

THE POND

Written by

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With Music by Claude Debussy

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EXT. MIDWESTERN FARMLAND - LATE AFTERNOON - AUGUST 1941

We see various shots of Midwestern countryside. Golden shafts of sunlight pierce through rolling clouds blanketing the midsummer horizon. Wind waves through hay fields as cloud shadows dance over the landscape. Fertile hills of beans and corn stretch out from barnyard complexes fixed with silos.

EXT. HORSE PASTURE - SAME

We settle on: A vast and hilly pasture surrounded by fencing and aged trees, CRANING DOWN to reveal a young GIRL (10) galloping on a quarter horse up the pasture. Her flaxen hair dances in the bright warm backlight. She's an idyllic figure, glowing.

We end on a BOY (12) watching her as he rests on the other side of the paddock fence. He's obviously smitten.

The BOY climbs over the fence and jogs over to her.

The young farm BOY is clad in blue overalls rolled up at his knee - wind blows into his dusty cheeks and dirty brown hair, contrasting his bright eyes glinting in the evening sun.

GIRL rides over to him, as the two playful beings are alone together surrounded in a sea of countryside bliss.

BOY grabs the reins and runs his hand down the white crest of the mares head, as the shimmery brown beauty comes to a halt with him.

BOY looks up at GIRL; her eyes are as piercing and honest as his. She throws him a playful smile before shifting the reins, and gently spurs the horse as she gallops off toward a distant barnyard.

INT. STABLE CORRIDOR - EARLY EVENING

CLOSE ON: A small hand holding a brush moving down the midsection of the horse, coming back up to meet another brush combing with an even smaller hand.

BOY admires the animal as he looks over to GIRL, who's doing the same before looking at him.

They stand next to one another as they comb the brown beauty in the dusty golden-hour light slicing through the stable doors.

EXT. STABLE ENTRANCE - EVENING

BOY walks his bicycle away from the barn as GIRL comes out to wave goodbye to him as he hops on and pedals away.

From the doorway, she gives him a smile that holds all things before cutting to:

EXT. COUNTRY DIRT ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Small dusty bear feet pedaling fast and hard, round and round the chainring of a rusted, tattered bike chassis. BOY pants heavily, tearing down the dirt road before cutting into the driveway of:

EXT. FAMILY FARM - YARD - EVENING (CONTINUOUS)

Entering the yard, BOY barrels past the farmhouse, as a golden retriever DOG bathes in the warm amber-light on the back porch, She perks up at his entrance.

The DOG rushes to him, as the two fly down the farm grounds, whisking through sheets drying on a clothes line.

EXT. FAMILY FARM - HORSE Paddock TRAIL

The two follow a trail approaching the horse paddock. Four of the horses gallop alongside the wooden fence at stride with BOY and DOG, before breaking off at the end of the paddock.

EXT. FAMILY FARM - BACK FIELDS

The two pass a green John Deere tractor towing a manure spreader on an adjacent field. Atop the tractor sits the boys FATHER (35) - clothed in a collared white shirt, navy overalls, and a sweat-stained fedora.

Quickly passing by, the two wave at one another - as FATHER watches BOY enter into the area of:

EXT. POND - SAME

Continuing to their objective, BOY skids his tires to a halt at the back of the property - between a hay field and woods. A quite small, but deep pond sits shaded by a single large weeping willow. BOY collects a can of worms and his fishing pole which leans against the willow trunk.

DOG sits at the bank clearing between the surrounding cat-tail's.

BOY strings a small dried worm onto a rusty hook and tosses the line into the pond, causing ripples to cascade across the glass surface.

DOG sits next to her best friend, as BOY watches the bobber intently. A few moments pass before it bounces subtly, twice. Then again...And again, harder...DOG fidgets and wags her tail at the familiar excitement.

BOY positions his body to set the hook and yanks back on the pole.

Struggling, he's surprised at the weight pulling against him - he moves closer to the water as:

FATHERS POV - BOY losing the fight against the catch, inching closer to the water.

DOG barks at the water ready to pound on the beast winning against her best friend. In the distance, FATHER runs up from the field toward BOY.

BOY's feet enter into the water as he yanks hard on the line making the pole bend dramatically, before SNAP... the line breaks and he falls backward onto the bank.

