

THE FANCY DANCER

CLOSE-SHOT: ORGAN KEYBOARD

A hand flicks on a switch, and the old organ pulsates to life. Quickly the hands release all the stops. The fingers come down on the yellowed ivory keys and we hear the ~~fixxx~~ opening voice of a BACH FUGUE.

MONTAGE: INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - TOWN OF COTTONWOOD, MONTANA

The church is old and in disrepair. This is not a wealthy parish. Yet there ~~RE~~ remains a magnificence to the STAINED GLASS WINDOWS, the ALTAR of imported Italian marble, the CARVED PEWS of good Victorian yellow oak.

Scattered in the pews are the PARISH REGULARS, about 15 of them, mostly women over 40. They kneel or sit quietly in contemplation of the music. There is a conspicuous absence of young people.

CLOSE-SHOT: THE ORGANIST - FATHER THOMAS

He is a YOUNG PRIEST, 28 years old, dressed in a black priest's cassock. He is blond-haired and handsome. But there is a certain exhaustion about him as the heavy fugue begins to weigh upon his spirits.

He looks up into the small organist's MIRROR in which he can view the parishioners below him as he plays. In the mirror, his eyes travel to a DARK FIGURE in the shadows of the last row of the poorly lighted (for financial reasons) ~~(aw)~~ The figure is staring up at Father Thomas as he plays. Surprised by a brief eye contact through the mirror, Father Thomas quickly averts his eyes back to the keys. ~~The dark young man in the~~  
~~stares at Father Thomas.~~

Around the walls of the church are murals depicting scenes from the life of a local pioneer, Father de Smet, and his Jesuits as they worked to convert the Indians. The murals are faded and draped with cobwebs. A crack from a recent earthquake runs up the wall, running right between the eyes of one of the Jesuits, shifting one eye upward and giving him a kind of crazy look.

FATHER THOMAS glances again in the mirror. The dark young man continues to stare up at him. The wild intensity of his eyes carries over the distance. This time, Father Thomas returns the stare a beat longer.

Abruptly, Father Thomas breaks off the fugue. Furiously, he pulls out some different stops on the organ and crashes into the bizarre modernist chords of a piece by Gabriel FAURE.

CONTINUED

Several of the good ladies of the church turn around and look up at Father Thomas as he exuberantly whales away at the four keyboards and the foot pedals like the Phantom of the Opera. The ladies are both startled and pissed at being so rudely jolted from their meditations by Father Thomas' little joke.

The DARK YOUNG MAN is also again looking up at Father Thomas - with a big grin on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFESSIONAL - FATHER THOMAS (CREDIT SEQUENCE)

He sits quietly, patiently in front of the grill that separates him from the parishioners, as he listens to their typically small-town confessions.

He hears the curtains part as someone enters the booth and clumsily sits down. The ensuing VOICE is that of a drunk, middle-aged woman on the verge of tears.

DRUNK WOMAN'S VOICE

Father forgive me, for I have sinned. It has been two weeks since my last confession.

FATHER THOMAS

What are your sins, my daughter.

DRUNK WOMAN'S VOICE

(rambling in a drunken slur)

Father, I know I ought to stop drinking, but I just can't. Harry always has his drinks after lunch and after supper and then he just falls asleep in front of the television, so he's no company for me. And my daughter treats me terribly. Can't you speak to her. She says the worst things to me. I know she's mad at me because I drink, but I get so lonely. She's never home anymore. She and her boyfriend - he's such a nice boy and I spoke with his mother on the phone once and she seemed awfully nice - but Susie-Ann and him, they always go off in his car, and some days she doesn't even call me to tell me where she is...

Father Thomas rests his forehead on his hand listening in sober silence.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONFESSIONAL - FATHER THOMAS

A SECOND VOICE, that of an OLD LADY, comes through the confessional grill to Father Thomas. Now there is a hint of an affectionate smile on his face.

OLD LADY'S VOICE

Now let me see, Father, you must forgive me but I guess my mind must be going because I can't remember...now did I do repentance for my sin of gluttony? I had three pieces of Jenny Ogilby's devils food cake, but - of course, that was two weeks ago Friday. or was it Thursday? Anyway I must have confessed that last week. Of course I know I'm still drinking too much tea.

FATHER THOMAS

For your penance, before each meal, or whenever you are tempted to overindulge, you should meditate on the poor and hungry of the world who are less fortunate than you.

OLD LADY'S VOICE

Oh, Father - can't you give me an old-fashioned penance, perhaps 10 rosaries?

FATHER THOMAS

(with a deep sigh)

Very well. For your penance, say 3 Our Fathers and 3 Hail Marys, and, if you feel you need any more penance, then meditate on the hungry of the world.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONFESSIONAL - FATHER THOMAS

A THIRD VOICE, that of a TEENAGED GIRL, is in the middle of confession.

TEENAGER'S VOICE

...and I've been discourteous to my mother...

FATHER THOMAS

Yes...

CONTINUED

TEENAGER'S VOICE

And I smoked some pot at my Mom an' Dad's house when they were away in Butte for the K of C convention...

FATHER THOMAS

Yes...

*Change to my script*

TEENAGER'S VOICE

And **Robbie** Sanchez tried to kiss me, and he put his hand, you know, where it's not supposed to be...?

FATHER THOMAS

Did you try to stop him?

TEENAGER'S VOICE

Yes!... Well, I sorta tried. But I didn't let him go no further!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONFSSIONAL - FATHER THOMAS

Another VOICE, that of a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN, is confessing.

WOMAN'S VOICE

And I have lusted after another woman's husband and have had carnal thoughts about him...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CONFSSIONAL (END CREDIT SEQUENCE)

As the MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN leaves the confessional, crosses herself and walks away down the aisle. No one else immediately enters.

INT. CONFSSIONAL - FATHER THOMAS

Assuming he has heard the last confession for the evening, Father Thomas starts to rise to leave when he hears a man's footsteps approaching the confessional. The curtain swishes and the man kneels heavily into the confessional. He is evidently drunk. His head presses against the wooden lattice, and Father Thomas can see dark, wavy hair pushing through the openings. Clearly it is the dark young man he had seen earlier in the organ mirror.

CONTINUED

YOUNG MAN'S VOICE  
Father? You in there?

His hand grips at the grill, his fingers curling tensely through the openings.

FATHER THOMAS  
Yes, I'm here.

YOUNG MAN'S VOICE  
(all worked up)  
Father, I.....shit!

FATHER THOMAS  
It's alright. Relax.

YOUNG MAN'S VOICE  
Yeah, well, man, the thing is - I've had a few drinks.

FATHER THOMAS  
I can see that. You've smoked a little grass, too.

YOUNG MAN'S VOICE  
(sarcastic)  
Hell, I forgot to eat a mint.  
(then serious)  
Look, I seen you around town. I figure maybe I can talk to you. I can't fuckin' talk to old whats-iz-name.

FATHER THOMAS  
Father Vance?

YOUNG MAN'S VOICE (sarcastic again)  
Yeah. Hail Mary full of grace and God forgives you.

FATHER THOMAS  
We're not here to pass judgment on you - and there's no point in trying to shock me with your disrespect for the Church. If you're willing to turn to God for help, God is ready to help you.

YOUNG MAN'S VOICE  
(gloomy)  
I don't think God will help me.

CONTINUED

FATHER THOMAS

If you're truly sorry for  
your sins, the Lord will  
forgive you.

YOUNG MAN'S VOICE

(taunting him)

Mine aren't your usual  
run-of-the-mill sins, Father.

FATHER THOMAS

If you've invented a new sin,  
the world will beat a path to  
your door. But I can't help  
you if you don't tell me what  
it is you've done.

The young man snorts in amusement at Father Thomas' wry humor.

YOUNG MAN'S VOICE

You're alright, man. But the  
thing is, I don't know if I'm  
ready to confess tonight. I  
need to think this out a little.  
Ya know? Maybe if I could talk  
to you a couple times...maybe  
you could like counsel me.

FATHER THOMAS

That's what I'm here for.

There is silence a moment from the young man. Then suddenly he  
strikes his hand violently against the lattice separating them.

YOUNG MAN'S VOICE

I can't talk through this  
goddam thing! It's like fuckin'  
jail again!

FATHER THOMAS

Would you prefer that I come  
outside?

YOUNG MAN'S VOICE

Yeah. Face to face.

EXT. CONFSSIONAL

Father Thomas comes out of the Confessional. The church is empty  
now except for the dark young man who Father Thomas now recognizes  
as VIDAL STUMP, the town's most notorious troublemaker. Vidal is  
about the same age as FATHER THOMAS, late 20's. He is dressed in  
levis and a leather jacket. Vidal's wild eyes make hard contact  
with Father Thomas' - a challenge which Father Thomas meets with  
a quieting calm.

CONTINUED

FATHER THOMAS  
(indicating a pew)  
We can sit here if you like.

Vidal continues to stare; then, deciding he trusts him, sits down opposite Father Thomas in the pew.

FATHER THOMAS  
Tell me about yourself, Vidal.

VIDAL  
(surprised)  
You know who I am?

FATHER THOMAS  
Vidal... Stump, isn't it?  
It's a small town. We've  
passed on the street a few  
times.

VIDAL  
(suddenly shy)  
*And* You remember ~~that~~  
*me*?

FATHER THOMAS  
You said you'd like to talk.

Vidal looks suspiciously around the church.

VIDAL  
Do we have to do it here?

FATHER THOMAS  
No. We do counseling at the  
rectory. I have my own office.  
It's completely private. And  
anything you may wish to talk  
about there will be held as  
strictly confidential as here.

VIDAL  
(continuing to stare)  
Okay. Can I come tomorrow?

FATHER THOMAS  
(shaking his head no)  
Tomorrow I play the organ  
for Father Vance's high mass  
at nine. And then I'm driving  
into the city to see my folks.  
I only get in once a month,  
and it's my mother's birthday.  
Could you come Monday ~~evening~~  
at 7:30?

CONTINUED

Vidal nervously punches his fist a few times into the palm of his other hand - an expression of pent-up frustration. Then he slaps his Indian-style black hat on his head and stands up.

VIDAL

Okay.

FATHER THOMAS

Monday at 7:30 then?

Vidal pulls on his leather jacket, without confirming the appointment.

VIDAL

Goodbye, Father.

Vidal turns and walks away. Father Thomas stands watching him. He notes Vidal's distinctive catlike swagger.

*Vidal's leather jacket, in large silver studs, is the word ME.*

Vidal disappears out the door into the evening light. The door bangs shut. Moments later, the sound of a motorcycle coughs to life outside.

Father Thomas smiles and shakes his head in amusement and curiosity.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH - EVENING

Father Thomas walks pensively from the church and enters the rectory - a one story, red brick Victorian house overgrown with lilacs.

INT. RECTORY

As Thomas enters the small dining room, FATHER VANCE, his plate already cleaned of dinner, sits reading the local newspaper.

FATHER VANCE

(gruffly)

You're late.

FATHER VANCE is a priest of the old tradition, now slowed down by arthritis. He is something of an institution in the town of Cottonwood and doesn't take kindly to Thomas' new ways.

THOMAS

I'm sorry, Father. Just at nine, someone wanted to confess.

FATHER VANCE

And you played that modernistic music again, didn't you! Even after I asked you to stick to the nice old hymns everyone is familiar with.

*add hymns*

CONTINUED



Thomas restrains himself from answering. He does not want to get into another argument about modernizing the Church. The housekeeper, MRS. BIRCHER, brings Thomas a plate of food.

MRS. BIRCHER  
I kept your ~~chicken~~ <sup>spaghetti</sup> on the back burner nice and warm, Father Thomas.

THOMAS  
Thank you, Mrs. Bircher.  
I'm sorry I'm late.

Father Vance looks up again from his newspaper as Thomas digs in.

FATHER VANCE  
I understand that young troublemaker Vidal Stump was in church tonight.

THOMAS  
(not looking up)  
Yes. In fact it was he who came in at nine.

FATHER VANCE  
(impressed)  
Hmnp! I guess if God's grace can reach him, it can reach anybody!

Thomas smiles secretly at this grudging acknowledgement of his accomplishment.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

EXT. RECTORY - SUNDAY MORNING

A red Triumph sportscar backs snortingly out of the driveway. Father Thomas is driving. He wears black trousers, a black turtleneck sweater, and a sports jacket. This is one of his rare days off.

*his social uniform.*

MONTAGE: COTTONWOOD, MONTANA

As Thomas drives through the small town.

He passes slowly along narrow residential streets lined with large old houses with neatly trimmed lawns; then down Main Street past an unprosperous-looking business district; then past a few bars, gas stations, and a teenage hangout. As he passes, the kids at the hangout wave to Father Thomas, who they clearly consider a friend.

CONTINUED

Signs everywhere promote the upcoming COTTONWOOD RODEO AND COUNTY FAIR.

At a stop sign, MRS. SHOUP, the town busybody, waddles across the street in front of Father Thomas, eying his sportscar disapprovingly. Thomas gives her a top-of-the-morning type nod and smile. MRS. SHOUP curtly returns the nod with a forced smile.

On the outskirts of town, Thomas passes the popular new shopping center that has stolen most of the business from downtown, then turns on the access road to the Interstate Highway, heading South toward Helena, the state capitol.

#### EXT. THE OPEN ROAD

The surrounding mountains are shedding the last of their snow, and the rolling foothills are green with a slight hint of the coming rash of wildflowers.

Quickly, the signs of town are behind him. The countryside is devoted entirely to ranches and farms.

Exhilarated by the open road and spring air, Thomas guns the throttle, purposely challenging the 55 mph speed limit. He turns on the radio, quickly flashing by a few inspirational programs and the latest quotes of wheat and corn prices - to KGLM, Butte, a country music and soft rock station.

#### EXT. HELENA, MONTANA

As Thomas approaches the capitol city, the traffic increases, and the countryside gives way to new suburban developments, the usual McDonald's and Holiday Inns, and the modest skyline of the old central city, now updated with a few new highrisers.

#### EXT. WEST SIDE RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

Thomas pulls into the driveway of a towered Victorian brick residence in this upper middle class old part of town. This is where Thom grew up, and he takes pleasure looking around the pleasant yard, noting how very little has changed since his youth.

He bounds up to the old porch, but the door opens before he can ring it; and there stands his MOTHER, flushed and glowing and all smiles. She is a small woman, and even in her 50's, she still looks girlish and smart, fresh from the hairdressers.

MOTHER  
Thommy!

They hug and kiss.

CUT TO:

INT. PARENTS' HOUSE

Thom, his mother, and his FATHER sit around the formal setting of Sunday dinner, while ROSIE, their 66 year old maid, clears away the main course. Thom's FATHER is a semi-retired banker, gentle and impish in a baggy suit and bifocals.

MOTHER

...and so the Historical Society wants me to run for Chairperson; but it's such a responsibility. Do you think I should do it, Tommy?

*more relevant  
IRA  
Women's movement*

Her question brings Thom out of a reverie - he has been staring out the window.

THOM

I'm sorry - what did you say?

MOTHER

You seem miles away today, Tommy.

THOM

I'm sorry. I was thinking about a parishioner I'm counseling. A very tough case.

FATHER

How are things at St. Mary's, Thom?

THOM

Oh, same as always - absolutely bananas. St. Michael's over in Riverdale has closed down now, so we're the only parish left in the Valley. And we're living on macaroni and burning wood to conserve energy and only half lighting the church.

*my things are black & blue from bumping in to posts*

FATHER

And how's dear Father Vance?

THOM

Oh, he seems to be having a lovely time - back there in the 19th Century.

They all laugh.

THOM

(continuing)

At least I have the Parish Council and my adult education classes - so I'm involved in what's going on in the community.

THOM  
(continuing)

And every once in a while we even seem to make some progress. But then that's usually offset by our self-proclaimed guardian of public decency, Mrs. Shoup, who seems to think the Supreme Court's decision upholding local standards on pornography means we should ban "Catcher In the Rye" from the school libraries.

MOTHER  
Not really.

THOM  
Oh yes. Not to mention Hemingway and Oscar Wilde and a few of those other well-known pornographers.

FATHER  
Hemingway!

THOM  
Yeah. "The Old Man and the Sea." The Old Man relieves himself over the side of the boat.

They all make amused noises of disbelief.

THOM  
I kid you not.

There is a lull in the conversation, and Thom looks at his watch.

THOM  
I've got to run along to my appointment with Father LeMatt pretty soon - or I won't make it back to Cottonwood under Father Vance's ten o'clock curfew. And then he'll feel obliged to smell my breath to make sure I haven't been out hitting the bars or cavorting with loose women.

Just at this moment, Rosie, the maid, enters the room carrying a birthday cake with 5 candles on it and starts singing "Happy Birthday To You..." Thom and his father join in as the cake is set in front of his mother, who beams in her spotlight.

CONTINUED

THOM  
Now make a wish.

She closes her eyes a moment making her wish, then glances a loving look at Thom - as if the wish perhaps concerned him.

CLOSE-UP: THE CAKE

as she blows out the candles.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP: ALTAR CANDLES

as a NUN in a short modern habit lights the candles.

INT. HELENA CATHEDRAL

Walking past the altar in this large cathedral are Thom and his spiritual advisor, FATHER LeMATT. LeMatt looks like a Jesuit Ichabod Crane, standing an angular 6'6", with a large skull and high-bridged nose. *they walk briskly together through the cathedral, then outside through the grounds of adjacent college campus.*

LeMATT

Every young curate has that moment when he suddenly realizes that the Church is a sinking ship and that he is the chosen rat who's got to stay aboard and save it.

THOM

Seriously, Father, I don't want you to misunderstand. I like it in Cottonwood. I like dealing with the people. I get very involved in their problems - I suppose maybe too involved. Sometimes I lie awake worrying: Did ~~Janie~~ *me* *Shoup* have the abortion anyway? Did old Mr. Hoover really hear me when I asked him if he wanted to confess, or had he already lost too much blood...?

LeMATT  
(interrupting)

Pray.

Thom stops walking and looks down at the ground as if this is not a satisfactory answer for him.

CONTINUED

LeMATT  
(sternly)

You have very little inward life,  
so you have no defense against all  
the stresses. I've told you before.  
Obviously you've made very little  
progress.

THOM  
(miserable)

I know. To be honest with you,  
I feel very close to my  
parishioners, but very far from  
Our Lord.

LeMatt shakes his head in disbelief.

LeMATT  
You're one of the casualties  
of what they call the new  
spirituality. Actually I'm  
not sure it is spirituality.  
Back in the '60's, we threw out  
the litanies, the novenas, the  
rosaries - all in the name of  
reform. But the rosary was at  
least better than nothing -  
when you were down and out.  
It was a start - a place to  
focus your thoughts. I'm not  
sure your generation has  
found anything to replace that.  
A priest without a spiritual  
life is just a glorified  
social worker.

They walk on a bit in silence. Thom is particularly gloomy.

LeMATT  
I shouldn't get your hopes up,  
but perhaps you should know.  
Bishop Carney is going to need a  
new secretary this Fall, and  
you're one of the men being  
considered.

Thom visibly brightens at this news.

LeMATT  
(critical)  
You'd like to have your feet  
on the yellow brick road that  
leads to monsignor, wouldn't you.

CONTINUED

LEMATT  
 (continuing)  
 Well Bishop Carney has a special regard for your Father Vance, and he's not 100% sure he wants to take you out of Cottonwood. So don't get your hopes up. Just...

THOM  
 ...pray.

LEMATT  
 (slow smile)  
 Sometimes our fantasies and God's will coincide.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET, COTTONWOOD - NIGHT

Thom stops his Triumph at a red light on Main Street. There is what sounds like a fistfight going on in the adjacent alley behind the old Rainbow Hotel and the ~~Greyhound~~ <sup>RAILWAYS</sup> bus terminal. THREE MEN are slugging it out, crashing over garbage cans. From the flash of the "Pancy Dances" studs on the back of a leather jacket, Thom realizes that Vidal is one of the three.

Checking quickly to see if there are any other cars around (there aren't), Thom guns his car through the red light and wheels into the Hotel parking lot. He jumps out of the car and runs to the alley.

A WOMAN opens a window from up in the Hotel and yells down at the fistfighters:

WOMAN  
 Hey, shut the fuck up,  
 down there!

In the alley, Thom now clearly sees:

(SLOW MOTION) Vidal is taking on TWO ~~guys~~ <sup>GUYS-</sup> ~~guys~~. They've been at it a while and all three are bloody and stumbling around. To Thom's eyes, it appears almost as a ballet.

(NORMAL SPEED) Momentarily evading his two assailants, Vidal stumbles toward the end of the alley, where, silhouetted from behind ~~and dressed in his black priest's cassock~~, Thom's 6 foot frame looms tall with Christian rectitude.

The two ~~guys~~ <sup>guys</sup> pick themselves up and start after Vidal, but they stop, surprised, when they see Thom.

Vidal stumbles up to Thom and, drunkenly, crosses himself.

CONTINUED

VIDAL  
Hail Mary full of grace...

THOM  
(firm)  
Come with me!

He motions Vidal toward his Triumph in the Hotel parking lot.  
(The Two ~~Thoms~~ <sup>guys</sup> are not pursuing - ~~they're probably Catholics~~).

The very drunk ~~Vidal~~ <sup>Vidal</sup> suddenly lurches back in the direction of the ~~thugs~~ <sup>guys</sup>. Surprised, Thom looks after him as if he were crazy.

Vidal searches around in the garbage in the alley and comes up with his black Indian hat. He bangs it on his knee to get the dirt off and plunks it on his head. The thugs still aren't making a move. Feeling cocky, with a big grin on his face, Vidal turns back toward Thom.

VIDAL  
My hat.

In the distance is heard a police siren.

THOM  
(coaxing)  
C'mon. Before Chief Wheeler gets here.

~~Vidal~~ <sup>Vidal</sup> turns once more toward the ~~thugs~~ <sup>guys</sup> and gives them an "up yours" with his finger. They lunge at him and he jumps back and hightails it for Thom's Triumph, Thom following quickly behind him.

They scramble into the car. Thom turns the ignition and they screech out of the parking lot and up Main Street.

Once in the safety of the car, Thom has trouble catching his breath. Vidal sits there drunkenly watching him drive. Thom slows down to a normal speed.

A POLICE CAR, its lights flashing and siren going, whizzes past from the other direction. Thom keeps on driving. Vidal turns his head to watch as the flashing lights disappear into the distance behind them. Then he turns back to Thom.

VIDAL  
Don't you want to see me punished for my sins?

Vidal suddenly opens the door of the moving car and starts to get out. Terrified, Thom slams on the breaks.

THOM  
(aghast)  
What are you doing!

CONTINUED



Vidal stumbles out of the car.

VIDAL  
Gotta take a leak.

He stands on the sidewalk, back to Thom, and proceeds to relieve himself against the neon-lit display window of Fowler's Jewelry Store.

Thom is truly shocked. He just sits there with his mouth open and watches.

Vidal finishes urinating and with a backward hunch of his hips pulls himself back into his pants. He turns and stumbles back toward the car, trying to rebutton his fly as he goes. But he's too drunk, so as he falls back into the car, he stops trying.

VIDAL (*to himself*)  
~~Fuck it. Let it all~~  
~~hang out.~~

He now looks over at Father Thomas and catches the shocked look on his face.

VIDAL  
(grinning)  
Ooops, sorry, Father.  
Too much beer.  
It won't happen again.

With this he breaks out chuckling. Thom doesn't see what's so funny. He starts driving again.

Suddenly Vidal starts to open the door again.

VIDAL  
Let me off here.

Again, Father Thomas screeches on the brakes. This again amuses Vidal. Thom is quite confounded by him. Vidal points to the shadowed form of a motorcycle parked in the alley by the Main Street Bar.

VIDAL  
My bike.

THOM  
Oh!

Vidal stumbles into the darkness toward his cycle. Something crashes in the dark.

THOM  
(startled)  
Are you alright?

CONTINUED

VIDAL'S VOICE  
(at some inanimate object)  
Goddam fuckin' shit!

There's another crash. Then the sound of the cycle kicking to a start. Vidal weaves out of the alley on his bike and makes a clumsy stop at Thom's window.

VIDAL  
(emphatic)  
Monday at 7:30!

He adjusts his hat and guns his bike off down Main Street.

CUT TO:

INT. RECTORY

As Thom walks in still a little dazed from his street encounter. Father Vance has been waiting for him.

FATHER VANCE  
You're late!

Thom looks at his watch. It is 10:21.

THOM  
(lying)  
I, ah, my Mother's birthday party. She was having such a good time, I ~~couldn't tear myself away.~~ *lost track of time.*

Thom moves quickly off toward his room before he can be interrogated any further. Father Vance mumbles after him:

FATHER VANCE  
Wouldn't ya know I'd get a no-good hippy pilgrim with a fancy sports car who can't even bring himself to respect the rules of the rectory...

