"JOHNSTOWN"

A Historical Drama

Written by R. Carl Leech

A screenplay based on the 1889 Flood of Johnstown, Pennsylvania

Date: November, 2026

NOTE: A scene heading marked with an asterisk * indicates the scene is based on some historical facts.

SUPER:

"The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall."
(Matthew 7:27)

MAIN TITLE: JOHNSTOWN

SUPER: Johnstown, Pennsylvania

April, 1888

EXT. CITY OF JOHNSTOWN - DAY

A smoky, bustling town situated in a steep valley built at the confluence of two rivers. Horse-drawn trolleys and carriages move through the dusty brick and dirt streets.

Amongst the busy scene, a PRETTY PETITE GIRL crosses a dusty brick street. She enters Heiser's Dry Goods store.

INT. HEISER DRY GOODS STORE - DAY

EMMA HART (24 yo, petite, radiant looks, curly blonde hair, brown eyes) enters and greets the 52 yo owner GEORGE HEISER and wife 48 yo MATHILDE known as "MATTIE" at the counter.

EMMA HART
Is Victor here?

GEORGE HEISER
Yes. I'll get him.
(walks to the back)

MATTIE HEISER
You seem excited dear.

EMMA HART
I got some good news this morning.

INT. HEISER DRY GOODS STORE BACKROOM - DAY

VICTOR HEISER (24 yo handsome, stocky, brownish hair, blue eyes) lifts a heavy barrel off a shelf, sets it down. Sighs.

Another day of grunt work at the family dry goods store. This is his life. This is his future.

His DAD pokes his head in the room, tells him Emma is out front. Suddenly he perks up, like an electric shock hits him.

VICTOR HEISER
Oh OK. Tell her, tell her, I'll be out in a minute.

His Dad smiles. His son has been smitten with Emma for years.

INT. HEISER DRY GOODS STORE COUNTER - DAY

32 yo ladies ANNA FENN and BELLE WATERS with several young children walk to the counter. EMMA turns, greets them warmly. 4 yo VIRGINIA "GINNY" FENN, runs up to Emma. Hugs her.

EMMA HART
Hello Miss Ginny. I love your hair.

GINNY FENN
Miss Emma. You comin' over soon? To sing us some songs?

EMMA HART
I sure hope so sweetie pie.
(turns to Anna)
She's getting so tall.

ANNA FENN
I know. Haven't seen you in a while. Anything new with you?

EMMA HART
I do have some news. I'm going to be singing at the clubhouse this summer at the lake.

ANNA FENN
Really! The boss's club!

BELLE WATERS
Bully for you! That could be your ticket out of here.

EMMA HART
One can hope right?

BELLE WATERS
Oh Emma. Once those big bosses hear you sing, you'll be packing your bags for Pittsburgh in no time.

Emma smiles. Being discovered has been her dream since the audition at the lake clubhouse with her brother Charlie last month. And, maybe moving to Pittsburgh!

Emma turns to see an excited VICTOR coming around the counter. Smiling, staring at her. But CRASH, he trips over a crate and goes down in a heap. APPLES SPRAY all over the floor. His dad laughs. Anna speaks up in a sarcastic tone.

ANNA FENN
Have any apples Victor? I'm thinking about making a pie.

VICTOR HEISER
(looks up at her)
Let me check Mrs. Fenn.

EMMA HART
Are you OK?

VICTOR HEISER
(Slowly rising)
No. Damn that hurt actually. Did you hear something?

EMMA HART
Yes! We got the job!

VICTOR HEISER
Oh my God. That is great!

EMMA HART
I wanted to tell you in person.

VICTOR HEISER
I'm so excited for you and Charlie.

EMMA HART
(leans in for a hug)
Thank you so much for setting up the audition. You're such a wonderful friend.

Victor's face falls at the word "friend". He pulls away, a half smile. He wants to be more than a friend to Emma. Looks down at the apples on the floor.

VICTOR HEISER
I better pick these up.

SUPER: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

July, 1888

EXT. CITY OF PITTSBURGH, DUQUESNE CLUB - DAY

Pittsburgh's congested downtown in 1888: Hulking grey buildings and warehouses. Massive steel mills line the dirty dark rivers. Black clouds pour out of tall smokestacks. Steam tugs, workboats and cargo steamers traverse the rivers under dozens of bridges. Inclines line the hillsides.

Since the Civil War, Pittsburgh's factories have become the largest manufacturer of steel and glass in the nation.

Pittsburgh's young business owners have become the newest millionaires, part of the Gilded Age in America.

A four story tan brick building sits within the city. A red awning covers its wide marble steps at the entrance.

Fancy horse-drawn carriages arrive at the building. Well-dressed gentlemen traverse the steps. A smartly dressed doorman opens tall doors into a marbled lobby.

The exclusive and prestigious Duquesne Club.

INT. DUQUESNE CLUB BILLIARDS ROOM - DAY

Cherry wood paneling and moldings frames the room. Elegant red leather couches and chairs. An ornate oak bar.

Two men shooting pool. One man is clearly distracted.

ANDREW MELLON. A short 34 yo (year old) man, premature gray hair, large nose, deep set eyes, bushy mustache. He's President of the T. Mellon Bank, a major bank in Pittsburgh.

HENRY CLAY FRICK. A bearded 40 yo, with large piercing eyes. He owns the H.C. Frick Company, a coke manufacturer. Coke is a critical element needed for steel production.

HENRY FRICK
Mister Mellon? Over here. It's your shot.

ANDREW MELLON
Apologies Henry. I was daydreaming.

Mellon shoots but misses badly. He lays down the stick.

HENRY FRICK
Something on your mind Andrew?

ANDREW MELLON
More problems with the damn city on the Sixth Street Bridge project. They want another round of inspections that will delay us another...

HENRY FRICK
Stop. We must direct your mind off all that. How about this? The lake. Are you going on Friday?

ANDREW MELLON
Taking the afternoon train.

HENRY FRICK
Good. I heard the weather's going to be fantastic this weekend.

A portly, balding PHILANDER KNOX walks towards them with an older gentleman, "COLONEL" ELIAS UNGER, both holding drinks.

35 yo PHILANDER KNOX is the lawyer to many Club members. He's known as "Sleepy Phil" due to his baby face and tired eyes.

COLONEL ELIAS UNGER is a tall, stern-looking, balding 58 yo with deep-seated eyes, large nose and ears, white whiskers.

Unger is the President of their summer resort, the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club at Lake Conemaugh near Johnstown.

PHILANDER KNOX
Look who I found in the lobby.

COLONEL UNGER
Mr. Mellon, Mr. Frick.

ANDREW MELLON
The Colonel! What brings you here?

COLONEL UNGER
In town for some interviews. We're hiring a new engineer for the Club.

ANDREW MELLON
Really? What for?

COLONEL UNGER
You'll be pleased. He's going to work on a new septic system for the Clubhouse and the cottages.

HENRY FRICK
Finally! I never want to use that two story outhouse again.

ANDREW MELLON
How's the search going?

COLONEL UNGER
I like this man John Parke I met today. Graduated from Penn. Civil engineering. Very good grades.

ANDREW MELLON
Excellent. Penn is a fine school.

HENRY FRICK
I was saying the fishing has been especially good this summer. And the lake seems much larger this year.

COLONEL UNGER
Right. The lake is the largest it has ever been. Lots of snow melt and a rainy spring. Three miles long.

ANDREW MELLON
I'm looking forward to the fishing tourney in August. I'll be taking the egg this year gentlemen.

PHILANDER KNOX
No sir! I'm ready for you all this year. Have a new kind of lure. A secret weapon! Mark my words. I'm taking the egg!

HENRY FRICK
Mr. Knox, the last thing you caught at the lake, was a cold.
(The men laugh.)

ANDREW MELLON
You said the lake is the largest ever. Any impact on that dam?

COLONEL UNGER
Not really. That dam's been around fifty years, should be around fifty more. At least. Some earthen dams have lasted hundreds of years. The Greeks used them. The Egyptians.

HENRY FRICK
Same people in the valley still raising a stink about it?

COLONEL UNGER
Yes. Fulton at Cambria. Moxham at Johnson Steel, a few others. I'm used to it. I put them off.
(a beat)
Anyone heading to the lake this weekend?

ANDREW MELLON
Mr. Frick and I are going Friday.

COLONEL UNGER
Excellent.
Gentlemen. I must now excuse myself. A meeting at the Monongahela House beckons.

HENRY FRICK
Before you go. Let's have a toast. Everyone raise their glasses.
(all raise glasses)
Gentlemen. Here's to black-bass fishing, the finest gourmet dinners, and the best bourbon and cigars. All at our beautiful South Fork club.

JOHN "JAY" PHIPPS, a handsome 25 yo, sandy brown hair, blue eyes, enters with PHILO FRENCH. Mellon steps up to him.

ANDREW MELLON
Jay. Your father's here. Wants to talk. He's in the main boardroom with some people from Steubenville.

JAY PHIPPS
Thanks Mister Mellon.

Jay turns to talk to Philo who's holding two drinks.

PHILO FRENCH
I figure you might need one of these. Your Dad's here right?

JAY PHIPPS
In the boardroom. This could be bad.

PHILO FRENCH
Good luck. I'll wait here.

Jay takes a long drink. Heads out of the billiards room. Walks down a long hall to a closed door. Takes a deep breath. Knocks. Pokes his head in.

HENRY PHIPPS is seated with THREE OTHER MEN at a table Phipps is a 50 yo with a deep broad brow, grey eyes and brown hair and beard. He's an owner of the Union Iron Mills Company along with Andrew Carnegie.

HENRY PHIPPS
Gentlemen, this is my son Jay. And I must speak with him. I believe we're finished here for today. A good meeting. I'll be in touch next week. Safe travels back to Ohio.

The gentlemen stand, nod goodbye and exit.

HENRY PHIPPS (CONT'D)
Close the door and sit down.

JAY PHIPPS
You wanted to see me.

HENRY PHIPPS
Yes I did Jay. Again, I'm in the position of handling another one of your messes at work.

JAY PHIPPS
I see.

HENRY PHIPPS
Oh, you see? Well this latest woman said she would go to the papers.
(slams the table, yells)
GOD DAMN IT. You're my son! You work for me! And yet you continue this, this terrible behavior. The women in our offices are not some harem for you to...

JAY PHIPPS
I'm sorry.

HENRY PHIPPS
Well guess what. I paid this woman quite a bit of money. To keep her quiet. And moved her to another office.

This is it Jay.

HENRY PHIPPS (CONT'D)
One more time and you're out of a job. And out of the house. I was already a millionaire at your age. Twice over.

JAY PHIPPS
I'm sorry to have disappointed you.

HENRY PHIPPS
Don't try your cute sarcastic bullshit with me.
And another thing, the family is going to the lake this weekend. And you're coming. You haven't been there in ages. Do you understand?

JAY PHIPPS
I have plans this weekend with...

HENRY PHIPPS
Do you understand?

JAY PHIPPS
Yes. Yes sir.

HENRY PHIPPS
We leave on the 10 AM train on Friday. Don't be late.
Now, you can go.

Jay nods, heads out of the room. Back to the billiards room.

PHILO FRENCH
So?

JAY PHIPPS
It's what I thought.
She threatened to make a stink.

PHILO FRENCH
What happens now?

JAY PHIPPS
What happens now, fine sir.
Is I am going to be,
a very, very good boy.

PHILO FRENCH
At least at work. You still going to that party on Saturday in Fox Chapel?

JAY PHIPPS
Nope. I'm going to the lake. My Dad said I have to go.

PHILO FRENCH
Really! I'm going to the lake. And so is Lloyd. This is great. All of us together. And there's someone up there I want you to see.

JAY PHIPPS
Did you just hear me? I just said something a minute ago. No women!

PHILO FRENCH
This one's different. She's a singer. She sings on Saturdays at the Clubhouse. And she's gorgeous.

JAY PHIPPS
I don't care. I told you.

PHILO FRENCH
Well wait until you see her.

Jay shakes his head. Takes a long drink.

INT. PULLMAN CAR PASSING JOHNSTOWN - DAY

Families and excited children seated in an elegant private Pennsylvania Railroad Pullman car furnished in dark woods, crown moldings and plush red leather seats.

Among the passengers, a bored JAY, who stares out a window. He sees smoky Johnstown as the train passes by. Another ugly dirty steel town. So many of them around here.

EXT. SOUTH FORK TRAIN DEPOT - DAY

SUPER: South Fork, Pennsylvania

July, 1888

The train pulls into the small South Fork station and halts. A whistle. A cloud of white smoke covers the platform.

The train doors open. African American PORTERS in crisp uniforms jump off and pull out stairs. Passengers exit.

HENRY PHIPPS, his 49 yo wife ANNE, and three excited YOUNG CHILDREN walk towards their carriage. The porters load up their luggage and help them into a two horse carriage.

JAY climbs aboard last. Once everyone is seated, the driver snaps a whip and the horses jump forward.

HENRY PHIPPS
Is everyone ready for the lake?

The younger three kids clap, scream YAY!

ANNE PHIPPS
I forget. Are the Mellon's coming this weekend?

HENRY PHIPPS
They're coming later today.

ANNE PHIPPS
I was thinking about Mr. Carnegie the other day. When's the last time he was here at the lake? Or even in Pittsburgh?

HENRY PHIPPS
Awhile. Years. When he's not in New York, I hear he's looking at castles in Scotland to buy.

They both laugh. The carriage rumbles onto a country road.

EXT. CARRIAGE ON A COUNTRY ROAD TO THE LAKE - DAY

The carriage approaches the 900 foot-long earthen dam.

The dam: A rugged hillside. Scattered rocks, grasses and shrubs dot its long dark slope. So odd in this setting.

The carriage crosses a bridge over a bubbling creek, the dam spillway, then turns onto the dam road and stops near the center so everyone can get a view of the pristine lake.

HOWARD PHIPPS
Daddy does this hold in the fish?

HENRY PHIPPS
You mean the dam Howard? Yes this holds in the fish. They're all happy, swimming in our big lake.

EXT. SOUTH FORK CLUBHOUSE - EVENING

The placid lake lit by warm orange light. Near the clubhouse, men talk around a bonfire. Cigars and bourbons in hand.

INT. SOUTH FORK CLUBHOUSE DINING ROOM - EVENING

EMMA and brother CHARLIE HART on stage, ready to start. Charlie is a tall, handsome 17 yo, brown hair, blue eyes.

COLONEL UNGER
Good evening everyone.
Well it's another beautiful summer evening at our South Fork Clubhouse.
And to entertain you, please welcome one of our favorites.
Miss Emma Hart and Mister Charlie Hart, the Harts.
From down the valley in Johnstown.

EMMA HART
(to strong applause)
Thank you Colonel. Good evening.

Charlie begins on his guitar. Emma starts a song.

JAY with friends PHILO and LLOYD HUFF sit near the stage, talking. Then Philo pokes Jay. This is that girl I was talking about. As she sings, Jay is captivated by her.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SOUTH FORK CLUBHOUSE - EVENING

The edge of the sun disappears below the darkened hills.

INT. SOUTH FORK CLUBHOUSE DINING ROOM - EVENING

EMMA ends the song "My Darling Clementine". Vibrant APPLAUSE.

EMMA HART
Thank you . Have a pleasant night.

JAY and his friends clap loudly. All a bit drunk.

PHILO FRENCH
Isn't she something? What a voice.
And what a doll. I told you Jay.

JAY PHIPPS
Yes Philo. You might have been right about this one.

LLOYD HUFF
You going to go talk to her?
Turn on that famous Phipps charm.

JAY PHIPPS
Yes boys, I do have that charm in spades. But what really gets the lasses? Maybe my dashing looks? My pithy humor? Hard to decide.

LLOYD HUFF
I don't know.
I was thinking, it might be,
(a beat)
your last name?
(Philo laughs loudly.)

JAY PHIPPS
That hurt Lloyd. But I do fancy her. I like her, her singing.

PHILO FRENCH
And I told you, she's gorgeous.

JAY PHIPPS
Yes. I did not expect to see someone like her, up here. Anyway, watch closely.

Jay stands. Winks. Heads towards Emma.

LLOYD HUFF
Off to stalk his prey. Always in for the jammiest bits of jam.

PHILO FRENCH
No more girls in Pittsburgh left. He must look to the east!

Emma alone at a table near the stage. Jay approaches.

JAY PHIPPS
What a wonderful performance. You're Emma?

EMMA HART
Yes. Emma Hart. And thank you. And you are?

JAY PHIPPS
Jay Phipps.

EMMA HART
From Pittsburgh I assume?

JAY PHIPPS
Yes I'm from "hell with the lid off". May I sit down?

EMMA HART
Of course. Well I'm from Johnstown and we might fight you for that title. Been there?

JAY PHIPPS
No, just seen it passing by on the train. But after meeting you, I'm sure it must have its own, charms.

EMMA HART
Maybe.

JAY PHIPPS
Well I've been missing out. Guess I should visit.

EMMA HART
You sure? Johnstown? Really?

JAY PHIPPS
I love to explore new places. Maybe you could show me around. You have a card or something.

EMMA HART
We do. Give me a moment.
(finds a card in her purse, hands it to him)

JAY PHIPPS
The Harts of Union Street. Well I might have to...

