

THE ELECTRICAL LIFE OF LOUIS WAIN

Story by

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Screenplay

Simon Stephenson and Will Sharpe

"PROLOGUE"

1 **EXT. GRAVEYARD, CATHOLIC CHURCH, MARYLEBONE - DAY (1880)** 1

A WILD, FOREBODING ATMOSPHERE. HEAVY RAIN as we track ominously along muddy ground. LIGHTNING reflects in puddles.

A STRANGE CREAKING and the SPLISH-SPLOSH of footsteps. A pair of muddy black shoes trample through the shot, followed by rickety wheels.

LOUIS WAIN (19, slight moustache, ill fitting funeral suit) drags a wagon behind him, overflowing with soggy fabrics.

We are in a GRAVEYARD, walking among headstones, through a garden of death. The fabrics are delightfully coloured and intricately patterned - a curious counterpoint to the grand gloom of the storm. LOUIS is soaking wet and has a slightly odd gait. He hums quietly to himself as LIGHTNING flashes.

A SCREECHY MEOW as a GRAVEDIGGER tosses a disgruntled GINGER CAT out of a freshly dug grave.

GRAVEDIGGER

Get out of it! Stupid cat...

The GINGER CAT hisses as it scurries off into the bushes. The GRAVEDIGGER inspects a ravaged lunch box.

GRAVEDIGGER (CONT'D)

Naughty bastard's just gobbled up half my herrings...

LOUIS chuckles to himself. Other FUNERAL GUESTS gather with umbrellas. A FUNERAL CARRIAGE arrives bearing the coffin.

LOUIS (V.O.)

On the 5th of August in the year 1860...

LIGHTNING FLASHES over the horizon.

2 **INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH, MARYLEBONE - DAY** 2

LIGHT FLASHES on the pale, yellow face of WILLIAM MATTHEW WAIN. He is lying dead in an open casket full of flowers.

LOUIS (V.O.)

... I was born into a decade of sickness and torment.

LOUIS coughs and shuffles through scribbled wet notes - some of it backwards, written the wrong way: "My father is not dead. He has merely transformed into electricity."

LOUIS' FIVE ECCENTRIC LOOKING SISTERS (CAROLINE (18), JOSEPHINE (17), MARIE (11), CLAIRE (10) and FELICIE (9) are squashed together on a pew with their mother, MRS WAIN.

CAROLINE

Speak up, Louis, for goodness' sake...

JOSEPHINE

Yes speak up. I completely agree.

CAROLINE has an almost comically serious manner. JOSEPHINE has a dafter, waftier energy. A PRIEST sits confused in a large, ornate chair. We notice MRS DU FRAYNE, a neighbour we will recognise later.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Foul storms of ferocious agony expanded time and I seemed to live for a thousand years, haunted by mental pictures of extraordinary complexity.

The FABRICS from LOUIS' wagon are on display around the church, dripping rain onto the floor. LOUIS looks up finally to the congregation.

3 **OPENING TITLES (C.1860 - 1875)**

3

CREDITS BEGIN over a series of MEMORIES. We feel transported into the colourful chaos of LOUIS' young brain.

YOUNG LOUIS as a boy. We see his cleft lip.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I saw wriggling spectres in my father's handiwork and was a bedevilled by a vast globe with endless surface, climbing over and over it for eternity.

YOUNG LOUIS discovers his father in a WORKSHOP. WILLIAM WAIN uses a woodblock to print patterns onto wallpaper. It looks like they are coming to life.

TERRIFYING, ABSTRACT VISIONS OF A VAST GLOBE SPINNING ENDLESSLY - AN INFINITE CURVE OF DARKNESS.

YOUNG LOUIS is in bed, feverish. His TWO BABY SISTERS watch.

LOUIS (V.O.)

But most fearful of all... was The Sea Full Of Big Ships...

A SUDDEN CRACK OF THUNDER AND WE ARE TRANSPORTED INTO A VISION OF A STORMY SEA. SHIPS FROM HIS BEDROOM NOW LOOK HUGE AND CREAK IN TURBULENT WATER.

