

THE BLACK WEDDING

Written by

Jordan Paree

Based on a true story

Jordan Paree  
jordanparee@hotmail.com  
(480)316-4510

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: Pasco County, Zephyrhills, Florida, 1954

A DETECTIVE looks around. Some MEDICS and two SHERIFFS work. Their hands cover their mouths. An olfactory stench hangs.

A casket sits on a long table; the open lid revealing pictures of a dark-haired exotic woman. Beside the casket, a microscope. Dried up flowers in a vase. On the wall, a rosary and crucifix.

Next to the table, on the ground, lies the badly decomposed body of a seventy-five-year-old MAN. In his arms a life-sized DOLL. The face -- made of plaster of Paris -- resembles the woman in the pictures.

The detective stops at a writing desk. Sees a MANUSCRIPT bound together by string. Looks over the title: "The Secret of Elena's Tomb" by Count Carl Tanzler (pronounced TAHN-zler) Von Cosel (pronounced COSS-el). Unbinds the manuscript, opens it to the first page:

KARL (V.O.)

(in a German accent)

When in November, 1940, I was finally released from prison, I was a very bitter man. Charges had been brought against me that I was a violator of the grave, a ghoul, a fiend of society. There was an avalanche of misrepresentations, of sensational press stories, which accused me of being a sexual pervert, a necromancer, and a maniac, while being confined for court hearing.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - LOMBARD'S OFFICE - DAY

KARL (V.O.)

Worst of all, they had removed Elena's body, that body which I had treated, first to preserve it in its unearthly beauty, and then to reunite with its soul which always was with me in the scientific efforts of over seven years...

SUPER: Marine Hospital, Key West, Florida, 1927

DR. MARION LOMBARD (42) sits at his desk. Friendly most of the time, but tough when the occasion calls for it. Before him, some notes written in pen. Sitting ramrod straight in a chair before the desk:

KARL TÄNZLER (50). German. Skinny, average height, wiry. A slightly balding skull with mostly brown hair tapering down toward a gray Van Dyke beard. Round, silver-rimmed spectacles magnify the pupils of his light blue eyes. Mildly charismatic. English is not his strongest language.

LOMBARD

So, you graduated from the University of Leipzig in Dresden, Germany with degrees in medicine, psychology, and biology.

KARL

Yes. And painting, music, philosophy, mathematics, physics, and chemistry.

LOMBARD

Wait. Nine different degrees?

KARL

Yes.

LOMBARD

Mr. Von Cosel...

KARL

Count.

LOMBARD

Excuse me?

KARL

Count Von Cosel, if you please.

LOMBARD

Count Von Cosel, I understand that in order to work as a doctor or technician, one needs a great deal of schooling. But to claim that you have nine different degrees... do you understand my concern?

KARL

I do, and I assure you that this is all true. You may contact the University of Leipzig and discover for yourself.

LOMBARD

I may do that.

KARL

Let me also assure you that I am proficient in operating an x-ray machine. You may put me through the trial.

LOMBARD

I'll consider it. Thank you for your time. I will contact you when I've made my decision.

KARL

Very well.

They shake hands. Karl stands up, looking as ramrod upright as he did in the chair. Exits.

Lombard looks down at his notes. A look of disbelief paints his face. A loud RAP on the door.

LOMBARD

Come in.

An X-RAY TECHNICIAN, middle aged and experienced, enters. Eyes wide with astonishment.

X-RAY TECHNICIAN

You are not gonna believe this, Dr. Lombard.

LOMBARD

What?

X-RAY TECHNICIAN

That guy you just interviewed?

LOMBARD

The German?

X-RAY TECHNICIAN

Yeah.

LOMBARD

What about him?

X-RAY TECHNICIAN

You have to see this.

LOMBARD

Listen, I'm a busy man, and --

X-RAY TECHNICIAN  
Trust me, you wanna see this!

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - X-RAY ROOM - DAY

Karl operates the machine, sticking his own hand in for the photograph.

Lombard and the technician enter, bringing light with them.

KARL  
Close the door! You'll upset the picture.

They close the door.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Lombard and the technician incredulously stare at each other.

X-RAY TECHNICIAN  
Incredible, huh?

LOMBARD  
Did you tell him how to do it?

X-RAY TECHNICIAN  
No, he just walked in and told me I was going about it wrong.

LOMBARD  
Why didn't you stop him? He could've broken it completely beyond repair.

X-RAY TECHNICIAN  
I tried, but he shooed me out and locked the door before I could get back in. And then I heard noise and... it was fixed!

Door opens. Karl hands them the x-ray picture of his hand.

KARL  
Here you are. I trust it came out perfectly?

Lombard holds the picture up to the light, revealing a skeletal hand as clear as day. Lowers the photograph.

LOMBARD

Karl Tänzler Von Cosel, welcome to  
the Marine Hospital staff.

They shake hands.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - KARL'S LAB - DAY

SUPER: 1930

Karl stands before a microscope. Eyes glued firmly to the goggles. The SOUND OF RODENTS WORKING AWAY in their cages. A KNOCK on the door. Karl turns to see:

NURSE MARIE BODINE standing at the doorway.

BODINE

Lombard needs you.

KARL

What for?

BODINE

(staring at rodents)

Make sure those don't get out. You  
know how Lombard feels about them.

KARL

What does he need?

BODINE

A patient needs her blood drawn.  
We're thinking tuberculosis.

Karl leaves his microscope, follows Bodine.

BODINE (CONT'D)

It still amazes me that Lombard  
hired you the way he did.

KARL

I will not go through this again!

BODINE

I'm just saying there's something  
going on in that head of yours, and  
pretty soon we're all gonna find  
out.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - LOMBARD'S OFFICE - DAY

A young WOMAN sits in the chair before the desk, her hand covering her face. Lombard stands by. The door opens, revealing Karl and Bodine.

KARL

Hello, Dr. Lombard. How may I be of service?

LOMBARD

I need blood drawn from this young woman here, and I need it examined.

KARL

It shall be done.

Karl draws a pin from his coat, walks to the woman. Crouches down. Moves the pin to her earlobe. Stares at it. Beautiful, delicate. Karl notices her hand covering her face.

KARL (CONT'D)

May I see your hand, please? I hesitate to draw blood from your ear. It is so delicate that I refuse to mar it.

The woman drops her hand, revealing her face. Karl draws back. Star struck.

ELENA HOYOS MESA (20). Nice looking. Cuban. Wears an iridescent necklace of inexpensive artificial pearls. Slender legs. Lustrous, long black hair tumbling down over her smooth tan shoulders. Full breasts. An underlying sadness.

ELENA

(Cuban accent)

Is there something wrong?

KARL

I apologize. I have never seen anyone as... *schön* -- ah... beautiful as you.

ELENA

*Gracias.*

KARL

*De Nada.* What is your name?

ELENA

Elena.

KARL  
Pleased to meet you. I am Count  
Karl Tänzler Von Cosel. But you  
would call me Carlos.

ELENA  
Carlos...

LOMBARD  
How about that blood test, Carlos?

KARL  
Of course. Forgive me.

Karl sticks the pin into the tip of her finger. She reacts.

KARL (CONT'D)  
I'm very sorry to have caused you  
pain.

ELENA  
It didn't hurt much. Excuse my  
nervousness.

Karl collects the blood onto a slide.

LOMBARD  
Thank you, Mrs. Mesa. You may go.

Elena stands up, exits. Karl watches her.

LOMBARD (CONT'D)  
Carlos, may we convene to the lab?

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - KARL'S LAB - DAY

Karl, Lombard, and Bodine enter. Karl moves directly to his  
microscope, inserts the slide.

LOMBARD  
You two seemed to get along well,  
Carlos.

Karl straightens out.

KARL  
You would not understand.

LOMBARD  
I understand completely.  
(mock-German)  
"Your ear is so delicate zat I  
refuse to mar it."

BODINE

I've seen plenty of doctors fall in love, but you... just embarrassing.

KARL

I have seen her before! Many times, in fact.

LOMBARD

Please explain.

KARL

When I was eleven years old, my aunt -- the Contessa Anna -- showed her to me, and told me she was to be my bride. She, and no other.

LOMBARD

Ah, so it's a storybook romance.

KARL

You may laugh, but she has been with me since childhood.

BODINE

The woman of your dreams, so to speak.

LOMBARD

That's all she's gonna be.

KARL

What do you mean?

Lombard hands him Elena's record sheet. Karl looks it over. The information states she's married. He reacts.

BODINE

I am sorry, Don Juan.

LOMBARD

Alright. We've made fun of him enough.

Karl looks through the microscope.

KARL'S P.O.V. -- long tubes inside cells. Compared to the red blood cells, they look alien.

Karl raises his body up from the microscope.

LOMBARD (CONT'D)

What is it?

KARL  
Tuberculosis.

LOMBARD  
Damn.

BODINE  
Her poor parents.

LOMBARD  
We'll call her tomorrow. Give her  
some morphine.

KARL  
Dr. Lombard, if I may suggest  
something... It is possible that if  
we were to look at her lungs, we  
could determine how far the disease  
has progressed.

LOMBARD  
For what purpose, Karl? She has the  
disease. All we can do is make sure  
she's comfortable.

KARL  
But it is possible to slow the  
progression. Possibly to stop it  
altogether.

LOMBARD  
Nurse Bodine, can you please check  
on patients?

BODINE  
Yes, doctor.

Bodine exits. Lombard steps close toward Karl.

LOMBARD  
You're talking about a cure...

KARL  
Yes.

LOMBARD  
Karl, that's the talk of a quack.  
You're not a quack.

KARL  
Just give me a chance. I can prove  
it.

LOMBARD

No. But I'll allow the x-ray.  
That's all.

KARL

Thank you.

Lombard exits. Karl sits down, looks at the mice.

KARL (CONT'D)

Ah, Hilda. How agonizing the wait  
must have been for Ziegfried to  
rescue you. I wonder why Elena's  
Ziegfried wasn't here.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - KARL'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) A litter of library books
- B) Stacks of envelopes, postmarks, check stubs from Berlin
- C) A used airplane propeller made of laminated wood standing  
in a corner
- D) A treadle organ
- E) Clean glasses
- F) Clothing
- G) Scavenged machinery parts scattered everywhere

Karl lies in bed, staring up at the ceiling.

INT. TÄNZLER HOME - GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: 1889

Karl (12) sits at a large round table with writing materials  
and books. A kerosene lamp with a green shade shines bright.  
As he works, Karl sweats from mental strain.

On its own, the pencil moves slowly half across the table.  
Karl looks. It stops moving. He returns to work. The pencil  
lifts off of the table, performing somersaults in the air.  
Flies down on to the floor.

A match lifts, gyrates in the air, follows the pencil.

The books before Karl lift up, crash onto the floor. The instruments on the table come next.

The table lifts into the air. Karl backs away. Watches the table lift higher and higher, almost touching the kerosene lamp. It sways down, slowly at first, then CRASHES down, causing the floor to reverberate.

Karl retreats to a large curtain. FLAMES FLARE UP, RUN ALONG the surface. Karl moves away, watching the flames creep up to the ceiling and extinguish themselves. No smoke. Karl touches the curtain, coating his fingers in ash.

Loud REPORT. Karl enters a room, finds a PAINTING of a woman lying on the floor. The face torn across through the middle.

INT. TÄNZLER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Karl and MRS. TÄNZLER, Karl's mother, sit across from each other. Eggs and bacon on their plates. With these two is a YOUNG WOMAN, a few years older than Karl. His sister.

THE TÄNZLER FAMILY SPEAKS IN GERMAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

KARL

Mother, I think the Contessa Anna visited me last night. She made a mess of everything and even destroyed my painting of Judith.

MRS. TÄNZLER

It is said that the Green Room has been haunted for ages. Why don't you install an electric bell connecting my bedroom to your study? You can call me immediately if the apparition should appear again.

KARL

I shall.

INT. TÄNZLER HOME - GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

Empty. THE BELL RINGS. The floor TREMBLES.

The painting of Judith flies from the easel. CRASHES into the wall. Badly damaged.

Karl enters, looks around. His eye catches the painting on the floor. He investigates. Sees the damage. Smiles.

INT. TÄNZLER HOUSE - KARL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Karl lies in bed, asleep. Unearthly NOISE fills the room. Karl awakes, sits up straight. Eyes widen in shock.

CONTESSA ANNA, a tall lady with snow-white hair, stands before the bed. With her, a woman dressed in a bridal gown and veil.

ANNA SPEAKS IN GERMAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

ANNA

I've been trying to attract your attention for quite some time, my boy. But you wouldn't take note. You were too much engrossed in your experiments. That is why I had to use some violence. Now take warning, do not entangle yourself with the woman represented on the Judith picture. Don't get snared by her. She isn't the one who is destined for you. Look here, Karl, I have brought you the bride whom someday you will meet.

She draws the bride nearer to him. Lifts the veil, revealing Elena's smiling face. Both women disappear.

Karl continues staring into the dark. Turns to the clock on the wall. Two a.m. He falls asleep.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - X-RAY LAB - DAY

BACK IN 1930

Karl enters with Elena. Gesturing to chair:

KARL

Please...

Elena sits down.

KARL (CONT'D)

How are you today?

ELENA

(coughing)

Fine.

KARL

Did you sleep well? You look tired.

ELENA

No, I'm okay.

KARL

If I may ask you to lower your blouse so I may examine your chest? There is no need to be nervous.

Elena lowers her shirt.

Karl retrieves a stethoscope from the drawer. Plugs it into his ears. Begins chest and back auscultation. Elena's breathing quickens from nerves and illness. Karl's breathing quickens from arousal and disbelief. He hears her lungs RATTLE. Unplugs the stethoscope.

KARL (CONT'D)

Please take a seat before the x-ray machine, and I will be quick.

(off her hesitation)

Do not worry, *señorita*. There is nothing to fear.

ELENA

What will that machine do to me?

KARL

It will perform a x-ray of your lungs, and will show us what is causing your cough and illness. I assure you it is quite harmless.

Elena sits before the machine. Breath quickening.

KARL (CONT'D)

If I could ask you to remove your blouse completely...

Elena hesitates. Acquiesces, exposing her heaving breasts.

Karl's breathing quickens while performing the x-ray.

KARL (CONT'D)

Thank you. You may return your blouse to your shoulders and wait in the hall.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Elena sits beside her mother AURORA HOYOS (49). A bit headstrong, distrusting anything she's never seen before. Elena COUGHS into a rag, comes away with blood.

Karl walks toward them.

KARL  
Are you Elena's mother?

AURORA  
Sí. I am Aurora Hoyos.

KARL  
I am Count Karl Tänzler Von Cosel.  
I am a doctor, pathologist, and x-  
ray technician. I am sorry, but  
Elena has tuberculosis.

Immediately, their eyes fill with tears.

KARL (CONT'D)  
The equipment here is inadequate  
for proper treatment. If I may be  
so bold as to suggest we meet  
somewhere else to discuss  
treatment? Your house, perhaps?

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tiny, dilapidated. This family is poor. Karl, Elena, and Aurora enter. Karl inspects the place from top to bottom.

FRANCISCO HOYOS aka PANCHO (47), the father, greets Aurora and Elena with a kiss. God-fearing, ignorant of science. A pipe protrudes from his mouth; a well accustomed routine.

PANCHO  
Who is this?

AURORA  
This is... I'm sorry, what was your  
name again?

KARL  
Count Karl Tänzler Von Cosel. I  
work at the Marine Hospital as an x-  
ray technician and pathologist. I  
took a blood test from Elena, as  
well as the x-ray today.

PANCHO  
Why are you here?

KARL  
I am here to discuss treatment for  
Elena. She has tuberculosis.

(MORE)

KARL (CONT'D)  
Normally, this would be a deadly case, but I can offer treatment.

