

THE NOTEBOOK
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revisions
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based on the novel
By
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July 11, 2002

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Do I contradict myself?
Very well then
I contradict myself
I am large
I contain multitudes

-W.W.

==

...

==

For Teddy
Together Soon

...

...

...

1 EXT. BLACK RIVER - MAGIC HOUR/ NIGHT

1

A canoe paddle slides into the water and emerges, shimmering in the sunlight. Water falls off the paddle in droplets of gold. The canoe moves ahead, and the paddle goes back into the water, again and again.

As the canoe moves forward, ducks scatter and shoot into the sky. Willow branches dip into the water, silhouetted against the setting sun. The paddler keeps moving deliberately ahead, his back glistening with perspiration.

The sun disappears and now it is night. But the canoe continues to move through the moonlight, the droplets now turning to diamonds.

2 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - OLD ALLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

2

Standing at a window in a nightgown and robe is OLD ALLIE, 70s, long white hair, a distant look in her eyes, watching the single rower. As the canoe passes, hundreds of Tundra swan and Canadian geese lift off the banks and start flying south for the winter. Old Allie watches, as the swan and geese fly right by her window in the purple evening sky. Her reverie is interrupted by NURSE ESTHER, a black woman in her 40s.

NURSE ESTHER

Let's get ready for bed, honey.

3 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - HALLWAY - NIGHT

3

A long corridor of linoleum reflects the strips of night-lights placed by the floor. Midway down the hall is a nurses' station. At the end of the hallway, a head pokes out of a room, sees Nurse Esther making notations in resident charts, and then disappears.

Nurse Esther closes the book, picks up a Styrofoam cup, and heads down the hallway to fetch some coffee. When she leaves, the head appears again. It is a man in his 70s, DUKE. He is wearing pajamas and a robe. He looks around, then quickly walks down the hall, his slippers sliding along the smooth floor.

4 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - OLD ALLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

4

Duke slips into the room. Sleeping in the bed is Old Allie. He walks over to her, reaches out, and lets his hand rest gently on her silver hair. Old Allie turns, still asleep, and instinctively takes Duke's hand. Duke smiles. Old Allie opens her eyes and looks at Duke, at first plainly, then quizzically, and then with growing panic.

OLD ALLIE

What do you want?

DUKE

It's me.

Duke strokes her hand, trying to calm her, but she jerks it away.

4. CONTINUED:

2.
4

OLD ALLIE

Who are you? Why are you in my room?
Help!

Duke puts his fingers to his lips and tries to shush her.

OLD ALLIE

Help me! Somebody help me! There's a
strange man in my bedroom!

Old Allie begins to shriek, and, almost instantly, there is the sound of feet running. Duke's face sinks with defeat, and by the time Nurse Esther and NURSE IRENE arrive, Old Allie is hysterical. Duke stands frozen, unable to help. Nurse Esther hurries over to Old Allie and holds her in her arms.

NURSE ESTHER

It's okay. It's just a mistake. It's
all okay.

Nurse Esther shoots a look over at Duke, who is being led from the room by Nurse Irene.

DUKE

I'm sorry.

5 EXT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - MORNING 5

A flock of ducks skim along a pond in the early morning sunlight. Up on the hill, the nursing home is coming to life.

6 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - MORNING 6

The nursing staff is taking the patients through their morning ritual of breakfast, exercise, and meds.

7 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - DUKE'S ROOM - DAY 7

Duke, hair combed and freshly shaved, stands in front of a mirror, and finishes knotting his tie. He looks at himself. He looks sharp. He slips on a jacket, picks up a notebook, and walks from the room.

8 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - HALLWAY - DAY 8

Duke, tan slacks, blue blazer, very dapper, walks smartly down the hall, notebook under his arm. This is the "Assisted Living" wing. Not the end of the line, but close. Patients wandering. Patients in wheelchairs and walkers. A woman strapped to her bed. Duke takes it all in as he moves down the hall.

He passes KEITH, a large orderly with multiple earrings and a shaved head.

KEITH

Looking good, Duke.

8 CONTINUED:

Duke flashes a peace sign and slides up to the nurses' station. There is a line, and Duke speaks to the man in front of him.

DUKE
How's it hanging, Harry?

HARRY
I keep trying to die, but they won't let me.

DUKE
Yeah, well.

Harry moves off and NURSE SELMA hands Duke his meds.

DUKE
Big day today.

NURSE SELMA
You say that every day.

9 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - ALLIE'S ROOM - DAY

9

Nurse Esther is brushing Old Allie's hair, helping her get ready for the day. Old Allie is in a better mood, full of piss and vinegar.

OLD ALLIE
I don't know what I want to do. But I can tell you what I don't want to do, and that's Bingo. Bunch of old farts trying to read numbers off ping pong balls.

Allie looks up to see Duke standing in the doorway. She doesn't recognize him.

OLD ALLIE
Yes?

NURSE ESTHER
This is Duke.

OLD ALLIE
Yes?

NURSE ESTHER
He's come to read to you.

10 EXT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - VERANDA - DAY

10

Old Allie and Duke sit at a table in the screened room, the river below them. She looks at him while he puts on his glasses and finds the right page.

DUKE

Now, let's see, where did we leave off? Ah, yes, the dance.

OLD ALLIE

The dance?

DUKE

July 4th, 1940. Noah was at the Independence Day dance with his friends, Fin and Sara. Allie was there, too.

11 EXT. TOWN PARK - NIGHT

11

YOUNG ALLIE, 17, is a fresh-faced blonde with emerald eyes that shimmer with life.

Colored lights are strung across the park. A band plays on a bandstand, and fireworks light up the sky. Through the crowd, Allie sees YOUNG NOAH, 19, blue eyes and blue collar handsome. He is sitting with FIN, redhead and freckles, and SARA, pretty, and filthy rich, both also 19. Allie walks over to Noah.

ALLIE

Hey, you. Noah Calhoun. Do you want to dance?

NOAH

Dance? No.

ALLIE

Why not?

NOAH

I don't know how.

ALLIE

Come on. I'll show you.

NOAH

I'm not dancing.

ALLIE

Yes, you are. It's ladies' choice.

Allie takes his hand, yanking him to his feet and pulling him onto the dance floor. They come together awkwardly. She takes his hand, puts it on her waist. They start to move, but he steps all over her feet.

ALLIE

Ow. Ow!

NOAH

This is stupid. I told you I didn't know how.

11 CONTINUED:

ALLIE
Shut up and dance.

The song is slow and sweet, and soon, they relax and move softly to the music. Finally, Allie closes her eyes and puts her head on Noah's chest.

12 EXT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - VERANDA - DAY 12

Old Allie is lost in thought.

OLD ALLIE
This isn't the first time they met.
You don't act like that the first time
you meet. Not if you want a second
time.

DUKE
You're right. They met for the first
time the week before at the carnival.

13 EXT. HAMILTON PLANTATION - MAGIC HOUR 13

Allie's father, JOHN HAMILTON, white suit and Panama hat, is at the stables, admiring his horses.

DUKE V.O.
Allie had come to New Bern for the
summer. Her father was a very wealthy
tobacco executive who brought the
family there to vacation.

Allie, all dressed up, runs out of the house and down the road. In the distance is a Ferris wheel. John calls after her.

JOHN
I want you home by ten, Allie.

ALLIE
Eleven.

JOHN
Alright, eleven. No later.

ALLIE
Twelve.

JOHN
Allie!

ALLIE
I know, I know.

14 EXT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - VERANDA - DAY 14

Old Allie blinks. There is a glimmer of recognition in her eyes.

14 CONTINUED:

OLD ALLIE
Yes, they met at a carnival.

15 EXT. NEW BERN CARNIVAL - NIGHT 15

Bumper cars. Cotton candy. Penny arcades. Fin is trying to ring the bell in the Strong Man competition, as Noah approaches.

NOAH
Hey, Fin.

FIN
Hey. Watch this.

He swings the giant mallet but the meter goes only half way up.

FIN
Crap! I swear this game is fixed. I clobbered that thing.

NOAH
Where's Sara?

FIN
Up there. Can't do it. Don't like heights.

Fin indicates the Ferris wheel. Noah looks up to find Allie sitting in the seat next to Sara, who waves.

SARA
Hey, Fin!

For a moment, Allie and Noah's eyes lock as the giant wheel swoops by.

NOAH
Who is that?

Up on the wheel, Sara catches Allie making eyes at Noah.

SARA
Noah Calhoun. He works at the lumberyard with Fin.

ALLIE
What?

SARA
The guy you were just flirting with.

ALLIE
I was not! Sara!

SARA
Well, whatever you were doing, keep doing it. He's staring right at you.

Allie looks. It's true. The wheel drops down again, and Noah never takes his eyes off her. He raises his hand, and Allie waves back.

SARA

Oh, that was subtle.

ALLIE

He seems nice.

SARA

Yeah, yeah. They're all nice.

On the ground, Fin dishes out the details.

FIN

Allie Hamilton. Seventeen years old. Here for the summer. Dad's got more money than God. She's friends with Sara, buddy. You want me to introduce you?

NOAH

Thanks, Fin, but I can do it myself.

Noah glances at the OPERATOR, who is looking the other way, then jumps the fence and leaps into Allie's chair, just as it passes, squeezing down between Allie and Sara.

OPERATOR

Hey! You can't do that!

NOAH

I'll pay you when I get down, Tommy!
(turns to Allie)
Hi. I'm Noah. Noah Calhoun.

ALLIE

I'm Allie.

NOAH

Nice to meet you.

OPERATOR

You can't sit more than two people in a chair, Noah!

NOAH

Okay, Tommy!

Noah stands up and the chair starts to rock back and forth.

SARA

Hey! Stop it, Noah! You're going to tip us over!

NOAH

No, I won't.

Noah grabs a bar overhead and swings free of the chair. Sara and Allie start shrieking.

ALLIE

Get down! You're going to fall and kill yourself!

NOAH

You're right. Oh, my God. I can't hold on any longer. I'm going to fall. I'm going to fall!

Suddenly, Noah lets go of one arm, as though he's losing his grip. Allie screams in terror. Noah starts to laugh and grabs the bar with his free hand again. Allie's face gets red, embarrassed by being tricked.

ALLIE

You think you're so smart, don't you?

SARA

That wasn't funny, Noah.

ALLIE

I'll take care of this.

Allie reaches up and starts to undo Noah's belt.

NOAH

Hey, cut that out! Cut it out!

Noah tries to stop Allie, but she undoes the button, and Noah's pants slide down his legs. On the ground below, a crowd has gathered and is starting to laugh and shout comments up to Noah about his underwear. Now Noah's face is red.

ALLIE

Not so cocky now, are you?

NOAH

You wait. I'll get you for this.

ALLIE

Maybe you will. Maybe you won't.

Noah and Fin walk and talk.

NOAH

So, you think she likes me?

FIN

Who?

NOAH
Who? Who do you think who?

FIN
Oh, Allie? Sure, she likes you.

NOAH
Yeah?

FIN
Buddy, relax. It's all set up. Sara
said to meet them for an ice cream.

17 INT. MALT SHOP - DAY

17

Sara and Allie are eating cones when Noah and Fin enter.

FIN
Sara! Allie! What a surprise!

SARA
What a coincidence! Look who's here.
Allie, you remember Noah, don't you?

ALLIE
How could I forget? Last time I saw
him, he stepped all over my feet.

There is an awkward pause.

ALLIE
Are you guys going to have some ice
cream?

FIN
No, we were just, uh...

NOAH
I thought I might go to the creek and
do some rowing. Anybody want to come
along?

FIN
I would.

Noah shoots him a look.

FIN
...uh, but I can't. But it sure
sounds fun. Doesn't it, Allie?

SARA
Yeah, Allie.

ALLIE
Rowing?

SARA

Yes. Rowing.

ALLIE

No. It doesn't sound fun.

SARA

(pointed)

Rowing.

ALLIE

Stop saying rowing. I don't want to go rowing.

FIN

Sure, you do.

ALLIE

I'm not going rowing.

NOAH

Don't worry. You'll have a good time.

ALLIE

I'm not worried. I'm just not going. Sara, help me out here.

SARA

Oh, look at the time. Got to go.

ALLIE

You're leaving?

SARA

Yeah, busy.

FIN

Got to do a bunch of stuff.

SARA

See you!

Fin and Sara exit. Allie blinks.

ALLIE

You want to tell me what just happened?

NOAH

What?

ALLIE

One minute, I'm having a good time with my friend. The next minute, I'm standing here with you, holding a soggy ice cream cone.

17 CONTINUED: (2)

Noah shrugs.

NOAH
So, do you want to come?

ALLIE
No.

18 EXT. MARION LAKE - DAY

18

Noah rows. Allie sits facing him. He shoots her a smile and she smiles back, but it's uncomfortable.

NOAH
Bored?

ALLIE
No. I had no idea it was possible to cram so much excitement into one afternoon. Is this what you do for fun?

NOAH
Sometimes. I try to get out in the middle of nowhere for a few hours every day. Away from everything. It's beautiful, don't you think?

ALLIE
(not impressed)
Sure.

NOAH
Alright, what do you do?

ALLIE
For fun? Well, I'm busy, so there's not a lot of time, you know. Let's see. There's dance lessons, piano, French tutor. And I'm finishing up school so there's studying. I'm applying to all these colleges, Radcliffe, Sarah Lawrence. They're the ones we want.

NOAH
Who's we?

ALLIE
What?

NOAH
You said, 'we'. The ones 'we' want.

ALLIE
Oh. My family. We decide everything together.

NOAH

You do?

ALLIE

Well, not everything. But the important things, yes.

NOAH

But the rest you get to decide all by yourself?

ALLIE

You're very rude, you know that?

Noah shrugs.

NOAH

So, you study for fun, do you?

ALLIE

What?

NOAH

You named all the things you have to do. What do you do for you?

ALLIE

I don't understand.

NOAH

What do you do for pleasure?

Allie gets the double meaning and makes a face. They drift along in silence for a moment.

ALLIE

I love to paint.

NOAH

Yeah?

ALLIE

Most of the time I have all these thoughts bouncing around my brain and no place to put them. But when I paint, I'm relaxed. I'm probably not even very good.

NOAH

I doubt that.

ALLIE

But with a brush in my hand, I feel like myself, you know?

NOAH

I'm that way with a saw.

Allie smiles.

ALLIE
Anyway, it's a passion.

NOAH
It's good to have a passion.

Allie looks at Noah, taking him in.

ALLIE
You make me nervous, you know that?

Noah grins.

ALLIE
And don't smile like the cat in the tree, because I don't mean that kind of nervous, okay?

The boat pushes through the water to the center of the lake. Noah puts the oars up.

ALLIE
God, it's hot. I wish I could swim. I just want to jump in the water right now.

NOAH
Why don't you?

ALLIE
No.

NOAH
What's the matter, you have to check with your parents first?

ALLIE
Hmmp

NOAH
That's your problem. You don't do what you want.

ALLIE
Yes, I do.

NOAH
No, you don't. If you did, you'd swim.

ALLIE
I don't want to swim.

NOAH
You just said you did.

ALLIE

Well, I don't now. So, let's just drop it, okay? I'm not going in the water.

Noah gets up, stands on the gunnel, and flips the boat over, sending them both into the lake. Noah and Allie break the surface, Allie, excited, Noah, laughing.

ALLIE

You're crazy!

NOAH

Maybe.

They tread water, their faces suddenly very close. After a second, she splashes his face.

ALLIE

I hate you.

Allie turns, starts toward shore, when Noah reaches out, stopping her. She turns and kisses him, hungry, taking his face in her hands, devouring him. And together they sink under the water, still kissing.

DUKE V.O.

Southern summers are indifferent to the trials of young love. Armed with warnings and doubts...

