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NIGHT GALLERY

"WHISPER"

Teleplay by
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From the Short Story by
Martin Waddell

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#35221

NIGHT GALLERY

"WHISPER"

CAST

CHARLIE
IRENE
MAN'S VOICE
DOCTOR
RACHEL'S VOICE
WOMAN'S VOICE
GIRL'S VOICE

S.B.:

DRUGGIST

SETS

INTERIOR:

COUNTRY HOUSE KITCHEN
MAIN HALL
DOCTOR'S OFFICE

EXTERIOR:

MEADOW
COUNTRY HOUSE
VILLAGE
DRUGSTORE
CEMETERY
SUMMERHOUSE
WOODS

NIGHT GALLERY"WHISPER"

FADE IN

1 INT. COUNTRY HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

1

Camera pans slowly to establish details. The room is brightly sunlit and empty...but during pan we hear the familiar, homely sounds of a kitchen in use: a kettle set down on a cast-iron, wood-burning stove...crocery, dishes, silverware being washed ...things boiling, etc. Perhaps the oddest sound is the steady squeak of a pump-handle and the gush of water into the sink...since we see there are faucets at the sink, and no water running in any case. Also during this pan we hear voices -- indistinct, quick, overlapping -- accompanying the sounds of the kitchen chores. These voices have the faintly-Elizabethan music still heard in isolated hill communities of Kentucky, Virginia and the Carolinas:

WOMAN'S VOICE

Mind you don't fall with --

Crashing sound of a metal pail on the stone floor. Eagerly:

GIRL'S VOICE

't ain't broke, missus!

WOMAN'S VOICE

The pail's of tin, that's why!
and see where the water's gone all
over my fl--!

MAN'S VOICE

Ah Meg, the child's not well t'day,
cain't y'see?

WOMAN'S VOICE

T'day?? more like all this month.

GIRL'S VOICE

I'll pump it full agin!

WOMAN'S VOICE

I'll do...whilst you, can I trust
ye to carry up a thing'r two from
the root-cellar?

GIRL'S VOICE

Oh yes'm!

WOMAN'S VOICE

G'on then, Rachel, I don't see even
yesself smashin' a turnip...!

CONTINUED

1 CONTINUED

GIRL'S VOICE

Oh, no'm...!

Voices are fading into inaudibility as angle includes Irene, a young woman, whose eyes scan the kitchen as camera did. She goes to a corner of one of the counters where we saw a piece of fabric, folded away. She opens it -- an old-fashioned shawl -- and drapes it carefully over the shoulders of her cheerfully contemporary dress. Camera pushes closer on Irene as she runs her hand along the border of the shawl...not idly, but rather as if she wants to learn from the design or weave of it, perhaps something about the one who made the shawl or wore it. She turns to the fireplace...She doesn't respond to a distant call from outside:

CHARLIE'S VOICE

Irene...?!

2 NEW ANGLE - FAVOR IRENE'S HAND

holding an airline ticket-folder. She passes one corner through the flames, teasingly...An edge browns, begins to smoke...She withdraws it, kills the tiny glow with her fingers. Camera pans to favor Irene's face. She sets the ticket-folder down on the raised hearth and slips the shawl off her shoulders, examines it more carefully...Again, from outside:

CHARLIE'S VOICE

Hey, where are you? Hello-o-o!
Irene...?

But she concentrates on the shawl, fingering each woven detail ...Then, quiet and plain, without eeriness:

IRENE

Did you wear it...? or was it some-
one close...?

She waits, not so much to hear as to understand...something.
Then; more urgently:

IRENE

...Get word to me! whisper to me!
...I think I know what to do, but --

She straightens! A moment ago there was the o.s. sound of the front door, but now - right from the next room:

CHARLIE

Hey, where are you? the kitchen?

In panic, she hides the shawl, crushes it into the kick-space under the hearth...!

3 FAVOR CHARLIE

3

as he comes into the kitchen, behind her. He smiles...but we see some worry in his face. He embraces her, and:

CHARLIE

Didn't you say you wanted to pick some flowers?

IRENE

Daisies...

CHARLIE

Well, somebody planted a whole flock of them in the meadow, you know, along the edge of the woods...?

IRENE

(light laugh; overlapping)

They grow wild, Charlie!

CHARLIE

Y'kidding me?

IRENE

(knows he's teasing now)

Charlie...

But over her shoulder - still in the embrace - he's just noticed:

4 CHARLIE'S POINT OF VIEW - AIRLINE TICKETS

4

quite close to the fire, on the hearth.

IRENE'S VOICE

...you know they...