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. FATHER THOMAS'S OFFICE - MONDAY EVENING

A teenage girl sits with her head down, weeping, the tears running down her face. She is MEG SHOUP, daughter of the town busybody.

Father Thom sits opposite her on the edge of his desk.

FATHER THOM

Meg, think about what I told you. Don't do anything foolish. This house I told you about in Helena can help you, but you'll have to tell your parents.

*Take good care of girls in your situation. Thought about how you'd come to deal this to your parent.*

MEG

(rising)

I gotta go, Father.

THOM

May God be with you.

Meg stands and goes to the door, wiping her tears from her face. Thom walks with her and opens the door, giving her a reassuring squeeze on the shoulder.

In the small waiting room outside the office sits Vidal Stump. Meg passes quickly out of the room.

THOM

(to Vidal)

Come on in.

VIDAL

Does everyone leave your office crying their eyes out?

Vidal's face is still a little bruised from the alley fight. But he has combed his hair and wears clean levis and a white Yucatan wedding shirt. He seems particularly shy and subdued as Thom nods him to be seated in the office. Vidal carries his hat in his hand, and plays with it nervously as he stares at the floor.

VIDAL

(clearing his throat)

Hey look, I'm sorry about last night. I was really drunk.

THOM

(simply)

There's nothing to be sorry about.

CONTINUED

VIDAL  
 Yeah, well I'm sorry anyway.  
 (looking up at Thom)  
 That's what confession's  
 all about, isn't it?

Thom smiles, then gets down to business.

THOM  
 You're from ~~up at~~ Browning,  
 aren't you?

VIDAL  
 Yeah. I'm one quarter Indian.

THOM  
 Were you born on the reservation?

VIDAL  
 Hell, I was born right in  
 Browning there. My folks  
 are town Indians. The fullbloods  
 up in the hills at Heart Butte  
 kinda look down on us. Went  
 to high school in Browning.

*elaborate on  
 fullblood*

THOM  
 What about college?

VIDAL  
 Yeah - for a year. Had a  
 scholarship to Montana U.  
 You know, promising young  
 Injun. Studied hard. I was  
 even engaged for a while to  
 a girl there - Georgia Keough.  
 Her old man's in the state  
 legislature now.

There is a rising bitterness in Vidal's voice. He stops talking,  
 ruminating on these memories.

THOM  
 (gently)  
 What happened?

VIDAL  
 Guess I just wasn't cut out  
 to wear a suit. That summer,  
 after my first year at  
 Missoula, I went back home  
 and raised a little hell.  
 Guess I was tired of living  
 up to everybody else's  
 expectations but my own.  
 Anyway, my ~~dad~~ came down on me  
 real hard. *old man*

THOM

What does your father do?

The subject of Vidal's father evidently hits a real nerve. The blood starts pulsating through the veins in Vidal's neck.

*Old man?* VIDAL

My ~~Dad~~ He's what you'd call a tribal pig - a reservation cop. He tried to... knock some sense into me. And that gave me all the more reason to.... Well, to make a long story short, I did something real dumb. Robbed a liquer store. One of the regular town cops caught me. They put me away for 3 years - with my father's blessing. Got out in 2 - for "good behavior".

Vidal glances challengingly at Thom, then snorts bitterly.

VIDAL

(continuing)

But you probably don't know what that means - good behavior.

THOM

What does it mean?

VIDAL

It means you do whatever anyone asks you to do - and then you say thank you. (he snorts again ironically) So then I was out. I'd lost my scholarship. So much for school. Went down to L.A. Met my... wife there. You musta heard about her - the retard?

(he smiles maliciously)

Hitched up with her down there. So L.A.'s different, but the air's bad. So we came back up here. Prison placement service gets me this job as a mechanic. I'm good with my hands. An' it pays me enough to support my bad habits.

(he looks at Thom)

I do all the talkin' - that's the idea, huh?

THOM

If you like.

CONTINUED

VIDAL

Well, Father, the thing is,  
I'm a young man on the way  
down. But I'd like to stop.  
I'd like to turn things around -  
get a sense of commitment back.  
Purpose. I've tried by myself,  
but, ah, as you've seen, trouble  
and me seem to have an affinity.

Vidal has evidently finished what he has to say. There is silence  
for a moment.

THOM

Is that all?

Vidal sighs deeply and nods yes.

THOM

(softly)

I don't believe you.

VIDAL

(amused)

Okay. You don't believe me.  
What else do you want to hear?

Thom is momentarily stymied. He changes the subject.

THOM

Where do you get that ~~top~~<sup>grass</sup>  
you're always smoking?

This really breaks the ice. Vidal grins broadly.

VIDAL

That's Indian weed, Father.  
High grade stuff. Grows wild  
over in Bitterroot. Want some?  
I'll get you some.

THOM

(shaking his head no)

That wasn't what I meant.

VIDAL

No? Ain'tcha ever been high?  
Real spiritual stuff, this!

THOM

(musing)

I used to smoke - a little.  
Back in college in the 60's.

CONTINUED

VIDAL

Yeah, the 60's. Hot shit times. The 70's really suck. How'd you spend the 60's, Father? I don't know why the ~~suck~~ I'm callin' you Father - we're 'bout the same age. How old are you?

THOM

Twenty-eight.

VIDAL

I'm 27 come July. Why you wanta be a priest anyway? In this day and age. Everyone knows the Catholic Church has had it. You really believe in all that old shit about abortions and divorce and sex?

THOM

To be honest with you, the way things are right now, I believe the only thing a person can do is follow his conscience. And the only real judge of that is God.

VIDAL

(intense)

So, if I had sex with a person, and it was against what the Church said, but I really believed I'd done the right thing, then everything'd be okay?

THOM

If you really believed you were right, you'd be okay.

(he rolls his eyes)

If Father Vance heard me say that, he'd crucify me - but that's what I believe.

There is another lull in the conversation. Father Thom looks at his watch, then back at Vidal.

THOM

What's really on your mind? In Church the other night, you acted like someone who's pretty disturbed about something.

CONTINUED

Vidal looks around the office uneasily, suddenly feeling closed in again.

VIDAL

This place is almost as bad as that little box in the church. I don't like talking here.

THOM

Maybe you'd like to talk somewhere else?

VIDAL

Do they let you have supper with people?

THOM

There isn't any "they". I'm not a prisoner here.

VIDAL

No? Then why don't you come to my house for supper tomorrow night.

THOM

*Tomorrow night is Binso night.*  
How about Wednesday?

VIDAL

(standing)

Okay. Wednesday. I've sure wasted your time, haven't I, Father?

THOM

Not unless you think you have.

VIDAL

You know where I live?

Thom shakes his head no.

VIDAL

(continuing)

Okay - you take Main down and cross the river...

DISSOLVE TO:



EXT. COTTONWOOD - WEDNESDAY NIGHT

It is raining as Father Thom drives his Triumph through the poorer section of town on his way to Vidal's house for supper.

Through the windshield, as the wipers move rhythmically back and forth, the bridge crossing the Cottonwood River passes by.

Thom is wearing his social uniform again: his black turtleneck and sports jacket.

OFF SCREEN, we continue to hear Vidal's instructions on how to get to his house.

VIDAL (V.O.)  
(continuing)  
Turn left on Willow  
Street and on over the tracks...

The car rumbles over a set of railroad tracks. Willow Street is dotted with trailer homes and cheap pre-fab houses, and looks all the more dreary in the rain.

VIDAL (V.O.)  
(continuing)  
My place is the last house  
at the end of the street.

Thom pulls up in front of a little clapboard house, its upkeep long neglected, surrounded by a yard overgrown with weeds. Vidal's motorcycle is up on the dilapidated porch - out of the rain.

Thom hurries to the door and knocks.

It is a couple minutes wait before Vidal finally opens the door. He is wearing his usual levis, an ~~undershirt~~ <sup>undershirt</sup>, and no shoes. His hair is wet and slicked back. *He has a drink in his hand.*

VIDAL  
Hi. Just took a shower.  
Come on in.  
(then, in a low voice)  
Now don't pay any attention  
to my wife. She can't help  
the way she is.

INT. VIDAL'S HOUSE

Thom looks around at the squalid interior.

Two muddy mongrel dogs are sleeping on a sagging sofa. There is a chintzy fake Oriental rug on the floor, well stained and apparently never swept. Among the debris on the floor are well-chewed dog bones, a couple old corn cobs, a baby's rattle, and seeds scattered from a parakeet's cage at the window. A beat up old black and white TV is blaring loudly. A bundle of greasy mechanic's overalls and dirty diapers lies on one of the armchairs.

CONTINUED  
CONTINUED

The walls are covered with colored pictures cut out of magazines and pasted up into a mural celebrating a consumer's Garden of Eden: wild animals, movie actresses, glimmering glasses of jello, flowers, bombs bursting, American Beauty roses.

Looking through the doorway into the kitchen, Thom can see piles of dirty dishes, scattered cereal and cracker boxes on a table. One of the kitchen chairs is tipped over on the floor.

*pulls on an undershirt, then*  
Vidal turns the TV down a little bit.

VIDAL

The Ritz it ain't, but sit down anyway, Father. Just kick the mutts off the couch. I got whiskey or wine.

THOM

Whiskey.

*(out of character)  
immediately*

Vidal drags a bottle of Jack Daniel's from a cabinet and pours an inch or so into each of two tumblers. He hands one to Thom.

VIDAL

(as he downs his straight)  
To the Pope.

Thom laughs, truly amused at Vidal's persistent sacrilege.

VIDAL

You want to smoke some grass?

THOM

Oh no. No thank you.

Vidal shrugs, then calls out into the kitchen.

VIDAL

Hey Patti Ann!

Patti Ann comes shuffling shyly into the room. She's carrying a baby over one arm and an old beaded handbag over the other - as if she were going out. Other wise, all she is wearing is a dirty taffeta slip, several sizes too big for her. Her ash-blond hair is a rumpled mess. Her big brown eyes are strangely vacant. She appears to be about 19 years old.

Vidal groans when he sees her.

VIDAL

Awh shit, Patti Ann!  
(to Thom)

~~Just an hour ago,~~ I had her all cleaned up. *a second ago.*

CONTINUED

Patti Ann looks down at the floor like a scolded child. The baby, dangling precariously from her arm, gurgles happily.

Vidal turns her around and aims her toward the bedroom.

VIDAL

Father, would you help me with her?

Thom follows them into the bedroom. It is as squalid here as in the rest of the house.. The bed is just a mattress and boxsprings on the bare floor, with its dirty sheets in a tangle. A large old veneered dresser is overflowing with assorted items of clothing, which are similarly strewn about the room.

Vidal sets the baby on the bed and starts trying to re-dress Patti Ann, who just stands there passively.

VIDAL

Now Patti Ann, I told you. We got company, so I want you to keep your clothes on - you hear me?

(to Thom)

Father, could you grab that hairbrush there and see if you can't do something with her hair?

Vidal points to the top of the dresser. Next to the hairbrush is a half-eaten peanut butter and jelly sandwich, long forgotten. Somewhat reluctantly, Thom picks up the hairbrush and gently begins brushing Patti Ann's hair. At his touch, Patti Ann rolls her eyes up and stares pathetically at Father Thom.

VIDAL

Just like playing with dolls, huh, Father? Ever plays with dolls?

Patti Ann's stare quickly becomes unnerving for Thom. He looks around the room.

On the opposite wall above the bed is a large poster - the kind specialty shops blow up from your favorite snapshot. The poster is of a young Indian in full dance regalia performing a native dance, with a crowd of spectators out-of-focus in the background. The dancer wears an eagle-feather bonnet, a ~~red satin shirt~~, a beaded vest and loin cloth and moccasins. There is a feather bustle strapped over his buttocks, and his legs are wound with strings of little bells.

THOM

Who's the poster?

<sup>^</sup>  
that in

CONTINUED

VIDAL *The Fancy Dancer*  
 That's me - ~~when I was 19~~  
~~I was a "fancy dancer."~~  
*or at least I was once.*  
~~I was 19 when that picture was taken.~~  
 THOM  
 What's a fancy dancer?

*I'm an Indian boy -  
 one of the few really  
 Indian things I  
 ever did. I was  
 pretty good at it  
 didn't make me  
 feel like an  
 Indian, but it  
 made me feel free -  
 real free.*

VIDAL  
 It's one of the traditional  
 ceremonials on the reservation.  
 There's the Eagle Dance, the  
 War Dance, and the Fancy Dance.  
 I was pretty good at it. It's  
 about the only really Indian  
 thing I ever did. Didn't make  
 me feel like an Indian, but it  
 made me feel free - real free.

THOM  
 You don't dance anymore?

VIDAL  
 (abrupt)  
 No.

Vidal finishes buttoning Patti Ann's skirt. He pats her in the direction of the kitchen.

VIDAL  
 Okay, Angel, you're all set  
 now. You go back to the  
 kitchen now and boil us some  
 water for the tamales.

Patti Ann picks up the baby again and her beaded bag and starts to shuffle out of the room. At the door, she turns and gazes back bashfully at Thom with her big brown eyes. Then she disappears into the next room.

Thom sits down on the edge of the bed next to Vidal looking after her.

THOM  
 How did she get like that?

VIDAL  
 Hell, I don't know.

THOM  
 Have you taken her to doctors?

VIDAL *anyone*  
 I don't think ~~there's a doctor~~  
~~alive who~~ can do anything for her.

THOM  
But how <sup>does</sup> she manage?  
Does she ever go out ~~or~~  
of the house?

VIDAL  
Not hardly. I go do the  
laundry and all the shopping.

THOM  
What about the baby?  
Don't you think it's  
 kinda dangerous...?

THOM  
What about the baby? Don't  
you worry leaving her alone with it?

VIDAL  
Yeah, sometimes. I've thought  
about putting him up for  
adoption. But you'd be  
surprised. She's pretty  
careful with him.

VIDAL  
She's pretty careful  
with him, but yeah,  
I know. She thought about  
putting him up for  
adoption.

THOM  
(shocked)  
You'd put your own son up  
for adoption!

Vidal sighs and walks to the other side of the room, then turns  
back to Thom.

VIDAL  
Father, I've told you a  
few lies.

THOM nods,  
has he suspected  
that he had been  
lied to?

THOM  
I know.

VIDAL  
Patti Ann ain't my wife.  
And the kid's not mine either.  
She latched on to me down  
in LA. When I decided to  
come back up here, I figured  
she'd make me a good cover,  
so I brought her along.

) elaborate

THOM  
A cover?

VIDAL  
Yeah. So the local rednecks  
won't get any ideas about me.

THOM  
(cautious)  
What kind of ideas.

VIDAL  
Ideas like wondering why  
I never make it with any of  
the ~~local girls~~  
*chicks here.*

Thom looks confused.

VIDAL  
Put 2 and 2 together, Father.

Thom still looks confused.

VIDAL  
The thing is, ~~I'm not so~~  
~~interested in making it~~  
~~with women as I am with men.~~

*I'm only interested  
in making it with  
men.*

Thom is really taken aback. Vidal stands there staring at him, waiting for him to say something. Finally, Thom stumbles out some words:

THOM  
Is that your problem then?

VIDAL  
What?

THOM  
That you're... homosexual.

Vidal just stares back at him without answering. When he finally speaks, it is with a motion to the next room.

VIDAL  
Let's see how Patti Ann's  
doing with supper.

He walks out of the room. After a beat, Thom stands and follows.

*bolts his drink*  
DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN

Thom, Vidal, and Patti Ann sit around the kitchen table eating in silence. Supper consists of creamed corn from a can and frozen tamales cooked in boiling water. Patti Ann mostly plays with her food.

The Jack Daniels bottle is also on the table. Vidal pours himself another drink. He motions the bottle toward Thom, but Thom shakes his head. He is still nursing his first drink.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VIDAL'S HOUSE

Vidal is walking Father Thom to his car. It has stopped raining. Vidal is quite drunk.

VIDAL  
You're shocked, aren't you, Father.

THOM (coldly)  
Not exactly. To be honest with you, it's something I'm pretty green at. I've never counseled someone with your problem before. I guess the important thing is, do you want to change?

Vidal looks at Thom again with that challenge in his eyes. He shakes his head slowly - no.

THOM  
Then I don't know what I can do to help you. You must be aware of the Church's ~~stance~~ on homosexuality.

VIDAL  
I thought the Church's policy was to follow your conscience.

THOM  
No. That's my policy.

VIDAL  
Then maybe what you can do to help me is be my friend. I ain't got no one my own age to talk to in this town.

Thom gets into his car. Vidal leans in the window.

THOM  
It's the Church's policy that a priest shouldn't form friendships with his parishioners.

VIDAL  
Yeah? And what's your policy?

THOM  
I don't know.

He starts the engine. Vidal withdraws from the window. Thom drives off. Vidal watches the lights disappear down the street.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RECTORY - THOM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The small room is illuminated only by a 10-inch black & white Sony portable television set that has been left on, but with the sound turned off. *An old vampire movie is played.*

In the flickering light, Father Thom lies on his back on his small cot, staring blankly at the ceiling. He is still fully dressed.

CLOSE-UP: THOM

His blank troubled eyes.

The silence is suddenly broken by a screaming voice, on the verge of hysteria.

VOICE (V.O.)

Where is he! I want to see Father Thomas!

CUT TO:

INT. WAITING ROOM - RECTORY

The voice belongs to Mrs. Shoup. She has barged into the waiting room followed quickly by Father Vance and Police Chief Wheeler, who are trying to calm her.

MRS. SHOUP

He knows where my Meg is - and he's going to tell me!

CONTINUED



The door to Thom's office opens, and Thom steps out, curious at the commotion. Mrs. Shoup immediately accosts him.

MRS. SHOUP

Where's my daughter!  
You know. I know you  
know. She came here and  
talked to you.

THOM

(concerned)  
Is Meg missing?

Chief Wheeler steps between Mrs. Shoup and Thom.

CHIEF WHEELER

She hasn't been seen since  
yesterday afternoon. Do  
you have any idea where  
she might be?

THOM

Meg Shoup did come to see  
me Monday evening. She  
wanted to confess. But you  
must understand, anything we  
discussed falls under the  
seal of the confessional.

MRS. SHOUP

Then you do know *where she is!*

THOM

No, I don't know. She  
didn't talk about running  
away. In fact she was  
supposed to come back and  
talk to me again this week.

MRS. SHOUP

What did she talk about?  
Was it drugs? Surely you  
can tell us something!

Thom shakes his head, unable to answer. Father Vance tries to explain to Mrs. Shoup.

FATHER VANCE

You must remember that my  
curate is strictly within  
his rights and his sacred  
obligation to uphold the  
seal of the confessional.

CONTINUED

MRS. SHOUP

(yelling)

Sacred obligations! A child's life is in danger and you talk to her mother about sacred obligations! I have a notion to have you both prosecuted for withholding information from the police.

CHIEF WHEELER

Mrs. Shoup, please!

Mrs. Shoup turns to Thom, her eyes blazing.

MRS. SHOUP

You're one of those frivolous young priests our seminaries are turning out nowadays. You have no sense of what's right and what's human. And I intend to expose you, if it's the last thing I do. in this town.

*ranting*

With this, she turns and stomps out of the room, followed quickly by Chief Wheeler.

Father Vance turns to Thom and gives him an approving nod.

FATHER VANCE

Well, pilgrim, you got more backbone than I gave you credit for.

THOM

Thank you, Father.

FATHER VANCE

So I'll overlook the fact that you got in ten minutes late again last night - ~~the third time in a week~~ - and assume you had your reasons.

*with whiskey on your breath*

THOM

(wearily)

Thank you, Father.

Thom turns and heads back to his office.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. TRINA'S CAFE - MAIN STREET - MORNING

Vidal's bike is parked on the sidewalk. From the crowd inside, it is clear that this is a popular breakfast spot.

INT. TRINA'S CAFE

Vidal and Thom are sitting together in a booth over bacon and eggs. All around them are groups of ranchers and farmers having business breakfasts, talking loud and raucous.

Thom looks around to make sure no one is watching them, then withdraws a small yellow booklet from his pocket. It is a pamphlet outlining the Catholic Church's position on homosexuality. He slides the booklet across the table to Vidal.

THOM

Have you ever seen this?

Vidal also raises his eyes to make a paranoid reconnaissance around the cafe, ~~then settles back in the corner and~~ thumbs through the pamphlet.

A couple ranchers at the nearest table are talking about race horses.

1ST RANCHER

So you gonna run ole Bessie in the endurance race?

2ND RANCHER

Hell, I'm gonna run ole Bessie to the glue factory!

*new work important of the race.*

3RD RANCHER

I hear Vern Stuart's been working out ~~Black Beauty~~ ARAB SON. That'll be the horse to beat.

1ST RANCHER

Wouldn't count out that stud mustang those guys over in Drummond are grooming either...

Vidal finishes looking through the booklet and pushes it back across the table, face down, to Thom. Vidal puts a big fake smile on his face for the rest of the cafe - to conceal the bitterness in his voice as he tells Thom what he thinks of the pamphlet.

VIDAL

I've heard all this crap before. And I'll tell ya - it doesn't jive with the reality I live in, or that anyone else lives in for that matter.

*(and its bullshit)*

*specific examples?*

CONTINUED

*stymied.*  
Thom appears rather ~~crestfallen~~. He fishes for the right thing to say.

THOM

Then you don't feel guilty  
about the way you are?

The fake smile remains frozen on Vidal's face as he slowly shakes his head no.

THOM

(attempting a joke)  
Then I guess it's my duty  
to try and make you feel guilty.

Vidal laughs, genuinely amused.

TRINA, the owner of the cafe, comes sauntering by their table with the check. She is a tiny Chicana with her black-lacquer-hair up in a bun. She's wearing a sexy red silk dress and has little gold-bead earrings in her pierced ears. She likes to flirt with the customers, *especially Vidal.*

TRINA

'Allo, Vidal, you gorgeous  
bike man, you. When you  
take me out on your bike, eh?

Vidal looks her up and down as if considering the proposition. Then he shakes his head.

VIDAL

I'll have to ask my wife's  
permission.

Trina pouts, then turns to Thom.

TRINA

'Ey, Padre, you gonna make a  
monk out of this gorgeous hombre?

THOM

I guess he's so fond of his  
wife, he already is a monk.

They all laugh, and Trina goes off to another table. Thom and Vidal start to get up to leave.

VIDAL

~~So~~ I'll see you tomorrow?

THOM

Tomorrow?

CONTINUED

VIDAL

I eat here every morning.  
Any reason why you can't?

THOM

(hesitant)

Well, I... No, I guess  
there's no reason I can't.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP: FATHER LeMATT

He is talking to Thom on the phone from Helena.

LeMATT

*Homosexuals are very  
difficult to deal with*

Homosexuals are the toughest  
cases. You've got to have a  
heap of patience and compassion *with them -*  
~~to bring them around.~~ And  
firmness. You have to be firm  
with them. But don't expect  
results overnight....

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP: THOM

On the phone, listening to Father LeMatt.

LeMATT (V.O.)

Frankly, just between you and  
me, the success rate is ~~pretty~~ *very*  
low. Pray for him. Pray hard.

THOM

(nodding obediently)

Pray...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRINA'S CAFE - ANOTHER MORNING

Through the window, Thom and Vidal can be seen at a table talking.

THOM (V.O.)

Are you actively involved  
with any ~~other~~ men ~~right~~ now?

VIDAL (V.O.)

In this town! You kidding?  
The nearest gay bar is 80  
miles from here.

CONTINUED

THOM (V.O.)  
(joking)  
You must be as celebrate as  
I am then.

VIDAL (V.O.)  
(a slow drawl)  
Yeah..... except I can  
~~masturbate~~, and you can't.  
**SACK OFF**

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RECTORY

Father Vance looks up from his coffee as Thom enters.

FATHER VANCE  
They found Meg Shoup.

THOM  
They did? Where?

FATHER VANCE  
Seattle. Seems she's 5  
months pregnant and was  
looking for her boyfriend.  
*Police picked her up.*

THOM  
What's going to happen to  
her now?

FATHER VANCE  
Mrs. Shoup's ~~putting her in~~  
~~a boarding house in Butte -~~  
~~'til she has the baby.~~

*arranged to put her  
in a good Catholic  
home in Boston*

Thom nods thoughtfully.

FATHER VANCE  
Mrs. Shoup's still got it  
in for you, though. So you  
better watch your step.

THOM  
Oh?

FATHER VANCE  
Seems she's seen you and that  
Vidal Stump at one of the local  
cafes. She told me she thought  
it was a most unsuitable  
friendship.

CONTINUED

THOM  
And what did you say?

FATHER VANCE  
Far as I can see, your  
counseling's having a good  
effect. I hear he's staying  
out of the bars and showing  
up regular at his job.

THOM  
I'm encouraging him to go  
back to school. Underneath  
? all his show, he's an  
intelligent guy.