19 EXT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - VERANDA - DAY

19

Duke is still reading to Old Allie from the notebook. His thick glasses exaggerate the size of his eyes.

DUKE:

...Noah and Allie gave a remarkably convincing portrayal of a boy and girl travelling down a very long road with no regard for the consequences.

OLD ALLIE

They fell in love, didn't they?

DUKE

Yes, they did.

OLD ALLIE

I knew it. Good. I like this kind of story. Go on.

Nurse Selma approaches in her white uniform.

NURSE SELMA

Lovely day outside. How about a walk?

19 CONTINUED:

OLD ALLIE

Oh, not now, young lady. This nice man is just reading me a most fascinating story.

NURSE SELMA

That's nice. But I want you to get some exercise, take some fresh air into your lungs.

DUKE

I'll take her in a few minutes. Soon. I promise.

He gives her a wink, and Nurse Selma moves off.

OLD ALLIE

Okay. Go on. Read.

DUKE

(reading)

After that day on the lake, Allie and Noah spent every waking hour together. Soon, they were inseparable...

20 EXT. LUMBERYARD - DAY 20

Quitting time. The employees walk to the parking lot and Allie is waiting. When she sees Noah, she runs and jumps on him, kissing him. Hoots and hollers from Fin and the workers.

21 INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 21

Sarah and Fin watch the movie. Noah and Allie are wildly making out, paying no attention to the screen.

22 OMIT 22

23 OMIT 23

24 EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY 24

Noah and Fin ride Allie and Sara on two bicycles, the girls on the handlebars.

25 OMIT 25

26 EXT. NEW BERN STREETS - PARK BENCH - DAY 26

Noah and Allie eating ice cream cones.

ALLIE

Ew.

NOAH

What?

26 . CONTINUED:

ALLIE

Smell this. I think it's gone bad.

He goes to smell it, and she sticks the cone in his face, getting ice cream everywhere. She then proceeds to lick it off his eyes, his nose, his lips.

27 EXT. ROAD/ CALHOUN HOUSE - NIGHT

27

Allie walks down the moonlit road and sees Noah and his father, FRANK CALHOUN, sitting on the front porch in rocking chairs. Noah's voice drifts in the summer night air.

NOAH

I depart as air, I shake my white
locks at the runaway sun....

Allie watches, transfixed. Noah finishes the poem and there is a moment of silence.

FRANK

I think you have a visitor, son.

Noah looks up to see Allie silhouetted by moonlight. She is embarrassed.

ALLIE

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to
interrupt.

FRANK

(standing)
Who's interrupting? You're not
interrupting. We could use something
around here that doesn't smell like
plywood.

NOAH

Dad, this is Allison Hamilton.

ALLIE

Allie.
(taking his hand)
Pleased to meet you, Mr. Calhoun.

FRANK

My father was Mr. Calhoun. Call me
Frank.

For some reason, Frank thinks this is hysterical.

FRANK

So, this is Allie?

NOAH

Dad?

27. . CONTINUED:

FRANK

Allie, Allie, Allie. She's pretty,
son. Even prettier than you said.

ALLIE

Is that right?

NOAH

Oh, you two are ganging up on me?
Really nice.

They laugh.

ALLIE

That poem was beautiful. What was it?

FRANK

Whitman. When Noah was young, he used
to stutter.

NOAH

Stammer.

FRANK

Same damn thing. Couldn't understand
a damn word he said.

ALLIE

Really?

Noah is mortified, but Allie is enjoying the story.

FRANK

So, I had him read poetry aloud to me.
It wasn't very pretty at first. But
after a while, it started sounding
good. And before you know it, the
stutter was gone.

ALLIE

Good idea, that poetry.

FRANK

That's what I thought. I'm a Tennyson
man myself. But he loves Whitman, so
I let him have his way. Now, does
anybody want some breakfast?

ALLIE

Breakfast?

NOAH

Dad, it's ten o'clock at night.

27 CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

It's a free country. I figure I can
eat pancakes anytime I damn please.
Now, who's hungry?

Noah and Allie look at each other.

28 INT. CALHOUN HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT 28

Noah, Frank, and Allie eating eggs, bacon, and big stacks of
pancakes. Frank and Noah are telling a story. Allie is laughing
so hard, tears stream down her face.

DUKE V.O.

It was an improbable romance. He was
a country boy. She was from the city.
She was wealthy. He wasn't.

29 OMIT 29

30 OMIT 30

31 EXT. CALHOUN HOUSE - PORCH - NIGHT 31

Noah, Allie, Frank, and lots of Frank's friends play music on
Frank's porch. There's a guitar, a harmonica, and a fiddle.
Frank's friend, ELGIN, black, 50s, plays the banjo, and Frank
plays the spoons. Frank finally drops the spoons, and despite
her protestations, starts dancing with Allie. Noah laughs.

32 EXT. ASHEPOO RIVER - DAY 32

Noah, Allie, Sara, and Fin swinging on a tire and jumping into
the river.

33 INT. FRANK'S TRUCK - DAY 33

Noah teaching Allie to drive in Frank's pickup. She's terrible.

34 EXT. CALHOUN HOUSE - DAY 34

Allie is painting a portrait of Noah. Noah hates sitting still,
complaining the whole time. WE SEE the painting. The river and
the Calhoun house are a beautiful backdrop, and the likeness of
Noah is remarkable.

DUKE V.O.

They rarely agreed on anything. But
despite all their differences, they
challenged each other every day.

35 OMIT 35

36 EXT. HAMILTON PLANTATION - NIGHT 36

Noah drops off Allie at home They say goodbye, locking lips in a
long kiss.

DUKE V.O.

...And they were crazy about each other.

John Hamilton stands on the porch watching the two lovebirds. A smile plays across his lips. Allie pushes Noah away, waves goodbye, and runs up the steps. Her father's voice stops her.

JOHN

Allie?

ALLIE

You scared me. I didn't see you there.

JOHN

Awful friendly with that boy down there.

ALLIE

Yes, Daddy.

JOHN

You bring him to the house on Sunday. I want to meet this young man.

37 EXT. HAMILTON PLANTATION - DAY

37

It's a lawn party. Everyone dressed in white linen. Servants. Guests playing croquet, drinking from crystal glasses. Noah parks Frank's pickup in front of the house. He looks out of place in his father's navy blue suit. John Hamilton sees Noah, walks over, proffers his hand.

JOHN

Noah? John Hamilton. Allie's father. Strong grip.

NOAH

Nice to meet you, sir.

JOHN

Indeed. Glad you could make it, son. Come on in. We're in the back.

He leads Noah to the back of the house, where a lavish dining table is set up. Allie sees Noah, rushes over, kisses him.

JOHN

Can I get you a drink?

NOAH

Uh, no, sir...

JOHN

Nonsense. No such thing as a southern man who doesn't drink.

(MORE)

37 CONTINUED:

37

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'll fix you a julep. Sit down, sit
down. We're just about to eat.

38 EXT. HAMILTON PLANTATION - BACKYARD - DAY

38

The table is set for twenty. The setup is spectacular. Little forks. Big forks. Silver water bowls for your fingers. Among the guests are Fin and Sara, Sara's parents, MR. and MRS. TUFFINGTON, Allie's snotty cousin, BODEE, and his girlfriend, VERONICA, and Allie's mom, ANNE, 40s, elegant. The servants pour drink after drink, and there is far too much food.

MR. TUFFINGTON

So, what do you do, Noah?

NOAH

I work in the lumberyard with Fin.

SARA

Fin's father owns the lumberyard, you know.

NOAH

It's mainly milling. Receiving logs. Stripping bark. But I have a lathe at home, and I build furniture in my spare time.

MRS. TUFFINGTON

That's lovely, dear.

MR. TUFFINGTON

So, you're a carpenter, are you?

SARA

Like Jesus.

The table laughs.

BODEE

If you don't mind me asking, how much do you make at your job?

ALLIE

Bodee...?

BODEE

It's just a question. I'm interested.

NOAH

You mean, how much money?

ALLIE

Bodee, I'm warning you.

38 CONTINUED:

NOAH

It's alright. About forty cents an hour. Not a lot, but I don't need much. And I save some.

JOHN

Is that a summer job, Noah?

NOAH

No.

MRS. TUFFINGTON

Going back to school?

Noah shakes his head. He's really on the spot. Fin jumps in and saves him.

FIN

Noah and I are saving up to see the world. Travel. See how the other half lives. We're going everywhere. China. India. Brazil. Australia. You name it. We've been talking about it since we were kids.

The table voices their approval. "Here, here."

MRS. TUFFINGTON

Too bad Europe is so unsettled right now.

MR. TUFFINGTON

Yes, yes. Europe is important. Every young man should visit Europe. It builds character.

JOHN

Let's eat, shall we?

Noah looks up to find a servant setting down his plate. It's Elgin, dressed in the white servants' uniform.

NOAH

Hi, Elgin.

Elgin nods, uncomfortable, and moves away.

ANNE

So, Noah, you and Allie have been spending a lot of time together. You must be very fond of each other. Getting pretty serious, huh?

NOAH

Yes, ma'am.

The table is embarrassed. Mr. Tuffington coughs.

ANNE

Summer's almost gone. What will you do?

NOAH

Oh, well, Charlotte's just a couple of hours away.

ANNE

But Allie's going to Sarah Lawrence. Didn't she tell you?

Noah looks at Allie, whose face is flushed. She wants to strangle her mother. Bodee smiles.

ALLIE

I just got the letter. I was going to tell you.

NOAH

That's great. Really.

ANNE

Sarah Lawrence is in New York.

NOAH

Oh.

JOHN

Anne, this conversation is too stuffy for the dinner table. Can't the children have a good time without bringing in the Spanish Inquisition? Allie, why don't you take Noah onto the lake? You like boats, don't you, Noah?

NOAH

Would you excuse me?

Noah abruptly gets up from the table, and moves quickly away.

38A INT. HAMILTON PLANTATION - BATHROOM - DAY

38A

Noah throws some water on his face. The bathroom is very fancy. Lots of sprays and powders and lacy hand towels. Noah looks at himself in his cheap blue suit, the edges all frayed. A knock on the door, and Allie enters.

ALLIE

You okay?

NOAH

Sure.

38A CONTINUED:

ALLIE

Don't pay any attention to my family.
They're all drunk by noon. Come on.
Let's go have some fun.

39 OMIT 39

40 EXT. COOPER LAKE - MAGIC HOUR 40

Allie and Noah row out to the center of the lake. On the shore, Anne and John watch, as Allie kicks off her shoes and jumps into the water.

ANNE

That child has too much spirit for a girl of her circumstance.

JOHN

It's just summer love.

Noah rips off his jacket and shirt and jumps in as well.

ANNE

Trouble, is what it is.

The party guests watch Noah and Allie come together in a wet embrace.

DUKE V.O.

It was a magical summer, but summer was almost over.

41 OMIT 41

41A EXT. CALHOUN HOUSE - BARN - ESTABLISHING SHOT - NIGHT 41A

42 INT. CALHOUN HOUSE - BARN - NIGHT 42

Noah is sanding the surface of a table when Allie arrives. She's radiant. He hands her a small bouquet of wildflowers.

NOAH

Come on. I want to show you something.

43 EXT. COUNTRY LANE - NIGHT 43

Frank's truck moves along a dirt road.

44 INT. FRANK'S TRUCK - NIGHT 44

"I'll Be Seeing You" is playing on the radio. There is something special in the way that Allie looks at Noah.

45 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - NIGHT 45

The truck stops in front of an old abandoned plantation house.

45 CONTINUED:

45

NOAH

Wait here.

Noah moves inside and Allie looks around. The grounds are wild and beautiful. A river winds below her, the moon in its reflection. When Noah reappears at the doorway, he holds a candelabra.

46 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - NIGHT

46

Noah leads Allie inside. There are lit candles everywhere. The old home is dilapidated, but right now it fairly glows.

ALLIE

Noah, what did you do? Oh my God, it's beautiful.

They move through the house from room to room.

NOAH

It's the Windsor Plantation, one of the oldest homes in the state. Built in 1772. Rumor has it that Francis Marion proposed to his wife on these very steps.

ALLIE

Wow. This place is gigantic.

NOAH

Yep. It looks crappy now, but one day I'm going to buy it, and fix it up. All it needs is a new floor, new walls, and a new roof.

ALLIE

Is that all?

NOAH

Yeah. Except for plumbing and electric.

ALLIE

And furniture.

NOAH

Yeah. But it's right on the river. And it has a big barn that will be my workshop.

Allie thinks he's kidding, but plays along.

ALLIE

What about my stuff? Don't I get a say in this?

NOAH
What do you want?

ALLIE
Well, first of all, the house should be white. I must live in a white house. With blue shutters, if possible. And I'd like a room overlooking the river, so I can paint.

NOAH
Anything else?

ALLIE
A big old porch that wraps around the entire house, where we can drink tea and watch the sun go down.

NOAH
(dead serious)
Okay.

Allie moves to an old grand piano that sits in what once must have been the living room. She hits the keys and Chopin floats into the night. As Allie plays, Noah lifts her hair and kisses the back of her neck, her shoulders, her ears. She fumbles a few notes.

NOAH
I think you need more practice.

ALLIE
Are you kidding? I couldn't play chopsticks with you doing that.

Noah moves to an old Victrola, cranks it up. "I'll Be Seeing You" plays. Noah takes Allie's hand and they dance. Their lips come together. His hands move to her hips. Allie's head tips back, her eyes closed, breathing heavily. She hooks her fingers under his belt and whispers in his ear.

ALLIE
Make love to me.

Noah looks at her and Allie nods. She stands back, unbuttoning her dress until it drops to the floor. Noah pulls his shirt off and Allie kneels before him, undoing his belt and taking off his pants. Then she unfastens her bra and lets it drop. He takes her in his arms and lowers her slowly to the floor, kissing her neck, her shoulders, her chest. Allie suddenly gets very talkative.

ALLIE
Noah. Noah?

Noah looks at her.

ALLIE

I know I said to make love to me but I think you're going to have to talk me through this.

NOAH

What's going on?

ALLIE

A lot of thoughts. I'm having a lot of thoughts right now. Never mind.

She pulls him in, starts kissing him again, but after a few moments, her eyes pop open.

ALLIE

Like, what are you thinking right now? Right this second.

Noah tries to talk, but he's breathing pretty hard.

NOAH

Uh...

ALLIE

Did you know when you brought me here that this would happen?

NOAH

No.

ALLIE

No? Did you ever even think about this moment?

NOAH

Of course.

ALLIE

You did? What did you think?

NOAH

Allie...

He puts a finger to his lips.

ALLIE

Talking too much? Got it. Sorry. Shutting up. Mum's the word.

The lovemaking continues. The rest of the clothes come off and they are now both completely naked. Finally, Noah is on top of her and the moment of truth is at hand. But Allie is a bundle of nerves.

ALLIE

I don't understand how come you're so quiet. You don't have any thoughts at all? I'm going crazy over here, but no, with you, everything's fine, not a care in the world.

Noah sits up.

ALLIE

Oh, I'm spoiling it, aren't I? I wanted this to be so perfect, and I can't shut up.

NOAH

Hey. Be yourself. It is perfect. I love you.

ALLIE

You do?

Allie looks at Noah and becomes emotional. Her breath comes in heaves.

ALLIE

I love you, too.

Noah strokes her hair.

NOAH

Take it easy. Breathe slow, okay? We don't have to...

ALLIE

No. I want to do this. I really do.

Noah looks at her.

NOAH

Sure?

ALLIE

Yeah.

She puts her arms around him and they melt into one another. Allie kisses Noah with great passion, their heat taking over. Allie forgets her fear and closes her eyes. When she opens them, Noah is over her. He nods at Allie, asking permission to enter her. Allie studies Noah's eyes, then nods back.

