

At the Back of the North Wind

A Screenplay

By

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Based on the classic novel
by George Macdonald

Registered WGAW

FADE IN:

EXT. CATHEDRAL TOWER - OLD LONDON - EVENING

It's the beginning of a cold, winter night in Old London.

In the cobblestone streets below, people are hurrying home in carriages and on foot. Candles flicker in leaded-glass windows. A light wind is blowing and there is a touch of snow in the air.

SUPERIMPOSE: LONDON, 1698

The giant bell of the cathedral begins to chime. With each deep ring, the sound of the wind rises higher and higher. Snow swirls around the tower.

At the sixth and final ring a haunting theme begins filled with beauty and wistfulness. It's almost as though the wind itself had begun to sing.

Suddenly, there is a swirling blast.

POV RIDING ON THE WIND

Sailing above copper rooftops with tall, brick chimneys...

Over shops and pubs and squalid row houses...

Then, down into the streets...

Past a milk woman hurrying home with empty cans...

A filthy chimney sweep hauling a ladder trailed by an apprentice loaded with brushes...

Through iron railings and swinging gates...

Making shutters creak and groan...

Over carts and omnibuses...

Through the wheels of a wagon laden with furniture...then between the dray horses straining against the reins...

Blowing out the flame of a lamplighter...

Knocking the hat off an old gentlemen...

Shivering past a ragged, little girl of seven who sweeps crossings for a penny. (This is MOLLY.)

(CONTINUED)

Wandering on and on...

EXT. STATELY STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Finally, the wind turns down a stately street lined with majestic old homes. Clattering down the middle of the street is a rich, black coach drawn by a rather old, but still noble, white horse. The coachman hunches down against the cold. He has little to do, the horse is going home.

The driver is JOSEPH, a man of middle age, who has been at his job for many years. Though he has had a hard life, his eyes are gentle and kind. The horse in front of him is Old Diamond, a creature of great intelligence who knows and trusts his master.

The coach turns in at a particularly impressive mansion and begins to pull up a long drive.

INT. COACH - EVENING

Inside four people are seated, bundled against the cold. A very unpleasant conversation has been taking place. The group includes:

SARAH COLEMAN, a lovely young woman in her twenties, dressed in fine clothes, who is fighting back tears as she stares icily at an older man who is seated across from her.

The man is EDWARD COLEMAN, her father, a rather haughty gentleman in his late fifties, who stares back grimly. Everything about him speaks of wealth and power.

Next to Sarah sits her fiancée, ALFRED EVANS, a man of thirty-one. He is handsome, but somewhat shabbily dressed compared to the others. He stares out the window under a cloud of depression.

The last member of the party seems rather embarrassed to be present. This DR. ROBERT MACDONALD, a prominent physician of the city and an old friend of the Coleman family. He is in his sixties and is rather gruff, but the gruffness hides a deep sensitivity to human suffering.

SARAH

(to Mr. Coleman)

Is that all you have to say, father?

MR. COLEMAN

Yes, and the subject is closed.

We'll not bore Dr. MacDonald with anymore of our personal trivialities.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH
Trivialities? Is that what you call them? You think my concerns are trivial?

MR. COLEMAN
Did you hear me, Sarah? We will have no more of this discussion.

SARAH
I heard you very well.

She turns her icy stare toward Alfred who looks like a beaten dog.

SARAH (CONT'D)
And all you can do is sit there biting your tongue.

ALFRED
Perhaps we could talk about this in private.

SARAH
There's nothing to talk about, Alfred. Clearly, you've made your decision and you must live with it.

The coach comes to a stop. She throws open the door. Outside, Joseph is just getting down from his seat. Sarah jumps out without waiting for assistance. Mr. Coleman looks at the other men and smiles.

MR. COLEMAN
Spirited, isn't she? An excellent trait in women and horses. After you, gentlemen.

Dr. MacDonald gives him a look and then gets out. Alfred follows him.

EXT. COLEMAN MANSION

Sarah rushes up the front steps of the mansion past a servant who holds open lovely carved oak doors. Alfred tries to catch up to her.

ALFRED
Sarah, wait.

She doesn't. Dr. MacDonald is just about to mount the steps when Joseph touches his arm meekly.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH
 Beggin' your pardon, Dr. MacDonald,
 sir...

DR. MACDONALD
 Yes, Joseph.

There's a worried look on the coachman's face. He struggles for words.

JOSEPH
 I'm sorry to be botherin' you, sir.
 It's the little boy.

DR. MACDONALD
 It's come over him again, has it?

Joseph nods.

JOSEPH
 His mother and me...we're real
 worried.

MacDonald pats him on the arm, but his look is grim.

DR. MACDONALD
 All right, I'll stop by later.

JOSEPH
 Thank you, sir. We're very much in
 your debt.

DR. MACDONALD
 Not at all.

MacDonald follows the group into the house. Joseph swings back up onto the coach, clicks to the horse, and they begin to move around toward the back of the mansion.

EXT. REAR OF MANSION -- MOMENTS LATER

Behind the big house is a garden brown with winter. In the center stands a gazebo.

EXT. STABLE - NIGHT

The coach follows the drive past the garden to a decrepit, old stable. Joseph and his family live in the loft. Candlelight shines from a solitary window. Looking out through the glass is a little boy dressed in a long nightshirt. He's waiting for his father to come home. This is DIAMOND. When he sees the coach, he waves.

(CONTINUED)

Joseph waves back.

CU JOSEPH'S FACE

He tries to smile, but his eyes are filled with worry.

The coach stops outside the stable doors. Joseph gets down and leads the horse inside.

The wind moans...and with it returns the haunting music.

ANGLE IN STABLE WINDOW

Through the frosted glass of the loft window, the inside of a little home can be seen.

INT. STABLE LIVING QUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

The room is poorly furnished but clean and warm. Everything about it speaks of love and gentle care. A stove and scattered candles bring heat and light. A woman of thirty-five, but old-looking for her age, bustles about setting a small table for dinner. This is RUTH, Diamond's mother. Joseph and his family live in this one room. In the corner is a rough-cut, wooden bed.

Diamond waits by the door. He's seven years old with quiet, thoughtful eyes. And he is frail. It takes only a moment to see that something is very wrong with him. Suddenly, the door opens and Joseph enters. He sweeps his son into his arms and kisses him.

JOSEPH

Well, how is my little Diamond this evening?

DIAMOND

I felt better today. Lot's better.

JOSEPH

Did you now?

DIAMOND

Maybe tomorrow I can ride with you.

JOSEPH

I'd like that very much. And Old Diamond'd like it even more. He misses you somethin' terrible. Why he was askin' me today, 'Where is that boy? He needs to bring me a carrot.'

(CONTINUED)

Diamond smiles. Joseph goes to his wife and kisses her.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
And how are you sweet wife?

RUTH
I'm...I'm all right.

But she's fighting back tears.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Did you talk to him?

JOSEPH
He's comin' by this evening.
(with forced
cheerfulness)
Well, I've got to say I'm about as
hungry as a baited bear. In fact, I
think I need to take a bite of
somethin' this very minute.

He lifts Diamond and pretends to bite his stomach. The little boy laughs, but there is weakness in the sound.

Outside, the wind is rising.

PULL BACK THROUGH WINDOW

EXT. STABLE - NIGHT

Except for the warm glow shining out from the window, the stable is caught in the freezing loneliness of winter. Snow is blowing everywhere.

DISSOLVE
TO:

INT. STAIRCASE TO DIAMOND'S ROOM - NIGHT

Rough work shoes walk up coarse wooden stairs by candlelight.

Joseph is carrying Diamond up to bed. He holds a candle. On either side of them are walls of hay. Finally, they reach the child's "bedroom."

INT. DIAMOND'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Diamond sleeps in a little room of hay. Only the wall at the foot of his bed is made of wood. The room is cold. The ancient wall seems a thin barrier for the wind outside.

(CONTINUED)

In fact, a small chunk of wood has rotted away and someone has tried to stop the hole with a plug of brown paper. Joseph pulls back the heavy quilt and tucks his son beneath it. Then he kneels down.

JOSEPH

All right, time for our prayers.
What should we be thankful for today?

Diamond closes his eyes and begins praying.

DIAMOND

Thank you God, for my bed and for my blankets and for my food and for old Diamond and for my mother and for my father and for feeling better when I've been sick.

The child's prayer fades and Dr. MacDonald's voice is heard.

DR. MACDONALD (V.O.)

His name was Diamond. Some people thought it was a strange name for a little boy. You see, his father had named him after their horse. But Diamond knew it was the most wonderful name in all the world. Little Diamond loved big Diamond. To the child it was a constant source of joy that his namesake slept in the stable down below.

Diamond's father smooths his hair and kisses him. As he looks at his son there are tears in his eyes.

DR. MACDONALD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(continuing)

But if you want the truth, I believe his parents named him Diamond because they knew that a child is the greatest treasure that a family can ever possess.

(beat)

And they also knew that in this world, treasure can slip through your fingers.

Joseph blows out the candle and leaves the room.

DISSOLVE
TO:

INT. DIAMOND'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

A winter storm is raging outside. The wind is howling. Diamond is fast asleep.

ANGLE ON WALL

The paper plug in the wall begins to move. It works back and forth until, suddenly, it shoots across the room and lands directly on the boy's nose.

Freezing wind screams into the bedroom.

Diamond wakes up.

Finding the plug, he crawls shivering across the bed and sticks it back in the hole. Then, he scurries under the covers.

Outside the wind is filled with shrill whistling noises. Strangely, it sounds almost as though a voice is speaking.

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
(whistling echo)
Little booooy...little booooy...

Diamond sits up and listens.

The voice disappears.

He lies back down.

The instant he does so, the plug blows out of the hole again with even greater force. Once more, Diamond crawls out from under the blankets. But this time, he can't find it in the dark. So, instead, he pulls out a fistful of hay and stuffs it into the hole.

DIAMOND
Now, stay in there.

The wind shrieks.

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
LITTLE BOOOY, WHY...WHY DID YOU DO
IT?

DIAMOND
Do what? Is somebody out there?

Putting his ear to the wall, he hears a haughty woman's voice.

(CONTINUED)

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
My window. Open my window right
now. Open it.

DIAMOND
What're you talking about?

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
You stuffed hay into my window.

DIAMOND
You mean this hole? It isn't a
window.

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
It is my window.

DIAMOND
But this is my bedroom wall. And
whoever you are, why do you need a
window anyway? You're outside
already.

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
You are wrong. I am in my house and
I want to see out of it. So, open
it right now.

DIAMOND
I can't. If I do, the wind'll blow
in my face and I'll catch a cold.

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
I am the wind.

Diamond stares at the wall.

DIAMOND
You are?

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
Yes, now stop arguing and do what I
told you.

DIAMOND
But, I'll freeze.

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
You won't freeze. Now are you going
to do it or not?

(CONTINUED)

DIAMOND
I guess I can pull the covers over
my head.

Diamond jerks the hay out of the wall. Instantly, wind whistles around him. Jumping back, he buries himself under the covers. The sound of the wind grows louder and a regal voice speaks out of it.

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
What is your name, little boy?

DIAMOND
(muffled by covers)
Diamond.

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
Speak up.

DIAMOND
Diamond.

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
What a silly name. A diamond is
such a useless thing.

DIAMOND
I like my name.

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
You don't know what a diamond is, do
you?

DIAMOND
Yes, I do. It's me and my horse.

A beautiful laugh fills the room. Diamond remains a huddling lump under the covers.

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
It's not polite to lie there and
never look up to see what kind of a
person you're talking to.

DIAMOND
(half crying)
I want this dream to end. I'm tired.
I want to go to sleep.

The laugh comes again.

(CONTINUED)

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
That doesn't make any sense. If
it's a dream you are asleep.

DIAMOND
Go away.

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
Well, it isn't a dream and you can
sleep tomorrow night.
(firmly)
Now, will you get your head out from
under those covers?

DIAMOND
NO.

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
No one tells me "no."

Instantly, the wind rips every blanket off the bed. Diamond
sits up startled, with his nightshirt blowing around him.

POV DIAMOND

Standing above him is the most beautiful woman he has ever
seen. She is very tall and her eyes are brilliant violet.
From her head streams out long hair as black as midnight.
It swirls around her. Her gown shimmers with snowflakes.
This is NORTH WIND.

DIAMOND
Who are you?

NORTH WIND
I'm the North Wind.

DIAMOND
You are? I didn't know the wind was
a person.

She laughs.

NORTH WIND
There are lots of things you don't
know. You still think you're
dreaming, don't you?

Diamond nods.

NORTH WIND (CONT'D)
I want to take you on a trip.

(CONTINUED)

DIAMOND
You mean go outside?

NORTH WIND
Is there any other way?

DIAMOND
I'll freeze to death.

NORTH WIND
Not if you hold my hand. Now do you
want to come or not?

DIAMOND
I can't go anywhere with somebody I
don't even know.

NORTH WIND
Oh, you know me. You've seen me
many times, you just don't remember.
If you want to come, I'll be waiting
in the garden.

With a great, swirling rush, North Wind is gone.

DIAMOND
Hey, wait...

Diamond crawls across the bed and looks out the hole.

POV DIAMOND THROUGH HOLE

The mysterious woman is standing on top the gazebo smiling
at him. He hops to the floor and starts down the stairs.

EXT. STABLE -- MOMENTS LATER

The night is clear and cold. A full moon shines down, casting
razor shadows. Diamond squeezes through the big doors of
the stable. But, when he gets outside, the wind has died
and the woman is gone. He looks up at the sky...and shivers.

Across the yard, two people are sitting in the gazebo.

INT. GAZEBO

Sarah Coleman and Alfred Evans are both are very upset.

SARAH
(crying softly)
So, money means that much to you,
then?

(CONTINUED)

ALFRED

It means a lot. You've never been without it, Sarah, so how would you know?

She shakes her head in disbelief.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Your father's right. I bring nothing to a marriage but poverty.

SARAH

I thought you brought love.

ALFRED

I do, but I've got to prove myself. He's given me a great opportunity and I can't turn it down. It's a chance to earn his respect.

SARAH

My father respects only money and the people who can get it for him.

ALFRED

And I can do just that. This one voyage is all it will take.

He tries to take her hand, but she pulls it away.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Please Darling, I know eight months is a long time. But you could spend it getting ready for our wedding. When I come back, I'll have a permanent position in your father's company and the money that goes with it. Can't you see it's for the best?

SARAH

IT ISN'T FOR THE BEST. YOU COULD DIE OUT THERE, ALFRED.

ALFRED

I'm not going to die.

SARAH

YOU DON'T KNOW THAT. PEOPLE DIE ON VOYAGES ALL THE TIME.

Suddenly, she looks up and sees Diamond shivering in the garden.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH (CONT'D)

Diamond?

She rushes out of the gazebo. Alfred follows her.

EXT. GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

SARAH

Child, what are you doing out here
in your nightshirt?

