

Promises, Promises

Written by Kathryn Ford

Directed by Jerry Jameson

Rev. Blue, August 15, 1995

Rev. Pink, August 17, 1995

Cast List

MICHAELA QUINN
SULLY
MATTHEW
COLLEEN
BRIAN
LOREN
DOROTHY
JAKE
HANK
HORACE
GRACE
ROBERT E
PRESTON

FEATURED EXTRAS: CUSTOMER WAITS BY BIN FOR DOROTHY

BACKGROUND: TOWNSFOLK
CUSTOMERS

ANIMALS:
FLASH

Set List

EXTERIORS: TRAIN STATION
TELEGRAPH OFFICE
BARBERSHOP
GENERAL STORE
COUNTRY ROAD

**SMALL COUNTRY HOUSE
GRACE'S CAFE
HOMESTEAD
CORRAL
GENERAL STORE (BACK ALLEY)***

**INTERIORS: TELEGRAPH OFFICE
BARBERSHOP
GENERAL STORE
HOMESTEAD
BRIAN'S BEDROOM
MIKE AND SULLY'S BEDROOM
GENERAL STORE (STORAGE ROOM)*
CLINIC (PATIENT ROOM)
CLINIC (EXAM ROOM)
SCHOOLHOUSE
BACK OF LIVERY
BARN**

Prod. 2244-0111 "Happy Birthday" (Pink) November 4, 1992 1.

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. TRAIN STATION - ESTABLISHING (STOCK) - DAY ONE

The train takes a station-stop outside the Telegraph Office.

**HORACE (V.O.)
Got the medicine you ordered...**

2 INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY ONE

HORACE hands a package and letter to MIKE.

HORACE

And a letter from Boston.

MIKE

More marital advice from my mother, no doubt.

HORACE

From what I can see, you two're doin' just fine.

MIKE

(pleased it shows)

... We are.

HORACE

Oh, almost forgot. Sully got a letter, too.

He ducks under the counter to retrieve it. Mike is surprised.

MIKE

Sully? A letter?

HORACE

From Virginia City, Nevada. Can't figure how I'd forget this, made the whole pouch smell real nice.

(hands to Mike)

Don't see much fancy writin' like that, neither.

Mike considers the handwriting, brings the letter to her nose.

HORACE

Lilacs, I'm guessin'.

As Mike contains her reaction:

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3 INT. BARBERSHOP - DAY ONE

JAKE shaves **LOREN**, who's wearing a new black suit and high spirits. **HANK** watches, continuing his fishing expedition.

HANK
A bath in the middle a the week?

JAKE
And two shaves before lunch.

HANK
New suit 'n hat... Somethin's brewin'.

Enjoying his mystique, Loren starts to **WHISTLE**. Annoyed, Jake's razor hovers dangerously close to Loren's mouth.

JAKE
Warned ya 'bout that noise, 'less you're lookin' to lose a lip.

The whistling ceases immediately. Jake finishes the shave.

HANK
Man's s'pose to confide in his friends.

JAKE
Told ya, he ain't talkin'.

HANK
He'll talk to me...

Loren rises, splashes on cologne, grabs his hat, then turns to go. Hank steps into his path.

HANK
Won't ya?

Grinning, Loren ceremoniously dons his hat, resumes his **WHISTLE** and steps around Hank to exit. Jake shoots Hank a dry look.

JAKE
Good work.

4 EXT. BARBERSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Loren steps into the street as COLLEEN and BRIAN rush up.

BRIAN
Hey, Mr Bray! We got it done, just the way you want!

COLLEEN
Flowers and lace cloth and --

(CONTINUED)

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4 CONTINUED:

Loren quickly pulls them aside, assuring their privacy.

LOREN
Fine, fine. Got your two-bits each, like I promised.

As he digs for money, Colleen and Brian exchange looks.

BRIAN
Colleen 'n me already decided. We ain't takin' your money.

COLLEEN
We're contributin' to the cause.

Loren is touched by their gesture.

LOREN

Alright, but it's a secret. So don't go flappin' to nobody.

They nod and start off, then Brian hesitates. He returns to offer his hand to Loren, man to man.

BRIAN
Good luck, Mr Bray.

5 INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY ONE

DOROTHY observes Mike staring right through a stack of clothes. She comes over.

DOROTHY
You wantin' a particular colour?

MIKE
(startled)
Oh, I... I haven't decided yet.

Mike feigns sudden interest in the clothes. Dorothy grabs one.

DOROTHY
Well, mostly these come in red. And then sometimes... they're red.

She unfurls the men's red longjohns. Mike colours.

DOROTHY
Would you like to talk about it?

MIKE
It's nothing... Really.

She takes the longjohns to put back. Dorothy is clearly hurt.

(CONTINUED)

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5 CONTINUED:

DOROTHY

Oh Michaela, after all that book mess, I thought I had your confidence back.

Mike realizes her dismissal was misunderstood.

MIKE

Of course you do. It's just... I feel silly.

(considers Dorothy, then plunges ahead)

A letter came for Sully today. From a woman. Perfumed.

(convincing herself)

There must be dozens of reasons for a lady to write my husband... I just can't think of one.

DOROTHY

I'm sure there's an explanation.

Mike nods. As Dorothy offers a reassuring touch --

LOREN (O.S.)

Sorry folks -- store's closin'!

They look up to see Loren ushering Customers to the door with AD LIBS "good day", "come back tomorrow."

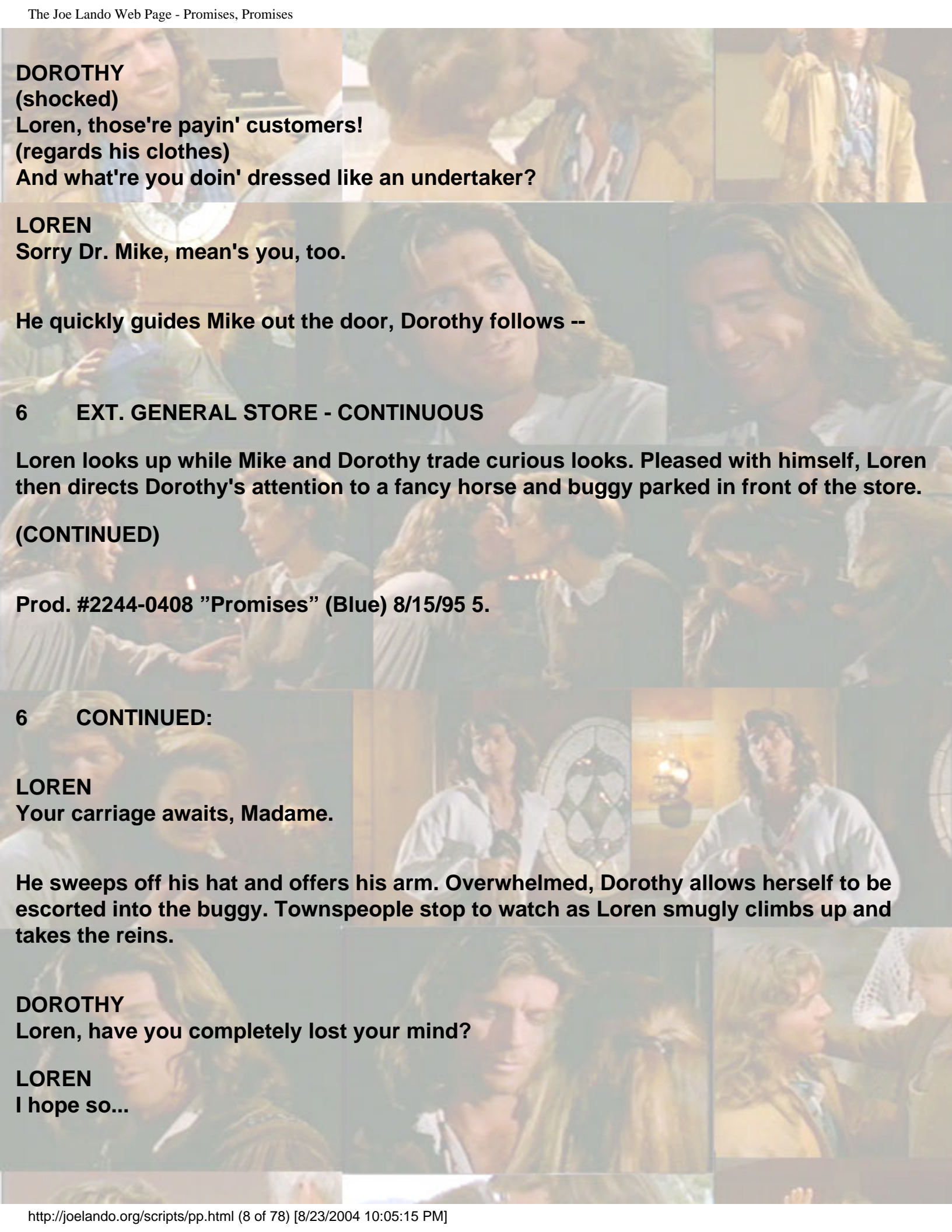
DOROTHY

What on earth?

They hurry over as Loren eases out the last baffled customer.

LOREN

Right this way, come back again.



DOROTHY
(shocked)
Loren, those're payin' customers!
(regards his clothes)
And what're you doin' dressed like an undertaker?

LOREN
Sorry Dr. Mike, mean's you, too.

He quickly guides Mike out the door, Dorothy follows --

6 EXT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Loren looks up while Mike and Dorothy trade curious looks. Pleased with himself, Loren then directs Dorothy's attention to a fancy horse and buggy parked in front of the store.