PANCHO  
How much will it cost?

KARL  
Nothing. I will pay for it.

PANCHO  
Aurora, may I speak to you a moment?

Pancho and Aurora enter another room. Karl sits with Elena.

ELENA  
Are you really going to pay for treatment?

KARL  
Absolutely.

ELENA  
How much money do you have?

KARL  
Don't worry about that. For now, focus on getting well.  
(beat)  
I noticed on your record that your name is Hoyos, yet you are married.

ELENA  
Hoyos is my given name. I am now Elena Mesa. But I am separated. After I lost the baby...

Looks ahead. Eyes fill with tears. Karl turns to the window overlooking the street.

KARL'S P.O.V. -- From the window, we see a car driving by.

ELENA (CONT'D)  
That's his car. He lives with another woman now. He believes that somehow I'm responsible for our son's death.

Elena cries. Buries her head into Karl's shoulder.

KARL  
Nonsense. He is a fool if he thinks that.

(MORE)

KARL (CONT'D)

Elena, I am going to take care of you. I am going to cure you. Whatever it takes.

Aurora and Pancho return.

AURORA

What happened?

KARL

Her husband drove by.

PANCHO

Luís. That *cabrón* had better hope I never see him again for as long as we both live.

AURORA

(to Karl)

We have been talking, and we've decided that we will let you take care of Elena.

KARL

Thank you. I promise, I will not fail you.

The door opens revealing FLORINDA aka NANA HOYOS (24) and CELIA (18). Elena's sisters.

Nana. A delicate Spanish-Cuban type beauty. Her fair and blemishless skin seems to glow with an inner light. Her dark brown eyes, vivacious, flash fire. Persistent, tough, kind.

The same can be stated for Celia, except she looks about as innocent as Elena, if not more so.

PANCHO

Nana, Celia, meet Carlos. He's gonna take care of Elena.

KARL

(to women)

Pleased to meet you all.

He kisses their hands. All Nana can do is stare at this stranger in her home and force a smile.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S ROOM - DAY

Karl and Aurora enter. Elena lies in bed, looks up at Karl, smiles. Karl looks above Elena's bed, toward the wall at the PORTRAIT of Saint Cecilia.

INT. CATACOMBS - DAY

SUPER: Rome, Early 1910's

A room made of brick. In the center rests a statue of a woman completely draped in silk. Her face turned away from us. She lies on her right side on a slab.

Karl (mid 30's) walks toward the grave holding a bunch of roses. Kneels down, places them by the figure's hands.

INSCRIPTION ON SLAB: "In Memory of Edith Cecilia McBride of New York. U.S.A."

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S ROOM - DAY

BACK IN 1930

Elena looks up at the portrait, back at Karl.

ELENA

That's Saint Cecilia, sir.

KARL

Yes, and you know, Elena, she is my guardian angel, and this is the first time that I have seen her picture here in America.

ELENA

We too are not Americans. We came from Cuba several years ago.

Karl smiles. He wanted to hear that.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - X-RAY ROOM - DAY

Elena lies on a table. Her blouse unbuttoned. Karl stands before the x-ray machine.

KARL

Hold still, my darling. This will not hurt.

He presses a button.

A light BEAMS straight into Elena's chest.

Periodically, Karl checks his watch for the time. Looks back at the machine. At beautiful Elena. After a few minutes, he stops the machine.

KARL (CONT'D)

That is all for today. But remember to come back tomorrow for another treatment, and stay away from cigar smoke.

ELENA

Yes, Carlos.

Elena buttons up her blouse, exits. Karl follows.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Karl walks to the window, gazes out into the courtyard.

On her way to the car, Elena spots a large airship. Wingless. Big wheels on each side. She hurries to it. Her eyes as wide as a child's on Christmas morning. Aurora follows behind.

Karl heads for the door leading out to the courtyard.

EXT. MARINE HOSPITAL - COURTYARD - DAY

Karl exits the building, walks to the airship. Elena and Aurora turn to see him.

KARL

I see you are admiring my airship.

ELENA

This is yours?

KARL

Yes.

ELENA

It is beautiful, Carlos!

KARL

Would you like to look inside?

ELENA

*Sí! Sí!*  
(to Aurora)  
*Por favor, mama.*

AURORA

*Sí.*

Karl opens the door, lets Elena enter. He follows.

INT. AIRSHIP - DAY

Enclosed. Not nearly big enough for more than a family. Karl and Elena crawl into the cabin, sit side by side. Elena grabs the controls.

ELENA

Can this airship fly?

KARL

It can. It can also float in water.

ELENA

Don't be silly. Planes don't float in water.

KARL

This can. It has a pontoon to allow for flotation. And once it has wings, it will be able to lift from the water and fly.

ELENA

But how will it fly if it has no propeller?

KARL

Ah, good question. Very astute. It will have a propeller soon. And once it does, coupled with the displacement of water and air density, it will take flight.

ELENA

Where would you fly your airship?

KARL

Anywhere you would like to travel. How would you like to see the rest of the United States? And beyond that? Would you like to see my homeland Germany? Rome, where Saint Cecilia lies? Or your homeland of Cuba? How would you like to travel to the North and South Poles?

ELENA

I very much would. But I don't think I will.

KARL

Why not?

ELENA

Carlos, you know this as well as I.  
So do *mama* and *papa*, and Nana and  
Celia. All the doctors know this  
too. Even Luís knew this. I am  
dying.

KARL

You are not.

ELENA

Carlos, do not lie to me. I've seen  
this disease before. I am dying.

KARL

Banish the thought from your mind.  
Focus on getting well and seeing  
the world.

ELENA

What will you name your ship?

KARL

I wish you would permit me to name  
our ship La Contessa de Cosel. Or  
even better, Contessa Elena.

ELENA

(blushing)

Alright, let's name her "Contessa  
Elena."

EXT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Karl stands at the nose of the airship. Paints the name

**Cts Elaine  
von Cosel C-3**

In white on the starboard side. Stands back to inspect it.

KARL

Anywhere we want to fly, Elena.  
Anywhere we want to fly.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - KARL'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Karl stands before the mirror. Dressed in a nice white suit.  
In one hand a bouquet of flowers. In the other a ring. Nice  
and shining.

KARL

Happy Birthday, my darling Elena. I must say, you are looking radiant tonight. Here are some flowers. Oh, and uh...

He moves to the bed, retrieves some medicinal wine from a bag. Holds it before his reflection.

KARL (CONT'D)

Medicinal wine.

Returns to the bed, grabs the BAG full of items, holds them up to his reflection.

KARL (CONT'D)

Some cakes as well.

Puts the bags down.

KARL (CONT'D)

Elena, you do not know this, but we are meant to be together. I knew when I saw the picture of Saint Cecilia on your wall, and when you told me that you came from Cuba. You came to me in a dream when I was just a child, and you visited me many times after that. So, I have waited for you my whole life.

He holds up the ring to his reflection.

KARL (CONT'D)

Marry me, darling. I will care for you like no other. Not even your former husband could care for you the way I could. Be my wife, and you will never know sadness again.

EXT. HOYOS HOUSE - NIGHT

Karl, holding the items shown to us in the residence, knocks on the door. Waits a while. The door opens, revealing Celia.

CELIA

*Hola, Carlos.*

KARL

*Hola, Celia.*

Celia steps aside, allowing Karl to enter.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - NIGHT

Karl and Celia venture further inside.

Celebratory music, shouting, dancing... cigar smoke. The epicenter -- Elena -- dances. A rose rests in her hair. She looks euphoric. Cuban MEN take turns dancing with her. Elena sees Karl, hurries over to him. Karl hands her the bouquet of flowers, medicinal wine and cakes.

KARL  
Happy Birthday, Elena.

ELENA  
*Gracias, Carlos!* This is all too much!

KARL  
No. Not for my Elena.

CUBAN (O.S.)  
Elena, dance with us!

ELENA  
Enjoy yourself, Carlos. We all should enjoy ourselves!

Elena puts the items given to her away, returns to dancing.

Pancho walks up to Karl, pats him on the back.

PANCHO  
Your treatments cured my daughter. Medicine is the best thing in the world! You know, I used to think that there was no difference between a doctor and a priest, but now I can see that one is truly better, and can cure the sick.

KARL  
Elena is not cured. Not yet, at least. It will take more than radiation to cure her.  
(off Pancho's confusion)  
The treatments are proving beneficial to her. This much is true. But a cure takes longer to find. Elena is not cured, but she is improving.

Elena returns to Karl and Pancho.

ELENA

What are you old men talking about?

PANCHO

Your doctor doesn't really believe you're cured.

ELENA

Carlos, don't be silly. Of course I am. I feel wonderful!

KARL

You feel wonderful now, and that's good. But you are still ill. If you don't believe me, come to the lab tomorrow, and I will show you.

ELENA

Okay, doctor. If you say so.

She returns to dancing. Pancho lights a cigar. Karl watches.

Nana and Aurora sit together.

NANA

*Mama*, why did you let Carlos come here?

AURORA

He cured your sister. Anyone who aides a family deserves a place in its heart.

NANA

But doesn't he seem... odd to you? I mean, is he even really a doctor? What else does he do other than operate an x-ray machine?

AURORA

This is Key West. Everyone here is odd. And yes, he is odd, but he knows what he's doing.

NANA

I hope you are right. I really do.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - KARL'S LAB - DAY

P.O.V. -- Bacilli dance around.

Elena rises from the microscope. Looks at Karl. Laughs.

ELENA

You painted these. They are very good. But that can't be from my blood.

KARL

(beat)

I will walk you to your mother.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Karl and Elena walk together. Toward the wall, they see a man staring off into space. Elena stops to observe.

ELENA

What is wrong with him?

KARL

He is experiencing a seizure.

ELENA

Why does he not shake?

KARL

His are a different kind. They cause hallucinations of the five senses.

ELENA

How awful! What causes them?

KARL

Anything from great mental strain to a bright flash of light.

ELENA

What does he have?

KARL

There is no name for his illness. None of the doctors believe that he has seizures. But I do.

ELENA

I feel sorry for him.

KARL

Never fear. He gets the treatment he needs.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - NIGHT

Cuban music. Men, women, and children dance. Cigars smoked. Beverages imbibed. Dinner served: roast pork, rice and beans, *tachinos* (plantain slices or cooking bananas).

The subjects of this particular party are Nana -- dressed in a white wedding gown -- and MARIO MEDINA (25) -- dressed in a white tuxedo. He seems younger than Nana. A small moustache, piercing eyes, and boyish good looks. Easy-going.

Elena, the hostess, serves drinks and food.

KNOCKS on the door. Elena hurries to answer. Karl stands before her.

ELENA

Carlos! I'm so happy you could come.

KARL

I apologize for being late.

Karl enters. Looks around. Elena walks Mario over to Karl.

ELENA

Carlos, this is Mario, Nana's husband.

KARL

Pleased to meet you. I am Count Karl Tänzler Von Cosel.

MARIO

So you are Carlos. I have heard much about you.

KARL

I have heard nothing about you.

MARIO

Hopefully we can change that. For now, grab a Cuba Libre and a cigar.

The music dies. Elena hurries to the gramophone, turns the crank. The music STARTS BACK UP AGAIN. She returns to serving hungry and thirsty guests. Away from them, she gives out a dry COUGH into her handkerchief.

Karl watches the entire time.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - NIGHT

Aurora helps Elena clean the now empty house, while Karl stands by and watches. Aurora enters the kitchen. Karl approaches Elena, pulls her away from picking up cigars.

KARL

Elena, I admire you. You are the most wonderful hostess in the world. But this sort of thing just can't go on. Permit me to help you. Let's get married, and let's get away from all this.

He pulls the diamond ring from his pocket, places it on her finger. Elena opens her mouth to answer, but stops when her eye catches something behind Karl. He turns.

Aurora stands before the kitchen entrance.

AURORA

No daughter of mine is going to marry an American. It is to be a Cuban if ever she remarries again.

Elena bows her head. Karl turns back to her.

KARL

God bless you, and good night, my Elena.

Karl glances at Aurora, exits the house.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - AURORA AND PANCHO'S ROOM - NIGHT

Aurora and Pancho lie in bed together. The table lamp provides the only light here.

AURORA

What do you think of Carlos?

PANCHO

He's becoming odder by the day. But at least he wants to help Elena.

AURORA

He asked for Elena's hand in marriage.

PANCHO

She said no, I hope.

AURORA  
I told him myself.

PANCHO  
Do you think we should keep him  
out?

AURORA  
We can't afford another doctor.

PANCHO  
What if you became her doctor?

AURORA  
Pancho, you know I'm no doctor.

PANCHO  
Sí. We will keep an eye on Carlos.

AURORA  
He would be a good match if he was  
Cuban... and younger.

PANCHO  
Yes, he would.

EXT. CAMPO SANTO - DAY

SUPER: Campo Santo, Genoa, Italy, 1910's

Marble statues along the walls. Flowers and other types of  
foliage sit by their feet. Visitors marvel at the  
architecture. Others silently pay respects to the dead.

Karl (30's) stands in front of an exquisite marble statue:  
the Inconsolable. She bears a striking resemblance to Elena.

KARL  
Why, here she is in stone. How very  
strange. Why could not God grant it  
to me that I should meet her in the  
flesh instead?

Tears well up in his eyes. He looks down at the plaque  
stating her name as Elena, and age of death twenty-two.

KARL (CONT'D)  
(under breath)  
Elena, Elena, Elena, El...

The sun SHINES AGAINST the marble, creating a glare before  
Karl. He shields his hands, then brings them down.

A SPIRIT in the form of Elena wearing a white dress detaches itself from the statue, slowly walks past Karl, who removes his hat to greet her. The spirit's eyes meet his, her lips part in a smile.

KARL (CONT'D)  
*Guten tag, mein Fräulein.*

She keeps her pace, disappears in the crowd of mourners. Karl chases her, racing up and down through the numerous alleys in the cemetery. Breaks through throngs of visitors.

KARL (CONT'D)  
 Haven't you seen a young lady in white? I've lost her; I've got to find her again!

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - KARL'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

BACK IN 1930

Karl sits at his desk. Deep in thought, face in hands. Pulls out a sheet of paper, uses a pen to write:

KARL (V.O.)  
 My darling, Elena: please don't deceive yourself that all is well. Even if you feel that way, don't throw caution into the wind; your enemy is an invisible one. He can only be seen by trained, scientific eyes, and he can only be caught in a scientific manner. Please, darling, do not listen to irresponsible advice. I know there are quacks around who are suggesting all kinds of magic cures which have their common source of ignorance. Please, take the medicine I am sending and do come back to the hospital for a new check-up. Dr. Lombard, too, wants to see you. I am working on our airplane in my spare time. It is now nearly completed, and the next time you come, I will give you the key for the cabin and we shall officially christen it. And then too, I am already collecting all the things we are going to need on our wedding trip.

(MORE)

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

Silk dresses for you and a bridal gown which is all white silk, and all the rest of your trousseau, even lingerie and silver slippers and last but not least all of your medicines like chinosol and adrenaline, glucose, beef extract and all the rest of it. Forever yours, Karl.

MONTAGE

- A) Karl gives Elena a large rock crystal pendant
- B) Karl gives Elena a pair of earrings
- C) Karl gives Elena a beautiful carved rose of pink coral on a gold chain
- D) Karl writes Elena letters
- E) Karl sends a taxi for her
- F) Elena refuses the taxi

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Young CUBANS play with the radio, CHATTERING AWAY in Spanish. Elena sits on her bed, smiling yet suffering.

Karl enters.

KARL

What are you doing?! Get out! Now!  
*Schneller! Schneller! Get out!*

The Cubans exit. Hearing footsteps behind him, Karl turns to see Pancho.

