

PAST PRESENCE
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FADE IN

EXT. ENGLISH SUBURBAN CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A vacant field on the far outskirts of London sports a sign that reads:

On this site soon: BERKSHIRE
ARMS 100 NEW LUXURY FLATS

At the moment, the lot is fairly un-populated, save for a BACKHOE and its OPERATOR which is in the process of removing enough earth to make room for a basement parking garage...er "car park".

The operator, a 50ish man whose weathered complexion betrays years of experience at his craft, whistles in the morning mist as he digs, observing intently the progress of his machine's large shovel.

Abruptly, however, the shovel halts in the loamy ground. The operator is momentarily thwarted and backs off with the shovel to try again.

Again the metal comes to a halt, this time emitting a SOUND that indicates something both HARD and HOLLOW.

BACKHOE OPERATOR
What the bloody 'ell...?

He backs off again, this time using the shovel to pull the soil away, revealing the object of his frustrations. He peers over his machine to glimpse a bit of ELEGANTLY CARVED STONE.

Intrigued, the operator maneuvers his shovel to clear more soil away from the site for a better view of something that is seeing the light for the first time in centuries.

He shuts his machine off and climbs down for a close look.

The sudden silencing of the backhoe brings a hard-hatted SUPERVISOR running across the field with an annoyed look in his eyes.

SUPERVISOR
For the love of Mike, what is
it now? Fuel line again?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BACKHOE OPERATOR
Negative, gov. Take a look.

The two gaze down into the excavation at what the shovel has revealed: a small STONE MAUSOLEUM in good condition save for a hole that the backhoe has gashed in its roof.

BACKHOE OPERATOR (CONT'D)
Some sort of burial crypt
maybe. Looks pretty old.

The Supervisor's eyes roll.

SUPERVISOR
Oh great! That's the capper.
I may as well call Sir Anthony
and tell him to kiss his whole
wad good-bye.

The Backhoe Operator strolls down to peer into the dark hole the backhoe has opened in the tomb.

BACKHOE OPERATOR
Don't get your knickers in a
knot, gov. We'll just clear
this out of here and be on with
it.

SUPERVISOR
Oh yes, the Ministry of
Antiquities would love that.
They'd be all over our case for
disturbing "an historical
treasure."

BACKHOE OPERATOR
(with a wink)
Not if they don't *know* about
it...Besides, gov, what if this
here "historical treasure" has
some *real* treasure in it?

CUT TO:

EXT. ENGLISH SUBURBAN CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

A single work light illuminates the site of the mausoleum. More dirt has been removed now, revealing a stone structure with medieval markings. The Supervisor and the Backhoe Operator are clearing away the corroded metal doorway.

BACKHOE OPERATOR

Robbin' graves in the wee
hours. Me mum always said I'd
amount to no good.

SUPERVISOR

Here, hold this.

He hands the Backhoe Operator a flashlight, er "torch", as he grabs a crowbar and begins to pry open the crusty doorway. It may have had a name on it at one time but it is unreadable now.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

The doorway gives with a groan and a lurch and the pair of explorers enters the musty tomb. Light from the worklight streams in from the hole in the roof to illuminate a SARCOPHAGUS on a pedestal in the center of the small space. There is nothing else in the chamber.

The Supervisor and Backhoe Operator examine the area.

BACKHOE OPERATOR

Looks like no treasure today,
gov.

SUPERVISOR

Sometimes they buried articles
with the body. Here, give me a
hand.

The Backhoe Operator shrugs and helps the Supervisor try to lift off the flat stone covering of the sarcophagus. It is heavy and about all the pair can do is slide the slab off to the side where it tumbles to the ground with a tremendous, echoing CRASH. The two tumble to the ground in a scrambling effort to avoid being crushed.

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CONTINUED:

Silence reigns again as the dust settles and the pair pull themselves upright. The Supervisor grabs the flashlight.

SUPERVISOR

You okay?

BACKHOE OPERATOR

(grunting to his feet)

Like new.

Slowly they approach the open coffin. Judging by the ornate burial dress, the SKELETAL OCCUPANT was a woman. Over her chest, in the clasp of what once were hands is a sort of MEDIEVAL PICTURE FRAME, inlaid with yellow metal, face down.

BACKHOE OPERATOR

Not much in the way of treasure here either.

SUPERVISOR

What's that she's clutching there? Looks like it could be gold.

[BACKHOE OPERATOR

It musta really been important to her to have it buried with her like this.]

The Backhoe Operator gingerly takes the object from the dusty grasp of the corpse.

BACKHOE OPERATOR

'Scuse me Miss. Hate to leave you empty handed, but my friend here doesn't want to leave empty handed.

The Supervisor takes the object from the Backhoe Operator. He holds it in the shaft of light streaming in from the ceiling.

A blank, puzzled look comes over his face and he turns a little pale.

BACKHOE OPERATOR

What is it, gov?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SUPERVISOR

You just dug this...this *crypt*
up this morning right?

BACKHOE OPERATOR

You watched me, gov.

SUPERVISOR

And it's obviously several
hundred years old, right?

BACKHOE OPERATOR

Medieval, looks to me.

SUPERVISOR

Then how do you explain *this*?

He hands the Backhoe Operator the ornate frame. There in the center is a small, faded PHOTOGRAPH of a YOUNG MAN! In the lower corner of the white area surrounding the photo is a logo that unmistakably reads "Polaroid."

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Two burly KNIGHTS, their heads and faces obscured by metal helmets, are battling mightily with broadswords. One of them towers half a foot over the other and sports a full suit of armor. For the other, besides the crude helmet, the armor is minimal; a breastplate and some leg and shoulder guards.

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The struggle grows fierce, the opponents uttering intense cries of exertion as they wield the heavy two-handed blades.

Each of the two combatants moves with sure-footed calculation against the other. Each chest is heaving from the discharge of great effort as opposing blows are blocked and steel blades clash.

Though he has striven valiantly, the smaller man abruptly goes down, his opponent quickly moving in to plant his foot on his defeated foe's chest and a sword point at the vanquished throat.

A loud CHEER is heard from the CROWD as we DISCOVER that the two contestants are participants in a medieval tournament on the manor grounds of BARON WILLIAM OF LANCASTER.

A TITLE is SUPER-IMPOSED:

"England, Five Centuries
Earlier."

The Baron, along with his lovely daughter ABEGAIL, his friar/ advisor FATHER ELIAS, and the visiting EARL OF BERKSHIRE look on from a tented platform as the two combatants rise, remove their helmets, and bow before the cheers and applause of a hundred or so peasant on-lookers.

The winning knight strides from the center of the arena to approach the platform as his opponent exits the field.

WILLIAM
(to Berkshire)
Yet another contest falls to
you, Berkshire. I fear we of
Lancaster must maintain
scrupulous hospitality or fall
prey to your conquering hordes.

Though the entire party CHUCKLES at the expression, it is a very real possibility that permanently resides in the back of Baron William's mind.

The winning knight kneels before the Baron and his party. Berkshire, clad in more finery than anyone else on the platform, steps forward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BERKSHIRE

Well done, Sir Andrew. For
your service and skill I hereby
award you the sum of fifty...

ABEGAIL

(squealing with
delight)

Samuel!!

Abegail has spotted a lone FIGURE, dressed simply and
carrying a small pack, approaching from the road.

BERKSHIRE

(puzzled at the
interruption)

I beg your pardon.

WILLIAM

(not understanding)

Abegail please!

Abegail leaps down from the platform and hurries across the
field to throw her arms around SAMUEL, a young man in his
twenties that we recognize as the *figure in the Polaroid
photograph*.

William looks out on the field to realize who has arrived.

WILLIAM

(smiling)

It *is* him. It is Samuel!

(aside to Berkshire)

...my Ward. I sent him to be
schooled these four years by
the fathers at Vickers Abbey.

Abegail and Samuel stroll back toward the platform. Amid the
smiles, we can imagine their words to each other after four
years.

BERKSHIRE

Four years away, William? And
so distant...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WILLIAM

I promised his father I would
look after the boy. Though he
and Abegail grew up as if
brother and sister, it was well
that his need for education
came as she began to flower.

A grin comes upon Berkshire's face.

BERKSHIRE

I take your meaning, William.
A brilliant happenstance.

Abegail and Samuel reach the foot of the platform.

ABEGAIL

Father, you must allow Samuel
to compete in the tournament.
Someone must defend the honor
of Lancaster.

Berkshire chuckles. William tries to do the same.

WILLIAM

Oh, now Abegail; he must be
weary from his journey.

SAMUEL

If it please you, Baron
William, I do desire to honor
this house in partial payment
of the bountiful consideration
you have shown me.

William has little to lose at this point.

WILLIAM

(chuckling)
Well, then, welcome young
Samuel. Have the good friars
taught you to fight as well as
to think?

SAMUEL

They have, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

WILLIAM

Very well then. Berkshire,
choose your best man to oppose
young Samuel. And Samuel will
have the choice of weapons.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOURNAMENT FIELD - DAY

Samuel stands unarmed in the center of the arena awaiting his opponent. He glances over at Abegail, distracted for an instant by her confident smile, when a SHADOW comes over him.

Samuel turns to discover his OPPONENT in the match, a mean-looking brute who is a full foot taller than Samuel.

A REFEREE bearing two six-foot wooden poles approaches the contenders.

REFEREE

(loudly, for all)

Weapon of choice is the
longstaff. Last man to remain
standing is the victor.

The two contestants each grasp a pole by its center with both hands, holding it at an angle across their chests. They stand facing each other, waiting.

Upon a nod from William a TRUMPET BLASTS and the contest begins.

The two combatants circle each other, gazing intently into the other's eyes. But only for a moment.

Samuel's opponent makes his move.

But Samuel's moves are quicker. In an incredible flurry of elegant-but-deadly thrusts and parries, Samuel sends his burly foe crashing to the ground, flat on his back in less than six seconds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A CHEER goes up from the gathered on-lookers, who swarm around the victorious Samuel and sweep him towards the platform as his giant opponent limps away in humiliation.

