

Chinook

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST COAST - EARLY DAWN (DREAM)

The full moon sits low on the horizon, just before dawn. Mist glides slowly over the water.

A coastal river merges its waters with those of the ocean.

Just offshore, waves surge into rocky islets, breaking in plumes of spray.

A seal, coat slick and wet, BARKS once and then slips into the sea, a raven CAWS as it soars over the beach.

From a thicket of spruce and pine near the beach, ferns thick under the canopy, a sound of RUSTLING BOUGHS, FOOTSTEPS.

Something is making its way through the underbrush toward the shore.

A teenage Native American woman, SUZANNE ROSS, slips out of the forest onto a narrow spit of sand between the river and the sea.

The wind sweeps her long, dark hair back from her face and rustles the fringes of her cedar-bark dress.

She seems in a light trance, her face relaxed, her eyes wide and liquid.

Slowly, she looks toward her right along the shoreline, then left.

Suddenly, out of the mist, a great cedar canoe emerges. The CREW wears masks depicting traditional indigenous Northwest ANIMAL SPIRITS, ORCA, WOODPECKER, AND RAVEN, AND AT THE BOW, THE SALMON WOMAN is dressed in gleaming salmon skins.

As the canoe glides silently up the river, the young woman watches, enraptured.

The young woman stands on the water's surface, not far from the canoe.

The salmon woman beckons to her.

She steps on the water and reaches out toward the Salmon Woman.

Before she can grasp her hands, she sinks into the dark water.

EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT (DREAM)

Beneath the surface, disoriented, the young woman twists, trying to get her bearings. Everything is in slow motion. Her long hair drifts slowly and covers her face.

She moves forward, and her face is revealed through her hair.

She turns right and is nose to nose with a gigantic CHINOOK SALMON.

She stares into the salmon's eyes, and the salmon stares back at her.

Suzanne breathes in involuntarily and breathes in the entire ocean.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A ROCKY BEACH - DAY (DREAM)

Surf breaks. Suzanne soaking wet walks along her dream beach, passing by weathered cedar canoes in various stages of completion.

She sees a decaying cedar longhouse.

Suzanne stoops and steps through the round entrance.

Shafts of light penetrate the darkness inside, streaming through chinks in the rough-split boards, revealing images of mythical creatures carved on the posts and beams of the house.

Suzanne turns and sees her father, FRANK ROSS, in the center of the longhouse. A partially hollowed-out canoe rests on skids beside him. Frank holds a well-honed adze in his hands.

Without a word, he swings the adze. A cedar chip flies by Suzanne.

Suddenly, Frank is standing amongst the older generations of Chinooks.

Suzanne looks at her hand. She is now holding the adze.

She raises the adze high and swings.

INT. SUZANNE ROSS'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Suzanne sits bolt upright in her bed, gasping for breath.

Rain blows in from an open window onto a cluttered nightstand. The wind flutters the curtains on the window.

Suzanne gets out of bed and slams the window shut, then flops back onto the edge of her bed, clutching her covers.

Suzanne pulls a journal off her nightstand, opens it, pulls a pen out, and writes.

Suzanne grabs a sketchpad off her nightstand and sets it on her journal.

On the open page is an unfinished drawing of Suzanne as the Vitruvian woman divided into two halves.

The left half of Suzanne wears modern clothes. A bag slung across her shoulder. In her left hand, she holds a cell phone. Images of her life fill in the background.

In the right half of the drawing, Suzanne wears traditional Northwest Coast clothing. Stylized images in red and black of Woodpecker, Otter, and Jay fill the entire space so much that the image bleeds over into her other half.

She flips the page and reveals a drawing of the spirit canoe of her dream.

She picks her pencil from the sketch pad and twirls it between her fingers.

She sketches quickly possessed by the dream, completing the detail of the salmon woman, who stands in the canoe's bow next to the woodpecker.

Her alarm clock SQUAWKS.

She slaps the clock into silence and sets the two pads on her bed.

With a heavy sigh, she gets up and shuffles down the hallway to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Suzanne showers. As she bends her head to rinse her hair, glittering fish scales flow off her hair and down the shower drain.

INT. ROSS FAMILY KITCHEN - MORNING

Fish scales flow down the kitchen sink's drain.

SHIRLEY ROSS, late 40s, wearing a pair of yellow rubber gloves, cleans a salmon in the sink. The fish's head rests on a plate on the counter.

SHIRLEY

Suzanne.

SUZANNE (O.S.)

Coming.

INT. THE ROSSES HOUSE - MAIN STAIRWAY - DAY

Suzanne slowly descends the stairs; her image reflects in the glass of the framed family photos hung on the stairway wall.

She lingers on the stairs, studying a photo of a handsome dark-haired man, her dad FRANK ROSS, with a pilot's helmet tucked under his arm and an old Seahawks cap on his head.

Frank is grinning widely, standing beside a CH-47D Chinook helicopter with high, snowy mountains looming in the background.

A framed newspaper clipping hangs next to the photograph. The headline reads: LOCAL HERO FRANK ROSS SAVES 25 FELLOW SOLDIERS.

Suzanne takes another step and pauses. It is a photo of a younger Suzanne holding a canoe paddle in a warrior stance.

Another photo next to that of her family standing on the steps of a weathered building. Suzanne and Jimmy hold a cardboard sign with a stylized Chinook Salmon. Painted beneath the salmon are the words: FUTURE HOME OF THE CHINOOK RESTAURANT & GALLERY.

INT. ROSS FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

Suzanne enters the kitchen with her mom, Shirley.

Shirley is at the sink, and Suzanne heads to the fridge.

Suzanne grabs the plate of salmon heads with both hands and pointedly moves it next to her mother, revealing the front-page headlines of the CHINOOK TIMES.

The headline of the paper reads FEDS DENY CHINOOK REQUEST FOR TRIBAL STATUS.

Beneath that, in smaller type: FOUR LOCAL FISHERMEN BELIEVED DROWNED AFTER THEIR BOAT SINKS ON COLUMBIA BAR, AND HEROIN AND METH EPIDEMIC TAKES HEAVY TOLL ON THE NORTHWEST COAST CITIZENS.

Suzanne reads the headlines.

SUZANNE

The government has denied the Chinook tribal recognition again.

SHIRLEY

What time did you come home last night?

SUZANNE

I don't remember, midnight, I think.

Shirley puts the cleaned fish into a plastic bag. She slides the bag into a small ice chest and then hands the ice chest to Suzanne.

SHIRLEY

Don't forget to pick up the salmon from Earl's. It's on the menu tonight.

SUZANNE & SHIRLEY

(Simultaneously)

So, don't be late.

SUZANNE

We could close tonight. No one would blame us.

SHIRLEY

It would probably be good, but I need something to do, something normal. I cannot believe Frank is gone.

Shirley and Suzanne hug for a moment.

SUZANNE

I know, Mom, he will walk through the front door and tell us another bad dad joke.

SHIRLEY

I'll even miss those, as bad as they were.

SUZANNE  
They were so bad.

They both chuckle.

Suzanne, with the cooler in tow, heads towards the kitchen door.

SHIRLEY  
We need to tell your brother.

SUZANNE  
He's working on the dock; it's the busy time of year. I'll tell him.

SHIRLEY  
Do you want me to go with you?

SUZANNE  
No, I can do it; besides, I don't even know if he'll be there.

Shirley and Suzanne smile at each other.

SHIRLEY  
Be careful.

SUZANNE  
Roger that.

Suzanne opens the screen door, steps through, and closes it softly behind her.

EXT. THE ROSS FAMILY HOUSE - MORNING

Suzanne throws the ice chest into the back of a beat-up Jeep Cherokee JEEP, which sports a rusty grill guard and well-used winch.

She slips behind the wheel, grabs a CD labeled "Dad's Mix" from the sun visor, loads it into the CD player, and cranks it up.

She drives off. On the rear window, there are two stickers: one, a Northwest Coast art design of a Salmon, reads "GO COASTAL," and the other, "SUPPORT OUR TROOPS" with a Chinook helicopter carrying a giant yellow bow.

EXT. WILLAPA BAY MARINA - BOAT HOUSE - DAY

The Willapa Bay fishing fleet rides at anchor.

GULLS wheel and CRY. A SEA LION, cruising between the boats, dives, sliding into the dark water.

Suzanne drives up to the dockside.

Suzanne gets out of the Jeep and walks up the plank to the boathouse

A fishing boat, just in from the sea, eases up next to the boathouse fueling station. Loud ELECTRIC POW WOW music blares out from a window on the boathouse's upper floor.

The OWNER of the fishing boat jumps out onto the dock, wearing a slicker and rubber boots. Middle-aged cheerless, he looks around peevishly for some service.

Then, from inside the boathouse, the gruff, boozy voice of HANK MACNEAL roars out.

HANK

Jimmy. I thought I told you to turn that crap off and get down here and do some work for a change.

Suzanne rounds the corner, climbs the stairs, and walks in the open door.

INT. BOATHOUSE - DAY

She finds her brother, Jimmy ROSS, passed out on a mattress in the middle of the room.

SUZANNE

Jimmy.

There is no response.

His left sleeve rolled up, revealing a tattoo of a stylized Northwest Coast salmon on his forearm.

Suzanne turns the music off.

SUZANNE

Jimmy.

Suzanne grabs a beer can from the many strewn on the floor, swishes it around, then walks over to Jimmy and pours its remains on Jimmy's outstretched hand.

JIMMY

Jeez, why are you harshing my mellow?



Jimmy rolls over and sits up.

SUZANNE

I just thought you'd want to know  
that Dad was killed in action.

Jimmy slowly pulls the needle out of his arm and throws it  
against the wall.

JIMMY

Fuck, what a waste.

Jimmy looks skyward.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I remember the last thing you said  
to me before he left.

SUZANNE

Was that after you went fishing on  
his secret spot?

JIMMY

Yeah, he told me this was his last  
tour. He would come back, and we  
would finish the spirit canoe; he  
told me I was a better carver than  
him.

SUZANNE

You have a way with wood grain;  
it's like it speaks to you.

Jimmy looks at Suzanne and gives her a slight smile.

JIMMY

Yeah, once we finished it, we would  
sell it and donate that money to  
the Chinook elders for their health  
care.

SUZANNE

Sounds like dad.

JIMMY

Yeah, he would literally give you  
the shirt off his back.

SUZANNE

I cannot believe Dad is gone. It  
just seems impossible to go on.  
What am I going to do?

JIMMY

Look, little bear, Dad died, as sad as that is, and it does leave a giant hole in our hearts, but we are still here.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Life goes on, and now it is our time.

They both have the thousand-mile stare.

SUZANNE

Well, thanks for cheering me up.

JIMMY

All you have to do is be, and we are our father's kids, after all.

SUZANNE

Are you coming to the restaurant tonight? Mom needs your help.

JIMMY

Maybe.

Hank yells from the bottom of the stairs.

HANK

Get down here, you lazy injun, and do some work.

SUZANNE

How can you work for that racist?

JIMMY

Easier for me to swallow blatant racism than that subtle shit you put up with every day. Besides free rent.

SUZANNE

Be like water?

JIMMY

Now you are learning. Now, get out of here so I can get back to my mellow.

Suzanne walks out of Jimmy's room, leaving the door open and down the stairs towards the dock.

Before she can leave the dock, the boat owner calls to her.

BOAT OWNER (TO SUZANNE)  
Fuel her up, babe.

Suzanne nods and heads for the fuel pumps. She unhooks the nozzle, pays out the hose, opens the fuel tank, and fills it.

Hank shuffles out of the boathouse, rubbing his head, clothes rumpled. Hank sidles up to the boat owner.

BOAT OWNER  
You got the babe workin for you  
now.

Hank shrugs.

HANK  
How's the catch been?

OWNER  
Well, between the gov'ment, the  
Marine Mammals Protection Act, and  
the Indians, I'm lucky to have a  
boat.

The boat owner glances toward Suzanne.

Suzanne ignores the owner's intentional insult, finishes filling up the boat, and hooks the nozzle back on the pump.

HANK  
I'll ring it up. You go on, shove  
off.

SUZANNE  
Roger that.

Suzanne leaves the boathouse.

Hank rings up the sale.

The boat owner looks at the charge.