As they approach, Diamond sinks to the ground, unconscious.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Oh, dear God...

Evans scoops him up and they rush toward the stable.

INT. STABLE LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Diamond is lying in his parent's bed. He's pale and is only half conscious. Dr. MacDonald is seated beside him, taking his pulse. Diamond's parents stand nearby. Ruth is crying.

RUTH

He's never done nothin' like that
before. If they hadn't found him,
sure he would've frozen to death.

Joseph tries to comfort her.

JOSEPH

It's all right. God took care of
him. He don't give us more'n we can
bear.

The doctor stands and motions the parents to follow him. They walk to a corner and speak in whispers.

DR. MACDONALD

He'll sleep now. In the morning
I'll send over more medicine.

JOSEPH

Dr. MacDonald, sir. It's not lookin'
good, is it?

DR. MACDONALD

No, Joseph, it isn't looking good.

As Ruth cries, Joseph takes her in his arms.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

Now, don't lose hope, wife. It just means we got to pray harder. That's all.

The doctor turns away. Before he leaves, he stops and looks down at the little boy.

DR. MACDONALD (V.O.)

That strange, awful illness. Not in many years had I seen it.

(beat)

Little Diamond. Why should one small boy mean more to me than all my other patients? Yet, somehow, he did. And I had resolved to battle for his life.

DISSOLVE
TO:

EXT. WHARF ON THAMES -- MORNING

It's a bright and beautiful winter morning. The wharf is bustling with activity. Many sailing ships are being loaded and unloaded. Wagons of every description move about. Onto the wharf rolls the Coleman's black coach. Joseph is at the reins. Uncertain where to go, he slows Old Diamond. The window of the coach opens and Sarah's head appears.

SARAH

Joseph, I think it's all the way at the end.

Joseph clicks to the horse and they move down the line of ships. At the very end, one stands apart. It's a grim vessel. The name on the side reads: "Constance Venable." A crew of tough-looking men are loading supplies up a gang plank. Some carry wood boxes filled with chains and manacles.

Alfred Evans stands on the dock with a checklist in his hand. As the coach pulls up, he sees it and becomes very upset. Not waiting for Joseph to open the door, Sarah gets out. The sailors stop work to leer at her.

ALFRED

Sarah, what are you doing here?

SARAH

So, this is my father's new ship. It's vile looking. What cargo would be carried in such a vessel?

(CONTINUED)

She pushes past Alfred and marches straight up to a SAILOR who's about to carry a box up the gangplank.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You, sailor, answer a question for me.

The man leers at her.

SAILOR

And what is it you want to know, missy?

ALFRED

Get back to work.

The sailor scowls at Evans.

SAILOR

Now, yer honor, I'm a gentleman, you see?

The other sailors laugh.

SAILOR (CONT'D)

And gentlemen always answers pretty lady's questions.

SARAH

What cargo does this ship carry?

SAILOR

Cargo?

(beat)

Well now, you might say it carries meat. Long slabs o' meat so fresh and hot we gotta keep 'em chained in the hold so they won't swim away.

More laughter. He lifts one of the manacles.

SARAH

I knew it. This is a slaver.

Sarah gives Alfred a terrible look and rushes back to the coach.

ALFRED

Sarah, please...wait.

Jumping inside, she slams the door.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH
Take me home.

Alfred bangs on the coach door.

ALFRED
Sarah, open up.

She doesn't. Joseph climbs to his place and the coach moves away at a fast trot, leaving Alfred staring in horror after her. The sailor calls to him.

SAILOR
Now, don't you worry, Mr. Evans, sir. There's plenty o' fish in God's ocean. When we get our cargo you'll have all the fine, fresh women you could ever want. And that's a guarantee.

Evans stares at him. The sailors laugh.

INT. EDWARD COLEMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Sunlight is streaming in at the window. Edward Coleman is seated at his writing desk hard at work. He doesn't look up. Sarah stands nearby. Her face is pale with rage.

MR. COLEMAN
You shouldn't have gone there, Sarah. The docks are no place for a woman.

SARAH
Is that all you have to say?

MR. COLEMAN
What do you want me to say? Yes, it's a slaver. I purchased the Constance Venable three months ago.

Sarah is so angry that no words will come. Her father looks up. When he sees her face, he lays down his pen and speaks in a gentler tone.

MR. COLEMAN (CONT'D)
Sit down, Sarah.

She remains standing. He stands and walks to a window.

POV THROUGH WINDOW

Outside, near the stable, Joseph is brushing down old Diamond.

(CONTINUED)

MR. COLEMAN (CONT'D)
Whether we like it or not, the traffic
in Africans is growing. In it I see
the wealth of the future.

SARAH
AND IT DOESN'T BOTHER YOU THAT IT'S
UTTERLY EVIL?

MR. COLEMAN
I don't think it's evil at all. I
find myself in agreement with the
Reverend Bramley. Whatever they
are, the savages are not entirely
human. All one has to do is look in
their eyes. It's clear they have no
souls. I'm determined to deal in
them just as I would any other cattle.

SARAH
And you've drawn Alfred into your
vile plans.

MR. COLEMAN
He's a bright young man who shows
great potential. I've trusted him
more deeply than you can ever know.
On that ship rides our future.

SARAH
You have cursed us, father.

MR. COLEMAN
Sarah, it's time you knew the truth.
Over the past two years I've
experienced a series of disasters.
Everything we own is mortgaged. If
Alfred is unsuccessful it will mean
bankruptcy.

SARAH
I hope your ship never returns.

MR. COLEMAN
You might want to reconsider such an
ill-advised wish. I don't think
you'd enjoy being a pauper, my dear.
No more beautiful gowns, no more tea
with fifty of your friends. And I
know I certainly wouldn't relish
debtor's prison.

(CONTINUED)

She turns on him with a look of ice.

SARAH

You bought him. You bought the man
I loved and made him your slave.

MR. COLEMAN

Nonsense. All I did was give him an
opportunity to better himself.

SARAH

You broke my mother's heart and sent
her to an early grave...

MR. COLEMAN

SARAH, STOP THIS MINUTE. NOT ANOTHER
WORD...

SARAH

NO, I WILL NOT STOP. DO YOU THINK I
DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF CORRUPTION
TAKES PLACE ON A SLAVE SHIP? WHAT
HORROR AND DEBAUCHERY ENTER A MAN'S
SOUL?

(beat)

How could you do this to me, father?
How could you do it to the man I
love?

MR. COLEMAN

Sarah...

SARAH

Today I leave your house and I will
never return.

(beat)

Goodbye, and God have mercy on you.

With tears streaming down her cheeks, she turns and walks
out.

INT. DIAMOND'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bedroom in the hay is dark.

Diamond is asleep in his bed. A large, heavy board has been
nailed over the hole in the wall.

Suddenly, there is a tapping noise. It continues until
Diamond begins to awaken. From the other side of the wall
comes the voice of a little girl.

(CONTINUED)

NORTH WIND LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)

Diamond...
 (beat)
 Diamond, wake up.

Rubbing his eyes, Diamond sits up.

DIAMOND
 Who's out there?

NORTH WIND LITTLE GIRL
 Who do you think? Open the window.

DIAMOND
 (sleepily)
 Are you North Wind? I don't hear
 you blowing.

NORTH WIND LITTLE GIRL
 Well, you hear me talking, don't
 you?

DIAMOND
 It doesn't sound like you.

NORTH WIND LITTLE GIRL
 Just open the window.

DIAMOND
 I can't. They've pounded it shut.

NORTH WIND LITTLE GIRL
 What a stupid thing to do. All right,
 get back.

Remembering his previous experience, Diamond moves to the farthest corner of his bed and holds the blankets up to his nose.

There's the sound of a heavy wind.

As he watches, very slowly, the board begins to push away from the wall as though a powerful hand were behind it. Finally, with a creaking groan the nails pull out and the board blasts across the room leaving an inky, black hole much larger than before.

Then, the wind stops.

Instantly, the hole is filled by a lovely little face with violet eyes and long black hair. North Wind is a LITTLE GIRL who looks even younger than Diamond.

(CONTINUED)

With a puff of breeze, she tumbles onto the end of his bed.

DIAMOND

Who are you?

NORTH WIND LITTLE GIRL

Oh, come on. Who do you think I am?

DIAMOND

You can't be North Wind, you're littler than me.

NORTH WIND LITTLE GIRL

You should have seen me this evening. I was so small I took a ride in Old Diamond's ear. I've come to take you on that trip I promised.

DIAMOND

I'm not going anywhere with a girl.

She rolls her eyes.

NORTH WIND LITTLE GIRL

Sometimes you don't have a very nimble brain.

DIAMOND

I do too.

NORTH WIND LITTLE GIRL

Well, I'm not gonna sit here and argue.

She stands to leave.

DIAMOND

Wait, what kind of a trip is this? Where are you going?

NORTH WIND LITTLE GIRL

Oh, forget about it and go back to sleep. You'd be too scared anyway.

DIAMOND

Would not.

She turns toward the hole.

NORTH WIND LITTLE GIRL

Yes, you would. I'm gonna fly.

(CONTINUED)

His eyes grow wide.

DIAMOND
Really? And I could fly with you?

NORTH WIND LITTLE GIRL
Well, you certainly can't fly alone.

DIAMOND
All right, maybe I'll go. But I've
gotta get dressed first.

She turns back toward him and sits down. He looks at her
with indignation.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)
I'm not gonna get dressed in front
of a girl.

NORTH WIND LITTLE GIRL
Oh, for goodness sake.

DIAMOND
How come you didn't wait that other
night. I thought it was all a dream.

NORTH WIND LITTLE GIRL
You were too slow and I had someplace
to go really fast. I have a little
more time tonight, but you'd better
hurry.

There's a swirl of wind and she vanishes. Diamond jumps out
of bed.

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

It's late spring. The stable door opens a crack and Diamond
slips out. He's buttoning his shirt. The moon is very
bright. A gentle breeze is blowing.

North Wind is swirling joyfully, dancing around the garden.
She's grown into a lovely YOUNG GIRL. Seeing Diamond she
smiles and extends her hand. He runs to her.

DIAMOND
I can't keep up with the way you
change.

NORTH WIND YOUNG GIRL
You'd better try 'cause I never stop.
Are you ready?

(CONTINUED)

DIAMOND

I guess. Are we gonna fly now?

In one little jump she's standing on a high, stone fence looking down at him.

NORTH WIND YOUNG GIRL

Well, come on. What are you waiting for?

DIAMOND

I can't do that.

NORTH WIND YOUNG GIRL

Yes, you can. It's easy.

She extends her hand once more. He reaches for it. Instantly, a puff of wind takes him and he find himself on the fence next to her.

Diamond's eyes are wide.

The wind stiffens. He looks up. Standing beside him is North Wind in the form that he first saw her, a full-grown woman. She looks down at him and smiles.

DIAMOND

You're yourself again.

NORTH WIND

I'm always myself.

The wind begins to blow harder.

To Diamond's amazement, North Wind grows taller and taller. In a moment she is a giant with her head in the tree-tops. Gently, she reaches down and picks him up in her huge hands. He's terrified.

NORTH WIND (CONT'D)

Now, don't be frightened. I've got to begin my night's work. While I fly, I've made a place for you in my hair.

She lifts him into her hair. There Diamond finds a braided nest. He crawls in.

NORTH WIND (CONT'D)

Are you ready?

(CONTINUED)

DIAMOND

I guess so.

With a mighty rush of wind they rise into the sky.

She gives an echoing call. Great thunderheads boil.
Lightning flashes.

As they streak into the clouds rain begins. But, strangely,
Diamond remains dry.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)

How come I'm not getting wet?

NORTH WIND

Because you're with me.

EXT. FLYING HIGH OVER LONDON -- CONTINUOUS

They're sailing high above Old London. Down below, the city
is asleep. North Wind is moving at great speed. Her hair
and dress streak out from her and blend with the clouds.

DIAMOND

Could you fly a little slower?

NORTH WIND

Why?

DIAMOND

I want to see the streets.

NORTH WIND

There's not much down there. I've
nearly washed all the people home.

EXT. FLYING LOWER OVER STREETS - CONTINUOUS

North Wind swoops down just above the rooftops. They pass
over a few chilly people bundled against the storm. Rain
comes in sheets. The wind tears at them.

EXT. STREET NEAR WHARF - MOMENTS LATER

North Wind and Diamond are flying over a very poor section
of town near the wharf. Suddenly, they come upon a little
girl dressed in rags. She's crying and stumbling, battered
and blown by the wind and rain. Behind her she drags an old
broom. This is Molly.

As Diamond watches, the child falls down and crouches in a
gutter, sobbing. A moment later, she struggles on.

(CONTINUED)

DIAMOND
Look at that little girl. You've
got to help her, North Wind.

NORTH WIND
I can't stop my work.

DIAMOND
But she's in trouble.

NORTH WIND
Then, you help her.

DIAMOND
How?

NORTH WIND
You'll find a way. Just remember,
if I put you down the wind and rain
will catch you too.

DIAMOND
I don't care. Will you wait for me?

NORTH WIND
I'll meet you after awhile. Do you
see that church?

Not far away is a huge cathedral.

DIAMOND
Yes.

NORTH WIND
When you've finished, go and sit on
the steps.

North Wind sets Diamond down on the street and then flies
away. The instant he's on the ground, the full force of the
storm hits him, soaking him to the skin. A chimney pot
crashes at his feet. He runs after the girl, calling to
her.

DIAMOND
HEY, WAIT, STOP.

MOLLY
(calling through her
sobs)
I CAN'T. THE WIND WON'T LEAVE GO OF
ME.

(CONTINUED)

She's being blown closer and closer toward the river.

Finally, Diamond manages to catch hold of her dress, but the rotten material tears and she's off again.

A few moments later, she's at the edge of the street. Next to her is a twenty-foot drop into the roaring water of the Thames.

She screams.

Just as she's about to go over the side, Diamond grabs her around the waist and pulls her back. They go down in a heap. Then, together, they crawl to the doorway of a building.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

(crying)

I thought I was gonna drown.

(beat; fearfully)

Where's my broom?

DIAMOND

Over there. I'll get it.

Rushing out into the storm, he brings it to her. When she has it in her hands, she breathes a little easier.

MOLLY

I lose that, I'm done for.

DIAMOND

Where are you going?

MOLLY

Home.

DIAMOND

I'll go with you. It'll be easier
if we walk together.

The wind and rain have diminished. Holding onto each other, the children leave their shelter. They look like two soaked animals.

MOLLY

I never seen you before. Do you
sweep crossings?

DIAMOND

No.

(CONTINUED)

MOLLY

Well, what do you do? Who are you?

DIAMOND

My name's Diamond and I guess I just live with my mother and father.

MOLLY

Come on, you don't have no mother and father. And what kind of a name is that?

DIAMOND

It's a good name.

(beat)

Don't you have a mother and father?