CHARLIE HART
(walks over, interrupts)
We need to go. It's getting late.

EMMA HART
(a little irritated)
Mr. Phipps, this is my brother Charlie. And he's right, we do have to go. Before it gets too dark.
(stands)
Thank you for your kind words.

JAY PHIPPS
(stands)
A pleasure to meet you Miss Hart. And you Charlie.
You were both wonderful tonight. And Miss Hart.
Maybe, see you again?

EMMA HART
Don't lose that card.

A flirtatious wink and smile from Emma as they leave. Jay rejoins his friends. They clap in a mock ovation.

PHILO FRENCH
Well good man. You made it without a drink in your face. I'm shocked.

JAY PHIPPS
Not only that, she gave me her card. The Harts of Union Street.

LLOYD HUFF
Like you'd ever set foot in Johnstown.

JAY PHIPPS
How about this? I'm thinking about going there tomorrow. Find this little songbird.

LLOYD HUFF
Jay let this one go. Summer's over in a month. And you're never here.

JAY PHIPPS
Suddenly I love this lake. And a lot can happen in a month.

EXT. CARRIAGE HEADED TO SOUTH FORK - EVENING

CHARLIE and EMMA in a carriage. Emma senses Charlie is upset.

EMMA HART
Are you mad about something?

CHARLIE HART
Why did you flirt with that guy?

EMMA HART
He was nice. He came over and said how well we did. What is...

CHARLIE HART
You gave him our card. What if he looks you up?

EMMA HART
And what if he does?

CHARLIE HART
I don’t understand you. You have guys pining for you in town. Why are you kicking up dust up here?

EMMA HART
Kicking up dust...
(laughing)
Where do you get these expressions?

CHARLIE HART
You know what I mean.

EMMA HART
Fine. I'll try to control my dust-kicking, going forward.

CHARLIE HART
I know what you're doing.

EMMA HART
What do you think you know?

CHARLIE HART
You're thinking you're going to find someone in the boss's club.

EMMA HART
And what if I do?

CHARLIE HART
Do you think one of these rich toffs is going to want to, what marry you? They'll want you for one thing and that's...

EMMA HART
Just shut up. Don't tell me what to think. Or what to do.

CHARLIE HART
Fine.

EXT. HART HOME JOHNSTOWN - MORNING

A two-story white wood rowhouse with a front porch.

INT. HART HOME KITCHEN - MORNING

EMMA walks down the stairs and enters the kitchen. Her Mother RUTH HART (50 yo brunette) putting some dishes away.

RUTH
Morning. How did it go last night?

EMMA HART
Good. Some people talked to us after the show. Said we did well.

RUTH
Of course. You always do. Listen. I have to run over to Belle's. Need some sugar. I'll be back soon.

Ruth waves goodbye and exits out the kitchen back door.

INT. HART HOME - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

CHARLIE strums his guitar. EMMA enters, sits across from him.

EMMA HART
Morning. OK. Let's run through "Shenandoah". I messed up the lyrics last night.

Charlie starts strumming. Suddenly he stops.

CHARLIE HART
I can't believe it. That guy from last night. Phipps.

Emma rushes to the window. JAY is walking to the door.

CHARLIE HART (CONT'D)
He's here. Holy...

EMMA HART
Hush. Answer the door. I need to straighten up.

Emma rushes upstairs. A KNOCK at the door. Charlie opens it.

JAY PHIPPS
Charlie right? I'm Jay Phipps. From last night. Remember?

CHARLIE HART
I do. Can I help you?

JAY PHIPPS
Emma gave me your card. If she's around, I'd like to see if she...

CHARLIE HART
She's here. Come in, have a seat.

JAY PHIPPS
(sits down, looks around)
You were both excellent last night. Have you been playing the guitar for long?

CHARLIE HART
Seven or eight years.

JAY PHIPPS
I play some. Not as well as you. I have a Martin six string. Heard of the Martin guitars?

CHARLIE HART
(surprised)
Of course. They make them in Nazareth. I'd love to have one.

JAY PHIPPS
Yep. Visited the shop there a few years back. Had to have one.

EMMA HART
I have a visitor it seems.

Jay stands up. A smiling Emma wearing a colorful sundress enters the room. Looks GORGEOUS.

CHARLIE HART
You remember Mr. Phipps?

EMMA HART
I do remember Mr. Phipps.

JAY PHIPPS
You look, just beautiful. Sorry for the unannounced visit.

EMMA HART
No. It's a pleasant surprise.

JAY PHIPPS
Are you free this afternoon? To maybe show me the sights?

EMMA HART
(Smiling)
I think I am free.

EXT. OUTSIDE HART HOUSE - MORNING

EMMA and JAY outside on the porch talking. Suddenly VICTOR arrives on a bicycle, stops. She was not expecting him.

EMMA HART
I didn't know you were stopping by.

VICTOR HEISER
I wanted to surprise you with a visit. But. I'm the one surprised.

EMMA HART
(a beat)
Jay, this is my friend Victor Heiser. And he's the reason I'm singing at the Clubhouse. He works at the boathouse and got us the audition with the Colonel. And Victor, this is Jay Phipps, who I met, last night.

JAY PHIPPS
Greetings Mr. Heiser.

VICTOR HEISER
Wait, did you say Jay Phipps? From the Phipps family? In Pittsburgh?

JAY PHIPPS
That's correct. And I'm so glad you introduced Emma to the Colonel.

Victor can't believe he's talking to Jay Phipps. Jay Phipps is a top celebrity of the day, in papers all the time. Attending fancy balls and big parties. He's from one of the richest families in Pittsburgh, hell the country. And damn, he's a very handsome guy.

EMMA HART
Jay said he wanted to visit Johnstown. See the sights. We're going to take a walk around.

VICTOR HEISER
Really? See the sights. In Johnstown.
(a beat)
That should be a pretty short walk.

JAY PHIPPS
Nice meeting you Vincent.

VICTOR HEISER
It's Victor, not…

He watches them walk towards town. Jay's arm on her shoulder.

INT. HART HOME FAMILY ROOM - MORNING

A forlorn and stunned VICTOR knocks and enters the house.

CHARLIE HART
Well hello there Mister Heiser.

VICTOR HEISER
I can't believe that I just met Jay Phipps. Jay Phipps. What the...

CHARLIE HART
Yep. Emma talked to him after the show.

VICTOR HEISER
So he sees her one time, and is here the next day. Really?

CHARLIE HART
That's Emma. Always the charmer.

VICTOR HEISER
She sure is.

CHARLIE HART
(smiling)
Something bothering you? A certain handsome man here from Pittsburgh?

VICTOR HEISER
Actually smart ass, I wanted to come over to talk with her about...

CHARLIE HART
But a rich dandy in a tan suit is here first. Son of a gun!

VICTOR HEISER
How funny would it be?
I get you the job at the lake.
But because of that, she meets some millionaire toff from Pittsburgh.

CHARLIE HART
Not funny. Actually, very sad for you. So sad in fact, I might have to write a song about it.

Charlie starts a mocking song. "Emma and very handsome Jay, strolling our little town today...". Victor fumes.

EXT. STREETS OF JOHNSTOWN, CENTRAL PARK - DAY

JAY and EMMA reach the busy Central Park. Find a bench.

EMMA HART
That's my Church St. John's. And I work over there at Cambria Iron.

JAY PHIPPS
I know Cambria Iron. They were once the biggest steel mill in the country. Bigger than anything in Pittsburgh. What do you do there?

EMMA HART
I'm a secretary.

JAY PHIPPS
Do you like that?

EMMA HART
Not really. But I have to take care of things.

JAY PHIPPS
What about your father?

EMMA HART
(a beat)
He passed away, a few months ago.

JAY PHIPPS
Oh my God. What happened?

EMMA HART
A mill accident. At Cambria.

JAY PHIPPS
Good Lord. I'm so sorry.

EMMA HART
Thank you. It's pretty common actually. Over a hundred men died at Cambria last year.

JAY PHIPPS
Just like in Pittsburgh. It's such dangerous work. How are you doing?

EMMA HART
It was tough at first, especially for my Mom. They'd been together for years. But time passes. You just have to carry on.

JAY PHIPPS
I understand.
(a beat)
So if you don't like your job at Cambria, how about being a singer?

EMMA HART
It's hard to make a living around here just as a singer.

JAY PHIPPS
Ever thought of moving?

EMMA HART
Maybe, some day. But I'm here now.

JAY PHIPPS
Can I ask, that guy Vincent, he didn't seem too happy to see me. Are you two...

EMMA HART
We're just friends.
His name is Victor actually.
Anyway,
(pokes him playfully)
Enough of my sad stories.
What about you?
What do you do for fun?

JAY PHIPPS
I enjoy music. I told Charlie I play the guitar some. I like tennis, horses. Traveling. Parties.

EMMA HART
Do you work?

JAY PHIPPS
For my father. At Union Iron.

EMMA HART
How's that going?

JAY PHIPPS
(smiles)
How's that going.

JAY PHIPPS (CONT'D)
Well, he regrets that I enjoy my life of leisure, a little too much. And wishes I was more like him, working ten hour days, six days a week. So not going that well.

EMMA HART
Goodness. So much honesty on our first, whatever this is.

JAY PHIPPS
Lots to cover there believe me. But let's save that for next time. When I see you in two weeks.

EMMA HART
What's happening in two weeks?

JAY PHIPPS
I'm back here. Take that Friday off work. And I'll pick you up and take you to the lake.

EMMA HART
Sounds like a date.

JAY PHIPPS
More than a date. How about a grand tour of Lake Conemaugh. Some time on the water. A great dinner. A night to always remember.

EMMA HART
I'm intrigued. A night to always remember? Who will be there? Maybe President Cleveland?

JAY PHIPPS
You mean old Grover? You never know. You'll have to see.

INT. ANNA FENN'S HOME PARLOR - AFTERNOON

ANNA FENN and husband JOHN with BELLE WATERS and husband GEORGE chatting. A KNOCK at the door. Anna opens it. EMMA and CHARLIE, holding a guitar case, stand outside.

ANNA FENN
Emma, you brought a special guest!

As they enter, greetings all around. Several kids run up to hug Emma. The men turn to talk to the tall, lanky Charlie.

JOHN FENN
Lord you're growing like a weed.

CHARLIE HART
Bit of a growth spurt I guess.

JOHN FENN
You still playing ball at Johnstown High?

CHARLIE HART
Yep. Starting at first base.

GEORGE WATERS
(holding a cigar)
Damn Charlie. You keep growing and you'll be playing for our Quicksteps one of these days.

EMMA HART
(to the wives)
Where are you going tonight?

ANNA FENN
The new Hulbert House hotel.

EMMA HART
I've been there. The restaurant is wonderful. And they have one of those new Otis steam elevators.

ANNA FENN
I heard about that. Well we must go, running late as usual.

The Fenns and Waters say goodbye. Emma and Charlie sit down on the couch and the excited kids gather around them.

EMMA HART
This is my brother Charlie.

One girl: "HE'S CUTE". Other young girls giggle.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
Who wants to have a singalong?

Claps and cheers. Charlie lifts his guitar out of the case.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
Before we start, tell Charlie your name and age.

The six Fenn children and two Waters daughters introduce themselves and how old they are.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
What song do we want to sing first?

Different songs yelled out. Emma listens. Nods.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
I heard "My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean". How about that one?

Kids scream YAY! Charlie begins the song on his guitar. GINNY FENN curls up with Emma on the couch as they begin singing.

INT. CAMBRIA IRON WORKS OFFICE - DAY

EMMA at her desk typing. Her friend MARGARET "PEG" LEECH (pretty, 24 yo brunette) walks over.

PEG LEECH
Thought he was getting here around two. You better change.

EMMA HART
Oh shoot! Be back in a few minutes.

EXT. ELEGANT CARRIAGE MOVING THROUGH JOHNSTOWN - DAY

JAY PHIPPS steers an elegant carriage through Johnstown. People stop and point. This is no ordinary carriage. It has an elevated sleek design, bright red paint, silver plated hardware and large rimmed wheels.

INT. CAMBRIA IRON WORKS OFFICE - DAY

PEG and others gather at the office windows, pointing at the impressive carriage. 52 yo Manager JOHN MILLER approaches.

JOHN MILLER
What are you all looking at?
(sees the carriage)
Holy cow!
That's a, that's a Chariot D'Orsay.

PEG LEECH
A what?

JOHN MILLER
A Chariot D'Orsay. It's one of the most expensive carriages in the world. The British Royal family, the Rockefellers use them. I've never seen one here before.

PEG LEECH
Well that's Emma's ride today.

JOHN MILLER
Really? Our Emma?

Emma approaches. Her hair and makeup done up. Looks GORGEOUS.

PEG LEECH
Look at you Cinderella. And your Prince Charming has arrived.

Emma sees the elegant carriage waiting for her. Wow!

EMMA HART
I better go. Thanks for the time off Mr. Miller.

JOHN MILLER
(a bit shaken, wow!)
Oh, OK Emma. You, you have fun.

EXT. OUTSIDE CAMBRIA IRON WORKS - DAY

As EMMA walks towards the carriage, people cheer her on from the office windows: "GO EMMA" "BULLY FOR YOU". JAY smiles, bows at her like she's a queen, takes her bag, helps her onto the carriage. She waves goodbye to those cheering her on.

The carriage passes near the Heiser store. VICTOR sweeping out front. Sees the fancy carriage. Spots Emma sitting with Jay, smiling, laughing. Victor suddenly so angry. DAMN IT!

He SLAMS his broom on the ground. Picks it up by the broom end. SLAMS IT again against a streetlamp pole. The broom splits in two, with the handle half flying across the street.

The TOWN CRAZY MAN stands across the street. He is a haggard man in his 50s, striking blue eyes, long white hair.

He catches the broom handle as it flies through the air. Walks across the street towards Victor, holding it.

TOWN CRAZY MAN
Listen to me boy. I had a vision I would receive a Sign today.
About someone who would share my dreams. And here it is!
You have sent to me a Staff of Christ!

VICTOR HEISER
That's a broom handle you nut.

TOWN CRAZY MAN
This is a Sign. For what you are going to start seeing. Listen boy. You're going to start having visions. Visions about the dam breaking. About the flood. The start of the End Times.

VICTOR HEISER
What?

TOWN CRAZY MAN
I'm having the visions too. Do you read the Bible? The Book of Revelation? Know the Seven Seals? One of those Seals will be broken in this very valley, by a terrible flood. Starting the End Times.

VICTOR HEISER
Look you kook. Get the hell away from my store.

TOWN CRAZY MAN
You'll see boy. You'll be haunted by terrible visions. Just like me. Soon enough. You'll see.

An angry Victor enters his store. The Crazy Man walks down the street holding the broom handle. Mumbling to himself.

EXT. LAKE CONEMAUGH, NEAR THE DAM - DAY

The carriage moves through the lush forest towards the lake.

EMMA HART
This little buggy made quite the impression today.

JAY PHIPPS
It's a bit much I know. Razzmatazz. My dad bought it a few years ago for special occasions here.

EMMA HART
Like what?

JAY PHIPPS
Weddings. Anniversaries. In June, we have a Launching Of The Fleet party. Then in August, the Feast of Lanterns. That's in a few weeks.

EMMA HART
What's that?

JAY PHIPPS
All the sailboats are tied to a steam yacht and are pulled around the lake, like a parade. All have five lit lanterns on them.

EMMA HART
That must be something to see.

JAY PHIPPS
After there's a fireworks show. It's a big party. You'll see.

The carriage stops on the bridge over the spillway. A beautiful setting, the waters bubbling down, lit by the sun.

JAY PHIPPS (CONT'D)
Isn't this just butter upon bacon?

JAY steers the carriage to a stop near the spillway. They find a picnic table and Jay sets down a picnic basket.

JAY PHIPPS (CONT'D)
Such a fine day right? Sunny. A nice breeze.

EMMA HART
We're lucky. After all the rain we had this week.

JAY PHIPPS
I feel lucky.
Just spending an evening with you.

EMMA HART
(kind of rolls her eyes)
Uh huh. So the fancy carriage, the spillway, the picnic. I bet this works well with the ladies?

JAY PHIPPS
Oh yes. But wine is a key element.

Jay takes a bottle from the basket. Pours two glasses.

EMMA HART
Do you want to have a toast?

JAY PHIPPS
I do. To the most beautiful day I've enjoyed, in a very long time.

INT. VICTOR HEISER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

VICTOR in bed, tossing and turning, dreaming.

He sees peaceful placid Lake Conemaugh, but a growing darkness falls over it. Black storm clouds. Lightning. Thunder. Winds rise. Torrents of rains start to come down.

The waters slam against the dam and start to pour over the top. Loud rumbling. The dam crumbles and water explodes into the valley. Like a tidal wave.

Victor sits up in bed. Eyes wide open. That crazy man said I would start having visions like this. Is it happening?

INT. CAMBRIA IRON WORKS OFFICE - MORNING

EMMA sits down at her desk. PEG rolls her chair over to talk.

PEG LEECH
Welcome back Cinderella.

EMMA HART
Oh please.

PEG LEECH
So how did it go? Do tell.