KARL (CONT'D)

What do you think you are doing?  
Elena cannot take cigar smoke! Or pipe smoke for that matter!

PANCHO

If you don't like the smoking, why don't you get out of the house?

Karl turns to Elena, looks into her eyes. Then exits.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - KARL'S LAB - DAY

Karl looks at samples. The door OPENS, revealing the MAILMAN.  
He hands Karl a note.

MAILMAN  
Mr. Von Cosel.

Karl takes the note.

KARL  
Count. Thank you.

He opens the note, reads:

ELENA (V.O.)  
Dear Doctor: I am so very sorry,  
because I know how unpleasant your  
last visit to our home must have  
been. Please, do forgive us, I'm  
sure *papa* did not really mean what  
he said to you. He had been on edge  
all day and had been very cross  
with everyone. Please understand  
that he didn't mean to be that  
rude. Both my family and myself  
would be glad to have you as our  
guest again. So, please, accept my  
apology for the other night, we  
must see you soon. Your friend,  
Elena Hoyos Mesa.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - NIGHT

Karl enters. Immediately met by a frantic Aurora.

AURORA  
Oh, Carlos! Please help us.

KARL  
What's wrong?

AURORA  
It's Elena!

Karl hurries.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Karl enters. Elena lies in bed in a series of convulsions.

KARL

What happened?! Explain this right  
this minute!

AURORA

A doctor gave her some injections.

KARL

What kind of injections? Who is the  
doctor?

Aurora gives him an empty vial. Then hurries to cover Elena  
in blankets.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Karl enters. Elena looks much better. Aurora is with them.

KARL

I just contacted the doctor. We  
agreed that the injections will  
stop. You should have contacted me  
from the beginning.

AURORA

I will go make tea.

KARL

Thank you.

Aurora exits. Karl sits next to Elena.

KARL (CONT'D)

Elena, there is only one way that  
you can be cured of this. You know  
what that is.

ELENA

But, Carlos, I am not divorced, and  
even if I were, you are not Cuban.  
And you're too old for me.

KARL

Alright, my darling. I have  
patience if you have.

Elena turns on the radio. A melancholy GUITAR SONG plays,  
followed by a Spanish singer.

ELENA

I love this song.

KARL  
What is it called?

ELENA  
"La Boda Negra." It means "The Black Wedding." It speaks of a bride who dies on the night of her wedding. Her husband digs up her bones, then kills himself, lying next to them.

KARL  
A very morbid song.

ELENA  
It actually is quite humorous.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - KARL'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Karl sleeps. Tossing, turning. Wakes up, clutching his stomach in pain. Bolts up out of bed, hurries out.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Karl enters, stands before a toilet. Unzips himself. Urinates. Painful yet relieving. He looks down in horror.

KARL'S P.O.V. -- Blood red urine

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - INFIRMARY - NIGHT

THE CLIPBOARD at the end of the bed: The name is "Carl Tanzler Von Cosel." The diagnosis "Bright's Disease." Karl lies in bed, tossing and turning in his sleep.

EXT. HOYOS HOUSE - DAY

DREAM SEQUENCE

Karl KNOCKS the door. Elena answers. Karl takes her in his arms, kisses her. She reciprocates.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - INFIRMARY - DAY

BACK TO REALITY

Karl wakes up. Immediately his hands reach for the pen and paper. He writes to Elena about the dream.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - INFIRMARY - DAY

Karl lies in bed. Looks up. Nana walks toward him, stops at the foot of his bed.

NANA  
Dream no more.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

DREAM SEQUENCE

Karl looks around. Focuses his attention on an OLD WOMAN lying in bed. Breathing weakly.

KARL  
*Mutter?*

She stops breathing. Karl sees a headstone with Elena's name carved in it. Runs, digs into the earth. Grabs something. Pulls up. Elena emerges. Karl cleans the mud from her face.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - INFIRMARY - DAY

BACK TO REALITY

SUPER: February 2, 1931

Karl sitting upright in bed, writing. The door OPENS O.S. He looks up.

Elena enters with Aurora and Nana, wearing her hair in a flapper style and a nice dress. Sits by Karl. They stare at each other for the longest time while Aurora and Nana watch. The Hoyos family leaves.

The mailman walks past them, stops before Karl, gives him a black-rimmed letter. Karl opens it, reads.

CLOSE ON LETTER: The writing is in German, but we can see that it informs Karl that his mother died.

Karl lowers the letter, eyes wide with shock.

EXT. HOYOS HOUSE - NIGHT

Karl, looking so much better now, walks up to the house. Peers into the window.

KARL'S P.O.V. -- The Hoyos family going about their lives.

He KNOCKS on the door. Celia answers. Karl breezes past her into the house.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - NIGHT

Karl walks toward the kitchen, where he finds Elena, dressed in a silk kimono, sitting in a chair. The color gone from her face. Body emaciated. But there's light in her eyes. The diamond ring rests over her finger.

Aurora walks INTO FRAME, stares at Karl.

KARL

Good evening, mother; I am so happy to be here again. Tell me, what doctor is attending her now?

AURORA

I am her doctor now!

KARL

(bitter laugh)

You are some doctor, mother. I am sure you are a good nurse, but not a doctor. I have come to stay. From now on you might as well consider me in charge for good.

All the family can do is stand still, mouths agape. Karl kneels down before Elena.

KARL (CONT'D)

Please, darling, tell me whatever you wish or need at the moment and I will go and bring it to you.

ELENA

I don't need anything.

Karl takes her weak pulse. Listens to her shallow breathing. She looks anemic. He looks at an abscess on her leg.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S ROOM - DAY

Karl enters with armfuls of fruit. Elena picks out a couple of pieces. Aurora enters with chicken broth in a bowl.

ELENA

*Gracias, mama.*

Aurora exits. Elena dumps the broth out in a bucket near the bed. Karl takes a jeweler's catalog out of his jacket, gives it to Elena along with a pen.

KARL

You can pick whatever you want.

Using the pen, she marks a bracelet watch, a necklace, a wedding ring. Hands the catalog back to Karl.

ELENA

But only one. I do not want all three of them.

KARL

Very well, my darling.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Karl enters with a small homemade apparatus powered by a cell battery. Elena watches. On her wrist, the bracelet watch. On her neck, the necklace. On her finger, the wedding ring.

ELENA

What is that?

KARL

This is what will help you. It is a smaller version. Here...

He gives her a set of brass handles attached to the machine with silk cores and a small movable shocking coil.

KARL (CONT'D)

You can control the flow with this.

Elena pushes a button. The flow starts.

KARL (CONT'D)

Do you feel anything?

ELENA

No.

KARL

You may want to remove your jewelry. The metal could hurt you.

Elena acquiesces. Karl turns up the electricity. The tickle of the current causes her to yelp.

ELENA  
 (laughing)  
 Stop.

Karl shuts off the electricity.

ELENA (CONT'D)  
 Call *Mama* and Nana, Carlos.

Karl exits, returns with Aurora and Nana. Elena plays the joke on them.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Karl takes Elena's temperature: lower than normal body heat. Elena's breath shortens. Her cough severe. Karl brings out a throat spray and rinsing solution, first administering the throat spray. Elena inhales, gags.

ELENA  
 Take the spray away, as far as possible. I can still smell it. Take this pillow out, take the sheets out too. Give me a new night gown.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Elena, still not feeling one hundred percent, sits upright in bed. RELATIVES gather around. Their weight causes the bed to BREAK. Some pile onto Elena, giving her bruises.

Karl rushes into the room.

KARL  
 Begone! Out! Now! *Schneller!*  
*Schneller!*

They exit. Karl hurries to Elena, treats the bruises.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Elena lies in a new bed made of wood with high-closed ends for protection. The mattress and dresser are new. A mosquito net covers the bed. Sheets and silk cushions in pink and blue. Elena happily plays with a briefcase full of bank notes; millions and billions of counterfeit marks.

Karl stands by, watching it all.

KARL

Don't forget, I still want to marry you, darling.

ELENA

I wish you would stop asking me that, Carlos. I can't marry you. You're old enough to be my grandfather.

(beat)

I think I am going to die.

KARL

No, darling, you musn't believe that. You won't be going to Heaven for a while yet.

ELENA

I am not going to Heaven. I am not good enough. I think I will be going to Hell.

KARL

In that case, dear, I will be going with you too. Wherever you go, there I'll go. But I am sure that if you die, I'll take you in my arms and the good Lord will take us into his Heaven.

Elena smiles, reaches to her dresser, retrieves a dancing fan, opens it.

ELENA

I used this when I still was able to dance.

She retrieves two bridal pictures of herself and Luís. Hands them to Karl.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Doesn't he look so handsome?

She breaks down in tears. While her head is in her hands, Karl retrieves a pair of scissors from the dresser, cuts Luís' portion out perfectly. Hands the photos back to her.

KARL

There, is that better?

Elena looks, puts the photos down.

ELENA

If I must die, will you make sure  
nothing bad happens to my body?

KARL

I promise, my Elena. This is the  
most sacred promise I have ever  
made in my life.

He kisses her head, lays her gently back into the cushions,  
lifts her feet up high.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Karl moves the ray machine into the room. A high-powered,  
high frequency medical unit with violet-ray equipment,  
fulguration and throat examination attachments. He plugs it  
into the light socket near the bed. Switches on the Tesla  
coil. Hooks it up with one of the throat vacuum tubes.

He adjusts the apparatus, showing only the faintest blue  
light in the tube without any sparkling.

KARL

Open your mouth wide, please. And  
hold still.

Elena acquiesces. Karl slowly inserts the tip of the glass  
tube down her throat. Nervous, she moves a little.

INSERT: The tube touches her tonsils, electricity biting her.

Karl withdraws the tube.

ELENA

The electricity has bitten me.

Karl inserts the tube again, only withdrawing when the  
electricity bites her. This goes on for some time. Finally,  
Karl stops altogether. Elena breathes normally.

Karl uses the machine to apply five-minute radiation to  
Elena's larynx; the ultra-electrode tube is the giver. He  
exchanges the electrode for a surface tube, gives the outer  
surface of her throat and chest radiation of high-frequency  
for thirty minutes with minimum strength. Stops.

ELENA (CONT'D)

(stronger voice)

I feel so much better, Carlos.  
Perhaps I can soon go out a little.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Karl lays Elena on auto-condensation cushions, places a sponge electrode on her chest. Gradually increases the high frequency current to four-hundred on the milliamperere meter.

KARL

Cry out when it begins to burn.

He watches her breathing for ten minutes.

ELENA

Oh, Carlos, it burns!

He gently reduces the flow of electricity to zero. Elena's status: high temperature, painless chest, normal breathing, rapid pulse. He covers her up in blankets.

KARL

Rest tonight, my love.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - NIGHT

Karl standing before Aurora and Pancho.

AURORA

What are you doing to our daughter?

KARL

I am helping her! Can you not see?

AURORA

She nearly choked this morning on a blob!

KARL

That is good. She can breathe more normally now.

AURORA

She don't need any electric treatment!

PANCHO

You are running up a high electricity bill for us! Who is going to pay for that?

KARL

I will pay for it.

AURORA

Get these devil machines out of our house!

KARL

Will you take responsibility to let your daughter die through your stupidity?

Aurora bursts into tears, runs into the kitchen. Pancho follows after her.

ELENA (O.S.)

Oh, Carlos, you have hurt *mama*.

Karl turns, walks to the entrance of Elena's room.

KARL

I am sorry, darling, but it was necessary to tell her the truth.

EXT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S ROOM - DAY

SUPER: A few days later...

Karl enters with a radio and amplifier microphone. Sets it next to Elena, who looks worse than before. Turns on the radio, helps Elena hold the microphone to her mouth.

ELENA

(soft, hoarse)  
*Gracias, Carlos.*

A RADIO from down the street. Elena covers her ears in pain. Karl sits down at his pump organ, plays Wagner's "Parsifal."

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: October 11, 1931

Karl enters with a ring. Elena barely smiles. Karl places it on her finger. Elena holds up her hand. Five rings.

KARL

Do you have any pain?

ELENA

No, I am all spent. Father took me out for a walk to Celia's house to see her radio. That's all.

KARL

Darling, you simply must not take such walks; they drain your strength, you might collapse in the middle of the road. Get well. Your airplane is waiting for you. We'll go together any place you like to see.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - NIGHT

SUPER: Friday, October 16, 1931

Karl enters, walks straight to Elena's room. Immediately exits, heads to the kitchen, where Aurora works.

KARL

Where is Elena?

AURORA

Pancho took her for an auto ride to town. She'll be back in half an hour.

Karl sits down. Hears CAR NOISE. Stands up. Opens the door.

Pancho quickly exits the model T Ford, opens the back door of the car. Carries an unconscious Elena.

Karl runs out of the house.

KARL

What happened?!

ELENA

Help me, please, help me Carlos.

They run into the house. Sit her in the chair. Aurora dashes over to her daughter, SCREAMING and CRYING in Spanish. Pancho tries to calm her down.

KARL

Elena, please talk to me.

But Elena can't speak. Looks pale. Eyes sunken. Karl picks her up, carries her.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S ROOM - DAY

Karl places Elena in bed. She pulls off her rings, sets them into a heap on the dresser.

ELENA

I won't have those now for very long.

Karl places her in the Trendelenburg position: her legs against his shoulders, lifting her so her head is upside down. Color returns to her face. Karl puts her legs down, then turns to see Pancho contentedly smoking a pipe. Motions for him to follow.

EXT. HOYOS HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Karl and Pancho.

KARL

What were you thinking giving her an automobile ride? She cannot take them.

PANCHO

Why not?

KARL

Because it will kill her, take my word for it.

PANCHO

(laughing)  
Auto rides never killed anyone.

KARL

It will if you continue.

EXT. MARINE HOSPITAL - COURTYARD - DAY

SUPER: Sunday, October 25, 1931

Karl, buttoning his coat, walks down the steps.

A car SCREECHES to a halt. Mario hurries out.

MARIO

Elena has just died! Come with me.

Karl sprints into the car. Mario floors it.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S ROOM - DAY

A crowd of Cuban MEN and WOMEN MOANING for a miracle, SCREAMING to God in grief and devastation.

Karl runs inside, stops before the bed, where Elena's body lies. Her jaw dropped, her bright and clear eyes looking far away. She wears a dirty old shirt. Her jewels are gone.

Karl kneels before Elena, ear bent to her mouth. Then to her chest. Can't hear anything over the screaming. Places the faradic testing electrode on her neck. No reaction.

DR. H.C. GALEY enters.

DR. GALEY

Sir, could you please step aside.

Karl does so. Dr. Galey examines Elena. Turns to the Hoyos family standing before the doorway.

DR. GALEY (CONT'D)

She is gone.

Aurora and Pancho turn away, devastated. Karl stares down at Elena. Mario tiptoes to his side.

KARL

If only you had come to me half a hour earlier, perhaps it wouldn't have been too late.

MARIO

I drove as fast as I could. What more could I do?

KARL

How did it happen?

MARIO

Pancho took her on an auto ride to town. She was waving to everyone. Then she fell. Pancho quickly drove her back here.

Karl looks down at Elena. Focuses on her dead bright eyes. Pulls out of the trance. Notices her wardrobe.

Nana enters, sobbing.

NANA

Is she alive?

KARL

No, she will never come back again.

NANA  
 (looks at Elena)  
 Please, close those eyes, doctor!  
 Please close them.

KARL  
 I could look into those beautiful  
 eyes forever and ever.

He bends down, gently closes Elena's eyes.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S ROOM - DAY - LATER

Karl with Elena. Suddenly, Pancho bursts into the room.

PANCHO  
 Please help us, Carlos! We can't  
 afford to pay for Elena's funeral.  
 I don't know what to do! Please  
 help us. Please...

KARL  
 Alright, but you should have left  
 her to me while she was still  
 alive.

