

C A R N I V A L E

"After the Ball is Over"

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FADE IN.

INT. RED BIRD RESTAURANT - NIGHT

1934. An empty diner. A WAITRESS is standing behind the counter, reading a book and smoking a cigarette. "Love Me or Leave Me," sung by Ruth Etting, plays on the RADIO. A bell rings as BROTHER JUSTIN CROWE enters.

RADIO

"This suspense is killing me. I can't stand uncertainty. Tell me now, I've got to know, whether you want me to stay or go..."

Justin sits on a stool at the counter. The Waitress flings her book down, puts her cigarette out in an ashtray and brings Justin a menu and a cup. She quietly pours him some coffee. The bell rings as BEN HAWKINS enters.

RADIO (CONT'D)

"Love me or leave me, let me be lonely. You won't believe me. I love you only. I'd rather be lonely than happy with somebody else. You might find the nighttime the right time for kissing but nighttime is my time for just reminiscing, regretting instead of forgetting with somebody else..."

Ben also sits down at the counter. The Waitress too pours him a cup of coffee. The bell rings as HENRY "HACK" SCUDDER enters.

RADIO (CONT'D)

"There'll be no one unless that someone is you. I intend to be independently blue. I want your love but I don't want to borrow, to have it to today to give back tomorrow. For my love is your love, there's no love for nobody else. Love me or leave me, let me be lonely. You won't believe me. I love you only. I'd rather be lonely than happy with somebody else. You might find the nighttime the right time for kissing but nighttime is my time for just reminiscing, regretting instead of forgetting with somebody else..."

Scudder's wearing a TUXEDO and TOP HAT. He takes off the hat and collapses it. Then, Justin and Ben watch him in the mirror above the counter as Scudder sits down behind them at a booth alongside a large GLASS WINDOW. The bell rings as the UNIFORMED MAN enters.

RADIO (CONT'D)

"There'll be no one unless that someone is you. I intend to be independently blue. I want your love but I don't want to borrow, to have it to today to give back tomorrow. For my love is your love, there's no love for nobody else. Oh,

love me or leave me, let me be lonely.
You won't believe me. I love you only.
I'd rather be lonely than happy with
somebody else..."

Ben and Justin continue watching in the mirror as the Uniformed Man joins Scudder at the booth. The Waitress walks over to them with her pitcher of coffee.

WAITRESS
Every prophet in his house.

Scudder and the Uniformed Man toast their glasses of wine. Suddenly, the glass window behind them all explodes! Justin and Ben lay their heads on the counter as the glass shatters around them--

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - DAY

Ben opens his eyes. He's been sleeping on the ground underneath a trailer. He's covered by a blanket...

INT. JUSTIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Justin opens his eyes. He's in bed. He puts on his glasses and looks at the alarm clock on the table beside him...

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - DAY

Wind whistling. Dogs barking. It's morning.

Ben stands shirtless at a water pump. He's filling a bowl and wetting rags to clean himself. The young and beautiful LIBBY DREIFUSS is behind him, leaning against a trailer. Her mother, RITA SUE DREIFUSS, sits on the running board of a truck nearby. She smokes and pretends to read a magazine.

LIBBY
Mmm, mmm, mmm.

Rita Sue whistles.

LIBBY
Sure is hot. Lord knows it's hard enough
to stay clean around here with all this
dust and dirt and whatnot. I am so damn
tired of waking up with grit in my teeth
every morning.

No reaction from Ben. Rita Sue gives her daughter an encouraging look.

LIBBY
(to Ben)
How old are you, farmboy?

BEN
I'm old enough.

LIBBY
Got any jills back home?

BEN
I got a couple.

Libby picks up a rag and starts to wash Ben's back for him. He snatches the rag away from her.

BEN
Hey.

LIBBY
Easy. I ain't gonna hurt ya. Just trying to help.

BEN
I don't need your help.

RITA SUE
I guess farmboy ain't used to gals like us, Lib.

LIBBY
Oh, no, ma. Didn't you hear? He's got a whole bunch of gals back home.

RITA SUE
A whole herd I bet.

BEN
Y'all don't know me. You don't know nothin' about me.

Ben puts his shirt on.

RITA SUE
I know I saw you staring at my titties in the show.

LIBBY
Practically hypnotized.

RITA SUE
But that's okay, honey. That's what they're there for.

Rita Sue leans over and shakes her breasts.

BEN
I seen better.

The women laugh as Ben walks away.

RITA SUE

Mmm.

LIBBY

Mmm-hmm...

INT. SOFIE'S TRAILER - DAY

SOFIE is sitting next to her mother, the perpetually catatonic APOLLONIA, who stares vacantly upward. Sofie wets a rag and uses it to clean her mother's arm as they carry on, from our perspective, a one-sided conversation:

SOFIE

I just think you see what you want to see. ... Well, things are bad, people get desperate. ... Please. ... Forget it. ... He's not coming back here, not after last night. ... Mother, I tried. ... Yes, I'll ask him. ... I said yes!

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - DAY

CLAYTON JONES, a.k.a. "JONESY," is assigning duties to a group of men. With them is Ben, whose eyes drift over to the outdoor shower, or more aptly, RUTHIE, the woman standing naked within it.

JONESY

Spider, Billy, I want you two on Colossus. Valves haven't seated on that rebuild. Run her for an hour and get her hot, drain the oil. You find shavins, gimme a holler. Grover, Cap, I want you to spike the Cootch-tent. You too, Jake. And check for holes 'round back, sew 'em up tight.

