

IBID



A New "Howard" Story by Everett
 -and a special tribute to Stephen King

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by

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based on the Short Story by Stephen King
(Presented in lieu of a long-delayed essay on
the work of today's preeminent master of
the weird by a doubter-become-admirer!)

Collins' Corner: IBID's own master of comic art presents
a view of Fast Food in Transylvania, or, for that
matter, in the hamlet of Jerusalem's Lot.

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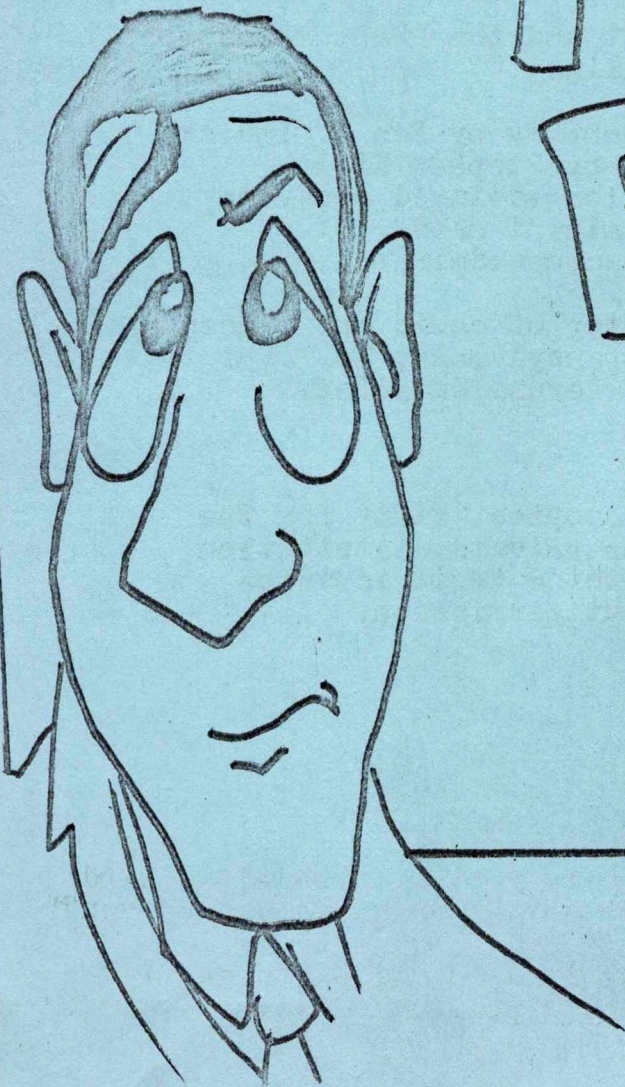
HOWARD

LOVEGRAFF

AND THE

PHANTOM
BUSTER

by E. EVERETT



© Jerry
Kling

Eldon returns with yet another previously unrecorded adventure of his old friend Howard Lovecraft -- and encounters a familiar figure. Happily, Jerry Collins is on hand to record it graphically! Do you think History will one day add to such combos as Merritt and Finlay, Howard and Kremkel, Carroll and Tenniel, IBID's own glorious Everett and Collins?!

HOWARD LOVECRAFT AND THE PHANTOM-BUSTER

By Eldon K. Everett

Illustrated by Jerry Collins

It was late afternoon, with a mellow sundown going on, and Howard Lovecraft and I had just finished off a half-gallon of strawberry ice cream in my room at the Providence-Arms. I was worried about his night-time strolls, as a number of people had been beaten up and robbed near there in the preceding few weeks.

"Let me give you a few tips on the manly art of self-defence," I urged.

"Please, Eldon. A gentleman never descends to the level of common fisticuffs!"

"Well, when some low-life plants one on your schnozzola, you aren't going to kiss his hand, are you?"

"Quiet speech and a firm request to desist from violence is the answer to any threat from the lower classes!"

"Howard, you are nuts!" I said. "Here -- just in case your 'firm request' doesn't work -- let me show you a few tricks!"

Well, I was getting down to business (Howard was pretty wiry -- not at all the sickly "old man" he often pretended to be) but a half-hour or so later, we were interrupted by the sound of a police-car siren.

We opened the window and looked out. A half a dozen flatfoots piled out of that Buick like a Mack Sennett comedy, and another car disgorged Detective Lieutenant Grogarty, in his bowler hat, with a smoking Corona-Corona stuck in his face.

"Good heavens, Eldon, they're coming in here!" Howard looked at me. "You haven't been up to anything illegal, have you?"

I knew he had my hip-flask in mind; Howard disapproved of spirits. "No," I replied, "but somebody apparently has. Let's find out!"

We stepped out into the hall just as Grogarty and his posse swooped down to Room #13. The manager, Ted O'Donnell, all pasty-faced, was letting them into the room.

"When the maid came to make up the bed, the door was bolted from the inside, Officer. She looked through the keyhole (not a usual practice of our employees, I assure you!) and saw -- this!"

We could see the bloody form lying on the bed in a welter of gore!

O'Donnell went on: "Our first hope was that the person was still alive, so, with the help of our porter, we broke in the door but it was too late."

Grogarty examined the splintered wood, where a sliding-bolt had been fastened inside. He walked to the window. "It's locked," he growled. "Was it that way when you entered the room?"

"Indeed yes," said the manager, wringing his hands.

"Goddamn," muttered the detective. "He must have used a forty-foot ladder, if he came in this way!"

"Officer...if I might suggest....?"

"Any help I can get," nodded Grogarty. "This is weird!"

"Precisely," said O'Donnell. "Upstairs, as a guest, is a famous detective -- Dr. Jules de Grandiose!"

"Why, this would be right up his alley, something spooky!" said Grogarty.

"I'll go an get him," said O'Donnell, withdrawing to the elevator.

"Jesus Christ!" I muttered, "don't tell me that old fraud is in town!"

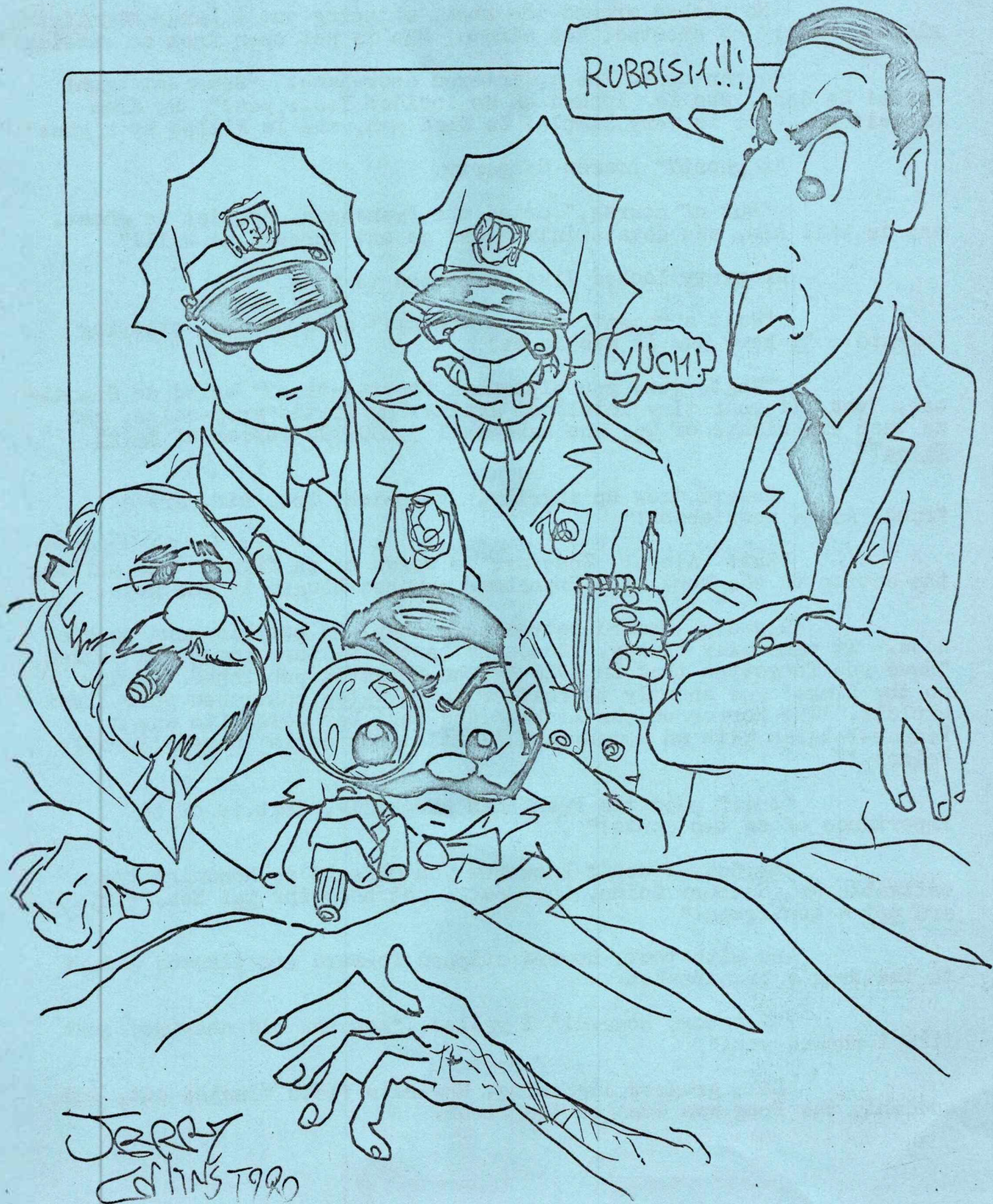
Howard stepped forward. "Lt. Grogarty?"

