music.

SCOOP BINGHAM [40s], dashing, sits across from Grace. She wears a steel blue dress and white gloves. She looks out of place in the garish bar. A couple sits next to them. The man can't take his eyes off Grace. His date notices. She asks for their bill.

GRACE
(shouting above the music)
I wanted to tell you -- I had the strangest dream last night.

The waitress looks to Scoop for his drink order. He hands her his empty glass.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Scoop, are you sure you don't want to get another drink? You've had a long day.

Scoop shakes his head. The waitress sees Grace's glass of wine is still full and leaves their table.

Scoop is silent. Jaw clenched. Grace sizes him up.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I won't get angry, you know, when you say what you have to say.

SCOOP
How do you know what I'm going to say?

GRACE
I can see it written on your face. The way you're fingering your wedding band. You're going to say that I'm a smart girl, and that I know better.

SCOOP
Don't you?

GRACE
We should've met somewhere private.

SCOOP
We haven't been thinking of Maggie, have we? How this affects her?

GRACE
It was never my intention to make things difficult for you.

Scoop grabs her hand. She looks away.

SCOOP
I'm trying to do the right thing here.
(pause)
This has been nice.
(MORE)

SCOOP (CONT'D)
I - You know I don’t want to. You know what I want. It’s just -

GRACE
Nice.

Grace looks out at the dance floor, at a couple clutched tight together. She looks back to Scoop, vivacious. The trumpet player BLARES his horn.

EXT. BAR. NIGHT.

Grace stands by the curb. Above them, a billboard for another film, GREEN FIRE, advertises Scoop and Grace’s faces pressed cheek-to-cheek. Scoop comes out with their coats.

GRACE
Take me home, now.

Scoop nods. He helps her put on her coat.

EXT. GRACE’S HOUSE. GARAGE. LOS ANGELES. NIGHT.

Scoop parks his car.

INT. GRACE’S HOUSE. GARAGE. CONT’D.

Grace looks amazing in the soft light. She knows this. She allows a little sadness to reach her features, holding her face so the light hits it just right. She kisses Scoop sensually until he gives in.

He takes off her coat. He kisses her neck and whispers.

SCOOP
I thought I loved you.

Grace shuts her eyes and allows him to keep kissing her.

INT. GRACE’S HOUSE. NIGHT. LATER.

The house is dark. Grace stands away from the windows, as if hiding. Outside, Scoop pulls out of the driveway and down the road. For a moment, his car’s headlights swing into the living room, illuminating everything but Grace. She looks up to an Academy Award statue on the mantel.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. CONT'D.

Still in the dark, Grace pulls her underwear out of her pocket and tosses them in the laundry. She sets her alarm clock to 6 am. Looking at her hair in the mirror, she pushes a strand into place. She undresses very carefully, putting each piece of clothing where it belongs. There's a tremor in her hands as she pulls the straps of her slip off her shoulders.

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT. LATER.

MAGGIE [30's] opens her front door. When she sees Scoop, she smiles and jumps on him, wrapping her legs around his waist. Dressed in a robe, hair still set in curlers, she has an uncontrolled energy and sensual beauty. Scoop laughs and carries her to the couch. Maggie slowly runs her hands through his hair.

They kiss. He reaches an arm around her. She leans her face into the side of his jacket. Her eyes snap open. She pushes herself off him.

MAGGIE
Scoop.

SCOOP
Maggie.

MAGGIE
You smell like a prissy gardenia.

SCOOP
What?

MAGGIE
I hate that perfume.

SCOOP
Maggie, don't.

MAGGIE
I hate that it's on your clothes. I hate that I have to smell it.

SCOOP
She hugged me goodbye, that's all.

MAGGIE
I thought that you ended it!

SCOOP
I did. I have.

MAGGIE
It doesn't smell like it, Scoop.

Maggie turns to leave the room.

SCOOP
Maggie -

MAGGIE
Don’t try to defend her. Please! I’ve heard it before.

SCOOP
I’m here, aren't I?

She stops. Turns back to him -

MAGGIE
There’s consequences, Scoop. Do you understand? You can’t have both. You can’t have EVERYTHING. What did you want when you married me? A sweet little station wagon wife who would look the other way?

SCOOP
No.

MAGGIE
One more time and I’m leaving.

Maggie breaks down. Scoop tries to console her but she pushes him away and storms off into the other room. He sighs, goes after her.

EXT. GRACE’S HOUSE. POOL. NIGHT.

Grace walks toward the pool, wearing a white swimsuit. She carries a towel, looking beautiful and composed. She lowers herself into the water. The night is chilly. The water is black and glassy. She submerges herself in the water, all except for her hands, which still clutch at the edge. Her hands release and she floats under.

UNDER WATER

Grace is illuminated by the pool lights. She let’s out a silent scream. It ripples in bubbles through the water.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. MORNING.

Grace is immaculately dressed in a simple red dress with her hair swept-up. She slices a grapefruit expertly with a special grapefruit knife, then picks up an envelope from the pile of mail on the table.

It's stamped with a royal seal.

The teakettle WHISTLES. Grace opens the letter.

Dear Grace, I hope this letter finds you well. I think often of our meeting last Spring and the brief time we had together.

VISION:

Grace looks across the room to see a caged lion. The animal circles his cage. Restless. He stops and looks toward Grace.

The teakettle SCREAMS. She takes it off the burner, pours herself a cup of tea and walks into the other room, letter in hand, shoulders pulled back. Her posture, always, perfect.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE. OFFICE. CONT'D.

She takes a seat and pulls out stationary to respond to the letter, in big cursive handwriting. A distinct HUM fills the silence in the room. Grace writes, quickly, easily. The sound carries over to -

INT. ON-SET. "THE DEADLY KISS". DETECTIVE WEBB'S OFFICE.

Grace is seated in a chair, legs and back straight, eyes on the script in her lap.

She looks up to see Scoop walking onto set, with Maggie clutching at his hand. Without meaning to, she catches eyes with Nikolas, who is watching her, nervously. Grace shows no sign of distress.

Scoop kisses Maggie on the cheek. He walks onto the stage and takes a seat in the chair across from Grace. Nikolas turns to Patrice.

NIKOLAS
(motioning to Grace and Scoop)
Have you been following this?

Patrice nods with a laugh. Nikolas sighs. Stressed.

NIKOLAS (CONT'D)
Iris? Webb? Ready?

Grace and Scoop nod back to Nikolas. Patrice shouts into her bullhorn.

PATRICE
Rehearsal up!

The set settles.

NIKOLAS
When you're ready.

Scoop plays a hard-nosed homicide detective, "Detective Webb." He arranges papers on his desk before glancing up.

DETECTIVE WEBB
Iris, I assume you know why I asked you here?

IRIS
I have an idea.

DETECTIVE WEBB
You were the last person to visit Paul Grey in prison before he was found dead.

IRIS
Yes.

DETECTIVE WEBB
What was his state of mind?

IRIS
He seemed calm. He discussed groceries. He didn't mention anyone intent on killing him. What are you taking notes for?

Detective Webb looks at Iris with an appraising glance. He doesn't bother answering.

IRIS (CONT'D)
I don't think I can be of much help.

DETECTIVE WEBB
See, I don't believe you.

Detective Webb leans back and steeples his fingers.

DETECTIVE WEBB (CONT'D)
Eyes are the most telling feature. Yours are very unsteady at the moment.

IRIS
Detective, I'm an analyst in criminal behaviors. If I had something to hide, it would stay hidden.

Grace and Scoop stare resolutely at one another. Their tension almost breaks through the scene. She stands and exits. Detective Webb doesn't stop her.

NIKOLAS
Good. That was good.

Scoop breathes a deep sigh of relief. Nikolas steps onto the stage. He pats Grace on the shoulder and whispers in her ear.

NIKOLAS (CONT'D)
I'm proud of you, Kelly. You have some tough skin.

Grace holds her composure, nodding professionally to Nikolas before he walks over to give Scoop direction. Grace looks to Maggie with an eerie smile. Maggie turns away, uncomfortable.

Nikolas sits back down in his director's chair. He looks to Patrice, nods.

PATRICE
(into her bullhorn)
Roll sound!

The set quiets. Iris straightens up in her chair. Detective Webb looks back to the papers on his desk.

NIKOLAS [O.S.]
Action!

EXT. GRACE'S HOUSE. AFTERNOON.

The wind carries dead leaves onto the pool.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM.

The silence is palpable. Grace sits alone, knitting. She wears glasses and a silk slip.

The phone RINGS, jolting her and breaking the silence.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. ESTABLISHING. EVENING.

A grand, brick, colonial mansion is surrounded by neatly trimmed hedges. Warm light peaks through the shuttered windows.

INT. PHILADELPHIA. HOME.

FRANCIS [51], Grace's mother, picks the wilted flowers from an arrangement. She is fit and well-dressed. GEORGE [56], the family patriarch, walks into the kitchen to pour himself a glass of water. His presence is strong and firm, unmoving. It's clear where Grace got her good looks. He gives Francis a kiss on the cheek. She's too busy with her flower arrangement to care.

FRANCIS
You just missed Gracie. She had to go. She says she won't be here for Thanksgiving. The movie is running behind.

GEORGE
Humm.
(beat)
But there's no more engagement talk with... what's his name -

FRANCIS
Scoop.

GEORGE
Yes. *Scoop.*

Francis shrugs.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I wish Ruthie was still down there with her. We gotta nip that one in the bud.

George tries to shake it off.

FRANCIS
I believe she's had the good sense to shed him.

GEORGE
Those people think marriage is like a game of musical chairs.

RUTHIE [23], Grace's sister, walks in. She's distinctly similar to Grace, though her shoulders are a little broader and her legs and arms a little heavier.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
It's unhealthy.

RUTHIE
Is politics healthier?

George huffs. Francis is suddenly uncomfortable.

GEORGE
Where's the Inquirer? I've been looking for it.

FRANCIS
I put it in your office.

George grumbles out of the room.

RUTHIE
Grace?

FRANCIS
You should talk some sense into her before she gives your father a heart attack.

RUTHIE
What could her younger sister say that would make any difference?

FRANCIS
She listens to you.
(beat)
Could you throw out these old flowers for me?

Francis holds up the arrangement, inspecting it for any imperfection. Satisfied, she carries it into the other room. Ruthie begins to clean-up the old flowers.

INT. GRACE'S APARTMENT. EVENING.

Grace, all dressed up, stands before her bay window, looking into the glow of the sprawling city lights. Her white silhouette clashes with the black background.

INT. FIGUERORA HOTEL. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES. INTIMATE PARTY. NIGHT

A record player blasts MUSIC. A live cheetah in a rhinestone collar lounges in the corner. A mix of young artists talk, dance and drink around the room.

A beautiful black woman, GENEVIEVE [30s], moves through the room. She carries her dancer's body with confidence. Grace wears a conservative dress buttoned up to her neck and white kid gloves. All eyes are on her as she enters. Genevieve spots her and quickly takes her under her arm.

GENEVIEVE
Gracie!

GRACE
Genevieve!

Genevieve takes Grace by the arm and pulls her into a quiet back corner.

GENEVIEVE
I'm so glad you could make it. How are you? I can't buy a pack of cigarettes without seeing your face, but it's been so long since I've seen these beautiful cheekbones in person.

Grace closes her eyes and leans her head against Genevieve's shoulder.

GRACE
I'm almost done with it all, here. I want to go back to New York. I miss the city the way I miss a man.

GENEVIEVE
When are you going back?

GRACE
After the movie wraps.

Genevieve pauses. She leads Grace into a quieter corner.

GENEVIEVE
I've been trying to keep some news from you. Too soon, bad luck. You know. But you're here and I have to tell you.

GRACE
Yes -

GENEVIEVE
I’m pregnant.
(beat)
It’s good, it’s so good. I’m happy.

GRACE
Oh, Ginny.

Grace wraps her arms around Genevieve, truly happy for her.

GRACE (CONT’D)
Who’s the father?

Genevieve motions toward a tall, thin, white man, SEYMOUR [40s], leaning against the wall. He looks over just as Genevieve points. He raises his glass and smiles.

GENEVIEVE
Seymour. Sweetest thing with the sweetest babydoll blue eyes.

Grace leans back against the wall and laughs.

GRACE
Ginny, you’re incredible.

GENEVIEVE
You’re the only one who knows. Don’t tell anyone.

GRACE
You know I tuck my secrets away.

GENEVIEVE
A little far away, sometimes.

Genevieve dances over to turn up the music. Grace moves through the crowded room, toward the kitchen.

INT. PARTY. KITCHEN. CONT’D.