EMMA HART
(Leans in to talk to her)
Alright. He took me to the lake for a nice picnic by the spillway. Then off to their so-called "cottage" which is three times bigger than our house!

PEG LEECH
I've heard about those cottages.

EMMA HART
Spent some time on a sailboat. We had dinner at the Clubhouse. Later a bonfire outside. Some drinks. I even smoked a cigar for a bit! And I stayed at the cottage.

PEG LEECH
Really? A sleep over? Ohhh...

EMMA HART
Stop it. His whole family was there. I slept in a guest room.

PEG LEECH
Oh OK.

EMMA HART
The next day, lunch at the Clubhouse, we went out on the lake in a fancy steam yacht. Never been on one of those before.

Just spent time together. Later I got dressed at the cottage for my singing. Then after the show, Charlie and I headed home.

PEG LEECH
What do you think?

EMMA HART
Well. He's. He's, very handsome.
(they both giggle)
And he's very...

PEG LEECH
Rich! Very rich!

EMMA HART
I was going to say he is very much the gentleman. We kissed a little. Held hands. But he was not...

PEG LEECH
What happens next?

EMMA HART
He invited me to this thing called the Feast of Lanterns. In two weeks. Then I guess we'll see.

The manager JOHN MILLER walks over.

JOHN MILLER
Good morning Miss Hart. So. Did you ride the fancy chariot to work?

EMMA HART
No Mr. Miller. Just walked today.

JOHN MILLER
That's too bad. Now. Enough chit chat. Get to work ladies.

They both smile, turn to their typewriters, start working.

EXT. ON SAILBOAT DURING THE FEAST OF LANTERNS - EVENING

JAY and EMMA mingle among others on a fancy sailboat. Five lit lanterns hang on the boat. Jay pours Emma some wine. A beautiful summer evening turning to dusk.

JAY PHIPPS
Miss Hart, are you enjoying the Feast of Lanterns?

EMMA HART
I am Mister Phipps. This is really something.

JAY PHIPPS
And wait til the fireworks. I bet they're the best you've ever seen.

Their sail boat approaches the spillway.

EMMA HART
I have a question about the spillway. I know the members love to fish the lake. Don't the game fish swim out through the spillway?

JAY PHIPPS
No. There's a screen of iron rods attached under the bridge. Keeps them in.
(Emma nods, got it)
Get this. When they stocked this lake awhile back, the Club shipped a thousand black bass on a special train, all the way from Lake Erie.

EMMA HART
How about that.
(in an affected voice)
Oh to be so rich,
to have a special train,
just for fish.

Jay smiles. Pokes her playfully. The boat parade passes by the dam. Night setting in. The lanterns shine brighter.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
And there's the dam.
Or what I call it, the boogey dam.

JAY PHIPPS
Why?

EMMA HART
A few times a year after some bad rains, the rumors start that it's going to go. It's over fifty years old, and I used to get scared.

JAY PHIPPS
You don't worry anymore?

EMMA HART
Some of the smartest people in the country have fine summer places here. Like your Dad. And I believe that those very smart people are taking good care of that dam. So I don't worry about it anymore.

JAY PHIPPS
(points at a cottage)
Colonel Unger lives in that cottage. He keeps a close eye on the dam. The lake. Everyone says he's a good man. Someone to trust on such things.

EMMA HART
I hope so.

JAY PHIPPS
So. Have you thought, about us? What we discussed this morning?

EMMA HART
(looks up at him)
I have. I know the Club here closes tomorrow. And so, how can we...

Jay leans in with a kiss. Holds her. Gazes into her eyes.

JAY PHIPPS
I want you in my life Emma.
I want you to come to Pittsburgh. This fall, at Christmas...

EMMA HART
Really? But...

JAY PHIPPS
I'll be blunt. You're too good for your town. Too talented.
You should be singing for crowds in opera houses, theaters, at garden parties. In Pittsburgh, New York, Chicago. Hell, London and Paris.

EMMA HART
That's what, what I want to do.
That's my dream.

JAY PHIPPS
(slowly, intensely)
So. Make your dream. Come. True.

He leans in and they passionately kiss. Suddenly FIREWORKS EXPLODE over the boats and the lake illuminating them.

EXT. JOHNSTOWN TRAIN STATION - DAY

SUPER: November, 1888

CHARLIE with EMMA on the platform. Dressed in winter coats. She is ready to board. Some snow falling.

EMMA HART
Remember I told Mom I'm staying with Dottie Kinevey in Shadyside.

CHARLIE HART
You sure about this trip?

EMMA HART
Yeah. Why?

CHARLIE HART
How well do you know this guy? You only saw him a few times, right?

VICTOR approaches them on the platform.

EMMA HART
What are you doing here?

VICTOR HEISER
Charlie told me you were going to Pittsburgh. To see Phipps.

EMMA HART
(To Charlie)
Why did you...

VICTOR HEISER
I can't believe you're really going to see this guy. Don't you know what kind of person he is? He's a rogue. A scamp. He'll just...

EMMA HART
Stop it. I know what you think.
And you too Charlie.
But I think you're both wrong.

Jay has been writing me letters.
Lovely letters. Wanting me to come
visit him since the summer.

VICTOR HEISER
Alright. He is writing you nice
letters. But do you really think
you have a future with him. Other
than this summer fling. Seriously.

EMMA HART
(a beat)
I don't know. And I know his
reputation. But I want to find out
for myself. With eyes wide open.
If there's something between us.
Something, long lasting.

An announcement: "Final Boarding for Pennsylvania Railroad Train 909 to Pittsburgh and points west. Final boarding."

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
Charlie, I'll see you here on
Sunday, around six.

She gives Victor some side eye as she leaves. After she boards the train, Victor turns to Charlie.

VICTOR HEISER
You know. I wonder.
Maybe Jay is playing her.
But, she might be playing him too.
To get what she wants.
She always seems to get what she
wants.

INT. PITTSBURGH UNION STATION - DAY

After exiting the train, EMMA spots JAY waiting for her. He walks up to her and gives her a big hug.

JAY PHIPPS
Welcome to Pittsburgh Miss Hart.

EMMA HART
Thank you. And thanks for the first
class ticket. I felt like a queen.

JAY PHIPPS
It's so good to see you. I have a carriage waiting for us outside.

EMMA HART
Alright. I just need to get my bag.

JAY PHIPPS
No I have someone for that.

Jay nods at an African American porter. He points at her bag sitting on the platform. The porter picks it up. They start walking with the porter following them.

EMMA HART
Are we off to the Phipps castle?

JAY PHIPPS
(smiles)
The castle? That will come later.
Actually I wanted to stop off at the Duquesne Club first.
Have a few drinks.
You can powder your hair a bit.

EMMA HART
I didn't know women could visit the Duquesne Club?

JAY PHIPPS
On Friday evenings, we welcome the fairer sex to join us.

EMMA HART
As long as I don't drink too much. I might fall into the moat at the castle. Get eaten by an alligator.

JAY PHIPPS
Don't worry.
The drawbridge is wide and the alligators are very friendly.

EMMA HART
But am I dressed smart enough for the Duquesne Club?

JAY PHIPPS
Don't worry. You look beautiful.

EXT. DUQUESNE CLUB ENTRANCE - DAY

EMMA and JAY exit the carriage. Walk under a wide red awning. Some snow in the air. Emma so thrilled. The Duquesne Club!

INT. DUQUESNE CLUB BAR ROOM - DAY

The elegant lobby lit by beautiful crystal chandeliers. They walk through and enter the bar room, ringed with rich dark woods, elegant furniture, vaulted cathedral ceilings, and beautiful moldings. Piano and violin music plays.

JAY greets well-dressed members as they move through the room and arrive at an elegant long ornate oak bar.

JAY PHIPPS
What can I get you?

EMMA HART
A Tom Collins.

JAY PHIPPS
(calls for the bartender)
Raymond! Good man! A Tom Collins and a Manhattan, two cherries.
(Turns to Emma)
Well, thoughts so far?

EMMA HART
(looks around)
This is something.
I have to say, I'm a bit...

JAY PHIPPS
A bit?

EMMA HART
Nervous. This is, a lot different. Not like the lake.

JAY PHIPPS
Maybe you feel like a fish out of water. But a lot of the members here grew up in much smaller towns than Johnstown.
Mr. Knox, our attorney, is from a tiny burg called Brownsville. Mr. Horne grew up on a farm.

EMMA HART
Maybe so but...

JAY PHIPPS
Even the famous Mr. Carnegie was a penniless 13 year-old Scottish immigrant when he arrived in Pittsburgh. True story.

Drinks arrive. Jay hands Emma her drink.

JAY PHIPPS (CONT'D)
Please relax. But just in case, a few of these should help.

EMMA smiles. Elegantly dressed 24 yo MILDRED CHAMBERS and 24 yo LORETTA MUELLER walk over to them at the bar.

JAY PHIPPS (CONT'D)
Emma, please meet Miss Mildred Chambers and Miss Loretta Mueller, from Pittsburgh. And ladies, this is Miss Emma Hart, from Johnstown.

EMMA HART
A pleasure to meet you both.

MILDRED CHAMBERS
Charmed. You're from Johnstown? I've heard it's a delightful town.

EMMA HART
It has its own charms, I guess.

LORETTA MUELLER
I'm sure it does. Mildred we must visit sometime.

EMMA HART
I'd be happy to show you around.

MILDRED CHAMBERS
We'll plan on it. Well, we must mingle. It was a pleasure meeting you Miss Hart. Please enjoy your stay. Jay will take very good care of you.

The women walk away, giggling. Emma thinks that odd. Club members ANDREW MELLON, DURBIN HORNE and JAMES CHAMBERS approach. Jay greets them warmly. Emma a bit star-struck.

JAY PHIPPS
Emma, please meet Mr. Andrew Mellon, Mr. James Chambers, and Mr. Durbin Horne.

JAY PHIPPS (CONT'D)
Gentlemen, please meet my friend, Miss Emma Hart from Johnstown. This past summer, she was a singer at the Clubhouse at the lake and...

ANDREW MELLON
Of course we all remember Miss Hart. You have a very beautiful voice.

EMMA HART
Thank you. It's such an honor to be here.

DURBIN HORNE
You are so welcome Miss Hart. So, being from Johnstown, I've often wondered, how do the folks there feel about our club at the lake?
Are there any, strong opinions?

EMMA HART
Mr. Horne. I believe people are kind of proud that the financial titans of Pittsburgh summer in our lovely Cambria County.

JAMES CHAMBERS
Financial titans? I like that. I heard we're called the big bosses. Or worse.

DURBIN HORNE
I'm glad to hear that too. That lake is just so peaceful. So beautiful. And so far away from the ugly smoke and grit here.

EMMA HART
But people do talk about one thing.

JAMES CHAMBERS
What's that Miss Hart?

EMMA HART
Every year after some heavy rains, rumors start that the dam's going to break. People know it's an old dam. That does worry some people.

JAMES CHAMBERS
I assure you Miss Hart, we'll work to make sure that the dam is safe and secure. Our man there, Colonel Unger, keeps a close eye on things.

EMMA HART
I know the Colonel very well.

ANDREW MELLON
(a beat)
Well I'll just come out and ask. Miss Hart. Would you mind, singing something? Maybe one song.

EMMA HART
(Surprised, smiles)
Not at all. It'd be my pleasure.

Mellon escorts Emma to the piano. She has a brief chat with the musicians. Mellon rings a bell. The crowd quiets.

MELLON
Ladies and Gentlemen.
Can I have your attention please.
We have a very special guest.
Miss Emma Hart from Johnstown.
She was a wonderful singer at the lake clubhouse this past summer.
And she has graciously agreed to sing a song for us this evening.

After some light applause, Emma begins the Civil War ballad "Aura Lee" accompanied by piano and violin. Her voice captivating. A moving performance. Loud clapping at the end. She steps back over to Jay and the other men.

DURBIN HORNE
My goodness, that was wonderful.

JAMES CHAMBERS
"Aura Lee" is my favorite song from the war years. Thank you dear.

JAY PHIPPS
Let me get you a drink.

EMMA HART
Thank you all for the kind words.
And Jay, another Tom Collins please. But I need to use the ladies' room first.

Jay provides her with directions. Emma exits the room.

INT. DUQUESNE CLUB LADIES BATHROOM - DAY

EMMA sits in a stall, starts to stand, ready to leave. The door to the bathroom swings opens. MILDRED CHAMBERS and LORETTA MUELLER enter, talking loudly. Both a bit drunk. Emma quietly sits back down, pulls her legs up off the floor.

MILDRED CHAMBERS
Jay's new girl is quite the singer. I remember her from last summer.

Loretta hushes Mildred. She looks under the stall doors. No one with them in the bathroom (she thinks).

LORETTA MUELLER
Yes she is quite the singer. Apparently Jay saw her sing and fell so hard he visited her the next day. In Johnstown.

MILDRED CHAMBERS
Really? Well you do need a good reason to visit that dump of a town. What's even there?

LORETTA MUELLER
(stops, thinking)
Isn't that big horseshoe railroad curve near there? I don't know.

MILDRED CHAMBERS
Speaking of curves, Jay has the kind of curves he likes tonight.

LORETTA MUELLER
I was talking to Philo. Jay told him about her visit.

MILDRED CHAMBERS
What'd he say? Do tell.

LORETTA MUELLER
Jay told Philo. I need to close the book on this girl. Worked on her last summer, but didn't get too far. I need to get her notch on my belt. And this small town bumpkin will be so easy to bed.

MILDRED CHAMBERS
He's such a scoundrel!

Both laughing. Emma comes out of the stall.

EMMA HART
Actually ladies...

They jump. Both with "OH SHIT" looks on their faces.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
The railroad horseshoe curve is near Altoona. Not Johnstown.

Emma calmly steps to the mirror, washes her hands. Turns to leave. Both still speechless. Until Loretta speaks up.

LORETTA MUELLER
Hey Johnstown.

Emma stops. Turns. A nasty, icy stare at Loretta.

LORETTA MUELLER (CONT'D)
You seem like a nice girl.
I'm sorry you heard that.

EMMA HART
Yeah. Maybe so. I'm just mad I found out about this, from you two drunk ass bitches.

INT. DUQUESNE CLUB BAR ROOM - DAY

EMMA walks up to JAY as he chats with others.

EMMA HART
I need to go. I'm not feeling well.

JAY PHIPPS
What? Really? What's wrong?

EMMA HART
I'm leaving.

JAY PHIPPS
Did something happen? What?

Emma turns to walk away from him. Jay follows her out.

INT. DUQUESNE CLUB LOBBY - DAY

EMMA in the lobby, not sure where to go. JAY reaches her.

JAY PHIPPS
What happened? Are you OK?

EMMA HART
(some tears, angry)
You're a fucking ass. A liar!

JAY PHIPPS
What?

EMMA HART
I heard your friends in the bathroom talking about me.

JAY PHIPPS
Who? What? What did you hear?

EMMA HART
Those two twits we met at the bar. They said they heard you talking to one of your friends. About my visit. And how I was going to be easy. Another notch on your belt.

JAY PHIPPS
Oh Christ. They said what? No I didn't mean that! I was kidding around. Being a clown. It means nothing.

EMMA HART
Kidding around about how you're going to bed me this weekend? The dumb small town bumpkin?

JAY PHIPPS
Please, please believe me.

EMMA HART
All that time at the lake, the letters. The gushing over me. How talented I was, how beautiful. All lies, to get me here. To your royal court, to get me into bed...

JAY PHIPPS
I meant what I said. Everything.

EMMA HART
You're nothing but a liar.
And I'm nothing but a fool.
Now get me out of here. I want to be on the next train to Johnstown.

Emma pushes past him, exits out the front door of the Club.

INT. ON TRAIN HEADED BACK TO JOHNSTOWN - MORNING

EMMA's head pressed against the train window, some tears. An OLDER GENTLEMAN seated next to her, sees this. Gently pokes her. Passes her a handkerchief. The gentleman is distinguished, handsome, with grey hair and blue eyes.

OLDER GENTLEMEN
Don't worry, it's clean.
(Smiles)
I don't mean to pry. But is everything alright?

EMMA HART
Not really.

OLDER GENTLEMEN
We have some time on this train. And I can be a sympathetic ear. Do you want to talk about it?

EMMA HART
Well, alright.
I was in Pittsburgh to visit what I thought was a friend. I thought he cared for me. I thought we had a future together.
Turns out, it was all a big lie. I was just someone to toy with.

OLDER GENTLEMEN
How did you meet him?

EMMA HART
This past summer, I met him while singing...

OLDER GENTLEMEN
You're a singer?

EMMA HART
Yes. I sing at a club at a lake near where I live in Johnstown. The richest people in Pittsburgh belong to it. The South Fork club.

OLDER GENTLEMEN
I've heard of that club. This young man, is wealthy?

EMMA HART
Yes. Very.

OLDER GENTLEMEN
And you were hoping that maybe,
this young man and yourself...

EMMA HART
(some tears)
I daydreamed about this visit for
months. Of how it could go.
Maybe change my life.
But I don't know why I really
believed anything would happen with
him and me.
Some small town nobody.

OLDER GENTLEMEN
But I could see how a young man
could fall for you.

EMMA HART
Well, it's over. Over with him.
And now my hopes and dreams are
gone. What I wanted. My future,
everything, looks so dark.

