

SCRIPT TITLE

Written by

Name of First Writer

Based on, If Any

Address  
Phone Number

**HOME FRONT**

By

C. D. PETERSON

(Based on the book *Home Front*)

C. D. PETERSON

[cdflyfish@att.net](mailto:cdflyfish@att.net)

PO Box 5045

Brookfield , CT 06804

(203) 241-4060

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

SUPER: "1926"

Black and white.

A 50+ couple, MYRTLE PETERSON, AKA "THE BOSS," and ENOCH PETERSON, AKA "POP," defeated, facing a Massachusetts Water District Commission official in a white shirt and tie. His truck is in the background. Their son, HARRY PETERSON, 7, is watching from the barn doorway.

POP speaks with a Swedish accent. He is fit-looking, and judging from the well-kept farm, the hardest working man you could meet. The Boss surveys the land with a boss' eyes.

COMMISSION OFFICIAL

Pop, I'm sorry to finally make it official, but the State will be condemning Hillcrest Farm. They need it to build the Quabbin Reservoir.

(He pauses)

Most of the town will be underwater. There was no way to save Hillcrest.

POP

So we out here have to get off our land so to give water to people in Boston.

COMMISSION OFFICIAL

The city's growing fast. They call it progress. You'll have three months. I'm very sorry, Pop. I really wish there was something I could do.

He departs. The family comes together near a large black and white HILLCREST FARM sign.

HARRY

What's going to happen to us now?

POP

We make a new Hillcrest Farm.

BLACK SCREEN

EXT. HILLCREST FARM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

SUPER: "1942"

Open close up on the same Hillcrest Farm sign. (Now in color) Expand to a beautiful, verdant Norman Rockwell setting, freshly plowed fields and a white farmhouse with four pillars, a red barn and silo, a cinder block dairy, and the bull pen. A spotted pointer, SCRATCH, romps in the yard and two MILKMEN pile scrap metal and tin cans into a collection bin.

A 1940s-era mustard colored school bus eases up to the front drive of the farm. The sign on the bus reads, "Framingham, Mass."

DOUGLAS PETERSON, 9, revealed as a husky, clean-cut boy, leaps off the school bus and poses like a soldier in front of the farm sign.

The kids on the bus flash the "Victory" sign at Douglas. He returns it.

He takes a step aside to give the sign a slap and runs up the lilac-lined farm drive where Scratch greets him. The milkmen wave a smiling hello as he passes by.

As the bus pulls away, LAURA RAWLINGS, 9, a girl with copper colored hair, is at a bus window watching Douglas go up the drive.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Douglas runs up the drive to the farmhouse. He pats Scratch and they run in together.

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Douglas bustles into the farmhouse where his three year old brother KEN grabs at his legs. He gets a hug from his mother EDIE, 20s, a free spirit in a farm housewife's body, poking at her housework and grumbling.

Douglas zips around into the cold pantry where he drops his pack and starts to spread lard on hardtack bread in a way that suggests he's used to doing for himself.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Douglas peers out of the pantry door and remains perfectly still as he eavesdrops on a phone call.

Sitting with her back to him, at a scarred oak desk looking out on the farmyard, is his grandmother, the Boss, in her sixties now.

THE BOSS

You saw what they did to Pearl Harbor. I tell you, if the Japs win any more battles, they could win all the way to California. Harry's gone and now we're losing two of our dairymen. We're going to have to dig in harder just to hang on to the place.

Douglas stands transfixed. Alarmed. Douglas avoids the Boss and quietly heads out into the farm yard.

INT. DAIRY - DAY

Douglas absently wanders the farmyard. He watches his grandfather, Pop, now in his sixties, drape an American flag above the barn doors. He absorbs himself straightening up a fallen fishing rod. He gives a slow pat to a calico barn cat. He finally shakes himself out of it and rushes to his workstation in the dairy, through steam, and noisy clatter, where he sorts bottles.

Dairymen twins BOB and DICK, 20s, big, fun loving, sporting short military haircuts, approach Douglas. Bob points to their haircuts.

BOB

Like 'em? Dick and I are on our way in. Next month we head to the navy station in Boston.

Dick tosses his black leather apron on Douglas' workstation.

DICK

(laughing)

So now you get to do all our work, too! Maybe you'll get a raise!

DOUGLAS

Won't take much to fill in for you two clowns.

BOB

No more Tom Sawyer fishing all day!

DICK

Maybe he can get Laura Rawlings to help him out with some of that magic witchy stuff they have up in the hills!  
The war has changed everything,  
Dougie Boy!

The two big young men affectionately play-punch Douglas.  
Douglas, sober-faced, gets it.

EXT. HILLCREST FARM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

The scene is a montage. Douglas drags wrapped newspaper and cardboard boxes down to the edge of the state road to a marked pick up station, collects scrap metal, pours melted fat into a can, works a "Victory Garden."

Pop carries a milk can from the milk room to the dairy.  
Douglas joins him.

Douglas leads cows into their stalls for milking.

Douglas, appearing slightly weary, leads two rigged up buckskin work horses, TOM and JERRY, out of the barn into the farmyard

The Boss watches Douglas through the window as he finishes with Pop and drifts aimlessly around the farmyard, woolgathering, before heading inside.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - LATER

The Boss has the table covered with ration books and stamps. She is carefully disbursing the stamps into books and checking their allotments.

Douglas flops down, tired, on a window bench and absentmindedly reaches for a well-worn Ford Times magazine. He is pictured on the cover, holding a fish and wearing a straw hat by the river, with the caption "Meet Tom Sawyer."

He casually flips some pages then stares at his picture on the cover. The Boss smiles while she continues watching him.

THE BOSS

Douglas, I believe you aren't tethered to the world quite tight. Seems any stray wisp of fantasy carries you off. But we all work here and can't be watching you all the time.

Douglas buries his head in his magazine but feels her stare on him. He jumps up and helps her with the stamps.

DOUGLAS

Why do we have to have ration stamps?

THE BOSS

Because with the war going on, the country can't make enough of some things like food and tires and gasoline. Ration stamps help make it fair so some people won't buy up everything.

DOUGLAS

What if we run out of stamps?

THE BOSS

Then we just make do.

Eddie comes in carrying fresh eggs from the henhouse, scowling, brushing at her sleeves.

EDIE

Can't I do something else around here, Boss, like keep the books or send out bills? I feel like a hired hand.

THE BOSS

Now, everyone does what's needed, Edie. You knew you were marrying into a family of farmers. Maybe if the war hadn't come along you and Harry would have had more time to sort out what that meant.

Eddie fusses with the eggs.

EDIE

I'm just saying I can do more.

MONTAGE

The workings of a dairy farm. Quiet music in the background, but the driver is the distinct SOUND of each operation:

--The sound and image of a whirring seed spreader, the sounds and motions of mowing, baling, and putting up the hay.

--Visuals and sounds of cows coming into the barn for milking,

-- Visual of Douglas happily watching Pop spraying a stream of milk from a cow toward the assembled barn cats making them stand and fall over.

-- The sight and clanking of milk cans being brought from the barn to the dairy by Pop and Douglas.

--Visuals and clinking of milk being bottled.

--Visuals and work sounds of Douglas and Pop laboriously loading cases of milk into the trucks.

One final visual as a truck pulls out with Hillcrest Farm plainly visible.

--The sound of the truck gets louder as the music fades and ends the montage.

EXT. BREWER'S APPLE BARN - NIGHT

1930s and 40s trucks and cars are arriving. A "V" for victory poster adorns the front wall.

INT. BREWER'S APPLE BARN - NIGHT

Shelves on the wall are laden with empty cider jugs and nested bushel baskets. Two dozen or more FARMERS, men and women, mostly middle-aged, in overalls and plain dresses, stream in, under hanging naked light bulbs. They grab benches and chairs to form a rough circle. Some make themselves coffee from a side table. The room buzzes with comfortable chat.

Laura, the copper haired girl from the bus, and her father MR. RAWLINGS, 50s, dour, careworn, push through the crowd of farmers like AL LAWSON and TOM JENKS. Douglas, the Boss, and Pop enter in a file.

Douglas's head is on a swivel, looking everywhere. Laura and Douglas squirm through the crowd to wind up sitting next to each other. Laura nudges Douglas and produces a rock painted with a flower.

DOUGLAS

Can you paint one with an African violet like the Boss likes?

LAURA

Sure. Smells like cider in here.



WALTER BREWER, late 60s, all sinew, well over 6 feet, the neighbor everyone relies on, stands up at the head of the crowd. He plunks a cowbell to call everyone to order.

MR. BREWER

Thanks for coming out tonight, I know we're all busy. Now, nobody knows how long this war will go on so some of us thought maybe we can help each other out.

He points to a clutch of men toward the rear.

MR. BREWER (CONT'D)

You know I'm only orchard farming now, so I got a lot of stuff you dairy boys might be able to use.

He points to Tom.

MR. BREWER (CONT'D)

Tom Jenks needs a couple tires.

He points to Pop.

MR. BREWER (CONT'D)

Pop, here, says he has extra dairy time if any of you want to save work and wear and tear and let him put up your milk. Of course, the Boss will be watching to see you don't litter her farmyard!

Everyone laughs. Animated side conversations spring up among twos and threes of the farmers as they bargain. Al Lawson and Tom Jenks break away and approach Douglas, who now stands next to the Boss. Laura watches.

AL LAWSON

Douglas, I know you got school and plenty to do at Hillcrest, but we could use some help on our milk routes, maybe just on the weekends.

Douglas gives the Boss a reassuring pat on the arm and moves toward the two men

DOUGLAS

I could do a Sunday here and there if you put the two routes together.

The farmers murmur to each other, nod agreement, pat Douglas' shoulder, and walk away. The Boss pulls Douglas aside and speaks quietly.

## THE BOSS

Al's son is missing. I don't know how you'll find the time, but I'm glad you'll try to help him.

Douglas, frowning, looks at Al's retreating back. Laura rejoins him.

A commotion in the room as GRACE KRILL, raven haired, determined as a soldier in battle, in her mid thirties, dressed in black and white, marches in. Walter Brewer approaches her.

## MR. BREWER

(surprised, chiding)

Evening, Grace. What brings an important developer and member of the ration board like you to a farmers' meeting?

## GRACE

Oh, I just want to keep up with what's going on around town.

Grace strides up to the front of the room, all eyes on her.

## GRACE (CONT'D)

And I came to tell all of you what you should already know. This war is bound to end, and the boys are going to want houses when they get back, lots of houses. I'm looking for land to build those houses on. You're sitting on land only twenty miles from Boston. It'll be too valuable for farming. You need to get thinking about what's next.

Heavy murmurs fill the room.

## GRACE (CONT'D)

Framingham is going to be a wonderful, growing place to live and work but I can tell you this: it won't be milking cows or picking apples. Those days are going. I know things are tough for some of you right now and I'll be glad to talk with you. I'll treat you right.

TOM  
 (interrupts)  
 We're here tonight because there's  
 a war going on.

GRACE  
 (glowering, turns to Tom)  
 No one knows that more than I do.

MR. BREWER  
 (quietly)  
 Grace, we were all sorry to hear  
 about your brother. You've a big  
 load to carry these days. You know  
 you have our sympathy.

The crowd is shocked and subdued by Graces pronouncement. They mutter concerns as they file out of the meeting. A few linger on trying to absorb the impact. Douglas glares at Grace, who is engaged with Mr. Brewer, until the Boss nudges him to stop. Laura pulls him away.

Grace breaks away from Mr. Brewer and calls to the Petersons.

GRACE  
 I know times are especially rough  
 for you with Harry and your hired  
 help off. I really think it would  
 be good if we talked. I can pay you  
 top dollar that no one can match.  
 You can start a new life.

THE BOSS  
 No, thank you, Grace. We've had  
 Hillcrest taken from us once. We  
 didn't sell to your brother and we  
 won't be selling to you...or  
 anyone.

GRACE  
 Oh, you will, Myrtle, you will.

Douglas stands stunned and angry. The Boss nudges him out the door. Grace watches them leave.

EXT. BREWER'S APPLE BARN - NIGHT

Adults continue to process the life changing future they've just heard. Douglas and Laura talk in hushed, worried voices. Mr. Rawlings approaches. He attempts humor

MR. RAWLINGS

Douglas, with this war going on  
you'll be a man before your mother!

DOUGLAS

That's what everybody tells me.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

SUPER: "December 1943"

Douglas stands in the farmyard holding his lunch bag and books. Edie and the Boss are on the step. A rough running Dodge Power Wagon driven by Mr. Rawlings pulls into the farmyard. Laura sits beside her father. Mr. Rawlings rolls down the window.

MR. RAWLINGS

Ain't gas for the school bus again,  
so get on in.

Douglas waves goodbye to his mother and grandmother. Before Douglas can even get in and seated...

LAURA

Douglas! German planes are going to  
come in the night!

DOUGLAS

How do you know such a thing as  
that?

LAURA

I just know it, I just do.

MR. RAWLINGS

Naw, nothing to worry about.  
That's why you and Douglas pull  
down the blackout shades for the  
drills.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Laughter and excited chatter. CHILDREN ages 8 to 12 are playing. Some girls have jump ropes, some are in clusters gossiping. Laura stands aside. Most of the boys are playing war. Some run with their arms out making airplane noises, Douglas among them.

In a corner of the playground one BOY holds forth, surrounded by a gang of children.

BOY

I swear it was a German sub. Right  
off Hyannisport!

BOY IN THE GANG

Aw c'mon, did you really see a  
German sub?

BOY

(embarrassed)

Well, no, but I talked with the boy  
who did!

The crowd laughs and the bell rings.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Laura beats Douglas to a seat in the noisy, bustling  
auditorium. Douglas joins her. They find their class cohorts,  
exchange nods, smiles, and waves and settle down.

DOUGLAS

Where's your friend Margaret?

LAURA

Pa heard her father was killed in  
the war. In Italy.

Douglas slumps, saddened. Laura produces a pouch of small  
stones painted with lilies and presses one into his hands.

As MISS HUNTER, a pretty young teacher, hustles up to the  
stage, she sneaks a wave at Douglas. Miss Hunter holds a  
songbook and a MUSIC TEACHER plays the piano.

MISS HUNTER

(singing)

Over there, over there.  
Send the word,  
Send the word over there.  
That the Yanks are coming...

Miss Hunter leads a group of teachers who sing. All the kids  
sing, and Douglas sings half-heartedly. Laura elbows him and  
he sings louder. After the song, Miss Hunter reads a letter.

MISS HUNTER (CONT'D)

"Dear Jonathan Maynard School, I  
got your wonderful letters here at  
the front. Best Christmas present  
possible for me. Thank you for  
writing that you sing songs for us  
in your assemblies.

(MORE)

MISS HUNTER (CONT'D)  
 Maybe if I sit real quiet I can  
 hear them. Be kind to everyone and  
 mind your teachers! Keep singing  
 your songs..."

Laura elbows Douglas again when he falls asleep. Miss Hunter  
 watches all this.

INT. MISS HUNTER'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Miss Hunter leads Douglas into a near empty classroom. A hand-  
 lettered sign says, "Miss Hunter's Special Class."

MISS HUNTER  
 Douglas, I hear from neighbors that  
 with all the shortages and men  
 leaving for the war you've taken on  
 quite a load for a young fellow.

DOUGLAS  
 I guess everybody has.

MISS HUNTER  
 Have you thought about what you  
 want to do when you grow up?

DOUGLAS  
 Oh, yeah. I want to be a Navy pilot  
 and fly off aircraft carriers, but  
 not much chance of that. Besides,  
 I have to help out at home, on the  
 farm.

MISS HUNTER  
 (thoughtful)  
 Oh, I don't know. Come and see me  
 Friday after school, right here.

INT. MISS HUNTER'S CLASSROOM - FRIDAY

Blue smocked, Miss Hunter fusses with a straight-backed chair  
 rigged with pulleys, rope lines, a broom handle, and levers.  
 She seats Douglas and instructs him.

MISS HUNTER  
 The broom handle is called the  
 stick. If you move it to the left,  
 and step on that left pedal at the  
 same time you go left. If you move  
 it to the right and step on the  
 right pedal you go right. Put it in  
 the middle you go straight.

(MORE)

MISS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Pull back you go up; push forward  
you go down. It's more complicated  
than that, but those are the  
basics. Now, let's see you try,  
nice and slow.

Douglas moves the stick and pedals at Miss Hunter's  
direction, going left, straightening out, going right,  
climbing, diving. He grins from ear to ear.

MISS HUNTER (CONT'D)

Why, Douglas, you're a natural.

An even bigger grin from Douglas.

INT. FRAMINGHAM TAX ASSESSOR'S OFFICE - DAY

CLAIR, a clerk is handing Grace some maps. Grace spreads one  
of them out on the counter. The busybody Clair hovers.

CLAIR

On the hunt again, Grace?

GRACE

Always looking, Clair. We're going  
to need land for houses, lots and  
lots of houses.

Clair points to a section of the map.

CLAIR

You won't be building houses here.

GRACE

Why not?

Clair leans in as a fellow conspirator, whispering.

CLAIR

The State people were in here last  
week and I overheard that might be  
where the Mass Pike is going.

Grace straightens, quickly rolls up the map, thanks Clair and  
leaves, almost on a run.

EXT. HILLCREST FARM - CONTINUOUS

POP leads two rigged up buckskin work horses, TOM and JERRY,  
out of the barn into the farmyard and calls to Douglas.

POP

It's time you learned to handle  
these two, *sot pojke*. We got no  
help and no telling how long we'll  
be short on gas.

Pop settles the pair. The Boss is observing from the window. Bob and Dick look out from the dairy. Douglas, wide eyed, comes to stand alongside a smiling Pop.

POP (CONT'D)

What we want is to make these two  
old boys answer to us, to our  
sounds. It's sounds with actions,  
but it's always the sounds, the  
commands, we want them to  
understand.

(he waits to let that sink  
in)

Now, to get them moving, we make a  
sound like this.

Pop makes a soft chick-chick-chick sound, and the horses move out. Pop guides Douglas into starting and stopping the team "Chick chick " and "whoa." Then he shows him how to veer left "Haw" then right "Gee"

The scene becomes a montage Douglas' concentrated face, his hands pulling, Pop smiling, gently correcting as Douglas continues to make sounds and practice, with a big smile. We see him progressing as he gets better and better at performing such important work. We can hear the clatter of the horses hooves on the gravel farmyard.

