

LIND

by

Richard Flynn

15 South Wig Hill Rd.
Chester, CT 06412
PH: 860-526-1252
Email: rickflynn15@comcast.net

WGAW Registered

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET/HILTON HEAD S.C. - DAY

A massive oak tree looms over an intersection on a quiet residential street. A blue Grosbeak stirs in its nest. Sunlight filters through the leaves showing off the bird's bright blue and brown feathers.

IN THE INTERSECTION--

An ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, late 30's, and her DAUGHTER, 10, pull up to the stop sign in a classic '68 Ford Mustang. They laugh together. Mom gives a quick glance in both directions and starts into the intersection.

From out of nowhere a Mercedes CRASHES violently into the passenger side door.

IN THE OAK TREE-

The Grosbeak takes flight.

IN THE INTERSECTION--

Broken glass lies scattered across the roadway.

The Mustang is a twisted hunk of metal. The windshield and side windows are blown out from the force of the collision.

The woman and daughter sit motionless in bucket seats, their bodies contorted and lurching at unnatural angles. A broken watch on the woman's wrist records the moment of impact: 10:45.

ACROSS THE INTERSECTION--

A LONG-HAIRED MAN, 22, opens the door of his demolished Mercedes. A vodka bottle tumbles onto the pavement. Blood oozes from his nose and ears. He staggers away from the vehicle.

He leans against the massive oak, slides down along its trunk and surveys the damage. His breathing is shallow. The eyes register real fear.

He gazes up at Spanish moss dangling from the oak and futilely reaches out a hand. Life ebbs away. The eyes go dark. The hand drops.

EXT. IN THE SKY - DAY

A BLUE FEATHER spirals downward in tight, concentric circles. It descends into the intersection.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A gentle breeze carries it through the shattered windshield of the Mustang onto the lap of the dead woman behind the wheel.

EXT. NEARBY HOME - DAY

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN in tennis gear emerges from her home and moves tentatively toward the scene of the accident. Her hand trembles as she dials 911 on her cell phone.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
Please. There's been a terrible
accident.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SAME INTERSECTION - DAY

Now a quiet, serene setting.

SUPER:

-- FIVE YEARS LATER

A Student Driver vehicle pulls up to the stop sign. ISLAND DRIVING SCHOOL, HILTON HEAD, SC, is emblazoned on both doors.

INSIDE THE VEHICLE--

CHRIS LEEDS, 40, unassumingly handsome, with a somber demeanor is in the passenger seat. He monitors a TEENAGE BOY, 16, behind the wheel. The boy initiates a wide left turn. Chris grabs the wheel and hastens the turn radius.

CHRIS
That's a little wide.

TEENAGE BOY
Sorry.

CHRIS
It's alright. That's why we're
here.

TEENAGE BOY
My old man would have had a fuckin'
stroke. Sorry, Mr. Leeds.

CHRIS
You're allowed to call me Chris,
you know?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TEENAGE BOY

I didn't mean to say fuck.

CHRIS

It's alright. I didn't even hear you the second time.

The car continues up the street. Chris looks back at the intersection in a small auxiliary rear view mirror on the passenger side of the windshield. His eyes look haunted.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOME/REAR DECK - DUSK

The large wooden deck overlooks a neatly landscaped backyard sloping down to a lagoon. Chris nurses a beer in an Adirondack chair, oblivious to a Ruby-Throated hummingbird hovering nearby feeding from a flowering vine.

EXT. SAILBOAT "TRIESTE" - DAY (SIX YEARS EARLIER)

Chris comes up the steps from below deck carrying apples and cheese on a cutting board.

TRISH, 30's, and KELLY, 4, easily recognizable as the victims from the car crash, lie on the forward deck in their bathing suits. They giggle together at the sight of Chris in his artfully colored bathing trunks.

CHRIS

What are you two monkeys laughing at?

KELLY

Nothing, Daddy.

Trish whispers in Kelly's ear.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Where was the yard sale?

More laughter.

CHRIS

Okay, I see how it's going to be.

KELLY

(baiting him)
I love you, Daddy.

Chris puts the cutting board in front of them, content at being the butt of all family jokes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS

Here's some monkey food.

TRISH

Thank you, darling.

He heads toward the stern and unties the knot that's been looped through the wheel to keep them on course. Taking his rightful place, he exchanges a smile with his wife. She purses her lips, sending him a kiss.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOME/REAR DECK - CONTINUOUS IN THE PRESENT

The hummingbird abandons its vine and BUZZES past Chris's face, forcing him back to reality.

INT. CHRIS'S HOME/KITCHEN - MORNING

Chris cooks bacon and eggs in the modern kitchen. His movements are deliberate and methodical but lack any real conviction. A pervasive sense of melancholy and longing are at war with one another.

INT. CHRIS'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Car keys rest on a coffee table next to a photograph of Trish and Kelly taken years earlier on the beach. Trish looks beautiful, luminous. Kelly's head rests on her mother's shoulder.

Chris's hand picks up the keys.

IN THE FOYER--

He turns around inexplicably at the front door and looks back at the trappings of his existence. Time is suspended.

EXT. STRIP MALL - MORNING

A storefront window reads:

--ISLAND DRIVING SCHOOL

INSIDE THE DRIVING SCHOOL--

Chris gives a PowerPoint presentation to a MOTLEY GROUP of TEENS sitting around several tables. An illustration depicting an intersection with a four-way stop is projected onto a white blackboard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A phone RINGS once behind a partial barrier wall.

CHRIS
Three cars meet at an intersection
at the same time. What happens?

WISE-ASS TEEN
Chinese fire drill.

MARINA TORRE's pops her head out from behind the barrier wall.

MARINA
Sorry. You got a call.

CHRIS
I'll call back later?

MARINA
I don't think so.

CHRIS
Would you mind taking over then,
Marina?

MARINA
No sweat.

Marina, late 20's, moves with confidence toward the blackboard. Her compact frame oozes a kind of gritty sensuality.

MARINA (CONT'D)
(to the Wise-Ass)
That's the last thing I hear out of
you, kid. Understand? This ain't
high school. I don't take crap.

The wise-ass kid smirks and lowers his head onto the table.

INSIDE THE OFFICE--

Chris picks up the phone at his desk.

CHRIS
Hello, this is Chris.

A RUMBLING comes through his earpiece.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Hello?

The RUMBLING drowns out a voice on the other end.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 (forcefully)
 Sorry. I didn't catch that!

I/E. CESSNA 172/HILTON HEAD AIRPORT RUNWAY - DAY

JAAGUP SAAR, late 40's, all silver-blond hair and bulging eyes, taxis a single engine plane down the runway. He speaks a compromised English with a distinctive Northern European accent over a 'hands free' device.

The engine RATCHETS UP as the plane picks up speed on the runway.

INTERCUT PHONE SEQUENCE.

SAAR
 I CAN'T TALK ANY PLAINER!

CHRIS
 It's very loud on your end!

SAAR
 I'M GOING UP, BUDDY! NEXT STOP, THE
 WILD FUCKING BLUE YONDER!

Saar pulls back on the throttle. The Cessna lifts off, kisses the ground, and lifts off again, slightly off kilter.

SAAR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 WHAAHEE!

IN HIS OFFICE--

Chris hangs up out of frustration.

I/E. STUDENT DRIVER VEHICLE/PARKING LOT - DAY

MAGGIE, 16, a mischievous little redhead, maneuvers the car deftly into a parking spot, pulls up the emergency brake, slides the gear shift into Park, and flashes a winning smile at Chris, in the passenger seat.

CHRIS
 I guess you think you're ready for
 the road?

MAGGIE
 Absolutely.
 (equivocal)
 Aren't I?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A LOUD HUM gets LOUDER very quickly. A plane passes directly over the car, flying extremely low. Maggie and Chris duck reflexively, then, watch through the windshield as the tail of the low flying Cessna veers away from the them.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Moron.

Chris hops out and watches the small plane arc off to his right, circle back, and head straight toward him, flying very low.

INT. CESSNA 172 - DAY

Rock music BLARES inside the cabin. Saar stares out the windshield at...

... Chris, looking up, haplessly, forty feet below.

IN THE PARKING LOT--

Chris pivots and watches the Cessna as it streams past, picks up altitude, and banks left.

Maggie gets out of the car and leans on the car.

MAGGIE

You know that guy?

CHRIS

(squinting)

No. I don't know.

They watch the plane disappear beyond the treeline.

MAGGIE

For a small island, we sure have our share of jerkoffs.

(ominously, only half-kidding)

You don't think it's a terrorist attack, do you?

He looks dubiously at her, then back at the treeline.

EXT. ISLAND DRIVING SCHOOL - DAY (AN HOUR LATER)

Marina's at the blackboard teaching another GROUP of TEEN ZOMBIES as...

... Chris comes through the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA
 (to Chris)
 Whoever that was before called
 back.

CHRIS
 He leave a number?

MARINA
 Nope.

An INDUSTRIOUS TEEN takes advantage of the opportunity and bangs out a text message under the table. Marina doesn't miss a beat.

MARINA (CONT'D)
 Don't you dare do that when I'm
 talking. You do it in here, you'll
 do it behind the wheel. Now turn
 that stupid thing off!

IN THE OFFICE--

Chris sits at his desk. He picks up the phone and checks the caller ID. It reads: PRIVATE CALLER.

INT. CHRIS'S KITCHEN - DUSK

Chris has a half-eaten pizza still in the cardboard box in front of him at the table. He gets up, hesitates, then crosses to the kitchen counter. He lifts the lid off a cookie jar and takes out a blue feather. His finger glides along its fine hairs.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY WAITING ROOM - DAY (FIVE YEARS EARLIER)

Chris sits on a ubiquitous orange plastic chair staring at the floor. Behind him...

A DOCTOR speaks in HUSHED tones to a DUTY NURSE behind the main desk. She shakes her head solemnly and looks at Chris as the Doctor turns away and walks somberly down a corridor.

EMT WORKER (O.S.)
 Excuse me.

A FEMALE EMT stands beside Chris. She's young, obviously distraught, and nervous.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMT WORKER (CONT'D)

May I?

Chris is unresponsive, nearly catatonic.

EMT WORKER (CONT'D)

I just wanted to say how sorry I am
for your loss.

She removes a blue feather from her jacket pocket.

EMT WORKER (CONT'D)

I found this inside the vehicle,
on your wife's lap. No one seems to
know how it got there. It's
probably nothing but I wasn't sure
if it had any significance so...
I'm very sorry.

She hands him the blue feather. Chris stares blankly. A phone
RINGS behind them at the main desk.

INT. CHRIS'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS IN THE PRESENT

The phone RINGS, bringing Chris back. He picks up.

CHRIS

Yes?

INTERCUT WITH JAAGUP SAAR ON THE BALCONY OF A WATERFRONT
VILLA:

Jaagup Saar wears an expensive silk robe over a bathing suit
and looks out at the Atlantic ocean across a wide stretch of
flat beach. He has a BANDAGE on one arm.

SAAR

(into cell)

That was me today. In the plane.

CHRIS

(still distracted)

I'm sorry. Am I supposed to know
you?

SAAR

Did you eat yet?

CHRIS

Who is this?

Saar plays with his belly button.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAAR

There's a place just off the island. It looks like shithole from the road. Well, it is shithole, but the foods good and nobody's got a stick up his ass. What do you say? My treat.

CHRIS

(to himself)
This is ridiculous.

Through Chris's earpiece...

SAAR'S VOICE (O.S.)

WHAT THE FUCK?

Chris looks at his phone in dismay.

ON THE BALCONY--

Saar gawks at a REMARKABLE LOOKING WOMAN in a moderately low-cut blouse and skirt. Her hair is cropped short and looks almost as if it were molting, making it difficult to pin down the exact color. Her features appear unformed, inchoate, yet somehow, they add up to make her beautiful; in the way a fragile nestling is beautiful.

SAAR

(in Estonian, subtitled)
You want your tits popping out?
(in English, into cell)
Her tits are popping out!
(in Estonian, subtitled)
Change!

The woman cowers before him and rushes off the balcony into the villa.

SAAR (CONT'D)

(into cell)
How about it, buddy? I got to eat.
My fucking toes are hungry.

CHRIS

I'm hanging up now.

SAAR

Okay, listen, I'll try you later. I get cranky too, when I don't eat. Right now I got to get this fucking woman out the door. Hey!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAAR (CONT'D)

You like to fly? I take you up
sometime. Okay, I got to eat.

He hangs up and stomps off the balcony with a full head of
steam.

SAAR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Kaja!

(in Estonian, subtitled)

Let's go before I eat the fucking
chair!

INT. CHRIS'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Chris looks around as if he's losing his mind. He puts the
feather into the jar and closes the lid.

INT. CHRIS'S GARAGE - NIGHT

DARKNESS: A light switch flicks on revealing a two car
garage.

Chris looks at an automobile hidden beneath a protective
cover. He walks around the car and pulls the dusty cover off,
exposing a '55 turquoise Thunderbird convertible in mint
condition.

He climbs inside. His hand caresses the wheel. The seduction
begins. Memories flood back.

EXT. CAR FERRY - DAY (SIX YEARS EARLIER)

Chris and Trish huddle close together in the front seat of
the Thunderbird bracing against the wind. Kelly sits on top
of the rear backrest, her blonde hair blowing wildly in the
breeze.

Trish turns and smiles at Kelly, then nuzzles into Chris.
They hunker down. She kisses him. A good one.

INT. CHRIS'S GARAGE - CONTINUOUS IN THE PRESENT

The memories come at a price. Chris is a man in deep, deep
pain. He looks to be on the verge of an emotional meltdown.

INT. CHRIS'S BATHROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

He brushes his teeth, spits into the sink, and stares somewhere beyond his reflection in the mirror.

INT. KELLY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kelly's bedroom is a shrine. Softball trophies on a shelf... stuffed animals on the bed... a jewelry box on a bureau... out-dated posters on the walls.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chris gets into bed and looks at a photograph on the night table: Trish holds BABY KELLY in her arms on the Trieste.

CHRIS

Night, monkeys.

He turns off the light and stares into the darkness.

DREAM SEQ. - EXT. SAME RESIDENTIAL INTERSECTION - DAY

Chris perches on a tree limb in the large oak. He looks down at Trish and Kelly pulling up to the stop sign in the '68 Mustang. They share a laugh, then pull forward as...

A Cessna 172 flies very low up the street heading straight toward them.

Chris stands alone in the middle of the intersection, directly in the path of the Cessna. The plane looms larger, closing in fast. The engine SCREAMS. Its wings tilt ominously.

Chris turns in time to see Trish and Kelly's terrified faces staring back at him, pleading.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eyes flash open. Chris's breathing fills the vacuum left by the dream.

EXT. SAME RESIDENTIAL INTERSECTION - MORNING

A blazing hot Saturday. Chris stands under the massive oak looking out across the quiet intersection.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA (O.S.)
I knew I'd find you here.

Marina moves alongside him, sliding her arm through his. He's a million miles away.

CHRIS
They just pulled up.

Marina's eyes glisten, his pain becoming hers.

MARINA
That was five years ago, Chris.

CHRIS
The police said he must have been doing seventy.

Something in his peripheral vision distracts him. Further up the street...

Jaagup Saar leans against another oak, watching them. Chris walks right past Marina.

