

THE DANCE

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ABSTRACT

This screenplay, *The Dance*, tells a story of a woman struggling for a life and love to call her own in a world where so few choices are her own. It is a fictional story based on a factual romance set during World War II. Instead of focusing on the factual romance, the screenplay instead focuses on Maggie Dalton, the woman left behind by the man she loves. This shift in focus is an attempt to shift the cinematic narrative gaze from the predominate male character to the female.

In mainstream cinema (i.e. studio produced films which operate under a bureaucracy) women are typically viewed through the male protagonist's gaze and are thus objectified and sexualized. Film theorists recognize that a shift in this gaze would also shift the way in which the audience views a film and the world. Shifting the narrative focus was my primary concern throughout my screenplay. It was my belief that by using a female cinematic gaze, the focus would remain on Maggie's struggles as a woman caught in a patriarchal society.

Today, women make up at least half of a film's viewing audience. Hence, mainstream cinema has begun to realize a shift in the narrative gaze will not hamper the audience's ability to relate to the protagonist. The male narrative gaze was adopted simply because the assumption was that the predominately male audience would better relate to this point of view. However, that is no longer a valid reason for mainstream cinema to still remain patriarchal. Although mainstream cinema has brought about the origin of the female protagonist, she is still typically highly sexualized and objectified, ergo her story often becomes densely intertwined with the stronger, story-telling male

character. Mainstream cinema needs to reevaluate the power of the female protagonist and utilize her to tell her own story instead of merely being a story facilitator.

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DEDICATIONS

For the real Maggie, may she never stop dancing.

INTRODUCTION

Good writers borrow. Great writers steal. Whether the writer turns to events in his or her own life or situations taken from the lives of others, often fiction has its roots in fact. As a writer myself, I first became interested in attempting to use factual events in my fiction while studying Theodore Dreiser's novel *Sister Carrie* (1900). Even more intriguing to me was the screenwriting process in which changes were made to Dreiser's novel when adapting it to William Wyler's film version *Carrie* (1952), in order to make the story more visually compelling and appealing.

Sister Carrie is an early example of just how compelling factual events can be when put into a fictional context. Dreiser loosely based his heroine Carrie on his own sister, Emma. He founded Carrie's love interest on Emma's real-life relationship with L. A. Hopkins. Extraneous factual sources such as personal interviews, letters, and news reports from the *Chicago Tribune* also served as inspiration for Dreiser's famous novel. Notably, Dreiser made no attempt to hide the factual context of his novel. Like many literary successes, *Sister Carrie* was later adapted for the screen by William Wyler under the title *Carrie*. Although not a box-office hit at first, *Carrie* has since proved an effective means of examining the adjustments made to the novel in transforming it for the mass public and why those changes were necessary.

Throughout the history of cinema, films have been used both as educational tools and as mediums through which the general public could have access to otherwise unapproachable texts. In contemporary society where Reality TV has become more captivating than fiction and the majority of people would rather be passively entertained by watching a movie than actively engage themselves in reading a book, it is time for

mainstream cinema – studio produced films which operate under a bureaucracy and million-dollar budgets – to reevaluate film as the new “Literature.”

Just as society shifted from Orators to Writers as the general public’s literacy increased, the mass media venues brought on by our surge of technology must now be considered as new artistic mediums through which a larger portion of the general public may be reached and educated. Even though many literary successes are eventually adapted for the screen, the film versions rarely are the masterpieces the original stories are. Somehow, something always gets lost in translation.

At the end of the 20th century, a whole succession of Hollywood films took as their theme the question of the difference between fiction and reality. Reality TV and movies such as Peter Weir’s *The Truman Show* (1998) and Gary Ross’ *Pleasantville* (1998) posed the question of whether there was a difference and, if so, could we methodically state where the boundaries between fact and fiction lie. Yet films that declare they are “based on true events” actually blur the boundaries between fiction and reality more than Reality TV does. While some movies, specifically documentaries and life stories such as *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1959), adhere to strict codes of transposing the factual event into a fictional film, others blur these boundaries by claiming authorial freedom. As a case in point, the newly released *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, which claims to be “inspired by a true story,” is actually based on several murders by one man. Ed Gein killed his victims with a pistol and dressed up in a mask made of a human scalp and face and a vest complete with breasts and female genitalia in order to fulfill his desire to become female. However, authorial liberty allows the screenwriter to take this fact and exaggerate it for mass-appeal purposes into a movie about 33 murders by Thomas

Hewitt who wears a mask of human skin to conceal his skin disease and kills his victims with a chainsaw.

While films like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* have their roots in fact, the end product no longer remains true to the spirit of the fact. Instead, the factual event has been reinvented to make a more marketable or entertaining story by the studio's standard. It is not this complete reinvention of factual events that I concerned myself with, but instead the happy blurring of fact and fiction in films such as Dreiser does in his novel *Sister Carrie*. In questioning the boundaries between fact and fiction without resolving them, popular culture has developed a new artistic medium in film. While film has been around for decades, it has only been recently that film has become as easily accessible to artists as other art forms. Technological advances such as digital video and home editing software have "changed the economic conditions of cinematic production, which can now be artisanal as well as capitalist" (Mulvey 15).

My screenplay is derived from a story I became privy to while volunteering at a nursing home in Goldsboro, North Carolina during the summers of 1997 and 1998. At the Brian Center Health and Rehab facility I met a woman in her eighties who lived in the assisted living hall. Due to patient confidentiality rights, I will refer to her as Maggie. Shortly after I started working there, Maggie was reunited with a man (I will refer to as Phillip) whom she knew during her teen years of the 1940s in Goldsboro, NC. Phillip had just had major surgery and was recovering on the rehab hall. After their reunion, Maggie informed Phillip that they had had a son together, although Phillip knew nothing about her pregnancy. I later discovered that Maggie's son (who I will refer to as

Alexander) had been given up for adoption in the early 1940s and had recently tracked down his birth mother, Maggie.

By the time Maggie learned she was pregnant, she had lost communication with Phillip for reasons I never discovered. Due to the era in which Maggie's out-of-wedlock pregnancy occurred, she had been forced to conceal it. Maggie was sent to a home for unwed mothers where she was to give birth, hand the baby over for adoption, and then return home from her "Finishing School." Maggie returned home, married someone her parents wanted her to, and never had any more children. Phillip, on the other hand, married and had several children. By the time Maggie came to the Brian Center, she was a widow. Shortly after Maggie was reunited with Phillip, she introduced him to the son he never knew existed. A few days later, Phillip died from complications of his surgery, leaving behind his wife, children, and grandchildren. A few years later Maggie died.

Most of this story was corroborated by multiple sources. Yet Maggie would recount nothing about her son's adoption. I later learned Maggie was mentally blocking this event in her life in order to actually get on with her life. She would scarcely talk about her Finishing School, but then scowl when she would recollect giving birth and having her baby stolen from her in the middle of the night. Maggie apparently knew nothing of the adoption plans, or rather chose not to. It was her son who finally pieced together the truth for me. Maggie's son had legally been given up for adoption. Using adoption papers, along with his adoptive parents' help, Alexander was able to track down Maggie, who still resided in Goldsboro, North Carolina.

In adapting the historical events into a fictional screenplay, my plan was to take the factual war-time romance and hidden pregnancy and transpose it into a script that was

artistically intriguing and educational while still remaining an approachable form of entertainment for the general public. Not knowing the circumstances of Maggie and Phillip's teenage romance, I invented them within the historical context of their era – World War II. In doing so, I researched the historical context of rural North Carolina preceding, during, and directly following World War II and documented the era within the script direction, dialogue, setting and wardrobe descriptions.

In researching the era I also began to formulate the character of Phillip more clearly. Knowing nothing of the real Phillip's background, character, or reasons for leaving Goldsboro, I had complete artistic control over Phillip's character in the screenplay. Therefore, I decided to stick with the local history facts I had at my disposal and create Phillip's character out of them. Through simple deduction I could formulate a realistic character for Phillip. During the era, nearly all young men his age were going to war. More specifically, in Goldsboro, North Carolina, a new military training facility was opened as a result of the war. Seymour Johnson Field was activated on June 12, 1942, as the Headquarters for the Technical School Army Air Forces Training Command. In June of 1943 it was opened as a training facility for officers and enlisted men for overseas duty ([Goldsboro News Argus 2VII](#)). The opening of the base in effect determined the exact year I set the screenplay as well. I first decided Phillip would be connected with the opening of the base, which would bring him into Goldsboro and then take him out within a relatively short period of time. Then I researched the dates and missions of Seymour Johnson Field to determine a more specific time frame for the screenplay.

Thus, I began the flashbacks in the screenplay during the fall of 1943. In September of 1943 Seymour Johnson Field was given a 3rd mission; it would “provide basic military training of cadets preparing to become technical officers in the Army Air Corps” (Goldsboro News Argus 2VII). In October of 1943, the 326th Fighter Group arrived in Goldsboro, North Carolina, to begin their training in January of 1944 as replacement pilots for P-47 Thunderbolt aircraft (Goldsboro News Argus 2VII). By the spring of 1944 they finished their training and were sent overseas to join the war. Phillip, I decided, would be part of the 326th Fighter Group. Making Phillip’s character involved in the war allowed me to bring in themes about patriotism, heroism, and duty, which are echoed not only by Phillip, but also by Maggie and Clayton. Furthermore, it set up a nice dichotomy between Phillip the fighter and Clayton the crippled pacifist.

In revisions I more clearly defined Phillip’s character, setting him even further apart from Clayton. In an attempt to break down the Hollywood depiction of soldiers as brave, loving, heroic men, I decided in revisions to have Phillip’s character be despondent about the war and unpatriotic in his motives. I further revised the male characters to make Phillip a coward and Clayton the one who demonstrates a greater capacity for bravery and love in that he is able to sacrifice all he has for the one he loves, Maggie.

In addition, Clayton’s character is completely fictionalized. Other than the fact that Maggie did indeed marry a local boy her family approved of, I know nothing of Maggie’s late husband. My decision to make Clayton a kind-hearted and likeable character was an attempt to demonstrate that while Maggie didn’t have complete control over her life, she was ultimately the one to blame for her lifelong unhappiness.

While films such as Elliot Nugent's *Up in Arms* (1944) and Stephen Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) have attempted to present an educational yet entertaining view of World War II, few have focused on the home front depicting the life of those in America, specifically the women. Films such as *League of Their Own* (1992) attempt to shift the focus away from males in battle to females at home during the war but ultimately still depicted women through the male cinematic gaze (i.e. the view from the position of the camera) in which women were objects of phallogentric desire. While some films depicted hyper-sexualized women in short skirts playing baseball, others showed asexualized or masculine women taking over the masculine role of worker. Neither type of film was able to successfully reverse the cinematic gaze to female. A reversal to the female cinematic gaze would put women in the story-telling role that the viewers, both male and female, will relate to and see the other characters through. A female cinematic gaze eliminates the sexualized female of films by breaking down social stereotypes of women and portraying them as they really are.

As theorists Molly Haskell and Marjorie Rosen suggest, male-centered films reflect social reality in that the "film mirror[s] how society treats women" and "these depictions are distortions of how women 'really are' and what they 'really want'" (White 118). *A League of Their Own* and other female-centered war films ultimately failed to show women in a different light than the male-centered war films because "simply replacing stereotypes with positive images does not transform the system that produced them" (White 118). Hence, the majority of female wartime films "position the women they address as subject to, rather than of, the discourse of desire" (White 122). The women are thus dispossessed of their own stories.

That is not to say that all female-centered films have failed to justly portray its story through the female gaze. On the contrary, “woman’s film flourished in Hollywood in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s” and still survives today in the made-for-TV movie (White 122). These films centered around a female heroine, were usually written by or adapted from the work of women, typically inexpensively made and explicitly marketed to and consumed by female audiences (White 121-122).

Since independent and made-for-TV films were able to make the successful transition from the male cinematic gaze to the female gaze, I saw no reason why a mainstream film about a woman’s struggle during wartime could not also make the transition. Thus, I focused entirely on Maggie throughout my script. Like Dreiser’s heroine, my heroine Maggie found herself in the midst of a conflict between her own needs and the demands her society placed on her and on the necessity for material success.

In my screenplay I attempted to depict the war, society, and the constraints on women as the inferior sex completely through the female cinematic gaze. Film theorists have hypothesized that what they call the “cinematic gaze” is essentially male for “women are positioned as the object of the cinematic gaze rather than as the observer” (Culler 63). Film Theorist Laura Mulvey suggests that this is due to the fact that “mainstream film focus[es] attention on the human form” with the assumption that the viewing audience is predominantly male (17). Yet the alternative cinema that technological advances has created “provides a space for the birth of a cinema which is radical both in a political and an aesthetic sense and challenges the basic assumptions of the mainstream film” (Mulvey 15). The problem with using women as spectacle is that

their presence tends to “work against the development of a story-line” thus freezing “the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation” (Mulvey 19). Narrative film has recently tried to dispense with this problem through the creation of “buddy movies” in which the “active homosexual eroticism of the central male figures can carry the story without distraction” (Mulvey 19). Moreover, film theorists surmise that a change in this perspective would change the way both men and women view the world.

In revisions I decided that to more clearly express the female gaze, I needed to focus more on Maggie and less on the factual love story. My decision to shift the focus away from the love story and war and onto Maggie’s tribulations due to her society, predicament, and gender allowed me to take more liberties with the factual story while still remaining true to the spirit of the fact. Since so much of Maggie’s life is left unknown even to herself, the decisions I made concerning her life between the time of her son’s birth and the reunion with Phillip in the nursing home were completely creative ones. My decision to make Maggie an intelligent woman with an inquisitive mind and obvious drive and thirst for knowledge was to underscore her inability to make certain decisions for herself. No matter how strong of a character Maggie was, there were still certain things that were out of her control during that time era. Ultimately, Maggie had no say in her son’s adoption if she wanted the continued love and support of her family. Similarly, Maggie is further obligated by familial ties to marry someone she does not love simply because it will save the farm, thus ensuring her family security. War in itself raises questions of patriotism, heroism, duty, obligation, and loyalty. Yet it was my intention to portray Maggie’s life against the war in order to show how women in society, specifically during World War II, were faced with decisions in which they had virtually

no voice in. Like the thousands of young men drafted to war, Maggie was drafted into a life she went unwillingly but obligingly into due to her loyalty to her family.

By controlling the dimensions of time through editing and narrative, the cinematic gaze can more effectively be reversed from male to female. Throughout the script, I used camera angles and character action to emphasize that the story is to be told visually through Maggie's gaze. For instance, when Maggie first encounters Phillip the scene focuses its attention on Phillip since Maggie herself is literally "gazing" at him. Not everything, of course, is shown through Maggie's gaze, but the pivotal details in the story are all presented in Maggie's presence whether she is fully conscious of it or not.

Editorially, there are two instances where a different type of cut between scenes is indicated. Twice I use the dissolve cut where the two scenes briefly overlap as one fades out and the other fades in. During these dissolve cuts there is also another connecting device between the scenes and that is a sound bridge. This editorial notation is to indicate that these sequences are taking place in Maggie's imagination. The first occurs when she imagines she is dancing with Phillip in the ballroom. She is startled out of her daydream through the sound bridge. The Phillip in her dream is overlapped with the real-life Phillip calling her name. The second time the dissolve cut occurs in the script is at the end when Maggie is in the piano room as an old lady and imagines Phillip is alive again and they are dancing. When the scene dissolve cuts back to Maggie in real-life it is the sound of Cora playing the piano that provides the sound bridge from the dream back to reality.

