

NORTHERN VOICE

Written by

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EXT. TURNAGAIN BAY - ALASKA - DAY

The snow-capped Chugach mountains rise above the deep blue of Cook Inlet in the Alaska territory.

SUPER: Alaska Territory, 1896.

A PIANO softly plays the hymn "It Is Well With My Soul" as we glide over the *SS Alki* Steamship chugging among the soaring peaks of Turnagain Bay.

EXT. STEAMSHIP SS ALKI DECK - DAY

An eagle swoops low across the bay, dives, plucks a fish out of the water, flies in front of the ship.

MARY LANDRY (32) watches from the bow. Her attire conveys her position as the respectable daughter of a preacher: prim, long, cream-colored day dress, gloves, hair covered by a scarf that ruffles in the breeze. It also provides the armor she hides behind.

Mary's brother MARTINE LANDRY (15) bounces beside her, his boyish exuberance barely contained within a worn brown wool suit.

MARTINE

Did you see that!

Mary's eyes follow the eagle.

MARTINE (CONT'D)

Mary!

MARY

(tired)

Yes. I saw it.

Martine is awestruck, bursting--

MARTINE

Imagine that! An eagle--

Gestures, his hands arc from high to low, his fist closes.

MARTINE (CONT'D)

Bam!

CAPTAIN BRUCE (50s), British, wind worn, a seaman all his life, joins Mary and Martine.

CAPTAIN BRUCE

Great fishermen, those eagles.

Mary starts, bristles as Captain Bruce stops next to her. He leans towards her, she flinches, quickly steps away.

MARY
Come along, Martine.

MARTINE
Awe Sis.

MARY
(snaps)
Martine!

She flees, chin up, her anxiety masked by haughtiness. Martine rushes after her.

Captain Bruce eyes Mary appreciatively.

EXT. TURNAGAIN BAY/HOPE, ALASKA - DAY

The piano resumes PLAYING "It Is Well With My Soul" as we soar across the bay, past a grazing moose near the shoreline, over the tents and rough buildings of the struggling outpost of Hope, Alaska.

A SOFT WIND intensifies, a WOLF HOWLS.

EXT. HOPE, ALASKA - MAIN STREET - DAY

TRAPPER IVAN (40s), beard down his chest, bloody slashes in his shirt, rides down the dusty main street in a wooden cart pulled by sled dogs, a bear carcass draped across his legs. He's a big, ragged, Russian mountain man, born in Alaska before it was sold to the U.S.

Trapper Ivan passes the canvas tent housing the "U.S. Post Office", then the wood/canvas structure of "Sam Lee's Chinese Laundry", stops at the rough hewn building for "Hope Trading Co. & Supplies". He wrestles the bear carcass inside.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

The farthest north Post Office in the U.S. has a canvas roof and walls over a rough wood plank floor. Light comes from rolled up flaps in the walls.

Postmaster JAKOB ANDERSEN (30) reads a letter behind the counter. LEAH (24), his pregnant wife, bustles out from a canvas partition, sets a jumbled box of mail on the counter.

Jakob quickly puts the letter in its envelope.

LEAH

Let's get the outgoing mail ready
for when the Alki comes.

Jakob GRUMBLES, throws a mail bag on the counter, grabs a
pile of mail, stuffs it in the bag.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Jakob! You'll tear them!

JAKOB

They're lucky they have mail
service in this gawd awful
territory.

EXT. TONIO'S BUILDING - DAY

Two corner posts for a new building stand next to the only
two-story building in Hope, "Chinese Joe's Saloon and
Grocery".

TONIO MAZZINI (32) and Trapper Ivan muscle a corner post.
Tonio is an Italian emigre and the town carpenter. He built
Chinese Joe's, now struggles to construct his own building.

The two settle the post in place, catch their breath.

TONIO

We're finito.

Trapper Ivan looks around, a man of few words, he's puzzled.

TONIO (CONT'D)

No lumber, no walls.

TRAPPER IVAN

When?

TONIO

Coming on the Alki.

TRAPPER IVAN

(nods)

Dah!

Tonio wipes his face with a bandana, SIGHS.

TONIO

Could be the end, mio amico.

Trapper Ivan frowns.

TONIO (CONT'D)
I'm almost out of money.

INT. STEAMSHIP SS ALKI - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Captain Bruce sits at an ornate round table, pours two shots of whiskey, hands one to JOHN LANDRY (58). This is Mary's father. He wears a dark wool suit, a clerical collar visible.

They clink glasses. Captain Bruce sips, John gulps his.

JOHN
Thank you Captain Bruce. A most satisfactory trip.

Captain Bruce smiles.

CAPTAIN BRUCE
Did Mary enjoy the voyage?

JOHN
Of course, of course.
(quick change of subject)
When will our belongings... and the piano be unloaded?

CAPTAIN BRUCE
Later today. The piano tomorrow.

John frowns.

JOHN
As I said before, the piano...

CAPTAIN BRUCE
Will be unloaded when we can get to it...tomorrow.

Captain Bruce smiles, holds the bottle toward John's glass.

JOHN
No, no, I have much to do.

CAPTAIN BRUCE
I'll look for you later.

John nods, hustles off.

INT. CHINESE JOE'S SALOON - DAY

SALLY SEYMORE (40, former slave, daughter of a slave owner) stands behind the bar, looks at the dwindled supply of booze.

She wears the saloon gal uniform: lace, silk, lots of cleavage and bare calves.

SALLY
(yells)
Chinese Joe.

A sharply dressed Chinese man in a quilted Chinese suit with a top hat and gold pocket watch strolls through the door from the grocery. This is CHINESE JOE (a renowned wealthy businessman who was a real life character in 1800's Alaska.)

SALLY (CONT'D)
We're almost out of booze. I'm gonna have to water this down! Maybe we'll get through TODAY.

CHINESE JOE
I have an order arriving.

A STEAM WHISTLE BLOWS

SALLY
Thank the lord!

EXT. DOCK/SS ALKI GANG PLANK - LATER

The dock bustles as workers unload the *SS Alki*.

Tonio jumps down from a horse-drawn wagon.

Nearby KAGANAQ (40s), a native Alutiiq fisherman, nearly drops a crate of salmon as an eagle buzzes his head, stealing a fish. The noise startles a rat from under the wagon.

TONIO
Ciao Kaganag! That eagle knows how to get the best fish.

Tonio CHUCKLES, Kaganag, good-naturedly GRUMBLES. Tonio looks at the ship, his smile slips. He takes a deep breath, strides up the gang plank.

EXT. SS ALKI DECK - MOMENTS LATER

Captain Bruce supervises the lifting of cargo from the deck. Tonio steps around a straining deckhand, stops, helps lift.

Captain Bruce notices Tonio, eyes a pile of milled lumber.

CAPTAIN BRUCE
You have the payment?

TONIO
Ah, um, can I--

CAPTAIN BRUCE
How much?

TONIO
Eleven dollars and... some gold
dust.

Captain Bruce shakes his head.

CAPTAIN BRUCE
That barely covers half. So I give
you half. I take the gold dust for
my troubles.

TONIO
(cajoling)
Mio Captain.

CAPTAIN BRUCE
Half, or none. I can sell all of it
in Juneau.

TONIO
Si, si.

CAPTAIN BRUCE
One hour.

Tonio heads across the deck, passes Martine who gawks at the deckhands. John scans the dock while Mary eyes Tonio.

TONIO
Ciao.

Mary steps behind John, looks away.

EXT. DOCK/SS ALKI GANG PLANK - LATER

Deckhands YELL and GRUNT, lower the lumber onto Tonio's wagon. He and Trapper Ivan, still grubby and bloody, tie it down.

TONIO
Grazie, grazie.

Atop the gang plank Martine looks at the hustle and bustle on the dock, eyes big. John steps to his shoulder.

JOHN
Boy! Stop lollygagging! We have
God's work to do.

Martine goes down the plank and onto the dock.

A booted foot under a white petticoat lifts, about to step onto the gang plank hesitates as a rat CHIRPS, runs across the dock end of the gang plank.

All eyes are on Mary, a nearly blinding vision in the prim cream dress compared to the dirty brown of the surroundings.

The dockworkers, Tonio and Trapper Ivan stop, stare at Mary.

She looks around, sees Trapper Ivan, shivers. Trapper Ivan realizes how grubby he is, wipes at the blood on his shirt.