FATHER VANCE  
Well, he's not in heaven  
yet. So don't let up on him.

THOM  
I won't.

CUT TO:

INT. COTTONWOOD AUTO SERVICE - DAY

The phone is ringing. The OWNER of the garage answers.

OWNER  
Yeah? Hold on.

He calls out toward a battered Volkswagen that is up on a hydrolic  
lift.

OWNER  
Hey, halfbreed! Telephone!

Vidal emerges from under the car. He wipes some of the grease  
off his hands and proceeds to the phone.

VIDAL  
Hello?

It is Thom.

VIDAL  
Yeah. I can get away.  
How about going on my bike,  
or are you too chicken?  
(he smiles at Thom's answer)  
Alright. I'll pick up some  
eats. Sure. See ya then.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE

Vidal guns his motorcycle along the back roads of Cottonwood with Thom close on the seat behind him holding on, ~~tightly~~, his arms around Vidal's ~~chest~~ <sup>waist</sup>, as the wind whips their hair. Thom is exhilarated.

They speed on through acres and acres of wheat and pastureland, up into the rolling foothills of the distant mountains.

Suddenly Vidal downshifts his bike. Ahead is a vast hayfield. Along it, near the road, stands a lonely clump of quaking aspen trees. A little ditch of green water runs along the edge of the field, which has been recently mowed, the grass lying in windrows to dry. Vidal brings his bike to a halt.

VIDAL  
How's this for a picnic?

THOM <sup>(real pleased)</sup>  
(happy as a lark)  
It'll do. <sup>Great!</sup>

They climb off the bike and look around, breathing in the good air. Vidal takes a paper sack from his saddlebag and heads toward the shade of the aspens.

They both sit down under the trees. Vidal extracts 2 beers and a couple sandwiches from the sack. With hardly a word exchanged, they relax into the pleasant setting, drinking their beers and enjoying their picnic lunch.

Vidal takes a hand-rolled cigarette from his pocket and lights it, taking a deep drag. Casually, he offers it to Thom. Clearly it is marijuana. Thom looks at the offered joint a beat, then reaches for it. Vidal smiles broadly as Thom takes a hit.

The wind in the trees, the birds, the water gurgling in the stream - all seem magnified into a sort of symphony of the sounds of nature. A warm sun shines playfully through the gently moving branches above them as they share the joint.

Vidal gives a tug at the hem of Thom's cassock, inching it up his leg a little.

VIDAL  
Hey, Father, I've always wondered - what do priests wear underneath ~~their cassocks?~~ <sup>these things</sup>

Thom pushes his hand away, playfully.

THOM  
That's <sup>my</sup> secret of the profession.

CONTINUED

LONG SHOT: THE IDYLIC SETTING

dialogue?



VIDAL  
(teasing)

Yeah? You got lots o' secrets, I bet - locked away in that head of yours. All those dirty thoughts and indiscretions people must tell you about in their confessions. Any of the locals ever mention me as the object of their sinful thoughts?

THOM  
(laughing)

I'll never tell.

VIDAL

Yeah? Shit.

THOM  
(a sudden idea)

Can I ride your bike?

VIDAL

Huh?

THOM

Can I ride your bike?

VIDAL

Sure. You ever ride one before?

THOM

Just a ~~scooter~~ <sup>motor</sup> ~~I had for~~ <sup>my roommate had</sup> a little while in college.

VIDAL

Yeah, well this ain't no scooter.

THOM

Principle's the same?

VIDAL

Okay.

They get up and walk over to the bike - a big <sup>Harley</sup> ~~Honda~~ 750. In order to straddle the bike, Thom has to hike up his cassock to his knees.

VIDAL  
(grinning)

Nice legs...

CONTINUED

THOM  
(ignoring the crack)  
Just show me how to start  
this thing.

VIDAL  
Here...

Vidal turns on the ignition and kicks it to a start. Thom plays with the throttle, revving it a few times, ready to go.

THOM  
Well climb on!

Vidal grins, a little apprehensive, and gets on behind Thom - but he steadies himself by holding the back of the seat rather than putting his arms around him. Thom looks back over his shoulder at him, enjoying the reversal of their roles.

THOM  
Ready?

VIDAL  
You sure you know how  
to do this?

Thom laughs and kicks it into gear. The cycle lurches forward - Vidal practically falling off. It lurches again, and Vidal holds on for dear life to the seat.

Instead of going onto the road, Thom starts circling cautiously through the field - a bumpy ride, and he's not in all that much control of the machine. Vidal is having a hard time staying on. He gives in and puts his arms around Thom.

Thom is having a ball. He accelerates and slips into a higher gear. They are both bouncing off the seat.

*Swerving around the bales of hay -*  
Suddenly the cycle hits a gully between two plowed rows and throws them both flying through the air. The bike flops over and comes to a halt in the loose soil. Vidal and Thom land together in the dirt, ~~rolling over one another until they come to a stop with~~ Vidal's body lying squarely on top of Thom's. Realizing that no damage has been done, they both start laughing.

VIDAL  
*Hey!* You're crazier than I am!

Thom lies back and shuts his eyes, catching his breath. Vidal looks down at him. He lowers his lips to Thom's and kisses him lightly, tentatively. Thom makes no attempt to turn his lips away. He lies there caught up in the moment.

Vidal withdraws from the kiss and looks intently down at Thom. Thom's eyes ~~open and look~~ up into Vidal's. *crash*

CONTINUED

Then Thom recovers his senses. He tries to make a joke out of it.

THOM  
What's going on here?

Thom tries to sit up, but the weight of Vidal's body holds him pinned down.

THOM  
(nervous)  
C'mon. It's getting late.  
We better get back.

With a sigh, Vidal gives in and rolls off of Thom. He sits up and watches as Thom stands and goes over to check the bike.

THOM  
Hope nothin's been damaged.

He pulls the bike upright, then glances back at Vidal, who has not moved, but continues to stare at Thom broodingly.

THOM  
(insistent)  
C'mon. I have to be back.  
Father Vance will throw a fit.

Without a word, Vidal gets to his feet. Thom steps aside as Vidal takes over the bike. Vidal straddles the engine and kicks it to an easy start. He continues to stare straight ahead as Thom climbs on behind him.

As the bike lurches forward, Thom ~~puts his arms around Vidal, but less tightly than before.~~ *starts to hold & hold on to Vidal, but reconsiders and grabs on to the seat instead.*

They move off back to the road, then quickly disappear down the hill.

CUT TO:

EXT. RECTORY

As Vidal drives up and lets Thom off. Vidal turns and looks at Thom.

VIDAL  
See you tomorrow.

When Thom makes no immediate reply, Vidal takes off.

Before Thom reaches the door of the rectory, Father Vance comes hurrying out carrying the kit of holy oils for administering ~~extreme unction.~~ *last rites.*

CONTINUED

He takes one look at Thom's dusty cassock and, in a fury, thrusts the kit into his hands.

FATHER VANCE

Get up to Malley's ranch quick! Clem Malley's had an accident with a ~~baler~~ *baling machine*.  
Hurry!

Thom snaps to, grabbing the kit and jumping into his Triumph. He screeches out of the driveway and off up the street.

CUT TO:

EXT. MALLEY'S RANCH

Thom pulls his Triumph to a stop by a hayfield where an ambulance, a squad car, and a small crowd has gathered by a baling machine. Thom runs up to the scene of the accident.

Sheriff Wheeler is standing to the side talking in hushed tones with Mrs. Malley and her teenaged son, who are stunned and weeping. Another policeman and a ranch hand and two MEDICS are bent over a bloody form on the ground.

{ The BODY is so mangled that it no longer looks human. Even the head has been hacked nearly in half, and the eyes are falling out of the sockets. Evidently, the man fell into the baling machine, for the machine is splattered with sun-dried blood.

Thom is horrified by the sight, but quickly recovers and kneels by the ~~remains~~ *body* to administer the holy oils.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RECTORY - LATE AFTERNOON

As Thom returns, pale and shaken, from the ranch.

Father Vance is waiting for him and mad as a hornet.

FATHER VANCE

If you hadn't been out gallivanting around the countryside with that half-breed friend of yours, you might have been in time to save Clem Malley's soul.

THOM

(tired and irritated)  
The only way I could have ministered to Clem Malley's soul was if I had been there before he fell into the baler - 'cause there wasn't anything left to minister to afterward.

CONTINUED

FATHER VANCE: The soul stays in the body for fifteen or twenty minutes. The faculty of hearing is the last to go. Clem Malley might have heard you if you'd been there to confess him sooner. Your carelessness might be the difference between his going to heaven or hell; or the degree of grace he might have in heaven; or the amount of time he'll spend in purgatory. TAKE YOUR PICK YOUNG MAN.

TOM: May I ask why you didn't take the call? You were on duty.

FATHER VANCE: I went out on a sick call. When I got back I was told that Mrs. Malley had called five minutes earlier.. I was just leaving when you came. If you had been here...

TOM: Wait a minute. With all due respect , Father, not even the Pope knows how long the soul remains in the body before it departs. And I was not on/call----you were. Your judgment in leaving was just as bad as mine was in coming back late.

FATHER VANCE: Don't you get flippant with me young man! A priest who's not there when he's needed is the same as no priest at all.

TOM: I was counseling...

FATHER VANCE: Counseling my foot! You smell of beer. You're running around a little too much with that half-breed friend of yours. Get out of my sight!!! I've probably lost a soul because of you.

FATHER VANCE

Don't you get flippant with me, young man! A priest who's not there when he's needed is the same as no priest at all.

THOM

I was counseling...

FATHER VANCE

Counseling my foot! Get out of my sight, and don't let me see you for the rest of the day.

As Thom walks away, Father Vance yells after him:

FATHER VANCE

Maybe you should consider taking breakfast at the rectory for a while!

*Thom's* {

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THOM'S BEDROOM

As before, the only illumination is the flickering screen of his portable TV, as Thom lies on his back, unable to sleep. *The beta movie is a 30's romance - Camille Lombardi looking down-eyed just before a kiss, and repeating*

CLOSE-UP: THOM

As he lets his eyes close a moment.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP: VIDAL

From Thom's POV, (recalling the kiss in the wheatfield), Vidal's face stares down at him, then moves closer for the kiss.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

CLOSE-UP: THOM

Forcing his eyes open again.

But quickly his weariness again overtakes him. Once more his eyelids close.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT: THE BALER

As a body is wrenched through the machinery, blood spraying all through the yellow bales of hay.

*repeat original p. 44* {

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. TRINA'S CAFE - MORNING

Vidal's bike is parked as usual on the sidewalk. But, through the window, Vidal can be seen sitting alone and dejected. He keeps glancing out the window, hoping for Thom to arrive.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

CLOSE-UP: THOM

As he hears confession. He rests his forehead on his hand, himself troubled.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)  
Bless me, Father, for I  
have sinned...

Thom closes his eyes in weariness.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. TRINA'S CAFE

Vidal sits alone at a table, uninterested in his breakfast, anger in his eyes.

Trina approaches him.

TRINA *bikeman.*  
Hey, handsome *riden.*  
How cum Father Thom he  
don't eat breakfast at  
Trina's no more?

VIDAL  
(purposely mean)  
*?* Maybe he doesn't like the  
food here! *thinks the food sucks.*

He pushes himself abruptly from the table, throws down a couple bills, and stomps out of the restaurant. Trina looks after him, hurt and perplexed.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

CLOSE-UP: THOM

Hearing confession.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)  
Father, I have lain down in  
sin and am unfit before  
God's eyes.

FADE OUT

V.O. & DREAM SEQUENCE

FATHER LAMATT

INSERT B

top of p. 46

V.O. as TOM continues to toss and turn.

Beware of friendships that distract you from the love of God.  
The priests loneliness exists to be filled with the love of  
God.

You have no friends for the same reason that you have  
no wife and children.

You belong to no one so that you can belong to everyone.

INSERT C

TOP OF P. 47

~~From the close-up of Tom's eyes we match dissolve to two pool balls.~~

Close-up: BALLS BEING positioned in a rack. These are all tight shots of hands, balls, cue stick being chalked. It is very apparent the person playing pool has spent a lot of time in pool halls. A few seconds before the break we pan up the arms and see it is a very angry and slightly drunk VIDAL. He breaks with all the force he can muster. He bolts down a shot of tequilla followed by a long pull of a bottle of Bud. When he shoots he is shooting extremely hard and misses three or four shots in a row. A few bar customers step back out of VIDAL'S way sensing his anger and frustration. After he misses another shot he swings the pool stick at the balls and bats several off the table. He then takes the pool stick and smashes it on the table.

BAR PERSON: Hey man...are you crazy? You broke a good stick.

VIDAL: (as he storms out) SHOVE IT UP YOUR ASS. He jumps on his bike and goes roaring off.

FADE OUT



FADE IN

CLOSE-UP: VIDAL

He is standing in a darkened bar, drinking. He downs a mixed drink, then smashes the glass to the floor.

A couple BAR PEOPLE around him jump back to avoid the flying glass.

BAR PERSON

Hey, man, are you crazy!

VIDAL

Fuck you!

FADE OUT

FADE IN

CLOSE-UP: THOM

Waiting to hear the next confession. The voice is Vidal's, and he sounds angry and drunk.

VIDAL

Tom!

Thom is startled, almost fearful. His face goes pale.

THOM

Vidal, I've stayed away from you for your own good...

VIDAL

(spitting out the words)

I'm not in the mood for any of your priest bullshit tonight!

Thom sits there stunned, as Vidal rages on.

VIDAL

So don't lay your Catholic morality on me, you faggot!

~~You are, you know. You're~~ *you're as gay as I am.*

~~as big a faggot as I am - but~~

you don't have the balls to admit it to yourself. My own good, huh? You're in love with me,

aren't you? But then, you're a Christian. You love everyone.

You love God. You love the world. What the fuck do you know about love? You don't even love

yourself, 'cause if you did, you could be honest with

yourself. You'd face up to what you really want. Why

don't you get in bed with me, you holier-than-thou faggot

and I'll show you what love really is.

*hypocrite*

CONTINUED

*INSERT C*

INSERT D

BOTTOM P.48

VIDAL: You're trapped in your own closet... And I didn't trick you. At first I wasn't after anything. I thought you were probably straight and I just wanted to be near you. I could never forget the first day I saw you walking down the street. You were looking so butch and so free. And you had a wonderful smile on your face. And I fell for you. I couldn't get you out of my mind. I went crazy thinking about you. I drank. I got in fights. Finally I got so crazy I thought I'd just try hanging around you. Do you know how gorgeous you are? If you went to L.A. and walked down Hollywood Boulevard you'd have every guy in town chasing after you.

TOM: Stop it. Please. Please.

Thom suddenly feels trapped inside the confessional, panicked by the truth of Vidal's words.

*SLOW MOTION:*

FLASH CUT TO:

THE BALER

*Thom himself falling into the baling machine, pulled into the*

~~As the machinery pulls the screaming body through the turning blades, and the blood sprays.~~

BACK TO:

CLOSE-UP: THOM

Trapped in the confessional.

THOM

*(to Vidal)*

*Get out of here!*  
~~Leave me alone.~~ It's not true. You're ~~you're~~ drunk!

*STAT*

VIDAL

I'm drunk alright. But what I'm saying is true, and you fuckin' know it! All these weeks I've been playing along with you - waiting for you to wake up and admit you're attracted to me - just like I am to you. And when I kissed you, you liked it, didn't you? You didn't stop me, did you? Then you got scared.

THOM

So you lied to me! You didn't want help at all. It was all a lie - a trick!

VIDAL

Don't talk to me about lies! *You're the one*  
You who won't face up to what you are and what you want!

*EXPAND  
w/ RE-  
INITIAL  
D*

Vidal has said his piece. He stops his accusations. Thom can hear him breathing heavily on the other side of the booth.

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP: VIDAL

In the confessional. His anger spent, his voice becomes suddenly softer, almost a romantic pleading.

CONTINUED

VIDAL  
 You liked it when I kissed  
 you, didn't you.  
 (then more insistent)  
~~Hub?~~ Didn't you?

After a long pause, Thom finally speaks - so low Vidal can hardly hear him.

THOM  
 Yes.

VIDAL  
 What?

THOM  
 (louder)  
 Yes.

*VIDAL  
 And you are attracted  
 to me, aren't you?  
 THOM  
 yes.*

Vidal smiles in relief. Now it is his turn to interrogate Thom.

VIDAL  
 Have you ever had sex with  
 another guy?

THOM  
 No.

VIDAL  
 With a woman?

*more  
 about  
 passion*

THOM  
 I was engaged once. I did  
 what was expected of me.  
 But it wasn't right.

VIDAL  
 Then you must have had  
 feelings about men.

CUT BACK TO;

CLOSE-UP: THOM

As he is forced to recall painful memories, tears well up and stream down his face.

THOM  
 I had a friend.

VIDAL  
 Tell me about him.

*INSERT E*

CONTINUED

TOM: One friend in high school, Eddie Machin. He was on the football team with me and we went to the same church in Helena. (pause) I would have died for Eddie. (almost losing control). One day I put my arm across Eddie's shoulders and the parish priest saw me do it and he told me that men who do things like that, even little things, are automatically damned. He told me it was the unforgivable sin.....

VIDAL: And the other one?

To top of p. 50

THOM

It was in the seminary. His name was Doric - Doric Wilton. We never touched each other, but Father LaMatt, he could see that something was going on between us. He told me that it was a dangerous friendship and that it had to be stopped. He must have talked to Doric too, 'cause that was the end of it. Since we were ordained, I never saw or heard from Doric again.

*we avoided each other after that.*

VIDAL

So were ~~we~~ <sup>you</sup> the only ones?

THOM

Yes --- except for you.

There is silence for a moment, then:

VIDAL

Meet me tomorrow.

THOM

I can't. Tomorrow's Sunday. I'm supposed to go into Helena and see my folks - and Father LaMatt.

VIDAL

Alright. ~~All the better then.~~  
*OKAY. HE'S WHAT WILL DO:*

~~THOM~~

*Thom looks at him questioningly*

VIDAL

You know the Holiday Inn on the Interstate?

THOM

Yes.

VIDAL

I'm going to drive up there tonight and get a room. Then I'm going to call you and tell you what ~~the story is~~ *where to stay*. I'll call you in your office - at eleven o'clock. *tonight*.

THOM

No. We shouldn't...

CONTINUED

VIDAL  
No more bullshit from you.  
You just be at that phone  
when I call.

THOM  
And if I'm not?

VIDAL  
(laughing)  
You'll be there. Eleven  
o'clock.

Thom can hear Vidal stand up and push his way out the curtains,  
then his footsteps going down the aisle.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP: TELEPHONE

THOM'S OFFICE  
The phone rings once, twice.  
The phone rings.

INT. THOM'S OFFICE

Thom sits next to the phone, staring at it in indecision - as it  
rings a third time. He picks it up.

VIDAL (V.O.)  
Coward. You were sitting  
right there, and you were  
too chickenshit to answer.

THOM  
Don't rub it in.

VIDAL (V.O.)  
I'm in room 203. You don't  
even have to go in the front.  
Just park in the lot and go  
in the side door, like you're  
going to your own room.  
Nobody will notice you.  
They're a million people here.  
Go up the side stairs and *Rm 203 -*  
~~you come to the corridor that~~  
~~my room is on -~~ the third door  
on the right. Got it?

THOM  
I don't know...

VIDAL (V.O.)  
You got it. What time do you  
~~leave there tomorrow?~~ *will you be here.*

THOM  
Around 10:30. *10:00*

CONTINUED

VIDAL (V.O.)

~~Then you should be here by  
eleven. I'm going down to  
the bar now and have a couple  
drinks. See ya tomorrow, Tom.  
Sweet dreams.~~

THOM

~~Yeah. Sweet dreams yourself.~~

He hangs up the phone.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

EXT. RECTORY - MORNING

Thom is hurriedly packing a few things into his Triumph, not noticing that Father Vance is approaching behind him.

FATHER VANCE

Tom?

Thom jumps, not having been aware of Father Vance's presence. He turns and smiles nervously. Father Vance looks at him curiously. Thom's guilt is showing.

FATHER VANCE

On your way out of town,  
drop by and see Missy Oldenberg.  
She's in pretty poor shape.

Irritated to be detained, Thom glances at his watch.

FATHER VANCE

(noticing his irritation)  
That's not so much to ask, is  
it? I'm sure your parents will  
understand if you're a little late.

THOM

No, no, of course I'll drop by.

Father Vance continues to stare after him, as Thom backs his Triumph out and drives away.

CUT TO:

EXT. OLDEBERG FARM

As Thom drives up. It is a former dairy farm. The roof of the old barn has long ago fallen in, but the farmhouse has been kept up.

CONTINUED



Working in a small vegetable and flower garden by the side of the house is CLARE FAUX, a small, cheery woman in her 70's, wearing a big straw hat with daisies on the brim and overalls. She greets Thom warmly and leads him into the house.

INT. FARM HOUSE - MISSY OLDENBERG'S BEDROOM

Thom sits by the bed holding the hand of MISSY OLDENBERG, also in her 70's, who lies in bed, sick. The rouge on her cheeks does not hide the pallor of her complexion.

Clare Faux sits nearby in a rocker, crocheting. The bedroom is cheery, with lots of cut flowers and sunlight flowing through the open windows. Everywhere is evidence of the 2 ladies' handiwork: patchwork quilts, crochet-work, and knitting.

MISSY

(her voice quavering)

I'm so lucky to have Clare,  
you know, Father.

THOM

You both are very fortunate  
to have each other.

MISSY

If it weren't for Clare,  
they'd have taken me away  
to the Old Peoples' Home.

Thom pats her hand consolingly.

MISSY

But what's going to happen  
to Clare When I'm gone?  
They'll come and take her  
away.

CLARE

Don't you worry about me,  
Missy. You just think about  
getting your health back.  
No one's goin' to take me  
anywhere, lessen it's at the  
point of a shotgun.

MISSY

Make her listen, Father.  
Make her think about the  
future.

THOM

I'll try.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOLIDAY INN

As Thom drives in and parks. The parking lot is crowded with cars. Nervous, Thom walks straight to the side door, trying to act as normal as possible.

INT. CORRIDOR

Thom walks along the plush red carpeting and knocks softly on the door of room 203.

It is several painful moments before the door opens. There stands Vidal, wearing only his levis, ~~his chest and feet bare.~~ His face shows strain. With no words exchanged, Thom enters, and the door closes.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Vidal is strangely silent. He walks across the room to a picture window (with a spectacular view of the mountains). He leans against the window and looks out.

THOM  
What's the matter?

VIDAL  
(turning back to Thom)  
I thought you'd stood me up.

THOM  
I had to visit an old lady  
on the way. She's sick.

VIDAL  
You could have phoned.

THOM  
I'm sorry. I figured you'd  
understand.

Unsmiling, expressionless, Vidal watches as Thom crosses the room to join him at the window.

Thom raises both hands and cups Vidal's unshaven face affectionately, looking into his eyes.

THOM  
I just want to talk  
to you.

VIDAL  
(smiling ironically)  
Talk away.

Vidal's hands reach up and close around Thom's wrists, pulling him closer. Thom closes his eyes. His fingers find their way into Vidal's hair, to the nape of his neck.

CONTINUED

They kiss, moving into a tight embrace.

LAP DISSOLVE INTO:

MONTAGE: LOVEMAKING, THOM AND VIDAL

Slow and sensuous, male flesh moves over male flesh - tentative, exploring, then urgent.

*Strayhorn*

We hear Thom's voice, describing the experience, as one would recall it later on:

THOM (V.O.) *slowly, dreamily*

I was drifting alone through space...the void...oblivion. And I knew... I felt that I'd been there before - that I'd always been there. And the feeling was serene - serene, but lonely. So very lonely. And I said to myself: this is the place we go after we die, and this is the place we were before we were born. And then it occurred to me that being born is a choice - a decision. A decision to seek out that which we are not - to know the other side - to quench the loneliness - fulfill the yearning.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP: THOM

Lying on his back on the deep red carpet, his eyes glazed into some oblivion.

He turns to Vidal, who is lying beside him, ~~smoking a cigarette.~~

THOM

It was strange, because I had no identity any more. I had no name. No past.

Vidal looks at him a little curiously.

VIDAL

(down to earth)  
Yeah, well I kinda got off on it myself.

Suddenly he sits up.

CONTINUED

VIDAL  
I'm starved! You want  
some food?

THOM  
Food?

VIDAL  
Yeah, food. Or don't  
you get hungry - out  
there in the void.

Vidal stands and goes to the phone. He dials room service.

VIDAL  
(in the phone)  
Hello, Room Service please.  
Yeah, this is Room 203, and  
I'd like to order a real  
big breakfast. Four eggs  
over easy, a ~~lot~~ <sup>double order</sup> of bacon, <sup>a double order of</sup>  
~~some~~ toast, and a ~~couple~~ <sup>a hot pot of</sup>  
~~large~~ coffees. Yeah.