By following the lead of independent and made-for-TV films, I wrote a screenplay that tracks one woman's story, as she would tell it. Hence the ambiguity over

her son's adoption. If Maggie tells it one way, then that's the way the audience should view it. By the end, however, the truth is apparent to the audience, as it most likely is apparent to Maggie herself. The use of factual characters and places allows the film to connect with a greater viewing audience. With the World War II backdrop, the film has the potential to intrigue a male viewing audience that most female-centered made-for-TV films don't. In addition, the strategic use of editing, sound, and time help to center the audience and further connect them with Maggie's female gaze, regardless of their gender.

THE DANCE

FADE IN:

INT. BRIAN CENTER HEALTH & REHAB: MAGGIE'S ROOM -- DAY

It's a small, yet comfortable room. Beside the door, a bookshelf is packed with books. Stacks of books are also on the nightstand and dresser. There's no television or radio in the room, only a record player with a small but eclectic collection of albums.

Plants sit in the windowsill. On the walls are a couple of very tasteful original paintings. By the looks of things, the inhabitant of this room is well-educated and cultured.

In fact, if it wasn't for the twin-size hospital bed in the corner by the window, one would never know it was a nursing home.

MAGGIE BAUER, an agile 80-year-old woman, sits at a bureau looking in the mirror. She dons a flowered dress and her pearl necklace for today's special occasion.

She's all smiles as she applies blush to her pale and wrinkled skin.

She picks up her pearl, clip-on earrings. Beside them is a black-and-white photograph of herself as a teenager standing beside a young man in uniform. Consequently, it's the only photograph in Maggie's room.

Maggie pauses and picks up the photograph.

CU on the picture of teenage Maggie with the young man wearing a one-piece World War II flight suit. He's handsome and has his arm around Maggie's waist. They are both beaming the way only young lovers do.

In the doorway, Maggie's sister, CORA BENNETT, wobbles in. Cora is in her late 70s and closely resembles Maggie, but her face portrays a happier being. A feisty and jovial woman, Cora has had a fulfilling life and doesn't see it ending any time soon. She's a petite woman, but one has a hard time overlooking her. She's bawdy and sassy, and her dry sense of humor takes most people by surprise.

Cora wears trousers and a printed, rayon, button-down shirt. Casually dressed, she stands for a moment watching Maggie lost in the photograph.

CORA

What the hell are you wearing? I said I'd take you to the K&W, not the Steak Barn.

MAGGIE

I can't go today.

CORA

You mean I risked my life driving all the way over here
and you aren't going?

MAGGIE

You live two miles away.

CORA

At my age, just backing up is a hazard to my health.

MAGGIE

I can't go.

CORA

(sarcastic)

What? Is it double day Bingo?

Maggie sets the photograph back down and checks her makeup in the mirror.

MAGGIE

Good-bye, Cora.

CORA

Fine, fine. See if I come again.

Cora starts walking out the door as Maggie begins putting on her earrings.

MAGGIE

See you tomorrow.

CORA (O.S.)

(yelling from the hall)

Twelve o'clock. And you're paying!

Maggie smirks.

As Maggie puts the second earring on, her wedding band on her hand catches her attention.

She solemnly contemplates it a moment, glances at the photograph, smiles sadly, and then takes her wedding ring off, placing it next to the photograph.

Maggie stands, looks herself over again in the mirror, takes a deep breath and exits her room.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN CENTER HEALTH & REHAB: HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Maggie walks down the burgundy carpeted assisted-living hallway. There are big potted plants along the hallway . . . it's all very homely. Perhaps she walks with a cane or walker, maybe she just takes it slowly down by herself . . . either way, she's jittery and it's not because she's physically incapable of the walk.

Maggie passes CATHY, a nurse, who turns and looks surprised at Maggie's attire and glow.

CATHY

Good morning, Ms. Maggie. What's the special occasion?

MAGGIE

My dear, when you get to be my age, every day is a special occasion.

Maggie chuckles to herself and continues walking.

She passes other residents in wheelchairs and nurse's aides, all of whom take extra notice of her today. The hall is full of life. Maggie acknowledges everyone with a friendly nod or smile while she continues her walk.

Maggie turns the corner and steps onto the cold gray tile floor of the rehabilitation hall.

The change between the two halls is so drastic it seems as if Maggie just stepped out of her own home straight into the hospital.

Down this hall, the nurses move slowly and solemnly about and no patients are seen loitering about. A couple of patients sit motionless in their wheelchairs staring vacantly into space. It's almost as if time slows down the closer Maggie comes to her destination.

Mid-way down the hall Maggie stops.

She takes a deep breath, then KNOCKS.

PHILLIP (O.S.)

Yes, yes . . . come in.

Maggie's shaking hand unconsciously flattens her dress as she composes herself before turning the knob and entering.

CU on the door as it closes behind her.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. DALTON HOUSE -- DAY

CU on the door as it opens and the seventeen-year-old MAGGIE DALTON steps out.

SUPERTITLE: Goldsboro, NC - 1943

Maggie is an olive-complexioned girl with a contradictory face. Her big brown eyes constantly survey her surroundings. She's of small stature and slender in form. Her short, straight, brown hair is cut in a shingle haircut, but not styled. She's the middle child of a middle-class farming family, with mediocre looks.

GEORGIA (O.S.)

Hurry up, Maggie Fay.

Maggie shuts the door behind her and hurries towards the driveway.

Maggie's mother, GEORGIA DALTON, a fair-skinned woman in her late 30's with sandy colored hair, sits in the front-seat of the 1938 brown and tan Oldsmobile Sedan. Her youngest daughter, CORA DALTON, a four-year-old version of Maggie, sits next to her.

Maggie climbs into the back-seat and sits next to GRETCHEN DALTON. Gretchen is the Dalton sister guys turn their heads at, even though she's only ten. A blonde-haired, blue-eyed beauty, Gretchen has ivory white skin and a delicate build. Although beautiful and frail, she's not sickly.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTER STREET -- DAY

Establishing shot of downtown Goldsboro on this sunny fall day. The leaves are bright autumn colors. In the windows of some of the shops are pumpkins and cornucopias, signaling the time to be early to mid November.

Goldsboro is a progressive town for 1943. There are light posts on the street and a railroad track runs down the middle of Center Street. At one end of Center Street is the Railroad Depot.

While most people in this town travel by car, there is still a functioning livery with horse-drawn carriages going in and out of it.

The Dalton Oldsmobile drives down Center Street and parks. Maggie and Gretchen hop out and walk towards Woolworth's Five and Dime Store, while Georgia carries Cora down the street in the opposite direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOOLWORTH'S FIVE AND DIME STORE -- DAY

Maggie walks up to the door of Woolworth's Five and Dime Store, towing Gretchen by the hand.

From inside the store, PHILLIP FAIRCHILD sits at a table with a well-dressed young woman. He rises from the table, kisses the young woman on the lips and then approaches the door . . . the same one Maggie is approaching from the outside.

Although only slightly older than Maggie, Phillip carries himself with an air of experience and knowledge beyond his years. Phillip's sandy blonde hair, blue eyes, and pale skin are deeply contrasted with Maggie's darkness. He wears a one-piece army flight suit and has the *Messenger* newspaper tucked under his arm.

As Maggie reaches for the door, Phillip pushes it open from the inside. He steps outside and holds it open for Maggie and Gretchen.

PHILLIP

(to Maggie)

Good-day, ma'am.

(to Gretchen)

Miss.

Maggie looks up and locks eyes with Phillip.

Phillip's smile freezes Maggie in her place. Gretchen nudges Maggie gently back into reality. Maggie recovers, blushes and shyly shuffles through the door, nodding her thanks to Phillip.

Phillip closes the door. As he walks past the store, he glances back in and locks eyes once again with Maggie.

Phillip waves to her, but Maggie stands frozen. Gretchen tugs at Maggie's arm to get her to wave. Getting no response, Gretchen acts on Maggie's behalf and waves back at Phillip.

CUT TO:

INT. WOOLWORTH'S FIVE AND DIME STORE -- CONTINUOUS

Once Phillip is out of sight, Maggie's movement is restored.

She shrugs it off, and she and Gretchen take seats at the lunch counter.

CUT TO:

INT. WOOLWORTH'S FIVE AND DIME STORE -- LATER

Maggie and Gretchen are still sitting at the lunch counter, now with empty milkshake glasses in front of them, when Georgia comes in carrying Cora.

GEORGIA

Ya'll ready?

Gretchen slides off her seat, but Maggie sulkily swivels in her seat to face her mother.

MAGGIE

Must we?

GEORGIA

Yes, we must. Now come along.

MAGGIE

I don't *have* to go to it.

GEORGIA

Not go? And make our family look unpatriotic?
Certainly not. Now come along.

MAGGIE

(abidingly)

Yes, ma'am.

Maggie sluggishly slides off the seat and follows her mother and sister out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. SOROTAS -- LATER

Maggie wears a sky blue evening dress. The straight skirt of the dress hangs to the floor, a tad longer on Maggie than it should be. Conservatively cut and slightly out of fashion, the dress has a round neckline and short peasant-style sleeves. There's no design or embroidery or bows. It's simple and plain, but it looks nice on Maggie as she stands on an alteration block in the front of the store.

Georgia and the SALESLADY admire Maggie.

Maggie, however, gazes hypnotically out the window, preoccupied by her thoughts.

GEORGIA

She looks lovely.

SALESLADY

Yes, and the color compliments her eyes nicely.

GRETCHEN

But her eyes are brown.

The saleslady smiles and shrugs as if to say the color of Maggie's eyes really doesn't make a difference.

GEORGIA

Do you like it, Maggie?

Maggie is so deep in her thoughts that she hasn't heard a word her mother has said.

GEORGIA

Maggie? Maggie?

At last Georgia breaks through to her. Maggie snaps back to reality and turns to face her mother.

MAGGIE

Yes, ma'am.

GEORGIA

That's the one you want then?

MAGGIE

Yes, ma'am.

GEORGIA

Take it off then.

Georgia doesn't have to tell Maggie that twice. She pulls up the bottom of the dress, revealing her bare feet, hops off the alteration block, and disappears behind the changing curtain.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOROTAS -- LATER

Maggie walks to the car, carrying her dress nicely wrapped in a bag.

Gretchen and Cora sit on the hood of the car, eating ice creams.

MAGGIE

May I get a new book?

GEORGIA

A book? I just bought you a dress and now you want a book, too?

MAGGIE

I'd rather the book.

Georgia sighs, but concedes and pulls a couple of crunched up dollar bills out of her purse.

GEORGIA

No trash.

MAGGIE

Yes, ma'am.

Georgia hands Maggie the money and Maggie is off.

GEORGIA

Get Gretchen and Cora one too.

MAGGIE

(calling behind her)

Yes, ma'am.

CUT TO:

INT. GOLDSBORO BOOK STORE -- LATER

Maggie enters the bookstore.

Behind the counter is DEWEY DAVIS, a charming old southern gentleman with a passion for books. Dewey takes his time at everything, including his speech. Therefore, he has a tendency to draw out his words much longer than it is intended for them to be.

DEWEY

Miss Dalton.

MAGGIE

Good-day, Mr. Davis.

From behind a bookshelf, Phillip pokes his head out to see Maggie, but she is unaware of his presence.

DEWEY

You've become quite the reader. Take after your brother Travis, I reckon. Too bad that other brother of yours . . . what's his name again?

MAGGIE

Leo.

DEWEY

Right you are. Leonard. Too bad he never picked up reading. If he had, he might be sitting at a bank right now with Travis instead of sitting in a hole somewhere half across the globe hoping he shoots them before the Japs shoot him.

MAGGIE

(fondly)

Well, Leo always was the type that would rather do it than read about it.

DEWEY

And you? What do you want to read about now?

MAGGIE

What's your recommendation?

Dewey pulls a book out from a shelf behind him and hands it to Maggie.

She turns it over and reads the cover . . . it's *The Moon is Down*, by John Steinbeck.

DEWEY

I just finished it last night. You liked his last one so much, you ought to really go for this one.

Dewey pulls out another book off the shelf and hands it to Maggie . . . it's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, by Betty Smith.

DEWEY (CON'T)

But I finally got that one in you wanted.

Dewey hands the book to Maggie. She surveys the two books in her hands, torn between which one to get. Finally, she hands the Steinbeck book back to Dewey.

MAGGIE

[re: the Betty Smith book]

I suppose I'll have to get just this one today. I also need the sixth book in the Little House series for Gretchen.

Dewey reshelves the Steinbeck book and moves off towards another shelf. Maggie walks over to another shelf with children's books on it.

DEWEY

Ah, *The Long Winter*.

Dewey picks up the book Maggie requested, taking it back behind the counter with him.

Maggie pulls one of the Little Golden Book series books out, *The Golden Book of Fairy Tales*. She grimaces and quickly puts it back on the shelf.

She pulls another one of the Little Golden Book series books out, studies it a moment, and then carries it over to Dewey and puts it on top of the other two books. She has chosen *The Animals of Farmer Jones*.

DEWEY (CON'T)

[re: *The Animals of Farmer Jones*]

She'll enjoy the talking animals.

Maggie gives Dewey the crumpled up dollar bills, collects her change, and picks up the books.

MAGGIE

Thank you, Mr. Davis.

DEWEY

Anytime, my dear.

As Maggie exits, Phillip appears around the bookshelf with a couple of books in his hands.

PHILLIP

I'll take these, please.

Dewey starts to ring him up.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Charming young lady.

FRANCIS DAVIS, a bitter old man with a slow step, comes from the back of the store carrying books to reshelve.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Does she come here much?

DEWEY

Miss Dalton? Why, yes. Every chance she gets.

Francis has made his way to the front counter now and sets the books down beside Phillip with a loud THUD.

FRANCIS

Ain't nothing but trouble, if you ask me.

DEWEY

Nobody did.

FRANCIS

It just ain't right, I tell you.

PHILLIP

What isn't?

FRANCIS

That girl. She ought not to be allowed to read so much.
It's just askin' for trouble.

Dewey shakes his head. He's heard this all before.

DEWEY

Just because you can't read don't give you a right to
think other people shouldn't.

PHILLIP

I think more women should be like Miss Dalton.

FRANCIS

You do, does ya?

PHILLIP

Yes, sir.

Francis picks up a couple of books off the pile and starts in the direction of a bookshelf.

FRANCIS

You just wait. You'll see. If they do, it'll be nothing but
trouble.

Phillip laughs and picks up his books.

PHILLIP

Good-day, gentlemen.

DEWEY

Good-day.

Francis merely grunts at Phillip as he walks out the door.

A young lady walks up to Phillip on the sidewalk. They appear to already be acquaintances for they engage in conversation immediately. The lady kisses Phillip on the lips and walks off.

Phillip turns around and stares at her legs as she walks away.

From inside the store, Dewey Davis watches Phillip with mixed envy and disapproval.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTER STREET -- LATER

Gretchen and Cora have finished their ice creams now.

Georgia stands beside the Oldsmobile engaging in friendly conversation with CLAYTON BAUER, a boy about Maggie's age with a muscular build and dark farmer's tan. The one thing to note about Clayton's appearance is his left shoe, the sole of which is twice as thick as his right one.

Maggie approaches, carrying the books.

GEORGIA

There you are. Clayton came looking for you.

CLAYTON

I was comin' to get you to help decorate for the dance.

GEORGIA

I told Clayton you would want to go.

MAGGIE

Certainly.

Georgia takes the books from Maggie.

Maggie and Clayton walk off down the street as the rest of the Daltons pile into the car. As they walk, Clayton favors his right leg slightly, by shuffling his left leg instead of stepping, as if the thick sole was made of a brick.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. GOLDSBORO HOTEL BALLROOM -- LATER

Maggie and Clayton continue walking and enter the large ballroom.

Several girls about Maggie's age are already hanging up decorations.

CLAYTON

I gotta help put up the lights out yonder. I'll meet you out there when ya get done.

MAGGIE

All right.

