

**THE SHIPPING NEWS**

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**INT. LAUNDROMAT, MOCKINGBURG, NEW YORK - NIGHT**

Glaring fluorescence, trash overflowing with cheap detergent boxes, empty Coke machine flashing all lights orange. Only two dryers are humming. It's very late. Keep PANNING to...

...a wiry, gimlet-eyed WOMAN, furtively removing crumpled newspapers from a dryer. She flattens and folds them meticulously, her glance darting angrily everywhere. Top secret mission.

...a natty little black man. PARTRIDGE has spread a late supper on a neat cloth atop a dryer. Small cold fowl. Brie, baguette, olives. Bottle of red. An air of competence, of indomitable upbeatness. He ignores the spy-dressed-as-bag-lady as if she were normal. More curious about...

...a hulking, rumped figure scrutinizing Help Wanted ads as if cramming for life's midterm exam. Thoughtful. Circles one, slowly. Set out on QUOYLE's dryer are one Snickers bar and four empty snickers wrappers. His version of cold supper. He reaches for the candy, but seeing it's the last one, he...

...rises. Goes to the candy machine. Drops in his 65 cents, hits the button. The Snickers starts to fall, but gets caught in the mechanism at the last moment. Quoyale blinks dully. One more retelling of the story of his life. He BANGS the machine half-heartedly. Nope. Shakes it with his shambling strength. Nada. POUNDS the coin return button. Hat trick. He empties his pocket. Studies the results. Not enough. And without so much as a sigh...

...he ambles back to his dryer. Starts to unwrap the last Snickers. Partridge taking this all in. But Mata Hari of the Neat Newspapers goes to the candy machine, KICKS it violently. Out fall the Snickers and the 65 cents. She scoops up both, turns in a single motion to...

...GLARE death at the enemy. Quoyale opens his mouth to comment.  
But. Doesn't. Resumes unwrapping his supper, as...

...his dryer STOPS. He pops it open. Stares in. Blinks.  
Suddenly YANKS a tangle of graying shirts out onto the grimy floor  
to reveal they have been...

...STAINED streaky BLUE by a cheap pen, quietly melting amid the  
pile. This slips beneath even Quoyale's expectation level. The  
big, soft face is pitifully, yes, even adorably, devastated.

QUOYLE (a murmur)

Ruined.

And to the bystander. This seems a comment on more than shirts.

PARTRIDGE (softly)

Nah. Rub the ink with hot salt and  
talcum powder.

Quoyale's head WHIPS around. As if he thought he was alone.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

If you're shocked when someone aims  
kindness your way. That oughta tell  
you somethin' about yourself.

Watches the little guy's undemanding smile.

QUOYLE (V.O., just staring)

Then again. If you're that kinda  
guy. It don't.

**PARTRIDGE**

And put a cuppa bleach in, next  
time through.

As Quoyale gazes at his benefactor, the woman sneaks up, SNATCHES  
his Help Wanted ads. Races them over to her dryer. As the boys  
watch, she shoves them in, starts the machine with Quoyale's coins,  
and glares fiercely back at us. A mother bear protecting her cubs.  
Partridge chuckles. Holds out his hand...

**PARTRIDGE**

Partridge.

Quoyale glances at the little man's cold fowl supper.

**QUOYLE**

Uh. No thanks.

**PARTRIDGE**

It's my name.

Oh.

**INT. MOCKINGBURG RECORD CITY ROOM - DAY**

Shabby one-floor newspaper. Old equipment, listless personnel, stale you can smell from here. Only guy working is Partridge, who is laying out the front page, and glances up to see across the floor...

...Quoyle enter in his best suit. It is also his worst suit. Partridge points to the only enclosed office, and gives his buddy a hearty thumbs-up. Quoyle nods, his smile a rictus, his eyes a glaze of panic. We see now that he is chewing, somehow. On the way into the office, he snags a doughnut from a paper plate by the coffee. Enters...

**INT. ED PUNCH'S OFFICE - DAY**

...ED PUNCH, managing editor, looks up from a reverie with a startled expression. He wears really thick glasses which MAGNIFY his eyes, giving him a frightening aspect.

**PUNCH**

Quoyle? You're early.

From the rear, we see Quoyle can barely squeeze himself into the chair.

**PUNCH**

I don't like that.

All the change SPILLS out of Quoyle's pockets, and CLATTERS onto the wood floor, ROLLING interminably, as Quoyle fidgets.

**PUNCH**

Partridge says you're not as dumb as you look.

REVERSE ANGLE now to see Quoyle's face. The neat moustache of powdered sugar.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

How could I be?

And takes a healthy bite from what's left of the doughnut.

**PUNCH**

Anyway, that's why I'm takin' a chance on you. Partridge said he'd re-write

whatever of your stuff. Stay late...

Quoyle nods, dumbly. Knows this.

**PUNCH**

We're a family paper. Upbeat stories with a community slant. Self-help stuff: Are You a Breakfast Alcoholic?...Guide to Getting Dumped...like that.

Quoyle nods bigger. Like he gets it. Punch shoves an antique tape recorder across the table.

**PUNCH**

City Planning Board meeting at two-thirty. Three hunderd words max. Sink or swim.

HOLD on Quoyle's eyes. Recalling...

**FLASHBACK: EXT. PUBLIC POOL - DAY**

...Quoyle as a fat kid in a baggy bathing suit, being savagely pummeled by his vicious OLDER BROTHER...

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

I think my brother said that once.

**BROTHER**

**LARDASS! SNOTFACE! FARTBAG!**

Being pulled off the sniveling Quoyle by a rough hairy man with dead eyes.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

Maybe it was my father.

Quoyle's FATHER hauls him off the deck, and in a single motion, FLINGS him INTO the pool!

**FATHER**

Sink or swim, pig-butt.

Watches the THRASHING with mild contempt. Turns away before Quoyle simply SINKS beneath the surface.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

I'm not a water person.

**INT. CITY ROOM - LATE NIGHT**

The empty room a haven of dust motes floating in sickly fluorescence. Quoyle sits across the desk, gazing with endearing fearfulness as Partridge turns page after page...

**PARTRIDGE**

See, three hunnerd words would be,  
like, one page. This is...oh,  
fifteen, sixteen.

**QUOYLE**

So we should cut it.

Partridge does glance up on that.

**PARTRIDGE**

Gonna have to.

**QUOYLE**

Or you could tie me in a sack, throw  
me in the river. Tell the police you  
thought it was oddly-wrapped lard.

**PARTRIDGE**

Might be quicker.

Nobody smiles. Nobody has to. Quoyle pulls a big glass jar from a paper sack. Sets it on the desk.

**QUOYLE**

Does your wife like special pickles?  
They're fine with cold cuts.

Partridge looks at the cornichons. They look expensive.

**PARTRIDGE**

Come by for supper, tomorrow. We'll

find out.

DISSOLVE to...

**EXT. PARTRIDGE'S BACK YARD - DAY**

Sausages on the BBQ, interesting colors and sizes. A huge hand delicately places cut-up pieces of quail on the grill. It is Quoyle, trusted, paying attention. MERCALIA, a slim black woman with fiery eyes and an enticing smile, hands him a glass of white wine, and...

...goes to slip her arm around Partridge. He watches Quoyle's

concentration approvingly. Shares a smile with his sexy wife.  
And  
raps a knife on his glass. Announcement.

Quoye looks up with innocent eyes. Which makes Partridge  
hesitate.

**PARTRIDGE**

We. Got you this.

Mercalia takes out the package. Wrapped in tissue, a neat ribbon.  
She hands it to Quoye, and leans up to kiss his cheek. Quoye  
looks down at it, dumbfounded. A silence.

**MERCALIA**

It's...an anniversary present.  
Anniversary of our friendship.

Quoye smiles. Sweet and slightly confused.

**QUOYLE**

Seven and a half month anniversary?

He starts to unwrap...

**PARTRIDGE**

Well. Why wait?

...a wristwatch. A nice one. He is overwhelmed, but still  
uncomprehending.

**MERCALIA**

It's because we're happy. About  
something.

And steals a glance at her husband.

**QUOYLE (BIG grin)**

You're havin' a baby!

That stops Partridge's face. No more stalling...

**PARTRIDGE**

Mercalia and me are movin'.  
To California. Friday night.

Quoye so pole-axed he can't even lose the smile. It just turns  
stupid and transparent. His friend swallows.

**PARTRIDGE**

You know she's been learnin' to  
drive a rig. She got the Oakland

to New Orleans run. I'm gonna  
make her smoked duck sandwiches for  
the road. I can edit copy anywhere.

Quoyle nodding slowly, smile still there. Yep. I guess y'can.  
Partridge sees that it's a death blow. Mercalia looks at her feet.

**PARTRIDGE**

Love's all that counts. It's the  
engine of life.

As if parting advice. As if Quoyle should file that away. So  
Quoyle nods some more. As if he will.

**PARTRIDGE**

We'll just. Stay in touch.

On this, Quoyle's smile deserts him. So Partridge reaches out his  
hand. Quoyle paralyzed, then takes it. CLOSE ON their handclasp,  
and DISSOLVE to...

**INT. DOUBLETREE MEETING ROOM - EVENING**

...a slender feminine hand. Buried in Quoyle's.

**PETAL (O.S.)**

Petal Bear, Mr. Quoyle.

PAN up to see her. Tiny, twitchy, moist ringlets. A gray-eyed  
predator. She looks around at the milling suits and their name  
tags. As if they were alternatives.

**PETAL**

Do you hate this shit, or what?

Quoyle transfixed by her slight form in its loose but clingy  
wrapping. The smile that sees him again and flickers...

**PETAL**

What do you think? You want to  
marry me, don't you?

Don't you? No answer. She laughs, as if at some off-color  
response. Runs hot fingers up his arm, leaning to his face...

**PETAL**

Buy me a drink somewhere, it's  
seven-thirty. I think I'm going  
to fuck you by ten. What do you  
think of that?

Quoyle. Blinks. She laughs again. Bright, like whiskey music.

**PETAL**

You are quite. The raconteur.

**INT. QUOYLE'S TRAILER - LATE NIGHT**

Petal naked in near-darkness, moves with authority toward the massive lumpy creature nearly overflowing his bed. Draws the covers back.

Stares.

**PETAL**

Christ. I won the lottery.

Climbs on, the lithe move of a leopardess. Feeding time.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

It was pretty much like that for a month.

Petal RIDING in silhouette, with great, violent swoops. CLOSE on his face, his eyes. Lovelight.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

Somewhere in there. We got married.

**INT. BAR - NIGHT**

Horrible place. Smoke and bodies. Quoyale alone, carrying his sloshing beer, apologies unheard, toward...

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

After that, I had to follow her to see her.

...the back of Petal, talking to a big guy in a shiny suit.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

Which I know was wrong of me.

Closer. Close enough to hear...

**PETAL**

What do you think? You want to marry me, don't you?

HOLD on Quoyale's face. The lovelight has never left. It shines through the shock. As if in apology...

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

She didn't know she was pregnant.

DISSOLVE to...

**INT. PARLOR - DAY**

One-year-old BUNNY is SCREAMING in a rickety crib festooned with mobiles and bright toys. HEAR Quoyle POUNDING in. He reaches to lift her...

...WAY UP, starts running around the faded little parlor making cheerful airplane noises, as he DIVES and SWOOPS the shrieking kid, until he...

...stops. Sniffs. Oh. Gives her a kiss, which doesn't put a dent in the screaming, and flops her down on the diaper table. She is screaming LOUDER. He is fumbling with the diaper, the Baby Wipes, getting a wad of ten or so at once. When...

...the phone rings. He runs off. Runs back, lifts Bunny, diaper dangling from the tape stuck to her skin, and SNATCHES up the phone, hoping with everything in him that it's...

**PETAL (O.S.)**

Hey. How do you make an Alabama  
Slammer?

He takes a breath. Can hear the noise of a rowdy spot. Country  
juke box.

**QUOYLE**

Uh. Where are y...

**PETAL (O.S.)**

Alabama. Hence, the question.

Bunny. Has stopped screaming.

**QUOYLE**

Come home. I'll make you one.

**PETAL (O.S.)**

That's a swell idea. Now go look on  
top of the fridge, where I keep the  
Mr. Boston. I'll wait.

What should he do? He sets Bunny carefully on the floor. She starts screaming again, and he LIFTS her quick, cuddles her. LOPES off, leaving the phone on the floor...

...RACES back in with the Mr. Boston, a bag of pork rinds, and

a pacifier. Something for everyone. As he flips the pages, he murmurs into the phone...

**QUOYLE**

You okay?        Except for being thirsty?

She laughs, almost friendly.        He smiles.    Ever hopeful.

**PETAL (O.S.)**

I'm busy, I'll see y...

QUOYLE (reads)

Ounce Southern Comfort, ounce Sloe  
Gin. Ounce Triple Sec. Three ounces  
o.j....

**PETAL (O.S.)**

Got it.

CLICK. The BUZZ of her disconnect. He glances down at Bunny, working the pacifier. Murmurs to the receiver...

**QUOYLE**

Me too.        I'll tell Bunny you miss her.

Hang up the phone. Kiss a baby. Eat a pork rind. Slow. As he gazes down on Bunny, we PUSH INTO her face, and MATCH DISSOLVE to...

**INT. BUNNY'S ROOM - NIGHT, FIVE YEARS LATER**

...an ECU of Bunny, now six years old, asleep in the flickering blue light of a nearly-mute TV. Apparently she was watching Sportscenter. PAN the darkened shoebox room. Toys everywhere, in a clutter. A pile of used Barbies, limbs jutting in all directions, waiting for a mass grave. BACK to Bunny, to see...

...she sleeps in her father's lap. His chin resting on her head, an industrial-size bag of cookies handy. Somewhere, a door OPENS..

...SLAMS HARD. Quoyale gently lays Bunny on her bed, and lurches INTO the hall, to see Petal disappearing into her bedroom, and he hurries to stop the door before it slams in his face.

When she turns, she is wasted, feral, and somehow as sexy as ever. Her laser glare. What the fuck do you want?

**QUOYLE**

There's.        Cold chicken.

Really? She tears off her jacket, revealing that she has left her shirt somewhere and is down to her bra. She stalks toward him.

Straight to the doorway. He flinches.

**PETAL**

Find yourself. A girlfriend.  
With what you got down there,  
you'll do fine.

Quoyle swallows. Shakes his head.

**PETAL**

Only thing can work, here. Is  
divorce.

No. No. Tears of shock pool in his eyes.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

I knew we had our problems. But  
I never thought I'd hear that word.

She shivers with disgust. Walks around in a frustrated circle.  
Back to his face. Are you sure? What does a girl have to do? And  
now...

...the tears are on his face. She flashes her hardest look.  
And  
yet...

...her slender fingers reach out. Wipe his face, not as roughly as  
she might have intended.

**PETAL**

Your funeral, pussy.

And CLOSES the door, quietly, but firmly. In his face.

He stares at it. His lips part. But no sound comes. Instead,  
he  
walks the few steps to Bunny's room, to find her...

...wide awake. Sitting on the edge of her bed. No question, she  
heard it all.

So Quoyle smiles. He reaches to the top of her battered armoire.  
His eyes damp but dancing for his daughter. Pulls down...

...a box of chocolates. Their stash. He sits on the floor.  
Opens  
the lid, like buried treasure.

She comes to cuddle in his lap. He feeds her one. She feeds him  
one. They've done this before. As they chew...

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

I knew if I could take it. In the end. It would all work out.

**INT. CITY ROOM - MIDDAY**

Everyone trooping back from lunch, twos and threes. Quoye last, alone, still stuffing down a snack cake as he heads for the coffee pot. There's one answering machine for everybody here, glowing a red number 2. Someone hits it, and everybody shuts up a beat, to see if they got lucky.

**MALE VOICE (O.S.)**

Lila, it's Daniel. Ten-thirty. Bring the. You know.

LILA doesn't even bother to blush. A shrug is plenty.

**FATHER (O.S.)**

Quoye, this is your father. Calling you. Dicky's machine is full. Your home one's broke. Well. It's time for your mother and I to go.

Quoye listening. Go?

**FATHER (O.S.)**

Instructions about the undertaker. The cremation. On the dining room table.

Oh. Go. Eyes are sneaking over now. Lots of them.

**FATHER (O.S.)**

You'll have to make your own way. I did. Nobody gave me nuthin'. Other men woulda give up, turned to bums. I sweated, wheeled barrows of sand, went without so you and yer brother could have advantages. Not that you did much with your chances.

Everybody just openly staring now. Quoye's snack cake and coffee frozen in mid-air.

**FATHER (O.S.)**

Hasn't been much of a life. Tell Dicky and my sister Agnis Hamm. Her number's on the dining room ta...

**BEEP!**

**MACHINE (O.S.)**

That was your final message.

Quoye nods. Sounded that way. Despite the hateful coarseness of this message, Quoye is deeply moved. Lips pursed inward to stem tears. In the silence...

FAT GUY (trying)

Were they sick, or something?

Quoye stares into distance. Somewhere, feet shuffle.

**QUOYLE**

Brain tumor and liver cancer.

(afterthought)

One apiece.

FAT GAL (sad for him)

That's rough.

He nods, it is that. Wanders on over to his desk. They're still watching, but he doesn't seem to notice. Turns his ratty Rolodex with solemn slowness. Not to dishonor the moment. Finds the number, dials. Winces at the harshness of the voice he hears. Then...

**QUOYLE**

Dicky. It's Mom and Poppa. They.

He can't say any more. Turns out, he doesn't need to.

BROTHER (O.S., snorts)

Jeez, they did it? I never thought he'd find the fucking guts.

Quoye licks his lips. His eyes puddling now.

**QUOYLE**

So. For the funeral, I thou...

**BROTHER (O.S.)**

You think I'd go pay that prick respects? You got me confused with you!

Quoye shakes his head once. That confused he isn't.

QUOYLE (quietly)

Well. Mom'll be there, too.

Silence.

**BROTHER (O.S.)**

Hey, Barfbag. They leave us anything, y'think?

**QUOYLE**

Don't see how. Big mortgage. Spent their savings on the doctors. I hadda send some grocery mon...

**BROTHER (O.S.)**

Well, see, that's why he did it. I mean, think how it felt. Taking from you.

LONG ANGLE...they are watching him replace the receiver in its cradle. Think. Stumble slightly, as he makes his way toward...

**INT. PUNCH'S OFFICE - DAY**

Punch looks up, startled at Quoyale's entrance. His oversized glasses seem to magnify his eyes more than ever.

**QUOYLE**

Sorry, Ed. I gotta drive down to my parents' place. I'll be back, Friday.

A full beat.

**PUNCH**

Take yer time. I gotta let you go.

Quoyale's eyes sharpen.

**QUOYLE**

In what sense do you m...

**PUNCH**

As in canned.

Oh. Once again, life slips beneath even Quoyale's expectations.

**QUOYLE (a little dazed)**

Uh. Would next week be better?

**PUNCH (sighs)**

I got the summer interns comin' next week. They're free and they're smart. Gotta do somethin' to fight this slump. But don't worry...

Don't?

**PUNCH**

Yer not the only one.  
(beat)  
Eventually.

A beat.

**QUOYLE**

Should I finish the sawmill piece?

**INT. QUOYLE'S HOUSE - DAY**

Quoyle enters carrying a spray of violets. HEAR Springer turned up loud. He goes to the parlor to find...

...MRS. MOOSUP, the babysitter, smoking and swigging a Pepsi. She is mean-ugly with flesh hanging beneath her arms. She stares at him, the flowers.

MRS. MOOSUP (dry)  
Mr. Quoyle. You shouldn't have.

QUOYLE (taking her literally)  
They're for Petal, Mrs. Moosup.  
I got something to tell her.

**MRS. MOOSUP**  
Well, that may take awhile.

Uh-oh.

**MRS. MOOSUP**  
She came in at one, packed like crazy. Said she was movin' to Florida with the guy in the red Geo. You know the one.

He knows the one.

**MRS. MOOSUP**  
She says you gotta pay my wages for the sittin'. Seven weeks, comes to \$3080. 'Preciate a check right n...

He is heading toward the hall.

**MRS. MOOSUP**  
Don't bother. She took Bunny with her.

That stops him. Cold. He turns...

**QUOYLE**

That's the last thing she'd ev...

**MRS. MOOSUP**

She was real clear about my check.  
It's no fun workin' if you don't  
get paid.

He TEARS out, DOWN the hall, INTO Bunny's room...

...closet open. Empty. No more tangled pile of Barbies.

He  
surveys the wreckage of his life.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

At least she took her toys.                      Wanted  
her to be happy.

He staggers out of the room, down the hall...

**MRS. MOOSUP (O.S.)**

Mr. Quoyle? I ain't got all day, here!

...into the kitchen.                      Lifts the receiver.                      Thinks.                      Dials.

**QUOYLE (quietly)**

Yes.                      I need to report a kidnapping.

And straightens his spine.                      Just a little.

**QUOYLE**

Quoyle. Q-U-O-Y-L-...no, Y, then  
L-E. Yeh, it's my kid.

He's still holding the violets.                      He notices this.                      Sets them  
down,  
almost tenderly, in the sink.

**INT. QUOYLE'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT**

Quoyle alone in absolute darkness. Bumping around the house.  
There's a large bag of something in one hand, maybe M & Ms. But  
he's not eating. Just murmuring to himself...

**QUOYLE**

Who knows?                      Who knows?

**INT. QUOYLE'S PARENTS' HOME, BROOKLYN - DAY**

Quoyle moving in his parents' cluttered parlor like a man

underwater. A room as drab, as neglected, as Brooklyn through the window. He stands at a shelf now, staring at a row of framed photos. Lifts one...

...a BOY of 15, bundled for winter, stands by a frozen pond. Stocky, sullen, something unpleasant in the narrow eyes. Next to him, not touching, a GIRL, big for 12. Rawboned, husky. Flat gaze, like something's dead or hidden.

Quoyle walks to the table. A cardboard box has been filled with mementos. A slip of paper: AGNIS HAMM, a telephone number. The phone is RINGING now. Quoyle staring at the paper. Finally, lifts the phone, breathes an absent greeting, and...

**MALE VOICE (O.S.)**

Is this Mr. Guy Quoyle?

QUOYLE (weary)

He's not here.