MARINA
Chris?

CHRIS
(over his shoulder)
I'll call you later. And thanks.

Saar sits on the curb and watches Chris walk up the street. He takes a pipe from his shirt pocket and fills it with tobacco. Chris stops about ten yards away. They regard one another.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
What do you want from me?

Saar lights the pipe; his voice calm, measured.

SAAR
I gave up cigarettes two years ago. Doctor's orders. That fucking guy's dead now and I'm addicted to this stupid thing. Be easier giving up pussy.

CHRIS
Go to hell.

He turns and walks away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAAR

I'm already there, buddy. Just like you.

Chris stops, turns.

CHRIS

I don't know you.

SAAR

Suit yourself.

Chris walks on.

SAAR (CONT'D)

My name is Saar. Jaagup Saar.

Chris slows his pace. Saar taps the pipe against the tree. Fiery bits of tobacco spill out and scorch the dry grass.

SAAR (CONT'D)

My son Andres killed your family.

Chris's moment of revelation. Saar gets up and walks directly past him toward the intersection. Chris watches him, then follows.

CHRIS

How did you know I'd be here?

SAAR

It was five years ago.

(checking his watch)

It was right about now. Am I right?

(chuckling)

Where else would you be? Wal-Mart.

They stand together looking out at the intersection.

SAAR (CONT'D)

I was on my way out the door when the phone rings. This is at my home in Amsterdam. A voice comes on and says my son Andres is dead. It says he kills a woman and her daughter, and I think... if he was alive, I'd kill him myself with these hands.

Chris looks at the street; his confluence to the past and present.

CHRIS

I live... not too far from here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAAR
(nodding)
I follow you.

Saar walks up the street toward a shiny new Porsche. He tosses his pipe nonchalantly onto someone's front lawn. Chris watches him, then turns toward his company car.

EXT. CHRIS'S REAR DECK - DAY

Saar sits under an umbrella at an outdoor table. Chris puts a beer in front of him and sits.

SAAR
Not for you?

CHRIS
A little early for me.

SAAR
Hmm. You got rules, heh?

CHRIS
Was that your wife you were speaking to yesterday on the phone?

SAAR
(a brusque laugh)
No. Kaja's just a whore.
(an awkward moment)
A nice whore. With a kind heart.
(changing the subject)
How old your daughter would be now?

CHRIS
I'm not prepared to talk about my daughter if you don't mind.

SAAR
Sorry, buddy. I'm a crude man. You got to cut me slack.

CHRIS
Please. Call me Chris. Look, I'm sorry, it's just that it's hard around... I want to call it an anniversary but that doesn't sound right somehow, does it? Someone needs to come up with a new word.
(slight pause)
What about your son?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAAR

Andres. He'd be twenty-seven now. He used to talk about being a doctor someday. That was never going to happen.

CHRIS

Was he in medical school?

SAAR

No. Never got that far. He took a year off from college, you know, to get his head on straight. One year becomes two. I have a villa here. On the beach. Andres was living there. He liked the lifestyle. Partying all night, sleeping all day. Too much like his father.

CHRIS

Are you married, Mr. Saar?

SAAR

Jaagup. You call me, Jaagup. No. No, I'm not married. My wife kills herself four years ago.

(quietly, to his beer)

Merrily, merrily, merrily, heh? So? Now you teach kids safe driving. That's your salvation?

CHRIS

Salvation? No. I wouldn't call it that. I used to be an attorney until that stopped making sense.

SAAR

But you still look for reason. You don't show up today unless you look for reason.

(draining his beer)

Got to go.

CHRIS

Well, thank you for introducing yourself.

Saar gets up to leave.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

We can have that dinner tonight if you still want to? If you're free, that is?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAAR

Yeah?

(a big grin)

You bet! I tell you! You come to my villa tonight, heh? How's that?

CHRIS

(smiling, in spite of himself)

Okay. If that's what you want. Where are you?

SAAR

Don't worry. I send car for you.

CHRIS

You don't have to do that.

SAAR

I don't have to do anything. I want to. Eight o'clock. Okay?

CHRIS

Okay, Jaagup.

SAAR

Okay, buddy.

Saar takes the deck steps two at a time, rifling through his pockets as he goes.

SAAR (CONT'D)

Where'd I put that fucking pipe?

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING

Chris buttons a short sleeve shirt. The doorbell RINGS.

IN THE FOYER--

Chris opens the front door.

ON THE LANDING--

She stands with her back to him, wearing a simple sleeveless summer dress. It shows off her supple physique. As she turns, Chris tries hard not to stare, but her eyes captivate. They dart about.

CHRIS

Hello.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her eyes settle on him. Her head tilts at a slight angle.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You must be... Kaja?

The hint of a smile.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I'm Chris.

They regard one another. Her voice is soft, with an accent like Saar's.

KAJA
Chris.

CHRIS
Shall we go?

She holds out the car keys.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Okay. I'll drive.

INT. PORSCHE - EARLY EVENING

Chris, behind the wheel, casts a furtive glance at Kaja as she closes her eyes and breathes in the fragrant night air through tiny nostrils.

They take off up the street.

EXT. OCEANFRONT VILLA/TERRACE - EVENING

Japanese lanterns illuminate the stone terrace. Chris and Kaja emerge through the French doors of the villa onto the terrace.

Saar's in the jacuzzi. He drinks from a nearly empty champagne bottle.

SAAR
Hey, buddy! You made it! Come on,
hop in!

Chris is embarrassed.

CHRIS
I'm afraid I didn't bring a suit.

Saar stands up. He's naked.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAAR
Come on! Get in!
(pointing at the villa)
Kaja! Cook dinner!

She looks away.

CHRIS
I think I'll pass this time.

SAAR
Okay, okay. I get the hint.

He climbs out of the jacuzzi and hands Chris the empty champagne bottle on his way inside.

SAAR (CONT'D)
Give me two minutes.

Chris looks conspicuously around the terrace. Kaja takes the champagne bottle from him and goes into the villa. A moment later, she reappears with a fresh bottle and two flute glasses.

CHRIS
Here. Let me do that.

He opens the champagne and pours. They raise their glasses in an awkward, silent toast.

KAJA
Cook.

He watches her retreat through the French doors. A moment later, the harsh sound of a towel SNAPPING, then Kaja's SCREAM.

Saar bounds onto the terrace, laughing, drying his hair with the towel. He wears a Hawaiian shirt and a pair of shorts.

SAAR
You like Kaja?

CHRIS
She's lovely.

Saar leans into Chris, a little drunkenly.

SAAR
She fuck you like...
(sans metaphor)
... good whore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS

Please don't do that. Don't talk like that.

SAAR

It's okay, buddy. She don't hardly speak any English.

He grabs the champagne bottle from Chris and takes a long swig from the bottle.

SAAR (CONT'D)

You like my villa?

CHRIS

It's very nice.

SAAR

I like that they call it villa, not house. It sounds classier, right?

(elbowing him)

How much you think?

CHRIS

I have no idea.

SAAR

Go on. Guess.

CHRIS

I don't know.

SAAR

Guess!

CHRIS

Three million! How the hell should I know what you paid for your house. Villa! Whatever you...

Saar laughs and throws his arm around Chris.

SAAR

I like you, buddy, you know that? What's it going to take to pop that bubble of yours, heh? What?

CHRIS

I don't have a bubble. There are just some things you don't bring up in conversation. And please stop calling me buddy.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It's not like we're old friends
from high school or something.

SAAR

(laughing)

Okay, okay. Easy does it. Come on.
Let's sit down and we'll get drunk,
okay? You and me. We drink all the
champagne in my fridgerator. What
do you say? Let's have some fun!

They sit in two lounge chairs facing each other. Chris shakes
his head disparagingly; annoyed, but longing to burst free
from himself and abandon his wretched bubble.

CHRIS

(barely audible)

Alright.

SAAR

What do you say?

CHRIS

I said yes. Yes!

Saar wheels around in his seat.

SAAR

Kaja! KAJA!

She appears at the French doors. Saar holds up the bottle.

SAAR (CONT'D)

More champagne for my buddy!

(clapping his hands)

And music, hey! Kaja! Music!

(to Chris)

You like sexy bossa nova, yeah? It
get your blood pumping. You damn
right!

(animated, singing Jobim)

Afloat, adrift

A flight, a wing

A hawk, a quail

The promise of spring.

Chris laughs, caught up in the insanity. Kaja rushes onto the
terrace with a fresh bottle of champagne. Saar leads her
drunkenly across the terrace in a spontaneous tango.

SAAR (CONT'D)

(singing Jobim)

A sliver of glass

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A life, the sun
A knife, a death
The end of the run.

Kaja pulls away and hurries inside.

KAJA

Cook.

Abandoned, Saar feigns disappointment, then opens his arms to Chris.

SAAR

Buddddy?

CHRIS

No, no.

Saar doubles over with laughter and howls up at the full moon.

SAAR

OUUUUUUU! OUUUUUUUUUUU!

KAJA (O.S.)

Jaagup! Vaikne.

Kaja's at the French doors. She holds a finger to her lips.

SAAR

Okay, okay. Can't even have fun.
Only quiet fun.

Kaja goes back inside. Saar stares lasciviously at the empty spot where she stood.

SAAR (CONT'D)

You like quiet fun, buddy? I like quiet fun.

Another uncomfortable moment for Chris.

CHRIS

Are we getting drunk or not?

SAAR

Fuck, yeah! You bet!

He POPS the cork and thrusts the bottle to Chris.

SAAR (CONT'D)

Now we have our own bottles. Just like babies.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAAR (CONT'D)

Two big fat happy babies. You're not fat though. One big fat happy baby. One regular. Now what do we drink to, heh? Big tits? I know, I know!

Chris braces himself for another inappropriate remark.

SAAR (CONT'D)

Flying.

CHRIS

(relieved)

Flying? Alright. Sure. To flying.

Saar drinks from his bottle, then urges Chris to do likewise.

SAAR

Come on, drink like a man with a thirst, for God's sake! Go on, I'm not going to tell anybody.

Chris takes a long pull on the champagne.

SAAR (CONT'D)

Good. Good! You know best part of flying?

CHRIS

(without thinking)

The freedom.

Saar stares at him, quite drunk now. He points a finger.

SAAR

You know. How you know? Let me ask you something, buddy. You think like me that man is a fool? A big, dumb, stupid fool?

CHRIS

I'm afraid I can't answer that one.

SAAR

I think so. I think man is a big, dumb, stupid...

Saar takes another swig and gazes up at the early stars. Chris watches him retreat into himself, hoping he'll fall asleep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAAR (CONT'D)
 (softly)
 I envy you, buddy.

His arms stretch out. He holds the bottle in one hand and rises. His large frame sways from side to side.

SAAR (CONT'D)
 Freedom. Like bird.

He glides drunkenly around the terrace, surprisingly light on his feet, wings outstretched; a big, fat, happy bird. Hopping up onto the short stone wall, he leaps off, initiating flight, and crashes headlong into the sand on the other side.

Chris rushes over.

CHRIS
 Are you alright?

Saar rolls onto his back, hugging the bottle.

SAAR
 Stupid drunk bird.

Chris offers a hand. Saar pulls himself up and draws Chris into a tight, bullish embrace.

SAAR (CONT'D)
 There's another reason I envy you, buddy. You're kind to people you don't even like.

He brushes past him.

CHRIS
 It's not that I don't like you.

SAAR
 It's alright. Forget about it. Come. We drink like teenage boys, yeah? Little pricks.

He takes a swig, cackles at his own frailty, and challenges the moon.

SAAR (CONT'D)
 (subdued)
 Ouuuuu.
 (laughing hysterically)
 Ouuuuuuuuu.

LATER THAT NIGHT--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They eat lobster by candlelight at an outdoor table.

Saar's boozy from the drink. Kaja works lobster meat deftly from a claw with delicate fingers while Chris studies her face, trying to be inconspicuous. She looks at his plate and raises an eyebrow.

CHRIS
It's very good.

Saar grunts and stuffs his face.

Without warning, a GREAT BLUE HERON swoops down and lands on the terrace wall. Everyone is silent, awestruck. Kaja's eyes twinkle with delight. They dart back and forth from the heron to Chris. Electricity fills the air.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(whispering)
I've never seen one do that.

Kaja takes a lobster claw from her plate, moves cautiously to the wall, and sits a short distance away from the heron. She removes some meat from the claw, places it between her lips, and tilts her head back at a slight angle.

The heron waits, then walks gingerly toward her on great spindly legs. Gently, it stretches out its neck and accepts the offering with its beak.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(with quiet awe)
My God.

Kaja places another helping between her lips. The heron studies her, takes the lobster, swallows, and waits for more. Kaja extends her hand. The heron backs off, stops, inches closer, and lets her caress its mantle.

Kaja smiles triumphantly. Chris beams at her. Kaja CLAPS her hands.

KAJA
Lendama!

The heron takes off in a GREAT FLUTTER of wings. They watch it fly off into the luminous night sky.

Kaja returns to the table and places a napkin in her lap, trying hard to contain her delight.

CHRIS
I've never seen anything like that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAAR
 She's crazy for birds.
 (darkly)
 Like her mother.

He makes the international crazy sign, looping an index finger around his temple. Kaja looks at him without comprehending.

SAAR (CONT'D)
 (subtitled, in Estonian)
 Crazy. For birds.

He flaps his arms half-heartedly. Chris watches Kaja, entranced by her enigmatic beauty.

CHRIS
 Does she miss... ? Do you miss your home, Kaja?

She looks at him with wide eyes.

SAAR
 Answer him.
 (in Estonian, subtitled)
 You miss that shithole you grew up in?

She stares at the table.

CHRIS
 It's alright. You don't have to answer.

She looks up at Chris and smiles.

SAAR
 If you two want to fuck, you should go upstairs.
 (to Chris)
 Don't worry. She doesn't understand a word I say.

CHRIS
 That's still no excuse.

SAAR
 Okay, okay, boy scout. I apologize.

CHRIS
 Not to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAAR

(in Estonian, subtitled)
Kaja, he wants to take you for walk
and fuck you on beach.

CHRIS

What did you say... exactly?

SAAR

I apologize and ask her to take you
for nice walk on beach. I have to
make some calls. Business. Can't be
helped.

CHRIS

A walk would be nice.

(to Kaja)

Is that alright? Would you like to
go for a walk?

SAAR

Go on, already. Have fun.

He grabs the wine bottle from the table and lumbers off
toward the villa.

SAAR (CONT'D)

Good... quiet... fun.

Chris reaches out his hand to Kaja.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

They stroll barefoot through the surf. Kaja stops and gazes
up at the full moon. It pulls at her like the tide. Her eyes
drink it in. Chris looks up, then, at her.

CHRIS

Beautiful.

She walks on the beach, away from the water, and turns to
face him.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You want to sit down?

He walks over to her and sits in the sand. She plops down
directly in front of him. They watch the surf until she leans
back into him. Her hair brushes his face.

Chris is paralyzed. Finally, his hand finds its way onto her
bare shoulder and traces small circles where the skin peels.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You're peeling.

She leans forward, waits. He lowers the zipper on the back of her dress. She stands and lets it fall to the sand. Slipping out of her bra and panties, she runs down to the surf and dives in.

