

# CANEY CREEK

## *The Ballad of Alice Lloyd*

*“You must have aspirations as high as the mountains,  
and Faith as firm as the rocks.”*

Alice Lloyd c1934

An original screenplay by Michael Johnathon

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## MAIN CHARACTERS

### **Alice Lloyd:**

We meet her when she is a 40 year old journalist in Boston. She has spinal meningitis and has a stroke. After moving to Kentucky she starts a school that is saved on the NBC TV network in 1955

### **Mrs. Geddes:**

Alice Lloyd's mother who traveled to Appalachia with her daughter when she left Boston

### **Arthur:**

Alice's husband who abandoned his wife after learning she was sick

### **Abisha Johnson:**

The mountain man who heard of the ferrin' womin moving into the mountains, has a dream they will teach his children to read, crosses two mountains barefoot in a snowstorm and begs them to come to his home in Caney Creek. Abisha gives Alice his land in exchange for her agreement to stay and start the school for his children.

### **June Buchanan:**

A student from Wesleyen College in New York who read one of Alice's letters looking for volunteers to help at the Caney school. She stayed until she died at 99 years old.

### **Ruth:**

June's friend at Wesleyan College

### **Sary:**

Abisha's daughter who later married Angus

### **Mr. Buchanan**

June's New England father

### **Angus:**

The son of Abisha's late brother. He referres to Abisha as his Pappy. Abisha brings him up but he is angry that his uncle gave away his land, Angus' inheritance, to Alice Lloyd.

### **Dan Martin:**

A Caney student, loyal to Alice, who became a lawyer and settled in Hindman, Ky.

### **Commadore:**

A local man, long time and active supporter of Alice and the Caney school, often serves as a buffer between Alice, an outsider, and distrustful locals.

**Berthy:**

A local mountain woman who runs the post office. She is abrupt, funny, distrustful with a heart of gold. She can not read, just lets folks know if they have a letter it must be in the box.

**John Martin:**

A mountain man, coal miner, who wants his songs to come to the Caney school

**Rebecky**

The young daughter of Sary and Angus

**Jason**

Angus' 16 year old son who sees his father anger and is scared of it. He wants to get an education, to become better, and attend the Caney school.

**Dean Hayes**

In the 1940's and 1950's he was the Dean of the Caney School and helped Alice and June tend to the influx of students

**Grady Stumbo**

As a young man attended the Caney school, became a doctor and started a medical clinic ... and later on became a powerful Kentucky politician

**Elvin, Seth and Ansel**

Friends of Angus who are parters at the hidden still

**Darrel**

Elvin's son who is secretly going to the Caney school

**Gentelman:**

An assistant to the late Lamont DuPont

**Writer William Dutton:**

A biograpgher who wants to write the story of Mr. DuPont and ends up writing the article that appears in Readers Digest Magazine

**Albert McLaughlin:**

Mr. DuPont's personal accountant who uncovers the yearly check written to a woman in an obscure Kentucky town and thinks Mr. DuPont has sired a secret heir

**Lydia (WIDOW)**

DuPont's somewhat arrogant, distrustful, materialistic and easily angered widow

**Sheriff:**

the lawman from Hazard, KY

**Congressman Perkins:**

Carl D. Perkins was a graduate of the Caney school, became one of the most powerful congressman in Washington DC and appeared on "This Is Your Life" with Alice

**Ralph Edwards**

The host of the 1950's hit TV show on NBC "This Is Your Life"

**SCRIPT NOTE:**

Historic segments are in BLACK

Modern Day segments are in RED

Both story lines are told until they merge in real time during the final act.

AUDIO - BLACK SCREEN

We hear the sound of an old typewriter; followed by the sound of an office

FADE IN:

EXT. FRONT NEWSPAPER OFFICE/SOUND OF TYPWRITER - DAY

CUT TO:

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE/OLIVER #9 TYPEWRITER - DAY

Alice Lloyd is behind her desk at her newspaper.

TEXT ON SCREEN  
Boston, October 1916

EDITOR  
Here are the corrections

Alice takes the files, it is obvious she doesn't feel well.

ALICE  
Well, well

CUT TO:

INT. EDITORS OFFICE - DAY

There is a commotion outside his office, we see Alice, a frail thin woman about 50 years old, passed out and collapsed behind her typewriter

DISSOLVE

BEAUTIFUL MELODY OF Hammer dulcimer and banjo theme music in

## CREDITS ROLL

SPRING: We are high above a mountains IN SPRING as the camera swoops down in-between two close mountains as we see the blooming dogwoods and red bud trees and we go at high speed in a holler, lifting up and seeing the huge expanse of the Appalachian mountains in early May

CUT TO

INT. HOSPITAL ALICE IN BED - DAY

The doctors and nurse huddle around Alice's bed. Alice's husband Arthur, a stern and unemotional 55 year old, is there as is her Mother, Mrs. Geddes small woman in her late 70's.

DOCTOR

It's not just the spinal meningitis

ARTHUR

There's more?

DOCTOR

You've had a stroke, that's why you can't use your arm

ARTHUR

What ...

MRS GEDDES

Dear God ...

DISSOLVE

## CREDITS ROLL

theme music now joined by Mandolin and string quartet

SUMMER: We are high above a mountains IN SUMMER as we plunge down in-between two lush green close mountains as we go at high speed in the same holler, lifting up and seeing the huge expanse of the Appalachian mountains in July

CUT TO

INT. ALICE AND ARTHUR'S HOME - DAY

ALICE IN wheel chair next to large window overlooking the boston harbor The doctor, Arthur and Mrs. Geddes. Doctor is checking Alice, pulls a chair forward and sits directly in front of her

DOCTOR

The combination of your illness and the stroke has rendered you

... I'm afraid you are permanently fated, Alice.

ARTHUR

Meaning?

DOCTOR

You are terminal.

(Mrs. Geddes starts weeping)

ALICE

How long?

DOCTOR

Six months, maybe longer if you move to a warmer climate

ARTHUR

Move?

ALICE

How? After the hospital there's no money left

DOCTOR

Here, the pastor has given me permission to offer you this

(Dr hands Alice an envelope)

ALICE

Kentucky?

(She hands the envelope to Arthur)

DOCTOR

It's warmer there and the church has a mission home for your use free of cost.

ARTHUR

Leave Boston for Kentucky? Now?

MRS. GEDDES, scolding  
Arthur!

ALICE  
Why ... why is this cabin available  
and why is it free?

DOCTOR  
The missionaries are not there any  
more ... the locals ran them off,  
so the cabin is ... free.

ALICE  
How long can I expect?

DOCTOR  
Two years, maybe three.

(He places his hand on Alice's shoulder)

ARTHUR  
One life wasted is unavoidable, my  
dear. Two lives wasted is  
senseless.

DISSOLVE

CREDITS ROLL

theme music now joined by GUITAR and percussion that sounds  
like the typewriter pounding away

AUTUMN: We are high above a mountains IN AUTUMN as we swoop  
down in-between two mountains fully ablaze with fall colors  
as we go at high speed in a holler, lifting up and seeing the  
huge expanse of the Appalachian mountains in late October

EXT. ALICE and MRS. GEDDES - DAY

ALICE AND MRS GEDDES In a horse and buggy loaded with  
belongings. The mountains are bare and gray. There is a light  
rain. They pull up in the mud to a small windowless cabin in a  
holler.

Alice slowly descends the buggy with the help of her mountain  
driver.

CUT TO:



INT. CABIN - SAME DAY

We are inside the dark windowless cabin. The door opens as Alice stands as a silhouette against the stark mountain background as the rain pounds behind her

DISSOLVE

FINAL CREDITS ROLL

theme music now joined by full orchestra into soaring melody and then subsides back to only the hammer dulcimer and ends

WINTER: We are high above a mountains IN WINTER as we swoop down in-between the same two mountains, white and stark with snow, as we go at high speed in a holler, lifting up and seeing the huge expanse of the Appalachian mountains in winter as it snows

DISSOLVE

EXT. ABISHA/ APPALACHIAN WINTER - LATE AFTERNOON

We see the top of a now covered tree stump up close and hear the continued sound of someone walking in the snow. A man's hand abruptly sweeps the snow off the stump top.

A foot clomps down. The foot has no shoe, but is bound with cloth against the snowy tree stump. Hands appear, tightening the strings of the cloth that bind the straps on his foot.

We see the small man bundled against the cold. His name is ABISHA JOHNSON, a pale, thin man about 55 years old. He places a log upright on the stump. Gripping his ax handle tightly, he aims at the log before him and swings. We see the snow falling straight down toward us as the loud wood chopping continues. Abisha stops and listens to the echo of his last chop bullet through the airborne snow and into the mountainsides of the holler.

The chopping echo dissolves into to the sound of a car on a bumpy road . . .

INT. MODERN DAY SCENE/CAR/CLOSE UP - DAY

We see Alice as an old woman, slightly plump. Tired. About 75, hair grey, very dignified looking. We hear the sound of the car she is riding in as it travels over a bumpy road.

EXT. FROM A DISTANCE - DAY

We see the top of a colorful autumn mountain. A 1950 black Buick, four door, motors along a mountain road. The car moves past us and from our right a sign comes into view and the camera focusses in:

Hazard, KY  
14 Miles

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ABISHA/ WINTER - DAY

Abisha is still at the tree stump in the snow. We hear the voices of small children echoing from the house in the near distance and off the mountainside. Not laughter, but a muted discussion. Abisha looks toward his small home.

We see in the faint dusk light Abisha's children stacking firewood next to a coal pile outside the door. His house is a log structure with no windows. One small child plays in the snow with a dog.

TEXT ON SCREEN  
Knott County, Kentucky  
February, 1917

We see his young daughter SARY. She is thin but pretty. She does not smile, but she is not frowning. Six year old Sary is handed a bundle of wood from her older cousin, ANGUS, about fourteen years old, with no words. She looks toward her father and then disappears into the house.

We see his home, two mountains sweep down on either side of the windowless log house with the expanse of the holler disappearing behind it in the snowfall. Smoke from the chimney hangs suspended in the mountain holler.

Abisha's eyes gaze at the imprisoning visual of his family against the mountains, and then over to his small barnyard. Two old cows and several chickens congregate together against the cold as five large hogs search beyond the fence. Abisha stares at the hogs, then at his children.

Abisha grips his handle. As he readies to swing, his coat falls and we see he is humpbacked. He re-bundles his cloak and raises the ax above him.

The ax swings down against the log and the handle shears at the ax base. The metal blade bounces up against the stump and slams against Abisha's head with a thud.

He falls.

We are lifted up above Abisha's limp body laying in the snow, over the gray mountains as the snow pours in toward us.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

The old woman moves forward as the car stops. Another older woman, June Buchanon, smaller and thinner sits beside her. A gentleman dressed in a suit, Commandor Slone also in his 40's, sits by the opposite window.

Through the car windows we see the setting of a 1950's train station in Appalachia. People mill about dressed in period clothes more suited for 1935 or so

JUNE BUCHANON

Here we are, Mrs. Lloyd

ALICE

Well, well

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN - EVENING

The gentleman, Dan Martin a lawyer in his 40's, makes his way down the hall of the moving train, to the passenger compartment. He opens the door. Inside we see five people, including Alice Lloyd who is seated against the window

DAN MARTIN

Seems like we'll be in Cincinnati  
in no time. This train is mighty  
fast.

COMMADORE

That conductor fella says she'll  
travel upwards of 50 miles in just  
an hour.

JUNE

My, how exciting

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE LLOYD'S CABIN - NIGHT

ALICE LLOYD and her mother MRS. GEDDES in their small, dark log home with no windows. Alice sits in her chair, her mother across from her. We hear the wind outside, blowing ashes and sparks down the chimney into the room.

MRS. GEDDES

Good heavens, Alice. Get the  
broom.

(They quickly put out the sparks.)

CUT TO:

INT. ABISHA'S HOUSE - EVENING

By the light from a coal lamp we see Abisha sitting in front of his table. The large bump above his eye is being tended to by young Sary. The house is dark except for the light at the table. We see half of Abisha's eleven children sleeping on floor cots. ANGUS, the cousin about 17, is the oldest of the children.

We see Abisha's wife, a thin, hard looking woman about 50 years old. She, too, is quiet, but very concerned and attentive. She stands by the fireplace and brings a pot of very hot water toward the table.

As the wife approaches the table, Sary peers closely into Abisha's cut that she is tending. Abisha looks weary and simply allows it. Sary presses her rag against the cut. Abisha reacts to the pain scaring Sary. Sary moves back quickly into her mother who drops the pot of hot water on Sary.

Sary cries out.

ABISHA

Sary!

(Sary's cries blend into the sound of the wind)

CUT TO

INT. ALICE'S CABIN - NIGHT

Alice is reading a book through her wire rimmed glasses. The wind howls and she looks up to listen. Her mother sits by the fire, with the broom in her hand, as though waiting for another downdraft. She places another log on the fire as the wind howls again. She looks toward Alice.

MRS. GEDDES

The wind sounds so cold and sad.

CUT TO

INT. ABISHA'S BED - SAME NIGHT

Abisha and his wife lay together in bed by the light of the fireplace. Sary and another young child sleep between them.

Abisha's eyes are open in the dark, deep in thought. The texture on his brow reflects his wounds as his skin glistens against the small flames of the fireplace. We can barely see his breath hang in the air from the coldness of the cabin.

HIS WIFE

I be hearin' your mind in the  
darkness.

(Abisha sits up in bed with his back to his wife)

HIS WIFE

Sary be stout to heal.

Abisha gets up, walks over and leans over the fireplace. His wife getting out of the bed. One of the children coughs.

HIS WIFE

Be you havin' the dream agin?

Abisha turns and faces his wife, but says nothing. She looks hard into the flames and then back toward her husband.

HIS WIFE

Then it be the will of God 'hovy.  
It be your duty to go to them, for  
our'n and the other chillin's.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S CABIN - SAME NIGHT

Mrs. Geddes stares into the fire, deep in thought. She pulls at the sweater over her shoulders.

MRS. GEDDES

I thought we traveled to Kentucky  
for warmer weather, not snow.

ALICE

Even the south must have its cold,  
Mother.

The sound of the wind interrupts them.

MRS. GEDDES

We're hardly here two months and I  
already miss the sound of the  
Boston Harbor so, and windows.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABISHA'S CABIN - SAME NIGHT

Abisha closes the door of his cabin behind him. He coughs into his hands as he looks straight up into the snow as if he was praying.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S CABIN - SAME NIGHT

Mrs. Geddes gets up from her chair and places another log on the fire, mumbling.

MRS. GEDDES

No windows, no indoor privy.  
Alice, dear, if we had a window we  
could at least see the weather.

ALICE

The weather can be seen as it comes  
down the fireplace.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN SIDE - SAME NIGHT

Abisha travels through the night, treading by foot through the snow and wind. Abisha arrives at the edge of a frozen stream, stares up and down and then at the ice. He carefully steps on the ice and walks forward. The ice breaks and Abisha falls into the water. He screams from the cold. Up to his waist in cold water, he plows through the ice and breaks his way to the shore, disappearing into the snow.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S CABIN - SAME NIGHT

Alice looks up from her book, takes off her glasses. As she does, the book falls from her lap. We see that she favors her left hand, which is crippled. Mrs. Geddes sits before the fire, now mending a garment.

MRS. GEDDES

Have you heard from Arthur? Has he  
sent you any more funds?

ALICE

I hoped you would make it through  
the whole day without asking.

MRS. GEDDES

Well, I thought perhaps that vile  
little man would take pity and help  
you, as is his duty.

ALICE

Perhaps, and maybe in the meantime  
I will regain my health and return  
to Boston a mountain princess.

The sound of the wind overtakes the moment.

CUT TO

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - SAME NIGHT

The sound of the wind blends into the sounds of Abisha's struggles through the dark woods as he climbs up a mountainside. Snow clings to the branches as his face is whipped by tree limbs that slap him as he climbs. He slips on the icy ground and slides down the incline. He grabs his cloth bound feet. One foot has all but been abandoned by the makeshift wrapping. Abisha rips off the cloth and throws it aside. Barefoot, he continues his climb through the snow.

He reaches the top of the mountain and peers across the snowy, dark holler. We see Alice's windowless cabin, barely visible against the white blanket of snow.

Breathless and freezing, Abisha heads down toward the cabin.

CUT TO

INT. ALICE'S CABIN - SAME NIGHT

The two women sit quietly. Not talking. Alice sits at a table before the coal oil lamp, writing a letter with her good hand. Mrs. Geddes nods off in her chair.

They are startled by the sound of footsteps. Mrs. Geddes gets out of her chair and reaches for the fireplace poker.

There is knocking at the door. They call out, but no one answers, just a weak rhythm of pounding against the door. Alice slowly reaches for the door latch and Mrs. Geddes positions the iron poker behind her.

The door opens as Abisha, with frozen ice crusting his face, falls to the floor.

MRS. GEDDES

Dear God, who is he?

ALICE

Get a blanket!



The word "blanket" echoes over and over as the wind grows louder and dissolves into the sound of the train.

DISSOLVE

INT. TRAIN - EVENING

Alice is resting with her head propped on a pillow against the glass.

JUNE

Alice, do you want a blanket?  
Commadore, reach for a quilt,  
she'll catch a cold

ALICE

I'm fine

COMMADORE

Aw, that tough old bird cain't take  
a chill no how.

(Laughter in the cabin. Alice looks around)

ALICE

Where's Dan

COMMADORE

Don't rightly know. I'll go fetch  
him.

Cut to:

INT. TRAIN/DINNER CAR - EVENING

Dan sits alone at a dinner table reading the paper. Commadore enters the car, sees Dan and sits across the table from him. Dan doesn't put down his paper but says

DAN

She'll be fine

COMMADORE

Twenty six years, Dan. That's a  
long time to be in one place. She  
ain't left that holler for a  
quarter of a century.

Dan puts down the paper, looks out the window into the dark expanse moving before then, then back to Commadore

DAN  
Well, it's time she's aired out  
then

Slight pause, then both men roar with laughter. Dan reaches into his jacket pocket for a cigar and tries to light it. The lighter doesn't work

Commadore has matches. He lights up a match and reaches across the table toward Dan.

COMMADORE  
Here' ya go, buddy.

As he reaches across the table, we come very close to the lit match as it ignites the tip of the cigar. The screen gets filled with the bright glow of heat and the smoke.

DISSOLVE

INT. ALICE'S CABIN - NIGHT

We see the burning fireplace in Alice's cabin. Mrs. Geddes secures the door and the women drag Abisha toward the fireplace. Alice covers Abisha with the blanket and both women see the swollen mass of blood and ice that are his feet. Mrs. Geddes shuts the cabin door.

ALICE  
Who are you ... what do you want?

Abisha tries to sit up. His face, laced with ice, contorts in pain and he falls back down.