YOUNG LOUIS runs through the house at night. A LIGHTNING STORM outside. He arrives at his parents' bedroom, crying.

YOUNG LOUIS
Mummy! Daddy! Help me! I'm
drowning! Help me!

YOUNG LOUIS rattles the door, but it is locked. He looks down the hallway. In his imagination, WATER FLOODS TOWARDS HIM.

YOUNG LOUIS (CONT'D)
Mummy! Please! Help me! Help! I'm
drowning... I'm drowning...

INTERCUT:

4 **EXT. LONDON STREETS / ST JOHN STREET, CLERKENWELL**

4

GUESTS make their way through the RAIN in a slow parade.

LOUIS (V.O.)
My warped appearance and uncommon
behaviour saw me banned from school
and I was quite excluded from the
enviously hum-drum existence of
normal children.

LOUIS walks near the front with his SISTERS, MRS WAIN, MRS DU FRAYNE. PATTERNS OF COLOUR START TO INVADE THE PICTURE.

LOUIS (V.O.)
But then... at the age of nine...

The WAINS usher GUESTS into their TOWNHOUSE. LOUIS notices the feral GINGER CAT cowering under cover across the street. The scruffy GINGER CAT has one eye.

4A **OPENING TITLES**

4A

YOUNG LOUIS groans with pain. His tongue is bright red, infected. He is covered in a rash. His MOTHER attends to him.

LOUIS (V.O.)
I suffered a violent attack of
scarlet fever, which I decided to
fight... For the first time in my
life, I decided to fight...

LOUIS is ROARING through tears, like he is summoning some deep seismic force. He looks up into the camera, his tear-sodden face showing great determination and courage.

LOUIS (V.O.)
I forced my way into conventional
education - and there too, I fought
the bullies that taunted me.

YOUNG LOUIS is pushed by a group of BULLIES who are pulling faces to mock his CLEFT LIP. YOUNG LOUIS pushes them back. He is outnumbered, but he fights back with all his might.

QUICK CUTS OF LOUIS' CHILDHOOD NOTEBOOKS.

LOUIS (V.O.)
I studied chemistry, mathematics,
music, astronomy and art... and
soon discovered that school, in
fact, was no match for my vast,
peculiar intellect...

He works hard, writing notes, doing experiments, sketching inventions, fiddling on the violin. He looks through a KALEIDOSCOPE. He discovers and investigates a MAGIC LANTERN, A VICTORIAN CHROMATROPE which spins with psychedelic colours.

LOUIS (V.O.)
I realised I could defeat the chaos
of my mind, by always moving... I
became brilliant. I became brave.

YOUNG LOUIS climbs trees and snatches eggs from nests. He paddles in streams, catching beetles.

He runs freely in the fields. A LIGHTNING STORM cracks into action. He looks up at the electric sky.

LOUIS (V.O.)
I became indestructible.

INTERCUT:

5

INT. PARLOUR / KITCHEN, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - DAY

5

A PORTRAIT WIDE of the WAINS and their FUNERAL GUESTS. TWO PET DOGS. LOUIS sits in the centre, sipping a cup of tea.

LOUIS (V.O.)
But forty-four years after the
death of my father, sinister
electrical currents and foul ether
will infect my body and mind
irreparably. I will be certified
insane and admitted into a pauper's
ward at Springfield Psychiatric
Hospital in Tooting... You probably
won't have heard of me, but my name
is Louis Wain.

PATTERNS OF COLOUR OVERWHELM THE IMAGE. A WASH OF DANCING ELECTRIC HUES. It's strange. It's unsettling. It's beautiful.

"LOUIS WAIN"

END OF PROLOGUE / TITLES

1881 - 1887 "EARLY WAIN"

6 **EXT. TRAIN FROM ANDOVER - DAY (1881)** 6

A STEAM TRAIN clatters through the countryside. A feeling of ramshackle proactivity.

