

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

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"Subterranean Homesick Blues"

Written by

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BBAUTY AND THE BBAST

"SUBTERRANEAN- HOMESICK BLUES"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

TIGHT ON A SUITCASE

It is 50's vintage and well-worn. OVER, we HEAR:

FATHER (V .O.)
Forgive the condition, Mary. It's
not used very often -

Now, CAMERA PULLS BACK and we're:

INT. FATHER'S CHAMBER - Day

VINCENT and MARY are watching FATHER struggle with a latch.

FATHER
(continuing)
-- But it will serve your needs
for your time above.

Father and Vincent help Mary prepare to visit the world above.
The mood is tense, but controlled.

MARY
It should only be for a day or two.

FATHER
Or perhaps longer. It would depend on
what happens between the two of you when
you finally meet.

MARY
I don't even know if we will. I
just want to see him. What he looks
like. It's been almost twenty years.

FATHER
That is a millennium for a mother not
to have seen her own son.

ANGLE ON VINCENT

the importance of Mary's exodus resonates within him.

BACK TO SCENE

Father finishes with the latch.

MARY

Do you think he'll remember me?
He was only two when I gave -- when
I... placed him with my inlaws.

VINCENT

A child has memories even before it
has words.

MARY

(very anxious)
Maybe this isn't the right thing to
do.

FATHER

Maybe... but it is the natural thing
to do.

MARY

I mean, is it wrong for me to do?
Selfish?

VINCENT

For a mother to seek out her son...
it cannot be judged in conventional
ways.

Mary neatly packs the few articles of clothing she has brought
with her.

FATHER

That doesn't mean I'm not concerned.
Mary, the world above is even more
treacherous than when you left it, all
those years ago.

MARY

You think it still is dangerous for
me?

FATHER

Especially for you, and people like you.
Which is why I prepared some
identification for you to carry:
driver's license, social security card,
etc. Keep these with, just in case.

VINCENT

And take this phone number. Should there be trouble, call Catherine immediately.

MARY

It's hard to imagine anyone would still be looking for me after all these years.

FATHER

When you see the world above, I'm afraid your imagination might be shaken. With all its opulence and majesty... it has eroded --infected by greed, indifference, violence and the decay of the human spirit.

MARY

All that has happened to this city in just twenty years?

FATHER

To most all cities -- throughout the world. Prepare yourself.

Father goes to a special drawer in his cabinet.

FATHER

(continuing)

... and you'll need some money...

He hands her some bills.

MARY

Really, I don't need all that!

FATHER

(amused)

You have been down here a long time. Take it, you can return what's left.

(to Vincent)

She's ready.

Vincent picks up the suitcase.

FATHER

(continuing)

Remind me to have that lock fixed.

VINCENT

I have, Father. Many times. But you always say there are more important things to attend to.

Father smiles, then puts his arm around Mary as they move to the door.

FATHER

Remember, Mary, this is your world
down here -- for as long and as
much as you want it to be.

(embraces her)

Be safe.

Vincent and Mary exit the chamber leaving Father with grave doubts and concerns about her journey.

CUT TO:

INT. TUNNELS - MINUTES LATER

Vincent escorts Mary to the threshold, an urgency to their pace. She talks out of nervousness, to allay her fears.

MARY

Ben's graduating tomorrow, and then he
starts law school almost immediately.

Vincent glances at her curiously. Mary notices.

MARY

(explaining)

An old friend keeps me informed...

(a pause, then)

He's going out of town... I don't know
the name of the school... This might be
my last chance to see him for years...

CAMERA TRACKS as they turn a corner...

CUT TO:

INT. THRESHOLD - MOMENTS LATER

They move through the last stretch of tunnel. Mary's nervousness grows as the light in the distance gets closer and brighter.

MARY

I've thought about this day, dreamed
about it, been haunted by it for so
long -- I can't believe it's here. I
can't believe I'm doing it. I'm still
not sure I should be...

As they arrive at the final portal between worlds, Mary's anxiety is bubbling over. Vincent listens stoically.

MARY

(continuing)

I don't know how he'll react to all this. He doesn't know me, he doesn't know I'm coming... but, then, he doesn't have to.

Vincent has never seen Mary like this before. He tries to calm her and give her all his support.

VINCENT

It is an opportunity you must encounter... and experience.

As he hands her the suitcase, it pops open. He grabs it before the contents spill out, removes a piece of rawhide from his garment, and begins to tie the suitcase.

MARY

(re: suitcase: panicking)

Maybe this is an omen.

VINCENT

(tying it shut)

It's merely an old suitcase. A teacher as wise as yourself knows the price one pays for neglect.

MARY

Should I talk to him? Tell him the reasons I gave him to his grandparents... and never went back for him? What if he doesn't want to see me?

VINCENT

(touches her shoulder)

Any son would want to meet the person who brought him the gift of life... Especially if that person were you.

Vincent's touch and words calm her. She pats his hand and takes a deep breath.

MARY

... Do I look all right?

VINCENT

Your beauty shines through your eyes... Always.

(re: suitcase)

Here. It's secure now.

She kisses him, like a mother would a son.

MARY

Vincent, what would I do without you?

As Mary climbs up into the harsh light, SOUNDS of the city seep in. They grow LOUDER as Vincent watches her go, touched by her turmoil -- a growing awareness of his own.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - RUSH HOUR

A red truck WIPES FRAME, HORN BLARING, revealing...

MARY

steeling herself against the onslaught of the city. The SOUNDS are overwhelming as Mary hails a taxi. She's not aggressive to get one on the first try. When she finally does, the driver peels away before she even gets the door shut.

MARY (V .0.)

Fordham University, please.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK - VARIOUS SHOTS

Through the window of Mary's taxi we see the following:

42ND ST. - replete with vagrants, hookers, x-rated movies.

AMSTERDAM AVE. - windowless and boarded up vacant stores, support five-story walk-ups in the same condition.

125TH ST. - Winos, vendors, pimps, the homeless and the hustlers.

