

## **BIG EYES**

Written by

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### **FADE IN:**

### **TITLE SEQUENCE:**

TIGHT on TWO PAINTED EYES. The pupils are impossibly wide. Imploring. The watery rims spill a single tear. We PULL OUT... revealing the eyes belong to a child. A young girl, fingers clasped pitifully. She's forlorn, alone in a dirty gray alley. We feel shame. Compassion. Sorrow... Then -- an IDENTICAL girl SLAPS in front of the first one. Then another! It's a PRINTING PRESS, the creation of a BLUR of sad children.

A KINETIC montage! HORDES of gazing WAIFS get lithographed, bundled: Huddling in worry. Floating in space. POSTERS.

### **POSTCARDS. BOOKS.**

We ZOOM into a MAGAZINE AD: A 1960's era come-on -- "IT'S

### **KEANE! MUSEUM-QUALITY ART, MAILED DIRECTLY TO YOUR HOME!"**

A blizzard of NEWSPAPER ARTICLES: "Meet America's Million-Dollar Painter!" "Keane Masterpiece at World's Fair" Painted EYES float by. Haunting... questioning... Old POLAROIDS: A family Christmas, a Keane print over the mantel. Kids play bumper pool, a Keane print in the b.g. A blurry black-and-white TV: A talk show HOST holds up a Keane

### **PAINTING --**

MUSIC BUILDS. FASTER. Keane brochures. Catalogs. A flyer: "Now Open! Keane Gallery" MORE orphan's faces. Hungry, unblinking, beseeching. A CRESCENDO -- then -- SILENCE.

A single CARD on black:

"I think what Keane has done is just terrific. It has to be good. If it were bad, so many people wouldn't like it."

-- ANDY WARHOL

### **CUT TO:**

**EXT. SUBURBIA - 1958**

A nice, orderly tract of post-World War II housing. Identical rows of little yards. Young MOMS. Scampering KIDS. Then, a SUBTITLE: "TEN YEARS EARLIER"

2.

**INT. HOUSE - DAY**

CU on two concerned eyes. The same eyes as the paintings. We REVEAL they belong to a real girl: JANE, 8. She sits in her small house -- a typical young family's, spare and underfurnished.

Suddenly -- Jane's mother MARGARET ULBRICH, 28, rushes through frame. Margaret is blonde, yearning, fragile. Terribly upset, she is hurriedly packing. Margaret throws her clothes in a suitcase. She shoves Jane's clothes and toys into another. Margaret barrels through the breakfast nook, which is a mini art studio -- easel, canvases, paints. She scoops up her supplies.

Margaret runs to the door -- then turns. The hallway is lined with her PAINTINGS. Oils and inks of wide-eyed Jane, who grows from baby to toddler to child. Hastily, Margaret takes them down, each frame leaving an empty mark on the flowered wallpaper. Finally she reaches the last spot -- a WEDDING PHOTO: Margaret and her HUSBAND, smiling, happy. Margaret peers -- then leaves it hanging. The door SLAMS.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

Cars roar down an interstate.

**INT. PACKARD - DRIVING - DAY**

Margaret grips the wheel, uncertain. Jane stares. The car is all loaded up. REFLECTIONS of passing BILLBOARDS drift across the windshield. Images of perky, happy-fake Americans. Margaret bites her lip. Has she made the right decision...?

**CUT TO:**

**EST. SAN FRANCISCO - DAY**

San Francisco, 1958! A mix of SKYLINES and STOCK FOOTAGE.

**EXT. FURNITURE FACTORY - DAY**

A weathered building: "G & B FURNITURE SUPPLY." Margaret sits in the Packard, fixing her lipstick. Jane holds the "WANT ADS," a few circled. Margaret gets out and straightens her skirt. Jane smiles.

**JANE**

Good luck.

3.

**INT. FURNITURE FACTORY - DAY**

A beaten industrial office. Margaret sits anxiously, watching the BOSS, a tired guy in a cheap suit. He glowers unsurely at her JOB APPLICATION. Scratching his face. HMMMMM...

**BOSS**

We don't get many ladies in here. So your husband approves of you working?

**MARGARET**

(quiet; a soft Southern lilt)  
My husband and I are separated.

**BOSS**

**(SHOCKED)**

"Separated"?  
A deadly silence. He squirms uncomfortably. She presses on.

**MARGARET**

Sir, I realize I have no employment experience... but I sure need this job. I have a daughter to support.

**(PAUSE)**

I'm not very good at tooting my own horn... but I love to paint, and if I could just show you my portfolio...  
He is baffled. Margaret pulls out a large ARTIST'S PORTFOLIO. She opens it, riffling through the pictures...

**MARGARET**

I studied at the Watkins Art Institute in Nashville, then took Illustration classes in New York. Here's a pastel I did... here's some fashion design... a portrait in charcoal... though I enjoy mixing mediums, preferably oil and ink...  
She's alive, enthused.  
The guy shakes his head.

**BOSS**

You do understand this is a furniture company?

**CLOSEUP - MARGARET**

A strained smile.

4.

**INT. FACTORY FLOOR - LATER**

Margaret works on an enamel baby crib. Under stenciled "Humpty Dumpty," she quickly paints on a cartoonish egg man. We WIDEN, revealing ten identical, completed cribs behind her. We WIDEN again -- revealing a DOZEN PAINTERS. All surrounded by identical cribs. All painting identical Humpty Dumpty's.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. SAN FRANCISCO NORTH BEACH - 1958 - DAY**

NORTH BEACH! An exotica of Beatniks, palm readers, interracial couples and coffeehouses. Ground zero for the Avant Garde. Margaret waits on a busy corner, a bit dazed, peering at the parade of fun-loving Hipsters. Primly, she fixes herself.

Margaret turns -- and suddenly grins. Running up is DEE-ANN, 30, a Beat girl in a black leotard and sandals. Dee-Ann excitedly grabs her, and they laugh and hug girlishly.

**DEE-ANN**

Sugar, you made it! You're in North Beach!

**MARGARET**

Deirdre, look at you!

**DEE-ANN**

**(CORRECTING)**

"Dee-Ann."

**MARGARET**

"Dee-Ann"?!

**DEE-ANN**

Yeah, I know. But I hit this scene... and "Deirdre" just sounded like something my mother would call me. Margaret giggles.

**DEE-ANN**

So are you flipping for all this?! Are you settled? How's Jane?

**MARGARET**

Jane -- is swell. She's started in a sweet little school.

**(PAUSE)**

Though... it's hard without her father.

I'm not sure we can do this...  
The thought hangs, and Margaret gets emotional. Teary-eyed.

5.

**DEE-ANN**

Oh stop that. You're better off.  
Between us, I never liked Frank.

**MARGARET**

**(SHOCKED)**

You were a bridesmaid!

**DEE-ANN**

Exactly. That's why I couldn't speak  
up. But if I ever see you wrong off  
again, I will tell you.

**(LONG BEAT)**

Now come on. Let's have some fun.  
WIDE - They start WALKING. Dee-Ann gestures.

**DEE-ANN**

Toss off your middle-class  
preconceptions! This is Pompeii!  
We're livin' in the volcano!! For  
jazz, check up the hungry i. For  
Italian, Vanessi's. For salvation,  
try the Buddhist temple. For art, the  
Six Gallery --  
They pass a GALLERY. The displays are stark, Calder-like  
MOBILES and found-object SCULPTURES. Margaret stares, unsure.

**MARGARET**

Do they only show Modern?

**DEE-ANN**

Everyone only shows Modern!

**(SHE POINTS)**

In the basement, they've got espresso.

**MARGARET**

What's espresso?

**(WORRIED)**

Is that like reefer?  
Dee-Ann LAUGHS, astounded.

**DEE-ANN**

You've got a lot to learn!

**EXT. ART SHOW - DAY**

A Sunday ART SHOW. It's picturesque, amateur ARTISTS displaying their paintings, jewelry, sculpture... The modern stalls are crowded with trendy BOHEMIANS. Abstract lines, speckles of color. We drift away... and find Margaret, alone in her stall with Jane. Margaret sits patiently, surrounded by Big Eye paintings and charcoal portraits. In contrast with the neighbors, her work seems... quaint.

6.

A pink, chubby TOURIST FAMILY ambles over. Margaret brightens hopefully.

**TOURIST GUY**

Your stuff is cute. How much?

**MARGARET**

Today's a special: Two dollars.

**TOURIST GUY**

I'll give you one.  
Beat -- then she nods, agreeing. She gestures.  
The little BOY sits. Margaret clips a fresh sheet of paper, sharpens her charcoal... and... goes motionless. Studying the boy's face. He gazes back.  
Then -- inspired, she begins sketching his EYES. Large and exaggerated. Then she fills in the shape of his head. His ears. His jaw.  
In a rush, his likeness appears. The parents come over to peek -- then gasp. Margaret is good. She sketches faster. Focused. Until a LOUD, PLUMMY VOICE drifts in...

**MAN'S VOICE**

Monet? "Monet"?! Whew -- that's a hell of a compliment. Though, if I may respectfully disagree, I'm more in the tradition of Pissarro.  
Margaret looks up, distracted. She resumes her work.

**MAN'S VOICE**

C'mon, get closer. Closer! Look at that sunlight coming through the mottled leaves. That's a bold yellow!  
Curious, Margaret casually peers over...

**HER POV**

Holding court in another booth is WALTER KEANE, 40. Walter is astonishing: Hugely confident. Charming. Waggishly handsome. And dressed like an "Artist" -- striped turtleneck, with hands full of brushes.  
Walter's stall is filled with oils of Paris street scenes. He casually flirts with TWO YOUNG COEDS. They admire a painting.

**WALTER**

You wanna touch it? Do it! I lay it on thick -- you're not gonna break it!

**(UNWAVERING)**

I poured myself into that painting.  
It's thirty-five dollars.

7.

Walter glances over -- and notices Margaret watching him.  
Shy, she quickly turns away, back to her portrait.  
Walter smiles rakishly. He's found a new interest.

**WALTER**

Excuse me, Ladies.

**WIDE**

Walter strides up to Margaret. She peers nervously... trying  
to ignore him. She sketches faster. Shading...  
Walter watches. Admiring... and discreetly smelling her hair.  
Margaret pays no attention. Done, she blows into a can of Fix-  
It. Poosh! A fine mist sprays, setting the portrait.  
Without fanfare, she humbly turns the picture.

**MARGARET**

All finished.  
Her customers gape, impressed. She smiles. The guy counts  
out four quarters, then happily leaves.

**MARGARET AND WALTER**

are left together. An unspoken frisson, until --

**WALTER**

You're better than spare change. You  
shouldn't sell yourself so cheap.

**MARGARET**

I'm just glad they liked it.

**WALTER**

Ahhh! You're past that point! Your  
heart is in your work...  
He leans in, too close. Margaret shivers. Breathing faster.

**WALTER**

What's your name?

**MARGARET**

M-Margaret...  
Mmm. He grins, checking her out... her loose sexy blouse and  
tight black capris. She flushes.

**MARGARET**

Wouldn't you rather flirt with those  
dolls over there?

8.

**WALTER**

Mm, no.

**(BEAT)**

I like you, Margaret...  
He zeroes in on the artworks' signature: "M. Ulbrich"

**WALTER**

"...Ulbrich."

**(IMPASSIONED)**

You know, Margaret Ulbrich, you're undervaluing yourself. Lemme show you how it's done.  
Walter spins to Jane. He SHOUTS out, like a carnival barker.

**WALTER**

Little Girl! How would you like your portrait sketched by the World-Renowned Margaret Ulbrich?! Queen of the Bay! In mere minutes, she will capture your soul!  
Hm. Jane shrugs, unimpressed.

**JANE**

Nah.

**WALTER**

"Nah"?!  
(he grabs a PAINTING)  
Don't you wish this were you in this beautiful painting??

**JANE**

But that IS me! And that's me...  
(she POINTS all over)  
And that one started as me, but then Mother turned it into a Chinese boy.  
Huh? Walter peers at Jane... then at Margaret. And then -- it hits him. He grimaces, embarrassed.

**WALTER**

Oh, you're Mommy! My apologies, Honey. I misconstrued the situation.

**(SHEEPISH)**

Well I'll just mosey along, before Mr. Ulbrich comes back and socks me in the eye.

**ON MARGARET**

A gut decision. She stares at Walter, then smiles slyly.

**MARGARET**

Mr. Ulbrich is out of the picture...!

9.

**ON WALTER**

His face slowly lights up. Ah! Sun breaking through clouds.

**CUT TO:**

**EST. FRENCH BISTRO - NIGHT**

**INT. BISTRO - NIGHT**

An enchanting bistro. Wine barrels, laughing, twinkly tivolii lights. Perfection. Walter flamboyantly enters, escorting Margaret. Instantly, the STAFF ERUPTS in excitement: "Monsieur Keane! Ah, Monsieur Keane is here! Bonsoir!"

**WALTER**

Bonsoir, gang! Henri! Sorry I didn't call first. Est-ce que tout va bien?

**MAITRE'D**

Je vais bien, merci! Comment allez-vous?

**WALTER**

Je vais bien! I'm with a beautiful woman! Could life be any grander?? They get led in. Margaret is dazzled. Walter whispers.

**WALTER**

And I don't even have to pay! I'm set because I gave the chef a painting. You know what he said? "Nobody paints Montmartre like Walter Keane!"

**LATER**

Margaret and Walter enjoy an intimate dinner. The wine flows.

**MARGARET**

I can't believe you lived in Paris.

**WALTER**

Best time of my life...

**MARGARET**

I've never even been on an airplane.

**WALTER**

Well you have to experience these things! Grab 'em!!

**(JOCUND)**

I wanted to be an artist, so I just went! Studied painting at the Beaux-

Arts. Lived in a Left Bank studio. I survived on bread and wine...

10.

**MARGARET**

You're a romantic.

**WALTER**

Damn right!  
A wistful shrug. He chugs his glass.

**WALTER**

Of course, walkin' away from the bourgeois scene wasn't a snap. I had to quit my job. Leave my wife. These choices aren't easy...  
She stares at her wine.

**MARGARET**

I've never acted freely. I was the daughter. The wife. The mother...

**(SHE SIGHS)**

All my paintings are of Jane, because she's all I know.

**WALTER**

You shouldn't knock your work. I'd give an eyetooth to have your talent.  
Margaret is taken aback. He's absolutely sincere.

**WALTER**

You can look into someone and capture them on canvas! You paint people!  
(he gestures sadly)  
I can only paint -- things. My street scenes are charming... but at the end of the day, it's just a collection of sidewalks and buildings.  
Walter goes silent. He has revealed his fears.

**ANGLE - MARGARET**

She doesn't know what to say. Gently, she takes his hand.

**MARGARET**

Walter, I'd bet you could paint anything.

**WALTER**

**(INTENSE)**

Whew... Baby, when you look at me like that, I could fall hard.  
Margaret gulps. Afraid to talk.

11.

**MARGARET**

This is moving fast. You're my first date in a long time... Neither of them speaks. The tension builds -- There is a spark between them...

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. PALACE OF FINE ARTS - DAY**

A lush green knoll, overlooking the park. Margaret and Walter have set-up TWO EASELS. They both smoke cigarettes. Margaret is spattered with paint, stirring colors. Walter paces about, framing the scene with his fingers. Jane sits in front of them, playing paddleball. Bonk! Bonk!

**MARGARET**

Sweetie, could you stop fidgeting?

**JANE**

Mother, after all this time, you MUST know what my face looks like. Margaret winces. Walter laughs. She gets busy, penciling in LARGE OVAL EYES. Then -- quick marks for the mouth and nose. Impatient, Jane spies on Walter's canvas.

**JANE**

Hey! Your canvas is blank!

**WALTER**

Er, you can't rush inspiration --

**MARGARET**

Jane! Don't bother Mr. Keane. You know creativity has to well up from the inside...

**WALTER**

Don't worry. She's not bothering me...!  
Walter leaves Jane. He points at Margaret's canvas.

**WALTER**

There's something I gotta ask you. What's with the big crazy eyes...?

**MARGARET**

I believe things can be seen in eyes. They're the windows of the soul --

12.

**WALTER**

Yeah, but, c'mon! You draw 'em like pancakes! I mean, they're WAY out of proportion!  
He's having fun, but she remains serious.

**MARGARET**

Eyes are how I express my emotions.  
That's how I've always drawn them.

**(EARNEST)**

When I was little, I had surgery that left me deaf for a period. I couldn't hear, so I found myself staring...  
Relying on people's eyes...  
She smiles shyly. Understanding, he smiles back. Then --

**VOICE**

Walter? Hey -- Walt!  
Walter spins, startled. A FRIENDLY GUY in a suit strolls up.

**FRIENDLY GUY**

I thought that was you!

**WALTER**

**(EMBARRASSED)**

Oh! Uh... er, hi, Don.

**FRIENDLY GUY**

Boy, I'm glad to see you! Have we heard back from the city, on that setback? My guys really need the variance, for the first floor retail.  
Walter is mortified. He turns away from Margaret.

**WALTER**

Um... we should hear from Permits by Thursday.

**FRIENDLY GUY**

Yeah? Well that's terrific! I'll tell the architects!  
Pleased, the guy cheerily strides away.

**ON WALTER AND MARGARET**

He is stricken. Something ominous just happened.

**MARGARET**

What was that??

**WALTER**

**(ASHAMED)**

I -- I didn't want you to know...  
A long, horrible pause. Walter's face turns gray. We SLOWLY  
PUSH IN. This revelation is churning. Agony.

**WALTER**

I'm in commercial real estate.  
A stunned beat.

**MARGARET**

You're a -- Realtor?

**WALTER**

**(CONTRITE)**

YES! A hugely successful Realtor!  
Top earner in the Downtown office  
three years running!

**MARGARET**

And you're... ashamed?

**WALTER**

Of course! Any blockhead can arrange  
a sublet!

**(HEARTFELT)**

All I ever wanted was to support  
myself as an artist...

**(SAD; BEAT)**

I tried to make a clean break, but  
couldn't cut it. I'm just a goddam  
Sunday painter. An amateur.  
Margaret looks at him, touched by his vulnerability.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - DUSK**

End of the day. Golden light slants in through the windows of  
this small tidy apartment.  
The door opens. Margaret holds it for Walter, who  
chivalrously staggers in, carrying all her supplies: Easel,  
paints, cans. He carefully puts it all down -- then turns.  
Beat. Walter stares at Margaret, their faces caught in the  
warm light. Then, enchanted, he kisses her.  
Silence.  
Margaret smiles, captivated. Caught in his glow. The moment  
could last forever...

**IN THE DOORWAY**

Jane stares unhappily. Threatened.

**JANE**

A-hem!

