

Father's Day

Written by Sara Davidson

Directed by Jerome R. London

Rev. Blue, August 16, 1994

Cast List

MICHAELA QUINN
BYRON SULLY
MATTHEW COOPER
COLLEEN COOPER
BRIAN COOPER
LOREN BRAY
JAKE SLICKER
REVEREND JOHNSON
OLIVE DAVIS
HORACE
ROBERT E
HANK
MYRA
EMILY
GRACE
ETHAN COOPER
CLOUD DANCING
HARRIET
BECKY
HUSBAND
WOLF
WOLF PUPPY

LEM, INGRID, CONGREGATION, TOWNSPEOPLE, FIVE QUILTING CIRCLE LADIES,
THREE
CHILDREN

Set List

INTERIORS: BARBER SHOP

**HOMESTEAD
CLINIC
CHURCH
SALOON
EMILY'S HOME
TELEGRAPH OFFICE**

**EXTERIORS: MAIN STREET
LIVERY
HOMESTEAD
CHURCH
CLINIC
BARBER SHOP
HITCHING POST
COUNTRY ROAD
ANOTHER PART OF ROAD
FIELD
EMILY'S TAILOR SHOP
WAGON
CLEARING
MOUNTAIN
BRIDGE
STAGE
DANCE PLATFORM
SUPPER TABLES**

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. CHURCH - DAY

LONG SHOT: We SEE the church, the town and the countryside on a tranquil Sunday morning, as the stirring harmonies of "Amazing Grace" echo out from the congregation.

2 INT. CHURCHDAY

PICK UP Dr. Mike and her three children Matthew, Colleen and Brian as they sing the last chorus.

**All
(singing)**

I once was lost, but now I'm found, Was blind but now I see.

3 ANGLE REV. JOHNSON at the podium.

Reverend

Thank you. Now, some announcements. The Founder's Day social is all set. We're gonna have a pie-eating contest -- so start building up your appetites, folks...

4 ANGLE

Colleen and Brian, excited, exchanging glances with Mike.

Reverend

...Relay races, a potluck supperdance, and of course the auction -- where we plan on raising that money we need to open a real school.

Pan across the congregation, picking up people we know from the town -- Olive, Loren, Emily with her baby and son, Jake, Horace -- end back on Rev. Johnson.

Reverend

Now, who's got something to donate?

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

**Emily
(standing)**

The sewing circle's got a quilt we been working on a year. It's a beauty.

Reverend

Fine!

We HEAR a chorus of appreciative remarks and applause.

**Jake
(standing)**

Free haircuts and shaves for a month...

More applause and cheers.

**Olive
(rising)**

A whole night's dancin' at the Hurdy-Gurdy.

Raucous applause.

5 ANGLE

Matthew turns and steals a glance at Ingrid, imagining a night of unlimited dances. If only he could dance. Colleen nudges Brian, and they giggle.

Mike stands up.

Mike

Small pox vaccinations for the whole family.

A hush falls over the room, except for Brian, who claps his hands, then, realizing he's alone, abruptly stops. Embarrassment hangs in the air. Dr. Mike, with forced dignity, sits down. A beat.

Reverend

Who else now... has something to donate?

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

6 EXT. TOWN - MAIN STREET - DAY

A stranger, Ethan Cooper, rides into town on a splendid horse and saddle studded with silver. The horse is so high spirited, it causes heads to turn. Ethan comes to the boarding house once owned by Charlotte. The old sign is still in place.

CLOSE ON SIGN: "Mrs...Cooper's Rooms and Meals"

Ethan rides on.

7 EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Mike is walking out with Olive and Emily, who holds her baby. Colleen and Brian scamper about with other kids. Matthew is talking, awkwardly, with Ingrid and a couple immigrant girls.

8 ON MIKE, OLIVE AND EMILY

Mike
But the vaccine saves lives...

Olive
If folks are healthy, you oughta leave 'em be.

Mike
This will keep them healthy, and prevent an epidemic. Don't you know that...?

Olive
I know I want no part of it. Good day.

Olive walks off, leaving Mike with Emily.

Mike
(frustrated)
If I could just get through to them.

Emily
You oughta join the quilting circle.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

Mike
I don't have the time.

Emily
Maybe you should find the time.
(gives her look)
Those ladies decide about of things in this town.
(meaningful)
Things like vaccinations.

CLOSE ON MIKE -- as she reconsiders.

9 INT. SALOON - DAY

Ethan is playing poker with four MEN including Hank, who's dealing. These are the mavericks and rough types who don't go to church on Sunday. Myra stands close behind Hank, watching game.

Hank
(to Ethan)
Where you ride in from?

Ethan
Frisco.
(places money down)
Raise you.

Hank
Fivemore.
(puts money down)
Plan on stayin' awhile?

Ethan
Possibility.

Other men at the table slap down their cards, folding, so only Ethan and Hank are left in the game.

Ethan
That a boarding house across the Street?

Hank
Not any more. Widow who owned it died, and the bank took it back. Now the lady doc's got it for a clinic.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

Myra
Them bankers come runnin' over from Denver so fast. Turned the widow's younguns right out on the street.

Ethan
(shows no emotion)
I call.

Hank
(turns over cards)
Two ladies.

Ethan
(turns over cards)
Two gents.

Hank
Damn!

Ethan collects the pot. He's won a great deal. Another man gathers the cards, shuffles and starts dealing. Ethan picks up his cards and stares at them.

Ethan
(light)
Now what kind of town is this -- lets a darn bank turn younguns out in the street?

Myra starts to answer, but Hank motions her to be quiet.

Hank
Two more.

Dealer gives him cards.

Ethan
I'll stay.

Hank
Raise you five.

Ethan
See your five. And raise you ten.

Hank stares at Ethan. It's a blinking contest, and after a beat, it's Hank who blinks first.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

Throws his cards down and folds.

**Hank
Lemme see.**

Hank reaches for Ethan's cards, but before he can get them, Ethan slips them back in the deck.

**Ethan
No pay, no peek.**

Ethan starts to collect his winnings. Hank is burning. Ethan stands to leave.

**Ethan
(to Hank)
Think I'd like to see that room in back now.**

**Hank
We ain't finished here. Somebody wins big, he oughta give folks a fair chance to win some back.**

**Ethan
(a smile)
Or lose a lot more.**

CAMERA STAYS on Ethan as he turns and walks away from the table. Suddenly, from behind, a chair crashes down over his head. Ethan slumps to the floor, as commotion breaks out.

**10
THRU OMITTED
11**

12 EXT. TOWN - STREET - DAY

Mike and the children are driving by in the wagon when she spots a group of men, including Jake and Loren, carrying Ethan into the barber shop. Bystanders follow and crowd along. Mike stops the wagon, grabs her bag, gets out and starts for the shop.

Mike
(to kids)
Wait for me at the livery.

13 INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

Ethan's slumped in the chair. Jake throws water in his face and he comes to. Blood streams down his head from a deep gash. Mike comes up, takes a look.