The loud MUSIC is jarring. A man, LAWRENCE [33], pours himself a glass of red wine. He is well-dressed and handsome. Very handsome. The type of man that has never had any trouble attracting women. When he sees Grace approaching, he pours a second glass and hands it to her. They turn toward the room and watch the party. Genevieve's pet cheetah has risen to circle the room. Lawrence looks at Grace.

LAWRENCE
We should join the circus, I think.

Grace is caught off-guard, but she plays along.

GRACE
You and me?

Lawrence looks around, jokingly. Grace is the only one standing near him.

LAWRENCE
Who else?

GRACE
Well, perhaps I can put in a good word for you. I've just been hired as the bearded lady.

Lawrence chuckles.

LAWRENCE
Congratulations, miss. That's a true coup. I turned in my resume as the lion tamer, but have no hope of being hired.

GRACE
Oh? Are you awful?

LAWRENCE
Well, they may have heard about the incident from my last gig, in Tulsa.
(leans in, whispering)
Julio, my lion, ate someone from the audience.

Lawrence fake grimaces. Grace is amused.

GRACE
Oh! Dear. Well, that won't do.

Lawrence extends his hand. Grace takes it in hers.

LAWRENCE
Lawrence.

GRACE
Grace

LAWRENCE
I know.

Grace is still holding onto his hand. Lawrence looks toward the party.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Shall we?

Grace nods. They walk through the room to a group of people talking in the small sitting room. Grace and Lawrence take a seat. Lawrence watches her as she folds her gloved hands in her lap and pulls back her shoulders. She crosses her legs at the ankles so they appear long and slender.

WOMAN 1
Ball park. Middle of the night. He said it would be romantic.

Everyone laughs loudly, slapping knees, taking large gulps of drinks. They motion to the man at the woman's left.

MAN 1
I was twelve and she was my P.E. teacher. She had big boobies.

Everyone yells and guffaws in denial.

WOMAN 2
How old was she? Sixty?

The man waves his hands in the air in surrender.

MAN 1
Okay, okay. Sophomore year with Sophia. It wasn't the ... longest experience.

Laughter. Heads turn toward Grace.

MAN 2
Your turn.

Grace shakes her head.

WOMAN 2
Come on! We all have.

Grace takes a sip from her drink.

GRACE
What makes you think I'm not a virgin?

The crowd laughs and the game moves on.

INT. GRACE'S FAMILY HOME. FLASHBACK. 1948.

Grace is 16. She is lying on her bed going through a play, her lines underlined. Her parents are out. The house is quiet. Her voice is different - not yet as polished as her adult self. She whispers her lines to herself.

YOUNG GRACE
I wasn't expecting to find you here so late.
No, of course not, I wouldn't presume to think--

The door downstairs SLAMS. Grace quiets. A woman's laugh filters through her open bedroom door. Footsteps mount the stairs. She keeps her eyes on the door. First she sees her father, smiling broadly and looking back at a blond woman who passes after him. The woman catches Grace's eyes.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT. FLASHBACK. CONT'D.

The rain is coming down in thick sheets. The young Grace rushes up to the front door of a respectable suburban home.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME. NIGHT. FLASHBACK. CONT'D.

The HUSBAND [30s] answers. His hair is still cut short from the war.

YOUNG GRACE
Is Cynthia here?

HUSBAND
Not at the moment. Come in.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME. NIGHT. FLASHBACK. CONT'D.

The husband takes her coat and motions toward the darkened living room.

YOUNG GRACE
I wanted to run through lines with Cynthia. There's a scene I'm worried about.

HUSBAND
Of course. She's mentioned you. She says you're brilliant in that play thing.

The husband looks at Grace, both assessing and admiring.

HUSBAND (CONT'D)
You want some tea? Coffee? Something warm for your mitts after the cold outside? It's raining something hard.

Grace takes a seat on the couch. She is careful not to cross her legs, so they appear long and slender. She folds her hands in her lap and pulls her shoulders back. She sits in the dark as the husband makes the drinks in the kitchen.

He returns with her cup of tea.

HUSBAND (CONT'D)
Oh, I left the light off. How forgetful of me. You're welcome to wait. If you want.

He sits down on the couch without turning the light on. He's close to Grace. Grace doesn't look at him, only sips her tea. Steam rises in her face. He moves closer to her. She can tell he wants her. Quickly, she turns and presses her face into his. He's surprised but pleased. Her kisses are amateur.

As he undresses her, Grace whispers her lines.

YOUNG GRACE
I wasn't expecting to find you here so late.
No, of course not, I wouldn't presume to think--
Really? That's a kindness, truly.

The husband covers Grace's lips lightly with his hand and whispers.

HUSBAND
Shh.

INT. BEDROOM. FLASHBACK. CONT'D.

Grace is naked. She pulls her body over his.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT. FLASHBACK. CONT'D.

Grace walks back home under the pouring rain, letting herself get entirely soaked. Her expression is impenetrable.

Cut to:

EXT. ON-SET. "THE DEADLY KISS". STREET. 1955.

Rain falls heavily from a rain machine. Grace stands to the side, wrapped in a thick robe. Her hair is wet and caked to her cheeks. She's shivering but doing her best to maintain her composure. She is a sensual, confident version of her younger self. Nikolas shakes his head in frustration.

NIKOLAS
Again.

Grace nods. She sheds her robe and walks bravely beneath the water to a corner pay phone.

PATRICE
(into her bullhorn)
Still rolling!

With the rain coating her, Grace picks up the phone and dials a number.

IRIS
Detective Webb. I have something for you. (pause) No, not there. Somewhere more private. (pause) Yes, yes. I'll be there.

Grace hangs up, looks quickly in both directions, then runs across the empty street.

NIKOLAS
Cut!

Grace is quickly wrapped in the robe. She shivers, but smiles bravely at Mrs. Munroe, who shakes her head in commiseration. Nikolas again throws up his hands.

NIKOLAS (CONT'D)
Not good enough. Again.

The D.P. looks at Nikolas.

2ND AD
Take it easy mate, she's really shivering.

Nikolas glares and mutters under his breath.

NIKOLAS
Ay gamisou.

GRACE
What'd you say?

Nikolas looks straight at Grace. He puts his thumb to his nose and wiggles his fingers.

Nikolas
Fuck off.

Grace laughs. She outdoes him by putting both hands up to her nose -- thumb to nose, thumb to pinkie -- and wiggles her fingers.

GRACE
Ay gamisou!

Nikolas, Grace, and the D.P. burst into laughter. Grace loops her arm around Nikolas. Patrice feels threatened. Grace sheds her robe and steps back beneath the rain.

For a moment, when she looks away from Nikolas and the crew, her face falls: utterly blank.

INT. GRACE'S TRAILER. LATER.

Grace's hair has dried. She wears a plain dress. She takes a note off the counter. It reads:

William
1335 Edgecliff Drive

Grace slips the note into her pocket. She checks the mirror one last time. She removes her glasses and leaves the trailer, gloves and purse in hand.

INT. WILLIAM'S STUDIO. DAY.

Grace sits on the sofa - prim in her white gloves. The photos from her shoot are laid out across the table. She looks through a magnifying glass, expertly, at a row of proofs.

GRACE
This one.

She holds up the glass for William to have a look. It's a profile of Grace, only her eyes are turned toward the camera.

WILLIAM
Yes. I think the profile is better.

William takes a red, wax pencil and circles the frame.

GRACE
I'm trying to set-up a darkroom in my apartment, when I get back to New York.

WILLIAM
Really? I didn't know you were a photographer yourself.

GRACE
My amateur exposures are always a little off. I have a decent book, to help me with developing.

WILLIAM
If you're serious, I could show you now?

GRACE
Alright.

William motions her to follow him into the other room.

INT. WILLIAM'S STUDIO. DARK ROOM.

William and Grace enter. He flicks on the red light. He shakes an empty jug.

WILLIAM
Sorry. We'll need this. Be right back.

INT. WILLIAM'S STUDIO. STORAGE CLOSET.

William pulls down a full jug. He checks the expiration date. It's good. He places the empty jug in the trash bin.

INT. WILLIAM'S STUDIO. DARK ROOM. CONT'D.

He opens the door to find Grace against the wall, stark naked. He swallows hard. He sets down the heavy jug, trying to stay composed. He walks to her and kisses her.

INT. WILLIAM'S STUDIO. MAIN ROOM. LATER.

The room is empty, quiet.

Grace enters, perfectly composed and dressed again. She takes her purse off the sofa.

WILLIAM (O.S.)
Would you like some coffee?

He enters after her, looking ruffled.

GRACE
I have to go now or I'll be late.

William nods.

WILLIAM
Good luck with your dark room.

GRACE
Thank you.

WILLIAM
You call me, if you have questions.

GRACE
Yes I will seek your professional council.

Grace smiles sweetly and turns toward the door.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Goodbye William.

Grace leaves. William takes a deep breath.

WILLIAM
Wow.

INT. RESTAURANT. LOS ANGELES. NIGHT.

A peppy big band plays. The restaurant's crowd is mostly movie people. A massive ice sculpture of a turkey slowly melts in the center of the room.

Grace sits at a table with Nikolas, Patrice, and LUCAS [39], a tan Hollywood film producer in a tight-fitting suit. Grace wears a close-fitting brown dress. Patrice is focused on her overwhelming Thanksgiving plate.

LUCAS
I did it. I had to. Tan leather, cream exterior. She's a beauty.

Grace begins to slice her turkey into smaller and smaller pieces.

NIKOLAS
What year?

LUCAS
1954. 356 Speedster.

Nikolas raises his eyebrows.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
Grace, tell me, is it true your father may be the next mayor of Philadelphia?

GRACE
I don’t have a head for politics.

Patrice fills up her glass of wine.

GRACE (smiling) (CONT’D)
But I do think Eisenhower looks like an otter.
(beat)
Excuse me.

Grace stands up and goes to the bathroom. Across the restaurant, the man from the party - Lawrence - sits with a pretty brunette and an older woman. He watches Grace as she exits.

PATRICE
It’s Grace’s world and everyone else is just living in it.
(beat)
That’s not me, it was a line I read in a magazine.

NIKOLAS
Since when do you read women’s magazines?

PATRICE
Doctor’s office.

LUCAS
Do you think I have a chance?

Patrice is tipsy.

PATRICE
What was it you said?
(imitating her Husband’s accent)
She’d screw a doorknob.
They didn't put that in the magazine did they.

Lucas chuckles. Patrice takes a big sip from her glass. Nikolas takes the glass away from her.

NIKOLAS
Patrice! You’re drunk.

INT. RESTAURANT HALLWAY.

Grace is returning from the bathrooms. Lawrence walks toward her. When she sees him, she smiles broadly.

GRACE
The lion tamer.

He moves toward her until he's standing only inches away, looking down into her beaming face. She looks up and, in the most natural way, stands on her tiptoes and kisses him. They kiss, sensually, for moments.

Grace steps back, happy.

LAWRENCE
When will I see you? I'm back in New York tomorrow.

GRACE
New York is home.

LAWRENCE
Is it really? Will you be back?

GRACE
Yes. Soon.

LAWRENCE
Soon. Next week? Next month?

Grace shrugs coyly and turns away.

INT. RESTAURANT DINING ROOM. CONT'D.

Lucas stands and extends his hand to Grace, before she can sit down.

LUCAS
Let's dance.

He motions toward a barely populated dance floor on the other side of the room. Grace acquiesces.

As Lawrence returns from the bathroom, he sees Grace and Lucas on the dance floor and joins them with his date. Lucas is a terrible dancer. Grace and Lawrence smile as they pass each other and Lucas steps on Grace's toes.

Nikolas and Patrice watch the flirtation between Grace and Lawrence. The looks from the restaurant crowd are no longer subtle. Grace is the center of attention.

Nikolas turns to Patrice.

NIKOLAS
You've always been terrible at the set-up.

PATRICE
There’s still time.

On the dance floor Lucas spins Grace away from Lawrence, but her eyes stay on him.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. EST. NIGHT.

The warm light filters through the windows, into the night.

FRANCIS (O.S.)
Where’s your father?

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. CONT’D.

The family is posing by the fireplace for a photo. The butler, Eddie, holds the camera. George enters.

GEORGE
I’m right here Francis. You don’t have to shout.

Francis stands by her eldest daughter, FRANNY [33], the ultimate alpha female. Her young son CAMERON [5] wriggles at her feet, bored. Ruthie stands on the other side of her mother.

RUTHIE
I wish Grace was here.

Ruthie looks over to her boyfriend, Joe, standing off to the side. Francis notices.

FRANCIS
Come on, Joe. You have to be in the photo too.