5 TWO SHOT - FAVOR IRENE

5

She's sensed something amiss...leans back to see his expression...She knows what it is...remains silent.

ABRUPT CUT TO:

6 EXT. A MEADOW - FULL VIEW - DAY

6

In distant b.g. Irene is gathering flowers. In f.g. of frame, sitting on a low stone fence watching her, his back to camera, is Charlie.

CONTINUED

6 CONTINUED

6

CHARLIE

Pretty picture: Pretty Girl On A
Summer Day. My wife...

(then)

The picture'd fool me, too...

Camera has begun moving closer on Charlie - holding him in profile, now - as he keeps watching Irene.

CHARLIE

...if I didn't know the...that cold,
wintry! things...use her!

(then)

It's going to be different this time,
worse! I can feel it...

IRENE

(distant call)

Charlie...?

Abruptly, surprisingly, Charlie glances aside, directly at camera, suspicious, resentful:

CHARLIE

...one of you wants to keep her!

IRENE

(still distant)

Charlie...!

He turns to watch her running toward him across the meadow.

CHARLIE

...But how can you?...if I won't let
go.

7 NEW ANGLE

7

Irene reaches Charlie, goes into his arms, happily. Her mouth is pressed against the fabric of his coat; she's saying something over and over which we can't make out...Nor can he, apparently:

CHARLIE

...What?

She looks up at him, gravely, says nothing.

CHARLIE

What?

IRENE

(a shy whisper)

...There's a baby! This time,
there is a baby.

CONTINUED

7

CONTINUED

7

Camera pushes close on Charlie. Beat. He closes his eyes... cradles her now, no longer the embrace of equals, of lovers. When he opens his eyes again, he's looking directly at camera. We see his anger.

ABRUPT CUT TO:

8

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - FORMAL VIEW - DUSK

8

As if posed for a still photo, for a real-estate dealer's file. Obviously, once quite imposing -- like the home of the richest-man-in-town -- but past its prime, by-passed, not well cared for, and too long vacant. Sound of car engine idling. (Note: the voice of the real-estate dealer is local, but more contemporary Southern than those we heard in the kitchen.)

MAN'S VOICE

Best speak up quick naow, 'f y'like it.

CHARLIE'S VOICE

I don't...
(then)
but my wife does.

MAN'S VOICE

Done an' done! have the lease ready fer signin'.

Car engine races.

CHARLIE'S VOICE

Three months; the summer.

MAN'S VOICE

Nah, full year, Mr. Evens, don't pay me t'make it livable fer jes summer. Been standin' empty li'l bit.

CHARLIE'S VOICE

Li'l bit??...How long?

MAN'S VOICE

Jes' since after th'war.

CHARLIE'S VOICE

Civil War?

MAN'S VOICE

Naow, naow, Mr. Evens...

Sound of car in gear and moving away...lost...replaced by softer sounds of a mid-summer day: bees and, from time to time,

CONTINUED

8 CONTINUED

8

a bird call. Some time during above, angle adjusts: a less formal view, to include Irene, in the b.g., sitting on the lawn in a dark blot of shade cast by a single ancient oak. When she waves toward camera, pull back to include Charlie in f.g. He's just emerged through the front door, waves to her, and checks the mailbox:

CHARLIE

Nothing...And that was a month ago,
I signed the lease.

(shrugs)

There is no one.

He gazes across the lawn toward Irene.

9 ANGLE ON IRENE

9

CHARLIE'S VOICE

We're in touch with no one...except
you...No need to write letters to
you, is there...?

10 CLOSE ON CHARLIE

10

still watching Irene...He turns sharply toward camera now;
a pale smile:

CHARLIE

...you're all dead.

Beat. He starts across the superb lawn toward Irene.

11 MOVING TOWARD IRENE - CHARLIE'S POINT OF VIEW

11

She's surrounded by meadow-flowers, daisies, weaving them into
a chain.

CHARLIE'S VOICE

She has this...ability to be some-
one else. Not insanity, she's not
insane. It's a...an openness in
her, a...vacancy, available to others;
she's like an inn, or an empty room,
and for a time, someone lives there,
lives in her!...but then leaves. And
Irene stays and...

12 CHARLIE - TRACKING

12

At a certain moment, he may look up at camera to admit:

CONTINUED

12 CONTINUED

12

CHARLIE

I've always liked it: these colors
and changes of moods that make her...
(shrug)

Irene! Oh, I've been...terrified
to lose her!...but never bored.

13 NEW ANGLE - FAVOR CHARLIE

13

Stopped, close...but she isn't aware of him yet.