OWNER  
(sarcastically)  
Well, at least diesel's still  
cheap.

EXT. TRAILER PARK EARL'S TRAILER - DAY

Suzanne pulls into Frank's brother EARL ROSS's carport next to his trailer. Behind the trailer, you can see the top of a fishing boat passing through the slough.

Suzanne hops out of the Jeep, grabs the ice chest and her sketchpad, and heads toward the back of the trailer.

Earl sits on the back deck of the trailer, facing the slough, a canoe paddle balanced on his knees. Alder chips fall around his feet as he planes the blade of the canoe paddle smooth.

SUZANNE

Uncle Earl. Is that the last of the paddles?

EARL

I have one more to carve after this, and there'll be a complete set.

SUZANNE

Can I carve the last one?

EARL

Hmm, I can't think of any reason why not. Here, I started this one.

Earl hands Suzanne a roughed-out paddle.

SUZANNE

Sic.

EARL

Come to think of it. I don't know of any female carvers.

SUZANNE

You know one, me.

Suzanne smiles at Earl.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Why are you carving paddles anyway?

EARL

I don't know. It's some hair-brained scheme my little brother cooked up. Let's ask him when he gets back.

SUZANNE

I'm so sorry, Dad passed away. He was killed in action yesterday.

EARL

My heart is heavy.

SUZANNE

I feel like throwing up.

EARL

It can do that to you. It was his time then. We all have our time. We don't know when it is. Only the creator knows that. Are you and your mom doing okay?

SUZANNE

I don't know.

EARL

It is okay to not know.

Suzanne hands Earl her sketchbook from under her arm.

SUZANNE

I did have a dream last night.

EARL

What did you dream about?

Earl studies the drawing on the sketchpad.

SUZANNE

The Salmon Spirit invited me into the canoe.

Earl looks back down at the sketchbook.

EARL

An invitation that is a powerful message.

Earl hands Suzanne back her sketchpad.

Earl's phone RINGS from inside the house. Earl stands up.

The phone keeps RINGING.

EARL

When they want somethin' from you,  
they just don't leave you alone.

Earl heads inside, and Suzanne takes the ice chest to the big steel cooler at the end of the porch.

Suzanne opens the ice chest, revealing a salmon head staring back at her. She transfers the salmon into the cooler and slams the lid shut.

She walks to her Jeep, spinning the rough canoe paddle like a baton.

INT./EXT. VICINITY OF WILLAPA BAY - DAY

Suzanne drives her Jeep through the countryside.

She passes an oyster processing plant with a colossal midden of oyster shells heaped by the side of the road.

Driving past a cranberry bog, Suzanne pulls into a dirt driveway next to a farmhouse and honks her horn.

A moment later, her friend LINDSAY DAVIS, in her late teens, bustles out of the front door.

Lindsay bounds down the porch stairs, throws her bag in the back of the Jeep, and jumps into the passenger seat.

INT./EXT. SUZANNE'S JEEP - DAY

As they drive, Lindsay sips from her water bottle while looking sideways at Suzanne.

LINDSAY

Hey, are you okay? You don't look so good.

SUZANNE

My dad died in Afghanistan; he was killed in action.

LINDSAY

Suzanne, I am so sorry. You don't have to go to work today. Take a bereavement day.

SUZANNE

I think work might actually help.

LINDSAY

Maybe.

They drive in silence for a while.

Without warning, Suzanne tenses her grip on the steering wheel and uses it to steady herself as she violently throws her torso against the seat several times.

SUZANNE

Gaugh.

There is a moment of silence.

Suzanne takes her eyes off the road and looks at Lindsay.

LINDSAY  
Suzanne, look out.

Suzanne looks forward just in time to maneuver her Jeep around a hairpin turn, avoiding an empty log truck, its trailer piggy-backed on the tractor's tow plate.

SUZANNE  
So, how are you and Morford doing?

LINDSAY  
You wouldn't believe what he did.  
I'm so pissed at him right now.

INT./EXT. VICINITY OF WILLAPA BAY - DAY

Through thick stands of Sitka spruce, the harbor of WILLAPA BAY comes into view.

As Suzanne cruises down toward town, Lindsay continues to talk to Suzanne a mile-a-minute, her VOICE UNHEARD through the rolled-up windows of the Jeep's cab.

INT./EXT. WILLAPA BAY - DAY

Suzanne drives down a long street, past tourist shops and fishing boats docked along the wharf.

A weathered fisherman walks by in knee-high boots, wearing a yellow slicker and a baseball cap. The open raincoat reveals a T-shirt that reads, "THERE'S NO NOOKIE LIKE CHINOOKIE."

Suzanne pulls up to a stop sign in front of a bank and stops.

A weathered mural depicting Chinook tribal life decorates one side of the bank building. Part of the mural features a big cedar canoe with native people paddling it.

One of the canoe's crew is pulling a giant Chinook salmon out of the water.

Suzanne stares at the mural.

A car horn HONKS, breaking her focus.

LINDSAY  
Suzanne, Suzanne, the light's  
green.

Suzanne gives an apologetic wave and drives off.

INT./EXT. WILLAPA BAY - DAY

A WOMAN sets an ESPRESSO sign outside the Willapa Hardware Store. Suzanne and Lindsay wave at her as they drive by. The Espresso Woman waves back.

At a corner gas station, an old salt, bearded, wearing his skipper's cap and pea coat, is fueling up a battered four-wheel rig.

On the other side of town, the road runs along the shoreline, sports fishers, their poles over the water, fishing next to their parked trucks.

EXT. THE ILWACO FISH N CHIPS - DAY

Suzanne parks the Jeep, and she and Lindsay jump out of the Jeep and stroll into work.

Suzanne sees MARK MORFORD, Lindsay's boyfriend, and JOE KIRSHNER, Mark's friend. They are dressed in their bibs and ready for work.

SUZANNE

Mark and Joe, are you guys ready to fry some food?

JOE

Mark and I are already fried.

LINDSAY

Joe, Mark.

MARK

Hey Linds, sorry about last night.

LINDSAY

I've already forgiven you.

Just then, the new manager, ROY ATWOOD, enters the room.

ROY

Okay, everybody, I'm Roy, I'm new. Let's not dink around; let's get some work done. Suzanne, you are on the drive-up window; got it, chief.

Suzanne mouths the word chief to Lindsay.



ROY  
Let's go. Chop, chop, work, work.

Roy claps his hands.

TIME LAPSE Montage of Fish and Chips being fried in the deep fryer and put into to-go bags.

As the shift ends, Suzanne waves goodbye to her friends and drives away in her Jeep.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - EARL'S TRAILER AND SHED - DUSK

Suzanne drives into the trailer park and up to Earl's trailer.

She gets out of her Jeep.

Next to the trailer, there stands a rough shed; the door is open.

Suzanne enters Earl's shed through the open door.

INT. EARL'S SHED - DAY

Around the small shed, half-hidden in the shadows, works in various states of completion, interspersed with large blocks and chunks of wood.

SUZANNE  
Earl?

There is no response.

Suzanne walks by a long wooden sculpture of a Chinook salmon like the cardboard one she and Jimmy held in the picture.

She runs her hand along the smooth top of the carving.

EXT. EARL'S BACK DECK - DAY

Suzanne exits the shed and walks onto the back deck of the trailer.

Smoke fills the air, getting into Suzanne's face and eyes.

A figure, wreathed in smoke, stands in front of the smoker like an apparition.

The figure steps out of the smoke and closes the smoker door.

It's Earl.

Suzanne coughs and flaps her arms to dissipate the smoke.

SUZANNE

That smoke can't be good for you.

EARL

That's just good ol' alder smoke.

SUZANNE

It smells like wet dog.

Earl leads Suzanne into the trailer.

INT. EARL'S TRAILER - DAY

Earl and Suzanne enter the kitchen.

Earl transfers packages of salmon from an old fridge into a picnic-sized ice chest.

SUZANNE

Is Connie here?

EARL

She's in the backroom.

Suzanne walked past Earl's room. The door stands half-open. Several pairs of old boots and waders line the foot of the bed.

She continues to the backroom.

CONNIE, 40s, Earl's girlfriend. Connie is weaving cedar bark, her hands moving deftly back and forth.

Intent on her work, Connie overlooks Suzanne.

The room walls are decorated with Northwest Coast art: masks, paintings, and photographs.

Suzanne pauses beside an old black and white photograph of a kid about nine years old who stands beside a cedar canoe pulled up on the edge of the water. Suzanne's faint reflection looks out at her from the glass covering the photo.

The kid has Suzanne's eyes.

Connie looks up and sees Suzanne.

CONNIE

Hi, Suz. I was so sorry to hear about your dad. I talked to the girls today; we are bringing some traditional food and having a sit with your mom tomorrow.

Suzanne stares at the tops of her shoes.

SUZANNE

Mom would like that.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

At least Dad didn't have to hear that the government denied our tribal status again after they had already approved it; that is just betrayal.

CONNIE

If the government would just honor the original treaty, we'd be better off. Crazy.

SUZANNE

No one else has to prove who they are except Natives.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Oh, what are you makin'?

CONNIE

Cedar bark cloth.

Suzanne moves to the door frame and leans herself against it, watching Connie weave.

Connie looks away, suddenly very focused on her weaving.

A HEAVY THUMP emanates from the living room. Connie looks up, alert.

SUZANNE

I'll check it out.

INT. EARL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Suzanne finds Earl blotting the floor next to a coffee table with a handful of rags. A TV flickers silently, volume on mute.

In (b.g.), against the wall, a rack holds four alder-wood paddles, each paddle decorated with a stylized image of a different mythological animal.

Another paddle lies across the coffee table.

SUZANNE  
Let me help, Earl.

Suzanne kneels to help, grabbing a rag.

EARL (WHISPERING)  
Don't tell Connie I'm paintin  
inside.

SUZANNE  
Okay.

After wiping up the mess, Earl picks up the paddle from the coffee table and hands it to Suzanne.

EARL  
Here's Woodpecker; I finished it.

Suzanne looks at the paddle. A bird motif in red and black follows the curve of the blade.

Suzanne goes to the rack, carrying the Woodpecker paddle with her. She touches each one of the other paddles in turn.

SUZANNE  
Otter is faithful and graceful. She  
likes to play. Jay is wise and very  
crafty. Orca is the Traveller. He  
sees the Unseen.

EARL  
Raven.

SUZANNE  
Raven brings the light out of the  
darkness.

EARL  
Good, and Woodpecker?

She holds the Woodpecker paddle.

SUZANNE  
And Woodpecker is the Carver.

Suzanne runs her hand across the smooth wood of the blade. She grasps the paddle by the shaft and top grip as if about to take a stroke.

SUZANNE

Woodpecker is the Carver.

Suzanne places the Woodpecker paddle in a slot on the rack.

EARL

I put the salmon in the cooler.

SUZANNE

Thanks, Earl. I gotta go. I'll see you tomorrow.

EARL

Sweet dreams.

They smile at each other.

EXT. THE CHINOOK RESTAURANT AND GALLERY - EVENING

A blue heron slowly stalks the edge of Willapa Bay. Its stilt legs make no ripples on the glassy surface of the water.

In (b.g.), the deck of the converted shingle-style cottage is the Chinook Restaurant juts out over the shoreline. Tall windows on the restaurant's West wall reflect the setting sun's light.

Piled up along the wharf, mounds of oyster shells gleam in the twilight.

The heron takes another slow, long step.

A MAN and a WOMAN, walking along the pier, approach and enter the restaurant.

The heron strikes, flipping a silvery fish up from the water and into its beak.

INT. THE CHINOOK RESTAURANT AND GALLERY - EVENING

A CRACKLING fire in the red brick fireplace casts a warm glow on the wood-finished interior of the restaurant. Displayed on the walls are many objects of Northwest Coast art.

Through the french doors opposite the maitre d's station, a gallery filled with more indigenous art sits darkened, with a sign reading "SHUT" hanging crookedly on the door handle.

Several tables already have diners. Shirley leads the man and woman to their table and seats them.

Shirley walks to another couple at an adjacent table.

SHIRLEY

May I take your order?

WOMAN

What is in the First Food Basket?