Mike
He's going to need stitches.
(opens her bag)

Jake
(to Mike)
I can do that.

Jake pours whiskey onto a dirty towel and starts cleaning the wound. Mike looks dubious.

Ethan
(to Mike)
Excuse me, I haven't had the pleasure...

Mike
I'm Dr. Quinn.

Their eyes meet. Although Mike comports herself with cool professionalism, she can't help but notice what an attractive man this is.

Ethan
Medical doctor?

Mike
That's correct.

Ethan
(to Jake)
You a doctor?

Loren
He's been patchin' folks up for years.

Group voices agreement.

Ethan
But you're a barber?

Jake
(puffs self up)
That's right.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

Ethan
With all due respect, I'd like Dr. Quinn to do the stitchin'.

He smiles at her. Dr. Mike is surprised, as is Jake and everyone else.

This is the first time a man in this town has picked her first for treatment. She nods at Ethan and prepares to do the sutures.

Mike
(to Ethan)
I need you to stay very still now.

She begins the procedure.

DISSOLVE TO:

14 EXT. EMILY'S TAILOR SHOP - NIGHT

Mike, carrying a fabric bag, walks up the steps and stops at the door. From inside, we HEAR women chatting, laughing.

Harriet (O.S.)
Liquor and cards is a bad combination. We oughta make 'em close the saloon on Sundays.

Olive (O.S.)
Hank said the man was cheatin'...

Emily (O.S.)
Hank's a poor loser.

Laughter. Mike hesitates, then knocks.

15 INT. EMILY'S HOME - NIGHT

A large wooden quilting frame is in the middle of Emily's sitting room. Around the frame are eight ladies, who hold it on their laps. The group includes Olive, Emily and Harriet -- a sturdy pioneer in her thirties. Harriet looks up with interest when Mike walks in.

Mike stands, a bit self-conscious, as there are no extra chairs.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

Emily begins to speak, awkwardly -- she neglected to tell the ladies Mike was coming.

Emily
I...asked Dr. Mike... to stop in. She's done a lot of fine sewing with her people back East...

Mike
(opens bag)
I brought some pieces I've been saving... for something special.

She holds up scraps of beautiful colored silk and velvet remnants from fancy clothes.

Olive
(indicates quilt)
We're workin' this all in cotton.

Mike
(fingers quilt)
It's beautiful. Double wedding ring. I love a geometric pattern.

Harriet
We're doin' a crazy quilt next.

Mike
Oh, the pieces I brought might do very well for that...

She steps toward frame and holds out fabric.

**Olive
(interrupting)**

We already got eight people here.

Room falls silent.

**Emily
Olive, you always said a new pair of hands is like a new line of harmony.**

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

**Olive
That's true.
(shoots Mike a look)
But sometimes, new things make for trouble.**

**Mike
Excuse me... I don't get your meaning...**

**Olive
Take this vaccine business. Before you came, we got along fine without it.
Now you're pushing it on us.**

**Mike
Merely want to help. There's an epidemic in the next county...**

**Olive
Fact is, you act like you got the answer to every question.**

**Mike
(hurt)
I don't mean to give that impression.**

**Olive
My favorite aunt the one I'm named for died from bad vaccine.**

Harriet seems to be listening with special interest.

Mike

I'm terribly sorry. But, believe me... that's a rare occurrence.

Olive
Wasn't your aunt.

Mike
True. But I've seen this vaccine save people -- whole families from terrible suffering. The benefits far outweigh the risk...

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

Olive
You ain't the one takin' the risk.

Mike
But I am. I've been vaccinated myself. And I've given it to my own children.

There's a moment of silence, as Mike and Olive stare at each other.

Olive
That's your choice. It ain't mine.

She goes back to her sewing.

Harriet frowns at Olive, then looks at Mike, wants to come to her defense but is reluctant to speak.

Mike
Well, I'll leave these here perhaps you'll find use for them... some time.

She leaves the bag of beautiful remnants on a table, and, with stately carriage, goes out the door.

16 INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY 2

Ethan is talking to Horace.

Ethan
My wire come in?

Horace

Not yet.

Door OPENS and Mike walks in.

**Horace
Mornin'.**

**Mike
Morning, Horace.**

**Ethan
(turning)
Dr. Quinn.**

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

Ethan takes her hand and kisses it lightly. She's charmed, but also uncomfortable at the presumed intimacy.

**Mike
(professional tone)
How does your head feel?**

**Ethan
Much improved.**

**Mike
Any dizziness or nausea?**

**Ethan
Nope.**

**Horace
(to Mike)
Got a package for you. From some outfit in Chicago.**

He hands her a large box wrapped with brown paper.

**Mike
Oh good. Don't mention this to Colleen. It's a surprise. For the social.**

**Ethan
What's the occasion?**



Horace
Founder's Day. We're raisin' money to put up a school.

Ethan
That's a tall order.

Horace
You bet. Six hundred dollars. But we'll make it.

Ethan nods, impressed. Mike starts for the door. Ethan opens it and reaches for her package.

Ethan
Let me help you.

She hesitates briefly, then hands him her package.

17 EXT. STREET

Ethan and Mike come out of the telegraph office and start walking up the street. They begin to talk quickly. There's a current of flirtation.

Ethan
So you're from Chicago, Dr. Quinn?

Mike
No.

Ethan
Didn't think so.

Mike
Oh? Where, then?

Ethan
Boston.

Mike
(laughs in surprise)
How did you guess?

Ethan
You got the manners of a real civilized city.

Mike
What else have you observed?

Ethan
Some folks have been kind of rough on you here.

Mike
Some people are slow to embrace new ideas.

Ethan
In San Francisco, we're a little more broad-minded.

Mike
(shoots him a look)
I've heard about your "broad-mindedness." Your sporting houses...

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

Ethan
Let just say we like to see a woman step ahead... any way she can.

Mike
(flirting)
Then stand aside, sir.

She takes her package back and, with a smile, steps off the wooden sidewalk into the street. Amused, he watches her, then moves to catch up...

18 EXT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

A group of men, including Jake and Loren, are admiring Ethan's horse, tied to a post with no saddle on.

Loren
Bet he's got some mustang in him.

Jake
Like to see him run.

19 ANGLE

Sully, with wolf, comes up the street and stops to see what the commotion is. Then he notices something of far greater interest to him.

20 SULLY'S POV

Dr. Mike and Ethan, talking and laughing, as they approach.

**Loren
(to Ethan)
Fine looking horse.**

**Ethan
Thank you, sir. Got a fine temper, also.**

Sully's wolf starts to growl at Ethan. Sully is surprised -- the wolf rarely does this. Sully makes a sound to quiet him.

**Loren
(to Ethan)
My sister'd fancy him.**

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

**Ethan
Well, I been waiting for word on an important business deal. I'm temporarily short of funds.
(pats horse)
I'd sell him, for the right price.**

**Loren
Looks like he's a challenge.**

**Ethan
Not for a man --
(looks at Mike)
or woman who's got some authority.**

**Loren
(shakes head)
Nah, we're low on cash.**

Jake
I already got two horses.

