

AKATEWA

FADE IN:

MONTAGE: - 2006

1. A Rocky Mountain sunset, valleys, lakes, woods of evergreens and autumn aspens, and endless fields, a herd of galloping deer..

2. ALICE, 16, pretty Native American teen, gallops on her Appaloosa through meadows toward a small valley-town along a scenic river. A train rolls in the distance.

EXT. WILLY'S HOUSE - DAY

Sunshine. Autumn leaves on the trees. Alice's sweaty Appaloosa horse stands near a new Porsche Boxster in front of an opulent, two story house with manicured garden.

Alice, bursts out of the front door, laughing. She's happy. She drags a reluctant WILLY, 17, behind her. He's slim, cute, with a nascent beard.

ALICE
Willy come here.

Alice takes his hand and pulls him around the corner of the house. They exchange a deep kiss. Willy is clearly wanting more, but he separates and glances around looking nervous.

WILLY
Mom might come. You know she doesn't approve. Better go now.

Alice looks wistful, then glances at her horse.

ALICE
Taqasa!

The horse joins her; she strokes it and mounts. Willy grabs her hand looking intense.

WILLY
But I approve. Hot enough. How about an Indian summer swim later?

Alice nods and smiles. Willy climbs into the Porsche. Alice stares at his face as he drives away.

EXT. WILLY'S HOUSE - DAY - 2016

Sunshine. Autumn leaves on the trees. A slender, curvaceous Alice, now 26, rides Taqasa down Willy's street. Cars reflect the current period.

Alice stops at Willy's house: slightly dilapidated, the house is deserted, the garden neglected. Alice studies the place. She strokes her horse, then continues down the street.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Alice gallops through fields, jumping streams and fences, toward a large ranch house, stables, people busy working.

EXT. AKATEWA - DAY

A long, tree-lined road. Alice passes a WOODEN GANTRY WITH A VINTAGE FRAME reading "WELCOME TO AKATEWA".

She rides toward BEN, 70, an imposing Native American figure barking orders to his ranch hands. She stops, gets off Taqasa, then goes to kiss Ben.

ALICE
'Morning Dad.

INT. AKATEWA - DINING ROOM - DAY

Ben and Alice sit face-to-face at a long table. A carved, Native American artifact shaped like a long bone sits as a centerpiece.

ZELDA, 50, motherly Native maid, monitors the scene from the kitchen.

BEN
Willy, a top attorney now?
Representing some greedy
company gouging the American
people, raping the environment
and shipping jobs overseas, no
doubt.

Alice gets up and, BANG, slams the door shut on her way out. Zelda enters snapping her knuckles, looks at the ceiling. She points to a framed picture of a beautiful

YOUNG WOMAN

Who strongly resembles Alice, Alice's late mother, ALINE.

ZELDA
Mom wouldn't like you treating
Alice like a child, Ben. Your
girl knows her own mind.

BEN
And her mind's still on that
Willy character.

ZELDA

Life has a way of showin' us where we need to mend. And we gals always need mendin'. Sometimes hard to let an old love go.

BEN

Settling down might help. She needs to quit going through men like--

Zelda looks at her nails.

ZELDA

Good luck! Just sayin' I'm not holdin' my breath for that to be part of my Christmas bonus.

BEN

What is it about women? Always sticking up for each other.

ZELDA

It's a big club, and I don't mean an organization.

Zelda picks up the bone artifact on the table and waves it at him. Ben leaves in disgust.

INT. AKATEWA - LIBRARY - DAY

Alice moves to the table in the center of the room she made her personal domain:

A world of warmth surrounded by book-laden shelves scattered with Native artifacts, interrupted only by a picture-window bathing everything in sunlight.

A HUGE SCREEN TV on one side. The screensaver scrolls images of Native American history: camps, parades, horses.

Two armchairs and a coffee table. The table, cluttered with various topic magazines, a coffee cup, several notebooks. A wireless keyboard, mouse, and remote control.

Alice now stands in front of a PHOTO of her mother, with a sad wistful look.

She then gazes at another photo near a TROPHY from the International Rescue Committee. It's of Aline with a younger Ben and a little girl: Alice.

She brings the photo of her mother to her breast. Her face, the same sad, wistful look as her mother's.

INT. AKATEWA - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Alice sits at the table. She picks up a notebook marked, ODDNESS. She opens it to beautifully precise handwritten texts, diagrams and equations.

She takes her mouse and opens a full-screen window on the TV. A series of equations display, topped with a dynamic chart looking like an infinite carpet of random patterns.

As Alice makes changes in the equations, the pattern changes from regular to random, from random to a new motif.

Alice smiles, plays a moment with the changing motifs, then marks spots on the chart and saves screenshots. She reaches for her notebook.

INT. AKATEWA - LIBRARY - DAY

Alice is with MEG, 26, another pretty Native woman. The news plays on the big flat screen TV, sound low. Meg grabs the IRC trophy on the shelve, smiling.

MEG

Remember?

ALICE

Yeah! Proud we did that. We really made a difference.

Meg turns around, looks at printings of patterns near Alice's notebook still opened on the table. Takes one, then another.

MEG

Beautiful, Honey.

ALICE

All random. All important.

MEG

Why?

ALICE

It doesn't do the same each time it should. That means that part of our world is unpredictable by nature.

Meg continues watching the patterns, mesmerized. Then, the pages filled with equations.

MEG

You have a talent, Alice. You should do more than work for a sleepy, small town where nothing ever happens.

ALICE
Move to the big city? Dad
would never go for that.

Alice opens a door hidden behind bookshelves and enters a closet. Sound of WATER FLOWING into a sink. On the TV..

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
..And in Seattle last evening,
the prestigious Wakefield
Award was presented to..

Meg picks up the remote control. Looking as though she's about to change channels, she glances at the TV.. A video showing an

ADULT, CLEAN-SHAVEN, WILLY,

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
..PHIL FOGG..

Mid 30s, handsome, tuxedoed, receiving a trophy..

ALICE (O.S.)
You want to leave your car
here and ride with me to the
meeting?

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
..Senior explorer at National
Geographic for his story on
Africa's climate crisis.

.. To the applause of a formally attired audience. Riveted, Meg looks as though she's seeing a ghost.

MEG
What the..?

Alice comes out of the closet. Meg quickly turns off the TV.

ALICE
You say something?

Meg regains composure, turns to Alice.

MEG
No. I'll meet you there. Hurry
up.

Meg exits.

EXT. AKATEWA - PORCH - DAY

Ben enters the porch and lays the BLACKSTONE HERALD, folded in half, on the coffee table. Headline reads, INDIAN SUMMER, the date is Wednesday, October 12, 2016.

Ben steps back into the house and meets Alice who is leaving.

BEN
Off to the club?

ALICE
Then to the City Council
meeting. See you later.

BEN
Say hello to the Mayor for me.

They hug.

ALICE
You know we're still butting
heads?

BEN
Yeah. I know the feeling.
(smiles)
But my butt's bigger. You know
I love you? I just want the
best--

Alice turns to him and kisses his cheek.

ALICE
I know Dad. I always know.

Alice jumps down the steps and climbs into her car. Ben
watches her drive off, he fondly smiles, shaking his head.

EXT. TWO PINES RESTAURANT - DAY

Alice pulls up to the restaurant. She parks and gets out. Meg
is talking with ABBY, late 20s, near the entrance. They wave
at her.

MOMENTS LATER

Alice stands with Meg and Abby.

ABBY
So he's standing there,
gawking at me like an idiot,
and then he says:
(mimics male voice)
"That's the last time I'll
ever let you touch my car!"

The three women burst out laughing.

ABBY (CONT'D)
Told him it serves him right
for taking me to eat cheap
Chinese food for my birthday.

ALICE
Next time have him take you to
dinner at the Ashley Inn. That
bill will serve him right!

The three women continue laughing.

INT. TWO PINES RESTAURANT - DAY

Alice, Meg and Abby enter the restaurant. Cozy atmosphere, A
Whiter Shade of Pale plays on the radio. Alice stops cold at
hearing..

RADIO
"..and although my eyes were
open they might have just as
well been closed.."

Alice looks as though a memory is just beyond reach. The
other women continue past a long bar toward a sign over a
doorway reading "CLUB ROOM". Meg turns to Alice.

MEG
Coming?

Alice catches up. Meg and Abby exit through the club room
door. As Alice reaches the threshold, she hears more of the
lyrics playing and stops again..

RADIO
"..If music be the food of
love.."

Alice shakes her head to clear her mind and steps over the
threshold.

INT. CLUB ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Women mill about a room decorated with trophies, framed
items, the club's coat-of-arms, and a banner that reads
"BLACKSTONE GIRLS SECRET SOCIETY."

Alice enters and claps her hands.

ALICE
Let's get started. Phones off.

The women find seats at a large table centered in the room.
Silence falls into an exterior backdrop of cars, voices,
birds chirping..

INT. PASSENGER TRAIN, DAY

At the end of a full passenger car, Phil Fogg sits typing on his laptop. He stops to look out the window at the sunny, fall scenery. A beautiful day. The train continues on.

INT. CLUB ROOM - DAY

The club meeting continues. A TRAIN HORN sounds -- moves through the station, draws away.. until -- it's CUT-OFF by the

-- DEAFENING THUNDER OF A HUGE CRASH --

The women scream and jump out of their seats. THUNDER AND CRASH OF METAL continues. Light fixtures tremble and rattle. The noise finally stops. Utter silence.

Alice rushes out, followed by Meg and the other women.

EXT. CRASH SCENE - DAY

Smoke and dust hang above the devastation of scattered debris and tangled train cars. Some are on fire, including engines. Farther, the last boxcars sway over the canyon edge.

Howling and moaning, passengers exit the few upright passenger cars. Some run, others reel in shock.

Phil, dazed, his clothes rumpled and stained, climbs down from a passenger car. He moves slowly, scanning the scene as if in shock.

Alice and women from the meeting stop with a crowd at the edge of a broad field to scan the accident. Alice studies the mayhem, then moves forward.

ALICE
Let's go.

Meg grabs her arm.

MEG
Better wait for the
authorities.

ALICE
We're trained for this, Meg.
Those people need help now.

Meg doesn't let Alice go. Not far off, Phil looks their way, watching them as he dusts himself off.

ALICE (CONT'D)
We're not in a sleepy town
anymore. Time to make a
difference. Not our choice.

A moment between them. Meg releases her. Alice turns to her club sisters.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Half of you control access for
now. Half, direct bystanders
to round up able survivors.
Gather them all over there.

Alice points to a grassy area nearby. She turns to Meg.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Come with me.

Alice and Meg head to the end of the passenger train and separate, each going to one side. Phil observes at a distance.

Alice inspects outside the train then climbs inside the last car, listening.

INT. CARS - DAY

She quickly explores the lower level then climbs to the upper level. She explores it, running. Empty. She enters the upper level of the previous car through the communication door.

Alice reaches the front end of the last car still on tracks, can't enter the previous one through the communication door. Hurries down.

EXT. CRASH SCENE - CONTINUOUS

Alice exits the train car and is about to enter the first derailed one when a voice comes from behind her:

PHIL (O.S.)
Excuse me, miss.

Alice startles and turns, looking shocked at seeing Phil.

ALICE
Willy?

PHIL
Pardon me?

Alice realizes her mistake and collects herself.

ALICE
Sorry. It's just that you..
gave me a start.

Alice can't help checking out Phil from head to toe.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Are you hurt?

PHIL
No, I'm okay. I saw you with
your friends.. I just wanted
to ask if--

Voice of an old man in the train car.

INT. WRECKED TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS

Alice and Phil climb into the train car which is leaning to one side. The interior is more damaged than last. Outside, SIRENS come up in the distance.

ALICE
Where are you?

OLD MAN (V.O.)
Here. I'm here.

A hand appears over the top of a seat at the end of the car. Alice turns to Phil.

ALICE
Could you help me?

PHIL
Should we move him?

ALICE
I'm a volunteer rescuer and a
member of the City Council. I
give us permission.

PHIL
Okay, let's go.

Alice and Phil clear wreckage and debris to reach the old man. He's trapped up to his torso under luggage. Alice and Phil remove all carefully.

ALICE
Were you traveling alone?

OLD MAN
Yes.. To Madison, to visit my
daughter.

The old man is freed.

ALICE
Do you have a cellphone?

The old man looks like he's struggling against pain.

OLD MAN
In my bag.
(points)
There.

Alice grabs the bag and hands it to the old man. He rifles through it, as Alice unbuttons the top of his shirt.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

ALICE
(sly smiles)
Checking your fitness.

She rolls up the legs of his pants.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Nice legs.

The old man chuckles.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Stay put. This car is safe.
Someone will come soon.

EXT. CRASH SCENE - DAY

SIRENS blaring now. Alice and Phil exit the wrecked passenger car.

ALICE
You up to more help?

PHIL
Right behind you.