PANCHO  
 Thank you! Thank you! Mr.  
 Pritchard, come!

REGINALD PRITCHARD (45) enters. Friendly enough. In his hands  
 are some documents.

PANCHO (CONT'D)  
 This is Carlos. He is in charge of  
 all the arrangements.

KARL  
 Count Karl Tänzler Von Cosel.

PRITCHARD  
 How do you do? I am Reginald  
 Pritchard, the undertaker. But you  
 can call me Reggie.

They shake hands. Pancho leaves to join his family.

KARL  
 Mr. Pritchard, while I appreciate  
 your presence, this is not the  
 place to discuss these types of  
 affairs. Shall we go somewhere  
 else? Your funeral home, perhaps?

PRITCHARD

Alright.

KARL (V.O.)

She is not dead. She will come  
back. I have died, but I came back.

MONTAGE

- A) At Pritchard's Funeral Home, Karl selects a coffin
- B) Karl selects flowers
- C) Nana gives Karl the silk dress

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

SUPER: October 26, 1931

Masses of flowers form a wall around the place. Karl takes a seat near the open casket. A large number of mourners passes by, kissing Elena. All reverently quiet, depositing flowers along the way. ISAAC MESA, a wrinkled old man, walks up to Elena, leaves flowers, bends down to her.

ISAAC

Forgive us, Elena. Forgive my son.

He breaks down in tears, exits.

Pritchard touches Karl, pulling him out of his trance.

PRITCHARD

Everybody is heading to the church.

Karl stands up, walks over to Nana.

KARL

She hasn't one single piece of  
jewelry on her.

Nana opens her purse, pulls out the ivory necklace and rosary. Karl takes them, puts the ivory necklace around Elena's neck, the rosary around her left wrist. Nana pulls out black velvet felt with a brilliant clasp and an embroidered handkerchief.

Karl gives them all to Elena. Kisses her temple.

INT. ST. MARY'S STAR OF THE SEA CHURCH - DAY

Mourners fill up the pews. Karl and the Hoyos sit together.

A heart of roses rests on the casket's lid. A picture of Elena with the flapper hairstyle and her jewels.

The organist plays a beautiful song.

Karl, face in hands, weeps the moment the organ SOUNDS.

FATHER A.L. MAUREAU steps up. The organ ceases. WHEN HE SPEAKS, IT'S IN SPANISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

MAUREAU

Words cannot begin to illustrate the grief that the Hoyos family must feel. Their daughter Elena had been through so much in her short life. But take comfort in the knowledge that she was loved. Not only by her parents, her sisters, and cousins, but by her friends. She too loved in turn. God wants us all to love, and it's this very action He will never look past.

EXT. KEY WEST CEMETERY - DAY

Most of the existing tombs are widely spaced family plots with elaborate iron or cement fences surrounding them. The mourners gather around a shallow hole in which GRAVE DIGGERS lower Elena's casket.

Karl watches dirt cover Elena's casket.

CUBAN (O.S.)

Who among you has done this? I want to see punishment for the person responsible!

BIENVENIDO PEREZ (31), a police officer, takes the man from Elena's birthday out of the cemetery. Karl gives the grieving man a clap of the hand. Looks down at the earth. Then out into the ocean.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - DAY

Karl stands before Pancho and Aurora.

KARL

Where are her things?

AURORA

Everything was burned. We cannot stay in the house where our daughter died. It isn't right. We will move to some other part of town.

KARL

If you are moving out, I'm going to rent this house for myself, even if I have to buy it. Moreover, you'd better be warned that the furniture and other things and jewelry I've given Elena were bought on the installment plan. If you want to keep these things for yourself, I will notify the company according to the contract and you will have to pay the balance owing. No matter whether you move or stay on, I'm going to live in my Elena's room, where she has lived and died because it is here that I distinctly feel at home in her presence.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - ELENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Karl lies in bed. Most of Elena's things remain. He inhales deeply -- her scent is here. Opens the dresser -- the silk kimono revealed. Closes the dresser.

INT. HOYOS HOUSE - DAY

Karl and Aurora.

AURORA

I have all of Elena's jewels. But they're locked up. I suppose you want those too.

KARL

Keep them until the tomb is ready. Then I'll adorn her with all her jewels, because I don't want anybody else to wear them.

AURORA

But what's the use? There won't be anything left but bones.

KARL

Don't you believe it, mother. I'll take care of her. I'll not permit her body to decay and if in the grave Elena should lose her hair I'll buy new hair and put it back on her head.

AURORA

Don't do that, don't use other people's hair; put her own hair back.

She moves to a dresser, retrieves some wrapped up paper. Unwraps it, revealing dark tresses of hair. Gives it to Karl.

KARL

Thank you. From the bottom of my heart. Thank you.

MONTAGE

- A) Karl draws plans for a mausoleum
- B) Karl and a man dig up the rain-soaked coffin
- C) At Pritchard's, Karl builds an incubation tank
- D) Karl retrieves Elena's jewels from her room
- E) Karl and Pritchard sanitize the morgue
- F) Karl and Pritchard set the coffin on the floor
- G) Karl opens the smashed door
- H) Karl cuts the lining from Elena's face
- I) Karl sprays diluted formalin on her body
- J) The lining falls off
- K) Karl and Pritchard lift the body onto the table
- L) Karl sprays her body; sponges her
- M) Karl and Pritchard place Elena on thick layers of cotton
- N) Karl and Pritchard position Elena in a new airtight coffin
- O) Karl fastens the one hundred screws
- P) Karl fits in two valves

- Q) The coffin moves into an outer metal coffin
- R) Karl closes the fifty screws on the outer coffin
- S) Karl leaves instructions not to open the coffins
- T) Antiseptic and nourishing solutions fill the tank
- U) Karl lays Elena inside the tank
- V) Karl returns the tank to the outer coffin

EXT. KEY WEST CEMETERY - MAUSOLEUM - DAY

SUPER: Three months later

Karl stands before the mausoleum:

Adjacent to where Elena was buried. Eight feet wide, five feet above ground. Concrete top, between the sides. A squatty door centered in the front with small blue-curtained windows. Atop the structure, four slender columns supporting a small cupola and a metallic gold-plated cross.

An inscription in Latin reads "Accersitus ab Angelus." Beside the door, near an urn with asparagus fern, a marble plaque reads "Elena Milagros Hoyos, born July 31 - 1909, died October 25 - 1931 R.I.P."

A few ONLOOKERS pass by.

ONLOOKERS

I'd like to move in and make it my home.

Karl walks to the door, unlocks it.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - DAY

The cement floor lies two steps below ground level. A light bulb suspends from a twisted electrical wire. In the inner area, two large rectangular sepulchers of poured concrete side by side, each covered with a rough concrete slab.

Karl places a crucifix on top of the casket, lights the votive lights in the niche above the head of the casket.

KARL

*Auf Wiedersehen, mein bride.*

He exits the mausoleum, locking the door with three locks.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

SUPER: Eighteen months later

Karl, cane in hand, enters. Leaves the door open.

KARL

Hello, once again, my beautiful  
Elena.

He sits by the coffin. Slowly falls asleep.

A LOUD CRASH!

Karl wakes up. Looks around. No one here. He stands up,  
exits. After a few seconds, returns. Looks at the casket.

Fifty locks sprang open. Karl smiles. Then hears CRACKLING  
from inside the coffin. Like fingernails. He grabs his keys,  
quickly opens the remaining locks. Opens the lid. Reveals the  
intact coffin.

Karl looks around, finds a piece of lumber, uses it to prop  
open the lid. Bends his ear down to the inner coffin. No  
other sound. He removes the lid. Tests all one hundred  
screws. They're intact. He tests the top valve of the  
incubator. Stops. Sniffs.

KARL (CONT'D)

Hamine...

He places his ear to the valve.

ELENA (O.S.)

Carlos...

Karl looks around the room, sees no one. Returns to coffin.

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

You do love me still, don't you?  
Tell me, am I really dead?

KARL

Elena, my darling, you are not  
really dead. It's only your body  
that's asleep, and your spirit is  
dreaming.

ELENA (O.S.)

Carlos, where am I?

KARL

You are in a little house, darling,  
which I have built for you.

(MORE)

KARL (CONT'D)

I built it so you should not be disturbed, and be protected in your sleep.

ELENA (O.S.)

Is then this your house too?

KARL

No, darling, I am only here to visit you, and to wait for you to call me.

A few minutes pass.

ELENA (O.S.)

I wish you would take me with you to your home. I want to stay with you.

KARL

With all my heart, darling, I will take you with me, if needs be, to the ends of the world.

No answer. But a SOUND hits Karl's ear: LIPS MOVING SILENTLY. He moves closer to the valve. The sound INCREASES.

KARL (CONT'D)

Yes, darling, I will do exactly as you wish. When the moon changes it is to be. Then I will take you with me and you will stay with me forever.

No answer. He embraces the top of her coffin. After some time passes, he tiptoes away, leaving the outer casket's lid open.

KARL (CONT'D)

Sleep sweet, and God bless you.

He exits.

MONTAGE

- A) Karl brings flowers
- B) Karl brings pretty handkerchiefs
- C) Karl brings a Spanish shawl
- D) Karl brings a comb
- E) Karl brings a vanity case

INT. MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Karl sits by the coffin. The SOUND of young boys outside.

KARL

They cannot enter. You are safe.

BOY (O.S.)

Hey, come on out, old man. Tell us what she told you. Please tell us! What's the secret of Elena's tomb? Tell us, you old Kraut!

KARL

I must leave, my love. It is the only way they will leave us alone.

EXT. KEY WEST CEMETERY - MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Karl exits. The BOYS and some CONCHS -- Key West citizens -- outside the cemetery. He locks the door to the mausoleum, approaches the boys.

KARL

Please do not disturb me.

Karl leaves.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Karl sits next to the coffin. GLASS SHATTERS. Karl stands up. The window on the door is broken. A stone lies on the floor.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Karl stands before Bienvenido.

KARL

There are boys bothering me when I am in the tomb. They broke the window to the door. It would be greatly appreciated if you would tell them to leave me alone.

BIENVENIDO

I will talk to them when I see them.

KARL

Thank you.

EXT. KEY WEST CEMETERY - MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Karl walks toward the mausoleum. Looks like he's had a rough day. Stops. Looks ahead.

A veiled white figure moves into the building.

Karl runs into the tomb.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Karl enters. Looks around. Sees no one. Walks to the coffin. Touches it. The BUZZ of an electric current. Karl inhales. The smell of hamine. He sits in the chair next to the coffin. Softly, Elena sings "La Boda Negra."

KARL

Darling, very soon now the moon will change. The hour approaches when I shall take you home with me. I will clean you and wash you and I will put on your bridal dress with veil and crown and all. Thus, as my beloved bride, you will stay with me forever.

(mouth to valve)

You know, sweetheart, your coming with me must remain a deep secret and I have been wondering how we can keep it a secret. You see, this cemetery is surrounded by streets and by houses. It has several gates, but they are all in full view of the houses. The automobiles pass back and forth past the cemetery at all hours. People are curious. They are quite used to seeing coffins go into the cemetery, but they have never seen the dead come out again. If they see us, people might raise hell. What are we going to do about this, darling?

ELENA (O.S.)

Go out of the tomb, Carlos, and I will show you how this can be done.

EXT. KEY WEST CEMETERY - NIGHT

Karl exits the mausoleum. Looks at the surroundings. A fence encloses the cemetery. The graves offer no cover.

ELENA (O.S.)

You do it this way: when the moon changes, you bring along a very large blanket. You hang that blanket over the rail of the fence. Then nobody can see you from the street and from the houses, Carlos. The woman, my neighbor in the grave, she is my friend. She will be glad to help you.

Karl turns, sees Elena's spirit enter his body. His feet move, but he's not in control. Down the path, through the dark part of the cemetery, he walks. Looks around. Sees how protected he is by this path. Stops before a deserted house, looks at an open window.

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

Into this window you shall lift, Carlos, and I shall be safe in this deserted house and from it, later, you can take me away in an automobile.

KARL

Yes, darling. Everything shall be done exactly as you say.

Karl's body jerks slightly. He moves his hands up and down his person. Control over body is his again. He looks around, finds a gate. Crosses through. Heads home.

EXT. STORE - DAY

Karl walks past a toy store. Stops. Looks in the window to see a toy wagon.

ELENA (O.S.)

On this little wagon you will ride me along.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Karl enters. The wagon in his hands, with a blanket and black rain sheet. Shows them to the coffin. Sits next to it.

KARL

Tell me, darling, will you truly come with me? Will you not fail to aid me at the last moment, as I must count on your support?

ELENA (O.S.)

(beat)

Yes, I will come with you.

KARL (SUBTITLE)

(in German)

Come fly with me and be my wife, my  
heart thy resting place shall be.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

SUPER: 8:30pm, New Moon, April, 1933

Karl enters, opens the window facing the cemetery. Suspends the wagon over the fence from the window. The two rubber cushions and a couple of short towing ropes follow. He darkens the room, exits, locking the door behind him.

EXT. KEY WEST CEMETERY - NIGHT

Karl enters, retrieves his things from the fence. Pulls the wagon along the chosen path. It RATTLES. He carries it through the path. Unlocks the door to the mausoleum, leaving it open. Enters.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Karl puts the things down, places his mouth to the valve.

KARL

Darling, I have come to fulfill my  
promise to you. Sleep now, darling,  
gently for a while, until you are  
with me. God bless you.

He screws the valve shut tightly, closes the outer coffin.

EXT. KEY WEST CEMETERY - MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Karl hangs the blanket over the iron rail. The entire lower half of the entrance is cast in shadow. On the door's threshold rubber cushions cover the uppermost step of the staircase. He takes a look around. Returns to the mausoleum.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Light SHINES in Karl's eyes, causing him to raise his hand as a shield. He moves his hand down.

The light softens from the crucifix. Karl steps forward, crosses himself like a good German Catholic, lifts the crucifix from the hook, kisses it.

KARL (SUBTITLE)

(in German)

Please protect us both. I promise  
to guard her and her sleeping soul  
and to bring her back safely with  
me. Amen.

He lays the crucifix on the lid, lifts the coffin up high. The foot end touches the entrance. Karl pushes the head forward slowly, little by little, through the door opening until the entire length rests securely on the threshold. He walks upstairs.

EXT. KEY WEST CEMETERY - MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Karl pulls the coffin up outside behind the shielding blanket, into the grass. Pulls it further around the corner of the mausoleum, slides the blanket from the railing, covers the crucifix. Picks up the cushions, locks the mausoleum.

Karl lifts the coffin onto the wagon, using the cushions on each side. Ties down the coffin and cushions with the rope. Once secure, he pulls the wagon down the pathway chosen by Elena. Sweats. Looks up.

Spirits rise from the grave, guide him through the pathway. Karl stops at the house. The spirits disappear. He takes a few moments to rest, gather his breath.

Karl takes the coffin off of the wagon, hangs the blanket across the windowsill with one end hanging over the top of the wooden fence. Places the head of the coffin at the height of the window. Crouches down, lifts the bottom of the coffin. His back toward the fence.

The ground underneath him CRUMBLES. He loses balance. The coffin lands on his head, crushing his hat. After a few seconds, Karl summons all of his strength, using the fence against his back as support, lifts the coffin through the window. Letting it sit on the windowsill.

Karl rests. His head and hair saturated with blood and sweat. Hands and clothes are sticky too. He smells something. Looks up. The bottom of the coffin fell out. Fetid liquid drips. Neighborhood dogs BARK. Karl rises.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Karl enters, pulls the casket inside. The blankets follow. He tilts the bottom half of the coffin up. Plugs the hole with cotton. Shuts the window. Makes a light. Wraps the blanket into a secure parcel. Undresses, washes clothes in alcohol. Dresses back up. Locks the door on the way out.

