HENRY'S HOUSE ©

BY

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FADE IN:

EXT. WELLS MANSION - HEAVENS - NIGHT

A full Moon.

Stars move with the CREAKING RHYTHM of a rocking chair. The creaking stops. FOOTSTEPS through grass.

EXT. WELLS MANSION - PILLARED PORCH - NIGHT

A weathered rocker WOBBLES back and forth. Pulling back - a grand 1918 old brick Governor's Mansion.

EXT. WELLS MANSION - LAWN - NIGHT

A tall Norwegian pine. Shadowy images of a YOUNG BOY and a YOUNG GIRL sit at an old white iron table at the three's base. The images fade.

A tall statured silhouetted man stands before the pine.

HENRY MCNIGHT, late 40s, rests his forehead on the tree.

HENRY
I asked for much. You took my rage.

He rises to full height and gazes up the tree. He tears.

HENRY (CONT'D)
If I never see her again, I will remain content.

Henry backs up. The tree's height shines in the moonlight.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Restore a chance. I'm willing.

MERT (O.S.)
(yells)
You all right, Daddy?

HENRY
(loudly)
You're supposed to be in bed.

MERT (O.S.)
(yells)
You talking to a tree?

Henry swipes a tear from his eye.

EXT. WELLS MANSION - PILLARED PORCH - NIGHT

MERT, 14, mixed race, discombobulated hair, squints through her coke-bottle glasses.

HENRY (O.S.)
Mert, please.

MERT
(yells)
You hugging the tree?

HENRY (O.S.)
Mert!

MERT
You angry? I wouldn't want to see you angry.

HENRY (O.S.)
No, I'm not angry. Go to bed, Mert.

MERT
(yells)
I can't. I lost my way on the stairs.

HENRY
(under his breath)
But you can see me hug a tree.

He chuckles.

EXT. WELLS MANSION - LAWN - NIGHT

Henry jogs toward Mert.

HENRY
Just stay there. I'm coming.

Smiling, he glances once again at the stars.

EXT. DAY'S MANSION - COURTYARD - NIGHT

We descend from the sky -- then TWO walk.

ROSALYN DAY, late 70s, showy attire, leans heavily on her elaborate silver-studded cane.

She strolls along the courtyard with TIMOTHY "SPOONER" DAY, 20s, emotionally and mentally challenged. Multiple flags align the meticulously rich landscape.

Spooner speaks in spoonerisms (swapping the first consonants of words in a sentence).

SPOONER
You have the hags flung out.

ROSALYN
It's Memorial Day.

Spooner escorts the frail Rosalyn to a set of lounge chairs. They recline.

SPOONER
There's a million scars in the sty.

ROSALYN
Yes, that happy craze cleared up.

SPOONER
Fetch a stalling car and wake a mish, Mandgra.

ROSALYN
Dokey Okie. My wish is--

SPOONER
What did you fish war?

Spooner removes a candy bar from his pocket.

ROSALYN
You eat too many sweets, Spooner. Where'd you get that?

SPOONER
Colin had a puke on. Bike a lit?

ROSALYN
Sure.

She solemnly takes the piece he breaks off.

ROSALYN (CONT'D)
I'll be going up in the clouds for a while. Sort of like a manahuman soup going the lead of spite.

SPOONER
Wow. Make tea!

ROSALYN
Where I'm going, I can't take you, Spooner. I'll try real hard to come back. I promise.

Rosalyn gazes toward the oblivious Spooner.

SPOONER
Sure, Mandgra. I'll wake your turd for it.

Her slow-to-surface smile becomes a low CACKLE.

SPOONER (CONT'D)
Is this the pun fart?

ROSALYN
Yes, yes, very fun. But what I'm about to do won't be.

She reaches for his hand as Spooner GIGGLES.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - MAIN ENTRY - NIGHT

Tightly creased dress pants crinkle as COLIN STEVENS, 70s, whose attire reeks of servitude, rocks from toe to heel on the polished ceramic floor.

Spooner paces before the study entrance. A canvas mailbag drapes his shoulders, always.

The French doors EXPLODE open and Spooner retreats behind Colin. MAXWELL DAY, 20's, overconfident youth, storms out.

ROSALYN (O.S.)
Max, you come back here!

Maxwell stops. Rosalyn's cane supports her weakness.

ROSALYN (CONT'D)
Day Pharmaceuticals will be yours along with stipulations regarding Spooner's care.

Maxwell casually eyes Spooner. Spooner moves behind Rosalyn.

MAX
I think I can manage that. And what of my sister. What of Melinda?

ROSALYN
Have you made contact?

MAX
She hasn't responded.

ROSALYN
Keep trying.

MAX
Why?

ROSALYN
Because I ask.

She escorts herself out with Spooner's arm.

ROSALYN (CONT'D)
Come on, Spooner. I've the urge to go back outside.

Max waves off the conversation and exits.

COLIN
The air outside may prove too cool.

ROSALYN
Perhaps you'd like to join us?

COLIN
Perhaps you'd like to retire?

ROSALYN
Never!

COLIN
You should take your linguistic humor to the bedroom, not outside.

ROSALYN
And encounter the deadroom bore?

SPOONER
You hanged your bed, Mandgra?

ROSALYN
No, Spooner.
(reluctantly to Colin)
I'll retire, first, a phone call. A private one.

INT. FORD VAN - MOVING - DAY

BRUCE, 20s, black, huddles in the passenger seat as his window reflection moves through an affluent area.

Summer foliage rustles.

Henry drives.

HENRY
How are you doing?

BRUCE
These friggin' meds-

HENRY
Hey!

BRUCE
That's not swearing.

HENRY
I won't have it.

Henry's nervous fingers TAP the steering wheel. He turns the vehicle into the...

EXT. DAY'S MANSION - MAIN GATE - DAY

Mature shade trees envelop the massive gated mansion.

Henry pushes the Comm. Button.

NURSE (O.S.)
(filtered)
Yes?

HENRY
Mr. McKnight to see Rosalyn Day.

NURSE (O.S.)
The servants are off. Can you manage?

HENRY
Yes, I believe so.

The gate opens.

EXT. DAY'S MANSION - SIDE ENTRANCE - DAY

A covered carriage entrance.

HENRY
(to Bruce)
Stay here.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - KITCHEN - DAY

Henry enters the fit and tidy state-of-the-art kitchen. He reflects solemnly as he strides through the elaborate...

INT. DAY'S MANSION - DINING ROOM - DAY

...he notes a photo of the Young Girl. He touches it.

HENRY
(whispers)
Hello, Mel.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - MAIN ENTRY - DAY

Winding stairs, porcelain perfection, antique artifacts.

A NURSE, 30s, exits the adjacent study.

NURSE
In here, Mr. McKnight.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - ROSALYN'S STUDY - DAY

Ornate wooden bookcases line the study wall. Rosalyn sits in a high-back leather chair behind an elaborate Victorian desk.

ROSALYN
Come in, Henry.

Silence rules as Henry enters and sits.

HENRY
It's good to finally see you, Rosalyn.

ROSALYN
That delay was intentional. Your identity took precedence.

HENRY
Yes, but something's changed.

ROSALYN
I'm dying, Henry.

Compassion overwhelms Henry. He reaches, then decides not to.

HENRY
(pauses)
What can I do?

Rosalyn fiddles with a photo album.

ROSALYN
I need, what's the word...closure.

HENRY
How can I help?

She glues an article in the book.

ROSALYN
Spooner. If Melinda fails to return I must find a place for him.

HENRY
Why not here? What about with Max?

ROSALYN
Her is not an option.

She blows on the paper.

HENRY
You want me to take Spooner in.

ROSALYN
In reality, it may come to that.

HENRY
Of course, it's the least I can do. I never had the opportunity to thank you, Rosalyn. The lawyers, the doctors, my name change.

She lays the opened book aside and opens another.

ROSALYN
Our history is not the purpose of this discussion. I'm going to Europe for alternative procedures.

She meticulously repairs a photo corner.

ROSALYN (CONT'D)
But if I fail to come back and Melinda doesn't come, then I've instructed my lawyers to give you all of Spooner's pertinent information.

She finally looks up.

ROSALYN (CONT'D)
Even as educated as you are, Henry, you've not met anyone like him.

HENRY
I see.

Henry drifts to an earlier time.

FLASH BACK:

EXT. WELLS MANSION - LAWN - DAY

The Young Boy (Henry) and the Young Girl (Melinda) sit at an old white iron table before the Norwegian pine. They laugh.

BACK TO SCENE:

ROSALYN
You see? You won't do it?

HENRY
This opportunity I've -- No, you've misunderstood. What would be the ideal for Spooner? Where do you want him to be?

ROSALYN
With Melinda, of course.

HENRY
I see.

Henry's gaze drifts.

ROSALYN
Henry.

HENRY
I know this is difficult, Rosalyn. Melinda could come around.

SUPER: 'Two Months Later'

INT. DAY'S MANSION - KITCHEN - DAY

Colin prepares a serving tray.

Industrious hands painstakingly arrange a serving tray with water crackers, cut cheese, and fruit.

He flips on the counter TV.

INSERT SCREEN IMAGE:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

FEMALE reporter stands...

TV REPORTER (FILTERED)
Fans dearly loved Rosalyn Day. She was well known for her unique skits of comedy filled with oxymorons, spoonerisms and linguistic humor.

BACK TO SCENE:

COLIN
So it begins.

Colin does the final touch with a napkin and picks up the tray, hesitates, and moves toward the cupboard.

REPORTER (V.O.)
(filtered)
Testimony after testimony from service men filled her ceremony.

Colin removes a box of Gunboat sponge cakes and pitches one on the tray.

REPORTER (V.O.)
(filtered)
But unfortunately, Rosalyn Day took the quiet exit when she lost the battle to colon cancer.

Now, five more Gunboats. Colin turns off the TV.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - ROSALYN'S STUDY - DAY

Colin passes the sumptuous Victorian décor. The awkward high-backed chair is turned toward the back wall.

He pours a cup of coffee and sits beside the desk. He opts for a Gunboat.

COLIN
-- always hated these.

He rises and flips the TV on in the corner armoire.

INSERT SCREEN IMAGE:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

TV REPORTER
(filtered)
Everyone anticipated catching a glimpse of Rosalyn's reclusive, yet still popular, granddaughter; the singer Melinda Day.

BACK TO SCENE:

COLIN
Come on, Melinda, this is your cue.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)
We switch you now to a live report at the Day residence.

EXT. DAY'S MANSION - MAIN GATE - DAY

The National Guard attempts to control the crowd of vets and fans. A REPORTER drills the Nurse at her opened car door.

REPORTER
I understand you were Rosalyn's nurse in her last days?

NURSE
That's correct.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - ROSALYN'S STUDY - DAY

COLIN
Bloody hell!

He throws his napkin to the floor.

EXT. DAY'S MANSION - MAIN GATE - DAY

A crowd of fans huddle around the Nurse's vehicle.

REPORTER
Did she ever talk about her son and daughter-in-law's murder?

NURSE
Circumstances about their deaths, I believe, were never solved.

REPORTER
Will their business be sold?

NURSE
I think Max will take over.

REPORTER
Her youngest grandson? Why not the oldest?

Colin rushes down the drive shooing the press.

NURSE
Well, I don't think he's capable-

Colin swiftly plants himself before the nurse.

COLIN
That'll be enough, my dear. Remember your contract.

The Nurse drives off. Colin straightens his rolled up shirt.

COLIN (CONT'D)
(loudly)
There will be a public announcement, next Tuesday, after the will is read.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Rushed, MELINDA DAY, (Mel), 40, retired performer, returns to find the grave side service has ended.

Disheveled, she dashes through the exiting entourage with the aid of the National Guard. She approaches an aged PASTOR.

The attendants begin to lower the casket. Max sits in the head chair at the burial site.

MELINDA
No wait, Pastor.

MAXWELL
Melinda.

MELINDA
Max. I want to see her.

MAXWELL
That's not possible.

MELINDA
Please, Max. I've slept in every airport.

Max stands.

MAXWELL
I can't help you.

PASTOR
She requested a closed casket.

MELINDA
No, it's been too long. I must see her. She's my grandmother. Surely, Pastor, you understand?

MAXWELL
The request was in her will. When she was dying she informed us.

MELINDA
Dying?

MAXWELL
Starting already, Melinda?

Melinda stands confused. Max strides away.

PASTOR
She had a long illness, bedridden in these last couple of weeks.

MELINDA
I didn't know.

PASTOR
Your brother didn't contact you?

Her eyes track toward her exiting brother.

Tearful, Melinda sits as the casket is lowered.

MELINDA
Mandgra. Spooner, where's Spooner?

EXT. CEMETERY - TREED AREA

Spooner clings to a tree MUMBLING.