CUT TO:

INT. ABISHA'S CABIN - SAME NIGHT

Sary sleeps against the pillow. The light of the coal lamp approaches and lights her as her mother comes to the bedside. Sary turns and we see the LOOSE FLESH AND REDNESS OF BURNS on her opposite cheek. Sary's eyes open and she sits up.

SARY

Momma?

Sary's mother lifts her off the bed, away from her sleeping brother. She sits on a chair next to the fire and puts Sary in her lap. Mother starts to rub butter on wound, while singing a soft, lonesome mountain song. Sary notices her father is not in the house.

The older cousin, Angus, sleeping on the cabin floor, awakens and comes to the fire. He puts his hand on her forehead and pushes her head back to see the burn. Sary says nothing.

ANGUS

Pappy in the privy?

(Mother looks up and shakes her head)

MOTHER

He seed the vision agin', Angus.

The boy has a very negative look on his face.

ANGUS

Uncle 'lishy preached to let the fernors be. Pappy heard.

MOTHER

What Pappy heard louder be across those mountains.

CUT TO

INT. ALICE'S CABIN - SAME NIGHT

Abisha is seated on a crate before the fire. He is wrapped in a blanket, his hair and clothes soaked from the thawing ice. Mrs. Geddes hands him a cup of hot tea. Abisha stares at the steam coming up from the cup, holding it in his hands for the warmth. Slowly, he places the cup back on the floor and turns toward Alice. He hesitates, then speaks.

ABISHA

I was afeered to come to the house of the ferin womin.

ALICE

Are you in trouble?

ABISHA

My troubles be in my heart, for my chillin.

ALICE

Are they sick, do they need a doctor?

Abisha begins to weep. Mrs. Geddes picks up his cup from the floor and tries to get him to hold it.

MRS. GEDDES

Here now, drink this. It will stop your shivering.

Abisha takes the cup and sips at the tea.

ALICE

What is your name?

ABISHA

I be called Abisha fer my daddy and his daddy before him. Abisha Johnson. They call me ABISHA, my kinfolk do.

MRS. GEDDES

What is it then. Why have you come to us?

Abisha returns the teacup slowly to the floor. To their surprise he gets down on his knees before them and clasps his hands. Alice, startled, begins to stand from her chair. As she does, the Bible on the armrest falls to the floor in front of Abisha. He picks it up and holds it to his chest.

ABISHA

I was affeared to approach the ferrin women. But I heered the voice in the dream. The voice of the lord God 'hovy beseachin' me to summons you, to call my youngin's away from their sickenin's and weakenin's

ALICE

We are not medical. . .

ABISHA

The voice said to throw myself down before you and summons you to make my youngin's live unliken the hogs.

Alice and her mother exchange their confused disbelief.

## ABISHA

(pointing to the Bible he placed on the floor in front of them)

There be the dreams of the god-uv-my fathers. But I have no 'bility to read the words, nor to give them such dreams, so they can rise above liven as the hogs.

Abisha, very emotional, claps his hands together once, and speaks as though he is making a solemn oath.

I see'd in my dream that the ferrin' wimen seek not the alms. I hain't got no gifts of money.

## ALICE

Mr. Johnson there is no need to-

## ABISHA

If the ferrin wimen come to Caney and teach my youngin's the larnin' I will build for you a schoolhouse on my land. I will build for you a cabin bigginer than this one, and I be givin you the land for teachin my youngins the larnin'.

Alice leans against the wall by the fireplace, looking into the eyes of this near crippled stranger. She looks around the dark, tattered cabin and then at her mother.

## ALICE

I don't understand, why do you want to give us your land? How will you live? How will you take care of your children?

## ABISHA

The lord god 'hovy summonsed you in my dream, to give my youngin's a life better'n the hogs. I've come to come to the house of the ferrin wimin to teach them the larnin'.

Alice, by now very concerned and perplexed, simply looks at her mother. Alice picks the Bible up off the floor.

ALICE

Why can't you just send your  
children to a schoolhouse? Surely  
there's a teacher-

Abisha, once more, with abruptness, clasps his hands together, and repeats his plea, as though he had rehearsed this moment in his mind long before coming to Alice's cabin.

ABISHA

If the ferrin wimen come to Caney  
and teach my youngin's the larnin'  
I will build for you a schoolhouse  
on my land. I will build for you a  
cabin bigginer than this one, and I  
be givin you the land for teachin  
my youngins the larnin'.

Alice gets up from her chair and moves toward the fireplace. She looks over to Abisha and his red, crusted feet, his hump back. Then to her mother.

MRS. GEDDES

(whispering)  
Windows ...

(After a pause)

ALICE

Where is this land?

ABISHA

Across the mountains over yonder,  
on the Caney creek.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

We see the wheels of a stopping train and the train step comes into view.

CONDUCTOR VO  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
Please check your tickets and  
luggage for Indianapolis, Indiana

The train stops, the door opens and we see the feet of several people rush off. There is a pause, then a older womans legs appear. Alice slowly dismounts off the train as Dan Martin helps her from the sidewalk.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NEXT MORNING

Dan and several of the party are at the hotel desk checking out of the hotel. Alice sits with Commadore in the lobby, waiting.

COMMADORE  
Feel better after a good nights  
sleep?

ALICE  
I miss my bed

COMMADORE  
Lordy, Miss Alice. It's only been  
one night. We got two more to go.

ALICE  
Well, I have a good bed

We hear the chatter of the lobby and of June and Dan in the background. Alice eyes them one by one.

JUNE  
(OFF)  
The train leaves in half an hour,  
we best hurry.

ALICE  
I still can't fathom why that man  
has to see me in person. Why not  
you or June.

COMMADORE  
For the hundredth time, old woman.  
You want to lose everything because  
you're a stubborn old mule?

(He Laughs)

I tol' you, he's willing to help  
but mighty particular. I cain't  
blame him. That's a lot of money.  
He wants to meet who he's handing  
it to.

ALICE

Than why doesn't he visit me in  
Caney?

COMMADORE

Probably because he busy working to  
make the money he's gonna give you.  
Look, it's either this or sit in  
Caney and type your darn letters  
for another six months till the  
whole thing is up and gone  
(mutters) Stubborn ... old... mule.

Commadore smiles and pats Alice on the shoulder reassuringly  
and picks up his paper. As he starts reading Alice looks  
toward him.

CUT TO:

EXT. CANEY HOLLER, SPRING TIME - MORNING

A mule drawn wagon carries Alice, her mother and a man. The  
man driving the cart is Commodore Slone, a ruggedly handsome  
mountain man about 35 years old. The wagon is loaded with  
some of Alice's belongings.

SUPER ON SCREEN

Caney Creek, Kentucky  
Early Spring 1917

SCRIPT NOTE - LET'S USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO VISUALLY PAINT.  
THIS IS A MAGNIFICENT REGION FOR DARK AND LIGHT CONTRASTS. IT  
IS BEAUTIFUL AND UGLY, BIG AND SMALL, RICH AND POOR.

We pass the grey springtime scenery of the mountains,  
contrasted by the harsh visuals of strip mined landscapes and  
raped and barren hillsides.

The road turns around a bend. Abisha stands next to a small  
sawboard cabin, nervous and anxious as the cart approaches.

CUT TO:



EXT. SUNRISE

Alice and everyone get down off the carriage.

ABISHA

Miss Alice. How do, Commodore ...  
how be your momma?

COMMODORE

Howdy, ABISHA ... jess fine.

Alice accepts his greeting with her left hand. She looks up at the ridges surrounding the cabin and the small creek below. It is a scene of desolation. The trees have been lumbered off the mountainsides.

ALICE

Where are the trees, Abisha?

ABISHA

Fernnir,s come, took 'em all away.

They take a walking tour around the cabin. Abisha's wife and children stand waiting, very quietly.

ABISHA

This be my womin, and my fambly.

Alice sees the young girl with scars on her face.

That be Sary. She's been a-waitin  
fer you to come.

Alice leans over and touches the little girl's shoulder. Sary eyes the thin gold necklace around Alice's neck, and whispers into her ear,

SARY

(OFF)  
Be you a princess?

At first surprised, Alice reaches behind her and unlocks the necklace to give to Sary.

ANGUS

No, Sary. Don't be obligen to the  
ferrin woman.

ABISHA

Angus!

Angus turns and walks away.

ABISHA

That be Angus, my cousin's boy.  
His daddy be dead a while, yep. He  
lived with my preacher brother  
'Lishy but he lives with me now.

Abisha gets Alice's attention back to the cabin as Sary watches her golden prize remain in Alice's hand.

ABISHA

It be the building of a poor man.

(pause)

Not to be intrudin' ma'am,  
but it's not to late to be boardin'  
up them holes.

ALICE

They're not holes, they're  
windows.

COMMODORE

Miss Alice, them windows could be a  
danger in these hills, you being of  
wimen and all.

ALICE

The danger isn't in having windows,  
they are like eyes to the outside  
world.

ABISHA

Folks hain't used to these here  
winders. Ain't never had the likes  
of 'em. I say they mean trouble.

ALICE

No, Abisha, they mean light.

CUT TO

EXT. NEARBY MOUNTAINSIDE SARY AND ANGUS - SAME DAY

Angus watches Abisha and Alice talk from his position at  
thicket along the creek. Sary walks over to him, carrying a  
small chick.

SARY

Miss Alice is jess like Pappy said,  
a princess.

Angus says nothing.

SARY

Why you be afearred of the ferrin  
wimen?

ANGUS

Pappy been suckered in by that  
ferrin woman. Those two and  
COMMODORE be up to no good.

SARY

What do you fix to do?

ANGUS

Watch 'em send them back to  
Americay with them dang books.  
Jess like they did the others.

Angus picks up a stick, makes believe it's a shotgun ...  
turns from Sary and walks away.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABISHA'S NEW CABIN - DAY

Abisha and COMMODORE unload the last from the wagon into the  
cabin. Abisha goes to the cart and lifts a heavy object  
covered in a towel. He doesn't know what it is, as he  
uncovers it and gazes at the queer mass of metal

ALICE

It's a typewriter.

Abisha brings it into the cabin and rests it on a small  
table. Alice demonstrates the machine on paper already  
inserted.

ABISHA

A writin' machine! Makes an awful  
racket, don't hit?

Alice types a word.

ALICE

Do you know what this word is?

ABISHA

no ma'am.

ALICE

(with a smile)  
It's your name, "Abisha"

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - SAME DAY

Alice moves from the table and stands before the windows.  
She sees Angus by the creek.

ABISHA  
I can still board up dem holes.

ALICE  
You'll do nothing of the kind. You  
know how I feel about viewing the  
outside.

ABISHA  
Hain't you on the inside viewing  
the OUTSIDE that I fear.

Mrs. Geddes enters the cabin and looks around, smiling.

MRS. GEDDES  
What a fine home you have built

ABISHA  
Thank you, ma'am. Well, I best be  
tending your firewood.

Abisha leaves the cabin.

MRS. GEDDES  
Well?

ALICE  
  
(staring out the window)  
Time will tell, mother.

MRS. GEDDES  
That's not what I mean, Alice. A  
well, Do we have a well? For water  
and washing?

ALICE  
Yes, actually, we do.

MRS. GEDDES  
  
(opening a box)  
Mrs. Johnson tells me that six of  
her neighbor families have children  
who want to attend your lessons.  
Between Abisha's eleven children  
and the other families, this room  
might be too small already.

Mrs. Geddes picks up the box and pauses

And how are we to provide books and paper? Alice, have you considered this? Books and paper and...

She looks around at the smallness of the cabin

...and desks? All we have is a small house, Abisha's barn, and all these young children coming.

ALICE

Ah, yes, mother, but we do have windows now, don't we.

MRS. GEDDES

(as she leaves the cabin)  
Wonderful. Now the whole world can watch me worry.

Alice is alone inside. She hears Abisha and COMMODORE speaking together. She looks out the window at the barren mountains across the way. She sees Angus, now alone, staring back toward her.

ALICE

A princess indeed ... I am your friend

Alice hands the necklace to little Sary

SARY

I hain't never had no friend from Amerikay before

ALICE

I'm from Boston

Alice reaches up to her mouth with her finger and makes a "be quiet" noise. Sary takes the necklace, turns and runs toward Abisha.

Alice, looking back out the window at Angus, is returned by his cold stare.

She walks out of her cabin to the stream nearby. She turns back and looks at the view of her new home, the contrast of her wooden cabin against the barren, lumbered mountain sides.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT/ALICE'S CABIN/ALICE AND MRS. GEDDES - NIGHT

We see a log fire in the fireplace and the interior of the cabin. Small but quaint. Mrs. Geddes sits in front of the fire, working on a quilt. The sound of crackling of the fire mixes into another sound ... a steady popping noise, almost a solid banging. We move around the room to a corner of the cabin where Alice has her desk set up. An oil lamp burns as Alice bangs out a letter on her Oliver #9 typewriter.

We see a pile of nearly 30 letters, addressed and ready to mail.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN - PASSENGER CAR - RAINING - DAY

We see June, COMMODORE, Dan and Alice, sitting in train cabin, speeding through a very wet America. COMMODORE sits next to a window, sweating a bit. Miss June sits next to him. They both look out the window.

JUNE

Beautiful. And fast

COMMODORE

Like riding the wings of the lord  
God hisself.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN - PASSENGER CAR - RAINING - SAME DAY

Dan is reading a tri-fold letter. Leans forward to the seat in front of him and whispers to Commadore and June

DAN

This here NBC has a bunch of these  
TV stations. The closest to Caney  
is Lexington. I don't guess no one  
will even see it.

JUNE

Oh, those boys will figure out something. They are quite the resourceful ones.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN - PASSENGER CAR - SAME DAY

We are close to the cleavage of the generous chest of an endowed stewardess carrying a tray of snacks and drinks. She leans forward into the camera and says,

STEWARDESS

Can I interest you in a snack?

Alice looks up and her eyebrows raise nearly as far as her hairline and looks next to her where Dan is sitting, his eyes wide and motionless.

With no response the stewardess smiles and moves past, we hear her asking the same for people in the rows behind.

We see Commadore's hand gently slap Dans shoulder from the seat behind. Commadore leans forward and WHISPERS,

Commodore

I'm a telling you . . . Like riding the wings of the lord God hisself.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

We are close on Alice's face as she bumps up and down on a horse drawn buggy. We hear the clomping of hooves

EXT. DOWNTOWN HINDMAN/ALICE AND ANGUS/POST OFFICE - DAY

Alice slowly gets off the mule drawn cart, driven by a not too happy Angus. They pull in front of the post office, a small out building on the main street. Two fellows sit out in front of the general store on a railroad tie, the elder playing a fiddle and the younger playing a guitar. The guitar player nods to Angus.

ALICE

I'll just be a minute, Angus.

Angus looks ahead apathetically. Alice dismounts the wagon.

ALICE  
 Will you at least still be here  
 when I come back?

CUT TO:

INT. POST OFFICE/BERTHY, PATRONS - DAY

Alice enters the small post office. A young Berthy, about 30 years old, stands behind the counter. She is a small, spry young lady, quick witted and happy. Her appearance is very "mountain", dark colored clothes.

BERTHY  
 What fer ya, stranger?  
 Be you 'spectin' a letter?

ALICE  
 Well, I don't know that anyone  
 knows I'm here yet. I use the post  
 office over in Mousie, usually.

BERTHY  
 That be a fer piece. You be the  
 ferrin' woman. Where be  
 your momma?

ALICE  
 She's home.

BERTHY  
 Bishy built ye the cabin.

Alice  
 News travels quickly.

BERTHY  
 Quick as it needs to. No need  
 to read when you can listen.

Laughs

ALICE  
 No need to hire a postmistress if  
 folks can't read.

BERTHY  
 (Stops laughing and repeats)  
 Be you 'spectin' a letter?

ALICE  
 I need postage for these.



Berthy looks over the large pile of envelopes to mail.

BERTHY

(pointing to box on shelf)  
If you be 'spectin' a letter,  
hits in the box.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICES CABIN/MRS. GEDDES - SAME DAY

Mrs. Geddes goes through the motions to light an old Appalachian cook stove, using wood and coal with a kerosene starter.

Knock on door, Mrs. Geddes answers and sees JOHN MARTIN a local family man, coal miner in his 40's.

JOHN MARTIN

'xcuse me, ma'am. My name is John,  
John Martin. I live across Blue  
Moon mountain over the other side  
of the county.

(Motions to the three boys)

This here boy be my nephew, Dan.  
These two here be my boys. I have  
others

MRS. GEDDES

So, what is it I can do for you?

(Sees smoke coming from fire pipe into room)

MR. MARTIN

Ma'am, I can fix that for you. I've  
tinkered with enough of 'em at the  
coal houses and tipples.

MRS. GEDDES

Are you a coal miner?

MARTIN

Right now, ma'am, I'm a fella who  
can fix a stove pipe.

CUT TO:

John fiddles with the flu pipe and shuts the grate. The three boys sit, hair in the "used to be combed" look, eating shortbread given by Mrs. Geddes.

MARTIN

This here be an old stove.

MRS. GEDDES

Well, I'm an old woman, you'd think we'd work well together.

Martin goes from stove to table where Mrs. Geddes sits. She motions for him to sit down

MARTIN

(laughs)

You's pretty funny, ma'am. I ain't never seen an outsider who don't mind the mountains like you.

MRS. GEDDES

You've just met me, how would you know what I don't mind?

MARTIN

Oh, these hill people, you know...the womin talk, the men hear...then talk about it agin' later when the womin ain't around.

MRS. GEDDES

How about some tea?

(Puts water into a tea pot)

Now that we have a fire, I may as well use it.

(Pauses and smiles)

...and thank you for fixing it.

MARTIN

I heard that ABISHA give his land to the ferrin women from Americay so's to build a school. I heard you come to Caney to live on the land and to commence the larnin' to ABISHA's chillins ... and other's.

MRS. GEDDES

Why do you people call us foreign?  
You say we are from Americay?  
Aren't you American? Don't we all  
live in the same country?

MARTIN

No offense meant, ma'am.

MRS. GEDDES

Oh, I'm not offended, I'm confused.  
Kentucky is as much a part of  
America as Boston. Don't you feel  
part of the country?

MARTIN

The only thing folks of these hills  
be a true part of is the man next  
to him a half mile down a mountain  
shaft, hoping the roof don't cave  
in or a gas don't come.

MRS. GEDDES

Surely you have more than that.  
This is your home. Your children  
and your family is here. Your lives  
must be very full

MARTIN

Full ... we come out that mountain  
every day with lungs full of black  
dust and whatever pride is left  
over from being so in debt to the  
scrip store owned by the company  
thet sent you in the hole in the  
first place.

MRS. GEDDES

I would think you would be grateful  
to the company for providing that  
store in the first place. Why  
complain about the very work that  
feeds you?

MARTIN

Ma'am, it ain't the work ... it's  
the company that owns the work. The  
company is owned by men from  
Boston, and New York and other big  
cities in Americay.