CHARLIE

She asks me to take her somewhere
-- like this place -- and I do.
And...it happens. But she's always
Irene again, after...

14 SHOOTING DOWN AT IRENE

14

There is something sweet and perfectly sane about her, busy
with the flowers.

CHARLIE'S VOICE

...she's always come back to me.

As if she'd heard him, she looks up at camera and smiles, and
the impression of sweetness and sanity is even stronger.

IRENE

Is it for me?

15 NEW ANGLE - CHARLIE AND IRENE

15

She means the letter in his hand. He shakes his head no,
leans down, kisses her...but doesn't sit.

IRENE

Afraid of grass stains?

He nods, admits his fastidiousness. She likes him, pats a
place close beside her:

IRENE

Don't care, Charlie.

Beat. He loves that very thing about her...drops onto the
grass.

IRENE

See how easy it is to live...reck-
lessly?!

CONTINUED

15 CONTINUED

15

He nods, laughs...watches her concentration on weaving the daisies together...her hands working...Silent, until:

IRENE

I thought Brother'd write us, didn't you?

CHARLIE

No.

IRENE

(laughs; then)

Why don't you like him?

CHARLIE

He's dull. He's a bigot and he's a snob.

IRENE

Yes, but besides that.

He knows she's making a joke...but he wants to say this:

CHARLIE

...And he treats you poorly.

She looks up. Beat. She resumes work, but:

IRENE

He thinks there's something wrong with me...

CHARLIE

He can g -- !

IRENE

(overlapping)

...do you?

CHARLIE

(caught off-balance)

...I think you're perfect.

He quick-kisses her brow, refers to the daisies.

CHARLIE

What's the object here?

She simply looks at him; he knows he won't get away with an evasion. But he tries to keep it light:

CHARLIE

It's like being snowblind, loving someone: you don't see --

CONTINUED

15 CONTINUED - 2

15

IRENE
 (overlapping)
 You love me?
 (as he nods)
Me...?
 (he nods again)
 ...And d'you always know who I am,
 Charlie?

He reaches to put his hand beside her cheek but she very gently tilts her face away; insists:

IRENE
 Do you?

Moment. At last, with infinite sadness:

CHARLIE
 No. Dear. Not always.

A beat of her wonder at his devotion...and at the terrible thing it implies. Suddenly she looks down, horrified:

IRENE
 Look what I've done!

Camera pushes close on daisies: broken and crushed to a yellow-green pulp in her hands. Sound of her anguished breathing.

16 FAVOR CHARLIE

16

Her reaction is out of proportion...But now he sees the horror on her face changing into something else, more alien! To prevent it or deny it, he speaks reasonably:

CHARLIE
 There's still some light...

17 FAVOR IRENE

17

CHARLIE
 ...we can pick...

He knows she doesn't hear him. There is something new in her; the crushed flowers are forgotten. She's become aware of a thing inside her, as a pregnant woman might respond to the first life-signs of a fetus...But this isn't centered in her belly. She feels taken-over, entirely, and surrenders herself to it! A rustling sound has begun, like the first whispering gusts of a summer storm that've reached the highest branches of the tree above them. This sound builds, dominates.

IRENE
 There...is a summer house!

CONTINUED

17 CONTINUED

17

CHARLIE

Let's go up to the meadow...?

IRENE

Find it!

CHARLIE

We've tried! there is no --

IRENE

Help me find it!

Camera moves around them to favor Charlie: alarmed! as if he were caught in this tempest of wind-sounds with her. Her lips move again but he hears nothing. He looks up.

18 HUGE OAK - CHARLIE'S POINT OF VIEW

18

Absolutely still; not even the uppermost leaves stir. Yet the sounds persist!

19 FAVOR CHARLIE

19

Looks at Irene again: he knows she's speaking or wants to speak...but doesn't even know if it's to him.

CHARLIE

I can't hear you!

As he leans toward her, camera pans off him...holds close on Irene. When she speaks now her voice is clear...but it has a harsh, new quality, unlike her...It is not Irene's voice, yet it is a voice we've heard before - in the opening kitchen sequence - Rachel's voice:

IRENE

She's at the summer house!...

And Irene's up, running across the lawn toward the curving gravel drive. A small, open car is parked.

20 CHARLIE

20

CHARLIE

Who is...?!

IRENE'S VOICE

(fading away)

Please...Hurry!

Charlie's still in a reaching gesture...lowers his arm now. Beat; then, not to Irene:

CONTINUED

20 CONTINUED

20

CHARLIE

Every night -- sometimes till sun-
up! -- we look for a summer house.
Why?