THE EAST BRONX - Semi-demolished buildings, piled like rubble after a war.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Mary's taxi pulls past vagrants huddled around ash-can fires and jolts to a stop. Through the taxi window we see:

INT. TAXI

Mary sticks bills through the protection-cage.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A modest room, but the best the Bronx has to offer. Mary locks and bolts the door. Puts her suitcase on the bed. She removes the rawhide tie, and clutches it like Rosary beads. Shaken from the journey, it is her only link to the tranquility of the spiritual world she left behind.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Mary, showered and calmed and wearing a simple robe, sits at the desk. She's writing on the hotel stationary.

MARY (V .O.)

'Dear Ben,
Should I not have the courage
to approach you tomorrow, I want
you to know I was present at your
graduation... and the reasons why
I was absent for your life.'

She stops writing and opens a window, viewing the city from above for the first time in two decades. The sound of a lone SIREN beckons her back to her memories of the 1960's. The strains of Buffalo Springfield's "For What It's Worth" are FAINTLY HEARD at first...

BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD
(V.O.)

'There's somethin' happenin , here,
What it is ain't exactly clear...
There's a man with a gun over there.
A tellin' me I got to beware. . .

... as the song grows LOUDER, we...

FLASHBACK TO:

THE 1960'S - MONTAGE (SONG OVERLAPS)

BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD (V.O.)

'-- I think it's time we stopped,
children, what's that sound? Everybody
look what's going down.'

still PHOTOS and DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE re-create the dramatic images and events and SOUNDS that shaped the 60's: Rallies. Civil Rights marches. Anti-War protests.

Then, like rapid-fire GUNSHOTS: John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert F. Kennedy, SILENCE.

Now, the hollow DRUMS of a funeral dirge. The WHISTLE of trains carrying coffins... RIFLES FIRING military salutes at Arlington. A strain of TAPS, followed by SILENCE, as a nation weeps as flags wave half-mast.

BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD (V.O.)

'There's battle lines being drawn.
Nobody's right if everybody's wrong.
-- Young people speaking their minds.
Getting so much resistance from
behind.'

Then, more SIRENS. Chicago, 1968 - Democratic National Convention. Chaos reigns as a rabid Mayor Daley declares war on the students of the nation. Cops on horseback. CRIES of pain. college kids are clubbed and hauled into police vans - bloodied and SCREAMING.

BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD (V.O.)

'What a field day for the heat. A
thousand people in the street.'

A MATCHING FILM CLIP featuring a young Mary being dragged along the ground by two cops. The SONG ENDS. As we hear CHANTS of, "Hell No, We Won't Go"...

CUT BACK TO:

MARY - IN HER HOTEL ROOM - PRESENT

The CHANTS stop, as Mary closes the window, hard, as if shutting out the past.

MARY - THROUGH WINDOW

Her haunted face fills the frame. The lone SIREN FADES into the night as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE ON VINCENT

as a lone SIREN FADES away.

VINCENT

... all these years, I never knew she
had a child of her own.

ANGLE WIDENS to see that he's scanning the skyline from:

EXT. CATHERINE'S TERRACE - NIGHT

CATHY moves to join a very concerned Vincent.

CATHY

Is it so troubling that she kept that secret?

VINCENT

No. In our world, secrets are respected. But Mary's have been burdens to her. I feel she is being drowned by their weight.

CATHY

You love her very much, don't you?

VINCENT

She has been a surrogate mother to me. The only one I have ever known.

CATHY

When did she come below?

VINCENT

It was at the most difficult time of my life. I was immersed in the anguish of adolescence. Everyone gave me love and understanding... and my pain prevented me from accepting it. But Mary... she treated me like I was her son. She felt my pain. It was as if she knew about the loneliness that had suddenly invaded my whole being. If I could have chosen a mother, it would have been Mary.

A fragile moment, as Cathy's torn between easing his torment, and invading this sensitive area. She proceeds gently.

CATHY

Do you ever think about your real mother?

VINCENT

I have. Often. Especially now.

CATHY

Do you remember her at all?

VINCENT

I was an infant when they found me.

(then)

But I have this vision of what she looked like: auburn hair... a full face... and large, soft brown eyes.

(a beat)

But this woman, this face I keep seeing, might not even be her.

CATHY

(cautiously)

Do you think she's still alive?

VINCENT

I do. I feel she is.

(turning to her)

I wonder, if she saw me, if she would love me like Mary does... and Father. And you...

CATHY

(very close)

If she really saw... all that you are, as I do... she'd be proud.

VINCENT

reflecting on this, and wonders...

Cathy, sees this. She holds him close, trying to smother his doubts with her love.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VINCENT'S CHAMBER - LATER

Vincent opens a large ornate trunk. From a secret panel in the lid of this massive chest, he removes a locket.

INSERT - LOCKET

Vincent opens it, revealing a picture of a woman's face -the face he described to Catherine.

VINCENT

who the woman is and what she means flickers across his face. As he ponders the faded photograph...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. COLLEGE HALL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Rain has forced the event indoors. The auditorium is filled to capacity as the graduation ceremonies are well along the way. STUDENTS, capped and gowned, are lined along the wall. They file onto the stage as their names are called. We HEAR scattered APPLAUSE from a STUDENT'S family and friends as he goes up. The UNIVERSITY CHANCELLOR drones on:

CHANCELLOR
 (admonishing the crowd)
 Please, save the applause until the
 end...
 (then)
 Muriel Meyer...

ANGLE - THE AUDIENCE

As her family applauds. CAMERA FINDS a lone woman standing against the wall in the back of the auditorium. As CAMERA MOVES IN on the woman we realize that it's:

MARY

deep within herself, trying to be as invisible and unobtrusive as possible... clutching her cloth coat with both arms as if she needed all her strength to muffle the emotions inside her. It is obvious she is not looking at the stage, but at:

A STUDENT

in line for his diploma.

ANGLE -

This is her son, BEM MILLER. A slender young man of average height, his intensity is apparent as he shuffles closer to the stage. Suddenly, he turns and gives a tight smile and nod in Mary's direction.

MARY

her blood turns cold. Can he have seen her? Does he know her? She attempts a small, frozen wave, then SEES that Ben's smile was for TWO PEOPLE seated nearby.