OLDER GENTLEMEN
But dear, it can't all be dark.
Your hopes and dreams shouldn't
grow dark.
They're what moves us forward.
What do you want? What is your
dream? Right now.

EMMA HART
I want to be a singer.
Make a living as a singer.
And sing on stages in big cities.

OLDER GENTLEMEN
(slowly, intently)
If you truly want that,
then don't give up.
You're so young.
Just starting your life.
Keep your dreams alive.
Please tell me you will do that.
Please.

Emma, teary eyed, smiles a bit, nods ok, leans on his shoulder. He puts his arm around her.

EXT. JOHNSTOWN TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - AFTERNOON

EMMA on the platform, holds her bag. Looking for Charlie. VICTOR approaches. He is the last person she wants to see.

EMMA HART
Where's Charlie?

VICTOR HEISER
He told me you were coming back a day early. Asked if I could meet you. Did your plans change?

Victor takes her bag. Emma irritated, walks with him.

EMMA HART
Things didn't work out.

VICTOR HEISER
Can I ask...

EMMA HART
I don't want to talk about it.

VICTOR HEISER
Can you stop for a minute.

Emma stops, sternly turns to him. Victor sighs. Looks around.

EMMA HART
(a beat)
What? Just say it.

VICTOR HEISER
I told you, he was no good.

Emma turns away and starts walking.

VICTOR HEISER (CONT'D)
Wait. Please.

Emma stops again. A "what now?" look.

VICTOR HEISER (CONT'D)
Look. I was so angry and upset that you wanted to see that guy. I couldn't eat, couldn't sleep.

EMMA HART
Alright. Well it's over.

VICTOR HEISER
Emma. Please. Listen.
I should have told you this before.

VICTOR HEISER (CONT'D)
Directly. Clearly.
I adore you.
I have since we were little kids.
You know that.
And I know you want to get away
from here. Start somewhere new.
With your singing. And you hoped
that would be possible with Jay.

EMMA HART
Yes and I know your future is here,
with your parents and the store.

VICTOR HEISER
I'm not so sure about that anymore.
I wanted to talk to you about that,
and some other things.

EMMA HART
(a loud sigh, angry)
Christ. You know what.
My life is so messed up right now.
I don't want to talk about this. Or
you. Or anything.

Emma storms away. He says nothing more to her.

INT. HART HOME FAMILY ROOM- AFTERNOON

EMMA enters the front room. Her mom on the couch.

RUTH HART
I thought you were coming back
tomorrow.

EMMA HART
I needed to come back early. Didn't
Charlie tell you?

RUTH HART
No. Everything OK with Dottie?

EMMA HART
Mom. I didn't tell you the truth,
about my trip. I didn't visit her.

RUTH HART
What did you do?

EMMA HART
I visited that gentleman I met at
the lake last summer. Jay Phipps.

RUTH HART
Why didn't you tell me.

EMMA HART
I don't know. I wasn't sure about the whole thing.

RUTH HART
What happened?

EMMA HART
He wanted me to visit. I thought he had feelings for me. I thought there could be a future with him.

RUTH HART
And?

EMMA HART
And. It's over.
I don't want to talk about it. OK?

RUTH HART
That's fine.

Emma starts to tear up.

RUTH HART (CONT'D)
Honey what's wrong?

Emma moves in to hug her Mom. They embrace.

EMMA HART
I did really like him. I did. And if something could have happened with him, maybe I could start in Pittsburgh, with a singing career.

RUTH HART
I know you want that dear.

EMMA HART
People tell me I'm good. Really good. But I don't feel like there's any way I can, I can...

RUTH HART
I was like you in a way. At your age. Very good at art in school. Oil painting. Won awards.
I thought that was my future.
Was planning to go to art college.
Even had a scholarship.

EMMA HART
I know.

RUTH HART
Then I met your father.
And he worked here. At the mill.
We fell in love.
Started a family. You and Charlie.
And I wouldn't change one thing
about what happened to me.

EMMA HART
But you put your dreams aside. I'm
not ready to do that. Not yet.

RUTH HART
One thing I've learned.
Life is not how we plan it.
Unexpected events happen, something
you never even thought about.
Out of the blue.
Just keep an open mind.
You never know what the next day
might bring.

Emma leans in and hugs her Mom. Tears in her eyes.

INT. VICTOR HEISER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

VICTOR in bed, tossing, turning. Dreaming of the flood again.

A powerful wave of water fifty feet high. People running, but they are doomed. Swamped by the waters. A train car is crushed. People in the windows screaming.

The waters now coming at him, rising over his head. The water about to crash down.

Victor sits up, wide awake. The visions are getting worse.

EXT. COLONEL UNGER'S COTTAGE - MORNING

SUPER: Colonel Unger's Cottage

March, 1889

A carriage makes a turn onto dirt road, heading to the Unger cottage which sits on a hill overlooking the lake.

In the carriage sits JOHN FULTON, the President of Cambria Iron. Fulton, a tall 56 yo, iron-grey beard, dark brow.

Fulton approaches the front door. Knocks. UNGER answers. With him stands 23 yo old, slender, baby-faced JOHN PARKE in an ill-fitting suit. They move into Unger's office which features beautiful views of the lake out the large windows.

INT. COLONEL UNGER'S OFFICE - MORNING*

JOHN FULTON
Colonel. Thank you for meeting me.

COLONEL UNGER
Of course Mr. Fulton. Before we begin, this is Mr. John Parke, an engineer we hired to help here with special projects.
(Fulton nods hello)
What can we do for you today?

JOHN FULTON
I represent a number of city and business leaders from Johnstown concerned about the dam.

This lake has grown to its largest size ever. Three miles long, a mile wide. We believe issues with the stability of the dam must be immediately addressed.

COLONEL UNGER
Alright first Mr. Fulton, we monitor the lake level closely. And we have a spillway already in place.

JOHN FULTON
That spillway is only seven or eight feet below the dam crest. If the lake level rose too high, it becomes useless.

The lake holds over twenty million tons of water, at least. If that amount of water breached the dam, it would be disastrous.

COLONEL UNGER
I disagree that it would be disastrous. Your own newspaper in Johnstown, the *Tribune*, had an article about this topic.

JOHN FULTON
I know about that article.

COLONEL UNGER
It said a break would not impact Johnstown too much. There would be some bad flooding, but most of the water would disperse through the fifteen miles of valley to Johnstown. Into streams, creeks.

JOHN FULTON
I believe that article was wrong. A lot of people do.

And it's not just the amount of the water. This lake is five hundred feet higher than the valley. If it broke, all that water would head downhill. For miles.

Fulton looks over at Parke, back to the Colonel.

JOHN FULTON (CONT'D)
Mr. Parke, your new engineer. Is he working on the dam?

COLONEL UNGER
Mr. Parke was hired to install a new septic system.

JOHN FULTON
I see. A septic system.

COLONEL UNGER
Can we get to the point? What do you want to discuss today?

JOHN FULTON
Our recommendations are here.
(He hands him a report)
Please review this as soon as you can. But in summary, we recommend another spillway be installed. You need to work on overhauling the dam, especially the upper slopes. You should also...

COLONEL UNGER
(interrupting)
Fine. I'll review your report with the Club leadership. When they arrive in early June.

JOHN FULTON
Early June. So, in three months.
(sighs)

JOHN FULTON (CONT'D)
I guess I'm done here for today.
(standing)
But before I go, I want to add something else.

COLONEL UNGER
Of course.

JOHN FULTON
Please let the Club leadership know that Cambria Iron will help pay for these changes to the dam. We feel that strongly about this situation.

COLONEL UNGER
Thank you Mr. Fulton. Duly noted.

JOHN FULTON
Thank you. I can find my way out.

Fulton rises to leave and exits the cottage.

JOHN PARKE
Colonel, what do you think?

COLONEL UNGER
It's nothing new. Believe me.

JOHN PARKE
If you want, I can review that report. Maybe there are some actions we can take to...

COLONEL UNGER
(Sternly, stares at him)
Mr. Parke. Listen to me.
(a beat)
I hired you for one thing.
A new septic system.
That's what the members want.
They are tired of using that two story outhouse and having no indoor plumbing in the cottages.
And I'm goddamn tired of them bitching about it to me.

You work only on the septic system.
That's your number one priority.
Do you understand?

Parke stands and nods yes. He exits out of the office.

SUPER: April, 1889

EXT. SOUTH FORK CLUBHOUSE PORCH - DAY

VICTOR walks toward the Clubhouse. As he approaches, he spots someone on the porch. JOHN PARKE, smoking a cigarette.

VICTOR HEISER
Strange to see a new face up here. My name's Victor Heiser. I work at the boathouse.

JOHN PARKE
(shakes his hand)
John Parke. I'm a civil engineer. Working for the Colonel. I started here about a month ago.

VICTOR HEISER
Congratulations. Are you working on the dam?

JOHN PARKE
(smiles, takes a puff)
You're about the tenth person to ask me that. No I'm working to set up a new septic system. Install indoor plumbing in the cottages. Getting rid of that monstrosity.
(points at the two story outhouse)
You've been here for awhile?

VICTOR HEISER
A few years. I work on the weekends for the Colonel getting the boats ready for the summer. I'm on the lake a lot.

JOHN PARKE
Alright Mr. Heiser, give me your thoughts on the dam. Everyone else around here already has.

VICTOR HEISER
OK. First it leaks badly, and they have to patch it every spring. They need to build up the dam face. Strengthen it. There's only one spillway for this huge lake. Just one. They need another one. Maybe some piping under the dam too.

JOHN PARKE
I agree with you. I've brought up the dam with the Colonel a few times. And the last time I did, he got really angry. Pounded his fist on the table. Said not to ever bring it up again.

VICTOR HEISER
Really? Why is he so against making fixes to the dam?

JOHN PARKE
From what I can tell, it would be very expensive to make the needed changes. Might even have to drain most of the lake. And even though these bosses are richer than God, they don't like spending money.

VICTOR HEISER
That's what I hear.

JOHN PARKE
And another thing. Unger believes an article he read in the Johnstown newspaper. From a year or so ago.

VICTOR HEISER
What did it say?

JOHN PARKE
That if the dam failed, the lake waters would disperse through the valley, into the creeks and streams. A bad day of flooding in the valley, but not a huge disaster.

VICTOR HEISER
People do believe that. It is fifteen miles to Johnstown.

JOHN PARKE
Yeah. True. But.
There's twenty million tons of water in there. At least. And this lake sits much higher than the valley and Johnstown.
If the dam broke, all that water would burst out. Heading downhill. For fifteen miles.
That would be some immense power.

JOHN PARKE (CONT'D)
I believe it would be far worse than a bad day of flooding.

VICTOR HEISER
I haven't told anyone about this, but I'm having dreams about the dam breaking, flooding the valley, killing people.

JOHN PARKE
Really.

VICTOR HEISER
And here's the weird thing. There's an old man in town who's always screaming about the end of the world. And one day last year, he told me I would start having these dreams. Or visions he called them. About the dam breaking. And the flood. And the destruction.

JOHN PARKE
He told you that.

VICTOR HEISER
Yeah. He said the flood was the start of the End Times or something. Said he was having the same dreams. I thought he was crazy, but I'm having the dreams too. Just like he said I would. It's all just so strange.

Parke nods. Looks at the huge lake. Takes a long drag.

SUPER: Thursday, May 30, 1889

The Day Before The Flood

Decoration Day Parade

Sandy Vale Cemetery, Johnstown

EXT. SANDY VALE CEMETERY - MORNING*

Union Army Veterans wearing their dress-blue Civil War uniforms lead a parade into the Sandy Vale Cemetery. The town's Revolutionary and Civil War veterans are buried here.

In the parade, EMMA and CHARLIE march, along with VICTOR.

When the Union Army veterans reach a veteran's tombstone, they salute, bow for a moment, and place a wreath on a stand.

Above the parade, the SKY DARKENS. Dark black clouds have been coming from the west all day. LIGHTNING FLASHES, THUNDER RUMBLES in the distance. The WIND picks up. Rain starts.

Victor greets Emma and Charlie as they view a tombstone. A freshly placed wreath stands near it. It reads:

William Henry Hart
54th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment
Company E
August 23, 1844 - May 15, 1864

VICTOR HEISER
Who's this?

EMMA HART
Our father's brother, Billy Hart.
He served in the Pennsylvania 54th.
Fell at New Market in Virginia.
Just nineteen years old.

VICTOR HEISER
Right. You told me about him.

EMMA HART
My dad missed him so much.
The baby of his family.
It broke his heart.

VICTOR HEISER
I'm so sorry.
Hopefully they're together now.
(a beat)
Can we talk for a moment?

After Emma finishes a prayer, they gather under a tree out of the rain, now falling harder. Victor turns to her, nervously.

VICTOR HEISER (CONT'D)
Emma. I'm so sorry about the whole
Jay Phipps thing. How I reacted.
He really hurt you. I know that.
And he was your chance to get away
from here. I can't blame you for
wanting that.

Emma smiles. Charlie runs over to them. Rain pouring down.

CHARLIE HART
We should go. This storm is getting worse. Someone said we could get record rains. Even tornadoes.

EMMA HART
(Turns to Victor)
My Mom's making some apple pies this weekend. Why not stop by on Sunday afternoon? We can talk about those, other things. You know, the other things you wanted to talk about.

VICTOR HEISER
Yes. Alright. OK. See you on Sunday.

Emma leans in and hugs Victor. Gives him a kiss on the cheek. And then Emma and Charlie head out of the cemetery, running, along with everyone else as the rains and winds pick up.

Victor walks slowly in the rain and wind. A big smile. He's getting drenched. He doesn't care. His heart is full. He can't wait until Sunday.

INT. VICTOR HEISER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

VICTOR in bed, the rain pouring down hard. He hears something odd, like a voice. Gets up, walks to the window.

Standing in the rain in the street below him, the TOWN CRAZY MAN. Staring right at him. He is holding the broom handle, and the handle is glowing brightly. Victor is horrified.

The Man's eyes roll up into his head and he starts moving his mouth in a creepy way. Victor hears him talking, slowly.

TOWN CRAZY MAN
Listen boy.
Today is the Day.
Today is the Day of the Flood.
The Beginning Of The End Times.
Like I told you.
The Lord's Will be done.

Suddenly, all around the Man, he sees ghostly white figures walking towards his house. Hundreds, thousands of figures. Men, women, children. As far as the eye can see.

Victor wakes up. He goes to the window. Nothing outside but the flooded streets and pounding rain. Am I going crazy? What was that? Who were those ghosts. Today is the Day?

INT. HART HOUSE KITCHEN - MORNING

SUPER: Friday, May 31, 1889

The Day Of The Flood

8:30 A.M.

EMMA sips her tea. CHARLIE enters. Groggy, sleepy.

EMMA HART
Morning. Schools are closed. I heard the bells.

CHARLIE HART
This stupid town's flooded. Again. You going to work?

EMMA HART
Yep. One reason Charlie. It's pay day. I'm used to walking in the rain.

Suddenly the front door bursts open. VICTOR tumbles in, drenched. Soaked. Out of breath.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

VICTOR HEISER
(Excited, talking fast)
Listen to me. I've been having dreams. For months. Horrible dreams about the dam breaking. So real, so vivid. It started right after I talked to the crazy man downtown. You know, the guy with the crazy long white hair. He said I would have these dreams.

EMMA HART
Slow down. What are you talking about?

VICTOR HEISER
The crazy man tells me he's having the dreams too. About the dam breaking. Says it means the end of the world.

CHARLIE HART
The end of the world?

VICTOR HEISER
Anyway last night I saw him in a dream talking to me. And he said today is the day. Today is the day of the flood! Then I saw thousands of ghosts with him.

CHARLIE HART
Ghosts? What? Come on, it's just another rainy day.

VICTOR HEISER
This is different. I'm telling you. Please stay home Emma. Don't go to work. And get your Mom. Get to higher ground. Maybe Green Hill.

EMMA HART
(Matter of factly)
Mister Heiser. I am going to Cambria and getting my paycheck. And like I told you. Come back here on Sunday. For some apple pie. But maybe in some drier clothes.

Emma leans in and hugs Charlie. Turns to Victor.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
If I see the crazy man, I'll tell him you said hello. Although, I'm not sure who's more crazy anymore.

She smiles and exits out the door.

VICTOR HEISER
I'm telling you. This is real. You should get to higher ground.

CHARLIE HART
Come on. Is this some scheme or something about Emma. If it is...

VICTOR HEISER
No it's not!

CHARLIE HART
Are you going to higher ground today? What about your parents?

VICTOR HEISER
They. They told me not to worry. They hear about the dam breaking all the time. And nothing happens.

CHARLIE HART
OK. They're staying. Are you?

VICTOR HEISER
Christ. I don't know.

CHARLIE HART
Go home. Dry off. Get some sleep. I'll see you on Sunday.

VICTOR HEISER
I hope so. God I hope so.

EXT. SOUTH FORK DAM - MORNING*

SUPER: 10:00 AM

TORRENTS OF RAIN pour down. Water now only a few feet from the dam crest. Men dump tree stumps, dirt, large stones off wagons onto the road, hoping to halt the waters.