Far from being insulted or threatened, Berkshire laughs and applauds heartily at the sight of the victorious underdog. He leans over to whisper something to Abegail who is visibly delighted at Samuel's victory.

William too radiates pride.

WILLIAM

Well done, young Samuel. You
have honored this house with
your skill and bravery.

William steps forward, taking the ceremonial sword Father Elias hands him.

Samuel crouches to one knee, head bowed. William gently taps Samuel's shoulder with the sword's point.

WILLIAM

This day you have proven
yourself faithful and true in
defense of these lands. I
hereby bestow upon you the
office of knighthood of the
house of Lancaster with all its
attendant honor, privilege, and
responsibilities.

Glancing up at Abegail's smile, Samuel beams.

SAMUEL

Ever in your service, my liege.

INT. BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

A full-blown post-tournament medieval feast. The central table finds William imbibing heartily, flanked on his right by Abegail and Berkshire, and on his left by Elias and Samuel, all enjoying the fruits of a full harvest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Other tables include the ladies and gentlemen of both Lancaster and Berkshire houses, all in festive mood as a small group of minstrels plays 15th century top 40.

In the hall's center, two gaily dressed DWARVES perform a silly pantomime version of a tournament match, flourishing loaves of bread as mock swords.

Finally, one of the dwarves finds himself on his back with the other standing over him with a poised sword-loaf. All eyes go to William's table. The signal is thumbs down and the loaf of bread is "mercilessly" plunged into the prostrate dwarf's gaping mouth.

Laughter ensues all around. The dwarves bow and exit to applause as William rises to speak.

WILLIAM

Ladies and Gentlemen of the
House of Lancaster; Lords and
Ladies of the House of
Berkshire. It is truly a
joyous and prosperous time that
we share. The harvest is a
good one. We in each house are
blessed with good men and
brave, ever poised to defend
our bounties.

One of the seated LADIES at that moment gives a little YELP and slaps the roving hand of her somewhat-inebriated COMPANION. A chuckle fills the hall.

WILLIAM(CONT'D)

...and good women to defend
their own bounties I fear.

The chuckle explodes into full-blown laughter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILLIAM(CONT'D)

And yet it falls my lot to
bring yet more welcome news to
our two houses. From this day
we share not only borders, we
share all that is good for both
our lands and both our houses.
For we are hereby pleased to
announce that we have solemnly
pledged...to our friend and new
ally the Earl of
Berkshire...the hand of my
beloved daughter Abegail in
marriage.

There is applause all around. Probably the only surprised
faces in the room are those of Abegail, who doesn't quite
know what to think, and Samuel, who does a valiant job of
hiding his disappointment.

WILLIAM(CONT'D)

And with this union our two
houses become one, in strength,
in war, in peace, in need, and
in prosperity.

Berkshire rises, lifting a chalice.

BERKSHIRE

A toast, then. To our friend
and ally William and all the
Houses of Lancaster and
Berkshire.

The celebrants lift their flasks. Berkshire turns to
Abegail.

BERKSHIRE

And to the most exquisite
blossom in any land...

Tears fill Abegail's eyes. She bolts from the table and
exits. Berkshire starts after her, but William holds him
back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WILLIAM
 (to Berkshire)
 She'll get used to the idea.
 (to the group)
 To strength and prosperity!

ALL
 To strength and prosperity.

All drink except Samuel. But none drink more deeply than William, who drains his flask and then envelops Berkshire in a zealous bear hug. There is APPLAUSE all around, but Samuel is troubled.

SAMUEL
 (to William)
 My liege, if I may ask...why
 did you not *tell* her?

Father Elias tries to pull Samuel away from such a dangerous line of inquiry.

ELIAS
 Samuel, my boy...

William signals it's okay.

WILLIAM
 I wouldn't expect you to
 understand now, Samuel. Some
 day, perhaps.

Samuel looks intently into William's eyes...and Berkshire's. But there are no answers there. He too turns and exits.

INT. MANOR CHAPEL - NIGHT

Later, in the flickering, candle-lit glow of the manor's simple place of worship, we find a single kneeling figure at the altar. It is Samuel, hands clasped and head bowed in silence.

A tear or two runs from his tightly closed eyes.

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CONTINUED:

SAMUEL

Beloved Lord Jesus, I beg that you will give me strength in this new life you have given me. I have come to this my home, but it seems no longer a home.

Another figure appears in the doorway. As she steps into the light we see it is Abegail. She too has come to pray. But, finding Samuel, she stops only to listen.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

(very emotional)

You have kept Abegail well, Father, and have blessed her with a loveliness as great as all your grace... But, I fear her soul is troubled, precious Father. If it be your will, give her peace, I beg. Grant her happiness in her...new life.

No longer able to choke back her tears, Abegail rushes away, sobbing, before Samuel can notice her presence.

INT. BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

The hall is now empty, save for a somewhat inebriated William, a similarly-intoxicated Berkshire, and a couple of servants, cleaning up the hall after the revelry.

WILLIAM

Of course she loves you. A man with all your...wealth...and horses and soldiers and...wealth. Of course she loves you.

BERKSHIRE

But what of this Samuel, dear William? I fear she has eyes for him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

William leans over to Berkshire and blinks back the effects of the ale.

WILLIAM

(getting serious)

Berkshire I assure you. I do not take this lightly. Abegail is my most precious possession. I offer her to you because I need your trust. We need each other in these dangerous times. You know of the struggle in the north. You've heard what Tyndale, and Keswick are about. Who knows what armies they are massing.

He grabs a flask and fills Berkshire's cup.

WILLIAM(CONT'D)

Abegail can never know happiness if she does not know the shelter of security. Abegail needs you, my friend.

BERKSHIRE

And Samuel?

WILLIAM

Samuel is knighted into my service. His heart is a pure one. He will pose no trouble, I promise you.

Berkshire lifts his cup and bursts out in rowdy song. William joins in and they resume their drinking.

INT. SAMUEL'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

In the crude hovel that occupies a distant corner of the manor grounds, Samuel lies asleep, but it is not a restful one.

He is wakened by a soft knock at his door. Perhaps he imagined it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But the door creaks open and the darkness is pierced by a candle, held in the grasp of a distraught Abegail, her face streaked with tears.

ABEGAIL
(whispers)
Samuel?

Samuel sits up, startled.

SAMUEL
Abegail!

He rises from the bed, and approaches the door as she enters, closing it behind her.

SAMUEL
You must not be here. What
will...?

Abegail puts the candle holder down and resolutely presses her lips passionately to his, flinging her arms around him and clinging as if he was about to vanish forever.

Samuel is at first taken aback, but does not push her away.

Abegail comes up for air, smiling girlishly.

ABEGAIL
This I have wanted for longer
than I can tell you.

SAMUEL
It does seem a lifetime that I
have been away. But Abegail,
you cannot be here now...

ABEGAIL
I kept your every letter.

SAMUEL
(smiles)
You must have driven Father
Elias quite mad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ABEGAIL
(nodding, with a
giggle)

Oh yes. He grew so weary of my asking him to read your letters, he positively *forced* me to learn to read.

SAMUEL
And to write...I too cherished your letters.

ABEGAIL
(sadly)
And now I am the one to be taken away.

SAMUEL
Abegail, you are pledged to another. You must return to your chambers.

She clings closer to him.

ABEGAIL
How can I marry Berkshire when my heart is already filled?

He turns his eyes away.

SAMUEL
(not very sincere)
There are things more important than the desires of two hearts.

ABEGAIL
Two hearts? If you feel the same then, Samuel let us run away. We can make our own life...

SAMUEL
Our own, yes. But what of all the people whose very lives depend on your wedding Berkshire.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ABEGAIL

(getting teary-eyed)

What of them? What is security
without happiness if not
a...prison? Oh Samuel!

She collapses in his arms, sobbing uncontrollably. Samuel lacks for consoling words. All he can do is stroke her brow and try to wipe away the tears.

She brings her lips to his, kissing him deeply, longingly.

Samuel can no longer resist both her desires and his own. The two lovers gently descend to the waiting bed.

FADE OUT

There is darkness for a beat, then:

With a horrifying CRASH the hovel door is kicked open by three of William's GUARDS, silhouetted in torchlight which banishes the darkness.

Abegail cowers in Samuel's strong arms, pulling the bedclothes to cover their nakedness.

The Guards enter and fling the covers away,

GUARD #1

Dress yourself, m'lady.

Abegail quickly throws on her cloak.

ABEGAIL

What is the meaning of this?
Have I no privacy whatever?

She is silently, briskly, hustled outside as Samuel dresses himself as best he can.

SAMUEL

What is happening? Where are
you taking her?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

GUARD #2

It is not her I should worry
about if I were you. Hands
behind your back.

SAMUEL

What is it you want?

GUARD #2

I said hands behind you!

One guard roughly turns Samuel around as the other ties his hands.

SAMUEL

Am I to be charged with a
crime?

GUARD #2

How does "treason" sound to
your tender ears?

EXT. SAMUEL'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

As the guards bring the couple outside they are met by an inebriated and disheveled William hurrying up the path in a fury, followed closely by Berkshire. William does not look Abigail in the eye as he passes her.

ABEGAIL

(in desperate tears)
Father, what are you doing?

WILLIAM

(to guard)
Confine her to her chambers.
Chain her if you have to.

As she is being hauled away William steps up to Samuel, who is being held by the other guards, glares at him, with trembling rage, for what seems an eternity.

William's wrath explodes: He strikes Samuel across the face with all his drunken might.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ABEGAIL
(looking back from a
distance)
Father no!

WILLIAM
(to Samuel)
How *dare* you! Do you realize
what you have done? Have you
no idea the consequences of
your actions?

Samuel is silent.

WILLIAM
All that we are, all our
labors, our families, our
land...all to waste because you
can't keep your filthy pants
on.

SAMUEL
I cannot defend my actions, my
Liege. But this you must know:
Abegail does not love
Berkshire.

WILLIAM
And that gives you privilege to
cast us all into ruin?

Berkshire stands by sternly.

BERKSHIRE
William...

William turns to Berkshire.

WILLIAM
(desperate)
Berkshire, how can I ever...she
is my only daughter.