He's shaking his head, mystified. Then, again surprisingly,
he turns directly to camera:

CHARLIE

...Are you there?

(then)

Who are you?

Bewildered moment...He turns to watch Irene getting into their
car. He can't deny her anything; he gets up.

21 EXT. VILLAGE - FULL VIEW - DAY

21

A small, grassy green, the center of town. A mossy fountain
against a ruined wall. Facing the green, a small hotel with a
half-dozen rockers (some wood, some wicker) on the open porch;
a newsroom; a drugstore; diner; doctor's office; etc. A path
leads to the small, rickety wooden church and its cemetery.
Concession to the motor age: a few parking meters along one
side of the green. Charlie and Irene's car is parked in the
early morning sunlight, empty.

22 EXT. DRUGSTORE - DAY

22

Charlie's emerging. Apparently he's asked for some information
because the Druggist is outside his shop as well, pointing to a
building diagonally across the green. Camera pans Charlie
away...After a few paces he stops, as if to unwrap a package
of cigarettes he's just bought...glances across the green.
Closer now, we know he's been up all night.

23 ANGLE ON CAR - CHARLIE'S POINT OF VIEW

23

Empty. Camera pans off car...holds on hotel. Irene's seated
alone in one of the rockers, breaking up a breakfast roll to
feed some pigeons. She gets up. Camera pans her toward the
path leading to the church.

24 ANGLE ON CHARLIE

24

watching Irene. He glances toward the building pointed out
by the Druggist...then toward Irene again.

25 EXT. CHURCH AND CEMETERY - DAY 25

Irene is about to enter the church when she notices the small cemetery beside it.

26 CHARLIE 26

reassured that Irene'll be occupied for a while, he's moving toward the pointed-out building. We see that its door bears a sign: JIM KENNAWAY - DOCTOR OF MEDICINE.

27 EXT. CEMETERY - MOVING WITH IRENE - DAY 27

She seems quite cheerful, expectant. Sometimes she kneels to read a name or date or epitaph on one of the stones by pressing the mossy overgrowth into the carved letters.

28 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CHARLIE AND DOCTOR - DAY 28

CHARLIE

He said I'd need a prescription.

The doctor's mountain-born, but he's been away to school, after all.

DOCTOR

Y'tried the over-the-counter stuff?

CHARLIE

They don't seem to help her anym--

He stops himself...too late. And the doctor, who had opened his prescription-pad, lets it close. So Charlie makes an admission:

CHARLIE

They're for my wife, not me. She has...insomnia.

(under doctor's gaze)

She's out...

(brief gesture)

there, on the green.

The doctor nods...but lets the silence grow awkward for Charlie. So, anything to fill it:

CHARLIE

We're not from around here.

DOCTOR

(knows it)

No.

CONTINUED

28 CONTINUED

28

CHARLIE

We're from San Francisco...

DOCTOR

Nice place; was there in the Navy.
Treasure Island.

CHARLIE

My wife's never been back East.

DOCTOR

How'd you pick here?

CHARLIE

By chance: we flew most of the way,
rented a car, drove... This is
where she said stop.

DOCTOR

(moment, before:)

Old country. You're not just back
East, in these hills...you're back
years.

CHARLIE

That's...true, doctor.

DOCTOR

(abruptly)

You bring her in to see me.

CHARLIE

(hesitates; then)

Dr. Kennaway...

Doctor waits. Charlie takes a deep, resigned breath and starts
to speak. Faintly, the wind-sounds...

ABRUPT CUT TO:

29 EXT. CHURCH CEMETERY - IRENE - DAY

29

Wind-sounds persist. Irene is nearing the end of the burial
grounds. There's a small headstone, fallen into taller grass.
She moves it, rubs her hand over the eroded face...then rises,
waiting or listening for something. Nothing. She speaks
plainly now, in no way weird:

IRENE

I'm trying to reach a...summerhouse!

(waits; then)

If she was too young, someone must've
been there who can...find me! And
I'll know where it is...and what I

CONTINUED

29 CONTINUED

29

IRENE (cont'd)

have to do...

(waits again, as if
for an answer; then)Charlie is worried, more than ever,
this time. He'll interfere. I want
to...help, haven't I served you
well??...but I don't have much time
here!

(looks about; then)

Reach me. Find me. Or...

ABRUPT CUT TO:

30 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

30

Open close on Charlie, spent, but still agitated by what he's
told the doctor. Angle widens to include the doctor; thought-
ful moment, before:

DOCTOR

Y'encourage it.

CHARLIE

Do I?

DOCTOR

There's dangers here, I've seen in-
dividuals push right on out...
farther out into these hallucinations,
past --

CHARLIE

--Hallucinations?!

