

Return Engagement

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Part I

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. TOWN - DAY ONE

ANDREW STRAUSS, a naturalist, rides into town leading a pack mule loaded with provisions and botanical equipment. Andrew wears a patch over one eye, and his face, though scarred from battle, is compelling and warmly engaging. He has a beard, and wears a shirt with a vest, a sprig of wild flowers in a buttonhole, and a slouch hat.

Heads turn as Andrew rides down the main street. He stops before the clinic, stares at the sign above it for a moment, then turns his horse toward the saloon. He gets off and ties both animals to the post.

INT. SALOON - DAY ONE

HANK is serving **JAKE** and **LOREN** as Andrew comes in. Andrew's voice is low -- the result of a shrapnel wound in the neck.

ANDREW

Good morning, gentlemen. (to Hank) Would you have a room to rent, by chance?

Hank looks Andrew up and down.

HANK

Where'd ya ride in from?

ANDREW

Montana.

HANK

Looks like it's been a while since you had a lady... ?

ANDREW

No, thank you. Just the room. May I see it?

Hank walks out from behind the bar and leads Andrew to a back room. Jake and Loren trail after them, curious.

JAKE

What brings ya to town?

ANDREW

I'm collecting research for a book.

LOREN

Oh, ya write them dime novels? I could tell ya a lot of stories.

ANDREW

I'm sure you could. But I don't write novels. I'm a naturalist...

HANK

A what?

Hank opens door, shows him room.

ANDREW

I draw and write about nature. Animals, plants.

HANK

But what do ya do for a livin'?

ANDREW

(smiles) My relatives have asked the same question. (looks around) I'll take the room.

He hands Hank some money. Hank pockets it. Andrew nods at the men and pulls the door closed.

ANDREW

Gentlemen.

INT. ROOM - DAY ONE

Andrew goes to the window, looks out a moment, then pulls the shade down. He starts to unpack his bag. Takes out a pocket watch and opens it. Stares at the photograph inside.

CLOSE UP

On the inside of the watch is a photograph of Mike, when she was younger, in Boston.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAY ONE

Mike, looking happy and at ease, is walking in the woods with CLOUD DANCING. She stops to pick an herb from the ground.

MIKE

Isn't this what you use for cuts and infection?

CLOUD DANCING

(nods) You grind the leaves and flowers, and mix them with water. Leave it on for a day, or even longer.

MIKE

But what if the plants don't work? The pain doesn't go away?

CLOUD DANCING

With every wound to the body, there's also a wound to the spirit. Things get out of balance. So unless you doctor the whole person, you may not be able to cure the pain.

MIKE

And how do you do that?

CLOUD DANCING

Call on the spirits.

MIKE

But... I don't know how to call the spirits. And truthfully... I'm not sure I believe they exist.

CLOUD DANCING

Then call on me. My belief will work for you. My helpers will help you.

Mike nods, thinks a moment.

MIKE

Do you have to believe in the spirits to be cured?

CLOUD DANCING

You have to want to be cured. You have to be ready.

Mike smiles, and starts to walk on. Cloud Dancing joins her. She has something she's bursting to tell him.

MIKE

Yes. I know about being ready. In fact, I've been wanting to tell you something.

CLOUD DANCING

What is that?

She considers how to put it.

MIKE

Well, it's about... love. It seems as if it's everywhere right now. Horace and Myra are getting married. Matthew and Ingrid are engaged. Robert E and Grace want to start their family. And... I'm ready now.

She looks at him, expecting a happy response, but he says nothing. Merely looks at her without smiling.

MIKE

You know I've been unsure about Sully, and about myself. But that's changed. I feel happy, and confident, and... ready.

Cloud Dancing still doesn't respond.

MIKE

Cloud Dancing. Aren't you pleased? You've always been our friend.

CLOUD DANCING

I am your friend. (beat) And I see difficulties.

MIKE

Yes, we both had problems to resolve. But I'm certain we've put them behind us now.

He looks down a moment, then looks into her eyes.

CLOUD DANCING

The spirits showed me in a dream -- a hawk was carrying you off.

MIKE

A hawk?

CLOUD DANCING

Hawks usually mean bad fortune. This hawk took you away from Sully.

MIKE

For good?

CLOUD DANCING

That is up to you.

MIKE

What are you saying? We're not meant to be together?

CLOUD DANCING

Something will separate you. It could be an illness. A journey. Another person. A death. Or something small.

MIKE

But... we've been drawing closer together. I've never felt so sure.

CLOUD DANCING

That is what the spirits say.

MIKE

(smiles bravely) Well, as I said, I'm not sure I believe in the spirits.

Cloud Dancing nods, and they walk on.

HOLD ON Mike's face, as we

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. CLINIC - DAY ONE

Mike is mixing and sorting medicines with COLLEEN. Sully is there. Mike keeps stealing looks at Sully, trying to see any sign of the trouble Cloud Dancing predicted. She drops a bottle and it shatters. She cries out.

COLLEEN

It's all right. I'll get it.

Colleen starts putting the glass pieces in a bucket. Sully goes to Mike.

SULLY

Maybe ya oughta take a rest.

MIKE

I'm fine.

SULLY

Ya been workin' awful hard.

MIKE

I'm perfectly all right.

SULLY

(playful) We could take a walk.

MIKE

Loren needs something for his gastritis.

She picks up a bottle and starts to pour liquid into a vial.

COLLEEN

I could do that...

MIKE

I appreciate your help, but I'd like to take care of this.

COLLEEN

What are ya givin' him?

MIKE

Paregoric.

COLLEEN

But that's not right...

MIKE

Of course it's right.

COLLEEN

No, Dr. Mike...

Mike loses her patience and snaps.

MIKE

Please, don't argue with me. Just take it to him!

Colleen takes the vial but doesn't move. She looks at Sully, who intervenes.

SULLY

What'd you put in there?

Mike picks up the bottle and sees -- it's silver nitrate.

MIKE

Oh, my God. It's silver nitrate.

COLLEEN

I was tryin' to tell ya...

MIKE

(upset) I could have poisoned him. (to Colleen) I'm sorry, Colleen. (turns to Sully) Perhaps we should take that walk.

Sully takes her arm and guides her to the door.

EXT. SALOON - DAY ONE

Andrew comes out and stands on the porch, looking across to the clinic.

HIS POV

Sully and Mike come out the door and walk out into the street, heading toward the meadow. They're absorbed in talk. WOLF follows them.

BACK TO SCENE

Andrew stares at Mike and Sully as they go by. PUSH IN on his face, as he sees Mike for the first time in seven years.

EXT. MEADOW - DAY ONE

Mike and Sully, With wolf, are walking by the edge of the meadow.

MIKE

I've never made a mistake like that. I can't understand it...

SULLY

Guess you got your mind on other things. (takes her hand) You worried 'bout somethin'?

MIKE

No.

SULLY

Sure?

Mike looks at him, searching for a sign.

MIKE

Is there something I should be worried about?

SULLY

(smiles) Not that I know of. But folks don't always need a reason to start frettin'.

MIKE

Oh, Sully, I've felt so happy recently. Happy with you and me. And... I don't want anything to disturb that.

SULLY
Nothin's gonna disturb it.

MIKE
(shy) You do... love me?

SULLY
Course I do. I been tellin' ya.

MIKE
I know. But I guess... you can never hear it too often.

Sully takes her hand and puts it to his lips. Staring into her eyes, he kisses her fingers.

SULLY
I love you.

Mike melts, and moves into his arms to hug him.

MIKE
I love you too.

They hold on to each other, basking in the warmth and peacefulness.

EXT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY ONE

Andrew comes out of the office and spots Mike and Sully, returning from the meadow. Andrew watches them a beat, preparing himself. Then he walks over to them.

ANDREW
Excuse me, Mr. Sully? I'm Andrew Strauss. I was told you work as a guide.

Sully and Mike turn to look at him. Sully shakes his hand.

SULLY
Sometimes, I do. This is Dr. Quinn.

MIKE
(reaching for his hand) Pleased to meet you, Mr. Strauss.

They shake hands, and she looks at his face -- there's something faintly familiar.

SULLY
What'd ya have in mind?

ANDREW
I'm working on a book about Rocky Mountain wildlife.

MIKE
Sully knows a great deal about that.

ANDREW
So I hear. Thought you might help me do some tracking.

SULLY
I could.

MIKE
(to Andrew) You're from the East, aren't you?

ANDREW
I grew up in Philadelphia.

MIKE
I went to college in Philadelphia. Did you?

ANDREW
No, I was at Yale for a time, but then I enlisted...

MIKE
I see. Is that how you were... injured? (he nods) May I ask what battle?

ANDREW
Olustee. In Florida. But I'd rather not speak of it.

MIKE
I understand. But I'd love to hear about your book. Wouldn't you, Sully?

SULLY
Sure.

MIKE
You must come to supper.

Andrew takes off his hat.

ANDREW
It'd be a pleasure.

He walks away. Mike watches him, then turns her attention back to Sully as they head into the clinic.

INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT ONE

Sully sits at his regular place at the head of the table, along with BRIAN, Colleen, MATTHEW and Andrew. Mike moves about the table, passing a platter of chicken and dumplings. Andrew looks about, taking in details of the primitive cabin.

MIKE
More dumplings, Mr. Strauss?

ANDREW
Thank you. This is a treat.

COLLEEN
What do ya eat when you're out collecting samples?

ANDREW
Whatever I can find. There's been a lot of mushrooms lately.

BRIAN
I don't like mushrooms.

As Andrew helps himself, Mike notices a scent about him.

MIKE
Is that... bay rum?

ANDREW
Yes. Do you like it?

MIKE

Someone I once knew... used to wear it.

ANDREW

(smiles and shrugs) A lot of men do. I'm afraid I have common taste.

She nods and continues passing the platter. Then sits down. Sully turns to Andrew.

SULLY

So what were you doin' in Montana?

ANDREW

Searching for glaciers.

BRIAN

What's a glacier?

ANDREW

Well, did you ever wonder how the mountains were formed? Millions of years ago, there was a great Ice Age, when most of America was covered by a giant sheet of ice.

MATTHEW

(surprised) Ice!

ANDREW

And as the ice slipped down from the North Pole, it broke into chunks called glaciers. And the glaciers carved out rivers and canyons and split the mountains into jagged peaks.

MIKE

(coming alert) Professor Whitney at Harvard disputes that. He says the mountains were formed by a great upheaval. How does he put it... ?

ANDREW

"A sudden wreck of matter and crush of worlds." But Dr. Quinn, I can show you evidence that the mountains were not formed overnight, but slowly, slowly, over time, by the ice. I'll show you grooves in the mountains where the glaciers passed. In Montana, we found twenty-two glaciers, still alive and creeping.

COLLEEN

I'd like to see that.

BRIAN

Me too!

MIKE

We don't want to trouble Mr. Strauss.

ANDREW

No trouble. After Mr. Sully and I have explored the mountains nearby, I may be able to convince even you, Dr. Quinn. (playful) If you'll keep an open mind.

MIKE

I always keep an open mind.

She smiles at him, enjoying the challenge.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY TWO

It seems the whole town is gathered outside the store to watch Loren uncrate a velocipede -- an early bicycle -- just arrived from Chicago. We see DOROTHY, Jake, HORACE, MYRA, GRACE, ROBERT E, Mike and the three kids.

ROBERT E

What do they call it?

LOREN

A velocipede. Just came in from Chicago.

COLLEEN

Sully said he always wanted to try ridin' one.

MATTHEW

Yeah. Remember when we saw that one in Boston?

Mike moves forward and examines the bike. Like everyone else, she's fascinated. Turns to children.

MIKE

Let's get it for him, as a surprise?

COLLEEN

Oh, he'd love it!

BRIAN
Can I ride it, too?

MYRA
Here he comes!

Sully comes down the street with Andrew, and Wolf. They're getting ready to go out tracking.

MATTHEW
Quick, cover it up.

Loren puts the crate back around the bike and stands in front of it. Mike, Colleen and Myra move out to intercept Sully and Andrew, and divert their attention from the bicycle.

MIKE
Morning, Sully. Mr. Strauss.

Andrew tips his hat in greeting.

MYRA
Hey, Sully. How ya doin'?

SULLY
Just fine, thanks. This is Mr. Strauss. (to Andrew) This is Myra -- she's the one who's havin' the weddin'.