(CONTINUED)

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6 CONTINUED:

LOREN
Your carriage awaits, Madame.

He sweeps off his hat and offers his arm. Overwhelmed, Dorothy allows herself to be escorted into the buggy. Townspeople stop to watch as Loren smugly climbs up and takes the reins.

DOROTHY
Loren, have you completely lost your mind?

LOREN
I hope so...

He snaps the reins and they start off. Dorothy turns back to catch Mike's enthusiastic wave from the boardwalk.

As the buggy pauses, Jake steps from his shop to watch.

7 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY ONE

A moment later. Loren drives Dorothy into the countryside.

DOROTHY
Why can't you just say what we're doin'?
(silence, feels his forehead, teasing)
Well, you don't have a fever.

LOREN
Never felt better in my life.

DOROTHY
(a look around)
It is a lovely day.

LOREN
(a glance at her)
It is.

They round a grove of trees to come upon a small country house.

DOROTHY
Ain't this the Sorena place?

LOREN
Not for long. Moved to Denver.

He stops the buggy at the porch where a romantic lunch is spread out over a lace cloth (handiwork of Brian and Colleen).

(CONTINUED)

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7 CONTINUED:

LOREN
It's got a fine sittin' porch, with boxes for them pink flowers you like so much. And a real parlour inside where you can write without smelling cigars and old saddles.

Taking in the sight, Dorothy grows still; uneasy.

LOREN
I wanna buy it for you, Dorothy.
(OFF her silence)
I asked ya once a long time ago, and I'm gonna ask you now --

DOROTHY
Loren...

LOREN
But I'll never ask you again. So I want you promisin' you won't go answerin' me right off. Not 'til you had time to sleep on it.


His look is determined. Dorothy can't help but concede.

DOROTHY
Alright.

LOREN
(takes her hand)
Nobody'll ever love you as much as I do. Always have. And there's nothin' I've wanted more in this life than to see you happy... I promise to take good care of you, Dorothy. I want you to marry me.

Loren kisses her with passion. The surprise of the house and romance and proposal all swirl around Dorothy. And she finds herself giving in to the moment, and the kiss, as we:

FADE OUT.



END TEASER

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:



8 EXT. GRACE'S CAFE - DAY ONE

Dorothy sits alone, suffering the aftershock of the afternoon. Mike enter and rushes over. As she sits:



MIKE

Dorothy, I'm sorry. Lizzy's ankle took longer than expected.

(OFF Dorothy's look)

Are you alright?

DOROTHY

Loren asked me to marry him.



MIKE

Oh...

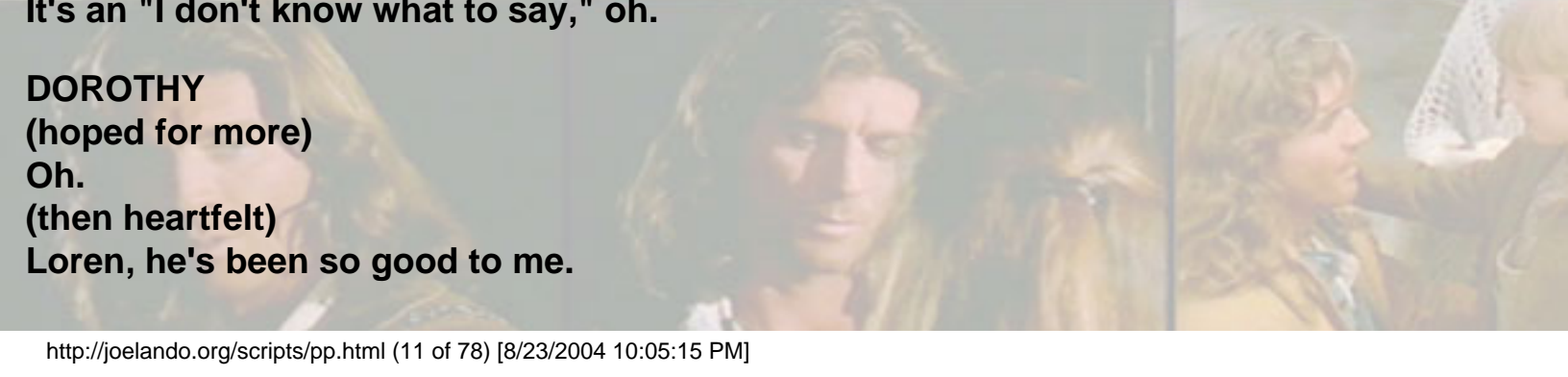
DOROTHY

That s'pose to be a "I'm thrilled for my best friend" oh? Or a "oh, I can't believe she's even thinkin' 'bout it?"

MIKE

(delicately)

It's an "I don't know what to say," oh.



DOROTHY

(hoped for more)

Oh.

(then heartfelt)

Loren, he's been so good to me.

MIKE
Do you love him?

DOROTHY
'Course I love him. I just ain't sure if I... love him. In that way. The way I felt for Marcus in the beginning.
(beat, the irony)
And look how that turned out.

Mike sympathizes with her friend's confusion. She waits.

(CONTINUED)

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8 CONTINUED:

DOROTHY
Life's comfortable with Loren. Maybe it's wrong to still be hopin' for that special spark with a man. It ain't like I'm in my spring --

MIKE
You're not too old. And it's never wrong to want to feel... more alive.

DOROTHY
(brightens)
That is how I feel, Michaela. It seems like the whole world's openin' up to me; bein' on my own, with my book and the newspaper, now the train comin' to town. And I wanna grab it all.

(beat)
Then sometimes at night in bed -- I reach out, wishin' somebody was there to share it with.

(OFF Mike's silence)
You won't go sayin' nothin' to folks 'bout him askin'?

Mike shakes no. She sees GRACE approaching and gives her a slight wave. Grace takes the hint and moves on by. A beat.

MIKE

I can remember sitting here once, so confused about love. Do you remember what you said?

(sees she doesn't)

You told me to take all the time I needed, and to really listen to my heart... You were right.

DOROTHY

(beat, pointed)

I got 'til tomorrow mornin'. And if I say no this time, I'm gonna lose him for good.

The thought is clearly distressing, and they both fall silent.

9 EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - PORCH - DAY ONE

Loren's changed his clothes, all remnants of the picnic gone. Sully examines the frame around the tiny, front window.

(CONTINUED)

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9 CONTINUED:

LOREN

I know how Dorothy likes lookin' out at things when she writes. Helps her think.

Sully is focused, thumps the wood.

LOREN

She deserves to live in a real house. I been savin' since the day she come back. Promised myself I'd buy her the biggest window I could find.

Sully stops working to smile at Loren's excitement. FOOTSTEPS are heard from inside, prompting Loren to lean in close.

LOREN
Listen, Sully, I don't want nobody knowin' I asked her. Not 'til she answers official.

SULLY
Sure...
(turns to window)
Wood's still solid. Can't see a problem puttin' in a bigger window.

PRESTON steps from the house onto the porch.

PRESTON
I'd say your offer is more than fair, Loren. Tomorrow I'll wire the Sorenas, and you should expect an answer by week's end.

Exuberant, Loren shakes Preston's hand.

LOREN
I'm gonna take one more look...

Preston steps aside to let him pass, then regards Sully.

PRESTON
You're a curious man, Sully. You'd turn down the opportunity to build my entire home, and then accept this... patch work?

SULLY
Man does for his friends.

Sully walks off, leaving Preston something to chew on.

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10 INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT ONE

MATTHEW has joined Mike, Sully, Colleen and Brian for dinner. As they finish dessert, Colleen offers more pie.

COLLEEN
There's one more piece?

MATTHEW
'Nother bite and I'd pop.

BRIAN
I got room.

She serves Brian as Mike grabs the coffee. Matthew stretches:

MATTHEW
Feels like I'm storin' for winter.

MIKE
(hinting)
You could just come to supper more often.

MATTHEW
Maybe I will.

Meeting her smile, he holds out his cup. As Mike refills it:

MATTHEW
Saw Loren and Dorothy ride out together today. Wonder if those two'll ever get hitched.

Mike strays from his cup, pouring coffee onto the table.

MATTHEW
Watch out!

MIKE
Oh, I'm sorry --

She wipes it up as Colleen and Brian sneak uneasy glances. Sully looks to Matthew, all innocence:

SULLY
What makes ya say that?

MATTHEW
Don't take a fool to see how they care for each other.

An awkward silence as each struggles to honour "their" secret.

(CONTINUED)

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10 CONTINUED:

MIKE
Of course they... care for each other. It doesn't necessarily mean they should marry.

SULLY
But maybe they should.

COLLEEN
If Mr. Bray ever asked --

MIKE
Which he probably won't --

COLLEEN
Right.

SULLY
But if he did ask... Think Dorothy'd say yes?

He looks directly at Mike, who stares back, clearly trapped. Matthew watches, a little thrown by the bizarre exchange.

BRIAN
I say she should. They're practically married anyways.

He reacts to Colleen's kick under the table. Mike sits back, relieved.

SULLY
It ain't the same, Brian, just 'cause they're both livin' at the store... When a man and woman marry, they're makin' certain kinds 'a promises to each other.

He reaches over and takes Mike's hand, triggering her memory.

MIKE
Oh, I forgot. A letter came for you today.

SULLY
You're jokin'. From who?

Mike pulls the letter from a pocket and hands it to Sully, closely watching his incredulous reaction.

