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Red Deer is an adult story written in a very unsensational tone. Even a rape scene is described without detail in a couple of sentences. One reason for caution is that it recently was rewritten and we don't yet know what changes were made.

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As for script abbreviations: INT. and EXT. refer to whether the scene is inside or outside and whether the lighting is natural or artificial. A SUPER is something printed on the screen. POV stands for "point of view." O.S. refers to dialogue spoken by someone who is "off stage." V.O., or "voice over," refers to dialogue spoken by someone who is not on the screen, or onscreen but not talking.

Now enjoy the story.

RED DEER

By

Aimee Lamb

ON SCREEN:                    "There was a time when our people covered  
the land as the waves of a wind ruffled sea  
cover its shell-paved floor, but time long since  
passed away with the greatness of tribes that  
are now but a mournful memory."

"Soon there will come from the rising sun a  
different kind of man from any you have ever  
yet seen."

FADE IN:

ON SCREEN:                    ANNO DOMINO, 1831 - SOMEWHERE  
BETWEEN MINOT AND FORT DIABLO

CAMERA PANS a vista of wide open yellow grassed prairies. ZOOM on a flash of yellow and bright red as a figure is seen running through the tall grasses. CLOSE on figure of a teenage, panic stricken girl, ANNE, running as though for her life, gasping for each breath.

The brittle grasses rustle as she runs through. CLOSE a rock as her yellow satin shoe catches on it and sends her sprawling in a mass of petticoats, yellow gown and loose red hair. A small pouch and lady's drawstring purse fly scattering their contents.

CLOSE Anne's hands desperately seek items and find a gold chain, several rings, which she places on the chain, a small lady's pistol and the pouch which contains some meager

provisions.

As Anne's rasping breath calms down we become aware of the sound of horses and the swish of crops and sword blades' flashes as they flatten the tall grasses.

Anne lies perfectly still, her yellow dress blending with the grasses, her eyes wide with fear as she holds the pistol in trembling hands.

V.O. MALE #1  
She can't be far.

V.O. MALE #2  
Aye, that she can't. We'll find her for sure.

Anne's P.O.V. the rump and tail of a horse almost on top of her.

V.O. MALE #1  
How could we lose her! We could see her as we rode, being higher and all. Damn! But it's like the ground has swallowed her up!

V.O. MALE #2  
Well, let's double back.

V.O. MALE #3  
Yeah! All this galloping about has made me thirsty!

V.O. MALE #4  
And I'm famished!

As the men gallop back the way they came Anne, clutching the pistol in one hand, the lady's purse and the pouch in her teeth, slowly parts the grasses in front of her, before taking off at a run in the opposite direction from the men.

Day turns to night.

Anne fitfully sleeps, waking at any small sound.

As dawn rises, Anne wearily looks around. H.P.O.V. mountains are seen in the distance, between them and her lies a large rocky, open space, with occasional scrub oaks and small trees.

Suddenly determined, she stands and darts from rock to tree, to rock, etc. She stops at a small stream and cups her hands to drink and eat a piece of hard tack and an apple from the pouch.

By mid afternoon Anne has almost made it across the open area when she becomes aware of the ground vibrating beneath her feet. She turns, in her ruffled and torn dress, a look of hope on her face, which turns to horror, as she recognizes the four mounted men approaching, one of whom has a young woman, MARIE, split lip, one eye swollen shut, hands tied behind her back, sat behind him on his mount .

Anne does not hesitate but runs for the safety of a thorn thicket her clothing, hair and skin catching on its branches as she fights her way in.

As dusk falls the men, who have been passing a bottle of whisky around drunkenly, light a fire.

MAN #1

You'll soon come out of hiding.

MAN #2

Yea! We'll have you before nightfall,  
each of us in turn.

Marie begins to sob and cries out as one of the men takes a flaming branch from the fire and sets fire to the thickets where Anne hides.

As the flames take hold and Anne begins to cough and wheeze, the men drunkenly dance and whoop it up around the thicket as though they are Indians.

As the flames begin to lick at her dress and hair Anne decides to brave the men.

MARIE (French accent)

Better to die in the fire like sainted  
Joan of Arc than have anything to do  
with these dastardly English!

MAN #!

Shut up you bitch!

He roughly pushes Marie backwards causing her to lose her footing, fall awkwardly and hit the ground hard. She lies still her neck at an odd angle.

ANNE

Oh Mon Dieu! Marie!

Anne exits the thicket, scratched and singed and falls to her knees in despair by the body of Marie. Hearing the men approaching her, laughing drunkenly, she cowers. Then she hears horrendous screams and thumps and slowly, turns around, terrified.

Four MANDANS, one of whom hold the dripping and grisly scalps of Anne's would-be tormentors, stand looking down at her. She crumbles in a faint.

RUN CREDITS OVER MONTAGE OF SHOTS:

- Mandans checking Marie for signs of life - none.
- One of the braves gently picks up and carries Anne to where several horses are tethered .
- Other braves take anything of value, including the mounts of the Englishmen.
- One body twitches as the Mandans move off.
- The last Mandan looks around to see that nothing has been left. He notices the bottle of whisky, picks it up and holds to his nose.
- After one whiff he throws it from him in disgust and hurries after his companions.
- Whisky seeps out of the broken bottle.
- As the Mandans ride off, up and over a rise, the whisky meets up with the fire which rages out of control across the prairie.

END CREDITS AND MONTAGE OF SHOTS

CUT TO:

EXT. A CAMPFIRE BY A RIVER - LATE AFTERNOON

The Mandan braves are variously occupied: cooking rabbits over a spit, watering their mounts

washing in the river, lounging. Anne lies at the foot of a tree. CLOSE her face is bright red, her shoes scuffed and torn and her dress and petticoats singed and ragged.

BRAVE #1  
What funny garments the Whites wear.

BRAVE #2  
I wonder what animals they come from?

BRAVE #3  
None that we have ever come across on any of our hunting expeditions.

BRAVE #1  
Well we did this time!

As the braves laugh raucously Anne stirs and the braves sit back as though half afraid of her. Seeing her move the leader of the group LITTLE BEAR goes over to her and picks her up. She opens her eyes startled and begins to try and fight him off. But undeterred she carries her over to the river and drops her in and then mimes that she should put water all over the burns on her arms and legs. The other braves laugh and joke. Anne finds her footing and looks around in despair.

BRAVE #1  
She tries to find an escape.

BRAVE #2  
She is resourceful.

BRAVE #3  
She is scared for her very life.

Puzzled that they do nothing Anne slowly makes her way out of the river speaking in French.

ANNE  
If one of you so much as makes a move, I'll,  
I'll run away.

The braves look at her in puzzlement for they cannot understand her.

BRAVE #1  
What does she say?

BRAVE #2  
Who can tell?

BRAVE #3  
Maybe she doesn't like the smell of your cooking Little Sparrow.

The one so addressed who is turning the spit over the fire looks up.

LITTLE SPARROW  
The smell makes her hungry you mean.

LITTLE BEAR  
(Miming as he speaks)  
Come, sit down, join us. You must eat. Come.

Anne looks from him to the other braves and then over to the spit and licks her cracked lips. Slowly, shivering, she moves towards the fire, squats down and extends her arms. Steam

begins  
to rise from her clothing.

LITTLE SPARROW  
Just look at that, she looks like she came  
out of the sweat house!

BRAVE #1  
Why does she not eat? She is strong this one.

BRAVE #2  
She's crazy you mean. Women!

BRAVE #3  
I tell you, it's Little Sparrow's cooking!

LITTLE BEAR  
Turn the spit, maybe the smell of the meat will  
tempt her empty belly. Her head may be full,  
but it won't argue with an empty belly for long!  
Besides I have her pouch. She will want to hold  
something familiar. It will keep her spirits up.

BRAVE #1  
Do whites have spirits? Surely the Great  
Watonka does not look favorably on them  
otherwise they would be the same color as  
us. Yet they are pale, pale as moonlight.

BRAVE #2  
Maybe their great spirit is of the Moon.

LITTLE BEAR  
Maybe they are really Pawnees and worship  
the Morning and Evening Stars!

All the braves laugh at this idea and Anne, seeing that they mean her no harm, leans forward  
and  
gingerly takes a piece of rabbit off the spit. She eats it and licks her fingers clean  
before daring  
to take another piece.

LITTLE SPARROW  
See she likes my cooking, maybe it was  
the company she couldn't stomach!

As the sun sets, most of the braves roll themselves up in their blankets and sleep, with one  
acting  
as a look out. Anne holds her knees and dozes fitfully. Little Bear talks to those still  
awake.

LITTLE BEAR  
We'll have to take her with us.

BRAVE #1  
Well she can come with us, or not, I don't care.

LITTLE BEAR  
She'd never survive out here, there are no  
whites for many day's journey. Too far for  
her to walk.

BRAVE #2  
We could give her a horse.

LITTLE BEAR

You're crazy! A bride's price is sometimes only one horse. Have you taken leave of your senses.

BRAVE #1

Well, what do you suggest? We did pick up four new ones from the white men.

LITTLE BEAR

Those are booty, not for giving away. They must be shared. She will come with us.

BRAVE #1

Well, she could ride on one of them then, if you plan on taking her with us. They still have the white men's trappings on them, she will know what to do with them.

LITTLE BEAR

No, she is in no condition to sit on a horse by herself, she will ride with me.

LITTLE SPARROW

Phew! I wouldn't want to be in your moccasins when you reach home and Grey Squirrel finds out!

BRAVE #1

What if she doesn't want to come?

LITTLE BEAR

She will come, where else could she go? When the white men come to our camp after the winter for trade, we will send her back with them. They will now what to do with her. And I'm not afraid of Grey Squirrel, what does she have to worry about with a white eyes?

LITTLE SPARROW

Pouah! White men are all animals where squaws are concerned. You'll see they will do to her what those pursuing her wished to.

He spits in disgust onto the fire before rolling himself up in his blanket.

LITTLE BEAR

Not all. But we will let her decide, when she is ready.

Little Bear rolls himself up and soon all are sleeping except for the look out.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE OF SHOTS:

- The small cavalcade making it's way across rough terrain.
- Braves catching deer and enjoying it roasted at night.
- Anne looking haggard and afraid as the group journeys on.
- A Mandan village in the distance as the braves and Anne make their way alongside a river. As they near the houses are seen to be large lodges.

- Dogs bark and run towards the group as children, women and braves wave excitedly in welcome.
- The braves spur their horse towards the village and Little Bear jumps down and into the welcoming arms of GREY SQUIRREL, as Anne slowly slips to the ground in a faint.

END MONTAGE OF SHOTS

INT. MANDAN LODGE - DAY

The lodge is dark, built into the ground with the walls made of wood and padded with moss and mud. There are several sleeping areas in the lodge and a fire burns in the center over which hangs a large hide pot.

CLOSE Anne lies sleeping fitfully as Grey Squirrel applies a salve to her arms and legs. Grey Squirrel has the Mandan trait of a white streak in her hair. Children stand watching Anne.

CHILD

Is her hair that color because it was in a fire?

GREY SQUIRREL

I don't think so. I think it is her natural color.

CHILD

But it's red, no-one has red hair!

GREY SQUIRREL

Some whites do.

Anne stirs and the children scatter afraid.

GREY SQUIRREL

Ah, you wake. That is good. I have to take you to meet our leader Four Bears.

ANNE

What? I'm sorry I don't understand you.

GREY SQUIRREL

No matter you soon will. Come.

Holding out her hands she helps Anne rise. Anne screams as she notices she is naked. The children scream in turn and run from the lodge, leaving only some women busy at their looms or the cooking pot.

Grey Squirrel tries to calm Anne down and hands her a beautiful soft brown hide gown, and boots.

GREY SQUIRREL

These belonged to my best friend, who recently died in childbirth. It is as though you have come to replace her, the Great Watonka works in mysterious ways.

Anne not understanding a word nevertheless understands that she is to wear the garment and the boots, all of which fit her perfectly. As she looks at Grey Squirrel timidly Grey Squirrel takes her by the hand and gently leads her out of the lodge into the brilliant sunshine.

EXT. LARGE MANDAN VILLAGE - DAY

The village is a substantial one and many large lodges are clustered together along a large river.

People go about their business; men fish and tend to horses, others work on weapons, while women hoe vegetable patches, treat animal hides, weave baskets, smoke meats and fish, dry berries, tend to children and cooking. In the center of the village a large, tall, wooden circular structure makes Anne stop and stare.

GREY SQUIRREL

It's the symbol of the mythical ark which our ancestors build to save themselves from a flood.

ANNE

It looks like the ark that Noah built in the Old Testament story to save animals from the flood.

GREY SQUIRREL

I wish I knew what you were saying. Ah well. Come we mustn't delay, Chief Four Bears awaits.

The women approach a very large lodge and step down into it. In the dim interior the light seems to play tricks on Anne's eyes as she sees multi-hued images on the walls. Dogs pad up and sniff her causing her to step back and knock some spears down from where they had been propped up against one of the support posts. A fire burns in the center of the lodge and as Anne looks at

CHIEF FOUR BEARS seated there horses off to one side snort and cause her to jump. Braves snicker but Chief Four Bears merely looks at her and indicates that she sit next to him on a buffalo hide.

As Anne painfully sinks to her knees she notices her pouch and her mother's pistol in front of him.

Anne looks him over. He has a long aquiline nose and warm brown eyes below wispy white brows. His face is very lined, as though made of leather. His hair is grey streaked, long and in one long braid which dangles over his left shoulder down the front of the blanket he is wrapped up in. His hands, long and slender fingered, indicate the items as he asks her if they are hers. She doesn't understand him. He indicates that she should pick up the items.

Anne winces in pain as she straightens up and the Chief makes as though to help her causing the blanket to fall from his shoulders and expose black parallel strips and figures on his naked torso. Again he addresses Anne and she indicates she doesn't understand him speaking in French.

ANNE

I'm sorry I don't understand you. But thank you anyway.

CHIEF FOUR BEARS

(In halting French)

You are French?

ANNE

Yes! Yes! Oh yes!

CHIEF FOUR BEARS

Welcome, my daughter. We have been friends of the French for a long time. We do trade with them. We are friends with them.

ANNE  
You speak French!

CHIEF FOUR BEARS  
Yes. But he doesn't (he indicates Little Bear)  
He is sad, a long time ago, many of us died from  
a sickness contacted from the French. After the  
snow Frenchmen will come.

ANNE  
Thank you.

Clasping her pouch and her mother's pistol to her she follows Grey Squirrel outside into the  
sunshine. As they walk through the village Anne reminisces.

ANNE  
(V.O.)  
I don't think I was ever as happy as I was  
that day. Though I had a lot to learn about  
my hosts for I had to learn to adapt to their  
way of life which was so very different to  
that I had known as the daughter of a French  
war hero and his beautiful wife. What if my  
father hadn't been posted to Fort Diablo and  
my parents and I hadn't been on the road that  
fateful day...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ROAD BETWEEN MINOT AND FORT DIABLO - DAY  
A carriage with a small escort of six French soldiers makes its way along a dusty trail.  
Prairies,  
tall grasses of late summer, sway to either side. Inside the carriage an elegant woman  
MADAME  
DE SEYGNAC, her husband GENERAL DE SEYGNAC, their teenage daughter ANNE and  
their maid MARIE look outside as General de Seygnac expounds.

GENERAL DE SEYGNAC  
Look at these vast expanses. This is a young  
country ripe for a future full of new beginnings  
and new hopes. There will be no revolution in  
this country, unlike the bloody one we left  
behind. And though I am a true patriot the new  
King, Charles X, who now sits on the throne of  
France, is backward looking and relentless in  
his pursuits of the glories of the past to the

GENERAL DE SEYGNAC  
(Cont.)  
detriment of the future of our beloved country.  
No, the future does not lie in the Old World, but  
here in this new country. Though you are but  
fifteen Anne, you will grown with this new land.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
I just wish our son, Pierre could have come with  
us instead of staying at Fort Minot.

GENERAL DE SEYGNAC  
Nonsense my dear. The boy has to grow up and  
earn his commission. He will do well under  
General Le Claire, and as his aide de camp will  
learn lessons that will be invaluable to him later.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Still, to me he is just a boy. I just wish...

EXT. THE CARRIAGE UNDER ATTACK - DAY

Four men, their faces masked, pistols in both hands shoot at the escort, mortally wounding or incapacitating them. Anne and her mother cling to one another horrified as General de Seygnac unsheathes his sword and jumps from the still moving carriage only to be struck down by a bullet. As the carriage careens to a stop Madame de Seygnac looks out at the attackers and then opens the door on the opposite side of the carriage from the horrific scene.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Here take these.

She tears her locket and chain from around her neck, pulls off her rings and inserts her small La Page blunderbuss-pistol along with the jewelry into a pouch and hands a small bag of provisions to her daughter Anne.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Run and don't look back. Go, run, escape!  
Please, my darling. Anne run. You too Marie,  
now!

ANNE

But mother!

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Go! Go! I must stay with your father, please go!

She rises and pushes Anne out of the door on the far side from the fracas. Anne half stumbles, half falls and holding onto the items her mother has given her, starts running across the land which stretched out endlessly before her. She doesn't look back and blends into the grasses, her yellow dress almost identical in color and is soon lost to sight.

Meanwhile a fierce fight is soon over, as all the French soldiers lie on the ground dead or dying and Madame de Seygnac kneels sobbing and holding her dying husband in her arms.

One of the four attackers, all English by the sound of their voices, grabs Marie, as she attempts to run after Anne, and drags her back to the others and proceeds to rape her behind the carriage while the others ransack the luggage and purloin all the bodies of anything of value. As the rapist comes around the carriage another replaces him, until all four have had their way with poor Marie who lies whimpering in pain on the ground.

Madame de Seygnac is dragged over to one of the carriage's wheels and tied up there.

ENGLISHMAN #1

Let's kill her and be done with it.