MYRA
(sighs) I don't know 'bout that. Horace just got a telegram. The Bings ain't comin'.

HORACE
Gotta plant their crops. Lewis is there now, helpin' 'em.

MYRA
They don't wanna see ya marry me. Ain't that it?

HORACE
Course not.

MYRA
Look at me, Horace. Tell me straight. They said it's on account of me. Didn't they?

Horace looks down. He can't lie to Myra.

HORACE
The heck with 'em.

MYRA
But how we gonna have a wedding now? Your folks ain't comin', and I ain't got no family.

MIKE
We're your family. The whole town...

DOROTHY
(coming up) That's right. We're all gonna put on this wedding for ya.

GRACE
I'm gonna cook the supper.

DOROTHY
(to Myra) And I got the dress for you. It was my wedding dress. I was savin' it for my daughters, but they run off and got married somewhere else.

JAKE
Ain't white, is it?

DOROTHY
Oh, Jake...

JAKE
She shouldn't wear white.

DOROTHY
It's... *off white*. What do you think, Loren?

LOREN
Long as it's off white. (to Horace) And I'm gonna fit ya with a new suit.

COLLEEN
Can I be the flower girl?

MYRA

Sure.

MIKE

I'd like to be your maid of honor.

DOROTHY

And you'll need a best man, Horace.

Horace looks around, but no one volunteers. After a beat.

SULLY

That's me.

HORACE

Thank you, Sully. (to Myra) See... it's gonna be a fine wedding. We don't need no other family.

He puts his arm around her and draws her close.

Andrew watches it all, with keen interest.

EXT. WOODS - DAY TWO

Sully and Andrew are tracking elk. There's an easy camaraderie between them. Wolf follows.

SULLY

What're ya plannin' on puttin' in this book?

ANDREW

It'll be an account of my travels -- the animals and plants -- everything I've seen.

SULLY

Folks want to read that?

ANDREW

People are fascinated with the West. My hope is, if I can show them the beauty of these wild mountains and forests, I can win their support for protecting them.

SULLY

They need protectin', all right. But how would ya do that?

ANDREW

Well, for one thing, the government could set the land aside, as a wilderness park. And outlaw logging...

SULLY

You're dreamin'.

ANDREW

Maybe, but in California, they just made the Yosemite a wilderness park.

SULLY

Hold up.

He points to animal tracks.

ANDREW

Eik?

Sully nods, puts a finger to his lips, and motions Andrew to follow him up a rise.

ANGLE

Lying on their stomachs, moving silently, Sully and Andrew come up the rise and look out on a valley.

THEIR POV -- STOCK FOOTAGE

A bull elk and his harem of cows, grazing.

ON SULLY AND ANDREW

Andrew takes a sketch pad from his pack and starts to draw.

ANDREW

Look at the antlers on the old bull. He's magnificent.

SULLY

There's a young one over there -- gettin' ready to challenge him.

STOCK FOOTAGE

A young bull stands, poised to charge at the old bull who rules the harem. They BUGLE at each other, then run together and butt horns in a terrible CRASH. After a brief struggle, the young bull falls to his side, picks himself up and beats a retreat.

ON SULLY AND ANDREW

ANDREW

A lot simpler than the way we do it, isn't it?

SULLY

Yep. It's a fair fight. The winner keeps the females and the loser goes away.

ANDREW

But he can try again, can't he?

SULLY

Soon as he's ready. And he's got time on his side.

The two men smile at each other.

EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY THREE

Mike, Brian, Matthew, and Colleen bring Sully out the door with a blindfold on. The velocipede sits on the road.

SULLY

Can I look now?

BRIAN

Not yet.

COLLEEN

Just a few more steps.

MIKE

Now.

Sully pulls off the blindfold and stares at the bicycle. His face lights up with wonder.

BRIAN

It's for you!

SULLY
Where'd it come from?

MATTHEW
Mr. Bray ordered it from Chicago.

MIKE
It's a present.

SULLY
But... why?

MIKE
(mimics his words) Folks don't always need a reason... do they?

COLLEEN
Go on, try it!

Sully walks to the bicycle, gets on and starts to pedal. It tips over, but he gets on and tries again. After a few wobbles, he can ride! Mike and the kids CLAP and CHEER. Sully rides over to Mike.

SULLY
It's like flyin'! Come on, I'll give you a ride.

He helps her onto the handlebars, (or Matthew does) and they take off. They ride down the road, weaving back and forth, laughing, exhilarated. They make a circle and come down the road again. The kids CHEER.

ANGLE
Cloud Dancing suddenly appears at the edge of the road, and stops the bike They get off. The kids run UP to greet him, calling out, "Cloud Dancing," Mike is both pleased and a little apprehensive to see him.

CLOUD DANCING
I have come to say goodbye.

SULLY
(caught by surprise) What? Where ya goin' off to?

CLOUD DANCING

On a vision quest. To the Black Hills.

SULLY

You never said nothin' before...

CLOUD DANCING

I need to understand what has happened. Why things became so out of balance with my son.

MIKE

But why the Black Hills? That's so far.

CLOUD DANCING

The spirits showed me the place in a dream. They said, this is where you must come.

SULLY

But... you're not leavin' right now, are ya?

CLOUD DANCING

At sundown. Snow Bird and two others will go with me.

He shakes the children's hands, then Mike's, and last, he embraces Sully.

CLOUD DANCING

Be well, my friends. Ha ho.

He turns and walks off. Sully watches him a beat, then starts after him.

SULLY

Wait!

As Sully moves after Cloud Dancing, Brian reaches for the bicycle.

BRIAN

Can I ride it now, Ma?

MIKE

(distracted) Yes.

MATTHEW

Get on, I'll help ya.

Brian gets on, and Matthew and Colleen walk on either side of him, holding onto the bicycle.

Mike stays where she is, looking after Sully and Cloud Dancing. She's worried that Cloud Dancing will tell Sully about the trouble he sees for them.

HER POV

Sully and Cloud Dancing stand at the edge of the clearing, talking. They suddenly turn and stare back at Mike.

BACK TO SCENE

This confirms Mike's suspicion. She looks around at the children, nervously. They're still engrossed with the bicycle. She turns back, just as Sully walks up to her.

MIKE

He told you? (Sully nods) About us?.

SULLY

Us? He said he might not come back to the Cheyenne camp. He doesn't know.

MIKE

(surprised) Oh.

SULLY

Why, what'd he tell you?

MIKE

Nothing...

Sully looks hard at her, and she realizes, she can't dissemble with him.

MIKE

It's just... The last time we were out collecting plants, he said he had a dream. The spirits told him you and I... are going to be separated.

SULLY

(startled) He said that? (Mike nods) Why didn't you tell me?

MIKE
It was just a dream. I thought he would tell you, if it was important.

Sully looks after Cloud Dancing, but he's disappeared into the woods. Sully looks troubled.

MIKE
But Sully, surely you don't believe that.

SULLY
His dreams usually turn out to be true.

MIKE
But not always?

SULLY
(after a pause) No.

MIKE
And who knows what the dream means? It could be a temporary separation, or nothing at all. I'm sure there's nothing to worry about.

Sully nods and puts his arm around her, and they start walking back to the homestead.

STILLY
I'm sorry he's leavin'.

Mike tries to smile and comfort him, but she knows, Sully is disturbed.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. CLINIC - DAY FOUR

Mike is re-opening the clinic, putting things in order. Andrew is there, looking about with interest.

MIKE

What time is it?

Andrew looks at his pocket watch, being careful not to let Mike see the photograph inside.

ANDREW

Nearly eleven. Could something have happened to him?

MIKE

I doubt it. He moves by a different clock.

ANDREW

He was going to show me a meadow where wild orchids grow.

MIKE

I know that meadow. I can take you there myself.

ANDREW

But you shouldn't leave your duties...

MIKE

Actually, I need to gather some foxglove and other herbs.

They get ready to leave.

EXT. WOODS - DAY FOUR

Mike, carrying her medical bag, and Andrew, carrying his plant press and knapsack, walk through the woods.

ANDREW

When did you start using Indian remedies? I don't suppose they taught you that at medical college.

MIKE

Certainly not. But when I came here, I had no choice. I ran out of medicine during an epidemic, and would have tried anything. Now, I've come to respect them. (stops)
There's one of those orchids.

They stop. Andrew takes out his sketch pad and begins to draw. Mike starts picking herbs, placing them in her bag.

MIKE
When did you learn to draw, Mr. Strauss?

ANDREW
Andrew. In the hospital. I was confined to bed for months. I couldn't speak...

MIKE
What happened?

ANDREW
I had shrapnel wounds in my throat. I had to learn to speak all over again. And I couldn't move my legs. But my hands were unaffected, so I taught myself to draw.

MIKE
(looks at drawing) The petals are so graceful.

ANDREW
Aren't they? I don't think I ever really see something until I try to get it down on paper.

MIKE
I know what you mean. When I'm doing research, I have to write things down before I understand them.

ANDREW
That pine tree is lovely, don't you think?

MIKE
(lightly) I imagine you say that about all the trees.

ANDREW
(laughs) But it's true. Most people think a tree is something dull, but it's like a fountain! Water flows up through it constantly, defying gravity. (motions to her bag) You have a stethoscope? (she nods) Let me show you something.

She opens her bag, and hands him the stethoscope. He walks over to a tree, places it on the trunk and listens. Then beckons to her.

ANDREW
Listen. You can hear the sap traveling through the veins.

Mike puts the instrument to her ears, and smiles in surprise.

MIKE
I never knew that.

They share a look of delight.

ANGLE

Sully walks up, with Wolf, and sees them at the tree. Sully's face looks tight and drawn. He's suffering from a migraine headache, but tries to act as if all is normal.

SULLY
Dr. Mike. Mr. Strauss...

BACK TO SCENE

They startle.

MIKE
Sully! We waited for you...

SULLY
I had to... see to my traps.

MIKE
Well, now that you're here, you can take us up to Hidden Valley.

SULLY
Not a good day for that.

MIKE
Why not?

SULLY
The ground's soft. Footing won't be good.

MIKE
But we did it the other day...

SULLY
Trust me.

ANDREW
(trying to ease things) We can see it another time. I don't mind going back to town, to work on my journals.

MIKE
All right then. (to Sully) You coming?

SULLY
(beat) No, you go ahead. I'll come later.

Mike looks at him, puzzled. She thinks Sully is being elusive. She turns to gather her things and walk back, but Andrew pauses, watching Sully. Sully puts a hand to his eyes, shielding them from the light. Andrew nods at him and turns to follow Mike. As soon as they leave, Sully gives in to the pain.

EXT. LEAN-TO - DAY FOUR

Sully barely makes it to the lean-to where he often takes shelter. When he reaches it, he practically collapses. He's sweating, and in terrible pain.

EXT. GRACE'S CAFE - DAY FOUR

Townfolk are gathered around a table to help plan Horace and Myra's wedding. Mike is there, with the three kids, as are Dorothy, Grace, Robert E, Jake and the REVEREND. Dorothy's holding her wedding dress up to Myra.

GRACE
I'm gonna make some of my fancy Creole dishes I been savin' for a special occasion. Soupe de poisson...

HORACE
What is that? Poison soup?

GRACE
It's a fish stew. You'll love it. And lapin etouffe...

MYRA
Lapin?

GRACE
That's rabbit. With gravy.

DOROTHY
Hold still, Myra. I'm just gonna pin up the sleeves. Oh, it suits you.

But Myra doesn't look too comfortable. The dress is Victorian, with a high neck and buttons.

MYRA
Ya think so?

ROBERT E
Now you're gonna need a carriage to ride in.

COLLEEN
Let's cover it with flowers and ribbons!

HORACE
Can't we just walk? It ain't that far.

MYRA
But I want to ride. Could we have a white horse?

ROBERT E
I got a nice blue roan. That's good luck, for a weddin'.

REVEREND JOHNSON
Let's talk about the service.

JAKE
Wait a minute, Reverend. I already said I'd marry 'em. Bein' the mayor, it's my job.

REVEREND JOHNSON
(to Horace and Myra) But I'm sure you want a religious service, don't you?

Horace looks from the Reverend to Jake.

HORACE
I... I...

MIKE
Jake, why don't you give the bride away, since you're the town father.

Jake smiles.

MATTHEW
I was gonna do that.