Powerless and under her spell, Chris strips off his clothing and follows her into the surf. They swim around each other. She folds up neatly in his arms, buckling her legs up around his chest. He turns her in a half-circle, casting her in moonlight.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You don't weigh anything at all.
It's like holding air.

EXT. OCEANFRONT VILLA/BALCONY - SIMULTANEOUS

SAAR'S POV THROUGH BINOCULARS: Chris kisses Kaja tenderly, then passionately.

Saar lowers the binoculars, drinks from the wine bottle, and dials a cell phone.

SAAR
(into cell)
Wake up, bloodsucker. I want to
make a will.

EXT. IN THE SURF - SIMULTANEOUS

Chris and Kaja kiss.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - MORNING

A TAP on the window. Chris rouses in bed. A voice filters through the ether.

SAAR (O.S.)
Hey! Buddy!

Chris squints in disbelief. Saar grins at him through the window.

CHRIS
What the... ?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Saar holds up two paper cups.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

SAAR
I got coffee.

Chris points toward the front of the house. Saar doesn't move.

CHRIS
Go around.

Saar nods and disappears from view.

IN THE HALLWAY--

Chris hops on one foot, pulling up his pants.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I don't believe this.

He opens the front door. Saar pushes past him into the house.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Jaagup? What the hell's going on?
Do you know what time it is?

Chris looks at his wrist and sees he's not wearing a watch.

SAAR
No shit, buddy! Come on, we got to go!

IN THE KITCHEN--

Saar rifles through the cabinets.

SAAR (CONT'D)
You got any Pop Tarts? My blood sugar's low.

CHRIS
Are you diabetic or something?

SAAR
Isn't everybody?

CHRIS
I have oranges. That's about it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAAR

I really feel like a Pop Tart, but
if that's all you got.

He grabs an orange from a bowl on the counter and starts for
the door.

SAAR (CONT'D)

Let's go, let's go! I eat it on the
way.

CHRIS

On the way where?

Saar looks at him with disbelief.

SAAR

I told you before. We're going up.
Only you got to put a shirt on. I
don't take you like that.

CHRIS

Going up? You mean flying? There's
no way I'm going flying with you.
You can forget about that. It's not
going to happen.

SAAR

Listen to me now, okay? I don't
come here for anniversary or
whatever you want to call it.
Understand? I come for you.

CHRIS

Jaagup, I appreciate what you're
trying to do. Really. It's just...
it's six-thirty in the morning.

Saar sits at the kitchen table, stung by Chris's reaction.

SAAR

Maybe I don't explain it good.
Something happens up there. This
foolishness...

He pinches the skin on one arm.

SAAR (CONT'D)

It goes away. Up there, you're
free. You see, buddy, I can't make
up to you what happen, but maybe I
can give you that. Freedom. Just
for a little while.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Chris is disarmed. For the first time, Saar appears to be a human being.

CHRIS

Alright. Let me put a shirt on...
and we'll go flying. For a little
while anyway.

SAAR

Okay, buddy.
(with renewed vigor)
Go on and get dressed.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Chris throws on a T-shirt and dials the phone.

CHRIS

Hey, listen, sorry to call so
early. Any chance you can take
Maggie Gilmore out for an on-road
this morning?

INTERCUT WITH MARINA IN HER BEDROOM:

She's in bed alongside her daughter, SAMMY, 4.

MARINA

(groggy)
I guess so, but you owe me. What's
the big emergency?

CHRIS

I'm going flying.

MARINA

What?

CHRIS

I'll explain later.

MARINA

You're damn right you will. Be
careful. And call me. I want
details.

She hangs up. Sammy stirs beside her. Marina tucks a fuzzy stuffed alligator under her chin.

MARINA (CONT'D)

Go back to sleep, baby.

INT. SAAR'S PORSCHE - MORNING

Saar's behind the wheel. The passenger door opens. Chris gets in the passenger seat.

SAAR
Ready, buddy? I'm going to change
your life today.

CHRIS
I doubt that.

The Porsche backs onto the street and PEELS OUT. Halfway up the block it SCREECHES to a halt.

Chris gets out, walks around the rear of the vehicle, and opens the driver's side door. Saar steps out and walks around to the passenger's side. Chris gets in behind the wheel.

The Porsche drives off at a normal rate of speed.

I/E. CESSNA 172/HILTON HEAD AIRPORT

The Cessna races up the runway. Chris struggles to smile as the plane leaves the ground.

SAAR
First time in small plane?

Chris tries to look enthusiastic.

SAAR (CONT'D)
Don't worry. You're in good hands.

TIME CUT: OVER THE ATLANTIC COASTLINE

The view is spectacular as they follow the coastline south.

SAAR (CONT'D)
What do you say now?

CHRIS
It's just like you said.

A brief silence.

SAAR
I want you to think of me as your
friend.

Chris glances at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAAR (CONT'D)

I need to ask you something personal.

CHRIS

Alright.

SAAR

How often you think about killing yourself?

Chris struggles to contain his anger.

CHRIS

Turn the plane around.

SAAR

Not until you answer the question.

CHRIS

I said turn it around!

SAAR

Easy, buddy, okay? Anyone who says they don't think about it sometimes is probably too stupid to know they were fucked to begin with.

CHRIS

Jesus Christ, you're the most ignorant man I ever met!

(pause)

I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. Just... please turn us around.

Saar continues to look out the windshield.

SAAR

I can't do that, buddy.

CHRIS

What do you want?

Without warning, Saar dips the plane's nose.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

They descend rapidly. Chris grabs the door strap.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Are you mad?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The engine SCREAMS!

CHRIS (CONT'D)
GODDAMN IT, JAAGUP! STOP!

THEY HURTLE TOWARD THE OCEAN!

CHRIS (CONT'D)
ALRIGHT! ALRIGHT!

SAAR
YES?

CHRIS
YES!

Saar struggles mightily to bring the nose up. The plane shakes violently under the strain. After a harrowing ten seconds he regains control and levels them off.

A uneasy silence follows.

SAAR
That wasn't so bad.

Chris stares at him in disbelief.

CHRIS
I knew it the first time you called. You're out of your fucking mind. I must be half-mad myself, letting you drag me up here.

Gradually, his anger dissipates.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
That first year I lived with a constant image of them in my head. Whenever I closed my eyes, all I saw was their terrified faces. Some mornings I'd wake up and for a split second everything was normal. Trish was in the kitchen making breakfast. Kelly was still asleep in her bed. Then it would all come rushing back. Some days I'd be a willing victim. I let it pull me down into the abyss. Into blackness ... like a grave. The only way to get through a day was to tell myself I was doing it for them. To carry on their memory.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS (CONT'D)

If I couldn't do that, who would be here to remember them?

(looking at Saar)

I keep them alive. If I die, they cease to be.

He searches Saar's face for any sign of fraternity or understanding.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You have no idea what I'm talking about, do you? There's something going on inside that head of yours but I'll be damned if I know what it is. Can you feel anything at all? Is it really enough for you... that fucking villa on the ocean you're so proud of, or this ridiculous airplane? Maybe none of it makes sense anymore and it's eating at you because you're dying inside.

Saar stares straight ahead, impassive.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I recognize it because I'm dying inside as well.

He looks out at the low clouds partially obscuring the Atlantic from view.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

What is it you really want, Jaagup? You want to know why I don't just get it over with? Like your wife? You want to know why I don't just put a gun in my mouth and blow the top of my fucking head off? Isn't it obvious? I'm afraid to die. Ironic, isn't it? Here I am, as good as dead... and I'm afraid to die.

A long moment.

SAAR

I like you, buddy. I really do.

CHRIS

Would you please turn this thing around now? I'd like to go home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAAR

No problem.

He initiates a wide turn.

SAAR (CONT'D)

You want to know what I see when I look at the world? I see filthy, grubby little fingers just like mine grabbing at everything they can't keep. Money. Power. Sex. Babababa.

(clenching a fist)

You ball it all up tight in your fist and strangle the fucking life right out of it. But not you, right? You don't want anything from life because you walked away from it five years ago. Maybe you're right. Maybe we should all become Buddhists and go live on a fucking mountaintop somewhere. Funny, heh? I never cry for my Andres. Not once. You educated people, you think everybody's supposed to love everybody else. Suppose you don't get that gene? Hmm? What then, buddy? You tell me what then?

His emotions blind-side him.

SAAR (CONT'D)

You tell me what I'm supposed to do then?

He PUNCHES the instrument panel.

SAAR (CONT'D)

You must know I come for you, Chris! For your life!

CHRIS

What are you talking about?

SAAR

To give you, maybe best gift you ever got!

CHRIS

(frightened)

Look, I appreciate what you're trying to do, Jaagup, I really do.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS (CONT'D)

But there's nothing you can give me that will change anything. You have to know that!

SAAR

Suppose you're wrong?

CHRIS

I'm not.

SAAR

Suppose!

Another wave of emotion washes over him.

SAAR (CONT'D)

You have to help her! Help her and maybe you help yourself!

CHRIS

Help who? Kaja?

SAAR

Not Kaja.
(crying)
Kaja's dead.

CHRIS

What?

SAAR

I killed her. Just the same as if I pulled the trigger.

CHRIS

Jaagup? You're not making sense.

He PUNCHES the dashboard.

SAAR

Kaja's dead! She's dead! You have to free the daughter! She's messenger! She's not bound to this earth! Not like us! Set her free. Set her free! You're the only one who can!

Saar forces his door open. A DEAFENING ROAR as air rushes into the cabin. Chris's face registers what's about to happen.

CHRIS

JAAGUP! DON'T DO THIS!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAAR
LENDAMA!

He leaps out of the plane.

Chris watches Saar fall to the earth; his arms spread wide like useless wings as he disappears into a thin layer of clouds. Paralyzed with fear, Chris stares straight ahead as the plane drifts ever downward until it becomes obscured by clouds.

FADE TO WHITE:

A WHITE BACKGROUND:

A woman's hand moves a steaming iron back and forth.

SUPER: (RED LETTERING)

-- AMSTERDAM

INT. BRICK LOFT - NIGHT

VITA WESTERGAARD presses a man's white dress shirt in the darkened loft. Her wispy blond hair is tangled and unwashed. She's 32, thin, angular, and fiercely pretty. Steam rises up around her face.

"DING."

She abandons the iron on the shirt, turns her chiseled jawline in the direction of the "DING," and walks slowly over to a laptop computer on a table. A cruel flick of her index finger against the mouse wakes the screen.

She sits on an office chair and dials her cell.

VITA
(a crisp Dutch accent)
You got a hit. Just now! Why do you
think I'm calling?
(hanging up)
Idiot.

The screen reads:

-- THE ISLAND TIMES, HILTON HEAD, S.C.

MAN LEAPS FROM PLANE!
LEAVES FRIEND TO DIE!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She clicks on the headline. The story includes a photo of Saar. Her eyes scan the screen. She laughs and turns the office chair around and around. The room spins. Behind her:

The white shirt succumbs to the iron and BURSTS INTO FLAMES.

AN HOUR LATER--

A wooden match IGNITES, lighting a slender Zino Cigarillo. Vita lies in bed wearing only a black bra and panties. She draws the smoke into her mouth and exhales.

Her husband, PALLE WESTERGAARD, 38, lies alongside her stroking his ever-present five o'clock shadow. He has a benign tumor the size of an egg on his forehead. They've just made love or something like it. He waves a hand, dispersing wisps of Vita's smoke, and speaks with a calm, detached accent.

PALLE

Amazing how it smells like dung.

His hair is jet black; a stark contrast to the spiffy white T-shirt he wears. He grabs a handful of Vita's hair.

PALLE (CONT'D)

When are you going to wash your hair? It's disgusting.

She lets out an impudent little puff.

VITA

Why don't you eat me?

PALLE

Shower and I'd consider it.

He pulls his white briefs up under the covers, goes over to the laptop, and sits.

VITA

How many times are you going to read it?

He ignores her. She blows more smoke.

PALLE

Did you press my shirts?

VITA

Oh my God, I want to jump out of a fucking plane! Yes! I pressed your precious white shirts!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VITA (CONT'D)

Why don't you get a job in a bank
and jerkoff all day with the other
starchy white assholes.

He stares at her without expression.

PALLE

When you fall asleep tonight, I'm
going to cut off all your hair and
stuff it into a little pillowcase
to help me sleep on the plane.

She squirms around seductively under the covers.

VITA

Promise?

With great calm, he takes a pair of scissors from the desk
and goes over to the bed.

PALLE

I'll do it now if you like.

She turns over, grinning madly; their little game.

VITA

Why don't you cut my head off while
you're at it?

PALLE

One day I probably will.

He yanks back the sheet, exposing her perfect ass beneath the
black panties. He traces a finger along the back of her
thigh.

PALLE (CONT'D)

I'll need a gun when I get there.

VITA

It's America. They sell them in the
supermarkets.

PALLE

Maybe when I get my money back,
I'll buy you expensive shampoo.

She flips over, grinning like the Cheshire cat.

VITA

You mean our money, don't you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PALLE

How did it get to be our money?

She slips a hand inside his briefs and begins to work him.

VITA

Oh, but I earn it. You know I earn it.

PALLE

Why is it important to you... to be such a dirty little piggy?

VITA

Don't you know? It's so I can drag you down into the gutter and defile you.

She continues to work him. He leans back against the headboard and shuts his eyes.

PALLE

Palle and Piggy had a race.

VITA

All around the pillow case.

Her head disappears from view.

PALLE

Piggy went down...

Ecstasy. He holds a white pillow against his chest and winces with pleasure... or pain?

FADE TO WHITE:

A WHITE BACKGROUND:

A child's hand draws a colorful bird with a crayon.

EXT. MARINA'S BACKYARD - DAY

Little Sammy sits at a bulky plastic play table drawing a bird on white construction paper.

Nearby, Marina sips lemonade at a picnic table in the small, sparsely landscaped backyard. Chris sits across from her. He has a small bandage on his forehead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA
Where are you?

CHRIS
Hmm?

MARINA
You're not here.

CHRIS
Oh. Sorry.

MARINA
Maybe you ought to think about
going away for a while?

CHRIS
(ironically)
Like on an airplane?

MARINA
You could drive.

CHRIS
Yeah. I probably don't spend enough
time in cars.

MARINA
What about the Trieste?

CHRIS
What about it?

MARINA
Sammy! Put your hands over your
ears for a sec.

Sammy smiles and does as she's told.

MARINA (CONT'D)
You're being an asshole.

CHRIS
Agreed.

MARINA
So that's it? You're just gonna go
on pretending nothing happened?

CHRIS
I'm not sure of anything right now
except that I'd like to get on with
my life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMMY

Mommy?

MARINA

Put 'em down, honey!

Sammy drops her hands and goes back to drawing.

MARINA (CONT'D)

(to Chris)

That's not gonna be so easy with your face plastered all over the news. It's like you've been elected mayor of Bizarro land. This whole thing is just...

(catching herself)

... friggin' weird.

(looks at Sammy's drawing)

That's great, Sam!

SAMMY

I know!

CHRIS

Listen, I need a favor. Can you cover my class this afternoon? I'm supposed to meet with Saar's lawyer.

MARINA

Yeah, I guess. I saw him on the news the other day. He came off like your typical D-Bag shyster. Hey, remember that guy Kenny I used to date?