John notices the reaction to Mary, stands close.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 (loud preacher voice)
 Tonight, hear God's word and the
 voice of an angel...
 (quiet)
 Daughter.

John nudges Mary, she glances at where the rat went, inhales, heads down. The workers gawk as she walks away.

PRELAP: MARY SINGS A CAPELLA

MARY (V.O.)
 It is well--

INT. COOKHOUSE/EXT. COOKHOUSE - LATE DAY

The cookhouse has a canvas roof, open sides and rows of tables.

Mary is lost in the music, oblivious to the few miners, trappers and townspeople listening raptly. Tonio sits at a long table in the front row.

MARY
 -- it is well, with my soul. When
 peace, like a river,--

Outside John hands out leaflets: "Revival: Hear GOD'S WORD."
 Trapper Ivan takes a leaflet, heads inside.

MARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 attendeth my way; When sorrows like
 sea billows roll;--

Trapper Ivan sits next to Tonio, watches, enthralled.

BEANS (60s), white beard, denim coveralls, the proprietor of the cookhouse, listens while cleaning a big bean pot.

MARY (CONT'D)

(slowly fades)

Whatever my lot, thou has taught me
to say; it is well, with my soul.
It is well, it is well, with my
soul.

INT. COOKHOUSE - LATER

John, head bowed--

JOHN

Lord, I surrender to you all that I
have. I offer my life, my heart, my
spirit and all my riches, as do all
those here, to serve those who
serve the Lord. Amen.

MUMBLED AMENS from the audience. John nods at Mary, then Martine.

MARY

(a cappella singing)

Praise God from whom all blessings
flow--

Martine hands a collection plate to a miner.

MARY (CONT'D)

-- Praise Him all creatures here
below--

Mary eyes the men, wonders if she can handle this?

INT. LANDRY TENT - NIGHT [IT'S STILL DAYLIGHT]

Mary wipes her face before a battered mirror.

John stumbles through the tent flap, still daylight outside.

JOHN

Damn sun never sets.

He takes a sip from a metal flask.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Where's the plate, boy?

MARTINE
On the table Papa.

The collection plate is on Mary's table. John paws through the offerings, finds some silver coins, picks up a small bag, pours a few gold flakes in his palm.

JOHN
The Lord provideth!

John notices Mary staring at his hand. He tucks the gold back in the bag, moves behind Mary, pulls pins from her hair.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Wear it down tomorrow.

He pulls a red scarf from the open trunk beside her, lays it across her shoulder.

JOHN (CONT'D)
And this.

INT. LANDRY TENT - MORNING

Mary wears a plain gray dress, reads her Bible. Martine on his cot is engrossed in Mark Twain's novel "Pudd'nhead Wilson", not something his father would allow if he knew.

John sprawls across a rough bed, still in yesterday's clothes. He SNORES. Mary glances at John. He releases a long, loud, gargled SNORE that wakes him up.

Martine scrambles to hide the book under his pillow.

MARY
Father, I must get supplies.

JOHN
(yawns)
I'll get them later.

MARY
My special supplies.

JOHN
(waves his hand)
There's a coin in the plate.
Martine, you go.

Martine jumps up, ready to explore.

John MUMBLES, takes a sip from his flask, rolls over, asleep.

Mary removes a silver coin from the collection plate, surreptitiously takes a second coin, stuffs it in her pocket.

Martine fidgets, peaks out the tent flap, he's excited.

Mary glances at John who faces the tent wall, his BREATHS LOUD. She gives Martine the coin, he bounds outside.

From her trunk Mary removes a small chest of feminine things: lotions, powders, tinctures. She grabs a dark glass bottle, pours a small amount of gold dust into it.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MORNING

Martine bounds down the dirt street, excitedly eyes the town and people, a rag tag group from all over the world.

RATTLE AND CREAK of dogs pulling a wood-wheeled cart. WILD DOG (60s), matted beard, dirty clothes, rides in a wood-wheeled cart pulled by a team of sled dogs. Yells--

WILD DOG
On by! On by!

Wild Dog narrowly misses Martine who excitedly watches the dogs race by, oblivious to an angry Wild Dog.

Martin passes a ramshackle building advertising "Liquor, Food & Mining Supplies", waves at the rough men lounging outside.

As he approaches "Sam Lee's Chinese Laundry", SAM LEE (40), throws a pail of water in front of him. Martine jumps over the puddle, smooshes in mud on the other side, LAUGHS.

EXT. CHINESE JOE'S SALOON AND GROCERY - MORNING

Chinese Joe's is a bit rustic. On the first floor is the saloon and a grocery store.

Martine skips to the boardwalk, considers the two doors, opens the door on the left. LAUGHTER and BAWDY MUSIC erupt, a ragged miner stumbles out. Martine jumps back.

Cautious, he cracks open the other door, straightens, smiles.

INT. CHINESE JOE'S GROCERY - MOMENTS LATER

Chinese Joe smiles at Martine.

CHINESE JOE

Come in, please. Welcome to Chinese Joe's. We have everything you need.

Martine gawks. There's a dainty tea service, French soaps, bags of beans, gold pans, picks, everything miners need.

CHINESE JOE (CONT'D)

What do you need?

An embarrassed beat.

MARTINE

Where's the--
(whispers)
lady towels?

CHINESE JOE

Erm.
(yells)
Sally!

Sally strides through the door to the saloon.

SALLY

Now what?

Chinese Joe whispers in Sally's ear. She eyes Martine.

SALLY (CONT'D)

For you?

MARTINE

No, no, no. For my sister.

Sally heads to the back of the store.

FRANNY SEYMORE (15, African-American/Cajun), carries a wooden box past Martine to the counter, unloads small boxes. She wears a demure brown dress, a red bow on her braid.

Martine joins Franny, eyes on the basket.

MARTINE (CONT'D)

Creole Pralines!

FRANNY

They're all the way from New Orleans. Came in with you on the Alki.

MARTINE

How'd you know that?

FRANNY

I keep track of everything that happens in this town. For my news paper.

She hands Martine a handwritten news sheet, he looks it over, flips to the back.

MARTINE

This ain't a news paper.

Franny points to a story on the front.

FRANNY

That's a news story.

MARTINE

But--

She flips to the back, points.

FRANNY

And that's an advertisement.

MARTINE

(reads)

Miss Sarah's Creole Pralines, in stock at Chinese Joe's.

(looks up)

Oh!

FRANNY

Chinese Joe is my biggest advertiser.

Martine looks over the sheet.

MARTINE

He's the only advertiser!

FRANNY

Well, he pays, that's what matters.

She GIGGLES. Martine looks at the pralines, SIGHS.

MARTINE

My sister loves these.

FRANNY

You been to New Orleans?

MARTINE

No, I grew up in Shreveport.

FRANNY
 (giggles)
 How can that be? You're not all
 grown up yet.

MARTINE
 (puffs up)
 Right near.

Franny finishes loading the basket.

MARTINE (CONT'D)
 Papa went to New Orleans sometimes.
 Always brought back Miss Sarah's
 Creole Pralines.

FRANNY
 I was born in New Orleans.

MARTINE
 How'd you end up here?

FRANNY
 (spunky)
 How did you?

MARTINE
 (sassy)
 Traveled by train and then
 steamship.

They GIGGLE.

Sally strolls up with a bag, hands it to Martine.

SALLY
 Here's your... TOWELS.

Martine GULPS, drops the coin on the counter, runs out.

EXT. DOCK/SS ALKI DECK - DAY

Deckhands unload more cargo, a wood stove, a rocking chair.

Franny sits on a crate, holds a notebook and pencil. Watches,
 hopes something interesting gets unloaded.

Sam Lee backs his two-horse wagon past Franny, she waves. He
 nods, scrambles down.

And then she sees it, something interesting. A large claw-
 footed bathtub slowly rises from the deck.

Franny's mouth drops open, her eyes go big. She scribbles in her notebook.

John and Martine stroll past Franny. He waves, she waves back, snaps her eyes to the tub swinging over the dock.

Sam scurries to the back of the wagon, guides the bathtub down onto the wagon.

John strolls up to Sam.

JOHN

My good man. I could use your help delivering God's word.

Sam looks confused, he has a different "God".

JOHN (CONT'D)

I have an item I need to take to the Cookhouse.

Sam nods, smiles.

EXT. DOCK/SS ALKI DECK - LATER

Two deckhands strain at a rope, slowly a battered spinet piano rises above the ship's deck.