Ruthie is surprised, but pleased. Joe nods and moves to stand by Ruthie. Ruthie squeezes his hand.

EDDIE
Alright.

The family flashes smiles.

EDDIE (CONT’D)
One, two, three.

The camera CLICKS.

FRANCIS
One more!

EDDIE
One, two, three.

The camera CLICKS again. They fall out of their poses.

Francis goes to take the camera from Eddie.

FRANCIS
Thank you Eddie.

FRANNY
Mom, we have to be going, it's way past Cameron's bedtime.

FRANCIS
Alright dear. Are you sure you don't want to stay here?

FRANNY
We'll be fine. I promise.

Ruthie gives her sister a hug goodbye.

FRANNY (CONT'D)
Things are getting pretty serious, with Joe?

Ruthie nods, embarrassed.

FRANCIS
He definitely seems to be fitting in.

Ruthie looks around for Joe. But he's left the room.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. DEN. CONT'D.

George pours whiskey into Joe's glass.

JOE
Thank you.

George takes his glass and sits comfortably in his chair. The room is evidence of George's success. The walls are lined with his plaques of achievement - awards from various Philadelphia organizations.

GEORGE
That daughter of mine--

JOE
She's something, isn't she?

GEORGE
Gallivanting around Hollywood -- Hollywood! Ha! -- no cares.

Joe realizes George is not speaking about Ruthie, but Grace. His face turns. George makes broad, sloppy motions with his hands.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Tapdancing. What-have-you. Acting in nothing films. And for what. I tell you -- She's thrown herself into a jungle. I tried to raise them up to be individuals. Strong-minded individuals.

Joe nods, afraid to speak. George takes a long drink from his glass and finishes it. He holds it out as if he expects someone to take it from him and refill it. No one does.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
You see Joe. I like you. Good sensible head you have. So you know what Hollywood does. Nothing respectable comes out, no matter the awards they gild it with. You believe me, Joe.

Joe
I agree, sir.

George's words slur. He is drunk.

GEORGE
Sex.

JOE
Excuse me?

Ruthie pops her head in.

GEORGE
(whisper)
Take care of Ruthie. Do that for me.

JOE
I promise, sir.

RUTHIE
Joe, Dad. Would either of you care for some coffee?

Joe jumps up.

JOE
Oh that sounds swell, thanks.

RUTHIE
Dad?

George shakes his head. He rises to pour himself another drink.

Ruthie and Joe leave the room together. George sits alone. He stares straight ahead. His face falls.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS. NIGHT.

Lucas's convertible speeds through the sharp turns.

INT. 1954 PORSCHE 356 SPEEDSTER. NIGHT.

The wind whips through Grace's hair. Lucas shifts gears.

LUCAS
She said, "Sir you are drunk." And you know what Churchill said?

Grace shakes her head.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
"And you, Madam, are ugly. But in the morning, I shall be sober."

Grace doesn't find the joke funny. Lucas stops at a light. He rests his hand on her leg. Grace lets it rest there. Lucas turns back to the road. The car speeds around another sharp corner.

EXT. GRACE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Grace steps out of the car and wraps her shawl around her shoulders. A cold wind blows. Lucas follows after her. He grabs her arm.

LUCAS
Nightcap?

GRACE
I can't.

LUCAS
Come on, it's a holiday! Just one, I promise.

GRACE
Just one.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE. CONT'D.

Grace switches the floor lamp on and goes into the kitchen. Lucas follows her. When she opens her cabinets and pulls down two glasses, he sees how empty they are.

LUCAS
No plates?

GRACE
I'm moving soon.

LUCAS
Where?

GRACE
Back to New York. This place is merely temporary. Can't you tell?

Grace pours two whiskeys. Lucas settles in on the couch. Grace hands him a drink. She sits on the opposite end of the couch and slowly sips her drink.

His eyes are fixated on her. In one quick motion, he puts his drink down and lunges for her. He slips the straps of her dress off. She struggles, but only for a few seconds, then she lets herself go. He kisses her neck.

Grace suddenly begins making bird noises, small chirps and tweets. Lucas frowns but pushes on. The tweets turn squeaky and more high-pitched. He shrugs and continues kissing her, feeling her up. Finally, the noises become the loud honks of a goose. Lucas pushes himself off her and mutters.

LUCAS
Crazy bitch.

He quickly gets up and walks away. The door slams behind him. Grace sits up, amused. She smooths down her hair and the folds of her dress. She straightens her posture. The silence is palpable. It rises to a loud HUM.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. CONT'D.

Grace stares at her bare body in the mirror. It's a bald, open stare. Her eyes move over her entire body, critical and aware.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. LATE NIGHT.

There is a windstorm outside. A branch THUMPS against Grace's window. The wind is strong. It's still dark outside. The phone RINGS. Grace wakes and pulls on her glasses to look at the clock. It's 1:00 a.m. She picks up the phone. At first she can't hear who's on the other line.

GRACE
Excuse me? Hello?

GENEVIEVE (O.S.)
Gracie, it's me.

Grace sits up quickly, grabbing at her skirt and shoes.

GRACE
Ginny. What's wrong?

GENEVIEVE (O.S.)
My baby. It's my baby.

GRACE
Hold on. I'll be there soon.

EXT. FIGUEROA HOTEL. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES. LATE NIGHT.

Grace passes a group of young boys, smoking and LAUGHING loudly.

INT. FIGUEROA HOTEL. CONT'D.

Genevieve is in the bathtub. The towels in the bathroom are covered in blood. Genevieve is frantic. Grace hugs her, doing her best not to cry.

GRACE
We need to get you to the hospital, Ginny. Everything will be okay. I promise.

INT. HOSPITAL. EMERGENCY ROOM.

The NURSE behind the counter looks up at Genevieve as they enter. Grace has her head down, looking through her purse. Genevieve takes a seat. The nurse looks back down at her papers. Grace approaches her.

GRACE
My friend has had a miscarriage.

Nurse
The Grenada Hills Hospital is open for--.

The nurse looks up. She does not recognize Grace in her glasses, with her hair pulled back.

GRACE
For what?

NURSE
For your Negro friend.

GRACE
Excuse me?

NURSE
We have a policy.

GRACE
Do you understand? She's lost blood. A lot of blood.

NURSE
I do, but -

GRACE
If you think I am going to put her back in the car and drive her to wherever the hell Grenada Hills is because of your *policy*, you better think again. She needs to see a doctor, immediately.

The nurse relents and hands her a clipboard.

NURSE
Sign in, please.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. SUNRISE.

Genevieve lies in bed, asleep. Her face is haggard and worn. Grace sits in the seat next to her, awake, holding her hand. For the first time, Grace's looks are a little scruffy. Her eyes belie her distress. She kisses Genevieve on the forehead.

INT. HOSPITAL PAY PHONE.

Grace dials out. We can only hear her side of the conversation.

GRACE
Hello, it’s Grace.
I wanted to see if we could push my call time?
Not even an hour?
Alright. No, I understand. Thank you.

She hangs up. She pushes her hair back into place. Grace looks to see an OLD WOMAN sitting alone, in the hall. She looks eerily similar to Grace - except she’s twice her age. They make eye contact. The woman’s face is slightly bloated, belying drinking and depression. Grace turns away, frightened.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. CONTINUED.

Genevieve is barely awake. Grace is sitting in a chair by her bedside.

GENEVIEVE
I need to call Seymour.

GRACE
He’s on his way. We reached him.

Genevieve smiles, softly, and drifts back to sleep. Grace looks deeply concerned, to see her friend lying there.

INT. ON-SET. MORNING.

Grace arrives on set, exhausted but doing her best to hide it. She sits down in the make-up chair.

GRACE
I think I look more like Iris today. There’s purple under my eyes.

MAKE-UP ARTIST
Oh honey. Please. I’ve been here since four this morning.

GRACE
Why so early?

MAKE-UP ARTIST
Lana Morris. Still so pretty, but every year you have to start earlier. There aren’t many defenses against the camera.

Grace looks into her reflection.

VISION:

Suddenly, the Old Woman appears.

The vision dissolves.

INT. ON-SET. “THE DEADLY KISS”. IRIS’S APARTMENT.

Iris and the Detective stand close to one another. The detective looks out the window to see a cab waiting on the street. Iris has a suitcase next to her feet.

Iris suddenly reaches for the Detective. He grabs her, keeping her from touching his lips.

DETECTIVE WEBB
You really believed I’d be like the others? You met with Paul Grey, you seduced him, or he seduced you? You couldn’t be so careful to keep him from your deadly kiss. Did you think he had it coming to him? And this isn’t the first, is it? There have been other Paul Grey’s, haven’t there?

IRIS
I don’t know what you’re talking about.

DETECTIVE WEBB
A beautiful woman alone, never close to any man.

IRIS
I have to go.

She looks at the detective still holding her. Police sirens blare. She knows he turned her in. She suddenly kisses him. He tries to push her away, then gives in.

NIKOLAS
Cut!

The set pauses.

Director
That’s a wrap!

Everyone cheers and hugs. Grace thanks everyone, kind, making everyone feel important. Scoop nears her.

SCOOP
Great job, kid. Really.

She doesn't respond. He takes her in his arms. It's a long, friendly hug. Grace presses her lips against his neck. Maggie sees them together.

INT. GRACE'S TRAILER. LATER.

Grace is changing. Her trailer is full of flowers and wrap gifts. There's a knock on the door.

GRACE
One minute.

Grace rearranges a hair. She looks sensual in her robe. She opens the door to see Maggie.

MAGGIE
I won't make this a bigger deal than it needs to be. Stay away from Scoop. He's not yours.

Grace bristles. She speaks in a dry tone.

GRACE
Don't worry. I don't go back for more, when I've already had the full meal.

Maggie turns to leave. Grace shuts her trailer door. She slips off her robe and reaches for her dress. Her hands struggle with the metal zipper, it catches her finger, cuts her. She watches the cut open and bleed a small pellet of red. She puts her finger in her mouth.

EXT. AGENCY. BEVERLY HILLS. DAY. ESTABLISHING.

INT. AGENCY OFFICE. BEVERLY HILLS.

Grace wears a plain dress and hat and white gloves. She sits with her agent, FREDDY [40s]. Framed posters of her films surround them, including her LIFE Magazine Cover with the headline "The Year of Grace". Grace is a tired, pale version of the woman in the pictures. She takes a small sip of tea and picks a small piece of lint off her dress.

FREDDY
Did you have a look at the Quentin Durward script?

GRACE
That can't be the best MGM has to offer.

Freddy frowns at Grace. She elaborates.

GRACE (CONT'D)
A character isn't a character just because she wears 35 different costumes and looks pretty and frightened while eight people chase her. I'd have the old man, robbers, the head gypsy and Durward on my tail.

FREDDY
So that's a pass.

GRACE
There has to be substance.

Freddy walks back and takes a script off his desk.

FREDDY
Take this with you. It shoots in Prague this summer. It's the story of a princess whose mother wants her to impress a prince cousin.

Grace laughs out loud.

GRACE
You're kidding?

Freddy hands her a script titled THE SWAN.

FREDDY
Just have a look. See if it sticks with you. You could have some fun with that one.

Grace recoils.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
I'll check in with you, when you're in New York.
(beat)
You're not going too under the radar, are you?

GRACE
I'll be reachable.
You know I get that awful low after I finish a film.

FREDDY
We'll find something. The world is your oyster, my dear.

Freddy pats Grace on the back, full of fatherly affection.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
Look at those apple cheeks.

Grace rolls her eyes playfully.

INT. GRACE'S HOME. EVENING.

The apartment is packed up. Sound echoes. Grace eats a hamburger and sips from a paper cup. She wears a button-down shirt tucked into a pair of slacks. The phone RINGS. She takes a big bite and finishes it, before answering -

GRACE
Hello.
(pause)
How on earth did you find me? Yes, I am impressed.
I'm standing in my skeletal apartment now saying goodbye to California.
(pause)
No, not forever. Well I do have very high expectations. Yes, I'll see you there. Okay. Goodbye Lawrence.

Grace hangs up the phone, beaming.

NEW YORK CITY. DECEMBER. 1955. ESTABLISHING.

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. MORNING.

It's a beautifully furnished apartment, the living room has a lip-shaped red couch. Picture windows look out onto Central Park West, all covered in snow. A record-player plays Frank Sinatra. A short, frail woman, MIMI [70], cleans under the couch cushions.

INT. BEDROOM.

Grace flips through her closet. She takes out a heavy mohair coat. She holds the coat up, inspecting.

INT. DINING ROOM.

