

A Place Called Home

Written by Julie Henderson / Directed by Chuck Bowman

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY ONE - NOVEMBER, EIGHTEEN SEVENTY-TWO

The sun shines down on a lunchtime baseball game. BRIAN and ANTHONY (wearing the cap Robert E gave him) kneel along the third base line waiting for their turn at bat. (In the b.g. the BATTER swings and misses at two straight pitches.)

BRIAN
You finish writin' the essay for Parent's Day?

ANTHONY
I been workin' on it...

BRIAN
What's yours about?

ANTHONY
I ain't quite figured it out yet...

Brian grins at his buddy, convinced he's being secretive.

BRIAN
You wanna win that contest real bad, don't you?

ANTHONY
Nah really, I can't decide what to write about -- there're so many neat things...

BRIAN
Maybe you oughta just pick one and finish it up.

ANTHONY

But it's important -- I want it to be great.

The CRACK of the ball off the Batter's bat draws the boys' attention back to the game. The easy fly ball is caught and the Batter walks over to Brian and hands him the bat.

Brian steps to the plate and swings at the first pitch, sending a slow roller down the third base line just under the THIRD BASEMAN'S glove. Brian rounds the bases, as the ball continues into left field, and stops at third base just ahead of the tag.

Anthony stands up a little stiffly and steps into the batter's box.

Brian edges off third base. The PITCHER looks into the plate, considers, then delivers the pitch. Anthony swings and misses.

CATCHER

Strike one!

The Catcher smiles at Anthony, then stands and tosses the ball back to the Pitcher. Anthony steps out of the batter's box and looks down the third base line to Brian.

BRIAN

C'mon Anthony.

Anthony nods, the pressure mounting. He steps back into the box, digs in and stares back at the Pitcher.

The Pitcher nods and delivers a high, hard fast ball to the plate. THWACK. Anthony smacks a sharp line drive over the SHORTSTOP'S head and takes off for first base.

Brian races home from third base, crossing the plate to the cheers of his teammates. He quickly looks to:

ANTHONY

running slowly toward the first base bag. As the throw comes in to the FIRST BASEMAN, Anthony lunges for the bag, but he's tagged out.

ANGLE ON THE SCHOOLHOUSE PORCH

as TERESA rings the school bell.

TERESA

Children! It is time to return to class.

RESUME THE FIELD

Anthony stands bent over the bag trying to catch his breath. His teammates surround him and offer congratulations, before they head toward the schoolroom. Brian runs over to him:

BRIAN

You really pounded that ball.

Anthony gasps for breath, unable to reply. Brian sees that he's more out of breath than he should be.

BRIAN

Hey, you alright?

Anthony nods, as he rubs his knees, trying to work out the pain.

Brian gives him a look, not convinced and concerned for his friend.

BRIAN

You sure?

ANTHONY

Yeah.

The boys start to walk toward the school, but Anthony's right leg gives way beneath him.

BRIAN

You're hurtin'. (not taking no for an answer) I'm takin' you to Ma.

Anthony nods, disappointed that his body has once again betrayed him. Brian helps Anthony to his feet, then shouldering most of his weight they begin to walk toward the clinic.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY ONE

Anthony sits up in bed while MIKE palpates his lower back. Anthony winces when she percusses the area above his kidneys.

GRACE and ROBERT E look on from the other side of the bed -- contending with Anthony's attacks has now almost become routine. Brian is there, too, concerned.

MIKE looks up, trying to hide her distress. She takes a glass of water and laudanum powder from the nightstand tray and mixes a solution. She hands Anthony the glass. He drinks it.

MIKE
This should ease the pain.

Grace sits beside Anthony and takes his hand.

GRACE
It's just another one of your attacks. You rest awhile, then me and your Pa'll take you home.

Anthony nods, relaxing. Mike smiles at him and smooths his brow.

MIKE
I'll be right back.

She leads Grace and Robert E out of the room --

INT. CLINIC HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - DAY ONE

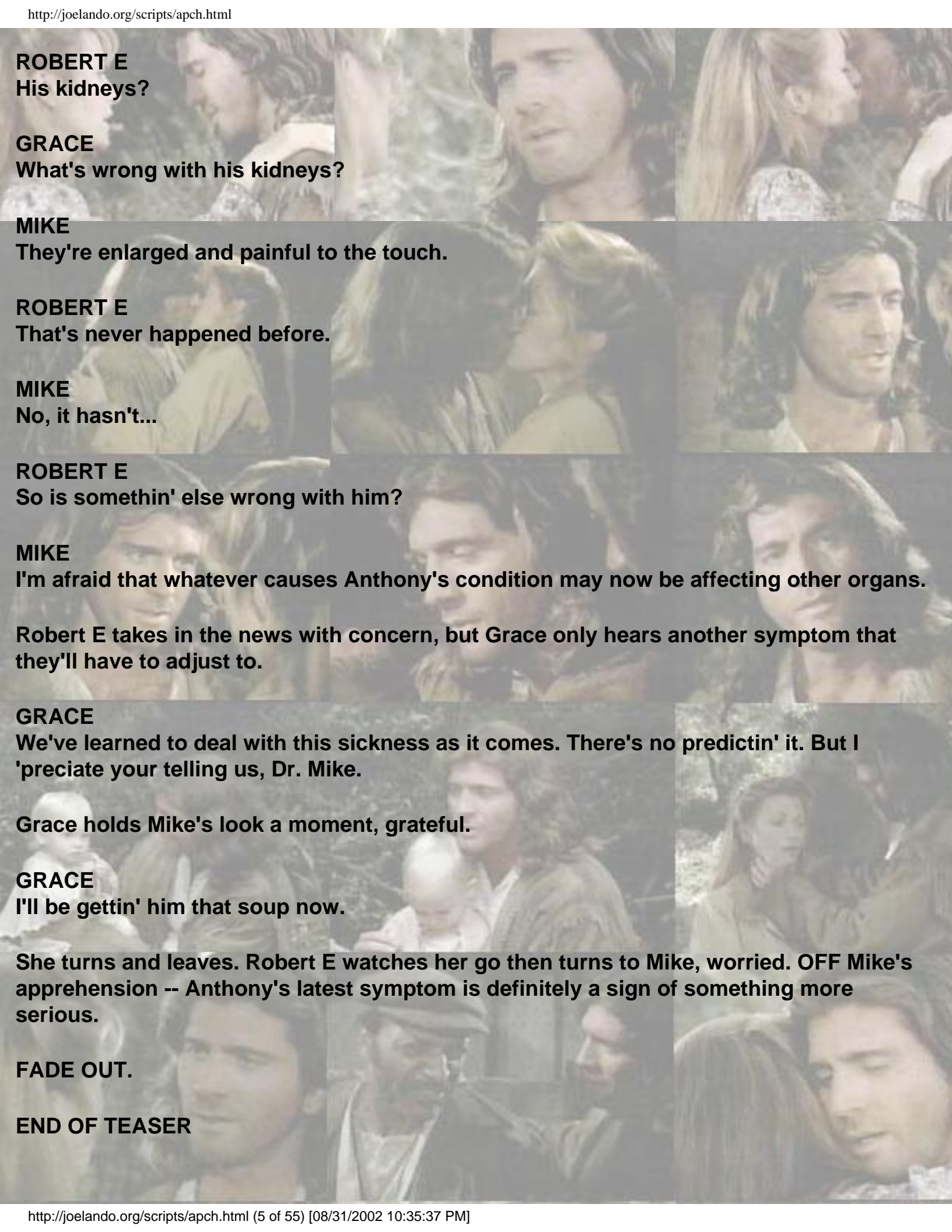
Mike, Grace and Robert E come out of the Recovery Room. Grace and Robert E start to head downstairs:

GRACE
I'm gonna bring Anthony some of my tomato soup. He always likes that when he's feelin' poorly.

