ON GOLDEN POND

Screenplay by
Ernest Thompson

REVISED
SEPTEMBER 11, 1980
Rev. 6/28/80

ON GOLDEN POND

FADE IN:

1 AERIAL SHOT - DAY

FROM HIGH ABOVE, we SEE rural New England, all green and gray, laced with black and brown winding roads and blue rivers, and blue ponds, little drab towns highlighted with the inevitable white church.

2 AND THEN THE LAKE - DAY

Golden Pond, shimmering like a sapphire against the deep green forest.

3 EXT. ROAD - DAY

A late-model Buick, modest color and style, cruises along this country highway. It passes a small farm where a farmer is erecting a new section of fence.

4 EXT. ROAD - DAY

A signpost with a charming collection of information, pointing out the direction to Golden Pond, as well as other points of interest. The Buick turns off the highway onto a smaller tar road.

5 EXT. HILL - DAY

An open meadow, ablaze with wild flowers, blueberry bushes just budding. The Buick stops at the meadow's edge. We SEE the lake shining down below.

6 INT. CAR - DAY

ETHEL THAYER is at the wheel. She is sixty-nine, full of life and energy, feisty. Beside her is NORMAN THAYER, JR., seventy-nine, gray and faded. He stares out the car window without emotion, but Ethel is aglow with enthusiasm and excitement. She looks at Norman and smiles. The car moves on.

7 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

A cluster of ancient houses, a gas station, where a teenaged boy is carefully painting the single pump. The Buick drives slowly by.
EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

The General Store. A woman sweeps the sidewalk. A man is nailing up a sign announcing "Summer Hours." A small marina, new boats piled up. The Buick crosses a tiny bridge. We SEE a channel, bordered by houses, opening onto the lake.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

The CAMERA PANS DOWN TO it and across its surface, and we SEE the lake's personalities:

EXT. COVE - DAY

The water is calm and relaxed, golden where the sun hits the shallowest parts.

EXT. PENINSULA - DAY

Little waves lap the scraggly shore.

EXT. OPEN SEA - DAY

Bigger waves, angrier, white-capped, bouncing hard against white-topped rocks, red and black buoys bobbing in the swells.

EXT. SHORELINE - DAY

God's greenest trees, towering high, bending occasionally to the water. Rolling along behind them is the Buick.

EXT. SHORELINE - DAY

A length of sandy beach, a scrubby swamp.

EXT. HOUSES - DAY

Little modern things, with lots of glass, too close together. Two young men are mooring out a sailboat.

EXT. CABINS - DAY

Old, delicate ones with docks piled on the banks. An old man struggles with a section of dock.
17 EXT. ESTATE - DAY

A sprawling place, with tennis courts and manicured lawns. Several men are working, pruning trees.

18 EXT. CAMP KOCHAKIYI - DAY

Little cabins and dining hall. Float and docks on the beach, boats and canoes being painted.

19 EXT. COTTAGES - DAY

The originals, some boarded up now, others in various stages of ready: docks in place, an occasional boat.

20 EXT. THAYER HOUSE - DAY

A wonderful rustic place, two stories high, rambling porch, a widow's watch. On the bank are piled sections of a dock, and a float with a diving board. The yard is covered with pine needles. The board storm doors have been taken off the front of the house and now lean on the porch. There's an old washtub in the back, full of dirt, where later flowers will grow.

The Buick pulls into the yard. Ethel jumps out, Norman follows slowly. Ethel dashes round the side of the house down to the dock, making Loon calls. From the distance the Loons answer. Ethel turns to Norman who stands at the side of the house watching bemused.

   ETHEL
   Norman. The Loons. They heard me!
   Hello Golden Pond. We're here.

Norman fumbles with keys, and opens the door. Ethel follows.

21 INT. HOUSE - DAY

Norman and Ethel step into the living room.

It is large, high-ceilinged, comfortable-looking. There's a cheery glow from the lake, which can be SEEN THROUGH the large WINDOWS. The room is practically alive with character and history. Its furniture, eclectic and interesting, is mostly hidden now by dust covers, and there are porch chairs and tables piled up inside as well.

On the walls we SEE an amazing chronicle of a family. Hundreds of photographs, diplomas and 4-H ribbons, and drawings, and yellowed newspaper clippings.
The whole room, indeed, as we'll see, the whole house, is a huge album of memories. There are old fishing hats on a rack, and old jackets, fishpoles, boat cushions, anchors, a water ski, knicknacks galore, pine cones, stuffed fish, and the like, and hundreds of wonderful books, collections of Dumas and Twain and Dickens and Defoe and Stevenson and other masters of the ilk.

**ETHEL**
Just look at this place.

**NORMAN**
It's a mess, isn't it?

**ETHEL**
Just take a minute. Be all shipshape again.

She pulls off her jacket, puts on a marvelous, dilapidated old thing and steps outside. Norman studies the room, seemingly confused, as though staring at an old friend he can't quite place. He wanders to the fishpoles.

On the wall is a photo of Norman as a younger man holding two large fish. Norman stares at the picture. Beside it is a clipping whose headline reads, "Professor Thayer Retires." It is dated 1956.

**NORMAN**
Huh.

Norman wanders across the room. We see an aluminum canoe near the porch door, the name "Gertrude" emblazoned on its bow.

Norman opens the wooden front door. He pushes the screen door, but instead of swinging open, it falls over onto the porch. Norman regards it for a moment, then steps back into the living room.

He looks about. He lifts a dust cover and finds a fifties-style telephone on a small table. He lifts the receiver and listens.

**NORMAN**
(continuing; calling)
The phone works!
(to himself)
At least I think it does.
(he dials "0")
Hello? Hello? Hello?

(continued)
He is distracted by a photo of himself and Ethel when they were both much younger.

**NORMAN**
(continuing)
Who the hell is that?

(he calls)
Who the hell is in this picture here?

No answer.

**NORMAN**
(continuing)
Who the hell is that? Hello? Who is this?... The operator! What do you want?... You called, you must want something... Oh, wait a minute. I did call you, but you never answered... Well... How are you?... How nice. Listen. This is Norman Thayer, Jr. over on Golden Pond, and I have something I'd like you to do. Call me up. Can you do that?... I want to check my phone and make certain it still rings. It hasn't been rung all winter, and it may have lost its whatsis. Do you have my number?... I have no idea, it has a nine in it, that's all I know... Well, it's in the book, you must have a book... Norman Thayer, Jr. Let's give it a try, shall we?

Norman hangs up. He stares at the phone expectantly. A moment passes. He squints at the photo.

**NORMAN**
(continuing)
Who the hell is that?

We HEAR a KNOCK at the DOOR. Norman is startled. He calls to the kitchen.

**NORMAN**
(continuing)
Someone's at the door!

**EXT. BACK STOOP - DAY**

Ethel stands on the step, arms full of logs.

(Continued)
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CONTINUED:

**ETHEL**

It's me, you old poop.

She waits impatiently until at last Norman opens the door.

**NORMAN**

Well, look at you.

**ETHEL**

Yes, quite a sight, aren't I?

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Ethel marches in, Norman follows. He watches while she dumps her load of logs, and straightens up a bit.

**ETHEL**

Norman, it's so beautiful.
Everything's just waking up.
Little tiny birds, little tiny leaves. I saw a whole patch of little tiny flowers out by the old cellar hole. I forgot what they're called, little tiny yellow things.

**NORMAN**

What were you doing out there in the woods?

**ETHEL**

Getting firewood, what do you think I was doing? What happened to the screen door?

**NORMAN**

It fell over.

**ETHEL**

How?

**NORMAN**

I pushed it.

**ETHEL**

What do you mean?

**NORMAN**

I pushed the door and the door fell over.

(CONTINUED)
ETHEL
It's not supposed to do that when you push it.

NORMAN
I didn't think so. I'll fix it later.

ETHEL
You might have closed the big door. Now we'll be swatting black flies for the next two days.* * *
She swings it shut. Norman takes a hat off the rack and puts it on. He studies himself in the mirror.

NORMAN
How do you like this hat?

ETHEL
Stunning. Do you want to help me with the dust covers?

NORMAN
I don't have anything else to do.

She pulls the sheet off the sofa. He reluctantly removes a cover from a chair and begins to fold it carefully.

ETHEL
I met a very nice couple.

NORMAN
What... Where?

ETHEL
In the woods.

NORMAN
A couple of people.

ETHEL
No. A couple of antelope. Of course a couple of people. Migliore was their name, I believe.

NORMAN
Migliore? What sort of name is that.

ETHEL
I don't know, dear. Italian, probably. They're up from Boston.

(CONTINUED)
NORMAN
Middle age means the middle, Ethel, the middle of life. People don't live to be 150.

ETHEL
We're at the far edge of middle age, that's all.

NORMAN
We're not, you know. We're not middle-aged. You're old, and I'm ancient.

ETHEL
(approaching irritated)
Oh, pooh, you're in your seventies, and I'm in my sixties.

NORMAN
Just barely on both counts.

ETHEL
Are we going to spend the afternoon quibbling about this?

NORMAN
We can if you like.

ETHEL
The Migliore's, whatever their age group, have invited us to dinner, sometime. Wouldn't that be nice?

NORMAN
I don't know. I'm not sure my stomach is ready for rigatoni and that sort of thing.

She scowls at him. She carries an old handmade table up to the front door.

NORMAN
(continuing)
How's that table? A bit heavy?

ETHEL
Lord, yes. My father built this table in 1917. The first summer I went to Camp Koochakiyi.

(Continued)
CONTINUED: (4)

Norman tries on another hat.

NORMAN
What do you think of this one?

ETHEL
Quite a sight. Oh, no, poor Elmer has had a terrible fall.

NORMAN
Who's poor Elmer?

ETHEL
Elmer, my doley. He fell into the fireplace.

NORMAN
Well, he should be more careful.

ETHEL
Poor little Elmer. The life you've had. Did you know he turned sixty-five this spring?

NORMAN
No, I must say I wasn't aware of that.

He tries on more hats, one of which he'll wear for the rest of the scene.

ETHEL
My father got him for me on my fourth birthday. I wanted a red scooter, but my father said red scooters were excessive and contrary to the ways of the Lord. He told me I'd understand when I got older. Well, I'm a lot older now and I'm afraid I still don't understand. But he gave me Elmer. And Elmer and I, the times we've had. He was my first true love, you know.

NORMAN
I've known all along I wasn't the first in line.

ETHEL
No, you were a rather cheap substitute for my darling Elmer. And now he's had a fall, poor dear.

(CONTINUED)
NORMAN
Maybe he was trying to kill himself.
Maybe he wants to be cremated.
Probably got cancer or termites
or something.

ETHEL
Are you hungry, darling?

NORMAN
No. It wouldn't be a bad way to go,
huh? A quick front flip off the
mantel, a bit of a kick at the
last minute, and end up right in
the fire. Nothing to it.

ETHEL
Shut up, Norman!

NORMAN
When my number's up, do that for
me, would you? Prop me up on the
mantel and point out which way is
down. I may even try for a full
gainer with a half twist.

ETHEL
Norman Thayer, will you shut up?
Your fascination with dying is
beginning to frazzle my good humor.

NORMAN
It's not a fascination. It just
crosses my mind now and then.

ETHEL
Every five minutes. Don't you have
anything else to think about?

NORMAN
Nothing quite as interesting.

ETHEL
Well, what's stopping you? Why
don't you take your dive and get
it over with? See what it's like?

NORMAN
And leave you alone with Elmer?
You must be mad.

(CONTINUED)
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23 CONTINUED: (6)

ETHEL
Oh, for pity's sake. Come along with me and let's get the canoe off the porch.

She opens the enclosed porch.

24 INT. PORCH - DAY

ETHEL
All right. Grab an end.

Norman takes one end, she lifts the other.

25 EXT. HOUSE

They plod slowly down the steps.

NORMAN
This is not our canoe. It's way too heavy.

The PHONE RINGS.

(Continued)
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25 CONTINUED:

ETHEL
Well, what do you know? The phone's ringing.

NORMAN
Who the hell is it?

ETHEL
I don't know, dear.

She sets her end down. Norman sets down his. PHONE RINGS AGAIN.*

NORMAN
I'll get it. Maybe it's St. Peter. You take the canoe on down.

He hurries back to the house. Ethel drags the canoe.

26 INT. LIVING ROOM

The PHONE RINGS. Norman enters. He pauses a moment to regain his breath. He lifts the receiver.

NORMAN
Hello? Who is this?... The operator! What do you want?... Oh, to check the ring. Of course. Does it work?

27 EXT. PORCH - DAY

Norman carries the phone onto the porch and watches as Ethel gathers up paddles and cushions, puts the binoculars around her neck and carries them all down to the canoe.

NORMAN
Yes, I guess it did ring here. Thank you... I beg your pardon?... Oh. Thank you.

He hangs up the phone and leaves it on the porch. He ambles down the bank shaking his head.

NORMAN (continuing)
She said to have a nice day. What a strange thing to say. What did she think I was going to do? Well, the phone works.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ETHEL

That's good.

EXT. DOCK - LATE AFTERNOON

He sits on a rock and watches Ethel move sections of dock.

ETHEL

Oh, guess who else I ran into?

NORMAN

You ran into someone else? The woods are full of people. What's this place coming to?

ETHEL

It was only Charlie.

NORMAN

Who's Charlie?

ETHEL

Charlie, Norman. The mailman. He said he'd come round and put in our dock for us.

NORMAN

I'll put in the dock.

ETHEL

You won't put in the dock.

NORMAN

Why not?

ETHEL

Because you're too old.

NORMAN

I'm not old at all. I'm middle-aged.

ETHEL

Charlie says our boat's all ready and he'll bring it on Saturday!

NORMAN

I remember Charlie when he was just a little fellow.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
NORMAN (CONT'D)
He used to laugh at anything. I thought then he was a bit deficient.

ETHEL
Chelsea had such a crush on him. Remember, Norman?

NORMAN
Yes. I could never understand that.

He pulls himself up and studies the beached float.

NORMAN
(continuing)
Remember Chelsea trying to be on the diving team at school? Ha, ha, ha.

(he holds out
his hands)
She was about this wide.

He climbs up on the diving board. He may take a jump or two while they talk.

ETHEL
Tsk. She wasn't any such thing. She had a few fat years, that's all.

NORMAN
I should say so. It's no wonder she could never do a back flip. No center of gravity.

ETHEL
Well she tried... She only did it to please you, anyway.

NORMAN
I know.

ETHEL
Oh, Norman. Wouldn't it be nice if I could persuade her to come and spend a few days this summer?

NORMAN
(after a moment)
Mmm. Want to go up to the house and play a quick game of Parcheesi?
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28 CONTINUED: (2)

ETHEL
Not now, Norman. We've got the whole summer for you to try to win back the fortune you lost to me last year.

NORMAN
Heh heh.

ETHEL
I hope you thought about your tactics over the winter.

NORMAN
Heh heh.

ETHEL
Pretty shoddy, some of those moves of yours.

NORMAN
Heh heh.

The two of them stare out at the lake.

(CONTINUED)
(continuing)
Isn't it beautiful, Norman?

He steps to her and puts his arm around her.

Yes.

Let's take a quick ride, shall we?
First ride of the year.

It's a little cold for that sort of thing, isn't it?

Come on.

She pushes the canoe into the water and holds the bow. He hesitates, but finally begins to climb in. The canoe rocks and Norman stumbles.

Good God.

Well, watch yourself.

I think you're trying to kill me.

I've thought about it.

At last he settles in. Ethel hands him a paddle, then climbs aboard, and they're off.

EXT. LAKE - LATE AFTERNOON

Norman and Ethel in the canoe. She is paddling energetically in the bow. He is faking it in the stern. The canoe, consequently, is veering crookedly.

Are you paddling, Norman?

Of course I'm paddling.
ETHEL
Then you're not steering. Do you want me to take the stern?

NORMAN
I most certainly do not.

He tries a little harder. The canoe glides along by other cottages.

ETHEL
Charlie says he doesn't expect Miss Appley to make it up this summer.

NORMAN
Who's Miss Appley?

ETHEL
Miss Appley, Norman, who lives there with Miss Tate. They're both in their nineties. They were up here together when I was a teenager. Wearing their neckties, and singing in the gazebo. Holding hands. What a marvelous love affair, if that's what it is.