Mimi pushes in the dining room chairs. She stands back to look over the spotless room. Grace appears with the coat in her hands. She stands quietly with it. When Mimi turns, she's startled by Grace. She grabs her chest.

MIMI
Oh dear! I didn't see you there. You scared me.

Mimi tucks her rag into her apron and walks over to Grace.

GRACE
Winter's coming. This is too heavy for me and itches my sensitive skin terribly, but maybe it won't bother you?

Grace holds open the coat.

MIMI
Oh I couldn't.

GRACE
Yes. Try it on.

Mimi slips her frail arms through the sleeves.

MIMI
It's so soft! It's too nice.

GRACE
It's perfect on you.

Grace buttons the top button. Mimi stands back, looking at her reflection in the window.

GRACE (CONT'D)
You're a movie star now.

Grace watches Mimi admire her reflection, posing like a model.

The door BUZZES. Mimi looks to Grace.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I'll get it.

INT. GRACE'S APARTMENT. ENTRYWAY.

Grace speaks into the intercom.

GRACE
Please, send him up.

Mimi collects her purse and her old coat. She looks down at the new coat.

MIMI
It’s so warm. Are you sure?

GRACE
Yes, of course. My dear Mimi.

Mimi waves goodbye to Grace. She passes the CONCIERGE walking down the call with a covered bird cage and two notes, headed towards Grace. He reaches her door.

CONCIERGE
It’s just arrived, been tweeting the whole way up.

Grace puts the cage on a table. She removes the cover. A red canary is flying back and forth. She chuckles and breaks the red seal on the first note.

Dear Grace,

I remember how you liked the sound of mine when we met. I hope it will keep you company. –M

She opens the second one.

To the Beautiful Bearded Lady,

I’ll pick you up at 6 tonight.

L.Salina, Lion Tamer

Grace grins sincerely, almost shyly, at the letter. She puts the two letters under her arm, embarrassed. She takes some change from a bowl by the door and hands it to Concierge.

GRACE
Thank you.

She shuts the door and heads back inside. She tries to install the cage in different places in her flat. Nothing seems to work. She finally sets it on a table in her living room, next to a view of Central Park.

GRACE (CONT’D)
Here you go, little bird. A cage with a view.

INT. KITCHEN. CONT'D.

Grace pulls a cigar box down from the cabinet. She opens it to reveal a newspaper clipping of her with a short, dark haired man, standing beside a caged lion. She slips the new letter inside. She carefully closes the box and hides it back in the cabinet. Contemplative.

EXT. SMALL CIRCUS TENT. NIGHT.

Families and children gather outside. The cab drops off Grace and Lawrence. As Grace gets out, she clings to Lawrence's arm.

GRACE
I should have known.

INT. CIRCUS TENT. LATER.

The tent is filled with the NOISE of the crowd and the show. Grace is radiant and beautiful in a yellow dress. They sit close to each other, obviously enjoying and aware of the other's presence.

A woman walks the tightrope.

GRACE
It's beautiful.

Lawrence looks at Grace, surprised.

GRACE (CONT'D)
To be something so odd and complete that no one thinks about what you're hiding.

She acts as though what she's just said is completely normal. Lawrence tries to read her expression, but can't. He stares at her and she stares at the acrobat, both completely transfixed.

INT. LAWRENCE'S APARTMENT. WEST VILLAGE. NIGHT.

Grace follows Lawrence inside. One wall is brick. The shelves are so full with books and small keepsakes, they spill out onto the floors on either side.

Grace begins to wander, trailing her fingers along the bookshelves and table. There's a pile of sketches on the desk. She picks them up and begins to look through them. Lawrence walks up behind her and kisses her neck.

GRACE
These are fantastic.

LAWRENCE
For a film. I was thinking of -

He pulls over a swatch of light grey wool.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
For the suit?

GRACE
Is she a blond, the actress?

LAWRENCE
No, brunette.

GRACE
It's too light.
(beat)
I'd love to be able to sketch, like this.
Who is it? The actress?

Lawrence
I'm too wrapped up having you in my apartment to remember her name.

Grace laughs.

GRACE
Oh please.

Lawrence takes the sketches from her, sets them back on the desk, and turns her around. He kisses her. She softens completely.

INT. LAWRENCE'S APARTMENT. NIGHT. LATER.

The lights are out. Lawrence and Grace are in bed together. Moonlight cuts through the window blinds. They're asleep, not curled around each other, but close.

Something in the next apartment crashes. Grace jerks awake. She tenses and looks to Lawrence, who still appears to be fast asleep.

GRACE
(whispering)
Lawrence?

Without opening his eyes, he reaches his hand over to hers.

LAWRENCE
I'm here.

Grace's face softens. She allows her eyes to close. She falls back asleep.

INT. LAWRENCE'S APARTMENT. NOON.

Lawrence rolls over on top of GRACE so he can have a good look at the clock. He groans at the time and kisses her full on the lips.

LAWRENCE
You know what I like to do at times like this?

GRACE
Skydive?

LAWRENCE
Order in sandwiches. What's your pleasure?

GRACE
Ham on rye. Lots of mustard.

LAWRENCE
A woman after my own heart.

Lawrence goes into the living room to call the deli. Grace stays in bed. She smiles at the muffled sound of his voice on the phone. She catches sight of herself in a mirror on the opposite wall and quickly adjusts her hair.

LAWRENCE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Should be here in thirty!

INT. LAWRENCE'S APARTMENT. LATER.

There is a KNOCK on the door. GRACE turns to Lawrence, still in her underwear.

GRACE
Should we have a little fun?

Lawrence looks to her, unsure what she means.

Grace jumps up, without putting on a robe. She pulls open the door in her underwear. The DELIVERY BOY looks at her in shock.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Sandwich boy.

Delivery boy
Uhm. I -- Yes. Sandwiches.

GRACE
How much do I owe you?

She hands the delivery boy a ten dollar bill before he can answer. His hands shake as he counts out her change. The door closes.

Grace turns around with the bag of sandwiches. Lawrence bursts into laughter. He doubles over. His face goes red. She tries not to, but she begins laughing with him. He grabs her around the waist and kisses her on the lips.

LAWRENCE
Man you're something.

Grace looks to Lawrence, fully aware of the effect she has on him.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
I'm planning a trip to Long Island, to my house there. Come with me.

Grace collapses beside him on the couch. Sensually, she begins tracing her finger around his chest. She whispers into his neck.

GRACE
I can do that, I think. Maybe.

LAWRENCE
You can stay with me until I leave.

GRACE
Leave to where?

LAWRENCE
Paris. It's the most work I do all year. I've got to rest up for it, preferably in bed, with you.

He smiles and pulls her into his lap. He kisses her.

GRACE
We can hide there?

LAWRENCE
Of course.

GRACE
We'll hide until the icebergs melt.

INT. GRACE'S MANHATTAN APARTMENT. DAY.

Grace has her glasses on, reading a script on her couch. She looks rested and happy.

MIMI
Goodbye Miss Grace.
(motioning to the bird)
I'll be sure to take care of him while you're away.

GRACE
Thank you Mimi. I do appreciate it.

Mimi leaves. Grace looks down to the script titled THE SWAN.

She turns a page. She reads over the lines. Then aloud -

GRACE (CONT'D)
Ever since I was a little girl I've never said no to my mother. It was my mother who said I should invite you tonight.

The canary starts to TRILL. Grace is troubled. She gets up and goes to the cage. She starts whistling, trying to play with the bird but he just jumps, frantic, back and forth in the cage. Grace checks her watch and goes to the phone. She picks it up to make a call.

GRACE (CONT'D)
William Morris Agency, Los Angeles.

She waits for the line to connect, impatient.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Fredrick Levine please. (pause). It's Grace. Oh, that's fine, can you please give him the message that I won't have a phone number to be reached on, while I'm in Long Island. No, just a friend. Tell him I'm going under the radar. Yes. Okay. Thank you very much.

Grace hangs up the phone. The bird trills loudly, mixing with the sounds of SEAGULLS.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN COAST. DAY.

The beach is nearly empty and cold. Grace walks alone. A young, scruffy kid is playing on the beach. He runs past Grace. He stops and stares back at her.

GRACE
It’s cold. Go home.

The child turns from her and runs off, maybe afraid of her, maybe going home. The wind pushes against Grace as she heads back, toward the house.

INT. LONG ISLAND HOUSE. DAY.

Grace sheds her coat in the entryway. The rooms are dark as she walks through them. The house feels abandoned. The old crystal chandelier over the dining room table is covered in dust. The paint is peeling off the high ceiling beams. She finds Lawrence next to a large window. He’s hunched over the kitchen table, sketching. She walks over to him, leans down and hugs his neck, so their cheeks are pressed together. He shivers at her touch.

LAWRENCE
You’re going to get sick if you keep going out on that cold, cold shore.

They kiss. Lawrence stands.

GRACE
It’s good for me.

Lawrence picks up a bottle of whiskey sitting on the kitchen counter.

LAWRENCE
For warmth?

They both have a shot.

GRACE
Lawrence, I was thinking.

LAWRENCE
What’s got you thinking?

GRACE
Christmas. You should come home with me. It’s soon, and you can’t stay here alone. I won’t have it.
(MORE)

GRACE (CONT'D)
And this way, we'll have more time together before you leave.

Lawrence is taken aback. He was not expecting this.

LAWRENCE
You want that?

GRACE
Please.

Grace and Lawrence kiss.

INT. LONG ISLAND HOUSE. BEDROOM. LATER.

Lawrence sifts through Grace's suitcase while she showers. She comes out and sees the outfit he picked out.

GRACE
I think that's the costumer's job, sir.

LAWRENCE
I gave her the afternoon off. You're stuck with me.

Grace walks around him and takes out another dress. She holds the two out in front of her.

GRACE
Which role am I playing today? The housewife or the murderer?

Grace holds one dress up in front of her and does a small, coy dance. Then she holds the other dress up and begins moving seductively toward Lawrence. Lawrence is caught between amusement and discomfort.

LAWRENCE
How about Grace. Isn't it the toughest role to play?

He's digging. She doesn't like it. She pulls him into a kiss, to distract him.

Lawrence pulls back and points out another dress, laying on the bed behind Grace.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
This one.

GRACE
My favorite.

Lawrence kisses Grace on the cheek and leaves the room. She watches him - unsettled by his remark. The shadows are sharp against her face.

INT. LONG ISLAND RESTAURANT. LATER.

Grace and Lawrence are seated at a long table in a private corner, at the back of the restaurant. They share the table with two other couples, FRANK and MAUREEN and LORAINE and IAN, who do not seem awed by Grace's celebrity. They're halfway through their meal. It's loose and comfortable.

MAUREEN
(to Grace)
So - was it love at first sight?

Lawrence makes a funny face. Embarrassed.

GRACE
Yes. Like a lion pouncing.

The table chuckles. Lawrence tries to change the subject.

LAWRENCE
I haven't shown Grace the haunted room in my house yet.

GRACE
Oh?

LAWRENCE
Two summers ago -

MAUREEN
No! We want to hear more about your meeting. You wild animal.

IAN
Yes! How did you pounce on this delicate creature.

LAWRENCE
Forget it.

GRACE
No, I want to hear your story!

LORAINE
Me too. I believe in ghosts.

LAWRENCE
The moment's ruined.

GRACE
Tell it, please. Come on.

Lawrence starts again.

LAWRENCE
Two summers ago, Frank crashed at my place. Drunk. He came running into my bedroom around 3 a.m., wearing nothing but his under things, screaming like something had just bitten off his ear.

FRANK
I thought something had!

LAWRENCE
No, you thought something had touched your foot. Very different, although equally ridiculous.

FRANK
I still stand by that.

LAWRENCE
You shouldn’t.

The table laughs.

A woman, ROSE [40], enters the restaurant. Her brunette hair is swept into a high bun. She looks directly at Lawrence. Lawrence is caught by surprise. The woman makes her way to their table.

ROSE
Lawrence.

Lawrence rises, kisses her gently on the cheek.

LAWRENCE
Grace, this is Rose, my ex-wife.

Rose recognizes Grace. She struggles to find the right words. Grace reaches out. They shake hands.

GRACE
Hello.

Rose looks to Lawrence.

ROSE
Of all places. I though you’d rented out the house.

Grace notices a heavy diamond on her finger.

GRACE
What a beautiful ring.

Rose takes a moment to compose herself, looks down at her hand.

ROSE
Thank you. It's nothing really.
Family. Passed down.

Rose turns back to Lawrence and leans down to whisper.

ROSE (CONT'D)
I was so sorry to hear, about
Barbara.

LAWRENCE
She loved you.

ROSE
I've missed her, since.

Rose looks back to her husband, standing awkwardly by the door and then back at the table.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Good to see you all.