**MALE VOICE (O.S.)**

This is Lt. Amos Figg of the Mockingburg, New York Police. Could you have him call me when he ret...

**QUOYLE**

He's passed on. He's dead.

(beat)

You said Mockingb...

**FIGG (O.S.)**

We're a small town upstate. I'm actually trying to reach his son. He allegedly went down to his parents' place two days ago.

Quoyle blinks. Not in the mood.

**QUOYLE**

Are you a detective, Lieutenant?

**FIGG (O.S.)**

Yes sir.

**QUOYLE**

Well, as you've probably deduced, I am his son. Cause I'm at his place. As alleged.

Silence.

**FIGG (O.S.)**

There's no need for that tone,  
sir. I'm calling with urgent news.

And says no more.        We can feel Quoyle's heart beating from here.

**QUOYLE**

Which is...?

**FIGG (O.S., hesitant)**

You want the good news? Or  
the bad news.

Ominous.        Would be an understatement.

**QUOYLE**

The good.        Please.

**FIGG (O.S.)**

Your daughter Bunny was sold by  
your wife to a child pornographer.  
For \$9000.

Quoyle's heart.        Has stopped.

**FIGG (O.S.)**

But she's fine. We got her. And  
the doc says she wasn't touched.  
Yet. If you catch my drift.

INTERCUT...a dingy kitchen, scuzzier than we could even have  
guessed. Bunny in her underpants sliding merrily on a floor made  
slippery with dish detergent. PAN past the video camera on its  
tripod to the PORNOGRAPHER at the window, also in his underpants,  
screaming into a cordless phone. And...

BACK to Quoyle.        His heart must have started again, because he is  
able to say...

**QUOYLE**

That's.        The good n...

**FIGG (O.S.)**

Well.        Compared.

INTERCUT...a riverbank somewhere high above swiftly-flowing water.  
Police and bystanders gathered. A winch reaching its chain into  
the depths.

**FIGG (O.S.)**

Your wife was in a red Geo which  
went through a guardrail over the

Chesapeake Bay Bridge.

Here comes part of the Geo. Streaming water and mud.

**FIGG (O.S.)**

They were doin' 97 in a fog. The

car was cut in half by the impact  
with the rail. Her male companion's  
body floated up downstream.

BACK to the horrified husband. Waiting in silence.

**QUOYLE**

And Petal...?

**FIGG (O.S.)**

May never find the body. But she  
was mercifully killed on impact,  
without a doubt. They found her  
shoes under the dash and her...  
trousers for some reas...

**QUOYLE**

That don't mean for sure she w...

**FIGG (O.S.)**

...and her purse. With the nine  
large.

Oh. Tears finally force their way through the shock. As he  
realizes...

**QUOYLE (a murmur)**

Yeh. If she was alive. Don't  
guess she'd a left that.

**INT. COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES - DAY**

Quoyale moving his bulk FAST down a corridor, a uniformed COP almost  
skipping alongside to keep up, watching Quoyale like a hawk all the  
way to....

...the threadbare common room. Kids playing, arguing, sleeping,  
staring at an antique TV. Quoyale goes THROUGH them all, cop  
doggedly in his wake, and sinks to his knees beside...

**BUNNY**

I can't do this.

Bunny on the ratty sofa, legs dangling, holding out a vintage  
Gameboy. She wears clean clothes, freshly-washed hair, and a

comfortable smile.

QUOYLE (very soft)  
Me neither.

And kisses her, lightly, on the lips.

QUOYLE (softer still)  
Hi.

She kisses him back, much harder, on the mouth. The lopsided grin  
of a practicing imp.

**BUNNY**  
Hi, too. That for me?

We hadn't seen them, hidden beside his leg. A bunch of  
DAISIES.  
He gives them to her. Like her best beau.

**BUNNY**  
Where's our candy?

**QUOYLE**  
In the store. That way, you've  
got the whole selection.

And then...

**QUOYLE**  
Give us a minute.

Bunny doesn't understand.

**QUOYLE**  
I mean him.

PULL BACK to the cop, staring down on them from point-blank range.  
He doesn't move. Quoyle looks up, with an easy smile that says  
he'd just as soon tear all the arms and legs off, and sweat the  
consequences later. The cop backs well off. He can take a hint.

**BUNNY**  
Petal went to Florida. She'll be  
back soon.

He looks in her eyes. Shakes his head. No.

**QUOYLE**  
She had an accident.

**BUNNY**

So do you.

He nods, I do. Tenderly pulls a strand of her hair aside.

**QUOYLE**

There was a car crash, sweetie.  
And they found...you know, the  
body. Of her friend.

**BUNNY**

Nestor.

That's right. His big hand has wrapped around one of hers.  
She  
doesn't seem to mind. Their faces so close.

**QUOYLE**

Petal can't come back, she's dead.  
You know dead. Like the turtle.

She drills his eyes. Calm as a moose.

**BUNNY**

We found the turtle. And they  
found Nestor. Did you find Petal?

He shakes his head.

**BUNNY**

You never do. But she always  
comes back.

And leans her forehead. To rest against his.

**BUNNY**

Don't worry.

**INT. QUOYLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Quoye stumbling toward the front door, drawing his robe around  
him. Squinting through the peephole. OPENING the door, to  
reveal...

**AGNIS**

Nephew, I'm your Aunt. Agnis Hamm.

Tall and rawboned and 60. A rugged, maybe even handsome face, set  
with ice-blue eyes. Calm, slightly scary eyes, that drift to his  
robe...

**AGNIS**

You sick? It's nine o'clock.

He is completely off-balance here.

**QUOYLE**

Uh. No, Bunny and I like to...  
uh, early to bed, earl...

**AGNIS**

Losin' your wife, your folks, and  
your job'd depress anybody. It's  
a wonder you don't sleep all day.

Not that she seems to approve. Not at all. His eyes now drift to  
the large, well-used SUITCASES dangling from her powerful hands.

**AGNIS**

Thought I'd stay a day or two.  
Give you some relief with th...

And stops.     The mouth doesn't smile.     But the eyes crinkle  
slightly  
toward...

...Bunny. Who has crept out in her jammies.     Hugging a sack of  
Pepperidge Farm cookies like it was a teddy.

AGNIS (to Bunny)  
You like blue dogs named Warren?

The little girl nods.     As if she certainly does.

**AGNIS**

I got one in the car.

**INT. PARLOR - LATER**

In the far corner of the room, Bunny plays with WARREN, a sweet,  
ugly dog. Toothless and, undeniably, blue.

**QUOYLE (O.S.)**

I never knew her, really.

See him now, sipping his tea.     Wallowing in the detritus of his  
emotions.

**QUOYLE**

But she was driven by terrible  
forces, no one could understand.  
She was a locked door. Even to me.

Agnis in the good chair. Teacup on her ample lap. Assessing a  
photo on the end table, Petal's arctic eyes, rigidly seductive

pose. The snapshot enshrined by a neighboring votive rose in its jelly jar glass.

**AGNIS**

So she wasn't just a bitch in high heels?

Quoyale's eyes cut instinctively toward his daughter, her innocence protected by distance and absorption with Warren's passivity.

**AGNIS**

Don't stress. She mighta heard worse from her momma. I'm only guessin'.

**QUOYLE**

Some people probably thought Petal was bad clear through.

**AGNIS**

People. Are a cynical lot.

**QUOYLE**

I think she just couldn't get enough love.

Agnis' unblinking eyes.

**AGNIS**

I think the evidence. Is on your side.

The eyes study him. Dissect him, even.

**AGNIS**

I'm headed north, Nephew, to where our family comes from, in Newfoundland. Thought I'd never go back. But the older y'get...

Clucks her tongue.

**AGNIS**

There's a pull. Becomes an ache. As if where your people started held a purpose for you. Like you're a piece in a puzzle...

Not a smile. But something. A softening of timbre, a flicker behind the eye.

**AGNIS**

...lookin' for where y'fit.

Lifts her cup.

**AGNIS**

You, too.

Takes a sip. His eyes have narrowed in a burlesque of suspicion.

**QUOYLE**

In what sense do you m...

**AGNIS**

You need to come, Nephew.

Just like that.

**AGNIS**

Nothin' here but hurt. You got  
to start fresh, everythin's gone!

Hmmn?

**AGNIS**

The trip'll clear your head.  
Be educational for the squirt.  
Teach ya the world's still spinnin'  
outside this toxic slice o'Hades.  
And who knows...?

Tilts her head. Who knows.

**AGNIS**

They must have a newspaper up  
there. Somebody's gotta write it.

He just stares. The blankest of the blank.

**AGNIS**

Tell the truth, I'd appreciate  
the company. You two are pretty  
much my family.

His face softens. Hadn't thought of it that way. And seeing  
this...

**AGNIS**

A pot o'coffee would hit the spot.  
Drop o'whiskey would fit nice in it.

She waits. He rises. And when he does...

**AGNIS**

Which one's my brother?

He blinks. She looks at two URNS on the mantle.

**QUOYLE**

Uh. There's Mom. And that's Poppa.

The name of the funeral home tastefully stenciled. He clears  
his  
throat...

**QUOYLE**

Those are temporary.

**AGNIS**

Coffee. And maybe a sweet.

Quoyale nods, glad to serve. Heads off to the kitchen. Agnis  
looks  
at Bunny and Warren.

**AGNIS**

She needs to go outside.

**BUNNY**

I know why.

She runs out, the dog trotting after. Alone now...

...Agnis pulls something from her large carpetbag purse. It  
is an  
oversized ZIPLOC BAG. She stands. Crosses to...

...her brother's urn. She removes the lid. Turns the huge Ziploc  
upside down to COVER the urn. Then, in one deft movement...

...UPENDS the urn, a cascade of ash tumbling into the Ziploc.  
Seals it. Sets it to one side. Then, from her purse...

...another ziploc already filled with replacement ashes. She pours  
just enough into the urn. That should do it. Stashes the rest  
back in her purse. Turns now to lift...

...the Ziploc with her brother's remains. Stares at it. Think  
Hamlet with Yorrick's skull.

**AGNIS**

What say, Guy? The dumpster?

A beat. Eyes flat and neutral.

**AGNIS**

Just a thought.

**EXT. PHANTOM HIGHWAY - MISTY NIGHT**

A world of fog and reflected high beams. Big rig pulls over, and Petal climbs up and in, her short red dress fluttering about her thighs.

The truck is roaring heedlessly through dense cloud. The DRIVER is gross and bald, snot suspended from his nostrils. He lets go of the wheel to run his hairy hands UNDER Petal's dress, while through the shotgun window, we see...

...Quoyle FLYING along outside, like a superhero. Except he is shocked bug-eyed by the tableau. The disgusting driver buries his face in Petal's hair, she throws her head back laughing, and the driver becomes Quoyle's FATHER, Quoyle silently SHRIEKING outside the window, and SMASH cut to...

**EXT. DECK, PORT-AUX-BASQUES FERRY - DAY**

...Quoyle            blinking awake on the deck of a pitching ferry. Fog and cliff            and the raw Atlantic. And SOARING alongside, an amazing number of            MARITIME BIRDS...the gulls and terns seeming to stare Quoyle in            the eye as they glide past. Maybe they prompted his dream.

**AGNIS (O.S.)**

They draft off our air currents,  
it's quite premeditated.

She stands at the rail.            Smoking, despite the wind.

**AGNIS**

They actually know the ferry  
schedule. Show up on time  
better'n the Newfies.

He smiles a seasick smile. Lurches from his bolted-down chair to join her. She nods back toward...

...Bunny through the glass window, snuggled with Warren, feeding the dog french fries.

**AGNIS**

...image of m'sister, Feeny.  
She's married to a falconer in  
Arabia, now. Has to wear a black

thing over her face.

**QUOYLE**

Like the falcon.

She stares in his eyes. Yes, like the falcon. They are growing  
on  
each other in a companionable way.

**AGNIS**

Nice. To be with family.

He smiles. It is nice.

**AGNIS**

'Specially big shots. Who can  
land a job with one phone call.

His smile changes color. A quiet pride in the modest...

**QUOYLE**

Well, that was my friend Partridge.  
Made the call. And it's just an  
interview.

When Quoye looks back in at Bunny, he sees she is staring off at  
something with full attention. He follows her gaze to...

...a honey-haired MOTHER with her small BOY snuggled in her lap.  
She is feeding him an ice cream bar with evident tenderness. And  
though the child's face is blissfully vacant, she murmurs to him  
with serious intent.

**INT. CAR, GREAT NORTHERN PENINSULA - DAY**

Quoye driving a winding, rutted road, high above the coastline.  
Cracked cliffs in volcanic glazes. Long-abandoned settlements  
jutting from raw granite. Icebergs on the horizon above the  
rumpled, creased fabric of a brilliant blue sea. Beside him...

**AGNIS**

On the map, here. Quoye Point.  
Named after us. You.

It all seems at once awe-inspiring, frighteningly lonely. And  
hostile as hell.

**EXT. QUOYLE'S POINT - SUNSET**

The car pulls up in a shroud of mist. Our family climbs out,  
stares into what seems the center of a dense cloud, until...

...the fog LIFTS. And like a ghost, a GREEN HOUSE appears. Then,  
disappears. Then, APPEARS again. This time, to stay.

AGNIS (bottomless pride)  
I was born here.

**BUNNY**

The green makes me hurl.  
(Warren whimpers)  
Her, too.

The cloud lifts further, and we see the house stands alone on a rocky point. The bay roils far below. Half the window panes are gone. Holes in the roof, paint flaking everywhere. Lonely and scary as any haunted house.

**AGNIS**

Empty 44 years. And look at that  
roofline, straight as a ruler.

Quoye looks at her. Looks at the house. Looks at her.

**QUOYLE**

Take it easy. Floor mighta fallen  
into the cellar.

AGNIS (laughs)  
Not likely. There is no cellar.  
No foundation, neither.

She takes Bunny's squirming hand and starts toward the house, as if crossing Jordan.

AGNIS (calling back)  
The whole thing's lashed with cable,  
to iron rings set in the rock!

He just stands there. Sees the cables now, the rings.

QUOYLE (calling out)  
Uh. Why would they do th...

AGNIS (calling back)  
Long story!

Apparently a private one, too. Keeps walking.

**INT. GREEN HOUSE - TWILIGHT**

Inside the dank, corroding place. We can feel all 44 years of abandonment. CRASH! The door FLIES open. Quoye with his tire iron steps aside, and...

...Agnis drags Bunny inside. The wind shrieking low through openings like proper spirits. Even this bold child is frightened.

So Agnis leans to murmur...

**AGNIS**

Up those stairs, Aunt Pinkie slept.  
So fat she couldn't get down to her  
chamber pot. Wanna see if she's  
still there?

Asked as a serious question. Bunny nods. Let's.

ANGLE...upstairs now. Agnis marching through like MacArthur  
reclaiming the Philippines. Room after rough-hewn spacious room,  
light spiking through a thousand roof holes in assorted shapes.

**AGNIS**

Well. Too late to drive that road  
back 'round the bay. We'll camp  
in here tonight. Be right as rain.

Quoyle looks down to his daughter. Who nods, as if that were a  
perfectly natural suggestion.

**BUNNY**

Which one's Petal's room? I'll  
sleep there.

**INT. GREEN HOUSE - LATE NIGHT**

CLOSE on Bunny's sleeping face. PUSH INTO her closed eyes, and  
FADE to...

...a WINDOW, unearthly tendrils of FOG drifting past in moonglow  
wisps. Suddenly, a FACE appears, an animal. White. Wolf, or more  
likely, dog. It stares in at us, is fleetingly joined by a  
grizzled HUMAN ghost, eyes FLASHING crazy, and...

...gone in mist. CUT to...

REAR ANGLE of Quoyle and Bunny, each rolled over onto one side,  
asleep in their sleeping bags. His arm across her protectively.  
Hers across Warren, who sleeps curled to her chest. PAN up to...

...the window. Only the shimmer of cloud-like mist. SNAP to...

REVERSE ANGLE...Bunny's eyes. wide open.

**INT. ROOM - DAWN**

CLOSE on Quoyle, stirring at the end of sleep. His eyes flutter  
open. A beat. He is alone. sits...

...BOLT UPRIGHT.

ANGLE...front hallway, Quoyle's bulk POUNDING toward us, boots in his hand. The front door ajar. And at the threshold, in a decorous semi-circle, six naked Barbies. Legs spread wide for balance. Each staring out the doorway, to where...

...Bunny sits on the cold ground. Making some craft project with great care. Quoyle can breathe again, she's safe. Ambles out, crouches beside her. Close.

She keeps working. Almost eerie concentration. He sees now that she is weaving a loop of dandelion stems, connected by aluminum pop tops. He leans down. Kisses her head.

**QUOYLE**

Is that a belt or a crown?

No answer. That concerns him. The intensity of her focus. He notices now, the soda and beer cans with their tops popped. Lined up in a row. He lifts one, liquid sloshes out. They're full.

**QUOYLE**

Sodas get flat withou...

**BUNNY**

This is important.

She won't look up. He glances back to the doorway.

**QUOYLE**

That why the Barbies are watching?

**BUNNY**

They're being nice and patient.

**QUOYLE**

They must be chilly, tho. Should I get their clo...

**BUNNY**

They look better this way. They have great bodies.

He looks back. Well. Maybe so. Holds up one of the heavy boots he's carrying. It has a thick blue shoelace. The other. Has none. Sticks that one in front of her face.

She looks up to him. Tugs on the shoelace, which she now wears as a necklace...

**BUNNY**

I need it. I look good in blue.

QUOYLE (smiles)

Well. I look good in shoes.

...sees now what she has tugged from inside her shirt. The  
shoelace necklace holds a dull metal KEY as a pendant. He blinks.

**QUOYLE**

I was lookin' for that all over  
our old place. The landlady s...

**BUNNY**

I need it.

He takes that in. The urgency of it. She is staring in his eyes.  
So he grins...

**QUOYLE**

You had quite the heavy morning.  
Take the rest of the day off.

She doesn't smile back. Returns to her work. He looks out by the  
cliff, to see Agnis staring across the bay, Warren sitting at her  
side. He pulls on his boots. Gets to his feet.

**QUOYLE**

Be right back, and we'll start  
talking breakf...

BUNNY (not looking up)

Watch out for the dog.

He looks across the ground toward old Warren.

**QUOYLE**

Yeh, her farts are pretty scary.

**BUNNY**

I mean. The white one!

Now their eyes meet. Matter-of-fact...

**BUNNY**

The White Dog with the big  
teeth and the red eyes. The  
Skinny Ghost owns him. They  
came last night.

He draws a breath...

**BUNNY**

I didn't dream 'em, don't say  
I did.

He thinks this over.

**QUOYLE**

I was gonna say. I'll keep my  
eyes peeled.

And makes a funny gesture, like peeling his eyeballs. She goes  
back to work. His eyes linger. Then, he heads off toward the  
cliff. When he gets there...

AGNIS (staring across the bay)  
I'll get us a carpenter. Fix  
the place up in no time. We'll  
find a rooming house til th...

**QUOYLE**

Be cheaper to build a new one.  
On the Riviera, even.

Now she looks at him. Her flat, bottomless eyes.

**AGNIS**

Only I weren't born. On the  
Riviera.

O-kay. That's settled. He nods, humbly, dumbly. She points off  
across the water. An actual TOWN.

**AGNIS**

Flour Sack Cove. What time's  
your interview at that paper?  
Ten o'clock?

Ten o'clock.

**AGNIS**

The drive's a bitch. We'll buy  
us a boat.

He tries a smile. Unavoidably lame.

**QUOYLE**

I'm not. A water person.

AGNIS (dead straight)  
A boat. That's the ticket.

His grin hardens. Just enough to say that on this issue, maybe  
even she can't push him. He turns around. Starts back toward his

daughter.

**QUOYLE**

...not a water person.

**INT. CAR - MORNING**

Quoyle driving alone in his best suit. Which is also his worst suit. Which is also the suit he wore to interview Ed Punch, years ago. Hard rain. Potholes. Around a curve, to see ahead...

REAR ANGLE of a tall WOMAN, holding the hand of a CHILD as they walk in their slickers through the downpour. As he passes them, they TURN and..

...the woman is Petal. The child is Bunny. They both stick their tongues out at him.

Past now. Looking in the rear-view. The woman is lovely and no longer Petal. The child is a BOY, with a slack face and warm smile. Surprisingly, the same mother and son that Bunny watched on the ferry.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

Someone found a pretty wife.

Still staring in the mirror. The receding figures small against the rain.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

Someone always does.

**EXT. THE GAMMY BIRD - DAY**

Quoyle pulls up to a ramshackle place, its sign: THE GAMMY BIRD over a painted quacking duck. As he climbs out, he hears SHOUTING from inside. A door opens, and...

...a crab-like figure scuttles out, jumps in a Toyota truck, turns the key. Kills the engine. He looks out at Quoyle standing in what's left of the rain. Climbs back out. Rasps...

**CARD**

As you can see, sometimes y'can't get away. I'm Tert X. Card, the bloody so-called managing editor, copyeditor, rewrite man, mechanicals, ad makeup department, mail and distribution chief, and snow shoveler.

More of a leering rictus than an actual smile. TERT CARD is aging,

balding, potbellied over a once-rawboned frame. His face looks like cottage cheese clawed with a fork. He scratches his balls with a rough-hewn hand. He is never happy.

**CARD**

And you are either a big advertiser come to buy a four-page spread to push your warehouse of left-footed Japanese boots. Or. You. Are the breathlessly-awaited Quoyle.

**QUOYLE**

That'd be me. The second one.

Card rakes his privates once more, and offers the same hand in dubious greeting. Quoyle takes it.

**CARD**

Have to do without the Ultimate Cheese, y'll. Himself, Mr. Jack Buggit, is up at the house having charms said over his scrawny chest to clear out that impressive accumulation of phlegm he's been hawking all week.

Claps a mirthless hand on Quoyle's back, leading him into...

**INT. GAMMY BIRD NEWSROOM - DAY**

A newsroom. Makes the Mockingburg Record look like the Washington Post. Only two employees at their vintage desks. Card points as he bellows...

**CARD**

Now, there's Billy Pretty. He's something of a landmark and an old fish dog.

BILLY PRETTY is wizened and wiry, pushing 70. A tiny, energetic creature with well-weathered hide, watering crystal-blue eyes, and a slanted smile. He waves a bony hand.