DOCTOR

(surprised at Charlie's
reaction)

's what we're talkin' 'bout.

(then)

Tell y'what it's like: it's like
th'way we rocket out astronauts,
got to reach that, what they call,
escape-velocity. Order t'free them-
self from...Earth. Tryin' do
th'same thing, y'wife.Charlie, appalled, moves his head from side to side. Beat.
The doctor shrugs, eases it with:

DOCTOR

Never met th'lady, maybe you're...
overdoin' her state, some.

CONTINUED

30 CONTINUED

30

CHARLIE

(looks up; then, sadly)

No.

DOCTOR

(beat; compassionate)

Whyn't y'take her back home to Frisco, familiar surroun---

CHARLIE

-- She won't come.

DOCTOR

Well, there's medicines, make a patient more tr--

CHARLIE

She's not a patient! and I don't want her drugged!

DOCTOR

(kind smile)

Mr. Evens, you came in here for sleepin' tablets.

CHARLIE

For a few nights' rest, yes, but not to dope her down to a...a zcmbie!

(like a plea)

I can't tell you how...lively she is! the fun of it! every day! I couldn't do that to...

(quieter)

She'd be...she wouldn't be...Irene to me.

Beat. Charlie rises, manages a pale smile; as if to sum up:

CHARLIE

I couldn't.

Doctor says nothing. Only when Charlie reaches to shake hands does the doctor rise. As Charlie walks to the door, camera favors the doctor's troubled face. Charlie's about to leave, when:

DOCTOR

What d'you do, Mr. Evens?

As if reminded of an old love:

CHARLIE

I studied architecture.

CONTINUED

30 CONTINUED - 2

30

DOCTOR

Must be tough, uh? workin' on the
move, way y'say y'live?

CHARLIE

I don't...practice, anymore.

DOCTOR

Y'don't...have much f'yesself, then?

CHARLIE

Of course I do. I have Irene.

The doctor hammers his fist down on the desk, once. His sudden anger catches Charlie by surprise. Doctor sits, regains composure, before he raises his eyes to Charlie's again:

DOCTOR

Y'know, lookin' at it one way,
m'friend, you are as...obsessed as
she is!

Beat. As Charlie turns, lunges away -

ABRUPT CUT TO:

31 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

31

Open close on Irene: labored breathing, her heavy-lidded eyes seen unfocused; they close, then half-open again; she tilts her head as if to pick up some faint sound...Then, a change: her eyes focus, open wider, her breathing becomes normal. Alert, she looks about:

IRENE

Nothing? No?

Angle widens: she's sitting beside a small, grass-overgrown gravestone.

IRENE

Then it's no good.

(irritably)

It isn't fun this way, I only did
it because it was fun for me and
better than being...

(haughty)

like everybody!

(then, as if the grave-
stones were children,
all about her)

It was my game, I made it up, and
you'll play it with my rules or --

CONTINUED

31 CONTINUED

31

IRENE (cont'd)

(smiles at an ex-
citing possibility)or I'll make up a new game! and none
of you'll be able to play that one...

(jaunty; improvising)

Something about...animals! Or stars!
Whatever I want, there's no one to
stop me! I may even be...

(has to laugh)

Charlie's wife! and live in one
place!

(a level threat)

Uninhabited!

(then)

Myself.

(brief smile)

Just...Charlie's!

This has been a performance, a display of independence, for listeners...But we see from her manner that there's been no response. Moment. She hears someone coming now. Angle adjusts to include Charlie in b.g. approaching, across cemetery. When Irene speaks now her voice is warm and her smile real. Quietly, not a call:

IRENE

Charlie. I do like you. And love
you. And I could live with you for-
ever...

She's up, moving to meet him. Just before they reach each other, she stops. He sees how feelingful her expression is, and her eyes are brimming. It moves him; gently:

CHARLIE

...Hey...?

She heads off any real question, puts her index-finger across his lips:

IRENE

Shhh.

So, he just embraces her, then kisses her. After a moment, he nods toward the church:

CHARLIE

Pretty inside?

IRENE

I haven't been in...Let me show
you my favorite...

CONTINUED

31 CONTINUED - 2

31

She means gravestone. As she leads him to a far corner of the cemetery, camera covering, he shows mild disapproval:

CHARLIE

Epitaph jokes, I don't know, they
can wear pretty thin after an
eternity or two...

32 NEW ANGLE

32

She's kneeling beside a fallen stone, obviously untended. Charlie clears the grass and wild ivy...but the face of the stone is mossy and eroded.

CHARLIE

Sweetheart, you can't make out the...