7 **INT. TRAIN FROM ANDOVER - DAY** 7

LOUIS (now 20s) looks dishevelled, covered in mud and dusty hoof prints. He carries a satchel, sketch pad, the remains of a smashed easel, a violin case and boxing gloves.

TRAIN ATTENDANT
Please keep your animals under control!

He bustles his way through a busy train full of VARIOUS FARM ANIMALS, PAMPERED DOGS, even A PEACOCK - all making a ruckus among the GENTLEMEN, LADIES, FARMERS and other ANIMAL OWNERS.

A FEW PASSENGERS whisper as he passes. We can hear snatches: "nutcase", "death-wish", "idiot".

8 **INT. CARRIAGE, TRAIN FROM ANDOVER - DAY** 8

LOUIS' sketches from the ANDOVER COUNTRY SHOW are in a messy pile. He is crouched on the floor, finishing the details of an angry BULL, which he draws at great speed from memory.

MR POMERANIAN (O.C.)
Are you an illustrator?

A MAN with a rosetted POMERANIAN, is crouched nearby.

LOUIS
Um... yes and no... I illustrate for money, but I'm also working on several patents at the moment...

LOUIS shuffles out his PORTFOLIO: accomplished drawings of BIRDS, OWLS, FISH, BEARS, PENGUINS, DOGS, LANDSCAPES. We also see CONFUSING SKETCHES OF COMPLICATED INVENTIONS.

MR POMERANIAN
Just come from the Country Show, I take it... did you get into a fight or something?

LOUIS
Oh... no, I was attacked by a one and a half tonne bull.

MR POMERANIAN

Ah... That was you was it. Yes, I heard about that... How much would you charge for a drawing of Cleopatra.

LOUIS

I... I don't really draw people.

MR POMERANIAN

No. Cleopatra.

CLOSE-UP of the daft POMERANIAN.

LOUIS

Ah. Well that you can have for free...

MR POMERANIAN

That's awfully kind... my sister normally takes her but she's unwell so it's me today. Thought it might cheer her up. Dan Rider by the way.

LOUIS nods in acknowledgement of the name, already sketching CLEOPATRA with surprising speed. MR POMERANIAN (DAN RIDER) curiously spies the VIOLIN CASE and BOXING GLOVES.

DAN RIDER

... Busy day?

9

INT. JEM MACE'S BOXING GYM, LONDON - DAY

9

SMACK! WALLOP! LOUIS is suddenly boxing. A SKETCH of the famous boxer BENDIGO - hangs on the wall. LOUIS keeps throwing himself at a much bigger SPARRING OPPONENT.

THWACK! LOUIS falls onto his back and starts laughing.

JEM MACE

Alright, Wain, that's enough. You'll be late for your meetings...

LOUIS

Let me have one last crack at him!

LOUIS dizzily wobbles back to his feet, jiggling about in a febrile dance. OTHER BOXERS, both men and women, enjoy this.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

The Bendigo Shuffle! Come on, you big brute. Give me your best shot!

THE BIG BOXER thinks about it for a second. Then - *THWACK!*

HARD CUT TO:

10 INT. INGRAM'S OFFICE, ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS - DAY

10

LOUIS crashes into an ILN WORKER and drops a pile of his sketches in a flurry of paper.

LOUIS
Sorry! Sorry...

He starts picking them up and trying to pass them to SIR WILLIAM INGRAM, Editor of the ILN.

INGRAM
I've received word about your foolish antics at the country show, Mr Wain. There's been a whole raft of complaints about...
(consults a note)
... "An odd fellow being dangerous, climbing nonchalantly into the Longhorn's pen and standing not three yards from the largest, most ferocious animal on the entire site..."

INGRAM inspects LOUIS' bull illustrations as they walk.

LOUIS
I was trying to get a closer look at him and, well, he didn't have a very good sense of humour, put it that way...

INGRAM
Not renowned for their sense of humour are they really... bulls... Every time I commission you to illustrate a story for us, you manage to create some kind of ridiculous chaos. I mean, why were you throwing peanuts at him?