MIKE
Please, Grace, wait a moment.

Grace and Robert E turn to Mike. She shifts uncomfortably, this is difficult news.

MIKE
Anthony's condition... this last attack, the fever... I believe it may have damaged his kidneys.



ROBERT E
His kidneys?

GRACE
What's wrong with his kidneys?

MIKE
They're enlarged and painful to the touch.

ROBERT E
That's never happened before.

MIKE
No, it hasn't...

ROBERT E
So is somethin' else wrong with him?

MIKE
I'm afraid that whatever causes Anthony's condition may now be affecting other organs.

Robert E takes in the news with concern, but Grace only hears another symptom that they'll have to adjust to.

GRACE
We've learned to deal with this sickness as it comes. There's no predictin' it. But I 'preciate your telling us, Dr. Mike.

Grace holds Mike's look a moment, grateful.

GRACE
I'll be gettin' him that soup now.

She turns and leaves. Robert E watches her go then turns to Mike, worried. OFF Mike's apprehension -- Anthony's latest symptom is definitely a sign of something more serious.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. HOMESTEAD BARN - NIGHT ONE

Mike brushes down FLASH, trying to forget her troubles in the easy rhythm of her task. SULLY silently enters (looking like he's been on the road for a while) and lingers a moment, taking her in, watching his wife. Then:

SULLY
Michaela.

Mike turns around at the sound of his voice. She's thrilled to see him, and rushes to him:

MIKE
You're back! Thank goodness...

He enfolds her in his arms, and they kiss.

Mike takes in his road-weary condition, and can't help but worry. Her concern rushes out in a torrent:

MIKE
Are you alright?

SULLY
I'm fine --

MIKE
It's not safe here for you...

SULLY
I been keepin' my eyes on the soldiers -- I got a few minutes.

She holds him to her -- she can't help being in an emotional turmoil: so much has happened since she last saw him that she needs to tell him: Sgt. McKay's wire, the miscarriage...

MIKE
I can't tell you how good it is to have you home... (releasing him) How did it go? Were

you able to speak with the Indian elders?

SULLY
I tried, but Black Moon got to 'em first. He's got 'em convinced that the white man's their enemy.

MIKE
Oh, Sully...

SULLY
An' other tribes are joinin' him Apache, Kiowa. He's tellin' 'em the army plans on killin' every Indian in the territory.

Sully looks at her and sees the concern in her eyes. He pulls her closer.

SULLY
Hey, it ain't over. We're not givin' up.

Mike nods and smiles thinly, wanting to believe him.

SULLY
What about you? How're you holdin' up?

MIKE
I'm fine. But... (this is difficult news) I received an answer from Sgt. McKay.

Sully reads the news in her eyes:

SULLY
The army turned down our appeal.

She nods, sadly, then glances away, quiet.

Sully sees that she needs reassuring. He takes her hand:

SULLY
Like I said... we're not givin' up.

Mike nods. She knows that this is the moment to tell him about the miscarriage...

She looks at him, almost ready to tell him -- but her feelings betray her and she can't.

She looks away.

Sully reads that there's something else wrong:

SULLY
What is it? Somethin' else happen?

Mike struggles with her emotions. She can't tell him:

MIKE
No -- I've just missed you so much... (drawing herself into his embrace) Just hold me, Sully...

Sully holds her tight.

OFF Mike, worried about the secret that now lies between them.

EXT. TOWN STREET - DAY TWO

DOROTHY and Mike walk from the store towards the telegraph office, talking in hushed tones.

MIKE
Cloud Dancing stayed behind to try and reason with Black Moon again.

DOROTHY
Does Sully think Cloud Dancin' can convince him to stop the raids?

MIKE
Apparently Black Moon seems set against peace with the army -- but Sully's determined to keep trying to convince him.

DOROTHY
How is Sully?

MIKE
(evasively) He seems alright...

That's not what Dorothy means:

DOROTHY

How'd he take the news about the baby?

They stop in front of the alley between the telegraph office and the clinic. A beat, then:

MIKE

I couldn't tell him. (before Dorothy can respond) I wanted to, but I couldn't -- I couldn't add to his burdens.

Dorothy sees that this is an excuse; she understands how difficult it is for Mike to deal with this:

DOROTHY

(gently) You gotta tell him, Michaela -- for both your sakes.

MIKE

(nods) You're right... I will.

Dorothy takes her hand, squeezes it encouragingly. Mike smiles back her gratitude...

EXT. CAFE - DAY TWO

Robert E sits across from Anthony, who's busy snapping the ends off a pile of green beans. Anthony stops a moment, rubs the pain from his fingers. Robert E is watching him carefully, but tries to be casual:

ROBERT E

You just let us know when you're feelin' tired...

ANTHONY

I'm alright.

He resumes snapping the peas. Grace sits down next to Anthony and sets a bowl for the beans in front of them. Anthony and Grace work quietly a moment, before:

ANTHONY

What's your favorite thing 'bout Colorado Springs?

GRACE

Hmmm. That's not an easy question.

ANTHONY

I know. Miss Teresa told us to write an essay about our favorite thing, and then she's gonna pick the best one to read at Parent's Day.

Grace and Robert E share a smile -- they can see he wants to win that contest.

ROBERT E

Well, you just figure it out one step at a time --

GRACE

That's right -- what things make you feel good?

ANTHONY

I like the fishin'...

ROBERT E

That's good --

ANTHONY

And the library -- it's got books all the way from Boston...

GRACE

You could write about what those books mean to you --

ANTHONY

And the hot springs, and the newspaper -- not many other places got those --

ROBERT E

You sure got plenty of things to pick from.

ANTHONY

That's my problem -- what's my favorite?

Grace and Robert E exchange a look -- they see his problem:

GRACE

I see what you mean...

ROBERT E

Guess that's what makes it special --

Mike approaches them:

ROBERT E
Dr. Mike.

MIKE
Robert E. Grace. (to Anthony) I thought I'd come and see how my patient's doing. (smiling) How are you feeling, Anthony?

GRACE
(before Anthony can answer) He's better. That attack passed.

Anthony looks at Grace, surprised. It's not like her to speak for him. But he can see that it's important to Grace for him to agree:

ANTHONY
Yeah, I'm better.

Mike doesn't miss the exchange between mother and son. She looks to Grace a moment, then back to Anthony.

MIKE
Well, I'm glad to hear it.

Grace stands up.

GRACE
C'mon Anthony, let's get these beans on the stove.

Grace takes the bowl over to the stove. Anthony follows. Robert E looks to Mike.

ROBERT E
Dr. Mike, he's tryin' to hide it, but I can tell he's still in pain. (a beat) It's never lasted this long.

MIKE
No. It hasn't.

Robert E and Mike trade an uneasy look, then turn to watch Anthony and Grace working quietly by the stove.

EXT. CAVE - DAY TWO

Sully and Cloud Dancing are looking at a map of Indian Territory.

CLOUD DANCING

Many more Apache and Kiowa have come from the east to join Black Moon.

SULLY

Is he gonna attack?

CLOUD DANCING

For now he waits and gathers strength.

SULLY

That buys us some time. If we talk to the Apache and Kiowa ourselves, maybe we can convince 'em to move north where they can live free.

Cloud Dancing folds the map.

CLOUD DANCING

Yes, but we will also need to convince the army to allow them free passage.