They join Meg who's startled and turns pale at the sight of Phil. She flashes a questioning glance at Alice.

ALICE
Let's go.

Alice, Meg and Phil continue their inspection toward the front of the train, while emergency vehicles arrive.

LATER

Alice, Meg and Phil look stricken by what they've seen as they approach the rescue team.

MAYOR BOB, 40, and SHERIFF GEORGE, mid-40s, give curious looks at Phil, then Sheriff George glances at Alice and Meg with wry admiration.

SHERIFF GEORGE
This isn't your International
Rescue stuff, girls; you know
you're not authorized for--

MEG
You're welcome, "Boy."

ALICE
So sorry for helping, George.
The wounded are over there.

SHERIFF GEORGE
Okay, okay.

ALICE
No one in the last three cars.
But elsewhere, you're..

She stops, looking shaken. Meg tries to finish her sentence:

MEG
..Gonna need body bags.

SHERIFF GEORGE
OK, show us.

MAYOR BOB
I, uh.. you go ahead. I'll
comfort the survivors.

Phil is still there, hanging back. Meg starts to guide rescue workers. Alice turns to Phil.

ALICE
You don't have to come.

PHIL
I do.

Alice and Meg guide the rescue workers on the scene. Phil follows.

Around them, firefighters attack the fire and cover corpses with sheets, as police take photos and make their initial observations while emergency medical personnel treat the wounded. Ambulances come and go; a helicopter arrives.

LATER

Alice, Meg, and Phil return to the site entrance. They mix with the group of rescuers and survivors gathered there.

Alice turns to Phil. They both look upset, but trying to keep a brave face. Alice checks out Phil from head-to-toe.

ALICE
I have to join my friends. Can we meet later?

PHIL
That would be great. I'll be staying in Blackstone until this blows over you know. I'd be happy to help out in any way.

He offers Alice his National Geographic business card. She takes it, looking like her mind drifts off for a moment, then looks at the card.

ALICE
Kind offer. Thank you. Seems you're more than just a journalist. Good to have you around.

Phil smiles:

PHIL
Clark Kent hides a Superman?

Alice smiles back, sighs.

ALICE
Hope so. Let's meet at the Two Pines Restaurant at six. Stay at my place tonight if you'd like, okay?

PHIL
That would be great. Thanks.

As he turns away, her gaze lingers on him. Then she turns away, not seeing him glance back at her. She joins Meg who looks intent and suspicious.

MEG
Who's this guy? Not Willy--

ALICE
Just a survivor.

Alice hands Phil's card to Meg who reads it and sighs in relief.

MEG
Phil Fogg. Okay. Uncanny resemblance.

Meg hands back the card to Alice who puts it in her pocket.

ALICE
More like unnerving.

EXT./INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Survivors are gathered in a gymnasium. They mill about, some with damaged clothing, others with shocked and haunted faces. City officials and some of Alice's club sisters comfort and organize the people. Some help survivors onto a bus.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A chart on the wall lists "AVAILABLE HOUSING". Names, addresses, phone numbers, beds available, etc.

Meg takes information from a volunteer family and posts it on the chart.

The name "ASHTON" is at the very top of the list. Next to it, survivor names have been assigned: "FOGG = 1" and below "BECKMANN = 2-1-1."

EXT. CRASH SCENE - DAY

The fire is almost extinguished. Phil mingles discreetly with the rescuers. This is obviously something he does very well.

INT. TWO PINES RESTAURANT - CLUB ROOM - DAY

In the club room, a packed meeting. Mayor Bob is in attendance, sitting beside him, SARAH, 40, from the restaurant, his WIFE.

Everyone is tense and weary.

MEG
And what about the hanging
boxcars?

MAYOR BOB
According to the railway
company, no risk to people or
animals.

Alice looks troubled.

ALICE
I wouldn't like it if they
fell into the river. That's
Akatewa down there.
(beat)
Any more questions?

Silence.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Okay, then. We'll meet here
again, tomorrow morning at
eight sharp.

The meeting breaks up.

INT. TWO PINES RESTAURANT - BAR - SUNSET

Alice joins Phil who is just finishing his drink. He has
his travel bag under his bar stool.

ALICE
Hey, Superman. Ready to go?

Phil grabs his wallet. Alice discreetly signals the
bartender.

BARTENDER
On the house.

PHIL
Thanks. I appreciate it.

He leaves a tip and waves. He and Alice exit.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Alice and Phil drive through the city streets. The traffic is
fairly heavy. Phil points to news vans.

PHIL
The hounds have arrived.

ALICE
Aren't you a hound?

PHIL
Super-hound, remember?

Alice smiles and drives on, a little faster.

EXT. AKATEWA - NIGHT

The car pulls up to the house and parks. Alice and Phil get
out, as Zelda comes down the stairs to join them.

ZELDA
(startled)
Oh!

ALICE
Zelda, this is Phil Fogg.

Zelda pulls herself together. She extends her hand for Phil to shake.

ZELDA
I'm Zelda.

PHIL
Pleasure's all mine.

Phil kisses Zelda's hand instead of shaking it.

ZELDA
I'm an old woman, so I can say this. You're one fine young man.

PHIL
Thank you, Ms. Zelda.
(to Alice)
Chivalry goes a long way, doesn't it?

Alice smiles and Zelda giggles. Alice enters the house, followed by Phil and Zelda.

INT. AKATEWA - MAIN HALL - NIGHT

The three enter. Phil escorts Zelda by the arm. Alice observes, looking playfully annoyed. Conversation comes from the living room. Zelda heads down the hall with Phil's bag.

INT. AKATEWA - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ben sits with four people -- the BECKMANN FAMILY, a middle-aged couple, and two teenagers slouched in comfortable armchairs, all looking tired and discouraged. Refreshments sit untouched on the coffee tables before them.

Alice and Phil enter. Everyone stands. Ben looks astounded at seeing Phil, and stares at Alice. She gives him a comforting look.

ALICE
(to Beckmann's)
Mr. and Mrs. Beckmann, Tyler, Shane, welcome.

MR. BECKMANN
As I was telling your father, we're so grateful you were able to take us in..

Alice squeezes his arm.

ALICE
 Anything we can do to help.
 Have you been able to rest?

BEN
 (looking suspicious at
 Phil)
 They just arrived, sweetie.

ALICE
 Let me take the lead now. I'll
 show you to your rooms.

Alice leads them down the

MAIN HALL

She beckons to Phil to follow. Ben stands there, dumbstruck,
 looking at Phil's back drawing away. Then as Zelda comes in:

BEN
 Am I the only one who--

ZELDA
 You're not.

INT. AKATEWA - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Dinner ends. The household rises from the table. Ben shakes
 the hands of the exhausted looking guests as they leave the
 dining room.

BEN
 Need anything, just ask.

He hesitates at taking Phil's hand, then shakes it.

Zelda clears the table. Ben peers around the doorway to watch
 Alice escort the guests down the hallway, his focus on Phil
 who brings up the rear.

Zelda stops clearing the table and looks at Ben.

ZELDA
 That stare's going to burn a
 hole in that young man's back.

BEN
 I don't like him.

INT. AKATEWA - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As Phil passes through the living room, he notices flickering
 blue light down a hallway. He looks around, then moves toward
 the light.

INT. AKATEWA - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Phil stops at the open door and glances around the blue-hued room. He enters. He stops at seeing a recent issue of National Geographic on the table. His name is on the cover. Then continues to a

SLIDESHOW OF BEAUTIFUL BLUE NUDE PAINTINGS

flashing across the large TV. All Native American People. Mostly women, singles, in pairs or groups, occasionally with one man, sometimes making love. Phil stops in front of the screen, looking captivated. Alice leans against the door frame.

ALICE
Who are you now? Superman or
Clark Kent?

Phil starts and turns.

PHIL
Clark Kent at your service
Miss Lane.

ALICE
What did you want to ask me
this morning?

PHIL
I wanted to know if you were
in charge of the rescue.. I
mean, you were impressive. You
seemed like someone I should
know. I wanted to introduce
myself. But you know Kent's
cover name now. Maybe you
already knew?

He points to the copy on the table.

ALICE
(teasing)
I recognized you immediately.
I'm a big fan.

Phil observes her, not buying it.

PHIL
Sure. Superman has nothing on
you lady.. You got a heck of a
poker face.

ALICE
I'm not the celebrity.. What
in the world were you doing on
that train?

PHIL
Homeward bound. Seattle to New
York.

ALICE
By rail? Are you afraid of
flying? No, that's not right.
Superman can't be aerophobic.
(facetious)
Or is he?

PHIL
No, but Clark Kent loves the
rails. Always has. Trains come
in every flavor you know, from
plain to gourmet. In most
countries, they're the only
ticket.

ALICE
But coast-to-coast? Sounds
long and boring.

PHIL
Not at all. A train is a
microcosm of the country
you're in: races, cultures,
dialects.. Magic gifts
gathered just for you in a few
linked boxes. And enough time
to unpack it all, against
breathtaking landscapes.
What's not to love?

ALICE
(dreamy)
True. Not something you can
see from a plane. But clouds
are beautiful, too. And up
there you're closer to the
angels.

Phil looks unexpectedly charmed. He looks Alice directly in
the face.

PHIL
Occasionally, one finds an
angel walking the earth.

She smiles back and looks away. He glances at the naked
blue women.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Tell me something, Alice.. May
I call you Alice?

ALICE
Sure Phil.

PHIL
Why am I staying with you?

ALICE
(winks, smiling)
Superman needed a safe place
to land didn't he?

Phil smiles back, nods.

PHIL
It's been a long day. Better
hit the hay.

He moves to the door. Alice turns off the screen with the remote control and also moves to the door. Phil turns abruptly.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Good--

They accidentally brush up against each other. Alice jerks back, looking embarrassed.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Excuse me.

They stare at each other for a moment.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Goodnight, Alice.

ALICE
Goodnight.

Phil exits. Alice relaxes and takes a deep breath, wearing a strange expression of confusion and happiness. Alice turns back and picks a book from a shelf. She opens it and takes out a photo of

WILLY

..Who strongly resembles a younger Phil.

EXT. CRASH SCENE - SUNRISE

The area is surrounded by fences and yellow tape and is being cleaned up. Important pieces of evidence are being replaced by markers of various shapes and colors.

There are vehicles, policemen, federal investigators with "NTSB" on their windbreakers, firefighters.. Rescue personnel struggle to cut into a passenger car.

INT. AKATEWA - DINING ROOM - DAY

Ben and Phil eat breakfast in silence. Ben reads the BLACKSTONE HERALD with its headline: "RAILWAY DISASTER."

Ben peeks at Phil with veiled suspicion. Phil reads something off a tablet computer, glances up at Ben. Ben puts on a smile, Phil smiles back.

Alice enters.

ALICE
Good morning.

PHIL
(looking relieved)
'Morning.

ALICE
Beckmanns still in bed?

BEN
So it seems. The company is sending a bus for them at noon. I rode out there for a look this morning. Worried about those cars hanging over the cliff.

ALICE
No kidding.

BEN
You know what they're doing about that?

ALICE
I intend to find out.

INT./EXT. ALICE'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Alice and Phil cruise down the drive toward the gate. Phil sees the ranch by day: buildings, workers, the horses, stables. The daily round of activities, unchanged by the nearby drama.

LATER

They enter Blackstone.

ALICE
OK Superman, today's job is to deal with the press and officials. We like journalists, but right now they're getting in the way. Anything you could do to help?

PHIL
Even those who know me won't listen to me. If you want them out of your hair, set up a press conference.

INT. CITY HALL - DAY

The city council is gathered around a table with the sheriff and a few other people in the council-room. Phil sits beside Alice. Meg is there, too.

MAYOR BOB
Press conference?

PHIL
Yeah. Held at a place where they'll be less trouble.

MAYOR BOB
Such as?

PHIL
A ballroom or convention hall. With all the top authorities and a detailed press release with links to updates. And lunch would also be a draw. Most of media should clear out afterward.

MAYOR BOB
How about helping coordinate the whole thing?

PHIL
Glad to.

Alice looks at Bob, who nods. She gets up, dragging Phil by the arm.

ALICE
Done deal. Meg, let's go.

Meg follows.

INT./EXT. CONVENTION HALL - DAY

The press conference is breaking up. Journalists stream to the parking lot -- cars and trucks get moving onto the road.

Sarah manages her waiters around a big buffet, Meg and a few other members of the club hand out press releases.

Mayor Bob and officials shake hands with departing journalists, as employees move in to clean up. Phil and Alice watch from the stage.

ALICE
That was perfect.

PHIL
My pleasure.

Mayor Bob and Sheriff George join them.

MAYOR BOB
We're going back to the crash site. They're assessing the risk posed by the cars hanging over your land. Coming?

ALICE
Absolutely!

EXT. CRASH SCENE - DAY

Mayor Bob, Sheriff George, Alice and Phil join FIRE CHIEF FRED, 40s, firefighters, and a few others.