The copper looked up. "Oh, it's you, Lovecraft. What're you doing here?"

"Just visiting a friend. Do you know who the corpse was?"

"Sure: Trigger-Finger O'Toole, the gangster. Some of his buddies must've put him on the spot, but -- " He waved his cigar. "-- How in the Hell could they have gotten into a locked room to rub him out?"

"Well," said Howard, considering, but he didn't finish. Just then there was a tumult in the hall. O'Donnell was back, with two old men with beards. I knew the bald one was Dr. Drawbridge, and the one with the pointed moustache was Jules de Grandiose!



De Grandiose strode into the room. "Zut! Alors! Son-a-ma-gun! Merde!" he shouted. "A dead man in a locked room! Zut! Alors! She is a problem for ze little grey cells! N'om d'un nom d'un nom!"

He rushed around the room, whipping out a large magnifying glass. "Zut!" he shouted, "ze window! She is not open from ze outside!"

He ran up to the splintered door-jamb. "Son-a-ma -gun! Merde! Ze door, she is locked on ze inside! Yes...yes!" He drew himself up. "It is very simple! Ze dead man, she is killed by a ghost!"

"A ghost?" roared Grogarty.

"But of course," cried the Frenchman. "Merde! Ze ghost, she is kill him, zen dematerialize and go out through ze wall!"

Grogarty looked like he wanted to puke.

"Wait a moment, wait a moment!" said Howard, stepping forward. "I know how it was done!"

"What, you, you pipsqueak Providentialian?" cried de Grandiose, "you pit your tiny intellect against my little grey-cells, and ze vast experience of me, who have sell 3,000,000 copies of Weird Tales?"

Howard drew up angrily. "Rubbish! You, sir, are a fraud! And a mountebank!"

"Zut! Alors! Zose are ze words of ze fight" And suiting the action to the word, the Frenchman punched Howard in the nose.

Dazedly, Howard retreated a step and put his hand to his nose. It came away bloody. Suddenly he became very angry and yelled, "Have you forgotten that in 1926 Agatha Christie published 'Murder on the Links' and shortly thereafter Weird Tales published your first exploit, 'The Horror on the Links.' And that her detective was a Franco-Belgian with an accent and 'little grey cells' named 'Hercule Poirot.'"

"Zut!" said the Frenchman haughtily, "zat is of ze importance of ze two cents!"

"By God, I don't know how you managed to hoodwink the estimable Mr. Seabury Quinn, but you'll not hoodwink me! You, sir, are not a gentleman!"

And with that, Howard stepped forward and planted a left to the Frog's breadbasket.

"Attaboy, Howard!" I yelled, "now the old one-two, just like I showed you!"

Like greased lightning, Howard's fists flashed out, and suddenly the Frog was down on the floor.

"Oh, mon ami, Dr. Drawbridge, m'aider! I am killed! Son-a-ma-gun!"

"Okay, Lovecraft," said Grogarty, "he swung the first punch, so I can't call it assault and battery -- but, back to the problem. How did this bozo get slaughtered in a room locked from the inside?"

Howard was looking at his knuckles in wonder. DeGrandiose, in tears, was being escorted out of the room by his friend and one of the blue-bellies.

"Does anyone have a piece of string?" Howard asked.

"I gotta string around my notebook," said Grogarty.

"Let me have it!" Grogarty did.

Howard closed the door almost shut. He looped the string around the knob on the sliding-bolt, then, pulling the two ends of the string around to the front of the door, he closed it.

"Watch!" came his muffled voice from the hall.

As he pulled both ends of the string, the bolt slid left into where the socket had been, which would have locked the door.

"Then, I let go of one end and pull the other --" came his voice. We watched as the end of the string was pulled out into the hall through the tiny gap in the door-jamb and disappeared from sight!

"Well, I'll be damned!" said the cop, letting his cigar grow cold. "That must be just how it was done!" He pulled the door open to see Howard on the other side, a grin on his face.

"How in the Hell did you figure that out?" demanded Grogarty.

Howard blushed. "To tell the truth, I read about it when I was a boy in an 'Old Sleuth' dime novel!"

Grogarty scratched his head and then kicked a flatfoot. "Come on, McGonigle, start looking for clues. Some real gungel did this job. Say, Lovecraft, you wouldn't mind...?"

But Howard only smiled. "That's in your line, Lieutenant."

Later, Howard and I were in the Red-spot Cafe for a hamburger. Howard was nursing some sore knuckles and went back to the Men's Room to run some cold water on them, asking me to order him a cherry-coke.

I just ordered a regular coke, and when it came, I drank about one-third of it, and poured in some booze from my hip-flask.

When he came back, I said, "They didn't have any cherry syrup, Howard. I had them make it up with 'Butter-Rum and Maple' syrup. Is that okay?"

He took a sip. "Not bad, Eldon. But let's eat. I worked up an appetite with that idiotic Frenchy -- not a gentleman at all -- and after the burgers maybe we can try some of their ice-cream."

We sat there and ate for awhile, and talked, and as Howard finished that "coke" he was getting jovial and a little glassy-eyed.

"Tell me something," he said, looking into the empty glass. "Did you put something in this coke, Eldon?"

"Why, Howard," I said, "I wouldn't do anything like that!"

He grinned and winked one eye.

"Bullshit!" said Howard Lovecraft.

END

A Postscript to Eldon's biography of Lon Chaney:

On behalf of Eldon, I was gratified at the fine response to his biography. It was truly a labor of love, and represented a history of early films as well as the great star. I sent a copy of each of two parts to one of today's masters of horror, on the writing end, at least, Mr. Robert Bloch, and he most kindly responded as follows:

The Chaney biography was of great interest to me, particularly its references to the early films antedating his fame. I can only quarrel with the author's use of "amputee" to describe Chaney's roles in THE MIRACLE MAN and THE BLACKBIRD; in each he was a fake cripple, but none of his limbs appeared as though amputated. And SHADOWS was not a "fascinating crime epic"; its main theme was the intolerant community attitude toward a gentle Chinese laundryman. But there's so much good stuff here -- including that mention of RETURN OF THE PHANTOM, which I'd not heard about before. It would be interesting to see the script, if one existed.

.....

As ever, with thanks,
Bob

Incidentally, Bob added the good news (I hope he wasn't kidding) that he is now writing PSYCHO II. Considering how grandly chilling his first volume was, both in book and classic film, this is N.E.W.S.

- bpi

Most of you are aware of my love for Theatre and my altogether modest accomplishments in writing for it. Even in my dotage I have dreamed of trying again, and so, recently, immersed in the stories of Stephen King, I decided, for the fun of it, to adapt one of his stories -- for EOD, and for the fun of it only. Having written a screenplay about Robert E. Howard for R.E.H: LONE STAR FICTIONEER (#3) some years ago, and then an Innsmouth trilogy, adapting stories by HPL, for an A.P.A., and having just enjoyed the broad but honest adaptation of "The Shining" by Stanley Kubrick, a screenplay seemed the ideal vehicle.

I should add that, could I drop 30 years or so, I'd do my damndest to get into cinema. I admit writing is often an excruciating agony for me, and probably, my readers, but it is still a joy to attempt the screen mode. There is a freedom the stage cannot allow; the camera is so fluid that it is like a brush in the hand of an artist.

So, I chose a short story which would readily, easily and briefly lend itself to my purposes. . Well, NO King story is that simple! Each has its worlds within worlds, and since "I Know What You Need" is one of the most unusual love stories I've ever read, that added a special quality. It ended up much longer than I'd anticipated. Partly because I've written it as a shooting script (the final form), including directorial and camera notes. (I feel they will make the piece more truly cinematic for interested readers, and also BECAUSE DAMMIT I WANT TO BE A DIRECTOR!! A truly professional script and its predecessor, the brief treatment, eschew such stuff...but for me it adds to the fun!)

In adapting a written story, one cannot help but make changes. I have tried to be faithful, even using the actual dialogue as much as possible; however, for dramatic purposes, expository passages are anathema. The viewer must see events happening, not be told of them. In some cases, I felt certain visually graphic elements worked better for me than the original episodes, and I do apologize for my temerity in making such changes. Another thing, unavoidable in adapting another person's work is that ^{one's} own personality gets in the way. To some extent, then, the characters may have transmogrified in the process.