Clayton leaves as Maggie walks over to two girls about her age, JANICE and LEILA TOWNSEND. Both girls have fair skin and blue eyes. Their blonde hair is cut to a medium length and styled in the latest fashion, the Baby. They both have straight, knee-length skirts on with matching suit jackets and hats. There is a proudness to the way they hold their heads and look at other people.

LEILA

Hello, Maggie.

MAGGIE

Leila. Janice.

Leila hands Maggie some streamers.

JANICE

Are you coming to the dance Saturday?

MAGGIE

Yes.

LEILA

Where's your dress from?

MAGGIE

Sorotas.

Leila and Janice glance at each other in disgust.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

(naively)

What?

JANICE

We went to Raleigh and got ours.

LEILA

We had to go up there to get some more nylons anyway.

MAGGIE

(enviously)

You just got *new* nylons?

Leila and Janice shake their heads yes.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

Momma would kill to have some of those to wear to Church.

Maggie is clearly not on the same social level as the Townsend girls.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

Your dresses must be lovely.

JANICE

The point isn't how lovely they are, but how much notice they get you.

MAGGIE

Notice?

LEILA

Not all of us are already engaged.

MAGGIE

I'm not engaged.

JANICE

There's nothing wrong with Clayton, Maggie. Just because he's slow at walking . . . I'm sure he makes up for it elsewhere.

Janice and Leila giggle to themselves. Maggie, on the other hand, doesn't find anything about Clayton amusing.

MAGGIE

Actually, I met an army man today . . .

LEILA

Really?

JANICE

Maybe you and Leila could double date to the picture show next weekend, then.

Janice and Leila chuckle at the mere thought of Maggie taking up with such a man.

LEILA

(sarcastically)

I'm sure Phillip would love to.

Maggie ignores them and starts climbing up a ladder to hang the streamers.

MAGGIE

Phillip?

LEILA

Yes. He took me to the picture show last Friday.

JANICE

Boy, is he a sight.

Maggie gazes off into a day-dream while Janice and Leila continue to talk about Phillip.

DISSOLVE CUT TO:

INT. GOLDSBORO HOTEL BALLROOM -- NIGHT

The ballroom is much more elaborately decorated.

Nobody is on the dance floor, and the people at the dance are all blurred around the edges to the point that no face is discernible.

Maggie enters wearing a beautiful red dress, much more elaborately decorated than the blue one she just bought. The straight skirt of the dress hits her right at the ankles. The straps hang loosely off her shoulders, and there's a satin ribbon that ties around her waist and into a bow at the small of her back. She wears matching yellow gloves, and her hair is styled in a beautiful wave with a jeweled comb.

Phillip, wearing a black tux, bows in front of her then extends his arm to her.

She curtsies and takes his arm.

He leads her to the dance floor and they begin to dance.

Mysteriously, everyone else at the dance has suddenly disappeared.

They twirl all over the dance floor.

PHILLIP

You look beautiful, Miss Dalton.

DISSOLVE CUT TO:

INT. GOLDSBORO HOTEL BALLROOM -- AFTERNOON

Maggie stands on the ladder in another one of her day-dreams.

PHILLIP (O.S.)

Miss Dalton?

Maggie is startled abruptly out of her day-dream and nearly falls off the ladder.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Careful there. I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to startle you.

Maggie blushes as she turns to see Phillip wearing his flight suit from earlier. She cautiously climbs down the ladder.

MAGGIE

It's my fault. My mind was somewhere else.

A moment of awkward silence passes.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

I'm sorry, it seems as though you know my name, but I don't recall catching yours.

PHILLIP

Phillip Alexander Fairchild, Miss Dalton.

MAGGIE

Maggie.

A beat.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

(rambling)

Maggie Dalton. Margaret, actually. But people just call me Maggie.

A beat.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

Are you a pilot?

Phillip surveys his flight suit.

PHILLIP

A trainee.

Maggie makes a sweeping motion with her hand.

MAGGIE

Then all this is for you.

PHILLIP

I certainly hope not.

MAGGIE

Your squadron then.

PHILLIP

Yes.

MAGGIE

You'll be attending the dance then, I suppose?

PHILLIP

Will you, Miss Dalton?

MAGGIE

Maggie.

Phillip smiles and repeats after Maggie.

PHILLIP

Maggie.

MAGGIE

Yes.

PHILLIP

Then I'd be a fool to miss an opportunity to dance with you. You'll save a dance for me?

MAGGIE

Of course.

Phillip takes Maggie's hand in his and kisses it.

Phillip exits, leaving Maggie overwhelmed.

Leila walks across Phillip's path. Maggie watches as Phillip talks with her, takes her hand in his, kisses it, and then exits the building.

CUT TO:

INT. TAYLOR CAFÉ -- EVENING

Maggie and Clayton sit across from each other.

The food on their plates is half-eaten.

CLAYTON

Is somethin' the matter?

MAGGIE

What do you mean?

CLAYTON

Are you mad at me or somethin'?

MAGGIE

What for?

Clayton takes another bite of food and shrugs.

MAGGIE

No. I just have some things on my mind.

CLAYTON

We can talk about it.

MAGGIE

I was just thinking about the dance. That's all.

CLAYTON

Yeah, I wish we didn't have to go either.

MAGGIE

Actually, I think I want to go.

CLAYTON

No foolin'?

MAGGIE

No. I am thinking about keeping company with . . .
well, with a gentleman I met.

Clayton freezes.

CLAYTON

I see. Anyone I know?

MAGGIE

No. He just arrived into town a couple of days ago. I'm
not even sure how long he might be staying.

CLAYTON

Then you best not get mixed up with a fella like that.
He'll just get ya in trouble and I don't think your ma and
pa would be none too happy about that. They don't
wanna see ya mixed up with a fella that isn't settled
down. You know fellas breeze in and out of this here
town all the time, but the draft from that breeze can
leave ya cold long after they're gone.

Maggie rolls her eyes at Clayton's histrionics, dismissing him.

MAGGIE

It's just a dance, Clayton. I'll be fine.

Maggie and Clayton return to eating the rest of their dinner in silence.

Phillip enters the café accompanied by yet another well-dressed young woman in a Red Cross uniform. He spots Maggie and walks over to her.

PHILLIP

Miss Dalton.

Maggie looks up to see Phillip and she smiles widely, baring her teeth in a way we've never seen her do before.

MAGGIE

Mr. Fairchild. Hello. Oh, this is my neighbor, Clayton Bauer.

Phillip extends his hand to Clayton, but Clayton just stares motionless at him.

PHILLIP

Nurse Baker insisted I try some of Goldsboro's famous Bar-B-Que.

Maggie's smile diminishes as she notices Nurse Baker, who has her hand on Phillip's arm.

MAGGIE

Well, you've come to the wrong place then.

PHILLIP

They don't have Bar-B-Que here?

MAGGIE

Oh, no, they do . . . but nothing beats Scott's Bar-B-Que.

PHILLIP

You're on.

MAGGIE

I'm what?

PHILLIP

You must promise to take me so I can pick which one I prefer.

Maggie glares at Nurse Baker. Nurse Baker returns an equally threatening glare, but then snobbishly cocks her head to the side and looks off into space as if to say Maggie is no match for her.

MAGGIE

Agreed.

PHILLIP

Well, it was good to see you again, Miss Dalton.

MAGGIE

You too, Mr. Fairchild.

Phillip and Nurse Baker take their seats at a table across the room.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

That was rude.

CLAYTON

Sure was.

MAGGIE

I'm talking about you.

CLAYTON

Me? What'd I do?

MAGGIE

You didn't even speak to Mr. Fairchild.

CLAYTON

'Cuz I ain't stupid, Maggie.

MAGGIE

What's that supposed to mean?

CLAYTON

I know that Mr. Fairchild is the fella you have a fancy for.

MAGGIE

What makes you think that? Because I was nice to him?

CLAYTON

'Cuz of the way you smiled at him. The way you smile for your pa and nobody else.

MAGGIE

I smile all the time.

CLAYTON

Not like that, you don't.

Maggie glances over at Phillip and Nurse Baker. They are laughing and chatting. Maggie sulkily diverts her eyes to her plate and plays with her food. Maggie picks up her cup and moves it in slight circles, swirling the drink inside.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. GOLDSBORO HOTEL BALLROOM -- EVENING

Maggie holds her punch cup in her hand watching the drink inside swirl around as she moves the cup. Clayton stands beside her in the corner drinking punch and watching everyone dance.

Maggie wears her blue dress and has her short hair waved and clipped back with bobby pins. Clayton wears a gray suit, but his stance looks more like he's wearing a straight jacket.

The ballroom is nicely decorated with streamers and balloons. On stage an all-black band plays the tunes of Duke Ellington, Glen Miller, and Ella Fitzgerald.

Although the room is full of men and women, the men are mostly older or army men, outnumbered by young women.

Phillip enters wearing a black pin-striped suit.

Almost immediately, Janice and Leila Townsend make a beeline to Phillip to greet him.

Leila takes Phillip's arm and they walk to the dance floor and begin dancing.

Maggie sees him and unconsciously begins straightening her dress.

MAGGIE

I think I'll have more punch.

Clayton reaches out to take Maggie's cup from her, but she snatches it out of his reach.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

I'll get it. Thanks, Clayton.

Confused, Clayton slumps back against the wall and turns his gaze back to the dance floor.

Maggie walks slowly to the punch table, keeping her eyes on Leila and Phillip the whole time. As the song ends, the dancers begin clapping as a faster swing song starts playing.

Maggie focuses her attention on the punch bowl as if she were studying it through a microscope.

Maggie attempts to pour herself some more punch but her hands are so jittery she's not getting much in her cup.

A hand reaches around her and brushes over hers.

PHILLIP (O.S.)

Please, let me.

Maggie turns around and nearly hits Phillip in the nose. Startled and embarrassed, Maggie can only smile widely and laugh nervously.

She lets go of the ladle, and Phillip pours her punch for her and hands her the cup.

MAGGIE

Thank you.

Phillip pours himself a cup.

PHILLIP

My pleasure, Miss Dalton.

MAGGIE

Maggie.

Phillip nods.

The two drink their punch in order to fill the awkward silence.

The band finishes playing a song and the room claps.

The band starts up another song, and a black woman gets up to the microphone and sings. It's an original song, slow and romantic and sings as Ella Fitzgerald might sing.

PHILLIP

Do you dance, Miss Dal—

Phillip catches himself and smiles.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Maggie?

MAGGIE

Not very much, I'm afraid.

PHILLIP

Well, you seem to be a risk taker. Care to try?

Maggie swallows hard. She's torn between wanting to dance and not wanting to make a fool of herself.

Phillip takes Maggie's punch cup out of her hand and sets both his cup and hers down.

Then he extends his hand to Maggie.

PHILLIP

Shall we?

Maggie smiles and puts her hand in his.

Phillip leads her to the dance floor.

They start to dance and Maggie is a little awkward at first.

She giggles and Phillip smiles.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Don't think about it. Watch my eyes.

Maggie locks eyes with Phillip and they dance, much as Maggie had imagined in her fantasy.

In the corner, Clayton spots them. Hurt and angry, Clayton's stance stiffens as he watches them.

Janice and Leila also watch from across the room and are enraged that Phillip would pay more attention to a farm girl than to Leila. They pout in the most conspicuous ways.

CUT TO:

INT. GOLDSBORO HOTEL BALLROOM -- LATER

Maggie and Phillip dance to a swing song now. The dance floor is packed with couples.

Clayton stands at the snack table, eating peanuts and glaring at them.

Janice Townsend approaches him.

JANICE

That's so unthoughtful of her.

Clayton looks up at Janice confused, but doesn't speak. Janice and Clayton aren't usually on friendly terms with one another. Clayton finds her snobbish and she finds him base.

JANICE (CON'T)

Coming here with you and dancing all night with that man.

Clayton still doesn't speak, but he looks out at the dance floor at Maggie.

JANICE (CON'T)

I'm sure her parents wouldn't approve. I mean, she's practically betrothed to you.

Clayton shakes his head no.

JANICE (CON'T)

Clayton, everybody knows it. She's making a fool of you by prancing around with him in front of everybody. I know why she's doing it, though.

CLAYTON

She's in love with him, ain't she?

Janice snickers.

JANICE

No, she's in love with *you*.

CLAYTON

Wouldn't she be dancin' with me, then?

JANICE

You dance?

CLAYTON

No.

JANICE

Exactly.

Clayton looks more confused than ever. Janice realizes she's going to have to break this down for him.

JANICE (CON'T)

She wants the fairy tale, Clayton.

CLAYTON

Not Mags. She hates fairy tales. Won't even read them, not even as a kid.

JANICE

The point is, Clayton, she's trying to make you jealous by dancing with another man so you'll dance with her. Be her knight and shining armor, Clayton.

JANICE (CON'T)

Go over there and take her away from him and dance with her yourself.

CLAYTON

I don't dance.

JANICE

Do you want Maggie or not, Clayton?

CLAYTON

Sure I do.

JANICE

Then learn to dance. *Quick.*

Janice leaves Clayton on that note and walks over to the punch table.

Clayton is not so sure about this, but he loves Maggie and is willing to make a fool of himself if it's what she wants. He takes a step towards the dance floor . . .

But, Maggie and Phillip are no longer on the dance floor.

Clayton spins around.

They aren't at the punch table either.

He looks at Janice, who is just as perplexed as he is and angry her scheming didn't work.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTER STREET -- EVENING

Maggie and Phillip walk arm-in-arm down Center Street past Woolworth's Five and Dime Store where they first met towards the Center Street Livery.

MAGGIE

Only four months?

PHILLIP

Five maybe. As soon as our training is over, we'll be sent overseas.

MAGGIE

What are we doing, then?

PHILLIP

We're enjoying each other's company.

MAGGIE

You are?

PHILLIP

So are you.

MAGGIE

Yes, but there's no point.

PHILLIP

Of course there is.

MAGGIE

You're leaving.

PHILLIP

Only so I can come back.

Maggie stops in front of the Center Street Livery and pets one of the horses inside.

MAGGIE

I don't understand.

PHILLIP

Maggie, what is it that we're fighting for?

MAGGIE

I . . . I don't know exactly.

PHILLIP

Me either, really.

Phillip smiles. Maggie glances at him and laughs.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

But it doesn't matter. I'm going to war so I can come back here.

MAGGIE

Aren't there enough people going already?

PHILLIP

(gravely)

I can't back out now, Maggie. Besides, I wouldn't trust someone else to protect you . . . to protect our way of life. The world is at war, Maggie. We're part of that world and whether we like it or not we're in this war now.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

If we back out now, we stand to lose everything this country stands for.

A beat.

Phillip tries to hide his smile, but it just comes bursting out onto his face.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

I read that in an editorial this morning. Sounded good, though, didn't it?

Maggie laughs and shakes her head at Phillip.

MAGGIE

And you're willing to die for that?

Phillip pauses, for he's not as heroic as he wants people to think he is. When he begins to speak again, his voice falters and quivers with uncertainty.

PHILLIP

I won't.

MAGGIE

You could.

PHILLIP

Then, let it be for you.

Maggie stares at the horse she's been petting, not knowing what to say.

Phillip takes her face in his hands, leans down and kisses her. It's a soft, sweet, innocent kiss. The kiss is all the answer Phillip needs.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTER STREET -- LATER

Clayton stands outside leaning against Gidden's Jewelry Store's clock, which reads 10:04 pm.

Maggie and Phillip walk arm-in-arm, but quicken their pace when they spot Clayton.

MAGGIE

Clayton, is the dance over?

CLAYTON

It's been over for half an hour, Maggie. I didn't know what to think when you disappeared. I ought to've known you wouldn't've left 'cept on account of him.

PHILLIP

I apologize, sir.