LOUIS
I heard somewhere that they like peanuts and it calms them down, but it didn't work. That's the trouble with these show-cows. Huge egos...

INGRAM
It's a good job you can draw, Mr Wain, or we would have parted ways some time ago. And don't think I haven't noticed the absolute state of your visage.

INGRAM arrives at his desk and inspects LOUIS' bull illustrations. LOUIS is a bit bloody and bruised, a small cut across his nose, hesitantly following into the office.

LOUIS

Oh this isn't from the bull, Sir William. I've just had a boxing class with Jem Mace.

INGRAM

Boxing? With the great Jem Mace? So when did you draw this bull?

LOUIS

On the train... from memory.

INGRAM

All of them? ... How fast do you work exactly?

LOUIS

Um... well...

LOUIS rummages for a couple of pencils. SIR WILLIAM looks at him curiously. LOUIS is scribbling with TWO PENCILS AT ONCE.

INGRAM

I'll come clean with you, young Wain. One of my speediest, most prolific staff illustrators has just been poached by a rival publication and I am in desperate need to find a replacement. Do you think you'd be up to it?

LOUIS

Well... yes... obviously...

(off INGRAM'S look)

I hardly find this work taxing, Sir William. I do it simply to pay the bills and to support the six hungry and precocious women that I live with at home. Until they get married of course. To be honest it's rather inconvenient.

LOUIS finishes sketching and turns the paper round to show SIR WILLIAM a sketch of SIR WILLIAM. The expression in the drawing is comically similar to his expression in real life.

INGRAM thinks as LOUIS starts gathering his things.

INGRAM

Mr Wain, I don't think you understand me. On the basis of the speed and the quality of your work - and with the proviso that you modify your imbecilic behaviour - I am offering you the position of full time staff at the Illustrated London News.

LOUIS

Well that's very kind of you, Sir William, but I'm afraid I can't. I have several important electrical patents to finish and in fact I'm rather late for a meeting with Henry Wood, the celebrated composer...

(off INGRAM'S look)

... I've written an opera.

11 **INT. HORSE-DRAWN BUS / EXT. LONDON STREETS - AFTERNOON** 11

A GIANT DOG FOOD ADVERT featuring a PAMPERED-LOOKING DOG.

Inside a HORSE-DRAWN BUS, LOUIS leafs through his scores, humming, even singing and conducting excitedly to himself.

A MOTHER shields her CHILDREN from LOUIS' peculiar presence.

12 **INT. LONDON TEAROOMS, MAYFAIR - AFTERNOON** 12

LOUIS is sat in a plush tea room full of FANCY GUESTS. Brightly coloured cakes are half finished on a cake stand.

HENRY WOOD

This is not an opera, Louis. By conventional standard, it barely qualifies as music. And... this is not a plot... it's just your... thoughts.

LOUIS' "OPERA" is out on the table. WOOD smiles patiently.

HENRY WOOD (CONT'D)

I love your enthusiasm... but you have to master the basics of harmony first...

LOUIS

I've invented my own harmonies.

HENRY WOOD

Yes, well... perhaps that's part of the problem... if it's any consolation, I thought the little drawing you did on the cover sheet was rather charming.

LOUIS looks down at the colourful display of leaves and berries surrounding A BULLFINCH.

13 **EXT. WAIN TOWNHOUSE, ST JOHN STREET, CLERKENWELL - DUSK** 13

A reasonably smart street clouded in evening mist. We can dimly hear a PIANO being played.

NEIGHBOUR (O.C.)
Tell your sisters to keep it down!

LOUIS ignores this as he arrives home at the TOWNHOUSE.

14 **INT. HALLWAY, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - DUSK** 14

LOUIS slams the door behind him. WILLIAM WAIN'S BEAUTIFUL COLOURFUL WALLPAPER brings colour to the lamplit hallway.

Immediately we feel the bustle of his SISTERS - COOKING in the kitchen, a PIANO being played, CHILDREN FENCING upstairs.

LOUIS starts wiping his shoes clean on a boot brush.