Yes.

NORMAN

ETHEL
Can you imagine being together so long?

No.

ETHEL
Thanks a lot. Charlie says Miss Appley is just too frail and Miss Tate won't come without her. It's sad, isn't it?

Yes.

Norman and Ethel paddle up the shore. A fish breaks the water.

ETHEL
Norman! Look at the fish! My word. It's going to be a good summer. My father always said if the fish start jumping in May it's a good sign. We'll have to go to the village and get your license.
NORMAN
I don't think I'll be doing any fishing this time around.

ETHEL
All right, Norman...

NORMAN
No point in wasting the money. You'd think they'd give the license free to an old case like me. It's not as though I'd come out here and deplete the entire bass population or anything.

ETHEL
You always catch your share. You always have.

NORMAN
Well, that's all behind me now.

ETHEL
All right, Norman.

They paddle without speaking for a moment. Suddenly Ethel's attention is caught by something. She shrieks.

ETHEL
(continuing)
Norman!

NORMAN
Good God! What is it?

ETHEL
The loons! I've spotted the loons!

She scrambles back in the canoe to retrieve the binoculars.

ETHEL
(continuing)
Oh, my goodness. They're so lovely. Here. Look.

He takes the glasses and trains them on the water.

ETHEL
(continuing)
Do you see them?
NORMAN
No. Oh. Oh, my goodness. There they are.

ETHEL
Aren't they beautiful?

NORMAN
They're huge! I've never seen such big loons in my life.

ETHEL
Those are boats, you poop. Come in closer.

He lowers the glasses. We SEE two loons, huge and black. They swim close to each other.

ETHEL
(continuing)
A husband and a wife. I think they're looking at us.

NORMAN
Yes. They are.

He waves.

ETHEL
They're talking.

NORMAN
I can't make out what they're saying. Can you read beaks?

ETHEL
Look! They're kissing. My word.

NORMAN
How wonderful.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ON THE LOONS
They do indeed seem to be kissing. But suddenly they look around, wary. We HEAR the SOUND of a MOTORBOAT, loud and threatening.

ANOTHER ANGLE
Now we SEE the boat, a runabout, sleek and fast, a young couple aboard.

(CONTINUED)
31 CONTINUED:

They head right at the Loons, who look at the boat, and disappear. The boat zooms right over the spot where the Loons had been.

32 ON THE CANOE

ETHEL
My God! What are they doing?

33 ANOTHER ANGLE

Now the speedboat continues and heads right at the canoe. Norman paddles like mad. At last the boat veers.

The young man and young woman wave pleasantly and speed off.

Now the wake of the boat rolls toward the canoe.

NORMAN
(raises his middle finger
in a vulgar gesture, shouting)
Buzz off!!

Ethel imitates his gesture.

ETHEL
That's right; Buzz off!

NORMAN
(shocked)
Ethel! What are you doing?

ETHEL
What do you mean?

NORMAN
Don't do that!

ETHEL
Why not? You did it!

Norman turns the canoe about to face the waves.

NORMAN
Never mind, I'll explain later.

He and Ethel are rocked violently by the waves, but they ride it out.

34 ANOTHER ANGLE

The Loons have now surfaced. One of them calls angrily.

ETHEL (O.S.)
You're absolutely right. They should be ashamed of themselves!

(CONTINUED)
ON THE LAKE
The water is almost golden in the late afternoon sun.

ETHEL
Norman. Look at our house. Isn't it beautiful?

NORMAN
Yes...Which one is it?

ETHEL
You're such a poop. It's the one with the birch tree, as you very well know.

NORMAN
Oh, yes, that's right.

They drift for a moment, looking at the distant house, and the Loons. A pastoral picture.

ETHEL
Norman, do you realize this is our forty-eighth summer on Golden Pond.

NORMAN
Hmmm. Probably our last.

ETHEL
Oh, shut up.

She splashes him with her paddle.

35A-D A series of long DISSolves between nature shots indicating the passage of time.

36 EXT. DOCK - DAY
Ethel is repainting "Thayer" on the metal mailbox. In the b.g. we SEE Norman on the porch reading a paper.

We SEE a boat approaching. In it is CHARLIE MARTIN, a local, simple and good-hearted. He is towing the "Thayer Four," a grand old mahogany speedboat.

ETHEL
My God, Norman! Charlie's brought the boat. Come down and say hello.

NORMAN
You say hello for me.

ETHEL
Oh, come on.

NORMAN (snapping)
No.

Charlie draws up to the dock and ties the Thayer Four.

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CONTINUED:

ETHEL
Oh, Charlie, you've done a beautiful job.

CHARLIE
Thank you, Ethel.

ETHEL
Hello, Thayer Four. You look wonderful.

NORMAN
(from porch)
Make sure he ties it up right.

ETHEL
Oh, shut up.

CHARLIE
Hello, Norman.

Norman nods hello.

ETHEL
Come on down, Norman, we'll go for a ride.

NORMAN
No, thank you.

ETHEL
So enthusiastic, isn't he?

Charlie laughs.

ETHEL
(continuing)
I love your laugh, Charlie.

CHARLIE
Thank you, Ethel.

Norman steps down toward them.

NORMAN
He's got the whatsie on the wrong side. The thing you tie the boat to. That's not where we put the boat. It's all wrong.

(CONTINUED)
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36 CONTINUED: (3)

ETHEL
(to Norman)
Well. You should have been down here helping instead of sitting on the porch being disagreeable.

NORMAN
I can see that now.

He looks around, feeling rather smug. He looks at Ethel's paintwork.

NORMAN
(continuing)
You spelled our name wrong.

ETHEL
What.

She actually looks at the mailbox, then back at Norman who smiles slyly. Ethel shakes her head.

37 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Norman and Ethel are playing Parcheesi. Ethel throws the dice.

ETHEL
Look at that. Eleven!
(she moves)
Five -- six -- seven -- eight -- nine -- ten -- eleven. Puts me right on your man. How about that?

NORMAN
(challenging)
Where were you?

ETHEL
Oh, don't give me that.

Norman glowers at her.

NORMAN
Five -- six -- seven -- eight -- nine -- ten -- eleven. Damn it!

Ethel smiles at him.

38 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Norman is hunched over a newspaper, scanning the classified ads with a magnifying glass. He nods his head and calls.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NORMAN
Here's one. Listen. 'Driver wanted for occasional chaufferring and errands, five days a week. Pay negotiable.' Sound about right?

No answer.

NORMAN
(continuing)
'Experience required.' Well, I guess I've had enough experience. I've driven enough cars, God knows.

(he calls)
How many cars would you say I've had?

No answer.

NORMAN
(continuing)
Twenty probably, if you don't count the Nash. Twenty cars and one Nash. Sounds like experience to me.

(he calls)
I think I'll give these people a call. Huh?

No answer.

NORMAN
(continuing)
There's no number. How do you like that? For God's sake. It's so typical. They want a man for a job and yet they don't list a number. Well, I hope those errands weren't too crucial. Good God!

There is a KNOCK at the DOOR. Norman looks up, startled. He stands and calls.

NORMAN
(continuing)
Someone's at the door.
EXT. BACK STOOP - DAY

Ethel stands on the step, a berry bucket in each hand. In the washtub behind her we SEE little plants growing.

ETHEL
It's me, you poop. Open up.

The door opens and Norman ushers her in.

INT. BACK ENTRYWAY - DAY

NORMAN
Where have you been?

ETHEL
Out picking berries. There are oodles and oodles of little strawberries along the old town road. Look.

NORMAN
How nice.

ETHEL
What on earth you're doing in here on a morning like this is beyond me.

NORMAN
(carrying his papers)
Oh, I've been quite busy. I've been looking through yesterday's paper for gainful employment.

ETHEL
Here we go again.

She shakes her head and disappears into the kitchen.

NORMAN
Very good prospects, I think. Chauffeurs, yardwork. The Dairy Divine wants an ice cream dipper. I think I could do something like that, don't you?

He realizes she's not in the room. He looks about, irritated, then heads for the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ethel is busily dumping her berries into a large bowl.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Norman enters.

NORMAN
Oh, here you are. What do you think?

ETHEL
What are you going to do if you call and someone says, 'Come on over and start tomorrow'?

NORMAN
Go on over and start tomorrow.

ETHEL
Oh, for the love of God. Whatever is the matter with you? Why don't you take a bucket and go pick us another quart of strawberries? I'll fix us up a scrumptious shortcake for lunch.

NORMAN
You want me to pick strawberries?

ETHEL
Yes. Do I have to put an ad in the paper?

NORMAN
I'm not sure I know how to pick strawberries.

ETHEL
There's really nothing to it, Norman. You bend over and you pick them. Come on.

NORMAN
Bend over? Where are they?

ETHEL
On the ground, where they belong.

NORMAN
The last time we picked blueberries they were on a bush. Didn't have to bend over at all.

ETHEL
Well, these are strawberries. They're on the ground.

She leads him out.
EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Ethel leads Norman down the stoop and into the yard. We HEAR a MOTORBOAT. Norman looks at the lake.

NORMAN
Oh. Here comes what's-his-name. He'll be bringing the paper, you know.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NORMAN (CONT'D)
I wouldn't want to miss any career opportunities just because I was off looking for strawberries.

ETHEL
(leading him along)
I'll pay you, Norman. It could be the beginning of something big. You may become a major strawberry picker.

NORMAN
Not if I have to be bending over all the time. I think you're trying to kill me.

ETHEL
I've thought about it.

NORMAN
You needn't bother. I'm on borrowed time as it is.

ETHEL
Would you please take your cheery personality and get out of here?

NORMAN
I hope you'll be prepared to massage my bent back this evening.

ETHEL
(kissing him)
With pleasure.

She gives him a push and he steps away, mumbling.

NORMAN
Maybe I could lie down to pick the berries.

He seems confused as he turns and trudges into the woods. Ethel watches, concerned, but glad to have gotten him into motion. She looks at the lake, heads down to it.
ON GOLDEN POND - Rev. 6/28/80

EXT. DOCK - DAY

Ethel moves toward the house as Charlie roars up in his boat. He waves. And cuts his motor.

CHARLIE
(shouting)
Morning, Ethel.

ETHEL
(shouting)
Come on up and have some coffee. You can take five minutes off. I'll write you a note and you can send it to the Postmaster General.

Charlie loves this. He laughs and clambers out of the boat. He holds a small package and a packet of mail, from which he pulls a letter.

CHARLIE
You got a letter from Chelsea.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
The rest is just bills and junk like that.

He heads up the bank.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

Charlie pulls open the door, but it falls over on him. He sets down the mail and props the door against the wall.

CHARLIE
(calling)
Uh-oh. I think I broke your door.

ETHEL
(from the kitchen)
Oh, no, it's been that way for a month now. Norman is supposed to fix it, but I'm afraid it's not high on his list of priorities.

Which makes Charlie laugh. They step inside.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Norman is standing at the end of the lane with his berry bucket. He slaps at a mosquito. He steps into the woods, then quickly steps back to the lane, unsettled. He tries again. Into the woods, a little further this time. He stops, stares up at a huge tree as though surprised to find it there. He seems ready to cry.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Charlie stands by the fireplace, not totally comfortable in the Thayer home. He looks at the photos, and smiles.

ON THE PHOTOS

One of Norman as a younger man, in his bathing suit, on the diving board.

One of the daughter, Chelsea, plump, but pretty. Also on the diving board. He picks it up.
He gazes at the photo with great interest.

**ETHEL (O.S.)**
Come and get a biscuit, Charlie.

He fumbles with the picture and puts it back. He steps into the kitchen.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Ethel is setting out coffee and biscuits. Charlie hands Ethel the letter from Chelsea. Ethel slips it into her pocket.

**CHARLIE**
You know, they lost a little girl in Purgatory Cove. She was visiting her grandparents, you know, the McCreas up on the point...

**ETHEL**
Of course...

**CHARLIE**
Yuh... She sailed her little sailboat right into Purgatory Cove, and went up on the rocks and drowned. I felt just awful.

**ETHEL**
Oh, dear, dear. Isn't that tragic? Poor Mrs. McCrea.

**CHARLIE**
Yuh. Count your blessings.

Charlie takes a biscuit and sits at the table. Ethel looks at him fondly and sits beside him.

**ETHEL**
How's your mother, Charlie?

**CHARLIE**
My mother?

**ETHEL**
Yes.

**CHARLIE**
She's holding her own. (he sits and roars with laughter) She fell down, you know, a couple of months ago.
Continued:

Ethel
Oh. I didn't know.

Charlie
Yuh, a couple of months ago, right on her rump, when she was out helping clean up town common with the Ladies Auxiliary. She was having a tug-a-war with a dead juniper bush, and she won, or lost, depending on how you look at it.

(he laughs)
But, if you'll pardon the expression, she's one old lady who really believes in busting her ass for the community.

They both roar with laughter. Suddenly the door opens and Norman enters. They stop laughing.
CONTINUED:

CHARLIE
(continuing)
Hi, Norman.

ETHEL
Hello, Norman. What are you doing back already? You've barely left.

NORMAN
So? I moved fast. I ran all the way, picked without stopping, and ran all the way back.

ETHEL
(going to him)
Let me see what you've got.

NORMAN
I'll just dump them in with yours.

He starts for the sink. Ethel grabs for the bucket, it tumbles to the floor and bounces.

ETHEL
You didn't get a single strawberry. What's the matter with you?

NORMAN
I must have eaten them all.

An awkward moment as the three exchange looks.

NORMAN
(continuing)
No mail today, Charlie?

CHARLIE
Holy Mackinolyl! I left it on the porch.

NORMAN
How about bringing it in? Could you do that?

CHARLIE
You bet.

He exits. Ethel stares at Norman.

ETHEL
Would you like a glass of milk, Norman?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

NORMAN

No!

ETHEL

I'll get you one.

Norman follows Charlie into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

NORMAN

I see you broke the screen door, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Oh, well, it's just missing its little thingamabobbers for the hinges. I could bring you a couple from town tomorrow.

NORMAN

No, just be careful next time.

Charlie hands the package and packet of mail to Norman, who goes back into the kitchen. Charlie follows.

INT. KITCHEN

Norman sits and studies the package. Ethel sets a glass of milk by him.

ETHEL

Here, Norman, drink this.

NORMAN

Thank you, nurse.

ETHEL

Sit down, Charlie, and finish your coffee.

He looks uncomfortably at Norman, then sits.

ETHEL

(continuing)

What have you got there, Norman?

NORMAN

I have no idea. I can’t open it. Here, could you bite this, please?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He hands it to Charlie, who laughs and pulls it open.

ETHEL
Ah. It's your medicine.

NORMAN
Oh, goody, what a swell surprise.

ETHEL
(to Charlie)
It's nothing serious. Just for his palpitations.

NORMAN
That's right, Charlie, I have occasional heart throbs.

ETHEL
We got a letter from Chelsea.

Oh?

He hides in his newspaper. Ethel busies herself with the letter. A moment passes, Charlie feels slightly left out.

CHARLIE
Well, how is old Chelsea?

Norman doesn't answer. Ethel doesn't look up.

ETHEL
Mm-mmm.

NORMAN
Look at the goddam Orioles. Baltimore has always been a sneaky town.

ETHEL
Norman! She says she's coming for your birthday.

NORMAN
Really? How nice.

ETHEL
Yes. And she's bringing her friend.

(to Charlie)
She has the nicest boyfriend.

(CONTINUED)
CHARLIE

Oh.

He half laughs.

ETHEL

They're coming together and then they're going on to Europe for awhile.

NORMAN

Ohhh. Well, I don't want crowds of people here on my birthday. I don't want crowds of people watching me turn older.

ETHEL

Oh, pooh. There'll be just the three of us. Is three a crowd?

NORMAN

That's what they say.

CHARLIE

That's right. Three's a crowd.

(laughs)

What happened to her husband?

ETHEL

Wait a minute. It's not that Freddie person. This is a different boyfriend altogether.

NORMAN

What the hell is going on? Detroit has disappeared. Good God!

ETHEL

What is it, Norman?

NORMAN

Detroit is gone. Three weeks ago they looked like a contender, and now this stupid paper has them missing.

CHARLIE

What happened to her husband?

ETHEL

What did you say, Charlie?