SHIRLEY

It is the native food that the indigenous Chinook tribe used to eat. It includes locally sourced Chinook salmon, and smoked clams, boiled Wapato, which is a root very similar to a potato. Then we drizzle a Huckleberry reduction sauce over the top.

MAN

What is a Huckleberry?

SHIRLEY

Huckleberries are like a small blueberry.

WOMAN

Oh, that sounds good; I'll have that.

MAN

Make that two orders. And we'll have the Oregon Pinot as well.

Shirley writes down their order, nods, and picks up their menus.

SHIRLEY

Thank you, I'll be right back with the wine.

She goes to the order window, sticks the order in a caddie next to three other orders, and spins it around.

The CHEF, a woman in her late 40s, pulls the orders off the caddie and reads:

CHEF

First food basket that is with the salmon? Oh. And what's this? Another first food basket with salmon as well. The salmon that has not arrived yet.

Shirley gives the Chef a blank look. Suddenly, her face freezes in panic.

Then, a BANG and a THUD emanate from the kitchen.

SUZANNE (O.C.)

Oomph. Uungh.

Suzanne struggles as the door slams against her again as she tries to enter the kitchen.

The couple looks up from their tête-à-tête.

Shirley flashes a put-on smile. They smile back.

A moment later, Suzanne breezes out of the kitchen, carrying her backpack.

SUZANNE

Sorry, I'm late, Mom. Battery died. Uncle Earl got it goin again. He followed me here to make sure it wouldn't die on the way.

CHEF

Do you have the salmon?

SUZANNE

Right here in the cooler.

Suzanne breezes to a far booth near a window and drops her backpack as Earl strolls through the front door.

Shirley looks at the Chef and shrugs her shoulders. The Chef raises her eyebrows and then returns to her domain.

EARL

Hello, Shirley. I am deeply saddened to hear about Frank. Are you holding up okay?

SHIRLEY

Thanks, I don't know; I keep expecting him to walk in the door and make one of his silly jokes.

EARL

Yes, I know what you mean. Can I help with anything?

SHIRLEY

Our dishwasher didn't show up.

EARL

I can wash with the best of them.

Earl goes to the kitchen and looks the dishwasher up and down, then turns to the Chef.

EARL

What does she mean the dishwasher didn't show up? It is right here.

The Chef shakes her head and turns back to her stove.

At that very moment, a couple enters the restaurant.

SHIRLEY

Table for two?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE CHINOOK RESTAURANT AND GALLERY - NIGHT

Suzanne sits in the booth, drawing more native designs into comic panels.

In her book, she is the heroine, Salmon Chief, helping her people, keeping the old ways alive, and protecting nature.

She finishes the panel with a close-up view of her face divided in two, one half her regular face and the other half a Northwest Coast art motif.

The dinner rush begins. Suzanne gets up, stashes her books, and puts on an apron.

Suzanne breezes up to a table to take an order.

BEGIN MONTAGE

- Shirley seats a couple at a table by a window.
- Smiling, Suzanne takes an order.
- The chef puts her order up.
- Suzanne brings to the table a colorful platter of smoked salmon with hazelnut sauce and cranberries.
- Shirley, at the cash register, takes payment.
- Suzanne and Shirley bus tables.
- Earl opens the door of the dishwasher. And steam roils out.



EXT. THE CHINOOK RESTAURANT AND GALLERY - NIGHT

The lights inside the restaurant go out one by one. The neon "OPEN" sign flickers off. The Chef exits the front door, immediately followed by Earl.

INT. THE CHINOOK RESTAURANT AND GALLERY - NIGHT

Suzanne puts away her apron and collects her things; as she approaches the maître d's station, where Shirley is looking over her reservation schedule, the phone rings. Shirley picks it up.

SHIRLEY  
Chinook Restaurant.

Shirley looks at Suzanne and makes a wry face.

SUZANNE  
(mouths silently)  
Bye, Mom.

Shirley waves goodbye.

SHIRLEY  
Hi Pat, thank you, news travels  
fast. Yeah, we are still open.  
Sure, I can make a reservation for  
your anniversary.

Suzanne leans her shoulder against the restaurant's front door and shoves it open.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The five members of an honor guard rifle party stand at the graveside next to the coffin draped with the American flag.

In the folding chairs sit Shirley, Suzanne, family, and friends.

At the command of the NCO in charge, the guard raises their weapons and fire three times.

As the color guard folds, the flag taps are played.

NCO in charge presents the folded flag to Shirley.

As the funeral ends, Jimmy walks up the road.

Lindsay gives Suzanne a big hug.

Jimmy walks up to Shirley and Suzanne.

SHIRLEY

Jimmy, I'm so sorry.

JIMMY

Yeah, me too. Dad should have died with his people, not fighting the white man's war.

Jimmy turns and walks towards town.

Shirley walks away in silence, leaving Suzanne alone.

Earl walks up to Suzanne with a shoebox tucked under his arm.

EARL

Come on, Suzanne. Let's say goodbye to your Frank the Indian way?

Earl leads Suzanne to his truck.

EXT. SHORE OF COLUMBIA RIVER - DAY

Suzanne and Earl stand beneath an Oregon white oak. Its gnarled branches reach almost to the ground. Earl holds the shoebox in one hand.

EARL

This place is Mamaloose Illahee, an old Chinook burial ground.

Earl sets the shoebox down and removes the lid.

Earl takes a jackknife with a hole neatly drilled in the handle and a little cedar canoe out of the shoe box.

With the jackknife, he carefully carves a hole in the bottom of the canoe.

SUZANNE

What's the hole for?

EARL

The canoe's alive, so we're making a hole in it so Frank can use it.

SUZANNE

The canoe is alive?

EARL

Everything's alive. Canoes, knives, baskets, everything.

Earl holds the canoe out to Suzanne.

Suzanne takes it in her hands.

Earl removes an envelope out of the shoebox, opens it, takes out a lock of hair. He puts it in the canoe as Suzanne watches.

Earl transfers a little piece of smoked salmon from the shoebox to the canoe.

EARL

The first time the old ones came to me, I didn't understand what they wanted. Kind of weird when dead people come and talk to you in your dreams.

SUZANNE

Yea, I know what you mean. A few days before Dad died, I dreamt that I was walking on a road that leads through a forest down to the sea. The road was paved with white round stones. At the end of the road, an older man sat on the beach carving on a canoe.

Earl rummages around in the shoebox and pulls out a small kerf box, and places it in the canoe with the other items.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

I look back behind me at the road. Those weren't stones on the road; they were skulls.

Suzanne fidgets with the canoe.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

I could see the black eye-holes peering at me above the surface of the ground. I hadn't noticed before because all the skulls had been looking out to sea.

Earl hands Suzanne the jackknife.

EARL

All along, you've been traveling on the skulls of your Ancestors. That's what we do. We walk forward into life on the bones of those who went before. Your dream is telling you to follow your path.

SUZANNE

How do I know if it is the right path?

EARL

It's your path. Only you know.

Suzanne places the jackknife into the canoe.

EARL (CONT'D)

Whichever path you choose, it will take you where you need to go.

Earl looks into the tree.

EARL (CONT'D)

Creator, Frank is with you now. Frank, your earthly time with us has ended, and you are in the embrace of our ancestors and with Mother Earth forever.

Suzanne places the little canoe in a fork of a low-hanging branch.

SUZANNE

I have to carve a canoe to prove that the Chinook people exist; is that my path?

Earl smiles, gathers up his shoebox, and walks with Suzanne back to the truck.

EARL

Our people have survived many hardships so that at this very moment, you would be ready to take up the paddle. This is your time.

SUZANNE

I don't think I can do it? What if I fail, what if I let everyone down, what if I cannot carve a canoe?

EARL

Suzanne, you are not alone; every Chinook who has ever walked this sacred place stands with you.

Earl and Suzanne smile at each other.

As Suzanne and Earl walk away, it is revealed that the old Chinook burial ground is on the edge of a vast, asphalt parking lot.

EXT. CHINOOK RESTAURANT AND GALLERY - DAY

Suzanne drives her Jeep up to the Chinook restaurant and parks out front.

She gets out and strolls towards the door of the restaurant.

Suzanne opens the front door of the restaurant and walks in.

Shirley looks up from her maitre station.

SUZANNE

Hey, mom.

SHIRLEY

Come here, Suzanne.

Suzanne approaches Shirley and extends her arms, and they hug.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Are you hungry?

SUZANNE

Yes.

SHIRLEY

I was craving a burger and fries,  
so I stopped at Ilwaco burger.

Suzanne opens the bag and takes a whiff.

SUZANNE

Smells good.

SHIRLEY

Come on, we can eat in the gallery,  
like when you were kids.

Suzanne heads into the gallery and makes the workbench ready for lunch as Shirley brings the bags from the Ilwaco burger.

They eat in silence.

Shirley gets up and walks to where Frank's carving tools hang.

She opens a small lockbox that has a Thunderbird carved on the front of it.

She pulls a beat-up notebook from the box.

SUZANNE

Dad's notebook.

Shirley places it on the table in front of Suzanne.

Suzanne starts flipping through the pages of the book.

SHIRLEY

Since the day I met your dad, he was never without it. He was always doodling in it or putting little pieces of paper or unique things in it.

SUZANNE

Wow, the drawing of these canoes looks like a photograph.

SHIRLEY

He drew those plans from an old canoe he used to play on as a kid.

SUZANNE

And it has instructions.

SHIRLEY

Frank had hoped that carving a canoe would help preserve the Chinook culture.

SUZANNE

He had such a passion for our people.

SHIRLEY

He also knew that he had to reach outside the Chinook and show we are part of the larger tribal community.

Suzanne opens a page that reveals canoe paddles.

SUZANNE

It's a drawing of the paddles that Earl has carved.

SHIRLEY

Turn the page.

Suzanne turns the next page and pulls out a flyer, and reads it.

SUZANNE

Paddle to Seattle, tribal canoe journey, celebrating the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest coast.

SHIRLEY

Your dad wanted us to do that as a family. That is why he had Earl carve the paddles. It was going to be his welcome home present.

Shirley starts to cry.

SUZANNE

Chinook culture is still alive after so much of it has been lost.

SHIRLEY

It is up to you now. You have to keep the culture alive.

SUZANNE

I remember dad telling Jimmy and me that someday we'd get federal recognition, and then the Chinook Nation would be whole again.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

The Chinook are still here, we don't need the government to tell us who we are or who we are not.

Suzanne closes the notebook.

EXT. ILWACO FISH N CHIPS - DAY

Suzanne opens the dumpster and she and Lindsay throw the trash bags in and lets the lid slam shut.

SUZANNE

It is like that video game we used to play when we were kids, where if you choose the wrong path, the bad guy eats your soul, and you die, or you choose the right path you live to fight another day.

LINDSAY

You're expecting your friends to give up all their free time to help you carve a canoe in a month and paddle it to Seattle, all, so you don't get your soul eaten?

SUZANNE

Yup.

LINDSAY

And tomorrow, we're going to go to a timber company to shop for a log for the said canoe.

SUZANNE

That's where the big logs live, Lindsay.

LINDSAY

So, I don't understand, what does it mean for the Chinook to have federal recognition?

SUZANNE

It means that some of things the government stole from us when they took our land would be given back and we could keep our traditions alive for future generations of Chinook.

LINDSAY

Does carving a canoe help you get that recognition?

SUZANNE

My dad though it might and I think it gives us a chance to tell the world that the Chinook are not gone, we are still here.

LINDSAY

How do you carve a canoe, anyway?

SUZANNE

I have plans.

INT. ILLWACO FISH N CHIPS - DAY

Suzanne and Lindsay walk into the restaurant.



Mark and Joe are at the grill flipping burgers and dipping fries.

SUZANNE

Mark, Joe, what are you guys up to tomorrow?

Mark and Joe look at each other.

MARK

Nothing.

SUZANNE

Great, I pick you guys up an eight at Lindsay's.

JOE

Did we just get voluntold?

MARK

Yup.

Roy gets uncomfortably close to Suzanne.

ROY

Suzanne, I'm going to need you and Lindsay to work tomorrow afternoon.

Suzanne moves away from him, but he shadows her.

SUZANNE

Okay.

LINDSAY

K.

ROY

And if you could close up too, that would be great. Thanks, chief.

He backs away from her, staring at her as he walks away.