Rose nods goodbye. Grace tries to feign indifference, but she is unsettled.

EXT. BAY. NIGHT.

Lawrence has trouble driving their small boat across the bay. The friends laugh. Grace looks out over the water. It's night, and everything around them seems to disappear into darkness.

Yachts tower around them as they make their way to the house.

Lawrence pauses to adjust the motor.

IAN
Come on! I thought you said you
knew how to drive this thing!

LAWRENCE
Hold your horses Ian.

VISION:

Grace looks down into the dark water. Staring back up at her is the face of the Old Woman -- like a ghost chasing her. The water ripples white and breaks the vision.

INT. LONG ISLAND HOUSE. LATE MORNING.

Grace's head rests against Lawrence's chest. The sheets swirl around them.

GRACE
Lawrence, who was Barbara?

Lawrence hadn't expected this.

LAWRENCE
My grandmother. She raised me.

GRACE
With your grandfather?

LAWRENCE
No, just her.

Grace silently takes this in.

GRACE
Do you have any brothers or sisters?

LAWRENCE
No. We were a team, her and I.

GRACE
Oh.

Grace isn't sure how to react. They're silent for a moment. She holds one of his hands in front of her face, tracing the calluses and lines on his palm.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Your skin is so rough.

Grace bends the fingers one by one, playing with them.

GRACE (CONT'D)
What if a person's outside could be exactly their inside? What if this skin meant your inside was like this too -- scarred and durable.

LAWRENCE
What would you look like?

Grace freezes, unsettled, almost disgusted. Lawrence smiles, amused, and kisses the back of her hand tenderly. Grace rolls over so she's looking into Lawrence's eyes, shoving off her dark thoughts.

EXT. BEACH. EVENING.

Grace and Lawrence walk along the beach. They're not holding hands, but there's a closeness to them. He takes her by the elbow and she climbs up onto the dune and lays down. He sits beside her. They stay silent. The ocean crashes against the beach.

INT. LONG ISLAND HOUSE. NIGHT.

Grace and Lawrence return. Lawrence pushes her against a wall and kisses her. They kiss for awhile, and then Grace pulls him into the living room and down onto the couch. He leans in to kiss her but she puts her finger to his lips delicately.

GRACE
Shh. I want to hear.

Lawrence looks around him, then back at GRACE.

LAWRENCE
Hear what?

GRACE
The ghost.

Lawrence rests his head next to Grace's. They listen. Grace is happy.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. DAY.

Lawrence and Grace arrive by car. The house is buried in snow. There's a Christmas wreathe on the front door. Grace checks her complexion in a make-up mirror with her glasses on. She straightens her hair. She is nervous. She takes her glasses off and looks to Lawrence. She runs her fingers through his hair like a mother preparing her child for company.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME.

The butler Eddie opens the door and bows deeply when he sees GRACE.

EDDIE
Welcome home.

Grace kisses him on the cheek. She looks to Lawrence.

GRACE
Lawrence, this is Eddie. I'd be nothing without him.

LAWRENCE
Nice to meet you.

Eddie goes out to the car to get their bags. Grace takes Lawrence's hand and leads him upstairs, to the room where he'll be staying.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. BEDROOM.

Lawrence and Grace notice a pile of presents stacked up in a corner of the bedroom, almost 50 identical boxes with Elizabeth Arden labels. Grace picks up one of the cards.

Push in on card:

Dearest Cheryl, you are my angel. -George

She looks at the next card. Lawrence looks over her shoulder.

Dearest Roberta, you are my angel...

Grace points to the gifts and turns to Eddie as he enters with Lawrence's bags.

GRACE
These shouldn't be here.

Eddie looks at Lawrence and nods, knowingly.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Thank you Eddie.

He begins piling the gifts into his arms. Grace turns to Lawrence.

GRACE (CONT'D)
The things you don't notice when you're a child.

Lawrence takes a second to understand her. She begins to move toward the living room but he pulls her back, close to him, and pushes his mouth against her ear.

LAWRENCE
That’s not me. I am not that man.

Grace kisses him prudishly on the cheek.

INT. GRACE’S FAMILY HOME. RUTHIE’S ROOM.

Grace walks excitedly down the hall, looking for Ruthie. She pokes her head into her room, but it’s empty. She turns around. Ruthie’s behind her. They hug quickly.

GRACE
I’ve missed you.

Ruthie pulls back to really get a good look at Grace.

Ruthie
I’m so happy you’re here! Where is he?

GRACE
Getting changed.

RUTHIE
How was Long Island?

GRACE
It was hard to leave. But I have been homesick. Isn't that silly? Mostly for you, though. I’ve missed my sister.

RUTHIE
I’m so glad you’re here.

Ruthie hugs her sister tight.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. NIGHT.

Eddie puts on a Christmas record.

The house is full of people, all gathered in the living room, laughing and joking. George keeps his glass full. Two young boys run around the legs of the adults.

Grace sips water. She stands next to Lawrence. From across the room, we see Ruthie pull Joe over to meet them. They exchange handshakes and cheek kisses.

Francis walks around the room. She stops for a moment in front of George, taps his glass but doesn’t say anything.

Ruthie pulls Grace aside. She looks pointedly at their father across the room.

RUTHIE
Has he made any effort yet?

GRACE
Of course not. But why would he?

Ruthie clasps one of Grace's hands in her own.

Ruthie
Look, Gracie, I wanted to tell you earlier--

From across the room, Grace's uncle, NILE [50s], spots their small group. He crosses and embraces Grace and Ruthie together. He is an effeminate, gay man.

NILE
My nieces! Gracie! My bird, my feather, my bee. So good to see you.

Nile looks at her niece and at Lawrence standing behind. Joe taps Ruthie on the shoulder. She turns away to speak with him.

NILE (CONT'D)
(to Grace)
Who did you bring?

GRACE
Nile Kelly, Lawrence Salina. Lawrence, Uncle Nile.

Nile and Lawrence shake hands.

NILE
Have you gotten yourself a drink yet? You're going to need it.

Lawrence realizes he has not. He looks to Grace, suddenly uncomfortable.

NILE (CONT'D)
Do you work with Grace?

LAWRENCE
We haven't, yet. She's in other, much more capable hands.

Grace looks over to see Ruthie and Joe talking with excitement. Joe drags Ruthie out into the middle of the group. They're holding hands.

JOE
We have an announcement!

The MUSIC quiets and conversation dies down. Grace's lips sit in a flat line. She and Ruthie's eyes meet. Ruthie suddenly looks apologetic. Joe is standing behind Ruthie, his smile almost breaking his cheeks.

RUTHIE
Joe and I --

Ruthie coughs and, seeing her unwillingness, Joe cuts in.

JOE
We're engaged!

People immediately begin clapping and exclaiming their congratulations. A crowd gathers quickly around Ruthie. The men shake hands with Joe. Ruthie sees Grace. She comes over to Grace. The sisters hug. Grace fakes a perfect smile.

GRACE
So happy for you, Ruthie.

Ruthie knows Grace is frustrated.

RUTHIE
You'll be happy, too.

Ruthie steps back from Grace. Lawrence takes Grace's hand.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. LATER.

George is pouring himself a glass of whisky. Grace stands by his side.

GRACE
It's nice to be here together.

GEORGE
You could come home more often, don't you think.

GRACE
I know it's been too long. I'll be closer to home now, in New York.

George looks at Lawrence, across the room, chatting with Nile.

GEORGE
Is that one yours?

GRACE
Yes. Lawrence. Come, I'll introduce you.

GEORGE
Him and Nile seem to get along very well.
(beat)
I'll come say hello in a minute.

Grace pours herself a drink.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
My daughter, drinking whiskey?

GRACE
Only on special occasions.

Grace stops pouring. Puts the bottle down.

GEORGE
I don't know what's popular, with the kids you run around with.

GRACE
Oh, Dad. I'm not possessed by some Hollywood demon.

Grace's mother, Francis walks over.

FRANCIS
Which is this man? The married one or the divorced on?

GRACE
Are you drunk, mother?

GEORGE
Don't talk to her like that, Gracie.

FRANCIS
I'm not drunk.

GEORGE
Are you?

FRANCIS
George!
(beat)
Come, say hi to the Williams.

Francis and George walk across the room, leaving Grace alone next to the bar.

She walks over to Ruthie, who is surrounded by relatives.

FRANNY
Grace! Tell us the crunchy Hollywood stories. Is it true about Ava and Clark? Truly?

Back across the room, Nile and Lawrence watch as Grace tells Ruthie and Franny a story. Ruthie bursts out laughing.

Lawrence smiles, looking at Grace.

NILE
I remember I took her to the theater. She must've been ten. Her eyes lit up when she saw the marquee outside. She smiled the whole time, edge of her seat, and it was a depressing play. Not one I should have taken a ten-year-old to. After, I offered to take her backstage to meet the actors. She looked at me for a moment, so confused. Gorgeous then as she is now. She stayed quiet the whole time back there. The actresses fawned over her, said she was the cutest thing, tried to get her to talk, but she wouldn't. I felt like I'd crushed a dream somehow. But I think from that disappointment grew this life. And I think she's happy.

LAWRENCE
Disappointment in what?

NILE
In the unreality of it. She wanted everything to be real. She didn't want there to be a backstage.

Lawrence sips his drink, thinking about it. He pats Nile on the arm. He holds up his empty glass. Nile nods and holds up his full glass. Lawrence takes off to get another drink.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. EMPTY ROOM.

Lawrence is walking aimlessly around the house. He walks into the kitchen and is startled to see Francis, arranging silverware on the counter. When she looks up and sees him, her face turns steely.

LAWRENCE
Do you need any help?

FRANCIS
Oh no, thank you. Enjoying our Christmas reunion?

LAWRENCE
Very much. I missed out on Christmas parties growing up. My family wasn't very close, not like yours.

Lawrence tries to make easy conversation, but it's apparent this isn't a friendly chat.

FRANCIS
It's hard to understand family, I think, when you haven't been blessed with one.

Lawrence doesn't quite understand, but knows she means nothing good.

LAWRENCE
Well--

FRANCIS
I don't mean anything, Lawrence dear, just that we're each born with a specific slice, and sometimes that slice isn't suited for family.

LAWRENCE
I love Grace.

FRANCIS
Yes, men do that. Would you help me carry those glasses to the living room?

Lawrence takes the tray and follows her, still in shock.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. LIVING ROOM. LATE NIGHT.

Grace has begun to dance. She lifts up her skirt, naturally, in the moment. Everyone else is involved in their own conversations, sitting or standing in small groups. Grace turns slightly to notice Joe's eyes on her. Laughing, she takes his hand and insists he dance with her. He agrees. It is innocent and yet she is seductive, without knowing or being able to help it.

Ruthie watches her little show. Lawrence enters, following behind Francis with the tray of glasses. He sets them down. He turns to Grace, to see her dancing with Joe. He heads out of the room - upset.

Grace doesn't see him leave. She stops dancing and walks over by Nile. She collapses onto a couch beside him. They are both intoxicated. Nile puts his arm around Grace's shoulder and pulls her close.

NILE
How is my favorite niece?

GRACE
Fine.

There is a long silence between them. Nile turns Grace's chin, so he looks in her eyes.

NILE
Your eyes. Have you been sleeping?

GRACE
Sometimes, no.

NILE
Why?

GRACE
I get this hot feeling in my chest, at night, like a hot towel has been placed right here.

Grace presses her palm into her chest.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Like there is not enough room in this chest for whatever is in there.

Nile studies Grace. She finishes her drink with desperation. Nile pulls her in close again and kisses her on the temple.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I better go find him.

Grace wanders through the house.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. FAMILY ROOM. NIGHT.

George sits across from Franny.

GEORGE
Mother says things are going better, for you, at home.

Franny shrugs her shoulders.

Franny
He's just away so much, on business.

GEORGE
You don't think he's unfaithful, do you?

FRANNY
I don't know Dad. I don't want Cameron to lose his father, I'm just... It's just, I'm alone, so much of the time.

GEORGE
You know how to look out for yourself. You're strong. I always thought, well -- I always thought you'd be the success, Franny.

Grace pokes her head in. She sees Franny looking as though she's about to cry.

GRACE
Is everything alright?

GEORGE
Marriage isn't easy, girls, it never is. But Franny will get through it.

George points to Franny. He rises, speaking to Grace as he heads out.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
She's a trooper, this one.

Grace is left alone with Franny.

GRACE
I'm sorry you're having trouble.

Franny bristles.

FRANNY
I'm fine. I'll be fine.

GRACE
Have you seen Lawrence?

FRANNY
Who?