UNGER on horseback, crisscrosses the dam road, back and forth, screaming at the men to do more.

Unger sees PARKE and his men working on the spillway screen using long poles, picks, axes. But there's NO WATER getting to the spillway. Rides over, gets off his horse. Angry.

COLONEL UNGER
Why isn't the spillway working?

PARKE
Colonel we can't get the screen cleared. The lake keeps pushing logs, stumps, underbrush, all kind of debris into it. Faster than we can clear it.

COLONEL UNGER
Get that screen cleared. You hear me. Get more men on it!

A stout bearded man, 32 yo JOHN BUCANNON, approaches. Walks up to Unger. Gets in his face. Parke steps back, watches.

JOHN BUCANNON
You're the Colonel right?

COLONEL UNGER
What do you want.

JOHN BUCANNON
I'm John Bucannon from South Fork. There's no water getting to the spillway. It's because of the fish screen attached to the bridge.

COLONEL UNGER
I don't have time for this.

JOHN BUCANNON
The screen is clogged with too much shit. Too much debris. If you can't clear it, tear down the bridge!

COLONEL UNGER
Get the hell out of here.

Unger steps away. Bucannon follows him. Screaming at him.

JOHN BUCANNON
People WILL DIE if this dam breaks. To save a bunch of fucking fish. FISH! GODDAMN IT! TEAR DOWN the bridge! Tear it down! You'll have blood on your hands.

Bucannon finally leaves. Parke approaches the Colonel. He knows what he's going to say will really upset him.

JOHN PARKE
Colonel the spillway fully working is the only way possible to prevent the dam breaking.
Since we can't get the screen cleared, we must tear down the bridge. It's the only way to...

COLONEL UNGER
Parke! I have no intention of tearing down a bridge that the Club just built a few years ago.
First that asshole, now you!
Just stop it!

JOHN PARKE
But Colonel...

COLONEL UNGER
Enough! No more excuses!
Get that screen cleared.
Get this spillway working!

INT. HART HOME FAMILY ROOM - MORNING

SUPER: 10:30 A.M.

CHARLIE plays his guitar. The front door opens. EMMA enters. She shakes off the rain. Pulls off her raincoat.

CHARLIE HART
Home already?

EMMA HART
They let us out early.
The flooding is really bad.
Worse than usual.
How long did Victor stay?

CHARLIE HART
He left right after you. Still upset about his dreams.

EMMA HART
Well anyway. I got my check.
(Holds up her check.)
Guess the crazy man and all the ghosts were wrong about the flood today. So far at least.

EXT. SOUTH FORK DAM - MORNING*

SUPER: 11:15 A.M.

The rain continues to pour down. The workmen still trying to dump tree stumps, logs, rocks and dirt onto the dam road.

But the lake waters are flowing across the road and down the front of the dam. Small waterfalls are forming.

UNGER still on his horse, yelling at the men to do more. But even he sees these efforts are not going to stop the waters.

He rides over to PARKE, still working with his men on the spillway. Ties off his horse. He steps up to Parke. Unger is solemn. Like a broken man. He knows what's going to happen. The dam will fail. And there's nothing he can do about it.

COLONEL UNGER
Parke. I need you to ride down to South Fork. Go to the telegraph tower. Tell them that the dam is going to fail. They need to alert the valley towns and Johnstown. To take all the necessary precautions. You need to go now. Right now.

Parke nods and immediately runs to get his horse.

EXT. PORCH OF ANNA FENN HOME - MORNING

SUPER: 11:30 A.M.

ANNA FENN holds her BABY DAUGHTER ESTHER. Her next door neighbor BELLE WATERS comes out on her porch. They exchange hellos. The flood waters now up to their front porches.

BELLE WATERS
Is John around? We could use some help moving some things upstairs.

ANNA FENN
He's actually heading over to his Mom's place. He'll be back later.

Five year old GINNY FENN comes out on the porch.

GINNY FENN
You comin' in soon Mom?

ANNA FENN
Yes Ginny. Go back inside.
(turns to Belle)
I better get back in. Lord it's been collie shangles all day. Six bored kids and sassy Esther here, stuck together upstairs.

BELLE WATERS
I don't know how you do it. God bless. See you soon.

EXT. STINEMAN'S STORE, SOUTH FORK - MORNING*

SUPER: 11:45 A.M.

PARKE rides his horse on a treacherous country road through the rain. Arrives in South Fork. Rides up to some men standing under the porch of Stineman's dry goods store.

JOHN PARKE
(Drenched, out of breath)
Listen to me. Listen. The waters are pouring over the top of the dam. It's going to give way. You need to alert people.

The men look at him. Just shake their heads.

STINEMAN MAN
Listen son. Someone already rode down here this morning and told us about the dam. Guy named Bidwell. Said there was nothing to worry about. The Colonel has a plan.

JOHN PARKE
(Exasperated)
No. No. Listen, things have gotten much worse. Much worse!
The Colonel sent me!
Told me to warn people. Get a message down the valley.

The man waves him off. Parke, flustered, rides towards the South Fork telegraph tower in the near distance.

EXT. SOUTH FORK DAM - AFTERNOON*

SUPER: 1:30 P.M.

A fifty foot waterfall pours over the dam. Workmen stand around. Their axes, tools, lay on the ground, useless.

PEOPLE from South Fork have gathered all morning. Staring, watching, waiting. UNGER, looks so worried, ill.

TELEGRAPH MESSAGES*

On screen, telegraph messages typed out and displayed.

1:52 PM RP OD VIA MP & AO
THE WATER IS RUNNING OVER THE BREAST OF LAKE DAM, IN CENTER AND WEST SIDE, AND IS BECOMING DANGEROUS.

2:25 PM RP OD VIA MP & AO
THE DAM IS BECOMING DANGEROUS AND MAY POSSIBLY GO.

EXT. SOUTH FORK DAM - AFTERNOON

SUPER: 3:00 P.M.

As the rain pounds down, the WATERFALL pouring over the dam is one hundred feet wide. PARKE and UNGER stare at this spectacle, along with the large crowd. Parke looks around.

JOHN PARKE
All these people. I guess you don't see something like this every day.
(a beat)
Colonel, what do you really think's going to happen, when the dam goes?

COLONEL UNGER
(trembling voice)
There will be some bad flooding. But a lot of the waters will spread out in the valley. Into the streams and creeks. Like that article said.

JOHN PARKE
(Solemnly)
I disagree Colonel.
I believe. When this dam fails.
And twenty million tons of water pours into this valley.
Heading downhill.
I fear, it's going to be.
(a beat)
The most Awful Force
Of The Creator.

Screen goes BLACK and SILENT.

SUPER: Friday May 31, 1889

Lake Conemaugh, Pennsylvania

3:10 P.M.

A THUNDEROUS EXPLOSION OF NOISE.

The bloated lake BLASTS through the dam. The crowd erupts in SCREAMS. Water GUSHING OUT AT TREE-TOP LEVEL, plunging, pouring into the valley. Tons and tons of water.

UNGER founders, holds his chest, falls to his knees moaning "OH GOD, OH GOD". PARKE tries to hold him up, steady him.

EXT. THE VALLEY, THE STONE RAILROAD BRIDGE - AFTERNOON*

LOUD THUNDEROUS ROAR as 20 million tons of water devours and crushes the valley landscape. The dark wave is 40 feet high.

Tears up railroad tracks on the valley edges. Shreds huge trees and telegraph poles like twigs. Crushes farmhouses, barns, any structure in its path. Like toy blocks.

HOWLING WINDS ahead of the wave. Fast moving flood waters reach 70 FOOT HIGH in steep areas of the valley.

The flood wave smashes into an 80-FOOT HIGH STONE RAILROAD BRIDGE. Debris jams the huge arch of the bridge stopping the water. A new dam forms a new lake. Briefly.

But the water's strength builds in force and power. The huge stone bridge creaks as it strains to hold back the mounting weight of the water. Huge cracks begin to appear. A rumbling noise. The bridge EXPLODES in a heap as the flood wave punches through it with even more force.

At Mineral Point, people on hillsides watch as a 40 foot wave flattens their town. Thirty structures. Gone in minutes.

EXT. - EAST CONEMAUGH RAIL YARD - AFTERNOON*

SUPER: East Conemaugh

A locomotive moves in reverse. TRAIN WHISTLE blowing nonstop. The train stops. Men jump off, run. The dark wall approaches.

The wall of water smashes into a huge train roundhouse. Nearly 30 LOCOMOTIVES, some weighing up to EIGHTY TONS, are lifted, flipped and crushed like toys. Locomotives and train cars scattered up to a mile from the flattened roundhouse.

TWO PASSENGER TRAINS sit on parallel tracks. Both have been stopped for hours due to the flooding.

A Pullman passenger car among the cars on the higher tracks.

The other train with passenger cars on the lower tracks is closer to the oncoming flood. Which is coming fast.

The flood wave SMASHES the train on the lower tracks. People inside the passenger cars screaming in HORROR. Crushed.

The people in the Pullman on the higher tracks see this horrible sight. Begin sobbing, praying. They are NEXT TO DIE.

But the waters are somewhat diverted by a train tower. The car is partially flooded and pushed down the tracks. But the passengers survive. Weeping, thanking the Lord.

EXT. TOWN OF WOODVALE - AFTERNOON*

SUPER: Woodvale

A ROAR grows in the distance. A BLACK MISTY ALIEN WALL approaches the town fast. People see it and panic.

The flood wave travels a straight two mile stretch to the town through the valley, no twists or turns. The wave hits like a SLEDGE HAMMER. Block after block flattened instantly.

So much HORROR. A group of people trying to run, crushed under a rail car. Over 90 horses drown in a downtown stable. People trying to outrun the wave, swamped. Drowned.

Next the waters slam into the huge Gautier Barb Wire factory west of town. The boilers EXPLODE in a thunderous ROAR. HUGE SPRAYS of water. Killer barb wire now in the flood wave.

EXT. SHANTY ON CREEK NEAR JOHNSTOWN - AFTERNOON

The TOWN CRAZY MAN steps outside his shanty. Holding the broom handle. Turns to see a 40 foot high WALL of DARK WATER APPROACHING FAST.

At first he CRIES OUT in terror. But he pauses, takes a deep breath. Smiles. Makes the Sign Of The Cross. Closes his eyes. Looks up. Extends his arms. Holding the broom handle. Screams "I'M COMING HOME LORD!"

SUPER: Johnstown

INT. HEISER HOME SECOND FLOOR - AFTERNOON

GEORGE HEISER and his wife MATTIE gaze out a window. The pounding rains have slowed. The sky's brightening some.

MATTIE HEISER
Maybe the worst's over.

GEORGE HEISER
Shhhh, do you hear that? Look.

He points to an alien misty dark mass approaching from the east in the distance. A rumbling ROAR grows. Getting louder.

INT. HART HOME SECOND FLOOR BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

CHARLIE strums his guitar. His mom RUTH sitting in a chair enjoying it, smiling. He stops. Gazes out a window.

CHARLIE HART
Looks like the rain's slowing down.

RUTH HART
Finally. I might head downstairs.
Want to get dinner started and...

Suddenly EMMA bursts into the room. Runs to the window.

EMMA HART
Look out here. Look. In the distance.

Charlie and Ruth go to the window. Emma points to a black wall of mist coming closer. Below them in the street, chaos. People running about. Shouting. Bells start ringing. Sirens.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
See it? It's a flood wave. The dam must have broke. We've got to go.

They scramble out to the front porch. But the flood wave is coming too fast. Emma sees others getting on their roofs.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
Get back inside! Get on the roof!

They head back in, rush up the stairs. Her Mom trips, stumbles. Emma turns and goes back to help her. HOWLING WINDS. The ROAR of waters grows LOUDER. SMASHING SOUNDS.

A LOUD WAVE of water BLASTS through the windows. The house CRUSHED, FLOODED. All three tossed into the powerful WATERS.

Moments later, Charlie surfaces on a telegraph pole, spitting up water. His head bleeding. Emma hanging onto a roof timber. Their mom barely hanging on to a piece of wall frame.

The rushing waters push them out into a crowded debris field.

Emma tries to get to her Mom. Suddenly a large section of a building near her collides with another. The building CRASHES DOWN on her Mom and near Emma. A huge spray. She barely survives. But her Mom is swamped under the structure, gone.

Emma jumps onto a more sturdy floating roof. She keeps crying out for her Mom. She gazes around. Looks for Charlie.

Charlie hangs onto a telegraph pole that is quickly floating away. Emma watches as he disappears heading to the west in the roaring waters. At least he's alive. She hopes.

EXT. STREETS OF JOHNSTOWN - AFTERNOON

The wall of water SLAMS the eastern end of town. Shattered buildings, carriages, railroad cars slammed together.

INT. HEISER HOME SECOND FLOOR - AFTERNOON

GEORGE HEISER looking for VICTOR. MATTIE says he's out by the barn in the backyard. George runs to a window. Spots him. His Dad motions GET ON THE BARN ROOF! NOW!

EXT. HEISER BARN - AFTERNOON*

VICTOR reaches the roof of the barn. Turns to see his PARENTS on their roof, frightened, holding each other.

The black wave approaches as high as the building and PUMMELS it. His parents disappear. He closes his eyes. Waits to die.

The waters SLAM the barn. Knocks it off its foundation. It starts SPINNING in the water. Victor hangs on barely.

His barn spinning, quickly sinking. He leaps onto another roof, barely making it.

He sees a FAMILY across from him in a building floating in the waters. The father tries to packs a trunk. The wife and children cling to rafters. Suddenly the building collapses and pitches forward. All fall into the waters. SCREAMING.

INT. ANNA FENN HOME SECOND FLOOR BEDROOM - AFTERNOON*

ANNA FENN and her CHILDREN on the second floor. Playing games, with toys. Outside she hears SIRENS, BELLS, YELLING. A LOUD RUMBLING. What's that racket? She goes to the window.

She sees the DARK FLOOD WAVE CLOSING FAST. She's terrified. But she remains calm. Tells her six kids to stand with her across from the windows and hold hands. Anna hugs her baby ESTHER tightly. She closes her eyes, says a silent prayer.

The water BLASTS through the windows. The baby ripped out of her arms. Kids SCREAMING, THRASHING ABOUT. Water in the room rises fast. Anna tries to save her kids. All struggling in the waters. Screaming. Grabbing at her. The water rising.

Anna's head barely above water. Near the ceiling. She waits to drown. Then the water stops rising. She has survived. But her SEVEN CHILDREN FLOAT AROUND HER. ALL HAVE DROWNED.

EXT. RIDING THE FLOOD WAVE - AFTERNOON*

VICTOR hangs onto a roof in the rushing waters. He dodges timbers and debris hurling through the air like missiles.

A FREIGHT TRAIN CAR heads towards him fast. Hits a building, launches into the air. Falling towards him. He waits to die.

His roof suddenly shoots forward in a swell of water. The train car SPLASHES with a huge spray, barely missing him.

His roof floats into open calmer water. He sees a MAN on a roof, half naked. PRAYING LOUDLY to GOD to save his Soul.

INT. WATERS HOUSE ATTIC - AFTERNOON*

GEORGE and BELLE WATERS stand with their two daughters on wide roof rafters in the attic. Belle holds their baby EVA.

The roar grows louder. The flood wave BLASTS through the windows. The house ROCKS VIOLENTLY and floods to the rafters. The TWO DAUGHTERS knocked into the waters.

George moves towards them in the waters, holding onto a roof rafter. Reaches into the dark water. He can't find them. CRIES out for them. His hands thrash around. Where are they?

After a few moments, he finds two feet in the waters. With all his strength, pulls at both of the feet. And amazingly, he has grabbed BOTH daughters, one foot each. Pulls them onto the rafters with him and his wife. Both COUGHING, CRYING. They all hug each other. Alive.

EXT. RIDING THE FLOOD WAVE - AFTERNOON

EMMA'S roof drifts in the debris field. She spots THREE CHILDREN on a portion of a roof. CRYING OUT, scared. Their roof sinking fast. Not much time. They float closer.

Emma gets a LONG POLE out of the waters. SHE CRIES OUT to them. They see her. Wave at her.

EMMA HART
Hey! Hey kids! Grab this!

As they get closer, Emma holds out the long pole. An older sister grabs for it, once, twice. The third time she grabs it, she holds on. Another sister grabs it too.

Using all her strength, Emma pulls them closer, almost falls in herself. Finally, they're close enough that she can help them onto her more sturdy floating roof.

The older sister helps her brother onto the roof. He's CRYING in pain. His leg twisted at an odd angle. Finally all are safely on Emma's roof.

The youngest sister holds a SMALL DOG. She shivers. CRYING. Emma sits next to her. Hugs her. Tries to calm her.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
You're OK sweetie. You're OK.
(sees the dog)
What's your doggie's name?

YOUNG GIRL
Hazel. She barked when the flood was coming. And we got on the roof.

EMMA HART
Well. Hazel's a little hero dog isn't she? And I bet she's glad you're here. To keep her warm.

The girl stops crying. Smiles at Emma. Hugs her dog.

EXT. CAMBRIA IRON, SCENES OF JOHNSTOWN - AFTERNOON

Powerful waters SLAM into the Cambria Iron plant. CRUSHES smaller outer buildings. Tall smokestacks SHAKE, some tumble into the waters. Metal roofs bend and CRASH down.