Suddenly, there is the sound of a car arriving outside, its headlights flooding the room. Noah and Allie freeze.

FIN O.S.

Noah? Noah?

46 CONTINUED: (4)

The front door opens and Fin enters. Noah and Allie try to cover themselves.

NOAH
Jeez, Fin.

FIN
Sorry.

NOAH
What in the hell are you doing here?

FIN
It's Allie's parents. They're going crazy. They've got every cop in town out looking for her.

47 EXT. HAMILTON PLANTATION - NIGHT

47

Frank's car races into the driveway and Allie jumps out, stomping into the house. Noah waits outside.

ALLIE O.S.
You sent the police out for me?

48 INT. HAMILTON PLANTATION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

48

Allie stands in front of her mother.

ALLIE
You sent the goddamn police?

ANNE
Yes. It's two in the morning. We were worried. We sent the police.

John enters, throws his arms around his daughter.

JOHN
Thank God, you're alright. Where have you been?

ANNE
Come on, John. She was with that boy.

JOHN
Is that true?

ALLIE
Yes, Daddy.

ANNE
'Yes, Daddy. Yes, Daddy.' You think you're going to bat your eyelashes at your father and get away with it? Not this time. There's going to start being some rules around here...

ALLIE

Like what?

ANNE

...And if your father won't enforce them, I will.

ALLIE

Like what, Mother?

ANNE

One. You're going to stop seeing Noah. I didn't spend seventeen years raising a daughter, giving her everything, so she could throw it away on a summer romance.

ALLIE

Dad!

ANNE

You'll wind up with your heart broken or pregnant.

JOHN

Anne!

ANNE

He's a nice boy, but he's...

ALLIE

He's what?

~~ANNE~~~~Low class. Not for you.~~

ALLIE

Low class?

49 EXT. HAMILTON PLANTATION - NIGHT

49

Noah sits on the grass, his head tilted up at the stars, the words hitting him like bricks.

ANNE O.S.

He's a laborer, sweetheart.

ALLIE O.S.

Don't you ever call him low class. He may not have any money, but he's got more class than you and you and all of your stupid society friends put together!

ANNE O.S.

So, what are you going to do, move down here to hick town, live in his father's white trash house, and pop out a few dirty kids? Is that your plan?

ALLIE O.S.

I wouldn't mind.

ANNE O.S.

(to John)

You see what I'm dealing with? Alright, that's enough. You're not to see him anymore and that's final.

ALLIE

It's not final for me. You can tell me how I have to dress, and what schools and social events I have to attend.

(shouting, near tears)

But you're not going to tell me who I have to love!

JOHN

Love?

Allie moves to her father, pleading.

~~ALLIE~~

~~I love him, Daddy~~

~~JOHN~~

~~He's not suitable for you, baby.~~

ALLIE

~~I know. He's not what you want for me. He doesn't fit. He doesn't have any money or status, but I don't care. Because he has a soul. And I love him from the tips of my toes with everything I have. He makes me prickle.~~

JOHN

I don't like the sound of that. Prickle?

ALLIE

Yes. Tingly all over. Something she wouldn't know anything about.

ANNE

Yes, yes. It's all very emotional. Puppy love and star crossed lovers.

(MORE)

50 CONTINUED:

ANNE (CONT'D)

You're seventeen years old. You don't know anything about love.

ALLIE

Oh, and you do?

ANNE

What is that supposed to mean?

ALLIE

You don't look at Dad the way I look at Noah. You don't touch or play or laugh. You're the one who doesn't know anything about love!

Allie, near tears, runs out of the house.

JOHN

Allie.

ALLIE

Leave me alone.

51 EXT. HAMILTON PLANTATION - NIGHT

51

When Allie walks outside, Noah is still looking at the stars.

ALLIE

You heard everything, didn't you?

Noah nods.

ALLIE

I'm sorry. They're crazy. Really crazy. My mother's crazy. My father's crazy. Having their chromosomes, it's a wonder I'm not some kind of twisted psychotic killer.

NOAH

Allie, they're not crazy. They're right. And you shouldn't talk to them like that. I don't have a mother, but if I did, I would never speak to her the way you did.

ALLIE

I was sticking up for you. What are you talking about?

NOAH

It's not going to work out, Allie.

ALLIE

What isn't?

NOAH

You and me.

ALLIE

You're kidding, right? Of course, it will.

NOAH

No. You're seventeen years old. You've got a million things to do. You've got school and a big future ahead of you. I'd just be getting in the way.

ALLIE

No.

NOAH

Yes, I would. We're different, Allie. All my dreams are here. What am I supposed to do, follow you to New York? Sneak around, spend time with you on weekends? Hope no one sees us and tells your parents?

ALLIE

I don't have to go to school.
(desperate)
We could go away. Just start running and not look back. Couldn't we?

Noah takes his time, measuring his words.

NOAH

I know we love each other, but your parents are right. It's not enough.

ALLIE

I see.

Allie bites her mouth and the first tear rolls down her face.

ALLIE

You breaking up with me, Noah?

NOAH

Yeah. I guess I am.

Allie takes it in, thinks about it, starts to get mad.

ALLIE

You're breaking up with me because of my parents?!

NOAH

I can't fight them, Allie.

ALLIE

Why not? I'll show you how. I'm an expert.

Noah looks at her and almost smiles.

NOAH

Allie Hamilton. You've got that big brain going all the time, racing, racing. But you can't think your way out of this one.

ALLIE

I don't...

Noah says the words he doesn't mean.

NOAH

Let's just finish the summer and say goodbye.

ALLIE

Don't do this, Noah.

Allie puts two fingers together.

ALLIE

We're like this, remember? Right? This isn't a summer thing. Not for me, anyway.

Noah looks at her, his heart tearing apart. Finally, she snaps.

ALLIE

Oh, hell. Why wait until summer ends? Why not do it right now? Go ahead. No, I'll do it. It's over between us. You hear me, Noah Calhoun? Over.

NOAH

Allie...

ALLIE

Don't touch me. I hate you, you know that? I hate you!

Now it's Noah's turn to be emotional. He turns to leave.

NOAH

I'm going to go.

ALLIE

Yeah, why don't you? Just leave. Get out. Go.

Noah walks away from the house, disappearing into the moonlight. Allie calls out after him.

ALLIE

Wait a minute, Noah. We're not really breaking up forever, right?

(MORE)

51 CONTINUED: (3)

ALLIE (CONT'D)

This is just a thing we're having, a difference of opinion, and tomorrow it'll be like it never happened, right? Because it still was kind of a special night for me...

She starts to finish her thought, but Noah is gone.

52 EXT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - DAY

52

Duke is taking Old Allie for a walk around the grounds.

OLD ALLIE

Gone?

DUKE

Gone.

OLD ALLIE

Oh, she must have been devastated.

DUKE

She was.

OLD ALLIE

And he was just trying to do the right thing.

DUKE

Yeah.

OLD ALLIE

But what he really should have done is tell the parents to go to hell. To stick it where the sun don't shine.

DUKE

Yes, you're right. He probably should have.

They come across a bench that overlooks the river and sit. Old Allie makes a face, and Duke starts reading again.

DUKE

The next day, Allie woke up to find her world completely changed...

53 INT. HAMILTON PLANTATION - ALLIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

53

Allie lies asleep in a canopy bed, white linen with tiny rosebuds. There are loud sounds and voices coming from outside her open window. She gets up, moves to the window, and looks out.

ALLIE'S POV. A large wood-sided station wagon is outside. TWO BLACK MEN are loading suitcases into the car and tying a trunk to its roof.

54 INT. HAMILTON PLANTATION - FRONT HALL - DAY 54

Allie comes flying down the stairs in her nightgown.

55 INT. HAMILTON PLANTATION - DINING ROOM - DAY 55

Allie bursts into the dining room. She finds her mother at the formal table, drinking a cup of coffee. BETTY, a black woman in her fifties, is clearing dishes.

ALLIE

What's going on?

ANNE

We're going home.

Betty senses a conflict coming and makes a hasty exit.

ALLIE

We're going now? We're not supposed to be leaving for another week.

ANNE

Get dressed. Then have some breakfast, dear. Betty will pack your things.

ALLIE

I don't want Betty to pack my things. I don't want to pack my things, period. I'm not going. Where's Daddy?

ANNE

Your father left for Raleigh an hour ago. Aaron is driving us back to Charlotte.

ALLIE

Well, I'm not going.

Anne looks up at Allie, all business.

ANNE

No, Allie, you are going. Whether you like it or not.

Allie looks at her mother, panicked, then races from the room. Anne calls after her.

ANNE

I want you ready to leave in half an hour, Allie.

56 EXT. NEW BERN ROAD - DAY 56

Allie running down the dirt road.

57 EXT. LUMBERYARD - DAY

57

Fin is loading bricks, when he looks up and sees an out of breath Allie run into the yard, her face smudged with tears.

ALLIE
Where's Noah?

FIN
Out delivering a load with his dad.
What's going on?

Suddenly, a station wagon, luggage piled two feet high on the roof, pulls up outside the entrance to the lumber yard. Allie turns to Fin, desperate.

ALLIE
Look, Fin, I have to leave.
Something's come up. Can you give him
a message for me? Can you tell him I
love him? Tell him I'm sorry, that
I'll write.

FIN
I was up all night with him, Allie.
I've never seen him so low. It's
over. Don't make it any harder than
it already is.

ALLIE
No. It's not over. We had a fight
last night and said some things I
don't think either of us really meant.
But it's not over.

FIN
Don't write him, Allie. Leave it
alone. Let it go.

Allie doesn't know what to do. Tears flood her eyes. The car horn sounds.

ALLIE
I'm coming. I'm coming.

FIN
Look, he understands. It's hard, but
he really does. Summer's over. Time
to go home. If he wants to talk to
you, he'll write. If not...

The station wagon has pulled through the gate and is now right next to them. Aaron opens the door for Allie.

ALLIE
Okay. Bye, Fin.

57 CONTINUED:

She kisses Fin goodbye.

ALLIE
Tell him I love him, will you?

FIN
I'll tell him.

Fin watches Allie get into the car and drive away.

58 INT. HAMILTON STATION WAGON - NEW BERN - DAY 58

Allie, tears flooding her eyes, looks out the window as the car drives out of town.

59 EXT. LUMBERYARD - DAY 59

A flatbed truck turns into the lumberyard. Noah hops off the back and Fin runs over to him.

We don't hear what's being said, but we can tell from Noah's reaction that Fin has told him that Allie has gone. Noah jumps in the truck and races out of the yard, dust flying from the spinning tires.

60 EXT. HAMILTON PLANTATION - NEW BERN - DAY 60

The truck comes roaring up the driveway and jerks to a halt in front of the house. Noah gets out, stunned by what he sees. The house has been boarded shut.

61 EXT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - RIVERBANK - DAY 61

Old Allie, stares into space, lost in thought. Duke keeps reading.

DUKE
Summer romances end for all kinds of reasons, but, when all is said and done, they have one thing in common: they are shooting stars, a spectacular moment of light in the heavens, a fleeting glimpse of eternity, and in a flash, they're gone.

62 EXT. CALHOUN HOUSE - PORCH - DAY 62

Noah is busy writing a letter. Frank is chopping wood. And everywhere, the leaves are falling, red, purple, and gold.

DUKE V.O.
Noah was desperate. He wrote to Allie that he was sorry, and stupid for breaking up with her. He wrote to her to tell her that he still loved her and wanted to see her.

(MORE)

62 CONTINUED:

62

DUKE V.O. (CONT'D)

And that if she would write back, he would come to wherever she was.

63 EXT. CALHOUN HOUSE - PORCH - DAY

63

The leaves are off the trees, and Noah writes another letter. It's cold. He wears a coat, and his breath is like steam. Inside the house, a Christmas tree and lights.

DUKE V.O.

He wrote one letter a day for a year. Three hundred and sixty five letters, but they all went unanswered.

64 EXT. CALHOUN HOUSE - PORCH - DAY

64

Noah runs outside to greet the POSTMAN. It's pouring rain. Noah asks if there is any mail for him, but the postman shakes his head, no.

DUKE V.O.

And finally, after a year of silence, he decided to put it all behind him and start a new life.

65 EXT. NEW BERN - STREETS - DAY

65

It's hot. The trees and flowers are in full bloom. Noah stops at a post box, drops in the last letter.

DUKE V.O.

So, he wrote a farewell letter, and he and Fin packed their bags and headed for Atlanta.

66 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - ATLANTA - DAY

66

SUPERIMPOSE: ATLANTA, 1941

Noah and Fin, high above the city, work construction from steel girders. From below, there is a commotion and a crowd. The other employees shout and wave at them, and Noah and Fin take the little elevator down. On the ground, everyone listens to a radio. F.D.R. has declared war on Germany.

67 INT. RECRUITMENT OFFICE - DAY

67

Noah and Fin join up.

DUKE V.O.

Noah and Fin enlisted together, and after three years of tramping through jungles in the Pacific...

68 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

68

SUPERIMPOSE: BASTOGNE, 1944

DUKE V.O.

...They were re-deployed to Patton's
Third Army in Europe.

Noah and Fin march with Third Battalion across the snowy Belgian plains. Allied tanks roll with them. Suddenly, German warplanes fly overhead. First Battalion is under fire, and soon explosions cover the land. Fin is sent flying. Noah runs over to his fallen friend. Fin's eyes are open, empty.

69 INT. SARAH LAWRENCE COLLEGE - DAY

69

Allie walks through the hallway of the all girls school, carrying armloads of books.

70 INT. SARAH LAWRENCE COLLEGE - CLASSROOM - DAY

70

Allie listens to the PROFESSOR, who writes, "Leaves of Grass - Walt Whitman" on the blackboard. Allie blinks.

DUKE V.O.

Allie was in her third year of college
when she volunteered as a gray lady.

71 INT. ARMY HOSPITAL - DAY

71

Allie moves from bed to bed, tending to the injured. The scene is grotesque. Soldiers with missing limbs. Faces burned beyond recognition. Men in great pain. But Allie moves with purpose.

DUKE V.O.

To her, the broken men with shattered
bodies who filled the ward were all
Noah or someone who fought beside him
in the jungle or a frozen snowswept
road.

Allie moves to LON, 30, a heavily bandaged soldier, lifts him into a sitting position, and starts taking his blood pressure.

LON

Miss?

ALLIE

Be still, please.

She notates the blood pressure numbers.

LON

I want to ask you a question.

ALLIE

Yes?

71 CONTINUED:

LON

I noticed you weren't wearing a ring.
And I was wondering if I could take
you out?

ALLIE

Excuse me?

LON

Out.

ALLIE

Out?

LON

On a date.

Allie can't believe what she's hearing. She's up to her elbows
in sickness and death, and she's being asked out by a mummy.

LON

Now, before you say no, I'll have you
know that I'm an excellent dancer, and
my intentions are completely
dishonorable. And...

Lon breaks into a coughing fit, hacking uncontrollably. She lays
him back down.

ALLIE

Okay, Casanova. Let's get you better,
then we'll see about a date.

Allie shakes her head as she walks away.

72 EXT. SARAH LAWRENCE COLLEGE - DAY

72

Allie and her college friends, ELLEN, SUSAN, and LAURA, exit the
ivy covered Tudor building. As they reach the street, they
notice an extremely good looking soldier, dressed in full
uniform, standing next to a convertible Packard.

ELLEN

Would you get a load of him?

SUSAN

Jeez, Louise. He's dreamy.

LAURA

What's he doing here?

The girls shoot the soldier coy smiles as they pass.

SOLDIER

Miss?

72 . CONTINUED:

72

All the girls turn around, but he's speaking to Allie. She recognizes him now. It's Lon.

LON

I'm all better. Are you ready to go out on that date?