GRACE
Lawrence.

FRANNY
Oh, no. No, I don't know.

Franny leaves, distracted. Grace sits alone in the room for a second, before turning to keep looking for Lawrence.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. HALLWAY.

Grace makes her way through a dark hallway.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. NIGHT.

Grace taps on Lawrence's door. There's no answer. She opens it to see him undressing. She slips her arms around him and whispers in his ear.

GRACE
Are you going to bed?

Lawrence turns to her.

LAWRENCE
Your mother-

GRACE
What?

LAWRENCE
You smell like a man.

GRACE
What does that mean?

LAWRENCE
Like whiskey.

Grace's eyes burn.

GRACE
What about my mother?

LAWRENCE
Nothing.

GRACE
What?

LAWRENCE
Leave it.

GRACE
I don't want to leave it.

LAWRENCE
Grace. Enough. I'm going to sleep.

GRACE
It's 10 p.m.

LAWRENCE
I'll sleep when I want to sleep.

She leaves. The door slams behind her.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. MORNING.

Grace and Francis sit at the kitchen table, alone. Francis is dressed to go out, while Grace is still in her robe. They slice their grapefruits in unison, in a familiar routine. Grace stops to sip her tea and look down at the newspaper.

FRANCIS
Did you stay in touch with the Prince of Morocco? You certainly made an attractive couple in those photos.

GRACE
Mother. It's Monaco, not Morocco.

FRANCIS
That's what I said - Morocco.

GRACE
Morocco is in Africa.

FRANCIS
Well I thought -

GRACE
Prince Maxence is the Prince of Monaco, in Europe.

FRANCIS
Well, I suppose you would know. You've been there.

GRACE
What did you think of Lawrence?

There's a long, awkward pause.

FRANCIS
He's very handsome.

Ruthie steps into the kitchen. George follows close behind her.

GEORGE
Come on Francis. We're going to be late.

Francis beams when she sees Ruthie. She rises, taking Ruthie in her arms.

FRANCIS
There she is! I'm so happy for you.

GRACE
Where are you going?

FRANCIS
We have a big fund-raiser for the church this morning.

Francis kisses Grace on the forehead.

GEORGE
How are you getting back Grace?

GRACE
We have a car.

GEORGE
I would've taken the train, myself. The roads could be icy.

GRACE
We'll be fine.

GEORGE
Be careful, Grace.

FRANCIS
Say goodbye to Lawrence for us, will you?

GRACE
Alright. Bye.

Francis and George leave together. Grace looks at Ruthie, jarred by her parents quick exit.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I go away and you get engaged.

RUTHIE
It's exciting.

GRACE
So much to do!

Ruthie nods, overwhelmed.

RUTHIE
I like Lawrence. He's smart, and seems ... artistic.

Grace laughs.

RUTHIE (CONT'D)
You know what I mean.

Grace nods.

GRACE
I do.

Grace looks like she doesn't know how to say what she wants to say.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Ruthie -- I don't think I told you, about my friend who had the miscarriage? Over Thanksgiving.

RUTHIE
Who was it?

GRACE
I can't say, I promised them.
(beat)
It was the worst thing. She was all alone in a hotel room and the father was away on business. She called me and I did my best, but there's only so much I could do.

RUTHIE
Is she okay now?

GRACE
Better. It's terrifying, to think how alone we can be when it matters. It was different, when you were there, with me.

RUTHIE
But you're back now. You're just a train ride away.

Grace smiles, as though she knows something Ruthie does not.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. GRACE'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM. LATER.

Grace sits at a girlish desk. She looks through her books and pulls out a French manual. Lawrence opens the door and pokes his head in.

LAWRENCE
There you are, I was looking for you.

GRACE
Here I am.

LAWRENCE
French?

GRACE
It's for a new role I'm considering.

LAWRENCE
Have you decided yet?

GRACE
What?

LAWRENCE
If you're going to do the film.

GRACE
Oh. I don't know. Perhaps.

Grace smiles, tries to change the subject. She pulls him toward her.

GRACE (CONT'D)
We're alone. My parents had to leave. They say goodbye.

LAWRENCE
Oh... That’s too bad.

He tenderly grabs her by the waist, turns her around and runs his hand up her skirt. He kisses her neck. Outside, the snow comes down in thick flakes.

GRACE
It’s so cold.

INT. TOWN CAR. NEW JERSEY. DAY.

Snowflakes stick to the car window. Grace and Lawrence ride at opposite ends of the backseat. The driver suddenly slows down.

DRIVER
Look out to your right!

Grace scoots closer to the window by Lawrence. Outside, a small pack of coyotes are visible in the moonlight.

LAWRENCE
Grace, can you see?

Lawrence puts his arm around Grace, as she looks to the animals with a certain sense of empathy.

The driver stops the car as the coyotes cross the road and disappear into the woods.

EXT. NEW YORK SIDEWALK. EVENING

The town car rolls into the city, tire chains grating on the dry pavement. Lawrence and Grace step out onto the sidewalk. The driver helps them take their bags from the back of the car. Grace looks over Lawrence’s shoulder and freezes. Maggie and Scoop are on the street, walking toward them. Lawrence notices Grace’s expression. She steps out toward Scoop and Maggie. They notice her and walk over, exchange cheek kisses.

Scoop looks abashed. Maggie is on edge, her hand not leaving Scoop’s elbow.

SCOOP
This is where you live?

Grace nods.

GRACE
It’s home. Are you in the city for Christmas?

MAGGIE
No - I'm performing this week. Three shows at the Thicket.

SCOOP
You should come.

MAGGIE
Yes. Do. That would be lovely. You can bring -

Maggie holds a long pause.

LAWRENCE
Lawrence.

GRACE
I'm afraid I'm all tied up. But I'd love to go to dinner sometime. Let me know if you're ever free.
(beat)
Do you have your same apartment here?

SCOOP
I do.

GRACE
Hum. Well, Scoop, you know how to reach me.

Scoop says nothing, just nods. Grace turns and walks into the building. Lawrence quickly follows with the suitcases, confused by Grace's quick exit.

LAWRENCE
Nice to meet you.

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. ENTRYWAY.

Grace notices a pile of scripts and mail in front of her door. She bends down to pick them up. She goes through her mail quickly, struggling to carry the heavy pile.

LAWRENCE
Let me help you.

GRACE
It's fine. I've got it.

Lawrence follows after her, bewildered. Grace spots the royal seal on one of the envelopes and hides it in the other letters. She freezes in front of her door.

LAWRENCE
What's the matter with you? Give me your keys.

Grace doesn't move an inch. Lawrence takes the keys from her hand and unlocks the front door. He pushes it open and heads inside with their suitcases.

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM.

Lawrence drops the luggage at the door and follows Grace into the living room.

LAWRENCE
Grace?

It's a jolt when Grace looks at him. Her eyes are glazed over. Lawrence walks over to her and wraps his arms around her. She's shaking.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

Grace shakes her head yes. She leans into him, against the wall. She's full of emotion she's trying to suppress. Then she quickly stands back, spine straight. Her expression frightens him. The bird TRILLS. Lawrence looks into the cage. In a quick motion, Grace sets her heavy pile of scripts on the counter and hides the mail in a cabinet drawer.

The bird TRILLS again.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Loud little bastard, isn't he?

Grace moves to cover the bird's cage with its red cloth.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Gracie? What's the matter?

GRACE
Nothing. Nothing at all.

The phone begins to RING. Grace moves to answer it. They both look to it.

LAWRENCE
Leave it.

Grace fights her urge to pick it up. The phone stops RINGING.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Gracie, I think we need to be happy right now. Look, I've never been this way before. I'm completely in love with you.

Grace kisses him. He pulls off her coat, kisses her neck. She opens her eyes. She stares straight ahead, at the red cloth over the birdcage.

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Lawrence wakes. He looks over to where Grace should be, but the bed is empty.

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

The room is lit only by moonlight. Grace dumps out a vase of old flowers into the garbage. She's rinsing the vase out with a sponge when Lawrence walks in.

LAWRENCE
Grace?

He startles her. She drops the glass vase. It shatters in the sink, cutting her hand.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Come back to bed.

She tries to lift the glass pieces into the garbage as she's bleeding. Lawrence leans over to see what she's doing.

She begins to sob uncontrollably.

GRACE
I couldn't sleep.

He lifts up her hands, covered in blood.

GRACE (CONT'D)
This isn't me. You shouldn't have seen.

LAWRENCE
What did you do to yourself?

He pulls her hands under the faucet, runs the cold water. He reaches for a towel.

GRACE
It was dirty.

He puts the towel around her bleeding hand. Grace doesn't respond. She can't collect herself.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. You shouldn't see me like this.

LAWRENCE
Stop apologizing.

Her emotion frightens him. She is shaking.

GRACE
Put your arms around me?

He moves to her slowly and wraps his arms around her.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Thank you.

He begins to rub her back.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I don't want you to go away.

LAWRENCE
But I have to. You know that. It's only a few months. I'll be back soon.

Grace nods, unable to collect herself.

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NEXT DAY.

Lawrence lies asleep in bed, alone.

INT. OFFICE

The sun silhouettes Grace as she pulls a jacket over her simple black dress.

Lawrence enters, kisses her on the cheek.

GRACE
Let's stay in tonight. Make dinner.

LAWRENCE
Okay.

Grace puts a key in his hand.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
When will you be back?

GRACE
Not too late.

LAWRENCE
You know I'm leaving tomorrow.

Lawrence pulls Grace back, by the edge of her dress. She stops. He pulls her closer to him. Kisses her again. She pushes back on him.

GRACE
I've got to go.

LAWRENCE
Go where?

GRACE
I have a meeting.

LAWRENCE
Be late.

Grace wants to say no.

GRACE
Lawrence.

LAWRENCE
Take this off.

Lawrence starts to unbutton her dress.

GRACE
I have to go.

LAWRENCE
They'll wait.

He kisses her neck.

EXT. PARK. DAY.

Grace walks down a path, strewn with dead leaves. She pulls her jacket tight around her neck.

She sits on a bench, stares straight ahead. Sits, silent. Doesn't move. She looks lonely, sad.

INT. GRACE’S APARTMENT. EVENING.

They did not clean up after dinner. The plates and glasses from the night’s meal sit on the table with an empty bottle of wine.

INT. BEDROOM

Grace and Lawrence sit up in bed. Naked.

GRACE
They never have been able to explain why, at the same time you think of someone, they call you on the phone.

LAWRENCE
You mean the paranormal?

GRACE
Yes, exactly. When I was a child, I was sure that I could read minds.

LAWRENCE
And now?

GRACE
I could try.

LAWRENCE
Prove yourself.

Grace stares straight ahead.

GRACE
You’re thinking. I want to marry her. I want to be with her.

Lawrence swallows a lump in his throat. He turns to her, kisses her.

LAWRENCE
When I get back.

Grace nods. Touches her forehead to his.

GRACE
Yes.

EXT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. NEXT DAY.

It’s very cold. Grace follows after Lawrence. She pulls her thin sweater around her body. Lawrence sets down his bags. His taxi has arrived. He looks to her, puts his arms around her.

They’re silent for a moment.

Lawrence kisses her forehead.

LAWRENCE
Be good.

He gets into his taxi. Grace watches him go.

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. CONT’D.

Grace enters her empty apartment. She takes the cloth off the bird cage. The phone begins to RING. She looks to it. Answers it.

GRACE
Hello? Yes I’m here. Yes. I’m thinking about it.

INT. AGENCY OFFICE. BEVERLY HILLS. DAY.

Freddy paces his office, holding his phone in his hand.

FREDDY
Beautiful, doll. Let me know sooner rather than later, if you could.
You have to fulfill your obligation to MGM.
I know, but they’re not going to loan you out again.

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. CONT’D.

GRACE
Alright, Freddy. Yes. Bye.

Grace hangs up the phone.

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. NIGHT.

The living room is dark except for one lamp, by the chair where Grace sits reading a script.

She wears her bathrobe and glasses. It looks like she could have been sitting there for days. She begins to read lines aloud.

GRACE
This isn't easy for me. None of this is easy. She took me aside yesterday and said I needed to be sure. The crown is not a small thing to accept, to take on. I must be the perfect princess. I cannot falter.

The script unsettles Grace.

INT. BATHROOM/DARK ROOM. LATER.

Grace walks into her spare bathroom - converted into a dark room. She flicks on the red light. She stares down at the empty bins, overwhelmed. She flicks the light off.

INT. BEDROOM. LATER.

Grace is in bed, wide awake. She turns on her bedside light. The clock reads 2:49 am.

INT. OFFICE.