Oblivious, Irene's running her fingertips sensually over the moss, pressing gently, as if she were reading Braille:

IRENE

Vademecum...

She turns to look at Charlie. They're close. Camera moves closer on them.

CHARLIE

What is it? Old English?

IRENE

Latin.

CHARLIE

What does it mean?

IRENE

(even closer)

Vademecum...Take me with you.

He knows she's telling him something more. He searches her eyes. Then:

CHARLIE

Where?

IRENE

Home.

CHARLIE

D'you mean it?

(as she nods)

Home?

CONTINUED

32 CONTINUED

32

IRENE

...Home.

He holds her, inhales deeply, happiness and relief. It makes him dizzy: they fall between gravestones. The wind-sounds build again; they ignore it. Camera slowly pans up, holds on the leafy branches: absolutely motionless:

IRENE'S VOICE

...That's right, Charlie, yes, yes
...Home...

FADE OUT

(ACT BREAK)

FADE IN:

33 INT. COUNTRY HOUSE KITCHEN - MONTAGE - DUSK TO NIGHT

33

In a series of shots, Charlie collects luggage, prepares to pack, while Irene's making supper. (NOTE: the kitchen is a large room with many-paned windows, a wood-stove, tile work-surfaces, a fireplace, two sinks, roomy cupboards, etc.)

- A. Irene's happily rubbing seasoning into a roast...whirls at the crashing sound of drums falling: it's Charlie pulling their empty suitcases out of a high cupboard. Surrounded by luggage he gestures: voila! She smiles, returns to her own chores. Sound of another suitcase falling.
- B. Charlie checks the fire in the stove. Flames lick out, singe the hair on the back of his hand. Irene sniffs, makes a face at the acrid smell...but then presses her lips to his hand. He kisses her.
- C. Cooking is mostly a matter of waiting, now. Charlie's cutting salad-greens...sees Irene hunched over the raised, whitewashed hearth. He looks over her shoulder: with a bit of fireplace charcoal she's sketching a kind of personal map: the United States, an 'X' representing their approximate geographical location somewhere in the heart of the Deep South, a Confederate Flag hovering over the spot, then, on the West Coast, another 'X' and the unmistakable outline of the Golden Gate Bridge. Somewhere inbetween these two points she has drawn a car - which she now hastily erases and replaces with a primitive aeroplane ...Charlie likes the map, nods, makes a minor addition: a man-looking Cupid-face, blowing...He labels it: "North Wind." Charlie and Irene look at each other; there's no question that they're happy and relieved at the prospect of returning home.

CONTINUED

D. Irene's lighting candles on the small kitchen table. But Charlie takes over, parades them grandly toward an adjacent room. Camera moves to feature the slightly singed airline tickets envelope. It flutters, then, tugged by an invisible wind, arcs lazily through the air and into the fire.

The candles are burning steadily at either end of the table, beautifully set for two...separated by the table's 15 feet of darkly-polished wood. They're into their meal: some of the roast has been sliced and eaten. Charlie raises his glass in a toast...but has to clink it or whistle to get Irene's attention. She smiles now, raises her glass.

CHARLIE

Here's --

He stops, aware of the wind-sounds that've just begun...He waits, as if he expected them to form into something...or to create a change in Irene. But she seems unaware of his concern:

IRENE

That's not much of a toast, Charlie...
(when he doesn't re-
spond; shrugging)
but I'll drink to it.

She sips her wine, resumes eating. Charlie remains attentive to the sounds...But then, casually, as she eats:

IRENE

Must be a storm...

CHARLIE

What?

IRENE

Hear that wind?

CHARLIE

Yes...
(then)
Do you?

Apparently not aware that she's being asked a significant question; just going on, really:

IRENE

...whistles right down the chimneys
in these old...southern manors or
whatever they are.

35 FAVOR CHARLIE

35

His relief: it isn't the wind-sounds only he had heard, earlier, the wind that didn't touch the trees! He drains his wine glass. When he goes to refill it, he finds the bottle all but empty. Irene -- perhaps a bit too promptly -- is up and on her way to the kitchen for another. He offers:

CHARLIE

I'll get it.

IRENE

(gestures him down)

Please, m'lord...

She exits to the kitchen. Camera pushes closer on Charlie. Wind-sounds persist but he's no longer disquieted; he resumes eating. And the sounds diminish now...Charlie's a happy man; he leans back in the massive, ornate chair, considers the hall's high paneled ceiling...and smiles to himself:

CHARLIE

M'lord...

Then leans forward to slice some more of the roast. The candle just before him flickers...steadies. He reacts, briefly, resumes slicing, and calls:

CHARLIE

Some more of the roast...?