The Boss and Edie, onlookers, smile with pride at his quick grasp. The twins Bob and Dick applaud.

INT. MISS HUNTER'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Christmas decorations are pasted on the walls, cut out snowflakes fill the windows. Laura shows Douglas her latest painted rock with Santa Claus on it and then places it on Miss Hunters desk.

MISS HUNTER

I can see so much Christmas spirit  
here in our room! You've done a  
wonderful job decorating. I wish we  
had a tree, though.

Douglas' hand shoots up and waves frantically. Miss Hunter nods to him to speak.



DOUGLAS

I can get a tree off our farm.

MISS HUNTER

Wonderful, Douglas. Right, class?

The class shouts approval.

MISS HUNTER (CONT'D)

If everyone could bring in one ornament, we can get it all decorated in no time!

The class again shouts approval.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family in the middle of dinner: the Boss, Pop, Edie, Douglas, his father HARRY, home on leave, 20s, a younger, reflective version of Pop, but notable for his eyes which change from hazel to golden brown to near green at times.

HARRY

How do you plan to get them a tree?

DOUGLAS

I figured you could do it being as you're home on leave.

HARRY

I can help you get it to school, but you're the one who promised the tree.

DOUGLAS

I've already tried. The trees that look like Christmas trees are all too big.

HARRY

I wouldn't worry. Classrooms don't really need trees with all the decorating that goes on. We didn't have trees in class when I went to school. Don't worry about it. No one will blame you.

The rest of the dining family nods and murmurs in assent at Harry's sum up.

INT. MISS HUNTER'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Children milling around, looking at each other's ornaments, fixing decorations, chattering, making their way to their seats. Douglas, treeless, shuffles his way up to Miss Hunter's desk, hands deep in his pockets, while Laura watches, worried. Miss Hunter gives him a big smile.

MISS HUNTER

I'm so excited! Everyone's brought their ornaments! We're all waiting for the tree!

Douglas looks deeply pained. As he starts to explain, the classroom door swings open and a perfect Christmas tree invades the room. All the kids cheer.

Douglas runs up and helps pull the tree through the door. Laura pulls on him while he pulls on the tree. It comes through the door with difficulty and Harry, in his blue Navy uniform, puts it on the floor at the front of the room. He smiles at Miss Hunter. He pulls Douglas aside.

Douglas beams at his father.

HARRY

The tree is for all your hard work keeping Hillcrest going.

Douglas hugs him.

HARRY (CONT'D)

I've been called to be back aboard my ship in Boston. Tonight. It may be for quite a while this time.

DOUGLAS

But you'll miss Christmas. Our big dinner and presents and...

HARRY

I know, it's the war, Douglas. I'll be home real soon, I promise. You'll have to go on taking care of the farm again. Can you do that?

Douglas nods. Harry hugs Douglas, ruffles his hair and hurries out. All the kids swarm around the tree with their ornaments. Douglas looks grim, near tears. Laura walks to him.

INT. DECORATED FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - EVENING

The Boss, Pop, Edie, Douglas, and elderly Great Aunt OLGA are all busy with cooking and preparation tasks. Pop is making Glog (Swedish wine). A fire burns in the fireplace. Olga, tiny and delicate, is baking her dromkokar (dream cookies) The first batch is just out of the oven.

BOSS

You best put a big lid on those cookies, Olga, or they'll float away.

Douglas reaches around Olga and snatches one off the tray. The Boss play-slaps his hand. Everyone laughs.

OLGA

(heavy Swedish accent)

Let Douglas be. He needs to eat now to stay strong. He and Pop got to take care of the farm just two of them.

(to Pop)

So many farms closing down, Enoch.

POP

Yah, we got to struggle some, Douglas and me.

He ruffles Douglas' hair. Smiles.

POP (CONT'D)

But he's a good worker and so we do it OK.

Douglas beams at the compliment.

EDIE

Just the two of them working till dark with Harry gone, I wish this damned war was over!

Milkmen are returning from their routes and one by one they enter the bustling kitchen, grab a dromkokar or two, a cup of glog, exchange Christmas greetings and leave.

The family moves to be seated. Food is passed around. The mood warms some.

DOUGLAS

Dad told me he'd be home soon.

OLGA  
 (raising a toast)  
 Gud gör oss starka. God make us  
 strong.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Douglas steps out from a Hillcrest Farm milk truck and starts to deliver milk up a front walk. He sees a gold star flag in the front window. The MILKMAN pulls him aside.

MILKMAN  
 Be extra quiet. That gold star  
 means they lost somebody in the  
 war.

Douglas walks slowly, stops and puts the milk on the step and picks up the empties very quietly and returns to the truck. The Milkman sees his somber face. He catches Douglas' eye and nods to him. They drive away.

MILKMAN (CONT'D)  
 (seeing Douglas' sadness)  
 I told the other guys I got you as  
 my striker today and they told me  
 we'll be late getting back because  
 all the old women come out and give  
 you cookies. Is that true?

Douglas forces a smile. At the next stop MRS. WATKINS, 60s,  
 in a housedress, comes out to speak to him.

MRS. WATKINS  
 Douglas, I know you have problems  
 and shortages out there on the  
 farm, but I need to count on my  
 deliveries, and you've missed three  
 times in just the last two weeks.

Douglas puts the milk on the step. Big smile.

MRS. WATKINS (CONT'D)  
 If you can't make deliveries, I'll  
 just have to find someone else.

DOUGLAS  
 Seems we're always short on gas and  
 this week a truck broke down. Sorry  
 about missing the deliveries, Mrs.  
 Watkins. We'll sure do better.

Mrs. Watkins looks at Douglas for a moment, believes him to  
 be just a kid, gives a curt nod, and shuts the door.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD -- LATER

Douglas and the milkman come to another house with a gold star. He sees a line of people waiting to enter to pay their respects.

MILKMAN

We'll come back later.

Douglas is profoundly saddened.

EXT. FARM GRAVEL PIT - DAY

Down in the large airless pit surrounded by derelict machinery, discarded bottles, stumps, and construction debris, Douglas and Laura take turns shooting a .22 at cracked milk bottles set atop a scratched and rusted ice box.

Laura hits one with a "thwack" and the bottle shatters. Douglas misses and the gravel hill behind the target hisses.

LAURA

Maybe you need to stand closer.

Douglas marches over to Laura and stands with his shoulder against hers.

DOUGLAS

Close enough?

She gives him a punch on the shoulder and shoots another bottle. The force of the shattering glass knocks another milk bottle off the ice box onto an old wagon bed.

Douglas inspects the milk bottle on the wagon bed. His face lights up. He pulls the wagon bed out to the center of the pit.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

I think we could use this.

INT. FARM SHED - DAY

The wagon bed skeleton sits in the shed. The scene becomes a series of images - Douglas and Pop build a cab. Douglas scavenges the pieces of the set up - the tongue, reach, and single tree. Edie and the Boss watch, smiling, Laura comes by, and slowly the derelict shapes into a milk wagon. Douglas paints it glossy red, white, and blue. The whole family admires it.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Douglas brings up GYPSY, a large bay horse, and they fit her to harness in the wagon. She behaves well. The Boss, Pop, and Edie come out of the house. Pop and Douglas load cases of milk on the wagon and cover the milk with chopped ice.

THE BOSS

Well, Edie, you wanted to do something different to help the farm and here it is. This is the list of customers. It's just a few nearby that we've been missing, and you'll recognize all of them. Now, you know Gypsy, she's everybody's friend so try and keep her moving.

Edie laughs, takes the list, waves to everyone, pats Gypsy in a particularly affectionate way, and leaves.

Pop walks with Douglas, puts his hand on his shoulder, and gives a big grin.

POP

You did damn fine. Save on the gas. No spare parts to worry about and your Mrs. Watkins will get her milk.

INSERT: NEWSPAPER FRONT PAGE

The front-page photo shows Edie on the horse drawn wagon with a caption "No gas stamps required!"

EXT. BREWER'S FARMYARD - DAY

A pickup truck with the logo "U.S. Department of Agriculture" on the door is parked off to the side. The crowd from the nighttime meeting in Brewer's barn gathers around MR. ENGMAN, 40s, assured, from the USDA. He holds a shoebox size carton.

MR. ENGMAN

The last thing I want to talk about today is something very special. I want Enoch and Myrtle Peterson and their family to come up here.

Douglas and his family do. The crowd jostles for position.

MR. ENGMAN (CONT'D)

I have the honor, on behalf of Mr. Henry Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture, to present Hillcrest Farm with the department's "A" award for productivity.

He opens the carton and unfurls a large red and blue flag emblazoned with a white "A". The crowd breaks into solid applause. Pop moves to accept it. Douglas tugs on the Boss's arm.

DOUGLAS

Where are we going to hang it?

THE BOSS

I'd say we just keep it in the grain room in the barn. No need to be showing off during tough times like these.

EXT. FOOT OF FARM DRIVEWAY - DAY

Douglas, at the foot of the farm driveway, sweating, wrestles a piece of scrap metal onto a pile under a sign "Collection Site" sitting just off the state highway, beside a stack of wrapped paper and boxes.

Grace Krill drives up, waves hello. She makes a display of unloading bundles of paper from the trunk of her gray Hudson onto Douglas' pile. As always, she wears black and white. She smiles at Douglas' curiosity.

GRACE

See, just doing my part, Douglas. That was a nice story about your mother and the milk wagon you built. You're quite the farmer. And now you've got the "A" award!

Douglas shrugs. She walks a few steps up the drive, stops and throws a long look up toward the farm.

GRACE (CONT'D)

My brother had an eye for this property. He always said you Petersons have a really fine piece of land here. 150 acres, river, nice views, close to Boston. Karl was right. Your folks weren't at all cordial to his inquiries over the years.

Grace takes a step toward Douglas.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Like I said at Walter Brewer's meeting, with the boys coming home looking for places to build their houses you won't be working those long farmer's hours forever. Those days are on the way out.

Douglas stiffens. He doesn't answer and after a few seconds of locked eye contact with Grace, she gets in her car and drives off. Douglas puts his hand on the big Hillcrest Farm sign and stares at her retreating Hudson.

EXT. FRAMINGHAM RAILROAD SWITCHING YARD - DAY

Douglas and his downtown cousins DICK, a muscular 11, JOHN and RONNY, both 9 years old, all tough as nails, walk alongside the tracks looking down into a weedy, scrub-wooded ravine, searching. Ronny carries a sack that clanks with glass bottles. John suddenly points.

JOHN

There's a bottle! Pickwick Ale.  
Gets us five cents, all we need.

RONNY

I don't see any hobos around.  
Douglas, you can get it!

DICK

I'll be right behind you if one  
comes out.

Douglas skids down into the ravine and quickly moves to the empty bottle when the brush parts and an old HOBBO squatting in the bushes to relieve himself yells, startled.

Douglas grabs the bottle at the hobos feet and sprints away. The hobo starts to give chase but stops when he sees Dick standing at the top of the ravine. Douglas quickly scales the side of the ravine, jogs to Ronny and deposits the bottle in Ronny's bag.

RONNY

That should do it. Turn these in  
and we'll get 26 cents apiece.  
Tickets, candy and a penny left  
over. Courtesy of our speedy and  
fearless cousin from the country!



EXT. HOLLIS MOVIE THEATER - DAY

The marquee reads Destination Tokyo and Navy Dive Bomber plus seven cartoons. Kids are milling around but maintaining a rough line. Signs advertise "War Bond Drive". Cars dropping off TOWN KIDS. A cacophony of voices.

TOWN KID 1

Did you watch Groucho Marx last night?

TOWN KID 2

Yes! He was so funny. Then we watched "Our Miss Brooks."

Douglas turns to listen to the kids' voices as they all chime in about their TV watching. He and his cousins stand silent.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOLLIS MOVIE THEATER - LATE AFTERNOON SAME DAY

The movie is over. Kids stream out. Douglas pretends to be the Navy pilot in Dive Bomber. The cousins wander, window shopping.

INT. JOHNSON'S HARDWARE/FISHING AND HUNTING GOODS - DAY

Douglas and his cousins browse, walking the creaky oiled floors. Douglas picks a golden wood fly rod off a wall rack and gives it a shake. He pretends to cast with it. MR. JOHNSON, 60s, slow moving, seen-it-all, the owner, approaches, watches.

MR. JOHNSON

Pretty nice, eh, Douglas?

DOUGLAS

I've never felt anything like this. It almost feels alive.

MR. JOHNSON

That's because it was alive once. It's bamboo. Best fly rod you can buy.

DOUGLAS

How much?

The cousins gather behind Douglas and Mr. Johnson now.

MR. JOHNSON  
It's twenty-five dollars and I'll  
throw in the carrying tube.

Dick takes Douglas by the elbow.

DICK  
Let's go. You'll never find enough  
empty bottles to buy that thing.

Douglas slowly hands the rod back to Mr. Johnson, who has  
heard Dick.

EXT. LARGE CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Douglas, Dick, John, and Ronny ride like mad and brake their  
bikes hard at the chain link entrance gate. They look out at  
the tremendous activity going on: military construction  
vehicles crawling around skeletons of buildings, men weaving  
in and around piles of red bricks and stacks of lumber.

The sign at the gate reads "Cushing Army Hospital  
Construction No Entrance."

The boys get off their bikes and run up to the gate. A  
MILITARY POLICEMAN 20s, tall, straight, in khaki uniform with  
a white armband and white helmet blocks their way.

MP  
You boys want something?

DICK  
We heard you got POWs in there. Is  
that true?

MP  
We have some Italian POWs. They  
come down from Ft. Devens. They're  
working on the chapel.

DOUGLAS  
Can we see them?

MP  
No.

DOUGLAS  
We're doing a project on the war.  
For school.

DICK  
That's right. We do those on the  
war every day. So, can we see them?

MP

No. Besides, they're way in the back so they can't bother anybody.

JOHN AND RONNY

What do they look like? Do they look mean?

MP

No, they just look sad.

The boys stand silent.

EXT. SALVATORE'S OLD HOUSE - SAME DAY

The cousins pedal along through a neighborhood of small houses and apartments when a young man, SALVATORE, late 20s, wearing a tattered army jacket standing in front of a house confronts them, waving his arms, agitated.

SALVATORE

My house! It's my house!

They stop. John gets off his bike, holds out his arms and cautiously approaches the man who continues to yell.

JOHN

Salvatore. It's OK. It's OK.

John pats his own chest and points in indication to the other cousins.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Cugini! Cousins, Salvatore!  
Cugini! Everything is OK.

Dick pulls Douglas aside.

DICK

You're too young to remember Salvatore. He's like a second cousin or something. Went in as soon as the war started.

EXT. ARMY BASE - CONTINUOUS - FLASHBACK - DAY

SUPER: "1941"

A young Salvatore, fresh in uniform, goes through basic training. Gung ho and full of energy.

EXT. DIEPPE BEACH -DAY

SUPER: "DIEPPE, FRANCE, 1942"

Salvatore lands with the US Rangers on the French sand.

Blam. Blam. Blam. A disaster.

GERMAN SOLDIERS barrage the US army soldiers. Salvatore charges into battle.

He stares at the beach. Big and wide and long and full of fighting and blood. He presses the trigger of his rifle and shoots a young German Soldier. Another German soldier wounds Salvatore in the head.

INT. LONDON HOSPITAL - DAY

SUPER: "LONDON, ENGLAND 1943"

BRITISH DOCTORS and NURSES bandage Salvatore's head. He moans and endures the pain.

EXT. SALVATORE'S HOUSE - PRESENT DAY

Salvatore stalks around the yard, as if looking out for enemies, while John calms him. Douglas watches, dumbstruck, while Dick keeps him and Ronny away from Salvatore.

DOUGLAS

What's going on?

DICK

His brain got shell shocked.

RONNY

What do you mean?

DICK

See, he used to live in this house before the war, but his family moved while he was gone. He can't get over it. He yells at the new owners and scares the shit out of kids in the neighborhood.

Salvatore is yelling, incoherent, angry

DICK (CONT'D)

John handles him better than anyone. He'll walk him home now.

(MORE)

DICK (CONT'D)

Everybody says they're gonna have  
to put him away. Goddamned war.

Douglas, frozen, watches John, walking beside his bike, lead Salvatore away.

EXT. FARM MEADOW - DAY

Douglas and his cousins carry fishing poles and walk a tree shaded path away from the farm to the river. They come to a post fence with two wires. The rig is connected to a battery and a yellow humming transformer.

DOUGLAS

Just step on the lower wire and  
lift the top wire and step through.

As they do, they shriek in pain. Douglas laughs. The cousins grab him and give him a harmless thumping, then move on, laughing, to the river.

EXT. FARM FIELD - DAY

SUPER: "May 8, 1945"

Pop watches Douglas harness Tom and Jerry.

POP

I wonder how many more cuttings  
before the war ends.

DOUGLAS

I hoped it would end before Big Red  
had her next calf, but it hasn't.

POP

I just hope it ends before the bank  
steps in.

Douglas looks toward Pop, deep concern in his eyes.

Pop heads back toward the dairy. Douglas easily handles Tom and Jerry who tow a clump of birch trees lashed together over a plowed field breaking up the clumps. The hard, repetitive work continues on and on.

EXT. FARMYARD - LATER

Douglas, dispirited, unlashes the birch trees and puts the horses away and, perspiring, comes into the farmyard where the Boss, Pop, Mr. Rawlings and Laura gather, laughing heartily. Laura runs to Douglas.

LAURA

Can you believe it? It's all over  
the radio. Germany surrendered!  
They're calling it VE Day!

EXT. LAURA'S FARM - MORNING

A small middling farm tucked under big chestnut trees. Douglas runs up and joins Laura sitting on the wide porch, helping MRS. RAWLINGS, her mother, strip and dry beans.

Mrs. Rawlings, never hardy, is now pale, her movements slow, her breathing heavy. Laura works at a fast pace, glancing at her mother from time to time. Douglas joins them until the chore is completed.

Laura lovingly helps her mother into the house and returns to Douglas. Flops exhausted on the porch.

LAURA

They're saying on the radio that  
maybe the Japanese will surrender  
too now.

DOUGLAS

(beaming)

Maybe my father will be coming  
home. We sure need him. This calls  
for a celebration. I say we skip  
school and go fishing. No one's  
going to notice anything anyway.