SAMUEL
She is not property to be
traded like cattle!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

This takes William over the edge.

WILLIAM
 (to Berkshire,
 clenching his teeth)
 We cannot make amends for
 Abigail. I cannot ask you to
 shame your house as well as my
 own. But we *can* punish the
 crime.

Samuel struggles but the guards hold him fast.

SAMUEL
 (angry)
 The only "crime" is callous
 indifference to the cares of
 your daughter's heart.

WILLIAM
 For that you shall hang.

He turns back to Berkshire.

WILLIAM(CONT'D)
 ...at noon. In the square.
 That shall end it.

William turns and is gone. The guards shuffle Samuel off to confinement, leaving Berkshire alone to ponder what has transpired.

EXT. MANOR GROUNDS - DAWN

The splendid peace of the dawning new day is shattered by the hammering and clattering of several of the manor GUARDS as they begin construction of a gibbet.

INT. BANQUET HALL - DAWN

A disheveled and hung-over William slouches in his chair, alone in the great hall, his head back, with a slab of meat over his eyes and forehead in an attempt to quell the pounding in his head.

Soft, echoed footsteps approach. William looks up to find a tearful Abigail. She stands silently before him. He retreats back under his compress.

WILLIAM
(to the ceiling)
Well?

ABEGAIL
Father, you cannot do this thing. Samuel is like your son.

WILLIAM
A son would not betray this house.

She crouches at his feet.

ABEGAIL
But a daughter did. Father, I am more to blame than he...Please. Hang me if you will, but let Samuel live I beg you.

WILLIAM
Our first pledge to Berkshire was broken. But this shall stand.

ABEGAIL
(bitter)
Is there nothing more for you? Only your all-consuming pride?

William looks at her.

WILLIAM
(raising his voice)
My word is my word! Now off with you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He winces at the loud sound of his own voice.

ABEGAIL

(desperate)

Father listen to me. Samuel betrayed his home for love and love alone. Now, would you alienate all that you love just to maintain your precious property? Does no heart beat within you at all? How can you...?

WILLIAM

I said be gone. Guards!!

A couple of guards rush in and firmly lead a sobbing Abegail back to her chambers, past a silent Berkshire who has observed the entire exchange from the shadows.

INT. FATHER ELIAS' QUARTERS - DAY

The friar's quarters are not quite what one would expect of a simple man of the cloth. The walls are ornamented with maps. The table contains not only several heavy volumes, but odd-looking "scientific" devices, and several mysterious-looking flasks and vials.

Father Elias is discovered on his knees in silent meditation before the cross above his bed.

A soft KNOCK comes at the door.

Elias slowly opens his eyes and rises.

ELIAS

Enter, my son.

The door opens to reveal Berkshire, who slips in silently and closes the door behind.

BERKSHIRE

Father I fear only you can help this troubled house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELIAS

I have been in prayer with the
Lord much already this day.
Please, sit my son.

BERKSHIRE

Perhaps you can speak to
William, Father. He may listen
to you.

ELIAS

And what am I to persuade him
of?

BERKSHIRE

Father, I have no desire to see
young Samuel hang. Though I
care for Abegail, it is plain
her heart belongs to him.

ELIAS

And why do you not speak to
William of this matter?

BERKSHIRE

I...I have tried, Father. But
William feels he has to please
me. And my own heart is in
turmoil, for I wish only the
best for Abegail, for both our
houses and for William.

ELIAS

Your heart is wiser than
William's I fear.

BERKSHIRE

I would gladly accept Abegail's
hand even still, would she but
have me. But what kind of
marriage could that be with
Samuel's blood ever on its
brow?

Elias turns and gazes emptily out the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BERKSHIRE

And yet that union could bring
our houses together with
greater safety for all.

Elias does not turn back to Berkshire.

ELIAS

Is there nothing else that can
unite the houses?

BERKSHIRE

That is why I now come to you,
Father Elias. Perhaps you can
open William's eyes. Help him
see that there are other paths
to happiness and that Samuel's
blood gains nothing.

ELIAS

As long as Samuel lives,
William's pride will not let
him see those paths.

BERKSHIRE

And if Samuel dies...

Elias sighs deeply.

ELIAS

Bitterness will fill Abegail
and sunder the house of
Lancaster.

BERKSHIRE

You see you must do something,
Father. For Abegail's sake...

ELIAS

I will do what I can do, my
son.

Berkshire, thankful but uneasy at the Father who still faces
the window, turns and exits.

Elias resumes his silent meditation.

EXT. MANOR GROUNDS - DAY

The construction of the gallows is nearing completion. The rope is being tied and tested. PEASANTS are beginning to gather. An OLD WOMAN weeps. Guards keep the gathering throng in line.

INT. SAMUEL'S DUNGEON CELL - DAY

Samuel sits silently, head in arms, on the floor of the barren stone cell. A shaft of LIGHT streams in through the bars high above him.

The CLANKING of keys in the lock of the door of the cell is heard. The heavy wooden door creaks open and Father Elias slips in.

Once the door is shut behind him, he removes a bundle from under his robes.

SAMUEL

You need not bring me
absolution, Father. I can pay
the price of my actions. I
have made my peace with God.

ELIAS

Confessing your sin indeed
brings peace, my son.

Samuel rises. He is bitter.

SAMUEL

But what of Abegail? What
justice is there for her?

Elias doesn't have an answer. Samuel turns away.

ELIAS

I bring you news, Samuel.

Samuel turns back to look at him.

ELIAS

Your sentence has
been...changed, my son.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Samuel is suspicious.

SAMUEL

What more can William do than
hang me?

Elias hands him the bundle.

ELIAS

Here is clothing. Dress
yourself...quickly.

Samuel throws on a shirt and vest. Elias speaks as he
dresses.

ELIAS

Now listen sharply, Samuel.
Your sentence is that you are
to be banished from this land.
You may not return as long as
Baron William lives.

SAMUEL

Banished? What of Abegail? Am
I never to see her again? I
should rather dance at the
gallows than bear this thought.

ELIAS

Let God's will be done, my son.

[SAMUEL

Sometimes he seems a cruel god
indeed. How can I cling to
faith when he removes my hope?]

CUT TO:

EXT. MANOR GROUNDS

The crowd around the gallows has grown. The hour has drawn
near. A DRUMMER begins a steady, droning BEAT.

William appears from a balcony window.

INT. DUNGEON PASSAGEWAY

Three guards begin a ritualistic march toward Samuel's cell.

INT. SAMUEL'S DUNGEON CELL

Samuel hears the drumming, though he cannot see out the high window.

SAMUEL
(troubled)
The hangman's drum? I thought
you said I was to be banished.

Elias pulls a vial from a small pouch at his belt.

ELIAS
Drink this now.

SAMUEL
What is it?

ELIAS
A...a new sacrament...for the
imprisoned.

The SOUND of keys is heard rattling in the lock.

ELIAS
Hurry, my son. Time grows
short.

Puzzled, Samuel drinks. He looks up. The shaft of LIGHT grows brighter, becoming a brilliant blinding white.

And then it is gone.

The door opens to reveal the contingent of guards, now come to escort Samuel to the gallows.

But Samuel is *no longer there!* The guards find only the kneeling Elias, lost in meditation, in the center of an otherwise empty cell.

CUT TO:

EXT. WEST L.A. LAUNDROMAT - NIGHT

LILA BROWNE, an attractive single woman of the '90's is hauling a basket of laundry from the all-night laundromat to her car. She has very close-cropped hair that reveals her delicate ears, each of which sports half a dozen earrings.

Beyond these modern trappings Lila is a dead ringer for Abigail. (In fact, she is portrayed by the same actress.)

Across the street, a loitering trio of BIKERS spot Lila.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND LAUNDROMAT

With a powerful gust of WIND that is gone in an instant, Samuel is deposited in the litter-strewn alley at the laundromat's rear. Somewhere a RADIO belches a rap beat. SIRENS mourn in the distance.

Samuel peers around at the strange new surroundings in terror. Rats scurry about an overloaded, oozing dumpster near by.

SAMUEL
(pleading)
Father Elias? Father?

A thumping police HELICOPTER, spotlight blazing, passes overhead. Samuel crouches in fear for his life.

SAMUEL
(to God, shouting
above the noise)
Is this the price of my sin?
Is this my hell?

Suddenly a very earthly female SCREAM siezes Samuel's attention. He scrambles upright, listening. When he hears it again the cry is closer. He starts toward the sound.

Just then, the three Bikers rush into the alley, a struggling and screeching Lila in their grasp. The big one, SNAKE, has his hand over her mouth, attempting to muffle her cries.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SNAKE

Now you just pipe down little lady. We're gonna have us a little party here.

The other two, BLADE and MITCH cackle at the thought.

Samuel stops in his tracks, glances around and grabs a length of pipe from a nearby rubbish heap. It becomes his newfound longstaff.

The Bikers spot Samuel. Blade pulls out his knife. He and Mitch slowly move toward Samuel.

BLADE

Hey, whatawe got here? Looks like a knight in shining armor to the rescue.

The other two chuckle for a moment but Mitch makes a move for Samuel. Mitch, however, is quickly dispatched, sent sprawling face down, unconscious in an instant from Samuel's instinctive maneuvers.

The laughter stops. Blade moves in while Samuel's back is turned, fire in his eyes.

But Samuel whirls round and, though the knife plants a GASH on Samuel's right hand, the pipe catches Blade across the jaw before he knows what has happened.

Blade too is quickly out cold on the ground.

Now alone to face Samuel, Snake still holds Lila. He stares into Samuel's eyes as Samuel starts to move toward him. Before Samuel can get very close, however, Snake decides it just isn't worth it. He shoves Lila in Samuel's direction, sending her stumbling to the ground, and flees into the night.

Lila, relatively unhurt, looks up to her rescuer and clammers to her feet.

LILA

Listen, I don't know how I can ever...are you okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Samuel looks puzzled. Lila is still several feet away in shadow.

SAMUEL

Oh...kay?

LILA

Yeah, Okay. You just get off the boat? 'Okay', you know, is everything cool?