The office is dark. Grace enters, switches on her desk lamp. She looks to a number written by the phone, and sits down to dial.

INT. LAWRENCE'S STUDIO. PARIS. MORNING.

The studio is bustling with people. Lawrence is pinning a dress onto a model. The phone RINGS on the other side of the room. A woman, BERNICE, answers. She sits at a messy desk, next to a metal table fan.

BERNICE
Bonjour. Oui, il vient d'arriver. Désolée, mais il est occupé. Oui, je vais lui dire.

She scribbles Grace's message onto a piece of paper and hangs up the phone. She hears her name called, across the room. She leaves her desk quickly. The metal fan blows the piece of paper with Grace's message onto the floor.

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. CONT'D.

Grace hangs up - distraught. She stares out her window, into the city.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREETS. 3 AM.

The night is thick with fog. Grace steps under a streetlight, dressed in flat shoes and a long, thick fur coat. She seems in a trance.

EXT. UPSCALE APARTMENT BUILDING. ESTABLISHING.

INT. UPSCALE APARTMENT BUILDING. CONT'D.

The doorman, HAL [60s] recognizes Grace, as she enters. She has a smudge on her cheek.

HAL
Miss Kelly.

GRACE
Good evening Hal. How have you been?

HAL
Very well thank you.
(beat)
Are you alright, Miss Kelly?

GRACE
Why of course.

HAL
Are you here to see Mr. Bingham?

GRACE
I- I was just in the neighborhood.

Hal nods, perplexed. He looks to see Scoop and Maggie heading inside, returning from the theater, laughing, drunk. They see Grace. Freeze.

SCOOP
Grace?

GRACE
Hello.

SCOOP
What the hell are you doing here?

Grace's eyes shoot from Scoop, to Maggie, to Hal. The silence thickens. She can't find her line.

GRACE
I don't know.

She opens her mouth to say something more, but nothing comes out. She is a robot that is malfunctioning. Her face starts to contort. She lunges on Scoop, kissing him. He quickly shoves her off.

SCOOP
What're you doing? Have you lost your mind?

Grace recoils, darts out, leaving Scoop and Maggie speechless.

EXT. UPSCALE APARTMENT BUILDING. CONT'D.

A loud HUM fills the air. Grace stares ahead, breathing heavily, eyes bright red. She pulls up her shoulders and begins to walk, slowly, pulling herself forward.

INT. GRACE'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. MORNING.

Grace is lying on top of her covers, still in her long, fur coat. Her hair in knots.

The phone RINGS. Forced out of a deep sleep, Grace puts the phone to her ear, silent. She pulls herself up. Her voice is dry from cigarettes.

GRACE
Oh Eydie. How are you?

Grace pronounces her words carefully but her face is pale and emotionless.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Yes. Of course. I can't wait to see you. That's perfect. See you then. Bye bye.

She hangs up. Her eyes are wide open and lost. There's an empty bottle of wine, dirty glass and full ashtray by her bedside. She lifts up her bruised hand.

INT. GRACE'S APARTMENT. LATER.

Grace sits across from RUSSELL and EYDIE AUSTIN. They are a plump, comfortable couple, very well-dressed, sipping cups of tea. Grace wears a colorful flowery dress and white kid gloves. The apartment is sparkling and clean, nothing out of place. She crosses her legs so they appear long and slender and folds her hands in her lap. She pulls back her shoulders, seeming perfectly composed.

GRACE
Cookie?

Grace's hand shakes as she lifts the cookie tray. Eydie notices. She takes one off the tray.

EYDIE
Thank you.
(beat)
Did your mother tell you we were invited to the Royal Palace of Monaco?

GRACE
Yes, she did. How was your visit?

EYDIE
Prince Maxence was so hospitable. You know, you had quite the effect on him when you met. He's planning to visit Philly soon.

This startles Grace.

EYDIE (CONT'D)
He did notify you, of his visit?

GRACE
Yes, naturally.

Eydie stares at her. There's an uncomfortable silence.

RUSSELL
What'a view.

GRACE
Yes. A room with a view feels that much larger.

Grace stays very still with her hands still folded in her lap. She looks like a porcelain doll. Her frozen posture and expression make Eydie uneasy - she forces an awkward grin.

RUSSELL
Our driver there was a real talker. Remember Eydie?

Eydie shoots her husband a look to silence him, but he likes to hear himself speak.

RUSSELL(CONT'D)
Said the whole royal family of Monaco is cursed.

EYDIE
Who would believe such nonsense.

GRACE
No, I'm curious.

RUSSELL
They're cursed by monks. Eight-hundred years ago, their ancestor disguised himself as a monk in his enemy's sanctuary, only to slaughter them all.

EYDIE
Russell!

RUSSELL
You heard the man. It's history Eydie.

EYDIE
More like folklore.

Russell and Eydie look to Grace, speechless. She smiles back at them.

INT. GRACE'S APARTMENT. OFFICE. EVENING.

Grace is seated at the desk, the old cigar box by her side and a piece of stationary before her. The phone begins to RING. She looks at it but doesn't pick up. She begins her letter. The phone keeps RINGING.

PUSH-IN on letter:

Dear Prince Maxence, Sorry for not writing earlier, I was terribly busy. It fills me with joy to hear that you may be visiting Philadelphia.

She contemplates her next sentence.

She sets down the pen and walks over to the window. Her words are firm - her polished accent, forced.

GRACE
I will be sincerely happy.. Très heureuse to see you again. Tres heureuse.

Grace looks in the mirror on the wall. She smooths down her hair. Her reflection in the mirror begins to mutate into the Old Woman. Lines form around her eyes and mouth. She blinks the image away and turns back to look out the window onto a beautiful view of Central Park.

EXT. NEW YORK HOTEL. SUNSET. ESTABLISHING.

INT. HOTEL BAR. NIGHT.

Grace sits with an empty glass. WALTER [late 40s], enters. A group of well-dressed, middle-aged ladies out for a night on the town watch him walk-in. The bartender recognizes him and serves him a gin. Grace turns to him, curious.

WALTER
What are you drinking?

GRACE
Soda water.

WALTER
Really? Mitch, can we get the lady another, please?
(beat)
Are you by yourself?

Grace doesn't answer. Walter takes a seat.

GRACE
Never. Not in Wolf Town.

WALTER
You should be out with the girls, having a good time.

Walter waves playfully to the group of middle-aged women eying him. He turns back to Grace. Looks through her glasses. Recognizes her.

GRACE
I'm inside my script now. There's no room to falter. I must not make a mistake.

Walter puts his hand on her knee. He looks down at her bandaged hand.

WALTER
What happened to your hand there?

GRACE
I fell.

Walter doesn't protest.

EXT. BAR. LATER.

Grace emerges from the bar with Walter. His arm is around her waist. He is guiding her forward.

They arrive at his house.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Walter leads Grace down a hallway littered with toys. Grace kicks a toy locomotive out of the way. Walter pulls her into his bedroom and immediately begins disrobing her.

As they are making love, he puts his hands around her neck. She can barely breathe.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE. THE NEXT MORNING.

Grace is just waking up when she hears a noise outside the bedroom. Walter shoves her roughly toward the closet. She listens carefully to the sounds of the wife and children. When she gets a chance, she sneaks out through the laundry room.

Just as she is outside and closing the window, one of the children passes by in the hallway. She stares at the doorway; she locks on a child staring back at her. Grace slips quickly away.

EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE. MORNING.

The barely awake Grace is struck by the bright light and dry cold. She looks both ways, seeming lost. She starts wandering. An old woman passes.

GRACE
Excuse me. Do you know where the nearest church is?

OLD WOMAN
It’s a mile straight ahead. But dear, take a bus.

GRACE
Thank you.

The old woman studies Grace. She senses her distress. Grace starts walking.

OLD WOMAN
God bless you, little bird.

EXT. STREET.

Grace walks down the street, toward the camera. From afar, her steps are steady, careful. Her back is straight, shoulders pulled back, hair only slightly ruffled. As she nears the camera, her exhaustion becomes more and more evident. Her face shimmers slightly with sweat. Her eyes are determined but wavering. She looks on the verge.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Grace sits down in a pew near the back. The church is almost silent. Grace folds her hands in her lap.

Some minutes pass. She notices a confession booth.

INT. CONFESSION BOOTH.

GRACE
Is someone here?

Priest
Yes, come in.

Grace is surprised. She sits.

GRACE
Hello.

PRIEST
Hello.

There is a long silence.

GRACE
I’d like to confess.

PRIEST
Yes.

Grace pauses.

GRACE
I wonder. If there's a version of me somewhere, living my life for me.

On his side of the confessional booth, the PRIEST [late 60s] looks through to Grace, frightened.

INT. GRACE'S APARTMENT. AFTERNOON.

Grace enters. She shuts the door and holds it shut with the flat of her palm. She presses her other hand to her chest. Slowly, as if allowing herself to unravel in stages, she begins to hyperventilate. Her chest heaves. Her breaths come out in thick, uneven bursts. Her eyes waver and water. The bird starts TRILLING. She goes cold. She looks to it as though she could kill it.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

Ruthie and Joe are working on details for their wedding. The front door opens and Francis walks in carrying a bouquet of flowers from her garden. She begins searching for a vase, chatting happily.

FRANCIS
Next week. It's set. Prince Maxence will be here. Can you imagine? I don't know what to prepare. He's driving down after his appointment in Baltimore.

RUTHIE
What's he doing in Baltimore?

FRANCIS
Well, he sees his doctor at John Hopkins University. You know it's the best hospital in the world. So you understand.

RUTHIE
Is it really?

FRANCIS
Oh yes. He’s making a special trip after, to see Grace. Isn't that so exciting?

Francis puts the flowers in the vase and starts eyeing the empty surfaces in the room.

RUTHIE
Yes. Very. Joe and I actually have a question, Mom, about our wedding.

FRANCIS
What’s that, honey?

RUTHIE
The Williamses. Have they RSVP’d? Our seating arrangement keeps wanting them next to George and Lucy Grayson, but we know that’d be a catastrophe.

FRANCIS
Mhm, sure honey. Sounds good. I need to call Grace, remind her to bring that red dress. Really accentuates her eyes. Oh, I hope that fool of a man won’t try to come, too. I hope she’s had the sense to shed him.

Ruthie shoots Joe a worried look. Francis grins, happy, and leaves the kitchen with the flowers in a vase.

INT. LAWRENCE’S STUDIO. PARIS.

Lawrence sits behind a paper-strewn long table. He picks up a fresh sheet and begins sketching furiously. His hands and one cheek are smudged with lead.

DAVE [40s], a small scrawny man with messy brown hair, comes into the room and sets a glass of water in front of him.

DAVE
You’ve been in here for hours. Thought you might like a drink.

LAWRENCE
Thanks. How’s all out there?

Dave pulls up a chair and sits.

DAVE
Word is you got yourself a woman.

LAWRENCE
Word from who?

Dave shrugs. Lawrence sets down his pencil and reaches into his pocket. He pulls out a ring box and sets it on the table, next to his sketch. He and his friend look at the ring box for a few moments, as if it's a live bomb. Lawrence shakes out his hand, tired from sketching. He opens the box.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
With her, it's like standing in the ocean, feet sinking into the sand. I'm comfortable, I feel the warmth, and then I look at her and another cold wave hits. Over and over. It's the most incredible sensation. Distant, but acute, in the way that sometimes your fingers become so cold you mistake the chill for warmth.

He sets the box back down, flips it shut. Dave doesn't know what to say.

INT. TRAIN. EVENING.

Grace looks out the window at the green countryside passing by. She turns to a book in her lap, A HISTORY OF MONACO.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. GRACE'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM.

Grace wears only her underpants and a bra. A red dress is laid out for her on the bed. The soft sounds of her family drift up from downstairs. She turns to look at herself in the mirror over her dresser.

Grace takes out her red lipstick and begins to apply it carefully. There is a loud KNOCK. Startled, GRACE smudges her red lipstick across her cheek.

FRANCIS (O.S.)
Coming downstairs?

GRACE
Yes, soon.

Grace stares at herself, red lipstick across her cheek. She rubs the back of her hand across, only making it worse.

INT. PHILADELPHIA HOME. LIVING ROOM.

The short, dark-haired man from the newspaper clipping Grace saved, MAXENCE [32], sits with his entourage - his priest and personal physician. Grace is in a daze. She can see the interactions of Maxence with her family, but she is apart from it.

MAXENCE
I wanted to see the river, where George rows.

FRANCIS
Oh George would be more than happy to show it to you.

FRANNY
(looks to her grandson)
He has Cameron in training.

MAXENCE
Do you enjoy sculling like your Grandfather?