MAN (O.C.)

All right, boss.

JONESY

Tired of them hayseeds gettin' a free show. Hawkins?!

Jonesy snaps Ben's attention back into place.

BEN

Yeah?

JONESY

You're in charge of the baggage trailer.

BEN

The what?

JONESY

Baggage trailer 'round back. Run down
trailer with a big ole roof rack on her.
Can't miss it.

BEN

What you want me to do?

JONESY

Go through it. Save anything worth
saving or selling. Dump the rest. When
you're done, give it a good sweep!

The men laugh and slap each other on the back.

JONESY

Get to work!

CUT TO:

Ben walks to the edge of the grounds until he spots the BAGGAGE TRAILER under
a large tree. It's a dilapidated thing, barely standing.

INT. BAGGAGE TRAILER - DAY

Ben opens the DOOR and walks inside. The air is dust. Birdcages and watering
cans hang from above. There are all manner of trunks and boxes on the floor
and stacked alongside the walls.

On one shelf is a glass jar and within it, a FETUS. Ben stares at it for
awhile, then reaches for a suitcase on another shelf. The stickers adorning
its outside indicate the suitcase is well traveled. Ben opens it.

Inside are: a tuxedo, a top hat -- which Ben pops open -- and a box. "Love Me
or Leave Me" plays faintly for a moment. Inside the box is a PHOTOGRAPH of a
woman standing in front of a truck marked "Big Sky Farms." Ben turns the
photograph over. The writing on the back says "H.S. and FLD."

Suddenly, the door to the trailer slams shut and the trailer goes dark.

BEN

Hell.

Ben flicks open a lighter. He uses the flame to study the photograph again,
then to make his way outside.

The eyes of the fetus open...

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - DAY

Ben's back outside, walking through the tents. SAMSON follows him.

SAMSON

Hey, boy! Where you been hidin'
yourself? They're spikin' the ten-in-one.

BEN
I was cleaning out the baggage trailer.

SAMSON
Baggage trailer?
(to Jonesy)
Jonesy!

Jonesy is standing around a truck with two other men. They've got the hood open and they appear to be doing repairs. They're all grinning.

JONESY
Yeah, boss?

SAMSON
Did you tell this boy to clean out the baggage trailer?

JONESY
We, uh, we was just havin' some fun.

SAMSON
I don't pay you birds to have fun. We an hour behind already.
(to Ben, gesturing)
Get on over there and help them spike the tent.

BEN
So I should finish the baggage trailer later?

The men laugh.

JONESY
(to the other men, trailing off)
He still wants to...

SAMSON
We don't got no baggage trailer.
Nobody's got a baggage trailer. It's an old carnie gag, like hunting for snipe.
Send some poor chowder head out searching for something that don't exist...

BEN
I was in there.

SAMSON
Where?

BEN
The baggage trailer, goddamnit!

The men start laughing again.

SAMSON
Okay, sport. Suppose you show me where
it is.

CUT TO:

The tree on the outskirts of the grounds, blowing in the dusty winds. The
baggage trailer has vanished.

SAMSON
Ah, forget it, kid.

BEN
No, it happened, goddamnit! I'm telling
you, I was cleaning out old trunks.
Look, I-- Here, I found this.

Ben reaches into his pocket and hands Samson the photograph.

SAMSON
Where?

BEN
In the trailer that ain't there.
(a beat)
Well, you know who that is?

SAMSON
(lying)
Nope. You?

BEN
Something I found.

SAMSON
Well, you don't mind if I hang onto it
then.

BEN
Yeah, I do mind.

Ben snatches the photograph back from Samson.

SAMSON
Suit yourself.

Samson walks off, leaving a perplexed Ben alone.

INT. SAMSON'S TRAILER

Samson pulls a photo album off a shelf, then has a seat as he flips through
it. In the album, full of snapshots of former carnival performers, is the
same photograph as Ben's - untouched - the woman in front of a truck marked
"Big Sky Farms." He turns around and addresses the curtains behind him.

SAMSON
What in the hell are you up to?

ZOOM-IN on the curtains. No answer...

INT. JUSTIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Justin closes his closet door and studies himself in a mirror. He slicks back his hair and straightens his vest.

INT. JUSTIN AND IRIS'S HOME - DAY

He shuts the door to his bedroom and begins to walk down the hallway, when he hears humming and stops. His sister, IRIS CROWE, is in the bathroom, showering. She turns off the water and stands naked in front of the mirror, drying herself. Justin watches...

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Another beautiful day in Mintern, California.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

At the front of the church, Iris leads the congregation in a rendition of the hymn "Old Rugged Cross."

CONGREGATION
"So I'll cherish the old rugged cross
till my trophies at last I lay down. I
will cling to the old rugged cross and
exchange it some day for a crown. O'
that rugged cross, so despised by the
world, has a wondrous attraction for me,
for the dear lamb of God left his glory
above to bear it to dark cavalry. I will
cling to the old rugged cross and
exchange it some day for a crown..."

As they sing, a few parishioners cannot help but be distracted by the braying voice of one man, LESTER MCGILL, who is sorely out of key. He shares a hymnal with his mother, ELEANOR MCGILL.

A young girl turns around in her pew. Her mother, EMMA TEMPLETON, shakes the girl's arm.

EMMA
Don't stare!

But Emma's father, CAROLL TEMPLETON, continues to gawk at the dirty migrants who have crowded into the church.