He hangs up. Thom sits on the floor gazing up at him.

VIDAL  
There!- something substantial  
to bring you back to Earth.

THOM  
You're making fun of me.

VIDAL  
That's one of the privileges  
of lovers.

THOM  
Lovers? I didn't hear you  
say you loved me.

VIDAL  
You're very free with that  
word "love" in your profession.  
You'd think it was a basketball,  
the way you bounce it around.

Thom is disappointed. He suddenly becomes aware that he is  
naked and reaches out for his shirt - to cover himself with.

VIDAL  
Oh, now your feelings are  
hurt. What do you want me  
to say? I never waited so  
long or so hard for anyone  
in my life as I have for you.  
And it was worth the wait.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

*lovers?  
different  
agony*

DISSOLVE  
IN SCENE

Vidal lowers himself again to Thom. He removes the shirt from Thom's groin. Quickly, they are kissing and moving urgently against each other again.

Suddenly there is a knock on the door.

VOICE  
(outside the door)  
Room Service!

Thom freezes in panic.

THOM  
Oh my God!

He looks at Vidal as if to ask: what do we do now? Vidal is grinning, but quickly changes his expression to a faked look of seriousness.

VIDAL  
Quick! Grab your clothes  
and hide in the bathroom!  
(then, toward the door)  
Just a minute!

Thom grasps wildly around gathering up the clothes which are strewn all about the floor. He bundles them up and retreats toward the bathroom. Vidal stops him.

VIDAL  
My pants!

He grabs his levis out of the bundle of clothes, causing Thom to drop everything again. Thom frantically gathers them back together and disappears into the bathroom, pushing the door shut behind him.

Vidal can't help chuckling as he pulls on his levis and hops to the door. He is still grinning maniacally as he opens the door and takes the tray of food from the Room Service boy.

VIDAL  
(to the boy)  
Thank you. You're very  
fast.

The boy looks at him curiously, but Vidal can't wipe the grin off his face. He pulls a dollar bill from his pocket and tips the boy.

*He signs the bill and*

BOY  
Thank you, Sir.

CONTINUED

Vidal shuts the door and carries the tray over to the bed. Then he goes to the bathroom door and knocks on it.

VIDAL  
(disguising his voice)  
Alright, I know you're  
in there. Come out with  
your hands up!

After a beat, the door opens a crack, and Thom sticks his head out to see if the coast is really clear. As the door opens, we can see that he has hurriedly gotten dressed.

Vidal laughs at him.

THOM  
Well I'm not used to  
these things.

VIDAL  
You'll get used to 'em -  
real quick. You'll become  
a master of deceptions.

The word "deceptions" has an instant sobering effect on Thom.

THOM  
Yes... ~~deceptions~~.

VIDAL  
Why don't you come have  
some breakfast and don't  
think about those things  
right now.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP: THOM - INT. MOTEL ROOM

He is on the phone - talking to his mother.

THOM  
Hello, Mom?...Yeah. No.  
I'm alright. No, I'm in  
Bernsville. Trouble with  
the car. No, not serious.  
But I guess I'm not going  
to make it today. I'm sorry.  
Yes. Mom? Would you do me a  
favor? Call Father LaMatt  
at the Seminary. Tell him  
I'm not going to make our  
appointment. Yes, thanks  
Mom. Tell Dad I'm sorry.  
We'll make up for it the  
next time.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

THOM  
(continuing)  
(on the phone)  
What? Ah, I'm calling from  
the Holiday Inn. Yeah, they  
let me use the phone. No, I  
won't. I'll call you when I  
get back to the rectory - so  
you won't have to worry.  
Okay. Thanks, Mom. Bye.

As Thom puts down the phone, Vidal grins up at him from the bed.

VIDAL  
You're learning fast.

*THIS MOVIE TOWARD EACH OTHER.*  
CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - COTTONWOOD

The congregation chants the liturgical responses of Sunday Mass.

CONGREGATION  
Holy, Holy, Holy -  
Lord God of Hosts.  
Heaven and Earth  
Are filled with Thy Power and Might.

Thom is at the altar, preparing the Consecration. Behind him,  
the congregation kneels in prayer.

Thom raises the wafer.

THOM  
This is my body.

He bends over the chalice.

THOM  
This is my blood.

Behind him, soft footsteps shuffle up to the altar rail, as the  
first people come forward to receive Holy Communion.

Thom comes down the altar steps holding the ciborium of  
consecrated wafers. There in the front row pew, staring at him,  
sits Vidal - a mask of religious indifference settled firmly on  
his face.

Without daring so much as a glance at <sup>Vidal</sup> ~~his lover~~, Thom moves along  
the row of kneeling people at the altar rail, slipping the wafers  
into their open mouths.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VIDAL'S HOUSE

Patti Ann slips a potato chip into her mouth and munches away. She is sitting in front of the television set, totally engrossed in an afternoon cartoon show.

Behind her, Vidal, dressed only in his levis, quietly shuts the door to the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM

Thom sits on the bed, taking off his cassock. He looks up at Vidal at the door. Vidal stares back, as he undoes his belt and lets his pants fall to the floor.

VIDAL

This is my body...

As Vidal steps toward the bed, the CAMERA PANS UP to the Fancy Dancer poster on the wall.

VIDAL (O.C.)

This is my blood.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. RECTORY - MORNING

Vidal is mowing the rectory lawn with an old manual lawn mower. He is shirtless and sweating in the hot summer sun.

In the distance, Father Vance is trying, without success, to start his car - an old black 1955 Buick.

Father Vance gets out of his car and approaches Vidal. Vidal looks up from his work.

FATHER VANCE

So he's got you working now.

VIDAL

I volunteered.

FATHER VANCE

I see.

VIADL

I've never exactly been famous for my Christian acts.

CONTINUED



FATHER VANCE  
Un-huh. Well it's never  
too late. I hear you're  
a good mechanic.

Vidal shrugs modestly.

FATHER VANCE  
Maybe if you're so full  
of Christian spirit these  
days, you'd be willing to  
take a look at my car.

Vidal stops mowing and wipes the sweat from his face with a  
handkerchief. He grins at Father Vance.

VIDAL  
What's wrong with it?

FATHER VANCE  
It doesn't seem to want  
to start.

VIDAL  
Let's take a look.

They walk over to Father Vance's Buick. Considering its age, the  
body is still in excellent condition.

VIDAL  
She's a beauty. What is  
this? '56?

FATHER VANCE  
'55.

VIDAL  
You the original owner?

FATHER VANCE  
(proudly)  
That I am.

VIDAL  
(running his hand over the car)  
Nice.

Vidal opens the hood and looks inside, testing the wiring.

VIDAL  
Try starting it now.

Father Vance gets in the car and turns the key. It starts.  
Father Vance is delighted.

CONTINUED

FATHER VANCE  
It's a miracle!

VIDAL  
(laughing)  
More like a loose wire.  
Sounds like you could use  
a tune-up, though.

FATHER VANCE  
I know I could. But those  
things cost money, and we're  
a poor parish.

VIDAL  
(a sly smile)  
Maybe we can work something  
out.

Father Vance looks open to making a deal.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH

JAMIE OGILVIE, one of the altar boys, is helping Thom clean the sacristy. Jamie is 17, still afflicted with some of his baby fat, but a handsome and earnest boy. Right now he has something pressing on his mind.

JAMIE  
Father, you always told  
me its better not to keep  
things pent up inside you,  
so I'm gonna come out and  
say this.

THOM  
What is it, Jamie?

JAMIE  
*crush ?*  
The thing is, Father,  
I think I have a crush on you.

*I think I'm... have up on you.*

For several moments, Thom is silent, paralyzed. Jamie is frightened as to what that silence may mean.

JAMIE  
I know its wrong! I hope  
you're not shocked, Father!

THOM (calmly)  
I'm not shocked, Jamie.  
I'm just thinking. I don't  
want to encourage you in  
any way with these feelings  
of yours - but I don't want  
to condemn you either. This  
is something a lot of people your  
age go through - getting a crush

(CONTINUED)

THOM

(continuing)

on someone who's a little older. Girls go through the same sort of thing. But it's something that passes. A year later you laugh at yourself and think, boy, what did I ever see in him? Or her?

JAMIE

Yes, but... supposing I don't get over it. I mean, there are guys who never get over having crushes... on other guys.

THOM

That's true. There are people who never get over it. Men and women both.

JAMIE

What if I'm one of them?

THOM

You'll be going off to college soon, Jamie. You'll be exposed to a lot of things there that you're not exposed to here in a small town like Cottonwood. I can only suggest to you that you keep yourself open to the widest range of experience before you decide if you're one thing or another - in any aspect of your life.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH

As Thom and Jamie walk from the Church.

JAMIE

Thanks ~~again~~, Father.

As Jamie walks off, Thom spots Vidal and Father Vance talking by the '55 Buick.

Full of curiosity, Thom starts toward them, and almost immediately, Father Vance drives off, waving to Thom as he turns down the street.

VIDAL

(calling out to Thom,  
~~in mimic of Father Vance~~)

Dust off your hiking boots,  
~~Tommy-me-boy!~~ We're going  
backpacking!

CONTINUED

THOM

Huh? What were you talking with Father Vance about?

VIDAL

His holiness just granted you ~~an~~ **afternoon** off - through my benign intercession. And we're going to get some good mountain air in your lungs, 'cause you've been looking a little peaked lately.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - THOM'S TRIUMPH

Thom and Vidal are driving along the Interstate - in high spirits.

THOM

Okay, so isn't it time you told me where we're really going - or have you actually taken a sudden interest in backpacking?

VIDAL

Remember those friends of mine I told you about who raise ~~horses?~~ **mustangs?** We're gonna visit them. They're getting a horse ready for the endurance race at the County Fair. Take the next exit.

He points to an upcoming exit sign for the town of Drummond.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RANCH

Thom and Vidal approach this high elevation ranch whose structures are a combination of the old and the new - indicating a recent restoration job.

They park by a rambling brick ranch house and are greeted by the friendly barks of a small dog of very mixed parentage. The front door opens and a tall, spare COWBOY emerges. He is in his mid-30's and sports a tightly cropped ~~beard of~~ **dirty blond beard**. He flashes a grin of recognition at Vidal.

COWBOY

Goddam! Look what the cat dragged in!

VIDAL

Hey, Larry! How the hell are you?

CONTINUED

Larry and Vidal shove each other around goodnatureedly as a form of greeting. They are old friends. Vidal introduces Thom.

VIDAL  
This is my friend Thom ---  
Larry.

LARRY  
Howdy.

THOM  
Glad to meet you.

They shake hands.

VIDAL  
So where's Will?

LARRY  
Oh he'll be along -  
as soon as he hears the  
beer cans opening.

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP: A CAN OF BUDWEISER

as the pop top is snapped open.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE

Larry, Thom and Vidal are sitting on the very pleasant patio having some beers. Thom quietly observes what is clearly a friendship of long-standing.

VIDAL  
So you been trashin'  
around much? Hittin'  
the bars?

LARRY  
Nah. Just takin' it easy.  
How 'bout yourself?

VIDAL  
Not since I got religion.

Larry and Vidal share a good laugh at Thom's expense.

Riding up across the lawn from the barn area comes a 2nd cowboy, WILL, atop a wiry blue roan stud horse. He rides right up onto the patio, a big grin on his face.

CONTINUED

WILL  
Did I hear beer cans?

WILL is a little taller than Larry, with amiable dark eyes and a similarly close cropped dark beard. He climbs down from the horse.

LARRY  
(to Thom)  
This here's my partner,  
Will Catlan, and our other  
partner...  
(he pats the horse's nose)  
... ~~Pancy Dancer~~  
**FLINT LOCK**

~~Thom flashes a questioning look at Vidal. Vidal just shrugs.~~

Will offers his hand to Thom.

WILL  
I hear you got Hot Shot here  
on the straight and narrow?

THOM  
I don't know about that.

Will opens a can of beer, pours some into his cupped hand and offers it to the horse. The horse laps it up politely.

LARRY  
~~FLINT LOCK~~  
If ~~Pancy Dancer~~ wins the  
race, maybe the Budweiser  
people will want him to do  
an ad.

VIDAL  
He looks like he's in great  
shape.

LARRY  
We've been training him  
real careful. 15 or 20 miles  
one day. Just 8 or 10 the next.

THOM  
Vidal tells me you've been  
raising mustangs?

LARRY  
That's right. You're looking  
at one.

THOM  
(surprised and impressed)  
This horse was born wild? ~~then?~~

CONTINUED

LARRY

Sure was. I got the broken bones to prove it. We got him down in the Pryor Mountains on the Montana-Wyoming border some 6 years ago.

THOM

I thought mustangs were extinct. Didn't the dog food people kill them all?

LARRY

Almost. Still about 15 thousand of 'em left runnin' around in the back country though. They're kind of a "persecuted minority."  
(he grins)

That's why we breed 'em. They're a hell of a horse. We got a whole breeding herd now that we picked up for practically nothing. Lot of people put us down, but I think they're gonna be surprised. Wanta see the herd?

THOM

Sure.

CUT TO:

EXT. PASTURES

Thom, Vidal, Larry and Will walk along a wire fence that encloses some 50 horses, mares and foals, ranged in three big pastures.

The horses act nervous at the approach of the men. The lead mare edges the rest of the band away, as the lone stud trots toward the intruders in an unfriendly, businesslike way.

LARRY

All these adult horses were foaled in the wild. They've never had a man on their backs, and we don't much care to change that. They just roam wild here like they was at home. The foals we got at auctions and the ones that were born here - they're the ones we'll break for show and sellin'.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RANCH HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

The four are just finishing a late lunch of chili, salad, and home-baked bread. They are lounging around in the livingroom with their plates on their laps.

The livingroom is large, functional, and comfortable, with lots of Navajo rugs everywhere - real western living.

WILL  
(to Thom)  
Want some more chili?

THOM  
Thanks, I'm fine.

Will sets his plate on the table and leans back on the couch next to Larry, who is enjoying a cigarette. Will drapes his arm casually around Larry's shoulder.

THOM  
How long have you two known each other?

WILL  
Jesus - must be 8, 9 years.  
We met at the Billings Rodeo. in '70, Larry was entered in the bareback riding and I was sittin' on the fence - and he bucked off right in my lap!

They both laugh at this story - some sort of private joke.

LARRY  
We got a notion to get drunk together that night - and we've been together ever since.

THOM  
(getting up)  
Can I use your john?

LARRY  
Down the hall on your right.

Thom walks down the hall, glancing through an open door into the bedroom - noting a large king-size bed.

INT. BATHROOM

As Thom relieves himself, he looks over the assortment of postcards and photos that have been tacked on the wall.

They offer a quick biography of Will and Larry's life together: a life of horses, rodeos, beer and roughhousing. Vidal appears in one picture arm-in-arm with Larry, the ubiquitous beer cans in their other hands, against a mountain sunset.

DISSOLVE TO



INT. THOM'S TRIUMPH - INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - EVENING

Thom and Vidal are driving home from their visit in a mellow mood.

THOM

I like your friends. ~~We~~ *we'll have to*  
~~must~~ go "backpacking" again  
some day.

VIDAL

We will. Next Saturday.

THOM

No way. Father Vance  
would never let me off two  
Saturdays in a row. I still  
don't understand why he let  
me go this time.

VIDAL

*wooding* {  
For your health! Over which  
one and all are concerned. As  
Father Vance's trusted mechanic,  
I can assure you that his car  
has several dispensations of  
work yet to be done on it. And  
next weekend, we're going to go  
backpacking again - and even  
camp out ~~the~~ night

THOM

(shaking his head)  
You're dreaming.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. RECTORY - NEXT SATURDAY MORNING

Father Vance smiles and waves goodbye, as Thom and Vidal pull out  
of the driveway and off down the street, with two backpacks  
tied to the roof of the Triumph.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. MOTEL - EVENING

Under the blinking neon of this cut-rate motel is parked Thom's  
Triumph.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

It is a pretty seedy place.

CONTINUED

Thom lies on one of two twin beds looking miserable. Vidal stands in front of a mirror dressed for a night on the town. He is primping and combing his hair.

THOM

I'm not sure I want to go through with this.

VIDAL

(pissed off)  
Suit yourself.

THOM

Someone might recognize me.

VIDAL

So.

THOM

I don't think I'm ready for that. My parents live in this city.

VIDAL

That's right, and we're going to visit them tomorrow - just like we told Father Vance we would - on our way back from the mountains.

THOM

I don't like all this lying and deception.

VIDAL

You can do what you please, but I'm going out dancing. One of the few chances we've had to be alone together, and you've been cold fish all day.

THOM

I'm sorry. I guess it's this place.

VIDAL

(unsympathetic)  
Whatever.

Vidal disappears into the bathroom.

CUT TO

INT. DISCO - HELENA, MONTANA

The disco is predominantly gay. The large dance floor, with its flashing ~~deco~~ neon and laser decor, is filled with dancers gyrating to a booming, sensuous disco beat.

Vidal is dancing the Bump with a handsome ~~BLACK DUDE~~ <sup>GUY</sup> and having a great time. He is plenty drunk and going out of his way to be trashy.

Sitting on the last seat at the bar watching Vidal and the ~~black dude~~ <sup>GUY</sup> is Thom. He is self-conscious and miserable, avoiding looking at anyone around him, lest they strike up a conversation. He has already drunk more whiskeys than he is accustomed to.

A good-looking TALL GUY ambles past Thom, looking him over. Thom avoids his stare, turning back to the bar and motioning to the BARTENDER.

BARTENDER

Whiskey-on-the-rocks. Right?

Thom nods, and the drink is quickly delivered. When Thom turns around again, the tall guy is still standing there, but with his back to Thom, ostensibly watching the dancing.

Thom catches a glimpse of Vidal through the crowd. Vidal and the ~~black dude~~ <sup>guy</sup> are standing in the middle of the dance floor locked in a tight embrace, kissing passionately.

As people push through the crowded bar area, the tall guy in front of him is pushed back toward Thom. His body presses momentarily against Thom's, and his hand seems to accidentally brush against Thom's thigh - then remains there. The tall guy turns around and smiles.

TALL GUY

Howdy.

Panicked, Thom cannot even bring himself to reply. He squeezes away down the bar with his drink, seeking out a dark corner of the dance floor.

Sitting on some cases of beer piled up in the corner is a young ~~DRAG QUEEN~~. Slim and wraithlike, she is wearing an antique gown of watered silk, with lace at the neck and wrists. Her brown hair is long, and her eyes are shadowed in a pale green that accentuates a forlorn sadness to her appearance.

Looking as out-of-place here as Thom feels, she catches his attention. Aware she is being looked at, she smiles demurely back.

PALE EYES

(dreamily)

Hello, lonely boy.

CONTINUED

THOM

Hello.

PALE EYES

How come you're not dancing?

Thom looks out at the dance floor feeling the effect of the whiskeys.

PALE EYES

Did you have an argument  
with your lover?

Thom nods yes.

PALE EYES

And now he's out there  
dancing with someone else.

THOM

Yeah.

PALE EYES

You want to dance with me?

Thom looks at her drunkenly.

PALE EYES

I won't bite you.

THOM

I don't know how to dance.

PALE EYES

(disappointed)

Oh.

They both stand there a little awkwardly in their respective glooms.

PALE EYES

Can I have a sip of your drink?

THOM

Sure.

He hands the drink to her. She takes a sip and hands it back.

PALE EYES

Thanks.

There is a pause in the music, and a voice comes over the sound system.

VOICE

DOCTOR

If there's a clergyman in  
the house, would he please  
come to the main entrance?  
Thank you.

CONTINUED

The music begins again. Thom is frozen in indecision. Pale Eyes looks at him in curiosity.

PALE EYES  
What's the matter?

THOM  
Someone needs a priest.

PALE EYES  
So? You're not a priest,  
are you?

THOM  
(abruptly)  
No.

Thom's hands are shaking.

PALE EYES  
Hey, what is it?

THOM  
Excuse me.

He pushes off through the crowd toward the main entrance.

He makes his way to where a DOORMAN is collecting a dollar from everyone entering the bar. Again, Thom holds back in indecision. Finally, he approaches the doorman.

THOM  
Was someone in need of  
a priest?

DOORMAN  
You just missed him.  
Some old guy had a heart  
attack or something. They  
just took him out.

He indicates out the door. Thom's face goes pale. He stands frozen in anguish.

DOORMAN  
Why? Are you a priest?

THOM  
(backing away a step)  
No.

Suddenly, Thom feels sick. He turns and hurries back through the crowd and into the Men's Room.

CONTINUED

INT. MEN'S ROOM

Gagging, Thom barges into a stall. He falls to his knees and vomits into the toilet.

The CAMERA PANS over the pornographic graffiti on the toilet walls.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

CLOSE-UP: THOM - INT. MOTEL ROOM

Thom opens his eyes and groans.

VIDAL'S VOICE

Wake up, you crummy  
amateur sinner!

Vidal is bending over him, grinning down at where he lies on the bed.

VIDAL

What time are we supposed  
to be at your folks house?

Thom groans again and turns over.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THOM'S PARENTS' HOUSE

Vidal and Thom's mother and father sit politely around the dinner table pursuing small talk, while Thom is in the next room on the phone.

THOM'S FATHER

What do you do for a  
living, Vidal?

VIDAL

I'm a mechanic.

FATHER

That's a smart profession  
to be in these days - you'll  
never be unemployed.

VIDAL

Yeah. Keeps me busy.

MOTHER

Would you like some more  
coffee?

VIDAL

Yes, please.

CONTINUED

CLOSE-UP: THOM

He is talking to Father LeMatt .

LeMATT (V.O.)

This is the 3rd time  
you've cancelled in a  
row, Thom. I'm beginning  
to think that you're  
hiding something from me.

THOM

Hiding something? No, I'm  
not hiding anything. It's  
like I told you - I'm exhausted.

LeMATT (V.O.)

Perhaps I could speak to  
Father Vance about letting  
you have a little vacation.

THOM

Maybe you're right.

INT. DININGROOM

As Thom returns to the table, his mother watches him with great  
concern on her face.

MOTHER

Is everything alright, Tommy?

THOM

Yes. Father LeMatt is very  
understanding.

MOTHER

Vidal was just telling us  
about some of your adventures  
backpacking.

THOM

Oh?

Thom fakes a smile, but his hand is shaking so badly that he can  
hardly get his cup of coffee to his mouth.

FADE OUT

*added  
stuff  
on Thom's  
health*

FADE IN

MISSY OLDENBERG'S BODY

She lies in a simple wooden coffin.

THOM'S VOICE

May the grace and peace  
of God our Father and the  
Lord Jesus Christ be with  
you.

INT. CHURCH - COTTONWOOD

Many of the townspeople, both young and old, have turned out for the funeral.

CONGREGATION

(answering the Priest's invocation)  
And also with you.

Clare Faux, Missy's lifelong companion, stands shakily alone in the front pew, her face tight and vacant.

The PALL BEARERS put a white pall over the coffin. The congregation stands and begins the hymn: "Holy God, ~~We~~ Praise Thy Name." The pall bearers carry the coffin down the aisle, with Jamie Ogilvie, the altar boy, leading the way carrying the lighted paschal candle, followed by Father Thom.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP: THOM

Reading the Scripture as part of the funeral Mass. His hands tremble, as the words he is saying reflect his own state of mind - his own imagined fall from grace.

THOM

He who pleased God was loved;  
He who lived among sinners  
was transported,  
snatched away,  
Lest wickedness pervert his mind,  
Or deceit beguile his soul;  
For the witchery of paltry things  
obscures what is right,  
And the whirl of desire  
transforms the innocent mind.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD

Around the freshly dug grave stand: Father Thom; Jamie Ogilvie, carrying the cross; the six pall bearers; Clare Faux leaning on Father Vance's arm for support; and a small crowd of mourners.

CONTINUED



THOM

Give her eternal rest, oh Lord.

MOURNERS

And may your light shine  
upon her for ever.

A YOUNG WOMAN comes forward to Clare Faux with a long box. Clare takes from the box a bouquet of flowers - the only flowers in the funeral. Clare leans forward to place the flowers on the coffin and nearly falls, Father Vance catching her arm just in time.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MISSY AND CLARE'S FARM

Thom and Clare Faux walk slowly together through Clare's flower and vegetable garden.

CLARE

I've thought about your suggestion, Father, and I've made some plans for the future. Missy was right. She said: "Now I don't want to hear about you living on here alone and being found dead by the milkman some fine day.

(she chuckles)

Missy got so confused. We don't have a milkman any more.

THOM

Then you'll sell this place and move to somewhere smaller?

CLARE

Goodness no! I'm going to stay right here, and I'm going to be very busy. And I won't be alone either. You'll see.

She squeezes Thom's hand.

CLARE

You've been very good to us, Father. You're a good priest and a very manly young man too. But you ought to take better care of your health.