Lying on the ground with his heart pounding, the stunned BOY looks up to his FATHER's hand reaching to help him up.

His young, smooth palm takes hold of his fathers well-worked, oil stained hand as they both look dumbfounded at the pond beginning to settle back to its undisturbed state.

FATHER begins to laugh in amazement at the encounter with his arm around BOY.

An early twilight engulfs the area as we view from afar:
A tranquil sunset scene that one dreams of. Gold and purple hues lie atop swathing clouds, illuminating the endless features of the countryside - seducing a sun that refuses to set.

FADE TO BLACK

A single snowflake falls from a white sky, followed by more and more, before we RACK FOCUS TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY - DECEMBER 1941

A Chevy pickup truck makes it's way down a dirt road surrounded by snow-powdered fields.

INT. TRUCK - SAME

FATHER shifts the truck into a higher gear. BOY watches FATHER's hand on the shifter to see how it's done, constantly taking notes from his mentor. He pets DOG's back as the three bounce along in the cab before approaching a small-town strip:

EXT: BARBER SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

The red, white, and blue colors of a barber pole twirl round and round as FATHER and BOY enter.

INT: BARBER SHOP

They hang up their coats just inside the doorway as beams of light cut through dust and cigarette smoke.

The sound of a New York Giants-Brooklyn Dodgers football game broadcast fills the shop as heavy-set, well aged FARMERS sit surrounding an old Delco Tombestone radio. Only their lower halves show - including their protruding guts, which prop up the newspapers that cover their faces. Cigarette smoke rises from where sporadic 'humph's' answer from behind the latest articles.

FOOTBALL ANNOUNCER
(WOR RADIO)

The Dodgers are ready to kickoff now, they just scored. Ace Parker did it - they lead the Giants seven to nothing.

BOY and FATHER sit in the barber chairs, as the two shave masters wrap a cape apron around their necks.

Tending to the father is OLD BARBER, a slender aging man who's gruff panache and precisely-curved mustache puts FATHER at ease. His half-century of experience tending to the routine blue collar man's buzz, crew cut, or slicked back side part is evident.

The BARBER APPRENTICE, tending to BOY - runs a comb up the back of his head and grabs a pair of old faded shears - before running the noisy shaving contraption up the back of BOY's head.

FOOTBALL ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Here's the whistle, Merl Condit comes up, he boots it. It's a long one, down around the three yard line...

OLD BARBER runs a straight-razor back and fourth against a leather sharpening belt before meeting the edge to FATHER's neck - effortlessly scraping the shaving cream up toward his jawline.

With his head turned upward - mid shave, FATHER looks at BOY without moving his head.

With his head half shaven, BOY meets FATHER's eyes as FATHER juts his jaw forward and gestures with his eyebrows, mimicking an old-timey movie actor's expression.

BOY laughs and shifts his head as BARBER APPRENTICE stops him and repositions his head promptly forward.

FOOTBALL ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Ward Cuff coming up to his left, nice block there by Leemans, Pug Manders still going, he's up by the twenty-five...

The FARMERS begin to shift in their seats, flipping pages as if the game was being played in the Classified section.

FOOTBALL ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

And now he's hit, and hit hard, by the twenty-seven yard line. Bruiser Kinard made the tack...

NEWS ANNOUNCER

We interrupt this broadcast to bring you this important bulletin from the United Press.

BOY head shifts toward the radio, as OLD BARBER double-takes to understand the interruption.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Flash, Washington - The White House announces Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

The FARMERS lower their papers and turn their heads to the radio

The straight razor making its way up FATHER's neck slips and cuts his skin, blood instantly covers the blade and shaving cream.

OLD BARBER jumps back and grabs a rag, pushing it on the wound.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
 Stay tuned to WOR for further
 developments, to be broadcast
 immediately as received.

BOY looks to FATHER - FATHER looks back at BOY, holding a rag to his neck with blood showing through.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. FARMHOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT - JANUARY 1942

FATHER gathers personal items around his room. His service uniform is hanging next to a desk with his officer's hat. Pictures lie to the side of it: photos of younger BOY, a and beautifully composed WIFE - who's absent in this story...

He stops packing and picks up an old fiddle from a closet and begins to play Debussy's 'Beau Soir'.