CLAIRE (O.C.)
Evening, Louis!

LOUIS
Yes, evening...

FELICIE & MARIE (O.C.)
Evening!

LOUIS
Hello, yes, how are you...

JOSEPHINE (O.C.)
Are you back?

LOUIS
Yes of course I'm back, Josephine!
I'm back! What do you mean?

FELICIE (10) hurries down the stairs, holding a FENCING FOIL.

FELICIE
Louis, did you meet an eligible young lady of means in Hampshire?

LOUIS
No but I did meet a few goats and geese and a rather cantankerous bull...

JOSEPHINE
Well that's no use - you can't marry a goat can you!

FELICIE
What's happened to your poor face?
Was it boxing again?

FELICIE

En garde!

FELICIE jokingly holds the foil up at CAROLINE, who bats it out the way without any humour whatsoever.

CAROLINE

Don't. Louis, we *must* discuss our finances. How was your meeting with Sir William? Is he satisfied?

LOUIS

Sir William is if anything overly delighted with my work. In fact he offered me the position of staff illustrator. Now can I get to my-

LOUIS tries to push on up the stairs but FELICIE hugs him.

FELICIE

Staff illustrator! But that's fantastic, Louis!

LOUIS

Yes but-

CLAIRE

Bravo, brother!

CLAIRE reappears. MARIE (12) is now standing on the stairs above him. She also holds a FENCING FOIL, in a strange costume, with cape and mask, munching an APPLE.

JOSEPHINE

Did I hear you say staff illustrator?

JOSEPHINE appears down in the hallway.

LOUIS

Yes but I didn't accept it.

CAROLINE

... I beg your very pardon... why!?

LOUIS

Because I need more time to work on my inventions and to improve my understanding of musical notation so I can return to Henry Wood with the greatest opera of all time.

MARIE

I'm a phantom swordsman. Apples make me invisible.

LOUIS
 (heading upstairs)
 Yes, okay, Marie. Well done.

CAROLINE
 Louis! Come down here this instant!

LOUIS
 Where's mother? I got her a little
 present from Andover.

FELICIE
 She's got a snuffle. She's
 snoozing.

LOUIS
 It's just a silly trinket from the
 country show. It cost nothing.

CAROLINE
 Nothing costs nothing, Louis. We
 already have twice as many
 outgoings as you have wages and
 we've just hired a governess.

LOUIS
 I told you I need that room for
 secondary projects and anyway I can
 teach them! I'm perfectly qualified
 in all the relevant subjects.

CAROLINE
 No you are not, Louis. And you need
 to be out working.

JOSEPHINE
 Yes quite right. You need to be out
 working, Louis.

LOUIS
 Governess! I'm afraid we do not
 require your services at present!

LOUIS ignores them and continues up the stairs.

18 **INT. FIRST FLOOR LANDING, WAIN HOUSE, CLERKENWELL - CONT.** 18

The SISTERS chase after him. MRS WAIN snoozes in an armchair.

LOUIS
 Please excuse the misunderstanding!

CAROLINE
 Louis! Come back here!

JOSEPHINE
 Yes come back here! Quite right!

19 INT. TOP FLOOR LANDING, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - CONT. 19

LOUIS struts up to the top floor where there are three rooms - THE SCHOOL ROOM, the GUEST ROOM and LOUIS' BEDROOM. LOUIS tries the SCHOOL ROOM first.

LOUIS
Governe-ess! Time to pack your ba-
ags! ... Where are you?

20 INT. GUEST ROOM, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - CONT. 20

LOUIS enters the GUEST ROOM. The room is a mess of teaching materials, books, clothes and quite a lot of exotic FRUIT.

LOUIS
Governess?

No sign of anyone. CAROLINE, JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE, MARIE and FELICIE arrive in the doorway, shocked by the mess.

JOSEPHINE
Where's she gone?

Inside the wardrobe, we are with EMILY RICHARDSON, who has curled herself up into the dark and is peering at the WAINS through a crack of light in the door. THE SISTERS investigate the FRUIT, while LOUIS comes over to the wardrobe. EMILY breathes nervously as LOUIS peers right in at her.