ENGLISHMAN #2

No, we'll keep her for ransom, for barter  
if need be. We might have need of her, so  
we keep her.

Madame de Seygnac looks at her tormentor. He has piercing cold blue eyes and every time he looks at her threateningly she shivers and looks away. This makes him roar with laughter

and  
slap his thigh in amusement. His three companions, smaller in stature, all seem to be  
related.  
They laugh as they drink and look around at the dead bodies.

Later in the afternoon after returning from a fruitless search for Anne they argue the night  
away  
as to whether to pursue her or go on.

ENGLISHMAN #2

We should look for her in the morning.  
She's a bloody female after all, she can't  
have got far. And after a night in the wild  
by herself, why she'll be happy to see us!

MONTAGE OF SHOTS:

- Women begging for water and finally being given some.
- Both women are now tied up, on opposite sides of the carriage, from one another.
- The men cook and eat a couple of rabbits without giving the women any.
- The men check the women's bindings and then sleep under and in the carriage.

END MONTAGE OF SHOTS

EXT. CARNAGE SITE - EARLY MORNING

The men mount their horses, one taking Marie behind him, and take off across the prairie in  
the  
direction taken by Anne, leaving Madame de Seygnac sobbing for her daughter and exhausted.  
Finally she falls asleep. Suddenly a weak voice wakes her up.

MALE VOICE

Madame?

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Yes. Who's there.

She looks around her, scared out of her wits.

MALE VOICE

It is I, corporal Durand, Madame.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Corporal Durand! You are alive! But how  
can that be?

She looks around in disbelief at the seemingly dead bodies.

CORPORAL DURAND

Just Madame, only just. I'm over here.

She looks over to where he lies and watches in amazement as he slowly sits up. His forehead  
is  
bloody and the congealed blood looks black in the morning sun. His left arm, hangs useless  
by  
his side and when he stands he almost keels over. She is helpless to assist him since she  
is tied  
up.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Oh dear God!

CORPORAL DURAND

I'll be all right. Just as soon as I can feel my

legs.

She watches as he drags himself towards her, half walking, half crawling.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Oh corporal Durand, what are we to do?  
Those vile men will be back soon.

CORPORAL DURAND

Then I will return to the dead once more until  
I can seize the opportunity to free us. But I do  
not see them.

She watches as he painfully picks up a discarded saber and finally cuts through her ties.  
She tries  
to stand but her legs are numb and her arms, which had been tied over her head are painful  
as the  
blood finally circulates in them. Finally she is able to stand and goes and gets a water  
jug from  
which she gives Durand a drink and then drinks herself. She then tends to his saber wound  
on  
his arm and places the arm in a makeshift sling made from one of her petticoats. Leaving  
him in  
the shade of the carriage she goes around straightening up and giving some dignity to the  
corpses  
which flies, maggots and small rodents have already begun to attack. She shivers and then  
releases the horses from the shafts of the carriage and gives them water before letting them  
forage. She then goes over to Durand.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

How did they not know that you lived?

CORPORAL DURAND

The bullet that creased my forehead must have  
knocked me unconscious for that came after  
the saber cut to my arm. When I did regain  
consciousness, it was night. I heard the English  
talking and peering about me I realized all my  
companions had gone to meet their maker. So,  
realizing I could do nothing, I slept and then  
feigned death if anyone came near me. They  
ignored me this morning and as soon as I was

CORPORAL DURAND

(Cont.)

sure they had all left, I raised my head and saw  
you, God be praised. And voila, that is all,  
Madame. But what of your maid and your  
daughter? I do not see them among the bodies.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

My daughter may have managed to escape, I  
do not know, but poor Marie was savagely  
raped by all the men who have now taken her  
with them and are now, as we speak, looking  
for my daughter. (Beat) We must get away  
from here and report what has happened.

CORPORAL DURAND

I know, but the question is, do we go forward  
or back?

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

I think we go forward but....

She stops as on the horizon in the direction the Englishmen had taken smoke rises and  
billows

upwards darkening the sky.

MADE DE SEYGNAC  
What in God's name?

CORPORAL DURAND  
A fire, and it's moving this way. Quick  
Madame, we must make haste before it  
catches us, these prairie fires have wings.  
Come, let us mount the horses and be off.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
Oh my God, Anne, Marie! I don't want to  
leave them.

Durand helps Madame de Seygnac up onto one of the horses and after many failed attempts finally mounts another, both horses now panicked as they smell the smoke.

The two take off, the horses only too eager to flee the smoke.

They ride for quite some time before they suddenly come upon a French cavalry unit. Their leader, a dark sparse man, wearing a captain's uniform reigns in his mount and signals his men to a stop.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
Oh thank God, we are safe. Captain...

As Madame de Seygnac breaks down in tears Corporal Durand explains to CAPTAIN FRANCOIS DARDEL the events of the previous days.

CAPTAIN DARDEL  
Madame, our deepest condolences and sympathy. My men and I will escort you and the corporal to Fort Diablo where you will be tended to and a search party will be detached to look for your attackers, your daughter and maid, who God willing, still live as we speak. A burial detail will go with the search party to tend to our dead and the perpetrators of this foul deed, will of course, be brought to justice and hung.

MADE DE SEYGNAC  
God willing.

CAPTAIN DARDEL  
Come Madame, corporal, let us ride to Fort Diablo.

CUT TO:

EXT. FORT DIABLO - DAY

A heavily stockaded wooden fort with large guard houses atop its parapet outside of which a bustling village of carts, tepees and tents are spread. Out on the plains, at the foot of the hills, smoke rises from chimneys of individual houses in front of which stretch tilled fields. A bugle blows as the cavalcade rides up and soldiers are seen running and forming ranks on the dusty parade ground. An OFFICER, adjusting his saber and two women, MADAME MARTIN and her daughter LOUISE stand on a wooden planked walkway outside of several wooden cabins watching the group approach. The older woman, stern looking stands besides the much younger plumper one who had a vacant look in her eyes; both are dressed in black.

CAPTAIN DARDEL

Madame Martin and her daughter Louise  
will show you to your quarters Madame.

Madame de Seygnac is helped down from her mount and led into one of the cabins by the two women.

INT. CABIN - DAY

It is dark and sparsely furnished with a coffee pot boiling on top of a black stove. Madame Martin gently leads Madame de Seygnac over to a bed which takes up one corner of the room and sits her down. Madame de Seygnac is asleep before the women can pour her a cup of coffee.

CUT TO:

ON SCREEN: FORT MINOT

EXT. HIGH LOG WALLS OF FORT - DAY

Madame de Seygnac approaches on horseback with a large escort behind which trundles a cart with a sheet wrapped body lying on it. As the group approaches the Fort a lone horseman rides out to meet them.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
Pierre! Pierre at least you are safe and alive.

PIERRE DE SEYGNAC  
Mother! Thank God you are safe. We received the dispatch but two days ago. What a dreadful and horrific time you must have had.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
Yes, it was quite horrible and if it hadn't been for Corporal Durand, I dread to think what the outcome might have been. But I live, and so long as I have breath I will keep up the search for your sister. For in my heart of hearts I know she lives and waits but for us to find her and bring her back to us.

They reach the fort and Pierre helps his mother down off her mount and over to one of the houses lining the parade square, their former home, where everything reminds Madame de Seygnac of her departed husband and lost daughter.

PIERRE DE SEYGNAC  
Mother I think you have to resign yourself to the fact that Anne is gone, that she is probably dead, or worse...

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
Pierre! Listen to me, please. I know she still lives, I feel it here. (She holds her breast) I just know it.

PIERRE DE SEYGNAC  
Mother, you must not delude yourself. If those men who attacked your small convoy have her, then she and Marie both have met a fate worse than death, if indeed they survived their ordeal!

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
(Sobbing)  
I know, I know. But as long as she lives! I must find her, I must keep hoping. The search party from Fort Diablo found no trace, absolutely no

trace, surely that is something?

PIERRE DE SEYGNAC

Yes, mother. And I will do all I can. Messages have gone out with every detail that has left the fort since we had words of the events that took Papa's life. Believe me, if anyone hears anything, we will be informed. We have sent copies of the drawings of the men, as you described them, with their names as you recalled them, to every known settlement, fort, trading post, within three hundred miles. If they are known, they will be found and apprehended.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Thank you. That is all I ask.

CUT TO:

EXT. GENERAL STORE - FORT MINOT - DAY

Madame de Seygnac is standing outside the store observing some Indians, three males and a young girl, all dressed in soft leather garments intricately decorated with colorful beads and

quills. Behind them two large round black hide objects lie propped up against bundles of personal possessions. Two mangy dogs scratch themselves by the foursome. The young girl, FLYING DEER, looks up at Madame de Seygnac and smiles at her. She is about thirteen.

Several CIVILIANS work the store stacking barrels of grains and pilling up the goods for sale.

Madame de Seygnac addresses one of them.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Where did those Indians come from? They are much smaller than the ones I am used to.

STORE KEEPER

They came in last week. They are Shoshone, though some call them Snakes. They came in from the south west where they live along the Snake River, hence their name. They are used to traveling great distances. See those boats?

He points to the round black objects.

They have traveled on water with those and when need be they must travel on land, they drag them behind them on the travois you see propped up against the side of the General store. The dogs pull that. It's like a sled, if you will.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

How ingenious.

STORE KEEPER

They are just like the coracles that some of our fishermen use off the coast of Brittany, not much different. But these people are savages, they are not much use to us.

Madame de Seygnac looks the Indians over and approaches them. One of them, JUMPING FISH, is really old and works at cleaning a hide with gnarled and joint swollen rheumatoid hands, but his eyes are lively as he looks up at Madame de Seygnac, and nods in her direction. She nods back and looks at the girl, the girl does not look full blooded Indian. Madame de Seygnac begins

to cry and the young girl takes her by the hand and leads her over to one of the coracles  
and sits  
her down.

FLYING DEER

What is the matter? Why do you cry?

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

You speak French, and so well.

FLYING DEER

Yes. My grandmother was married to a Frenchman. She was very famous in her time, though now she is old and lives on her memories.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Tell me about her?

FLYING DEER

My grandmother? You wish to know about her?

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Yes, I want to know all about you and your family.

FLYING DEER

Well, her story really begins when she was only a child, when she was taken from her family while far from their tribe on a hunting expedition. They were set upon by a band of armed Hidatsa. In the confusion of the attack, all the men of my grandmother's hunting party, fled on horseback, leaving the women and children to fend for themselves. Most of the Hidatsa pursued the fleeing men but could not catch them and so returned to the campsite, where my grandmother had somehow been left when the women and children scattered. She was taken by her captors to their village on the Knife River and there raised by them in the ways of their tribe.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

But how awful! Was she well treated?

FLYING DEER

She was a captive, a slave, and she was a Shoshonee. She was fed and housed and she was alive.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Did she not miss her family?

FLYING DEER

Of course. One never forgets ones family or whence one came. But she lived. Then she was sold to a fur trader the Hidatsa dealt with, a Frenchman, Toussaint Charbonneau, who needed a wife. She was soon with child, my uncle.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Your uncle! But didn't you say she was your grandmother?

FLYING DEER

Well my mother was born after him. My uncle was first born. It was not until my parents settled

with the Mandan tribe on the Missouri River that I was born.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
So, you are part French?

FLYING DEER  
I suppose so, though I do not think of myself that way.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
Then what became of your grandmother?

FLYING DEER  
Oh, she traveled with some white men who came from the east. They had been given the task, by their big chief, of exploring the land.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
(Looking at Flying Deer in disbelief)  
What was your grandmother's name?

FLYING DEER  
She was called Sacajawea. She and my grandfather traveled with the two white men and other braves, some from the Nez Perces tribe, for two years. My grandfather hunted and cooked for them. She was their guide and while on their travels west, they came across a Shoshone village, which was my grandmother's tribe of birth and where her brother had become the Chief. His name was Cameahwait. The Shoshone traded with the white men, giving them horses in exchange for gifts and promises of guns. That way their expedition could continue on its journey of exploration, for without horses and the help of my grandmother's tribe, the explorers would not have been able to pursue their goal.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
I don't believe it!

FLYING DEER  
You don't believe me? Ask Him!

She points in the direction of the old man.

FLYING DEER  
His name is Jumping Fish. He was in my uncle's village when my grandmother and the explorers arrived. That is how she was recognized. He had been her childhood friend.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
I don't mean I don't believe you, I mean your story is so incredible that it is almost unbelievable, for everyone has heard of your grandmother and the journey she took with Mr. Lewis and Mr. Clark.

FLYING DEER  
Oh! Well, now she is through traveling. She lives with her memories. But like her I want to travel and meet new peoples, see new sights. That is

why I travel with Jumping Fish and two of my uncles. My other uncle he traveled.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Where did your other uncle go?

FLYING DEER

He went far away. Mr. Clark had promised my grandparents that he would take care of him and treat him like his own son. So one day Mr. Clark sent for him and my uncle went away. Sometimes I miss Jean Baptiste and I hope he misses us too. Some day I would like to go find him, for I do not think he will come back to us.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Well maybe one day I will accompany you on your travels for I need to find my daughter, if she still lives. Maybe we could find your uncle too. Someone must know where he is.

FLYING DEER

I heard of what happened to you and your family and if your daughter still lives, she may have been taken in by a tribe, though in the area you describe the tribes that are the closest are the Mandans and the Hidatsas.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

The Hidatsas aren't they the ones that took your grandmother?

FLYING DEER

The very same.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Oh my God! I hope they don't sell her to some trapper. And the other tribe you mentioned the Mandans, what are they like? Would she be a slave?

FLYING DEER

A slave? No, I do not think so. But there are other tribes in the area and they are not so good.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

It doesn't bear thinking about. Tell me about your life. What is it like in your village?

FLYING DEER

You want to know what your daughter's life is like if she lives?

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Yes, please.

FLYING DEER

Well, we live in a place much like this one, by a river, a much larger river. And our homes are much better than these wooden places you call home. Ours are built of the earth we tread on, the earth that gives life to all plants and all living things. They are big and round. In the cold winters they keep us snug and warm and in the summer keep us cool. More than one family live in our homes, called lodges, for they are big.

You are never alone, it is comforting. In winter we also keep the animals in them and they thank us by imparting their bodily warmth to that of the fire which burns in the center and over which we do our cooking. In the summer, we go outside and sit on the roof tops in the evening, watching the heavens go to sleep.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
How do you live?

FLYING DEER  
How do we live?

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
What do you eat for example?

FLYING DEER  
We eat whatever we can catch or grow and that which the Great Spirit leaves for us in the forest. The buffalo sustains us with almost everything that we need. We use its fur, skin, bones, meat, every part of it. We also fish and kill deer, rabbits and large birds. We grow corn, beans and eat the berries off the trees and from the ground. Water we find in the river. We have everything we need. It is a good life, we want for nothing. If we have too much, too many furs and pelts, or beaded jackets, then we trade them with others who have too much of something that we want. That is why, we like the trappers, who come through once the winter begins to retreat, for they bring us white men's things, pretty beads, ribbons, pots, kettles.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
You sound happy. Do you miss your home?

FLYING DEER  
I think so. I thought at first that I would be happy to travel, as did my grandmother, but I find that I miss my brothers and sisters.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
You have many brothers and sisters?

FLYING DEER  
Of course, for all my tribe are my brothers and sisters as are the peoples of other tribes. We are all one big happy family, under one sky. Even the animals are our brothers.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
I wish things were so simple for me. I only live to find my daughter, then I will be happy.

FLYING DEER  
If she lives, you will find her. What does your daughter look like? Does she look like you?

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
Yes and no. Her hair is different. It is red.

FLYING SQUIRREL

Red! One of the men that my grandmother traveled with was of the red hair. It is unusual is it not.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Not in some countries.

FLYING SQUIRREL

Countries! What are countries?

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

They are, they are different tribes in the land I come from.

FLYING SQUIRREL

Ah! So there are tribes with red hair. You married a man from a different tribe then?

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Er... Yes.

FLYING DEER

Well, when I return to my people, and as I travel, I will ask for news of a red haired white woman. If she is alive, she will be known.

JUMPING FISH

Flying Deer!

FLYING DEER

I must go now, we go further up stream to trade and then we return home before winter sets in. We also act as guides for the soldiers.

Standing, she dusts herself off, smiles at Madame de Seygnac and then helps her companions turn over the two coracles which they then fill with goods and push them down into the water

Her two uncles step into one, kneel and, each paddling, move the coracle off into mid stream

Then Jumping Fish and Flying Deer settle in the other one, with the dogs, and take off in the wake of the others. Soldiers enter long canoes and paddled after the Indian crafts. As the coracles turn the bend in the river Madame de Seygnac waves, tears rolling down her face.

CUT TO:

EXT. LARGE MANDAN VILLAGE - DAY

Coracles bob on the river as women and children go about their tasks, hoeing, weeding and watering vegetable plots by the rivers edge. Among the women are Anne and Grey Squirrel who has a baby strapped to her back. They are suddenly startled by screams and yells off to one end of the village and a young boy comes running.

YOUNG BOY

Pawnees! Pawnees!

Grey Squirrel grabs Anne by the hand and runs her down to the river's edge where a coracle is upended on the bank.

GREY SQUIRREL

Get under that, and don't come out until

I, or someone else, let's you know it is safe to do so.

ANNE  
But... why...?

GREY SQUIRREL  
Don't argue, just do it. NOW!

Pushing Anne under the coracle, none too gently, Grey Squirrel then takes off up the slope and into the village.

Anne, under the coracle with the sun beating down, is soon sweating and crouches in fear as she hears the sound of footsteps approaching.

GREY SQUIRREL  
It's all right, you can come out now.

Anne slowly crawls out and sees that Grey Squirrel is unhappy. She silently follows her into the center of the village where all the women, children and a few old men are gathered around a mother and two teenage sons, one of whom is bleeding profusely as they stand keening and looking down at the body of another boy, pierced through and impaled to the ground by a lance..