SULLY

You and me ain't exactly welcome guests.

CLOUD DANCING

This is true, but we are not the only voice.

SULLY

Michaela tried. Daniel tried. They wouldn't listen.

CLOUD DANCING

Perhaps Dorothy could help.

SULLY

(surprised) Dorothy?

CLOUD DANCING

I believe the *Gazette* might become a strong voice for peace.

Sully considers his words, sensing that there's more to this connection than Cloud Dancing's willing to admit.

SULLY

You should talk to her.

OFF Cloud Dancing, looking forward to that...

INT. SCHOOL - DAY THREE

The children in the class work quietly, writing their Colorado Springs essays. Anthony, looking a little feverish, writes quickly. Brian sits beside him proofing his own essay. Teresa walks down the aisle checking the children's work.

TERESA

I am pleased to see that your essays are progressing so well. I will collect them on Friday.

Brian leans over to Anthony and whispers:

BRIAN

Thought you couldn't decide what to write 'bout.

ANTHONY

Somethin' my Ma and Pa said gave me an idea.

Brian nods, goes back to his work.

Anthony continues to write quickly, then stops and holds his stomach as a wave of nausea hits him. He whispers to Brian:

ANTHONY

Brian -- I think I'm gonna be sick...

BRIAN

Miss Teresa, Anthony's sick --

Teresa walks over, feels Anthony's forehead.

TERESA

You do feel a little warm. Perhaps it would be best if you go home.

Anthony nods, rises stiffly.

TERESA

Brian, will you go with him?

BRIAN

Sure.

Brian picks up their schoolwork, and follows Anthony to the door. Teresa watches, concerned...

EXT. ROAD THROUGH THE WOODS - DAY THREE

Dorothy is riding along a road through the woods, when suddenly:

Cloud Dancing steps out from behind a tree up ahead.

Dorothy pulls the reins of her horse, stopping, a rush of emotions overwhelming her: she's surprised, thrilled to see him...

They lock eyes, as he walks over to her to help her off the horse.

CLOUD DANCING

It is good to see you.

He clasps her waist and gently lowers her to the ground.

They stand silently, his hands still on her waist, only inches apart, and once again feel the pull of their attraction... They look as if they might kiss, as if they both want to kiss --

But there's something different added to it: a shyness on both their parts --

And on Dorothy's part, a hesitation, her feelings overwhelming her.

Cloud Dancing reads her hesitation, lets his arms drop from her waist. Dorothy speaks, nervously, about everything except what she feels:

DOROTHY

You look... (she wants to say, wonderful, but she says:) well.

CLOUD DANCING

And you.

DOROTHY

Michaela said you were going to -- have you been able to reason with Black Moon?

Cloud Dancing looks into her eyes. He sees that she needs to keep this on a non-intimate level, and responds accordingly -- but throughout this, while they're talking business, they're staying physically close to each other, talking above their attraction to each other:

CLOUD DANCING

He sees the white man as his enemy -- just as the white man sees him.

Dorothy hears that -- will this dictate their fate?

DOROTHY

It doesn't have to be that way...

CLOUD DANCING

I hope not. I think -- there is something we can do to help -- something *you* can do.

DOROTHY

(hopefully) What?

CLOUD DANCING

With your newspaper -- you can help your people understand that we are not their enemy.

DOROTHY

I've tried -- I don't know if I can.

CLOUD DANCING

You once thought as they do...

DOROTHY

That was before... (she means, before them)

CLOUD DANCING

If you can write about what changed your mind, the way you did in your book, they will listen. Their hearts will hear what your heart does.

Dorothy nods. There is a crack from the woods. Cloud Dancing whips his head, peering into the woods. Nobody's there. But it's still dangerous for him to be out in the open, and they I both know it:

CLOUD DANCING

I must go.

Dorothy nods. They drink in each other, and again almost kiss. But don't.

Cloud Dancing turns to go.

DOROTHY

Cloud Dancin'...

He turns back.

DOROTHY

Be safe.

He nods, and disappears into the woods.

OFF Dorothy, emotions running through her --

EXT. ROBERT E'S PORCH -- DAY THREE

Grace, Robert E and Mike come out of the house.

GRACE

(matter of fact) Thanks for comin', Dr. Mike. We'll keep him quiet 'til his stomach settles.

MIKE

Grace...

GRACE

A nice little nap'll do him good -- maybe I'll make him some puddin', that always seems to settle him...

MIKE

Grace -- I believe Anthony's nausea and fatigue are symptoms that may be related to his kidneys.

ROBERT E

His kidneys... ? You still think there's somethin' wrong with 'em?

GRACE

So maybe this ain't the same as his attacks before?

Mike reads the confusion and fear in their eyes. This is difficult, as she searches for the words to explain.

MIKE

With each attack, the pain and swelling seem to last much longer. And now, his kidneys are showing clear signs of deterioration.

GRACE

But what's that mean?

MIKE

If they stop functioning, it would be very dangerous...

ROBERT E

Can you take 'em out? You took out his spleen.

MIKE

I'm afraid not -- you need your kidneys.

ROBERT E

Then what're you sayin'...?

This is the hardest thing she's ever had to say to her friends -- but they deserve the complete truth.

MIKE

If Anthony's kidneys continue to fail... one can't survive without one's kidneys.

They get it: she's saying that he's dying. Robert E looks away, fighting back tears.

But Grace is still in denial:

GRACE

(hopefully) Are you sure you're readin' the symptoms right, Dr. Mike?

Mike doesn't take offense; she knows the strain Grace is under:

MIKE

Perhaps we should get another opinion.

INT. ANDREW'S OFFICE - DAY FOUR

ANDREW examines Anthony's eyes for signs of jaundice, as Mike, Grace and Robert E look on.

Andrew steps back, makes a notation on Anthony's chart. He then takes Anthony's wrists in his hands, carefully checking them again for signs of edema.

Andrew looks up and smiles at Anthony.

ANDREW

There. All done.

Anthony nods nervously. Grace and Robert E trade a tense look. Andrew glances at Mike, who reads his look -- the news isn't good. She nods slightly, then turns to Anthony:

MIKE

Anthony, why don't you come outside and sit with me.

Anthony nods and she helps him down from the table. They go outside.

A difficult moment as the others wait for them to leave.

Then Andrew turns to Grace and Robert E:

ANDREW

Grace, Robert E -- I'm afraid I must concur with Michaela's diagnosis. Anthony's condition is very grave.

OFF Grace and Robert E --

EXT. SPRINGS CHATEAU PORCH - CONTINUOUS - DAY FOUR

MIKE

How about here?

Mike guides Anthony to a bench and they sit down. Anthony stares out at the horizon.

ANTHONY
I'm sick aren't I?

Anthony turns to Mike, his simple question unsettling her.

MIKE
Well, yes, you know that -- you've had these attacks for a very long time.

ANTHONY
I mean, *really* sick.

Mike is torn: it's not her place to answer. She puts her arm around him, drawing him close.

MIKE
We should wait and hear what Dr. Cook has to say.

INT. ANDREW'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS - DAY FOUR

Grace has gone silent, inward, summoning a way to deal with this news. Robert E is grasping at straws, asking Andrew:

ROBERT E
Is there anythin' you can do for him?

ANDREW
The cause of this illness is still unknown -- Michaela has done everything possible to treat his symptoms, but -- he does seem to be moving into a... less hopeful state. (a beat, then) I'm truly sorry. I wish I could offer you better news.

Robert E stares back at him, absorbing the words.

A beat, then Grace stands up and walks out of the room. Robert E shoots a worried look to Andrew, then gets up to follow Grace.