**CARD**

Billy does the Home News page. Poems, baby photos, household tips, and a gossip column, under the byline of Junior Sugg, that is pretty much straight libel.

Billy nods. That pretty much covers it.

**CARD**

In short. He writes the only  
stuff anybody actually reads.

Little salute from the Managing Editor.            If Card likes anybody, he  
likes Billy. And he doesn't.

**CARD**

Now this miserable ugly Brit, is  
B. Beaufield Nutbeem. Imagines  
he's the foreign news chief. Steals  
every story off that foul shortwave  
radio and rewrites it in Limey prose.

NUTBEEM (smiling)

Which bloody Card rewrites in a  
mystical tongue most charitably  
referenced as an unacquireable taste.

NUTBEEM is 50 and gangly. Buttery hair swept behind ample ears.  
A thin moustache, a bounteous bowtie, a ratty pullover. He opens a  
file folder. Gives Quoyle a piercing, meaningful glance.

**NUTBEEM**

Mine: 'Burmese sawmill owners and  
the Rangoon Development Corporation  
met in Tokyo Tuesday to consider a  
joint approach to marketing tropical  
hardwoods.'

Got it?    Turns the page.

**NUTBEEM**

Card's rewrite: 'Burnoosed sawbill  
awnings and the Ranger Devotional  
Competition met Wednesday near  
Tokyo to mark up local hairwood.'

A stunned.    Silence.

**CARD**

It's shorter, and I got Tokyo right.

**NUTBEEM**

If misspelled.

**CARD**

Now what's funnier, Quoyle? My  
writing style, or the fantasy that  
any Newfie would read that  
moosepuckey in the first pIa...

QUOYLE (to Nutbeem)  
How'd the meeting go? Did they  
agree on a joint marketing approach?

The beginning. Of a beautiful friendship.

NUTBEEM (gentle smile)  
Still in progress, old bean.  
One can only hope.

Card, who likes no one. Doesn't like Quoyale, too.

**CARD**

There's your miserable desk, Quoyale.  
We've got no idea what yer s'posed  
to do. But Mr. Jack Buggit will  
drop by someday and enlighten us  
all. Til then...

And he turns away. Through the swinging door. SLAM. Quiet.  
Except for Nutbeem's chuckle.

**EXT. GREEN HOUSE - DAY**

Quoyale pulls up beside the ancestral home. Agnis stands at the  
back of a rented truck, sorting through materials in the payload.  
Across a stretch of ground, Bunny is earnestly pretend-reading a  
book to Warren, who lies listlessly before her.

Quoyale comes up behind Agnis. He carries a newspaper and an  
excited air.

**QUOYLE**

Listen to this. 'Well, we see  
the postman has landed in jail for  
45 days for throwing the mail in  
Killick-Claw Harbor. He said he  
had too much to deliver, and folks  
could just take a dip and help  
themselves.'

He looks up, eager for her reaction. She is still sorting through  
bolts of thick cloth, spools of heavy thread, odd mechanical  
devices.

**QUOYLE**

This is great stuff. 'A snowmobile  
mishap has taken the life of 78-year-  
old Rick Puff, who was on his way  
home from what the Widow Puff calls  
a 'screech-in and a carouse,' when his  
machine fell through the ice. A well-

known accordion player, Mr. Puff had served four years in the 1970s for sexual assault on his daughters. Bet they aren't crying, either.' This Billy Pretty can really write!

AGNIS (absently)  
...passes as colorful.

He looks into the truck. Sees all the stuff. She surveys his puzzlement.

**AGNIS**  
Nephew, we can't fix up the house proper on a journalist's wages. So I have un-retired.

Oh. Absorbs that.

**QUOYLE**  
From what?

**AGNIS**  
Upholstery. Been sought after for 33 years, wherever I've lived. This should be the real test, huh?

Quoyle nods. Could be that. The sudden sound of footsteps above them, makes him look up sharply, to see...

...a fit young MAN in a toolbelt climbing down a ladder from the roof. The muscles of a stud, the shy smile of a boy, he waves a greeting and HOPS down the last six feet to the ground.

**AGNIS**  
This is Dennis Buggit, master carpenter.

DENNIS offers a hand, and a smile that says he's expecting to like you. Makes the sentiment contagious.

**DENNIS**  
Only til I get my lobster license. I'm a fisherman in my soul.

A strong handshake. On both sides.

**DENNIS**  
It's a Newfie thing, the compulsion to fish. Y'hear yesterday's tragedy 'bout the Newfie who went ice fishin'?

Quoyle hasn't.

**DENNIS**

Brought home 200 pounds of ice. His wife fried it. They both drowned.

Quoyle laughs good and honest. Dennis likes that.

**AGNIS**

With me workin', we'll need day care for Bunny after school. Turns out Dennis and his wife send their little girl to this wonderful saintly woman. How's that for us livin' a charmed life?

Quoyle nods, if a bit cautious. Dennis squints out across the bay.

**DENNIS**

Agnis says yer buyin' a boat. Sooner's prob'ly better'n lat...

QUOYLE (quiet smile)

I'm not buyin'. No boat.

Sounds pretty sure of that. Punctures the amiable ambiance with a shard of silence.

**AGNIS**

Well, course we're buy...

QUOYLE (to Dennis)

Buggit, huh? Any kin to my boss on the Gammy Bird?

The silence. Just got thunderous. A full beat.

DENNIS (low)

Oh, yeh. He's m'dad.

Even the eyes glance down. What is that? In the wake of it...

AGNIS (cheerful)

Gonna chat up yer daughter, or just ignore her as usual?

Quoyle nods. Better do that. Dennis sends a shy smile, as if apologizing for the awkwardness. Quoyle holds up a finger, be right back, and...

...heads on over to where Bunny is reading to Warren.

**BUNNY**

Warren threw up in your sleeping bag.  
She's got a stomach problem.

Quoyle takes a breath to answer, but stops. He's caught a whiff.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

Headline. Dog Fart Fells Freelance  
Reporter. Promising Career Nipped  
in Bud.

**BUNNY**

It's called cancer.

Oh. Quoyle holds his face together, as Bunny strokes the limp Warren. Then, he crouches down...

...strokes Warren, too. Good dog.

**INT. GAMMY BIRD - MORNING**

Quoyle enters. Billy Pretty's on the phone, hand cupped over the receiver, like it's top secret. Nutbeem's tuning his ancient shortwave with a butter knife through the hole where a knob ought to be. And as Quoyle sets down his sack lunch and thermos, as he peels off his parka, he's staring straight into the eyes of...

...Tert Card across the way. Wearing a wicked and mysterious smile. As Quoyle's butt lowers toward his chair...

**BOOMING VOICE (O.S.)**

**ATTENTION QUOYLE!**

Quoyle JUMPS a foot. Looks from Card to Billy to Nutbeem. What's going on?

**BOOMING VOICE (O.S.)**

**IT'S AN I.Q. TEST, ME OLD SON, AND  
YOU AIN'T EXCELLING!**

WHIPS around. Through the glass of the only private office, sits a rumpled codger with a bullhorn. JACK BUGGIT, has his rubber boots up on the desk, scale-spattered overalls over his compact, sinewy body. His hair is wisps and shocks, and his face is strewn with stubble split by a leprechaun's grin around a stained hand-rolled ciggie.

JACK (into bullhorn)

**DOES PAYIN' YER SHAMEFUL WAGE ENTITLE  
ME TO A PERSONAL AUDIENCE? OR WOULDJA**

**RATHER JUST STAND THERE AN' DROOL?**

**NUTBEEM**

Tell the truth.

Jack WAVING him in, with great energetic loops. The grin more rowdy than his boy's. But the charm is there and more so. Quoyle goes...

**CARD (O.S.)**

Hold onto yer danglies, little  
sister.

...closes the door behind him. Jack's eyes are crinkly blue. They study Quoyle good. And right in his face...

JACK (into bullhorn)

**I PREDICT! A COCKADOODLE-BRIGHT  
FUTURE IN JOURNALISM!**

**QUOYLE**

Based on my I.Q. test, huh. Where'd  
I rate?

JACK (sets the bullhorn down)

Advanced squirrel. This ties you  
with me, an' I own the place.

Holds out a brown fisherman's hand. Quoyle takes it.

**JACK**

Pleased t'meetcha, Billy says yer  
workin' out.

A wink.

**JACK**

Tert Card says he's keepin' an eye  
on ya. Since he's a self-servin'  
liar, helluva ad salesman tho, it  
means he's jealous. And Nutbeem...

Lifts the bullhorn...

JACK (into bullhorn)

**NUTBEEM'S TEMPORARY ANYWAY! YOU HEAR  
THAT NUTBEEM!**

NUTBEEM (O.S., through glass)

**WITH PROFOUND RELIEF!**

Jack's grin grows a twinkle. Soft spot for the Brit.

**JACK**

Nutbeem's obsessed with actual news. Makes up for it by manning the sexual abuse desk. Can't keep up with the volume there, we're runnin' three, four a week.

Leans forward. Like he's dishing the lowdown.

**JACK**

Card's in charge. Ya hear this and that 'bout his typos, but typos is part of Gammy Bird. Everyone gets a laugh, and gets to figger 'em out.

Better'n a crossword.

Stabs out his cigarette. Pulls a new one from a damp little box.

**JACK**

An' Billy. Well, Billy's a writer and a fisherman. Me, I'm just a fisherman.

Offers the box. Quoyle shakes him off.

**JACK**

Fishin' and the sea is all I am. My pap the same. My boy.

**QUOYLE**

So he said. Waitin' for his license.

Ah. Jack's smile doesn't actually fade. But the eyes flicker, and Quoyle is sorry he opened his yap.

**JACK**

Naw, my boy's passed. Went to sea and there he rests. Bless his bones.

His glance goes to a photo. Jack and a strapping blond son. Not Dennis, that's for sure. Somehow, we are suddenly down to business...

**JACK**

Want two things from ya, Quoyle. First. You cover every local car wreck, take pictures. Front-page photo every week, whether we have a

wreck or not, an' we always do. When we don't, we dip into Card's file, he's got some beauties.

INTERCUT...half a red Geo being fished out of the water. Petal's lifeless torso hanging backwards out the door, arms gracefully extended like a ballerina or Olympic diver. Over this...

**JACK (O.S.)**

Knack to this. If there's a dark patch on the ground, it reads blood, whether it's motor oil or Diet Coke. Gloves, hat, lyin' in the road...

BACK to Jack. Canny and keen. He knows this stuff.

**JACK**

...somethin' that humanizes, makes ya feel. That's what a wreck is. It's always saying, 'There but for the grace of God...'

Do ya follow? Quoyle follows.

**JACK**

Plus. We're starting a feature on the shipping news. What ships come in, what goes out. Whatever's of interest. Throwin' it to you, son. Chance to shine.

A beat.

**QUOYLE**

Mr. Buggit. I'm not. Well, a water person.

Ah. Jack takes this in. The smile returns.

**JACK**

Chance. To shine.

If you catch my drift. Quoyle shuts up.

**JACK**

One peculiarity. I'm no joke, son, and I don't tolerate jokes about Newfies. Or them that does.

SMASH CUT to...

**INT. SKIPPER WILL'S DINER - NIGHT**

CLOSE on Dennis, holding a half-eaten squidburger in two hands. Oblivious to sawdust, smoke and stench, he is charmingly, engagingly, smashed.

**DENNIS**

So this Newfie comes to Toronto.  
Cabbie says, take ya to meet girls  
for a good time. Boy says, okay,  
but I only want a Newfie girl.

His audience is Quoyle and Nutbeem. Each holds a squidburger of his own, tentacles dangling. Quoyle has his next one handy by his beer.

**DENNIS**

Right section of the party district,  
he finds a girl, they have sex,  
she says that's a hunnerd dollars.  
He says fine, tips her another  
hunnerd! She says, wow, can y'come  
back t'morrow?

Quoyle takes a humongus BITE. Tentacles now dripping from his jaws. Rapt. Hypnotized.

**DENNIS**

Next two nights, same thing!

Finally she says, I never met so  
sweet a guy, where ya from? He says,  
Misky Bay, Newfoundland. She says,  
really? Me, too!

Quoyle hanging on the punch.

**DENNIS**

He says, I know. Yer ma asked me  
t'give ya six hunnerd dollars!

Quoyle SNORTS his laughter, dislodging a tentacled morsel or two. Nutbeem has to look away, as Quoyle retrieves the chunks, stuffs 'em back in his mouth.

**DENNIS**

Yer the model Newfie, Q, but fer  
th'boat. Why doncha buy Nutbeem's?

Drunken, devilish smile. Quoyle turns, innocent questioning eyes.  
You got a boat?

**NUTBEEM**

I built a Chinese junk. Sailed it  
up from Brazil. Missed Manhattan by  
a mile or so, got stranded here when  
I shipwrecked by Gaze Island.

So casual and falsely modest, Quoyle's eyes are big.

**NUTBEEM**

Almost finished my repairs. Be  
leaving soon. As paleontologists  
define the term.

Studies Quoyle's amazement. Confides...

**NUTBEEM**

She's ugly. And the only thing  
I've ever loved.

Dennis rises. Belches.

**DENNIS**

Yer story tugs at me bladder.

And off he lurches to correct the situation. Once he's gone...

**QUOYLE**

Him and Jack. Tell it.

Their eyes meet. The Brit sighs.

**NUTBEEM**

Jack Buggit's psychic, start with  
that. He's got the gift. Specially  
about the sea.

Thinking. Should he tell it? Quoyle makes a rolling hand motion,  
hurry it up.

**NUTBEEM**

Older brother Jesson, everyone's  
favorite, even Dennis'. Goes to  
sea like his dad. One day, rest  
of the family's sitting by the radio,  
and Jack goes white...

That's right.

**NUTBEEM**

Stands up. Says, Jesson's gone.  
Walks out of the house. Grief too  
big for walls to hold it.

Sets down the burger.       Runs a finger down the frost on his beer mug.

**NUTBEEM**

So Dennis is forbidden the sea.  
But being free, Newfie, and 21,  
he goes anyway.

**QUOYLE**

And that's enough t...?

**NUTBEEM**

Death storm. Monster wave cracks  
her steel hull amidships, one inch  
crack from starboard to port. Men  
go in the water. Dennis lost.  
After a week...

A week.

**NUTBEEM**

They come to Jack, call off the  
search. He stands like a stone. Then  
turns, sharp, the way he does. Says  
only, 'He's alive. And I know where.'

**QUOYLE**

Man's a witch.

**NUTBEEM**

Went to sea, alone, in just a skiff.  
Finds him. Can you guess the odds?  
Finds him. Finds him. Both arms  
broke, 99% dead.

Leans.       Close.

**NUTBEEM**

Boy comes to. Jack says if you ever  
step in a boat again, I'll drown ya  
m'self. And you know what the kid  
said...?

Quoyle glances over.       Dennis wobbling his way back through the tables.

**QUOYLE**

Say it fast.

**NUTBEEM**

Says fishin' licenses are all spoken

for, I'd appreciate you givin' me  
yours. Jack looked in his eyes.  
They never spoke ag...

**DENNIS**

What's bein' blabbed here?

NUTBEEM (not missing a beat)  
Quoyle says you got a nice ass.

**DENNIS**

Quoyle's right.

He raises his beer.

**DENNIS**

To my ass.

**QUOYLE**

I'll drink to that.

And, by God. They do.

**EXT. WAVEY'S YARD - AFTERNOON**

Quoyle and Bunny climb out of the wagon. A small house, its grassy yard strewn with a phantasmagoria of painted wood figures, galloping horses, dogs balanced on wheels, a row of chrome hubcaps on sticks. A zoo of the mind. To one side, a table piled with crafts, ignored by...

...fifteen LITTLE KIDS running in all directions, like bundled, unbridled banshees. Looks like fun. Two harried MOTHERS are trying to cope with the chaos. And there, under a tree...

...the honey-haired WOMAN Quoyle had seen on the ferry. And in the rain. She is on her knees, tying the shoes of her vacant-faced SON. He trips and sprawls, but he is laughing. The woman smiles tenderly and tousles his brown-straw hair.

Quoyle gets up his courage. Walks Bunny over to them. As we arrive, the woman looks up...

QUOYLE (really nervous)  
Hullo. It's our first day, and I  
was wond...

**BUNNY**

What's wrong with him?

Quoyle freezes. She means, of course, the blankly-staring boy.

**QUOYLE**

Hey, how 'bout we ask what's wrong with you? There's nothing wr...

WOMAN (to Bunny, softly)  
Sure, there is. This is Herry, and he has Down's Syndrome. It means he learns things very slowly.

Oh. HERRY smiles at Bunny. Suddenly, wonderfully.

BUNNY (to Herry)  
Know how to be a dog?

She DROPS to all fours and starts YAPPING like a terrier. Herry LAUGHS with delight. Tumbles down to the grass and does his impression of a Chihuahua on speed.

BUNNY (to the woman)  
He looks fast to me. Maybe he's cured.

**WOMAN**

Maybe.

The kids waddle off in their canine personas. Alone with the woman now, Quoye is near-catatonic. Come on, brain!

**QUOYLE**

Which one of those women is in charge here?

The woman looks at him. Clear cornflower eyes. As comfortable in silence as he is agonized. Then, she squints out at the other women, desperately running ragged after the kids.

**WOMAN**

Neither of 'em. They're just moms.

Oh.

**QUOYLE**

Well, my lord, whoever runs the place should be giving this a little more attention.

She looks back at him, blankly.

**WOMAN**

You think.

**QUOYLE**

I mean, children need structure.  
No one's even guarding that craft  
table, they could be running around  
with scissors and get hurt.

The woman's eyes bottomless, unreadable.           The silence  
excruciating  
for poor Quoye. He clears his throat.

**QUOYLE**

Um.    I write for the newspa...

But she stands.    The grace and quickness of a jungle cat.

**WOMAN**

Well. I'd better get to work, I  
see. Providing structure and all.

Brushes off her skirt.           He is in the dawning panic of beginning  
to  
realize...

**WAVEY**

I'm Wavey Prowse, and this is  
my place. Pardon our antiquated  
emphasis on individuality and the  
freedom to have fun.

Heads off with a loose-limbed stride.           Spins back around...

**WAVEY**

Oh, yeh.           Running with sharp  
objects?           We save for Tuesdays.

Got it? He gawks like a stupid animal.           Nods, got it.    She's  
already gone.

**EXT. BARGE DECK - DAY**

Quoye and Billy Pretty stroll the teak deck of a massive,  
elegantly-outfitted BARGE. The wiry little fellow keeps his  
smile to his eyes...

**BILLY**

Well, she don't wear a ring, cause  
she lost her husband at sea. Just  
after the boy was born.

Oh.    Quoye nods, blandly.           As if it is a matter of no real  
concern

**QUOYLE**

Well, I was just...

**BILLY**

...sharpenin' those observation skills. First tool of a quality reporter.

Keep walking.

**QUOYLE**

She has wonderful. Posture.

BILLY (has to smile)

Yer know, I never notic...

**MELVILLE (O.S.)**

**JESUS F. CHRIST! YOU BOYS WANT THIS  
STORY OR NOT?**

Look up ahead to the bow, where a rolling bar has been set up. BAYONET MELVILLE is mixing drinks. He has a florid face and striking white hair. Dapper, arrogant, a guy with more money than he's worked for. As we approach...

**MELVILLE**

Ever seen anything like her?

Quoyle looks to the sour-faced middle-aged lady, who glances disdainfully at us above her gimlet. SILVER MELVILLE used to be pretty and rich. She's still rich.

QUOYLE (politely)

No sir, your wife is very lovl...

**MELVILLE**

I mean. The ship.

Oh. Billy keeps a straight face. Silver ROLLS her eyes.

**MELVILLE**

It was built for Hitler. You've heard of Hitler? Up here in Canada?

**QUOYLE**

Oh, yessir. He was in all the papers. Way back.

Silver snorts a laugh. Melville wonders if that was irony. Looking at Quoyle, he doubts that's possible.

**MELVILLE**

Finest botterjacht ever built in  
Holland. Flat-bottomed, she can  
go right up on shore in a storm.  
Incredibly heavy, forty tons of oak.  
Not unlike the barges of Henry VIII  
and Elizabeth I.

BILLY (helpful)  
We heard a them, too.

**SILVER**  
Tell them what happened. In  
Hurricane Bob.

He looks at his wife. Clear in a glance they hate each other's  
guts. Go on, she nods. Tell it.

**MELVILLE**  
Pounded twelve beach houses.  
Expensive ones. To rubble.

**SILVER**  
**WHAMM!**  
Drunk and mean. And smarter than he is.

**SILVER**  
Now tell them. Who let our  
insurance lapse.  
Silence.

**SILVER**  
Took six very expensive lawyers to  
weasel us out of it. An inch from  
bankruptcy.  
She winks.

**SILVER**  
Moral of the story? When you marry  
a tour guide. Confine his authority  
to mixing the drinks. Same again,  
dear?  
And holds out her glass. Billy looks out to sea. Like he  
hasn't  
heard this.

QUOYLE (cheerful)  
So. What brings you folks up

from Long Island?

A beat. While husband and wife glare at each other.

**SILVER**

My dining salon needs refitting.  
And the best custom yacht upholsterer  
in the Northern Hemisphere just  
moved here. I was forced. To follow.

She turns to Quoyle. Who just gapes at her. Open-mouthed.

Oh. My. God.  
QUOYLE (softly)

**INT. GREEN HOUSE - DAY**

Quoyle enters, impressed by the progress of the renovation.  
Windows are in, walls patched, floor sanded, lights are working.

Through the place into...

...the kitchen, which is in surprisingly usable shape. Agnis sits  
alone at a butcher block table with a set of ledgers spread before  
her. A large mug of tea. A bottle of Bushmill's Irish.

**QUOYLE**

You are a woman of mystery, Aunt.  
Mystery and surprise.

AGNIS (still working)  
Silver Melville says you was out  
there. Be nice in yer story, she's  
payin' for a piece of this house.

Silence.

**QUOYLE**

You said upholstery. Never said  
yacht uphol...

**AGNIS**

...never said not. Ask better  
questions, you got a chance fer  
better answers. Got my shop set  
up in Killick-Claw, now.

Looks up. Sees he's dazzled by how she moves right along.