MAYOR BOB
(re: Alice & Phil)
Fred, they're with me.

FIRE CHIEF FRED
Okay, Bob.

Fire Chief Fred points to a passageway made next to the wrecked trains.

FIRE CHIEF FRED (CONT'D)
Over there.

He leads and the group follows him.

They pass the damage done to train engine, what remains of the two parallel tracks. Fred points to the fatal switch beneath the entangled cars.

FIRE CHIEF FRED (CONT'D)
Something went wrong there, is my theory.. Amazing.
(MORE)

FIRE CHIEF FRED (CONT'D)
 One little mistake and lives
 are ruined.

Alice looks at Fred, then looks away.

Nearby, railway company workers work close to the accident.

They continue toward the back, following the remains of the freight train, then stop at the precipice. Alice stands a step behind.

They peer over the cliff. Two boxcars hang over the river far below. A car wedged in a rocky formation beside the track anchors them.

The ravine is rocky and irregular. Dense thorny vegetation lines the upper part, looking impassable.

ALICE
 If they fall into the river,
 it'll be a disaster for our
 land below.

FIRE CHIEF FRED
 (pointing at the cars)
 Two hundred-thousand pounds of
 pesticide and fertilizer.. If
 they fall into the river,
 there won't be anything alive
 for twenty miles downstream.

ALICE
 Oh, my God!

FIRE CHIEF FRED
 And no way to inspect them
 with our equipment.. Need to
 wait..

They scan the scene. Alice makes a step forward and grabs Phil's arm, looking anxious at the height. Phil notices.

ALICE
 Fred. I've ridden my horse
 there. I know a way in. The
 slope leads to a small flat
 down to the left.. About fifty
 feet.

She points that way.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 From there, the cars can be
 reached.

FIRE CHIEF FRED
 Safely?

ALICE
Safe enough when tons of
boxcars aren't hanging there.

FIRE CHIEF FRED
Fine. Let's go.

Alice looks tentative.

ALICE
It's so steep.. Safer on
horseback, I mean. Four feet
are better than two. I'll
bring an extra horse back for
one of your men.

PHIL
Mind if I tag along?

Alice looks at him reluctantly.

PHIL (CONT'D)
I'm an experienced rider and
I've climbed the Himalayas. I
might be able to help out.

ALICE
Just you remember who's
leading.

Alice looks at Fire Chief Fred. He shrugs.

EXT. AKATEWA - DAY

Alice holds reins of Taqasa, holding a lead rope of another
saddled horse. Phil does the same with a saddled horse from
the stablehands. Ben and Zelda look on from the porch.

Alice and Phil check the saddles and mount up. Alice watches,
as Phil puts his horse through its paces in a perfect western
style. Satisfied, he pats the horse on the neck, and returns
to an impressed Alice.

ALICE
Is that the way people ride in
New York?

PHIL
My granddad taught me in
Wyoming.

Alice gives him a look, rides past him.

ALICE
We have to hurry to get out
and back by nightfall.

Phil follows. Ben and Zelda watch.

BEN
I still don't like him.

ZELDA
Because he looks like Willy?
Or he's a good-lookin' fella
who's caught your daughter's
eye?

She smiles over at Ben, teasing. Ben fumes.

BEN
My business. Why is he still
here?

ZELDA
Besides providing the locals
with a bit of eye candy, I
think Alice wants to keep an
eye on what he's up to.

Ben descends the stairs and moves to a saddled horse tied to the porch railing.

BEN
I wasn't born yesterday. Her
attraction to him isn't
healthy. This continued
fascination she has for..

ZELDA
When are you gonna trust her
again?

BEN
When she starts making good
decisions.

ZELDA
Then you gotta stop making
decisions for her.

Ben climbs on his horse and rides away.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

Alice leads the way on the mountainside, followed by Phil and RICHARD, 30, athletic firefighter, whose horse is loaded with ropes and climbing gear.

They move slowly down a steep slope, horses slipping among stones and rocks, scant trees, and brush. They ride over a ridge and reach a more open area. The boxcars are twenty yards away.

RICHARD
If we're careful, it shouldn't
be too much trouble.

They dismount and tie their horses to some nearby brush.

ALICE
You two go ahead. I'm not into
climbing anything.

Phil smiles at her. Richard unloads the equipment. The two men don their climbing gear. Richard watches Phil who handles the gear like a pro. Richard smiles, reassured.

RICHARD
We'll try to go up on this
side. I'll lead the way.

Mayor Bob, Sheriff George, firefighters and a few other people watch from the ridge above.

Richard and Fire Chief Fred speak into walkie-talkies. Fire Chief Fred sketches tactics with his hands.

Richard and Phil climb carefully up the mountainside. They plant pitons, secure their ropes.. The cars dangle. Alice watches with a worried look.

The two inspect the cars, couplings.. doors.. going up to a rock wall to the edge of the vegetation which blocks access from above. They take pictures.

The sliding door of the uppermost boxcar has jumped off its rail. Wrapping materials have broken open, scattering a colored powder everywhere. Richard and Phil take samples.

Suddenly, CRACK!.. A wheel truck breaks away from the last boxcar, losing its wheel sets which SPLASH -- KA-BOOM! crash near into the river bed.

The cars dangle dangerously next to the climbers. Alice calls up to the men; they head back down.

Richard reaches the clearing. Phil brings up the rear. Suddenly, he slips and scrapes up against a jutting ridge.

PHIL
Ouch!

Alice springs forward -- Phil slides down into her arms. They end up in an embrace on the edge of the ravine, then separate.

ALICE
You okay?

Phil holds up his hand with a grimace. A two-inch gash in his glove seeps blood. Alice takes his hand in hers, takes off his glove, and looks at the injury.

ALICE (CONT'D)
That's not good.

She reaches into her saddlebag and pulls out medical supplies.

ALICE (CONT'D)
We'll wrap it for now. Fix it up at home. Does it hurt?

PHIL
It'll be fine. I don't normally bleed on the first date.

Alice wraps Phil's hand. Richard removes his equipment.

RICHARD
It's a miracle the couplings can withstand such weight. The other wheel trucks may fall.

ALICE
Let's pray they hold.

EXT. AKATEWA - PORCH - NIGHT

Alice and Phil sit on the porch. A first-aid kit sits on the coffee table. Alice treats Phil's wound.

ALICE
I'm worried.

PHIL
Only a flesh wound. I'll survive.

ALICE
No, those cars. Dad is furious. Mom's grave is nearby, slightly higher up on the other bank.

PHIL
You know, I don't believe the cars will come off -- I'm so sorry about your mother.

Alice says nothing. She finishes bandaging his wound.

ALICE
Good as new Superman.

PHIL
Nice work! Add life-saving
nurse to your resume.

While Phil inspects his bandaged hand, Alice gazes at him with a glint of affection in her eyes.

INT. AKATEWA - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Alice sits in one of the armchairs, while Phil browses through the bookshelves. Each sips from a mug of coffee. Phil stops in front of Aline's photo.

PHIL
Your mother?

ALICE
Yes.

PHIL
Beautiful. Like her daughter.

Alice says nothing. Just watches him. Phil grabs the trophy from the International Rescue Committee.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Where did you go with the IRC?

ALICE
Kenya. Three years ago. We worked in Dadaab from April to August.

PHIL
No kidding! I was in Nairobi, then, and Dadaab. Met some IRC folks. Could've met you!

Alice stares at him, smiling.

ALICE
I think I'd remember..

Phil picks a book from a shelf, reads the title:

PHIL
"Nu Mee Poom Tit Wah Tit"?

Phil leafs through the book.

PHIL (CONT'D)
What language is that?

ALICE
Nez Perce.

PHIL
What's it about?

ALICE
How Coyote made the world and the mountains before people settled there, and other Indian tales.. That was the topic of Mom's thesis.

PHIL
Seems you're really into Indian culture, aren't you?

ALICE
Why not? It's our past here.

PHIL
What Nation do you belong to?

ALICE
Mainly, Coeur d'Alene.

From another shelf, Phil picks up the red notebook that Alice was working before. He opens it to a bookmarked page, looks at the equations, the printed patterns.. He closes it and reads the title, then turns to her.

PHIL
"Oddness"?

ALICE
An attempt to demonstrate how causality can generate variable events and make our universe undetermined.

PHIL
You mean so we have free will and are responsible for our behavior?

ALICE
No. It's just physics.

PHIL
(impressed)
And you wrote all this?

ALICE
Yes of course. Writing is on my list of skills.

PHIL
A controversial topic isn't it?

ALICE

Yes. But science is all about dispelling doubt, isn't it?

Phil nods and smiles. He puts away the notebook and continues browsing the shelves, picking up books and putting them back. All the books are well-thumbed and bookmarked.

PHIL

Anything in the universe that you're not into?

He sits down in the other armchair, close by.

ALICE

Not really. But for me, some are best left alone, like heights..

PHIL

(smiling)

I saw that. Thought Native people weren't afraid of heights.

ALICE

We're not all alike. I don't do heights well, or gardening and other DIY things. Guess I'm a little nerdy.

Phil holds up his hand.

PHIL

Nothing nerdy about caring for wounded, or understanding Nez Perce, or contemplating physics.

Phil points at the picture of Alice's mother.

PHIL (CONT'D)

She'd be very proud of you. Anyone would.

A moment between them.

PHIL (CONT'D)

What's your Indian name?

Alice smiles.

ALICE

Hayka't.

PHIL

Meaning?

ALICE
Clear Sky, serene.

PHIL
Beautiful.

He stands and pulls her up. They walk to the door. He turns to her. They face each other, close.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Sleep tight, Hayka't.

Alice smiles, Phil exits.

INT. AKATEWA - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alice peers around the door frame to watch Phil.

Phil whistles "Yankee Doodle" as he walks down the darkened hall. He disappears into his room. The door closes behind him.

Alice smiles, and walks off.

INT. AKATEWA - PHIL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Phil unbuttons his shirtsleeves, looking thoughtful. He sits down at the table, takes his notebook.

PHIL
What keeps you planted in
Blackstone, Superwoman?

He flips through his notebook, stops on a page filled with mixed text and shorthand, circles a word:

"WILLY?"

EXT. CRASH SCENE - DAY

The passenger cars are completely dismantled. The last three intact cars have been replaced by self propelled cranes.

EXT. BLACKSTONE - DAY

Alice's car pulls up in front of the school.

Outside a classroom, several club women are setting up for the morning, coffee in hand.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Alice turns to Phil.

ALICE
Keep the car. Meet me here at
twelve?

PHIL
High noon.

She gets out and goes into the school, as Phil drives off.

EXT. CRASH SCENE - DAY

From the slope above the yard, under the trees, Phil watches the crash scene through his smartphone fitted out with a telephoto lens:

- The workmen busy around the railcar wedged into the rocks, which anchors the dangling boxcars.

- The forensic investigators inspecting some railcars in the middle of the freight train, talking and taking pictures.

- The untangling and repairing of the track. The cranes advance and remove the next wrecked car.

INT. TWO PINES RESTAURANT - DAY

Phil and Meg chat and sip coffee in a cosy corner. Phil points to the club room.

PHIL
Tell me something: why is it
the "Blackstone Girls Secret
Society"?

MEG
(smiling)
Sounds strange doesn't it?
Hold-over from high-school. A
way to foil the Friday night
plans of macho boys who only
wanted cheerleaders for
weekend dates. We were totally
underground then, of course.

PHIL
Aha! I get it now!

MEG
Back then, we'd spend our
Fridays together. Movies,
shopping, salons, dishing
about the boys.

PHIL
Nice.

MEG
Today we help out the
community. Assist kids who get
the least amount of help at
home. We tutor kids, pay for
books, computers.

PHIL
Very different!

MEG
We still do that other stuff
of course: beauty salon,
shopping.. Dish about men..

PHIL
Of course.. Was Willy one of
those macho boys?

Meg frowns.

MEG
Did Alice mention Willy?

PHIL
Everybody has something to say
about him. I gather he meant a
lot to Alice.

Meg hesitates, drums her fingers on the table.

MEG
Once upon a time.
(gazing at him)
What about you.. and Alice?

PHIL
I care about her. More than
I'd like, actually. But this
Willy thing.. I don't want to
make a mistake.

Meg looks hard at him:

MEG
You really have no idea how
much you look like him, do
you?

Phil and Meg continue speaking together; their words covered
by music and background sounds.

LATER

PHIL
And about Willy's family?

MEG
They didn't like him dating a
Native American girl.

PHIL
Why not?

MEG
Dunno. But not long after
Willy left, his father was
embroiled in defrauding
reservation resources and they
left town without a trace.

Silence.

PHIL
Uh-huh.. Our forefathers raped
your land, your heritage, and
it seems to go on, doesn't it?
-- How did Alice react?

MEG
She really went through hell
when Willy left. She was
admitted to Stanford. Never
went.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - DAY

Phil waits in the car outside the school with his earbuds.
His smartphone rings and he answers.