CHARLES AND NANCY MILLER

Ben's grandparents and Mary's in-laws. An elderly couple, somewhere in their sixties. Gray and bespectacled, they have worked hard to achieve the anonymity of mainstream America.

Nancy's corsage is proudly pinned to her Laura Ashley best. An American Legion pin adorns Charles' lapel. Nancy blows a demonstrative kiss to Ben. Charles salutes him.

ANGLE - MARY

who turns numb at the sight of them. Her in-laws have been far from friends.

BACK TO THE STAGE

as The Chancellor continues with the ceremony.

CHANCELLOR

... Benjamin Miller...

Ben goes up on stage and accepts his diploma.

THE MILLERS

applaud vigorously.

ANGLE - MARY

Something in her takes over. In spite of herself, she begins to applaud, loudly and defiantly... With innate pride. She stops when she realizes that...

THE MILLERS

have spotted her. Their attitude is clear. They hate Mary, and begin to consult in furtive WHISPERS about her presence.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

The Chancellor is nearing the end while Mary, still standing in the back, removes a letter from her coat pocket.

CHANCELLOR

... Stephen Walters.

NEW ANGLE

The Millers shuffle into FRAME as they squeeze through the aisle and make a bee-line for Mary. She sees them coming and braces for the confrontation.

NANCY
 (hushed, seething intensity)
 What are you doing here?

Mary gathers her dignity and a steely calm layers her nervousness.

MARY
 Hello, Nancy... Charles. I came to see my son, on the most important day of his life.

NANCY
 You mean you came to ruin it!

MARY
 I have no intentions of doing that. Or letting anyone else do it.

CHARLES
 Please, go away. You come here after all these years -- you have no right!

Mary handles this assault with all her strength and wisdom.

MARY
 I am his mother. I belong here.

NANCY
 (raging)
 You belong in jail!

Charles tries to calm Nancy, as heads turn toward them.

NANCY
 If not for you, our son would still be alive!
 (losing it)
 We lost our son because of you!

As more heads turn, Charles grabs hold of Nancy.

MARY
 (cool, direct)
 That's not true. I hope you haven't gone through life believing that's true.

ANOTHER ANGLE

MEMBERS of the audience "shush" them, while:

CHANCELLOR
 (from the stage)
 ... and finally, Sara Zedman.
 (to audience)
 You may now all applaud the
 graduating class.

The audience stands and applauds.

ANGLE - MARY, CHARLES AND NANCY

as they raise their voices above the din.

CHARLES
 We took the boy in when you
 abandoned him -

NANCY
 -- it was a blessing!

CHARLES
 Don't undo all the good we've done for
 him. Have mercy, for Lord's sake.

NANCY
 (to Charles; but for Mary's
 ears)
 She's a witch. A traitor who belongs
 in prison!

CHARLES
 (to Nancy)
 This is not the time or place for
 this -
 (takes hold of his wife)
 Come, Nancy, let's find Ben and take
 him home.

As he leads her away, CAMERA HOLDS on Mary. Their attacks have taken a toll on her. She looks down at the crumpled envelope in her trembling hands. She fights for composure as the crowd files past her. Then, she looks up and sees:

BEN

searching the crowd for his grandparents.

ANGLE - MILLERS

seeing Ben. They wave and call to him, then, join Ben. They try to hustle him out the doors, but the crowd slows them down. Now:

BEN

spots Mary. He stops moving. The smiles and cheer of the event are gone from his face.

THE MILLERS

notice. They tug at Ben to move out, but he motions for them to wait. The NOISE of the crowd FADES as:

MARY AND BEN

lock eyes on each other. Mary can't move. She has waited her life for this moment... and she is suddenly helpless. Does he know who she is? What does he think of her? Does he know she loves him?

Ben moves away from the grasp of his grandparents... slowly going to Mary. She finds herself moving slowly toward Ben.

The Millers watch, horrified, as Mary and Ben now stand facing each other... and stare.

BEN

(coldly studying her face)
You look like your picture.

Mary fights for focus through brimming eyes. She pushes on with her mission.

MARY

(lifting the envelope)
I... I'd like very much for you to read this... and... maybe then we can talk...

Ben never looks at it. Never leaves her eyes.

BEN

You are never to hurt my parents again, understand? You may have given birth to me, but you are not my mother.

He returns to the Millers, who give their support as they leave the hall. He never looks back.

Mary's face is like alabaster. She lets the tears fall from her eyes as the letter drops to the ground. Mechanically, she puts on her coat, buttons it, and files out, like a mourner at a funeral. CAMERA PANS DOWN to:

THE LETTER

being trampled on by the crowd as we...

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

MARY'S FEET

walking along damp, stoney ground. The SOUND of her FOOTSTEPS echo as we WIDEN to see we're in:

INT. THE TUNNELS - LATER THAT DAY

The pipes sorrowfully announce her return as a devastated Mary trods back to the only sanctuary she'll ever have.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK ENTRY - DAY

Vincent leans heavily against a tree. Even with his back to Catherine, his frustration can be felt.

VINCENT

(anguished)

How can a son do that to his mother?
I don't understand...

CATHY

(counseling him)

Not everyone is like you, Vincent. So many souls get twisted as they go through life... and they just can't see beyond the damage that's been done to them.

VINCENT

(turning to her)

I was abandoned. I know the feelings. But I moved beyond them long ago. .

CATHY

Have you...?

VINCENT

Yes! Thanks to Father and... and Mary.

Cathy tries to lead him to perspective.

CATHY

Not everyone has the good fortune to have people like that in their lives.

Vincent's anger subsides.

VINCENT

That is true. I was raised and nurtured
with love and wisdom.

(then)

Yet, I have no compassion for this boy I
never met.

CATHY

Why do you think that is?

VINCENT

He's hurt Mary so deeply... I am
worried for her.

CATHY

I can understand. But something else
seems to be tearing at you.

VINCENT

(a long beat; then)

Perhaps it is the opportunity he
had... and threw away.

CATHY

A chance you can never have?

VINCENT

My fondest wish would be to meet my
mother and tell her of my fate.

A long beat. Vincent shows Catherine the locket.

VINCENT

This was in the rags I was wrapped in
when they found me as a baby. There is a
woman's picture inside.