MIKE
Initials D.S. From Nevada?

COLLEEN
You know somebody in Nevada?

(CONTINUED)

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10 CONTINUED: (2)

But Sully isn't listening. He tears open the letter, rising.

SULLY
'Scuse me.

And he drifts outside, reading. Mike watches, unsettled.

11 EXT. HOMESTEAD - PORCH - NIGHT ONE

Later. Sully sits on the steps lost in a memory. Mike comes outside with mugs of coffee. Tentative, she joins him.

MIKE
A good letter?

Smiling, he nods, takes the coffee. It's hard for Mike to ask.

MIKE
From someone special?

SULLY
Yeah. Go back more'n twenty years... Even partners once.

Mike works to keep her insecurities in check.

MIKE
She must be quite a friend, then.

SULLY
(nods, then reacts)
She?

MIKE
D.S.

SULLY
Daniel?

MIKE
(unexpected)
Who's Daniel?

SULLY
(confused)
My friend.

He holds up the letter. Mike is uncertain what to make of it.

MIKE

And your friend always uses lilac water when he writes?

(CONTINUED)

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11 CONTINUED:

SULLY

Daniel can't write. He had some lady in town...

He stops, realizing from Mike's reaction what she had thought. Sully waits as Mike tries to regain some dignity.

MIKE

Do I look as foolish as I feel?

SULLY

I think you're beautiful when you're jealous.

Grinning, he pulls her to him. They share a close moment.

MIKE

So, tell me about your friend.

SULLY

Daniel Simon. Met 'im after my folks died. We sorta grew up together on the docks. Then when they found gold at Pike's Peak, we come west, wound up workin' the mines... He saved my life once.

MIKE

Then I owe him.

SULLY

Me, too.

(watching Mike)

Made him a promise, if he ever needed anything -- I'd be there.

MIKE

Why haven't you ever told me about him?

SULLY

Never come up. Haven't heard from 'im in years... When I met Abigail, Daniel moved on. Far as I knew, he's been lookin' for the elephant ever since.

MIKE

The elephant?

SULLY

Gold. Looks like he finally found it in Virginia City.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

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11 CONTINUED: (2)

SULLY (CONT'D)

He wants me to come out, help 'im set up the workin's.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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11 CONTINUED: (3)

SULLY (CONT'D)

(hands letter over)

Even sent a two-way ticket for the train.

Mike finds the ticket folded inside. She skims the letter.

MIKE

Well, I'm sure Horace can refund the ticket.

She misses his reaction; a refund never occurred to Sully. As Mike looks up, something out in the yard catches her attention.

MIKE

Someone's coming.

He looks out at the FIGURE approaching in the dark. They rise.

SULLY

Who's there?

DOROTHY (O.S.)

Sully?... Michaela?

MIKE

Dorothy?

A strained and exhausted Dorothy steps into their light --

12 INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT ONE

Mike and Dorothy shake out a sheet, making the bed together.

DOROTHY

I feel just awful...

MIKE

Don't. Brian thanks you for the excuse to sleep in the barn, believe me.

She sees Dorothy's distress just beneath the tight facade.

MIKE

Dorothy, you're our friend. You stay as long as you need to.

Dorothy manages an appreciative smile.

DOROTHY

I couldn't think at the store. Seein' Loren every time I turned, watchin' me...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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12 CONTINUED:

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

So I went for a walk. And just kept goin'.

(sinks onto the bed, miserable)

It was wrong of me, livin' all this time under the same roof. I been takin' advantage of Loren's good nature.

MIKE

You haven't taken advantage of anyone. Dorothy, you're just... confused about your feelings.

A beat. Dorothy looks at Mike with sudden resolve.

DOROTHY

Well, I ain't confused anymore.

13 INT. SULLY AND MIKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT ONE

Sully sits on the floor leaning back against the bed. He stares into the fire. Mike enters, interrupting his thoughts.

SULLY
Dorothy alright?

MIKE
She will be.

Mike drops a blanket by Sully to sit on. As she settles down:

MIKE
Loren asked her to marry him... She's telling him "no" in the morning.

SULLY
Loren's gonna be heartbroken.

Mike nods, knowingly. Sully puts his arm around her and they snuggle, staring at the fire.

MIKE
I don't know what I would've done if you hadn't wanted me.

SULLY
But I did.

Sully meets her warm gaze, then kisses her. Mike responds, clearly in the mood. She kisses his ear, moving to his eyes...

(CONTINUED)

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13 CONTINUED:

MIKE
Can't imagine my life without you now...

And back to his mouth. But something has clicked for Sully.

Dorothy looks at the store and hesitates.

MIKE

I should be at the clinic all day, if you need me.

Dorothy meets her look with an appreciative nod, steels herself and then moves on to the door. Sully climbs back up with Mike.

SULLY

Got time for that talk now?

(CONTINUED)

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14 CONTINUED:

Mike smiles shyly, remembering last night. Grinning, he takes the reins and starts the wagon around.

DOROTHY (O.S.)

Loren, open the door... Loren?!

Their attention goes back to the store where Dorothy BANGS on the door. She stops to peer in the windows. Jake comes over. Sully stops the wagon. Dorothy turns back to them, puzzled.

DOROTHY

He's got the place locked.

JAKE

Been closed like that all mornin'. What's he 'spectin' us to do?

Growing concerned, Dorothy peers closer through the windows.

MIKE
Perhaps he's around back?

Sully helps Mike from the wagon as Dorothy moves down the walk to another window. She looks in ... and reacts with horror.

DOROTHY
Oh my Lord!... Loren!

The others rush to her side to peer in.

15 THEIR POV - THROUGH WINDOW

Loren lies still on the floor, collapsed by the counter.

16 RESUME ANGLE

Dorothy cries out with alarm. Mike runs back to the wagon for her medical bag as the others race to the front door.

DOROTHY
Help him! Please, hurry!

Jake throws his shoulder hard into the door, then bangs against it again and again frantically.

SULLY (O.S.)
Back off!

Seeing Sully pull his tomahawk, Jake yanks Dorothy away as Sully chops through the glass.

ROBERT E, Hank and other Townsfolk come running as Sully reaches in and unlocks

the door.

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17 INT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Mike returns to join Sully, Jake, Dorothy, Hank and Robert E rushing in to Loren. Mike drops to check his pupils. She quickly loosens his tie and collar and then feels for a pulse. Dorothy watches, frozen with fear. An interminable beat.

MIKE
He's alive... Barely.

Mike looks up with little relief. ON Dorothy's reaction, we:

FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE

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ACT TWO

FADE IN:

18 INT. CLINIC - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY TWO

Loren lies comatose in bed. Colleen takes his temperature while Mike checks reflexes in his feet. Finished, Mike grabs a lamp and moves to Loren's face. She lifts each eyelid, watching reactions to light. Colleen reads the thermometer.

COLLEEN
Still the same, ninety-seven.

MIKE

At least it isn't climbing.

She sets the lamp aside and feels for his pulse. Mike is clearly shaken by Loren's condition, and Colleen notices.

COLLEEN

Is he gonna die?

Distracted, it takes a moment for Mike to respond.

MIKE

I don't know, Colleen.

COLLEEN

But you have seen this before?

MIKE

(beat)

... Yes.

She finally looks to Colleen, shifting back to her doctor mode.

MIKE

It's critical we monitor all his vital signs closely. Any change could lead to another rupture.

COLLEEN

I'll count his respirations again.

As Colleen begins counting, Mike studies Loren with concern.

19 INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY TWO

Dorothy stands alone in the empty, quiet room, crushing Loren's hat tightly against her chest. As she smells his hat, the SOUND of crunched glass startles her. Dorothy spins around --

(CONTINUED)

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19 CONTINUED:

Jake stands inside the broken door, watching her. Dorothy sees his grim expression and her heart sinks, knowing:

(CONTINUED)

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19 CONTINUED: (2)

DOROTHY
Loren's dead.

JAKE
No... he's alive.

Dorothy goes weak, grabs the table to steady herself.

DOROTHY
Thank you, God... Thank you.

She closes her eyes for a silent prayer. Jake watches with a mixture of emotions, fighting the urge to go to her. After a beat, Dorothy tearfully looks back at him.

DOROTHY
I was so afraid... Couldn't stand the waitin' anymore.

Their sudden intimacy makes Jake uncomfortable. He clears his throat.

JAKE

He ain't awake yet, but Dr. Mike says you can see 'im.

Dorothy walks quickly past him and out the door... leaving Jake behind; alone and anguished.

20 INT. CLINIC - EXAM ROOM - DAY TWO

Mike sits downstairs alone, waiting, lost in a painful memory. Dorothy enters, jolting Mike back to the present. Dorothy steels herself, reading Mike's grave expression as she rises.

MIKE

Dorothy - I thought it best if we talk here first.

DOROTHY

What's happened to him?

MIKE

Won't you have a seat?
(gently coaxing)
Please, just for a minute?

Dorothy finally relents and joins Mike on the bench. It's a difficult moment for them both. Mike collects her thoughts.

MIKE

I believe Loren has suffered a cerebral haemorrhage. It's when an artery -- that carries blood -- ruptures inside the brain.

(CONTINUED)

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20 CONTINUED:

Dorothy is unnerved. She struggles to stay composed.

DOROTHY
It sounds bad.

MIKE
His condition is serious, yes... But depending on the amount of damage the rupture causes, some patients completely recover or suffer only mild impediments.

DOROTHY
And the others?
(OFF Mike's hesitation)
Michaela, I need to know the worst.