PHIL
Hello.. Hey, Tim.. Got my
message?.. Samples? I sent
them this morning.. And what
about my doppelgänger?..
Miller yeah. William Miller.

Phil frowns.

PHIL (CONT'D)
How long ago?

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Alice leaves the school and joins Phil. She gets into the
car.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - DAY

Phil takes his earbuds out.

ALICE
You like music, don't you?

PHIL
If music be the food of love,
play on.

Alice frowns, suddenly looking uncomfortable.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Don't you like Shakespeare?

Alice smiles at him.

ALICE
Love him. It's just that.. I
don't know..
(shakes her head)
I have the afternoon free.
Want to eat something?

INT. ALICE'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Phil drives. They pass the stadium where preparations are underway. The stadium's sign reads MEMORIAL SERVICE, TOMORROW 9 AM.

PHIL
I have to be in New-York
tomorrow for a special
editorial meeting; I'm
catching a flight tonight out
of Liberty.

Alice frowns.

PHIL (CONT'D)
If it's okay with you, I'll be
back on Sunday for another few
days. Would you mind dropping
me off at the airport tonight
and picking me up on Sunday?

Alice perks up at this news.

ALICE
Happy to.

EXT. PIZZERIA - DAY

Phil pulls up in front of the pizzeria near the gas station on the border of town.

INT. PIZZERIA - DAY

Alice and Phil enter. A young boy (10) steps forward. His name-tag identifies him as "GREG". He's cute and Alice brightens.

ALICE
Hey, Greg. Helping your dad
out today?

Alice nods to a chef behind the counter of an open kitchen. The man waves at her.

GREG
(proudly)
I'm waiting tables.

ALICE
Moving up in the world, I see.
Good job.

She tousles his hair.

GREG
Just sit anywhere, I'll be
over in a second.

Phil eyes the kid, sizing him up.

Alice grabs a Blackstone Herald sitting on the counter, and they take a seat. She shows Phil the headline: "47 DEAD, OVER 100 INJURED: WORST RAIL ACCIDENT IN THE US SINCE 1951"

LATER

Alice and Phil eat a pizza and salad. Phil observes Greg at work. He steals a glance at Alice.

PHIL
You know what?

ALICE
What?

PHIL
(nods to Greg)
I wonder why he's the only one
in this town who doesn't stare
at me as if I were a vampire.

Alice smiles, dodges the issue.

ALICE
He's only ten, maybe too short
to see your shirt's wearing so
much tomato sauce that you
look like you've just left
your last victim?

She wipes a few stains off his shirt.

EXT. OLD RANCH - DAY

A grassy place under trees with a well maintained log cabin
with a porch. Several funeral cairns nearby under the trees.

Alice and Phil arrive riding horses in the forest. The mood
is reflective, somber. They stop and dismount near the cabin.
Phil sweeps the place with his eyes.

PHIL
What's that place?

ALICE
Our first home. The old ranch
built by our ancestor more
than one hundred and twenty
years ago.

PHIL
(looking at the cabin)
Well preserved.

ALICE
Our hideaway.

Phil kneels down in front of a recent looking cairn, examines
the headstone, it reads "ALINE ASHTON-ROS 1952-1998".

PHIL
Aline; that's an unusual name.

ALICE
Mom was French. She came to
the States to get her English
degree. She never left.

PHIL
How did she meet Ben?

ALICE
In San Francisco when Dad
returned from Vietnam. She
died when I was nine. We
watched her suffer for three
years.

Alice places a flower on the grave.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 That's when Zelda came. She
 took care of Mom till she
 passed away. Cherished her
 till the last day of her life.
 Dad was completely lost.
 Didn't know what to do for
 her.

Alice arranges the flower in a better position.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 That's when I understood what
 suffering really is.

PHIL
 What is it?

ALICE
 Like being on oncoming train
 rolling down the wrong track,
 knowing what's coming and
 powerless to stop it.

She wipes away a tear, looks up through the leaves at the
 sunny sky and the high clouds.

EXT. BOTTOM OF THE RAVINE - CONTINUOUS

Alice and Phil lead their horses down to a stream-bank.

In front of them, surrounded by security fences, the boxcar
 wheel-truck and its two-wheel sets lie in the river. Just
 above, the two boxcars hang over the cliff.

PHIL
 A little unnerving, isn't it?

Alice looks at Phil with concern. She leads him to several
 boulders a few yards upstream. Alice meticulously washes the
 moss off some spots on one rock, revealing several

PETROGLYPHS.

Phil studies the engravings finely carved in the stone,
 looking mesmerized.

PHIL (CONT'D)
 Amazing!

ALICE
 This very spot is the original
 Akatewa. In old languages, it
 means the place decorated with
 shells. A sacred place for our
 ancestors.. And we are the
 guardians of this tradition.

EXT. AKATEWA - DAY

As Phil puts his luggage in the car, Ben approaches him. Doesn't look friendly.

BEN
Leaving? You stayed a mighty long time. Your New York friends must be missing you.

Phil regards him mildly.

PHIL
I'm sorry if I've been a burden, Mr. Ashton.

BEN
No burden. All the same, I'll be glad to see the back of you. You don't really belong here, do you? Not many fancy clubs and restaurants.

Phil gazes at Ben. Ben glares back at him. Neither seems willing to break eye contact.

Alice and Zelda exit. Zelda waits on the porch as Alice joins the two men -- breaking up their confrontation.

ALICE
Shall we go, then?

PHIL
Yes, of course.

He waves to Zelda.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Bye, Zelda, thanks for your hospitality! I'll bring you back a cheesecake from a fancy New York restaurant.

ZELDA
Oh, Mr. Fogg, don't bring me a thing. I'm watching my figure you know.

Phil turns to Ben, extends his hand.

PHIL
Goodbye, Mr. Ashton.

Ben clasps his hand in a grip of iron, jaws tightened. He lets go, and walks off.

Alice and Phil get in the car and drive off. Ben joins Zelda at the foot of the stairs.

BEN
Thank the Lord.

ZELDA
The Lord doesn't hear your
prayers much. He'll be back
Sunday.

BEN
Not before a few nights of big
city tom-cattin', I'll wager.

ZELDA
When are you going to stop
taking pot-shots at this guy?

BEN
(mimicking
shooting)
When I hit him in the head!

Zelda looks at him coldly, she turns back to enter the house.

ZELDA
Aim at him, you hit Alice..

INT. ALICE'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Phil looks back at the receding house. Chuckles.

PHIL
Lucky I got outta there with
no buckshot in my hide!

ALICE
Don't mind him. Deep down he's
a pussycat. The welcome mat'll
always be out for you. I'll
make sure of that.

They share a smile.

PHIL
Do you do work on the ranch?

ALICE
I help out with routine chores
like any other employee. Dad
won't let me do anything
management-related.

PHIL
Too bad. You have talent for
that.

Phil observes Alice attentively.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Ever thought of getting
married?

ALICE
(smiling)
Whoa Foggy, that came out of
nowhere.

PHIL
All I meant was, I bet you
drove a lot of suitors to
despair.

ALICE
Not in a long time. Dad has a
way of dissuading suitors. He
usually gets his way. Stopped
me from going to college, too.

PHIL
You never went to college? I
mean, science, Native
languages. You learned it all
yourself?

ALICE
Well, since he wouldn't let me
go, he ensured my cage was as
gilded as possible. That's why
I have my library. Money, my
club. Freedom's another thing.

PHIL
He opened the cage though.. I
mean he let you work on the
International Rescue
Committee.

ALICE
Because Meg and I were
together. He was sure I
wouldn't like the experience
.. He was right in a way.

PHIL
Right?

ALICE
It was not what I expected. We
just brought a little help to
those people but their real
problems are political,
ethnic.. In the end, I've
accepted my life, as is.
Making the best of it.

PHIL
Uh-huh..

Phil stares at her. She glances at him.

ALICE
I'm not as strong as I'd have
people believe I am, am I?

Phil still looks at her. He takes a moment to answer, then:

PHIL
It takes strength to give in
to someone you love and help
others. No one would fault you
for that.

EXT. BLACKSTONE GAS STATION - DAY

Alice switches to the passenger seat as Phil finishes refueling.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - DAY

Phil gets in the car and drives off.

PHIL
I know strong people too. My
own father was a piece of
steel. Hard, cold. Violent,
too.

ALICE
Really?

PHIL
Always putting me down.. Thank
God, my mother helped me go
after my dreams. But he stayed
in the back of my mind, still
silently putting me down years
after his death.

ALICE
Dad's the opposite, always
generous and caring, but bull-
headed. Only Mom could
manipulate him.

Alice looks outside the window, her gaze lost in sad thoughts.

ALICE (CONT'D)
After her death, the light
went out of his eyes.
(MORE)

ALICE (CONT'D)

But he's always made me feel special, like I could do anything.

She turns to Phil, proudly.

ALICE (CONT'D)

And as I trusted him, I was doing what needed to be done.

(beat)

He saved my life once.

PHIL

What happened?

ALICE

Long story.. Anyway, when it was time to go to college, he locked me up. Like Rapunzel in her tower. Guess he thought once I left, I'd never come back.

PHIL

You love him very much, don't you?

ALICE

We love each other very much. And even though Zelda seems like family now, it's still just the two of us. Alone.

PHIL

Your father, the remembrance of your mother, fierce bonds tie you to Akatewa. True freedom won't come till you choose your own way.

Alice looks out the window.

ALICE

Maybe I have.

INT. LIBERTY AIRPORT - DAY

A fairly busy regional airport. Alice escorts Phil to the security line. They stop and face each other. They hug.

PHIL

See you in a couple of days
Hayka't.

She gives him a peck on the cheek.. gazes into his eyes.. lets him go.

Phil walks away. Alice continues to watch him. He puts his earbuds in, looks back at her, and gives her a thumbs up.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Alice looks sad as she cruises back to Blackstone. She turns on the radio, a sweet, old, pop love song plays. She looks moved.

The sound of an old recording of the same song comes on top of that of the radio:

FLASHBACK:

EXT. AKATEWA - DAY

Alice, 16, dances with Willy under the benevolent gaze of Ben and Zelda.

They all laugh. Zelda joins them and dances alone while Ben beats time.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

The old recording continues. Alice smiles and beats time. Then looking more and more disturbed as visions race through her mind replacing memories:

VISION SEQUENCE:

1. Alice cries in young Meg's arms, on a sunny street of an unknown town..
2. Phil shows the dead waiter, Greg, to a SLIM MAN all dressed in black, with a long coat and a hat.

EXT. ALICE'S CAR - NIGHT (BACK TO REALITY)

Alice stops and turns off the radio, looking shaken. She bursts out of the car, breathing in the night air. She takes a few steps through the meadow near the car and stops.

MOMENT LATER

Alice dials her phone, upset.

ALICE
Meg?

INT. TWO PINES RESTAURANT - LOUNGE - NIGHT

The lounge is almost empty, a client talks with the bartender. The sound system plays music very low.

Alice and Meg are in a cozy corner, in two armchairs behind a coffee table, drinking coffee. Alice tries to make a brave face. Meg observes her, looking concerned.

MEG
How's it going with Phil?

ALICE
An interesting guy.

MEG
That's one way to describe
him.
(laughs)
He's not your usual conquest.

ALICE
(laughs)
Dad thinks otherwise.

MEG
Reminds him of Willy right?

Alice frowns, stares at her coffee.

ALICE
Seems Willy's on everyone's
mind these days.

Meg stares at Alice.

MEG
That bother you?

ALICE
(looking at her)
Should it?

Meg is troubled.

MEG
Dunno. I'm not in your shoes.

ALICE
(pointedly)
Phil and Willy are nothing
alike.

Meg looks relieved, takes a deep breathe.

MEG
Glad of that.

Silence for a moment, Meg staring at Alice.

MEG (CONT'D)
So why are we here Honey?

EXT. BLACKSTONE - NIGHT

Alice's car rolls through the empty streets in the darkness.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Alice drives slowly, visibly upset. While driving by Willy's house, she gazes at it intently, Meg's voice ECHOING IN HER MIND:

MEG (V.O.)
Do you know Willy's back in town?

EXT. WILLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

No light, no car parked out front, no sign of life. The house, closed and neglected.

MEG (V.O.)
He represents the company that owns the tracks and operated the freight train.

INT. AKATEWA - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Alice sits at the table.

She searches within a large box and pulls out memorabilia from her teenage years which she examines carefully. She spreads it all out in front of her:

Letters, a harmonica, a lock of hair tied with a ribbon,

PHOTOS of her with Willy, other

PICTURES where they are in groups with other teens.

Alice studying the photos, looks both nostalgic and confused. She takes a deep breath, closes her eyes, concentrates, and frowns. She grits her teeth, her jaw trembles.

EXT. CRASH SCENE - DAY

The site has been mostly evacuated. Scarred earth.. a pile of twisted rails nearby. Crews work to reconnect the tracks.