Thom does look exhausted, but he manages a laugh, making light of it.

CONTINUED

THOM

Now don't you worry about me!  
As a matter of fact, I'm  
about to take a little vacation.  
I'm going to Denver for a week  
to attend a conference.

CLARE

Well good for you! Come  
visit me when you get back,  
and I think you'll be surprised -  
by my new life.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VIDAL'S BEDROOM

Thom and Vidal are in bed together. But Thom is not particularly responsive to Vidal's attempts at lovemaking - his mind is elsewhere. Finally, Vidal stops trying - pissed off.

VIDAL

What is it this time?

THOM

I'm sorry. It's Clare Faux.  
She and Missy Oldenberg lived  
together 50 years. Maybe they  
were lovers. And now Clare's  
alone - and I wonder if she  
won't just let herself go too -  
like so many old people when  
their partners pass on.

~~talk about age~~

Fed up, Vidal turns away from Thom.

VIDAL

I feel like there's always  
one of your parishioners in  
bed with us.

THOM

(not taking him seriously)  
Are you going to drive with  
me to Denver?

manger's got  
a week off and

VIDAL

(sarcastic)

Oh yeah! How would that look?  
Vidal Stump takes a sudden  
interest in academic conferences  
on abortions. No way!

CONTINUED

word in his head  
intention - & respect  
dignity

THOM

I suppose you're right.  
But I don't want to drive alone.

VIDAL

I got an idea. Why don't  
you try bumming a ride on  
one of those little private  
planes that are always flying  
in and outta here. I'll bet  
someone would give a priest a ride.

THOM

Hmmn. Maybe.

VIDAL

I'll come down on my bike  
and meet you there. A lotta  
good night life in Denver.  
I'll show you some of the  
hot spots.

*and stay together  
at that dignity place.*

THOM

(irritated)

You know how I feel about  
bars. But I'm sure that  
won't stop you ~~from checking~~  
~~them out yourself.~~

?

VIDAL

(looking Thom in the eye)

Maybe... ?

CUT TO:

AN AIRPLANE PROPELLER

As the engine whines on, ~~and~~ the propeller kicks into its spin.  
The plane is a small Cessna 4-seater. It taxies down the short  
runway of the Cottonwood Airfield and lifts off.

INT. AIRPLANE

Thom sits in the back looking very pale and uneasy as the little  
plane lurches up into the sky.

The PILOT, a heavy-set man in his 40's, turns around and notices  
Thom's condition.

PILOT

Ever fly in one of these  
things before, Father?

CONTINUED

Thom shakes his head no. The pilot tosses him a bottle of Dramamines.

PILOT

Here. Take one of these.  
Calm your nerves.

Thom gulps down one of the pills.

EXT. AIRPLANE

Below them stretches the Rocky Mountains - a spectacular sight that Thom at this moment does not appreciate.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DENVER AIRPORT

As Thom walks through the busy main terminal building, carrying his suitcase.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DENVER

Thom gets out of a taxi and pays the driver. He checks the address on a piece of paper and proceeds up a concrete walk to the arcaded porch of a stuccoed private home, pleasantly shaded by big blue spruce trees.

He rings the bell, and the door opens. Standing before him is a tall slender young man of ascetic features, with a few touches of grey already in his close-cut black hair. It is DORIC WILTON, Thom's old friend from his seminary days.

THOM

~~(stunned)~~

Doric!

DORIC

Thom - for God's sake.  
Is it really you?

They shake hands warmly *and hug each other.*

THOM

They said at the Dignity Office that I should contact Father Doric - and I wondered if it might not be you. *had a pretty good idea it was you.*

DORIC *anonymous*

Then you're the priest from Montana who wrote us asking for help.

CONTINUED

THOM *desperately*  
(~~suddenly gloomy~~)  
Doric, I'm here on the pretext of going to a conference on abortions. It's just one of the many lies and deceptions that fill my life now. I've got to talk with someone. I'm going crazy.

DORIC  
(identifying with his pain)  
Come on inside.

*DIGNITY HOUSE*  
INT. ~~GUEST ROOM~~

*and leads him to the guest room.*  
Doric shows Thom around. It is a placid, sunny little room with modern furniture and a double bed. There is a private bathroom off the end.

DORIC  
You can use this room while you're here.

Thom sets down his suitcase and sits on the edge of the bed, exhausted. He buries his face in his hands.

DORIC  
How much do you know about the Dignity program?

THOM *its*  
Just that ~~you're~~ an organization of Catholics sympathetic to the human rights movement and trying to redefine the role that homosexuals might have in the Church.

DORIC  
That ~~just~~ about says it. As long as the Church stands pat on abortion and a few other things, it's a cinch she won't change on homosexuals either. But we can try to soften the attitudes for now and make some kind of place for ourselves at the edge.

Doric is suddenly aware that Thom is crying, tears streaming down his face.

DORIC  
Are you alright?

CONTINUED

THOM

I'm sorry. I'm ~~just~~  
falling apart.

DORIC

I know. I went through  
it too. Why don't you  
lie down for a while. We  
can talk when you're  
feeling better. ~~You want~~ *Let me give you*  
something to help you sleep?

Doric steps into the bathroom and takes a bottle of Valiums out  
of the cabinet. He draws a glass of water and comes back to Thom.

DORIC

I don't use them anymore  
myself, but I keep the  
prescription going for  
other people.

THOM

Thanks.

Thom puts one of the Valiums in his mouth and takes a swallow of  
water.

THOM

Look, I gave the number  
here to a friend of mine...

DORIC

Your lover?

THOM

Yes. He's coming down  
separately and...

DORIC

Sure. He can stay here too.  
Rest now.

Doric turns to leave, but Thom calls after him.

THOM

Doric!...

Doric looks back at Thom on the bed.

THOM

Do you think, back when we  
were in seminary together -  
if Father LeMatt hadn't  
separated us ~~do you think~~  
~~we would have become lovers?~~

*?  
Doric thinks  
Thom's his  
Valium's lover!*

Doric looks back at Thom, sharing for a moment the pain of regret for what might have been, but wasn't. There is no need for a reply.

Finally, Doric turns and leaves, shutting the door behind him.

DORIC

Go to sleep now. I'll see you later.

Thom lies back on the bed and closes his eyes.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. GUEST ROOM - HOURS LATER

Thom comes out of his sleep murmuring in pleasure as he approaches orgasm.

Kneeling over his lower torso is Vidal, still dusty and weatherbeaten from his long trip on his motorcycle.

From Thom's point-of-view, dulled by the Valium, he sees through a soft focus haze, as Vidal's face moves up his body and kisses him on the lips.

VIDAL (grinning)

Hi. Happy vacation.

Thom blinks his eyes, trying to bring his mind back into focus.

VIDAL

Your friend Doric wants to know if you want to go to Mass.

THOM

Mass?

VIDAL

Yeah. Some special kind of Mass - with dancing in it. I'm going to jump in the shower.

Thom watches in a kind of stupor as Vidal strips off his road-soiled clothes and heads toward the bathroom.

~~Slowly, mechanically, Thom opens the bottle of Valiums and downs another one.~~

(O.S.) There is a sudden, loud, harsh RATTLING sound - as produced by a wooden percussion clapper - shaking to a martial beat.

*It is a disturbing sound - a death-rattle.*

CUT TO:

DANCE MASS - INT. LARGE RECREATION HALL - DENVER

12 young DANCERS, 6 men and 6 women, goosestep in stiff strides like wind-up soldiers. They parade in front of a predominantly college-age audience who are kneeling on the wooden floor of the large, open hall. In the background, co-ordinated with the dance, a PRIEST conducts Mass at a long table draped in white that serves as an altar. Off to the side stands a young ~~MAN~~ providing the only accompaniment with the wooden clapper.

Kneeling among the audience are Thom, Vidal, and Doric.

CLOSE-UP: THOM

Abstracted ~~into his drugged~~ <sup>by his</sup> condition, his eyes are glazed. The dance mass takes on a somewhat surreal, expressionistic stylization from his point-of-view, dominated by the almost overwhelming death rattle of the wooden clapper.

All the dancers are dressed in black leotards, except one - a very attractive young man, about 20 years old, with blue eyes and shoulder-length blond hair - whose leotard is white.

The dancers pair off into 6 pairs, men with men, women with women. The pairs face each other, their hands placed gently on each other's shoulders, and lightly press their lips together in chaste kisses.

They move through a choreography of stately patterns, celebrating their pair-off state as lovers.

The death rattle again shatters the air, and the couples shift back into man-woman couples - all but one pair: the blond in the white leotard and his dark-haired male partner. The others goose-step in a circle around the lone pair of men, who hold each other and turn slowly, as if trapped.

Suddenly, IN SLOW MOTION, the others tear the two men apart. The 4 male dancers drag the dark-haired partner struggling away. The 6 women circle around the blond, who looks longingly after his partner, but makes no attempt to struggle.

The 10 dancers now thrust the blond forward, alone and rigid, as if tied. They strut past him, each in turn lashing out toward him, as if whipping his body.

CLOSE-UP: THOM

We move in toward Thom's glazed eyes - into his fantasy of the Passion of Christ, as acted out by the dancers.

DISSOLVE TO

VIDAL  
(nudging Thom)  
indicating the blond dancer.  
Check out the blond number.  
DORIC  
(laughing)  
Hands off.  
He's mine.  
Vidal nods his approval.



DANCE FANTASY

The blond dancer, wearing torn white robes and a crown of thorns, his hands tied behind him, is trapped within a circle of ROMAN SOLDIERS (the male dancers). One of the soldiers lashes him with a whip, while, in the background, the 6 women dancers, dressed in black mourning habits, moan with each crack of the whip.

Blood starts to trickle down the arms and legs from the torn flesh of the dancer.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP: THE DANCER'S BODY

Christ lies on the floor of a jail cell, bloodied, his clothes half torn off him.

The CAMERA moves slowly, intimately, over the dancer's body - emphasizing its sensuous physicality.

INT. PRISON CELL

TWO GUARDS look down at the dancer's body. They are powerfully built men. They lift the body from the ground. One guard holds the unconscious dancer in position, as the other guard approaches the dancer from behind. It is evident that they intend to abuse the dancer/Christ sexually.

Suddenly, (OFF-SCREEN) there is a crashing sound, then the drunken voice of Vidal.

VIDAL (V.O.)  
Goddamn fuckin shit!

HARD CUT TO:

INT. GUEST ROOM

Thom awakens abruptly from his nightmare - in a cold sweat.

He sits up, as light flashes across his face. On the other side of the room, Vidal is picking up a floor lamp that he has accidentally knocked over. Evidently drunk, Vidal stumbles into the bathroom. Thom can hear the water running.

Slowly, Thom draws himself to his feet and walks toward the bathroom.

THOM *(confused)*  
Where were you?  
I waited for you *to come back.*

CONTINUED

Vidal turns toward him, and Thom sees that his face is all bruised and bleeding. Vidal has been in ~~a~~ <sup>another</sup> fight.

THOM  
Oh my God!

VIDAL  
*John* You should see the other guys!  
*so, I did it a little*  
Vidal barges past Thom back into the guest room and drops down onto the edge of the bed. He starts trying to take off his clothes, but because of his bruises and because he is drunk, he has difficulty undressing.

Thom stands staring at him. Apporavingly.

THOM  
What happened?

VIDAL  
What's it look like?

THOM  
But why?

Vidal does not answer right off. He is struggling to get his shirt off. He throws it on the floor.

VIDAL  
Maybe I got something on my mind.

THOM  
(hesitant)  
Something about... you and me?

VIDAL  
(nasty)  
Something about me!  
I'm moving out of Cottonwood.

Thom is paralyzed with fear. Vidal starts tugging at his cowboy boots, which refuse to come off.

THOM  
Moving to where?

VIDAL  
Over to Missoula. Maybe get a part time job, maybe take a couple classes.  
(bitter)  
You're always saying I ought to go back to school.

CONTINUED

Vidal turns toward him, and Thom sees that his face is all bruised and bleeding. Vidal has been in ~~a~~ <sup>another</sup> fight.

THOM  
Oh my God!

VIDAL  
~~John~~ You should see the other guys!

Vidal barges past Thom back into the guest room and drops down onto the edge of the bed. He starts trying to take off his clothes, but because of his bruises and because he is drunk, he has difficulty undressing.

Thom stands staring at him. isaprovably.

THOM  
What happened?

VIDAL  
What's it look like?

THOM  
But why?

Vidal does not answer right off. He is struggling to get his shirt off. He throws it on the floor.

VIDAL  
Maybe I got something on my mind.

THOM  
(hesitant)  
Something about... you and me?

VIDAL  
(nasty)  
Something about me!  
I'm moving out of Cottonwood.

Thom is paralyzed with fear. Vidal starts tugging at his cowboy boots, which refuse to come off.

THOM  
Moving to where?

VIDAL  
Over to Missoula. Maybe get a part time job, maybe take a couple classes.  
(bitter)  
You're always saying I ought to go back to school.

CONTINUED

Vidal turns toward him, and Thom sees that his face is all bruised and bleeding. Vidal has been in ~~a~~ <sup>another</sup> fight.

THOM  
Oh my God!

VIDAL  
~~JOKE~~ You should see the other guys!  
~~so, I did it again~~

Vidal barges past Thom back into the guest room and drops down onto the edge of the bed. He starts trying to take off his clothes, but because of his bruises and because he is drunk, he has difficulty undressing.

Thom stands staring at him. is apporovingly.

THOM  
What happened?

VIDAL  
What's it look like?

THOM  
But why?

Vidal does not answer right off. He is struggling to get his shirt off. He throws it on the floor.

VIDAL  
Maybe I got something on my mind.

THOM  
(hesitant)  
Something about... you and me?

VIDAL  
(nasty)  
Something about me!  
I'm moving out of Cottonwood.

Thom is paralyzed with fear. Vidal starts tugging at his cowboy boots, which refuse to come off.

THOM  
Moving to where?

VIDAL  
Over to Missoula. Maybe get a part time job, maybe take a couple classes.  
(bitter)  
You're always saying I ought to go back to school.

CONTINUED

THOM  
(shocked and hurt)  
When did you decide all this?

VIDAL  
Drivin' down here on my bike.

THOM (pleading)  
~~You get me involved like this, and now you're just going to leave me?~~

*You've just barely given me a bite of the apple, and now you're taking it away*

*STAT* ( )  
VIDAL  
(nasty)  
~~How can I leave you when I was never with you!~~

*VIDAL  
I'm not taking anything away.  
THOM!  
But you're leaving me.*

Thom is stunned into hurt silence, the tears forming in his eyes. He is slumped against the wall for support.

THOM  
(barely audible)  
I can't believe you mean that.

VIDAL  
Well believe it! Your ministry is your lover. It always has been. Even the first time we made love, all you could talk about was drifting through the void - alone.

THOM  
(pleading)  
No! You didn't understand...

VIDAL  
You live in your head. I live in my body. We have ~~nothing~~ in common.

*little*

THOM  
(struggling with the words)  
So... I was just... just another trick to you.

VIDAL  
(suddenly quiet and gentle)  
That's not true.

THOM  
(tears now flowing)  
Then why do you want to go away?

CONTINUED

Vidal stops fussing with his boots and looks up at Thom in earnestness. His bitterness and anger are now gone.

VIDAL

I've become too dependent on you... and you've become too dependent on me. We could never be like Will and Larry. I'm just not made to be like that. And neither are you. You made that decision when you chose the Church. I know things are a mess in your life now, but you still have that to fall back on. I don't. I'm jealous of that. Maybe on my own I'll find something. But I won't as long as I have you as a crutch. Can't you understand that?

THOM

(resigned)

Yes... but I don't want to.

VIDAL

It's not like we won't still see each other. Missoula's not that far away.

There is a long silence. Thom is still slumped at the other side of the room. Vidal makes an overture.

VIDAL

Hey. Help me with my boots, will ya? I can't get the goddamn things off.

Thom hesitates a moment, then slowly walks over to the bed. He looks at Vidal's bruised face with concern.

THOM

You're not hurt bad, are you?

VIDAL

Nah. It feels good.

Thom looks at Vidal lovingly. Vidal lifts a boot in the air. Thom <sup>resigned,</sup> ~~SIGHS~~ and helps pull the boots off.

THOM

What about Patti Ann and the baby?

CONTINUED

VIDAL

I'll take them with me.  
No one else would take  
care of them.

THOM

In Montana, if you live  
with a woman for 2 years,  
she becomes your common-law  
wife.

VIDAL

Who gives a damn.

The boots off, Vidal slips off his pants and climbs into bed,  
moving over to make room for Thom. Thom hesitates a moment,  
then gets into bed, but at the far side, away from Vidal.

They lie separated a moment, then Vidal moves to Thom and puts  
his arms around him. Thom snuggles up to him. They fall asleep  
in each others arms.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. COLLEGE CONFERENCE HALL - DENVER - MORNING

Vidal and Thom come riding up on Vidal's motorcycle. Thom is  
wearing his street clothes for the conference.

As Thom gets off the bike from behind Vidal, he is being observed  
from the top of the steps by Mrs Shoup! She is there with another  
woman from Cottonwood, Mrs. Turner.

*Mrs Turner*  
*Mrs Shoup*

MRS. SHOUP

(to Mrs. Turner)

There! Look! I told you!  
It's just as I suspected!

Mrs. Turner nods in agreement.

Unaware of Mrs. Shoup's presence, Thom stands watching as Vidal  
drives away on his bike.. Then, slowly, half-heartedly, Thom  
starts up the steps.

A HIPPIE on the steps waves an anti-abortion flyer at Thom.

HIPPIE

Have you been born again in Jesus?

Thom pays no attention. He continues on into the conference hall.

HIPPIE

(calling after him)  
Christ died for you!

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE HALL

Thom sits in the darkened auditorium among the other conference-goers, watching a slide show on a large screen at the end of the room.

Thom stares blankly at the screen, his mind elsewhere.

The SLIDE SHOW consists of a series of inside-the-womb depictions of the progressive growth stages of the human embryo. A LECTURER explains what each slide is:

LECTURER

This is the human embryo  
at 2 weeks...

This is at 2 months...

This is 5 months...

This is 7 months...

This is just before birth.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COLLEGE CAFETERIA

The conference has broken for lunch. Thom is alone, carrying a tray with a cup of coffee and a Danish on it toward a table.

Suddenly, from out of nowhere, he finds himself face-to-face with Mrs. Shoup, backed up by Mrs. Turner.

MRS. SHOUP

You're an abomination  
before our Lord!

Thom reels back speechless.

MRS. SHOUP

I've been watching you  
and your ~~boyfriend~~. I've  
~~seen the places you go.~~  
You call yourself a man of  
God, but you're the slime  
of this earth!

In utter terror, Thom backs away from her, but she keeps advancing on him.

MRS. SHOUP

*now* | You're a pervert!  
A defiler of children!

Thom bumps into another man carrying a tray. Everyone seems to be staring at him. Mrs. Shoup is raving. Thom drops his tray to a table, turns, and runs away.

CONTINUED



?  
Mrs Shoup  
tapping her fingers.

MRS. SHOUP  
(yelling after him)  
You lie down with men! **you pervert!**  
You lie down with men!

Suddenly, the DEATH RATTLE of the wooden clapper sounds.

CLOSE-UP: THOM

He stops short, his eyes widening in wonder.

HARD CUT TO:

THE DANCE OF THE MOURNERS

The 6 WOMEN DANCERS, dressed in black mourning habits, lift their arms in supplication, moving in unison to a rhythmic series of deep sighs, at the base of the 3 crosses of Calvary.

LEANS  
TOWARDS  
LEFT

The CAMERA moves slowly up the base of the center cross to the body of Christ (as played by the blond dancer), ~~his blood oozing from his wounds down his half-naked body~~

MATCHED DISSOLVE TO:

A CRUCIFIX - INT. COLLEGE CHAPEL

Pulling back from this statue of Christ on the Cross, we find THOM kneeling before Doric, saying his confession.

THOM

Bless me Father, for I have sinned. I have broken my vow of celibacy. I have lied before the Church and before those I love. In my fallen state, I have made a mockery of my service to God.

( a long pause)

I have decided to leave the priesthood.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DENVER

Vidal secures his stuff-bag of clothes to the back of his motorcycle and climbs on. He is dressed to travel, in his leather jacket and goggles.

He kicks his bike to a start and pulls into the street.

CUT BACK TO

INT. COLLEGE CHAPEL - THOM'S CONFESSION

Doric tries to reason with Thom.

DORIC (calmly)  
You can't leave the priesthood.  
It's your calling.

THOM  
I have no choice. I'm  
going to be exposed.  
They'll bar me from Mass,  
confessions, everything.  
They'll ship me off to a  
retreat house somewhere  
and try to shrink my head.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS - DENVER

We dodge in and out of traffic from the POV of Vidal on his  
bike.

CUT BACK TO:

CLOSE-UP: THOM - INT. COLLEGE CHAPEL

He listens solemnly as Doric, acting as his confessor, lays out  
his penance.

DORIC (O.C.).  
The decision to continue or  
to leave off from your ministry  
is between you and your  
conscience. But you cannot  
remove the mark of your  
ordination from your soul.  
The priesthood you will take  
to the grave. In the name of  
the Father and of the Son and  
of the Holy Ghost, I absolve  
you of your sins; and as your  
act of contrition, I commend  
you to return <sup>to your</sup> parish and to  
deal forthrightly with what  
your ministry has created there -  
to weight the effects of your  
sins against the effects of  
your good deeds - before making  
your final decision.

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP: VIDAL

Exhilarated, as he rides his bike along the open road, high in  
the splendor of the Rocky Mountains.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. RECTORY - COTTONWOOD - DAY

A Taxi cab pulls up, and Thom gets out. He starts to pay, but the driver refuses.

DRIVER  
That's okay, Father.  
Say a prayer for me.

Thom nods his thanks, takes his suitcase and enters the rectory.

INT. RECTORY

Father Vance comes to the door of his study when he hears Tom enter.

FATHER VANCE  
(gravely)  
Thom, will you come in here?

Thom sets down his suitcase and enters Father Vance's office, fully expecting the ax to fall.

FATHER VANCE  
Shut the door.

Thom shuts the door.

FATHER VANCE  
Sit down, Father.

Thom sits.

FATHER VANCE  
I think you should know that Mrs. Shoup has been to see me and I believe she has also spoken with the Bishop's office in Helena - because you have received a summons to appear before Bishop Carney.

He hands the summons to Thom. Thom looks it over grimly.

FATHER VANCE  
Mrs. Shoup has brought serious charges against you regarding your moral conduct...

Thom's face is pale in expectation of what he knows must be coming.

CONTINUED

FATHER VANCE  
(continuing)

I think you know what I think of that harpie and her crusades. And I just want you to know that whatever happens, I stand behind you one hundred per cent. You're a good priest and of high moral character, and that is precisely what I have told Bishop Carney in my report on your work here. As far as Mrs. Shoup goes, I told her that if she goes around spreading vicious rumours about my curate, she'll get no absolution from me when she comes crawling in here on Saturday night for confession.

THOM

(truly surprised)  
Thank you, Father...  
for your confidence in me...  
but I...

FATHER VANCE

Don't thank me. You just hop in that fancy sports car of yours and get yourself into Helena and get this mess straightened out.

Thom rises to leave, truly grateful.

THOM

I'll do my best to be  
worthy of...

FATHER VANCE

(interrupting -  
his old gruff self again)

Never mind that. I just want you back here and attending to your share of the duties. I'm too old to be running this place alone. Now get outta here.

THOM

Yes, Father.

Thom exits, his low spirits somewhat buoyed.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL - HELENA

Thom pauses a moment, nervous, takes a deep breath and proceeds into the adjacent Diocese Building.

INT. DIOCESE BUILDING

Thom is led by another priest through a grand corridor, high-arched in Victorian Gothic style, the wall hung in rich old tapestries. The corridor leads to a set of tall doors. The other priest knocks, then opens the door, signaling Thom to enter, then shuts the door behind him.

INT. BISHOP CARNEY'S STUDY

BISHOP CARNEY is sitting at a huge Gothic desk flipping through some papers. He is in his late 50's, a man whose demeanor speaks of authority.

As Thom enters, the Bishop stands and comes from behind his desk to greet Thom.

BISHOP  
(business-like)  
Father Meeker...

Thom kneels and kisses the Bishop's ring.

THOM  
Your Excellence.

The Bishop motions Thom to sit in a large, uncomfortable Gothic arm chair, then circles back behind his desk.

BISHOP  
You are aware of the serious  
accusations that have been  
lodged against you?

THOM  
Yes, I am.

BISHOP  
Are they true?

CLOSE-UP: THOM

He pauses a moment, then looks directly to the Bishop.

THOM  
(resigned)  
Yes, they're true.

CUT TO:

EXT. THOM'S PARENTS' HOUSE - THE FRONT DOOR

Thom's Mother opens the door. Her face registers both surprise and concern.