CATHY

You think it's your mother?

VINCENT

I don't know... I dream that it is. But
to turn dreams into reality... it
doesn't happen often in a lifetime.

CATHY

It happened with us.

VINCENT

I know.

(then)

To ask for more would be greedy.

CATHY

Vincent, can I have the locket?

Vincent looks at it, almost reluctant to give up his dream.

VINCENT

What for?

CATHY

Maybe I can find something out about
this woman.

(a beat; then)

Would you like that?

VINCENT

It is more than I hoped.

As Vincent surrenders the locket we...

CUT TO:

INT. TEACHING CHAMBER - SAME TIME

Mary attempts to continue on -- tending the children as usual.
But it is not easy for her.

LAUREN

Mary, I need a coloring book with lines
to color in.

MARY

No, you don't, Lauren.

Yes, I do!

MARY

You draw beautiful pictures all by
yourself.

LAUREN

(presents drawing)

Okay. Then tell me what this is?

MARY

(takes it; then)

It's a house, with a lake, and a
mountain and lots of tunnels.

LAUREN

Then how come no one else ever
knows?

MARY

I guess they're just not as smart as
us.

Mary wanders over to some of the others. But she seems distant, pre-occupied. SAMANTHA and Zack have been reading the Greek classics.

SAMANTHA

Aren't you going to discuss our assignments with us?

MARY

Of course, Samantha. Which of the Greek classics did you like the best?

SAMANTHA

I liked the comedy best... where the women stopped a war by refusing to sleep with their husbands. Now that's power!

The kids laugh.

MARY

What about the tragedies?

SAMANTHA

I don't understand why they were so bloody. I mean, parents and children were always killing each other -- or hating each other. It was ridiculous.

MARY

You think so?

SAMANTHA

You and Father would never act that way.

MARY

The world is not like us.

Mary's thought drift back to yesterday's events.

MARY

(continuing)

Sometimes, the most intense emotions... and passions take place within families.

SAMANTHA

Well, I wouldn't put up with it. If I had family that crazy I'd just leave 'em and go out and pick another.

MARY

It wasn't that simple, then. Or even now. When you depend on your family for support and survival... you feel trapped. And resentful. And feelings rise up... and things are said... and done -

SAMANTHA

But murder...?

MARY

Yes! Maybe not literally, like in the plays -- but kinds of murder, yes. Murder of the heart, of the spirit... between flesh and blood... Yes. It happens... all the time...

Mary breaks down. Her emotions have surfaced in front of the children -- she can do nothing but leave the chamber. Lauren is very upset by this, goes over to Samantha and hits her.

LAUREN

Why did you make Mary cry?

SAMANTHA

I didn't. I would never... I love Mary.

Samantha comforts Lauren, who starts to cry. They are all worried and confused by what just took place.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MARY'S CHAMBER - LATER

Mary is pacing, struggling to get herself under control. She's both weeping and raging at the same time as Vincent enters holding Samantha's hand.

VINCENT

Thank you, Samantha. Go back and tell the children Mary's fine.

(pointedly)

But even Mary is allowed to be sad.

Samantha looks at Mary, to be sure. She nods, gives her a reassuring smile. When she leaves, Mary moves to Vincent.

MARY

I'm furious with myself. How could I let that happen in front of the children!

VINCENT
 (very concerned)
 Did you hear what I told Samantha?

MARY
 Yes. Thank you.

VINCENT
 I meant it. The children are worried --
 not because you got upset, but because
 you think you are not allowed to share
 that with them.

MARY
 This isn't their concern.

VINCENT
 You are their concern. Everything about
 you. You are their teacher, and their
 mother... but you are not a God. They
 must see you as a human, too.

Mary hears this. It registers.

MARY
 You are a wise man, Vincent.

VINCENT
 If I am, it's because of all that you
 and Father have taught me.

MARY
 I should go talk to the children
 before they get too concerned.

She goes to a wash basin, and douses herself with cold water. Vincent follows.

VINCENT
 Children understand feelings better
 than we do. They say what they think
 without guilt.

MARY
 I envy them.
 (then)
 I can't get beyond what happened with
 Ben. His anger is still scorching me --
 how can he hate me so much? He doesn't
 even know me.

VINCENT

And that's what is tragic. You must tell him your truth, and your feelings.

As she dries her face, passions begin to rise again.

MARY

How? His grandparents are convinced I'm responsible for his father's death. That I'm to blame for my husband's activism. I met John in Washington, D.C., marching for civil Rights. We weren't 'radical'. The entire Nation was there. If not in body, in spirit.

VINCENT

Tell Ben that...

MARY

That I was a student, like him... in love with American Ideals... like him - - that we all believed it was up to us to heal this nation... we felt it was not only right, but our duty to help end a war!?

VINCENT

Yes, tell him. He doesn't have to agree, but he will feel your sincerity... and passion.

MARY

But these people raised him to believe I'm 'evil incarnate'. A fugitive from the law who deserves to be imprisoned -- an uncaring mother who abandoned her son.

VINCENT

You must attempt to heal those wounds... they will clearly hurt him in the future.

A beat. Mary knows Vincent's right.

MARY

I'll try, Vincent. Myself, I can live with my loss and my pain. But I will try for Ben. He's got to hear why I did what I did.

CUT TO:

EXT. MILLER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A traditional two-story suburban home. A taxi pulls up and Mary gets out.

MARY
(to Driver)
I won't be long.

A light goes on in the front room and the window curtain is drawn back as the Miller's watch Mary approaching the front door. She has a drive and determination we haven't seen in her before. A woman on a mission. The door opens.

NEW ANGLE

Nancy opens the door and bars the entrance.

NANCY
How dare you come to our house.

CHARLES
Nan, I'll handle this.
(moves her aside; then, to
Mary)
What do you want?

MARY
To speak to Ben.

CHARLES
He's not here. And if you know what's
good for you, you'll leave him alone.

Past the open door, we see Nancy move down the hall to the kitchen.

MARY
(undaunted)
I know he's here. His roommate
told me he was.

Over Charles' shoulder, we see Nancy on the phone.