Melinda approaches Spooner quietly. He speaks to three rocks he's placed as figures on a bolder. He raises one.

SPOONER
Gee-sus joes sup to the pie. He's la-hive...Mangra died.

Spooner stares with wide eyes.

SPOONER (CONT'D)
Leminda? No! No!

He thrashes his head on a tree.

MELINDA
It's me. Really.

He sprints toward her with his bleeding head.

SPOONER
I'm blurt and heeding.

MELINDA
Let me help.

He hangs and weeps uncontrollably on her. Melinda hesitates, then embraces him.

EXT. CEMETERY - DRIVEWAY - FORD VAN - DAY

Henry views their embrace. Bruce sits in the passenger seat.

EXT. DAY'S MANSION - SIDE ENTRANCE - DAY

The mansion overshadows Melinda and Spooner as they enter. Hesitant, Melinda eyes the grand brick walls laced with ivy.

SPOONER
This was Hell--Mel's mouse?

Melinda lingers.

MELINDA
Mel's house, yes.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - KITCHEN - DAY

Melinda gazes at familiar items.

SPOONER
Mungry Hell?

MELINDA
What? No, I'm not hungry.

SPOONER
BunGoat?

He spots the box of opened Gunboats and digs in.

MELINDA
Huh?

SPOONER
I have wubble with my turds.

MELINDA
I know. Mandgra loved her Gunboats.

Colin enters with the empty lunch tray. Startled, he drops the tray -- gunboat wrappers and all.

COLIN
(loudly)
Melinda?

MELINDA
Hello, Colin.

COLIN
Oh, my dear, it is you? Welcome home. When did you get in?

He quickly picks up the mess.

MELINDA
I arrived too late. I was surprised not to see you there.

COLIN
You must have just missed me.

Spooner squints in front of Colin's face all the while stuffing gunboats down his throat.

SPOONER
(whispers)
Lou yie.

Colin sidesteps Spooner and pitches the tray to the counter.

COLIN
Come, my dear. Come on in. Did you have problems at the gate?

MELINDA
The National Guard was there.

COLIN
That's right. The guard and your grandmother were very close. Can I get you something?

Spooner still squints at him. Colin lightly smacks him.

COLIN (CONT'D)
Spooner, that's enough. How many have you had?

SPOONER
Fust Jive.

COLIN
Five? You naughty boy! Why don't you go on up to your room. I set some new drawing pencils out.

Melinda gazes. Her recollections preoccupy her.

SPOONER
Canks, Tholin! Leminda come?

MELINDA
Huh?

COLIN
You go ahead, Spooner.

Spooner exits.

COLIN (CONT'D)
Come Melinda, I've something to show you.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - ROSALYN'S STUDY - DAY

Melinda enters -- Colin nervously follows.

COLIN
Your grandmother spent long hours here reading and doing her books.

MELINDA
Books?

COLIN
She made albums depicting a history of her life. She started with her overseas performances. Like to see?

He indicates a certain section in the walled library.

COLIN (CONT'D)
They start here and go to the end.

Melinda takes the first book and hesitates at the high-backed leather chair. It still faces the wall. Colin freezes.

COLIN (CONT'D)
I, for some reason, can't sit in it. We always joked about how odd the chair looked with the décor. She opted for comfort. It's almost like she's still here.

Melinda revolves the chair and sits. Colin exhales, relieved, then notices a Gunboat wrapper; he pockets it.

COLIN (CONT'D)
You will stay the evening?

MELINDA
No, Colin, I can't stay.

COLIN
A cup of coffee perhaps?

MELINDA
Thank you.

Colin exits. Melinda flips the pages of Rosalyn's shows.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - MAIN ENTRY - DAY

Colin sees a shadowy FIGURE lurk at the top of the stairs. He hoofs to the bottom of the steps. He CLEARS his throat.

COLIN
(whispers)
Go to your room! She's still here.

EXT. DAY'S MANSION - ROSALYN'S STUDY - DAY

Melinda retrieves another book. She strokes it curiously with her hand. Colin enters with the tray of coffee.

COLIN
Here we go. Nice and hot.

MELINDA
Colin, who are these people?

He lays the tray on a side cart.

COLIN
Let's have a look. Oh yes, that was a much happier time.

MELINDA
I recognize Mandgra, and of course Mother and Father. Who is this?

COLIN
That's Harold Wells. Your father's business partner.

MELINDA
His old partner.

He points at a single photo.

COLIN
Not at that time. They were all very happy. This is Harold's wife, Angelina. She died that same year with ovarian cancer. That's Henry, their son; and that is you.

INSERT PHOTO IMAGE:

Young Henry and YOUNG MELINDA stand by their PARENTS who sit on white wrought iron chairs before the Norwegian pine.

COLIN.
He quite fancied you as I remember.

MELINDA
I don't remember him.

COLIN
That's odd. I recall you being friends. He was a challenged child.

Colin pours coffee. Melinda avoids eye contact.

MELINDA
Oh?

COLIN
He had anger control issues.

He sets a cup on the desk.

MELINDA
Then the rumors were true; he killed his father.

COLIN
That night brought rumors to us all. We've certainly read enough of them about you.
(MORE)

COLIN (CONT'D)
No one really knows if he killed his father or what happened to him.

Melinda nervously plays with the page.

MELINDA
Mother does look happy.

He folds a napkin and tucks in under the saucer.

COLIN
The Wells family had acreage about an hour north of here. The two families would often retreat there.

Mel's interest focusses on the photos.

MELINDA
Thank you, Colin.

Colin smiles and slips out.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - SPOONER'S ROOM - DAY

A highly interactive room - a room every child dreams of.

Spooner flips the TV remote several times.

SPOONER
Flannel-chipping, flannel chipping.

He goes to some medieval figurines.

SPOONER (CONT'D)
Rindercella waived. Her comb was a hassle now.

He pitches the remote and waves like the queen.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - ROSALYN'S STUDY - NIGHT

Six albums lay open. Melinda scans them, engrossed.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - SPOONER'S ROOM - DAY

Spooner, dressed in a goofy French shirt, barely balances a white wig flopped on his head. He finishes a pencil drawing on an easel. The likeness of Melinda mesmerizes him.

SPOONER
Colin and I have a secret.

He kisses the picture. He yawns heavily and hugs his mailbag.

SPOONER (CONT'D)
Teepy Slime.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - ROSALYN'S STUDY - DAY

Melinda reaches for the last book on the shelf.

Colin enters.

MELINDA
She followed every appearance I--

COLIN
Entertainment was her life. She was very proud of you.

MELINDA
So many years. I regret --

COLIN
Perhaps if you stay your regrets may disperse. Spooner needs you.

MELINDA
Spooner! I forgot Spooner.

COLIN
He's fast tucked away, my dear.

He points at the clock, three A.M.

COLIN (CONT'D)
I've taken the liberty and put your bags in the guestroom. I've left the light on.

MELINDA
Oh, okay. One thing. What is this?

She points to several awards displayed on a credenza.

COLIN
Those are her awards. She became quite a philanthropist since you left. I suppose Spooner inspired her to give.

MELINDA
Fascinating, I always thought Mandgra a bit of a tight wad.

COLIN
She was also a woman with regrets. If it weren't for Spooner, I suppose she wouldn't have survived this long.

MELINDA
Of course, Colin. That was uncalled for. She had a big heart. Much bigger than mine.

COLIN
If it helps, she did read every letter you wrote Spooner.

MELINDA
Thank you, Colin. Goodnight.

She picks up a brochure.

INSERT BROCHURE IMAGE:

"Henry's House works difficult cases into productive lives. 5555 Delmar, St.Louis, MO. 63101. A not-for-profit organization. Contact Henry McKnight 555-7201"

INT. DAY'S MANSION - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Melinda climbs the dark winding staircase to the west wing.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

She approaches the faintly lit room.

Hesitantly, she scans the room at its entrance. The immense postal bed draws immediate attention.

Melinda views a portrait over the mantle.

MELINDA
(whispers)
Mother.

DAY MANSION - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Slowly, Melinda unpacks her bag. Shaking off her tension, her scan drifts to the fire poker at the fireplace's base.

Taking her robe and night case to the...

DAY MANSION - GUEST ROOM - BATH - NIGHT

... She removes her makeup. She brushes her hair. CLANG, a noise from the room. She freezes.

MELINDA
Who's there?

INT. DAY MANSION - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Melinda enters the bedroom and drops her brush. The fireplace poker lies in the middle of the floor.

MELINDA
No.

Melinda backs toward the exit and JUMPS as she clips Spooner.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Ah, Spooner! What are you doing?

SPOONER
Slant keep. New much toys.

He holds his ears.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - ROSALYN'S STUDY - NIGHT

Melinda sleeps curled on the couch.

MAXWELL (O.S.)
I don't care. It's three o'clock in the afternoon!

Maxwell enters, determined.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
I'm taking Spooner, Melinda.

MELINDA
What?

MAXWELL
He can't stay here. My place isn't big enough and Colin is too old.

MELINDA
What are you saying, Max?

MAXWELL
I'm saying he's coming with me.

Maxwell wheels around and exits. She quickly pursues him, putting on a robe.

INT. DAY MANSION - MAIN ENTRY WAY - DAY

Maxwell rattles his keys.

MELINDA
Just a minute. You can't arbitrarily do this.

Maxwell halts with defiance.

MAXWELL
I certainly can. I'm his brother.

MELINDA
And I don't have any say?

MAXWELL
Your absence disqualifies anything you have to say.

MELINDA
Disqualifies?

Maxwell marches to the stairs.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - STAIRCASE - DAY

MAXWELL
You left, remember? Colin, the car's out front. Bring his bags. Spooner, come on, it's time to go.

MELINDA
You can't do this, Max.

MAXWELL
Watch me.

MELINDA
Why, you smug little rich boy. This is Spooner we're talking about.

MAXWELL
He belongs in a home where they can help him.

Spooner and Colin appear with suitcases at the top.

Melinda BANGS her hand on the banister.

MELINDA
This is his home!

MAXWELL
Not any longer!

She climbs the steps and plants herself in front of Maxwell.

MELINDA
That's it, isn't it? You stand to inherit all of this and he's in your way.

COLIN
Perhaps we should discuss--

MAXWELL
We? This is none of your business!

Colin and Spooner come down the steps. Max points.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Look at him, Melinda. Professional care is what he needs. He's barely been out of these four walls. He can't talk right, let alone care for himself.

He struts down to Spooner and flips his canvas mailbag.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
What is it you carry in that?

COLIN
They're Melinda's letters.

Melinda stands stunned. Spooner retreats behind Melinda.

MELINDA
He's coming with me. If you care to challenge that, I'll call the police. Rumors and stigma I can handle, but I don't think you want a domestic scandal stuck to your precious name.

MAXWELL
Do what you want.

Melinda steps back.

MELINDA
Nice act, Max. Mandgra taught you well. Come on, Spooner.

Melinda and Spooner climb the steps.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Melinda, fully dressed now, throws clothes into her bags. Zipping one up, she notices Colin at the entrance.

COLIN
Melinda, don't go. I'd hoped this would become your home again.

MELINDA
I can't stay, Colin.

COLIN
The Press will find you and relentlessly hound you. Stay.

MELINDA
I'll find someplace they won't.

COLIN
Maxwell is feeling the power in his belly. It'll pass.

She stops packing.

MELINDA
It'll pass? He never tried to contact me. Mandgra was sick and he didn't tell me. He did nothing.

COLIN
It's been difficult for Maxwell without parents. Rosalyn tried.

MELINDA
I would have at least--

COLIN
(quietly)
--You haven't called in decades...I can't convince you to stay?

MELINDA
No.

COLIN
Then I'll help you with these bags.

Spooner CRIES from the hallway. Melinda stops.

COLIN (CONT'D)
Go ahead, I'll finish here.

Melinda exits. Colin hides Melinda's makeup case.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY

Spooner clasps Melinda's bag of letters and cries.

MELINDA
Spooner, don't cry.

SPOONER
I'm pouring with rain.

Spooner bangs his head on the wall.

MELINDA
Stop. Please don't.

SPOONER
I'm all-alone.

MELINDA
No, no you're not. I'm here.

SPOONER
I'll light that fire.

MELINDA
Fire?-light-liar. Who? Who lies?

SPOONER
Max.

MELINDA
I'll take care of Max.

SPOONER
Mad Bax! He's going to mend see.

MELINDA
He won't send you anywhere. You can stay with me.

He lifts his letter bag.

SPOONER
At Melinda's Montana?

MELINDA
Good question. My place is a hiding place. You need to see what's outside these walls.

Colin enters with the bags.

COLIN
Ready?

Melinda nods. They descend the stairs.