(CONTINUED)
CHARLIE
I wondered what happened to Chelsea's husband.

ETHEL
He didn't work out.
(reading)
She says she's in love. With a dentist.

NORMAN
Oh, really? Does her boyfriend know about this?

ETHEL
That is her boyfriend. Her new boyfriend is a dentist.

CHARLIE
That's interesting.

NORMAN
That's who she's bringing here? A dentist?

Yes.

NORMAN
Oh, God, he'll be staring at our teeth all the time. Why does she have such a fascination with Jewish people?

ETHEL
Who said this one is Jewish?

NORMAN
He's a dentist, isn't he? Name me one dentist who isn't Jewish.

Your brother.

NORMAN
My brother is deceased. Name me one living dentist who isn't Jewish.

ETHEL
Oh, for Lord's sake.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
ETHEL (CONT'D)
This particular dentist who's coming to celebrate your birthday is named Ray, and that doesn't sound Jewish.

NORMAN
It would depend on the last name, I'd say.

ETHEL
That is his last name.

NORMAN
His last name is Ray?

ETHEL
Yes. Bill Ray.

NORMAN
Bill Ray. That sounds rather flippant.

ETHEL
Well, shall we ask him not to come?

NORMAN
No. I think we should have representatives from all walks of life here for my last birthday party.

ETHEL
Oh, God.
(she stands)
I think this medicine should be put away from all this hot air.

She carries the package out of the kitchen. Norman stares at Charlie.

NORMAN
Why didn't you marry Chelsea?

CHARLIE
You wouldn't let me.

NORMAN
Oh. You could have married someone else, I would have allowed that.

(continued)
CONTINUED: (5)

CHARLIE
I didn't want anyone else... How old will you be?

NORMAN
When?

CHARLIE
On your birthday.

NORMAN
One hundred three.

CHARLIE
Miss Appley was ninety-seven in May. Isn't that amazing?

Yes.

CHARLIE
She died, you know.

NORMAN
No.

CHARLIE
Yuh. Last Tuesday. We got a call in case any mail comes up.

NORMAN
They gave you a forwarding address for Miss Appley?

Charlie roars at this. Ethel enters.

ETHEL
What's so funny?

NORMAN
One of the lesbians expired.

Which sends Charlie into paroxysms of laughter.

ETHEL
Oh, Norman.
   (to Charlie)
Which one?

CHARLIE
Miss Appley.

ETHEL
Oh, dear. Well, she had a good, full life.

(CONTINUED)
NORMAN
Charlie says she was ninety-seven.

ETHEL
Really? How wonderful.

NORMAN
Puts us all to shame, doesn't it? There's something to be said for a deviant lifestyle.

CHARLIE
(standing and laughing)
I always liked those old ladies, but I sure used to wonder what the heck was going on in there. Well, thanks for the coffee, Ethel. You still make the best biscuits on the lake.

ETHEL
Thank you, dear. You must come round when Chelsea's here.

CHARLIE
Oh, yuh. I haven't seen her in a long time. Well...

ETHEL
Norman, Charlie's leaving.

NORMAN
Good. 'Bye.

CHARLIE
Goodbye.

NORMAN
Watch out for that screen door.

Ethel leads Charlie out of the kitchen.

ETHEL
He's such a poop, isn't he?

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Ethel and Charlie walk across the porch and down the bank.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ETHEL
Seen our loons out there today?

CHARLIE
Yuh. Out by Honey Island. They're teaching their baby to fly.

ETHEL
Oh. Isn't that exciting?

EXT. DOCK - DAY
Charlie climbs into his boat.

CHARLIE
Yuh. Well, see you next time.

He starts his motor and pulls away. Ethel waves, and looks out at the lake. She heads back to the house.

EXT. PORCH - DAY
Norman steps out with the newspaper folder to the classifieds.

ETHEL
Norman, isn't that exciting? Teaching their baby to fly.

NORMAN
Listen to this. 'Retired people sought for handbill delivery. Some walking involved.' I should call, I can walk.

ETHEL
Is that why you came rushing back here? To read those goddam ads?

Norman throws down the paper. He glares at Ethel.

NORMAN
Do you want to know why I came back so fast? I got to the end of our lane and I couldn't remember where the old town road was. I went a little way into the woods and nothing looked familiar, not one damn tree.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
NORMAN (CONT'D)
And it scared me half to death.
So I came running back here to
you, to see your pretty face, and
to feel that I was safe. That I
was still me.

He puts his face in his hands. Ethel is shocked by this,
but she rallies quickly. She sits by him and rubs his back.

ETHEL:
You're safe, you old poop. And
you're definitely still you, still
picking on poor Charlie. After
lunch, after we gobble up all the
strawberries, we'll take ourselves
to the old town road. We'll remember
it all, my darling, we've walked it
a thousand thousand times.
(she pauses, trying to find
the right words)
Listen to me mister, you're my knight
in shining armor and don't you forget
it. We're going to get right back on
that horse. I'm going to be right
behind you holding on tight, and away
we're going to go, go, go!

NORMAN
I don't like horses.

They look at each other.

NORMAN
(continuing)
You are a pretty old dame, aren't you?

She hugs him.

NORMAN
(continuing)
What are you doing with a dotty old
son of a bitch like me?

ETHEL
I haven't the vaguest idea.

She holds him close. They stare out at the lake.

54A-D  A series of long DISSOLVES between nature shots indi-
cating the passage of time.

55  EXT. CHANNEL - DAY

Ethel drives the Thayer Four slowly along the channel
while Norman sits glumly in the passenger seat.
EXT. MARINA - DAY

Ethel draws the boat up to the marina dock. Norman holds onto the pier while Ethel jumps out.

ETHEL
Do you want to stay and watch the boat while I run up to the store?

NORMAN
I think I'm qualified to watch the boat.

ETHEL
Well, come with me if you want.

NORMAN
No, thank you very much.

Ethel shrugs and turns to SUMNER TODD, a teenaged gas station attendant. His friend, also a teenager, loafs nearby.

ETHEL
Hello, Summer.

' MORNING, MRS. THAYER.

ETHEL
Could you fill us up, dear?

SUMNER
Oh, sure.

ETHEL
Norman will help you.

Summer looks over at Norman without enthusiasm as Ethel walks quickly up the shore.

EXT. MARINA - DAY

Norman watches Summer closely. He looks at the pump and shakes his head.

NORMAN
Do you know how much gas cost when I was your age? Twelve cents a gallon.

(Continued)
SUMNER
(looks at his friend,
then at the sky)
Is that a fact? I didn't even
know they had gas back then.

The other boy giggles and Sumner smiles.

NORMAN
(looks from one
to the other)
What are you, a couple of nitwits?
You think it's funny being old?
My whole goddam body's fallin'
apart. Sometimes I can't even go
to the bathroom when I want to,
but I'm still a man, let me tell
you. I can take on either one of
you punks.

He steps toward them, ready to fight, when Ethel ar-
ribes with a bag of groceries. The boys look at her,
relieved to be rescued. Norman climbs quickly into the
driver's seat. He helps Ethel into the boat.

NORMAN
(continuing)
I'll drive home.

ETHEL
Are you sure?

NORMAN
(snapping)
Yes! If I take a wrong turn and
end up in Michigan or somewhere,
you be sure and tell me.

Ethel sees no point in arguing. She sits and waves at
Sumner who pushes them away from the dock. The boys
stand openmouthed, watching them go.

58

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Norman has a look of great intensity in his eyes.
Ethel looks nervous.

ETHEL
You remember, don't you, to go
outside the flag?
He doesn't seem to hear. He heads for the inside of a buoy that is some distance from the shore.

ETHEL
(continuing)
Norman, you fool. Go outside the flag!

We SEE rocks jutting up between the flag and land. The boat is racing toward them.

ETHEL
(continuing; scared now)
--- Norman, turn the boat!

But Norman is looking stubborn. He bears down on the rocks, and only at the last minute does he turn the boat and travel alongside them. His face shows nothing as he now speeds to the outside of the flag. Ethel looks more than a little undone.

58A-D A series of long DISSOLVES between nature shots indicating the passage of time.

59. INT. LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Ethel is bustling about, excited, wearing her usual grubbies. She hangs a sign which reads, "Happy Birthday, Norman." On the wall across from it is one saying, "Welcome Home, Chelsea."

60. INT. BEDROOM - DUSK

Norman is standing at the mirror trying his tie. He scowls at his reflection and pulls at his collar, which seems oddly large for him. We HEAR the LOONS CALL.

61. EXT. PORCH - DUSK

Ethel rushes to the door and pushes it. Down it falls.

ETHEL
Oh, Norman, for God's sake.

She steps out, closing the big door, and moving the screen door. She rushes down to the dock.

62. EXT. DOCK - DUSK

Ethel stands at the end, in the golden glow of sunset.

(CONTINUED)
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CONTINUED:

THE LOONS ANSWER. Ethel is delighted.

EXT. WIDOW'S WATCH - DUSK

Norman is standing on the balcony looking down at Ethel, amused.

NORMAN
I don't think you should do that in front of Chelsea's companion.

ETHEL
Oh, pooh, I'm just talking to my friends. My, my, look at you. You have on a tie.

NORMAN
Yes, I know. I put it there. Do I look all right? I haven't overdressed, have I?

ETHEL
You look sexy! I'm going to have to do some pretty fast maneuvers to catch up with you.

NORMAN
I have other ties. You could come as Miss Appley.

ETHEL
Thanks a lot.

She goes inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Norman comes down the stairs.

NORMAN
'Welcome Home, Chelsea.' I see my birthday wasn't cause enough for a celebration.

(Continued)
ETHEL
Oh, stop. I just want our little
girl to feel welcome, that's all.

NORMAN
(re-checking his tie
at the hallway
mirror)
Uh-huh.

ETHEL
Wouldn't it be nice if we could
all get along this time.

NORMAN
Uh-huh. Where the hell are they?
I'm getting older by the minute.

ETHEL
They said they'd be here when
they get here.

NORMAN
Is that what they said? That's a
hell of an attitude. No wonder we
have no grandchildren.

ETHEL
What would we do with grandchildren?

NORMAN
Toss them on our knees. We're the
last of the Thayers, you know.
End of the line for a damn good
name.

ETHEL
Well, we'll take it out in style.

Their attention is caught by the SOUND of a CAR. We
SEE headlights THROUGH the window. Norman and Ethel
look at each other.

ETHEL
(continuing)
Oh, no! They're here! And I'm
not dressed. I look like an old
character.

NORMAN
Well, run upstairs and change if
it makes you feel better.

(continued)
CONTINUED: (2)

ETHEL
Will you be nice to them?

NORMAN
Sure. I'll explain to them the risk involved in arriving late for an old man's birthday party.

We HEAR a VOICE CALLING.

CHELSEA (O.S.)
Hey! Anybody home?

ETHEL
Too late!

Ethel opens the back door and rushes out.

EXT. HOUSE - EVENING

CHELSEA THAYER WAYNE steps toward the house. She is forty-two, attractive, restless, with Norman's humor. She grins at Ethel. Behind her a car is turning around in the growing darkness.

CHELSEA
Heeey.

ETHEL
(stepping to her)
Hey yourself.

After the briefest pause they embrace.

CHELSEA
Mommy.

ETHEL
Dear little girl... Chelsea.

Chelsea looks to the house. We SEE Norman at the screen door peering out. Chelsea walks up the steps and inside. Ethel follows.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Chelsea smiles at Norman, then steps to him and hugs him awkwardly. He is embarrassed, surprised. He tries to respond. Chelsea steps back.

CHELSEA
Hello, Norman. Happy birthday.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NORMAN
Look at you. Look at this little fat girl, Ethel.

Chelsea, who is not fat, looks quickly at her body.

ETHEL
Oh, stop it. You're thin as a rail. Isn't she, Norman?

Oh, sure.

A moment of adjustment. Ethel jumps in.

ETHEL
Dear Chelsea, I'm so glad you're home.

CHELSEA
I thought we'd never get here. We rented a car that explodes every forty miles.

NORMAN
You rented a car?

CHELSEA
Yes. In Boston.

NORMAN
Huh. What sort of car is it?

CHELSEA
Oh. I don't know. Red, I think.

ETHEL
Ooh! A red car!

NORMAN
No. I meant -- what sort of make is it?

CHELSEA
Um. I don't know.

ETHEL
She doesn't know, dear. It doesn't matter.

(CONTINUED)
NORMAN
Of course it doesn't matter. I was just curious.

CHELSEA
Well, I should have looked, I guess. It's um, very ugly, and it breaks down a lot.

NORMAN
Ugly and it breaks down a lot. That sounds like a Nash.

An awkward moment.

CHELSEA
Yeah. Well...

She looks about, smiles at her "Welcome Home" sign.

ETHEL
(stepping in)
Where's your friend? You did bring your friend, didn't you?

CHELSEA
I knew I was forgetting something.

She steps to the door.

NORMAN
That's still on then?

CHELSEA
As far as I know.

(she calls out)
Come on in, no one's going to bite you. Mommy and Norman, this is Billy Ray.

In walks BILLY RAY, thirteen and sassy and full of life, a bit shy and defensive, lousy posture. He smiles.

BILLY
How ya doin'?

He grabs Norman's hand. Norman stares at him, shocked at first. Ethel loves it.

(CONTINUED)
NORMAN
You seem awfully young to be a dentist.

CHELSEA
This is Billy Ray, Jr.

NORMAN
Oh. I'm Norman Thayer, Jr. Where's...?

CHELSEA
His father is out trying to park the car.

ETHEL
(taking Billy's hand)
Well, what a great surprise. You can call me Ethel, Billy, and you can call Norman Norman.

CHELSEA
I like your logic, Mommy. I'm going to see if Bill's driven into the lake.

She exits. Ethel steps to the door to watch.

ETHEL
It's so dark outside. It never used to be this dark.

Norman is staring down poor Billy.

BILLY
I hear you turned eighty today.

NORMAN
Is that what you heard?

BILLY
Yeah. That's really old.

NORMAN
Oh? You should meet my father.

BILLY
Your father's still alive?

NORMAN
No, but you should meet him.

(continued)
Ethel steps to them.

**ETHEL**

Isn't this fun? Norman, why don't we put Billy in Chelsea's old room and then he can look out at the lake in the morning.

**NORMAN**

Why don't we put him out on the float and he can look at the lake all night long.

**BILLY**

I'd like that.

**ETHEL**

I'm afraid you'd be eaten alive by all the bugs.

**NORMAN**

So?

**ETHEL**

Norman, take him up and we'll show him where everything is.

**NORMAN**

Come on, boy, grab your bag.

Norman scowls at Ethel, but leads Billy upstairs.

**BILLY**

I just had a birthday, too. I turned thirteen two weeks ago.

**NORMAN**

Oh? We're practically twins.

Ethel turns as Chelsea enters.

**CHELSEA**

He will be right here. He thought he had to lock the car.

**ETHEL**

I'm so glad you're here.

**CHELSEA**

Norman looks very old.

**ETHEL**

Well... I don't know.

(Continued)
CHELSEA
(quickly)
You look great though.

ETHEL
Thank you. So do you. I love your hair like that.

CHELSEA
(surprised, she touches her hair)
You do? Um. How's his mind? Is he remembering things any better?

Norman has appeared on the landing. He stops when he hears this.

ETHEL
Oh, he's all right.

NORMAN
Come on, Billy, I'll show you the bathroom, if I can remember where it is.

He disappears again. Chelsea looks at Ethel and smiles.

CHELSEA
He hasn't changed too much, has he?

ETHEL
Nope. Still impossible. It means so much to him to have you here.

CHELSEA
Yeah. Great. Now he's got someone to pick on.

ETHEL
Oh, stop. Thank you for coming.

CHELSEA
Thank you for inviting me.

Bill enters carrying a load of suitcases.

CHELSEA
Look at you. You made it. This is my mother. Mommy, Bill Ray.

ETHEL
How do you do?

(CONTINUED)
BILLY
Hi. I think I saw a bear.

ETHEL
Oh, you wouldn't have seen a bear out here this time of year. There are a lot of very nasty moths flying around, though.

BILLY
This was kind of big for a moth.

CHELSEA
If you want a real scare you've got to meet my father.

Billy comes crashing down the stairs. Norman follows.