**AGNIS**

Two good workers. Mrs. Mavis  
Bangs is an old plow horse like

m'self. But Dawn...

She winks.

**AGNIS**

Dawn's young and on the sexy side. You oughta drop by and say hullo.

He absorbs that.      How fast can he change the subject?

**QUOYLE**

Where's Bunny?

Agnis looks at him.      Reaches for the Bushmill's.

**AGNIS**

Upstairs, in what will soon become her room. She'll be all right.

**QUOYLE**

What does that mean?

She pours some whiskey into her tea cup.

**QUOYLE**

Little early in the day f...

**AGNIS**

Warren died today.      That's what that means.

Drinks the whiskey.      Stares straight in his eyes.      Sees his sorrow.

The honesty in...

**QUOYLE**

Poor old girl.

Agnis deciding.      Whether to tell him...

**AGNIS**

I used to live with someone named Warren. Died of cancer, after nine years together. Dearest soul on this earth.

Quoye shocked. What can he say? His empathy so naked, so real, even Agnis has to soften her voice...

**AGNIS**

Went from the funeral, and bought that dog. Named her Warren. Just

so I could say the name a hunnerd  
times a day. Women are foolish, huh?

**QUOYLE**

I never thought so.

A good moment for them. It holds a beat.

**AGNIS**

Bunny wants to bury the dog with  
me. But I told her I'd rather do  
it alone.

Quoye nods. Rises slowly. He'd better go to her.

**AGNIS**

Some advice about the child?

Another sip.

**AGNIS**

Don't get down on her level, the way  
you do. She'll never respect you.

**INT. BUNNY'S ROOM - DAY**

Bunny sits on the floor in dim light, wearing an enormous blue  
sweatshirt. Obviously dad's. Her naked Barbies sit in a semi-  
circle watching her braid a meticulous loop out of the paper and  
foil from chewing gum wrappers. Quoye enters, and sits close  
beside her. Watches in silence, as she works.

BUNNY (not looking up)  
Warren died today. She's not  
coming back.

No tears. Just a hollow sound in her voice.

**BUNNY**

That's the difference.

He knows what she means. Strokes her hair.

**QUOYLE**

Another necklace, huh? Can  
I help?

**BUNNY**

You can watch.

Okay. He looks at the Barbies.

**QUOYLE**

Do I have to take my clothes off?

She looks up at him.        Straight to his eyes.

**BUNNY**

You look better with 'em on.

Goes back to work.        He watches her.

**QUOYLE**

You know.        You do look good  
in blue.

**EXT. ROAD - DAY**

Quoyale driving the wagon, Dennis at his side. Up ahead on the road, two figures. Herry holds tight to his mom's hand. Quoyale pulls over, and they stop. Wavey squints at him, against the sun.

**QUOYLE**

Give you folks a lift?

That extra beat before she says...

**WAVEY**

We're enjoyin' the walk, thank you.

Doesn't smile.        Doesn't look angry either.        Just comfortable.

**QUOYLE**

Well. My aunt can't bring Bunny to the daycare, she's got her shop now. But I worked it out with my boss. So I'll be bringin' her come next week.

No reaction.

**QUOYLE**

If that's all right.

**WAVEY**

Love to have her. I'm sorry, Mr. Quoyale, about the other time. Women can be moody, you know. And temperamental.

Now she smiles.        One-tenth power.        Still a dazzler.

**QUOYLE**

Only the best ones.

Did she like that?      Hard to tell.      She looks around him...

**WAVEY**

Good afternoon, Dennis. Give our respects to Beety and Marty.

He waves, will do. She takes Herry's hand, starts off down the road. Quoyle sits and watches.

**DENNIS**

Excellent posture.

Quoyle looks over.      His pal shrugs.

**DENNIS**

People talk.

**EXT. SHORELINE - SUNSET**

Rear ANGLE of Agnis, walking over stones to the edge of the sea, carrying something in her arms. Walking to meet the sun, as it gives its last to the shimmering water. REVERSE ANGLE to see...

...she carries her old dog. On a clean sheet. Rests the burden gently down. The incoming tide laps over. The sheet billows in it. She takes a step back.

**AGNIS**

You were a good girl, Warren, no trouble a'tall.

Surf rolls out.      Swims back in.      Flows around her friend.

**EXT. GREEN HOUSE - DAY**

An outhouse stands unobtrusively near the edge of the cliff. See Agnis alone, approaching. Something in her hand. As she reaches the outhouse, we see it is...

...the ziploc bag. With her brother's ashes.      She gazes back at the house now. Then, at the bag...

**AGNIS (cold, low)**

Hope ya like. What we done with the place.

She opens the door, enters.      Stares down into the deep hole. Unzips the bag, and...

...TIPS the ashes DOWN INTO the hole. Watch them in SLO-MO, falling free. Hear the rustle of Agnis lifting her skirts, and...



They don't look at each other.           Poker-faced, just alike, working  
side by side.

**QUOYLE**

The Newfie looks around. Still  
nobody. Hollers, WHO ARE YA?  
THE VOICE O' GOD? Voice comes  
back, NO! THE ARENA MANAGER!

He can't help but snort out a chuckle of his own.           Sneaks a look  
over at her, and she...

...laughs out loud.    Healthy.   Sexy, even.   But from the delay, he  
guesses...

**QUOYLE**

Heard it before, huh?

She looks over at him.           Her eyes dance a little.

**WAVEY**

Sometimes, passion in performance.  
Beats the element of surprise.

And he is lost in those eyes.           Knows it's showing.           Glances away  
to  
where...

...Bunny sits in a corner.           Reading to a rapt Herry.

**QUOYLE**

You guys hungry?

**BUNNY**

Shhh. I'm teaching Herry to read.  
Just like I did Warren.

**QUOYLE**

Is he learnin'?

Bunny looks over at him.           He is so dumb.

**BUNNY**

First is the teaching part.           The  
learning comes later.

Herry nods.    Later.    And out of the blue...

**BUNNY**

Wavey? Now are the berries ready  
to pick?

Quoye looks over to the woman. But instead of Wavey, he sees PETAL, staring at him with slow predatory heat.

**PETAL**

Want to pick my berries, do you.  
Should I climb right up on this sink?

And then, once more she is...

**WAVEY**

Almost. Almost ready.                    You know,  
it's all about timing.

Quoye.    Takes note.

**INT. GAMMY BIRD - DAY**

Quoye alone in the office, pretending to peck away at a story. Actually, he's looking...

...through the window. Where Jack Buggit, Tert Card, Billy Pretty and Nutbeem are all circling around a small, roughly-made boat, attached to its rented trailer. They are talking to each other in learned tones. A Talmudic chat. And...

...in they come.            First through the door...

**CARD**

That's yer boat.

**QUOYLE**

Said it was.

**CARD**

One question remains.            Why.  
Is that. Yer boat?

Uh-oh. He looks from one face to another. Even Billy is irritated. Nutbeem gazes down, embarrassed for him.

**QUOYLE**

Well.    A boat's a boa...

**CARD**

It's a shit boat. Best thing,  
get rid of it some dark night.

Quoye can't believe this.            Hot shame burns.

**BILLY**

Go hire Alvin Yark to build ya a  
sweet little rodney. This thing's

a wallowing cockeyed bastard that'll  
sink in a bathtub.

And standing in the doorway, the scariest sight of all.      The boss.  
Just shaking his head.

JACK (sadly)

You don't have the sense God gave  
a doughnut, do ya?

The word from Sinai on Quoyle's worth.      A pity.

**JACK**

I'm goin' fishin'.

Out the door with a SLAMM!      Quoyle stares hopelessly after him.

**NUTBEEM**

Don't jump off a bridge over it.  
Anyone can make a brainless, asinine,  
devastatingly revealing blunder.

QUOYLE (actually means this)

Thanks.

**CARD**

What in th' furry pit of Newfie hell.  
Is this!?

Holds up some sheets of paper.      Photos of the Melvilles'  
botterjacht. Reads...

**CARD**

Hitler's Barge...?

**QUOYLE**

That goes with the shipping news.  
Profile of a vessel in port.

**CARD**

What about the car accident?

**QUOYLE**

That's the one I didn't do. Mrs.  
Diddolatte sprained her wrist. Period.

Card still reading.

**CARD**

So you didn't do the one Jack told  
yer to do, and you did one he don't

know yer did!

Silence.

**QUOYLE**

Pretty mu...

**CARD**

This copy. Is worse. Than yer boat.

He looks up. Equal parts disgust and delight.

**CARD**

Jack even sniffs this, he cuts you  
up fer lobster bait. I've half a  
mind to run it.

Quoyle straightens his spine.

**QUOYLE**

Run it.

Strides off for the door. Turns back...

**QUOYLE**

As for the part about you havin'  
half a mind? No comment.

Out the door. SLAMM harder than Jack's.

**EXT. GAMMY BIRD - DAY**

Quoyle stumbling toward his wagon with vacant eyes.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

Headline. Reporter Disembowels  
Self With Rusty Joke.

**EXT. GREEN HOUSE ROOF - DAY**

Quoyle in a carpenter's belt, climbing very carefully from a ladder  
onto the roof. His vertigo apparent as he keeps to his hands and  
knees, trying to fight the compulsion to look down. Gives in to  
it, peering from the corner of his eye down the cliff, the rocks,  
the sea so far below. Not a good idea.

Comes to the shingles. Eases his way into a fearful crouch. Okay.  
Starts hammering. And rehearsing.

**QUOYLE**

Jack, I completely understand, I

would fire me, too.

Nodding, in time to the hammer strokes.

**QUOYLE**

In a heartbeat.

Hammers LOUDER, speaking in rhythm...

**QUOYLE**

You give me a chance, and what happens? I buy the wrong boat, I write the wrong story, I am the lowest form of alleged life. In fact, your comment...

Stops.

**QUOYLE**

...was an insult to the doughnut.

Hear now what the hammering had masked. Someone is reaching the top of the ladder, climbing onto the roof.

Bunny. Somehow she has managed to climb while carrying a sandwich on a plate. And an open bottle of soda. He stares at her, uncomprehending.

**BUNNY**

Egg salad and Nehi grape.

She sets them down. Stands UP on the steep pitch.

QUOYLE (shocked stupid)

Baby...

**BUNNY**

They're mine but I'll share.

As the plate and bottle slip neatly OFF the roof and, after a noticeable beat, shatter softly far below. Bunny's turn to be shocked. She's contemplating going after them.

**QUOYLE**

**DON'T MOVE!!**

Okay, that was a little loud. It has also scared the kid out of her wits. Quoyle regrets this. Starts scooching awkwardly down the slope, inches at a time...

QUOYLE (too casual)

We're gonna play Wait For Daddy.  
Can you play that?

She's just staring over the side. Hypnotized by the sight. He's slipping toward her. Toward the edge.

**QUOYLE**

And if you don't move. Until I  
get there. Then...

Closer, reaching toward her back...

**QUOYLE**

...then you win!

...GRABS her arm, she STARTLES, violently LURCHING, but he YANKS her to him. Holds her to his heart. Holds her. He is breathing like a freight train.

**QUOYLE**

That. Was so easy.

**INT. GAMMY BIRD - MORNING**

Jack Buggit enters with energy. Looks around. Billy's typing,

Nutbeem's reading. Quoyale is cleaning out his desk, pulling things off his little shelf to pack away. Goofy photo of Bunny. Ceramic child-made three-legged turtle. Tiny padded box with what looks to be carefully-preserved empty eggshells.

Jack heads toward him.

**CARD**

Did ya see the Hitler's barge  
piece, Jocko?

**JACK**

I saw it. And heard from some  
who'd done the same.

(to Quoyale)

Good. Neatness.

Quoyale turns. Pretty much all his possessions are in a big cardboard box. Jack peers into it.

**JACK**

Reorganize. Start over. Good  
thinking.

But he's smiling. Like he's got the point.

**QUOYLE**

Thing about the barge piece? I just thought it'd perk up th...

**JACK**

Got six phone calls 'bout that piece. Six. That'd be like half a million calls in Toronto.

Grasps Quoye around the back of the neck.

**JACK**

People liked it, old son. Crowd went down to the dock t'see the thing, but it'd already pulled out.

Quoye stares, slack-faced into the elfin eyes...

**JACK**

Course you don't know anything about boats, but that's entertaining, too. So go ahead with it. That's the kinda stuff I want, see?

Just now, Card's jaw is scraping his boot tops.

**JACK**

From now on, you write a column every week. The Shipping News. Gonna order you a computer and everything. And y'know the beauty part...?

Quoye doesn't.

**JACK**

I don't have to tell Card all over again, cause he's already eavesdroppin'. So I'm free to take m'leave.

**QUOYLE**

Goin' fishin'?

**JACK**

Ah. You've an instinct for character and idiosyncrasy, old son.

A wink. He heads toward the door. And never looking at him...

**JACK**

Zip yer fly, Card.

Card looks down. He zips up, as the door slams. Billy Pretty sends Quoyale a thumbs-up, without turning. Nutbeem clasps his hands above his head, like a winning prizefighter.

Quoyale slides a sheet of paper into his typewriter. Stares at it.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

Thirty-eight years. First time anybody said you done it right.

**INT. AGNIS' SHOP - DAY**

A woman looks up from her stitching. She is solidly built, pushing 60, Emily Dickinson hair. A cheerful, calmly butch way about her. Trustworthy eyes.

**AGNIS**

Nephew, this is Mavis Bangs. A real professional.

Mavis holds out a hearty hand. Agnis is showing him the shop. A cutting table, two sewing stations. Billowing sailcloth hung over the windows. Racks of leathers and fabrics.

**AGNIS**

And this is Dawn Budgel. She's a vegetarian.

Dawn, once described by Agnis as young and on the sexy side, is that. Red lipstick and nails. Her eyes float up in a way that suggests reflexive sensuality. Agnis nods to her, and the girl reaches a slender pale hand...

**DAWN**

Agnis is always saying such...things about you. It's nice to fit a man.

With the name.

And as she releases his hand, her eyes flick to Agnis. Some conspiracy there. Quoyale follows his aunt back to the big cutting table.

**QUOYLE**

I just, uh, came to see if you'd heard abou..

**AGNIS**

Silver Melville? Snuck off in the night, they did. Not a penny paid for all we done.

Shows him sheets of baby blue leather.

**AGNIS**

We'd installed the banquettes in  
her salon. Three of the chairs done  
and delivered, three to go...

Points to them. A neat row by the makeshift kitchenette.

**QUOYLE**

That's. That's just terrible.

But Agnis is thinking...

**AGNIS**

Strange. Leavin' the chairs.

And as he glances off, he sees Dawn across the way. Her skirt  
hiked up, as if she were adjusting a stocking.

She isn't wearing any.

**EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY**

Billowy clouds frame a languid KITE, silver and sleek, darting this  
way and that. Graceful, in command of the currents.

**WAVEY (O.S.)**

**HERRY PROWSE! LOOK HOW WELL YOUR  
KITE IS DOING!**

See her now, seated atop a grassy slope. It is she who holds the  
string, and her boy is way down at the bottom of the hill with  
Bunny. Blue jumper billowing, the girl is teaching him how to make  
necklaces from wildflowers and garbage bag twisty-ties. Herry and  
the naked Barbies watch with great attention. The learning will  
come later.

**WAVEY**

**ARE YOU MAKING IT DANCE WITH  
YOUR THOUGHTS?**

On this he looks up. Serious.

**WAVEY**

**KEEP THINKING YOUR THOUGHTS!  
YOUR KITE IS DOING SO MUCH BETTER  
THAN MR. QUOYLE'S!**

PULL BACK slightly to reveal that Quoyale has been sitting right  
beside her all along. He holds the string of a big, glum kite that

hangs motionless in space with barely a flutter. As she watches the kids, he stares at her, fixedly deciding whether to ask...

QUOYLE (barely audible)  
Do you think Bunny's. Strange?

Wavey looks over. Sees that he's worried half to death.

QUOYLE  
In New York. They said she had a...  
personality disorder.

WAVEY (softly)  
And it was named Petal.

Do you understand that?

QUOYLE  
All these hallucin...

WAVEY  
The White Dog. Sometimes with the  
Skinny Ghost. Kids do things like  
that, it's called imagination. Like  
the necklaces.

The necklaces, yeh. A thought that frightens him.

QUOYLE  
You know how many she makes?

She does.

WAVEY  
It's a skill, she's proud of it. And  
she brings her dolls along. And she  
looks good in blue. And she wears a  
key for a good luck charm.

Her kind smile. No big deal.

QUOYLE  
And she's saving her mother a room.  
Did she tell you that?

Wavey's slow nod.

QUOYLE  
She talks to her at night. I can  
hear through the door.

Very quiet now.      The wind.      The kites.

**QUOYLE**

You know how kids think.      You have  
all those books.

**WAVEY**

The ones I read to teach Herry.  
They don't make me an exp...

QUOYLE (blurting)

Just.      Is she okay?

That was naked.      He swallows.

**QUOYLE**

I mean.      If you had to guess..

Too serious a subject.      Too good a woman.      For an easy lie.

**WAVEY**

That child is the only friend my son  
ever had. So she's strange, you bet.

She swallows, too.      Her eyes are damp.

**WAVEY**

I love that little girl. And I will  
see to it. That she's all right.

Hold the look.

**WAVEY**

And I don't have to guess about it.

**EXT. WOODS - LATER**

Quoyle RUNNING, huffing, through a bog with every color of berries  
imaginable. Around another bend in the path. Stops. Hands on his  
knees.

Listens.      Nothing.      Shit.

**QUOYLE**

**IF YOU GUYS AREN'T CHASING ME, I'M  
GONNA BE COMPLETELY CHEESED OFF!**

More nothing. He trudges back the way he came.      Peeks  
around a  
bend to see...

...Bunny is teaching Berry to pick gooseberries. This time, the

learning has started. They are being very careful.

**QUOYLE**

If you pick enough, we can sell 'em  
for a thousand dollars. And give it  
to Aunt Agnis to make up for those  
Staties who didn't pay h...

BUNNY (means business)  
Then don't. Slow us. Down.

Quoyle SLAPS his hands across his mouth. Sorry! He tiptoes  
off.  
Rounds a bend. Walking faster now...

Around another bend. And stops. Hold on his face. REVERSE  
ANGLE  
to take his view of...

...Petal, kneeling in a flimsy sundress, picking berries.  
Barefoot, her skirt hiked up, stained with berry juice. And when  
she turns to him...

...she is still Petal. Her face is beautiful, and filled with  
tender desire. She looks at him the way he has always dreamed she  
would. He goes to...

...kneel beside her. Touch her waist. And now she is...

...another woman. His hand is on Wavey's waist, and it comes  
slowly away. But her eyes are locked to his. Making her choice.

WAVEY (very soft)  
Look. I like you.

Even in kindness, he can smell rejection. He starts to back  
away,  
but she takes his hand. Holds it.

**WAVEY**

I want us. To be friends, okay?

He nods, dumbly. Of course. Okay.

**WAVEY**

And friends. Need. To understand  
each other.

QUOYLE (so sorry)  
I understand. Believe m...

**WAVEY**

My husband drowned. Herry was...

Hard for her. He quiets.

**WAVEY**

He was two months old. And Herold took the boat out. Overnight. To fish for haddock.

Do you understand?

**WAVEY**

Because I liked. Haddock.

Silence.

**WAVEY**

It's four years.

She stares in his eyes.

**WAVEY**

And it's yesterday.

No smile.

**WAVEY**

Now, did I blow it. Or can you still be my friend?

A beat. Quoyle nods, sure. I'll be your friend. But what she sees is a lifetime of being Quoyle washing past his eyes. It makes her murmur...

**WAVEY**

What? What are you thinking?

And from his heart...

**QUOYLE**

I'm thinking I'm sorry. For everything.

He stands up. HEAR him stumble off. HOLD on her.

**EXT. GREEN HILLSIDE - DAY**

A grassy place above an empty sea. The rest of the world far away.  
Two figures climb the gentle hill.

**BILLY**

How're you doin' with the Tall  
and Quiet Woman?

**QUOYLE**

Cindy Crawford and me is doin' fine.

**BILLY**

I meant Wavey Prowse.

Oh.

**BILLY**

My dad used to say there's four  
women in every man's life. The  
Stouthearted Woman...

**QUOYLE**

Oh, that'd be Agnis.

**BILLY**

...the Maid in the Meadow...

**QUOYLE** (has to think)

Bunny I guess. Weavin' a daisy-chain  
necklace.

**BILLY**

...the Tall and Quiet Woman...

**QUOYLE**

Well. She does have that posture  
goin'.

**BILLY**

...and the Demon Lover.

On this. Quoyale's smile fades. He looks away. They've reached a  
fence where blunt pickets enclose crosses and wooden markers, many  
fallen on the ground.

**BILLY** (wistful)

Me dad said that.

Billy finds the right marker. Sets his satchel onto the grass.  
Kneels. His old fingers clear debris from painted words:  
**W. PRETTY. 1897 - 1944. THROUGH THE GREAT STORMS OF LIFE, HE  
DID HIS BEST. GOD GRANT HIM ETERNAL REST.**

**BILLY**

That's me poor father.           Thirteen

I was when he died.

He hears the thread of feeling in his simple words. And says no more. Withdraws two cans of paint from his bag. One white, one black. Two brushes. Lays them out carefully, for this task is sacred.

**BILLY**

Every time I wonder. Is this the  
last coat?

Pries the lid off the tin of black. And when he sees Quoyle's eyes...

**BILLY**

Well, there's no one else to do  
it, y'see.

**QUOYLE** (straight back)

There is now.

An easy smile. Stating the obvious.

**QUOYLE**

There's me.

The old man's face just stops. The eyes sharpen. Into a question.

**QUOYLE**

Well, you said. There's no  
one else.

As if that were enough.

**QUOYLE**

Hey. If you wanna rest next to  
him. I'll paint yours at the same  
time. No extra trouble.

Billy stares at him. Stares at him. Clears his throat, gruffly.

**BILLY**

Then better get Alvin Yark.  
T'build yer a real boat. So  
yer'll be around.

**EXT. GREEN HOUSE - DAY**

Quoyle exits the house, pulling on his jacket, and...

...stops. Something laid across his threshold. A long piece of TWINE has been placed there. KNOTS tied evenly along its length. He glances back up to the second floor, thinking Bunny. Looks at the thing again. Neat work. Odd. Slips it in his pocket.