EXT. SPRINGS CHATEAU PORCH - CONTINUOUS - DAY FOUR

Mike and Anthony sit together on the parch. They look up to see Grace approach, followed by Robert E and Andrew.

ANTHONY

What'd the doctor say, Ma?

Grace looks to Mike a moment, then turns and smiles at Anthony, stepping closer.

GRACE

(with conviction) Dr. Cook says you're gonna be just fine.

Anthony looks to Mike, not sure Grace is telling him the truth. Mike gives nothing away in her look, and Anthony turns back to Grace. He smiles and takes her hand.

GRACE

Now, c'mon, let's go home. I got an order of apple pies to fill this afternoon, and you're my official taster.

Grace and Anthony head toward the wagon. Mike shoots a questioning look to Andrew. He grimly shakes his head, no.

Robert E looks to Mike, confused -- what should he do? Mike returns his look, at a loss. Robert E turns to follow Grace and Anthony.

Mike watches them climb into the wagon, then turns back to Andrew, deeply troubled by the lie now standing between Grace and Anthony. As we slowly...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. CAVE - DAY FIVE

Sully turns as Mike steps inside, holding Katie. He is delighted to see his daughter.

SULLY

Look who's here...

MIKE

Katie insisted on joining me.

SULLY

Well, I'm glad that she did. Hey there, sweet girl...

Sully takes Katie and holds her up in the air, beaming.

SULLY

How'd you get so big, huh?

Mike smiles, but she's distracted, anxious to tell Sully about her miscarriage.

Sully holds Katie's hands, guiding her as she walks around the cave.

SULLY

Look at you. Michaela, she's gonna be runnin' pretty soon...

MIKE

I know, we won't be able to keep up with her. (beat) Sully? I need to talk to you about something.

He picks Katie up and turns his attention to Mike.

MIKE

While you were away --

KATIE

Pa...

Sully looks at Katie, thrilled.

SULLY

Did ya hear that? She said Pa.

Mike can't help smiling.

MIKE

I heard.

Sully beams at his daughter.

SULLY

Katie, you said Pa.

Mike watches them, seeing Sully's pride in their child.

SULLY
(turns to Mike) I'm sorry. What were you sayin'?

MIKE
I...

SULLY
You said -- while I was away... ?

Mike decides that her moment is lost -- this is a bad time to tell him about her miscarriage.

MIKE
Yes, it's Anthony. He's become very ill.

Sully looks stricken.

SULLY
How bad is it?

MIKE
I don't believe he'll recover.

Sully absorbs the terrible news. He holds Katie close.

SULLY
Nothin' harder than losin' a child.

Mike nods, knowing this all too well...

EXT. CAFE - DAY FIVE

Robert E watches Grace vigorously chop a bunch of carrots. She stays focused on her task, not acknowledging him.

ROBERT E
You're gonna have to talk to me sometime.

GRACE
(not looking up) I got nothin' to say.

ROBERT E
Well, maybe I do.

He reaches out and stops her hands. She looks at him.

GRACE
I'm listenin'.

Robert E chooses his words carefully, delicately.

ROBERT E
Grace... Dr. Mike and Andrew wouldn't lie to us.

Grace remains cool and quiet.

ROBERT E
We need to face it now... for Anthony.

Grace takes a deep breath, resolved.

GRACE
I know what they said -- but they're doctors, Robert E, I'm his mother. (forcing herself to say the words) An' if Anthony was dyin', I'd know it... I'd feel it... (putting her hand to her heart) Right here.

Grace looks at Robert E, pleading for his understanding. At this moment, he'd give his life to have her conviction.

ROBERT E
I wanna believe that --

GRACE
Then believe it.

She stares at him, greatly determined. After a beat, Robert E nods, not wanting to dispute her. He walks away.

Grace gets back to work. She falters for a moment, leaning heavily on the table, then

composes herself and resumes chopping.

EXT. GRACE AND ROBERT E'S HOUSE - DAY FIVE

Anthony sits on the porch steps, writing his essay. He stops and flexes his fingers, rubbing the joints, trying to ease the pain.

Turning back to the essay, he crosses out a few lines, then starts again.

BRIAN

rides over on his bicycle.

BRIAN

Hey, Anthony.

RESUME

Anthony looks up from his notebook and smiles.

ANTHONY

Hey, Brian.

BRIAN

Thought if you were feelin' better, you'd wanna come ridin' with me.

Anthony sits up, briefly considering the offer, then shakes his head, thinking better of it.

ANTHONY

My legs're still hurtin' me.

BRIAN

You could ride on the handlebars.

ANTHONY

I don't think so. I might fall.

Brian nods, not pressing him.

Anthony looks at Brian, troubled, needing to talk.

ANTHONY
Brian?

BRIAN
Yeah?

ANTHONY
I think there's somethin' they're not tellin' me.

BRIAN
Whad'ya mean?

ANTHONY
Well, my ma says I'm gonna be fine but -- I don't know... this time, the pain's the same, but somethin' inside feels different.

Brian listens, concerned.

ANTHONY
Maybe you could ask your ma what's wrong with me?

Brian responds to the sadness and confusion in Anthony's eyes.

BRIAN
Sure, I'll ask her.

Anthony smiles, relieved and grateful.

ANTHONY
Thanks.

Brian nods, worried about his friend.

INT. CLINIC - DAY FIVE

Dorothy waits anxiously while Mike reads a draft of her article. Mike finishes and looks up.

MIKE
It's wonderful.

Dorothy exhales, but she's still insecure.

DOROTHY
Ya think so?

MIKE
Yes, it's very well-written.

DOROTHY
But I want it to be more than that. I mean, I've gotta make folks understand what the Indians've been goin' through.

MIKE
I believe that you've done that, Dorothy. All the information is presented clearly and fairly. I found your final paragraph especially compelling.

Dorothy smiles, reassured.

DOROTHY
Thank you, Michaela. Thank you for readin' it.

MIKE
I look forward to seeing it published in the *Gazette*.

They trade smiles. Dorothy heads for the door, then hesitates and turns back. Mike gives her a questioning look.

MIKE
Is there something more?

DOROTHY
I can't help wonderin'... are we just foolin' ourselves?

Mike doesn't follow.

DOROTHY
I mean, this one article, Michaela -- will it really make any difference?

MIKE
Yes, I believe that it *will* help educate some people, perhaps change their opinions.

DOROTHY

But will there ever come a time when folks'll just accept the Indians? When we can all live in peace an' be free to -- to see one another as friends?

MIKE

I certainly hope so. And I believe your article is a positive step in that direction.

Dorothy nods gratefully, but she's still uncertain.

EXT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT FIVE - ESTABLISHING

INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT FIVE

Pensive, Brian dries the dishes, handing them one-by-one to Mike, who stacks them in the cabinet.

Brian wipes the last dish. Mike puts it away.

MIKE

Thank you, Brian.

BRIAN

Sure thing.

Mike smiles warmly at him, then moves away.

BRIAN

Ma?

MIKE

(pauses, turning back) Hmm?

BRIAN

What's wrong with Anthony?

Mike stiffens, unprepared for his direct question and unwavering stare. She composes herself.

MIKE

You know that Anthony is very sick.

BRIAN
Yeah. And he seemed real worried when I saw him today. He said somethin' feels different this time.

MIKE
(with difficulty) I'm afraid that it is.

Brian stares at her, needing to know more.

MIKE
Anthony's condition -- is very serious.

Brian swallows, seeing the gravity in Mike's expression.

BRIAN
Ya mean -- he's gonna die?