EXT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT

SUPER: Monday Night.

Karl waits. A cab arrives, stops. The DRIVER exits.

DRIVER

Where to?

KARL

Marine Hospital. But come and help me first.

He opens the house. Both he and driver enter. They exit, carrying the coffin out. Driver opens the backseat. They slide the coffin inside. Driver shuts the door. Karl and driver enter the cab. The cab STARTS. Off they go.

EXT. MARINE HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The cab stops before the airship. Karl exits, opens the cabin. Both he and the driver move the coffin out of the cab, into the airship.

KARL

Thank you.

DRIVER

Have a good night.

The man drives off. Karl closes up the plane.

INT. AIRSHIP - NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) Garments, bridal dress, veil, flower, jewels
- B) Shoes, stockings
- C) A tank of distilled water, plenty of clean linen
- D) Sterile cotton

E) A Carl Dakin instillation apparatus; solutions, chemicals

Karl slides the coffin aft from the pilot cabin to the curtained windows. Loosens all one hundred screws, leaving the last four -- on one each corner -- alone.

KARL

I must leave now, but I will  
return, my darling.

He exits the plane, closes it up.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

SUPER: Australia, March 7, 1912

The table is set with scrambled eggs, hot toast, cookies, bananas, meat. Drink of choice is hot tea. Karl (35) sits, looking out the window: a storm BLOWS outside. The roof of the house RATTLES with a DEAFENING NOISE.

Stressed from the power of the storm, Karl resumes eating. The STORM OUTSIDE CEASES. Karl looks out the window. Turns to the clock on the wall. Seven p.m.

At the threshold of the door, facing Karl, stands a white, veiled FIGURE. About five feet eight inches tall. Female. Rich, black hair unrolls over her shoulders, reaching her knees. Through the veil, dark eyes stare fixedly. It's Elena.

Karl rises from his chair.

KARL

What can I do for you, my lady?

Elena smiles. Stretches her hand out. Karl walks across the room. Hair rising, increasing cold running down his spine. They wrap their arms around each other. The coldness dissipates. Their feet lift off of the ground.

Elena dissolves in Karl's arms. He finds himself back on the ground again, on his feet. He steps into

INT. HOUSE - GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Karl stops as soon as he sees Elena by his side again. Her feet float above the ground. So do his. Cautiously, they walk side by side throughout the room and house until returning to

INT. HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Elena moves away from Karl, stands at the threshold from where she first appeared. Smiles. Karl offers her a seat at the table, gesturing to his chair. Offers food and tea.

MONTAGE

- A) Day One: Karl at the organ; Elena at the threshold
- B) Day Two: Karl returns to Elena
- C) Day Three: Elena watches Karl sleep
- D) Day Four: Elena follows Karl around
- E) Day Five: Karl plays the organ for her
- F) Day Six: Karl paints while Elena watches
- G) Day Seven: Karl walks through town, feels a disturbance
- H) Karl returns; Elena is gone

INT. AIRSHIP - NIGHT

BACK IN 1933

Karl enters, locks the plane. Pulls the curtains across the window, kneels down beside the coffin. Removes the last four screws. Lifts the cover, hooks it against the ship's wall. Looks down. Elena's badly decomposed corpse. Her eyes gone. Dress decayed.

KARL

My poor darling, how you have been neglected. Of course you could not help yourself. May God forgive me if I could not come to your aid in time to save you earlier.

He detaches the uppermost layers, overgrown and eaten by slimy moulds. Deposits rags into a large bucket until it fills to the brim. Then carefully peels off the pieces around the head, face and chest. But many pieces aren't just stuck; they're glued. Karl leaves them to soak.

Karl coughs. Grabs the bucket of rags. Exits the plane.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Karl wades into the water. Dumps the rags into the ocean.

## MONTAGE

- A) Karl continues cleaning Elena
- B) Karl cleans, disinfects the airship
- C) Karl dumps rags into the ocean
- D) Karl finishes cleaning Elena
- E) Karl drains, sponges clean, dries the coffin

## INT. AIRSHIP - NIGHT

Karl places new rubber cushions all along Elena's body. Looks into the eyeholes. Small pupils form at the center. The dry lips part slightly, exposing teeth.

EVEN THOUGH ELENA SPEAKS, HER LIPS DON'T MOVE:

ELENA

Now, you will love me no more?

KARL

Darling, I love you more than ever before. If it were not so, I would not have taken you to me.

He kisses her dry lips, breathes deeply into her lungs. Her chest rises. Karl unpacks her bridal gown, covers her body with it. Drapes her with a silk veil. Adorns her head and hair with a golden crown. Sinks gently into her coffin. Kisses her. Holds her close. Falls asleep.

## INT. AIRSHIP - DAY

Karl awakes, looks out the windows. The sun peaks above the horizon. He looks down at Elena in his arms. After a while, rises up. Collects samples from Elena on slides.

KARL

I will return, my love. Very soon.

He exits the plane.

## INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - KARL'S LAB - DAY

Karl places slides into the microscope. Peers into goggles.

KARL'S P.O.V. -- Tubercular bacteria is absent.

KARL

Please forgive me, darling. You are  
an angel of death, you are purer  
than many living.

INT. AIRSHIP - DAY

SUPER: Easter Morning, 1933

Karl washes Elena with perfumed soap, spirits of wine, Eau de Cologne. Tries to loosen the pieces of silk. They're still glued. Her hair is glued. Small maggots feed on blood around her head, lips, and on the surface of her partly damaged and lacerated abdomen. Karl removes them with phenol solution.

Karl treats the abdomen with healing lotions and sterile packing. Bandages her toes, feet, and fingers. The bandages themselves are moistened with formalin. He looks over the rest of her body.

No bad discharges. No putrefaction anywhere on the body. But there is some loose-binding element of tissues. A deficiency of alkaline elements.

Karl uses fine powder all over the moist surface of the body, supplementing lost calcium and sodium, neutralizing the skin, leaving it dry, almost free of acid. Olive oil and glycerine solutions are used. He looks at her again.

CLOSE ON HER NOSE: Damaged, but still has its normal shape.

Karl puts everything down once finished, exits the plane.

INT. AIRSHIP - NIGHT

Karl feeding Elena broth. She expels it. Karl grabs a scale, carefully places her down on it. Marks down the weight in a log: twenty pounds heavier than before. Looks over her body. She's healed, looks happier. Karl collects samples. Places them in a microscope. Looks into the goggles.

KARL'S P.O.V. -- A strong positive reaction from the tissues.

He puts the microscope down, removes the splints from her nose. It's knitting together more firmly.

Karl straightens her arm out using a counterweight with a cord over a pulley on the ceiling. The arm automatically takes position below the hip joint. Karl treats the groove across her stomach. It's already straightening itself out with hot solutions and broth.

INT. AIRSHIP - NIGHT

Karl drapes silk over Elena's face. Makes a plaster cast on top. Waits a while. Tries to remove the cast. It's stuck. Karl takes a paint and brush resting next to a portrait of Elena, paints a face on the cast. Places her body in an incubation tank to soak. Removes her after a while to dry. Places his hand to her hair. Attraction.

INT. MARINE HOSPITAL - CHIEF OFFICE - DAY

A NEW MAN sits in Lombard's seat. Karl sits ramrod straight in a chair across from the desk.

NEW MAN

How long have you been with Marine Hospital?

KARL

Since 1927.

NEW MAN

How often have you been coming in?

KARL

Now listen, I know I have been lax in my work, but...

NEW MAN

Karl, I know Lombard -- God rest his soul -- thought you quite reliable, but we need an x-ray technician. You have by the end of this week to clear your office. You will receive severance pay. Oh, and you need to move out and find another place for your plane. Thank you for your service Karl Von Cosel.

EXT. SOUTH BEACH - DAY

Karl, cane in hand, walks. Every now and then, looks out into the water. Stops. Looks ahead at an open shed for farming equipment. An enclosed room for tools, saddles, etc.

EXT. KEY WEST - DAY

Two trucks rest outside Marine Hospital. Karl and Mario load them up with all of Karl's things.

They hitch the airship to a truck, which Mario enters as the driver. Karl enters the leading truck. Both vehicles START.

They turn right on Whitehead Street, down Monroe County Courthouse, past Hemingway's house, then a left on United Street. They turn right, traveling half a mile south until the road ends at the shore. Several hundred feet away lies the new home. Karl and Mario stop the trucks.

EXT. SOUTH BEACH - DAY

Karl builds a residence from rocks, cement, beach sand, and sea water. Walks to an opening on the leese side where the airship rests. Opens it. Carries the coffin into the main residence. Walks back out. Looks ahead at Hawk's Channel.

Boats travel east and west. The northerners blow, causing the work boats to snuggle in two or three hundred yards from shore and anchor. Karl enters the house.

INT. BUTCHER PEN - DAY

We watch Karl set this place up accordingly:

The roof is supported and fastened securely on top of the cement walls.

The pen has two sections: a hangar with a workshop and laboratory -- made up of a globe resting on top of a million-volt transformer and the incubator tank, and a picture of Elena; and a room with a bed, a large table, the organ, and Karl's books.

The million-volt transformer is installed in the middle of the floor. Against the front stonewall is a large x-ray machine and operating table. Along the northern windows the examination bench with microscope, scales, etc.

Along the division wall, mounted shelves all the way up to the top for bottles, chemicals, glassware and other supplies, with a long bench for analytical work.

EXT. SOUTH BEACH - DAY

Karl walks along the beach. Looks ahead.

KARL'S P.O.V. -- A small figure looks at the airship.

Karl runs over to Butcher Pen, stops at the figure: FRANK, a fisherman. Italian. Weatherbeaten, friendly.

KARL  
Nobody goes into that plane!

FRANK  
Okay, okay.

KARL  
What are you doing here?

FRANK  
I live here.

KARL  
Lies! This is my home.

FRANK  
No, I mean, in that shack.

Frank leads him to the side of the building to the shack.

KARL  
Ah, that. I had intended it for  
storage.

FRANK  
I've only been gone for a few days.

KARL  
Forgive my rudeness.

FRANK  
Don't think about it. Name's Frank.

KARL  
I am Count Karl Tänzler Von Cosel.

They shake hands.

FRANK  
A count, huh? Like Dracula?

KARL  
No.

FRANK  
Why are you living here? Shouldn't  
you be up in some castle?

KARL  
I did live in one in Germany.  
Castle Cosel. My aunt was the  
Contessa Anna.

FRANK

So that life didn't appeal to you?

KARL

It did. But after my sister moved to Zephyrhills, my mother wished me to move there too. But when my ship landed here, there was none to greet me. So, I settled.

FRANK

Story of my life. My parents came from Italy. They moved here when she was pregnant with me. We've been here since.

KARL

You said you had been gone for only a few days. What is it you do?

FRANK

I'm a fisherman. That's my boat right there.

He points to the boat shored up on the beach.

KARL

Are you good at what you do?

FRANK

As good as I can be. I just caught myself a good amount. You like fish?

KARL

Some of them.

FRANK

Then we will feast like counts tonight!

INT. BUTCHER PEN - KARL'S ROOM - DAY

Karl opens the coffin, revealing Elena. Double screens the windows of the room. Upon inspection, he notices liquid in the coffin. Checks the body. The liquid corroded her skin and the coffin. He quickly removes Elena, places her on his bed. Cleans out the coffin.

INT. BUTCHER PEN - LABORATORY - DAY

Karl mixes up plasma solutions, adjusting, testing, cooling, and heating elements; testing the circulating pumps and electron cell, sterilizing everything, including rubber and glass connectors.

Karl places Elena gently into the incubator tank on a thick layer of white felt. Fills the entire tank with a clear solution of oxyquinoline sulphate of sodium at a temperature of 38 centigrade or 100.4 Fahrenheit. Leaves Elena alone.

INT. BUTCHER PEN - KARL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Karl drains the incubator. Refills the tank with plasma at a temperature of 98.6 Fahrenheit, using a pump intake connected to the plasma tank. The incubator fills up, overflows through the foot valve into the filter and recharging tank. He puts Elena in, lets her soak.

INT. BUTCHER PEN - LABORATORY - DAY

Karl takes her out of the tank, places her on the x-ray table. Turns the machine on, inducing five minutes of radiation with high voltage, 3 mill. amp. 1 mm alum filter. After that, he returns her to the bath.

INT. BUTCHER PEN - KARL'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON SCALE: The hand stops at ninety pounds.

Karl takes Elena off of the scale, places her in the now clean coffin. Sits at the pump organ, plays Johann Sebastian Bach's "Toccatà and Fugue in D Minor."

EXT. SOUTH BEACH - DAY

W.P.A. WORKERS wearing short pants clean up the terrain. Some workers are CONCHS. One of them approaches the airship.

Karl immediately exits, storms over to the worker.

KARL

Nobody goes into that plane!

The worker scuttles off. Karl returns into the house.

## INT. BUTCHER PEN - LABORATORY - DAY

Karl lifts Elena out of the incubation tank, dries her off with alcohol and Eau de Cologne. Empties all the plasma fluid into glass bottles, dismantles the incubation assembly, sterilizing and packing it away.

## MONTAGE

- A) The City Council and Country commission turns Key West over to the Federal Emergency Relief Act aka the W.P.A.
- B) The cigar factories shut down, move to Tampa
- C) The sponge industry goes down to disease
- D) People wash, clean, plan meals
- E) Karl walks briskly to the post office to pick up a monthly check from Germany
- F) The trolleys go down
- G) Reports of a hurricane arrive
- H) Key West prepares
- I) A MAN ties his SON to a tree
- J) Karl and Frank reinforce the entrance with strong timbers
- K) Karl and Frank bolt large beams down between the cement walls
- L) Karl and Frank bolt beams to the floor and roof beams
- M) Karl wheels the airship into the hangar
- N) Karl blocks the wheels to put back pressure against the doors
- O) Karl packs away his things close to the roof
- P) Karl puts Elena in the steel casket, wrapped in a silken quilt with the crucifix on her breast
- Q) Karl places her in the roof's loft

## INT. BUTCHER PEN - NIGHT

Karl locks the door. Frank is with him.

FRANK

I don't like this. I don't like this at all. I don't think we're safe.

KARL

Don't be ridiculous. We are as safe as possible.

FRANK

How do you know?

KARL

Because I believe it.

FRANK

Oh, you believe it! That sorts it all out! Believe it! Believe it all you want!

Frank walks past him, enters his own room.

INT. BUTCHER PEN - KARL'S ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: Labor Day, 1935, 9:00 p.m.

Karl looks at the barometer. The air pressure falls rapidly.

The northwest wind blows. Then it hits: THE HURRICANE! The RATTLING WINDOWS and SHUTTERS and LARGE STEEL GATES create a DEAFENING ROAR.

Karl sits near the organ, looking up at the roof.

KARL

Elena, my darling, we are alone on this shore. The hurricane may free us both from this life, but we will cling together faithfully, you and I and our God. Death will not harm us, nor separate us anymore. He, who has given you to me, will not reject our souls, united as they are in His undying love.

With soft duke, Karl plays "Good Friday Spell" from Wagner's *Parsifal*. Adds Vox Celeste on the second movement. Puts his soul into the performance. The hurricane DECREASES. At the finale's diminishing notes, the storm SILENCES.

Karl rises from the organ, looks at the barometer. The air pressure rises rapidly. Karl heads up into

INT. BUTCHER PEN - ROOF LOFT - NIGHT

Karl bends down to the coffin, kisses it.

KARL

Elena, dear, God bless you. He saved all of us. Thank God.

He exits the loft, closing the door.

INT. FRANK'S SHACK - NIGHT

Frank lies in bed, face down. Hands to his ears. Karl enters, sits at his side.