EXT. RIVER - LATE AFTERNOON

Douglas and Laura pick up their lunch bags, wind up their fishing lines, and pull their string of fish out of the river. They walk through a line of wild grapes and up the cinder bank to the railroad tracks. As they cross the railroad trestle over the river Douglas stops and lays everything down.

He walks to Laura and takes her things from her and lays them down. He takes her hand and walks to the edge of the trestle. Laura pulls away.

LAURA

Hell no! I'm not jumping.

DOUGLAS

Why not? You can swim. It's only a short jump. I'll hold your hand and we'll go together. We're celebrating. Come on, you're brave.

He takes her hand again. She does not pull away. Slowly he raises their clasped hands and with no signal they jump.

EXT. FARMYARD - LATE AFTERNOON

Douglas and Laura come into the farmyard, wet and carrying their fish and gear, to find the Boss standing in the yard like a sentry.

THE BOSS

Took the day off, did you? Well the school called and asked if I knew where you were.

Laura flashes Douglas a look. Uh-oh.

DOUGLAS

What did you tell them?

THE BOSS

I told them what I knew was that Pop was mowing over on the other side of the highway all day.

DOUGLAS

Did you tell them I was with him?

THE BOSS

No, that would have been lying.  
(to Laura)  
I'll bet your mother is waiting for you to turn up.

Laura and the Boss exchange a look and Laura turns and heads for home.

THE BOSS (CONT'D)

Told you, the grownups can't always be watching you.

DOUGLAS

I know. But the war's getting over and Dad might come home.

THE BOSS  
The war's been hard on everyone.

But she softens.

THE BOSS (CONT'D)  
(to herself)  
He can't get home soon enough.

EXT. STREETS OF FRAMINGHAM - DAY

Colorful banners strung across the crowded streets spell out  
"VJ DAY! VICTORY!"

SUPER: "August 14, 1945"

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

The Boss hurries out into the yard.

THE BOSS  
Everyone! Get out here! Hurry!

Douglas, Pop, Edie and two of the returning milk drivers  
hustle into the yard.

THE BOSS (CONT'D)  
Bulletins are coming over the  
radio. They say we dropped an  
atomic bomb on Tokyo, and the Japs  
sound ready to surrender!

EXT. DOWNTOWN FRAMINGHAM - EVENING

Douglas rides with Edie driving their farm truck. Mr.  
Rawlings and Laura ride in his Dodge. Al Lawson, Tom Jenks,  
Mr. Johnson and others ride in their trucks and cars. They  
form a caravan in a spontaneous victory celebration.

People - Grace Krill among them - wave flags and shout at  
them as they drive by. A rambling parade of cops, firemen,  
air raid wardens, club men in white shirts and others forms  
up. A marching band of high school kids in blue and gold  
uniforms and women from the Catholic Eagles in big green hats  
play as loud as they can. People hug each other.

Kids climb onto the Hillcrest Farm truck bed and ride around.  
Fireworks explode. It's hot as hell, but no one cares.

STILL of the entire Framingham street in full celebration.



INT. BREWER'S APPLE BARN - NIGHT

A big victory party in full swing. Douglas and Laura in high spirits. Everyone dressed in bright colors. A commotion in the room when Grace Krill shows up. The rest of the farmers eye Grace. She chats up a farmer, DAVE SUNDSTROM.

Al Lawson and Mr. Brewer talk quietly with the Petersons. Pop pours some whiskey into a paper cup when he thinks no one is watching, but Douglas sees him.

AL LAWSON

The Krills are buying up property from here to Boston. It's like Grace is trying to act like her brother. It worries me. They've got a way of getting what they want. Hope Dave Sundstrom knows that.

THE BOSS

You intending to sell?

AL LAWSON

No, but times are changing, Boss.

A few VETERANS wander through the crowd, some with vacant looks. Some wear parts of their old uniforms. People slap them on the back or shake their hands. They appear uncomfortable. They stick close together. Grace moves over to talk quietly with them, handing out pamphlets about GI loan programs.

GRACE

I know it's going to take time for you to get settled back in.  
(she holds up pamphlets)  
Read these over. The GI Bill can help you toward a place of your own. In the meantime, my family and I are leasing the old town parade ground and will be putting up Quonset huts if you need to rent a place right away.

Douglas takes in all this adult conversation.

EXT. FARMYARD - EVENING

SUPER: "One Week Later"

Douglas walks into the farmyard carrying a basket of sawdust to the barn.

He hears someone shout "Hey!" He looks toward the sound. Harry, in uniform, throws down his duffel bag near the dairy. Douglas runs to him. They embrace.

HARRY

What do you say we go fishing tomorrow?

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Harry and Douglas set up where the river flattens out into a pool just below a small falls. Harry looks around, reacquainting himself with the river. He makes a beautiful cast and a fish takes it and jumps.

With some work he brings the fish to hand, picks up the stringer, then puts it down and instead releases the fish. He sets down his rod.

HARRY

Tell me about how things went while I was gone. How did you and your mother make out?

DOUGLAS

We did OK. She's not much of a farmer - you know that - but she worked hard with chores and helping with the housework, of course she griped some. She spent a lot of time in town with her sisters. And then there was the milk wagon.

HARRY

I hear you've had to carry quite a load with Dick and Bob gone. Pop says you can handle the team now. He also tells me you sometimes push yourself too much and your schoolwork isn't keeping up there like it should be. That true?

DOUGLAS

(firmly)

I do fine. I once heard the Boss on the phone really worried about the war and losing the farm. Pop said how we lost the farm once before. It made me worry. But we buckled down and got through OK. Hillcrest Farm is still here. And you're back.

HARRY  
Your grandmother says you made a  
big difference.

DOUGLAS  
(abruptly)  
Tell me about the war.

HARRY  
(stalling, working his  
fishing line, a distant  
look in his eyes)  
I'm not good at telling about it.  
Let's just say I never knew how  
much I could miss you and everybody  
and the farm. I'm back and that's  
that. OK?

Harry, composed now, smiles, tousles Douglas' hair, and hands  
him his rod.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Now show me you still know how to  
catch a fish!

INT. FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A welcome home party is in progress. Laughter and mixed  
conversation snippets

GUEST 1  
Harry looks good but he seems so  
quiet now.

GUEST 2  
Oh, they're all like that when they  
first get home. He'll be fine!

Harry has his arm around Edie's waist. She leans up and  
whispers in his ear.

EDIE  
I'm so glad you're home.

Harry turns and kisses her. The crowd laughs and applauds.

EXT. FARMYARD - MORNING

Milk bottles get loaded into new stand-up drive trucks.  
Harry walks around and inspects them

HARRY

A hell of an idea - stand up. No more jumping in and out, opening and closing doors. Expensive?

POP

All four of the old Chevys were pretty worn out I got the dealer to give us some trade-in money. He even took the old International. The rest the bank let us have. It's a good thing that they lend easy now with the war over. We need the trucks.

Harry wears a new milkman's uniform. The Boss fixes his hat. Pop, and Edie look on. Douglas joins Harry and they walk away toward a milk truck.

THE BOSS

I've been waiting a long time to see that sight again.

INT. FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Edie is cleaning windows while the boss writes out customer bills. The radio is on and a musical jingle plays.

RADIO

It's OK to owe Kay till pay day  
Your promise to pay is OK with KAY  
For gifts and watches and diamond  
rings,  
Come in and see all the beautiful  
things.  
OH! It's OK to owe Kay till payday.  
Your promise to pay is OK with Kay.  
OK OK OK.

BOSS

Imagine! People today think nothing  
about going into debt to buy  
jewelry!

Edie rolls her eyes.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

SUPER: "TWO MONTHS LATER"

Edie and Douglas drive. Douglas stares out the windshield down the highway.

DOUGLAS

Why are we going to Garino's?

EDIE

They sell things like washing machines and vacuum cleaners and refrigerators. The war's over, Truman's president, times are good, and we're making enough now that the Boss and I deserve some help. I sure do, anyway.

EXT. GARINO'S APPLIANCES - DAY

On the sidewalk sits a large plaster dog with its head tilted. In the window several TV sets show the same station, a game show. Douglas stops and joins some other shoppers staring at the screens. Edie goes into the store.

EXT. GARINO'S APPLIANCES - LATER

Edie comes out of the store and motions to Douglas to follow. She smiles and holds up a coupon book.

DOUGLAS

What did you buy?

EDIE

I bought some time for the Boss and me. I'm tired of wringing out clothes and pushing brooms for hours. AND there's a TV for you.

DOUGLAS

Must have cost a lot. Are we making that much?

EDIE

(waving the coupon book)

Only \$10 a week for everything. You know the Boss won't like this buying on credit, but we can afford it. These are good times!

EXT. FARMYARD - LATE AFTERNOON

Douglas comes up into the yard carrying his fishing rod and a stringer of fish. He walks to the Boss, but she doesn't reach for the stringer. She looks at him with sadness. He stops.

BOSS

Etta Rawlings passed away this morning. You get on up there and see what Laura and her father need. Lord knows there's nobody up there to comfort that girl.

Douglas hands her the stringer and reaches for his bicycle. Pop whistles and tosses him the keys to the pick-up.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - DAY

Laura sits on the porch. Douglas sits beside her. Silence for a few moments.

DOUGLAS

I'm sorry.

LAURA

(nodding)

She said she was ready to go. But what about me? I don't know what's going to happen now. I feel like my damned life has no story.

She breaks down in tears.

Douglas puts his arm around her shoulder.

MONTAGE

--Douglas and Laura riding in the pick up. Getting closer together.

--Laura eating dinner with the Petersons.

-- Mr. Rawlings and Harry sit on the porch and drink together Harry reaches for another drink.

--An older Douglas and Laura fishing together.

EXT. EASTERN STATES FAIRGROUND - DAY

Douglas and Laura are now 16, both tall, strong-looking, confident, golden enough to attract attention. They follow Pop and Mr. Rawlings as they walk under a sign: "1952 EASTERN STATES EXPOSITION GRAND RE-OPENING."

The crisp autumn air is filled with the noise of a crowd, music from a band and, at a distance, the roar and dust of racecars warming up.

Loudspeakers announce events. Crowds fill the grass aisles as the four of them walk among tented equipment vendors, tool displays, games, food, and animal exhibits.

Pop and Mr. Rawlings step into a tent featuring tractors. Douglas and Laura wander toward the food, stopping to see several 4H projects with young people and their animals.

LAURA

You and I should do a 4H project.

DOUGLAS

Like raise a calf?

LAURA

No brushing shit out of a calf's tail for me. I'd have us bake the best cake. My mother left me some good recipes.

DOUGLAS

I will if you will.

He wraps his arm around her.

INT. TRUCK - EVENING

Pop, driving, and Mr. Rawlings confer while Douglas and Laura, in the back, tired, shoulder to shoulder, stare out the window.

POP

So you didn't see anything you wanted?

MR. RAWLINGS

Oh, I did, but the prices now are all way out of my reach.

POP

Yeah, prices are up all right, but I didn't have a choice. That Jeep I bought was a mistake. It's fun, but it's not worth a damn for work. Maybe you could do what I did, buy what you want on time. I hated to spend the money, but we need a small tractor. The dealer set it up for me with the bank right on the spot.

MR. RAWLINGS

Buy it on time? Pop, I don't know  
how much time I've got with Etta  
gone and Grace Krill circling  
around like a vulture.

Douglas' head snaps forward at the mention of Grace's name.  
Laura looks at Douglas. They clasp hands.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Douglas watches Grace at the foot of the drive putting more  
paper and scrap metal on the collection site piles. She sees  
him, gets into her car and drives up into the yard.

The Boss comes out.

GRACE

I don't know if you heard, but Dave  
Sundstrom threw in the towel. We  
just paid him good money for White  
Dairy farm. Hillcrest might be wise  
to think about the future.

THE BOSS

I happen to know that Dave  
Sundstrom isn't happy about his  
deal. And you need to know that  
we're not intending to sell.

Grace shrugs, puts her Hudson in gear and starts to move but  
addresses Douglas very directly.

GRACE

Like I said to Walter Brewer, we're  
not going back to the way things  
were.

Douglas, upset, walks to stand by the Boss.

EXT. FARMYARD - NOON

Douglas drives the big flatbed truck into the yard, exits,  
and enters the farmhouse.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

The family eats lunch. The radio plays in the background.



POP

I saw the damnedest sight this morning, over where we baled hay yesterday. I saw one person out there walking alongside a flatbed truck, getting in and out once in a while to keep the truck straight, and then at the same time jumping up and down loading the whole truckload of bales. All alone!

THE BOSS

Who was it?

POP

Not sure, could have been Laura Rawlings. She's strong, and you know how those hill girls can be.

THE BOSS

It's a good thing that she's so strong because she sure'll never be hung for her beauty.

DOUGLAS

(blurts out)

She's pretty enough. And she's not some kind of hill witch.

The family laughs. Douglas, regretful, avoids everyone's gaze. He soon smothers a yawn and looks ready to fall asleep. Harry notices.

HARRY

(aside to the Boss)

We need some extra help. He needs to pay more attention to his school work. Won't be easy. With the GI Bill, the boys don't want to come back to the farm.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

A pre-war black Plymouth pulls up into the yard. The door opens and a gaunt man, JIM COWELL, 25, disabled veteran, struggles a bit to get out and get himself balanced on one crutch. He works to overcome some visible tremor.

Pop comes out of the dairy to greet him. Douglas, working in the dairy, occasionally pokes his head out.

POP  
Jim, good to see you! How you  
getting along now?

JIM  
Not bad, considering. Pain's about  
gone. I do need this stick, and I  
mostly need some work, Pop.

They walk slowly around the farm yard.

POP  
I imagine you do. I hear Carol has  
a good job at Dennison so that must  
be a big help.

JIM  
Yeah, she's keeping her wartime job  
and I'm out scrounging for work. I  
can't go back to the fire  
department. I'm hoping you can help  
me out.

They stop walking and face each other.

POP  
(solemnly)  
You know dairy farm work, Jim. What  
would we have you do? Can't have  
you deliver milk, dairy's slippery  
as hell, and the rest is hard for  
any man. Maybe you can find some  
office work.

Silence sits between them.

JIM  
What the hell would I do in an  
office, Pop?

Pop stays silent. Jim extends his hand. In the doorway to the  
dairy, Douglas bends down and picks up assorted trash and  
debris, trying to pretend he's not listening.

JIM (CONT'D)  
I knew it was a long shot, but I  
had to try.

POP  
(shaking Jim's hand)  
I'm sorry, Jim. If I think of  
anything I'll let you know.

They walk back his car. Jim nods and, frustrated with his crutch, slings it in the back seat and awkwardly gets in. Jim drives off. Pop looks back and makes eye contact with Douglas in the dairy.

POP (CONT'D)

Didn't have the heart to tell him about the boy your father lined up. Damned war.

DOUGLAS

What boy?

POP

We can't afford to hire anybody, even if we could find someone who wants farm work, so your father got a boy from the Lyman School for boys coming.

EXT. FARMYARD - EVENING

Douglas, the Boss and Pop stand facing Harry and CHARLIE MCPHAIL, slightly older than Douglas. Handsome and tough, Charlie has a bruise on his left cheek and a thin red scar on his neck. He shuffles his feet, but keeps his head up. Harry puts his hand behind the boy and guides him forward.

HARRY

This is Charlie McPhail. He's come down from the Lyman School. He's going to be with us from now on to help out with the haying, and all, aren't you, Charlie?

Charlie nods, smiles. Douglas gives him a friendly smile.

THE BOSS

What got you into the Lyman School?

CHARLIE

They say I stole some cars, but I didn't.

DOUGLAS

At school if you do anything bad they threaten to send you to Lyman.

CHARLIE

Well, I didn't steal. I just borrowed them. I did take a hubcap sometimes. I was a kid then.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
 (looking from one to  
 another)  
 I wouldn't do that now.

POP  
 (stepping closer to the  
 boy)  
 No, you won't, or back you go!

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

Typical pounded dirt and grass schoolyard. Boys playing baseball at one end, girls in clusters here and there, lots of laughing and calling out.

In one part of the yard a small knot of kids gather around Douglas and a bigger boy, BIG JOE RILEY, who gets in Douglas's face.

BIG JOE  
 So you've got a Limey at Hillcrest now. Couldn't you afford to hire real help? They're all juvenile delinquents up there. Aren't you afraid he'll kill you and run off in the night?

DOUGLAS  
 Charlie's a good kid. He helps us.

Big Joe pokes Douglas in the chest.

BIG JOE  
 What? Helps you steal cars?

Just as Douglas raises his fists, Charlie darts through the ring of onlookers and with a smooth motion slams his right fist into Big Joe's face. Big Joe goes down and stays down. More onlookers run to the scene.

Miss Hunter wedges her way through the crowd and, after inspecting Big Joe, gives Douglas a long look and leads Charlie away. Douglas runs after them.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - EVENING

The family and Charlie, who has his head down, eat dinner.

DOUGLAS  
 He was just trying to stick up for me. Big Joe started it.

CHARLIE

'Cause Douglas stuck up for me.

THE BOSS

Charlie, I talked with the school and they'll let you come back but you'd have to spend lunch and recess at your desk and help with their chores after school. I told them it's close enough to June and we'll just finish off your schooling here. We can't afford to lose any more time because of you.

Douglas and Charlie exchange muted smiles.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

JANICE the RFD mail lady, 50s, built like a fireplug, stands outside of her car chatting with Harry, Edie and the Boss as she hands over the mail. Her car has "RFD-Rural Free Delivery" seal on the side.

Pop comes from the dairy as Douglas and Charlie emerge from the barn. Lots of good chatter and a laugh here and there over some gossip. The Boss surveys the gathering.

JANICE

Best part of my day, delivering to farmers.

She smiles at Douglas.

JANICE (CONT'D)

My family's been doing this since the first stations in 1896. It's in my blood like farming is in yours.

Edie fidgets, uncomfortable. The Boss sees it.

THE BOSS

By God, this is the first time since the war that we have everybody together. Douglas, go get my camera and we'll ask Janice to take a picture of us.

Douglas brings out the camera. The family has become aware of the significance of the moment. They pose. Janice takes several pictures. Charlie takes one with Janice in the group. Janice drives off and the family quietly drifts back to their own doings.

EXT. FARMYARD BEHIND BARN - DAY

Charlie is lacing boxing gloves on Douglas, who looks doubtful.