MIKE
We may need you to be best man. (looks around) Sully doesn't seem to be showing up.

BRIAN
What does the best man do?

MIKE
Well, he walks with the groom down the aisle. And at the dinner, he makes a toast.

MATTHEW
What if I can't think of nothin' to say?

MIKE
We'll find you a poem, or a quote.

COLLEEN
Like what?

MIKE
Well, at my engagement party, David recited Robert Burns.

COLLEEN
How'd it go?

MIKE
I don't remember.

MATTHEW
Sure ya do.

BRIAN
Come on, Ma. Tell us. Please.

She starts to resist again, but then gives in.

MIKE

"O, my luve is like a red red rose
That's newly sprung in June:
O, my luve is like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.
As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till all the seas gang dry."

Everyone is silent, watching her with rapt attention. Mike is overcome by the memory.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SALOON - DAY

Andrew is sitting in a chair in front of the saloon, reading a book. He looks up, sees something, and is about to call out, when he stops himself.

HIS POV

Sully, with Wolf, walks over to greet Mike as she rides up on her horse and dismounts.

EXT. CLINIC - DAY FIVE

MIKE

Sully, I was beginning to worry.

SULLY

Why's that?

MIKE

You were supposed to meet us at the cafe yesterday -- to talk about the wedding?

SULLY

Sorry. Couldn't make it.

ANGLE - ANDREW, WATCHING SULLY AND MIKE.

BACK TO SCENE

MIKE

You're not disappearing on us again, are you?

Sully shakes his head no. But the movement pains him.

MIKE

Because it means a lot to Horace for you to be in the wedding.

SULLY

I will be.

MIKE

Good. Will we see you for dinner?

SULLY

Not tonight.

Now, Mike is really getting puzzled and concerned.

MIKE

Well, let us know when you can come.

She walks into the clinic. Sully gets a sharp pain, and puts a hand to his head. Andrew, who walks up to Sully, notices his discomfort.

ANDREW

Sully.

SULLY

Mornin', Andrew. Don't think I can go out with ya today.

ANDREW

Are you not feeling well?

Sully doesn't answer.

ANDREW

Does your head hurt?

SULLY
I'm all right.

ANDREW
Is your vision blurred, by any chance?

SULLY
(surprised) Yeah, kinda.

ANDREW
And your eyes are sensitive to the light?

SULLY
Yeah.

ANDREW
Have you been eating much?

SULLY
Not for a while. Why ya askin'?

ANDREW
Well... A friend of mine used to get... what they call... sick headaches. Sometimes they'd last for days.

SULLY
What'd he do for 'em?

ANDREW
There wasn't anything he found that would help, except resting, in a dark place.

SULLY
(nods) I'll meet ya tomorrow.

He walks away, with Wolf.

INT. CLINIC - DAY FIVE

Mike is showing a male PATIENT out, when Andrew appears in the doorway, carrying his plant press.

MIKE
Hello, Andrew.

ANDREW
Do you think I might borrow your microscope?

MIKE
Of course.

ANDREW
I found a thistle by the creek that's not supposed to grow this far North.

He opens the plant press and places a thistle on the microscope slide.

MIKE
Plants do things they're not supposed to?

ANDREW
All the time. That's what makes them interesting. (peering into microscope) I saw Sully earlier. Does he have those headaches often?

MIKE
What headaches? He's never complained of headaches.

ANDREW
It was just a thought. I had a friend once who was acting like Sully...

MIKE
Acting like what?

ANDREW
Going off by himself. Shielding his eyes from the light. Not being able to eat.

A faint bell goes off in Mike's head.

MIKE
He did say he wouldn't come to dinner. (to Andrew) How is it you're so knowledgeable?

ANDREW
(shrugs) I remember hearing what the doctors told my friend. That's all. I think they called it, "megrim." But this is probably not the same thing...

MIKE

Well, he has been acting strangely. And his eyes did seem... pained, now that I think about it. (beat) Oh, dear.

ANDREW

What?

MIKE

Did you see where he was going?

ANDREW

When I left him, he was walking on the road out of town.

MIKE

I'd better find him.

She turns to leave.

EXT. LEAN-TO - DAY FIVE

Mike walks up a path through the woods. She spots Sully's lean-to and quickens her step. She draws closer, closer, then stops.

HER POV:

Sully sprawled in the dirt in front of the lean-to.

BACK TO SCENE:

MIKE

Sully!

She rushes to him and drops beside him on the ground. He's in agony. She takes him in her arms.

HOLD on Mike's face as we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. LEAN-TO DAY FIVE

Mike is beside Sully on the ground. He MOANS in pain. She places a hand on his forehead.

MIKE
Why didn't you tell me?

SULLY
I thought it was nothin'. It'd pass.

MIKE
But when did the headache start?

SULLY
Couple days ago.

She holds up an instrument to look in his eyes.

MIKE
Let me just check your eyes... (he winces) Has your vision been blurred?

SULLY
Yeah, right before the pain started, like I was tellin' Andrew.

MIKE
You told Andrew?

SULLY
He was askin' me the same things you are.

Mike considers this. Something disturbs her, but she can't quite name it, and then her attention is drawn back to Sully.

SULLY
Said he had a friend who got sick headaches. Is that what I got?

MIKE

I believe so. They're also called "megrim." I'm going to give you strychnia, and vegetable bitters.

SULLY

I don't want to bother ya.

MIKE

You could never be a bother.

SULLY

Just leave me be.

MIKE

No...

SULLY

Please.

MIKE

Did you leave me, when I was sick with influenza?

SULLY

The clinic...

MIKE

I've closed it...

SULLY

The kids...

MIKE

I told them I might not be back for a few days. I'm staying with you, Sully.

He winces in pain -- it's excruciating. Mike looks frightened. She takes a cloth from her bag, pours alcohol onto it and lays it gently on his forehead, to cool him.

MIKE

This must have been what Cloud Dancing meant. He said it might be an illness. But don't worry. I'm here now...

He grabs her hand and holds onto it.

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY FIVE

Horace is handing Matthew the mail for his family.

MATTHEW

Weddin's comin' right up, huh?

HORACE

Hope it's gonna turn out good.

MATTHEW

Gettin' nervous?

HORACE

No, it just... worries me a little.

MATTHEW

Why's that?

HORACE

Well ' we're not what you call fancy folk. And the weddin's gettin' to be a big fancy thing. Grace is makin' that poison soup. And rabbit -- I can't eat rabbit. I get sick.

MATTHEW

(trying to be light) Well, if you do, Dr. Mike'll be there. (sees Horace's distress) Just kiddin'.

HORACE

I wish we could just have meatloaf. Everyone in town likes it.

MATTHEW

Tell Grace.

HORACE

I don't wanna hurt her feelin's.

MATTHEW

I'll tell her, all right?

HORACE
Would ya?

MATTHEW
I'm sure she'll cook whatever you want. Don't worry.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. GRACE'S CAFE - DAY FIVE

Grace is standing with Matthew.

GRACE
Meat loaf! Are you crazy?

MATTHEW
But that's what Horace wants.

GRACE
And he can have it every week. But he might never get another chance to have lapin etouffe. I guarantee -- he's gonna love it.

Matthew opens his mouth to argue, but Grace stops him.

GRACE
Ya gotta leave this to me. I know food.

EXT. WOODS - DAY SIX

Andrew is out with his knapsack. He stops by a cliff, looks at striations in the rock. Then walks on, but after a few beats, stops.

HIS POV - THE LEAN-TO

Mike sits with Sully, wiping his brow with a damp cloth.

BACK TO SCENE

Andrew decides not to disturb them, but stands there watching.

EXT. LEAN-TO - DAY SIX

MIKE
It's not any better?

SULLY
No. Feels like a spike's borin' into my head.

MIKE
The strychnia should have worked by now. (thinks a moment) I'm going to collect willow bark. (kisses his hand) I won't be long.

EXT. WILLOW TREE - DAY SIX

Mike is stripping bark off the tree. She's been out with Sully overnight, and her hair and clothes are slightly disheveled.

ANGLE
Andrew watches her, impressed by her determination and skill.

EXT. GENERAL STORE DAY SIX

Hank is going into the store, as Myra comes out. They meet on the steps.

MYRA
Hey, Hank. I been meanin' to talk to ya.

HANK
What about?

MYRA
My weddin'. I'm invitin' ya.

HANK
Don't ask me to come.

MYRA
You're as close to family as I got here.

HANK
I can't do it, Myra.

He moves past her into the store. Myra starts to walk down the street, when Colleen, holding a bunch of wild flowers, intercepts her.

COLLEEN

Myra, look what I found. When I come down the aisle, I can toss 'em all around, so you'll be walkin' an a carpet of flowers.

MYRA

(distracted) That's real nice.

COLLEEN

If you don't like 'em...

MYRA

No. They're fine.

COLLEEN

Somethin' troublin' ya?

MYRA

Guess I'm gettin' jittery. I just want things to be perfect.

COLLEEN

I would too, if I was gettin' married. And they will be, Myra.

MYRA

You like that dress of Dorothy's?

COLLEEN

Sure. Why?

MYRA

It's got such a high neck. Every bit of my body's covered up. It don't feel like me.

COLLEEN

Well, what do you wanna wear?

MYRA

The girls at the saloon been sewin' a dress. It's pink -- my favorite color. And it's got a real pretty neckline, not as high.

COLLEEN

Then wear that one.

MYRA

But I don't want to be rude to Miss Dorothy.

COLLEEN

She won't mind. I know it. (Myra looks doubtful) I'll talk to her.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY SIX

Colleen's with Dorothy, who's stitching a hem on the dress.

DOROTHY

Of course she's gonna wear this dress! There's nothin' prettier in the whole county. And I already fixed it.

COLLEEN

She doesn't think it's right for her.

DOROTHY

Well, she's wrong. She can't wear nothin' pink. This is her wedding day.

Colleen realizes, she's up against a brick wall.

EXT. LEAN-TO DAY SIX

Mike is brewing tea from willow bark. Sully lies on his side, still in pain.

MIKE

The tea will ease the pain. Cloud Dancing always uses it.

SULLY

(dreamy) Wonder where he is right now.

MIKE

Probably half-way to the Black Hills.

SULLY

I keep thinkin' of things I wanna say to him...

MIKE

I know. So do I.

Mike starts to pour the tea.

SULLY

Now he's gone.

Mike holds the cup of tea to his lips. Then puts it down, and has him lie with his head in her lap. She strokes his forehead, and thinks about the loss he's feeling.

ANGLE - WOODS

Andrew has followed Mike to the lean-to. He watches her, and is struck by the tenderness and love Mike shows for Sully. He turns away, and walks back to town.

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY SIX

Colleen and Matthew have come to report to Horace and Myra about the wedding plans.

MATTHEW

I'm... ah... afraid Grace already ordered the fixin's for the dinner.

COLLEEN

And Dorothy's dress is real pretty. You can wear the pink one on another day.

MYRA

But this is the most important day of my life.

HORACE

Myra, honey, you're gonna look, beautiful, no matter what ya wear. Let's just go along...

MYRA

Who's weddin' is it, anyway?

HORACE

Ours.

MYRA

Then why shouldn't we have it the way we like? I don't want to wear Dorothy's dress. I want a new one, for my new life. And you can't eat rabbit. Not to mention no poison soup.

HORACE

But I don't want to cause trouble.

MYRA

Fine. Let's run off and do it quiet, all by ourselves.

HORACE

No, that'll look like we're ashamed. I want to get married with everyone there. And the whole town's countin' on it. They all been workin' hard. Don't you care... ?

MYRA

Don't you care 'bout how I feel? Nobody seems to care 'bout how I feel. Maybe we oughta call the whole thing off!

She runs out. Matthew and Colleen look at Horace.

EXT. LEAN-TO - NIGHT SIX

Mike is trying to sleep, lying next to Sully, but he starts to thrash and MOAN in pain.

MIKE

Sully...

SULLY

I can't sleep. The pain... I never felt nothin' like this.

MIKE

I wish I knew what to do. The bark isn't working. (looks away) What would Cloud Dancing do if he were here?

SULLY

(moans) That's just it. He's not.

Mike stands and walks back and forth. Then she stops, turns to Sully.

MIKE

I know what he would say.

SULLY
What?