(MORE)

MARTIN (cont'd)

Those men come to these hills and buy up all the land, then they go movin' our families around, rippin' the mountains apart. They take the trees off the hills and leave the land that was our home looking as barren as what's left inside of folks after Americay leaves with whatever coal or oil or lumber you all came to take. So's the mountain people come together as one blood, one people. We become part of whatever is left of Us.

MRS. GEDDES

What do you think we've come to take from you?

MARTIN

Don't know . . . cain't tell. I've known ABISHA all my life. He's a bit crazy but a good man. Why he gave his land, I don't know, but he did.

MRS. GEDDES

So, do you feel we have done Abisha wrong by accepting and coming here?

MARTIN

I ain't the judge of that, ma'am. I do know what I see.

MRS. GEDDES

What do you see, then?

MARTIN

Holes... I see holes that I work in deep in the ground. I see holes on the sides of hills where our homes and families used to be. I see mountains torn apart by people from Americay, who take the heart of a hill and leave behind a big hole. I see my daddy and good men, who had the heart and soul dug out from them just to be buried in a hole of what used to be their land.

MRS. GEDDES

But aren't you responsible for yourselves? Didn't you yourself help dig those holes? Why did your people let them, Mr. Martin?

MARTIN

'cause folks didn't know they WAS letting them till it was too late. By then, they all sold away the right to say 'no' when they signed a paper written by people in Amerikay. We no longer own the holes, ma'am.

MRS. GEDDES

But you didn't answer me - do you think we've done wrong by coming?

MARTIN

If you quit and leave, like the others, and leave behind a big hole where 'Bysh's heart used to be.

The tea pot whistles. Mrs. Geddes gets up, goes to the stove. She takes a cloth towel and carries the pot from the stove to the table and pour the tea,

MRS. GEDDES

Is that why you are here?

MARTIN

I come to see if you would take my boys, that maybe you and Miss Alice will stay a while, and that this here school house would let them know a better part of Americay than Americay showed me.

MRS. GEDDES

You are a deep thinker, Mr. Martin

MARTIN

(looks at his coal blackened fingers)  
Ma'am, DEEP is what I DO.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN ST/ ANGUS AND GUITAR PLAYER - SAME DAY

Main street in Hindman is very old, gaunt looking...very "coal town" soiled. The main street is dirt, cobblestone and mud puddles. People smile and are friendly.

They look poor but not in poverty. Angus approaches the railroad tie outside the post office and listens to the music played by three friends a little older than Angus (guitar, banjo, fiddle).

GUITAR PLAYER

What you'all carryin' today?

ANGUS

Hog manure.

GUITAR PLAYER

But hain't that the stranger womin  
your pappy gave his land to?

ANGUS

Same thing.

Camera turns to let us see Alice standing within earshot.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S CABIN/ ALICE AND MRS. GEDDES - EVENING

There is an oil lamp near as Alice works.

MRS. GEDDES

You're relentless.

ALICE

According to young Angus, I'm pig  
droppings.

MRS. GEDDES

I beg your pardon?

ALICE

(stops typing)

This morning, when we were in town,  
he told his friends that I was a  
load of pig droppings.

Alice continues to type

MRS. GEDDES

He must have a big heart to hate  
that deeply. It's like a big hole  
in his spirit that he didn't dig.  
It will take a lot of patience to  
fill, my dear.

Alice stops typing

ALICE

A big hole?

MRS. GEDDES

This school can be a lot more than just something to keep you occupied. Which seems to be working, I might add. You've not complained about your health for weeks.

There is a sudden rapping at the door.

ALICE

No time for complaints mother. There's work to be done.

Alice looks out window.

ALICE

It's Abisha.

Mrs. Geddes opens the cabin door. Abisha stands at the entrance with Sary at his side.

MRS. GEDDES

Come in. Hello Sarah, have you been good today?

SARY

Momma done made you some biscuits. I helped.

ABISHA

Miss Alice, them boys agreed to commence the extry school house buildin'. They'll take your word on your promise.

ALICE

Good. And can I take their word on their promise to me?

ABISHA

(nods affirmative)

MRS. GEDDES

What promise?

Alice picks up a stack of letters and a small purse.

ALICE

Now, here is what we need to do. Take these letters to the post office. Here are the coins to pay the post. This purse has the money that came in the letters for the building lumber. Can you get the supplies tomorrow?

ABISHA

I suppose.

ALICE

Good then, it's settled. When will the men be finished with the building?

MRS. GEDDES

What promise?

ABISHA

Well... I supposen...

ALICE

By month's end nearly 40 children will be coming to Caney to this school you started. They cannot fit in this cabin, and I'll not teach in your barn.

Returns to her typing.

ALICE

And thank you so much for the biscuits, they look delightful.

MRS. GEDDES

Oh, come, come Abisha. Let her be. She's a bit sensitive about barns lately.

Mrs. Geddes and Abisha walk outside into the cool night. The moon and stars are crystal clear. Alice can be seen typing through the cabin window.

ABISHA

Miss Alice, she be a hard worker.

MRS. GEDDES

You've not seen the half of it.

Mrs. Geddes re-enters the cabin, shuts the door and stares straight at Alice. Alice stops typing and looks up.



MRS. GEDDES  
WHAT promise...?

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN/RAINING - LATE AFTERNOON

The horn jolts us as we see the train speeding through the autumn fields in the plains of the midwest

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN/RAINING - LATE AFTERNOON

We see inside the train and many people of all walks of life. Children. Parents. Businessmen. The camera moves toward Dan and Commadore, now sitting next to each other.

COMMADORE  
I give my word of honor

DAN  
She expects nothing at all?

COMMADORE  
Nary a lick

DAN  
June would skin us both alive, I swear.

COMMADORE  
Keep yer britches on. This is sealed tighter than a gnats ass on an ice cube

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN / PASSANGER CAR - RAINING - SAME DAY

June and Alice sit next to each other, both mesmerized while looking out the window of the train.

ALICE  
And I thought the hills of Caney were so lovely

JUNE

I wish the boys could see

ALICE

I don't believe the boys would be  
looking out the window much

Alice and June look forward to the front of the train cabin where the stewardess stands with her eternal smile. They turn their attention back out to the breathtaking view beyond the window.

JUNE

It's all so exciting. Almost like  
traveling to another country.

ALICE

This is another country.

CUT TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY/YOUNG JUNE BUCHANON AND RUTH - DAY

Two college girls stand facing a bulletin board. Both are white, about 25 years old, wearing dresses and lettered sweaters.

Young June Buchanan is a very energetic, idealistic young lady. Very independent, also sincerely moral with strong religious convictions. The girls are reading a letter posted on the board that we see, signed by Alice Lloyd.

SUPER ON SCREEN

Wesleyen College, Massachusetts  
Spring 1923

RUTH

June, you can't be serious. Your father would NEVER allow such a journey. Especially in those Appal-ay-chians.

JUNE

Nonsense. I think we can take care of ourselves. Besides, it's almost like missionary work ... very proper. And I'm told it's "Appalachians"

RUTH

However you say it I've heard the people work in coal mines and come out looking black as night. It sounds so terrible.

JUNE

All the more reason to see what it's like. The letter says the mountains are quite lovely and that they have more students than they can teach. They need volunteers.

RUTH

Volunteers?

JUNE

(pointing to letter)  
See here... "If the only gift you can afford is your time, you will invest it well at the Caney School..."

RUTH

The Caney School in Kentucky. It's almost like traveling to another country. June, do you really think your father will allow it?

JUNE

Of course he will.

CUT TO

INT. BUCHANON HOUSE - EVENING

The Buchanan family around their evening dinner table. A comfortable middle class, New England family. Mr Buchanan is the typical New England head of the house, almost in the personality of Theodore Roosevelt.

MR. BUCHANAN

(pounds the table)  
Absolutely Not!

JUNE

But father, the children need ...

MR. BUCHANAN

The only children of concern are my own, Junie. I won't stand for a daughter of mine traipsing around those forgotten hills.

MOTHER

Franklin, June does have a good point about it being like missionary work. Perhaps if we consider...

MR. BUCHANAN

Mother, there is NOTHING to consider. It's too risky for a pair of young girls to travel to some remote ... hillbilly school.

(To June)

If you want to teach, teach HERE.

We see June's very determined expression.

JUNE

But daddy ...

CUT TO

EXT. CANEY HOLLER/HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGE - DAY

A rather amused Commodore is seated in the cart as it pulls through the mountain roads. Ruth sits in the back with the luggage. June is next to Commodore, with a smile nearly as broad as her hat brim. They pull around the bend to Caney holler

CUT TO

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE/ANGUS - SAME DAY

Angus, shirt off and sweating from his work of chopping a tree off the hillside with an axe, hears the approaching cart with yet another stranger, stops and looks. He wipes the sweat from his brow and spits.

CUT TO

EXT. Cart, Alice and Mrs. Geddes

The cart pulls up to Alice's cabin, with Alice and her mother waiting outside.

ALICE  
Well, well...

CUT TO

INT. ABISH'S CABIN - NIGHT

ABISHA and his family sit around the table. Sary pours water into each cup as the mother spoons out a stew. ABISHA sees Angus is rigid and angry.

ABISHA  
Be you so sick with anger you  
cain't eat yer sup?

Angus pushes his plate away. ABISHA reaches over and puts his hand on the boys shoulder

ABISHA  
Boy, Miss Alice didn't take away  
your daddy.

SARY  
Pappy, Miss June done commenced to  
learn me a poem right off. You  
wanna hear it?

ABISHA  
Why, sure little one

SARY  
"The years at the spring..."

ABISHA waits for the rest, as Sary just smiles.

(Pause)

ABISHA  
Well, that's mighty fine.

Angus shakes his head in disgust

CUT TO:

INT. ALICES CABIN - SAME NIGHT

Alice, June and Ruth, Commodore and his wife, Mrs. Geddes and Sary sit around a table over a dessert and tea. They are laughing, June is very animated. Alice mostly listens.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE ALICES CABIN - SAME NIGHT

Angus peers through the cabin window from a perch in a nearby tree. He carves on a branch stick with his buck knife. He looks from the window up to a full moon, deep in thought.

CUT TO:

EXT. MORNING/OUTSIDE ALICE'S CABIN - MORNING

Commodore and several local men gathered at a construction sight, and pulls off the last of a load of saw mill lumber. ABISHA and two men take it and carry it off. Commodore slaps the wood chips from his overalls and from his hair.

COMMODORE

This here should be the start of a fine school building. Lord knows, you got the enough youngin's to fill it.

June comes up with two young girls, all are carrying buckets of water and walks off toward the construction site.

COMMODORE

That Miss June, she's a fine one. Those youngin's shine to her right off.

ALICE

That's good, isn't it. We could use 10 more like her.

COMMODORE

I bet you be a'missin' Boston, someday.

ALICE

No, No. Not at all ... tell me about Angus.

COMMODORE

Naw, don't be lettin' that boy  
under your skin. He's a young  
feller, a bit moody, though. He be  
like a lot of folks in these hills.  
Don't like outsiders.

She kneels down and looks into her reflection on the waters.

ALICE

Why?

COMMADORE

Why? Well, now, most of us ain't  
never been given a reason too.  
These hills, this land, we live  
here. We love what be here.  
Outsiders just WANT the things we  
love. They take it away. They leave  
behind holes in the hills, holes in  
the mountains, holes in our soul.

ALICE

What is this infatuation everyone  
has around here with "holes"?

COMMODORE

Angus daddy is buried in one of  
them holes, Miss Alice.

ALICE

I'm sorry ... but it just doesn't  
make sense. On one hand you decry  
the "outsiders" and go on about how  
we ruin the mountains you so love.  
Then, the first chance that comes  
along to leave the mountains, you  
FLEE with speed so fast it can  
churn butter. Why do you run so  
quickly from the mountains you  
claim to love.

COMMODORE

Ignorance...selfish...desperation..  
. fear of dyin' in the coal mines  
... lookin' fer somthin' bigger  
and better.

ALICE

So, then, you ARE part of America  
after all.

COMMODORE

(laughing)  
 Yep ... I guess we are, deep down.

Alice  
 Well, you need to focus on the  
 positive a bit more. These  
 mountains are like ... not perfect  
 but very beautiful. Full of hope. I  
 left Boston because the doctors  
 said I had only six months to live.  
 Well, that was almost a year ago,  
 and here we are.

COMMODORE  
 Yep, a brand spankin' new school  
 with great big winders.

Laughs and looks around. He mounts up upon his cart  
 He puts on his hat

COMMODORE  
 Well, gotta get back. You'll be  
 fine, Miss Alice.

As he leaves

COMMODORE  
 Jess keep them winders covered up!

As Commodore leaves, Alice turns back to her reflection in  
 the Creek. She touches the water with her hand and watches  
 her reflection dissipate in the waves of the water.

ALICE  
 (to herself)

Welcome to Caney Creek. . .

The words "Caney Creek" echo over and over, as the screen  
 turns fluid and we head FORWARD in time. The sound of  
 Alice's voice echoing "Caney Creek" changes into the voice of  
 a young girl.

LONG DISSOLVE TO



INT. ANGUS'S CABIN/SUMMERTIME - DAY

ANGUS is now in his mid-40's, stern and serious. We see close the face of a young girl, his daughter, soaking wet and teary eyed. Her chin is bleeding. Her younger sister, about 6 years old, is next to her. The mother's hands tend the hurt child.

SISTER

Caney Creek...Rebecky fell in the CANEY CREEK, momma! I told her to shy from the rocks, but she slipped and fell on her head.

SUPER ON SCREEN:  
Summer, 1953

ANGUS

(OFF)

Sary. . . Sary, where be the new hemp rope woman?

The father, is hard, solid, rough looking Angus Johnson, Abishas nephew. He enters the small house dressed in his miners clothes, covered in coal soot and dirt. His face is almost full black. He looks at his daughter, then his wife. Sary turns to face her husband, and we see the burn scars on the side of her face. Angus moves past her and takes a loop of rope off the wall.

ANGUS

Tend to the chil'

CUT TO:

EXT. BARNYARD - SAME DAY

We see a mules head. Angus' coal blackened hands appear and place the rope around the mules neck. The holler where Sary and her family live is very beautiful in the spring. Redbuds in full bloom. Dogwoods with bright white and pink blossoms. A creek runs near the barn. A young boy, naked, about two years old, plays in the creek with a stick.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORNFIELD - DAY

Jason, 16 years old, the oldest son of Sary and Angus, tends a row of corn with a hoe. He looks up toward the cabin and barn. He sees his father leading the mule toward him. Jason looks troubled.

CUT TO:

INT/ANGUS'S cabin/Sary and Rebecky

Sary is now about 40 years old. She is sickly, and quiet like her mother. REBECKY is bright, energetic six year old.

Rebecky is about 10 years old, stands half dressed on the family bed. Her mother is stooped down, reaching under the bed. She slowly gets up holding a worn dress for Rebecky to wear.

REBECKY

Momma, can I wear the red one?

SARY

No.

REBECKY

Even if I reach under for it?

SARY

No chil'

The dress slips over Rebecky's eyes. We hear a horse drawn wagon approach. Sary and looks up and out the door at Angus by the barn. She looks worried.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORNFIELD - DAY

Jason is Abisha's 17 year old son, in the field and works the corn. In between chops with the hoe, he also hears the wagon approach. He stops his work and looks anxiously toward the barn.

CUT TO:

EXT. FROM THE BARN - DAY

Angus was leading the mule toward the cornfield. The wagon approaches from behind and he stops. Turning around, he sees Alice Lloyd, now about 70 years old, dressed in a white full length dress, with a red scarf. She is being driven by COMMODORE SLONE, who is now 60, dressed in a black coat. Angus' cheek is full of tobacco. He looks sternly at the riders, turns away, and spits.

Then he spits in the direction of Jason.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORNFIELD - DAY

Jason stares at the riders. We see Commodore, much older, step down to the ground and walk toward Angus. He makes a friendly gesture. He points toward Alice, trying to get Angus to speak to her. Angus approaches the wagon.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - DAY

Sary stands at the door. Alice sees her from her seat in the wagon and smiles, then realizing she can't be too friendly. She waves. Sary nods back, straining to hear as Angus nears the wagon.

REBECKY

Momma, can I show Miss Alice my...

SARY

No chil'

CUT TO:

EXT. CORNFIELD JASON - DAY

Jason nervously stands amid the corn. His eyes focus on the activity around the wagon.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEAR THE BARN - DAY

Commodore stands with Angus at the carriage. He looks up at Alice. Then back to Angus.

COMMODORE

I'm mighty sorry.

ANGUS

No need. Between the coal tipple and the farm we be fine.

ALICE

Angus, perhaps . . .

Angus looks up in her face. He is solid, unmovable. Alice looks over into the cornfield. She stops her thought and reaches behind her. She lifts a sack to her lap.

Can we leave a gift for your children?

ANGUS

No need.

COMMODORE pats Angus on his shoulder

COMMODORE

So long, now. My best to Sary.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORNFIELD JASON - DAY

Jason, leaning against his hoe, watching

COMMODORE climbs onto the wagon, and mules begin pulling it away. Jason lifts the hoe above his head and whacks it into the earth with anger.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - DAY

Watching from the doorway, Rebecky leaves her mothers side as the wagon drives away. She looks into the field where her brother was.

He is gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUGGY/ALICE AND COMMODORE - SAME DAY

COMMODORE

That ain't the first time tried and ain't first time failed

Alice

No, but I was hoping

COMMODORE

Oh, shucks, Angus ain't never been friendly 'bout this since the day you moved in. ESPECIALLY poor Miss June.

ALICE  
poor Miss June

CUT TO:

INT. CANEY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

We see the face of a twelve year old girl.

GIRL  
Miss June?

The camera moves back. We see her hand raised up. She is seated in a row of desks in a full classroom

GIRL  
might I run to the privy, Miss June?

We see June Buchanon, now about 60 years old. She looks up from her notebook as she stands at the classroom chalkboard. In a quick paced discussion:

JUNE  
Not yet. OK...let's hear it now...no notes and from memory. The name of the poet?

CLASS  
Robert Browning

JUNE  
And the name of the poem?

CLASS  
Pippa's Song

JUNE  
Loretta, how do you spell "Pippa"?

BOY  
Her name be Lo-retty

JUNE  
Loretta how do you spell Pippa?

LORETTA  
Pippy, P-I-P-P-A

The young girl with the bladder problem raises her hand again, looking a bit more stressed.

JUNE (to the girl)  
Yes, yes...but don't delay

JUNE

Good enough. OK, let's hear it, now  
...class.

CLASS

The year's at the spring  
The day's at the morn  
Morning's at seven  
The hillside's dew pearled...