CHARLIE

You need to know how to take care of yourself. I saw what Big Joe pulled on you and you weren't ready. Fold these newspapers under your arms. I want you to jab at me and get your hand back fast enough that you don't drop the newspaper. Do ten with your left then ten with your right.

Douglas does, dropping the paper several times when he uses his left, but only once when using his right.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Now I want you to really hit me.

DOUGLAS

No, I might hurt you.

CHARLIE

(smiling)

No chance of that.

Douglas snaps several jabs at Charlie, all batted away, but then pretends to jab a left, but swings a fast right slapping Charlie below his left eye. Charlie smiles and shakes a glove at Douglas. They continue. Douglas getting better, Charlie working harder. They quit.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You don't need to run from a fight, but don't get into one if you don't have to. You're big and strong and fast enough, but you don't have it in you to hurt people and they'll see that.

HARRY (O.S.)

Douglas! The milkmen are back.

Douglas, relieved, takes off the gloves.

EXT. DAIRY LOADING DOCK - AFTERNOON

Five uniformed milk route drivers cluster around a flustered Harry. Douglas and Pop are watching. The mood is somber.

HARRY

Tell me again. Why are you bringing  
back more milk?

DRIVER ONE

(exasperated)

Harry, people don't need milk  
delivered every other day now.  
They have refrigerators.

DRIVER TWO

They buy cheaper at the store and  
buy for a week.

Harry stands silent and looks to Pop and Douglas. The meeting  
breaks up and everyone shuffles off.

HARRY

(to Pop and Douglas)

Time to talk to the Boss.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Douglas, Harry, Pop, and Charlie form an audience for the  
Boss. Douglas gets some colored flavored ice cubes out of the  
shiny new refrigerator and puts them in his water. Harry  
grabs a beer.

THE BOSS

First National Stores has dropped  
us. They've gone to Sealtest.  
That's six stores we've lost right  
there. Add that to all the milk  
that the drivers are bringing back,  
we're headed for a big problem. I  
hate to say it, but we've got to  
come up with a plan, and fast.

POP

I know Ed Rossi, the First National  
store manager. I'll go see him.

Harry, Pop, and Charlie leave the room. Douglas lags, waiting  
for more, but the Boss, scowling, goes to work on the books.

INT. STORE OFFICE - DAY

Pop and Douglas sit across a small, cluttered desk from ED  
ROSSI, 40s, rumpled white shirt, tie, no jacket, chain  
smoking, the store manager.

ED ROSSI

It came right from the top, Enoch. All First National stores are going to be changing. It's business. I know how that sounds, but Sealtest is so big they can produce cheaper and we get a lower price because of our volume. That's what our customers want.

DOUGLAS

Is there anything we can do?

ED ROSSI

I can't think of anything. In fact, you better brace yourselves. Have you heard from A&P? If not, I bet you will.

The phone on his desk rings. He shrugs a long-faced apology and answers his phone. Pop and Douglas leave the office and Douglas whispers to Pop.

DOUGLAS

Which one of us is going to tell the Boss?

EXT. FARMYARD - LATER

The Boss is showing Douglas how to care for her many gladiolas. Harry and Edie sit on the porch sharing a warm moment, talking, laughing, carefree.

Grace Krill pulls straight up in her gray Hudson. She rolls down her window. Harry and Edie tense up and get off the porch, then approach the Boss in solidarity.

GRACE

We bought Frank Kelly's place in Natick. Boston is emptying out. You can see it, Myrtle. Development is moving this way. General Motors says they're building a huge factory right here in Framingham. Just wanted you to know.

THE BOSS

I know what you wanted, Grace Krill. Same as your brother wanted.

Grace looks long and hard at the Boss. The two women stay locked in a stare down.



## THE BOSS (CONT'D)

Grace, let me tell you, we were pushed off our farm once and we're not going to be pushed off again.

## GRACE

That was 1926, Myrtle. It's history. Things are changing now.

She looks at Douglas and waves as she drives down the drive.

## INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - LATER

Douglas looks at the newly arrived photographs that Janice took. The whole family together, happy.

## EXT. RAWLINGS' FARM YARD

Grace accepts a sheaf of papers from Mr. Rawlings. Laura watches, downcast.

## GRACE

I know how hard this is for you, John. The war turned everything upside down. You worked so hard during the war. But this just isn't farm land anymore. I'm really sorry.

Laura takes her father's hand, tears in her eyes.

## EXT. HILLCREST FARMYARD - SAME DAY

Douglas grabs his fishing rod and heads down toward the river. He walks slowly, truly seeing Hillcrest, the hayfields, the equipment, the animals in the sheds, the cows in the pasture. He turns and looks back up at the dairy and the barn. He shakes his head.

## EXT. RIVER NEAR BLOOD'S LAND

Douglas, lost in thought, arrives at a familiar rich crescent of river side bottom land, belonging to George Blood. Its dark soil is untouched.

He is surprised to see, on the dirt road beside the land, Grace sitting in her car, smoking a cigarette out the window. She beckons him over.

GRACE  
(as if to herself)  
Look at this land George Blood has  
just sitting here.

Douglas holds her gaze momentarily and stalks off, silent.

EXT. RIVER NEAR BLOOD'S LAND - LATER

Douglas begins to fish, but a painted rock whizzes through the air bounces along side him and splashes into the river. He sees Laura reloading, ready to hurl another rock. Angry tears on her face.

LAURA  
We had to sell. It's so damned hard  
since Ma passed. I can't keep house  
and garden and keep up with school,  
and Pa, well, he can't handle  
things so well. We're moving to the  
stone cottage just down river.

Douglas drops his fishing rod and goes over to hug Laura.

DOUGLAS  
Hope she doesn't get Blood's field.  
She was parked there just now.

LAURA  
Mr. Blood told Pa he can't work it  
since his Junior took a job at GM.  
Pa said Mr. Blood doesn't want to  
see this piece get taken over for  
houses, it's the best bottom land  
around, but he's in a corner.

DOUGLAS  
Maybe I'll go up and talk to him.

LAURA  
I know you're God's gift to  
farming, but what the hell can you  
do?

EXT. WHOLESALE VEGETABLE MARKET - DAY

Douglas makes his way around the noisy stands and stalls piled with produce, stopping to talk with the wholesalers. He stops at JERRY GARDELLA'S stall. Jerry, 50s, looks healthy, robust, sunburned. He is in constant motion.

DOUGLAS

Mr. Gardella, if you wanted to plant something right now, what would it be?

JERRY GARDELLA

You're the Peterson kid, right? Call me Jerry and plant tomatoes. I went crazy last year trying to get tomatoes to my stores in Boston. Nobody grows shit anymore, they're all building houses and cars. See me when you got tomatoes, big boy.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

The family and Charlie sit listening to Douglas.

DOUGLAS

So those are the numbers I came up with. I talked with Mr. Blood. He says he just doesn't want any houses going in. He thinks Junior will tire of GM and come back. I cant say I see that happening. But right now it's mine if I want it. I talked with Jerry Gardella and he says he'll take all the tomatoes I can grow. If you'll buy the plants and help me put them in I'll keep them pruned and weeded and do the picking and take them to Gardella.

HARRY

So what do you get?

DOUGLAS

(smiling)

Aside from a summer away from the damned milk routes, I'd like to get enough to buy a car. Mr. Blood told me he planted just three acres in tomatoes one year and cleared almost as much as he made off the dairy. Whatever we make goes to the farm, but I'm hoping - betting - there's enough for a cheap car.

BOSS

If this will help us hang on I'll  
find a way to get the bank to lend  
us what we need. It's not that  
great a risk.

The family nods. Edie makes a show of folding her napkin and laying down her silver.

EDIE

While we're talking money, I'm  
taking that job at Bay State  
Abrasives to help keep us going. I  
start Monday.

The family sits stunned. The Boss recovers quickly.

THE BOSS

Edie, we could use the money, for  
sure. And Bay State gives Blue  
Cross. You make sure you and your  
two boys will be covered.

MONTAGE

- Douglas plants and stakes by himself.
- Grace Krill drives by and watches Douglas.
- The tomatoes grow and ripen.
- Douglas picks almost until dark.
- Douglas flops among the tomato baskets in the truck bed.
- Douglas looks at the tomatoes waiting to be picked. More of them than ever before.
- Douglas is at Gardella's being paid by Jerry
- Douglas, exhausted, is putting his money in a Svea cookie tin

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Douglas, with his fishing rod, is riding his bike along side a tall, perfectly crafted stone wall. He passes an ornate metal gate with the word "RACELAND" arced over it.

Some yards down he comes to a large wooden plank gate in the wall that's been left open. He stops. He walks his bike to the opening and looks inside at the estate.

He sees he is on a crushed stone drive and mounts his bike and enters.

EXT. RACELAND - DAY

The estate spreads out to stables, a golf course, a dirt horserace track, and, under swaying willows, a flowing stream. He looks around and sees no one to stop him, so he begins to fish.

Out from the reeds fly three enraged white swans. They attack, beating him with their huge wings, screeching and pecking at his face and neck. He tries to cover himself and run for his bike but they descend on him.

Suddenly the screeching changes to squawking and the swans are off him and half flying, half running for the water followed by two shiny brown dogs, tails wagging, and filling the air with barking. The swans make it. The dogs frolic back and forth along the shore, barking.

A blue four-door convertible car has appeared on the drive. Behind the wheel sitting erect in a black suit, white shirt and black tie is MR. JOHN R. MACOMBER, 70s, gray hair, glasses, imperious.

MR. MACOMBER

Who are you and what are you doing besides scaring my swans and aggravating my dogs?

DOUGLAS

My name is Douglas Peterson and I was hoping I could fish. The gate was open.

Mr. Macomber shuts off the car and motions Douglas to come closer.

MR. MACOMBER

Peterson? Enoch Peterson, Hillcrest Farm? You're his grandson?

DOUGLAS

Yes, sir.

MR. MACOMBER

Are you the boy that built the milk wagon in the paper during the war?

DOUGLAS

Pop and I built it.

Mr. Macomber takes a closer look at Douglas and smiles.

MR. MACOMBER

Pretty smart, saving gas and getting some free publicity. What are you and my old friend Enoch up to these days?

DOUGLAS

I'm trying to make some money off of tomatoes and corn. The dairy business is sort of tough.

MR. MACOMBER

Lots of changes from the war, Douglas. People spending all that piled up money, buying houses, buying cars. Growth everywhere. You planning to grow?

DOUGLAS

No room to grow. Land's too expensive now.

Mr. Macomber starts his car.

MR. MACOMBER

I'm sure you'll find some other ways to grow. Now, you can fish here, but don't bring anybody with you, clear?

DOUGLAS

Yes, sir.

MR. MACOMBER

And say hello to Enoch for me. He's been a good neighbor.

Mr. Macomber drives off.

DOUGLAS

(to the retreating car)  
Thank you.

EXT. HILLCREST FARM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Under a bright sun Douglas helps bale hay with Pop. He shows them his cuts and peck marks.

DOUGLAS

Mr. Macomber says hello, Pop.

POP

Decent man. One of his racehorses is like to be worth more than all our Guernseys. Richest man in town. Look at you, Douglas. Making big friends. Like Pop, like grandson.

DOUGLAS

What do you mean?

POP

Right after we came here, Macomber had a fire in his stable. I took some of his horses and boarded them here for a time.

DOUGLAS

I'm going to keep fishing there. He says I can.

Pop laughs. He remounts the tractor and the baling resumes. Hay flies everywhere and sticks in their hair.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

As they come back up into the yard after baling, Laura rides in, bareback, on her horse. Douglas, sweaty and dirty, walks out to her, smiling.

LAURA

You work too damned hard. I say we take a ride and go fishing up by the dam.

DOUGLAS

OK, gotta rinse off first.

INT. STABLE - DAY

Douglas preps Gypsy. He reaches for a saddle but puts it back and rigs the horse without it.

EXT. TREE BOWERED WOODLAND TRAIL - DAY

Douglas and Laura, in a white shirt, ride, closely, side by side, Laura to Douglas' right. After some riding, Laura points to their left across the trail and across Douglas.

LAURA

Look, lady slippers. You aren't allowed to pick them.

DOUGLAS

I know, I was sitting behind you  
when Miss Hunter said.

Laura does not withdraw her pointing arm. After a moment she shakes her hand. Douglas, alerted, reaches his right hand out and takes her hand. They continue to ride in silence.

A few drops of rain fall. Laura and Douglas shrug. A light rain becomes steadier. They drop their hands.

LAURA

I gotta go. I put Pa's work clothes  
on the line and sure as all hell  
he'll never think to take them in.

They turn their horses. Douglas smiles at Laura.

DOUGLAS

Probably just as well. In case you  
didn't notice, we didn't bring  
fishing rods.

Douglas leans, awkwardly, and plants a clumsy kiss on her cheek. Laura conceals a smile and turns her horse to her home.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Pouring rain. Pop shelters, dry, in the doorway of the barn, watching Douglas, who leads Gypsy by the reins, up to him and stops. Pop points to the reins with a questioning look.

DOUGLAS

Riding bareback in the rain. It's  
easier to walk.

POP

Go dry her off, *sot pojke*, then dry  
yourself. We've got chores. You're  
working double because you'll be in  
Boston for a couple days.

EXT. BOSTON BUS TERMINAL - DAY

Douglas steps off the bus, which shows the destination BOSTON above the windshield. He wears school clothes and carries a small leather case.

AUNT HELEN (O.C.)

Douglas!



He turns to see AUNT HELEN, his mother's sister, resembles Edie, 40ish, lovely, perfectly made up and well dressed. Full of smiles. He walks to her. She gives him a quick, but energetic hug.

AUNT HELEN (CONT'D)

Oh, Douglas, you look so big and handsome and grown up! Thank you for coming in to see me. It's been lonely without Mac. Let's walk.

EXT. BOSTON FASHIONABLE CITY STREETS - DAY

Aunt Helen and Douglas walk the streets then stop and ascend the steps of a handsome stone building. A doorman greets them.

INT. AUNT HELEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

It is beautifully furnished in warm woods and Oriental rugs. Centered on an entry table is a picture of Aunt Helen in a black fur coat with a handsome man in an Army Air Corp uniform. They are standing in front of a Packard car.

AUNT HELEN

I have to go in to the store for just a few minutes this afternoon. **Can't miss** payday now that I'm a working woman again! You know to stay behind the gate in the back. We're having dinner tonight with my new friend, Tom. You'll like him.

Douglas nods, Aunt Helen brushes her hand along his cheek, and leaves.

EXT. AUNT HELEN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Behind Aunt Helen's apartment building, Douglas is looking toward the banks of the Charles River and soon sees TWO OLD WHITE FISHERMAN and an OLD BLACK FISHERMAN set up with their lawn chairs and fishing gear.

He opens the gate, walks across the wide green park-like expanse and joins them. He is instantly welcome. They laugh. Douglas inspects their equipment and looks in their pails at their catches.

AUNT HELEN (O.C.)

Douglas!

Douglas and his fishing companions snap to the sound of her voice. Aunt Helen marches toward them. She grabs Douglas by the shoulder, throws a dark look at the fishermen, and leads him away. She lectures as they walk.

AUNT HELEN (CONT'D)  
Douglas, this is the city. You  
can't be talking to strangers.

DOUGLAS  
They were friends, just fishermen.

Aunt Helen looks at him, almost in tears.

AUNT HELEN  
I'm responsible for you while  
you're here and I'm not going to  
let anything happen to you! I've  
got enough to worry about now that  
I'm alone.

INT. INTIMATE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Douglas, dressed in an oversized blue jacket, Aunt Helen, bejeweled with a fur wrap, and THOMAS WHITING, 50s, graying, movie star looks, elegant manner, eat dinner. Thomas has ordered lobster for everyone.

DOUGLAS  
This is how my grandmother taught  
me to eat lobster.

AUNT HELEN  
It's a little messy, Douglas.

THOMAS  
But really worth it. Good work  
there, Douglas!

Thomas puts a small box on the table and motions to Douglas to open it. Douglas pulls out a signed baseball and forgets about the lobster.

THOMAS (CONT'D)  
Those are the signatures of every  
member of the 1946 Red Sox.

DOUGLAS  
Wow. Thank you, Mr. Whiting!

THOMAS  
Next time you come to town we'll go  
to a Sox game, OK?

Douglas grins and nods.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Aunt Helen fusses over Douglas, brushing back his hair.

AUNT HELEN

It was so nice to have you for company, Douglas. Thank you for coming in. I've been at such loose ends since the war.

DOUGLAS

I had fun with your criminals down by the Charles. And Mr. Whiting! A signed Red Sox baseball and next time a game!

AUNT HELEN

(nervously)

Well, Mr. Whiting travels a lot. We can't be sure he'll be here next time.

INT. BUS CABIN - DAY

Douglas waves goodbye to Aunt Helen and takes the baseball out of his leather case.

INT. BONWIT TELLER DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Aunt Helen rushes down the aisles of the store to the make-up counter. She removes her black fur coat, throws on a white smock, pastes on a smile, and takes her position as a sales clerk.

INT. FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The family watches television. "The Lone Ranger" ends and "I Remember Mama" begins. Douglas won't let go of his baseball.

THE BOSS

So you had a good time with your aunt Helen and Bill?

Douglas, absorbed with the baseball, nods. The Boss pulls him close but he just fixates on his baseball.

DOUGLAS

But his name was Tom, not Bill.  
Bill was the one before.

The Boss and Pop share a knowing look.

POP

Time to turn in, *sot pojke*. You  
have a tomato day tomorrow.

EXT. BLOOD'S LAND - DAY

Douglas, Ronny, John and Dick pick tomatoes. Lots of baskets sit piled beside the truck. Douglas picks with a vengeance. He directs his cousins.

EXT. RACELAND - DAY

Douglas fishes. Mr. Macomber, in his convertible, pulls up to watch. Douglas sees him, puts down his rod, picks up a cardboard box, and walks to Mr. Macomber's car.

DOUGLAS

I have something for you.

MR. MACOMBER

Well, let's take a look. Let me see  
what you've been up to.

Douglas first holds up a handful of tomatoes, then some ears of corn.

DOUGLAS

I'm doing pretty well. I sell the  
tomatoes to Jerry Gardella and sell  
the corn off a truck, mostly to our  
milk customers. These are for you.  
Payback for letting me fish here.

Douglas sets the box on the back seat.