HOLD ON Allie's face.

DUKE V.O.

Allie was surprised how quickly she fell in love with Lon Hammond.

73 INT. SUPPER CLUB - NIGHT

73

Lon and Allie dancing. Lon wasn't lying. He really can cut a rug.

DUKE V.O.

He was handsome...

74 EXT. RACE TRACK - DAY

74

Allie and Lon at the horse races. They cheer. Their horse wins.

DUKE V.O.

...sophisticated...

75 EXT. HAMPTONS - DAY

75

Allie and Lon on a sailboat.

DUKE V.O.

...and charming. He also came from old southern money, and was fabulously wealthy.

76 INT. CHARLOTTE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

76

A bottle of champagne pops. Lon is animatedly telling a story. Allie, Anne, and John are laughing so hard, it hurts.

LON

You know, I've been thinking a lot about why we shouldn't get married.

Allie giggles. She's a little bit tipsy.

ALLIE

Okay. I give up. Why shouldn't we get married?

LON

That's the thing. At first, I couldn't think of any reasons. But then it dawned on me.

(MORE)

76 . CONTINUED:

LON (CONT'D)

The one dark secret that will absolutely be the wedge that keeps us apart. Your parents.

ALLIE

My parents?

LON

Yes. Dear old Mom and Dad. You see, here's the problem. They love me. I am exactly the type of man your parents want you to marry. From the south, have a good job...

ALLIE

Don't forget you're a snappy dresser.

LON

And an absolutely wonderful dancer, if I do say so myself.

ALLIE

Modest, too. So what's the problem?

LON

Just this. If you marry me, your parents will be ecstatic, and you will have lost a lifelong battle of defiance against them.

ALLIE

Too perfect for me? You're right, can't have that. And I promised myself I would never end up with anyone my parents would approve of. Especially if I love him.

LON

See what I'm saying?

ALLIE

Oh, my goodness. What do we do?

LON

I think you have to marry me. Because if you do, your parents will always know the unhappiness you feel for not being able to disappoint them.

ALLIE

I think I see.

LON

Imagine the guilt they would feel for not allowing you to choose your husband unwisely. They'd be racked with guilt. They'd be miserable. So even though you've technically lost, you've really won.

ALLIE

Hmmm. That's a very interesting point, Lon, but I think you've overlooked one minor detail. You have to get their permission first, and I think you may have overestimated their affection for you.

LON

I don't think so.

ALLIE

Why not?

LON

Because I've already asked them and they said, yes.

ALLIE

What?

She looks over to her parents, who nod. Anne squeezes her daughter's hand. Lon drops to a knee.

LON

One more thing, I love you.

Lon pulls out a ring. It's gigantic.

LON

Will you marry me, Allie? I know I kid around a lot, but I'm crazy about you. Marry me, and make me the happiest man in the world.

Allie takes a moment to decide before breaking into a big smile.

ALLIE

Yes, Lon. You bet, I will.

He slips the ring onto her finger and kisses her, before standing up and announcing the news to the whole room.

LON

Excuse me, I would like everyone to know that this young lady and I are getting married!

The restaurant erupts in cheers and the band plays. Lon smiles at her. HOLD ON Allie's face.

DUKE V.O.

She agreed with all her heart, but couldn't understand why, at the very moment she said "yes," Noah's face came to her mind.

77 EXT. NEW BERN - STREETS - DAY 77

Noah's face, solemn, in the back of a taxi. He is back from the war, wearing his uniform. He passes under a banner strung across the road. It reads, "Welcome Home, Boys!"

78 EXT. TUFFINGTON PLANTATION - DAY 78

The taxi pulls up to Sara's house. Noah gets out, walks to the front door, and rings the bell. Sara appears behind the screen door, seeing Noah in his uniform.

DUKE V.O.

Noah had no answer for why he survived and so many others did not. Although once, while hiding in a foxhole near the Rhine, he imagined he saw Allie watching over him.

Sara gets the news and collapses into Noah's chest. He sits her on the porch swing, and together, they rock gently back and forth.

79 EXT. CALHOUN HOUSE - DAY 79

Noah walks up the dirt road, suitcase in hand. Frank runs down to greet his son returning from war. He hugs Noah tight and doesn't let go.

FRANK

Good to see you, son. You okay?

NOAH

Hi, Dad. Yeah.

Frank takes his son's suitcase and leads him by the arm.

FRANK

Come on in. Come on in. There's something I want to show you.

80 INT. CALHOUN HOUSE - DAY 80

Frank's house is starting to be packed up into boxes. Frank runs over and hands Noah a check. Frank is excited.

NOAH

What's this?

FRANK

I sold the house.

NOAH

Sold?

FRANK

Yep. Got to be out by the end of the month. Don't you understand? With this, and your G.I. Bill, you're going to get it.

NOAH

Get what?

FRANK

Your dream house. The Windsor Plantation.

NOAH

Dad...

FRANK

Don't "Dad" me. I don't want to hear about it. I've already talked to the bank. It's all set. They're going to give you the loan.

Noah doesn't know what to say.

NOAH

I don't know.

FRANK

Do it, Son. Dreams are good. They're important.

Noah takes a long time before taking the check. He throws his arms around his dad.

NOAH

Thanks, Dad. But, wait a minute. If you sell the house, where are you going to live?

FRANK

With you, dummy. Somebody's got to help you fix it up.

81 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - DAY

81

Frank's old pick-up coughs smoke as it pulls up to the decaying structure. Noah and Frank share a look as they take it all in.

FRANK

Lot of damn work.

HOLD ON Noah's face.

DUKE V.O.

Noah took a look at the house but only saw one thing. Allie.

82 EXT. NEW BERN GENERAL STORE - DAY 82

Noah walks out, bags of supplies in his arms. He passes all the old haunts, the malt shop, the movie theater.

DUKE V.O.

He was home. And no matter where he went, or what he did...

83 INT. FRANK'S TRUCK - DAY 83

The carnival is back in town. Noah looks out the window, sees the Ferris wheel turning.

DUKE V.O.

...He was surrounded with memories of her...

84 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - DAY 84

The front of the house has been ripped down, and a new structure is being put in place. Noah is daydreaming, looking down at the river.

DUKE V.O.

...She consumed his thoughts...

Frank has prepared a giant wood support beam.

FRANK

You want to give me a hand? It's your damn house, you know.

85 EXT. BUS STATION - TICKET BOOTH - DAY 85

DUKE V.O.

He decided that wherever she was, he would find her and tell her he couldn't live without her.

Noah steps up to the window.

NOAH

Round trip to Charlotte, please.

86 INT. BUS - DAY 86

Noah stares out the window. He takes out his wallet and looks at an old address and a picture of he and Allie. Better days.

87 EXT. ROAD TO CHARLOTTE - DAY 87

The bus moves down the long empty highway, climbing the gentle grade, cotton fields on both sides.

86 INT. BUS - DAY

88

The bus enters the busy downtown section of Charlotte. People everywhere. Noah stares out the window, watching the people on the street. Suddenly, Noah sees a WOMAN wearing a yellow dress. While it's difficult to make her out clearly, it looks like Allie.

Noah presses up against the glass, trying to get a better look. Her face is blocked, but he's sure it's her. He jumps up and races to the front of the bus.

NOAH
(to the driver)
Let me off.

DRIVER
Sorry, Mack. Can't stop the bus until we get to the depot.

NOAH
No, no. It's an emergency. Open the door. I have to get off here.

DRIVER
You understand English, pal? Nobody gets off until we get to the depot. Now sit down.

Noah grabs the long door handle and yanks it open.

DRIVER
Hey!

The driver slams on the brake, and Noah jumps out of the bus.

89 EXT. CHARLOTTE DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

89

Noah races in front of the bus and across traffic. Cars slam on their brakes, narrowly missing him.

The woman in the yellow dress turns the corner at the end of the block. Noah races ahead, pushing through pedestrians, until he comes to the corner and turns it. Halfway down the street, the woman in the yellow dress enters a restaurant.

90 INT. CHARLOTTE RESTAURANT - DAY

90

Noah watches, as inside the restaurant, a MAN is waiting for the woman. She kisses him deeply, and for the first time, we see her face clearly. It is Allie, and the man she is kissing is Lon.

Noah is stunned. He watches as the couple is led to a table. Through the window, Allie and Lon sit laughing, talking, flirting. Allie has the biggest smile on her face.

91 EXT. CHARLOTTE RESTAURANT - DAY 91

Noah stands there, frozen, taking it all in.

92 INT. CHARLOTTE RESTAURANT - DAY 92

In the middle of Lon's story, Allie gets a strange feeling, a sense of something familiar. She turns towards the window, where Noah should be, but he's gone.

93 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - DAY 93

It's raining cats and dogs, but a bare-chested Noah, is on the roof using a crowbar to rip off the shingles.

DUKE V.O.

After seeing Allie that day, something inside Noah snapped. He turned all his energies towards the house, completely throwing himself into his work.

94 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - DAY 94

Noah is working like a madman, laying cement for the house's foundation.

DUKE V.O.

He became obsessed.

95 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - DAY 95

Noah is up on the second floor, furiously banging nails into the support structure.

DUKE V.O.

Some called it a labor of love, others called it something else...

96 EXT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - RIVERBANK - DAY 96

DUKE

...But in fact, Noah had gone a little mad.

Old Allie and Duke sit on the bench overlooking the pond. Duke continues to read.

DUKE

He got the notion into his head that if he restored the old house where they had come that night, Allie would find a way to come back to him.

A voice interrupts Duke.

NURSE ESTHER

Excuse me. Time to eat. We're serving lunch in the sunroom today.

97 INT./EXT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - SUNROOM - DAY

97

A table is spread with fruit and salads, sandwiches, juices, and tea. Duke is fixing a plate for Allie, finger sandwiches and melon slices. Esther stands beside him.

NURSE ESTHER

There's a new couple, I'd like you to meet when you have a chance.

Nurse Esther indicates an elderly man and woman across the room.

NURSE ESTHER

Interesting story. Childhood sweethearts. Madly in love, but for some reason, she goes and marries someone else. He waits fifty years for her while she raises a family. Finally, the husband dies. The kids put her in a home, so he follows her here, and starts to court her all over again.

DUKE

Patient man.

NURSE ESTHER

Yes.

DUKE

Look, I'm not courting Allie, I'm reading to her.

NURSE ESTHER

Sure. How's she doing today?

DUKE

She's fine.

Duke moves to a table where Old Allie sits gazing at the lawn. He sets her food in front of her, but she barely looks at it.

DUKE

Melon's good. I had a bite.

OLD ALLIE

Did they ever see each other again, Noah and Allie?

DUKE

Now, you don't want me to spoil the end of the story before I get to all the good parts, do you?

97 CONTINUED:

97

OLD ALLIE

Good parts? Hmmp. Okay, I suppose you're right. It's a very sexy story, you know. You're not trying to seduce me, are you? Because if you are, boy are you barking up the wrong tree.

Duke laughs. Then he looks at Allie's untouched plate of food.

DUKE

Tell you what I'll do. You eat some food, and I'll keep reading.

OLD ALLIE

Okay, but just know I'm on to you.

Duke smiles and opens the notebook. As he puts on his eyeglasses, Old Allie cuts a small slice of melon and eats it.

98 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - NIGHT

98

Noah is on a ladder, painting the white clapboards. He's got lights set up so he can paint at night. A voice below him causes him to look down. It's Frank.

FRANK

Getting late. Cold.

NOAH

I've got to finish.

Frank admires his son's work.

FRANK

Nice job. Though I'm not sure I'd paint it white.

NOAH

Oh, yeah? What color would you paint it, Dad?

FRANK

Black. That's the color of mourning, isn't it?

Noah laughs as he climbs down the ladder to grab some paint.

NOAH

Yeah, I suppose it is.

As Noah descends, Frank breaks up in an ugly coughing spell.

NOAH

You okay?

FRANK

Never better.

98 CONTINUED:

Frank hands Noah the paint bucket.

FRANK

I'm worried about you, son. You know I'm not one to give a lot of advice, but you're letting this young lady take over your life. It's not right to be so crazy over a house. Working day and night, never eating or sleeping, never having a moment to enjoy yourself. It's not going to bring her back.

NOAH

No?

FRANK

No. If building a house could restore a lost love, your mother'd be here, and we'd all be living in the Taj Mahal. Understand?

NOAH

Sure, Dad. I understand.

FRANK

Now, I'm going to grab a beer and sit down by the fire. I'm freezing my tail off out here. You going to come?

NOAH

No, Dad. I've got to finish.

FRANK

Okay, then. I'll go back inside and talk to your mother. She's a good listener, you know.

Frank heads for the house. Noah watches his father climb the steps and disappear inside.

PASTOR V.O.

Ashes to ashes...

99 EXT. CLARK RIVER CEMETARY - DAY

99

PASTOR

...Dust to dust...

The PASTOR delivers a simple eulogy to a very small crowd.

DUKE V.O.

When Noah's father died at the end of the summer, the house was all he had.

99 CONTINUED:

Elgin pats Noah on the back and sets a small bunch of flowers on the grave. Noah looks at the side-by-side tombstones for his mother and father through dark sunglasses. Together at last.

100 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - DAY - SERIES OF SHOTS 100

WE SEE various scenes of the house coming together.

DUKE V.O.

In time, Noah finished the house.

101 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - BARN - DAY 101

Noah is making furniture, beautiful furniture. Each piece made especially for its place in the house.

DUKE V.O.

He took a good look at what he'd accomplished, got rip-roaring drunk for ten days, thought seriously about setting it on fire, and finally, put the house up for sale.

102 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - DAY 102

Noah chases a perspective buyer off his land.

DUKE V.O.

He had a number of interested buyers, but he always found a reason not to sell it to them. Either their bids were too low, or, if they met his asking price, he felt it was worth a lot more.

103 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - DAY 103

Noah walks through the house. Each room is truly splendid.

DUKE V.O.

He told the man who offered him \$2,000 over his price that no one in his right mind would do that, and he wouldn't have a lunatic living in his house.

As he moves outside and heads for the water, WE SEE the finished house for the first time. It's perfect.

104 EXT. COMBAHEE RIVER - DAY 104

Early morning. Noah is out in his kayak, rowing. The workout is intense, but Noah is driven, each stroke knifing into the water with precision.

104. CONTINUED:

DUKE V.O.

He worked out his frustration with life on the creek every morning, and built furniture to earn a living during the day.

105 INT. MARTHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

105

DUKE V.O.

And in the evenings, to temper the sting of loneliness, there was Martha Shaw.

MARTHA SHAW, mid 30s, very southern, and Noah lay in bed, post coitus. She plays with the hairs on his chest.

DUKE V.O.

Martha was a war widow, who lived in Quail Ridge, a town away.

MARTHA

Hungry? I could make you something.

NOAH

No, thanks.

MARTHA

I've got some lemonade.

NOAH

Okay.

She gets out of bed and goes to the kitchen.

MARTHA O.S.

Want to have a picnic tomorrow? We could go down to the river.

NOAH

I can't. I've got to work.

Martha returns with the lemonade and Noah drinks.

MARTHA

What do you want, Noah?

NOAH

What do I want?

MARTHA

From me. I swear, I don't know. Sometimes when you talk to me, you don't even see me. A woman knows when a man looks into her eyes and sees someone else.

105 . CONTINUED:

NOAH

Look, Martha, I like you. But the things you want from me, I can't give. They're gone. Broken. Reserved for someone else who doesn't want me.

106 INT. DRESSMAKER'S SHOP - DAY

106

Anne stands with AUNT KITTY, AUNT GEORGIA, AUNT JEANETTE, and Allie's bridesmaids, LINDA JEAN, HEATHER LYNN, and ROSEMARY. They are having a discussion with JAMES, the dressmaker.