BILLY
Dad, they do have indoor plumbing.

BILLY
Chelsea was just bullshitting us.

BILLY
Billy!

CHELSEA
(to Ethel)
I always try to paint a rustic picture of life on Golden Pond.

ETHEL
Oh, it's rustic all right.

BILL
It's lovely though. Lovely rusticity.

He looks up as Norman approaches.

NORMAN
We've been peeing indoors for forty years.

BILL
You must be Norman.

NORMAN
Yes, I must be. Who are you?

(CONTINUED)
Bill Ray.

NORMAN
Bill Ray? The dentist?

BILL
Yes.

NORMAN
Want to see my teeth?

He bares them.

ETHEL
Norman!

BILL
(undaunted)
I just want to tell you, sir, how glad I am to be here. Chelsea's told us so much about you and your wife and your wonderful house on the lake, and I'm very pleased she's brought us here.

This fine sentiment is greeted by a typical Norman silence, which makes Bill feel like a bigger fool than he should.

NORMAN
I'm frankly surprised Chelsea could find the way.

ETHEL
She's here now, Norman, that's the important thing.

NORMAN
Do you visit your folks, young man?

BILL
No. My parents have both passed away.

NORMAN
I see. Then you have a good excuse, don't you?

ETHEL
(sweetly)
Norman...

(Continued)
CHELSEA
Norman. Please...

NORMAN
What? Am I not allowed to speak
to our guest? Is that it?
(to Bill)
They're afraid I'm going to embarrass
them.

CHELSEA
Well. I'm going down and say hello
to the lake. Anyone like to come?

BILLY
Me. I've never seen anyone say
hello to a lake.

CHELSEA
Then this will be a valuable
experience for you, wise guy. It's
always my firstorder of business
when I get to Golden Pond. Coming,
Mommy?

ETHEL
Yes. Want to take the boat?

BILLY
All right!

CHELSEA
Let's go, Bill.

BILL
Where? Outside?

CHELSEA
That's where the lake is. Coming,
Norman?

NORMAN
No. I think I'll just sit here and
enjoy the quiet.

BILL
(quickly)
I'll stay, too.

NORMAN
With Bill.

(continued)
Chelsea and Ethel exchange a glance. Chelsea shrugs and opens the door.

CHELSEA
The screen door's fallen down.

ETHEL
Really? Norman will fix it.

Norman makes a face. Billy follows the women outside leaving Norman staring at Bill, who feels more than a little uncomfortable.

BILL
I love your house.

NORMAN
Thank you. It's not for sale.

BILL
Oh, no, I wasn't thinking about buying it, I just like it. It has a charming ambience.

A word he clearly likes using.

Norman looks at him, less than impressed. Bill tries again.

BILL
(continuing)
How does it feel to turn eighty?

NORMAN
(scowling at him)
It feels twice as bad as it did turning forty.

BILL
Well, I know what that's like. I turned forty-five years ago. I'm forty-five now....(pause)...Norman.

NORMAN
Yes?

BILL
May I call you Norman?

NORMAN
I believe you just did.
BILL
I don't want to press. What shall
I call your wife?

NORMAN
How about Ethel? That's her name.
Ethel Thayer. Thounth like I'm
lithping, doethn't it? Ethel Thayer.
That almost kept her from marrying
me. She wanted me to change my last
name to hers.

BILL
What was that?

NORMAN
I don't remember. Ethel's all you
need to know. That's the name she
goes by.

BILL
I never knew. Chelsea always calls
her Mommy.

NORMAN
There's a reason for that.

BILL
But she calls you Norman.

NORMAN
There's a reason for that, too. I
am her father, but not her daddy.
Ethel is her mommy, and I'm Norman.

BILL
Oh.

The conversation screeches to a halt. Norman stands.

NORMAN
I think I'll start a new book. See
if I can finish it before I'm finished
myself.

He steps to the shelves.

NORMAN
(continuing)
Maybe a novelette. Maybe some-
thing out of Readers' Digest
Abridged. Here's Treasure Island.
Ever read it?
BILL
Yes, it's great. I'd recommend it.

NORMAN
No need for that. I've read it, too. But my mind is going so it'll all be new to me. Has that son of yours read this book?

BILL
I...don't think so.

NORMAN
Your son hasn't read Treasure Island?

BILL
No. But I intend to have him read it. His mother's been the real force in his life lately and now I'm trying to...eradicate some of the...dishevelment.

He looks to Norman to see what sort of impression he's registered. None apparently. Norman has settled down and is reading his book.
BILL
(continuing)
Yeah, things are coming together
pretty nicely for me now, and I'm
feeling very good about myself.
Meeting Chelsea was a major...
thing. We have a very kinetic
relationship, very positive. I'm
sure you'd be pleased.

Norman looks up from his book.

NORMAN
What do you charge for a filling?

BILL
Huh?

NORMAN
You're a dentist, aren't you?
What do you charge for a filling?

BILL
Um. Forty dollars, generally.

NORMAN
Forty dollars! Good God.

He returns to his book.

BILL
Um. Norman...
(quickly)
We'd like to sleep together if
it's all right with you.

NORMAN
What do you mean?

BILL
We'd like to sleep together, in
the same room, in the same bed, if
you don't find that offensive.

NORMAN
All three of you?

BILL
Oh, no! Just two.

NORMAN
You and Billy?

(continued)
BILL
No.

NORMAN
Not Chelsea and Billy?

BILL
No.

NORMAN
That leaves just Chelsea and you then.

BILL
That's right.

NORMAN
Why would I find that offensive? You're not planning on doing something unusual, are you?

BILL
No. Just...

He can't go on.

NORMAN
That doesn't seem too offensive. As long as you're quiet.

BILL
Thank you.

NORMAN
Chelsea always slept in the same bed with her husband.

BILL
Yes, I'm sure.

NORMAN
And Ethel and I do, you know. We sleep together. Been doing it for years.

(he thinks about it)
I guess I'd be delighted to have you abuse my daughter under my own room.

BILL
Norman.

(continued)
NORMAN
Would you like the room where I first violated her mother, or would you be interested in the master bedroom?

BILL
Um...

NORMAN
Ethel and your son and I could all sleep out back and you could do it right here on the hearth. Like that idea?

BILL
(having heard enough)
You're having a good time, aren't you?

NORMAN

BILL
Chelsea told me all about you, about how you like to have a good old time with people's heads. She does it, too, sometimes, and sometimes I can get into it, sometimes not. I just want you to know I'm very good at recognizing crap when I hear it. You know, it's not imperative that you and I be friends, but it might be nice. I'm sure you're a fascinating person, and I'm sure it would be fascinating to get to know you. That's obviously not an easy task. But, it's all right, you go ahead and be as poopy as you want, to quote Chelsea, and I'll be as receptive and pleasant as I can. I just want you to bear in mind while you're jerking me around and I'm feeling like a real asshole that I know precisely what you're up to and that I can take only so much of it. Okay? Good.

He pauses, waits for a reaction. Norman has been listening very intently.

(continued)
BILL
(continuing)
Now, what's the bottom line on the illicit sex question?

NORMAN
Very good. That was a good speech. Bottom line, huh? You're a bottom-line man. All right. Here's the bottom line: oh-kay.

BILL
Huh?

NORMAN
You seem like a nice man. A bit verbose perhaps, but nice.

BILL
Thank you.

NORMAN
And you’re right about me. I am fascinating.

BILL
I'm sure you are.

NORMAN
Tell me something. What goes on in a kinetic relationship exactly? Other than what we've just discussed.

BILL
Oh, the usual. We play tennis, go out dancing, we talk to each other.

NORMAN
I've never taken Ethel dancing. I've always felt badly about that. I think she would have liked it, she's the type, you know.

BILL
It's not too late.

NORMAN
That's what you think. My mind and my body are having a great race to see who can poop out first. I'd put my money on the body, but you never know...

(MORE)
NORMAN (CONT'D)
Here, now, I didn't mean to weight down our conversation. Let's go back to talking about sex. Anything you want to know, just ask me.

BILL
Well, I do want to make sure I have this little matter clear. Chelsea and I can sleep together, right?

NORMAN
Sure. Please do. Just don't let Ethel catch you.

Now Bill is right back to being confused. Billy bounds in the door.

BILLY
Dad! I paddled a canoe. It's a boat just like the Indians had.

NORMAN
Actually the Indians used a different grade of aluminum.

BILLY
Chelsea wants you to come down, Dad. She and Ethel are going skinny-dipping.

BILL
Skinny-dipping?

NORMAN
Go ahead. Permissiveness runs rampant here on Golden Pond.

Bill heads for the door, stops.

BILL
Oh...Are there any bears around these parts.

NORMAN
Oh, sure. Black bears and grizzlies. One came along here last month and ate an old lesbian.

Bill looks a bit horrified.

(CONTINUED)
Billy
Come on, Dad, he's bullshitting you.

With little confidence Bill steps out.

Bill tiptoes along the porch, down into the darkness. He's convinced there's a bear behind every tree. Suddenly he notices Billy beside him.

Bill
Where do you think you're going?

Billy
(grinning)
Skinny-dipping with Chelsea.

Bill
Oh no, you're not. You're going back in the house and talk to Mr. Thayer.

Billy
Bullshit! I'm not goin' in there with that old turkey. He gives me the creeps. What if he dies.

Bill
(grabbing him)
Listen, buster, you behave yourself. Do you understand? Or I'm going to send you right back to your mother. Is that what you want?... Is it?

Billy stands silent.

Bill
(continuing)
Now go on inside and talk to him, maybe you'll learn something.

Billy turns and walks back to the house. And Bill moves toward the lake. He stops when he hears the Sound of Ethel and Chelsea SKINNY-DIPPING. Not quite ready to confront their nudity, he settles nervously in a lawn chair.
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76

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

Ethel and Chelsea are indeed skinny-dipping. Their heads bob on the water.

CHELSEA
Remember when I was about nine and I came down and caught you and Norman skinny-dipping.

ETHEL
No, I don't think I remember that.

CHELSEA
I had that big flashlight and I shone it on Norman when he was standing on the diving board all naked. Then he started screaming at me that I was a spy and he sent me to my room for the rest of the year or something. It took me a long time to get over that.

ETHEL
It took Norman a long time before he'd go skinny-dipping again. I remember. He wouldn't get out of the water until I went up and made sure you were asleep. I was so mad at him for yelling at you, I let him float down here for an hour or so.

CHELSEA
Good.

She and Ethel look at each other and laugh.

77

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Norman is watching Billy who is pretending to be interested in the fish poles. A moment passes.

BILLY
You going skinny-dipping?

NORMAN
Nope. You?

BILLY
Naw. I try to be selective about who I flash in front of.

(CONTINUED)
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CONTINUED:

NORMAN
(not following)
Oh.

BILLY
Chelsea says you're a real heavy-duty fisherman. She calls you
the old man of the sea.

Ah. I've caught a few. You fish?

BILLY
Nah.

NORMAN
Want to go sometime?

BILLY
I don't know...

NORMAN
Well... We'll see. What do you think of your father?

BILLY
He's not bad...

Billy and Norman stare at each other a moment.

NORMAN
Why do you stand with your shoulders all bent like that?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BILLY
I have a lot on my mind.

NORMAN
I see. What do you do out there in California? I mean, what does one do for recreation when one is thirteen and not in school?

BILLY
Cruise chicks.

NORMAN
Hmm?

BILLY
Meet 'em. Girls. Try to pick them up.

NORMAN
And what do you do with them when you have them?

BILLY
Suck face.

NORMAN
I beg your pardon?

BILLY
You know -- kiss. Suck face -- kiss.

NORMAN
Oh.

He looks from Billy to the book, which he still holds.

NORMAN
(continuing)
Have you ever read this book, Treasure Island?

No.

BILLY
Go read it.

NORMAN
Now?

BILLY

(CONTINUED)
NORMAN
Go on. Read the first chapter and
give me a report on it in the
morning.

BILLY
I thought we were going to have a
party.

NORMAN
I'll call you when the party's
underway, if it ever is. Go on.

Billy looks at Norman sideways. But there's something in
Norman's authority that Billy responds to favorably.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Bill is still seated on the lawn chair. Ethel steps the
bank, dressed in a robe.

ETHEL
Hey.

BILL
(startled)
Acch!

ETHEL
Come on down, dear. Chelsea's still
in the water. No one should ever
skinny-dip alone.

She leads him toward the dock. He stops, scared.

BILL
What's that?

ETHEL
That's a lawn chair. Come on.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Norman looks up casually as Ethel enters.

ETHEL
Well, we've got Bill in the swim of
things.

NORMAN
I thought you'd be nude.

(CONTINUED)
CONrescia:

ETHEL

Nope. Sorry. I didn't want to overwhelm our guest on his first night. He's nice isn't he?

NORMAN

Yes. Forty dollars a filling.

ETHEL

Forty dollars?

NORMAN

That's enough to keep you off sweets.

ETHEL

He'd be quite a catch wouldn't he?

NORMAN

He said they wanted to sleep together.

ETHEL

Why not? They're big people.

Yes.

ETHEL

You and I did didn't we?

NORMAN

Did we?

ETHEL

Have you been picking on him?

(continued)
CONTINUED:

NORMAN
Yes. He finds me fascinating.

ETHEL
I'm sure.

She sits on the arm of his chair.

ETHEL
(continuing; proceeding carefully)
Norman. Norman, Chelsea wants us to do something. For her. She wants to leave Billy with us for a month.

NORMAN
Which Billy?

ETHEL
Tsk. The little one. Billy. Bill is supposed to have him for the summer and he'd be miserable in Europe. Bill seems very nice, and Chelsea needs someone nice. Couldn't we do that for her?

NORMAN
What would we do with the boy? What would I say to him?

ETHEL
You'd think of something. Let's do it. Let's say we'll do it and give Chelsea some happiness.

Norman looks fully prepared to say no, but he nods.

NORMAN
All right.

ETHEL
You're such a poop. We're going to have a splendid time, the three of us, aren't we?

NORMAN
I don't know. We might.

ETHEL
You really are the sweetest man in the world. And I'm the only one who knows.
INT. LIVING ROOM - CLOSEUP - CAKE WITH CANDLES

WIDEN as Ethel carries a beautiful candle-covered cake to the table. Ethel, Chelsea, Billy and Bill sing to Norman:

ETHEL, BILLY, CHELSEA AND BILL

Happy birthday, dear Norman,
Happy birthday to you.

Norman hates it. But he's pleased. He rises, takes a deep breath and blows out the candles. Everyone applauds.

NORMAN

I suppose you expect me to sing something now. Well, I'm not about to. I've been trying all day to draw some profound conclusion about living four score years. And I haven't thought of anything. I'm surprised I got here so fast.

(he looks at Ethel)
But I am glad I got to spend so much time with this beautiful woman. What's your name again?

He smiles as Ethel shakes her head. He turns to the others.

NORMAN

(continuing)
And I certainly want to thank all of your people for coming all the way here from Disneyland to witness this historic event.

EXT. THAYER DOCK - DAY

Bill stands in his designer jeans and Lacoste shirt and Adidas, proudly watching Chelsea backstroking smoothly toward the float. Charlie's boat appears.

EXT. FLOAT - DAY

Chelsea climbs onto the float and waves as Charlie pulls alongside. They look at each other for a moment.

CHARLIE

Well, Holy Mackinoloy. Look at you.
Chelsea Mackinesis.

(CONTINUED)
CHELSEA
Charlie Mackinarlie.

CHARLIE
Laughing
Boy, it's good to see you. You've held up good.

CHELSEA
Thanks. So have you.

She turns to Bill and shouts.

CHELSEA
(continuing)
Bill, this is my old friend, Charlie, the mailman.

BILL
Hi, there.

CHARLIE
Hullo.

Charlie reaches his hand to Chelsea.

CHARLIE
(continuing)
Want a ride?

Chelsea smiles and steps into the boat. They move slowly toward the dock.

BILL
(smiles)
So, you actually deliver the mail by boat. What an incredible tradition. *

CHELSEA
Charlie is a legend on this lake. He gets the mail through no matter what. Isn't that right, Charlie?

CHARLIE
Yuh, I guess so.

BILL
(gazing out at the lake)
It must be a bitch in the winter.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

Now Charlie laughs and brings the boat to a smooth stop by the dock.