The work itself, filmed, could be as brief as a half-hour TV show, or, with various elements added to its present content, an hour film. However, for me, as I said above, just doing it was a sort of tribute on my part to a fine writer, and also, a way of shaking myself up a bit.

I must caution at this point that this work, irrespective of merit, is not to be used, adapted, reprinted anywhere, inasmuch as it is only for the purposes outlined above, and remains a story entirely belonging for professional purposes to Mr. King!

I hope to be doing more adding for EOD, of classic stories by HPL, Blackwood, Dunsany, etc. Meanwhile, I hope you enjoy this one, and check it against the original in Stephen King's collection NIGHT SHIFT.

By the way, first I had wanted to ^{adapt} from that book "Graveyard Shift" -- a real gasser of horror!!! A film of that would make patsies of such flicks as WILLARD and the films of de Palma and Romero. Indeed, THEY'd be just the guys to do it. Brrrrr!

--- Ben

I KNOW WHAT YOU NEED

A screenplay by Ben P. Indick

adapted from the short story by Stephen King

FADE IN:

1. Library Reading Room of a midwestern college. The Camera is looking (Point of View ELIZABETH) into the pages of a textbook. Voices of students are a background hum. ELIZABETH'S hand riffles the pages impatiently. ED's voice is heard off-camera; teasingly:

ED: I know what you need.

Camera swings from book to ED. He is across the table, his somewhat fishy stare is on Camera (ELIZABETH). He is wearing jeans, an over-size green fatigue jacket; he has an obvious acne, aggravated by his scratching at it, his hair is unkempt, his glasses are spotted. Clearly his interest is not in himself. He is also rather nervous right now.

Quick cut to show ELIZABETH, annoyed at the impertinence of someone she does not know. She looks back to her book again.

ED (off-camera): I do.

ELIZABETH (not looking up): You do. I doubt that.

Cut to ED: ED: You need a strawberry double dip ice cream cone.

Cut to ELIZABETH, ED's voice concluding:

ED: Right?

ELIZABETH seems less sure of herself; a small smile plays on her lips. She sighs, looking down at the textbook. The Camera backs away slowly as she riffles the pages. BOTH are now in view, with other students.

ED: Right?

ELIZABETH (flashing pages at him): No thanks. These chapters have to come first.

ED: Aw, come on.

ELIZABETH has returned to her book.

ED: I've been watching you. You've been at it two hours (he looks at his watch) and twenty minutes.

ELIZABETH: (coldly) I don't like people watching me.

CLOSE-UP on ED. His face seems slightly unscrewed, a tension he does not wish to show, but it is there.

ED: I'm sorry.

Medium shot of both again.

ERRATA:

Alas, no one has ever accused me of being a good typist. I have corrected by weary hand as many of the indickian typos as I could, but several more egregious ones defy such easy treatment. These are goofs in numbering. Betwixt pages and scenes I got into HEAVY TROUBLE. The pages are all in order now, and so are the scenes. However, somehow, some of Roald Dahl's WWII Gremlins got into my typewriter and several scene numbers vanished altogether! Thus, while everything is in its proper place, you will go directly from Scene 21 to Scene 28. There just ain't no scenes 22 thru 27 listed here! Also, Scene 32, at the bottom of Page 22 becomes "continued" as "33" atop the next page! Don't believe it -- it is STILL 32! And, yes, sigh, "and", at the very end, the second scene numbered 38, should, of course, be 39, and it in turn is followed by 40, and not the belated 39! PLEASE DO NOT LET THIS DISCOURAGE YOU -- I swear, such as it is, for better or worse, it's all here, all where it should be spatially....and I hope you like it. --- BEN

ELIZABETH (not unsympathetically): I've got these finals.

ED rises, leaning on table.

ED: Sure. Okay. I'll see you around.

He wheels and begins to shuffle away. We now begin to realize everything he does is self-conscious, and his sloppiness is deliberately in spite of himself. The Camera observes him go to the far end of the hall, where he begins hesitantly to turn around.

From ED'S p.o.v., staring at ELIZABETH, we see her make a quick turn into her textbook. A STUDENT sitting near the Camera eye now rises and walks directly across it, turns to face it, blotting out the background.

STUDENT: Excuse me.

CUT TO:

2. OUTSIDE SHOT: From atop a building across from the Library, revealing much of the campus, students milling about. We note a campus clock, reading 5 P.M. It is tolling the hour. From this height we can pick out ED from his back, by his jacket, standing at the base of the flight of steps leading into the Library, his face intent on the doorway. The Camera descends, watching him as he fidgets, rubbing his cheek against his shoulder, scratching one leg with the other foot. As we reach ground level, we even note his stockings are mismatched. We are now close behind him, also looking up, and, among the emerging students is ELIZABETH, talking with a girl. She looks down, recognizes ED, first with surprise, and suddenly with pleased laughter.

FROM ELIZABETH'S P.O.V.: we are looking down the steps toward ED, and see he is holding two paper-wrapped objects. The Camera approaches him, and he hands one to us. We see it is a dripping ice cream cone. The Camera continues to close on his face and he is smiling happily and proudly.

OVERVOICE OF ALICE:

ALICE: So what happened?

3. INTERIOR. Dormitory bedroom of ALICE and ELIZABETH. Evening lighting. ALICE on bed in pajamas. We catch ALICE finishing her question.

ALICE: What'd you do?

ELIZABETH (getting into pajamas): Well, I really couldn't say no. And I like strawberry! We talked, and would you believe, Ed had Sosh last year with Branner, my Prof!

She sits down on the bed with ALICE, who is smiling suspiciously.

ALICE: Well, I never. Lawksamercy, landagoshen et cetera!

ELIZABETH: No, listen. This is really amazing. You know how I've been cramming for that course, and I have barely

an 80 so far -- I've got to crack his final if I'm going to keep my scholarship, and I'm going crazy with it. Well, this Ed Hamner says Branner uses the same final every year, almost, anyway, and he tells me he's .. eidetic.

ALICE: Come again?

ELIZABETH: "Eidetic." A photographic memory. Look.

She rises, gets her notebook and produces three sheets of paper. She hands them to ALICE. From ALICE'S p.o.v., we see the paper filled with lines of writing. As she glances at it, we hear ELIZABETH'S voice.

ELIZABETH: Ed says it's Branner's last year final word-for-word!

The sheets are snatched away. MEDIUM shot. ELIZABETH walking about, studying the sheets.

ELIZABETH: Word for word!

ALICE: I don't believe it.

ELIZABETH: It covers all the material -- I checked it out. I'm going to memorize it.

ALICE: (lying back) I still don't believe it. Just because this weirdo----

ELIZABETH: Don't call him a weirdo. He went home from the library and wrote this all out for me!

ALICE: Not terribly ethical, is it?

ELIZABETH (sitting at her desk, putting lamp on): Look, Brain, if I could get straight A's like you --

ALICE: Forget it, I'm sorry. But I'd study the book too, just in case.

CLOSE-UP on ELIZABETH. She opens the text, but then places the sheets over it, poring over them.

ELIZABETH: I will...I will...

FADE

4. FADE IN EXTERIOR of School Classroom building. The door is just opening, and students are emerging, chattering nervously. Camera circles them to look into the corridor and then enters it, discovering ELIZABETH emerging excitedly from a classroom, almost running between the students. A friend stops her; ELIZABETH smiles exultantly, while the other seems bemused and shakes her head. ELIZABETH runs past the Camera, and now it follows her as she hurries out of the building.

Outside, we see ED waiting, looking up at ELIZABETH.

ED: How'd it go?

ELIZABETH lands on him with a laughing bearhug and kisses him lightly on the cheek.

ELIZABETH: I think I aced it!

ED: Great, great! How about a burger?

ELIZABETH: I could eat a bagful!

5. INTERIOR SHOT. With no break in continuity, ELIZABETH is eating a hamburger at a diner, with ED across the table.

ELIZABETH: I mean, it was fantastic -- Ed! that exam was like ditto the one you gave me!

ED (eating his burger, the ketchup squirting on his chin): I told you; he never changes it. Would you like the exam Branner gives for Bus Ad -- ?

ELIZABETH: No thanks -- but don't tell me you managed that one too?

ED (scratching at his acne): No, I'm kidding. I didn't have to take the exam. I'm in Honors -- I don't take exams unless I feel like it. And I didn't feel like it.

He sees she is watching his scratching and brings his hand down uncomfortably.

ELIZABETH: Ed, I'm really grateful to you. You saved my scholarship!

ED (somberly, nervously): I'm glad... I'd do anything for you. (Pause) I would!

ELIZABETH (gently taking his offending hand) I appreciate it, Ed, really. But..you should know..I have a boyfriend, I mean ---

ED (withdrawing hand, almost scratching again, but not): Heck, I didn't mean anything like that .. Beth...

