

PUSHING DAISIES

“PIE-LETTE”

Written By

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ACT ONE

DIRT

CAMERA MOVES up through the earth finding the gnarled tips of a perennial weed. We RISE out of the soil REVEALING a beautiful blooming daisy. In fact, it's an entire...

EXT. FIELD OF DAISIES - DAY - FLASHBACK

CAMERA FLIES OVER the "Welcome to Couer d'Couers" sign at the field's edge to FIND a bright, care-free boy of about 10 (YOUNG NED) racing through the flowers sending petals flying as he chases his dog DIGBY, an adorable yellow lab as bright and care-free as Young Ned. Our OMNISCIENT NARRATOR (imagine Patrick Stewart reading a bedtime story) begins:

NARRATOR

At this very moment in the town of Couer d'Couers, Young Ned was 9 years, 27 weeks, 6 days, and 3 minutes old.

Young Ned is only a few feet behind his dog, 3 sets of legs speeding through the brush. He reaches out trying to make contact, but Digby is just out of touch. Closer... closer... The brush gives way to a clearing. Closer... closer, still...

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

His dog Digby was 3 years, 2 weeks, 6 days, 5 hours and 9 minutes old.

WHAM. Out of nowhere, Digby is HIT BY A PASSING SEMI-TRUCK. A BLUR OF BIG RIG obscures the impact. Ned stops, horrified.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And not a minute older.

TIME SLOWS TO A CRAWL. FUR SAILS THROUGH THE AIR, as if Digby was taking flight by his own propulsion. ALL SOUND DROPS OUT except for the RAPID, RHYTHMIC POUNDING of Ned's HEART and the EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION of his LUNGS.

He approaches the unmoving body of his dead dog Digby.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

This was the moment Young Ned realized he wasn't like the other children. Nor was he like anyone else for that matter.

Ned kneels down beside Digby and as he reaches out to stroke the dog's matted fur... CAMERA JUMP CUTS TO:

AN EXTREME-EXTREME-EXTREME-EXTREME CLOSE UP OF NED'S FINGER

The ridges of his fingertip look like circular troughs. As Ned touches his dog we see a small STATIC POP OF ELECTRICITY between his finger and Digby's fur.

CAMERA JUMPS WIDE

TIME RESUMES TO NORMAL as Digby inexplicably scrambles to his feet with a happy dog-smile on his face and runs off into the field of daisies.

NARRATOR

Young Ned could touch dead things and bring them back to life.

Young Ned watches slack-jawed and furrow-browed as Digby disappears over the horizon. He stares at his finger, not sure exactly what just happened.

CLOSE ON - A FLY

It lands on a cupboard door and darts to and fro until SMACK. A FLY SWATTER ends its life in one abrupt movement. We are...

INT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - KITCHEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

The dead fly lands on the counter top. Young Ned's MOTHER sets the fly swatter down and returns to lovingly preparing a pie, pressing dough into the pie plate.

NARRATOR

It was a gift given to him, but not by anyone in particular. There was no box, no instructions, no manufacturer's warranty. It just was.

Young Ned peers over the edge of the counter, reaching in and touching the dead fly. There's a small ELECTRIC POP then the fly flies up and out the open window.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The terms of use weren't immediately clear nor were they of immediate concern.

CAMERA FOLLOWS THE FLY and Young Ned's gaze to:

EXT. NEIGHBOR GIRL'S HOME - DAY - FLASHBACK

A girl named CHUCK, pig-tails et al, plays in the back yard.

NARRATOR

Young Ned was in love.

She's making a small village out of mounds of dirt and cardboard boxes with Play-Doh people and toy cars as her FATHER waters the lawn in the background.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Her name was Chuck. At this very moment, she was 8 years, 42 weeks, 3 hours and 2 minutes old.

She squeezes a little people head out of the Play-Doh Fun Factory and places it on the body she's already constructed.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Young Ned did not think of her as being born or hatched or conceived in any way. Chuck came ready made from the Play-Doh Fun Factory of Life.

She makes the final few touches on her village and it COMES TO LIFE THROUGH THE MAGIC OF IMAGINATION.

CHUCK'S P.O.V. - IMAGINATION REALIZED

Large as life, TOY CARS drive through tiny streets, and TOY PEOPLE mill about on tiny sidewalks.

BOOM. BOOM. BOOM. BOOM. The ground SHAKES. The TOY PEOPLE react to the strangeness... then a GIANT REPTILIAN LEG STOMPS into a cardboard building, crushing it.

CAMERA REVEALS A GIANT PIG-TAILED GODZILLA stomping through the village, sparing no one as PLAY-DOH PEOPLE SCRAMBLE. And just when we think a lone TOM CRUISE-ESQUE PLAY-DOH PERSON has escaped... SQUISH. A GIANT RODAN-ESQUE WINGED DINOSAUR looking as much like Ned as the Godzilla looks like Chuck (wearing the same clothes, etc.) stomps him good.

SMASH BACK TO REALITY

Chuck and Ned are stomping through the remains of her small village, having an absolute ball and getting very dirty.

ON NED

His Mother is sweeping the dirt off of him with a broom.

INT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - KITCHEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Freshly broomed, Young Ned stares out the window as filthy Chuck is getting hosed off in the backyard by her Father.

NARRATOR

He was under Chuck's spell... until a blood vessel in his mother's brain burst, killing her instantly.

In the background, we see Ned's Mother cutting fruit one moment then abruptly dropping OUT OF FRAME.

INT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - KITCHEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Young Ned turns away from the window to find his Mother dead on the linoleum floor next to the stove.

EXTREME CLOSE UP - MOTHER'S OPEN AND STARING EYE

Young Ned reaches into FRAME and touches his Mother's cheek just below the eye. A BOLT OF STATIC ELECTRICITY. Her constricted pupil dilates and Ned's Mother blinks.

DING. The timer goes off.

ON NED

He slowly backs away as his Mother stares at him. A CLOCK appears in the corner of the OUR SCREEN and begins counting down from ONE MINUTE. 59 seconds... 58... 57...

NARRATOR

Young Ned's random gift that was came with a caveat or two...

MOTHER

Did the timer go off?

Young Ned nods as his Mother gets to her feet, brushes off her apron and pulls on a pair of OVEN MITS.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

I must've slipped. Clumsy. Hmmm.

Ned sits at the kitchen table, unable to look away as his Mother pulls a pie out of the oven. 37 seconds... 36...

Ned's Mother places the pie in the kitchen window to cool.

ON CHUCK IN HER YARD

She kicks over the last standing building and runs inside as her Father continues to water the lawn in the background. The COUNTDOWN continues... 23... 22... 21...

ON NED AND HIS MOTHER

Ned watches as his Mother readies a second pie to go into the oven. 11... 10... 9... 8...

NARRATOR

It was a gift that not only gave... it took.

Ned's Mother twists the timer around, puts a new pie in the oven and as she closes the oven door. The CLOCK HAND has traveled almost full circle: 4... 3... 2...

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Young Ned discovered he could only bring the dead back to life for one minute without consequence. Any longer and someone else had to die.

INCLUDE THE KITCHEN WINDOW, through which we can SEE the Chuck's Father drop dead. Young Ned and his Mother don't immediately see this because their backs are to the window.

Ned's Mother cuts a piece of pie, puts it on a plate, and sets it down in front of Young Ned. He takes a bite. Heaven.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

It was the most delicious pie ever baked because it was the pie that was not meant to be.

His Mother's GASP draws his attention to the window, where they can see Chuck's Father dead in the yard.

INT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - NED'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Ned stares out the window at an AMBULANCE slowly pulling away from Chuck's house without its lights on, horrified.

NARRATOR

Young Ned realized somehow in the grand universal scheme of things, he had traded his mother's life for Chuck's father's.

NED'S MOTHER

Come on, big daddy, into bed.

NARRATOR

And he was horrified.

Ned's Mother pulls up the blankets so Ned can slide into bed. She draws the blanket up to his chest. (NOTE: Never touching him directly.)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

But there was one more thing about touching dead things that Young Ned didn't know. And he learned it in the most unfortunate way.

She moves to kiss Ned on his forehead.

EXTREME-EXTREME-EXTREME CLOSE ON - NED'S MOTHER'S LIPS

As they're about to make contact with his forehead, we see a STATIC POP OF ELECTRICITY.

GO WIDE

Ned's Mother drops dead right then and there.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

First touch, life. Second touch, dead again forever.

Ned kneels next to his dead mother, poking her cheek, waiting for her to open her eyes again. She doesn't.

EXT. NED'S HOME/CHUCK'S HOME - DAY - FLASHBACK

Young Ned sits on the porch, dressed all in black. He watches as Chuck's 30-something Grey Garden-esque aunts (VIVIAN and LILY) drag large steamer trunks into Chuck's house.

NARRATOR

Chuck was orphaned when her father died and fostered by her aunts Vivian and Lily. A renowned synchronized swimming duo, they shared matching personality disorders and a love for fine cheese.

INT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - NED'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

Young Ned watches as his FATHER fills a steamer trunk with all the belongings from his room, his Rodan costume,

NARRATOR

For all intents, Young Ned was orphaned, too. After a brief mourning period, his father panicked at raising a child alone. In the wake of that panic, Ned was hustled off to boarding school.