Justin sits quietly on stage, listening and watching his congregation. He turns and smiles at Iris.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

The service has ended and everyone is departing. Eleanor and her family are gathered with Justin and Iris in front of the church.

ELEANOR
Brother Justin, you and sister were
truly inspiring today.

JUSTIN
Thank you, Eleanor.

ELEANOR
Let me introduce you to my family. This
is my sons, Tom and Lester.

They shake hands.

JUSTIN
Good to finally meet you. Did you enjoy
the service, Lester?

LESTER
Parts.

JUSTIN
Oh.

Eleanor slaps Lester across the chest with the back of her hand.

ELEANOR
Don't pay him no mind. Uh, this is my
niece, Maggie, and her husband, Garrett.

GARRETT
Hello, Reverend.

JUSTIN
Hello.
(looking down)
Who is this?

Eleanor introduces Justin and Iris to the six children standing in front of them (4 boys, 2 girls). As she does, several parishioners look on, aghast, and make snide comments to each other.

ELEANOR
This is Harold and J.J. and Molly and
Dorothy and Tim and Lyle.
(a beat)
Brother Justin's put your grandma on the
righteous path.

JUSTIN
Bless you, sister.

ELEANOR

Thank you.

CARROLL (O.C.)

Excuse me, excuse me, folks.

Carroll and Emma Templeton, and their young daughter, force their way through the throng of migrants.

JUSTIN

Carroll. Mrs. Templeton.

Justin offers his hand, but Emma refuses it.

EMMA

(disgusted)

Reverend...

CARROLL

(to Justin)

Gettin' a bit crowded in there these days.

JUSTIN

Yes, it certainly is. Splendid, isn't it?

CARROLL

Yes, splendid. I was just thinkin' of stoppin' by this afternoon, havin' a little chat.

JUSTIN

Always a pleasure. This afternoon, then?

CARROLL

Reverend. Iris.

IRIS

Mr. Templeton.

The Templetons get in their car to leave. Justin and Iris continue to greet their congregation.

MAN (O.C.)

Reverend.

IRIS

(to Man)

Hello...

INT. CARNVIAL GROUNDS - DAY

Meal time.

Rita Sue and her husband, FELIX "STUMPY" DREIFUSS, are sitting at a table. Stumpy is engrossed in a newspaper, but Rita Sue studies her daughters, DORA MAE DREIFUSS and Libby, as they approach. Dora Mae has her plate well filled.

RITA SUE
Oh, dear Lord.

DORA MAE
What?

RITA SUE
Felix, will you look at what your
daughter's eating. That is a
pig's-portion. Now, you split that with
your daddy.

DORA MAE
But ma, I'm hungry.

STUMPY
Just leave the girl alone.

RITA SUE
Gal, you eat like a lumberjack, you're
gonna look like a lumberjack and nobody
wants to see a lumberjack dance the Cootch.

LIBBY
I'd like to see a lumberjack dance the
Cootch.

The girls laugh and Stumpy smiles. Rita Sue shoots him an angry look.

CUT TO:

Samson finds Jonesy at a table.

SAMSON
Just spoke to the local constabulary. We
are fixed in this town. As in heavily.

JONESY
Great. Babe get that homer, yet?

Jonesy looks up from his newspaper and sees Sofie, who is holding a plate and
cup, looking around. Jonesy gets up to indicate that Sofie is welcome to join
him, but Sofie walks the other direction.

SAMSON
Naw, still sitting around 699. He had a
couple of hits against the Red Sox.
Drove in the winning run with a long,
fly ball. Crowd roared. No home run.
Gonna be quite a thing when it happens
though, ain't it?

JONESY
Yeah, helluva thing...

CUT TO:

Ben is sitting by himself, still studying the photograph he found in the baggage trailer.

SOFIE (O.C.)

Mind?

He looks up and shakes his head. Sofie sits down across from him.

CUT TO:

Jonesy watches Ben and Sofie from afar, clearly upset.

SAMSON

700, can you imagine that? No one is ever gonna beat that. Babe Ruth is gonna go down in--

JONESY

Babe Ruth is an overrated, flannel-mouthed hick who never did nobody a bit of good but himself!

Jonesy slams the newspaper on the table with a bang and storms off.

SAMSON

Jeez-o. Bite my head off.

CUT TO:

Ben and Sofie are eating.

SOFIE

They got you, ah, fixed up with a job yet?

BEN

Totin' junk off trucks, helpin' set up... tents, lights.

SOFIE

"Roustie." "Roustabout." That's what they call a guy that does what you do. "Rustabout."

BEN

Reckon that's what I am, then.

SOFIE

They're startin' you at the bottom...

Ben looks over Sofie's shoulder and sees Ruthie and her son, the mentally-challenged GABRIEL, looking for a place to sit.

RUTHIE

(to Gabriel)

Honey, over here.

SOFIE (CONT'D)

Guess that's where everybody starts. You know, I could talk to Samson for you. He likes me. Maybe get you fixed up with a better job, a flasher or talker or somethin'.

BEN

I ain't much for talking.

CUT TO:

The blind mentalist PROFESSOR LODZ and "The Bearded Lady of Brussels" LILA are conversing at a nearby table.

LODZ

Do you sense any attraction between them?

LILA

Maybe on her part. Boy doesn't know what to do with a woman. Needs someone to show him the ropes. Someone... with experience.

LODZ

That would be unwise.

LILA

What's wrong with teaching a puppy dog a few tricks, hmm?

LODZ

For one, it might very well kill you.