ANNE  
What happened? That is not one of our lances.

GREY SQUIRREL  
No it's not, it's Pawnee. They came and took their sister, still a young girl, as she worked the family plot with her mother.

Anne looks from Grey Squirrel to the distraught mother and her sons.

ANNE  
Pawnees? But why? What for? I don't understand.

GREY SQUIRREL  
For sacrifice to the Morning Star.

ANNE  
Sacrifice? Morning Star? Why? Why, one of ours?

GREY SQUIRREL  
There is a band of outlawed Pawnees who follow the old ways. Young braves who have banded together and forsaken the ways of their tribe but have kept the old custom of a human sacrifice to the Morning Star.

ANNE  
But that is horrible! Can't we go after the girl and save her?

GREY SQUIRREL  
There are no braves here willing to do that for the sake of a mere girl, a virgin.

ANNE

But what of her family? Her Mother? Does  
no-one care?

GREY SQUIRREL

You have seen what happened to her oldest  
brother. Now her mother is dependent on  
two younger sons, what good will it do her if  
she loses them too? They are just young boys,  
they cannot be expected to exact revenge.

ANNE

But surely the hunting party will return soon  
and they can track this band down and rescue  
the girl. Surely she can be saved?

GREY SQUIRREL

It will be too late, she will have been sacrificed  
already. Every year they kill a virgin, as a  
sacrifice to the Morning Star whom they  
worship along with the Evening Star. The virgin  
is always a captive from another tribe. We just  
happened to be their choice this year. There is no  
hope for her, even though the great Pawnee Chief  
himself, Petalesharo, has forbidden the custom,  
some still carry it out.

As everyone begins to walk away, some older women comfort the mother and tend to her son's  
injuries, a group of braves on horseback are seen approaching. Anne looks at them with  
interest  
for they are unlike the Mandans having shaved heads with a crest of hair running across the  
crown of their heads painted red. They are Pawnees. From their ears dangle many earrings,  
all  
beaded. Their moccasins have beautiful beadwork on them too and all wear breechcloths and  
have buffaloes drawn on their torsos and shoulders. CLOSE the leader has a long aquiline  
nose  
and holds his hand up to speak. As he announces himself, gasps are heard from the Mandans.

PETALESHARO

I, Petalesharo, ask your forgiveness and that  
of your family and tribe. Young warriors,  
who do not follow my leadership but live as  
outcasts did the unholy, unsanctioned deed.  
They have been punished and banished from  
the Pawnee nation. No more will this custom  
of our forefathers be allowed or tolerated. We  
cannot replace your son, the girl's brother but  
we return her to you unharmed and ask that  
you accept these tokens of our apology.

A beautiful white mare is pulled forward by one of his braves on top of which is seated the  
recently abducted girl. The mare's trappings include a blanket of the softest buffalo skin  
as well  
as a well stocked quiver with an accompanying bow and a beautiful white robe. As the mother  
tearfully reunites with her sobbing daughter, Petalesharo is warmly welcomed into Four  
Bears  
lodge and a feast is ordered for that evening.

CUT TO:

INT. FOUR BEAR'S LODGE - EVENING

As Anne and Grey Squirrel go about assisting the other women with the food for the guests  
Grey  
Squirrel notices that one of the Pawnees BLUE EAGLE cannot keep his eyes off Anne, and  
nudges Anne to get her attention and indicate the brave.

GREY SQUIRREL

His eyes follow your every move.

Anne shrugs and ignores both Grey Squirrel and Blue Eagle. As the meal winds down Anne, her duties done, leaves the lodge and goes down to the river. Plumes of purple clouds float across the sky and all is peaceful. A dog pads by, drinks and then goes off. Anne, looks around, takes off her robe hanging it on a branch and slips into the cool water and swims out to the middle where she lies floating looking up at the sky. As the moon creeps out from behind a cloud she slowly makes for the river bank where her dress hangs. As she leaves the water a figure detaches itself as she makes to grab her dress and Blue Eagle thrusts a blanket at her.

BLUE EAGLE

Here. You need to dry off before you put on your robe.

And with that he turns on his heels and leaves Anne standing with her mouth open in shock. She quickly dries off, dons her dress and then runs to her lodge where Grey Squirrel stops her.

GREY SQUIRREL

Well?

ANNE

Well, what?

GREY SQUIRREL

Did you talk to him? Do you like him?

ANNE

No I didn't, and how would I know!

GREY SQUIRREL

Hmph! So you didn't speak to him? Well, what do you call that?

She points at the wet blanket that Anne is carrying.

ANNE

A blanket, what do you call it?

GREY SQUIRREL

He wants to court you, why else would he have given you a blanket.

Grey Squirrel laughs gleefully while Anne gets flustered and angry.

ANNE

Don't be silly. I went for a swim and when I came out of the water he was standing by my robe and handed me this to dry off with.

GREY SQUIRREL

He saw you naked?

ANNE

It was dark, I don't know what he saw!

GREY SQUIRREL

Well, you'll see, he'll come a-courting!

ANNE

But he's a Pawnee!

GREY SQUIRREL  
So? And don't talk so loudly, you'll wake everyone up.

ANNE  
So, I can't have anything to do with him.

GREY SQUIRREL  
Ha! We'll see about that. Besides it's high time you were married!

And with that she turns and goes to her bed pile leaving Anne to toss and turn on hers.  
Anne is still asleep when she is woken up by a gleeful Grey Squirrel.

GREY SQUIRREL  
There's someone outside who wishes to speak to you.

Anne rises and taking the Pawnee blanket with her exits the lodge only to have the blanket taken from her and wrapped around her by Blue Eagle who looks down at her with green eyes! As Anne stands there, effectively his prisoner members of the lodge exit laughing and exclaiming.

GREY SQUIRREL  
He's courting you, you are wrapped in his blanket, it's not all he wants to share!!

ANNE  
What is it that you want?

BLUE EAGLE  
I, er, um.

As members of the lodge, some of whom have climbed onto the roof to look down on the pair, laugh Anne tries to dislodge herself and cannot.

ANNE  
Perhaps we could go somewhere else.

Silently Blue Eagle nods and half unwraps the blanket so they can walk down to the river bank where he spread it on the ground. Anne sits down and he hesitantly kneels beside her. She looks at him noticing the white of his teeth, the crest on his head and the earrings in each lobe.

ANNE  
How does your hair stand up like that?

BLUE EAGLE  
Fat.

ANNE  
So, Pawnee, horn man, what do you want of me? In what way can I possible interest you?

BLUE EAGLE  
We call ourselves men of men, not horn men.

Anne laughs at his discomfort.

ANNE

I'm sorry, I meant no offense.

BLUE EAGLE  
My party and I leave tomorrow.

ANNE  
Ah.

BLUE EAGLE  
Well, I was wondering, I mean, that is to say,  
will you go with me?

ANNE  
Go with you? Are you crazy? Why would  
I want to go with you? My life is here. I  
don't know your tribe and know even less  
about you.

BLUE EAGLE  
Well, my life is many days' journey from here  
and I don't know when I might pass this way  
again. Maybe never.

ANNE  
I'm sorry. But I couldn't possibly leave here.  
My brother might come looking for me. And,  
besides, I know nothing about you. I don't  
even know your name, and I don't want to be  
a Pawnee. I like the Mandans, they are now  
my family.

BLUE EAGLE  
Well, the Pawnees are my family but I would  
like to find my mother's real family for she did  
not start out a Pawnee. My name is Blue Eagle.

Suddenly they are interrupted by Grey Squirrel.

GREY SQUIRREL  
Red Deer, the Pawnees are leaving. It is time  
for him to go.

BLUE EAGLE  
Time to go? Promise me, that you won't marry  
anyone before I come back, please.

ANNE  
I can't promise something I don't know anything  
about. But I think you can safely know that I  
won't be marrying anyone any time soon, that I  
can assure you.

With that he smiles at her and nodding to Grey Squirrel leaves them at a run. As the two  
women  
walk back to their lodge, the Pawnees dust trail is seen in the distance.

GREY SQUIRREL  
Come we must prepare for the Sun Festival.

ANNE  
Sun Festival? What's that?

GREY SQUIRREL  
Our most important festival and it lasts for  
twelve days.

## MONTAGE OF SHOTS:

- Sun beating down on village. Women planting corn, squash, beans and tobacco, sweat pouring down their faces and staining their dresses.
- Older braves and children listless in the heat.
- A ceremonial pole, the Sun Pole, being erected in the middle of the village next to the sacred ark and from which hang all kinds of decorations including a strip of yellow brocade from Anne's former dress.
- The first four days spent in feasting and merrymaking and women, chosen for their virtue, being blessed by the shamans.
- The Okipa ceremony where the elders of the tribe disguised as mythological figures recall the creation of the Mandan people and which signals the start of the next four days of ceremony.
- Youths are led, by their elders and the shamans wearing buffalo robes and heads over their painted bodies, in a circle of dance imitating the buffaloes, honoring the beasts and calling for a successful buffalo hunt. At the conclusion of the dance young men are led into the Okipa Lodge where they fast and prepare themselves for the torture ceremony to come.
- A warrior is sent out to seek a cottonwood that would become the center of the ceremony. Having 'captured' the tree, one with the straightest of trunks and with a forked top he daubs it with red paint.
- The following day the chosen women, accompanied by warriors, stop three times on their way to find the sacred cottonwood in order to chase away any evil spirits that might be around.
- When the women reach the chosen tree they take turns chopping it until it is ready to come down, the most virtuous being accorded the honor of the last chop. The tree is then stripped of its bark all the way to the fork then carried in triumph back to the village by the warriors.
- Once back at the village, the pole is painted four colors denoting the four directions, and buffalo hide cut into the shapes of men and buffalo are then placed in the fork. The pole is then raised in the center of the village where the warriors dance around it and shoot arrows at the representations of men and buffalo. Once that is completed a path is beaten to the Sun Lodge.
- As the sun rises on the last day of the Sun Dance ceremony the shamans rise to greet the sun.
- The young men are given their final initiation rites as they are bedaubed with paint and symbols. Then they are handed hoops, made from pliable willow representing the four directions and eagle bone whistles which they are to blow as long as they remain conscious.
- While the young men are being prepared, everyone not involved gathers in the center and children have their ears pierced.
- The young men then have their backs, chests and legs ritually slashed and then they are skewered through the loose hanging flesh before being strung up and raised towards the roof of the Sun Lodge by thongs of rawhide which have been attached to the skewers.

- The young men hang, some twitching and twisting in agonized pain but never uttering a sound. All of them sweat profusely as the sun beats down, the musicians keep up their hypnotic beating of the drums and sing the sacred songs, accompanied by the onlookers.
- Anne looks on in horror and has to leave to vomit.
- The young men during their ordeal see their visions that will be the basis of their life for ever after.
- As the youths endure their torture the Buffalo Bull Society members dance around the ceremonial pole in the center of the village, getting more and more possessed and frenetic until they finally are joined by the youths from the Sun lodge who have to undergo further torture by having buffalo skulls attached to their impaled rawhide thongs which they then drag behind them as they race around the sacred pole. Finally the elders strip off the buffalo skulls by jumping on them as the youths pass them by.

END MONTAGE OF SHOTS

EXT. VILLAGE CENTER - LATE AFTERNOON

Anne and Grey Squirrel both appear drained as they watch the last bloodied youth being relieved of his buffalo skull torture.

GREY SQUIRREL

The youths' endurance means we will have prosperity for the coming year.

ANNE

I thought when they went into the sweat lodge with their helpers they were ensuring prosperity.

GREY SQUIRREL

No, that is when they seek their vision quest and become men.

ANNE

Well, what is the point of their stay in the pits?

GREY SQUIRREL

First they are purified in the sweat lodge when the medicine man invokes the spirits with - "All the power of the world, the heavens and the star peoples, and the red and blue sacred days, all things that move in the universe, in the rivers... all waters, all trees that stand, all the grasses of our Grandmother, all the sacred peoples of the universe: Listen! A sacred relationship with you all will be asked by this young man, that his generations to come will increase and live in a holy manner."

ANNE

I don't understand. What is the point of lying in a pit then?

GREY SQUIRREL

They stay there in total isolation, naked as the day they were born, and fasting the whole time. Pure in mind and body they only come out after their personal guardian spirit has come to them and foretold the future. Sometimes, they need

the help of their advisor or the medicine man, for the vision sometimes has to be interpreted. This is very important for it is from this that their grown up name will be taken and will provide the young men with a protector from the spirit world as well as power and strength from the spirits.

ANNE

I think I understand.

GREY SQUIRREL

Whenever he needs guidance, throughout his whole lifetime, the brave will go through a similar vigil. Our beliefs are intensely personal, for we are guided by the voices we hear, the powers we feel and the visions seen. Our faith grows out of the soil on which we walk and is intimately tied with every aspect of nature that we experience. A man might have power from an elk which would make him a great lover.

Both women laugh.

Or he may have seen a bear in his vision, that would, of course, give him great healing skills. And then there are our pipes. Our sacred pipe is held aloft in prayer forming a link between us and the Great Mystery Power and expresses the unity between the supreme deity and Grandmother earth. The bowl of the pipe represents the earth from which it comes, the stem the soil's

GREY SQUIRREL

(Cont.)

bounty and the smoke the breath of the Great spirit. The pipe is us. The stem is our backbone, the bowl our head. The stone is our blood, red as our skin. The Great Spirit called the Indian nations together, and standing on the precipice of the red pipe stone rock, broke from its wall a piece, and made a huge pipe by turning it in his hand, which he smoked over them and told them that this stone was their flesh, that it belonged to them all, and the war club and scalping knife must not be raised on this ground. In the red stone quarry happened the mysterious birth of the red pipe, which has blown its fumes of peace and war to the remotest corners of the earth; which has visited every warrior and passed through its rendered stem the irrevocable oath of war and desolation. Here also, the peace breathing calumet was born, which has soothed the fury of the Indian.

CUT TO:

INT. MANDAN LODGE - WINTER - EARLY MORNING

The lodge is dark and smoky and children bicker and cry as women play games to relieve the monotony. CLOSE on women playing a game of dice made from beavers' teeth on which are painted spiders, lizards and turtles and other small animals. Men play flutes, smoke, throw knives, and animals stomp around.

OLD WOMAN

We are nearly out of water. Who will venture outside to fetch some snow?

ANNE

I will, I will.

GREY SQUIRREL

Be careful it's too cold for man or beast  
out there.

ANNE

Anything will be better than the air in here.

GREY SQUIRREL

Well at least let me help you bundle up.

As Anne wraps herself up in a buffalo robe, grey squirrel helps her on with her boots which she pads with rabbit fur and helps her walk over to the entrance which is blocked by hides as Anne holds on to a couple of large hide buckets.

Outside the entrance there is no snow, for it has all been used up for water. Anne struggles out, pushed by Grey Squirrel, who retreats back inside as Anne's breath curls up into the cold air.

Anne fills the buckets with fresh snow and leaves them by the lodge entrance. She then meanders her way through the piled up snow, from the snow covered mounds where wisps of smoke denote a hidden lodge and looks out over the frozen river. All the trees, snow laden, look like a painting. Animal tracks criss cross the area.

Suddenly Anne stands still for she hears a sound off through the trees to her right. Gasping in the cold air she makes for the safety of a clump of trees and peers around the trunk.

A small black and white dog darts about, barking excitedly, ahead of a pack mule laden down with hide covered items alongside of which plods a white man JEAN-CLAUDE BENOIT. Anne gasps and the man pauses as the dog stand still its muzzle pointing in Anne's direction. Suddenly the man laughs and the dog runs up to Anne and jumps up and down causing her to let go of the robe which falls away from her face and hair. The man nears and looks her up and down. She does the same. He has deep blue eyes, that twinkle and look a little puzzled as he looks at her. She notes his fringed buckskin which is as worn as his boots from which straw and rabbit fur bulge through cracks and broken seams. Around his waist is a wide leather belt which holds a butcher's knife and a pair of pistols, while around his neck hangs a bullet pouch and from his right shoulder dangles a powder horn to which is fastened a bullet mold and an awl. In contrast to the man's unkempt appearance his mount is a well cared for chestnut whose saddle and trappings look both old and soft from years of use and care.

BENOIT

Ah, ma belle. What are you doing here on  
Mandan land?

ANNE

I live here.

BENOIT

You live here? Well, that is a first. Are your  
family living here too?

ANNE

No. I'm all alone.

BENOIT

Ah! Good, I was afraid I might be facing some competition.

ANNE  
Competition?

BENOIT  
My name is Jean-Claude Benoit, at your service Mademoiselle. I'm a trapper by trade from up North and every spring I come to barter and trade goods with the Mandans.

ANNE  
Every spring? How long have you been coming?

BENOIT  
Oh many, many years. Before me, my father came, and now that he is no longer able to make the journey, I come alone. Been about twelve years now. So, how long have you been here? I have never seen you here before, ma petite.

ANNE  
I came during the summer.

BENOIT  
So, how come you are here?

As they walk Anne explains how she came to be in the Mandan village. As they near the lodges the dog barks excitedly as other dogs within the village respond. Soon, a crowd of hardy people and well bundled up children, all shouting "Jun Clude, Jun Clude" have joined them.

ANNE  
So what do you have to trade with the Mandans?

BENOIT  
I have many plews, and...

ANNE  
What are plews?

BENOIT  
Plews! Why they are beaver skins, everyone knows that!

ANNE  
Beaver skins. I see. And what else do you have to trade?

BENOIT  
Oh, this and that, just the usual, beads and rolls of calico and some good whisky.

ANNE  
Beads I can understand, but calicos and whisky. Why? The Mandans love their buckskins and furs, what would they do or want with calico? And, as for whisky, they don't drink!

BENOIT  
What you say is true, it's the first time I bring calico, in time they will like it. As for the whisky, who doesn't like it? They will too. Well, ma belle,

I must get down to business. Perhaps we will see one another later. By the way, what is your name?