CHARLES
(with mounting rage)
You went to his... Look, he doesn't
want to have anything to do with you.

MARY
Let him tell me that.

CHARLES

Listen, once and for all, he's not here!
You come into our lives after twenty
years and think you have rights to the
boy!?

MARY

(with great dignity)

I am his mother. You can't deny me the
right to talk to him.

CHARLES

You'd be surprised what I can do. There
are laws in this country -you can't
upset my wife, harass people -

MARY

(over-riding)

-- Charles... I'm not here for myself.
Ben has a right to know what happened
and who his parents really were --
before he goes off to law school. You
can't let him go through life hating a
mother and father he never even knew.

CHARLES

He's better off not knowing -- a slut
like you, who turned my son into a
Commie!

He slams the door in Mary's face. She stands there for a moment,
as if to let the man's venom slide from her body. Resigned, she
turns to go back to the waiting taxi, but:

ON THE STREET

a POLICE CAR moves rapidly toward her, red light spinning.

MARY

a look of panic fills her face. As she moves quickly to the waiting
cab, she is washed in the hot-white of a spotlight from the Police
Car. She freezes. The Police slowly approach, pulling in front of the
taxi, smearing Mary in light.

POLICE (V.O.)

(through the car's
microphone)

Please stay where you are. Put
you hands over your head. Don't
make any sudden moves.

INT. MILLER HOUSE

The Miller's watch Mary getting arrested. Being read her rights, being frisked, cuffed... all the indignities.

CHARLES

You didn't have to do that, Nan.

NANCY

She won't be bothering our Ben any more.

ON THE STREET

Mary is being put in the back of the Police Car, the taxi waved on its way. The cops get in the car and drive past FRAME. CAMERA PANS UP to a lit window on the second floor of the house. The silhouette of a spectator is in the window. We see that it's...

BEN - LOOKING THROUGH THE WINDOW

His expression is hard to read, but his body is immobile. As the police SIREN WAILS away into the night we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL - DAY - ESTABLISHING

OVER, WE HEAR:

CATHY (V .0.)

... So you've been working here since
you got out of high school?

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

Catherine is speaking with ESTEE SAMPSON, matronly black nurse, somewhere in her late 50's. The oldest employee at the hospital, Estee is carefully examining the locket.

ESTEE

Honey, I been working here
before it was busy.

(re: locket)

How do you open this?

Cathy assists her. Estee talks, as she looks at the photograph of the woman in the locket.

ESTEE

I worked in the cafeteria here to pay
for nursing school. Now I'm the senior
R.N. at St. Vincent's -I know more than
most of these damn doctors... and they
want to retire me. But they're scared
the place won't run without 'ol Estee.

(then)

Pretty woman. Was she a nurse here?

CATHY

I don't know. We're trying to locate
her - and this is the only lead we've
got.

ESTEE

I can't quite place the face, but she
looks like somebody...

Cathy's pager BEEPS. She hands Estee a card.

CATHY

That's my office. Call me if you think of anything. Thanks.

As Cathy hurries to a phone booth...

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY JAIL HOLDING CELL - DAY

THROUGH THE BARS, we see Mary sitting on her cot, very depressed. The SOUND of a cell door sliding open... A husky FEMALE OFFICER speaks routinely:

FEMALE OFFICER (O.S.)

Your attorney's here to see you.

CUT TO:

INT. VISITING ROOM - LATER

Almost too bright for its purpose. A bullet-proof glass partition runs the length of the room. Cathy is on one side, Mary on the other, talking intensely -- on telephones.

CATHY

(holding case file)

I can't believe this warrant was still on their files. They didn't even have computers then.

(reading)

'Willful destruction of United States government documents... vandalizing government property... defacing government building...

(then, quicker)

...resisting arrest, harassing police officers, unlawful assembly. . .

(takes a breath)

...failure to appear, jumping bail' -- My God, when did you have time to study?

MARY

Believe it or not, John and I were honor students.

CATHY

It says here you were Bonnie and Clyde.

MARY

We were just there, down at the Selective Service Center. I was too meek to even go inside. I waited on the steps while John and his friends messed up some draft records. I think someone poured blood over them - or red paint -
(then)

-- Is it okay to talk -- I mean, is anyone listening?

CATHY

No. Only the middle three are 'hot lines'. Why didn't you at least appear for the arraignment?

MARY

By the time we had to go to court, the Government had declared war on its students. They killed innocent kids at Kent State. It got so crazy even Joe Namath wound up on Nixon's hit list -- and then. . .

CATHY --

Then what?

MARY

I found out I was pregnant. We were terrified. We went underground. The rest is like a Charles Dickens novel -- Ben was born. John's parents looked after him while we ran from one hiding place to another. Then John died... I got very sick, was brought to the tunnels... I planned on re-claiming Ben when things changed. But they only got worse.. As time went by, I felt it might be a better life for him up top - without a fugitive for a mother.

CATHY

You knew the risk when you came up to see Ben?

MARY

Yes. I can live with the legal ramifications -- but not the rejection of my own son.

CUT TO:

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE - DAY

Cathy is pursuing a busy MAXWELL around the outer office, pleading her case. He's far more concerned with lightening his own case load.

CATHY
 (working him)
 It's amazing, isn't it? Over 50,000 war casualties, three assassinations, race riots -- and the entire government was conspiring to track down student war protesters.

MAXWELL
 'Hey, man', that's the 60's for you: a few hits on a joint and you expect your government to 'make love, not war'.

Maxwell moves to a file cabinet. Cathy follows.

CATHY
 Don't be flip, Joe.
 (then)
 This woman's in jail for a student prank from twenty years ago.

He finds what he's looking for.

MAXWELL
 A prank? They weren't 'trick or treating' .
 (then)
 Remember when you were a kid in school, and your parents warned you what you did would follow you around for the rest of your life?

CATHY
 Vaguely.

MAXWELL
 Well, they were right.

He BANGS the file shut, and moves inside his office. Cathy's on his heels... CAMERA FOLLOWS them into:

INT. MAXWELL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Maxwell, trying to shake Cathy, goes behind his desk.

CATHY
 But she didn't do anything.