MIKE
The next twenty-four hours will be critical. If he doesn't come out of the coma by tomorrow...

She doesn't have to finish. Dorothy chokes back her fear.

DOROTHY
And the worst if he lives?

MIKE
(with difficulty)
Paralysis to one side of his body. Loss of speech... Confusion...
(as Dorothy reacts)
But that won't necessarily happen to Loren. We can't know the extent of any real damage until after he wakes.

DOROTHY
If he wakes...

OFF Mike's nod, Dorothy stands; her defences crumbling.

DOROTHY
I should've been there this mornin'...

Mike quickly rises, pulling Dorothy around to face her.

MIKE

Dorothy, no. Nothing you could've done would have prevented this. Nothing.

Dorothy takes a moment to pull herself together.

(CONTINUED)

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20 CONTINUED: (2)

DOROTHY

So... What can I do now?

MIKE

Say a prayer. Sit with him. He's not awake, but I have come to believe...
(how to explain?)

I think he'll know you're there.

CLOSE on Dorothy's reaction.

21 INT. SCHOOLHOUSE - DAY TWO

Brian sadly sits at his desk in the empty room. LAUGHTER and YELLING drifts in from the schoolyard where children play.

Mike has been watching Brian from the door behind. She comes inside and sits next to him. Her sudden presence makes his tears harder to fight, but Brian's determined not to cry.

BRIAN

I never knew my grandparents, Sully's folks are gone... So's your pa.

He looks to Mike who painfully nods...

BRIAN

Mr. Bray's 'bout the best thing to a grandpa I ever had.

MIKE

And hopefully he'll stay that way, for a long time to come.

But Brian shakes his head with a calm certainty.

BRIAN

He's gonna die, just like Ma and Ingrid and everybody else.

A difficult beat. Mike puts her arm around his shoulder.

MIKE

He could. But I think Loren might just surprise us all.

Brian turns away, afraid to believe her. Mike feels helpless.

MIKE

Brian, I know you've lost so many people you love...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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21 CONTINUED:

MIKE (CONT'D)

I wish I could promise you that it won't ever happen again.

(emotions rising)

But what I really wish, is that I could hold you in my lap, and rock you, and try to make your hurt go away... But I suppose you're too old and grown up to let me do that now.

Brian nods stoically, without looking at her. Mike goes on, trying to find a way.

MIKE

Sometimes though, even grown-ups get scared. And they need to sit and hold on to somebody they love... And just feel sad.

Wiping his eyes, Brian studies Mike's face for a thoughtful moment. He's affected by her sudden, surprising fragility.

BRIAN

'That how you feel now?

MIKE

... Yes.

Brian puts an arm lovingly around Mike. And relieved, she pulls the boy to her. As they both let go of their tears --

BRIAN

Me, too.

And mother and son hold on tightly, comforting each other.

22 INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY TWO

Dorothy numbly watches Colleen replace the warm compresses on Loren's arms. Colleen then feels his face for any change in temperature. She anticipates Dorothy's question.

COLLEEN

His temperature's stayin' down. Ma says that's a good sign.

Dorothy forces an appreciative smile, then:

DOROTHY

Colleen, would it be alright if Loren and me had a moment alone?

COLLEEN

... 'Course.

(CONTINUED)

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22 CONTINUED:

Colleen gathers towels to go, but hesitates next to Dorothy.

COLLEEN

Miss Dorothy --

DOROTHY

I'm fine, dear. Thank you.

She pats Colleen's hand reassuringly, and Colleen exits. And as the door closes, Dorothy's stoic facade finally crumbles. She covers her mouth to hold back her sobs, staring at Loren. Then, mustering some control, she touches his hand.

DOROTHY

You listen to me, Loren Bray -- don't you dare go 'n die on me. We got too many things to do. We've got them pink flowers to get planted, and a porch to get ready for sittin'... And there's that trip to Denver you always talk 'bout makin' together...

(composure slips)

And I miss that grin of yours when you say hello to me in the mornin'... So you fight. You hear me? You fight to live... Please.

She studies his face for any sign that says he hears. Nothing. A resolve washes over Dorothy and she leans closer, softly:

DOROTHY

I'm sayin' yes, Loren. Yes, I will marry you.

Then, at a loss, Dorothy tenderly kisses his cheek.

23 EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY TWO (DUSK)

Matthew holds the door steady as Robert E and Sully edge in a newly framed glass-panel into one of two openings.

ROBERT E
Think this'll do nicely...

SULLY
It's good work, Robert E.

ROBERT E
I'll get right on the other one.

SULLY
We can finish in the mornin'.

(CONTINUED)

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Blue) 8/15/95 25.

23 CONTINUED:

ROBERT E
(shakes his head)
Grace's busy fixin' food for the clinic. May's well get this done now, 'fore Loren wakes up yellin' at us for breakin' it.

They trade wry smiles and Robert E heads off. Matthew hands a hammer to Sully and together they start tacking in the frame.

SULLY

Got a favour to ask you, Matthew.

MATTHEW

Anything. You know that.

SULLY

If I had to go 'way for a while, could you move to the homestead, watch after the family?

MATTHEW

This got somethin' to do with that letter?

SULLY

He's a old friend who's askin' for my help. I'll be leavin' soon as I know Loren's alright.

MATTHEW

He in some kind of trouble?

SULLY

Found gold in a river. A minin' town's no place to make friends. He needs a man he trusts to help get things goin' right.

MATTHEW

Long way to go just to give a friend a hand.

SULLY

**'Member me tellin' you 'bout that minin' cave-in I was trapped in?
(as Matthew nods)**

Daniel's the one who dug me out... Nevada ain't so far.

MATTHEW

What's Dr. Mike say 'bout you goin'?

(CONTINUED)

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Pink) 8/17/95 26.

23 CONTINUED: (2)

SULLY

Ain't had much time to talk yet... She'll understand.

As they continue working...

24 OMITTED

25 EXT. SALOON - DAY TWO (DUSK)

Jake drinks alone, studying the clinic. He throws back a whiskey on his way to a good drunk. Hank comes outside to join him, follows his look across the street.

HANK
Been up to see 'im yet?

Ignoring the question, Jake holds out his glass. Hank refills.

HANK
I seen a man once, had one 'a them "ruptures." Weren't much of a man left after that.

Jake turns away from the clinic to lean against the rail, his mood soured. Hank chuckles affectionately.

HANK
Never 'spect it'd happen to Loren. Always figured the ornery 'ole cuss'd out-live us all.

JAKE
Sure wish a man could drink in peace 'round here.

Hank stares at him, undaunted.

HANK
'Scuse me.

As Hank returns inside the saloon, Jake gulps his whiskey.

26 INT. CLINIC - PATIENT ROOM - DAY TWO (DUSK)

At the window, Dorothy stares down at the saloon and Jake, lost in her own thoughts. Behind her, Colleen finishes lighting a lantern while Mike gently tests the mobility of Loren's left arm. She tries to be hopeful.

(CONTINUED)

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Blue) 8/15/95 27.

26 CONTINUED:

MIKE

There's still only a slight contraction, if at all...
(lowers arm)
Would you take his pulse?

As Colleen grabs the pocket watch, Mike looks over at Dorothy. Worried for her friend, Mike goes over to her.

MIKE

You should try and get some rest. There's a cot next door, I promise to call if there's any change --

DOROTHY

I'm stayin', Michaela.

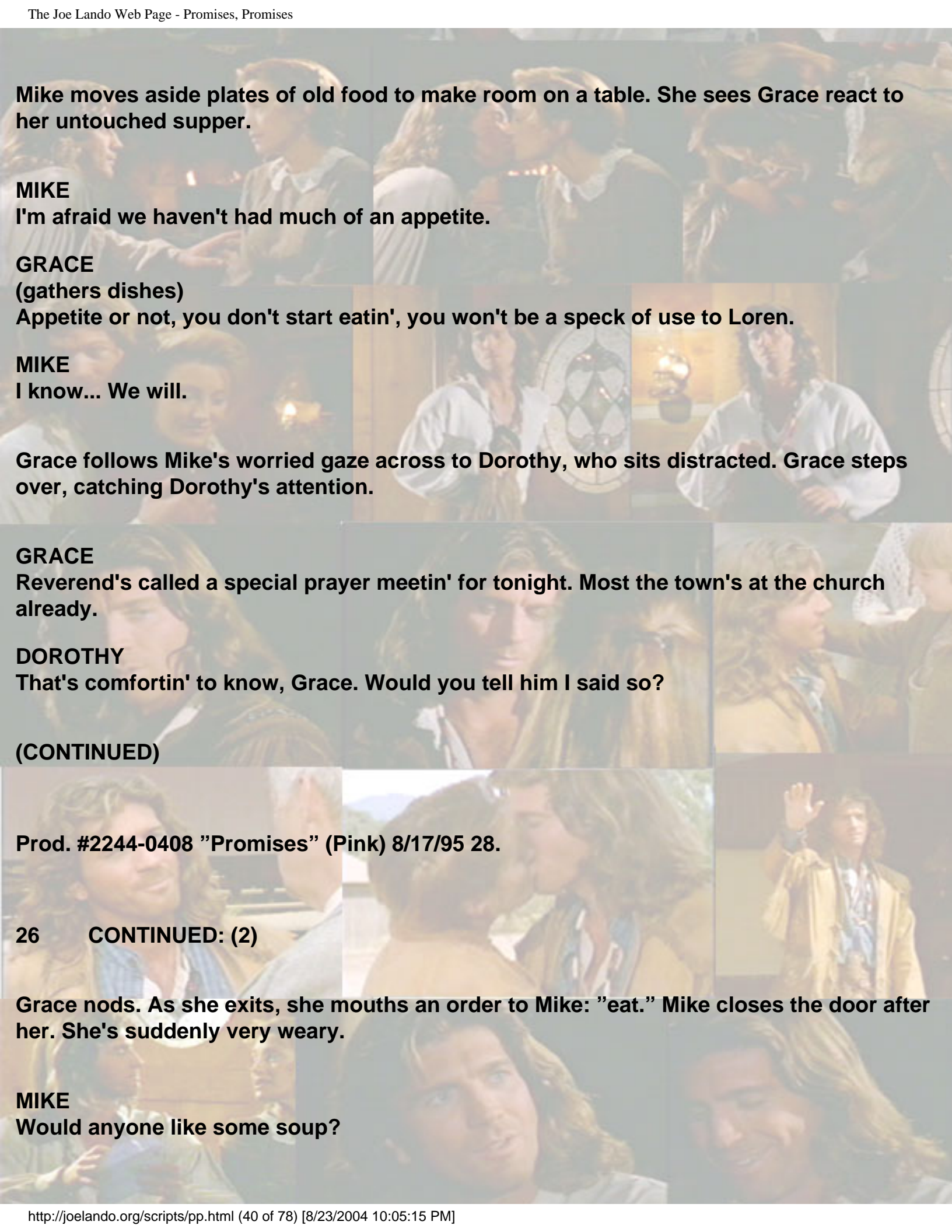
She returns to sit, taking Loren's free hand. Colleen finishes taking his pulse and shakes her head at Mike. As they share a concerned moment, there's a KNOCK. Grace bustles in.