MIKE
Something's out of balance. We need to heal the whole person.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SWEAT LODGE DAY SEVEN

Sully lies on the ground outside the sweat lodge the Cheyenne have used. Mike is tending the fire, where rocks are heating in the center. She stirs the fire with a stick, and puts the stick down. She looks up at the sky, praying, asking for help. Thinking of Cloud Dancing.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SWEAT LODGE - DAY SEVEN

Sully, barechested, lies on the ground, in pain. Mike walks in, carrying some rocks with a forked stick. She puts the rocks in the pit and pours water on them, creating steam.

MIKE
Can you sit up?

Sully raises himself to a sitting position, takes tobacco from his bag and makes an offering.

SULLY
Grandfather, we ask for your help and guidance in this healing.

He nods at Mike, and she walks out. Sully closes his eyes, and starts to pray, silently.

EXT. SWEAT LODGE DAY SEVEN

Mike tends the fire. Puts up a kettle of water and breaks sage leaves into it, for tea. She looks toward the hut with concern, then back to her tea.

INT. SWEAT LODGE - DAY SEVEN

Sully's lying down again, sweating, very weak. We HEAR faintly at first, the voice of

Cloud Dancing, chanting a prayer. Sully sits up, with difficulty. The chanting grows louder. Sully startles.

ANGLE

There's a burst of light. Cloud Dancing appears in the hut, sitting cross-legged across from Sully. Cloud Dancing reaches for his hand.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY - SEVEN

Cloud Dancing and Sully are sitting in the same position, but in a field. Cloud Dancing indicates where Sully should look.

SULLY'S POV

Mike, wearing something simple and white, comes out of the trees.

BACK TO SCENE

Sully sees Mike, stands and begins to walk toward her. Cloud Dancing moves back and disappears.

ANGLE

Sully and Mike come together in slow motion, and seem to melt into one another's arms.

ANGLE

Slow motion. Sully and Mike are on the grass, rolling about in a sensual, flowing embrace. Freer than they've ever been. And more united.

ANGLE

Mike seems to rise up and away from Sully.

CLOSE ON SULLY

He reaches up for her.

ANGLE

Mike drifts farther away.

ANGLE

Sully gets to his feet, and reaches out to grasp her.

ANGLE

Mike, moving backwards, toward the trees.

ANGLE

Sully starts to move after her, pursuing her.

ANGLE

Mike is moving farther, farther from him.

ANGLE

Sully calls out.

SULLY

Michaela!

He can't see her now. He looks about wildly, frantically.

EXT. SWEAT LODGE

Mike, in her regular clothes, hears Sully call her name. She gets up and goes to the hut, opens the flap and looks in.

MIKE

Sully?

INT. SWEAT LODGE

There's a change in Sully's face. It's free of pain, and focused, determined.

SULLY
Where'd ya go?

MIKE
I've been right here.

Sully is confused -- is she a vision or is she there now?

SULLY
That's really you?

He reaches out, gingerly, to touch her. Sees that she's real.

SULLY
You're not leaving?

MIKE
No.

SULLY
I don't want you to leave.

He holds her more tightly.

SULLY
I want to be with you. I need to be with you. I'll love you all my days.

Mike is struck to the core of her being by the intensity of his words.

MIKE
Sully...

SULLY
Will you marry me?

She looks in his eyes for just a heart beat. Then she answers.

MIKE
Yes.

He pulls her to him and they kiss, with fervor and joy. They're home.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. HOMESTEAD NIGHT SEVEN

The children are scattered about the room. Matthew is playing a game with Brian -- marbles or cards. Colleen is sewing. Mike and Sully stand by the table, feeling a little shy and self-conscious, knowing what they're about to do.

MIKE
Everyone. Come sit down. Sully and I have... something to tell you.

She and Sully exchange a look. Brian and Matthew are still absorbed in their game. Colleen walks over and sits down.

MIKE
Matthew. Brian. Please?

MATTHEW
(looking up) It ain't bad news, is it?

MIKE
No...

BRIAN
What, then?

Mike and Sully look at each other, hesitate.

COLLEEN
(prompting) What'd ya wanna tell us?

SULLY
It's somethin' I wanna... ask ya for.

The children look at him, their interest piqued.

BRIAN
Go 'head.

SULLY
I want to ask your permission... to marry your Ma.

There's a beat of shocked silence, then everyone seems to move and speak at once -- except Colleen. Brian jumps up and runs to hug Mike, then Sully. Matthew reaches for Sully's hand. Colleen sits frozen in her chair, watching.

BRIAN
Are ya kiddin'? We been hopin' you'd get married.

MATTHEW
Hey, thought you'd never get around to it.

BRIAN
I accept.

MATTHEW
Congratulations!

Sully and Mike notice Colleen. Sully goes to her and kneels down beside her.

SULLY
Colleen. Will that be all right with you? (she doesn't answer) Colleen?

She's silent for a moment. Then, as tears start...

COLLEEN
I'm... so happy.

She puts her arms around Sully to hug him, then goes to Mike and hugs her. Everyone else springs back to life.

BRIAN
Where we all gonna live? (to Sully) You gonna move in here?

MIKE

We haven't discussed that yet.

SULLY

I'd like to build us a new place.

Mike looks at him, surprised.

BRIAN

When's the weddin'?

MIKE

We haven't discussed that either.

COLLEEN

You could have a double weddin', with Horace and Myra.

SULLY

That's a little too soon.

MIKE

And we don't want to overshadow Horace and Myra. This is their moment. In fact, let's not tell anyone about it until their wedding's over.

BRIAN

Awww... can't I tell Mr. Bray?

SULLY

Don't tell no one. It's a secret. Promise?

Children look at each other.

BRIAN

Promise.

EXT. STORE - DAY EIGHT

Matthew and INGRID are on the porch of the store, having a private talk.

INGRID

They're getting married?

MATTHEW

Ya can't tell no one.

Door opens and Andrew walks out. Matthew and Ingrid startle.

ANDREW

Hello, Matthew.

MATTHEW

Mr. Strauss. Have you met Ingrid? She's my fiancee.

ANDREW

It's a pleasure to meet you. I can see why Matthew is so enchanted.

He takes both Ingrid's hands in his, as if to kiss them, and notices the engagement ring. It startles him, but he covers his reaction.

ANDREW

What a beautiful ring.

INGRID

It was Dr. Mike's. Her fiance gave it to her. The one... who died.

Matthew gives her a look -- don't say no more.

ANDREW

I couldn't have picked a lovelier one, myself.

MATTHEW

Ya goin' out trackin'?

ANDREW

Not today.

He tips his hat to them and turns to walk off.

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY EIGHT

Mike walks in to send a telegram to her mother. She's glowing, but Horace isn't there. She looks around, then the back door opens and he walks in, looking upset.

MIKE

Horace, there you are. I'd like to send a wire... (he doesn't respond) Horace? Is something wrong?

HORACE

No.

MIKE

You don't look... yourself.

HORACE

Well... it's the weddin'. Myra don't want to wear that dress, but Dorothy's insistin'. Everyone's fussin' and fightin' 'bout the food, 'bout everythin'. Myra wants to call it off.

MIKE

She doesn't mean that.

HORACE

I say we should just go along with things, but Myra's bein' awful stubborn.

MIKE

Horace, this often happens before a wedding. People get nervous and things get out of hand. But it really doesn't matter what you wear, or what you eat. The wedding is just one day -- and you're going to be together all your lives.

HORACE

That's true.

MIKE

All that matters is that you love each other.

HORACE

I gotta go find her. (starts out)

MIKE

Wait. I nearly forgot. I need you to send this to my mother in Boston.

She hands him sheet with message. He scans it.

HORACE

Oh, my gosh! You're en...

MIKE
(cuts him off) Shhh! It's a secret. No one knows yet. So, please...

HORACE
You can count on me. I took a oath!

INT. HOMESTEAD - DAY EIGHT

Mike and the children are making preparations for Horace and Myra's wedding. Matthew's wearing his suit, and Mike is letting down the cuffs. Colleen is decorating a basket with ribbons to carry the flowers. Brian practices walking with the ring on a pillow.

BRIAN
What if I drop the ring?

COLLEEN
Don't.

BRIAN
But what if I do?

MATTHEW
We'll pick it up.

COLLEEN
(to Mike) Myra told me to ask you. She's got somethin' old -- Dorothy's dress, and somethin' new -- her shoes. But she needs somethin' borrowed.

MIKE
I'll find something. (to Matthew) You can take those off now.

Mike goes to open the trunk where she keeps photos and mementos from Boston.

BRIAN
Why does she gotta borrow somethin'?

MIKE
It's good luck. Let's see, I have a lace handkerchief...

As she sorts through her things, she comes across a photo, takes it out and looks at it.

CLOSE SHOT

It's a photo of her fiance, Dr. David Lewis. Clean-shaven, young, well-dressed.

BACK TO SCENE

Mike studies the picture, thinking. Something begins to move and click in her mind. Something strange...

INT. MYRA'S ROOM - CLINIC - DAY EIGHT

Horace has come to the room in the clinic where Myra's staying.

HORACE

I'm sorry, Myra. I just want you to be happy. So let's have the kind of weddin' you want. You can wear the dress you like. I'll eat poison soup. I don't care. And if you wanna run off and elope, that's all right, too.

MYRA

No, no, I think you're right. Folks have been workin' hard, and they got good intentions. I don't want to upset everyone. (beat) Let's just go along and enjoy ourselves.

HORACE

Oh, Myra.

He grabs her hands, overcome with joy.

EXT. TOWN - DAY NINE

It's the wedding day. Mike, Sully and the three kids, all dressed up, ride into town in the wagon. As they pass the saloon, Andrew is there, packing his mule. He beckons to them, and they stop. He walks over.

ANDREW

I'm heading out today. I want to thank you for all your help and kindness.

BRIAN

How come ya gotta go now?

ANDREW

I've finished the work I came here to do.

COLLEEN

But ya never showed us the glaciers.

As they talk, Mike gives Andrew a careful look. Could it be? No. impossible. She must be mistaken.

ANDREW

Next time I come through here, we'll do that. Dr. Quinn?

He shakes her hand.

MIKE

Goodby, Andrew.

ANDREW

Sully.

Andrew tips his hat and turns to go. But Sully calls to him.

SULLY

Wait. Don't leave just now. Come to the weddin' with us.

ANDREW

But I'm already packed...

SULLY

Stay one more day. We might not get to see ya again for a long while.

Andrew looks at Mike, considers: this may be the last time he sees her.

ANDREW

I suppose I could leave in the morning.

INT. MYRA'S ROOM - CLINIC - DAY NINE

Myra is getting dressed for the ceremony. She has Dorothy's gown on, and is fixing her hair. Mike and Colleen are helping her. Colleen hands her bouquet.

COLLEEN

Here's your flowers.

MYRA
Oh, they're so pretty.

MIKE
You look beautiful, Myra.

There's a knock on the door.

MYRA
Come in.

Dorothy walks in, carrying the pink dress made by the saloon girls.

MYRA
Dorothy...

DOROTHY
I got to thinkin'. Pink is really your color.

She hands her the dress. Myra is delighted.

INT. CHURCH - DAY NINE

The whole town is gathered in the church. At the altar, Horace stands with Sully and Matthew, before the Reverend. In the front rows are Loren, Dorothy, Robert E and Grace. But no Hank.

Music starts and everyone falls quiet. First to walk down the aisle is Colleen , tossing flowers.

Then comes Brian, carrying the ring, trying not to spill it and not to giggle.

Then Mike walks down the aisle, looking graceful and aglow.

ANGLE - ANDREW

He watches her, with deep emotions.

BACK TO SCENE

Mike walks to the altar and shares a look with Sully. They have their secret.

Music shifts: the bridal music begins. Jake escorts Myra, in pink, down the aisle. Horace turns toward her, beaming. Everyone murmurs in admiration. She reaches the altar.

REVEREND JOHNSON

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to join this man and this woman in holy matrimony...

INT. SALOON - DAY NINE

The place is deserted. Hank sits a by himself, drinking. He stands and paces about the empty room.

INT. CHURCH - DAY NINE

REVEREND JOHNSON

If any of you can show just cause why they may not lawfully be married, speak now...

DOOR OPENS, noisily. People crane their heads to look.

ANGLE - HANK

He walks in the door and stands, staring at the altar.