ANNE

They call me Red Deer but my Christian name is Anne, Anne de Seygnac.

BENOIT

Well, Anne de Seygnac, I will see you at supper tonight then. Until then, keep well, ma belle.

CUT TO:

INT. FOUR BEARS LODGE - EVENING

Everyone is sat replete after a large meal and warriors are passing around the pipe. Women sit holding their children on their laps and Benoit rises and seeks out Anne.

BENOIT

Well, ma belle, how would you like to return to civilization with me when I leave in a few days' time, huh? Four Bears has agreed to it, if you wish.

ANNE

(Looking at him startled)  
But where would I go? My parents were murdered and my brother Pierre could be anywhere. Do you know Minot or Fort Diablo?

BENOIT

Not personally, but I have heard of them. I could take you to the trading post at Pierre; strange it should have the same name as your brother! We could make inquiries there.

ANNE

I don't know. I feel comfortable here, for now. What would I do, out there?

BENOIT

Out there? You make it sound like the ends of the earth instead of civilization. You don't belong here, you belong among your own kind of people.

ANNE

Some of my own kind of people murdered my parents, our escort, my maid and friend Marie and tried very hard to kill me! What would I do? I have no-one to care or provide for me. I have no money or worldly goods. No trade to earn a living.

BENOIT

Do? There would be plenty of men willing to make you their wife, glad to find one so refined and so beautiful. I can assure you they would come flocking around you like flies to a carcass.

ANNE

What a wonderful picture you paint, Monsieur!

They both laugh.

But I will think about your offer. Perhaps when

you leave you could take all the information I can give you about my brother and make inquiries. When you return next year, maybe you will have heard something.

BENOIT

Well, if that's what you want, I will do it gladly. Besides, you are probably right, traveling with a trapper is perhaps not the best thing for a young lady of quality. The going is hard and then there is the long canoe trip and, now that I think about it, the trading post at Pierre is not such a good place; the men that frequent it are invariably not the sort you would care to meet. Bon, then it is decided. I will make inquiries for you and, hopefully, return next spring with good news!

As they talk young braves are seen drinking a bottle of whisky and coming to blows over who has the right to the next drink. Benoit rises to go and try and stop them quarreling.

ELDER

White man's fire water will be their undoing.

ANOTHER ELDER

Powerful medicine!

He picks up the discarded empty bottle and holds it to his nose. He wrinkles his face in disgust and throws the bottle from him causing it to shatter on the hard ground. Small children run forward to pick up pieces of the dark green glass sparkling by the light from the fire.

ANNE/BENOIT

No! No!

But they are too late, several children cut their fingers and hands on the broken glass causing consternation to their mothers and the assembled group. One of the elders sneers in disgust

ELDER

It not only affects men's behavior but the bodies of their children. Powerful medicine indeed.

FOUR BEARS

I wish to express my displeasure of this and to prohibit the drinking of such fire water. We have more pressing needs. Our stores are low after the long winter we have endured. So, as soon as the snows are all melted, we will set out to replenish them. All the braves that can be spared, and those that wish to accompany them, will embark on a buffalo hunt.

To cries of joy the group breaks up and people exit to go to their lodges.

FADE TO BLACK

ON SCREEN

ANNO DOMINO 1833

EXT. MANDAN VILLAGE - DAY

Chief Four Bears is seen exiting his lodge as news of a white man's approach is announced. Anne working on a vegetable patch looks up hopefully, but does not recognize the man approaching and can tell that he is not French. It is the artist GEORGE CATLIN.

FOUR BEARS

My friend! Welcome, welcome. You came back.

GEORGE CATLIN

My paintings of you and yours were so well received that I need to do more!

The two men embrace warmly. Mr. Catlin turns his horse and pack mules over to some excited children.

MONTAGE OF SCENES: Superimpose real Catlin paintings over village and have them come to life.

- Mr. Catlin painting everyday life in the Mandan village.
- Chief Four Bears posing for his portrait.

END MONTAGE OF SHOTS.

EXT. CHIEF FOUR BEARS LODGE - EARLY MORNING

Mr. Catlin preparing to leave, his pack mules laden down with supplies and gifts from the tribe.

MR. CATLIN

I don't know how to thank you for your generosity and hospitality. I hope, however, that in some small way, with my paintings to be able to show the people in the East how you live and what a great people you are.

CHIEF FOUR BEARS

My friend you bring us great hope. We must all be friends for we are all children of the Great Spirit and should all live in harmony and peace.

MR. CATLIN

Amen to that! I leave with a heavy heart for I know I will not be able to return in a long, long time. I have already been gone three years from my family and people and it is time that I return.

CHIEF FOUR BEARS

Travel safe, the Great Spirit will look out for you.

CUT TO: 1834

EXT. MANDAN VILLAGE

A young look out runs into the village shouting excitedly.

YOUNG LOOK OUT

Strangers, from the East with an artist come.

As Four Bears and others go to greet the newcomers Anne continues working on the vegetable patch down by the river. She is found there, some time later, by Grey Squirrel.

GREY SQUIRREL

Red Deer! Come quickly!

ANNE

What is it?

GREY SQUIRREL

Visitors. Four Bears wants you to come and help with the greeting.

ANNE  
Why? Why me?

She rises from her knees dusting herself off.

GREY SQUIRREL  
Because they speak your tongue.

ANNE  
French? So it is not Mr. Catlin who returns?

GREY SQUIRREL  
No it is not. Come, you will see. These people  
are from a very different tribe than Mr. Catlin.  
Leave your hoe here, and come with me quickly!

They take off at a run and pull up short outside Chief Four Bear's lodge where several large carts, and a magnificent carriage, the subject of nearly everyone's amazed attention, stand surrounded by a group of white men dressed as though courtiers at a ball. Both women stifle giggles as they pass by them and into Chief Four Bear's lodge.

INT. CHIEF FOUR BEAR'S LODGE - DAY  
Two men, one dressed outlandishly like those outside, in satin and bows and even a powdered wig, PRINCE MAXIMILIAN DU WEID, and one more somberly clad, KARL BODMER, look up in astonishment as Anne enters red hair streaming out behind her.

CHIEF FOUR BEARS  
Ah, come Red Deer. Gentlemen this is  
Red Deer. Come Red Deer these men  
speak your language.

Anne nods in the men's direction and kneels down across from them and Chief Four Bears.

ANNE  
Gentlemen.

KARL BODMER  
Mademoiselle, I am Karl Bodmer, an artist.

ANNE  
An artist!

KARL BODMER  
Yes, an artist. You don't seem surprised.

ANNE  
No sir, I am not, for we had occasion to  
welcome another artist to our midst this past  
year. He spent quite some time living among  
us. An American Mr. George Catlin, perhaps  
you have heard of him?

KARL BODMER  
Indeed we have. A fine artist whose work I  
admire very much. His fame and reputation are  
well known. But now, may I present my friend  
and sponsor, Prince Maximilian du Weid.

Anne looks at the Prince clad in a pale suit of fine velvet and wearing a hat with several white plumes in it, and in his hand a fine walking cane, decorated with swirls and inlaid with silver.

ANNE

Prince. (Beat) Your names gentlemen and your voices, you do not sound French.

KARL BODMER

No, indeed we are not. I am from Switzerland and the Prince is from Germany. But our language of contact with these admirable people is French, for none that we have come across speak German.

CHIEF FOUR BEARS

Ask him what coups he received the feathers for.

Anne tries not to show her amusement at his request.

ANNE

The Chief is interested in the Prince's walking stick for he thinks it is his coup stick.

KARL BODMER

What is a coup stick exactly? We have heard mention of it, but we are still unclear as to its real purpose.

ANNE

When a warrior goes into battle he carries along with him his coup stick. It is a tall pole, such as you see there along the side of the lodge. See, they are usually eight to ten feet in length, rather like a lance. The top is rounded and the bottom is sharpened to a point.

KARL BODMER

Don't you mean it the other way around?

ANNE

No. The stick is not used for killing, it is used for touching. It is felt much more worthy of a warrior if he touches his opponent rather than kills him. For to touch him he must be almost on top of his enemy, whereas you can kill anyone from a distance with a bow and arrow.

PRINCE MAXIMILIAN

But why then is the other end, the bottom end, pointed, if it is not used for killing.

ANNE

That your highness, is so the warrior can plant it in the ground when he needs to have his hands free.

BODMER/MAXIMILIAN

Oh!

KARL BODMER

What do the ornamentations represent?

ANNE

They are all wrapped in skin or fur, depending on the owner's whim. The feathers are merely for decoration.

Looking over to the side of the lodge they see the Chief's and other warriors' coup sticks lined up

ANNE

Whereas, if you look at a warrior's head feathers you will notice that they are different from man to man denoting rank. Some are entitled to one, others to two. They also represent coups. When a young warrior has recorded his first coup his stands upright and is adorned with a horse-hair tuft. If a warrior was wounded then he wears a red one. If he was wounded and killed any enemies, the number of enemies is represented by the number of quill work bands on the shaft, one denoting one kill, etc. If the wearer killed his foe a red spot attests to this deed. If he killed his foe and took his scalp the feather is notched. If the wearer was wounded many times then his feather is split down the shaft. If he cut his adversary's throat the feather is cut at the top at a slant. If the wearer accounted for four coups his feather is clipped on both sides, see like the warrior next to the Prince.

The Prince flinches as he looks at the grinning warrior next to him.

KARL BODMER

What about that warrior. Is his feather old or does the fact that parts of it have been removed mean something too?

ANNE

Indeed, it does. He counted coup five times.

There is silence as the visitors look around the lodge for, without exception, every warrior present wears feathers denoting at least one coup.

KARL BODMER

We had no idea! We thought they were merely decorations, the design being the choice of the wearer!

CHIEF FOUR BEARS

What do you say daughter? I hear the word coup mentioned but do not understand. And you do not tell me what he received his coup for.

ANNE

I am explaining the reasons for every warrior's feathers, Chief. And the man you ask about does not carry a coup stick, rather it is a stick denoting his rank, for he is a chief in his own land. Even so, he is very impressed with your warriors coups and bravery.

CHIEF FOUR BEARS

(Looking around at his warriors proudly)  
Who is this visitor then, dressed like the blue bird that steals?

ANNE

He is very great chief in his land, which is many, many days away, across many waters, in a different land than this one.

CHIEF FOUR BEARS

He is not of this land? From the east? How can that be?

ANNE

There are many lands on this great earth. Both these gentlemen are from another land different from this one. And are, in fact, from two different tribes themselves.

Everyone tries to understand but looks puzzled at the explanation. Soon, however, all are happy as gifts are given and the feast of welcome gets underway. Soon the heat of so many and the fire gets to the Prince who removes his plumed hat and powdered wig. All the braves, women and children exclaim, squeal and stare in disbelief at the Prince's tonsured head and discarded wig.

ANNE

Do not worry. The Chief has not been scalped. He is wearing a, a ceremonial headdress called a peruque.

With looks of understanding the Mandans pass around the wig, some even try it on much to the amusement of those present. Soon the pipes are brought out and the story told of how the Prince and his companions had come so far with the carts and carriage. Anne is quick to inform everyone that they had come by boat as far as Fort Clark.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE OF SHOTS

- The Prince, a naturalist, gathering samples of plants, berries and all manner of rocks and soil samples.
- The Prince being taken on hunting and exploring expeditions by eager braves, even though accompanied by his retinue of cooks, servants and butler to see to his every need, as well as grooms to look after their mounts!.
- Karl Bodmer painting scenes of every day life of the Mandans. (Super impose his paintings on screen as in Catlin scenes).
- Preparations being made for the Prince and Bodmer to leave.

END MONTAGE OF SHOTS

EXT. VILLAGE - EARLY MORNING

One of the Prince's wigs is hung on the pole in the center of the village and then the group, accompanied by Anne and several braves, escorts them to Fort Clark.

EXT. FORT CLARK - DAY

A strong palisade surrounds the trading post. Many bull boats, as well as several boats and a large vessel with sails are tied up at the dock. Among those mingling are Hidatsa and Arikara and several Mandans from other villages. All cluster to see the Europeans depart and watch as their carts and carriage are dismantled and hauled on board. All wave good-bye as the large sailing vessel sets off up river.

Anne and her group spend the rest of the day bartering for and trading at the fort's store. They have just settled down for an evening meal around their camp fire when a fight breaks out near the store. LITTLE BEAR, over six feet tall, quickly goes to investigate. He returns some

time  
later.

ANNE

What was the fight all about?

LITTLE BEAR

Some idiots, Arikara, by all accounts, had converted some of their trade items into liquor. They quickly drank it all and then tried to rob the store of more bottles having nothing left to trade with! The store keeper has had them locked up for the night and we have all been ordered to leave the fort area.

ANNE

But that's ridiculous! What does any of that have to do with us? I'm going to give the fort commander a piece of my mind!

Accompanied by Little Bear she goes over to the fort where they are met by a gun toting fort commander, CAPTAIN SIMPSON.

ANNE

Sir, why cannot my companions and I spend the night in the fort? We have just seen off Prince Maximilian du Weid and his group, as

ANNE

(Cont.)

you know for you too were on the dock as they left. They stayed with our tribe, many weeks, without incident. We are peaceful and do not drink liquor. We seek only to spend a quiet night in the safety of the fort, before we return to our village in the morning.

CAPTAIN SIMPSON

I have made my decision, all Indians are alike in my book. No Indians can sleep inside the fort tonight unless they are tied up and incarcerated. And that goes for Indian lovers too! Of course, if you'd like to warm my bed to spend the night inside the fort, then be my guest. If not, git!

Seeing they cannot reason with him Anne and Little Bear return to their companions, pack up their things and move the travois and their mounts out of the fort to spend the night close by on the edge of the butte under some scrub oak. Just before dawn they are rudely awakened by the sound of gunshot coming from a clump of trees to the rear of their campsite. As they sit up and look around they are approached by a group of Hidatsa.

HIDATSA #1

We need your help. Please!

LITTLE BEAR

Why? What has happened?

HIDATSA #1

We were sleeping outside the fort when we were woken by two white men from the fort trying to take one of our women. She escaped from their clutches as they dragged her in the direction of the fort and was running back to us when the white men caught her again. We gave

chase and caught up to them but they threatened us with a gun. We lunged at them and in the ensuing melee one of their guns went off and killed Lone Wolf, son of our chief. Furious we jumped the white men and killed them both.

LITTLE BEAR  
What did you do with them?

HIDATSA #2  
We left them.

LITTLE BEAR  
Well, you can't leave them where they will be found. You, we will have to do something. What about your brave?

HIDATSA #1  
We will take him with us. He was her husband.

The Mandans look at the woman who is now squatting keening her grief in silence.

HIDATSA #2  
So what should we do with the dead white men? We don't want to take them with us.

MANDAN #1  
We could throw them in the river, they will be swept away and maybe never found.

LITTLE BEAR  
No, the river is not always friendly. It might deposit them where they will be found and it will be seen that they met an unnatural death, or at the hands of Indians.

HIDATSA #2  
I suppose we could take them with us, but they will slow us down and the white men might come looking for their companions and follow our trail.

HIDATSA #1  
And have all the white men chasing after us and harming our tribe. No, a thousand times no.

ANNE  
Did the men have knives?

LITTLE BEAR  
Knives? What do you mean?

HIDATSA WOMAN  
Yes, they threatened me with them, so I ran.

ANNE  
Good, then we will make it look like they had a fight. Come, show us where they are.

As the sun begins to rise the group runs in the direction of where the killing had taken place. All set to and soon a scene is set. The men's rifles are propped up against a small tree and their knives placed in their hands. Their bodies are laid out as though they had been facing one another in a fight. As Anne bends over adjusting one man she wrinkles her nose.

ANNE

They have both been drinking. That is good, for that will give credence to the fact they were fighting! And at least none of you stopped to scalp them, thank God! Come, we must all make haste and go back to our homes before they are found to be missing.

Anne and her group journey home leisurely so as not to attract attention by their haste.

LITTLE BEAR

That was quick thinking on your part!

ANNE

I just hope it works, that the white men will believe they fought one another, when they find their bodies.

LITTLE BEAR

Well, we will be back at our village by the time they do and to the white man, all Indians look alike. They will not be able to tell who did it!

ANNE

Let's hope that they don't think any Indian had anything to do with it!

LITTLE BEAR

We should keep away from white men, they bring nothing but trouble to the Indian!

CUT TO:

ON SCREEN: 1837

EXT. MANDAN VILLAGE - DAY

The village has grown and is very prosperous. As the Mandans gather around the center of town to hear Chief Four Bear speak, we hear V.O. of Anne.

ANNE

We had grown to about sixteen hundred souls when Four Bears was made the Great Chief of all the Mandans. Times were good for there was plenty of food for everyone, and the fur hunting season had been an excellent one. I was content in my new life and my friends Little Bear and Grey Squirrel were proud of their growing children. We were not to know that the life we all loved was soon to be shattered and become almost extinct. Chief Four Bears had gathered us in the center of the village to bid good speed to a trade group that would go barter our pelts to an American fur company that had a steamboat moored at one of our neighboring villages. And so we had bid the traders good luck and sent them on their way. I was a little concerned that among those going were the same young braves who had enjoyed the whisky brought by trapper Benoit and I had overheard them saying that there was also a whisky trader's boat docked near that of the fur company's and how they could not wait to drink some more fire water. But I kept my thoughts to myself and saw them off happily with the rest of the tribe. It was several weeks before they returned. (Beat) We knew from the moment they were heralded that something was wrong, for they could

hardly hold themselves up in their saddles.

EXT. VILLAGE CENTER - DAY

As the returning braves near they appear half conscious and sway in their saddles. Some are retching and close to vomiting while others, when helped down from their mounts, have a hard time walking and have to be helped to sit down. Nearly all have red spots on their foreheads, faces and wrists.