CHARLIE
Oh, yuh, in the winter I have a hell of a time. Of course there's nobody on the lake to deliver to so I get done a lot faster.

Bill puts a foot up on Charlie's boat.

BILL
You've got a great setup here. Well, you're a lucky man.

He helps Chelsea from the boat.

CHARLIE
(looking at Chelsea)
You're a lucky man, too.

BILL
Yes, I guess I am.

The bow of the boat is now drifting from the dock. Bill finds himself being stretched.

BILL
(continuing)
Um. What do you do at a time like this?

CHARLIE
I generally just fall into the lake.

BILL
Oh, yes.


INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Norman, Ethel, Bill and Billy are playing Parcheesi. Chelsea sits across the room scanning the newspaper. Bill rolls the dice.

BILL
Two threes. What does that mean?

(CONTINUED)
NORMAN
(patronizing)
It means doubles. Which always
gives you 14, you see.

BILL
Oh. Okay.

(he moves)
7, 12, 13, 14. Right? I seem to
have landed where you are. What
does that mean?

NORMAN
It means you send me home and you
get 20 more, for God's sake.

BILLY
All right, Dadders!

BILL
That's good, huh?

ETHEL
Excellent. You're a natural.

NORMAN
I'm starting to regret teaching you
this game.

BILL
Hey, Chels, I'm a Parcheesi pro.

Chelsea nods.

NORMAN
Chelsea has never liked playing
games. We don't know why.
Probably she doesn't like losing.

CHELSEA
I tend to panic when the competition
is too intense.

NORMAN
And what is that supposed to mean?

CHELSEA
Nothing.

ETHEL
(trying to keep it light)
We play serious Parcheesi around here.
I let Norman win every week or so to
keep up his spirits.

NORMAN
Ha, ha, ha.

(Continued)
83 CONTINUED: (2) CHELSEA
(here goat gotten, she challenges Norman)
What I want to know is why do you like playing games?

NORMAN
What?

CHELSEA
You seem to like beating people.
I just wonder why.

Norman and Chelsea glare at each other, until he at last turns and smiles at Bill.

NORMAN
You get another chance, Bill. You get another roll of the dice.

84 OMITTED thru
87A

88 EXT. GAZEBO - DAWN
Mist hovers over the lake in the early morning light. Chelsea sits wrapped in a blanket, staring at the lake. Ethel steps down the bank in her robe, two cups of coffee in her hands. She watches a moment.

ETHEL
Having fun? That's why you came to camp -- to have fun.

(CONTINUED)
Chelsea tries to smile.

**ETHEL**

(continuing)

What's the matter with you?

**CHELSEA**

Nothing.

She looks at the lake; a moment passes.

**CHELSEA**

(continuing)

I don't think I've ever grown up on Golden Pond. Do you understand?

**ETHEL**

(trying to)

I don't think so.

**CHELSEA**

It doesn't matter. I act like a big person everywhere else. I'm in charge of Los Angeles; but I come back here and I feel like a little fat girl.

**ETHEL**

It's only because your father said that.

**CHELSEA**

My father is a goddam bastard... poop!

**ETHEL**

(automatic reflex)

Watch your language, young lady.

**CHELSEA**

Are you going to make me wash my mouth out with soap? That was a rather bizarre custom. Do you know that I have spent my whole life answering to Norman? Even when I'm 3,000 miles away and never see him, I still find myself answering to him.

(really mad now, she shouts)

Norman is a goddam poop!

(Continued)
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CONTINUED: (2)

ETHEL
Oh, for Lord's sake. Here we go again. You had a miserable childhood. Your father was overbearing, your mother ignored you. What else is new? You have this unpleasant chip on your shoulder which is very unattractive. You stay away for years at a time. You only come home when I beg you to and then all you can do is be disagreeable about the past. What is the point? Don't you think everyone looks back on his childhood with some bitterness or regret about something? It doesn't have to ruin your life. You are a big girl now, aren't you tired of it all?... Life marches by, Chelsea. I suggest you get on with it.

Ethel turns and marches up the bank, leaving Chelsea to sit alone, staring at the lake.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Bill is setting the suitcases into the trunk. Norman, Ethel and Billy and Chelsea stand nearby.

ETHEL
Have a wonderful time. And don't worry. Billy will take good care of us.

CHELSEA
Okay.

NORMAN
Don't go getting involved with any foreigners.

CHELSEA
Right.

BILL
(to Billy)
You gonna be all right?

BILLY
Oh sure.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BILLY
(hugging Billy)
Behave yourself.

BILLY
Okay. You guys behave, too.

CHELSEA
Okay.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED

She kisses Billy.

BILL
'Bye Norman. Work on your
Parchisi game.

NORMAN
Ha, ha, ha.

CHELSEA
Good luck, everybody.

The car drives down the lane, everyone waving. Billy
turns to Norman and Ethel.

BILLY
I just want you guys to know I'm
not about to take any crap from you.

He heads for the lake. Norman looks at Ethel.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Billy picks up a pine cone and tosses it at a tree.
Ethel surveys the situation and opts for something
decisive.

ETHEL
All right, gentlemen. It's a
beautiful day. We're going
fishing.

NORMAN
What? Doing what?

ETHEL
Fishing, dear. You remember
fishing. Come on, you can
show Billy what life is all about
on Golden Pond. Come on, Billy.

BILLY
Bull --- shit.

ETHEL
(stopping)
Does that mean you can't wait to
get out there or it's not your
cup of tea?

BILLY
It's bullshit. That's all. I'll
do what I want to do when I want
to do it. Okay?

(CONTINUED)
90 CONTINUED:

ETHEL
(nodding)
Come on, Norman. Let's get ready.

She marches up the steps and into the house. Norman follows. He stops.

NORMAN
You like that word, don't you?
Bullshit.

BILLY
Yeah.

NORMAN
(thinking about it)
It's a good word.

He continues into the house.

91 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Norman is making a great production out of donning his old fishing vest, examining himself in the mirror. Ethel has changed her clothes and sits at her vanity, putting on her hat. In her mirror she sees Billy coming up the stairs.

ETHEL
(whispering)
Okay, Grandpa. Do your stuff.

Norman looks from Ethel to the doorway as Billy appears.

NORMAN
Pretty slick, huh?

Billy shrugs. Norman reaches into the closet, pulls out another smaller fishing vest and throws it on the bed.

NORMAN
(continuing)
Look at this. This was Chelsea's when she was about your age. She caught some pretty respectable fish wearing this.

BILLY
I'm surprised you kept it if it's Chelsea's. Since you obviously don't like her.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
91 CONTINUED:

BILLY
(continuing)
Hey, you know, uh, I might not stick around here. I might just haul my ass out to Wyoming or Puerto Rico or one of those places.

Norman and Ethel share a look.

BILLY
(continuing)
Listen, I mean, I know I'm just being dumped here, which is like my middle name. You turkeys don't want me.

NORMAN
Bullshit.
(pause)
I'm 67 years older than you. How do you know what I want.

BILLY
Well...you didn't say. If you don't say, how's anybody supposed to know anything?

Norman stares at him a moment, his feelings hit.

NORMAN
Okay. We're going fishing now. We want you to go along. If you want to come with us, I suggest you get your ass down to the dock in two minutes. Okay, Mrs. Turkey, let's go.

Ethel takes his arm and they walk out of the room.

92 EXT. DOCK - DAY

Ethel is sitting in the boat. Norman stands holding it. He looks up at the house, waiting. He nods when Billy comes sauntering down, wearing Chelsea's fishing vest, and carrying one of Norman's hats.

BILLY
I thought I just might sort of come along and see what this bullshit is all about.

Billy climbs in and Norman starts the motor. Ethel turns to Billy.

(CONTINUED)
92 CONTINUED:

ETHEL
You look very handsome in that vest.

Billy is embarrassed, but pleased. He pulls the hat down over his eyes, playing it cool.

BILLY
How fast does this old tub go anyway?

Norman scowls at him, then revs the engine. The Thayer-four zooms away, sending Billy sprawling. He grins.

BILLY
(continuing)
All right!

93 OMITTED thru 96

97 EXT. LAKE - DAY

Norman, Billy, Ethel in the Thayer-four. Norman has his fishing gear spread before him. Billy holds a pole, looking almost interested. Norman hands Billy a worm. Ethel holds a parasol and book and tries to be interested.

NORMAN
All right. Hold this.

Billy takes it, not without some trepidation.
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93  INT. CHURCH - DAY

A little rustic place, a small crowd of worshippers. The MINISTER is holding forth from his pulpit.

MINISTER
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, amen.

94  ON THE CONGREGATION

A conglomeration of people, in various outfits. Ethel looks appropriately serene, Norman and Billy proportionately less so.

MINISTER (O.S.)
It's a pleasure to see some new faces among the old faces. I'm glad some of you still know the way over here.

Ethel looks at Norman meaningfully. He cringes slightly. Billy smiles. The Minister turns to MISS DARREN, who is a lovely older lady. She stands and begins warbling. The Minister listens rapturously.

95  ANOTHER ANGLE - CONGREGATION - BILLY

would love to giggle. It's a challenge to sit through. He catches Norman's eye. Norman scowls at him, then begins to giggle himself. This gets Billy going. Ethel sees what's going on. She smiles herself, then elbows Norman, who elbows Billy.

96  EXT. CHURCH

The congregation straggles out. Norman and Ethel pause at the doorway to speak to the Minister. Billy wanders into the yard and begins chucking stones at a tree.

MINISTER
Another summer for the Thayers. First time we've seen you this year.

-NORMAN
Well, Ethel hasn't been feeling very well.

MINISTER
Oh, I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)
He looks compassionately at Ethel, who looks threateningly at Norman.

MINISTER
(continuing)
We all slow down. It's the Lord's way, I guess. You've both had a good full life, God knows.

Norman half-smiles at him.

MINISTER
(continuing)
May I invite you to our little reception at the parsonage?

NORMAN
Nope. You see that kid over there, Reverend? He belongs to my daughter's lover, and we're going to teach him the facts of life this afternoon.

MINISTER
(concerned at best)
Oh?

ETHEL
What Norman means is that we're taking the boy fishing. Isn't that right, Norman?

Norman looks angelic.

NORMAN
Yep. We're going to take the little turkey out and show him something about fishing.

MINISTER
(relieved, and impressed)
Oh. Well. God bless you.

NORMAN
Thank you.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Norman, Billy, Ethel in the Thayer Four.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Norman has his fishing gear spread before him. Billy holds a pole, looking almost interested. Norman hands Billy a worm. Ethel holds a parasol and book and tries to be interested.

NORMAN
All right. Hold this.

Billy takes it, not without some trepidation.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NORMAN
(continuing)
That's a worm.

BILLY
I guess I know that.

NORMAN
Good. Just don't tell the fish.
As far as they're concerned that's filet mignon. Now. Put it on
your hook.

Billy thinks about it, then drapes the worm over the
curve of the hook.

NORMAN
(continuing)
This is not going to be easy. Here's
what you do. You start with the
worm's head. You can tell this is
the head because he's smiling at
you, see? And you slowly stick the
hook into the guy's neck and work
it up through the body.

Billy watches, horrified.

BILLY
Gross me out.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Norman is busily concentrating on his fishing. Billy
watches him and mimics his demeanor. He sits perfect-
ly still and scowls at the water. Ethel rolls her
eyes impatiently. Norman glares at her incredulously.
Suddenly Billy's pole is bent.

BILLY
Norman! What's going on!

NORMAN
You've got a bite.

ETHEL
Ooh! A bite! How wonderful!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BILLY
What do you mean?

NORMAN
A fish is biting your worm.

BILLY
No shit. Here.

He passes the pole to Norman, who passes it back to him.

NORMAN
Bring it in. The fish! Bring it in!

Billy panics. He sets down the pole and begins pulling in the line, hand over hand.

NORMAN
(continuing)
With the reel, for God's sake!

Now Billy reels in.

BILLY
This is San Frantastic.

He cranks like mad and at last brings out of the water a small but mighty sunfish.

BILLY
(continuing)
Hey, wow. Look at that. I caught that. Me. I caught a fish. Can you believe it?

ETHEL
It's wonderful, Billy. Congratulations.

NORMAN
(unimpressed)
It's only a sunfish.

BILLY
Only a sunfish! This is a beautiful fish, man. Look at it.

He swings the fish through the air, and hits Norman's face, a move which goes unappreciated. Norman grabs the fish, unhooks it and throws it back into the lake. Billy is horrified.
BILLY
What are you doin', man?

NORMAN
I don't allow sunfish in my home.
We're looking for trout, boy.

Billy looks stricken.

ETHEL
Oh, well, don't worry about it,
dear, there are plenty more where
that one came from. Aren't there,
Norman?

NORMAN
How the hell would I know? I
think we should go in!

ETHEL
Norman...

NORMAN
(firmly)
We'll go in. Now!

He starts reeling in. Billy looks a bit hurt.

ETHEL
Well, there'll be plenty of other
chances to go fishing, won't there,
Norman?

NORMAN
Maybe.

98A. EXT. LAKE - DAWN
Fish are breaking the surface of the lake in early
morning feeding.

99 EXT. HOUSE - DAY (EARLY MORNING)

Norman trudges down to the dock where he's surprised to
find Billy waiting with the boat ready.

BILLY
Let's go, Captain Turkey.
Look out, fish, here we come!

NORMAN
Shhh. You'll wake up the old lady.

But Billy gestures with his head and we SEE Ethel walk down
the bank carrying her sewing basket and her old doll.
CONTINUED:

NORMAN
(continuing)
Oh, well. Look at you. You're not coming with us, are you?

ETHEL
No. You don't have to worry. You two go on and have a good time, and don't be mean to the fish.

NORMAN
All right. Goodbye, woman.

Norman starts the engine and the boat speeds away from the back.

OMMITTED

EXT. DOCK - DAY (MORNING)

Ethel sits with Elmer. She watches the boat move in the distance through her binoculars, then begins sewing the doll.

ETHEL
Well, Elmer, looks like we've been deserted.

(she pauses, looks at the doll wistfully)
Remember how we used to sit down here and wait for Dad and watch the fishing boats from Golden Pond Hotel. And they'd ring the bell to call them in for supper. All gone, Elmer. That time is all gone... They say the lake is dying, but I don't believe it... Remember how I used to sit you down here on the dock, Elmer, when I'd head off to Camp Koochakiyi, when I was a little girl? And I'd wave goodbye, and you always waved back, didn't you, Elmer?

(she sings)
I can see the birds
Way up in the sky
From my tent on the bank
Of the lake
At Camp Koochakiyi,
Camp Koochakiyi.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
ON GOLDEN POND - Rev. 7/14/80

101 CONTINUED:

ETHEL (CONT'D)
(she thinks about it)
What a terrible song.

102 EXT. LAKE - DAY

Billy and Norman sit silently fishing.

BILLY
I don't think there's any trout in this lake.

Norman stares at the boy, thinking hard.

NORMAN
Can I trust you to keep a secret?

Yeah.

NORMAN
If I take you to a certain place on this lake where the trout are humungus, will you promise not to tell anybody?

BILLY
Who'm I gonna tell?

Promise?

BILLY
Okay. I promise. No bullshit.

NORMAN
All right. Pull up the anchor.

Norman is very serious about this. He sets down his gear and starts the boat.

103 EXT. LAKE - DAY

The Thayer Four cruises along a deserted stretch of lake, swings in a circle, then stops. Norman looks about to ensure that no one has followed them. Billy looks about, too, skeptical.

(CONTINUED)
BILLY
This is it?

NORMAN
This is it.

Norman and Billy prepare to fish.

NORMAN
You have to be patient when you fish for trout boy. There is a trout living in this cove, who weighs ten pounds if he weighs an ounce. I first saw him four or five years ago, and I hooked him two years ago, and last year, too, but he's...

(he yells at the water)
... a crafty old son of a bitch!
(to the bass)
This is your last chance, Walter! I named him Walter because he reminds me of Ethel's brother, because...
(to the fish)
... he's fat and lazy and ugly!

Billy loves all this. Norman nods at him.

NORMAN
(continuing)
Where's your line? Are you on the bottom? If your line's floating you're on the bottom, and that won't do you any good. Bring it up, bring it up, for Christ's sake.