CHRIS

Used to?

MARINA

He bailed out, too. Only he didn't leave me his house. Sorry. Villa!

CHRIS

Maybe I'll just hand the keys over to you.

MARINA

What? And give up all this splendor for a palace right on the beach? Not a chance.

(sipping lemonade)

Any news on what's her name?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS

Kaja. It's like she dropped off the face of the earth.

MARINA

Maybe she has.

CHRIS

I don't know. Saar was a lot of things, but I don't see him as a murderer.

MARINA

Don't forget you'd be dead right now if you didn't manage to land that plane. What do the police say?

CHRIS

As far as they're concerned, she doesn't exist. There's no record of her ever being here. There's no passport, no visa, nothing.

MARINA

Not even a body. Sorry. You liked her, didn't you?

CHRIS

I'll take your class tomorrow if you want.

MARINA

Fine. Be that way.
(mumbling)
Asshole.

Sammy rushes over with her drawing.

SAMMY

Look, Mommy!

Marina lifts her onto her lap.

MARINA

That's beautiful, baby! Where'd you learn to draw like that?

(to Chris)

She didn't get it from my side.

(to Sammy)

Shall we show Chris?

SAMMY

I drew it for him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA

You did? That's sweet, honey.

Sammy hands Chris her drawing.

CHRIS

That's incredible, Sammy. I think it should hang in the Louvre.

SAMMY

The bathroom?

MARINA

The Louvre's a museum in Paris.

SAMMY

Oh. I'll color another one for them. This one's yours.

CHRIS

It's terrific. I'll have to find it a place of honor.

SAMMY

It's 'cause you're always sad.

MARINA

Sammy.

CHRIS

It's okay.

(tickling her)

You're just a little truth machine, aren't you? Why a bird? How come you drew that?

(tickling)

Talk, you miniature artiste!

Sammy giggles uncontrollably under the onslaught.

MARINA

Oh, please. She's been lobbying hard for two weeks now. I told her we'd have to wait and see what Santa has in mind.

SAMMY

Mommy! Help!

CHRIS

A bird's a big commitment. You'd have to take really good care of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMMY
(hysterical)
I will! Stop! Stop!

CHRIS
Not until you tell me what kind of
bird you want?

The tickling intensifies.

SAMMY
One with pretty colors! Mommy!
Pleeeeeease!

MARINA
Oh no, don't drag me into this.

Chris stops tickling.

CHRIS
Oh, I'm sorry. You should have told
me you were ticklish.

Sammy catches her breath.

SAMMY
I couldn't because you were
tickling me!

CHRIS
Oh, I got it. Well, I'm not going
to make any promises or anything, I
mean, ultimately it's Santa's
decision, but...
(winking at Marina)
It doesn't sound that unreasonable.
Have you been a good girl for your
Mommy?

Sammy's face lights up. She smiles triumphantly at her mom.

MARINA
(to Chris)
She plays you like a fiddle, you
know that?

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING PARKING LOT - DAY

Chris parks in front of a modern office building.

INT. BYRON STILL'S OFFICE - DAY

BYRON STILLS, 60's, a silver-haired Southern charmer, approaches Chris with his hand outstretched. He's nicely dressed but island casual.

BYRON

Hello, Chris. Nice to see you in person. Byron Stills.

CHRIS

Hello, Byron.

BYRON

Say, you were a lawyer once, weren't you, Chris? Didn't I read that in the paper?

CHRIS

Technically, I still am.

BYRON

(motioning to a chair)
Please. So tell me, how are you handling all this newfound fame?

Byron walks around his desk and opens a folder.

CHRIS

It's not something I went looking for. I can tell you that much.

BYRON

Can't say I blame you there. Something spectacular like this... the media latches on like a newborn. You seemed very apprehensive over the phone, Chris. Granted, this is a highly unusual set of circumstances we have here.

CHRIS

I don't know why you'd say that, Byron. Someone I barely knew takes me up in his single engine plane, bails out over the Atlantic, then leaves me all his worldly possessions, including a home right on the beach.

BYRON

Mr. Saar wasn't exactly your average Rotarian, was he, Chris?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS

That's my point, Byron. I don't know who or what he was. Look, I don't know what you want me to say here. This whole thing has turned into a very public nightmare.

BYRON

I understand.

CHRIS

No, I don't think you do.

BYRON

You have every right to be angry.

CHRIS

Oh, really? Well, thanks. What a relief that is.

Chris shuffles in his seat, upset with himself for unloading on Byron.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I know it's not your fault. It's just... I've been keeping things kind of bottled up ever since this happened.

BYRON

It's alright, Chris.

A brief silence.

CHRIS

Saar told me about his wife. Are there any other family members you're aware of?

BYRON

He mentioned a sister. She had an unusual...

(thinking)

Lind! That's it. Her name is Lind.

CHRIS

Was she mentioned in the will?

BYRON

Well, for one thing, there was no will until the night before the tragedy. Chris?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BYRON (CONT'D)

You know you don't have to keep the house if you don't want to. It sounds like it might be more of a psychological burden than anything else. Put it on the market. There's no mortgage. You'll walk away with a tidy little fortune.

CHRIS

All I want right now is to know why Saar would do something like this? Obviously he was unbalanced. His behavior was erratic to say the least. People don't typically jump out of airplanes. To be honest, I feel like I'm the one who's going mad here.

BYRON

I wish I had some answers for you, Chris. I really do. For all his pomposity, Mr. Saar was a very private man. I couldn't even tell you how he made his living. Of course, I have my suspicions but that would be pure speculation on my part.

CHRIS

What does that mean?

BYRON

(waving it off)

Forget I even mentioned it. It's beyond the scope of our business here. You understand attorney client privilege as well as I do, I'm sure.

CHRIS

There was a woman staying at Saar's house. Her name was Kaja. Do you know anything about her?

BYRON

Sorry. Mr. Saar never mentioned her.

CHRIS

Do you think there's any chance she could still be out there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BYRON

There was no sign of her the other day. I did a cursory inspection after the cleaning crew went through the place. Maybe you ought to take a drive out and see for yourself.

Byron comes around the desk and escorts him to the door.

CHRIS

I was planning on keeping my distance for a while. At least until I get a better handle on things.

BYRON

That's understandable, Chris, after what you've been through.

They shake hands.

CHRIS

Thank you, Byron. I imagine there must be some paperwork.

BYRON

It's just a formality really, without a mortgage to assume. I'll have my girl Sherry drop it off at your house.

He pulls a key from his pocket.

BYRON (CONT'D)

Oh, here. I almost forgot.

Chris takes the key and examines it.

CHRIS

I'm not sure what I'm going to do with this.

He starts out the door, then turns.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

What did you say her name was? Saar's sister?

BYRON

Lind. Her name is Lind.

INT. COMMERCIAL AIRLINER/AMSTERDAM

Palle, in a white dress shirt and dark pants, sits in a window seat as passengers board the plane.

An AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN, mid-30's, comes up the aisle talking on a cell. He looks at his boarding pass, then at Palle.

BUSINESSMAN

You're in my seat.

Palle steps into the aisle. The businessman stuffs his laptop case into the overhead.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

(into cell)

I don't give a shit about her personal problems. What do you think I hired you for?

He squeezes past Palle with a bag from a fast food joint.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

Don't let shit like this reach my desk. If you don't have the balls to fire her, then fire yourself!

He hangs up. Palle sits down next to him and buckles his seat belt.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

Do me a favor, would you? Don't be chatty.

Palle closes his eyes. He looks serene.

TIME CUT - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

Somewhere over the Atlantic.

Palle's eyes are closed. The businessman puts his seat tray down and unwraps a meatball grinder. When he takes a bite, a meatball falls out, soils Palle's shirt sleeve, and rolls onto the floor.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

Sorry, pal. Those fucking Dutch can't even make a meatball sandwich right.

Palle presses the overhead button. A sullen FEMALE FLIGHT ATTENDANT comes up the aisle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Yes?

PALLE

Is there another seat available?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Sorry, it's a full flight.

(seeing the stain)

Can I get you some club soda for that?

PALLE

That won't be necessary.

She gives him the requisite steely smile, pivots, and walks briskly away. Palle remains expressionless in her wake.

BUSINESSMAN

What's your problem? I said I was sorry. What do you want, a fucking letter from the pope?

Palle looks straight ahead.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

Oh Jesus, now I hurt his feelings. Look, just tell me where you're staying and I'll have a dozen shirts sent over.

Palle closes his eyes.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

Fine. Be an asshole.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Gardening tools in a small bucket. Several discarded plant containers lie on the ground. Chris puts the finishing touch on some flowers at Trish and Kelly's grave. He stands and brushes himself off.

CHRIS

I know it's silly. I feel like I let you down somehow.

INT. AIRPORT RESTROOM - DAY

A mop soaks idly in a bucket. A yellow plastic sign warns patrons of a wet floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Palle buttons a clean white shirt before a mirror. He stuffs the soiled one into a plastic bag and tosses the bag into a small suitcase lying open on the counter.

A JANITOR enters and KNOCKS politely on a stall door, then looks over at Palle and shrugs.

JANITOR
Everything alright in there, boss?

Palle zips up the suitcase.

PALLE
Probably just the airline food.

He grabs his bag and walks out the door.

JANITOR
(chuckling)
You got that right, mister.

A RED PUDDLE forms around the janitor's feet.

JANITOR (CONT'D)
What the... hey!

He tries to force the stall door, then pulls himself up and peers over the top.

JANITOR (CONT'D)
Oh, my God, oh, my God.

The businessman from the plane straddles the toilet, his shirt soaked in blood. A hand dangles inches from the floor. Blood drips from it. A BIC PEN protrudes from his neck.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Palle strides through the busy terminal brandishing a faint grin.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Chris stares at his reflection in a glass door in the frozen food aisle. Pizza boxes are stacked inside.

Maggie, the red-haired teen driver, appears alongside him. Together, they stare at the contents behind the glass.

MAGGIE
Fascinating, aren't they?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He turns to her, lost in thought.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

But they can't be trusted. That's why they keep them behind glass.

CHRIS

What are you doing here?

MAGGIE

Ahhh, shopping.

CINDY, Maggie's mother, early 40's, an attractive, conservative Junior Leaguer approaches pushing a shopping cart. She looks like she stepped out of a corporate boardroom.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Mom! This is Chris Leeds, my driving teacher. This is my mother, Cindy.

(drawing out the words)

N-e-w-l-y d-i-v-o-r-c-e-d, I might add.

CHRIS

Hi, Cindy.

CINDY

Maggie, go grab some milk, would you, dear.

MAGGIE

(a subtle taunt)

Skim?

CINDY

Maggie!

Maggie skulks away.

CINDY (CONT'D)

I saw what happened to you on the news.

CHRIS

I guess all I can really say in my defense is that it was a totally random event. I was as shocked as anyone. I don't know how else to explain it. Things are returning to normal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CINDY

Of course, I'm glad you're alright, but I wouldn't be a very effective parent if I wasn't a little concerned that you let yourself get tangled up with a person like that to begin with.

She looks over her shoulder for Maggie.

CHRIS

I wouldn't exactly call it "tangled up." I mean, this... this was someone I barely knew.

CINDY

That may be, Mr. Leeds, but you have to admit, it hardly shows good judgment on your part. Am I supposed to just overlook that and blindly entrust you with my child's welfare?

(seeing Maggie)

I think maybe I'd like to examine my options before Maggie goes out for another lesson.

CHRIS

Honestly, Cindy, this was...

CINDY

I think I made myself clear. Thank you.

She pushes her cart past him as Maggie walks back up the aisle. Chris watches Cindy take Maggie by the arm and lead her away. Maggie does an eye roll for his benefit as they round the corner and disappear from view.

EXT. SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT - DAY

Chris exits through the automatic doors carrying a grocery bag. Preoccupied, he steps off the curb into the path of an oncoming vehicle.

Tires SCREECH! A horn BLASTS! The ANGRY MALE DRIVER leans toward the passenger side window.

ANGRY MALE DRIVER

Hey, wake up, asshole!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Several BYSTANDERS watch the driver steer around Chris and speed off.

Chris hurries over to his company car and tosses the groceries in the back seat. Backing out of the parking space, he nearly collides with a car pulling out of a space across the way. Chris waves apologetically.

CHRIS

Sorry. Shit.

He drives off the lot at a good clip.

I/E. CHRIS'S CAR/ROUTE 278 - DAY

Chris drives east along the main traffic artery on the island; his anxiety building as he passes endless strip malls in their seamless uniformity.

Stuck at a red light, his fingers tap impatiently on the wheel; the anxiety feeding off itself now. Suddenly, he sees an opening and pulls an illegal U-turn, turning left against the light and reversing direction. He heads west on 278, checks the rearview mirror, and puts the pedal down.

I/E. CHRIS'S CAR/BEACHFRONT ROAD - DAY

Driving past one beautiful home after another, Chris slows down in front of Saar's villa. He pulls into the driveway and remains inside the car, looking at the house.

EXT. OCEANFRONT VILLA - DAY

The key turns in the lock.

INSIDE THE VILLA--

Chris squints as sunlight pours in through the French doors at the far end of the living room. Everything is exactly as he remembered it.

CHRIS

Hello?

Moving cautiously, he stops momentarily at the stairs and looks up. On the second floor landing, he pauses to look down the hallway.

He stops at the first door and opens it. Inside:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A master bedroom. Simple furnishings. A king size bed. He walks inside and looks around. An empty closet. He pokes his head inside the master bath. A BROKEN MIRROR over the sink.

FURTHER DOWN THE HALLWAY--

Another door. Chris hears a FAINT SOUND, then nothing. He pushes the door. As it opens... a single bed, a wooden chair, a walnut bureau.

He walks into the room. A window is open. Chris closes it, crosses to the closet and opens the door. Kaja's summer dress is suspended on a hanger. The one she wore that night. He starts toward the walnut bureau.

BOOM!

Chris turns to the window. He opens it and looks outside.

ON THE SANDY GROUND BELOW--

A sparrow lies on the ground. A wing flutters. The bird takes flight. Chris watches it disappear into the blue. He closes the window. His entire body displays a sense of shame. He walks out of the room, leaving the door ajar.

INT. ISLAND DRIVING SCHOOL/OFFICE - MORNING

Chris is at his desk staring at a computer screen. Marina's on the phone. She's exasperated.

MARINA

I'm sorry, Mrs. Butler, but we never guarantee anyone will pass. We try to prepare our students. The rest is up to them.

(eye roll)

I understand that, ma'am, but we can't take the test for them.

(to Chris)

That bitch hung up on me. Maybe if her precious little Sean stopped staring at my tits for two seconds he'd know how to make a friggin' K turn.

CHRIS

Our numbers are way off.

MARINA

I thought any publicity was good publicity.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS
In theory, maybe.

The phone RINGS.

MARINA
Let me get it. You're killin' us
here.
(into phone)
Morning. Island Driving School.
(listens intently)
Hang on a second, alright.

She puts the caller on hold and looks anxiously at Chris.

CHRIS
What?

MARINA
You better take this.

CHRIS
(picking up)
This is Chris.
(listening)
You're sure about that?
(slight pause)
I'll be there as soon as I can.

He puts the phone down.

MARINA
What is it?