MOLLY

Nope. I live with Old Sal. And I better get goin' or there's gonna be hell to pay.

EXT. MOLLY'S ALLEY - NIGHT

Diamond and Molly turn in at a dark alley. It's like entering a pit. Ancient shutters creak and groan. Molly stops at a set of filthy stairs that lead down to a wretched cellar door. Beside the door at ground level is a dirt incrustated window. Faint candlelight glimmers from within.

DIAMOND

(horrified)

You live here?

MOLLY

(defensively)

Yeah, what's the matter with it?

DIAMOND

Nothing.

MOLLY

It's better than no place at all. You better get goin' before Sal sees you.

She heads down the stairs.

DIAMOND

Wait, what's your name?

(CONTINUED)

MOLLY

Molly.
 (beat; with a faint
 smile)
 Thanks for helping me.

Then she opens a rotting door and disappears inside. Diamond is just about to walk away when hears the shrieking of an old woman.

OLD SAL (O.S.)
 YOU LITTLE BEAST, WHERE HAVE YOU
 BEEN? WHERE'S THE MONEY? GIVE IT
 TO ME.

MOLLY (O.S.)
 It's in my pocket.

OLD SAL (O.S.)
 NO, IT ISN'T. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE
 WITH IT?

MOLLY (O.S.)
 (starting to cry)
 I don't know. Maybe it got lost in
 the rain. I almost fell in the
 river...

Diamond hears a hideous snarl and a blow. Molly cries out. Fearfully, he stoops to look through the window.

To his shock, a horrible face filled with toothless rage appears inches away on the other side of the glass. Dirt mats down scraggly, gray hair. Beady eyes glare at him. This is OLD SAL.

OLD SAL
 (shrieking)
 GET IN HERE.

Diamond turns and runs for his life.

EXT. STREET LEADING TO CATHEDRAL - MOMENTS LATER

Out of breath and still terrified, Diamond turns onto the empty street leading to the cathedral. The storm has past. Cold moonlight casts strange shadows on the decrepit buildings. As he approaches a small alley, he hears the sound of a struggle.

(CONTINUED)

VAGRANT (O.S.)
 Don't hurt me. Please. I don't
 have no money.

ROBBER (O.S.)
 You're lying, you old pig. I'm gonna
 slit your throat.

VAGRANT (O.S.)
 I'm tellin' the truth, I swear.
 Here look.

Diamond peeks around the corner. A ROBBER has an old vagrant
 at knife-point. The huge man shakes open the vagrant's purse
 and turns it upside down. It's empty.

ROBBER
 YOU'RE HIDING IT SOMEWHERE. GIVE IT
 TO ME.

The robber hits him. The vagrant falls to the ground
 unconscious.

Suddenly, there's a blast of wind. Then, a deep, ominous
 growl comes from the darkest recesses of the alley.

The robber freezes.

To his amazement, into the moonlight steps a gigantic wolf.
 With a cry, the man drops the knife and runs. Instantly,
 the wolf is after him snarling and tearing at his legs.

The robber races past Diamond without seeing him. But when
 the wolf reaches Diamond it stops and looks straight at him.
 The creature has amazing, violet eyes.

Diamond is terrified.

Suddenly, a wonderful, silvery laugh is heard and a
 transformation begins. As the boy watches, the wolf melts
 into the lovely form of North Wind.

NORTH WIND
 You didn't recognize me?

DIAMOND
 Can you become anything?

NORTH WIND
 Almost.

(CONTINUED)

DIAMOND
You scared me to death.

They begin walking toward the cathedral.

NORTH WIND
I scared the robber too.
(beat)
Remember, sometimes things that are
good can look very frightening.

EXT. CATHEDRAL STEPS -- MOMENTS LATER

Diamond and North Wind walk up the steps leading to the huge cathedral. The building is cold and massive in the moonlight. They stop on a broad landing.

NORTH WIND
I want to take you on a wonderful
trip, but first I have a difficult
job to do.

DIAMOND
What is it?

NORTH WIND
I have to destroy something.

DIAMOND
Are people going to get hurt?

NORTH WIND
Yes.

DIAMOND
(horrified)
Well, don't do it then.

NORTH WIND
(sadly)
I must.

DIAMOND
But why? Don't you care about the
people?

NORTH WIND
Very much. What I'm going to do
breaks my heart.

He stares at her.

(CONTINUED)

NORTH WIND (CONT'D)

Diamond, someday all the suffering and death in the world will be over. The bad things that people do will stop. Until that time, my work goes on.

DIAMOND

But, you're going to do a bad thing.

NORTH WIND

No. My job is making things come to an end so that they don't go on forever.

A faraway look enters North Wind's eyes.

NORTH WIND (CONT'D)

I want to take you to a very beautiful place, so beautiful that when you see it you won't ever want to leave.

DIAMOND

Where is it?

NORTH WIND

It's a country behind my back. When I return, I'll take you there. Until then I've fixed a place for you to wait.

North Wind moves a few steps away. In the moonlight she is utterly lovely and regal-looking. Suddenly a strong wind begins to moan. As it grows louder, she grows taller. Her black hair streams. In an instant, she is as tall as the cathedral, but she doesn't stop there.

The wind roars and her head seems to reach the stars. Diamond is holding on to a railing to keep from being blown away. North Wind stoops down and holds out a gigantic hand. Diamond climbs onto it. Gently, she lifts him up to the bell tower of the cathedral.

NORTH WIND (CONT'D)

Go inside and wait.

He climbs in.

INT. CATHEDRAL BELL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

North Wind's huge, beautiful eyes look at him.

(CONTINUED)

NORTH WIND

I'll be back soon.

Rising once more, she gives a strange, terrifying call. From deep within the sky there is a crash of lightning. A staggering, black thunderhead begins to form. It swirls in her hair. The ground shakes. With a roar, North Wind vanishes.

Diamond starts to shiver.

Nearby, he finds a little pile of blankets. He sits down on them and looks up. Above him are the mighty bells. Lying down, he pulls the blankets around him and closes his eyes.

CU DIAMOND'S FACE

It becomes deathly pale and the shivering grows worse.

DISSOLVE
TO:

EXT. CONSTANCE VENABLE AT SEA - NIGHT

Alfred Evans stands on the prow of the Constance Venable staring into the darkness. The sails are furled and a strong wind is blowing. The FIRST MATE joins him.

FIRST MATE

Only four weeks till we're home.
Two months early. We've made good
time, Mr. Evans.

ALFRED

Seems like we've been gone six years.

FIRST MATE

Smoothest voyage in my experience.
But it looks like we might have a
bad one comin' tonight. You might
better get buttoned down inside.
Could get nasty.

Alfred nods and heads toward his cabin.

INT. HOLD OF SHIP - NIGHT

A small oil lamp is burning. By its faint gleam the pitiful squalor of the slaves is visible. Two hundred of them lie chained on their racks barely able to move.

(CONTINUED)

ANGLE ON LARGE BLACK MAN

A powerful black man is lying awake on his rack. His body is covered with swollen lumps. Sweat streams down his face. In his eyes is a look of terror. He mumbles incoherently.

SLAVE'S POV

Along the wall a huge rat is creeping toward him. As he watches it, he strains against his shackles.

Nearer and nearer it comes.

He starts screaming. But when the rat is inches from his face, it simply disappears.

A sailor carrying a lantern walks down the aisle. When he comes to the man he stops and holds it up so he can see better. Then, he cries out in horror.

SAILOR
GOD SAVE US.

He rushes away.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

The terrified sailor is reporting to the CAPTAIN. Standing nearby are the First Mate and Alfred Evans.

SAILOR
(shaking with fear)
It's the plague. I know it, sir.
We're doomed. It's God's judgment.

CAPTAIN
If you're wrong, Perkins, I'll have
you flogged. Show us.

They head out of the cabin.

INT. HOLD OF SHIP - MOMENTS LATER

The group makes its way down the aisle. Now all the slaves are awake and in a state of terror. The captain looks down at the diseased man. He's dead.

CAPTAIN
It's the plague all right.

FIRST MATE
What are we going to do, sir?

(CONTINUED)

Hurriedly, the captain leads the group out.

CAPTAIN
Seal up the hold.

ALFRED
What do you mean?

CAPTAIN
I mean seal it up. Within three days they'll all be dead.

ALFRED
Why don't we throw him overboard?
Maybe we can save some.

CAPTAIN
No hope o' that. As soon as we get near any shore we'll put off in long boats and burn the ship.

ALFRED
(horrified)
We're going to lose everything?

CAPTAIN
That's right and probably our lives as well.

Outside, the wind is howling.

EXT. CONSTANCE VENABLE - NIGHT

The ship staggers through monstrous seas. High above in the shrieking clouds appears the beautiful and terrifying face of North Wind. Her streaming hair chokes the sky.

DISSOLVE
TO:

INT. STABLE LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Diamond is unconscious in his parent's bed. He's very pale and thin. His mother and father bring soaking linens to Dr. MacDonald. They all look exhausted. Tears run down Ruth's cheeks.

DR. MACDONALD
The fever's not breaking.

RUTH
He ain't gonna make it is he, sir?

(CONTINUED)

DR. MACDONALD

(gruffly)

Don't talk that way. Bring more
linens.

He continues working.

DISSOLVE
TO:

EXT. CONSTANCE VENABLE - NIGHT

The storm is a hurricane.

In the swirling clouds hangs the face of North Wind. Her hair is laced with lightning. Her violet eyes are wild and ghostly. The ship creaks and groans as waves crash over it. The dead bodies of sailors wash between the rails.

ANGLE ON LONG BOAT LEAVING SHIP

Four men are huddled in a longboat. Three are sailors, the other is Alfred Evans. All are soaked to the skin and fighting for life.

DISSOLVE
TO:

INT. STABLE LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

CU DIAMOND'S PALE FACE

On Diamond's face is the stillness of death. Yet, Dr. MacDonald refuses to give up.

DISSOLVE
TO:

EXT. SHIP OF ICE - DAY

Diamond awakens slowly to a world of blue. He finds that he's been sleeping on a pile of furs. He looks around. He's on a wonderful ship made entirely of ice. It's traveling down a fjord. On either side are monstrous, blue walls of ice that tower hundreds of feet in the air.

At first, Diamond thinks he's alone. But, then he sees a figure standing silently in the prow. It's North Wind. She's facing away. He gets up and walks toward her.

DIAMOND

North Wind?

(CONTINUED)

She doesn't answer. He's frightened.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)
What's the matter?

Slowly, she turns. She's undergoing an incredible transformation. Her face is worn and growing older by the moment. Strands of gray are appearing in her hair.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)
What's happening to you?

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN
Don't be afraid. I always look like
this...when I'm going home.
(beat)
Remember...the trip...I promised?
We're on the way...to the country at
my back.

A strange light enters her eyes.

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
Look...we're almost there.

INT. TUNNEL OF ICE - CONTINUOUS

The ship enters a tunnel of ice. The walls are covered with eerie, twisted forms almost like frozen angels. Diamond is trembling.

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN
There's nothing to fear. The entrance
is made this way...to keep people
out who don't belong. You see?
It's already changing.

Gradually, the blue of the ice becomes silver and the ghostly angels fade away.

EXT. ICE CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

The tunnel opens out into a cavern of ice. Lovely silver icicles hang everywhere. The ship glides to a small, frozen dock and stops. From here a winding path disappears into glistening formations.

Diamond looks up at North Wind. She's grown even older. Her face is covered with deep wrinkles and her shoulders are stooping. But, still she smiles at him.

(CONTINUED)

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN
 From here we must walk. And you
 must help me...for I'm growing very
 weak.

They step out onto the dock. North Wind leans a bit on
 Diamond.

Slowly, they make their way up the path. As they enter the
 ice formations, the light becomes very bright and golden.
 Everything around them is covered with what appear to be
 clusters of precious stones.

DIAMOND
 Look at these stones. They're so
 beautiful

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN
 They're not stones.

DIAMOND
 What are they?

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN
 They're tears.
 (beat)
 Every tear that has ever been
 shed...is collected...in this place.

DIAMOND
 Why?

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN
 For a future day...when crying will
 end forever.

DIAMOND
 Is this the country at your back?

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN
 Oh, no. We've only reached the
 doorstep.
 (beat)
 Look...there it is.

Ahead, Diamond sees a towering, wooden door in the ice.
 It's encased in iron scrollwork and everything about it
 whispers of age beyond imagining. The door is shut and there
 is no knob. One worn step leads up to it.

Now, with every foot they travel North Wind grows more weak
 and old.

(CONTINUED)

By the time they reach the step she has barely enough strength to sit down. Diamond stares at her in shock. She's like a shadow. Her hair is white and her skin creased with a thousand wrinkles. Only her eyes retain a hint of who she was. Her voice comes in a rasping whisper.

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
Diamond...I'm fading.

DIAMOND
DON'T LEAVE.

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN
I won't. I'll be...right here.

As she speaks, she becomes transparent. Her lips barely move.

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
To get to the country at my back...you must walk...through me.

DIAMOND
What do you mean?

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN
Walk through...as if I were...an open door.
(beat)
There is...no other way.

DIAMOND
I can't do that.

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN
You can.

DIAMOND
I don't want to go alone.

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN
You won't be alone. Not ever.

DIAMOND
I'm scared.

She smiles at him gently.

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN
Come to me, Diamond.

(CONTINUED)

As she reaches out to him, she is almost completely transparent. Slowly, he moves toward her. As they draw together, he passes straight through.

DIAMOND
It's so cold.

NORTH WIND OLD WOMAN (O.S.)
(echoing whisper)
Walk on...

He enters a world of dazzling whiteness and extreme cold. He shivers. The brilliance is overpowering. It thickens and churns around him.

CU DIAMOND'S FACE

He grows weaker and weaker. His eyes begin to close.

DISSOLVE
TO:

EXT. COUNTRY AT THE BACK OF THE NORTH WIND - DAY

Diamond is lying asleep on a bed of purple moss. Slowly his eyes open.

POV DIAMOND

Above and all around him are gigantic flowers of the strangest and most beautiful hues. Swirling everywhere are thousands of butterflies.

In this place, color is in the air. It mingles with the flowers and trees.

A soft breeze is blowing. It carries a mist of sweet music. A woman's voice is singing.

Suddenly, Diamond hears laughter and whispering. Leaves are pushed aside and children's eyes appear.

Then, with laughing shouts, a dozen beautiful children of many races rush out into the open. There's a surge of billowing color as all the butterflies flutter away at once.

The children gather around Diamond. They all seem to be about his age. They pull him to his feet and drag him along. They want to show him their world.

A chase begins through a wonderland. The children splash through colored waterfalls and streams of pure gold.

(CONTINUED)

On and on they run through the forests of Heaven.

EXT. VALLEY OF THE CHILDREN - DAY

Diamond and his new friends rush out of the woods and find themselves on a high hill. Beneath them is a soft, lovely valley surrounded by glistening mountains. Down the center winds a river of crystal blue.