Lila laughs.

LILA

At least I'd die with a smile on my face.

LODZ

Mm-mm. No, I don't think so.

Lila stares into Lodz's milky white eyes and her expression turns more serious as she sees that her friend isn't joking.

CUT TO:

Ben and Sofie. Still eating.

SOFIE

Maybe you could come by tonight.

BEN

Um...

SOFIE

(smiles)

No, um... It's my mother, she wants to see you again.

BEN

No offense, but, your ma, she gives me
the creepin' willies.

SOFIE

Things wind down about midnight. Please?
She won't leave me alone until you do.
She's driving me crazy--

BEN

Your ma's a turnip.

Sofie frowns, pushes her plate away with a clang, and walks away. Ben watches her go before scooping her leftover food onto his plate.

EXT. MINTERN - DAY

Justin and Iris are walking through the bustling town of Mintern toward the Red Bird Restaurant.

IRIS

That Betty has been a real pill about
collecting blankets for the migrants.
She said she was going to put it on the
agenda for the women's auxiliary, but so
far the only thing she has done is give
me a bunch of excuses.

JUSTIN

Uh-huh.

Iris stops.

IRIS

Justin Crowe, you have not heard a word
I've said.

JUSTIN

Uh... Is that a new dress?

IRIS

(laughing)

No, it's not a new dress!

INT. RED BIRD RESTAURANT - DAY

A bell rings as Justin and Iris walk into the very same diner from Justin and Ben's shared dreams. Justin immediately stops and looks around in disbelief. "Love Me or Leave Me" plays on the radio.

IRIS

Something wrong?

Justin shakes his head. The bell rings again as a woman opens the door to the diner. The door hits Justin and he steps out of the way.

WOMAN

Excuse me.

REVEREND NORMAN BALTHUS, an older man with graying hair is sitting in a booth, reading a newspaper: The Daily Chronicle. The headline reads "Babe Ruth Swinging for 700!" He is dressed in all black, like Justin.

IRIS (O.C.)

Norman!

He puts the paper down and stands to greet Justin and Iris.

NORMAN

Children. Tardy as usual.

IRIS

I'm sorry we're late. Oh, it's so good to see you.

They hug and sit down.

NORMAN

Did you see the car?

IRIS

You didn't.

NORMAN

I did, just outside. The Buick Phaeton. Silver and black. Runs like a greyhound. Salinas to Mintern in just over an hour.

IRIS

You're lucky you didn't get in a crack-up.

NORMAN

Did I mention it's a convertible?

The waitress, also the same from the dream, walks over to their table with a pitcher of coffee. Justin covers his cup.

JUSTIN

(to Waitress)

Tea, please.

WAITRESS

Every prophet in his house.

JUSTIN

Excuse me?

WAITRESS

I said, coming right up.

IRIS

Honestly, Norman. A man of your age--

NORMAN

Should enjoy the blessings the good Lord bestows on him while there is still time.

IRIS

You're turning into a rake!

NORMAN

Justin, you better snap this little girl back into line.

JUSTIN

I'm sorry?

NORMAN

Your sister just called me a rake.

JUSTIN

Oh.

IRIS

He's been like this all week.

NORMAN

Something bothering you, son?

JUSTIN

I just have a lot on my mind.

NORMAN

Well then, maybe this will make you stand up and salute.

He holds up the newspaper and passes it to Justin.

IRIS

No more Babe Ruth, please! That's all anybody talks about.

NORMAN

Of course it is. Mighty endeavors are inspiring.

IRIS

There's nothing inspiring about a man hitting a ball with a stick.

NORMAN

I could say the same thing about a young man throwing rocks with a sling.

IRIS

Norman Balthus, don't you dare compare David to Babe Ruth!

NORMAN

You just watch me, little girl.
(a beat)

In desperate times, the good Lord looks over the flock and chooses one man to inspire the multitudes; one man to accomplish the impossible; one man to offer hope where there was only hopelessness; and who are we to judge the wisdom of the Almighty?

Justin listens, enraptured.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

He chooses his servants to fit his plan and when he chooses his servant from the flock and gifts them with talents, it is a grave sin to bury them in the earth.

NORMAN

Amen.

IRIS

(resigned)

Amen.

JUSTIN

Amen...

EXT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - DAY

The entrance with a large sign reading "Carnivale" has been erected. The Ferris wheel is going round and round. Multicolored flags are whipping in the wind. Sounds of amusement from within. The festivities are in full swing.

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - DAY

Inside a booth, a carnie spins The Wheel of Fortune. Crowds gather around, yelling in excitement.

WHEEL MAN

Who shall lady luck smile upon now?
Nickel wins a saw-buck. A saw-buck wins a fiver. Fortune is only one spin away.
You sir, you look like a winner! Step right up...

CUT TO:

Libby is standing on a stage, looking very sexy as her father sells her wares. A carnie is on the ground in front of them, trying to hold back a crowd of whistling men.

STUMPY

Just feast your eyes on this Northen
Eye-talian beauty. This is the woman all
the men in town been talkin' about.
She's gonna shake it. She's gonna break
it. She's gonna tear it down to the
ground, because Ms. Francesca here is
so, so hot, she's gonna put blisters on
your eyeballs...

INT. SOFIE'S TRAILER - DAY

Sofie is in her trailer, tarot cards spread on the table before her. A WOMAN sits patiently across from her. Sofie turns her head to listen to her mother, but Apollonia refuses to speak, so Sofie slides the woman's money back across the table.