MOTHER

Tommy!

Thom looks like he has been through an ordeal.

THOM

(wearily)

I've just had an audience  
with Bishop Carney...

From ~~the~~ look on his face, one might assume that he is about to report bad news.

THOM

...and he offered me a  
position on his new community  
affairs council. I'd be  
liaison man between the  
community and the Church,  
travelling around the state  
and reporting back on  
economic and social issues.

MOTHER

Tommy, that's wonderful!  
When do you begin?

THOM

I don't know. I don't  
know if I'm going to accept.

MOTHER

But why not, Tommy?  
It sounds like just the  
kind of work you've always  
loved.

Thom lowers his head - he appears seriously troubled.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN

Thom and his Mother are talking over coffee.

THOM

(astounded)

Then you knew!

MOTHER

(simply)

Your father and I have  
always known.

CONTINUED

THOM

But how could you know?  
I didn't know myself!

MOTHER

Oh, Tommy. Parents sense these things. When you were a teenager and didn't show any interest in girls... And you never dated <sup>much</sup> in high school. Of course there <sup>was</sup> that nice girl in college, <sup>but</sup> then you decided on the priesthood. Then in <sup>the</sup> seminary, there was your friend Doric. Why, all you ever talked about was Doric and God - in that order.

Thom blushes.

MOTHER

(continuing)

And then last month, when you brought your new friend to visit. Of course, he didn't seem quite your type - he seems a bit... wild, isn't he? But if you admire him, he must have some fine qualities we don't know about...

Thom is shaking his head in amused wonder.

THOM

It seems like ~~it was~~ obvious to everyone but me.

MOTHER

Your father and I always hoped you might marry and have children, of course. But all we really care about is if your happy.

Thom leans forward and kisses his mother on the cheek.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FATHER LEMATT'S OFFICE - HELENA

Thom stands before Father LeMatt, his ~~old~~ confessor. LeMatt is sternly lecturing him.

CONTINUED

LeMATT

A homosexual priest, if he is to stay in the Church, has two choices: he can either give in to his feelings and live a covert life, hiding his shame from his parishioners and associates - or he can combat his feelings with mortification and prayer. I would advise you to follow the second path.

THOM

No. There's a third choice...

Father LeMatt raises his eyebrows, surprised by Thom's assertion.

THOM

He can live openly as a gay priest.

LeMATT

I cannot condone that!

THOM

I realize that. And that's why I shall no longer come to you as my spiritual advisor.

Father LeMatt is left with his mouth open in shock.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CLARE FAUX'S FARM

As Thom drives up, he is surprised to find a flurry of activity going on. Some young men are on ladders painting the house. Another crew of young men and women are at work on the barn - repairing the room, rebuilding the interior. An electrician's truck is parked by the barn, and new wiring is being installed. A couple young women are unloading bundles of weaving materials from a Volkswagen bus and carting them up onto the front porch. A sign has been put up on the road proudly announcing: COTTONWOOD CRAFTS UNLIMITED.

Running around keeping her eye on all this activity is Clare Faux. She greets Thom with a big mischievous smile and a lively twinkle in her eyes.

THOM

What's going on here? It looks like the Seven Dwarfs have moved in!

CONTINUED



CLARE

You told me to make plans,  
Father.

THOM

You didn't fool around,  
did you?

CLARE

Well, I knew some young  
artists around the state  
who do the kind of handicrafts  
Missy and I did - only sometimes  
more modern. But they needed  
a cheap place where they could  
live and work together.

THOM

Are you telling me that  
you're opening a commune?

CLOSE-UP: CLARE FAUX

Bubbling over with enthusiasm for her new life.

CLARE

Oooh, something like that.  
We'll work and market as a  
group. The girls are going  
to live in the house with me -  
and the boys are fixing up a  
dormitory in the barn. 'Course  
I know that won't prevent a  
certain amount of hanky-panky...  
(she gives Thom a wink)  
...but then it is the 20th  
Century - almost the 21st!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JUDGES' TOWER - COUNTY FAIR - COTTONWOOD

An ANNOUNCER at a microphone is gazing out into the distance.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen, the first  
horses in the endurance race  
are now just a mile out of town -  
and they're coming on fast!

A crowd pushes forward along the sides of the finish line, straining  
their necks down the road for the first sight of the horses.

CONTINUED

Thom, Vidal, and Larry are at the front of the crowd. Thom is wearing his cassock, in his capacity as on-duty priest at the Fair. He is as excited and anxious as anyone.

ANNOUNCER

The first two horses are entering the fair grounds! It looks very close! And here they come!

A stir of excitement goes through the crowd as a horse and rider appear at the far end of the track - followed by another horse and rider about 3 lengths back. The horse in the lead is Flintlock, ridden by Will.

LARRY

It's Flintlock!

Vidal, Larry, and Thom start jumping up and down, urging the horse to the finish.

ANNOUNCER

That's Flintlock in the lead, folks - followed by Arab Son!

The crowd erupts into applause as the horses head down the home stretch. Flintlock is actually extending his lead in a final burst of energy - as he and Will lob across the finish line.

ANNOUNCER

And the winner is Flintlock!

Carried away with joy, Thom and Vidal leap into a big hug, as Larry goes running out to congratulate Will and Flintlock.

The crowd continues to applaud as Larry grabs the reins and leads Flintlock back in his victory walk along the track - both Will and Larry grinning like Cheshire cats.

ANNOUNCER

Let's hear it for the winners, Ladies and Gentlemen! Flintlock is a 6-year old stud owned by Will Mills and Larry Deisser of Drummond. The jockey is Will Mills. Local boys, Ladies and Gents!

As Thom and Vidal turn back to applauding for their friends, Thom looks around and notices that their hug has been observed by two standersby - one of them is MRS. TURNER, Mrs. Shoup's friend. Now she is whispering something in the ear of another woman friend, and Thom can see that the hot gossip is about him and Vidal.

CONTINUED

Vidal tugs at Thom's arm to get him to go out on the track to congratulate Will and Larry. Defiantly, knowing he is being watched, Thom turns and pulls Vidal into another big hug.

The two gossips are utterly scandalized. They turn away in a huff from Thom's demonstration of his emancipation - and go tittering off through the crowd.

ANNOUNCER

Something you ought to know about Flintlock, folks. He's a real son-of-a-gun mustang! Foaled right down in the Pryor Mountains. His Mammy and Pappy were wild as the wind. Take a good look at him, Ladies and Gentlemen. He's a new breed of champion!

Thom and Vidal join the crowd clustering around Larry and Will and Flintlock. A pretty girl in a bathing suit comes forward with a loving cup full of beer. Larry grabs the girl and gives her a big, lusty kiss, slurping the beer over both of them. Then he hands the loving cup up to Will, who takes a sloppy ceremonial drink, spilling the beer down the front of his clothes. He hands the cup back down to Larry, who takes a big swig himself, then holds it out for Flintlock - who obliges with a well-deserved drink, lapping it up with his tongue.

The crowd bursts into another round of laughter and applause.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. RAINBOW HOTEL - COTTONWOOD

As the sign in the window indicates, the hotel doubles as the Trailways Bus Terminal.

Sitting on the bench in front of the hotel waiting for the bus is Patti Ann, sharing an ice cream cone with the baby in her lap. It is a toss-up as to who is making the bigger mess of it, she or the baby.

A couple of old suitcases and cardboard boxes tied up with string are piled next to her. Vidal's motorcycle is parked on the street, with an oversize load of baggage tied on the back.

Vidal and Thom stand closely together on the sidewalk talking quietly.

CONTINUED

VIDAL

Look, Missoula's only 80 miles from Helena. So if you're going to be gay affairs counsel for the Church, you can come by my new place - and we'll do a little research.

THOM

Community Affairs Counsel - not gay affairs counsel.

VIDAL

Yeah. I guess I got a one-track mind.

THOM

And I haven't told the Bishop I'll do it yet.

VIDAL

What else are you gonna do - become a Bible salesman?

THOM

Maybe.

They are interrupted by the arrival of the bus, its destination marked "Missoula."

VIDAL

Wish me luck, Father. I'm going to need it.

Thom suddenly can't speak. He looks longingly at Vidal, breaking the light-hearted spell of their goodbye.

Vidal returns the look - just for a moment. One brief look that says "I'll miss you." Then he turns to Patti Ann.

VIDAL

C'mon, Patti Ann.  
Up an' at 'em!  
Hup-2-3-4!  
Hup-2-3-4...

He does a quick march-in-place, clowning for her.

Patti Ann smiles her little girl's smile and stands up, imitating Vidal's march.

The door to the bus folds open with a hiss, and Vidal boosts Patti Ann, carrying the baby, ahead of him into the bus.

CONTINUED

INT. BUS

Vidal hands 2 tickets to the BUS DRIVER.

VIDAL  
Two for Missoula?

The driver punches the tickets.

VIDAL  
Hey look, I'm gonna sit my wife in that back seat, and if you don't mind, I'm gonna just follow along behind you on my bike.

BUS DRIVER  
I guess that's okay....

They are interrupted by a YOUNG PRIEST in a black cassock who is working his way down the aisle, awkwardly trying to carry two suitcases and a guitar case. He is trying to get off.

PRIEST  
Excuse me, please.

Thom pushes to the side, giving the handsome young priest a look-over as he squeezes past. As the priest goes out the steps, Vidal grins and calls out after him:

VIDAL  
Good Luck, Father!

The priest looks a little puzzled, but nods back pleasantly.

PRIEST  
Why thank you.

EXT. BUS STOP

Thom is waiting for the young priest (his replacement) outside the bus. Behind him, an attendant is throwing the last of Vidal's luggage into the side storage area of the bus.

THOM  
Father Richards?

YOUNG PRIEST  
Yes. You must be Father Vance.

THOM  
(laughing)  
No, I'm not Father Vance. I'm Father Meeker. But Father Vance is anxiously awaiting your arrival.

CONTINUED

PRIEST

I'm afraid the bus was a  
little late.

THOM

(smiling)

Oh yeah! Try explaining  
that to Father Vance!

The naïf young priest looks at Thom curiously - not in on the joke.  
Thom gives him a generous handshake.

THOM

(ironically)

Welcome to Cottonwood!

As Thom helps the new priest lug his suitcases towards Thom's  
car, the bus starts revving up to pull out. Vidal hops out of  
the bus and to his bike.

Thom looks back over his shoulder as Vidal kicks his bike to a  
start.

The bus pulls out and off down Main Street. Patti Ann is in the  
back window, waving her hand goodbye.

Vidal pulls his bike from the curb and takes off slowly after  
the bus. The bus and Vidal disappear down the end of the street.

Suddenly the first chords of a joyous BACH FUGUE leap to life.

CUT TO

CLOSE-SHOT: ORGAN KEYBOARD

As in the OPENING SHOT, Thom's hands move gingerly over the  
keys - giving much new life to the grandiose Bach fugue.

CLOSE-UP: THOM - PLAYING THE ORGAN - INT. COTTONWOOD CHURCH

Thom's face seems to radiate with inspiration.

The CAMERA gradually moves into THOM'S EYES - alive with new  
spirit.

DISSOLVE TO:

VIDAL - AS THE FANCY DANCER

Dressed in the Indian costume of the poster that was over Vidal's  
bed, he dances his traditional dance. In SLOW MOTION, the background  
BLEACHED OUT in a blaze of light, Vidal's body moves gracefully  
in harmony with Thom's fugue. It is a dance of inner freedom.

END

~~WITTO E.~~

A WISE MAN TAKE OFFENSE AND DRAWS BACK,  
FEELING SELF PITY

MODESTY SETS ON TO CREATING ORDER  
AND INSPIRES ONE TO BEGIN BY DISCIPLINING  
ONE'S OWN EGO AND ONE'S IMMEDIATE CIRCLE.

THE COURAGE TO MARSHAL ONE'S ARMIES  
AGAINST ONESELF TO ACHIEVE SOMETHING  
REALLY FORCEFUL.

KEEP THE 2 LOVERS IN THE FOREFRONT

A VISIONARY EXPERIENCE (FOR VIDAL)

WITCHES:

Child of Heaven

Child of Hell

You are both

And all is well.

Billy Shoup runs away  
Abortion Convention in Helena, Thom bumps  
into Father Adrian. They are staying at  
the same motel.

<sup>In the middle of the</sup>  
That night, Vidal shows up at the motel  
Drunk and bloody from a fight - he wakes  
Thom up with a blow job. Thom is ice cold.  
Vidal suggests their affair is over.  
"What if I wasn't a priest?" "You are a priest."  
Breakfast with Adrian and his lover and Vidal.  
Thom and Adrian drive together to the  
convention. Thom breaks down, saying  
he is leaving the church.  
Thom is too worked up to stay at the  
convention and leaves early. He  
catches Vidal in bed with the blonde.  
Thom drives to the REST STOP and gets  
arrested.

Men hate fucking  
and love the medical  
MODESTY 4 28 46

p. 13 - add Vidal fixes Father Vance's car  
- Vidal points out notorious REST STOP

EQUALIZE THE EXTREMES THAT ARE THE SOURCE  
OF SOCIAL DISCONTENT AND THEREBY CREATE  
JUST AND EQUABLE CONDITIONS.

FOD GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE  
THE LAST JUDGMENT



WHEN

A WEAK MAN TAKE OFFENSE AND DRAWS BACK,  
FEELING SELF PITY

MODESTY SETS ON TO CREATING ORDER  
AND INSPIRES ONE TO BEGIN BY DISCIPLINING  
ONE'S OWN EGO AND ONE'S IMMEDIATE CIRCLE.

THE COURAGE TO MARCHAL ONE'S ARMIES  
AGAINST ONESELF TO ACHIEVE SOMETHING  
REALLY FORCEFUL.

KEEP THE 2 LOVERS IN THE FOREFRONT

A VISIONARY EXPERIENCE (FOR VIDAL)

WITCHES:

Child of Heaven

Child of Hell

You are both

And all is well.

Q Do you like big cork.

A. It depends on who's  
big cork you're talking  
about?

They go to  
Larry's bar.  
a cowboy bar  
in Helena

Q. mine.

Everyone tries to grope Thom  
and he loves it.

The next morning, he says:  
I don't think I can go on  
as a priest.

↓ The place gets busted by vice police -  
Thom is arrested. And 3 townsfolk  
denies being a priest when the cops  
ask look at his ID and ask him if he  
is a priest. He is finally released  
under his own recognizance.

Mrs Shoup finds out about the arrest.  
It comes out in the Cottonwood papers, but  
most of the townspeople stand behind Thom.

Thom is hearing his view of Charity,  
and his own definition of the mustwood,  
which he confesses to his confessor.

~~Thom is told that he must~~

The Church confessor takes a hard line. Thom  
must bow to the will of the Church.

The confessor suggests that he go  
immediately into retreat and there  
await the judgement of the Church.

Q he confesses to his old friend in retreat.

Vikal

That's one place where  
you and me agree, Father.

Neither of us thinks  
the world is such a great place to be.

The saint cannot  
fight the Demon  
and remain untouched.

# Why Did Thom become a Priest

Vidal

Don't you have desires,  
Father, like other people?

Thom

I have energy  
which I direct  
into activities  
which are different  
from those which  
preoccupy a lot of the world

I wanted to disassociate myself  
from the world that I saw  
growing around me in the  
early 70's. And yet I  
wanted to be useful.

It was a practical decision.

Vidal

Did you want to exorcise demons?

Vidal

No religious ecstasies?

The Virgin didn't  
appear to you and

touch you with her white light?

Thom seems quite troubled by his remarks.

Thom

Who are you?

Vidal: Hah! Who am I?

Jim Vidal Kaplan,  
the local good-for-nothing -

A future bum.

When Vidal is  
drunk, Thom  
suddenly asks  
him a series  
of hard questions  
so if he were  
talking to a demon  
who had to be  
exorcised.

Thom

Why did you say  
that about the Virgin?

Vidal

Oh then than she  
did come down and  
brought you with her  
white light.

Thom

Why are you so scornful.

Vidal

Jim zealous.

~~Vidal~~  
Thom

Went all saints looking  
for a Demon to exorcise?  
A Test?

Thom

It would be a  
sin of pride

to go out looking for a test.

Vidal

But if you were to run ~~to~~ into a test,  
you would not turn and run away.

Through their exchange we gradually  
move toward exposure of both

Vidal's and Thom's

more unconscious motivations or impulses.  
then challenge each other.

①

TAKES PLACE IN THE SUMMER

Opens on CU: GIRL IN CONFESSORIAL

she tells story of Vidal's vs saying we see her fantasy.

CREDITS

Outside Confessional:

2 girls pass; one giggles

Inside Confessional:

2nd Girl Everything Marylon said

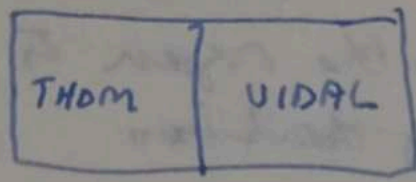
Did Marylon just tell you a story about her and Vidal's laughter?

was just a story she made up. I wasn't here to do it, but I was only kidding

3rd Confession

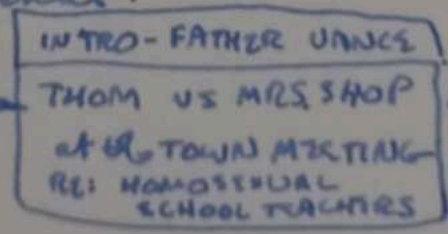
Old woman (comedy)

4th Confession: Vidal



Thom and Vidal meet face-to-face out confessional.

Who Group's son, the Boy Scout, is in Carolyn's class. Boy Scout is tagged as a spy, Tattle-Tale.



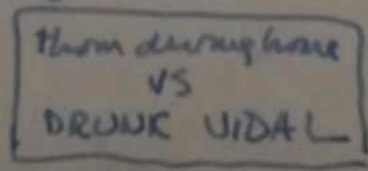
add old women not group. # old ladies who sing rock songs. THE LADIES AUXILIARY

Mrs. Shop bumps up the measure in an impassioned speech.

Thom gives opposing view.

It goes to a vote and the town overwhelmingly votes not to put it to a referendum.

Carolyn thanks Thom.



Ladys Auxiliary sing "School's out forever"

song "DIMON HOUSE"

AFTER a disco number

DISCO:

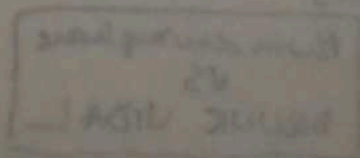
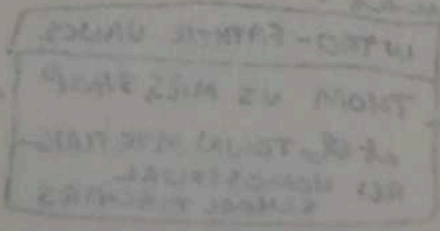
A long scene with several incidences

lost in a drugged-pair languor.

Ladys Auxiliary don strange demonic costumes. They call themselves

"The Old Witches"

Thom plays the organ to accompany them ~~(then don't know)~~



2710202



# The Fancy Dancer

A story in 3 acts

1. SEDUCTION
2. AFFAIR
3. DISSOLUTION OF AFFAIR

|             | Thom   | Vidal  |
|-------------|--|--|
| SEDUCTION   | Alone and SNUG<br>the own secure<br>definition of the<br>universe<br>UNINVOLVED<br>AN OBSERVER                                   | ALONE + CONFUSED,<br>IN ANGUISH<br>SCARED BECAUSE HE IS<br>DRIFTING AIMLESSLY<br>Thom has the Church<br>Vidal has NOTHING - <i>It's all about you<br/>&amp; him<br/>He is bitter</i> |
| AFFAIR      | <del>Thom becomes</del><br>changing<br>- a crisis -  | REVENGE<br>PASSION<br>SCORN<br>Profaning the sacred<br>out of disbelief in the sacred  |
| DISSOLUTION | Disillusion at<br>realization of<br>Vidal's motives.<br>But clinging<br>What is his new<br>life at end?<br>Where is he<br>going? | It's still, you know<br>the Church<br>& I have nothing   |

And he is drawn to Vidal

He considers leaving the Church

ABOLITION

Thom tends to be over-worldly. The Church sent him to the small town to ground him deal with everyday reality. To teach him compassion.

Thom goes on to a broader base to carry on his fight for the good, mellowed by his own experience of things earthly.

Thom is going up the ladder - recognition for his good work. He has mixed feelings about it, but we know that he will measure up to the new challenges ahead of him.

## THE HONEYMOON

Camping trip together

to a mountain lake,

they go skinny dipping in the cold water,

then they make love in the tent. We are outside and hear them, ~~and~~ but only see where their bodies press on the outside of the tent.

(They are overseen swimming in the nude together - by Mrs Group's son)

Mrs Group's son is the altar boy: Billy Gumbo

Carolyn Burgess, the barman school-teacher who Mrs. Group wants thrown out.

NO HORSE RACE

NO Cowboy funds

Lots of old women

All the old women on the Church council who are so fond of Father Thom. Their lives are so filled with reasons not to take action, they they welcome Thom's new ideas and energy.

Thom was sent to this town by the Church he didn't choose the town.

NO Older priest.

Cont:

(2)

Thom: I didn't say that. I just said that I like to encourage you to say some prayers for yourself.

Thom: You're a Catholic aren't you?

Vidal shakes his head: no.

Thom: (insistent) your parents were Catholic. You were brought up Catholic.

Thom: That's not true. Jim prayed for you. I don't do me any.

Thom: That was before I actually met you. Vidal: Oh, so you're going to stop now.

Vidal (still shaking his head) Not any more Father. I and Catholic I ~~wasn't~~ <sup>am not</sup> been Catholic since I discovered sex.

Vidal: My mother wasn't raised Indian so much as she was raised Catholic. She was a nun.

Vidal: (mutter) only truth she was the only one who prayed for me. I can assure you there's no one else to be

Vidal: My mother was a nun!

(Thom looks skeptical. Vidal starts laughing, knowing Thom does not believe this.)

Vidal: No really, she was when she was young.

I think they must of kicked her out. Then she and her flapper friends started hanging around the Fort Evans. My father was in the Army, that stationed there that's how we met. He was dumb Caribbe. I hated him. And my mother - well.... she was pray

Thom: Your mother I know. It's come to me.

Thom: a promise I made. No, it was your mother last winter. I heard her last rites. She asked for me to continue her prayers for you, and I said I would.

Vidal: I don't really mean you say prayers for me!

Card:

(2)

Thom: I didn't say that. I just said that I like to encourage you to see some prayers for yourself.

Thom: That was before I actually ever met you. Vidal: Oh, so you're going to stop now.

(Thom looks skeptical)

Thom: a promise I made to No. it was your mother's wish. I heard her last rites. She asked for me to continue her prayers for you, and I said I would.

Thom: You're a Catholic aren't you?

Vidal shakes his head: no.

Thom: (insistent) your parents were Catholic. You were brought up Catholic.

Vidal (still shaking his head) Not any more Father. I and Kathleen I ~~wasn't~~ <sup>am not</sup> been Catholic since I discovered sex.

Vidal: My mother wasn't raised Indian so much as she was raised Catholic. She was a nun!

Vidal: My mother was a nun! (Thom starts laughing, knows Thom does not believe this.)

Vidal: No really, she was when she was young. I think they must of kicked her out. Then she and her flapper friends started hanging around the Fort Evans. My father was in the Army, stationed there that's how we met. He was dumb Caribbe. I hated him. And my mother - well... she was psychotic.

you really mean you say prayers for me!

Thom: That's not true. Jim praying for you. Vidal: Don't do me any favors.

Vidal: (muttered) Yeah, she was the only one who prayed for me. I can assure you there's no one praying for me now.

Thom: I know your mother she used to come to mass faithfully and she always prayed for you.

SOCIETY VS Youth CPR  
ON ELIMATOR  
Curling plus curls releases  
and down to elevator.  
US Debbie Ford?

Debbie Ford - as she wants to  
and back to business -  
"That's mine is an  
atomization before God!"



HOLIDAY INN scene  
CHAMPING IN MOUNTAINS

CF SARDE THOMPSON

1st GIRL - Curious details of the story.

Father I want to talk someone  
about what happened last week  
I feel so guilty about it, Father.

Father: As your penance, Mary Ellen,  
maybe you better try hanging out  
with a different crowd of people.

2nd  
Father Thom, don't you believe  
that Mary Ellen. She made it  
all up. She just wishes  
it were true.

The school girls are wound up for  
compulsory confession.

So Father Thom hears a series of  
silly confessions by school girls.

Mary Ellen guessed at  
the 2nd girl.

② TRINA'S

ALGER  
SOPH?

outside, Mrs. Thom observes them walking on will help son. Thom

when Thom is formal, Vidal says VIDAL: Look, I think you must look in psycho or something. I started this whole thing to get back at the Church, you don't have to ~~come~~ <sup>talk</sup> meet with me anymore. I'm sorry for wasting your time. This breaks the ice. Thom is willing to be friends.