The valley is filled with thousands of children playing. When the children in the valley see the children on the hill they wave and shout. With a great deal of tumbling and rolling, Diamond and his friends make their way down.

At the bottom, they meet a group of children digging. Each child has a silver shovel. Diamond is intrigued. Suddenly, a boy gives a shout. The others drop their shovels and run to their friend. He's digging hard.

Finally, he reaches into a hole and pulls something out. The children gasp in delight. Diamond crowds closer to see.

The thing the boy holds shines like a little sun. A GIRL next to Diamond whispers...

GIRL

Star.

DIAMOND

You mean a real star?

She nods solemnly. Diamond looks at it in wonder. Then, he kneels down to look in the hole. Instead of dirt, he sees inky blackness and thousands of twinkling stars.

The children become very quiet. The little boy who found the star waves to them. Holding it tightly, he walks to the hole. In an instant, he's gone. Several others fill up the hole with dirt. Diamond turns to the girl.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)

Where'd he go?

GIRL

Back down. It wasn't his time.

Diamond picks up a shovel and begins to dig for himself. He's only begun when he strikes something very hard. A shining tip appears. Other children call out and group around him.

(CONTINUED)

A few more scoops and he's able to pull the star from its place. It's very large and shimmering blue. The children gasp in awe. Diamond doesn't know exactly what to do with it. He stoops down and looks into the hole.

POV THROUGH HOLE

He sees the universe. Then, far away and drawing nearer he sees something else. It's the face of North Wind.

NORTH WIND
(echoing whisper)
Diamond, come home. Come home.

Instantly, the music of the beautiful world fades into a soft wind...and darkness surrounds him.

DISSOLVE
TO:

INT. STABLE LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Diamond awakens slowly to the dim glow of candlelight. He hears soft crying. His mother is kneeling beside the bed with her face buried in her hands.

Asleep in a chair nearby is Dr. MacDonald. He looks like a wreck. Diamond's father is asleep on the floor with his back against the wall.

RUTH
(praying and sobbing)
Dear Jesus, bring him back. Please, bring him back. He's just a little boy and he's all we've got in this world.

Diamond touches his mother's hair.

DIAMOND
Mommy...

With a gasp she looks at him.

RUTH
Oh, God...

Jumping up, she hugs him.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Oh, God, thank you, thank you.

(CONTINUED)

The men awaken and realize what's happened. The little room is transformed with joy.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. STABLE - MORNING

It's a beautiful day in early summer. The garden behind the mansion is in bloom.

Diamond and his mother sit bundled in the seat of an old cab. In it are all their possessions. Old Diamond is hitched to it.

DR. MACDONALD (V.O.)

Little Diamond awoke to a new world.
The Constance Venable never returned.
And the loss changed many lives.
For Joseph and his family, it meant
farewell to all that they had known.

Out of the stable comes Joseph. He puts a bucket in the cab and then swings up beside his son. Clicking to the horse, they begin moving down the path.

DR. MACDONALD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

For Edward Coleman it meant financial
destruction and utter disgrace.
With the end of his dreams came the
creditors.

INT. EDWARD COLEMAN'S STUDY - DAY

Edward Coleman stands by his window looking at Diamond and his family as they leave in their cab. He turns back toward the room.

From his study, the parlor is visible. It's filled with people. Some are moving furniture and others are haggling. Two men are arguing over an expensive vase.

CREDITOR #1

I tell you this is mine.

CREDITOR #2

He owes me far more than he does
you. And according to the terms of
our agreement...

(CONTINUED)

A man carrying a trunk bumps into them. The vase falls and smashes on the floor.

CREDITOR #1
YOU BUMBLING FOOL. LOOK WHAT YOU
DID.

MOVER
Beggin' yer pardon, gov'ner. I got
this'ere monster on me back.

CREDITOR #2
Here, here. Where is that going?
That belongs to me. Take it out to
my wagon this instant.

CREDITOR #1
IT DOESN'T BELONG TO YOU, ALL THE
TRUNKS ARE MINE.

The mover lets the trunk drop to the floor with a crash, then sits on it as the men argue. Edward Coleman turns away.

EXT. DRIVE OF COLEMAN MANSION -- MOMENTS LATER

The cab carrying Diamond's family rolls around to the front of the mansion.

The yard is filled with people, furniture and wagons. All of Edward Coleman's possessions are flowing down the front stairs in a steady stream.

Joseph and Ruth pause for a moment and shake their heads. Then, Joseph clicks to Old Diamond and they drive away.

EXT. DISMAL, LONDON STREET -- AFTERNOON

It's the end of the day as Joseph and his family enter a side street in a poor section of London.

EXT. DINGY ALLEY -- MOMENTS LATER

The wagon turns in at a dingy alley. It leads to a small courtyard surrounded by dirty tenements. The ground is littered with trash. Diamond stares at the buildings.

DIAMOND
Is this where we're going to live?

JOSEPH
I'm afraid it is.

(CONTINUED)

RUTH
And we'll make the best of it, won't
we now?

JOSEPH
(very depressed)
You're a good woman, Ruth. May God
bless your soul.

INT. BARREN TENEMENT ROOMS -- AFTERNOON

The family enters their new home, two cramped, filthy rooms on the third floor. In the main room is a small fireplace. The window beside it looks down into the courtyard where the cab is sitting.

DR. MACDONALD (V.O.)
Unable to find work as a coachman, Joseph was forced to take the little money they had and purchase a cab. The life of a London cabby was hard, but at least it would keep them from starvation. Around them lived other cabbies. Many were vicious men and their families suffered for it.

INT. TENEMENT BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Diamond enters the bedroom. The only window faces the bare wall of the building next door. Through a wall next to him he hears the sound of a terrible argument between a man and a woman. They're screaming at each other. Diamond's eyes grow wide. His mother enters. She's trying to make the best of it, but she's fighting back tears.

RUTH
Come Diamond, while your father's
bringin' up our things, you can help
me tidy up the place.

They walk back into the other room. In spite of herself, Ruth is crying.

DISSOLVE
TO:

INT. TENEMENT LIVING ROOM -- DAY

The furniture is all in place and the room is as clean and bright as Ruth can make it. Diamond is standing by the window looking down at the filthy courtyard. Thick fog swirls around the buildings.

(CONTINUED)

As he stares, he rocks back and forth, singing an odd little song to himself.

DIAMOND

I know a river where water sings,
where flowers grow and it's always
spring. I know a place where music
flies, where colors play and no one
dies. And the river is deep and
crystal blue and the wind is soft
and it kisses you. And everything's
happy because no one knows about
hurts or tears so you never cry and
you can't get sick so no one dies...

With a look of deep concern, Diamond's mother walks up to him.

RUTH

Diamond, where'd you learn that song?

Diamond keeps staring out the window as though he's seeing far away.

DIAMOND

I don't know. I think I heard it in
that other place. But I haven't got
it right yet. I just can't remember
the words.

RUTH

That "other place?"

DIAMOND

You know, the country behind the
door.

He starts humming again. Tears fill Ruth's eyes as she watches him.

CU DIAMOND'S FACE.

As the soft humming goes on...

DISSOLVE
TO:

EXT. WHARF ON THAMES -- DAY

The docks are grim and ghastly. Men are loading and unloading ships. Gray fog blankets everything making the tall masts look like a forest of draped crosses.

(CONTINUED)

As the men work they don't notice the mist over the water.

It begins to part.

Slowly, out of the swirling grayness drifts a nightmare vessel. The masts are broken. The wood is dark and full of rot.

Suddenly, a worker sees.

He calls out, pointing.

The men crowd to the edge of the wharf. Their eyes are wide.

The dead ship is floating straight toward them. Its rigging hangs in tatters and there is not a sign of life on board. Finally, they can read its name. It's the Constance Venable.

The dock workers stare in horror.

As Diamond's humming continues, the craft drifts into the dock. With a gigantic rumble, the rotted wood gives way and the ship impales itself.

The humming ends.

Everything is silent except for the wind and the gulls.

Finally, one of the workers gets up courage and climbs the side of the vessel so he can look on deck.

EXT. DECK OF CONSTANCE VENABLE -- CONTINUOUS

A section of the deck has broken away revealing a nightmare below. In the hold the man sees the bodies of dead slaves still chained in their racks. Their skin is covered with grayish lumps and patches.

He screams and jumps back down to the wharf.

DOCK WORKER
PLAGUE...THEY'RE ALL DEAD. IT'S THE
BLACK DEATH.

The crowd erupts in chaos.

DOCK WORKER #2
BRING FIRE. BURN IT.

Men roll barrels of pitch to the ship and set them ablaze. Dark smoke rises. In a few moments, the Constance Venable is an inferno.

(CONTINUED)

The dock is empty. The workers have fled.

Quickly the fire leaps to other ships.

As the slaver burns, out of her escape the rats.

DISSOLVE
TO:

EXT. WHARF ON THAMES -- MORNING

The sun is shining and the wharf is a desolation. Most of the buildings are rubble and the ships have been burned to the waterline.

DR. MACDONALD (V.O.)

The plague began in the buildings near the wharf. From there it spread like a fire from hell. Unimaginable fear gripped the city. Suddenly, people who had never prayed were crying out to the heavens.

EXT. CATHEDRAL -- DAY

Crowds stream into the open doors of the cathedral. Fear is on every face. Many of the women carry small bouquets of flowers that they keep in front of their mouths and noses in the vain hope that it will save them from tainted air.

A large notice is posted on the wall of the church. It reads: LAST SERVICE UNTIL THE PLAGUE LEAVES OUR CITY. BY ORDER OF THE LORD MAYOR.

INT. CATHEDRAL -- DAY

The church is packed. Not an inch of space is left. A PRIEST is reading from the Scriptures.

PRIEST

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress. My God, in Him will I trust...

EXT. SOLICITOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

The reading continues.

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST (O.S.)

...He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Wealthy people are streaming to lawyers trying to put their affairs in order.

INT. SOLICITOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

The office is full. A large, fat ATTORNEY, with a powdered wig sits behind a grand desk writing with a quill pen in bold flourishes. He's talking to a man sitting across from him.

SOLICITOR

And in the most unhappy event that your beloved wife precedes you in death...

INT. CATHEDRAL - SAME SERVICE -- DAY

PRIEST

...Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day. Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

(beat)

Let us pray...

As the priest begins to praying, he is slowly drowned out by crying and wailing from the congregation.

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST (CONT'D)
 Father, from Thy hand
 we draw our life. We
 beseech Thee to spare
 these Thy children
 from pain and death.
 Let Thy mercy be poured
 upon us. Keep Thy
 people from corruption.
 Stay the Angel of Death.
 Our hearts cry out to
 Thee. Thou who sentest
 Thy Son to conquer
 death, hear our cry.
 Though we walk through
 the valley of the shadow
 we will fear no evil.

WAILING VOICES
 (slowly rising)
 Oh, Jesus...Hear us, Master.
 Forgive us...Oh God in
 Heaven...Oh, Lord save
 us...We cry to you, spare
 our children...Jesus, have
 mercy...Lord, don't let us
 die... Jesus Christ in
 heaven...Son of God...Don't
 forsake us, Lord...

DISSOLVE
 TO:

EXT. CATHEDRAL BELL TOWER (PANORAMIC VIEW) -- EVENING

The streets of London are deserted. There is not a soul to
 be seen anywhere.

DR. MACDONALD (V.O.)
 So, all the people of London set
 their affairs in order and waited
 for the horror to arrive. Most locked
 and barricaded themselves in their
 homes. The rich fled the city.
 (beat)
 For everyone, the wait was not long.

INT. TENEMENT LIVING ROOM -- EVENING

Diamond is sitting beside the window looking down into the
 courtyard waiting for his father to come home. His mother
 is busy preparing the evening meal. But it's clear she's
 not feeling well. Her face is pale and covered with
 perspiration.

ANGLE THROUGH WINDOW

Suddenly, down below, Joseph's cab comes into view. But
 something's wrong. Joseph is slumped over the dash.

DIAMOND
 Mama, father's sick.

Ruth rushes to the window and looks down.

(CONTINUED)

RUTH
(terrified)
Oh, dear God...

She runs to the door. Diamond is right behind her.

INT. TENEMENT BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Joseph lies in bed. His face is ghastly. He bears the awful marks of the plague. Bending over him is Dr. MacDonald. Diamond and his mother stand nearby. Ruth is crying. The doctor completes his examination and places a cold compress on Joseph's head. He's weary as he leads the other two out of the room.

DR. MACDONALD
There's nothing I can do. Give him
brandy. As much as he'll take.
Keep him drunk, it might help the
pain. I'll try to come back in the
morning.

He stares at Ruth. She doesn't look good.

DR. MACDONALD (CONT'D)
Are you all right?

RUTH
I'm...I'm fine.

DR. MACDONALD
Well, good night then.

He walks toward the door. But just as he reaches it, Ruth collapses.

INT. TENEMENT BEDROOM -- LATER

Both of Diamond's parents are lying on the bed. Dr. MacDonald is near exhaustion. He turns to Diamond.

DR. MACDONALD
We must find someone who can help
you. Do you know any of your
neighbors?

DIAMOND
No.

(CONTINUED)

DR. MACDONALD

(wearily)

Well, come along. Let's see what we can do.

INT. TENEMENT HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Dr. MacDonald and Diamond cross the hall. He knocks on a door. It doesn't open, but a hysterical FEMALE VOICE screams out...

TENEMENT WOMAN (O.S.)

YOU GO AWAY, JIM SAVAGE, I AIN'T YOUR WIFE ANY MORE...YOU HEAR ME. GO AWAY.

DR. MACDONALD

Please, I have a little boy out here...

TENEMENT WOMAN (O.S.)

YOU GOT THE PLAGUE AND NOW YOU WANT TO GIVE IT TO ME. WELL, YOU'RE NOT GONNA DO IT. I AIN'T LETTIN' YOU IN NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY.

DR. MACDONALD

Please, madam, my name is Dr. MacDonald...

TENEMENT WOMAN

GO AWAY, JIM SAVAGE...

MacDonald shakes his head and they move to another door. He knocks.

DR. MACDONALD

Is anyone in there?

The door doesn't open.

He knocks again. A deep, drunken MALE VOICE answers.

DRUNK CABBY (O.S.)

STOP POUNDING ON MY DOOR.

DR. MACDONALD

Sir, I have a little boy here. He's your neighbor.

DRUNK CABBY (O.S.)

YOU GO TO HELL.

(CONTINUED)

A WOMAN'S VOICE is heard in the background pleading.

CABBY'S WIFE

(sobbing)

Bob, come here. I need you, Bob.
Please...

DRUNK CABBY (O.S.)

(to woman)

SHUT UP.

DR. MACDONALD

If you'd open door I can explain.
He's not ill, it's his parents.

DRUNK CABBY (O.S.)