Cameron nods, shyly.

MAXENCE (CONT'D)
You look very strong already.

A HUM replaces the conversation in the room. Grace watches her family interact. Without her glasses, they are fuzzy. Cameron flexes his arm muscle and the room laughs; Maxence places his hand on Franny's lower back in a strangely intimate gesture; George reenters the room with a bottle of whiskey. Grace locks in on the glow of the lamp. Her gaze fixed on it. Below the HUM. Her name is repeated.

FRANCIS
Grace. Grace.

The HUM ends.

RUTHIE
Grace?

She smiles easily, back in the conversation.

GRACE
Yes?

FRANCIS
What's the Latin name for the Dogwood flower?

She doesn't miss a beat.

GRACE
Cornus florida.

The room breaks into laughter.

GEORGE
I didn't think she'd know it!

FRANCIS
She taught herself.

Grace looks at Maxence, who smiles shyly.

MAXENCE
Maybe Grace and I could take a walk through the garden. It's not dark, yet?

Grace nods.

GRACE
No more quizzes.

She follows Maxence outside. Ruthie looks out the window as they walk into the foggy evening.

INT. GARDEN. DUSK.

Grace and Maxence walk side by side.

GRACE
Is it true there's a curse on your family?

Grace focuses in on small details. His shirt, his collar, his eye, his ear.

MAXENCE
Yes. That we will always have trouble in marriage and producing an heir to the throne. But we will prove them wrong.

GRACE
We will?

Maxence stops.

MAXENCE
I want to marry you Grace.

Grace looks like a deer caught in the headlights.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY. ESTABLISHING. SUNSET.

The cold is gone. It’s nearly spring.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY. SUNSET.

Grace rides in the backseat of a town car, through the city, the skyline behind her.

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT.

Lawrence waits as the DOORMAN rings Grace. Lawrence is clutching a bouquet of flowers.

The doorman shakes his head.

Doorman
I’m sorry, sir. She’s not here.

LAWRENCE
Can you try again?

The doorman puts the phone to his ear to ring up to Grace’s apartment, again. Lawrence waits impatiently.

EXT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT.

Lawrence steps out onto the sidewalk and begins walking away from the building, slightly hunched. He disappears down the street.

Grace’s car pulls up outside. She steps out. The driver helps her with her bags.

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. ENTRY WAY.

The doorman recognizes Grace right away.

DOORMAN
Welcome home!

Grace smiles warmly.

GRACE
Thank you. It’s good to see you.

DOORMAN
Those are for you.

The doorman nods to the flowers left by Lawrence.

Grace picks up the bouquet of wild red and pink roses. She opens the note.

To my beautiful tightrope walker. Love, L

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. BATHROOM.

Grace pours herself a warm bath. She's thrown all the petals from the roses in the water. She slips in and dives her head under the water. Pulling her hair back out of the water, her expression is impenetrable.

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL. SUITE. DAY.

Grace is seated in her parents' hotel suite. Ruthie sits next to her. Francis lays her dresses out, on the bed. George sits by the window, reading the newspaper.

Francis leaves the dresses. She goes to Grace and clasps her hands around her daughter's.

FRANCIS
Oh Gracie, aren't you just so thrilled? You'll be a princess! A European princess!

Grace smiles broadly. George lowers his newspaper and looks at Grace approvingly.

Ruthie
I'm going to my room.
(to Grace)
Come with me?

Grace rises, curious.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL. RUTHIE'S ROOM.

Ruthie sits down on the bed.

RUTHIE
Joe and I were talking, on the train ride here. And I think we've made up our mind.

GRACE
What?

Grace takes a seat on the sofa across from her.

RUTHIE
Our wedding -- we've decided to elope.

Grace is genuinely shocked.

GRACE
Ruthie!

RUTHIE
We just... We thought it made sense, with all of this. We didn't want to get in the way.

GRACE
Oh Ruthie. You're not in the way. You could never be in the way. Did I make you feel like this?

RUTHIE
No, it's not that. We talked about it. It just makes sense.

GRACE
Oh, sister.

Grace is devastated.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I envy you.

Ruthie moves closer to Grace. She sees Grace is stricken.

RUTHIE
Gracie?

GRACE
I think I'm losing my mind. There was a face, in the mirror, but it wasn't mine.

RUTHIE
What?

GRACE
I don't want to be her.

RUTHIE
Be who?

GRACE
I’m sorry.

RUTHIE
We haven't talked, about Lawrence.

GRACE
I don’t know who it is. If it’s me that stays, or me that goes.

Ruthie looks at her sister, unnerved by what she’s saying and her distant expression.

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM. EARLY MORNING

Mimi has finished cleaning. The apartment is boxed up. She reaches for her coat. She sees a thick envelope on the counter, addressed to her. She picks it up. The envelope is full of hundred dollar bills. She reads the note inside.

PUSH-IN on note: *With love, Grace*

EXT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT.

Mimi walks past a hoard of photographers camped out front, waiting for Grace.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL. PRESS CONFERENCE.

Grace and Maxence are in front of a large group of reporters. Grace’s posture is firm, but she wrings her gloved hands, slightly, nervously. Maxence’s press agent nods at reporters, allowing them to ask questions.

REPORTER 1
Will you keep your apartment here?

GRACE
Yes, it’s a home. But I’m looking forward to calling Monaco a home, as well.

REPORTER 2
Will you still act?

Maxence quickly cuts in. He puts his hand on GRACE’s knee.

MAXENCE
Being a princess is a very busy job.

Grace gives her best perfect smile.

EXT. SIDEWALK. DAY.

Lawrence stands in line for a cup of coffee from a sidewalk cart. Bored. His eyes float down to the newspaper on display. Grace's marriage announcement stares back up at him. He grabs for the top paper in the stack. He stands, frozen, staring at the front page. A woman pushes up next to him.

WOMAN
Excuse me.

Lawrence doesn't move.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Sir--

Lawrence moves slightly for her to reach for the paper. He focuses on the image of Maxence and Grace. Grace's face in the photo is flat, her lips in a flat line.

INT. ENGAGEMENT PARTY. NIGHT.

Grace wears a flower in her hair and a heavy, floor-length gown. Across the room, Maxence watches her. He talks with another man in FRENCH.

FRENCH MAN
She will bring a much needed boost to Monaco. This is a real coup.

MAXENCE
Yes. She's perfect. Just perfect. I'm the luckiest man in the world.

FRENCH MAN
More refined than most Americans. She doesn't seem like an "actress."

Nile approaches Grace. They hug. His partner, ADAM, is with him. Grace recognizes him instantly.

GRACE
Adam, hello, so good to see you.

Grace kisses him on his cheek.

ADAM
It's an honor to be here Grace.

GRACE
It’s an honor to have you here.

Nile puts his hand on Adam’s shoulder, affectionately. Grace spots Freddy on the other side of the room. She nods goodbye to Nile and Adam.

GRACE (CONT’D)
Freddy!

She kisses him on the cheek.

GRACE (CONT’D)
Thank you for being here.

FREDDY
Congratulations!

GRACE
I’m happy. Truly happy.

Freddy can see through Grace’s words.

FREDDY
You’ve found that next role.

Grace is steely.

FREDDY (CONT’D)
But you still owe MGM another movie!

GRACE
Good thing I’m leaving the country.

The lights lower. A sweet, sorrowful, birdlike voice cuts through the crowd. Grace turns from Freddy.

GENEVIEVE(O.S.)
Take one fresh and tender kiss
Add one stolen night of bliss.

Grace looks up at Genevieve on stage. She is radiant, singing.

GENEVIEVE (CONT’D)
One girl, one boy
Some grief, some joy
Memories are made of this.

On the other side of the room, Grace spots Scoop and Maggie.

Her sister, Franny, stands by herself, drinking.

GENEVIEVE (CONT'D)
Don't forget a small moonbeam
Fold in lightly with a dream
Your lips and mine
Two sips of wine
Memories are made of this.

Ruthie sits with Joe. She reaches to take his hand in hers.

GENEVIEVE (CONT'D)
Then add the wedding bells
One house where lovers dwell
Three little kids for flavor
Stir carefully through the days
See how the flavor stays.

Maxence moves next to Grace. He reaches for her hand. She looks down at his.

GENEVIEVE (CONT'D)
These are the dreams you will savor
With His blessings from above
Serve it generously with love
One man, one wife
One love through life
Memories are made of this
Memories are made of this.

The crowd claps. Genevieve looks down at Grace. Their eyes meet.

EXT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Grace steps out of Maxence's car. She goes inside quickly and hides just inside the doorway, waiting for his car to leave.

Once the car pulls away, she returns to the street, and hails a cab.

EXT. LAWRENCE'S APARTMENT. NIGHT. LATER.

Grace, still in her gown. The flower has wilted in her hair. She RINGS Lawrence's buzzer. It's a loud, unsettling sound. She RINGS and RINGS and RINGS. Finally, she's BUZZED up.

INT. LAWRENCE'S APARTMENT.

Lawrence opens his door. He's obviously unsettled to see Grace on the other side. She moves past him. She walks majestically, back straight, chin up, hands in white kid gloves.

GRACE
Oh good. I was hoping you'd be here.

LAWRENCE
Grace?

Grace sits primly on his couch and looks at him. She holds her white-gloved hands carefully in her lap.

GRACE
I thought we should speak.

Lawrence sits across from him. He can tell she's playing a role.

LAWRENCE
Alright, princess. What is it?

GRACE
I am to be wed, soon.

LAWRENCE
Yes. I read all about it, in every paper on every corner.

GRACE
How was your trip to Paris?

LAWRENCE
Good god.

GRACE
What?

LAWRENCE
Are you going to do this? Now? It's nearly midnight. You come here, dressed like a damn peacock, and expect me to listen to your show?

GRACE
I don't understand.

LAWRENCE
Yes, you do. Of course you do.

GRACE
I asked how Paris was.

LAWRENCE
How about an apology? How about: Sorry you had to find out from a newspaper.
(MORE)

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
All I wanted was to come back to you. To be with you. Do you understand? I wanted to marry you. But this was always the way we were going to end. I guess I always knew. You're caught in your own ruin, now.

GRACE
Lawrence...

LAWRENCE
No. Grace. This is done. We aren't going to play this scene. Whatever you have worked in your mind. We won't talk again, for a long time.

Lawrence is standing, furious. Grace nears him. He flinches away from her, as if away from an electric shock. She takes his hand and begins to kiss it furiously. He stares at her.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Get out.

Grace freezes.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
You heard me.

Grace opens her mouth to speak.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
You need to go now.

Grace turns. Her dress dragging behind her. The door shuts behind her. Lawrence stands, frozen, in the center of the room.

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL. ESTABLISHING.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL. RUTHIE'S ROOM. MORNING.

Grace's gown from the night before is laid out across the bed. Ruthie pulls a dress out of her suitcase. She holds it up, looking at its size.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL. BATHROOM. CONT'D.

Grace is dressed in a robe. She stares into the mirror. She slaps herself across the cheek and barely flinches. She looks into her own reflection and slaps herself again, harder.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL. RUTHIE'S ROOM. CONT'D.

Ruthie knocks on the bathroom door.

RUTHIE
Grace?

Silence. Grace emerges from the bathroom. She takes off her robe, standing only in her underwear. Ruthie holds up the dress.

RUTHIE (CONT'D)
This'll do, right?

Grace nods. Ruthie pulls the dress over her head like she's dressing a child.

RUTHIE (CONT'D)
Maybe I should go in ahead of you, as a distraction.

GRACE
No, it's fine. I'll go alone.

RUTHIE
Are you sure?

Grace nods. She looks like she's about to say something. Ruthie watches her.

GRACE
I guess this is it, then.

Ruthie looks to her, sad and resigned. She kisses Grace softly on the cheek. Grace turns around and Ruthie zips up her dress.

EXT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. LATER.

Grace steps out of the car. She is poised, polished. The photographers swarm around her, snapping photos as she steps into her building.

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. DAY.

Grace walks into her boxed up apartment. There's a small pile of dresses on the bed. She opens the closet and begins to hang the dresses. Among them is the yellow dress she wore to the circus with Lawrence. She dresses in a high-collared suit. She pins up her hair. She looks out the window. Maxence is waiting for her on the street below with the hoard of photographers and an entire motorcade.

Her expression is noticeably solemn. The canary trills. She stares at the bird rocking back and forth in its little cage. She removes her glasses, puts on her coat, a hat and her shoes. She looks in the mirror for any imperfection. She pulls on her white gloves and leaves.

The camera pans to the window to reveal Maxence opening the car's door for Grace beneath. The car takes off down the street.

FADE TO BLACK.