**ON MARGARET**

She turns, startled. Feeling guilty, Margaret rushes from Walter. Busying herself, she skims through the MAIL. Jane shakes her head and marches out. Margaret flips through envelopes -- until one stops her. On edge, she slowly removes an official DOCUMENT. She scans it... and her face drops. Crushed. Something terrible... Walter is worried.

**WALTER**

What's wrong...?

**MARGARET**

**(SOFT)**

Frank wants to take away Jane. He says I'm an unfit mother...  
Walter is taken aback.

**WALTER**

You're a perfect mother.

**MARGARET**

He told the court Jane doesn't have a proper home. It's beyond my abilities as a single woman...  
Margaret trails off, shaken.  
Walter gulps unsurely. Then, he takes her in his arms. We

**SLOWLY PUSH IN.**

**WALTER**

Marry me.

**MARGARET**

**(SHE GASPS)**

Walter! I --

**WALTER**

(he puts a finger to her lips)  
Shh. Don't think of a reason to say no. 'Cause I've got a million reasons to say yes.  
(he gives a winning smile)  
I know it makes no sense!

**(MORE)**

**WALTER (CONT'D)**

But just think of the fun we'll have..! And I'll take care of you girls.

Margaret stammers, speechless. She doesn't know what to say. Walter pulls out his ace. In a debonair move, he creakily drops to his knee. He exudes a hammy, wonderful romance:

**WALTER**

Margaret, I'm on my knee! C'mon, whatdya say? Let's get married! We can be in Hawaii by the weekend.

**MARGARET**

"Hawaii"? M-marriage?

**(EMOTIONAL)**

Walter, I'm crazy about you... but I'm overwhelmed. Why would we go to Hawaii?!

**WALTER**

**(BEGUILING)**

Because you're a princess... and you deserve to get married in paradise.

**CLOSEUP - MARGARET**

Margaret shudders, tears in her eyes. Hawaiian MUSIC begins...

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**STOCK FOOTAGE - DAY**

A propeller-driven PAN AM airplane soars through the sky.

**EXT. HAWAII - DAY**

Hawaii, 1958. Heaven on earth. Blossoming flowers, rare birds, lush greenery. Margaret is experiencing total bliss. We widen. She and Walter stand in front of a waterfall, getting married. Jane is Maid-of-Honor. A PRIEST smiles, and Walter places a ring on Margaret's finger. They kiss.

**EXT. BEACH - SUNSET**

Margaret and Walter lie on the sand, making out. Cuddling, running their fingers along each other's bodies. She stares up, endlessly happy.

**MARGARET**

You're right... this is paradise. Only God could make those colors.

**WALTER**

I knew you'd love it.

**MARGARET**

Oh, can't we stay here forever??

**WALTER**

Well, I don't know about forever. But maybe... I can arrange another week.

**EXT. HOTEL GROUNDS - DAY**

Thatched umbrellas, Polynesian fun. Margaret is set-up, drawing PORTRAITS of the GUESTS. Walter regales them as they wait. Joking, gregariously handing out Mai-Tais. Margaret finishes a picture. She beams at Walter... then signs the picture "KEANE."  
Walter gapes, astonished at this gesture. Margaret lock eyes with him. She smiles girlishly, radiating happiness.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY**

Old school Cantonese: Dragons and red lacquer. Margaret eats lunch with Dee-Ann, showing off SNAPSHOTS from the trip.

**MARGARET**

This is a waterfall... the air was so fresh you could taste it. Here's an ancient altar... that statue is Kane, the god of creation. I said a prayer to him. Oh! Here's Walter and Janie, building a sandcastle --  
Dee-Ann raises an eyebrow.

**DEE-ANN**

This is all happening mighty quick. In the time you moved here, I've had two dates. You're already married.

**MARGARET**

**(SHE GIGGLES)**

I thought there was a void in my life. Well... Walter's filled it.

**DEE-ANN**

Walter's filled a lot of things. He's diddled every skirt on the art circuit.

**MARGARET**

You're talking about my husband!

**DEE-ANN**

I know! That's why I brought it up. Margaret frowns, insulted.

17.

**MARGARET**

I'm not naive.  
(beat; she laughs)  
Well, I am naive. But I know the man  
I'm marrying. Walter can act rash...  
but he's a good provider. And he's  
wonderful with Jane.

**(CLEAR-EYED)**

Look -- we're both looking for a fresh  
start. I'm a divorcee with a child.  
Walter is a blessing.  
Dee-Ann bites her tongue. The WAITER brings over the check.  
Sitting on it are TWO FORTUNE COOKIES.  
Hm. Margaret stares, utterly serious. She reaches for one...  
then impulsively grabs the other. She cracks the cookie. Dee-  
Ann waits, curious. Margaret reads... then slowly smiles.

**MARGARET**

"You are on the threshold of untold  
success."

**INT. ART GALLERY - DAY**

A Modish, happening gallery. The white walls are hung with  
ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM: Slashing angles of color, painted over  
rags and glued bolts. On the floor is SCULPTURE made from  
wood and wire.  
In charge is RUBEN, a fussy man in a goatee. He's schmoozing  
a FANCY LADY. They look at a spattered, distorted painting.

**RUBEN**

What's brilliant about the composition  
is its spontaneity. The image has no  
visual center of attention.

**FANCY LADY**

It's quite gestural.

**RUBEN**

Oh definitely! Strongly influenced by  
the tachistes.

**FANCY LADY**

I heard Tab Hunter was in here,  
looking at one.

**RUBEN**

Well... I'm not allowed to say...  
He NODS HIS HEAD up-and-down: Yes, you're right.

**OUTSIDE**

A car backfires. Ruben turns -- and winces.

**18.**

Through the windows is Walter, climbing out of his massive white Cadillac. He's all done up, in beret and scarf. He opens the giant trunk and removes a pile of paintings. Ruben cringes knowingly. He whispers:

**RUBEN**

Oh Christ, don't come in here. Please don't come in here...  
The door SLAMS. Walter loudly barges in.

**WALTER**

Ruben, good day! Do you got a minute?

**RUBEN**

Walter. In polite society, the word is "appointment."

**FANCY LADY**

(glancing back and forth)  
Uh, I could come back later...  
She anxiously hurries for the door. Ruben fumes. Walter ignores it all and starts laying out his wares. First, the Parisian street scenes, one after another...

**WALTER**

You're gonna love my stuff today.

**RUBEN**

Haven't I seen that one before?

**WALTER**

Nah! That was painted in the Fifth Arrondissement. This is the Sixth Arrondissement!

**RUBEN**

**(SKEPTICAL)**

I don't understand. You lived in Paris for a week. How can you still be cranking out paintings?  
Walter laughs. He points to his head.

**WALTER**

It's all up here.  
(beat; a sentimental

**FLOURISH)**

And here.  
He points to his heart. Ruben frowns and points to the wall.

**19.**

**RUBEN**

Well, it's not going up here.

**(CRUEL)**

Walter, you know we don't go for that representational jazz! You're too literal.

**WALTER**

**(HURT)**

Hey, Art isn't fashion!

**RUBEN**

Yes it IS!

**(CUTTING)**

People want Kandinsky, or Rothko!  
They don't want goopy street scenes.

**CLOSEUP - WALTER**

Ouch! This stings terribly.  
Walter glares at the man, then softly slides aside his works.  
Quietly, he pulls out Margaret's Big Eye paintings.

**WALTER**

Would they want... this?

**RUBEN**

**(HE SHUDDERS)**

Good God! You've entered a new period.

**WALTER**

No... they're my wife's.  
Fascinated, Ruben glances through Margaret's oils. Canvas after canvas of sad kiddies against gray, bleak backgrounds.

**RUBEN**

Why are their eyes so big?! They're like big stale jellybeans.

**WALTER**

**(SNIDE)**

It's Expressionism. Surely you recognize it.

**RUBEN**

**(LONG BEAT)**

Well -- I'm just glad you two found each other.

**WALTER**

So... what do you say?  
Ruben looks up, amazed. Walter seems oblivious.

**20.**

**RUBEN**

I say, NO! It's not art.

**WALTER**

**(HORRIFIED)**

Not -- "art"??

**RUBEN**

It's like the back of a magazine!  
"Draw the turtle! Send in a nickel  
and win the Big Contest!"

**WALTER**

How dare you! Lots of people would  
like this.

**RUBEN**

Well, nobody who's walking through the  
door of this gallery!

**(BEAT)**

Now please! Clear out this clutter,  
before the taste police arrives.  
Walter's jaw drops.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. HUNGRY I MARQUEE - NIGHT**

"The hungry i" -- the hottest nightclub around, so hip it's in  
a basement. The marquee says "Cal Tjader, TONIGHT!"

**INT. HUNGRY I SHOWROOM - NIGHT**

A swinging mob of BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE -- suits, gowns and pearls.  
CAL TJADER'S BAND is crazed: Vibes and bongo-driven JAZZ.  
Margaret and Walter are squeezed at a table. She nurses a  
Grasshopper. Walter's in a foul mood, CHUGGING cocktails.

**WALTER**

We'll never break in...! Because  
there's a CABAL. A secret society of  
gallery owners and critics, who get  
together for Sunday brunch in  
Sausalito, deciding what's "cool."

**(BROODING)**

They're like Freemasons. No, worse!  
McCarthy, in his hearings: "That  
painter, I anoint. That painter, I  
banish to nowheresville!"  
Heartfelt, Margaret disagrees.

**MARGARET**

I think people buy art because it  
touches them --

21.

**WALTER**

Heh! You're livin' in fairy land!  
People don't get to discover a thing.  
They buy art, because it's in the  
right place at the right time.  
O.s., MUSIC BUILDS. Muddled, Walter turns. He looks -- and  
then -- his eyes light up. He is getting an idea...

**ONSTAGE**

The band speeds to a climax, the percussion throbbing. Then,  
a final, crazed note. BAM!!  
The crowd APPLAUDS. The club's owner, ENRICO BANDUCCI, bounds  
on stage. Banducci is a theatrical, natty Italian guy with a  
skinny moustache and loud personality. He grabs a mike.

**BANDUCCI**

Give it up for Cal Tjader! That set  
was HUMMIN'! Al-aright, be sure to  
stick around for the one a.m. show!  
The house lights come up. Banducci hops down, greeting  
guests, making his way out -- when Walter glides up.

**WALTER**

Hey, Banducci. I love the music  
tonight. It's a gas.

**BANDUCCI**

Oh. Thanks, thanks.

**WALTER**

I'm Walter Keane. I'm a painter.

**(KNOWING)**

I was looking at your walls, and  
they're pretty plain.

**BANDUCCI**

Really? Hm...! Maybe you're right.  
What color were you thinking?  
Huh? Walter holds his composure.

**WALTER**

No -- I'm an artist. I used to be

based on the Left Bank. But now I've relocated to the "States," and I'm looking for an... exhibition venue. Beat. Banducci frowns.

**BANDUCCI**

I like my club the way it is. Your stuff's so hot, go put it in a museum.

22.

**WALTER**

Okay! I respect that. You're a businessman, not a charity! So how 'bout if I, uh... rented your walls? Hm?! Banducci raises an eyebrow.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BERKELEY APARTMENT - DAY**

Walter's swanky pad is CHAOS, filled with cameras and lights. A PHOTOGRAPHER runs around, tweaking equipment. Walter's at an easel, putting the final touches on a PAINTING of a French street scene. He gabs on the PHONE.

**WALTER**

Yes! The paintings are available for public viewing daily, from 7 to 3!  
(an awkward beat)  
Er, no. 3 a.m. It's in a nightclub.  
(he hangs up)  
Maggie! It's promotion time! We gotta lay the racket!  
Margaret puts on a smock, a bit dumbfounded. Walter spatters some paint on his shirt. He grins, then holds up his brush and SIGNS the painting: "W. KEANE"  
Margaret forces a "cheese" smile, with her Waif. FLASH! The camera pops.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. HUNGRY I - NIGHT**

CU - A cheery BROCHURE, "Meet the Keanes!" There's a staged PHOTO: Walter at his street scene, Margaret at her Waif. Then -- a SHOE steps on it. We WIDEN... revealing the brochure on the sticky floor of...  
THE CLUB! It throbs with frolicking CUSTOMERS. We move through the pack. To a rear concrete hallway... to a sign with an arrow: "TOILETS." We go down the hall... into...

**A DINGY CORRIDOR**

The Keane paintings hang here. The only human in sight is Walter, forlorn at a card table. Brochures are stacked, and

he wears a sailor coat with a dandyish ascot.  
The image is grim. Walter listens to the raucous mob. Until,  
THUMP! -- a sloshed MAN stumbles in. Walter brightens and  
stands.

**23.**

**WALTER**

Ah, beautiful! An art lover! Yes  
sir, how may I help you?

**MAN**

**(UNCLEAR)**

I'm, uh, just looking for the john.  
A terrible pause. Walter swallows his outrage... then points.  
The guy smiles and tosses Walter a BUCK, as a tip. Walter is  
stunned. The guy toddles away.  
Beat. The Ladies Room opens, and TWO GOSSIPY WOMEN rush out,  
oblivious to Walter. He glowers. ANOTHER MAN bounds in,  
right up to one of Walter's paintings! He stops at it.  
Walter gathers a moment of hope. Does he like it?  
Then the man leans down and opens a CLOSET. He removes a tray  
of bar glasses, kicks the door shut, and scoots away.

**ANGLE - WALTER**

He grimaces... beaten. Walter drops his head on the table.  
Not noticing a DRUNK COUPLE stagger in. They pass a Waif,  
then halt -- taken. They lean in. Enthralled... concerned...

**TIPSY LADY**

Look at that child. She's so sad.

**TIPSY MAN**

Is she poor..?

**TIPSY LADY**

She's forgotten! It just makes me  
want to cry.  
(she peers at the  
signature, then turns)  
Are you "Keane"?  
Walter lifts his head from the table.

**WALTER**

Yeah.

**TIPSY LADY**

Well you're a hell of a painter.  
Walter squints, confused, then beams. Joy! Happiness  
bursting like a little child.

**WALTER**

Why, thank you...! Thank you so much!

24.

**TIPSY LADY**

Your work is very powerful. There's  
so much emotion in those eyes.  
OUCH! Walter's smile collapses.

**TIPSY LADY**

Is something wrong?

**WALTER**

**(REELING)**

Huh? Uh... no. No. I just didn't  
realize you meant... the waif.

**TIPSY MAN**

(beat; he CHUCKLES)  
Oh, I get it...! The artist doesn't  
wanna part with his favorite piece...  
The man winks, then pulls out a WAD OF BILLS.  
Walter stares morosely.

**INT. HUNGRY I - LATER**

Walter sits at the bar, toasted, drinking. In a dark place.  
His misery is interrupted by happy Banducci, groping two GALS.

**BANDUCCI**

Hello, Picasso! Nice crowd, eh?

**WALTER**

**(SOUR)**

You wouldn't know it from that broom  
closet you parked me in.

**BANDUCCI**

Hey, it's prime thoroughfare! People  
drink, they gotta relieve themselves.

**WALTER**

**(MUTTERING)**

"Location, location, location..."  
Walter wallows in self-loathing. Suddenly, he explodes.

**WALTER**

It's INSULTING! When people see art,  
they shouldn't think of SHIT!

**BANDUCCI**

**(SHOCKED)**

Whoah! Watch it with the purple

language. We got ladies present --!  
Banducci PUSHES Walter away.

**25.**

In reaction, Walter sloppily SMACKS him.  
Riled, Banducci suddenly takes a SWING! Walter stumbles, and  
Banducci's punch accidentally HITS the GIRL.  
Ow! She topples. Walter gasps.  
He SWATS Banducci -- then RUNS! Cameras FLASH. Wild whoops.  
Walter barrels down the hall, Banducci chasing. The brawl's  
gone nuts. Walter grabs a Waif and SMASHES it over Banducci's  
head. CRASH! Banducci drops.

**CUT TO:**

**INSERT - SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER**

The front page! A small headline says "BISTRO BRAWL: BANDUCCI  
AND ARTIST SLUGFEST." Below are two PHOTOS: Walter mid-punch,  
and Banducci unconscious, sticking out of the Big Eye.

**EXT. POLICE STATION - DAWN**

A neighborhood precinct, quiet at 6 a.m. Doors open, and  
Margaret leads Walter out. She's seething. He's bruised,  
with a mortified drunk-tank, slept-in-my-clothes swagger.

**MARGARET**

I've never posted bail before.  
Silence. He has no idea what to say. His aplomb crumbles.

**WALTER**

I'm -- I'm sorry. Banducci... laughed  
at our work. ...So I socked him.

**MARGARET**

Since when are you thin-skinned?  
Artists have to handle criticism.

**WALTER**

You're right! I know. But... I was  
already in a bad place. I'd had a  
couple... and earlier...

**(PAUSE)**

I let some guy think I painted your  
Big Eye.  
Beat. Margaret is stupefied.

**MARGARET**

I don't understand. Why would you do  
such a thing?!

**WALTER**

It was a misunderstanding. And then,  
I didn't want to jinx the sale.

26.

He shrugs feebly. She frowns.

**MARGARET**

Don't ever do it again.

**INT. HUNGRY I - NIGHT**

The club is a ZOO. PARTYERS swarm the door, trying to enter. Suddenly, Walter pushes his way down the outside stairs. The DOORMAN starts to protest, but Walter somberly waves him off.

**WALTER**

Don't give me a hard time. I'm just grabbing my stuff...

Across the packed room, he spots Banducci with a black eye. Walter halts, uncertain. A bristling tension... Until -- Banducci suddenly rushes and GRABS him! Walter flails, freaked. Banducci DRAGS him into a back kitchen --

**INT. CLUB KITCHEN**

Banducci shuts the door, looks around... then suddenly LAUGHS! He grins manically and pulls Walter into a hearty HUG.

**BANDUCCI**

Can you believe this? We're sold out, and I don't even have a headliner!!

**(GLEEFUL)**

Hell, it's a Monday!  
Walter blinks, lost. Banducci explains.

**BANDUCCI**

Dope, we made the front page!! People are here, cause they wanna see the sappy paintings that made grown men fight!!  
A moment of discombobulation... until -- Walter slowly grins.

**INT. CLUB - SECONDS LATER**

The two men suddenly tumble into view, SCREAMING.

**WALTER**

I'll see you in COURT, you son of a bitch! I'm suing you for assault!  
Slander! False arrest!!  
Banducci storms away.  
Walter shudders, "upset." CUSTOMERS peer at him... then at the paintings. Curious, they migrate that way...

27.

Walter glances sideways. Gauging their reactions...  
Until -- a swinging middle-aged guy in horn rims and a suit  
lopes up. DICK NOLAN: A man who hides his bored emptiness  
under a veneer of booze and broads. Dick leans in.

**DICK**

Yes sir! Whew. That was quite a load  
of horseshit you gents were layin' out  
there.