SOFIE

The cards are unclear. I'm sorry.

WOMAN

Is that bad?

MAN

C'mon!

The woman's companion snatches the money off the table and the couple leaves the trailer.

SOFIE

(to Apollonia)

So you're gonna be a child. ... Well,
we've gotta eat, okay? ... Look, don't
try to change the subject. The point is,
I asked him, he said no, that's the end
of it. ... Yes, it is.

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - DAY

Sofie leaves the trailer. There's a long line of customers waiting outside. They groan as Sofie breaks the news:

SOFIE

Folks, we're closed. Sorry.

As she walks away, she bumps into Ben, who is carrying a carton of empty bottles.

SOFIE

What do *you* want?

BEN

Nothin'.

Ben walks behind a tarp and sets the bottles down. Ruthie shouts from a nearby tent.

RUTHIE

(to Ben)

Boy! Hey, boy! I need a quick hand.

BEN

Yeah?

RUTHIE

Run on back and fetch Gabriel's gauntlets.

BEN

What?

RUTHIE

Them big leather straps he wears 'round his wrists. Big baby. He won't go on without them. I gotta stall.

BEN

Where they at?

RUTHIE

Third trailer on this side on my vanity.

Ben looks confused.

RUTHIE (CONT'D)

Near the back by the bed. Now, skedaddle!

He runs off.

INT. RUTHIE'S TRAILER - DAY

Ben enters Ruthie's trailer. He goes over to her vanity and curiosity gets the better of him. He examines a necklace, then sniffs a bottle of perfume. He looks around before finding the gauntlets hanging on the wall. He grabs them and runs off.

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - DAY

RUTHIE

Ben!

Ben appears from around a tarp and runs over to Ruthie. He hands her the gauntlets.

RUTHIE (CONT'D)

Bless you.

BEN

Sorry it took so long--

She kisses him on the cheek.

RUTHIE

Ssh.

He watches her leave.

EXT. JUSTIN AND IRIS'S HOME - DAY

A car pulls up to an attractive, although modest two-story home. Carroll Templeton gets out.

INT. JUSTIN AND IRIS'S LIVINGROOM - DAY

Iris greets Carroll at the door. Justin is sitting, reading the newspaper.

IRIS

Oh, Mr. Templeton. Please come on in.

(to Justin)

Justin, Mr. Templeton's here.

Justin stands and the men shake hands.

JUSTIN

Hello, Carroll. I was afraid you wouldn't come by.

CARROLL

Of course I came by. Said I would, didn't I?

JUSTIN

Yes, yes, you certainly did. Please, have a seat.

(to Iris)

Iris, how about some of that cold lemonade?

She leaves the room.

JUSTIN

Well... I have got a project in the works that I'm very excited about but I'm going to need your help.

CARROLL

I had a feelin' you were gonna say that. What kind of project?

JUSTIN

Well, do you remember this morning when you said it was getting crowded in church?

CARROLL

Oh, yeah. As a matter of fact that's why I'm here. My wife and I--

JUSTIN

I know, I know, it's the migrants. They need a place to come and worship but our church is already overcrowded. So what they need is a place of their own.

CARROLL

Now see, I was just sayin' something like that to Emma not an hour ago.

JUSTIN

Is that right?

CARROLL

Yes, sir. Well, how can I help you out, Reverend?

JUSTIN

Well, there's a building down on State Street. I believe you own it.

CARROLL

Chin's?

JUSTIN

That's the one. I want you to give that to me.

Carroll squeals with laughter.

JUSTIN

I'm sorry. Did I, uh, did I say something funny?

CARROLL

Yeah, that's a real howler. Turnin' Chins into a church for the Oakies...

JUSTIN

I'm quite serious.

CARROLL

I'm sure you are. I'll tell you what... Will fifty dollars work? They can get themselves a nice tent for fifty--

JUSTIN

(firmly)

No, no. The Lord has spoken to me. He was quite clear. I want Chin's.

CARROLL

The Lord has spoken to you?

JUSTIN
That's correct.

CARROLL
Maybe he should have told you that
property's not for sale.

Carroll stands and prepares to leave.

JUSTIN
Are you mocking me, Mr. Templeton?

CARROLL
I'm just sayin' it's not for sale.

JUSTIN
(angrily)
And I'm just saying I have no intention
of buying it.

CARROLL
No?

JUSTIN
You will donate it.

CARROLL
To you? With all due respect, Reverend,
you're out of your goddamn mind.

JUSTIN
How dare you take the Lord's name in
vain in this house!

Justin grabs Carroll's arm and the room around them goes dark.

Thunderclap.

Out of the shadows, the CHINESE PROSTITUTE approaches. She embraces Carroll,
rubs her hands over him and whispers sensually in his ear:

CHINESE PROSTITUTE
Hello, Mr. Templeton. Back so soon?

Carroll flings the woman off him and she turns away in a huff. As she walks
back into the shadows, a wall of flame erupts in front of Justin and Carroll.

EXT. MINTERN - NIGHT

But the flames are emanating from a barrel in the street outside of Chin's.
Justin and Carroll are no longer in Justin's living room, rather they are
watching the prostitute as she walks through the busy streets of Mintern and
into the brothel.

CARROLL
My sweet Jesus.

INT. CHIN'S - NIGHT

Inside Chin's, business is thriving. There is a scantily clad fan dancer on stage; Western gentlemen are smoking and dancing with Chinese women; some Chinese men are playing Mah Jongg.