MAGGIE

(interrupting)

Actually, it was my idea that we go for a walk. All that dancing made me quite dizzy. Mr. Fairchild was kind enough to accompany me. I'm sorry we kept you waiting.

CLAYTON

We 'ought to be gettin' home, Mags.

PHILLIP

Certainly. Good-night, Maggie. Good-night, Mr. Bauer.

Clayton holds open the passenger side door of his 1941 Plymouth Woodie for Maggie and glares at Phillip.

Phillip takes Maggie's hand in his and kisses it.

MAGGIE

Good-night, Phillip. Thank you for the dance.

Maggie gets in the car, and she and Clayton take off.

Phillip stands and watches then walks down the street towards the Arlington Hotel.

CUT TO:

INT. CLAYTON'S CAR -- LATER

Clayton drives in silence.

Maggie is still giddy from her evening with Phillip.

CLAYTON

I think your pa will disapprove of your behavior tonight. What 'cha think he's gonna say to me when I tell him?

MAGGIE

I don't know why he would disapprove and I don't know what you have to tell him. I've done nothing wrong. The only thing I have to apologize for is keeping you waiting.

CLAYTON

Your pa would want me to tell him if I thought you were gettin' yourself into a heap of trouble.

MAGGIE

And that's what you think I'm doing?

CLAYTON

I already told you that your Mr. Fairchild is nuttin' but trouble. See how he let you lose track of time and keep me waitin'.

MAGGIE

You're just jealous I'm spending time with him.

CLAYTON

I ain't never gonna be jealous of a guy like him.

MAGGIE

Well, you should be.

CLAYTON

And what's so great about him?

MAGGIE

He knows how to dance. He likes to take walks and talk.

CLAYTON

We walk 'n talk all the time.

MAGGIE

Forget it, Clayton. I don't want you to be like Mr. Fairchild. You'll always be my best friend, but you'll never be able to make me feel the way he does. You just can't change who you are, and I wouldn't want you to either.

CLAYTON

You just forget about this Mr. Fairchild. He's gonna be outta here before ya know it and then whatcha gonna do? Sittin' 'round dreamin' about things that ain't never gonna be. You need to settle down with a man that's gonna be there forever.

MAGGIE

You mean a guy like you.

CLAYTON

I will you know. He won't.

MAGGIE

(yells)

You don't even know him!

Maggie's anger startles Clayton. In all their years of fighting, Maggie has never become this enraged before.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

I'm sorry. Look, I just want the chance to get to know him.

CLAYTON

You mustn't get your hopes up for something that ain't never gonna be. He's gonna join the war, then you ain't never gonna see him again.

MAGGIE

You don't know that's true. After the war he will come back.

Clayton pulls up in front of Maggie's house. Before he can cut the car off, Maggie is out of the car and running towards the house.

CUT TO:

INT. DALTON HOUSE -- DAY

Maggie sits in a chair reading.

Her father, FRANKLIN DALTON, a stout man in his mid-forties with a soft spot for his children, enters and kisses Maggie on the forehead.

He takes a seat beside her and opens the newspaper.

FRANKLIN

How was the dance?

Maggie shrugs.

FRANKLIN (CON'T)

Did you dance?

Maggie slowly nods her head yes and smiles.

FRANKLIN (CON'T)

(surprised)

You did? With who?

MAGGIE

This boy. He's one of the fighter pilots that's training here.

FRANKLIN

(contemplating)

A fighter pilot?

MAGGIE

His family's from Raleigh. Maybe Travis knows them. The Fairchilds?

FRANKLIN

Is his father a banker?

MAGGIE

I don't think so . . . I don't know.

FRANKLIN

I'll ask Travis.

Georgia, who has overheard the conversation, now comes into the room and stirs the fire.

GEORGIA

Did Clayton have a nice time?

MAGGIE

I guess so. He didn't really like me dancing with Phillip much.

FRANKLIN

Are you planning to see this Phillip again?

Maggie puts her book down. She's not sure how her parents are going to react to this one.

MAGGIE

Actually, he was going to stop by on Wednesday and meet you, Papa. To see if it was all right if he took me to the picture show next weekend.

Franklin and Georgia exchange a brief look of concern, but Franklin quickly shakes it off.

FRANKLIN

I suppose the boy can stop by.

Maggie almost falls out of the chair with excitement.

She kisses her father on the cheek.

MAGGIE

Thank you, Papa.

Maggie exits the room, leaving Franklin and Georgia.

GEORGIA

Franklin, do you think that's wise?

FRANKLIN

I see no harm in the girl going to a picture show.

Georgia takes Maggie's seat.

GEORGIA

What about the Bauers?

FRANKLIN

Even if this boy makes it back from the war, he probably won't be coming back for Maggie.

GEORGIA

And if he does?

FRANKLIN

If he does, then there's always Leo. Frederick has that young daughter of his . . . what's her name?

GEORGIA

Emma?

FRANKLIN

That's it, Emma. Leo's always been smitten with her. He can marry Emma once he gets back from the war. The farm can hold out until then.

GEORGIA

I suppose you're right, but poor Clayton!

FRANKLIN

Yes. That boy sure does have his heart set on our Maggie.

GEORGIA

It'd be a shame to disappoint him.

FRANKLIN

It's a phase . . . She'll grow out of it.

GEORGIA

And if she doesn't?

FRANKLIN

Well, then maybe she'll grow to love Clayton. It'd be a bigger shame if she didn't.

CUT TO:

EXT. DALTON HOUSE -- EVENING

Phillip drives up to the Dalton House.

As he walks to the door, he passes Clayton exiting the house.

Clayton eyes Phillip like a wolf eyes his prey.

PHILLIP

Good-evening, Mr. Bauer.

Clayton glares at Phillip and continues to his car.

Phillip knocks on the door.

Maggie opens it and Phillip hands her a bouquet of flowers.

Maggie smiles and ushers Phillip inside.

Clayton sits in his car watching.

As Maggie shuts the door, he speeds off down the driveway.

CUT TO:

INT. PARAMOUNT THEATER -- EVENING

Maggie and Phillip walk out of the theater. Maggie has her arm linked with Phillip's.

An attractive red-head, JACKY, approaches Phillip and kisses him on the cheek.

JACKY

We still on for tomorrow night, Phil?

Phillip smiles at Jacky, not caught off guard by this situation in the least. He apparently is used to handling more than one girl at a time, but Maggie is not happy about the situation.

PHILLIP

Sure thing.

Jacky smiles and leaves.

Phillip starts walking, but Maggie stands firm. He turns around and faces her.

MAGGIE

That your girlfriend?

PHILLIP

One of them.

MAGGIE

One of them?

PHILLIP

I don't really have girlfriends . . . I just have girls that I see.

MAGGIE

Like me?

PHILLIP

Well, yeah.

With that said, Maggie storms off. Phillip chases after.

PHILLIP

Okay, no . . . hey, will you wait?

Maggie stops and looks at Phillip.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

No. Okay. No, not like you. I've never been with a girl like you, Maggie. You're different. I didn't know you'd be so upset.

MAGGIE

I don't know what kind of girl you think I am.

PHILLIP

I don't think that at all, Maggie. Look, if you don't want me to see Jack—

MAGGIE

(interrupting)

I don't!

PHILLIP

Then, I won't.

Phillip puts his arm around Maggie and they start walking down the street towards the car.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

So can I see you still?

Maggie shrugs her shoulders and then slowly nods her head yes.

CUT TO:

INT. PARAMOUNT THEATER -- EVENING

Maggie sits with her family in the theater. The entire theater is packed, with people standing in the back.

On stage MAYOR BERKELEY stands talking.

Behind him sits Phillip and a handful of other men dressed in flight suits.

Beside him stands SUZANNE JOHNSON, a little girl about twelve in age.

On the side of the stage is a Christmas tree decorated with white lights and blue and red ball ornaments.

MAYOR BERKELEY

. . . The 326th Fighter Group will begin their training as replacement pilots for the P-47 Thunderbolt aircraft in January.

The crowd applauds. As the applause dies down, Mayor Berkeley continues.

MAYOR BERKELEY (CON'T)

Today I present this plaque to Suzanne Johnson in honor of her father Seymour Johnson, a Goldsboro native who lost his life two years ago while testing a navy plane. Today, we honor his memory by naming the new training field Seymour Johnson Field.

The crowd claps as Mayor Berkeley presents the plaque to Suzanne.

The crowd rises as they applaud Suzanne and the fighter group behind her on stage.

CONTINUED ACTION CUT:

INT. FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH -- DAY

Everyone sits back down in their pews, open hymnals in their hands.

Maggie sits with her family in a pew.

Gretchen nudges her and Maggie looks up.

Across the aisle, Phillip takes a seat and waves at her.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH -- LATER

Maggie and her family stand outside the church.

Phillip comes out of the sanctuary and walks up to Maggie's father and shakes his hand.

FRANKLIN

Mr. Fairchild. Good to see you.

PHILLIP

Mr. Dalton. Mrs. Dalton.

Phillip smiles and waves at Cora, but she clings to her mother's skirt, hiding her face in the cloth.

GEORGIA

I reckon you haven't had many home cooked meals since you've been here.

PHILLIP

No, ma'am. Can't say that I have.

GEORGIA

Then you must join us for supper.

Phillip is about to protest, but Franklin stops him.

FRANKLIN

Don't say no to a Dalton woman, Mr. Fairchild.

PHILLIP

No, sir. I don't believe I will.

Maggie's family starts off towards the car.

Maggie and Phillip walk arm-in-arm towards the car.

MAGGIE

I do believe my parents have developed a liking for you.

PHILLIP

I hear it runs in the family.

The two laugh and continue walking.

CUT TO:

INT. SCOTT'S BAR-B-QUE -- DAY

Maggie and Phillip sit in a booth across from one another.

Their plates are filled with Bar-B-Que, collards, yams, and cole slaw. In the center of the table is a basket of hush puppies.

Maggie watches Phillip as he eats his Bar-B-Que.

PHILLIP

You're the one, doll.

MAGGIE

You like it?

PHILLIP

This is quite possibly the best Bar-B-Que in North Carolina.

Phillip takes another bite and reconsiders his comment.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

No, no, it is the best Bar-B-Que in all of North Carolina.

MAGGIE

Never doubt a Dalton woman.

PHILLIP

No ma'am, I don't believe I ever will.

The waitress, DOT, a homely looking woman in her mid-twenties, walks up to the table with a pitcher of tea and starts refilling their glasses.

DOT

(to Phillip)

Just can't get enough of this Bar-B-Que, can you?

Phillip grins sheepishly with his mouth full of Bar-B-Que.

Dot bends down close to Phillip in a very seductive and flirtatious way.

DOT

Maybe I'll bring you some tomorrow when I come by.
It's much better in bed.

Phillip smiles rather uneasily this time. Dot smiles and leaves.

Maggie says nothing to Phillip. In fact, she can't bear to look at him, but simply stares at her plate.

PHILLIP

It's not what you think.

MAGGIE

You mean she's not one of your girlfriends?

PHILLIP

All right, it is what you think.

MAGGIE

You told me you would stop.

PHILLIP

No, I said I wouldn't see Jacky anymore . . . and I haven't . . . seen Jacky, that is.

MAGGIE

No! Just every other girl in this town but Jacky.

PHILLIP

(jokingly)
No, not every girl.

MAGGIE

This isn't funny, Phillip.

PHILLIP

What do you want me to do, Maggie?

MAGGIE

Stop.

PHILLIP

And see only you?

MAGGIE

Yes.

PHILLIP

I'm not a relationship type of guy, Maggie. I'm not built for them.

MAGGIE

Then I guess we should just be friends then.

PHILLIP

I want to see you, Maggie. You're the only girl I've seen this much of since I've been here.

MAGGIE

Then you can see me as friends. That's all.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARLINGTON HOTEL -- DAY

Clayton carries a package to his car. As he reaches the car, he notices Phillip coming out of the Arlington Hotel.

With Phillip is VIRGINIA, a young, blonde, high-class woman, who has her arm linked in his. She kisses him on the cheek and they continue walking.

Clayton is obviously enraged by what he sees.

Phillip and Virginia walk down the street. Clayton follows them.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL LUNCH -- LATER

Phillip sits with Virginia inside Central Lunch. They have plates in front of them. Virginia cries as Phillip tries to comfort her.

Clayton stands outside watching them, deciding whether he's going to go in or not.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Clayton. What are you doing here?

Clayton spins around to find Maggie standing in behind him.

He begins to fidget . . . the last thing he wants is for Maggie to see Phillip.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

Well, since you're here, let's get some lunch.

CLAYTON

No . . . I mean . . . I'm not hungry.

But Maggie is already inside the diner.

CUT TO:

INT. CENTRAL LUNCH -- CONTINUOUS

Maggie stands in the middle of the doorway, shocked. Clayton walks in behind her.

Phillip sees her, but as soon as he stands up, Maggie is turns around.

Phillip catches her just as she is about to go out the door.

PHILLIP

Maggie, wait . . . this isn't what you think.

MAGGIE

It doesn't matter what I think . . . we're just friends so it makes no difference who you have lunch with.

PHILLIP

I don't want to be just friends, Maggie. This is my sister.

MAGGIE

(relieved)
Your sister?

PHILLIP

Come sit down and have lunch with us.
(to Clayton)
Both of you. I want to explain some things.

Maggie and Clayton exchange questioning looks, but in the end they join Phillip and Virginia.

CUT TO:

INT. CENTRAL LUNCH -- LATER

Virginia is still crying. She's just finishing telling them the story.

VIRGINIA

By the time I found out Trey was seeing all those other girls while he was seeing me, I was already pregnant. He made me feel special. Like I was the only one. Now he's gone to the war.

Maggie is almost in tears. Clayton and Phillip are both fuming with anger.

MAGGIE

What are you going to do?

VIRGINIA

I'm having the baby. I'm going to keep it.

CLAYTON

If anyone did that to one of my sisters, I'd kill him.

PHILLIP

If I could find him, I would.

VIRGINIA

It makes me so angry that Trey duped me like that. And to think I'm probably not the first . . . and surely won't be the last.

MAGGIE

And he made you believe he loved you.

VIRGINIA

(to Phillip)

Now do you see what you're doing? You need to stop this now.

PHILLIP

That's not fair. I'm not like Trey.

Virginia and Maggie both eye Phillip coldly. Phillip sense their skepticism and reevaluates his behavior.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Well, if I was before, I'm certainly not anymore. I don't want to be like Trey. I don't want to hurt someone like he hurt you.

MAGGIE

Then don't.

PHILLIP

(to Maggie)

Will you be my girlfriend?

Maggie blushes and smiles.

MAGGIE

What?

Virginia smiles too . . . recognizing a sincere change in her brother.

PHILLIP

Be my girlfriend, Maggie . . . my one and only girlfriend.

Maggie just smiles her wide-mouthed smile at Phillip, but the answer is clearly written all over her face.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEYMOUR JOHNSON FIELD -- NIGHT

Maggie and Phillip sit inside Phillip's 1942 Chrysler New Yorker in the middle of Seymour Johnson Field.

A flash of light darts across the sky.

MAGGIE

Do you believe in life elsewhere?

Phillip looks up at the sky.

PHILLIP

That was a firework, Maggie.

MAGGIE

Not that . . . so, do you?

PHILLIP

I guess it's possible.

MAGGIE

(excited)

It would be wild if you saw something while you were flying, wouldn't it?

PHILLIP

I'm going to war, Maggie, not outer space.

MAGGIE

When Cora was first born, I told Momma she was an alien.

PHILLIP

Cora, your sister?

Maggie giggles and shakes her head yes.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Why on earth would you think that?

MAGGIE

I was reading this book on Mars at the time. Besides she was all yellow. So yellow that even the whites of her eyes were yellow.

(whispering)

And the peculiar thing is . . . she loves flying.