Ethan scans the group, spots Sully.

Ethan
What about you, sir?

Sully gives no response. The crowd looks amused. It's an awkward moment, and Mike tries to smooth things over.

Mike
He doesn't need a horse.

Jake
He can't ride.

Ethan
What! Every man who's got two legs can ride.

Loren
Not Sully.

Jake
He's scared.

The group laughs.

21 ON MIKE

She's uncomfortable.

22 ON SULLY

No expression on his face. After a beat, he takes a step toward Ethan.

Sully
How much?

23 EXT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT

TO ESTABLISH: Lamps are lit inside. Smoke rises from the chimney.

24 INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT

Colleen is trying on the dress Mike ordered from Chicago. Mike is on her knees, pinning up hem. Brian is helping Matthew fix his fishing pole. Puppy is there.

Colleen
(spins around, excited)
Look how it twirls!

Mike
(smiles)
Lovely. Now could you stay still?

Colleen is too excited to stand in one place.

Colleen
What if no one asks me to dance?

Mike
All the boys will ask you.

Colleen
But what if no one does?
(turns to Matthew)
Will you?

Matthew
I'm busy here.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

Colleen
(goes to him, takes his arm)
Please... you gotta learn some time.

Matthew
(embarrassed, shoos her away)
Go on!

Mike
(to Colleen)
Come over here, you're losing the pins...

There's a KNOCK on the door. It startles them. After a beat, Colleen goes to open it. Mike follows her. Colleen stops in surprise.

25 HER POV

Ethan, standing in the doorway. He takes off his hat.

Ethan
Hello, Colleen.

26 ON COLLEEN

She stares at him a beat. Then...

Colleen
Pa!

27 ON THE FAMILY

Brian
You came back. I knew you would!

Brian looks overjoyed, but Matthew looks wary. He takes Brian's arm to restrain him, but Brian breaks free and runs into Ethan's arms.

28 CLOSE ON MIKE

flabbergasted.

FADE
OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

29 INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT

Ethan is pulling gifts from a leather satchel. Brian and Colleen watch, fascinated. Matthew sits apart, keeping his distance. Mike's manner toward Ethan has changed -- she's suspicious, wary.

Ethan
This comes all the way from China.

He unfolds a fabulous colored fan and hands it to Colleen.

Colleen
Thank you, Pa.

He takes out a small bottle of perfume, holds it out to Matthew.

Ethan
If you have a young lady, this'd make a nice gift.

Matthew
I don't.

Brian
Liar.

Matthew
Hush up.

Ethan
Still like to fish, Matthew?
(he doesn't answer)
Thought we'd go out tomorrow, try our luck.

Matthew
Got somethin' else to do.

Ethan takes out a bleached white bone and hands it to Brian.

Ethan
This comes from a dinosaur. Picked it up in Wyoming last fall.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

Mike

You said you were in San Francisco last fall.

Ethan

Did I? I'm not good about time.

Mike

That's apparent.

They exchange a look. He feels the coldness in her glance. He takes out a model of a clipper ship in a bottle, holds it up for them to see.

Ethan

This is the ship my partner and I bought an interest in. She's on her way to China right now. We're gonna bring back silks and ivory... Sell 'em to fine stores in San Francisco.

Mike

I'm curious, Mr. Cooper, what induced you to leave your business and journey here?

Ethan

I got word their mother died.

There's a moment of silence, as Charlotte's memory seems to hover in the room.

Ethan

(indicates children)

I'm real grateful to you for picking up the burden...

Mike

They're no burden, I assure you, Mr. Cooper.

Mike puts her arms around the children and pulls them to her. She stares at Ethan. He stares back.

The children look from him to her. They're torn, unsure what to do.

30

THRU OMITTED

33

34 EXT. BLACKSMITH SHOP - DAY

In the small enclosure by his shop, Robert E is holding Sully's new horse. Sully's about to get on, but he's nervous. Brian watches, giving encouragement.

Robert E
Don't show him you're scared.

Sully
He knows.

Robert E
No, sir. You're smarter than he is.

Brian
Make believe, Sully. That's what I do.

Sully musters his courage and swings up into the saddle. The horse instantly starts to prance and snort.

Robert E
Whoa, son.

Brian
Take him over to the rail.

Sully tries to steer the horse to the rail. He makes one pass around, but then the horse wheels about and bolts for the center.

Robert E
Pull him back!

Sully yanks on the reins, and the horse responds by bucking.

CLOSE ON SULLY as he hits the ground.

35 ON BRIAN

put his hands over his eyes.

36 INT. HOMESTEAD - DAY

Ethan is teaching Colleen to dance, humming a waltz. Matthew sits in the corner, sharpening knives, pretending disinterest, but he keeps stealing glances. Mike is preparing medical supplies, crushing leaves with a mortar and pestle.

Colleen
I lost my step.

Ethan
No mind. Just keep smilin'. When I come forward, you step back. That a girl!

Colleen
This is fun.

Ethan
(calls to Matthew)
Know how to dance, Matthew?

Matthew fixes his attention on the knife.

Colleen
(whispers)
He doesn't.

Ethan
Ladies love a man who'll dance with 'em.

Ethan shoots Mike a look. She pretends she's not listening, but mashes harder with the pestle.

Colleen
Nobody's as good as you are, Pa.

Ethan
If you came out to San Francisco with me, you'd see some mighty fine dancers.

Colleen
That right?

Mike pounds even harder with the pestle.

Ethan
Young men would be lining up to choose you.

37 ON COLLEEN

she blushes and laughs as her father twirls her about the room.

38 EXT. HOMESTEAD

Matthew carries a bucket to the water barrel. He stops, puts the bucket down, and begins to imitate, a little woodenly, the steps he saw his father doing. CAMERA PULLS BACK as Matthew raises his arms, pretending he's holding a girl.

39 EXT. FIELD - DAY

Ethan is showing Brian how to play baseball, with a stick and a ball made from rags tied up with string. Ethan pitches to Brian. Puppy is there.

Brian
What's this called.

Ethan
Baseball. They're playin' it in all the big cities.
(holds up ball)
Keep your eye on this.

He throws to Brian, who swings and misses.

Brian
I can't.

Ethan retrieves ball to try again.

Ethan
Sure you can. Watch it now...
(throws)
... watch it, watch it, swing!

Brian connects. Ball soars into the air. Brian lets out a whoop of jubilation.

40 EXT. HOMESTEAD - GARDEN - DAY

Mike is planting a medicinal garden of herbs for healing. She's on her knees, digging, humming. Ethan walks up.

**Ethan
What're you planting?**

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

**Mike
Foxglove.**

**Ethan
What for?**

**Mike
They make digitalis from the leaves for heart problems.**

Ethan drops down beside her.