SUZANNE

What is the chief thing with this guy?

LINDSAY

At least he didn't call you Pocahontas.

SUZANNE

Right, because that wouldn't be raciest or anything.

LINDSAY

Forget about him, he is an idiot.

EXT. A TIMBER DEPOT ON THE WATERFRONT - DAY

The kids cruise the waterfront in Suzanne's Jeep. Loading cranes loom over the shoreline like giant robot herons.

They reach the yards of a once-vast timber depot and drive through the main entry, following a concrete roadway.

On either side of the road, sagging sheet metal buildings squat by the roadside, their windows are broken or boarded up. Grass and weeds grow in the cracks of the pavement.

They pull into a parking lot next to the yard boss's trailer. A small stack of logs lay along the river's edge, next to an ocean-going transport ship tied up at the pier.

A lone log-handling machine CLANKS and GROWLS around the yard like a miniature Godzilla.

The kids hop out of the van. FRED NELSON, the yard foreman, steps up to greet them.

SUZANNE

Hi, Mr. Nelson.

FRED

You can call me Fred.

LINDSAY

Where are all the big logs?

FRED

Years ago, this yard used to be packed with logs, all the way back to the main road there.

MORFORD

Wow. What happened?

JOE

Toothpicks and toilet paper, my man. It's the Industrialized West's insatiable need for toothpicks and toilet paper. Madison Avenue, fanning the desire of Americans for pristine gums and clean asses.

MORFORD

They get you coming and going.

LINDSAY

Eeeew.

SUZANNE

Is there any cedar here, Mr. Nelson?

FRED

That's all cedar over there.

LINDSAY

Those are tiny logs.

Fred shoves his hard hat back on his head.

FRED

How big a log you lookin' for?

SUZANNE

About twenty feet long and forty-two inches in diameter.

FRED

That is old growth size. We don't deal in that anymore. Just young trees no bigger than this.

SUZANNE

What about finding a log in another yard?

FRED

Oh, you could try some other outfits. But even if you could find one of those logs, you wouldn't be able to get any mill workin' round here to saw it up.

JOE

Hey, it's a cost-benefit ratio thing, man.

SUZANNE

We don't want to saw it up. We want to carve this canoe out of a whole log.

MORFORD

I thought you planked it out, you know, like a drift boat.

JOE

Hello. Morford. Why do you think they're called dugouts?

SUZANNE  
Thanks a lot for your help, Mr.  
Nelson.

EXT. THE ILLWACO BURGER - DAY

All the kids except Joe are sitting at a picnic table. An occasional car passes by on the highway. Lindsay SLURPS up the last of her shake, scrunches up the cup, and makes a long shot into the trash.

A pickup truck with a trailer hauling a long white dugout canoe with WAVE EATER emblazon on the side pulls up.

Suzanne is mesmerized and walks over to the canoe.

CHRIS 20 something surfer-type dude gets out of the pickup and walks back to the trailer to tighten down one of the straps holding down the canoe.

He turns around and sees Suzanne.

CHRIS  
Hey.

SUZANNE  
Hey, did you carve this?

Chris LAUGHS goes to the Wave Eater, THUMPS on the hull.

CHRIS  
No, it's fiberglass. I'm Chris, by  
the way.

SUZANNE  
Suzanne. The hole doesn't look too  
bad.

CHRIS  
Naw, not too bad. I'm heading to my  
friend's surf shop; it should be a  
quick fix, just in time to paddle  
it up to Seattle. Hey, I gotta run.

SUZANNE  
Have a good paddle.

CHRIS  
Thanks.

Chris climbs in his rig and heads off down the road.

Joe arrives with a tray piled high with a couple of burgers, large fries, and a huge shake.

MORFORD

Jeez, Joe, do you have a hollow leg or what?

JOE

What, I'm hungry.

Joe rips open the wrapper of a burger and bury his snout in it.

Just then, a log truck DOWNSHIFTS and breaks the silence.

All the kids except Joe turn to look.

A truck carrying a massive, old-growth cedar log stops at the corner by the drive-in. The words, INDIVIDUAL TREE SELECTION MANAGEMENT CORPORATION, are stenciled on the cab door, along with the name RALPH.

The truck pulls away.

The kids leap up and dash to the Jeep.

Joe remains at the table, still scarfing his burger.

JOE

Hey, where are you guys going?

The kids pile in the Jeep. Suzanne starts the engine.

SUZANNE

Come on, Joe.

Joe leaps up, burger in hand, and dashes toward the Jeep. Suddenly, he stops, looks back at the table where he sees his fries and shake.

He looks at the Jeep. He looks at the chow.

The Jeep begins to pull away.

Joe runs for the Jeep.

JOE

Hey. Wait for me.

Joe jumps into the back seat and closes the door.

The Jeep pulls away from the Ilwaco Burger in hot pursuit of the log truck.

EXT. ITSMC LOGGING YARD - DAY

The log truck pulls into the yard. The Jeep follows close behind. A sign to the side of the building reads ITSMC.

The ITSMC establishment is highly organized clean. The machines parked around the compound are examples of cutting-edge logging technology.

The truck passes the office with a wrap-around porch. JOHN SORENSEN, a tall, middle-aged man, leans on the porch rail.

The truck grinds to a halt. The Jeep pulls up beside it.

The kid's bailout of the Jeep.

JOE  
Look at that log.

LINDSAY  
It's gigantic.

MORFORD  
Yeah.

The log truck driver, RALPH, 40s, gets out of the cab. He sees Suzanne and breaks into a grin.

RALPH  
Hey, Suzanne. What are you doing here?

SUZANNE  
Hi, Ralph. We're looking for a log.

RALPH  
It looks like you've come to the right place.

SUZANNE  
I didn't know you worked here.

RALPH  
Oh, I drive for Big John now and again.

Together, Ralph and Suzanne walk up the porch steps, with the rest of the kids trailing behind. Ralph introduces Suzanne to John.

RALPH  
John, this is Frank Ross's daughter, Suzanne. Susanne, this is John Sorensen. He owns that log.

JOHN

Pleased to meet you, Suzanne. I knew your Dad. He was a fine man. I was sorry to hear about his passing. We are all thankful for his service.

SUZANNE

Thanks, Mr. Sorensen.

JOHN

What can I do for you?

SUZANNE

We're interested in that log.

Suzanne points to the log on Ralph's trailer.

JOHN

Well, that particular log is spoken for.

SUZANNE

Oh.

JOHN

I can get you another one if you want. What would be wantin with a log of that size?

SUZANNE

To carve a dugout canoe.

JOHN

Canoe, now that's a project.

JOE

How much does that log cost?

JOHN

Oh, bout twenty thousand dollars. But I'd be willin to sell you one for fifteen thousand.

SUZANNE

Fifteen thousand dollars, wow.

The kids are stunned into silence.

Morford glances at his watch.

MORFORD

Lindsay. Aren't you going to be late for work?

Lindsay grabs his wrist pulls it toward her, twisting his arm to look at the watch.

MORFORD

Ow.

LINDSAY

Suzanne, work.

SUZANNE

Huh?

Lindsay grabs Suzanne and shakes her.

LINDSAY

Suzanne, I hate to be late.

SUZANNE

Omigosh.

MORFORD

Come on. I'll drive.

SUZANNE

Thank you, Mr. Sorensen.

JOHN

Bye, you kids, take care.

John heads inside.

JOE

I'm not gonna let Morford drive. He drives like a maniac.

MORFORD

Well, you can't drive Joe. You don't even have a license.

Meanwhile, Suzanne and Lindsay confer.

LINDSAY

Suzanne? Would you care to drive?

SUZANNE

I'd be delighted.

LINDSAY

Well then, let's go already.

Suzanne hops into the driver's seat, with Lindsay riding shotgun. Suzanne starts the Jeep.

Lindsay leans out the window and waves at the guys.



The guys watch as the Jeep fishtails in the gravel, straightens, pulls out onto the main road, and takes off.

Ralph comes over to Morford and Joe.

RALPH

It looks like you fellas could use a ride.

EXT. ILWACO FISH N CHIPS - DAY

Suzanne and Lindsay pull up to the back of the fast-food joint.

Roy is sitting on a milk crate in the back, smoking a cigarette.

ROY

Babes, you are late. There is a price to pay for that.

A loud CRASH emanates from inside the restaurant.

ROY

What now?

Roy flicks his cigarette towards the dumpster, gets up, and walks inside.

Suzanne and Lindsay get out of the Jeep, put on their aprons, and walk towards the restaurant's back.

SUZANNE

How am I supposed to carve a log into a canoe when I can't even afford a fricken log.

LINDSAY

I know fifteen thousand dollars for a tree; I mean, they are everywhere.

SUZANNE

Yeah, we should go cut one down.

LINDSAY

Great idea; my dad has a chain saw.

Suzanne and Lindsay head inside the joint.

INT. ILWACO FISH N CHIPS - DAY

Suzanne put her Ilwaco Fish N' Chip cap on.

Suzanne gently puts the frozen fries in the frier.

Lindsay is putting the cooked fries into the French Fry cup.

Roy walks up to Suzanne.

ROY

Suzanne, I need you to get more fish sticks out of the freezer; I'd do it, but my wrist hurts.

SUZANNE

Okay, Lindsay, can you take the fries out when the buzzer goes off?

LINDSAY

Sure.

Suzanne follows Roy to the freezer.

Roy opens the door, Suzanne walks in first, and Roy follows, quietly closing the door behind them.

ROY

They are the ones in the corner, on the floor, chief.

Suzanne walks to the back of the freezer.

Roy is very close behind her.

ROY(TO HIMSELF)

In the freezer, no one can hear you scream.

SUZANNE

What did you say?

ROY

Over there in the corner on the floor.

Suzanne bends over to pick up the box.

ROY (CONT'D)

No, the one further in, chief.

Suzanne switches positions to reach the other box.

Just as she does that, Roy grabs her by the hips and thrusts his pelvis against her backside.

SUZANNE

What are you doing?

Roy continues.

Suzanne grabs a number ten can of ketchup with both her hands and stands up, leans to her left, and tosses it over her shoulder, hitting Roy square in the face knocking him back on the freezer floor.

ROY

Come on, chief; you know you want it; you're practically begging me for it.

Suzanne lets out a primal scream.

SUZANNE

What is wrong with you?

Suzanne backs out of the freezer, closes the door and puts the lock on the handle, locks it, and tosses the key over her shoulder, and the key lands in the deep fryer.

SUZANNE

Lindsay, I quit. I'll call you.

LINDSAY

Okay.

Suzanne walks out of the Fish and Chip place.

INT. SUZANNE'S JEEP - DAY

Suzanne starts her Jeep, shifts it into gear, slowly backs out. Then she slams it into gear and accelerates hard past the Ilwaco Fish & Chips.

EXT. THE COAST HIGHWAY - DAY

Suzanne Jeeps speeds down the coast highway, the late-afternoon sun flashing on the windshield of her truck. Dark spruce woods hug the road on one side; sheer cliffs fall into the sea on the other.

INT./EXT. JEEP - DAY

Suzanne downshifts turns a sharp hairpin corner.

A PAIR OF RAVENS flies across the road.

Suzanne, crying, takes her eyes off the road for a moment to watch a pair of ravens fly into the trees.

Suddenly, a log truck overloaded with trees rounds the bend, crossing into her lane.

Suzanne swerves to avoid the log truck.

Losing control, she careens off the highway, ripping through the underbrush, heading for the cliff's edge.

WHUMP.

The truck suddenly stops, the front end buried in the rotted remains of a hundred-year-old cedar stump.

INT. SUZANNE'S JEEP - DAY

Suzanne's head WHACKS against the steering wheel, knocking her unconscious.

INT. SUZANNE'S TRUCK - DAY

Suzanne wakes to the sound of the breaking surf.

SUZANNE

Whoa.

One of the raven's lands on the Jeep's hood spreads its wings, CAWS.

Suzanne pulls back with a gasp.

Then, folding its wings, the bird sidles up the hood and looks sidelong at Suzanne through the windshield.

SUZANNE

Hey. You can't eat me. I'm not dead yet; it's against the rules.

Suzanne sinks back into unconsciousness.

INT. A NORTHWEST COAST CEDAR LODGE - DAY (DREAM)

Suzanne opens her eyes. She sits up. She is inside a Chinook longhouse, sitting on a brightly colored native blanket.