AUNT KITTY

You can't have the bridesmaids wearing the same color as the bride, Annie.

AUNT GEORGIA

It's just not done.

ANNE

Why not? Where's the rule? I want the whole wedding to be white. Flowers, place settings, everything. As far as the eye can see.

JAMES

May I suggest the lightest of pink?

He shows her a swatch of chiffon.

JAMES

Powder puff. White in the sun, but inside? Definitely pink.

Allie exits from the dressing room wearing her wedding dress. It needs to be pinned, but she is absolutely stunning. Anne's eyes fill with tears and the women scream with approval.

ALLIE

Is the veil too much?

The ladies rush her.

LINDA JEAN

Are you kidding? You look perfect. You're the most beautiful bride ever.

AUNT JEANETTE

You look gorgeous, honey.

AUNT GEORGIA

Wait until Lon sees you in that dress. He'll go crazy.

HEATHER LYNN

He won't be able to take his eyes off you. Or his hands.

AUNT KITTY

Did you see this morning's paper, Allie? The Herald says it's the social highlight of the season.

ANNE

Of the season? Honey, this is going to be a celebration the likes of which this town has never seen.

ALLIE

Mama, you don't plan, you plot.

Aunt Kitty hands the newspaper to Allie.

AUNT KITTY

Right here, you see?

ALLIE

Gosh. It mentions that the Governor's coming.

ANNE

He better. Let me see.

As Allie opens the paper, she freezes. On the opposite page is a large photograph of Noah standing in front of the Windsor Plantation. The caption reads: OLD NEW BERN HOME FULLY RESTORED.

ANNE

Oh, boy.

Allie stares at the picture, loses her breath. Her eyes roll upwards and she slides onto the floor, out cold. The girls flock around her, asking if she's alright. James gets a cold compress for her head, and Allie comes to.

ALLIE

I'm okay. I just need to get out of here.

107 INT. HAMILTON HOUSE - ALLIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

107

Allie sits in a large cast-iron tub, the wedding veil still pinned to her hair. Steam pours from the hot water in which she sits, staring into space. Propped on a chair beside the tub is the newspaper with Noah's photo. Anne knocks on the door.

ANNE O.S.

Are you alright, honey?

ALLIE

Yeah, yeah. I'm fine.

She slowly slides down the tub until her face is completely under the water, the thin veil floating above her.

108 INT. HAMMOND COTTON INDUSTRIES - DAY 108

Allie enters the large columned building and approaches the RECEPTIONIST, who sits behind a mahogany desk. Allie looks extremely nervous.

ALLIE

I'm here to see Mr. Hammond.

109 INT. LON'S OFFICE - DAY 109

Lon, three piece suit and slicked hair, greets Allie at the door.

LON

I didn't know you were coming.

ALLIE

I should have called. I'm sorry, but I needed to talk.

LON

You don't have to call. Sit down. You want a drink?

She shakes her head.

LON

What's up?

ALLIE

I don't paint anymore.

LON

What?

ALLIE

I used to paint all the time. I loved it.

LON

I didn't know that.

ALLIE

Yeah.

LON

So, paint.

ALLIE

I will. I'm going to start.

LON

Is everything okay?

ALLIE

I need to get away, Lon.

109. CONTINUED:

Lon looks relieved.

LON
Okay, you're on. Where are we going?
Some place hot. And with sand, I
hope.

ALLIE
No, Lon. I've got to go by myself.

LON
Okay.

ALLIE
I just need to take care of a few
things. Clear my head.

LON
Secrets?

Allie doesn't say anything.

LON
Should I be worried?

ALLIE
I don't think so.

LON
Well, that's reassuring.

Lon moves to her, kisses her.

LON
Are you okay?

ALLIE
Yeah.

LON
Okay, then go. Take your time. Do
whatever you need to do. Look, it's
okay to be nervous. It's normal to
get cold feet before your wedding.

ALLIE
No second thoughts, Lon. I love you.
I want you to know that. And we're
going to be married. I'll be back
from New Bern in a couple of days, and
everything will be fine, okay?

LON
New Bern?

ALLIE
Yeah, New Bern.

110 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY 110

The sun hangs just over the trees, as Allie's car drives down a country road under a canopy of Spanish moss. The car passes a sign reading: NEW BERN, POP. 2704.

111 INT. ALLIE'S CAR - DAY 111

Allie passes by the general store and the malt shop. She turns her head as she passes the movie theater.

ALLIE

My God, it hasn't changed at all.

Allie lets out a sigh as her car pulls up to a small white clapboard building with a sign reading: NEW BERN INN.

112 INT. NEW BERN INN - ALLIE'S ROOM - DAY 112

Allie stands in front of a mirror putting on mascara and mumbling to herself.

ALLIE

Worst idea. Just asking for trouble.

She puts on a dress. Doesn't like it, throws it on the bed. Tries another. No good. Puts on a third. Poses for the mirror and then catches herself.

ALLIE

What am I doing?!

113 EXT. NEW BERN INN - DAY 113

Allie walks to her car, gets in, sees herself in the rearview mirror. She tries to put on lipstick, looks down at her trembling hands, lets out a deep sigh, starts the car, and drives off.

114 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - NOAH'S WORKSHOP - DAY 114

A red Crosley radio is playing, the yellow light from its half-moon dial shining in the shadows. Noah, in jeans and T-shirt, is working on one of many pieces of furniture in various stages of construction. The sound of a car approaching causes him to stop. Noah shuts off the radio, wipes his hands on his jeans, and walks into the sunlight.

115 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - DAY 115

Noah watches Allie's car get closer and closer. At first, he doesn't know who it is, but, as it gets nearer, he senses something that makes his heart beat faster.

Allie stops the car, turns it off, and then slowly gets out. She freezes at the sight of the house. Pristine. White with blue shutters and a wraparound porch.

ALLIE

Hello, Noah.

NOAH

Hello, Allie.

ALLIE

I saw your picture in the paper. The picture of you and the house. It's beautiful. It really is. And I just thought I'd stop by to make sure you were okay.

Noah looks at Allie and says nothing.

ALLIE

Are you okay?

NOAH

Am I okay? Seven years ago you walked out of my life without so much as a goodbye, and I never heard from you again. You want to know how I'm doing? I fought in the war. Fin's dead. That's how I'm doing. My dad sold his house and we sunk every penny both of us ever had into buying this place and fixing it up, and we did. We built this place with our bare hands. Me, hoping in some crazy way that it would bring you back, but it didn't. And, now Dad's dead, too. That's how I'm doing. And still, even now, after all this time, when I hear a car pull up the driveway, or somebody says my name, or a letter comes, or the phone rings, I get excited, because I think maybe, just maybe, it might be you. But it never is. And now here you are. This ghost, standing in front of me, asking me if I'm okay. Yeah, Allie. I'm just fine.

ALLIE

I shouldn't have come.

NOAH

Yeah, well. Thanks for stopping by.

Allie nods, opens the car door, starts the engine, and starts to back up. Noah watches as Allie backs into a section of fence, knocking it over. He begins to walk toward the car, as Allie continues to maneuver it in an attempt to leave.

NOAH

Allie, don't go.

Allie doesn't hear. She continues to back the car around, knocking over a small bench, until she has the car facing in the direction to leave.

NOAH

Allie, wait.

Allie guns the engine. Noah runs toward the car.

NOAH

Allie!

Allie spins the car wheels and starts to race down the driveway. Noah moves in front of the car and cuts her off. Allie races toward him with no apparent intention of slowing down. At the last second, he dives out of the way, and Allie swerves her car into a bush.

Slowly, Noah gets up, brushes himself off, and walks to the car, where Allie sits at the wheel, staring numbly ahead. He talks to Allie through the open car window.

NOAH

You want to come inside?

ALLIE

Okay.

Noah puts out his hand to help her out of the car. When he touches her, it all comes back for Allie. The feelings overwhelm her.

NOAH

What are you doing here?

ALLIE

That's a very difficult question to answer. I don't know. I really don't.

NOAH

Try.

ALLIE

I'm getting married, Noah. Oh, God, I'm getting married.

And with that, Allie breaks down into huge sobs. Noah pulls her close, letting her cry against his chest.

ALLIE

It's going to be the happiest day of my life.

NOAH

Congratulations.

115. CONTINUED: (3)

115

ALLIE

Thank you.

116 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - SUNROOM - DAY

116

Lunch is over. Elderly men and women sit at tables playing cards, some reading magazines. Duke and Old Allie still sit at their table, Old Allie's plate now empty.

OLD ALLIE

It's a good story.

DUKE

I'm glad you like it.

OLD ALLIE

I've heard it before, haven't I?

DUKE

Yes.

OLD ALLIE

Probably more than once.

Duke smiles reassuringly at Old Allie. A voice interrupts them.

NURSE ESTHER

The doctor needs to see you.

OLD ALLIE

Me? Now?

NURSE ESTHER

No. Him.

OLD ALLIE

You're leaving? Why? What about the story?

DUKE

I'll read some more as soon as I'm done with the doctor. It shouldn't take long.

OLD ALLIE

(not so sure)

Okay.

DUKE

Don't go away. I'll be right back!

He winks before getting up and walking away.

NURSE ESTHER

While you're waiting, maybe you'd like to play the piano for a few minutes? You like that.

116 CONTINUED:

OLD ALLIE

Do I? I don't know any tunes.

NURSE ESTHER

You can read music.

OLD ALLIE

No kidding?

117 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

117

Duke enters the examination room to find DOCTOR BARNWELL, a fresh-faced intern in his early thirties.

DUKE

Who are you?

DR. BARNWELL

I'm Dr. Barnwell, one of the new attending physicians. We haven't met, so I thought I'd examine you myself. Do you mind taking off your shirt?

Duke removes his shirt. Dr. Barnwell takes his blood pressure and places EKG leads on his chest.

DR. BARNWELL

It says here you've had two heart attacks in the last eighteen months.

DUKE

Minor ones. I think one was Angina.

DR. BARNWELL

Any complications?

DUKE

Nope. Feel fine.

DR. BARNWELL

Are you taking your medicine?

DUKE

Every day, Doc.

Dr. Barnwell looks at the roll from the EKG machine unraveling.

DR. BARNWELL

Good. All done.

Duke starts to put his shirt back on.

DR. BARNWELL

One other thing. I understand you read to Miss Hamilton.

DUKE

Yeah. To help her remember.

DR. BARNWELL

It won't help, you know.

DUKE

No?

DR. BARNWELL

Impossible. Senile Dementia is physiological. It's irreversible and she's pretty far along.

DUKE

That's what they keep telling me.

DR. BARNWELL

I just want to make sure you understand, and not get your hopes up.

DUKE

Thanks, Doc. But you know what they say. Science goes only so far. Then comes God.

DR. BARNWELL

Yeah, sure. Then comes God.

The piano music stops.

DUKE

Damn. They forgot to turn the page for her.

118 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - GREENROOM - DAY 118

Old Allie sits at the piano, staring at the sheet music. She looks around. Nobody is paying any attention to her. She looks at the keyboard and starts to play. It's Chopin.

119 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY 119

Duke is about to leave.

DR. BARNWELL

I guess they flipped that page.

DUKE

No, that she's playing by memory.

120 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - GREENROOM - DAY 120

Duke enters and watches Allie play. It really is quite beautiful. But suddenly, she can't remember anymore. She starts hacking away in frustration, hitting haphazard notes in total cacophony. Nurse Esther comes hurrying in.

120 CONTINUED:

NURSE ESTHER
I'm sorry. I got called away.

Old Allie looks up at Nurse Esther and stops playing. Nurse Esther leads her off. Duke looks out at the people in the room.

DUKE
You think next time you might turn the page for her? You're not too feeble to flip over a sheet of paper, are you?

121 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - LIVING ROOM - DAY

121

Allie and Noah sit around a coffee table, steaming mugs in hand.

ALLIE
His name is Lon Hammond, Jr.

NOAH
Hammond, like in Hammond Cotton Mills?

ALLIE
Like in Hammond Cotton Mills.

NOAH
Nice. Mom and Dad must be very happy.

ALLIE
Total bliss. But Lon convinced me to do it anyway.

NOAH
I don't understand.

ALLIE
Never mind, it's dumb. He's a good man, Noah. You'd like him.

Noah's look says it all.

ALLIE
Or maybe not so much.

NOAH
You love him?

ALLIE
Yes, I do. I love him very much.

Noah's face cracks for just a second before nodding.

NOAH
Then, that's that. Okay, here's what I think. We should be friends.

(MORE)

121 CONTINUED:

121

NOAH (CONT'D)

You marry Lon, and I'll marry Martha,
and we'll stay in touch and confide
our problems to each other on the sly.
Then maybe we'll get lucky some day,
they'll both kick the bucket and we
can be together.

ALLIE

You want me to marry Lon, hoping he'll
die?

NOAH

It's a thought.

ALLIE

Yeah, yeah. Who's Martha?

NOAH

You want some dinner? It's getting
late.

Noah turns and starts to walk out of the house. Allie reaches
out and grabs his arm, stopping him. He turns to face her,
close.

NOAH

Yeah?

The hair on the back of Allie's neck stands up, and all of a
sudden, she's out of breath.

ALLIE

I ought to go. Really.

NOAH

Okay, look, I don't know why you're
here. I don't think you know why
you're here. I just know that you are
here, and that after tonight we'll
probably never see each other again,
so we might as well have some dinner.
You like crabs?

122 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - DOCK - MAGIC HOUR

122

A basket full of crabs emerges from the water. Noah is hauling
up the crab trap. Allie stands on the dock, watches him, the
muscles in his arm flexing as he lifts the cage from the water.

NOAH

Here comes dinner.

ALLIE

Noah? Who's Martha?

Noah takes the crabs from the cage and puts them into a large
galvanized bucket.

NOAH

A friend I look after from time to time.

ALLIE

Are you looking after her well?

NOAH

I like to think so.

Noah picks up the bucket and walks down the dock toward Allie.

ALLIE

What does she think?

NOAH

She thinks that when I look into her eyes I see someone else.

Noah passes by Allie, lightly brushing against her, causing her entire body to twitch.

123 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - KITCHEN - DUSK

123

Noah is busy washing crabs over the sink. Allie arrives and stands in the doorway.

ALLIE

You need any help?

NOAH

No, I'm okay.

Noah turns and sees Allie in the doorway with her arms clasped.

NOAH

If you're cold, you can grab a shirt out of my room.

124 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - SECOND FLOOR - DUSK

124

Allie moves down the second floor hallway, peering into rooms. She stops short when she sees an artists' easel in a large windowed room overlooking the river.

Finally, she comes to Noah's room, sees a wool flannel shirt lying over a chair, and picks it up. She brings it to her nose and then, pleased, puts it on. She stands in front of the mirror, straightening her hair, then wanders around the room, stopping to examine several photos: Noah as a baby with his father and mother, Noah and Frank in cowboy hats, Noah with his unit, his arm across Fin's shoulder.

Hanging on the wall beside the doorway, framed, is Allie's painting of Noah, the river and the Calhoun house in the background. It is signed: TO MY LOVE, NOAH, FROM ALLIE.

125 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - KITCHEN - DUSK

125

Noah places the large pot on the stove. Allie enters and leans against a counter.

NOAH
Find everything okay?

ALLIE
Yeah. Can I give you a hand with something?

NOAH
Do you mind cutting up some vegetables? They're in the icebox, and there's a bowl over there.

Noah motions toward a cabinet. Allie takes the vegetables from the icebox and begins to cut them.

ALLIE
Do you ever see Sara anymore?

NOAH
No. She married some rich guy and moved to Savannah. Pass me that, will you?

As they work together, the comfort and ease between them is unmistakable.

NOAH
Is Lon here with you?

ALLIE
No, he's still in Charlotte.