**Ethan
I'd space 'em a little further apart.**

**Mike
(gives him a look)
Charlotte said you didn't care much for farming.**

**Ethan
I don't know about that. We had a nice place in Topeka.**

**Mike
Broke her heart when you sold it out from under her.**

**Ethan
Now that's not the way it was.**

**Mike
Oh?**

Mike stands and moves to another row. Ethan follows.

**Ethan
I had a dream - to open up trade with the Orient. So Charlotte and I struck**

a bargain. We'd work the farm for four years, sell it and go on out West. Only she changed her mind. Wouldn't go.

Mike
So you took off with her money sock.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

Ethan
Half of it was mine. I left her the other half.

Mike
She said you took it all.

Ethan
She might have exaggerated. She was angry.

Mike
I don't blame her.

Ethan
I don't either. But I had to go after that dream right then, or I was scared I never would. You know what it's like when there's something you gotta do? In spite of everything and everyone?

Mike
(after a beat)
Yes.

Mike looks at him. She understands, more than he realizes. Then another thought overtakes her.

Mike
But I also know what it's like to lose a father.

Ethan
I made a mistake. I know that. I can never make it right with Charlotte.
(stops, caught by emotion)
But I want to with the children.

41 ON MIKE

She's moved by him. At the same time, she's troubled by what this is going to mean.

42 INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT

Harriet has brought her four CHILDREN to the homestead for small pox vaccinations. This is a breakthrough for Mike, who prepares the needle and vaccine.

Harriet
I want you to give my kids them vaccinations.

Mike
(warmly)
You're doing a wise thing.

Harriet
Don't say nothin' to the others.

Mike
Of course not.

Harriet
I don't agree with what they said to you.

Mike
(to children)
Who's going to be first?

No one volunteers.

Harriet winces in pain, puts hand to her stomach.

Mike
What is it?

Harriet
Nothin'. Just a belly ache. Lem, you set an example.

Lem, the oldest boy, steps forward. Mike rolls up his sleeve. He stands still, stoical.

Mike
This will feel like a pin prick.

(she applies vaccine)

There, it's over.

Harriet

Becky, you're next.

The young girl shakes her head no and backs away.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

Becky

I don't want to.

Harriet clutches her stomach.

Mike

(to Harriet)

How long have you had this pain?

Harriet

I ate some peaches that turned.

Becky

(referring to shot)

I'm scared...

Mike

(to Harriet)

I'm the only one who ate 'em. Becky, you be brave.

The girl starts to cry and protest.

Becky

No. Wait, please...

Mike goes to her.

Mike

Don't be afraid. Look your brother's fine.

(to Harriet)

If you're not better tomorrow, I want to see you.

Becky
(to Mike, louder)
Wait, wait! Lemme just tell you somethin'... I gotta catch my breath.

Harriet
Becky, we ain't got time for this nonsense.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

Mike
(to Becky)
It'll be over quickly...

As Mike attends to the crying girl, she doesn't see Harriet, whose face registers another stab of pain.

43 EXT. HOMESTEAD - MORNING - DAY

Sully, with his wolf comes walking up, carrying a wild turkey he's just killed. Ethan comes around corner. Wolf, once again, growls at Ethan. Sully quiets him. Door is open.

Ethan
Mr. Sully. Where's your horse?

Sully
I'm lookin' for Dr. Mike.

Mike comes out the door, followed by Brian and Matthew.

Mike
Good morning...

Sully
Brought a turkey.

Mike
(takes bird)
Thanks. You must come back for supper and share it with us.

Sully

Don't think so.

Brian
Hey, Sully, come one.

Matthew
(imploring with his eyes)
You gotta eat with us.

Sully picks up Matthew's discomfort, glances at Ethan, then back at the children.

Sully
I'll stop back.

44 EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY

Matthew is chopping wood. Ethan walks up. Matthew ignores him and doesn't break rhythm. Ethan watches Matthew a moment, then, as Matthew swings the ax up, Ethan takes hold of it and wrests it away. Sticks it in a slab of wood.

Ethan
Go on -- take a swing at me. Better than keeping all that anger bottled up.

Matthew looks at ground.

Matthew
You ain't worth swinging at.

Ethan
I know it's been hard on you...

Matthew
What do you know? What about Ma? For a year, I watched her waiting for you. Jumping every time she heard a horse ride up.

Ethan
I'm sorry.

A beat.

Matthew
Why'd you go?

Ethan

I was looking for answers. Had to find my way.

Matthew

You never even wrote!

Ethan

I couldn't.

Matthew

Too busy, huh.

Ethan

(a beat, difficult to say)

I don't know how to write.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

Matthew

Get on.

Ethan

Or read. Your ma always helped me. I never let on to anyone... til now.

Matthew is astonished to learn his father can't read, and a little ashamed.

Matthew

Hard to believe.

Ethan

I can't undo what's done Matthew. But I'm asking for another chance.

Matthew

(shakes head)

You talk good...

Ethan

For better or worse, you only get one Pa.

45 ON MATTHEW

looks at his father, begins to soften.

46 INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT

Colleen and Mike are checking the turkey. Sully, Ethan and the boys sit at the table. Candles are lit, mood is festive. Wolf and Puppy are in a corner.

Ethan
We got a claim in Carson city -- once we raise the capitol -- could bring us some nice profits.

Sully
I heard they shut down mining there years ago.

Ethan
You musta heard wrong.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

Mike carries out the turkey on a platter.

Brian
Mmmm, smells good!

Ethan
(indicating turkey)
Dr. Quinn, you continue to surprise me.

Mike
Colleen cooked the turkey.
(beat)
Who'd like to carve?

Both Ethan and Sully stand up. Mike hesitates, not certain whom to give it to.

Ethan
(gracious)
It's Mr. Sully's turkey.

Sully
(more gracious)

You're the guest..

Ethan
Fine then.

He takes the plate from Mike, sets it down.

Ethan
Before we start, let's join hands.

All at the table join hands and bow their heads.

Ethan
Thank you, Lord, for your generous gifts. And thank you for bringing this family back together. We're not going to be parted again. Amen.

Others
Amen.

Ethan looks up at the children.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

Matthew
(cautious)
You're staying?

Ethan
Nope...

Matthew nods, thinking, right. He's gonna take off again.

Ethan
I'm taking you kids back to San Francisco with me.

Colleen
Pa! Really?

Brian
Ya -- hoo!

The two youngest run to hug their Dad. Matthew is shocked. Sully turns to

Mike, who looks pale -- devastated.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

47 EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY

Mike and Colleen are hanging wash on a line. Ethan, close by, is polishing his boots. Brian watches him. Matthew carries up an armful of wood. Mike is upset about the impending rupture in her life.

Mike
When were you thinking of setting out for San Francisco, Mr. Cooper?

Brian
We can't miss the social, Pa.

Ethan
No, I wouldn't dream of takin' you off before then.

Colleen
Tell me about my room again.

Ethan
It's got a canopy bed, and curtains with little red roses. From your window, you can see the ocean.