CHRIS
Someone driving to Beaufort thought
they saw a woman walking out of a
marsh. When the police arrived they
found her near the road. She wasn't
wearing any clothing.

MARINA
Oh my god.

CHRIS
The Sheriff said she was
disoriented but that she didn't
appear to be harmed. They took her
to the hospital for observation.
She's asking for me.

MARINA
You think it's her?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS
How else could it be.
(getting up)
I better go.

He walks to the door.

MARINA
Chris, wait! Let me go with you.

CHRIS
No, it's better if you stay here.

She follows him...

INTO THE PARKING LOT.

MARINA
At least let me give you something
she can put on! My backseat's like
a thrift shop.

She opens the door to her car. Clothing is piled up in the back seat. She smooths out a blouse and a pair of shorts and hands them to Chris along with a pair of flip-flops,

MARINA (CONT'D)
Be careful, alright?

He forces a smile and gets in his car. Marina watches him drive off.

EXT. MARSH OUTSIDE BEAUFORT - EARLIER THAT DAY

An emergency vehicle and police car on an open patch of ground near an expansive marsh alongside the highway. A FEMALE EMT WORKER escorts Kaja, naked except for a blanket, into the back of the ambulance.

A LOCAL SHERIFF closes the ambulance door behind them and hops into his squad car. Both vehicles pull out onto the highway with their emergency lights flashing.

INT. BEAUFORT HOSPITAL/EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

The Sheriff chats with a DAY NURSE at the registration desk as Chris approaches.

CHRIS
Sheriff? We spoke over the phone.
I'm Chris Leeds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERIFF

Oh, hey, I appreciate your comin'
down, Mr. Leeds.

(recognizing him)

Say, you're that fella who landed
the plane.

CHRIS

You got me, Sheriff.

SHERIFF

I bet you had yourself a big old
glass of whiskey that night.

CHRIS

Sheriff?

SHERIFF

What can you tell me about this
young woman, Mr. Leeds?

Chris sighs, not sure how to proceed.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Is that a tough one?

CHRIS

I'm afraid there's not much I can
tell you, Sheriff. I don't really
know that much about her.

SHERIFF

That's funny. She seems to know you
pretty well.

CHRIS

What are you talking about? She
doesn't speak English.

SHERIFF

(chuckling)

Nobody told her that.

CHRIS

I'm sorry. Are you sure we're
talking about the same woman?

SHERIFF

Why don't you take a look and see
for yourself. By the way, what did
you say her name was?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS

I didn't.

SHERIFF

(impatient)

Is this some kind of game with you, mister?

CHRIS

If it's who I think it is, her name's Kaja.

SHERIFF

Kaja?

CHRIS

She's from Estonia.

SHERIFF

Alright, that makes sense, what with the accent and all. To your knowledge is she on any medication or anything like that?

CHRIS

None that I know of, Sheriff.

SHERIFF

Well, this is just great. We got a naked Estonian woman in a marsh and nobody seems to know how she got there.

CHRIS

May I see her now?

The Sheriff points at a treatment room.

SHERIFF

In there.

INT. TREATMENT ROOM - DAY

She sits on an examination table in a green hospital gown. She won't look at Chris when he appears in the doorway.

CHRIS

Are you alright?

KAJA

(softly)

Fine. Thank you for coming, Chris.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He leans against the door frame, dumbfounded.

CHRIS
You're welcome.
(slight pause)
Lind.

I/E. CHRIS'S CAR/RT. 170 - DAY

Chris and Lind ride through the lowlands in silence.

CHRIS
You want to tell me what's going
on?

She stares out the windshield.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You speak English pretty well all
of a sudden.

LIND
I'm sorry. I couldn't let Jaagup
know.

CHRIS
Why not? He's your brother.

LIND
Half-brother. How did you know?

CHRIS
I didn't. Not until today. A few
days ago I spoke to his lawyer, a
man named Byron Stills. He told me
Jaagup had a sister named Lind. I
guess I just put two and two
together.

She looks at him, not understanding the slang.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
It's an expression. It means to
make sense of things.

LIND
That would be impossible.

CHRIS
Why don't you try?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIND

Chris, there's too much you don't know. If you did, you don't judge.

CHRIS

I don't want to judge anyone, Lind. I just want to know what the hell is going on here.

She looks out across the marsh reeds stretching out toward the Atlantic haze in the distance.

LIND

When I'm very young, Jaagup goes away. I don't see him again. Money comes sometimes, but not him. Until two months ago.

CHRIS

Where did he go?

LIND

Denmark. Amsterdam. He becomes criminal there.

CHRIS

What do you mean, criminal?

LIND

He sells women.

CHRIS

You mean prostitutes?

LIND

Yes. To him, all women are whores. He has no respect.

CHRIS

I don't understand. What happened to make him that way?

LIND

Before I'm even born, when Jaagup is young boy, his father abandons our mother. Sometimes she has to do things, horrible things, in order for them to survive. Jaagup hates her for it.

CHRIS

So when he's older he runs away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIND

Then, when Amsterdam makes it so prostitution is legal, Jaagup does other things. Bad things, Chris. Terrible things.

CHRIS

What kind of things?

LIND

Kidnapping. Then, murder. Jaagup has contacts everywhere but he's coward, so he gets partner who kills people for money. We hear about it because people in our village talk all the time. They point at us on the street and call us "whores." They say, "your brother's a murderer." They use red paint on our cottage and write "scum." Then, a few months ago, Jaagup fight with his partner and take all his money.

CHRIS

And he comes here?

LIND

No. First home. To Estonia.

CHRIS

And he stays with you?

LIND

And my mother. Kaja. But not for long. A month, maybe. He's nervous all the time, and frightened. He doesn't sleep. He drinks too much. He's afraid his partner kill him.

CHRIS

So he comes here?

She nods and struggles to go on.

LIND

Then, one day last month, his partner come...

(long silence)

... and kill my mother.

Chris pulls the car onto the shoulder of the road. Lind is shaken, but determined to go on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIND (CONT'D)

He kills her because of money.

CHRIS

Where were you?

LIND

Upstairs. Hiding in my room. My mother sacrifices herself so I can get away. When I tell Jaagup what happened he pretends not to care, but I know he blames himself for her death. I see what it does to him. Part of him loves her, only he hates her too. He called her whore to her face. He called her stupid peasant. He say she's touched.

CHRIS

You mean crazy?

LIND

But she's not crazy, Chris. She's not!

CHRIS

Jaagup saw something in you, Lind. He tried to tell me only he didn't know how. He called you a messenger. Do you know what he meant by that?

LIND

(crying)

I don't know. He's all the time drunk. Always screaming, calling me by her name. Kaja! Cook! Kaja! Clean!

CHRIS

Why couldn't he know you spoke English?

LIND

My mother tells me long time ago not to let Jaagup know. Never. She say, "you live longer."

CHRIS

And you think her death drove him over the edge?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIND

He go crazy after she's killed,
Chris. Every day he get worse.

She closes her eyes and covers her face with her hands.

FLASH - INT. WATERFRONT VILLA/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lind cries in a chair. Jaagup, in his robe, crouches at her feet with an empty vodka bottle nearby on the floor.

MOS EXCEPT FOR VOICE OVER.

Jaagup holds his hands over his ears. He screams, "Kaja!"

LIND (V.O.)

He scream my mother's name over and
over. Then he gets angry and calls
me whore.

Jaagup stumbles drunkenly across the room and throws the vodka bottle against the wall.

FLASH - INT. WATERFRONT VILLA/BATHROOM - NIGHT

A bottle of pills is open on the sink. Jaagup stares feverishly at himself in a mirror, then smashes it with his fist. The mirror shatters.

LIND (V.O.)

He drink and takes pills.

FLASH - INT. WATERFRONT VILLA/MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jaagup drags a jagged piece of the broken mirror across his arm, opening a horrible gash where the bandage is worn in earlier scenes. He screams.

LIND (V.O.)

He cuts himself.

I/E. CHRIS'S CAR/ROADSIDE - DAY

Chris holds Lind's hand.

CHRIS

It's alright. It's over now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A long moment between them.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Are you hungry?

LIND
I could eat chair.

Chris chuckles. Lind smiles.

EXT. DRIVE-UP RIB JOINT - DAY

At a picnic table, Lind winces with pain reaching for a rib.

CHRIS
How did you hurt your arm?

LIND
I must have bang it on something.

CHRIS
Can you tell me how you came to be
in the marsh?

She stares down at the table and shakes her head almost imperceptibly. He wipes barbecue sauce off her chin with a napkin.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You look like modern art.

LIND
I'm sloppy eater sometimes.

She catches him studying her face.

LIND (CONT'D)
What?

CHRIS
Nothing. It's just... you're very
beautiful.

She smiles demurely and holds up a rib.

LIND
It's good.

He looks at the pile of discarded ribs on her plate.

CHRIS
No kidding.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She laughs and puts her hand on his.

INT. GROCERY STORE - AFTERNOON

Chris pushes a cart half-filled with groceries. Lind wanders behind staring at the myriad choices lining the shelves. She picks up a container of fresh figs, and bumps into a MAN in a white shirt. He drops the basket in his hand.

Lind bends down and picks it up along with several items that spilled out. She stares at his face.

LIND

Please. I'm very sorry.

She hands the basket to Palle. He looks into her eyes. She rushes past him and runs up the aisle to Chris with the container of figs.

LIND (CONT'D)

Can we?

CHRIS

I think we can splurge.

She turns around. The man in the white shirt is gone.

EXT. CHRIS'S DECK - DUSK

Chris and Lind sit at the outdoor table after finishing dinner. A candle burns. They sip red wine.

LIND

You learn to cook after your wife... ?

CHRIS

It's a new century, Lind. Men cook now.

LIND

Not in Estonia.

CHRIS

Tell me about your mother. Tell me about Kaja.

LIND

Like what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS

I don't know. It's strange.
Something terrible happened and I
can't help but feel like I'm a part
of it now. Is that crazy? Am I
crazy?

LIND

(laughing)
No. You're not crazy, Chris. What
do you know about my country?

CHRIS

About Estonia? I'm afraid I'll have
to plead ignorance.

She stares at him, not understanding.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Sorry. I don't know anything.

Distant lightning illuminates the horizon. Lind crosses to
the edge of the deck and looks out at the darkening sky.
Lightning flashes in the distance.

LIND

A storm comes.

Another flash of lightning. She transfixed.

LIND (CONT'D)

(to herself)
For some there is only sky.

Chris goes to her.

CHRIS

I'm sorry. What did you say?

LIND

When my mother was only six years
old, Russia invades her country.
She doesn't even know where Russia
is on map.

She looks at the horizon. Another flash.

EXT. ESTONIAN WOODS - DUSK (1940)

YOUNG KAJA, 6, hurries through the woods carrying a basket of
wild berries. A storm brews.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIND (V.O.)

One day while she's out picking berries, a storm comes. She hurries through the woods trying to get home before it becomes dangerous.

Lightning flashes. THUNDER CLAPS. The girl looks up.

HANGING IN A TREE--

A RUSSIAN PARATROOPER is suspended from a parachute. His neck is broken.

LIND (V.O.) (CONT'D)

A soldier hangs from a tree. He dies jumping from plane. My mother doesn't know he's Russian. Death itself is a stranger until that moment.

Young Kaja stares up at the Russian, her eyes wide with fear and wonder. Rain falls on her face. Lightning flashes, illuminating the corpse.

INT. COTTAGE/ESTONIA - EVENING (1940)

Young Kaja sits at a table. She watches her MOTHER prepare dinner in the rustic kitchen. Kaja's FATHER sits across from her, sharpening a knife. He winks at his little girl. Kaja can't bring herself to smile. He makes a funny face.

LIND (V.O.)

That night, she's afraid. She doesn't say a word about the dead man. Suppose someone blames her? She's child. How could she know what's coming?

EXT. ESTONIAN WOODS - DAY (1941)

In the tree, the Russian paratrooper twists in the freezing wind. Exposure to the elements has taken its toll. His body shows obvious signs of physical decay. Pieces of his uniform lie scattered on the ground and in the brush around the tree.

LIND (V.O.)

So, he stays in tree... long time. Nobody finds him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Young Kaja stands beneath the tree. Snow covers the ground around her feet. She holds "airmen's wings" in the form of a golden-winged insignia, attached to a torn shred of fabric.

She runs her index finger slowly over the wings, then holds it up against a backdrop of blue sky. Sunlight glimmers around it, causing her to squint. She makes the figure eight, simulating flight.

INT. YOUNG KAJA'S BEDROOM - EVENING (1941)

Young Kaja sits on the floor. An oil lamp provides the only light. She works tirelessly with a pair of scissors to trim the excess fabric away from the golden-winged insignia. Small pieces of fabric gather on the floor.

That done, she retrieves an old wooden box from a dresser, places the wings inside, and returns the box to the top drawer of her dresser.

Gathering the excess fabric off the floor, Kaja sticks her head out into the hallway. All quiet. She tiptoes down the stairs, tosses the excess fabric onto the fireplace embers and watches them ignite and burn.

The faint light emanating from her bedroom at the top of the stairs BRIGHTENS as the embers burn in the fireplace.

INT. YOUNG KAJA'S BEDROOM - LATE THAT NIGHT

Young Kaja sleeps in her bed. Her fingers move, a spasm. Her eyelids flutter rapidly.

DREAM SEQ. - EXT. BLUE SKY - DAY

Treetops far below. Above, blue sky.

Sunlight shimmers across a black wing drifting high over the forest. The landscape below tilts, giving way to distant hills and rivers. Tilting upward, the sky beckons.

INT. YOUNG KAJA'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Young Kaja stirs. From downstairs:

A door opens with a THUD.

ALL RUSSIAN & ESTONIAN DIALOGUE in ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUSSIAN SOLDIER #1 (O.S.)
Move! Stupid peasants!

Kaja sits upright in bed, terrified. She listens to the harsh sound of RUSSIAN VOICES downstairs. Then, the BONE-CRUNCHING impact of a rifle butt's strike and her father's pitiful GROANS.

KAJA'S MOTHER (O.S.)
(crying)
Why? Why? We don't hurt anyone!

DOWNSTAIRS--

TWO RUSSIAN SOLDIERS destroy furniture for sport as their COMRADE threatens Kaja's parents with a bayonet. Kaja's father bleeds profusely from the deep gash on his forehead.

INT. YOUNG KAJA'S BEDROOM

Kaja's paralyzed. She quakes with fear. From downstairs:

RUSSIAN SOLDIER #1 (O.S.)
Out! Out already! Leave that!

Kaja looks over at her dresser. The wings! The silence at the bottom of the stairs is deafening, then:

KAJA'S MOTHER (O.S.)
KAJA!

Kaja leaps from her bed and yanks open the dresser drawer. She grabs the airmen's wings from the old wooden box and bolts out the bedroom door.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE COTTAGE - DAY

A grey morning. Kaja's mother kneels on the ground. She's hysterical. Tears stream down her face.

INSIDE THE COTTAGE--

Kaja runs down the stairs and past the fireplace, unaware of the broken furniture scattered haphazardly around the room.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE COTTAGE - DAY

Young Kaja bursts through the front door of the cottage in with the airmen's wings in her outstretched hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her father soothes Kaja's mother but blood from his head wound blinds him.