BILLY
Okay, man, don't yell at me! Who do you think you are, Long John Silver?

I'm sorry.

NORMAN
It's okay.

They sit for a minute. Norman looks at Billy, searching for something to say.

(CONTINUED)
NORMAN
You having fun?

BILLY
Yeah.

NORMAN
That's good. Now isn't this better than 'cruising chicks'?

BILLY
No.

NORMAN
No, I suppose not. (he thinks about it)
You planning on getting married one of these days?

BILLY
No way, Jose. I just want to suck face, man.

Norman nods. He fiddles with his line, thinking he has a bite, deciding he doesn't.

BILLY
(continuing)
How old were you the first time you did it with Ethel?

NORMAN
I beg your pardon? Did what?

BILLY
You know what I'm talking about.

Norman stares at Billy, trying to think of an answer.

NORMAN
It's not a good idea to talk too much out here. Scare the fish away. If the sons of bitches are even here.

Norman looks around, irritated. Suddenly we HEAR the PUTT-PUTT of a small outboard MOTOR.

BILLY (O.S.) WHISTLES a greeting.

Norman and Billy turn to see Ethel approaching in their skiff.

(CONTINUED)
NORMAN
For God's sake! What the hell are you doing here?

ETHEL
(holding up a basket)
Shhh... I brought you lunch.

Ethel paddles to them.

NORMAN
How the hell did you find us?

ETHEL
Shhh... you'll scare the fish.

BILLY
(whispering)
This is supposed to be a secret fishing place.

ETHEL
Just a lucky guess.

She smiles and holds out the basket.

NORMAN
We don't need any lunch. We've got more important things going on here.

ETHEL
Take the basket, you poop. Billy might be hungry.

Ethel sets the basket into the boat.

ETHEL
(continuing)
Have a nice lunch. I'll see you both later.

NORMAN
Goodbye!

BILLY
Thanks, Ethel.

She starts the motor and moves off. Norman casually opens the basket.

(CONTINUED)
Norman

Might as well see what she brought.

The two of them set down their poles and attack the sandwiches voraciously. A moment passes while they feast. Suddenly Norman's pole is bent double and yanked into the air. He lunges and grabs it just in time.

Norman (continuing)

Ah ha. Ah ha! Hold on, you son of a bitch!

We see the trout break the water, flipping in the air.

Norman (continuing)

He's not Walter, but he's related.
(to the fish)

He's an ugly old son of a bitch!

Norman is now standing, reeling like mad. Billy stands, too, thrilled.

Norman (continuing)

Get the net, boy! We're going to have trout for dinner tonight.

He pulls the large fish out of the water.

Norman (continuing)

Get the net under him. That a boy.

Billy nets the trout. A 3-pounder.

Norman (continuing)

This is a trout. See? A rainbow trout.

Norman is genuinely excited. He punches Billy.

Norman (continuing)

Good work, kid.
ON GOLDEN POND - Rev. 7/14/80

106 INT. DINING ROOM - DUSK

Ethel enters with a platter, on which lies the trout all cooked and yummy looking. She sets it down in front of her two tired fishermen.

NORMAN
Well, look what you've done. Look at what this beautiful woman has done, Billy.

BILLY
San frantastic.

ETHEL
Did you boys have a good time out there today?

BILLY
It was a trip.

NORMAN
He's right. It was a trip.

ETHEL
(smiling)
Well, that's good. Isn't it?

107 OMITTED

110 EXT. FLOAT - DAY

Billy is perched backwards at the end of the diving board. Norman sits in the canoe nearby. Ethel is swimming a circle around them on an air mattress.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NORMAN
(rather strongly)
Now go up this time, not just back.
Up and back. Come on.

Billy looks hesitant.

NORMAN
(continuing)
Come on, there's nothing to be scared of. The back flip is one of the easiest dives.

BILLY
Then you do it.

Norman looks challenged. He starts peeling off his shirt.

ETHEL
(from the water)
Norman Thayer, stay where you are!

He scowls at Ethel. Billy loves it. He covers his mouth and pretends to giggle.

NORMAN
Dive, boy.

Billy does. He goes up all right, but doesn't turn all the way. He lands rather face-first. He surfaces and punches the water.

BILLY
Ouch!
(sounding like Norman)
For God's sake!

NORMAN
That wasn't it.

BILLY
Thanks for telling me.

Billy climbs back up on the float. Ethel swims alongside the canoe.

ETHEL
Norman, we're going to have him for a month. I don't think you should kill him the first week.

Norman scowls at her.
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110A EXT. HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Norman is sitting on a chair watching Billy clean an enormous pile of fish. Ethel can be seen in the b.g. gathering kindling. They all wear sweaters.

BILLY
We caught eight million fish. Are you sure none of these is Walter?

NORMAN
Yep. Watler is humungus! Those fish you got there are just little mothas.

BILLY
Well, they're disgusting little mothas.

NORMAN
You got something against fish guts boy?

Billy makes a face.

BILLY
Can I ask you something? How did you get Ethel anyway?

NORMAN
What? I sent away for her. Two box tops from Quaker Oats.

BILLY
Don't bullshit me man...

NORMAN
I met Ethel when I was a principal and she was a substitute teacher. She was about the prettiest thing I'd ever seen. So I told her she made my heart go pitter-pat. She fell in love with me immediately.

Ethel, having overheard the end of Norman's conversation, moves forward carrying a bunch of kindling.

ETHEL
Hah!...

BILLY
Is that really the way Norman got you Ethel?

(CONTINUED)
ETHEL
Don't be silly. Norman didn't get me at all, I won him in a contest. He was the booby prize! Has he got you cleaning those stupid fish?

NORMAN
That's right... he cleans the stupid ones and I clean the smart ones. Fortunately, the smart ones are too smart to get caught. That's why they're in schools... Ha, ha, ha!

Ethel and Billy share a look. She hands Norman the kindling.

ETHEL
Come in Norman and get a fire going. It's going to be a bit nippy tonight.

Norman extends the kindling to Billy.

NORMAN
Do you hear that boy... get a fire going!

ETHEL
For God's sake Norman, Billy doesn't have to do all your chores.

Norman shakes his head as he walks to the house with the wood.

NORMAN
What is the point of having a dwarf if he doesn't do chores?

Ethel now shakes her head and looks at Billy who smiles.

110B INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Norman is methodically lighting a fire, a pile of newspapers on the hearth beside him. Billy enters carrying a fish bucket as Norman struggles to light a match.

NORMAN
Damn it.

(CONTINUED)
ON GOLDEN POND - Rev. 6/10/80

110B CONTINUED:

BILLY
(whispering)
Got the matches backwards. Want me to do it?

NORMAN
I think I know how to light a fire, for Christ's sake!

Billy shrugs. Sets down the bucket and steps onto the porch.

Now Norman has the paper ignited. He fans the fire and stands and watches it with satisfaction. He looks around for Billy. Heads for the porch.

110C EXT. PORCH - LATE AFTERNOON

Billy sits reading as Norman steps out.

NORMAN
What are you reading?

BILLY
(not looking up)
A Tale Of Two Cities.

NORMAN
Ah... Tres bien, tres bien.

Norman looks at Billy for a moment trying to think of something to say. Suddenly, Ethel yells from inside.

ETHEL (O.S.)
Norman, for God's sake! You've set the house on fire!

Pandemonium as Norman and Billy rush inside.

110D INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

The newspapers on the hearth are ablaze. Ethel is frantically trying to stomp out the flames.

NORMAN
What the hell is going on?

ETHEL
Get a bucket Norman!

(CONTINUED)
110D CONTINUED:

NORMAN

What?

But Billy races by him and grabs the fish bucket. He throws the water and the clean fish onto the fire, extinguishing it.

NORMAN

For God's sake! You made a hell of a mess!

BILLY

What? Don't yell at me man.

ETHEL

(overlapping)

Norman!

NORMAN

I guess it's not safe to have me around here is it?

(he looks to Billy)

What are you staring at me for? You little son of a bitch!

Billy looks ready to punch him. Instead, he storms out, knocking down the screen door. Norman marches up the stairs, leaving Ethel to look after them both, upset. She bends and returns the fish to the bucket, then steps to the stairway, and calls:

ETHEL

Norman. I'd still appreciate your making a fire when you get a chance.

No answer. She steps outside.

110E OMITTED

110F EXT. DOCK - LATE AFTERNOON

Billy stands staring at the lake, troubled. Ethel comes down the bank.

ETHEL

You mustn't let Norman upset you, dear.

(Continued)
110F CONTINUED:

    BILLY
    Sure.

    ETHEL
    He is not yelling at you... you know.

    BILLY
    It sounds like he is yelling at me.

    ETHEL
    No. He is yelling at life.

    BILLY
    What the heck does that mean?

    ETHEL
    Well, he's like an old lion. And he has to remind himself that he can still roar.

    BILLY
    Oh.

    ETHEL
    Sometimes you have to look hard at a person and remember that he is doing the best he can. He is just trying to find his way. That's all. Just like you.

Billy stands silently for a moment, thinking.

    BILLY
    Can I take you for a ride, Ethel?

    ETHEL
    Well, thank you.

111 OMITTED

111A EXT. LAKE - LATE AFTERNOON

Ethel and Billy in the canoe, he paddling stern. They move slowly along in the late sun, a bit raggedly as Billy tries to keep the canoe on course. They paddle in silence for a moment past a rocky shore.

    ETHEL
    It's beautiful, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)
BILLY
Sure.

ETHEL
He is not yelling at you...you know.

BILLY
It sounds like he is yelling at me.

ETHEL
No. He is yelling at life.

BILLY
What the heck does that mean?

ETHEL
Well, he's like an old lion. And he has to remind himself that he can still roar.

Oh.

ETHEL
Sometimes you have to look hard at a person and remember that he is doing the best he can. He is just trying to find his way. That's all. Just like you.

Billy stands silently for a moment, thinking.

BILLY
You could come out fishing with us anytime, you know. If you get lonely.

ETHEL
Well, no, I've never liked fishing. It always seemed like the dead fish were staring at me.

BILLY
We don't just fish, you know.

ETHEL
No?

BILLY
Nope. We have a pretty good old time. Norman makes me practice my French, and I make him tell me stories. We've got a real kinetic thing going.

(CONTINUED)
ETHEL
That's wonderful.

BILLY
Oh, yeah. And you don't have to worry about him. I keep an eye on him.

Ethel smiles.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Norman is fastidiously minding the fire, anything flammable moved well out of danger. He looks at Ethel and Billy, who sit reading.

NORMAN
Um. Did you want to play Parcheesi, or not?...It's all right, we don't have to.

Ethel and Billy look at him, amused.

NORMAN
(continuing)
Unless you want to. It doesn't matter. If you'd rather not play a game. It's not important.

Ethel and Billy look at each other and smile.

ETHEL
Set it up, buster, and prepare to lose your shirt.

EXT. GAZEBO - EARLY EVENING

Ethel is busily crocheting. She feels something and brushes at her neck...then again. We SEE Norman behind the gazebo railing. A mischievous look in his eye and he tickles Ethel with a long piece of grass. She grins.

ETHEL
Oh, Norman. For God's sake.

NORMAN
How is my little Petunia?

(Continued)
CONTINUED:
She looks at him surprised, but pleased. Billy calls from the dock.

BILLY
Hey, I was wondering if I could take a little spin in the Thayer Four.

NORMAN
Absolutely not.

BILLY
I know how to drive.

ETHEL
I think it would be all right. Don't you, Norman?

NORMAN
Good God! Can you be careful.

BILLY
Oh sure!

He hops into the boat. Norman climbs up over the gazebo rail.

ETHEL
Norman!

Norman sits beside her and puts his arm around her.

ETHEL
(continuing)
Well it has finally happened. You have lost your marbles.

EXT. LAKE - EARLY EVENING
Billy drives the Thayer Four away from the house, straight out past the point and out of sight.

EXT. LAKE - EARLY EVENING
Billy drives the boat in great looping circles and figure eights, cutting and weaving, bouncing wildly on the waves, having a marvelous time.

OMITTED
ON GOLDEN POND - Rev. 6/10/80

CONTINUED:

He glances at Billy then looks back at the lake. Billy
smiles and stares at Charlie, getting the point but not
commenting.

CHARLIE
(continuing)
I just liked the girls.
(he smiles shyly)
Every night after lights out,
you know what they used to do...
go skinny dipping!

BILLY
No shit!... Girls are great, Charlie.
(shouting)
They're great! Girls are great!
I love 'em, Charlie. I love the
little nitwits!

Charlie laughs.

EXT. GAZEBO - EARLY EVENING

Ethel is busily crocheting. She feels something and
brushes at her neck... then again. We SEE Norman
behind the gazebo railing. A mischievous look in his
eye as he tickles Ethel with a long piece of grass.
She grins.

ETHEL
Oh, Norman. For God's sake.

NORMAN
How is my little Petunia?

She looks at him surprised, but pleased. Billy calls
from the dock.

BILLY
Hey, I was wondering if I could
take a little spin in the Thayer
Four.

NORMAN
Absolutely not.

BILLY
Charlie let me drive.

(CONTINUED)
ETHEL
I think it would be all right.
Don't you, Norman?

NORMAN
Good God! Can you be careful.

BILLY
Oh sure!

NORMAN
Stay in our cove boy.

BILLY
Yes sir, I promise.

He hops into the boat. Norman climbs up over the gazebo rail.

ETHEL
Norman!

Norman sits beside her and puts his arm around her.

ETHEL
(continuing)
Well it has finally happened. You have lost your marbles.

EXT. LAKE - EARLY EVENING
Billy drives the Thayer Four away from the house, straight out past the point and out of sight.

EXT. GAZEBO - EARLY EVENING
Norman and Ethel sit on the bench. Norman leans forward.

NORMAN
Where the hell is he going?

ETHEL
Tsk. Don't worry about him.

NORMAN
He stole my boat. Thief!

ETHEL
Will you shut up?
ON GOLDEN POND - Rev. 6/28/80

119 EXT. LAKE - NIGHT
A crystal night, full moon sparkling on the calm water. Billy sits in the Thayer Four not far from the shore of Camp Koochakiyi, binoculars trained on the bank. At last a BELL RINGS and the lights go out in the tents. Billy leans forward.

120 EXT. CAMP KOOCHAKIYI - NIGHT
Seven or eight young teenage GIRLS creep down the bank and quietly pull off their clothes and jump into the water.

121 ON THE BOAT
Billy watches, aging fast; his mouth locked open.

    BILLY
    (whispering)
    Thank you, Charlie Mackinarily.

122 ON THE WATER
The girls push and splash each other.

    GIRL #1
    Let's swim out to the boat.

They start to swim toward the Thayer Four. Billy ducks, terrified. The girls arrive and start to climb aboard. Three of them are aboard before they discover Billy staring transfixed. They shriek and leap into the water and swim, giggling, to the shore as suddenly a light shines on them from the shore. A woman's voice rumbles.

    MISS LOWRY
    (shouting)
    What's going on there? Out of the water and back to your bunks, girls.

The girls scramble from the water as Miss Lowry trains the flashlight on the Thayer Four.

122A ON THE BOAT
Billy panics...tries desperately to start the engine, which he finally does. He zooms away grinning like a fool.

123 OMITTED
thru
126

127 EXT. PORCH - NIGHT
Norman and Ethel sit at the Parcheesi board as Billy up to the dock and quickly ties up.

(CONTINUED)
ON GOLDEN POND - Rev. 6/10/80

CONTINUED:

NORMAN
I'm too old for this nonsense.
Let's just kill him and get it over.

EXT. YARD - SUNSET
Billy moves up the bank and onto the porch.

EXT. PORCH - SUNSET
NORMAN
Go to your room.

BILLY
Huh?

NORMAN
You go to your room and stay there for two years.

Ethel looks to the heavens.

BILLY
What. I didn't do anything.

NORMAN
Bullshit. You stole my boat.

BILLY
Oh, come on!

NORMAN
And, you lied.

ETHEL
We were worried about you, Billy.

BILLY
You guys don't have to treat me like a kid.

NORMAN
Hah! Then you shouldn't act like one. I have already raised one ungrateful brat. I'm in no mood to go through it again.

ETHEL
Norman!

(CONTINUED)
Continued:

He turns to go. Norman grabs him.