PHILLIP

(teasing)

Is she trying to get back to her planet?

MAGGIE

It's possible.

PHILLIP

Anything's possible.

MAGGIE

Is it possible the war will end before you'll have to leave?

PHILLIP

Anything's possible.

MAGGIE

But not probable.

PHILLIP

I'll come back.

MAGGIE

What if you don't?

PHILLIP

That's not possible.

MAGGIE

Anything's possible.

PHILLIP

Not that. As long as you'll wait.

MAGGIE

I'd wait a lifetime for you.

PHILLIP

(sadly)

Wartime will feel like a lifetime.

MAGGIE

And I'll wait.

They embrace and kiss.

CUT TO:

EXT. HERMAN PARK -- DAY

Maggie and Phillip walk arm-in-arm around the park.

They stop at the swings.

Maggie sits in a swing and Phillip stands behind her and pushes her.

Clayton walks by on the sidewalk and sees Maggie and Phillip. Seeing them happy and in love, even Clayton can't help smiling, but he catches himself quickly and continues walking past.

CUT TO:

EXT. DALTON HOUSE -- LATER

Phillip walks Maggie to the door after their date.

PHILLIP

Maggie, I'm rather bad at this.

Maggie looks confusedly towards Phillip.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Relationships.

Maggie laughingly shakes her head . . . that's impossible.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

It's true.

MAGGIE

But you've had so many girlfriends . . .

(mutters)

like Leila Townsend.

PHILLIP

No, I haven't. What?

Phillip chuckles and begins teasing Maggie.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Come, you aren't jealous of her are you?

Maggie shrugs shyly.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

I haven't dated anyone like this before, Maggie. I wasn't prepared . . . this isn't what I wanted.

MAGGIE

What are you saying?

PHILLIP

Marriage. Children. It was never my plan.

Maggie is starting to physically distance herself from Phillip as she feels he's distancing himself emotionally.

PHILLIP

When we were kids, my sister used to always talk about who she would marry, what her wedding would be like, how she couldn't wait to fall in love. Me? I never wanted to fall in love.

MAGGIE

I've always wanted to fall in love . . . I just never thought it would happen to me.

PHILLIP

But it has.

Maggie blushes and glances down at the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. HERMAN PARK -- DAY

Maggie sits on a bench in Herman Park reading.

Behind her, Gretchen and Cora play around the fountain.

Phillip walks up to them, playfully.

PHILLIP

Hey, Cora.

Cora untrustingly sneaks behind Gretchen, but keeps her eyes fixed on Phillip.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Want me to fly you?

Cora shakes her head no.

Phillip sneaks up behind Maggie and kisses her on the cheek, startling her.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

I'm taking you to dinner.

MAGGIE

All right.

Phillip comes around the bench and sits beside Maggie.

PHILLIP

A celebration dinner.

MAGGIE

What are we celebrating?

PHILLIP

I passed.

Maggie's happiness quickly deflates.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

My flight exam—

MAGGIE

(angrily)

I know what you mean.

PHILLIP

Then why aren't you happy for me?

MAGGIE

When do you leave?

PHILLIP

A week.

Maggie gets up and walks over to the fountain.

Phillip watches her for a moment, then follows her.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Please don't make this any harder on me, Maggie.

MAGGIE

Harder on you?

PHILLIP

Maggie, you knew this would happen.

MAGGIE

Just go, then.

Maggie turns to leave, but Phillip catches her by the arm and stops her.

PHILLIP

I have to go, Maggie. Please say you'll write to me.
Tell me you'll wait for me.

Maggie nods as tears fill her eyes.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

I'm scared, Maggie. I've always been scared . . . but you . . . you give me a reason to fight.

MAGGIE

To fight and die.

PHILLIP

No. A reason to live through it all.

Maggie turns away from Phillip, shaking her head no.

Phillip stops her, catching her in his arms.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Maggie . . . everything I'm leaving behind . . . well, it's become you all of a sudden.

Maggie can no longer hold back her tears.

MAGGIE

I'd feel rather lonely without you to be proud of and frightened for . . . to be waiting for when you come back and to live my life with when it's all over.

Touched by Maggie's words, Phillip's eyes begin to tear up.

PHILLIP

I want to marry you.

MAGGIE

What?

PHILLIP

Let's get married.

MAGGIE

But relationships, marriage, children . . . you don't do them.

PHILLIP

That was before I fell in love with you. I love you, Maggie.

MAGGIE

I love you, too.

PHILLIP

Shall I ask your father, then?

Maggie kisses Phillip and shakes her head yes. Phillip smiles broadly and kisses her again.

CUT TO:

INT. DALTON BARN -- DAY

Franklin is in the barn spreading straw with a pitchfork. Perhaps a farm handler or two is also in the barn, cleaning out the horses' stalls.

A KNOCK in the doorway causes Franklin to look up. Phillip walks in.

PHILLIP

Good-day, Mr. Dalton.

Franklin doesn't stop his chore, but he acknowledges Phillip's presence amicably.

FRANKLIN

Mr. Fairchild. Maggie's in the house.

PHILLIP

Actually, it was you I wanted to have a word with, Mr. Dalton.

Franklin pauses at his work and looks at Phillip.

FRANKLIN

Me?

PHILLIP

Yes, sir.

Franklin grabs another pitchfork, and hands it to Phillip.

FRANKLIN

All right then. I could use some help.

Phillip smiles, takes the pitchfork and begins helping.

PHILLIP

I know I haven't known your daughter long, sir—

FRANKLIN

Three months.

PHILLIP

Yes, sir.

Franklin stops working and gives Phillip his undivided attention.

FRANKLIN

Go ahead then, Mr. Fairchild.

PHILLIP

Well, sir . . . I wanted to ask you for Maggie's hand in marriage. I love her and want to spend my life with her.

FRANKLIN

Have you talked with her about this?

PHILLIP

She knows my intentions, sir. But I wanted to get your blessing first.

Franklin takes a seat on a bale of hay.

FRANKLIN

I see. And when would you plan on marrying her?

PHILLIP

Right away, sir.

FRANKLIN

You think that's wise?

PHILLIP

We think it's necessary, sir.

FRANKLIN

And I should think to wait is.

PHILLIP

With all due respect, sir, I don't see why we need to wait.

Franklin motions for Phillip to sit on the bale of hay across from him.

Phillip obliges and sits down.

Franklin takes a beat, then sighs and begins.

FRANKLIN

Son, let's face the facts. You're going to *war*. I wish you a safe return, but we have to consider the consequences of a marriage to which you don't return. How's that going to affect Maggie?

PHILLIP

Sir, I realize this appears selfish on my part, but I *will* return for her.

FRANKLIN

That's not in your power to decide, son.

PHILLIP

No, but it is in my power to fight for.

Franklin considers Phillip for a moment before continuing.

FRANKLIN

Son, I've never been one to say no to my children.

Excited, Phillip can no longer sit still on the bale of hay but instead springs to his feet.

FRANKLIN (CON'T)

But as her father I have a duty to protect her future . . . which is why I must insist that she waits until after you return home from the war to marry.

Phillip's excitement has receded and he resumes sitting.

PHILLIP

I see.

FRANKLIN

What kind of life would a seventeen-year-old widow have? Her brothers and I . . . we're not always going to be around. If you don't come back, I'd still want her to marry.

PHILLIP

I want her to be happy too.

That wasn't exactly what Franklin was thinking about, but he must agree that it should be considered.

FRANKLIN

Yes, her happiness. So we agree.

PHILLIP

Is that your answer then?

FRANKLIN

I'm afraid it is.

PHILLIP

(protesting)

But sir, I love her.

FRANKLIN

You're not the only one.

PHILLIP

But I've never loved anyone before. Maggie, she . . . she changed me.

FRANKLIN

I don't doubt that, Mr. Fairchild. All I'm asking of you is to prove your devotion. The walking away part ain't gonna be hard for you . . . it's the walk back that might kill you.

Franklin stands up and walks over to Phillip, putting his hand upon his shoulder.

FRANKLIN (CON'T)

Perhaps it's best you let Maggie think it's your decision that you two wait. She'll understand it coming from you. She needs to know she has your blessing to continue on if you don't come back for her.

Franklin pats Phillip on the back and walks off.

Phillip continues sitting, contemplating his grim future and the task of breaking it all to Maggie.

CUT TO:

EXT. DALTON ESTATE -- AFTERNOON

Maggie and Phillip sit on a blanket beside a creek overlooking rows upon rows of tobacco crop on the Dalton farm.

MAGGIE

But if Papa approved, I don't understand the reason for waiting.

PHILLIP

Maggie, dear . . . he . . . I mean, I . . . I just think it's best. This is no way to treat a bride . . . to marry her and leave her.

MAGGIE

But I want it that way.

PHILLIP

(sharply)

No, you don't.

Maggie withdraws a little from Phillip. Phillip realizes he was harsh with her. He softens a bit, leaning in to her and taking her in his arms.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Maggie, I'll be back. We'll do it just the way you want then. The proper engagement, the parties, the wedding . . . anything you want.

MAGGIE

I don't want any of that.

PHILLIP

What do you want?

MAGGIE

(whispers)

I want you.

Phillip smiles at her shy flirtation and leans closer to her.

PHILLIP

You shall have me.

And he kisses her.

MAGGIE

If I wait, promise you'll come back and never leave me again.

PHILLIP

I'm not leaving you this time . . . I'll be carrying you around with me the whole time in here.

Phillip gestures to his head by tapping his temple with his finger.

Maggie places her hands on her chest.

MAGGIE

And you'll be in here.

Phillip sighs deeply and pulls her close to him.

PHILLIP

Then you'll wait?

MAGGIE

You don't leave me much choice.

CUT TO:

INT. PHILLIP'S CAR -- EVENING

Phillip drives his Chrysler New Yorker with one hand and has the other around Maggie's shoulder.

They're happy together, lost in each other's love, having forgotten what tomorrow will bring.

Maggie lays her head on his shoulder and closes her eyes.

The car sputters and jerks.

Phillip grabs the wheel with both hands and Maggie sits upright.

The car continues to sputter and jerk until it finally dies and coasts to a stop.

They both sit in silence for a minute.

MAGGIE

Aren't you going to try to fix it?

PHILLIP

I can't until tomorrow.

MAGGIE

Why, what's wrong?

Phillip smiles.

PHILLIP

Out of gas. I knew this would happen when they wouldn't let me fill up today.

Phillip starts laughing and Maggie can't help but join him. Their situation is more than amusing to them.

Phillip gets out of the car, walks around and opens Maggie's car door.

Phillip offers her his hand to help her out.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Shall we?

Maggie takes his hand and gets out of the car.

Phillip begins walking down the road in the direction the car was traveling.

Maggie heads towards the fields.

MAGGIE

If we're gonna walk, do you mind if we take the short way?

Phillip stops, then cautiously heads into the field following Maggie.

PHILLIP

I'm a city boy, Maggie. I don't know about this walking through dark fields in the middle of the night.

Maggie continues walking ahead of Phillip.

MAGGIE

Didn't you have woods training?

PHILLIP

Sure, but I didn't like that much either.

MAGGIE

Just walk nice and the possums won't get you.

Phillip jumps like a scared little boy and runs up to Maggie grabbing her by the hand and pulling her along with him.

PHILLIP

Come on, come on, come on.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD -- LATER

Maggie and Phillip now walk at a casual pace, arm-in-arm.

In the distance a light shines in a house.

PHILLIP

You sure you know where you are?

MAGGIE

I used to come out here all the time when I was little . . .
Clayton and me. That's his house there.

Maggie points to the light in the distance, which is growing fainter by the footstep.

PHILLIP

I didn't know your two farms backed up to one another
like that.

MAGGIE

That's why Papa wants to join the two farms. He thinks
a marriage bond between the two farms would keep
them from going under during hard times like so many
of the small farms already have.

PHILLIP

A marriage bond?

MAGGIE

I thought you knew.

PHILLIP

That you're engaged to Clayton?

MAGGIE

That's how it always seemed. But I was never in love
with him. I never could be.

PHILLIP

But you love him?

MAGGIE

Yes. Like a brother.

PHILLIP

Then your father will never let you marry me.

MAGGIE

He said yes, didn't he? Now Leo will simply have to
marry Emma.

Feeling duped by Maggie's love, Phillip is becoming jealous.

PHILLIP

And what if he doesn't love her!

MAGGIE

Leo's crazy for her. But he's shy and she's young, so the duty always fell on Clayton and me.

PHILLIP

(under his breath)

That's what he meant.

It's all starting to make sense to Phillip now and he stops Maggie and turns her to him.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

What if something happens to Leo . . . what if he doesn't come back from the war?

MAGGIE

(teasingly)

Then Papa would never let me marry you.

PHILLIP

So all this . . . this was just a lie.

MAGGIE

What! No. I love you . . . I was never going to marry Clayton.

PHILLIP

Maybe you should.

MAGGIE

What are you saying?

PHILLIP

He'll be here for you. He won't die and leave you alone.

MAGGIE

And neither will you. Stop this talk. We're going to be together . . .

Phillip shakes his head and takes Maggie firmly in his arms.

PHILLIP

Maggie, I need you to promise me something.

MAGGIE

Anything.

PHILLIP

If I don't come back . . .

Maggie puts her finger over his lips, stopping him.

MAGGIE

You will.

PHILLIP

Yes, but if I can't.

Maggie turns and continues walking.

MAGGIE

I don't want to talk about this.

Phillip stops her again.

PHILLIP

Maggie, we must.

MAGGIE

No!

PHILLIP

Be with Clayton.

MAGGIE

What?

PHILLIP

He'll take care of you.

MAGGIE

You don't want me?

PHILLIP

Of course. But if something happens, Maggie . . . if I can't come back for you . . . marry him so I know you'll be okay.

MAGGIE

How can I promise that?

PHILLIP

Because it's what's best for you.

Maggie turns away, hurt and confused.

MAGGIE

You're what's best for me.

Phillip holds her tight and they kiss. As they kiss, drops of rain begin to run down their faces.

They break away from their embrace and hold their hands out, catching the raindrops and laughing.

Suddenly the sky lights up all around them, a loud thunderclap is heard, and rain comes pouring down.

They laugh and start running across the field.

CUT TO:

INT. DALTON BARN -- LATER

Soaking wet, Maggie and Phillip enter the barn, still laughing.

The rain is still pouring down outside.

Maggie climbs the ladder to the loft and lights a lantern that casts a dim glow over the loft.

Maggie climbs back down the ladder.

MAGGIE

You can sleep up there. I'll bring you some dry clothes.

Phillip follows the light and climbs up the loft as Maggie leaves the barn.

CUT TO:

INT. DALTON BARN -- LATER

Maggie reenters the barn, now dressed in a dry night dress. She holds a bundle of clothes in her hands and a blanket draped over her head.

She climbs the ladder, talking as she goes.

MAGGIE

I brought you some of Leo's clothes. Nobody will
mis—

But Maggie has reached the top of the loft now and is distracted by Phillip, who is standing in his underwear.

Maggie freezes when she sees him, then catches herself and hands him the towel.

Phillip takes the towel and begins drying off his body.

PHILLIP

Could you help me?

Phillip holds the towel out towards Maggie. She eyes it a moment, then comes towards him, takes the towel from him and helps him to dry off.

Phillip kisses her and Maggie drops the towel, but is now too caught up in the heat of desire to retrieve it.

Phillip gently lays Maggie down on the blanket as they continue to kiss more passionately.

CUT TO:

INT. DALTON BARN -- MORNING

The early morning sun is just starting to filter into the barn.

The lantern burns dimly, flickering as if about to burn out.

Maggie and Phillip sleep wrapped in each other's arms, naked.

The barn door OPENS and with it a burst of sunlight floods the barn.