GRACE

Thought you all could do with some hot soup.

MIKE

Thank you, Grace. Here --



Mike moves aside plates of old food to make room on a table. She sees Grace react to her untouched supper.

MIKE
I'm afraid we haven't had much of an appetite.

GRACE
(gathers dishes)
Appetite or not, you don't start eatin', you won't be a speck of use to Loren.

MIKE
I know... We will.

Grace follows Mike's worried gaze across to Dorothy, who sits distracted. Grace steps over, catching Dorothy's attention.

GRACE
Reverend's called a special prayer meetin' for tonight. Most the town's at the church already.

DOROTHY
That's comfortin' to know, Grace. Would you tell him I said so?

(CONTINUED)

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Pink) 8/17/95 28.

26 CONTINUED: (2)

Grace nods. As she exits, she mouths an order to Mike: "eat." Mike closes the door after her. She's suddenly very weary.

MIKE
Would anyone like some soup?

DOROTHY
Michaela...?

Dorothy stares at Loren, filling with hope. Mike quickly trades places with Colleen, grabbing the stethoscope.

DOROTHY
His hand moved, I felt it.

Mike studies Loren's face as she listens to his heart. Dorothy moves in closer, gently stroking his face.

DOROTHY
I'm right here, Loren... Wake up, dear. Please wake up...

They wait and watch... but Loren lies completely still. Disappointed, Mike pulls off her stethoscope and sits back.

DOROTHY
I know I felt somethin'.

MIKE
You probably did. I believe that side is the one affected. The muscles could be contracting.

Loren stirs, moving his head slightly. Colleen sees first.

COLLEEN
Ma!

They look as Loren opens his eyes, groggy. Relief fills the room as Mike quickly takes his pulse, watching his limbs for movement. Dorothy tearfully leans close to his face.

DOROTHY
I knew you'd wake up... You're gonna be fine, Loren. Just fine... Look, Michaela's right here.

She looks to Mike, who leans close so Loren can see her. Mike offers her most comforting smile.

MIKE
Hello, Loren. Welcome back...

Loren tries to speak, but only MUMBLES incomprehensibly. ON Mike's troubled reaction, we:

FADE OUT.

END ACT TWO

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Blue) 8/15/95 29.

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

27 INT. CLINIC - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY THREE

Two days later. Loren is propped up in bed, clearly depressed. Mike moves his left leg in the air, bending and raising it.

MIKE
It's important you keep working these muscles to get your strength back... And we must exercise your other side as well.

She lays the leg back down, covers it, then sits on the bed.

MIKE
Now, see if you can grab my arm.

She waits. Loren makes no effort, so she places his hand on her arm and raises both slightly.

MIKE

Can you push my arm down?

(nothing, a moment)

Loren, I know this is difficult. But from what I can determine, the damage is quite minimal. And with hard work and some patience, you should regain good use of your limbs... But you must try.

Beat. Still nothing. With patience, Mike begins exercising his arm herself. Brian bursts into the room, a book in hand.

BRIAN

Hey, Ma. Hey, Mr. Bray!

MIKE

Hello, Brian. How was school?

BRIAN

It was good. The Reverend told us about another story -- I found it in your Pa's library.

As he drags a chair over, Mike watches Loren for some reaction.

BRIAN

It's about this Green Knight who comes to King Arthur's round table, and he asks one of the knights to chop off his head...

(CONTINUED)

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Pink) 8/17/95 30.

27 CONTINUED:

Mike stops the exercises. Smiling at Loren, she rises to go.

MIKE

Well, I suppose we can finish this later.

Brian settles in, talking to Loren as though nothing was amiss.

BRIAN

It's written kinda funny, like that Shakespeare stuff, but you can help me with the hard words.

Touched by the boy's spirit, Mike exits. Brian opens the book.

BRIAN

You want somethin' 'fore I start?

A flicker of reaction. Loren looks at Brian and **MUMBLES**.

BRIAN

What'd ya say?

(as Loren mumbles)

Water? You want some water? Betcha get thirsty a lot, huh?

He pours a glass and holds it up for Loren, who dribbles down his front. Loren's humiliated, Brian's nonplussed.

BRIAN

'S alright, I spill sometimes too, when I'm not payin' attention.

Grabbing a towel, Brian gently wipes his friend's nightshirt...

28 EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY THREE

The store is a storm of activity. Dorothy rushes a crate of apples out to a Customer waiting by an empty bin.

DOROTHY

Tell Millie I gotta order more lace... These're a nickel apiece.

Dorothy plops down the crate and moves on to load potatoes. Hank catches her eye, leaving the store with a box of whiskey.

DOROTHY

Hank -- just where're you goin'?

HANK

Cash is on the counter...

(CONTINUED)

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Pink) 8/17/95 31.

28 CONTINUED:

He passes Mike approaching. Dorothy spots her.

DOROTHY

Oh, Michaela, I've been tryin' to close for more 'n an hour --

MIKE

There's no hurry, Brian just arrived with a new book.

DOROTHY

It's awful sweet of him, comin' every day like that.

MIKE

Brian loves doing it... Dorothy, you look exhausted. Are you getting any sleep at all?

DOROTHY

I'm fine. Just a little behind here. Be easier watchin' the store once Loren comes home.

She moves down the walk to stock onions. Mike helps her.

MIKE

Well, he's still quite dispirited.

DOROTHY

'Course he is, stuck up in that room for days. I could care for him myself right here.

(as Mike reacts)

Robert E's already fixin' up that old wheelchair. And I could put Loren downstairs in the back room.

MIKE

I'm not so sure that's wise.

DOROTHY

He's not still in any danger?

MIKE

No, but...

DOROTHY

Good. I can feed and dress him, and you can show me his exercises, how to get 'im in the wheelchair.

Mike is clearly uncomfortable with the plan.

(CONTINUED)

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Blue) 8/15/95 32.

28 CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE

I'm afraid Loren has... well, he has special needs right now.

DOROTHY

Michaela, I took care of a sick husband more 'n once. There'll be no surprises... Besides, you got your own family to get back to.

MIKE
Dorothy, I really think --

DOROTHY
(patience waning)
You're the one sayin' he's gotta want to get better, that cheerful surroundin's can help him.

(OFF Mike's silence)
Then it's settled. We'll move Loren home today.

Dorothy takes the empty crate inside. OFF Mike's reaction:

29 INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT THREE

Sully comes downstairs to find Mike wearily washing the dishes. He comes up behind and wraps his arms around her.

MIKE
I've missed you.

SULLY
Let's finish these later. I made us a fire down here.

Mike turns to face him. She appreciates the gesture, but...

MIKE
Actually, I was hoping to catch up on some sleep.

SULLY
'Course. Been a rough few days.

She sees his disappointment under his facade, then realizes:

MIKE
Sully, I forgot. You've been wanting to discuss something --

SULLY

'S alright. It'll wait.

(CONTINUED)

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Blue) 8/15/95 33.

29 CONTINUED:

MIKE

No, I'll be fine, really. I'll just put on some coffee.

She grabs the pot with renewed energy. He gently stops her.

SULLY

Michaela, we can talk about my plans tomorrow.

MIKE

Your plans?

SULLY

Yeah. My trip to Nevada... I told you 'bout it.

Mike pulls away from him in stunned disbelief.

MIKE

You said this man asked you to come. You didn't say anything about actually going.

SULLY

Askin' and goin's the same thing. Daniel's my friend.

MIKE

Well I don't believe he really is your friend.

Blindsided by her reaction, Sully is incredulous.

SULLY
You don't even know 'im!

MIKE
What kind of friend disappears for years, and then expects you to come running whenever he asks?

SULLY
That ain't how it is!

He realizes they're both yelling and forces calm. Mike turns away to store the cooking pots, banging them for effect.

SULLY
Michaela, it's just a few weeks... I gave 'im my word.