COLIN (CONT'D)
Don't worry, he'll be smiling soon.

SPOONER
Colin and I have a secret.

Colin halts - eyes widen and hustles Spooner down.

MELINDA
(to Colin)
He didn't spoon.

COLIN
Never mind that -- Occasionally, when he's emotional, he doesn't.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - STAIRCASE - DAY

COLIN
--the estate reading will be Tuesday. I assume you'll stay in town until then. I'm not sure of the time. Can you contact me?

MELINDA
Sure.

Melinda reaches the end of the staircase.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
(to Spooner)
Wait here.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - ROSALYN'S STUDY - DAY

Melinda snatches the brochure for Henry's House.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - KITCHEN - DAY

Colin takes a set of keys and a card from his desk drawer.

COLIN
My private number and keys to your Grandmother's pool truck.

MELINDA
Pool truck?

EXT. DAY'S MANSION - MAIN GATE - DAY

Melinda and Spooner, disguised, make their way through the PRESS in a pool maintenance truck.

Melinda smiles, only to show decayed teeth and a floppy hat. The peering PRESS backs off and allows them to exit.

INT. POOL TRUCK - MOVING

SPOONER
(to Melinda)
Don't pet the sweaty things.

He waves to the press. The truck jerks into gear releasing a cloud of dust inside.

SPOONER (CONT'D)
(to the press waving)
Eye ball.

Melinda takes out her false mouthpiece. Spooner takes off his cap. He swipes the dash and fingers the dust.

SPOONER (CONT'D)
Trusty little duck.

Melinda smiles. The truck speeds off.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Henry rushes by the living room window, stops and peers out in disbelief. Spooner and Melinda get out of the pool truck.

HENRY
Lord, no! Right, I asked for this, right. Mert! Can you get the door?

Mert runs through the Foyer hall.

MERT
Stairs! Help me with the stair!

Henry rushes her to the stairs. Zigzagged she goes up.

LIZZIE, elderly, impulse is to pull hair, enters frantic, flopping her hands in the air. She goes for the stairs.

Henry glances out of the widow again.

LIZZIE
Let me git! Come here! I gotta git!

She heads up the stairs.

HENRY
Lizzy, do not pull Mert's hair.

OTIS GEERING, a retired do-wop singer, enters doing a Temptations like dance humming with intermittent words sung.

OTIS
Hmmm...run.....away.

He dances to Henry then trips. Henry takes an index finger and pushes him up. Otis smiles then exits.

Henry's glances out the window. Melinda and Spooner approach.

BRUCE (O.S.)
I'm gonna explode!

HENRY
I'll be right there.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Melinda, with Spooner, picks up a fallen "Help Wanted" sign. Spooner reads:

SPOONER
Welp Haunted. Nosy little cook.

Melinda KNOCKS.

She KNOCKS again. Henry hurriedly opens the door. Melinda hands him the sign.

HENRY
I knew it was a matter of time
before you came.

MELINDA
No, I didn't come for the job -- My name is Melinda.

Henry pauses bewildered momentarily. He shakes her hand.

HENRY
Listen, can you come in? I have a situation I'm taking care of.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - ENTRY - DAY

They enter. Bruce paces the width of the entry hall. He anxiously looks at Henry while doing cleansing breaths.

BRUCE
This isn't working, Henry. I can't control it.

HENRY
Okay, let's try to walk it off.

Henry gently paces the hall with him.

MELINDA
Perhaps we should come back later.

HENRY
No, it wouldn't hurt to see what it's really like here.

MELINDA
But I didn't come for the --

HENRY
Why don't you have a seat in the kitchen? I'll come in a minute.

MERT (O.S.)
Lizzie! I am a black woman raised by gangs. I will take and leave you with them if you don't stop!

Henry yells up the stairs.

HENRY
Try to get her to take a bath. Put lots of bubbles in it. It'll distract her.

MERT (O.S.)
Whoa kay, Daddy. I got this.

BRUCE
I can't shake this, Henry. Don't let me hurt anyone.

HENRY
That's not going to happen. Come.

BRUCE
Henry, don't want any meds.

HENRY
We'll try the other. Try to relax.

BRUCE
No!

Henry physically locks arms with him.

HENRY
Bruce, I'm not your enemy. I'm trying to help, but you have to do your part.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Early practical motif - a donated kitchen.

Henry cuts Bruce loose facing the counter. Bruce TAPS the counter. Henry unlocks a medicine cabinet and stirs a powdered mixture into a water glass.

Spooner studies the paintings on the wall.

MELINDA
(to Henry)
Can I help?

BRUCE
God himself can't help me, lady.

HENRY
That's not true, Bruce. He's helped me. She just wants to help.

Bruce's TAPS become POUNDS. Spooner makes his way to Melinda.

BRUCE
Yeah and angels are going to zap me with their miraculous power and this madness will all go away.

HENRY
Could happen. Here, drink this.

BRUCE
(explodes)
I said no meds!

Spooner hides behind Melinda.

HENRY
(calmly)
I'll explain again. This is a natural substance that will help you resist the impulse.

BRUCE
You'll have to shove it down my throat.

HENRY
(quietly)
Try to take it.

They stand off. Bruce transfers his intensity towards Henry.

BRUCE
Henry, I'm going to explode.

MELINDA
We'll come back at a later time.

HENRY
It's best you stay there.

Henry motions Melinda and Spooner to back off.

HENRY (CONT'D)
(to Bruce)
It's all right. I'm here, keep breathing. Try to take this.

Bruce inflames, then FLAILS the glass. It SHATTERS.

BRUCE
You want to help lady? I'll show you how you can help.

Spooner shelters himself behind Melinda. Henry firmly plants himself before Bruce.

SPOONER
You have very mad banners.

BRUCE
Get out of my way.

HENRY
No.

Bruce averts his attention to the kitchen table.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Just stay still. He won't hurt you.

The table contents CRASH to the floor. Bruce pulls and SMASHES the pictures off the wall.

Stopping momentarily, Bruce focuses on the counter. Flinging the cabinets open he THRASHES their contents to the floor. He stops. He YELLS.

BRUCE
I don't want any f-f-friggin meds.

Henry squints at Bruce's language.

HENRY
No, no meds, Bruce. Not yet. Are you through?

Bruce goes to the medicine cabinet and whips the contents violently to the floor.

BRUCE
I can't stop. It's getting worse.

Mert enters.

MERT
What's up in here? Daddy?

HENRY
I'm all right, Mert. Go back.

Bruce blocks Mert's exit. She bumps into him, then freezes. Bruce barely controls his desire to push her.

MERT
I can't.

HENRY
Come over here, Mert.

MERT
No, Daddy, I really can't. I can't find the way.

HENRY
Look up, honey. Start walking.

Bruce braces himself in the entry way. Henry plants himself in direct proximity.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Had enough?

BRUCE
Help me, Henry. Help me.

Henry approaches him with his arms up. Bruce takes two cleansing breaths and releases the doorway. Henry embraces him fully.

Bruce hugs him. Suddenly, Bruce pushes off his hug, propelling Henry toward the wall. Henry whiplashes his head against the wall.

HENRY
Ah. I thought you were through.

BRUCE
(quietly struggling)
Just - one - more - thing...

Bruce violently overturns the table. When through, he staggers toward Henry.

HENRY
I got you.

Henry catches him in his exhaustion - lays him on the floor.

MELINDA
Is he all right?

Bruce retreats to a closed eyed solitary position.

HENRY
He's all right.

Holding his head, Henry moves toward the sink.

MELINDA
Here, let me help you.

She yanks a towel off the refrigerator. Henry, dazed, leans over the filled sink.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Spooner, get some ice. Bring the whole tray.

Mert SHAKES.

MERT
Daddy.

Henry quickly responds.

HENRY
Mert! I forgot you were here. Hold on. I'll take you out.

He physically picks Mert up and takes her to the...

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - STAIRS - DAY

He places Mert's hands on the banister. Melinda follows with a towel full of ice.

HENRY
Better?

MERT
Uh huh.

HENRY
Can you make it up?

MERT
Sure, Daddy.

LIZZIE, 60s, in a robe, stands at the tops of the stairs with a hand full of hair. Her head is wrapped in a towel.

LIZZIE
Henry, I'm better now.

HENRY
Ah, Lizzie, come down. You need to take your medicine.

Mert and Lizzie cross paths on the stairs.

MERT
She confused my path.

Melinda hands Henry the ice.

MELINDA
I'll take her up.

Henry watches Melinda ascend the stairs. He smiles.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Lizzie shuffles the mess toward Spooner. He picks up a broken picture. Henry roots for Lizzie's medicine on the floor.

LIZZIE
I'm Lizzie. What's your name?

SPOONER
Spooner.

LIZZIE
Spoon? Who the heck named you that?
Nice hair, Spoon.

HENRY
Don't even think about it, Lizzie.
Here, take this.

SPOONER
I'd rather toke in a sub than shake
a tower. You?

While Lizzie gapes dumbfounded at Spooner's response, Henry plops her meds in; she never notices. Melinda ENTERS.

MELINDA
You should keep that ice on.

LIZZIE
I'm Lizzie, nice hair.

HENRY
Lizzie, put your gloves on till
your medicine takes hold. Come on.

Scowling, Lizzie takes two heavy winter gloves from her robe pockets. She puts them on and exits.

MELINDA
Here, sit down. Spooner and I can
help clean up.

SPOONER
I'll empty out this wordy daughter.

Henry holds his head and watches Spooner go to the sink.

HENRY
If you run into any aspirin, throw
it my way.

Bruce stirs.

MELINDA
Not again.

HENRY
He'll be the exact opposite. Sort of a weakened depressive state.

BRUCE
I'm hungry. Dinner's late.

HENRY
It'll be late tonight. It's good that you're hungry.

Bruce exits.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I hoped he'd apologize. We've been working on that but he doesn't seem to have it in him.

Bruce re-enters.

BRUCE
Sorry, Henry. Sorry, lady.

HENRY
Good, Bruce. That's good.

Bruce exits.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I'll take what progress I can get. Bruce has ICD, Impulse Control Disorder. Difficulty dealing with the impulses of rage in particular. Little is known about it, although cases have been around for years.

Melinda prepares more ice in a towel.

MELINDA
How long has he been here?

HENRY
Five months and five attacks, which is minimal considering it could be more. Lizzie has the same malady but her impulse is to pull hair.

MELINDA
Why do you take such hard cases?

HENRY
I'm sort of an expert on it.

He holds the ice pack on his head. Melinda CRUNCHES over broken glass, finds a clean glass and fills it with water.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Mert, my daughter, has visual problems. But you didn't come to listen to me. I didn't expect you to come so soon.

Melinda hands him the water.

MELINDA
No, I didn't come for the job, I'm Melinda -

HENRY
- Day. I know. Your grandmother is a staunch supporter.

MELINDA
...was.

HENRY
Ah, was. Forgive me. How are you?

MELINDA
Considering I haven't been home in twenty years and just experienced my first ICD episode. Fine. I came -

HENRY
- hey, maybe you can help me.

He reaches for Melinda's hand. At his touch, she jerks away.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Sorry, I'll remember that.

MELINDA
What?

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - DAY

A well lived-in room, games set up, lacks a womanly touch.

Otis sits, stares into oblivion.

MELINDA
That's Otis Geering.

HENRY
St Louis's own. You know him?

MELINDA
Not personally, just his music. Why is he here?

HENRY
He walked out of his act when some heckler wouldn't leave him alone. His agent found him in a shelter in Louisiana and brought him here.

MELINDA
I can't help you.

HENRY
What made you leave?

MELINDA
I beg your pardon?

HENRY
What made you leave? Maybe I can help Otis if I had some insight.

MELINDA
That's too personal, Mr. McKnight.

HENRY
Henry, call me Henry. Why? Why did you leave your singing career?

MELINDA
I was lonely.

HENRY
That's hard to imagine.

MELINDA
It became an empty life. There was no one to share it with.

HENRY
You may have something there. Otis has no family.

Henry notices Spooner examining another wall painting.

HENRY (CONT'D)
You came because of Spooner. I thought you came to cut off my funding.

MELINDA
That's why I got the full tour?

HENRY
I'm a determined man, Ms. Day. I have a two-page waiting list.

MELINDA
I have no control over the funding. The lawyers do, I suppose. Spooner is why I came.

SPOONER
Ah, munk jail!

Spooner sits and sorts through junk mail.

HENRY
He hasn't stopped looking at pictures. Have you noticed?

MELINDA
No, I haven't.

HENRY
Can you stick around?

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A sparse room with a very large table.

Mert, Bruce, Otis, Lizzie, Melinda, Spooner, GREGORY, 20s, a savant, and MORLEY, 17, nerdy geek with several bruises on his face, sit around the table graced with basics such as rice, cornbread, vegetables.