REVEREND JOHNSON (V.O.) ... or forever hold your peace.

BACK TO SCENE

Myra and Horace exchange a nervous look. Room is silent. Hank doesn't move. Then he makes a gesture of greeting toward Myra, and takes a seat in back. Everyone seems to sigh with relief. Myra smiles.

REVEREND JOHNSON

By the power invested in me, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

Horace kisses Myra, as everyone cheers.

EXT. GRACE'S CAFE - DAY NINE

The wedding party is in full swing. People sit at tables, eating and drinking. A band PLAYS, and people dance. Children run about. Hank watches from the sidelines.

At the head table, Horace and Myra sit with the Reverend, Dorothy, Loren and Jake. The punch flows, and Horace is getting tipsy. Grace comes up, carrying a plate with a silver cover. She sets it in front of Horace and, with a flourish, lifts the cover. It's meat loaf.

GRACE
Surprise!

HORACE
Oh, Grace!

Horace plants a kiss on Grace. Everyone laughs.

HORACE
You're the best cook in the whole world.

GRACE
(to Myra) What would you like? Lapin etouffe, or meat loaf extraordinaire?

MYRA
The rabbit.

Others at the table pipe up: "Rabbit!" or "Meat loaf!"

LOREN
And more punch for everyone!

ANGLE
Mike sits between Sully and Andrew, at a table with Brian, Colleen, Matthew, Ingrid, and Robert E. She turns to Andrew.

MIKE
What do you think of our town?

ANDREW
Wonderful. (smiles) Though it's not the destiny you were raised for, I imagine?

MIKE
(smiles back) No. But it's home.

ANDREW

And it suits you.

ANGLE

Grace walks up to the head table with the wedding cake and sets it down. People start yelling, "Speech."

Horace stands up. Myra does also, holding onto Horace to steady him.

HORACE

This is the happiest day of my life. I hope every one of you will find your true love, and be as happy as we are!

Everyone CHEERS.

HORACE

And I hope we'll be back here for lots more weddin's. We already got a few comin' up. Matthew and Ingrid.

Ingrid blushes. Matthew draws her to him and kisses her.

HORACE

Dr. Mike and Sully.

The place falls quiet. People turn to Mike and Sully.

HORACE

Oh, my gosh... I wasn't s'posed to say. It's a secret.

ANGLE - MIKE'S TABLE

Robert E turns to Mike and Sully.

ROBERT E

You gettin' married?

DOROTHY

(rushing up) Is that true?

Mike and Sully look at each other.

SULLY
It's true.

Dorothy hugs Mike. Robert E slaps Sully. Others rush up to congratulate them.

CLOSE ON ANDREW

The news is like a body blow. But he covers his reaction. He stands and raises his glass.

ANDREW

This calls for a toast. (to Mike and Sully) "May your love be like a red, red rose, that's newly sprung in June."

LOREN
To love!

DOROTHY
To Mike and Sully!

JAKE
To all the newlyweds!

Everyone **APPLAUDS** and **CHEERS**. Andrew puts down his glass and walks out of the cafe.

CLOSE ON MIKE

She's been smiling, but now she freezes. She looks at Andrew, walking away. She goes white with shock.

She stands, and begins to walk after Andrew. Then quickens her step until she's running. Sully rises and starts to follow her. The other guests continue making merry.

EXT. SALOON - DAY NINE

Andrew is walking up the steps when Mike runs up behind him.

MIKE
Wait. Wait!

He turns and sees her. Stops, watching them. Sully comes around the corner but stops,

watching them.

MIKE
Look at me.

She reaches up and runs her hand over his face. He tries to turn away.

MIKE
Look in my eyes.

He meets her gaze.

MIKE
You're not Andrew Strauss.

ANDREW
Of course I am.

CLOSE ON SULLY

He watches, confused.

ON MIKE AND ANDREW

MIKE
You're David.

HOLD ON MIKE, as we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

Part II

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SALOON - DAY NINE

MIKE stands with DAVID. SULLY watches from a distance. In b.g., we HEAR sounds from Horace and Myra's wedding party.

DAVID

You're mistaken. I'm Andrew Strauss, from Philadelphia...

MIKE

I'm not mistaken. Your face is changed, and your voice... But your hands. (takes his hand) I remember your hands. I watched them for so many hours, in surgery.

DAVID

Would you like to see my papers?

MIKE

That's why you knew about Sully's megrim. You were always brilliant at diagnosing.

DAVID

It was a guess. A mere guess. I'm flattered that I remind you of someone you admired, but...

CLOSE ON SULLY

Watching, with rising concern.

BACK TO SCENE

MIKE

The toast you just made -- that's the toast you made at our engagement party. We were in the ballroom of your parents' house. My father stood beside us. You looked into my eyes and held my hand as you recited , "O, my luve..."

DAVID

Robert Burns is often recited at weddings.

MIKE

Why do you deny it!

DAVID

(politely but firmly) Because it is not so. The man you speak of is dead.

Mike stops, pulls herself back. Looks at him and nods.

MIKE

Perhaps you're right. I'm mistaken. (looks in his eyes) The David I knew would never lie to me.

They stare at each other. Finally, David capitulates. He can't lie to her anymore.

DAVID

Michaela... I'm sorry. (takes her arm) Let's sit down.

Mike looks like she might faint. David leads her toward a chair.

CLOSE ON SULLY

He's astonished. He considers what to do. Makes a move to approach them, but then stops, turns and walks back to the party.

EXT. GRACE'S CAFE - DAY NINE

ROBERT E is holding a white horse harnessed to the carriage for **HORACE** and **MYRA**. **COLLEEN**, **BRIAN**, **MATTHEW** and **INGRID** are tying shoes, tin cans and noise makers onto the carriage. **DOROTHY** is there, too.

BRIAN

Here they come!

Horace escorts Myra to the carriage, with the others following along.

MYRA

I just love that white horse. Robert E, I can't thank you enough for gettin' it.

ROBERT E

You're the princess today. And ya oughta ride off with a white horse.

Horace climbs in, then helps her up.

COLLEEN

You gonna toss the bouquet now?

MYRA

Where's Dr. Mike?

BRIAN
I don't know. She went off somewhere...

MYRA
I want her to catch it...

But people start calling for her to toss the bouquet. Myra, Horace and the three kids look about for Mike.

DOROTHY
Toss the bouquet!

HORACE
(looks around) I don't see her nowhere,

MATTHEW
She and Sully mighta slipped away.

COLLEEN
Maybe ya oughta go ahead...

MYRA
(to Horace) What do ya think?

HORACE
Sure.

She stands up on the seat, looks around at the crowd, then turns her back and tosses it over her shoulder -- to Ingrid. Everyone CHEERS.

EXT. SALOON PORCH - DAY NINE

Mike is in shock, trying to make sense of what's happening. She and David sit in chairs close together.

MIKE
It's really you, then? You didn't die?

DAVID
No.

MIKE
I can't... grasp this.

DAVID
It's a shock...

MIKE
(with wonder) David, do you know how many times I prayed... that I might see you, just once more? Now you're here. You're really alive.

She puts her arms around him with joy, and he clutches her tightly.

DAVID
I longed to see you as well. I've written you so many letters...

MIKE
I never got them.

DAVID
I never sent them.

MIKE
But why?

DAVID
I'll tell you everything... in time.

MIKE
But I want to know now. Where have you been these... what is it? Seven years? We were told you were killed at Bull Run.

DAVID
I was left for dead. The hospital tent where I was working got struck by cannon fire. I was hit in the legs, the neck. My face...

Mike looks at him, pained to hear this.

DAVID
Some farmers took me in and nursed me, but then I was captured, and shuffled from prison camp to prison camp, until I landed at Andersonville.

MIKE

Oh my God. Andersonville!

DAVID

(matter of fact) You have no idea what it was like. One of every three prisoners who came there died. And those who didn't looked like corpses, with sunken eyes, blackened faces, skin falling off from disease. We were given nothing but rancid meat and brackish water. When the war ended, I was too weak to walk or even move.

MIKE

If I'd only known, I would have come.

DAVID

I was barely conscious. And when I began to recover my senses, I knew that I would never walk again. I was half blind, crippled... I couldn't speak.

MIKE

But why didn't you send word?

DAVID

(steels himself for what he's about to reveal) I learned that I'd been reported dead. You, my family, everyone had been notified. You'd already buried what you thought were my remains. And I decided... it was better to let it be.

MIKE

But you had no right.

DAVID

You were young, and beautiful. I didn't want you saddled with a helpless invalid.

MIKE

You should have let me decide. I wouldn't have cared, as long as you were alive!

DAVID

That's just it. I knew you would have insisted on going ahead with the marriage, but it would have been from pity.

MIKE

How can you say that? Do you think my love was that shallow? I would never have pitied you. I loved your mind, your spirit...

DAVID

I wanted to spare you pain.

MIKE

Pain! I stood at your grave and felt such emptiness, I wanted to die with you. You can't imagine how I suffered, thinking I would never see you again.

DAVID

But I knew that pain would pass, as opposed to endless years of burden.

MIKE

It never passed.

DAVID

I wanted you to go on with your life, Michaela. And you have. It's a good life.

MIKE

Then why did you come back now?

David begins to pace.

DAVID

This is the strange part. I was told I could never move my legs again. But after a few years, the feeling returned. And I started to walk. I wasn't a cripple anymore.

Mike watches him intently.

DAVID

And all that time, I could never stop thinking about you. I know I made a mistake. A grievous one. That's partly why I came here...

MIKE

But why did you pretend to be someone else?

DAVID

I didn't want to intrude -- if you were happy. Michaela, please believe me, what I did, I did from love. I'm sorry for the injury I caused you. And I ask your forgiveness, if you could ever find it in your heart...

MIKE

David, of course I forgive you. All that matters is... you're alive.

She hugs him, closes her eyes, and as they embrace, she's overcome by a flood of emotions.

Suddenly, we HEAR noise -- of a wagon and people, talking and laughing. Mike opens her eyes and looks over David's shoulder.

HER POV

The carriage with Myra and Horace comes around the corner from the livery. Townsfolk follow along, including the three kids, Ingrid, Dorothy, Grace, Robert E, Loren, Jake, the Reverend and, keeping off to the side, Sully. While the others have their attention on Horace and Myra, Sully looks to the saloon, and meets Mike's eyes.

BACK TO SCENE

Mike disengages from Andrew, straightens her hair.

MIKE

I must go.

EXT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY NINE

The carriage draws up to the telegraph office. Horace helps Myra down, then picks her up and carries her over the threshold into the office and through it, to their room. Crowd CHEERS and throws rice. Mike walks up to join the children, and Sully, standing just apart. Colleen spots her.

COLLEEN

There you are!

BRIAN

Ma! Can we stay for the shivaree?

MIKE

I don't think so.

COLLEEN

Please. We're the ones who fixed the carriage.

MIKE

But it's not until the middle of the night.

COLLEEN

Miss Dorothy said she'd look after us.

MATTHEW

I'm stayin'.

MIKE

I'd rather you come home with us now.

She starts walking toward their wagon, parked outside the clinic.

MATTHEW

But I can get back on my own.

MIKE

Matthew, please, come along. Besides, I don't entirely approve of shivaree. I think it's unkind.

Disappointed, the kids follow her to the wagon.

CLOSE ON MIKE AND SULLY

He helps her up. Their eyes meet, but they can't speak now.

MIKE

Thank you.

Sully starts the horse and they drive off.

EXT. ROAD - DAY NINE

They drive toward home.

BRIAN

Where'd you go off to, Ma?

COLLEEN

Myra wanted to throw you the bouquet.

MIKE

Who caught it?

MATTHEW
Ingrid.

MIKE
But that's perfect.

COLLEEN
Where'd ya disappear to? We looked for ya everywhere.

MIKE
I was speaking with... Mr. Strauss.

Mike shoots a look at Sully, then changes subject.

MIKE
What else happened at the party?

COLLEEN
Horace had too much punch.

MATTHEW
That's why he blurted out the news.

COLLEEN
Now the whole town's got weddin' fever. Everyone was asking about you two.

BRIAN
Are you gonna get married here, or in Boston?

MIKE
I don't... think we'd go to Boston.

MATTHEW
I'd like to get married in the countryside. Some place pretty. What about you, Sully?

SULLY
(after a beat) Don't matter to me.

They ride on in silence.