MR. MACOMBER

Thank you, Douglas. I get my  
"payback" from watching you. And  
from keeping up to date about your  
business doings. Things getting any  
better at Hillcrest?

DOUGLAS

(pacing)  
About the same.

(MORE)

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

We lose customers to the supermarkets, but then get a few in the new developments. The big dairies keep lowering prices. And then Grace Krill keeps coming around.

He does a dead-on imitation of Grace.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

"Oh, you better sell out to me. You can't be farming here any more."

MR. MACOMBER

You don't want to sell?

Douglas stiffens and looks directly at Mr. Macomber.

DOUGLAS

No, sir. And the Boss says no too. She says we're not going to lose Hillcrest again. I know things are changing but there has to be a way to still make a living farming.

Mr. Macomber starts up his car.

MR. MACOMBER

I'm sure if there is a way you'll find it, but Grace, slippery as she is, knows what's going on. She was in law school when her brother was killed. She had to drop everything and step into the business, no easy thing. She got burned a couple times, but she learned fast. Don't underestimate her.

Mr. Macomber starts to drive off, stops.

MR. MACOMBER (CONT'D)

Thanks for the tomatoes and corn.

The wind picks up and nearly blows Douglas's rod out of his hands. He looks off in the distance at the gathering storm and heads back to the gate.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

The wind violently whips dust and debris in fits and starts. Clouds scud by so fast it's like a light switch being turned on and off.

The wind rises to a scream, folding trees, then drops off to breathless silence. A short burst of rain, then broken sun and the complaining wind. The sky turns a yellowy gray and the wind builds and holds.

The family streams into the farmyard looking to each other. Pop points up. Shingles and branches are high in the air, slowly turning. The air crackles and crackles. The wind becomes a steady, train-like roar.

Pop motions for everybody to get inside. The family runs for the house. Douglas helps the Boss with her cane into the house.

Douglas sees Scratch losing his footing and being blown down. He runs to the dog and dives into the sawdust bin just as a wave of rain hits.

In a break in the tempest Douglas and Scratch run out of the sawdust bin and into the house with the rest of the family. They make it just as a blinding deluge turns the farmyard into a lake.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

The farm looks like the storm raged all day. Leaves, branches and debris everywhere. Douglas, returning to the yard, stops to move a large branch. Pop and Charlie come up from the back. Harry pulls up in the pickup. The Boss waits and stands on point.

HARRY

It's bad all the way to Southboro.  
Fayville got hit the worst. The  
radio says it was a tornado.

(to Douglas)

You're lucky. It skipped your  
tomato field.

POP

We got by with the buildings but  
the fields, they look bad.

DOUGLAS

Fields are worse than bad, Pop. I  
took a walk. We got millions of  
shingles and pieces of wood and all  
kinds of junk. It'll take forever  
to clean it up. We'll have a hell  
of a time getting good hay.

## THE BOSS

Well, another damned thing for us  
to get through. Radio says how  
others got it much worse.

Pop is absently picking up twigs, surveying the devastation.

## POP

Even so, we didn't need this.

Douglas looks at Pop in surprise.

The scene is a series of images. Douglas, and Charlie hand  
picking trash from the hayfields and putting it on the flat  
bed. Douglas walking ahead of Pop on the mower inspecting for  
debris. Hand turning hay, inspecting ahead of the baler.  
Breaking open a bale of hay to check for debris.

## EXT. FARM GRAVEL PIT DUMP - DAY

Douglas and Laura sit in a rusted, gray hull of a truck.  
Douglas daydreaming behind the wheel. Laura twitching a long  
stem of grass.

## DOUGLAS

If this thing ran I'd drive it all  
the way to a big ranch in Montana  
and catch lots of rainbow trout.

## LAURA

Me? I'd cruise into Boston and go  
shopping at all those fancy stores  
they advertise.

Laura moves around, full of restless energy. She walks around  
and finds a pile of empty 55-gallon oil drums.

## LAURA (CONT'D)

Look at these.

She waits for Douglas to join her

## DOUGLAS

(smiling)  
They float, you know!

## EXT. RIVER - DAY

Douglas and Laura, along with Scratch, shove off on a lash-up  
raft of oil drums and scrap door painted with 'LAURA' into  
the river.

Laura takes charge of fishing rods and a lunch basket. Douglas stands and uses a long handled shovel as a rudder to steer.

EXT. RIVER COVE - DAY

Laura and Douglas drift in a slow flow, both seated, Laura's arm looped over his shoulder. Sandwich basket open. They polish off their lunch.

LAURA

This is the best thing we've ever done. Can we just stay here?

DOUGLAS

Nope. No anchor. Next time.

The raft gives off a grinding sound as the left front dips under water. Suddenly the raft snaps around as the oil drums groan and slowly come apart. Scratch barks.

Laura drops to her hands and knees and grasping at their gear, she slides into the water. Scratch heads for shore.

Douglas, swimming, makes for Laura and, after three tries, has her under his arm and in a few strokes is in water shallow enough to stand. He lays her on the shore. She coughs and sits up. He holds her. She looks small in his arms. She coughs again and he stares at her. Both totally vulnerable.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

You OK?

LAURA

(imitating Douglas)  
Look at these. They float.

DOUGLAS

Sorry...

LAURA

You should stick to farming.

They stand and start for the farm. Scratch constantly barks, first running toward them and then running away. He repeats. Suddenly Charlie appears.

CHARLIE

(hands on hips)  
Your dog was making me crazy and I come down to find you taking a pretty sorry swim.



Douglas and Laura squirm, embarrassed.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Douglas, I'll get Laura home, but you better get back. They've been looking for you. Seems you always need to be in the middle of things.

INT. DAIRY - DAY

Pop, grim, is looking at a large white vat as a small but steady stream of milk spits from a crack along the bottom rim and runs across the cement floor to a drain.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

The family and Charlie gather at the table. Douglas has dried off. Pop is in the middle of a making a point.

POP

If we go buy a used vat somewhere we're just back where we were. This new high temperature steam system cuts the pasteurizing time from minutes to seconds. We'd have open dairy time and could put up milk for Echo and Waveney real cheap. They save having a dairy and we make money.

THE BOSS

But this means more borrowing.

HARRY

(takes a sip of beer)  
Well, let's see what our youngest farmer says.

EDIE

Harry? Are you all right?

Douglas looks over at his father who looks distant-eyed.

HARRY

I'm fine, thank you.

DOUGLAS

We have to do something.

THE BOSS

But more borrowing? The tractor, new trucks.

POP  
Do we have a choice?

Everyone mutters agreement.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Pop exits a Hillcrest pickup and walks to a waiting Boss. He hands her two sheafs of papers.

POP  
Signed sealed and delivered! We'll  
be bottling milk for both Waveney  
and Echo.

The Boss looks at the papers.

THE BOSS  
This could do it. We just need a  
couple breaks.

EXT. RACELAND - DAY

Douglas sits in Mr. Macomber's convertible.

MR. MACOMBER  
So how is your new deal with the  
other dairies working out?

DOUGLAS  
The Boss sure is happy. She says  
it's bringing in good money. But  
they're getting hit same as we are.

MR. MACOMBER  
You watch, I suspect Grace will be  
on the hunt.

EXT. BLOOD'S LAND - DAY

Two pickups are parked at the edge. Douglas, his cousins, Charlie, and Harry all lug baskets of tomatoes to the trucks. Laura sits to the side.

CHARLIE  
That looks like the last of them.

The group mumbles assent. Laura walks up carrying a bag. She reaches inside and takes out a small stone and hands it to Charlie. It's painted to look like a tomato. She hands one to everyone.

DOUGLAS

Well at least you did something.

LAURA

Shut up. I sure as hell wasn't going to get green hands and smell all tomatoes like you!

Smiles all around, the group breaks up and heads away.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Douglas and Harry sit at the big round table. A pile of money, in neat stacks, sits next to the Svea cookie tin. Harry smiles and sets a beer bottle down next to two others.

HARRY

So you think you're some farmer. But remember this. I taught you everything you know, but not everything I know!

Harry smiles, waits. No reaction from Douglas.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Look, this isn't going to solve our money problems, but you're a hell of a help. Like the Boss always says "little and often makes much." Now take your share for your car. Pop says he'll sell you the Jeep for \$50.

Harry puts his hand on Douglas's shoulder and leaves it there.

INT. FRAMINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Douglas takes his seat next to HOLLY SHEEHAN, a well-dressed, tanned, pretty girl his age. She smiles hello.

DOUGLAS

How do you like here in the east after six months? Sure not like California.

HOLLY

I like it OK. We're a GM family. GM means "gotta move." Listen, we're having a party Saturday to get acquainted with people. I'd like it if you could come.

Holly takes out a piece of paper and pencil and writes. A couple desks away, Laura sees them and abruptly switches desks with someone several rows behind Douglas.

Douglas frowns.

EXT. SHEEHAN HOME - NIGHT

A brick house with old-looking lanterns on the front. Douglas pulls up in his Jeep and sees a row of slick, mostly new cars. He parks at the end.

INT. SHEEHAN HOME - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

A party in full swing. Holly walks Douglas through a mixed group of partygoers, some adults, some college age and a few his age. She introduces him to ROGER and KYLE, both late teens, both country-club set.

HOLLY

I have to help my mother, you just mingle and meet people.

Douglas watches her go. He looks a little lost.

ROGER

Douglas, do you caddy at the club?

DOUGLAS

No, I work on my family's farm, Hillcrest Farm on Route 9.

ROGER

My dad tells me there's a new highway, the Massachusetts Turnpike, that's going to go through here somewhere. Governor Dever's going to make it happen. You know about it?

DOUGLAS

Oh, they've been talking about that for years.

KYLE

Are you a Sox fan?

DOUGLAS

I'd like to be, I've got a signed 1946 baseball, but so far the only baseball game I've ever gone to was the Braves.

(MORE)

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

There's a Civic League bus that takes you in and back for fifty cents.

KYLE

You better see the Braves while you can. Lou Perini, your big Framingham contractor who owns them, is moving them to Milwaukee next year.

Douglas looks around the room for Holly but she's nowhere.

EXT. GAS STATION - SAME NIGHT

Douglas fills up his Jeep. Grace Krill, wearing black and white, pulls in, gets out and walks to him.

GRACE

How was the party?

DOUGLAS

You seem to know everything.

GRACE

I saw your Jeep outside the Sheehans'. Douglas, your grandmother doesn't even want to hear what I'll offer. I've tried to tell her I'd be the only one who could get much out of the farm because of the steep hill. If you're as smart as they say, you'd tell her I'm right.

Grace sees Douglas' stony face, raises her arms in mock surrender and retreats to her car. She gives him a long stare while she gets into her car.

EXT. DAIRY LOADING DOCK - DAY

Harry is unloading his truck. He reaches under the canvas cover, pulls out a bottle in a paper bag and takes a drink. Douglas, brushing wood shavings off himself, arrives, sees him and makes a noise, pretending not to see the bottle.

HARRY

How was the party?

DOUGLAS

I had a good time.

HARRY

Your mother and the Boss sure  
fussed over you. Give me a hand,  
will you?

Douglas, yawning, starts to help.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Your mother here?

DOUGLAS

No, she's in town at her sister's.

HARRY

(to himself, sing-song)  
As usual, as usual, she's in town,  
in town.

Douglas helps him unload the truck.

EXT. FARM YARD - DAY

A black and white police car is in the farm yard. OFFICER MAHONEY, all six foot three of him, addresses Charlie and Douglas and holds a Cadillac hubcap.

OFFICER MAHONEY

I found this by your loading dock  
as I drove in. Mel Pennell in  
Saxonville said his Cadillac was  
missing a hubcap and I thought I  
might know where to find it. I told  
you, Charlie, next time and back  
you go to Lyman School. I don't  
want to take you away from here,  
but this is it.

DOUGLAS

Charlie didn't take that. I was  
striking on that route and found it  
in the middle of the street.

OFFICER MAHONEY

(scowling)  
Oh, you did?

DOUGLAS

Yes.

OFFICER MAHONEY

(deep sigh)  
Well, I don't believe you, but I  
can't prove otherwise.

(MORE)

OFFICER MAHONEY (CONT'D)

I'll bring this back to Mel. But Charlie, I won't take any excuse next time, not any! Got it?

CHARLIE

Yes sir.

Officer Mahoney stops in front of Douglas, taps him on the chest, and shakes his head slowly, and walks to his cruiser.

INT. WELLWORTH SODA SHOP - DAY

Douglas and his friend BILLY DYAN, 16, perfect blond DA, are sitting at the counter, being served by BYRON, 40s Greek, the counterman, when three swarthy young men wearing crisp white shirts enter, move to the back, and slip into a booth. Billy looks at Douglas.

DOUGLAS

Puerto Ricans. Old man Thompson's given up the dairy business and gone over to growing all vegetables. He's brought nine or ten up. It's just for the summer.

BYRON

Bullshit! They ain't ever gonna want to go back to Puerto Rico. You'll see! They took over a whole block on Irving Street. They already got their own store. There'll be more and more. I'm telling you Framingham's not gonna be the same!

Douglas stares at the three Puerto Ricans while the noises of the soda shop swirl around them. The clock on the wall chimes. Douglas slurps down his soda.

BILLY

Don't tell me it's chore time.

DOUGLAS

Gotta go.

BILLY

Maybe your grandpa should hire some of those guys.

DOUGLAS

I asked. He said, "I hardly learned English, I'm not going to try to learn Spanish."

## INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - EVENING

The family, including Charlie, listen to Mr. Engman, the Department of Agriculture man who had presented them with the "A" award. He has a portfolio open before him. He passes out a packet of papers to everyone.

MR. ENGMAN

What I've given you is a summary of my three days at Hillcrest. As you see I start off with, "You have a fine farm." And you do. As you read further you'll see that's not enough to guarantee your future.

Everyone reads the report.

MR. ENGMAN (CONT'D)

Your land is good, your herd is top notch, and your dairy is efficient, especially by putting up milk for others. But today it's tough for the small family way of farming. It's "get big or get out." I'm advising you to keep after customers in the new developments, grow your tomatoes and corn, and by all means keep your costs down. Don't carry any excess labor.

(pauses)

But that's just going to keep you treading water. I wish I could tell you how to get bigger. And you already know your debt load is heavy - all the new trucks and machinery, the new dairy equipment.

The Boss looks at everyone.

MR. ENGMAN (CONT'D)

You're facing quite a challenge. With some luck you can hold on for the time being. I'm sorry I don't have better news.

## INT. MAIN BARN - DAY

Douglas absently cleans up the grain room. Charlie, in khaki pants and blue dress shirt, taps him on the shoulder.

CHARLIE

They work you like a mule.



DOUGLAS

What are you dressed like that for?

CHARLIE

I gotta take off.

Douglas opens his mouth.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You heard Engman yesterday. Things don't look so good. He says cut costs. I'm a cost. And Officer Mahoney's gonna be back, you know that. But I want to tell you two things before I go. First, I hate to leave.

Douglas can't work out what to say.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You and your family have been good to me. I know my leaving is going to make more work for you, and I'm sorry about that. The second thing is this. You think you're pretty smart, and you are, but you haven't seen enough yet. You're going to make mistakes. You're dumb as a box of rocks when it comes to people. You have no idea about the bad people out in the world. I've tried to toughen you up, but I think you'll just have to learn for yourself.

DOUGLAS

Where are you going to go?

CHARLIE

Florida. It's nice there.

Charlie gives Douglas a playful slap, turns and leaves.

EXT. LAURA'S COTTAGE - DAY

Douglas rides Gypsy toward Laura's cottage only to see Laura riding off with another TEEN BOY and holding hands. He turns and rides for home.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

The trees have fall colors. Harry and Edie square off beside Harry's loaded milk truck while Douglas steps between them. The Boss watches from the steps.

EDIE

I suppose you're going to take this boy out with you while you drive around drinking!

HARRY

Douglas hasn't been a boy since the war. We'll be fine. No drinking.

Douglas heads for the truck.

EDIE

Don't tell me you aren't drinking!

The Boss steps in and quiets things down. She guides Edie away and then calls Douglas aside. She hands him a dime.

THE BOSS

You take this and if he gets to drinking you call me and I'll have Pop come and collect you.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Harry stops the truck in front of a restaurant and carries in some milk. He stays inside longer than needed just to make a delivery. Douglas, restless, hums a song.

EXT. ITALIAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Harry pulls the truck into a narrow lane. Douglas watches as an OLD MAN brings out a gallon of purple wine. Harry gets out and goes to the man. The man sees Douglas and puts the wine down, shaking his head no. Harry returns to the truck and sags behind the wheel.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Harry is awake, but slumped behind the wheel. Douglas is making all the doorstep deliveries now. He hands milk to Mrs. Watkins, who sees Harry's condition. She gives Douglas a look of sympathy. After she goes inside, Douglas digs out the dime and considers it, but puts it away.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Douglas is now driving. Harry tries to talk with him, but Douglas remains silent.

HARRY

(distant-eyed again)

It's all gone to hell since the war, Douglas, all gone to shit. All of it. The milk business, in debt up to our ass, then the vat cracks, now a tornado. Just piles on. And look at you. Look at you.

He reaches out to stroke Douglas' hair. Douglas stares straight ahead. Harry puts an arm around him.

HARRY (CONT'D)

We should go fishing.

Harry passes out.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Edie kicks the piles of raked leaves. She's pissed.

Harry stumbles out of the truck and stands with his head bent down. Douglas comes to stand between them. The Boss descends the steps.

EDIE

Goddamn it, Harry. That's it. I'm not taking any more of this. I'm taking the boys and moving to town.

Harry charges forward to engage but not in a threatening way.

HARRY

As usual, as usual in town. She's in town,

EDIE

Anywhere!

Harry moves to embrace her but she pulls free. The Boss and Douglas form a barrier between them.

THE BOSS

Edie, maybe it's good for you to take Ken and move to town for a while. Douglas will be fine here, don't you worry.

EDIE

So he can keep working all hours  
while Harry drinks?

THE BOSS

We'll take care of him.

EDIE

I married in with farmers, but he  
didn't choose to be born to  
farmers. He's my baby.

DOUGLAS

It's OK. I want to stay.

Eddie marches into the house. The Boss turns to Harry.

THE BOSS

I don't know what's gotten into  
you, Harry. You took a hell of a  
chance with Douglas in the truck  
and you sure weren't any help to  
the business! Get inside and sleep  
it off.