MIKE
What about your word to me?! You made promises to me, Sully. To these children --

(CONTINUED)

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Pink) 8/17/95 34.

29 CONTINUED: (2)

SULLY
And I ain't breakin' 'em! I'm takin' a trip.

MIKE
Because you obviously care more about this man than you do your own family!

Sully's stunned and confused. He pulls Mike around.

SULLY
What's wrong with you?... This ain't about who's more important. It's about my word meanin' somethin'!

MIKE

Would it mean something if I were sick?... Or Colleen or Brian? Would you leave us then?

SULLY

Those're just "what ifs" that ain't so --

MIKE

Or Loren.

SULLY

(stung, turns cold)

I seen Loren today. He understands why I gotta go.

MIKE

Well I don't understand... I don't understand at all.

Mike heads up the stairs fighting tears. She rounds the corner coming face to face with Brian and Colleen eavesdropping. They stare at each other, startled and upset -- then Mike rushes by. Downstairs, Sully is frustrated. As the door above SLAMS:

30 INT. STORE - STORAGE ROOM - DAY FOUR

The door opens, Dorothy cheerily enters pushing the wheelchair.

DOROTHY

Good mornin', Loren. Did you sleep well?

She discovers Loren struggling, tangled in bedsheets.

DOROTHY

Look at you, all tangled...

(CONTINUED)

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Blue) 8/15/95 35.

30 CONTINUED:

Dorothy hurries to the bed where she begins straightening the sheets. Loren avoids her eyes, extremely uncomfortable.

DOROTHY

It's so good havin' you home...

(beat, OFF his silence)

Loren, you gotta keep talkin'... Michaela says your words are just garbled 'cause the muscles by your mouth're tired...

(more silence, notices odour)

I should've aired this room out first.

She goes to the window and opens it. Loren mumbles.

LOREN

Go 'way!

Dorothy turns back, encouraged by his sudden effort.

DOROTHY

I most certainly will not go away.

Watching Loren avoid her look, she then realizes the source of the odour... And his humiliation. Dorothy goes back to the bed.

DOROTHY

Oh, Loren, you laid all night...? You shoulda called for me.

Loren struggles to turn away from her as he begins to weep. Dorothy's heart breaks. She forces her most reassuring smile.

DOROTHY

It's alright... Loren... Don't worry. I'll just get you some clean clothes.

She tries to touch him soothingly, but he only jerks away more. Helpless, Dorothy hurries out. HOLD on Loren's self-disgust...

31 INT. HOMESTEAD - DAY FOUR

The family finishes a strained breakfast. The tension between Mike and Sully is thick, each avoiding the other's eyes. Brian and Colleen are more interested in Sully's upcoming trip.

BRIAN
Is he givin' ya half his gold?

(CONTINUED)

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31 CONTINUED:

SULLY
No, Brian. I ain't goin' 'cause of money.

COLLEEN
But you said you were partners.

SULLY
We were. Once.

MIKE
That was a long time ago, Colleen.

Her zinger hits its target. Sully tenses as he explains.

SULLY

I'm goin' so I can keep a promise I made once... See, Daniel and me come west together. We were kinda like family.

BRIAN

'Fore you met us.

SULLY

Right.

COLLEEN

How come we never heard of him?

Sully feels Mike's eyes. He can't believe he's going through this again. He forces patience at the innocent question.

SULLY

It just never come up.

An uncomfortable beat. Mike rises to collect the dishes.

MIKE

I've decided to sleep in town tonight. I'm concerned about Dorothy caring for Loren alone.

She avoids Sully's cool gaze.

SULLY

Can't hide from this in town.

MIKE

I'm not hiding from anything. A friend needs my help... You should understand that.

OFF Sully's reaction, Mike carries the dishes to the kitchen. Brian and Colleen exchange looks. You could hear a pin drop...

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Blue) 8/15/95 37.

32 INT. STORE - STORAGE ROOM - DAY FOUR

A demoralized Loren, now dressed, sits on the edge of the bed, propping himself with his good arm. Dorothy squats before him, lacing his shoes in silence. It's been an unsettling start for them both, but Dorothy's working to put on her best face.

DOROTHY

It's a lovely day outside. Some sunshine'll do you wonders.

LOREN

Leave -- me -- here.

DOROTHY

Nonsense.

Finished, Dorothy brings the wheelchair to the bed. She stands before him and leans in, resting her chin on his shoulder.

DOROTHY

Now, put your arms around my neck... Help with your good arm.

When Loren doesn't budge, Dorothy straightens. Not unkindly:

DOROTHY

Loren Bray, I won't allow you to sit inside and mope all day. Now you can help me or not, but I'm takin' you out for a decent meal and a visit with your friends.

Loren's look is pitiful. She sympathizes, but can't give in.

DOROTHY

Suit yourself.

Dorothy leans in as if to hug him, placing his bad arm over her shoulder. Their faces are close, eyes locking for a confusing, bittersweet moment. Whatever dreams Loren held

for them, now seem hopelessly dashed. As Dorothy draws a breath and lifts --

33 EXT. GRACE'S CAFE - DAY FOUR

Grace circulates tables re-filling coffee. She comes upon Mike sitting alone, looking forlorn. Grace stops.

GRACE
Looks to me like somebody just lost their best friend.

MIKE
(looks up)
Sully and I had a terrible fight.

Mike's expression falls. Grace sits, sympathetic.

(CONTINUED)

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Pink) 8/17/95 38.

33 CONTINUED:

GRACE
Honeymoon can't go on forever.

MIKE
Disagreeing feels so different now that we're married. It hurts more.
(beat, curious)
Do you and Robert E ever fight?

GRACE
Does a dog bark?... Funny thing is, when we're spittin' mad at each other -- it's the times I'm sure I love Robert E the most.

MIKE

There's still so much I don't know about Sully.

GRACE

Discoverin' those things is half the fun of being married.

(refills Mike's cup)

Other half's the makin' up after the fight... And the bigger the fight, the sweeter makin' up.

Mike manages a half-hearted smile at Grace, as --

34 ANOTHER ANGLE - BACK OF LIVERY

Dorothy pushes a very unhappy Loren towards the cafe. As they pass, Robert E looks up from his work, gives them a wave.

ROBERT E

Miss Dorothy... Hey, Loren, good to see you up.

Loren shrinks in his wheelchair, too embarrassed to look.

DOROTHY

See? Folks're happy to see you. Look, there's Hank and Jake.

He recoils in horror as she pushes his chair over to Hank and Jake's table. The men are unsettled by the abrupt encounter.

DOROTHY

You gentlemen look like you could use some company.

HANK

Sure, have a seat.

(CONTINUED)

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Blue) 8/15/95 39.

34 CONTINUED:

He pulls away a chair for Dorothy to push Loren up. Loren can't look at his friends. A strained, awkward silence. Hank breaks the moment, looking to Dorothy.

HANK
Why don't you go visit with Michaela...?

Dorothy takes the hint and starts off but Loren grabs her by the wrist. Embarrassed, Dorothy struggles with his tight grip. Loren forces the words:

LOREN
Take -- me -- back!

Hank and Jake hide their reactions to his slurred speech.

DOROTHY
Loren... Please...

HANK
Better yet, stay with us.

She nods and sits. Defeated, Loren lets her go. Another awkward beat.

HANK
Y'know, Loren, you ain't lookin' half as bad as I figured.

JAKE
(guilty)
Yeah. Sorry I ain't been by yet.

Jake searches for an excuse. He's saved by Grace approaching.

GRACE

Hello, Loren, Dorothy. I got a real nice stew simmerin'?

DOROTHY

That sounds fine. And we'll take two of your ciders please.

As Grace heads off, Hank grins at Loren.

HANK

Sure you wouldn't rather have a real drink?

DOROTHY

Drinkin's not good for Loren's condition.

(CONTINUED)

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Blue) 8/15/95 40.

34 CONTINUED: (2)

HANK

Ain't seen a "condition" yet a good drink couldn't help.

He winks at Loren, who's feeling very much the child as the adults talk over him. Preston steps up to the table.

PRESTON

Good day everyone. Loren, I must say it's wonderful to see you up. You're looking quite well.

Loren won't look at him, knows it's bull. Preston shifts. Smiling at the others, he then leans in closer to Loren.

PRESTON

I thought you'd want to know, I decided it best to delay that little business we discussed... Until things are more settled.

(slaps Loren's back)
You'll let me know.

He tips his hat moving on, passing Grace returning with stew.

DOROTHY
What business was that, Loren?

Loren is growing agitated. He watches Grace serve their food. Suddenly he pushes himself back from the table. Dorothy jumps.

DOROTHY
Loren -- what're you doin'?

She pushes him back to the table, but he blocks with a hand.

LOREN
Take -- me -- home!

His bad arm flails, knocking the stew flying. Hank and Jake react, spattered. Humiliated, Loren pushes away hard, the chair spinning. Before Dorothy can react, Loren tries to stand and instantly collapses to the ground.

Watching from her table, Mike reacts and hurries over as Hank drops at Loren's side. He looks up at Jake.

HANK
Give me a hand, Jake.

But Jake stands frozen, shaken by the sight of his friend flailing helplessly in the dirt... Robert E gets there just as Mike does. They both help Hank turn and raise Loren.

ROBERT E
C'mon, Loren. You're alright.

(CONTINUED)

Prod. #2244-0408 "Promises" (Blue) 8/15/95 41.

34 CONTINUED: (3)

MIKE

Let's get him back to the store.