Mike looks at Brian, wanting to protect him, but knowing his need for the truth.

MIKE
I'm sorry, Brian.

Brian shifts back, struck by her answer. He sinks into a chair, stunned, trying to process the information. Tears well in his eyes at the thought of losing his best friend.

Mike closer to comfort him.

MIKE
I'm so sorry.

Brian looks up at her.

BRIAN
Ma he wants to know the truth. You've gotta tell 'im.

MIKE
(pained) I wish that I could.

BRIAN
Why can't ya?

MIKE

Grace and Robert E are his parents. It's their place to tell Anthony, and they don't want me to do it.

BRIAN

But you're his doctor.

MIKE

I'm also their friend, and I must respect their wishes. (beat) We both must.

Brian understands, but he's still distressed.

BRIAN

What about Anthony's wishes?

Mike reacts, as troubled as Brian. She looks at him, wanting to offer some reason and consolation as we CUT TO:

EXT. CAVE - DAY SIX

Sully and Mike are eating lunch on a blanket. The mood is somber and reflective.

SULLY

Brian's right. It's best for Anthony to know the truth.

MIKE

I agree. Robert E feels the same way, but Grace sees things differently. (beat) I can't imagine, Sully, what they must be feeling now.

SULLY

(nods) They'll get through it, Michaela. Just like you 'n me 've made it through all the tough times in our lives. They'll get through it together.

Mike nods thoughtfully as Sully embraces her, but when he lifts her chin to kiss her, she hesitates and draws back.

MIKE

Sully... I need to tell you something.

Sully sees her seriousness and listens intently.

MIKE
I had a miscarriage.

He stares at her, caught off-guard.

SULLY
You were pregnant?

Mike nods sadly.

MIKE
I lost our baby, Sully.

For a moment, Sully just stares, in shock. Then he shifts closer and tenderly rubs Mike's back.

SULLY
You alright?

MIKE
I'm feeling well now.

SULLY
When did it happen?

MIKE
A few weeks ago, before Founders Day.

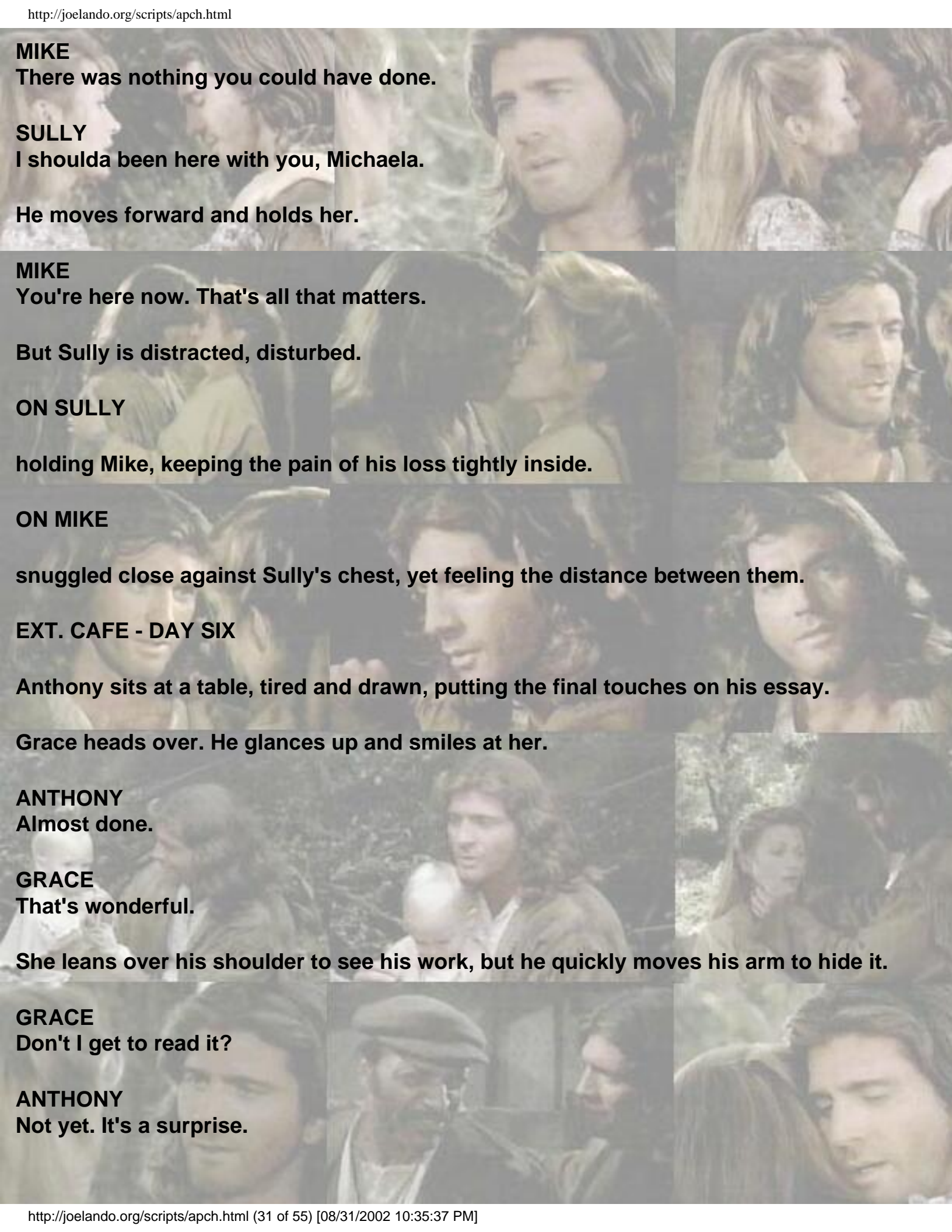
Sully looks confused.

SULLY
Ya didn't tell me?

MIKE
I know, I should have told you right away, but I wanted to protect you.

Sully takes this in, feeling great frustration and guilt.

SULLY
I shoulda been here.



MIKE
There was nothing you could have done.

SULLY
I shoulda been here with you, Michaela.

He moves forward and holds her.

MIKE
You're here now. That's all that matters.

But Sully is distracted, disturbed.

ON SULLY

holding Mike, keeping the pain of his loss tightly inside.

ON MIKE

snuggled close against Sully's chest, yet feeling the distance between them.

EXT. CAFE - DAY SIX

Anthony sits at a table, tired and drawn, putting the final touches on his essay.

Grace heads over. He glances up and smiles at her.

ANTHONY
Almost done.

GRACE
That's wonderful.

She leans over his shoulder to see his work, but he quickly moves his arm to hide it.

GRACE
Don't I get to read it?

ANTHONY
Not yet. It's a surprise.

Grace smiles, intrigued.

ANTHONY

I've still gotta look it over, check the spellin'...

As Anthony proofreads his essay, Grace admires him thoughtfully.

GRACE

Anthony? I been thinkin'... how would you like to go to New Orleans?

Anthony brightens, despite his fatigue.

ANTHONY

New Orleans?

GRACE

We could visit your Grandma. I know that she'd love to see ya.

ANTHONY

When can we go?

GRACE

Well, we'll have to start watchin' our pennies, but I bet we can save up enough money to take the train there this summer.

ANTHONY

(excited) This summer. Wait till I tell Brian.

Anthony gets up, still weak but with new enthusiasm. He takes his essay and heads out, favoring one leg, pausing near

MIKE

who's on her way in.

ANTHONY

Dr. Mike, we're goin' to New Orleans this summer.

Mike gives Grace an uneasy glance, then smiles brightly at Anthony.