Derailed freight cars. A few remaining attached to the hanging boxcars.

EXT. BLACKSTONE - DAY

In town, people dressed in mourning enter the stadium, where a platform with a black border has been set up. Many coffins are there, wreathed in flowers.

INT. AKATEWA - ENTRY HALL - DAY

Alice and Zelda stand dressed in funeral attire. Zelda helps Alice adjust her dress. Alice looks upset and distracted. Zelda looks concerned.

ZELDA
You really like Mr. Fogg,
don't you?

ALICE
What?

ZELDA
Phil. You like him.

ALICE
He's been genuinely helpful
and not taken advantage of the
situation to write a scoop.

ZELDA
He's too busy with his eyes on
you.

ALICE
Oh?

ZELDA
Like you haven't noticed.

Alice says nothing.

ZELDA (CONT'D)
Ben has. Put him in the worst
mood I've ever seen -- Is he
really not coming?

ALICE
Dad and funerals don't mix.

EXT. CRASH SCENE - DAY

The cranes approach derailed cars.

EXT. STADIUM - DAY

The stadium is full: officials, clergy, families, local residents, television journalists, and others. A clergyman offers up a prayer. The assembled bow their heads.

Alice keeps her head raised. She meets Mayor Bob's look of disapproval.

At his side, Alice notices an ELEGANT MAN wearing a long black coat and a fedora, the same kind of those of the man she saw earlier in her vision.

LATER

The ceremony has ended. While Zelda goes to their car, Mayor Bob takes Alice aside.

MAYOR BOB
Phil Fogg is lying to you.

ALICE
What?

MAYOR BOB
Your friend Mr. Fogg is
snooping around.

Alice is stunned.

MAYOR BOB (CONT'D)
His job, I know, but that's
making the train companies and
authorities nervous.

ALICE
What are you trying to say?

MAYOR BOB
Seems like Fogg's doing his
best to get people to say that
the causes of the accident are
not entirely natural.

ALICE
He hasn't spoken to me about
that.

MAYOR BOB
And that the freight was not
entirely what we were told..
Maybe not as safe as they're
pretending.

ALICE
 If there's nothing to hide,
 what's the railroad company
 worried about?

MAYOR BOB
 Because journalists can light
 a fire without a match just to
 sell their papers.

ALICE
 Phil isn't that kind of guy.

MAYOR BOB
 You sure about that?

Alice stares at him.

ALICE
 And you, you sure of what was
 in the freight cars?

MAYOR BOB
 Anyway, I'm the one getting
 the flak.

ALICE
 The company had better remove
 these cars hanging there,
 before they fall into the
 river.

MAYOR BOB
 Get Fogg to lay off, if you
 know what I mean.

Mayor Bob nods at her coldly and moves off, leaving her in an agitated mood. A voice comes from behind her:

WILLY (O.C.)
 Hello, Alice.

Alice turns to face the man in the black coat. He's tall, slim, and dressed in black from head to toe; he wears a bright smile under his fedora.

WILLY (CONT'D)
 Remember me?

Willy removes his hat: he's almost the same as the teen he was, just a bit taller; his chin and cheeks covered in a well-cut stubble: A bearded and slightly younger looking Phil.

ALICE
 Willy?

He gives Alice a little nod.

WILLY
Yeah.. How are you?

Alice stands there, moved, studying him up and down, confused.

ALICE
Hello, Willy.. You.. Moving back into your family house?

WILLY
(laughs)
Not that dump. I'm at Ashley Inn in Liberty.

ALICE
The Ashley. Nice. So you're here for the railroad, aren't you?

WILLY
(laughing)
Yes, I'm here.

EXT. STADIUM PARKING LOT - LATER

A troubled Alice walks toward her car. She joins Zelda in the car, they leave.

INT. AKATEWA - KITCHEN - DAY

Alice and Zelda sit, looking pensive, having a drink. Ben enters, looking for trouble, an old issue of US VETS NEWS in his hand, folded open.

BEN
Where's your Mr. Right?

Alice startles.

ALICE
Who?

BEN
Don't you try to get smart with me like your boyfriend.

Alice is flummoxed.

ALICE
Can't imagine who you mean.

BEN
That hack. That bamboozling sponger who's been sniffing around here for tasty tidbits.

ALICE

Dad--

BEN

(to Zelda)

You think he's "The One"?
Traveling the globe, never at
home.

ALICE

That's his job!

BEN

Sure. Scouring the earth for
fresh game.

(pointedly)

Who's his latest fling, I
wonder?

Alice gets up.

ALICE

I don't have to take this.

She walks past Ben, who grabs her arm.

ALICE (CONT'D)

(shouts)

You can say what you want
about Phil, but he's much less
of a pain in the ass than you
are!

BEN

So you think he's the right
one? Nobody knows who his
latest fling will be. He'll
always be here, there and
anywhere!

Alice breaks from his grip.

ALICE

Quite a detailed evaluation of
his qualities as a husband.
Are you thinking of marrying
him? And I don't know if he's
the right one. But maybe he
can spring me from this
Alcatraz!

BEN

Oh sure, what a great idea!
You living in the big city,
away from your friends, your
books, your horse. And what'll
you get in return?

ALICE
R.E.S.P.E.C.T.!

BEN
That's it! You'll get to sit
in an empty apartment,
twiddling your thumbs and
losing your mind while he
gallivants around screwing
half the globe! Those damn
intellectuals respect nothing.
Aren't you sick of 'em?

Ben throws the

MAGAZINE

On the table right under Alice's eyes.

On top of the article, a photo of several civilians and US
soldiers killed by a suicide bombing and a bold headline that
reads "Don't break the rules!"

BEN (CONT'D)
Your beau got his wife and
four GIs killed in Bagdad!

Deathly pale, Alice stares at him for a moment, shuddering
and tongue-tied, then she rushes away in tears.

Zelda stares at Ben, who feels her gaze and refuses to look
back at her. He sets his jaw, but there's remorse on his
face.

EXT. AKATEWA - STABLE - DAY

Still dressed in mourning, Alice leads Taqasa out of the
stable, gets on her bareback, and gallops off.

INT. AKATEWA - ALICE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Alice cries on her bed, like a little girl. Zelda strokes
her hair tenderly and rocks her gently.

INT. AKATEWA - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Zelda prepares dinner, looking stoic. Ben enters looking
dejected. He removes his boots.

BEN
Everything alright?

ZELDA
Whadda you call alright? Your
daughter's a wreck. Happy?

Ben snorts angrily.

ZELDA (CONT'D)
You're afraid of Fogg.

BEN
Mind your own business, Zelda!

ZELDA
Kill the messenger why don't
you. Just reading your face.

Zelda continues her work in silence. Then:

ZELDA (CONT'D)
You proud of yourself?

BEN
Do you want her to fall for it
again, hook, line and sinker?

ZELDA
Surely not! Indeed, he might
be a serial killer..

BEN
Don't test me!

ZELDA
You're being a fool. It's more
likely he's a good guy who
could both support Alice and
help her run the Ranch. Here
taste this.

Zelda hands a spoon to Ben to taste the soup she is
preparing. Ben seems to like it.

BEN
He doesn't strike me as the
ranching type, Zelda.

ZELDA
I guess you didn't notice his
legs?

BEN
Zelda!

Zelda gets hot and starts waving the knife she holds.

ZELDA
No one will ever be good
enough for your Alice. You
realize that don't you?

BEN
That's preposterous! I'm as
level-headed as the next guy!

Zelda slams down her knife.

ZELDA
Level-headed? All you want is
a puppet following your orders
and playing the role of
"Alice's husband". Don't you
see how selfish that is? What
happens when you kick the
bucket?

Ben sits down at the table and hunches his shoulders. Zelda
advances, warming to her topic.

ZELDA (CONT'D)
You treat her like your
horses: a good stable, good
feed, and a nice green
pasture.. All behind a fence.

Ben looks in the other direction for a moment.

ZELDA (CONT'D)
She's a woman, Benjamin, not a
horse. And raising a child is
not the same as breeding
cattle. It's time you open the
gate and let her run now. Just
like you did yourself!

Ben seems ashamed of himself. Zelda points to a framed
picture of Aline on the wall, presses her advantage.

ZELDA (CONT'D)
I wonder what Mom would think
about this situation. I know:
you'd never hear the end of
it!

Ben wilts a bit more. A tear spills down Zelda's cheek.

ZELDA (CONT'D)
I've said my piece. Fire me if
you want!

Ben gets up, moved, he puts his arm around Zelda's shoulders.
Ben is flustered.

BEN
You know she's facing the real
world here don't you? If it
doesn't work out between them,
can she weather it all again?

Ben regains his composure.

BEN (CONT'D)
 It's been a hard day. My aim
 wasn't to make you two so
 unhappy.. Go to bed. Tomorrow'll
 be a better day.

He gently walks a tearful Zelda into the front hall.

ZELDA
 What about dinner?

BEN
 I'll manage. Come back and eat
 later when you feel better,
 just the two of you.

INT. AKATEWA - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Ben looks around the room. He lowers his eyes to the table and sees the current issue of National Geographic.

He picks it up, stares at it for a moment, and then twists the magazine into a tight roll. He stops and tries to straighten the magazine smoothing out the wrinkles.

He places it back on the table, still smoothening it out, then stares at it a moment. He picks it up and exits.

INT. AKATEWA - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ben sits alone, reading Phil's last article, eating some cold leftovers. He murmurs as if finding something interesting in Phil's article.

INT. AKATEWA - LOUNGE - NIGHT

A gloomy Ben sits on the couch, whispering to his late wife Aline in the photo next to him on the coffee table.

BEN
 Mom, what I want for Alice is
 best, isn't it?

Aline stares back, smiling, unmoving.

BEN (CONT'D)
 She's free to do what she
 wants here. Right?

Ben stays silent for a moment, looking at the photo.

BEN (CONT'D)
She's safe here. We're a
family here. If she leaves..
We'll be alone.

Aline stares at him fondly, smiling in the frame, still unmoving.

EXT. AKATEWA - NIGHT

The mansion is in total darkness.

DREAM SEQUENCE:

Under a cloudy sky, Ben (60) and Alice (16) leave Aline's grave in the forest. They ride down to the bank of a swollen river in the early spring.

Ben enters the water and crosses slowly but easily to the other bank. He motions Alice to follow him, pointing out dangerous passages.

Alice enters the flow and begins to cross. Suddenly, Taqasa slips, unseating Alice who falls into the current.

Swift water carries her past Ben who dives and swims frantically after her. Alice desperately tries to keep her head above water.

Ben loses sight of her; sees her again, loses sight; sees her again. She loses consciousness and spills lifeless through the current, then CATCHES on a tree trunk in the stream.

Ben gets to her, frees her and pulls her up on the riverbank. He stretches her out on the ground, takes her purple face in his hands and shakes her, crying and powerless.

Then he gathers himself and gives her mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Some moments later, Alice shakes violently and spits out water.

She opens her eyes, Ben turns her on her side and she spits out more water, coughing.

INT. AKATEWA - NIGHT (BACK TO REALITY)

A dark bedroom window illuminated by the full moon. A person suddenly bolts awake out of a nightmare.

EXT. CRASH SCENE - DAY

Workers bolster and secure the rock holding the boxcars. Nearby, crews get closer to rejoining the tracks.

INT. AKATEWA - LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

Zelda is ironing. Alice helps her fold the laundry. Yesterday's run-in with Ben hangs in the air.

ALICE
If he'd let me go to college.
I'd have a career. Akatewa
wouldn't be such an issue.

Zelda is about to say something, changes her mind.

ZELDA
This ranch will always be an
issue for your father. Mom
rests here. This place is in
his blood, and yours. It's
your people's land. You could
have gone to college, gone to
the moon. Akatewa is you, and
you, Akatewa.

ALICE
I know it, deep down. But
sometimes I feel that if I
ever leave Akatewa I fear I
won't be able to come back.

ZELDA
This is a losing battle for
him, 'cause in his heart
you're both Alice and Aline.
The two gals he loves most.
(beat)
Do what you have to do, Honey.
He'll adjust.

They share a meager smile.

INT. AKATEWA - LIBRARY - DAY

Alice, sad and pensive, leafs through a notebook. A JINGLE alerts her to a message on her phone. Alice reads a message from

"PHIL FOGG" - "LANDING AT 2 PM SEE YOU SOON HAYKAT"

Alice perks up, fluffs her hair with her hands.

EXT. AKATEWA - DAY

Alice gets into her car and starts it up. Suddenly, Ben stands in front of the car, stopping her. He comes to her window and motions her to roll it down. Alice is breathless, scared. She lowers the window.

BEN
I want to apologize for my
awful behavior yesterday.

Alice breathes a sigh of relief.

ALICE
(tenderly)
Thanks, Dad.

He leans down to the window and kisses Alice. A tear rolls down her cheek. Ben looks as though he wants to say more, but,

BEN
(smiles)
No speeding.