EXT. JEWISH/CHRISTIAN GRAVEYARD - LATE DAY - FLASHBACK

The JEWISH and CHRISTIAN GRAVEYARDS are two halves of the same cemetery. The Synagogue and Church on either end of the hillside graveyard. Two funerals are taking place, one on each side of the graveyard.

NARRATOR

At their respective parent's funerals...

EXT. GRAVEYARD - SUNSET- FLASHBACK

The peak of the cemetery hill. Young Ned and the Neighbor Girl ENTER FRAME from their respective side, silhouetted by the sun. She takes his hand and kisses him on the lips.

NARRATOR

...dizzy with grief, curiosity and hormones, Young Ned and a girl named Chuck had their first and only kiss.

MOMENTS LATER

Young Ned watches the Neighbor Girl head back down the hill. After a moment, Young Ned's dog Digby returns and bounds right up to Ned. He reaches out to pet Digby and the dog pulls away. Despite this, Digby wags his tail and smiles, keeping a safe distance. As Young Ned leads Digby down the other side of cemetery hill, CAMERA BEGINS TO PULL BACK...

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The effect of his Mother's death on Ned's psyche was twofold. He avoided social attachments, fearing what he'd do if someone else he loved died. Secondly, he became obsessed with pies.

The setting sun shining bright and round MORPHS INTO A GOLDEN BROWN PIE on a cloud-print tablecloth. We are:

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

It's 19 years, 34 weeks, 1 day and 59 minutes later...

INT. PIE HOLE - KITCHEN - DAY - PRESENT

We're on a cooling window, the shelves lined with the cloud-print tablecloth. On a pillow on the floor, is DIGBY.

NARRATOR

Young Ned has become "The Pie-Maker," owner and pastry chef of "The Pie Hole."

CAMERA FINDS a PAIR OF HANDS rolling and kneading dough.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The expression "pie in the sky" entered popular culture in 1911, referring to a dessert so sweet it can only be found in heaven. But...

EXT. PIE HOLE - DAY

A charming Parisian (in tone)/American (in style) googie-esque bakery. The front of the business is rounded and given the facade of a giant pie wedged into the ground floors of an ADJACENT APARTMENT BUILDING, complete with a pie-crust roof. A sign reads: The Pie Hole.

NARRATOR

...if you crave something before you die I recommend where the Pie Maker makes his pies.

INT. PIE HOLE - KITCHEN - DAY - PRESENT

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON the back of the Pie Maker as he works, lining the pie pan with dough, not yet showing his face.

NARRATOR

The peaches never brown. Berries ripe as the instant they were plucked. If they weren't so delicious and eaten so quickly, folks might notice the pies stayed fresh an unusually long time.

Dead, dying or bruised fruit is lovingly picked from a bowl and placed into the empty pie crust. Bruises fade and dead fruit spontaneously engorges with juice, ripe and tasty.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

That's because the Pie Maker personally touches the contents of every one.

A piece of NOW FRESH fruit spills out of the pie crust.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The dead fruit in his hands becomes ripe with ever-lasting flavor -- as long as he only touches it once.

The Pie-Maker's hand snatches it before it hits the floor and the fruit spontaneously shrivels and darkens.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

For this reason, the Pie-Maker is a vegetarian.

CAMERA FINALLY REVEALS NED'S FACE

Simultaneously handsome and awkward, about 30 years of age. Ned's lips are whistling but we don't hear a sound.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

He bakes alone, whistling quietly to himself, rarely pursing his lips tight enough to produce a sound.

Digby cocks his head, listening to what no one else can hear.

INT. PIE HOLE - DINING AREA - DAY

Rich and textured, like the inside of a pie. Tufted booths and a rounded counter bar (with spinning stools) that curves parallel to the pie facade exterior. Right out of the 40's. The place is dappled with customers and a single WAITRESS. CAMERA FINDS OLIVE, a 20-something waitress waiting on regular customer EMERSON, a late 30's/early 40's African-American man in a seersucker suit.

OLIVE

Every day I come in, I pick a pie and concentrate all my love on that pie. If I love it, then someone else will love it. And you know what? By the end of the day I've sold more of those pies than any other pie in the bakery.

EMERSON

Yeah? What pie do you love today?

CAMERA PUSHES IN:

OLIVE

Rhubarb.

EMERSON

I'll stick with three plum. Ala mode.

NARRATOR

Emerson Cod, soon to be enjoying a slice of three plum pie ala mode, was the sole keeper of the Pie Maker's secret.

EXT. CITY - ROOFTOP - FLASHBACK

EMERSON chases a RUNNING MAN across a rooftop.

NARRATOR

And how he came to be the sole keeper of the Pie Maker's secret...

The Running Man jumps to make it to the next building and misses, plunging 10 stories to his death. Emerson looks over the ledge to see the Running Man HIT a trash bin with a BONE-CRUNCHING WHAM that most definitely killed the man. But he BOUNCES into a SLIGHTLY YOUNGER NED who happened to be emptying the trash at the time.

CAMERA JUMPS TO AN EXTREME-EXTREME-EXTREME CLOSE UP of the impact and we SEE the POP OF STATIC ELECTRICITY.

CAMERA POPS WIDE as the Dead Running Man OPENS HIS EYES and takes off again. Slightly Younger Ned gives chase.

Emerson watches as Slightly Younger Ned tackles the Running Man and he goes limp.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

After the runaway corpse, Emerson Cod, a Private Investigator, proposed a partnership with the Pie Maker.

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON Emerson staring, slack-jawed.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Murders are much easier to solve when you can ask the victim who killed them.

RESUME - PIE HOLE - DAY

Ned watches Emerson through the porthole window in the kitchen door. Emerson looks up from his pie. Their eyes connect.

NARRATOR

Since the bakery was on the verge of financial ruin, the Pie Maker agreed so he could keep his Pie Hole open.

INT. PIE HOLE - NIGHT

It's after hours and the bakery is closed. Blinds are drawn over the windows and the lights are dim. As CAMERA FINDS Ned and Emerson sitting at a booth speaking in hushed tones. Ned, forever the handsome, articulate recluse, fidgets a bit, uncomfortable in his own skin. Digby sits nearby listening to them MID-CONVERSATION:

NED

I asked you not to use the word "zombie." It's disrespectful. Stumbling around, squawking for brains. That's not how they do. And "undead?" Nobody wants to be un-anything. Why begin a statement with a negative? It's like saying "I don't disagree." Just say you agree.

EMERSON

Are you comfortable with "living dead?"

Ned shakes his head for a long beat.

NED

You're either living or you're dead. When you're living, you're alive. When you're dead, that's what you are. And when you're dead and then you're not, you're alive again. Can't we say "alive again?" Doesn't that sound nice?

EMERSON

Sounds like you're a narcoleptic.

NED

I suffer from sudden and uncontrollable attacks of deep sleep?

EMERSON

What's the other one?

NED

Necrophiliac.

EMERSON

Words that sound alike get mixed up in my head. Used to think masturbation meant chewing your food. Now are you interested in this opportunity or not?
(off his hesitation)

A dog is involved.

NED

(glances at Digby)
What kinda dog?

EMERSON

Gonna be a dead dog. A dead dog named Cantaloupe. Putting her down. Allegedly killed her owner.

NED

When you say allegedly --

EMERSON

Cantaloupe was framed. Someone put part of the victim in her mouth.

NED

Huh.

EMERSON

Docile as a kitten, says the family.

Emerson holds up a picture of the dog, a chow.

NED

Despite it being a chow -- the breed most likely to turn on its owner.

EMERSON

That's racial profiling. Looky here, if the dog's innocent, it's murder. If it's murder, then there's a reward.

AN OIL PAINTING - LEONARD GASWINT AND HIS DOG, CANTALOUPE

NARRATOR

The facts were these: one Leonard Gaswint, 39 years, 42 weeks, 5 days, 3 hours and 26 minutes old, was found mauled to death in a parking garage.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A chow named Cantaloupe cleans himself next to a parked car which partially obscures Leonard Gaswint's corpse.

NARRATOR

His dog Cantaloupe was the soul witness and only suspect in the murder.

A REWARD SIGN

There's a business photo of Leonard Gaswint with text that reads: "REWARD \$20,000."

NARRATOR

Convinced of her innocence, the Gaswint family offered a significant reward to find the real killer.

INT. POUND - DAY

Cantaloupe sits alone in her cell, awaiting execution.

INT. COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE - DAY

Ned and Emerson stand outside the morgue with the CORONER, who is filling out a series of forms on a clip board. TWO COUNTY SHERIFFS stand nearby, looking official.

CORONER

You the dog expert?

NED

Uh-huh.

CORONER

Already had a dog expert.

NED

I'm the, uh... other one.

INT. COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE - MORGUE - DAY

Emerson and Ned approach a sheet-covered body on a slab. Ned peeks under the sheet and Emerson takes a step back.

EMERSON

How's he look?

NED

He looks fine, but my threshold is pretty high so you have to take what I say with a grain of salt.

Emerson takes a peek under the sheet himself.