**(LONG BEAT)**

Dick Nolan. The Examiner.  
Walter freezes up. Until -- Dick grins conspiratorially.

**DICK**

Hey pal, don't lose any sleep. I eat  
this stuff with a spoon! It gives me  
something to type about, in my column.

**WALTER**

(he laughs, relieved)  
I thought you only did celebrities.

**DICK**

Well, Banducci's famous -- and you hit  
him! So you're a celebrity, once-  
removed.

**(HE CHUCKLES)**

Buy me a drink?

**WALTER**

Huh? Uh, sure --  
Dick smoothly drags him to the bar. Dick waves the bartender.

**DICK**

Gary! I'll have a Ward Eight, in a  
frosted high boy. My friend'll have  
the same.  
(he beams, then turns)  
So! Walter, tell me about your work --

**WALTER**

Well, when I was in Paris...

**DICK**

Jesus, not those! I mean the little  
hobo kids.  
What?! Walter frowns, peeved. He considers this indignity...  
then decides to stomach it. He smiles fakely, effusively.

**WALTER**

What do you wanna know...?!

**CUT TO:**

28.

**INT. BERKELEY APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT**

Margaret is asleep. Suddenly Walter bursts in, drunk and jocular. He FLIPS on the lights.

**WALTER**

Ding-a-ling! Wake up, we're a HIT!  
Margaret rolls over, groggy. Walter jumps on the bed, grinning. He tosses her a HANDFUL OF MONEY.

**WALTER**

What a night! I sold out all your Big Eyes!!  
She rubs her eyes, amazed.

**MARGARET**

There must be two-hundred dollars...

**WALTER**

They adore you! Cause of that article, the joint was PACKED. And then, a famous journalist showed up, and -- I need more paintings! Now! He hungrily KISSES her. She laughs.

**MARGARET**

Walter, they take at least a week. There's layering, shading --

**WALTER**

Of course! But, this is opportunity! Ah, we're gonna make a crackerjack team: Me schmoozing up the club, while you're back here, doing what you love! She stares at him -- then smiles. MUSIC...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Margaret happily paints away. At peace, lost in her art...

**INT. HUNGRY I - NIGHT**

Walter sells Big Eyes. Shoving cash into a cigar box.

**INT. APARTMENT - DAY**

Margaret works, HUMMING serenely. On the easel is a half-finished blonde girl in a blue dress.

29.

**INT. TAILOR'S - DAY**

Walter buys a new suit. A TAILOR measures him.

**INT. APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT**

Margaret finishes painting a sad boy, using a fine brush to add a watery rim to his eyes. Magically, this detail brings the picture to life. She's pleased.  
Margaret signs "KEANE." There are two finished canvases, the sad little girl and boy. Margaret smiles, her heart swelling. She loves them. Then, she looks about. Nobody is there to share the moment.  
Hm. She thinks -- then picks up the PHONE. She dials.

**MARGARET**

Mrs. Cava, I'm sorry to bother you so late... but would you mind watching Jane?

**INT. TAXI - NIGHT**

Margaret rides in the back seat, smiling, her gaze faraway. She proudly hugs the bundled paintings to her chest.

**INT. HUNGRY I - NIGHT**

The club is pounding. Margaret enters the throng, carrying her work. She looks up -- and has her breath taken away. The

**ENTIRE CLUB, EVERY WALL, IS NOW HUNG WITH KEANE PAINTINGS!**

Whoa...! Pure joy envelops her.  
Then -- she gets jostled. Margaret notices Walter holding court with some GROUPIES. She approaches, unnoticed:

**WALTER**

...yeah, eyes are powerful. A poet said they're the windows of the soul.  
Margaret smiles, touched. She comes closer....

**GROUPIE**

They hold so much feeling.

**WALTER**

You got it! That's why I paint 'em so big.

**(BEAT)**

I've always done it that way.

**CLOSEUP - MARGARET**

She GASPS, stunned. The room starts spinning.

**HER POV**

**WALTER**

If you like this style, I'm working on a few new pieces. I've got a little blonde girl in a blue dress that'll tear your heart out.

**ANGLE - MARGARET**

Her face goes ashen. Dizzy, she clutches for support. What to do?? Overcome, she shrinks away... disappearing... ending up alone in a corner. She cowers, childlike.

**ACROSS THE ROOM**

Walter LAUGHS at a joke, then backslaps the group. He jovially strides away... passing by Margaret... when --

**MARGARET**

Walter...?  
He spins -- shocked at her presence.

**WALTER**

Baby!

**(DISCOMBOBULATED)**

Hey, uh, what are you doing here? I

**UM --**

**MARGARET**

Why are you lying?  
For once, Walter has no answer.  
She bores in, emotions racing. Confused. Hurt.

**MARGARET**

You're taking credit for something that isn't yours.  
He looks ill. Wheels spinning, looking for an out --

**WALTER**

I was... trying to close the deal --

**MARGARET**

Those children are part of my being!

**WALTER**

I'm just a salesman! You know, buyers pay more if they meet the painter --

**MARGARET**

They couldn't meet me, because you told me to stay home!!

**WALTER**

Shh, QUIET!  
He grabs her, pulling her behind a curtain. He's desperate.

**WALTER**

Don't blow this! Look, we're makin'  
money! Your pocket, my pocket?  
What's the difference?!

**MARGARET**

**(TREMBLING)**

You take this so lightly --

**WALTER**

Not all all! But it's not about ego!  
You wanna say you did the street  
scenes? Fine! I don't care! Say a  
monkey painted it!  
She breaks into tears, sobbing.

**MARGARET**

I'm glad you can dash off your pieces  
without any emotional connection...!

**WALTER**

Ah, honey! I just wanna share them  
with the world!

**(BEAT)**

Would you rather have your children  
piled in a closet... or hanging in  
someone's living room?  
Silence.  
Then -- FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!  
Walter turns. And -- his eyes pop, astonished.

**AT THE DOOR**

Is an incredible sight. Like a moment from "La Dolce Vita," a  
fabulously dressed ITALIAN MAN with THREE BLONDES floats down  
the stairs, into the club. Cameras FLASH.  
Walter gapes, transfixed. He grabs Banducci.

**WALTER**

Hey. Who is that remarkably handsome  
and confident man?

**BANDUCCI**

That's Dino Olivetti -- as in Olivetti  
typewriters.

**(HE SMIRKS)**

**(MORE)**

32.

**BANDUCCI (CONT'D)**

Don't even try, Walter. He doesn't  
speak a lick of English.  
Walter stares hungrily.

**ANGLE - OLIVETTI**

glides into the club -- a vision of perfection with his slick  
hair and sunglasses. He approaches closer, closer... when he  
gets distracted. By one of Margaret's Big Eye PAINTINGS.  
Walter gasps. He nudges Margaret.  
Olivetti peers at the artwork. Intrigued. Then -- excited.  
He starts gesturing and yapping in ITALIAN. The Blondes shout  
back. Everyone is getting worked-up.  
The big-bosomed Blonde turns to Walter.

**EUROPEAN BLONDE**

Mr. Olivetti is enchanted with the  
painting. He would like to know...  
who is the artist?

**ANGLE - MARGARET AND WALTER**

The moment of truth. Margaret opens her mouth... and no sound  
comes out. She clenches up. Stomach tight. Mute.  
Walter gives her a second -- tick tock tick tock. Then -- he  
leaps into Opportunity. He SMACKS his hands.

**WALTER**

I am!  
Walter swoops over and grabs Olivetti in a hearty clasp.

**WALTER**

It's a delight to meet you, Signore!  
Buon giorno! Have you been an art  
lover for long..?  
We move in tight on MARGARET, as the SOUND DIALS DOWN.

**WALTER'S VOICE**

I call that piece "The Waif." Isn't  
it striking? With its juxtaposition  
of girl, cat, and stairs... and its  
almost Flemish use of underpigment...  
The SOUND dims... then goes SILENT.  
Margaret stares in shock, unmoving.  
Time seems to stop. She is frozen in grief. Until --

33.

**WALTER'S VOICE**

Baby! Baby! Can you believe it?!!

**CUT TO:**

**MINUTES LATER**

Time has passed. Walter happily clutches Margaret.

**WALTER**

We made five grand!! Five THOUSAND dollars...!!!

**(GIDDY)**

And that wasn't even one of your good ones!

Margaret blinks, lost.

In the b.g., Olivetti holds the painting, now wrapped-up in newspaper and twine. A pleased customer. Margaret's face darkens.

**MARGARET**

Don't you mean... one of your good ones?

**WALTER**

No. No no! One of -- OUR good ones. (the spirit of generosity, he hands her a CHECK) Look at those zeroes! We've hit the big time! We are now hanging in the collection of Italian industrialist Dino Olivetti! With his patronage comes credibility! And with credibility comes RESPECT!

Margaret stares at the check in her hands. At all the zeroes.

**MARGARET**

What about... honesty?

**WALTER**

Aw c'mon! The paintings say "Keane"! I'm Keane, you're Keane. From now on, we are one and the same. Walter pulls her tight. She doesn't resist.

**CUT TO:**

**SERIES OF SHOTS:**

**34.**

**INT. APARTMENT - DAY**

Upbeat MUSIC. Walter frantically tosses all the BROCHURES of him and Margaret into a FIREPLACE. They burn to ash.

**INSERT - NEWSPAPER**

We ZOOM into Dick Nolan's SOCIETY COLUMN. Under a caricature of Dick is a highlighted ITEM. We hear TYPING:

**DICK'S HUSHED VOICE**

"What exactly is local painter Walter Keane up to? My spies tell me a big announcement is forthcoming...!"

**EXT. CITY HALL - DAY**

Walter proudly hands a painting to the confused-looking MAYOR.

**WALTER**

On behalf of the children of the world, we present this painting to Mayor Christopher!

**EXT. PUBLIC BUILDING - DAY**

Walter thrusts a painted Ballerina at a SOVIET DIPLOMAT.

**WALTER**

In the interest of peace through culture, we donate this painting to the people of Russia!

**INT. PHONEBOOTH - NIGHT**

Dick whispers into a phone.

**DICK**

The Purple Onion. 9:30. Joan Crawford has a dinner reservation.

**INT. PURPLE ONION - NIGHT**

JOAN CRAWFORD is eating with friends. Suddenly Walter lunges into view, startling her. He lugs a painting.

**WALTER**

Miss Crawford! In recognition of your cinematic craft, we bestow this painting, "The Lion and the Child"!

**INT. APARTMENT - DAY**

Margaret paints. Walter beams.

**35.**

**WALTER**

Joan said "Marvelous"! MARVELOUS!  
That's worth more than 1000 critics!  
(he CLAPS his hands)  
Hey, maybe she'll come to our opening.

**MARGARET**

But... isn't it strange? Artists get shown. They don't build their own

galleries.

**WALTER**

Says who?! Like John Q. Public cares?  
He's FED UP with abstract neoformalism!  
She responds -- but he sexily puts his finger to her mouth.

**WALTER**

He digs real art. Your art! It's  
beautiful. You're beautiful...  
Walter starts rubbing against her, dancing sensually. She  
laughs, embarrassed, her wet paint brushes smearing his chest.  
She relents and relaxes. They dance around...

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. CITY STREETS - EARLY MORNING**

In the shadows, POSTERS of "The Waif" get glued up. Under her  
woeful face, it says "KEANE GALLERY 494 Broadway." We WIDEN,  
as Walter, Margaret and Jane hastily slap up the posters.  
They carry glue buckets and a ladder.

**WALTER**

Ruben's gonna choke when he sees this!  
Little Jane tiredly glues another poster. She yawns.

**JANE**

I remember when Momma painted that.  
Huh?  
Suddenly, Margaret freezes. She hadn't anticipated this.  
Margaret looks to Walter. He stares back, waiting.

**MARGARET**

Are you -- sure? That was a long time  
ago.

**JANE**

Sure I'm sure! It was in our old  
apartment, and you had me sit on a  
stool in the kitchen --

**36.**

**WALTER**

**(CUTTING IN)**

No, dear, I'm afraid you're confused.  
I painted that one --

**JANE**

No, Mother did! Look! I'm wearing my  
blue dress.

**MARGARET**

L-lots of girls have that dress...  
Margaret trails off, sickened. Not knowing how to lie.  
Walter takes charge. He kneels, then smiles gently at Jane.

**WALTER**

You have a good eye, sweetie. I  
painted it, but I was trying to mimic  
your mother's style. You know, the  
style she USED to paint in.

**CLOSEUP - JANE**

A loooooong pause. She examines the print. Then... she nods.

**JANE**

Well you did a really good job.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. SAN FRANCISCO NORTH BEACH - DAY**

CU on the Waif. We widen, revealing the ENTIRE WORLD has been  
hijacked, blanketed by THE POSTERS. People gape -- astonished  
and captivated.

Disconnected from it all, strolling alone, is Margaret. She  
is burdened by her own thoughts. Regretful...

Across the street, she sees a GOTHIC CHURCH. She stares up,  
awed by the beauty. It's Catholic imagery in all its glory:  
Saints... Jesus... Mary...

Suddenly -- the bells RING. Hm. Margaret takes a step...

**INT. CHURCH CONFESSION BOOTH - DAY**

Margaret tentatively enters and kneels. Beat -- then the  
grille OPENS. She reacts, discomposed.

**MARGARET**

Hello. I've -- never really done this  
before. I'm not sure how you...

**(WORRIED)**

I was raised Methodist. If it's a  
problem, I can go --

**37.**

She starts to stand. The Priest blurts out.

**PRIEST'S VOICE**

No, no! Please. We don't chase  
people away.

**(BEAT)**

What is troubling you?  
Margaret takes a breath.

**THEN --**

**MARGARET**

I lied to my child.  
Pause.

**PRIEST'S VOICE**

Why would you do that?

**MARGARET**

My husband... he pressured me into  
doing it.

**(PAUSE)**

I've never lied to her before. I'm  
not that kind of person.  
Beat.

**PRIEST'S VOICE**

Is your husband that kind of person?

**MARGARET**

Ummm, no. I don't think of him that  
way. I mean, he likes to tell  
stories... maybe he exaggerates a  
little... but he's a good man.

**(SHE THINKS)**

He takes care of us. He wants to make  
enough money to buy our family a  
house...

**PRIEST'S VOICE**

But what of the child? Will this lie  
bring harm to her?

**MARGARET**

"Harm"?? Oh! Not at all.

**(BEAT)**

I'm just looking for answers...  
The Priest considers this.

**PRIEST'S VOICE**

Well, the modern world is a  
complicated place.

**(MORE)**

38.

**PRIEST'S VOICE (CONT'D)**

Occasionally, children need to be  
sheltered from certain truths.

**MARGARET**

N-no. That's not what --

**PRIEST'S VOICE**

It sounds like your husband is trying to make the best of an imperfect situation.

**(BEAT)**

You were raised Christian, so you know what we are taught: The man is head of the household.

**(BEAT)**

Perhaps you should trust his judgment.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. KEANE GALLERY - NIGHT**

Opening night! The gallery is packed with the IN CROWD: Rich and drinking. The space is cool -- the walls bright white, the art hanging under spotlights. JAZZ plays on the stereo. At one painting, a HIPSTER COUPLE stares at the image of a sorrowful girl holding an armful of poodle puppies.

**HIPSTER LADY**

I think it's creepy, maudlin and amateurish.

**HIPSTER MAN**

Exactly. I love it.  
We move in tight on the painting. Underneath is a tag: "BEDTIME, by WALTER KEANE. Oil on canvas."  
We drift along, to another painting: "CALICO CAT, by WALTER KEANE." Then, another: "IN THE GARDEN, by WALTER KEANE."  
Every painting is now by Walter Keane.  
We move along... finding the Tipsy Man chatting up Dick.

**TIPSY MAN**

We got in early. We own three.

**(HE TURNS)**

Thanks, doll.  
He tosses his empty to a PASSING LADY. We reveal the waitress is... Margaret. She carries a tray of pigs-in-a-blanket. Margaret looks shell-shocked -- faking a happy party face. A burst of LAUGHTER. Margaret turns.

**39.**

Walter and a group ROAR at a joke. A SEXY GIRL hands Walter one of the promo posters. He beams and lays it across her back... hugging her waist to "steady" himself as he signs.

**BACK ON MARGARET**

She frowns. Dee-Ann slides into view, slurping champagne.

**DEE-ANN**

Hey, baby! Killer party! It's a hap-  
pen-ing...! So, where's your stuff?

**MARGARET**

**(NERVOUS)**

Oh. Um, we decided that this would be  
Walter's show --

**DEE-ANN**

**(SUSPICIOUS)**

Oh "we" did?? And why would "we" do  
that??

**MARGARET**

Well... he's more established.

**DEE-ANN**

Please! Is that you talking, or did  
you just turn into a little felt  
puppet with someone's hand up your  
ass?

Margaret is befuddled.  
Dee-Ann scopes out the artwork.

**DEE-ANN**

It's strange... Walter doesn't strike  
me as the cute hungry kitten type...  
Margaret grimaces.

**MARGARET**

Thanks for coming.  
Margaret grabs a drink and hurries away.  
Dee-Ann stands there, irked.  
Margaret cuts over to Walter. We MOVE IN TIGHT ON THE COUPLE.  
He grins and grabs her.

**WALTER**

Ah, my sweet! Are you enjoying the  
scene?  
(he gives her a kiss)

**EVERYONE!**

**(MORE)**

**40.**

**WALTER (CONT'D)**

Give a hand to my beautiful wife.  
Without her, none of tonight would be  
possible!  
The crowd APPLAUDS politely, condescendingly.  
Margaret smiles strangely. The Topsy Man leans in.

**TIPSY MAN**

Your husband's quite a talent.

**(PLEASANT)**

Do you paint, too?  
Margaret freezes up, terribly awkward.

**MARGARET**

I don't... know.

**AT WALTER**

A NOSY GUY corners him in front of a painted child.

**NOSY GUY**

I'm curious about your technique. How long did that piece take to execute?

**WALTER**

That? Oh, wow. Probably... months. First the thinking, the sketching, and then time with just me and the oils.

**NOSY GUY**

"Oils"? But isn't that acrylic...? Huh? Walter glances at the painting, startled.

**WALTER**

Oh --! You mean that painting! Uhh, sorry! It's like a jumble of ideas, rattling around in my brain!  
Beat.

**NOSY GUY**

So where do you get your ideas?

**WALTER**

What do you mean?

**NOSY GUY**

I mean --  
(confused at this confusion)  
Why are they... images of children?  
Yikes. Walter starts to sweat. He didn't think this through.

**41.**

**WALTER**

Well, er, I've just always loved kids. Though mostly I was influenced by my darling daughter...  
An odd beat.

**WALTER**

I remember when she was a baby...  
Walter gets a far-off look.