MIKE

Won't that be lovely?

Anthony beams and nods, then leaves.

Mike turns to Grace. They share a look.

MIKE
Grace...

GRACE
I know, Dr. Mike. He's dyin'.

Mike moves closer, with compassion:

MIKE
Then why are you planning a trip to New Orleans?

GRACE
Because I want the rest of my boy's days to be filled with hope 'n happiness.

MIKE
I want that for Anthony, too, Grace -- but he's feeling weaker every day. He knows that he's sick. Planning a trip now will only confuse him.

GRACE
But didn't ya see 'im just now, smilin' like that?

MIKE
Grace... he needs to hear the truth from his mother.

GRACE
(firmly) No. I ain't tellin' that child that he's dyin'.

This quiets Mike.

GRACE
(resolved) I'm gonna tell 'im whatever it takes to keep that smile on his face, ev'ry precious day that he's alive.

Grace holds Mike's look, fiercely determined, then she turns and walks away.

OFF Mike, silenced by Grace's conviction as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. CAVE - DAY SEVEN

Mike rides up on Flash, her saddlebags filled with food supplies for Sully. She dismounts, scans the area for him, but doesn't see him.

MIKE
Sully?

No answer. She heads inside the cave.

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS - DAY SEVEN

Mike comes in, looks around...

MIKE
Sully?

... but Sully's not in here, either. Off Mike, trying not to look concerned...

EXT. STREET - DAY SEVEN

Mike and Dorothy walk from the General Store toward the clinic, in mid-conversation:

DOROTHY
Maybe he was with Cloud Dancin', tryin' to talk to some of the Indians.

MIKE
(unconvinced) Yes... I'm sure that's where he was.

But something's still troubling her, and Dorothy sees it.

DOROTHY
What is it, Michaela?

Off Mike's hesitation, Dorothy touches her arm, stopping her.

DOROTHY
Did you tell Sully about the baby?

MIKE
Yes.

DOROTHY
How'd he take it?

MIKE
(after a beat) He was saddened by it... and concerned for me... (another beat) But there was something else...

DOROTHY
What?

Mike thinks about this a moment, as if trying to figure it out for herself.

MIKE
I sensed something in him. The way he held me... (beat) It's as if... something's changed between us...

DOROTHY
Michaela, you've both suffered a great loss. Sully'll get through this... and you will, too. Together.

Mike nods, grateful for this heartfelt encouragement... but still clearly troubled.

MIKE
I only wish I'd told him sooner.

The two continue walking toward the clinic as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LIVERY - NIGHT SEVEN

Robert E works late at the forge, pounding a piece of metal into shape, striking it over and over. Each blow he strikes is a blow against the disease now killing his son.

The metal snaps. Robert E stops, looks down at the broken pieces, then hurls them across the livery. He can't hold the pain inside any longer and breaks, as the agony of Anthony's impending death washes over him.

Then, from the darkness, a whispered voice:

SULLY (O.S.)
Robert E.

Startled, Robert E turns. At first, he sees nothing but shadows.

ROBERT E
Sully... ?

He steps toward the darkness, suddenly discovering Sully standing there, out of view of the street.

Robert E hugs him -- two friends together again. He steps back.

ROBERT E
It's good to see you.

SULLY
Good to see you, too.

Sully clasps Robert E's shoulder, his voice consoling, compassionate.

SULLY
I'm sorry 'bout Anthony.

The sadness returns to Robert E's eyes, his pain too naked and raw to hide.

ROBERT E
I'm losin' my son, Sully...

Sully, feeling his own pain as well as Robert E's, tries to make sense of it.

SULLY

It ain't right. (a beat) Losin' a child before the parents... It's against nature.

Robert E shakes his head in frustration.

ROBERT E

There's nothin' I can do to stop it.

SULLY

You can be there with him... (remembering when he wasn't with Mike)... make sure he ain't alone.

This hits Robert E hard.

ROBERT E

That's just it, Sully. Even when I'm with him... I still feel like he's alone in this. (struggling with his emotions) I mean... we're there by his side, tryin' to ease his pain. We tell him we love him, but still...

Robert E falls silent, unable to continue.

SULLY

It's good that you're tellin' him those things, Robert E... (beat gently)... but sometimes it's the things we don't tell each other that keep us apart.

Robert E looks at Sully, the pain of keeping the truth from Anthony evident in his eyes.

EXT. CREEK - EARLY MORNING - DAY EIGHT

Dorothy sits beside the creek, waiting for Cloud Dancing, deep in troubled thought. She takes the *Gazette*, which includes her recent editorial, out of her saddle bag.

She hears LEAVES RUSTLE and looks up to see Cloud Dancing emerging from the woods.

CLOUD DANCING

Ha-ho.

DOROTHY

Mornin', Cloud Dancin'.

He steps over and sits down beside her, noticing the *Gazette* in Dorothy's hands.

DOROTHY

I finished the editorial. I wrote about the terrible treatment at the reservation, and how the army's violatin' the Indian treaties. (holds it out to him) You wanna read it?

Cloud Dancing shakes his head.

CLOUD DANCING

Because you have written it, I know it is the truth.

DOROTHY

(a beat, moved by this) Thank you.

They sit in silence a moment, watching the sunlight dance off the water. Dorothy finally turns back to him, trying to find the words for what's been troubling her:

DOROTHY

Cloud Dancin'?

He turns to face her.

CLOUD DANCING

Yes.

DOROTHY

I keep thinkin'... bout that time when you and me... (beat) ...That time we kissed.

Dorothy looks down at her hands, her nervousness showing. Cloud Dancing gently tips her face up to his.

CLOUD DANCING

(warmly) I too have thought of it often.

Dorothy looks at him, finally admitting:

DOROTHY

It frightens me... (off Cloud Dancing's look) I'm just not sure what to make of it...

Cloud Dancing nods, understanding.

CLOUD DANCING

There are many questions.

DOROTHY

And no answers.

CLOUD DANCING

(after a beat) But there will be.

He gently takes her hand in his. She looks down at their joined hands, then back up to him, realizing that perhaps they will be able to discover those answers together.

This realization gives Dorothy hope, renewing her optimism.

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING - DAY EIGHT

It's early morning, before school. Anthony sits, wrapped in a warm coat and red scarf, at the picnic table watching the children play baseball. He looks weak and drawn.

Brian approaches the school, spots Anthony, and hurries over to join him.

BRIAN

(pleasantly surprised) Hey Anthony, you're back!

ANTHONY

I wanted to come, and my ma said I could.

Brian sees that Anthony doesn't look well, but tries to offer encouragement.

BRIAN

That's good.

ANTHONY

(a beat) Did you talk to Dr. Mike for me?

Brian has dreaded this question, but won't lie to his friend.

BRIAN

Yeah.

ANTHONY

What'd she say?

Brian hesitates, unsure of what to tell him. Finally:

BRIAN
She thinks you should talk to your ma.

Anthony holds Brian's look a moment, sensing the words he hasn't spoken. Anthony nods. He knows the truth.

ANTHONY
Naw. I don't wanna make her sad.

Brian looks at him, and nods.

BRIAN
Yeah. Maybe you're right.

Brian sits beside Anthony. The weight of their unspoken words rests heavily on their shoulders, as they quietly turn back to watch the game.

INT. SCHOOLHOUSE - DAY EIGHT

The children are all in their seats, giving Teresa their full attention. She stands at the front of the class, proudly surveying her pupils. She holds the winning essay in her hand.

TERESA
This was a most difficult decision. Each one of your essays was deserving of a prize. However, there was one that stood above all others.