Noah goes over the icebox and gets a couple beers.

NOAH
No kidding? Didn't invite him?

ALLIE
Not really. But I can call him up if you want.

Noah opens the beers and pours them into pot with the crabs.

NOAH
Does he know you're here?

ALLIE
No. I told him I needed to get away. I don't think he'd really understand my coming here.

Noah takes a bottle of hot sauce and pours it over the crabs.

125 . CONTINUED:

NOAH

Dinner's almost ready. I've got beer
or tap water.

ALLIE

Noah, maybe this isn't a good idea.

He puts a finger to her lips.

NOAH

No talk, okay? It's a special
occasion. Let's just eat.

126 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

126

Noah and Allie sit at a long candlelit dining table. In front of them is a huge picture window that lets in the stars. They feast on the crab legs in silence, stealing occasional glances at one another. Their attraction is palpable. Allie reaches for her beer.

ALLIE

Spicy. I must warn you, I'm a cheap
drunk. A couple of drinks, and you'll
be carrying me out of here.

NOAH

Go slow. I don't want to have to take
advantage of you.

ALLIE

You wouldn't dare. I'm a married
woman.

NOAH

Not yet.

Allie enjoys the flirtation, but changes the subject.

ALLIE

Full moon tonight. How come every
time something crazy happens, the moon
is full? They say it affects the
tide. Do you think the moon controls
the water inside your body and makes
you do things you normally wouldn't
do?

NOAH

I don't know. Maybe.

ALLIE

I think it does.

Allie takes a swig of beer. Noah smiles. Same old Allie. When she gets nervous, she talks.

ALLIE

Why are you looking at me like that?

NOAH

Nothing. Memories. This room.

Allie looks around and realizes that this is the exact same room where they nearly made love eight years earlier.

ALLIE

Is this where we...?

NOAH

Yep.

ALLIE

I see.

She takes a big gulp of her beer. Noah pushes his plate away.

NOAH

I'm full. You?

ALLIE

Stuffed.

Noah grabs the plates and heads for the kitchen. Allie is a little tipsy. She gets up and admires the room, running her fingers along the furniture.

ALLIE

Everything's so beautiful.

Noah returns, holding a blanket.

NOAH

Let's take a walk and sit by the water.

127 EXT. COMBAHEE RIVERBANK - NIGHT

127

Noah and Allie sit under the stars blowing dandelions into the night. The full moon reflects white off the shimmering water.

ALLIE

I'm sorry about your dad.

NOAH

He was the greatest, wasn't he?

ALLIE

Yeah. So funny. I loved him, Noah. I don't know what to say.

NOAH

It's not your fault.

127. CONTINUED:

ALLIE

And Fin. He was so young. I can't believe it. I feel terrible.

NOAH

That's life, you know. Maybe it was his time.

They sit there looking out at the water, the wind gently blowing through the trees.

ALLIE

You know who I miss? Whitman.

128 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - NIGHT

128

NOAH V.O.

'...Is it night? Are we here together alone? It is I you hold and who holds you...'

Noah and Allie walk along a dirt path that winds through a thicket of trees.

129 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - PORCH - NIGHT

129

Allie drinks tea as Noah reads to her from "Leaves of Grass."

NOAH

'...your fingers drowse me, your breath falls around me like dew...I feel immersed from head to foot. Delicious, enough.'

The poem ends, and he closes the book.

ALLIE

It was real, wasn't it? You and me. Such a long time ago. We were just a couple of kids. But we really loved each other, didn't we?

He moves to her, takes her hands.

NOAH

Yeah, we did.

She looks at him and her eyes fill with tears.

ALLIE

I should be going.

NOAH

Don't.

129 . CONTINUED:

ALLIE

I've got to. But I'm glad I came.
Walk me out, will you?

130 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - NIGHT

130

Noah and Allie walk hand in hand to Allie's car. A good-bye kiss is in both their eyes.

NOAH

Listen, I want to show you something.
It's a place I've discovered. Can you
come here tomorrow morning? Just for
a little while. I promise you've
never seen anything like it.

ALLIE

Okay.

Allie is startled by the ease of her response. Noah opens the door, and a little lost, she gets in her car.

ALLIE

See you tomorrow.

Allie drives away. Noah watches her tail-lights disappear.

DUKE V.O.

She had come back into his life like a
sudden flame, blazing and streaming
into his heart.

131 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - PORCH - DAY

131

: Duke and Allie sit in rocking chairs. Duke reads.

DUKE

Noah sat there all night,
contemplating the certain agony he
knew would be his if he were to lose
her twice.

OLD ALLIE

Oh, I do wish I could remember how it
ends.

Nurse Esther arrives.

NURSE ESTHER

Your daughters are here.

OLD ALLIE

(confused)

My daughters? I don't understand.

NURSE ESTHER

His daughters.

Nurse Esther indicates three women in their forties with two children waiting on the lawn.

DUKE

Do you mind?

OLD ALLIE

No, no. I'd love to meet them.

Nurse Esther waves, and Duke's daughters, MAGGIE, MARY ALLEN, and VIRGINIA, and two grandchildren, DAVANEE, 12, and NOAH JR., 6, approach and kiss Duke. Old Allie sticks her hand out pleasantly.

OLD ALLIE

Hello there, everyone. Hello, young man. I'm Allie.

The family introduces themselves. Allie shakes each hand, repeating everyone's name. Noah Jr. surprises Allie with a big hug.

OLD ALLIE

Well. I guess I should be going. I think I'll take a nap. Nice meeting all of you.

DUKE

We'll finish the story later?

OLD ALLIE

Okay.

Nurse Esther leads Old Allie away.

MAGGIE

She seems good today. . . Calm.

DUKE

She is good. I don't know, but there's something about today. Feels like a day for a miracle.

The girls smile at their father. They love him.

DUKE

I'm glad you're all here because I've got something to tell you.

Duke pulls out some documents from his jacket pocket.

DUKE

I'm giving you the house. All three of you are now its rightful owners. Use it to live in or for the summers. I don't care. Do whatever's best.

(MORE)

131 . CONTINUED: (2)

DUKE (CONT'D)

But my wish is for it to stay in the family, to be passed on to these guys. And when the time comes, to their children. Understand?

MAGGIE

Of course. But we can't take your house.

VIRGINIA

Dad, it's too much.

DUKE

My father gave me his house, I suppose I can give you mine. Now I don't want to hear anymore about it. You sign those papers and it's all legal.

MARY ALLEN

But what about you?

DUKE

I'm not going anywhere. This is my home now.

132 INT. NEW BERN INN - LOBBY - NIGHT

132

Allie passes through the lobby where the night clerk gives her a disapproving look.

133 INT. NEW BERN INN - ALLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT - INTERCUT

133

When Allie opens the door, the phone is already ringing.

ALLIE

Hello?

LON O.S.

Hey, there.

ALLIE

Who is this?

LON

Lon. Who were you expecting?

ALLIE

Nobody. I'm just surprised. How did you find me?

LON

There's only one hotel in New Bern. When you didn't call, I got worried.

ALLIE

Oh, well. What time is it?

When she sees the clock, she winces. It's after midnight.

LON

It's late. Where have you been? Are you alright? It's embarrassing to admit, but I've called about a hundred times.

ALLIE

I'm fine. I ate some dinner, took a walk, sat by the river. You know, did some thinking.

Lon makes a face. He knows something's wrong.

LON

Is there anything you want to tell me?

ALLIE

No.

LON

No, you don't want to tell me, or no, there's nothing to tell?

ALLIE

Lon, I took this time. Let me have it, will you? I know it's unreasonable. I know it's crazy. You can give me the third degree later. But for now, just leave it alone, okay?

LON

Okay.

ALLIE

Lon? I love you.

LON

I love you, too, Allie.

ALLIE

I mean it. This doesn't have anything to do with you.

LON

Right.

ALLIE

I'll call you tomorrow.

She hangs up the phone, racked with guilt.

ALLIE

What am I doing?!

134 EXT. BLACK RIVER - DAWN 134

In the first light of dawn, small wisps of vapor rise from the still waters of the creek.

135 INT. NEW BERN INN - ALLIE'S ROOM - MORNING 135

Allie wakes up, blinking her eyes. When she realizes where she is, her face falls. She picks up the phone.

ALLIE

New Bern. The number for a Noah Calhoun, please.

136 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - PORCH - MORNING 136

Noah sits on the front steps drinking a cup of coffee. He's been up all night. The phone rings. Noah smiles to himself, but does nothing to answer the phone.

137 INT. NEW BERN INN - ALLIE'S ROOM - MORNING 137

Allie listens to the phone ring and ring.

OPERATOR O.S.

No answer, ma'am.

138 OMIT 138

139 INT. ALLIE'S CAR - DAY 139

Allie, agitated, drives down Main Street, her suitcase on the passenger seat.

140 EXT. NEW BERN - DAY 140

Allie's car speeds out of town, down a dirt road, and over a wooden bridge.

141 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - DAY 141

Noah stands as Allie's car pulls up. He moves down the steps to greet her.

ALLIE

Hi.

NOAH

Hi. You ready? We better hurry if we're going to beat the rain.

ALLIE

I'm not staying. I tried to call you to tell you I wasn't coming today, but no one answered.

Noah studies Allie's eyes. Says nothing.

ALLIE

I really can't be here, not the way I feel about you. It isn't fair to Lon.

Allie stops short, mad at herself, realizing she's let out more than she wanted to.

ALLIE

Look, Noah, you can't marry two people, and I'm marrying, Lon, so I shouldn't be here.

Noah's continued silence only causes Allie to say more, hoping for an answer from Noah.

ALLIE

I prayed for you to die. During the war. I really did, Noah. Well, not die. I would've felt terrible if you'd died. I just wanted you to kind of not be alive anymore. I couldn't bear the thought of us never being together again, of your being with someone else, which is why I should go now, don't you think?

By now, Noah is so bewildered, that he couldn't say anything, even if he wanted to.

ALLIE

Oh, God, Noah, I am so confused. It may not seem like it, but I am. For seven years, no matter what I did, I couldn't get you out of my mind, and then I met Lon, and he's really great, and I told him I'd marry him. And I want to marry him, I really do, but then I saw your picture in the paper. And I knew I couldn't marry him until I saw you again, because we never really finished things, not really. And now here I am, and all those adolescent feelings have come back, and I still love Lon, and I'd never break off our marriage. But, basically, all I want to do is crawl under a rock and stay there for the rest of my life. So, what do I do? Leave before I make a total mess of things, right? Or do I say the hell with everything and just stay here and enjoy whatever time we've got left? You tell me. What do I do?

Dark clouds overhead. In the distance is the low rumbling of thunder. A canoe glides effortlessly through the water.

Allie sits in the front of the canoe, facing Noah, who paddles with a steady rhythm. Noah's chest and arms bulge with each stroke, and Allie can't stop herself from looking.

Noah watches Allie hungrily, his eyes eating her up. Her eyes, her mouth, her neck. Allie doesn't budge one inch. She returns his stare confidently, dangling her fingers lightly on top of the water.

ALLIE

What was the war like, Noah?

NOAH

It was okay. You just try to get through it.

ALLIE

I bet you were brave.

NOAH

No.

ALLIE

Yes, you were. I bet those German bastards were scared to death of you. I bet you were just like John Wayne.

NOAH

No, nothing like that. I saved a few lives, I guess. But I was just doing my job, hoping someone would do the same for me if I was in trouble.

ALLIE

Saved a few lives? Jeez, Noah. Sounds a little like John Wayne to me.

NOAH

Yeah, well, I don't know. Then I guess that's good. I like John Wayne.

Suddenly, a swan swoops low over the canoe.

NOAH

We're here.

Allie, surprised, turns around. Noah indicates an old fallen tree which obscures a small opening ahead. He guides the canoe around it.

Hundreds of Tundra swan and Canadian geese are gathered in a small pond fed by the waters of the Combahee. They float so close together that there is virtually no water to be seen.

ALLIE

Oh, Noah, it's spectacular.

The canoe drifts silently among the huge flocks of swan and geese. Allie starts to laugh, giddy with the beauty of it all.

ALLIE

It's like a dream.

Noah reaches under his seat and holds out a loaf of bread.

NOAH

Want to feed them?

Allie nods. She takes the bread and starts feeding the birds, who now circle about, bobbing for the food. Noah quietly paddles the canoe through the flocks.

ALLIE .

What are they doing here?

NOAH

I don't know. They usually migrate to Wadmalaw Sound. Maybe they got off course or something. But they'll find their way back.

ALLIE

They won't stay here?

NOAH

I doubt it. They're driven by instinct, and this isn't their place. Eventually, they all go back to where they belong.

The irony is not lost on Allie, but before she can respond, there is the sound of thunder.

NOAH

We'd better get going.

144 EXT. COMBAHEE RIVER - DAY

144

It has started to rain. Noah paddles fast now, trying to beat the storm. Allie fights the rain at first, trying to stay dry. But then, it becomes a downpour, raining so hard, it's ridiculous. Noah laughs and Allie gives up the fight. Accepting it, she lays back, letting the rain hit her face. He watches her, his desire raging. The drops splash off her dress and she runs her hand through her hair. And by the time they get to shore, they are both soaked through.

145 EXT. DOCK - DAY

145

Noah pulls the boat out of the water. Allie stands on the dock, her dress clinging to her body, leaving very little to the imagination. The rain is coming down in sheets now.

145 CONTINUED:

ALLIE

Why didn't you write me, Noah? It wasn't over for me, you know. I waited for you for seven years, and now it's too late.

Noah is stunned.

NOAH

I wrote you once a day, every day, for a year. Three hundred and sixty-five letters. You never got any of them, did you?

Allie shakes her head. In an instant, she understands what's happened. The deception, the pain it's caused her over so many years. But with that pain, a release, now allowing her to do whatever she wants without blame.

ALLIE

You wrote me every day?

NOAH

It wasn't over. It still isn't over.

Noah presses his mouth against Allie's lips. She opens her mouth, pulling him into her body with all her might. He grabs her, throwing his big arms around her back, the force bending her over backwards, but she holds on. Nothing else matters. Not the rain. Not the years. Not her marriage. She just keeps hanging on.

They fall back against the side of the boat, devouring one another, the raindrops beating against the wood, until Noah picks her up and carries her all the way inside.

146 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - DAY

146

Mouth to mouth, Noah and Allie come crashing into the house, her legs now wrapped around his waist. They bang up against a kitchen wall and she rips his shirt off. They wind up on a big oak table, knocking everything over, pulling at each other's clothing.

The intensity of their passion is so fierce, there is not even a breath, just pawing and groping. She unfastens his belt, and his pants drop. And as they move into the hall and up the stairs, more clothes come off.

147 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - NOAH'S BEDROOM - DAY

147

Noah carries Allie in and they drop onto a feather bed, down popping up as they hit. They're both naked now and he pulls her up so they are sitting, facing each other, her legs wrapped around him.

She claws at his back, rocking back and forth, pressing her face into his chest. And then, unexpectedly, her body fills with pleasure, and she trembles, trying to catch her breath.

Noah lays her back down and she stretches her arms back, putting her palms against the wall, letting Noah take her wherever he wants. And then, her body floods with pleasure again, this time shaking uncontrollably. Noah's body tenses and holds. Nothing is left now except heavy breathing, rapid hearts, and flushed cheeks.

ALLIE

You've got to be kidding me.

Noah looks at Allie. Her hair is crazy.

ALLIE

Seven years later. This is what I've been missing?

Noah smiles.

ALLIE

Let's do it again.

And they roll over.

148 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - DAY

148

Wisps of fire come off the logs in the fireplace as the rain continues outside. Noah and Allie lay on a blanket, their clothes still strewn about the house. Noah is exhausted from a full morning of sex. Not Allie. She's trying to encourage him to rally.