EMERSON

It's not a grain of salt. It's one of those blocks they give cows to lick. The man's tore up.

NED

He can't help the way he is.

EMERSON

It doesn't make it any less traumatic.

NED

For who?

EMERSON

Me. And I'm sure him. But mainly me. I'm fine when they don't move. It's when they move that I have a problem.

NED

Would it help if I turned off the light?

EMERSON

Yes.

Ned turns off a metal floor lamp next to the drawer, casting a shadow over the body and obscuring it. Emerson pulls back the sheet and reacts to the OFF-CAMERA corpse, mortified.

EMERSON (CONT'D)

I'm gonna wait outside.

Ned watches as Emerson quickly disappears out the door. As Ned's about to touch dead Leonard Gaswint's hand... CAMERA JUMPS TO AN EXTREME-EXTREME-EXTREME CLOSE UP and we see the FAMILIAR POP OF ELECTRICITY. Ned sets the alarm on his watch.

A CLOCK appears in the corner of the SCREEN and begins counting down from ONE MINUTE. 59 seconds... 58... 57... Leonard Gaswint sits upright into the light revealing he's been MAULED. He couldn't be nicer.

LEONARD GASWINT

Hello.

NED

Hi. Sorry to disturb you, Mr. Gaswint.
Or Leonard. Do you prefer --

LEONARD GASWINT

Leo.

NED

Leo. Your, um, current condition...

Ned indicates the missing part of Gaswint's face. The clock continues to count down: 43... 42... 41...

LEONARD GASWINT

Do I have something right here?

NED

No. There's nothing right there.

LEONARD GASWINT

Damn dog.

NED

Cantaloupe?

LEONARD GASWINT

No, no. Cantaloupe's docile as a kitten.
It was that rottweiler. My secretary sicked her dog on me. She's been upset since last year's Christmas party. You know, it's a funny story...

Before Gaswint can start, Ned touches him and life slips from his body instantly. He stops his watch at 27 seconds.

INT. COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE - DAY

The Coroner and the Two Sheriff Deputies stand outside, as before, alone with Emerson. Ned steps out of the morgue.

CORONER

Was it the chow?

NED

The Secretary. With a rottweiler.

INT. POUND - DAY - SLOW MOTION

Cantaloupe bounds out of her kennel and down the aisle, her fellow kenneled dogs barking M.O.S. in support.

EXT. SECRETARY'S BROWNSTONE

SECRETARY and the ROTTWEILLER are escorted out of her apartment building, surrounded by MEDIA and POLICE. CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL the image is on TV. We are --

INT. OLIVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CAMERA CONTINUES PULLING BACK TO REVEAL Olive sitting in a over-stuffed lounge chair, Digby squeezed in next to her, his head on her lap. They're watching the evening news.

NEWSCASTER

An anonymous tip led to solving the murder of a Michigan entrepreneur believed to have been fatally mauled by a family pet. The truth, however...

KNOCK-KNOCK. Someone's at the door.

INT. HALL OUTSIDE OLIVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Olive opens the door to find Ned standing on her stoop. Digby pokes his head out from around the lounge chair. The NEWSCASTER continues to prattle on in the background.

OLIVE

How was your convention?

She draws close to him, flirtatious and almost slightly desperate for him to seduce her. He doesn't engage.

NED

Conventional. How was Digby?

OLIVE

Neurotic. He's a very needy dog.

(MORE)

OLIVE (CONT'D)

Do you pet him? Maybe if you pet him once in a while he wouldn't be so neurotic.

INT. OLIVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ned steps inside and around Olive.

NED

I pet him. I'm allergic so I can't actually touch him. But I pet him.

OLIVE

With a stick? How do you pet him?

NED

A stick is involved, but it's more like a handle to a... petting device.

OLIVE

The dog needs to be touched. We all need to be touched.

NED

You touch him. Other people touch him.

OLIVE

He's your dog. Do you touch anything?

NED

Of course I... I touch lots of things.

OLIVE

With affection?

She reaches out and touches his shoulder, holding her hand there an uncomfortable beat. Ned innocently averts his eyes.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

When was the last time someone touched you with affection?

NED

I get touched.

She holds his gaze for another uncomfortable moment. He clears his throat, she finally pulls back her hand.

NED (CONT'D)

Can I get Digby's leash?

(to Digby)

You don't mind that I don't touch you, do you?

Digby smiles and wags his tail, happy to see Ned.

NARRATOR

And then came the event that changed everything.

Ned's attention is drawn away from Digby and to the television news broadcast. A NEWSCASTER reports:

NEWSCASTER

In other news, the body of a young woman allegedly murdered aboard a cruise ship was recovered from the sea. Her identity is being held pending notification of...

Ned watches on the television as an image of a LIMP, LIFELESS WOMAN is hauled out of the water by a system of pulleys on the deck of the cruise ship.

NARRATOR

The Pie-Maker listened intently to the news, unaware that he stopped breathing. He was haunted by the nameless woman who met her end on the high seas.

Olive approaches with Digby's leash in hand.

OLIVE

Here's your leash.

NARRATOR

But he didn't know why.

OFF Ned, totally rapt, ignoring Olive...

INT. PIE HOLE - KITCHEN - DAY

Ned has one eye on the pies he's making and the other on the small television set in the corner of his kitchen.

NEWSCASTER

Her name still withheld, very little is known of the victim, who was reportedly traveling alone when ...

Ned gives Digby a scratch with the petting device.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

...murdered aboard a passenger ship returning from a tropical cruise.

Ned looks up from the television to see Emerson through the porthole window in the kitchen door -- he's seated at a booth in the restaurant. Their eyes connect.

INT. PIE HOLE - DINING AREA - NIGHT

It's after hours and the bakery is closed. Blinds are drawn over the windows and the lights are dim.

EMERSON

Been watching the news?

NED

Doesn't seem like much is going on in the world besides a dead girl on a boat.

EMERSON

A lot's going on with that dead girl.

NED

That so?

EMERSON

Mmm-hmm. 100,000 dollars of that's so. Interested in a conversation?

NED

I could be persuaded.

EMERSON

You better be persuaded quick cause dead girl's about to go in the ground.

NED

They just pulled her out of the water.

EMERSON

Jewish. Christians leave 'em laying around. Jews gotta get 'em buried.

NED

Where we going?

EMERSON

Coeur d'Coeurs. Ever been there?

NED

I grew up there. Sort of.

(lost, then:)

So this dead Jewish girl from Coeur d'Coeurs. She have a name?

EMERSON

Charlotte Charles.

POW. He might as well have punched Ned in the stomach.

A SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS FROM NED'S P.O.V.:

-- Young Chuck stomping through the dirt city in her yard.

-- Young Chuck and Young Ned at Halloween. She's Godzilla, he's Rodan, they hold their candy bags out for goodies.

-- Young Chuck and Young Ned kissing in the graveyard.

RESUME - PIE HOLE - EMERSON AND NED, AS BEFORE

NED

Chuck?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. TRAIN CAR - DAY

Ned and Emerson sit opposite each other next to a window.

EMERSON

You know this girl?

NED

I know of her.

EMERSON

Know of her in the biblical sense?

NED

Haven't thought of her since I was 10.

EMERSON

Think of her a lot when you were 10?

NED

Don't remember anything when I was 10.

NARRATOR

The Pie-Maker remembers everything.

EXT. OCEAN - UNDER WATER - FLASHBACK

CAMERA IS ANGLED UP at the undulating surface of the water. SPWOOSH. A BODY breaks the surface in a cloud of bubbles.

NARRATOR

The facts were these... Charlotte Charles, 28 years, 24 weeks, 3 days, 11 hours, and 51 minutes old, was found floating in the ocean moments after her body was discarded there.

The silhouette of dead Charlotte Charles floats in the surf.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Discarded by whom seemed to be a question only Charlotte Charles could answer.

CLOSE ON - COFFIN

A simple, pine casket. The lid is set in place over Charlotte's beautiful, lifeless body. We don't see her face.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Jewish law prescribes burial in a plain white shroud to demonstrate equality for all. No bling. For this reason...

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

The FUNERAL DIRECTOR, a chain-smoking obese man, stands outside the Home as MOURNERS file inside.

NARRATOR

...the nondenominational Funeral Director preferred non-Jewish services.

INSIDE LAVISH COFFINS - 3 QUICK POPS

-- The Funeral Director opens the coffin lid and pulls the NECKLACE off of a DEAD WOMAN'S neck.

-- ...pulls the WATCH off a DEAD MAN'S wrist.

-- ...pulls the SIZEABLE RING off a DEAD WOMAN'S finger.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

The Funeral Director continues to watch MOURNERS file in. CAMERA FINDS Ned and Emerson approaching in the throng of mourners. Emerson begrudgingly slips the Funeral Director some cash, he quickly pockets it and opens the door.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - VIEWING ROOM - DAY

The simple, pine casket in the middle of the room surrounded by much fancier coffins. The afternoon sun shines through a window -- a light on the pine casket. Emerson and Ned ENTER.

NED

Um, I just wanna... I wanna... Can't I do this one alone? On account of, you know, the whole historical context?

EMERSON

Got something personal you wanna say?