Matthew
(passing them)
I like seein' the mountains.

Ethan
'Cause you know 'em. Most folks are scared to leave what they know.

Brian
Not me.

Colleen
We'll be a real family.

Colleen smiles with pleasure. Then a thought clouds her face -- they'll be leaving Mike. She turns to her.

Colleen
But what about you?

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

Ethan
(turns to Mike)
Lot of call for doctors in San Francisco.

Mike
Lot of call here.

Mike slaps another garment on the line.

48 EXT. CLEARING - DAY

Sully has brought his horse to Cloud Dancing. He's tethering him to a post.

Cloud Dancing
You never wanted a horse.

Sully
This one came to me.

Cloud Dancing
Whatever you fear will always come to you.

Sully
(finishes tying horse)
When I was young, my brother got his foot caught in a stirrup and got dragged to death.

Cloud Dancing
You must look in the eye of the horse and thank him.

Sully
Thank him!

Cloud Dancing
For the lessons he will teach. The lessons you couldn't learn any other way.

49 ON SULLY

He doesn't want to thank this animal who reminds him of his brother's death. But he has learned to trust Cloud Dancing. He turns to the horse, moves closer and stares in his eye.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

Cloud Dancing
For the next days, you are not to leave this horse...

DISSOLVE TO:

50 EXT. FIELD - DAY

We SEE Sully walking beside the horse, leading him by a rope as Cloud Dancing watches. Sully stops. Starts again. Stops. The horse and Sully begin to move in rhythm.

51 EXT. FIELD - DAY

The horse is tied to a tree. As Cloud Dancing looks on, Sully runs his hands over the horse's back, becoming familiar with its muscles and skeleton.

52 EXT. MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

The horse is tethered by a group of rocks. Sully is wrapped in a blanket on the ground, not far from him. Sully is awake, thinking.

53 OMITTED

54 EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY

Sully walks up, leading his horse. Wolf walks behind them. Sully finds Mike in the garden.

Mike
How do you like your horse?

Sully
Gettin' acquainted.
(ties horse up)
Where's Mr. Cooper?

Mike
He took the children to town.

They start walking toward the cabin.

Sully
Homestead's gonna seem quiet.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

Mike
I can't imagine how I'll bear it without them.

Sully
Don't let them go.

Mike
He is their father.

Sully
I think he gave up that privilege.

The more Sully attacks Ethan, the more Mike defends him.

Mike
He did come back.

Sully
For what purpose?

Mike
Didn't you ever make a mistake and wish you could go back and set things right?

Sully doesn't answer. She has him. We HEAR wagon wheels and horse hooves.

55 ANGLE

Ethan comes up in Mike's wagon. Wolf growls.

Ethan
(to Mike)
Harriet's at the clinic. She's in bad trouble. I said I'd come get you.

Mike, with alarm, gets into the wagon and Ethan whips the horse.

56 ON SULLY

watching them drive off.

57 INT. CLINIC - ROOM - DAY

Harriet's lying on a cot, dead. Her HUSBAND paces, crazy with grief. The children cower in a corner. Mike checks Harriet for vital signs and finds none.

Mike
I'm afraid she's gone.

Husband
She got a fever last night. Then she threw up and passed out.

Mike examines Harriet's body, feels her stomach.

Mike
(quietly)
Why didn't you send for me?

Husband
Thought she'd be better in the morning.

Mike
I'm sorry.

Husband suddenly scoops his dead wife up and starts for the door.

Mike
Wait, what're you doing?...

Husband
Takin' her home.

He sweeps out the door, followed by the children. Mike stands still, shaken.

58
THRU OMITTED
59

60 EXT. CLINIC - DAY

Mike, obviously upset, walks out to the wagon where Ethan waits.

Mike
Her appendix burst.
(beat)
I missed it.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

Ethan
She told you she ate bad peaches.

Mike
Stomach pain is often a symptom of internal injury. I should have thought...

Ethan
(gently, consoling)
Don't blame yourself. We always see things more clearly looking backward.

Mike

(nods toward road)
I haven't told her family.

Ethan helps her into the wagon.

Ethan
No point to it now.

He signals horse, and they start off.

61 EXT. CLEARING - DAY

Sully is on his horse, riding bareback. Cloud Dancing rides another horse beside him. In unison, they trot their horses in figure eights. Wolf sits to the side, watching.

Cloud Dancing stops his horse. Motions Sully to ride out alone. Sully begins to trot in a circle, around Cloud Dancing.

62 CLOSE ON SULLY

He looks tense, stiff.

Cloud Dancing
Remember that the two-legged and the four-legged were created by the same spirit.

Sully begins to relax, lets his weight sink down onto the horse until their motions become more fluid. Sully's shoulders drop. A faint smile comes to his face.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

MEDIUM SHOT -- Sully urges the horse into a lope and takes off across the field. He is beyond fear now. He breaks into a gallop -- bareback through the meadow.

This is an image of freedom, joy.

DISSOLVE TO:

63 EXT. FIELD - DAY 7

Rev. Johnson is conducting the auction on the dance stage, decorated in red, white and blue. The townspeople are gathered in front. Behind him is a giant chart with a red line showing how much money's been raised. The line is up to \$460. Olive and Emily are on stage, holding the quilt donated by their circle. Grace and Robert E stand nearby, watching.

Reverend
Do I hear thirty?

Loren
Thirty dollars!

Reverend
Thirty! Who'll make it forty--
(points to chart)
... take us clear on up to 500 dollars?

64 ON ETHAN

in crowd, staring at the chart. He takes in the figure -- five hundred.

Horace
Thirty five.

Reverend
Thirty five, who'll give me forty? Every lady who worked an this quilt put some of her spirit into it. Olive, Emily, Harriet...

65 ON HARRIET'S HUSBAND

standing apart, dressed all in black.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

**Husband
Forty.**

There's a hush, as everyone turns to look at Harriet's husband.

**Husband
It's the last piece Harriet sewed.**

**Reverend
(bangs gavel down)
Sold.**

Noise and bustle start up again, as CAMERA FINDS Mike, who turns away from the crowd. Overtaken by guilt.

66 EXT. ROAD - DAY

Sully rides up, dismounts and ties his horse to a post where other wagons and horses are tied, for the social. Wolf is with him.

66A OMITTED

67 EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

Mike is walking, lost in thought, as Sully quietly approaches and falls in step.

**Sully
Not in a holiday mood?
(off her head shake no)
Maybe he'll change his mind about going.**

**Mike
No. It's Harriet.
(a beat)
She died of a burst appendix, and I didn't see it.**

**Sully
Could you have saved her?**

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

Mike
(shrugs)
We don't have proper operating facilities. She may have been too far along.
But I could have tried.
(beat)
I haven't told her people.

Sully
Why?

Mike
They already believe I'm not competent. How could they ever trust me?

Sully
Speaking the truth is what makes people trust you.
She looks at him, considers his words, as they walk on.