ALLIE

I can't stop kissing you.

NOAH

What are you trying to do, kill me? I need rest.

ALLIE

You're no fun. Be careful what you wish for, Mister.

NOAH

You must feed me so I can regain my power.

ALLIE

Okay. What do you want?

She jumps up, but a knock on the door freezes her.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Hello? Noah?

148 . CONTINUED:

148

They scramble. Allie throws on Noah's shirt and Noah jumps into his jeans.

149 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - FRONT DOOR - DAY

149

Martha stands behind the glass. When Noah arrives, she smiles at the obvious nature of the interruption.

MARTHA

Sorry. I saw the car, but it didn't occur to me. It's just, I made some muffins and I thought...

NOAH

It's okay, Martha.

Martha studies the light in Noah's eyes.

MARTHA

She's the one, isn't she?

Noah doesn't answer for a moment, and then he nods. Martha squeezes out a bittersweet smile.

MARTHA

Can I meet her?

NOAH

She's leaving tomorrow morning to go back to her fiance.

MARTHA

I'd like to meet her, Noah.

ALLIE O.S.

So, this is Martha?

They turn. Allie stands there, leaning against the door-frame. She moves to Martha, sticking out her hand.

ALLIE

Hi, I'm Allie. I've heard a lot about you.

MARTHA

I've heard a lot about you, too.

Noah's head jerks back and forth between the two women.

ALLIE

What's in the basket?

MARTHA

Pecan muffins.

ALLIE

That's great. Come on in.

MARTHA

You sure?

ALLIE

Yeah. Noah was just saying he was hungry. How about making some tea, Calhoun?

Noah is flabbergasted. He gives Allie a look, indicating he'd rather not. Allie ignores it and leads Martha inside.

ALLIE

These muffins look great.

MARTHA

They're still hot.

And Allie and Martha leave Noah standing there, looking after them in bewilderment. Allie turns.

ALLIE

Are you going make some tea or not?

150 EXT. CHARLOTTE COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

150

John and Lon are playing golf. They wear knickers and sweater vests. Lon swings and the ball goes flying down the fairway.

JOHN

Well struck, Lon.

151 EXT. CHARLOTTE COUNTRY CLUB - FAIRWAY - DAY

151

John and Lon are walking to their balls, their caddies behind them.

JOHN

You and Allie should come by the house tomorrow evening. The Governor is coming for drinks.

LON

Allie's out of town, sir. Didn't you know? She went to New Bern for a few days.

John's face falls.

JOHN

New Bern?

LON

What? What is it, John?

JOHN

I don't want to ruin your round, Lon, but there's something you should know.

152 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - KITCHEN - NIGHT

152

Allie and Martha sit beside each other at the kitchen table. They are getting along famously.

ALLIE

He can only cook crabs?

MARTHA

No, no. He can cook anything that can be boiled in beer. It's the only thing he knows how to do. If I didn't bring him food, he'd have starved to death months ago.

NOAH

It's not true. I can cook eggs. They're really great when you...

Noah can't keep a straight face.

NOAH

...boil them in beer.

Allie and Martha crack up. Noah looks at Martha. He's always taken her for granted, but right now, she's very sympathetic. The conversation hits a lull, and the room goes quiet. Martha gets up.

MARTHA

Time to go.

ALLIE

Great meeting you, Martha.

MARTHA

It was great meeting you, too, Allie.

Instinctively, Martha picks up the dishes and walks over to the sink to wash them. Allie gets up and goes over.

ALLIE

That's okay. I can do the dishes. I mean, unless you really want to.

MARTHA

(laughing)

No, no. I've got no problem with you doing the dirty dishes.

NOAH

I'll see you out, Martha.

153 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - NIGHT

153

Noah walks Martha to her car.

MARTHA

She's sensational. She really is. I'm really glad I came, Noah. I'd forgotten what it's like. For the first time since I lost Richard, I feel like I've got something to look forward to. Thanks.

Through the open window, Allie sees Martha lean forward and kiss Noah gently on the lips, then drive away.

154 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - NIGHT

154

On the second floor balcony, in an outside tub and shower, Noah is giving Allie a bath. Steam rises from the tub, as Noah washes Allie's hair, the moon above them and the river below.

NOAH

What are you going to do, Allie?

ALLIE

I don't know. Let's go to bed and I'll tell you tomorrow.

155 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - MORNING

155

Allie wakes up stretching her arms and smiling. She feels good. Noah is gone, but there's a note by the bed. "You looked so sleepy, I couldn't wake you. I'm out on the river. Be back soon." Allie wraps the comforter around her body and heads downstairs. A knock is heard, and through the glass, she sees her mother rapping insistently.

Allie takes the long walk to the front door. Anne looks at her daughter, dressed only in a blanket, and shakes her head. Allie doesn't invite her in.

ALLIE

What do you want, Mother?

ANNE

Lon is on his way here.

ALLIE

What?

ANNE

I'm afraid your father spilled the beans about Noah. And when Lon didn't hear from you again last night, he decided to come.

ALLIE

Oh, that's great. That's terrific. You, me, Noah, and Lon. One big happy family.

Anne stares at her daughter. She doesn't think it's funny.

ALLIE

Tell me about the letters, Mother. Is it true?

ANNE

Yes.

ALLIE

You stole my letters, even though you knew it would break my heart? You watched me cry myself to sleep night after night for months. And all these years you still never told me? How could you do it, Mom?

ANNE

I'm sorry.

ALLIE

You're sorry?

ANNE

Yes, I'm sorry!

ALLIE

You know I swear, sometimes I want to strangle you.

ANNE

I did what I thought was best for you. You were seventeen years old and out of control.

ALLIE

Out of your control!

ANNE

I was doing it for your own good!

ALLIE

For my own good? Look at the mess I'm in, Mom. Because of you, my life is ruined.

ANNE

Stop being dramatic and take at least some of the responsibility. You came down here. You knew what you were doing. You knew this would happen.

ALLIE . . .

Oh, now I'm a tramp? You're unbelievable. Let me tell you something, Mother. Because you don't understand the first thing about me, how I really feel.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

When I saw Noah's picture in the newspaper, I caught a glimpse of my soul shriveling up. So I came here to find out whether I could ever feel about Lon the way I remembered feeling about Noah, and whether it really mattered.

Anne sees the pain in her daughter's face and softens.

ANNE

And does it?

ALLIE

What?

ANNE

Does it matter?

ALLIE

I don't know, Mom. I really don't.

ANNE

Come on. Get some clothes on. Let's take a drive.

ALLIE

Take a drive? Why would I want to go anywhere with you?

ANNE

Because I might know you a little better than you think. And I don't want you waking up one morning thinking that if you had known everything, you would have done something different.

156 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

156

Anne's Delahaye speeds along the two lane road.

ANNE O.S.

When I was young, my family also vacationed in the area. We took summers not too far from New Bern.

157 EXT. JAMES CITY - DAY

157

The Delahaye drives down the main drag of the sleepy town. It stops in front of a blacksmith's shop.

ALLIE

What are we doing here, Mom?

ANNE

You see that man?

Anne indicates BILLY FENWICK, the blacksmith, a well muscled man in his late forties. He is shirtless, sweaty, and swinging a sledgehammer.

ANNE

Doesn't look like it now, but twenty-five years ago, oh my goodness, he was really something. I was in high school, and we were out of our minds in love, let me tell you.

ALLIE

Mom!

ANNE

Naturally, your grandfather was furious, so we decided to run away. We didn't even make the next town before the police picked us up.

ALLIE

What happened?

ANNE

Oh, it was a big scandal. We went home to Charlotte. I wasn't even allowed on a date until I met your father. But that was then.

Anne sighs, lost in the trip down memory lane.

ANNE

You know, sometimes when I'm in the area, I'll stop here and watch him, trying to picture how much different my life might have been.

Allie watches the blacksmith at work, his hands and face covered with dirt. She gets her mother's point. Anne opens her door and starts to get out.

ALLIE

What are you doing?

ANNE

Come on. The box is open, and Pandora's crying. It's a big day for everybody. Time to put this fantasy to bed once and for all.

Anne, totally in control, walks across the street in her elegant clothes. As she gets close, Billy Fenwick sees her.

BILLY

Oh my God.

He rushes outside, and the way he looks at Anne, you know what they had was something special.

ANNE

Hello, Billy.

BILLY

Anne, oh my God. It's good to see you.

ANNE

I want you to meet my daughter.

BILLY

She's you, Annie. She's you twenty-five years ago.

ANNE

I know.

BILLY

So, I heard you married the Hamilton man and everything is great. I'm happy for you.

ANNE

And you? How is your life?

BILLY

Great.

ANNE

Married?

BILLY

Yeah.

ANNE

You love her?

BILLY

Oh, yeah. I love Nancy with all my heart.

And then, something funny happens. Hearing the love of her life say he loves someone else cracks Anne's icy demeanor, and she becomes emotional.

BILLY

Are you alright, Annie?

Tears roll down Anne's choked up face.

ANNE

This is very embarrassing. I'm a stupid woman. I shouldn't have come.

158. CONTINUED: (2)

158

BILLY

I'm sorry. Did I say something?

ANNE

Goodbye, Billy.

Allie walks her mother back to the car and it drives away.

159 INT. ANNE'S DELAHAYE - DAY

159

Allie and Anne ride in silence, Allie holding her mother's hand. As they pass the New Bern Inn, they notice Lon's Studebaker in the parking lot. Allie gulps.

ANNE

Oh, boy.

160 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - DAY

160

The Delahaye pulls up to Noah's house. Before Allie gets out, Anne hands her a bundle of letters. They're the letters from Noah, all of them, unopened, the postmarks seven years old. Allie can't believe her eyes.

ANNE

I hope you make the right choice.

Noah is waiting on the steps. As the Delahaye pulls away from the house, Allie approaches.

NOAH

It's hit the fan, hasn't it?

ALLIE

Yeah. Lon's here in town. I saw his car at the hotel on the way.

She shows him the bundle of letters.

NOAH

Finally, huh? Did you read them?

ALLIE

No. You know, for so many years, all I could think about was you, my long lost love, and why you never wrote me. Now that I have these, it's finished. It's like this huge weight's been lifted off of me.

They stand there, both knowing what's coming, neither knowing what to say.

NOAH

So what are you going to do?

ALLIE

I don't know.

NOAH

Come on. Are you kidding? We're back to that? What about the last two days? They happened, Allie. You can't take that away.

ALLIE

I know they happened, and they were wonderful. But they were irresponsible. I have a life back in Charlotte, and a fiance waiting for me at a hotel, who is going to be crushed when I tell him what happened. I don't know if he even will take me back, but I'm going to talk to him.

NOAH

So you make love to me, and then go back to your husband? What was that, a test? Didn't I pass?

ALLIE

I made a promise to a man. He gave me a ring, and I gave him my word.

NOAH

Well, that's pretty much shot to hell now, isn't it?!

ALLIE

I don't know. I'll find out when I talk to him!

NOAH

So, this is all about not breaking a promise? I thought it had something to do with following your heart. Or is it really about security?

ALLIE

What is that supposed to mean?

NOAH

Hey, he's got a lot of money.

ALLIE

Okay, now I hate you. You don't think I love Lon? You smug bastard. Haven't you been paying any attention to what's been happening the past few days?

NOAH

I guess I misread the signs!

ALLIE

I guess you did!

NOAH

Come on, Allie. You're dying of boredom. You wouldn't be here if something wasn't missing.

ALLIE

You arrogant sonofabitch.

She starts to leave, but he catches her arm.

NOAH

Stay with me.

ALLIE

Stay with you? What for? Look at us. We're already fighting.

NOAH

That's right. We do that sometimes, remember? We don't cut each other any slack. If I'm being a jerk or an arrogant sonofabitch, you tell me. If you're a pain in the ass, which you are ninety-nine percent of the time, I've got no problem telling you, or hurting your feelings, which have about a two second rebound rate before you're off doing the next pain in the ass thing.

ALLIE

So?

NOAH

So, it's not going to be perfect. We'll have to work at it every day. But I want you. Not for today, or next week, but forever. Every day, you and me.

ALLIE

Noah...

NOAH

Think about your life twenty years or fifty years from now. Where do you want to be? If it's with that guy, go. I lost you once. I suppose I can do it again. Just don't take the easy way out.

ALLIE

What easy way out? There is no easy way out. No matter what I do, someone gets hurt.

NOAH

Answer one question for me. Forget about me and your fiance and your parents for a minute. Forget about what you should do. What about you? What do you want?

ALLIE

It's not that simple.

NOAH

Yes, it is.

Her eyes fill with tears.

ALLIE

I've got to go.

Allie kisses Noah and then gets in the car. She rolls down the window and runs her fingers along his forearm.

NOAH

Don't do this, Allie. Don't go.

ALLIE

I'll always love you, Noah Calhoun. No matter what.

She puts the car into gear, and drives away, leaving Noah to watch her disappear forever from his life.

161 EXT. ROAD - DAY

161

Allie drives, her eyes pouring tears, trying desperately to see through them. She drifts too close to the middle of the road and nearly sideswipes a passing pick-up truck, turning away at the last moment.

162 INT. ALLIE'S CAR - DAY

162

Allie veers off the road to pull herself together. She sits there crying, trying to catch her breath. She looks over to the pile of letters sitting on the seat beside her. She picks them up, slides out the bottom letter, and starts to read it to herself.

DUKE V.O.

Allie decided to start with the very last letter Noah had written.

NOAH V.O.

'My dearest Allie...'

163 EXT. NEW BERN ROAD - DAY

163

Allie is back on the road. Her tears have, for the most part, stopped.

163 CONTINUED:

NOAH V.O.

'...I couldn't sleep last night because I know that it's over between us.'

164 EXT. NEW BERN - DAY

164

Allie's car approaches the New Bern Inn. She pulls in next to Lon's car.

NOAH V.O.

'I'm not bitter, anymore, because I know that what we had was real.'

165 INT. ALLIE'S CAR - DAY

165

Allie turns off the motor, then she reaches in the glove box, removing a hairbrush and lipstick.

NOAH V.O.

'And if, in some distant place in the future, we see each other in our new lives, I will smile at you with joy, and remember how we spent a summer beneath the trees, learning from each other and growing in love.'

Allie brushes her hair, adds some color to her lips, and wipes the remaining tears from her eyes.

NOAH V.O.

'And, maybe, when you see me pass, you'll smile back and think of all the memories we will always share together.'

166 EXT. NEW BERN INN - DAY

166

Allie gets out of the car and walks toward the inn.

NOAH V.O.

'The best love is the kind that awakens the soul, that makes us reach for more, that plants a fire in our hearts and brings peace to our minds. That is what you have given to me. It is what I had hoped to give to you forever. I love you. I'll be seeing you. Noah.'

167 INT. NEW BERN INN - LON'S ROOM - DAY

167

Allie knocks on the door, and then it opens, revealing Lon. She attempts to smile without crying, but it is no use. Her eyes fill with tears as she falls into his arms, and they clutch each other tightly.

168 EXT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - DAY

168

Old Allie and Duke sit by the pond, the sun reflecting gold off the water. Duke closes the notebook in his lap, removes his thick glasses, and wipes his weary eyes.

OLD ALLIE

That's a beautiful story.

DUKE

Yes, it is.

OLD ALLIE

I'm not sure why, but it makes me feel less afraid. Which one did she finally marry?

DUKE

The one who was right for her.

OLD ALLIE

Very clever, smartypants. That doesn't tell me anything.

DUKE

You'll know by the end of the day, I promise.

Old Allie looks at Duke, then out at the pond.

OLD ALLIE

I have to ask you something. It's hard, though.

Old Allie, nervous, avoids looking at Duke, whose eyes fill with pain. He knows the question!