June looks out the classroom window and see's Dean Hayes, a kindly headmaster, always dressed proper, and Commodore's buggy driving up

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN/ EARLY EVENING - RAINING - DAY

We see Alice slowly making her way toward the dinner car. She notices as she enters that Commadore, June and Dan have been joined by a stranger and the table is full. She sees an empty table so sits . We hear the rest of the classes poem dissolve into an echo:

Class VO

The lark's on the wing  
The snails on the thorn  
God's in his heaven  
...all's right with the world

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN/DINNER CABIN - RAINING - DAY

A young boy, about 10, is seated across the isle at another table. He is alone, and watches Alice carefully and painfully seat herself at a table

BOY

What's wrong with your leg?

ALICE

I used it so much I wore it out

Boy looks as his leg and then notices Alice favoring her arm.

BOY

Did you wore out your arm too?

ALICE (Laughing)  
I suppose I did . . . Why is a  
handsome young man like you sitting  
alone in a dinner car

BOY  
I'm waiting on my momma

ALICE  
Going to visit family?

BOY  
Momma is moving us away from  
Chicago to a new place to live

ALICE  
And are you both traveling alone?

BOY  
Momma says being alone is better  
than being with someone who hurts  
you.

ALICE  
Oh, my. You sound like you have a  
wonderful, strong momma.

BOY  
She's pretty strong. I hope she  
doesn't wore out her leg, though.

Alice looks as though she wants to say something but then stops. The boy's mother suddenly enters and sits next to the boy, blocking him from Alice's view.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN / DINNER CAR / ALICE'S POV

The boy leans forward past his mom's shoulder and looks at Alice, give's her a little smile, and sits back again in his seat.

The sound of the TRAIN TRACKS dissolve into

**AUDIO - BLACK SCREEN**

We hear the steady sound of Alice' typewriter

FADE IN:

**INT. ALICE'S OFFICE - DAY**

Alice is at her desk typing, she stops deep in thought. Looks out her window toward the mountainside

CUT TO:

**EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY**

Commodore and DEAN HAYES in a buggy cart round the bend onto what is now the campus of Caney School. We see large buildings and students in their white uniforms milling about.

CUT TO:

**INT. ALICE'S OFFICE - DAY**

Alice is at her desk, Commodore and HAYES, 40 years old and balding, the new Dean at the school, seated by her desk. A young male student, about 17, is busy at a file cabinet. In front of Alice, on her desk, is the typewriter. MISS JUNE enter the office briskly

JUNE

Well?

ALICE

Nothing hard to understand about the word "No"

June sits down in one of the chairs. She looks at the boy

JUNE

Young man, what's your name?

GRADY

Stumbo, ma'am...Grady Stumbo.

JUNE

Oh, yes, that's right. How long have you been here at Caney?

GRADY

'bout 8 years.

JUNE

And what do you want to be?

GRADY

A lawyer, politician...mebbe a doctor



JUNE

Well, there are too many lawyers  
and politicians, so be a doctor

(laughter)

DEAN HAYES

Here, here

JUNE

Master Stumbo, how does your father  
feel about you being here?

(Grady stands, a bit fidgety and nervous)

GRADY

He feels...like... momma wants for  
me to be here

(laughter)

JUNE

But how does HE feel about it

GRADY

Better, when momma says it's so.  
He'd druther I go to the settlement  
school in Hindman

DEAN HAYES

Why, Grady?

GRADY

Because it's closer t'home. But  
momma favors Caney fer going to the  
University in Lexington so's pappy  
jess gives in to her.

COMMODORE

Boy, you got a smart momma and a  
smarter pap

Commodore and June laugh. The boy continues his chores with  
the filing. Commodore stands to leave.

COMMODORE

Do it fer me one time?

Alice

Oh, what, again?

COMMODORE

Come on, let's see.

Alice takes a piece of paper from her desk and, with just her one good hand, weaves the paper perfectly onto the carriage of the typewriter and readies a letter.

COMMODORE

I still cain't fathom how you fuss  
with that machine with one hand.  
How many of them letters have you  
written by now? Hundreds?

JUNE

Thousands.

COMMODORE

A one woman fund raisin' machine.  
Ma'am that's talent!

Alice

No, that's desperation

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MORNING/SUNRISE OVER THE MOUNTAINS - DAY

Various scenes of a mountain morning. Morning fog clings to mountainsides. Rays of sun burst over the mountain tops. A man tending his chickens in the morning. A woman and a child milking a family cow. Men gathering at a mining tippie

CUT TO:

EXT. A COOK RINGS THE BREAKFAST BELL AT CANEY - SAME MORNING

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S CABIN/ALICE AND AID - DAY

A student sets a tea pot on the stove, turns and rushes into Alice's bedroom. She disappears for a moment behind the door. Slowly, she helps a near crippled Alice to her table chair

CUT TO:

INT. BREAKFAST HALL/CANEY CAMPUS/JUNE AND DEAN HAYES

June and Hayes are seated at a long table with several students and teachers.

It is a sturdy but rustic building, with about 300 people crammed at tables in the hall. A student rises at the head of June's table and the room abruptly goes silent. All bow their heads.

STUDENT

O Lord, we thank ye for this day's blessing and for this food. Amen

Student and everyone in the hall sit and begin the meal. Conversation is animated and active. Many in the hall are under 15 years old.

DEAN HAYES

Young man, could you make your prayer a bit more brief next time?

(Table laughter)

JUNE

Did you hear of our milestone, yesterday

DEAN HAYES

400 students. Quit amazing.

JUNE

Can you manage being Dean over this large a body.

HAYES

Now, you don't look so big to me

TEACHER

Dean, you're so fresh. Don't let Alice hear you joking like that.

JUNE

Let him enjoy his jokes ... after a few months of this he'll walk around all serious and stone faced like the rest of us.

HAYES

Miss Lloyd looks as though she could use some cheer. She never leaves that typewriter.

ANOTHER TEACHER

Thank God! That's the only way to know you'll get paid around here.

JUNE

It's not easy on her. True. She get's so tired now. Always the pressure of the money, and never enough of it.

HAYES

(hushed tone)  
I've noticed not many of the town folk like her too well.

JUNE

Enough do.

HAYES

Yes, but a LOT don't. Does she push too hard, perhaps?

JUNE

She's persistent. She believes in them. After all these years, she's still an outsider, but sometimes it takes an outsider to act as a mirror on people so they can see their own potential.

HAYES

Well, it seems not everyone likes what they see.

CUT TO:

INT. ANGUS'S CABIN - NIGHT

Angus sits at the head of the table, his face still stained from the days work at the coal tippie. Sary holds a pot of stew, spooning it into the bowl in front of him. Sary and Angus have five children. Jason is the oldest and sits at the opposite head of the table. It is dark in the room except for the light of the coal lamp on the table.

Rebecky follows her mother from plate to plate pouring water into metal cups. Angus dips bread into the stew. Jason sits quiet and nervous. Their eyes do not meet, though Jason looks up often. Rebecky spills water on the table, but her father says nothing.

JASON

I heared tell there be a new invitation for the larnin', over at Caney Creek. I hear'd so myself.

Everyone at the table gets very quiet. Rebecky holds a rag that she was wiping up water with, but she stops and looks up at her father.

JASON

I feel obliged to wanna go, paw.

Angus keeps dipping his bread into the stew.

ANGUS

No.

SARY

It is a good thing, pa. That's why Miss Alice and Commodore come all the way out here. It's for the boy.

Angus says nothing. Jason looks down at the table. He quickly gets up and leaves the cabin. Sary looks beseechingly at her husband, but Angus doesn't acknowledge her.

REBECKY

Pa?

Rebecky moves over to her father, who keeps eating. She moves against his arm and almost worms her way onto his lap. He lets her. She puts her head on his shoulder.

CUT TO:

EXT. DAY/ALICE, JUNE, HAYES - EARLY EVENING

The three slowly walk along the campus road. Alice walks very carefully, the student aid allows her to lean heavily on her for support.

ALICE

(To student)

That's a good dear, nice and slow

After a minute

Here, now, let's sit down. These old bones are starting to rattle

JUNE

(To student)

Go get another girl to carry Miss Lloyd back to her cabin, please.

Student leaves

ALICE

So, how is our solicitors committee coming along.

HAYES

Fine. I expect about 9 are coming, mostly from Ohio and Pennsylvania. They will be here the end of the month.

JUNE

That's a good amount

ALICE

I hope they donate a good amount

Dean Hayes sits on the bench next to Alice

HAYES

Actually, I would like to fix things up, if we can. Before they arrive, I mean. Make the campus presentable and in good repair.

JUNE

How do you mean?

HAYES

Well, the girls dormitory, for example. The floors wave like a river because the foundation pillars are settling. And the science classrooms, the floors there, too. One side is nearly four inches higher than the other and pencils literally roll off a students desk. Can't let a benefactor see that.

ALICE

And why not?

HAYES

Oh, it can easily be repaired without...

ALICE

You'll do nothing of the kind. Let those floors roll and split apart like the river Nile. Let the spirit here be destitute and wretched, just as they expect it to be.

Students come and lift Alice to go back to her cabin

HAYES

But, why?

ALICE

It'll make the benefactors feel  
they are truly needed.

Students carry off Alice

We see Hayes' perplexed expression.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE/JASON SAME DAY

Jason by a tree on the side of mountain overlooking the campus. We see June and Alice walking away from Hayes, who stays seated on the bench, who turns and looks up into the hillside toward Jason.

CUT TO:

EXT. JASON AND SARY - NIGHT

Jason leans against a fence rail alongside Angus' barn. The night is almost blue because of the stars and moonlight, bright enough to leave a shadow. Jason is pissed off. Sary comes up from behind him and leans against the same rail. She tries to brush the hair from his eyes but Jason pulls away.

SARY

Don't let your anger turn you  
bitter, don't do like your daddy.

JASON

But, why, momma? He leans on me so  
hard I cain't breath no more.

SARY

It's his way.

JASON

It ain't MY way. My road is not his  
road. My road leads out of this  
place

SARY

Jason

JASON

Cain't you see it? These hills box me in so tight, and poppa boxes me in so tight. And he jess don't see.

SARY

I see it, boy. And your daddy seed it once, too. When he was a boy.

JASON

I don't want to be like him, to hate without understanding what I'm hating for. And everytime I open that door to commence walking through it, poppa grabs that door and slams it shut on me so hard I ache, like I was a bull caught in his barn lot.

SARY

(thoughtful)  
That's jess how my pappy ABISHA...

JASON

Cain't you make him? Cain't you make him let me

ANGUS

(OFF)  
Sary...Sary

Sary hesitates...tries to say something, then turns back toward the cabin, leaving Jason alone.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN - SAME NIGHT

Jason is running. He runs through the cornfield past the barn. He jumps over a creek and into the woods. He runs as fast as he can run. We see his face clearly in the bright moonlight. His skin glistens with sweat and we see his breath in the damp night air. He runs as his face and body is slapped by the branches of the trees and brush. He runs upwards and higher until he reaches the top of the mountain.



He looks up, breathless, from atop the rock, across the blackness before him, into the side of another dark, quiet mountain. All is silent but for his heavy breathing.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S CABIN - NEXT MORNING

Alice sits in front of an old Oliver #9 typewriter. Her bad arm sits in her lap, as her left hand furiously types away. Next to Alice is a window with several panes of glass. It is a beautiful morning. Sunlight reflects off her gold rims, as she returns to her typing.

Enters JUNE BUCHANAN, prim and seriously cheerful. Behind her is WILLIAM HAYES,

JUNE  
Typing again?

HAYES  
Doesn't that finger of yours ever  
get tired?

ALICE  
  
(barely looking up)  
As far as workers waiting for their  
wages are concerned, I have the  
strongest index finger in the  
world.

HAYES  
I saw Angus' boy on the hillside  
the other afternoon.

JUNE  
The poor boy

ALICE  
He's not poor, he's rich. That's  
why he was on the hillside. It's  
his father who is poor.

HAYES  
Perhaps that's a battle left behind

ALICE  
Mr. Hayes, I've pursued that  
victory since the day I moved to  
Caney.

HAYES

Why?

Alice looks out her glass windows.

ALICE

This land once belonged to Angus' uncle. It was going to be his, but ABISHA gave it away. Angus watched his future being placed into the possession of people he believed in his heart didn't even belong here.

Alice gets silent. She looks out of her window, then turns back to the typewriter.

ALICE

After all these years, I've built everything but his trust.

CUT TO:

INT. ANGUS'S CABIN - MORNING

Rebecky is in her bed, dressed. She is bored. She gets up and walk outside. Her mother is outside stirring a lyepot.

SARY

Jason hain't back so go feed the chickens. . .

Rebecky walks to the barn.

CUT TO:

INT. BARN - MORNING

Rebecky goes to the feed bin, nearly empty. She grabs a can on a shelf. Holding onto the can, she reaches down deep into the bin for the feed. She can't quite reach it so she scoots herself up on the wooden bin. Reaching all the way down she loses her balance and falls forward into the feed bin.

CUT TO:

INT. FEED BIN

Upside down with her head in the corn feed, Rebecky calls out, but no one can hear. She turns herself upright and spits out a mouthful of corn. She feels something in the corn with her hand. Reaching down, she pulls out a book.

Holding on to the book, she gropes her way up the side of the bin.

She turns around on top of the wooden panel and eases down the other side, careful not to drop the book. Her feet touch the ground.

She turns and finds Jason right in her face. Frightened, she drops the book.

Jason picks it up.

JASON

You breath so much as one word, and  
I'll skin you alive like a rabbit!

Jason grabs Rebecky by the collar. As he does, the voice of their father raises outside the barn. He lets go of Rebecky, hides the book high on a shelf, and walks away.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANGUS'S cabin door way

Angus

(calling toward the barn)  
Boy, let's go

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

Jason and Angus ride in a wooden cart, pulled by a mule. Several empty glass jars jingle in the back of the cart. The cart is half full with coal. Neither speak.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLEARING IN A GROVE/WHISKEY STILL - DAY

Several men gather around a fire all about Angus' age. Two men unload coal. A stack of glass jars is next to the fire.

ANGUS

Unload the jars.

Standing around the fire are ELVIN COLLINS, Seth Watts, and Ansel Martin. Standing apart from them are two sons, Darrel Collins and Delbert Watts, all teenagers.

SETH

'bout time you showd ...

Seth reaches down to the still and brings up a tin cup of whiskey. Angus sips the whiskey and hands it over to Jason. Jason refuses and the men laugh.

ANSEL

Did you speak to the man in Floyd county?

ANGUS

Yep, he'll buy ten gallons a week, three dollars fer each gallon.

Elvin turns toward the boys,

ELVIN

Darrell ... come on, boy!

Elvin's son Darrell runs over. He looks at Angus.

ANGUS

Ten gallons a week, three dollars a gallon.

Darrell pauses a minute, bends down and writes in the dirt.

DARRYL

Seven dollars each, and two left over.

SETH

Well, hits done then.

ANGUS

Seven dollars. Dang that beats travelin' three days on a jolt wagon to market, yep.

ELVIN

Yeah, fellers. And it won't rot on the way.

ANGUS

(to Jason)

... and that school ain't never made nobody seven dollars.

Elvin hears this and sees the reaction of Jason. Elvin looks over to his son, Darrell, then back to the still.

CUT TO:

INT. ANGUS'S CABIN - SUNDAY MORNING

Rebecky fidgets with her Sunday dress. Sary stands at the door of the cabin while Jason and his brothers wait in the cart outside. Angus sits at the table.

REBECKY

Smell me, papa. Mamma bath'd me.

ANGUS

You look real fine Rebecky.

REBECKY

Why, I smell as purty as the cherry blossoms.

ANGUS

Yep, you do at that. I never seed a little chil' enjoy a bath so much.

REBECKY

'course, mamma done bath'd me once before, a summer ago.

ANGUS

What a fine summer thet was.

REBECKY

Pappa, you ever comin to the holy house? Momma says today be Sunday again.

ANGUS

Not likely.

Rebecky hugs her dad and scoots out the door past Sary. Angus watches her run out the door past her mom.

SARY

Jason needs speaking, too.

ANGUS

Not likely.

Sary turns and walks to the cart.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Congregation is singing "Amazing Grace" in the mountain shape note style. We hear the first verse in its entirety.

We see Sary, Jason, and Rebecky sitting together with their other brothers and sisters. In the small clapboard church, we see the hard faces of their mountain neighbors. Elvin, Darrell and the others from the still are also present. COMMODORE SLONE sits with his family. He sees Sary and nods.

The PREACHER, a mountain man in his 60's loud and passionate, rises to the platform as the singing stops. He holds the Bible, but does not read from it.

PREACHER

And the Bible says, be not ye wise  
in yer own eyes. The devil comes  
with his fire and temptations  
against mortal man. Trust in the...

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

COMMODORE SLONE waits outside the church as folks exit and leave. All are friendly, greeting each other and talking. Jason comes walking out of the church.

COMMODORE

Jason, step over fer a bit.

Jason walks over to where COMMODORE stands.

Yer pa has his mind made. We  
tried.

Jason looks away, doesn't respond.

Now listen, Jason. He's a good man,  
but hard to change. No outsiders  
find his pleasure, not jess Miss  
Lloyd, all of 'em.

JASON

I'm not an outsider.

Jason walks away toward his cart.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS - RAINY AFTERNOON

We see the sights around the campus through the eyes of a thunderstorm. From the clouds high and dark, to the rain blasting atop the roofs. The water spills off the sides of the gutters, down past rows of glass window panes.

We stop our descent at a WINDOW and enter the room. It is a classroom, filled with almost 20 young people, 14-18 years old. June Buchanon is teaching. We can't actually hear what is being said above the sound of the rain and music. The young people look bright and clean. The boys in uniforms of dark jackets, ties and white shirts. The girls in white dresses and big red scarves.

WE LEAVE THE ROOM, back out the window and down the side of the building. As we travel with the rain, through grass and dirt and mud and leaves, we dissolve in and out of the young faces we have just seen. The rain and water spills over the side of a road into the ditch. The little stream descends like a mini waterfall into Caney Creek. We leave the side of the swelling creek, in the darkness of the wet afternoon to the roots of a very large tree.

At the base of the tree are a young man's feet, muddy and wet with rain. We slowly climb the side of the tree, all the while hearing the continued sounds of the rain and music and the classroom until we see the rain soaked head and face.

It is Jason.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S OFFICE/CAMPUS - DAY

The thunderstorm continues, Alice sits at her desk typing. Dean Hayes walks carrying a large, full file.

ALICE

I thought you were going into town today.

HAYES

Was, roads have drowned over and the creek is full.

ALICE

Well?

Hayes pauses as if trying to word something, but can't. He hands her the file.

ALICE

All right then, what are the options?

HAYES

There's only two.  
Close down . . .keep fighting.

Alice takes a deep breath and returns to her typing.

ALICE  
That's clear enough.

Hayes smiles to himself then leaves the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLEARING AT THE STILL/RAINSTORM - DAY

The coal fire beneath the still burns and smokes and steams through the hard rain. Next to the still is a lean-to-like shelter, outside the shelter is a small fire under an overhang with a pot on it.