**WALTER**

Yeah. Cute little thing. I'd stare into those big orbs. Sometimes I'd get out my Brownie and snap a photo... but... that's not subjective. You know? It doesn't capture your feelings. So that's when I started painting her...  
We hold on Walter, unsure where reality begins and ends...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BERKELEY APARTMENT - DAY**

CU on a fuzzy TV SCREEN: A PRIGGISH MAN is griping. The screen is captioned "JOHN CANADAY, NY TIMES ART CRITIC"

**CANADAY (ON TV)**

Keane's work is completely without distinction. He is not a member of the Society of Western Artists. He has won no awards. He's only noteworthy for his appearances in a certain newspaper's gossip column!

**(EXASPERATED)**

Mr. Keane is why society NEEDS critics!  
To protect them from such atrocities!  
Walter gapes at the TV, outraged. He suddenly grabs a PHONE.

**IN THE LIVING ROOM**

Jane is BANGING on a closed door.

**JANE**

Mom! I wanna come in.

**MARGARET (O.S.)**

Uhh, you can't. Mommy's busy.

**JANE**

(she BANGS again)  
Let me in! What are you doing in there? Why's the door always locked?

**42.**

Walter enters -- and reacts. He glides over to the girl.

**WALTER**

Janie, sweetie, you need to respect your mother's privacy. Sometimes grownups need alone time.

**(HE WINKS)**

Is that the ice cream truck? Why don't you go get yourself a fudgesicle?

Walter tosses her a dime. She peers warily, then leaves. He waits a beat -- then pulls out a KEY. Walter discreetly unlocks the painting room.

**INT. APARTMENT PAINTING ROOM - SAME TIME**

It's a factory. Big Eyes are everywhere. Margaret frenziedly works, surrounded by half-done canvases, solvents, easels. She's in a bathrobe -- a cigarette hanging from her lips. Startled, she looks up to see Walter. He gazes at all the art. At the bulbous faces, eyes watery and submissive, trapped in muddy yellows and dire browns. And then... Walter grins broadly.

**WALTER**

Whew! Out of this world...!

**MARGARET**

**(BOTHERED)**

I dunno. I'm not really comfortable with this. Jane and I used to be so close... but -- now...

**WALTER**

Ah, Jane's grand! She's eating ice cream! She has new shoes. She has a college fund.  
Beat.

**MARGARET**

Maybe I'm lightheaded from the turpentine. I've been in here all day.

**WALTER**

Well I don't want you feeling like a prisoner. Take a break!  
Walter glances at one PAINTING -- then does a take.

**ANGLE - PAINTING**

It's a child in a rusty alley, staring, aching for compassion. And, starting to cry. A single tear streams down her cheek.

**43.**

**WALTER**

Is that a tear...? You've gone deep!  
Margaret bites her fingers, worried.

**MARGARET**

Do you -- like it?

**WALTER**

I love it! ...How'd you get the eyes so lifelike? Is it the highlights?

**MARGARET**

**(PROUD)**

No. The secret is the shadow. I shadowed the eyelid. Margaret smiles shyly. Walter smiles back, full of warmth. He takes her face in his hands.

**WALTER**

I owe you an apology. I was initially dismissive of your kids, those emotion-wrenching blobs of humanity... but they have a real strength.

**MARGARET**

**(SHE LAUGHS)**

Is that your best version of sincerity?

**WALTER**

I'm trying! Ah, you know me. See -- this is why I need your help! I want to go on tv, to defend our art.

**MARGARET**

You're going to be on television?!

**WALTER**

Yes! But... what will I say??

**(BEAT)**

Meaning -- what compels me... to paint... these paintings?? A bizarre pause. The two of them look around the room. At all the Big Eyes peering down at them.

**MARGARET**

Maybe you have an unhealthy obsession with little girls.

**WALTER**

Cute.

**44.**

**MARGARET**

**(SHE SNICKERS)**

I guess you've painted yourself into a corner.

**WALTER**

Funny! Keep 'em coming! You're a

regular Steve Allen. You want heat  
this winter? Help me out!

**MARGARET**

Walter... art is personal.  
Walter picks up a picture of TWO LITTLE GIRLS IN TUTUS. He  
stares, perplexed.

**WALTER**

What would make a grown man paint a  
picture like this?!  
No answer. He thinks of stories, wheels spinning.

**WALTER**

I grew up, surrounded by six sisters.

**(NO GOOD)**

I grew up in an orphanage?

**(STRUGGLING)**

I grew up... in a world where adults  
had vanished, and children and kittens  
ran wild over the desolate landscape!  
Margaret smiles.

**MARGARET**

What about your Paris street scenes?  
Why do you paint those?

**WALTER**

Well, because... I lived it! I  
experienced it!

**MARGARET**

(calling his bluff)  
And was it really all sun-dappled  
streets and flower vendors?  
Huh? Walter stares off at the Waifs. They peer out from  
broken windows... chain-link fences...  
And then -- he gets it.

**WALTER**

Well -- NO! Of course not. It was  
after the War. There was destruction  
everywhere...

**(PAUSE)**

**(MORE)**

**45.**

**WALTER (CONT'D)**

I traveled the Continent. The ravages  
were horrifying...

**CUT TO:**

**INSERT - FULL FRAME TV SCREEN**

Walter is on TV, on a LOCAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS SHOW. He's coated with makeup, sitting rigidly, fingers gripping his chair.

**WALTER (ON TV)**

My psyche was scarred in my art student days. Nothing in my life has ever made such an impact as the sight of the children: War-wracked innocents, without homes, without parents, fighting over garbage... He sits in a half-circle of PROPER WOMEN, who are spellbound.

**WALTER (ON TV)**

Goaded by a frantic despair, I sketched these dirty, ragged little victims... with their bruised minds and bodies, their matted hair and runny noses. There my life as a painter began in earnest. Walter sadly looks up to the HOST. The man is shellshocked. Mute. Walter waits, then sighs.

**WALTER (ON TV)**

The insane, inhuman cruelty inflicted upon these children cut deeply into my being. From that moment on, I painted the lost children with the eyes. Those eyes that forever retained their haunting quality. The ladies are stricken. A few dab their eyes.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - DAY**

Keane posters get RIPPED off a wall. RIPPED off a mailbox. PULLED off a construction site!

**EXT. KEANE GALLERY - NEXT DAY**

Walter strides along, a bounce to his step. He reaches the gallery -- then stops, dumbfounded. It's PACKED with PEOPLE! Not rich, but regular folks, gawking at the art.

**46.**

Wow. A sweet moment... then some TOURISTS see Walter and happily accost him: "Walter Keane!" "Mr. Keane!" They thrust papers and POSTERS at him to autograph. Walter grins and scribbles his signature. Glancing over their shoulders, he sees Ruben down the block, standing outside his own gallery. Gaping in disbelief. Walter chuckles... then flips him off. Ruben's face falls.

**INT. KEANE GALLERY - SAME TIME**

Walter pushes through, shaking hands, greeting the CUSTOMERS:

**WALTER**

Good afternoon! Delighted!  
(he reaches the SEXY BLONDE  
CLERK and pinches her ass)  
How many sales today?

**BLONDE CLERK**

"Sales?" None with this crowd.  
Walter's smile drops, surprised.

**BLONDE CLERK**

These people are looky-loos! They  
can't afford the paintings. But we  
gave away a heap of posters!  
Huh? Walter peers, baffled. Suddenly -- a loud FRWWIPPPP!  
Walter whirls, startled. Outside, two GIRLS tear a big poster  
off the front window.  
Walter's eyes widen. Slowly, he turns back. At the counter,  
FOLKS and KIDS are grabbing free posters from a box.  
Walter stares. Processing this. And then... being struck by  
an idea of absolute genius...

**INT. STORAGE ROOM - SECONDS LATER**

Walter is on the telephone, peering through the doorway.  
Hiding from the customers. Spying. WHISPERING.

**WALTER (ON THE PHONE)**

It's the craziest thing. I started  
charging for the posters! First a  
nickel... then a dime.  
(struggling to whisper)  
YES, Maggie! It's cuckoo! So it got  
me thinkin': Would you rather sell a  
\$500 painting, or a million cheaply-  
reproduced posters?!  
(he LAUGHS, exultant)

**(MORE)**

**47.**

**WALTER (ON THE PHONE) (CONT'D)**

See, folks don't care if it's a copy.  
They just want art that touches them!

**CUT TO:**

**ANIMATION**

**WALTER'S VOICE**

And then... we could sell it  
anywhere!! EVERYWHERE!

60's-style MADISON AVENUE GRAPHICS: A still of a HARDWARE STORE. Mops, light bulbs, then -- BING! -- framed KEANES. A PHARMACY. Aspirin, candy bars -- BING! -- framed KEANES. A GAS STATION. Tires, motor oil, and -- BING! -- KEANES.

**INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY**

An aisle of Sundries: Plastic toys, beach balls... Waifs. A sign says "WE HAVE KEANE!"  
Around the corner, Margaret shuffles along, listlessly buying banalities: Cereal. Soap. She turns the cart... and runs into her wall of teary-eyed kids.  
Margaret peers, muddled.  
Then she turns away -- to a RACK OF PAPERBACKS. They offer fast hope, inspiration. Margaret seems disconnected. She runs her hand down the options... a book of Numerology... a book on Judaism... an Edgar Cayce prophecies manual...  
AT THE REGISTER - Margaret gazes up. The CASHIER is a sad Beatnik Girl. In a haze, Margaret notices the whole market is full of LONELY WOMEN:  
One LADY is her doppelganger -- same age, blonde, gripping a cart. Next aisle over, a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN stares into space. Nearby, a YOUNG MOM wrangles her children.  
We shift to Margaret. Face gaunt. Eyes empty. Troubled...

**INT. APARTMENT PAINTING ROOM - DAY**

Curtains drawn, Margaret frantically SKETCHES. She's cabin feverish. In her robe. Hair dirty. And -- up to something. These sketches aren't squat children with round eyes. They're different: Figures with long lines.  
Margaret frowns and rips the paper. She tries again! Another angular figure -- straight fingers... no!  
Again! A woman... reclining. Then an indication of a face: A slash... and then -- two small almond shapes for eyes.

**48.**

Hmm. Margaret's face brightens. She likes it.

**LATER**

Margaret rabidly paints. Spurting globs of color. The woman is blonde, almond eyes cool, lips curled with mystery... Margaret glances in a mirror. It's a self-portrait. It's Margaret, aloof. Alone at a table.  
Suddenly the door opens. Margaret GASPS, startled, and spins the canvas away. Walter barges in, dressed like a million. He HALTS -- making a sour face.

**WALTER**

Whew! Something smells in here. You should open a window.  
Margaret blinks, a bit dazed.

**MARGARET**

What time is it?

**WALTER**

I dunno. 6:30, 7? ...Didn't Janie get dinner?  
Margaret shrugs. Walter leans in.

**WALTER**

When's the last time you washed your hair?

**MARGARET**

I've been... busy.

**WALTER**

(he notices the turned canvas; he's intrigued)  
What do you got back there? Lemme see.

**MARGARET**

No --! It's just... something I'm working on. It's not for the world.  
Walter gives her a funny look.

**WALTER**

"The world"? Baby, it's me!  
(stepping forward, a bit

**MALEVOLENT)**

I'm your number one fan.

**MARGARET**

No, please! Walter, it's -- personal.

**49.**

**WALTER**

**(GETTING CLOSER)**

But we're husband and wife. We shouldn't have secrets...  
Margaret gulps, fretting. Finally, without options -- she flips over the canvas of the lonely blonde.  
And -- Walter is taken aback. His eyebrows raise, shocked.  
Margaret bites her lip. Will he go ballistic?

**ANGLE - WALTER**

He leans right up to the painting.  
His expression is inscrutable. Studying the technique. We have no idea what his emotion is.

**WALTER**

It's a completely different style.

**MARGARET**

Yes it is.

**WALTER**

**(BEAT)**

It looks like you.

**MARGARET**

It's a self-portrait.  
Beat.

**WALTER**

How am I gonna explain that?  
She shifts about.

**MARGARET**

I thought... maybe... I could sign it  
myself.  
Hmm. Walter's eyes narrow.

**WALTER**

That seems a bit confusing. "Keane"  
means me.

**MARGARET**

Yes, I know... but... when people ask  
me if I paint, I don't know what to  
answer! I just want the pride of  
being able to say -- that's mine.  
Walter's wheels are ratcheting.

50.

**WALTER**

Who'd you tell about the Big Eyes?

**MARGARET**

Nobody!

**WALTER**

**(PARANOID)**

Was Dee-Ann here?! Did Dee-Ann see  
this painting?!

**MARGARET**

No! NOBODY saw it!

**WALTER**

You tell anybody, the empire  
COLLAPSES! Do you wanna give back the  
money? We've committed FRAUD!

**MARGARET**

I KNOW! My God! I live with this

every minute of my life!

**(IMPASSIONED)**

Janie used to have a mother who painted. Now what's she think?! I lock myself in this room ten hours a day... and then you walk out with finished paintings! He scowls, offended.

**WALTER**

Janie thinks I'm in here, painting.

**MARGARET**

C'mon! You haven't picked up a brush in months!  
(starting to sob)  
We used to paint together! Easels next to each other, side-by-side --

**WALTER**

That was the honeymoon period! Margaret breaks into tears. Walter tenses.

**WALTER**

Jesus, you're so fragile.

**MARGARET**

I've kept my end of the bargain! I've never told!  
(she SOBS harder)  
Please! Just let me have this!  
Walter recoils, unable to take this. He relents.

51.

**INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - ANOTHER DAY**

Another PHOTO OP, but big: A CAMERA CREW rushes about. Lights get set-up. Walter, Margaret, and Jane work at easels. Walter dabs at a Big Eye. Margaret works on a sad, long-neck blonde. Jane paints a goofy flower, like any child. Dick Nolan takes notes.

**DICK**

So you're now called "The Painting Keanes"?

**WALTER**

Yep! Walter and his girls! With galleries in three cities!

**DICK**

I had no idea Margaret painted.

**WALTER**

Yeah, we don't talk about it. Sadly,  
people don't buy lady art.

**MARGARET**

**(INTERJECTING)**

What about Georgia O'Keefe?  
Dick shakes his EMPTY GLASS, distracted. Walter points.

**WALTER**

The bar's over there.  
Dick goes to get a refill. Walter shoots Margaret a look.

**WALTER**

Yeah, Margaret's a superb artist, in  
her own way. I even steal a few tips  
from her, now and then!

**(HE CHUCKLES)**

Behind every great man is a great  
woman.

**DICK**

True true. So Margaret, where do you  
get your ideas?

**MARGARET**

(a bit tentative)  
Oh... from the world around me. And I  
love Modigliani's use of line.

**DICK**

ModiWHAT? The Italian joint?

52.

**WALTER**

Oh, for Christ's sake, Margaret! Dick  
writes a gossip column --

**(BEAT)**

Let's stick to the family angle. Get  
a gander at little Janie over there!  
Walter steers Dick to Jane, cute at her little child's easel.

**WALTER**

What a talent! Look at these Keanes!  
If you cut open our veins, we bleed  
oil! Er -- turpentine.

**(AWKWARD)**

Uh, Dick, you know what I'm goin' for.  
Make it sound good.  
DING-DONG! It's the doorbell. Everyone turns.

**JANE**

Who's that?

**WALTER**

Ah! A little treat! The fourth member of the Painting Keanes! Margaret and Jane turn, confused. Walter whips open

**THE FRONT DOOR**

Revealing LILY, 10, a quiet girl in bobbed hair. She holds a little overnight bag.

A Buick HONKS, and Walter waves as it drives away. Walter stares at the girl, then puts on big hammy airs.

**WALTER**

Lily, honey, how are you?! He gives her a giant hug. She responds stiffly -- a girl who doesn't see her father too often.

**LILY**

I'm fine, Dad. I lost a tooth.

**WALTER**

Really? Did you get in a fight?

**LILY**

**(SHE LAUGHS)**

No. It fell out!

**ANGLE - MARGARET AND JANE**

They gape in bewilderment. Who the hell is this girl??!

**53.**

**BACK ON WALTER AND LILY**

Walter admires Lily's mouth.

**WALTER**

Well is the tooth fairy somethin' I gotta deal with, or did your mother already handle it?

**LILY**

**(DRY)**

She handled it.

**WALTER**

Good! Good good! Well, just go throw your stuff in the kids' room, then you can come join the fun! Lily toddles out.

**ON THE GROUP**

Margaret and Jane are speechless.  
Walter acts like nothing bizarre has happened.  
Dick eyeballs all this with major curiosity.

**DICK**

Walter... you never told me you had  
another daughter.

**WALTER**

Didn't I? Sure. Lil's from my first  
marriage.  
Margaret struggles to hold her rage. Disoriented...

**MARGARET**

Walter?

**(URGENT)**

Walter! We need to speak.  
Margaret gestures: Get in the kitchen! He nods and follows.

**INT. KITCHEN**

Margaret shuts the door, then spins on him.

**MARGARET**

What is going on here??!

**WALTER**

That's Lily. I'm sure I mentioned her --

**MARGARET**

No you didn't.

**54.**

Margaret peers at him. How much can she trust?

**MARGARET**

Did she just move in??

**WALTER**

No! Her mom's just going to Vegas for  
the weekend.

**(BEAT)**

I'm supposed to have her once a month,  
but I don't make her mom enforce it.

**TIGHT - MARGARET**

Her head is spinning.

**MARGARET**

How can you keep something so big a  
secret???

**TIGHT - WALTER**

He starts to answer... then gives her a look: You are kidding?  
Walter squirms defensively.

**WALTER**

She's a sweet girl.

**MARGARET**

**(HISSING)**

I'm sure she is.

**WALTER**

I put up with your daughter. I never  
said a peep.  
Margaret's jaw drops.

**MARGARET**

I'm gonna pretend you didn't say that.

**WALTER**

I'm sorry. Sorry! Please... let's  
just try to get through this.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. JANE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Jane's room, cute with stuffed animals and troll dolls.  
Lily is in the corner, awkwardly unpacking her bag. Trying  
not to impose on Jane's space. The girls peer at each other.

**LILY**

Dad told me you had a bunk bed.

**55.**

Jane shakes her head. She feels bad.

**JANE**

Take the bed. I can sleep on the

**FLOOR --**

**LILY**

No, that's not fair! The floor's fine  
for me.  
Jane smiles nervously. She stares at this new girl.

**JANE**

Do you live far away?

**LILY**

I guess... about a twenty minute drive.

**JANE**

**(STARTLED)**

"Twenty minutes"?! That's close!  
Jane blinks, confused.

**JANE**

But you never see Walter?

**LILY**

No, I see him all the time! He comes  
up and visits every week.  
Jane is taken aback. Lily sees this.

**LILY**

Doesn't he talk about me?