CHIEF FOUR BEARS

What is wrong with you. Were you set upon?  
Speak!

BRAVE #1

When we reached the fur trader's boat we were warned not to set foot on board for one of the men was ill with a white man's sickness. But some braves from another Mandan tribe went onboard anyway. Several days later, nothing having happened to them, or so they thought, since they had no outward visible signs of any sickness, they sat down with us and boasted of the good trades they had made. Even as they boasted we saw the dead white man being buried by his companions. We all laughed at how weak the white man was compared to us. On their way to trade, however, our new friends told us how they had passed through several villages whose braves had already traded with the fur ship and how all now seemed to be suffering from some disease and had been too weak to stop them taking their best remaining pelts and furs to barter with along with their own. They also recounted how they had come across an unfriendly tribe of Hidatsa, who were challenged, attacked and scalped. We looked at the scalps on their mounts' bridles and were a little jealous. But we were content with what we had traded. The next day when some of us became sick we set off for home, stopping at and warning villages along the way of the white man's disease, which though unseen was the cause of death, even among the white men.

ANNE

But didn't you realize that in so doing you would spread the disease among those villages that you visited?

CHIEF FOUR BEARS

She speaks the truth. We must call for the Medicine Man to say his magic spells over you all so that you do not give it to our tribe. Go, confine yourselves to one lodge, until such time as you are cured or die, for we must protect the rest of the village.

MONTAGE OF SHOTS:

- The braves developing postules all over their bodies and writhing in agony in the sweat hut.
- The Medicine Man and Chief Four Bears and his family falling prey to the disease.
- People dying all over the village and others being too weak to take care of the

dead.

- Anne, seemingly unscathed, going around offering water and solace to the dying.
- Chief Four Bears lies dying. Anne tends to him, wiping his fevered brow, giving him water to sip, as well as making sure he has his blessed medicine bundle, his pipe, flint, steel and tinder close to him.

ANNE

Here is your tobacco pouch and all you will need to light your way on your last long journey.

CHIEF FOUR BEARS

My wives are all gone, my children too. Is it the end for us all? I never saw a white man hungry, but what I gave him to eat... and how have they repaid it! I do not fear death... but to die with my face rotten, that even the Wolves will shrink... at seeing me, and say to themselves that is Four Bears, the friend of the whites... It is the last time

CHIEF FOUR BEARS

(Cont.)

you will hear me. Think of your wives, children, brothers, sisters, friends... all are dead, or dying with their faces all rotten, caused by these dogs the whites. Think of that, my friends, and rise together and leave not one of them alive.

- Some, who still have strength enough go off into the wilderness to die.
- The survivors sit around a small fire at night wailing at the moon and heavens above for their lost companions.

END MONTAGE OF SHOTS

The survivors, twenty seven in all, seventeen braves and boys, ten females, six women, three girls and a newborn, among the braves are LONE EAGLE and GREY ELK, a blind older brave, sit around a fire.

LONE EAGLE

We should leave this place of death and go seek out other survivors.

BRAVE #1

Where can we go? Who is to know that we are not the last of the Mandans?

YOUNG MOTHER

Indeed, who is to know if other tribes have not suffered a like fate.

GREY ELK

You may be right daughter, maybe we are the last of our kind.

ANNE

We could go and find out.

Everyone looks at one another.

GREY ELK

If we go, it has to be up north to mato pala, the sacred place of safety for our people. In keeping with our tradition and lore handed down, we can only find salvation up north, we can never go south.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANDAN DESOLATE VILLAGE - EARLY MORNING

The few survivors pack up ten bull boats with goods and supplies and those too weak to walk along with a person capable of paddling. Six of the healthiest, including Anne, walk along the shore with a string of horses pulling packed travois.

Anne has the clothes on her back, the small pouch containing her mother's jewelry and her mother's pistolet in her boot. On her mount inside the Pawnee's blanket she carefully wraps Four Bears sacred pipe, his beautiful jacket with the intricate quill art as well as his pictograph done while Mr. Catlin was visiting.

The small group journeys for many days stopping at night, setting up camp on the river bank. They sleep too exhausted to talk. During the day those on foot with the horses pass through desolate and deserted villages, being joined by a few dogs and horses along the way.

On the third day, those on land setting up camp for those still out of sight on the river, hear horses approach. Quickly hiding in the dense growth by the river's edge, Anne has the presence of mind to grab her blanket and its precious contents, they watch from their hiding place as a group of Pawnees approach. The Pawnees rein in their horses and look around. Some get down and, laughing, kick everything about and then take off with the best horses having found the fire cold to their touch.

The Mandans come out of hiding.

ANNE

I bet that is the group of outlawed Pawnees that still practice the sacrifice to the Morning Star.

BRAVE #1

How would you know. You never saw them, did you?

ANNE

Well no, but only ones not concerned with common good would have acted the way they did.

BRAVE #1

Well we'll never know, and the family of the kidnaped girl are all dead so they can't speak.

CUT TO:

EXT. 'LIKE A FISHHOOK' HIDATSA VILLAGE - DAY

On a bluff overlooking the Missouri, a village appears, the round earth lodges looking like a honeycomb as smoke rises from their roofs. A solid protective palisade surrounds the lodges which have a commanding view both up and down river. Rows of corn, patches of squash and beans grow in a small clearing close by the stockade and horses are grazing in a small field. The travelers' weary mounts whinny in greeting and the dogs bark excitedly causing armed Hidatsa to stand just outside the palisade watching the approach of the weary group. One of the Hidatsa braves, RUNNING DOG, detaches himself a short way from his group and holds up his hand in both greeting and warning.

RUNNING DOG  
Greetings! Whence come you?

LONE EAGLE  
We come from a Mandan settlement, many  
days' journey south of here.

RUNNING DOG  
My name is running Dog and my people and  
I welcome you. We ask only that you set up  
camp where you are until the next full moon.  
If by then there are no signs of the sickness  
among you and yours then we will welcome  
you into our settlement.

LONE EAGLE  
Agreed, and we thank you.

Anne and her weary group settle down and make themselves as comfortable as possible.

ANNE  
(V.O.)  
We stayed in our little camp for fifteen days,  
each day finding a small gift from the Hidatsa.

Small piles of corn, squash and fresh fish are eagerly eaten by the ailing Mandans. They  
are  
welcomed into the settlement and given a lodge to themselves. They get on with their lives  
while  
other survivors arrive, some more dead than alive, on foot, in bull boats or on weary horses

ANNE  
(V.O. as scenes unfold)  
By the fall of that fateful year we had grown  
to over two hundred Mandans and were living  
in peace with our brothers the Hidatsa. I even  
found a friend from Fort Clark among the  
Hidatsa, Speckled Eagle, who had recognized  
me as the one who had helped them make their  
escape after the untimely death of the two white  
men who had killed their companion Lone Wolf.  
Alas, all his companions from that fateful trip had  
all died of the disease which had ravaged us all.  
There had been no buffalo hunt that summer but  
hunting had been good in the nearby lands and we  
had plenty of stock of black-tailed deer. We could  
make everything we needed from the deer. Sinew  
was made into sewing materials, bowstrings and  
cord for making traps. The bones were made into  
much needed awls, needles and ornaments. Their  
innards, such as the stomach and bladder provided  
us with pouches and bags. Their meat filled our  
bellies and their hides made our clothes and boots.  
Life was good once more.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE - LATE AFTERNOON

After hoeing and weeding all day Anne is lying down among the tall grasses, basking in the  
warmth of the sun and watching the clouds roll across the heavens. Suddenly she feels the  
ground beneath her pulsating. She sits up, shades her eyes, and peers off into the distance  
where  
the figure of a lone horseman appears. She stands up and as though the rider knows her he  
steers

his mount in her direction at a full gallop. She cannot outrun him and is scooped up as he  
lets  
out a warlike whoop and gallops with her held to him towards the settlement. As they ride  
up  
people come running from all directions, some even have weapons in hand for the rider has  
his  
hair in the Pawnee style. Anne by now has recognized the rider as Blue Eagle and stands,  
mouth  
open where he deposits her, as he gets down from his mount and raises his hand in greeting  
to  
Lone Eagle and Running Dog.

BLUE EAGLE

Hail! I come in peace, for my bride!

Everyone looks at him in astonishment, including Anne.

RUNNING DOG

If you come in peace, you are indeed welcome here among us. As for your bride that will have to be discussed among you and her family. What do you bring as the bride price? You would appear to have come empty handed!

BLUE EAGLE

I have not come empty handed and will speak of my bride price later, if she, Red Deer, agrees. I told you I would return!

Anne looks at him speechless.

BLUE EAGLE

May my horse graze with yours?

LONE EAGLE

Of course.

Blue Eagle then divests his mount of his pack and blanket as well as his arms which he hands  
to  
Lone Eagle as indication that he has indeed come in peace and is unarmed.

LONE EAGLE

So, you have come to claim your bride? That is the sole purpose of your visit here among us? Are you alone?

BLUE EAGLE

My sole purpose and yes, I am alone. I feared her dead. I cannot tell you how many times my heart died as I searched for her. All the tribes I have traveled through on my journey here have likewise been almost wiped out by the white man's disease, which unseen until it has struck, cannot be fought by any man, no matter what his station in life.

LONE EAGLE

So we found out! Well, if you would like some refreshment, something to drink, I am sure Red Deer can take care of you, for I have business I must attend to.

As he spoke Lone Eagle gave Anne a meaningful look as though to say if you wish to speak,

sheep now. She seems incapable of speech and can only shake her head at Lone Eagle who shrugs as he leaves.

BLUE EAGLE  
May we take a walk?

Anne nods and they fall into step and go down to the river's edge. They sit down and watch the water lapping gently. Anne suddenly stands up.

ANNE  
I was working all day, hoeing and weeding  
I need a wash.

BLUE EAGLE  
I have ridden many days without washing  
I too need to bathe.

Looking around to see that no-one is around they disrobe and, shyly, hand in hand they enter the water.

BLUE EAGLE  
So here we are, two separate people naked  
as the day we were born, our bodies washed  
of all our past. Together we will forge a future  
together as a couple, as one.

Anne slowly rolls over and looks deep into his eyes and then is suddenly crying as he holds her to him and wipes her tears.

BLUE EAGLE  
Hush, my love. You have no need to fear. I  
will look after you, love you, and protect you.  
Come it is best we join the rest and I tell them  
what I have as a bride's price.

INT. ANNE'S LODGE - EVENING  
All the Mandans are gathered around the central fire as Lone Eagle talks.

LONE EAGLE  
Since the past winter we have been blessed  
by rains from the Gods, the grasses and  
bushes around the encampment have been  
nourished and grow thick.

GROUP  
That is true.

LONE EAGLE  
But that is not good, for anyone can now  
approach unseen. Perhaps an enemy might  
lurk there, so tomorrow at dawn we will all  
help clear the area. We will start by cutting  
down trees and clearing away the undergrowth.  
This will enable us to have more wood for  
building, for the women tell me they need more  
meat drying racks and that we are running short  
on kindling and fuel for our fires. We also need  
to build a sweat hut, we cannot go on sharing  
with our brothers. That is all. Does anyone

wish to speak, bring up a matter for discussion?

Blue Eagle looks at Anne and then stands. Lone Eagle indicates he may speak.

BLUE EAGLE

As you know I am not of your tribe, I am Pawnee.

An old woman spits on the fire showing her disgust while everyone else looks a little uncomfortable. The old woman then laughs a toothless smile making everyone else laugh.

BLUE EAGLE

I have come to ask for a bride.

OLD WOMAN

Anyone in particular. How about me?

Everyone laughs.

BLUE EAGLE

I am flattered Old Woman, that you would consider one so young and fresh as myself and though my vanity is much pleased with your offer I come for Red Deer.

LONE EAGLE

And what do you propose to give for your bride, I see no gifts for her family as is custom.

BLUE EAGLE

I have six horses, not a day's ride from here.

LONE EAGLE

What do you mean? Explain yourself.

BLUE EAGLE

I did not want to come empty handed, nor did I want to come to the wrong place with my bride price, for I could easily have been robbed. I am but one against many. Also, I did not know if she was alive and if so, free to marry.

LONE EAGLE

Hmph! That is true. Continue.

BLUE EAGLE

I spent last year capturing six beautiful horses as a bride's price. With my father's permission, and blessing, I left my tribe in search of Red Deer. As I journeyed, I saw the devastation left by the white man's disease and only hoped that she might have been spared its ravages. I am blessed that she has and that I found you all well living with our brothers the Hidatsas. I found an enclosed grassy clearing, not a day's ride from here, and left my steeds there before I checked out this place, not knowing whether I would find Red Deer here or have news of her.

LONE EAGLE

You are a wise young man. (Beat) Very well. Tomorrow, while we toil outside the palisade you may go and retrieve your horses, if horse thieves have not come upon them, and return with them on the morrow. We will expect you

two days hence. Then we will talk further.

CUT TO:

EXT. SETTLEMENT - OVERCAST DAY

As Anne and her companions are busy clearing the area outside the palisade they hear a group of horses approaching. All look up as Blue Eagle approaches with not six but seven horses, one of which is pure white. Everyone runs towards him discarding their tools. Anne stands, disheveled and dirty as Blue Eagle approaches. He addresses Lone Eagle and Running Dog.

BLUE EAGLE

My bride's price, six horses.

LONE EAGLE

But you have eight total, unless the Pawnees count differently.

Everyone laughs nervously.

BLUE EAGLE

The white one is for my bride, my gift to her.

LONE EAGLE

You have done well my young friend. Come everyone we must celebrate. Tomorrow we will have a big feast in honor of Blue Eagle and his bride Red Deer.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PALISADE - MORNING

Red Deer and Blue Eagle are being waved off on their mounts. CAMERA PANS beautiful tree covered countryside as they ride and finally come across a small inlet with a grass clearing

BLUE EAGLE

This is perfect. We can camp here, swim in the river and I can catch our supper in the woods.

He tenderly helps her down from her mount and they set up camp. She unrolls their blankets and gathers dead branches and twigs for the fire while he goes off hunting for their supper.

They have eaten their fill and are lying side by side, Blue Eagle leaning on one elbow looking down at her as he draws his finger along her cheek and down her throat with his free hand.

BLUE EAGLE

What are you thinking?

RED DEER

How much I love you and your body and what it can do to mine.

She snuggles down into his arms half embarrassed but happy.

BLUE EAGLE

What my body can do to yours? I feel it is your body that does things to mine and takes all my control away!

He bends over her, kisses her and soon they are making love as the sun sets and the horses

munch  
contentedly by them.

BLUE EAGLE

I don't think I can call you Anne, Red Deer  
suits you better.

He rolls her hair around his finger as he looks at her lovingly.

ANNE

I can run, run fast, though not as fast as a deer.  
Does your name mean you can fly like an eagle?

BLUE EAGLE

Before I met you I did not think that I could fly,  
but now I soar higher than an eagle and I feel as  
though I am floating above the ground all day  
long.

ANNE

(Teasingly)  
What about at night?

BLUE EAGLE

At night you carry me up to the heavens, so yes,  
I fly at night too. And now, my love, I must get  
some sleep if I am to be a proper husband to you  
tomorrow.

ANNE

Then sleep for I will want to make you fly many  
times tomorrow!

When Anne wakes in the morning, the fire is lit, the horses are contentedly munching and  
there is  
no sign of Blue Eagle. She sits up and goes to the river to get some water in a skin pouch.  
She  
has just finished rolling up their blankets when she is suddenly surrounded by six braves  
dressed  
in buckskins denoting they are Iroquois. Anne looks at them and quickly makes the sign for  
Sioux, by running her hand across her neck in a cutting motion and the universal sign for  
Indian  
by rubbing her left hand back and forth twice. The Iroquois grunt and squat around her  
looking  
her up and down. Anne offers them water and some berries and while they are so occupied  
feels  
for her mother's pouch and her pistolet in her boot. The Iroquois look around and  
appraising the  
horses. Anne tries not to show her fear and worry by talking to them in sign language.  
Suddenly  
the Iroquois jump up as Blue Eagle appears on the edge of the forest.

The Iroquois talk among themselves then start to laugh as they look from Blue Eagle to Anne.  
Blue Eagle advances making the V-sign with his right hand indicating that he is Pawnee. The  
Iroquois charge Blue Eagle, their knives and lances at the ready. He turns and runs into  
the  
woods the Iroquois in hot pursuit.

Anne quickly grabs her mother's pistolet, primes it and goes to stand near to their horses.  
O.C.  
sounds of shouting, yelling and screams of agony. Anne can no longer stand and wait and  
runs to  
where the others had disappeared into the forest.

As she enters the thick undergrowth she falls across the bodies of two dead Iroquois. She  
looks

at them in horror, picks herself up and dusting herself runs in a crouch to where she can  
see a  
clearing lit by diffused sunlight, passing an unconscious, wounded, Iroquois on the way.

She sees Blue Eagle in the clearing with the remaining Iroquois. Blue Eagle is on his toes  
and  
has his hunting knife in his right hand while seemingly inviting the Iroquois to attack him  
with  
his left. Anne inches forward and is within a few feet of the men when Blue Eagle shouts.

BLUE EAGLE

Behind you Red Deer, behind you!

Anne turns just in time to see the Iroquois behind her with his raised war club in his hand.

She  
rolls out of his way and he howls in anger, blood spurting from a knife wound to his chest.

As  
Anne looks up at him her knife drawn, his wound begins to spurt and he slowly sinks to his  
knees, with a surprised look on his face, and falls forward at her feet. She grabs his war  
club  
from him, hits him hard over the left temple and then approaches the clearing once more.

She  
smothers a moan as she sees Blue Eagle, bleeding from a slash to his left arm and hand and  
the  
Iroquois circling around him with smirks on their face. Anne slowly raises her mother's  
pistolet,  
takes aim and fires. The sound explodes in the quiet of the forest as Anne closes her eyes.

When  
she opens them one of the braves is lying lifeless on the ground, one holds his shoulder  
which is  
bleeding and Blue Eagle is locked in combat with the remaining Iroquois. As Anne advances  
the  
wounded brave runs at her yelling with his hunting knife in hand. Anne screams at him and  
throws the war club taken from his dead companion, hitting him square in the forehead. He  
sinks  
to his knees dazed and his eyes glaze over. Anne bends down and takes his knife from him  
and  
then looks over at Blue Eagle and the last Iroquois. Both are still fighting and both bleed  
profusely from many gashes and wounds as they roll, kick and punch one another. Anne aims  
her pistolet but cannot see where one ends and the other begins. She advances and choosing  
her  
moment hits the Iroquois on the soles of his feet with the war club and then as he flays  
around on  
the side of his head. He suddenly lies still and Blue Eagle rolls away from him, bleeding  
badly,  
heaving and gasping.

BLUE EAGLE

Finish him, please.

Anne looks from Blue Eagle to the unconscious Iroquois in horror.

ANNE

I... I... I can't!!

BLUE EAGLE

Please Red Deer now, or he will kill us both.

Anne just stands rooted to the spot looking from one dead Indian to another and then to the  
unconscious one. As she looks at him he rouses himself and with a piercing yell raises his  
knife  
to kill Blue Eagle. Anne does not hesitate, takes aim and shoots him dead. She then falls  
to her  
knees sobbing, her hand holding the pistolet limp at her side. Finally she rouses herself  
and goes  
over to Blue Eagle who lies still with his eyes closed.

ANNE

Blue Eagle! Don't die on me! Please.

Holding him she smothers him with kisses and strokes his face. He looks up and smiles weakly.

BLUE EAGLE

Go get me my medicine pouch.

Anne runs off to their mounts and unties his pack. CLOSE it is a long affair tied to an arrow by straps of decorated rawhide and further decorated with strips of fur and beadwork. She runs back to Blue Eagle opens up the pack and hands him his medicine pouch.

BLUE EAGLE

Now I will get better.

Slowly she helps him rise and they walk back to their campsite where she sits him down and bathes his wounds with the water collected that morning. She re-stokes the fire and sits watching as he sleeps. Finally, exhausted, she lies down beside him and falls asleep too.

Sometime later she wakes and is panicked to find Blue Eagle gone. She looks up and sees both horses still there. She almost collapses with relief when she sees him on the edge of the forest where he first appeared that morning. Now they are no enemies wishing him dead just Blue Eagle with an armful of weapons and six scalps tied to the reins of the first horse of a string of seven.

Anne runs over to Blue Eagle who drops the weapons and enfolds her in his arms.

BLUE EAGLE

Oh my beloved, your were magnificent.  
I owe my life to you.

RED DEER

And I mine to you.

BLUE EAGLE

Look. (He points to the scalps). I will have much to tell when we return, between us we have six coups and seven horses.

And with that he picks her up and swings her around.

RED DEER

Please put me down before you open up your wounds. And you have six coups, not I.

BLUE EAGLE

Well, I will tell everyone that you helped.

Anne looks at him, he is encrusted with blood and sweat which had dried like silver on his brown skin. His breechcloth is besmirched with blood and dirt. She slowly looks from him to herself and finds that she looks much the same.

ANNE

Perhaps we should wash off all this dirt and blood and be clean again.

And so after dropping the weapons off at their campsite, and letting the horses loose with their mounts they strip off their clothes and enter the water.

CUT TO:

EXT. SETTLEMENT - DAY

Anne, very pregnant, is kneeling outside the lodge and rubbing her sides, next to her a creel of freshly caught fish which she has been scaling. Blue Eagle exits the lodge, kneels next to Anne and puts his ear next to her distended belly. He suddenly jumps up rubbing his ear.

BLUE EAGLE

The baby kicked me! It must be a girl with red hair. A son would have had more respect for his warrior father!

ANNE

Sometimes it feels like there is a whole tribe in there!

BLUE EAGLE

Well as long as it is not a foal like many people joke, saying we have a proclivity for collecting horses so why wouldn't you give birth to one.

As Anne laughs up at him her face suddenly turns white and she shouts.

ANNE

I think it is time. Go find Grey Dove, the midwife.

BLUE EAGLE

First I will take you inside.

ANNE

I don't think there is time, go, go, go!

As Blue Eagle runs off another wave of pain racks through Anne and slowly, on all fours, she makes her way into the lodge. Once inside women run to her side and assist her off with her robe

and over to the center pole, while other women scoot the men and children outside. As Anne holds onto the pole she squats and with every wave of pain groans. One of the women slips a deer hide under Anne as GREY DOVE enters and rushes over to her side. She peers between Anne's legs and then rubs fat on her distended stomach.

GREY DOVE

The head is there. So you can push. Push!

As the next wave of pain hits Anne she pants and pushes as hard as she can, sweat drips from her.

GREY DOVE

Harder. Push harder!

ANNE

(Shouting)

Merde! I am pushing harder!

GREY DOVE

Not hard enough. Come on you can do it. If you can kill Iroquois you can give birth!

ANNE

Right now I would like to kill someone and

it isn't an Iroquois! Oh Mon Dieu faites vite je n'en peu plus!

GREY DOVE  
Speak Mandan, or I won't help you!

ANNE  
You are not helping me anyway. Oh Mon Dieu. Please get this baby out, NOW!!

Suddenly the baby comes out into the waiting hands of Grey Dove who gently wraps it in the deerskin.

GREY DOVE  
Blue Eagle! Come you have a daughter. You can now cut the umbilical cord.

Blue Eagle runs in, gives an exhausted Anne a kiss then gingerly cuts the umbilical cord. He then picks up Anne and gently carries her over to their sleeping platform while Grey Dove tends to the baby. She washes it down, rubs it dry with the deer skin and then disinfects its navel with powder from a puffball. She then takes the baby and lays her on Anne's chest.

GREY DOVE  
A perfect little girl, not a foal at all! When the after birth comes you must sleep. I can't understand why it hasn't yet come. Let me knead your stomach, that will hurry it up.

As Blue Eagle stands watching with the other women present during the birthing Anne screams out in pain.

ANNE  
Oh my God what is happening?

Blue Eagle grasps Anne's hand as she looks up at Grey Dove in fear, the latter smiles.

GREY DOVE  
I think you are having another child.

ANNE  
Another child? But I only have one cradle.

WOMAN  
But enough clothes for a whole tribe of babies.

As Blue Eagle holds their new-born daughter and looks on in total disbelief, Anne is once more led to the center pole where she is almost immediately delivered of another baby, a son, followed by the afterbirth.

Blue Eagle has the baby girl taken from him and is given the after birth which he leaves to dispose of while Anne is led back to the bed platform and propped up with her two babies on her lap. She is given water to drink and pemmican to chew on and has scarce had time to nibble before the lodge is filled with well-wishers and curious people trying to see the twins.

While this is going on, Grey Dove takes about six inches of each umbilical cord and inserts them into two little beaded pouches which will serve as amulets tied by leather thongs around the babies' necks. Blue Eagle has to fight his way through the crowd to reach his family.

BLUE EAGLE

My beautiful wife. You have made me the  
most blessed of men.

ANNE

It is I who am blessed.

And so saying Anne falls asleep as everyone discreetly leaves the lodge.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE CENTER - NIGHT

Everyone is gathered around Grey Elk and a big fire as proud Blue Eagle and Anne, each holding on of the newborn twins, stand laughing and jostling one another.

GREY ELK

The blessed birth of these two children means  
our tribes will be fruitful too.

BRAVE #1

Wish I had your prowess Blue Eagle!

WOMAN

And I your fertility Red Deer.

BRAVE #2

Shush! Grey Elk is about to begin the blessing.

GREY ELK

Ho! Ye Sun, Moon, Stars, all ye that move in the heavens,  
I bid you hear me!  
Into your midst has come a new life.  
Consent ye, I implore!  
Make its path smooth, that it may reach  
the brow of the first hill!  
Ho! Ye Winds, Clouds, Rain, Mist, all ye  
that move in the air,  
I bid you hear me!  
Into your midst has come a new life.  
Consent ye, I implore!

As the smoke from the fire wafts over everyone they begin to disperse and Blue Eagle and Anne walk slowly back to their lodge. Anne looks up at the starlit sky and sees a shooting star.

ANNE

My mother always used to say if one made  
a wish on a shooting star it would come true.

BLUE EAGLE

What do you wish for?

ANNE

Well apart from peace, prosperity and health  
for us all, I hope that the trade post which the  
fur company want to set up outside our settlement  
doesn't interfere with those wishes.

BLUE EAGLE

I am sure the trading post will be good for us all.

CUT TO:

EXT. SETTLEMENT - DAY

A trading post, wood sign FORT BERTHOLD, Est. 1845, built of logs, stands to the north of the settlement. Two young children, both with reddish hair, WHITE DEER and BLACK ELK, race one another on their ponies outside the settlement observed by blue uniformed soldiers and a group of Pawnees. One of the soldiers detaches himself from the group and stops the children .  
He speaks to them and they turn their ponies around and gallop over to the settlement where Anne is seen weeding the vegetable patch.

WHITE DEER/BLACK ELK  
Maman, maman!

ANNE  
What is it? Has something happened?

WHITE DEER  
It's a surprise.

BLACK ELK  
And you have to keep your eyes shut.

ANNE  
Can it wait until I've washed, I've been working in the dirt all day.

The two children look her up and down and after consulting one another agree.

WHITE DEER  
Yes, you can bathe, but you must be quick.  
We will wait for you. Hurry, maman, please.

BLACK ELK  
And change into your white robe.

Laughing Anne goes down to the river, washes herself off and then goes into their lodge and comes out dressed in her white robe.

ANNE  
Now, tell me what kind of surprise is it that I need to wear my ceremonial dress?

WHITE DEER/BLACK ELK  
A really, really big surprise.

BLACK ELK  
Grey Elk said it would be the right thing to wear.

WHITE DEER  
And wear your mother's jewelry too.

Anne returns into the lodge and comes out wearing her mother's ring and neck chain.

ANNE  
There, will this do?

She looks at her children in amazement for they are giving her very critical looks.

ANNE  
This had better be worth it!

As the children lead her in the direction of Fort Berthold, Anne is a little puzzled.

ANNE  
Why are we going to the Fort? Surely Grey Elk is not there?

WHITE DEER

There is someone there to see you, and we  
promised not to tell.

As Black Elk gives his sister a warning look they near the Fort where a vast number of  
horses are  
in the coral, many of them having brand marks on their rumps. As they pass under the fort's  
entrance Anne stops at the sight of the Pawnees and soldiers dressed in French uniforms.

Anne  
has difficulty talking.

ANNE

Wh..., what is this?

WHITE DEER/BLACK ELK

It's the surprise maman.

Anne looks at the French soldiers hardly believing her eyes as a young Captain detaches  
himself.

Both he and Anne start to run towards one another.

ANNE

Pierre?

PIERRE

Anne?

As Anne and her brother Pierre hug and kiss one another and Anne begins to cry the children  
jump off their ponies and fling themselves at her.

BLACK ELK

We knew it, we knew it, maman

WHITE DEER

Please don't cry, we only wished to make you  
happy.

ANNE

Oh I am, I am! And Pierre, I never thought to  
see you again.

PIERRE

Nor I you. Mother was right all along, you are  
alive. I never believed it could be true.

ANNE

Mother? (Beat) But she died, she was murdered,  
I heard her scream, I ...

PIERRE

No she lived, she was unharmed, but we never  
found Marie, the men who murdered father and  
his detachment, or any sign of you, until now.

ANNE

Mother... she is still alive. I can't believe it.

PIERRE

Yes.

Anne collapses into his arms once more.

ANNE

Oh Pierre. But how did you find me? What  
brought you here?

PIERRE  
That Indian over there.

As Anne, and the now tongue-tied children look at the Pawnees, one of them, tall, dignified and obviously a chief, PETALESHAWAM, detaches himself and comes towards them. Around his neck he wears the famous Jefferson medal as well as strings of beads, and around his shoulders a rare white buffalo robe. His hair is piked with red dye and stands like a crest on his fine head.

WHITE DEER  
(Whispering)  
Maman, doesn't he look like Papa?

ANNE  
Yes dear, he is of the same tribe, Pawnee.

PIERRE  
Come, Anne, meet this man who wishes to know more about you and your children!

ANNE  
Me, and my children? But why?

PIERRE  
Like me he too seeks a lost relative in these parts, though his relative was lost of his own volition.

ANNE  
I don't understand. What do you mean his own volition?

PETALESHAWAM  
So, you are the one of the fire hair, I can see why my son has not sent word of his finding you!

ANNE  
Your son?

PETALESHAWAM  
Yes my son. He accompanied my brother Petalesharo to your village, many, many moons ago and then nothing could keep him from going in search of you. Not having heard from him we presumed he had failed in his quest and met with disaster or died from the white man's disease, like so many of our brothers.

ANNE  
As you see, he found me. Children, come here. This man is your father's father and this one, is your uncle for he is my brother Pierre.

The children are suddenly tongued tied and hide behind their mother's skirt.

ANNE  
What may I call you?

PETALESHAWAM  
My name is Petaleshawam, also known as Runs Like the Wind. But where is my son? Does he live?

ANNE

He lives, indeed. He is off with the hunters on the annual buffalo hunt. We expect them soon for they have now been gone a long time. Can you stay, at least until he hunting party returns? We would be glad to receive you and welcome you in our village.

PETALESHAWAM

I can stay and would be glad to see where my son lives and what kind of life he has made for himself. We have brought our tepees with us, however, and will set them up outside the settlement, if that is agreeable?

ANNE

That will be fine. But only so long as you allow us to provide your food?

PETALESHAWAM

Very well.

ANNE

Now about you, Pierre? How long are you here for?

PIERRE

I came with Chief Petaleshawam in search of you. We met quite by chance and I would not let our mother come for fear of disappointing her should you not live, though many tales reached us of a fire headed woman and her heroic mate! You are the stuff that legends are made of! I could not believe it could be my little timid sister Anne, so did not want mother to get her hopes up, only to have them dashed!

ANNE

But how did you know I was here?

PIERRE

We didn't. That is to say, we had heard that Fort Berthold was fast becoming a large and prosperous trading post and that there were many Indians living beside the fort, that many were survivors of the smallpox epidemic. We, in my case, came to see that settlers who come out this way would be safe and well treated, and of course never having come this far east I was intrigued to see what we would

PIERRE

(Cont.)

find and if there would be news of you. Though, for my part, I must confess, I had long since given up any hope of finding you alive. Mother, however, never gave up hope. She had an inner voice that kept on telling her you lived. And then, when my party and I reached the fort there were these two children playing with one of the trappers and thought dressed in Indian clothing they looked white and one, the little girl in particular, had an air about her that reminded me of you. Though you were never as free spirited as her, that I can recall. So, I observed the children for a long time before I dared approach them. They were not afraid and, imagine my surprise, and the hope

they raised in my breast, when they could speak in French! Never was I more amazed! They are beautiful these children of yours!

ANNE

You nephew and niece.

Pierre gives her a funny look.

PIERRE

What of your husband. Tell me of him. Did you marry him of your own free will. How does that work among the Indians?

ANNE

What are you implying that I was sold or maybe bartered for? No! A thousand times no. Though he paid a high bride price for me and I came to him with nothing, not even a little dote. He loved me before I loved him and yet, the truth be told, I adore him. He is a wonderful man, hunter, brave, husband, father. Though he looks very much like his father for he is a Pawnee too, not Mandan like the tribe that took me in. I do not believe he has much of his mother though he has her green, sometimes hazel, eyes.

PIERRE

That I have to see! She was white then? Chief Petaleshawam did not tell me, he only spoke of his beloved wife, I had no idea.

CUT TO:

INT. MANDAN LODGE - EVENING

Soldiers, Indians, sit around replete as the pipe is passed around. Some of the soldiers cannot prevent themselves from staring and Grey Elk's sightless eyes seem to be boring into Pierre.

PIERRE

I am more and more amazed with each passing moment and cannot wait to see the man that you married and whose children you bore, for I still cannot reconcile you with the little sister I thought I had lost so many years ago. But, why does the old man, Grey Elk, stare at me like that? Have I done something to offend him? It's almost as though his eyes were piercing right through me.

ANNE

That I doubt very much, for Grey Elk is blind. He cannot see you.

PIERRE

He is blind?! Yet he needs no guiding hand to lead him around. I did not realize.

ANNE

Sometimes, I think he sees things much more clearly than any sighted man or woman.

As Anne and her brother talk Lieutenant Durand detaches himself from his companions and sits down next to Anne, who looks at him but does not recognize him.

LIEUTENANT DURAND

You don't remember me, do you?

ANNE

No. I'm sorry. You look familiar, but that could be the uniform.

LIEUTENANT DURAND

I was with your father's detachment when we were attacked. Your mother and I were the only survivors.

ANNE

You too survived! And I thought everyone had been murdered. I would not have run had I known that my mother would live and you too would be spared.

LIEUTENANT DURAND

Be glad you ran Mademoi... Madame, for you might have suffered the same fate as that of poor Marie. And I was not spared, I feigned death in order to live.

ANNE

Poor Marie. I saw her die, struck down by the men who had attacked our party and, had it not been for my family, the Mandans, I too would have died at their hands, of that I am convinced.

LIEUTENANT DURAND

And your husband?

ANNE

He is off on the buffalo hunt. He is part Pawnee and, though his mother was white, he considers himself an Indian, as do I.

LIEUTENANT DURAND

Ah! It's a strange world we live in, is it not?

ANNE

I think it is a wonderful world. I am happy. I have a wonderful husband, two wonderful children, twins. And now I find that the mother I thought was dead lives, and I have found my brother once more. I feel I am the luckiest of women. Life is a miracle.

LIEUTENANT DURAND

Indeed.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE - LATE AFTERNOON

The buffalo hunters stream into the village, travois heavily laden, under the unbelieving gazes of the French soldiers. Their amazement continues as the women after greeting their returning menfolk then set to dismembering the carcasses, making tanned hides from the skins, clothing and coverings for the hunting tepees; the excess is stacked for trade in the spring.

Buffalo hair is woven into ropes, belts etc. while horns and bones become utensils and the bellies cooking pots.

Manure patties, gathered from the prairies are dried and stacked for winter fuel. A large feast is got underway to welcome everyone back. Pierre, finally finds Anne helping with the preparations.

PIERRE

My God, you are more numerous than ants  
in an ant hill!

ANNE

Yes, we have prospered and grown since our  
near extinction due to the white man's disease.

PIERRE

You mustn't talk like that. You are white too.

ANNE

I don't think I could ever go back to being a  
white. But come, you must meet my husband.

They walk over to where Chief Petaleshawam is seated talking to Blue Eagle.

PETALESHAWAM

Well my son, it seems you found your fire  
haired love and have become the warrior  
and hunter I knew you would.

BLUE EAGLE

Father! I did not think to see you. How  
is mother?

PETALESHAWAM

She is well, though her heart has been in two  
pieces of late. One stays with me but the other  
wanders wondering when her son would send  
news that he is well and make her heart whole  
again.

BLUE EAGLE

I am sorry father, I have not been a dutiful son,  
but I have also been busy.

PETALESHAWAM

One should never be too busy to forget one's  
family, one's origins.

BLUE EAGLE

You are right father. I apologize and will remedy  
the situation.

ANNE

Blue Eagle, this is my brother Pierre.

BLUE EAGLE

Pierre! Anne has long sought to find you!  
Welcome.

Both men size one another up, shake hands awkwardly, and then sit down and eat.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE - EARLY MORNING

Mist rises from the river as the French soldiers make ready to leave and the Pawnees, among whom is Blue Eagle, stand to one side besides their mounts, also ready to leave. Anne

throws  
herself at her brother.

ANNE

Tell mother that when Blue Eagle returns from visiting his tribe then we will make our way to Fort Minot and come visit you. Take this ring, so that she knows I am alive.

PIERRE

She is already convinced of that, but she will be glad for the confirmation. Good-bye, and a bientot!

As the soldiers leave the children cling to Anne and then look over to their father standing beside his father, and they begin to cry. Blue Eagle detaches himself from his tribesmen and tries to comfort the children.

BLUE EAGLE

I won't be gone long, just through the cold winter months. I am putting you both in charge of taking care of your mother. Understood? But you have to know my mother misses me and I miss her, so I must go see her. All right?

As the children nod and hug him one last time he gives Anne a lingering kiss and then jumps on his mount and follows his father and the others in the opposite direction from that taken by the French, following the river past the fort and out of sight.

EXT. RIVER - FROST ON THE GROUND - EARLY MORNING

Anne, pregnant, is bending down at the river filling two water sacks. As she looks at the bull boats out on the river under the fort she notices a man, standing looking in her direction, on a small rise. She stares back taking in his yellow buckskin fringed pants and a much patched matching jacket. He has a full beard and a large brimmed hat which hides his features. On his feet, Indian style boots and a large knife is strapped on the outside of one while yet another dangles from his waist. In his right hand, the stock resting on the ground, is a large musket. Anne shivers as she looks at him and quickly fills her sacks before hurrying back up to the lodge.

MONTAGE OF SHOTS:

- Every day that Anne goes to fill her water sacks, the man is there observing her.
- Anne voicing her concern to Lone Eagle and Grey Elk.

GREY ELK

He's white, who knows what he thinks? He probably wonders about you, is all. Do not let it worry you. What have you to fear?

ANNE

I don't know. He just scares me.

- Anne has a hard time walking back up in her advanced stage of pregnancy.
- One morning she slips. She bends over to retrieve her sacks.

- She looks up, the man is not at his usual observation spot.
- Much relieved, she goes back down to the river to refill her sacks.
- On the way back the man is suddenly there, barring her path.
- Anne draws back in fear, causing the man to laugh and advance.
- Anne slips and loses her footing.
- With a smirk the man is upon her and pinning her to the ground.

MAN

Ha! I have you at long last. Now to repay you!

- Anne looks at him in terror for he now has his musket under her jaw and his knife at her bosom. Seeing her terror he laughs at her once more.

MAN

Yes, close your eyes and pray for your last moment has come.

- Anne stares into his crazed, icy blue, full of hate eyes.
- At that moment voices are heard and the man scrambles off Anne and away, dropping his knife.
- Three women appear and rush to Anne's side to help her stand up. Anne is gently led back to the lodge by the concerned women.

END MONTAGE OF SHOTS.

INT. LODGE - EVENING

Anne is sitting in front of the assembled members of her lodge. Grey Elk is holding her hand in his gnarled one and trying to comfort her.

GREY ELK

What troubles you, my child? It is not the fact that you fell, something more troubling than that, is it not?

ANNE

Oh Grey Elk! You know that man I spoke of?

GREY ELK

The one that watches you?

ANNE

Yes. Well this morning I was on my way down to the river to refill one of my water sacks, for I had slipped and in so doing spilt the contents. I ran into this man and he attacked me. I do not know what he might have done had not three women come down the path. He held a knife, a large hunting knife, at my throat as well as his musket. I thought my last moment had come and I know not why he hates me so! Oh! I've just remembered, he dropped his knife when he fled.

Lone Eagle gets up and goes outside.

GREY ELK

He is a coward and as such not worth our trouble. Are you all right? Did he hurt you or molest you?

ANNE

No, he did not, but he would have had not the three women come down the path, and now I am afraid.

GREY ELK

Well, when Lone Eagle returns I will speak to him. He may have found the knife and then we will go over to the fort and seek this man out. For by his knife he will be known. In the meantime, do not go in fear, for then he will have won the battle before it is even engaged!

ANNE

Thank you Grey Elk, for all your kindness and your understanding. And now I must tend to my children. I promise you I will try to not be afraid.

GREY ELK

Stay close to others if you leave the lodge.

As Anne rises Lone Eagle enters the lodge.

LONE EAGLE

I did not find the knife. Perhaps he came back for it, for I searched high and low and there was a good moon out tonight to see by. But we can't have this happening, tomorrow you will accompany me to the fort and we will seek this man out.

CUT TO;

EXT. FORT BERTHOLD - EARLY MORNING

Anne, accompanied by Lone Eagle and several braves, walks towards the fort. Smoke rises from the cabins' mingling with the grey wisps of early morning fog. As they approach CAPTAIN MACKENZIE, of the small detachment of soldiers at the fort, comes out pulling his jacket on. He stops when he sees the small group and waits to greet them.

CAPTAIN MACKENZIE

Good morning friends. What brings you to the fort so early?

LONE EAGLE

A man staying here, attacked Red Deer as she went to the river to collect water yesterday.

ANNE

I want him run off, he tried to kill me!

CAPTAIN MACKENZIE

The only one, not working for the company or a soldier, left yesterday. That is, if you mean the one we called Yellow Buck for he would not give us his name, said he was a hunter. So if he's your man you no longer have anything to fear, for he left mid morning.

They are joined by the tall lean company man, MR. NORTON, who puts in his two cents.

MR. NORTON

A strange man, a very strange man. Never took off his hat the whole time he was here, and wore a scarf around his head underneath it. Rumor had it that he lost his scalp to an Indian raid several years back, though that was merely speculation. Shot one armed too, for his left arm was almost crippled from some

injury he had received during the same attack. He could barely raise it to steady his firearm, though he was a good shot for all that.

CAPTAIN MACKENZIE

Aye, that he was.

ANNE

(Voice quivering)

Well I would ask, that if he does return, that you not take him in. As you can see, I am with child and he attacked me in the lowest fashion as I was walking back up from the river, yesterday morning.

CAPTAIN MACKENZIE

We are sorry, Red Deer, but as we told you he left in the morning, no doubt ashamed of his carnal attack and regretting the deed. I do not think that you have anything to worry about from him any more.

LONE EAGLE

Come Red Deer, it is best we return to the village.

Anne and her group return to the village to be greeted by Grey Elk and a group of braves.

GREY ELK

What think you Lone Eagle. Think you he is gone?

LONE EAGLE

We'll send some scouts out along the trail. He should not be hard to follow, his horse will be shod and the trail still fresh, for no-one has come this way these past few weeks.

GREY ELK

Very good. Send out scouts.

LONE EAGLE

You five, arm yourselves, take fresh swift mounts and see if you can find the trail of the white man who left Fort Berthold yesterday during the morning. If he has left the vicinity return, if not, make sure that he is indeed gone! And then report back..

Five braves, among whom are CUNNING BEAR and LEAPS LIKE A HARE, arm themselves and taking some provisions, leave as the sky turns grey and sleet begins to fall.

CUT TO:

EXT. LODGE - DAY

Anne is returning from the vegetable patch with some vegetables in a basket as snow gently falls.

She becomes aware of five horse, one riderless, approaching. She stands, shock still, as they near

for across the withers of the lead horse of Cunning Bear, is the bloodied body of Leaps Like a

Hare.

Anne shouts for help and soon Leaps Like a Hare has been laid down on soft skins by the fire inside the lodge. His breathing is faint and rattles in his throat with every breath he takes.

GREY ELK

What happened? How came he by his wounds?

CUNNING BEAR

We picked up the trail of the white man, not a day's journey from where he had camped the night before. It was easy to follow, almost too easy for, as we approached a small copse, he shot at us, wounding Leaps Like a Hare and then took off before we could catch him. We thought it best to tend to our own for the white man is now long since gone. And then the storm set in and we threw together a shelter of birch bows and as the storm raged we huddled around our wounded companion. We are just thankful to Watonka that the horses survived the ordeal. We thought not to. But here we are.

ANNE

(Crying)

Oh dear, Cunning Bear, I am so sorry and all this because of me.

CUNNING BEAR

Do not cry Red Deer, there is no shame in exacting retribution, however, since the man is long gone we chose to return rather than to pursue him further, for our companion is near death and has lost a lot of blood. We feared for his life, many times.

GREY ELK

Leaps Like a Hare is strong, he will live.

He sets to invoking the Great Spirit and wafting smoke from herbs over Leaps Like a Hare, everyone is quiet watching him and Leaps Like a Hare. Suddenly Anne lets out a moan and Grey Dove runs to her side.

GREY DOVE

When is your time?

ANNE

Not for some time yet.

She holds herself again as pain courses through her.

GREY DOVE

Your nose is pinched. I think your time has come. Come we should get you ready.

ANNE

No! It cannot be my time, it is too early.

GREY DOVE

Babies do not always come when expected.

As Grey Dove tries to lead Anne over to the center pole Anne falls to her knees and is quickly delivered of a little girl. Everyone looks on in amazement especially White Deer and Black Elk.

WHITE DEER

She's so tiny.

BLACK ELK

Another girl, well I'll just have to be twice  
as brave and strong.

GREY DOVE

Do you feel strong enough to walk over to your  
bed platform? Here Black Elk, take the after  
birth and place it high in a tree out of wild animals'  
reach.

As Black Elk leaves to do his task White Deer fusses around Anne and her new sister.

GREY DOVE

Well Red Deer, it seems you are destined not to  
have regular births like everyone else.

WHITE DEER

That's because she's not like everyone else.

At this everyone laughs in agreement and Anne falls asleep with her newborn on her chest,  
her  
two other children curled up beside her as people gather around looking down at her.

GREY ELK

If Leaps Likes a Hare does not live, his  
spirit will live on in this new life.

CROWD

That is so, that is so.

When Anne wakes, sometime later, she thinks she is dreaming, for Blue Eagle stands before  
her,  
his hair in the Pawnee style by his side an older woman, her long white hair tied back in a  
braid.

BLUE EAGLE

What is this? I did not even know you were  
with child when I left. I would never have  
gone had I known.

ANNE

I know!

BLUE EAGLE

She is so tiny and perfect. How old is she?

ANNE

She was born this morning.

BLUE EAGLE

This morning only! Of if only we hadn't been  
delayed by a storm. Mother, come I want you  
to meet my wife. Red Deer this is White Dove  
my mother.

The older woman moves forward and speaks to Anne after having kissed her on both cheeks.

WHITE DOVE

You are everything that Blue Eagle said you  
would be. And much more than my husband  
told me.

ANNE

And you are so young and beautiful. I was  
thinking my husband had taken another wife.

BLUE EAGLE

Taken on another wife? Don't you think you give me enough trouble. You are more than one man can handle, perhaps it is you who needs another husband! Black Elk why don't you take your grandmother and sister outside for your mother needs her rest.

BLACK ELK

I can show her where I put the baby's afterbirth. Because you weren't here, I had to stand in for you papa.

BLUE EAGLE

That would be good. And when you return maybe I will have something for you, for looking after and taking care of your mother and sister during my absence.

WHITE DEER

Papa! What about me? I helped him take care of Maman.

BLUE EAGLE

Go with your brother, and maybe, just maybe, I have something for you too!

As the two children exit with their grandmother Blue Eagle turns and holds Anne close. As he does she tells him of Leaps Like a Hare's wounds and how he came by them. Blue Eagle looks from Anne to where Leaps Like a Hare lies and then stands and goes over to him.

BLUE EAGLE

Leaps Like a Hare, you know the love I have for my wife, as does everyone here present. I can never repay you for what you did for her or for your suffering, but until this man is found and made to pay I will not rest, you have my word on it.

LEAPS LIKE A HARE

Your word is good. I thank you.

The next day the children go off with Blue Eagle while Anne and White Dove get acquainted.

WHITE DOVE

Isn't it strange. When I was a child, the Indians were deemed to be savages and cruel beyond belief. Now, knowing them as I do, I feel that the white man is the savage. I would not go back to my former life for all the world. I love my husband and his people. I perhaps would not have chosen him as my life mate, but I have come to admire and love him and cannot imagine my life without him. With the Indians I have an equal voice and am listened to. Life is hard, very hard sometimes, but everyone is equal and looks out for one another.

ANNE

I agree. I do not think I could ever go back to being white, even thought that is what I am. For I do not feel, nor do I think like a white, I am Indian on the inside though the outside may say something else.

WHITE DOVE  
Exactly.

ANNE  
We are indeed lucky to have the lives we have.

WHITE DOVE  
As long as things do not change. For our wise ones predict that the white man will soon roll in vast numbers over our lands, our villages, our hunting and sacred grounds, and destroy us all.

ANNE  
Oh no, that can never be!

WHITE DOVE  
Well, each year we see more and more whites moving out from the east and settling on our lands. The clouds of war are gathering on the horizon. The Indians stand to lose everything, their way of life, everything.

ANNE  
Do you really believe that?

WHITE DOVE  
I'm afraid I do.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE - EARLY MORNING

Blue Eagle, Anne, their children and White Dove are getting ready to leave and have their horses and travois packed for a long journey.

LONE EAGLE  
Don't be gone too long, and have a safe journey. Do not worry about what you have left behind we will all look after your possessions.

BLUE EAGLE  
Thank you. My wife wishes to stop by the Fort before we leave so while she goes with my mother I will make my farewells, with the children, to everyone.

Blue Eagle, Lone Eagle and the twins walk around the village as Anne, with the baby in a sling, and White Dove by her side walks over to the fort where they are greeted by Captain MacKenzie.

LADIES  
Good morning! The coffee pot is on, might I interest you each in a cup?

WHITE DOVE/ANNE  
Oh yes! Please.

As the two women sit down with Captain MacKenzie many of the soldiers and workers from the fur company come to look at the two women who have chosen to live as Indians.

MAN #1  
Why would two women, such as yourselves, obviously women of quality, chose of your own volition to have Indian husbands?

ANNE  
Why not?

MAN #2  
Well, you are women for one thing?

ANNE  
But many of you have Indian wives.

MAN #1  
Well, it's different for men, men have needs.

ANNE  
And women don't have needs?

MAN #2  
Not where we come from, they are for cooking  
and cleaning and bedding.

ANNE  
Men can all do those things too, so women should  
be allowed to do all the things men do!

MAN #3  
What? Hunt and stuff?

ANNE  
Why not? I know how to hunt and have killed  
when I had to. I bet one day there will be women  
in the army too.

CAPTAIN MACKENZIE  
Git out of here! Not on my watch!

As all the men stand around laughing and exclaiming Anne and White Dove drink their coffees with twinkles in their eyes.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE OF SHOTS:

- The small group setting off from the village as the morning mists dissipate and the sun begins to shine.
- They follow a scarce discerned path across the plains, through small valleys, across streams and rivers.
- They camp under the stars and after eating roasted rabbit, dried corn and berries, sleep.
- They follow the Missouri River for many days seeing herds of deer and wild game.
- They stop to camp but find the area overrun by ants. But the baby needs feeding so Anne settles on a large rock while Black Elk and White Deer take off their moccasins and clothes and wade into the river to swim, while Blue Eagle fishes.
- White Dove walks towards Anne and the nursing baby. Suddenly she stands in horror looking towards Anne.

ANNE  
What is it?

WHITE DOVE

Don't move, Anne, please don't move.

- White Dove slowly pulls her knife out of her boot and slowly inches forward.
- The dry sound of a rattlesnake over which Black Elk cries out for his father.
- White Dove lets fly her knife but it misses and lands quivering in the hard ground to one side of the snake and then falls over while the snake coils up and with its tongue darting in and out, its beady red eyes look at Anne and the baby.
- Anne looks from the snake to her children who are crying out for their father, in obvious panic.
- White Dove darts for her knife as the snake strikes her. Anne quickly places her baby on the rock and taking out her knife catches the snake off guard and slices through it's body. She then runs over to White Dove and slashes a cross where the bite is swelling and begins sucking out the venom.

END MONTAGE OF SHOTS.