Hank scoops Loren up in his arms, shoots Dorothy a look, and starts off with Mike at his side. ON Dorothy's reaction, we:

FADE OUT.

END ACT THREE

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ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

35 EXT. GENERAL STORE - BACK ALLEY - DAY FOUR

Mike rounds the side of the store and finds Dorothy scrubbing clothes on a washboard. Dorothy glances up, but keeps working.

MIKE

Loren's resting comfortably now.

DOROTHY

How could I do that to him? He didn't wanna go, but I had to keep pushin'...

MIKE

You were just doing what you thought was best.

DOROTHY

I should've respected his wishes.

MIKE

(beat, with compassion)

His kind of condition -- it's not only difficult on the patient.

Dorothy turns away to hang clothes, battling her guilt. Mike proceeds, choosing her words carefully.

MIKE

I've been thinking, perhaps I misjudged the damage he suffered. I first thought because there was no actual paralysis, his muscles were simply weakened, and --

DOROTHY

What're you sayin'? That Loren might not get better?

MIKE

I'm saying... his recovery could be more difficult. And it is possible that he won't be able to do all that we expect he can.

Mike waits to let Dorothy digest this, then continues.

MIKE

Dorothy, I think it'd be wise to consider hiring him some help.

(CONTINUED)

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35 CONTINUED:

DOROTHY

Help. You mean like a nurse?

MIKE

Someone who's trained to care for his physical needs. Who can do the bathing and dressing, help with his exercises... Hopefully it would only be temporary.

Dorothy has grown quiet, staring at Mike in disbelief.

DOROTHY

You want me to hire a stranger to care for Loren?

(OFF Mike's discomfort)

That man took me into his home, when I was beaten, and broken...

Emotions rising, she turns back to her work.

MIKE

Dorothy, I don't deny you must feel tremendous loyalty. I'm merely suggesting this might be best for both of you. You can't possibly expect to care for Loren and manage the store and Gazette. And keep up with your writing --

DOROTHY

Then I stop writin'. I sell the store if I have to.

MIKE

And if Loren never walks again? Are you prepared for that life?

(gently pointed)

Dorothy, are you ready to give up your dreams?

Dorothy calmly turns to face Mike again.

DOROTHY

I'm gonna marry Loren.

Mike is caught completely by surprise. She stares at Dorothy, not knowing what to say.

DOROTHY

That first day when I thought he was dyin'... I made a promise.

Dorothy gathers her things into the laundry basket. Mike is overwhelmed by a sudden sadness for her friend.

(CONTINUED)

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35 CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE

Dorothy, before this happened --

DOROTHY

Keepin' promises's easy when it's convenient, Michaela. But easy don't count for much in life.

Dorothy leaves, her words touching something deep within Mike. OFF Mike's disarmed reaction:

36 INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY FOUR

Loren wears yet another change of clean clothes, sitting in his wheelchair staring out the window. Dorothy enters from a back room with a crate. The sight of Loren makes his humiliation fresh for her, but Dorothy shakes it off. She loads the crate.

DOROTHY

Thought you might like some time alone, so I'm ridin' supplies out to Lizzy's. I won't be too long.

She looks over, Loren is still. Dorothy lifts the crate to go.

DOROTHY

I left some buttered rolls on the counter if you get hungry.

Loren remains turned away from her. She stares helplessly at his back, then goes to the

door. Dorothy opens it and stops. She can't look at him.

DOROTHY

I'm sorry, Loren. I won't ever do that to you again.

Dorothy leaves closing the door. As she passes by the window, Loren clumsily pushes himself back and turns the chair...

37 EXT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Jake steps out to watch Dorothy load the back of a wagon. She looks over at him, making Jake very uncomfortable.

JAKE

How's Loren doin'?

DOROTHY

You could just ask 'im yourself.

JAKE

Well, I been kinda busy lately.

(CONTINUED)

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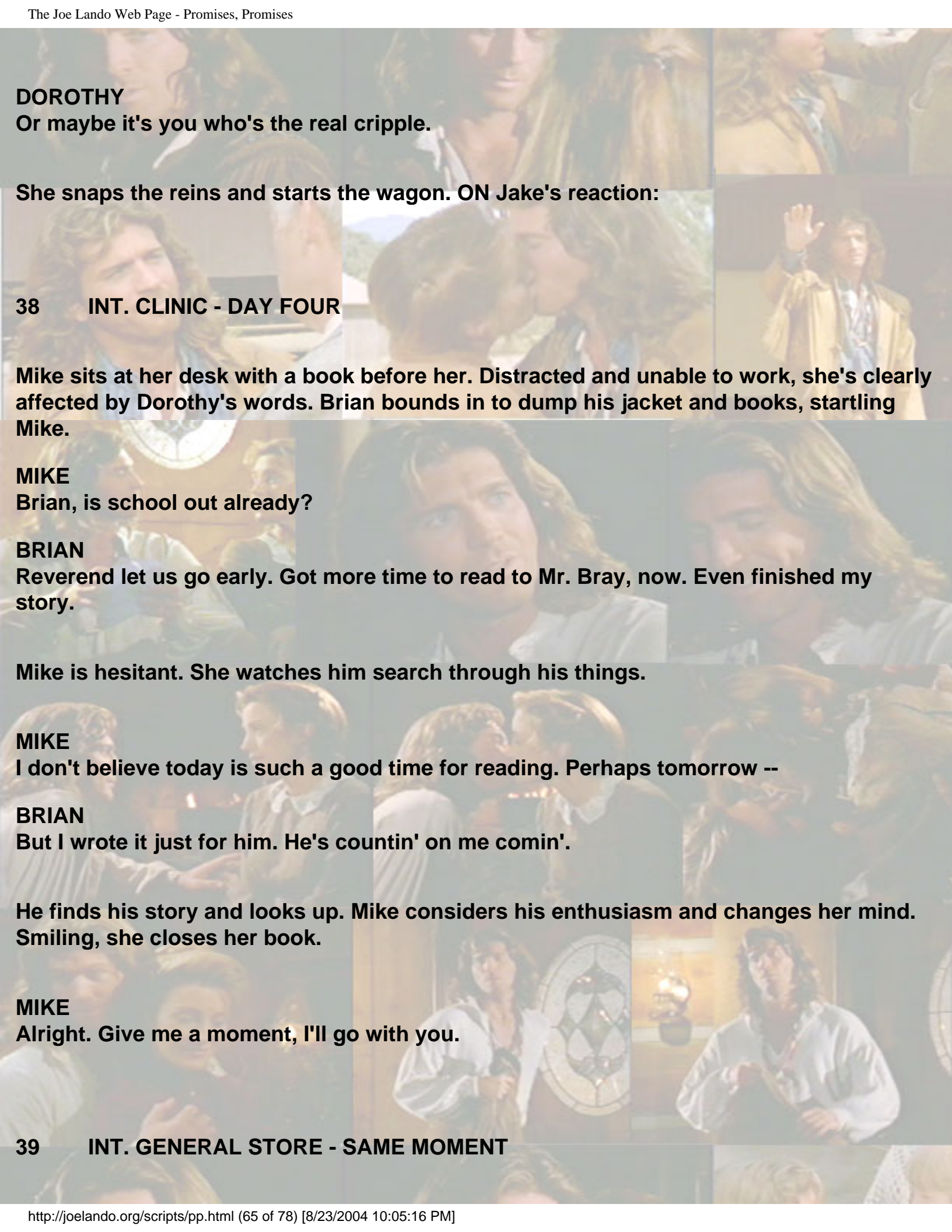
37 CONTINUED:

DOROTHY

(tart)

So I noticed... Must be hard, havin' a cripple for a friend.

Dorothy climbs aboard. She takes the reins, looks at Jake.



DOROTHY
Or maybe it's you who's the real cripple.

She snaps the reins and starts the wagon. ON Jake's reaction:

38 INT. CLINIC - DAY FOUR

Mike sits at her desk with a book before her. Distracted and unable to work, she's clearly affected by Dorothy's words. Brian bounds in to dump his jacket and books, startling Mike.

MIKE
Brian, is school out already?

BRIAN
Reverend let us go early. Got more time to read to Mr. Bray, now. Even finished my story.

Mike is hesitant. She watches him search through his things.

MIKE
I don't believe today is such a good time for reading. Perhaps tomorrow --

BRIAN
But I wrote it just for him. He's countin' on me comin'.

He finds his story and looks up. Mike considers his enthusiasm and changes her mind. Smiling, she closes her book.

MIKE
Alright. Give me a moment, I'll go with you.

39 INT. GENERAL STORE - SAME MOMENT

Loren struggles to wheel the chair around a counter. Pushing with his good hand, his course is erratic, bumping into things. But Loren is on a mission. He stops at the open display case.

CLOSER ANGLE as Loren reaches into the case and pulls out a six-shooter he sets on his lap. He then grabs a box of shells.

(CONTINUED)

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39 CONTINUED:

He fumbles the box open with one hand, spilling bullets to the floor. Loren manipulates his bad hand to prop the gun while he opens the chamber and loads one bullet. He closes the chamber and sits back, fuelled by a sudden sense of power and relief...

And tremendous conflict. Loren battles his demons. Steeling himself, he slowly raises the gun and hesitates. His hand begins to tremble. Loren lowers the gun slightly, looking around the store, taking in the remnants of his life --

The door pops open and Brian rushes in, followed by Mike. She sees Loren first, just as he ditches the gun under his laprobe. Loren meets Mike's startled look just as Brian spots him and hurries over. He never notices the box of shells.