LET HIM DIE, LET'EM ALL DIE. THEY
WILL ANYWAY.

MacDonald just can't stand it. He pounds on the door.

DR. MACDONALD

HE'S ONLY A CHILD. ARE YOU AN ANIMAL?
HE NEEDS HELP...

DRUNK CABBY (O.S.)

LET THE BRAT DIE.

DR. MACDONALD

DEAR GOD IN HEAVEN I HOPE YOU ROT.

He looks at Diamond guiltily.

DIAMOND

They're scared.

DR. MACDONALD

We all are.

They continue down the hall.

INT. TENEMENT LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Diamond and the doctor enter. The poor man is almost in
tears.

DR. MACDONALD

I don't know what to do. I suppose
you must come with me. But it's
worse in the streets.

(CONTINUED)

DIAMOND

I can't go. Somebody's got to take care of my mother and father.

The doctor looks at him. His next words come very hard.

DR. MACDONALD

Your parents are very sick, Diamond. They have the plague.

DIAMOND

I know.

DR. MACDONALD

(his voice breaking)

They're going to die. There's nothing you can do for them.

DIAMOND

I can bring cold rags. That's what they did for me when I was sick.

MacDonald turns away.

DR. MACDONALD

(fighting back his tears)

All right. Bring them cold rags. I'll come back in the morning.

He heads for the door.

INT. TENEMENT BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Diamond is dressed in his nightshirt. He's made a nest of blankets on the floor beside his parent's bed. He wipes his mother's face with a wet cloth. Both Joseph and Ruth are unconscious.

DIAMOND

(whispering)

Please, God, I need North Wind. Could you send her now?

Suddenly, through the walls comes the sound of a screaming baby. A moment later, a terrible argument begins between the man and woman.

DRUNK CABBY (O.S.)

SHUT HIM UP. SHUT HIM UP, I SAY.

(CONTINUED)

CABBY'S WIFE (O.S.)
I CAN'T SHUT HIM UP. CAN'T YOU SEE
HE'S DYING.

DRUNK CABBY (O.S.)
YOU DO WHAT I TELL YOU.

Diamond listens for a moment, then he looks at his mother and father. Their condition hasn't changed. Quietly, he slips from the room.

INT. TENEMENT HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

The door to the next flat stands open. Diamond peeks around the corner to look inside.

INT. DRUNK CABBY'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

A giant of a man is in the center of the room. It's the DRUNK CABBY. He holds a bottle of rum and sways unsteadily. Not far from him is a cradle. The baby's screams come from out of it. Next to the cradle is a bed. On it lies the CABBY'S WIFE. She's got the plague. As she sobs, she looks at him with total hatred.

CABBY'S WIFE
Drunk. Drunk on the night your baby
dies. You're goin' to hell, Bob.
That's where you're goin'.

DRUNK CABBY
Yes, I'm goin' to hell. Everybody's
goin' to hell.

CABBY'S WIFE
Not our baby. He's goin' to heaven.

DRUNK CABBY
And he's gonna drive me nuts before
he gets there.

The man bends over the cradle and screams at the baby.

DRUNK CABBY (CONT'D)
SHUT UP, DAMN YOU.

The child only screams louder. In the desperation, the man shakes the cradle.

DRUNK CABBY (CONT'D)
I SAID, SHUT UP.

(CONTINUED)

That's all the woman can take. Though she's ill, she jumps out of bed and rushes at him, beating him with her fists.

CABBY'S WIFE
YOU FILTHY BEAST. GET AWAY. LEAVE
MY BABY ALONE. LET HIM DIE IN PEACE.

The man erupts. He grabs the woman like a rag doll and throws her across the room. She lands on the floor in a sobbing heap.

The baby is still screaming. The cabby staggers over to the only chair and slumps onto it.

As he sits in a drunken stupor, suddenly, he can't believe his eyes.

He sees a little boy quietly enter the room, go over to the cradle and pick up the baby. Then, Diamond sits down the floor and begins to rock him back and forth. And while he rocks, he sings softly.

DIAMOND
I know a river where water sings,
where flowers grow and it's always
spring. I know a place where music
flies, where colors play and no one
dies. And the river is deep and
crystal blue and the wind is soft
and it kisses you. And everything's
happy because no one knows about
hurts and tears so no one cries and
you can't get sick, so no one dies...

As Diamond sings, the baby stops crying. The cabby sits watching in disbelief.

POV DRUNK CABBY

Everything is blurry.

Tears begin to stream down the man's face.

Quietly, the baby goes to sleep never to awaken. Diamond lays him back in his cradle and tiptoes from the room.

INT. TENEMENT BEDROOM -- VERY EARLY MORNING

The first gray light of dawn comes through the window. Diamond is asleep on his blankets next to his parent's bed. Slowly, he awakens. At first, he's not sure where he is. Then, he remembers.

(CONTINUED)

Pulling himself up, he looks at his parents. Both are dead. Tears begin to run down his cheeks.

DIAMOND
Mommy...daddy...

Slowly, he sinks back down on his nest of blankets, buries his face and cries as though his heart will break.

Suddenly, he hears a soft wind and feels a gentle hand stroke his hair. He discovers that his face isn't buried in blankets anymore, but in the folds of North Wind's dress. He looks up. North Wind is crying too.

NORTH WIND
Little Diamond.

Diamond clings to her, sobbing.

DIAMOND
I called to you. I needed you to help me. But, you didn't come.

NORTH WIND
But, I did help you.

DIAMOND
How?

NORTH WIND
I sent you the baby when you needed him most.

DIAMOND
But my mother and father...

NORTH WIND
(softly)
Remember the beautiful country, Diamond? Last night, while you were sleeping, they walked through the door. They loved God. Now they're with Him.

DIAMOND
I want to be with them.

NORTH WIND
And you will be...someday.

He clings to her, but she fades away. He finds himself holding the blankets.

EXT. TENEMENT COURTYARD -- MORNING

An ugly, gray mist hangs in the air. The door to Diamond's building opens and the boy walks out. He's dressed now. Poor Old Diamond the horse is still hitched to the cab. When little Diamond approaches, the horse nuzzles him.

DIAMOND

I'm sorry. You never even got unhitched. And I'll bet you're hungry. But we've got something to do first.

He pulls himself up into the cab and takes the reins. Then, slowly, they move out into the street.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF TENEMENT -- MORNING

A ghastly pall hangs over London. The houses and shops are all boarded up. Many have large, white crosses painted on the doors. No one is on the street but Diamond. Slowly, the horse draws the cab over the rough cobblestones.

From a nearby house comes the sound of a sobbing woman, but no one is visible. On several corners barrels of pitch are smoldering.

Diamond seems very small in the huge, black cab. He hums his song for courage as he stares at the strangeness all around him.

INT. DR. MACDONALD'S TOWN HOME - HALLWAY -- MORNING

The doctor lives in an expensive town home. But the place is a mess. Makeshift medical supplies are stacked in the hall.

INT. TOWN HOME LIBRARY -- CONTINUOUS

Doctor MacDonald is asleep in the library. He's still in his clothes and looks exhausted. There's a timid knock on the front door. He doesn't awaken.

The knock comes again, a little louder.

The third time the doctor wakes up, but he's groggy. He pads to the door in his stocking feet.

DR. MACDONALD

(wearily)

Yes, yes, I'm coming.

(CONTINUED)

He opens it. Diamond is standing on the steps. No words are needed. MacDonald sits down and takes the boy in his arms. Then, they cry together.

EXT. LARGE CEMETERY -- DAY

Diamond and Dr. MacDonald are walking behind a black cart. On it are the bodies of Diamond's parents. There are no caskets left. They lie side by side wrapped in sheets. As Diamond walks he isn't crying anymore. There is a look of wonder on his face. Hundreds of wailing voices are heard all around them.

PANORAMIC VIEW

As far as the eye can see, the cemetery is filled with carts. Diamond's cart is only one in a long line moving through the tombstones. Dozens of religious services are going on at once. Open graves are everywhere. It's like a surreal nightmare.

EXT. CEMETERY - GREAT PIT -- DAY

Diamond and Dr. MacDonald stand side by side on the edge of a giant pit. The black carts are pulled up to it by the score. A distance away a priest on a makeshift podium is struggling to be heard above the din.

PRIEST #2

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile...

The boy and the doctor watch as the bodies of Joseph and Ruth are pushed over the side into the massive pit. For a moment they stand in silence...and then Dr. MacDonald leads Diamond away.

INT. DR. MACDONALD'S TOWN HOME - HALLWAY -- DAY

Diamond and the doctor enter his home.

DR. MACDONALD

Diamond, I must begin my rounds.
Stay here till I come back. There's food in the pantry.

DIAMOND

I want to go with you.

(CONTINUED)

DR. MACDONALD

I'm sorry, but that's out of the question.

DIAMOND

But, you help people. Maybe I could help them too.

DR. MACDONALD

(bitterly)

I don't help anyone. They die whether I'm there or not.

DIAMOND

But just seeing you makes them feel better.

DR. MACDONALD

Does it? Well, thank you.

DIAMOND

Aren't you afraid of getting sick?

DR. MACDONALD

That's my great curse and blessing. I had the disease when I was a child. My parents died from it just like yours. I think perhaps now it can't harm me.

DIAMOND

It can't hurt me either.

DR. MACDONALD

How do you know that?

A strange look comes to the child's eyes.

DIAMOND

I just know.

(beat)

Please, let me go with you. We could use my father's cab.

(tears come to his eyes)

I...I don't want to be alone.

DR. MACDONALD

(gently)

Well, all right. I guess you won't see any worse than you've seen already.

EXT. CAB MOVING THROUGH CITY STREETS -- DAY

Diamond and Dr. MacDonald sit side by side in the cab. Diamond is humming his song. The doctor turns to him.

DR. MACDONALD

You've been humming that for hours.
Does it have words?

DIAMOND

Yes, but I can't remember all of
them.

DR. MACDONALD

Sing it for me.

Diamond begins.

DIAMOND

I know a river where water sings,
where flowers grow and it's always
spring. I know a place where music
flies, where colors play and no one
dies. And the river is deep and
crystal blue and the wind is soft
and it kisses you...

Suddenly, a woman runs out of a shop and stops them.

WOMAN SHOPKEEPER

Dr. MacDonald, sir. That house over
there. I've been hearing children
crying.

DR. MACDONALD

Well, did you go and look?

WOMAN SHOPKEEPER

No. I was...afraid.

DR. MACDONALD

All right.

He guides old Diamond to the curb in front of the house.

DR. MACDONALD (CONT'D)

(to Diamond)

Wait here.

EXT. SHABBY HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Getting out, he climbs the stairs. Then, he pounds on the door.

DR. MACDONALD
Hello...anybody home? I'm a doctor.

No answer. He tries the knob. It's locked.

DR. MACDONALD (CONT'D)
Hello...

He puts his ear to the door. There is faint movement inside. Then, he hears a child softly crying.

Stepping back, he kicks the door open. Cautiously, he enters.

INT. SHABBY HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

MacDonald walks down a hall, past a room. It's empty.

DR. MACDONALD
My name is Dr. MacDonald. I'm here
to help you.

He looks into a dining room.

INT. DINING ROOM

In the corner huddle three very sick children. They're dirty and frightened. The youngest is four and the oldest seven.

DR. MACDONALD
Children, where are your parents?

SEVEN YEAR OLD
Gone.

DR. MACDONALD
Did they die?

SEVEN YEAR OLD
No. They left. They didn't want to
catch it from us.

DR. MACDONALD
(under his breath)
Oh, God...
(beat)
Can you walk?

(CONTINUED)

SEVEN YEAR OLD
I can, but they can't anymore.

Dirty and plague-ridden as they are, the doctor picks up the two little ones. They cling to him.

EXT. SHABBY HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Carrying the two children, Dr. MacDonald walks out the front door and down the steps. The oldest hobbles behind him. He puts them all inside the cab and wraps them in blankets.

DIAMOND
Where are we going to take them?

DR. MACDONALD
We have a place. It's only for sick children.

He climbs up beside Diamond and they drive away.

EXT. BOOK STORE -- DAY

The cab pulls up in front of a quaint bookstore. Medical workers are bustling in and out. The doctor climbs down and gets the children. A woman comes out dressed in a dirty smock. To Diamond's surprise, it's Sarah Coleman. She looks like she's aged twenty years.

DIAMOND
Miss Coleman...

Sarah walks up to him and smiles. She's very tired and appears to be ill herself.

SARAH
Diamond, how are you? How are your parents?

A look of pain comes into his eyes. She understands immediately.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry.
(beat)
Have you eaten today?

Diamond shakes his head.

SARAH (CONT'D)
There's food inside. Go in and help yourself.

(CONTINUED)

Sarah begins helping Dr. MacDonald with the children. Diamond climbs down and enters the building.

INT. BOOK STORE -- CONTINUOUS

The books and shelves have been pushed into a corner. The room is now a makeshift hospital. Mattresses and blankets cover the floor. Children are everywhere, sometimes three or four to a mattress. All are very ill.

As Diamond walks down the rows, they look at him with large, feverish eyes. A dozen women are giving their lives to take away a little of the suffering.

Sarah enters. She lays the child she's carrying onto a mattress near her brother and sister.

DIAMOND

You're helping a lot of children.

SARAH

(with tears in her eyes)

All we can do is make them more comfortable until they die.

DIAMOND

But some of them might live. Dr. MacDonald had the plague when he was little and he did.

SARAH

You're right, a few may live. There's soup in the back. Go and get some.

EXT. LUXURIOUS COACH DRIVING ON TREE-LINED STREET -- DAY

A beautiful, black, coach is moving down a tree-lined street on the outskirts of the city. Although it's warm outside, the driver is bundled up and his face is covered with a scarf. (This is JAMES.) The coach is riding through a wealthy section of London, but no people are to be seen anywhere.

INT. LUXURIOUS COACH -- CONTINUOUS

Inside the coach sits Mr. Coleman, staring at the dying city. The driver looks in at him through a small window.

JAMES

Where to next, Mr. Coleman, sir?

(CONTINUED)

MR. COLEMAN

(very discouraged)

I don't know, James. She wasn't with any of her friends. They've all left the city. I just don't know.

JAMES

Maybe she left too.

MR. COLEMAN

I don't think so. She'd stay and try to help people. I've got to know if she's alive or dead. Let's go down by the river.

JAMES

I heard it's rotten with plague down there.

MR. COLEMAN

If you don't want to go, I'll understand. I'll find a horse and go by myself.

JAMES

I got nothin' to lose, sir. My whole family's gone. Don't much care if I live or die.

He clicks to the horse and they continue moving down the street.

EXT. LONDON STREET NEAR MOLLY'S ALLEY -- AFTERNOON

Diamond and Dr. MacDonald are riding in the cab on his rounds. They come to a street that looks very familiar to the boy. It's the place where he helped Molly. At the corner near her alley stands a huge barricade. On it is a sign with a death's head and the words: KEEP OUT BY ORDER OF THE LORD MAYOR.