INT. HORACE'S ROOM - NIGHT NINE

Horace and Myra are in his room behind the telegraph office. It's spartan, with a single bed, chair and night stand. There's a screen, with a basin behind it.

Myra's in the bed, wearing a fancy night dress and robe, brushing her hair. Her pink wedding dress is on the chair. Horace is behind the screen changing out of his wedding clothes. We HEAR a moan from behind the screen.

MYRA
Horace, you all right? (another moan) Horace?

ANGLE - BEHIND SCREEN

Horace stands at the basin with his shirt off. He's been sick, from the punch. We don't actually see this, but we can tell from his face.

HORACE
Yeah.

MYRA (O.S.)
Can I help ya?

HORACE
No. I'm all right.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT NINE

Myra starts tamping down the oil lamps, lighting candles. Then she fluffs the pillow on the bed and gets back in.

MYRA
Horace? Ya comin' out? (beat) I miss ya.

HORACE
I'll be there in a minute.

Then Horace walks out, wearing a red night shirt, a sleeping cap and socks. Myra stifles a laugh.

MYRA

Hey, there.

HORACE

You comfortable? Do you want some water?

MYRA

No, thanks. I'm fine. (awkward silence) I like your hat.

HORACE

My ma knit it. Says it keeps off the chill.

MYRA

I heard that's true.

She starts to take off her robe, and, instinctively, Horace looks away.

MYRA

Feelin' sleepy?

HORACE

No. Ain't ya cold?

MYRA

A little. Wanna come sit by me?

HORACE

I... I... think we oughta say our prayers.

MYRA

(surprised) Prayers? All right.

Horace gets down on his knees beside the bed. He looks at Myra. She gets down beside him.

HORACE

Thank you, Lord, for givin' us our weddin' day. It was worth all the waitin'. And I pray you'll help me be a good husband, and let me always love and take good care of... (with emotion) ...my wife.

MYRA

Amen.

HORACE

You're my wife now.

MYRA

I am.

She rises, reaches for his hand.

MYRA

Come to sleep. (he hesitates) Don't be nervous.

HORACE

It's just... I ain't never done this.

MYRA

Oh, don't worry, I had a lot of fellas like tha... I mean, there's nothin' to fret about.

She stops herself, embarrassed. She can't look at him now. Horace sits down beside her on the bed.

HORACE

I don't want to disappoint ya.

MYRA

You could never disappoint me. I love you, and I'm gonna love you the rest of my days.

He reaches for her, tips his head down to kiss her when...

There's a burst of NOISE from outside -- fire crackers, screaming, pots and pans banging. Myra and Horace nearly jump out of their skins. Horace runs to the door and looks out, through the office, to the street. Myra comes up behind and peeks around him.

THEIR POV

In the street, the townsfolk are gathered for a frontier shivaree -- where they make as much NOISE as they can to celebrate the wedding night. Robert E has brought the carriage up, and a group of people shake it, so the noisemakers clatter.

HANK shoots off fire crackers, as do JAKE and LOREN. Dorothy bangs on a cowbell. GRACE hits tin pans together. Others blow whistles, play fiddles, shout and laugh.

INT. HORACE'S ROOM

Horace and Myra are huddled on the bed, covering their ears from the deafening NOISE. The furniture is shaking from the noisy vibrations. Their intimate moment is shattered.

EXT. HOMESTEAD PORCH - NIGHT NINE

Sully is waiting outside, while Mike puts the kids to bed. He looks off at the trees, paces.

Door opens. Mike walks out and goes to him, searching for words to begin.

MIKE
Sully, the most extraordinary thing has happened.

SULLY
I know.

MIKE
(surprised) You know?

SULLY
I heard you before, outside the saloon. You and...

MIKE
David.

Sully nods, looks at her.

SULLY
Ya wanna talk about it?

MIKE.
I hardly know what to say. It's such a shock.

SULLY
Ya glad to see him?

MIKE
Glad? Yes, I'm glad. I'm thrilled he's alive. And I'm upset that he deceived me all these years. And I'm... frightened. (turns to Sully) What are we going to do?

Sully searches her face.

SULLY
What do ya wanna do?

HOLD ON MIKE, as she wonders this, herself.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

HOMESTEAD - DAY TEN

Mike is trying to explain to the children about David.

BRIAN
I don't get what you're sayin'.

COLLEEN
Andrew is David?

MIKE
As I said, David was horribly injured. His body was so crippled and disfigured that he didn't want to come home. So he took on another man's name.

BRIAN
What are we supposed to call him now? David or Andrew?

MATTHEW
And who's Andrew Strauss?

MIKE
Another prisoner at the camp. They served together, and he died in David's arms.

COLLEEN
But... whets this all mean?

MATTHEW
What about Sully?

COLLEEN
Are you and David still engaged?

MIKE
Well, technically, I suppose we are. It was never broken off.

COLLEEN
If he hadn't died, or said he died, would you have married him?

MIKE
Yes, I'm sure I would have.

BRIAN
So are you gonna get married to him now? Will he be our Pa?

COLLEEN
Our pa?!

MATTHEW
Do ya want me to get your ring back?

MIKE
Hold on, now. I gave it to you. It belongs to you and Ingrid.

BRIAN
But I thought you and Sully were engaged.

MIKE
We are.

COLLEEN
So... You're engaged to two men?

CLOSE ON MIKE.

She's flummoxed.

INT. DAVID'S ROOM - DAY TEN

Mike has come to see David. She knocks -- he opens the door. She comes in.

MIKE
I wanted to see you again, in the daylight. I still can't believe it's true.

DAVID
I know. I didn't sleep at all.

MIKE
The children were asking all sorts of questions...

DAVID
Michaela, I never meant to disturb your life here. Once I saw that you were happily settled with a practice, a fiance, a family -- I packed my things to leave.

MIKE
I'm very glad you didn't.

DAVID
But I think... maybe it's best if I leave now.

MIKE
How could you suggest that?

DAVID
I'm afraid my presence will only cause greater pain.

MIKE
Why don't you let me decide that, please?

DAVID
Michaela...

MIKE
You can't show up after seven years of being thought dead and walk away again. There's so much I want to know. So much I want to tell you. Please, stay for a while longer.
(beat) I think you owe me that.

David is touched that she wants him to stay. He relents.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY TEN

Colleen, Brian and Matthew are shopping for supplies. Loren, Dorothy, Grace, Jake and the REVEREND are there also. The children have just informed them of Mike's predicament.

LOREN
Engaged to two men!

JAKE
(to Reverend) Ya hear that? Dr. Quinn's a... what do you call it? A... bigamist.

REVEREND JOHNSON
No, that's when you're *married* to two people.

GRACE
So what's she gonna do?

COLLEEN
She's not sayin'.

MATTHEW
I don't think she knows.

LOREN
Well, this fella Andrew...

BRIAN
David.

LOREN
Whatever his name is. She was engaged to him first, so he's got the prior claim.

GRACE
But that was seven years ago. I'd say it expired.

DOROTHY
He let her think he was dead. That's the same as breakin' it off. I think she's a free woman.

GRACE
Besides, she loves Sully.

REVEREND JOHNSON

But she loved this David, too. Probably still does.

DOROTHY

People change in seven years. No tellin' what the war did to him. Look what it did to my boy.

JAKE

What's Sully say 'bout this? If it was me, I'd run that flowerpickin' jackass right outta town.

LOREN

But a promise is a promise. This fella was off riskin' his life for his country. A woman oughta wait for a man...

DOROTHY

Even if he's dead?

LOREN

But he wasn't.

MATTHEW

Stop it! (people fall quiet) This ain't none of your business. They're gonna work it out among 'em, somehow. So let 'em be.

Door opens. Myra walks in, carrying a box with Dorothy's dress in it. People try to go back to their business.

LOREN

Well, good mornin', *Mrs. Bing*.

MYRA

Mornin', Mr. Bray.

LOREN

(poking Jake) Ya sleep good last night?

MYRA

Why, sure.

JAKE

She's lyin'.

She walks up to Dorothy, hands her box.

MYRA
Here's your dress. Thanks for what ya did.

DOROTHY
You looked beautiful, Myra. (draws closer) How'd everythin' go?

MYRA
Fine. Just fine.

But Dorothy senses this isn't so.

MYRA
Well, I better be gettin' back.

She turns and walks out.

INT. CABIN - DAY TEN

Mike is examining a nine-year-old girl, ELSIE, who's in bed with a fever. Her MOTHER stands nearby, as does David. Mike looks at the girl's arm -- there's a few red spots.

MIKE
(to mother) She has chicken pox. There's no need to worry. It's not serious, but your other children will probably come down with it in... let's see, the incubation period is...

DAVID
Five days.

MIKE
So keep her in bed, give her quinine for the fever. (to Elsie) And try not to scratch.

Elsie nods. Mike rises to go.

MOTHER
I'm real grateful. We ain't got no money right now , but would ya take a side of mutton?

MIKE

That'll be fine.

David gives her an amused look.

EXT. CABIN - DAY TEN

Mike and David drive away in her wagon. Mike drives.

MIKE
Don't you miss practicing medicine?

DAVID
No, I couldn't go back to it after the war, after Andersonville.

MIKE
Why was that?

DAVID
I couldn't bear to see more suffering. I'd seen enough.

MIKE
But you had such talent, David.

DAVID
All my talents were useless, in the camp. I saw men I could have cured with simple things, like clean water, and I couldn't get any. Can you imagine what it's like to watch people suffer and die, hour after hour, knowing you could help them and being powerless to do it?

MIKE
But that was an extreme situation...

DAVID
I was sickened by what humans could do to humans. And it wasn't just the enemy. Our own men beat and killed for a shoelace. So I retreated. I went to the mountains, to nature, for solace.

MIKE
I can understand that.

DAVID

Things in nature are fair and clean. When it rains, it rains on everyone. There's nothing personal. Animals only kill what they need to survive. They don't kill for sport. (looks at Mike) Or principle.

They ride in silence a moment.

DAVID
And you, Michaela. Are you happy?

MIKE
About many things, yes.

DAVID
(light) I never saw you as a mother.

MIKE
I was the most unlikely person to adopt three children, but now, I can't bear to be without them. I want you to know them, David. Would you come to supper?

DAVID
It wouldn't be awkward?

MIKE
No. They've heard so much about you. They want to know you too.

David smiles at her, as they drive on.

INT. CLINIC - DAY TEN

Colleen's taking care of business at the clinic while Mike is off on rounds. Sully walks in.

COLLEEN
Hey, Sully.

SULLY
Colleen. Dr. Mike's not here?

COLLEEN
She's out doin' rounds.

SULLY

Oh, that's right.

COLLEEN
He went with her.

SULLY
Guess they got a lot to catch up on.

COLLEEN
I don't think it's fair, him dropping back in on her after all this time.

SULLY
Lot of things ain't fair.

COLLEEN
I just want him to go away.

SULLY
I expect he will, after a time.

COLLEEN
You're supposed to be our pa.

Sully puts his arm around her to comfort her.

SULLY
Things'll work out. Ya just gotta trust that.

But she doesn't look reassured. Neither does Sully.

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY TEN

Jake, Loren and the Reverend come into the office to see Horace, who's looking crestfallen.

JAKE
Horace, how's the groom doin' today?

LOREN
You a changed man?

HORACE
I'm busy right now...

JAKE
Did ya like our serenadin'? Cause we could come back again tonight...

HORACE
Don't you dare.

REVEREND JOHNSON
We didn't mean any harm, Horace. It's just a custom -- for havin' a little fun with newlyweds.

HORACE
It couldn't a come at a worse time. We'd just finished prayin'...

JAKE
Prayin'!

REVEREND JOHNSON
I applaud that.

HORACE
We was startin' to feel real nice and lovin' and then -- that noise started up.

Loren laughs.

HORACE
Wasn't funny. I plum lost the mood.

JAKE
You'll get it again.

HORACE
You ever lose the mood?

JAKE
Me? Never.

LOREN
I never did neither.

REVEREND JOHNSON

Horace, if I could have a word with you? (to Loren and Jake) Some business we have to attend to.

Loren and Jake look at each other, shrug and leave the office.

REVEREND JOHNSON

I just want to tell you, (looks to make sure they're alone) All men lose their moods some time.

HORACE

Really?

REVEREND JOHNSON

They just don't let on about it.