SPOONER
What a wearable taste.

MELINDA
Spooner.

SPOONER
What's that jumpy lunk?

MELINDA
Spooner.

HENRY
It's all right. Some survivalist nut donated his stored food. With my budget, I'll take anything.

Henry helps Otis with his plate.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I must say, that dish you made turned out well. You knew what to do with those cans.

MELINDA
I live in a remote portion of Montana. I buy in bulk. You get creative.

HENRY
Remote? Morley, inform us please.

MORLEY
The 1990 Almanac says that Montana has a total population of 799,065. There are more people in this city.

HENRY
Yes, Montana, land of the Jackalope.

MERT
Jackalope?

HENRY
An imaginary creature, half-jackrabbit half antelope.

MERT
Imaginary? Sounds like drugs.

Mert misses her mouth with a spoonful of food.

HENRY
Seclusion is a drug. An evasive maneuver to replace reality.

Melinda gazes at her plate. Henry rises.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Okay, house, you're on your own. Ms. Day and I are retiring to my study.

They all OOH and AH.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Very funny.
(to Melinda)
They're doing that because my study is off limits.

MORLEY
May I have a book, Henry? Please?

HENRY
It's kind of late, Morley.

MORLEY
I'll go to bed, I promise.

HENRY
No flashlights?

MORLEY
No, I promise.

HENRY
Come by when you've finished.

Melinda rises and Spooner follows.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Spooner, perhaps you could help clean up?

Melinda nods okay. Henry and Melinda exit. Morley SNEEZES.

SPOONER
Here, know your blows.

Spooner hands him his handkerchief.

MORLEY
Did you know that sneezing is the only human bodily function that can generate speeds up to one-hundred miles per hour?

SPOONER
You're a fart smeller.

SNICKERS well into LAUGHTER. Spooner smiles.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

The well-kept library clashes with the rest of the house. Leather-bound books; built-in bookcases;baby grand.

MELINDA
You like poetry, Henry?

She blows the dust off of a book.

HENRY
It was an old passion. You?

MELINDA
It helped inspire fresh lyrics.

HENRY
You shouldn't have stopped. The world lost good music that day.

MELINDA
You know my music?

HENRY
Doesn't all of St. Louis? Your family has been their greatest conversation for decades.

Melinda notices a framed certificate. Henry sits at his desk and shuffles papers.

MELINDA
And you wonder why I live in Montana. You're a practicing Psychologist?

HENRY
According to the state, if that means anything.

MELINDA
What brought you to the field?

Henry SNICKERS.

HENRY
I had a rough childhood.

Melinda strokes the keys on the white baby grand piano.

MELINDA
This is beautiful. Do you play?

HENRY
No, it was my mother's. Gregory occasionally blesses us with his talent. He's a savant but not of the prodigious level. His syndrome was acquired.

He files some leaflets in a drawer.

HENRY (CONT'D)
A bullet found it's way to the left side of his brain during some gang activity. His mother drops him off when she needs a break.

MELINDA
About Spooner. Can you help him?

HENRY
I can only try. Tell me about him.

Henry stops filing. Melinda strolls around. He notices his family picture on his desk. He HIDES it in his drawer.

MELINDA
He had meningitis as an infant. Miraculously, he survived, yet it left him impaired. He's mentally challenged but not stupid.

Melinda scans the bookcase.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Spooner was six the summer my parents died. Mandgra, Rosalyn, basically took over his parenting. I was 20 coming out of boarding school. I rarely came home.

Henry rises and heads for the bookcase, takes another picture and tucks in on the top of some books.

HENRY
The cuts on his head?

MELINDA
He bangs his head occasionally.

HENRY
His speech, how did that start?

MELINDA
Mandgra started that. Being the comedian she taught him to spoon.

Henry sits at his desk again and shuffles more papers.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
It's basically the swapping of beginning consonant sounds between words. He clung to it so tightly, he never stopped.

HENRY
The bag he carries.

MELINDA
They are my letters. I wrote Spooner often.

Henry stops his preoccupation.

HENRY
You must mean a lot for him to keep such a vigil.

MELINDA
I had no idea.

Melinda sits in a wing-back chair.

HENRY
Your other brother, where does he fit in all of this?

MELINDA
Max wants to put Spooner in his proper place. A home somewhere. Max just hasn't accepted Spooner.

Henry stands and inserts a book in the bookcase.

HENRY
Why is that, you think?

MELINDA
I don't care to speculate.

HENRY
Ah, this discord? It exists between you and Max too?

MELINDA
I haven't been around.

HENRY
And you, have you accepted Spooner?

MELINDA
Of course I do. I wouldn't be here, would I?

HENRY
I see.

Frustrated, Melinda throws her hands up.

MELINDA
You see? What is it you see?

Henry approaches and kneels before her. He reaches for her hand, then backs off.

HENRY
I see a beautiful woman, full of guilt, who has the courage to return and make things right. Spooner isn't the only one who needs help.

Melinda's eyes fill with tears.

MELINDA
Can you help us?

HENRY
I'll try.

Morley appears at the open doorway. Henry stands.

MORLEY
About that book, Henry?

HENRY
You've got one hour, no more.

He proceeds to his bookcase and pitches him a book.

MORLEY
The Bathroom Book?

HENRY
You'll love it.

Mert appears at the doorway.

MERT
Daddy, it's laundry night?

HENRY
Ah! Honey, it's late. I need to get Otis and Lizzie in bed.

MELINDA
I can help.

HENRY
Fine. I'll be down when I can.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - EXERCISE AREA - NIGHT

A total gym. Bike, treadmill, weights, flex machine...all in a unfinished area.

MELINDA
Who is the exercise guru?

MERT
Daddy. He uses it to relieve stress.

They walk through to the...

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Three washers and dryers align the cement floor. Mert, with odd bodily movements compensates for her vision and ritualistically starts to sort clothes.

Melinda follows her lead. Struck by Mert's unique movements, Melinda watches her.

MERT
So what's your problem?

MELINDA
I beg your pardon?

MERT
Why are you here? No one comes here without a problem.

MELINDA
I brought Spooner here for help.

MERT
He's rather fun. We don't get many fun ones. It's good to laugh. Daddy needs that.

MELINDA
Your mother, Mert, where is she?

MERT
I never knew her.

Guilt-ridden, Melinda feigns busyness.

MERT (CONT'D)
I'm adopted.

MELINDA
Oh. How long?

MERT
One year, Monday.

MELINDA
You have no adopted mother?

MERT
I've never seen Daddy look at a girl let alone date. When we met, he told me of his one love he had growing up. We were both lonely. So we became a family.

Mert approaches the washer sideways. She gropes for clothes but her depth perception is way off.

Turning to her right side, she moves in without facing the laundry. She pours the detergent.

Looking up, she feels her way to the dryer.

MERT (CONT'D)
I usually need help unloading. Bending over confuses me.

MELINDA
Let me help.

They take the basket to the folding table.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - ENTRY - NIGHT

Melinda and Mert meet Henry coming down the stairs shuffling his hair back in place. Spooner exits the kitchen toward the family room.

HENRY
Lizzie gave me a rough time.

MERT
That's okay, Daddy. We did it in record time.

HENRY
You need to get into bed.

Henry kisses Mert.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Night, baby.

MERT
Night, Daddy. Love ya.

HENRY
Love you, too.

Mert starts up the stairs, then stops.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Look up.

MERT
I got it. Night.

Melinda smiles.

HENRY
She is unique, isn't she?

MELINDA
Adorable. Who could resist being part of her life? How did you meet?

Henry gives lead toward the study.

Henry takes a deep breath then smiles at Melinda.

HENRY
Providence.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Henry and Melinda approach the study, as Morley roots through Henry's desk drawer.

HENRY
Morley.

You know the rules.

MORLEY
Yes, sir. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Don't hit me.

Sheepishly, Morley retreats.

HENRY
Hit you? Why would I hit you?

MORLEY
I don't know. Just don't.

HENRY
I won't ever hit you, Morley, but there are rules. No one comes in here without permission.

MORLEY
Yes, sir.

Henry roots in the drawer Morley opened.

HENRY
Put it back.

MORLEY
Put what back?

HENRY
Don't lie to me. Put it back.

Morley takes a penlight from under his shirt and places it back into the drawer.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Now go to bed.

MORLEY
Yes, sir.

HENRY
One more thing. Your mother, she's remarried, right?

MORLEY
Yes, sir.

Morley exits. Henry reflects. Melinda looks to Henry.

HENRY
His mother feared for his life. She said the ridicule at school escalated to a point of hazing. Rightly so, if that's the case.

MELINDA
You question her story?

Henry leans on the edge of his desk.

HENRY
Each case's intricate puzzle will fall into place. He was afraid I would hit him. If that is occurring, it must be exposed.
(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)
When it is, the puzzle eventually turns into a beautiful picture.

MELINDA
I see.

Henry smiles, then hones in with all seriousness.

HENRY
The sins of his father could haunt him until he has the faith to overcome it. Most people assess their value as the sum total of their past. If God doesn't think less of us, why do we spit in his face and wallow in it?

Melinda turns her head away.

MELINDA
You're an intuitive man.

HENRY
We all fall short in this world. Sit. This is my favorite time of the day. The quiet.

Melinda sits. Sliding the doors of his credenza, he snatches two Port glasses and a bottle. He POURS.

HENRY (CONT'D)
An old family tradition. Port before bedtime. Here, join me.

MELINDA
No, no thanks.

HENRY
You have a drinking problem?

MELINDA
No.

HENRY
Come on. It'll warm the soul.

They both drink. Henry peeks into the Family room.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I would prefer Spooner stay. You're more than welcome unless you have some place to go.

MELINDA
I have nowhere to go.

HENRY
Good, because your brother is fast asleep on the sofa and you may have the privilege of sleeping in here. The couch is comfortable and with that I'll say goodnight.

Henry abruptly exits.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Melinda lovingly covers Spooner on the couch with a quilt.

He wakes up momentarily.

SPOONER
Colin and I have a secret.

MELINDA
You're okay. Sleep, my little boy.

Spooner sleeps again.

Unseen, Henry watches her. She strokes Spooner's hair.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Maxwell pours himself a drink. Colin's phone rings.

ANSWERING MACHINE (FILTERED)
(Colin's Voice)
This is the private line for Colin Stevens. Please leave your message.

MELINDA (FILTERED)
Colin, sorry it's so late. I'm on Delmar at Henry's House, one of Grandma's charities. So far, no press. I've misplaced my cosmetic case. Can you check if it's there? I'll call you tomorrow. Bye.

Maxwell hovers over the answering machine and snickers.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - EXERCISE AREA - NIGHT

Henry vigorously exercises. Routine movements border on rage. Time elapses to exhaustion. He sits, BREATHING deeply shifting his vision toward the bare concrete wall.

HENRY
Not one bit of recognition.

BREATHING deeply again. He SLAPS the wall.

HENRY (CONT'D)
...repressed memories.

FLASHBACK:

INT. WELLS MANSION - LIVING ROOM - DAY

TEENAGE HENRY thrashes in rage. His FATHER holds him.

TEENAGE HENRY
Help me, Father.

FATHER
Hold on. It's almost over.

Another MAN grabs his father and beats him - pummels him. A horrified TODDLER watches.

BACK TO SCENE:

HENRY'S eyes close tightly in forced concentration.

Waiting for it....

HENRY
Must I always suffer?

He leans heavily on the wall.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Right, yes, she's here. She's here.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Twilight trickles through the study window. Otis stands agitated. He sings a DO-WOP bass line. Melinda tosses in her sleep. She MUMBLES.

OTIS
Where is it? I can't find it.

Otis paces. He goes to Henry's desk and roots.

OTIS (CONT'D)
Where is it?
(sings)
"Ball of confusion."

Melinda flings up as the desk door SLAMS.

OTIS (CONT'D)
(yells)
Where is it? Did you take it?

Melinda huddles on the couch.

MELINDA
What? Take what?

He approaches Melinda and stares at her.

OTIS
I'm opening for you?

MELINDA
No.

OTIS
(sings - top of his lungs)
Something like "Ball of Confusion."
(whispers)
I can't sing until I find that map.

Otis dances a few steps toward the desk. He roots. Henry appears at the French Doors and scans Melinda's helplessness.

HENRY
It's okay. He's talking?

MELINDA
And singing.

OTIS
Henry.

Henry flips the light switch.

HENRY
Yes.

Otis dances over to Henry. Otis trips. Henry pushes him up with an index finger

OTIS
I can't go on. Not until I find that map.

HENRY
What does it look like? Maybe I can help you find it.

OTIS
Where's my keyboard?

HENRY
It's not here. Otis, do you know where you are?