Maggie and Phillip are startled awake, but lie frozen and silent.

Below, Franklin walks around the barn gathering the tools he needs.

Then he walks out and shuts the barn door.

Maggie and Phillip cover their mouths and giggle like school kids.

Maggie kisses Phillip and then jumps up and starts dressing.

She throws Phillip's trousers at him.

MAGGIE

Better get going.

CUT TO:

EXT. DALTON BARN -- LATER

The door to the barn opens and Maggie pokes her head out.

She looks all around before opening the door further and gestures for Phillip to come out.

Phillip kisses her.

MAGGIE

Take the road so he won't see you.

Phillip nods and starts to go, but Maggie tugs at his jacket and pulls him back to her.

They kiss again, while struggling to pull themselves away from each other.

PHILLIP

You'll come say good-bye, won't you?

MAGGIE

I wouldn't miss it.

They kiss one last time and Phillip jogs off down the road.

Maggie throws open the door to the barn and then walks back inside the barn to start her chores.

CUT TO:

INT. DALTON BARN -- LATER

Maggie sits on a bucket milking a cow.

She's still wearing her night dress and she can't seem to stop smiling.

Gretchen comes in and passes by Maggie, paying close attention to Maggie's clothes and unusual happiness.

She sits down in front of another cow and begins milking her.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD -- LATER

Phillip walks down the road smiling to himself. There's a spring to his step that usually isn't there.

He turns the bend in the road and sees his car.

As he approaches, he sees Clayton standing beside the car pouring gas into it from a gas canister.

Phillip yells to Clayton as he continues walking towards him.

PHILLIP

You should know, that's *my* car.

CLAYTON

I know whose car this is.

PHILLIP

Then why are you putting gas into it, Mr. Bauer?

Clayton finishes pouring, sets the canister down, and closes the gas tank.

CLAYTON

(mumbling)

Clayton.

PHILLIP

What was that, Mr. Bauer?

CLAYTON

You can call me Clayton . . . Mags does . . . so I figure
you can call me Clayton too.

Phillip is now standing next to Clayton. He pulls out his wallet and begins taking money out.

PHILLIP

Please let me pay you for that gas. I know it's not easy
to come by these days.

Clayton makes a dismissive gesture and picks up his gas canister.

CLAYTON

She loves you. It's the least I could do.

Clayton turns to go, but Phillip catches up to him and walks with him.

PHILLIP

You love her, don't you?

Clayton stops walking and faces Phillip without answering.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Take care of her for me.

CLAYTON

I tried to go, but the man said I ain't good enough. He
said my short leg would make me a sittin' duck for the
enemy. I wanted ya to know that. I ain't no coward.

Phillip puts his hand on Clayton's shoulder.

PHILLIP

I know you aren't, Clayton. You're a good man.

CLAYTON

Come back to her. I ain't the one she wants.

PHILLIP

I'm going to do everything in my power to.

Phillip and Clayton have finally come to an understanding. They shake hands.

CLAYTON

She loves you.

PHILLIP

And I her.

Clayton nods and starts to walk away, but stops and turns back to face Phillip.

CLAYTON

I'll take good care of her.

PHILLIP

I know you will. If she didn't have you, I don't think I'd be able to leave her.

Clayton nods at the compliment and continues walking across the field towards his house.

Phillip watches him go.

CUT TO:

EXT. DALTON HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

Maggie is outside, shelling green beans with Georgia and Gretchen.

Cora plays in the yard close by.

Clayton pulls up to the house and walks over to Maggie.

Cora runs over to him, with her arms outstretched

CORA

Fly me.

Clayton picks her up and spins her around . . . flying her. She giggles and Maggie can't help smiling watching them.

He sets her back down and continues walking towards Maggie.

GEORGIA

Clayton. What brings you by?

CLAYTON

I'm gonna give Maggie a ride into town. I mean . . . if she wants . . . I figured she'd want to see that fella of hers off.

Maggie looks up . . . she hasn't let time slip her by, Clayton is simply early.

CLAYTON

It's early . . . I just figured I 'ought to make sure you get there in time.

MAGGIE

Let me change.

She starts towards the house, but comes back over to Clayton, pecks him on the cheek, and she's off towards the house.

Clayton blushes and watches her disappear into the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEYMOUR JOHNSON FIELD -- AFTERNOON

Around the outskirts of the airfield, crowds of people line up to watch the 326th Fighter Group take off.

Maggie stands in the crowd, pushing her way through with Clayton. She wears the same dress she has on in the photograph in her room at the nursing home.

Phillip stands on the field surveying the crowd for her.

Phillip and Maggie spot each other at last and come together in an embrace.

Clayton hangs back, but close enough to hear this.

Maggie has tears in her eyes and hands Phillip something wrapped in a handkerchief.

PHILLIP

What's this?

MAGGIE

Something to remember me by . . . and to help bring you back to me.

Phillip unwraps it to find a little pink baptismal Bible with a cloth pink cover.

He opens it to find *Margaret Fay Dalton* written inside and in a different handwriting the inscription *Bring him home*.

Phillip's eyes tear up as he kisses Maggie.

Then he pulls a tiny box out of his pocket and hands it to Maggie.

She opens it to find a small gold ring with a single diamond.

Maggie stands stunned and not quite comprehending.

PHILLIP

Wait for me?

Maggie nods her head yes and cries.

Phillip takes the ring out of the box and slips it onto Maggie's finger.

Clayton slumps as he overhears this. He turns around and makes his way to the outskirts of the crowd.

Maggie and Phillip kiss as a photographer comes up to them.

PHILLIP

Take our engagement picture, sir?

The photographer is happy to oblige.

He snaps the photograph of Phillip and Maggie . . . the same photograph Maggie still has years later on her dresser.

The photograph captures young love at its best, and even years later the picture can bring back those feelings for him.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

I have to go now.

Phillip kisses Maggie and holds her tight.

Around them other pilots are saying good-bye to loved ones.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

I love you, Maggie.

MAGGIE

And I love you.

They kiss one last time and Phillip walks away with the other pilots.

Maggie watches until he's out of sight and then turns her attention to the ring on her finger.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DALTON HOUSE -- DAY

Maggie sits at the kitchen table looking at her engagement ring.

On the table is a letter from Phillip.

She smiles and starts writing Phillip a letter.

MAGGIE (V.O.)

My dearest Phillip. It's been over a month since you left and already it feels like a lifetime. The place that has always been home to me, no longer feels like home without you in it.

CUT TO:

EXT. DALTON ESTATE -- SUNSET

Maggie walks through fields of tobacco, which are now growing leaves after last year's picking. The sun is beginning to set over the crops.

MAGGIE (V.O.) (CON'T)

Every day passing day brings me comfort. Every sunset I watch is one less that'll pass without you. On warm nights I sleep in the loft in the barn. I can still feel the weight of your body in the hay.

CUT TO:

INT. DALTON BARN -- MORNING

Maggie sits milking a cow. Gretchen is milking another cow.

Abruptly Maggie gets up, runs to a stall, and throws up.

MAGGIE (V.O.) (CON'T)

Since you left, I feel sick to my stomach just thinking about you and hoping that you're safe. If you can, please write to me, my darling. Every letter I receive from you puts my heart at rest. All my love, Maggie.

Maggie comes back and sits down to begin milking her cow again. She appears uneasy, not just queasy. Gretchen looks at Maggie, worried.

CUT TO:

INT. DALTON HOUSE -- EVENING

Franklin sits reading a book.

Still wearing the engagement ring, Maggie is helping Georgia clean up the kitchen.

Georgia motions for Maggie to go to her father. Maggie hesitates, but after more prodding from her mother she shuffles over to her father.

MAGGIE

Papa?

FRANKLIN

(not looking up)

Yes?

MAGGIE

Papa, I . . . I need to tell you something.

Georgia now stands behind Maggie.

FRANKLIN

Go ahead.

MAGGIE

It's important, Papa.

Franklin understands and sets his book down.

FRANKLIN

Yes.

MAGGIE

Papa . . . I haven't had my monthly.

Franklin doesn't quite understand.

GEORGIA

Franklin, she's with child.

FRANKLIN

What do you mean she's with child?

MAGGIE

Papa, we didn't mean . . . we wanted to wait . . . but
Papa, he might die!

FRANKLIN

He better hope he does or I'll kill him myself!

MAGGIE

Papa, please.

FRANKLIN

Do you know what you've done? He tricked you, Maggie.

MAGGIE

No!

FRANKLIN

Yes. Now he's never going to come back for you. And no other decent man will have you, either.

MAGGIE

That's not true, he will come back.

FRANKLIN

What's there to come back for?

MAGGIE

He loves me.

FRANKLIN

He loved you so you would sleep with him. The man was about to go to war where it might be years before he even sees another woman . . . and if he does, do you think he'll be thinking about you?

MAGGIE

How can you say that?

FRANKLIN

Maggie, I thought you were smarter than this. How could you disgrace this family?

MAGGIE

We're going to get married. He gave me this.

Maggie holds out her hand showing the engagement ring.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

He said he spoke to you . . . that you gave your
permiss—

FRANKLIN

(interrupting)

If he had intended to marry you, he would have done so *before* he did this to you . . . *before* he left for the war.

MAGGIE

He thought it best for *me* if we wait.

GEORGIA

Franklin, what are we going to do?

FRANKLIN

Write your sister in Boone. See if Maggie can stay with her until the baby is born.

MAGGIE

Then what, Papa?

Franklin and Georgia exchange a look. Who's going to tell her?

Georgia accepts the responsibility and sits down next to Maggie, taking Maggie's hands in hers.

GEORGIA

Maggie, you've got your whole life ahead of you. You know what they say about girls in your condition. Think of your child. Do you want him to grow up being called a bastard?

Maggie has always trusted her parents, but the thought that Phillip isn't coming back for her kills her.

GEORGIA (CON'T)

You go stay with Aunt Lilly until this whole thing blows over. Nobody ever has to know about it.

MAGGIE

It's a baby, Momma. It's not the kind of thing that just blows over.

GEORGIA

It will. You just have to trust us, Maggie. If you want us to support you on this, you musn't argue.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN -- DAY

Maggie boards the train carrying a suitcase, which she stows above her seat.

She takes her seat and gazes out the window at the platform as the train starts off.

On the platform her family stands huddled together.

Her father puts his comforting arm around her mother as she cries.

Only Gretchen waves happily at the train.

Maggie waves to Gretchen and then faces forward, refusing to prolong the good-bye.

CUT TO:

INT. LILLY'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Maggie lies on a couch writing a letter. She's further along in her pregnancy now and clearly showing.

In a chair beside her sits AUNT LILLY, a woman of about Georgia's age with fair skin and blue eyes, reading a book.

Maggie finishes the letter, folds it, and seals it.

MAGGIE

Aunt Lilly?

AUNT LILLY

Yes, dear?

MAGGIE

Could you mail this for me?

AUNT LILLY

A letter to your mother?

MAGGIE

No.

AUNT LILLY

Another letter to him?

MAGGIE

Yes, ma'am.

Aunt Lilly puts down her book and looks at Maggie for the first time.

AUNT LILLY

How long are you going to keep this up?

MAGGIE

Until he writes back.

AUNT LILLY

He might not.

MAGGIE

He will.

AUNT LILLY

Have you told him about your condition?

MAGGIE

No, not yet.

AUNT LILLY

That's probably for the best.

MAGGIE

I don't want to worry him.

Aunt Lilly reaches for the letter.

AUNT LILLY

Here . . . I'll mail it when I go into town tomorrow.

Maggie hands Aunt Lilly the letter and picks up a book.

MAGGIE

Thank you.

CUT TO:

INT. LILLY'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Maggie lies on the couch reading. She's even further along in her pregnancy now.

Aunt Lilly comes in the front door carrying a package and some mail.

She hands a letter to Maggie.

Maggie's face lights up with excitement, then drains the moment she sees who the letter is from.

Without opening the letter, Maggie places it on the table and continues reading.

MAGGIE

I didn't get anything else, did I?

AUNT LILLY

Not today, honey. I'm sorry.

CUT TO:

EXT. LILLY'S HOUSE -- DAY

Maggie has a short-sleeved shirt and trousers on. Her trouser legs are rolled up to the knee and she dangles her feet in a wading pool as she writes a letter to Phillip. She's even further along in her pregnancy now.

CUT TO:

INT. LILLY'S HOUSE -- DAY

Maggie sits on the kitchen floor carving out a pumpkin. She's very far along in her pregnancy now.

Aunt Lilly walks in with a grim look on her face, carrying a letter.

MAGGIE

What is it?

AUNT LILLY

Put the knife down, child.

MAGGIE

That's a letter from the war, isn't it?

Aunt Lilly nods her head as Maggie puts the knife down, preparing herself for the worst.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

Is he dead?

Aunt Lilly nods her head as tears run down her face.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

Oh, God.

Maggie starts crying.

Aunt Lilly sits down beside her, trying to comfort her.

AUNT LILLY

Poor Leo . . . what's your Papa going to do without him?

Maggie looks up shocked.

MAGGIE

Leo?

AUNT LILLY

Who else would it have been?

Maggie dismisses her aunt and sits in shock. She had been prepared for Phillip's death, but she had never considered losing her brother.

MAGGIE

No, not Leo.

AUNT LILLY

I'm so sorry, honey.

MAGGIE

I must go pack.

Maggie stands up as if heading out the room. Aunt Lilly catches her by the hand, shaking her head no.

Maggie slumps back down on the couch.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

Not even for Leo's funeral.

AUNT LILLY

I'm afraid not, my dear.

MAGGIE

They hate me.

Maggie lies her head in Aunt Lilly's lap, crying.

AUNT LILLY

No, no.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL -- MORNING

There is a small, decorated Christmas tree on the nightstand beside Maggie's bed.

Maggie lies in the hospital bed, sleeping.

Aunt Lilly sits beside her and watches her.

A NURSE wheels in a baby boy.

Aunt Lilly gently shakes Maggie to arouse her.

The Nurse hands Maggie the baby.

NURSE

He's very handsome . . . like your husband, I'm sure.

Maggie shakes her head, but before she can say anything Aunt Lilly steps in.

AUNT LILLY

I think the baby takes more after Maggie's side than his father's.

NURSE

Where's the father?

AUNT LILLY

He's a pilot in the war.

The Nurse turns to Maggie, who is cuddling her baby.

NURSE

How'd you meet?

MAGGIE

We met while he was training for the war.

NURSE

In Boone?

MAGGIE

No, Goldsboro.

NURSE

How did he propose?

MAGGIE

He proposed the day he left with his flight group to go overseas. Right there on the flight field in front of the entire town.

NURSE

How romantic . . . but when did you marry?

MAGGIE

Oh, well, we . . .

But Maggie can't get it out before Aunt Lilly cuts her off.

AUNT LILLY

They didn't have much time at all. He was given an extra week before he had to leave . . . they were married the next day and spent six days as husband and wife before he went to war.

The nurse is completely captivated by the young love, but Maggie is utterly perplexed by Aunt Lilly's fabrication.

NURSE

Ah, young love. How amazing.

MAGGIE

(sarcastically)

Isn't it?

The nurse starts to go.

NURSE

I'll be back in half an hour to get him.

Maggie nods and the nurse starts to walk out, but stops and turns back to Maggie.

NURSE (CON'T)

By the way . . . have you decided on a name for the baby?

MAGGIE

A name?

NURSE

Yes.

MAGGIE

Yes . . . yes, Alexander.

NURSE

Alexander it is then.

And the nurse walks out.

As she exits, DAVID WILSON and REBECCA WILSON enter the room. They are a young couple in their mid-thirties, well-dressed, with a soft demeanor about them.

AUNT LILLY

Maggie, these are friends of mine . . . David and Rebecca Wilson. They wanted to come by and see Alexander.

David and Rebecca can't take their eyes off Alexander.