DIAMOND

Stop...stop.

DR. MACDONALD

What's the matter?

The doctor pulls the horse to a halt.

(CONTINUED)

DIAMOND
I know a girl who lives in there.
She may need help.

DR. MACDONALD
Diamond, everyone in this section is
dead. It's where the plague has
struck the worst.

DIAMOND
Please...can't we go and see? It
isn't far.

DR. MACDONALD
I'm sorry, but it's just not possible.
The area is quarantined. No one is
allowed inside.

He clicks to the horse and they move on. Diamond is very
upset.

DIAMOND
(fighting back tears)
She lives in an alley. And she's
very poor.

DR. MACDONALD
How did you ever meet someone like
that? I can't imagine that your
father drove his cab in there.

DIAMOND
I was with North Wind.

He stops short. He didn't want to say her name, but it just
slipped out. A strange look comes to the doctor's face.

DR. MACDONALD
What did you say? Who were you with?

Diamond doesn't answer.

DR. MACDONALD (CONT'D)
Did you say...North Wind?

Diamond stares ahead without speaking.

DR. MACDONALD (CONT'D)
Was it...when you were ill?

Still no response.

(CONTINUED)

DR. MACDONALD (CONT'D)

Listen carefully to me, Diamond.
Little children often have imaginary
friends. For the most part they're
quite harmless and pass away with
age.

(beat)

But, sometimes such
fantasies...linger.

(beat)

This is very important. If you ever
see this imaginary person again, you
must send her away. Do you
understand? Tell her to go away and
never come back. Is that clear?

Diamond gives the doctor a long, piercing look.

DIAMOND

Is that what you did when you were
sick? She came and you sent her
away?

A haunted look comes to the doctor's eyes.

Suddenly, they hear a woman's scream. It's followed by
hysterical crying. The sound comes from a middle class home.

EXT. MIDDLE CLASS HOME -- CONTINUOUS

The doctor stops the cab and jumps down. Going to the front
door, he pounds on it.

DR. MACDONALD

PLEASE, OPEN THE DOOR. I'M A
PHYSICIAN AND I'M HERE TO HELP YOU.

The crying continues. He tries the knob. It's unlocked.
He enters.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS HOME -- CONTINUOUS

MacDonald stops short and stares. A young man in his twenties
has hanged himself in the hallway. He's covered with the
marks of the plague.

The man's YOUNG WIFE, also infected, is at the top of the
stairs. She's crying uncontrollably. Beside her on the
floor is a little girl of a year old. She's sick too.

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG WIFE
 (sobbing)
 OH, GOD, HE LEFT, HE LEFT ME...

The doctor climbs the stairs.

YOUNG WIFE (CONT'D)
 He couldn't stand the pain. Oh,
 he's left me.

DR. MACDONALD
 Madam, my name is Dr. MacDonald.
 Please, you need to rest. You must
 go back to bed.

He picks up the child, then, gently, walks with the sobbing woman toward a bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

They enter the bedroom and the woman falls on the bed.

DR. MACDONALD
 You're too ill to take care of your
 daughter. The city has established
 a hospital for children.

She sees a tiny ray of hope.

YOUNG WIFE
 Can you help her? I'm dying, I know
 it. You look like a good and godly
 man. Please, help her.

DR. MACDONALD
 We'll do the best we can.

YOUNG WIFE
 Oh, thank you. God bless you, sir.

She grabs his hand and kisses it. Embarrassed he draws it back.

DR. MACDONALD
 I'll send someone to take care of
 your husband's body.

The mother takes her daughter's tiny hand and holds it to her lips.

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG WIFE

Oh, my little Bessie, I love you so much. I'll see you in Heaven.

EXT. LUXURIOUS COACH -- AFTERNOON

Mr. Coleman's coach is passing through a poorer section of town. White crosses are on the doors. Smoking pots are on the corners and there is death in the air. The place looks like a war zone.

INT. LUXURIOUS COACH

Mr. Coleman stares at the devastation with deepening shock and gloom.

MR. COLEMAN

God help us all. It looks like the end of the world.

(beat)

Where are you, Sarah? Where are you?

EXT. CAB MOVING THROUGH CITY STREETS -- AFTERNOON

Diamond's cab rolls down a street. Diamond is at the reins and the doctor is holding the little girl. She's very ill.

DIAMOND

Is she going to live?

DR. MACDONALD

No.

DIAMOND

Death isn't what people think it is.

The doctor looks at him.

DR. MACDONALD

Oh, really, and what is it?

DIAMOND

For people who love God, it's just a door. It's cold going through, but there's a wonderful place on the other side.

DR. MACDONALD

And how would you know that?

(CONTINUED)

DIAMOND
Because I've been there.

Dr. MacDonald stares at him in silence.

EXT. BOOK STORE -- AFTERNOON

The cab arrives at the book store/hospital. The doctor is climbing down with the little girl in his arms when a FEMALE WORKER approaches from within the building.

FEMALE WORKER
Doctor, we've run out of brandy.

MacDonald turns to Diamond.

DR. MACDONALD
Do you think you could find your way
back to my house?

DIAMOND
I think so.

DR. MACDONALD
There are five bottles in my cellar.
It's all we've got to take away the
pain.

DIAMOND
I'll get them.

The doctor enters the building. Diamond clicks to the horse and the cab moves off down the street.

EXT. STREET NEAR MOLLY'S ALLEY -- EVENING

Diamond is on his way back from Dr. MacDonald's house. The brandy is on the seat beside him. Suddenly, ahead looms the barricade with the fearful sign. He pulls on the reins and the horse stops.

INT. LUXURIOUS COACH ON POOR STREET -- EVENING

Mr. Coleman's coach is moving through the worst part of London. James looks in through the window.

JAMES
It's gettin' late, sir. No tellin'
what awful things happen around here
after dark.

(CONTINUED)

MR. COLEMAN
I suppose we'd better quit. I've
arranged a place for us to stay. I
have a meeting tonight.

Suddenly, Mr. Coleman sees a black cab pulled up in front of
the entrance to a condemned section of the city. Diamond is
walking toward the barricade. Mr. Coleman recognizes him.

MR. COLEMAN (CONT'D)
(calling to the driver)
James, pull up a moment.

They pull up.

MR. COLEMAN (CONT'D)
(calling out the window)
LITTLE BOY...
(beat)
LITTLE BOY, STOP...

Diamond looks around and recognizes Mr. Coleman. He stops,
but doesn't move toward the coach.

MR. COLEMAN (CONT'D)
You're Joseph's boy aren't you?

DIAMOND
Yes, sir.

MR. COLEMAN
You can't go in there.

DIAMOND
I've got to.

MR. COLEMAN
Why?

DIAMOND
I have a friend. She lives inside.

MR. COLEMAN
Don't you understand? Everyone in
that section is dead.

DIAMOND
I know that's what the sign says.

MR. COLEMAN
Look, even if she wasn't dead, what
could you do to help her?

(CONTINUED)

DIAMOND

I don't know. But I've just got to find her.

(beat)

Goodbye, sir.

Diamond turns and begins trudging down the street.

MR. COLEMAN

LITTLE BOY, COME BACK...

But, Diamond continues walking. A strange look comes to Mr. Coleman's face.

EXT. MOLLY'S ALLEY -- EVENING

The alley that leads to Molly's tenement is a nightmare. A dead body lies on the ground. The smell is hideous. Diamond reaches into his pocket, pulls out his handkerchief and covers his mouth and nose. In the shadows lurk huge rats. They eye him as he passes.

Finally, he comes to the stairwell leading down into Molly's cellar. A rat scurries out of it.

Diamond is afraid, but he forces himself to walk down the stairs and open the door.

INT. MOLLY'S CELLAR -- CONTINUOUS

The light in the cellar room is very dim. The room is filled with flies. Diamond looks around. In the corner is a pile of rags. Fearfully, Diamond walks toward it.

It's Molly. She's covered with the plague.

He kneels beside her.

DIAMOND

Molly?

To his amazement, her eyes open.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)

You're alive. Can you walk?

She can barely move.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)

I'll get help. I'll be back.

She's too sick to answer.

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly, Diamond hears a scraping sound and turns.

Looming above him is Old Sal. She's hideous with plague.

Diamond freezes.

Her hands reach out.

But instead of grabbing him, she staggers and sinks to her knees. With a pitiful look she whispers...

OLD SAL
Please...help me.

Then, she drops to the floor, dead.

Diamond stares at her in terror. He backs out the door.

EXT. MOLLY'S ALLEY -- CONTINUOUS

He rushes up the steps. He's in the alley before he sees.

It's filled with hundreds of rats.

Slowly, they move toward him.

Then, a shot rings out. The rats scurry.

At the entrance to the alley stands Mr. Coleman with a small pistol. He moves toward Diamond swinging a beautiful cane in every direction.

More of the rats run for cover.

MR. COLEMAN
Hurry, I've only frightened them for
a moment.

DIAMOND
I found my friend. She's alive.
Will you carry her out?

MR. COLEMAN
No. We've got to leave immediately.

DIAMOND
Please, she needs help. She's just
a little girl.

(CONTINUED)

MR. COLEMAN
(irritated and
desperate)
Oh, all right. Where is she?

INT. MOLLY'S CELLAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Coleman and Diamond enter the awful cellar. Diamond points to Molly. Mr. Coleman stares in horror.

MR. COLEMAN
She's got the plague.

DIAMOND
There's a place where they take care
of children. Dr. MacDonald's there.

Molly opens her eyes.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)
Please...I don't want her to die
alone.

As Mr. Coleman looks at the little girl, something seems to change within him.

MR. COLEMAN
You're right. No one should die
alone.

Dropping the cane, he scoops her up into his arms.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF BARRICADE -- MOMENTS LATER

The coach waits near the barricade. Suddenly, Diamond and Mr. Coleman come into view. He's carrying Molly. Diamond walks toward his cab.

DIAMOND
You can put her in here, sir. I
know where to take her.

MR. COLEMAN
No, I'll take her in my coach. She'll
be more comfortable. We'll follow
you.
(to the driver)
I'm afraid we must go on a mission
of mercy, James. Follow the boy.

He lifts Molly inside.

INT. LUXURIOUS COACH -- CONTINUOUS

Mr. Coleman sits in his coach with Molly in his arms. His face is filled with compassion. The little girl looks up at him without speaking.

MR. COLEMAN
It's all right, my child. You're safe now.

EXT. BOOK STORE -- NIGHT

The cab and coach pull up in front of the bookstore. Dr. MacDonald comes out of the building. He's shocked to see Mr. Coleman get out of the coach carrying a plague victim.

DR. MACDONALD
Edward, I'm glad to see you...but what's this?

MR. COLEMAN
Apparently, she's a friend of Joseph's little boy.

DR. MACDONALD
(utterly amazed)
You went into the quarantined section?

MR. COLEMAN
Oh, not willingly.

The doctor takes Molly from him.

DR. MACDONALD
In any case, I'm glad you've come. You're in the nick of time. I sent a messenger, but he couldn't find you. Your daughter is very ill.

MR. COLEMAN
You've heard from Sarah? Where is she? I've looked everywhere.

MacDonald is surprised.

DR. MACDONALD
You didn't know? She's here. She's been here since the beginning.

MR. COLEMAN
I want to see her.

(CONTINUED)

The doctor leads him into the building.

INT. BOOK STORE -- CONTINUOUS

They enter the room and Mr. Coleman sees the mass of dying children. The doctor gives Molly to a helper, then he leads his friend down the toward the back.

DR. MACDONALD

Edward, Sarah is a wonderful, young woman. She worked tirelessly helping the children...until the illness overcame her.

As Mr. Coleman walks between the rows of children, the sorrow begins to overwhelm him.

Finally, they come to a blanket on the floor at the back of the room. On it lies his daughter. Her eyes are closed. She is dying.

When Edward Coleman sees her he is shattered. Though she is wasted and covered with the marks of the plague, there is a strange beauty about her. It's the beauty of total peace.

Quietly, the doctor leaves them.

Edward breaks down in tears. At the sound, Sarah opens her eyes.

SARAH

(a whisper)

Father...

She reaches toward him. He kneels and kisses her hand. He is so overcome that, for a moment, he can't speak.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Forgive me.

MR. COLEMAN

(amazed)

Forgive...you?

(beat)

I'm the one who needs forgiveness.

SARAH

I was filled...with pride. I should never...have left you.

(CONTINUED)

MR. COLEMAN

(crying)
Oh, Sarah, please forgive me. My
life has been so evil.

SARAH

God will forgive us both if we ask
Him.

For a moment all the man can do is close his eyes and weep.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Father...tell Alfred...that I love
him.

(beat)

Tell him that...I'm sorry.

MR. COLEMAN

But, Sarah, you've forgotten. He
never came home from the voyage.

SARAH

You'll see him again. And when you
do...please tell him.

MR. COLEMAN

I will.

She's happy now. And her life is fading.

SARAH

I...love you.

MR. COLEMAN

And I love you...my dear, sweet child.

He closes his eyes in tears. He brings her hand to his lips.
And she is gone.

INT. DR. MACDONALD'S TOWN HOME -- NIGHT

Dr. MacDonald's house is dark. The front door opens. The
doctor and Diamond walk in. They're exhausted. MacDonald
lights a lamp in the study and slumps in a chair.

DR. MACDONALD

There's food, Diamond. I know you
must be hungry.

The boy shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

DR. MACDONALD (CONT'D)
You should eat.

MacDonald removes his boots.

DIAMOND
I'm so tired.

DR. MACDONALD
Let me take you up to your bed then.

Fondly, he picks the boy up and carries him toward the stairs.

DR. MACDONALD (CONT'D)
You were a great help to me today,
Diamond. A very great help.

DISSOLVE
TO:

INT. DIAMOND'S TOWN HOME BEDROOM -- NIGHT

For the first time his life, Diamond is asleep in a large, comfortable bed. Moonlight shines in through a window.

CU DIAMOND'S FACE

Very slowly, his eyes open. He stares across the room.

POV DIAMOND

Standing in the shadows is a tall, silent figure draped in black. It's North Wind. Her face is pale and extremely stern.

DIAMOND
North Wind?

Quietly, she moves toward him.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)
You're different. What's wrong?

She doesn't smile, but she speaks gently.

NORTH WIND
I have been opening the door for
many people.
(beat)
It's time for another trip, Diamond.

(CONTINUED)

DIAMOND

Where are we going?

NORTH WIND

You've seen many frightening things,
but few have been truly evil. Tonight
you will see something that is very
evil indeed.

DIAMOND

I don't want to.

NORTH WIND

You have nothing to fear. I'll never
leave your side.

DIAMOND

But, why do I need to see it?

NORTH WIND

At the right time, you'll know.
Now, get up, we must hurry.