(puts a piece on his own
plate, calls again)

Irene?...M'lady?

No response. But he cuts another thin slice, starts over to get her plate -- when the candle flickers violently! almost goes out. And the sound of the flame is exaggerated as if the candle were guttering! dangerously low! The meat-platter rings as Charlie drops the carving utensils into it. Camera -- holding close -- pans Charlie to the kitchen.

36 INT. KITCHEN - CHARLIE'S POINT OF VIEW - NIGHT

36

Quiet; unchanged; their suitcases still lined up where Charlie left them. The other bottle of wine is on the table. Irene isn't there.

37 CLOSE ON CHARLIE

37

CHARLIE

Irene?!

He whirls.

- 38 INT. MAIN HALL - CHARLIE'S POINT OF VIEW - NIGHT 38
Candles are flickering dangerously; the room-shadows leap!
One candle flickers out...There's a strong draught coming
from somewhere!
- 39 CHARLIE - TRACKING CLOSE 39
through the house toward the main door...He stops.
- 40 ANGLE ON MAIN DOOR - CHARLIE'S POINT OF VIEW 40
Open, wide!...and then, out of the dark beyond it:
IRENE'S VOICE
Darling...!
- 41 ANGLE ON CHARLIE 41
surging forward, toward the voice!
- 42 EXT. COUNTRY-HOUSE - LONG VIEW - NIGHT 42
As Charlie bursts out he's met with a gale of wind-sounds and
-- half lost in them:
IRENE'S VOICE
...Darling?!
- Charlie falters, as a man would in a real storm. He howls
into it:
CHARLIE
Irene...! Irene!
He stays, framed by the open doorway...but there's no answer-
ing call.
- 43 ANOTHER ANGLE ON CHARLIE - DOLLYING CLOSER 43
Scanning the darkness for any sign, a glimpse of her dress,
some direction to follow. Camera holds now, and even if
Charlie doesn't look directly at camera, it's clear he's
addressing it; bitterly:
CHARLIE
You want too much of her...! What
kind of a thing are you this time??
...Damn you, whisper to someone else!
leave her to me...!
- He starts forward.

44 NEW ANGLE 44

Charlie's running across the lawn, the gravel drive, toward the dark meadow beyond.

45 EXT. MEADOW - FULL VIEW - NIGHT 45

Still. Faintly moonlit. Charlie reaches the low stone fence where we first saw him. He scans the tall grass: she could be anywhere! He calls out again, without enough breath:

CHARLIE

Irene...?...Love!...

He stands on the fence now...but he's met with silence. Suddenly, from the black woods that border the meadow: sounds of laughter. It might be Irene -- who else could it be? -- but the laughter is harsher than we've heard from her. Charlie plunges into the tall meadow grass...

46 EXT. WOODS - SERIES OF BRIEF CUTS - NIGHT 46

thru

49 Charlie's smashing through brush and low branches; he falls 49

often, drives recklessly deeper into the woods...Laughter and wind-sounds persist.

50 TRACKING CHARLIE - LOW ANGLE 50

Moving fast, he makes no attempt to avoid the briars that've torn at his face and arms and ripped his clothes...! Without warning, he bursts into a tiny clearing...stops.

51 EXT. SUMMERHOUSE - CHARLIE'S POINT OF VIEW - NIGHT 51

A ruin of moonlit stone pillars, half fallen, cushioned by moss, connected by grapevines grown wild and night-blooming flowers. The summerhouse has become part of the damp woods; a stone bench has eroded into something as natural as wood. Even shattered glass seems to have entered the chemistry of the decaying leaves that carpet and silence this place. A sickly-enchanted place.

52 CLOSE ON CHARLIE 52

Stunned by what he sees now...

53 IRENE - CHARLIE'S POINT OF VIEW 53

On a stone bench that's been worn smooth by years of weather,

53 CONTINUED

53

she sits, tranquil as the ruins, waiting...Her head turns slowly now -- as if in slow motion -- and now she smiles as we've never seen her smile before, at camera. Then, like a part of her smile...and, again, not with the voice of Irene but of Rachel:

IRENE

...Darling Johnny...!

54 CHARLIE

54

gasps, as if he'd been punched in the stomach...His hand reaches blindly for support, the low branch of a tree.

55 WIDER ANGLE - FAVOR IRENE

55

looking at him, still smiling, only a bit puzzled by his reaction. Still in Rachel's voice:

IRENE

What is it...?

He shakes his head no, nothing. She accepts it.

IRENE

Come...