CUT TO:

INT. SHELTER - DAY

Angus, Seth, Elvin and Darrel sit inside the lean-to, with cups of coffee. They were producing the moonshine and have been caught by the rainstorm.

Angus sits with his cup empty next to him, holding a large sharp knife and shaving a stick into no particular shape.

SETH  
Rain be pickin' up agin'. Bridge  
is out by now.

ELVIN  
Thet ol' bridge hain't never been  
IN!

Laughter

SETH  
Fire needs tendin'.

Seth leaves to put more coal on the fire beneath the still. Angus eyes Elvin sitting across from him.

ANGUS  
Your boy be knowin' his numbers or  
he's learnt to read dirt.

Elvin grins and looks down at his cup.

ELVIN  
Well, now, truth be known, Angus,  
I let the boy take the larnin' on  
Caney for last winter.

Angus doesn't respond.



Cain't do no harm. The boy can figure the price of what we need, and he can read the book for his momma at the holy house a bit.

ANGUS  
(looks disgusted)

ELVIN  
Now, dammit, Angus, Miss Alice been here nearly forty years. Hell, she's more local than Jason, he's only seventeen.

ANGUS  
How nice she would stay a while to help us po' folks

ELVIN  
She didn't come to help us ... she come to support folks who want to help themselves ... it's time you wanted too.

no reply

ELVIN  
Look, ol' ABISHA gave away his land. HIS land, not yourn. Don't kill off your boys life because of land you ain't got.

Angus looks out the shelter into the rainfall. Lightning brightens the atmosphere and crashes down near the still. Seth jumps in fear and runs back into the shelter as loud thunder swallows his scream.

SETH  
Lord 'hovy hep me!

Angus puts his stick to the ground and begins placing the knife in its sheath. He stares right at Elvin. Lightning flashes again, then loud thunder.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRAIN BED COMPARTMENT- RAINING - NIGHT

The very loud sound of the thunder shakes the cabin as the train whistle pierces the darkness. Alice is startled awake. She is on the bottom bunk and Miss June sleeps above her. Alice sits up on the bed and brings her legs to the floor.

She gets up and sits on the seat along the window of the cabin room, looking out as the night scenes speed by her. The rain makes streaks of running water against the darkened glass.

Alice reaches toward the window and runs her finger across the condensation, leaving her mark on the window

We hear June rustle and awake.

ALICE  
It's moving too fast

JUNE  
I know

June comes off the bed and sits across the seat from Alice, both looking out the window. June lights a lamp on the table.

JUNE  
I know it's hard

ALICE  
It's all been hard. It's been good though.

JUNE  
Are you happy that you stayed? Do you wish you went home, you know, years ago?

ALICE  
Home is where the heart is. My heart is right where I've been for 40 years.

How about you? Do you miss him still

JUNE  
Oh, well ... he was a good man, wasn't he?

ALICE  
Better than I had.

Both ladies smile comfortably with each other as the sound of rain gets louder. Alice looks out the window as the train heads into a tunnel. The tunnels lights flash and speed by

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COAL MINE ENTRANCE RAINING - DAY

The lights of the tunnel turn into the headlamps and eyes of coal miners coming out of the mine entrance. They are tired, unemotional, we see the coal crusted on their hair and faces as they walk out of the entrance in the rain.

We end the scene with Angus covered in coal dust, sitting in the rain on a tree stump outside the coal tippie. He takes off his miners hat and lamp and lets the rasin wash the coal dust from his face.

CUT TO:

INT. ANGUS'S CABIN, RAINSTORM - NIGHT

Rebecky stands near her doorway looking out at the rain-soaked farm yard. Her mother and two younger brothers sleep on the family bed. Jason is not around. She looks out at the barn.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAINSTORM/ SAME NIGHT

Rebecky leaves the little cabin and runs full speed through the rain into the barn.

CUT TO:

INT. BARN/RAINSTORM - SAME NIGHT

Rebecky enters the barn soaked and breathless. She looks back at the house which remains motionless. She spies up at the shelf where Jason hid the book, grabs hold of an empty barrel and turns it under the shelf. Climbing atop the barrel she reaches the book.

She enters the cow stall and slides her back down the wooden wall. Rebecky opens the book and turns each page. She doesn't realize the book is upside down until she comes to a picture page. Turning the book around, we see on old time photo of a beautiful aristocratic woman in a white dress.

REBECKY  
 Lord 'hovy ... hits Miss Alice!

Rebecky shuts the book and runs toward the house.

CUT TO:

INT. ANGUS'S CABIN - SAME NIGHT

A wet Rebecky rushes to the side of her momma's bed.  
 Speaking quickly but in a whisper.

REBECKY  
 Momma, momma . . .looky here!

Her mother awakens and sits up.

SARY  
 Hush chil'.

She gets up and sits at the table. Rebecky puts the book in front of her.

REBECKY  
 Look momma, hits Miss Alice!

Sary takes the book and touches the wet, worn pages. She opens the cover of the book. There, on the white face page is a handwritten inscription. We see the inscription,

"To Abisha Johnson our friend,  
 May you have aspirations as high as  
 the mountains, and faith as firm as  
 the rocks.  
 With affection,  
 Alice Lloyd"

Sary looks very emotional. She doesn't actually read the words out loud, but she moves her mouth to form their words. Rebecky pulls the book from her hands and flips back to the picture of the woman in the dress.

REBECKY  
 See momma, she's so purty. Like a  
 princess.

Suddenly we hear the sound of hooves and a cart. Sary quickly gets up and moves to the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT

Angus drives the carriage alone toward the house. Wet, covered up and scary looking.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Sary eyes the book on the table. She picks it up, looks for a place to hide it, then shoves it into Rebecky's hands.

SARY  
The barn, chil' ... don't let your  
pappa see!

CUT TO:

EXT. WAGON/ANGUS AND JASON - NIGHT

Angus on the cart, holding the reins of the wagon. Through the rain he sees Rebecky run from the house to the barn.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Sary sits at the table, waiting. Angus enters but she doesn't turn.

ANGUS  
Why the chil' be running in the  
storm, womin.

No answer. Jason enters.

ANGUS  
Womin'.

Angus turns to see Rebecky standing back at the door. She is soaked. He walks toward her. Sary stands up from her chair. Angus walks up to Rebecky.

REBECKY  
Here pappa, a present.

Rebecky holds out a small egg in her hand toward her father. Angus looks at the egg, unbuttons his coat and hangs it up. He doesn't take the egg.

Sary sits back in her seat as the thunder and rain continue outside. The camera moves out the door and into the rain.

CUT TO:

INT. DUPONT MANSION/WIDOW, PEOPLE DELAWARE - DAY

A VERY BEAUTIFUL MANSION, richly furnished. Someone important has died. The widow and a small gathering of friends and family, all in black are together in a large room. In the parlor, two men are talking quietly.

SUPER ON SCREEN  
DuPont Mansion,  
Delaware

A large gentleman obviously in authority speaks to a younger man, a writer, trying to get the him to leave.

WRITER

I understand it's a bad time.

GENTLEMAN

Perhaps in two weeks, you know, after Mr. DuPont's funeral, the family will have settled down.

WRITER

No, I understand perfectly, but she will see me?

GENTLEMAN

Without question, Mr. DuPont's story should be told and you will tell it, but not just now.

The two men shake hands and the gentleman returns to the widows side.

CUT TO:

INT. DUPONT MANSION/THE MAIN ROOM - DAY

The widow, Mrs. DuPont, sits in a chair in the middle of the room and is comforted by many people. A framed plaque, with the scrolled name of DuPont Chemical Corporation is seen on a table top. Mrs. DuPont is about 50 years old, "well preserved". She looks materialistic. She is upset but not crying. We hear words like "he was still so young", "she'll be well taken care of", and ". . .a fortune" spoken but we can't tell who's saying it.

The large, well dressed man seems to be in charge. He walks in and stands next to the Mrs. DuPont.

A man, ALBERT MCLAUGHLIN, DuPont's personal accountant, enters the room. He is a small, wirely, nervous, well dressed, balding man. Thin mustache. A bit anxious and serious looking. He doesn't want to disturb, but something important is happening. ALBERT gets the attention of the large gentleman with a hand gesture.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE/DUPONT MANSION/WIDOW, ACCOUNTANT - DAY

WIDOW

Who is this ... whore?

GENTLEMAN

Now, Lydia, calm down. Just calm down. Albert, continue.

ACCOUNTANT

As I was saying, the checks have been written for the past 14 years, every Christmas.

GENTLEMAN

Specifically Christmas?

ALBERT

Well, no. But about that time each year.

WIDOW

How much?

ALBERT

\$500 ... per year.

WIDOW

Cheap Bitch!

Lydia holds out her hand to the gentleman. He hesitates for a moment, reaches into his pocket and takes out a flask of whiskey. She grabs it, uncorks the flask, and downs a swig.

WIDOW

Find her, Albert.

GENTLEMAN

I beg your ...

WIDOW TO ALBERT

Find her. Find her now. Track  
that tramp and her little bastard.  
Pay her, make her sign a paper. Pay  
her off and pay her well ... pay  
her away forever. Understood?

The accountant and the gentleman are speechless.

GENTLEMAN

How much?

WIDOW

Just do it!

We see a flash of anger and weakness and almost tears. She  
calms herself down. Then, restrained and quietly,

WIDOW

I'll not have the future and  
security of myself ... or my family  
... jeopardized by my husband's

(pause)

unfortunate indiscretion.

(Then pointedly)

Understood?

CUT TO:

INT. ANGUS'S CABIN - NIGHT

Jason lays on his cot. The family sleeps soundly around him.  
We hear the sound of summer quiet outside the door. It is a  
calm mountain night. Jason slowly gets up, grabs his  
coveralls and sneaks outside. We follow him as he walks  
toward the barn. The moon is nearly full. All the stars  
shine brilliantly because there are no lights coming from the  
dark mountains. The sky looks almost magic.

He enters the barn.

CUT TO:

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Jason walks in, quietly gets the coal lamp from the wall. He  
reaches into his coveralls for a match.



Lighting the lamp, he puts on his coveralls. As he puts his last suspender on, he sees the barrel under the shelf. Quickly, he kneels up on the ladder to find the book missing.

Scared and angry, he comes down, turns off the coal lamp. Jason turns in the darkness of the barn and is face to face with a dark figure right in front of him.

It is his mother SARY, holding the book.

CUT TO:

INT. ANGUS'S CABIN - NIGHT

Rebecky wakes up, and notices that her mother is gone. She looks over to Jason's cot, and it, too, is empty. She sneaks up out of bed, passing her sleeping father.

Rebecky quietly opens the cabin door and peers off into the night. We can see her face closely as she looks around, her eyes and hair almost blue from the bright moonlight.

She looks in the direction of the barn, a faint glow of the coal lamp shining back from the barn door.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S OFFICE - DAY

Alice is at her desk, next to her is a stack of almost 50 letters. She is ON THE PHONE, in the middle of an intense conversation. A young female student enters. Alice points to the stack, which the young girl takes and then leaves the room.

ALICE

We have made purchases from your company for almost twenty years. We have always paid.

(Pause, listens)

Mostly on time . . .

But one more month couldn't possibly . . .

(pause)

We need those science textbooks. The university requires it of us, but we need your patience.

(Pause)

If I were to promise one month.

(Pause)  
A solemn promise.

(Smiles)  
The students of Caney thank you  
dearly. And please give your fine  
secretary Elizabeth my warmest  
regards. . . till then.

Alice hangs up the phone and immediately begins typing. She looks up and sees June, holding a letter in her hand.

June hands her the letter, Alice reads it.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMPUS/SCHOOLROOM - SAME DAY

Alice and June walk briskly (as able to) to a log house. Alice carries the letter with her. Inside the house are almost two dozen men and women. They are the campus workers. Some teachers.

Alice looks around and sits down. Everyone looks upset. A polite middle aged man, custodian looking, removes his hat and comes forward to represent the group.

MAN

We all knows how hard youin's have  
tried, and we want to hep all we  
can, but it's been weeks now since  
we been paid nary a penny and,  
well, we was jess a -wondrin'.

ALICE

A debtor's note ... well, well

He comes forward and hands her a pencil. She flattens out the debtor note and signs it.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANGUS'S HOMESTEAD/A FIELD - DAY

Angus is driving fence posts into the ground in some open bottom land between two mountains. The field looks dry, and we are seeing the first faint hints of autumn.

Angus has a huge sledge hammer in his hands. The posts are driven with great power. He is a very strong man.

And sweats like a pig. Walking up from behind him is Sary. She holds a ladle of water. She arrives to Angus, offers him the water. He puts his hammer to the ground and takes the water without a word.

Angus drinks out of the cup, pouring the rest on his face and hair. This makes him look even meaner. Sary pauses as if to go, then stops.

SARY

I mean to speak for the boy.

(No reply)

SARY

He needs for his pa to hear him.

ANGUS

You be speaking wrong, womin.

SARY

I speak what needs to be heard.

Angus looks hard at his wife. He doesn't know whether to be angry or just surprised. He picks up his sledge hammer, and walks to a creek side.

Sary walks to him.

ANGUS

The weather be turnin' soon.  
There's work to be done.

SARY

There's WORDS to be done, between  
you and the boy.

ANGUS

The answer is NO.

SARY

Pappy would have let him.

ANGUS

Pappy be dead.

SARY

Pappy wanted you to go. You broked  
his heart.

Sary tries to reach out to Angus, but he pushes her away

ANGUS

I'll not mingle with the ferrinors.  
Not ever. Nor my boy.

SARY

But Elvins boy . . .

ANGUS

Elvin be a fool. His own kin lost two men to Amerikay. Pappy even lost his brother, my own daddy. They come in coats of peace to these hills, and rob us piece by piece instead. Every mountain and hill is scarred an done asunder by these ferrnors.

Angus throws down his hammer to the ground

Let them stay in Amerikay, away from me. Away from my kin. And my son.

SARY

Miss Lloyd is not those men.

ANGUS

She is OF those men. She teaches what they think, and what they ARE.

SARY

How long must you know someone before they can be one of us. We've known her all our life. Pappy loved her, trusted her. What do they do that's so wrong?

ANGUS

I hain't never seed one man saved from a coal mine because of a single word from her books.

Getting more frustrated as he speaks

ANGUS

They teach the chillin's to live above their raisin' in dem fine white dresses and fancy neckties.

SARY

If the way of your raisin' is what keeps you down, it's the boys right to rise above the raisin' you force him to live.

That last comment was too much. Angus couldn't accept that he was wrong, so he rears back and STRIKES SARY HARD, hard on the scarred side of her face. She falls to the ground.

He stands, angry and ashamed. He looks up and around.

It's Rebecky, watching from the creekside. Angus moves toward her, stops himself, then stomps away.

CUT TO:

EXT. ACCOUNTANT ARRIVES TO HINDMAN KY/TOWN - DAY

Albert, Mr. DuPont's accountant, arrives by an old car. He thanks the man driving the car, dusts himself off and looks around. Hindman is a one-road mountain "wonder". Several people mill around the general store. Berthy's post office is next door. Albert exits the car, dusts himself off and looks around.

CUT TO:

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Albert enters the old post office. He looks around.

BERTHY

What fer ya, Stranger?

The brusky, screechy voice of an older mountain woman is startling itself. But the sight of Berthy is even more so. She wears a long dress, worn out but clean. Her grey hair is up in a bun. No teeth but a great big gummy smile when she likes you.

She doesn't like Albert, though.

ALBERT

Madam, I'm Albert McLaughland, I represent the family of Lamont Dupont and I'd. . .

BERTHY

'spectin' ye a letter, stranger?  
All the letters bein' the boxes  
over yonder.

Berthy points to the boxes behind her.

BERTHY

If yourn 'spectin' a letter jess  
come 'round' n' fetch it.

Albert is about to answer, but watches, fascinated, as Berthy takes a huge pinch of tobacco and crams it in her mouth.

ALBERT  
Good Heavens ...

Albert takes out his glasses to peer more closely at Berthy.

ALBERT  
Madam, your mouth has swelled like  
a balloon.

Berthy's eyes strain sideways to see her bulging cheeks.

BERTHY  
Never heered tell of the suffrin'  
of the balloon befir. Does it haf  
a cure?

ALBERT  
Dear lady, a balloon is not an  
illness it is merely an express...

As Albert tries to finish his sentence, Berthy rears her head back and spits a huge amount of black spittle into a can on the floor. Albert stares in total fascination.

ALBERT  
Actually madam, I am trying to find  
someone from this area.

BERTHY  
He be a friend of yourn?

ALBERT (slyly)  
Well, yes, a very dear friend, but  
his name is a woman, I mean she is  
a woman - her name is Alice Lloyd.

Berthy laughs loudly and sloppily, black drool drips from her mouth and she spits again.

ALBERT  
Do you know her?

BERTHY  
Everybody knows Miss Alice.

ALBERT  
Yes, so I understand. Quite  
popular is she?

Albert takes a pad out and starts writing.

BERTHY  
Yep, sure is.

ALBERT

And the children, do you know the children?

BERTHY

Well now, that's a hard one being how there's so many and all.

ALBERT

(Writing furiously)  
I see, I see.

(Slyly)

And do you know any of the fathers? Perhaps?

BERTHY

Well now, some I do, some I don't. Course I myself knowd some of the men for longer than I can remember.

ALBERT

(Looking down from his glasses)

Well, I can only imagine.

Berthy chews hard, looking at Albert eyeball to eyeball. Rears back and spits again.

ALBERT

Could you tell me, madam, where might I find this Miss Lloyd?

BERTHY

I can take ye'.

ALBERT

You can?

Berthy reaches down and pulls up a sack of mail.

BERTHY

'bout to deliver em' myself.

ALBERT

Are they all for her?

BERTHY

Yep.

Albert takes a letter from the sack and eyes the envelope up into the sunlight out the doorway.

ALBERT

Why this is a check!

(looks at more letters)  
They are all checks. . . for the  
children?

(almost to himself)  
Well, well, well . . . isn't Miss  
Lloyd a busy young lady.

Berthy takes the sack and starts for the door. She hears his  
comment and starts laughing loudly.

BERTHY  
Stranger, yer a funny one you are.  
YOUNG LADY! Come on 'fore I get  
kilt a-laughin'.

CUT TO:

EXT. POST OFFICE - SAME DAY

Berthy keeps laughing as she climbs up onto a mule cart.  
Albert sits on the bench next to her and they drive off.

CUT TO:

INT. ANGUS'S CABIN - DAY

The cabin is quiet and still. We hear the sound of a robin  
outside. The door of the cabin is closed and it is very  
dark. Suddenly, the door is opened with a LOUD BANG, the  
glare of sunlight is blinding behind the silhouette of a very  
angry Angus. He enters the cabin, tosses a cot away from  
Jason's corner. He picks up a rifle and some bullets and  
leaves the cabin. We watch him leave and the camera slowly  
turns back inside the cabin to Jason's dishevelled corner.  
The BOOK lies opened and tossed with the cot on the floor.