NED

No. Okay, perhaps. I have nothing to gain but a small amount of closure.

EMERSON

Wha'cha got so open it needs closing?

NED

Just wanna say I'm sorry for something. One of those stupid things kids do... that they don't know they're doin'.

EMERSON

You ask who killed her first.

NED

Okay.

EMERSON
You only got one minute.

NED
I know.

EMERSON
60 seconds.

NED
I know.

Emerson walks out eyeing Ned, who closes the door behind him. Alone in the room, Ned braces his back on the door and takes a deep breath. Gulp. He slowly approaches the casket. Ned runs his hand over the pine frame then lifts the lid, bathing the body of Charlotte Charles, aka CHUCK, in sunlight.

NARRATOR
*Only Prince Charming could know how the
Pie-Maker felt upon looking at her.*

Even in death she's beautiful, a woman yet very much the little girl he once knew.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
*Great thought was taken as to where to
touch her. The hand too impersonal,
lips too forward, the cheek... the cheek.*

Ned's finger closes in on Chuck's alabaster cheek and CAMERA JUMPS TO AN EXTREME-EXTREME-EXTREME CLOSE UP of his slow caress. A CRACKLE OF ELECTRICITY between finger and cheek.

A CLOCK appears in the corner of the SCREEN and begins counting down from ONE MINUTE. 59...

Chuck opens her beautiful eyes and blinks. Ned can only stare back at her. The moment is as electric as his touch. He smiles at her, expecting a warm smile in return but instead... WHAM. She grabs him by the jacket and SLAMS HIS HEAD between the coffin and its lid. WHAM-WHAM-WHAM.

NED
OW.

Chuck scrambles out of her coffin as Ned stumbles back in a daze. She grabs a chair and raises it to hit him again.

NED (CONT'D)
Chuck! Wait.

CHUCK
Who are you?

NED

Do you remember the little boy who lived next door to you when your dad died?

CHUCK

Yeah...

NED

We used to destroy small villages together?

Chuck stares at him a moment... confused... then...

CHUCK

Ned? Hey. How's it going?

She finally puts the chair down. 46... 45... 44...

NED

Good. You look great. Um, do you know what's happening right now?

CHUCK

I had the strangest dream I was being strangled to death with a plastic sack.

NED

It wasn't a dream. You were... strangled to death with a plastic sack. That's probably an odd thing to hear but I wasn't quite sure how to sugar-coat it.

It takes a moment. She glances at her burial shroud, her coffin and finally the viewing room filled with caskets.

CHUCK

Oh. Oh. And I'm...? Neat. How...?

NED

You only have a minute. Less. About 38 seconds.

CHUCK

Huh. What can I do in 38 seconds?

NED

You can tell me who killed you so, um, you know, justice can be served.

CHUCK

That is so sweet. I just wanna put you in my pocket. But I don't know who killed me. I went to go get ice. I was filling my bucket and I dropped my room key in the ice maker and just as I was thinking that was dumb...

INT. CRUISE SHIP - CORRIDOR - MEMORY FLASH - VERY QUICK ACTION

CHUCK stands at the ice machine perplexed with a bucket of ice under her arm. FWIP - a bag is thrown violently over her head. She sucks air and it shrink-wraps to her face. The ice tumbles to the deck in the FOREGROUND as Chuck is murdered in the BACKGROUND.

RESUME - FUNERAL HOME - VIEWING ROOM - DAY

CHUCK
...then you touched my cheek.

BEEP-BEEP-BEEP: Ned's watch alarm goes off. 15 seconds left.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
Is my time up?

NED
I'm sorry.

And Chuck was just starting to get used to being alive again. It's weird and sad, but all she can think to say is:

CHUCK
Thanks for calling me Chuck. Nobody's called me Chuck since... you.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - OUTSIDE VIEWING ROOM - DAY

Emerson RAP-RAP-RAPS on the door.

EMERSON
I heard you beeping.

NED'S VOICE
Just a second.

RESUME - VIEWING ROOM - DAY

Chuck back in her coffin, Ned holding the lid. 11... 10... He stumbles on his words, trying to speak but overwhelmed:

NED
Before you...

CHUCK
Yeah?

NED
I wanted to say I'm...

Staring at her, Ned can't bring himself to tell her he inadvertently killed her father. So instead he says:

NED (CONT'D)

I used to... when I lived next door to you... I had a cru... I was in... You were my first kiss.

CHUCK

(smiles, touched)

You were my first kiss, too. Or did you think I'd been around?

NED

I didn't want to assume.

CHUCK

Wanna be my last kiss? First and last? Or is that weird?

NED

It's not weird. It's symmetrical.

5... 4... He looks at her and slowly moves in for the kiss. She closes her eyes. Their lips are about to connect when...

INT. FUNERAL HOME - BATHROOM - DAY

The Funeral Director scoots into the stall, pulling down his pants, sitting on the toilet and striking up a cigarette.

RESUME - VIEWING ROOM - DAY

Ned and Chuck, their lips hang in the air, centimeters apart.

NARRATOR

*His lips went as far as they would go.
He couldn't will them to go any further.*

Chuck opens her eyes. 2... 1... Minute's up.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - BATHROOM - DAY

A beat, then THUNK -- we HEAR The Funeral Director's lifeless head hit the stall door. Then the smoking cigarette drops.

RESUME - VIEWING ROOM - DAY

Ned slowly pulls away from Chuck, who lies there blinking. He let her live and someone else died, the weight of it all is clearly on Ned's face when he looks back at Chuck.

CHUCK

If you don't wanna kiss me, you don't...
It was just a... I thought it might...

NED

No. I want to, I do... I... What if you didn't have to... be dead?

CHUCK

Well, that would be preferable.

RAP-RAP-RAP, Emerson pounds on the door.

NED

Nobody can know. I have to think about how to get you outta here. Can you lay really still until I get back?

CHUCK

Uh, sure --

Before she can finish, he's closing the coffin lid.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - OUTSIDE VIEWING ROOM - DAY

Ned emerges from the viewing room, quickly shutting the door behind him. He's nervous and a little sweaty.

NED

She doesn't know. Didn't know.

EMERSON

Someone tossed her carcass off a boat and -- why are you sweating?

NED

I'm -- it's warm in there. What?

EMERSON

Your eye's twitching. When people aren't telling the truth, their eye twitches. Right there. Like yours did, just now.

NED

It's nerves. Aggravated by a stomach thing. Like acid reflux but in my eye. I think I'm gonna stay for the service.

EMERSON

S'that so?

NED

Feeling nostalgic. I'll catch a later train. Remember how to get to the station? It's down the, uh... Great.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - VIEWING ROOM - DAY

Ned runs in and STARTLES at an ELDERLY JEWISH MAN standing next to where Chuck's coffin was but no longer is. The Elderly Jewish Man STARTLES, as well.

NED

Where... uh, where's the deceased?

He points to an open back door.

ELDERLY JEWISH MAN
Gone to sleep with her fathers.

NED
What? I'm sor -- You sort of mumbled.

ELDERLY JEWISH MAN
She's getting buried.

NED
Presently?

OFF Ned's ohshit of it all...

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

The HEARSE is pulling away as Ned BURSTS out of the doors of the Funeral Home in PANICKED HOT PURSUIT.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Ned runs across the cemetery vaulting over headstones. He cuts into a road and falls into step behind the Hearse.

INT. HEARSE - THROUGH REAR WINDOW - DAY

Ned chases the hearse until he disappears in a cloud of dust.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Ned waves at the clouds of dust. He sees the Hearse continue down the driveway until it turns onto the street, a long line of cars pull out behind it.

Ned sees which direction the Hearse is heading and cuts across the Funeral Home yard, jumping over fences and hedges.

INT. COFFIN - DARK

The small amount of light coming through the joints of the coffin barely illuminates Chuck. She's beaming, awestruck.

NARRATOR

*Only Sleeping Beauty could know how
Chuck felt at this moment. With a brush
of his finger across her cheek, the
world became a place of magic.*

Chuck is suddenly JOSTLED.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

*And then the pallbearers pulled her out
of the hearse.*

INT. FUNERAL HOME - VIEWING ROOM - DAY

8 PALLBEARERS pick up the casket and carry it out the back door following the RABBI walking ahead of them. The Pallbearers are unevenly matched -- tall on one side, short on the other -- consequently there's some slippage.

INT. COFFIN - DARK

Chuck continues to be jostled about.

EXT. HILLSIDE GRAVEYARD/SYNAGOGUE - DAY

The Pallbearers stop and we HEAR Chuck slide up and bump her head on the inside of the coffin.

CHUCK'S MUFFLED VOICE

Ow.

Two Pallbearers react to the "Ow," glancing at one another over the top of the casket, each thinking it was the other.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Ned runs as fast as he can, spying the cemetery up ahead. He quickens his pace, running past the last of the mourners.

INT. COFFIN - DARK

Chuck lies there, waiting patiently.

NARRATOR

Lying in the dark, Chuck considered how she came to be lying in the dark.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY - FLASHBACK

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON YOUNGER VIVIAN AND YOUNGER LILY, their backs to us as they sit on the side of the pool facing very, very sparsely populated audience stands, mermaid fins cover their legs. A SIGN READS: "The Darling Mermaid Darlings."