Franny, wide eyed, watches the piano dangle precariously, she scribbles in her notebook. The ropes slide, she GASPS.

The deckhands muscle the rope, stabilize it.

On the dock John glares at the deckhands, Martine fidgets, holds his breath.

The piano swings over, then BANGS onto Sam's wagon behind the tub, a DISCORDANT CLANG.

Martine scrambles up to the piano, looks for damage.

JOHN

Is it alright?

Martine runs his fingers across the keys. We hear PART OF THE HYMN from the open.

MARTINE

(relieved)

Yes, yes it is, Papa.

EXT. OUTDOOR PRIVIES - DAY

Mary skirts behind the tents and buildings, picks her way through mud, rocks, cast off debris, the bag of feminine towels gripped tightly.

A ramshackle row of privies (outhouses) sit behind the buildings. Sally exits one, straightens her skirt, adjusts her bodice. She notices Mary, glares at the bag.

SALLY

Why'd you make that poor boy get
your towels?

Mary is taken aback, nervously eyes Sally, then realizes what she is. Mary raises her chin.

MARY

It's not your business what my...
brother...
(haughty, stiff spine)
what I do.

SALLY

In this town everything's my
business.

MARY

Well!

Mary strides by, then struggles to open the door of a privy. She stumbles, then scrambles inside, SLAMS THE DOOR.

A THROATY LAUGH from Sally as she ambles off.

SALLY

Stupid bitch.

EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Trapper Ivan's dog team and wooden cart are "parked" out front. Ivan comes out, unwraps a package, reveals a book.

Sam drives by, John next to him. Ivan sees Martine in the back with the claw-footed tub and piano, he's baffled by the odd load. Walks after the wagon.

EXT. COOKHOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Sam stops the wagon in front of the cookhouse. Martine hops down, Sam and John join him, all look at the piano. They ponder how to get the heavy piano off the wagon.

Trapper Ivan stops beside the trio, sees them staring at the piano, he copies them looking.

MARTINE
How we gettin' it off?

Sam and John have blank looks.

TRAPPER IVAN
Yah. I do it.

CUT TO:

Trapper Ivan stands ready at the tailgate. Sam, John and Martine strain, Ivan pulls, the others push.

The piano teeters, Ivan GRUNTS, takes the weight, gets one side on the ground, muscles the piano down.

John EXHALES, then notices the distance still to get the piano in the cookhouse, SIGHS. Ivan sees the problem.

TRAPPER IVAN (CONT'D)
Dah!

Ivan raises one end of the piano and swings it around, begins "walking" it inside.

INT. LANDRY TENT - LATER

Mary sits in front of her mirror, prepares for tonight's revival. A pale lavender gown shows off her creamy throat and some chest. She ponders her reflection, a dispirited SIGH. She picks up the red scarf we saw previously, reveals a small pearl handled knife on the table.

She wraps the scarf around her neck and over a shoulder, tries to hide the exposed skin. She eyes the knife, picks it up, tests the sharpness, hides it in a secret pocket.

She stares at her image. Like an automaton she pulls the pins out of her hair, a long strand caresses her cheek.

Martine bounds in.

MARTINE
Sis, we got the piano set up!

Mary ignores Martine, continues the ritual prep. He pulls out a black suit, begins dressing.

MARTINE (CONT'D)

Sounds pretty good, 'specially with no walls. At least there's a canvas roof, better than some places we've been. 'Course that broken key is still broken. But I can work around that, like I always do.

John enters, eyes Mary critically.

JOHN

A little more rouge.

MARY

Father, I...

JOHN

Enough of this melancholy. Your purpose is to bring joy into these people's lives.

Mary SWALLOWS, reaches for the rouge.

INT. COOKHOUSE - NIGHT [EVENING DAYLIGHT]

Trapper Ivan, Tonio and Sam Lee sit among a small crowd of miners, trappers and townspeople. Leah, Jakob and Captain Bruce are there as is Wild Dog and two scrungy cronies.

Franny sits on a box in the corner, scribbles notes about what she sees.

Martine is at the piano, Mary stands behind it, uses it like a shield. John clutches a bible, paces.

JOHN

Who among us has not sinned. But in the house of the lord that sin can be forgiven!

(softer)

Let us pray.

John bows his head as do Mary, Martine, Leah, Jakob, Tonio and a few others. Captain Bruce marvels at John's performance.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Dear lord. Help your flock that gathers here today. Forgive their sins. Heal their hurts.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Guide them in your wisdom and lead
them to support our mission, here
in this humble tent...

LATER

Martine accompanies Mary on the spinet piano. She sings verse two of the hymn heard earlier, casts a spell on the audience.

MARY

(singing)

Though Satan should buffet, Though
trials should come, Let this blest
assurance control, That Christ has
regarded My helpless estate,...

Trapper Ivan is captivated by the beauty of the singing and Mary. Tonio listens, eyes closed. A smiling Sam doesn't understand the words, but HUMS the music.

Wild dog and his two cronies don't care about the music. One licks his lips, the other leers and Wild Dog fidgets, uncomfortable in his tightening pants.

Jakob glances at Leah's bulging stomach, readjusts himself. Captain Bruce travels his eyes over Mary's body.

Leah feels the Lord, she tents her hands in prayer, bows her head. John watches the crowd, he's pleased.

Franny scribbles furiously in her notebook.

MARY (CONT'D)

And hath shed His own blood for my
soul... It is well, with my soul,
It is well, it is well, with my
soul.

John lets the crowd bask in the music, then reels them in.

JOHN

Lord, we surrender to you all that
we have. We offer our life, our
heart, and all our riches to serve
those who serve the Lord. Amen.

Leah, Tonio and a few others sound out AMENS.

John nods at Martine who takes two collection plates off the piano. As he hands one to the nearest table, Leah bustles up, grabs the other plate. She works the far side encouraging each person to contribute. John tracks her efforts, smiles.

INT/EXT. COOKHOUSE - ENTRY - LATER

John shakes hands with people as they leave. Captain Bruce watches. Sam Lee, Trapper Ivan and Tonio come by.

Sam Lee palms together, bows. Trapper Ivan shakes his hand, his grip making John grimace. Tonio clasps John's hands leans in and European kisses him on both sides.

JOHN
(chuckles)
Glad you enjoyed it son.

TONIO
Si, si.

Tonio grabs his hand, shakes it, again.

TONIO (CONT'D)
I am Tonio Mazzini from Italy.

JOHN
Well yes. Welcome Tonio.

Leah waddles up with Jakob, joins a beaming Tonio. She holds an overflowing collection plate.

LEAH
I'm so pleased you are here. It was wonderful to hear the words of our Lord after so long.

JOHN
I'm glad to be here. John Landry, at yours and God's service.

LEAH
I am Mrs. Andersen, Leah. This is my husband Jakob. He's the postmaster.

John shakes Jakob's hand.

JOHN
Mamm... How long has it been, since you worshipped?

LEAH
Last Christmas, when we were stationed in Seattle.
(accusatory look at Jakob)
Um, uh...We've been here since the spring thaw.

(MORE)

LEAH (CONT'D)

I guess preachers don't come this far north, well, until you.

JOHN

I'm pleased to be able to serve the Lord here.

LEAH

Oh that's an answer to my prayers. I've so wanted a church in Hope.

TONIO

Si, si. Hope should have a church.

JAKOB

Come on Leah, this isn't even a town. There's no point in building a church.

LEAH

We have buildings, we have a main street. It's a town.

JAKOB

Who's going to build a church? Some dirty miners and trappers?

Jakob takes Leah's elbow drags her off.

John eyes the money in the collection plate, looks at Captain Bruce who arches an eyebrow. John nods, smiles at Tonio.

INT. COOKHOUSE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Martine chats with Franny in the far corner.

Mary waits behind the piano, uncomfortable. Wild Dog and his cronies eye Mary as they laugh, bump shoulders and leer at her. They amble her way.

Nervous, Mary fumbles for her pocket, clasps the knife.

Oblivious to Mary's discomfort, John strides through the cookhouse.

JOHN

Martine!

John notices the men--

JOHN (CONT'D)

Gentlemen. Thank you for your generosity and your commitment to God's work. I trust I'll see you at our next service.

Mumbled YEAHS, UH HUHS.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

John strolls along main street, carries revival fliers. Where Martine saw fun and adventure, John views the ramshackle tents and shacks as a town struggling to survive.

He arrives at Chinese Joe's, heads into the saloon.