INT. FARMHOUSE HALLWAY - SAME

Approaching FATHER's room, BOY halts down the hall with eyes on FATHER playing the violin through a half-cracked doorway.

INT. BEDROOM

The oil stained work hands glide the bow across the strings with grace, as FATHER's stoic face of concentration subtly reacts to the beauty of each note ringing out.

INT. HALLWAY

The light from the room pours into the dark hallway that BOY watches from - with light glinting in his innocent eyes.

The sound of a train station fades up as the song continues to play over the following sequence -

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY - JANUARY 1942

Ahead of parked cars, a crowd is gathered next to a River Raisin passenger train.

Children, wives, and parents of the enlisted men say goodbye to their sons, husbands, and fathers - dressed in uniform, toting their belongings.

Among them is FATHER - approaching the train. Alongside him is BOY and another man, BOY'S UNCLE: slightly younger and less composed than FATHER. The trio halts and FATHER kneels down taking BOY'S hand in his clutch, and pulls him in for a hug. FATHER shakes his hand firmly and releases, raising up to exchange a stoic nod with UNCLE before turning toward the train. FATHER enters a group of other boarding soldiers while UNCLE places his hand on BOY'S shoulder as his new caretaker.

BOY looks nearby to see GIRL saying goodbye to GIRLS FATHER, with GIRLS MOTHER next to her. GIRL sees BOY, as they share expressions of woe for their departing fathers.

In a moment of heartfelt good-byes - Young boys, girls, and mothers hug and wave to their men as the train cars fill. FATHER sits among the men as he looks out the window of the train to see:

BOY looking to the departing train. Tears well in his eyes but he stays strong.

CUT TO:

INT. - FARMHOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT - PREVIOUS

The same expression as BOY continuing to watch FATHER play the violin.

INT. - FATHERS BEDROOM - SAME

The notes from the strings are as precise as they are beautiful as FATHER further loses himself in the music.

CUT TO:

EXT. - TROOP TRANSPORT TRUCK - NIGHT - FRANCE 1944

Sitting next to a handful of other infantrymen, FATHER writes a letter by flashlight to his son - the truck bounces and jerks in the early night.

INT. - FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Passing UNCLE smoking a cigarette while reading a newspaper, BOY enters the living room - tearing open the same letter written by FATHER. He smiles as he reads it. DOG lies nearby, panting with a canine grin.

EXT. - GIRL'S FARMHOUSE - EARLY EVENING

On his bicycle, BOY glides quickly into the barnyard property of GIRL's family farm before ditching his bike to enter the stable.

INT. HORSE STABLE - ENTRANCE/HALL

BOY enters to find that the stalls are empty, no light illuminates the once lively equine hall. He exits as quickly as he entered.

EXT. GIRL'S FARMHOUSE FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER

BOY looks to the front porch to see the single star service flag lying on the steps. He then shoots his head to the adjacent driveway to discover the family loading the last luggage into their Ford four-door.

GIRL is helped into the back seat by GIRLS MOTHER before entering into the passenger seat.

BOY runs to the car as it starts to exit down the driveway.

GIRL looks back at the boy through the rear window.

GIRLS POV: The boy follows and slowly stops his pursuit.

He watches as the car moves further away to join the road and disappears...

INT. FATHERS ROOM - PREVIOUS

CLOSE ON: FATHER's calloused hands as he continues to glide the bow over the strings, notes of woe emanating.

EXT. FARMHOUSE POND - EARLY EVENING - 1944

BOY grabs his fish pole and slowly baits it before tossing the line into the water - ripples glide over the water SUPERIMPOSED against the boys face as he watches the water - unmoved.

The John Deere tractor sits in the nearby field - unattended.
DOG lies next to the tire, asleep.

EXT. TALLGRASS FIELD - DAY - FRANCE 1944

A dispersed platoon of U.S. INFANTRYMEN walk with their rifles, progressing up a tallgrass field. A light rain shower falls over them.

FATHER is among them, as his head pans from side to side in a calm, patrolling manner.

EXT. DISTANT TREELINE - SAME

CAMERA REVEALS: GERMAN SOLDIERS dug into a treeline, machine gun nests dug among the infantrymen who kneel in wait. Their rifles and nested machine-guns are aimed toward the field.