KARL

Frank, it's all over now!

Frank rises, looks at Karl.

FRANK

I heard you playing the organ. It sounded like Holy Mass in church, so I prayed. But Doc, it's all so still now. Will the storm come back again?

KARL

No, it will not. You can safely go to sleep now. Good night, Frank.

MONTAGE

- A) The destroyed upper keys of Matecombe and Tavernier
- B) The demolished veteran's camp
- C) The felled highway
- D) The shattered railroad
- E) People gather at Sloppy Joe's and other bars
- F) A man finds the tree-bound boy headless; vomits
- G) A thirty foot fishing cruiser faces Karl head on

INT. BUTCHER PEN - LABORATORY - NIGHT

Karl takes Elena out of the incubation tank. Collects blood samples from her body. Places them in the microscope. Looks into the goggles.

KARL'S P.O.V. -- red blood cells mixed with tank fluid.

Karl continues treating Elena with radiation.

INT. BUTCHER PEN - KARL'S ROOM - DAY

SUPER: Christmas, 1935

A little Christmas tree decorated with silver tinsel, cotton snow and thirteen small wax candles, sits on a bench beside Elena's bed with little gifts like picture books, chocolate, cakes, cookies, perfume, soap, and face powder.

Elena looks more like a doll than before: face covered in silk, glass eyes, her own hair fashioned as a wig.

Karl lights the candles, places a crucifix nearby. Sits at the organ, plays "Silent Night" until the candles burn out. Moves to the bed, lifts Elena's veil, kisses her.

KARL

Elena, darling, we are all alone in  
this world -- you and I and our  
God, but we are happy and  
contented. Let us stay together  
forever.

He opens a small bottle of Rhine wine on a table, fills a glass, raises it.

KARL (CONT'D)

Lord, I thank you for bringing me  
to Elena. I thank you every day for  
our union. Amen.

He drinks half a glass. Brings the glass to her lips. Lets her finish. Feels the passage of air as the wine enters her stomach by pressing his lips to hers. Releases. Watches her chest fall, not spilling a single drop of wine. Looks closer.

Her chest moves up and down. Blood runs out of the corners of both eyes and ears. Karl uses cotton to wipe the blood off, deposit them on slides. No further discharge of blood.

Karl grabs a stethoscope, plugs it into his ears. Places the bell on her chest. A soft SOUND of FLOWING LIQUID in the vessels, then a pause, then a flowing again with an irregular FLUTTER in-between. He covers her with a blue silk quilt.

MONTAGE

A) Karl checks saphenous veins on Elena's legs; menstrual blood

- B) The great concrete pier close to the pen EXPLODES
- C) The trucks, driven by Karl and Frank, move everything out
- D) Karl and Frank find a shed on Flagler Avenue
- E) Karl fixes up the bedroom
- F) Karl fixes up the laboratory
- G) Frank anchors his three boats
- H) Karl and Frank plant vegetables, papayas, bananas, lime, coconut trees
- I) Karl and Frank take in some dogs
- J) Karl removes Elena from the airship
- K) Karl places her on a quilt
- L) Karl lies in bed with Elena
- M) Karl seals any leakage with wax
- N) Karl puts away jars labeled with organ names i.e. "heart"
- O) Karl uses piano wire to keep the bones together
- P) Karl repaints a face in the silk over her head
- Q) Karl polishes the glass eyes
- R) Karl inserts a toilet paper tube into her vagina
- S) Karl uses a pair of tweezers to place cotton swabs near the cervix
- T) Karl dresses her in a new bridal gown

INT. KARL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The pump organ is here. Karl's books, a writing table, chairs and shelves. Elena lies in bed.

Karl approaches her. Takes his clothes off.

KARL

No longer doctor and patient. Now,  
husband and wife.

Karl lifts up her dress, exposing her vulva. Climbs on top of her. Inserts his erect penis into her vagina/tube.

At first it's a bit rough, but Karl's excitement moistens up the tube in no time. It feels like the real thing.

He moves faster and faster. Achieves orgasm. Kisses her lips. Jumps onto the organ, joyously playing Ludwig Van Beethoven's "Ode to Joy."

INT. KARL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Karl enters with a tray of eggs, toast, and Lipton tea. Places it on the table next to the bed, where Elena lies. Sits down next to Elena. Eats in flawless peace.

SCRATCHING AT THE DOOR. Karl finishes eating, answers. The BIGGER DOG stands at attention. Karl steps to the side. She noses her way past the x-ray machine and organ. Sits down at the bed. Looks satisfied. Wags her tail. Looks up at the screen around the bed.

KARL

This is your mistress, Granny, and she also likes dogs, but don't wake her up now. You may look at her through the screen. That's all.

Granny sits up, holding her paws carefully in the air.

KARL (CONT'D)

You watch and guard your mistress always.

INT. KARL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

SUPER: July 29, 1936

Naked, Karl wakes up next to Elena. The sun shines brightly in his face and eyes. He looks down at Elena. Eyes grow wide:

Elena's fingers on her right hand move. Karl takes it into his hand. Elena's left arm lifts, hand presses firmly against his lips and face. Karl kisses that hand. She turns over on her side toward him, attempting to sit up.

KARL

God bless you, Elena. I am so happy you are awakened from your long sleep.

ELENA

I've come to you to stay for a while and keep you company.

KARL

Elena, it is five years that I have waited by your side for your awakening now. Don't be too hasty in getting up. It may exhaust your strength, my darling. Wait a little and I will make you some hot beef tea to strengthen you.

Karl exits. Returns with a bowl of hot beef tea.

Elena lies in her normal rigid state. Karl sits down, feeds her the tea anyway. Then sits at the desk to write out the event in a journal.

EXT. FLAGLER AVENUE - DAY

Karl walks up and down the street. Spots something. Enters

THE JUNGLE

A wild garden of myrtle bushes loaded with little white flowers. Karl gathers some. Inhales their fragrance. Exits the jungle. Still smelling the flowers.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Karl walks along the beach. Sees a shipwreck on the sand.

CONCH (O.S.)

Wreck ashore!

Karl looks back. A sea of Conchs races toward him. Karl runs for the wreck, pumping his legs up and down, keeping his body ramrod straight. Finally reaches the wreck. Places his hands on the hull. The Conchs stop, then depart.

INT. KARL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Karl inspects Elena. Looks closer. Leaks develop; plasma runs out onto the muslin gauze. He examines her thoroughly: on her body several pinholes drilled through. Karl quickly gives Elena chinosol. After a few hours, the pinholes contract. He looks around.

KARL

I am all out of silk, my darling.

ELENA

Take my bridal dress. It's soiled anyhow.

KARL  
That's a good idea.

Karl takes off her bridal dress, cuts out the soiled parts. Still plenty left. Seals it on her with wax and balsam.

INT. KARL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Karl dresses Elena in a new silk kimono: gold colored, trimmed with white silk lace. Places a twenty-two carat golden crownlet on her head. Doubled the veils, tucks them carefully around her entire form inside her large bed. Tired, he lies next to Elena. Falls asleep.

INT. CASTLE COSEL - DAY

DREAM SEQUENCE

Big, luxurious. Karl and Elena -- as she looked in life -- sit with an older version of Karl's mother, and a younger MAN looking a bit like Karl. Elena, wearing a pink dress, sits at Karl's right. Mother at his left. Father sits directly across from him. Elena stands, stretches, smiles like a happy child.

KARL  
Be careful, my darling. You are still weak after lying down for so many years.

ELENA  
Oh no, Daddy. I am calling you Daddy because you look older than your father. I am strong now. I can walk safely. Oh, I am so happy.

KARL  
Alright, darling. Father will assist you and see that you don't fall.

The color in her eyes changes from dark to blue. Father has blue grey eyes. Mother has brown eyes. The surroundings disappear. They find themselves standing in space. A distant SOUND, like millions of harmonies.

INT. KARL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Karl wakes up. Looks around. Compared to the dream, everything around him looks gloomy. He sits at his desk, writes the dream on paper. Looks at Elena.

KARL

Alright, my darling, we will carry  
on the fight together until we go  
back. The time is short, then we  
shall be together in the home where  
there is not death.

He looks up at the crucifix. Then the portrait of Saint  
Cecilia playing a organ. Walks to his organ. Plays "The Home  
of the Soul." Stops. Tunes the organ to his liking. Plays  
again. It sounds exactly like the music in his dream.

ELENA (SUBTITLE)

(in German, singing)

How can I part from Thee, how can I  
leave Thee?

Karl stands, picks up Elena. Pauses. Exits with her.

INT. KARL'S HOUSE - LABORATORY - DAY

Karl places Elena on the scale. She weighs fifty pounds.

EXT. WRECK - DAY

SUPER: March 2, 1940

Karl works. Steps on the plank-free deck frames. FALLS  
THROUGH. LANDS ON HIS LEFT SIDE, BREAKING HIS RIBS.  
Paralyzed. In pain. Can't breathe.

KARL (V.O.)

My God, what shall become of Elena  
and the house if I do not return?  
My sweet Elena, I will join you  
soon.

ELENA (V.O.)

Take a deep breath, as deep as you  
can, expand your chest, then you  
can come home.

Karl attempts, but his chest collapses. Using his arms, he  
frees himself from the timbers. Lies still for a minute.  
Tries again with all his strength to expand his chest.  
Manages to get some air. Feels his ribs attach. Climbs out of  
the wreck. Walks home. Keeping his chest full of air.

INT. KARL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Karl enters, lies next to Elena.

KARL

Elena, my angel, I am back by your side. I don't care what happens next since I am with you.

The pain grows unbearable.

ELENA

Come closer to my side, then turn so that your back lies against my body.

KARL

Darling, I certainly will do anything to get rid of the pain.

He slowly moves over until his back rests against the right side of her body. Relief. He falls asleep.

MONTAGE

- A) Karl buys bandages
- B) Karl sleeps on his side
- C) Karl makes cement urns
- D) Karl places the new urns on the mausoleum
- E) Conchs buy the urns

INT. KARL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: September 13, 1940

Karl, healed and half-awake, lies in bed next to Elena.

ELENA

Hide me, hide me somewhere.

KARL

This is the third night you've asked this of me. Why should I hide you, Elena? You could not be safe anywhere than here in your own bed.

INT. KARL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

SUPER: September 14, 1940

Karl awakes. Hears NOISE. Feels vibration. Turns to Elena. She trembles all over. Karl places his hands on her.

KARL

Elena, God bless you, darling, are you going to rise? Rise, if it must be to our Heavenly Father. All of my love will help you on the way.

He takes her hands in his, kisses her lips.

EXT. KEY WEST CEMETERY - MAUSOLEUM - DAY

SUPER: September 28, 1940

Nana, Mario, OTTO BETHEL (64) the sexton, MARGUERITE DELGADO, and NONIE SAWYER enter the cemetery. Nana leads the way. Shows all the signs of tuberculosis. They stop outside the door of the mausoleum. In Nana's hands is a pair of scissors and a piece of iron. Both of them rusty.

BETHEL

I hope you're prepared to pay for the damages.

NANA

I don't care. I'm tired of hearing all of the rumors. I want to see for myself.

MARIO

Why not just ask Carlos?

NANA

I'm not giving that bastard the satisfaction of lying to me again.

She COUGHS into her hand, comes away with blood.

NANA (CONT'D)

The least I can do for *mama* and *papa* is make sure Elena is still here, and not with him.

She sees the window in the door is broken, turns to Bethel.

NANA (CONT'D)

What's this?

BETHEL

Some boys broke that about seven years ago.

NANA

Who told you?

BETHEL

Mr. -- Count Von Cosel.

NANA

Of course he did.

BETHEL

I really should warn you against what you want to do. I'm gonna have to inform Mr. -- Count Von Cosel.

NANA

Fine! I don't care.

Bethel leaves. Nana resumes her work, using the iron. But no matter how much she strains, it won't open. Finally, she stops, COUGHS profusely into her hand. Mario, Marguerite and Nonie comfort her. She looks up. Brow furrows. Her friends and husband look up.

Karl and Bethel walk side by side. In Karl's hands is the key to the tomb.

NANA (CONT'D)

Von Cosel...

KARL

Mrs. Medina.

NANA

Open the tomb.

KARL

First it was jewels, and now this. No, I will not.

NANA

If you do not open the vault I will have it ordered open.

KARL

The law states that the vault is mine, and will be my resting place alongside Elena.

NANA

You sick bastard! Whatever she told you was lies. She wouldn't want to be here, and nor do I.

KARL

You ought to be ashamed of yourself, talking like that at the grave of Elena.

(MORE)

KARL (CONT'D)

She is an angel, but not you. I can see clearly that you don't love her, nor are you interested in her safety. All you seem to be interested in is to strip your sister again of her jewels. That's why you want to break into her tomb.

Karl looks at the iron, bent from strain, and the pair of scissors. Walks past her. Inspects the door. The lock and windowpane have been disturbed.

NANA

Please, open the tomb and let me see Elena. Just, let me see if she's alright.

KARL

Alright, I will let you see Elena. Let us talk this over in peace and arrange it between ourselves. This is not a public affair.

NANA

Where do you want to us to go?

KARL

To your house --

NANA

No, not to my place.

KARL

Well, then, let's drive down to my house.

NANA

Okay.

EXT. KARL'S HOUSE - DAY

Nana's car stops right in front of the house. Karl and Mario exit. Nana, Marguerite and Nonie remain. Karl turns to them.

KARL

(to Mario and Nana)

Come in, you two.

(to Marguerite and Nonie)

But not you. You are not family.

NANA

No, I can't.

KARL  
Why not? There is nothing to fear.

NANA  
I can't. I am tired.

She coughs. Blood splatters on her fist. Karl sees it.

KARL  
Very well.

MARIO  
I will go, darling.

INT. KARL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Karl and Mario cross the threshold. Granny jumps onto her feet, GROWLS.

KARL  
Down! Down, Granny! Down! Sit down!  
Bitch, down! Down, bitch! Down!

At each command, the growls soften to a stop. Granny falls back down on the ground.

Karl brings Mario closer to the bed, draws back the mosquito netting. Mario looks down at Elena. Eyes widen. Backs away. Breath quickens. Runs out of the room.

EXT. KARL'S HOUSE - DAY

Mario runs out of the house, skids to a stop at the car.

MARIO  
Nana! Come quick! She is here! She  
is here!

Karl stands in the doorway.

KARL  
Come. See for yourself. Come here,  
Nana, and see how beautiful Elena  
is resting in her bed in her silken  
garments with all her jewelry. Come  
and see. She could not have it  
better. I think that will pacify  
you now.

INT. KARL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Karl, Mario and Nana enter. Granny jumps back up, growls.

KARL

Down! Down, Granny! Down! Sit down!  
Bitch, down! Down, bitch! Down!

Granny obeys. Karl draws back the netting, revealing Elena.  
Nana stares. Turns away.

NANA

This isn't my sister. That's  
another girl you have here.

(to Karl)

How long have you got her here?

KARL

It is now seven years.

NANA

Oh, my God! Oh, my God! What have  
you done? Who is that?

KARL

I've only done what she wanted me  
to do.

NANA

Oh, God! I feel sick! It can't be!  
I need to get out of here!

They head for the exit. But Nana stops. Takes a few moments  
to inhale and exhale the nausea away. Turns back to Karl.

NANA (CONT'D)

I'm giving you a week. I want you  
to put Elena back in the vault, but  
I want to be present to see that  
she lies in the coffin, do you  
hear?

KARL

Elena and I will go back into the  
vault together when our time is up,  
but not right now. I don't see why  
you should worry about her right  
now. You never looked after her for  
the past nine years. She has been  
under my care all these years. I  
have paid all of her expenses, not  
you; you forget that I own that  
tomb with everything that is  
inside, not you.