**JANE**

**(LYING)**

Huh? Uh... sure. I guess a little.  
Jane thinks, fretting.

**JANE**

Does he talk about me?

**LILY**

**(LYING)**

Uh... yeah. Sometimes.

**JANE**

**(PLEASED)**

So what's your mom like?

**LILY**

She's pretty. She drives a Buick.  
She cries a lot.

56.

**JANE**

Yeah, mine's the same.

**(BEAT)**

Except she drives a Packard.  
Lily nods. Jane lowers her voice naughtily.

**JANE**

I have some peanut butter hidden in my  
sock drawer. Do you wanna eat it?  
Lily smiles: Sure. Jane opens a drawer and removes a jar of  
Skippy. The two girls sit on the floor, happily eating the  
peanut butter with their fingers.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. KEANE GALLERY - NIGHT**

Klieg lights streak the sky! A crazed CROWD is packed INSIDE. A big sign announces: "NOW APPEARING: AMERICA'S FIRST FAMILY OF ART - 'We paint truth and emotion.'"

**INT. KEANE GALLERY - NIGHT**

The place is filled with Big Eyes. Waifs waifs waifs! Cash registers RING. Money changes hands. "Sold" stickers go up. Walter works the room.

**WALTER**

Yeah, Walter Keane and Gauguin have a lot in common. They both walked away from successful careers to travel the globe, live on a boat... We move... finding Margaret alone in a small ANNEX. It displays a few of her sad blondes, alongside Jane and Lily's paintings of flowers and Mr. Potato-Head. Margaret sits, seeming like an adult at the children's table. An urbane RICH MAN glides by... and is taken with one of Margaret's nubile blondes. He gazes at the lounging figure. Margaret sits up. Alert, pleased with his interest. She tingles. Then, happily excited, unable to hold it in:

**MARGARET**

I painted it!

**RICH MAN**

Really?

**(IMPRESSED)**

It's very evocative. ...Sensual... He smiles flirtatiously. She smiles shyly and shrugs.

**57.**

He steps forward -- then peers closer at the painting. The SIGNATURE is a feminine scroll: "MDH Keane"

**RICH MAN**

"MDH"? You're so... misterioso.

**MARGARET**

Yes, we don't use my name, since people don't take women's art seriously.

**(BEAT)**

"MDH" are my initials. And more! I'm interested in numerology... and as you know, seven is a very good number.

**RICH MAN**

**(PUZZLED)**

Er... seven?

**MARGARET**

Luckily, my maiden name is Margaret Doris Hawkins! "M" is the 13th letter of the alphabet, "D" is 4, "H" 8! If you add up 1 and 3 in 13, that gives you 4, making 4 plus 4 plus 8 equals 16, then 1 plus 6 equals seven! The man's head is spinning. He's lost all interest. Across the room, Walter sees this debacle. He marches over.

**WALTER**

Psst! Maggie! Can I have a second?  
(he PULLS HER ASIDE)  
Good grief! What the hell are you babbling about?! Long division??  
Could you please help the world and shut your mouth? You want just one number in his head: The sales price!  
Her face drops, hurt. Acquiescing.

**WATCHING THIS**

Two SNOBBY ARTISTS smirk and GROAN at this scene.

**SNOBBY ARTIST #1**

Two nuts that fell from the same tree!  
It's insufferable. Why are we starving, while they print money?

**SNOBBY ARTIST #2**

Because that nut's a genius! He sells paintings! Then he sells pictures of the paintings! Then he sells postcards of pictures of the paintings.

58.

They stare bitterly. Then, a terrible, shameful idea forms:

**SNOBBY ARTIST #1**

I'll bet I could bang one out in ten minutes.

**SNOBBY ARTIST #2**

It wouldn't have the dopey sincerity.

**SNOBBY ARTIST #1**

The customers won't notice...  
They peer sheepishly at each other...

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. STORE WINDOW - DAY**

Ruben is walking past -- then stops, pained. A window display of Keane Big Eyes shares space with paintings of CUTESY KITTENS lapping up milk.

We WIDEN, revealing a whole wall of rip-offs! All with odd anonymous signatures: "Gig." "Eve." "Igor." A cavalcade of

**WIDE-EYED ANIMALS AND KIDS... DANCING WITH GUITARS... DRESSED AS HOBOS... PLAYING IN PAJAMAS.** But these children aren't sad. They're just... blank. Ruben gasps at the dead-eyed pictures.

**RUBEN**

Christ. It's a movement.

**CUT TO:**

**INSERT - TELEVISION - FULL FRAME**

"The Tonight Show" opening CREDITS:

**ANNOUNCER (V.O.)**

It's "The Tonight Show!" With guests Jerry Lewis, the Everly Brothers, artists Walter and Margaret Keane -- The CHANNEL CHANGES: A children's toy commercial (STOCK). A tear-streaked, crying plastic DOLL, a flagrant Waif rip-off:

**FEMALE ANNOUNCER (V.O.)**

She's "Little Miss No Name," the doll with the tear. From Hasbro. The CHANNEL CHANGES: Spanish TELEVISION. A Keane painting gets hung in Madrid's National Museum of Contemporary Art.

**CUT TO:**

59.

**INT. PAINTING ROOM - DAY**

The Margaret sweatshop is going full-blast. Canvases are everywhere: Melancholy MDH ladies. Woeful Keane kids. Even a portrait of Natalie Wood, copied from a photo. Margaret dips a tiny brush, quickly detailing the tear on a child's cheek... when the doorbell CHIMES.

Hm? Margaret puts down her brush, wipes her hands, then hurries out. She opens the door... REVEALING THAT WE'RE IN A DIFFERENT HOUSE. A GIANT, PHENOMENAL 1960s EXTRAVAGANZA.

**INT. WOODSIDE HOUSE - SAME TIME**

Margaret runs across the marble floors, past the swooping, Modern lines of a California ranch... all-white furniture... a kidney-shaped pool glistening blue outside the glass... a cute TOY POODLE barking at the door.

**MARGARET**

Rembrandt, shush!  
In the foyer, Margaret opens the front door. And standing there is Dee-Ann. Dazzled. She laughs with surprise.

**DEE-ANN**

My God! I thought I misread the address.

**MARGARET**

Yeah. That driveway is long.  
(she giggles, embarrassed)  
Honestly, I can't believe I live here.  
Dee-Ann glides in -- then freezes, agape.

**DEE-ANN**

Whoa.

**MARGARET**

I know! Two acres, a pool, five

**BEDROOMS --**

**(PAUSE)**

Though I thought that was excessive,  
since there's only three of us here.

**DEE-ANN**

Three? I thought there were four.

**MARGARET**

What?

**(CONFUSED; BEAT)**

Oh -- you mean Lily! No, she doesn't  
really live with us. That was just in  
the articles.

60.

**DEE-ANN**

Crazy. A fake daughter...  
Dee-Ann's eyes take it all in. Astonished.

**DEE-ANN**

It's been so long since I've seen you.

**MARGARET**

I know. North Beach is 30 miles, but  
it might as well be 300...

**DEE-ANN**

You're probably busy, hanging out with  
your new rich buddies.

**(BARBED)**

"Kim Novak."

**MARGARET**

Oh, please! She's Walter's friend.  
(a quiet shrug)  
He brings people by... the Beach Boys  
were here. But, it's pretty isolated.  
Dee-Ann goes silent. Margaret seems dwarfed by the house.

**MARGARET**

Jane has nice friends. Sometimes I  
pick them up at the junior high, and  
we all get pizza.

**(AWKWARD)**

But she's busy... Are you hungry?

**DEE-ANN**

I'm thirsty.

**MARGARET**

Good! I'll whip us up two gin fizzes.  
Margaret forces a smile and scurries behind a giant curved wet  
bar. She pulls out ingredients: Gin, lemon juice, soda...

**MARGARET**

When we moved in, I thought a wet bar  
was extravagant... but it's surprising  
how much use you can get out of it.  
Dee-Ann watches the drinkmaking.

**DEE-ANN**

How's Walter?

**MARGARET**

He couldn't be happier. He has  
everything he ever dreamed of.

**61.**

**DEE-ANN**

And so do you! Fabulous.  
Dee-Ann smiles archly. She glances away -- and notices  
Margaret's STUDIO, the door half-open.

**DEE-ANN**

Oh, is that your studio?  
Margaret turns -- and gasps.

**MARGARET**

No --! You can't go in --

**DEE-ANN**

I just want a peek. See what the workspace of a wildly successful artist looks like --

**MARGARET**

Dee-Ann, please! STOP --  
Margaret rushes to block her -- but Dee-Ann pushes open the door, revealing...

**INT. PAINTING ROOM**

A room full of MDHs and Keanes.  
Dee-Ann stops, puzzled. She glances at Margaret -- who has turned white as a ghost.  
Immensely curious, Dee-Ann slowly enters. She peers around at the two styles of paintings...  
A strained silence. Finally, Margaret whispers.

**MARGARET**

W-Walter paints in here too.  
Hmm.  
Dee-Ann walks about, examining the canvases. Then, her gaze settles on the Big Eye that Margaret was working on.  
Below the easel is the wet brush on the open jar of paint.  
Margaret sucks in her breath. Dee-Ann sees this.

**DEE-ANN**

Is Walter home??  
Margaret has no answer.  
The two friends look at each other... Dee-Ann waiting... wondering if Margaret is going to lie to her...

**62.**

When..... SLAM!

**WIDE**

Both women startle. FOOTSTEPS. Then... Walter strides in!  
Margaret's eyes pop.  
Walter's pop even bigger. He glares at the ladies.

**WALTER**

What the hell's going on here?!!

**MARGARET**

**(TIMID)**

Uh... Dee-Ann was just... she...  
Margaret trails off. Walter thinks, then SNAPS.

**WALTER**

You KNOW I don't like anyone seeing my work before it's done!  
Walter rushes to the Waif, then for show grabs up the wet brush and quickly starts to "finish" the painting.  
Suddenly -- an odd expression crosses his face. He eyeballs

the canvas, realizing he doesn't know what to do.  
A furtive glance. Then, unbowed, he hastily dips the brush  
and slaps a little black onto the shaded background.  
Walter spins, victorious.

**WALTER**

There!

**CUT TO:**

**INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER**

The three sit silently, tension thick, sipping gin fizzes.  
Nobody speaks.  
Walter finishes his drink and pours a fresh one.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. FOYER - NIGHT**

They are drunk and SCREAMING. Walter pushes Dee-Ann out the  
door.

**63.**

**WALTER**

You and your whole non-representational  
crowd are FRAUDS!!

**DEE-ANN**

SHUT UP! You're so full of shit,  
Walter!

**WALTER**

Get outta my house! My big house!

**(LIVID)**

Go back to sellin' your coat hanger  
sculptures on Fisherman's Wharf!

**DEE-ANN**

Fuck you!  
Dee-Ann staggers outside, then hops in her car.

**OUTSIDE**

Dee-Ann GUNS the engine and squeals away. The car peels down  
the very long driveway.  
Margaret and Walter watch the car disappear into the distance.  
Without looking over, Walter speaks.

**WALTER**

I don't want her ever invited here  
again.  
Margaret nods, terribly sad.

**MARGARET**

I won't.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT**

Margaret and Walter lie in bed, awake. Arms crossed. Unspeaking.

**EXT. WOODSIDE HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY**

Margaret and 13-YEAR-OLD JANE play on the lawn with the poodle. Jane laughs as the dog chases in circles.

**JANE**

Go, Rembrandt! Get the ball!  
She tumbles, and Rembrandt licks her ear. She giggles.

**MARGARET**

Okay, honey. I have to go work.

**64.**

**JANE**

Can I come?  
(an awkward silence)  
No. I can never come. No! I  
shouldn't even ask.  
Jane glares glumly.  
Margaret peers hopelessly at her daughter... then goes inside.

**INT. WOODSIDE HOUSE**

Margaret strolls to her studio. WE SEE the poodle scampering behind her on its cute little legs. She enters the

**INT. PAINTING ROOM**

Margaret doesn't notice the tiny dog follow her in. She LOCKS the door, then turns -- surprised.

**MARGARET**

Where did you appear from? Didn't you hear? No visitors!  
Rembrandt wags his tail, his little eyes bright. Margaret peers.

**MARGARET**

Is this what it's come to? You're the only living soul I can tell my secret?  
(she lowers her voice)  
Well -- I painted them all!  
(she shudders with release)  
It's TRUE! I did every single one --

She gestures, then catches sight of a Walter street scene.

**MARGARET**

Well, every one except that street scene.

**(BEAT)**

But I did the rest. Every Big Eye!  
And nobody will ever know. But YOU.  
Rembrandt pants and BARKS.  
Margaret chuckles, then goes to work. She pulls a CURTAIN across the sliding glass door. At her easel, she squirts a tube into a well and starts mixing colors.  
Rembrandt jumps on the couch.

**MARGARET**

No you don't! It's nice to have company, but that sofa is new.  
(she pushes him off)  
Let's find you some carpet to lay on.

65.

Margaret goes over to a CLOSET. Rembrandt follows, curious.

**IN THE CLOSET**

Margaret turns on the bare bulb inside. It's filled with old easels... cans... junk...

**MARGARET**

I think there's a scrap back here...  
She rummages, sliding the junk aside. In back is a TATTERED

**WOODEN CRATE.**

Hm?

**MARGARET**

Well what's this?  
Margaret swings the bulb closer. The crate is covered with SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS and international markings.  
Margaret's interest is piqued. She tugs at the lid, pulling it off. Revealing inside a STACK OF STREET SCENE PAINTINGS. Ten or fifteen of Walter's canvases.  
Or so it seems.

**TIGHT - MARGARET**

She peers closer.

**TIGHT - THE PAINTINGS**

The top painting is a typical Parisian street scene: Cobble stones, a man carrying baguettes, an old lady selling roses...  
But down in the bottom corner is the signature: "S. CENIC"

**TIGHT - MARGARET**

She sucks in her breath, shocked. She examines the painting. Then, she hurriedly grabs the next canvas. It's another

sunlit scene: A quaint Parisian cafe, a man playing accordian, and in the bottom right corner... the signature: "S. CENIC" WHAT?! Margaret grabs the next canvas. "S. CENIC" The next canvas. The next canvas! They all are signed "S. CENIC" Margaret starts hyperventilating.

**66.**

She thinks, then suddenly bolts from the closet.

**INT. PAINTING ROOM**

Margaret races, rushing up to Walter's painted street scene, hung on the wall. We PUSH IN TIGHT, as she shoves her face up to the canvas, so close we can see the brushstrokes -- As we MOVE IN TO THE SIGNATURE. Simply, "W. KEANE" Margaret's face is flushed. She gazes at the name... then rushes back to her work area. She manically hunts: Brushes, tubes, rags -- and an EXACTO KNIFE. Ah! She runs back to Walter's painting. Heart pounding, she grazes the knife up against the signature, then DIGS. And -- the "W. KEANE" flecks off. Revealing... underneath... the name "S. CENIC"

**CLOSEUP - MARGARET**

She trembles, overcome. Music SWELLS. Her eyes spin back --

**SERIES OF QUICK FLASHBACKS:**

Walter painting at the Palace of Fine Arts. His canvas is blank.  
Walter in the apartment, signing his name to a finished piece.  
Walter spattering paint on his clothes.  
Walter the day we met him. He shows off a rack of finished paintings at the Sunday Art Show.

**BACK ON MARGARET**

She collapses.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. WOODSIDE HOUSE - THAT EVENING**

A grandfather clock says 10:15. Margaret sits gloomily, staring at the clock. Clutching a drink.

**LATER**

2:30 a.m. Margaret still stares at the clock. She's stewing. Suddenly, keys in the door. Walter swings in, tanked and full of life. He skids across the marble, humming to himself -- when -- he's startled by his wife. He jerks.

**67.**

**WALTER**

M-Maggie! What're you doin' up?  
Margaret glares. Not speaking. He shrugs.

**WALTER**

I had a helluva night. Worked three  
or four clubs.  
(he winks, loosey-goosey)  
Stumbled onto some hot gossip: Madame  
Chiang Kai-shek is coming to town!  
Straight from Taipei! I think we  
should present her with a painting --  
get Dick to flack it...

**(HE THINKS)**

Or the heck with Dick. I met a new  
guy at UPI...

**MARGARET**

Maybe you should give her one of your  
street scenes.

**WALTER**

**(HAZY)**

You think? I dunno -- I thought you  
could whip off a doodle of Chinatown.  
With a cute little kid, sort of a big-  
eyed slanty-eyed thing...  
Margaret's anger is raging. She glares, steely.

**MARGARET**

No, Walter. She's a dignitary.  
Doesn't she deserve a piece that comes  
straight from you?

**(SHARP)**

From your experience???

**WALTER**

Yeah? Maybe you're right. She  
probably doesn't have a Parisian  
street scene hanging in her palace.  
Margaret nods, as if they've settled something. She turns to  
walk away -- then suddenly SPINS.

**MARGARET**

Unless Madame Chiang Kai-shek already  
has a Cenic.

**ON WALTER**

He freezes up.  
Suddenly sober, smacked to reality.

**WALTER**

"Cenic"...? Uh, what's that?  
Margaret stares, eyes sharp.

**MARGARET**

Cenic is the name of the artist who  
did all your early paintings.

**WALTER**

Huhhh?  
(spinning his lie)  
Urgh... oh! CENIC!  
(he laughs crazily)  
Cenic was my nickname in Paris! All  
my art school pals loved my scenic  
views, so they called me "Scenic"!  
But since those Frogs can't pronounce  
a hard "e," I became "Cenic."  
He looks up at her hopefully.  
But she shakes her head.

**MARGARET**

The more you lie, the smaller you seem.

**WALTER**

(unyielding, scrambling)  
How DARE you accuse me of lying! I'm  
proud of my early Cenics!

**MARGARET**

Then why do you paint over the name?  
Walter gasps, floored.  
Margaret bores in.

**MARGARET**

A bit of advice: Don't use a water-  
base over an oil. It flecks off.  
Walter cowers.

**WALTER**

You sound crazy! For God's sake.  
You've... you've SEEN me paint!!!!

**MARGARET**

No, I haven't.

**(QUIET; STRONG)**

I always thought I had... but it's  
some kind of... mirage. From a  
distance you look like a painter, but  
up close... there's nothing there.

**CLOSEUP - WALTER**

All life drains from his face. His eyes go glazed. He speaks mechanically. Tiredly...

**WALTER**

I studied art in Paris. I went to school at the Beaux-Arts. The Grand Chaumiere. I spent hours in the Louvre, gazing at the greatness of the Masters...

**MARGARET**

Walter?  
He turns. She winces, pained.

**MARGARET**

Have you even been to Paris?  
Walter blanches. He shakes, broken up.  
He looks away, then staggers to a chair. He falls into it. Trembling. Not able to look her in the eye...