**EXT. CLIFFSIDE - DAY**

Quoyle now making his way down a steep primitive trail through lush vegetation. The green house is far above him. The shimmering bay now just below. This way down as treacherous as it is wondrous, and Quoyle SLIPS in the tangle and wet, half-slides through wild angelica stalks and patches of dogberry, suddenly...

...LOSING his balance, TUMBLING roughly down a stretch, rolling, grasping a spruce trunk. Pulling himself to his feet, he hears... RUSTLING. Looks up, just as...

...a WHITE DOG appears through the bushes. Red eyes. Lips curled back. A frozen second of mutual indecision, and Quoyle...

...SCREAMS and falls on his butt.           The dog...

...TAKES OFF, bounding down a path we hadn't noticed. Toward an upright SILHOUETTE. Who steps into sun just long enough to become...

...a MAN, grizzled and scrawny and quick.           Gone in a flash.    Like  
a  
skinny ghost. And there, on his butt...

...Quoyle laughs softly.           How 'bout that?    Murmurs...

**QUOYLE**

Attaway, girl. You're smarter'n all  
of us.

As he climbs to his feet, he sees the rocky beach just below. Squints, as if at something that doesn't belong. We see it now...

...a SUITCASE, washed up onto a tangle of rocks, just offshore.

ANGLE...Quoyle wading into the water. Up to his knees, slips, sinks to his waist. Stays upright. Snatches the suitcase from its perch. Brings it back to shore, holding it high. Already, he is making the face of someone smelling something he'd rather not.

He sets it down. The face is worse.           His curiosity running the show, he unhooks the latch...

...and stops. Because he's staring inside. Suddenly, he SCREAMS and FLAILS back, his leg STRIKING the case, and out tumbles onto the wet ground...

...the head. Of Bayonet Melville.

**INT. SKIPPER WILL'S DINER - NIGHT**

Three guys. Three beers. Five squidburgers (Quoyle likes his backups ready and waiting).

**CARD**

Y'know none a that impresses Jack Buggit. He's not one fer blatant ambition.

Quoyle thinks better of his answer. Chomps a bite instead.

**NUTBEEM**

Even if you don't recognize 'Human Head Packed in Satchel' as the most compelling piece ever to appear in...

CARD (snorts)

Even if.

...takes his hand from his greasy burger. Scratches his crotch below the table.

**NUTBEEM**

A triple increase in ad revenue. Does get. The man's attention.

And winks at the silent hero.

**CARD**

Weren't even double if yer figger it right.

(to Quoyle)

Point is. A real reporter woulda

named the obvious suspect.

**QUOYLE**

More obvious. Than the wife?

**CARD**

Yer aunt, ya thick Statie lardface dumbass!

Quoyle. And Nutbeem. Just look at each other.

**CARD**

She gets stiffed by the guy, after basin' her new shop on that revenue.

And she ain't one ta fool with.  
Capable a anything, that woman!

QUOYLE (angry now)  
Okay, where's the wife? Agnis kill  
her too?

**CARD**

Okay, where's this week's shipping  
news? Or you gonna rest on yer  
Crisco-coated laurels.

Quoye viciously BITES into his squidburger.

**CARD**

Uh-oh. The way he's chewin', he ain't  
a fat boy t'be trifled with!

NUTBEEM (quietly)  
His piece. Is about oil tankers.

Card blinks. Looks at Quoye with, dare we say, new respect.

**CARD**

Hope fer ya yet. Now that's  
news, the McGonigle oil field.  
Petrodollars, a golden flood a jobs.  
That's th'future a this god-forsaken  
ice rock. Civilization!

Scratches his crotch savagely. To honor civilization.

**CARD**

That's why those with half a brain  
already put our money where our  
mouths is!

Puts his squidburger. Where his mouth is. Nutbeem clarifies for  
Quoye...

**NUTBEEM**

Two shares. Of Mobil.

**INT. WAVEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

ANGLE...brightly lit kitchen. Bunny sits at the little table, a  
large mixing bowl filled with popcorn before her, little Herry at  
her side. They are watching Freakazoid on a tiny TV. Bunny  
shovels in a mouthful of popcorn. Then makes a sage, if  
unintelligible, comment about the show to Herry. Still chewing,  
she takes another huge handful of popcorn...

...Herry opens his mouth like a baby bird. Bunny stuffs the snack in. It's a stare-and-chew, side by side. Just alike.

ANGLE...cozy parlor. Quoyale sits in a Barca-lounger with a huge bowl of chips in his lap. He is watching hockey on a modest TV, the action is fierce. Stuffs his mouth full of chips, yet somehow manages to say...

**QUOYLE**

...so there they were, this goofy old codger and his dog, big as life.

PULL BACK to see Wavey now. Curled on the sofa, under a lap robe. She is knitting something in a heavy oxblood-colored wool. He watches her work.

WAVEY (softly)

That'd be old Nolan. He's actually your uncle, last of the crazy Quoyles. I should have realized.

Keeps her eyes on her work.

**WAVEY**

Sad, really. Lives like a hermit in a run-down shack. No one to look after h...

**QUOYLE**

Here I was worried about Bunny night and day, and there's absolutely nothing wrong with her.

A silence. Which makes him uneasy.

**QUOYLE**

Her only problem is her dad worries too mu...

WAVEY (not looking up)

You are a loving and wonderful father. You're not the problem.

She meant to reassure him. Instead...

**QUOYLE**

So what is th...

**WAVEY**

Nice to see you.

Looks up with smoky eyes.

**WAVEY**

...after all this time.

Oh.

**QUOYLE**

Well. I've been workin' longer hours.  
So Dennis and Beety were kind enough  
to bring Bunny to the daycare. Fed  
her a lotta meals, too. They're real  
friends.

Quoyale's smile tries to sell the innocence of his absence.

WAVEY (very quiet)

I thought you forgot. That I'm your  
friend, too.

No smile from her. She wants him to know she was hurt. He  
shakes his head, serious now. No, I didn't forget.

**WAVEY**

You want another sandwich? There's  
roast pork.

He holds up what's left of his four-decker. This is plenty.  
Takes a huge bite to show how much he likes it.

**WAVEY**

You said. You'd read me your  
article.

He did, he nods. But just now he's scared to. And so she smiles.  
Which traps him. He pulls out a single sheet of paper. Clears his  
throat.

**QUOYLE**

Nobody Hangs a Picture of an Oil  
Tanker. That's the header.

She nods. Likes that. He gestures, go back to your knitting.  
So she smiles, slyly. And commences to knit.

QUOYLE (reads)

There's a 1904 photo hung in the  
library. Eight schooners heading  
out to fishing grounds, sails spread  
it like white wings. Beautiful. Beyond

compare.

This means something to him.            Hear it in his voice.

QUOYLE (reads)

More common today is the low black profile of oil tankers. Like the ruptured Golden Goose, which last week bled 14,000 tons of crude onto seabirds, fish and boats at Cape Despond.

He stops.        As if revisiting that little thought in his mind.

QUOYLE (reads)

There will be more and more tankers. They will grow old and corroded, and their tanks will split. They have already done to fishing. What their spill has done to fish.

He sneaks a glance.            She has never looked up.

QUOYLE (reads)

Nobody hangs a picture of an oil tanker. On their wall.

Silence.        A full one.

**QUOYLE**

Well.            Whatcha think?

She reflects.

**WAVEY**

I think when Card sees it, he'll split a gut. I think he'll sit up nights thinking of cheap shots to pay you back. I think he'll never stop until you're fired.

Quoyle keeps nodding at each point.            Yep.    Yep.

**WAVEY**

I think I haven't been so proud. Of a friend. Since I don't know when.

Quoyle's heart explodes in his chest.            And shines in his eyes.  
There is a long silence.

WAVEY (softly)

Maybe another sandwich. There's

roast pork.

He swallows. He just doesn't want to cry from happiness.

**QUOYLE**

Well, sure.

**INT. GAMMY BIRD - DAY**

CLOSE on Card. Who is RIPPING the single page in half. Then again. And again. And again. See Quoye now, standing at the desk like a statue. Billy and Nutbeem at their stations, watching as Card...

...flutters the pieces down onto his desk. Like falling snow.

**CARD**

Oh, I'll run it. Just easier  
t'copy edit. When yer can move  
th'pieces around.

A hush. A frozen tableau in this room.

**QUOYLE**

Run it. Like I wrote it.

**CARD**

How does this suit yer, Quoye?  
I'll do my job. You do yers, which  
means a four-vehicle pile-up south  
a Killick-Claw. And don't ferget  
the camera.

He slides the battered camera across the desk. They glare at each other a full beat. Card belches, softly. Quoye takes the camera, heads for the door...

**CARD**

I fergot somethin'.

Quoye turns. Card doesn't.

**CARD**

You pinko Greepeace sack a quivering  
pigfat.

Thinks.

**CARD**

Did I leave out moosebutt-ugly?  
(nods to himself)  
You may go.

HOLD on him. Making a neat little pile of the torn pieces.

**QUOYLE (O.S.)**

Like I wrote it.

SLAMM! Across the room, Nutbeem stands. Takes his cigarettes.  
Passing Card's desk, on the way out...

**NUTBEEM**

Tough love. Impressive.

SLAMM! Card shoots Billy a challenging look. You got something  
to say?

**BILLY**

I hope you get him fired.

Do you.

**BILLY**

So I can watch him beat yer to jelly.

Just turns around. Flicks ON his computer. Back to work.

**EXT. GREEN HOUSE - TWILIGHT**

Bunny jumping out of the wagon, running to the house. As Quoye  
locks his car...

**BUNNY (O.S.)**

Why'd you leave the house open?

He looks up. She is pushing the front door with one finger. It  
swings OPEN.

**BUNNY**

Can I keep the necklace?

...and lifts a long piece of TWINE. There are KNOTS neatly tied  
along its length. Quoye stares. Stares.

**QUOYLE (calm)**

Sweetie. Come sit in the car.

**INT. FRONT HALLWAY - TWILIGHT**

Quoye climbing the stairs in fading light. He carries a tire  
iron. Stops midway. Listens to the silence.

**QUOYLE**

**IF ANYBODY'S THERE, YOU BETTER COME  
OUT NOW!**

Up, up, to the top.        Looking down the empty hall to see...  
...knotted twine.        At every door.

**INT. GAMMY BIRD - EARLY MORNING**

Quoyle enters, haggard and distracted. The place is lit, but empty. A toilet FLUSHES. From the loo, appears...

**CARD**

S'tell me.        Yer fancy it?

Nodding toward something behind Quoyle. Turning, we see that hanging over Card's desk is an oversized framed photo of: QUIET EYE - WORLD'S LARGEST OIL TANKER. Quoyle stares blankly.

**QUOYLE**

Like I said.        Nobody hangs those.

Card just goes to the fresh stack of newspapers on his desk. Hands one toward Quoyle...

**CARD**

Yer column's front page stuff. Only now, it's more like a caption, is all.

A photo of the same tanker.        That hangs on Card's wall.

**QUOYLE (reads)**

More than 3000 tankers proudly ride the world's seas. Even the biggest take advantage of Newfoundland's deep-water ports and refineries.

**CARD**

Spelled everthin' perfect.        So as not t'embarass yer.

**QUOYLE (reading)**

Oil and Newfoundland go together like ham and eggs, and like ham and eggs they'll nourish us in the coming years.

**CARD**

Even put yer name on it.

QUOYLE (finishes reading)  
Let's all hang a picture of an oil  
tanker. On our wall.

Stares at the paper. In his hand.

**CARD**

Man a yer principles. I unnerstan'  
resignation is th'only honorable  
course.

Quoyle looks up. Card flinches back. But all that comes is...

**QUOYLE**

How can a man resign. To nobody?

Drops the paper on the floor. Steps on it, on his way toward the  
door.

**CARD**

If yer off to see Jack Buggit,  
yer'll hafta swim some.

Quoyle turns back.

**CARD**

Yer can whine an' beg t'him. But I

runs his paper, every inch of it,  
every dirty time-eatin' job which he  
would have t'do without me.

A wink.

**CARD**

An' if yer think he's gonna choose  
you over fishin'...yer not as smart as  
even you look!

The cackle of the guy holding the straight flush.

**CARD**

Me an' Jack. Has a sym-bi-otic  
relationship. Yer can look that up.

Quoyle puts his hand on the door.

**QUOYLE**

I know the word, Card. It means  
you two deserve each other.

Out the door. It closes behind him. Card alone, crosses his arms

in glee...

**CARD**  
**I'LL TELL JACK YER SAID SO!**

HOLD on Card. DISSOLVE TO...

**INT. GAMMY BIRD - DAY**

CLOSE on a box of assorted doughnuts. Two dozen. A hand reaches down toward a raspberry swirl, thinks better of it, moves thoughtfully along the selection to pluck a maple glaze, and bring it to...

...Quoyle's mouth. The box rests beside the cardboard carton into which Quoyle is packing his things. Nutbeem sits on the edge of the desk, nibbling a cruller. Billy is bringing three mugs of coffee. Looks like a going-away party. Through the glass of the only private office...

...Jack Buggit is talking. Card is not. Card stands now, strides to the door, flings it OPEN. Nutbeem taps Quoyle's shoulder with his pastry. They look to...

**CARD**  
So. This is what Jack and I think.

He's looking straight in Quoyle's eyes. Defiant as ever.

**CARD**  
We wanna run Quoyle's oil spill  
piece b'cause controversy sells  
papers and papers sells ads.

**NUTBEEM**  
Sounds reasonable to me.

Lives to needle this guy. Card keeps his laser gaze on Quoyle.

**CARD**  
And we're gonna let Quoyle have  
his head on these columns, up to  
500 words. So he'll get his  
confidence up.

**NUTBEEM**  
Well, let's not go overboard. He's  
rather green doncha thi...

**CARD**  
But we wanna expand his responsi-  
bilities to boat crashes. There's

maybe four a week.

**NUTBEEM**

He'll need a raise. And need to be represented in the negotia...

**CARD**

And. The oil tanker picture. Stays!

Nutbeem's eyes WIDEN. He mimes catching an arrow shot through his chest. Falls OFF the desk.

CARD (to Quoyle)

All that clear?

Quoyle looks him in the eyes. Starts putting his things back in his desk.

**CARD**

One more thing...

Hear the SLAMM!

QUOYLE (never looks up)

Jack's gone fishing?

**EXT. OMALLOOR BAY - DAY**

The sky threatens black. Quoyle picks his way across the rocks to his ungainly, much-maligned boat, as it bobs against the weathered dock. He crouches, and as he begins to untie it, his gaze drifts out toward the nearby point, and...

...something catches his eye. A boulder in the shape of a great dog. And as he stares, there is something below it. Something in a cove protected from intrusion by a jagged ring of menacing rocks...

...it is a MAN in a yellow suit. His head under the surface as if looking for fish. Arms and legs spread out like a starfish, the body slides in and out of a small cave. Tugged by the sea like a top on a string.

Quoyle stares in frozen shock.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

Headline. Reporter Becomes Magnet  
For Dead Men.

No way in past the pounding surf, the savage rocks. So Quoyle turns sharply. Squints across the bay.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

What was my panic? He was already  
dead. Maybe I thought, in some dim  
way...

CLIMBS into his boat, TURNS the engine over. KICKS it in overdrive  
toward the town across the bay.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

...if it wasn't too late for him.  
It wouldn't be for Petal.

STREAKING out, toward the black sky. Racing to open sea where the  
chop INCREASES drastically. Closer. Closer...

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

Once I was past the shelter of the  
lee shore, and into the real wind.  
I realized my mistake.

...clear of the point's protection, the wind ROCKS the tiny craft,  
swells coming BROADSIDE. The boat RISES, then DROPS with cruel  
speed. Quoyale tries to swing the boat around, the propeller RACES,  
the bow PITCHES violently, SLAMMING down, the stern SWAMPED, the  
hull filling, swerving broadside just as the oncoming sea HITS with  
all its force, and the little boat...

...rolls OVER, Quoyale suddenly FLYING under water, limbs flailing  
in all directions...

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

Headline. Reporter Becomes Anchor  
Man.

INTERCUT...Quoyale's dad FLINGING him into the public pool, the  
youngster SINKING like an anvil in a profusion of bubbles, and  
**CUT...**

BACK to Quoyale, struggling madly somehow to the surface, THRASHING  
toward the overturned boat, GRASPING the stilled propeller shaft,  
which causes the bow to lift, the next wave turning the boat  
upright, FILLING it with water, and it SINKS forever, as Quoyale...

...TUMBLES once more beneath the surface, watching the boat  
DISAPPEAR into darkness below him.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

Stupid. Stupid to drown with Bunny  
so young. No life jacket, no floating  
oar. No sense.

Back to the surface, GASPING for air. And then, daintily rowing a

small boat, unaffected by the waves, her filmy dress rippling in light breeze...

**PETAL**

Look, it floats. Just like you.

Is the lilting smile cruel? Or only the irony that conveys intimacy, even affection.

**PETAL**

Maybe it's filled with fat.

And VANISHES. In her place, bobs a red BOX. A plastic beer cooler. He LUNGES for it, GRIPPING the handles, resting his chest on its top.

The waves RISE, mountainous now, and he rises and falls with them. He has been swept a mile from the nearest shore.

INTERCUT...a winch pulling part of the Geo, streaming mud, from swiftly flowing water. Police and bystanders gathered.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

And I wondered. Am I going where she's gone?

BACK to the bay. A barely-conscious Quoyale still clings somehow to the plastic cooler. But hours have passed. Light is fading.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

...and will I see her?

He turns. And there she is. Beaming at him from the bow of her little rowboat, a smile ambiguous in the growing dusk. It could be love. From behind her a light GLOWS, giving Petal the aspect of an angel.

She drops a wink. FADES away. And the light becomes...

...the BEAM from a fishing boat. Quoyale squints his swollen eyes, as strong hands WRENCH him from his box. From the sea. A voice warbles, distorted by wind and Quoyale's diminished consciousness...

**JACK**

Jesus Cockadoodle Christ! I knowed somebody was out here.

Quoyale's teeth are chattering so hard, his body shivering so

painfully, Buggit hauls him over the rail and lays him down on a wriggling mound of fish.

**JACK**

Thank god fer yer figure, me old son.  
A thin man woulda froze.

Quoyle burrows into the fish, like nestling in a down comforter.  
Jack covers him with a heavy tarp. Crouches down close...

**JACK**

Good. Yer lost th'boat.

**INT. BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT**

Dim light. Quoyle stirs beneath the billowing down coverlet. His eyes flutter. Open. Where...?

VOICE (O.S., very soft)

It's all right. You're in heaven.

His head SNAPS around. She's sitting just beside the bed in half-shadow. Her oxblood knitting across her lap.

**WAVEY**

Actually. It's just my bed.

Now he sees the cigarette.

**WAVEY**

Actually, it's not. I just wanted  
to see your eyes bug out like that.

Now he sees the smile.

**QUOYLE**

You don't smoke.

His voice was a croak. So he CLEARS his throat with a massive and disgusting effort. It is gross and funny, and she smiles again.

**WAVEY**

Only when I'm worried. I don't  
worry much.

He rolls over, to see her better. They are very close.

**QUOYLE**

You don't have to, I'm all right.  
I'm in heaven.

**WAVEY**

I'm not worried. About you.

Oh. As he draws a breath to ask...

**WAVEY**

You're in the boys' room at Jack's house. Wonder how long since Dennis slept here.

She glances to the nightstand. Beneath the dim lamp. A picture of Jack and blond son Jesson. Guess what they're doing.

**WAVEY**

Mrs. Buggit called, knew Bunny was still with me. The kids are camped out in the parlor.

A beat.

**QUOYLE**

Nice. You sittin' up with me.

A longer one.

**WAVEY**

S'okay. Someday you'll do somethin' nice for me.

He nods. He will.

**QUOYLE**

Who you worried ab...

**WAVEY**

You didn't find a second dead man. Just the rest of the first one.

Ah. He nods. Well, that figures.

**QUOYLE**

I asked. Who you worried about?

On this, she stubs out her cigarette. Takes another from the pack.

**WAVEY**

You said Bunny talks to Petal at night. You ever listen?

He shakes his head.

**QUOYLE**

Not really. Wouldn't be right.

**WAVEY**

Well, I'm not that nice a person.

STRIKES a match.

**WAVEY**

She plays Petal. Talks to the Barbies, like Petal talking to her.

Brings her cigarette. To the flame.

**WAVEY**

She says she's sorry she left them. It was just to see if they could be good girls. And they were...

And.

**WAVEY**

...and she loves them.

His eyes at once rapt and suffering. She watches that.

**WAVEY**

The Barbies look better naked, Bunny looks good in blue, guess who said that?

Draws on her smoke.

**WAVEY**

So we talked. Just before Petal left her with that...stranger? Bunny had snapped her mom's bead necklace. That's why she's making more.

Do you understand?

**WAVEY**

When she's made enough. She'll be forgiven.

Tears are pooling in his eyes. Hers, too. She keeps going...

**WAVEY**

She saves Petal a room at the house, but she's also got the key to the old place. In case her mom would rather go there.

A thin stream of air escapes from his lips.

**QUOYLE**

And she talked about it. Just like  
that.

**WAVEY**

Sure, I lied. I said nice things  
about her mother.

Bitter smile.

**WAVEY**

See, there's only one problem.  
Petal isn't gone.

Quoyle thinking. Madly. What can he do?

**QUOYLE**

So we're patient. And we wait, and  
we're good to her.

(beat)

And. Maybe. Time.

She stares back. Unease to match his own. Maybe time.

**INT. ALVIN YARK'S BOAT HOUSE - DAY**

A wiry wisp of an aged elf, ALVIN YARK is shaping the center beam  
of what will become a tidy boat. Its wooden skeleton across two  
sawhorses in his spacious workshop.

ALVIN (sings softly to himself)  
Oh, the Gandy Goose, it ain't no use.  
It ain't no use, the Gandy Goose.

Quoyle, Wavey and Dennis stand in a row. Watching the little  
artisan shave wood as if his tools were his hands.

ALVIN (keeps singing, as if alone)  
The Gandy Goose, she ain't no uuuuse...  
Cause all her nuts'n bolts is loose.

Wavey can't help but smile. She really likes the old duck.