68 EXT. DANCE PLATFORM - DAY

MUSIC UP.

Whole town is there. People are choosing partners for a two step. Horace is the announcer.

Horace
We got a two step comin' up. Choose your partners!

69 ANGLE

Ethan takes Colleen, wearing her new dress, to join the dance. Grabs Matthew's arm.

Ethan
Come on, son.

Matthew
(whispers)
I can't.

Ethan
Keep your eyes on me and do what I do.

Nervously, Matthew turns to Ingrid and offers his arm.

70 ANGLE

Musicians start up, "Buffalo Gals." Group on floor begins to dance.

71 ANGLE

Ethan swings Colleen.

72 ANGLE

Matthew, watching Ethan, does the same with Ingrid, who's amazed.

Matthew
Hang on.

He continues twirling her, starting to enjoy it.

73 ANGLE CROWD

Mike walks up with Sully, just as dance is ending. Colleen comes off the stage with her father.

Colleen
That was so much fun!

Mike
You looked lovely.

A waltz begins. Ethan puts his arm out to Mike.

Ethan
May I?

Mike looks at Sully, whose face is impassive. Mike turns to Ethan and gives him her hand.

74 THE STAGE

Ethan begins to waltz with Mike, holding her a respectable distance apart. They're both accomplished dancers, but Mike hasn't danced since she left Boston. As they fall in rhythm with one another, Ethan pulls her closer and attempts more complex moves. She goes right with him.

75 ON SULLY

watching them dance, not pleased. Wolf is with him.

76 THE STAGE

They are dancing so brilliantly now that others have fallen back and formed a circle to watch.

77 ANGLE MIKE'S CHILDREN

watching.

78 THE STAGE

Mike and Ethan seem to be dancing out all the feeling that's been building between them. It's electric, intimate, magical. When the music ends, Ethan does a small bow and kisses her hand. People clap and cheer.

79 ON SULLY

fuming.

80 EXT. FIELD

Mike and Ethan walk past the refreshment table. He hands her a cup of punch.

Ethan
Dr. Quinn?

Mike
Michaela.

He smiles at her, pleased at the dropping of formality. Matthew comes up

with Ingrid, a little hesitant.

**Matthew
(to Ethan)
Ready to eat, Pa?**

**Ethan
We'll be there shortly.**

Matthew and Ingrid walk off toward the buffet tables.

**Mike
You've come a long way, Mr. Cooper.**

**Ethan
Ethan.**

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED:

She smiles at him.

**Mike
The children seem happy.
(mood shifts)
I'll miss them.**

**Ethan
I've been thinking... we might settle here a while...**

Mike looks up in happy surprise, just as Colleen and Brian join them.

**Brian
Come on, Pa, or the food'll be gone.**

**Colleen
Matthew's saving places.**

**Ethan
You all go along. I'm gonna help set up the fireworks. I'll join you in a bit.**

He watches them all go off to the supper tables. Mike turns back and smiles

at him. He gives a small wave.

81 EXT. SUPPER TABLES - DAY

Everyone in town is at the supper, sitting at picnic tables, or standing in line at Olive's chuck wagon.

82 EXT. DANCE PLATFORM

Ethan looks about, makes sure he's alone, then walks quietly, swiftly, away from the scene of the social.

83 ANGLE SULLY

in the shadows, watching Ethan go. Turns to Wolf, and motions him.

Sully
Stay!

84 EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Ethan approaches the church, looking about to make sure no one sees him going in.

84A OMITTED

85 ANGLE

Sully, crouched behind a nearby bush, watches Ethan.

86 EXT. SUPPER TABLES - DAY

Mike and the children have nearly finished eating. Mike cranes her head about, watching for Ethan.

87 INT. CHURCH - DAY

Ethan walks down the aisle to the pulpit.

CLOSE SHOT: Ethan goes to the Reverend's side of the pulpit, reaches in and finds the collection box with the proceeds from the auction. Ethan smiles as he opens it.

88 EXT. FIELD - DAY

Mike approaches a group of men, including Jake and Loren, who are setting up fireworks. Ethan is not in sight.

Mike
Excuse me', where's Mr. Cooper?

Jake
Last I saw, he was dancing with you.

Mike
He was supposed to help with the fireworks.

Loren
Well, he ain't.

89 INT. CHURCH - DAY

Ethan stuffs money from collection box into his satchel.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

Sully (O.S.)
Put it down, Ethan.

Ethan wheels around.

90 HIS POV

Sully, coming up the aisle.

91 ANGLE

Ethan is frozen a moment, then tosses the collection box to Sully.

**Ethan
Here!**

Sully, out of reflex, catches the box. Ethan pulls a gun. Then, holding satchel with one hand, keeping gun on Sully with the other, he eases past him and backs out the door. Ethan gives a loud whistle.

**91A
THRU OMITTED
95**

95A EXT. HITCHING POST

Ethan's former horse hears whistle, pulls free of post and bolts toward spot where Ethan stands.

95B EXT. CHURCH

Ethan, at the door, keeps gun trained on Sully as horse approaches.

**Ethan
(to Sully)
Hold it -- nice and quiet.**

As horse canters up beside him, Ethan leans on with his satchel and starts riding out of town.

Sully runs after him a few paces, stops and looks around.

95C ANGLE

Mike comes up, spots Sully.

**Mike
Have you seen Mr. Cooper?**

**Sully
(nods)
Just stole my horse. Rode away with all the money raised for the school.**

Mike

What? No. You must be mistaken!

Sully looks around.

**Sully
Gotta borrow Matthew's horse.**

He hesitates, feeling a jolt of the old fear. Then remembers what he's learned. Takes the reins and stares, for a moment, into horse's eyes. Then, with determination, he swings on and kicks horse into a gallop.

95D ON MIKE

She struggles to digest what's happened. She feels violated, mortified. Then anger takes over. She unhitches wagon, climbs on and starts racing after Sully.

**FADE
OUT.**

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

95E EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Sully is leaning forward in the saddle, urging Matthew's horse to gallop faster.

95F EXT. ANOTHER PART OF ROAD - DAY

Ethan on his horse, moving steadily, not aware yet he's being followed.

95G EXT. ROAD - DAY

Sully runs the horse up a ridge and stops to take a sighting.

95H HIS POV

Ethan, riding.

95I ON SULLY

He heads down and cuts across to intercept Ethan.

95J ON ETHAN

Sees Sully approaching. Spurs his horse.

95K ON SULLY

He's gaining on Ethan and in a few strides, he's alongside him. Makes a flying leap onto Ethan, knocking him off. Both tumble to the ground. Ethan gets up and starts to run, puts out his gun and turns to fire when...

THWACK! Sully's tomahawk knocks the gun out of his hand.

Sully is on him now. They continue fighting, when we HEAR the wagon pull up.

95L EXT. WAGON - DAY

Mike jumps out of wagon. Moves toward where Sully and Ethan are struggling. Spots Ethan's gun. Picks it up. She's never shot a gun before.