Across the dirt floor, centered on the opposite side of the lodge, two support beams hold up the roof, each carved in the likeness of a raven. An elk-hide curtain painted with the image of a Chinook salmon hangs between them.

From behind the curtain comes the rhythmic BEAT of a drum.

In the center of the floor is a fire pit. No fire burns there.

Suddenly, a human-like figure emerges behind the curtain, wearing a RAVEN MASK with a long beak. It's RAVEN, the old trickster.

Raven saunters bird-like to the fire pit. He leans over to look in, his beak almost touching the ashes.

Then, POOF. The fire ignites with a shower of sparks.

Raven staggers back, flustered. Regaining his composure, Raven approaches the fire pit again begins to warm his wing-tips over the fire.

Suddenly, one of Raven's eyes alights on Suzanne. She's been seen.

Suzanne looks back, transfixed.

Suddenly, Raven's head splits open. The over-beak cracks along its axis. The under-beak gapes wide.

Suzanne's vision blurs. The entire scene distorts and pulls apart, the lodge's walls receding into the dark distance.

In the blink of her eye, she is alone.

In the center of the floor, where the fire had been, stands a large kerf box.

Suzanne is drawn to the box. She approaches it, touches it, runs her fingers along its decorated sides.

She looks at the lid. The image of a Chinook, its eye stares back at her.

Suzanne opens the box.

A huge wave, a TIDAL WAVE, a veritable TSUNAMI, gushes from the box and engulfs her.

Suzanne is lost in the blur and surge and foam of the wave; she is overwhelmed and drawn down into the depths.

INT. SUZANNE'S TRUCK - DAY

Suzanne awakens, slowly becoming aware of the SOUNDS of the world around her, flowing over her in a deep, living current: WIND in the trees; the ROAR of distant surf; the SONGS of birds.

She opens her eyes. Through the windshield, she sees the open sky. She sits up slowly, then carefully unbuckles herself and climbs out of the cab.

She grabs the canoe paddle to help her out of the Jeep and uses it as a crutch to walk.

The RAT-TAT-TAT of a PILEATED WOODPECKER on a nearby pine tree causes Suzanne to look up.

Having caught Suzanne's eye, the woodpecker flaps up into the air and drops over the cliff's edge.

Suzanne follows the woodpecker to the edge of the cliff and peers over.

Far below, a huge cedar log roils and grinds in the rock-strewn surf.

EXT. BOATHOUSE - EVENING

Suzanne parks her Jeep.

She climbs out slowly, slams the Jeep door, and limps to the boathouse.

She hears shouting coming from inside.

She heads inside the boathouse and hears Hank's voice; he is drunk and out of control.

Hank is whacking Jimmy on the top of the head with a framed poster.

Jimmy is just taking the beating.

SUZANNE

Stop.

Hank stops hitting Jimmy for a moment and turns on Suzanne.

HANK

You.

Suzanne ducks just in time to avoid being hit by the poster.

Hank throws the poster against the door jam, and the poster frame breaks, falling to pieces on the ground.

Hank shoves past Suzanne, and she rushes in to see Jimmy.

SUZANNE  
Jimmy, you okay?

Jimmy is standing, rubbing his head.

JIMMY  
My head hurts.

Hank appears in the doorway of Jimmy's room with a long barrel .22.

Hank fires one shot. The bullet misses both Jimmy and Suzanne hitting the window behind them, shattering the glass into a proverbial million pieces.

The three stand stunned in silence, wide-eyed.

Hank drops the gun on the floor, slides against the door jamb, and passes out.

Suzanne picked up the gun and tossed it into the water.

SUZANNE  
Come on, Jimmy.

Suzanne grabs Jimmy by the hand and drags him out of the room and out the door to the Jeep.

INT. JEEP COUNTRY ROADS AND THROUGH TOWN - NIGHT

SUZANNE  
What was that all about?

JIMMY  
He does that when he is drunk.

SUZANNE  
Jeez, he almost killed us.

Suzanne makes a right-hand turn.

JIMMY  
Where are you taking me?

SUZANNE  
Uncle Earl's, it's late, and unlike some people I'm not sleeping on the streets.

JIMMY

Look apple. I ain't goin to Earl's.

SUZANNE

Apple?

JIMMY

Red on the outside, white on the inside. Matter of fact you could pass for white, and I bet you do don't you?

SUZANNE

That's so mean; I'm Chinook.

JIMMY

You're just playing; you don't even know how to be Indian. Besides, there ain't no such thing as Chinook; we don't exist; white folks keeps making sure of that. Pull over, I'm out of here.

Suzanne pulls her Jeep over to the side of the road and stops.

SUZANNE

Dad said, you have to bridge the two worlds, respect our ancestors, carry on the old ways, and yes, live in the white world.

JIMMY

Die in the white man's war. That's a great way to respect our ancestors. Go shed a tear in your canoe.

Jimmy jumps out of the jeep and slams the door behind him. As he walks away, he flips up his hoodie.

A MAN walks up to the Jeep driver's side.

MAN

Hey, can I get a ride, chief?

SUZANNE

No, sorry.

He quickly opens Suzanne's unlocked door, grabs her, and throws her to the ground.

MAN

Your mine now squaw.



Suzanne is trying to escape his grasp, but he overpowers her.  
He starts dragging her off.

MAN  
Go ahead squaw, fight me, but  
either way your coming with me.

Jimmy carefully opens the Jeep's back door and grabs the canoe paddle out of the back seat.

Jimmy walks around the front of the Jeep, stands behind the man, and swings the paddle like a baseball he hits the man squarely on the head.

The man is knocked off balance, rolls over on his back, and holds his head.

MAN  
What the?

Jimmy nods to Suzanne; she nods back at him.

The man slowly stands and holds the side of his head and staggers.

Suzanne stands up next to the Jeep.

Jimmy throws the paddle to Suzanne, who catches it and spins it with one hand and then takes a warrior stance with it.

The man looks at Suzanne.

Suzanne lunges at the man with the paddle.

SUZANNE  
Ah.

The man stumbles back.

Jimmy turns heel and runs.

The man staggers after Jimmy.

Suzanne stays in her stance until the man has gone out of view.

Suzanne gets in the Jeep, slams the door, then locks it.

She gently sets the paddle in the passenger seat.

She starts the Jeep, grinds the gears, and speeds away, fast and out of control.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Suzanne skids the Jeep to a stop in the gravel road of the trailer park.

Suzanne turns the Jeep off and sets the brake.

She pounds on the steering wheel several times, screams out of control, and then begins to cry.

After a moment, she regains her composure and straightens her clothes.

Suzanne slowly opens her door and jumps out of the Jeep. She grimaces as she hits the ground with both feet, still sore from the earlier crash.

She limps as she walks towards Earl's trailer.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILERS FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

There is a handwritten sign resting precariously next to the doorbell which reads, DOORBELL BROKE, below that in red block letters and in all caps, NO SOLICITORS, THAT MEANS YOU.

Suzanne knocks on the door.

You can hear rustling from inside.

From inside a voice.

EARL  
Can't you read?

Suzanne knocks again, then again.

EARL  
This better be life or death.

Earl opens the door.

SUZANNE  
Life.

Earl shakes his head, then removes his ball cap and scratches the top of his head.

EARL  
Well, come on in before you catch  
your death.

Suzanne enters the trailer and gives Earl a big bear hug.

INT. EARL'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Earl closes the door behind them.

SUZANNE

I'd like to spend the night if I could?

EARL

Let me guess; the house burned down, and your mom is working all night at the restaurant.

SUZANNE

Yes.

EARL

Are you hungry? I was havin some leftover seafood stew.

SUZANNE

Oooh, that sounds good. Dad used to say, don't go to sleep on an empty stomach.

Earl directs Suzanne into the kitchen.

EARL

My brother was a wise man.

INT. EARL'S TRAILER - NIGHT.

Earl and Suzanne are slurping on the stew.

EARL

How's Jimmy doin'?

SUZANNE

I don't know.

EARL

You know there is no native word for homeless.

SUZANNE

Everywhere is sacred.

EARL (SINGING)

Anywhere I lay, my head is home.

SUZANNE

Is that Metallica?

EARL

Very good.

Suzanne takes another slurp of soup.

SUZANNE

I found a canoe log today.

EARL

Found one? Let me guess a little bird told you.

SUZANNE

Yes, a woodpecker, how did you know?

EARL

Lucky guess.

SUZANNE

Can we go get it tomorrow?

EARL

Tomorrow?

SUZANNE

I need something to look forward to, or I'm going to lose it.

EARL

Well, we cannot have that. You're the only sane one in the family.

SUZANNE

What about you?

EARL

Your dad never told you?

They both laugh.

EARL

So, where did you find a canoe log?

SUZANNE

Deadman's cove.

EARL

Deadman's cove?

SUZANNE

I saw it from above. I think we can get your boat in there at low tide.

EARL

You know dead man's cove is right next to cape disappointment. They don't call it that for nothin, you know?

SUZANNE

I know it's dangerous.

EARL

Last year cousin George and two of his buddies perished when their boat capsized.

SUZANNE

And they never found the bodies.

EARL

And you still want to go out there?

SUZANNE

Dad always said if you don't follow your dreams, they will die a most horrible death.

EARL

Your dad told you that?

Earl looks up.

EARL (CONT'D)

Kind of macabre little brother.

SUZANNE

I have to prove the Chinook are still here.

Earl looks up again.

EARL

After this, Frank, we're even.

Suzanne gets up and gives Earl a big bear hug.

SUZANNE

It'll be fun, Uncle Earl.

EARL

If you say so, but we survive this, you make me your famous macaroni potato salad. I need something to look forward to.

SUZANNE

Deal.

EXT. WILLAPA BAY MARINA - BOATHOUSE - DAY

Suzanne, Joe, Morford, and Lindsay clamber into Earl's boat. Earl and Ralph secure an inflatable rubber raft to the stern.

Suzanne tops off the gas tank on the raft. Hank, hair flying wild in the wind, stands by grousing.

HANK

Hey, babe, where's that worthless brother of yours?

SUZANNE

Don't know.

Suzanne finishes fueling, re-seats the hose, then climbs into the boat with the rest of the kids.

HANK

You see him before I do, you tell him he is fired, but you can work here anytime.

Hank turns and trundles off to the Boathouse, MUTTERING under his breath.

Morford and Joe help Earl cast off.

Lindsay scrunches up next to Suzanne as close as her life jacket will allow.

Earl pulls the boat away from the dock suddenly, sending Joe tumbling ass over teakettle.

LINDSAY

I can't believe I'm out here on this stupid boat, all because of your weirdo dreams.

Joe again launches into his Viennese psychiatrist schtick.

JOE

Ze young woman's dreams are not paranormal intrusions into concrete reality; rather zay h'are messages from ze deep unconscious which demands attention from ze conscious ego. All normal people have zem.

SUZANNE

See, Lindsay. Normal. Not weirdo.

LINDSAY.

Oh, I'm so-oo convinced.

Earl maneuvers the boat through the Marina and out into the open ocean.

EXT. OFFSHORE - A HEADLAND - EARL'S BOAT - DAY

Scudding clouds from the Southwest slowly darken the sky. Waves sweep in toward shore churn through the rocks on the headland.

Ralph looks at the clouds.

RALPH

Think it's gonna rain?

EARL

Maybe.

Ralph squints at the clouds then shrugs his shoulders.

Spray whips over the boat's bow as it pitches and yaws through the waves.

Joe looks a little green. He glances at Ralph, who is next to him in the boat.

Ralph grins and slaps him on the back.

Joe leans over the gunwale to hurl just as a wave slaps him in the face. He slumps back, thoroughly wretched.

RALPH

You'll get used to it, Joe.

Joe hangs his head over the side.

JOE

Don't wanna.

Earl pilots the boat around the headland and enters a small, sheltered cove.

They see the log, on the rocks, just above the tide line.

EXT. COVE - EARL'S BOAT - DAY

Ralph at the helm, Lindsay, and Morford stand by the winch on the stern. Earl snaps a leader onto the D-ring of the winch's cable throws it into the raft where Jimmy, Suzanne, and Joe are waiting.