INT. CHINESE JOES' SALOON - CONTINUOUS

John's eyes roam around the room. This is better than expected. Several tables are full of poker players.

Behind the bar Sally pours a whiskey shot for Jakob.

Franny serves drinks to a table where Captain Bruce plays poker with GRIZZLED MINER (60s), Trapper Ivan and Wild Dog.

John hands fliers to a table of trappers and old miners.

JOHN

Gentlemen. I haven't seen you at our revival services. Come hear my daughter Mary sing God's praises.

CAPTAIN BRUCE

(loudly)

You want to hear her sing. She has the voice of an angel.

John smiles at Captain Bruce.

TRAPPER IVAN

Dah. An Angel.

WILD DOG

Nice on the eyes too.

Captain Bruce, Grizzled Miner and Wild Dog LAUGH. Trapper Ivan doesn't think it's funny.

Captain Bruce waves John over.

CAPTAIN BRUCE

(loud)

Sally. A whiskey for the Preacher.

Sally nods. Wild Dog looks speculatively at John.

INT. LANDRY TENT - LATER

Mary paces, like an anxious caged animal. Martine reads his "Pudd'nhead Wilson" book, aware of Mary's agitation.

Mary sits, massages her scalp to ease the headache, then rubs the back of her neck. She can't sit still, gets up, paces.

MARTINE

Sister, you're interferin' with my reading.

MARY

(sarcastic)

I'm sorry I'm bothering you.

Martine SIGHS, closes the book, sits up.

MARTINE

What are you fretting about?

MARY

The men here, I --

MARTINE

They're like the miners in all the other camps. Well except for the dog teamers, that's new.

MARY

Some... I don't like how they look at me.

Mary crosses her arms over her chest, symbolically protects herself, continues her pacing.

MARTINE

Calm down. You're gonna make yourself sick with all this fretting.

Mary stops, realizes there's a solution. She sits, pulls a tincture of laudanum from her small chest, dampens a cloth with water, drips the last of the laudanum on the cloth. She lays down, places the cloth over her face, INHALES DEEPLY.

Martine watches, shakes his head, returns to his book.

INT. LANDRY TENT - LATER

Mary rests, the cloth covering her face. Martine dozes.

The tent door flap RUSTLES open.

JOHN

Wake up Boy, we've got work to do.
Mary!

Mary slowly removes the cloth, opens an unfocused eye.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I've spread the word. There'll be
more coming tonight!

A glassy eyed Mary turns her head, gazes in the direction of John.

MARY

(low and slurred)
I'm unwell Father.

She pushes one hand on her lower abdomen, makes the universal sign of menstrual pain, turns away, curls her legs up.

John clenches his fists, angrily stares at Mary's back. He knows she'll not sing tonight.

INT. COOKHOUSE - LATER

John walks up to Beans. CLANGING POTS, the CRACKLE of the stove fires drown them out. John gestures, Beans shakes his head, puts his hand out, John gives him two silver coins.

As John stomps off, Beans crosses out "Revival Tonight, 8:00 pm" on the chalk board sign.

INT. COOKHOUSE - LATER

Beans is back scrubbing his pot after dinner.

Leah leads Jakob inside. She looks around, wonders where John, Mary and Martine are. She sees the chalk board.

LEAH

Mr. Beans, no revival tonight?

Beans glances at the chalk board.

BEANS

That's what it says 'aint it?

Leah, ever polite--

LEAH
Will there be a revival tomorrow?

BEANS
Don't know.

Beans turns back to the pot.

LEAH
(to Jakob)
Oh dear. I so looked forward to
hearing the Lord's word and
rejoicing in the music. I hope
they'll be back.

Jakob rolls his eyes. He puts Leah's hand on his arm and escorts her out of the cookhouse.

EXT. COOKHOUSE/STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Leah notes the shabbiness of the cookhouse and the ramshackle street as she and Jakob stroll out of the cookhouse.

LEAH
This isn't a good place to hear
God's word.

JAKOB
This town isn't good for anything.
Hope? There's no "hope" here.

LEAH
Oh Jakob...there's always hope.
This town just needs to believe.

Jakob looks at the wood and canvas structure of Sam Lee's Chinese Laundry and the tent building next to it.

JAKOB
Look at these tent...buildings. If
they believed this place had a
future they'd build something
lasting. Even the gawd damn Post
Office is temporary.

LEAH
I believe!...I believe there's hope
here....We just need to show
everyone the way... God's way...
(thinks, an idea comes)
(MORE)

LEAH (CONT'D)

A church. We can build a church for
Preacher John and Mary. And for us.

Jakob shakes his head. He helps Leah up the step to the Post Office. She MOANS, rubs her back.

EXT. SS ALKI GANGPLANK

It's ten pm and the Alki basks in the extended daylight. John climbs the gangplank, strides across the deck.

INT. STEAMSHIP SS ALKI - CAPTAINS QUARTERS - EVENING

Captain Bruce pours postmaster Jakob a glass of whiskey. A deck of poker cards is on the table.

CAPTAIN BRUCE

How's Leah feeling?

JAKOB

She's always moaning... Her feet hurt. Her back aches.

CAPTAIN BRUCE

It can't be easy on her being here.

JAKOB

Ahh. She shouldn't have come. But she's a stubborn bitch.

Captain Bruce grimaces, shocked by Jakob's attitude.

A double TAP on the door.

CAPTAIN BRUCE

Enter.

John strides in, anger barely contained. His chair SCRAPES gratingly as he pulls it out.

JOHN

Captain, Jakob.

Captain Bruce pours a glass of whiskey, slides it to John, who gulps the shot, hands it back for a refill.

John looks at the daylight streaming in the window, pulls out his pocket watch.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Ten p.m. And it's still daylight?

CAPTAIN BRUCE

Back in me hometown of Inverness
June days are long, the sun doesn't
set until almost half past ten.

JAKOB

We still got ninety more minutes to
go here in the back of beyond.

JOHN

It's unnatural.

CAPTAIN BRUCE

We sailors like it. Easier to see
where we're goin'. And the
mermaids.

They all CHUCKLE. Captain Bruce picks up the cards, deals.
They look at their hands, arrange cards.

CAPTAIN BRUCE (CONT'D)

How's Mary?

JOHN

Hmph! It was gonna' be a full house
tonight!

CAPTAIN BRUCE

They'll come back.

JAKOB

Leah thinks a church is the answer.
Why would anybody want a church in
this God forsaken land?

Jakob glances at John.

JAKOB (CONT'D)

No offense Preacher.

JOHN

None taken. I found that a few
revivals and then interest wanes.
Everybody's ready to move on.

CAPTAIN BRUCE

Well old boys, in the meantime you
can play the cards tonight.

JOHN

Thank you Lord.

JAKOB

Amen!

INT. LANDRY TENT - DAY

John sprawls on his bed, SNORES. Martine reads and Mary puts the last pin in her hair. She looks at John, then pulls coins from her secret stash.

She quietly walks over to Martine, taps him. They go outside.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Mary and Martine walk past Ivan and Tonio working on his building. Mary stares straight ahead as Martine waves at the men who wave back.

Mary comes to a stop in front of the two doors to Chinese Joe's Saloon and Grocery. She heads to the door on the left.

MARTINE

You don't want that one. Trust me.

Martine opens the door on the right, they go in.

INT. CHINESE JOE'S GROCERY - MOMENTS LATER

Martine heads over to Franny who's working on her news sheet in the corner. Mary looks around the store, notices Chinese Joe behind the counter.

CHINESE JOE

Welcome to my store Miss Mary. I'm Chinese Joe.

MARY

(surprised)
Oh. Good Day Mr. Joe.

CHINESE JOE

Everyone calls me Chinese Joe. So you call me Chinese Joe.

MARY

Alright M...Chinese Joe.

CHINESE JOE

What do you need?
(boastful)
I have everything!

MARY

Really?

CHINESE JOE
If I don't I'll order it for you.

MARY
Ah.

CHINESE JOE
Arrives in one month, maybe two.

Mary looks around, concerned.

MARY
Do you have Dr. Jones's Laudanum,
Tincture of Opium?

CHINESE JOE
Oh yes. Very popular.

Chinese Joe goes to a cabinet, removes a bottle, puts it on the counter.

Sally bustles in.

SALLY
Franny it's time for your numbers
lessons.

Franny heads into the saloon. Martine tags along.

MARY
Martine!

Sally notices Mary.