The wave slams into the hillside to the west of town. The waters pushed back, forms a powerful swirling eddy.

The scene: people on roof tops, in trees, some naked, on floating train cars. Some in their battered homes, floating on beds. Many crying out for help, in pain.

The waters calming. Mud, muck, debris, wrecked structures, corpses, dead horses. Smoke as fires burn.

Stunned crowds of people walk down from hillsides around the town. They begin to help the survivors as much as possible.

At the Stone Bridge, a massive debris field fed by the flood waters grows. Tons of wreckage clogs the arches, including wrecked structures with people trapped inside.

EXT. RIDING THE FLOOD WATERS - AFTERNOON

VICTOR'S roof comes to a rest in shallow waters. He stumbles out to a muddy street. Soaked, out of breath. He falls to the ground. Hands, bare feet bleeding, bruised. His clothes--torn, covered in dirt and mud.

EXT. JOHNSTOWN, STONE BRIDGE DEBRIS FIELD - AFTERNOON*

Crushed structures, debris, locomotives, dead horses, barb wire jammed together in a debris field in front of the Stone Bridge. Over a hundred yards long.

Within the debris field, people trapped in battered structures. Pinned by beams. Some too injured to escape.

A MAN on the Stone Bridge looking at the wreckage lights a CIGARETTE, tosses the match.

Immediately a HUGE FLAME catches on a pool of oil from a battered locomotive. The winds catch the flames. The fires spread quickly among the debris and the wooden structures with people trapped inside. An inferno erupts.

People try to help the people trapped in the debris, but there's not much anyone can do. Most are too far out of reach. People CRY OUT for help. Horrible BLOOD CURDLING SCREAMS of those dying in the fire.

EXT. NEAR STONE BRIDGE - AFTERNOON*

Hearing the cries and screams, VICTOR rushes into the debris field. Sees a YOUNG WOMAN pinned by timbers. CRYING out.

ANOTHER MAN joins Victor. Desperately they try to pull her out. The timbers too heavy. Too jammed. They cannot free her.

The flames approach fast due to the high winds and are suddenly all around them. It's too much heat. They have to quit the effort. The woman's horrible SCREAMS fill the air. Victor falls to his knees, holding his ears.

Victor shakily rises. Listens for other cries for help. He hears a VOICE. He runs towards it. He recognizes the voice. It's EMMA! He cries out "EMMA!" as he runs toward the voice.

EXT. EMMA HART'S STRUCTURE IN THE DEBRIS FIELD - AFTERNOON

VICTOR climbs onto some battered buildings. Spots EMMA with the three CHILDREN. Trapped by crushed structures.

Victor yells for help. TWO MEN run over. One has an AXE. They start to bust through the wreckage and finally reach them. Victor makes his way onto the roof, helps Emma off. The other men pick up the three children and Hazel.

EXT. MUDDY STREET NEAR STONE BRIDGE - AFTERNOON

The GROUP stumbles into a muddy street. VICTOR and the men first tend to the kids. Put them on an OX CART with some other injured people, a makeshift ambulance.

Victor approaches EMMA. She looks at him, amazed, and hugs him. Whispers "Thank you". Hugs him tighter. Sees the cart.

EMMA HART
Where are they taking them?

VICTOR HEISER
They set up a hospital on Adams Street, at the school house. What happened to you?

EMMA HART
Our house was crushed. My mom's lost. I don't know what happened to Charlie. He was floating away the last I saw him.

VICTOR HEISER
How did you end up with the kids?

EMMA HART
Their roof was sinking. And I was able to get them on my roof. What about you? What happened?

VICTOR HEISER
I was on our barn roof. The flood waters crushed our store. My Mom and Dad were swamped. Then my barn was picked up, carried away. Jumped on some other roofs. Rode it out.

EMMA HART
This is so, unbelievable. And good lord, you tried to warn us this morning. And we laughed at you.
(a beat)
Let's go to that hospital. Maybe Charlie's there.

EXT. DEVASTATED STREETS OF JOHNSTOWN - EVENING

EMMA and VICTOR walk through the shattered town. Huge piles of twisted wreckage and muck in muddy pools of water.

All around: Structures on their sides, with wood beams exposed like ribs. Dead horses. Trees stripped of bark. Chunks of twisted machinery. Wrecked train cars.

Odd sights too, an upright piano sitting in the street. Ready to play.

They see corpses, some bloated, bent into ugly shapes. A WOMAN HOLDING A BABY is covered with a blanket.

A stunned, wide-eyed WOMAN approaches them. Asks if they'd seen a six year old blonde haired boy in brown pants, white shirt, "about so high". They both nod no, sorry.

The FLAMES at the Stone Bridge fire light the evening sky.

INT. DUQUESNE CLUB BAR - EVENING

JAY, PHILO and LLOYD at a table. Drinking. LAUGHING LOUDLY. Across the club, Philo spots HENRY PHIPPS slowly walking into the bar room. He has a stunned look on his face.

PHILO FRENCH
Jay. Your Dad just came in.
Looks like he's seen a ghost.

Mr. Phipps walks over. His sad expression shakes them.

JAY PHIPPS
Dad. What's wrong? You OK?

HENRY PHIPPS
(Slowly, solemnly)
We just finished a meeting.
The South Fork board.
We found out.
(a beat)
The dam broke on Lake Conemaugh,
this afternoon. Flooded the valley
down to Johnstown.

Jay and his friends shocked. "Oh My God". "Christ".

JAY PHIPPS
What's the word? Is it bad?

HENRY PHIPPS
From what we know, it's very bad.
They pulled a man out of the
Conemaugh River west of town. That
river was moving like white water
rapids. He said the flood hit
around 4:00. Devastated the town.

HENRY PHIPPS (CONT'D)

In the river, there were people floating on wreckage, alive. But also, dead bodies in the waters. Corpses. Lots of them.

PHILO FRENCH
Oh my God. Did you talk to Unger?

HENRY PHIPPS
We can't reach him. The circuits are down to the lake.

Jay and his friends silent. Wide-eyed.

JAY PHIPPS
Dad, I knew that girl, her family, in Johnstown. The singer. Emma.

HENRY PHIPPS
I know you did.
Pray for her son. And her family.
I'll pray for them too.
Pray for the whole town.
(a beat)
This will be in all the papers in the morning. Good night.

Mr. Phipps slowly leaves the table. The bar now, so quiet.

EXT. ADAMS STREET SCHOOLHOUSE - EVENING

A large crowd outside the makeshift hospital. People laid out on stretchers, some bodies covered by blankets.

INT. ADAMS STREET SCHOOLHOUSE - EVENING

EMMA and VICTOR enter the schoolhouse. A noisy chaotic scene. People on stretchers, on the floor. MOANS of pain. Doctors and nurses trying their best to help them.

Emma spots the THREE CHILDREN. Walks over and sees their brother in bed. The two sisters greet her warmly with hugs.

EMMA HART
What happened to your brother?

OLDER SISTER
They took off his one leg below the knee. It was mangled, twisted. It started to turn colors.

EMMA HART
Oh my. How are you doing?

OLDER SISTER
We're OK.

EMMA HART
Have you heard anything about your parents?

OLDER SISTER
No one has seen them. They were on our roof and got knocked off.

EMMA HART
Alright. They may still show up. I'll pray for them.

The younger sister brings a duffel bag to her. Inside the bag, the LITTLE DOG HAZEL. Emma smiles and pets Hazel.

OLDER SISTER
Thank you. For everything.

Emma smiles, hugs her tight. Hugs her younger sister. Emma and Victor walk the hospital. But do not find Charlie.

EXT. OUTSIDE ADAMS STREET SCHOOL HOUSE - EVENING

EMMA and VICTOR stand outside the schoolhouse. People with stunned looks wander around. A woman CRIES out, faints, when seeing a child's body under a blanket. This shakes Emma.

EMMA HART
We need to find a place to stay.

Victor sees people setting up tents. They head there.

INT. TENT NEAR THE ADAMS STREET SCHOOL HOUSE - MORNING

Morning light shines in the tent. VICTOR rolls over, sees EMMA. She looks so peaceful. He thinks: Holy hell. What now?

EXT. OUTSIDE ADAMS STREET SCHOOL HOUSE - MORNING*

On the top step, a group of older men stand before a large crowd including EMMA and VICTOR. JOHN FULTON begins speaking. Everyone presses in to hear him. And begin to quiet.

JOHN FULTON
Ladies and gentlemen, can I have your attention please.

I'm John Fulton, the President of the Cambria Iron company. This morning I met with some of our city leaders. They asked me to lead our recovery efforts. I told them I would be honored to act in that role. Now, I want to inform you of some of our initial plans and who is responsible.

First Reverend Beale and Reverend Chapman will set up and manage morgues to handle the deceased.

Mr. Zimmerman and Mr. Johnson will work on incinerating dead horses and other animals.

Doctors Lowman and Matthews will set up hospitals.

Captain Miller will act as our chief of police and deputize a force to prevent looting.

Cyrus Elder will store any monies or valuables found in the debris for safekeeping.

MAN IN THE CROWD
What have you heard about relief? When should it arrive?

JOHN FULTON
At least a few days. Supplies from Pittsburgh can only reach Bolivar. I'm not sure about other relief.

Some murmuring in the crowd. Some angry words. Rising voices.

MAN IN THE CROWD
We know why this happened. The big bosses' dam broke at the lake. That was their dam! Their dam!

ANOTHER MAN IN THE CROWD
They are murderers! Anyone still there should hang by the neck. Especially that Colonel Unger!

People start clapping and yelling in agreement. Angry voices rising. Fulton tries to calm the crowd, interrupts.

JOHN FULTON
Please everyone please.
This is not helping.

The crowd finally quiets and calms.

Good people, we have been dealt a terrible blow. A horrible tragedy.

But for now, we must take the reins. For those who have lost loved ones or friends, may God's Grace give you strength.

We must carry on. The people still with us this morning are counting on our efforts. God bless us all on this mission.

EXT. PITTSBURGH UNION STATION - AFTERNOON*

A sign outside the station: "Pittsburgh Relief Committee." A large crowd brings suitcases and bags full of canned goods, coats, clothes, shoes. Uniformed railroad personnel load train cars with the supplies.

EXT. BOLIVAR TRAIN STATION - AFTERNOON*

Trains rumble through the green countryside. A sign "Johnstown Relief" hung on many of the cars.

At the Bolivar station west of Johnstown, men unload boxes and crates off a train. The supplies are loaded onto smaller HANDCARS that can still travel the damaged tracks.

EXT. RAILROAD SCENES - DAY*

American flags fly from a locomotive as it moves through the countryside. "Pittsburgh Relief Committee" signage on some cars. Another train approaches on opposite tracks. As they get closer, the train crews WAVE, CHEER each other on.

EXT. OUTSIDE A SMALL TOWN CHURCH IN PENNSYLVANIA - DAY

Near a church, people walk to a horse-drawn wagon, carrying bags and boxes of supplies. CHURCH BELLS RING.

INT. COLONEL UNGER'S COTTAGE - EVENING

SUPER: Tuesday, June 4

UNGER at his desk, looks ill, haggard. His hair and beard unruly, face gaunt. He has barely eaten or slept in days.

Stares out a window at the former lake--an alien expanse of mud and puddles lit by the fading sunlight.

He perks up. He hears something. Angry voices outside.

In the waning light, he spots a mob of men moving towards his cottage. As they get closer, they start throwing stones. One rock CRASHES through a window. Other rocks hit the door.

Unger heads into the next room. Opens a door to a small closet under the stairs. Pulls the door shut.

The mob SMASHES through the front door. They move into the cottage. Blood chilling voices. "MURDERER! MURDERER!" "WHERE ARE YOU COLONEL?" "YOU'RE GOING TO DIE TONIGHT". The mob ransacks his cottage. Busting up furniture.

Unger terrified. The voices right next to his closet. He hears "Look in there". CRACK! The closet door yanked open. They spot him, cowering in a corner, behind a coat.

MAN ONE
Colonel Unger. Hiding like a rat.
Get him out of there.

Two masked men pull out Unger. He tries to stand but is pushed down. A man ties his hands behind his back as he lies on the floor.

MAN THREE
What do you want to do with him?

MAN TWO
What do you do with a murderer.
Hang him? Shoot him?

COLONEL UNGER
I'm not a murderer! I'm innocent!

MAN TWO
Get him up.

Two men help Unger shakily get to his feet. Stands before the group of men around him. All wearing masks.

MAN TWO (CONT'D)
Make your case Colonel.
If you claim you're innocent.

COLONEL UNGER
We worked for hours on that dam, trying to fix it, trying to stop the flood. We sent riders down the valley to warn people.

MAN ONE
Did you know about problems with the dam before this happened? That might have caused this?

COLONEL UNGER
I. I was. I was aware of issues.

MAN TWO
What issues?

COLONEL UNGER
(stammering)
I, I, ah...

MAN ONE
What issues? What issues?

MAN TWO
You lowered the dam crest a few years ago. Right?

COLONEL UNGER
The members wanted a wider dam road. For their carriages.

MAN THREE
Why was a screen attached to the bridge over the spillway? It got clogged. The spillway was useless.

COLONEL UNGER
The members. They wanted to keep the game fish in the lake.

MAN THREE
How many died for your fucking fish.

COLONEL UNGER
(Sobbing)
You have to understand.

MAN TWO
I know you're guilty as hell.
You knew about problems with that dam. But you didn't do anything.
In fact you made things worse.

If I decided your fate,
you would hang by the neck tonight.
But, I will not make that decision.
Someone else is here to do that.

COLONEL UNGER
No please. Don't do this.

From a dark corner, ANNA FENN steps forward. Not wearing a mask. Holding a military dagger. Unger starts to shake.

MAN TWO
This is Mrs. Anna Fenn. She has a story to tell you Colonel.

ANNA FENN
On the day of the flood, my husband died helping his mother.
His mother died alongside him.

And I lost, seven children. Seven.
One was a baby. They all drowned.
In the same room I was in.

COLONEL UNGER falls to his knees, cries a bit, whimpers.

ANNA FENN (CONT'D)
Do you want to know their names?

COLONEL UNGER
(sobbing)
Mam. Mam I'm so sorry for your horrible loss.

As she says each name, she slams the dagger hard on a table.

ANNA FENN
There was John who was 12, Daisy 10, Gen 9, George 8, Ginny 5, Bismarck 3, and my baby Esther, who was almost 2.
They drowned Colonel.
Crying out for their mother.
But I couldn't help any of them.

Anna kneels down. She is face to face with him. SLAMS the dagger on the floor. He is sobbing, "Please, please"..."

She HOLDS THE DAGGER TO HIS THROAT. She takes out a picture of her family. Holds it up to COLONEL UNGER's face.

ANNA FENN (CONT'D)
Look at this picture Colonel.
This is my husband John and my seven children.
I want to take this dagger, and slowly stab you to death.
Cause you so much pain.

Unger cries out, weeping. Begging "No please, please!"

But.
I am a Christian woman.

She stands, turns to look at the men in masks.

There has been too much pain.
Enough death.
Leave him here.
Let his soul rot with the memories of what he has done.
Let the Lord render his final punishment.
For Eternity.

Anna, with tears and a quiet sob, sets the picture down on his desk. She walks out of the room with the dagger. The men quietly follow her. Unger on the floor, weeping, shaking.

INT. PEG LEECH'S APARTMENT KITCHEN - MORNING

SUPER: Thursday, June 6

PEG sips tea as EMMA enters. Emma has been staying with Peg since the flood. Exchange good mornings. Emma pours some tea.

PEG LEECH
You going to that hospital camp at Sang Hollow today?

EMMA HART
That's my plan. What about you?

PEG LEECH
Goin' down to Cambria. See if there's any news on our jobs coming back. I'm so bored.

EMMA HART
I bet not for awhile. Not our jobs. But at least that one part of the mill started up yesterday. This town needed some good news.

Emma starts to leave. Peg hugs her tight.

PEG LEECH
God bless you chuckaboo. I hope you find out something about Charlie. Praying for you.

Emma smiles. Whispers "thank you". She exits the apartment.

EXT. SANG HOLLOW HOSPITAL CAMP - AFTERNOON

EMMA walks among hospital tents, looks into some. People on hospital beds. Nurses mill about. Emma spots an OLDER DOCTOR with a clipboard. She greets him.

EMMA HART
Doctor is there anyone I could talk to about a patient list?

DOCTOR
Who are you looking for?

EMMA HART
A Charles or Charlie Hart. 18 years old, tall, brown hair, blue eyes.

The doctor looks over the clipboard. Checks again.

DOCTOR
I don't see him here. I'm sorry.

EMMA HART
What happens if someone comes here, and passes away. What do you do?

DOCTOR
We notify the coroner and they take him or her to one of the morgues.

EMMA HART
Do you have a list of people from here that were sent to a morgue?

DOCTOR
I don't. You would have to check with the morgues. So this is your...

EMMA HART
My brother.

DOCTOR
I see. Well keep looking for him.
But many people will probably never
be found. I'm sorry.

EMMA HART
I know. I keep hoping.
Doctor, how many are gone?