INT. LIBERTY AIRPORT - DAY

A typical airport between security and baggage claims: music, travel atmosphere with lots of movement, advertisements, airport noises.

Alice is wandering, looking impatient.

Food stands, magazine racks, signs for baggage and gates..

Alice observes people shopping, awaiting departure in security lines. She looks at panels, checks the times.

Suddenly, Alice notices Willy waving to her in the concourse. She stands still while Willy joins her.

WILLY
Alice.

ALICE
Hey, Willy. You off?

WILLY
No. I'm waiting for clients.
What about you?

ALICE
(embarrassed)
Uh.. Just strolling. I dropped
off a friend.

WILLY
(dubious)
Oh?

Willy checks his watch, points to the arrival area.

WILLY (CONT'D)
Pretty late for an incoming
flight around here. They
should have landed by now.

He takes a business card, adds a number on the back and hands it to her. She takes it.

WILLY (CONT'D)
I'll be in town for a few
days. Call me. We have a lot
to talk about.

They stand face-to-face for a moment, loudspeakers announce the arrival of Phil's flight. Willy winks.

WILLY (CONT'D)
Have to go now. Can't wait to
see you again. Ciao!

Willy turns around and hurries into the crowd. Alice stays put looking at him move, then follows him at a distance.

Outside security, Alice stops further back from Willy, behind a few people. She concentrates on the passengers exiting.

Phil appears amidst the passengers, a large travel bag in one hand. He sees Alice, smiles and waves.

Alice's face beams -- all the strain of the past few days evaporates in her smile. They come together, greet and hug.

ALICE
Lose your earbuds?

PHIL
No. Just listening to the
music in my heart right now.

Alice blushes and smiles back. She looks at him but says nothing.

An elegant young woman (30s) attractive, wearing a suit and spike heels, places a suitcase on the ground. Phil turns to her.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Meredith, this is my friend
Alice.

Alice looks astounded.

MEREDITH
Nice to meet you!

Alice gives her hand a shake, but her face indicates she'd rather be anywhere else than here right now.

PHIL

Alice is one of the leaders of
the local response here.

(to Alice)

Meredith is a colleague
working on the legal aspects
of the crash. She'll be in
Liberty for a few days

Meredith punches Phil playfully in the arm.

MEREDITH

Hey, colleague..

A flash of panic crosses Alice's face. She searches Phil's
eyes. He smiles, shakes his head.

PHIL

And a friend.

MEREDITH

(winks)

I'll leave you two alone now.
Behave yourselves.

Alice watches Meredith retreat.

PHIL

So, what's the latest news
from the front?

ALICE

What?.. Oh.. It's mostly over.
They don't need us anymore.

PHIL

I hear the town of Liberty is
worth a walk? Join me?

ALICE

Sure.

EXT. LIBERTY - DAY

A quaint, good-sized town, with handsome, well-kept streets
lined with authentic, vintage Americana.

Alice and Phil stroll around the historic district. Past
large beautiful old mansions, wide avenues. Alice is visibly
cool toward Phil.

EXT. BAR - TERRACE - LATER

The two enjoy drinks at a small table.

PHIL
How's Ben?

ALICE
I think he's coming around.
Zelda gave him an earful the
other day.

PHIL
Seems like she can hold her
own in an argument. Have she
and Ben ever..?

ALICE
You mean like you and
Meredith? No. They're good
friends. Nothing more.

PHIL
She's good for him. A man
should stick with a good
woman.

Alice steals a glance at him. Phil takes in the scenery.

ALICE
Thought you might have
replied, "No, Alice. You're
wrong about Meredith".

Phil shakes his head, smiling. Looks at her.

EXT. LIBERTY - LATER

Alice stops in front of "HERBIE'S Vintage Clothing" and
admires a dress in the window.

ALICE
(to the window)
So how long did she last?

Phil looks at Alice, looking puzzled.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Meredith.

PHIL
A gentleman doesn't kiss and
tell.

ALICE
Humor me.

PHIL
Well, long enough. But it's
not how you imagine.

ALICE
Then paint the picture.

PHIL
We met years ago at National
Geographic. She's a jurist. We
had an on-again/off-again
relationship for a long time.

Alice turns and looks at him.

PHIL (CONT'D)
It's been over for years.

Alice continues to look at him.

PHIL (CONT'D)
You believe me, right?

ALICE
Why wouldn't I? Clark Kent
never lied. Oops, well, yes he
did.. To everyone in fact.

Alice stares at him.

PHIL
Alice, she's just a friend
now. Friendship between a man
and a woman. You know how that
works, right?

ALICE
How does that work?

PHIL
It's this good little vibe
that makes you enjoy each
other's company without
thinking about sex.

Alice gives him a dubious look.

LATER

Alice and Phil walk on. Alice is still looking worried and
attentive to Phil's behavior.

ALICE
(looking at him)
Not fed up with my ramblings?

PHIL
I love your rambling: science,
Native American..
(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)

Listening to what's said, then exploring what's behind the words. That's why I chose this job--

Alice stops.

ALICE

I'm part of your work?

Phil laughs.

PHIL

Don't be ridiculous!

Phil gently bumps into her, shoulder-to-shoulder.

PHIL (CONT'D)

It seems a shining star hides behind all this science.

Alice looks embarrassed and walks on. Phil follows.

ALICE

But apparently not bright enough to have my own theory about the causes of the accident.

PHIL

Excuse me?

Alice stops and turns to him.

ALICE

You seem to be asking everyone else. Some are saying that you're trying to make people say what they don't want to say.

PHIL

Who told you that?

ALICE

Is it true?

PHIL

Alice. A journalist's job is all about dispelling doubt. Like science. Asking questions, letting people talk. It's called investigating.

ALICE

And when are you planning on publishing your scoop?

PHIL
Never. That's NTSB's stuff.
National Geographic's not a
tabloid. We publish only what
elevates the planet.. And
humanity.

The once congenial mood has cooled.

ALICE
You didn't answer my question.

Silence.

PHIL
I didn't want to put you in an
awkward situation.

ALICE
Yet here we are. Is that why
you didn't talk to me about
your wife either?

PHIL
Pardon me?

ALICE
Bagdad.

Phil looks bewildered.

PHIL
Who told you about that?

Alice stands her ground. Phil's face darkens.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Sorry Alice, that's something I
can't talk about right now.

ALICE
I trusted you.

Silence.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Thought we were past all that.
And you're still holding back
on me.. You'd better join
Meredith now shouldn't you?

Alice turns around and a distraught-looking Phil watches her
walk away.

LATER

It's night. Alice and Willy are still chatting in a playful mood.

The low background music plays Bach's Air on the G string. At the bar, the waiter looks at them from time-to-time.

WILLY

You remember that camp on
Spokane Lake? The last time
before all of us left for
college. We were wild.

Alice laughs. A sunny summer day invades her mind as the background Air on the G String melts into song and Willy's voice fades..

WILLY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You remember that song?

FLASHBACK:

EXT. SPOKANE LAKE - DAY

WILLY (V.O.)

Come here. Give me your hand.
Like that. You..

On the sandy shore of a lake near the forest, Alice, 17, wears a bikini and Willy wears trunks. The dense branches of a large red maple hang above them as they slow-dance to Whiter Shade of Pale playing:

SONG

"If music be the food of love
Then laughter is it's queen"

They laugh, kiss each other deeply. Willy bends back and they fall in the shallow water, Alice on top.

SONG (CONT'D)

"And likewise if behind is in
front
Then dirt in truth is clean"

Willy turns them over and comes over Alice whose face has just emerged. They breathe hard. Alice is frightened. On top of her, Willy embraces and kisses her voraciously.

SONG (CONT'D)

"My mouth by then like
cardboard
Seemed to slip straight
through my head"

Alice resists and sinks in the water while trying to push him away.

SONG (CONT'D)
 "So we crash-dived straightway
 quickly
 And attacked the ocean bed"

Willy sits up straight astride her. He holds her, lying atop her, almost submerged, her hands gripped in his left hand over her head.

SONG (CONT'D)
 "And so it was that later
 As the miller told his tale"

Alice struggles to keep her face above the water while an overexcited Willy tears off her bra and frantically kisses her breasts.

INT. MUSICAFÉ - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Alice freezes. Her eyes widen, she pulls back slowly and resumes a normal posture, her face ashen, as the last words of the song echo in her mind.

SONG
 "That her face, at first just
 ghostly,
 Turned a whiter shade of pale"

At the place where Willy sat in front of her, the waiter stands looking concerned.

WAITER
 You okay ma'am?

Alice looks terrorized. She jumps up from her seat and flees.

EXT. MUSICAFÉ - NIGHT

Alice rushes to her car, and takes off at full speed.

INT. MEG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The doorbell rings continuously.

A light turns on and Meg's husband, JIM, 30, comes to the door while tying his bathrobe belt. He opens the door and finds himself face-to-face with Alice, her eyes red with tears.

ALICE
 I need to see Meg.

JIM
Alice, what the hell? She's
sleeping.

ALICE
I need to see her!

MEG (O.S.)
Alice. What's happened?

Meg appears in nightgown behind Jim. Alice just stares at her, looking completely bereft.

MEG (CONT'D)
Jim, leave us alone, will you?

Jim moves off grumbling, Meg gently takes Alice to the

KITCHEN.

Alice sits at a kitchen table. Meg sits across from her.

MEG
What is it, Honey?

ALICE
I have these dreams. Memories?
Willy, angry. Promising to
marry me, then.. Then you and
me in Richland. And the
smothering feeling of such
sadness.. It's all in pieces.
(beat)
Nothing makes sense, and I
couldn't seem to put it
together. Until tonight. I had
this awful vision.

Alice is in tears. Meg takes a big breath.

MEG
You're remembering--

ALICE
So it's true? Not dreams?

MEG
Tell me.

ALICE
Willy was scared of his dad. I
remember that. But why? We'd
been together for four years.

MEG
People change. He had a
future, the University.
(MORE)

MEG (CONT'D)

His parents would have gone ballistic if--

ALICE

But I loved him!

MEG

You were kids.

ALICE

Then you and I, in Richland..

Meg takes a moment before answering. Drums her fingers on the table.

MEG

Yeah. Willy paid.. Officially, we went camping for a week. When we came back, Willy had gone to college without a word.

Alice considers Meg's words, looking staggered.

ALICE

Willy paid.. You mean.. An abortion?.. Why haven't I remembered all this before?

MEG

It was all too much for you to handle.. You had a breakdown, Alice. You were months in a nursing home. The whole Miller family had left when you came back.

ALICE

Is that why Dad kept me from Stanford?

Meg nods.

MEG

And why he gifted your mom's library to you, and you started to work your butt off.

(beat)

And to this day, you're the only one still talking about Willy in this town.

Suddenly, Alice looks like the teen she once was. She stares at Meg, bursts into tears.

ALICE

Willy.. Meg, it was rape!

INT. MEG'S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Two empty cups are on the coffee table.

ALICE
To think I'd have a ten year
old child now. No wonder Dad
hates Willy.

MEG
No, nobody's ever known about
the abortion. He blames your
breakdown on Willy dumping
you.

EXT. MEG'S HOUSE - DAWN

Meg accompanies Alice to her car and they hug. She waves and
watches Alice's car pull away.

EXT. CRASH SCENE - DAWN

Alice's car passes the crash scene where the tracks are
nearly reconnected.

Only one freight car, tied down, remains holding the hanging
boxcars. Technical teams work to recover them.

The cranes and a telescopic forklift car are moving to the
place where the two boxcars still dangle.

EXT. AKATEWA - DAY

Alice pulls up at the mansion, parks and gets out under the
gaze of Ben, who stands near the stable, looking surprised.

She runs up to him and throws herself into his arms, hugging
him tightly, half-crying, half-laughing.

ALICE
Oh Dad! Forgive me. Please
forgive me.. I didn't know..

Alice dashes to the house and enters running, leaving Ben
there looking mystified.

INT. AKATEWA - PHIL'S ROOM - DAY

Alice enters and puts Phil's suitcase on the table. She gives
it a long look.

INT. AKATEWA - LIBRARY - DAY

Alice is on her phone while dressing in a riding outfit.

PHIL (FILTERED)
Phil here. What's up Doc? Call
you back ASAP.
(receiver)
Beep!

Alice composes a cheerful voice.

ALICE
Hello Phil..

EXT. AKATEWA - DAY

Alice rides out of the stable and leaves galloping.

EXT. BLACKSTONE - DAY

Alice wanders in town, exploring familiar places and asking for Phil:

- the Two Pines Restaurant,
- the school,
- the crash scene with people hard at work.

EXT. WILLY'S HOUSE - DAY

Alice sits on the steps, lost in her thoughts.

INT. PIZZERIA - DAY

Alice enters, Greg waves at her.

GREG
Hey Alice.

Alice gives him a moved look, hugs him.