SALLY
It's the religious singer.
(sing song)
Sounds like an angel...
(sarcastic)
Buying your own things, now?

CHINESE JOE
(calm)
Miss Mary this is Sally. She's my
business partner, runs my saloon.

Mary is surprised.

The door opens and Leah waddles in. She eyes both women,
GULPS.

Sally looks the two women up and down. Mary and Leah both
look away. Sally bristles at the snubs, storms off.

CAPTAIN BRUCE
Mrs Leah. Have you met Miss Mary?

LEAH
Yes. Well no. I mean I was at the
revival...You sing beautifully.

MARY	LEAH (CONT'D)
(resigned)	(awed)
Like an angel.	Like an angel.

MARY (CONT'D)
I do my best to share God's music.

LEAH
It was divine.

Leah takes a step, MOANS, rubs her sore back.

CHINESE JOE
Mrs. Leah?

LEAH
Ehh. I can't see my feet, but I can
feel 'em.

MARY
And your back hurts?

LEAH
Yesss!

MARY
I remember that, um.
(catches herself)
When momma had Martine.

Mary picks up the laudanum.

MARY (CONT'D)
Put a couple drops of this on a
damp cloth and cover your face when
you take a nap.

Chinese Joe gets a bottle, hands it to Leah.

LEAH
Thank you.

Mary looks at the door to the saloon.

MARY
I better get Martine.

CHINESE JOE

Let him stay a bit longer. Franny
can use someone to challenge her.

MARY

Well, I--

Chinese Joe stares into Mary's eyes.

CHINESE JOE

It's good for a person to learn
about all kinds of people. To
appreciate what everyone brings to
our world.

Mary looks down, clears her throat. She pulls coins from her
pocket. Chinese Joe waves her off.

CHINESE JOE (CONT'D)

I'll start a tab. You pay me start
of next month.

MARY

Thank you...Chinese Joe.

She turns, takes a step to leave.

LEAH

Miss Mary, can you wait a moment?
I'll walk with you.

MARY

Sure.

Mary steps aside as Leah shops.

EXT. CHINESE JOE'S GROCERY - MINUTES LATER

Mary holds the door as Leah gingerly steps onto the
boardwalk, steadies herself. Each carry shopping bags.

Mary gently grabs Leah's arm. They slowly walk along the
boardwalk, then onto the dirt street.

LEAH

It's nice to have another lady
here.

MARY

I noticed there's only three of us.

LEAH

Two that are ladies.

MARY

Well, yes.

LEAH

Your coming here is a blessing.

Mary is uncomfortable.

MARY

God provides the blessings, I'm just his servant singing his message.

LEAH

Oh yes. You've shown us what we need, a place where all can receive his message. Some place long-lasting. A church!

MARY

We put on a revival services. Not a church. Not lasting.

LEAH

But you can stay. Doesn't Preacher John want his own church? Where he can preach every week, see how God's word makes lives better. I know we can raise money for a proper church building.

Leah stops just past the HOPE TRADING COMPANY building, points at the miners milling outside. Inside the building Tonio listens to the ladies.

LEAH (CONT'D)

These miners look scruffy, but they have gold from when it was found near here. They'll help because they deserve a house of the Lord.

MARY

I, I wouldn't want to get their hopes up. We might be gone before the church is built.

LEAH

Please stay. We could do this together. Bring the Lord to Hope. Create a real town here.

Tonio comes outside, excited, he has a plan for his building.

TONIO

This is fantastico. A church. That is what my building is for.

LEAH

Oh Tonio, it's perfect. And it's already started. We just need to raise funds to finish it.

MARY

It would be wonderful to sing in a church again.

TONIO

Yes! Yes!

Leah claps her hands together.

LEAH

God has shown us the way.

MARY

I don't know about my father. He likes being an itinerant preacher.

LEAH

You'll convince him... Alright, we've got much work to do.

Mary frowns as each head off in different directions.

INT. LANDRY TENT - DAY

Mary enters the tent. John rouses.

JOHN

Where've you been?

MARY

I went to the grocery.

JOHN

I thought you were ill.

MARY

Well, uh. The laudanum helped.
(shows the bag)
I needed more.

JOHN

Alright. Make sure you use it sooner. We can't afford to cancel anymore services.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

This town...It's 'gonna be a short visit. We may not have much more time until the steamboat leaves.

John pulls off the clerical collar, removes his shirt, rummages in a trunk for clothes.

Mary sits at the table organizes the laudanum bottle with her other feminine things.

MARY

We could stay.

JOHN

Why?!

MARY

Leah wants to build a church. She wants you to be the preacher.

JOHN

(dismissive)

Ehhh.

MARY

(wistful)

It would be lovely to sing in a church again.

JOHN

It's better for us, for you, that they don't know us. The longer we spend here the more questions. Besides they give most at the beginning.

Mary bows her head, dejected. She prays.

EXT. TONIO'S BUILDING - DAY

Tonio stands on a ladder, balances one end of a beam on a post. Trapper Ivan heaves the other end on his shoulder, climbs a ladder, lifts the beam onto the other post.

Trapper Ivan uses a heavy mallet to pound nails into the post, starts down the ladder.

Leah comes to a stop in front of the building, watches.

Tonio notices Leah. She gingerly walks into the building, goes around the pile of lumber from the steamship.

LEAH

This is exciting! How long will it take?

TONIO

With the rest of the lumber on the ship and another bigger load... We could have it done by winter.

LEAH

(disappointed)
That's a long time.

TONIO

(chuckles)
Winter comes at the end of August.

LEAH

Oh.
(brightens)
Oh!

TRAPPER IVAN

We need to get to the dock, before the Alki leaves.

LEAH

Oh yes.

Leah pulls several silver coins from her pocket, hands them to Tonio.

TONIO

Mrs Leah, are you sure?

LEAH

I am proud to be the first to give to the church.

Tonio and Trapper Ivan head off as Leah turns in a slow circle, overcome with joy.

EXT. SS ALKI GANG PLANK/DECK - DAY

Tonio strides up the gang plank, heads to the lumber.

TONIO

(yelling)
Captain! Captain!

Captain Bruce comes out of the wheel house.

TONIO (CONT'D)

I have the money.

Tonio holds the coins out, Captain Bruce counts them.

He WOLF WHISTLES, deckhands appear.

CAPTAIN BRUCE

Get this lumber off loaded.
Quickly. We sail in thirty minutes.

INT. COOKHOUSE - DAY

Beans is packing up. He adds a skillet onto a pile of pots and cookware on his prep table.

John jauntily strolls in, looks about, he's confused. The tables and chairs are stacked to one side. He notices Beans and the pile of cookware.

JOHN

What's going on Beans?

BEANS

What's it look like I'm 'doin'?

JOHN

Packin' up?

BEANS

Yup.

JOHN

Why?

BEANS

The salmon are runnin' good on the
Kenai River.

JOHN

(incredulous)
You're going fishin'?

BEANS

Yup.

JOHN

But I want to do a revival service,
tonight... For the next few days.

BEANS

Good. In a week or so I'll be back.
You can do it then.

Beans pulls a canvas tarp over the pile of cookware.

JOHN

But, but.

LONG BLAST of the Steamship Alki. John looks down the road. In the distance smoke billows out of the Alki's stacks. He turns back to Beans who's disappeared.

Frantic, he runs off toward the dock.

EXT. DOCK - MINUTES LATER

Tonio and Trapper Ivan drive the wagon loaded with the lumber by Franny who sits on a crate scribbling in her notebook.

The SS Alki picks up speed, now several boat-lengths away from the dock.

John stumbles onto the dock, stops, looks forlornly at the departing Alki. He pants for breath.

FRANNY

It's too bad you missed it. The postmaster brought the mail bags and Captain Bruce saluted.

JOHN

(confused)
Where's it going?

FRANNY

Juneau, probably Dyea...It's symbolic you know. A special send off of all those letters from little Hope, Alaska, heading all over the world.

JOHN

When's it coming back.

FRANNY

Next month.

John stomps off.

INT. LANDRY TENT - LATER

John storms into the tent. Martine quickly pulls out sheet music, studies it. Mary reads her bible.

John grabs his whiskey flask, takes a swig.

Mary follows his moves out of the corner of her eye.

MARTINE

Papa?

JOHN

(snarls)

The Alki sailed.

John looks angrily at Mary.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You got your wish. We're stuck here!

MARTINE

(placating)

I like it here Papa.