A Russian soldier pushes him with a rifle butt toward a rag-tag GROUP of ESTONIAN REFUGEES bound for who knows where.

Kaja rushes toward the soldier wielding the rifle at her father. Her mother grabs her before she can reach him.

YOUNG KAJA

I have it here! I have what you
want! Please let them go!

Kaja's mother pulls Kaja close and tightens her grip. They break down in one another's arms.

The other two soldiers exchange a glance, annoyed by the delay. Russian Soldier #1 FIRES A ROUND into the air. One of the Estonian refugees SCREAMS.

KAJA'S MOTHER

Please don't hurt my baby!

RUSSIAN SOLDIER #1

You stupid cow! Just let her go! We
don't want the girl!

His Russian dialect is incomprehensible to her. He pulls at Young Kaja but her mother misinterprets his actions and holds her tighter.

KAJA'S MOTHER

I WON'T LET YOU TAKE HER!

RUSSIAN SOLDIER #1

BITCH! I'LL JUST SHOOT HER THEN!

The other two soldiers laugh at their friend as the situation takes an operatic turn.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER #2

Just get it over with, would you!
We're starving! Shoot the little
bitch already!

Russian Soldier #1 points his rifle directly at Young Kaja's head.

KAJA'S MOTHER

NO! PLEASE! SHOOT ME! SHOOT ME!

Young Kaja opens her fist and reveals the golden-winged insignia.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG KAJA

I have it. What you're looking for.
Take it! It's yours!

She holds it out to him. The other soldiers laugh even harder.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER #2

(to Soldier #1)

Hey! I think she likes you!

RUSSIAN SOLDIER #3

She's asking you to marry her!

They laugh heartily. Russian Soldier #1 looks humiliated. He draws his rifle back and drives the butt end into Young Kaja's forehead.

BLACKNESS.

EXT. CHRIS'S DECK - CONTINUOUS IN THE PRESENT

Lightning lights up the horizon. Lind's eyes stare off into the distance. She's trapped in the past.

LIND

(softly)

The soldiers take my grandmother,
my grandfather, and put them on
train. Years later, my mother
learns they go to camps inside
Russia. Gulags. Work camps. She
never sees them again. No letters.
Not a word. Nothing.

CHRIS

I'm so sorry, Lind.

LIND

You're the only person I tell.

EXT. ESTONIAN WOODS - DAY (1942)

Young Kaja, 8, walks alongside a stream. She scours the ground as she moves stealthily along, then stops suddenly. She bends down and picks up the lifeless body of a black crow. The eyes are open. Kaja stares into the bird's black eyes.

The eyes stare back.

INT. COTTAGE/ESTONIA - DAY (1942)

Multiple species of birds in various stages of decay are pinned to the cottage walls. Many of the bird's frames are mere skeletons. All the wings appear intact, as if suspended in the act of flight. The walls are a kind of aviary alter.

Young Kaja kneels on the floor with her hands clasped and eyes closed. She has an ugly scar on her forehead.

LIND (V.O.)

A year passes and my mother creates
a world where she is safe. A world
the birds show to her when they
pass through this life on their
journey.

Kaja's eyes open.

INT. COTTAGE/ESTONIA - NIGHT (1942)

In a ritualistic manner, Young Kaja arranges a grouping of bird skeletons into the shape of a halo on the rough hewn wooden floor. She lies down and positions her head beneath the calcified halo. She places the Russian paratrooper's airmen's wings over her heart and WARBLER quietly. Her eyelids flutter.

DREAM SEQ. - EXT. TRAIN STATION/ESTONIA - DAY

A dilapidated train station. A chaotic, tragic scene unfolds as RUSSIAN SOLDIERS manhandle ESTONIAN REFUGEES onto boxcars.

GUN SHOTS!

An ELDERLY MAN lies dead on the ground.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER

(subtitled)

Stop moving! Stop living!

A YOUNG SOLDIER points a rifle at Kaja's parents. They move to the open door of a boxcar. Other refugees help them up.

The train moves forward with a jolt, then gradually picks up speed. Kaja's father holds his wife in his arms. They take a last look at their village.

Someone closes the door.

EXT. HIGH ABOVE THE STATION - DAY

The strident "CAW" of a crow. Far below, the refugee train lumbers along the track heading toward a tunnel carved into a mountain. "CAW." The mountain closes in fast, then:

A sharp, ninety-degree angle upward. Hurling along a sheer rock cliff face up to the top and a great blast of wind that propels us...

INTO THE BLUE.

Freedom. Exhilaration. A circular ascent. The swirl of warm thermal currents. Sunlight dances on a black wing. Far off, in the distance:

The refugee train follows the course of a winding river toward some distant horizon and terrible fate.

INT. COTTAGE/ESTONIA - NIGHT

Young Kaja dreams on the wooden floor beneath a halo of small bones. Her hand moves. She's in flight. At peace. Free.

EXT. CHRIS'S DECK - NIGHT

Lind's eyes glisten.

LIND

Every night in her dreams, she
becomes bird. Is only way she knows
how to survive.

Rain begins to fall in sheets, soaking them both and breaking the spell. Chris grabs Lind's hand. They run for the house.

INT. CHRIS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They face each other, inches apart, dripping wet. The only sound: their breathing.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

They make love on the bed.

LATER--

They lie in each other's arms.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRIS

I really don't mean to sound morbid but... what happens to birds when they die? How come we almost never find them on the ground?

She smiles. Her eyes close.

LIND

I think they know when the time has come and so they go to places they remember. Someplace that has meaning for them. You don't find them because you don't know where to look.

CHRIS

Can I ask you something else?

LIND

Of course. You can ask me anything.

CHRIS

How come there's no record of your being here? In this country.

LIND

Because I didn't want there to be.

CHRIS

But how... are you in some kind of danger?

LIND

Yes.

CHRIS

I'm in danger, as well, aren't I?

LIND

Yes.

CHRIS

Was it the plane?

LIND

Yes.

INT. BYRON STILL'S HOME/FOYER - NIGHT (SIMULTANEOUS)

Byron closes the door and shakes the rain from an umbrella. He carries a bag of Chinese Take-out.

INT. BYRON'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Pitch black. Byron turns on the light. The Chinese Take-Out hits the floor with a THUD.

Palle sits at the kitchen table.

BYRON
I don't keep money in the house.

PALLE
You don't keep food, either. Pick that up and bring it here.

Byron eyes stay on the intruder as he picks up the bag of Chinese and places it on the kitchen table.

PALLE (CONT'D)
(pointing)
Now go stand over there.

Byron retreats to the far wall.

Palle removes white containers from the bag, takes out a napkin and chopsticks, tucks the napkin meticulously into his white shirt, and eats right from the containers.

BYRON
I can get you money, if that's what you want?

PALLE
Don't have a heart attack, alright.

BYRON
How did you get past the security system?

PALLE
Do you have wine?

BYRON
What?

PALLE
Wine. You know, from the grape.

BYRON
Oh. I'm sure I must.

He opens the refrigerator door, removes a half-empty bottle of white wine, and holds it up ridiculously.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PALLE
You have glasses?

Byron reaches nervously for a wine glass in the cabinet. His hand hits another glass. It SHATTERS on the floor.

PALLE (CONT'D)
Easy, okay. Why don't you grab one for yourself and sit down.

Byron grabs two glasses and sits at the table. Palle looks at him, then the wine bottle. Byron's hand trembles as he pours a measure of wine into both glasses.

PALLE (CONT'D)
You're going to tell me everything I want to know. Understand?

BYRON
About what?

PALLE
Jaagup Saar.

Byron turns pale.

BYRON
Look, I'm willing to help you any way I can. Believe me, I have no ethical ties in that regard. None.

PALLE
Relax, okay. You're giving me indigestion.

BYRON
I guess I always knew he'd be trouble.

PALLE
But he paid in cash.

BYRON
How do you know that?

PALLE
Because it was my money.

BYRON
I can pay you back. That won't be a problem.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PALLE

Don't worry about it. You probably earned it having to deal with that miserable fuck. All I want is to know what you know. Do that and you're off the hook.

BYRON

It's not a lot I'm afraid. Saar never confided in me.

(desperate)

Please. I have grandchildren.

PALLE

I'm a business man, Mr. Stills. I only want what's mine. Go on, have some wine. They say it's good for you now.

Byron's hand shakes as he drinks from his glass.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The lights are out. Rain BEATS against the skylight overhead. Occasional lightning illuminates the room, creating stark contrasts.

CHRIS

Do you look like your mother?

LIND

I think so. Yes. But she had a hard life. Jaagup's father was a cruel man. He likes to beat her. Then one day, he doesn't come home from work. After that, my mother has to clean houses for women in the village. Sometimes their husbands come to our home at night... and pay her extra money.

FLASH - INT. ESTONIAN COTTAGE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

A MAN dressed like a farmer sits on the bed, unbuttoning his shirt. KAJA, 40's, closes the door to the room.

LIND (V.O.)

That's how I get born.

BACK TO SCENE:

CHRIS'S BEDROOM--

LIND

Jaagup is almost a man when he leaves home. Then, we become just two.

CHRIS

But you survive.

LIND

We survive. At night, my mother teaches me to live... the way she live.

A sustained burst of lightning. On the skylight: The image of Lind as a young girl of 6 beneath a halo of bird skeletons on the cottage floor. Her mother, Kaja, late 40's, lies beside her. She strokes Lind's hair and coos into her ear.

EXT. BYRON ROOF/ABOVE BEDROOM - NIGHT (SIMULTANEOUS)

The sustained burst of lightning reveals a shattered skylight; Palle's original point of entry.

THROUGH THE SKYLIGHT OPENING--

Raindrops fall onto the bed and the lifeless body of Byron Stills. A long kitchen knife is buried in his chest.

INSIDE THE BEDROOM--

Broken shards of glass are everywhere. Dressers and tables are overturned. Articles of clothing, papers, and personal items are strewn all over the room.

INT. BYRON'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The room is a shambles. The contents of cabinets and drawers are scattered everywhere. A faint SLOSHING SOUND comes from...

A LAUNDRY ROOM.

Palle sits on the floor staring intently at the glass door of the washing machine. A MONOTONOUS SLOSHING. His white dress shirt arcs back and forth in soapy water. He watches it. Hypnotized.

INT. YOUNG PALLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (34 YEARS EARLIER)

In B&W, YOUNG PALLE, 4, scoops a dead fish from a large aquarium in his extravagantly furnished bedroom.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

In B&W, Young Palle walks solemnly with the dead fish in the palm of his hand. He stops just outside his parent's bedroom and peeks in through the door.

INSIDE THE BEDROOM--

In B&W, except for the RED EVENING GOWN worn by Palle's MOTHER, GRIETA, mid-30's. She sits before a vanity in the opulent surroundings. Her hair up, exposing her long, elegant neck and delicate shoulders. She lifts a POINTED, SOLID GLASS TOP from a perfume bottle and dabs its scent at the base of her neck.

Palle's FATHER, HENDRIK, 50's, appears behind her in the vanity's mirror. He's a stout, mean-spirited man, in a white dress shirt and black tuxedo pants.

Grieta tenses as his hands caress her shoulders.

DUTCH LANGUAGE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

HENDRIK

(terse)

Now what's wrong?

GRIETA

Please don't do that. I'm getting ready.

He slides the gown off her shoulders. It falls to her waist, exposing her breasts.

HENDRIK

That's better.

He cups one of her breasts in his hand. Grieta turns her face away.

Young Palle watches with fascination from his vantage point in the hallway as...

Hendrik gropes his wife from behind, lifting her to her feet. She struggles to free herself. He grabs her shoulders and turns her roughly around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HENDRIK (CONT'D)
I'm your husband!

She spits in his face.

GRIETA
You disgust me!

He SLAPS her hard across the face. She reaches behind her back, grabs the pointed top from the perfume bottle on the vanity, and PLUNGES it into his chest.

Hendrik's eyes bulge. He looks down with horror and collapses on the floor.

Young Palle moves tentatively into the bedroom. He walks over to his mother and looks down at his father. A RED BLOTCH forms on the tuxedo shirt.

Palle takes his mother's hand. He opens his other hand, exposing the small dead fish. Grieta smiles down at him. Her gown is still gathered around her waist.

GRIETA (CONT'D)
We'll get another.

Grieta leads him over to the vanity and sits before the mirror. She lets down her hair and brushes it out, humming softly as Young Palle moves alongside her and watches with fascination. The fish falls from his hand onto the floor.

INT. BYRON'S LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Palle picks up Byron's HANDGUN from the floor and tests its weight. He puts the barrel of the gun in his mouth and closes his eyes. After several seconds he opens them, puts the gun down, and removes a fortune cookie from the Take-out bag. He undoes the wrapper, cracks open the cookie, and grins sardonically. It reads:

--- You will live a long and happy life.

EXT. HARBOUR TOWN MARINA - DAY

Chris extends a hand and helps Lind aboard his 35' sailboat, the Trieste. He hops onto the pier and grabs a cooler off the dock and carries it onboard.

EXT. HARBOUR TOWN LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

Palle, in a straw beach hat, watches Chris from the observation balcony of a lighthouse adjacent to the marina.

I/E. RENTAL CAR/MARINA PARKING LOT - DAY

POV THROUGH BINOCULARS: Palle, on the observation deck. Then, a BLUR as the focus shifts to Chris and Lind onboard the Trieste.

IN THE RENTAL CAR--

Vita lowers the binoculars and lights a Zino cigarillo. Her cell VIBRATES. On the screen: PALLE

VITA

About time.

INTERCUT WITH PALLE ON THE OBSERVATION BALCONY.

VITA (CONT'D)

(into cell)

Uh huh.

PALLE

Don't sound so excited.

VITA

Should I be?

PALLE

Where are you?

VITA

In your bed, fucking someone handsome.

PALLE

You're a dirty little whore.

VITA

You're so romantic. Where are you?

PALLE

On top of a lighthouse looking down at our friend from the plane.

VITA

Does he have our money?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PALLE

I don't know yet.

VITA

What are you waiting for?

PALLE

I'm thinking about how I'm going to handle it. You'll never guess who's with him?

VITA

The suspense is killing me.

PALLE

Saar's sister.

VITA

You're sure?

PALLE

She spoke to me in the grocery store.

VITA

I hope for her sake she doesn't look anything like Saar.

PALLE

Fortunately, no.

Vita picks up the binoculars and looks at the Trieste. POV THROUGH BINOCULARS: Chris casting off the bow lines.

PALLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I have to go now.

VITA

Follow the money. Honey.

She tosses the cell phone onto the passenger seat, flicks the Zino out the window, and PEELS OFF the lot.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE OBSERVATION BALCONY - DAY

Palle watches the Trieste tack out of the marina. Someone's SCREECHING tires in the parking lot are a temporary distraction.

He watches the Trieste tack out of the marina.

EXT. TRIESTE - AFTERNOON

Chris, at the wheel, keeps them on a course parallel to the shoreline; a mile off the port side. Lind sits nearby. She soaks up the sunshine and the cool breeze.

CHRIS

What are you thinking about?

LIND

I'm thinking how I love the wind on my face. You're at home here.

He smiles at the horizon, then, at her.

CHRIS

Why don't you take the wheel for a while?

LIND

I don't think so.

CHRIS

Come on.