NARRATOR

She considered the life that was with Aunts Lily and Vivian.

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

The yard is over-run with growth and the paint is peeling.

NARRATOR

No longer nursing at the teat of synchronized swimming stardom, their personality disorders blossomed into incapacitating social phobias.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - DAY

VIVIAN (early 50's) is cleaning a birdcage. LILY (early 50's dressed in a kimono and an eyepatch) shields her eyes.

NARRATOR

Which made it difficult for them to leave the house.

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL... they're surrounded by DOZENS AND DOZENS of CAGED BIRDS in a maze of STACKS AND STACKS of newspapers and magazines. Chuck is moving through the house opening curtains and windows and allowing fresh air to flow.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Which in turn made it difficult for Chuck to leave them.

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - BACKYARD - FLASHBACK

Chuck is wearing a bee keeper's outfit and pulling cells of honeycomb out of the hive.

NARRATOR

She never strayed far from home. She served the community by harvesting honey in her backyard...

ON A HOMELESS MAN

He's below a banner reading: "HONEY FOR THE HOMELESS: HONEY DRIVE." Chuck stands next to him holding a jar of honey.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - CHUCK'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

As Chuck sits in the window sill reading a novel, the empty shelves in the room FILL WITH BOOKS until the walls are "literally" covered.

NARRATOR

...and read about people she could never be, on adventures she would never have.

INT. "BOUTIQUE TRAVEL" TRAVEL BOUTIQUE - FLASHBACK

Chuck ENTERS glancing around at all the promise of adventure.

NARRATOR

Life was good enough until one day... it wasn't. Chuck wanted more.

CHUCK'S P.O.V. as she approaches the smiling MANAGER DIEDRE next to giant STANDEE advertising a TAHITIAN CRUISE.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The irony that her want for life got her killed was not lost.

EXT. HILLSIDE GRAVEYARD/SYNAGOGUE - NIGHT - THE PRESENT

CAMERA ROCKETS through the headstones until FINDING a large mound of earth next to a hole in the ground next to a headstone that reads "Charles Charles, Loving Father." The TWO GRAVEYARD WORKERS seen earlier are about to take their first shovels-full of dirt and sling them into Chuck's grave. Ned runs up to the Graveyard Workers, out of breath.

NED

Hey, I think somebody's truck's on fire.

They look over his shoulder to see their work truck CONSUMED IN FLAMES. The Workers GASP and run to put out the fire.

GRAVEYARD WORKERS

Holy -- Oh, jeez --

Ned makes sure they're not looking and jumps into the grave, pulling the lid off the coffin. Chuck sits up and smiles at the sight of her Prince Charming. He returns the gesture:

NED

Sorry I'm late.

INT. PIE HOLE - NIGHT

Chuck and Ned sit at a booth, Chuck wrapped in his coat. He watches her devour a piece of pie and a large glass of milk. Ned is still filthy from digging up her grave.

CHUCK

I can't even hug you? What if you need a hug? A hug can turn your day around.

NED

I'm not a fan of the hug.

CHUCK

Then you haven't been hugged properly. It's an emotional Heimlich. Someone puts their arms around you, gives a squeeze. All your fear and anxiety comes shooting out of your mouth in a big, wet wad and you can breath again.

NED

That's fine for someone else to do, if I'm choking. On something other than emotion. But you can't touch me.

CHUCK

So a kiss is out of the question.
(off his look)
I'm teasing. I'm teasing you.

NED

Lost my train of thought.

CHUCK

This is the most delicious pie I've ever tasted... you use a lot of butter?

He shakes his head, then touches a piece of fruit that's fallen out of the pie, it SHRIVELS before our very eyes.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Never had so much in common with a pie.
(back to point)
Why didn't you touch me twice? I haven't seen you in 20 years.

NED

I have a very good memory.

CHUCK

How long were you thinking about this?

NED

Like thinking-thinking? It wasn't pre-meditated. I wasn't lying in wait. More like I was musing on the idea. Not, you know, dwelling. But I wasn't seriously considering until the exact moment I did it. Or, um, didn't do it.

Chuck stares at him a moment -- this is all overwhelming.

CHUCK

I always wondered if you'd come back. I guess you came back when I needed you most. Well, that would've been before I was killed but this worked out.

NED

You understand you can't go back, right? You can't see your aunts.

CHUCK

They're shut-ins, it's not like they talk to anybody.

NED

People aren't used to this sort of thing. Issues of morality and "how come she's not dead anymore?" It'd be a disaster.

CHUCK

I suppose dying is as good excuse as any to start living my own life.

NED

At least you're not the only Jew whose ever risen from the dead.

CHUCK

I am if you asked a Jew.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned and Chuck stand in front of Digby, who wags his tail. It's clear from Ned's slouching that he's exhausted.

NED

This is Digby.

CHUCK

Wasn't your old dog named Digby?

NED

This is him.

CHUCK

Did he...? Did you...? And now he's...?

NED

Yes.

CHUCK

You seem to do that a lot. Why do you do that a lot?

NED

It's just the two of you. I don't mean to be a bad host but I'm sort of exhausted from chasing your coffin.

CHUCK

Oh, oh, of course.

Ned crosses to the couch and lays down, dirt and all.

NED

I'm gonna sleep here, you take the bed. I insist. My eyes are rolling back into my head. I'm laying down now.

But Ned is already sound asleep. He snores quietly

CHUCK

(softly)

I'd kiss you if it wouldn't kill me.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chuck sits up in bed, watching the TELEVISION NEWS. A candid "while living" PICTURE OF CHUCK's smiling face looms over NEWSCASTER #1'S shoulder as he recites the news:

NEWSCASTER #1

28 year-old "Lonely Tourist" Charlotte Charles was laid to rest earlier today --

NARRATOR

In a strange bed watching her own funeral on the evening news, Chuck was struck by the undignified nature of celebrity.

Every time she CLICKS the remote the NEWSCASTER changes but her haunting "while living" picture stays the same.

NEWSCASTER #3

A passenger heard a commotion just moments before the victim's body fell past his window --

NARRATOR

Maybe her death should be celebrated.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

If she hadn't died, she wouldn't have this chance to finally live.

NEWSCASTER #3

Boutique Travel travel boutique has offered a 100,000 dollar reward for the murderer of customer Charlotte Charles.

Chuck reacts, no one said anything about a reward.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned sleeps on the couch. CAMERA SLOWLY REVEALS Chuck sitting on the big wing-back chair opposite him.

CHUCK

Ned?

NED

Hmmm?

CHUCK

Would I be alive right now if I knew who killed me?

NED

Of course. Don't be silly -- That's a -- Something on the news about the reward?

CHUCK

You said you wanted to know who killed me so justice could be served. But I don't think justice was on the menu. Maybe as a side dish. But not an entree.

NED

It most certainly was an entree. It was a special of the d -- Can we drop the metaphor? I wouldn't have known you died if it weren't for the reward.

CHUCK

When were you gonna tell me?

NED

In the morning or when it came up. Which ever didn't come first.

CHUCK

100,000 dollars makes a lotta pie.

NED

50 thousand. I have a business partner.

CHUCK

It's a business?

NED

Not in the traditional sense.

CHUCK

You touch murder victims, ask who killed them, touch 'em again, they go back to being dead and you collect the reward?

NED

Yeah... that's it in a nutshell.

CHUCK

Are you after my reward? I'm not mad at ya, I just wanna know. I'll be mad at ya if you lie to me, though. Is that why you're keeping me around?

NED

I don't want your reward.

CHUCK

I'll be so mad if you're lying. You'll have me scratching the drapes.

NED

I'm not lying. Please don't attack the window treatments.

CHUCK

Okay. Go back to sleep.

Chuck stands and returns to the bedroom. Ned lays his head back down on the couch, unable to shut his eyes.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chuck in bed, facing the living room. She closes her eyes and reaches out and puts her palm to the wall.

CAMERA RISES TO AN OVERHEAD ANGLE FINDING NED

...on the other side. He reaches out and touches the wall. He and Chuck appear to be holding hands side by side.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Chuck opens her eyes to find a note taped to the lamp shade. It reads: "Please do NOT leave this apartment."

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALL - MORNING

Chuck, in long coat, scarf and sunglasses, turns and is surprised to see Olive standing outside her apartment surprised to see a woman coming out of Ned's.

CHUCK

I'm a friend of Ned's.

Olive sizes her up for a moment, then out of curiosity:

OLIVE

Does he touch you?

INT. PIE HOLE - MORNING

Emerson sits opposite Ned before the bakery is open.

EMERSON

How was the service?

NED

You know, just paid my respects.

EMERSON

Weren't looking to get paid?

NED

Hmmm?

EMERSON

Might see a dead woman speaking to you in confidence as an opportunity to make a whole lot of money by your lonesome. Regardless of prior arrangements.

NED

There's no opportunity here.

With that, Chuck slides into the booth next to Emerson.

CHUCK

Hi. Are you the business partner?

EMERSON

Yes, ma'am.

CHUCK

Charlotte Charles. Call me Chuck.