CLOSE-UP OF ELIZABETH, and CROSS-CUTTING between each:

ELIZABETH (startled): What?

ED: Nobody calls you that, do they?

ELIZABETH: Why no, they don't.

ED: Not even this guy, the one -- your boyfriend.

5 CONTINUED

ELIZABETH: Tony calls me Liz. Everyone does.

ED: (trying to laugh): I'll call you Beth -- you like it best anyway, don't you?

ELIZABETH stares at ED in amazement.

ED: I knew. I always know, about you.

He is embarrassed, and hurries on.

ED: What're you doing this summer, Beth?

Mid-shot of both.

ELIZABETH: I'll be in Maine. Working. I did it last year too -- a waitress, in Boothbay. Good money and a good time too. Tony -- (pause)

ED: Yes?

ELIZABETH: He'll be in Maine too. He works with the phone company. How about you, Ed?

ED: I don't know. Maybe I'll get a job in Maine too?

Close-up on ELIZABETH. She looks up sharply. We hear ED laugh.

Mid-shot ED: Naw, my uncle wants me this summer in his plant, in Waukegan, Illinois, that is. Come on, drink up.

He pushes her Coke to her. She picks it up, somewhat uncomfortably, her mouth opening to receive the straw. She looks up at ED. Pause.

6. INTERIOR SHOT. ELIZABETH on her dormitory bed, phone in hand. She is waiting for the response, is bemused, but when it is answered she lights up in relieved joy.

ELIZABETH: Tony! Yes! -- Tony, it's over! I got a 96, the highest in the class! And my scholarship is renewed! Four thousand dollars! No, Tony, I cannot take the cash and run away with you! But I can see you Wednesday night -- I'm coming in on the 9:10. Yes, I know I'm a genius --

There is a slight shadow over her joy.

Well, you wouldn't believe -- oh, never mind. It's nothing.

She kicks off her slippers, lies back.

It'll be a great summer. Beautiful --

She sits up.

Oh, Tony, don't push me. We'll talk about it, I promise,

SK 6

6 CONTINUED

sure -- now you better be there! 9:10. I'll be the one with a rose in her teeth. Sure, only you! Sure.

She hangs the receiver up, her hand not leaving it for a moment, a bothered look on her face. She shakes her head as if to throw off a thought.

FADE

7. DREAM

Sound of wind, rain. Objects and figures wavering, voices as heard in a tunnel. INTERIOR SHOT, Restaurant kitchen. A heavy black man in apron is seen, waveringly.

MAN: Throw it out for me, Liz. Do me a favor. I'm busy.

ELIZABETH: I'm supposed to be a waitress.

MAN: Lizzie, I can't do everything.

ELIZABETH: Oh, all right.

She tugs at a large garbage bag, pulling it out the door.

8. DREAM

Exterior. Heavy rain. Muddy yard. ELIZABETH is pulling the bag, sliding on the wet muddy earth. Suddenly, without warning, she slips, fails, and slides helplessly into a widening pit, down till the earth is level with her head. She gasps, cries, the rain falling off her, waving her arms and yelling, half-screaming for help. TONY appears at the edge of the pit, in telephone lineman's garb, cap, equipment safety belt. He stares down at her.

ELIZABETH: Tony, help me!

TONY; (coldly) No more stalling, Liz.

ELIZABETH: Tony, help me!

TONY: Marry me, Liz, marry me, like we decided --

ELIZABETH: Please, Tony --

TONY: Marry me, Liz, or else!

ELIZABETH (her face is desperate): Tony..please!

TONY: If that's how it is -- !

He viciously kicks dirt down upon her, as she sobs his name. ED's voice is heard

ED: Get out of here! Go on!

He appears, pushing at TONY, who vanishes. ED peers into the pit,

his hands groping.

ED: Beth, Beth!

ELIZABETH: Ed, Ed! Help me -- please!

He reaches down, she grasps his hands and he pulls her up, and holds her to him.

ELIZABETH: Ed, you're here!

ED (softly, the words wavering in and out): I know what you need, Beth.

ELIZABETH: Ed, Ed!

She abruptly withdraws her hands with some inner sense of horror, and looks up at his face, but she is looking right into the head and mouth, red, of a huge wolf. She screams, piercingly. The scream fades slowly into the wind and rain, and carries over into:

9. INTERIOR: ELIZABETH'S bedroom, in her summer boarding-house. It is an old home, plain but neat. She is in bed, sobbing as the scream fades, seen only in moonlight through the open window, curtains fluttering. She stumbles from the bed to the lamp, flicks it on, fumblingly. She shakes out a cigaret from a pack, lights up a match, stares at the flame. FADE ON THE FLAME.

10. FADE IN. EXTERIOR. Evening. A car pulls up, the black cook driving. ELIZABETH gets out of the car. They are in front of her summer home.

ELIZABETH: Thanks, Sam.

SAM: Goodnight, Liz.

The car drives off. ELIZABETH goes up the walk, opens the door with a key.

ELIZABETH: Mrs. Montgomery?

No response. She shrugs her shoulder, puts on the hall light, takes off her light coat and throws it on a chair in the living room. She goes to the kitchen, humming. She looks into the refrigerator, chooses several items and takes them to the table. She gets bread from a bread drawer, and begins making a sandwich. The phone rings.

ELIZABETH: Hi, Tony? Oh, Danny. Hi! Sure I remember you -- Tony's partner. We doubled at the movie -- huh? Sure you can come over. What's up, Danny? Danny?"

she looks quizzically at the phone, frowns and hangs it up. She continues on her sandwich, finishes, is about to eat, gets up, makes a second one. She puts them on plates, with napkins, gets a bottle of Coke, glasses, and sits at last, drumming her fingers, somewhat concerned now as she waits. She rises, goes back to her coat, hangs it properly in the closet, returns to the kitchen, sits again. She looks at the phone,

SK 8

10 CONTINUED

goes to it and begins to dial. The doorbell rings. She replaces the phone and hurries to the front door, opens it, revealing DANNY, a young man about the same build and age of TONY as we saw him. He is coatless, and simply stares at her.

ELIZABETH: Danny, come in.

He enters and she closes the door behind him, leading him to the kitchen.

ELIZABETH: It's good to see you again. Come on.

He follows her.

ELIZABETH: I made you a sandwich. That waitress experience! Go ahead, sit down.

He sits, tensely, and she is nervous and trying to talk to cover it.

ELIZABETH: Yes indeed, this experience would make me a good housewife if I weren't -- Danny: did Tony send you here?

DANNY: Liz ---

ELIZABETH: I know you want to be his buddy, but I've told him I'm not ready yet. I want to finish school. And so does he. And I want my career --

He is still staring at her, and now she is alarmed.

ELIZABETH: Danny, is that it? Did Tony send you? Danny? Danny!

DANNY: Liz -- Tony's -- Tony's -- dead! Liz!

ELIZABETH: Tony?

DANNY: Oh, Liz...

He is rising to go to her, as she begins to understand him, and the pain grows.

ELIZABETH: But Danny, it can't be, not Tony, Danny, no, no!

DANNY (he is holding her by her shoulders): Oh Liz, he fell! He fell! He was on the pole, and his belt broke --

She breaks free of him, flails about the room a moment, and is finally staring out the kitchen window. It faces the street at an angle and she can see a telephone pole. We hear DANNY's voice behind her.

DANNY: His safety belt broke --

11. EXTERIOR SHOT, WHILE DANNY IS SPEAKING OVER

We see TONY atop a pole, suspended by his belt, working on a glass

11 CONTINUED

globe on the line. Suddenly his belt snaps and he falls back, arms waving helplessly, mouth open in silent scream, somersaulting back, eyes looking down in terror as the ground approaches.

CUT BACK to ELIZABETH, CLOSE-UP, her face a picture of horror.

DANNY (overvoice): I don't know how it could have happened, there was nothing anyone could do, it was over, just like that.

12. SLOW MOTION: TONY FALLING, back, over, eyes in terror at the approaching earth. At what would be impact:

13. CLOSE-UP ELIZABETH, who screams at that moment. DANNY has come up behind her, takes her gently. She is sobbing and he is sobbing also.

DANNY: Liz, it was over in a minute. One minute. All over. Oh my God, oh Liz, oh my God!

In his arms, ELIZABETH twists free, staring again at the telephone pole, again seeing TONY Falling in slow motion, and his agonized face. The camera closes in on the face and FREEZE FRAME, while ELIZABETH'S anguished voice is heard over it:

ELIZABETH: Tony!

BLACKOUT

14. AIRPORT EXTERIOR. Camera pans small airport, seeing small private aircraft parked on the field, repair building with gas tanks, and at last the small office building which serves as a terminal. A woman is tugging a little girl who is sullen:

GIRL: Don' like airplanes!

The woman pulls her into the building. A moment later the door flies open and the little girl appears, and is as quickly pulled back in. We hear her beginning of a wail as the door closes. ELIZABETH enters our line of vision. She has been walking aimlessly, killing time. She glances at her wristwatch and enters the building.