As she approaches, her face comes into the light and Samuel is thunderstruck.

SAMUEL

Abegail!

Lila doesn't come any closer.

LILA

Huh? No, buddy, I'm not Abegail. My name's Lila.

SAMUEL

(near tears)

Abegail, what has befallen us?

LILA

Look, I told you I'm not Abegail.

She brushes herself off.

LILA

(to herself)

Just my luck, I get attacked by some Neandarthals and then get 'rescued' by a drugged-out nut case.

Samuel drops the length of pipe and grasps his injured hand, wincing.

LILA

Let me see that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She approaches and takes his hand. Samuel is so bewildered he can do little but cooperate.

LILA

Hmmm. It's bad enough. But I don't think we need to burden the ER system this time, especially with whatever chemicals you've got in your system. What's your name?

SAMUEL

Samuel.

LILA

Listen, Samuel. Why don't we just bop on over to my place. It's not far from here. We'll get this cleaned up and bandaged and then you can be on your way. Where do you live?

Samuel is hesitant, doesn't quite know what to say. And he can't take his eyes off of "Abegail."

SAMUEL

I...know not.

LILA

(rolls her eyes)

Homeless. Figures. Listen, Samuel, I don't normally invite strange homeless dudes into my place so don't get any ideas; but under the circumstances I'd say it's probably the least I can do. My car's just over there. Let's get outa here before these creeps wake up...

She heads back toward the mouth of the alley, turns to see the un-comprehending Samuel.

LILA

Well?...Come on.

Samuel follows her.

EXT. LAUNDROMAT PARKING LOT

They arrive at Lila's car, a well-restored '63 Ford Falcon Convertible. This is Samuel's first glimpse of an automobile. His jaw drops.

SAMUEL

It...gleams like the sun.

LILA

(smiles)

Like it? My old boyfriend helped me get it. The *only* good thing I can say about him, lemme tell you.

Lila stoops to pick up the spilled basket of laundry left behind when Snake and his boys accosted her.

She pulls a small towel out of the pile and steps over to Samuel. He is staring wide-eyed at all the (to him) utterly foreign surroundings: The neon signs, street lights, traffic in the street, etc.

LILA

Here, give me your hand.

He doesn't. But she takes it anyway.

SAMUEL

If you please, where is this place?

Lila wraps the towel around his wounded appendage.

LILA

We're in West L.A., Samuel, glamour laundry capitol of the universe...There, that ought to hold it till we get some first aid.

She throws the laundry basket in the car's trunk and hops into the driver's seat. Samuel remains in awe of a simple nearby street light.

LILA

Samuel? Are you gonna get in?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Samuel looks at her and tries to understand. She reaches across and opens the door for him. He finally gets the message and slowly slips into the tuck-and-roll upholstery, pulling the door closed very deliberately.

INT. LILA'S CAR

As Lila turns the key in the ignition the "roar" of the engine revving up startles Samuel. But he looks over at the calm Lila as she takes the brake off and begins backing out of her parking space. He tries to calm himself.

SAMUEL

By what means does this device
move...with no horse or ox?

LILA

Oh it's got horses all right.

She steps on the gas and pulls out into traffic, pushing Samuel into his seat at the "terrific" speed of 25mph. He is petrified. She glances over at his pale face and saucer eyes.

LILA

Hey, take it easy. I never
said I was a great driver, but
geez...

SAMUEL

I...have never traveled at such
great speed.

LILA

I'm only doin' twenty five.
Get a grip! I sure hope
whatever you're on wears off
soon.

Samuel can do little but hold on, close his eyes, and pray.

EXT. LILA'S APARTMENT HOUSE - NIGHT

Lila pulls up to the curb in front of the building she lives in: a two-story fourplex with a half-hearted castle design motif.

She puts the car in neutral and the engine races slightly.

SAMUEL

Is it some demon which roars
within this carriage?

LILA

It is if you ask the smog
police.

Lila turns off the ignition and gets out of the car.

INT. LILA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lila and Samuel enter. She snaps on the light. Again he stares in awe at the instant illumination, and then at all the "modern" surroundings. Much of her apartment decor is a cross between early garage sale and fifties kitsche.

Lila hits the playback button on her phone answering machine. It springs to life with a recorded message from a gravelly-voiced old woman:

MRS. SCHEMEL (RECORDED V.O.)

Ms. Brooowne. It's Ada
downstairs. You're late again
sweetie. I need a check...
tomorrow...early.

Lila rolls her eyes in disgust.

LILA

(under her breath)
Get off my back ya ol...

She starts rummaging through a closet. Samuel hovers by the "box which speaks".

SAMUEL

Is it some small person which
lives in this box?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA

Small? As in insignificant,
petty, and vermin-like? Yeah,
you got her pegged all right.
Listen, why don't you go in the
bathroom and wash off your hand
while I find the first aid kit.

She points to the bathroom door. Samuel tentatively goes in
as Lila resumes her search, on her knees in the bottom
section of the linen closet.

She comes out with a black lace bra in her hand.

LILA

(smiling to herself)

Hey! I thought I'd lost this.

She goes back in, finally coming out with a roll of gauze and
a first aid kit.

LILA

Found it. How's it goin'
Samuel?

She pushes open the bathroom door to discover Samuel kneeling
on the floor, rinsing his hand in the toilet.

LILA

(shocked)

What are you doing?!

INT. BATHROOM

She rushes in, turns on the faucets in the sink, grabs his
hand and plunges it under the flow of warm water.

LILA

(irritated)

What's the deal, Samuel, you
never seen a sink before? Are
you really a nut case or have
chemicals totally fried your
CPU?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She dries his hand and begins the process of bandaging it up.

SAMUEL
 (upset that she's
 upset)
 I...I am sorry. I do not have
 a CPU.

LILA
 Boy, you got that right.

Lila looks into his eyes and sees she has unsettled him. She takes a deep breath and calms down a bit. She finishes up the bandage job somewhat more gently.

LILA
 There you go.

She returns the bandaged hand to its owner.

LILA
 Look, I'm sorry. I really do
 owe you a lot...So, uh...you
 hungry?

Samuel looks up at her and nods.

LILA
 (smiles)
 Okay come on.

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN

Lila leads Samuel into the living room which adjoins the kitchen in this one-bedroom palace. She plants him on the couch and heads for the refrigerator.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA
 You're in luck, Samuel, 'cause
 I'm a great cook...You name it,
 I can zap it.

She comes forth with two frozen dinners, holding them up, one in each hand, with a grin.

CUT TO:

DING! The microwave announces dinner is ready. Lila opens the oven door and pulls out the two gourmet feasts with her hotpad mittens. She narrates as she works.

LILA
 It's very important, see, that
 you follow the directions
 precisely. Some people just
 pull open the plastic and begin
 to scarf. No no no. You're
 actually supposed to let it...

She glances over to the couch. Samuel is sound asleep. Lila halts in her tracks.

LILA
 Samuel? (sighs) Great.

She sets the dinners aside, goes over to the couch, puts Samuel's feet up, and tosses an afghan over him.

LILA
 (softly)
 Whats the matter, party too
 dull for you?

She stands back and has a look at him. He's not a bad looking guy.

LILA
 Well, Samuel, you're a piece of
 work all right. Sleep it off
 and maybe tomorrow we can find
 out where you belong.

She turns off the light and heads into the bedroom, closing the door behind her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LILA
(shaking her head)
Good night sweet prince.

We hear the CLICK of the door as she locks it behind her.

[Samuel, meanwhile, is lost in exhausted unconsciousness.

EXT. DREAMSCAPE - DAY

In a misty vision of a sunny green landscape, we approach Abigail, seated under a shade tree in a flowing white dress. As we get nearer we see she is embracing a three year old CHILD.

Nearer still they both look to CAMERA and smile. The child leaves Abigail's arms and runs toward us with a huge grin.

As the child nears, we:

WHITE OUT]

INT. LILA'S BEDROOM - DAY

The sun streaming in from the window wakens Lila. After a beat she remembers Samuel and jumps out of bed, clad in a tee shirt and boxers.

Lila opens the door to find Samuel, raptly examining her desk and adjoining bookshelves. He has a Danielle Steele novel open in his hand.

LILA
(yawning)
Good morning.

Samuel looks up. He is chipper, alert.

SAMUEL
Milady, you must be very
wealthy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA

Well, at least you're not
calling me Abegail any more.
And just why, Samuel, am I so
wealthy?

SAMUEL

These...my eyes have never seen
so many books.

There are maybe five shelves full of books and papers.

LILA

(let down)

And here I thought the drugs'd
have worn off by now.

(then, impatient)

Well hey, that's nothing, I
write 'em too. Look here.

She pulls a couple paperbacks off the shelf.

LILA

It's a series: "Confessions of
a Horny Hooker." See that
name, Benjamin Dover? It's my
nom de plume. They pay better
if they think you're a man.

Samuel examines the slick, lurid covers. Lila continues,
pointing to a pile of scripts.

LILA

And these...my screenplays.
This *is* Hollywood after all.
Still haven't sold any. Can't
sell 'em unless you have an
agent. Can't get an agent
unless you sell 'em. ...So I
do this...

She grabs a stack of Tabloid newspapers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LILA

Here's one of mine: "Two-Headed boy marries Siamese Twins" and this one "Alligator Man Lays Eggs in Public Swimming Pool." And here, my masterpiece: "Space Aliens bring Jackie and Elvis back from the dead. Wedding Bells Ring."

Lila is obviously not proud of the legacy she has laid out for Samuel. In fact, she's a bit on edge. She steps into the kitchen and quickly grabs a bagel from the cupboard and a small bottle of juice from the fridge.

LILA

And now that you know my life's story, Samuel, I think it's time for you to go back to wherever it is you came from so I can get on with creating my literary masterworks. Here. Here's some breakfast.

She hands him the bagel and juice. He puts them in the small cloth pouch which hangs from his belt. Samuel doesn't understand a word of what she is saying, and certainly doesn't understand why Lila seems upset.