Harry looks at Douglas, slumps and walks into the house.  
Douglas follows him, close behind.

INT. HARRY'S AND EDIE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Douglas tucks Harry in bed in a room that looks like it's  
full of history and tradition, with framed photos of his  
parents on the dresser, including the one Janice took of the  
whole family in the farm yard at a happier time.

Eddie packs her suitcase. Ken watches. Harry is dead to the  
world. Ken just observes everything with a calm expression.

DOUGLAS

Does this mean you two are getting  
a divorce?

EDIE

We'll just have to see how things  
go. Don't you worry.

Eddie and Ken hug Douglas and leave.

Douglas sits on the bed next to Harry.

Harry snores. Douglas watches him.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Douglas parts through the bushes and gets to the river to find Laura standing there, fishing. They nod at each other and each offers a small smile and a wave.

DOUGLAS

So where's your new riding partner?

LAURA

I guess I could ask about your rich girlfriend.

They stand still for a moment, then Laura puts down her fishing rod and walks to Douglas.

She throws her arms around his neck. He holds her waist and they kiss. Beautiful, tender, awkward first kiss.

They stay embraced for a short time, then Laura holds him at arm's length.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Something's wrong, I know it.

DOUGLAS

Looks like my mother and father are getting a divorce.

LAURA

Oh, damn!

DOUGLAS

I didn't want to face it. I've seen it coming. Ever since he came back from the war.

(he paces around)

And my mother buying stuff on credit and going to work, I just knew that was wrong. It's like they had been locked up during the war and now they're out and forgot how to behave.

He picks up a rock and flings it as hard as he can, and then another.

EXT. RACELAND - DAY

Douglas sits with Mr. Macomber in his car.

MR. MACOMBER

You need to understand your parents, Douglas. They grew up in the scarcity of the depression and the pressure of the war. Now, like lots of others, with the war over and things booming, they have too many easy choices. They're ill-prepared for abundance, and they've vacated self-restraint.

He looks Douglas in the eye.

MR. MACOMBER CONT'D)

War can affect people far from the battlefield.

Douglas stares straight ahead, lost in thought.

EXT. FRAMINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

School is just out. Students stream down the steps, some stopping to light cigarettes, some rushing to their cars. Rock and roll music coming from car radios quickly fills the air along with the sound of custom hot rod muffler growls.

Douglas heads to the Jeep with Laura. Two boys, LEE, captain of the football team with a letter sweater, and EDDIE, the star hockey player with a letter sweater, are rushing through the crowd to catch up with Douglas. They do.

LEE

Doug, got a minute?

Douglas tries not to react to such in-crowders.

DOUGLAS

Sure.

They all walk along.

EDDIE

Do you ever see any pheasant or quail on your farm out there?

DOUGLAS

Oh, yeah, plenty. I use a dirt road to feed some heifers at a gate and my grain spills attract all kinds of birds. It's called Brewer Road.

LEE

Any chance you could get your family to let us hunt there?

DOUGLAS

You can hunt there.

EDDIE

Just like that? You're the boss?

Douglas shrugs.

DOUGLAS

I guess.

LEE

(to Laura)

Can't you get this guy to stick around once in a while? Cruise that cool Jeep around?

LAURA

Oh, he thinks he's indispensable at Hillcrest Farm.

Eddie and Lee laugh, stop, say their thanks and move off. The chattering crowd spills around them. The song "Rock Around the Clock" blares, the cars "dig out." Douglas and Laura share a look and a laugh.

LAURA (CONT'D)

They don't know you're not the cruising around type.

DOUGLAS

Who knows? Maybe I could learn.

EXT. SUNSHINE DAIRY - EVENING

Douglas and Laura, in the Jeep, pull into the parking lot of an ice cream stand and park. The sign overhead and on the building reads "Sunshine Dairy! Ice Cream-Hot Dogs-Hamburgers." They enter and then come out each holding an ice cream cone.

They pass a car full of in-crowd students including Lee and Eddie. They sit in the Jeep and eat and talk. Laura lays a newspaper across her lap.

LAURA

What do you hear from your parents?

DOUGLAS

My mother and Ken fit right in with her family in town. She has an apartment. I stay there some nights. My father started a milk delivery business in Worcester. I went up and went on one of his routes with him. Seems pretty solid to me. He's got a girlfriend and my mother has a boyfriend. I guess they're getting on with new lives for themselves.

LAURA

Everything is changing. My father just mopes around now without my mother or the farm to take care of.

Laura Spreads open her newspaper.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Did you hear about poor Jim Cowell? Look, here's a picture. Front page. Got arrested waving around a gun out in front of his house. It was just a damned war souvenir.

DOUGLAS

I heard. Poor Jim is right. First he gets shot up and ends up using a crutch, then he can't get a job while he watches his wife making big money. I thought we were all supposed to "get back to normal."

They go quiet for a time.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Maybe we should have one of these.

LAURA

One of what?

DOUGLAS

An ice cream stand. We're in a good location right on Route 9, plenty of traffic. The Shoppers World mall is opening and that means even more traffic. We could get our milk customers to come out. Kids all have cars now. Look at this place, it's full of cars. We need to do something big. Why not this?



INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Empty dishes and glasses litter the table. Pop picks up everything, restless, while Douglas shows everyone a sketch of an ice cream and hamburger stand and pitches his reasons for its success.

THE BOSS

Your idea looks good, Douglas, but even using the money from the tomatoes it'll mean borrowing about up to our limit.

POP

You see these new drive-in places popping up all over. People really like them.

Much muted discussion among the family as they reach consensus. The radio plays and drowns it out.

POP (CONT'D)

OK, then. I guess we can start as soon as the last hay is in.

(smiling)

Because Douglas is half-Italian, he should be the chief block layer.

DOUGLAS

How hard can it be to build an ice cream stand?

The Boss stares at a stack of the farm's bills and nods.

EXT. ICE CREAM STAND - CONTINUOUS

The scene is a series of images. Pop, Douglas and the Boss direct a construction crew. Douglas, big and strong, runs around as general gofer. Douglas holds nails for the carpenter. He helps the plumber. He lays cement blocks. Douglas takes delivery of everything needed for a soda fountain.

He and Pop erect a sign "Hillcrest Farm -- Ice Cream, Hot Dogs, Hamburgers."

EXT. ICE CREAM STAND - NIGHT

Douglas retouches the paint on the sign.

Laura drives her truck onto the construction site and leans out the window watching Douglas work, then drives off without talking to him.

Pop sees her drive off. He moves away from the finished building, which seems to glow with a dreamy light.

POP

You and Laura Rawlings. You're sure on again-off again. Some days like pages in a book and then far off as never.

Douglas throws a shrug at Pop and looks at Laura's retreating truck.

INT. FRAMINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Douglas walks with Laura, still in silence. Students, including Billy, file in. A GIRL STUDENT wearing a blue arm band cuts across the flow and takes Douglas by the arm.

GIRL STUDENT

The Vice-Principal wants to see you right now.

DOUGLAS

What about?

The student shrugs and moves away, making a dash for her class.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

(to Laura)

Now what?

INT. VICE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

A typical school office, lots of bookshelves, two flags, and a picture of President Eisenhower. VICE-PRINCIPAL MARTIN, 50s, glasses and a worldly look, sits behind his desk. Across from him, MR. LANDER, white hair, glasses, inspects Douglas's record for the tenth time.

VICE-PRINCIPAL MARTIN

How did we miss this?

MR. LANDER

These things happen.

VICE-PRINCIPAL MARTIN

Not in my school. The Peterson boy scored in the top five percent in everything. And we have him in general education and vocational.

MR. LANDER

All these changes with new students coming in so late in the school year, juniors and seniors moving here with GM...

VICE-PRINCIPAL MARTIN

What can we do for him?

MR. LANDER

The Navy NROTC program. If he goes for it, we still have some time, not much, but some.

A soft knock and Douglas opens the door.

VICE-PRINCIPAL MARTIN

Douglas, come in. This is Mr. Lander. Mr. Lander helps the school and students with college admissions. Please sit down.

Douglas sits. Puzzled. Still as death. Vice Principal Martin drops a sheaf of papers on the desk between them.

VICE-PRINCIPAL MARTIN

Douglas, these are your results of the state's big senior year exam. I'll be honest with you, they took us by surprise.

DOUGLAS

I can explain...

VICE-PRINCIPAL MARTIN

No, WE owe YOU an explanation, and we don't have one. Your scores are exceptionally high. We've had you on the general education track.

DOUGLAS

The farm kid track.

Douglas accepts a sheaf of papers and leafs through them. He looks up, stunned.

VICE-PRINCIPAL MARTIN

Yes, the farm kid track. These results say we should have had you preparing for college. You deserve an apology.

Mr. Landers opens a folder he has been holding and picks out a brochure. A 1950s-era Navy recruiting image graces the brochure cover.

MR. LANDER

You also deserve some help in fixing the situation.

DOUGLAS

(looking from one to the other)

Kind of late, isn't it?

MR. LANDER

Maybe not. We know you're working on your family's farm, but that's far from a certain future these days. Take a look at this brochure. The Navy offers a four-year scholarship in exchange for four years of service. It's called the Navy Reserve Officer Training Corp program, NROTC. Miss Hunter tells us you've expressed interest in the Navy.

VICE-PRINCIPAL MARTIN

There's still some time if you move fast. Mr. Lander was able to get you a slot for the qualifying exams in Boston next week.

DOUGLAS

(doubtful)

What do I need to do?

MR. LANDER

There's this written test, then, if you pass it, an interview, then we apply to colleges.

DOUGLAS

I'm not in great shape to do that.

MR. LANDER

You'll be OK. Most colleges accept the Navy's screening and they're only too happy to get four years of Navy money. Take the application forms and fly out of here. If you have any questions, call me.

Douglas picks up Mr. Lander's business card and the forms and nods thank you.

EXT. BOSTON NAVY CENTER - DAY - SNOWING

Douglas gets out of his Jeep, looks around at the cityscape, tugs at his mackinaw and trudges through a steady fresh snowfall making his way into the large stone building.

INT. BOSTON NAVY CENTER - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Douglas gets directions from the reception desk and walks, confident, down the hall, past SAILORS and offices with sailors clustered around desks.

Douglas walks into an empty classroom. A YOUNG SAILOR in dress blues enters carrying a box lunch, a folder and pencils. The two nod hello.

YOUNG SAILOR

You're the only one who made it through the snow, so sit anywhere. You have two hours to take the first part of the test. Then a break for lunch. That's when I'll come back. Then the second part. They say no time limit on that one. You just put the papers on the desk here and leave.

Douglas opens the folder and scans the test questions for the first part of the test. Mostly multiple-choice. He sits at his desk and takes up a pencil. The Young Sailor points to the clock.

YOUNG SAILOR (CONT'D)

Start now.

EXT. SNOWY BOSTON STREETS - LATE AFTERNOON

Some time later, Douglas wheels the Jeep through now heavier snow on the near empty Boston streets, often in exaggerated steering motions.

INT. DOUGLAS'S JEEP

Douglas speaks call signs into an imaginary microphone.

DOUGLAS

This is Navy aircraft number 1  
returning to carrier. Over.

INT. VICE-PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Douglas enters carrying two large envelopes and bumps into a  
SULKY DELINQUENT KID, who storms out of the vice-principal's  
office. Vice-Principal Martin looks relieved to see Douglas.

VICE-PRINCIPAL MARTIN

What have you got there?

DOUGLAS

Two big surprises. Boston College  
and Notre Dame say that if I get  
accepted by the Navy, they have a  
spot for me. How did they know  
about me?

Vice-Principal Martin jumps up and shakes Douglas's hand.  
Excited.

VICE-PRINCIPAL MARTIN

I've been hoping for this. It's  
great news, Douglas! It means you  
passed. Here's what happens. The  
Navy notifies their NROTC colleges  
when an applicant passes the  
written exam. If a school likes  
what they see, they send out a  
conditional acceptance, like the  
ones you got.

DOUGLAS

I'm still not sure about all this.  
I've got the farm...

VICE-PRINCIPAL MARTIN

Think about this instead - four  
years, full scholarship and \$400 a  
month pay! You get to serve as a  
naval officer. You have nothing to  
lose. All you need now is to go in  
for an interview.

DOUGLAS

What's that going to be like?

VICE-PRINCIPAL MARTIN  
 Oh, they'll ask you about your  
 schoolwork and your interests.

DOUGLAS  
 That's it?

VICE-PRINCIPAL MARTIN  
 Just you be sure and tell them how  
 hard you work on the farm and about  
 how you go all out to bring in more  
 business. Shows your initiative.  
 I'll have Mr. Lander work with you.  
 You'll do fine. Just be honest.

INT. FRAMINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Douglas and Laura walk to class among the noisy crowd.

LAURA  
 And exactly why would the Navy give  
 you all this? Because you're God's  
 gift to farming? I wouldn't pack  
 yet. I think I'll have you around  
 for a while.

DOUGLAS  
 Look, I passed those tests that  
 were supposed to be so hard. All  
 that's left is somebody asking me a  
 few questions. My parents and the  
 Boss won't need to worry about me  
 now no matter what happens to the  
 farm.

LAURA  
 Don't be a smartass. You make it  
 sound like it's a fact already.

Douglas shrugs.

Billy Dyan and a bunch of boys swagger by in leather jackets.

DOUGLAS  
 So what about you? What are you  
 going to do?

LAURA  
 I'll stay here. Look after Dad  
 some. Dr. Winter said he'd teach me  
 how to be his dental assistant.

(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)

Maybe I'll just be hanging around as a lonely Navy sweetheart, but maybe not - you could still end up right here, you know.

DOUGLAS

I'm beginning to wonder if there's going to be any "right here." This ice cream stand better pay off.

EXT. ICE CREAM STAND - DAY

The handsome white building is festooned with flags and balloons. A "Grand Opening" sign marks the entrance on Route 9. The parking lot looks comfortably full and people are coming and going to the serving windows. Mr. Rawlings, Al Lawson, Mr. Brewer, Lee, Eddie, Vice-Principal Martin and others line up. Douglas greets everyone in line.

Cousins John and Ronny serve ice cream.

The Boss and Pop stare down at the sight from the farmyard.

POP

This looks like it's going to work out.

THE BOSS

We damned sure need it.

The scene is a series of images. Pop and the Boss sampling ice cream. Douglas working (a bit clumsily) serving burgers, Laura handing a cone to a little girl, Billy Dyan cruising the parking lot where he sees lines of customers. Ronny, then John serving customers, Laura replenishing ice cream coolers. The cash register RINGS!

EXT. ICE CREAM STAND - NIGHT

Near closing time. The parking lot empties out slowly and the line thins out. Grace Krill drives in, finishes a cigarette, gets out and approaches the window where Douglas is serving.

GRACE

Well, Douglas, business looks pretty good.

DOUGLAS

(smiling)

If you build a development near here the people will have a nice place to get ice cream.



Grace smiles in spite of herself.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Here, have an ice cream cone on me!

Grace accepts the cone and leaves. Laura comes to Douglas's side.

LAURA

I think that's the first time  
you've ever smiled at her.

DOUGLAS

First time I've had anything to  
smile about.

EXT. ICE CREAM STAND - DAY

SUPER: "TWO MONTHS LATER"

The parking lot is nearly empty. Only Douglas works. He hustles between grilling hamburgers (he burns his hand) and serving ice cream to the few customers who straggle to the window. As the last customer leaves, he turns out the lights and sits with his head in his hands. He has a bandage on his burned hand. He's crushed.

EXT. RACELAND - DAY

Douglas and Mr. Macomber sit in the convertible under a willow

MR. MACOMBER

What's happened to you is that  
development took root five miles to  
your east, too far from you to be  
of any benefit. Shoppers World  
attracted lots of businesses that  
want to take advantage of the mall  
traffic.

Mr. Macomber studies Douglas.

MR. MACOMBER (CONT'D)

What you didn't consider is that  
some of those businesses would be  
restaurants including that new car  
hop where the girls serve you on  
roller skates.

DOUGLAS

So, I made a mistake?

MR. MACOMBER

Well, for now, yes. Being so eager and working this on your own, you got too far out ahead of things. Your reach sort of exceeded your grasp. It was so important to you to try and save your farm that you couldn't see these changes.

(he clasps Douglas' shoulder)

This is disappointing, I know, but development will be coming this way, I can guarantee that. Just try to hang on.

DOUGLAS

I hope we can.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

The Boss, now leaning on a cane, bursts out of the house waving an envelope.

THE BOSS

Douglas! Douglas! Pop!

Douglas emerges from the barn, Pop getting in his way, is in a mad dash from the dairy.

THE BOSS (CONT'D)

It's from the Navy Department.

The Boss hands Douglas the envelope and watches intently as he opens it. Douglas reads it and hands it to her. Pop presses close to read it. Douglas just stands there.

THE BOSS (CONT'D)

Your interview is next week. We'll have one of the route men drive you so's you'll be nice and fresh.

DOUGLAS

I won't need that. I'll be fine with the Jeep.

While the family takes turns re-reading the letter, Grace Krill drives through the (now) empty ice cream stand parking lot and up into the farmyard. She rolls down the window and directs her words, sharply, to Douglas.

GRACE

If I get to put a nice development here you and that stand might get back some business.

(to the Boss)

Give me a call when you're ready to talk.

DOUGLAS

You'll wait a long time, Grace.

GRACE

(softly)

Your father's gone, Pop's not getting any younger. You can't stop progress.

Grace slowly drives away. Douglas crushes the letter from the Navy.

EXT. RACELAND - DAY

Douglas leans against Mr. Macomber's car, a fishing rod in his hand. Mr. Macomber sits in the driver's seat holding the letter from the Navy.

MR. MACOMBER

This is wonderful news, Douglas. You must feel mighty good.

DOUGLAS

I don't know what I feel. I'd love to go to college and be a Navy pilot, but I can't let anything happen to Hillcrest Farm.

MR. MACOMBER

Listen to me. You're doing about as much as anyone can to hang onto that farm. But you can't tell what's going to happen, so you best go like blazes for that scholarship. The way things are today you could end up choosing between the farm and college...

DOUGLAS

(interrupting)

Not as long as the farm's there!

MR. MACOMBER

(voice raised)

Or, more likely, you could wind up with no choices at all. In banking we say don't go borrowing trouble, there's plenty of it for free. You just keep playing all your cards.