NANA

One week, Von Cosel. One week.  
After that, you'd better get a damn  
good lawyer.

Nana and Mario exit. Karl turns to Elena.

KARL

No matter what comes, don't worry,  
darling. And as for Nana is only  
after your jewels, let me take care  
of them for you until the trouble  
is past, then you will get them all  
back, sweetheart.

Karl takes the jewels, locks them up into a little casket.

EXT. KARL'S HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: Sunday, October 5, 1940

A motorcade arrives. Behind it, a funeral car and several  
other cars. BERNARD WHITE and RAY ELWOOD -- two sheriffs --  
walk up to the door. From their own cars exit ENRIQUE  
ESQUINALDO (57) -- the Justice of the Peace, Pritchard,  
Bethel, and BENJAMIN SAWYER.

Bernard knocks on the door. Karl answers.

BERNARD

Karl Tan-zler Von Cosel?

KARL

Count Karl Tänzler Von Cosel, if  
you please.

BERNARD

We have a report here says that you  
are in possession of a dead body.  
May we see the body?

KARL

Certainly.

INT. KARL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Karl and the sheriffs enter. Granny jumps up, GROWLS.

KARL

Down! Down, Granny! Down! Sit down!  
Bitch, down! Down, bitch! Down!

Granny obeys.

Karl pulls back the netting, shows Elena to the sheriffs.

BERNARD

This has been in your possession  
for seven years?

KARL

That is correct.

BERNARD

And who is she?

KARL

She is my bride, Elena.

BERNARD

Do you have a certificate for this  
body?

KARL

Yes, I have.

BERNARD

Show it to me, please.

Karl hands Elena's death certificate to Bernard.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

This is a certificate of death. Not  
for possession of a dead body.

KARL

I do not know of any other  
certificate required for the dead.

BERNARD

I am sorry, but you have to come  
with us to the courthouse.

EXT. KARL'S HOUSE - DAY

Bernard and Ray exit with Karl. The funeral home directors enter with a wicker coffin. Karl looks out ahead. CONCHS from everywhere watch.

The two attendants exit with Elena in a basket. Karl makes a move for them, but the sheriffs hold him back.

BERNARD

It's alright. Nothing's gonna  
happen to her.

KARL

There is no security for my house,  
when strangers are going in and out  
at liberty. I protest against this  
violation of my rights.

BERNARD

We're having the body placed in the  
funeral home where it is safer  
until your case is settled. Then  
you may get it back. I will see  
that nothing is removed, lock the  
door and bring you the keys.

He performs the task. Then places Karl into the car. Bernard  
and Ray enter, drive away.

EXT. MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

The motorcade arrives. Bernard and Ray exit with Karl.  
MEMBERS of the press surround the entrance. Light bulbs from  
cameras EXPLODE. Sheriffs and Karl enter.

INT. MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - BERNARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Karl sits before the desk of Bernard, who sits behind it.

BERNARD

What is your past with the  
deceased?

KARL

We have known each other for all  
our lives.

BERNARD

When did she die?

KARL

She hasn't really died, but her  
recorded death was October 25,  
1931.

BERNARD

When was she buried?

KARL

October of 1931 was her burial.  
Spring of 1932 was her  
disinterment. That was the same  
year as her placement in the tomb.

Bernard brings out the statute book. Lays it open before Karl, who looks down at it.

CLOSE ON PARAGRAPH: The words "Wantonly and maliciously demolishing, disfiguring and destroying a grave."

BERNARD

I am sorry, but we have to keep you until the case is cleared.

KARL

(re: press-members)  
What is with the publicity?

BERNARD

They're photographers of the press.

KARL

Why do you permit this nuisance?

BERNARD

It is customary our liberal government gives freedom to the press.

KARL

Please take care of my dogs. My neighbor is fishing, and there is nobody there to care for them.

BERNARD

We'll get someone over there.

KARL

Thank you.

INT. MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Karl lies down in the cot, staring at the barred window.

KARL

If this is to be my final end, then  
God, unite me with my Elena  
forever, as a spiteful world makes  
our peaceful existence impossible.

MUSIC from outside. Karl walks to the window: A band in the neighborhood. A cradle song. Karl returns to his cot. The room grows BRIGHTER.

Elena, in her bridal gown, stands in the middle of the room. Walks to him. Greets him with an embrace and a kiss.

ELENA

Suffer it for me. It won't be long,  
then you will be free.

She disappears. Karl turns to the wall.

INT. MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - JAIL CELL - DAY

Karl sits up, looking ahead. On the other side of the bars,  
CONCHS arrive with fruit and milk.

CONCH 1

We read your story in the paper,  
and we think it's the most romantic  
story ever.

CONCH 2

Frank's gonna stay at the house.  
We'll bring food to the dogs.

KARL

Thank you.

Karl takes the food and drink.

Ray leads the conchs out, brings in a LADY who gives Karl  
fruit and sweets.

LADY

I will help take care of the dogs  
until you're out of here.

KARL

Thank you.

Ray ushers her out. Then brings in Marguerite, who has a  
basket on her person. She opens it, brings out cookies,  
fruit, sweets and hot tea.

MARGUERITE

When you get out of here, I am sure  
something can be worked out.

KARL

Thank you.

She exits. Karl eats in peace.

INT. MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - JAIL CELL - DAY

Karl sleeps in the cot. Wakes up.

LOUIS A. HARRIS stands at the bars. Slightly shorter than Karl. A paunchy-pudgy, nearly round look with a large, soft midsection. A pleasant face, prominent ears, thin gray hair.

HARRIS  
Morning, Romeo.

KARL  
Who are you?

HARRIS  
I'm Louis Harris. I'm here to defend you. If you'll give me the authority to do so.

KARL  
Yes, I do.

HARRIS  
Very good.

He sticks his hand through the bars. Karl stands up, shakes his hand. Harris leaves.

EXT. MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

Harris exits. Reporters surround him.

REPORTER  
Mr. Harris, is it true that you're defending Karl Von Cosel?

HARRIS  
Yes, it is.

REPORTER  
People all around are saying that it's wonderful that you're defending him, that he's sure to get off now. How do you feel about that?

HARRIS  
Of course, it was a natural thing for me to do. I've been volunteering my services, just as I am in this unusual case, for many, many years -- even as any honest lawyer would do.

INT. COURTHOUSE - JAIL CELL - DAY

Karl sits on the cot. Maureau stands before the bars.

MAUREAU  
Hello, Karl.

KARL  
Hello, Father.

MAUREAU  
Is there anything I can do for you?

KARL  
The only one who needs help and protection and who cannot defend herself is Elena, since she has been taken away from me.

MAUREAU  
I think she's safe enough in the custody of Pritchard.

INT. MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Karl sits writing at the desk.

CLOSE ON LETTER: Addressed to Sister Superior. Outlining a plea for the convent to protect Elena.

Karl finishes the letter.

RAY (O.S.)  
Karl, a reporter wants to talk to you.

Karl turns around.

A REPORTER stands with a notebook and pen.

REPORTER  
I just wanted to ask you some questions.

KARL  
What kind?

REPORTER  
Well, for starters, tell me a little bit about yourself.

KARL

I am a Count from Dresden, Germany.  
I am also a trained x-ray  
technician and pathologist with  
nine degrees from the University of  
Leipzig.

REPORTER

Nine degrees! You're quite the  
educated man.

KARL

Yes, I am.

REPORTER

So, why did you, a highly educated  
man, take Miss Elena Milagro Hoyos  
from her mausoleum?

KARL

Because there was still life in the  
body, and she entrusted me to take  
care of her body.

REPORTER

Still life?

KARL

Yes, she spoke to me in the tomb.  
Told me to remove her and take her  
home with me.

REPORTER

How did you intend on bringing her  
back to life?

KARL

I used incubation and electricity  
to bring life to her.

REPORTER

Were these methods proven  
successful?

KARL

She rose one day to be with me.

REPORTER

How did you know the deceased?

KARL

We met in the flesh in Marine  
Hospital where I worked. I treated  
her for tuberculosis.

(MORE)

KARL (CONT'D)

I knew she was my bride because I saw her when I was a child.

REPORTER

There were rumors going around that you had connected a telephone to the mausoleum from your home. Is that true?

KARL

I had considered doing this so I could talk to her on rainy days. But the urge to visit her nagged me, so I visited anyway.

REPORTER

How was she still able to communicate with you? She must've been close to bones.

KARL

She was preserved in a special coffin.

REPORTER

Care to explain the coffin?

KARL

The wooden coffin was placed inside a galvanized container and the container inside of a steel coffin.

REPORTER

Why did you place her in the coffin?

KARL

About three weeks after she had been placed in the ground, I opened the steel casket and then a small hole in the galvanized container, and there was a awful odor. I then opened the wooden coffin and there were many vermin there. I decided then and there that I should take the remains and preserve them for me always.

The BAND PLAYS OUTSIDE. Karl turns his attention to the song. The same song that played his first night here.

INT. MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

SUPER: October 8, 1940, 5:30pm

Jury members, reporters from the whole state and nation, sweat from the heat. Esquinaldo sits before the court.

Nana, Mario, Benjamin, Bethel, Pritchard sit in the prosecution and defense seats respectively; Pritchard being the only defense witness. G.A. WORLEY, the State Attorney, sits with the prosecuting witnesses.

Karl and Harris enter. Everyone gasps when they see Karl's sharp wardrobe. The defense takes their seats. Harris pulls out cigarettes, lights one. The smell irritates Karl.

ESQUINALDO

Karl Tänzler Von Cosel, you are charged with wantonly and maliciously demolishing, disfiguring and destroying a grave, and the unauthorized disinterring of the body of a deceased human being. I would like to remind the court that, while this is an indictable offense both at common law and by statute regardless of motive or purpose, this is not a trial but a hearing. Mrs. Mario Medina, will you please take the stand?

Nana takes the stand. Worley stands up.

ESQUINALDO (CONT'D)

Please state your name, age, and occupation.

NANA

Florinda Medina, thirty-four, housewife.

WORLEY

Mrs. Medina, is it true that you tried to break into the mausoleum?

NANA

Yes. I had no key. Von Cosel did, and always kept it locked up. He always refused to open it when I wanted to go in.

KARL

That's not true! Frequently I opened that tomb for you and your relatives. But you never wanted to go in.

ESQUINALDO

Von Cosel, cool your heels.

WORLEY

How did you come to find out where Elena's body was?

NANA

People were talking in town. I wanted to see if Elena was safe. But Von Cosel wanted to talk things over. So Mario and I went with him to his house. I caught a glimpse of the old wooden bed my father gave Elena when she was sick.

KARL

I bought the bed.

ESQUINALDO

Von Cosel...

NANA

Raising the curtains, I saw the foot of the body. "That's Elena," he said. "I beg you to leave her to me, see how pretty she looks, touch her little hand." I told him "You have caused us lots of trouble, people are talking about us. They say you have a ring and talk to her by wireless." He said, "You don't have to listen to people."

WORLEY

What did you do after that?

NANA

I gave him an ultimatum, that he must place Elena back in the tomb within a week or else I would proceed against him. At the end of the week, I got a warrant for his arrest.

MONTAGE

A) Miss Medina on the stand.

MISS MEDINA  
It's all true.

B) Mario on the stand

MARIO  
It's all true.

C) Benjamin Sawyer on the stand

SAWYER  
I found the glass door on the vault broken and informed Mrs. Medina, which prompted her to question Karl.

ESQUINALDO  
Do you know who broke into the vault?

SAWYER  
I don't know.

D) Bethel on the stand

BETHEL  
April ninth, 1933

E) Pritchard on the stand

PRITCHARD  
Mr. Hoyos signed the authorization before he died.

ESQUINALDO  
How much?

PRITCHARD  
Close to three thousand dollars.

ESQUINALDO  
How did the remains look?

PRITCHARD  
If I went to see a wax figure at Kress or any other store, I would see the same thing.

INT. LOPEZ FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Elena's body lies in a bed. A gauze veil covers her face. A rose rests in her hair. Leather shoes cover her feet.

Thousands of Conchs circle around the body. They stare, wide-eyed. Men, women, children, senior citizens, tourists.

INT. MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

Karl takes the stand. Esquinaldo turns to him.

ESQUINALDO

State your name, age, occupation.

KARL

Count Karl Tänzler Von Cosel, sixty-four, chemist, engineer, physicist, scientist, roentgenologist with degrees in mathematics, chemistry, physics, medicine, biology, psychology, philosophy, music, and painting.

Harris stands up.

HARRIS

Mr. Von Cosel, how had you become acquainted with Elena?

KARL

Count Von Cosel, if you please. She was my patient at Marine Hospital and later became my bride after she accepted my ring. I had been in love with her since the first time I saw her. I knew then she was the lady I had been looking for all of my life.

HARRIS

You've just told the court you're sixty-four years old. How old were you when you met Elena?

KARL

In the flesh, I met her when I was fifty-three.

HARRIS

Could you please explain to the court your meaning behind the term "in the flesh?"

KARL

I had envisioned her from my early youth, painting pictures of her before I had seen her.

(MORE)

KARL (CONT'D)

She appeared to me in a vision of the old Cosel manor, also in Italy in Campo Santo. I saw her form and features carved in marble among the monument and tombs. She was standing on the grave of a young woman. Her living spirit appeared just behind the monument and then disappeared again.

(beat)

It was in Australia many years later when her spirit appeared in my residence in Sydney, right beside the pipe organ, her dark hair hanging over her shoulders down to her knees. The spirit stayed in my house seven days, walking with me every step.

HARRIS

And then you came to Key West and found that lady, the spirit of your dreams and lost her again, didn't you?

Karl looks out among the crowd, sees Elena floating above their heads. Dressed in a white wedding gown.

KARL

Yes. But she is still with me right now in this hall. I told her, no matter what happened to her I would take care of her life and death. This holy promise took complete control of my mind and body. She was my bride when she accepted my proposal of marriage and I regard her as my wife. Her death has sealed our bond.

(beat)

I built her monument with my own hands and watched over her all these years so that nothing should harm her, and I think that I have done my best.

HARRIS

What did you find when you disinterred her? What did she look like?

KARL

There was plenty of maggots. Her body was teeming with them. Everything was a mess.

HARRIS

How long ago was it that you took the bones out of the crypt to your house?

KARL

It was months after they were placed in the tomb, pretty close to eight years ago.

HARRIS

How did you remove Elena's bones from the crypt to your house?

KARL

I removed the casket from the crypt into the car outside of the cemetery and drove alongside the airplane, placing it in the cabin.

HARRIS

Did you meet anybody during this work? Did anybody help you and if so, who was the person, as the casket must have been heavy?

KARL

No, I did not meet a living person during my work, except the driver of the car outside who helped me to lift the casket up into the plane, that was all, and I don't know his name.

HARRIS

Didn't the driver ask you what it contained?

KARL

No, he asked no questions. I paid for the service.

HARRIS

Did you not move the airplane to the beach afterward?

KARL

I did. Mario Medina did the moving!

HARRIS

(to Mario)

Medina, is that true? Did you do the moving?

MARIO

Yes, sir, I moved the airplane to the beach, but I did not know that Elena was inside.

HARRIS

(to Karl)

You must've had some idea that the body would still deteriorate. How did you preserve it?

KARL

I rebuilt the lost parts, bandaged the broken parts and destroyed parts, which had to come out. I replaced them. I put sufficient absorbent material for packing to soak her in solutions to feed her and develop her tissues. I made these solutions very carefully.

HARRIS

Did you have the idea that her spirit would unite with her body and commune with you?

KARL

Yes, so it did. Many times, her spirit gave me advice, also technical advice. Whenever I do not know what to do, she tells me. She also told me that trouble was coming and asked me several times to hide her body, but I asked why I should hide her, but she said nothing and a week later the trouble came.