A GERMAN LIEUTENANT looks on, holding orders.

EXT. - FARMHOUSE MAILBOX - DAY - 1944

BOY swipes open the mailbox and grabs a bundle of papers, rifling through to find one from his father - the other is a from the U.S. Army War Dept.

CUT TO:

INT. - FATHERS BEDROOM - PREVIOUS

The father's eyes as he continues to play the violin - the strings vibrating as he skims the horsehair bow against them.

EXT. - FARMHOUSE YARD - DAY - 1944

Opening up FATHERS letter - BOY begins reading, before looking down to War Department letter.

EXT. - TALLGRASS FIELD - FRANCE 1944

FATHER and the U.S. INFANTRYMEN continue up the field, getting closer to the treeline.

Looking forward, FATHER notices something.

EXT. FARMHOUSE YARD - DAY

BOY slowly opens the War Department envelope and begins unfolding the letter.

INT. FATHERS BEDROOM - PREVIOUS

The notes become more sorrowful as FATHER closes his eyes in concentration of the beautiful song.

EXT. TREELINE - FRANCE 1944

The GERMAN SOLDIERS barrels hold steady.

The troops lie in wait.

EXT. TALLGRASS FIELD - SAME

The U.S. INFANTRYMEN walk on, alert but unawares.

EXT. TREELINE

The GERMAN LIEUTENANT's mouth finally opens fast and agape.

EXT. FIELD

FATHER looking forward, his eyes telling the fate.

EXT. TREELINE

CLOSE ON: Machine gun and rifle barrels flaring with fury.

CUT TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE YARD - DAY 1944

Tears from BOY hit the letter listing of soldiers killed in combat - the names smear from the spreading droplets.

INT. FATHERS BEDROOM - PREVIOUS

FATHER finishes the last note of the song, as brings the bow and fiddle to his sides - he notices BOY from the hallway.

BOY approaches and the two look at each other, FATHER smiles as a tear falls down his cheek.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE YARD - DAY 1944

BOY kneeling in the yard with the letters in his hands - alone among the vastness of the farm and fields.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. FARM - EVENING

Sun sets over the farm, shadows rise to consume spaces of barn doors, fields, and:

EXT. FARM PORCH

As the sun continues to set, traces of warm light fade past FATHER's service star hanging on porch door - DOG rests nearby.

EXT. BACKYARD OF FARM - TWILIGHT

Slowly wandering - BOY passes the now empty horse paddock and John Deere tractor, which lies in the darkened overgrown grass consuming the tires.

EXT. POND - TWILIGHT

Coming to the pond, BOY crosses onto a small dock that reaches out over the water about ten feet. The pool of glass sprawls-out, reflecting the dimming sky.

EXT. POND DOCK - SAME

Bending down at the end of the dock, BOY looks down at the water.

A tear hits the surface, spreading gentle ripples outward from the reflection of BOY's face.

Continuing to look at the water, his distorted face holds the pain of grief as a faint image of FATHER appears over BOY's right shoulder, with his arm around him - holding a smile before fading away.

As the ripples continue to swell from tears hitting the surface, GIRL appears on left - even more faintly.

Just then, A small feminine hand comes out from the surface - outstretched toward him.

BOY looks down and slowly takes the hand as he willingly drifts off the dock and falls into the water.

EXT. POND - UNDERWATER

Submerged alone, the light from the surface illuminating his body begins to dwindle as he continues to sink downward

The surface including the stars above - recede slowly away into the darkness.

He stops fighting, closes his eyes as he's taken by the depths.

BLACK

After a moment, a warm light touches a YOUNG MAN's face and brightens increasingly - BOY is now definably older (17).

His eyes open, his body is now illuminated as clear blue water surrounds him.

The surface approaches, he begins to swim upward to the light.

EXT. FOREST POND - UNDERWATER - DAY

Now the entirety of the water is bright, full of turquoise shimmering color. His fight towards the surface is full-on before breaking the surface:

EXT. FOREST POND - DAY

Gasping for air, a world of trees surrounds his gaze as the brightness overtakes him - INTERCUT YOUNG MAN's POV: as he spins about the surface confused in wonder before we see:

EXT. SURROUNDING FOREST/POND - DAY

A wide open crystalline pool of blue surrounding YOUNG MAN - only disturbed by the ripples made at the center.