MAGGIE

How do you do?

REBECCA

Oh, he's beautiful.

MAGGIE

Would you like to hold him?

REBECCA

Would it be all right?

Maggie shrugs, picks Alexander up and hands him to Rebecca.

Rebecca practically melts the moment Alexander is placed in her arms.

REBECCA (CON'T)

(to David Wilson)

Oh, David, he's perfect.

Maggie is so exhausted she can barely keep her eyes open. She starts to doze in and out while the rest continue to talk.

DAVID

When will she be leaving?

AUNT LILLY

Next week.

REBECCA

All the paperwork should be finished tomorrow.

AUNT LILLY

Maggie goes home tomorrow.

REBECCA

Would she like some time before we come?

AUNT LILLY

Perhaps a day or two . . . but anything longer probably won't be good for her.

DAVID

Then we'll come on Monday . . . that will give her the weekend.

AUNT LILLY

Monday it is.

CUT TO:

INT. LILLY'S HOUSE: BEDROOM -- MORNING

The morning light is beginning to filter in the windows.

Maggie sleeps in her bed. Beside the bed is a bassinet with Alexander in it.

Alexander begins crying and Maggie staggers drowsily out of bed and picks him up.

She begins rocking him as she paces up and down the room, lulling him back to sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. LILLY'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Maggie lies on the couch reading a book and dozing off.

Alexander sleeps in the bassinet beside her.

Aunt Lilly sits in a chair beside them, but gets up to answer the KNOCK at the door.

David and Rebecca Wilson enter, carrying Christmas presents.

Aunt Lilly greets them amicably and then brings them to where Maggie is lying.

Maggie sits up and greets them.

Rebecca motions to Maggie to ask if she can pick up the baby. Maggie nods and Rebecca picks him up.

AUNT LILLY

What's all this?

DAVID

Just some little gifts Rebecca and I picked up while in town . . . as a way to say thank you for everything.

David sits down beside Maggie and hands her a gift. He then hands the other one to Aunt Lilly.

Maggie opens it to reveal a book . . . *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, by Ernest Hemingway.

DAVID

Your aunt told me you like to read.

MAGGIE

Yes, sir. Thank you.

REBECCA

You're quite welcome, dear.

Maggie smiles.

DAVID

When will you be returning home?

MAGGIE

Soon.

AUNT LILLY

Yes, we were just waiting for her to get her strength back . . . but she's anxious to return to her studies.

Alexander begins to get fussy.

MAGGIE

I should probably feed him and put him to bed now.

REBECCA

Oh, of course.

Rebecca hands Alexander to Maggie.

MAGGIE

It was lovely seeing you both again.

REBECCA

You too, dear.

Rebecca walks partly out of the room with Maggie.

MAGGIE

Good-night, Mrs. Wilson.

REBECCA

Good-night, dear. You know . . . you're a brave young woman, bless your heart.

Maggie doesn't quite know what to make of Mrs. Wilson's comment, so she simply smiles and excuses herself.

CUT TO:

INT. LILLY'S HOUSE: BEDROOM -- LATER

Maggie puts the sleeping Alexander in his bassinet beside her bed.

Drained and sleepy, Maggie plops into the bed and falls fast asleep.

CUT TO:

INT. LILLY'S HOUSE: BEDROOM -- MORNING

Maggie sleeps in the bed. The bassinet still sits beside the bed.

The curtains blow gently from the breeze coming through the open window.

The sun is shining brightly in the room.

Below, noises can be heard from people stirring about.

Maggie slowly wakes up, stretches, and then lies still, listening for a moment.

Suddenly, she bolts upright and looks about her in a panic.

Maggie jumps up from the bed and rushes over to the bassinet. It's empty.

MAGGIE

(screaming)

Aunt Lilly!

Aunt Lilly busts through the door.

AUNT LILLY

What is it, child?

MAGGIE

Alexander! He's gone.

CUT TO:

INT. LILLY'S HOUSE -- DAY

Wrapping paper is strewn all over the floor. In the corner the Christmas tree is still decorated with its lights burning bright, but it's bare underneath.

Maggie sits in the middle of the floor with a neatly wrapped package in her hands. She's crying.

Aunt Lilly walks in and sees her. She kneels down beside her, trying to comfort her.

AUNT LILLY

What is it, child?

MAGGIE

[re: the package]

This was for Alexander.

Maggie sobs as Aunt Lilly hugs her.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN -- DAY

Maggie sits on the train, staring blankly ahead as the train pulls into the station.

There are dark circles under her eyes, and her face is thinner than it has ever been.

The train pulls to a halt, and Maggie turns her gaze to the platform.

Standing on the platform waiting for her is Clayton.

He's dressed nicely and holds a nicely wrapped book-sized package in his hands.

Passengers are hurriedly exiting the train, but Maggie continues to stare out the window.

She sighs deeply and then slowly gets up from her seat to leave.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN -- CONTINUOUS

Clayton takes Maggie's luggage from her and hands her the small, wrapped package.

CLAYTON

Welcome home, Mags. I've missed you.

Maggie tries to force a smile while she opens the package, but once the package is opened she no longer has to try to smile.

Inside the package is a book . . . *The Moon is Down*, by John Steinbeck. The same book she wanted to buy from Dewey at the bookstore.

MAGGIE

Thanks, Clayton.

Clayton and Maggie start walking away from the train.

CUT TO:

EXT. DALTON ESTATE -- DAY

Once again it's springtime. The tobacco crop is coming in nicely and the trees and flowers are all in bloom.

The Dalton and Bauer families are gathered on the Dalton lawn.

A small band is set up playing jazz songs in the background.

Maggie is dressed in a white wedding gown, Clayton in a black suit. Clayton is happier than we've ever seen him . . . so happy, he can't stop smiling. On his left hand is a wedding band.

Maggie, on the other hand, can't even fake a good smile. She has flowers in her hair and holds a bouquet in her hand. The engagement ring Phillip gave her has now been replaced with a wedding band.

Gretchen comes up to her sister and hugs her.

Franklin and Georgia also come up and hug Maggie and kiss her on the cheek.

FRANKLIN

You've made this family very proud, Maggie.

Maggie feigns a smile and her parents walk off.

Sitting at a table drinking some punch is EMMA BAUER, a small-statured girl of about sixteen years of age. Other than Maggie, she is the only one not having a good time.

Maggie walks over and sits down beside her. Emma feigns a smile at Maggie but doesn't speak.

After a moment, Maggie attempts a somewhat awkward conversation with her.

MAGGIE

I miss him too.

Emma looks up . . . Maggie might just be the only one who understands her.

EMMA

He told me he would come back.

MAGGIE

I know he meant it . . . they would have if they could.

EMMA

They?

Maggie catches herself and tries to cover.

MAGGIE

All the Leos in the world . . . they all promised someone somewhere that they'd be back.

Emma nods understandingly.

EMMA

At least you have Clayton, though . . . I . . . I don't have anyone.

Maggie looks across and sees Clayton. He's smiling and happy. Just the sight of him makes her sad and she sighs.

MAGGIE

So what are you going to do?

EMMA

Ma and Pa are sending me to Greenville next fall. I'm going to go to school there.

MAGGIE

I always thought I'd go to college . . . but then, well . . . things just don't always work out like you plan.

EMMA

Your life's not over, Maggie . . . just because his is.

Confused, Maggie stares at Emma.

EMMA (CON'T)

Clayton told me about Phillip. I'm sorry.

Emma picks up her empty punch glass and stands up, but puts her hand on Maggie's shoulder before she leaves.

EMMA (CON'T)

Clayton will give you anything you want . . . he can make you happy . . . if you'll let him.

With that said, Emma walks off, leaving Maggie all alone.

Clayton spots her sitting alone and walks up to her just as the band is starting another song.

CLAYTON

Maggie?

Maggie looks up at Clayton and feigns a smile.

CLAYTON (CON'T)

(nervously)

Would you like to dance?

Maggie looks towards the band. Her parents are dancing. Clayton's parents are dancing. She looks at Clayton and shakes her head.

Clayton looks disappointed as he nods and walks off, leaving Maggie alone again.

CUT TO:

INT. BAUER GUEST HOUSE -- NIGHT

Maggie sits on the bed in her nightgown, reading.

Clayton enters in his nightclothes, a bit nervous.

Maggie shifts uncomfortably in the bed when Clayton enters.

Clayton pulls up a chair beside Maggie's side of the bed and sits beside her.

CLAYTON

I know I'm not what you wanted, Mags.

Maggie shakes her head, but Clayton stops her and continues talking.

CLAYTON (CON'T)

But I'd do anything to make you happy.

MAGGIE

I know, Clayton.

CLAYTON

What is it you want for the rest of your life, Maggie?

Maggie looks longingly out the window.

MAGGIE

What I want, I can't have . . . and you can't give me.

CLAYTON

No, what do you want for yourself, Maggie?

Maggie considers for a moment, then brightens and turns to Clayton.

MAGGIE

I want to teach, Clayton.

Clayton thinks this over for a moment, then smiles and stands up.

CLAYTON

All right then. There's still time to apply for fall semester.

Maggie shakes her head . . . she doesn't understand how this is possible.

MAGGIE

I . . . I can't.

CLAYTON

Sure you can.

MAGGIE

But the farm . . .

CLAYTON

Dad will be fine . . . we can go away for a couple of years 'til you finish.

Maggie begins to become excited about the prospect.

MAGGIE

Could we really, Clayton?

CLAYTON

Of course.

Clayton walks over to the side of the bed, bends down and kisses Maggie on the forehead.

CLAYTON (CON'T)

Good-night, Mags.

Maggie looks confused.

MAGGIE

Where are you going?

Clayton nervously shifts on his feet.

CLAYTON

Maggie . . . I understand . . . I . . . I don't expect anything . . . I mean, you and I don't have to . . . I wouldn't want to, so I . . . I'm just going to sleep in the other room.

MAGGIE

Clayton, I know my obligations.

CLAYTON

No, Maggie . . . not with me . . . it's not going to be that way.

MAGGIE

Clayton, I don't mind . . . I—

CLAYTON

But you don't want me.

MAGGIE

Clayton! I didn't mean that.

CLAYTON

It's okay, Maggie. It's okay.

Disappointed, Clayton walks out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAUER ESTATE -- DAY

Emma and Maggie walk around the estate.

EMMA

That's great, Maggie. Have you told Clayton yet?

MAGGIE

No, I was going to talk to him tonight.

EMMA

It will be so nice having you both in Greenville with me.

MAGGIE

It will be nice just to get out of this town for awhile.

EMMA

But you just got back . . . from that, what was it? Girls' school?

MAGGIE

(faltering)

What? Oh, yes, yes . . . a Finishing School.

Emma links arms with Maggie.

EMMA

This is going to be lovely, Maggie . . . lovely.

CUT TO:

INT. BAUER GUEST HOUSE -- NIGHT

Maggie sleeps soundly in the bed by herself. A loud KNOCK on the front door awakens her.

The knock is promptly followed by footsteps entering the house and yelling.

EMMA (O.S.)

Clayton! Clayton! Come quick!

Maggie hurries out the room to find Emma standing in front of her.

Clayton comes out of the room opposite Maggie.

Emma spins around and looks at Clayton confused. She looks back and forth between Maggie and Clayton, but shakes it off . . . there's no time for this right now.

EMMA (CON'T)

Clayton . . . it's Pa . . . come quick!

Clayton doesn't ask any questions; he simply grabs his coat, slips on his shoes, and follows Emma out.

CUT TO:

INT. BAUER GUEST HOUSE -- DAY

Clayton sits at the kitchen table eating breakfast. Maggie brings her plate from the kitchen and sits down across from him.

They eat in silence for awhile, then Clayton pulls an envelope out of a book on the table and hands it to Maggie without saying a word.

Maggie opens it and pulls out a tuition stub with a *Tuition Paid* stamped in red on it.

Speechless, Maggie looks at Clayton questioningly.

MAGGIE

But, how . . . Clayton, we can't . . . with your dad gone, the farm needs you.

CLAYTON

Just because I can't go with you, Mags, doesn't mean you can't go.

MAGGIE

No, I can't.

CLAYTON

You can and you will. I've already arranged it with Emma. You'll stay with her.

MAGGIE

Won't people talk?

CLAYTON

I don't care if they do, Mags. I want you to be happy. Besides, you'll be great at this.

Maggie doesn't know how to thank Clayton. She comes around to Clayton and hugs him. Clayton holds her while she kisses him on the cheek.

Then Maggie sits down beside him and starts making plans for her future.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN CENTER HEALTH & REHAB: PHILLIP'S ROOM -- DAY

SUPERTITLE: Goldsboro, North Carolina – Present

A curtain is drawn down the middle of the room, separating the two beds.

The walls are bare and the room is much more like a hospital room than Maggie's room.

Maggie sits in a chair beside the bed.

In the bed, PHILLIP FAIRCHILD, now in his eighties, lies in disbelief at what he's just been told.

He has an IV in his arm and an oxygen tube in his nose.

Beside his bed are several pictures of his wife, children, and grandchildren.

PHILLIP

We have a son?

MAGGIE

Yes. He's the only child I ever had.

PHILLIP

I had no idea. When you stopped writing to me . . .

MAGGIE

I never stopped. I wrote once I left, but I never told you about the baby. I wasn't sure how to tell you.

A beat.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

You . . . you didn't get my letters?

PHILLIP

No. I kept writing you for months after your letters stopped . . . hoping something I would say would bring your heart back to me.

MAGGIE

My heart was always with you. I thought you were the one that stopped loving me.

PHILLIP

No, never . . . I . . . I even wrote you to say when I was coming home.

MAGGIE

I . . . I never got that letter. I never got any after I got pregnant.

PHILLIP

Because you weren't living there anymore. I know. I came by your house.

MAGGIE

You did?

PHILLIP

Yes. When your letters stopped, the only thing that kept me going was the thought that if only I could see you in person again . . . hold you in my arms and kiss you . . . then you'd be mine again.

MAGGIE

I never fell out of love with you.

PHILLIP

You married Clayton!

MAGGIE

You told me too!

PHILLIP

If I didn't come back.

MAGGIE

But you didn't. Your letters stopped. I . . . I thought you were dead. I didn't want to marry him, but things were tough. I didn't have a choice.

PHILLIP

I did come back for you, but you didn't wait for me. Your mother told me you had married. That you were happy and it was best that I leave you alone. What could I have done then, anyway?

Maggie considers this.

MAGGIE

And so you married.

Phillip shakes his head . . . Maggie has misunderstood him.

PHILLIP

I love my wife. We have two beautiful daughters and three wonderful grandchildren.

Maggie turns her head away from Phillip, unable to bear the news of his life.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

I have always been honest with my wife. She knows there's only been one woman I've truly been in love with.

Maggie turns questioningly towards Phillip.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Yes. She knows about you. She knew I would never love her like I love you . . . that I couldn't . . . but that I would give her all I could.

MAGGIE

Love the one you're with?

PHILLIP

I care for her and I love her and we've had a great life together, but it could never be the same as with you.

MAGGIE

You're the only man I've ever loved . . . the only man I've ever been with.

PHILLIP

Been with?

MAGGIE

Clayton and I had no children. We never consummated our marriage.

PHILLIP

He's a braver man than I thought.

MAGGIE

Was.

PHILLIP

Oh, I'm sorry.

MAGGIE

He was good to me. He honored his pledge to you. He took me when no other man would have me. And he never asked more of me than I could give him.

Phillip motions to the drawer in the nightstand.

PHILLIP

Open that.

Maggie does so and pulls out the same small pink baptismal Bible that she had given him so many years ago, but a little more worn and torn than when she gave it to him.

Tears begin to fill her eyes at the sight of it.

MAGGIE

You kept this?

PHILLIP

I take it everywhere I go.