ALICE
Have you seen Phil?

GREG
Not today. Sorry.

ALICE
Okay, thanks.

She looks hard at him, tousles his hair, then exits.

EXT. SPOKANE LAKE - DAY

Alice, looking distraught, stands by the shore of Spokane Lake. The dense branches of a red maple tree hang above her, the exact spot of the rape.

EXT. OLD RANCH - DAY

Near the cabin, Alice sits like a statue in front of her mother's grave, looking confused, Taqasa stands nearby.

EXT. BOTTOM OF THE RAVINE - DAY

Above the roped off area where the fallen wheel truck lies, technicians on the platform secure wheels still on the cars with chains, and are fitting the cars with slings.

From the other side of the river, Alice, on Taqasa, stares at the cars above, unfocused. Reeling a little in the saddle as she looks up at the height..

From her POV, she looks down from the cliff at herself on Taqasa.

Suddenly the workmen on the platform cry out: another wheel truck falls and -- KA-BOOM -- crashes over the first one with a deafening ROAR.

Alice screams, as Taqasa rears up. She desperately tries to stay in the saddle, as Taqasa flees along the bank.

She falls, but holds onto the reins trying to keep hold of the panicked horse, and is dragged a distance before she gives up. Taqasa runs away.

Half-groggy, she collects herself and sits up on the bank. She examines herself, clearly in pain. Her clothes are ripped and soaked.

She searches for her phone, finds it in her pocket with its screen broken. She bursts into tears. Tries to switch it on several times. No luck. Tries again.

It starts up. Phil's number is still on the screen. She dials, it rings, picks up. Still Phil's voicemail. Alice waits.. Beep!

ALICE

Phil, it's Alice. I need help.
Please. Taqasa threw me. I'm
soaked and I hurt. Not sure I
should move. Please help me..
I'm at Akatewa, downstream
from--

Alice looks at her phone, it's off. She tries to turn it on again.. It's dead.

EXT. OLD RANCH - DAY

Dazed, her clothes wet, Alice walks limping up to the entrance.

INT. OLD RANCH - DAY

Alice enters, beholding the unique room, entirely of varnished wood, with its table and chairs, two trunks and a few shelves, and a large bed covered with throws and pelts near the fireplace.

Alice stays put for a while, looking at the fireplace, then at the bed, she shudders.

EXT. WILLY'S HOUSE - DAY.

Walking along the empty street, Alice arrives in front of Willy's house. She looks as though memories return.

She goes around the back of the house, seeming to seek something. She hesitates, then explores a crack along the frame of a window.

She finds a thin piece of metal folded. She studies it, mind turning, then slips it between the base of the window. A little CLICK. She raises the window.

EXT. AKATEWA - DAY

Ben and a few men work together in front of a workshop. One of them points.

MAN
Ben!

Ben turns around: Taqasa approaches alone, still saddled.

BEN
Shit!

Ben approaches the horse and grabs the reins.

INT. AKATEWA - DAY

Ben bursts into the kitchen. Zelda startles.

BEN
Where's Alice?

ZELDA
 Dunno. Not here, anyway.
 What's the matter?

BEN
 Something's happened! That son-
 of-a-bitch did something--

ZELDA
 What are you talking about?

BEN
 That journalist, that rogue!
 Taqasa is back. Alone.

Zelda takes her phone and begins to dial.

BEN (CONT'D)
 Her phone is off.

Ben opens a closet and takes out a revolver, a rifle, and bullets.

ZELDA
 Ben!

BEN
 Call the sheriff.

Ben rushes out of the house. Outside, shouts, barks and whinnying horses. A cavalcade starts.

INT. WILLY'S HOUSE - SUNSET.

It's dark and grey. Alice is in the laundry room. Thick dust coats everything. A few things are gathered under a sheet. Alice uncovers them, revealing a washer, an ironing board and a chair. Alice goes through the door and enters.

An open plan kitchen with built-in cabinets and shelves, a rear door and window. A large bench sits in the den.

Alice notices an oil lamp among the few things on the shelves. Another door on her left is open to a dark closet under the staircase.

Alice crosses the kitchen to the den, then to the wide hallway. On her right is the front door and in front of her is another door.

On her left is a large stairwell lit by a skylight. In the corner of the staircase, a second door is open to the garage. The area is scattered with pieces of sheet-covered furniture.

INT. HOLIDAY INN, LIBERTY - SUNSET

Phil and Meredith are in a meeting room, working on laptops, surrounded by piles of papers.

Phil's phone beeps. The screen reads "You have 3 new messages". Phil unlocks the phone. The screen displays Alice's messages on top of the list. Phil's expression darkens.

PHIL
 "The welcome mat'll always be
 out for you..." Right.

Meredith stretches. She stands up and pats Phil on his shoulder.

MEREDITH
 Need to freshen up.

She leaves. Phil listens to the newest message on top of the list:

ALICE (FILTERED)
 Ph---tsal-l-l-l-----sa--.

He erases the message and listens to the second one:

ALICE (FILTERED) (CONT'D)
 Hello Phil? I apologize for my
 behavior yesterday. I'm so
 sorry. I have your suitcase.
 Please call me back.

PHIL
 (to himself)
 No thanks. FedEx comes to
 mind.

Phil erases the message, looks at the third one. It's from the day before.

PHIL (CONT'D)
 (erases the message)
 Frankly my Dear, I don't give
 a damn.

He is about to put his phone aside when it rings: unknown number.

PHIL (CONT'D)
 Hello?

ZELDA (FILTERED)
 Mr. Fogg?

PHIL
 Zelda?

ZELDA (FILTERED)
Is Alice with you?

PHIL
No. I'm in Liberty, working.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. AKATEWA - CONTINUOUS

ZELDA
(moved, speaking quickly)
Something odd's happened here. Tagasa came back without Alice and her phone is off. We don't know where she is and--

PHIL
What?! I'll come right--

ZELDA
No! Ben and the ranch crew are out looking. Ben thinks you harmed her. They're all armed. I just spoke to the sheriff. Be careful.

PHIL
Okay, Zelda. Don't panic. I'll call the sheriff, too. See you later.

INT. HOLIDAY INN, LIBERTY - SUNSET

Phil runs down the hallway running, as Meredith exits the restroom.

PHIL
I need the car. We have a problem.

INT. WILLY'S HOUSE - TWILIGHT

Night darkens. Alice rummages through kitchen drawers and find matches. She lights one and looks at the oil lamp. It's half-full. She lights it, bathing everything in yellow light.

With the lamp, Alice returns to the hallway near the den and pushes a door open to a home office. She continues down the hall, her lamp lighting the wide staircase up to large landings at two upper floors.

Alice hesitates at the first stair, then slowly climbs the CREAKING steps to the first landing.

She notices that seepages from the skylight have rotted the floor and the railing in many places.

Alice moves against the wall and proceeds upward. She continues to the second floor and goes straight to

WILLY'S ROOM

Which she enters.

A large teenager's room still full of furniture and belongings; a bed, a chair, a desk and bookshelves, an old laptop, printer, wall posters, and a corner closet.

Alice rummages through the room. She empties desk drawers, searches the shelves. She spreads her finds out on the desk.

EXT. MEG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A Police car stops in front of the house. Phil and Sheriff George get out, as Meg and her husband come to them.

INT. WILLY'S ROOM - NIGHT.

A whole bunch of things now clutter the floor, the bed, the desk. Alice pulls a big sport bag from the closet. She puts it on the bed and opens it.

She takes out various items: shoes, creased clothes, a belt, dumbbells.. Then from the very bottom of the bag, she finds her traditional dress, balled up.

She pulls it out and several pieces of seed-bead jewelry fall to the floor with a bandeau, earrings, bracelets, a necklace.

INT. WILLY'S HOUSE - LATER

It's dark. Alice has removed the sheets covering the furniture. The house looks normal in the lamp's half-light.

Alice kneels on the landing step of the first story, dressed in her traditional outfit and jewelry, a beautiful apparition.

Willy's belongings spread around her, washed in the lamp-light. The little bundle near them, smokes.

Alice takes the huge black and white feather from her bandeau then carefully divides it lengthwise in two, casts a spell.

ALICE
 (Native dialect subtitled)
*Cleanse my soul as I cleanse
 this space. Remove the past.*

Tears stream down her face.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 (Native dialect subtitled)
*..Head my spirit to our
 ancestors' so I can meet with
 my beloved ones.*

A SCRAPING comes from below.

Alice looks down to see Willy standing at the bottom of the stairs, still wearing his coat, fedora in his hand. He places the hat on a console table near a framed

PICTURE

Showing teen Willy with his mother, and his father wearing the SAME BLACK SUIT, COAT AND HAT.

WILLY
 Alice.

ALICE
 (eyes now dry)
 Willy, I knew you'd come.

WILLY
 You still remember how I used
 to open the back window.

ALICE
 (smiling)
 I remember a lot.

Willy climbs the stairs as Alice stands up.

WILLY
 I never expected you'd come
 back one more time. I'm a
 lucky man.

ALICE
 I wouldn't be so sure.

They meet on the landing.

WILLY
 Why not?

Willy reaches out and touches her cheek.

WILLY (CONT'D)
 You liked that then.

ALICE
 I loved you then. But people
 change.

Willy comes closer to Alice, walking over the things on the floor. Alice retreats until her back is against the wall.

WILLY
Do they?

Willy squeezes against Alice, puts his hands on the wall on either side of her.

WILLY (CONT'D)
I'm sure you'd still like it.

Willy draws his face closer to Alice's. He smells her hair. Alice closes her eyes, breathing hard, she extends her arms against the wall, her hands in fists.

Willy looks down and presses his middle finger on Alice's chest, just above the lace of her dress. He begins to fiddle with the lace.

Suddenly Alice pushes him back, and knees him in the crotch. Willy winces in pain and muffles a shout while putting his hands over his balls. He steps backward, knocking over the oil lamp.

It topples through the railing and falls through the door of the garage where it crashes onto the floor, igniting the room.

WILLY (CONT'D)
(raging mad)
You fucking bitch. I--

Alice kicks him in the balls again. Willy screams in pain, steps back and falls down the stairs as the fire in the garage begins to fully light the scene.

EXT. WILLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As the fire blazes to the right half of the house, people gather along the street. SIRENS rise in the distance.

Two fire trucks and the sheriff's car stop with a screech. Phil and Sheriff George burst out from his car with Meg and her husband.

Meg starts toward the house. George grabs her arm.

SHERIFF GEORGE
It's deserted. Let it burn.

MEG
She's there! I know she's there!

SHERIFF GEORGE
(to Meg)
You can't go in!

PHIL
The hell I can't!

While the firefighters set up their gear, Phil snatches an axe from one of them and runs to the left of the house. He smashes the kitchen door with the axe and rushes in.

INT. WILLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Phil is in the kitchen. He runs toward the firelight in the hallway.

PHIL
Alice!

He's in the hallway, looking around him: all the right side of the house is now ablaze, up to the roof, the smoke and heat are rising through the stairwell to the skylight.

Phil scans the staircase. He runs up to the landing. Alice sits with her back against the wall, staring mesmerized at the broken railing.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Alice!

Phil goes to her. He grabs her and shakes her.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Hayka't! It's Phil.

Alice looks petrified at the rail-less stairs. She's frozen. Phil lifts her to her feet. Alice slowly looks up at him. She points behind Phil, as Willy suddenly appears, coming toward them.

Willy grabs Phil by the arm, making him release Alice and turn around. As the fire slowly moves toward them, Alice desperately tries to stand, leaning against the wall.

Before her, the two men savagely fight on the landing while the wood CRACKS, and part of the house begins to collapse.

Phil slowly gets the upper hand on Willy, when suddenly, the floor gives way under him and he disappears.

Willy gets up, looking ferociously at Alice. He comes close to her, grabs her and shakes her violently. She falls.

In a desperate effort, Alice pushes him back. She grabs a piece of wood on the floor and strikes him in the face with all her strength.

Willy stumbles, takes a step backward. He crashes through the balustrade and falls to his death into the fire, as Alice faints.

INT. WILLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

On the landing, Phil violently shakes Alice. A large facial wound bleeds from his left temple to his chin.

PHIL
Hayka't! Get up! Please get
up!

Alice is unconscious. Phil lifts her onto his shoulders and carries her downstairs, through flames.

He races into the den and into the kitchen, as the stairwell BEGINS TO COLLAPSE over the hallway.

EXT. WILLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is now almost entirely on fire. Firefighters hose down the remaining part to slow the blaze. Phil bursts out of the kitchen door with Alice across his shoulder.

Firefighters run to him with blankets and stretchers. They carefully lay Alice on a stretcher. They all rush up to a nearby ambulance where a medic examines Alice, as a rescuer puts a blanket on Phil's shoulders.

Sheriff George, Meg, her husband, and Bob and Sarah all run to Phil's side.

Ben arrives with his crew, all on horseback. He dismounts and goes straight toward Alice on the stretcher. His men follow with menacing looks.