DOCTOR
At least 2,000. Maybe more.
(a beat)
God bless you dear.
I hope you find your brother.

He takes her hands gently. Emma thanks him. Walks away.

EXT. LOCUST STREET - AFTERNOON

EMMA walks a muddy street lined with twisted piles of wreckage. Men throw carpet and debris into large fires.

She stops before a battered railroad car on blocks. An American RED CROSS FLAG waves above it.

Nearby stands a five-foot dark-haired woman, with a prominent nose, dark eyes. 67 yo CLARA BARTON. She sees Emma staring at the Red Cross flag. She walks over to her. Greets her.

CLARA BARTON
Can I help you?

EMMA HART
I don't know. I'm looking for
someone.

CLARA BARTON
I'm Clara Barton with the Red
Cross. Maybe I can help.

EMMA HART
(Surprised)
Miss Barton. I've heard of you.
I'm, I'm Emma Hart.

CLARA BARTON
Who are you looking for dear?

EMMA HART
My brother Charlie.

CLARA BARTON
Alright. Well missing people still show up every day.
(Looks at pocket watch)
I'm sorry dear, but I'm late for a meeting. Can you stop by here tomorrow morning. Around 10. I'll get information about your brother. Then post it around the valley.

EMMA HART
Thank you, so much.

CLARA BARTON
And what about you? You have a place to stay? Are you working?

EMMA HART
I'm staying with a friend. Still not back to work.

CLARA BARTON
Well I hope you get good news about your job soon.

EMMA HART
Miss Barton. Can I ask?
Is there anything I could do for you? For the Red Cross?

CLARA BARTON
We can talk about it. We do need all the help we can get.

EMMA HART
I'd be so happy to help you. In any way.
Miss Barton, have you ever seen anything like this, in your life?

CLARA
(A beat)
I've been through a lot. A nurse during the Rebellion at Antietam and Fort Wagner, and before that over in France, during the Prussian War. But this is different.

EMMA HART
Why's that?

CLARA
This tragedy struck so suddenly. A valley of towns laid to waste in a matter of minutes. Thousands gone. Women, children, babies. No man-made weapon of war could do this.

I'm sorry but I must get to a meeting. Please stop by here tomorrow morning. Alright?

EMMA HART
I will. I'll be here. Thank you.

EXT. STONE BRIDGE - DAY*

Several men wire dynamite boxes. They evacuate the area. Once clear, a man at a detonator yells: "FIRE IN THE HOLE."

He pushes down a plunger. A huge EXPLOSION. Chunks of debris near the Stone Bridge BLAST high into the air. Using dynamite, men work for months to clear the huge debris field.

EXT. JOHNSTOWN RAILWAY STATION - AFTERNOON

SUPER: Friday, June 14

JAY steps off a train with a bag and a GUITAR CASE. A huge crowd exits the train with him. He is stunned at the number of people. Jay finds a carriage, climbs aboard.

JAY PHIPPS
Goodness. A lot of people getting off here. Is this normal?

DRIVER
Yep. Flood tourists. Want to see the destruction for themselves. Use their new Kodaks for photographs. Take home some relics.

JAY PHIPPS
Kind of morbid.

DRIVER
Actually it's good for the town. Lots of money coming in. For the hotels, the restaurants still standing. Where can I take you?

JAY PHIPPS
Can you take me to this address?
(hands him Emma's card)

DRIVER
(a beat)
I'm sorry to tell you. Union Street was wiped out. But I'll take you as close as I can.

EXT. STREETS OF JOHNSTOWN - AFTERNOON

Men work in the devastated streets. Feed a large bonfire with piles of bedding, clothes and carpet. A horrible stench.

DRIVER
Ever seen anything like it?

JAY PHIPPS
It's like hell on earth. Do they have a final death toll?

DRIVER
I've heard 3,000. I've heard 5,000. There's other towns up the valley wiped off the map too. Woodvale, Mineral Point, East Conemaugh.
(Pulls carriage over)
We're on the cross street for Union. That's what's left.

Twisted debris and wrecked structures for hundreds of yards.

JAY PHIPPS
I knew a family that lived there. The Harts. Is there anywhere I can get a list of those who died?

DRIVER
The main Red Cross hospital on Locust Street. I'll take you there.

EXT. RED CROSS HEADQUARTERS - AFTERNOON

A two story building with a Red Cross flag waving out front. JAY steps off the carriage. Turns to the driver.

JAY PHIPPS
Can you wait? I won't be long.

The driver nods OK. Jay hands him $10, far more than the fare. He walks to the Red Cross building.

INT. RED CROSS HEADQUARTERS - AFTERNOON

JAY greets a nurse at the front desk.

JAY PHIPPS
I'm looking for someone. Is there a list of missing or perished?

NURSE
That board behind you. But who are you looking for? I manage the list.

JAY PHIPPS
Her name's Emma Hart. She used to live on Union Street.

NURSE
Oh my God. I know her. She works here. She just left an hour ago.

JAY PHIPPS
Really! Do you know where she's staying? I'm an old friend.

NURSE
I don't. People are living all over since the flood. But she'll be back Monday. You want to leave a note?

Jay nods yes. She hands him a pad and pencil.

EMMA:

I'M SO HAPPY THAT YOU'RE OK.
I HOPE CHARLIE HART AND YOUR MOM ARE SAFE TOO.
I HAVE SOME IMPORTANT NEWS.
SOMETHING THAT CAN HELP YOUR TOWN.
BUT IT INVOLVES YOU.
I'LL BE AT THE CLUBHOUSE UNTIL TUESDAY AFTERNOON.
CAN YOU PLEASE COME UP THERE?
I BELIEVE THIS IS SO URGENT.

JAY

Jay folds the note, hands it to the nurse. Thanks her.

Walks to the bulletin board. Sees names of identified people who were lost in the flood listed. But many other victims are marked as "UNKNOWN", with descriptions like:

UNKNOWN FEMALE. Age Forty Five. Weight 100. Very long black hair. Black dress. Plain gold ring on third finger of left hand. Black stockings. Five pennies in purse. Bunch of keys.

UNKNOWN MALE. Age Five Years, Sandy Hair, Checkered Waist. Ribbed Knee Pants. Black stockings darned in both heels.

UNKNOWN FEMALE. Light hair. About fifteen years.

Jay shudders. So many gone. So many.

INT. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - MORNING

EMMA sits in a pew with VICTOR. A Christian hymn begins: "On Jordan's Stormy Banks". Emma does not sing. A little later, the PREACHER'S fiery sermon has begun.

PREACHER
Good people. I struggle with this. Why did a God who loves us so much let this horrible event happen?

I have spent much time reflecting on this. And I want to share my thoughts with you.
But this is not easy to say.

Too many of the people in this valley had become obsessed with earthly desires.
Making money.
Gaining the most possessions.
Abusing demon alcohol.
Partaking in unclean acts of the flesh.

The Good Book says there will come a time of Great Tribulation. A time of judgment unmatched by any period in human history.

This is revealed by the Seven Seals of The Book of Revelation.

I believe this horrible flood is the opening of the Seven Seals. And this means that the End Times are upon us. And we must be prepared.

For the Apostle Peter said, "The End of All things is at hand, be therefore sober, and watch unto Prayer."

EXT. OUTSIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - MORNING

EMMA walks outside the church with VICTOR. Smiling.

EMMA HART
What was that? I wanted to come to Church for some inspiring music and hopeful prayers. Not hear about the End Times.

VICTOR HEISER
And to blame the flood on alcohol and desires of the flesh?

EMMA HART
I know. Lizzie Thompson's and the other brothels on Frankstown Hill are still doing great business.

VICTOR HEISER
The Good Lord must have bad aim sometimes.

Emma stops at the bottom of the steps. Turns to Victor.

EMMA HART
I went to the Red Cross hospital on Saturday. And there was a note for me. From Jay Phipps.

VICTOR HEISER
Really? Is he here?

EMMA HART
(hands him the note)
He's at the Clubhouse.

VICTOR HEISER
What do you think?

EMMA HART
I don't know. I might want to go up there. See about this urgent news.

VICTOR HEISER
Alright but I'm going with you.

EMMA HART
You don't have to do that.

VICTOR HEISER
Of course I do! Who knows what's going on up there. I bet the Colonel's men are still there too.

EMMA HART
Alright. Thank you. There's a 2:00 train to South Fork.

INT. TRAIN RIDE TO SOUTH FORK - AFTERNOON

EMMA and VICTOR view the destruction of the towns in the upper valley for the first time. They are shocked, shaken, quiet. Victor leans in to talk.

VICTOR HEISER
I've been meaning to tell you. I'm headed to Philadelphia on Tuesday.

EMMA HART
Really?

VICTOR HEISER
I have an uncle there. He invited me to visit. And while I'm there, I plan to look at some colleges.

EMMA HART
That makes sense. You have to consider your future. I mean. What's left for you here?

VICTOR HEISER
Well, something's still here.

He reaches for her hand, squeezes it tight.

EXT. THE CARRIAGE HEADED TO THE DAM SITE - AFTERNOON

Their carriage approaches the former dam site. Now a wide gap between two steep hillsides. Beyond it, a muddy misty stew of puddles and brush as far as the eye can see. So alien.

EXT. IN THE CARRIAGE PASSING THE COTTAGES - AFTERNOON

The carriage passes damaged, vandalized cottages. Shattered glass, battered doors, broken furniture scattered in the overgrown, unkempt front yards full of weeds.

EXT. SOUTH FORK CLUBHOUSE - AFTERNOON

Outside the clubhouse, tall weeds choke the lawn. EMMA and VICTOR step onto the wide porch.

Other than the buzzing summer bugs, a strange eerie quiet.

INT. SOUTH FORK CLUBHOUSE LOBBY - AFTERNOON

The front door is locked so EMMA and VICTOR enter through an broken open window. The darkened lobby is littered with broken furniture. Shattered glass all around. They turn to walk down a hallway. Slowly open a door to the dining room.

INT. SOUTH FORK CLUBHOUSE DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

UNGER and PARKE sit at a table in a dark corner. Parke sees them enter. Stands, shakily points a PISTOL at them.

JOHN PARKE
Stop! Who goes there?

VICTOR HEISER
(Pulls Emma aside)
Don't shoot! My name's Victor Heiser. I worked here. I'm with Emma Hart. You know me Colonel!

COLONEL UNGER
It's alright Parke. Put that thing away.

EMMA and VICTOR walk in slowly. Approach the table. An unkempt Parke sets down the gun. Takes a long drink.

COLONEL UNGER (CONT'D)
Miss Hart. Mr. Heiser. How are you?

EMMA HART
I'm looking for Jay Phipps.

COLONEL UNGER
Parke. Go get Mr. Phipps.
(turns to Emma)
How's Charlie doing?

EMMA HART
He's missing. That's how he is.

COLONEL UNGER
I'm sorry to hear that.
Would either of you like an Old Overholt?

They both nod, no thanks. Unger pours himself a drink.

VICTOR HEISER
We saw the cottages coming in.

COLONEL UNGER
A few days after the flood. A drunken mob ransacked most of the cottages. They almost got me.

EMMA HART
An angry mob. I wonder why.

COLONEL UNGER
Miss Hart, we're so heartbroken. Such a terrible event, an Act of God that has shook us all.

EMMA HART
An Act Of God. Really?
Is that what you said?
Colonel, can you tell me.
Did God build that dam?
Did God take care of that dam?
(a beat)
No. Man did.

JAY enters. Holds a GUITAR CASE. He's excited to see Emma. But he can tell--she's not happy to see him.

JAY PHIPPS
Emma I'm so glad you're alright. Thank you for coming.
How's Charlie, and your Mom?

EMMA HART
My Mom went down in the flood. Charlie's missing. Probably gone too.

JAY PHIPPS
Oh Christ, I'm so sorry.

EMMA HART
(Looking at guitar case)
What's that?

JAY PHIPPS
It's a Martin guitar. For Charlie. He told me once how much he wanted one.

EMMA HART
You can keep it.

JAY PHIPPS
No, no. Please take it. In his memory. Or maybe he'll be found.

EMMA HART
So what's this urgent news?

JAY PHIPPS
My father wants to help the people here. Set up fundraisers and balls in Pittsburgh. I want you to come stay with us. And you can sing at the different events.

EMMA HART
There's plenty of singers in Pittsburgh. Why me?

JAY PHIPPS
It'll mean a lot more for you to sing. Since you're from here.

EMMA HART
Really? I don't think so.
No, you want to show me off.
Like an old dirty penny.
All shined up like new.

JAY PHIPPS
That's not it. You are an amazing singer. What are you doing today?

EMMA HART
I'm a nurse's aid at the Red Cross.

JAY PHIPPS
What? You're one of the best singers I've ever heard. Wrapping bandages, mending wounds. That's not what God intended you to do.

VICTOR HEISER
How in the hell do you know what God intends her to do?

JAY PHIPPS
Who are you? Wait. Didn't you work at the boathouse?

EMMA HART
This is Victor Heiser. He saved my life. And three other children with me. Found us trapped near the Stone Bridge and rescued us all.

JAY PHIPPS
God bless you for what you did.
We're so heartbroken about this terrible accident.

VICTOR HEISER
An accident Jay?
This "accident" as you called it, didn't have to happen.
People knew about the problems with that dam, and ignored them.
Did nothing to fix them.
People in this room, right now.

Victor stares hard at Parke then at Unger. They both look away. Jay ignores Victor, turns to Emma.

JAY PHIPPS
I know it didn't end right for us in Pittsburgh. But if I didn't mean what I said at the lake and in those letters, would I be here?

EMMA HART
Now I'm to believe that I'm the one. I don't think so.
I bet your Daddy sent you to find me. Make him and the other club members feel better about the horrible shit that happened here.

JAY PHIPPS
Look. I'm leaving on Tuesday.
Come with me. Please.

VICTOR HEISER
Did you hear her? She said no.

JAY PHIPPS
(ignores him)
You told me you wanted to sing on the biggest stages in the country.
It's still your dream. I know it.
Even if you still hate me, at least follow that dream.
You can start in Pittsburgh.
Do it for yourself, but you can also help your town.

VICTOR HEISER
Maybe her dreams have changed. Are you stupid? Can't you take a hint?

JAY PHIPPS
(Angry, turns to Victor)
Alright boathouse boy.
Then she can stay here with you
in this fucking hellhole...

VICTOR HEISER
You son of a bitch.

Victor moves at Jay. Parke and Unger stand and get between the two of them. Emma steps in front of Victor.

EMMA HART
Don't do this. Please. Don't.

Victor stops, stares intently at Jay. Victor backs off.

Emma pauses. Thinking. Looks up, stares into Victor's eyes.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
Maybe he's right.
I can do more in Pittsburgh to help
out here.
I have a gift.
I should use it. Right?
To help our town.
(a beat)
I know, this isn't what you wanted.

Victor's face falls. Shocked. How could she do this? After what they've been through together! Go with Jay? NO!

Emma hugs Victor, slowly turns. Walks towards Jay, with a crooked smile. Jay smiles back.

Jay looks at Victor with a smug smile. I win again.

As he leans in to hug Emma, she SLUGS HIM HARD IN THE NOSE. Jay curses loudly and holds his nose which starts bleeding profusely. Everyone GASPS. Stunned.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
You didn't get my notch on your
belt. But how about a bloody nose?

VICTOR HEISER
(stunned, shocked)
Holy shit.
I think. I think.
We should go.

EMMA HART
(smiling, calmly)
You're right Vincent.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
It's time to go.
Don't forget Charlie's guitar.

Victor picks up the guitar case. He's so nervous. What will they do? Parke has a gun! They head out of the room. Jay holds a napkin on his nose, bleeding. Seething.

JAY PHIPPS
Go ahead and stay here!
With the boathouse boy.
Enjoy singing to the rubble.
You stupid...

EXT. JOHNSTOWN CENTRAL PARK - AFTERNOON

SUPER: July, 1889

The park alive with activity. Families enjoying the beautiful sunny summer day. Dogs run about barking. Hammering noise fills the air as men work on new construction.

EMMA on a park bench in her crisp white Red Cross uniform. VICTOR arrives. She greets him with a warm hug and kiss.

EMMA HART
Well mister traveler. Welcome back.
A long trip. How was Philadelphia?

VICTOR HEISER
Good. Spent a lot of time
exploring it. What a fine city.
Beautiful museums. So much history.
And I have some news.

EMMA HART
Let's hear it.

VICTOR HEISER
While there, I visited Jefferson
Medical College. I liked it. They
seemed to like me too. And I
applied to their entry program for
the medical school.

EMMA HART
Medical school? That's, unexpected.
Where did that come from?

VICTOR HEISER
That night in the Adams Street
hospital, seeing those doctors
working on patients, helping them,
saving them. I was so inspired.

VICTOR HEISER (CONT'D)
I thought, if I ever got the chance, I want to do something like that. This is my chance.

EMMA HART
That's great Victor.

VICTOR HEISER
I should hear something in the next few weeks. And my chances are pretty good. They're making special exceptions for flood victims.

How are you? How are things with the Red Cross?

EMMA HART
Good. Good. It's keeping me busy. Learning so much. Treating patients, taking vital signs, giving medications.
It's so interesting.
Who knew I might want to become a nurse? And you a doctor!