Maxwell's buttons have been pushed.

MAXWELL

Look, we've never gone into this stuff before, because I made a rule for myself never to discuss politics where I work... but I had no sympathy for 'peaceniks' or draft-dodgers... then or now.

Cathy is dumbstruck.

MAXWELL

(continuing)

I wanted to serve. It was a tough call -
- Law School or Nam. By the time I graduated, the war was over.

He sees Cathy judging him.

MAXWELL

(continuing)

My dad fought in the big one. It's the way I was raised, what can I tell you?

CATHY

Tell me you'll call your buddy in the U.S. Attorney's office and get him to drop charges.

MAXWELL

Radcliffe, we're the ones who put people away -- prosecutors, not public defenders.

Cathy abruptly changes tactics.

CATHY

Joe, I am asking for a personal favor. Do this is for me.

MAXWELL

Who is this woman to you?

CATHY

I can't tell you.

MAXWELL

You want me to put my neck out there -- blind, and you won't tell me why?

CATHY
That's right. I can't.

Maxwell's still steamed from the discussion.

MAXWELL
Then, neither can I.

A beat. Then, Cathy puts it on the line.

CATHY
If you have any respect for me, as a
lawyer and a friend, you'll trust me and
make that call.

A pause. Maxwell sees she means it. She heads for the door.

MAXWELL
(grudgingly)
I'll think ~bout it... and see what
I can do.

CUT TO:

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Everything is in disarray as Ben is packing his past four years into boxes and suitcases. MUSIC BLARES on the radio -some grating, dissonant group -- making it hard to hear the KNOCKING on the door. Finally:

BEN
(shouting over music)
It's open!

The door slowly opens, revealing a cautious Cathy.

-BEN
(stops packing)
If you're looking for Keith,
you're a day late.

CATHY
(she can't hear)
What?

BEN
(turns off radio)
I said, Keith's gone. I can give you a
number to reach him at.

CATHY
Are you Ben?

BEN
(nods)
Who are you?

CATHY
Cathy Chandler. I'm with the District
Attorney's office. I'd like to talk to
you about your mother.

BEN
(closing off)
There's nothing to talk about.

CATHY
She's been arrested. She's in the County
Jail, facing very serious charges.

Ben resumes packing.

BEN
So?

CATHY
So... she'd like to see you.

BEN
(boxing books)
So?

CATHY
(getting irritated)
She's your mother. She risked her
freedom to talk to you. The least you -

BEN
Look, I don't care what happens to her.
There's no law that says I have to talk
to her, is there?

Cathy's thrown.

CATHY
No... no written law...

BEN
Good. 'Cause I'm real busy right now
and unless you have some official,
legal reason for being here, I wish
you'd go.

CATHY

(angry now)

I'm her friend. I'm trying to keep her from going to prison, and you won't have the common, human decency to even talk to her?

BEN

(exploding)

Don't talk to me about decency! This woman happened to give birth to me. That doesn't give her any rights to my life! She dumped me on my grandparents, she robbed me of my father, and now she wants to apologize -- and purge herself of guilt? -- to hell with her!!!

CATHY

(drawn to his level)

Mary is an extraordinary woman. She has a story to tell. And you should know it... or you'll go through life the same bitter, smug, wounded person you are now!

Ben moves in on Cathy so suddenly, it scares her. At this moment, he is all his grandparents raised him to be.

_BEN

Get out! This is my house! As far as I'm concerned, justice is finally served!

He snaps on the radio. It BLASTS as Cathy leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. FATHER'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Cathy is still stunned from her encounter with Ben. Father serves her tea as he and Vincent listen to her story.

CATHY

-- the boy was so full of rage and hate
I thought he was going to hit me.

FATHER

It is so tragic... he's been
brainwashed. And blinded. He cannot
see, or hear.

VINCENT

Or feel... anything but the pain of
being abandoned.

CATHY

It's hopeless for the boy.

FATHER

Unless something shocking happens to him, causes him to face himself, I'm afraid you're right.

(then)

Now, what's to be done about Mary?

CATHY

I've called for everything that exists on her case to be sent to my office... and I'm going to work on it until she's free.

But even Cathy's commitment can't lessen their fears.

CUT TO:

INT. CATHERINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It is empty... The phone is RINGING. The answering machine receives a message from the hospital...

ESTEE'S VOICE

(from answering machine)

This is Estee, the nurse from St. Vincent's... I think I might know who belonged to that locket...

FADE OUT

END OF
ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE - LATER THAT EVENING

Cathy and Joe Maxwell, both worn and frazzled from the all-nighter, as they pour over the material on Mary's 'case'. Cathy stretches, then goes to the charred coffee pot.

CATHY

I'm afraid we're out of coffee...

MAXWELL

... and I'm out of steam.

(then)

I still can't figure something out.

CATHY

What?

MAXWELL

How you talked me into this.

CATHY

Hey, I haven't even been home since yesterday. I wonder if my apartment will remember me.

MAXWELL

(yawns, then)

Oh, man... the only defense for Mary's case is the passage of time, but arguing 'statute of limitations' for fugitives is dicey.

CATHY

It's such a waste of taxpayer's money.

MAXWELL

Since when has that bothered anybody? We need a wrinkle to throw at them.

CATHY

(after a beat)

What does bother them?

MAXWELL

What do you mean?

CATHY

What bothers prosecutors, judges, us --
in pursuing a case?

MAXWELL

Lack of evidence, faulty testimony,
illegally obtained evidence -

CATHY

How did they nail Mary to these
charges?

MAXWELL

She was there.

CATHY

Outside the building.

MAXWELL

Nobody witnessed her doing
anything?

CATHY

She didn't do anything. No
fingerprints, no witnesses...

Maxwell jabs a button on his speaker phone. We HEAR it
RINGING.

CATHY

Who you calling?

MAXWELL

Our ace in the bullpen.

MALE VOICE

(from speaker phone; bored)
Data-center...

Maxwell speaks toward the phone.

MAXWELL

This is Maxwell -- who's awake down
there?

MALE VOICE

I think I'm it.

Cathy moves toward the speaker phone.

MAXWELL

Is Renie on tonight?