Maggie opens it and inside is a folded up photograph. She opens it and it is identical to the one on her dresser.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

You sent me that in the last letter you ever—

Phillip stops himself and corrects his statement.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

I ever received from you. I kept it in there so I could always look at you.

MAGGIE

I still have it, too.

Maggie pulls out her necklace, which is tucked into her dress. On the end of the necklace is the ring that Phillip gave her the day he left for war.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

And this.

Phillip begins to cry at the sight of it and the meaning behind her still wearing it.

PHILLIP

I can't believe you still wear that.

MAGGIE

I promised I'd wear it until you came back for me.

They smile at each other and Phillip reaches out to Maggie. Maggie takes his hand in hers.

The curtain is drawn back and ALICE, the social worker, comes in carrying some forms.

ALICE

Mr. Fairchild, I just need to go over some things with you . . . is this a bad time?

Maggie gets up to leave.

MAGGIE

I'll come back tomorrow, if that's all right?

PHILLIP

Please do.

Maggie bends down and kisses Phillip on the forehead and leaves.

Alice walks past her and takes the seat beside his bed.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIAN CENTER HEALTH & REHAB: PHILLIP'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Maggie stands outside of Phillip's room, breathing heavily.

From inside she catches pieces of the conversation.

ALICE (O.S.)

If you do not wish for us to use heroic measures to resuscitate you, I just need you to sign this consent form. Please read over it carefully, Mr. Fairchild, and if you have any questions I'll be happy to answer them.

Maggie fingers the ring on her necklace, smiles, and starts off in the direction of her room.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN CENTER HEALTH & REHAB: PHILLIP'S ROOM -- DAY

Maggie sits beside Phillip's bed again.

They've already settled back into a comfortable place with each other.

Phillip still has the same IV and oxygen tubes hooked up to him.

PHILLIP

He's coming, here?

Maggie beams with delight.

MAGGIE

Yes.

PHILLIP

Today?

MAGGIE

Don't you want to meet him?

PHILLIP

Yes, of course . . . I just . . . what do I say? What does he expect of me?

MAGGIE

Just be yourself. He expects nothing . . . he simply wants to meet you.

A KNOCK at the door sends Maggie to her feet.

PHILLIP

Yes . . . yes, come in.

ALEXANDER, a man in his sixties, enters. He appears just as anxious as Phillip. He has Maggie's dark eyes and complexion and Phillip's tall and lanky build.

Maggie greets him warmly and he kisses her on the cheek.

MAGGIE

Phillip, this is Alexander . . . your son.

Phillip extends his hand and Alexander takes it in his own.

PHILLIP

Sit, sit . . . please.

Alexander takes the seat beside Phillip's bed.

Both men are on the verge of tears as they struggle to find the words to say to one another.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

My son.

Alexander smiles.

MAGGIE

You two catch up.

(to Phillip)

I'll see you tomorrow.

Phillip nods, but doesn't take his eyes off Alexander.

Alexander stands and kisses Maggie on the cheek again.

ALEXANDER

I'll stop by before I leave.

Maggie smiles and exits, leaving father and son to catch up on a lifetime.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN CENTER HEALTH & REHAB: PHILLIP'S ROOM -- DAY

Maggie sits in her now familiar chair beside Phillip.

PHILLIP

It was a great visit . . . thank you.

MAGGIE

I'm glad.

PHILLIP

One thing confuses me, though.

MAGGIE

What?

PHILLIP

If Alex was stolen from his cradle in the middle of the night . . . I'm not sure I understand . . . well, how was he able to track you down?

Maggie starts to squirm in her seat as if all of a sudden she was sitting on needles.

MAGGIE

(aloof)

Hospital records I guess.

PHILLIP

You know that's not possible.

Maggie shrugs and looks away, trying to avoid the conversation.

MAGGIE

So, tell me about your wife.

PHILLIP

Maggie.

MAGGIE

What's her name again?

PHILLIP

Gloria.

MAGGIE

Don't you think we should meet?

PHILLIP

No, I don't.

MAGGIE

Why not?

PHILLIP

Maggie, please.

MAGGIE

What?

PHILLIP

Stop it.

Maggie sits with her head bent down, like a child being scolded.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Alex told me how he found you.

MAGGIE

It isn't important how he found me . . . he found me,
that's enough.

PHILLIP

Maggie, tell me the truth.

Maggie stands up from her seat and walks towards the window.

MAGGIE

I told you the truth.

PHILLIP

Alexander wasn't stolen from you in the middle of the
night. You put him up for adoption.

MAGGIE

No, I did not!

Maggie is clearly getting upset at Phillip's accusations.

PHILLIP

Maggie, it's okay if you did . . . you didn't have a choice . . . I don't blame you for it . . . Alex doesn't blame you . . . he had a good life.

MAGGIE

But I didn't! Everyone else did, but I didn't!

Tears are streaming down Maggie's face now.

Phillip pauses and reconsiders his approach with Maggie.

PHILLIP

Maggie, I didn't mean to upset you . . . please, sit down.

Maggie shakes her head and continues to stare out the window.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

It was a hard time for you, Maggie . . . your parents had lied to you . . . and it's my fault, too.

Maggie turns around to face Phillip, questioningly.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

I should have been there for you. He was my baby, too. You shouldn't have had to carry it on your own. If only I had known.

MAGGIE

I wanted to tell you.

PHILLIP

I know. I wanted to marry you before I left. If I had, this would have never happened.

MAGGIE

You wanted us to wait.

PHILLIP

No. Your father did. He thought it would be better if you thought it was my idea.

MAGGIE

My father?

Phillip nods his head.

PHILLIP

Come here.

Maggie takes her seat beside his bed. Phillip extends his hand to her and Maggie takes it.

PHILLIP (CON'T)

Maybe with all the stress, you just don't remember things clearly.

MAGGIE

I remember just fine. I put Alexander in the crib and went to bed. In the morning I slept longer than usual. He didn't wake me up with his crying. When I went to his crib, he wasn't there. I searched the entire house . . . nobody knew where he was.

Maggie is starting to get worked up again.

Phillip squeezes her hand.

PHILLIP

All right . . . all right . . . it's not important . . . he's here now . . . we're together now . . . that's all that matters.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN CENTER HEALTH & REHAB: HALLWAY -- DAY

CORA wobbles down the hallway carrying a box.

She wobbles into Maggie's room and then reemerges a few seconds later with a confused look on her face.

She wobbles down the hall until she finds Cathy.

CATHY

Ms. Cora. Are you looking for your sister?

CORA

(sarcastically)

Of course I am . . . she hasn't died, has she?

Cathy laughs.

CATHY

No.

CORA

(jesting)

Of course not . . . damn broad won't ever die.

Cathy takes Cora by the arm.

CATHY

Let me take you to her.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN CENTER HEALTH & REHAB: PHILLIP'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Maggie sits beside Phillip. They are laughing and reminiscing about something.

There's a KNOCK at the door and Cathy ushers Cora in.

CORA

There you are.

MAGGIE

Cora. Phillip, do you remember Cora?

PHILLIP

Baby Cora?

Cora looks confused . . . she obviously doesn't know this man.

CORA

Who you calling a baby . . . looks to me you're the one
in diapers.

Maggie laughs. Cora has a dry sense of humor about her that has always appealed to
Maggie. Phillip, on the other hand, isn't too sure what to think of this brash woman.

MAGGIE

Cora, this is Phillip . . . you know, *Phillip*.

Cora drops the box at the end of the bed, just barely missing Phillip's feet.

CORA

Phillip?

Maggie smiles and nods.

CORA (CON'T)

Well, I'll be damned.

PHILLIP

What's in the box?

CORA

Memories of you.

Maggie and Phillip don't quite understand.

CORA (CON'T)

I never could remember you, but boy how Mags used to pine over you. My grandson Chris was cleaning out the attic and he came across these.

Maggie opens the box and starts rummaging through them.

It's full of letters wrapped in two different bundles.

MAGGIE

Cora and her husband moved into Momma and Papa's old place after they passed away. Now her grandson lives there.

CORA

Well, I came to tell you he was still alive, but it looks like he already beat me to it.

Maggie holds a stack of letters in her hand, her mouth agape.

None of the letters have been opened. One stack are all addressed to *Phillip Fairchild*, the other stack are addressed to *Maggie Dalton* in a different handwriting.

MAGGIE

This is unbelievable.

CORA

Momma must have felt guilty tricking you like that. She must have known you would find these eventually.

MAGGIE

After it's too late.

CORA

It's never too late.

With that said, Cora leaves.

Maggie hands the stack of letters she wrote to Phillip years ago to him now and sits down with the stack of letters Phillip wrote to her.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIAN CENTER HEALTH & REHAB: PHILLIP'S ROOM -- DAY

Maggie pushes open the cracked door to Phillip's room.

The curtain is drawn partially back and the bed is stripped and empty.

Confused, Maggie enters.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN CENTER HEALTH & REHAB: PHILLIP'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Maggie walks around the curtain to find GLORIA, a woman in her eighties, sitting in the seat beside the bed.

In her hand she holds one of the pictures that was beside Phillip's bed . . . it's a picture of her and Phillip.

MAGGIE

Where's Phillip?

Startled, Gloria looks up to see Maggie.

GLORIA

You must be Maggie.

MAGGIE

Are you Gloria?

GLORIA

You know about me?

Maggie points to the picture.

MAGGIE

I saw your picture.

Gloria pulls the pink Bible off the bottom of the stack and hands it to Maggie.

GLORIA

And I've seen yours.

Maggie takes the Bible and looks at the empty bed.

MAGGIE

When did it happen?

GLORIA (CON'T)

During the night.

Maggie steadies herself by placing a hand on the bed.

GLORIA (CON'T)

He never stopped loving you.

MAGGIE

Thank you.

Gloria nods and begins putting the remainder of Phillip's stuff in a box.

Maggie turns to go, but Gloria's voice stops her.

GLORIA

Thursday at three o'clock at Arlington Cemetery.

MAGGIE

Thank you.

GLORIA

I know he would want you and Alex there.

Maggie nods and exits the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETARY -- DAY

Gathered around the grave is Phillip's family as pictured in his room.

Alexander stands with his arm around Maggie.

It's a military funeral, with a flag draped over his coffin and trumpeters.

The funeral is over and the guests are offering Gloria their condolences before leaving. Maggie walks over to the open casket.

She places the pink Bible in Phillip's hand, bends down, and kisses him on the forehead.

MAGGIE

(whispering)

Just as we started to know each other again, you're going away.

She's broken-hearted. Tears run down her face and onto his.

Gloria walks up beside Maggie.

MAGGIE

Thank you.

GLORIA

For what?

MAGGIE

For making him happy. For loving him and being there when I couldn't.

Gloria turns her attention to Phillip and strokes his hand.

GLORIA

I'm glad it's over at last.

Maggie is taken aback by Gloria's response.

GLORIA (CON'T)

You're a hard woman to live up to.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry, I don't understand . . . you're glad Phillip's dead?

GLORIA

Goodness, no. I'm just glad I can go back to being myself . . . what scares me is that I might not remember who I really am.

MAGGIE

Who have you been if you haven't been yourself?

GLORIA

You.

A beat.

GLORIA (CON'T)

I've spent my entire life trying to be you . . . trying to be someone my husband desired instead of the one he simply settled for . . . he was happy . . . sure, but this last week made his life complete . . . *you* made his life complete in a way I never could. I had fifty-four years with him and you had five days, yet *you* were the one that made his life worthwhile.

Maggie shakes her head no.

GLORIA (CON'T)

You, Maggie. You were his reason for living all this time. If he hadn't thought he'd see you again one day, he would have giving up fighting a long time ago.

MAGGIE

I never wanted him to fight in the first place. The day he went to war, my happiness ended.

GLORIA

I'm sorry for that.

Gloria turns to leave, but before she can get far away Maggie calls out to her.

MAGGIE

He was in love with you, you know.

Gloria turns back to look at Maggie.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

He told me. You gave him the life I couldn't . . . and . . . he loved you for it.

Tears fill Gloria's eyes. She fights to hold them back while she steadies her voice.

GLORIA

Thank you . . . for saying that.

And Gloria turns and goes this time.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN CENTER HEALTH & REHAB: PIANO ROOM -- DAY

Maggie sits at a table beside the piano.

The box of war letters sits beside her and she's reading one.

Cora wobbles in to the room and sits at the piano, opening it and playing a little bit here and there.

CORA

He came to the house once. Did you know that?

MAGGIE

Cora, he came to the house lots . . . you just don't remember.

CORA

No, but I remember . . . he came once.

Maggie sets the letter she's reading down and turns to Cora.

CORA (CON'T)

Just Momma and me were there, but I remember.

MAGGIE

When?

CORA

After you and Clayton had married . . . not long after that, I don't think.

MAGGIE

Cora, that was *two* years after he left.

Cora shrugs.

MAGGIE (CON'T)

What did he want?

CORA

He was looking for you. But Momma told him you had married.

Cora pauses a moment as if clarifying her memory.

CORA (CON'T)

I remember that because I'll never forget his face when she told him that . . . he looked like she had told him you were dead or something . . .

Cora studies Maggie for a second before continuing.

CORA (CON'T)

. . . I guess to him you might as well have been.

MAGGIE

Cora, our parents were horrible people.

CORA

No, they weren't. They did what they thought was best for you . . . they were wrong, but . . . people make mistakes . . . instead of admitting it, they just made more and tried to cover it up . . . that was their only fault.

MAGGIE

And it ruined my life.

CORA

Your life wasn't ruined. So, it wasn't grand . . . you didn't marry prince charming like Gretchen . . . but Clayton helped you have your own life . . . something you wouldn't have had with Phillip.

Maggie shakes her head in acknowledgment.

MAGGIE

That's true.

CORA

And you loved teaching.

MAGGIE

I did.

CORA

And Clayton did all that for you.

MAGGIE

He did.

CORA

And you denied him the one thing he asked from you.

Maggie shakes her hand in defense.

MAGGIE

He never asked . . . never even tried.

CORA

I am not talking about that.

Cora pauses a beat to let Maggie consider some more, but since Maggie remains clueless Cora finally tells her.

CORA (CON'T)

You denied him your love.

MAGGIE

Perhaps I should have been kinder to Clayton.

CORA

Perhaps?

MAGGIE

Yes, I should have.

CORA

I should say so. You could have been happy with him,
Maggie. You really could have been.

Maggie turns her gaze out the window, as Cora starts to play a slow song on the piano. It's the same song that Maggie and Phillip first danced to in 1943.

The camera dollies in to CU of Maggie. A tear trickles down her cheek as she realizes she had the power all along to make her life good. Then a smile slowly starts to creep up on her face as she takes in Cora's earlier advice . . . it's never too late.

DISSOLVE CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN CENTER HEALTH & REHAB: PIANO ROOM -- DAY

Cora continues to play the song on the piano.

CU on Maggie as she smiles. The camera dollies out to reveal Maggie wearing a red dress similar to the one she wore in her fantasy at the beginning of the film.

She's dancing with Phillip. He looks the same as he did in his hospital room, only he's healthier and doesn't have any IVs or oxygen tubes attached to him now. He is also wearing his tux from Maggie's fantasy in the beginning.

The two of them twirl around as if they were both still agile teenagers.

Maggie smiles her wide-mouthed smile as the camera dollies in to a CU of her.

DISSOLVE CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN CENTER HEALTH & REHAB: PIANO ROOM -- DAY

Cora's piano song is still heard in the background.

The camera dollies out from a CU of Maggie's wide-mouthed smile to reveal Maggie, dressed in her trousers and button-down shirt again.

Maggie is smiling widely and dancing.

She's dancing alone.

Just as she's been dancing her entire life . . . only this time she knows it.

FADE OUT:

THE END.

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