Standing next to Justin, Carroll Templeton watches *himself* across the room. At the bar, MR. CHIN is showing an envelope to CAROLL TEMPLETON #2.

MR. CHIN
This your piece for the week plus the
rent.

CARROLL #2
Anything new on the menu?

MR. CHIN
Maybe...

Chin reaches into his pocket and hands Carroll #2 a key.

MR. CHIN (CONT'D)
Room four. Upstairs. Enjoy...

Carroll watches himself walk past, headed upstairs. He struggles to get away, but Justin holds him still.

CARROLL
Let me go.

JUSTIN
What's on the menu, Carroll?

CUT TO:

The upstairs of Chin's. Carroll #2 walks down a hallway. Justin and Carroll follow.

JUSTIN
What's the matter, Templeton? Don't tell
me you're not hungry. Look at you.
You're famished!

Carroll #2 stops in front of a room, unlocks and opens the door, and says to the person inside:

CARROLL #2
Hello.

Justin forces Carroll to watch from the doorway.

CARROLL
(crying)
No, no.

JUSTIN
Open your eyes! Face your sin!

Carroll #2 sits down a bed and next to him is a very young, shirtless Chinese boy. Carroll #2 rubs his hands over the boy's chest and shoulders.

The CAMERA pulls away and...

INT. JUSTIN AND IRIS'S LIVINGROOM - DAY

We're back at the Crowe household. Iris enters.

IRIS
Here we go. Some nice, cold lemonade.

JUSTIN
Thank you, Iris.

IRIS
You're welcome.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

People are exiting the carnival.

MAN (O.C.)
Okay, folks, we're shuttin' down.
Goodnight now. Right this way. Thanks
for comin'...

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

The festivities for the night have ended. The Ferris wheel and the carousal stop spinning and the lights are being turned off. Sofie walks between the tents, carrying a large jug.

JONESY
Let me give you a hand with that.

SOFIE
No, I got it.

Jonesy takes the jug.

JONESY
Ain't seen you around much.

SOFIE
I've been around.

JONESY
Yeah, I know, I just... ain't seen ya.

SOFIE
Something on your mind?

JONESY
I was thinkin', I never did teach you
how to throw a slider.

SOFIE
Yeah, you did. I was eleven.

JONESY
Eleven? Damn.
(a beat)
You know, it's been a dog's age since we
played catch.

Jonesy places the jug under the water pump and starts to fill it.

SOFIE
I gotta, I gotta wash momma's hair.

JONESY
Oh, yeah, no, I know. I mean, I didn't
mean now. I mean, it's dark, right?
(a beat)
Still got your mitt?

SOFIE
Jonesy...

JONESY
Yeah. Yeah...

He hands the jug back to her and walks off. Sofie resumes filling it...

INT. GECKO'S TENT - NIGHT

Dora Mae is peering through the tent at Sofie. Behind her, GECKO is sitting
in front of mirror, picking at his skin.

DORA MAE
Poor Jonesy. Sniffin' around little Miss
Prissy-pants like a dog lost his bone.

GECKO
Oh, I'd wager he knows where his bone is
all right.

DORA MAE
Bet you wouldn't mind helpin' him find it
neither.

GECKO
Jonesy? Nah, not my type. 'Sides, he'd
sooner lick dust than kneel at the alter.

DORA MAE

Gotta admit, he is wicked handsome,
though.

Dora Mae peels a loose piece of skin off Gecko's back and lets it fall on the floor.

GECKO

For a roustie, maybe. Me, I'd fancy a
toss with the debutante. I wouldn't mind
blowin' her safe.

DORA MAE

Well, listen to you, Clark Gable...

They laugh.

INT. LODZ'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Professor Lodz is pouring himself a glass of absinthe. Samson sits across from him, whiskey in hand.

LODZ

The boy's a remarkable find. Should
prove quite valuable, no?

SAMSON

Aww, hell, Lodz. He's a rube.

LODZ

And yet, Management wants him on full
time, no?

SAMSON

For now.

LODZ

I saw Scudder. In the boy's dreams.

SAMSON

Don't care. Scudder's dead. Has been for
years.

LODZ

On the contrary, Scudder's alive and well.

SAMSON

Hogwash.

LODZ

But you will tell Management, won't you?
I'd do it myself, but he won't listen to
me anymore. He used to. But ever since
St. Louis.

SAMSON
Well, things have changed since St. Louis.

LODZ
No.
(a beat)
Samson, we should head south.

SAMSON
Circuit takes us north.

LODZ
The circuit's just an excuse, you know that.

SAMSON
We're headin' north.
(a beat)
Thanks for the whiskey.

Samson exits...

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

And walks to his trailer.

JONESY
All right boys, we're down for the
night. Get some shut-eye. See y'all in
the morning.

MAN (O.C.)
All right, Jonesy!

MAN (O.C.)
Night, boss.

Samson turns around, watches Ben stagger past, and goes inside.

INT. SOFIE'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Lodz is sitting at Apollonia's bedside. The two are having a conversation,
although neither is speaking. Then:

LODZ
We were always strong together than
apart. All you have to do is let me in.

Lodz strokes her hair and the trailer shakes. Sofie enters.

SOFIE
What are you doing here?

LODZ
Just having a chat.

SOFIE
Well, get the hell out!

LODZ
My intentions exactly.
(quietly, to Apollonia)
You leave me no choice, my dear. But
then, you know that.

He leaves.

SOFIE
Momma, are you all right?