CUT TO INTERIOR. We see ELIZABETH enter. She walks past the woman and the child, the latter now sucking at a huge lollypop. ELIZABETH sits on one of many folding chairs, only eight or nine having occupants; she is somber and silent, staring at nothing in particular. A small bag is on the next chair.

ED'S VOICE: Beth?

ELIZABETH looks up and around to locate the voice. The Camera backs up to a mid-shot to reveal both as she sees him.

ELIZABETH: Ed?

He is in his customary attire, a bit more dishevelled than usual, and he is slightly panting, as though he had run to get here. We feel the panting is overdone, especially since his eyes are firmly on her.

ED (self-consciously smiling): Me.

ELIZABETH (laughing, crying): Oh, Ed, it is you! (She does not rise, but he quickly sits next to and they embrace, not kissing.) Ed!

ED: I knew you needed me.

She leans back, wiping her eyes, laughing, looking at him.

ELIZABETH: You always do, don't you? But you don't know how much.

Still looking him over, she sees the usual mismatched socks, and, big-sister-like, she smiles knowingly, pointing at them:

ELIZABETH: Now I know it's you. Look at that!

ED (shrugging, laughing): Funny. I've got a pair home just like them!

ELIZABETH: Don't you care about yourself?

CLOSE-UP: ED: I don't care about myself, Beth -- only about you.

His look is intense; his acne seems to glow in his intensity. His eyes look up suddenly as an announcement from an overhead loudspeaker sounds:

ANNOUNCER: Flight 411 for Boston is now boarding. Ticket holders please board. Flight 411 for Boston now boarding.

Mid-shot. The passengers begin moving toward the door. We see the little girl clinging to her chair, and the mother angrily pulling at her and her hand. BETH rises, picks up her bag on the next chair, turns to ED.

ELIZABETH: That's mine, Ed.

He escorts her slowly to the doorway. She glances at him.

ELIZABETH: How did you know I was here, Ed?

ED: I know everything, Beth, everything. As soon as I heard, I knew I had to come. I got to your place after you'd left, but your landlady told me you were leaving from here.

ELIZABETH (mild surprise): She came back home?

ED (shrugging): She was there. Anyway, I came running, and just in time. Oh Beth, I'm so sorry. It must have been terrible for you.

He helps her through the doorway.

CUT TO DOORWAY EXTERIOR. As they emerge, ED take the bag from ELIZABETH and sets it down. He solemnly takes her hands in his and looks into her eyes.

ED: You'll be all right, Beth.

She returns his glance with equanimity, frees her hands quietly and picks up the bag.

ELIZABETH: It's all over.

We are walking with them as they approach a two-engine turbo-prop, its propellers spinning. Still moving, she looks at ED:

ELIZABETH: Where did you hear about this, Ed? I thought you were in Ohio or somewhere.

ED: Illinois -- I was lying, Beth. I was in Skowhegan, out here. I thought, if you ever needed me ... but I never figured anything like this. If this accident hadn't happened you wouldn't have heard from me at all! But I ran into your roommate -- Alice, is it? (ELIZABETH nods) She was spending the summer acting at the Lakewood Theatre, and she told me. You see, (impulsively he takes her arm)--

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE is heard while ED is talking.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE: Last call for passengers boarding Flight 411 to Boston. Will all passengers boarding Flight 411 please board. Last call.

ED (Continuing): -- I was right! A hunch! So (he releases her arm) I came right away. Poor Beth.

They have now reached the airplane.

ED: Look, Beth, if there is anything I can do--

ELIZABETH (smiling): I'm all right now, Ed -- but I am grateful you came. It was kind of you.

She turns to the staircase.

ED: Beth, wait -- here!

She turns. ED hands her an envelope. She accepts it.

ED: I'll see you -- at school!

ELIZABETH: Goodbye, Ed. -- Ed -- please call me!

CLOSE-UP, ED's face, beaming.

ED: I will!

LONG SHOT, engines revving, ELIZABETH, about to enter plane, turns, waves at ED, enters plane. A steward closes the door from within, a crew rolls the staircase away, the plane begins to move. ED watches.

15. INTERIOR OF AIRPLANE. CLOSE-UP on ELIZABETH moving into her seat (two seats on each side of aisle) to window, looking outside, waving, then making herself comfortable. The plane is proceeding down the runway into takeoff, its engines very loud. We hear a few voices from ELIZABETH's thoughts, just audible over the engines:

DANNY'S VOICE: "Liz -- Tony's dead!"

ED'S VOICE: "I ran into your roommate and she told me"

DANNY'S VOICE: "Liz -- Tony's dead!"

Suddenly, as the plane lifts off, she lurches, then she rests back, the engine sound all-encompassing. She looks at the earth through the window, see the terminal building and a handful of people waving, and then gone. She closes her eyes, resting a moment, then, recalling, she takes ED's letter, glances at it. The envelope reads "BETH". She opens it, removes a single folded sheet. She unfolds it and reads it.

ED'S VOICE: "I love you. I have loved you from the first time I saw you."

She smiles slightly, then more fondly, folds it and replaces it. The engines have by now assumed the normal flight noise level. She looks soberly at the envelope. Over a sudden surge of engine noise, we hear ED's voice:

ED'S VOICE: I know what you need.

She closes her eyes.

EXTERIOR SHOT: The plane wheels off into the clouds, engines roaring.

FADE

16. EXTERIOR. Panoramic view of ELIZABETH's college campus. Autumn color. Students going to classes, milling about, talking, laughing. Two young STUDENTS approach us, deep in discussion.

FIRST STUDENT: Just because Sartre dies doesn't mean EXISTENTIALISM is dead.

SECOND STUDENT: It was dead long ago, only he didn't know it.

As they pass us, he adds:

SECOND STUDENT: You don't either.

We see ELIZABETH approaching us, talking with friends. She is dressed more conservatively than we had seen her here last term, but is active and alert. The conversation seems to be solid, but she breaks it off to turn into her dorm. She waves a hand.

ELIZABETH: See you tomorrow, Gerri.

GERRI: Ciaow, Liz.

17 INTERIOR. Dormitory.

We pick ELIZABETH up entering the dormitory and, waving at a few boys and girls sitting in the lounge, going to the mail slots. She glances through the letters, several bills, phone co., bank, in her name, and a white business envelope addressed to "Ms. Alice Drummond" without a return address. She nods her head knowingly and says half aloud:

ELIZABETH: Aha, the phantom lover strikes again!

She turns to the staircase.

18. INTERIOR. Cut to ALICE sitting on her bed in their dorm room, reading a magazine. A key is heard in the lock, the door is heard opening, and ELIZABETH's voice is heard in greeting:

ELIZABETH: Hi Alice.

ALICE: Hi Liz.

Cut to ELIZABETH putting her books and letters down on her desk and then bringing the white envelope to ALICE.

ELIZABETH: The phantom lover --

ALICE joins her:

ELIZABETH AND ALICE: -- strikes again!

ALICE: Give me that. You're just jealous, that's all.

ALICE hops off the bed and takes the letter, unopened, to her desk. She unlocks a desk drawer and slips it in. We see several similar envelopes within. She closes it and we hear ELIZABETH behind her:

ELIZABETH : Selfish!

ALICE: You can read them when I publish my memoirs.
(Stiffly casual:) Any word from Ed yet?

ELIZABETH (mumbling): No.

ALICE: I imagine he'll call soon. (She opens the drawer a few inches, looking at the white envelopes.) I mean, such a lovesick swain. It's been a while, hasn't it? (ELIZABETH mumbles, rustling clothes behind ALICE, who is poking at the envelopes. One sheet protrudes, and we can see the heading on the stationary: STEIN AND EDWARDS, PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS. She pushes the drawer shut and locks it.) I'm sure he'll call soon.

CUT TO: ELIZABETH (at clothes closet): Yup.

FADE

19. EXTERIOR. EVENING. We see a light snowfall against the campus lightpoles. The Camera withdraws and we realize we are seeing it through a room window. It continues to move back and we see ELIZABETH,

19 CONTINUED

at her desk, desultorily glancing at a text. Her hair is in curlers. In a different corner we see ALICE at her desk, writing. The intercom buzzes.

ELIZABETH: Now who. I'll get it. (She rises, goes to intercom, pushes button) Yes?

VOICE: Gentleman caller, Liz.

ELIZABETH: For me? Who?

VOICE: His name is Edward Jackson Hamner -- Junior, no less--

ELIZABETH is suddenly nervous, and we see ALICE look up sharply.

ELIZABETH: Oh God, tell him I'll be right down -- (She feels the curlers in her hair) -- in a few minutes; "right away", okay?

VOICE: He's not running away, just sitting. Hey, his socks don't --

ELIZABETH has cut it off and is dashing back to her closet.