Ben is blocked by Sheriff George. He turns to Phil, pointing his rifle at him. Sheriff George quickly lowers it as -BANG- a gunshot hits the ground two inches in front of Phil's feet. Everyone freezes.

Sheriff George maintains Ben as his attendees keep Ben's men at a distance.

BEN
(shouting)
That bastard hurt my daughter!

SHERIFF GEORGE
Let it go, Ben. That bastard
just saved her life.

As Ben tries to leap on Phil, Sheriff George nods to one of his men. They seize Ben and tackle him to the ground where Sheriff George secures him with handcuffs.

LATER

The firefighters still hose the retreating blaze, as the whole house has collapsed.

Alice sits in the ambulance, talking with Ben and Zelda. She's swaddled in blankets, her arms, bandaged. Nearby, Meg and a medic attends to the wound on Phil's face and burns on his hands.

Ben turns to Phil.

BEN
I owe you an apology, Mr.
Fogg. And..

Ben looks as though he can't quite deliver his words. Phil stares at Ben, then simply half-smiles and nods.

INT. LIBERTY'S HOSPITAL, ALICE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Phil, Ben and Zelda are there with Alice who's on a drip, awake. A female doctor comes in.

DOCTOR
X-rays look good. A nice lump
on her head. Probably from
falling off the horse. But no
concussion. Let her sleep a
few hours. She can be released
in the afternoon.

Ben shakes her hand vigorously.

BEN
Thanks Ma'am. So much.

The doctor leaves. Ben turns to Phil.

BEN (CONT'D)
And thank you, Phil. She's
still with us because of you.
Stay a few more days? Alice
would like that.

Phil looks at Alice. She waits expectantly, happiness in her eyes.

PHIL
So would I.

Alice sighs with relief. She places her hand on Phil's arm. She turns to Ben and takes his hand, gazing at him.

ALICE
I remember everything now.

Ben frowns, failing to understand, then suddenly looks uncomfortable and pulls back his hand. Zelda notices.

A moment between them.

INT. LIBERTY'S HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Phil, Ben and Zelda walk along a hallway. Zelda steals glances at Ben who looks confused.

PHIL

Go back to Akatewa. I'll keep an eye on her. Bring her home safe and sound. Promise.

Before Ben reacts, Zelda grasps him by the arm, winks to Phil.

ZELDA

A kind offer. Thank you. Come on old man. We need some sleep, and work won't do itself.

Phil watches as Zelda pulls Ben down the hall.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

You'll find everything she needs in the bag I brought.

EXT. CRASH SCENE - DAY

The cranes remove the last dangling boxcar.

EXT. WILLY'S HOUSE - DAY

There remains only rumble and blackened ashes, still smoking.

INT. LIBERTY'S HOSPITAL, ALICE'S ROOM - DAY

A nurse exits with a meal tray. Alice sits in her bed, Phil on a chair at her side.

ALICE

Tell me about Bagdad. Please.

Phil nods slowly.

PHIL

I was an embedded journalist in the army, and Nora was a freelancer.

Phil stares into space.

PHIL (CONT'D)

She came under a fake name and we weren't supposed to be seen together. But one time she insisted on a rendezvous out of the Green Zone.. So I convinced a young First Lieutenant to organize a fake mission to protect her.

ALICE

And?

PHIL

Murphy's Law: we were ambushed and ten people died. The young lieutenant, Nora.. I was wounded and survived only because I looked dead..

Phil's face is filled with sadness and guilt. He looks at the ceiling.

PHIL (CONT'D)

We were young you know. We used to say you must live as if you were going to die tomorrow. But sometimes, you're bound to live a long time wishing you'd died yesterday.

Alice fondles Phil's hand.

EXT. LIBERTY'S HOSPITAL - SUNSET

Alice and Phil leave, Phil holding Alice's bag. They walk to Phil's car.

EXT. LIBERTY - NIGHT

Alice and Phil park in front of an upscale restaurant, one block from the historic center. A sign reads "CHARLEY'S STEAKHOUSE."

Phil gets out on the driver's side and opens the passenger door for Alice. They walk across the wide sidewalk to enter the restaurant.

INT. CHARLEY'S STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT

Warm atmosphere with soft music playing. Alice and Phil are halfway through the meal.

PHIL

The slide show of blue nudes in the library. It's beautiful.. and sometimes.. quite sexy.. Did you put that together?

ALICE

My Blue Women? Blue's most complementary to human skin, and opposite that pale shade on a color wheel. I transform photos using various filters and effects.

PHIL

Yet another talent. They were really gorgeous. Why mostly women?

ALICE

Purely aesthetic. Native men are often handsome, but blue or not, they're not Na'vi.

Alice smiles, looking dreamy.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Beauty is a feminine quality. Women like to be pretty, attractive, and that's what appeals to men.

PHIL

I won't disagree.

ALICE

Handsome men are always appreciated, but what's even more appealing is strength, kindness, protection. All very animalistic according to Native belief.. A realm where we willingly discard logic to free will.. Call it chance.

She smiles, they look deeply into each other's eyes.

Their faces draw close. Their lips brush, their hands entwine across the table.. Alice closes her eyes.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - NIGHT

Alice and Phil are back in Blackstone. Phil drives slowly through the wide streets, they arrive at the remains of Willy's house.

ALICE
Stop a moment, will you?

Phil stops. They stare look at the ruins. At the place where the garage was, the twisted chassis of the Porsche Boxster is already rusting.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Willy wasn't there, was he?

Beat.

PHIL
No. He died three years ago.

ALICE
How?

PHIL
Car wreck.. With his wife and two kids.

Alice frowns, stares at the ruins, no pity in her eyes.

ALICE
I needed to kill him, anyway.

Phil gently smiles.

PHIL
So you finally escaped my evil twin. Did you?

Alice looks at Phil's card she holds in her hand, front and back. She sighs and nods, as a tear rolls down her cheek.

PHIL (CONT'D)
You wouldn't move, you know.
Still petrified by the height?

ALICE
One more dragon to slay. In time..

Alice turns to Phil.

ALICE (CONT'D)
But it was you who saved me: I was prepared to die.. You saved me in more ways than..

Alice looks like she realizes something, stretches her hand, strokes the suture strips on Phil's cheek.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Did I do that?

PHIL
(obviously lying)
No. You didn't.

Alice smiles at him, her hand still on his cheek.

ALICE
I'm sorry. Could have killed
you, you know?

Phil smiles back.

EXT. AKATEWA - NIGHT

The car draws up to the house, parks. The engine stops and the headlights turn off. Alice and Phil get out, stare at the full moon in the starry sky.

ALICE
Let's walk awhile.

They walk away into the countryside. Disappear into the darkness.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Alice and Phil holding hands under the stars. They stop near the edge of a cliff over the twinkling stream. Their eyes embrace the starry sky and the scenery bathed in moonlight.

Alice fondles Phil's hand then let it go. She walks toward the precipice overlooking the river. Phil watches as she looks cautiously down at the river.

She takes a step closer to the edge, looks down, staring hard at the river. She seems about to trotter. Phil walks toward her, grabs her arm.

PHIL
Stay with me Hayka't.

Alice gets a grip.

ALICE
I'm fine.

They stare at each other for a moment then Alice grabs Phil's hand.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Follow me?

They disappear on a narrow path in the darkness.

INT. OLD RANCH - NIGHT

Phil scans the place lighted by an oil lamp hanging above the table while Alice lights a fire in the hearth.

Alice tidies on the bed the pelts and blankets she spread over the place the day before, then puts a huge bison pelt on the ground with a few cushions in front of the fire.

ALICE

This is where I was born a second time and where I made love for the first time.

PHIL

With Willy?

ALICE

With Dad.

FLASHBACK:

INT. OLD RANCH - DAY

A crying Ben bursts in, tightly holding teen Alice who coughs and spits water in his arms, soaked. He carefully puts her down on the carpet near the bed.

ALICE (V.O.)

After he resuscitated me, he took me here and nursed me.

Ben quickly lights a fire in the fireplace and pulls towels from a trunk. He takes Alice in front of the fire then undresses her and vigorously rubs her.

ALICE (V.O.)

He warmed me up and dried me.

Ben opens the bed. Half-desperate and half-relieved, He catches Alice who curls up in his arms, kneels and carefully puts her on the bed.

Ben looks at Alice, fondles her hair. He looks at her naked body, that of a fully formed woman: her breasts, her belly, her beautiful hips..

ALICE (V.O.)

He was seeing Mom.

Ben gently kisses Alice on one cheek, on the other; the two gaze into each others eyes. Ben kisses Alice on her mouth, then her neck.

Alice breath speeds up as Ben kisses her between her breasts, on her navel. She fondles his hair as he brushes her body, her breasts..

Alice stretches her arms and they embrace each other as Ben lies down near to her..

INT. OLD RANCH - NIGHT (END FLASHBACK)

Alice and Phil sit face to face on the pelt in front of the fire.

ALICE

I was a new person, a woman. Dad was ashamed of himself. It never happened again and we never talked about that later.. And then I held it back with my memories about Willy.. Till yesterday.

A moment between them.

PHIL

Why do you tell me that?

ALICE

Because I trust you.

They look hard at each other, their faces glow, their eyes sparkle.

LATER

In the flickering light of the fire, Alice and Phil make love in a tender embrace.

EXT. BOTTOM OF THE RAVINE - DAY

The morning is sunny and fresh. Alice and Phil walk down to the river bank near the place where the wheel trucks crashed.

Nothing remains in the river, nor on the cliff above. The only reminders of what happened are broken branches, some scratches in the rock and a few traces of paint.

EXT. BLACKSTONE - DAY

Alice and Phil on horseback encounter Meg and another of the club members talking in the street a few yards from the crash scene.

MEG
 (waving)
 Hey, lovebirds!

Alice smiles and blows them a kiss. Phil waves cheerfully. The two continue, riding their horses close together. Alice reaches over and takes Phil's hand. Phil looks at her.

They stop at the crash scene clearing. Only the color of the ballast and of the new rails is discordant in the scenery.

A TRAIN WHISTLE sounds. A passenger train rolls across the site and away into the distance. Alice and Phil exchange a smile.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

1. Alice and Phil wander around Manhattan, taking in the sights. Alice wears a splendid engagement ring.

Voice of a little girl, ALINE, at 6:

ALINE (V.O.)
 There is a force in this
 universe..

2. Alice at her club, laughing with her friends.

ALINE (V.O.)
 A force that configures our
 lives..

3. Ben and Zelda holding hands, looking up at the tall buildings in amazement like country mice in the Big Apple.

ALINE (V.O.)
 A force that comforts..

4. Ben, Zelda, Alice and Phil somberly observe the Ground Zero memorial. Some visitors dry their tears.

ALINE (V.O.)
 A force that binds..

5. A summer Amerindian wedding at Akatewa with everyone in attendance. Greg and Meg are the best man and best woman.

ALINE(V.O.)
 A force that heals..

6. Alice on assignment with Phil in Africa, taking care of people in an IRC Camp.

ALINE (V.O.)
 What shall we call this
 force..

7. Alice and Phil with Meredith at an art exhibition. The images are all of Blue Women. The poster reads, "Blue Women Exhibition" and it is of Blue Alice.

ALINE (V.O.)
It's an odd force, difficult
to comprehend, hard to
manage..

8. A college graduation. A sign reads "Princeton University". Alice accepts her diploma. Phil, Ben and Zelda cheer from the audience.

ALINE (V.O.)
So we may call it "Oddness"..

9. Ben, Zelda, Phil and Alice at Akatewa. Alice is pregnant in the arms of Phil.

ALINE (V.O.)
Or as it comes from the human
heart..

10. At Akatewa, Alice and Phil watch Ben play with baby Aline under the frightened gaze of Zelda. It's a beautiful moment as Grandpa is with his granddaughter.

ALINE (V.O.)
Perhaps we should just call it
"Love".

11. Alice, Phil, and their little Aline ride in a sightseer lounge car, watching the Fall colors of the Rocky Mountain landscape fly by the windows of Amtrak's

EMPIRE BUILDER.

FADE OUT:

THE END

AUTHORS' VIEW

AKATEWA is the saga of a Native American family from the Coeur d'Alène Nation, set in the Rockies of northern Idaho. The entire story is intended to be a series of five films covering a period from approximately 1850 to the present, each focusing on the life and destiny of one member of the family. The tale is told backward to gradually immerse the audience into the First Nations' forgotten history in a unique way.

The narrative idea behind this first movie is to tell two intertwined dramas in parallel: a train disaster and its aftermath gradually fading into the background, while a personal ordeal rises to a breaking point in the foreground, both ending in rebirth.

The story unfolds over the course of one week, rhythm being given every new day by a visit to the crash scene where the rescue then rebuild operations progress.

The names Akatewa and Hayka't are taken from the Nez Percé words "càwtiwa." and "Haykà't".