HORACE

So... what do I do?

REVEREND JOHNSON

Don't think about it too much. But next time the mood is there, let me give you some advice. Don't wait. Act.

HORACE

(considers this) Thank you, Reverend.

INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT TEN

David is sitting at the dinner table with Mike and the kids. There's tension in the air. The kids are cool to him.

DAVID

What do you like to do, Brian?

BRIAN

I don't know.

MIKE

He likes fishing.

DAVID

With worms?

BRIAN

If I can find 'em.

DAVID

I could help you with that. I've spent a lot of time watching worms.

COLLEEN

Sounds boring.

DAVID

Actually, it's quite interesting. Worms keep the ground airy and fertile. Did you know that every inch of the earth's surface has passed through the body of a worm?

COLLEEN

Never thought about it.

David's charm and enthusiasm aren't working tonight. There's a knock on the door, and then it opens. It's Sully, who's surprised to see David there, sitting in his place. The children all greet him with excitement.

MATTHEW

Sully!

SULLY

Hope I'm not interruptin'.

MIKE

Not at all. Would you like some supper?

DAVID

(stands) Please, join us.

BRIAN

(to David) Ya gotta move. That's Sully's seat.

MIKE

Brian, that's rude.

BRIAN

But it is.

David starts to move, but Sully stops him.

SULLY

Don't bother. I ain't hungry.

MIKE

Please, Sully, I'd like you to stay.

DAVID

So would the children...

SULLY

They can talk for themselves.

DAVID

Sorry. But there's no reason we can't be civil.

SULLY

Civil? Ya lied to me, *Andrew*. Ya lied to all of us. You call that civil?

DAVID

I regret that. But I had reason...

SULLY

If you had any honor, ya woulda told us who you were from the start. 'Stead of lettin' us take ya in as a friend, while you were pryin'...

DAVID

I did what I thought was best. I know you're angry, but I have as much right to be here as you. Michaela and I...

SULLY

I heard enough.

Sully starts out.

MIKE

Sully, don't go.

DAVID
Wait.

Sully keeps going. David is on his feet and puts an arm on Sully to stop him.

SULLY
Take your hands off me.

Sully whirls around and knocks David's arm off, pushing him against the wall. They begin to scuffle.

MIKE
Stop. Please. Stop it.

Matthew gets between them.

MATTHEW
Easy. Come on. Take it easy, all right?

They pull apart and stand, glaring at each other. David turns to Mike.

DAVID
Michaela, I told you I didn't want to cause more pain. But I find that my feelings for you are as strong as ever. Can you tell me that you have no feelings for me now? Because if you can, I'll leave tomorrow.

Everyone looks at Mike, waiting to hear what she'll say. Sully watches her intently. Mike looks at Sully, at David, at the children. Then turns to David.

MIKE
Don't leave.

Sully reaches for the door.

MIKE
Sully! This has all been so sudden. I need time to think. We all need time to think...

SULLY
'Bout what? Our engagement's off.

MIKE

I didn't say that.

SULLY

Yeah, ya did. Just now.

He goes out and closes the door. HOLD ON MIKE, as we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. GRACE'S CAFE - DAY ELEVEN

Dorothy is sitting at a table by herself, writing on a pad, when Mike walks up. Grace is in b.g., preparing strawberries for canning.

MIKE

Dorothy, may I speak with you a moment?

DOROTHY

(startles) Michaela, sit down. I was just writin' my story 'bout the weddin'.

MIKE

(alarmed) Wedding?

DOROTHY

Horace and Myra's.

MIKE

(relieved) Oh, yes.

DOROTHY

(reading her) I wouldn't be writin' 'bout yours. Not now.

MIKE

Oh, Dorothy...

DOROTHY

It's gotta be so unsettlin' for ya.

MIKE

It is.

DOROTHY

Some folks'd envy ya, havin' two men wantin' to marry ya. But I know what it's like to be in the middle. Ya got no peace.

MIKE

And yet, I used to wish for this. It was always on my mind -- what if David hadn't died?

DOROTHY

Are ya sure it's him you were wishin' for?

MIKE

What do you mean?

DOROTHY

Sometimes your mind plays tricks on ya. Ya remember all the good things, and the rough spots sorta fade away. Until it's not the person anymore, it's this rosy memory.

MIKE

He was my first love. The first man I kissed.

DOROTHY

Ya never forget the first.

MIKE

We come from the same world. When I'm with him, my mind moves more quickly. We can talk about things I could never share with Sully. (beat) And yet, Sully knows me in a way David never has. Sully stirs something in me, something I can hardly put into words.

DOROTHY

(penetrating) Does David?

MIKE

(looks down, then meets Dorothy's eyes) Yes.

DOROTHY

I see.

MIKE

I can't imagine life without Sully, and yet, I can't bear to let David go, either. What am I to do?

DOROTHY

I guess ya gotta take some time, and decide. (Mike nods) But don't wait too long.

HOLD ON MIKE, as she considers this.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY ELEVEN

Parents are gathered outside the school for a Spring concert. The Reverend has the children line up, including Brian and Colleen. Mike sits on a blanket. Brian runs over.

BRIAN

Where's Sully?

MIKE

I don't know.

BRIAN

But he promised he'd be here.

MIKE

You better join your class.

Brian goes back to the group. Mike looks around, nervously.

REVEREND

Welcome to our spring concert. For our first number we're gonna do, "Sweet Betsy from Pike."

He raises his arm to direct the children, and they start the song. Sully comes up to where Mike is sitting. She motions him to sit down. They listen for a few beats. Then they start to speak softly, under the SINGING.

MIKE

Sully, I'm sorry. I never wanted to hurt you, and it pains me that I have. I don't want to break things off. I didn't plan this...

SULLY

I know. You had no say 'bout him showin' up.

Sully waves to Brian, who breaks into a smile.

SULLY

But ya got a say in what happens now.

MIKE

I just need time...

SULLY

I think it's time ya let go of the past. Like ya told me to do, with Abigail.

MIKE

That was different. Abigail was a memory.

SULLY

So is David.

The children have finished their song. Everyone APPLAUDS, including Sully and Mike, who smile and nod at the kids. They start another song, "Down by the Riverside."

SULLY

That man's not the same man he was then.

MIKE

I know that.

SULLY

What you and I got is somethin' that's real. Somethin' we been buildin'. I asked ya to marry me, and you said, yes. Maybe that scares you, so you want to go back...

They both talk at once.

MIKE

No, that's not it...

SULLY

... to a time when you were younger, and full 'a dreams and David was part of 'em. But you'll never get back what you lost.

Another **SONG** ends, and they applaud.

SULLY

And ya might lose what ya got now.

MIKE

What do you mean?

SULLY

I got no reason to stay here. I'd be movin' along, if it wasn't for you.

They look at each other, as the children **SING** in the b.g.

EXT. GRACE'S CAFE - DAY ELEVEN

Sully and Mike are taking Brian and Colleen to Grace's for pie, after the concert. Grace is at the stove, boiling fruit and jars to make preserves.

BRIAN

Hey, Grace.

GRACE

How was the concert?

MIKE

Wonderful. I told the children they could have pie...

SULLY

Think I'll be goin'...

COLLEEN

No, please, stay and eat with us.

GRACE

Set yourselves down. I'll be right with ya.

Sully considers whether to go or stay. After a beat, he sits down. Grace leaves her canning to get the pie.

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY ELEVEN

Horace is sitting at his desk, working, when Myra comes in, carrying a tray with tea and cookies. She sets it down.

MYRA
Hey, darlin'. Brought ya some cookies.

HORACE
Oh, my goodness. That's so sweet. Where'd ya get 'em?

MYRA
I made 'em. Grace has been showin' me. Ya like 'em?

HORACE
(takes bite) Mmmm, real good. But ya know what I like even better?

MYRA
What's that? I'll learn to make it.

HORACE
Just havin' ya here.

Myra smiles and sits down in his lap.

MYRA
I like bein' married.

She gives him a peck on the lips, then snuggles against him. Horace starts to feel "the mood." He suddenly jumps up.

MYRA
What'cha doin'?

He runs and SLAMS the door shut. Locks it. Grabs her hand to take her to the bedroom.

MYRA
Horace?

HORACE
Come on.

INT. HORACE'S ROOM - DAY ELEVEN

In his hurry to seize the mood, Horace pulls Myra to the bed and begins kissing her. He tries to unfasten some of her clothes, but he's clumsy and his fingers get stuck on the buttons.

MYRA
Horace, it's the middle of the day...

HORACE
It don't matter...

MYRA
What if a customer comes?

HORACE
They can wait.

MYRA
Someone might hear us.

HORACE
I was told, when the mood comes -- act.

But it's clear now that Myra's not in the mood.

HORACE
Myra? If ya don't want to...

MYRA
It ain't that.

HORACE
What's wrong? It's not... one of them times, is it?

MYRA
No, it's just... I ain't never done it like this before.

HORACE
We can wait 'til night time, then.

MYRA
What I mean is, it's always been... business. I never done it with someone I love.

Someone I let... get close to me. It's kinda scary.

Horace looks at her with such understanding, and acceptance.

HORACE

I understand. It's kinda the first time for both of us, then. That's all right. We'll learn together.

He takes her in his arms, hugs her with warmth and love, and she hugs him back. In the glow of his acceptance, she starts to relax, and feel stirrings.

Suddenly there's an EXPLOSION, and SCREAMS from outside. Horace and Myra jump up to see what's happened. Once again, their mood is broken.

EXT. GRACE'S CAFE - DAY ELEVEN

Grace is by the stove, covering her eyes with her hands, screaming in pain. A glass jar blew up in her face as she was lifting it out of the boiling water. Mike, Sully and the two kids run to help her. Robert E comes rushing over from the livery.

MIKE

What happened?

GRACE

My eyes!

SULLY

Glass jar blew up...

ROBERT E

Grace!

MIKE

Let's get her to the clinic.

Robert E picks her up and carries her to the clinic. The others follow.

INT. CLINIC - DAY ELEVEN

Mike is examining Grace's eye, but she's in great pain. Colleen, Sully, Brian and Robert E are there.

MIKE
Colleen, get the chloroform.

GRACE
I can't see!

MIKE
You're going to be all right. I'm going to give you chloroform so I can take care of this without hurting you.

Mike turns to Robert E and speaks soothingly.

MIKE
Would you go across the street and find... David? Please tell him to come at once. (glances at Sully) I need his help.

Robert E nods and goes out the door. Colleen hands Mike the chloroform. Mike dabs it on a cloth and places it over Grace's mouth.

MIKE
Just breathe normally. Try to relax.

GRACE
I'm not gonna be blind, am I?

MIKE
Take a deep breath now... easy. There.

Grace goes under. Mike hands cloth to Colleen, who keeps applying it. Mike is now free to take a closer look at Grace's eye.

MIKE
(to Sully) Would you bring the light over?

Sully comes over with a surgical candle.

MIKE
Oh, dear.

SULLY
What is it?

Door opens, and David walks in, with Robert E.

DAVID
What's happened, Michaela?

MIKE
Thank you for coming. Robert E, would you wait outside, and take Brian with you? I'll be out as soon as we've taken care of her.

ROBERT E
How long'll that be?

MIKE
Not too long.

He and Brian go out.

MIKE
There's a piece of glass embedded deep in the cornea. I don't think I can pull it out...

David moves over to take a look.

DAVID
No, you'll damage the tissues. You have to make an incision...

MIKE
I've never worked on the eye.

DAVID
You don't want to dig or probe, or you could sever a nerve.

MIKE
Would you do it?

DAVID
Michaela, I haven't touched a scalpel in seven years.

MIKE
But you've worked on eyes. I don't know how deep to go. I'd only be guessing.

DAVID
I'm sorry...

MIKE
Please, David. I know you can do it. I'm afraid I might cause her permanent damage. You're the best chance she's got.

David looks at Sully and Colleen, who seem to be asking him with their eyes to help. All concerns have been dropped, for the moment, except their concern for Grace.

DAVID
You have a cataract knife?

MIKE
(hands him knife) Scarpa's needle?

DAVID
(takes it) Good. Can you clamp the lid open?

Mike takes a clamp and applies it so the eyeball is exposed. David looks closely.

DAVID
It's pierced all the way to the vitreous humor. I'm going to make a cut above it, and squeeze. When you see it begin to rise, use a forceps -- the smallest you have.