OLD ALLIE

I don't want to hurt your feelings. You've been so nice to me. But, who are you?

DUKE

My name is Duke.

OLD ALLIE

Duke...Duke...

Old Allie can't remember and starts to get frustrated.

OLD ALLIE

I'm sorry. I don't understand anything that's happening to me. When I hear you talk, I feel I should know you, but I don't. I don't even know who I am.

Duke looks into her eyes and smiles reassuringly.

DUKE

You are a dreamer. That's who you are. You led a full life and wanted nothing because your needs were all spiritual. You are kind and loyal and able to see beauty everywhere. Most of all you are a lover, of life and of all you've touched. And, of course, you are the most beautiful woman who ever lived.

OLD ALLIE

(smiling)

Of course.

DUKE

I know you feel lost right now, but there is no reason to feel lost because 'nothing is ever really lost, or can be lost, no birth, identity, form, no object of the world, nor life, nor force, nor any visible thing. The body, sluggish, aged, cold, the embers left from earlier fires, shall duly flame again."

Old Allie thinks about this and for the time being, appears consoled.

OLD ALLIE

Did you write that?

DUKE

No, that was Walt Whitman.

OLD ALLIE

Who's he? Did I know him, too?

DUKE

Yes, intimately.

OLD ALLIE

Intimately. Hmmp. I must have been really something.

They laugh.

OLD ALLIE

I like being with you. I don't have a clue who you are, but I enjoy your company.

DUKE

So, don't complain.

The sun is setting. On the grounds, families are saying goodbye to loved ones. Old Allie and Duke reach the doorway to the building, and Old Allie stops and stares in silence at Duke for what seems like a long time.

DUKE

What are you doing?

OLD ALLIE

I don't want to forget you or this day. I want to lock it in my head. You're very special to me, Duke. I don't know what I would have done without you today.

Duke is moved. He starts to say something.

OLD ALLIE

If you could not say anything right now, I'd be grateful. No stories, no poems, no grand pronouncements. I'd just like to feel this moment for what it is.

169 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - HALLWAY - EVENING

169

Old Allie and Duke walk slowly down the hall. When they get to Old Allie's room, they stop. Inside, a table is set with a tablecloth and lit candles.

OLD ALLIE

I take it this is your work.

Duke nods.

DUKE

With a little help from my good friends on the nursing staff.

Duke offers his arm to Old Allie, and they walk into the room.

170 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - OLD ALLIE'S ROOM - EVENING 170

Old Allie moves to the window, looks at the last orange glow of the sunset reflecting on the pond.

OLD ALLIE

I've never seen anything so beautiful.
I'm sure of it.

DUKE

(looking at Old Allie)
Neither have I.

Old Allie sees Duke looking at her and suppresses a smile. Duke gestures to the table.

170 CONTINUED:

170

DUKE

Shall we?

Duke pulls out Allie's chair for her. On the table, Allie notices two small plastic cups filled with pills.

OLD ALLIE

Which one is mine?

Duke hands Old Allie the cup with two pills, and picks up the one overflowing with pills for himself.

OLD ALLIE

So many pills. How sick are you?

DUKE

Sickness has become a relative term for me. I think of it more as a general wearing out process. Some grape juice?

Duke lifts a wine-shaped bottle of grape juice and fills her glass, then his own. Then he lifts it in a toast.

DUKE

To you.

Old Allie is pleased. She clinks her glass with Duke, then drinks.

OLD ALLIE

So what happened?

Duke just looks at her.

OLD ALLIE

In the story. Which one did she choose?

171 INT. NEW BERN INN - LON'S ROOM - DAY

171

Allie has given Lon the news. She was right, he's devastated.

LON

So, the way I see it, I have three choices. One, I shoot him. That way, he's dead, I go to prison, and you're left with nobody. And let me tell you, right now, that doesn't seem like such a bad option. Two, I kick the crap out of him. Which is probably not the best choice, because I'm not much of a fighter. Three, I leave you, call off the wedding, play the jilted lover, and expose your indiscretions to the entire community. But all of it's no good, you see?

(MORE)

171 CONTINUED:

LON (CONT'D)

None of those options give me you. And in spite of everything, I love you. And if you want to work it out, forget that our wedding is in three weeks. Forget what people will say, and they will talk. Believe me, it's started already. Forget everything. This is about you and me. And if you want to work it out, let's go home. I meant what I said when I gave you that ring.

ALLIE

I did, too. I love you, Lon. It's just that I feel like I'm two separate people. With you, I'm one person. With Noah, I'm totally different.

LON

Look, it's normal not to forget your first love. I love you, Allie, but I want you for myself. I don't want to have to convince my fiancée that she should be with me.

ALLIE

You don't have to, Lon. I already know that I should be with you.

172 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - OLD ALLIE'S ROOM - EVENING 172

Duke closes the notebook.

DUKE

And they lived happily ever after.

OLD ALLIE

Who? Who did?

And then, for the first time, Old Allie remembers. We see it on her face. It's clear as day.

OLD ALLIE

Oh, yes.

173 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - EVENING 173

Noah is in the kitchen when he hears the car engine. Even before he looks, his eyes are wet.

174 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - EVENING 174

Noah bursts out of the house. Standing before him is Allie. They race to one another. She won't be leaving again.

NOAH

I thought you were going home.

174 CONTINUED:

ALLIE

I am home.

175 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - OLD ALLIE'S ROOM - EVENING 175

Old Allie smiles, glowing with life. The distant look that has filled her eyes is gone. Duke's heart leaps with excitement. He knows what has happened.

OLD ALLIE

You're a wonderful man, Noah. A truly inspiring man.

And there it is, with the single word "Noah," Allie is back. Duke's eyes fill with tears.

DUKE

I love you, Allie. I love you so much.

Duke puts Old Allie's hand to his mouth and kisses it.

OLD ALLIE

Noah, sweet, sweet Noah. How long do I have?

DUKE

Not long. It gets shorter and shorter. Last time, it wasn't even five minutes.

Old Allie nods.

OLD ALLIE

Well, then, we better get cracking.

She indicates a tape player on the counter. Duke smiles. He then reaches in his pocket, pulls out a cassette, and puts it on. Bessie Smith begins to sing: I'LL BE SEEING YOU.

Duke and Allie dance cheek to cheek. Their movements are graceful, totally in sync. When the music stops, Allie curtseys.

OLD ALLIE

How are the children? Have you seen them?

DUKE

They were here today. Little Noah and Davanee, too. They're getting big.

OLD ALLIE

Oh, boy. How fast the time goes. Flies right on by.

DUKE

Yes, it does.

Old Allie thinks for a minute.

OLD ALLIE
Do you mind if I ask you a question?

DUKE
Not at all.

OLD ALLIE
It's kind of personal. You don't have to answer it if you don't want.

Allie looks at Duke. Something's not right.

OLD ALLIE
Who are you?

DUKE
I'm Duke. I'm Duke and you're Allie.

OLD ALLIE
Noah? It's happening again.

DUKE
Take it easy.

OLD ALLIE
Noah?

DUKE
I'm here, Allie.

OLD ALLIE
It's slipping away. I'm trying to hold on, but nothing's there.

DUKE
Don't be frightened. I'll never leave you, Allie.

OLD ALLIE
Oh, no. Oh, no.

Duke holds Old Allie, who starts to tremble. He whispers in her ear.

DUKE
I love you, Allie. Stay with me. Don't leave me yet. Not yet. Not tonight. Stay with me.

But Old Allie doesn't hear him. She looks around at the walls, panic growing on her face.

OLD ALLIE
Those people. They're staring at me. Please make them stop.

175. CONTINUED: (2)

DUKE

There's nobody there. It's okay.

OLD ALLIE

They're staring at me! Make them stop, Noah.

DUKE

There's no one staring.

OLD ALLIE

Right there. That man is coming. He wants to kill me with his wild animals! They're all coming to kill me! There's a panther! They're killing me!

DUKE

It's okay, Allie. I'm here with you!

Old Allie pushes Duke away. She's wild, hysterical.

OLD ALLIE

Who are you? What are you doing here?

Duke's face crumbles.

OLD ALLIE

Get away from me! Go away! Help!

Nurse Selma and Nurse Esther come running into the room. They move to Old Allie and comfort her.

NURSE ESTHER

It's alright, Allie. It's okay.

176 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - DUKE'S ROOM - NIGHT

176

Duke sits at his desk, exhausted. He stares at the pictures before him, family photographs of a lifetime. He looks up when Dr. Barnwell knocks.

DR. BARNWELL

Are you alright?

DUKE

A little indigestion, but otherwise, fine. It was so short today.

DR. BARNWELL

In her condition, the fact that she remembers at all is amazing. It defies all medical explanation.

DUKE

Maybe even a miracle, Doc?

176. CONTINUED:

DR. BARNWELL
Definitely, a miracle.

DUKE
When she first came here, she would remember me every few days, then every few weeks. This is the first time in three months. A few minutes and then she's gone again.

DR. BARNWELL
Night confusions are part of the disease. Nurses call them sundowners. A lot of screaming. Paranoid fantasies. No one knows why it happens at night. Just the brain poisoning itself.

DUKE
Yeah.

DR. BARNWELL
If you don't mind me asking, how did it begin?

DUKE
What? Oh. It started with her asking the same questions over and over. And she'd forget small things. Nothing important. No big deal. Sometimes she couldn't find her car keys. Sometimes she put the wrong year on her checks. She'd forget a neighbor's name.

Dr. Barnwell sits down on the edge of the bed.

DUKE
I took her to the doctor when I found her in her car, less than a mile away. She couldn't remember how to get home.

177 EXT. NEW BERN ROAD - DAY

177

Duke's car is behind Old Allie's. He is walking to the car. Old Allie sits behind the wheel, crying. Duke taps on the driver-side window. Old Allie looks up at Duke, her face filled with terror.

178 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

178

Old Allie and Duke sit side by side in chairs on the other side of DOCTOR ESTES' desk, holding hands.

DR. ESTES
I'm so sorry to have to tell you this, Mrs. Calhoun, but you're in the early stages of Alzheimer's.

178 CONTINUED:

178

Old Allie and Duke look at each other, taking in the news.

179 INT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - NIGHT

179

Old Allie sits at her work bench, writing furiously.

DUKE V.O.

When we went home, she went to work with a vengeance. She wrote her will. She left burial instructions. She wrote letters to the children.

180 EXT. WINDSOR PLANTATION - PORCH - NIGHT

180

Duke sits on the porch listening to the katydids chirping. Old Allie comes out, holding the notebook. She sits down beside Duke.

OLD ALLIE

I have something for you. It's a notebook in which I've written the story of our love. How we met, how we parted, and how we found each other again. In a few years, I won't remember any of it. When that happens, I want you to read it me, Noah. Never let me forget. Wherever I am, whatever state of mind I'm in, no matter how far away or how lost I seem, you must read it to me, and I will come back to you if I possibly can.

Old Allie hands Duke the notebook. Duke looks up at her.

OLD ALLIE

Promise me that, Noah.

NOAH

I promise.

181 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - DUKE'S ROOM - NIGHT

181

DR. BARNWELL

It's a remarkable story.

DUKE

Yes, it is. Of course, little by little, it's become a very complicated arrangement, reading the notebook. If she knows too soon that I'm Noah and she's Allie, she becomes terribly afraid. Of course, it's hardest on the children. When they visit, they have to treat her like they just met her or she becomes...she becomes...

181. CONTINUED:

181

Duke suddenly stands up, unable to talk. He puts his hand to his chest.

DR. BARNWELL
Becomes what, hysterical? Mr.
Calhoun?

Duke's eyes roll up in his head, and he collapses, crashing to the floor.

182 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - NIGHT

182

A gurney is being wheeled quickly down the hallway by TWO EMT'S. Duke is unconscious, an oxygen mask over his mouth. Dr. Barnwell runs alongside with Nurse Esther.

DR. BARNWELL
I need a trauma unit standing by.

The gurney passes Old Allie's room. She watches the stretcher as it goes.

183 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

183

Old Allie is being moved to the Alzheimer's ward. Her room is now devoid of any personal effects. She is among the addled and insane. It's the end of the line. A very frail Allie moves through her daily routine. She is lost and frightened.

184 EXT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - NIGHT

184

A repeat of the opening shot. The pond, illuminated by moonlight, with the nursing home in the background.

185 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - NIGHT

185

A repeat of the second shot. The long corridor, illuminated by night lights. The nursing station is midway down the hall. A head pokes out the doorway, then darts back inside.

186 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - HALLWAY - NIGHT

186

Duke moves down the corridor. When he reaches the nurses' station, Nurse Esther is there.

NURSE ESTHER
Welcome back, Mr. Calhoun. How do you
feel?

DUKE
Fine. Fit as a fiddle.

NURSE ESTHER
What are you doing?

DUKE
Taking a walk. I can't sleep.

NURSE ESTHER

You know you're not supposed to. It's against the rules.

DUKE

I know.

NURSE ESTHER

You're not really going for a walk, are you? You're going to see Allie.

DUKE

I haven't seen her in three months.

NURSE ESTHER

You remember what happened the last time?

DUKE

I remember.

NURSE ESTHER

Then you know you shouldn't be doing this.

DUKE

I just got back from the hospital and I miss her.

Nurse Esther checks the hallway, then looks at Duke, her voice softer than before.

NURSE ESTHER

I'm sorry, Mr. Calhoun, but I can't let you see her tonight. You have to go back to your room. As for me, I'm going downstairs for some coffee. I won't be back to check on you for a while, so don't do anything foolish.

Nurse Esther leaves. Duke watches her go, then he looks down at her desk. Sitting on it is a fresh cup of steaming coffee.

187 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - OLD ALLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

187

Duke moves into Old Allie's room. He looks at Allie sleeping peacefully and strokes her hair. Old Allie opens her eyes. To Duke's surprise, Allie doesn't panic. She just looks at him, a light coming on in her eyes.

OLD ALLIE

Oh, Noah. I've missed you so much.

Duke strokes her cheek.

DUKE

I'm sorry I haven't been able to read to you.

Old Allie smiles. Tears run down her face.

OLD ALLIE

Where have you been? I didn't know what to do. I kept thinking, what if he never comes back?

DUKE

I'll always come back.

OLD ALLIE

What happens when I can't remember anything anymore, when I can't come back to you, not even for a minute or two, what will you do?

DUKE

I'll still be here. I'll never leave you.

OLD ALLIE

I don't want to end up all alone, strapped to a bed, being fed by strange people.

DUKE

I know.

Duke and Old Allie look at each other in silence for a moment.

OLD ALLIE

I need to talk to you, Noah.

DUKE

What is it?

OLD ALLIE

Do you think our love can create miracles?

DUKE

Yes, I do. It's what brings you back each time.

OLD ALLIE

Yes, it is. Do you think our love can take us away together?

DUKE

I think our love can do anything we want it to, Allie.

187 . CONTINUED: (2)

187

Old Allie smiles. Duke looks at her for a very long time before kissing her. Then he lies down next to Old Allie, and slowly their fingers intertwine.

OLD ALLIE

Good night, Noah. I love you.

DUKE

And I love you, Allie. Good night.
I'll be seeing you.

They press their bodies against each other, fingers entwined. Old Allie and Duke's eyes close and they go to sleep, forever.

188 EXT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - DAWN

188

A few geese sweep along the surface of the pond and then sail off into the sky.

189 INT. NEW BERN NURSING HOME - OLD ALLIE'S ROOM - DAWN

189

Nurse Esther walks into Old Allie's room and stops when she realizes what's happened. She runs to the door and calls for help. Other nurses run in, one by one, and then, Dr. Barnwell.

DR. BARNWELL

I can't believe it.

Duke and Allie lay in bed together, dead in each other's arms.

NURSE ESTHER

Someone should notify the children.

THE END