She walks to a corner of the ruined summerhouse, a foundation made of loose stones, still intact. As Charlie follows, he notices that she's wearing an old, but beautifully-woven, shawl.

CHARLIE

Where'd you get that?

IRENE

What?

CHARLIE

That...shawl.

IRENE

(silly!)

I've always had it.

(with a laugh)

You gave it to me.

But during the above, she seems to be judging something about the stone foundation...She reaches to pull out a loose stone.. but as she does, the shawl falls partially open:

CONTINUED

55 CONTINUED

55

CHARLIE

What happened to your hand?!

Camera zooms close on the exposed hand: scraped bloody and caked with mud. She makes little of it:

IRENE'S VOICE

From the digging, I 'spect.

56 NEW ANGLE - CHARLIE AND IRENE

56

CHARLIE

What digging?

And he sees a very shallow, newly-dug hole in the ground. But she's kneeling at the foundation again, loosens a few more stones...

IRENE

Help, can't you?

She's been working rapidly...but with one hand. The other remains concealed under the shawl. Charlie pitches in...glances over at her from time to time...They've formed an opening in the foundation, a kind of crypt. She leans back:

IRENE

There...

She sees that he's looking at her, not at the cache they've made. She returns his gaze, coolly, as if waiting for:

CHARLIE

...If I'm...Johnny...who are you?

Beat. Then, as she reaches into the crypt to feel its depth, quite matter-of-fact:

IRENE

Rachel.

CHARLIE

(just echoing it,
a whisper)Rachel?

She leans back, looks at him with an absolutely unreadable, pale smile:

IRENE

For now.

(beat; then again
businesslike)

It's deep enough.

CONTINUED

56. CONTINUED

56

Charlie -- dazed by all he doesn't understand -- looks dumbly at the opening in the stones:

CHARLIE

...Is it?

IRENE

I'll rest, there on the bench,
Johnny. You finish.

CHARLIE

Yes...

(but then)

Finish...?

Irene's hands move under the shawl...She's about to give him something, but hesitates; so:

CHARLIE

What's the matter?

IRENE

You'll do it...proper this time?
won't you?

(he nods)

You must...

(he nods)

She was your child, too.

CHARLIE

Ahhh??!

57 FAVOR CHARLIE

57

Again, an animal-sound, as if he'd been slammed in the stomach. ...And then, mesmerized by it, by her...he holds out his arms to accept something: she's taken a small parcel, something wrapped in dark velvet, from under her shawl:

IRENE

I'll wait for you.

Charlie can only nod and look down at the thing she's placed in his arms, in his care. But when he moves his hand to lift one corner of the velvet wrapping:

IRENE

-- Don't!

(then, gentler)

Just...smooth white...bone...

broken, like...

(brief smile)

pottery!...Or she might be a kitten...

CONTINUED

57 CONTINUED

57

Camera loses Irene as we push closer on Charlie...He's nodding in acceptance...until the wind-sounds build, dominate! He looks up at the motionless trees, anguished! Barely audible through the wind-sounds:

IRENE'S VOICE

Proper, this time, Johnny...!

Charlie seems to awaken in anger:

CHARLIE

Yes!...All right, yes!

Shouted to the whispery wind-sounds...And feverishly now, he begins to bury the velvet bundle in the crypt.

58
thru
62

CHARLIE - SERIES OF CUTS

58
thr
62

Working wildly, his hands are scraped and bruised as he tries to force too many stones into the already closed crypt. On the last cut, as he shatters the final loose stone, trying to drive it into place -- the wind-sounds die...! He closes his eyes in relief and...like a prayer, to himself:

CHARLIE

Please: be Irene...!

He gets to his feet...Camera pans him to the seat where Irene's been waiting quietly. He stands near her in silence for a moment. Then:

CHARLIE

...All right. It's done proper...
(beat; then, more
himself)

Now...what was it? On that stone
you liked?...Vademecum?

He reaches, rests his hand on her hair, very gently. He leans down to kiss her brow. She falls to the darkening carpet of leaves!

CHARLIE

Irene!

He drops beside her...As he turns her face toward him, camera pushes close on Charlie: his eyes fill with the horror of what he sees...and now, with the horror of what he hears: an out-cry, from some indefinite distance:

IRENE'S VOICE

Oh, Charlie! I can't get back!

CONTINUED

58
thru
62

CONTINUED

58
thr
62

He starts...but there's no direction to follow...! He waits for it, now...knowing that it will be inevitably more distant:

IRENE'S VOICE

I can't get back...! Charlie...!

Frozen...until he raises his eyes...and looks directly at camera.

FADE OUT

THE END