He takes her hand. Reluctantly, she lets him position her behind the wheel. Together, they straddle the wheel for a moment with his hands resting on hers.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Just keep us on this course and try not to hit any icebergs.

He heads toward the galley.

LIND

(with mild panic)
Where are you going?

CHRIS

To make us some sandwiches. Don't worry. You'll be fine.

He disappears below. Lind is anxious but focuses on the task at hand.

INT. TRIESTE'S GALLEY

Tight quarters. Chris prepares sandwiches.

EXT. ON DECK - DAY

Lind concentrates on the horizon but her eyes shift continually back to the mainsail FLAPPING in the breeze. The steady FLUTTER takes her away.

EXT. COTTAGE/ESTONIA - DAY (A MONTH EARLIER)

A windy day. A white sheet FLAPS on a clothesline. Lind's MOTHER, KAJA, 75, secures one end with a clothespin. She bends down to pick up another from the ground and freezes at the sight of...

... BLACK SHOES in the grass.

She looks up... and hurries toward the cottage. Palle follows at a steady, almost benign pace.

INT. COTTAGE/UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - DAY

Through a window, Lind watches her elderly mother run across the lawn. A moment later, a man in white shirt follows. Lind turns her back to the wall, terrified.

INT. COTTAGE/DOWNSTAIRS - DAY

Kaja's out of breath. She turns around at the foot of the stairs. Palle appears in the doorway.

PALLE

Tell me where he is? Where's that fat piece of shit you call a son?

Kaja holds both sides of the bannister, creating a useless barrier.

KAJA

Muutma!
(screams)
CHANGE!

Palle moves quickly, deftly toward her.

EXT. TRIESTE - CONTINUOUS IN THE PRESENT

White-knuckles grip the wheel. Lind's eyes fixate on the white mainsail.

INT. COTTAGE/UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS IN THE PAST

Lind rushes to the bureau. She yanks open the top drawer.

INT. COTTAGE/DOWNSTAIRS - DAY

Palle's white shirt is damp with blood. Blood drips from a STILETTO in his hand. He looks down at Kaja's limp body. His face is serene. It's an exquisite moment, one to be savored.

An odd array of bird carcasses in various stages of decay are suspended from the walls. Their eyes stare at him. Even the empty sockets accuse him. He's startled as...

Kaja grabs his ankle. Her eyes burn into him until the last ounce of strength leaves her body and she succumbs.

Palle looks up at the top landing. He takes the stairs two at a time.

EXT. TRIESTE - CONTINUOUS IN THE PRESENT

The wheel turns on its own. Lind takes in shallow breaths and stares helplessly at the mainsail as the shifting wind batters it.

INT. COTTAGE/UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS IN THE PAST

The door CRASHES open. Palle stands in the hallway, his bloody stiletto at the ready.

On the bedroom floor, a halo of bird skeletons. A woman's crumpled clothing lies nearby. A sudden GUST of wind through an open window creates a tempest in the room, scattering the skeletons across the floor.

INT. TRIESTE'S GALLEY - CONTINUOUS IN THE PRESENT

Chris grabs a beer from the cooler. He lurches forward... a sudden shift in their position.

CHRIS
EVERYTHING OKAY?

They lurch to one side. Sandwich plates slide off the counter and CRASH to the floor.

ON DECK--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lind holds onto the mast. Her eyes register real fear. The skies overhead are gray. A strong wind tosses the Trieste about.

Chris makes his way unsteadily toward her. The WIND and CURRENT are deafening.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
WHAT IS IT?

A WAVE hits the port side.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
HOLD TIGHT!

He fights his way back to the stern and struggles to right the ship. Lind holds tight to the mast.

INT. WATERFRONT VILLA - SIMULTANEOUS

Palle stands perfectly still in the middle of the living room. Through the french doors, a lightweight chair blows across the terrace.

EXT. TRIESTE - DAY

Isolated and alone in rough seas. Chris hunkers down at the wheel.

INT. WATERFRONT VILLA/UPSTAIRS - SIMULTANEOUS

A bedroom door creaks open. Palle walks over to the bureau and methodically goes through the drawers. Nothing. He looks around, then sits in a chair near the window. From this vantage point, he sees the old wooden box under the bed.

He bends down and retrieves the box, places it on the bed, and lifts the lid. Inside, bird skeletons of various sizes on a bed of dry pine needles. Something buried under the needles gets his attention.

He removes the airmen's wings and places them in his shirt pocket. He holds up a bird skeleton and examines the small, fragile assembly of bones.

He crosses to the window and looks out at the pounding surf. Rain begins to fall. It BEATS against the glass.

INT. MARINA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Marina paces back and forth. She listens to the RING on the other end of the phone. In the b.g. a local news ANCHORWOMAN is on the TV screen. In a corner of the screen, a photograph: BYRON STILL'S FACE.

Marina starts to hang up.

INTERCUT WITH CHRIS IN HIS BEDROOM:

CHRIS (O.S.)

Hello.

MARINA

Oh, thank god! Put the news on!

She peers into her living room. Sammy's playing.

CHRIS

Hang on.

He clicks the remote several times until he sees the photo of Byron Stills.

ANCHORWOMAN (ON TV)

... last seen leaving a popular Chinese restaurant about 9:30 last night. Local police will only say that the investigation into this gruesome murder is ongoing, although they haven't ruled out burglary as a possible motive. We'll stay on top of this very disturbing story and keep you informed of further developments. In other local news...

Chris clicks the TV off. A shower RUNS in the bathroom.

MARINA (O.S.)

You still there?

CHRIS

I'm here.

MARINA

Chris? What's going on? Do you know anything about this?

CHRIS

I'm not exactly sure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

(pissed)

Chris?

CHRIS

Look, Marina, something's happening. I'm just not sure what.

MARINA

(mindful of Sammy)

Are you fucking kidding me? If you know something you have to tell the police, Chris. This was murder!

CHRIS

Marina, you have to trust me on this.

MARINA

I'm worried about you, Chris. Ever since that asshole Saar came into your life...

The shower in Chris's bathroom goes off.

CHRIS

I have to go now. Look, it's going to be alright. I'm going to need you to look after the business for a while. Can you do that for me?

MARINA

Of course, Chris, but...

CHRIS

I'll call you soon.

He hangs up. The phone RINGS immediately. He picks up.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

What is it?

(slight pause)

Marina?

VITA (O.S.)

He'll come after you now.

EXT. SEASIDE HOTEL - NIGHT

A drab two-story building.

INT. HOTEL ROOM/2ND FLOOR

A musty, no-frills room. Vita, in black bra and panties, looks out through the window blinds at the parking lot below. A NAKED, COLLEGE AGE STUD is asleep under the covers.

VITA
(into cell)
I can stop him.

INTERCUT PHONE SEQUENCE.

CHRIS
Who is this?

VITA
When he was a young boy, my husband
Palle saw his own mother stab his
father to death. He died on the
floor right there in front of him.

ON CHRIS--

VITA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Then, he watched as his mother sat
down at her vanity and brushed her
hair.

ON VITA--

VITA (CONT'D)
What do you think a boy like that
is like when he becomes a man?

She goes over to the bed, sits by her young stud, and tenderly brushes the hair from his forehead.

VITA (CONT'D)
Lucky for her she came from money.
Okay. We'll call this a one-time
offer. I'll kill my husband.. for
half the money.

Vita drifts back to the window and looks out through the blinds. With her index finger, she flicks the light switch on and off, on and off...

VITA (CONT'D)
I'll probably wind up killing him
eventually anyway. This just moves
up my timetable.

ON CHRIS--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He watches the bathroom door.

VITA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
If you don't have the money, he's
going to kill you. If you do have
the money, he'll kill you anyway.

CHRIS
That doesn't leave me a lot of
options. Suppose there is no money?

ON VITA--

The light switches off. The room stays dark.

VITA
Then I'll kill you.

CHRIS (O.S.)
Let's say I agree. What happens
afterwards?

VITA
I disappear. It's too fucking hot
here anyway. But that doesn't
change anything. You still wind up
dead.

CHRIS'S VOICE (O.S.)
What do you mean?

VITA
The girl. You think she's not
playing you?

ON CHRIS--

He hears movement in the bathroom.

VITA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
So? Do we have a deal?

CHRIS
I need time to think.

ON VITA--

VITA
Sure, baby. Only time's something
you don't have very much of.

She hangs up and crosses to the young man sleeping soundly in
her bed.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lind comes out of the bathroom wearing his bathrobe. One look at him and she knows something's happened.

LIND
What is it?

CHRIS
Byron Stills is dead. Someone
killed him.

She freezes.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You still haven't told me how you
got here?

LIND
Why do you care now?

CHRIS
How did you get into this country
without anyone knowing? It's like
you just appeared out of the blue.

LIND
Suppose I did?

He grabs her arms.

CHRIS
Start telling me the truth!

LIND
Chris, you're hurting me!

He lets go, ashamed.

CHRIS
I'm sorry... it's just that...

He turns away and sits on the edge of the bed.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
That's not who I am.

LIND
(quietly resolute)
You probably won't believe a word
of what I have to say, Chris. But
I'll tell you anyway because you
deserve to know the truth.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIND (CONT'D)

My mother, in her mind, she becomes bird. She does this because it's the only way for her to go on. To survive. Life can do that, Chris. It can break you. You know that as well as anyone. I don't question her when she teaches me her ways because she's my mother. I'm her child. But then, one day, something happens. Something neither of us expected. I don't just imagine anymore. I become.

CHRIS

You become... what?

He struggles to understand.

FLASH - EXT. WATERFRONT VILLA/TERRACE

Lind reaches out her hand and strokes the Blue Heron's mantle.

FLASH - INT. WATERFRONT VILLA/BEDROOM

The sparrow crashes into the window pane. The stunned bird lies in the sand. A wing flutters and it takes flight.

FLASH - EXT. RIB-JOINT

At the picnic table, Lind winces in pain when she moves her arm.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS IN THE PRESENT

Chris looks at her. Suddenly, it all makes sense.

CHRIS

Your arm. You hurt it crashing into the window.

INT. DRAB SEASIDE HOTEL ROOM/1ST FLOOR

Palle lies in bed staring at the white popcorn ceiling, listening to a mattress SQUEAK in the room overhead.

PALLE

Come already, would you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He dials his cell.

INT. HOTEL ROOM/2ND FLOOR

The mattress SQUEAKS as Vita rides her handsome young stud with abandon. His mouth is duct-taped. Her cell VIBRATES on the night table. On the screen: PALLE

She slows the pace of her lovemaking dramatically and picks up.

VITA
(impatiently, into cell)
Do you have it?

PALLE (O.S.)
Not yet.

VITA
Then why call? Do it already!
(fiercely, to both men)
Do it!

She tosses her cell and focuses on the task at hand with renewed vigor.

INT. PALLE'S HOTEL ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

The mattress SQUEAKS as if it's coming through the ceiling. Palle closes his eyes and rubs his temples.

PALLE
Royal bitch.

EXT. CHRIS'S REAR DECK - MIDNIGHT

Chris and Lind sit on the wooden deck steps. All the house lights are turned off behind them.

CHRIS
Is it something that just happens
or do you choose when?

LIND
It used to happen as part of a
ritual my mother created out of her
need. Now, I have what you call...
a shortcut.

She holds out her palm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIND (CONT'D)

I hold the Russian's wings here.
When I close my hand... I change.

CHRIS

And how do you change back
afterwards? To human form.

LIND

I won't. Not anymore. I think the
only reason I return this last time
is because I'm afraid for you.

(sensing his concern)

You mustn't worry, Chris. I'm meant
to change. I've known that for a
long time now.

CHRIS

(inexplicably moved)

What's it like?

She puts her head on his shoulder.

LIND

It's like a dream.

A RUSTLE from the bushes. Chris stands up, on high alert. A
raccoon wanders out and waddles across the lawn, breaking the
tension.

CHRIS

I guess I'm a little edgy.

(sitting back down)

I keep thinking about something
Jaagup said on the plane that day.
He called you a messenger. You must
have some idea what he meant by
that?

LIND

Sometimes... I see things.

CHRIS

Like what?

LIND

When I change back. When I become
myself again, sometimes I see
things.

CHRIS

What kind of things?

FLASH - EXT. KAJA'S COTTAGE/ESTONIA - DAY

A Mercedes, parked in front of the cottage in the pouring rain. Jaagup is behind the wheel. His throat is slashed.

BACK TO SCENE:

Lind turns her eyes away from Chris.

LIND

Like Jaagup... with his throat cut.
I tell my mother so she can warn
him.

CHRIS

And that's when he decides to come
back here. To America.
(reluctantly)
And your mother?

LIND

I try to tell her, Chris. I saw it
all before it happens but she's
stubborn. She won't leave her home.

CHRIS

You saw something the day you
walked out of that marsh, didn't
you?

LIND

Jaagup never should have contacted
you.

CHRIS

I don't think he had much choice.
It's almost like this whole thing
has to play itself out somehow.
(pause)
I never told Jaagup, but five years
ago I defended a young man charged
with drunken driving. I got him off
on a technicality.

FLASH - INT. COURT ROOM - DAY (FIVE YEARS EARLIER)

From the back of the courtroom. Chris is alongside his
client, a LONG-HAIRED YOUNG MAN. They stand facing a FEMALE
JUDGE who has just finished her summary judgement

The relieved young man turns and shakes Chris's hand. It's
Andres Saar.

EXT. CHRIS'S DECK - CONTINUOUS IN THE PRESENT

Chris stares off into the night.

CHRIS

He walked out of that courtroom a free man. A few weeks later, Andres Saar got behind the wheel of his car after drinking all night and half of the morning. My wife Trish was driving our daughter Kelly over to a friend's house. Kelly was going to help her with her math.

LIND

It wasn't your fault, Chris, what happened. You couldn't have known.

CHRIS

Jaagup's partner's name is Palle. His wife called while you were in the shower. She offered to kill him for half of the money that doesn't exist. I told her I'd have to think about it.

INT. MARINA'S HOUSE/SAMMY'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Palle stands over Sammy's bed, watching her sleep. He picks a stuffed alligator up off the floor and tucks it under her chin. Her eyes open slightly, then, she drifts back off. In a moment, she's sound asleep.

Palle aims his cell phone at her and takes a photo. He studies her face the way a loving parent might... and walks out of the room.

INT. VITA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The young stud is asleep again. Vita shakes him roughly by the shoulders.

VITA

Get out.

He reaches out for her, wanting to play some more. She grabs his thumb, twists his arm behind his back, and pulls him out of bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG STUD
(writhing in pain)
Are you nuts?

VITA
Grab your things.

He gathers his clothing as she manhandles him through the door and out into the hallway where he stands facing her, covering his privates with his belongings.

YOUNG STUD
You got a problem, lady!

VITA
But you're not it.

She closes the door in his face.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - LATE THAT NIGHT

Lind is under the covers. Chris sits next to her on the edge of the bed. She looks at the photo of Trish and Kelly on the night table.

CHRIS
Get some sleep.

LIND
They're so beautiful.

CHRIS
We were on vacation in Colorado.
(slight pause)
Lind, I need to know what you saw
when you walked out of that marsh?

LIND
(touching his cheek)
When you're ready, you will.