SAMUEL

I know not with certainty from whence I came, dear Lila, nor where I now stand, nor what I have done or said to make you angry with me. But I do beg your forgiveness for whatever it may have been. You have been very kind to a lost traveler.

Lila reaches into the pocket of her coat hanging nearby and pulls out a twenty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LILA

Here's twenty bucks. I really have to get back to my work. Good luck, Samuel. I hope you figure things out.

She hustles him toward the door, opens it. Suddenly she remembers something and closes it again.

LILA

Hold it. One more thing.

She rushes over and pulls a camera out of her desk drawer, a Polaroid camera. She moves him over to a spot in front of her desk.

LILA

Stand right there for a second.

She steps back and aims the camera.

LILA

Say cheese whiz.

Lila snaps the picture and, when it ejects, puts the photo on the small table by the couch to develop. Samuel is blinded by the flash, further adding to his continuing bewilderment.

Lila again hustles him toward the door.

SAMUEL

(blinking)

The image of the sun in that small box lingers still before me.

LILA

I'm sure it does, Samuel, and I'm terribly sorry about it. It's for my files...or the police...whichever. I tell ya Samuel it's been a slice. Next time, remember, 'just say no.'

With that, she closes the door on him, shutting him out at last on his own. Lila leans against the door and heaves a sigh of relief.

EXT. LILA'S APARTMENT HOUSE

Samuel, not knowing which way to turn, ambles slowly down the stairs and out the front walk.

MRS. SCHEMEL peeks out at him from her cracked-open door. She withdraws, shaking her head.

Samuel turns back for a last look at the temporally ambiguous structure, then turns his attention to the contents of his pouch. He pulls out the bagel, sniffs it, and takes a bite. It's agreeable enough.

He slowly begins to venture out into the world.

[A HOMELESS MAN is pushing a shopping cart down the sidewalk. He sees Samuel and approaches with a smile.]

HOMELESS MAN

Friend! I'm gonna let you in on it.

(gets closer and
whispers)

Sell all your municipals and move everything into biotechnologies.

He pulls back and returns to a normal voice as he moves on.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)

You'll thank me later.

Samuel can only wonder as the man recedes down the sidewalk.]

INT. LILA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Lila snaps on the TV and steps into the kitchen to pour herself a cup of herb tea.

The TV comes to life with a morning news program. A bleach blonde ANCHORWOMAN reads to camera.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANCHORWOMAN

...and finally this out of England. Would you believe medieval photography? That's right. Photographs more than four centuries before photography was invented.

Lila settles in to the couch to enjoy her tea and recuperate from the ordeal of the previous twelve hours. [She lights a cigarette.]

ANCHORWOMAN (CONT'D)

That's according to a construction engineer working outside of London who claims he unearthed *this* photograph in a crypt that had been sealed and untouched since the fifteenth century.

As the TV screen is filled with the supposed ancient photograph, we recognize it to be the image of Samuel.

LILA

Hey, wait a minute. Samuel?

Lila's eyes widen. She reaches over to the end table for the photo she just snapped of Samuel. She holds it next to the TV for comparison.

It's the same image!

ANCHORWOMAN

(turning in her chair)

Well I guess it takes all kinds, right Jay?

She turns to JAY, the weather guy as the TV image cuts wide to include the whole news desk.

JAY

Maybe it's not early photographs, Jane. Maybe it's proof of...time travel.

Both TV journalists chuckle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANCHORWOMAN

Speaking of time travel, here
to tell us about what the
future holds on the weathermap
is Jay Fontaine. What's it
going to be like today, Jay?...

Lila gets up and snaps off the set, her mind going a million miles a second. She stares at the snapshot in her hand.

LILA

(shaky)

Wa...wa..wait a second here.
This is too much. Lila, get a
grip girl. You just saw a
picture on TV from England...
the same one you just shot only
a minute ago...Time
travel?...Time
travel!...Samuel!

She bolts out the door.

EXT. LILA'S APARTMENT HOUSE & STREET - DAY

Lila rushes down to the sidewalk, glancing up and down the street.

LILA

(hollering)

Samuel!!

Finally, she spots him, down the street sitting on a bus bench. She runs toward him, still calling:

LILA

Samuel!

Samuel looks up to see her approach, smiles.

Lila arrives to find that Samuel is sitting next to a friendly-looking OLD LADY.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA
 (out of breath)
 Samuel. Thank God I found you.

SAMUEL
 Yes, let us thank Him.

He folds his hands and starts to kneel. Lila stops him.

LILA
 Listen you've got to come
 back...

SAMUEL
 No.

OLD LADY
 You'd *better* take him back,
 honey. He just offered me
 twenty dollars to take him
 home. (blushes) I had to tell
 him I'm married.

Lila tries to ignore her.

LILA
 (to Samuel)
 NO!?

SAMUEL
 Yes, you told me to next time
 just say 'no'.

OLD LADY
 Better go with her, son. She's
 quite a babe. (winks)

LILA
 (to Old Lady)
 Excuse us.

She grabs Samuel's arm and starts moving him quickly back
 toward her place.

LILA
 Samuel. Something's come up.
 We have to talk.

INT. LILA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Lila hands Samuel a cup of tea and takes a seat across the small table from him.

LILA
Careful now; it's hot.

He sips it and smiles at her. It's good.

LILA
So tell me. Did something strange happen to you and your surroundings recently?

SAMUEL
(gets somber)
Yes. Yes, all is changed. Nothing is as it was.
(gets excited, pleads)
Lila? What is it? What has happened?

LILA
Where was it you called home?

SAMUEL
The house of Lancaster, in Suffolk. I had just returned from my schooling at the Abbey.

LILA
And what year was that?

SAMUEL
Year? The year of our Lord one thousand four hundred and eighty nine. Is that not the year any longer?

Lila nearly hyperventilates.

LILA
Fourteen eighty nine. It's true, then. Ohmygod it's true.
(then, to Samuel)
Samuel, somehow you've moved over five hundred years into the future.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMUEL
 (very serious)
 What is it now? What is the
 year?

LILA
 Two thousand and one.

Samuel has to sit back a moment and think about this.

LILA
 How did you get here? What was
 the very last thing you did in
 1489?

SAMUEL
 (thinking hard)
 I was with Father Elias. He
 told me my sentence was to be
 banishment...and so it *is*.

LILA
 Sentence? For what?

SAMUEL
 The Baron's daughter was
 betrothed to another. Yet she
 and I...

Beat.

LILA
 I see. Was her name Abegail?

SAMUEL
 Yes. Forgive me, Lila,
 but...this also is strange:
 God's grace has bestowed her
 fair countenance upon *you*.
 Your eyes are her eyes. And to
 look upon you is to see...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LILA
 (blushing)
 ...her. I don't know whether I
 should be flattered or jealous.
 (back to business)
 What were you doing with Father
 Elias before you came here?

SAMUEL
 He gave me a vial of something
 to drink. He said it was a
 sacrament.

LILA
 And did you drink it?

SAMUEL
 Yes. The next I knew I was
 here in your world...defending
 your honor.

LILA
 (grins nervously)
 I dunno about *honor*. Savin' my
 bacon maybe...

A KNOCK comes at the door. A look of dread comes over Lila.

LILA
 Oh god, I know who this is.

She gets up and opens the door.

LILA
 (all phony smiles)
 Mrs. Schemel! What a surprise!
 How are you this morning?

MRS. SCHEMEL
 (dead pan)
 Hi miz Browne. I just stopped
 by to pick up a check.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LILA

You know, I was just about to call you. You see I'm expecting a big payment from a publisher any day now. But it just hasn't come in yet.

MRS. SCHEMEL

If it's the one from Ed McMahon I think you're gonna be waiting awhile. But here, I brought you your mail. See if it's in there.

She hands Lila a handful of envelopes. Lila continues to put on her best "Miss Congeniality" act.

LILA

Oh well wasn't that sweet of you!

Mrs. Schemel gazes nosily around the apartment as Lila shuffles through the envelopes. They all contain red stamps on the outside reading "PAST DUE" and "FINAL NOTICE".

LILA

Darn. Not today. I'm sure it'll be here tomorrow, though. Maybe you can come back then.
(smiles)

Mrs. Schemel turns away, coldly.

MRS. SCHEMEL

Don't worry. I'll be back all right.

Lila closes the door and returns to sit at the table, breathing a sigh of relief. But it is pre-mature.

Mrs. Schemel hollers up from below:

MRS. SCHEMEL (O.S.)

Oh and Miz Browne. If your boyfriend's gonna be staying with you I'm gonna have to charge you extra rent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LILA
(under her breath)
Yeah, and how're you gonna get
that much blood from a turnip?

SAMUEL
You pay tribute in blood?

LILA
(smiles briefly)
It's just an expression.
Sometimes with her I wonder,
though. That stuff I gave her
about a payment coming in? Not
exactly true.

SAMUEL
You...you lied to her?

LILA
The fact is I haven't sold a
story in over a month...
(sips her tea)
Wait a minute. A story! Your
story! It's wilder than
anything I ever made up. I
have to make a call. Excuse
me, Samuel. I think my ship
just came in.

She gets up from the table and dashes into the bedroom where
the phone resides.

She finds the phone under a pile of clothing and dials a
familiar number.

INT. NICK SILVERMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

NICK SILVERMAN, the overweight and balding editor of the
Weekly Star News sits behind his messy desk reading and
eating a doughnut. The phone beeps and he picks up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK
Silverman here...Lila! How's
my favorite aesthetically-
endowed stringer?

INT. LILA'S APARTMENT BEDROOM (INTERCUT)

LILA
Nick, you're gonna owe me big
time for this one.

NICK
Ooh, sounds like the lady's got
a *hot* lead...Or is it the *hot*
lady's got a lead?

LILA
Get your hand outa your pocket
and listen to me for once,
would ya?

NICK
I'm all ears for you, babe.

LILA
Nick, what would you say if I
told you I had proof positive
that time travel is possible?

NICK
I'd say yeah, and the ghost of
Marilyn lives in my shorts.

LILA
But just suppose it was true,
Nick. What do you think a
story like that would be
worth...what if I got you, say,
a book you could
serialize...complete
explanations of how time travel
works, exclusive interviews,
movie rights, the works...?