JOHN

This place has no future. People close up to go fishin'. The post office is in a tent. And how the good Lord could a church survive, HERE?

John drains his flask, stomps out of the tent.

EXT. MAIN STREET - LATER

John shuffles down main street. He looks askance at the rough miners, the shoddy tents, the dirt.

He nears Tonio's building. Trapper Ivan and Tonio unload the lumber. Leah watches, a pleased smile on her face.

Leah notices John, waddles eagerly towards him.

LEAH

Preacher John. We're so excited.

TONIO

Si, Si!

TRAPPER IVAN

Dah!

JOHN

(depressed)

I'm sorry there won't be a service tonight. Beans has "gone fishin'".

TRAPPER IVAN

Dah. The salmon are runnin'.

JOHN

So he said. And the SS Alki sailed.

TONIO

To return with new and wondrous things...

JOHN

In a month.

TRAPPER IVAN

So fast, those steamships. I remember when it was months between ships.

LEAH

And it will bring the lumber to finish the church. Are you excited to have a church?

John looks at the missing walls and roofless structure.

JOHN

This doesn't look like a church.

LEAH

But it will.

JOHN

You need more than wood.

LEAH

But isn't the most important part of a church the people?

JOHN

Um, uh.

LEAH

And we have great people.

Leah beams at all three men.

JOHN

How you going to pay for this, church building? Hope is barely surviving.

LEAH

The miners will help.

John looks around, shakes his head.

LEAH (CONT'D)

They turned out the other night.
The collection plates were
overflowing.

TONIO

The old miners have gold. From the
Turnagain Gold Rush of 1889.

JOHN

There was a gold rush here?!

TRAPPER IVAN

Dah.

JOHN

Why isn't Hope in better shape?

TRAPPER IVAN

We have simple needs.

JOHN

So why would they pay for a church?

TRAPPER IVAN

They been waitin' for something
worthwhile to spend it on.

LEAH

And what is more worthwhile than
serving the Lord and building a
house of worship. With you
preaching and Mary singing, we're
sure to raise LOTS of funds.

John looks at their hopeful faces. It dawns on him that
raising funds to build a church means far more money than
what he collects at a revival.

JOHN

I do feel the Lord here.

LEAH

Oh yes.

JOHN

We need to let the people know our
plans. See the need. Can we do a
service here, tomorrow?

LEAH

Oh, that's a wonderful idea.

Tonio looks at Trapper John, who nods.

TONIO

We can bring the piano here and
some chairs from Beans' place. He
won't need 'em for a bit.

JOHN

I'll get Martine to help.

Leah claps her hands as the men get to work.

PREPARATION MONTAGE

A PIANO and STRINGS play a mid tempo version of "It Is Well
With My Soul".

--TONIO'S BUILDING [THE CHURCH]: Trapper Ivan moves a massive
pile of lumber to the side, while Tonio can only carry one
piece.

--CHINESE JOE'S GROCERY AND SALOON: Leah finds no one in the
grocery, cautiously enters the saloon, finds Franny.

--COOKHOUSE: Trapper Ivan, Tonio, John and Martine wrestle
the piano onto Tonio's wagon.

--CHINESE JOE'S SALOON: Franny writes as Leah talks and
gestures.

--LANDRY TENT: Leah drags Mary out of the tent.

--THE CHURCH: Martine and Trapper Ivan move the piano into
place.

--CHINESE JOE'S SALOON: Franny shows Leah and Mary their ad
in the news sheet. "First Service in the Church of Hope. Help
build the House of the Lord."

--THE CHURCH: Tonio builds a pulpit.

--CHINESE JOE'S SALOON: Franny, Leah and Mary handwrite
copies of the news sheet.

--THE CHURCH: Tonio and John set up the pulpit.

--CHINESE JOE'S SALOON: Sally watches Franny, Mary and Leah
write, then to the ladies' surprise she joins the effort.

--CHINESE JOE'S BOARDWALK: Franny gives Martine news sheets.

--THE CHURCH: Mary helps Leah sit down, then sweeps the wood
plank floor.

--HOPE TRADING COMPANY: Martine hands news sheets to the men outside, chats animatedly.

--THE CHURCH: Tonio and Trapper Ivan bring chairs to Mary and she arranges them in front of the pulpit.

--THE CHURCH: John tries out the pulpit, pantomimes a sermon.

--THE CHURCH: Close on - Tonio's hand places a roughhewn cross between the piano and the pulpit.

END MONTAGE

MUSIC CROSS FADES--

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE CHURCH [TONIO'S BUILDING] - LATE DAY

--Mary singing, Martine playing piano.

In front of the cross, eyes closed, Mary's face is lifted to the sky. John watches from behind the pulpit.

MARY

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O
my soul! It is well, with my soul,
It is well, it is well, with my
soul.

The last note fades away to silence. Mary opens her eyes to the crowd who are awestruck.

John notes the rapturous faces.

Leah gazes adoringly at Mary, Trapper Ivan's eyes are huge, Franny glances at Martine, SIGHS. Tonio smiles broadly, Grizzled Miner GULPS, Sally wipes her eye, Chinese Joe nods.

JOHN

Let us pray.

Most bow their heads except those from other religions.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Oh Lord, thank you for our joy in
your word. For sister Mary's
glorious voice and Brother
Martine's gifted music. For the
faith of sister Leah and the
selflessness of brother Tonio and
Trapper Ivan.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

We offer this meager building to you with the promise to turn it into a house of worship worthy of you. This we vow, AMEN.

A murmur of AMENS from the crowd.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Sister Leah.

Jakob helps Leah stand. She waddles to the front.

LEAH

Thank you all for coming. Today we launch our effort to honor our Lord with a church. Through our faith, hard work and His blessings we will build a place of worship that all of Hope will be proud of.

Leah heads back to her seat.

JOHN

Blessings sister Leah for leading us on this path.

John points up to the sides without walls.

JOHN (CONT'D)

There is much to do to finish our church. But we can not do this alone. We need your commitment to our cause. We can use your time and sweat. But we need money to buy the lumber to finish this building, for nails and windows, for furnishings. For the chalices and communion plates...For so, so many things that will make this a place of worship. Your generosity and spreading the word to your friends and neighbors will ensure we attain our goal.

John nods at Martine who picks up Mary's small chest and walks to the entrance.

JOHN (CONT'D)

As you leave today, and after future services, place your contribution in our fundraising chest. And if you feel moved to give at other times, I am always available.

INT. THE CHURCH [TONIO'S BUILDING] - DAY

The wall behind the cross is almost finished. Tonio and Grizzled Miner are on ladders with hammers. Trapper Ivan lifts a wood plank, angles one end to Tonio, the other to Grizzled Miner. HAMMERING as they nail it in.

Mary and Leah stand just inside the building, watching.

Tonio gets down, moves his ladder to the right of Grizzled Miner. Trapper Ivan hands them another plank. More HAMMERING, then they stop, done.

Leah APPLAUDS, Mary joins in. Tonio jumps from the ladder, bows. Grizzled Miner lifts his arm in a "TA DAH" motion. Trapper Ivan, thinks, then does a passable curtsy.

Mary and Leah clap harder, then GIGGLE.

TONIO
Grazie, grazie.

LEAH
Well done gentlemen. It's going fast.

Tonio sobers.

TONIO
I need more lumber.

LEAH
We've got a start on the money.

Leah hooks her arm through Mary's.

LEAH (CONT'D)
We'll raise the money.

TONIO
I'm sorry I can't do more.

LEAH
You've done so much.

Mary looks at the cross, then up to the sky.

MARY
It's beautiful. The cross, the pulpit, the piano. It already feels like a church. I don't think God cares we don't have a roof yet.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Jakob sits behind the counter, reads the Seattle Post-Intelligencer newspaper, May 12, 1896.

John enters. Jakob slowly lowers the paper.

JAKOB
What can I do for you?

JOHN
I have a letter to post.

John hands the envelope to Jakob who looks at the address.

JAKOB
New Orleans. Long ways...It won't go out until the Alki returns.

John nods.

JAKOB (CONT'D)
Two cents.

John gives him 2 pennies. Jakob stamps the post mark.

John lifts up the paper, looks at the front page article on the Missouri presidential convention.

JOHN
Hmm. You think McKinley's going to get the nomination?

JAKOB
Looks like it.

John looks closer, reads the article.

JAKOB (CONT'D)
Here, take it. I'm ready to be done reading for today.

JOHN
I don't want to...