ALVIN (never turning)  
See, I'm already buildin' yers in me  
mind. The singin' helps that. But.  
Gotta take a walk in the woods, find a  
spruce with jest th' right curve fer  
yer stem.

And says no more. Keeps working. They are like acolytes at the

feet of a guru who never bothers even to glance their way.

**QUOYLE**

Well, hurry up. Thirty, forty years  
I'll be rarin' to get back out on the  
water.

Everyone smiles.        Except the guru.

**ALVIN**

Gotta build her solid. Who knows,  
mebbe Jack Buggit'll give his fishin'  
license to his boy. So next time,  
won't be nobody to pull yer out.

DENNIS (real quiet)  
Jack Buggit's boy is drowned.

Everyone looks.        Except the guru.

ALVIN (cheery)  
Dennis. Y'hear the one about the  
Newfie who lived ferever?

A beat.

**DENNIS**

No sir.

**ALVIN**

His kid never got a fishin' license.

Now he turns.        A maritime Yoda, squinting to discern if his message  
is received.

**ALVIN**

What we wait fer? She's like  
the main stem. Gives us our shape,  
doncha see.

He runs his hand along the backbone of the boat he's building.

**ALVIN**

Death's one shape.        Fergiveness is  
another.

Crinkly old eyes, laser bright.        Dennis isn't angry.        Just  
resolved.

**DENNIS**

Thing 'bout waitin' on fergiveness?  
Mixes up who's waitin' on who.

No smile, no spin.            Just the truth.

**DENNIS**

Death is simpler.            An' a lot shorter  
wait.

In the silence.            A door opens.

**MRS. YARK (O.S.)**

Mr. Quoye...?

A sprightly bird-like woman.            Wears apology and concern.

**MRS. YARK**

The school is callin'?            It's about  
yer daughter?

**INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE**

The PRINCIPAL is spare, dressed for England, her voice  
authoritarian by its pace, exaggerated diction, and lack of volume.

**PRINCIPAL**

...not only pushed Mrs. Lumball.            Not  
only pushed her very hard...

Seated in a semi-circle around the desk of power. Quoye,  
stricken, respectful. Wavey, already pissed off at the principal.  
And Bunny, her hat and coat on, arms folded, face crimson and set.

**PRINCIPAL**

She knocked. Her down.

Do you understand the severity of this, Mr.            Quoye?

**PRINCIPAL**

And. Refuses to explain her act.            Or.  
Apologize.

Is that right, young lady?

**PRINCIPAL**

Under the circumstances.            We have no  
choice but to suspend.

Bunny looks down.            Glaring an evil spell of death at her own  
kneecaps.

**WAVEY (quietly)**

I think Bunny and I. Should take

a walk.

And stands.

**QUOYLE**

Uh. Wavey? If it's all the same  
to you...

**EXT. PATH - DAY**

Quoyle and Bunny alone, hand-in-hand, walking slow where they once  
picked berries. Nobody's talking.

**BUNNY**

When you gonna ask?

**QUOYLE (calm)**

When you're in the mood.

Apparently, that hasn't happened yet. More walking.

**QUOYLE**

She musta done something. Really bad.

Said like he means it. Which he does. And Bunny, squinting up,  
sees that.

INTERCUT...the crime. Playground filled with kids. Bunny and  
girlfriends on the jungle gym. Bunny the best, a natural jock.  
MRS. LUMBULL large, sour, doughy, and betrayed by life, stands with  
her silver whistle in the midst of chaos. Her thoughts on a higher  
plane.

**BUNNY (O.S.)**

She's the worst one of all!

Little Herry Prowse comes to tug at the teacher's wool coat. He is  
holding his crotch and jumping up and down. This does not require  
an advanced credential to interpret.

**BUNNY (O.S.)**

Herry told her he had to pee. But  
the way he talks. He could just  
say 'eeee,' like that.

Mrs. Lumbull looks down. From her face as she responds, she has  
already devoted, over time, more professional attention to this  
troublemaker than should be asked of any dedicated educator.

**BUNNY (O.S.)**

She told him that recess was almost

over, an' she wasn't gonna make a trip special, an' he could hold it.

Herry, seemingly, disagrees. Still holding his crotch, he jumps up and down with greater agitation. She grabs him, rather roughly, by the arm. Marches him over to...

**BUNNY (O.S.)**

She made him stand against the wall.

...and walks off, pointedly ignoring him from ten feet away. He screams, pumping his fists in frustration. Grabs himself, suddenly. Whether or not we can see the dampness spread, we can see his humiliation all too clearly. As his tears come...

...a figure BOLTS into frame from behind Mrs. Lumbull. Hunched over like a linebacker, full speed ahead, LAUNCHING herself into the back of the large woman's knees. Her feet go UP, and the rest of her goes...

...DOWN like the proverbial amount of bricks. Herry's tears stop fast. Watching the woman shriek, and keep shrieking. Makes him laugh. CUT...

BACK TO...the berry path. They are sitting on a fallen log.

**QUOYLE**

See, a good dad would say hitting is always wrong. You coulda hurt her bad. I guess you know that.

**BUNNY**

She wasn't hurt for real. Just screamed like a baby.

Quoyale pulls out a single Snickers bar.

**QUOYLE**

Wish I'd seen it. It really sounds funny.

**BUNNY**

Petal'll think so, too.

He looks at her. Nods, probably will. Peels the candy bar free of its wrapper.

**QUOYLE**

Well, there won't be any trouble at school. I'll take care of that.

**BUNNY**

How?

He breaks the candy bar in half.                      Tho not quite equally.

**QUOYLE**

Because the best thing about people.  
Is they can forgive each other. I  
heard that this morning.

**BUNNY**

That teacher. Is gonna forgive me?

He nods.    Oh, yeh.

**QUOYLE**

That. And she won't want the story  
printed in the paper.

Oh.

**BUNNY**

Well.    I don't wanna forgive her.

**QUOYLE**

Me neither.

He holds out the two pieces of candy. She takes them both.                      the  
bigger one in his mouth. As he chews...

**BUNNY**

I had to do it. 'Cept for Wavey,  
I'm the only family Herry's got.

She nibbles at her own piece.

**BUNNY**

Like the ghost.                      Who's not a ghost.

Hmmn?

**BUNNY**

The one who ties the knots?                      You're  
the only family he's got.

Right?    Her father doesn't react.                      He's even stopped chewing.

**BUNNY**

You said.

And slowly.    Quoyle nods.    I said.

**EXT. NOLAN'S SHED - DAY**

Quoyle picks his way down to the battered boat shed, hidden at the foot of his cliff. He carries a big carton, which we see has made the journey slow and awkward. Across the gravel now, to...

...the door. HEAR the fire crackling, see the smoke curling. Takes a breath. Knocks softly. Then LOUDER.

**QUOYLE**  
**UNCLE NOLAN? CAN I COME IN?**

No answer. Juggle the box, lift the latch. Enter...

**INT. NOLAN'S SHED - NIGHT**

The old man and the dog huddled together at the fire. They look over with red eyes. Just alike. Only one growls. Quoyle finds a smile, a soft voice...

**QUOYLE**  
Uncle. My daughter Bunny and I.  
We got you some hot bread. And some  
meat. Some dried fish. Some squash  
and vegetables...a cake...some warm  
clothes...

Nolan is listening. Sharp-eared, sharp-eyed. What trick is this? So Quoyle sets the carton down in the squalor. Takes out a loaf of fresh bread. One step forward. Lay it down.

Good faith offering. And...

...Nolan scuttles to it. Like a wary crab. He tears off a chunk of bread. Nibbles. He likes it. And as he eats...

**QUOYLE (softly)**  
You tied those knots, huh?  
At my house?

...crouches down to the old man's size. Almost close enough to touch.

**NOLAN**  
Ain't yer house, it's th' Quoyle  
house!

He's found the meat. Ripped off a chunk.

**QUOYLE**  
See, I am Qu...

**NOLAN**

Old ones. Got run outta Omaloor Bay a hunnerd years ago. Dragged that house across th' ice. On spruce runners.

Stuffs some into his face. Like this, even better.

**NOLAN**

Hadda lash it to th' rock. She'll tell yer.

She.

**NOLAN**

Course she never come t'see me. That's obvious why.

And as Quoyle draws a breath to ask...

**NOLAN**

Your Aunt Agnis Hamm, me son. That's cause she can't face me. I knows she killed 'im.

A moment. Of stone silence.

**QUOYLE**

Him.

**NOLAN**

That baby she was carryin'. What was she t'do? She wuz only 12. An' it was her own brother what done 'er.

Quoyle's wide-eyed shock.

**QUOYLE (numb)**

Her own...

INTERCUT...a tiny frozen pond. Long ago. A girl of 12, rawboned, husky, skating alone. We've seen her, in the photo at Quoyle's dad's house. And as she skates, she looks up to see...

...a boy of 15, stocky, sullen. He was in the same photo. Only now, he steps onto the ice. Unbuttons his pants. Begins to slide toward her on the soles of his fishing boots. She looks around. Snow banked on all sides of the pond. Nowhere to run on her skates.

**NOLAN (O.S.)**

Her brother, me son. She only

had th' one.

The girl, breathless, skating this way and that. The boy closing in, cutting off her angle. A deadly endgame. There are no words. And...

...he is ON her. Pulling her TUMBLING to the ice in SLO-MO. No sound but their hot breath, the grunt of the struggle, and CUT BACK to...

**NOLAN**

Course no one alive knows no more.

So her an' me...

(winks)

Our. Little. Secret.

**INT. AGNIS' NEW SHOP, KILLICK-CLAW - DAY**

Agnis and Mavis are showing Wavey their new shop. It is big and bright with more elaborate fittings, the amount of work piled up carries the scent of success. Quoyale trails behind, as Agnis dotes on Wavey like a prize new daughter-in-law. When she turns, she sees her nephew staring...

**AGNIS**

What? My hem crooked? As if  
I was wearin' a hem.

He was staring pretty intently. Realizes that.

**QUOYLE**

Naw, I just come from seein' your  
cousin Nolan. Guess I was thinkin'  
about him.

She holds his gaze with her own. Is she wondering?

**DAWN**

Mr. Quoyale? What do you think of  
my dress?

Everybody turns on that one. Mavis cuts her alter ego Agnis a look. Can you believe this slut?

**DAWN**

I wore it just for you.

She actually looks pretty good in it. Wavey noticing that.  
Watching Quoyale say...

**QUOYLE**

That was more consideration. Than

I deserve.

Polite banter? Or outright flirting? Hard to tell if it's Wavey or Agnis who disapproves more. Dawn ignores them.

**DAWN**

Did your aunt tell you about all  
the money?

Agnis just blinks. Can scarcely believe she heard that.

**DAWN**

Agnis told us it came from Macau.

**AGNIS (quietly)**

Hush yoursel...

**DAWN**

...from Silver Melville. And it  
was more than she expected. And we  
shipped the chairs off to her.  
Y' know, the three remaining?

A really frozen beat.

**QUOYLE (casual, to Agnis)**

Uh. Why would she send you more  
tha...

**AGNIS (to Dawn)**

Do you have enough attention now,  
young lady?

**DAWN**

Yes, Ma'am, I think so.

Mavis echoes Agnis' glare.

**QUOYLE (really casual)**

Macau, huh? So. That where y'sent  
th' chairs?

Agnis turns. Sizes him up.

**AGNIS**

It's flatterin' you showin' me how  
you've turned into such a competent  
reporter and all. But even if I  
remembered where I sent 'em. I  
couldn't tell ya.

Puts her fingers to her lips.           Leans closer, to confide something  
he is obviously unaware of...

**AGNIS**

Professional ethics.

**INT. WAVEY'S KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT**

CLOSE on Wavey, cooking flapjacks.           Talking to them.

**WAVEY**

Only you.           Could do this.

And she's not pleased.

**WAVEY**

You fed him. You gave him clothes.  
You're the first human ever was kind  
to him...

She scoops them expertly into a stack.

**WAVEY**

Accordingly. You're sick with guilt.

Serves them to...

**WAVEY**

You sure you're not a complex guy?

...Quoyle, who nods absently. About the one thing he is sure of.  
Just now, he's examining the prodigious status of her oxblood  
knitting. Still attached to the needles, it looks too broad for  
a muffler.

**QUOYLE (decides)**

Horse blanket.

**WAVEY (ah!)**

That's what that is!

A beat.    Another.

**QUOYLE**

So if y'called around.           Musta  
found somepla...

**WAVEY (quietly)**

One decent golden age home. It's  
in St. John's. You can maybe afford  
it, tho God knows why you should.

She pushes the flapjacks closer to him, CLANKS down the fork, eat!  
She's exasperated. Thinks he's wasting his money.

**QUOYLE**

I can't put him there, til I go  
down to St. John's. See it's all  
right.

**WAVEY**

Great! Let's not be rash!

**QUOYLE**

Come with me.

And everything. Sorta. Stops.

**QUOYLE**

I mean, the kids could stay with  
Dennis and Beety. Or Agnis, or...

A meaningful beat.

**WAVEY**

Why. Would I. Do that?

She looks deep in his eyes. Hard to guess the answer she wants to  
hear. He clears his throat. Looks down.

**QUOYLE**

Well. Remember when you said.  
Someday, I'd do something nice  
for you?

And when he looks to her, she is...

PETAL (Wavey's voice)

And this is it.

A witheringly sexy smile.

**QUOYLE**

Hey. Overnight trip to St. John's.  
All expenses paid.

Petal arches a delicate brow.

PETAL (Wavey's voice)

Overnight?

He blinks. And sees...

**WAVEY**

What's wrong with a weekend?

With a playful smile.           Of her own.

**EXT. DOUBLE-DECKER BUS, ST. JOHN'S - DAY**

Not London, but it might as well be. Wavey and Quoyale atop a red double-decker bus, wind whipping their hair. She is watching the big city flow past, drinking every inch of it. He's watching her.

**INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY**

Wavey carries an armload of little girl's tights and corduroy pants, picking through a bin of barrettes. Quoyale appears with a fistful of neckties. Holds them up hopefully to his chest one at a time, each more breathtakingly godawful than the last. Well? She SHIVERS with disgust. Lifts from her shopping bag a nice conservative one she's already picked for him. He SHIVERS, just as she did. They share the trace of a grin, just alike. He walks off.

...Wavey trying on furry hats in a full-length mirror, as Quoyale keeps feeding her an endless supply from a double armful. She pouts and poses like a runway model, basically frowning that the

hats aren't working. He's staring at her as if nothing else exists in the universe. She knows it.

...Wavey alone at a cash register. The checker is ringing up a selection of lacy bras and panties. Suddenly, Wavey looks up to see Quoyale at the register one aisle over, staring fixedly at her purchases. Seeing she's noticed him, he holds up a huge pair of loud boxer shorts he's buying, and WAVES them at her. She laughs and waves her bras right back. Civilians watching think they're in love.

**EXT./INT. ST. JOHN'S - DAY/NIGHT**

...Quoyale and Wavey stroll the grounds of Nolan's future retirement home. It is twilight, and the modest place looks pleasant and welcoming. Quoyale listens earnestly, as the director points things out. Wavey watching Quoyale, her gaze not so disapproving after all.

...CLOSE on Quoyale with a bowling ball, poised, glaring our way. Here he comes. Stumbles. Lets go. REVERSE ANGLE to see the ball rolling, rolling real slow. Quoyale turns his back, strides away with confidence like he doesn't even have to watch, this is too easy. Wavey points, look. He turns in time to see two pins fall. Pumps his fist. YESSSS!

**INT. BAR - NIGHT**

It's late. It's dim. It's as romantic as urban Newfoundland will ever get. Our couple nursing beers at the corner table of a passably stylish bar. Piano playing show tunes, but soft. He pulls from his pocket...

...a travel brochure. Slightly drunk, completely merry, almost wicked smile.

**QUOYLE**

Now, listen to this for t'morrow.  
After I sign the papers at the home...

She's already grinning. Feels so comfortable.

**QUOYLE (reads)**

The answer to your annual outing!  
Rainbow trout fishing in four ponds.  
You pay for what you catch. Prizes  
in the ponds. If it drizzles or gets  
chilly, heated and lighted building  
available, right next to the ponds,  
with soft drinks, candy bars, ice  
cream and chips!

His subtle smile. A guy could get used to this irony stuff.

**WAVEY**

Or we could sleep in.

...innocent, natural. At some primal level, his panic begins.

**WAVEY**

I just feel so guilty about all  
your expenses. Two separate rooms.  
Both so big.

**QUOYLE**

Hey, it's my treat. You agreed.

She nods. She did.

**WAVEY**

Still. Seems like we could figure  
out. Something.

Even Quoyle. Has the message. He looks down at his beer, as he thinks about what he should say. Turns the glass in his fingers.

**QUOYLE**

A friend told me once. Love is  
the only thing that counts.

He nods. Almost to himself.

QUOYLE (a murmur)  
It's the engine of life.

He looks up. Her eyes are waiting.

QUOYLE  
So when you told me how you think  
about your husband. I really  
understood, becau...

WAVEY  
That's what I wanted us to talk  
about...

QUOYLE  
...because real love. Just comes  
once.

And everything. Stops.

QUOYLE  
See, you know some of the stories  
about Petal. Some of the bad things.  
What you don't know...

But she's looking in his eyes. And so, she does.

WAVEY (just above a whisper)  
...is how much you love her.

That's what it is.

WAVEY  
Even tho. She never loved you.

A beat.

QUOYLE  
Sorta. Because of it.

He sighs. The most miserable and the most honest he has ever been.  
All at once.

QUOYLE  
See, love. Isn't about what's good  
for you. Isn't about what you wish  
it was. Isn't about what...would  
make you happy.

His eyes are swimming. Can she possibly hear this?

**QUOYLE**

Love. Is about want. What you  
really want. And you can't change  
that. Even if it's poison.

Silence. The piano plays something gay and stupid.

**QUOYLE**

So that's why it's great. To have a  
real friend. When you're. Lonely.

The last word was a tough one. It makes her nod. She stares in  
his eyes for the longest time. And when she speaks, he can  
scarcely  
hear her voice...

**WAVEY**

I know you have to stay tomorrow.  
To sign the papers. But.

But. One word. And even a stupid guy. Gets it all.

**WAVEY**

I should be heading back. Before  
Herry. Misses me. Too much.

Wow. He nods, dumbly. Watching his worst nightmare unfold  
before  
his eyes.

**WAVEY**

And I'm not feeling so well.  
What I get for mixing vodka and  
beer, huh.

She gets to her feet. She does seem a little unsteady.

**WAVEY**

So I'll grab a taxi. You stay and  
finish. Listen to the music. Is  
  
that all right?

**QUOYLE**

I cou...

But he stops. Because she's shaken her head once. Don't.

**WAVEY**

And don't worry. I'm still your friend.

Her voice chokes a little on that.  
grinning at how foolish she feels.  
she means it.

She shakes her head, half-  
She smiles at him now. Like

And leaves. Without another word.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

She did stay my friend. In her way.  
Even tho, for awhile, we didn't see  
each other a lot.

He wants to cry. He wants to be sick. He doesn't know what he  
wants. Fumbles in his pocket for some wadded-up bills.

**QUOYLE (V.O.)**

Funny. How one little talk. Can  
change everything.

**DISSOLVE SLOWLY TO...**

**INT. SKIPPER WILL'S DINER - NIGHT**

The boys, the beers, the squidburgers. The usual.

**QUOYLE**

Tell me about it. Just get the  
aunt's house fixed perfect, and  
I gotta move.

Move?

**QUOYLE**

Three hours to drive from the Point,  
with all the ice. Alvin won't have  
my boat ready til New Years. Agnis  
can stay over her shop. Bunny and I  
have to find a room in town.

**DENNIS**

Stay with us. My kid follows yours  
around, they'll bunk t'gether. And  
we gotta fluffy couch that's more'n  
you deserve.

A good friend. Quoyle is touched.

**QUOYLE**

Hopin' you'd offer, almost  
worth it just t'inconvenience ya.  
Unfortunately, I'm too fond a

yer wife.

NUTBEEM (casual)  
Take my trailer. Timing's perfect.

The way he said that. They both turn. A shrug...

**NUTBEEM**

It's two years. My boat's ready.  
If I stay any longer, I'll begin  
to like it here.

Wouldn't want that. Very silent at this table. Against the  
din of the place. Is he serious?

NUTBEEM (softly)  
I'm throwing myself a farewell  
party on Saturday. Departure  
to follow Sunday. Regrets, soon  
after, no doubt.

And smiles. Serious as a heart attack. A long beat.

QUOYLE (a murmur)  
Be careful.

Careful?

**QUOYLE**

Last friend left me. Turned into  
a truck driver.

So much feeling behind his eyes. Nutbeem can only say...

**NUTBEEM**

Well. With that warning.

And return the feeling. With his own.

**EXT./INT. NUTBEEM'S TRAILER - TWILIGHT**

Quoyle GROANING under the weight of cases of beer and cheap rum  
pulled from the back of his wagon. Plenty more to go. Staggered  
into...

...Nutbeem's tiny, threadbare trailer. Every conceivable surface  
under stacks of plastic-wrapped party platters of cold cuts, cheese  
and red-eyed olives. Nutbeem is jamming beers into tubs of ice.  
Quoyle peers into the teensy closet that is the only bathroom...

**QUOYLE**

What's the barrel for?

SEE it now. Half a sawed-off empty BARREL, with MOLASSES stenciled in orange, fills the shower stall.

**NUTBEEM**

I'm British. I bathe.

Quoyle sends him a blank look.

**QUOYLE**

Perfect for th' chips.

He gestures to thirty bags of potato chips, filling the kitchenette.

**NUTBEEM**

It's coated with two kinds of scum.  
Soap. And mine.

**QUOYLE**

Works. We forgot to buy dip.

**INT. TRAILER - NIGHT**

VIEW out a window at the line of HEADLIGHTS still arriving. We are immersed in the ungodly WHITE NOISE of an all-gentleman's Newfie soiree, music pushed beyond the level of distortion, assorted grunts, squeals, unintelligible words, things breaking. As we struggle to look around...

...every square inch is crammed tight with semi-conscious drunks. Tert Card and some boys circle the potato chip barrel, which has become a handy urinal. Near the door, Dennis holding forth, arm tight around Quoyle who listens, listens, chuckles. Then Quoyle fights his way...