EXT. NORTH WIND FLYING -- NIGHT

Once more, Diamond is flying with North Wind. He nestles in her hair as the clouds boil around them. They travel over London. Suddenly, North Wind swoops downward.

Beneath them is a large mansion. Lights are burning in one of the rooms.

EXT. DARK MANSION -- MOMENTS LATER

POV NORTH WIND

She flies straight toward a pair of huge windows.

INT. MANSION MEETING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

With a roar, the windows burst open. A well-dressed MERCHANT in his forties is standing beside a fireplace.

WELL DRESSED MAN

Oh, damn it. It's bad enough we've
got the plague. Now we get a
hurricane as well.

He shuts the windows, then turns back to the room. Five other wealthy men are gathered around a massive, gilt-edged table. One of them is Edward Coleman. An argument has been taking place.

(CONTINUED)

The man who shut the windows paces back and forth.

ANGLE IN CORNER

In the shadows are North Wind and Diamond.

DIAMOND

They don't know we're here?

NORTH WIND

As long as you touch my robe, they can't see or hear you.

MERCHANT #1

Edward, I fail to understand your sudden squeamishness. Many of these rogues are your former creditors. Surely, they deserve anything that happens to them.

MR. COLEMAN

My failures were caused by my own greed and stupidity. I see that now and I blame no one but myself.

MERCHANT #2

May I remind you, sir, that this whole conspiracy was your idea? You were the one who drew us together around this plan.

MR. COLEMAN

I repent of it. And I beg all of you to turn back before it's too late.

MERCHANT #3

IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE. THERE CAN BE NO TURNING BACK. The proclamation is being drawn up this very night. The wheels have been set in motion. Either they grind our enemies or they will grind us.

MR. COLEMAN

BUT THESE MEN ARE NOT OUR ENEMIES.

MERCHANT #4

What has happened to you? Three days ago you hated them with a venomous passion.

(CONTINUED)

MR. COLEMAN

What has happened? I'll tell you
what has happened.

(struggling to hold
back tears)

Today I watched my only child pass
from this life. Tomorrow I will
bury her.

MERCHANT #1

(putting his hand on
Coleman's shoulder)

My friend, of course, you're in a
state of emotional exhaustion...

MR. COLEMAN

(pulling away)

YOU ARE WRONG, SIR. MY MIND HAS
NEVER BEEN MORE CLEAR.

(beat)

As I watched her die, I realized
that someday, perhaps very soon, I
will follow her to the grave. What
good will all the riches in the world
do me then? What will I say when I
stand before God?

MERCHANT #2

(disgusted)

He's become a religionist.

MERCHANT #4

My dear sir, every one of us has
experienced death. It must be
confronted with dignity and
rationality. Then life goes on.

MR. COLEMAN

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE LIFE THAT GOES ON
FOREVER IN HEAVEN OR IN HELL?

(beat)

WE HAVE CONSPIRED AGAINST INNOCENT
MEN.

MERCHANT #5

INNOCENT? THEY HAVE GROWN RICH
CHARGING THEIR VILE USURY.

MR. COLEMAN

HAVE THEY? THEN SHOW ME THE PROOF.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MR. COLEMAN (CONT'D)
 Is there one of you who can give
 evidence of such a thing? IF SO,
 OPEN YOUR BOOKS.

The men are silent.

MR. COLEMAN (CONT'D)
 No, they have dealt with us honestly,
 believed they were our friends. And
 this is how we repay them.

MERCHANT #1
 (gently)
 Of course, it's all a lie, Edward,
 we know that. But it's our lie and
you created it. You have been our
 leader, our inspiration.

Mr. Coleman grows pale.

MR. COLEMAN
 I've done many despicable things in
 my life, but this is the worst. I
 plead with all of you to call it
 off.

MERCHANT #1
 (turning to the others)
 So, what are to make of this? How
 are we to respond to this honest
 plea from our friend?

MERCHANT #2
 I risked my life convincing the king
 that these Jewish bankers are traitors
 and must be destroyed. Am I to go
 back now and beg off? Impossible.

MERCHANT #3
 It's our only chance to be rid our
 debts. We must take advantage of
 it.

MERCHANT #4
 The people are looking for a
 scapegoat, someone to blame for the
 plague. The Jews MAY have poisoned
 the wells. How do we know?

(CONTINUED)

MR. COLEMAN

God forgive us. I will not be part
of it.

The pacing man slams his fist on the table and leans close
to Edward Coleman.

MERCHANT #1

You speak of God as though you knew
him. Like Pontius Pilate you now
hope to wash the stain away. But
that is not to be.

(beat)

How did you escape debtor's prison,
Edward?

Mr. Coleman is silent. He can't look at the man.

MERCHANT #1 (CONT'D)

You escaped by hiding assets and
bribing the judge. Should that
information be given to the Lord
Prosecutor, you will hang. Are you
willing to sacrifice your life for
theirs?

No answer.

MERCHANT #1 (CONT'D)

I didn't think so?

(beat)

Tomorrow afternoon the gallows will
be ready. In the morning you will
bury your daughter. When the mob
assembles to destroy the Jews you
will be there with us. You will
watch them hang. And then you will
share in their wealth.

(beat)

Never fear, dear friend, into your
hands will fall far more than thirty
pieces of silver. Before God we vow
that once more you shall be a
very...wealthy...man.

Mr. Coleman buries his face in his hands. Silently, North
Wind leads Diamond from the room.

INT. DARK MANSION CORRIDOR -- MOMENTS LATER

Diamond and North Wind walk together down a shadowed hallway.

(CONTINUED)

DIAMOND

What happened? What are they going to do? Why was Mr. Coleman acting that way?

NORTH WIND

Those men are evil. They love money more than anything else. They're even willing to kill for it. Until tonight, Mr. Coleman was their leader. Now, he wants to stop them, but he can't.

DIAMOND

Who are they going to kill?

NORTH WIND

Rich men who are bankers in the city.

DIAMOND

But no one will believe them.

NORTH WIND

Everyone will believe them. The men will be hanged.

DIAMOND

You've got to stop it, North Wind, please.

NORTH WIND

As much as I'd like to, Diamond, I can't.

DIAMOND

Why not?

NORTH WIND

People in this world must be free to choose how they will live their lives.

DIAMOND

Even bad people?

NORTH WIND

Yes, even bad people. And even when they hurt others. It's up to good people to stop them when they can.

DIAMOND

What if they can't?

(CONTINUED)

NORTH WIND

Then, evil will go on until God brings history to an end.

DISSOLVE
TO:

MONTAGE - SOLDIERS ARRESTING WEALTHY MEN - NIGHT

1. In a lavishly furnished bedroom an old Jewish man and his wife are asleep in bed. Soldiers break down the door and drag them out.

2. Soldiers fill the front yard of a mansion. A middle-aged man is bound with ropes and hauled away. His family huddles together in their nightclothes, sobbing.

3. The butler lies dead by the front door of another mansion. Soldiers post a notice that reads: CONFISCATED BY ORDER OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING.

4. The royal dungeons. Ten wealthy men are thrown inside.

EXT. PUB -- DAY

It's sweltering hot. Flies buzz around garbage. Raucous laughter and shouting come from inside a low-class pub.

The doors fly open and a gang of people spill out. They look like walking dead. They're drunk and living as though this day will be their last.

A body is lying on the street. They step over it as they stagger on their way.

There is the sound of sickening music. A drum is beating and a few instruments are playing out of tune.

More laughter and cheering.

Shouts are heard.

PULL BACK

The whole street becomes visible. It's filling with revelers who have escaped the plague. They're moving together in larger and larger numbers. Slowly, they're becoming a mob.

Bottles smash and windows break. On a wall is a handwritten poster that reads: HANGING 2 O'CLOCK - BLACK FRIAR'S SQUARE.

(CONTINUED)

The people swagger and scream with laughter. Men grab at leering women. Sweat drips from filthy faces.

The sickening music grows as more instruments join in the cacophony.

It's the beginning of chaos.

EXT. CATHEDRAL -- DAY

The chaos grows.

There is the sound of wailing and demented singing.

On the steps of the cathedral, another huge crowd is forming. These aren't revelers, they're flagellants. They beat themselves, hoping to drive evil from the city by their awful penance. Among them are men and women of every age and station.

As they groan and chant, whips sing in the air.

They move down the steps forming their own terrible procession. As they walk, more and more people join them until the street is filled.

EXT. STREET OF REVELERS -- DAY

As the revelers dance and shout and drink, they grow more violent. Shops are broken open. Looting begins.

EXT. STREET OF FLAGELLANTS -- DAY

The flagellants groan and cry and pray, beating themselves.

EXT. BLACK FRIAR'S SQUARE - HIGH PERSPECTIVE -- DAY

The two streets bearing the two mobs gradually come together at a square. It's like a hideous Mardi Gras of the dead.

AT STREET LEVEL

In the center of the square, a huge gallows has been erected. From its platform, a dark arm juts up to the sky. From it hangs a noose.

The flagellants and the revelers mingle.

Screaming and laughing...

Beating and praying...

(CONTINUED)

They don't even seem to notice each other.

In front of the gallows huddles a pathetic little group of men, some still in their night shirts, but all filthy from imprisonment. They're roped like animals. Several kneel in prayer. A few guards slouch nearby.

Not far away stands another group. It's the wealthy merchants from the mansion. With them is Mr. Coleman. He looks deathly pale.

Near the steps leading up to the gallows platform is Diamond. He's all alone. He stares in horror at all that's going on. Suddenly, Dr. MacDonald pushes through the crowd and reaches him.

DR. MACDONALD

There you are. I've been looking everywhere. Diamond, you can't leave like this without telling me. What are you doing here?

Diamond doesn't answer.

DR. MACDONALD (CONT'D)

This is no place for a child. Come away immediately.

He takes hold of Diamond's arm. But the boy stares up at him with such a strange look that he stops.

DIAMOND

I have to stay. I have to be here.

DR. MACDONALD

What in the world do you mean?

At that moment, a trumpet blares.

The mob grows quiet with expectation.

A fat and sweaty OFFICIAL mounts the gallows platform and unrolls a large parchment.

OFFICIAL

Hear ye, hear ye. This proclamation is read by order of His Majesty the King.

(reading)

To all loyal subjects of the Crown...greeting.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

Be it known to all good Englishmen:
An abomination is upon the face of
our land and the Lord God has hid
his eyes from us. Our children pass
away like chaff in the wind. We
bury them all the day long. In our
agony, we have cried out to the
sovereign God and He has spoken.

(beat)

He has revealed to us the source of
our suffering...the cause of the
vicious plague that does so sorely
beset us. Evil men in high places
have done wickedly. But their
conspiracy has been uncovered.

There is anger and shock from the crowd.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

Like Judas Iscariot of old they are
traitors to a loving God and his
holy people. Though already rich,
they have lusted for more. Like
vultures they have preyed upon the
property of the dead and dying.
They have murdered without conscience.

The anger of the crowd builds.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

Look you to your wells, for in them
rots the corpse of their evil. The
very water we drink, upon which our
lives depend carries their poison.
It is this vile effluvium in the
waters of our city that is the source
of all the agony and death.

Calls for "DEATH" begin to come from the crowd.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

My fellow citizens, the only water
in our city untainted by the evil
hands of these greedy, rich men is
their own. They have filled us with
this loathsome plague while they and
their families are free from death.

(beat)

These same traitors do stand before
you now. What fate do they deserve?

(CONTINUED)

The crowd begins to scream "DEATH" in earnest.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

By the authority vested in me as a servant of His Majesty the King, I do find these men guilty of high treason and sentence them to die by hanging and the confiscation of all property.

Cheers from the crowd.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

Silence. Does any man speak for the accused before sentence is carried out?

All is quiet. Several of the condemned men are crying.

CU DIAMOND'S FACE

He turns and stares at Mr. Coleman.

Mr. Coleman stares at the ground. He's in tears himself.

Dr. MacDonald tries to lead Diamond away.

DR. MACDONALD

(whispering)

Diamond, it's time to go.

Diamond pulls away.

DIAMOND

No.

Suddenly, a strange, cold wind begins to moan. It seems to come from the depths of the universe. The sky turns dark blue. The people shiver. It's as though the crowd is held in an icy hand.

It is now that Diamond acts.

He rushes up the stairs onto the platform beside the official. Then, he calls out in a loud voice with authority beyond his years.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)

IT'S ALL A LIE. THEY DIDN'T DO IT.

The mob is stunned, caught in a moment beyond its control or ability to react. The people stare speechlessly at the boy.

(CONTINUED)

DIAMOND (CONT'D)
(pointing at the real
conspirators)
THOSE MEN OVER THERE...THEY WANT TO
KILL THESE PEOPLE FOR THEIR MONEY.
THERE WASN'T ANY POISON IN THE WELLS.
THEY LIED ABOUT IT.

The conspirators are frozen in disbelief.

The wind rises and moans.

Dr. MacDonald is in shock. Slowly, he looks up. Horror and recognition comes to his face.

He is the only one who sees.

POV DR. MACDONALD

On the edge of a building, high above the scaffold stands a terrible figure, robed in black. Her long hair and clothing stream out in the wind.

North Wind stretches her arms over the people. She is the source of the deathly chill.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)
PLEASE, LISTEN TO ME. I'M TELLING
THE TRUTH.

Diamond turns toward Mr. Coleman.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)
Tell them, Mr. Coleman. You know,
you were there.

The man begins shaking uncontrollably.

And the moment is over.

North Wind disappears. The air grows hot once more.

The crowd seems to rise as though from sleep.

Suddenly, Diamond is just a very little boy standing all alone.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)
(weakly)
Tell them. Please...

There are angry cries...

(CONTINUED)

VOICES IN THE CROWD
SHUT UP, BRAT. GET DOWN FROM THERE.

For the first time, Diamond realizes what he's done. Slowly, fear comes over him.

DIAMOND
(whispering)
North Wind, where are you?

The mob is growing ugly.

VOICES IN THE CROWD
HANG THE BRAT. THROW HIM DOWN.
GIVE HIM TO US.

The crowd surges forward.

With an evil smile, the official picks up Diamond by his collar and belt and throws him far out into the crowd.

There's a horrible cheer.

Diamond lands in their arms and the mob attacks him like hungry wolves. He's thrown to the ground.

The doctor struggles to reach him, but he's utterly helpless.

POV DIAMOND LOOKING UP

Two men are kicking him. Others are trying to get at him.

One man is carrying a club. He raises it for a deadly blow.

ANOTHER ANGLE

But, to his surprise, his wrist is grabbed by a huge hand. With a roar, everyone around Diamond is thrown aside.

POV DIAMOND

Above him stands a giant of a man. Tears are running down his cheeks.

It's the drunken cabby whose baby Diamond held.

In one move he picks up the boy and holds him high above his head. Then, the cabby turns to face the screaming mob.

He begins a walk of death straight through the middle of them.

(CONTINUED)

Unable to reach the child, the mob takes out its vengeance on the man.