Brian and Anthony sit nervously in their seats, hanging on her every word.

TERESA
I am very happy and proud to announce that the winning essay, to be read at Parent's Day, was written by Anthony.

The class reacts, at first surprised, then with scattered applause. Anthony is stunned. Brian nudges him.

BRIAN
You won!

Teresa holds out his essay and waits for him to come forward. Anthony shakes himself out of his reverie. He gets up and walks slowly to the front of the class. As he walks, he becomes disoriented and unsteady.

Teresa and Brian react, alarmed.

TERESA
Anthony?

She steps toward him, and he suddenly collapses in her arms. Brian is instantly at her side. The rest of the children react, startled and uneasy.

TERESA
Brian, quickly. Help me take him to the clinic.

Teresa and Brian hurriedly carry an unconscious Anthony out of the schoolhouse.

INT. CLINIC - DAY EIGHT

Mike is all business, as she examines the now-conscious Anthony. She checks his pulse, respiration and pupils.

MIKE
Anthony, can you hear me?

Anthony nods slightly, still somewhat disoriented.

MIKE
Can you speak?

No answer. Mike gently lifts his left hand.

MIKE
Anthony, squeeze my hand?

He squeezes her hand softly. She then lifts his right hand.

MIKE
Now, one more time.

CLOSE ON ANTHONY'S HAND

No response.

RESUME

as Mike lowers his hand to the bed. She looks down at him, concerned. A beat, then:

Grace and Robert E burst through the door.

GRACE

What happened?

Grace rushes to Anthony's side.

ROBERT E

Is he alright?

They look to Mike for the answers.

MIKE

It appears as if Anthony has suffered a slight stroke.

Grace and Robert E react, alarmed.

MIKE

There's some weakness on the right side, and his speech has been affected.

Grace leans in close and strokes Anthony's forehead. Anthony struggles to talk.

ANTHONY

(slurred) What's wrong?

Mike shoots Grace a look -- Please tell him. Grace looks to Robert E. She falters a moment, another crack in her resolve. Then, she regains her composure.

GRACE

Hush now, I'm here.

Robert E holds her look a moment, but relents and steps closer, taking Anthony's hand.

ROBERT E

We're both here, son.

He looks up to Mike, somber, the grim reality of Anthony's death now looming before them.

INT. CLINIC - LATER - DAY EIGHT

Mike is making notations on Anthony's chart. Grace enters from the recovery room. Mike looks up.

Grace glances away and sees Anthony's red scarf laying on the examining table. She picks it up, holding the soft wool close to her face.

Mike watches in silence, saddened for Grace, who is desperately trying to find the strength to face her son's imminent death.

A long silence hangs between them. Then Grace looks to Mike, tears brimming in her eyes.

GRACE

I don't know how to say goodbye to my son.

Mike moves to her, taking Grace in her arms. Grace allows the first waves of grief to wash over her, and cries in Mike's embrace.

OFF Mike, holding her silently, her own heart breaking for her dear friend. As we slowly...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY EIGHT

Mike sits quietly beside Anthony's bed. Robert E and Grace enter the room. Anthony opens his eyes at the sound. Mike stands to let Robert E and Grace sit down on the bed beside Anthony. Grace looks down at him and smiles.

GRACE
Hey, sleepyhead.

Anthony struggles to sit up. Robert E quickly helps him.

ANTHONY
(weakly) Hey, Ma.

Grace looks at Mike. She wants very much to do right by Anthony, but it's so hard to know what to say. Mike puts her hand on Grace's shoulder. Grace draws strength from the support of her friend.

Mike moves back just a bit as Grace turns back to Anthony.

GRACE
(to Anthony, quiet dignity) Anthony -- I know you been wantin' to talk to me -- 'bout things --

He's relieved to hear that she knew of his desire.

GRACE
But I was so afraid I'd say the wrong thing -- I made the mistake of not sayin' anything.

ANTHONY
That's all right, Ma.

GRACE
No it ain't. But we're here now. Me 'n your Pa. To talk about anything you want.

Anthony hopes he can speak completely candidly, but he's not quite sure.

ANTHONY
(quietly) Anythin'?

ROBERT E
Anythin'.

Anthony takes them at their word. He dives in.

ANTHONY
I been -- kinda wonderin' -- do you know what's gonna happen to me? When I die?

This is as hard on Robert E and Grace as they knew it would be. Mike speaks to Anthony with quiet authority, not hiding anything from him, not making it scarier than it is.

MIKE

Well, what happens is -- everything slows down and then -- stops. First your heart stops beating and then your breathing stops.

ANTHONY

(quietly) Does that hurt?

MIKE

(sincerely, with love) No. There is no more pain.

ANTHONY

And then what?

GRACE

(simply but with conviction) And then your soul is gonna fly straight up to Heaven where God's waitin' for you.

ANTHONY

(worried) What if I don't recognize Him?

GRACE

Oh, He'll recognize you.

ANTHONY

I wish --

He can't bring himself to say it.

ROBERT E

Go ahead. You wish what?

ANTHONY

(very quiet) I'm gonna miss you so much.

Grace is nearly undone by this. Robert E moves in to reassure his son.

ROBERT E

You won't have to miss us for long, son. In heaven, years seem like seconds. Hardly before you can even turn around, there we'll be. Me 'n your Ma.

ANTHONY
(relieved, happy) You mean it?

ROBERT E
(passionately) You know I do.

Grace and Robert E enfold Anthony in a warm hug.

MIKE
moves away, slightly. She wants to give the three of them this personal moment.

INT. BARN - DAY NINE

Brian is in the barn. Matthew comes in.

MATTHEW
I thought you'd left to go see Anthony.

Brian looks up at him, looks away.

MATTHEW
Brian?

BRIAN
(building emotion) I don't know what to say to him, Matthew. I don't know what to do. He's the best friend I ever had -- and he's goin' away and he ain't never comin' back -- and I don't know how to tell him that I don't want him to die.

MATTHEW
(gently) You think he doesn't know that?

Brian looks at him, close to breaking. Matthew hugs him, tight.

MATTHEW
I'll tell you somethin' else he knows. He knows you're hurtin' as bad as him.

BRIAN
(torn up) What am I supposed to say?

MATTHEW
You don't have to say anythin'. Just bein' with him is all he needs right now.

EXT. RECOVERY ROOM BALCONY - DAY NINE

Anthony sits in a make-shift reclining chair, enjoying the feel of the sun on his face and the sound of the bustle of the town below. The cap Robert E gave him rests on his lap. Brian comes out onto the balcony. Brian's mood is subdued, but there is a peacefulness that settles over him as soon as he sees his friend.

BRIAN
Hey, Anthony.

ANTHONY
Hey, Brian.

Brian sits down in the chair next to Anthony. Anthony looks over to Brian, visibly weakened since the last time Brian saw him. He smiles at Brian.

BRIAN
I wake you?

ANTHONY
Naw. I was just thinkin'.

Brian nods. Anthony looks at him again.

ANTHONY
Remember how you used ta read to me from Robinson Crusoe -- when I first came to town.

BRIAN
Yeah -- ?

ANTHONY
You were always wantin' to go on an adventure -- to far off places --

Brian smiles, nods.

ANTHONY

Ya even got me to try to hop the train with you -- remember?

BRIAN

I'll never forget that day.

They both laugh remembering the ill-fated trip.

BRIAN

That was a really stupid idea.

ANTHONY

Naw.

Then they sit in silence a beat, considering the adventure Anthony's about to undertake.

Anthony takes the cap from his lap with his left hand and gives it to Brian.