Emerson can only stare. Ned buries his face in his hands.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

I've been ruminating. And by ruminating I mean pondering, not chewing cud. How about we solve my murder and collect the reward. Wouldn't that be poetic? It's certainly an anecdote.

EMERSON

She's supposed to be in the ground.

NED

(to Chuck)

I thought you didn't want the reward.

CHUCK

No. I wanted you not to want the reward. 100,000 dollars is a lot of money. How about a 3 way split? 30/30/40? Only fair I get more. I did die for it.

NED

I'm not a detective. I make pies.

CHUCK

You can't just touch somebody's life and be done with it.

NED

Yes, I can. That's how I roll.

CHUCK

For someone who brings people back to life, you're awfully dead inside.

Ned reacts to that, stung.

EMERSON

I can do 30/30/40.

NED

She's supposed to be dead.

(to Chuck)

You're supposed to be dead. I think this is pushing your luck.

CHUCK

Yes, well, luck pushed me first.

OFF Chuck's determination...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. PIE HOLE - ROOF - DAY

Emerson and Ned on the googie-esque pie crust roof.

EMERSON

It's just so shockingly stupid I have a hard time believing you did it.

NED

You just agreed to be her partner.

EMERSON

I intend to profit from your stupidity. Are you in love with her? Cause it's that level of stupid.

NED

I'll admit to being confused. This is a very confusing time. Childhood issues. Diggin' in the dirt. S'all coming up.

EMERSON

We all have the childhood issues. I got a full subscription. Horror stories.

NED

I kinda killed her dad when I was 10.

EMERSON

Maybe not "horror" stories.

NED

She doesn't know. I wanted to make it better or different from what it was because what it was was her dead and I didn't want that to be my fault, too.

EMERSON

Who died instead, Captain Sav'a'ho?

Ned hands him the folded newspaper in his back pocket.

NED

It's a random proximity thing.

EMERSON

Bitch, I was in proximity.

NED

I wasn't thinking.

Emerson glances at the obituaries and a circled picture of the now deceased obese, chain-smoking Funeral Director.

EMERSON

I wondered where he went.

NED

Thank god he was an A-hole. He took stuff off of dead people and sold it on ebay. It's all in the obituary.

EMERSON

Oh, that's nice. Fact he was an A-hole make you feel better about what you did?

NED

Yes. Immensely. I would've felt horrible if it was... you, for example.

Emerson slaps Ned upside the head.

NED (CONT'D)

Ow. I'm not proud.

EMERSON

I like that you did it. Makes the worst thing I ever did seem insignificant.

NED

Listen to you all judgey-judge.

EMERSON

You don't know this woman. You don't know anything about her. Except she got herself killed.

As Ned takes that in...

NARRATOR

The Pie-Maker hadn't considered Chuck could be anything but the little girl next door he fell in love with.

CAMERA DRIFTS OVER THE LEDGE to find the side of the Pie Hole Bakery, moving through a window and into:

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

She only ever had charitable thoughts and her heart was filled with kindness.

INT. PIE HOLE - DAY

CAMERA FINDS Chuck sitting at the booth alone.

NARRATOR

She was who he wanted her to be and no one else... until proven otherwise.

Ned and Emerson slide into the booth next to Chuck.

CHUCK

I'm not who you think I am.

Emerson gives Ned a side-long glance.

EMERSON

Who does he think you are?

CHUCK

The small town girl who never saw the world only to have her first time out be her last. Well, that is who I am but I've been hoisted upon my own petard.

NED

What's a petard?

CHUCK

In my case, a petard is the wander-lust that compromised my judgment. That Tahitian getaway was a devil's bargain. And the devil... was Diedre.

INT. "BOUTIQUE TRAVEL" TRAVEL BOUTIQUE - FLASHBACK

Diedre Duffield holds the door open for Chuck as she ENTERS. Once inside, Diedre locks the door behind her.

NARRATOR

Diedre Duffield was the local manager of Boutique Travel travel boutique who lured Chuck with the promise of a high-seas adventure at no cost...

RESUME - PIE HOLE

CHUCK

All I had to do was pick up a package for Diedre.

NED

Are you a drug mule?

CHUCK

No. I'm a monkey mule. I met a man in a park and he gave me a brief case.

A BRIEF CASE - FLASHBACK

A stainless steel Halliburton molded in an alligator print. The case opens to REVEAL a pair of PLASTER MONKEY STATUES.

RESUME - PIE HOLE

NED

You died for a pair of plaster monkeys?

CHUCK

Diedre said their value was sentimental.

EMERSON

Those must be some emotional monkeys.

CHUCK

Yes, well, clearly he didn't want to part with them. You should ask Diedre about all of this. I'm very curious what she has to say.

INT. TRAVEL BOUTIQUE - DAY - FLASHBACK

CAMERA PULLS BACK FROM Diedre the Boutique Manager to REVEAL she's SPEAKING M.O.S. in front of SEVERAL REPORTERS.

NARRATOR

The facts were these: in a shrewd marketing ploy, the Boutique Travel travel boutique offered a 100,000 dollar reward in the death of Charlotte Charles.

EXT. BOUTIQUE TRAVEL TRAVEL BOUTIQUE - DAY - PRESENT

Emerson, Ned and Chuck pull up in front of the building. Only Ned and Emerson get out. Chuck slouches in the back.

NARRATOR

Boutique Travel travel boutique manager, Diedre Duffield, hoped it would catch a killer before a killer caught her.

INT. BOUTIQUE TRAVEL TRAVEL BOUTIQUE - DAY - PRESENT

Ned and Emerson open the door. They step inside and a bell CHIMES. The store appears to be empty, they look around.

EMERSON

Hello? Anybody home?

Ned looks around as Emerson goes into:

INT. BOUTIQUE TRAVEL TRAVEL BOUTIQUE - BACK ROOM

Emerson ENTERS and stops short at strangled-to-death Diedre sitting at the break table, plastic bag over her head.

NARRATOR

Although on-line sales increased by 23 percent, the reward fell short of achieving its desired goal.

NED

(as he ENTERS)

This is really no way to run a -- Oh.

MOMENTS LATER

Chuck is now staring at Diedre's dead body along with Ned and Emerson. Chuck carefully pulls the bag off her head.

CHUCK

Well, I guess I can't be too mad at her. Is that how they found me? That's humiliating. She looks horrible.

NED

I wonder how long she's been here.

EMERSON

Touch the poor bitch and ask her.

NED

(hesitates, to Chuck)

I'm sort of embarrassed to do it in front of you.

Chuck turns around and Ned touches Diedre. A familiar POP OF ELECTRICITY. Diedre opens her eyes, blinks and sits up. She glances around, more than a little confused -- wasn't she just murdered. She locks eyes with Chuck.

A CLOCK appears in the corner of the SCREEN: 59... 58...

DIEDRE

Hey, Charlotte.

CHUCK

Hey, Diedre.

DIEDRE

Now why'd I know you'd be the first person I'd see when I got to... is this... which one is this?

CHUCK

This isn't either. Or maybe it's both. But here's the deal: you get to talk for like a minute so we're gonna catch up. Then you're... not talking anymore.

DIEDRE

Does everybody get to do this? Cause, girl, we got to break it down.

CHUCK

Did you know I was gonna get killed?

DIEDRE

I thought it might be a possibility. And I'm real sorry about that. I probably should have said something.

(MORE)

DIEDRE (CONT'D)

But to be honest, and really? Why not at this point? If it was safe, I would've done it myself. This is fantastic. Being honest is fun.

Chuck is stunned. The clock continues: 34... 33... 32...

EMERSON

(sotto, to Chuck)

Ask who the dude was that killed you. And her. And what's with the monkeys.

DIEDRE

(re: Ned and Emerson)

Um, who are those people?

CHUCK

That's Emerson. I don't know him really. And this is Ned. He was my first kiss.

DIEDRE

Oh, now he's adorable. Look at this --

Diedre reaches over and pinches Ned's cheek and THUNK! Her head hits the table as she goes back to being dead INSTANTLY.

EMERSON

You couldn't have taken a step back?

NED

I didn't know she was gonna pinch my cheek. Who does that?

CHUCK

She... actually, she does that a lot.

EMERSON

Whoever killed you, killed your girl Diedre as evidenced by the plastic sack. But why would whoever killed you kill her if he already got his monkeys.

CHUCK

I dropped my key in the ice maker. He couldn't get in my room.

INT. CRUISE SHIP - CORRIDOR - MEMORY FLASH

The PLASTIC SACK KILLER, his face OUT OF FRAME, stands outside a cabin door holding dead Chuck slumped over in his arms, as he fumbles through her bathrobe for her room key.

PLASTIC SACK KILLER

Oh, for Pete's sake.

He tries the handle, it doesn't open.

PLASTIC SACK KILLER (CONT'D)

This is a nightmare.

RESUME - BOUTIQUE TRAVEL TRAVEL BOUTIQUE - BREAK ROOM

NED

He doesn't have the monkeys.

CHUCK

When you get murdered on a boat, where do they send your stuff?

EMERSON

Your next of kin.

CHUCK

If I got killed for the monkeys and Diedre got killed for the monkeys then...