OTIS
No, where am I?

HENRY
You're in St. Louis. My house.

Lifeless, Otis sits.

OTIS
St. Louis.

MELINDA
What's wrong with him?

HENRY
Not sure. He's at least vocal. That's a start. Come on, Otis.

Otis sings a bass run. Henry smiles and escorts him out.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Gregory flings open the study doors. Melinda stirs on the couch. Gregory sits at the piano and plays a Manilow tune loudly. Melinda startles from a deep sleep.

MELINDA
What?

Realizing her surroundings, she meanders to the ...

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - DAY

...where Spooner and Mert play cards.

SPOONER
Let's see, I have the who of tarts, the spoo of twaids, and the clue of tubs. Rin Jummy!

MERT
How'd you do that?

Mert squints at the cards.

HARRIET, 60s, thin dark skinned women, volunteer, enters.

HARRIET
I see Henry has a few more today. Get going. Breakfast is on. Church ain't going to wait.

SPOONER
Morning, Leminda.

MELINDA
Morning, Spooner. Where's your bag?

SPOONER
Supstairs.

Henry, casually dressed, enters. Spooner paces -- lost.

HENRY
Good Day.

SPOONER
D-Gay.

HENRY
...have you met Harriet?

Harriet gets a peck on the cheek. Mert returns the cards to the glass corner cabinet. The doors close on her nose.

MERT
Ow!

HENRY
She's been with us every Sunday morning like clockwork.

Gregory's encore is LOUD.

MELINDA
I couldn't find my bag.

HENRY
What? Just a minute.

He quietly escorts Gregory to Harriet who takes him out

MELINDA
I don't have my makeup bag.

HENRY
Never understood why women wear it.

MELINDA
I beg your pardon?

SPOONER
Women wear moz-ket-ics.

Like clockwork, Harriet reenters and leads Spooner out.

HARRIET
This way.

HENRY
Get dressed, we're leaving soon.

MELINDA
Where are we going?

HENRY
Church, they expect us.

MELINDA
Church?

HENRY
Church.

MELINDA
You're not one of those charities that gets you saved and leaves you high and dry thinking all is well?

Stunned, Henry asserts himself.

HENRY
It's church. Connecting to one's community and one's God is a rudimental objective, don't you think? Isn't that what you want for Spooner or do you intend on keeping him hidden in Montana?

MELINDA
But I can't go anywhere without attracting attention. Church won't be any different.

HENRY
It won't happen. If by the remote chance it does, I promise, I'll resurrect you out of there.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The CONGREGATION stands and sings LIVELY music as Henry leads a reluctant Melinda (in dark glasses) to the second pew.

The music ends. The congregation sits.

HENRY
(whispers)
You can take those off.

Melinda unwillingly removes her dark glasses.

Spooner gazes at the stained glass. He reaches for Melinda's hand. She hesitates, then takes it.

SPOONER
(stutters a bit)
Peautiful bitch-ers.

Pastor RAPHAEL NICHOLS, 50, dark skinned, tall man of integrity, slightly gray haired, speaks from the pulpit.

RAPHAEL
It is good to be home after a long season of travel. I'll say it again. It's good to be home.

The Congregation responds in YES and AMEN'S.

Raphael strolls down to the congregation.

RAPHAEL (CONT'D)
We all have a home; and I'm not just speaking of the roof over our heads. I'm speaking of the disciples of God showing a lost world that there is rest.

He paces the front.

RAPHAEL (CONT'D)
I don't have it in me to get windy and wound up preaching. Tell me, Church, tell me of your home today.

Raphael strides the center aisle waiting. Mert stands.

MERT
I have a wonderful home. I don't know where I'd be if I hadn't met my Dad. I love him.

Melinda stares at Mert's candidness. Henry smiles. Mert slightly misses the seat sitting.

RAPHAEL
He's a father to the fatherless.

One by one PEOPLE stand.

LADY ONE
We put my nephew in drug rehab and took him in after his time was done. He's not here today. My husband is with him. I pray he'll know where his help is coming from.

RAPHAEL
Come on!

GENTLEMEN ONE
My brother and I haven't spoken for years. He got sick, and out of the blue he called. I'm going to see him next week.

RAPHAEL
He opens doors that have shut.

Mel contemplates.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - ENTRY - DAY

Henry collides with Melinda, as she exits the kitchen with a bucket and rags. She wears the pool truck hat.

MELINDA
Oh!

HENRY
Sorry, preoccupation, a habit.

He scans Melinda's attire.

HENRY (CONT'D)
What are you up to?

MELINDA
I found one thing Spooner doesn't like to do.

HENRY
What?

MELINDA
Work!

HENRY
Where is he?

MELINDA
Sulking in the kitchen. I told him he had to help or no dinner.

HENRY
Good Biblical principal.

MELINDA
Yes. Thanks for this morning.

HENRY
You're welcome...After you're finished, I do have someplace I'd like to take you and Spooner. Say in about an hour?

MELINDA
Fine.

Melinda exits with Henry's eyes following her.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Melinda soaps the opposite end of the truck from Spooner.

Spooner pitches his mail pouch into the truck. He holds the hose over his head and GIGGLES. He moves it away. He repeats.

SPOONER
I'm shout of the hour.

He LAUGHS. Melinda stands from washing a tire. She smiles.

MELINDA
Nope, not a shower.

Spooner stands, fear frozen, under the hose. Melinda washes the window and jumps at Maxwell's image reflected on it.

MAXWELL
The job suits you, Melinda.

MELINDA
How did you find me?

MAXWELL
Just being resourceful.

MELINDA
What do you want, Max?

MAXWELL
A deal.

MELINDA
And that would be?

MAXWELL
You and Spooner stay out of what's rightfully mine.

MELINDA
Spooner has just as much right--

MAXWELL
You're sitting on assets equal to the estate. What makes you think any of it is yours?

MELINDA
I didn't say I--

MAXWELL
You're just as jealous as you were.

MELINDA
What are you talking about?

MAXWELL
Don't try it, Melinda. I'll have you in court for murder.

Shocked, Melinda drops her rag. Maxwell shoves her against the truck. Spooner jumps in the truck and locks the doors.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
What was it like whacking Father with that fire poker?

MELINDA
(whispers)
It wasn't like that.

MAXWELL
No? No? Do you know what it's like being raised without parents? Do you have any idea?

MELINDA
(whispers)
No.

MAXWELL
You killed him. Daddy's little girl. He finally had a real son he could pass his legacy to.

Melinda tries to pull away. Maxwell scuffles her back.

SPOONER
Leminda!

MAXWELL
Remember what it was like?

Maxwell firmly holds her against the car. Max lifts his fist.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Just one simple whack --

BRUCE
Whoever you are, you need to leave.

Maxwell squirms under Bruce's hold. Spooner lays on the HORN.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
You don't want to mess with me.

MELINDA
Let him go, Bruce.

Bruce complies. Maxwell shakes off. Spooner still honks.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
I'm all right, Spooner.

MAXWELL
You've found a perfect home, Melinda.

Maxwell SNICKERS. Spooner stops the horn.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Don't try to take mine.

Maxwell exits. Henry rushes outside towards Melinda.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CITY LOOP - DAY

The loop offers a diverse population, an open-air free-flowing community. Specialty shops bid for Sunday SHOPPERS.

They throw glances toward a nervous Melinda.

MELINDA
I don't know about this, Henry.

HENRY
Your brother's visit just shook you up. We're here anyway.

Henry, Spooner, Melinda and Bruce, enter.

INT. COLETTE'S ART GALLERY - DAY

The door announces their presence with a BUZZ.

COLETTE (O.S.)
Be with you in a moment.

A sensory overload of paintings, clothing, design items.

SPOONER
Oh poi, Bitchers.

HENRY
Take a look around, Spooner.

Melinda views the paintings.

MELINDA
They display intense affection.

HENRY
Quite passionate really. Colette's own personal impulse has been shifted into her paintings.

MELINDA
A past tenant?

HENRY
Yes.

COLETTE, 30s, hefty, an artist, enters.

COLETTE
That voice? Henry!

Colette's warm hug borders on physical enjoyment. She glances with familiarity at Bruce.

HENRY
Colette, my friend, how's business?

COLETTE
Couldn't be better. I have you to thank for that.
(to Melinda)
Are you who I think you are?

Melinda retreats somewhat.

COLETTE (CONT'D)
I'd make a sales pitch, but I don't think that's why you've come.

HENRY
No, actually, this is Spooner. He expresses keen interests in drawings and paintings. I thought you could help me channel that.

COLETTE
Anything for you, Henry. I'll take him in the back--

Henry raises an eyebrow toward Colette.

COLETTE (CONT'D)
--and set him up with some medium. In the meantime, look around. You might find something you like.

Colette purposely struts by Bruce and offers a smile. Henry watches. Bruce, embarrassed, nods.

BRUCE
I'll wait in the van.

Melinda drifts to a painting of a man and woman embraced.

Colette leads Spooner out. Bruce slinks away.

HENRY
(to Melinda)
It's hard to imagine, isn't it?

MELINDA
What?

HENRY
Look closely. I see commitment behind their embrace.

MELINDA
Yes.

She strokes the frame.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Artists share a strong commitment to create beautiful work.

HENRY
Then why did you quit, Melinda Day?

MELINDA
I told you, it got--

HENRY
--lonely, so you went to Montana.

She heads toward the door. Gawking FANS outside stop her. Trapped, she gazes on Henry. He approaches quietly.

HENRY (CONT'D)
What are you running from?

MELINDA
"Singer Who Got Away with Murder"
You've read the papers.

HENRY
I'm listening.

Melinda's eyes widen, then drift to the floor.

MELINDA
(whispers)
I don't remember.

HENRY
Don't remember what?

MELINDA
If I did or not...

Henry's eyes widen, this time expecting more.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Can we go?

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - ENTRY - DAY

HENRY
(yells)
Dinner in fifteen minutes.

HENRY POV THROUGH FRONT DOOR:

Colin approaches his front door with Melinda's bag.

HENRY (CONT'D)
(whispers)
No...
(yells)
Mert! Can you come get the door?

MERT (O.S.)
Melinda's trimming my hair.

Otis exits the dining room.

OTIS
(sings songs a base line)
"Can't get next."

A 'Temptations' trot through the hall; he trips. Henry pushes him up with an index finger. Otis smiles then exits.

HENRY
Morley? Morley! Where are you?

MORLEY (O.S.)
In the bathroom.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Colin KNOCKS.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - ENTRY - DAY

Hesitantly, Henry resolves to open the door.

COLIN
I'm Colin Stevens from the Day residence. Is Melinda available?

HENRY
Not at the moment.

COLIN
Mr. McKnight?

HENRY
Yes.

COLIN
She phoned me to bring this.

HENRY
I'll see that she gets it.

Colin hands him the case. Henry tries to close the door.

COLIN
One more thing.

Henry re-opens the door.

COLIN (CONT'D)
The estate reading will be Tuesday at one o'clock at the Day residence. She and Spooner will be expected.

HENRY
I'll let her know.

COLIN
Thank you.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Henry closes the storm door and keeps a watchful eye as Colin makes his way back to a Mercedes.

Halfway down the walkway Colin swings around, only to meet Henry's surveillance.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

Henry swiftly opens the door and rushes to Colin.

COLIN
Does she know who you are?

HENRY
No. I'd like to keep it that way.

COLIN
She's very vulnerable. She's come home. This is not good.

HENRY
I mean no disrespect, but my identity won't make her flee. There's more to disclose here.

COLIN
But you aren't the one to do that!

HENRY
Why?... You were there that night. You know something?

Colin turns away. Henry assesses him.

COLIN
No. You fancied her. You could push her away forever.

HENRY
I assure you, Colin, her welfare is my only objective.

In a long search in silence, Colin returns to his car.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Henry is at his desk shuffling bills, as Melinda enters.

MELINDA
They're tucked in. What's up here?

HENRY
I'm trying to make this budget work. Not doing a very good job.

MELINDA
Henry, I would like to help.

HENRY
No, that won't be necessary.

MELINDA
You'll accept some Y2K cracker's food but not my money. Why?

Melinda plops in a chair.

HENRY
You're right. I come from an affluent family. Pride resurfaces.

She leans forward.

MELINDA
Tell me about them.

HENRY
Not much to tell. They had a successful business, yet they both died. I've managed to put some of it in a trust for Mert and I still own some property up North; but the rest I've spent, little by little, here on tenants.

MELINDA
I see.

Henry smiles. Melinda approaches Henry.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Henry, your faith, it helps you?

HENRY
I'll not skirt around Christ by using the word faith. Christ's sacrifice eliminated my past.

MELINDA
How so?

HENRY
Forgiveness, compassion, the Gospel. His compassion fuels mine.