...OUT of the trailer, to cold night air where the party is MUCH wilder, given the elbow room. Quoyle steps OVER the supine form of Billy Pretty, who is singing to himself. Finds Jack Buggit with a beer in one hand a rum in the other. Wraps a drunken arm around Jack's neck. Starts to talk in his ear. Jack looks suspicious. A FIGHT breaks out a few feet away. They don't notice. Closing in, to hear...

QUOYLE (shouting against the din)

**SO THE NEXT DAY, THEY ALL SIT DOWN ON THE GIRDER. THE BRIT OPENS HIS LUNCH BOX. 'OH, NO! SCOTCH SALMON AGAIN! FAREWELL, BOYS!' AND HE JUMPS OFF THE GIRDER TO HIS DEATH.**

Jack nods. Grins. That's pretty funny.

**QUOYLE**

**THE QUEBEC GUY OPENS HIS LUNCH BOX.  
'MON DIEU! MEAT PIE AGAIN! AU  
REVOIR CRUEL WORLD!' AND HE JUMPS.**

This. Is even funnier.

**QUOYLE**

**NOW THE STATIE IS ALL ALONE ON  
THE GIRDER. HE OPENS HIS BOX.  
'HOLY MOLEY! BOLOGNA SANDWICH  
AGAIN! I DON'T HAVE TO TAKE THIS!'  
AND LEAPS OFF.**

Funniest yet. Jack is chuckling already.

**QUOYLE**

**AT THE FUNERAL. THE BRIT' S WIFE  
SAYS, 'WHY DIDN'T HE TELL ME HE HATED  
SALMON?' FRENCHY'S WIFE SAYS, 'WHY  
DIDN'T HE COMPLAIN ABOUT THE MEAT  
PIE?' STATIE'S WIFE SAYS, 'I DON'T  
GET IT. HE ALWAYS MADE HIS OWN LUNCH!'**

Quoyle is chortling. But Jack stares him dead in the eyes.

**JACK**

**YOU'RE SURE. THE FELLER WAS A STATIE.**

**QUOYLE**

**OH, YAR. FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE.**

At which point Jack BUSTS OUT laughing fit to wet his pants...

**JACK**

**MADE HIS OWN LUNCH!**

POUNDING on poor Quoyle, who is also dissolved in hysterics. Nearby, the biggest and ugliest GUY at the party (no small distinction) leaps onto a tree stump brandishing an AXE. Even in this crowd, it commands a certain degree of attention.

**BIG UGLY GUY**

**NOW WE ALL LOVES OLD FOOKIN' NUTBEEM,  
YAR???**

Cries of YAR! fill the woods. Nutbeem himself is HOISTED on shoulders, whooping and sloshing his grog.

**BIG UGLY GUY**  
**SO LESS KEEP 'IM 'ERE BYES! AXE**  
**'IS FOOKIN' BOAT! GOT YER CHAIN**  
**SAW, NEDDIE??**

An idea that wins IMMEDIATE MASS APPROVAL. Soused Nutbeem's eyes open bug-wide, as he is borne in a tidal wave of mayhem toward the docks. Whatever he is shrieking may well prove ineffective.

And rather suddenly. Quoyle is left alone.

Among the conscious, that is.

**INT. WAVEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Knitted wool, the color of oxblood, lies across a timeworn leather ottoman. In front of it, little Herry dances a shuffle-foot jig of his own design. The music seeps from a venerable accordian, played earnestly by his serious mom, nodding and tapping her foot to the time of his steps.

There is a feeling of empowerment and release in Herry. His grin splits his round face. His eyes say that his heart is dancing.

PULL SLOWLY BACK...through the window, past the porch, across the front yard. To a figure. By the fence. He stands motionless. Except his foot is tapping, very slightly, to the time of the music.

We can't tell how much Quoyle sees. But his eyes say that his heart is drowning.

**EXT. NUTBEEM'S TRAILER - MORNING**

As Quoyle shuffles up, we see Nutbeem's trailer has been turned completely OVER onto its side. Walls are crushed and splintered. It's a train wreck.

Sitting on the cinder blocks that once supported it, Nutbeem, and Dennis swig beers.

NUTBEEM (cheery)  
You're looking dishy, Q.

QUOYLE  
Feeling that and more. What's the situation?

Nutbeem hands him a beer.

NUTBEEM  
One. You're moving in with Dennis, no

matter how fond you are of his wife.

Quoyale looks sadly at the trailer. Realizing it was his place that got trashed.

NUTBEEM (laughs)  
And the boat! Omigod!

**BILLY**  
I'm some disgusted. With the human race.

**NUTBEEM**  
I'da never made it, anyway. Storms would have blown me to bits. You boys saved my life. Yes, you did.

The boys look at each other. Humiliated by his generosity.

**NUTBEEM**  
  
I've gathered my savings, and am flying to Brazil. Where water is swimming pool green. And I grill yellowtail steaks with lime and garlic, watercress and Tobasco. Touch of curry. What?

Quoyale is looking at him somewhat strangely.

QUOYLE (light)  
I collect friends who cook. Just can't keep 'em.

Maybe too light not to be obvious. Billy looks from Quoyale to the trailer. And back.

**BILLY**  
It's too bad.

Which seems to cover everything.

**EXT. JACK BUGGIT'S SKIFF - DAY**

Quoyale alone with Jack in open water. Pulling on a slicker, gloves, picking up a knife. Jack is pronging cod onto the deck.

**JACK**  
Hands might as well be movin' while we chat. Always hated th' sight a grown men around a table workin' nuthin' but their jaws.

And so, together, they begin to clean a small mountain of cod.

**QUOYLE**

Editorial meetin', y'say. 'Bout  
what?

**JACK**

Well, Tert Card's gone, fer one  
thing.

Doesn't look up.

**JACK**

Yar, I know, he never said g'bye.  
Well, don't get all weepy-eyed  
about it, old son. Try t'be a man.

Quoyle will.

**JACK**

They called him from St. John's,  
he tells me. Wants him to help  
put out th' newsletter fer them  
oil rig suppliers.

Yup. Believe it.

**JACK**

He was sassy an' he was smug. Oh,  
there's a waitin' list, he assures  
me. They only skims th' cream.

**QUOYLE**

Well, don't get all weepy-eyed abou...

**JACK**

Truth t'tell. I was a wee help.  
B'hind the scenes, doncha know.

Keeps working.

JACK (quietly)

Sometimes. Enough is enough.

No arguments arise.

**QUOYLE**

Well, Billy'll do a helluva job...

JACK (nods)

...right where he is. Too old a  
fish t'swim faster'n be wants.

Gotta find someone a little dumber  
t'take on a shit job like this!

Uh-oh.        You don't mean...

**JACK**

Spot I'm in, Christmas and all.  
Might have to offer th'mess. To you.

Quoyle swallows.        Arguably the proudest moment of his life.

**QUOYLE**

Course.        I'd need a raise.

Jack looks at him for the first time.        A real twinkle behind...

**JACK**

Y'know. Yer do have the sense God  
gave a doughnut.

**QUOYLE** (genuinely touched)

I'll try to live up to that.

Said with such sincerity, Jack can only nod.        Good.

**JACK**

Any other outrageous demands?  
Seein' as yer got me over a  
barrel. Here's your one chance.

And before he can stop his mouth...

**QUOYLE**

Well, your son...

The mirth dies in his host's eyes. Like a 60-watt bulb in a  
brownout. Quoyle swallows the rest.

**JACK**

You were sayin'...?

Quoyle sucks it up.

**QUOYLE**

His whole life would be changed.  
If he could come upon. A fishing  
license.

Jack's eyes.        Flat and cold as the cod he's gutting.

**JACK**

Well, there's only one a those

issued per family. So how exactly  
would he do that?

This is not. Going well. A dangerous silence.

**JACK**

Even doughnuts, y'know. Can  
push their luck.

**INT. WAVEY'S PARLOR - DUSK**

The day care contingent more organized today. Sort of. Bunny  
leading a spirited round of red-light/green-light, as...

...Quoyle enters with a big cardboard box full of presents. As he  
shrugs off his coat, he looks at the Christmas tree, its winking  
lights. The decorations that seem to be everywhere, many handmade  
by these children. He watches Bunny call out 'Red Light!', only to  
have Herry ignore it and tackle her anyway.

Mixed emotions, to be sure. A feeling of family he can at least  
visit, yet will never be his own. The sad edge catches up with  
him, so he strolls on into...

...the kitchen. Wavey baking, what else. She smiles to see him.  
A friend's smile.

WAVEY (Southern belle)

Why, Mistuh Quoyle. You shouldn't  
have!

He smiles back. Takes her in for a telling beat, before...

**QUOYLE**

Uh. I didn't. Most of these  
are for Herry.

Even better.

**QUOYLE**

There's two. Are yours.

They are on top. Personally wrapped in his slightly bulging,  
fine-motor-control-challenged, personal style. Be sets them on the  
counter.

**QUOYLE**

You prob'ly want to wait for  
Christmas.

Meaning, please don't. So she wipes her hands on her apron. Lets

him see her eyes dance just a flicker.

**WAVEY**

Oh, I'm much too excited.

Delicately unwraps the first. Lifts out a PORCELAIN TEAPOT, finely painted with an assortment of BERRIES. She holds it in her hands, at once admiring and wistful. Wondering if there's a message about their moment together while berry-picking.

**QUOYLE**

It's from a museum catalogue. But  
it's not real. It's a copy.

WAVEY (still gazing at it)

It is my favorite teapot.

A simple pronouncement. She opens the second, flat and narrow. It is a TURQUOISE BRACELET. Actually, kind of stunning. She blinks, taken back by the beauty and perhaps the expense.

**QUOYLE**

It's nice for your eyes. I thought.

She doesn't say anything. Lets it dangle from her fingers, catch the light.

**QUOYLE**

It's for everyday. You don't have  
to save it for special.

She looks to him. Her eyes are shining maybe more than she wants. Her voice perhaps softer than she even intends...

**WAVEY**

Oh, I'll save this, all right.

Covers. With only a slightly more than friendly smile.

**WAVEY**

And I'll think of you. When I

put lot on.

He can only nod. He'd like that. She holds up one finger, wait a second. And hurries off.

So he waits. Looking at her kitchen. Feeling his feelings. She is back, with two boxes. Sets them down. Nods, go ahead...

...one is heavy and square. He opens it to find a LEATHER-BOUND CASE. He looks at her, smiles in his childlike way. Opens the

case, which reveals...

...two leather-bound VOLUMES. One a dictionary. The other a thesaurus. He is obviously moved.

QUOYLE (a murmur)  
You must have me mistaken. For  
a writer.

And when he looks up.

**WAVEY**  
I don't make mistakes. About  
that kind of thing.

He stares at her long enough to make her nod toward the other package. Big and flat, but not heavy at all. He lifts the lid, and pulls out...

...a huge comfy SWEATER. In oxblood wool. He is completely stunned to realize...

WAVEY (so pleased)  
Well, you can't be surprised. You've  
seen me knitting it for months.

**QUOYLE**  
It was so big, I thought it was a  
tea cozy for your car. But if it's  
for me, it has to be bigger, huh?

Put it on, put it on! So he slips it over his head. Big enough and then some. This worries her. She plucks at it...

**WAVEY**  
Well. You'll grow into it.

**QUOYLE**  
You kiddin'? After the holidays,  
we'll have to stretch it.

He's just beaming. Hugs himself to show how warm it is. The silence is companionable. Then...

**QUOYLE**  
Not used to a woman. Giving me  
presents.

She raises a brow. Can scarcely believe that.

**QUOYLE**  
One Christmas with Petal, I gave her

eleven things. And I wrapped them.  
And watched her open them up.

She holds her friendly smile. But her eyes have changed.  
Slightly.

**QUOYLE**

She didn't have anything for me.  
Like every year. But this one  
time, she said, 'Wait a minute.'

Wait a minute.

**QUOYLE**

She ran to the kitchen. I heard  
the fridge open. She came back.  
With her hands hidden behind her.  
Then, she held out...

Even his voice. Betrays the longing.

**QUOYLE**

Two brown eggs. She gave them  
to me from her own hands. They  
were cold.

He smiles, self-conscious.

**QUOYLE**

Must sound really stupid. But  
they meant a lot to me.

Silence. A soft...

**WAVEY**

Well. It's the thought that counts.

He nods. He's glad she understands.

**QUOYLE**

I broke 'em, careful. Made her an  
omelette with 'em. And I saved the  
shells. In a little box.

She can't help but show her surprise at that.

**QUOYLE**

Oh, yeh. They're on a shelf  
behind my desk. At the paper.

He looks worried now. Shouldn't have brought this up. And seeing  
this...

**WAVEY**

I know how it is. To hold onto something good. In the middle of all the bad.

He nods. But feels truly awkward now. So...

**QUOYLE**

Well. I gotta collect Bunny. Beety's gonna have supper waiting.

Right. She nods. She understands this, too.

**WAVEY**

Thank you. Thank you, very much.

Takes her teapot and her bracelet. Holds them. A gentle barrier. Her hands now too full for a hug.

**QUOYLE**

Well. Merry Christmas!

With a wonderful smile.

**WAVEY**

Merry Christmas.

With one of her own.

**INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT**

Quoyle enters a packed auditorium, festooned for Christ's birthday with every trimming imaginable. Rough fishermen in black jackets they wear once a year, women in finery, schoolkids at their well-scrubbed best, antsy with anticipation. The BUZZ is audible, palpable. No Broadway opening could hope for this level of eagerness.

As Quoyle comes down the aisle, we see faces we know. Boys from Nutbeam's party. Billy Pretty with Jack and Mrs. Buggit. Alvin Yark and his bird-like wife. The old-timer who sold Quoyle his boat. Mavis Bangs with an empty seat next to her, must be saved for Agnis. All the kids from daycare. Still, Quoyle searching for the face he doesn't find. And finally...

...to the third row, where Dennis and Beety have saved him a seat. Beety gives him a peck on the cheek, and he smiles, settling in, nervous as hell, just as...

...the school principal, still dressed for England, walks to the

mike at center stage. Holds up her hands like the disciplinarian she prides herself on being, and they quiet pretty fast.

**PRINCIPAL**

Your friends and neighbors, and  
most of all, your children. Have

worked hard to bring you the best  
pageant ever.

THUNDEROUS applause, whistling, stamping. She is frustrated for a moment. Then, waves cheerily against the din, shouting...

**PRINCIPAL**

**LET THE FESTIVITIES BEGIN!**

And RUNS off-stage, as we DISSOLVE THROUGH a SERIES OF ANGLES...

...the Big Ugly Guy who led the raid on poor Nutbeem's boat stands in a threadworn suit bulging with his bulk, singing DANNY BOY in the sweetest tenor one could dream of. PAN an audience, rapt, motionless. Pavarotti never had more respect.

...Bunny and Marty walk timidly to the front of the stage. Marty dressed in Christmas reds and greens. Bunny all in blue, which does look good on her. Kids CALL OUT their names. The place falls quiet. And the girls begin to sing a plaintive West African HYMN in small brave voices that sometimes harmonize. It is unexpected and breathtakingly courageous. Two dads in the third row have tears flooding their eyes...

DENNIS (gruff whisper)

Not bad, my kid, eh?

QUOYLE (gruffer whisper)

I'll say. She's as good as mine.

...Agnis Hamm walks out alone onto the stage, wearing a brown jersey, tweed skirt, yellow stockings and red slippers. She has an odd look on her face, all serious and curious. The laughter and calls die away to silence. Suddenly, one of her feet SCRATCHES at the stage, her arms become WINGS, and with a CROONING and CACKLING she metamorphoses into a PEEVISH HEN protecting an egg. The house comes DOWN with laughter and UNISON applause. Quoyle glances back at Mavis Bangs who puts her fingers between her teeth and WHISTLES in pure delight.

...Wavey Prowse walks onto the rear of the stage, in a long black smock, carrying her accordion. She turns to the wings, nods, and out comes little Herry clacking across the stage in tap shoes. A beat of silence. Mom calls out: ONE, TWO, THREE, rolls into a savage hornpipe and Herry commences the JIG Quoyle once glimpsed

through a window. Three hundred HEELS coming STOMPING down in perfect rhythm and lift Herry into a joyous bouncing, rattling performance that builds in intensity until the finish. He runs to the edge of the stage, bows DEEP from the waist, stands beaming in their applause. Then RACES offstage, his mom following with dignity, and we go with her into the wings...

Once there, Wavey slips OUT of the smock, revealing to the dimness of the wings, that she is wearing dancer's tights over drop-dead legs. A close-fitting tunic covered with sequins and glass bugles, crystal diamonds, and dozens more glittering baubles that send a shimmer of prisms with her every breath. Herry hands her a top

hat, a cane, and...

...she STALKS back onto the stage, her lithe body strutting and glinting. A hush of stupefaction falls, only to be washed away by SHOUTS and WHISTLES, the kind of which have not been heard since Gypsy Rose Lee startled her first roomful of rubes. In the bedlam...

...she TWIRLS the top hat on one finger, FLIPS it up in a double somersault, catching it square on her head. She leans on her cane

And when at last they quiet...

**WAVEY**

We all know Billy Pretty's ways.  
Never save fifty cents, if you  
can save a dollar.

She winks. They laugh. Billy laughing loudest.

**WAVEY**

Well, last Feb'ry, Billy wants  
t'get his grandfather clock repaired.  
Calls old Leander Mesher. Local  
call. No charge.

Twirls the cane recklessly. In the third row, a goggle-eyed Quoye couldn't blink if he tried.

**WAVEY**

Well, says Leander, the big cost is  
pickup and delivery. Got t'charge  
fifty dollars, each way. Two strong  
boys. Gasoline. Air in the tires!

That's right.

**WAVEY**

There's no cost for air in yer

tires!, says Bill. Get wi' th'times,  
he's told. Tis called inflation!

WAGGLES her eyebrows, Groucho-style. They are busting their guts  
laughing. Connoisseurs of wit.

**WAVEY**

Billy lives at the top of the hill,  
Leander at the bot tom, doncha know.  
So Billy gets a rope, HOISTS the  
grandfather UP on his back. And  
muttering the words fifty bucks...

She puts her toe out, SLIPS wildly, windmilling her arms,  
pantomiming as she bends double under the phantom clock.

**WAVEY**

Mite slick. Four feet thick a ice.

Tears are streaming from a hundred eyes and more.

**WAVEY**

Meanwhile, at the bottom, Auntie  
Fizzard, 91 years young, sets out  
in her non-slip galoshes and her  
cane with the rubber tip. Didn't  
yer, dearie?

Bows to the old gal in the front row, who is scarlet-faced in  
hysterics, as all around her applaud. Wavey becomes her, inching  
along, casting fierce glances right and left to warn the world.

**WAVEY**

Meanwhile, at the top...

She is Billy once more, beneath his burden, her long legs stutter-  
stepping to one side, then the other, slipping, skidding, the  
howling all around her threatening to shatter walls, and...

**WAVEY**

...OVER he goes, clock-side down,  
and PICKIN' UP SPEED!

Miming the wild ride as they ROAR...

**WAVEY**

...eight blocks, NINE, missing  
everything like a miracle, zeroing in on...

She becomes Auntie Fizzard once more, shuffling, looking left,  
right, and suddenly up WILD-EYED!

**WAVEY**

CLIPS 'er into the snow bank!

Nods sadly. Leaning on her cane. When at last they quiet.

**WAVEY**

Just two galoshes stickin' outta  
the snow. She digs 'er way out.  
Brushes herself off. Looks at  
him sprawled like a turtle on his  
back, tied to his massive burden.  
She says...

She says.

**WAVEY**

**YOU THERE! BILLY PRETTY!**

Levels a dead-eyed killer gaze.

**WAVEY**

**WHY CAN'T YOU WEAR A WRISTWATCH  
LIKE EVER'BODY ELSE?**

The place comes DOWN like a house of cards. Bedlam surrounds  
Quoyle who sits still as a stone. Too dazzled to breathe.

**EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - EARLY MORNING.**

Lonely stretch of wooded road, middle of nowhere. Light snow just  
starting to fall. A truck pulls up beneath a tree. Out climbs...

...Wavey. Looking grim, walking slow. Crosses the road to a  
weathered diner. The woman who only smokes when she's worried,  
pulls out a pack of Camels. Looks through the diner's frosted  
window...

...a lone customer sits nursing his coffee. He is 40, lean, very  
attractive. Dark hard eyes, set into worries of their own. Wavey  
lights up. Watches in silence until...

...the man looks up. Their eyes meet through the glass. Hold.  
And on his faint smile...

She turns her back. Starts up the road.

ANGLE...he is walking beside her now. Snow drifting lazy, her  
smoke curling up. He watches her anger, how cold and quiet and  
closed. Smiles at her profile...

**HEROLD**

I shoul'da come last night. Seen

the show.

She can't even believe he said that.        Never looking at him...

**WAVEY**

Woulda been a thrill for the  
Christians among' em. They  
think you're dead.

Keep walking.    His smile is gentle.

**HEROLD**

Well, then we got good news  
for th...

**WAVEY**

So does your son.

A beat.

**HEROLD**

Even better news for him.

WAVEY (low)

You think so.

Breaking the words off.    He's watching her profile.

HEROLD (very soft)

I can't undo the hurt I've done.  
Unless you let me.

Gauging the feeling behind the bitterness.

**HEROLD**

There's a million reasons to send  
me away. Good ones. And only two  
reasons not to.

Is she even listening?        He lets the silence hang.

**HEROLD**

I love you. And you love me.

She stops walking.        Flips her cigarette off into the snow.  
Turns  
now...

Looks into his face.        And sighs.

**EXT. SHORELINE - DAY**

Rear ANGLE of Agnis, crouching in the lightly falling snow. At the edge of the sea. The spot where she once sent her dog to rest. HEAR footfalls crunching slowly across the rocks. A bulky figure comes into frame. Crouches down beside her. Close. She stares at the gray horizon.

QUOYLE (softly)  
Mavis Bangs. Told me where  
you'd be.

No answer. But she hears him all right.

QUOYLE  
We get so little mention in the  
wires. Thought you'd like to see.

He hands the folded print-out to her.

QUOYLE  
Head in the suitcase. The mystery's  
solved.

She looks briefly at his eyes. Takes it. Starts to read.