CUT TO:

EXT. MULE CART/BERTHY AND ALBERT - SAME DAY

Berthy is driving Albert towards Caney over a cramped  
mountain road, very curvy and narrow. They pass, every now  
and then, a log home. We see one newer log home with  
windows. Each person waves to Berthy as they pass. Some eye  
the stranger for a minute, then look away.

One young boy sees them, Albert's briefcase, and runs away.  
Albert is very uncomfortable on the bumpy drive.

ALBERT  
How long?



BERTHY  
 Hang on stranger, we'll be at that  
 YOUNG LADY real soon.  
 (Laughter again).

They drive on, seeing more of the above. Albert watches  
 Berthy take another big heave of a huge mouthful of spittle.

ALBERT  
 How did you ever fit all that in  
 one cheek?

BERTHY  
 Tain't hard, once you commence the  
 larnin'. Hits not unlike the belly  
 all swelled with child, but without  
 all thet kickin' and fussin'.

ALBERT  
 I see, and how does one learn  
 this... skill?

Berthy reaches into her apron and pulls out two fingers of  
 tobacco. She hands it to Albert.

BERTHY  
 Spit, don't swaller.

ALBERT  
 Don't swallow?

BERTHY  
 Spit, don't swaller.

Albert takes it and stuffs his cheek.

ALBERT  
 . . . don't swaller.

BERTHY  
 Good, hain't it. First time you  
 might find it a bit hot.

ALBERT  
 It is a bit hot, true enough.

Berthy leans her head again and spits into the road. Albert  
 follows with his very first spit - all over his pants leg.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S CABIN/ALICE, JUNE, COMMODORE - SAME DAY

Alice and several others are distressed over matters of the school. They are going broke. They can't pay their bills, they can't make payroll.

COMMODORE

The workers stay on faith. Things worked out before.

ALICE

I don't know. What do we do now? It was hard during the War finding money. But since the War ended ...

JUNE

Thank God.

ALICE

... the factories have stopped making as much steel, and the steel makers need less coal, and the coal operators work less hours. More mountain people are out of work, now that America is better than ever before.

ELVIN

I guess we cain't win fer loosin'.

COMMODORE

Well, we ain't lost nothin' yet.

JUNE

Faith and hard work we have, what we need is money to pay for it all.

A knock at the door interrupts them. Commodore gets up and answers.

MAN

Sorry COMMODORE . . . a boy jess run up tellin' of Berthy drivin' in a stranger man from town. They be about a half mile up the road and comin' this way.

COMMODORE

And?

MAN

He be carryin' the lawyer-mans bag.

JUNE

Good heavens.

ALICE

Another bill collector.

They get up and head out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. BERTHY'S CARRIAGE - SAME DAY

Now, this can be cool as hell. The drive to Caney is astounding, and it should be filmed that way. An absolute doorway from hell to heaven! Berthy and Albert drive their wagon on past the sights and squalor and the beauty of Appalachia in its most extreme form. All the while Albert is spitting and watching, spitting and watching. Up and down the mountain hollers they go.

Berthy drives the wagon down an incline, they pick up speed and while rounding a corner, hits a pothole. We see Albert up close as he is jolted by the bump and then - HE SWALLOWS!

BERTHY

Dang, stranger, they coulda bilt a  
bridge ov'n'r thet one.

She looks at Albert, surprised, worried, and his mouth open.

BERTHY

Oh, lord Hovy ....

CUT TO:

EXT. CONTINUED/BERTHY AND ALBERT - SAME DAY

We see the road ahead as if we were the driver. The cramped mountain lane bends around down a hill. The road sits tight between two mountains. The trees and thick brush, barely turning color from early autumn, obscure all vision.

Suddenly, as we finish the turn, the road way opens up to an expanse of buildings, and dorms, and people, and students in uniform, and a whole campus of nearly twenty five buildings.

Albert, getting a bit squeamish, has a handkerchief over his mouth. He is in total awe of what he sees and getting sicker by the second. The wagon pulls up into campus, the Caney Creek is to our right. Alice and everyone at that meeting is walking to meet them. Dozens of students mill about.

BERTHY  
Well, here she be.

ALBERT  
But this is a . . .a . . .

BERTHY  
  
(stone cold)  
Yep.

The wagon stops in front of little seventy year old, white uniformed, half crippled Alice Lloyd who extends her hand.

ALICE  
Sir, welcome to Caney. I'm  
Alice Lloyd.

Albert looks at Alice than at Berthy.

BERTHY  
Kinda of a cute, young lady, now,  
ain't she?

Albert turns green with sickness and disbelief, stumbles from the carriage and barfs his brains out on the road side. Berthy dismounts and stands next to Alice and the group. They look at the man ralphing on his knees and then the group looks at Berthy for an explanation.

BERTHY  
He swallowed.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE/ANGUS - NIGHT

We travel through the moonlit dark. We hear a scraping noise. ANGUS comes into view. He is carving on a piece of wood. We can see he is angry. His strokes are hard and brusque. He stops his carving, reaches down, picks up a can and takes a drink. He winces from the whiskey burn in his throat. We can see the Caney buildings and hear MUSIC in the distance.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMPUS/MUSIC & BARN DANCE - NIGHT

There is a barn dance going on in one of the campus buildings. In one corner of the building, a string band plays while teachers and students mingle and talk and laugh. Some dance. On a bench along one of the walls, Albert, still looking a bit puny, holds a napkin against his mouth.

DEAN HAYES

(talking over the music)  
Feeling any better, Mr. McLaughlin?

ALBERT  
Fine, just fine.

HAYES  
How long will you be staying?

ALBERT  
I'll be leaving first thing in the morning.

HAYES  
Well, thanks again for that generous donation!

ALBERT  
Consider it a gift from Mr. DuPont's widow

Hayes slaps Albert on the back and walks away. Berthy comes up to Albert, sits next to him and stares for a minute

BERTHY  
Find yerself any more purty young ladies?

(laughs)

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE BUILDING/JUNE - SAME NIGHT

June stands outside the building, with the party going on inside, deep in thought. She turns and walks inside.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE/JUNE - SAME NIGHT

June re-enters the barn dance and looks around until she finds Darrell.

JUNE  
Darrell, come outside, I want to talk to you.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANGUS'S CABIN/NEXT DAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Sary walks with Rebecky by the hand toward their cabin. Sary looks forward and hesitates, then rushing toward the house. They see the door hanging by one hinge.

CUT TO:

INT. ANGUS'S CABIN - SAME AFTERNOON

Inside, Sary looks around. The house is completely torn apart. Table overturned. Pans and clothes on the floor.

REBECKY

Momma?

Sary turns to Rebecky in the corner.

REBECKY

Pappa took the gun . . .momma . . .

CUT TO:

EXT. ANGUS'S cabin - SAME AFTERNOON

Sary comes to the doorway and screams.

SARY

Jason!

SCRIPT NOTE: This next sequence is very critical. On purpose, dialogue through this segment is kept to a minimal. The MUSIC, a mountain sounding instrumental will become almost military in nature as the segment reaches its climax.

**MUSIC IN: an Appalachian style tune that slowly builds with the rhythmic track of a typewriter**

CUT TO:

EXT. ELVIN'S HOUSE - SAME LATE AFTERNOON

Elvin lives in a coal mine holler. Several old houses in a row. The houses are clapboard, the people are poor. Small children play in the black, coal dusty road. Houses and chimneys are black with soot. The air is turning brisk with autumn. Jason walks up to the house and knocks. Darrell steps to the door, looks at Jason, and shuts it again.

Jason waits. After a minute, Darrell opens the door. He has his coat and a bundle of books under his arm.

JASON  
Are you sure?

DARRELL  
I told you, Miss June said so herself.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN/TWILIGHT - SAME DAY

The boys sneak down from the mountain neighbor to the creek, and up the other side.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANGUS/TWILIGHT - SAME EVENING

Angus back at his still alone, sips at his jug. Drunk. Angry. Gun in his lap. He gets up and starts walking.

CUT TO:

EXT/BOYS/TWILIGHT - EVENING

The two boys keep traveling.

DARRELL  
Just come on, she's a-waitin'.

CUT TO:

EXT. SARY AND REBECKY - ROAD - EVENING

Sary is riding a horse on the dark holler road. Rebecky hangs on behind her, both arms around her mother.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - SAME NIGHT

June enters the classroom with her coal lamp in hand. She's in a pleasant mood. She places the lamp down on a desk, picks up some chalk and writes on the blackboard.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLASSROOM - SAME NIGHT

Through one of the glass windows, we see June writing on the blackboard.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOYS/ MOUNTAINSIDE - SAME NIGHT

They are on top of a mountain now, they look down and, in the distance, we see the lights of the Caney campus

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S CABIN - SAME NIGHT

She sits down in front of her desk and looks briefly out the window. It's very dark. A student brings her some paper, then leaves the room. Alice takes the paper with her left hand, inserts it into the typewriter and turns the carriage.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN MOON - NIGHT

We see the clouds begin to hide the full moon. We hear the sound of Alice typing.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANGUS MOUNTAINSIDE - SAME NIGHT

To the audio sound of Alice's typewriter, Angus starts climbing a mountainside. Rifle slung across his back. He carries his jug of whiskey. Stops, takes a drink, and smashes the jug against the ground. He keeps climbing.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD / SARY - SAME NIGHT

She's riding as Rebecky holds on to her back, then picks up even more speed as Alice's typing fades in top of the sound of the hoof beats.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOYS/MOUNTAINSIDE - NIGHT

Jason and Darrell come down from the mountain to a clearing at the base of the campus. They talk in a forced whisper.



JASON  
Where she at?

DARRELL  
Over yonder, thet one!

CUT TO:

INT. JUNE/CLASSROOM - SAME NIGHT

She finishes writing on the blackboard, steps back to check her work. She is humming a song.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANGUS MOUNTAINSIDE - SAME NIGHT

Gets to the top of the mountain. He looks down. HE SEES SOMETHING. We can see all of the Caney campus. He takes his rifle and loads it.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE SARY - SAME NIGHT

She rides now very hard, the mule is galloping through the darkness.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS BOYS - SAME NIGHT

At the base of the classroom building. We see them come around a corner from the shadows and step quietly to the steps going up to the building. Jason is holding the books to his chest as he walks. Darrell follows behind.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S CABIN - SAME NIGHT

We see the young girl assistant in the kitchen pouring a cup of tea, we hear the sound of typing. Alice is busy typing away in front of the windows.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALICE'S CABIN - SAME NIGHT

We watch her typing through the glass windows.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUNE/CLASSROOM - SAME NIGHT

Through the glass windows, we watch June drop her chalk, and bend over to pick it up.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDWE ANGUS - SAME NIGHT

Leans against a tree; puts a chew in his mouth, raises the gun to his eyes and toward the campus, and takes aim.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE SARY - SAME NIGHT

She gallops as hard as the horse will go.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOYS CAMPUS - SAME NIGHT

They climb the stairs going up into the classroom to June.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE ANGUS - SAME NIGHT

Aiming, sweating, spits his chew. Finger presses the trigger, he aims hard.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S CABIN - SAME NIGHT

The young girl opens the door to Alice's room with the tea. Alice stops typing, turns and smiles as though she's about to say something.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE ANGUS - SAME NIGHT

Close on his sweating face to his trigger finger to the tip of his rifle.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE - SAME NIGHT

A blur in the night, Rebecky barely hangs on.

CUT TO:

INT. JUNE/CLASSROOM - SAME NIGHT

She stands from getting her dropped chalk and picks up the coal lamp.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOYS CAMPUS - SAME NIGHT

Jason reaches for the door knob to the classroom.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE ANGUS - SAME NIGHT

We are facing him straight on. He aims his rifle. We look almost straight down the barrel of the rifle. The whole screen explodes in flames as he fires his gun.

CUT TO:

INT. JUNE CLASSROOM - SAME NIGHT

Startled, drops the coal lamp.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE - SAME NIGHT

About to sip tea. The glass windows shatter in huge, splintery explosions as the gunshot hits her window. The attendant screams. Alice falls from her chair.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOYS CAMPUS - SAME NIGHT

Hand stops at door knob. They hear the shot and the scream from Alice's cabin, turn to run. Then June screams. They turn back to classroom.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE ANGUS - SAME NIGHT

Smoke clears from gun shot. He watches the commotion on campus.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAM HAYES CAMPUS HOME - SAME NIGHT

Sitting in a chair next to a lamp, Hayes was reading. Hears the shot, gets up and looks out the window.

CUT TO:

INT. JUNE'S CLASSROOM - SAME NIGHT

Coal lamp smashed to ground, classroom in flames. Boys enter the room and pull out Miss June.

CUT TO:

EXT. SARY ROADSIDE - SAME NIGHT

Riding fast. Comes around bend to Caney campus. Sees gathering in front of Miss Alice's cabin. She rides up. Hayes and students help Alice out of cabin with the assistant. They are OK.

Suddenly,

VOICE

(OFF)

Look, fire on the hillside!

Sary turns around to see the huge, windowed classroom building bursting into flames.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE ANGUS - SAME NIGHT

Angus watches from his perch, shocked at what he's done. He watches as dozens of young people and men from the hill, his people, form water lines and try to save the building from burning. He looks down and rubs his eyes. He sees JASON

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS/Sary - SAME NIGHT

She dismounts as Rebecky begins to cry. People are running and shouting. Sary runs toward the building and stops. On the roadside, in the shadows of a tree, is Jason. They know who did this. We see the full view of the flames and ascends with the smoke upward into the moonlight. The sound of the roaring fires dissolves in to the sound of . . .

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

. . . the screaming sound of a stopping train. Close on the wheels as they skid and smoke on the tracks.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

We see June and Commadore helping Alice off the train. She is feeble and moves slowly. She looks tired.

COMMADORE

This was a long trip. Maybe you'll let us fly back home like I wanted to.

ALICE

Not likely

Commadore motions to June "I'm flying home"

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM/COMMADORE & Dan - DAY

The men are unpacking their suitcase inside their hotel room. Commadore stands at the bathroom door clicking the light on and off.

DAN

No lightbulb chain ... The lady at the reception desk says we can pick up that phone and they'll bring the dinner right here to the room

COMMADORE

Damn

DAN

Then they come back and haul off the dishes.

COMMADORE

(Continues to click on the light)

I wouldn't be suprised if they come back and tuck you in the bed.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM/ALICE & JUNE - DAY

June has washed her hair and has it wrapped up in a towel. Alice sits in a chair dressed in her Caney Uniform near the window.

JUNE

All the hot water in the world! It was like an ocean never ending. Alice you must try the shower.

ALICE

Well, well

JUNE

How do you feel, should we call for some tea?

ALICE

I'm fine

Alice keeps staring out the window.

ALICE

I love windows. I'm tired of money. When I go, I want to have nothing left. I hope I used it all, spent every cent and every minute.

JUNE

And shall we bury you in a casket  
with a window then?

ALICE

The side of a hill will do.

JUNE

So, this Mr. Edwards. He sounds  
very generous. He wants to know all  
about you.

ALICE

I can't imagine why on earth.

JUNE

Just tell him of your work. Tell  
him how you came to Caney. Tell him  
all that has happened. He will  
listen to you.

ALICE

He could have read that magazine  
story, then. Why must I come on  
this trip. I miss my bed.

JUNE

Times are different. The world is  
modern. You can just type a letter  
and have people do what you want.  
They want to meet you, look you in  
the eye.

ALICE

We should have sent a younger  
student. My eyes are tired.

JUNE

Your eyes are windows, remember?  
Let him see what you've seen.

ALICE

So, this is California. Everyone  
looks the same . . . like that  
stewardess.

June smiles, holds back her laugh and just pats Alice on her  
hand as they both gaze out the window of their hotel room.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DUPONT MANSION OFFICE/DELAWARE - DAY

The young WRITER in his 30's, William Dutton, stands in a waiting area in the reception room outside of Mrs. DuPont's office. He has been listening at the doorway to the conversation inside. He has a pad in his hands, he's been taking notes from what he heard through the doors. We hear Mrs. DuPont's total laughter as the doors open.

RECEPTIONIST

So, you're a writer?

DUTTON

For READERS DIGEST, they are looking for a story about Mr. Dupont

RECEPTIONIST

Oh ... are you married?

Albert exits, the arm of the large gentleman around his shoulder as they speak.

ALBERT

I tell you, I've never been so ill in all my life. As I left that afternoon she says "stay on stranger, stay on". Well, I simply left as soon as I could.

Mrs. Dupont continues laughing as the men pass Dutton, who is writing furiously on his pad.

RECEPTIONIST

She can see you now.

CUT TO:

INT. ANGUS'S cabin - NIGHT

Sary, Jason and family sits at the dinner table in silence, except for Angus.

REBECKY

Momma, is pappy comin' home today?

No answer. Jason looks at his mother



JASON

It's been days. The bossman at the coal tippie says daddy best show up soon

Sary turns away and begins to weep. Rebecky gets up and, as she had done with her father before, she worms her way onto her mother's lap.

REBECKY

I'm sorry ... I'll hush, momma.

Jason gets up, takes his coat and leaves the cabin. Sary sits in the chair and rocks Rebecky. Her other young children come around at the same time. Jason stops a moment, looks at everyone at the table, turns and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS - AFTERNOON

We are standing at the base of the burned out building. Much of the rubble has been cleared. Workers still mill about the destruction. The leaves around the campus have turned into full autumn color. Almost blazing. The contrast between the destruction and the beauty is obvious.

On the side of the road, looking over the destroyed building is Alice, COMMODORE, and the Hazard (Perry County) Sheriff.

SHERIFF

Don't make enough sense. Who ever shot at her never meant to hit 'er or burn down the classrooms.

COMMODORE

I believe about the burning, but you sure about the shootin'?

SHERIFF

Come on, man. if'n he wanted to kill they'd a fired at the bottom of the winder, not the top.

Then, to Alice

I'm telling you, Miss Alice, they was jess trying to scare you. That's all there is to it.

ALICE

Well, that's quite enough.

SHERIFF

I'm askin' around, and when we find him he'll go to jail. It hain't no excuse, I jess don't want you be a-feered out here.

Sheriff shakes hands with COMMODORE and bids goodbye to Alice.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STILL - DAY

Jason comes to the still area out of the woods into the clearing. The still has been completely smashed and destroyed. Jason bends down and picks up a piece of copper tubing. There is a rustle in the woods. Jason spins around.

JASON

Pa?

Elvin comes out of the woods alone.

ELVIN

Jason, hit's me, boy.

JASON

Where's pa?

ELVIN

Don't rightly know. Got here a while ago, and found it, all wrecked and busted apart so.

Elvin walks over to where the still used to be. He sits on a crate.