**WALTER**

I wanted... I so wanted to be an artist. But -- it just never turned out good.  
Margaret stares, seething.  
Then, without comment, she storms away. She SLAMS the door shut. BANG!  
Walter doesn't move.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING**

Margaret makes Jane breakfast, scrambling up eggs.  
Jane glances over her shoulder -- and notices Walter in the living room, asleep on the couch.  
An awkward pause. Jane says nothing.

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM - LATER**

Margaret is making the bed. Straightening the pillows.  
In the b.g., Walter silently creeps into view. Shamefully standing in the doorway. Not speaking...  
Margaret knows he's there, but doesn't acknowledge his presence. Finally, without making eye contact --

70.

**MARGARET**

I don't want you sleeping in this room any longer. I -- I can't keep living these lies.

**(SHARP)**

There's three extra bedrooms. Go pick one.  
He nods.

**INT. HOUSE - LATER**

Margaret sits, unmoving, trapped in the big house. Outside, a JAPANESE GARDENER trims the hedges.  
Margaret stares at the walls, a smothering Walter Hall of Fame: Framed magazine articles on Walter, smugly posed with the Waifs.  
She swallows, then gently opens a dresser drawer. Inside is an ORIGINAL WAIF from long ago. A small oil of Jane, when she was a toddler.  
Margaret stares... and then her face slowly crumbles.

**INT. PAINTING ROOM - DAY**

Margaret huddles with a SKETCHPAD. Rembrandt is at her feet. She's drawing. She looks up, as Walter anxiously enters. He's holding a drink. He clears his throat.

**WALTER**

What are you working on?

**MARGARET**

A new MDH. Something for me. It's about a woman trapped in an uncaring world. I call it, "Escape."  
Walter bites his lip, afraid to talk.

**WALTER**

I figured out a solution to our problems.

**MARGARET**

What?

**WALTER**

Teach me.

**(BEAT)**

Show me your tricks. Then you can pass off the Waifs, and we won't be lying anymore.  
She looks up in disbelief.

71.

**MARGARET**

And then -- YOU'LL paint them?

**WALTER**

Sure! Why not?

**MARGARET**

**(OFFENDED)**

Walter, this isn't paint-by-numbers!  
You think it's easy?! It took me  
years to learn --

**WALTER**

Y-you're right!

**(SHEEPISH)**

But you know me! I'm a quick study.  
And I've got the basics...  
He trails off, unsure where this is going.  
Trying to rouse her, Walter rushes to an easel and throws up a  
blank canvas. She eyeballs him.

**MARGARET**

If you knew the basics, you wouldn't  
be at the easel. You have to sketch  
it first!  
Walter tightens, feeling stupid. He lets go of the canvas.  
Margaret stares, deciding. Then, she tosses him a PAD.  
Walter catches it. Slowly, he crosses over...

**ANGLE - MARGARET AND WALTER**

They peer at each other, like a Mexican standoff. Then, he  
nervously picks up a pencil.

**WALTER**

So...? What's first?

**MARGARET**

I dunno. You tell me. You're the  
creator.  
He frowns.

**WALTER**

It's a -- Keane.

**MARGARET**

Oh, a Keane! How witty.

**(SARCASTIC)**

You know, when we met all those years  
ago, I never would've imagined in my  
wildest dreams that one day --

72.

**WALTER**

YEAH YEAH! Point taken. I'm standing  
here naked and humiliated in front of  
you. Look... can we just do a crying

child?  
She gazes at him. Fingering her pencil...  
Trying to jump-start things, he starts to draw a circle --

**MARGARET**

How old is the subject?

**WALTER**

Huh? C'mon, it's a head --

**MARGARET**

It matters! A young child's head is round. An older child's head is oval!  
He feels pressured. Hand shaking, he draws a crooked circle.

**WALTER**

The child is this old!

**(ANGRY)**

You're trying to make this difficult --

**MARGARET**

NO I'M NOT! Every line is a decision!

**(IMPASSIONED)**

It's easy to talk about art, but it's not easy to MAKE art!!

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. PAINTING ROOM - MONTAGE:**

Margaret easily outlines a head, then two circles for eyes.  
Walter tries copying, but his eyes are misshapen.  
Again, Walter copies, but he's wobbly. Angry, he scratches it out.  
Margaret tries to help, guiding his hand. Insulted, he pushes her off. He CRUMPLES the page.  
NEW TACTIC: Walter grabs her sketch. He puts it on a LIGHT-TABLE. Despairing, he starts to trace it..

**LATER**

Walter finally paints. We can't see the canvas, but he's very meticulous. His expression quite earnest. He adds a final flourish... and then... a flicker of pride crosses his face. He smiles.

**73.**

We slowly MOVE AROUND... to REVEAL HIS PAINTING. And... it's... absolutely dreadful. Kindergarten quality.  
Walter stares.  
Then, he furtively glances at Margaret's work. Comparing... The realization slowly sinks in. He has no ability.  
A sadness swells into fury... and suddenly Walter GRABS HIS CANVAS and SMASHES IT AGAINST THE EASEL. CRASH!! The canvas

SHREDS. The frame blasts into pieces!  
Walter spins. He glares at one of Margaret's finished  
Waifs... then explodes, even more enraged. HE PICKS UP

**MARGARET'S PAINTING AND STARTS TO SWING IT AT THE WALL --**

**MARGARET (O.S.)**

Walter!!  
Huh? He lurches, startled.

**ACROSS THE ROOM**

Margaret stares him down.  
Sweaty, chest heaving, Walter staggers towards her. His face  
scowls, untamed. He clenches his fist, like he might attack

**MARGARET --**

Then -- he SCREAMS and smashes her CANVAS. BAM!!! The  
painting RIPS apart. Walter KICKS his foot through the  
remains, then spins and charges from the room.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. KEANE GALLERY - DAY**

TOURIST FAMILIES mill about. Suddenly the door SLAMS open.  
Walter bolts in, wild-eyed. A bit deranged.  
The families gawk -- glancing from Walter to his photograph  
all over: "WALTER KEANE! THE WORLD'S TOP-SELLING ARTIST!"  
Walter ignores them. He rushes a buxom REDHEADED CLERK.

**WALTER**

How's SALES?

**REDHEAD CLERK**

Oh, you know. Mondays --  
Walter MUTTERS strangely. He snatches some paper and starts  
scribbling. Then he runs into the

74.

**STORAGE ROOM**

Walter agitatedly paces, circling the stacks of PRINTS.

**WALTER**

How many posters are back here?

**REDHEAD CLERK**

Exactly? I dunno, 3,000 or --

**WALTER**

Does the printer owe us more? Do we  
owe him??

**REDHEAD CLERK**

Uh, let me --

**WALTER**

What about the OILS?! Are there more at the warehouse?

**REDHEAD CLERK**

Mr. Keane, I'd have to make a --

**WALTER**

For the LOVE OF MUD! What am I PAYING you for?  
The girl freezes, rattled. Walter spins, flipping out.

**WALTER**

Hypothetical question: If you were a man, would you marry Kim Novak or my wife?  
What?

**WALTER**

Okay! Different question! If I got crippled and had to stop painting, how long before the gallery ran out of inventory and went belly up??

**REDHEAD CLERK**

**(RATTLED)**

Do you want a glass of water, Mr. Keane?  
Walter sighs. His thoughts drift away...

**WALTER**

What's it all mean? Why are we put on this earth? A 100 years from now, will people even know we existed...?

75.

**REDHEAD CLERK**

**(UNCOMFORTABLE)**

I -- I don't understand. You'll always be famous. You were on the Jack Paar Show...  
(she glances away)  
Er, excuse me, sir.  
The girl hurries away, to ring up some customers. Walter silently watches. At the register, the Tourists buy a print. A "Madonna and Child," MDH-style. BAMMM! Walter's eyes bulge, like he's been stung.

**WALTER**

It's not even mine! It's one of hers.  
Aching, he staggers off. Sweating, woozy, he sits at a table.

Distracted, he glances down at a newspaper...

**INSERT - NEWSPAPER**

There's an article on the 1964 NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR. A headline says "CONSTRUCTION RACES TOWARD APRIL OPENING"

**TIGHT - WALTER**

His eyes narrow, piqued. World's Fair??? He leans in...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BISTRO - NIGHT**

A return to the charming bistro Margaret and Walter went to all those years ago, on their first date. The Maitre'd BEAMS.

**MAITRE'D**

Ah! Monsieur and Madame Keane!  
Delighted! Always such an honor!  
ANGLE on the Keanes. They are sullen. At wit's end.

**AT THE TABLE - LATER**

They stiffly sit at their old table. He snarls, eyes black.

**WALTER**

This doesn't change anything.

**MARGARET**

(trying to hold her ground)  
I know the truth.

76.

**WALTER**

Who cares?! This is all your fault!  
Maybe it's time to shake things up.  
Start puttin' my name on the MDH's.  
Margaret is astonished. A fury crosses her face.

**MARGARET**

NO! Absolutely NOT!! I still hate  
myself for giving you the Waifs!

**WALTER**

Quiet! Lower your voice --

**MARGARET**

Oh, I'll talk as LOUD AS I WANT --

**WALTER**

NO YOU WON'T! Or --

**(FLAILING)**

I'll have you whacked!  
She jerks, flabbergasted.

**MARGARET**

What??!

**WALTER**

If you tell ANYONE, if you squeal,  
I'll take you out! I -- I know  
people. Remember Banducci's cousin?  
The liquor wholesaler?  
Pause. Margaret breaks into tears.

**MARGARET**

You're threatening me...?! Fine, kill  
me! My God, I've kept our secret for  
years! I've never once --

**(CRYING)**

Do you know what it's been like for  
me? I don't have any friends. I've  
lied to my own child...  
Margaret shudders, distraught. Mascara runs down her cheeks.  
Walter squirms, uneasy with this.

**WALTER**

Christ, wipe your face! You look a  
mess.

**(BEAT)**

It's life imitating art! A crying  
Keane!  
He hands her his handkerchief. She dabs at her eyes.  
A looming quiet.

77.

**MARGARET**

What do you want, Walter? Everything  
with you is calculated. We're back  
where we had our first date...  
Walter's eyes widen.  
We MOVE IN TIGHT on them. He drops his voice. Dead serious.

**WALTER**

Look, I don't deny I need you. You're  
the one with the gift.

**(BEAT; HUSHED)**

Right now there's a shot... God, I'm  
shaking I'm so excited. The New York  
World's Fair. 70 million visitors.  
Opening day, I unveil my MASTERPIECE!  
She is flummoxed.

**MARGARET**

What masterpiece?

**WALTER**

Exactly! What have I been missing all this time?! Da Vinci has his Mona Lisa... Renoir has his Boatmen's Lunch... but where's my defining statement?

**MARGARET**

You sound insane. Artists don't announce a masterpiece --

**WALTER**

Why not?! Didn't Michelangelo know he was hittin' a homer, when he was on his back painting the Sistine Chapel?

**MARGARET**

He worked on that for FOUR YEARS!

**WALTER**

Posterity, baby...!!  
She empties her drink.

**WALTER**

And here's the best part. It's for Unicef! Unicef is sponsoring the Hall of Education. Aw, we can finally give back to the children of the world!!  
Margaret stares, wavering...

**CUT TO:**

**78.**

STOCK FOOTAGE: The 1964 WORLD'S FAIR READIES TO OPEN. Men on 109 cranes hammer away. Fantastic, futuristic pavilions rise. The Hall of Education gets erected...

**INT. PAINTING ROOM - DAY**

ANGLE - An INSANELY BIG, BLANK CANVAS. It's 8 feet across, filling half the room. Margaret is in the throes of hastily creating the MASTERPIECE. Sketches are tacked everywhere. Margaret is chain smoking, sleep-deprived. The DESIGN is a staggering multiracial CROWD of children, mournful, extending to the horizon. Walter enters, silently scrutinizing.

**MARGARET**

It's too big. Why'd you promise them Cinerama size?

**WALTER**

Because it has to encompass all children. All races! One hundred

stricken faces! Marching to infinity!  
The ultimate Walter Keane!

**(BEAT)**

At least that's what I told Life Magazine.  
Margaret ignores this. Walter does a rehearsed turn.

**WALTER**

Oh, a publisher says it's good timing to put out a coffee table book. You know, classy: "Tomorrow's Masters."

**(AWKWARDLY "CASUAL")**

So they need my... uh, early portfolio. My artistic evolution... Margaret's eyes pop. That's it. We PUSH IN... as she struggles to contain her frustration. Suddenly -- she SNAPS.

**MARGARET**

You're right! Where are your preliminary sketches?? All that time in art school, and somehow we waylaid your youthful experiments! The half-finished charcoals, the struggles...

**WALTER**

(a bit off-balance)  
I know you're being sarcastic, but these are all good ideas. Berlin war orphans... early self-portraits...

79.

Her eyes narrow.

**MARGARET**

Get out of here. I'm trying to work. She brusquely spins away, back to the canvas. He shoots her an uncertain, dirty look. What just happened?

**CUT TO:**

**INT. HOUSE - NIGHT**

Teenage Jane wanders through the house. Shouting.

**JANE**

Mom, what's for dinner?

**(NO RESPONSE)**

Mom! Are you home...?  
Nothing. No sign of Margaret.  
Jane tries the door of the PAINTING ROOM. As always, it's locked. Hm... Jane sneakily glances around. Opportunity.

Quickly, she stands on a chair and reaches above the door sill. She feels around... and finds a KEY.  
Ah! Hurriedly, Jane UNLOCKS the door and lets herself in.

**INT. PAINTING ROOM - SAME TIME**

The room is a madhouse of WAIFS. Jane takes it all in. Her face darkens.  
Then, heavy breathing. She turns. Margaret is asleep, curled up under the almost-finished Masterpiece. Jane leans in. Slowly, Margaret rouses -- then suddenly:

**MARGARET**

W-what are you doing in here --?

**(BLINKING; HALF-AWAKE)**

This is -- Walter's studio!

**(DISCOMBOBULATED)**

You have to leave!  
Jane peers sadly at her mother.

**JANE**

Mom... I know.

**MARGARET**

Jane, you don't know anything!!  
Jane's face tightens. Insulted.

**JANE**

I'm not a child anymore.

**80.**

Angry, Jane runs out. Margaret stares after her -- completely remorseful. She knows she did the wrong thing.  
Suddenly, she runs after Jane and grabs her tightly.  
Overcome, Margaret starts weeping. Jane starts crying too.

**CUT TO:**

**INSERT - LIFE MAGAZINE**

A gargantuan spread. The LIFE ARTICLE is titled "The Man Who Paints Those Big Eyes." We PULL OUT...

**INT. NEW YORK TIMES - DAY**

Starchy John Canaday reads the article, gaping in utter disbelief. His desk says "JOHN CANADAY, SENIOR ART CRITIC." He also has Walter's BOOK, "Tomorrow's Masters Series." We WIDEN, revealing he's in the busy New York Times NEWSROOM.

**CANADAY**

Four... five... SIX pages! Is there something here I'm missing?

**(UPSET)**

He's like -- the Hula-Hoop! He just won't go away...!  
He flips a page -- then his jaw drops.

**CANADAY**

"Will be unveiled in the Grand Pavilion of the Hall of Education... internationally celebrated artist has been selected... will represent the aspirations of children worldwide --"

**(HE GASPS)**

Oh this is ABSURD!  
He GRABS for his phone.

**INT. WORLD'S FAIR HALL OF EDUCATION - DAY**

A panel flicks, and the huge empty space lights up. It's overwhelmingly cavernous, a bright, freshly-painted Space Age spectacular. Up high hangs The Masterpiece and its 100 kids. A sign says "TOMORROW FOREVER."  
Below, two tiny figures walk in: Canaday and an obtuse CIVIC LEADER. Canaday stares up in horror. Utterly stupefied.

**CANADAY**

And WHO was on the selection committee?

**CIVIC LEADER**

Oh! Well there wasn't a "committee," per se. We just had a luncheon with me, Ed, Jerome, Jerome's wife...

**(MORE)**

**81.**

**CIVIC LEADER (CONT'D)**

**(HE THINKS)**

Though technically, we didn't invite submissions. Mr. Keane just contacted us directly!  
Canaday reacts, smoldering.

**INT. NEW YORK MANSION - DAY**

A STRING QUARTET PLAYS at a GRAND PARTY. It's completely fabulous -- an old-money mansion filled with stuffy BLUE BLOODS, all tuxes and gowns.  
In the doorway appear Walter and Margaret. They're dressed to kill. Walter's radiant -- but Margaret looks like she's about to emotionally disintegrate. Suddenly, he WHISPERS.

**WALTER**

Stop. Let us appreciate this moment.  
This is what we've worked toward our

whole lives: Rarified air. Inside  
this house are the movers and shakers.  
Kennedys. Rockefellers.

**(MISTY-EYED)**

Until today, we've always been on the  
outside, looking in. But when we  
enter... we will belong.

**MARGARET**

I was happier selling paintings in the  
park.  
He gapes, appalled.

**WALTER**

You are one crazy bitch.  
Walter spins and grandly enters. He grabs two CHAMPAGNES from  
a server.

**WALTER**

So maybe you have problems with the  
choices we made... but -- c'mon!  
Wednesday, the World's Fair opens.  
Thursday, our book goes on sale!

**MARGARET**

Friday, I file for divorce.

**WALTER**

Aw, why are you always so miserable?

**(IRRITATED)**

Well, I'm gonna enjoy my afternoon!  
The HOSTESS is a bejeweled dowager. Walter makes a beeline.

82.

**WALTER**

Mrs. Teasdale! Walter Keane. I just  
want to thank you for hosting this  
absolutely enchanting soiree.  
Walter takes the woman's hand. She smiles stiffly, silently  
horrified. She glances around for help.  
She catches a SOCIETY MAN's eye, and he hurries over.

**SOCIETY MAN**

Hey, Keane. Have you seen the Times?

**WALTER**

Er, no. Honestly, I've been so busy  
all day preparing for this lovely --

**SOCIETY MAN**

I think you should read the Times.  
The Man gestures. Perplexed, the Keanes follow him into a

**INT. DEN - SAME TIME**

The room looks like a hunting lodge. On the desk are all the DAILY PAPERS. Walter grabs the NEW YORK TIMES -- then gasps.

**INSERT - NEW YORK TIMES**

It's open to a reproduction of "Tomorrow Forever," above a scathing REVIEW.

**THE KEANES**

stare, then turn pale.

**INSERT - REVIEW**

A BLIZZARD of WORDS assaults us:

"GROTESQUE" "APPALLING"

"TASTELESS"

"Lowest common denominator"

**MARGARET AND WALTER'S**

faces drop, terribly hurt.

**MARGARET**

How could anyone... say something so cruel?

83.