Tall trees and forested land sets at the perimeters surrounding the pond.

YOUNG MAN swims toward the bank.

EXT. POND BANK - DAY

Treading water and dripping wet in his linen shirt and trousers, YOUNG MAN looks around in wonder, stopping as he sees:

YOUNG MAN'S POV: A small glowing white ETHERIAL FIGURE surrounded by trees and foliage watches him from across the pond, about a dozen feet into the forest.

Standing transfixed, YOUNG MAN squints to see what the figure is.

Noticeable feminine, wearing a white dress - her face is obscured by a glow - as she slowly, gracefully moves off into the forest.

In a trance-like state, YOUNG MAN starts walking in the direction of ETHERIAL FIGURE.

EXT. FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

Small white feet move over inclining old stone steps, half covered in moss.

YOUNG MAN follows the glow of ETHERIAL FIGURE up an inclining stair surrounded by large rock formations, up into the lush green forest.

EXT. FOREST WATERFALL

Falling gracefully into a small cove, a waterfall descends onto a stone surface - ETHERIAL FIGURE passes behind it, half obscured by the falling water as she looks back to YOUNG MAN.

We see her eyes through the falling water - as glimmering pools of light - familiar, yet faintly made out.

Not far behind, YOUNG MAN passes the falls - looking around at the vast beauty of the woods.

He looks back to ETHERIAL FIGURE who's now moving more quickly away, rounding a bend not far off - it now becomes a playful chase:

EXT. VARIOUS FOREST LAND - CONTINUOUS

The distance between the two remains constant as YOUNG MAN chases ETHERIAL FIGURE through various parts of the dense wood.

Trees tower above them as hard light beams into small and wide spaces they pass by:

Through a valley surrounded by high stone walls.

Against a large oak planted with twisted, gnarled roots.

Over rocks used as stepping stones, atop a shallow river.

Before coming to:

EXT. RIVER BRIDGE CANYON - LATE EVENING

The two enter into a space that harbors an arched bridge atop a narrow falling river - which pours into a small whirlpool situated next to a large oak tree, whose roots spread wide and plenty above the ground.

ETHERIAL FIGURE ascends past the tree up to the bridge - with YOUNG MAN not far behind.

EXT. NEAR ARCHED BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Looking to the center of the bridge, YOUNG MAN sees ETHERIAL FIGURE standing there looking at him.

BOY walks toward her.

EXT. ATOP ARCHED BRIDGE

Approaching slowly, YOUNG MAN crosses to the center of the bridge where the figure stands.

Her face slowly comes into view, with the glow now subtle enough to see a familiar looking YOUNG WOMAN - who's taken the place of GIRL from the farm.

He stops a few feet from her as she holds out her hand.

He takes it as she brings him closer.

Her eyes are as beautiful as he remembers, she smiles at him. He smiles back.

The two stand looking into each others eyes atop the arched bridge. A large shaft of light is casts upon them at the center, as water cascades into the pool below.

Their heads move inward, almost touching - before a shadow quickly falls over them...

EXT. MOUTH OF ARCHED BRIDGE/FOREST

YOUNG MAN'S POV - Darkness overtakes the area, light fades quickly as wind blows some scattered leaves toward the bridge. A foul sound subtly comes from the forest and makes it's way into their ears.

EXT. ATOP ARCHED BRIDGE

YOUNG WOMAN looks past him, as they both look fearfully into the shadowed forest.

YOUNG MAN looks back to her:

She's gone.

He stands atop the bridge alone, in a now dark place.

YOUNG MAN quickly moves off the bridge into the forest.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Navigating in the shadows of the now ominous wood, YOUNG MAN stops fearfully, leaning onto a tree as he looks around to see:

YOUNG MAN'S POV: tall and gnarled trees envelop his vision, a slight mist covers the forest floor in spots illuminated by moonlight.

He spots a silhouetted DARK FIGURE moving out from behind a tree, only for a seconds before it fades away.

He freezes, afraid to move. He looks to his left: another DARK FIGURE moves toward him.

He begins to run away from it, deeper into the forest.