A porcelain tea cup flies off a table and shatters against the wall next to Sofie.

SOFIE (CONT'D)
That's it! I've had enough of your
tantrums!

Sofie storms out.

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Ben slides underneath a trailer and brushes dirt off his blanket. He pulls out the photograph ("Big Sky Farms") and looks at it for awhile before lying back and falling asleep...

A fast series of frightening, cryptic images:

-- Thunderclap.
-- CLOSE-UP of a WWI soldier cocking a rifle, spilling the shells.
-- A WWI soldier (SCUDDER) walks through a bunker filled with dead soldiers. He removes the helmet from a dead soldier and places it on his own head.
-- A WWI soldier (THE UNIFORMED MAN) walking through a battlefield.
Explosions.
-- Scudder rounds a corner of a bunker and sees another soldier, minus limbs, writhing. Scudder picks up a rifle.
-- The Uniformed Man appears from above and aims his rifle.
-- Scudder approaches the writhing body cautiously and sees that it's not still alive, but something is in fact shaking it.
-- A giant, growling BEAR appears in the bunker. It's wearing chains, a red vest and a RED CAP with Cyrillic writing on it.
-- Growling. Scudder, looking up, afraid.
-- ZOOM-INTO the bear's bloody mouth.

Ben wakes up. He's breathing heavily.

BEN
Oh, shit...

Footsteps. A woman wearing a nightgown emerges from the dark night and walks toward him, slowly. It's the "catatonic" Apollonia. She extends her arm and Ben takes her hand.

APOLLONIA
(gasping)
You're the one.

INT. SOFIE'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Sofie enters the trailer and turns on the lights. She looks down at her mother's bed. It's empty.

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

SOFIE (O.C.)
Momma! Momma!

Apollonia faints in Ben's arms.

BEN
Over here!

SOFIE
Momma!

Ben waves to get Sofie's attention.

BEN
Sofie, she's over here!

SOFIE
Momma!
(to Ben)
What the hell are you doing?! Get away
from her! Get your hands off her! Don't
touch her!

Sofie runs to her mother and pushes Ben aside. All the carnies come outside and rush toward them to find out what all the commotion is about.

JONESY
Get back! Everybody stay back!

Gabriel throws Ben onto the ground.

SOFIE
Momma?

JONESY
Sofie... Sofie, she okay? What the
hell's going on here?

SOFIE
I don't know. I don't know. Momma, can
you hear me? Say something!

Two men hold Ben still and Gabriel smacks him around.

JONESY
Spill it, Hawkins! What the hell happened
here?

SOFIE
(to Ben)
What'd you do to her?!

BEN
I was sleepin'. I woke up. She walked
over to me--

SOFIE
She can't walk. She can't even move.
Everybody knows that.

BEN
I didn't do nothin' to her, Sofie. You
gotta believe me, I didn't--

Gabriel slugs him the stomach.

SOFIE
Momma, can you hear me?

Samson emerges from his trailer and hobbles toward the rabble.

BEN
(to the men)
Let me go, goddamnit!

SOFIE
Momma?

JONESY
(to Sofie)
Don't worry. It's okay. It's all right...

SAMSON
Let the boy go.

Gabriel continues to pound on Ben while Ruthie intervenes:

RUTHIE
Gabriel, stop, stop!

JONESY
Calm down. Everyone just quiet down.
Quiet!

Ben tries to shake off the two men.

SAMSON
I said let him go.

JONESY

(to Samson)

Boss, we got a real problem here. Needs
some sortin' out.

SAMSON

We don't have no sortin' out to do. The
kid didn't do nothin' wrong. Cut him loose!

Off Joney's look, they comply.

SOFIE

I can't hear her. She ain't talkin' to
me...

(to Samson)

What's wrong with her?

SAMSON

I don't know, sweetheart. I really don't.
Sorry. Best we get her inside, though.

(a beat)

C'mon, give her a hand here, for Chrissake!

Several men lift Apollonia and carry her away.

SOFIE

You got her?

JONESY

All right, stand back, everyone. Stand
back.

Samson spots Lodz outside his trailer, watching from a distance.

SAMSON

Been a change of plans. Tomorrow we pack
it up... head south.

The carnies exchange confused looks and mumble amongst themselves. South?

SAMSON (CONT'D)

Let's get some sleep!

(a beat)

Crack of dawn, children.

The crowd begins to dissipate.

RUTHIE

(to Ben)

You okay?

BEN

Yeah, I'm fine.

RUTHIE
Let me take a gander...
(a beat)
We gotta get something on that jaw. Come on.

Ben hesitates.

RUTHIE (CONT'D)
I said, come on.

Ben follows Ruthie to her trailer. Jonesy approaches Samson.

JONESY
(to Samson)
Want to tell me what's going on here?

SAMSON
Things are changing. Not for the better.

JONESY
South, huh? Gonna be hotter than Hades
down there.

SAMSON
That it will.

INT. RUTHIE'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Ben is shirtless, sitting on Ruthie's bed as Ruthie examines his wounds.
She's applying something to his face.

RUTHIE
Hold still. There. Leave that on through
the night. Take the swelling down by
morning. Let's see about those ribs.

She lifts his arm and feels his ribs with her fingers.

RUTHIE (CONT'D)
Hope you don't truck no grudge against
Gabe. He was just lookin' out for Appy
is all.

BEN
I didn't touch her.

RUTHIE
I know...

BEN
Thank you.

Ben stands and puts his shirt on. Ruthie smiles, either amused or aroused.