**WALTER**

(a seething fury)  
What do YOU care?! That's MY name  
being dragged through the mud!  
Walter CRUSHES the newspaper. He spins on the guy.

**WALTER**

Is he here?

**SOCIETY MAN**

Er... yes. Which is perhaps why it  
would be best for everybody if you --  
Walter STORMS out. The guy futilely chases --

**INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME**

Walter barrels in. The ROOMFUL OF GUESTS are all staring.

**WALTER**

**WHO WROTE THIS SHIT?**

People cower.  
Walter scans the crowd... and spots a cluster. Ah-hah! There  
is Canaday. Possessed, Walter strides over. Canaday stares,  
defiant. It's tense -- until he clears his throat.

**CANADAY**

Mr. Keane, this is not the venue.  
Perhaps you'd like to write a letter  
to the editor.  
Walter's throat tightens. He steps right into the guy's face.  
Women GASP. Tension bristles -- like a fight's about to erupt.

**WALTER**

What are you afraid of??

**(MALEVOLENT)**

Just because people like my work, that  
means it's automatically bad??

**CANADAY**

No. But that doesn't make it art  
either.  
Walter shudders. Canaday asserts himself.

**CANADAY**

Art should elevate -- not pander!  
Particularly in a Hall of Education!

**WALTER**

**(OFFENDED)**

You have no idea!

**(MORE)**

84.

**WALTER (CONT'D)**

Why does a man become a critic --??  
Because he can't create! You don't --

**CANADAY**

Ugh! That moldy chestnut --

**WALTER**

Don't interrupt! You don't know what  
it's like! To put your emotions out  
there, naked, for the world to see.

**CANADAY**

What emotions?! It's synthetic hack  
work!  
(he loses it)  
Your "masterpiece" has an infinity of  
Keanes -- which just makes it an  
infinity of kitsch!  
Crazed, Walter grabs a FORK off the buffet.  
He lunges, like he's about to STAB Canaday!

**WIDE**

Women SCREAM.

A few MUSCULAR MEN start to break through, to help.

**WALTER**

looks around -- then quivers, realizing he's out of control. Shamed, he slowly drops the fork. People breathe a sigh of relief.

**MARGARET**

is mortified. This is all too awful. Silent, she watches Walter back out of the party...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. WORLD'S FAIR HALL OF EDUCATION - DAY**

"Tomorrow Forever" gets TAKEN DOWN. Burly WORKMEN slide the painting into a huge WOODEN BOX.

**INT. KEANE HOUSE - NIGHT**

The house is dark. Walter is raging, in an alcoholic fury.

**85.**

**WALTER**

What's wrong with lowest common denominators?! That's what this country was built on!! He KNOCKS over a lamp. Crash!

**WALTER**

I'm gonna sue EVERYBODY! I'll sue that pansy critic! And the World's Fair! And -- Unicef!

**(CRAZED)**

Yeah! I'll take down Unicef, and all their precious little boxes of dimes! Walter RUSHES BY. In a dim alcove, we make out Margaret and Jane, huddled in the shadows. Jane looks up at her mother with wide, frightened eyes. Suddenly -- Walter LUNGES at them! They SCREAM, startled.

**WALTER**

But I can't sue you, can I?  
(in Margaret's face)  
You were the ultimate betrayal! You FAILED me with that painting! Suddenly, he pulls out a BOOK OF MATCHES. He lights a MATCH and waves it sinisterly --

**WALTER**

You crossed over from sentimentality  
to KITSCH!  
He THROWS the match at them.

**JANE**

Ow!

**MARGARET**

**STOP IT!**

He lights ANOTHER MATCH.

**WALTER**

You like making me look bad?? You  
enjoy people laughing at me??!  
He PUNCHES the wall, then tosses the match. Fwoosh!

**MARGARET**

Walter!  
He throws ANOTHER MATCH.

**86.**

**WIDE**

Margaret grabs Jane and starts running.  
They rush into the blackness.  
Walter squints woozily, then starts to CHASE --

**INT. HALLWAY**

The ladies run for their lives.  
Violent THUDS behind them!  
Something SMASHES.  
Margaret reaches the Painting Room. She YANKS Jane inside,  
then SLAMS the door!  
Walter staggers up.

**WALTER**

**LET ME IN!**

**INSIDE THE PAINTING ROOM**

Margaret LOCKS the door. She backs away.

**INT. HALLWAY**

Walter tugs the door. He POUNDS it, crazed.

**WALTER**

Lemme in, you BITCHES!!

**INSIDE THE PAINTING ROOM**

Margaret and Jane shudder.

All around them, Big Eyes stare down from above.

**INT. HALLWAY**

In his haze, Walter remembers the hidden key. Raging, he drunkenly pulls over the chair, then stands on it. But he's too wobbly -- and falls. Bam!

**WALTER**

Ow!

**INSIDE THE PAINTING ROOM**

Margaret hugs Jane.

**87.**

**JANE**

Mom, what are we gonna do??!  
Margaret thinks.

**INT. HALLWAY**

Walter laughs crazily and lights another MATCH. It flickers.

**WALTER**

You got all that paint and turpentine in there? Well I'm gonna burn you up! He pushes the lit match through the KEYHOLE.

**WALTER**

You're gonna blow like an atom bomb!

**INSIDE THE PAINTING ROOM**

The match drops on the floor -- then goes out, harmless. That's it. Margaret makes a decision.

**MARGARET**

We're leaving. Determined, Margaret runs to the curtained wall. She whips it aside -- revealing the sliding glass doors.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER**

Walter is lighting another match -- when he spins. Through rheumy eyes, HEADLIGHTS orbit across the front window. He peers, confused...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT**

Margaret and Jane drive fast. Adrenaline pumping. Lights of the city flash across their faces.

**MARGARET**

I'm sorry I wasn't the mother I could have been. I -- I should have done this years ago...

**JANE**

But where are we going?

**(FLUMMOXED)**

We don't even have any clothes!

**88.**

**MARGARET**

Where we're going, we won't need much.

**(LONG PAUSE)**

Hawaii.  
Jane freezes, not sure whether to believe.

**JANE**

Really...?  
Margaret smiles softly. We slowly PUSH IN to her.

**MARGARET**

Yes, Hawaii. Because it's paradise. There's flowers, and birds, and beautiful colors.

**(GENTLE)**

And... we're going to make a new life for ourselves.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. HAWAIIAN HOUSE - DAY**

Hawaii, paradise indeed. A dense, tropical forest of deep greens and giant blooming flowers. Margaret stands on the porch of her small, lovely house, breathing in the clean air. She looks lightened. In a clearing, Jane plays with some LOCAL TEENS.

**INT. HAWAIIAN HOUSE - SAME TIME**

The house is simple. In one light-filled corner is an EASEL. Margaret is painting Nature: Splaying ferns. Wild succulents. In the window, a BIRD flies by, its plumage a dazzling red. Margaret thinks -- then takes out a tube of RED PAINT. She starts to apply the vivid color onto her canvas... When -- a RINGING PHONE. Margaret reacts, startled. This is unexpected. And unsettling. It RINGS. RINGS. RINGS. Finally, she hurries to her one telephone, mounted on the kitchen wall. She slowly answers it.

**MARGARET**

Hello?

**WALTER (O.S.)**

Maggie --?  
She freezes.

**INTERCUT:**

**89.**

**WALTER ON THE PHONE - WOODSIDE**

He is strangely controlled and forboding.

**WALTER**

Boy, you were sure hard to track down.  
Thought I might never find you...  
(a menacing chuckle)  
I'm a little agitated. I got the  
strangest papers in the mail today.  
Margaret tries to stay cool.

**MARGARET**

It's a decree of legal separation. I  
would appreciate if you signed it.

**WALTER**

Aren't you acting too rash?

**MARGARET**

Walter, our marriage is over.

**WALTER**

Granted, our romance may have seen its  
better days. The bloom is off the  
rose.

**(BEAT)**

But I'm looking out for both of us.  
What about Keane Incorporated?! We're  
a professional couple. Like Roy  
Rogers and Dale Evans.

**MARGARET**

Walter, I want a divorce.

**WALTER**

Whew. It hurts to hear you say those  
words.  
Silence. He is feigning "hurt feelings." Struggling for a  
response. Finally, his thoughts sharpen up, smart and shrewd.

**WALTER**

I sure hate that it's come to this.

**(BEAT)**

Well... I SUPPOSE I can agree to a split -- as long... as you assign me all rights to every painting ever produced.

**MARGARET**

If that's the price.

**WALTER**

Really?!

**90.**

Walter is surprised. Greedy, calculating, he wonders if he can push her further...

**WALTER**

Uh -- okay. And... then, we have to consider future revenue stream.

**MARGARET**

My God, Walter! How much more money do you need?

**WALTER**

It's -- the marketplace! I gotta stay fresh. Surely you understand?

**(DEADLY)**

You want me out of your life, here's my term: You'll have to paint me 100 more waifs. 100 more Walter Keanes! Margaret's face drops, pained. But she doesn't object.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. HAWAIIAN HOUSE - DAY**

Margaret loads BUNDLED, WRAPPED PAINTINGS into a dusty pickup truck. Jane comes running by, barefoot.

**MARGARET**

Would you like to go into town? I'm stopping by the post office.

**JANE**

No, I'm gonna surf with the gang. Margaret tightens up.

**MARGARET**

Your friends are a bit... wild.

**JANE**

**(SHE SNAPS)**

Loosen up, Mom! You're impossible!  
You move me all the way to Hawaii.  
Then I actually make some friends, and  
all you do is complain about them.

**(CUTTING)**

Maybe you need to make some.

**MARGARET**

Y-you know I can't have people over to  
the house.

**JANE**

That's right! Or they'd see the  
precious paintings!!

**91.**

Margaret has no response. Jane runs off.

**INT. HAWAIIAN HOUSE - DAY**

Margaret is alone, pouring a drink. She mixes in some ice --  
then sees something odd.

**OUTSIDE THE WINDOW**

Coming down the long driveway are two FIGURES. Two small  
WOMEN, patiently walking toward the isolated house.  
Margaret stares, puzzled. The women come closer. They are  
Asian, dressed in formal dresses. Curious, Margaret creeps  
over, spying on them...  
They walk up and ring the bell. DING-DONG! An unsure beat...  
then Margaret opens the door. The ladies smile politely.

**ASIAN LADY #1**

Hello. We're visiting everyone in  
this neighborhood with an important  
message. No doubt you're busy, so  
we'll be brief.

Huh?

Margaret stares at them deadpan, highball in her hand.

**ASIAN LADY #2**

We have something to share with you  
about the wonderful things that God's  
Kingdom will do for mankind.  
Margaret's face darkens.

**MARGARET**

I'm not interested.  
She starts to close the door... but they continue.

**ASIAN LADY #1**

Do you mean that you are not  
interested in the Bible, or in  
religion in general?

**MARGARET**

I'm not interested in whatever you're selling.  
The lady glances at Margaret's glass. She smiles gently.

**ASIAN LADY #2**

But we're not selling anything. We're just here to share the good news.

92.

**MARGARET**

**(DOUR)**

From where I'm standing, I don't see much good anywhere. Just a lot of pride, and thievery, and people treating each other poorly.

**ASIAN LADY #2**

Yes! Exactly! That is the good news!  
What? Margaret is lost. The ladies grab the opening.

**ASIAN LADY #1**

Bad things in the world are a sign. They show us that earthly Paradise is at hand.

**ASIAN LADY #2**

Do you know what it says in Timothy

**3:1-5?**

(she pulls out a BIBLE and quickly thumbs to a page)  
"In the last days, critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves. Lovers of money. Self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient --"

**MARGARET**

Sounds like my ex-husband.  
Margaret laughs. Surprised, the women laugh, too.  
Margaret peers at them. At their Bible.

**MARGARET**

Would you like to come in?

**CUT TO:**

**LATER**

The three women sit. Margaret gazes...

**MARGARET**

It's been so long since I've been happy. But, I don't even know why I'm telling you... two complete strangers.

**ASIAN LADY #1**

It's our mission to comfort those in mourning. Jehovah wants us to help the brokenhearted.

**MARGARET**

So you're -- Jehovah's Witnesses?

**93.**

The ladies nod.  
Margaret thinks.

**MARGARET**

I've explored so many religions. But they all had their flaws...

**ASIAN LADY #2**

Then they're wrong for you. Read your Bible -- you might be surprised by the answers it gives.

**(GENTLE)**

Margaret, you can't go down a path unless you know, in your heart, it's the right one.

**MARGARET**

And how do you know...?

**ASIAN LADY #2**

**(SHE SMILES)**

Because our beliefs are supported by the Scriptures. Jehovah is the God of truth.

Beat.

Margaret glances over at a half-completed "Keane" on the easel. A strange pause.

**MARGARET**

What does that mean, exactly?

**ASIAN LADY #2**

**(EMPHATIC)**

Honesty leads to self-respect. A feeling of well-being.  
Margaret is piqued. Her eyes widen. Like a Keane.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. HAWAIIAN HOUSE - NIGHT**

Margaret is enthralled, avidly perusing a happy-looking booklet, "The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life."

**MARGARET**

It says here a worshiper of Jehovah must be honest in all things. Jane snorts.

**JANE**

I just can't believe you let people in the house.

**94.**

**MARGARET**

I have nothing to hide!

**(TORRID)**

It also says no lies. "Speak truth. Let the stealer steal no more." Margaret and Jane lock eyes.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. WOODSIDE HOUSE - DAY**

Loud JAZZ plays. Back home, Walter is living a Man's, Man's World. He's partying, drinking and dancing with two cute HIPPIE CHICKS in bikinis. The place is like a WAREHOUSE, Keane PRINTS stacked everywhere.

**HIPPIE CHICK**

Shit, this is crazy! All these copies... you're like Warhol!

**WALTER**

Nah, Warhol's like me. That fruitfly stole my act! "The Factory"? I had a factory before he had a soup can! The girls scrunch their faces, lost. Then -- DING-DONG! Walter peeks out the window, then grins.

**WALTER**

Ah! It's my art supplies.

**INT. PAINTING ROOM - SECONDS LATER**

Alone, Walter eagerly pries open a GIANT CRATE. He pulls out padding. Wadded Honolulu newspapers. Then... a PAINTING. Ah! A new WAIF, surrounded by colorful tropical plants. Walter smiles triumphantly -- until -- his happiness melts into confusion. Then horror. We ZOOM INTO the painting's SIGNATURE. It says "MDH Keane."

Walter freaks.

**WALTER**

**AAAGGGGHH!**

**CUT TO:**

**INT. HAWAIIAN KINGDOM HALL - DAY**

The JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES sing a joyous, high-spirited PSALM:

**95.**

**JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES**

"Tremble not before your foe,  
Let all lovers of truth know!  
That my reigning Son, Christ Jesus,  
From the heav'ns has cast the foe.  
Soon will bind the Devil, Satan,  
Letting all his victims go!"  
Margaret and Jane are singing happily.

**INT. HAWAIIAN HOUSE - DAY**

Margaret pours her liquor down the sink.  
Margaret tosses her cigarettes in the trash.  
Margaret swells, feeling a burst of power. Then a VOICE:

**D.J. (O.S.)**

Oh yeah! We got a special guest  
today. A world-famous celebrity who  
just called up and asked to come in..!

**INT. RADIO BOOTH - DAY**

Angle on BIG LOLO, a gregarious Hawaiian D.J. in headphones.

**D.J.**

She's malihini! Moved to the islands  
a couple months ago... so let's give a  
big aloha to Margaret Keane!  
He pops in a cart. Canned APPLAUSE plays. We reveal across  
from him... Margaret. He grins.

**D.J.**

So is it true your husband Walter is  
the top-selling painter in the world?  
We SLOWLY PUSH IN to her. Tentative, she speaks.

**MARGARET**

No... Big Lolo. Everything you just  
said is false.  
Margaret takes a deep breath. Working up her courage.

**MARGARET**

One: Walter is no longer my husband.  
(a long pause)  
And Two: He's not... a painter.  
Margaret exhales.  
The D.J. is confused. He checks his notes.

**96.**

**D.J.**

But, am I... mixed-up? Ain't he the  
guy who does the crazy eyes?

**MARGARET**

No. Though he's been taking credit  
for ten years.

**(STRONG)**

I'm the only painter in the family.  
Margaret slowly smiles.  
And then... a calmness comes over her. Like a cloud has  
lifted.

**INT. RADIO STATION HALLWAY - DAY**

Margaret and Jane walk away. Jane beams proudly, then gives  
her mother a warm hug.  
Then -- LOUD CLICKING:

**CUT TO:**

**INT. NEW YORK TIMES - DAY**

John Canaday stands over a WIRE SERVICE TELETYPE MACHINE. He  
stares at a printout, incredulous.

**CANADAY**

You have got to be kidding!

**INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY**

TIGHT - The San Francisco Examiner. A small headline says

**"EYE DID IT! CLAIMS WIFE"**

We PULL OUT, revealing Dee-Ann. She grins in disbelief.

**DEE-ANN**

I knew it!!!

**INT. SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER - DICK'S CUBICLE - DAY**

Dick Nolan reads the article -- and SPITS UP his martini.

**INT. HUNGRY I - DAY**

Banducci CACKLES, terribly amused.

**INT. ART GALLERY - DAY**

Ruben SHRIEKS at the article.

**RUBEN**

Who would WANT credit?!

97.

**INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY**

Walter sits in his favorite haunt, eating lunch and reading a NEWSPAPER. Suddenly -- he GASPS.

**WALTER**

Holy mother of GOD!  
Walter JERKS UP -- feral -- like an animal sensing danger. He whirls and looks around. Paranoia ratcheting. Is everybody staring at him? Walter starts shaking in horror. Then -- he jumps and BOLTS OUT.

**INT. BAR - NIGHT**

Walter sits with Dick. Walter's desperate, sweaty.

**WALTER**

Margaret's gone berserk! You gotta help me! I need a story, a wire story -- national! -- to calm things down. Dick peers shrewdly.

**DICK**

I don't know... Walter. What she has said is pretty inflammatory.

**WALTER**

But it's nuts! It doesn't even make sense. When I was studying art at the Beaux Arts in Paris, she was still a kid in Tennessee!  
Dick reacts. Walter whips out the "Tomorrow's Master's" BOOK.

**WALTER**

Look! These are my early sketches.  
(he flips pages, like a

**MAGICIAN)**

See?! Berlin orphans, 1946!

**DICK**

**(PIQUED)**

But... how could she...

**WALTER**

Exactly! It's impossible! We didn't meet for another nine years! After she busted her first marriage.

**(HE SHRUGS)**

Hell, she busted OUR marriage! Sleeping around with whatever trash she could find!!  
Dick's head is spinning.

98.

**DICK**

I-I, but... why would Maggie do this?