CLOSE ON - THE BRIEFCASE

CAMERA VERY QUICKLY PULLS BACK TO REVEAL we're in:

INT. CHUCK'S CHILDHOOD HOME - CHUCK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room has been stripped of all personal belongings. The briefcase sits on a bed, surrounded by STACKS OF BOOKS. In fact, the whole room is filled with STACKS OF NEWSPAPER.

CAMERA CONTINUES PULLING BACK INTO...

THE HALLWAY

...and down the stairs to the:

LIVING ROOM

Vivian is preparing a cheese platter while Lily watches an old television playing a NEWSREEL of the DARLING MERMAID DARLINGS in action, swimming in circles under water.

NARRATOR

It was Aunt Vivian and Aunt Lily who received custody of the monkeys. And they were about to be paid a visit by the man willing to kill for them.

DING-DONG. The doorbell rings.

LILY

Get that, would you dear?

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - NIGHT - MOMENTS EARLIER

Ned's VINTAGE MERCEDES screeches to a halt across the street from Chuck's Aunts' House. Ned, Emerson and Chuck hop out.

NED

You stay here.

CHUCK

I just wanna look in the windows. Like the ghost of Christmas past.

NED

This isn't your Christmas anymore.

CHUCK

I want my pie and I wanna eat it, too. I'll get crumbs in the bed I don't mind.

NED

You can't. You can have your pie, but you can't eat it. That's how it works.

NARRATOR

Chuck was the Pie-Maker's pie and he could never have a bite.

EMERSON

You're making me hungry.

CHUCK

What if something happened? What if they got hoisted on my petard, too? I would just die. Again.

NED

I wish I could give you an emotional Heimlich so you could cough up that wad of fear and anxiety, but... I can't.

Ned stares at her, his heart swells.

NED (CONT'D)

(to Emerson)

Give her a hug.

Emerson gives Chuck a hug.

NED (CONT'D)

That was from me.

Chuck watches them cross the street to her Aunts' house.

NARRATOR

*For 19 years, 33 weeks, 3 days, 7 hours
and 42 minutes, Aunt Vivian and Aunt
Lily were all Chuck had. And before
Chuck, all they had were each other.*

INT. POOL - DAY - FLASHBACK

Teen Vivian and Lily loll underwater, rolling over and over languidly in sea-shell bikini tops and mermaid fin bottoms.

NARRATOR

*They made a name for themselves as the
"Darling Mermaid Darlings."*

Teen Vivian and Teen Lily dive, pivot, shoot out of the water and flip, perfectly synchronized. The CROWD goes wild.

INT. POOL - DAY - FLASHBACK - 15 YEARS LATER

30's VIVIAN and LILY loll underwater, rolling over and over less gracefully than before, their mermaid fins not as cute.

NARRATOR

*Still holding onto their fading glory
as under-water artists, their lives
were changed forever...*

INT. BATHROOM - FLASHBACK

CAMERA MOVES PAST an advertisement for the "Darling Mermaid Darlings" to FIND 40's Lily cleaning the litter box as the cat waits patiently for her to be done. She accidentally flips cat sand in her own face and recoils.

NARRATOR

*...when Lily cleaned the litter box and
got dirty cat sand in her eye.*

INT. POOL - DAY - FLASHBACK

The cat now sits at the edge of the pool watching 30's Vivian and 30's Lily (with an eye patch) loll underwater with no indication of grace, colliding into each other.

NARRATOR

*Not only was the eye lost but their
careers, too.*

The CROWD in the stands is only 7 percent of what it was.

EXT. SYNAGOGUE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Young Chuck and 30's Vivian and 40's Lily lead a RABBI and a train of PALLBEARERS carrying her father's coffin through the GRAVEYARD on the hill above the Synagogue.

NARRATOR

*They retreated behind a fence and made
sure the world stayed on the other side.*

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - PRESENT

Vivian is preparing a cheese platter while Lily watches an old television playing a NEWSREEL of the DARLING MERMAID DARLINGS in action, swimming in circles under water.

DING-DONG. The doorbell rings.

LILY

Get that, would you dear?

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - NIGHT - PRESENT

Ned and Emerson stand at a walk-in gate talking to a box.

VIVIAN'S VOICE

Hello?

NED

Hi. Uh, my name is Ned. I lived next door 20 years ago. I was a friend of Chuck's... or Charlotte's, rather.

Emerson shoots him a look. BUZZZ. The walk in gate unlatches and Ned turns and gives Chuck in the car a thumbs up. She returns the thumbs up and then immediately scrambles out of the car, running to catch the gate before it closes.

INT. CHUCK'S CHILDHOOD HOME - NIGHT

Ned and Emerson sit opposite Vivian, they're surrounded by CAGED BIRDS of all varieties and a maze of newspaper stacks.

As Vivian sets a sad cobbled-together cheese and cracker plate in front of their guests, Lily prattles on:

LILY

Charlotte was a firecracker. Always trying to get us out of the house, threatening to bake anti-depressants into our food. Got to the point I was scared to eat anything she cooked.

VIVIAN

She was a good cook. And a nice girl. Do you like girls?

NED

Yes, ma'am.

VIVIAN

Charlotte was a nice girl.
(MORE)

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

With the exception of puberty. Which was unfortunately the same time Lily was going through her change of life.

LILY

It's impolite to discuss a person's menopause in mixed company.

VIVIAN

It nearly killed me.

Lily turns the subject back to Charlotte.

LILY

Horrible the way Charlotte died. On a cruise. Last days spent surrounded by middle-aged over-weight women who wear sweatshirts with things sewn to them. Usually kittens made of felt. And the food is perfectly atrocious. Unless she enjoyed vomiting and diarrhea, I can't imagine she had a good last meal.

EMERSON

A good last meal goes a long way. Our penal system makes a point of it.

NED

It's nice she had a little glimpse of the world before she died.

LILY

The world isn't that great.

VIVIAN

At least she had the sense not to fly. Airplanes fall outta the sky every day.
(to Emerson)
Cheese? I recommend the pure goat with blue ash. Has a grassy flavor.

Emerson takes a bite.

EMERSON

It does have a grassy flavor.

VIVIAN

It's delicious with Charlotte's honey. You haven't lived until you've tasted her honey. The homeless love it.

LILY

(holds off emotion)
We'll never taste her honey again.

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Chuck peers through the window at her Aunts, examining the life she left behind. Regardless of their neurosis, Chuck's Aunts were the only family she had and she loves them.

NARRATOR

For the life of her, Chuck couldn't remember why she was so desperate to leave her Aunts behind.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Ned reacts as he catches Chuck peering through the window. He tries not to lose his focus and keep on task:

NED

Not to change the subject, but has the cruise line returned her belongings? Specifically a stainless steel briefcase?

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Chuck spots Ned spotting her and ducks out of sight.

She sneaks another look at her Aunts through the window, surrounded by their feathered friends in cages. She moves around the side of the house, eyes the stacks of bee hives.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - CHUCK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chuck opens the window, climbs inside, finds the bed with the suitcase and the briefcase on the springs on top. A lone parrot is on its perch in the its cage in the corner. Chuck opens the briefcase to reveal the twin PLASTER MONKEYS.

NARRATOR

The monkeys of indeterminate sentimental value took on a new sentimental value for Chuck. If she couldn't keep her Aunts, she was going to keep them.

She HEARS footsteps coming up the stairs. She pulls the monkeys out of the briefcase.

UPSTAIRS LANDING - NIGHT

Lily walks up the stairs.

CHUCK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chuck snaps the briefcase shut and moves toward the window. She stops and takes a look around and slips outside.

Lily ENTERS narrowly missing Chuck. Lily crosses to the window and pulls it shut, yanking the curtains closed.

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LEDGE - NIGHT

Chuck stands on the ledge out of sight, the two plaster monkeys under her arm.

INT. CHUCK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lily moves to the bed and picks up the briefcase. Behind her, silhouetted in the door, a MAN quietly ENTERS the room.

The parrot SQUAWKS.

PARROT

"Oh, for Pete's sake."

Lily turns around and FWIP - a bag is thrown violently over her head. She sucks air and it shrink-wraps to her face.

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LEDGE - NIGHT

Chuck is trying to see through the window, but can't around the winding maze of NEWSPAPER STACKS. She shimmies along the ledge toward another window.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned, Emerson and Vivian in the living room.

VIVIAN

Charlotte always wanted to get away.
Got away further than any of us thought.

Ned reaches over and holds Lily's hand...

NARRATOR

***In a rare moment of sensitivity, the
Pie-Maker reached out and touched
someone... who didn't want to be touched.***

...but she stiffens at his touch. They sit there an awkward beat as if a social taboo has been broken. Ned is finally unable to take it anymore and gets up to excuse himself.

NED

I'll go see if she needs any help
bringing it down in case it's heavy.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LANDING - NIGHT

Ned climbs the stairs to the second landing. It's eerily quiet upstairs. He takes a few steps down the hall.

NED

Want me to carry that for you?

He rounds the corner and sees the stainless steel briefcase in the middle of the hall when FWIP - a bag is thrown

violently over his head, as well. He sucks air and it shrink-wraps to his face. Ned's struggles with the Killer, who tightens his grip, pulling Ned off his feet.