NORMAN
You want to be treated with respect you have to earn respect. Do you hear me, boy?

They stare at each other.

BILLY
(mumbling)
I'm sorry.

Billy enters the living room, heads up the stairs. Ethel elbows Norman and he looks at her. Then calls to Billy.

NORMAN
Hey. We're glad you're here, you know. You turkey.

Billy smiles and moves up the stairs. Norman looks after him, then turns to Ethel. She looks at him, pleased.
INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ethel scowls as Norman loads fishing gear onto an already overburdened Billy.

NORMAN
I'll get the rest...

He picks up a small net and exits. Ethel shakes her head.

ETHEL
You two will be sorry. The loons have been calling for rain all night. 'Rain, rain, send us the rain.'

BILLY
That's what the loons said? Huh?

He smiles and shakes his head. We HEAR NORMAN call:

NORMAN (O.S.)
Allons, debut!

BILLY
Je viens!
(to Ethel)
That's French, you know. It means, 'I'm coming.'

ETHEL
Ah. I'll get la porte.

She carefully opens the screen door and is amazed to discover its hinges are operable.

ETHEL
(continuing)
I don't believe it!

BILLY
Yeah... Norman and I fixed the mutha.

EXT. DOCK - DAY

Norman waits impatiently in the boat as Ethel and Billy trudge down with their loads. Ethel casts a wary look at the sky.

NORMAN
Hey, boy, grab my chair, would you?

(CONTINUED)
131 CONTINUED

ETHIEL
Norman. For God's sake, his hands are full.

NORMAN
So? He's got teeth, doesn't he?

ETHIEL
Norman, get the chair.

Grumbling, Norman does. He and Billy pile into the boat.

ETHIEL
(continuing)
You two be careful out there. And don't be gone long, or you'll miss dinner.

NORMAN
Then we'll just have to eat raw fish like the Orientals do.
(to Billy)
Of course you'll never get any taller.
(to Ethel)
Goodbye, woman.

BILLY
Goodbye, woman.

They motor away from the dock.

132 EXT. LAKE - LATE AFTERNOON

The sky is growing dark as the Thayer-four cuts across the water. Norman stops the boat at the entrance to a rocky cove.

NORMAN
This is about the only place we haven't looked for this stupid son a bitch fish. We might as well give it a try, huh?

He turns the boat and slowly maneuvers into the cove.

NORMAN
(continuing)
They call this Purgatory Cove, boy. See those rocks? They eat boats.
Billy looks around skeptically.

BILLY
Do you know the way?

NORMAN
Of course I know the way. I've been on this lake 48 years, for Christ's sake. Now you get up on the deck and tell me where the rocks are.

Billy does, with some trepidation. Norman moves the boat forward slowly and carefully.

BILLY
Um. There's a rock coming up, Norman!

Which side?

NORMAN
Uh, right!

BILLY
Starboard, boy.

NORMAN
Okay, starboard.

Norman turns the boat.

BILLY
Another one. On the left. Um. Shit. Port!

Norman turns the boat. Now they are into the cove. WE SEE rocks breaking the surface, or lying green and ominous just below. The boat zig zags along as Billy shouts directions.

BILLY
Port! Port. Starboard. No, port!

At last they reach the center of the cove, and Norman cuts the motor.

NORMAN
Now doesn't this look like the ideal hiding place for a (he shouts) crafty old son of a bitch?
Billy looks around at the cove, still and eerie looking in the fading light.

NORMAN
(continuing)
Well? The fish aren't going to just jump up into the boat, you know. Get it in gear, turkey.

Billy readies his fish pole. He and Norman sit fishing quietly, reflecting the somberness of the weather. Norman looks at the sky pensively.

NORMAN
(continuing)
It's getting dark, Chelsea.

BILLY
Who you calling Chelsea? I'm Billy. Come on, man.

Norman looks at him, nods.

BILLY
(continuing)
Are you okay?

NORMAN
Of course I'm okay.

BILLY
Okay. We better hurry up and catch Walter, huh? I'm not going to be here much longer.

NORMAN
Neither am I.

BILLY
I'll miss you, Norman.

What?

BILLY
Life really sucks sometimes, doesn't it?

They grow quiet again, each lost in his thoughts. Billy idly cranks his reel and feels something pulling on his line.
BILLY
(continuing)
Norman! Shit! I got the mutha!
I got him!

He cranks like mad, while Norman watches.

BILLY
(continuing)
Get the net, Norman! Get it in
gear, turkey!

Norman grabs the net. He stands by while Billy
excitedly reels in, struggling with his catch. He
peers over the side.

BILLY
(continuing)
What the heck is that?

Billy reaches into the water and pulls out the body of
a loon, obviously dead for some time.

BILLY
(continuing)
Good God. It's a dead loon,
Norman. The poor thing.
(he makes a face)
Phew! It stinks, too.

But he stands staring at it, fascinated.

NORMAN
Put it back.

BILLY
What? It's dead.

NORMAN
Put it back.

Billy carefully drops the bird into the water, and
watches it float away from the boat. Norman returns
to his own end of the Thayer-four, and sits silently.
Billy seems shaken by what's happened. The sky grows
steadily darker.

BILLY
(quietly)
Norman, are you afraid of dying?
NORMAN
What?

BILLY
(persisting)
Are you afraid to die?

NORMAN
What the hell kind of question is that?

BILLY
I was just wondering, that's all.

NORMAN
(muttering)
Well, I don't know why everybody has to talk about everything all the time.

He stares at the water, looks up at the sky, then back at Billy. He smiles.

NORMAN
Let's go home, boy.

He reels in, and pulls up the anchor. Billy reels in, and looks around nervously as the darkness closes in.

BILLY
Are you sure we're going to be able to get out of here?

NORMAN
What? Of course we are. Now get on the deck.

Norman starts the motor and looks at Billy, who moves reluctantly onto the deck. Norman senses Billy's fear.

NORMAN
(continuing)
Hey. Get back here. I forgot you're a hot shot boat driver. You take the wheel and I'll navigate.

BILLY
Yeah?

He climbs back into the boat as Norman pulls himself onto the deck.
BILLY
(continuing)
I'm not afraid, you know.

NORMAN
I know. Now you just take us real slow and do what I tell you.

Billy moves the boat forward. Norman points as he gives commands.

NORMAN
(continuing)

The boat zig zags along. The visibility gets worse and worse, and Norman has to squint at the darkness, struggling to see the way.

NORMAN
(continuing)
Port, Billy. Port! Good boy.

Suddenly ahead of the boat there looms a whole series of rocks, with seemingly no passageway.

NORMAN
(continuing)
Good God! Reverse! Full throttle in reverse!

Billy panics. He hits the throttle in forward, and the boat races ahead.

NORMAN
(continuing)
Reverse!

But it's too late. The boat slams into a rock, sending Norman flying into the water. Billy hits the windshield and is thrown back as the Thayer-four rolls onto its side. WE SEE a huge gash on the bottom. Water pours through it, as the grand old boat quickly fills and starts to sink. Norman splashes in the water, bleeding profusely from a scalp wound.

NORMAN
Chelsea! Chelsea!

(CONTINUED)
Billy swims toward Norman, calling.

**BILLY**

Norman! Norman!

At last he reaches Norman. He grabs him.

**BILLY**

(continuing)

Norman! I screwed up. I'm sorry.

But Norman is in no condition for conversation. His face is covered with blood from the gash in his scalp. He looks at Billy, then closes his eyes. Billy pulls him through the water, looking for safety. Norman is clearly too heavy for the boy, but Billy forges on. At last he spots a rock jutting out of the water, jagged and slippery. He drags Norman to it, and tries to push him onto it, but Norman is practically deadweight, and it takes all of Billy's remaining strength to force Norman onto the rock. Billy shakes him.

**BILLY**

Come on, Norman. You gotta live, man.

Billy is crying. He slides back into the water, exhausted. Norman lies still for a moment, then finally begins to regain his senses. He hears splashing near him as Billy struggles to stay above water.

**NORMAN**

Billy? Billy?

He drops into the water, hanging onto the rock, and he reaches for the boy. With a great lunge he grabs Billy and pulls him back to the rock, and holds him there.

---

Ethel's car screeches to a halt. She jumps out.

Charlie is tinkering with a motor at his workbench as Ethel enters.

**ETHEL**

Come on, Charlie, we're going for a boat ride.

**CHARLIE**

Huh?

(continued)
ETHEL
They're out on the lake. They should have been back before dark. Let's go!

She heads across the boathouse to Charlie's boat moored in its slip. Charlie grabs his slicker and follows her. They climb into the boat and move off.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT
Billy and Norman cling to each other, and to the rock, both exhausted.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT
Charlie's boat clips across the lake, Ethel shining a spotlight back and forth across the water. Charlie stops the boat.

Charlie
Ethel, we've been back and forth here three times. They must have pulled up somewhere.

Ethel peers into the darkness. She shines the light on the entrance to Purgatory Cove.

ETHEL
You don't think he went in there, do you?

Charlie
He's not that crazy.

Ethel
Yes, he is. Let's go.

Charlie
I'm not going to drive my boat into Purgatory Cove.

Ethel
Then I'll drive. Here; Hold this.

She thrusts the spotlight into his hands, and takes the wheel. The boat moves carefully into the cove.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT
Billy and Norman are now on opposite sides of the rock, arms interlocked.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BILLY
Maybe I should try swimming to shore.

Norman shakes his head, too tired to answer. Billy grips him tighter.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

Ethel steers the boat past the rocks, while Charlie tries to find them with his light.

CHARLIE
Left, Ethel. Now right! Oh, my God.

He can barely watch, but the boat winds along. Suddenly they hit something.

CHARLIE
(continuing)
Uh, oh.

He shines the line on the water.

CHARLIE
Holy Mackinoly.

WE SEE a section of the Thayer-four floating in the water. Ethel sees it too. She shouts.

ETHEL
Norman Thayer! Where the hell are you?

Ethel maneuvers forward, and Charlie slowly passes the light across the path. A dark mass looms ahead of them. Ethel brings the boat closer and WE SEE Norman and Billy just barely hanging onto the rock.

ETHEL
There they are. Take the wheel, Charlie.

She suddenly jumps into the water, and swims to the rock.

NORMAN
(weakly)
Ethel. You shouldn't be out here in this sort of weather.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She hugs him to her. She pulls Billy up and hugs him, too.

ETHEL

You poops. You goddam poops.

Charlie maneuvers his boat alongside.

OMITTED

through

164

165

EXT. LAKE - DAWN

Golden Pond is calm. The morning sun glistens on the water.
166 OMIT

167 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Norman and Billy sit at a table concentrating on a jigsaw puzzle. Norman wears a small bandage on his forehead. Ethel steps in from the kitchen carrying her berry buckets.

ETHEL
I'm off to get some berries. Will you two be all right?

They appear too busy to respond other than to nod or wave her off. She nods.

ETHEL (continuing)
Bye, then.

She exits through the kitchen. As soon as the back door slams, Billy and Norman spring into action. They grab fishing vests and hats and gear, and scramble out the door.

168 OMIT

169 EXT. DOCK - DAY

Billy and Norman rush down the bank to the dock until they are stopped dead in their tracks by Ethel's voice.

ETHEL (O.S.)
Hey!

Billy and Norman look up innocently as Ethel approaches.

ETHEL
And where are you juvenile delinquents off to?

Billy and Norman smile stupidly at her.

ETHEL (continuing, to Norman)
I thought you were in too much pain to exert yourself.

NORMAN
What? Well, I am. I'm only doing this for Billy - give the poor boy another chance to catch a fish. We've been doing goddam jigsaw puzzles for a week.

(continued)
ETHEL
Mm-hmm. You'll be staying in our cove, won't you?

NORMAN
Tsk. There are no trout left in our cove.

ETHEL
We have enough trout in the fridge to last us six years.

BILLY
But we don't have Walter.

NORMAN
Never mind. We'll stay in the damn cove.

Norman steps to her and grabs her, and kisses her.
EXT. BLUEBERRY HILL - DAY

High above the lake. Ethel stands, picking berries. After a moment she begins to sing.

ETHEL
I can see the trees and the
hills beyond,
from my tent on the bank
of the lake called Golden Pond,
On Golden Pond.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

A car rounds a bend and stops. Chelsea steps out and
breathes in the warm air. She stares down at the
lake, looking more buoyant than we've seen her. She
HEARS ETHEL'S VOICE and moves toward her, intrigued.

EXT. BLUEBERRY HILL - DAY

Ethel is dancing a little Indian dance.

ETHEL
We are the girls from Camp
Koochakiyi,
you can tell who we are by
the gleam in our eyes.
Our minds are clear
and our hearts are strong,
we are dancing here but we
won't be long...

Chelsea climbs down quickly behind her. Ethel's dance
grows.

ETHEL
(continuing)
There will soon be dear
where there are now fawns,
And we'll remember our years
on Golden Pond...

Chelsea joins in.

CHELSEA AND ETHEL
On Golden Pond.

Ethel turns, startled.

CHELSEA
(continuing)
How.

(CONTINUED)
ETHEL
How did you get here?

CHELSEA
I rented a car. A Volare.
Made by Plymouth.

Chelsea looks at Ethel then at her jacket.

CHELSEA
Look at you. You've had that coat as long as I can remember.

ETHEL
Looks it, doesn't it?

CHELSEA
It looks great.

Chelsea and Ethel hug each other.

ETHEL
You're in a huggy mood today.
What's the matter?

CHELSEA
You look different.

ETHEL
You mean old. Like my coat.

CHELSEA
I don't know.

ETHEL
That's what happens if you live long enough. You get old.

CHELSEA
How does it make you feel?

ETHEL
Well, it doesn't make me feel like jumping up and down.

CHELSEA
It makes me goddamn mad!

ETHEL
They're not digging my grave yet.
Well, how was your trip?

CHELSEA
Not bad.

(Continued)
Ah.

CHELSEA

How's the kid? Still got him or did you drown him?

ETHEL

We still got him. He's right out there fishing with his best buddy. You can see them.

Chelsea peers out at the lake, a wistful look in her eyes.

CHELSEA

Where's the Thayer-four?

ETHEL

Oh, Charlie's fixing it. Norman and Billy tried to drive it through a rock in Purgatory Cove.

CHELSEA

Did they get hurt?

ETHEL

Norman got a bump on his forehead, which he's been playing to the hilt, but they're both fine, thank God. Do you still have Bill or did you drown him?

CHELSEA

Still got him. But he had to get back to the coast. He had a mouth that needed looking into.

(she smiles)

Have Norman and Billy gotten along all right?

(continued)
ETHEL
Billy is the happiest thing that's happened to Norman since Roosevelt. I should have rented him a 13-year-old boy years ago.

CHELSEA
You could have traded me in. Billy reminds me of myself out there. Way back when. Except I think he makes a better son than I did.

ETHEL
Well, you made a very nice daughter.

CHELSEA
Isn't that cute the way they're so buddy-buddy? How come it's so easy?

ETHEL
What do you mean?

CHELSEA
Why wasn't the old son of a bitch ever my friend?

ETHEL
You're sounding very childish. Of course he was your friend ... he's your father.

CHELSEA
I like your logic, but it's bullshit!

ETHEL
Oh, dear. You're such a nice person, can't you think of anything nice to say?

CHELSEA
Um. I married Bill in Brussels.

ETHEL
You did what in Brussels?

CHELSEA
I married Bill.

ETHEL
Does it count in this country?

(CONTINUED)
CHELSEA
Fraid so.

ETHEL
(hugging her)
Well, bless you. Congratulations.

CHELSEA
Nothing to it.

ETHEL
Norman will be so pleased.

CHELSEA
Yeah, right. What do you think he's going to say, "Hey, Chelsea, fantastic. I'm so glad you're finally getting your life together, and I'm so proud of you?"

ETHEL
I doubt it, but he will be happy for you.

CHELSEA
No, he won't. You know why? Because he doesn't really care. He cares about Norman Thayer, Jr, but he doesn't care about me ... and he doesn't care about you either. He's a selfish son of a bitch!
(she yells at the lake)
You old son of a bitch!

Ethel, stunned by all this, slaps Chelsea's face.

ETHEL
That old son of a bitch happens to be my husband.

Now Chelsea is stunned. She turns and runs headlong down the hill.