ANTHONY

I'd like you to keep this for me.

Brian takes the cap, reverently turning it over in his hands. Tears well in Brian's eyes, Anthony sees Brian's discomfort, but continues, not giving into his feelings, all business.

ANTHONY

But you gotta promise you'll take good care of it. Don't mess up the bill, keep it straight, and smooth it down nice and flat when you take it off at night.

BRIAN

(very quietly) I will.

ANTHONY

And don't go lettin' some girl wear it or somethin'. She'd prob'ly forget to give it back to ya and it'd sit around her house bein' lonely for ya.

BRIAN

I wouldn't ever.

ANTHONY

Good. I feel better, then.

Anthony smiles, then eases back into his chair. He's tired. Brian sits quietly beside him, composing himself. Then he scoots his chair right next to Anthony's and puts his arm around his shoulders. A quiet moment, and then:

BRIAN
Anthony?

ANTHONY
Mmmm?

BRIAN
Are ya scared?

ANTHONY
A little.

They sit, comfortable with each other, their friendship sealed for eternity.

EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY NINE

Mike kneels beside her garden, tilling the soil with a small spade. She hears a whistle. She sits up, listens for it again. It comes again.

MIKE
Sully -- !

She jumps up and hurries off in the direction of the whistle.

EXT. WOODS - DAY NINE - CONTINUOUS

Sully smiles as Michaela comes running into his arms. They hold each other tight during this entire exchange.

MIKE
Sully! Oh, Sully! I've been so worried --

SULLY
Sh-sh-sh. I know. I'm sorry.

MIKE
No -- I'm sorry. I'm so sorry I didn't tell you about the baby when you first came home.

SULLY

You did tell me. As soon as you could, you told me.

MIKE

But then I couldn't find you and I was so afraid --

SULLY

No, no, no. It's all right. I just had to sit with it -- by myself -- for awhile. Let it sink in.

She pulls away, slightly, looks up into his eyes.

MIKE

Are you all right?

He nods. Takes her hand and sits her down beside him.

SULLY

I need you to tell me about it. Everythin'.

She leans up against him, overwhelmed with feelings of love for him, secure again in his love for her. As he holds her:

MIKE

Shortly after you left, I started feeling so tired. I didn't think much of it, with all that had been going on --

CAMERA STARTS TO PULL AWAY from them...

MIKE

But then one morning at Grace's, I felt sick. And I knew. There was only one other time in my life I'd felt like that. I was so excited -- and frightened -- and -- thrilled.

CAMERA continues to pull away and we:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT NINE

Anthony is asleep. Robert, E and Grace stand together near the bed, watching him.

GRACE

When he first came to stay with us -- some nights I'd get up and sneak into his room just to make sure he was all right.

ROBERT E

I know. (a smile) I used to follow you.

Grace smiles.

GRACE

Remember that first day -- when he stole the apple pie I had out coolin' --

ROBERT E

(remembering, smiling) Ended up with pie all over his face --

GRACE

An' all over Dr. Mike's dress.

They both laugh, slightly, to themselves in the memory of it.

GRACE

(loving Robert E for it in hindsight) An' you got so determined he was gonna come live with us.

ROBERT E

(simply) Seemed like he was s'posed to.

Grace nods.

GRACE

He'd watch you so close -- tryin' to walk like you, talk like you. (beat) The day you walked him to the schoolhouse -- to make sure they let him in -- he was so proud to be your son.

Robert E puts his head into his hand, fighting back the emotion. Grace puts her arms around him.

They stand, holding each other, not wanting to miss one precious second of whatever time they have left with Anthony.

EXT. SCHOOLHOUSE - DAY TEN - ESTABLISHING

INT. SCHOOLHOUSE - DAY TEN

The children are all in their seats. Anthony and Brian sit side by side, dressed in their Sunday best. The parents all stand along the back wall, include Grace, Robert E, Mike, Dorothy (with pad and pencil), Andrew, Matthew, LOREN and the REVEREND.

Teresa stands in front of the class. The banner strung across the chalkboard reads: WELCOME PARENTS. A podium sits in front of the class.

Teresa steps forward.

TERESA

I'd like to welcome you all to Parent's Day -- a celebration of our students' accomplishments during this past year. We'll begin our program today with a presentation by one of our brightest students.

Teresa looks to Grace and Robert E, who nod, putting their past disputes to rest.

TERESA

He will read you his winning essay, "A Place Called Home." Anthony?

The parents and children applaud as Anthony stands up. He holds his essay in his left hand. He leans on the desk for support. He looks back to:

ROBERT E AND GRACE

smiling at him, trying to maintain their composure.

RESUME

Anthony looks to Brian, who nods and smiles. Anthony takes slow, tentative steps, limping because of his weakened right side. Brian stands and offers his arm for support.

TERESA

steps aside as they pass her, tears brimming in her eyes.

RESUME ANGLE

Anthony and Brian reach the podium in the front of the class. They turn to face the crowd -- a sea of smiling, warm supportive faces. Anthony leans on the podium. Brian

sits to give Anthony his moment in the sun.

ANTHONY

(his voice clear and steady) My home is Colorado Springs. You talk to anybody here, they can tell you their favorite thing about our town. But I can't -- 'cause I don't have one. I have a hundred.

ON LOREN AND DOROTHY

surprised and pleased by Anthony's literary turn.

ANTHONY (V.O.)

I love walkin' down our main street, stoppin' to see what's in the *Gazette*, or pickin' up some hard candy at the Gen'ral Store.

ON ROBERT E AND GRACE

ANTHONY (V.O.)

Or stoppin' at my Ma's cafe for a piece a apple pie, an' listenin' to the sounds of my Pa's anvil ringin' through the town.

ON MATTHEW AND THE REVEREND

ANTHONY (V.O.)

I love the meadow where you can run and play and won't nobody stop you and tell you you don't belong.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY ELEVEN

Most of the same people who were in the schoolhouse are now at Anthony's gravesite. The Reverend presides over the burial. Mike stands with her arms around Brian, who is now wearing Anthony's cap. The mourners include Dorothy, Loren, Matthew (holding Katie), Teresa and Andrew. Some Shanty Town residents are also there.

ON THE REVEREND

Finishing up whatever reading he's doing from memory.

ANTHONY (V.O.)

An' just beyond our meadow, we got a church -- an' a Reverend who can see what you're thinkin' without even usin' his eyes.

ON MIKE

As she steps forward to place a flower on top of the grave.

ANTHONY (V.O.)

We got a lady doctor who cares 'bout how you're feelin' -- who finds out what's wrong with you without makin' it hurt more.

BRIAN

is next to place a flower.

ANTHONY (V.O.)

An' I got the best friend anybody could ever want to have. A friend who makes ya feel like anythin' you want to do you can if you try.

WIDER

As the other mourners file past to place their flowers on the grave.

ANTHONY (V.O.)

We got every kinda person you can think of in Colorado Springs. An' mostly they all get along. But I guess the best thing I found here --

CLOSE ON ROBERT E AND GRACE

watching the mourners file past.

ANTHONY (V.O.)

-- was a Ma and a Pa who wanted me in their family and who loved me even when I was scared an' who taught me the only thing you ever have to be is yourself.

WIDER - AS CAMERA BEGINS TO PULL BACK

ANTHONY (V.O.)

I lived in a lot of places in my life and Colorado Springs is the best place I've ever known. An' I know no matter where I go, I can always close my eyes and dream that I am home again.

The mourners begin to leave. Mike, Brian, Robert E and Grace hold onto each other for support, with Matthew and Katie nearby. As we slowly:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

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