BEN

This mean anything to you?

He hands her the familiar photograph: "Big Sky Farms."

RUTHIE

I remember that. Where'd you get it?

BEN

Found it.

RUTHIE

This here is a picture of old Hack
Scudder's sweetie. What was her name...?

(a beat)

Flora.

BEN

You met her?

RUTHIE

No, never met her. Hack showed me the
picture. Used to go on and on. Poor old
Hack.

She reaches for a photograph on the wall beside her and hands it to Ben. It's
a picture of HENRY "HACK" SCUDDER, the man from Ben's dreams, wearing a
tuxedo and top hat. The photo is titled "The Gentlemen Geek."

RUTHIE (CONT'D)

That's him. Henry Scudder. Worked the
geek-show. Real rummy. Poor bastard
never met a bottle he didn't like. Sad
thing. He sure seemed to miss this
woman. Don't know what happened between
'em. All's I know... he always kept the
picture on him.

BEN

She's my ma.

RUTHIE

The lady we buried back in Milfay?

Ben nods.

RUTHIE (CONT'D)

Well, now... That is downright queer.

BEN

You mind if I keep this?

Ruthie shakes her head and returns the photograph of FLORA HAWKINS to Ben. By
the look on her face, she's no longer amused by this young man, just
mystified. Ben's about to leave the trailer when he turns around and asks:

BEN
This, this Scudder, do you think he
might've been in the war?

RUTHIE
Could've been. Lots of crazy men in the
war.
(quietly)
Crazy as mud-bugs on a griddle...

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Ben climbs out of the trailer and exchanges looks with the sheepish Gabriel.

RUTHIE (O.C.)
Gabriel, come on inside now.

Gabriel does as he's told.

EXT. MINTERN - NIGHT

With no boozing or whoring to be had, Chinatown is eerily quiet. Justin walks up to the building and unlocks the door as...

CUT TO:

Carroll Templeton drives his car to a seemingly remote hilltop location. He parks the car and takes out a revolver.

INT. CHIN'S - NIGHT

Justin flicks on the lights and walks onto the stage. He begins to preach to an audience of empty tables and chairs:

JUSTIN
Brothers and sisters, welcome to our new
temple, our new home, our... sanctuary.
Here it is, we will begin our holy task,
our mission... to bring in the
multitudes who are now lost to God. The
multitudes who would otherwise perish
forever when His sword is loosed upon
the world!

EXT. MINTERN - NIGHT

Carroll places the gun against his head. And fires.

INT. CHIN'S - NIGHT

End of sermon.

INT. JUSTIN AND IRIS'S LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Iris has fallen asleep with her sewing in her lap. The RADIO plays.

RADIO

"Did you really think you could hide from me, Carla?"

- "Get out or I'll call the police!"

"Go ahead..."

- "Hello...? Hello, operator...? Oh, no. No!"

"Oh, yes. You see, I cut the line with this knife. The same knife I used to kill that nosy old bag next door."

- "It was you!"

"Yes, and once she was dead, it was only a matter of leaving behind some incriminating evidence."

- "Joe's wallet."

"Yes. I picked his pocket on the train platform. The fool had his nose--"

Justin turns the radio off. Iris opens her eyes and notices her brother, sitting across from her.

IRIS

Oh, I saved you some supper.

JUSTIN

I'm not hungry.

IRIS

A long day?

JUSTIN

We have a new church.

IRIS

We do?

JUSTIN

Chin's.

IRIS

That gambling hall down in Chinatown?

JUSTIN

Brother Templeton donated it to our new ministry... for the migrants.

IRIS

The migrants?

JUSTIN

The flock I've been chosen to lead. Chosen by the Lord God. He spoke to me, Iris. And I shall carry out His will.

Iris smiles.

IRIS
Praise the Lord.

JUSTIN
Amen.

Suddenly, Justin is overcome by a wave of emotion and breaks out in tears. Iris walks over to him and begins to massage his shoulders.

IRIS
You're a good man, Justin. He's
chosen... such a good man.

INT. JUSTIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Justin is now kneeling on the floor. From under the bed he pulls out a box that contains a leather whip.

CLOSE-ON

a cross hanging on the wall. Justin stares at it as he whips himself in the back.

INT. JUSTIN AND IRIS'S LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Meanwhile, Iris is sewing and humming along with the radio. She stops, listens to the flagellation occurring upstairs, and continues to hum.

RADIO
"...just as my heart was, after the
ball. A little maiden climbed an old
man's knee, begged for a story..."

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - DAY

RADIO (O.C.)
"'Do uncle, please! Why are you single?
Why live alone? Have you no babies? Have
you no home?'"

Men are dismantling the Ferris wheel and the carousel. Two men wheel away a popcorn cart. Others are collapsing tents and carrying trunks.

Ben, carrying two metal containers, walks past the conjoined twins, ALEXANDRIA and CALADONIA, who are playing cat's cradle and singing:

ALEXANDRIA AND CALADONIA
"After the ball is over, after the break
of morn, after the dancer's leaving,
after the stars are gone, many a heart
is aching. If you could read them all..."

Then, Ben abruptly stops walking. He looks up at a trailer. Attached to it is the RED CAP belonging to the bear from his dreams.

And as he stares at it, gobsmacked, the singing continues:

ALEXANDRIA AND CALADONIA (CONT'D)

"Many the hopes that have vanished,
after the ball... Many the hopes that
have vanished, after the ball...."

FADE OUT.