They whip and beat him. Holding Diamond in the air, he is helpless to protect himself.

Women claw at his face.

Men rake him with broken bottles.

He's smashed with a board.

Yet, through it all, not a sound comes from his lips.

Step by step.

They try to drag him down. But, they can't.

Whips, boards, nails, teeth fists...every blow the cabby has dealt another person now comes back upon him a thousandfold.

Finally, he's almost through them.

Suddenly, in front of him appears a man with a pitchfork.

The cabby sees him, but does nothing to protect himself.

The man lunges. The pitchfork drives deep into his body.

The cabby staggers as the man withdraws.

But, he's able to walk the last few steps to safety. The crowd has lost interest. Their attention is back on the gallows.

The cabby falls. Diamond is safe.

Dr. MacDonald and Mr. Coleman rush up to them. They pull the man and the boy into a nearby alley.

Diamond's clothes are torn, but he's uninjured.

The man is unrecognizable. He's dying. Blood is coming from his nose and mouth.

Diamond kneels beside him.

DRUNK CABBY
Little boy...pray...for me.

The cabby dies.

(CONTINUED)

Dr. MacDonald turns to Mr. Coleman.

DR. MACDONALD
Can you get him out of the city?

Mr. Coleman nods. He's in shock.

DR. MACDONALD (CONT'D)
Well, take him. Get out of here.

Mr. Coleman takes Diamond's hand and they rush down a side street to where his coach is waiting.

In the background they hear the first victim drop on the rope. There is a cheer from the mob.

DISSOLVE
TO:

EXT. COLEMAN'S COUNTRY HOME -- DAY

It's late, afternoon on a summer day.

Edward Coleman's summer home doesn't compare with his former mansion, but it's beautiful. It sits on a knoll with a lovely view of woods and meadows. Once it was a hunting lodge. There is a stone tower that overlooks the English countryside.

A long, dirt road leads across the fields to the front door. Mr. Coleman's black coach moves slowly over it. Old Diamond is tied to the back. Finally, it stops at the entrance to his home.

James alights and opens the door. Diamond and Mr. Coleman get out and enter the house.

INT. COLEMAN'S COUNTRY HOME -- CONTINUOUS

The events of the past days have deeply altered Edward Coleman's appearance. He has aged. His clothes are rumpled and his eyes are red. As they enter the main room, Diamond stares around.

MR. COLEMAN
Welcome home, Diamond.

The house is a place of rustic elegance. There is a huge fireplace that covers one wall. In front of it is a colorful rug and comfortable furniture. Diamond's eyes are wide.

DIAMOND
Is this where I'm going to live?

(CONTINUED)

MR. COLEMAN

Yes.

A plump, motherly, housekeeper named MRS. FITCH, enters. She's shocked by Mr. Coleman's appearance.

MRS. FITCH

Sir...what's happened to you? You don't have...the plague...do you, sir?

MR. COLEMAN

(wearily)

No, Mrs. Fitch, I'm quite well.

MRS. FITCH

Thank the good Lord. I was so worried. Been prayin' ever since you left.

(beat)

Any news of the young lady?

MR. COLEMAN

(tears well in his eyes)

I found her...and I buried her yesterday morning.

MRS. FITCH

(crying)

Oh, dear Lord...

MR. COLEMAN

(struggling to overcome his emotions)

Mrs. Fitch, it's my pleasure to introduce a new member of our family. This is Master Diamond. He'll be living with us from now on.

Mrs. Fitch smiles through her tears.

MRS. FITCH

Well, it's a pleasure indeed, Master Diamond.

MR. COLEMAN

I have a mind to give him the tower room. Is it prepared?

MRS. FITCH

It is, sir.

(CONTINUED)

MR. COLEMAN

Very good. I'll take him up there.
Come Diamond.

The old man leads Diamond toward a rough-hewn staircase.

INT. STAIRWAY TO TOWER ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

As they walk upward, Diamond touches the walls. They're made of field stones. Every few feet there's a small window that lets him see out.

MR. COLEMAN

When I was a boy, this was my room.
When I climbed these stairs I would
imagine that I was a knight in a
castle.

(beat)

That was a long time ago.

INT. TOWER ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Coleman leads Diamond into a charming and comfortable room. Large windows allow a lovely view of the countryside. To Diamond it's a mansion.

DIAMOND

Is this really mine?

MR. COLEMAN

It is. Do you think it will do?

DIAMOND

It's the nicest room I've ever seen.

(beat)

Which window faces north?

MR. COLEMAN

That one, why?

DIAMOND

Does the north wind blow hard here
in the country?

MR. COLEMAN

Sometimes. But this room is quite
warm. No wind can get in here.

DIAMOND

Do these windows open?

(CONTINUED)

MR. COLEMAN

Yes.

DIAMOND

Could I open one?

MR. COLEMAN

If you wish.

With Mr. Coleman's help, Diamond opens the north-facing window.

ANGLE THROUGH WINDOW

As they look out, something catches Mr. Coleman's eye. A long distance away, a lone figure is walking over the fields toward the house. A strange look comes to his face.

DIAMOND

Who's that?

MR. COLEMAN

I...don't know.

As the figure gets nearer they can see that it's a man and he's limping. Mr. Coleman grows pale.

MR. COLEMAN (CONT'D)

Wait here, Diamond. Mrs. Fitch will call you for dinner.

DIAMOND

Yes, sir.

Diamond stays by the window as Mr. Coleman leaves the room.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE FRONT HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Edward Coleman stands at the open front door silently waiting.

The stranger gets closer. His clothes are very shabby. He has a full beard and long hair and every step is filled with pain.

It's Alfred Evans, but he's almost unrecognizable.

He stops in front of Mr. Coleman. They look into each other's eyes. There is no word of greeting. Evans is like a broken, old man. Finally, he speaks in a hoarse whisper.

(CONTINUED)

ALFRED

I thought...you would be here.

(beat)

Sarah...where is she?

Tears well in Mr. Coleman's eyes.

MR. COLEMAN

She said you would come. She knew.

ALFRED

Have traveled very, very far.

(beat)

Please...take me to her.

INT. TOWER ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Diamond is still watching out of the window. Far across the yard, Alfred Evans and Mr. Coleman are walking together. Their voices can't be heard. The only sound is a gentle breeze.

Suddenly, Alfred drops to his knees with his face buried in his hands. He's sobbing. Mr. Coleman lays his hand on his shoulder.

As Diamond watches, tears run down his cheeks.

Suddenly, the breeze stiffens.

Diamond's attention is drawn to the yard just below. Looking up at him is North Wind. She smiles. Diamond is just about to call out to her, when she vanishes.

One whispered word is carried on the wind.

NORTH WIND (O.S.)

Tonight....

DISSOLVE
TO:

INT. TOWER ROOM -- NIGHT

All the windows stand open. The curtains blow gently in the night breeze. A full moon is shining. Diamond is asleep in bed.

The wind blows harder.

Suddenly, there is a ripple of soft music and laughter. It seems to come from everywhere at once.

(CONTINUED)

The laughter comes again and then North Wind whispers...

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
You sleepyhead, wake up.

Diamond's eyes pop open.

He looks around.

DIAMOND
Where are you?

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
Oh...someplace.

He jumps out of bed and starts to put on his shoes.

NORTH WIND (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Careful, what if I'm in your shoe?

He picks up a shoe and looks in it.

NORTH WIND (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Why would I be in your smelly shoes?

Diamond gets out of bed and looks around.

NORTH WIND (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Would you dance with me, Diamond?

DIAMOND
But, I can't see you.

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
You don't need to see me.

DIAMOND
Then, how can I dance?

NORTH WIND (O.S.)
Pretend.

As she says the word, the most lovely music begins. It's Diamond's song. North Wind is humming in a beautiful voice, but still invisible.

The wind grows stronger.

Diamond begins to dance alone in the moonlight. Slowly, at first...then faster.

CU DIAMOND'S FACE

(CONTINUED)

His eyes are closed.

He opens them.

POV DIAMOND

North Wind is dancing with him, looking down lovingly.

She picks him up and swirls faster. Wind roars around them.

Suddenly, she stops.

EXT. STABLE - NIGHT

They aren't in the tower room anymore. They're standing in the garden in front of Diamond's old home. Brilliant moonlight shines around them.

North Wind sets Diamond down. He stares in wonder.

The garden is filled with weeds. The gazebo is a shambles. The mansion is empty and cold.

Diamond looks at the stable. It's much the same except the little window above the big doors is broken. No light shines from it anymore.

NORTH WIND

You wanted to see it again.

DIAMOND

How did you know?

NORTH WIND

I could feel the hurt when I held you.

DIAMOND

What's happened to it?

NORTH WIND

People have stopped living here.

DIAMOND

(looking toward the
stable)

Can I go inside?

NORTH WIND

If you wish.

The walk to the stable doors.

INT. STABLE LIVING QUARTERS -- MOMENTS LATER

Diamond and North Wind enter the room where Diamond's family lived. For a moment, they stand in silence.

DIAMOND

It isn't the same. I knew it wouldn't be. But I thought it might be a little.

He turns to her.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)

That day in the city when all those people wanted to hurt me, I called but you didn't come.

NORTH WIND

I was there, Diamond.

DIAMOND

You were?

NORTH WIND

Every minute, right beside you.

DIAMOND

That man, the one who saved me, did you send him?

NORTH WIND

I opened his eyes. It was the first time he'd ever done anything for anyone else in his whole life.

DIAMOND

Your work is hard.

NORTH WIND

Why do you think so?

DIAMOND

You have to take all the bad things and find good in them.

Diamond turns toward the stairs leading up to his old bedroom in the hay.

INT. DIAMOND'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

His bed is gone. The hole in the wall is larger. Moonlight shines through.

(CONTINUED)

DIAMOND
The hole got bigger.

NORTH WIND
You couldn't stuff hay into it
anymore.

DIAMOND
Is it still your window?

NORTH WIND
No, I boarded it up long ago.

DIAMOND
I'm ready to leave now.

NORTH WIND
Is there anywhere else you'd like to
visit?

DIAMOND
I don't think so.

There are tears in North Wind's eyes. She looks down at him
with great love.

NORTH WIND
Do you remember the country at my
back?

DIAMOND
I think of it every day.

NORTH WIND
You only saw a little of it. Just a
shadow. There's so much more.

(beat)
That first night when I came to your
bedroom I told you my name was North
Wind, but I have another name.

DIAMOND
(in a small voice)
I know.

NORTH WIND
Do you?

DIAMOND
Your other name...is Death.

(CONTINUED)

NORTH WIND

That's right. I'm the Angel of Death.
The Angel of the Door.

DIAMOND

(calmly)

Is it time for me to die?

NORTH WIND

Yes. You've done more good on earth
in the few years you've lived, than
others who live to be a hundred.

(beat)

Diamond, when you pass through my
door this time, you'll never see me
again.

DIAMOND

Why not?

NORTH WIND

Because death isn't allowed over
there. Life goes on forever.

(gently)

Now, go to sleep, Diamond. And I
will come very soon.

CU DIAMOND'S FACE

Slowly, his eyes begin to close.

FADE TO
WHITE:

FADE IN:

INT. TOWER ROOM -- MORNING

Diamond is lying unconscious on his bed in the tower room.
He's breathing hard. Mr. Coleman is bending over him with
tears in his eyes. His hand is on Diamond's forehead. Mrs.
Fitch stands nearby crying.

MRS. FITCH

He doesn't seem to have a fever,
sir. But he just won't wake up. Is
he going to live?

MR. COLEMAN

I don't know. Has James gone for
the doctor?

(CONTINUED)

MRS. FITCH

Yes, sir. But, the soonest he'll be here is tomorrow morning.

MR. COLEMAN

All we can do is pray.

DISSOLVE
TO:

INT. TOWER ROOM -- NIGHT

Dying embers smolder in the fireplace. Moonlight shines through the windows. All of them are tightly shut. A strong wind is blowing outside.

On the bed, Diamond lies very still and pale with his eyes closed. Nearby, Mr. Coleman sits asleep on a chair.

The wind blows harder.

The latch on a window begins to move.

Very gently, the window opens.

Mr. Coleman doesn't awaken.

Soft music is heard. It's Diamond's song.

Slowly, Diamond opens his eyes and sits up.

POV DIAMOND

He sees a wonderful sight.

On the wall in front of him is the strange, old door from the cavern of ice. The gnarled wood whispers of age beyond imagining. The door stands slightly ajar and the most wonderful light comes from behind it.

As Diamond looks, North Wind's doorstep appears. She is sitting on it. Just as before, she's old and almost transparent. Without saying a word, she looks at Diamond. With great tenderness, she holds out her arms. Tears are in her eyes.

Diamond climbs out of bed, leaving his body asleep behind him. Somehow it is slightly transparent, like a cocoon that has released a beautiful moth.

Slowly, Diamond walks toward North Wind. Her arms enfold him...

(CONTINUED)

And he passes through.

CU DIAMOND'S FACE

His eyes are filled with glistening light...and music is everywhere.

DISSOLVE
TO:

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE -- MORNING

Dew glistens on the flowers. Birds are singing. It's a beautiful, summer morning. Mr. Coleman's home is soft and lovely in the fading mist.

In the distance, there's a cloud of dust.

It grows larger.

Furiously, up to the house dashes the coach. The horses are sweating and gasping for breath.

Before it even stops, the door opens and Dr. MacDonald leaps out. He's haggard and pale. His eyes are red from lack of sleep and his clothes are rumpled.

Running up the steps, he pounds on the door. Instantly, it opens and he goes inside.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE FRONT HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Mr. Coleman stands looking at the doctor. Mrs. Fitch is behind him. Tears are in their eyes. Neither speaks.

But, nothing needs to be said.

Suddenly, Dr. MacDonald looks like a very old man. All of his urgency is gone.

Mr. Coleman leads him to the staircase.

INT. TOWER ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Dr. MacDonald enters the tower room and stands looking down at the still, little figure on the bed. In death Diamond is utterly frail and beautiful, almost transparent. And on his face there is peace.

CU DR. MACDONALD

He is crying.

(CONTINUED)

DR. MACDONALD (V.O.)

His name was Diamond. Oh, I know
some people thought it was strange
name.

(beat)

But, if you want the truth, I believe
his parents named him that because
they knew that he was the greatest
treasure a family could ever possess.

(beat)

And some people thought he was dead.

(beat)

But I knew that he had only gone to
live...at the Back of the North Wind.

MONTAGE :

1. Diamond's peaceful face in death.

2. A joyous little boy, full of health and happiness runs
with a group of children in that beautiful land. Molly is
running beside him. Suddenly, on a hill up ahead, he sees a
group of older people waiting for him. It's his mother and
father and Sarah Coleman and the cabby who saved his life.

They all wave and smile. Diamond races toward them.

MONTAGE ENDS

A gentle breeze moves the curtains in the tower room.

FADE TO
BLACK