Mike picks one up. David prepares to cut. Their heads are bent together over the patient.

CLOSE ON SULLY

Watching them work together.

BACK TO SCENE

David cuts.

DAVID
There. Now it should just slide up...

MIKE
Try more pressure on the right.

DAVID
Here it comes.

MIKE
Got it.

She pulls the glass piece out, sets it on a tray.

DAVID
Let's just check... make sure there's nothing more.

MIKE
I think that's it.

DAVID
Give it a dab of silver nitrate, and we'll cover the eye.

Mike and David exchange a glance -- of satisfaction and relief, and the shared exhilaration of having succeeded with a difficult task. She takes his hand, and squeezes it a moment, before continuing with the work.

MIKE
Thank you.

Colleen and Sully, watching them, exchange a look.

EXT. CLINIC - DAY ELEVEN

Robert E's waiting outside, with Dorothy, Horace, Myra, and other townsfolk. David walks out, followed by Sully.

ROBERT E
How is she?

DAVID
Very well. We were able to remove all the glass. She'll need to keep her eye covered... until it heals. But I don't expect any permanent damage.

ROBERT E
Thank the Lord. (to David) And thank you. I'm real grateful you was here.

DAVID
Glad I could help.

He turns to walk away.

ANGLE

David walks down the street toward the meadow. After a few beats, Sully falls in step with him.

DAVID
I owe you an apology, Sully. You were right. I should have identified myself.

SULLY
You were packin' up to leave. I was the one who called ya back.

DAVID
You didn't know.

SULLY
(after a beat) I been askin' myself what I woulda done in your place. If I'd been blinded and crippled. I mighta done the same.

They walk on.

DAVID
I tried to forget her. I walked through the mountains, across the plains. I thought I was putting miles between us. I only learned by accident she was here. I was passing through Pueblo and heard about a lady doctor named Quinn. I had to come and see.

SULLY
(nods) Hard to plan what the heart's gonna do. After my wife died, I thought I'd never love anybody again. Thought I'd be on my own the rest of my days. And that was all right.

DAVID
I told myself the same thing.

SULLY
I hadn't counted on meetin'... Michaela.

David nods. The two men stop and look at each other. Beneath it all, there's a bond. They understand one another and wish the other could have what he wants. But they're at cross purposes.

EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY TWELVE

Mike is in the garden, tending her plants, when Sully comes up.

MIKE

Sully, I'm glad to see you.

SULLY

There's something I gotta say to ya.

MIKE

Please. I know this is terribly hard, but if you could give me more time...

SULLY

Ya got it.

Mike looks at him -- what does he mean?

MIKE

You're not going away, are you?

SULLY

No. But I been thinkin'. When you love someone, you want 'em to be happy, don't you?

MIKE

Yes, of course.

SULLY

I want you to do what's gonna make you happy. What's gonna be best for you. And whatever that is, I'll be behind you.

MIKE

Oh, Sully.

SULLY

You gotta know that.

She goes into his arms, and holds on, tight. She's grateful and moved by what he's said. And yet, she's not sure what she wants to do.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - DAY THIRTEEN

Mike is collecting plants. David is sitting on a rock, sketching her.

MIKE
Have you thought about what you'll do... after you finish this book?

DAVID
I thought of going to Yosemite, to see the "range of light." I met John Muir when he was lecturing.

MIKE
I hear he's inspiring.

DAVID
But there's plenty to keep me busy here.

He and Mike exchange a look.

MIKE
Sully told me about your idea for a wilderness park.

DAVID
(gestures around him) This could be a place of pure wildness, where all living things are protected. People could come here for renewal, or to commune with forces greater than themselves. But we have to act now...

MIKE
Why? Because of the railroad?

DAVID

Not just that. The mining companies are stripping the soil, and the lumber companies are mowing down trees...

MIKE

All in the name of progress.

DAVID

Muir says, any fool can destroy trees. They can't run away,

MIKE

(smiles) Or fight back.

DAVID

Some of these trees are a thousand years old. God has saved them from fires, avalanches and floods. But He can't save them from fools.

MIKE

Maybe you can.

DAVID

I'll be up against powerful adversaries. The timber barons. Railroad bosses. Banks. (appeals to Mike) But if a few people raise their voices, they can make something happen.

MIKE

We saw that, didn't we, with abolition?

DAVID

Yes. Remember the speeches we wrote together?

MIKE

How could I forget? The first time, we were up all night...

DAVID

But what a speech we wrote. I would start a line, and you'd complete it.

MIKE

You understood my thoughts, before I could say them.

DAVID

And when we finished, we walked along the Charles. We stopped on the bridge and

watched the sun come up.

MIKE

The flower sellers were setting out their wares. Remember? You bought me lilacs.

She turns her eyes to him, and he leans across to kiss her. Then he takes her in his arms for a long, electric moment. She pulls away, looks at him, and bursts into tears.

DAVID

Michaela...

She shakes her head, unable to speak. She feels love again, and guilt, and confusion. He tries to comfort her.

EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY THIRTEEN

Sully is with the kids, teaching Brian how to ride the velocipede. Sully runs along beside him, holding on. Matthew and Colleen cheer.

BRIAN

Don't let go!

SULLY

I got ya.

MATTHEW

Keep pedalin'.

COLLEEN

That's it!

ANGLE

Mike walks up by herself, with the basket of plants. She stops when she sees Sully with the children.

BACK TO SCENE

BRIAN

Don't let me go!

But Sully has already let go. Brian is riding alone.

SULLY
I'm not holdin' on anymore.

BRIAN
Sully! Help!

SULLY
You're ridin' on your own, Brian.

Brian looks behind -- sees that Sully's not there. A smile breaks out on his face.

BRIAN
I can do it!

Then he spots Mike ahead of him.

BRIAN
Ma! Look!

He comes to a stop in front of Mike. She puts down her basket and throws her arms around him.

MIKE
I knew you could.

BRIAN
It's so much fun!

Sully comes over and ruffles Brian's hair.

BRIAN
You tricked me.

SULLY
It worked, didn't it? Now ya just gotta keep practicin'.

He glances at Mike.

SULLY

See ya tomorrow.

He turns to leave.

BRIAN
Ain't ya stayin' for supper?

SULLY
Not tonight.

Sully smiles at Mike, waves to the kids and walks off into the woods. Mike looks after him.

BRIAN
(calls out) Thanks, Sully.

HOLD on Mike, watching Sully walk away.

INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT THIRTEEN

Colleen is setting the table for dinner. Brian shells peas. Matthew's sharpening a knife, while Mike works at the stove.

COLLEEN
How many places should I set?

MIKE
Just four.

MATTHEW
Andrew's not comin'? I mean David.

MIKE
Not tonight.

Colleen looks heavenward, in thanks.

BRIAN
Good.

Mike covers the pot and turns to face the kids.

MIKE

I know how fond you are of Sully. And I know you don't really know David. But he's a good man, and I'd like you to give him a chance.

The kids don't respond.

MIKE

You think you could do that?

Still no answer.

MIKE

Do you feel it would be disloyal to Sully?

COLLEEN

No, Sully told us to be fair. To try and get along with him.

MIKE

Really?

MATTHEW

(to Mike) Said you gotta think about your whole life, not just the next few years.

MIKE

When did he say that?

COLLEEN

Just now. While you were away.

BRIAN

He said we're gonna grow up and move away.

COLLEEN

So you gotta do what's best for you.

MIKE

Sully said that?

The kids nod. Again, Mike is moved by Sully's generosity of spirit, and concern for her.

INT. HORACE'S ROOM - NIGHT THIRTEEN

Horace and Myra are in bed, lying side by side with their eyes open. Horace wears his red night shirt and cap. Myra's in her gown.

MYRA
Awful quiet tonight.

HORACE
No serenadin'. No explosions.

MYRA
I got a feelin' it's gonna stay quiet.

HORACE
(sighs) I don't know what happened to my mood.

MYRA
Don't worry 'bout it.

HORACE
I feel like I'm lettin' you down.

MYRA
No, you're not. A lot of marriages are... friendship marriages. Least that's what I hear. That's the most important thing, anyway -- friendship. So let's just snuggle.

He puts his arm around her, and they snuggle up close.

MYRA
We don't gotta do nothin' else.

HORACE
But are ya happy, Myra?

MYRA
Course I am.

HORACE
Why?

MYRA

I get to sleep next to you every night. Wake up with you every mornin'. For the rest of my life, I got a home with you.

HORACE
That's right, you do.

She hugs him and kisses his cheek. Horace starts to feel a surge. He grabs her and kisses her more passionately.

MYRA
Horace, I said we don't have to... (more kisses) Oh, Horace. Oh... Yes...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY FOURTEEN

Matthew comes up to the office and knocks, tries the door. It's locked. He knocks again. Waits. No response. Loren comes up and reaches for the door.

MATTHEW
It's locked. Been that way all mornin'.

LOREN
(pounds on door) Horace!

There's no answer. Loren turns to Matthew.

LOREN
He never closes. Rain or shine, sleet or snow...

MATTHEW
Ya think somethin's wrong?

LOREN
I don't know. Maybe we oughta break in?

MATTHEW
Horace! Myra!

Suddenly, the door opens and Horace is there, in his night shirt and cap askew, rumped but beaming.

HORACE
We're closed!

MATTHEW
It's the middle of the day.

LOREN
I gotta send a wire.

MYRA (O.S.)
(come hither tone) Horace!

HORACE
(calling to her) Be right there. (to men) Come back tomorrow.

He pulls the door closed. Matthew and Loren look at each other, then smile and walk away.

EXT. CLINIC - DAY FOURTEEN

Mike comes out of the clinic, looks across the street and spots David, in front of the saloon. They walk toward each other and meet in the middle of the street.

DAVID
Would you like to take a walk?

MIKE
All right. It's a beautiful day.

He takes her arm to guide her as they start walking away from town.

DAVID
I think it's just the day for us to make some decisions.

MIKE
You do?

DAVID
I want to stay with you, Michaela. I know you care for Sully. But marriage is a lifetime partnership. You and I were meant to be together. We knew it from the start. And now that fortune has reunited us, we should carry on where we left off.

MIKE

But so much has happened in the interim.

DAVID

Of course. But we're the same people, at heart.

MIKE

I was young, then, without attachments. I have children now. Responsibilities.

DAVID

They'll be our responsibilities.

MIKE

And Sully... Sully gave us a home here, when no one else would. Whenever there's a problem, or when the children need help, he's there -- every minute of every day. He wants what's best for us. He's the father of my children. And we're... a family.

DAVID

But do you love him?

MIKE

Yes.

DAVID

More than you love me?

Mike turns away, looks in her heart for the answer, and hears it, clearly, at this moment. She looks in David's eyes.

MIKE

Do you really want me to say?

He holds up a hand to stop her. They both look away.

DAVID

I'll be leaving tomorrow morning, at dawn.

He looks at her, hoping for something, but she knows what she wants now.

MIKE

God bless you, David.

He takes her in his arms, for a final embrace.

EXT. WOODS - DAY FOURTEEN

Mike is walking toward the place where Sully has his lean-to. She stops for a moment. Looks up at the sky, thinking.

EXT. LEAN-TO - DAY FOURTEEN

Sully's chopping wood when Mike appears in the clearing. He sees her and keeps on with his task.

MIKE
Hello, Sully.

SULLY
What brings ya out here?

MIKE
I want to tell you how much appreciate what you did.

SULLY
What's that?

MIKE
Left me free, to decide.

SULLY
So ya musta decided.

MIKE
How do you know that?

SULLY
I know.

He keeps chopping. She hesitates, wondering how to begin.

SULLY
You love David.

MIKE

Yes. I'll always love him.

Sully nods.

MIKE

But that's the past. You're the present. We're the present. If you'll have me. (beat) Will you, Sully?

Sully stops his task and smiles. He's delighted, but he's going to have a little fun with this.

SULLY

Will I what?

MIKE

Will you... marry me?

He looks at her a moment. Mike watches him, nervous, wondering if she waited too long. Then he smiles, reaches for her hand.

SULLY

Yes.

They start walking off. CAMERA PULLS BACK. After a few paces, they stop and Sully draws her to him. CAMERA CONTINUES PULLING BACK as they embrace.

FADE OUT.

THE END

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