JOE  
(looking up from the raft)  
What a fine winch.

Lindsay stares at him blankly.

Suzanne slugs Joe on the shoulder.

JOE  
I was referring to the machine.

Earl shakes his head and clambers into the raft with them.

Lindsay casts them off the raft.

Morford pays out cable from the winch.

Earl pilots the raft shoreward.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Earl beaches the raft. The kids hop out, pull the raft out of the surf, and up onto the sand.

EARL  
Joe, you carry the choker. Suzanne,  
you and I'll haul on the leader.

They trudge through the sand to the log.

SUZANNE  
Now, what do we do?

EARL  
We're going to set the choker.

Earl takes the choker from Joe.

EXT. EARL'S BOAT - DAY

Ralph, at the helm, keeps the boat bow towards the incoming swells.

RALPH  
Lindsay, you keep an eye on Earl.



LINDSAY

Okay.

RALPH

Mark. Stand by the winch.

MORFORD

I'm on her.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Earl expertly secures the choker around the butt end of the log.

EARL

That's how she's done.

Earl grabs the landward end of the cable.

EARL

Joe, you connect the choker-hook to the cable loop.

Joe looks at Suzanne.

EARL

Take that loop there and slip it on the hook.

Joe hesitates.

Suzanne grabs the cable loop and slips it on the hook.

EARL

That's the way you do it.

Earl holds tension on the cable. He thrusts his arm into the air, index finger pointing skyward, then rotates his hand clockwise in wide circles.

EXT. EARL'S BOAT - DAY

LINDSAY

He's doing a pointy circley thingie.

RALPH

Okay, Mark. Start the winch. Slowly.

Morford engages the power switch. The winch turns, hauling in the cable.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The cable gradually pulls taught. Earl makes a fist in the air.

EXT. EARL'S BOAT - DAY

LINDSAY  
He's making a fist.

RALPH  
Mark stops the winch and locks it.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Earl lets go of the cable.

EARL  
Okay, kids. Stand clear.

Earl, Suzanne, and Joe stand a safe distance from the log.

Earl gives a thumbs up to the boat.

EXT. EARL'S BOAT - DAY

LINDSAY  
He's giving a thumbs up.

RALPH  
Hang on.

Ralph revs the engine. The boat churns forward.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The log slides across the beach and toward the surf.

The kids go wild.

EXT. EARL'S BOAT - DAY

Suddenly, the boat lifts and rolls.

RALPH  
Holy.

Ralph immediately cuts power to the engine and yells over his shoulder.

RALPH  
WAVE...

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A SNEAKER WAVE surges over the log swirls around Earl, Suzanne, and Joe, engulfing them up to their waists.

Earl struggles to stay on his feet, then goes down.

Suzanne and Joe hold onto each other, straining against the retreating wave.

SUZANNE  
AUGHHHHH.

A SECOND WAVE knocks them down and shoves them and the massive log inland.

EXT. EARL'S BOAT - DAY

The boat is bucking like a bronco, throwing Lindsay and Morford to the boat's deck.

Ralph struggles to keep the bow pointed into the waves.

RALPH  
Mark, unlock the winch.

Morford crawls to the winch, grabs the handle, struggles to release the lock.

LINDSAY  
The winch is stuck.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Suzanne and Joe surface, sputtering and gasping.

Suzanne struggles to her feet.

JOE  
Help.

Suzanne grabs Joe by his arms and pulls.

JOE  
Stop. Stop.

SUZANNE  
Come on, Joe.

JOE  
I can't. My foot's stuck.

Another WAVE rolls in, pushing the log toward them.

EXT. EARL'S BOAT - DAY

Ralph throws the boat into reverse to release the slack on the cable. The stern plunges downward, shipping water, drenching Lindsay and Morford.

The winch handle jerks out of Morford's hands, releasing the drum.

The cable zips from the winch drum, free.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The choker hook flies from the slackened cable, releasing the log.

Suzanne manages to pull Joe free.

The log, shoved inland by the force of the surf, misses them by inches.

The log rolls across the sand and skids to a thumping, clattering halt.

The waves retreat.

Suzanne collapses next to Joe.

EXT. EARL'S BOAT - DAY

The stern of the boat rises. Water pours off the deck.

RALPH  
Mark. Reel in the cable.

Morford engages the winch.

RALPH  
Lindsay. Is everybody okay?

Lindsay scrambles to the stern surveys the beach.

LINDSAY  
I don't see Earl.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Suzanne, sprawled on the beach, raises her head and looks around.

Suzanne and Joe struggle to their feet.

SUZANNE

Earl.

Suddenly, Earl appears from behind the log. His hat is gone, and wet hair is hanging over his face.

EARL

Wee-hoo. Nature's as sharp as the edge of a knife.

The skies open, and rain sluices down in sheets.

EXT. WILLAPA BAY MARINA DOCK - NIGHT

Rain sweeps in from the sea pounds on the dock. The boathouse lamps sway in the wind. Boats in the mooring rock on the swells.

Suzanne stands alone in the rain on the dock. Water drips from her hat and runs like tears down her face.

Morford and Lindsay arrive, huddling close to Suzanne.

Joe joins them, a half-eaten burger in his hands, along with Ralph and Earl.

They all stare out to sea.

EXT. EARL'S BOAT - DAY

Earl and Ralph stand by the helm. The boat rounds the headland and enters the cove.

The kids line the gunwales, expectant.

Suzanne is tight-lipped, her face a mask of anxiety.

They clear the point and see a beach swept clean.

LINDSAY

The log's gone.

Joe clambers up the superstructure and scans the shore. Suddenly he points and sings out:

JOE  
Thar she blows.

SUZANNE  
There it is.

LINDSAY  
Where? I don't see it.

SUZANNE  
There, next to the big tree.

MORFORD  
They're all big trees.

JOE  
See? Just down from that snag.

LINDSAY  
I see it. I see it.

EXT. CREEK-BED - DAY

A small, clear stream flows and splashes through bracken and Salal, past the massive log where Earl, Ralph, and the kids gather.

They look at the log and then turn and survey the distance between the log and the beach.

Ralph shakes his head.

EARL  
It looks like we're up that creek I  
been hearin' about all these years.

MORFORD  
What do you mean?

SUZANNE  
He means that we're not going to be  
able to pull the log out of here.

JOE  
We're going to need a bigger boat.

EARL  
That's about the size of it.

They all fall silent.

At last, Suzanne breaks the silence.

SUZANNE

So, if we can't move it, why don't  
we carve it up here?

Everybody turns to stare at her in amazement.

JOE

Out of the mouth of the babe.

Lindsay punches Joe's arm.

JOE

It was a compliment.

SUZANNE

Well let's get carvin'.

EXT. CREEK-BED - DAY

Smoke curls along the side of the cedar log.

Connie sits to one side of the log, draped in a cedar bark  
cape, DRUMMING softly.

Ralph, wearing a black T-shirt with a red Chinook salmon  
design, moves down the cedar log, which now rests on  
driftwood supports.

CHANTING in low tones, he uses an eagle-wing fan to smudge  
the cedar log with smoke from a burning knot of cedar bark.

Suzanne and the rest of the crew stand around the log. Each  
holds one of Earl's carved paddles.

Earl stands behind the butt-end of the log with his steering-  
paddle, completing the image of a "Spirit Boat."

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. CREEK-BED - DUSK

The kids sit cross-legged, still in paddling position.

Ralph tends a fire nearby. Connie sits by the fire, DRUMMING  
and SINGING a paddling song.

Smoke and burning embers rise into the sky. The stars are  
coming out one by one as the sun touches the edge of the  
horizon, sinks, and flashes out.

EXT. CREEK-BED - DAY

The kids gather around the log, fumbling with a jumble of aluminum poles and a blue tarp that threatens at any moment to blow away in the wind.

SUZANNE

Come on, guys. We have less than a month to carve this log into a canoe.

LINDSAY

How are you going to paddle it to Seattle from here?

EARL

There is a lot of water between here and there.

SUZANNE

One paddle stroke at a time.

JOE

It is like a miracle, turning a log into a canoe.

SUZANNE

Hardly a miracle, Joe; the old ones used to do it all the time and without a chainsaw.

Ralph and Earl sit on a driftwood log nearby, sipping coffee, watching the kids.

Suzanne, Lindsay, Joe each grab an edge of the tarp as Morford and Joe futzes with the poles.

Suzanne's end of the tarp flies out of her hands, and she lunges for it.

SUZANNE

Do you know what you're doing?

MORFORD

Oh yeah.

LINDSAY

Did you guys read the instructions?

JOE

Instructions?



Suddenly, a gust of wind bends several aluminum poles as if they were taffy, ripping the tarp out of Suzanne and Lindsay's hands. The entire structure collapses on top of the boys.

Suzanne looks at the disaster, then at Ralph and Earl.

Ralph shakes his head.

Earl takes a long, slow sip of coffee.

Earl gets up to help, and Ralph follows suit.

EXT. CREEK-BED - DAY

The tarp hangs over the log, supported by bent poles and makeshift lashings.

EARL

Well, it ain't the presidential suite, but hey, it's up.

INT. THE SHELTER - DAY

Suzanne, carrying her dad's notebook, joins Earl and Lindsay inside the make-shift shelter.

She opens the notebook to a sketch of a canoe and places it on top of the log.

Lindsay, curious, looks at one of the log drawings, squints at the paper, then the log, then the drawing.

LINDSAY

So, which is the top and which is the bottom?

EARL

(patting the top of the log)

This'll be your top...

(pointing to the bottom of the log)

...and this here's your bottom.

SUZANNE

See Lindsay, easy.

EXT. THE SHELTER - DAY

Earl trudges up from the beach, carrying a chain saw on each shoulder. Morford and Joe assist Earl in dismounting the saws and lowering them to the ground.

In full logger regalia, Joe swaggers over to one of the chain saws, puts one foot on the chain saw, and attempts to start it by reefing on the starting cord.

Once.

Twice.

Again.

Joe exhausted steps back.

Morford guides Joe out of the way, picks up the saw with one hand, and grabs the cord with the other. He lets the saw drop, pulling the starting cord in one smooth and graceful motion.

The saw starts instantly.

LINDSAY

Oo-oo, baby.

SUZANNE

Oh, brother.

Earl starts the second saw holds it out to Suzanne.

Suzanne takes the saw. They all enter the shelter.

Under the tutelage of Earl and Ralph, Morford and Suzanne begin to rough out the canoe's shape.

The cedar chips fly.

INT. THE SHELTER - DAY

Earl checks out the roughed-out canoe with the kids.

Ralph arrives with bags from Ilwaco Burger. The kids mob him like a flock of crows and leave him empty-handed.

As the kids scarf their chow, Ralph talks story.

EARL

I knew a fella up in Gig Harbor, he  
set out to carved a canoe.

(MORE)

EARL (cont'd)

He had to take out a second mortgage just to buy the log. His wife didn't like that at all. That log sat out in the backyard for a long time. I never did think he was gonna finish that thing.

JOE

So, did he finish it?

EARL

Oh, he found the time to finish it.  
'Course, he warn't married no more.

Ralph and Earl laugh loud and long.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Earl and Ralph move among the kids, constantly guiding, teaching by gesture and example how to use the tools of a canoe carver.

EXT. BEACH - DUSK

Earl's boat rocks in the water, silhouetted against the setting sun.

The group of kids and the two adults move across the beach toward the rubber raft pulled up on the sand.

Joe rushes to catch up.

INT. - SUZANNE DRIVING THE JEEP - AFTERNOON

Suzanne drives her Jeep through downtown Ilwaco.

She sees Jimmy walking down the street.

She pulls her Jeep over and rolls down her window.

SUZANNE

Jimmy?

Suzanne pops the clutch, killing the engine, and jumps out of the Jeep.

SUZANNE

Jimmy, Jimmy.

JIMMY

What?

SUZANNE

Come on. You saved my life, well, a couple of times. Now it's my turn to save yours.

JIMMY

It's a tough habit to break, little bear.

SUZANNE

Nothing that hard physical labor in the great outdoors can't fix. You know, carving, like when we were kids.

JIMMY

You know the whole town thinks we have lost it. Me a homeless addict, and you are carving a canoe.

Jimmy turns to look the other way.