MELINDA
But you can't even pay your bills.

She tickles the ivories on the piano.

HENRY
Compassion will always demand sacrifice.

MELINDA
I see.

HENRY
Good! Then perhaps we should start. It's quiet, isn't it?

MELINDA
Yes.

Habitually, Henry slides the credenza doors and pulls out the port bottle. He pours two glasses.

HENRY
I have something to show you. But first, here.

He hands her the glass. She downs it. He pours her another and sets in on the desk. She questions him with a gaze.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Just in case.

He quietly lays his hand on her shoulder. She scans from his hand to his eyes.

MELINDA
Of what?

Henry takes a drawing from a file folder.

HENRY
Spooner drew this.

Henry hands it to Melinda. Stunned, Melinda tears. She sits.

INSERT DRAWING IMAGE:

A pencil drawing depicts JACKSON DAY, Melinda's father, with outstretched hands going for Elizabeth Day's neck. Before the scene stands the toddler MAX holding his neck (same toddler from Henry's flashback) and a TEENAGE MELINDA who shields a YOUNG SPOONER from the sight. Melinda holds a fire poker.

Melinda wrenches down the second drink.

MELINDA
He remembers.

HENRY
What? He remembers what?

MELINDA
The night they died.

She brushes the drawing with her fingers.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
He's captured Mother's image.

Henry kneels by Melinda's chair. Careful not to touch her, he holds the side arm.

HENRY
Tell me, Melinda. What happened?

MELINDA
Max was just a toddler. He killed her. She was so beautiful, so loving. He killed her.

Henry anxiously presses forward.

HENRY
Who killed who?

MELINDA
My father strangled my mother.

HENRY
Nothing you say will go out of this room. Do you remember why?

Tears burn down her face as she locks eyes with Henry.

MELINDA
He didn't believe Max was his. He questioned Spooner's parenthood too.

HENRY
And you protected them.

MELINDA
Of course I did. He would have killed Spooner.

HENRY
Why? Why would Jackson Day kill his own son?

MELINDA
Because he wasn't his son.

Henry backs off with an affirmative glare toward the wall.

HENRY
Your mother had an affair--

MELINDA
He's mine.

Shocked, Henry backs up to his desk. He bumps it.

HENRY
(whispers)
How old were you?

MELINDA
I was young.

HENRY
I see.

FLASH BACK:

INT. WELLS MANSION - STABLES - DAY

YOUNG TEENAGE MELINDA and TEENAGE HENRY play cat and mouse down the Wells Mansion's stable isle.

YOUNG HENRY
We should go back.

Melinda leans into Henry. Just about to kiss--

BACK TO SCENE:

MELINDA
Henry.

HENRY
--your father didn't know?

MELINDA
Mother sent me to Europe. That's what rich folks did. We brought Spooner home as a surprise. Father accepted him as my brother until Max was born.

Henry's affirmative gaze returns. Melinda drops the picture then covers her face with her hands. Henry reaches. She allows him to take one.

HENRY
It seems you have the wonderful privilege of being a parent, Melinda Day. You have your wish. Having someone to share your life with. Isn't that what you want?

Melinda weeps uncontrollably. He assists her to the couch. He brushes her face with the side of his hand.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Rest.

Henry treads to his desk picking up the picture. He takes another picture from the file. He scans them both, then Melinda.

Melinda sleeps.

He puts them back in the folder.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - EXERCISE AREA - NIGHT

Sweating and exhausted Henry CLANGS a set of weights to the floor. They WOBBLE forward. He grits his teeth.

HENRY
It's not what you're thinking, Henry!

He kicks them further.

His clenched fist slightly shakes.

He SLAPS a flat hand on the wall then clings to it.

HENRY (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Please, don't come back.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Gregory POUNDS the same Manilow type rendition as the morning before rousing Melinda awake.

Groggy, she shuffles to the piano.

MELINDA
Stop, stop! Don't you listen to anything else? Here, try this.

She plays a few bars of Beethoven's Fifth. He repeats.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Very good. Try this.

She plays another classic. He repeats, not so perfectly.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Good. Hmm, let's see.

She plays chopsticks. He immediately joins in. She improvises around his melody. He deviates his somewhat.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Keep it going.

Tenants gather by the French doors. GREGORY'S MOM, 40s, stands with them.

Melinda and Gregory continue to play to a somewhat anti-climatic ending. Melinda hugs Gregory and realizes her audience.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Good try. I must say, I've never performed in my pajamas before.

HENRY
That was wonderful. Gregory, your mother's here. It's time to go.

He escorts Gregory to his elated MOM.

HENRY (CONT'D)
The rest of you put on your jeans. We're going to the country. Isaac is expecting us.

MELINDA
Country?

HENRY
My place up north. It's Mert's one-year adoption anniversary. I promised her I'd take her there.

Henry begins to exit, then hesitates.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Giving your talents to others is a worthy mission. It's not a performance.

Melinda squints at Henry as he exits.

INT. FORD VAN - MOVING - DAY

MERT
Daddy, take the River Road. Can we stop and watch the barges?

HENRY
In Louisiana?

Otis's eyes brighten. Melinda throws a querying gaze.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I could show you Paris, Missouri, too.

MELINDA
Ah.

HENRY
Sure, Mert, we'll go that way.

Otis's gazes out his window intently.

MELINDA
Do you always exercise in the wee morning hours Henry?

HENRY
What?

MELINDA
If it weren't for that second port,
I wouldn't have slept.

HENRY
Sorry, it's habitual.

INSERT ROAD SIGN IMAGE:

"Louisiana 10 miles"

BACK TO SCENE:

Otis clings to the window.

OTIS
Louisiana!

Otis unbuckles and climbs toward the van's side door. He reaches for the latch. Bruce unbuckles.

MORLEY
Hey! He's trying to jump out.

HENRY
Sit down, Otis.

Bruce goes for Otis. Lizzie goes for Mert's hair. Otis pulls away and goes for the latch again.

MELINDA
You'd better stop, Henry.

The van weaves to a stop. Otis successfully unlocks the sliding door and exits.

EXT. FORD VAN - MOVING - DAY

Otis darts down the road. Melinda and Henry exit the van.

MERT
Knock it off, Lizzie.

HENRY
Everyone, stay inside.

MELINDA
Where's he going?

HENRY
I don't know.

Henry dashes after Otis. Melinda after him.

EXT. HIGHWAY - ROAD SIGN - DAY

Otis stands by the 'Louisiana' sign.

OTIS
(slowly sings)
"Come back, come back."

He looks at the sign and the road.

HENRY
Otis. What is it?

Otis reaches for the thought.

OTIS
Louisiana, I wanted to go to
Louisiana, Missouri.

Melinda arrives.

HENRY
What? Why?

OTIS
Henry, take me to Louisiana.

HENRY
Sure Otis, but you have to get back
into the van. Come.

EXT. RIVERFRONT - DAY

Henry's tenants lean over the stonewall barrier to the river, taking in the sight. A passing barge's HORN BLASTS. Delighted, Mert and Spooner wave.

SPOONER
Piss-miss-ippi?

MERT
No, no! Miss-is-sip-pi.

Melinda joins Henry on a bench.

Otis wanders away unnoticed.

MELINDA
Mert seems very happy.

HENRY
Spooner too. He's very content with you. It's almost natural.

SPOONER (O.C.)
Missa-peepee?

MERT (O.C.)
No, no!

A train WHISTLE BLOWS in the distance.

MELINDA
You think so?

HENRY
He'll readily accept the fact that you're his mother. In fact, I think he'll embrace it.

MELINDA
Why?

SPOONER (O.C.)
Miss-si-pap-ee?

MERT (O.C.)
Better, well, yeah, I think.

EXT. RIVERFRONT - RAILROAD TRACKS - DAY

Otis observes the landmarks, the flag, the river, and the railroad tracks. He stands in the middle of the tracks.

OTIS
(softly)
The midnight train.

HENRY (O.S.)
His letter vigil is prominent. His picture had you protecting him. He feels safe with you.

EXT. RIVERFRONT - PARK BENCH - DAY

MELINDA
Hmm.

HENRY
Max threatens that security. There's still one thing to occur.
(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)
He needs to transfer his letter vigil toward the real thing, his mother. And frankly, that's not going to happen until you dump the hefty weight you carry.

MELINDA
I-

SPOONER (O. C.)
The Mighty Sipa-missy!

HENRY
Give it time.

EXT. RIVERFRONT - DAY

Bruce searches.

BRUCE
Otis?

The train WHISTLES and it comes closer. Bruce spots Otis.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Otis, get off the track! Henry!

Immediately, Henry jumps and sprints.

MELINDA
Henry, the train.

HENRY
Otis, get off the track!

Otis, still absorbed by his surroundings, stands.

Henry leaps before the HORN BLARING train, and shoves Otis to the other side just in time.

MERT
Daddy!

The long train ROARS. Melinda drops to her knees to look for Henry. Motion between ROARING wheels reveal the two.

MERT (CONT'D)
(screams)
Daddy!

MELINDA
(yells)
He's all right. I can see him.

Mert, frantically tries to focus.

MERT
(screams)
Daddy!

Melinda restrains Mert to reassure her.

EXT. RIVERFRONT - RAILROAD TRACKS - OTHER SIDE -DAY

Otis rises unscathed and continues his preoccupation. Henry, stunned, holds his knee.

HENRY
(loudly)
Otis, what were you thinking? Blast it, my knee.

OTIS
I made it.

HENRY
(loudly)
What?

Otis jogs up the street.

Henry pursues the fast paced Otis.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

The ROAR of the train subsides somewhat, as Henry limps around the corner in pursuit of Otis.

OTIS
It's right up here, Henry.

Otis stands before...

EXT. LA CROCHETTE LUMBER CO. - DAY

...on the sidewalk. Henry approaches.

DANIEL CROCHETTE, 70s, dark skinned man, exits the company's front door onto its stone porch.

DANIEL
I'll check on that Wednesday, Edna.

Otis stares at Daniel as he comes down the stairs.

OTIS
Daniel.

HENRY
You know him?

OTIS
I made it, Daniel.

Daniel notices Otis and squints.

DANIEL
Otis? That you? By the Lord above.

Overwhelmed, Otis embraces him and cries.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
You didn't call last--Oh, Lord.
It's happened, hasn't it?

Otis, in an emotional state, nods.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
You're here now. My offer still
stands. Come, sit down.

Daniel leads him to the steps. They sit.

HENRY
(to Daniel)
You know him?

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

Melinda leads Henry's tenants up the road. An elderly FARMER in a cap stands at the corner.

MERT
Can you see him?

MELINDA
This way, come on.

Lizzie approaches the Farmer. The Farmer removes his hat.

FARMER
Do I know you?

Lizzie gapes and contemplates the man's bald head.

LIZZIE
I don't know, maybe.

MELINDA (O.S.)
Lizzie, keep up.

EXT. LA CROCHETTE LUMBER CO. - DAY

Otis sits on the porch steps.

DANIEL
(to Henry)
He'd call the end of every month to let me know how he was doing. If the dementia got to be too bad, Otis would come live with me.

HENRY
This is incredible. Can you verify any of this?

DANIEL
Otis gave me the name of his Doctor. I have it inside.

Daniel sits on the porch next to Otis, who smiles.

HENRY
Mr. Crochette, are you aware of the commitment involved in caring for one with dementia?

DANIEL
I'm a good Christian man, Mr. McKnight. I intend to keep my promise to Otis. I assure you he'll be well taken care of.

OTIS
Please, Henry, I want to stay.

Melinda and the group arrive.

MERT
Daddy? I was so worried.

HENRY
Honey, you're shaking.

Henry embraces her.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I'm fine. See no broken bones.

She pats him and clings to him.

BRUCE
What's with Otis?

HENRY
Otis is a few phone calls from having a home.

EXT. ISAAC'S HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

Henry and crew drive up the lane. ISAAC, 40s, tall, strong black man, dressed in Amish attire, approaches Henry's van door. They all exit the van.

MELINDA
Henry, he looks familiar.

HENRY
He's the pastor's twin. Shh, supposed to be a secret.

ISAAC
You made it. I wondered if my letter got to you in time.

Everyone exits the van.

HENRY
Isaac, my man.

They LAUGH, SLAP hands and embrace.

HENRY (CONT'D)
This is Spooner, and Melinda Day.

Isaac eyes widen. He shakes Melinda's hand.

ISAAC
Welcome. Mert, Ananias and Sapphira are saddled in the barn, there are puppies in the wood shed, bunnies by the corncrib - enjoy them.

HENRY
Where's Christina?

ISAAC
She and the older girls are plucking chickens out back.

LIZZIE
Can I go see?

ISAAC
And help too, if you want.