95M ON MEN

fighting. We HEAR a gun shot. They freeze.

95N ON MIKE

After firing gun in the air, she points it at Ethan.

Mike
Don't move, Mr. Cooper.

Sully disengages from Ethan and takes gun. Keeps it trained on Ethan.

Sully

(to Mike)
Check his saddle bags.

Mike opens satchel and lifts out money raised at the auction.

Ethan
I was planning to replace it. I had a payment due -- we were going to lose the ship...

Mike
Stealing is one thing, but how could you do this to your children!

Ethan
I was going to send for them.

Sully hands Mike back the gun, so he can tie Ethan up, with rope he removes from horse. Dust starts to blow up.

Sully
Keep it on him.

(CONTINUED)

95N CONTINUED:

Mike
(to Ethan)
You come riding in with presents, fill their heads with dreams of San Francisco... Get them to open their hearts.
(beat)
You're good at that.

Ethan
Michaela...

Mike
You weren't even going to say goodbye.

Ethan
(thinking fast)
Cause I see now -- they're better off with you.

Mike
You're a liar.

Sully's finished tying Ethan's hands.

Sully
Let's take him in.

He starts leading Ethan by the arm. Mike stares a long moment.

Mike
No.

Everyone stops. Michaela retracts the gun on Ethan. The men think she's going to fire. Dust swirls all around her.

Ethan
Don't shoot! I never meant to harm anyone.

Sully
(to Mike)
Easy. We'll send for the marshall...

Mike
Turn him loose.

(CONTINUED)

95N CONTINUED:

Sully
What?

Mike
We'll take the money back to the church. No one knows it's gone.

Sully
What are you thinkin' of...?

Mike
The children. Don't you want to spare them the pain and humiliation of seeing their father tried as a common criminal? Better he just disappears.
(bitter smile)
True to his nature.

Sully considers, goes to Ethan's horse and takes reins.

Sully

How many times have you sold this horse and stolen it back?

Ethan doesn't answer -- he's checking his options, looking from Mike to Sully to the horse.

Sully

Get on him. Catch you anywhere near here again, we'll hang you as a horse thief.

Ethan starts to make a move, then hesitates. Is this a trap?

Sully

Go on!

Ethan springs onto the horse and starts off. Mike and Sully stand watching him as he gallops away. After a moment...

Mike

You paid for that horse.

Sully

He served his purpose.

96

THRU OMITTED

107

108 INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT

The children are gathered around the table with Mike.

Mike

Your father had to leave on urgent business...

Matthew

What?

Mike

He got a telegram -- while you were at supper...

Colleen

You mean he's gone?

Door opens. Sully walks in.

Mike

He had to set off right away for San Francisco.

Brian

No!

Matthew

(suspicious)

He didn't have time to say goodbye?

Everyone is silent. Mike has to steel herself to go on.

Mike

He asked me to say it for him.

Sully

And he left a letter for you.

Mike turns to Sully in surprise, tries to mask it. He hands her a piece of paper.

Sully

Why don't you read it.

Mike takes the letter, scans it. She gives Sully a look of appreciation, and complicity. Then starts reading.

(CONTINUED)

108 CONTINUED:

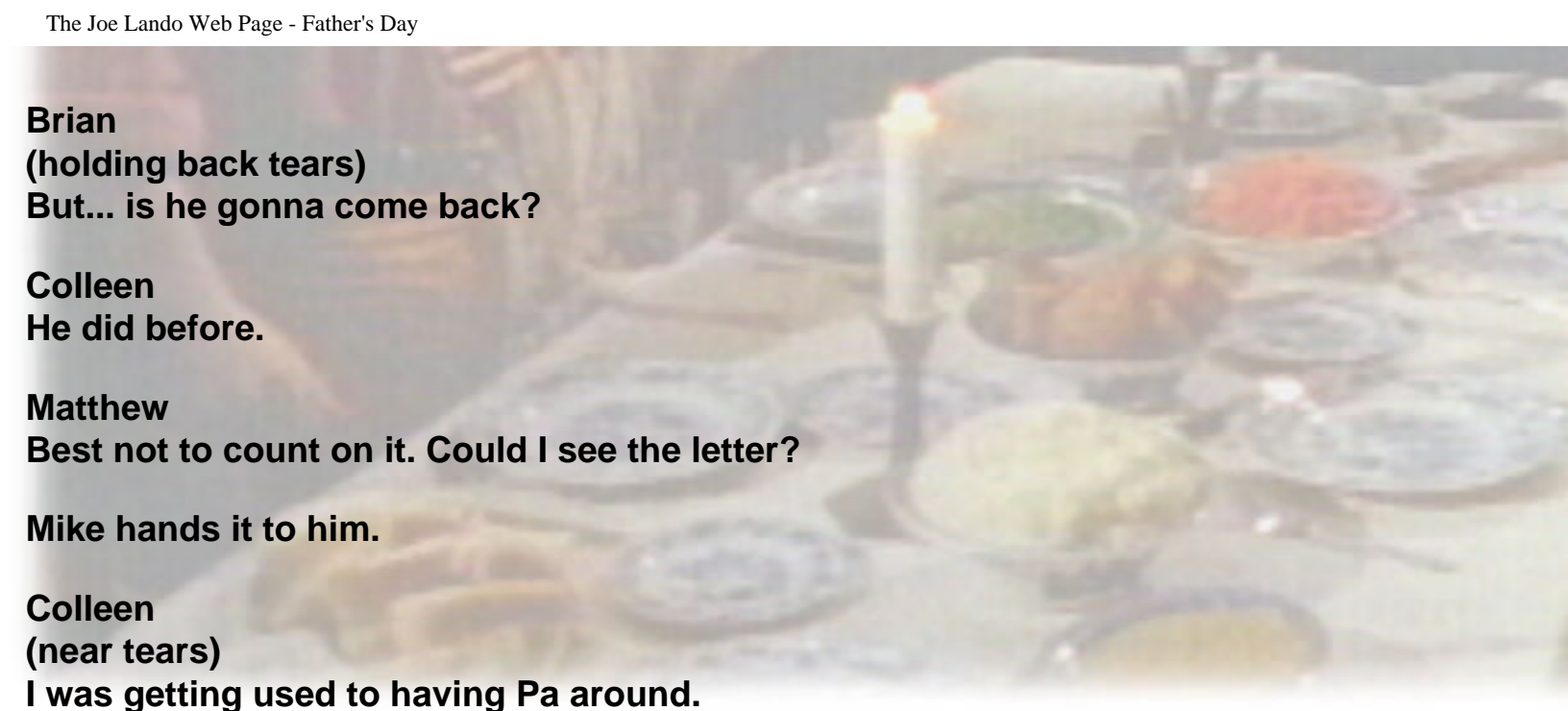
Mike

Dear children. I have learned that our ship was lost in a storm in the Pacific. My partner, I fear, is lost with it. I must leave at once for San Francisco, to save what I can of our business. I'm sorry I can't take you with me, but I rest easier knowing I'm leaving you in good hands.