VICTOR HEISER
You never know what life brings.

EMMA HART
Meeting Miss Barton changed my life. Probably saved it.

VICTOR HEISER
There were stories in the papers all the time about the Red Cross here. She's a national hero.

EMMA HART
She hasn't left since the flood. Working 12 hour days. 68 years old. I don't know how she does it.

VICTOR HEISER
Besides work, have you tried, singing again?

EMMA HART
Not really.
(sighs, somberly)
That part of me.
It doesn't feel connected anymore.
Like I was another person.
In a different life.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
In a different place.
It's so strange.

VICTOR HEISER
I think everyone that went through the flood feels that way.
Any news about Charlie?

EMMA HART
No. Nothing. But I keep hoping.
People thought to be gone do show up once in awhile.

VICTOR HEISER
You never know.
I did want to talk to you about one other thing.
If everything works out and I get into school there.
I want you to come, and join me.

EMMA HART
Victor, I...

VICTOR HEISER
It's a big decision I know.

EMMA HART
Let me think about it.
(smiles)
It's so funny.
I was so sure I was the one leaving town,
and YOU were staying here.

VICTOR HEISER
Everything has flipped.
Our whole world. Our lives.
(a beat)
Please consider what I said.

EMMA HART
Alright. And. I'm not saying no.

VICTOR HEISER
Good. Good.
I can't believe I'm talking about going to medical school. Me!
I still feel like a clumsy store clerk a lot of the time.

EMMA HART
Listen!
Never forget what you did for me.

EMMA HART (CONT'D)
And those children.
Never forget that.

VICTOR HEISER
I won't.

EMMA HART
I'm so proud of you.
After what you've been through.
To maybe being a doctor some day?

VICTOR HEISER
A long way to go, but thank you.

EMMA HART
I bet you do it. I do.
(a beat)
And your Mom and Dad.
They're so proud of you.
(tears in her eyes)
I just know it.

VICTOR HEISER
(tears in his eyes)
I hope so.
(a beat)
I miss them so much.
Every day.

Both in tears, they hug warmly on the bench.

INT. ORIGINAL OLD OYSTER HOUSE RESTAURANT, PITTSBURGH

SUPER: Original Old Oyster House

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

September, 1889

PHILANDER KNOX sits in a booth at the back of the restaurant. HENRY PHIPPS enters, looks around. Sees Knox and sits down in his booth. Phipps is in a hurry, agitated.

HENRY PHIPPS
Thanks for meeting. Look, I need to know everything about this Nancy Little lawsuit.

PHILANDER KNOX
You want to order some...

HENRY PHIPPS
I don't have time.

PHILANDER KNOX
Alright. Nancy Little lives in Sewickley. Her husband John was a woodenware salesman and in Johnstown on a business trip. He was at the Hulbert House hotel downtown. That hotel was hit by the flood. And he perished.

HENRY PHIPPS
Christ. And I understand she has seven children.

PHILANDER KNOX
Actually she has eight. She's suing the South Fork Club for $50,000 for the loss of her husband due to our negligence maintaining the dam.

HENRY PHIPPS
How do you plan to counter that?

PHILANDER KNOX
We plan to plead not guilty.
And here is our argument.
First we'll say there's no way to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that any dam, built by the best engineers in the world, could've withstood that much rain.
A record, over ten inches in two days. Truly, an Act of God.

HENRY PHIPPS
Good. I like that.

PHILANDER KNOX
And our team there worked tirelessly all day in dangerous conditions to try to stop the flood. The Colonel sent riders down the valley several hours before the flood to get messages sent out, warning the towns about the dam failing. That saved many lives.

HENRY PHIPPS
Alright. That sounds promising. What if her defense testifies about other issues? Like having only one spillway, the fish screen on the bridge, the dam being lowered for the road. Negligence in general.

PHILANDER KNOX
I don't believe any of that matters. Even if all those issues were addressed, there's still no way to know if it would have prevented this disaster. Beyond a reasonable doubt. That's the key.

HENRY PHIPPS
Knox we can't lose this case. It would lead to more like it. It could cost us millions.

PHILANDER KNOX
I know. That's why another thing I plan to do is use every lever of the court system to drag this case out. I will request continuances, more motions, object to evidence, dispute discovery requests. Believe me, this case could go on for years. And it will scare off others trying to sue us.

HENRY PHIPPS
I see you know your craft well.

PHILANDER KNOX
We are in the right here Henry. This was an Act of God. The Club members are not at fault. We are fully prepared to make that argument. And win the case.

HENRY PHIPPS
Christ. I hope so.

INT. JOHNSTOWN RED CROSS HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

SUPER: October, 1889

EMMA, in a white Red Cross uniform, tends to some patients in their beds. Chats with them, holds their hands, smiles.

EXT. JOHNSTOWN RED CROSS HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

EMMA walks outside. Takes a deep breath. A sunny day. She's tired. A little chill in the air, she pulls on a sweater.

She spots a man approaching down the street, wearing a hat. Hard to see him at first, because of the bright sunshine.

He gets closer. Tall. He walks closer. She recognizes something about him. How he walks. He has a duffel bag. As he gets closer, he takes his hat off.

Her eyes meet his eyes. She's SHAKEN. Oh my God!

IT'S CHARLIE! CHARLIE!

She starts to walk towards him. Then runs. He drops his bag seeing her. She steps up to him.

EMMA HART
Oh my God, are you a ghost?

CHARLIE HART
I hope not.

Emma leans in. They hug tightly. She pulls back.

EMMA HART
Where have you been? What happened?

CHARLIE HART
After our house was lost I floated down the river on a roof board, past Johnstown. Eventually my board came to a rest on the shore. I was barely awake, my head bleeding badly. Some broken bones. Almost dead.
Some people from Blairsville pulled me out of the waters. Took me to the hospital there.

EMMA HART
All the way to Blairsville. Wow.

CHARLIE HART
I recovered but couldn't remember anything for a long time. And I didn't have any papers on me, so they couldn't locate my family.

EMMA HART
Right.

CHARLIE HART
It took time. My injuries healed. And then I started to remember things. Where I was from. I remembered you. And Mom. And...

EMMA HART
How did you find me?

CHARLIE HART
When I arrived here this morning I started asking people. Someone knew you worked at the Red Cross.

EMMA HART
I still, I still can't believe it.

CHARLIE HART
So, is Mom...

Emma looks at him. Shakes her head--no.

CHARLIE HART (CONT'D)
Oh God. I prayed for her.
But, I knew it. I just knew it.

EMMA HART
I just, I just.
I can't believe you're here.
Oh Charlie. Oh God.
I missed you so much.

She leans in and holds him so tight. Both in tears.

INT. ALLEGHENY COUNTY COURTHOUSE* - AFTERNOON

SUPER: Allegheny County Courthouse

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

March, 1892

HENRY and JAY PHIPPS stand in the back of the courtroom. There is much anticipation as a jury verdict should be in soon. PHILANDER KNOX sees them and walks over.

JAY PHIPPS
What are you hearing Mister Knox?

PHILANDER KNOX
The verdict should be in any minute now.

HENRY PHIPPS
Good lord I'm so nervous. Even after all these years.

One of Knox's assistants approaches him and leans in to say something to him. Knox turns to the Phipps men.

PHILANDER KNOX
The verdict is in.

Knox heads back to the defense table. The courtroom suddenly abuzz as word spreads that the verdict is coming in.

The jury enters. The crowd chatter grows LOUDER. The JURY FOREMAN hands a paper to the BAILIFF. The bailiff nods, exits the courtroom. He returns moments later. Addresses the court.

BAILIFF
All rise. The Fifth District Court of Allegheny County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is back in session. The Honorable Charles Flaherty presiding.

JUDGE CHARLES FLAHERTY (66 yo, white haired, distinguished) enters. Sits down on the bench. Addresses the jury.

JUDGE FLAHERTY
Mr. Foreman, have you reached a verdict?

JURY FOREMAN
Yes we have Your Honor.

JUDGE FLAHERTY
Please address the Court and state your verdict.
And I ask that the courtroom remain calm after the verdict is read.

JURY FOREMAN
Your honor, we have reached a verdict in the case of Negligent Homicide filed by the family of Mister John Little of Sewickley Pennsylvania against the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club.
Our verdict is that the South Fork Club is... Not Guilty

AN EMOTIONAL ROAR rises from the gallery. Newspaper reporters race out of the courtroom. People SHOUT at the jury, calling them cowards. They yell at the judge. Police move into the room. The judge stands, YELLS, SLAMS GAVEL.

JUDGE FLAHERTY
Order. Order! We will have order!

The two Phipps men observe the unruly courtroom. After a few minutes, with the police in the room, calm returns.

JUDGE FLAHERTY (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentlemen, a verdict in this case has been reached.
(Looks at jury)
The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Allegheny County thank the jurors for your service.
I know this was a difficult case.
You are now discharged.
This case is adjourned.
God bless this Court and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The judge SLAMS down the gavel.

Knox turns to see the Phipps men in the back of the courtroom. Smiles at them. Pumps his fist. We won!

On the plaintiff side of the room, the widow NANCY LITTLE weeps with her children. Hugging them tight.

The Phipps men see the Little family mourning. Henry Phipps is moved, becomes emotional. Knox approaches.

PHILANDER KNOX
It took awhile, three and half years. But we finally won.
(Sees Henry upset)
Henry we won the case. It's over.
Why the...

HENRY PHIPPS
I'm going to make it right for her, for her family.

PHILANDER KNOX
What do you mean? No. No. I would not recommend doing anything like that. That would be... Let's discuss...

HENRY PHIPPS
For Chrissakes, shut up Knox.
Just shut the fuck up.
(eyes moist)
Oh my God,
what have we done.

EXT. GRANDVIEW CEMETERY, JOHNSTOWN - MORNING

SUPER: Grandview Cemetery

Johnstown, Pennsylvania

May 31, 1892

Three Years to the Day After the Flood

On a beautiful sunny day, a crowd of over 10,000 surrounds a new granite monument covered in a cloth tarp. At a podium, Governor ROBERT PATTINSON and Mayor HORACE ROSE. CLARA BARTON also with them near the podium. The crowd includes:

ANNA FENN MAXWELL and her new HUSBAND.

BELLE and GEORGE WATERS and their THREE CHILDREN.

PEG LEECH and her NEW HUSBAND

JOHN MILLER and many others from Cambria Iron.

The THREE KIDS RESCUED BY EMMA HART and their PARENTS who survived the flood. And their dog HAZEL, now fully grown.

INT. INSIDE TENT BEHIND THE MONUMENT - MORNING

Standing with CHARLIE. EMMA is so nervous.

CHARLIE HART
You're going to be fine. You sounded beautiful this morning.

EMMA HART
Practicing in a mirror is not the same as singing in front of people. This crowd is huge!

CHARLIE HART
Just relax and...

Into the tent, steps JAY PHIPPS. Emma and Charlie have not seen him in years. Both surprised, shocked.

JAY PHIPPS
Emma. Charlie.

CHARLIE HART
What. What are you doing here?

JAY PHIPPS
(stumbling, nervous)
I'm here to...
I came to support Emma.
I knew she was singing today.
And I wanted to talk to her.
And tell her.
(Turns to Emma)
Emma. I'm so sorry about what happened in Pittsburgh, and at the Clubhouse.

EMMA HART
That was a long time ago.

JAY PHIPPS
I hope you understand.
I was in a dark state of mind.
Just a wrecked soul.

EMMA HART
We were all, in some ways, wrecked.

JAY PHIPPS
But it's more than that. I realized how I was living my life. Being I don't know. Like a child.

EMMA HART
I understand.
(a beat)
How are things with your father?

JAY PHIPPS
We had work to do. To heal. But he changed too. A lot. We're fine after all these years. I'm working hard for the company. Seeing a nice young lady for awhile. Gave up the carousing, the partying.

EMMA HART
(Smiles)
You?

JAY PHIPPS
After I saw what happened here. It shook me to my bones. It changed me. And I realized. We were at fault. Our dam broke. Our dam.

EMMA HART
Sometimes it takes something horrible like this to realize what matters. And to make changes.

JAY PHIPPS
I know. All of that was weighing on me. The guilt. The shock. I was angry all the time.

It's been some time.
I hope you can forgive me.

EMMA HART
(stands, takes his hands)
It means a lot that you're here.
And yes Jay, I forgive you.

JAY PHIPPS
Thank you Emma. Thank you.

EMMA HART
(smiles)
And I'm sorry...
(a beat)
that I punched you in the nose.

JAY PHIPPS
(smiles back)
Oh. I deserved it.

EMMA HART
One good thing did happen that day. Charlie loves the Martin guitar you brought for him.

Jay smiles at Charlie. Someone enters the tent, says: "Emma and Charlie, they're ready for you".

JAY PHIPPS
Good luck. I know you'll be wonderful. Both of you.

He leans in and they hug tight. Jay still misses her so much, and what might have been. She heads out. As Charlie leaves, he looks at Jay and holds up the Martin guitar. He says "Thank You" to Jay. Jay smiles. Charlie smiles back.

EXT. GRANDVIEW CEMETERY - MORNING*

Before the large crowd, the GOVERNOR begins his speech.

GOV PATTINSON
We, who have to do with the concentrated forces of nature, the powers of air, electricity, water, steam, by careful forethought must leave nothing undone for the preservation and protection of the lives of our brother men.

With this proclamation today, we dedicate this monument to those who perished three years ago in the flood on May 31, 1889.

At this time, Miss Emma Hart, will lead our choir in song. Miss Hart lost her mother Ruth Hart that day. But her brother Charlie, after being missing for many months, did finally arrive home.

Miss Hart has worked for the American Red Cross here for several years. We thank her for that service. Miss Hart, the podium is yours.

EMMA and CHARLIE walk up. A church choir is behind them.

EMMA HART
Thank you Governor Pattinson for the kind words.

Emma clears her throat. Charlie begins to strum his guitar. She begins the song "God Moves In A Mysterious Way" But her voice is shaky. She stops. Looks down. Charlie stops playing.

An anxious silence in the air. Will she be able to sing?

She looks up. A determined look. She's ready. LET'S DO THIS. She motions to Charlie. Start the song again.

Charlie starts the song on the guitar. Emma begins to sing.

EMMA SINGS THE SONG POWERFULLY, BEAUTIFULLY. The choir joins her in a very moving performance.

As she sings, the Governor and the Mayor pull away the tarp at the front of the monument. The inscription reads:

In Memory Of The Unidentified Dead From The Flood
May 31, 1889

Many in the crowd WEEP. ANNA FENN and BELLE WATERS hold each other close. JAY in tears, clapping. People walk up to the new monument. Place photos of loved ones, flowers, toys, stuffed animals at the foot of the monument. Many tears.

As Emma continues to sing.

CUT TO:

INT. WALNUT STREET THEATER, PHILADELPHIA - EVENING

SUPER: Walnut Street Theater

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

One Year Later

EMMA in a beautiful blue gown continues the same song, but now on a lighted stage and accompanied by an orchestra. She finishes the song to LOUD APPLAUSE FROM THE FULL HOUSE.

Emma smiles. Thanks the audience and says good night. As she comes off the stage, she sees an older man waiting for her.

When she reaches him, she recognizes him as the OLDER GENTLEMAN FROM THE TRAIN from when she traveled back from Pittsburgh.

EMMA HART
It's you. From the train.
You remembered me?

OLDER GENTLEMAN FROM THE TRAIN
I live here and saw your picture in the advertisements for the show.
Can I say. You were just wonderful.
A beautiful performance.
It looks like your dreams came true.

EMMA HART
Thank you so much for coming.
And for what you told me that day on the train.
You made a difference in my life.
You helped to lift me up.
Thank you again.

OLDER GENTLEMAN FROM THE TRAIN
I'm so glad to hear that dear.
My heart is full.

EMMA HART
(staring at him)
You know.
Just now.
I'm noticing something.
(a beat)
You remind me a lot,
of my father.

PEG suddenly grabs Emma by the arm. Turns her.

PEG LEECH
We're waiting for you over there.

EMMA HART
OK. I want you to meet someone.

PEG LEECH
Who?

EMMA HART
This man. I talked with him on the
train, after that thing with Jay...

She turns. THERE IS NO ONE THERE. Emma is shocked. WHAT!

PEG LEECH
Who? I don't see anyone. Come on.
You need a drink.

They head to their table. Emma is still looking around. Where did that man go? What happened to him?

They reach the table. CHARLIE standing, loudly clapping. And he has a PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN as a date. Also, PEG's HANDSOME HUSBAND is there. All standing, clapping.

But someone is missing.

Out of the shadows, VICTOR walks to the table in a handsome pinstripe grey suit and tie, with a BOUQUET OF RED ROSES.

Emma turns, sees him, and smiles. Some tears in her eyes. Victor takes Emma in his arms and holds her tight, gazes lovingly into her eyes, and they kiss deeply.

THE END

As the credits roll, historic images from the Johnstown Flood and the people in the movie are displayed. Those characters based on real life figures include the Duquesne Club members, Colonel Unger, John Fulton, John Parke, Clara Barton, Belle Waters and Anna Fenn. Victor Heiser was based on a historic figure and he did become a world renowned doctor and author.