**WALTER**

She's unhinged! She left me and moved into the jungle. She fell in with a bunch of religious zealots:

**(WHISPERING)**

Jehovah's Witnesses.

**DICK**

I really don't know much about them...

**WALTER**

Oh! These people are gone! Solid gone! They don't celebrate Christmas, they can't salute the flag... they won't even let Janie go to the prom!  
Dick is startled.

**INT. HAWAIIAN HOUSE - DAY**

Margaret sits with a GROUP of her Witness friends. She is sorrowful. Confused. Clutching ASSORTED NEWSPAPERS.

**MARGARET**

He made me sound crazy!!

**ASIAN LADY #2**

Just rise above it.

**MARGARET**

But how can I?! He claims I copied HIM! That he taught ME how to paint! (reading the NEWSPAPER)  
"She used a slide projector to trace my work and fill in the colors."

**ASIAN LADY #1**

And which part of that is untrue?

**MARGARET**

**ALL OF IT!**

**(IMPASSIONED)**

When I finally told the truth, I felt good about myself for the first time in years!! I'm not going to let him take that away.  
Nobody is sure what to say. Until -- Jane pipes up:

**JANE**

Hey. Is Jehovah okay with suing??

**CUT TO:**

**99.**

**EXT. HONOLULU FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - DAY**

The mighty courtroom steps are SWARMING WITH PEOPLE. It's a circus. LOCAL TV NEWS CREWS do standups:

**REPORTER #1**

Seventeen million dollars!

**(BEAT)**

The art world is abuzz! Is it possible that the decade's top-selling painter can't even paint??!

**REPORTER #2**

Or is Mrs. Keane simply a bitter ex-wife, trying to steal her husband's fame and fortune?

**(BEAT)**

Today in Federal Court, lawyers present their opening arguments in the case of Margaret Keane vs. Walter Keane and Gannett Newspapers. A trial that could produce the largest libel and slander award in Hawaiian history. Margaret, Jane, Margaret's LAWYER, and her FRIENDS walk up. Margaret glances over -- and spots FEMINIST SUPPORTERS smiling at her. They hold up signs: "Stand Up and Be Counted!" Margaret is bewildered. She hurries in.

**AT THE CURB**

Walter and a POSSE OF LAWYERS exit a towncar. The REPORTERS charge over, as Walter puts on a confident face.

**REPORTER #1**

Mr. Keane! Are you at all concerned

about the charges?

**WALTER**

I'm angry as hell! But I'm lucky to have the mighty Gannett News Company watching my back. I expect to have this whole trial dismissed by noon.

**(BEAT)**

Truthfully, my only concern is that somebody get this woman some psychiatric care. She needs it!

**CUT TO:**

**INT. FEDERAL COURTROOM - LATER**

The EIGHT JURORS watch attentively. Walter sits with the table of slick Gannett lawyers. The lead lawyer stands in front of the irritable Chinese JUDGE.

100.

**GANNETT LAWYER**

Margaret Keane is a public figure. And as such, she has to prove that our newspapers published statements, aware of probable falsity.

**(BEAT)**

But there is no evidence that our editors could have known that the assertions were untrue.

**(BEAT)**

We would like to submit 692 articles and interviews in which Mrs. Keane credits Mr. Keane as the painter of the so-called "big eye" children. His Associate hands two massive bound PILES OF NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES to the BAILIFF. Margaret winces. Walter grins, eating it up. The Judge stares sourly at the piles.

**JUDGE**

How many years back do these go?

**GANNETT LAWYER**

Mrs. Keane has been making these statements since 1958.  
Beat.

**JUDGE**

This is a very strange case. These

paintings hang in museums all over the world, attributed to Mr. Keane. And regardless of the truth, Mrs. Keane has contributed immeasurably to the confusion...  
The Judge stares off... then makes a decision.

**JUDGE**

It seems impossible that Gannett's actions would ever meet the legal standard for libel. So -- the charge against them is dismissed.

**WIDE**

The Lawyer smiles, relieved.

**GANNETT LAWYER**

Thank you, Your Honor!

**101.**

Walter peers, comprehending... and then, a realization slowly kicks in. His face turns to horror. The Lawyer nods humbly, then spins away. He smirks at Walter.

**GANNETT LAWYER**

Good luck, Keane.

**AT THE DEFENSE TABLE**

The ENTIRE LEGAL TEAM jumps up and begins packing their briefcases.  
Walter sputters in astonishment.

**WALTER**

"Good luck"? W-where the hell are you going?!

**GANNETT LAWYER**

We were charged with libel. You're charged with slander.

**(BLASE)**

Just dance your way out of it.  
The Lawyers file out, leaving Walter alone at the table. He looks very small and pale. The Judge peers quizzically.

**JUDGE**

Mr. Keane, you appear to be without counsel. Would you like a postponement, in order to get your affairs in order?  
Walter glances over at Margaret. She stifles a laugh. He glares daggers. Then, cocksure, foolhardy, he jumps to his feet.

**WALTER**

I've always taken care of myself, Your Honor. And I don't need a bunch of rent-a-suits to defend my good name!

**(BEAT)**

Let's PROCEED!

**CUT TO:**

**INSERT - WIRE SERVICE TELETYPE MACHINE**

Words type out: "AP - HONOLULU - KEANE TRIAL TAKES STARTLING

**TURN"**

102.

**INSERT - ANOTHER WIRE SERVICE MACHINE**

More words type out: "UPI - HONOLULU - HE'S A PAINTER... AND A

**LAWYER?"**

**INT. DICK NOLAN'S OFFICE - DAY**

Dick frantically types at his typewriter.

**DICK (V.O.)**

I'm concerned about my old pal Walter Keane. The Hawaiian heat may have cooked his brain! The only thing he knows about courtrooms and lawyers comes from watching Perry Mason on television!

**CUT TO:**

**INT. COURTROOM - LATER**

Walter stands down front. Like a Broadway star, center-stage.

**WALTER**

I'm the sole creator of my art. This is my total life. My contribution to the world --

**JUDGE**

Mr. KEANE! I've told you, you must ask the witness questions! If you're acting as your own attorney, you cannot make statements at this time.

**WALTER**

Oh. Right! Ah, sorry, Your Honor.

**(BEAT)**

It's hard to keep this all straight...

Walter gathers his thoughts -- then turns to the WITNESS STAND. Sitting in it... is Margaret.

**WALTER**

Mrs. Keane. It seems impossible that you'd expect anybody to swallow your fantastic story --

**JUDGE**

**MR. KEANE!!**

Walter grimaces. He tries again, choosing his words.

**WALTER**

Mrs. Keane. You seem like a lucid woman. Reasonably intelligent... So how could you possibly have gone along with such a far-out scheme?

**103.**

We slowly MOVE IN ON MARGARET.

This is her moment. And then -- quietly, she speaks.

**MARGARET**

I was forced into it. You had -- She stops, bothered by this awkwardness. She looks away from Walter, to the Jury instead.

**MARGARET**

He had me dominated. He would rant and rave if I didn't do what he wanted. I was afraid. I didn't see any option, so I went along. I felt very bad...

**WALTER**

(like a TV lawyer)  
I want to remind you you are under oath.  
The Judge SLAMS his fists down, enraged. Walter jumps.

**WALTER**

S-sorry.  
Margaret turns back to the Jury.

**MARGARET**

I just gave in. I allowed him to take credit for the big eyes. They reflected all my feelings... and... it was like losing a child...

**(SHE SIGHS)**

I was weak. I didn't feel I could leave and support myself and my daughter. He said nobody would buy

the paintings without his personality.

**(SOFT)**

Maybe he was right...

**(TO WALTER)**

You were very talented at being charming. You were a genius at salesmanship and promotion.

**WALTER**

Hm! It sounds like you've described two different men. One a sadistic ogre... and the other a delightful bon vivant.

Margaret stares him in the eyes.

**MARGARET**

That's you, Walter. Jekyll and Hyde.

**104.**

**WALTER**

What an outrageous statement! I demand we strike that from the record!

**JUDGE**

(he SLAMS his fist)  
Overruled!!

**MARGARET**

(she loses her temper)  
No! You're outrageous! Constantly criticizing! Wearing me down! Saying I'd be "knocked off" if I ever told the truth!!

The Jury GASPS.

Walter throws out his hands.

**WALTER**

Your HONOR! I ask for a mistrial!  
Both Keanes starts QUARRELING. The Judge STANDS.

**JUDGE**

HEY! This is not a domestic squabble!  
Or -- maybe it is. But the rest of us have no interest in watching you two go at it.

Walter calms himself, contrite.

**WALTER**

I'm sorry for the emotions. I'm an artist.  
The Judge stares harshly.

**JUDGE**

Maybe.

**IN THE BACK OF THE COURTROOM**

Two SKETCH ARTISTS are busy, drawing the trial. One guy pokes the other one, to show off his work. His SKETCH is a typical courtroom drawing, except everyone is drawn with big ridiculous Keane eyes. The second guy GIGGLES. His buddy grins, then quickly erases the silly eyes before anyone sees it.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. COURTROOM - LATER**

Margaret is back at the litigant's table, with her lawyer.

**105.**

Walter stands, at his table. He shouts out.

**WALTER**

I call as my witness... Mr. Walter Stanley Keane!

A strange beat. The Jurors glance at each other. Walter reacts, like he just heard his name. He strides jauntily over to the witness stand. The BAILIFF gives the Judge a weird look. Then, he pulls out a Bible. Walter slaps down his hand.

**BAILIFF**

Do you swear to the tell the truth,  
the whole truth, and nothing but the  
truth, so help you God?

**WALTER**

**YESSS!**

Walter bounces out, a bit manic. He runs back to his lawyer table, then spins to address the empty witness stand.

**WALTER**

Mr. Keane. There has been a lot of innuendo and contradictory testimony about the genesis of the "big-eyed waifs." Would you mind clarifying to this court, once and for all, who spawned these paintings?  
Walter sprints back into the witness stand. He sits, then reacts coyly, as if he's surprised.

**WALTER**

Why -- I created the children.  
Walter starts to stand again -- but the Judge SLAMS his bench.

**JUDGE**

The choreography is not necessary.  
Just sit down and testify.  
Oh. Walter sits, then gathers his thoughts...  
We slowly PUSH IN. He smiles, wistfully...

**WALTER**

I've had a wonderful life. I've been  
an artist, a world traveler, a friend  
of untold celebrities...  
(he gets misty-eyed)  
But when I look back at it all, when I  
peer into my heart and define what  
mattered...

**(MORE)**

**106.**

**WALTER (CONT'D)**

it is that I was dedicated to the  
hungry children of the world.

**(GENUINE)**

It all began in Berlin. After World  
War II...

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**LATER**

**WALTER**

...the orphans were clutching the  
barbed wire. Their bodies lacerated,  
their fingers scrawny, their eyes big  
and helpless. Imploring me, begging  
me... "Do something!"

**(HUSHED)**

"Do something."

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**LATER**

**WALTER**

...and then Miss Joan Crawford walked  
up to me...

**LATER**

**WALTER**

...Kim Novak...

**LATER**

**WALTER**

...Liberace...

**LATER**

**WALTER**

...Wayne Newton...

**LATER**

**WALTER**

Miss Natalie Wood walked up and said,  
"That is the greatest single painting  
I have ever seen in my entire life."  
The Judge is bored out of his mind.

**LATER**

**WALTER**

I was born in a small town. My father  
made upholstery for the automobile

**INDUSTRY --**

107.

**JUDGE**

You're done.  
Walter stops, surprised.

**WALTER**

B-but, I'm not finished --

**JUDGE**

Actually, you are!  
(he blows his stack)  
I cannot stomach one more wild tangent  
or shaggy dog tale. You're not  
testifying -- you're filibustering!  
The Federal Courts are overburdened  
enough, without your docket-clogging  
nonsense.

**(BEAT)**

We can stay here until we grow old and  
die... but it's obvious that this case  
boils down to your word versus Mrs.  
Keane's word.

**WALTER**

**(HOPEFUL)**

So... mistrial?

**JUDGE**

NO! It's not a mistrial!! In my  
opinion, there's only one way to clear

up this thicket. You are both going  
to paint.  
Walter gasps, stunned. All color drains from his face.

**ANGLE - MARGARET**

Her face lights up. She slowly breaks into a satisfied smile.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. COURTROOM - LATER**

The doors SLAM open. The Bailiff leads in a crew of COURT  
DEPUTIES, all carrying ART SUPPLIES: Easels, brushes, paint...

**BAILIFF**

Awright, bring those easels down.  
Careful, don't bump anything... watch  
it with those paint cans, I got some  
newspaper on the floor down front...  
The Jury is fascinated.  
Margaret watches, quite eager. In the gallery, Jane grins.  
But Walter is horrified. Trying not to tremble.

**108.**

**DOWN FRONT**

The Bailiff directs the deputies, setting up TWO EASELS, back  
to back. On each easel is placed a small square canvas.  
The Judge addresses the room.

**JUDGE**

Now, I'm not looking for a  
masterpiece. I don't know much about  
these things -- I'm a jurist, not an  
art critic -- but, is one hour enough?  
Margaret nods: Sure.  
Shaking, Walter barely moves his head.

**JUDGE**

Okay then. You've both been provided  
with identical supplies... so --  
without any further business... Mrs.  
Keane, Mr. Keane, the court is yours.

**WIDE**

Margaret glances at Walter. What will he do?  
Walter's face is grimly blank.  
Margaret proceeds. Slowly, she pushes her chair from the  
table and rises.  
Walter doesn't move.  
Margaret walks over to the closest EASEL, then sits. She ties  
on a smock over her checkered dress.

**THE JURORS**

crane their necks, intently curious.

**MARGARET**

takes a pencil. She peeks over at Walter -- who's still glued to his seat. His face tight, his expression queasy. Staring off to some faraway place.

Margaret looks up at the CLOCK. 3:20.

Okay then. Totally calm, in a motion she's done so many times, she focuses on the canvas and starts outlining a Waif. Everybody watches. Effortlessly, she pencils the EYES. They are enormous. The largest orbs she has ever done.

109.

**WALTER**

looks ill. Wracked with uncertainty.  
The Judge turns to him.

**JUDGE**

Mr. Keane?

**WALTER**

**(FAINT)**

I'm... setting the mood.

**(WHISPERING)**

Getting the... muse to strike...

**JUDGE**

**(BEAT)**

Well, your muse has 58 minutes.

**MARGARET**

fills in more detail. Ears... nose... then, little fingers clutching a fence. The child is peeking over it, staring right at us...

**WALTER**

is melting down. In total crisis...

**THE CLOCK'S**

second hand sweeps around. It's 3:34...

**THE JURORS**

look from Margaret to Walter. Why isn't he moving??

**MARGARET**

finishes penciling. She leans back, satisfied with the composition. Then, she reaches for... the PAINT. She unscrews a tube and squirts it on the palette. She rests it on her lap and starts mixing a flesh tone...

**THE JUDGE**

gapes at Walter, befuddled.

**WALTER**

feels all eyes on him. He has to do something. Hesitantly, visibly shaking, he rises from the table. Margaret notices this.

**110.**

Walter braces himself, trying to look confident, then takes a step. Suddenly -- he SQUEALS.

**WALTER**

**OW!**

Walter contorts his face in AGONY. He grabs his shoulder.

**JUDGE**

Mr. Keane! Are you all right?

**WALTER**

No -- it's --

**(GRIMACING)**

Ah shoot! My old shoulder injury just flared up. I've got a bad muscle -- I've been taking medication for the inflammation... Walter shrugs pathetically --

**WALTER**

I -- I don't think I'll be able to paint today.

**THE JUDGE**

is astonished.

**WIDE**

The courtroom reacts.

**MARGARET**

peers at Walter, knowingly. She's not surprised. This was his only way out. A look between them -- and then she cocks a half-smile and turns back to the canvas. She squirts out some white oil paint, then begins painting the eyes.

**WALTER**

sinks down in his chair, beaten. All life gone. He stares at the emerging canvas, eyes wide, and we PUSH INTO WALTER'S FACE. He is witnessing the end of his empire... the destruction of everything that makes him who he is. We push in TIGHTER... TIGHTER... until the screen fills with his two eyes.

**111.**

Big. Sad. And filling with tears.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - DAY**

The doors open, and Margaret comes tumbling out, victorious. She has WON! She's surrounded by Jane, her friends, and a MOB OF REPORTERS. They all SHOUT: "Mrs. Keane! Margaret! Congratulations!!"

**MARGARET**

Thank you! Thank you so much.

**REPORTER #2**

What are you going to call the painting?  
She smiles, clutching the finished Waif.

**MARGARET**

"Exhibit 224."  
They all ROAR with laughter. A Reporter does a stand-up:

**REPORTER #1**

The jury found in favor of Margaret Keane on all points. She won on charges of defamation, emotional distress, damaged reputation --

**IN THE BACKGROUND**

Walter drifts out, disheveled and lost. He stares hazily... angrily at the crowd.

**WALTER**

What a group of idiots... a quagmire of incompetence...

**(RAMBLING)**

This doesn't change a thing!  
We slowly PULL AWAY, leaving him tiny in the shot. Forgotten.

**BACK AT MARGARET**

She hugs Jane. The Reporter jumps in.

**REPORTER #2**

Margaret! Do you feel vindicated by the high award?

**MARGARET**

Oh... it was never about the money. And honestly -- I doubt Walter will even pay.

112.

The Reporter chuckles. Margaret turns serious.

**MARGARET**

I just wanted credit for what I had done. The justice is... I got my art back.

**(SOFT)**

My prayers have been answered.  
Margaret takes Jane's hand and starts to walk away.  
Among the eager fans, a PORTLY LADY steps out, holding a BOOK.  
She smiles nervously.

**PORTLY LADY**

Margaret! Could I possibly have your autograph?  
Margaret looks down -- and realizes the book is Walter's volume of "TOMORROW'S MASTERS"  
Margaret stares at it in wonder, then quickly signs the cover.

**CLOSEUP - MARGARET**

We hold. She slowly smiles in pride.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. MARGARET KEANE GALLERY - DAY**

A brand-new gallery of Margaret's art. The walls are covered with NEWLY-PAINTED Waifs and MDH's. We GLIDE through the gallery... down the corridors of children and women... These paintings of big-eyed children are different. They're in magnificent colorful gardens, surrounded by joyful splashes of red, orange, green...

**CLOSING CARDS:**

"Walter never accepted defeat, insisting he was the true artist for the rest of his life. He died in 2000, bitter and penniless. He never produced another painting."  
"Margaret found personal happiness and remarried. After many years in Hawaii, she moved back to San Francisco and opened a new gallery. She still paints everyday."  
We move CLOSER to one child, into the face, until the eyes fill the frame. And then... finally, we tilt down. Revealing that the child is smiling.

**FADE OUT.**

**THE END**