EXT. FOREST STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

Down old stone slopes and stairs:

He bumps into trees, large stone walls. He fearfully looks into the forest as he runs. DARK FIGURES appear all around. YOUNG MAN then trips and falls down a short hillside... Disorientated, he stands back up and begins to hear the sounds of battle: machine guns, explosions, and screams of dying men all around him as he continues running through the forest...

IMAGES FLICKER past as he briefly sees the U.S. INFANTRYMEN being shot and killed.

YOUNG MAN'S POV: Several DARK FIGURES appear closer - cloaked in black, voids of darkness behind their cowls, reaching toward him.

One of the DARK FIGURE's unsheathes a sword and starts to lunge at YOUNG MAN. Another two of them start to attack from the sides. YOUNG MAN dodges their strikes and manages to steal a sword from one of them... He then swordfights with three DARK FIGURES in the forested night. The attack is ferocious, and for a split second as one of them lunges at him - from behind its cowl, we can faintly make out the distorted face of GERMAN LIEUTENANT...

Jilted in terror by what he see's, YOUNG MAN backs up, trips, and falls into a stone cave entrance - CAMERA PUSHES IN TO: YOUNG MAN disappearing into the dark passageway.

BLACK

SLOW MOTION FLICKERING IMAGES:

FADING IN as we see: YOUNG MAN'S POV - GIRL riding toward us on the horse, her friendly eyes take us back...

FADE TO WHITE

FATHER running towards us from the fields - stopping and holding out his hand...

CUT TO:

INT. CAVE TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER

YOUNG MAN stands up, stumbling into to a wall - clearly set aback for a beat...

He's barely illuminated by a flicking warm light that comes from his left, glinting in his watery eyes. He looks to his left to see:

YOUNG MAN's POV: A long, narrow tunnel leading to a dim flickering light.

He slowly moves toward it...

INT: CAVERN - ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Coming out of the tunnel, YOUNG MAN finds himself in a large cavern. Stalactites & stalagmites rise and descend over the space - only illuminated by a handful of torches that light a path leading further into the cave.

He follows it, grabbing one of the torches.

INT. CAVERN PATH

He hears the sound of subtle waves splashing before coming to:

INT. CAVERN SHORE

The path ends at an underground lake shore. The water extends into an endless darkness throughout the cavern.

A small wood canoe lies on the edge of the shore, oars lay inside it.

YOUNG MAN slowly moves to the canoe and fixes the torch to the front - and then grabs the oars, as he pushes off the shore and rows into the calm, dark underground lake.

INT. CAVERN LAKE - MOMENTS LATER

From afar we see: YOUNG MAN alone in the small canoe, rowing over the still surface of the water that extends out. The torch is the only light that shines across the gently rippled water.

Continuing to paddle, he sees the cavern walls shimmering. Small crystalline structures cling to the surfaces, reflecting into the water below like starlight. He paddles alone in what looks like the vastness of space.

Looking ahead - YOUNG MAN's POV: we see the reflection of a small white form walking, as ripples distort the familiar ETHERIAL FIGURE. PAN UP TO SEE:

YOUNG WOMAN on the distant shore, walking among the stalagmites as she looks over to YOUNG MAN.

He begins to row faster toward her.

CLOSE ON: The calm water begins to agitate, waves become taller, as a current begins to push the canoe backward.

YOUNG MAN fights with the paddles to maintain control.

YOUNG MAN POV: The glow from YOUNG WOMAN disappears as she fades away.

He hears splashing of distant paddling, as he shoots his head around behind him.

A dark, cloaked arm pushes an oar through the water - before revealing one of the DARK FIGURES rowing through the water in a canoe.

YOUNG MAN'S POV: five DARK FIGURES approaching in canoes from behind, getting closer.

YOUNG MAN paddles in a fearful fury.

Moonlight hits his face as his boat approaches a bank that extends out of the cave into the forested night, the moon shines in the distance.

EXT. CAVERN EXIT - BANK - MOMENTS LATER

YOUNG MAN fights the last bit of waves splashing into the canoe as he coasts into a large rock structure setting against the water.

He snatches the torch and jumps off the canoe up onto the rock, as:

A dark defineless hand grabs his ankle, pulling him backward.