INT. MILITARY OFFICE - DAY

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER (LCDR) JOHN SCOTT, 32, tall and blond, is seated behind a clean desk under crossed flags, in full dress blues with gold naval aviator wings shining on his chest. His assistant, YEOMAN WALTER NEVINS, 21 is handing him paperwork.

LCDR SCOTT

Who's next, Nevins?

YEOMAN NEVINS

Peterson, Douglas, that farm boy from Framingham, late NROTC applicant. Top scores.

LCDR SCOTT

Bring him in.

Douglas, wearing a dark jacket and white shirt, enters, shakes hands with LCDR Scott, who motions him to sit. Yeoman Nevins retreats to a corner to take notes.

LCDR SCOTT (CONT'D)

(very warm smile)

From the looks of these test scores we're lucky to have you this late in the process. Just so you know, my interviews are very short and to the point. I already know you're bright enough, so let's begin with the easy one. Why do you want to be a naval officer?

Douglas stares at LCDR Scott's wings.

DOUGLAS

I want to serve in the Navy and be a pilot, like you. I just always have. I see Navy pilots flying off carriers in the movies. I see pictures in Life magazine. It's like a dream for me. I know I'd be good at it.

LCDR SCOTT

That answers that for me! Now, are you good at math and science? Do you play sports?

DOUGLAS

I do OK at science, and so-so at math. I don't play sports because I work on my family's dairy farm in Framingham. I help out extra by growing tomatoes and selling corn in town.

LCDR SCOTT

Growing tomatoes. Sounds like hard work. Tell me about your science courses.

DOUGLAS

(brightens up)

I did do OK with my senior year science project. I got the idea because the tomatoes ripen so fast. What I did was...

Their voices fade as the noises of the city rise outside the window and muffle the interview. The noises of the city continue for a time and fade. LCDR Scott gets up and shakes Douglas's hand, with another pleasant smile.

LCDR SCOTT

Thank you for coming out, Douglas. You're a fine young man and a real credit to your family. You'll be hearing from me within a week.

DOUGLAS

Thank you, sir.

LCDR Scott maintains his pleasant smile. Douglas walks out. LCDR Scott glances at Nevins.

LCDR SCOTT

Impressions?

YEOMAN NEVINS

He seems damned competent.

LCDR SCOTT

But is he Navy? Tell me the truth.

EXT. HAY FIELD - DAY

Pop pulls into the field where Douglas is getting ready to mow, gets out and leans against the fender. Douglas stops, curious, and walks to Pop.

DOUGLAS

What's up?

POP

I've been thinking on Engman's "get big or get out" idea. Maybe we should think about getting out. Selling to a bigger dairy.

DOUGLAS

(startled, shifts back and forth)

What would we do if we got out?

POP

The Boss and I would head to Maine, for sure. Your father is pretty well set on his own. There'd be money for you to go to school.

DOUGLAS

The Navy...

Pop tousles Douglas's hair the way Harry does.

POP

It's good to have options.

DOUGLAS

And who would we sell out to?

POP

Henry Houghton. He's big and he's got the money. It's a good fit for him with our new dairy and trucks. We're right on the edge of his delivery territory.

DOUGLAS

What if he's not interested?

POP

Then we look at "get big". I've started to feel out Echo and Waveney and they're feeling the same pinch we are. They'd sell if the price was anywhere reasonable.

(MORE)

POP (CONT'D)  
But I'm going to call Old Man  
Houghton first.

DOUGLAS  
And what about the Boss?

POP  
I want to hear what Henry has to  
say first. You OK with that?

Douglas looks down and heads back to his mowing.

EXT. FARM GARAGE - EVENING

Pop approaches Douglas who is under a hanging light working  
on the baler. He waits for Douglas's full attention before he  
talks.

POP  
I called Henry Houghton.

DOUGLAS  
And?

POP  
He has no interest in tractors and  
cow shit, to use his words. He just  
processes now. He did say he'd  
meet. He's curious about our buying  
Echo and Waveney.

Douglas tosses his wrench on a bench and wipes his hands.

DOUGLAS  
It's something, I guess.

INT. MEYER GORDON'S CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Douglas, the Boss and Pop gather, seated, around a long,  
wooden table that holds a deep glow. At the head of the table  
sits MEYER GORDON, 60s, the family lawyer, whose black suit  
matches his seriousness. Pop has the floor.

POP  
That's the plan. We get livestock  
and land to grow, Echo's and  
Waveney's customers and a good bit  
of equipment we can sell off. And,  
we can do all the processing  
without any additional cost.

MEYER GORDON

I've gone over the numbers and if you can get them for the price you have here it could work. But the question is how would you get the money? Your bank line is about tapped out.

POP

Houghton wasn't interested in buying us, but he's curious about Echo and Waveney. Douglas and I have a meeting with him to see if he wants to partner with us. He should be interested.

MEYER GORDON

Just take everything nice and slow. There's so much going on.

POP

We don't have the time to take things nice and slow, Meyer.

INT. HENRY HOUGHTON'S OFFICE - DAY

HENRY HOUGHTON, 60s, smoking a cigar, shirtsleeves and tie, big Boston milk processor, sits behind his desk looking deadpan at Pop and Douglas. A big glass window looks down into the processing plant with creamy milk flowing into bottles on a conveyor. The plant sends a soft rumbling sound through the office.

HENRY HOUGHTON

You wore out my telephone.

DOUGLAS

(full of enthusiasm)  
For good reason. This is a winner.

HENRY HOUGHTON

I can see what the deal is, but for me, like I told you, farms are just more tractors and cow shit. We only process now. And who the hell says you'll make it even if you do get those two farms?

POP

We're only asking for you to back us on the bank loan. If we make it, you make money.

(MORE)



POP (CONT'D)

If we don't, you get our nice new processing equipment and a share of some valuable real estate.

Douglas smiles a winning smile.

DOUGLAS

And you don't need to get near the tractors or cow shit, that's what we'll be doing.

Mr. Houghton goes thoughtful for a moment, then taps the folder on his desk.

MR. HOUGHTON

If you get Echo and Waveney to agree we can work a deal.

Pop and Douglas exit, Douglas with an obvious bounce in his step.

INT. GRACE KRILL'S OFFICE - DAY

A stark but expensively furnished office, done in tones of gray. Wartime volunteer award plaques hang on the walls. The centerpiece of the office is a grand oval table.

Two easels stand next to her desk. One holds a drawing of a subdivision with the name ECHO FARMS in large letters. The other has a similar drawing but labeled WAVENEY ESTATES.

Grace Krill, in her black and white outfit, collects papers from the desk then shakes hands with the ECHO REPRESENTATIVES and the WAVENEY REPS.

GRACE

I know this will work out wonderfully for all of us. We'll have land to build houses for the boys and you'll have a chance to move on to a new life.

She notices that they have been staring at a large photo of a handsome soldier in full dress uniform hanging amid her awards.

GRACE (CONT'D)

My brother Karl. I wish he could have been here to see this.

She offers the representatives cigarettes and lights one for herself.

## INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

The family of three, Pop, the Boss, and Douglas, dispiritedly pokes at their nearly finished meals. The mood matches the rainy weather whipping at the windows.

POP  
Waveney and Echo.

DOUGLAS  
Both. Goddamned Grace grabbed them both.

THE BOSS  
Oh, no!

DOUGLAS  
No surprise. She offered them an easy way out of their problems. And she offered them far more than we could get Old Man Houghton to back. And that's the end of our milk processing money.

THE BOSS  
What did Henry say?

POP  
Said he was sorry and if the worst came to it for us, he'd buy the dairy unit and bid on the trucks.

The Boss places both her hands, palms down on the table.

THE BOSS  
I'm afraid you can tell Henry that the worst has come to it for us. Without the money coming in from those two, the bank won't wait any longer. I figure with Grace's latest offer, and what we can get from an auction we can square up with the bank, but we won't have a lot to spare.

POP  
You want me to give her a call?

THE BOSS  
No, I'll do it. She'll expect that.

Douglas stands and rushes out of the room. The others sit in stunned silence.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Janice, the RFD lady, pulls into the yard and hands a registered letter to Douglas, who is caring for the Boss's gladiolas with Laura's help. Janice hesitates, but Douglas doesn't open it in front of her and she leaves.

The Boss, hearing the mail car, comes out into the yard, on her cane. Douglas opens the letter, reads, it, and drops his arms to his side and lowers his head. He hands the letter to Laura. She scans and then reads, then nearly shouts.

LAURA

This is bull! He tells you how wonderful you are and then turns you down. After he soft soaps you he says...

(reads)

"Your interests and experience are in farming. The Navy is looking for men who will pursue math and engineering and we need to use our limited scholarships for them. I'm sorry this didn't work out. I meant what I said, your family should be very proud of you. Good luck in the future." Oh, what a load of crap!

She offers the letter to the Boss, who is frozen to the spot.

LAURA (CONT'D)

That idiot Vice-Principal Martin told you to talk all about farming. He should have known what they were looking for. He should have told you. And where was that other idiot, the guidance counselor? Some damned guidance. It's just not right. You should write the goddamned Navy.

DOUGLAS

(attempts to smile)

It's all right. Besides, I didn't want to go to BC and Notre Dame is an all-boys school.

The telephone rings O.S. (Inside)

THE BOSS

That's probably Grace.

The Boss walks back into the house.

THE BOSS (O.C) (CONT'D)  
 Yes. Hello, Grace. I guess it's  
 time we talked.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Eddie sits with Douglas. She looks a lot more refreshed, but worried. Harry arrives in his milkman's uniform in time to hear the conversation.

EDIE  
 It's their loss, Douglas.

Harry sits down, grim.

HARRY  
 There's got to be something we can  
 do for you.

EDIE  
 Maybe try for other colleges?

DOUGLAS  
 No, it's too late for that. I  
 missed the brass ring, plain and  
 simple as that. And now I have to  
 figure out how to keep Grace Krill  
 away.

The three clasp hands in the middle of the table. Douglas pulls out the signed 1946 Red Sox baseball.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)  
 I thought of selling this to get  
 some money for the farm.

HARRY  
 Hang on to it.

INT. BANKER'S OFFICE - DAY

The Boss and Pop sit at a small conference table across from MR. WINCHELL, the banker. Everyone is antsy.

MR. WINCHELL  
 Myrtle, Enoch, I've asked you here  
 today because I'm trying to avoid a  
 bad situation.

The Boss and Pop pass dark looks.

MR. WINCHELL (CONT'D)

The bank has enjoyed Hillcrest's business since you first came to town - good customer, no problems until the war. We all had problems during the war, so we worked to see you through it.

(he stiffens his posture)

Since then though, we've talked with you several times about Hillcrest falling behind on your loans. Now it's reached a point where something needs to be done.

The room goes still.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - AFTERNOON

Douglas is driving his Jeep on a narrow dirt road being slapped by vines and bushes. Scratch alternately sits beside him and jumps out to run along side, darting in and out of the brush. A fishing rod hangs out the back.

After a time the brush on the right hand side yields an opening to the river. Douglas stops.

DOUGLAS

(to Scratch)

I know it's out of the way, fella, but this is a great spot to get away.

Douglas gets out of the Jeep and surveys the river. He sees the circle of a fish rise.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

See! They're waiting for us!

Douglas rigs his rod and casts to the rising fish, which hits and Douglas lands him. Scratch pokes his nose onto the fish.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Here, nudge him back in.

Scratch paws at the fish and gets it into the water.

Time cut as Douglas catches several fish. The afternoon wanes into evening and into dusk.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

All right, fella, time to go.

He and Scratch make their way to the Jeep. Douglas tries to start it, but it won't start. He lifts the hood and checks all the connections, but it won't start. He ticks the battery with the key. Nothing.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)  
Dead battery, Scratch. We've got a long walk.

EXT. SAME DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Douglas and Scratch are walking, heavy-legged, now. After some long time they come to a smooth farm road and make the turn. Douglas can now see the farmyard lights.

DOUGLAS  
It's gotta be after midnight.  
Everybody will be out looking for me, going crazy. Maybe even call the police! I should've told them where I was going.

They come up into...

EXT. FARMYARD - NIGHT

A quiet farmyard. The only sounds are the low mutterings and night movements of the cows. All the trucks and cars are in place. He touches the hoods -- they're cold.

DOUGLAS  
Cold. Look at that, Scratch. My mother thinks I'm here and the Boss and Pop think I'm in town.

He goes into the barn, breaks open a bale of hay and collapses on it.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)  
Nobody's looking for me anymore.

Scratch runs up and sniffs the hay, then crawls up on it to be with Douglas.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Douglas drags himself toward the kitchen. He stops dead when he sees Pop and the Boss waiting for him.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)  
What's going on?

THE BOSS

You need to be coming with us to meet with Grace Krill. We've tried to keep you out of some things so as not to upset you and interfere with your school work.

Douglas rummages in the refrigerator, it's barer than before.

THE BOSS (CONT'D)

You need to listen.

Douglas takes his time.

THE BOSS (CONT'D)

Listen!

Douglas slams the refrigerator door.

THE BOSS (CONT'D)

The time has come for you to pitch in with this. We've met with the bank and this is the path we need to follow.

DOUGLAS

(shouting)

Grace Krill? Jesus Christ! And you're just now telling me? She's the one that put us in this hole by buying Echo and Waveney. She knew we needed their business. She's squeezing us. There has to be another way!

Pop puts his hand on Douglas' shoulder.

POP

Sometimes there is no other way.

INT. GRACE KRILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Seated at the grand oval table are the downhearted Peterson family and their lawyer, Meyer Gordon. Grace, in black and white, looks at each one of them before beginning. The picture on the wall of Karl Krill, resplendent in his soldier's uniform watches everything.

GRACE

I know - no, maybe I don't know - how hard this is for you.

(MORE)

GRACE (CONT'D)

But please understand that this is the best offer I can set in front of you. Before he went into the Army, Karl looked at how many lots we could put in - property contours, road requirements, wetlands, perc tests. I've re-looked at everything. I know you and Mr. Gordon have checked out the going prices for land like this and I hope you can see that the offer is fair. I really hope we can move along to an agreement.

THE BOSS

We can't see how your price is fair at all for 150 acres. We're here to see that you put on a major increase before we can move along. For God's sake, Grace, we're right on Route 9, everything is booming.

GRACE

I understand. The location is wonderful and you do have 150 acres. But, a third of those acres is nothing but a steep hill.

THE BOSS

You know what we owe the bank.

Douglas can't look away from the picture of Karl Krill.

DOUGLAS

She knows.

GRACE

We've done what we can to use some of that hill, but it's just not usable for building lots.

THE BOSS

Even so, your offer barely covers our debt.

DOUGLAS

(still angry)

We might as well stay on as long as we can and just let the bank take it. Might get another year or two before we have to do anything. Maybe we'll get another offer.



GRACE

No, no! You really need to act ahead of the market, right now. Look, I'll be willing to let you stay on for six months while you wind down. I can advance you some cash ahead of the closing if you need it. I'll even cover your auction expenses. You keep every penny of what you get for your livestock, trucks, and machinery. What do you say?

Meyer Gordon nods to the family.

POP

Yah, we'll go to think about this.

GRACE

Please do it quickly. I have other farms I'm talking to and I won't promise my offer will be on the table for long.

Douglas walks out of the room and slams the door.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

The Boss is seated, reading, chocolates at her side, listening to Kate Smith. She has her head down. Pop enters.

POP

Meyer Gordon called. Grace Krill is ready with an offer. He set it up for her office tomorrow afternoon.

The Boss gets up, walks to the record player and turns up the volume. The song is "September Song."

Pop moves to stand beside her and put his arms around her. She stares out the window into the farmyard. She sees Douglas working at a mundane chore and allows a small stream of tears to flow.

Pop holds her and she cries harder.

EXT. RACELAND - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Douglas arrives in his Jeep to find cars parked all along the gravel drives. Music is coming from a big green and white tent that's been erected on the infield of Mr. Macomber's racetrack. Colored balloons flutter overhead

He angles a spot to turn and sees Mr. Macomber standing at the opening of the tent motioning to him. Douglas leaves the Jeep and joins Mr. Macomber.

MR. MACOMBER

Douglas, sorry to mess up your fishing. We're having a celebration, the Boston Pops are tuning their instruments. How have you been?

DOUGLAS

(hesitates)

It looks as though we're done farming. We're going to have to sell Hillcrest to Grace Krill. The papers are all drawn up.

Mr. Macomber suddenly becomes animated.

MR. MACOMBER

No! You can't sell to Grace!

He guides a startled Douglas into the big tent and points into the crowd at a tall man, GOVERNOR PAUL DEVER.

DOUGLAS

Who's that?

MR. MACOMBER

Governor Dever.

DOUGLAS

At the Sheehans' party they talked about him and the Mass Pike.

MR. MACOMBER

The legislature just approved the Mass Pike and the governor will make his big announcement any day now. I've seen the plans and it's almost certain that the Pike will cross somewhere through your farm.

Douglas stares at Governor Dever in the middle of the happy crowd. He gives Mr. Macomber a quizzical look.

DOUGLAS

Maybe we can sell to the State.

MR. MACOMBER

(intense)

No, they'll just buy the slice they need.

(MORE)

MR. MACOMBER (CONT'D)

They'll pay for that, but leave you with land not fit for farming. Douglas, that big hill that Grace Krill said was worthless will be worth plenty. It's all gravel that they need for the bridge to cross the river. You and your family need to do whatever it takes to stall Grace until the plans are final. Don't sign, but don't let her walk away until everything is locked down.

(he grasps Douglas' arm)

Do you think you can find a way to do that?

Douglas stands shocked.

DOUGLAS

You think she knows about the Pike?

Mr. Macomber gives Douglas a long, knowing stare.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

I'll damned well find a way.

Mr. Macomber starts to walk away, turns back and gives Douglas a sharp look.

MR. MACOMBER

Don't do anything without talking to me, got it?

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Grace Krill stands in the arc of the open door of her Hudson facing Douglas. She smokes furiously.

GRACE

What do you mean appraisals? Why do you need to get appraisals of your machinery and cows or whatever to sign the contract to sell the land?

Douglas moves into the arc of the door and leans in, bending her ear in confidentiality.

DOUGLAS

No one in the family can accept that we're done farming. And they aren't sure they'll have enough money when your offer all settles out. They're afraid to sign.