MALE VOICE

Yeah, but she's down for the
count.

MAXWELL
Well, wake her up.

CATHY
(into speaker)
Tell her all of Scotland Yard is
counting on her.

MAXWELL
(to Cathy)
Scotland Yard...?

CATHY
(shrugs)
She's a Sherlock Holmes nut.

RENIE'S VOICE comes over the speaker...

RENIE'S VOICE
Whattya need, Joe?

MAXWELL
I hope you're sitting down...

RENIE'S VOICE
I'm lying down... local or out-of-state?

MAXWELL
Right here in the 'Rotten Apple'. You
pull this off, you got sick leave
tomorrow.

RENIE'S VOICE
Shoot.

MAXWELL
Twenty-two years ago a woman -

RENIE'S VOICE
-- Make it a three-day weekend.

As Joe and Cathy begin to fill Renie in,
we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAXWELL'S OFFICE - LATER

Maxwell and Cathy are both flaked out, Joe at his desk, Cathy on the
couch. The SOUND of the FAX machine brings them up and over to it. As
they both grab for the information, we...

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

an energized Cathy and Joe at his desk.

CATHY

Wire-tapping. Illegally obtained evidence!

Maxwell

They may hedge it these days, but back then, there was plenty of precedent.

CATHY

The Pentagon Papers...

MAXWELL

Hoffa. A truckload of mob cases... all tossed. Radcliffe, I think you've got your wrinkle.

CUT TO:

EXT. HUDSON RIVER DOCKS - NIGHT

Ben, torn and restless, is walking along the waterfront. It's hard to see him as he moves in and out of a thick, eerie fog.

BEN - CLOSER ANGLE

clearly undone by what's happened to Mary... and his confrontation with Cathy. We hear FOG HORNS O.S., while behind him:

A FIGURE

It's Vincent. Hooded, he looks for an opening to approach Ben, without revealing himself. Finally, Ben stops and Vincent closes.

VINCENT

A perfect night for thinking, isn't it?

BEN

(startled)

I'd like to be by myself, thanks.

VINCENT

You are... You're also very troubled... And scared.

BEN
(defensive)
How do you know?

VINCENT
It's easy to see things in people when
you've seen them in yourself.

BEN
I can barely see your face. What
are you, a philosopher?

VINCENT
No. I'm not that wise.

BEN
(curt)
If you're looking for a handout, I don't
believe in it.

VINCENT
Neither do I. I'm just looking for
some peace... answers to questions...
basic things.

BEN
Like what?

VINCENT
Like what my name is.

BEN
You don't know your own name?

VINCENT
Not really. I was a foundling,
abandoned at birth... named after a
hospital nearby -- Vincent.

BEN
(intrigued)
... I'm Ben.

Vincent senses a willingness to talk. A chance to build a
bridge between the two.

VINCENT
Most people know where they came from.
Very few know who they really are...

88M
I'm kind of in that category.
(a beat; with difficulty)
I was abandoned, too.

VINCENT
(very casual)
I guess it's more common than we
think... many people feel they were,
even if they weren't.

BEN
No, I was. But I know who my
parents were.

VINCENT
Were? They're dead?

BEN
My father is. My mother might
as well be.

VINCENT
Then, you know her?

BEN
Not really. I know about her.

VINCENT
Why do you hate her so?

After a beat, Ben opens up and tells this stranger what he has
never said aloud before.

BEN
She gave me away. She... she didn't have
to. Now, she's sorry. Now, she wants to
talk to me. Now, she needs me. Too late.

VINCENT
(after a pause)
You are fortunate, Ben.

BEN
... How?

VINCENT
To be able to thank her for giving
you the greatest gift of all -
the gift of life.

As they walk off into the fog, they continue to talk as they
disappear from view...

VINCENT (O.S)
(continuing)
I'd give anything on earth to be able
to just do that...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Mary receives her 'valuables' in a small baggie from a bailiff at the front desk: some cash, a watch, a small brooch -- that's it. She turns to Cathy.

MARY

They're dropping all charges?

CATHY

It looks that way.

MARY

I'm so grateful to you, Cathy.

As they cross to the door to move outside...

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTY JAIL - CONTINUOUS

Cathy and Mary emerge from the building and begin descending the stone steps.

CATHY

Sometimes things happen for the best.
Now, you never have to hide again. You
can visit above, walk the city and never
worry about being arrested.

MARY

I know. It's ironic, isn't it? Now that
I'm free to come up above, I don't have
any reason to.

The two women exchange a look. It's a bittersweet victory. As they descend the stairs, a Man's Shoulder comes INTO FRAME. Cathy suddenly stops and grabs Mary's arm. Then, Mary sees what Cathy is looking at:

THEIR POV - BEN

at the bottom of the stairs.

CATHY

Do you want me to wait for you?

MARY

No. I'll be okay. Why don't you get
some sleep?

CATHY

I'll be at home if you need me.

As Cathy moves down the stairs, she tries to read Ben's face, but can't. He gives her a curt nod as she passes him and crosses the street. She stops, turns, and watches from afar.

CATHY'S POV

Mary and Ben slowly move toward each other on the steps. Ben stops, a fair distance away. Mary takes one or two steps more, then, sensing Ben's needs, she stops. It is an awkward distance to have a conversation, but all that is possible.

NEW ANGLE - MARY AND BEN

They regard each other tentatively. Both unsure of what the next move is to be -- and by whom. Finally...

MARY
Hello, Ben.

BEN
Hello.

Mary proceeds with the caution of someone dealing with a mistreated, stray animal.

MARY
I'm very glad you're
here.
(pause; then)
I know how difficult this
must be for you.

Ben just stares at her, watching and listening.

MARY
(continuing)
And brave.
(then)
I have so much to say to you...
but I'm not sure what you want
to hear.

BEN

not sure himself, gives a half-shrug.

MARY
Maybe if you asked me some
questions... things you've probably
been wondering about... I'll give you
the most honest answers I can.

ANGLE - CATHY

trying to read what is taking place. She can see Ben is talking to Mary. Cathy's both curious and concerned at the same time.