JAKOB
I'm happy to share.

Jakob hands the paper to John.

JOHN
Much appreciated. What else does a postmaster do?

JAKOB

Here, not much. Most of the mail is posted when the steamship's due.

(wistful)

In Seattle, it was busy everyday.

JOHN

Why don't you go back to Seattle?

JAKOB

Well, uh,... This is a special assignment. They'll take me back, soon... So let me show you what I do to keep from getting bored.

Jakob grabs his hat.

JAKOB (CONT'D)

Cards and whiskey are a great way to pass the time... You know, Sally gets a New Orleans paper. I'm sure she'll share.

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

Mary and Leah sit at a makeshift table making fliers to advertise the next service and the church building campaign.

MARY

How'd you end up in Hope? I was surprised to see a post office.

LEAH

(deflecting)

This is the farthest one north.

MARY

Did you start it?

LEAH

No, it was here. Built during the 1889 gold rush.

Mary looks at Leah's baby bump.

MARY

Long way from home with the baby.

LEAH

Yeah. Jakob, got transferred here. He didn't have a choice. I don't think they knew about the baby.

MARY
Can't YOU go home, until after the
baby comes?

Leah hangs her head.

LEAH
My mama died and papa... It's not a
place I want to be with my baby.

MARY
Ah. I understand.

Jakob and John stroll past unaware of Mary and Leah who
notice the men, hear their FOOTSTEPS on the boardwalk.

Leah looks down, works on her flier. Mary frowns.

INT. THE CHURCH [TONIO'S BUILDING] - EVENING [STILL DAYLIGHT]

The crowd adds coins and satchels of gold to the money chest
Martine holds. Jakob and John amble to Martine.

Leah talks with Mary by the piano.

LEAH
That was wonderful!

Mary nods her head, feels awkward about the compliment. Mary
looks at Martine holding the chest of money.

MARY
There's more support for the church
than I imagined.

LEAH
I knew these people wanted more.

MARY
You're a true believer. Thank you.

LEAH
For what?

MARY
For reminding me what faith looks
like.

Leah smiles, then rubs her baby bump.

LEAH
Oh!

Mary realizes the baby is moving, making Leah uncomfortable.

MARY

Jakob! Leah needs to rest.

Jakob SIGHS, nods at John.

JAKOB

Later?

John nods. Jakob goes to Leah. John takes the box from Martine, turns away, looks inside.

As Jakob escorts Leah outside, John grabs a handful of coins secretly stuffs it in his pocket, then another.

Mary joins Martine and John.

MARY

Ready Father?

John closes, latches the money chest.

JOHN

Yes. Our work is done tonight.

INT. LANDRY TENT - ANOTHER DAY

The small money chest is open on the table. Mary counts the coins, enters amounts into a ledger. She looks at the coins, frowns. There's not as much as she expected.

INT. THE CHURCH [TONIO'S BUILDING] - MIDNIGHT

It's June 22, the longest day of the year. The sky glows from the recent sunset, and the near full moon is high in the sky.

The church is packed. Some hold lanterns, others candles, bathing the church in a soft, warm glow.

John's arms are raised, eyes to the sky.

JOHN

Lord God on this longest day, the sun finally sets on our sins, to rise in a few short hours on a new day and a new beginning, forgiven from our sins, ready to serve you with open hearts.

John looks at the crowd.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Lord, bless all of you.

Martine heads to the door with the money chest.

MARY
 (a cappella singing)
 Praise God from whom all blessings
 flow--

The crowd joins Mary, SINGING.

MARY (CONT'D)
 Praise Him, all creatures here
 below. Praise Him above, ye
 heavenly host. Praise Father, Son,
 and Holy Ghost.
 Ooh, Ooh, Ooh

SINGING continues as they head out, put coins in the chest.

MINUTES LATER

Mary strolls up the aisle. John turns away with the box. She watches closely, notices his hand go in his pocket.

INT. LANDRY TENT - LATER

A lantern flickers on a sleeping Martine. Mary pretends to be asleep, studies John through slitted eyes.

His hand goes to the coins in his pocket, he looks at his sleeping children, quietly picks up the lantern, sneaks out.

Mary watches him go, lifts her blanket, reveals she's dressed and wearing shoes. She quietly scurries after him.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Mary picks her way down main street in the moonlight, follows John's lantern.

EXT. THE CHURCH/CHINESE JOE'S SALOON - MINUTES LATER

Mary watches John blow out the lantern, enter the saloon. She looks for a way to see inside. HEARS A PRIVY DOOR bang.

She makes her way behind the church, watches Sally leave a privy and head into the back of the saloon. Mary sneaks up the back steps of the saloon, quietly goes through the door.

INT. BACK HALL - CHINESE JOE'S SALOON - MOMENTS LATER

Mary creeps toward the SOUNDS OF THE SALOON. She peeks through a red velvet curtain, sees Sally walk behind the bar.

JOHN (O.S.)
Gentlemen.

JAKOB (O.S.)
Preacher.

Mary looks to the side, sees John at a poker table with Jakob, Wild Dog and Grizzled Miner. He unloads the coins from his pocket, throws two into the pot.

JOHN
Deal me in.

Sally heads over with a bottle of whiskey and a glass, sets them by John. As she turns, Mary ducks behind the curtain, scurry's out the back.

Sally walks to the curtain, hears the faint SNICK of the back door closing, looks at John, frowns.

INT. THE CHURCH [TONIO'S BUILDING] - DAY

Leah sprawls in a chair, PANTS, hands on her big baby bump. Mary sweeps the floor in front of the cross.

LEAH
(panting)
Umph... This... baby... won't...
let... me...breathe!

MARY
(calm)
Sit up straight.

Mary watches as Leah wiggles to sit straight.

MARY (CONT'D)
Now raise your arms, high.

Leah raises her arms.

MARY (CONT'D)
Take... slow... deep... breaths.

Leah takes a deep breath, then another, visibly calms, her breathing steadies, lowers her arms.

LEAH
Whoa! That helps. Thank you.

Mary smiles.

LEAH (CONT'D)
I don't know anything about having
a baby.

MARY
I'll help you.

LEAH
How'd you learn?

MARY
Um... I,... I've... seen a baby,
babies born. Seen what the, uh,
last months of pregnancy are like.

LEAH
You're a blessing. I thank the Lord
you're here to help me get through
this.
(looks at the cross)
And to build this church together.

Mary turns away, uncomfortable, sweeps.

INT. LANDRY TENT - LATE EVENING

John sets down the money chest. Martine plops on his cot.

Mary sits, opens the chest, notes it's no longer full. She
looks at her father, then at Martine.

MARY
I forgot my scarf. Martine, will
you get it for me?

MARTINE
Sure thing, Sis.

Martine settles in, reads Franny's news sheet.

MARY
Now! I don't want a rat to chew it.

Martine rolls his eyes, gets up.

MARTINE
Okay, Sis.

Mary watches Martine leave, takes out some coins.

MARY

I'm surprised by the number of
coins.

JOHN

These miners and trappers are very
generous.

MARY

Yes. I watch them fill the chest
every service. Some nights I worry
it's going to overflow.

John smiles.

MARY (CONT'D)

Yet when I open it back here, it's
not full.

Mary stares at John, his smile falters.

MARY (CONT'D)

I saw you take coins, put 'em in
your pocket. After we came back
here you snuck out.

JOHN

Well, uh. I just stepped out for a
smoke.

MARY

I followed you.

JOHN

What?!

MARY

To the saloon.

JOHN

We deserve part of the collection.
They give so we can live and carry
out God's mission.

MARY

You take money every service. Way
more than we ever collected
before... I saw you play poker with
those coins.

JOHN

I'm trying to get more money to
send back home.

MARY

That money's for the people here.
To build the church and to help
Hope grow.

JOHN

Why do you care about this town?
We'll be gone before the church is
finished.

MARY

I want to stay. We can do so much
here. Don't you want to have a
congregation again. To see the
difference you make in people's
lives.

JOHN

We're already here too long,
waiting for that damn ship.

MARY

You have to stop taking money from
the chest.

JOHN

How are you 'gonna--

MARY (CONT'D)

I'll tell Leah to--

JOHN (CONT'D)

--stop me? You think very carefully
about what you tell Leah or anyone
else. Do you think she'll talk to
you if she knows what you are?

Mary's eyes are stricken.

JOHN (CONT'D)

If she finds out you're not
Martine's sister. That you're his
MOTHER!