QUOYLE  
Silver Melville was captured in  
Moored with a cruise steward. The  
boy was twenty, a looker, wearing  
Armani clothes. Driving a nice Lexus.

Agnis keeps reading.

QUOYLE  
Says she did it all for love.

She nods at that. Folds the paper neatly, as if conveying  
respect.  
Hands it back.

AGNIS  
She'd call me, time to time.  
Husband was a pig. More women should  
do what she done. Her situation.

He looks in her eyes. And decides to say...

QUOYLE  
Some women. Shoulda done it to  
their brother.

The look holds. She sees the compassion in his eyes. Knows  
he's

so on her side. She clears her throat.

AGNIS (softly)  
Cousin Nolan. Hafta pay him  
a visit.

They share a look. He glances at the sea. Beautiful spot.

**QUOYLE**  
Mavis said you buried Warren here.  
Called it an anniversary.

She stares deep and unblinking into his eyes. She will tell  
him.

**AGNIS**  
Of a loss. But not the dog.

A held moment.

**AGNIS**  
What makes us do that, nephew?  
Give ourselves away to someone.  
So we can't eat or think or  
breathe without 'em?

QUOYLE (just above a whisper)  
I don't know. We just do.

Silence. And...

**AGNIS**  
Wonderful, ain't it?

And now she smiles. Something we have rarely seen.

**AGNIS**  
Irene Warren died. The mornin'  
after a Christmas. We get one  
true love in life, nephew. She  
was mine.

He's not surprised. And that, in turn, does not really surprise  
her.

**AGNIS**  
Don't mean we can't give love  
again. And get some back.

**QUOYLE**  
For some, it does.

AGNIS (straight back)  
Not for me.

Strong with that. Sure.

**AGNIS**

And if that ruffles some small  
town feathers...

His smile in return. Very real.

**QUOYLE**

Y'know what the feathers around  
here need th' most? A good ruffling,  
I say.

He sounds pretty sure himself. Their look holds.

**QUOYLE**

Y'know what I need th' most?

She doesn't.

**QUOYLE**

A really big breakfast!

She nods, one last time. Sounds like a plan.

**INT. GAMMY BIRD - LATE NIGHT**

Quoyale alone with his cut-and-paste, making up the front page  
layout. Moonlight on fallen snow through the window. Late enough,  
quiet enough, to hear...

...the vehicle drive up, the engine turn off. The footfalls to the  
door, which swings open. The last person he'd expect to see.  
Especially with a bottle. Of Cuervo Gold.

They stare at each other. Only he smiles.

**QUOYLE**

Hey. Congratulations.

She shoots him a quizzical look. We see the edge right off,  
even  
if he doesn't.

**QUOYLE**

Last night. On the stage? You  
were...

Shakes his head with innocent admiration.  
his desk.

She puts the bottle on

**WAVEY**

It was easy. I just kept thinkin'.  
How would Petal do it?

He hears it now, right enough. The anger, the Cuervo. She stalks on over to the coffee counter, only a bit wobbly. Plucks up two styrofoam cups.

**WAVEY**

We're friends, right? Friends  
drink together.

Back to his desk. Shrugs her coat off onto the floor. Pullover and jeans, she looks terrific. Hikes her butt up onto the edge of his desk.

**WAVEY**

I asked a quest...

**QUOYLE (quiet)**

I'll drink with you. If you're  
not done yet.

Her soft throaty laugh. He hasn't seen her this way.  
decide  
if it's more scary or exciting.

Can't

**WAVEY**

Not drunk enough yet to talk about  
Petal. Which we always seem to do.

Opens the bottle. About four fingers are gone.

**WAVEY**

Let's talk about me. Which we don't.

Pours herself another two. Thinks before she says...

**WAVEY**

Growin' up, all I wanted from this  
place was out. Imagine. Give up  
all this.

Pours two fingers for him. Stretches her body to slide the cup across the desk. The Cuervo sloshes.

**WAVEY**

I ran off to Toronto, went to  
school. Wanted to be a social

worker. For kids.

She's looking at her cup now. Not at him.

**WAVEY**

Came back one summer. Fell for  
Herold Prowse. That. Was that.

Takes a swallow. Closes her eyes.

**WAVEY**

Did you know I was a liar?

Opens her eyes. Straight into his. Did you?

**WAVEY**

Herold liked other women. But you  
know how that is.

Sure you do.

**WAVEY (whispers)**

He didn't die. Not that he didn't  
deserve to.

Quoyle blinks. A perfect stunned ox gape.

**WAVEY**

See, I'm a good liar.

Drains her cup.

**WAVEY**

He ran off to Seattle with some  
bitch. When his damaged son was  
two months old. And nobody knew.

An ice-cold wink.

**WAVEY**

Like I said. It's four years ago.  
And it's yesterday.

Pours herself another. Savors the memory.

**WAVEY**

So I took his boat out. I sunk it.  
And told my little story. Grieving  
widow.

Shrugs a drunken, careless shrug.

**WAVEY**

I was leaving, of course. Why  
humiliate myself on the way out?

Yes?

**WAVEY (softer)**

But a funny thing happened. On  
my way out.

Her eyes are deeper now. And for a beat, the anger slips away.

**WAVEY**

All these funny, odd little folks?  
They put their hearts around me.  
So I wouldn't be alone. Having  
lost the man I loved.

Silence. A real one.

**WAVEY**

And since I knew, to my shame, that  
is exactly what I had lost. I let  
go of the will to leave. I did.

I did.

**WAVEY**

Decided to let my child grow up.  
Around folks better than his mom.

Stares in his eyes.

**WAVEY**

You're quite the talker.

**QUOYLE (quiet)**

I take pride in that.

So she smiles. But the bitterness is there in it.

**WAVEY**

Well, this morning. The man I  
loved. Came back.

And the world. Ceases to spin. One man's world, at least.  
She  
watches that. Assesses it.

**WAVEY**

Told me he knew. I loved him still.

Sips at her second drink.                      Slides the rest of it down.

**WAVEY**

Okay. Now I'm drunk enough.                      To  
talk about Petal.

Her eyes ask.                      Are you?

**WAVEY**

You're thinking we're kindred  
souls, you and me. In love with  
our nightmares.

Shakes her head.                      Uh-uh.

**WAVEY**

You don't love your Petal. You  
hate. Her cheating. Guts.

Means those words as an opening blow.                      Jacks or better.                      Here  
comes  
the hole card...

**WAVEY**

You have to think it's love.  
Because if it's not, you're dead  
inside. So you keep that flame a  
flickering. Cos it's all you'll  
ever have.

Pure contempt.                      And honesty.

**WAVEY**

You see.                      You're a good liar, too.

Lifts the cap.                      Screws it back on the bottle.

**WAVEY**

Where's the damn eggshells?                      That's  
all I came to see.

And from his prison of shock and shame.                      He points to a shelf.  
She  
is OFF his desk, like a panther...

...SNATCHES the tiny padded box with its treasure.                      RAISES it  
high  
to smash it, and...

...stops.                      To see the panic.                      In his eyes.

It brings tears. Pooling in hers.

And she sets the treasure down, with the tenderness that decency requires.

**WAVEY**

Can you guess how I know about  
Petal?

He cannot.

**WAVEY**

Because you and I. Are kindred  
souls. After all.

And that. Is what she came to say.

**WAVEY**

So I told my husband. To fuck  
himself. And the ego he rode in on.

She crosses the floor. Scoops up her coat. Walks, just a  
little  
wobbly, to the door. Sighs.

**WAVEY**

Thanks for the mirror.

Nods. Means that.

**WAVEY**

If I don't see you. Happy New Year.

And leaves. The door closes quietly. Quoyle looks from it. To  
the eggshells.

And back.

**INT. DENNIS' HOUSE - LATER**

ANGLE...Dennis and his wife BEETY bundled together asleep, as a  
ferocious storm HOWLS around the house.

ANGLE...Quoyle awake on the sofa in Dennis' parlor. Clutching his  
blankets around him. Eyes jumping with every SHRIEK of the  
marauding wind. Mind racing with thoughts of Wavey. And  
eggshells.

ANGLE...Bunny asleep with Dennis' daughter MARTY. The room seems  
to vibrate under the violence of the weather's assault. CLOSE on  
Bunny now, and...

...her eyes OPEN. A strange intent in them. A knowledge. She slips from Marty's bed in her thin blue nightdress. Through the house in the dark, as the wind SCREAMS its warning. Into the parlor where her father sleeps, as the wind suddenly INVADES, and...

...SUCKS her straight UP the chimney and out INTO the heart of the storm. SAILING like a loosened kite out across the black water. Out and out, as gray light rises, to...

...Quoyle Point, where she is blown FLAT against a granite boulder just in front of the Green House, which SHIVERS and pleads against the wind, its steel cables STRAINING, and suddenly from within the house, lights come ON...

...the WHITE DOG is in a window. No longer snarling and menacing, but whining pitifully, begging to be saved. And on the second floor...

...PETAL alone, wild-eyed with terror. She is dressed all in blue, and her daisy-chain necklace flies about her throat as she POUNDS against the glass, her eyes staring directly AT her daughter, who can only scream soundlessly against the gale as the house...

...begins to come LOOSE, the first cable SNAPPING and WHIPPING about with the fierce destructiveness of unleashed power, then the NEXT, and ANOTHER, and with Petal still visible, HOWLING in horror, windows BURSTING everywhere else like flash bulbs, the house...

...slides FREE, along the rocks, toward the cliff, Bunny screeching as it goes OVER the edge, TUMBLES down toward the sea, and Bunny...

...sits BOLT UPRIGHT in bed, a single GASP as her dad is THERE, holding her tight. She is soaked with sweat. But her eyes are not wild. They are filled with the knowing.

BUNNY (a whisper)  
Daddy. The Green House is gone.

He smooths her hair. The wind bellows in rage. Little Marty somehow sleeps on, undisturbed, beside her.

BUNNY (a whisper)  
I didn't dream it. Don't say I did.

#### **EXT. QUOYLE POINT - DAY**

They climb from the station wagon into cold, clear sunlight. Stare in wonder at the naked rock. The snapped, spent, cables. Only shards of wood and glass leaving a hapless trail toward the cliff.

Bunny RUNS toward the debris, and through it. To a tangle of bushes near the cliff.

He walks to a broken cable. Crouches. His eyes running over the space. Where his ancestor's home once stood. And then. He turns...

QUOYLE (calls out)  
What you got there?

We see now. Bunny has unearthed a huge wooden crate from its hiding place. Too engrossed in counting its contents to respond.

As he comes over...

BUNNY (not looking up)  
Petal's things.

She is counting her treasure trove of NECKLACES. More than any sound mind could imagine. Yet, in their infinite variety, somehow wonderful. A testimonial to the power of love.

**BUNNY**  
I think they're all here.

She looks up. Sees him staring so fixedly at them.

BUNNY (alerted)  
What's wrong?

**QUOYLE**  
They're beautiful. I never saw 'em. All together.

Oh. The kid doesn't smile. She decides whether to ask him...

**BUNNY**  
Will she be proud to wear 'em?

He looks in her eyes. His heart breaks behind his smile.

**QUOYLE**  
Well. Any woman would.

**EXT. JACK BUGGIT'S SKIFF - MORNING**

Steel gray morning. The sea is more than a little rough, as Jack lays out his lobster traps. Two other boats, not too close by, appear and disappear in mist. He is checking the lines, knotting hefty weights onto the traps to take them down.

JACK (sings to himself)

Oh, th' Gandy Goose she ain't no uuuuse  
Cos all her nuts'n bolts is...

Stops. Halfway to lowering the next trap over the side.

JACK (mutters)  
Sweet Jesus. I'm turnin' inta  
Alvin Cockadoodle Yark!

As it nears the water line, Jack's cat SKIPPER TOM suddenly LEAPS  
down ONTO the trap. Jack blinks.

**JACK**  
What is this? Suicide attempt?

Tries to let go of the trap and grab the cat in one motion, but the  
cat JUMPS BACK to the boat, Jack STUMBLING out of his way, STEPS in  
the coiled line which WHIRRS as the trap goes...

...DOWN, the line STRANGLING Jack's leg and WHIPPING him flailing  
OVER the side in one startling heartbeat. Almost comic to watch.

But then. It is very quiet. Air bubbles appear at the surface.  
In a few seconds...

The water is unbroken. The boat bobs silently in the swells.

**INT. ALVIN YARK'S BOAT HOUSE - DAY**

Quoyle and Alvin inspect Quoyle's newly-finished boat. It is a  
beauty, to be sure, and the old builder watches Quoyle lovingly  
running his hand across the smooth gunnel. Alvin doesn't smile.  
That's not his style.

**ALVIN**  
Gotta paint the name. What'll it be?  
'The Tall And Quiet Woman'?

Quoyle glances over. The old boy's eyes are dancing.

**QUOYLE**  
You knew Billy's dad?

**ALVIN**  
Ever'body knows ever'body. But  
Billy's pap didn't invent the  
Four Women in a Man's Life.

Quoyle nods. Guess not.

**ALVIN**  
Well. Which one is Bunny, I wonder?

The Maid in the Meadow, mebbe.

But Yoda is just staring at him. And quietly...

**ALVIN**

Doncha know? They're all the same woman. That's the point.

His pupil blinks. Like a crystal bullet of clarity his brain.

**ALVIN**

The Maid in the Meadow, that's her innocence and play. The Stouthearted Woman, is when you need to lean on her.

For some reason he could never name. Tears are pooling in eyes.

**ALVIN**

The Tall and Quiet Woman? That's the silent partner who always walks 'longside, so's yer never alone.

Quoyle is nodding, now. It all seems so right.

**ALVIN**

And the Demon Lover. That's just the frostin' on th' cake.

A soft knocking at the door.

**ALVIN**

When y'find the woman who's all four? That's when y'got yer one true love.

The bird-like woman enters. The old man nods toward her.

**ALVIN**

...like m'Gertie.

But she isn't alone. A man enters behind her. It is Dennis Buggit. And there are tears on his face. He brings a dreadful silence with him, because the face is an open grave.

**DENNIS**

My dad went over the side this mornin'. Tangled in th' sling-stone line.

A sob escapes from this strong man's throat. He ignores it. No one knows what to say.

**DENNIS**

If you could write a memorial t'  
him. Fer t'morrow's Gammy Bird?  
I'd be real grateful.

**EXT. JACK BUGGIT'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

The road is jammed with parked cars and trucks and vans and wagons  
Folks still streaming toward the brightly-lit house. Ever'body  
knows ever'body.

**INT. JACK'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Every room is filled with folks who wear their best. There is  
eating and chatter and even some pockets of laughter, as we move  
through the crowd. As if some have taken hold of a wake's well-  
meaning purpose. Others stand dazed, still wearing their pain and  
confusion. There are children here, some hold a parent's hand,  
some giggle with each other. Snapshot of a community. Struggling  
to cope.

Quoyle and Bunny enter, holding hands, looking around. As they  
cross the room...

...two figures step into their path. Two women holding hands,  
their bodies close together. Their feeling for each other open for  
all to see. One is Agnis. And the other. Isn't Mavis Bangs.

**DAWN**

Happy New Year, Mr. Quoyle. I'm  
sorry I missed you at the pageant.

Slightly startled, Quoyle can't help but smile, despite the solemn  
occasion. At the proud look on his aunt's face.

**DAWN**

I was in the wings, a course.  
Wasn't our girl somethin'?

Our girl, a course, is Agnis. Who nearly blushes at the  
compliment.

**DAWN**

I say, y'have t'love a woman. Who's  
in touch with her inner chicken.

Well, who could argue with that. Dawn leans up, kisses Quoyle on  
the cheek. And with surprising softness...

**AGNIS**

Nephew. You okay?

**BUNNY**

He's okay. He's not sleeping in  
the box.

Her great aunt looks at this child. Bends to plant an unexpected  
kiss on the top of Bunny's head. The kid squirms, tugs her dad  
firmly off, as he sends a parting wave.

Into the parlor now. Quieter here, as the new arrivals thread past  
Jack Buggit in his open coffin, resting on black-draped sawhorses.  
Dennis and his mom stand by Jack, a hand and a word for each. And  
moving into the line...

**QUOYLE**

Remember what I told you.

His words a murmur. Hers are bolder...

**BUNNY**

If he's not sleeping. Why do they  
call it a awake?

He thinks. As if it is a worthwhile question.

**QUOYLE**

We're the ones have to be awake.  
To how much we love him...

Nods to himself. Yes.

**QUOYLE**

And how we should be good to each  
other. While we have the chance.

He looks down. They are almost there.

**QUOYLE**

You think?

She is thinking. Keeping the thoughts to herself. At the coffin  
now, he lifts her up to see. Jack lies motionless, a wax figure of  
himself. Serene behind violet eyelids.

**BUNNY**

He looks like he's sleeping.

Dennis looks over. His stolid, grim face releases a smile for his  
friend.

**QUOYLE**

That's cos he's peaceful. No

worries, anymore. No troubles.

He sets her down.        Clasps Mrs. Buggit's hand.        And from his  
pocket...

**QUOYLE**

I found this in Jack's drawer at  
the paper. I don't know if it's  
somethin' special...

An enameled wreath with the initial R, backed by a long, sharp pin  
She tears up again, just to see it.

**MRS. BUGGIT**

Oh, it's his lodge pin.        We were  
lookin' all over.

She smiles bravely as she takes it.        Leans up to kiss his cheek.

**MRS. BUGGIT (a whisper)**

Dennis showed me what y'wrote fer  
th' paper. Did Jack proud.

So they look at each other. Dennis clears his throat, looks away.  
And then, Quoyle is leading Bunny off.

**QUOYLE**

You hungry? There's sandwi...

**BUNNY**

Petal's peaceful, too.

Just a statement of fact.        To no one in particular.        Dad squeezes  
her hand. Manages...

**QUOYLE**

You bet.        You can count on tha...

But she lets go. Scampers to a corner of the room.        To Herry  
Prowse. And his mom.

So Quoyle starts toward her, his heart in his throat. And when  
Wavey looks up. She is glad to see him. As he reaches her...

She holds up her wrist. Dangling from it, her turquoise bracelet  
She wore her best for Jack. Quoyle stands very close. One last  
thing from his pocket...

**QUOYLE**

New Year's present.

A small box. Wrapped as careful as he could. She looks to his eyes, really?

**QUOYLE**

Oh, yeh. It's a Quoyle tradition.

Well, in that case. She takes it into her slender fingers. Undoes the ribbon, the paper. Lifts the lid to see, resting in tissue...

...eggshells. Crushed almost to powder. Her heart comes straight to her eyes, even before the whispered...

**QUOYLE**

Thanks. For the mirror.

And across the room, Mrs. Buggit leans with trembling hands to fix the Lodge pin to Jack's lapel. Shaking as she is, the hand lurches, the big pin goes PLUNGING, and...

...a rattling COUGH. Rolls across this room. The world falls silent. Jack's wife grabs her son's arm, and their eyes bug out, staring into the box.

**DENNIS**

**DAD'S COME BACK!**

And LUNGES to help his gurgling father free his shoulders from the coffin's wedge. A sudden ROAR, there are SCREAMS, there is even LAUGHTER and WHISTLING, complete chaos. And in the bedlam, a tug on Quoyle's coat...

**BUNNY**

See. He woke up.

**EXT. OMALLOOR BAY - DAY**

Sunlit day of crystal perfection. The majesty of ice and towering rock and shimmering water. A scale so majestic, any cynic would be hard put to deny God's hand. And gliding into FRAME...

...a tiny skiff. On its maiden run. We CLOSE to see...

...painted on its side. THE FOUR WOMEN. One woman is rowing just now, doing all the work. Her son sleeps in the bow. And in the middle of the little boat...

...father and daughter. Are unpacking the picnic lunch. There is a lot of food. This could take awhile.

**BUNNY**

That's a funny thing to say. For

the first thing he said.

**QUOYLE**

What? 'I'm keepin' m'damn lobster license'?

Yeh. That.

**QUOYLE**

Maybe he just said it. To make your Uncle Dennis laugh so hard. You think?

She keeps unpacking. Her face quiet and serious. Her thoughts her own.

QUOYLE (very softly)  
It's not fair, is it. That Jack woke up. And Petal didn't.

And since he's said her thought aloud. She tells him...

**BUNNY**

Well. The world's not fair. You said.

She's not looking up. But he knows she's listening.

**QUOYLE**

That's something the world is always teaching us. And sometimes, the learning comes later.

That gets through. Both adults can see it.

QUOYLE (a murmur)  
You taught me that.

Eyes resolutely down, she nods. Remembers.

**QUOYLE**

You know. What we wait for? It's like the main stem of this boat. It gives us our shape.

Her brow furrows. Doesn't understand that.

**QUOYLE**

See, I know why you saved a place for Petal. All this time.

On this. She looks up. Her dad is smiling from his eyes.

**QUOYLE**

Cos I'm the daddy. And you learn  
how to do. By watching me.

And...

**QUOYLE**

You just watched. Better than  
I knew.

Still holding Bunny's eyes. He beckons to the woman rowing.  
C'mere, a second. So Wavey sets down her oars. Slides over.  
And Quoye whispers to his daughter...

**QUOYLE**

Watch this.

He leans his face. To Wavey's mouth. A kiss so tender, even a  
child can't turn away. The moment lingers. And when it ends...

**WAVEY**

I'm thanking your daddy. For all  
my presents.

**BUNNY**

There was only two.

Wavey looks at this girl.

**WAVEY**

More than two. Everything I need.  
Except...

Except. She gathers all the courage it takes to say...

**WAVEY**

Except a necklace.

And waits. We can feel her heart pounding in her throat. Bunny  
stares back with eyes no one could read. And then...

**BUNNY**

I got a box of 'em. You could  
pick one.

A hush over this bay. A woman stunned and grateful.

**BUNNY**

Then you'd have everything you need.

Well, that seems true. So, the woman nods. Her eyes flutter  
down.  
In the silence, she unwraps a sandwich...

WAVEY (a murmur)  
You want the cheese?

**BUNNY**

No.

Okay, then. She hands that one to Quoyle. And as she and Bunny  
look for another, we PULL...

...UP and AWAY, an AERIAL ANGLE swirling above the shimmering bay.  
The boat so far below us. The people tiny specks. They could be  
anyone.

Anyone at all.

**FADE TO BLACK. ROLL END CREDITS.**