BACK TO SCENE

MARY

... your father was the one who actually politicized me. Your grandparents could never accept his politics. They blamed me.

BEN

How did he die?

MARY

A car accident. To this day, no one's sure what happened... a friend was distributing anti-war leaflets - he went along for the ride. They found them in a ravine.

(then)

He loved you very much.

BEN

Why did you... give me up?

MARY

(proceeding gently)

It was never my intention to. It was the greatest sacrifice of my life... it still is.

(controls the emotions rising in her)

After he died, I went to take you back but... but your grandparents convinced me you could never have a normal life -- school, friends, all those things - - living with a fugitive.

Ben closes the distance between them. Studies Mary, then:

BEN

They told me you never even went to his funeral.

MARY

They warned me not to. The F.B.I. was waiting for me, they said... watching their house.

BEN

You never came to visit me.

MARY

'Don't visit', they said, 'the house is being watched.' They swore they'd call me when it was safe -- but they never did.

BEN

(growing agitated)
Years went by... what happened?

MARY

(sensing his mood)
Would it be all right if we walked a little?

CATHY'S POV

as they move down the steps and slowly stroll up the street. She walks, too, keeping her vantage point.

BACK TO SCENE

CAMERA TRACKS with Mary and Ben.

BEN

-- And what happened when you showed up at the house?

MARY

They finally they told me the truth -- They had no intention of letting me have you back. I was an 'unfit' mother. They said they'd fight me in court.

BEN

(digesting all this)
Why would they do that?

MARY

They always felt I took their son from them... maybe you became a way of replacing him.

Ben stops walking. Examines Mary closely. He can see the depth of honesty in her eyes. He cannot reconcile what he's been told, with what he sees. He knows she's telling the truth. It rocks him to the core. The people who raised him and loved him robbed him of his mother. Finally:

BEN

(confused by his emotions)
I have hated you so much... for so long...

:

MARY
(reassuring him)
You were taught to.

Ben struggles with the enormity of these revelations. As much as he wants to stay, he needs to get away, to think.

BEN
I'd like to talk to you again, but I
leave for school right away.

MARY
Maybe we can write. I
have so many questions.

BEN
But Charles and Nancy can never find
out. They'd never forgive me.

MARY
That doesn't seem to be their
nature.
(then)
And it would be fine with me...
just fine.

CATHY'S POV

of the two of them exchanging mailing addresses.

BACK TO SCENE

BEN
I have to go -- they're expecting me.

Not knowing how to deal with this stranger, he opts for a formal handshake -- stiffly offering his hand. Mary awkwardly clasps it. As she touches her own flesh and blood, the emotions she has grappled with for so long, rapidly surface.

MARY
Good-bye, Ben. You've made me so
happy.. .

BEN
Good-bye... mother.

Ben turns to go, but Mary cannot let go of his hand. Unable to fight the emotion anymore, the wall of reserve she had dammed herself with, cracks... tears flooding out. Ben, with simple human compassion, holds her. As Mary clutches her son, Ben breaks down himself.

NEW ANGLE

past Cathy, of mother and son -- re-united at last. She turns -- moved to tears, and walks off...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CATHERINE'S APARTMENT - DAY - LATER

An exhausted Cathy, her hands full of mail, routinely turns on her answering machine, slumps on her couch, and begins opening her mail when she HEARS:

ESTEE(V .0.)

This is Estee, the nurse from St. Vincent's... I think I might know who belonged to that locket...

Cathy rushes to the phone, finds Estee's number, begins to dial as we...

CUT TO:

INT. NURSING HOME - DAY - VISITING AREA

Cathy is sitting beside an ELDERLY WOMAN in a wheelchair. Fatigue is affecting her bedside manner.

CATHY

-- So the woman in the picture isn't you?

MARGARET

Heaven's no. I was attractive when I was a girl, but not quite that pretty. It was given to me. . .

CATHY

By whom?

MARGARET

I'm trying to remember who... I think it was a patient... But it could have been one of the nurses. . .

CATHY

What can you remember...?

MARGARET

... that whoever it was... they were very nice. It was their way of thanking me.

CATHY
 (impatiently)
 Try to think of the circumstances. Was
 it when a baby was born?

MARGARET
 (straining)
 At my age, it's not easy... it was many,
 many years ago... I used to get lots of
 presents back then...

CATHY
 Can you think of anything about
 the locket...?

MARGARET
 ... I do remember when it disappeared.
 (confidentially)
 I always suspected this orderly... But
 other people admired it... could have
 been anybody...

CATHY
 (exasperated)
 Look, Margaret, if you remember anything
 about it, call me at this number. Your
 nurse has it, too, in case you lose
 this, okay?

MARGARET
 Of course, young lady. Sometimes I
 remember things later... from long
 ago...

CUT TO:

EXT. CATHERINE'S TERRACE - DUSK

A gentle breeze billows the drapes at the open doors. Cathy is sitting
 on a chaise. Vincent sits beside her, holding the locket.

CATHY
 -- I'm not sure if she was a nurse, or a
 patient, or a friend of someone... but
 it seems like she did pass through the
 hospital.

VINCENT
 (re: locket)
 It's a face you don't easily forget.
 . . .
 (then: turning away)
 Perhaps it is too much to hope for.

CATHY

No, it isn't. Mary and Ben proved that.

VINCENT

You want me to keep this dream...

CATHY

I want you to keep all your dreams. If we are possible, all else is, too.

Vincent looks at the tireless woman by his side. His love for her fused with appreciation.

VINCENT

Catherine, I can't ask for more than I have now...

Taking her shoulders, Vincent eases her down in the chaise, and kneels by her side.

VINCENT

(continuing)

You must rest. You have done so much... and there is time.

Now that she is lying back, Cathy gratefully accepts her fatigue. But she doesn't want Vincent to leave.

CATHY

Vincent, tell me a poem.

Amused, he searches for something to leave her with...

VINCENT

"I met a lady in the meads
Full beautiful, a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light
And her eyes were wild."

Vincent turns to Catherine... and she is asleep. He lifts her, carries her inside, placing her gently in her bed.

VINCENT

as he watches Catherine sleep the locket glints in the moonlight. . .

FADEOUT.

THE END