A tear trails down Mary's cheek.

JOHN (CONT'D)

That his father is a rapist who was
murdered by your brother!

Mary turns away, cries.

John goes to the money chest, angrily puts coin after coin in a drawstring bag. He jiggles the bag, COINS TINKLE, strides out of the tent.

INT. CHINESE JOE'S SALOON - MINUTES LATER

The saloon is hopping. Chinese Joe sits on a stool at the end of the bar, keeps an eye on things.

Nearby Tonio, Trapper Ivan and Jakob play poker.

At the bar Sally hands Franny a bottle of whiskey and she delivers it to a rowdy table where Wild Dog, Grizzled Miner and Wild Dog's two cronies play poker.

Franny reaches for an empty whiskey bottle. Wild Dog runs his hand down her arm.

WILD DOG
Thank's love.

Franny grimaces, snatches the empty bottle and hustles away.

Angry, Sally strides from behind the bar. Chinese Joe stops her, heads over to Wild Dog's table. Sally grits her teeth.

CHINESE JOE
Gentlemen! Enjoying my fine
whiskey?

The men GRUNT their assent. Chinese Joe puts his hand on the neck of the bottle, deadly calm.

CHINESE JOE (CONT'D)
If you want to continue enjoying my
whiskey you don't touch Franny.

He stares at each one. Grizzled Miner nods, the cronies slouch, then drop their eyes. Wild Dog stares back, defiant.

WILD DOG
Ain't she training to be like her
mama?

Chinese Joe tenses, tightens his grip. Is he going to take the bottle or bean Wild Dog with it?

WILD DOG (CONT'D)
Hey!

It's a stare-down. Chinese Joe wins.

WILD DOG (CONT'D)
 (grumbles)
 Apologies CHINESE Joe.

Chinese Joe eyes each of the men.

CHINESE JOE
 Thank you GENTLEMEN!

Sally, teeth clenched, vigorously scrubs the bar while Franny wipes glasses. Chinese Joe sits on his stool.

CHINESE JOE (CONT'D)
 Wild Dog just bought an ad for Franny's news journal. Um, "Sled Dog Puppies For Sale." Put the cost on his tab.

Franny grins at Chinese Joe, Sally writes in the ledger.

The SALOON DOOR BANGS open. John stomps in.

Sally raises her eyebrows at Chinese Joe who turns to keep an eye on John. Franny pulls out her notebook, ready to write.

One of the Cronies slaps his cards down, chugs his whiskey.

CRONY 1
 (slurred)
 I'm out.

Crony 1 stumbles off. Wild Dog notices John.

WILD DOG
 Eh, Preacher John. We got room.

John hesitates.

GRIZZLED MINER
 Come on Preacher. Save our souls and pray for better cards.

The men LAUGH. John smiles, sits down.

JOHN
 Alright my good men. Lets play.

LATER

Grizzled Miner deals three cards to John. He only has a pair of sixes in his hand. John contemplates his small pile of coins, slowly slides a silver coin into the pot.

Wild Dog throws one coin from his large pile into the pot.

WILD DOG

Call.

Crony 2 slaps his cards down.

CRONY 2

Fold.

John shows his sixes. Grizzled Miner reveals a pair of Jacks. Wild dog turns over an ace of clubs, an ace of spades, looks at Grizzled Miner, turns over an ace of hearts, LAUGHS.

WILD DOG

My heart bleeds for you.

Grizzled Miner groans as Wild Dog rakes in the pot. A nervous John pulls at his clerical collar. Wild Dog notes John's discomfort.

WILD DOG (CONT'D)

Another hand Preacher? The Lord could swing the luck your way.

JOHN

Yes. Yes. Deal 'em.

EXT. CHINESE JOE'S BACK STOOP - MINUTES LATER

The wilderness behind the town is alive with ANIMAL NOISES.

Trapper Ivan relaxes on the stoop, puffs on his Siberian Eskimo Pipe (an intricately carved walrus tusk), contemplates the moon in the daylight nighttime sky.

Sally comes out the door.

SALLY

Too loud?

TRAPPER IVAN

Dah.

Something big CRUNCHES THROUGH BRUSH, a WOLF HOWLS.

SALLY

It's not quiet here either.

TRAPPER IVAN

Nature is never too loud.

Sally smiles indulgently, glances at the privies.

SALLY
Not the best view.

Trapper Ivan still gazes at the sky.

TRAPPER IVAN
The sky is always beautiful.

Sally chuckles, heads to a privy.

EXT./INT. THE CHURCH [TONIO'S BUILDING] - EVENING

On the street Wild Dog's team of dogs snooze in their harnesses, hitched to his wheeled cart.

Deep in thought, Mary quietly walks by the dogs. The lead dog lifts its head, gives a friendly YIP. She smiles at the dog, it SIGHS, lays its head down.

Mary stops at the church, wanders through the building. Drawn to the rustic cross, she hesitantly touches its center.

EXT. CHINESE JOE'S SALOON - MOMENTS LATER

Wild Dog pushes through the door. LAUGHTER and RAUCOUS SINGING are loud for a moment then muffled by the door.

He shakes John's drawstring bag, smiles as the COINS JINGLE in the full bag, tucks it in his jacket.

His BOOTS THUMP on the boardwalk.

INT. THE CHURCH [TONIO'S BUILDING] - SAME TIME

Mary kneels before the cross, her head bowed, quietly SINGS her prayer (Hymn: Lord Jesus, Think On Me)--

MARY
Lord Jesus, think on me, and purge
away my sin; from earth-born
passions set me free, and make me
pure within.

INTERCUT MARY, WILD DOG, TRAPPER IVAN

Mary's singing continues FAINTLY underneath as Wild Dog squats down by his lead dog.

MARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Lord Jesus, think on me, with care
and woe oppressed, let me Thy
loving servant be, and taste Thy
promised rest.

The dog lifts its head, Wild Dog scratches its ears.

Trapper Ivan smokes, listens to Mary, closes his eyes.

MARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Lord Jesus, think on me amid the
battle strife, in all my pain and
misery be thou my health and life.

Mary is on her knees, hands clasped, lifts her face up, eyes
closed as she SINGS.

MARY (CONT'D)

Lord Jesus, think on me, nor let me
go astray; through darkness and
perplexity point Thou the heav'nly
way.

Wild Dog hears Mary's SINGING, creeps into the church.

MARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Lord Jesus, think on me, when
floods the tempest high; When on
doth rush the enemy, O Savior, be
Thou nigh!

END INTERCUT

INT. THE CHURCH [TONIO'S BUILDING] - CONTINUOUS

MARY

Lord Jesus, think on me, that, when
the flood is past, I may eternal
brightness see, and share Thy joy
at last.

Mary bows her head, SIGHS, opens her eyes, starts to stand--

Wild Dog grabs her, wrenches her to him, arms tight around
her chest. Her arms pinned to her side, she freezes in fear.

He slobbers in her ear, squeezes her breast.

The WOLF HOWLS, nearby. Wild Dog's dog team YIPS and BARKS.

The howls break through Mary's fear. She struggles. Wild Dog
gets rough.

Mary, frantic, strains to get the knife from her pocket.

Wild Dog jams his mouth on hers, nearly gags her with his dirty tongue.

Her hand fumbles with the knife.

Wild Dog yanks the neck of her dress, it rips.

INTERCUT THE FIGHT, SLED DOG TEAM, TRAPPER IVAN.

Mary grasps the knife. As Wild Dog touches her breast, Mary rams the knife into his chest.

The WOLF HOWLS, the sled dogs BARK, strain at their harnesses.

The noise grabs Trapper Ivan's attention, he follows the sound toward the church.

Mary and Wild Dog fight, two animals in a frenzy. He punches her and she slices him, over and over.

Trapper Ivan sees the fight, runs into the church.

END INTERCUT

The punches stop, Wild Dog goes limp, collapses against her and she keeps stabbing, wild eyed.

Trapper Ivan attempts to pull Wild Dog off of Mary. Still fighting, Mary slices Trapper Ivan's arm. He steps back.

Wild Dog falls to the ground. Mary PANTS, eyes wild. Is Trapper Ivan a threat?

Arm dripping blood, Trapper Ivan backs away.

She looks at Wild Dog, sees his bloody body. Overcome, she makes a KEENING SOUND, collapses to the ground.

Behind the church, Sally scans the scene. In the shadows, Martine is frozen in shock.

FADE TO BLACK.