ELVIN

He sure is hot head, the ol' bastard. Has been since we was kids. Never changed. Not even when he married up with your maw. Course your pappy ABISHA was none too pleased about it, once Miss Alice moved to Caney.

Jason sits next to Elvin.

JASON

Miss Alice tried to stop pa from hitchin' ma?

ELVIN

Oh, not really, not when you get right down to it. She was concerned at first, them being fambly and all, but she had to keep her promise to the local folks, so she dropped it.

JASON

What promise?

ELVIN

When your pappy ABISHA asked her to come to Caney, he had no idear how big a commitment Alice made. That school was gonna be the last thing she did in her life. Hell, she moved to the mountains cause she was broke and dyin'. Thet dern school was everything.

JASON

But WHAT promise?

ELVIN

She made a two way deal, Miss Alice did. She would find the money to build the buildings and pay the wages, the menfolk would do the labor of the building work. Our pappy's all agreed, so long as she promised to stay out of our religion, to stay out of our politics,

(looks around)

and our moonshinin'. And that she did.

JASON

But maw and paw?

ELVIN

Son, marriage falls square in the middle of religion and politics. I think she jess knew that.

(Gets up to leave)

JASON

That was one deal. What was the other?

ELVIN

Everyone who went to her school  
could go for free, if they promised  
to stay in the mountains with what  
they learned. They couldn't leave  
and go off to a big city. No sir.  
Miss Alice would burn hotter'n  
Lucifer's ass if you did.

Elvin kicks over a section of the still

Well, so much fer free enterprise.  
Don't hate your daddy so. He's  
lost a lot in his time. Sometimes  
you loose so much so fast you can't  
seem to remember how much you got  
anymore.

Jason gets up now, very quiet. Elvin puts his hand on  
Jason's shoulder.

ELVIN

If you feel troubled and you came  
out here looking for your pa, think  
of how he feels. Think of what you  
need right now. That outta be where  
you'll find him, son.

Elvin leaves Jason alone at the destroyed still. Jason  
shuffles around the debris. He bends over and picks up his  
father's broken rifle.

CUT TO:

EXT. HINDMAN MAIN STREET/COMMODORE - DAY

Commodore walks out of the drug store, greets some old folks  
sitting on the railroad tie outside the store, and walks down  
the sidewalk toward the post office.

CUT TO:

INT. POST OFFICE/COMMODORE - DAY

Camera watches Commodore go to his postal box and open the  
box door. He pulls out a few letters and a small 6x4"  
magazine. He looks over the letters as he steps out of the  
post office into the sunshine. He looks at the cover of the  
magazine as he walks, then slows down. He stops walking and  
opens the magazine to an inside page.

COMMODORE  
Well, I'll be damned...

CUT TO:

EXT. ANGUS'S HOMESTEAD - DAY

Rebecky sits by herself at the creekside. She's upset. She watches a small chick hopping along the shore. Sary comes over to her and sits beside her. She hands Rebecky an apple. Rebecky takes a bite and starts to whimper.

Sary puts her arms around her daughter.

SARY  
Pa's comin home soon, you'll see.  
He will, chil'.

CUT TO:

INT. MISS JUNE'S OFFICE - DAY

June sits at the desk with two teachers. They are discussing how to rebuild the burned down schoolhouse. COMMODORE Slone knocks on the door, excited, and enters.

COMMODORE  
Where's Miss Lloyd, June?

JUNE  
I don't know. What happened now?

COMMODORE  
Glory to be, June, we jess gotta  
find her!

He grabs June and spins her around.

JUNE  
What is it?

COMMODORE pulls out the little magazine from his coat pocket and slaps June on the fanny with it!

JUNE  
Commodore!

COMMODORE  
Look! Hit's the darndest thang!

He puts the magazine on the desk top and everyone gathers around. Gasps of surprise and wonder fill the air. We see the magazine is READERS DIGEST, and the story headline is

"Stay on Stranger,  
The Story of Alice Lloyd"

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - EARLY EVENING

JASON is searching through the woods for his father. Dusk is creeping over the mountainside as he gropes through the trees. He comes to a clearing, in the shadows of which are grave markers. Jason goes up to one of the stone markers and runs his hand on the engraved name, which reads

"Abisha Johnson  
The Summonsor"

We hear a rustle of leaves. Jason stands and turns. Twenty feet away, unshaven and red eyed, stands his father shaken and ashamed. He has a hard time looking at his son.

The two stand apart for awhile, not speaking. Angus looks like he tries to speak, says nothing, then puts his head down. Jason moves closer.

He puts his arm on his fathers shoulder. Angus doesn't look up or move. Jason puts both hands around him and hugs him. Angus forces himself to respond, his arms go up slowly.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS - MORNING

Several men stand in front of the burned down building. They speak low and seriously. One points. Another scratches his head and walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S OFFICE/JUNE, COMMODORE, OTHERS - SAME MORNING

Alice stands by the windows looking out at the rapidly declining foliage. Winter is coming. June speaks in a serious tone on the phone.

A lawyer speaks "lawyer talk" to COMMODORE. June gets off the phone. Everyone stops talking and looks at her. A knock at the door. It's the same man who was talking outside.

CARPENTER

Well, hit don't look good.

Alice turns to face him.

Countin' the quickest way to build it, which ain't good 'cause it won't last, but it be the cheapest, plus how much we owes the lumber mills already, which we has to pay first to charge agin', plus all thet 'quipment lost, we figure that a tempr'y building can go up till spring fer nary less than \$25,000.

You can almost hear the wind being knocked out of everyone in the room.

JUNE

Our lawyer tells me that he recommends bankruptcy.

COMMODORE

And we still owe the workers back wages.

Alice looks back out the window. Everyone waits for her to reply. She turns to them, but doesn't reply. She sits at her desk, inserts a piece of paper. She hits a single key of her typewriter and then stops.

JUNE

We have students who live here with no place to go. We can't abandon them now. They can't go to another school ...

COMMODORE

Not college, no how.

They look to Alice, but no response.

CARPENTER

Miss Alice, you know my boy went here. And you did him fine. He done good and you paid his way to the big city university. He promised to come back and sho' nuff he did, Miss Lloyd. Yep, he come back a doctor in Pike county.

(MORE)

CARPENTER (cont'd)  
 Has himself a fambly and drives  
 himself an auto-mo-bile. No one  
 will ever think less of you, and  
 they won't give in less you do  
 first.

Alice keeps looking away. COMMODORE gets up and motions for everyone to follow. The room empties. Alice sits alone.

ALICE  
 Bankruptcy.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE/CALIFORNIA - DAY

We see an office of creative, well dressed people, sitting in a modestly furnished but successful looking office of Ralph Edwards. There is an animated and intense discussion of possible guests on his show "THIS IS YOUR LIFE" on NBC.

We can see a poster with the show's title, several large photos of Ralph on the walls. The NBC Network logo, framed. His name on a bold plaque on his desk. The bantering continues through the room, we see,

SUPER ON SCREEN  
 Hollywood, California

Ralph Edwards, a handsome succesfull broadcaster in his late 40's, leans back in his chair behind his desk. As Ralph listens to the various ideas, he watches the secretary taking notes, another executive opening and closing his briefcase latches, the hand of another gesturing graphically. He sorts through a pile of mail while he listens and comes to the READERS DIGEST Magazine.

The discussion in the room goes on, he flips through the magazine and he opens to the "Stay on Stranger" article about Alice Lloyd.

He moves forward in his seat.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S OFFICE - DAY

Alice stares at her typewriter, she almost looks defeated. After a while, she presses one single key of the typewriter ... and stops.

CUT TO:



EXT. MOUNTAIN road - DAY

Angus and Sary ride in their cart. Angus is dressed in his finest clothes, no tie. Sary is in her Sunday dress. In the back of the cart rides Jason and Rebecky, the other children are cramped together near the gate of the cart. Angus' eyes stays ahead. We come in close to Rebecky's neck. She wears the necklace that Alice originally gave Sary, her mother, years ago.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S OFFICE - DAY

Alice stands at her window, alone and silent as Angus and his family drive up. June and COMMODORE are walking out from their meeting with Alice, see them and go over to meet them.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS - SAME DAY

Angus stops the wagon. COMMODORE and Miss June walk to them.

COMMODORE  
Angus. Misress Sary.

As the family dismounts, Rebecky runs on into Alice's cabin.

Sary and Angus stand together, Jason next to his father. Angus speaks VERY seriously, haltingly.

ANGUS  
I ain't a man of words. I come here today to 'pologize to you'n and Miss Lloyd.

(pause)  
I am so very sorry.

But, after what I done, I don't expect no favors. If you choose to call the law, I'm here. I'll not run no how. I shamed myself. I shamed Pappy and all he lived and died for.

COMMODORE  
Man, you been jess blind angry for so long. Jess red dog ugly.

ANGUS

I know, and I am sorry. I come to help you rebuild your buildings and to trade my back and my work for the trouble I caused.

He puts his arm on Jason's shoulder.

and to give my boy over. He be proud to come and I be grateful to bring him.

Miss June looks happy for an instant then very sad. She can't reply. COMMODORE speaks up, in a low tone.

COMMODORE

Angus, my friend ...

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S OFFICE - SAME DAY

From her position at the window, Alice watches COMMODORE talk as Angus listens sadly. Sary looks up at Alice's window. Jason shoulders slump, he slumps against the old cart.

Alice turns from the window and sits in her chair. She looks defeated. As though all the hope and faith were for nothing. There's a noise at the door.

REBECKY

Howdy, Miss Lloyd.

ALICE

(hiding her tears)

Well, well, little Miss Rebecka.  
Come and see me.

Rebecky comes in and sits on her lap.

REBECKY

Smell me Miss Lloyd, don't I smell purty.

ALICE

Oh, yes you surely do.

REBECKY

My momma done bath'd me agin!  
Lookee hear what my mamma give me.

She points to the neckless around her neck. Rebecky pulls back her hair for Alice to see. Alice touches the golden chain and the locket.

ALICE

Well, glory be. I haven't seen that old thing for years, since your momma was . . .and ABISHA.

REBECKY

Momma says it makes me look jess like a princess!

Alice holds the young child and looks back out the window.

ALICE

Princess indeed.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE/DOWNTOWN HINDMAN - DAY

Sign on Door: "Office of Dan Martin"

We are in a legal office. Dan Martin has a humble demeanor and a very thick drawl. On the wall, above his desk is a diploma and a photo from Alice Lloyd and the University of Kentucky. He works at his desk, discussing the bankruptsy os Alice Lloyd College matter with another attorney.

MARTIN

There's no way around it, she hasn't met payroll for the workers in weeks and they are about to leave.

ATTORNEY

It's a shame. She must have typed thousands of those letters. I watched her through the window when I was there. Day and night, that clacking sound never stopped.

MARTIN

Well, it's filed in court. Just a matter of time I guess.

They are interrupted by a secretary who comes into the office.

SECRETARY

Mr. Martin, I'm sorry to bother you but theres a fella on the telephone calling from out of state. Says it's real important.

MARTIN

Who is it, Loretta?

SECRETARY

Said his name is Edwards, Ralph Edwards from a TV show in Caly-fornia.

Martin excuses himself with a gesture and picks up the phone.

MARTIN

Hello, this is Dan Martin ...

As Martin listens he slowly leans forward in his chair and gets very serious.

CUT TO:

INT. MISS JUNE'S OFFICE - DAY

Empty desk with phone on it. Phone starts ringing. We move around the desk and see out the window, all the while watching the phone. Miss June is still outside explaining things to Angus and Jason. The phone continues to ring. A hand of a girl student comes down and we hear a voice.

STUDENT

(OFF)

Miss June's office. No she's not here right now. No, I don't, well, yes I do - she's outside speaking to someone ... who shall ... well, okay then, honey, I'll go get her.

We still see Miss June outside. A voice calls out,

(V.O.)

Miss June, Dan Martin is calling, sez its important.

June excuses herself from Angus and Sary, and starts walking back to the cabin.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS - EARLY EVENING

An old 1948 Chevy makes its way around the bend and comes toward campus. Dan Martin stops the car and gets out. It's cold out, and we can see his breath clearly in the night air. June waits to meet him outside Alice's cabin.

MARTIN

I should have knowd better.

June and Dan enter the cabin.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE'S CABIN - SAME EVENING

Alice, June, Dan Martin, and COMMODORE are in a heated discussion.

ALICE

I don't understand why. It doesn't make a bit of sense.

DAN

(patiently)  
OK, listen to me. I'll explain the same thing only different. There's a man in California. He's very rich. He wants to give a check to the school, enough to pay for back wages and build the new building. But he won't come here to give it.

ALICE

Why doesn't he use the mail?

COMMODORE

Thet's a mighty big check to trust little ol' Berthy to hold.

ALICE

Well, he could wire it to the bank in Hindman.

JUNE

Miss Lloyd, he wants to meet you. It's only proper that we thank him.

ALICE

Than he could come here.

MARTIN

He can't Miss Alice. For a man to earn that much money, you know he'd be mighty busy.

ALICE

Yes, I suppose. I'm not being hard or ungrateful, but I haven't been out of these mountains in nearly 26 years. California is a long way to go and I'm just too old. And we don't know this man, how do we know for sure that he really means it?

Dan Martin gets out of his chair walks over and bends down in front of Alice

MARTIN

It's the only chance left Miss Alice. Look, you go and I'll go with you.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARTIN'S CAR - SAME EVENING

June and COMMODORE talk with Dan as he's leaving.

JUNE

This is wonderful, but she's never been on TV before. Good heavens, neither have I!

COMMODORE

Heck Miss June, folks around here ain't never even SEED a TV. You gonna survive three days on a train with Miss Alice?

MARTIN

Golly. You'd think she'd fly for a few hours and get it done with.

Gets in car

You know, I ain't never felt so good about lying in my whole life.

COMMODORE

(as he shuts Dan's car door)  
Hell, you're a lawyer.

MARTIN

I guess we're goin' to Hollywood.

Dan Martin drives off.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANGUS'S HOMESTEAD/ HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Jason sits on the dark hillside. We can see in the cold moonlight the family cabin down below, smoke from the coal stove raises in the dark blue light from the chimney.

Jason sits on a rock perch, bundled in a blanket. In his hands is the book of Alice Lloyd's that she originally gave to Sary, a long time ago. He opens to the face page, Alice's inscription to Abisha, which we can see over his shoulder.

He slowly becomes angry and emotional. Stands to his feet and rips the page out of the book. He takes the book and hurls it into the hog lot next to the barn below with a loud yell.

As the echo of his voice subsides, we see the hogs attach the book as food, trample it in the mud and rip it apart. Jason's scream drowns to the squeals of Abisha's old hogs.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS/ALICE - DARK EARLY MORNING

Alice walks along the Caney Creek. We see around us the amazing complex of buildings she created from nothing.

She's wrapped in a thick shawl. Through a window in a dorm, we see a lone student at a desk, the coal lamp lights his face as he is absorbed in a book, he's cramming for a test. Alice sits on a bench along the creek. She looks up into the moon, and we hear the echoing voice of Abisha Johnson, from years long ago.

ABISHA

I heard a voice in my dream, to  
summons you, to make my youngin' to  
live unliken the hogs

(and)

If the firren women come and teach  
my youngin's the larnin' I will  
build for you a schoolhouse on my  
land. I be given you the land to  
teach my chilin's the larnin'

(and)

across the mountains over yonder,  
on the Caney Creek ...

We are close to Alice's old face. She takes her glasses off and wipes them in her shawl. We can't tell if she's crying.

CUT TO:

EXT/ANGUS'S CABIN - NEXT DAY

Rebecky plays with her young friend on a hillside. They are playing coal mine. The little girl digs a hole into the side of the dirt. She and Rebecky have little hand made dolls. They make believe that the dolls are miners. The little girl places his doll at the front of the small "cave".

JULIE ANN

Uh, oh, lookee here come a cave in.

She pushes the dirt above the play cave down on top of the doll.

JULIE ANN

Now they all be dead.

REBECKY

darn.

Rebecky starts to clean the dolls off.

REBECKY

Julie Ann Howard, don't you get my man kilt in this here mine

JULIE ANN

Girls cain't be in no mine now how anyway

The girls turn to see Berthy riding her old black mule bareback as fast as she can. She bops up and down on the mule as she rides.

REBECKY

Thar comes Berthy in a rush!

CUT TO:

INT. ANGUS'S CABIN - DAY

Angus peels off his dirty mining clothes at the coal stove while Sary skins meat on the kitchen table. They hear from outside the cabin.



REBECKY

Momma!

Sary gets up and exits the cabin, curious not concerned.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Berthy rides up as Sary exits her cabin. Angus follows her outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. BARN - DAY

Jason walks out of the barn, hearing the commotion.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN YARD - DAY

Berthy dismounts.

BERTHY

I come preaching the glory of a  
miracle I seed with my own eyes.  
Lord 'hovey hisself has come upon  
us!

ANGUS

Say it plainer woman.

BERTHY

The miracle of the box has come to  
Caney. My own eyes seed the holy  
spirit fill it with life, like the  
resurrection of angels. The  
spirit comes from the sky and comes  
upon the box and it speaks and  
moves and thinks.

REBECKY

Momma, what Berthy see?

ANGUS

What does this vision of yourn have  
to do with us.

BERTHY

Angus, this hain't no vision, I  
seed it full awake.

(MORE)

BERTHY (cont'd)

Even touched it with my own hand.  
And it did speak to me. I come to  
fetch Jason. Darrell and Elvin  
callin' Jason to Caney to see the  
box.

JASON

Pa?

REBECKY

Pappa can we go to see the magic  
box? Please?

BERTHY

They come send me to summons to see  
the magic box, yep

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CALIFORNIA HOTEL - DAY

Alice is sitting alone in a hotel room, dressed in her Caney uniform. She touches the fine chair and the little table. She look thru the window, and several people sit around a pool. This is a stark contrast to what Alice just left. It's almost plastic looking. The colors are white and pink and powder blue. Very 50's.

Knock at the door. Dan Martin enters with a woman from Ralph Edwards office that we had seen earlier.

DAN MARTIN

You doin' OK? Got a lady here from  
that donor man. Come to say Howdy.

ALICE

Well, well. Howdy do.

The woman is very "coffee-clotchy, shallowy, plastic-y"

WOMAN

Miss Lloyd, welcome to California!

The woman bends down, exposing more cleavage than what is comfortable. Miss Alice's eyebrows raise up to her hairline and Dan tries not to laugh.

DAN MARTIN

I need to leave that dern holler  
more often ...

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS AT CANEY/DARRELL AND JASON - DAY

Darrell is positioned on a tree branch. Jason is below trying to hoist a large rusty mattress spring up to him. Elvin is helping him.

ELVIN

Sheriff says all the way to the top. Don't know why, don't know why this particular tree, don't know why this hill.

Darrell grabs the spring. All lift up.

ELVIN

Boy, you best climb up and pull.