Mike looks at Sully. Continues reading.

Mike

Please know that I love you... and always will. Your Pa.



Brian
(holding back tears)
But... is he gonna come back?

Colleen
He did before.

Matthew
Best not to count on it. Could I see the letter?

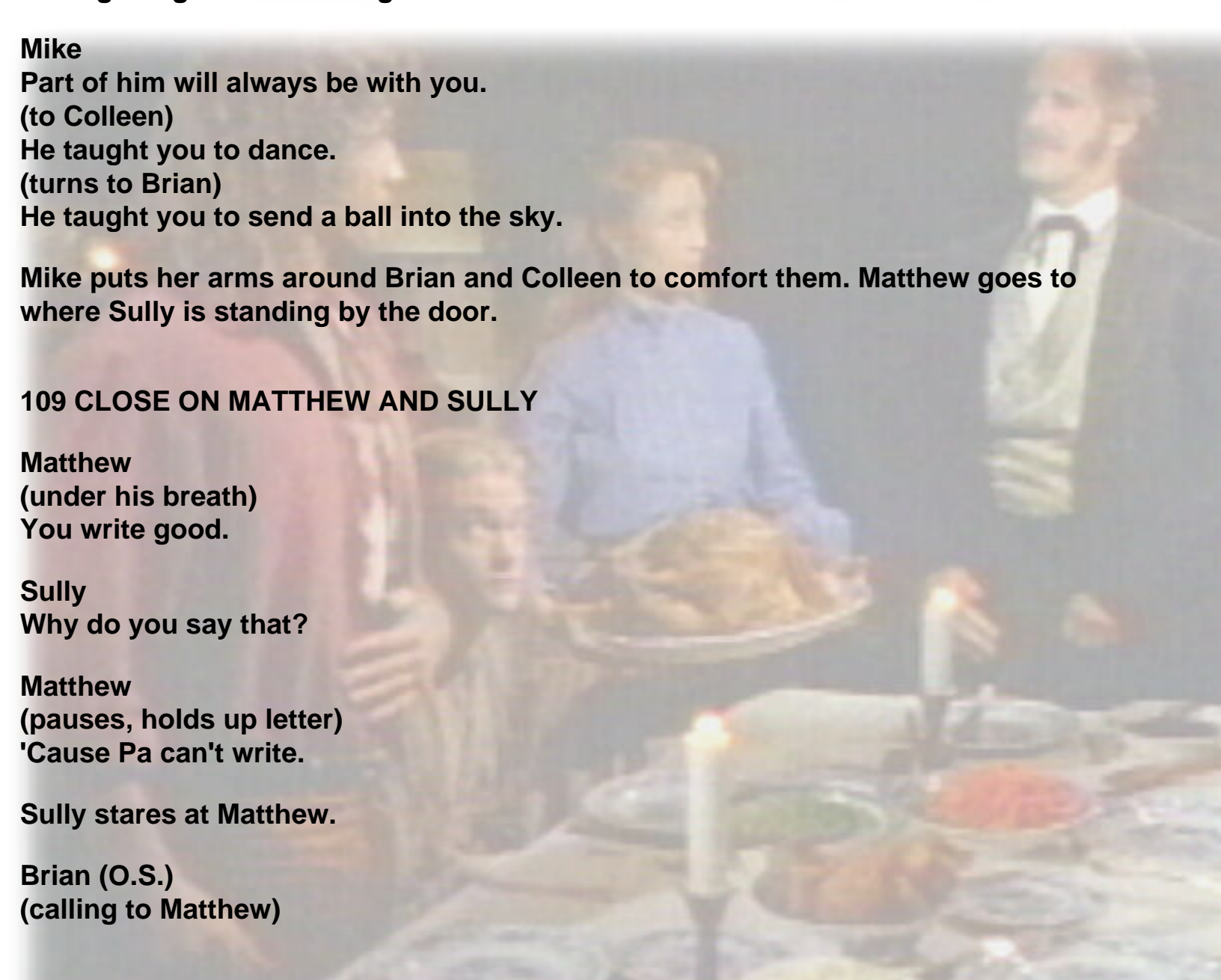
Mike hands it to him.

Colleen
(near tears)
I was getting used to having Pa around.

Mike
Part of him will always be with you.
(to Colleen)
He taught you to dance.
(turns to Brian)
He taught you to send a ball into the sky.

Mike puts her arms around Brian and Colleen to comfort them. Matthew goes to where Sully is standing by the door.

109 CLOSE ON MATTHEW AND SULLY



Matthew
(under his breath)
You write good.

Sully
Why do you say that?

Matthew
(pauses, holds up letter)
'Cause Pa can't write.

Sully stares at Matthew.

Brian (O.S.)
(calling to Matthew)

Read it again?

Matthew and Sully lock eyes.

Matthew

You always say, speak the truth.

Sully

This is one case where the truth would only hurt.

109A ON MIKE

looks at Sully, hears what he's saying.

110 WIDER SHOT

To include whole group.

Brian

Please...

Matthew turns and walks to Brian and Colleen. He holds up letter and starts to read.

Matthew

Dear children...

111 CLOSE ON MIKE

thinking about her standards of honesty, and when it's appropriate to tell the truth.

112 EXT. EMILY'S HOME - NIGHT

Mike walks up the steps to the porch where she hesitated on her last visit. This time, she walks with a sure step. Raps on the door.

113 INT. EMILY'S HOME - NIGHT

Seven women are seated at the table, blocking out the design for a new quilt. Mike stands close by.

Mike
I want to speak to you about Harriet.

Emily
(sighs)
I wish to God she hadn't eaten those peaches.

Mike
It wasn't the peaches.

The women all look up and stare at Mike, except for Olive, who continues working.

Mike
She brought her children to me for vaccinations the day before she died. I saw she was in pain, but she made light of it and I didn't examine her. I should have, because the next day, her appendix burst.

Olive
Appendix!

Emily
Are you saying she needn't have died?

Mike
I don't know. It may have been too late for me -- or anyone -- to help her. But if I'd seen it, I could have tried.

The room is deathly still.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED:

Mike
I know I sometimes act as if I have all the answers.
(looks at Olive)
But I don't. I make mistakes, and this is one...
(voice catches)
... I must learn from.
(beat)
And live with.

Everyone's quiet a moment.

Emily
I appreciate your comin'. Didn't have to.

Mike
I wanted you to know the truth.

No one speaks. Mike starts for the door.

114 CLOSE ON MIKE

as she prepares to walk out alone.

Olive (O.S.)
Hold on there!

115 BACK TO SCENE

Mike turns to face the group. She doesn't know what to expect -- anger, condemnation. She braces.

Olive
(indicating chair beside her)
We got an empty seat here.

116 ON MIKE

Relief washes over her. The women have accepted her, mistakes and all. She walks to the chair and sits down. Women resume their work. CAMERA PULLS BACK as we...

FADE
OUT.

THE END

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