CHELSEA
Runs along the shore. She reaches a little point of land, runs onto a huge rock, and flings herself into Golden Pond.
ON GOLDEN POND - Rev. 9/5/80

174 EXT. LAKE - DAY

Chelsea stays under the water for a moment, then surfaces, spitting out a spray of water.

CHELSEA

Well, shit.

175 OMITTED

175A EXT. LAKE - DAY

Billy is struggling to reel in his line. Norman watches skeptically.

BILLY

Shit! Oh, wow, man!

NORMAN

It's only a sunfish, don't get excited.

BILLY

This is only a sunfish? It's doing a pretty good trout impression. Get the net!

NORMAN

Are you doubting the word of a genius? There are no respectable trout in this cove. I chased them out years ago.

At which point the fish breaks the water, a huge trout.

BILLY

What is that then?

NORMAN

That is a trout.

(he scrambles for the net)

Good God! It's Walter! What the hell are you doing here, you son of a bitch?

He scoops the fish into the net, and he and Billy fall over each other landing the fish on the boat's floor.

BILLY

We caught Walter!

NORMAN

We caught Walter. The son of a bitch!
Chelsea is sitting on the dock, hair and shorts still wet, shoes gone. She looks at the lake through binoculars. She lowers the glasses as Ethel steps onto the dock. An awkward moment passes.

ETHEL
I brought your car.

CHELSEA
Thank you. (after a moment)
I'm sorry.

ETHEL
I'm sorry, too. But you're wrong, you know. Your father does care. Deeply. It's true he's an absolute mutt when it comes to telling anybody, but I know he'd walk through fire for me, and he would for you, too. And if you can't see that, then you're not looking close enough.

CHELSEA
(after a beat)
I don't even know him.

ETHEL
Well, he'll be here in a minute, I'll be glad to introduce you.

CHELSEA
Right. Maybe someday we can try to be friends.

ETHEL
Chelsea, Norman is 80 years old. He has heart palpitations and a problem remembering things. When exactly do you expect this friendship to begin?

CHELSEA
I don't know. I'm afraid of him.

ETHEL
Well, he's afraid of you. You should get along fine. (she pauses)
Here he comes. Talk to him.

She turns and marches up the bank, leaving Chelsea to gaze nervously out as Norman's boat approaches the dock.
EXT. SHORE - DAY

Chelsea is wading in the shallow water, studying the little pebbles that glisten in the sun. She looks up as Billy and Norman approach the dock. Billy spots Chelsea. He jumps from the boat to the dock, and smiles at her. She looks at Billy in surprise. He seems taller, his posture improved, his face ruddy. They look at each other a moment, then he jumps into the water. He and Chelsea embrace.

BILLY
Look at you.

CHELSEA
Hi, kid.

BILLY
Where's the dentist?

CHELSEA
He had to go back. He'll call you tonight. Hello, Norman.

NORMAN
(sitting in the boat)
Well, well, well.

BILLY
Chelsea, we caught Walter! Do you know who Walter is?

CHELSEA
I have a feeling he's a fish.

BILLY
Yes. A humungus fish. And we caught him! We caught him!

CHELSEA
Well? Let me see him.

NORMAN
We let him go.

BILLY
Yeah, we let him go.

CHELSEA
I think I've heard this story before.

(CONTINUED)
CONCLUDED:

BILLY
No, it's true. We figures if he's lived this long we should let him keep on living.

He climbs up the bank.

BILLY
(continuing)
I've got to tell Ethel we caught him.
(he grins at Norman)
We caught the son of a bitch!

Billy runs off. Chelsea looks at Norman. She has to squint in the bright sun.

CHELSEA
Got yourself a friend, huh?

NORMAN
He's all right. It hasn't been too difficult.

He starts to climb out of the boat.

CHELSEA
How's your forehead?

NORMAN
What? This?
(he touches the bandage)
Oh, not too bad. A lot of pain, nothing to worry about.

CHELSEA
Norman, I want to talk to you.

NORMAN
(sitting back down)
What seems to be the problem?

CHELSEA
There's no problem. I just...want to talk to you. I, um...I was thinking, it occurred to me that maybe you and I should have the kind of relationship we're supposed to have.

NORMAN
What kind of relationship is that?

CHELSEA
Well, you know, like a father and a daughter.

NORMAN
Oh. Just in the nick of time, huh?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
NORMAN (CONT'D)
Worried about the will, are you?
I'm leaving everything to you,
except what I'm taking with me.

CHELSEA
Oh, stop it. I don't want anything.
It just seems like you and I have
been mad at each other for too long.

NORMAN
Oh? I didn't know we were mad,
I thought we just didn't like
each other.

This hits Chelsea hard enough. She wades a little
deeper, trying to regroup.

CHELSEA
I want to be your friend.

NORMAN
(hit himself)
Oh. Does this mean you might come
around more often? It would mean
a lot to your mother.

CHELSEA
I'll come around more often.

Norman nods. Chelsea nods. They both work at not looking *
at each other.

NORMAN
Well ...

CHELSEA
Yep. Oh. Yeah. By the way, I
got married in Brussels.

NORMAN
You did? In Brussels? Ah ha.

CHELSEA
Yes. It's the best thing that's
ever happened to me. He makes me
very happy.

NORMAN
Well, good. Does he speak English?

CHELSEA
Tsk. I married Bill.
NORMAN
Bill? Oh, Bill! Ah.
(he thinks about it, smiles at her)
Well. I'm glad, Chelsea. That's um ... San Fantastastic.

CHELSEA
(surprised)
What?

NORMAN
Billy going to live with you?

CHELSEA
Yes.

NORMAN
Good. Isn't that something? Good for you.

He smiles at her. A moment passes.

NORMAN
Oh, you know, I've got him doing a back flip. Just like a pro.

CHELSEA
Oh, yeah? That's great.

NORMAN
You want me to get him down here and show you?

CHELSEA
Um, no thanks, not right now.

NORMAN
Okay. Oh, that's right, you never were a great back-flipper, were you?

CHELSEA
No, I was never a great one. I was too fat, remember?

NORMAN
(laughing)
Ha, ha, yes I do remember that now. Oh, well, I guess it's probably easier for a boy anyway.

CHELSEA
I beg your pardon? Would you like to see me do a back flip?

(continued)
Chelsea starts heading out toward the float.

What?

CHELSEA
I'm going to do a goddam back flip.

Now she swims. Norman watches confused.

NORMAN
Chelsea, you don't have to ...

CHELSEA
(interrupting)
I want to do it. It's part of my growing-up process. Come on, coach, let's go.

She swims to the raft. Norman turns the boat and rows after her.

EXT. FLOAT - DAY

Chelsea stands on the diving board, back to the water, looking intense, and scared. Norman sits in the boat near her.

NORMAN
Be sure to go up and not just back. Up and back.

Chelsea looks at him, a little girl.

CHELSEA
I'm scared.

NORMAN
There's nothing to be scared of. The back flip is one of the easiest dives of all.
CHELSEA
But I'm scared anyway.

NORMAN
Then don't do it. It doesn't matter if you don't do the stupid dive. It's not important.

Chelsea stares at him, hearing the message she would have liked to hear 30 years ago. She half smiles, and then throws herself up and back and does a flip. Not perfect, but passable. After a moment, she surfaces, amazed at herself. Norman stands in the boat and claps. He shouts at the house.

NORMAN
She did it! Chelsea did a back flip!

EXT. PORCH
Ethel and Billy stand clapping.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY
Chelsea, Ethel and Billy stand by Chelsea's car.

CHELSEA
You could come out, you know. Instead of going to Florida.

ETHEL
Well, we'll discuss it. If I can get Norman to accept the fact that Los Angeles is part of the United States, it shouldn't be too much trouble.

They turn as Norman marches out carrying a fish pole.

ETHEL (continuing)
Norman, what are you doing now?

(CONTINUED)
NORMAN
(handling the pole to Billy)
Here, cool breeze. In case you want to take a break from cruising.

BILLY
Wow. Thank you, Captain.

ETHEL
Norman, he can't take that stupid thing on the plane.

CHELSEA
Yes, he can.

Norman looks at Chelsea gratefully.

NORMAN
I've got something for you, too.

He fishes in his pocket and pulls out a medal, which he hangs around Chelsea's neck.

NORMAN
(continuing)
You know what this is?

CHELSEA
Yes.

NORMAN
University of Pennsylvania diving finals -- 1921. Second place.

CHELSEA
Thank you. 
(she's touched)
Now I can retire.

NORMAN
Show it to your new husband. Maybe he'll give us a discount on dental work.

Billy shakes Norman's hand.

BILLY
I'll see ya, ya nitwit.

NORMAN
Okay.

Billy hugs him, which is a shock to Norman, but he hugs him, too. Billy steps to Ethel.

BILLY
Well, goodbye, woman.

They embrace.

ETHEL
Goodbye, dear.

Chelsea stands by Norman.

(CONTINUED)
CHELSEA
Um. 'Bye. Norman. Dad.
With a what-the-hell, Norman grabs and hugs her, too.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Norman watches as Ethel packs up the Parchisi game.

NORMAN
What are you, quitting? Let's play 'Loser drives home'.

ETHEL
Tsk. You owe me four million dollars.

NORMAN
Double or nothing.

She smiles, shakes her head. She puts the board back down and sits across from Norman. They look like two gunfighters ready to square off.

EXT. SHORE - DAY
Norman watches Charlie haul up the last section of dock.

CHARLIE
Unnh. Well. Another summer, huh, Norman?

NORMAN
Yep. Now wait a minute. You better get that section all the way up the bank.

Charlie shakes his head and strains to lift the thing higher. Norman waves him on.

NORMAN
(continuing)
That's it, come on. I don't want to get back here next year and find out my damn dock has floated away. That's a good boy.
Charlie wipes his brow. He climbs into his boat.

CHARLIE
We'll see you next summer, Norman.

NORMAN
Okay, Charlie. You take care of yourself.

CHARLIE
You bet.

He starts the motor and roars off. Norman stands watching Charlie's boat skim across the water.

ETHEL (O.S.)
Norman. Come on, dear.

He turns and walks up the bank.

EXT. PORCH - Day

Ethel is on the porch. There are two boxes beside her.

ETHEL
Let's get these last boxes to the car and be gone.

NORMAN
Oh, for God's sake.

He starts to lift one box, she takes the other.

ETHEL
It's not too heavy, is it?

NORMAN
Of course it's not too heavy. Good God, this is heavy! (he takes a few steps) You're trying to kill me.

ETHEL
I've thought about it. Put it down if it's too much trouble.

NORMAN
What the hell do you have in here?

ETHEL
My mother's china. Put it down, Norman.

(CONTINUED)
185 CONTINUED:

NORMAN
Your mother never liked me.

He's clearly in pain.

ETHEL
Of course she did. Put the box down. Dammit!

He drops the box with a terrible crash. Norman falls down after it. Ethel drops her box and rushes to help him. He lies clutching himself as she holds him to her.

ETHEL
(continuing)
Oh, my God. Norman! Where's your medicine? Oh God!

She rushes to the back of the house. Norman lies still, gasping in pain. Ethel runs back. She wrestles with the medicine bottle.

ETHEL
(continuing)
Whoever designed these caps is a madman.

At last she has it open. She cradles Norman's head.

ETHEL
(continuing)
Here. Put this under your tongue.

NORMAN
What is it?

ETHEL
Nitroglycerin. Put it under your tongue.

NORMAN
You must be mad. I'll blow up.

ETHEL
Do it, dammit.

He does. She watches as he closes his eyes.

ETHEL
(continuing)
Dear God, don't take him now. You don't want him he's a poop. (MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ETHEL (CONT'D)

Norman? Norman!

NORMAN
(his eyes closed)
Maybe you should call a doctor.
We can afford it.

ETHEL
(jumping up)
Oh, yes. I should have done that.
Dear God.

She rushes onto the porch and into the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The furniture is all stacked and covered again. Ethel finds the telephone and dials "0".

ETHEL
Hello, hello. Dear God.

She steps back out the door, carrying the phone.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

ETHEL
How are you feeling, Norman?

NORMAN
Oh, pretty good. How are you?

ETHEL
How's the pain, dammit?

NORMAN
Pretty good, as pain goes.

ETHEL
Is the medicine doing anything?

NORMAN
No.

ETHEL
Why don't they answer the phone?

NORMAN
Who'd you call?

ETHEL
The stupid operator. Hello? Hello, hello, hello, hello, hello, hello. Whatever is the matter with her?

(CONTINUED)
NORMAN
She's slow.

ETHEL
How do you feel now?

NORMAN
I don't know.

ETHEL
Are you planning to die? Is that what you're up to? Well, while I'm waiting for this moron to answer the phone, let me say something to you, Norman Thayer, Junior. I would rather you didn't.

NORMAN
Really?

ETHEL
Yes! This stupid, stupid woman. I'm going to have to call the hospital directly.

(she heads back to the door, muttering)
The phone book, where's the phone book?

NORMAN
Ethel?

'ETHEL
(fearing the worst)
Yes. What is it?

NORMAN
Come here.

Ethel drops the phone, rushes to him, kneels by him.

ETHEL
Oh, God. Yes, Norman, my darling.

NORMAN
Ethel.

ETHEL
Yes. I'm here, Norman.

Ethel.

(CONTINUED)
ETHEL
Yes, yes, yes.

NORMAN
Ethel.

ETHEL
What is it?

NORMAN
Ethel. I think I'm feeling all right now.

ETHEL
Oh, God.
(she clutches him to her)
Are you serious?

NORMAN
My heart stopped hurting. Maybe I'm dead.

ETHEL
Oh, Norman. Oh, thank God. I love you so much.

NORMAN
Now my heart's starting to hurt again. Sorry about you mother's china.

ETHEL
Why did you strain yourself? You know better.
NORMAN
I was showing off. Trying to
turn you on.

ETHEL
Well, you succeeded. There's no
need for you to try that sort of
ingain.

NORMAN
Good.

She holds him and they don't move for a long time.
She gazes out at the lake.

ON THE LAKE

The lake looks more golden than ever, with dabs of
yellow and red reflecting in the water.

ETHEL (O.S.)
Norman. This is the first time
I've really felt we're going to
die.

NORMAN (O.S.)
I've known it all along.

ON NORMAN AND ETHEL

ETHEL
When I looked at you lying on
the ground I could actually see
you dead. I could see you in
your blue suit and a white
starched shirt, lying in Thomas'
Funeral Parlor on Bradshaw Street.

NORMAN
How did I look?

ETHEL
Not good, Norman. You've been
talking about dying ever since
I met you. But today was the
first time I've really felt it.

NORMAN
How does it feel?

(CONTINUED)
ETHEL
It feels... Odd. Cold, I guess.
But not that bad, really. Almost
comforting, not so frightening,
not such a bad place to go. I
don't know.

She looks at him, looks away. He reaches up and pulls
her head to him. She smiles at him, leans against
him. After a moment he pulls himself up.

NORMAN
Well? Don't you want to say
goodbye to the lake?

ETHEL
Are you sure you're strong enough?

NORMAN
I think so. If I fall over face
first in the water, you'll know
I wasn't.

ETHEL
Well, be careful, for God's sake.
I'm only good for one near miss
a day.

He steps to her, takes her in his arms.

NORMAN
Hello, there.

ETHEL
Hi.

NORMAN
Want to dance? Or would you
rather just suck face?

ETHEL
You really are a case, you know.

They move down to the water's edge. The LOONS CALL.

ETHEL
(continuing)
Norman! The loons! They've come
'round to say goodbye.

NORMAN
How nice.
ON THE LAKE

The two loons light on the water for a moment, then rise again and soar away.

ON NORMAN AND ETHEL

They watch the loons.

ETHYL
Just the two of them now. Little baby's all grown up and moved to Los Angeles or somewhere.

NORMAN
Yes.

ETHYL
Hello, Golden Pond. We've come to say goodbye.

They stare out at the lake. The CAMERA DRAWS BACK and we SEE Norman and Ethel, like the last summer flowers on the shore. Solitary figures. Not sad, but peaceful and hopeful and proud. The CAMERA DRAWS BACK, AWAY, ABOVE them. They become smaller and smaller, but still visible and bright on the golden pond.

FADE OUT.

- THE END -