Jason grabs a branch and climbs next to Darrell. The boys drag the spring through the branches to the top of the tree.

JASON

Now what?

ELVIN

Tie these wires to a clean spot on the metal, sort of like a charge in a mine job.

Elvin tosses up a spool of wire. Jason catches it. As the boy wire the mattress,

DARRELL (to Jason)

Why do you suppose they want to blow up this here bed spring?

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

We see several mountain people, 8 in all, sitting in a plane, high up over America. They both look out the window.

CONGRESSMAN PERKINS

Beautiful. Like riding the wings of the lord God hisself.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - LATE AFTERNOON

Jason and Darrell are running the wire from tree to tree, down the mountain toward the campus. Elvin waits and watches at the base of the trees.

ELVIN

The man who owns the magic box is  
comin in from Hazard. Hit be  
awaitin' at the Eagle Nest building  
at Caney.

DARRELL

Pa, we run out of wirein'.

JASON

You want I should run down and get  
more?

ELVIN

Go, boy.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

Several boys are moving desks and tables out the door of a large room. Some are sweeping. As if getting ready for a big crowd. Berthy is talking to the sheriff.

SHERIFF

Hain't no magic to it, old womin.  
Hit's e-lec-tronics is all, like a  
light bulb.

BERTHY

I never seed a light bulb speak.

Young people stop and listen, fascinated and nervous. Berthy turns to the crowd around her.

BERTHY

Spirits with faces smaller'n than  
your hands, eyes bright as a ghost.  
Spirits thet you can see but cain't  
touch no how. An' they be flatter  
than a possum under a rock slide.

Sheriff just rolls his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. CALIFORNIA HOTEL - DAY

Dan, COMMADORE AND JUNE helps Alice through the hotel lobby. Alice looks out of place in her uniform surrounded by early Holiday Inn furnishings. Several patrons and children look and point.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

We see the door of A DC-10 open, the stair ramp in place. Several passengers in business suits and well dressed women get out. Then a pause, finally a very hesitant Caney entourage. All are dressed up in their best "Sunday go-to-meetin'" clothes.

CUT TO:

INT. SETH'S HOUSE/KENTUCKY - DAY

Family is seated for dinner. Young son, about 8 years old, is praying out loud.

BOY

Bless this vittles and ma and pa.  
Bless be this here farm. Bless  
Miss Alice that she don't get stuck  
in the magic box and cain't get out

Youngest brother hears that and starts bawling.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Sherif stands talking to Angus, Jason runs up

JASON

The boys needs more of that wire

Sherif reaches down and hands Angus the wire.

SHERIFF

Best you start now ...

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - LATE AFTERNOON

Angus and Jason runs back with two more spools of wire.

JASON

Sheriff says his cousin is bringin'  
the magic box in from Hazard any  
time and not to let the wirin'  
touch the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO/CALIFORNIA - LATE AFTERNOON

Ralph Edwards in a make-up chair, Assistants and producers  
all around. Last minute information before showtime. Very  
electric atmosphere. We start at the back end of the room,  
around and then ends close up on Ralph's face.

ASSIST #1

Sponsors are set, Prell is in.

RALPH

Mrs. Lloyd is here?

ASSIST #2

Dan Martin will be here with Miss  
Lloyd in 15 minutes.

RALPH

Is it Miss or Mrs? Does anybody  
have that figured out yet.

WOMAN

She was married once, but her  
husband was pretty much a jerk.  
She'd probably not appreciate us  
bringing it up. Everyone calls her  
"Miss" Lloyd.

RALPH

Sounds like your third ex, sweetie  
... What else?

ASSIST #4

That's it. Show time everyone

Assistant #4 hands EDWARDS the script book. They all leave  
the room. The woman assistant stays behind to talk to Ralph.  
She sends the makeup girl away.

WOMAN

Something you should know, Ralph.  
It's about the school . . .

CUT TO:

INT. TV studio

Miss June, COMMODORE, etc. are ushered into a green room. Assistant #2 is escorting them.

COMMODORE

Well, hain't this a wonder.

He looks at the TV monitor set up with a black and white test screen. We hear the steady whine of the test screen.

ASSIST #2

Make yourselves at home. We have coffee and snacks on the table.

JUNE

Miss Lloyd, does she know?

ASSIST #2

She's next door with Mr. Martin and doesn't have a clue. Show starts in 10 minutes. Just relax and I'll come get you when it's your turn.

Commodore reaches for some snacks and another lady sits next to him, fascinated by the TV monitor test screen. The door opens and the folks from the DC-10 enter the room.

COMMADORE

Congressman Perkins! How are you cousin? Glad you made it.

CARL PERKINS

Wouldn't have missed this for the world

COMMADORE

Look et' that, Carl. I suppose you see this thang all the time up in Washington.

CARL PERKINS

More than I care to say. Some folks say that, one day, leaders will govern nations through that box, that governments will rise and fall, and generations will even preserve history through that box.

COMMADORE

Good gawd. Sounds like we best unplug 'em all now while we still can.

JUNE

Oh for heavens sake. Really ... who  
on earth will ever want to sit  
around all day staring into that  
box.

CUT TO:

EXT. CANEY CAMPUS, EAGLES NEST - EARLY EVENING

Large crowd of people entering the building. Crowd murmur.

CUT TO:

INT. EAGLES NEST - EARLY EVENING

We hear a crowd murmur in the building. We see a wire coming  
in from the window and we follow it close through the room.

Room is very crowded. Several coal lamps burn bright. Large  
number of children sit up front on the floor, adults stand in  
the back. We see Elvin, the Sheriff and his cousin hook the  
WIRE in the back of the TV. Camera slowly moves to the back  
of the set, we can see the faces of the crowd in front of it.

COUSIN

That should do it!

Crowd excitement.

SHERIFF

Let's cut off them coal lamps now.

Lamps go off. Room gets dark except for the light from the  
fireplace and coal stove. Crowd gets quiet.

SHERIFF

Well, here goes.

He nods to Elvin who plugs the TV into an extension cord.

SCRIPT NOTE:

This event was actually the first time many people in this  
Appalachian region actually saw TV.

FROM BEHIND THE TV SET TOWARD THE CROWD . . .The light from  
the TV begins to glow in the darken room, shining blue into  
the faces of the children in front, all wide eyed and amazed.



A collective sound of amazement from everyone. This, ladies and gentlemen, is the miracle of TV!

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO/CALIFORNIA - EVENING

A dark studio. Cameras and operators face a curtain. It is dark in the room. The cameras and TV crew all face the closed curtain in the darkened studio. Waiting. Assistant brings Alice and Dan into a "waiting room", the set of THIS IS YOUR LIFE. Alice is seated on a couch.

ASSISTANT #4

Mr. Edwards will be here in just a minute. Can I get you anything?

ALICE

Why, no, thank you.

ASSISTANT #4, TO DAN

Well, why don't you come with me for a second. We'll be right back Miss Lloyd.

Assistant #4 and Martin leave Alice alone in a big room. She looks around at the large lights above her and the huge curtain in front.

CUT TO:

EXT. EAGLES NEST/KENTUCKY - EVENING

Angus follows Rebecky, Sary, and the children to the steps of the building. We hear the muffled excitement inside.

CUT TO:

INT. EAGLES NEST - EVENING

Rebecky opens the door. We see Angus and Sary behind her. Sheriff is there is at the door. Sheriff and Angus meet eyes. Sheriff finally smiles.

SHERIFF

'Bout time you showd!

CUT TO:

INT. EAGLES nest - EVENING

Close on TV screen. We see THIS IS YOUR LIFE logo.

ANNOUNCER

Our principal subject has not heard  
the opening music or the  
introduction to tonight's  
show.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO/CALIFORNIA

Alice sitting on couch alone, V.O. audio remains the same (TV  
set).

ANNOUNCER (Con't)

- but what I say next she will  
hear,

Audio changes to studio speaker, Alice is startled

And now Ladies and Gentlemen, we  
want you to meet a great lady from  
the mountain country of Kentucky -  
Miss Alice Lloyd.

More lights flare on, the curtain Alice has been facing  
abruptly parts, to the roar of the audience's applause.

CUT TO:

Announcers booth, Bob Warren

ANNOUNCER

And here to guide her through an  
inspiring half hour is our host,  
Ralph Edwards.

CUT TO:

Edwards enters from the side archway to another round of  
applause and moves center stage to Alice's couch. He holds  
the script book. Alice is stunned.

EDWARDS

Thank you Bob Warren, Hello  
everyone.

CUT TO:

INT. EAGLES NEST TV SET/KENTUCKY - AUDIO FROM TV SET

EDWARDS

And good evening Miss Lloyd.

ALICE

Well, well.

EDWARDS

Do you mind if I sit here by you?

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO/CALIFORNIA

(He perches on the sofa armrest)

Edwards

I wonder Miss Lloyd have you ever heard of a television program called This Is Your Life?

Alice

Well, yes, no. I heard about it I think.

Edwards

Than you have a pretty good idea of what's in store for you, and for our viewers, when I say, Miss Alice Lloyd of Caney Creek at Pippa Passes, Kentucky - tonight This Is Your Life.

CUT TO:

INT. TV GREEN ROOM/JUNE, COMMODORE, ETC

Excited, watch the TV monitor.

Super on TV Screen:

THIS IS YOUR LIFE

Theme music comes up

CUT TO:

INT. EAGLES NEST TV SCREEN, SAME PICTURE

Face of Rebecky as she seats herself up front with the other children.

SCENE MONTAGE of tv broadcast  
 Through the sound of music and  
 applause, we see a montage of  
 guests for the show, close ups of  
 Alice. Guests include COMMODORE,  
 Dan Martin, Congressman Perkins,  
 Townsell Marshall and others. We  
 are able to glean the full history  
 of Alice and the school from these  
 "snippets"  
 a. she came from Boston  
 b. Abisha's summons  
 c. over 2,000 students have become  
 teachers in 118 schools she  
 helped start in the mountains.  
 d. Graduates include Doctors,  
 lawyers  
 (Dan Martin), congressman (Carl  
 Perkins), corporate executives  
 (Townsel Marshall)  
 e. She was written over 60,000  
 letters, has worn out 9  
 typewriters!

CUT TO:

INT. EAGLES NEST/REBECKY - SAME EVENING

She and others watch the little screen in amazement and  
 hypnotic awe.

BOY #1

Lordy!

REBECKY

Miss Alice be looking a bit chubby  
 in that magic box, don't she?

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO SET/CALIFORNIA

We are now at the end of the show. All of Alice's friends  
 are gathered around the couch. Ralph, standing to the left  
 of the sofa, now CLOSES HIS BOOK and speaks from his heart,  
 unscripted, directly to Alice,

Edwards

Miss Lloyd, I know there is only one great concern in your heart, "what will happen to the Caney school when you can no longer go on?" You have no endowments, no government grants. For forty years, your letters have raised every penny the school has received.

Alice nods "Yes"

Now, I feel certain that all of America wants to share your determination that your work may continue.

Edwards now turns to face the camera

Ladies and gentleman, let's keep Miss Lloyd's great dream alive, let's guarantee its future tonight. How many of you in our vast audience . . .

We see June to Dan

EDWARDS VO

. . . will put a dollar bill in an envelope right now---or a check for ---whatever you can afford, and mail it to

CUT TO:

EXTREME close up of Alice

EDWARDS

(OFF)  
Alice Lloyd, Pippa Pass, Kentucky.

CUT TO:

INT. EAGLES Nest/Kentucky

We see the blue-glowing faces of all the young people seated watching the little TV set.

EDWARDS VO

If you do it now, you will be helping more mountain boys and girls to become leaders for their region and assure them their only chance for higher education . . .

CUT TO:

INT. DUPONT MANSION - SAME EVENING

Mrs. DuPont sits before the TV set, hanky to her nose.

EDWARDS VO

. . . in that area. So reach into your heart and your purse.

(pause)

Don't put it off.  
Do it now.

The sound of Bob Warren and applause fades into music as we come closer and closer to Alice Lloyd's face, until she fills the entire screen. The sound of applause dissolve to ...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HAZARD SHERIFF'S OFFICE/RAIN - DAY

Rain ... We are outside of a main street office building that with a sign that reads "SHERIFF, Hazard, KY". Someone rushes in from the rain.

SUPER ON SCREEN  
Hazard, Kentucky  
Three Days Later

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

A busy office. An officer flirts with the secretary, an attractive young lady. We hear thunder. The phone rings.

SECRETARY

Hazard Sheriff's office...Verna May  
speaking OK...jesst a minute

Secretary pushes an intercom button

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFFS DESK

The sheriff sits behind his desk, concentrating on some  
paperwork. He hears his intercom go off.

SECRETARY

(OFF)

Hey, Will? There's some fella on  
the phone says he's the postmaster  
in Lexington.

SHERIFF

Oh, hell, not now Verna Mae. I got  
me a judge tryin' to do to me what  
yer boyfriend be trying to do to  
you

SECRETARY

(OFF)

Will, he's says its real urgent

Sheriff picks up the phone

SHERIFF

Damn... Hello, Sheriff Gorman.  
Yes, sirs, watched it at my  
brothers. Nope never met her. You  
don't say. No...You don't...HOW  
MANY? All right, I will.

Sheriff puts down the phone, thinks a second, then-

SHERIFF

Verna Mae...how many of them deputy  
badges we got?

SECRETARY

If I recollect, about 14

SHERIFF

Well, go get 'em ... an find some  
umbrellas.

CUT TO:

EXT. HAZARD POST OFFICE - DAY

A man in wet street clothes is wearing a deputy badge. We see he is carrying a shotgun, standing outside a large building with an American flag on it. A sign clearly reads:

Post Office  
Hazard, Kentucky

The Sheriff stands at the steps under the overhang, trying to stay out of the rain, looking at his watch. With him is another man with an umbrella wearing a business suit. Every one is waiting. A car drives up. DEAN HAYES and another man get out of the car. HAYES approaches the Sheriff.

HAYES  
Sheriff Gorman...Dean Hayes.

SHERIFF  
This here is Vernon Cooper, from Peoples Bank here in Hazard. I figured you might need him around.

HAYES  
Oh, good thinking. Thank you for coming. Dern, this rain.

(Pauses)  
Well, this is turned out to be an interesting day.

SHERIFF  
We're about to find out.

Someone calls out,

(OFF)  
Here it comes

The sound of a truck rumbles up in the distance. All eyes focus on the road ahead. Around the corner comes a police car with the markings "Hazard Sheriff"

It splashes through the road and is followed by two more trucks marked

US POST OFFICE  
Lexington, Kentucky



on the side panels. It is followed by another police car. As the convoy pulls up to the Post Office, all fourteen civilian deputies, the Sheriff, Cooper and Hayes assemble around the back doors of the first truck.

The thunder rolls as we see hands grab the truck handles. The doors swing open and we see loaded inside large, full canvas bags of mail.

The deputies forming a line with guns on their shoulders as postal workers carry these large bags of mail into the post office.

CUT TO:

INT. POST OFFICE/SHERIFF/HAYES/COOPER - SAME DAY

We see the opening of a canvas bag as its contents, all letters Tables are piled high with letters as postal workers try to manage the bulk. rain, all stand observing in the room.

POSTAL WORKER

Every damn one is headin' to Caney

SHERIFF

When is she gonna be back?

HAYES

Tomorrow, tomorrow afternoon. I hope. Miss June is back already. I've swear I've never, This is...

DEPUTY

This be a miracle.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN/DAY - PASSENGER CAR - DAY

Alice dozes in the seat next to the rain-splashed window. We see Dan Martin next to her. The rhythm of the tracks almost sound like Alice's typing. He looks at her, lightly touches her old hand, and then over into the distance. We let the camera take its time here. Let us see his affection for the old woman. He looks out the window and we get lost in the trees speeding by and dissolve into . . .

DAN MARTIN

I bet they're all home by now, in that fast ok' plane.

Alice  
I'm an old woman, I'm in no rush

DAN MARTIN  
Well ... I might be as old as you  
when we finally get there.

INT. CAMPUS BUILDING - DAY

We see tables piled high with letters, bags of letters piled on the floor. Other tables piled high with cash are next to them. Students opening and sorting envelopes. Miss June and Commodore with stunned looks on their faces.

STUDENT  
I ain't never imagine something  
like this

DEAN HAYES (to June)  
There's over 200,000 of these  
letters

JUNE  
She's going to wish she flew that  
plane.

EXT. CANEY/ALICE LLOYD/SUNSHINE - DAY

We are at the edge of a stream as the sound of a jolt wagon makes its way down a holler road. The CAMERA moves up and sees Alice Lloyd sitting next to a driver. In the back is Dan Martin. The wagon bounces through potholes of water as it rounds the bend to Caney holler. Around the turn we go until we see the campus property.

Along the sides of the campus road are hundreds of students, teachers, workers, towns folk, June, Commodore and Hayes. As the wagon pulls up, the crowd begins to applaud, then cheer.

The screen blurs and the sounds echoes, until it

DISSOLVES TO:

INT. ANGUS'S CABIN - EARLY MORNING

It is very quiet, morning. Rebecky face as she wakes up.

CUT TO:

INT. ANGUS'S CABIN - EARLY MORNING

Rebecky and Jason stand close together as Sary fusses over them. Rebecky is in a white dress with a red scarf. Jason is in a dark jacket and white shirt.

Sary runs a comb through his hair one last time. They stand at the door. Angus comes up to them.

ANGUS

Boy...

He hands Jason a box wrapped in colored paper. Jason takes it and opens it. We see it see a neck tie.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD/ MUSIC UP - DAY

Jason and Rebecky are walking away from us on a wintery mountain road. Very early morning. Brilliant autumn leaves on trees reflecting in the sunrise.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE/HEADSTONE - DAY

Alice's headstone

SCROLL ON SCREEN

(V.O.)

Alice Lloyd finally passed away in 1962, almost a half century after her Boston doctors gave her six months to live.

Her personal estate was worth only sixteen cents.

However, her students helped start over 118 other schools in the mountains. Over 3,000 became teachers. Thousands more became doctors, lawyers, and community leaders. One student, Carl Perkins, became one of the most powerful congressman in US history.

June Buchanon passed away in 1987,  
still active on the Caney campus,  
just a few days shy of her 100th  
birthday.

(As the screen goes to black)

In her lifetime, Alice Lloyd wrote  
over 60,000 letters to people  
around the country, looking for  
help and support for the school.

**AUDIO: The sound of Alice's typewriter**

Today, Alice Lloyd's dream remains  
alive and healthy in the mountains  
of Eastern Kentucky.

SUPER ON SCREEN

"You must have aspirations  
as high as the mountains,  
and faith as firm as the rocks"  
Alice Lloyd

MUSIC & CREDITS OUT over scenes of the modern day campus,  
actual old historic pictures of Caney/Abisha/ Appalachia;  
Alice Lloyd; June; her day on TV; etc/ THE END