Nick has gone back to his reading.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK
(chuckling)
I guess if that was the case,
neither of us would ever have
to work again.

LILA
(smiles)
That's the right answer, Nick.

She quickly hangs up the phone and goes back out to Samuel
who is again studying her "library."

INT. LILA'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Samuel looks up from the book in his hand.

SAMUEL
Is there someone in that room?
I heard you speak, yet I heard
no reply.

Lila smiles and opens the door wide.

LILA
No, there's nobody here, see?
I was using something called
the telephone. Here, lemme
show you.

She quickly grabs the cordless handset and demonstrates it to
him.

LILA
I can talk to anyone in the
world who has one of these. I
just hold it up to my ear to
listen and speak into here.
All I have to know is their
number.

She dials a number and holds it up to his ear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHONE VOICE (V.O.)

The time is...ten...forty
three...and ten seconds...

SAMUEL

(amazed)

What necromancing is this?
People, numbers, voices from
the ether...Do all these books
contain your incantations and
spells, then?

Lila laughs.

LILA

It's not *magic*, Samuel. *People*
built these things. ...and I'm
not a witch...at least...
according to the latest polling
data...

SAMUEL

Living is very strange here.
You have so many books, and yet
none of them is the book of
books. Do you not read the
Holy Scriptures?

LILA

(off handed)

What, a bible? Religion is
just the opiate of the masses.

She takes the book from him and puts it down,

SAMUEL

I do not understand.

LILA

I guess Marx is a little *after*
your time.

She takes his hands in hers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LILA

Listen, Samuel. What if I told you that you were going to have the chance to go back to your own time...even see Abegail again?

SAMUEL

(shakes his head)

After all I have seen these past hours I should believe nearly anything. But how...?

LILA

That's the problem, I don't know how...or when. I just know. Here, you better take this.

She hands him the Polaroid photograph of himself.

SAMUEL

What is this...a graven image of me!

LILA

Keep it with you at all times. Think of it as your ticket home.

SAMUEL

But how can this...?

LILA

I told you I don't know yet. But listen. I'd like to strike a bargain with you, an agreement, sort of. I want to tell your story, Samuel. I want everyone to know about you and how you got here and what you think about our world.

SAMUEL

A...chronicle...of me?
Writing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

He makes a motion like scratching with a quill.

LILA
(nods)
Writing.

She makes a motion as if typing.

LILA
And if you'll grant me
exclusive rights...uh that
means nobody else can write
your story...Together we'll
find out how you're going to
get home. And in the mean time
I can offer you lavish room and
board here at Chateau Lila,
this exquisite couch to sleep
on, and a personally guided
tour of the twentieth century.
Whadaya say?

SAMUEL
You...have already been so very
kind to me. I cannot fathom
that you would desire to
continue so unless it be the
Lord's will.

LILA
Then it's a deal?

She holds out her hand. He grasps it and they shake, all
smiles.

SAMUEL
A deal.

CUT TO:

MUSICAL MONTAGE:

Production note: UPBEAT MUSIC permeates the following scenes.
Voices and sound effects come forward as necessary.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Samuel marvels at the doors which slide open automatically as he approaches.

In the PRODUCE SECTION Lila stands by as Samuel gapes in awe at the opulence.

SAMUEL (V.O.)
Never have I seen such
abundance, not even at harvest.

Lila feigns "aw that's nothin" and pulls him out of frame to:

EXT. SIDE OF A SEMI TRUCK TRAILER

Samuel stands before the side of a truck decorated with six-foot illustrations of tomatoes, eggs, lettuce and other produce.

The truck pulls away to reveal:

EXT. AN ATM IN THE SIDE OF A BANK - DAY

Lila pulls Samuel along to the automated teller.

LILA
It's called an ATM. You get
money out of it, kind of a loan
till the bill comes. It's sort
of 'play now, pound of flesh
later'.

SAMUEL
I thought the..."turnip" had no
blood.

LILA
Blood no, plastic, yes.

She flips open a string of credit cards a yard long.

CUT TO:

INT. LILA'S CAR - DAY

Cruising through the streets of Hollywood, Lila has to swerve to miss the HOMELESS MAN pushing his shopping cart.

Lila glances back at the vagrant in the rear view mirror, hollering and waving his arms at her. She then looks over her sunglasses at Samuel.

LILA

Hmm. Y'know *his* fashion statement isn't much different from yours.

EXT.CLOTHING STORE - DAY

A NEWLY-WARDROBED Samuel exits the store into the sunlight with Lila. Samuel is admiring his new duds, but squints in the bright sun.

Lila quickly solves the problem--SUNGLASSES from a nearby STREET VENDOR complete his outfit. She steps back and gives approval to Samuel's new GQ look.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE ELECTRONICS SECTION - DAY

A WALL OF TELEVISIONS lurks behind an unsuspecting Samuel who is busy gawking at a mannequin. Casually turning around, he is assaulted by the image of a TIGER jumping at him from a million directions.

He is briefly shaken, then comforted by Lila.

LILA

It's called television. From the Greek words '*tele*' meaning '*far*' and '*vision*' meaning five-hundred-channels-of-sitcoms-and infomercials.

EXT. ICE CREAM STAND - DAY

Lila hands Samuel an ice-cream cone. Tentatively, following Lila's example, he takes a lick. Startled at the experience, he asks:

SAMUEL

How is it so cold without winter?

LILA

It's called refrigeration. The way it works is...ah...never mind. Just figure they store it next to Johnnie Cochran's heart.

She giggles. So does he, though he doesn't know exactly why.

EXT. MAGAZINE STAND - DAY

A MUSCLE magazine featuring a FEMALE BODY BUILDER on its cover is examined by Samuel who can't believe his eyes. He looks to Lila and asks:

SAMUEL

...a woman?

LILA

(shrugs)

Better living through chemistry.

INT. LILA'S CAR - DAY

Samuel cranes his neck to view the sixty foot palm trees that line the boulevard.

A large BILLBOARD looms into view featuring the likeness of a familiar buxom blonde, barely dressed in pink and white.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA (V.O.)
That's Angelyne...poster girl
for the cosmetic surgery
industry. She has her very own
silicone valley.

EXT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT

Samuel and Lila are enjoying lunch near the kiddie "playland"
attached to the restaurant.

Samuel looks up to notice a KID falling over backwards into
the playground's "ball pit". Horrified, Samuel quickly dives
in afterwards to "rescue" the kid.

After hauling the child out, the ticked-off kid's MOTHER
wrests him away from the well-meaning Samuel, while a bemused
Lila struggles not to laugh.

END MUSICAL MONTAGE

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - DAY

Lila and Samuel stroll with echoed footsteps around the
tableaux of two DINOSAUR SKELETONS arranged as if in combat.

SAMUEL
You have dragons?

LILA
(smiles)
I'm afraid not. These guys are
from before even your time.
The only dragons we have are
internal ones...hate, fear,
loneliness.

SAMUEL
Do you not pray to God for help
with these dragons?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA

Well Samuel, these days most people just don't need God much anymore. Nowadays we've got the theory of evolution.

SAMUEL

Evolution?

LILA

Yeah, you see scientists figured out the universe started with a big explosion, this big bang...

SAMUEL

All by itself?

LILA

Um...I guess so...and then it all kind of came together like a big Jackson Pollock painting and over a long time up popped an amoeba, see...

SAMUEL

...amoeba...

LILA

...this little bug. And that little bug turned into a bigger bug, which turned into something bigger and bigger until it finally turned into you and me.

A beat.

Then Samuel breaks out laughing hysterically.

SAMUEL

(laughing)

You...you jest, yes?

Lila is not amused.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LILA

Hey I don't make fun of *your* religion. Without some big hairy thunderin' god hanging over my head I figure I'm free to discover my own moral universe.

Samuel shakes his head.

SAMUEL

(chuckles)

No wonder you have dragons.

Lila just looks at him blankly for a moment.

LILA

(winks)

Well, let me show you how I slay 'em.

EXT. CLUB "MUSIK DER NACHT" - NIGHT

We are CLOSE on the blue neon SIGN of "Club Musik der Nacht" a warehouse that has been converted into a dance club. WIDEN to discover that the place SWARMS with the posturing young and the aimless, drawn by the throbbing rhythms within.

INT. CLUB "MUSIK DER NACHT" - NIGHT

Lila and Samuel enter past several tattooed BOUNCERS into the loud, smoky, neon cavern.

Right away we can see Samuel is uneasy.

Lila leads Samuel through a mass of gyrating DANCING BODIES, making a bee line for the bar.

Lila orders two drinks. But the MUSIC is so loud we can't hear what she requests. She pays the FEMALE BARTENDER and hands one plastic glass to Samuel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She immediately proceeds to slam her own drink back, draining the contents immediately. She smiles up at the apprehensive Samuel. He sips his drink, winces, and puts it back on the bar.

This does not sit well with Lila. Laughing, she playfully picks the drink up and brings it back to his lips. He tries to cooperate and gets a bit of it down.

As he recovers, Samuel discovers a seductively leather-clad GIRL has nuzzled up beside him, staring dreamily at him through an alcoholic haze.

Not far away, Samuel notices a slickly-groomed BLACK MAN putting the moves on a giggling WOMAN with green hair.

Not to be distracted, Lila takes Samuel's hand and leads him to the dance floor.

There the sensory input level elevates: the flashing LIGHTS, the wild moves of the DANCERS, the pounding bass of the music...

Overhead, in two cages, one on each end of the dance floor, two mostly-naked GO-GO DANCERS undulate in the sweeping light beams.

Lila grabs the attention of the distracted Samuel and begins to dance before him. Smiling seductively, she motions for him to do the same.

He watches her for a moment. At last he can take no more. Samuel pushes through the crowd, headed for the door. Briefly lost in her dancing, Lila barely realizes what Samuel is doing before he disappears into the throng. She quickly follows.

EXT. CLUB "MUSIK DER NACHT" - NIGHT

Lila catches up to Samuel as the pounding MUSIC SUBSIDES enough in the distance for a conversation to be audible.