CUT TO ALICE at her desk quietly watching ELIZABETH, whom we hear furiously opening and shutting drawers. We hear her:

ELIZABETH: It's Ed, Alice! He's here! How's that?

ALICE approaches the unseen ELIZABETH.

ALICE: Very nice, Liz. My, you can sure move when you want. (We hear the door opening) Have a good time, Liz -- Liz!

The door slams. ALICE returns to her text, but then she glances at the door area again.

ALICE: Edward Jackson Hamner ... Junior...

20. CUT TO INTERIOR, DORM LOUNGE. ELIZABETH and ED are holding hands, looking at each other. He wears his usual outfit, looking a bit messier than usual because his eyeglass' right ear is attached by tape.

ELIZABETH: Edward Jackson Hamner Junior!

ED: Beth, I wanted to see you..so much.

ELIZABETH: Then why didn't you call me?

ED: I thought I'd give you some time to sort things out, date guys, y'know.

ELIZABETH: I know I wanted you to call me.

They embrace, although ELIZABETH pulls away slightly from a kiss.

20 CONTINUED

ED seems to sense partial rejection, and his face tightens. However, ELIZABETH, sensing it, touches his cheek lightly.

CROSS-CUT CLOSE=UPS:

ELIZABETH: Ed, I've been waiting. I wanted only you to call.

ED: Beth, I wanted you to be sure.

ELIZABETH: I am, Ed.

ED: Wanna walk, Beth? Maybe see a flick? (His face brightens) There's one you'll like -- I know you will.

ELIZABETH: (Smiling) You know me so well! (She measures him) Sometimes I almost think I know you too, from somewhere. (Pause) But I couldn't, could I, Ed?

ED: I only want you to know me better. Let's go.

21. EXTERIOR SHOT. EVENING. From tree height we are looking through the leafless branches of a tree toward a streetlight. ELIZABETH and ED are approaching into the light. She is in different clothing than the last scene for it's later into Winter. We can see older neighborhood houses lining the street, boarding-house types on the periphery of a college. The camera descends to meet them, and ambles along before them as they talk.

ED: I've been happy with you, Beth.

ELIZABETH: It's been good, Ed. I think you're the most understanding person I've ever known -- and what a tutor you are! To think, it all started with -- an ice cream cone!

They laugh and walk on silently a moment.

ED: Have you ever thought about that letter I gave you at the airport, Beth?

ELIZABETH: I have, Ed, many times.
(She places her arm around his waist, looking openly into his face.)
It was so like you, and it did a lot for me when I needed it.

They stop, as ED points to a house.

ED: This is where I live, Beth.

We see the house, an old two-story colonial. ED's voice is heard:

ED: It's no great shakes, but it's home for me till I can get something better -- once I start making some money.
CUT TO ED: Want to see it? No, forget it, it's just a dump. It's late anyway -- this school is still living ten years ago; you'd better get back.

ELIZABETH: No, Ed, I would like to see it.

21 CONTINUED

ED: Oh, all right, just for a minute. Here, come this way.

He leads her around the side, up a driveway, to the back porch, which is surrounded by gravel.

ED: Careful.

He helps her up the porch steps, through a worn old screen door onto the porch. He reaches over the doorjamb and comes up with a ring holding two keys.

ED: Secret hiding place!

He opens the door, and the Camera follows them down a musty old hallway. He unlocks a door, gropes for the light switch, flicks it on.

28. INTERIOR OF ROOM. We see ED and ELIZABETH entering. He is first, and stumbles over a shoe, which he kicks aside. She follows, curious, frowning at the disarray.

ED: It's a mess, I know. I shouldn't have brought you in. What a mess, and you like things neat. I know. Here, sit down. It's my best chair -- it's my only chair!

He scoops up several large books in old bindings from a chair, pointing her to it. ELIZABETH sits, cautiously.

ELIZABETH: Oh, don't worry, Ed -- I know you didn't expect company.

While ED is talking, he is unlocking the closet with the second key, putting the books in, on a shelf, and locking it again.

ED: You're not "company", and I promise you, Beth, I'm ashamed! Don't make it easy on me -- I am! But it won't be like this another time, I promise!

He is finished and turns to her.

ED: How about I fix us some drinks, gin and tonic -- you like that, don't you?

From the chair, she agrees with a slightly bewildered smile. ED goes to a small kitchen, where we hear him opening and closing the refrigerator, fiddling with glasses, liquids, etc. He talks from the kitchen while ELIZABETH's eyes survey the room.

ED: It'll only take me a minute. I'm putting in lime -- darn, they're here somewhere. Damn. I got 'em specially. There they are. C'mere, you green midgets.

ELIZABETH has been shaking her head in patronizing dismay at the disarray. Her eyes widen as she sees a large photo of herself tacked on to the wall. She rises to look at it, replying off-handedly.

~~ELIZABETH~~ ELIZABETH: No rush, Ed, and stop apologizing. It's okay!

CLOSE-UP ON PHOTO. It is obviously a hastily-taken shot, enlarged, of ELIZABETH while she was walking on campus. A red felt-tip pen circle has been drawn completely around her, and red lines radiate from this to the periphery. "BETH" is written in block letters beneath it.

ED'S VOICE (immediately following her line):
You can always drop in if you have any questions about study.

ELIZABETH is studying the photo, in some perplexity. Suddenly she realizes ED is next to her, a glass in each hand.

ED: I love you, Beth.

He places the glasses down in a small table beneath the photo, and brushes his hand across the photo.

ED: I took it. It means you're everything to me, Beth.

She melts. He reaches for her and her arms go around him.

CLOSE-UP on ELIZABETH'S face, filled with feeling for him, ready to give. Her lips reach to his.

29 CUT TO INTERIOR: ELIZABETH AND ALICE'S DORMITORY ROOM

The door is opening and ELIZABETH enters. She is excited, holding an inner joy. She closes the door and leans against it, smiling.

ELIZABETH: Hel-lo, Alice.

P.O.V. ELIZABETH. We see ALICE, whose face is tight. She is at her desk, a packet of the white envelopes held by a rubber band on top of it.

ALICE: Liz, we have to talk.

MID-SHOT, of both, as ELIZABETH hangs her coat in the closet.

ELIZABETH: We talk too much.

ALICE: I have to talk to you, about Ed.

ELIZABETH: What about him?

ALICE: I think that when I finish talking to you, we're not going to be friends anymore. For me, Liz, that means giving up a lot, so if it didn't seem very important to me, I wouldn't say it.

ELIZABETH IS LEANING WITH BOTH HANDS AGAINST ALICE'S DESK.
ALICE CONCLUDES:

ALICE: So please hear me out.

ELIZABETH: Hear you out? God knows you've dropped enough snide little remarks about Ed already. I know he's not perfect -- I think we should just drop it!

She turns away.

ALICE: Liz --

ELIZABETH: I said drop it. I don't need advice from jealous --

ALICE: I was never near the Lakewood Theatre last summer.

ELIZABETH freezes somewhat at this.

ALICE: You told me he'd said that he met me there, and at the time I didn't want to say anything. I figured he only wanted to get in good with you. I didn't know what I know now.

ELIZABETH: Why should he lie about seeing you?

ALICE: Why? For one thing, he wasn't near Maine all summer -- or Illinois. He was in Las Vegas. Shirley d'Antonio was working in Maine, at the Pines Restaurant, right across from the Lakewood; if anyone would have seen him, she would've, and she says she never laid eyes on him. So he was lying about that. And as for that eidetic memory of his, heck, Liz, he can't even remember what color socks he's wearing!

ELIZABETH: How do you know that he was lying, that he was in Las Vegas?

ALICE: Because I didn't trust him -- I never trusted that creep --

ELIZABETH stiffens, and ALICE is quick to apologize.

ALICE: I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said that, but I never did trust him, so I told my father, and he arranged for me to ..

(She waves at the stack of white envelopes)

ELIZABETH: To -- what?

ALICE: To hire a private investigating agency, Liz!

ELIZABETH (livid): That's enough. That's damned well enough. When I need somebody to busybody me --

ALICE: Please, Liz, I know how lousy it sounds, but listen. I'm only starting! I hated to do it, but I was scared. Liz -- how did he know Tony was dead? I didn't

tell him!

ELIZABETH: I don't know what you're hinting at, but it smells pretty bad to me. Ed didn't even know Tony. He must have read about it. Ed is gentle...he's so considerate. He always knows what I want even before I ask... he says he loves me.

ALICE: It's not a monopoly, Liz. We've roomed together since Freshman year; give me a little credit, I think we love each other a little too. Enough to care, and to worry even.

ELIZABETH: I know, Alice...But you'll never convince me Ed did anything except maybe, well, maybe he lost some money in Las Vegas and didn't want to admit it! So he made up the story how he met you, after he heard about Tony somehow. Sure. Sure. All right then, go ahead, what skeleton in the closet did your private eye dig out?

ALICE: For one thing, it seems you knew him a long time ago. Or more like he knew you.