Lizzie exits.

BRUCE
I'm going fishing.

Bruce exits.

ISAAC
(to Henry)
Still working with him?

Henry nods.

MERT
Come on guys, let's ride.

Spooner and Morley follow Mert toward the barn.

MELINDA
The hills, they're lovely.

ISAAC
Henry's place has the best view.

MELINDA
This was your home, Henry?

HENRY
No, Isaac built this when he and Christina married. The old house is beyond that hill. In fact, I'll need to hike up there and get something for Mert.

Morley and Mert ride past them on a large mule. Spooner rides another, not very well.

MORLEY
Does he just trot? Get up.

MERT
Watch out for that tree.

There is no tree. Henry and Isaac CHUCKLE.

SPOONER
Hally Toe.

HENRY
(to Melinda)
Can he ride?

MELINDA
I don't know.

ISAAC
Saphira will take care of him.

MELINDA
I'll follow, to be sure.

EXT. ISAAC'S HOME - BACK YARD

In the background, CHRISTINA, 40s, Isaac's wife, white, and HER THREE TEENAGE girls pluck chickens on an outside table.

Henry and Isaac walk the lane before them.

Feathers fly before the ecstatic Lizzie who plucks.

CHRISTINA
(whispers to the girls)
Girls, go get some more. Lizzie is a big help.

The girls rush off.

Isaac stares at Henry looking for a response.

HENRY
She just showed up at my doorstep, like you did.

ISAAC
But I was running for my life.

HENRY
She's no different, Isaac. You found your way.

ISAAC
About that. There's this new free-range place down the road. They seem like good people. How about I approach them about a permanent place for Lizzie?

EXT. ISAAC'S HOME - FIELD - DAY

Melinda and Henry walk toward the pond, following the mules.

HENRY
Ah, country air.

Henry stretches his arms.

HENRY (CONT'D)
When Mert first came to the house she avoided all kinds of games because of her poor depth perception. But out here her dexterity improved.

MELINDA
I don't know the first thing about parenthood. Look at him. He hasn't experienced a day like this, shut up in that house all those years.

HENRY
I have a rule. Out here, I leave my concerns behind. He's enjoying himself. Why don't you?

Melinda locks eyes with Henry. Spooner dismounts and dashes to the pond and takes his shoes off.

SPOONER
Hey, let's wet get.

MELINDA
(calls out)
Spooner, don't do that.

Spooner plunges into the pond.

HENRY
Does he know how to swim?

MELINDA
I don't know.

EXT. ISAAC'S HOME - POND - DAY

Melinda removes her shoes.

MELINDA
He's been down too long.

Henry detains Melinda before going in.

HENRY
Hang on a second.

Spooner emerges with a great gasp for air.

SPOONER
I taught a girdle.

He holds up a sizeable turtle. Relieved, Melinda sits.

HENRY
Bring it here, Spooner.
(to Melinda)
You okay?

MELINDA
Barely.

SPOONER
Lelminda, a tomongous hurdle.

HENRY
Set him down, Spooner.
(to Melinda)
Maybe he'll come out of his shell.

Melinda motions Spooner over to sit. Henry retreats.

SPOONER
He's in his home.

MELINDA
Yes, that's his home.

SPOONER
Lelminda?

MELINDA
Yes.

SPOONER
A hard mouse for homma.

MELINDA
What? House? Oh, Spooner, his momma doesn't live in there.

SPOONER
Mandgra, she clashed in the crowds?

Melinda glances toward Henry.

MELINDA
She didn't crash. She died.

SPOONER
I miss Mandgra.

MELINDA
Spooner, you do have a mother.
I...I'll never leave you again.
It's been a big secret, but now I'm
going to tell you.

SPOONER
Colin and I have a secret.

Spooner reaches for Melinda's face.

MELINDA
You know....I am your mother.

Spooner nods and buries his head on her shoulder.

Melinda tears.

The turtle comes out of its shell.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Look!

SPOONER
No more secrets?

MELINDA
No more.

EXT. ISAAC'S HOME - FIELD - DAY

Henry stretches out on the grass and watches Melinda. Mert meanders over and trips over him. SPLAT! She's down.

HENRY
Hey, you.

Henry throws an arm around her.

MERT
Daddy, I didn't see you.

He places his face directly in front of hers.

HENRY
Can you see me now?

She playfully punches him.

MERT
Daddy.

They recline in the grass together.

MERT (CONT'D)
She's beautiful, isn't she?

HENRY
What?

MERT
Melinda. I see how you look at her.

HENRY
You do? You just walked on me without knowing I was here.

MERT
I see more than you think.

Henry's eyes widen.

HENRY
Tell me, why would I look at her when I have the most beautiful creature right beside me?

MERT
I haven't captured all your love. You love her.

Mert tries to stroke Henry's cheek with her hand. She misses. He guides her hand. Henry's gaze drifts to Melinda.

EXT. ISAAC'S HOME - FRONT LAWN - DAY

Lizzie sits and pulls grass up for the bunny she holds while the others play baseball. Spooner sprints the wrong way waving his hands hilariously.

Mert, not seeing the ball, reaches for dead air.

Christina appears at the front door.

CHRISTINA
Dinner's on.

HENRY
(to Isaac)
You go ahead. I'll take that hike to the house now.

MELINDA
I could use the exercise, Henry. Mind if I come?

Isaac glances at Henry.

HENRY
Sure.

EXT. WELLS MANSION - OPEN FIELD - DAY

Melinda strides easily, but Henry faintly limps.

MELINDA
This has been an incredible day. Does goodness always follow you?

HENRY
Sometimes no. Providence can hurt.

MELINDA
It seems to be working for me.

HENRY
How did he take it?

MELINDA
He knew.

HENRY
What?

MELINDA
He knew I was his mother.

HENRY
How?

MELINDA
He said Colin and he had a secret. They apparently kept it all these years.

Henry's contemplates as they come over the rise...

EXT. WELLS MANSION - LAWN - DAY

...to view a brick, pillared, 1918 mansion. Henry eyes Melinda.

MELINDA
It's beautiful. So grand.

HENRY
It's the old Governor's mansion built in 1918.

MELINDA
How do you maintain it?

They walk toward the porch by the weather-worn rocker.

HENRY
Isaac does, in exchange to live on the land. Christina was a widow when Isaac moved here. They fell in love and miraculously the Amish community embraced him.

MELINDA
Another tenant?

HENRY
He was the leader of the South Side Gang. I hid him here when the hit went out on him.

EXT. WELLS MANSION - PILLARED PORCH - DAY

Curiosity peaked, Melinda approaches. Intently, Henry eyes Melinda -- waiting -- standing behind her.

HENRY
I'll just be a moment. I want to get a piece of my mother's jewelry for Mert.

MELINDA
You keep jewelry here? Aren't you afraid it'll be stolen?

Melinda scans intensify. Henry shuffles, anticipates.

HENRY
Not out here. It's too remote and the people respect it. Besides, it's in a safe.

MELINDA
This is familiar. The lawn. Right there. Mandgra's picture...

She meets Henry's gaze. She rushes toward the Norwegian Pine.

HENRY
Melinda...

MELINDA
Ah, Henry, you should have told me.

She jogs back toward the way they came.

HENRY
Melinda, stop.

MELINDA
You should have told me before I spilled my guts.

Henry pursues her.

HENRY
Wait.

MELINDA
Wait? Wait for what! For more psycho babble from Henry Wells?

Stunned, Henry stops.

HENRY
I don't deserve that.

Melinda flings around and gets straight up in his face.

MELINDA
Your life is as screwed up as mine. How you ever led me to believe--

On edge, Henry steps back and breaths deeply.

HENRY
My life has completely changed.

MELINDA
Oh, yes, right! Henry Wells, man of faith -- oh, no, not faith, man of Christ!

HENRY
Yes, exactly!

MELINDA
You killed your father just like I killed mine.

Henry gets in her face.

HENRY
That's the tabloid's version. You going to stand on their word? Perhaps Christ is a better option.

MELINDA
Stop it. You! You have no right!

Angry, Henry struggles.

HENRY
So you know the whole story. You've had a son for over two decades! Have you ever thought about his father? Maybe he wanted to get involved.

A shocking moment; then, she pounds her fists on him.

MELINDA
Stop it. Stop! Just stop.

Momentarily tempered, Henry peels her hands off. She pulls away from the rage in his eyes.

HENRY
It seems providence does hurt.

Henry stomps toward the house. He waives his arms in frustration and BABBLES. Melinda watches. He loses it.

MELINDA
What have I done?

INT. WELLS MANSION - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Henry THRASHES coverlets off the antique furniture. Dust permeates the beams of light from the window and travels up the elegant staircase.

HENRY
Da...no, no. I will not swear.

Henry shakes his head violently.

HENRY (CONT'D)
The great Jackson Day Family. It's her d--b--blasted family who started this.

He firmly grasps a chair.

He breathes through his impulse but fails. The chair CRASHES into the wall.

Henry stands -- uncontrolled -- he shakes.

HENRY (CONT'D)
(yells)
Jesus! Help me!

He paces. Melinda enters. Henry's attack escalates.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Go before I hurt you.

MELINDA
Forgive me, Henry.

HENRY
Get out, Melinda. I can't control--

He TOSSES the mirror covering off, picks up a small end table and SLAMS it into the mirror. His hand bleeds.

MELINDA
Each case's intricate puzzle will reveal itself.

Henry SHAKES in his stance. Melinda approaches.

HENRY
You're really not helping. I could hurt you.

MELINDA
I don't believe you will.

He PUSHES over a covered lamp.

HENRY
Melinda!

MELINDA
Let me help you.

HENRY
Just stay there.

He EXPLODES in great rage. He TEARS into anything he can get his hands on. His ERUPTIONS come close to Melinda who courageously maintains her stance.

Breathing deeply, restoring some calm...

Melinda throws herself upon Henry, embracing him.

MELINDA
Henry! You're Spooner's Father!

Henry jerks intermittently. He grabs a vase off a table. Melinda lets him loose.

HENRY
(quietly)
I know.

He raises the vase and aims it toward her.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I saw the drawing.

He violently throws the vase missing Melinda's side; it smashes into another mirror.

He meanders like a drunk over to the fire place tools. His shaky hand, tries to maintain control. He jabs the tools. The fire poker lands before Melinda.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I don't want to go back to this!

MELINDA
(whispers)
Our worth is not judged by our past.

He slows to intermittent jerks.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
I was too much for you, Henry. You shouldn't have taken me on.

An exhaustive state takes over. Melinda captures him before he collapses.

HENRY
Compassion demands sacrifice.

Henry reaches for her hand. She supports him, laying him on the floor in his depleted state.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I wrote. I want you to know.

Melinda shakes her head.

HENRY (CONT'D)
(breathes heavily)
I never sent them...too ashamed. You were the only one...

She turns away. He reaches for her face. Henry's eyes tear as Isaac enters.

ISAAC
Whoa, Henry. If you needed a trip to the wood shed, you should have told me.

Henry helplessly CHUCKLES.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Henry wraps himself in a blanket on the couch. Melinda enters.

MELINDA
They're all tucked in.

HENRY
Thanks.

Melinda sits on the chair.

MELINDA
Spooner drew another drawing?

HENRY
It was he and I hugging. He knows. Do you want to see it.

MELINDA
I will, but not tonight.

She rises to Henry's ritual -- the bottle and port glasses.

She pours. He downs it. She pours another and gestures.

HENRY
You trying to get me drunk, Mel?

MELINDA
You have a drinking problem?

HENRY
No.

He downs it.

She moves over to the piano and begins to play. Henry manages to smile through his exhaustion.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Sing, Melinda. Sing for me.

She SINGS, she tears. Henry shuffles to her side. He sits on the piano bench with her. Wraps himself in the blanket.

MELINDA
Can God forgive me, Henry?

She drops her head on his shoulder.

HENRY
We wouldn't be right here, right now if He didn't care.

MELINDA
Henry, we need to talk.

HENRY
No, no we don't, Mel. Let peace find you. Don't ignore His calling.

Lost and struggling, Melinda cries out.

She jumps up and paces.

MELINDA
I don't know if I killed him. I don't remember.

HENRY
Tell Him everything.

MELINDA
How could I have forgotten...I don't remember...

HENRY
Tell Him.

Melinda's moans turn to wailing, ugly crying...She collapses on the bench. She's lost in letting it all out.

Henry embraces her.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Let it go.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

Distracted, Melinda and Spooner wait by the pool truck as Henry talks with Harriet at the door. He jogs over.

HENRY
Sorry, I had to be sure Bruce was all right. I haven't left him.

MELINDA
He's okay?

HENRY
Fine, let's go. You're late.