2nd Trina's

Thom talks about "being a priest" they joke together. Thom admits it

VANCE THOM CONVERSATION

VIDAL - GARAGE

PENIC

DEATH GILPHIL MAN TORN APART BY BLADES

Thom plunges the dagger

VIDAL STOOD UP AT TRINA'S

REVERSE CONFESSION

TA'S DELAY

HOLIDAY INN

Vidal asks Thom: Are you still a priest. Thom does not answer. Obviously, he doesn't know the answer.

THIS IS MY BODY

THIS IS MY BLOOD

Vidal + VANCE'S can deal

THOM + ~~SON~~

PACKING

THOM VIDAL IN MOTEL IN HELENA

LADIES GAY DISCO DENIES PRIESTHOOD TO COPE

← ?

MORNING AFTER THOM'S PARENTS

DEATH FUNERAL OF OLD LADY CONCUBINE

DENVER

ALGER

17978

# Model FAULT OF SMALL TOWN IN LANCASTER

- GIRLS CONFESSION
- VIDAL FANTASY
- ZAD GIRL CONFESSION
- OLD WOMAN CONFESSION
- VIDAL CONFESSION
- INTRO VANCE
- TOWN MEETING
- VIDAL DRUNK
- TRAM PLANE IN BIG TOWN CHURCH
- TRAM LOOKS FOR VIDAL AT GARAGE
- VIDAL'S HOUSE PARTY ANN THOM'S PRESENCE
- OLD WOMAN BINGO NIGHT JUST SING
- VIDAL disturbance outside
- VIDAL argues & Refers and apologizes
- VIDAL'S HOUSE PARTY ANN VIDAL SAYS HE IS GAY
- Thom lying awake in his room.
- TRINA'S

Father Vance asleep in front R. TV set.

ADDAMUS  
Thom's  
boy & other boy.

vidal does not really want to talk with them.  
vidal lets from outside "So Father them in there?"

Vidal: (drunk) Don't pray for me!

Vidal says he would like to talk with them after all - could he come to the Vidal's house and he will show him his problem.

Vidal does not want the responsibility of Patti-Ann  
Thom takes a hard line on Vidal's selfishness and does not respond warmly to the news Vidal is gay.

Thom suggests that anytime he wants to talk, he can make an appointment at the rectory. Vidal says he can't deal with the church but wants to talk. - they agree on meeting at Thom's.



CONFESSIONAL = INTO CLARE FAUX

~~Thom's~~

~~Intro~~

BINGO NIGHT -

intro CLARE FAUX and Mussy Oldenburg  
& as 2 of the rock quartet.

Thom's Delay:  
mussy  
Oldenburg  
sick

Vidal keeps asking Thom: Are you still  
a PMist?

Vidal is part Indian and thus  
a suppressed minority. Vidal had  
a period of Indian cultural awareness,  
but now he is bitter about that too.  
He challenges Thom's complacency.  
A small photo of Vidal as the  
Fancy Dancer - something he has now  
regretted and he scorns Thom's  
condescending interest.

Vidal is a have-not, the Barbarian  
Thom is the have, defended of the status quo  
trying to do the right thing in a  
decadent society.

Disco song: DEMON LOVER

Donna Summer  
types about how wild  
her love is.

Deep, deep, deep, deep, deeper ~~deeper~~  
~~Deep, deep~~ Chorus: Demon lover

Down, down, down, deeper down

Demon Lover

Oh, oh, oh, come again,

Demon lover, Demon Lover

The furies brought you to me

Then said you'd set me free

Now look what you've done to me

Demon lover

Ah a-a-a-a-h! Ah!

Oh. OOOOOO h! Ah!

Demon lover

I got you in me

Ah a-a-a-a-h! Ah!

Oh o-o-o-o-h, Oh!

Demon love - I got you in me

Demon lover  
Demon lover

Demon lover

Demon lover

①

Vidal: How long have you  
been here, father

Thom: 4 years

Vidal: Whew! That's a long  
sentence.

Thom: I'm not in a jail here.

Vidal: NO. Well I am. But  
I'm going to be getting  
out soon.

Thom: What does that mean?

Vidal: That means I'm not hanging  
around here much longer

Thom: What about Prissy Sue and the baby?

Vidal: What about 'em.

Thom: Aren't you responsible for them.

Vidal: Haven't you heard father,  
I ain't responsible for no one.  
(he laughs) I ain't even  
responsible for myself.

A shrink once told me that,  
I ain't responsible for no one  
an' no one responsible for me, got it?  
Thom: I am responsible  
for you.

Vidal: (Criminally)  
Don't you do  
yourself any  
favours, father.  
Cont:

The girl is relating her sexual fantasy about Vidal Laflour. She claims she was riding on the back of his motorcycle when the racing fight occurred.

We see the story through her dreams of her fantasy:

EVIE BRICE  
(internal)  
Father forgive me for I  
have sinned?

PREST (P.O.S.)  
How many days since  
your last confession,  
my daughter.

EVIE BRICE  
(internal)  
No been seven days  
(suddenly her tone changes  
to a more familiar, casual tone.)  
Father, it was my fault.  
It was that Vidal Laflour.

Garrings pulls up beside him and  
sees his machine challenging him to race.  
They do and Garrings cut him off,  
Vidal does his best to swerve into oncoming  
traffic and causes a crash, but  
Vidal and Evie Brice just barely escape.

Vidal drives a motor cycle through a store window.

Vidal vs motorcycle Hills Angel type who wears his motorcycle Honda key <sup>goes</sup> dangling for his ear as an earring.

Vidal rips the ear ring from the guys ear and ~~strabs~~ strabs his motorcycle, crashing it through a plate glass window.

We see his crash through the window <sup>into the bar,</sup> and moments later comes he comes staggering out of the bar and off down the street.

Opens with Vidal vs Sarring in a motorcycle encounter, where Sarring plays a dirty trick on Vidal <sup>- with California plate</sup>

~~the~~ intercut with Father Thom hearing confessions (like ~~of~~ teenage girls who confess to having the hots for Vidal.

or Old ladies gossiping about Vidal (we don't see Thom's face, ~~but~~ just what he says to the confessor. However the



Save: Thom at the abortion convention

outside: Christ died ~~for~~ for you.

inside: the growing fetus

Custom: crying, breaking down.

---

Character:

~~Thom~~ - Thom's would-be lover from  
GARY - Seminary school.

---

SHORT, VISUAL scenes, loosely connected  
but not a hard storyline, more an  
exploration of 2 characters.

No heavy melodrama, but many  
divergent incidents,

---

Carolyn:

Father, thank you for your support.

I know that your church does  
not look kindly on ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> priest who  
comes to the defense of homosexuality -  
so I realize it was a brave thing  
for you to do.

Thom - you don't need to thank me.

For me to take any other  
stand would be gross hypocrisy  
on my part, ~~but to see the~~  
~~issue of homosexuality is clear~~

Carolyn - Will thank you anyway,  
I'm not Catholic, but I think  
you are a true man of the cloth.

277777A

As a priest you learn a lot about the traumas of other people's lives, but you are removed from ~~being really involved~~ their problems. It's an odd choice of a profession and it requires a certain temperament.

He became a priest in the early 70's, after going to college in the late 60's, having at least a taste of the psychedelica. ~~that~~ He had a visionary experience that led him to become a priest.

P.P. 36  
R.T. 36  
T.G. 36  
Vidal causes a drunken disturbance outside the Wednesday Night Lounge meeting because he is pissed off that Thom spends the evening with the old ladies and not him.

He has a big old church but it is almost empty - very minimal congregation. He is more like the caretaker of the architecture.



Vidal grew up in this town. He  
has recently returned on ~~the~~ the death  
of his father and taken over the house -  
and the care of his 16 year old half  
sister and her baby. It is not  
Vidal's intention to be there long  
and it was certainly not his intention  
to take on responsibility of Betty-sue.  
But, at the end, he does take Betty-sue  
and the baby with him.

Betty-sue is the retard who does nothing  
but watch TV in the brother-down house

Vidal hated his father.

Vidal keeps saying: ~~He's~~ 'Din going  
back to San Francisco.

Vidal - who all lovers, they ~~love~~  
lie in bed after sex and they talk  
other about their lives - the truth  
about their childhoods, their parents.

---

from my parents know his gay. And  
I think ~~my~~ parents they prefer  
me being a saint than bringing  
home a lover.

Visit Thom's parents.

Visit Vidal's mother - she shows them  
the childhood picture of him when  
he was <sup>in college?</sup> young - as a fancy dancer.  
He steals the picture and tears it up

Vidal is both getting revenge on the Church  
and jealous of the Church as Thom's real  
lover.

Yeah - I'm married to Patti-Sue  
and you're married to the Church.  
What a joke.  
What a fucken joke.  
Life is just one big fucken joke.

They took turns screaming at us and then when my sister died, my mother went nuts with guilt. I was an altar boy. I wanted to be a priest when I grew. Later I became a priest. I was reluctant to go to college for a while. Looking for trouble

① Opening:

interview Thom saying mass with Vidal in a fight - real drunk  
Vidal is French Canadian with Indian blood "Canook"

"In part Coyote and part Canook" Indian blood, but my parents were just dumb Catholic ethnics

② confessional My mother a nun - you know she really tried to become a nun once - and Father Thom listening in the dark. my father was drunk  
Vidal drunk and weeping - almost psychotic  
Thom goes to the garage where Vidal sometimes works. but is told "No, he didn't come in today."

Vidal laughs: that's not what Thom said. I suggested to Sam I'd like to take my son and wife to see Thom's children.

2nd meeting - Vidal is sober (like Jekyll + Hyde)  
He apologizes to Thom, saying "I sorry. I was real drunk. I'm not really the religious sort - he doesn't want to confess. Thom tries to persuade him to confide in him - that he needs help."

Vidal keeps being surprised by Thom's answers - most surprising like you!

T What really is the matter.  
V It's a small town, Father, that's the problem. <sup>Things are kinda dull here</sup> Everyone wants to know too much <sup>about</sup> you - so I guess I put on a show for them.

T - And you put on a show for me too. Have I become that provincial a village priest.  
V Vidal laughs.

Well, as I said, Father, I'm not much of a religious man. I suppose I have some chip on my shoulder - about a Catholic's administration. Thom - I'm a favor and don't tell it out on me.

They make an appointment (at Thom's residence) but Vidal does not show up.

The 3rd meeting is drunk on the street. Vidal talks sex at Thom intimately - a sort of dare.

Vidal  
you got a big  
cock father.

Thom  
what!

Vidal  
Big cocks can  
get you into big  
trouble. Not right  
for a man of God  
to have a big cock.

Know what I mean? then he opens  
the door to take  
a look.

Vidal is almost SATANIC - he scares  
Thom.

Vidal makes a living "turning over cars"  
buying local junkies and reselling them  
in the city where "people think they're  
antiquers."

Thom: There's a season when priests  
remain celibate - not just  
in the Catholic religion, but  
in most <sup>of the world's</sup> religions.

Thom has tasted love in the past, but consciously decided it was too much trouble - there were higher things to be done.

Romance was too earthly for his taste.

But now, after several years of celibate life, someone enters his life with whom he craves romance - and they have an affair.

It ends a little bittersweet - breaking up to follow other paths. They realize that there is no future for them together.

# FANCY DANCER -

TALK with a real GAY PRIDE!

Drop all Indian complications.

~~Wdyl. 10~~ a college drop-out from a poverty childhood. The local bad boy.

---

Thom's parents — one scene only, as Thom brings Vidal to dinner to meet his parents. ~~they are~~ the parents are a problem — ~~as~~ very Puritanical and Vidal gets very drunk — but into it off with Thom's ~~also~~ retired alcoholic father.

Episodic love affair — the adventures they have together.

Vidal is from a Roman Catholic background and resents priest — there is an element of getting back at the church by seducing the Priest.

Maybe Mrs Sharp has the Alton Borg melior & fall in love with the Priest — to entrap him.

Meet with Gail

Meet with MICHAEL NICOLA

and get the parameters of what  
is needed set.

Throw copies of all your old scripts  
on his desk.

Pay me the money you owe me  
to get into the writer's guild  
and ~~to~~ give me all the  
established parameters to the  
story and I will deliver to you  
an <sup>written</sup> ~~complete~~ approach & a script  
that, if followed, will produce  
an ~~approved~~ accepted 1st draft.



A young lesbian woman, a local teacher, is the current scandal - she lives with another woman, her lover and this gets out.

Father Thom defends the lesbian teacher against Mrs. Shoup and Mrs. Shoup loses. Then she catches air of what's happening between Thom and Vidal.

Thom is naive about sex and love, but goes himself over wholly - a true Romantic.

Vidal lives with this wife and kid and, ultimately, will maintain responsibility for them.

The Church might lay a heavier trape on Thom, but he is not torn with guilt over his gayness.

Thom finds he must choose again between the Church and a lover.

Thom and Vidal take a trip to S.F. together, where Vidal really introduces Thom to the world of the flesh, but Thom quickly realizes this is not for him.

The conflict revolves to conflict with the church is just an absurd imitation.

HIGHLIGHT UP

Thom goes on a camping trip together early in their romance.

Set in small town Montana.

What ~~Mr~~ Thom knows about  
his homosexuality, but <sup>from early dalliances</sup>  
has chosen ~~to sublimate~~ <sup>in college</sup> it  
to Church as his lover,  
wanting to be a saint —  
until ~~he~~ <sup>she</sup> love sneaks in  
and knocks him off his feet.

The trauma with the Church  
is minimized — by today, a  
young priest can know that  
he is gay without it causing  
a massive trauma.

## NO GAY GUILT

But still, Mrs Shoup can cause  
a problem for them — like Father Bryant  
Mrs Shoup wants to lead a local anti-gay  
crusade — aimed at school teachers  
and ~~monks~~ priests and others who  
influence the young.

WRITE A SONG for the DISCO SCENE



SECOND SIGHT

pilot for TV series

w. Suzanne Bawin as BIRDY DEWHURST

Peter Coonradt as DR. BAWLER

{ June Rosen  
Stephano Andruan as Avnil Chatozer

groes Lafleur as Nick Malare

susan Polansky as Annie Simon

as Tad

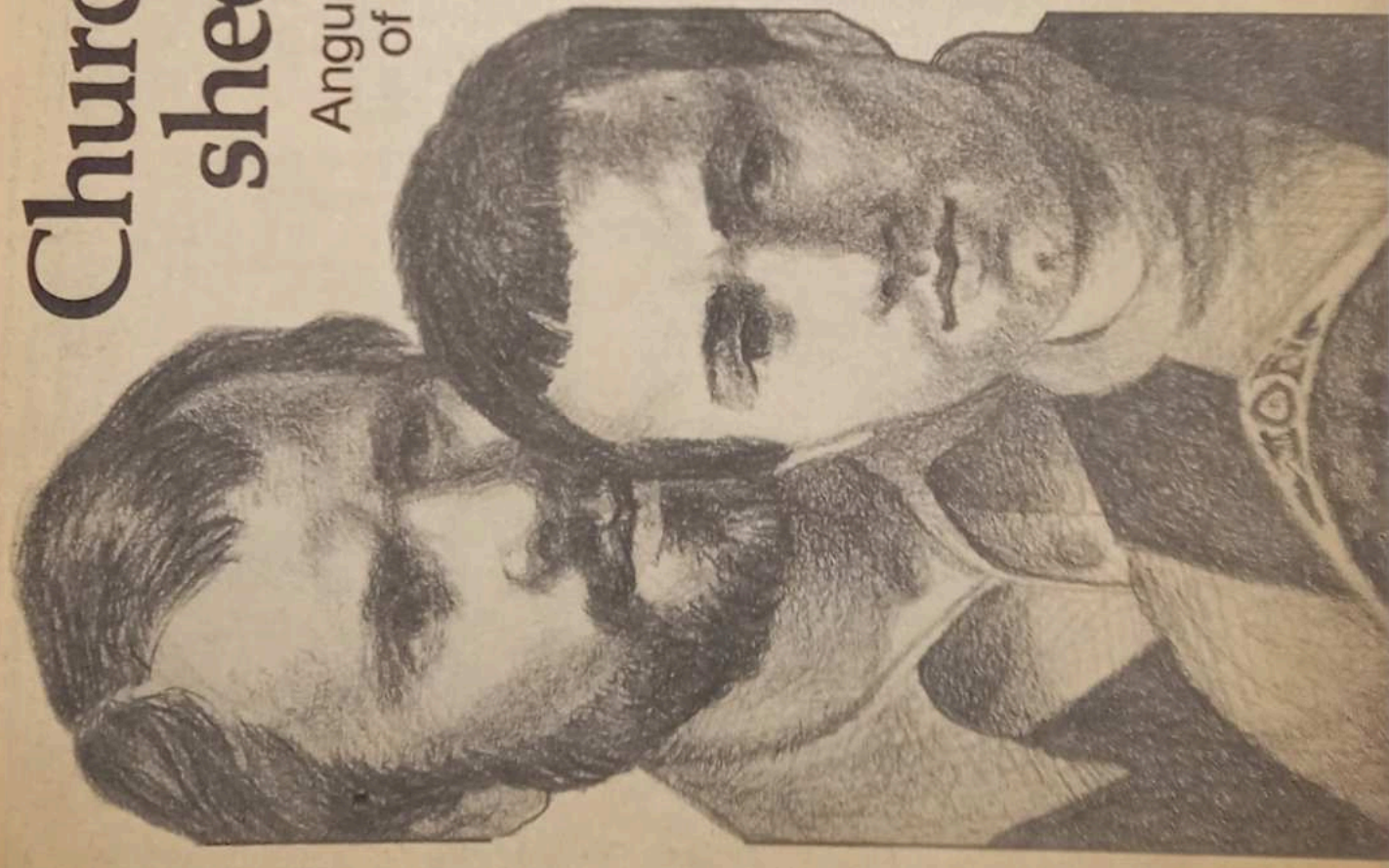
Sadie as Bruno

Mitch Gould as Mark Braward

# Church to gay sheep: Get lost

## Anguish and Dignity: The dilemma of being homosexual and Catholic

by Dianne Dumanoski



"Today I'd like to offer a pre-holiday Mass, a liturgy of inner peace and trust," the young priest says, explaining that he too sometimes finds himself depressed in what is supposed to be a season of joy and festivity. It is Sunday evening during Thanksgiving week, and the narrow, high-ceilinged room is overflowing. There are perhaps 150 worshippers; those who weren't lucky enough to secure one of the metal folding chairs stand in the back and the congregation dribbles out into the corridor. A two-dimensional painted crucifix has been attached to the wall behind the priest. His altar is a table covered with a white cloth and adorned with a single large candle. To his right sit two young men with guitars who are fervently singing a lyrical hymn entitled "Peace I Bring You."

Outwardly, the service is quite ordinary, a singing and celebrating folk Mass of the kind that has flourished in hundreds of progressive parishes since Vatican II. But despite its familiar form, this is an unusual Mass indeed. Unusual if only because in Boston, a city of innumerable Catholic churches, it is being celebrated in a chapel at the Unitarian Arlington Street Church. None of the parishes in Boston, it seems, could find room for this community of worshippers: gay Catholics, men and women who insist on belonging to a Church which, by and large, would prefer to ignore them and the issue of homosexuality. Many at this Mass are members of a national or-

and who are in danger of death," offers one young man. The prayer is a sober reminder of the high rate of suicide among homosexuals.

Another testifies to the love and support he has found in this community. "I'd like to offer thanks for everyone who has been so kind and has shown so much affection for me this past week. Without it I don't think I could have gotten through it."

A man in the center of the chapel stands. "I offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the presence of my partner." The discomfort of the white-haired couple beside him had been evident earlier as they had watched men kiss and embrace in greeting before Mass.

"I'd like to pray for my lover," Sweeney, declares a voice from the back. When the bread and wine are distributed, almost everyone comes forward to receive them. Afterward, two young men who have taken communion together clasp each other's hands and bow their heads to pray.

Being gay can undoubtedly be painful in a society whose worst attitudes are expressed by Anita Bryant, being gay and remaining Catholic seems, at best, at first glance, to be an exercise in masochism. As many a straight Catholic can testify, growing up Catholic and heterosexual was



**HOLIDAY JOY**

October 17, 1977

Mr. John Dorr  
9026 Norma Place  
Los Angeles, California 90069

Dear John:

Enclosed is \$300 which will be compensation for your services in the preparation of a story on the book we discussed.

As a signatory producer in the West I strongly suggest you order that we can execute a later date.

Please begin work on this whether back East or not the negotiations as they

Looking forward to working

Sincerely,

*Richard Arlett*

RICHARD ARLETT

RA:vv

Enclosure

Mr. John Dorr  
9026 Norma Place  
Los Angeles, California 90069

TELEFILM productions

TELEFILM productions

October 17, 1977

Mr. John Dorr  
9026 Norma Place  
Los Angeles, California 90069

Dear John:

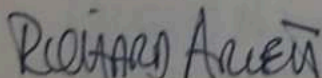
Enclosed is \$300 which will apply to our agreed compensation for your services in connection with the preparation of a story/outline/treatment based on the book we discussed.

As a signatory producer with Writers Guild of America West I strongly suggest your joining the Guild in order that we can execute a more formal agreement at a later date.

Please begin work on this project as soon as possible whether back East or not. I will keep you posted on the negotiations as they progress.

Looking forward to working with you on this project.

Sincerely,



RICHARD ARLETT

RA:vv

Enclosure



Richard W. Arlett

October 17, 1977

John H. Dorr  
9026 Norma Place  
Los Angeles, California 90069

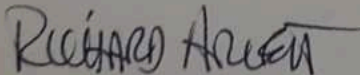
RE: FANCY DANCER

Dear John:

This will confirm our agreement for you to commence work on the story/treatment/outline of The Fancy Dancer motion picture.

You will be paid \$150.00 a week for a minimum of four (4) weeks. In addition, formal arrangements will be made for your membership in to the Writers Guild including the initial membership dues upon completion of said writing.

Sincerely,



RICHARD ARLETT

CURTIS

415-648-1716

GP  $\Rightarrow$  R

written ~~sex~~ sexy  
but not X

1110 DELORES ST

SF 94110

p. 82 Your lover, not?

THOM  
~~THOM~~

~~INSTRUMENT A - DRAFT~~  
~~INSTRUMENT B - BATTLE~~  
~~INSTRUMENT C - GOOD COPY~~  
~~INSTRUMENT D - RUMOR~~  
~~INSTRUMENT E - OKAY~~

~~INSTRUMENT F - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT G - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT H - SEE P. 82~~

~~INSTRUMENT I - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT J - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT K - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT L - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT M - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT N - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT O - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT P - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT Q - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT R - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT S - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT T - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT U - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT V - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT W - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT X - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT Y - SEE P. 82~~  
~~INSTRUMENT Z - SEE P. 82~~

~~P.45 TRAIWAYS BUS TERMINAL~~

~~P.52 add vampire movie~~

~~P.55 ARAB SON~~

P.45 INSERT A - DELETE

P.45 INSERT B - DELETE

P.47 INSERT C - TOO LONG, JUST AS MUCH A CLICHE  
SEE P.92 SEQUENCE

P.48 RECTOR LEAVE ME ALONE

P.48 INSERT D - REWORK

P.49 INSERT E - OKAY

~~P.55 INSERT F - see P.92~~

~~P.56 LOWER also. P.78, P.82 (P.87)~~

~~P.66 FLINTLOCK~~

~~P.76~~

~~P.84 add conversation~~

~~P.86 You should see the other guys!~~

~~P.89 MRS. TURNER~~

~~P.89 HIPPIE~~

~~P.90 SLIDE SHOW~~

P.71 TAPPING HER FINGER? NO!

~~P.91 CHRIST ON THE CROSS~~

VIDAL  
(motioning toward  
the photograph)  
That's me - The Fanny  
Dancer. Or at least  
I was - once.

FATHER VANKE reveals  
himself to be something  
of a matchmaker  
between Thom and Vidal -  
regarded Thom through it all.

cut ~~background~~  
cut JAMIE OGILVER

MINIMIZE  
EXPOSITION

① PRE-CREDIT:

Organ music — <sup>back, old women at mass, montages</sup>  
<sup>at church interior, murals.</sup>  
~~Zoom in on Tom, into church,~~  
Tom sees Vidal in the mirror. From back  
& Faure

② CREDIT SIGNATURE: MONTAGE

Various confessions establishing minor  
characters + their problems, the tone of  
small town sin. Comedy: his bored  
reaction to old women etc

END CREDITS

Tom is about to leave, when VIDAL enters confessional

③ TOM AND VIDAL in Church

④ TOM clashes with Father Vance. Criticizes  
his modern music. Amazed that Vidal came to  
confession. Some gossip about Vidal?