HARRIS

How would it affect you if that body were taken from you?

Karl's eyes water. He removes his glasses, wipes the tears away. Returns the glasses to his face. Still, the tears form.

KARL

I would feel lost. I had promised her I would keep and protect her against destruction for the rest of my life, even at the sacrifice of my own life.

HARRIS

How long do you think her body will last in the condition it is now?

KARL

Indefinitely.

HARRIS

Do you think there is still life in the body?

KARL

There is always life left in the body which can be resurrected by special methods, such as incubation, but as I had been interrupted repeatedly I could not complete my work, though partly successful. I can do better, if I am left undisturbed in my research.

INT. MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

SUPER: October 9, 1940

Everyone is here. Esquinaldo sits before the court.

ESQUINALDO

This is a rather complex case, and such complex cases require time to fully complete. Therefore I sentence Karl Tänzler Von Cosel to be held further under one thousand dollar bail until the next session, which will take place one month from now. So be it.

INT. MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - JAIL CELL - DAY

Karl sits in jail. Looks up when he hears the DOOR OPEN O.S.

RAYMOND LORD, a judge, walks up to the bars.

LORD

Karl Tänzler Von Cosel?

KARL

Count Karl Tänzler Von Cosel, if  
you please.

LORD

We've decided to move the next  
session to the eleventh of this  
month, and that the charges of  
"wantonly and maliciously  
destroying a grave and removing the  
body without authorization" still  
stand.

KARL

When can I have Elena back?

LORD

You're not a relative of hers. Mrs.  
Medina will have custody of her.

KARL

I might have been in error for  
removing the body without  
permission of the health  
authorities, but that does not mean  
it is not mine to do with as I see  
best. Her father gave her to me.

(off Lord's silence)

It is the end of everything for me.  
I protest against this inhumane  
decision. You cannot do this. It  
means her utter ruin and a break of  
faith to my Elena. If I cannot have  
her back, I will abide by your  
decision, but I will carry on the  
fight to the highest court of the  
land to annul this decision.

LORD

You're certainly well within your  
right to try, but they will tell  
you the same exact thing.

Lord exits. Karl collapses on his cot.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

The Conchs titter among themselves.

CONCHS

(sporadically)

He hasn't done anything wrong!

INT. MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - JAIL CELL - DAY

A MAN walks up to Harris and the jailed Karl.

HARRIS

Who are you, sir?

MAN

I'm an agent from Hollywood. I flew all the way down here to meet the man of the year.

(to Karl)

That would be you, I presume?

KARL

I am Count Karl Tänzler Von Cosel.

MAN

"Count!" I love that! You are truly something and in Tinsel Town, we're always on the lookout for something new.

HARRIS

What is it you want?

MAN

You're both direct men, so I'll return the favor. I want to produce a film about you, Karl. But only if you let me.

KARL

Why would I let you?

MAN

Because you will get a large percentage of the profits. Over a thousand dollars, let's say.

HARRIS

(to Karl)

That'll cover your bail.

KARL

Very well. You have my permission.

MAN

Great! You won't regret it.

They shake hands. The movie agent walks to the exit. Harris follows him.

HARRIS

You're gonna make good on your  
promise, right?

MAN

As far as I'm concerned he can stay  
in there until I need him.

The man exits. Harris returns to Karl. The door opens. Ray  
walks past Harris to the bars. In his hands is a letter.

RAY

Hey, Count, what do you make of  
this?

Karl takes the letter and reads it:

DORIS (V.O.)

Dear Sir: A note in the papers that  
Karl Tänzler is in custody. He is  
my husband. We have been separated  
for eleven years. His mind is  
troubled on account of many ways.  
It was impossible for us to live  
together. If my testimony as to his  
sanity is desirable, I will gladly  
tell you all I know. Sincerely,  
Mrs. Doris Tänzler.

Karl reads it a few more times.

KARL

Sure, we separated. Sixteen years  
ago. She was jealous. She pulled a  
gun on me. In the scuffle, a shot  
was fired. I decided that I would  
leave her. I haven't heard from her  
in twelve years.

RAY

Did you know she was in Florida?

KARL

My sister, who resides in  
Zephyrhills, had written me that  
Doris was with her.

RAY

What's your sister's name?

KARL

Leave her out of this. I do not  
want her name to be brought into  
this. She is very old, and sickly.

INT. COURTHOUSE - JAIL CELL - DAY

SUPER: October 10, 1940

Karl sits on his cot. Before the bars are Dr. Galey, DR. W.M. R. WARREN, MRS. GILMORE PARK, DR. DEPOO, and DR. FORAKER. All have paper and pens.

DR. GALEY

How easily bothered are you by things?

KARL

Very few things bother me easily. Except for being here.

DR. GALEY

Do you make friends easily?

KARL

Yes, I do.

DR. GALEY

Do you do just enough work to get by?

KARL

More than enough.

DR. GALEY

Do you respect others?

KARL

Only when they deserve it.

DR. GALEY

Are you interested in abstract ideas?

KARL

Very much so.

DR. GALEY

Do you dislike yourself?

KARL

No, I do not.

DR. GALEY

Do you make plans and stick to them?

KARL

Always.

DR. GALEY  
Do you tend to vote for liberal  
political candidates?

KARL  
I do not involve myself in  
ridiculous matters like politics.

DR. GALEY  
Would you describe your experience  
as somewhat dull?

KARL  
Right now, yes.

DR. GALEY  
Do you regularly insult others?

KARL  
No.

INSERT: STAMP HITS PAPER. Rises, revealing the word "Sane."

INT. MORGUE - DAY

Dr. DePoo and Dr. Foraker hover over Elena's body. They  
record their findings on paper and photographs.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) Piano wire, coat hanger wire in the bones
- B) Glass eyes
- C) Hair made into a wig
- D) Cloth in place of organs
- E) The vaginal tube
- F) Semen-stained cotton swabs

DePoo and Foraker look at the documents.

DEPOO  
We should tell them.

FORAKER  
What for?

DEPOO  
This is big.

FORAKER

But they all know him. He's helped them out at the hospital. This won't change anything. And no one's ready to hear this. Let them think of Karl as a romantic.

DEPOO

What about Mrs. Medina?

FORAKER

She's been through enough. Let her rest. They're burying Elena soon. She needs that closure.

DEPOO

I still say this is a bad idea.

They shelve the evidence.

INT. COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

SUPER: October 11, 1940

Karl stands before a JURY OF SIX MEN.

ESQUINALDO

Has the jury reached a verdict?

JURER

Yes, your Honor. For the wanton and malicious destruction, demolishing and disfiguring of a grave, and the removal of a body without authorization, we find the defendant guilty. But, seeing as the crime is seven years old, and the statute on the crime runs for two years maximum, we hereby call for acquittal.

ESQUINALDO

It is a rather strange case, and one I will talk about for the rest of my life. By the authority vested in me by the state of Florida, I hereby sentence you to the one thousand dollar bail bond. As to the remains of Elena Hoyos, they will be returned to her closest living relative, Mrs. Mario Medina. We will reconvene one month from now. Case is dismissed.

KARL

This is an outrage! I cared for her, I promised to! I am more entitled to her than her sister!

Nana stands up from her seat.

NANA

You will never see Elena again. She will go back into the ground and rot with the rest of my family.

Mario helps her out as she coughs into her hand.

Karl collapses in his seat. The sheriffs escort him out.

INT. MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - BERNARD'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: October 12, 1940

Karl sits before Bernard's desk.

BERNARD

You're a free man.

KARL

What are you talking about?

BERNARD

Your bond was posted today.

KARL

By who?

BERNARD

Some supporters.

Bernard hands the casket of jewels to Karl. They shake hands.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Of all the people I've met, Count, you are by far the most fascinating. Best of luck.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Karl walks down the stairs holding the casket. Looks ahead.

JOSEPH ZORSKY (46) and BENNY FERNANDEZ (93) stand outside of a car.

KARL

I trust you are the two that posted my bail.

JOSEPH

I'm Joseph Zorsky.

BENNY

I'm Benny Fernandez.

INT. CACTUS TERRACE HOTEL - ROOM - NIGHT

Karl, Joseph, and Benny enter. Karl immediately lies down in bed, falls asleep.

INT. MEDINA HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Nana sits at the table. With her is EARL ADAMS (37). In his hand is a note-pad and pen.

EARL

I'm sure you've heard by now that Karl has been freed from jail.

NANA

I've heard.

EARL

What do you think of people who think the body should be given back to Karl Von Cosel?

NANA

Would their sentiments be the same if the body was that of one of their loved ones? He may be free, but I'm determined to see to it that he is punished for one of the most outrageous crimes this world has ever known. He's no idealist. Instead of being lauded, he should be condemned.

EARL

What do you think of him being declared sane?

NANA

Would a sane man sleep beside an effigy for seven years?

(MORE)

NANA (CONT'D)

Why is it that the doctors who examined the wax image did not make public their findings? I understand that the two doctors who declared him sane later examined the body. I wonder if their opinion is the same since the thorough examination of the body. I am convinced that the man was driven insane by his desire for Elena. He could not have her in life so he stole her body and imagined her to the best of his ability. It is hard to conceive, but I am firmly convinced that his removal of the body was not motivated by a desire to restore life, but was the act of a man driven insane by his love for Elena... I will start from the beginning and tell the story of how Elena came to meet the old man who has brought so much unpleasantness to me.

EXT. KEY WEST CEMETERY - NIGHT

Bethel, Bienvenido, and Sawyer enter. In their hands, a shovel and a small casket for infants.

They stop at a spot away from the tombstones, yet inconspicuous enough for secret burial. Bienvenido shovels dirt aside. Bethel places the coffin in the hole. They pile the dirt on top. Flatten it. Exit the cemetery.

INT. KARL'S HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: October 19, 1940

Karl enters, looks around. Frank exits the dining room, approaches him.

FRANK

Hello, Doc.

KARL

Hello, Frank. Where are the dogs?

FRANK

Most of them died. Granny included. The rest ran away. I tried to keep an eye on them, but with all the people coming in and out...

KARL  
It is fine. Have some rest.

FRANK  
Thanks.

Frank walks away. Then turns back around.

FRANK (CONT'D)  
I always wondered what you did  
those nights. Who you were talking  
to. But I never mustered up the  
courage to ask.

He enters his room.

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. Karl answers. The movie agent.

MAN  
So, I heard you got out.

KARL  
What do you want now?

MAN  
I wanted to make good on our deal.  
I'm putting on a production. Who  
better to play the role than you?

KARL  
Please leave.

MAN  
But we --

KARL  
Leave now!

MAN  
Now, look --

KARL  
Go away, and never return, or I  
will have you arrested!

MAN  
(laughing)  
That'll be a sight to see.

KARL  
Go away! Now!

MAN

I'll make sure you never work in  
show business ever.

KARL

Leave now!

The man walks away. Karl shuts the door.

MONTAGE

- A) A line of cars from everywhere parked outside Karl's house
- B) People fill the house from top to bottom
- C) Karl talks to them
- D) Karl shows them the organ; sells some discarded parts
- E) Karl shows them the airship
- F) Karl allows photos and home movies
- G) Karl gives them flowers
- H) Karl gives them Elena's dresses
- I) Karl gives them nails and screws from the laboratory
- J) Karl gives them pictures of Elena
- K) Karl gives them plaster of Paris masks of Elena
- L) The visitors stay until very late in the night
- M) Karl visibly tired

INT. AIRSHIP - DAY

Karl in the pilot's seat. Knees drawn up. A journal of blank paper resting on his knees. He writes obsessively with a pen.

Further aft, the coffin rests. The lid open, revealing a life-sized doll, using one of Elena's death masks. It wears a bridal gown. The lid lined with pictures, fresh flowers by the doll's head, the silver crucifix. Elena's rosary lies draped over the doll's shoulder.

Karl hears NOISE from outside. Opens the window. Sticks his head out. Sees people near the airship.

KARL

Stay away from the plane!

They leave. Karl resumes writing.

EXT. KARL'S HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: April 14, 1941

Karl and two CONCHS pack everything up in three vans. Then each person enters a vehicle, drives away, with Karl leading. The trailing van tows the airship.

EXT. CHE CHE'S BAR - DAY

The vans drive past the bar. Some DRUNKS exit. See Karl in the van. Walk out in front of it. Karl hits the brakes.

DRUNK 1

Hey, Von Cosel! You never told us the secret of Elena's tomb.

DRUNK 2

Oh, come on! Let him alone. He's got nothing.

DRUNK 1

I think he does. You're so tough now, you old Nazi? Let's fight.

Karl, seething with rage, exits the van, approaches the drunks. They back away, fall down on the ground.

DRUNK 1 (CONT'D)

Wait a second, wait a second, wait a second! Okay, okay, okay! You win. You win.

DRUNK 2

I got an idea. How about a drink? To send you off with?

KARL

(beat)

Very well. But just one.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Karl enters. Looks around. Places dynamite on the ground. Sets the timer. Exits.

EXT. KEY WEST - NIGHT

Karl enters his van. Drives away. The two vans follow. The mausoleum EXPLODES.

EXT. DORIS' HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: Pasco County, Zephyrhills, Florida

The vans arrive. Karl exits. Looks ahead.

Three people stand before the houses: DORIS TÄNZLER (56), her daughter AYESHA (19), and an OLDER WOMAN bearing some resemblance to Karl.

KARL (V.O.)

Human malice has dynamited my laboratory on the beach long before. Human meanness has plundered and torn down the very roof over my head. Human jealousy and hatreds have robbed me of the body of my Elena; they have even poisoned my faithful dogs.

MONTAGE

- A) Karl paints
- B) Karl finishes memoirs
- C) Karl sends manuscript in, with paintings
- D) Memoir gets published, but paintings aren't included
- E) Karl creates a memorial for Crystal Tänzler, his daughter
- F) Karl's sister experiences a grand mal seizure
- G) Karl tries to find employment at hospitals
- H) Doris gives Karl money

KARL (V.O.)

Yet, Divine happiness is flowing through me. For she is with me. Nobody could take her away from me for God almighty has united our souls. She has survived death. Forever and ever she is with me.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: 1952

Karl (75) dances with the effigy of Elena in his arms. Eternal bliss and happiness are his. When close to the open casket on the table, he seizes, grabs the lower part of his back, collapses on the ground. Looks up. A BRIGHT LIGHT SHINES DOWN ON HIM.

FROM THE LIGHT: Elena, dressed in a bridal gown, holds out her arms in welcome.

Karl smiles. His spirit exits his body, ascends to the light. Embraces Elena. They both ascend.

KARL (V.O.)

And every look at her picture and every thought in my mind is a silent prayer of thanks. Thanks to the creator who led me to find her. Thanks that He gave me the strength and the knowledge to prolong her brief life on Earth for nearly two years, to make it tolerable in its pains and to salvage her beauty from the ravages of the grave.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: 1954

The detective reads the last few pages of manuscript. Another DETECTIVE with him.

KARL (V.O.)

She is my everlasting joy, she is to me that supreme and divine joy which the great Beethoven tried to express -- and couldn't enjoy and feel in the last before his death, his Ninth Symphony. God bless her.  
*Ex tenebris lucem.*

He put the manuscript down on the desk.

DETECTIVE 1

What does "ex tene-briss loose-em" mean?

DETECTIVE 2

"*Ex tenebris lucem.*" It means "From darkness to light."

(MORE)

DETECTIVE 2 (CONT'D)

(re: Karl's body)

There were rumors going around in Key West that he kept a piece of her when he left. You think that's true?

DETECTIVE 1

Only he would know.

PUSH IN SLOWLY TOWARD the effigy's chest.

INSIDE EFFIGY

CLOSE ON: Soaked in embalming solutions, the preserved yet decomposed heart of Elena Hoyos Mesa.

FADE OUT.

THE END