(MORE)

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

(that hits home)

I know our machinery will auction at top grade, the livestock will sell in an hour and we have a whole new dairy that Henry Houghton will grab. But they can't see that. Now, if I get some friendly appraisers, they'll be sure to show how we can make out fine with your offer and an auction. But I need time to find the right appraisers.

Grace stomps out her cigarette.

GRACE

Make it fast. When contracts drag on, nothing good happens.

Douglas backs out of the door opening. Grace slams the door and drives off. The Boss watches from a window, considering what she has just seen.

Laura watches Grace drive off.

LAURA

Appraisers? Are you really--

DOUGLAS

Laura, I know what I'm doing.

Laura looks at him in a new light.

EXT. HILLCREST MACHINERY SHEDS - DAY

Douglas has been talking with two men, APPRAISERS, in white shirtsleeves and ties. One holds a clipboard, the other has a small tool case over his shoulder. The tool case reads MIDDLESEX APPRAISERS.

APPRAISER ONE

So you want us to STALL the machinery appraisal?

APPRAISER TWO

I don't get that.

DOUGLAS

You don't need to get it, just tell me you can slow this to a crawl, two, maybe three weeks. If you think you can do that, I can get you all the milk trucks to appraise and then the dairy equipment.

APPRAISER ONE

I don't know...

DOUGLAS

Or maybe I can call someone else.

APPRAISER TWO

Your grandparents won't be happy with that, will they?

DOUGLAS

They gave the job to me. It's the way we work around here.

APPRAISER ONE

Hey. Aren't you the one who built the red white and blue milk wagon years ago?

DOUGLAS

Yes. And I'm the one who called Middlesex Appraisers. I can still call someone else if this doesn't suit your schedule.

The two appraisers exchange looks but remain uncertain.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

You guys like the Red Sox?

APPRAISER TWO

You kidding?

Douglas runs into the house. The Appraisers wait. Douglas approaches the appraisers slowly and hesitating, gives Appraiser Two the signed baseball.

DOUGLAS

Signed by the whole team.

Appraiser Two gives him a knowing look.

APPRAISER TWO

Well sometimes these appraisals of older machinery can take some time.

Douglas pats Appraiser One on the shoulder.

DOUGLAS

Then you better get to work.

EXT. DOWNTOWN FRAMINGHAM - DAY

Douglas walks toward a flag festooned storefront decorated with pictures of fighting ships and planes. The banner overhead reads U.S. NAVY RECRUITING STATION.

Grace Krill follows him. He notices her but doesn't stop.

GRACE

(gets in step with him)  
I phoned you last week. Your grandmother was less than nice. Tell me how the appraisals are coming along.

Douglas stops and puts his hand on the storefront door handle.

DOUGLAS

After this.

GRACE

The Navy. I guess I should take it as a good sign. You're finally thinking beyond that farm.

DOUGLAS

Like you said, it's no place for farming anymore.

He turns his back, leaving Grace standing on the sidewalk, and enters the recruiting office.

INT. RECRUITING OFFICE - DAY

Sitting behind the table-like desk is PO WALTER KALINOWSKI, 30s, very tall, a First Class petty officer in dress whites. Douglas sits across from him and drinks coffee. Kalinowski is absorbed with a folder on his desk, turning pages and marking on them. He grades a test with Douglas's name on it.

Minutes tick by. PO Kalinowski finishes grading and shows Douglas the test.

PO KALINOWSKI

You did great. Look at this. Scored in the very top in every category.

DOUGLAS

(smiling)  
So, I'm in pilot training?

PO KALINOWSKI

Well, no. See, you'll go to boot camp where you'll take the real pilot's test. You'll pass that easy. Then you'll go to Pensacola where they train pilots.

DOUGLAS

Really, that's it?

PO KALINOWSKI

Yup, Jackie Raybin from Saxonville wanted to be a pilot, took the tests and now he's in Pensacola. Just take these papers home, maybe talk with your family, then bring them back and I'll schedule your physical. You'll be going off to flight training in no time! Wait - you're not colorblind, are you?

Douglas shakes 'no.'

PO KALINOWSKI (CONT'D)

So, there you go!

DOUGLAS

You're a hell of a salesman, Kalinowski. I know what a long shot this is. But I've run out of sure things to bet on.

INT. JOHNSON'S HARDWARE/SPORTING GOODS - DAY

Mr. Johnson is arranging fishing merchandise. Douglas goes straight to the top rack and the bamboo fly rod he admired.

MR. JOHNSON

Still thinking about that cane rod?

DOUGLAS

Ever since I tried it.

MR. JOHNSON

They're a special tradition. Something you can always count on. Take care of them and they'll last you forever.

Douglas hangs on Mr. Johnson's words. He holds the rod and feels its vibrancy.

DOUGLAS

I want it.

MR. JOHNSON

Really?

DOUGLAS

Yeah, I'm going into the Navy and my cousin bought my Jeep, so I've got the money. That rod is the only thing I want.

MR. JOHNSON

Well, you buy that rod and I'll take it apart, put it in a tube, and keep it safe and sound. It'll be here and ready when you get out.

DOUGLAS

No, I'll take it now. I have a place for it.

They conclude their business.

EXT. DOWNTOWN FRAMINGHAM - DAY

Douglas, carrying the bamboo rod, walks back to his Jeep passing several closed stores and some with shabby displays in the window. The empty storefront for Kynoch's Athletic Goods has a homemade sign across the window "Moved to Shoppers World!"

Douglas finds Grace Krill leaning on his Jeep.

DOUGLAS

(holding up his hands)

The appraisals are almost done.  
This week for sure.

GRACE

You told me that last week. I let the deal for a sweet farm in Sudbury go by waiting for you and your family. Almost done. Almost done. You're costing me real money, Douglas! I want your family's signature on that contract by Friday. Friday!

DOUGLAS

I'll move them along. This week, really, this week.

(MORE)



DOUGLAS (CONT'D)  
 (hesitate)  
 Your brother liked land, didn't he?

Grace softens.

GRACE  
 He loved land. He always said land  
 was freedom. I don't think anyone  
 ever asked me that before.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

The family is tucked into a boiled dinner. Quiet among the three. The Boss picks at hers. Douglas sees her sadness and puts an arm around her.

Meyer Gordon bursts in.

MEYER GORDON  
 The Governor is announcing the Pike  
 this weekend! I got an urgent call  
 from John Macomber. He's preparing  
 to back a group led by Lou Perini,  
 and a developer named Michael  
 Campinelli, to purchase Hillcrest  
 and their offer is far more than  
 Grace could hope to raise. In fact  
 it's far more than I ever expected.

Everyone jumps up. Total celebration! Everyone talking at once! The phone rings and the Boss answers.

GRACE (V.O.)  
 Hello Myrtle. I've heard the news  
 about the Mass Pike and I'm  
 prepared to increase our offer.

THE BOSS  
 Well, Grace, I have a feeling it  
 wasn't news to you at all. That  
 might have been the time for your  
 bigger offer. Now it seems Lou  
 Perini and Michael Campinelli have  
 already made an offer and I don't  
 think you'll want to match it.

GRACE (V.O.)  
 I may have to see you in court.

Grace hangs up. The Boss stares at everyone.

THE BOSS  
 Grace says she might sue.

MEYER GORDON  
That's the Krill response to  
everything. Don't worry about it.

INT. MEYER GORDON'S CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Meyer Gordon and the family smile and toast each other with  
coffee cups.

MEYER GORDON  
The deal is done. It won't be an  
all at once cash windfall, but it  
will be enough to cover the debts  
and take care of the Boss and Pop  
for the rest of their lives. And  
you get to keep the auction money.

The family smiles and links hands. But Douglas looks solemn.

POP  
Don't look so serious, *sot pojke*.  
Go out and have fun tonight.

EXT. BILLY DYAN'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Douglas and Billy, relaxed, wash, clean and wax Billy's tan  
1948 Mercury convertible. They scrub the white wall tires  
with SOS pads. They shine the chrome. And they decide to  
clean the cloth seats with cleaning fluid. They beam with  
pride and anticipation. A NEIGHBOR is watching.

NEIGHBOR  
Big Saturday night date, eh, Billy?

Douglas and Billy smile.

EXT. ROADSIDE - EVENING

Douglas and Billy are standing alongside the Mercury, pulled  
off to the side of the road, as cars go by. They massage  
their backsides and look around and under the car.

BILLY  
My ass is burning.

DOUGLAS  
Mine, too. Thought we were on fire.

BILLY  
It's the goddamned cleaning fluid  
we used on the seats.

INT. BILLY'S CAR - EVENING

Billy and his date, DIANE, and Douglas and Laura sit on towels and blankets as they drive along. They laugh.

LAURA

Now listen to me. Not a damned word of this to anyone or we'll hear hot-ass jokes from now till graduation. Not a word.

The other three laugh in assent

EXT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT

The sounds of a party of young people. More music. Douglas and Laura cuddle on a porch swing, away from the crowd. A PARTY GIRL pokes her head out of the house for just a moment.

PARTY GIRL

Hot ass, huh?

Douglas and Laura laugh.

LAURA

Everybody seems so eager for graduation. I don't feel ready for anything. Our farm is gone, you're going into the Navy, and I'll be out there on the river. I'm not sure what's coming down the road, if I can handle it.

DOUGLAS

You can handle anything. Remember when we jumped off the trestle?

LAURA

But we were holding hands.

DOUGLAS

Besides, I'll be coming back.

LAURA

(unsmiling, looking directly at Douglas)  
No, you won't be coming back. Maybe for a visit, but I know you and you won't ever really come back. You just won't.

Douglas gets up and goes to the trunk of Billy's car, takes out the tube holding the bamboo fly rod, and brings it up to the porch. He hands it to Laura.

DOUGLAS

Please hold onto this for me.

LAURA

What is it?

DOUGLAS

It's a bamboo fly rod. It's very special. I want you to use it and take care of it for me. If you treat it right it'll last forever. It's proof that I'll be back.

Laura tears up and hugs the fly rod.

EXT. HILLCREST FARM - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

The farm set up for the auction with machinery lined up in the near pasture. Farmers and others stop to pick up their yellow bidding tickets and file into the yard. The barn doors are open and people are inspecting the cows and reading about each one on the auction sheet.

GUS TANNER, 50s, shirtsleeves, the burly auctioneer, in his powerful voice, briefs the family.

GUS

This is your last chance to pull anything you want to keep.

The family stays silent. Gus adopts a conspiratorial voice.

GUS (CONT'D)

I suggest you wander around and look for someone who is showing an interest in something. Then you sidle up and begin to show your interest. Of course it has to be someone who doesn't know you!

Henry Houghton, true to his word, shows up and bargains with Pop for the milk trucks. Byron, the counterman from the Wellworth Soda Shop, wanders in and out of the ice cream stand. Douglas, the Boss and Pop stand in the yard watching Gus at work when Grace Krill walks up to them. She stares at Douglas for a long moment then turns to watch Gus.

GRACE

I had to see this for myself. After all this time. Well, you hung on to this way of life longer than most. This just isn't a place for it anymore.

Douglas separates himself and walks toward Grace and starts to speak. Grace cuts him off.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I use Middlesex Appraisers myself, you know. A phone call and I pieced things together - a bit too late.

He starts to speak again.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Forget it, Douglas. You surprised me, but you did what you had to do. You and I aren't the villains here. It was just business in this new world. We'll both recover. Hell, we'll all recover. Your grandparents are headed for Maine, and your parents are off on their own doing fine. I'll find another deal and you'll be better off in the Navy than struggling for a life on this farm like you've been doing.

Grace smiles, turns and walks to her gray Hudson. She passes Harry and his new friend, MARIE, on their way in.

A great commotion in the auction area as bidding rages hot and heavy on the old red white and blue milk wagon.

MR. MACOMBER (O.S.)

One thousand dollars for Old Glory!

The crowd gasps and turns to see Mr. Macomber standing in the back. He gives a high sign to Douglas who waves back.

THE BOSS

Pop, I don't know about you, but I've had enough of watching everything we've worked for being sold off to strangers.

POP

Yah, we can go.

The family forms around the Boss and Pop as they get into Pop's new blue Pontiac Chieftain. Douglas brings Scratch to the car.

HARRY

You going to be OK without all this work to do?

POP

Yah, I got a nice place for a garden and the Boss has plenty of windows for her African violets. I got this fellow to look after.

He pats Scratch as Douglas helps the dog into the car. Douglas hugs Scratch one last time.

THE BOSS

Now Harry, you keep up the good work. You've got a nice life going now with a new wife, a good business, and a baby on the way. You come up and see us as soon as you get some time.

Harry hugs them. Douglas walks to Pop and the Boss.

POP

And, *sot pojke*, you come up and help me. You can teach me how to grow tomatoes like I taught you how to handle the team.

Douglas hugs Pop hard. The Boss fights for composure.

THE BOSS

You're the best young man in this world. How hard you worked and how hard you tried. I can't believe I won't be able to look out the window and see you come up to the yard carrying your fish, looking so happy. I watched for you every day. I wish we could have left more for you from all this.

She shifts her weight on her cane.

THE BOSS (CONT'D)

You'll write to your grandmother, now, won't you?

DOUGLAS

And I'll come to see you on my  
first leave, I promise.

He gives her a long, tender hug. She can't let him go until she finally pulls herself away and gets in the car.

There are waves all around and the blue Pontiac goes down the farm drive and on to the highway and off to Maine. Douglas and Harry watch till the car is out of sight.

Laura watches from a distance. Al Lawson approaches Harry, waving his arm toward the auction field.

AL LAWSON

Looks like you're going to have a  
whole new season after this, Harry.  
Good luck to you and your family.

He shakes Harry's hand nods at Douglas and walks away.

HARRY

Al is wrong. Real seasons repeat,  
you get to live them again and  
again, just like I thought we all  
would here at Hillcrest. I never  
thought it would come to this.

He puts his arm around Douglas's shoulder. Tears run down his cheeks. He gives Douglas a big squeeze. Laura is at the doorway of the barn, petting a barn cat. She starts to go to Douglas, but sees Harry and Douglas and she stops.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Need a ride tomorrow?

DOUGLAS

No, I sold the Jeep to Ronny.  
He'll drive me.

HARRY

You're going to do fine in the  
Navy. I know what it takes, and  
you've got it. Look, I'm sorry...

DOUGLAS

Dad, that's the past, like  
Hillcrest and farming. You're doing  
fine, I'll do fine. If you want to  
make things up to me, just take  
good care of yourself and Marie.

Harry approaches him, but instead of a hug, he ruffles Douglas' hair and walks to his truck where a waiting Marie takes his arm. Marie and Douglas exchange smiles and waves.

The farmyard is empty until Laura emerges from the barn. She walks to Douglas and without hesitation, embraces and kisses him. They disengage from the kiss, stiffly.

LAURA

What am I going to do? I'm afraid.

Douglas grabs her hand and starts to walk toward the river.

DOUGLAS

Come with me.

Now they run.

EXT. RAILROAD TRESTLE - DAY

Douglas and Laura come to the trestle over the river and walk out to the center. Douglas lets go of her hand. They pause, looking at each other and with no signal, they jump.

EXT. THE FARMYARD - DAY

Douglas and Laura stand, soaking wet, and laughing, full of life, next to Laura's truck.

DOUGLAS

See, you don't have anything to be afraid of. You're strong and tough. You can handle anything.

They have a long last kiss. Laura disengages.

LAURA

I gotta go. Pa needs....

DOUGLAS

I know.

Laura gets into her truck and starts to drive off. She gets just a few feet away when she rolls down her window and leans her head out, looking back at Douglas.

LAURA

I'm going to miss you.



INT. EDIE'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Edie has prepared a spaghetti dinner goodbye party for Douglas. A lot of laughing and teasing. Dick, John, Ronny and Ken sit with Douglas. FRANK, Edie's new friend, smiling, quiet, helps Edie serve. Ken sneaks sips of beer.

Edie watches Douglas every second. Dick breaks out a deck of cards and calls the boys into the living room. Edie guides Douglas into the kitchen.

EDIE

I wish everything could have been different after the war.

Douglas starts to interrupt. Edie fidgets with a dishtowel and holds her hand up to stop him.

EDIE (CONT'D)

No, I really do. I thought everything was going to go back to normal. But the war changed everything. It changed your father, it changed me, Aunt Helen, it changed everything in town, houses everywhere, shopping centers. Look at poor Jim Cowell in jail. Just look at what it did to you and the farm! The war changed everything.

She is shuddering, almost in tears. Douglas starts to move to her, but she puts on a bright smile. She waves him away with her dishtowel.

EDIE (CONT'D)

Go play cards with Ken and your cousins. I'll make you a nice breakfast in the morning.

She walks to a side table and picks up the picture of the whole family taken by Janice in happier times, then goes into the living room.

Frank steps out from the dining room and approached Douglas, standing alone in the kitchen. He extends his hand.

FRANK

I'll take care of your mother and Ken.

Douglas smiles, nods, and shakes Frank's hand.

DOUGLAS

Good, that's good.

EXT. HILLCREST FARM - MORNING

Ronny has parked the Jeep at the sign at the foot of the drive. He gets out to hand Douglas his suitcase.

RONNY

You sure you don't want me to drive  
you in?

DOUGLAS

No. I want to look around a bit  
and take the bus in. I'll be OK.

RONNY

I'm sure of that.

They hug and Ronny drives off.

Douglas starts to walk. With every step he hears his boots make a two-note crunch on the gravel as he walks up the drive into the farmyard.

He looks out to the abandoned fields and the river. He surveys the farmyard -- the house with its doors left open, the silent dairy, and the empty gray barn. A breeze cartwheels someone's yellow bidding ticket across the yard where it lodges, upright, against the milk house steps.

He sees a pile of discarded scrap left over from the auction. He examines it and finds an old war bond poster, a ration book, and the "A" flag award the Boss thought too boastful to display.

He tries to drape the "A" flag up on the barn door, but can't find any way to hang it. He folds the flag and carefully lays it in a bin in the grain room. He is looking at the flag when he catches a glimpse of a barn cat. He goes to the cat and pets it.

DOUGLAS

I'll call a lonely girl who'll take  
you home.

He picks up his suitcase.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

(to himself)  
It's done.

Without a last look he walks down the drive to the state road. He slaps the Hillcrest Farm sign and waits for the bus that will take him to his new life in the Navy.

FADE OUT