INT. CHRIS'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Chris takes a tool box from a workbench and goes over to the Thunderbird. He pulls the protective cover off.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chris peeks in the door. Lind is sound asleep under the covers.

INT. CHRIS'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Chris sits in front of his computer. He opens a "Legal Docs" file and starts typing.

LATER - AT FIRST LIGHT

He wakes up at his desk and removes some paperwork from the printer. He signs his name on several of the pages, puts them into a manila envelope, and scribbles out an address.

He starts for the door, reconsiders, goes back to the computer and goes 'online.' He googles 'Estonian to English.' On a translation web site, he types the word "Lind" in the 'translate' box and hits Enter.

He stares at the English translation that appears on the screen: BIRD.

INT. VITA'S HOTEL ROOM/BATHROOM - 7:00 A.M.

Vita, in the shower. She pours shampoo into her hand and lathers her hair.

EXT. CHRIS'S DRIVEWAY - DAWN

The sun is just over the horizon as Chris places the manila envelope in his mailbox and lifts the postman's flag. He takes a long look back at his house. A mental snapshot.

INT. DRAB SEASIDE HOTEL LOBBY - 7:15 A.M.

Palle, bag in tow, steps into the dingy lobby. He wears his customary black pants, black shoes, and a perfectly pressed white shirt. At the front desk he removes a postcard from a rack.

The HOTEL CLERK, a smarmy-looking guy in a T-shirt and shorts approaches from a back room.

HOTEL CLERK
Checking out?

Palle smirks.

HOTEL CLERK (CONT'D)
You have a nice stay?

PALLE
No. I didn't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOTEL CLERK

May I ask why?

PALLE

The couple upstairs were fucking all night. I thought the bed was coming through the ceiling.

Palle puts the postcard on the counter.

PALLE (CONT'D)

Put this on my bill.

HOTEL CLERK

What's the name?

PALLE

Truman. Let me have a pen, would you?

Palle turns the postcard over and scribbles on it:

-- Today, I buy shampoo.

He jots down an Amsterdam address and slides the postcard across the counter.

PALLE (CONT'D)

Post this for me, please.

HOTEL CLERK

(checking the address)
I don't know what to charge for that. Okay if I just add a buck onto your bill?

PALLE

Fine.

HOTEL CLERK

That'll be six hundred and eighty-one for the week.

Palle takes out a billfold and counts out the cash.

HOTEL CLERK (CONT'D)

Would you like a receipt?

PALLE

No.

He turns to go. The clerk types on his keypad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOTEL CLERK

Huh. I thought so.

PALLE

What?

HOTEL CLERK

The woman in the room above yours.
She has the same accent you do. I
checked her in myself.

(checking the postcard
again)

Amsterdam. What does that make you,
Dutch or something?

PALLE

The woman? What did she look like?

The clerk glances over his shoulder.

HOTEL CLERK

I'm not really supposed to give out
that kind of information.

Palle drops a twenty on the counter.

PALLE

In case that postage is more than
you thought.

The clerk tucks the money in his pocket.

HOTEL CLERK

Thin. Good-looking, I guess, if you
can get past the hair.

PALLE

What about it?

HOTEL CLERK

Kind of greasy if you ask me. I
don't know. I just figured she's a
foreigner, you know.

(catching himself)
No offense.

Palle half considers killing him, then starts for the door.

HOTEL CLERK (CONT'D)

She asked for it!

Palle turns.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOTEL CLERK (CONT'D)
The room. The one over yours. She
asked for it when she checked in.

PALLE
What's the name on the register?

HOTEL CLERK
(looking at the screen)
Black. Zino Black.

Palle swallows hard and walks out of the lobby into...

THE PARKING LOT.

His eyes sting. The anger builds. It ravages him.

EXT. VITA'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The window blind moves slightly.

INSIDE THE ROOM--

Vita stands at the window. Her hair is perfect.

EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Palle takes a straw beach hat from the trunk of his rental
car and tosses his bag inside. He puts the hat on, gets in
the car, and speeds off of the lot.

INT. VITA'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The blinds sway gently back and forth. The door is wide open.
Vita's gone.

EXT. HOTEL/COVERED WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

Vita runs through a covered walkway leading from the hotel.
She stops when she reaches the edge of the parking lot and
looks frantically around toward the exit. Not a sign of
Palle's car.

A SICKENING THUMP. Her eyes flash wide. Her head jerks back
from the force of the blade piercing her back.

PALLE
Goodbye, Mrs. Black.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He props her up from behind... and twists the knife.

PALLE (CONT'D)
Love the hair.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - 9:15 A.M.

Chris sits on a chair watching Lind sleep. She opens her eyes and smiles at him.

LIND
What time is it?

CHRIS
Just past nine.

LIND
Did you sleep?

CHRIS
A little.

LIND
I see who you are, you know. You are the kindest, sweetest man I ever knew... but I am changing. And nothing can stop that.

EXT. CHRIS'S DRIVEWAY - 9:40 A.M.

The garage door opens. Chris and Lind are in the front seat of the Thunderbird. The top is down.

CHRIS
You're sure about this?

She nods. He backs the car out of the driveway.

EXT. WATERFRONT VILLA - 10:00 A.M.

The Thunderbird pulls into the driveway. Chris turns the engine off. They watch the house. Lind takes his hand.

CHRIS
I'm coming with you.

EXT. BEACHFRONT CONDO - 10:00 A.M.

An ELDERLY GENTLEMAN opens the sliding glass door. His dog runs out of the condo onto the beach.

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN
Alright, easy does it. I'm comin'.

The dog runs into the dunes and BARKS.

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN (CONT'D)
Let's go, girl! Come on, Nellie!

The BARKING persists. The old man makes his way across the beach and onto the dune.

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN (CONT'D)
Nellie? What the hell are you... ?

IN THE DUNE--

Vita's headless body.

INT. WATERFRONT VILLA - 10:05 A.M.

Chris and Lind, in the living room. Lind starts up the stairs first. Chris follows.

INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lind bends down and looks under the bed. Nothing. She looks nervously around the room.

CHRIS
What?

LIND
It was here!

She opens the top drawer of the bureau and GASPS. Her breath comes out in short, erratic bursts. She points at the bureau. Her eyes are wild.

Chris looks in the drawer and recoils.

PALLE (O.S.)
I always thought we'd grow old together, but lately my wife's been a little detached.

Palle's in the doorway with Lind's wooden box under his arm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PALLE (CONT'D)

Is this what you were looking for?

Lind's terrified, unable to speak.

PALLE (CONT'D)

You two make a nice looking couple.
Vita...

(looking at the bureau)
My wife... she liked handsome
people. I don't know what she saw
in me. We were very different.

He goes over to the drawer.

PALLE (CONT'D)

She could be very sloppy sometimes.
Her hair looks nice today though.

He shuts the drawer. Chris watches him, knowing he's dealing
with a psychopath; a man capable of anything.

CHRIS

There is no money.

PALLE

I'm afraid I'll have to disagree
with you on that one point. You
see, when her brother left
Amsterdam, he took over 4 million
euro that didn't belong to him.

CHRIS

That may be, but I don't know
anything about it.

PALLE

I've been watching you, Chris. I'll
confess I've even gotten to like
you a little and I don't like many
people. We're a lot alike, all
three of us. We've been forged by
tragedy. Vita wasn't. She'd be out
of her depth here. It's not such a
bad thing. Tragedy. It's just
gotten a rotten deal lately.

CHRIS

I can't help you.

PALLE

We know how it feels to lose people
close to us.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PALLE (CONT'D)

We know all about hopelessness. We know what it means to see every light in the world go out.

Palle takes out his cell phone.

PALLE (CONT'D)

I want my money, Chris.

He holds up the cell. A photograph on the screen: SAMMY, sleeping with a stuffed alligator under her chin.

PALLE (CONT'D)

Kids are such heavy sleepers, aren't they?

(looking at the photo)

Don't make me do this.

Chris is mute. Lind walks toward Palle. He reaches behind his back and removes the handgun from his belt. She looks directly into his eyes, takes the wooden box from under his arm, and places it on the bed.

LIND

Chris.

He can't respond.

LIND (CONT'D)

Chris!

She opens the lid. Chris moves to the bed. Inside the box, a twisted jumble of bird skeletons and pine needle branches.

PALLE

She's from a strange family, this one.

(to Chris)

I guess I don't have to tell you.

(to Lind)

What does it mean?

LIND

(to herself)

What does it mean?

(to Palle)

It means nothing.

(to Chris)

It means everything.

Lind searches through the box, becoming desperate. Palle produces the airmen's wings from his shirt pocket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PALLE
Are you looking for this?

He tosses it on the bed.

PALLE (CONT'D)
Take it as a sign of good faith.
Now what are we going to do, Chris?

EXT. WATERFRONT VILLA DRIVEWAY - 10:30 A.M.

The turquoise Thunderbird backs onto the beach road and drives off.

I/E. THUNDERBIRD/RT. 278

Chris drives. Palle, in the passenger seat, holds the handgun on his lap. Lind sits alone in the backseat. The golden wings are in her hand.

PALLE
Tell me where we're going?

CHRIS
To get a key.

PALLE
And then?

CHRIS
To the airport.

Palle looks skeptical.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Saar left a key in his plane. It belongs to a locker at the airport.

PALLE
(smiling, to Lind)
Crazy right to the end, your brother.

He's confident now, at ease.

PALLE (CONT'D)
(to Chris)
Why didn't you empty the locker?

CHRIS
Because it's not mine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Chris turns right off of Route 278 onto a residential street.

PALLE

This isn't the way to the airport.

CHRIS

I told you. I have to get the key.
I wasn't about to leave it in the
plane.

PALLE

(to Lind)

A smart guy, your friend. Not too
smart, I hope. You know your mother
comes to me in my dreams.

(no reaction)

You don't believe me? I'm telling
you she comes to me with wings.
Big, beautiful wings that she wraps
around me. What do you think it
means?

(laughing)

You think maybe she's trying to
smother me? For killing her.

Lind shakes her head back and forth almost imperceptibly.

PALLE (CONT'D)

What, then? Go on, tell me! I want
to know!

LIND

She comforts you.

PALLE

(laughing)

Comforts me?

LIND

She's sorry for you.

Palle tugs playfully on Chris's sleeve.

PALLE

Sorry? For what?

LIND

For killing your own mother.

The words cut like a knife. Palle turns inward. Memories of a
past long buried come flooding back... with a vengeance.

FLASH - PALLE'S PARENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (26 YEARS EARLIER)

In B&W, except for the blood. Palle's mother lies in bed. The solid-glass perfume top is impaled in her chest. Her lingerie turns red.

PALLE, 12, stands over her, a broken, fragile looking child with blood on his hands.

I/E. THUNDERBIRD/RESIDENTIAL STREET - CONTINUOUS IN THE PRESENT

Chris and Lind lock eyes in the rearview mirror.

CHRIS

Change.

He pushes down on the gas pedal. The Thunderbird accelerates.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Change!

Palle's a prisoner of his past. He stares vacantly out the windshield as the Thunderbird races up the residential street.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD--

The massive oak tree looms far ahead in the distance.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

NOW!

Lind grabs Chris's shoulder! Tears stream down her face!

LIND

(desperate)

CHRIS!

CHRIS

FLY!

She closes her fist, squeezes the golden wings, and whispers.

LIND

Lendama. (Fly)

CHRIS'S POV: Outside, the black asphalt rolls past. The silhouette of the Thunderbird races up the street. Above it, the silhouette of a BIRD, flying in tandem.

The asphalt ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

... Morphs into WAVES that flow past the Trieste as it cuts through the Atlantic.

On the water, a silhouette of a BIRD keeps perfect time with the silhouette of the Trieste.

ON PALLE--

Staring out the windshield at the approaching oak tree as his last moments on earth rush toward him. He turns to Chris with a waning smile as...

The Thunderbird CRASHES into the large oak tree, ROCKING the neighborhood.

INSIDE THE VEHICLE--

Palle's dead. Killed instantly. His crumpled body projects half-way through the windshield.

After a moment, Chris comes to. He stirs in his seat. With great effort, he manages to open his door and stumble...

INTO THE INTERSECTION.

He makes his way over to the curb and sits on the grass near the great oak. He looks up at its green underbelly and closes his eyes.

EXT. THE TRIESTE - DAY

Trish and Kelly sit with their backs toward the bow as the sailboat cuts through the clear blue water. Sunlight glistens in their hair. Trish turns around first and smiles. She nudges Kelly, who turns to look. They take each other by the hand and walk toward the bow.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS IN THE PRESENT

Under the tree, Chris reaches out his hand.

EXT. THE TRIESTE - DAY

Trish takes Chris's hand and stands beside him at the wheel. She buries her head in his neck. Kelly hugs him tightly, not letting go.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS IN THE PRESENT

Chris lies motionless. Suddenly, the wind picks up and the branches of the oak sway in the breeze.

OUT OF THE BLUE--

A RED FEATHER floats downward, spinning in tight circles until it nears the earth... and lands on his lap. His watch reads 10:45.

FADE TO WHITE:

EXT. HILTON HEAD BEACH - DAY

Marina and Sammy walk near the dunes. Marina pulls a child's red wagon filled with driftwood.

SUPER:

--Christmas Day, Several Months Later

Sammy runs on ahead, picks up a fine specimen, and holds it up like she'd found the holy grail.

MARINA
(calling out)
That's the best one so far!

Sammy runs to her and tosses the driftwood into the wagon.

EXT. WATERFRONT VILLA TERRACE - DAY

Marina unlocks the terrace door, grabs as much driftwood as she can carry, and goes...

INSIDE THE VILLA.

A Christmas tree is in one corner of the great room.

Marina deposits the driftwood near the wood burning fireplace. She places several of the smaller pieces in a pile on top of some crumpled newspaper in the firebox.

MARINA
Well, shall we see if this thing works?

Sammy plops on the couch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMMY

Look, Mommy! They're watching us!

TWO FINCHES look at them from inside a birdcage near the French doors.

MARINA

How about that?

She strikes a match and lights the newspaper.

MARINA (CONT'D)

Okay. Here we go.

Within seconds, smoke starts billowing back into the room.

MARINA (CONT'D)

Oh, shit!

She pushes the driftwood aside before it can ignite and tamps down the flaming newspaper with an ash shovel.

MARINA (CONT'D)

Okay, I think I know what the problem is.

She sticks her head into the firebox and looks up at the smoke chamber.

MARINA (CONT'D)

I forgot to open the flue.

SAMMY

What's a flue?

Marina reaches up into the smoke chamber.

MARINA

The past tense of fly.

She struggles with the flue handle.

MARINA (CONT'D)

Wow, this thing's stubborn.
(yanking it)
It must not have been...

It opens with a JOLT.

STACKS of HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS fall onto the firebox floor. Marina looks at them with utter disbelief. She reaches up inside the smoke chamber and pulls out several more.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

She continues pulling out STACKS of HUNDREDS.

MARINA (CONT'D)

Oh my God, baby!

Sammy jumps up and down on the couch.

SAMMY

Santa! Santa! Santa!

EXT. VILLA TERRACE

A CARDINAL on the terrace wall watches the two finches inside the birdcage through the French doors.

Without warning, the Cardinal takes flight.

High above the villa and up... up to where the shoreline stretches out to meet the horizon.

Up and up...

INTO THE BLUE.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END