INT. POOL TRUCK - MOVING - DAY

Melinda drives. Her thoughts propel the vehicle. Spooner sits quietly between she and Henry.

HENRY
This will not be pleasant, Melinda.

MELINDA
Huh?

Spooner swipes his hand over the dash and shows Henry.

SPOONER
(to Henry)
Trotless little spuck.

Henry half smiles then leans over to view Melinda.

HENRY
Whatever happens, I won't abandon my desire to help you.

Coming out of her preoccupation, she smiles.

EXT. DAY'S MANSION - SIDE ENTRANCE - DAY

Colin dutifully meets them at the door. Colin's eyes widen.

MELINDA
Colin, this is --

HENRY
We met the other day.

COLIN
I managed to corral Maxwell in the Drawing Room. You will be meeting in your Grandmother's study.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - MAIN ENTRY - DAY

Colin leads Melinda and Henry to the entry hall. Spooner huddles closely to Melinda. Henry observes this.

COLIN
Wait, here.

Colin dashes to the entrance of the Drawing Room.

COLIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Maxwell? Melinda and Mr. McKnight are here.

MAXWELL (O.S.)
About time. I don't know why you didn't let me in without her.

COLIN
I'm just obeying specific instructions.

Maxwell approaches. Spooner retreats behind Melinda.

MAXWELL
(to Melinda)
I see punctuality has escaped you.

MELINDA
Sorry, Max. It couldn't be avoided.

MAXWELL
(to Henry)
A lawyer, Melinda?

MELINDA
No. This is Henry. My friend.

MAXWELL
Word's out that you don't keep friends.

MELINDA
I don't go unless he does.

MAXWELL
Let's get on with it, Colin.

COLIN
Yes, yes, quite right.

HENRY
One moment. Spooner--

MAXWELL
Go up to your room, Spooner.

MELINDA
Stop it, Max.

Maxwell walks up to Spooner.

MAXWELL
Go to your room!

Henry steps between them.

HENRY
You'll not address my son in that manner!

Stunned somewhat, however, Melinda stands her ground. She throws Henry an encouraging smile. Spooner views them both and stands taller.

MAXWELL
Son?

MELINDA
(whispers to Henry)
Breath, Henry.

Henry gives Melinda a smile and softens.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Spooner is my son, Max.

MAXWELL
What?

SPOONER
Father tied a long dime ago.

HENRY
He wasn't your father, Spooner. I am. It has been a secret, too.

SPOONER
You're lulling my peg.

MELINDA
It's true, Spooner.

ROSALYN (O.S.)
I thought this was to be my show.

Rosalyn Day, stands alive at the doorway TAPPING her cane.

MELINDA
Mandgra! You ought to be ashamed.

Spooner weaves toward Rosalyn, mouth gaping, stunned.

ROSALYN
Me? I've only been dead for ten days. Where have you been?

MELINDA
(to Rosalyn)
That's not fair. I didn't die.

SPOONER
Moo touch!

Spooner pokes Rosalyn. Henry eyes Spooner's reaction.

MAXWELL
I don't find this funny.

Spooner pokes her again. Henry weaves within the argument trying to get to Spooner.

ROSALYN
(to Spooner)
Pop stoking me.

Spooner jumps back.

ROSALYN (CONT'D)
(to Melinda)
You left me in my greatest need, Melinda.

SPOONER
Mandgra, I merely dissed you.

ROSALYN
What?

HENRY
Rosalyn, hug your great grandson!

ROSALYN
Oh, my, I merely dissed you, too.

They hug. Spooner clings to her.

HENRY
We'll give you a moment.

Henry leads Melinda into the library. Maxwell follows.

MAXWELL
(to Rosalyn)
This doesn't change anything.

Henry returns and escorts Colin by the elbow.

HENRY
(to Colin)
You'll need to attend also.

Colin hesitantly pulls away. Spooner clings to Rosalyn.

ROSALYN
I'm sorry, Spooner. I guess I'm one battle scared veteran.

SPOONER
It never pains, it just roars. Mugger-Huggers.

ROSALYN
Yes, yes, but we're all here now. I know, the best ex-tire finguisher is food. How about preparing some?

EXT. DAY'S MANSION - ROSALYN'S STUDY - DAY

Henry escorts Melinda to a chair before Rosalyn's desk. Colin stands dutifully by Rosalyn's desk facing the entrance.

HENRY
Let's slow down. There's a lot to be said.

MAXWELL
About my sister the whore and her wayfaring friend?

Henry encourages Melinda with a smile.

HENRY
Puzzles make beautiful pictures when they're finished.

Melinda smiles with renewed strength.

Rosalyn enters. Only Colin notices. She waves him silent.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Max, I'm your half brother.

Melinda freezes - stunned - gapes at Henry.

MAXWELL
(To Melinda)
He wants money, right?

ROSALYN (O.S.)
Shut up, Max.

Maxwell whips around.

MAXWELL
What is he saying?

HENRY
Your mother, Elizabeth, and my father, Harold Wells, had an affair. You are the outcome.

Maxwell pops up from his chair and points to Henry.

MAXWELL
You were that angry boy.

HENRY
The sins of our fathers cleared when Melinda came.

ROSALYN
(to Henry)
She told you she was Spooner's mother.

MELINDA
(to Henry)
You knew she was alive -- You arranged this?

Henry compassionately nods.

HENRY
I arranged your return - the funeral. I never thought you'd come to my house.

Maxwell circles around Melinda.

MAXWELL
So we have you to thank for this.

Nervous, Melinda stands. She paces.

MELINDA
(to Rosalyn)
You were here the night I stayed. You laid the fire poker in the room. Ah, Henry, no.

Flight consumes Melinda.

MAXWELL
Off she goes.

HENRY
(to Melinda)
You don't like Montana, remember?

She stops.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Hear this out.

Henry holds out his hand. She reaches for him.

MAXWELL
Let her go.

Henry meets her half-way and leads her to the chair again.

ROSALYN
Shut up, Max. I'm an old woman who desperately wants to make this family love again.

Melinda gazes at the floor.

HENRY
(to Rosalyn)
She knew I was Spooner's father.
(to Melinda)
Something kept her from telling me.

Detached, Melinda still gazes at the floor.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Your father couldn't accept that he could produce such a child as Spooner. Isn't that right, Melinda.

Henry gently lifts her chin. He kneels before her.

MELINDA
Mother said he would kill you.

HENRY
Your mother protected us holding firm that Spooner was hers.

MELINDA
He would have killed you, Henry.

HENRY
Then the murders - you buried the whole ordeal.

Henry brushes Melinda's cheek. She nods.

ROSALYN
What happened to my son, Henry? Before I die, I need to know.

HENRY
Jackson confronted my Father regarding the affair during one of my attacks.

Maxwell sits with his false confidence.

MAXWELL
So you killed your own Father. We've read the story.

Henry saunters to Rosalyn. He takes her hand.

HENRY
(to Rosalyn)
Your son pounded my Father ruthlessly while he was trying to talk me through an attack.

Pained, Rosalyn tears.

Returning to Melinda, Henry helps her stand. He embraces her.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Your father pummeled my father to death, Melinda. He left me there to take the blame.

Melinda loses it. She weeps.

MELINDA
I'm so sorry, Henry.

HENRY
Almost done. I'm here.

MAXWELL
How sweet.

Henry marches over to Maxwell then softens.

HENRY
(whispers)
Jackson brought Max with him and made him watch.

Maxwell goes silent. Henry sits by him. Max meets his effort with hate in his eyes. Henry walks away.

ROSALYN
How did Jackson die?

HENRY
Colin can elaborate.

ROSALYN
Colin only found them.

HENRY
(to Colin)
Spooner thinks otherwise.

Spooner, dressed like a waiter, bursts in with his tray.

SPOONER
Bun goats for everyone.

Spooner pitches sponge cakes to everyone.

ROSALYN
Not now, Spooner.
(to Colin)
How did Jackson die?

MELINDA
Spooner, let's go upstairs.

SPOONER
I can flow with the go.

HENRY
(to Melinda)
Mel, he knows. Let him stay.

Spooner offers Henry a snack.

SPOONER
Ninga guts?

Henry lifts the tray.

HENRY
Not now, Spooner. It's time to
listen. Stay by us. You'll be okay.

Henry places the tray on an end table.

SPOONER
Yozen Frogurt?

HENRY
Not now, son. Secrets are being
told. Understand?

Spooner nods. Henry puts an arm around him.

SPOONER
Colin and I have a secret.

HENRY
Yes, we know.

Rosalyn painfully rises and walks to Colin.

ROSALYN
How did Jackson die?

Silence.

SPOONER
Here's a dot in the shark.

HENRY
What?

Spooner marches to Maxwell.

SPOONER
You are slow as a turd of hurtles.
Answer, Mandgra.

MAXWELL
I don't know who killed him.

SPOONER
It's time to seal the hick. You
whacked the blushing crow.

Rosalyn collapses in Henry's arms.

Maxwell stands and shoves Spooner.

HENRY
Hey!

Henry sits Rosalyn in a chair. Melinda rushes to her side.

Maxwell makes for the exit.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Now who's running?

Colin blocks Maxwell's exit.

COLIN
(to Maxwell)
Melinda had struck Jackson down with the fire poker but he was still alive. I ushered Melinda out. Spooner followed. I went back for you, Maxwell -- when I got there, you were beating your father with the fire poker -- just a toddler -- beating him -- you had choke marks on your neck. When I took you out. Spooner was at the door...Melinda was protecting you, Max. Jackson would have choked you to death.

Maxwell exits.

COLIN (CONT'D)
(to Rosalyn)
I'm sorry.

Rosalyn rises in weakness. She exits. Colin follows.

Henry embraces Melinda. Spooner moves closer.

HENRY
Are you ready?

MELINDA
Ready?

HENRY
It's time to go home.

Spooner circles them, peering at their faces.

MELINDA
Henry, your devotion is --

Henry shakes his head.

HENRY
-- Shh. Come home with me. You'll see only respect from me.

Melinda searches Henry's eyes. He gently strokes here face. They kiss. Henry's eye catches Spooner's bug-eyed expression.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Spooner?

MELINDA
Are you okay?

Confused, Spooner points to Melinda.

SPOONER
Kid you diss him?

MELINDA
Yes, I kissed him.
(to Henry)
Spooner, we're going back to Henry's. You okay with that?

SPOONER
Ready as a stock. A whit out of the bay, though.

Melinda smiles and strokes Spooner's hair.

MELINDA
Go get changed.

Spooner exits.

HENRY
His given name, I don't know it.

MELINDA
I named him Timothy Henry Day.

Henry smiles.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - MAIN ENTRY - DAY

Henry and Melinda exit the study. Rosalyn sits alone on a parlor chair.

ROSALYN
I've never heard you sing, Melinda. I've heard your recordings, yet I've never heard you sing.

MELINDA
Mandgra.

Melinda embraces her.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Thank you for taking care of Spooner. I stayed away too long.

ROSALYN
Will you stay here now?

MELINDA
I can't, but I'll be back tomorrow. I'll sing for you then.

Melinda and Henry walk away. Melinda halts and runs back.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Mandgra. How are you going to tell your public you're not dead?

Rosalyn winks.

ROSALYN
I'm not.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - DINING ROOM - DAY

Colin sits at the elegant table - face downcast. Melinda touches his shoulder and kisses his head.

They exit. Colin glances their way.

INT. DAY'S MANSION - KITCHEN - DAY

Melinda, Spooner and Henry enter. Maxwell hangs over a bottle of whiskey.

MELINDA
Max, don't--

Henry intervenes.

HENRY
You can't save him. Only God can.

MAX
Let me make this clear. This is mine. Do you hear me? Nobody will take it from me. Nobody.

Melinda, Henry and Spooner exit. Max's arms wave aimlessly.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Henry opens the truck door for Melinda and Spooner.

MELINDA
Spooner, we're home.

Spooner yawns his sleep away toward the sky.

SPOONER
There must be a million scars in the sty.

Henry smiles. Morley's MOM sits on his porch.

MELINDA
You have another houseguest.

HENRY
We do?

MELINDA
Ah, Henry, she's beat up.

HENRY
It's Morley's mother. I was right.

MELINDA
I don't find that surprising.

She strokes his cheek and gives him a peck on the cheek.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Come let's meet our new tenant.

Henry brings her close for a long kiss. Spooner sighs.

SPOONER
Ooh, bedding wells? Come on, I want cop porn.

Spooner strolls off.

HENRY
We'll have to do something about that one.
(calls out)
Wearable taste, Spooner.

SPOONER (O.S.)
I like cop porn.

HENRY
(to Melinda)
Help me out here.

Melinda giggles. They walk toward the house and approach Morley's MOM. Melinda assists her up and they enter the house.

FADE OUT