BRIAN

Hey, Mr. Bray, how're ya doin'? I brung ya a story I wrote.

Miserable, Loren can't look at him. Mike thinks fast.

MIKE

Brian, I forgot my medical bag. Would you please go back and get it for me? It's on my desk.

BRIAN

Sure... Be right back.

Brian runs back out the door. The stillness he leaves behind is thick with discomfort. And Loren's shame. Mike comes over. Stepping on a shell, she bends to gather the bullets from the floor. A devastating beat as Loren looks away in utter defeat and humiliation. At a loss, Mike sinks into a chair nearby. She studies him with compassion.

MIKE

Brian loves you very much... He couldn't wait to get over here.

Another unsettling beat, her words only torturing him more. But Loren starts to wonder if she saw...

MIKE

Would you like me to put the gun away, before he comes back?

She did see. And Loren's shame is complete. But there's something in her gentle question, the lack of accusation and judgement... Overwhelmed with emotions, he finally meets her understanding look. And they both know this moment will be their secret, never to be spoken of again. Loren pulls back his laprobe to reveal the pistol. As he hands it to Mike --

(CONTINUED)

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39 CONTINUED: (2)

Brian races back with the bag, his story still clutched in his hand. Mike rises quickly, ditching the gun behind her back.

BRIAN

Got it... Here.

Brian deposits the bag by Mike and sits, eager to get started. As his attention goes to Loren, Mike slips the gun in a drawer.

BRIAN
That other story was confusin', so I decided to write my own.

MIKE
Would you two like to be alone?

BRIAN
It's your story, Mr. Bray. Is it alright if Ma hears it, too?

Loren is battling to contain his tears. Finally, he looks at Mike and nods. Satisfied, Brian proudly begins.

BRIAN
Here goes... "Once there was a boy who was lonely for a grandpa. He never had one, so he was always dreamin' what it was like. In the town where he lived was a old shopkeeper. Some people said he was kinda cranky, but the boy knew it wasn't so, 'cause he was always sneakin' the boy candy when his ma wasn't lookin'."

Realizing his reveal, Brian sneaks a glance at Mike. But Mike is too busy watching Loren's reaction. Safe, Brian goes on.

BRIAN
"Once he even showed the boy how to play "Beautiful Dreamer" on the harmonica. Sometimes when nobody was around, they'd talk about stars and girls and stuff like that. And the boy was thinkin' maybe the man was lonely for a grandson. So, one day, the boy..."

His VOICE FADES as we DISSOLVE TO:

40 EXT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT FOUR

Sully steps outside with a lantern to the SOUND of a horse cantering. He looks out toward the barn.



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41 HIS POV - THE CORRAL

Where Mike stops her horse. She dismounts and leads FLASH into the barn.

42 INT. BARN - MOMENT LATER

Sully enters to find Mike unhitching the saddle. They trade stiff, uncomfortable looks. As he comes over to help:

SULLY
Thought you was stayin' the night in town.

MIKE
I needed to be with my family.

SULLY
I got this.

Mike steps back to let him. She watches him work for a moment.

MIKE
I'm sorry, Sully. I'm sorry we quarrelled.

SULLY
(tight)
Quarrel. That what we did?

MIKE
Apparently we still are.

Sully pulls off the saddle, avoiding her look.



SULLY
How's Loren?

MIKE
The same.

Another long, unsettled silence as Mike comes to a decision.

MIKE
My father had a cerebral haemorrhage... It's how he died.

Caught off-guard, Sully looks over. He sees how hard this is.

SULLY
I didn't know.

MIKE
How could you? It never came up.

He reacts to her obvious choice of words, and their meaning. Mike slips into the painful memory as if yesterday.

(CONTINUED)

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42 CONTINUED:

MIKE
We were at breakfast. One second he was eating eggs, chattering on about this surgical conference he was attending... And the next, he was slumped on the table.
(as Sully approaches)
We rushed him to the hospital. He lived for three days, but he never woke up... There was so much I still wanted to tell him.

Sully takes her in his arms. Mike's emotions are raw.

MIKE
I'm so sorry, Sully...

He gently shushes her, their friction melting away.

SULLY
Me, too.

MIKE
The thought of you going away... Sometimes it frightens me how much I need you.

SULLY
Much as you think you need me, I need you more.

MIKE
(beat, considers him)
Will you bring me something from Nevada?

She enjoys his surprise. Sully studies her a moment.

SULLY
You sure 'bout this?

MIKE
You're the most honourable man I know, Byron Sully. How can I ask you to be anything less?

43 INT. STORE - STORAGE ROOM - DAY FIVE

Morning. Loren has managed to sit up in bed, legs slung over the side. He works with determination, pulling on his pants, trying to use his affected arm. There's a KNOCK. Loren concentrates on his words, still slurred, but more clear.

LOREN
Mornin' -- Dorothy!

(CONTINUED)

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43 CONTINUED:

Dorothy enters, surprised to discover Loren up and trying to dress himself. She restrains from showing her overwhelming relief, turning to pour fresh water in his washbowl.

DOROTHY
Well, you're sure up with the chickens. And lookin' quite handsome I might add.

LOREN
Feel handsa -- handsomer with trousers on. Help me?

Dorothy brushes aside a tear as she quickly moves to help him.

DOROTHY
Is there a special occasion?

LOREN
Sully's going today.

She holds his shirt, talking as he struggles to get into it.

DOROTHY
It's nice of you to see 'im off.
(regards his efforts)
You're gonna keep gettin' better at this, Loren. With practice.

As she helps button his sleeves, she feels his eyes fix on her.

LOREN

I done some thinkin' -- 'bout the store. Things. I got set in my ways. Can't see messin' with old habits. 'Bout that pr-proposal?

Dorothy is uncertain where this is leading. She looks up at Loren, making it harder for him to see this through.

LOREN

I don't wanna hurt you, Dorothy. You ain't an-answered me yet -- so I gotta take it back.

DOROTHY

Loren, don't...

LOREN

I'm sorry, but I can't be marryin' you.

He has to turn away from her piercing look, not wanting her to see through his lie. But Dorothy does anyway. And they both know it. It's a difficult moment with so much left unsaid.

(CONTINUED)

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43 CONTINUED: (2)

DOROTHY

If that's what you want...

Loren nods. Dorothy tries to digest all the intense feelings washing over her; guilt, relief, tenderness for Loren...

DOROTHY

I'd like to stay on for awhile, to help you get back on your feet. If it'd be alright with you?

Loren nods again, trying to hide his breaking heart. Dorothy grabs his shoes, using the movement to help. He painfully watches her fumbling with the laces. They both know nothing can ever be quite the same.

LOREN
You're a good woman, Dorothy.

DOROTHY
(overwhelmed)
You're a dear man...

As they finally meet each other's look...

44 **OMITTED**

45 **EXT. GENERAL STORE**

Where Dorothy pushes Loren outside. She turns him around to back down the steps when Jake blocks her way. Dorothy reacts, stranding Loren half way down the steps.

LOREN
Dorothy! What in blazes are you doin'?

A beat as Jake and Dorothy share a private moment.

DOROTHY
Gettin' help from a friend.

She steps aside and Jake takes over lowering the wheelchair.

JAKE
Hold your horses or I'll leave ya in the middle 'a the street.

Startled, Loren cranes around to catch Jake's grin --

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46 EXT. TRAIN STATION - SAME MOMENT

On the platform, Horace checks tickets while Hank helps a Lady onto the train. Mike waits her turn as Sully says goodbye to the children. Tearful, Colleen hugs him:

SULLY

Be back 'fore you even miss me.

COLLEEN

No you won't. I already do.

Sully smiles, moves on to face Brian.

BRIAN

This's the first time you're goin' way as our real pa.

SULLY

I'm comin' back, Brian.

BRIAN

I know... Good luck helpin' your friend.

Sully embraces Brian tightly. Brian holds on.

SULLY

Take good care of your sister and ma... 'N keep givin' Loren a hand when ya can, alright?

Brian lets go. Sully turns to Matthew. They embrace.

MATTHEW

Don't worry 'bout nothin' here. You just be careful.

SULLY

I 'preciate this, Matthew.

They share a moment. Then Sully locks eyes with Mike. As he starts toward her, something else catches his attention. He signals her to wait and jumps off the platform.

Sully walks over to Loren in the wheelchair, flanked by Dorothy and Jake. He nods hello, squatting to eye-level with Loren.

SULLY

Brian's really been needin' a man he can count on. Talk things over with. Would ya mind fillin' in while I'm gone?

Loren's face clouds. He sits a little taller, offers his hand.

LOREN

S'pose I can.

(CONTINUED)

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46 CONTINUED:

The men shake on it. The train WHISTLE blows. Hear Horace AD LIB: "Last call," "All aboard!"

SULLY

Thanks. Take care yourself.

Sully nods to the others and returns to the platform, and Mike. Neither are prepared to

say goodbye. They embrace tightly.

MIKE
I love you.

SULLY
I love you. I'll wire every day.

MIKE
Don't worry about us. Just hurry back.

And they kiss. The WHISTLE blows again. Horace passes.

HORACE
Better get aboard, Sully.

But they can't let go. The train jolts into motion.

MIKE BRIAN/COLLEEN
Tell Daniel he has to visit sometime. Sully! It's goin'!
I'd like to meet your friend.

SULLY
I'll ask him.

MIKE
... Make him promise.

As Sully reacts, Mike pushes him toward the train moving away. Sully jumps on back just in time, turning to wave at Mike as:

FADE OUT.

THE END

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