SUZANNE

Remember that quote dad used to say to us all the time? The Columbia River is our teacher.

JIMMY

It quenches our thirst, carries our canoes, and feeds our children.

Jimmy turns around.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Was it Chief Seattle?

Suzanne extends her hand.

SUZANNE

I think so.

Jimmy reaches out and takes her hand.

JIMMY

Okay, but I ain't usin no chain saw, only an adze.

SUZANNE

Roger that.

They both laugh.

EXT. WILLAPA BAY MARINA - BOAT HOUSE - DAWN

Earl, Ralph, and the kids with Jimmy clamber down into the boat.

SUZANNE

Jimmy, you remember Lindsay,  
Morford, and Joe.

JIMMY

How could I forget? Didn't we play  
cowboys and Indians together?

JOE

For the record, I was totally  
against it.

Lindsay hugs Suzanne.

LINDSAY

Can you believe that guy at the  
hardware store?

SUZANNE

I know, right, chief?

MORFORD

What's wrong with chief?

LINDSAY

Jeez, Mark have some cultural  
sensitivity.

JIMMY

It is derogatory to call any Native  
American chief.

MARK

Oh.

LINDSAY

If he would address Suzanne as a  
person of power, he should have  
called her Clan Mother.

MARK

Clan mother?

SUZANNE

Watch it, Mark.

LINDSAY

I think it has a nice ring to it,  
Clan Mother.

SUZANNE  
Thanks, Linds.

Earl looks at his watch

EARL  
Where's Joe?

The kids look at each other shrug.

EARL(CONT'D)  
Let's cast off, then.

The boat is several feet away from the dock. Joe comes pelting around the boathouse, Joe's hands swathed in bandages, various belongings falling from his person as he runs.

Joe leaps and lands safely on the boat.

SUZANNE  
(pointing to the dock.)  
Joe. You dropped something.

Joe turns. He watches as seagulls descend upon a hapless brown bag and its contents.

EXT. THE SHELTER - DAY

Suzanne, Lindsay, Joe, Morford, and Jimmy, wet with sweat, stir a bed of red-hot coals in a fire pit next to the creek.

Ralph directs them as they place rocks in the middle of the coals.

As Joe attempts to place a stone in the coals, the flames flare up, and he lets go of the stone. It falls into the fire pit. Embers fly up around his face like a swarm of bees.

Jimmy helps Joe out of the fire. Joe stumbles back, trips, and falls into the ice-cold water of the creek.

JOE  
Ahhhhhh.

Ralph and Morford LAUGH.

RALPH  
It looks like Joe's got his own  
sweat lodge action goin' there.

INT. THE SHELTER - DAY

Earl points out the slightly concave bottom of the canoe. He mimics the spreading of the hull and the lifting of the bow and stern during the steaming process with sweeping hand gestures.

Suzanne enters the shelter carrying a smoking hot rock in pair of wooden tongs. She releases the stone gently into the canoe. HISS OF STEAM as the stone submerges in the water.

Morford, Jimmy, and Joe continue to bring in stones. The water boils.

Jimmy walks to the woods and throws up.

Suzanne walks over to him with a water bottle.

SUZANNE

Are you okay?

He wipes his mouth with the sleeve of his hoody.

JIMMY

Yeah, my body isn't used to so much clean living.

They both chuckle.

They head back to the canoe.

Under Earl's direction, Suzanne and Jimmy carefully tap in the thwarts that will widen the hull.

Afterward, they drape a canvas tarp over the hull to hold in the heat and moisture. Billows of steam float up to escape around the edges of the tarp.

EXT. EARL'S TRAILER - DAY

Earl is barbecuing on the deck of the trailer overlooking the slough.

Earl points the burger spatula at the sky.

EARL (TO HIMSELF)

Cleaver as the Raven, little bother, getting me to carve a canoe, with a bunch of greenhorns no less.

Suzanne approaches Earl with an empty plate.

SUZANNE

Who are you talking to, Uncle Earl?

EARL

No one. Can you pass me the seasoning?

Suzanne hands him a well-worn plastic bowl with a make-shift lid.

Connie comes down the back steps lugging a big basket full of weaving material.

CONNIE

Hey, Suzanne.

SUZANNE

Hey, Connie.

Connie puts down her basket on the picnic table and hugs Suzanne.

Then she holds Suzanne out arm's length, her hands on Suzanne's shoulders.

CONNIE

You have that good tired look about you.

SUZANNE

I never knew carving a canoe would be so hard.

CONNIE

It's what they call putting your soul into it.

Connie picks up her basket.

CONNIE (CONT'D, TO EARL)

I am heading to the class; you better get in there. I think Ralph is grazin' in the fridge again.

Earl heads up the stairs with the plate full of salmon, followed by Suzanne.

EARL

It's like havin' a bear in your house.



INT. EARL'S KITCHEN - DAY

Suzanne and Earl find Ralph holding the refrigerator door open. It's full of fresh, non-processed food and veggies.

Lindsay, Morford, Joe, and Jimmy are gathered around the kitchen table, eating like there is no tomorrow.

RALPH  
Ain't you got nothin' good?

EARL  
Smoked oysters are in the crisper.

RALPH  
Ah. So that's where you hide 'em.

Earl and Suzanne bustle around the kitchen, preparing the salmon for the restaurant.

Ralph finds a fork and sits down, and joins the kids at the kitchen table with the oysters.

Ralph spears an oyster and pops it into his mouth.

RALPH  
Mmmm.

Suzanne pauses from her fish-wrapping and looks at the carved paddles in the other room.

SUZANNE  
Now that the canoe is ready, we should head out to Seattle.

EARL  
The canoe is not ready.

SUZANNE  
What do you mean not ready?

RALPH  
You got to name it.

SUZANNE  
Name it?

EARL  
Every canoe has a true name, and the carver knows it.

SUZANNE  
How do you know what the name is?

Earl pushes the fridge door closed with his foot.

EARL  
You just know.

Suzanne picks up a slice of salmon, places it onto a plastic sheet, and wraps it up.

INT. THE SHELTER - DUSK

Suzanne steps back from the canoe's prow, revealing the Northwest Coast stylized image of a Chinook salmon.

Lindsay moves close to take a look.

LINDSAY  
Simply beautiful, Suzanne.

EXT. THE SHELTER - DUSK

Joe roasts a frankfurter over the fire. Morford packs up the gear. Earl and Ralph stand nearby, looking up at the sky.

EARL  
No. That's a planet.

RALPH  
Are you sure?

EARL  
No.

Lindsay calls the crew to the canoe.

LINDSAY  
Guys. You got to see this.

INT. THE SHELTER - DUSK

Ralph, Earl, and the rest of the crew gather round. Ralph looks closely at the image on the prow nods his head.

RALPH  
Chinook.

EARL  
Good name for a canoe.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Shirley walks over to Suzanne and Jimmy and hands Suzanne Frank's old Seahawks ball cap.

SHIRLEY (TO SUZANNE)  
This cap was your dad's. I gave it  
to him. Now I want you to have it  
for your journey.

SUZANNE  
Thanks, Mom.

SHIRLEY  
Have a safe paddle, you two. See  
you in Seattle.

Shirley hugs Suzanne then hugs Jimmy.

Earl walks up to Shirley, Suzanne, and Jimmy.

EARL  
Are you guys ready?

SHIRLEY  
Be careful.

SUZANNE  
Come on, Mom. Help us send her out  
to sea.

SHIRLEY  
Of course.

Suzanne, Earl, Jimmy, and Shirley all walk toward the canoe.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

On either side of the canoe, knee-deep in water, Earl, Ralph, Connie, and Shirley hold on to the canoe's gunwales.

The kids get in and take their seats in the canoe, grasping their paddles. They all wear Chinook salmon T-shirts and cedar-bark hats.

Suzanne sits in the stern with his steering paddle held high. Other FRIENDS and RELATIVES stand by on the shore.

Earl places his free hand on the stern of the canoe.

EARL (TO THE CANOE)  
You used to carry the old ones over  
the water.

(MORE)

EARL (TO THE CANOE) (cont'd)

You took them wherever they needed  
to go. It's our turn now. We need  
to travel far over the water, and  
we humbly ask you to carry us.  
Carry us where we need to go.

Earl, Ralph, Connie, Shirley, and the others give the canoe a shove. The canoe slides into deeper water.

Everyone onshore CLAPS, CHEERS, and waves as the kids paddle out to sea.

EARL

See you in Seattle.

EXT. THE OCEAN - DAY

The kids' paddles dig roughly into the water, knocking into each other. It looks like Chaos.

EARL (V.O.)

Every stroke we take is one less we  
have to make.

They paddle in unison.

EARL (V.O.)

There is to no abuse of self or  
others.

Joe splashes with his paddling, then Morford smacks Joe upside the head. Suzanne splashes both Joe and Morford using her paddle, stopping the argument.

EARL (V.O.)

The gift of each enriches all.

Lindsey is entertaining the crew with a story, wildly gesticulating. The crew is belly laughing.

EARL (V.O.)

We all pull and support each other.

They paddle past the beautiful rocky coast a cormorant dives into the water beside them.

EARL (V.O.)

A hungry person has no charity.

Suzanne gives a whole sandwich to Joe. Morford taps Joe on the shoulder, and Joe gives him half of it.

EARL (V.O.)

A good teacher allows the student  
to learn.

The paddles slice through the water, but this time in unison,  
with a strong rhythm with Suzanne pointing the way.

EARL (V.O.)

When given any choice at all, be a  
worker bee, make honey.

The Chinook cuts through the water, as the kids dig into  
their paddle as the sea surges at the bow.

The crew pull up the coast, past rocky, forest-clad  
headlands, the canoe tiny against the vastness of the sea.

Then, with night coming on, they enter an inlet to the beach  
for the night.

EXT. THE OPEN SEA - DAY

The surface of the water is a glass-like sea. The crew  
paddles slowly as if reluctant to disturb the dark water.

Suddenly, Suzanne leans forward in the stern of the canoe.  
She taps Jimmy on the shoulder. Jimmy looks back. Suzanne  
holds a finger up to his lips.

Jimmy passes the signal forward.

On receiving the signal to be quiet, the kids stop paddling.

They wait.

Then, as one, A POD OF ORCAS BREACH around the canoe.

EXT. AN OCEAN BEACH - DUSK

The crew paddle to the shore.

A man onshore beckons.

MAN ONSHORE

I see you have come to our shores.  
Who are you, and why do you travel  
here?

SUZANNE

We are Chinook. We are paddling to Seattle, and we humbly ask to come ashore and share this land with you for the night so that we may rest and nourish ourselves for tomorrow's journey.

MAN ONSHORE

Welcome, Chinook. You may come ashore and join us in sharing this sacred place for the night.

Suzanne and her friends run the canoe onto the shore. They crawl out of the canoe, exhausted, drooping.

As they clutch their paddles, they shake the hands of their fellow travelers on the beach.

The Chinooks begin to unload the canoe.

JOE

Are we there yet?

Suzanne pulls an old dry bag out of the canoe and tosses it onto the beach.

SUZANNE

It depends on where there is; right now, it is here, Joe.

Lindsay wearily pulls herself into a sitting position drags her paddle across her knees. She brushes sand off the painted blade stares blankly at the image.

LINDSAY

What's all this graphic on the end of the paddle, anyway?

Suzanne walks over and sits next to her.

SUZANNE

They're the spirits of the animals. Earl taught me what each one means. That's Otter. Otter is faithful and graceful. She likes to play.

Lindsay looks around at the other kids, beaming.

LINDSAY

Graceful. That's definitely me.

Suzanne holds up her paddle.

SUZANNE

This one is Woodpecker, the Carver.

They all gather around.

MORFORD

How 'bout mine?

SUZANNE

Yours is Orca. Orca is the Traveller. He sees the unseen, down deep, where no one else is looking.

Joe examines Jimmy and his paddles.

JOE

These look just the same to me.

SUZANNE

They look alike because they're both birds. Raven is the Trickster. Jay is wise and very crafty.

Joe sits silent and serious for a moment.

JOE

So, which one is which?

SUZANNE

Let me see your paddle, Joe.

Joe hands Suzanne the paddle. She whacks him soundly on the shoulder with the blade.

JOE

Ow.

SUZANNE

That's Raven. The Trickster.