~~FAM~~  
⑤ Sunday, Tom gets into his red triumph: montage  
establishing ~~the~~ small town (passes disapproving  
who shop <sup>in</sup> street), Montana countryside,  
rock music, ~~city of Helena~~. enters the  
city of Helena. News on the radio bad state of  
agriculture business; to parents house.

⑥ TOM + parents: exposition

⑦ VISIT to Father Matt — his ambitions, his lack  
of inner life. The advice to pray.

⑧ Releases VIDAL from fist fight.  
He kisses the blood-soaked handkerchief

(make Mrs. Shoup a comedy character)

- 9 Counseling Mrs. Shoup → counseling Vidal.  
Mrs. Shoup's position  
"The only thing a person can do is follow his conscience."
- 10 Driving to Vidal's house to meet night. Mrs. Shoup's simple-minded wife reveals he is gay.
- 11 Tom returns to his room. Gazes blankly at the TV set, volume turned off.
- 12 Phone call to Father LeMoth for church's attitude toward homosexuals.
- 13 Run-in with Mrs. Shoup over Mrs. running away.
- 14 Breakfast with Vidal at Trina's Cafe.  
Gives his church literature on gays.  
Overhears rednecks talk about horses.
- 15 Alone in prayer. Hears Father LeMoth's words:  
~~the~~ Power of friendships that distract you from the love of God... you belong to everyone.
- 16 EXT. TRINA'S Cafe: Vidal + Tom are again have breakfast.  
Vidal on gay life in Montana.  
"You must be living as celibate as I am" — "except I can masturbate and you can't."
- 17 THE SEDUCTION

Tom + Parents: at position  
Visit to Father LeMoth - via confessor, his wife  
of wife's life. The advice & pray.  
Reveals Vidal from first night.  
The power of the Holy Spirit in the world.

INT. RECTORY - THOM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The small room is illuminated only by a 10-inch black & white Sony portable television set that has been left on, but with the sound turned off.

In the flickering light, Father Thom lies on his back on his small cot still fully dressed, asleep. The only sound is his deep breathing.

We moves slowly in toward the TV. The Late Show is an old Vampire movie.

TV MOVIE (THOM'S DREAM):

The full moon shines in the open windows into a Victorian bedroom. The wind lightly blows the long lace curtains into the room. A dark figure steps in through the curtains. It is DRACULA. He unfurls his long black cape and gazes hungrily toward the bed.

In the role of Dracula is Vidal Stump!

Vidal/Dracula moves toward the bed - an elaborate four-poster. His hand pulls back the sheet from a sleeping figure. There is a silver cross around the sleeping figure's neck; but (contrary to most vampire movies) the cross does not deter this vampire. He kneels next to the bed and leans over the sleeping figure.

CLOSE-UP:

As Vidal/Dracula sinks his teeth into the victim's neck, the victim's eyes snap open. It is Father Thom!

His eyes glaze into a strange ecstasy as the vampire drinks from his neck.

The silence is suddenly broken by a screaming voice, on the edge of hysteria.

VOICE (V.O.)

Where is he! I want to  
see Father Thomas!

CUT TO:

INT. WAITING ROOM - RECTORY

The voice belongs to Mrs. Shoup. She has barged into the waiting room followed quickly by Father Vance and Police Chief Wheeler who are trying to calm her.

MRS. SHOUP

He knows where my Meg is,  
and he's going to tell me!

CONTINUED



TOM'S DREAM (OT TRIP) His description to Tom ~~as~~  
then make love.

Tom: "I was drifting through space and  
I was lonely serene, but lonely.  
I felt like <sup>my</sup> birth was a conscious  
choice - a decision, a fulfillment  
of a yearning. And then was a  
dark mysterious man in my  
dream - an intruder from some  
other reality - and you were that  
dark man. (You were the vampire)  
My tale has such a legend. But it  
is the coyote who is man-beast. T!

TOM'S vampire dream

The handsome vampire sits with  
him in the car in the rain. The  
vampire turns and kisses him on  
the cheek - when he the vampire  
crushes its fang into Tom's neck,  
he falls, willingly into a dark  
oblivion.

When Tom and Vidal first make love, it  
becomes as a dream sequence to Tom  
IT DISSOLVES, with Tom's V.O. overlapping, into  
the 2 in bed together afterward as Tom is  
describing his dream to Tom. ~~rough Tom gives~~

# SEDUCTION

~~NOTE:~~

REVERSE-CONFESSION

MOTEL

LARRY + WILL INTRO

DRAG DANCE

TAKES VIDAL TO VISIT PARENTS

MISSY OLDENBERG'S DEATH

DENVER TRIP

CHRIST'S DEATH DANCE

VIDAL'S DECISION TO RETURN TO COLLEGE

CLARE FAUX'S NEW LIFE.

FATHER MATT'S PHONE CALL

VISITS LARRY + WILL ALONE

FATHER JANCE + MRS. SHOUP'S ACCUSATION

TRIES TO PLAY ORGAN, BUT CANT.

BISHOP'S JOB OFFER

MOTHER + FATHER REVEAL THEY HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN

VISITS VIDAL'S PARENTS: THE FANCY DANCER

THE FAIR - MRS FAUX'S EXHIBITS - WILL + LARRY'S HORSE WINS

VIDAL'S EXIT - BUS

PLAYS ORGAN AGAIN

~~Thomas~~

~~Thomas' mother + father  
as like Dad and Nancy  
she's an alcoholic  
his a dirty old man~~

Thom is from a large family - he has  
grown up <sup>w/</sup> brothers and sisters who have  
children

~~Thom wants:~~

The Fancy Dancer is a coyote costume  
who Vidal identifies with.

The Vampire is how Thom sees Vidal -  
thus Vidal goes to the costume  
party as a vampire.

THE JESUS DEATH DANCE - another  
of Thom's VISIONS! ~~It~~ Combine the  
reality and the night mare into  
one fantasy sequence.

Vidal enjoys his taking risks of exposure  
as gay - because he can always leave.

Maybe Vidal gets Thom to smoke a  
little dope.

BEATRICE THOMAS

# A ROMANCE

When the 2 go off on their motorcycle,  
Vidal ~~off~~ bumps out a joint. He  
hands it to Thom as a friendly  
gesture and an inviting smile.

Thomas makes a fast decision and  
smokes the grass. The sounds of  
nature all around them submerge  
the sounds in a <sup>romantic</sup> symphony of  
sounds ~~as a~~ ~~romantic~~ sensual montage  
of Thom and Vidal's ~~the~~ wrestling  
match, ending in the kiss --- and  
the nervous breaking off.

VIDAL is always a heavy drinker.

Vidal is cruel to him - tells him he was  
only not so interested in saving my soul  
as in cruising the priest.

WAITRESS to Vidal: Hey, handsome rider,  
Why Father Thom no  
come no more have  
breakfast  
at Trinias.

VIDAL

(being purposefully mean)

I guess he doesn't  
like the food here.

VIDAL stomps old and has a few more  
dimbles

(Perhaps we see the scene where he gets  
into trouble)

REVERSE CONFESSIOIN scene

---

Tom meets Vidal at Trinias

- ① shows him Catholic pamphlet on homosexuality  
he says he's happy - Thom says it's his job to make him unhappy.  
[Trina do her "gorgeous like man" line  
+ Thom agrees to eat breakfast there every morning]

② Telephone call to Father Kattell

- ③ Asks if how he feels about women? - John: anyone inclusion Vidal in  
About Pathe Ann? (P. 75) their confessions?  
I might as well feed a corpse  
(P. 81) masturbate line.  
Vidal calls him Tom.

④ Father Kattell asks  
about Vidal - gives Thom  
a file lunch. Tom calls Vidal.

HARD cut from Vampire & Estasy

TO:

C.U. MRS BHOUP - accusing Thom.  
The police chief and her husband  
are in the background - Father  
Vance is also present.

Afterwards, Father Vance commends  
Thom for standing his ground.

CUT TO

VIDAL and THOM at breakfast  
The discussion about the  
churches views on friendships  
Vidal's line about masturbating  
Vidal starts calling him "Tom".

Another Breakfast talk:

THOM: the Church says that homosexuality  
is anti-life.

VIDAL: look 10 years ago everyone  
told us that if the ~~con~~ world population  
didn't stop growing that over population  
would destroy the world. So maybe  
that's why there are so many people are  
into ~~too~~ not having babies.

metaphors:

Mustangs ~~have~~ free and are a strong  
breed because of it. But by  
bringing the Mustang into culture,  
they have a race-winner.

Will Vidal, like the Mustang, become  
civilized. Perhaps... The metaphor  
story about winning the race suggests  
an optimism for the future.

What the Mustang means to Vidal's nature,  
Missy and Clare means to Thom's.

Clare: when I lose my lifelong companion,  
I don't stop living. I embark on  
a new beginning, not romantic, but  
positive.

When Vidal decides to leave Thom is the same time they are getting reprosed as lovers by Mrs Shoup.

But Vidal has somewhere to go - ~~maybe~~ maybe he work part time - maybe he take a few courses night courses or something. I need to find a profession.

### THE RETARDED WIFE

At the end, Vidal decides to go back to LA. But they will meet again.

Vidal to Thom: Yours is by nature a very solitary profession. I'm a lover myself and a dancer. ... a fancy dancer.

Vidal to Thom at end: you see. I'm a fancy dancer. I have to be free to dance. to be true to my nature.

Ending: He puts Vidal on the bus ~~the~~ and goes to play the organ.

Vidal predicts the Thom will take the Bishops offer and ~~but~~ take over his own responsibility.

Vidal:

Vidal: Our paths will cross again.





the girl separating the two parts from the part.

② OLD LADY'S VOICE: Now, let me see, Father you must forgive me, but I guess my mind is going. How did I do repentance for <sup>my</sup> sin of gluttony? I had 3 pieces of of Jenny Ogilby's devil's food cake, but of course that was 2 weeks ~~ago~~ Friday, so I guess I must have confessed that last week. And I know I'm drinking too much tea...

FATHER THOMAS: In your penance you can meditate on the <sup>poor</sup> hungry of the world.

③ 2ND WOMAN'S VOICE: Bless Father, for I have sinned. It has been ~~3~~ <sup>3</sup> weeks since my last confession.

FATHER: What are your sins, my daughter?

2ND WOMAN: Father, I have sinned in thought; I have lusted after another woman's husband and have had carnal thoughts about him.

VOICE OF A

~~YOUTH~~ TEENAGER GIRL: I ~~have been~~ <sup>lived with my mother</sup> ~~discount~~ <sup>to</sup> my mother...

④ FATHER YES

TEENAGER: And I smoked some pot at my Mom and Dad's <sup>home</sup> while they were in <sup>to</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>for</sup> the K of C convention...

TEENAGER: And Jamie Sanchez tried to kiss me and he put his hand, you know, where it's not supposed to be...?

FATHER: Did you <sup>try</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> stop him?

TEENAGER: Yes!... well, I sorta tried. But I didn't let him go no further.

3 1st father and 3 1st lady "I must if you feel your sins are more than I can meditate on the hungry of the world."

Add scene:

James Oglwy and Thom are talking  
when Vidub<sup>o</sup> arrives on his bike.

JAMES

~~I think it's awful~~  
I don't think  
Father Vance is fair  
in the way he treats you,

THOM

One hopes people will  
put up with us when  
we order.

557  
CAT TO: WOMAN'S CHOICE

COMMUNION (to Kyle Nelson) - Vidal watches him

LOVE-MAKING AT VIDALS - they share the fact from the past.  
Vidal repeats "this is my body" and "this is my blood"

VIDAL MOWING RECTORY LAWN / REPAIRING CAR  
Father Vance sees him & Vidal, in exchange, gets

INT. CHURCH JAMIE OGILVIE'S CONFESSION  
Vance permission to take Thom back parking, because he needs to get away.

BACKPACKING - as they drive off, Thom asks "where are we really going? this time?"  
LARRY + WILL - MUSTANG

DISCO

VISIT THOM'S PARENTS (Vidal notices that Thom's father is staring at him curiously)

FATHER LAMATT SUSPECTS

MISSY OLDENBERG'S DEATH FUNERAL

DENVER AIRPLANE MEETS DORIC/HIS LOVER  
VALIUMS

MASS AS DANCE  
THOM/VIDAL CAN'T MAKE IT  
DORIC: LEAVE THE PRIESTHOOD?  
MRS SHOUP  
THOM/VIDAL ARGUE

A CONSPIRACY?  
Every is working to free Thom, while he thinks he's receiving him.

CLARE FAUX'S NEW LIFE  
DROPS FR. LAMATT

THOM VISITS LARRY

MRS SHOUP'S ACCUSATION

BISHOP CARNLY'S OFFER

THOM'S PARENTS KNOW ALL ALONG - DORIC AND GOD, IN THAT ORDER

VISIT VIDAL'S PARENTS: THE FANCY, DARKER REVISED

COUNTY FAIR - MUSTANG WINS

GOODBYE AT BUS

PLAYS ORGAN - FIRE + SPIRITUAL LIFE

VIDAL

If you think this is fun, wait til you see what we're going to do next week.

THOM  
Father Vance would let me off again - I still don't understand how he let me go this time.

VIDAL

As the good father's mechanic, I can assure you his car has many dispensations of work to be done on it. And - for the sake of your health, over which we and all are concerned, you'd be going on lots of back packing trips in the near future.

Thom feels faints  
at climax of mass  
and has his vision

Unknown to them,  
Mrs Shoup oversees  
them arriving at the  
conference on the back  
of Vidul's bike.

He comes back and finds  
Vidul fucking someone  
else in the guest room  
↳ the dancer

INTERCUT: DANCE MASS  
and

OTHER DENVER SUSPECTS  
BUILDS TO A VIOLENT CLIMAX

RELIGION and SEX  
CHRIST'S AGONY

Vidul: so you're going to be  
off at your conference  
all day.

Thom leaves the conference early because he  
cannot deal with the Shoups.

THOM walks in and discovers Vidul sucking  
off Andy Jorgensen

Thom's  
confused  
mind

# *pip* POSTAL<sup>®</sup> INSTANT PRESS

## PHOTO COPIES

DATE                      *MAY 10* 19 *79*

NUMBER OF COPIES

*114*

Sub-Total

*5 170*

Net Sub-Total

*5 170*

Sales Tax/Resale

*34*

**TOTAL** →

*6 04*

Aerial shot of sign-GREAT FALLS MOTEL---Singles \$8.00  
Doubles \$12.00 & up. Pan down through motel window. Tom  
lies on one of two twin beds looking miserable. Vidal  
stands in front of mirror dressed for a night on the town.  
He is primping and combing his hair.

TOM

I'm not sure I want to go to a gay bar...even  
if we are 280 miles from Cottonwood.

VIDAL

(slightly pissed)

Oh shit, am I gonna hear all this again?

TOM

Someone might recognize me. I'm a nervous wreck.

VIDAL

338  
cl I told you that's called "coming out of the closet  
paranoia." And it's a natural feeling. But if you  
see a guy you know in a gay bar, it's pretty  
clear that he's there because he wants to be there.  
And you can't keep hiding all your life. On second  
thought maybe YOU can. But I can't and I won't!

TOM

I just don't think I'm ready for all this. I  
know a lot of people and my parents...

VIDAL

We're going to visit your parents tomorrow just  
like we told Father Vance we would-on our way  
back from the mountains.

TOM

I'm going crazy with all this lying and deception.

VIDAL

You can do what you please but I'm going dancing.  
One of the few chances we've had to be alone  
together and you've been a cold fish all day. I  
come near you and you pull away.

TOM

I'm sorry. I guess it's this place.

VIDAL

Whatever.

Vidal goes into the bathroom.

CGT TO  
FADE TO

Exterior shot of Tom and Vidal walking up the backstairs of THE SIEU. Tom is very nervous and Vidal is trying to reassure him.

VIDAL

Look...we're even going in the back door. Now settle down damn it. We'll go into the HAYLOFT ROOM and catch the singer. Larry and Will said she's great. Vidal holds onto Tom's arm and leads him to the bar in the HAYLOFT ROOM. The singer is just finishing a song to a very enthusiastic audience. She dedicates her last song to everyone there. It is the theme song for the FANCY DANCER. When she finishes Vidal leads Tom to the disco area. The disco is almost totally gay. The large dance floor, with its flashing deco neon and laser decor, is filled with dancers moving to a booming, sensuous beat.

VIDAL  
(almost yelling)

This place used to be a big barn. Look what they've done to it. It's wild! Come on. Let's dance.

TOM

I can't!!!

VIDAL

SHIT...Well I can!!!

Tom watches as Vidal scans the immediate area for a partner and chooses one. The other guy seems eager and they move out onto the floor. Tom tries to lose himself in the crowd and still keep an eye on Vidal.

During the next few minutes Tom is drinking at the side bar and several guys try to make conversation or ask him to dance. He is very nervous. One San Francisco type keeps hanging around Tom and cruises him heavily...but not saying a thing. Tom continues to try to avoid his eyes and looks for Vidal on the dance floor. Tom sees a youngman woozily drop to the floor and is stunned. Two others scoop him up and proceed to carry him to the front door. One has his arms and the other his legs. To Tom he appears half dead.



PLAID SHIRT

Don't worry about him. Probably just OD'd.

TOM

OD'd?

PLAID SHIRT

Overdosed. Where have you been? Just get out of the convent?

TOM

I uh.....

PLAID SHIRT

You don't come here much do you? This your first time?

TOM

Why do you say that?

PLAID SHIRT

'Cause I've been watching you and you look like you're either going to faint, throw up or piss in your pants. Are you married? That's it. You're married and you're uptight about being here.

TOM

I'm not married. I am a little nervous...I don't go to bars much and my friend...

Tom motions to the dance floor and we see Vidal having a ball as the music is suddenly interrupted by a P.A. announcement.

VOICE

If there's a doctor in the house please come to the front door immediately.

Tom reacts and Plaid Shirt notices his reaction.

PLAID SHIRT

Are you a doctor?

TOM

No. I.....

VOICE

If there's a minister or priest in the house please come to the front door immediately.

TOM is frozen in indecision. Plaid Shirt looks at him.

PLAID SHIRT

What's the matter?

TOM

Someone needs a priest.

PLAID SHIRT

So? You're not a priest--are you?

TOM

(abruptly) NO!

Tom's hands are shaking.

PLAID SHIRT

Hey, man. What is it?

Tom pushes off through the crowd toward the main entrance. He makes his way to where a doorman is collecting a dollar from everyone entering the bar. Again, Tom holds back in indecision. Finally, he approaches the doorman.

TOM

Was someone in need of a priest?

DOORMAN

You just missed him. Some guy was strung out on ludes, booze and angel dust. Really wasted. He's in deep trouble. They just rushed him to the hospital.

He indicates the door. Tom's face goes paler. He stands frozen in anguish.

DOORMAN

Why? Are you a priest?

TOM

(backing away.)

NO.

Tom starts to panic and begins to run. Vidal grabs his arm. Tom's head is spinning and he is perspiring profusely. Tom begins to vomit.

CUT TO

THOM *desperately*  
(~~suddenly gloomy~~)  
Doric, I'm here on the pretext of going to a conference on abortions. It's just one of the many lies and deceptions that fill my life now. I've got to talk with someone. I'm going crazy.

DORIC  
(identifying with his pain)  
Come on inside.

*DIGNITY HOUSE*  
INT. ~~GUEST ROOM~~

*and leads him to the guest room.*  
Doric shows Thom around. It is a placid, sunny little room with modern furniture and a double bed. There is a private bathroom off the end.

DORIC  
You can use this room while you're here.

Thom sets down his suitcase and sits on the edge of the bed, exhausted. He buries his face in his hands.

DORIC  
How much do you know about the Dignity program?

THOM *its*  
Just that ~~you're~~ an organization of Catholics sympathetic to the human rights movement and trying to redefine the role that homosexuals might have in the Church.

DORIC  
That ~~just~~ about says it. As long as the Church stands pat on abortion and a few other things, it's a cinch she won't change on homosexuals either. But we can try to soften the attitudes for now and make some kind of place for ourselves at the edge.

Doric is suddenly aware that Thom is crying, tears streaming down his face.

DORIC  
Are you alright?

CONTINUED

Thom lies on one of two twin beds looking miserable. Vidal stands in front of a mirror dressed for a night on the town. He is primping and combing his hair.

THOM

I'm not sure I want to go through with this.

VIDAL

(pissed off)  
Suit yourself.

THOM

Someone might recognize me.

VIDAL

So.

THOM

I don't think I'm ready for that. My parents live in this city.

VIDAL

That's right, and we're going to visit them tomorrow - just like we told Father Vance we would - on our way back from the mountains.

THOM

I don't like all this lying and deception.

VIDAL

You can do what you please, but I'm going out dancing. One of the few chances we've had to be alone together, and you've been cold fish all day.

THOM

I'm sorry. I guess it's this place.

VIDAL

(unsympathetic)  
Whatever.

Vidal disappears into the bathroom.

CUT TO

The door to Thom's office opens, and Thom steps out, curious at the commotion. Mrs. Shoup immediately accosts him.

MRS. SHOUP

Where's my daughter!  
You know. I know you  
know. She came here and  
talked to you.

THOM

(concerned)  
Is Meg missing?

Chief Wheeler steps between Mrs. Shoup and Thom.

CHIEF WHEELER

She hasn't been seen since  
yesterday afternoon. Do  
you have any idea where  
she might be?

THOM

Meg Shoup did come to see  
me Monday evening. She  
wanted to confess. But you  
must understand, anything we  
discussed falls under the  
seal of the confessional.

MRS. SHOUP

Then you do know *where she is!*

THOM

No, I don't know. She  
didn't talk about running  
away. In fact she was  
supposed to come back and  
talk to me again this week.

MRS. SHOUP

What did she talk about?  
Was it drugs? Surely you  
can tell us something!

Thom shakes his head, unable to answer. Father Vance tries to explain to Mrs. Shoup.

FATHER VANCE

You must remember that my  
curate is strictly within  
his rights and his sacred  
obligation to uphold the  
seal of the confessional.

CONTINUED

The walls are covered with colored pictures cut out of magazines and pasted up into a mural celebrating a consumer's Garden of Eden: wild animals, movie actresses, glimmering glasses of jello, flowers, bombs bursting, American Beauty roses.

Looking through the doorway into the kitchen, Thom can see piles of dirty dishes, scattered cereal and cracker boxes on a table. One of the kitchen chairs is tipped over on the floor.

*pulls on an undershirt, then*  
Vidal turns the TV down a little bit.

VIDAL

The Ritz it ain't, but sit down anyway, Father. Just kick the mutts off the couch. I got whiskey or wine.

THOM

Whiskey.

*(out of character)  
immediately*

Vidal drags a bottle of Jack Daniel's from a cabinet and pours an inch or so into each of two tumblers. He hands one to Thom.

VIDAL

(as he downs his straight)  
To the Pope.

Thom laughs, truly amused at Vidal's persistent sacrilege.

VIDAL

You want to smoke some grass?

THOM

Oh no. No thank you.

Vidal shrugs, then calls out into the kitchen.

VIDAL

Hey Patti Ann!

Patti Ann comes shuffling shyly into the room. She's carrying a baby over one arm and an old beaded handbag over the other - as if she were going out. Other wise, all she is wearing is a dirty taffeta slip, several sizes too big for her. Her ash-blond hair is a rumpled mess. Her big brown eyes are strangely vacant. She appears to be about 19 years old.

Vidal groans when he sees her.

VIDAL

Awh shit, Patti Ann!  
(to Thom)

~~Just an hour ago,~~ I had her all cleaned up. *a second ago.*

CONTINUED

INT. CONFESSIONAL - FATHER THOMAS

A SECOND VOICE, that of an OLD LADY, comes through the confessional grill to Father Thomas. Now there is a hint of an affectionate smile on his face.

OLD LADY'S VOICE

Now let me see, Father, you must forgive me but I guess my mind must be going because I can't remember...now did I do repentance for my sin of gluttony? I had three pieces of Jenny Ogilby's devils food cake, but - of course, that was two weeks ago Friday. or was it Thursday? Anyway I must have confessed that last week. Of course I know I'm still drinking too much tea.

FATHER THOMAS

For your penance, before each meal, or whenever you are tempted to overindulge, you should meditate on the poor and hungry of the world who are less fortunate than you.

OLD LADY'S VOICE

Oh, Father - can't you give me an old-fashioned penance, perhaps 10 rosaries?

FATHER THOMAS

(with a deep sigh)

Very well. For your penance, say 3 Our Fathers and 3 Hail Marys, and, if you feel you need any more penance, then meditate on the hungry of the world.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONFESSIONAL - FATHER THOMAS

A THIRD VOICE, that of a TEENAGED GIRL, is in the middle of confession.

TEENAGER'S VOICE

...and I've been discourteous to my mother...

FATHER THOMAS

Yes...

CONTINUED