ELIZABETH: What do you mean?

ALICE: P. S. 119, Bridgeport, Conn.

ELIZABETH: P. S. 119? I was .. a child .. we'd just moved there...but I don't recall anyone .. like...Ed? I felt like I knew him, I told him, but, oh, everyone feels *deja vu* sometimes. It's nothing, just a trick of the mind.

ALICE: Second grade. The pretty ones never remember the ugly ducklings. Maybe he had a crush on you. Maybe he sat behind you. Or in the back of the room. And he just watched you. Some nothing little kid you can't remember, except he couldn't forget you.

ELIZABETH: Alice, come on now, the second grade? Please --

ALICE: The agency traced him by school fingerprints. Liz, listen, it gets worse. Lots worse.

ALICE goes to ELIZABETH, who reluctantly lets her seat her. ALICE will pace, sometimes sit on the desk; ELIZABETH is seated.

ALICE: The agency also found that Ed Senior was a compulsive gambler, sometimes won, sometimes lost. And got beat up for it. And told to move. He took his wife and son and moved to the West Coast. The little girl was gone, Liz--

ELIZABETH: But not forgotten, is that it, Alice?

ALICE: Wait. From the Coast he went to Vegas.

ELIZABETH: Like son, like father.

ALICE: He lost there, a typical small time gambler known most for borrowing. But one day he brought his little boy along with him -- and he started to win, every kind of game: roulette, craps, cards, he always won, with the boy along.

ELIZABETH: Like a good luck charm, a rocking-horse winner?

ALICE: The casinos stopped letting the boy in, so he went in for something bigger: the stock-market. And he won there too, won big! The hunches were all perfect!

ELIZABETH: Alice, all this is crazy. What are you implying about the boy?

ALICE: I'm not implying anything, except that he always helped his father to win, like he knew just what his daddy needed, (At this, ELIZABETH is jolted; she seems about to speak but says nothing.) But it was a sick family; there are two records that the boy was hospitalized, for what sounds like severe beatings. And still he tried to help in the one strange way he could. So the bank account piled up on stock winnings. While his mother finally -- flipped out. She spent the next six years in and out of various mental institutions. One orderly's report says she babbled that her son was the devil's son, things like that, and, finally, on one visit she got hold of a pair of scissors and stabbed him. Then, after she was released--

ELIZABETH has gone white, shaking slightly.

ALICE: Liz, what is it?

ELIZABETH: We went swimming about a month ago at the U-pool, and he had a gashy scar near his shoulder. He said he got it when he was a kid, fell on a picket fence... But Alice, be fair. How could he have said what really happened?

ALICE: Shall I stop, Liz? .. I don't know what to think anymore. Maybe I should have butted out right away; it's not any of my business... Heck, you're only my roomie, not even my sister... but I didn't want you to get hurt, and I was afraid... those lies, after Tony's death... Liz...

ELIZABETH has risen, a bit shaky, has gone to the window, looking out. There is light snow, students walking on paths, arms about each other, all dressed warmly, soft glow of lights. An idyllic scene.

ELIZABETH: No, go ahead. Finish. What happened?

ALICE: It isn't pretty. She finally was released, and the report was clean enough even for a suspected psychotic. Except maybe, this is all just conjecture really, she

wasn't clean inside. The three of them went pic nicking later, this was when he was a young man, Ed, on a vacation. Witnesses later said --

ELIZABETH: "Witnesses"?

ALICE: Witnesses. They said that the boy, Ed, was apparently collecting firewood, the husband and wife were in their car, she was behind the wheel. Suddenly she started the car up, and in a minute was driving straight at him.

ELIZABETH: At ED? Her son?

ALICE: That's what they said. Only she didn't reach him. All in one minute -- the car veered aside and went right over a cliff. They didn't touch him. Over. And dead. He was eighteen by then, and his father left behind a one million dollar portfolio. He came East and enrolled here. He may not dress the part, but he has a million dollars in his bank account. Just a poor little rich boy.

ELIZABETH: You're not very humorous. What then?

ALICE: Nothing. That's all. After that you'd be in a better position to know. Isn't it enough?

ELIZABETH; No wonder he has never mentioned his family. All that trouble, and a sick mother. What he must have had to endure, and then to listen to such tripe as that driving-at-him business! Poor Ed!

ALICE: "Poor Ed"! You don't understand -- you love him, I suppose.

ELIZABETH: I do!

ALICE: And you're going right back to him?

ELIZABETH: Right.

ALICE: Don't you understand yet? Forget your sympathy, and think! Ed Hamner is able to do things -- that's the only way I can put it, but he was able to get his father a stake at roulette and make him rich on the market -- maybe he's some kind of psychic. He can -- affect things. He can -- will things to happen. And, Liz, that includes your thinking you .. love him.

ELIZABETH: I've never heard anything so ridiculous in my life.

ALICE: Is it? He gave you that Sociology test the same way he gave his father the number on the wheel. Liz;; he was never enrolled in any Sociology Course! I checked that myself, and you can too! He did it because it was the

only way he could get you to take him seriously.

ELIZABETH: Stop it!

ALICE: He knew the test, and he knew when Tony was killed and he knew when you were taking the plane! He even knew the psychological moment when to step back into your life last October!

ELIZABETH slams her chair back into the desk slot, and goes to the closet, getting her coat.

ALICE: Please, Liz, listen -- I don't know how he does these things -- maybe even he doesn't know, but if he's tricking you by knowing every secret thing you need, then that isn't love. It's rape!

ELIZABETH has dressed, not replying or even looking at ALICE. She rushes out, slamming the door behind her, leaving ALICE looking helplessly at the door. She picks up the packet of white envelopes, after a resigned sigh, holds them over the wastebasket, and drops them in.

30. EXTERIOR. EVENING. SNOW. A bus is pulling away from a corner, the snow swirling down. We see ELIZABETH, who has emerged from the bus. The area is the street of ED'S house. She begins walking toward us, and we see her face is determined and set. Suddenly her eyes widen in a posture of having recalled something. Abrupt CUT TO:

31. EXTERIOR. BRIGHT DAYLIGHT. SCHOOLYARD. EXTREME CLOSE-UP ON LITTLE GIRL (young ELIZABETH), dazzling golden hair, her face going up and down as she counts. The Camera recedes and we see she is jumping rope, the rope held by two girls, and is surrounded by a circle of children.

YOUNG ELIZABETH: 39--40--41--42--43--

While the circle chants her name:

CHILDREN: E-liz-a-beth! E-liz-a-beth!

And now we see it from her P.O.V., up and down, up and down, a blur of motion, the circle swimming before us as we hear her voice continuing to count. Suddenly we are aware she is focusing on a little boy at the periphery of the circle. The scene slows to a drag, the sound dragging like a phonograph record winding down, while the camera slowly zooms to the boy's face, hungry, lonely, wet-eyes, plain -- already indicative of the ED he will become. As we recognize this fact, the adult ED's face is suddenly superimposed, and then, only a flash, the bloody muzzle of the wolf in the dream. Abruptly we cut back to:

32: ELIZABETH, full shot, walking through the snow, and now at ED'S house. There are no lights other than dim parlor light in the front. She turns into the alley, walks back to the rear porch entrance, goes up the steps, through the screen door, peering through the dark windows. Finally, she reaches up to the "secret" hiding-place, and finds the keys. She is very nervous. She unlocks the door, enters. We follow her into the dark hallways as she feels her way along the wall

33 CONTINUED

to the door of ED'S room. She tries the handle. The door is locked. She inserts the key, fumbling for the keyhole. She opens the door at last, and feels for the light switch.

34. INTERIOR. ED'S ROOM. The room is abruptly flooded with light as we see ELIZABETH's hand leaving the light switch, and she enters cautiously.

ELIZABETH (softly, a shiver of light fear): Ed?

There is no response. Surreptitiously, she looks over the room. A gust of wind is heard outside, and impulsively she reaches for the light switch, glancing behind her, but there is no further sound, and her hand falls away. She enters. Idly, she touches a chair, a table, and at last his desk. She tries a desk drawer, but it is locked. She looks beneath a cushion on the easy chair, and the pillows on the unmade bed, but discovers nothing. She notices her photo still on the wall. She goes to the bookcase, a jumble of books and papers. On the top is a book DANCE CRAZES OF THE FIFTIES, with a sheet of paper sticking out. She opens to the page, and starts at it, as we see with her THE STROLL and her name BETH scrawled beneath in red ink. Now she looks at the closet door for a long moment, then goes to it. She uses the second key to open it, and she begins to open the door; something comes bouncing noisily out, causing her to jump nervously. It is a large rubber ball, and she runs to retrieve it, bumping into furniture before she grabs it. It is old and has lost much of its air. She shakes her head in dim recognition, and turning it around sees faint, worn lettering. She traces it: B E H

Now she is quite apprehensive. She puts the ball down on the chair and returns to the closet. The floor is piled with a mass of clothing, the familiar jacket on top. She sees a shelf above, and a row of old, large books. As her hand goes past each, the Camera pans them: HAITIAN VOODOO .. ANCIENT RITES .. THE GOLDEN BOUGH .. MODERN MYSTERIES.. and against the wall a very old book, whose corner she tries to bring closer. She just reveals the letters NECRON when the spine tears in her hand, releasing a small cloud of mouldy pulp bits over her. She pulls back in disgust, wiping her hand on the jacket.