LILA
Samuel, wait.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He halts, though he finds it difficult to look her in the eye.

LILA
 (smiling but
 embarrassed)
 A little too much for you,
 huh?...Look, I'm sorry. I
 probably shouldn't have...

SAMUEL
 You do not understand.

Lila looks puzzled.

SAMUEL
 (admitting)
 My blood began to rise in
 there. I...I began to pleasure
 in it.

LILA
 (laughs)
 Well that's the idea, dude!
 C'mon, get with the program.
 Let's go back in and dance.

She grabs his arm and starts to lead. He resists, halts.

SAMUEL
 No!...What would Abigail think
 of me?

She looks in his eyes to find a fiery seriousness there. A beat, then:

LILA
 (sighs, resigned)
 Well, c'mon. Let's get outa
 here then.

INT. LILA'S CAR - NIGHT

As they drive through the streets, Lila notes that Samuel is quiet, absorbed. She cheerily tries to break the silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA

Well, mister party pooper, so ends your first day in the twentieth century. Quite a day for quite a knight, huh?

No response.

LILA

Get it? Quite a knight?

Samuel peers aimlessly out the window. Even the horrendous speed of 35mph doesn't faze him right now.

LILA

You know if it stays this quiet people are liable to think we're married.

Still nothing. Lila decides to clam up and get on home.

Suddenly Samuel's eye spots something out the window. He sits up excitedly and hollers:

SAMUEL

Stop!

Startled, Lila slams on the brakes, causing the car behind her to swerve wildly, barely missing her and making rude gestures as it passes, honking.

Samuel is out of the car and running across the grass before Lila knows what is happening.

LILA

Wait! Samuel!

Then she notices what Samuel is running towards:

EXT. GOTHIC-STYLE CHURCH - NIGHT

The medium-sized church could easily be from Samuel's time. Yet the illumination of electric floodlights and the brilliant glow that emanates from stained glass windows makes it more inviting than anything Samuel could have known.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lila has to find a place to park. She pulls around the corner, parks on the street and runs toward the church.

She is heading up a tree-lined walkway toward the side entrance when a dark figure suddenly appears in front of her. She is severely startled.

HOMELESS MAN

'Scuse me Missy...

LILA

(frightened)

Yaaah!

Lila halts, backs off a bit as she sees who it is.

It is the same homeless man she swerved to miss earlier, the one who advised Samuel on bio-tech stocks.

LILA

You...you scared me half to death!

He has a facial twitch that makes him a bit creepy.

HOMELESS MAN

I'm terribly sorry, Missy. I was just wonderin' if you could help me out a little. My broker just tipped me off about this tremendous market opportunity in pharmaceutical futures, and I'm a little short of cash...

Lila can't help but laugh.

LILA

That's a new one. You get a gold star for imagination...Here. Here's to your future...

She hands him a couple of bills and continues on toward the church.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOMELESS MAN
God bless you, Missy.

LILA
(calling back over her
shoulder)
...just stay away from the
pharmaceuticals.

INT. GOTHIC-STYLE CHURCH - NIGHT

The sanctuary is empty except for Samuel, who approaches the candle-lit altar as if returning home from a long journey.

He kneels in prayer, hands folded, gazing up at the glowing altar. His eyes become moist. Is it joy or sadness?

Lila appears at the door of the chapel. She does not disturb Samuel as he prays.

He bows his head in silent meditation for a long moment. Slowly, Lila approaches and gently touches his shoulder.

LILA
We'd better go.

Samuel looks up at her. A tear streams down his face. He has no words for her.

He nods, and rises.

INT. LILA'S CAR - NIGHT

Both Lila and Samuel are pensive.

LILA
Samuel, you know I can sort of understand you being religious. I mean that's your culture and all. But why is it that you manage to put God in *everything*?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMUEL

How is it that you do *not*?

LILA

Well...there's just so much...*evil* in the world. Murder, disease, hunger, Geraldo...

SAMUEL

You have said your world no longer needs God. Why then, if you push God out your door, does it surprise you when evil comes in your window? God protects those He loves...and those who love Him.

LILA

And what're you, my guardian angel?

SAMUEL

Do you not believe in angels?

LILA

Course I believe in angels...It's the *city* of the angels. (winks) But frankly I'm a Dodgers fan...

SAMUEL

(dead pan)

What are you dodging?

LILA

(laughs nervously)

I guess I just can't bring myself to believe in miracles. If there ever was such a thing, it stopped happening a *long* time ago.

SAMUEL

And what of myself then? How am I here speaking to you if not through a miracle?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They stare at each other for an instant across what seems a vast chasm.

LILA
 (uneasy)
 Just stop it, okay? I just
 don't want to hear about it any
 more.

She turns back and pretends to concentrate on her driving.

INT. LILA'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's late. Lila sits cross legged on her bed, a walkman headset over her ears, and her Powerbook computer propped on a pillow as she types her observations of the day's adventures.

LILA (V.O.)
 [Though he has much to absorb
 from the centuries that have
 passed him by, there is much
 that we can learn from this
 time traveler....For a person
 who has had only fifteenth
 century knowledge at his
 disposal, he is well-educated,
 bright, and quick.]

INT. LILA'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

CLOSE on Samuel as he sleeps on the couch. Lila's voice-over continues:

LILA(V.O.)
 Yet his outlook is one of
 steadfast faith. Many of us
 who know too much could well
 envy him. In many ways he is
 as a newborn child: innocent,
 trusting, and untainted by the
 institution we laughingly call
 civilization...]

INT. LILA'S APARTMENT BEDROOM

Lila pauses her typing for a moment, glancing briefly at the pile of red-rubber-stamped overdue notices that is growing on the table nearby.

INT. LILA'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

CLOSER still on Samuel on the couch. His slumber is deep.

CUT TO:

[EXT. DREAMSCAPE - DAY

Again we are with Abegail and the young child in a golden afternoon. Again the smiling child runs toward camera. With ECHOED voice the child squeals in delight:

CHILD

Papa!

WHITE OUT TO:]

INT. NICK SILVERMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Nick is sorting through a pile of photos. The phone beeps and he picks up.

NICK

Silverman...

INT. LILA'S BEDROOM - DAY (INTERCUT)

Lila is on the other end.

LILA

Nick, it's Lila.

NICK

What's up, sweetcakes?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA

Nick listen, I was wondering if maybe you could get me a small advance on that book I told you about.

NICK

What book?

LILA

(sighs)

The time travel book. You were gonna serialize it?

NICK

Oh, oh *that* book. You were gonna get me proof about how time travel works or something. You got anything?

LILA

Well it's coming along...

NICK

Can you show me how to go back to bet on yesterday's third race at Santa Anita?

LILA

...not exactly, not yet...

NICK

Then you got nothin', sweetheart. Call me when you got somethin'.

LILA

Nick wait. When have I ever disappointed you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NICK
 (with a leer)
 Ummm...oh you mean with your
writing?...Look, sweetheart,
 you know I never pay for stuff
 I haven't read. It's
 policy...Call me when you've
 got something.

There is a click on the other end of the line. Lila
 reluctantly hangs up the phone with a bang.

She kicks a nearby laundry basket out of sheer frustration.

INT. LILA'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lila enters from her encounter with Nick to find Samuel
 slumped in the couch staring zombie-like at the TV. There on
 the screen is your basic sensual MUSIC VIDEO. Lithe bodies
 pulsate amidst seemingly un-related Freudian symbolic
 imagery. [Some of it resembles the idyllic setting of
 Samuel's recurring dreamscape.]

What makes it more surreal, however, is the fact that the
 sound is turned off, (Samuel being unaware of the volume
 control.)

LILA
 I think you've discovered the
 way to make MTV *really* empty.

Samuel doesn't respond; he's caught up in it.

LILA
 Well if you like it that much,
 try it with sound.

She turns up the volume. Samuel is sprung from his trance.

SAMUEL
 It is as an unfolding
 dream...[like the dream I have
 at night. Moments become hours
 and the hours seem to melt into
 fleeting moments.]

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA

That's the vast wasteland for you. But speaking of melting hours...

She snaps off the tube and sits down next to him.

LILA

Samuel, listen. I think we're gonna have to take matters into our own hands. We've got to find out how you got here...what was in that potion Father Elias gave you. We've gotta find out how this time travel stuff works soon or...

SAMUEL

Or what?

LILA

Let's just say I'm hip deep in fecal matter.

SAMUEL

In my times of trouble Father Elias taught me that faith the size of a tiny mustard seed can move mountains.

Lila stands, paces impatiently.

LILA

Oh geez here we go again. Look, let's have a little agreement here. You don't talk about religion any more and I won't get pissed off at you. Deal?

Samuel looks at her silently.

LILA

...Besides, what kind of a God would jerk you away from a woman who loves you and plop you down in this hell hole?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAMUEL

[It seems to me as though he did not so much take me from her but rather transformed her into you.

LILA

(laughs bitterly)
You believe that?] Look at me.
Is this what you'd call a Princess?

SAMUEL

"What is seen is but a vapor.
What is unseen, eternal."

She looks at him and smiles, not realizing the poetic statement he just made was from the Bible.

LILA

(blushing)
That's beautiful...

Re-composing herself, she offers her hand to help him get up.

LILA

We'd better get going. There's tons of research to do and time isn't exactly on our side...yet.

[INT. COLLEGE SCIENCE LIBRARY - DAY

Lila hefts a greyish pile of no-foolin-around *astrophysics*, *cosmology*, and *relativity* books from the stacks to the table where Samuel is sitting.

Taking a deep breath, she proceeds to dig in to the intense scientific texts.

She puts on the earphones of her Walkman stereo as she begins the search.

Glancing over to Samuel, Lila finds that he is immersed, wide-eyed in the *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit issue. Sighing, she returns her attention to her own reading matter:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

INSERT SCIENTIFIC HEIROGLYPHICS

An incomprehensible scientific treatise with fine print, lots of letters, superscripts, and arcane diagrams.

PAGE WIPE TO:]

INT. COLLEGE CAFETERIA - DAY

From a distance, we see Lila and Samuel speaking with the CHECK-OUT GIRL who motions them to a table over in one corner of the bustling cafeteria.