Suzanne grabs for Jimmy's paddle. He pulls it away before Suzanne can grab it.

SUZANNE

See? That's Jay. Wise and crafty.

The kids get up and haul the rest of their gear inland.

EXT. PACIFIC NORTHWEST COAST - OFFSHORE - DAY

The wind is up, the sea running high as the crew of the Chinook pull toward shore. They paddle in unison, strong, happy, exulting in the simple joy of the physical effort.

Suddenly, the wind hits the canoe broadside. A wave smacks over the bow.

The canoe pitches and rolls, shipping water.

Suzanne leans on the steering paddle.

SUZANNE

Pull right. Pull right.

The kids pull, straightening the canoe, just as another wave hits them and knocks her Dad's cap into the water.

Suzanne watches in quiet desperation as it floats away.

They ride it out. The canoe is now sitting low in the water but still afloat. Suzanne grabs two old plastic buckets and throws one to Morford. They bail like mad.

Suddenly a fifty-foot, wave-eating canoe surges over the crest of the wave.

The WAVE EATER PADDLERS are long-haired; their cloaks were thrown back from muscled shoulders a wreath of fern and cedar boughs trails from the prow.

The kids look at the Wave Eater crew with awe.

The Wave Eaters see the Chinook's plight and throw them a line. Suzanne catches it and, with Lindsay's help, makes it fast.

Suzanne raises his steering paddle in an appreciative salute.

The kids continue to bail and paddle as the Wave-Eaters tow them toward shore.

Eyes on the Wave Eater crew, Suzanne dips her paddle in the water and pulls hard.

EXT. A WIDE, SANDY BEACH - SUNSET

Morford, Jimmy, and a few of the Wave Eater crew are knee-deep in the water, grasping the Chinook's gunwales.

The crew rolls the Chinook on her side. Water sluices from the interior of the hull. They roll the canoe back upright.

SUZANNE

Okay. Let's run her up onshore.

With a series of heaves, they run the canoe up onto the beach.



A short distance inland, campfires flicker, and smoke filters the evening light.

The rest of the crew of the Wave Eater are unloading their canoe for the night. The kids of the Chinook are soaking wet, trying to sort out their dry bags and other gear from a pile on the beach.

A Wave Eater guy passes them by, a beautifully painted cedar kerf box on his shoulder. He smiles at them, then strides on.

EXT. CAMPSITE - SUNSET

The kids drop their gear at the camp.

Despite being dripping wet, Morford, Joe, and Jimmy are completely stoked with the adventure of it all. They can't keep their emotions contained. Jimmy shows them how to fancy dance Chinook style.

Some of the Wave Eater paddlers are drawn to the dancing. A couple of them bring painted hoop drums out of their canoe and start pounding out a beat.

Suzanne watches in silence as Chinookians and Wave Eaters are fancy dancing to the beats.

One of the Wave Eaters crew hands Jimmy a drum and shows him how to hit out a beat.

Suzanne throws her paddle on her sleeping gear and starts back toward the beach. Lindsay intercepts her.

LINDSAY

Are you okay?

Suzanne looks sullen.

SUZANNE

Yeah, I'm fine.

LINDSAY

Where are you going?

SUZANNE

I just gotta get some more stuff to dry out.

Suzanne turns and stalks away.

EXT. THE WIDE, SANDY BEACH - DUSK

Suzanne rummages through a pile of gear beside their canoe.

A Wave Eater crew member, Chris is doing the same nearby.

SUZANNE (TO HERSELF)

They're the real deal. What was I  
thinking, trying to keep the  
Chinook alive? We almost all died.

Suzanne stands up takes a deep breath.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

What am I even doing here?

Chris looks up at Suzanne and grins.

CHRIS

It's amazing how much stuff you can  
get into one of these things.

Suzanne smiles ruefully at the Wave Eater.

SUZANNE

Yeah. Thanks for bailing us out.

CHRIS

Hey, no problem. If you're gonna  
paddle a canoe, you're gonna get  
wet.

They both LAUGH. The ice broken, he approaches her, offering  
his hand.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Hey, I remember you from Illwaco  
burger.

SUZANNE

Chris, yes the Waver Eater, right.  
Good thing you got your canoe  
fixed.

CHRIS

Did you guys carve this?

SUZANNE

We had a lot of help.

CHRIS

This is cool.

CHRIS (CONT'D CALLS OUT)  
Bobby, come check this out.

BOBBY ambles over to the canoes.

CHRIS(CONT'D)  
Check it out, a real hand-carved  
dugout cedar canoe.

BOBBY  
Whoa, just like at the museum.

CHRIS  
How did you carve it?

SUZANNE  
Well, the hard part was finding the  
log. Then we roughed it out; my dad  
had drawn plans from an old canoe  
he used to play on as a child.

EXT. SEATTLE, WA. - ALKI POINT - SUNRISE

The sun rises, flashing on the cupola of the Space Needle,  
silhouetting the skyline of the Emerald City across the  
Sound.

A platform festooned with microphones and speakers commands a  
strategic location at the boat launch at Alki beach park.

Hundreds of people mill about in the park, trying to find a  
good seats with a view of the water.

EXT. THE CROWD - DAY

Volunteers in black T-shirts with the logo PADDLE TO SEATTLE  
in red stenciled on the back guide the FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE  
AND ELDERS to a grassy area reserved in front of the  
platform. Among the groups they usher in is one consisting of  
Earl, Shirley, Connie, and Ralph.

Three white kids jump the railing, take seats in the reserved  
area. A MIDDLE-AGED NATIVE WOMAN shoos them out.

A young man, his hair buzz-cut on the sides and spiked on  
top, struts by, a long canoe paddle slung nonchalantly across  
his shoulder. Emblazoned in big letters across the back of  
his starter jacket are the words, SKOKOMISH RACING TEAM.

A sound crew hurriedly makes some last-minute checks to their  
equipment.

A couple of YOUNG GIRLS in fancy dancing regalia are laughing and talking as they buy lattes from an espresso cart.

The MASTER OF CEREMONIES, CHIEF ALICE MCKENNA, late 50s, stands near the podium. She wears a simple black dress with a traditionally decorated shawl across her shoulders.

Alice is surrounded by THE GUESTS OF HONOR, FIRST NATIONS DIGNITARIES IN TRADITIONAL DRESS, and other NON-NATIVE PEOPLE.

A SOUND CREW GUY comes over and whispers in Alice's ear.

The guests of honor take their seats. The crowd coalesces into an audience.

Chief Alice steps up to the podium, adjusts the mic, puts on a pair of reading glasses. She scans her notes, then raises her head to look over the crowd.

CHIEF ALICE

The powers that be told me I had to keep my talk politically correct.

She peers mischievously over the rims of her glasses.

CHIEF ALICE (CONT'D)

But I can't help myself. I look around and think, this is the way it should have been two hundred years ago.

LOUD APPLAUSE as the crowd CHEERS. Chief Alice waits until the clapping subsides, then continues.

CHIEF ALICE (CONT'D)

People used to live in towns all up and down the Sound, just like today. The People of the Canoe, who have lived here for 10,000 years, call this the Salish Sea. It is the place we know, the lands, the rivers, the coastal waters. This place we call home.

More CHEERING and APPLAUSE, as one of the volunteers, come up to the podium. Chief Alice leans down and confers for a moment, then speaks into the mic again.

CHIEF ALICE (CONT'D)

I have just been informed through the smokeless smoke signal that the folks we're waiting for are just about here.

A hush comes over the crowd. People look toward the Alki point.

Suddenly, the great canoes round the point and into view.

The crowd begins to CHEER again and keeps on CHEERING.

EXT. ALKI POINT - DAY

Suzanne and the crew of Chinook enter the harbor along with the rest of the regatta. Some canoes are huge fifty-foot-long behemoths with crews to match. Others are small, sleek, and fast.

Paddles rise and fall, knifing into the water as the canoes surge forward.

The crews have decorated their canoes with cedar boughs and ferns. Some fly the Canadian flag, some the Stars and Stripes, and some both. One ingenious crew has used duct tape to secure their flag to the bow of their canoe.

The canoes approach the dock, lining up in rows a short distance from the quay.

A CREW MEMBER of an attending boat delivers a wireless microphone to the Wave Eater. Chris, the WAVE EATER SPOKESPERSON, takes the mic and rises. Following ancient protocol, Chief Alice addresses him.

CHIEF ALICE

I see you have come to our shores.  
Who are you, and why do you travel  
here?

Chris replies.

CHRIS

We are Haida. We have come down  
from what the white people call  
Queen Charlotte's Islands. But we  
know the true name of that place  
and say it now so all can know it.  
We come from Haida Gwai. Land of  
the Haida. We come to see all our  
brothers and sisters gathered here.  
We come in peace and humbly ask to  
come ashore.

CHIEF ALICE

You speak well. We are pleased you  
have come. We hear the true name of  
your land, Haida Gwai.

(MORE)

CHIEF ALICE (cont'd)

Let everyone here remember it. You  
are welcome to come ashore.

Chris passes the mic to the next canoe, a long sleek Salish  
hull moored next to the Chinook.

The SALISH SPOKESPERSON stands and begins to speak in Salish.

SALISH SPOKESPERSON

(Landing protocol speech in  
Salish.)

We are from the Salish Nation. We  
have honored our ancestors by  
taking this tribal journey to come  
to this sacred place. We come here  
to represent the Salish Nation.

The canoes bob and sway with the current as the crews are  
attentive to the speaker.

SALISH SPOKESPERSON (CONT'D)

We come to see all our brothers and  
sisters gathered here. We come in  
peace and humbly ask to come ashore

As the Salish Spokesperson continues, the kids in the Chinook  
take the whole scene in. Over fifty Great Canoes. Hundreds of  
crew members. Costumes and masked figures. The kids are  
overwhelmed.

CHIEF ALICE

(Welcoming protocol speech in  
Salish)

We are pleased you have made the  
long journey, and you represent the  
Salish Nation well. We welcome you  
ashore.

Joe clutches his paddle. Lindsay holds Morford's hand.  
Suzanne glances at Jimmy, who smiles back reassuringly.

The Salish Spokesperson passes the mic to Suzanne.

Chief Alice glances at her notes. She peers at the Chinook  
crew over the rims of her reading glasses. She smiles  
slightly and looks straight at Suzanne.

CHIEF ALICE

Who are you, and why do you travel  
here?

Suzanne rises and begins to speak.

SUZANNE

We are Chinook.

FEEDBACK drowns out her voice for a moment. Suzanne waits until it fades, then continues.

SUZANNE

From the land of the Great River.  
Chinook Illahee. Long ago, we  
paddled our canoes to these waters  
to visit and to trade. It is  
painful to think about how those  
visits ended and how we became  
estranged from you, our brothers  
and sisters, our mothers and  
fathers.

Shirley wipes a tear from her eye.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

But then, we learned of the Great  
Canoes and how all the people who  
dwell on these lands and seas are  
coming together again, and we have  
made our canoe so that it would  
carry us here to see you. Now we  
have paddled far, and we are here.  
We are the Chinook People, and we  
humbly ask you to come ashore.

Chief Alice, looking very pleased.

CHIEF ALICE

I am very pleased that after so  
long a time, we may look upon the  
faces of our brothers and sisters  
from the land of the Great River.  
I, Chief Alice McKenna of the  
Salish Nation and on behalf of all  
nations gathered here, welcome you  
ashore. Come and take your rightful  
place in the Great Canoe of Mother  
Earth and all Her People.

As Chief Alice concludes her welcome, a V.O. OF A SONG OF  
WELCOME IN SALISH ACCOMPANIED BY DRUMMING commences.

EXT. PUGET SOUND - DAY

The SINGING continues.

A GREAT CANOE, the Spirit Canoe of Suzanne's dream, pulls away. Suzanne's dad at the front guiding the way home to the snow-covered Olympic Mountains (b.g.)

The dark silhouettes of its crew now seem more animal than human, mythological messengers returning to the Other World.

Their paddles rise and fall with the rhythm of the SINGING.

The SINGERS' VOICES RISE....

FADE OUT.

The Chinook have been trying to become a Federally recognized tribe by the U.S. Government since 1899. All total, there are over 400 unrecognized indigenous tribes in the U.S.