He drops the torch as he falls backward - holding on to the edge as more hands grab at him, pulling him from his arm, leg, shoulder, and midsection.

Flailing about, YOUNG MAN kicks and pulls his arms and legs out of their clutches, finally freeing himself.

He jumps back up onto the rock, and escapes into the night.

INT. CAVERN LAKE

OTS DARK FIGURES: YOUNG MAN running away, escalating up into the distant forest cliffs. The torch burns out.

EXT. FOREST CLIFFS (SEA COAST) - MOMENTS LATER

YOUNG MAN Runs up a steep incline that reaches up onto a cliff overlooking a large expanse of water. The moon shines over him, now at full-glow.

EXT. CLIFF - SAME

He finds himself at the top on a large flat outcrop, near the edge as he looks back to see:

YOUNG MAN'S POV: a single DARK FIGURE approaching head-on, very close.

He retracts himself to the edge of the cliff.

From afar we see YOUNG MAN and the approaching DARK FIGURE alone atop the cliff. The sea pounds upon the rocks below.

The DARK FIGURE is too close to outrun -

In one swift movement, it grabs onto him and plunges a blade into his chest.

He looks with painful shock into the DARK FIGURE's black cowl.

The figure's hood falls back, a bright white face appears from it:

It's YOUNG WOMAN. She leans in and kisses him.

After a moment, she pulls back.

He looks at her with a sweet despair.

She looks at him as she always has.

He drifts backwards, holding onto her - they both fall over the cliff...

Falling: We see in their eyes a sort of peace, before they close - embracing one another as:

EXT. UNDERWATER - MOMENTS LATER

They hit the surface, as moonlight shines around their silhouetted bodies drifting downward into the sea...

YOUNG MAN'S eyes briefly open to see a male figure above the distorted surface looking down to him. The figure is recognizable.

A hand breeches the surface, extending down to him - it's large, calloused, familiar...

He reaches up and takes the hand, and is pulled upward as we hear:

SON (O.S.)
Daddy?...

YOUNG MAN closes his eyes as his face breaks the surface.

FADE TO WHITE

FADE IN:

INT. FARMHOUSE BEDROOM - 1960

A small boy's face comes into view. He looks very similar to someone we've seen...

SON
Daddy?!

He's pulling at the MAN's hand, which is much like the hand which pulled him from the water.

The middle-aged MAN lying in bed looks at SON, startled awake from a deep sleep. MAN looks much like FATHER.

SON smiles and runs off, exiting the room.

A DAUGHTER then runs past the doorway, chasing SON. She comes back to the doorway and timidly smiles at MAN from the side of the door. We've seen a girl like her before... She then runs off with playful laughter echoing.

MAN slowly sits up in his bed, confused. The sound of piano-playing rings out from a distant room.

MAN stands up from the bed, slowly exiting the room towards the hauntingly beautiful sound.

INT. FARMHOUSE STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

MAN approaches the bottom of the stairwell moving toward the living room down the hall, slowly revealing:

INT. FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM - SAME

A middle aged WOMAN playing piano against a wall, wearing a white dress. Her hands glide over the keys with precision and grace.

MAN watches her from the end of the hall.

Reaching the end of the song she turns to him, as we see her face:

A familiar innocent and honest smile slides across her face when she sees him.

MAN is put into a calm as he recognizes his wife.

Her ageless, piercing eyes slyly take us away as she looks back to the keys as CAMERA tracks past WOMAN, revealing framed photos atop the piano of:

SON, DAUGHTER, and WOMAN posed with MAN.

Then we see:

A service portrait of FATHER.

And last, a photo of FATHER fishing with BOY.

We continue to pull back through the farmhouse window, framing the couple in the room as MAN sits with WOMAN at the piano.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - EVENING

CAMERA glides past farmhouse and continues through the farmland in a series of CROSSFADES:

Old barn with the John Deere tractor sitting outside. An old fedora sits atop it.

Continuing past the hillside horse paddock.

Moving to the back fields of the farm, approaching area of:

EXT. POND - TWILIGHT

CAMERA settles on the area of the pond with the farm and fields in the background. The glass surface reflects the swathing clouds and golden rays of early evening sunlight. A subtle ripple then taps the surface...

We are where we began.

FADE TO BLACK.