We see Lila thank the girl and they head over towards the table which is occupied by DR. IRVING SALTZMAN, the disheveled physics professor who is just now biting into his ham sandwich.

LILA

Excuse me, uh...Dr. Saltzman?

SALTZMAN

(looking up, coldly)

Who wants to know?

When he sees it's a pretty face he softens a bit.

LILA

My name is Lila Browne. I write for the Weekly Star News, and this is my friend Samuel.

SALTZMAN

(laughing)

The Star News! My favorite source of humorous fiction. Actually makes standing in the checkout line worthwhile. uh...I haven't seen Elvis lately.

Saltzman chuckles. Lila doesn't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SALTZMAN

Have a seat. What can I do for you?

Lila grits her teeth and swallows her pride as they join him at the table. Saltzman takes another bite of his sandwich.

LILA

What can you tell me about time travel?

SALTZMAN

(mouth full)

Don't know, never done it myself.

LILA

They said you were the top living physicist. I figure if anybody knew anything about the subject it'd have to be you.

SALTZMAN

Flattery will get you everywhere,...Lola is it?

LILA

Lila...um... So if I wanted to go *back* in time, say, how would I go about it?

SALTZMAN

Well, if you were a subatomic particle we might be able to arrange something...

SAMUEL

Sub...atomic...?

LILA

(to Samuel)

...particle. It's something very *small*, Samuel, like...

SALTZMAN

Pass the mustard, will you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAMUEL
 (brightening)
 ...like a mustard seed?

Lila glares at Samuel and hands Saltzman the squeeze bottle. Saltzman vigorously anoints his sandwich as he continues:

SALTZMAN
 Two years ago we were able to do a couple of experiments where we combined unstable isotopes in the linear accelerator...the small one here on campus.

He takes a huge bite of sandwich, leaving mustard at the corner of his mouth. Lila and Samuel anxiously wait for him to swallow.

LILA
 ...and?

SALTZMAN
 The equations from the resulting data pointed towards certain particles actually moving backwards in time...only nanoseconds you understand...but still backwards. Of course I wanted to pursue it further, but...

He sits back and sighs.

LILA
 But what?

SALTZMAN
 Any further work would require the use of a supercollider. I wrote up a proposal...and another proposal and another. In the end...(shrugs) Congress cut the funding.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LILA

So now what? How do I find out
about time travel?

SALTZMAN

What's the big rush? You
looking [for a new way to get
rid of that tattoo or
something?

Lila realizes he's looking at the bracelet of butterflies
tattooed on her wrist. She self consciously covers it with her
hand as she glances at Samuel, than back at Saltzman.]

LILA

It's just kind of...personal.

SALTZMAN

Well I'm afraid that's really
about all I know...for now
you're just going to have to
take my word on faith.

[INT. PARANORMAL BOOKSHOP - DAY

The shelves of the dimly-lit little shop are full of animal
skulls and bottles of pickled specimens in addition to eerie
amulets and bizarre symbols.

Lila strolls the narrow corridor between dusty antique
volumes, searching the titles.

Close behind her, a semi-oblivious Samuel follows wearing
Lila's walkman, nodding to the beat that only he can hear.

She looks back at him, a rather odd sight, and he returns her
glance with a smile. She shakes her head with a wry grin and
returns to her search.]

EXT. PSYCHIC ADVISOR SHOP - DAY

A sign reads "MADAM MARIA, Psychic Advisor, Potions, Palm
Readings, All credit cards accepted."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We move inside to discover:

INT. PSYCHIC ADVISOR SHOP - DAY

A small glass vial of amber liquid. MADAM MARIA hands it to Lila to examine. They are seated at a candle-lit table, its perimeter encircled by small jars of colored liquids.

MARIA

Thees one is very special. One drop and you become irresistable to the one you love...

Samuel sits nearby, enjoying a Slurpee. He glances down to discover that he has been joined by a diaper-clad TODDLER and [a CHIHUAHUA, both of whom stare at him as he eats.]

Maria picks up another small bottle of green liquid.

MARIA

...and thees one. Some say eet makes you very wealthy.

LILA

Yes, that's very nice, Madam Maria. But you see we're looking for a potion or a...whatever that can make you travel in time...make it so you could go back and patch it up with your boyfriend *before* the fight last night.

MARIA

(stumped)

Oooh thees one I do not know. I theenk we should consult the cards.

She picks up the tarot deck and begins to very deliberately place three piles of cards on the table, one at a time, face down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

[The Toddler is still staring blankly at Samuel, with a little grin, as Samuel continues to sip his Slurpee.

For a brief instant Samuel FLASHES to:

EXT. DREAMSCAPE - DAY

The child in Samuel's vision looks into camera with the same rapturous smile as the Toddler.

BACK TO SCENE:]

Madam Maria continues dealing out cards.

LILA

Okay, well, y'know it's really more of the potions we're interested in than the cards...

MARIA

(melodramatically)

The next card, it is *your* card. It represents you...

Maria places a card on the table face up...the Fool card.

Immediately realizing she has committed a *faux pas*, Maria fumbles to make a correction.

MARIA

I...I am terribly sorry. What I meant was that the *next* card...

[Suddenly Samuel gives out a CRY of anguish, feverishly clutching his head in his hands.

Lila looks up in horror.

LILA

Samuel! What's the matter?

She rushes over to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMUEL

My head!

Lila glances to the near-empty Slurpee cup he dropped on the floor...and smiles.

LILA

(chuckling)

You got a brain freeze! I told you not to drink it too fast.

In the scuffle and in her eagerness to please, Maria manages to spill the rest of her cards on the floor. She stoops to pick up the scattered deck.

LILA

(to Samuel, ignoring Maria)

Just take a deep breath, it'll pass in a minute.

MARIA

As I was saying, the cards...

Lila shakes her head and rolls her eyes in disgust. Samuel starts to recover.

LILA

Sorry Madam Maria, but contrary to popular belief *this* chick's mother didn't raise any fools. Come on Samuel...

They head for the exit. Samuel manages a smile and waves goodbye to the wide eyed toddler (who looks on from a corner) and ducks out.

Maria struggles to her feet, calling after them.]

MARIA

Wait, Miss!...what about my teep?

DISSOLVE TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

INSERTS--OTHER SIGNS, BOOKS, LOCATIONS

Sign: "New Age Herbal Medicines"

PAGE WIPE TO;

A stack of cookbooks ranging from the hip to the ancient and mysterious.

PAGE WIPE TO:

Sign: "Morry's Used Books & Antiques"

[PAGE WIPE TO:

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Lila uses one of the computers to log on to the Internet for a search there.

LILA

Maybe the history of your
family would turn up something.
What did you say it was? The
house of...?

SAMUEL

Lancaster.

INSERT - COMPUTER SCREEN - DAY

She types in a search request for the string: "Lancaster."
The search quickly returns a host of "hits".

BACK TO SCENE

Lila leans forward in her chair as she scrolls through the list looking for relevant items.

LILA

hmmm...mostly junk. Wait a
sec. Here's
something...artworks?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INSERT - COMPUTER SCREEN

She clicks on a hot link and is transported to the web location of an English museum. There she finds a page of miniature artwork icons. One of them is labeled:

LILA (V.O.)
Lancaster, house of--"Woman and
child." Fifteenth century. Oil
on wood panel. Artist unknown.

She clicks on the icon and the screen clears, slowly beginning to reveal a full screen image of the PAINTING.

BACK TO SCENE

As Lila waits for the image to load she absent-mindedly lights up a cigarette.

Samuel cannot believe his eyes, and finds himself staring intently at the woman who breathes fire.

Feeling the scrutiny of his gaze, Lila looks up from her work, realizes what has caught his attention, and demonstrates by taking another puff.

As she exhales the smoke he leans over to examine the smoldering Marlboro. She offers him a puff.

Samuel brings it to his lips and sucks, instantly precipitating a coughing fit.

Lila smiles and pats him on the back, trying to ease the shock to his system.

Soon they are both aware of a presence. They look up to find a surly-looking LIBRARIAN staring daggers through them.

CAMERA RACKS FOCUS past the librarian to reveal a large red NO SMOKING sign on the wall.

Lila puts out the cig sheepishly.

LILA
Oops. Sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LIBRARIAN

The library closes in ten minutes.

The Librarian turns to exit. Lila watches her go but her attention is quickly siezed by an exclamation from Samuel:

SAMUEL

Abegail!

Lila turns to discover Samuel intently staring at what the computer is now displaying.

INSERT - COMPUTER SCREEN

Sure enough, it's a full length portrait of Abegail in an elegant gown. Standing handsomely at her side is a small child.

LILA (V.O.)

Hey, she *does* look like me.

BACK TO SCENE

LILA

But who's the kid? He kinda looks like *you*...Hey, you okay?

Samuel is indeed looking pale. He has broken out in a sweat.

SAMUEL

(uneasy)

I have seen this child before. In my dream. He calls out to me. He...he calls me Papa...

LILA

You think this is your *son*?

SAMUEL

It could only be. He must be...but I thought you said I would return to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LILA

Yeah, that's how I figure it.
You still got the photo?

He pulls the Polaroid out of his shirt.

SAMUEL

But how could you know of such
a thing?...and why am I not in
this painting with Abegail and
my...son.

Lila's brow furrows. She turns back once more to the
painting on the computer screen.

LILA

Wait a minute. Look over here.

INSERT - COMPUTER SCREEN

Lila zooms in to a small table beside the seated Abegail.
Atop the table is the gold inlaid picture frame we saw at the
beginning of our story. In it is a tiny facsimile of the
Polaroid Samuel holds in his hands.

LILA (V.O.)

Here's the answer to both
questions. You are in it.

BACK TO SCENE

Samuel is puzzled.

LILA(CONT'D)

There's the picture you're
holding. And she's got it
because you're gonna *deliver* it
to her.

SAMUEL

I hear your words. But they do
not persuade.

The lights above them DIM as half the units are shut off.
It's closing time.

(CONTINUED)

To read the final act of "Past Presence", please contact:

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