She returns to the pile of clothing, feeling beneath it for anything, blindly probing. She discovers something and tugs at it, the clothing spilling about her as she brings the object out.

It is a cigar-box sized metal box, very old, and although the lettering is worn and scratched over, we can read an ornate BRIDGEPORT CANDY CORP. She realizes the scratching is a name EDWARD HAMNER JR. She shakes it. It rattles. She looks behind her again, as if fearful of being discovered, then cautiously opens the lid.

Looking over her shoulder with her, we see revealed a small doll lying on papers and photos and unseen objects below them. But the doll grips her attention and ours. It is an ordinary toy doll, but it wears a crudely sewn sweater of material obviously not its own, and just as obviously similar to a scarf we had previously seen ELIZABETH wearing. It also has a long curl of bright blonde hair pasted onto its head,

and we recognize with ELIZABETH that the curl is the color of the hair we had seen in the child in the schoolyard recollection. She stares at the doll and its large doll-eyes seem to stare back at her and us. Slowly, she whispers:

ELIZABETH: .. Me!

She touches the curl of hair, and dimly in the howl of the wind we barely discern the child's voice:

CHILD ELIZABETH: 39 - 40 -41

ELIZABETH: Oh, God ...

Holding the doll, she looks beneath it, sees obituaries of ED's parents with headline COUPLE DIE IN AUTO PLUNGE! photos of a man and woman with red circles and radiating lines drawn on, similar to the photo of her on the wall; pieces of cloth spattered with designs. She feels a lumpy thing beneath, shakes the contents of the box on to the floor. A second doll falls out.

Simultaneously we see the doll and hear ELIZABETH scream.

The doll, also a cheap toy doll, wears a crudely replicated leather jacket and jeans, and a leather belt with paper clips attached like tools, but rudely cut open and hanging loosely around the waist. We hear ELIZABETH:

ELIZABETH: TONY-Y-Y-Y-Y-Y!

Clutching a doll in each hand, she holds her head in her hands, sobbing, rocking on her knees. We hear the click of the door and the sound of its being pushed open. ELIZABETH whips around, scrambling desperately up. ED enters, his face stunned, while hers is white with fright. For an instant they stare at each other.

ED: (like a whipped dog) You found it...

ELIZABETH: I can't believe --

ED, (unable to believe this could happen to him): But it's mine, mine --

ELIZABETH: Yours? All this, this insanity?

She holds up the ELIZABETH doll to him.

ELIZABETH: This?

And the TONY doll:

ELIZABETH: And this? I don't understand it at all -- but .. somehow.. you killed Tony .. You killed Tony!

ED (gropingly): They're mine..Give them to me...

ELIZABETH jams the dolls into her coat pockets.

ELIZABETH: No! They're not yours. They'll never be yours.

She fumbles out the TONY doll and holds it up.

ELIZABETH: What could you have done to him with this?
This -- toy!

Now she fumbles for the ELIZABETH doll.

ELIZABETH: And this, this is me, isn't it? What have you done to me?

ED: Everything I did was for you, everything! You are all I cared about! What did he matter -- you didn't love him! Only I know what you need----

As he is finishing the familiar statement, ELIZABETH, sensing it, holds her hands, dolls and all, over her ears. She nearly shrieks:

ELIZABETH: No! No! You don't know anything about me---

He begins to move to her. She jams the dolls back into her pockets, pulling back.

ELIZABETH: Get away- get away from me!

She suddenly shoves at him, sending him stumbling back against the small table near her photo. He goes sprawling. She sees the photo and runs to it, tearing it from the wall, ripping it to pieces and throwing the pieces at him. In the act of doing it, she is speaking:

ELIZABETH: I suppose that's part of it. There! No more! You make me sick! I hate you -- I don't ever want to see you again!

Suddenly he jumps up and runs to the door, sprawling himself across it.

ED: That's the thanks I get. I gave you everything you ever wanted -- things no other man could have -- admit it: I made you happy!

ELIZABETH: You murdered Tony!

He is advancing toward her, and she is retreating around furniture, all the movement slow and methodical.

ED: Yes, and I did it for you. I loved you from the first time I saw you, over seventeen years ago. Could Tony say that? You were so pretty -- everything came easy for you. You didn't have to find other ways to get the things you needed. All you had to do was smile and say please. I could never get what I wanted that way. Don't you think I tried? It didn't work with my father --

he just wanted more and more. He never even gave me a goodnight kiss till I made him rich. And my mother -- they always used to argue and I made their marriage secure in their minds -- yes, I did it, but I couldn't get her to like me. She hated me! She said I was unnatural! Nothing came easy for me, no matter what I did for others. So if that's what they wanted, they got it! They tried to kill me, but I showed them. And I showed Tony too! Beth! I'm the only person who knows you best -- I can give you everything you want!

The door is clear now. ELIZABETH suddenly runs to it, hurling it open, screaming at ED:

ELIZABETH: There's nothing you can give me -- there's nothing I want from you!

She slams the door behind her.

35. INTERIOR, dimly lit HALLWAY, light coming only from the windowed door opening on the porch, and slivers of light from the closed door of ED's room. We follow right behind ELIZABETH as she runs to the back door, frantically opens it, looking back for an instant (at us, the Camera.) Her face is suddenly bright with light as we hear ED'S door opening and the light pouring into the hall. ELIZABETH turns and is on the porch, slamming the backdoor behind her.

36. EXTERIOR. PORCH, Night snow-light
The screen door swings, open in the wind, and snow has covered the floor at its doorway.

MID-SHOT as we see ELIZABETH carefully descend the back steps on to the gravel. We hear ED shouting behind her and running up the hallway.

ED: Beth! Beth!

He opens the backdoor, sees her on the gravel below.

ED: I want you Beth --

She holds up the ELIZABETH doll.

ELIZABETH: This is what you want!

He rushes out on to the porch, slips on the snow, crashes down the back steps, head first on to the gravel, near her feet. He looks up at her. His face is a bleeding mass of cuts from the stones. He hisses:

ED: You're mine!

ELIZABETH: Yours -- this is yours!

ELIZABETH tears the doll to pieces, throwing them at him.

ELIZABETH: This is all you'll ever have of me -- I hate you! I hated you then and I hate you now!

ED is on his knees, picking at the pieces of the doll. The wind blows away the bits of cloth and the curl of hair. He doesnot pursue them. He sits back in the snow as ELIZABETH runs to the alley. She turns to look at him, and he makes no motion to pursue her.

ELIZABETH: There's nothing you can ever do to me now, with all your books and your mumbo-jumbo. (Mockingly:) And will you still know what I need?

ED: Go away. Go on then! You'll never find anyone like me, to really care... and when you're alone and nobody else even looks at you, you'll wish for me! You'll remember what I did for you ---

Suddenly, he drops his head against the snow and gravel, hitting it against the stones. He is mumbling:

ED: Nothing. Nothing. Nothing.

The snow is bloodied.

ELIZABETH turns and walks down the alleyway, hearing behind her the echo:

ED: Nothing, nothing, nothing....

37. EXTREME CLOSE-UP ELIZABETH walking in the snow. Since she is on a bridge, lights flash and quickly go around her as she passes the adjacent lampposts. We realize this as the camera withdraws to a mid-shot. She pauses, leaning on the railing and looking at the dark, swirling waters beneath. She reaches into her pocket and withdraws the TONY doll. She looks sadly at it, tugs at the shreds of clothing on it as if to make it feel warm. Then, eyes closed, face tight, she drops the doll over the edge, gently. She opens her eyes, watching. ABRUPT CUT:

38: REPEAT IMAGE OF TONY FALLING FROM THE TELEPHONE POLE, tumbling over and over in slow motion. At the moment of impact:

38: LONG SHOT FROM ELIZABETH'S P.O.V. We see the doll hit the water with a small splash, floating in circles for an instant and then vanishing.

39. CLOSE-UP OF ELIZABETH from the other side of the guardrail. She is staring down at the water. The Camera slowly swings behind her, on the bridge, remaining stationary there as ELIZABETH adjusts her coat collar, turns and continues along the bridge, away from us, into the snow, and continuing until all we see is the snow.

SLOW FADE

THE END

N.B. This play was prepared for private distribution only, and is not to be used, excerpted or adapted in any form.

COLLINS' CORNER

BLOOD? WHAT IN PERDITION
DO YOU MEAN BLOOD?
GIVE ME PEANUTS
AND A COCA COLA
ANY DAY!

COCA COLA
PEANUTS
~

PEANUTS