WHAP -- Chuck comes out of nowhere and SLAMS THE STAINLESS STEEL BRIEFCASE upside the Plastic Sack Killer's head. It rings in his ears and ours. He drops Ned with a plop. He scrambles back pulling the sack off his face, gasping for air. The Plastic Sack Killer spins around just as Chuck is taking another swing with the briefcase --

THWAP. The Plastic Sack Killer catches the briefcase before it hits his head, snapping it out of Chuck's hands. A tense beat then...

PLASTIC SACK KILLER

Didn't I kill you?

LILY (O.S.)

I can hold my breath for a long time.

The Plastic Sack Killer turns to see Lily, still alive, standing at the other end of the hall cocking a shotgun.

LILY (CONT'D)

18 years of under-water ballet.

PLASTIC SACK KILLER

Oh, for Pete's sake.

BLAM! The shotgun KICK PROPELS Lily backward into the partially closed door behind her and into the next room. The impact of the SHOTGUN BLAST knocks the Plastic Sack Killer off his feet and THROUGH THE WINDOW BEHIND HIM, the stainless steel briefcase clamors to the floor.

LIVING ROOM

Emerson and Vivian both react to the commotion upstairs.

UPSTAIRS LANDING

Chuck and Ned stand with the gaping window between them, staring at each other. Holy shit. Did that just happen? They look down the other end of the hall where Lily is staring directly at not only Ned but more importantly Chuck, her dead niece evidently returned from the grave.

NARRATOR

The jig appeared to be up. Aunt Lily was looking directly at her niece. Her niece who wasn't supposed to be alive.

LILY'S P.O.V. - HALL

The corridor is partially obscured by her eye patch and she doesn't see Chuck at all, only Ned

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And if she possessed two good eyes, she would have seen her.

ON CHUCK

She slinks around the corner and out the open window.

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LEDGE - NIGHT

Chuck emerges from the second story and climbs down the rose trellis. She turns back to see:

SECOND STORY WINDOW

Ned's looking out the window at Chuck. The wail of approaching sirens can be heard in the distance.

NED'S P.O.V. - YARD

Chuck runs across the yard and stops at the dead Plastic Sack Killer and kicks him.

NARRATOR

A rush of warmth washed over the Pie Maker, he would later describe this feeling as delight. The girl he rescued from death had returned the favor.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LANDING - NIGHT

Ned turns from the window to find Lily holding the stainless steel briefcase as Emerson and Vivian come up the stairs.

ON BRIEFCASE

The lid pops open to REVEAL there are no monkeys, but instead it's filled with HONEYCOMB. A single bee flies out.

NARRATOR

And she gave a little sweetness to the ones she left behind.

GO WIDE

Ned, Emerson, Vivian and Lily watch the lone bee fly out the window and into the night.

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

POLICE and NEWS VANS parked in the street outside the fence. POLICE OFFICERS, REPORTERS and CAMERA-MEN storm through the gait and stop short at an unusual sight.

THE DEAD PLASTIC SACK KILLER

He's laying sprawled out surrounded by broken glass.

ON LILY AND VIVIAN

They step out onto the porch, surveying the REPORTERS and a gathering CROWD OF LOOKILOOS

NARRATOR

*And saw that the Darling Mermaid Darlings
had another go at the teat of stardom.*

ON CHUCK

She's wearing scarf and long-coat, watching from the gathering CROWD OF LOOKILOOS.

CHUCK

Hey. Aren't those the world-renowned
Darling Mermaid Darlings?

The Reporters glance at Chuck, then back at Lily and Vivian, then swarm to the Darling Mermaid Darlings in a CACOPHONOUS MURMUR OF QUESTIONS and GASPS.

Chuck smiles, pleased with herself...

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

ON A TELEVISION

Newscaster #1, seen earlier, reports breaking news:

NEWSCASTER #1

Former "Darling Mermaid Darlings" Vivian and Lily Charles defeated a deadly home invader who may have some connection to the murder of their niece, "Lonely Tourist" Charlotte Charles.

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL we are --

INT. OLIVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CAMERA CONTINUES PULLING BACK TO REVEAL Olive again sitting in her over-stuffed lounge chair, Digby squeezed in next to her. They're watching the evening news.

NEWSCASTER #1 (O.S.)

When asked about a "Darling Mermaid Darlings" reunion the sisters mentioned a benefit performance to support "Honey for the Homeless" was in the works.

Olive raises the television remote and we...

CLICK TO BLACK

INT. PIE HOLE - DINING AREA - NIGHT

CAMERA FINDS Ned and Chuck seated at a booth enjoying pie.

CHUCK

You know, this whole thing is sort of like reincarnation but more immediate.

NED

Sort of.

CHUCK

Do you believe in reincarnation? If I wouldn't have come back this way, would I have come back some other way?

NED

I don't wanna believe in reincarnation. The planet's falling apart. Right now it's the children's problem, but if we reincarnate it's our problem.

CHUCK

Never thought of it that way.

(MORE)

CHUCK (CONT'D)

(considers)

Was this an act of kindness? Me. Here. Were you trying to do something good for no other reason than to help me?

NED

(shakes his head)

I was being selfish. I'd love to tell myself I was being unselfish but I know deep down in my primal sweet spot I was being unselfish for selfish reasons.

CHUCK

Did you want a corpse bride?

NED

No. I just thought the world would be a better place if you were still in it.

The most romantic things she's ever heard.

CHUCK

Anything else I should know?

NARRATOR

The Pie Maker wanted to tell Chuck about that fateful afternoon when he brought his mother back and inadvertently killed her father, but instead he said...

NED

You know everything there is to know.

NARRATOR

He lied.

She slides one of the Monkeys across the table.

CHUCK

I figure since they cost me my life I should get to keep at least one. And since I wouldn't be alive if it weren't for you, you should have the other one.

NED

It's like those heart pendants that BFF's wear. Except with monkeys.

CHUCK

Thanks for bringing me back to life.

The word "life" hangs there. Chuck stares at Ned a moment. The attraction is palpable, but is it love or fascination? Not even Chuck could tell you. Ned's affection is clearer:

NED

Thanks for returning the favor.

Chuck takes her Monkey and presses its face against Ned's Monkey. Ned smiles returning the kiss with his Monkey. He feels the weight of the plaster statue.

NED (CONT'D)

These are kinda heavy.

Then: SMASH. Chuck smashes her Monkey against Ned's. The plaster shatters revealing SOLID GOLD MONKEYS underneath.

CHUCK

Is that...?

NED

Uh-huh.

CHUCK

Neat.

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - DAY

The flowers in the yard are blooming and there's a fresh coat of paint being applied to the house. Lily and Vivian emerge and walk down the path to the gate, stepping out.

NARRATOR

With a renewed interest in the world on the other side of their fence, Vivian and Lily retreated from their retreat...

EXT. WATER TANK - DAY

A large metal water tank with port hole windows in the side. Vivian and Lily in robes and wearing bathing caps climb the stairs to the platform above the water.

NARRATOR

...and took the plunge.

The VERY AMPLE CROWD APPLAUDS as Vivian and Lily DIVE!

CAMERA PUSHES INTO THE PORTHOLE WINDOW

SPLOOSH-SPLOOSH. Vivian and Lily dive in and into each other. The porthole the window in a kitchen door. The door swings open to REVEAL we are:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - DAYS LATER

CAMERA PUSHES PAST Emerson to find Ned and Chuck standing on either side of the door to the WALK-IN FREEZER.

NARRATOR

*And the Pie-Maker and Chuck took a plunge
of their own...*

CAMERA PUSHES BETWEEN Ned and Chuck to REVEAL they're standing over a FROZEN CORPSE. A clean-cut white professorial type in his late 40's wearing a suit. His name is MARTIN MILTENBERGER and he's been stabbed several times.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

*The facts were these: one Martin
Miltenberger, Principal of the Beales
School for Boys was found stabbed to
death in the school's walk-in freezer.*

As Ned's about to touch dead Martin Miltenberger... CAMERA JUMPS TO AN EXTREME-EXTREME-EXTREME CLOSE UP and we see the FAMILIAR POP OF ELECTRICITY. Ned sets the alarm on his watch. A CLOCK appears in the corner of the SCREEN and begins counting down from ONE MINUTE. 59 seconds... 58... 57...

Martin Miltenberger sits up and takes in his stabbed status.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

*But before Principal Miltenberger could
get into the specifics of his demise,
Chuck thought it would be nice to ask...*

CHUCK

Do you have any last words or thoughts
or requests?

Ned reacts, glancing at Chuck and loving her for asking.

NARRATOR

*It was something the Pie Maker never
thought or cared enough to ask until
Chuck back into his life.*

EMERSON

You better ask who killed him first.

As Martin Miltenberger prattles on , Ned stares at Chuck, his heart swelling. He reaches behind him and holds his hands behind his back.

NARRATOR

*As he stared at her, he reached around
and held his hand behind his back,
pretending he was holding hers.*

Chuck winks at Ned and reaches behind her back.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

*And at that very moment she was
pretending to be holding his.*

OFF Chuck and Ned holding their hands behind their backs...

FADE OUT: