

A New Beginning

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. GOLD NUGGET - DAY ONE

JAKE and **TERESA** stand on the porch of the Gold Nugget, waiting with anticipation. A moment passes, then **HANK** comes out, holding a piece of paper. He hands it to Jake, who reads, insulted by what Hank has written on it.

JAKE
A thousand dollars?

HANK
You wanted my best offer.

JAKE
My share of the Gold Nugget's worth a *lot* more'n a thousand dollars!

HANK
Maybe awhile back it was. Not now. Business ain't been good, we got expenses --

JAKE
We wouldn't *have* this hotel if it wasn't for the gold nugget my Pa left me, and that nugget was worth *twice* as much as this -- (indicates amount on paper)

HANK
Yeah, well maybe I was better off when it was just my saloon. Hotel's what's draggin' us down. (starting back in) You want a better offer, go find one.

Hank goes inside. Teresa takes the paper from Jake, looks down at the amount.

TERESA

It is still a lot of money.

JAKE

Don't come close to payin' off your mortgage.

Teresa quiets as Jake fumes, pondering his next move.

EXT. GRACE'S CAFE - DAY ONE

An impromptu celebration is under way. MIKE (holding KATIE), SULLY, MATTHEW and BRIAN are with COLLEEN at a table, surrounded by a crowd of well-wishers, including ANDREW, ROBERT E, the REVEREND, HORACE and GRACE, who pours lemonade for the group. LOREN and PRESTON are also here, on the fringe.

Colleen and the family (and Andrew) are dressed for travel (the men in suits), having just returned home on the train. Mike's filling in the group on the details of the trip:

MIKE

It was a wonderful ceremony. The graduating class was very impressive.

BRIAN

(also to the group) Colleen even got to give a speech.

COLLEEN

I was so nervous -- thought I was gonna faint.

SULLY

You did real good.

GRACE

Can't believe you re already finished with college.

REVEREND

Sure was a quick two years.

ANDREW

Actually, I was thinking just the opposite.

Everyone laughs at this. Preston spots something offscreen and raises an eyebrow, leaning close to Loren.

PRESTON
Oh, look...

ANGLE ON DOROTHY AND CLOUD DANCING

coming into the cafe together and making a bee-line for Colleen and the family.

PRESTON (O.S.)
The lovely couple.

DOROTHY
Colleen, congratulations!

Dorothy hugs Colleen, then Cloud Dancing hugs her.

CLOUD DANCING
Congratulations.

COLLEEN
Thanks.

DOROTHY
(to Mike) When'd you get back?

MIKE
Just now. We came straight over from the station.

DOROTHY
(back to Colleen) I'm gonna write a special article about you in the Gazette. (to family)
Not every day somebody from Colorado Springs graduates from college.

CLOUD DANCING
(to Mike and Sully) How was the ceremony?

As Dorothy, Cloud Dancing and the family talk:

PRESTON

notes the disgusted looks Cloud Dancing and Dorothy are drawing from the other customers. He lowers his voice to Loren:

PRESTON

It's getting worse, you know. Downright flagrant.

LOREN

What's that?

PRESTON

(indicating Dorothy and Cloud Dancing) Them... and this bizarre "courtship" of theirs.

Loren's not a fan of Dorothy and Cloud Dancing's relationship either, but he's no longer antagonistic toward them.

LOREN

They ain't hurtin' anybody.

PRESTON

On the contrary. They're hurting *me*, and my business. (off Loren's look) The Gazette, you remember, is half mine. And sales have been declining ever since they chose to display their sentiments of regard so... explicitly.

Loren gives him a look that lets Preston know he's confused Loren with someone who gives a shit.

LOREN

Yeah, well, whaddaya gonna do.

Before Preston can respond, Jake and Teresa approach him.

JAKE

Preston, we need to talk to you. In private.

Preston's interest is piqued. Jake and Teresa lead him off as:

MATTHEW

rises, **CLINKING** a fork against his glass to quiet the group.

MATTHEW

Folks... everybody, can I have your attention? (the crowd quiets) I wanna propose a toast... (turns to Colleen) To my little sister, who just graduated from the Colorado Seminary College... and made her big brother awfully proud.

Colleen smiles at Matthew, touched, as everyone raises their glasses and drinks.

MATTHEW

Once she gets accepted to medical school, won't be long fore we gotta start callin' her Doctor Colleen Cooper.

Applause from the group. Colleen's voice quiets them:

COLLEEN

Actually... two days ago I got a letter from the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania... (to the group) That's the school Dr. Mike went to.

Colleen removes the letter from her handbag as she turns nervously to Mike.

COLLEEN

Been afraid to open it. Guess now's as good a time as any.

All eyes -- especially Mike's -- are glued anxiously to Colleen as she opens the envelope and takes out the letter. As she reads, a huge smile forms on her face.

COLLEEN

They accepted me!

Mike jumps up, leading the group in cheers for Colleen. She hugs Colleen tightly, overjoyed.

MIKE

Oh, Colleen...

Sully and the rest of the family take turns hugging Colleen, thrilled for her. Andrew smiles, very proud of Colleen, but also knowing this means she will be leaving Colorado Springs.

ANDREW

Congratulations, Colleen. And well deserved.

COLLEEN

Thanks.

BRIAN

Does this mean you're gonna have to go all the way to Pennsylvania for school?

COLLEEN

That's right. (looking back at the letter) Says I have to be in Philadelphia in three weeks to complete matriculation.

MIKE

(still excited) Three weeks! That doesn't give us much time.

COLLEEN

(replying to Mike, but looking at Andrew) No, it doesn't.

Whatever smile Andrew's been able to muster has now faded. Colleen gives him an apologetic look before she's pulled away by the adoring townsfolk, who continue to smother her with hugs and kisses. Andrew sinks down in his chair, trying to absorb this sudden shock as we:

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. BANK - DAY ONE

Jake and Teresa sit opposite Preston, who's behind his desk, finalizing some figures on two contracts.

PRESTON

Now all I need is your signature here, and the transaction will be complete.

Jake signs. Preston turns to Teresa, indicating on the second form where to sign.

PRESTON

Mrs. Moral -- (catches himself) Mrs. Slicker -- if you'll sign right here... (she does) Your mortgage is now officially paid off. Congratulations.

Teresa and Jake share a smile, greatly relieved. Preston turns back to Jake.

PRESTON

Now... regarding the Gold Nugget. Will you inform Hank of the change of ownership, or

shall I?

JAKE
I'll tell him.

PRESTON
Let him know that I am thrilled to be in business with him. (smiles) I have big plans for that hotel. We'll add on a second floor, perhaps knock out a few walls, convert the saloon into a dining room...

JAKE
(also smiles) Hank's gonna love it.

Jake and Teresa go out as Horace comes in the front door, holding a letter.

HORACE
Preston, letter just come for you. Marked "urgent."

Preston takes the letter and opens it, begins reading. Horace gives him a cool look before going out.

HORACE
(under his breath) You're welcome.

Horace goes out as Preston reads... and as he reads, a look of horror washes over his face. He staggers back, sinking in his chair as he takes in what is obviously very bad news.

INT. HOMESTEAD - CLOSE ON COLLEEN - DAY ONE

reading a telegram, a big smile on her face.

COLLEEN
It's from Grandma.

Colleen continues to read as she turns to Mike, who's busy chopping vegetables for dinner.

COLLEEN
She's happy that I chose the Women's Medical College for my schoolin'. (looking up) Not like I had much choice. Hardly any medical schools that accept women.

MIKE
Not yet, anyway.

COLLEEN
(reads some more) She says she'll come visit me in Philadelphia, seein' as it's not so far from Boston.

Colleen lowers the telegram and sits at the table, pondering her future with a mixture of excitement and apprehension.

COLLEEN
Oh, Ma... Philadelphia. Such a long way from home. I mean, it's not like Denver, where I could come back now and then.

Mike stops chopping and sits beside Colleen. She is extremely happy for Colleen, and does nothing to hide it.

MIKE
It is a long way, Colleen. And we'll all miss you very much. (beat, reflecting) And it'll be a lot of hard work. I remember the first few weeks, I was completely overwhelmed. I wanted to climb aboard the next coach and head straight for home. (smiles) But then I grew to love it, and you will too. You'll meet new people and learn extraordinary things. And when you're finished... (emotions rising) Colleen, you'll be a doctor.

The reality of this returns the smile to Colleen's face.

INT. GOLD NUGGET - CLOSE ON HANK - NIGHT ONE

reacting with anger to what Jake just told him.

HANK
You *what*?!

The usual evening crowd falls silent at the sound of Hank's raised voice. Jake remains calm throughout.

JAKE
You told me to find a better offer, and I did. Effective immediately.

HANK
You can't do this!

JAKE
It's done.

Jake starts out. Hank yells after him from behind the bar:

HANK
I ain't goin' into business with Preston!

Jake pauses at the door, his voice irritatingly pleasant.

JAKE
Then you shoulda offered me more money.

And out he goes. Hank just stands there, steaming.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY TWO

Dorothy stands with Cloud Dancing, who has laid out various trade goods on the counter for Loren. Among the goods are several beaded necklaces and bracelets, and some colorful blankets. Loren inspects the goods carefully, trying not to let on how impressed he is with them.

LOREN
I'll give ya twenty-five cents each for the bracelets, forty for the necklaces... and a dollar for the blankets.

CLOUD DANCING
The blankets are one dollar and fifty cents.

LOREN
(insulted) A buck fifty? I'll be lucky to sell *one* a these blankets. Just look at 'em -- too much color. Blankets should keep people warm, not blind 'em.

CLOUD DANCING
(impassive) You will sell them, and that is why you will pay me one dollar and fifty cents.

Dorothy can't help but smile, which irritates Loren all the more. He turns back to Cloud Dancing.

LOREN
Lemme explain somethin' to you. In business, we got somethin' we call profit, see, and

what profit means is --

Loren is interrupted by Mike, who enters holding a copy of the Gazette.

MIKE

Dorothy, this article about Colleen is excellent. She'll love it.

DOROTHY

I only wish more people in town would read it. Folks ain't been buyin' the paper much lately.

LOREN

Maybe they don't care much for the editor's choice of friends.

Loren casts a glance at Cloud Dancing, who turns to Dorothy -- they both know Loren is right. Mike sees this uneasy exchange and turns back to Loren.

MIKE

If that were true, Loren, I'm certain it's only temporary. (to Dorothy) The Gazette is a fine paper.

LOREN

Not to mention the only one in town.

Mike looks back to Dorothy and Cloud Dancing, giving them an encouraging smile.

MIKE

People will come around eventually. You can wait them out.

Dorothy is bolstered by this. Mike squeezes her hand reassuringly, then goes back out, leaving Loren once again facing the impassive Cloud Dancing.

LOREN

Now... where were we?

CLOUD DANCING

You were explaining how you will sell the blankets for two dollars each, which will earn you fifty cents in profit from the one dollar and fifty cents you pay me.

Loren just shakes his head with the frustrating realization -- This guy is good.

EXT. LIVERY - DAY TWO

Robert E finishes hammering a shoe onto Sully's horse's hoof as Sully looks on. WOLF is nearby. Robert E stands, wipes the sweat from his brow.

ROBERT E
Should hold ya awhile.

SULLY
Thanks, Robert E.

Grace comes in from the cafe carrying three glasses of lemonade on a tray.

Her smile is warm and peaceful, a welcome change from the Grace we've seen of late.

GRACE
You men thirsty?

The men take the glasses.

SULLY
Thanks, Grace.

GRACE
You're welcome.

Grace and Robert E exchange an intimate smile before Grace leaves. Sully turns to Robert E as he watches her go.

SULLY
Looks like things're patchin' up 'tween you and Grace.

ROBERT E
Still gonna take some time, Sully. Wounds run pretty deep. But... last few weeks have been good -- real good. Like bein' in a dream. (smiles) An' I pray to God I don't wake up from it.

Sully returns the smile as Horace walks up, holding a telegram.

HORACE
Sully... you got another telegram from Senator Dinston.

SULLY

Thanks, Horace.

Sully takes the telegram and reads. Robert E sees that Sully is not happy about what it says.

ROBERT E

Bad news?

SULLY

He's got some investors lookin' to cash in on tourist dollars from the National Parks. (folds up telegram) Railroad wants to build a line into Yellowstone. Businessmen are already linin' up to build as many hotels as they can.

HORACE

But isn't protectin' the land from development one a the reasons for startin' the park?

SULLY

Yup. That's why I gotta go to St. Louis next month to talk him out of it. Lotsa places outside the park to build their hotels.

Sully starts off (with Wolf), heading into:

EXT. GRACE'S CAFE - CONTINUOUS - DAY TWO

where he makes his way toward the clinic. But something on the way catches his eye. He pauses at a table, where Andrew sits (his back to Sully) reading the Gazette, a forlorn look on his face. Sully peers over his shoulder at the headline of the article, reading out loud:

SULLY

"Local Girl Accepted to Philadelphia Medical School."

Andrew startles a bit, turns to see Sully.

SULLY

Looks like interestin' readin'.

ANDREW

Oh... yes. It's a wonderful article. I'm so happy for Colleen.

But the smile on his face is forced, and Sully can see right through it.

SULLY
You sure about that?

ANDREW
(caught off guard) What? (quickly recovering) I mean, yes, of course I'm sure. This is an incredible opportunity for Colleen. I couldn't be happier for her.

SULLY
(sits facing him) Me too.

Sully falls silent, waiting. He knows Andrew will eventually get to the truth. After a beat, he does:

ANDREW
I guess I've just been... I don't know, worrying. (beat) I'm afraid of losing her, Sully.

SULLY
Then don't.

ANDREW
(confused) What are you saying? I can't tell her *not* to go --

SULLY
That's not what I'm sayin'. (stands) What I'm sayin' is if that's how you feel, maybe you oughta stop worryin' so much... and start doin' somethin' about it.

Sully goes off, leaving Andrew deep in thought.

EXT. BANK - DAY TWO

A still fuming Hank marches up the street and over to the bank. He tries to open the door, but finds it locked. It's now that he notices the "CLOSED" sign in the window.

HORACE (O.S.)
Bank's closed.

Hank turns to see Horace passing by, delivering mail.

HORACE

(suspicious) Preston said he was feelin' "ill" this mornin'.

Hank starts away, but Horace's voice stops him.

HORACE

Sounds a mite peculiar if you ask me. (as Hank looks back) Got clerks workin' for him. Lotsa times they run the bank without him. You ask me, somethin's --

HANK

(no time for this) Well nobody's askin' you, are they?

And off he goes, heading back toward the Gold Nugget. Horace shrugs off the snub and continues back to the telegraph office.

EXT. GOLD NUGGET - CONTINUOUS - DAY TWO

Hank makes his way to the front door, is about to go in when:

PRESTON (O.S.)

Pssst. Hank.

Hank turns to see Preston peering around the corner, not looking ill, but instead, very stressed. Those in the audience paying attention will notice that he hasn't changed his clothes from yesterday. Probably hasn't slept, either.

PRESTON

(hushed) I need to talk to you.

HANK

(starting over) Damn right you do.

Preston leads Hank quickly around the side of the building, to a more private spot.

HANK

Jake had no right doin' what he did. There's no way I'm gonna --

PRESTON

(cutting him off) I want to sell my share of the Gold Nugget. Are you interested?

This stops Hank dead in his tracks. The anger washes away, replaced now by suspicion.

HANK

You wanna sell your share? (Preston nods) The share you just bought from Jake?

PRESTON

(losing patience) Yes.

HANK

What's the catch?

PRESTON

(now *he's* getting angry) No catch. Are you interested or not?

HANK

Sure I'm interested. But my offer's the same one I gave Jake... (beat) Eight hundred dollars.

PRESTON

(furious) Eight hundred! That's robbery!

But Preston is desperate; he struggles with what he should do. After a difficult beat:

PRESTON

Fine. Eight hundred. But I need the money now.

Once again, Hank is surprised. He stands there staring at Preston, increasingly perplexed by his odd behavior. And Preston is becoming increasingly annoyed with Hank.

PRESTON

Well? Are we going to settle this deal or not?

HANK

(beat, smiles) Sure.

EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY TWO

Sully and Matthew are out front, greasing the wheels of the buckboard, while Brian brushes down a horse in the corral.

Wolf is nearby. All stop what they're doing when Andrew rides up on his horse, looking extremely nervous.

BRIAN
Hey, Andrew.

ANDREW
(to all) Hello. (to Sully) I've come to see Colleen. Is she here?

SULLY
Inside.

Andrew dismounts. He draws a deep breath and makes his way up to the front door. Curious, Sully, Matthew and Brian follow behind at an inconspicuous distance, hanging back at the bottom of the stairs as Andrew knocks on the door.

Colleen answers the door, holding Katie, with Mike standing behind her. Colleen is pleasantly surprised to see Andrew.

COLLEEN
Andrew, what are you doin' out here?

Which makes Andrew even more nervous.

ANDREW
I, uh... I need to talk to you. Alone, if I may.

Colleen sees how uneasy Andrew is and becomes suddenly wary.

COLLEEN
Sure.

SULLY
(to Matthew and Brian) C'mon. Let's get a drink of water.

He leads Matthew and Brian into the house as Colleen hands Katie to Mike and steps out onto the porch with Andrew.

INT. HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS - DAY TWO

Sully closes the door, facing an intensely curious Mike, as Brian and Matthew move to get some water from the kitchen.

MIKE

(suspicion growing) What do you suppose that's about?

Sully has a hunch as to why Andrew's here, but he chooses not to disclose it. He simply shrugs and moves off into the kitchen. Mike follows.

The whole family is itching to know what is going on outside, and it's all they can do to keep from spying on Colleen and Andrew from the window.

After a beat, Mike can resist no longer. She leans ever so slightly toward the window to peek.

**SULLY
(gently chiding) Michaela, c'mon, give em some privacy --**

**MIKE
(reacting to what she sees) He's holding her hands.**

Sully quickly joins her at the window, with Matthew and Brian right on his heels.

THEIR POV - THROUGH WINDOW

of Colleen and Andrew, now at the foot of the stairs. Andrew is holding her hands, still looking very nervous. He's saying something to her... something that brings a huge smile to Colleen's face. She literally jumps for joy and throws her arms around him, hugging him.

ON THE FAMILY

watching this, curiosity brimming.

THEIR POV - THROUGH WINDOW

Colleen takes Andrew's hand and leads him up the stairs to the house.

BACK TO THE FAMILY

as they quickly scramble away from the window, assuming poses of nonchalance, just as the door swings open, and Colleen and Andrew come in.

**COLLEEN
Everybody, we've got great news! (bubbling with excitement) We're gonna get married!**

Matthew, Brian and Sully break into grins and quickly move to congratulate the couple. But Mike just stands there a moment.

There's a smile frozen on her face, but she's clearly been broadsided by this sudden revelation, and it's on her stunned look that we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. BARN - DAY TWO

Sully enters the barn to discover Mike busily scooping hay into the feed boxes for the horses.

SULLY
Michaela... how come you're not inside the house with the rest of the family, celebratin'?

MIKE
I'll be along in a moment. I want to finish feeding the horses.

Sully just stands there, watching as she continues to work.

SULLY
Andrew says he's gonna quit workin' at the Chateau clinic, start his own practice in Philadelphia.

MIKE
That's good. He deserves his own practice, away from Preston's control.

SULLY
Be nice havin' him there to look out for Colleen.

MIKE
Yes. That will be nice.

There's no harshness in Mike's tone, but something is bothering her, and finally she

stops working, looks at him.

MIKE

It's just... this is all so sudden. I can't help suspecting that this marriage proposal only happened now because Colleen is going off to school.

SULLY

Prob'ly. But that don't change the fact that those two love each other. I figure it was bound to happen sooner or later.

Mike thinks about this, realizing he's right.

MIKE

True... (manages a smile) Although I was hoping for later.

Sully smiles, puts his arms around her. She leans into his embrace, still reeling from the shock.

EXT. CHATEAU - DAY TWO

A nervous Andrew makes his way over to Preston, who sits on the verandah, poring through a stack of ledgers and account books. He still has yet to change his clothes.

ANDREW

Preston, may I have a word with you?

PRESTON

(not looking up) I'm busy.

ANDREW

I'm afraid it can't wait; it's rather important. It won't take long --

Preston slams down the ledgers and looks at him, exasperated.

PRESTON

Fine, Andrew. You may have a word with me. But no more than a *word*.

Andrew's impulse is to get angry. But then he catches himself, and smiles -- this is going to be much easier than he thought.

ANDREW

Actually, it's *two* words -- I quit.

Andrew prepares for Preston's harsh response, ready to get into it with him. But Preston is strangely silent for a moment, absorbing what Andrew has told him.

ANDREW

Meaning I'll no longer be running the clinic here at the --

PRESTON

(calm) I heard you. (beat) Fine.

And with that, he returns to his ledgers. Andrew can't believe it -- two years of dedicated service, and this is the response he gets? He turns and walks away, happier than ever about deciding to leave.

INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT TWO

Colleen, unable to sleep, comes downstairs to discover Mike, also awake, seated in front of the fireplace. An open trunk is beside her; draped across her lap is her wedding dress. Mike looks over as Colleen steps toward her.

MIKE

I couldn't sleep.

COLLEEN

Neither could I.

Colleen sits beside her, admiring the beautiful dress.

COLLEEN

Your weddin' dress.

MIKE

I'm remembering my wedding day... how chaotic it was... and how wonderful.

Colleen has sensed that Mike may be uneasy about her decision to marry Andrew, and tries to allay her fears.

COLLEEN

I know this has all happened so fast. But I do love Andrew, and he loves me. I wanna marry him more than anythin'. (beat) I hope you can be happy for me.

MIKE

(beat, sincere) I am happy for you, Colleen.

COLLEEN

And don't worry bout the weddin'. It doesn't have to be anythin' special.

MIKE

Of course it does. My daughter is getting married, I want it to be done right.

Colleen smiles, pleased that Mike is seemingly on board with this. She grows quiet a beat, looking down at Mike's dress.

COLLEEN

Could I wear your dress?

MIKE

(smiles, touched) I wouldn't have it any other way.

COLLEEN

I was also hopin' you'd be my matron of honor.

Mike is visibly moved by this.

MIKE

(gently) Colleen... it's not proper for the mother of the bride to be the matron of honor.

COLLEEN

I don't care what's proper and what isn't. All I know is I want you standin' up there beside me.

Mike can barely restrain the tears as she hugs Colleen tightly. But as the reality of Colleen getting married continues to sink in, Mike's apprehension increases, and we see in her eyes the uncertainty she's trying hard to keep hidden.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY THREE

Brian is at the table, looking through one of Loren's catalogues. Loren hovers over his shoulder. Brian sees something that appeals to him and points to it.

BRIAN

This one.

LOREN

Ah... silver picture frame. Very nice.

BRIAN

Gonna put a photograph in it of the whole family to give to Colleen as a present.

LOREN

Silver ain't cheap. Gonna cost ya.

During this Dorothy enters, steps up to the front counter.

BRIAN

I know. I got lotsa money saved up.

LOREN

All right then, I'll put the order in first thing.

DOROTHY

While you're at it, I need you to order printin' supplies for me. Ink and paper, and some of that grease for the press. Handle's stickin' again.

Loren begins to write up the orders as Preston comes in and moves to Dorothy, lowering his voice. Although he's finally changed his clothes, his desperation continues to increase.

PRESTON

Dorothy, I need to speak with you.

The look on his face tells Dorothy that this is serious.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS - DAY THREE

Preston leads Dorothy outside for a private conversation.

PRESTON

I don't know how to put this delicately; I'm afraid I must call in your loan on the Gazette.

DOROTHY

(stunned) what?

PRESTON

Not by choice. My hand was forced.

DOROTHY

If this is about sales dropping --

PRESTON

It has nothing to do with that. I merely need to liquidate certain assets as quickly as Possible. So unless you have the money to purchase the Gazette outright ---

DOROTHY

You're gonna sell the Gazette?

PRESTON

As I said, it's not by choice. (not happy about doing this) I'll expect payment as soon as possible.

He walks off, leaving Dorothy clearly shaken.

INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT THREE

Mike, Sully, Matthew, Colleen, Brian and Katie are at the table, going over wedding plans. Wolf is on the floor nearby. Colleen's excitement -- as well as the rest of the family's -- is building, but Mike still harbors reservations about the wedding. She covers by channeling her energy into the preparations, jotting down the plans as they're discussed.

MIKE

I spoke to the Reverend today. He'll perform the ceremony.

COLLEEN

And I talked to Grace. She said she'd be happy to make the food for the reception.

MIKE

I wired your grandmother, although I doubt there's enough time for her to make it to the wedding.

COLLEEN

That's all right.

MATTHEW

(to colleen) Maybe you oughta send a wire to Pa, let 'im know about the weddin'.

Colleen exchanges a look with Matthew and Brian, considering this.

COLLEEN

Yeah. S'pose I should invite him. (beat) But I'm gonna make it clear -- if he shows up, I don't want him to be the one who gives me away.

Colleen looks back to Sully, speaking from the heart.

COLLEEN

I want it to be you, Sully.

Sully wasn't expecting this, and it floors him. He falls silent a moment, then:

SULLY

I'd be honored.

Mike can't help but be moved. She reaches out and takes Sully's hand, clutching it tightly.

EXT. GRACE'S CAFE - DAY FOUR

Dorothy, deeply troubled, sits with Cloud Dancing, explaining her situation to him.

DOROTHY

We own the paper together. Preston owns 49 percent, I own 51 percent. But the reason I own that 51 percent is 'cause Preston's bank loaned me the money. (beat, frustrated) I don't know what I'm gonna do. I can't pay off my loan. I got some money saved up, but not nearly enough...

CLOUD DANCING

Could you not apply for a loan from another bank?

DOROTHY

I tried that before. None of the banks would do business with me.

CLOUD DANCING

You must try again.

DOROTHY

Won't do any good. I contacted banks in Denver and --

CLOUD DANCING
Dorothy.

The firmness of his voice quiets her.

CLOUD DANCING

I have seen the joy the Gazette has brought you. To live one's dream is a sacred gift. You must not let that gift be taken from you. (beat) You must try again.

His words hit home. Dorothy nods quietly.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY FOUR

Matthew is on his way out of the store as Andrew walks up. Andrew is extremely cheerful, unable to hide his growing excitement about marrying Colleen.

ANDREW
Matthew, just the man I've been looking for.

MATTHEW
Hey, Andrew. How ya holdin' up? Gettin' cold feet yet?

ANDREW
On the contrary. I've never been so excited in all my life.

MATTHEW
Well... just so you know... Brian and me are lookin' forward to havin' you as a brother.

ANDREW
(moved) Thank you, Matthew. (beat) I was wondering if you would consider being my best man.

MATTHEW
Me?

ANDREW
You don't have to. I only --

MATTHEW
'Course I'll do it. Be proud to.

Andrew smiles, relieved. As he and Matthew shake hands, we HEAR SOME RAISED VOICES offscreen. The two look to:

THE BANK

where a crowd of angry people are gathering. Horace is at the locked front door, banging on it. He holds a folded newspaper in his hands.

HORACE

Open up, Preston! You can't stay closed forever!

Preston peers out the window, unnerved by the growing crowd.

PRESTON

I'll open tomorrow, I promise.

HORACE

You said that yesterday!

Matthew and Andrew arrive from the store.

MATTHEW

What's the problem, Horace?

Horace shows him the newspaper. It's from Denver, and the headline reads: "STOCK MARKET PLUMMETS."

HORACE

Just got this paper from Denver. Says the Stock Market crashed -- people everywhere are gettin' their money outta the banks.

PRESTON

(still through the window) It's important that we *do not* panic.

MATTHEW

Preston, get out here.

Preston hesitates a beat... then unlocks the door and cautiously opens it. The crowd surges forward, but Matthew and Andrew step in the way, blocking them.

MATTHEW

Hang on, now! Hang on!

HORACE

We want our money!

Others in the crowd voice the same sentiment.

PRESTON

I'm afraid it's not as simple as that. You can't all just walk into the bank and demand to withdraw your money.

HORACE

Why not?

Preston quiets a moment, realizing he has words this.

PRESTON

Look... the way banking works is that as you deposit your money, the bank in turn invests that money in order to make *more* money, which is then passed back to you in the form of interest on your deposits. So you see --

ANDREW

What did you invest their money in?

Preston shoots Andrew an angry look.

PRESTON

Stocks. (back to the crowd) Which is how most banks invest their money. Oftentimes purchased on margin.

ANDREW

Margin?

Preston realizes Andrew's not going to let him get away without clearly explaining his situation, so he comes clean.

PRESTON

Credit. Ten cents on the dollar. Unfortunately, as the stock market dropped, my broker demanded that I put up the full value of the stock I had purchased.

MATTHEW

(cuts to the chase) So what you're sayin' is you lost all these folks' money.

Silence, as all eyes turn to Preston for confirmation.

PRESTON

I lost *my* money as well.

HORACE

I don't care about your money. I want *my* money, *now!*

The crowd surges forward again.

PRESTON

Didn't you hear what I said?! I don't have it!

The crowd continues to storm forward. Matthew and Andrew move in to protect Preston from being lynched on the spot. Matthew hustles him into the bank and shuts the door, before turning back to the crowd to calm their growing anger.

INT. CLINIC - DAY FOUR

Colleen sits on the examination table, waiting as Mike makes some adjustments to her wedding veil.

MIKE

I'm not sure how elaborate the Farewell Luncheon will be. Grace said we could have it in the cafe.

Mike finishes her work on the veil and moves to Colleen, who hops off the table to try it on.

COLLEEN

I don't need a Farewell Luncheon, Ma.

MIKE

Of course you do. It's a bridal tradition. (re: the veil) Now let's see how this looks.

Mike places the veil in position. Colleen holds it there and turns to look at herself in the mirror. She's pleased with how she looks, but Mike is more critical.

MIKE

The lace needs to be more pronounced. We'll also accent it with a spray of orange blossoms.

As Mike takes the veil and goes back to work:

COLLEEN

Doesn't need to be fancy. I think it looks fine the way it is.

MIKE

Fine is not good enough, Colleen. The veil must be exquisite.

COLLEEN

You're startin' to sound like Grandma durin' your weddin'.

Mike stops what she's doing, stung by this.

MIKE

I just want everything to be nice.

Colleen quiets, feeling bad for saying this. But the fact is, Mike is not enjoying the planning of the wedding, and Colleen knows it.

COLLEEN

Grandma was never really happy about you marryin' Sully, was she?

MIKE

In the beginning, no. But she's grown to --

COLLEEN

Are you happy about me marryin' Andrew?

Mike pauses, trying to figure out the best way to respond to this.

MIKE

Colleen... the only concern I have with you marrying Andrew is that it not be done out of fear of being alone in Philadelphia. It's not fair to you or Andrew --

COLLEEN

How can you think that? I love Andrew, and he loves me.

MIKE

Then why couldn't you wait until after medical school to get married? If you truly love each other now, you'll still love each other then.

COLLEEN

This won't affect my schoolin'. I'm still gonna be a doctor --

MIKE

What if you become pregnant?

The suddenness of this question hits Colleen hard.

MIKE

Starting a family is a part of marriage.

COLLEEN

Well... we'll just have to work it out...

MIKE

That'll be difficult, with your school work

Colleen is hurt, and her hurt quickly turns to anger.

COLLEEN

I can't believe you're doin' this.

MIKE

I only want what's best for you --

COLLEEN

No you don't. you only want what *you* want. (starting out) We shoulda just eloped.

Colleen goes out, slamming the door behind her. Mike is left alone, more upset than ever as we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. CHATEAU GARDEN - DAY FOUR

Colleen sits with Andrew on the bench in the garden. She's just filled him in on her argument with Mike, and Andrew is troubled by it.

COLLEEN

I think we should just leave and get married in Philadelphia.

ANDREW

No. (off Colleen's look) I mean...

Andrew hesitates a moment. He's clearly disappointed by this turn of events, but knows what he must do:

ANDREW

Michaela does have a point. I would hate to see anything interfering with you becoming a doctor.

Colleen falls silent. Andrew sees that she is saddened by this, and tries to reassure her:

ANDREW

I do love you, Colleen. And I know without a doubt that I'll feel the same way two years from now.

Andrew lightly touches her chin, turning her face toward his.

ANDREW

Hopefully you'll feel the same as well.

Colleen looks at him. Although she is not happy about this situation, she's comforted by the love she sees in his eyes.

COLLEEN

'Course I will.

Andrew pulls her into a soft embrace, both trying hard to mask their obvious sadness.

EXT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY FOUR

The same group of angry townsfolk that tried to storm Preston's bank earlier (including Horace) are now congregated around Matthew and Sully. Also here are Brian, Hank,

Jake, Robert E and the Reverend. Everyone's still upset, but they're no longer in a lynching mood.

HORACE

There's gotta be somethin' we can do about it. I had all my money in that bank.

REVEREND

I had the church's tithe money in the bank as well.

HANK

(to Jake) Looks like you an' me are the lucky ones in this. You got your wife's mortgage paid off (smiles) An' I got me a sweet deal on the Gold Nugget.

ROBERT E

Grace an' me were thinkin' a puttin' some money in the bank. Now I'm glad we didn't.

JAKE

How 'bout you, Sully?

SULLY

Me and Michaela don't do business with Preston anymore.

MATTHEW

None of our family does.

Brian, looking very distraught, speaks up.

BRIAN

I did. (off their looks) I kept all my savin's in the bank.

Sully puts a hand on Brian's shoulder, consoling him. Jake turns to Matthew.

JAKE

When's Daniel gettin' back from Manitou? Oughta be some kinda law against what Preston did.

HORACE

That's right. If a customer puts money in a bank, the bank oughta be able to pay it back whenever the customer wants.

Others in the crowd voice their agreement. Matthew raises a hand, quieting them.

MATTHEW

I already did some checkin'. Turns out what Preston did was *not* illegal. Lotsa banks invest customers' money the same way. Preston just got caught when the market crashed.

Everyone quiets, taking in this frustrating news.

REVEREND

And now *we're* the ones payin' for Preston's greed.

PRESTON (O.S.)

We're *all* paying.

Everyone turns to see Preston standing nearby. Matthew expects the crowd to charge him, but they don't -- they've never seen Preston so humiliated and despondent, the very picture of defeat.

Preston walks to the telegraph office. The crowd parts, all eyes glaring at him as he steps up to Horace and holds out a piece of paper.

PRESTON

I'd like to send this telegram, announcing the sale of the Springs Chateau and Health Resort.

Reactions from the crowd -- they didn't realize in just how bad of shape Preston is. He takes out some money (to pay for the telegram) and holds it out with the paper, until Horace finally takes it.

MATTHEW

Who you gonna sell it to?

PRESTON

To whoever will buy it.

As he turns and starts away:

HORACE

Why don't you just ask your father for the money?

Preston pauses briefly, but says nothing. Clearly, this is not an option for him. After a beat he walks off. The crowd then begins to disperse as well.

CLOSE ON SULLY

watching Preston go, contemplating something. He turns to Horace.

SULLY

Horace, when you're finished, I'd like to send another telegram.

Horace nods as Sully fishes in his pocket for money.

INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT FOUR

Mike, Sully, Matthew, Brian and Katie sit eating dinner. Colleen's place at the table is noticeably vacant, and Mike is worried. After a strained silence, the front door opens, and Colleen comes in. Mike breathes a sigh of relief.

MIKE

There you are. We were getting worried.

Colleen pauses at the door, avoiding eye contact with Mike. Her mood is quiet and sullen.

COLLEEN

Andrew and I have decided to postpone the weddin'.

Surprised reactions from everyone, including Mike.

MATTHEW

What? Why?

COLLEEN

We're gonna wait 'til I'm done with medical school. (beat, fighting emotions) If you'll excuse me, I don't feel much like eatin'.

She doesn't wait to be excused -- she heads straight up the stairs, leaving the family stunned and disappointed.

Sully looks at Mike, knowing this probably has something to do with her. Mike feels the weight of his stare and looks away, feeling terrible.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY FIVE

Loren sets a box of printing supplies on the counter for Dorothy, who just stares down at them with a forlorn expression.

DOROTHY

Send em back. I won't be needin' the supplies after all.

Loren reacts, feeling sad for Dorothy.

LOREN

Cloud Dancin' told me 'bout Preston callin' in your loan. (hopeful) But he also said you were gonna try an' get a loan from another bank.

DOROTHY

I did. Sent wires to eight banks in Denver and St. Louis. Not one is even remotely interested in givin' me a loan, specially with the financial crisis sweepin' the country. (beat, to herself) Guess a short time livin' a dream is better'n no time at all.

Loren is upset to see Dorothy so heartbroken. She looks up at him, managing a sad smile.

DOROTHY

Thank you, Loren.

She goes out as Brian comes in, looking equally forlorn. Loren sees him and quickly fetches a box from behind the counter.

LOREN

Oh, Brian, your picture frame come in this mornin'.

Loren opens the box, revealing an exquisite silver picture frame (no photo in it yet).

LOREN

It's a real beauty --

BRIAN

Can you send it back?

LOREN

(surprised) What?

BRIAN

I can't pay for it anymore. An' besides, the weddin's off, anyway.

Loren quiets. As with Dorothy, seeing Brian so heartbroken is upsetting to him.

LOREN
I'm sorry to hear that.

BRIAN
(quiet) Yeah. See ya.

He goes out, leaving Loren holding the picture frame... and staring down at Dorothy's printing supplies.

INT. CLINIC - DAY FIVE

Mike is at her desk as a KNOCK is heard at the door. She moves to it and opens the door, revealing Andrew. Although he tries to appear pleasant and upbeat, his disappointment in having to call off the wedding is hard to mask.

ANDREW
Good morning, Michaela. I was wondering if you had any more of those stinging nettle herbs I could borrow. It really has worked wonders for Mrs. Negley's hay asthma.

MIKE
Of course.

Mike moves to get the dried herbs, which she begins placing in a tin. Andrew follows her in, watching her. It's an awkward, uncomfortable moment for both.

MIKE
I heard Preston is trying to sell the Chateau.

ANDREW
Yes. I'm hoping the new owners will allow me to continue running the clinic there.

MIKE
(confused) But I thought you were going to start your own practice.

ANDREW
(beat, uneasy) No, I... I've decided to remain here in Colorado Springs.

Mike is feeling worse by the second.

MIKE

Andrew, I'm sorry about all that's happened.

ANDREW

Oh no, don't be. (sincere) You only want what's best for Colleen, as do I. And I would hate myself if I, in any way, were to hinder her dream of becoming a doctor.

Mike nods, wishing this would ease her mind. But it doesn't.

ANDREW

(managing a smile) And after all, two years is nothing to wait.

Mike manages to return the smile as she hands him the herbs. Another awkward beat.

ANDREW

Well... thank you.

MIKE

You're welcome.

Andrew turns and starts out, revealing Sully now standing in the doorway, having heard their conversation.

ANDREW

(as he goes) Hello, Sully.

SULLY

Andrew.

Andrew goes out. Sully shuts the door and looks at Mike.

SULLY

Can't think of a better husband for Colleen.

Mike nods, feeling the exact same way.

MIKE

I've been doing a lot of thinking lately... about Matthew and Ingrid... Marjorie and Loren... (another beat) A lot can happen in two years.

Sully moves to her and hugs her, holding her close as she struggles with her emotions.

EXT. HOMESTEAD - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT FIVE (STOCK)

INT. COLLEEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT FIVE

Colleen sits on her bed, brushing her hair, as Mike appears at her open door. She knocks lightly, drawing Colleen's attention. The mood is strained, the tension between them palpable.

MIKE

Colleen... may I speak with you a moment?

Colleen says nothing. Mike comes in, sits on the bed beside her.

MIKE

The other day in the cafe, when you told us you had been accepted to medical school -- that was one of the happiest days of my life. (beat) And I've realized -- everything you've accomplished in your life has made me happy. Very, very happy.

Colleen remains quiet, looking down, avoiding Mike's gaze.

MIKE

You were right, Colleen -- I have been acting like my mother. It's not *my* happiness that matters here, but *yours*.

Colleen finally looks up at her, sees the pain and love in Mike's eyes.

MIKE

And above everything -- above going to medical school, above coming a doctor -- I want you to make the choices in your life that will make *you* happy. And I will always love you and support you no matter what those choices may be.

Colleen sees that Mike truly means it, and a spark of hope returns to her eyes.

COLLEEN

I do wanna go to medical school, Ma. And I do wanna marry Andrew. (beat) But I don't wanna wait.

Mike nods, giving Colleen a warm, comforting smile.

MIKE

Then the sooner you get married, the better.

Colleen throws her arms around Mike, hugging her as the tears come. Mike holds Colleen close, feeling a great sense of relief... and happiness.

FADE OUT.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. CHATEAU - DAY SIX

Preston is once again on the verandah, poring through his ledgers. Something catches his eye, and he looks over to see Mike and Sully riding up on horseback. They dismount, stepping over to Preston, who greets them with a wary eye.

PRESTON

What do you want?

MIKE

Have you found a buyer for the Chateau, yet?

PRESTON

No. Why?

SULLY

I have.

Sully steps forward and holds out a telegram. Preston doesn't take it -- he just stares at it.

PRESTON

You have?

SULLY

An investor friend of Senator Dinston, of California, has been lookin' to build a health spa in Yellowstone National Park. I told 'im, why build one from scratch, when we

already got one right here in the Rocky Mountains.

PRESTON

"We" already got one?

MIKE

Are you interested or not?

Preston stares down at the telegram in Sully's hands... then finally takes it, reads it. Sully and Mike wait for his response. Preston is not at all happy about selling the Chateau, but he's forced to admit:

PRESTON

It's a fair offer. (notices something) What's this? (reads) "Senator Dinston has advised that I secure the services of Dr. Michaela Quinn in regards to the supervision of the medical clinic."

MIKE

Only until I can find someone else to assume the post.

SULLY

He's waiting for an answer. What do I tell him?

Preston fumes; the only thing worse than having to sell the Chateau is having Sully as his real estate agent.

PRESTON

(beat, difficult) Tell him I accept. (as Sully and Mike mount their horses) But know this...

Sully and Mike look back at Preston, who stands, his determination building.

PRESTON

If you think I'm finished here, you're wrong. I *will* get the Chateau back, at whatever cost.

Sully and Mike exchange a quiet look, then turn and ride off.

EXT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT SIX

After dinner. Colleen walks Andrew out to his horse to say good-night. Her excitement about the wedding is rekindled.

COLLEEN

I can hardly believe I'm gonna be married tomorrow.

ANDREW

Me either.

Andrew unties his horse, turns back to Colleen.

ANDREW

Colleen... are you absolutely sure you want to do this?

COLLEEN

'Course. (a worried look) Are you?

Andrew puts his arms around her reassuringly.

ANDREW

It was the saddest day of my life when we decided to postpone the wedding. (smiles)
And the happiest when we changed our minds.

He kisses her, lightly at first, but then more passionate, dropping the horse's reins from his hand in the process. As they continue kissing, the horse begins walking off.

COLLEEN

Uh... Andrew, your horse is walkin' off...

But he keeps kissing her.

ANDREW

What?

COLLEEN

Nothin'.

And they kiss again, savoring this romantic moment, as Andrew's horse disappears into the night.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY SEVEN

Mike kneels at Charlotte's grave, placing a small bouquet of orange blossoms at the base of the faded tombstone. Mike's voice is soft, at peace.

MIKE

She's getting married today... our little Colleen, can you believe it? Oh, Charlotte, I wish you could see her. She's beautiful and smart and strong... just like her mother. (beat, reflecting) It seems only yesterday that you entrusted me with her care. I hope I've raised her well, as you would have done.

COLLEEN (O.S.)

You did.

Mike turns to see Colleen standing nearby, tears welling in her eyes.

COLLEEN

Of all the people she coulda asked to raise us... she made the right choice.

Mike stands and moves to Colleen, joining her in an emotional embrace.

INT. CHURCH - LATER - DAY SEVEN

Matthew and Brian, already in their suits for the wedding, come in and breathe a sigh of relief when they discover Sully standing in front of a mirror, wearing his suit, but struggling to tie his tie.

MATTHEW

There you are. Been lookin' everywhere for you.

As they come closer, they see just how nervous Sully is. It's a stark contrast from his usual, cool and calm demeanor. In fact, he's downright flustered, his nervousness manifesting itself in his total inability to tie his damn tie.

SULLY

Can't get this tie right.

MATTHEW

Need some help?

SULLY

(a little too sharp) No.

He gives up, then starts over, retying the tie. Matthew and Brian exchange a look. They know he's nervous, and can't help but find it somewhat amusing.

SULLY
Is Andrew here yet?

MATTHEW
Yeah. He's outside with the Reverend.

SULLY
Where's Colleen?

BRIAN
With Ma, gettin' dressed in the clinic. Katie's with 'em.

Sully still can't get the tie right, and it's pissing him off.

SULLY
Damn tie!

He yanks it off and sits in a pew in frustration. Matthew and Brian share another look, then Matthew sits beside him, watching him as he struggles with emotions that are clearly overwhelming him.

MATTHEW
It's all right to be nervous. Father of the bride usually is.

Sully manages a quiet nod. Matthew holds his hand out. Sully hands him the tie. Brian puts a comforting hand on Sully's shoulder as Matthew begins tying his tie for him.

In the silence of the moment, PIANO MUSIC is heard -- the prelude to the WEDDING PROCESSIONAL -- and it carries us to:

EXT. MEADOW - DAY SEVEN

where a crowd of townsfolk have gathered for Colleen and Andrew's wedding. Among them are Loren, Dorothy, Cloud Dancing, Jake, Teresa, Hank, Horace, Robert E and Grace, who's playing the piano at the front. Nearby, at the makeshift altar adorned with colorful flowers, is the Reverend, standing with Andrew (who's nervous, but happy) and Matthew.

Everyone turns to see Brian leading Katie down the aisle. She's the flower girl, and although Brian does his best to coach her on how to properly scatter the petals, she pretty much just dumps handfuls wherever she wants, much to the amusement of the guests. When they reach the altar, Brian lifts Katie in his arms and clears the way for:

MIKE

who now appears and walks ceremoniously down the aisle, looking radiant in her matron of honor's dress.

She steps up to the altar and turns, which signals Grace to begin the WEDDING PROCESSIONAL. All eyes turn to see:

COLLEEN

a resplendent vision of absolute joy, wearing Mike's wedding dress. She clutches Sully's arm as they begin the march to the altar. Sully seems less nervous now, but the emotions are still there, as strong as ever. They arrive at the altar, and the MUSIC STOPS, cuing the Reverend.

REVEREND

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of Colleen Cooper and Andrew Cook in Holy Matrimony. The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity. (beat) Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

SULLY

I do.

Sully lifts Colleen's veil to kiss her cheek.

COLLEEN

(a whisper) I love you, Pa.

Sully can barely keep the tears back as he lowers her veil, then takes her right hand and places it in the Reverend's hand. The Reverend then places Colleen's hand in Andrew's as Sully steps back and takes his seat. Mike turns to Sully, sharing a tearful look with him.

REVEREND

Do you, Andrew, take Colleen to be your wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, as long as you both shall live?

ANDREW

I do.

REVEREND

Do you, Colleen, take Andrew to be your husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, as long as you both shall live?

COLLEEN

I do.

CLOSE ON MIKE

seeing the happiness in Colleen's beaming face... and sharing that happiness with her as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MEADOW - LATER - DAY SEVEN

The reception is under way. A small band plays music as couples dance on the makeshift dance floor. Food is laid out by Grace's helpers. Several people, including Matthew (holding Katie), Horace, the Reverend are already digging in. Matthew hands a cookie to Katie, then tosses one to Wolf, who happily gobbles it up.

Colleen and Andrew are among the couples dancing, as are Sully and Mike. Hank dances with one of his girls.

Off to the side is a table laden with wedding gifts. Brian stands beside it, staring sullenly at the presents. A HAND touches his shoulder, and he turns to discover Loren, holding a simply wrapped box. He hands it to Brian.

LOREN


Here.

BRIAN

What is it?

LOREN

The picture frame. Figured since the weddin's back on, you gotta have somethin' to give your sister. I took the liberty of gettin' the photograph from Dr. Mike -- it's already in there.



BRIAN
But I can't pay for it.

LOREN
When you can, you will. I trust you.

Brian takes the box, then hugs Loren. The music stops, and the dancers begin leaving the floor.

LOREN
Go on, now's your chance.

We follow Brian as he steps over to Colleen and Andrew. Colleen smiles when she sees him.

COLLEEN
Hey, Brian.

BRIAN
I, uh... I got you a present.

He holds the box out to her. Colleen is touched. She takes it and unwraps it, opening the box to reveal:

INSERT - THE PICTURE FRAME

now holding a beautiful photograph of the family -- Sully, Mike, Matthew, Colleen, Brian and Katie.

BACK TO COLLEEN

as she stares at this wonderful gift. She turns to Brian with tears in her eyes, and hugs him tightly.

COLLEEN
I'll keep it with me forever.

Brian too has tears in his eyes as he hugs his sister, already missing her terribly. The **MUSIC** begins again.

COLLEEN

Will you dance with me?

Brian looks to Andrew, who smiles.

ANDREW

Go ahead. I could use a rest.

Colleen hands the picture frame to Andrew as Brian offers his arm to Colleen. He leads her onto the dance floor, passing:

JAKE AND TERESA

who stand at the edge of the dance floor. Jake's enjoying himself, even if he does look a bit tired and distracted.

TERESA

Shall we dance?

JAKE

(heart not in it) Sure.

TERESA

Is something wrong? (off his look) You have been very quiet today.

JAKE

Just tired, I guess. I was up mosta the night, sketchin'.

TERESA

(a confused look) Sketching?

Jake reaches in his coat and takes out a folded piece of paper. He unfolds it, revealing a nicely drawn sketch of a homestead in the woods. Teresa looks at it, then up at Jake.

JAKE

It's the house I'm gonna build for us.

Teresa smiles and kisses Jake. He then leads her out onto the dance floor, where they begin dancing, passing by:

GRACE AND ROBERT E

who dance together, both smiling and having a great time.

ROBERT E

You sure look beautiful today, Grace.

GRACE

You're lookin' awfully handsome, yourself.

ROBERT E

Been a long time since I seen you so happy.

The smile on Grace's face grows even brighter.

GRACE

Figure I got reason to be. (beat) I'm pregnant.

Robert E stops dancing, in complete shock. Grace just smiles and nods, waiting for him to absorb it. And then the smile forms on Robert E's face, and he lifts Grace in his arms, spinning her around.

ON LOREN

as he makes his way over to Dorothy, who stands off to the side watching the festivities, in no real mood to join in.

LOREN

How come you ain't dancin'?

DOROTHY

Don't feel much in the mood.

LOREN

(after a beat) Listen, I've been doin' some figurin'. An' I got a business proposition for you.

He takes an envelope out of his pocket and hands it to her. Dorothy gives it an odd look.

LOREN

Go on, open it.

She opens the envelope and takes out a check. The amount on it staggers her.

DOROTHY
Wha -- what is this?

LOREN
I talked to my banker in Denver. Used the store as collateral to get a loan to buy the Gazette. Figure you can make payments to me, an' I'll make payments to the bank. An' don't worry, I'll go easy on ya 'til sales start bouncin' back.

Dorothy looks at Loren, utterly speechless.

DOROTHY
I... I don't know what to say.

LOREN
You can start by offerin' me free ads in the Gazette. And not those little ones on the back page. I'm talkin' about a big ad, right smack on the --

But that's all he can get out before Dorothy throws her arms around him, hugging him and kissing him.

DOROTHY
Loren Bray, you oughta be declared a saint.

LOREN
And *you* oughta be dancin'.

DOROTHY
I'd love to.

Loren takes her hand, but instead of taking her out onto the dance floor, he leads her over to:

CLOUD DANCING

who stands with Mike and Sully off to the side. Loren joins Dorothy's and Cloud Dancing's hands.

LOREN
There. Now go on, start dancin'.

Loren ushers them onto the floor, right past a disapproving Hank. Dorothy gives Loren a look of heartfelt thanks, then turns to Cloud Dancing and -- despite some unpleasant looks from others -- they begin dancing.

Mike, Sully and Loren watch them dance. Sully puts a hand on Loren's shoulder, proud of him.

Colleen and Andrew come over. Colleen holds her hand out to Sully, who takes it and begins dancing with her. Andrew holds his hand out to Mike, and they begin dancing as well. More couples join the dancing, and the MUSIC FILLS THE AIR, carrying with us as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHATEAU - DAY SEVEN

where a large banner is draped across the entrance, reading: "UNDER NEW OWNERSHIP." The hotel is closed; there are no guests to be seen.

Preston stands alone out front, staring up at the banner. After a moment he turns away and mounts his horse, riding off up the road as the MUSIC CARRIES US BACK TO:

EXT. MEADOW DAY SEVEN

where the reception continues. Colleen is once again dancing with Andrew. Dorothy and Cloud Dancing are still dancing together, as are Jake and Teresa, and Grace and Robert E.

ON MIKE

standing at the edge of the dance, taking in the joy of the moment. She sees Brian dancing with a GIRL, Matthew holding Katie, twirling her around to the music, and Colleen, looking so beautiful in her wedding dress, dancing with Andrew.

Sully steps up beside Mike and kisses her lightly, then offers his arm. Mike takes it, and the two join the other dancers. They're all having a wonderful time, the picture of happiness... and as we begin PULLING UP AND AWAY, the MUSIC PLAYS ON; this celebration is showing no sign of ending.

FADE OUT.

END OF SEASON SIX

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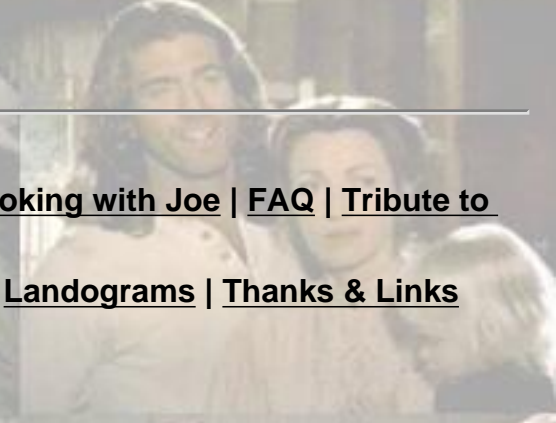
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