WHITE DOVE

Anne! Red Deer! I think I'm all right. You may stop. I will just lie here a little. But please, get rid of that thing.

Anne sits back on her heels, wipes her knife on some dry grass then kicks the snake out of sight behind the rock and goes over to her baby who is squealing and covered with ants.

ANNE

I have to run the baby down to the river, don't move. I'll be back soon.

As Anne rushes towards the river trying to brush off as many ants as she can she sees Blue Eagle bending over White Deer and Black Elk. Anne doesn't stop but runs straight into the river with the baby.

BLACK ELK/WHITE DEER

Mother! No!

Blue Eagle runs towards Anne and pulls her out of the river.

ANNE

What? What is it?

WHITE DEER

Sucking worms, horrible sucking worms.

Anne looks at her children in horror both have red welts where Blue Eagle has pulled off leeches!

ANNE

What kind of place is this? Your mother was bitten by a rattlesnake trying to save me and the baby. Little Willow was then covered by ants, and now this. Please, Blue Eagle let us move from this place, please!

BLUE EAGLE

My mother was bitten? How is she? She should not be moved for if there is any venom in her, it will travel through her blood stream.

ANNE

I think I got it all but she is probably being eaten

alive by ants as we speak.

As the children dress Blue Eagle hugs Anne.

ANNE

Black Elk get a water skin and take it over to White Dove. I will pack up our stuff and with White Deer will bring the horses over to you and White Dove.

After Anne has packed up all their belongings she hangs the baby's cradle on the side of her saddle and then walks the travois over to where White Dove lies being comforted by Blue Eagle.

BLUE EAGLE

She had best ride on the travois rather than on a horse until she is fully recovered.

ANNE

Maybe putting one of the leeches over the bite mark would help.

As Anne goes and collects a couple of leeches the children cry out in disgust, but are soon impressed when the leeches grow as they suck out White Dove's blood.

ANNE

See children, they can do good and are often used in white man's medicine.

WHITE DEER

If they are good and have sucked the venom out of grandmother's leg why haven't they died?

ANNE

They will, they will. It will just take a little while, that is all. Now come we must journey on and find a good resting place for the night.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

The small group is getting ready to ride once more when they become aware of hoof beats.

They all look up and are surprised to hear a dog yapping too! As the rider approaches all are smiles for it is trapper Benoit.

BENOIT

Greetings! I've found you!

ANNE

Why? Were we lost?

Anne kisses his rough cheek.

BENOIT

No, of course not, but your mother and your brother, who of course has too many responsibilities to absent himself from the fort, gave me explicit instructions to not come back without you!

ANNE

Ah! So you have met my mother?

BENOIT

Yes, a fine lady indeed. I met her last year when I finally made it over to Fort Minot. I told her of seeing you in a Mandan settlement so she insisted your brother look for you, even though he was a little reluctant to believe that I had indeed seen you. I think he thought I was after a monetary reward for bringing him news of you, or of making the whole thing up.

ANNE

That sounds like Pierre. He had to find out for himself. Though, I think he had my mother's best interests at heart, for he did not think that I was still alive!

BENOIT

So, here we are, what a fine reunion we will have at the fort, hein? Just look at the children, they have grown so much since last I saw them. A new baby too! You are indeed fortunate.

ANNE

Thank you. And I hope we will have a fine reunion and welcome at the fort.

Anne suddenly shivers and looks around.

BENOIT

What is it ma belle?

ANNE

Nothing, just a little cold.

BENOIT

Well the ride to the fort will soon warm you up.

ANNE

How far is it till we reach the fort?

BENOIT

A day's ride at most. If we leave early in the morning, we can make it before nightfall.

BLUE EAGLE

Do you hear that, children? Tonight we sleep early, for tomorrow we rise before dawn, so that we might get to your other grandmother's before dark.

And so the small group follows Benoit from the campsite.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ROAD TO FORT MINOT - DAY

The small group passes several sod houses whose occupants come out to stare at them as do people working the fields. No-one greets them or offers them a drink. As they go forward the fort rises out of the scenery ahead of them. The sky turns pink with streaks of purple and the sun turns into a big orange ball as the tired and dusty group near the fort. Benoit spurs his horse on while Anne combs her children's hair and washes their faces with the last of the water.

As they approach the fort the gates swing open and a soldier comes riding out. It is Pierre. On the parapet, by the fluttering French flag, a small dark haired figure stands waiving. Anne has a hard time swallowing.

BLUE EAGLE  
You'll be fine, you look beautiful Red Deer.

As Pierre circles them with his mount the children take off after him and race him back to the fort. When Anne and Blue Eagle with White Dove still on the travois arrive Madame de Seygnac, in a large hooped skirt that the twins are eyeing in amazement, opens her arms to Anne. As they stand laughing and crying and looking at one another a large crowd gathers. Some giggle, others make snide remarks.

ONLOOKER #1  
Savages I tell you, savages. Just look at his hair.

ONLOOKER #2  
And he is nearly naked too. And the baby, why string it up to the saddle?

Soldiers arrive carrying torches to light their way and the children cower as the faces in the crowd look on with distaste. Benoit reappears.

BENOIT  
What is wrong with you people? Let them pass. They've had a very long journey and the children are tired and hungry. Let them through, you cretins! Go, be on your way!

Even so people follow them to Anne's mother's house where Madame de Seygnac and Pierre quickly usher them inside as Benoit shouts out.

BENOIT  
Don't worry about the horses, I will have them tended to.

As everyone steps into the house, the children and Blue Eagle look around them in amazement and the children nearly hurt themselves as they cause a rug to slip and them with it. As Pierre goes upstairs, carrying some of their things, the children scream.

ANNE  
It's all right, children, it's like a big ladder, it goes up to the top of the house, it's called stairs.

They hesitate, then almost on all fours follow Pierre upstairs. Blue Eagle stands looking around while Madame de Seygnac leads Anne and White Dove into the sitting room where they all sit down. Anne indicates that Blue Eagle should too. He sits down very hesitantly and looks very uncomfortable making everyone laugh. He is not amused.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
So, here we are, together once more.

ANNE  
Yes. Here we are.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
So. (Beat) Tell me everything that happened

to you, since that dreadful day.

As Anne begins to tell her story of survival and living among the Mandans the baby begins to cry so Anne begins to nurse her. Her mother looks at her in horror.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
Please Anne, not here, what must you be thinking?

ANNE  
That my child is hungry and needs to be fed.

Further discussion is halted by the return of Pierre with the children and Trappeur Benoit who joins them for dinner. They all move to the dining room where they are waited on by soldiers who cannot contain their amusement and contempt as they watch Blue Eagle and the children try and cope with cutlery. The children amazed by the glasses hold them up to admire them and in so doing spill their water. Anne's mother looks distressed as Anne and White Dove do their best to show the others how things are done. It is too much for Blue Eagle and the children who resort to eating with their hands. As the meal comes to an end Madame de Seygnac stands up.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
I had the big copper tub filled with hot water so that you may all take a bath.

MONTAGE OF SCENES:

- The children screaming as they are made to get into the steaming tub.
- Finally relaxing and enjoying the bubbles they can make with the soap cake.
- Squealing and splashing water everywhere much to Madame de Seygnac's chagrin.
- Being shown to their beds and looking at them in astonishment.
- All end up sleeping on the floor

END MONTAGE OF SHOTS.

INT. A BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Madame de Seygnac looks in on the children sleeping on the floor and then with horror at her daughter and Blue Eagle also sleeping on the floor in their room. The creak of the door wakes Anne.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC  
Oh you have become like the savages you resemble.

And with that she runs from the room in tears.

BLUE EAGLE  
(Stretching painfully)  
Oh what an uncomfortable night that was!  
What I wouldn't give for our bed platform back at the lodge.

Anne looks at him then around the room, she appears sad.

ANNE

Blue Eagle I think it is best that we leave as soon as we can, for we do not fit in here. The ways of the whites are no longer mine and the children, though they would quickly adapt, would die cooped up in these rooms.

BLUE EAGLE

Whatever you wish, Red Deer, we came for your sake and for the children to know their grandmother.

ANNE

I know, and I will be forever thankful that we all had this opportunity but I am homesick, for my tribe, my friends, my lodge.

As they hold one another they hear the door open again and turn to find Anne's mother looking at them. She hands Blue Eagle a shirt and some britches.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

I'm so sorry Anne, I didn't mean what I said just now, I really didn't.

ANNE

It's all right mother. I understand. You see Indians before you and you think savages. I look at white people now and think they are the savages. We live in two different worlds. I have made my life according to the destiny given to me and wish to continue with it, for my life is with my husband, my children and my tribe. I'm sorry but we don't fit in here, and probably never will.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

You could try and what about the children? Their education? They must be taught to read and write, surely you believe that?

ANNE

I can teach them mother. And they are being educated, the whole tribe takes care of all the children, they are well versed in survival, in hunting, in food gathering, in everything that they need to know in order to live.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

But what about their souls?

ANNE

We have our gods, our souls are just as good as the white man's.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

I don't see how that can be! But I won't argue.

ANNE

Mother I think it best if we leave quickly, we cannot adapt to the situation here or the circumstances. We would like to return to our village tomorrow, if that is not too soon?

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Of course it's too soon. But if you must, you

must. Pierre was right, my daughter is dead.

ANNE

No mother, I am reborn. I will always be your daughter, but I cannot live the life you live.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Oh I know, I know. Oh what a wretched country this is. First your father and now you. I will never get to see my grandchildren grow up.

ANNE

Of course you will. You can come and visit us. Pierre did.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Maybe.

They are interrupted by Pierre's arrival.

PIERRE

What's going on?

ANNE

We have decided to leave tomorrow.

PIERRE

You can't be serious! But you just got here! Think of the children, the long journey, surely you must need rest before going off again?

ANNE

I think we sleep much better and rest more under the open sky.

PIERRE

Mother! Say something.

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

She is right, they do not belong here and her heart is with her new life. You cannot change the past, you can only hope to affect the future. She must go back to her new family and life and I think I must return to my old one.

PIERRE

What are you saying? Go back to France!

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Yes, my sister keeps asking me to come and live with her. I miss the comforts of the city, this new continent is not to my liking. It has taken two of the people I held most dear and you Pierre seem to have found your niche. Yes, I think I will return to France.

BLACK ELK

Where is France, maman?

ANNE

A long way away, across the oceans.

WHITE DEER

What are oceans?

ANNE

A thousand times bigger than any lake you have seen. France is a long way away. Further than we journeyed to see grande maman.

BLACK ELK/WHITE DEER

Further!?

ANNE

Yes, the other side of the world.

WHITE DEER

Can we go there, some day?

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

I would like that, you could come and visit me.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ROAD FROM FORT MINOT - EARLY MORNING

The small group, Benoit and Pierre laugh as Blue Eagle divests himself of the britches and shirt.

BLUE EAGLE

I could not breathe! It was as though they were squeezing the breath out of me!

They journey on and soon reach the Missouri where they make camp beside it. After eating they lie down to sleep Anne hanging the baby, in its cradle, from a tree branch close by.

When Anne wakes in the morning she sees Benoit busy building up the camp fire and her brother's blanket empty, of him there is no sign. She stands and goes over to the branch where

she had hung the baby in its cradle. She suddenly stops and stands looking in horror at the branch, there is no cradle. She looks around at all the other trees, there is no cradle there either.

She runs over to Blue Eagle and shakes him awake. He sits up groggily.

ANNE

Blue Eagle! Wake up! Wake up!

BLUE EAGLE

What? What is it?

ANNE

The baby is gone!

BLUE EAGLE

Gone?

ANNE

Yes! Gone!

Benoit has noticed something is going on and comes over to them. Anne is now sobbing.

BENOIT

What is it? Que ce passe-t-il?

ANNE

The baby and her cradle are gone.

BENOIT

Oh God in heaven, what could have happened.

He goes over to where the cradle had hung and examines the ground beneath the branch.

BENOIT

Well nothing to see here, the ground is far too hard.

Anne goes over to her saddle bag, pulls out her mother's pistolet and inserts the last two bullets before going over to White Dove and gently waking her up.

ANNE

Someone or something has taken the baby. Benoit and Blue Eagle have gone to see if they can pick up any tracks. I am going to follow them. Will you please watch over the children.

WHITE DOVE

Your brother, where is your brother? Did he go with Benoit and my son?

ANNE

Pierre, no I didn't see him when I woke up. Pray he hasn't done something foolish like taken the baby back to the fort for my mother. I never thought of that!

WHITE DOVE

That is not what I meant. I do not think he would do such a thing. Besides, see, his horse is still over there with ours. Perhaps he saw something or someone and followed.

ANNE

Pray to God that he is all right then.

Without a backward glance Anne runs off in the direction taken by Benoit and Blue Eagle, passing the horses as she does. Noting Benoit's rifle still strapped to his horse's saddle she grabs it and runs into the trees where the others have disappeared. As she enters she hears a gunshot. Slowly she advances until she can hear voices, arguing. She inches forward and is astounded to see the man who had attacked her near her lodge facing Blue Eagle and Benoit who are sat squatting on the edge of a clearing facing the man with the body of Pierre, a knife in his back between them. From the man's mount, tethered to a tree, hangs the baby's cradle. As Anne gets closer she notices that Blue Eagle is bleeding profusely from his left shoulder and that the man has his rifle trained on both he and Benoit. As Anne inches her way around the man speaks.

MAN

The bitch is going to pay with her life for what she did to me.

BENOIT

What did she do to you?

MAN

Shut up you filthy French bastard. She had my brothers killed by her Indian friends and then, after they had scalped us, they set fire

to us! That's what she did. That's what those Indian bastards did to us. Do you understand? Look at me! Just look!

And screaming he pulls off his hat and the scarf which covers his purple, hairless pate.

MAN  
Look!

Anne recognizes him as the icy blue-eyed attacker. As she puts her hand to her mouth in fear the man primes his rifle and points it at Blue Eagle.

MAN  
You and your kind must die. You are filth. Pray for you are about to meet your maker.

ANNE  
No!

Anne runs out from where she was hiding.

ANNE  
No, you cannot blame him, or any of us, for your stupidity and the cruelty and greed of you and your cohorts!

MAN  
Ha! You wish to save him? Then you must come with me.

ANNE  
Do what you want with me, but let my husband and my baby go, please.

BLUE EAGLE  
No. Red Deer! No.

ANNE  
I must Blue Eagle, I must.

She slowly moves towards the man and is almost upon him.

MAN  
Ha! My beauty, mine at long last.

He grabs her roughly and lets off a shot at the same time in Blue Eagle's direction catching him in the chest. Anne screams while the man laughs maniacally as Blue Eagle writhes on the ground and the baby begins to wail.

Anne pushes her pistol under the man's heart and lets go two shots. He looks at her in surprise before sinking to his knees and falling forward on his face.

Benoit is besides her in two strides and takes the pistol from her as they fearfully go over to Blue Eagle who is bleeding profusely. Benoit stanches the wound with his shirt and ties his belt around Blue Eagle who lies down on the ground his eyes closed. Anne goes over to her brother and feeling for a pulse realizes he is dead. She sobs uncontrollably until Benoit hands her the baby and she sits down to nurse her next to Blue Eagle.

Benoit carries Pierre from the clearing, returning some time later to remove the dead Englishman.

When he returns he has White Dove and the twins with him who all run over to Blue Eagle.

WHITE DEER

Oh Maman, Papa is going to be all right,  
isn't he? He's not going to die too, is he?

ANNE

I think he is going to be all right but he has  
lost a lot of blood and we should not move  
him for a few days.

WHITE DOVE

Oh my God, I can't believe it.

ANNE

Neither can I. I thought the nightmare of my  
escape from the murdering party was over.  
Well at least we now know them all dead.  
Imagine what might have been had I not had  
my mother's pistolet. I took it with me to return  
to her, but now I am so glad that I forgot all  
about it for it has saved our lives twice now.  
Without it Blue Eagle and I would both be dead.

WHITE DOVE

The white man's weapons are strong indeed.

ANNE

I will have to go back to the Fort with Benoit.  
My brother's death will be more than my mother  
can take at this point. Will you stay here with  
Blue Eagle and the children?

WHITE DOVE

Of course. You do what you have to do and I  
will nurse my son and the children will help. Go,  
do not worry, we will be fine. We have lots of  
provisions and there is fresh fruit and game is  
plentiful in the area. We will be all right.

With Benoit's help the provisions are moved to the clearing and Blue Eagle is made comfortable

wrapped up in his blanket with his medicine pouch. After kissing them all goodbye Anne and Benoit ride off to Fort Minot, Pierre across his mount and the Englishman across Blue Eagle's.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD AT FORT MINOT - DAWN

Pierre's coffin is being laid in the ground with full military honors next to his father's.  
Anne and

her mother walk arm in arm to where Anne's mount and Blue Eagle's stand, the latter packed with provisions by the now contrite people of Fort Minot.

ANNE

Remember to write me care of Fort Berthold,  
maman!

MADAME DE SEYGNAC

Yes, I promise. And here, I obtained more  
bullets for my pistolet. I want you to keep it,  
in the hope that you may never have to use it

again. But if you do...

They kiss and hug as Anne mounts her horse and, with Blue Eagle's alongside, she rides off  
dust  
swirling all about. As they gallop the hoof beats are echoed by distant thunder.

ANNE

To Like-a-Fish-hook after we meet up with  
my family. Home, home, home.

ON SCREEN:

In the 1880's land allotment brought an end to the prosperity of Fort Berthold, mua-iudskupe-hises "Like a Fish hook". The villagers were forced to scatter to the four winds, their lodges toppled and totally destroyed in order to prevent anyone returning. In 1954 any remains that might have survived were flooded under the U.S.. Government's Garrison Dam project which was built over tribal protests.

The descendants of the survivors of the smallpox epidemic, who had managed to make a new life for themselves and their families at mua-iudskupe-hises, live on in the community known as the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation.

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