EMILY
(quietly to herself)
Oh for fuck's sake...

JOSEPHINE
Perhaps we should have gone with
the scary nun after all...

MARIE
No, not the scary nun...

FELICIE
She was so smelly and boring!

LOUIS
Is that you in there, governess?

EMILY isn't sure what to do.

CAROLINE
Miss Richardson! If you are in the
wardrobe we shall be most
displeased!

FELICIE, CLAIRE and MARIE are finding this quite funny.

LOUIS

There's no need to be frightened,
but I'm going to have to open this
door. Okay? One... two... three...

LOUIS opens the door. Curled up inside is EMILY RICHARDSON.

EMILY

Right, yes. No I can see how this
is... I mean as first impressions
go... how do you do, Mr Wain.

EMILY emerges dustily from the wardrobe, clutching a copy of
"THE TEMPEST". She wears reading spectacles and variously
patterned garments in blue.

CAROLINE

Miss Richardson. Get out of the
wardrobe!

EMILY

Well I'm not in it anymore but...

CAROLINE

Get out of it immediately!

EMILY is not in the wardrobe anymore, but CAROLINE is so
angry that she's saying weird things.

EMILY

Would you perhaps like to know my
name, Mr Wain? So you don't have to
keep shouting "governess" all round
the house. I believe your mother
has been napping. Not very
thoughtful is it. Trampling up the
stairs like a drunken elephant
shouting "governess" at the top of
your voice.

CAROLINE, JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE, MARIE and FELICIE are surprised
by how easily EMILY handles LOUIS.

CAROLINE

Miss Richardson, why were you in
the wardrobe. And what is all this
mad fruit everywhere? It's chaos.

EMILY

It helps me to concentrate
sometimes, to be in a confined
space. With something like
Shakespeare I know it inside out
already, so I just block out the
world and play it through in my
head.

LOUIS

Well that's all very nice, Miss Richardson, but I was just saying how I am in fact well versed in mathematics and chemistry and so...

EMILY

Right well if you shan't be needing my services I'll be on my way.

JOSEPHINE

Miss Richardson, please. He's just being an ass.

EMILY

No, no... I'm actually quite relieved not to have to get up at four-thirty in the morning to prepare lessons...

LOUIS

Four-thirty...

21 **INT. TOP FLOOR LANDING / SCHOOL ROOM - CONT.**

21

EMILY heads for the SCHOOL ROOM. They follow.

EMILY

And to be honest with you, Mr Wain, I was a bit worried about the Ancient Greek. Homer's use of the metrical ictus does make it rather hard doesn't it? And all those feminine caesuras...

LOUIS has no idea. EMILY grabs a stack of books.

EMILY (CONT'D)

No doubt they will be much better off in your accomplished hands.

The SISTERS all look at LOUIS, urging him to make her stay.

22 **INT. GUEST ROOM, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - CONT.**

22

EMILY heads back to the GUEST BEDROOM. Again, they follow.

LOUIS

Um... I... I was just thinking actually that, um...

EMILY

... Yes?

LOUIS

I promised myself I would submit my patent for The Steady-Cycle before the end of the month and... if I'm teaching my sisters how to do feminine senoras-

EMILY

Caesuras.

LOUIS

- yes exactly, well... I may not have time...

EMILY

So you would like me to stay?

LOUIS has relented.

CAROLINE

Good. Well that's settled then.

CLAIRE

Is this a pineapple?

EMILY

Yes that's a pineapple. Quite rare but I know the man who imports them, you see. My father was a fruiterer. He passed away recently but I thought I would bring you all some interesting, tropical gifts by way of thanks for the employment.

LOUIS

... Our father passed away recently too.

EMILY

So I gather...

JOSEPHINE

Well thank you for the gesture, Miss Richardson, but I'm afraid this is too much fruit.

EMILY

Oh, I'm sorry.

JOSEPHINE

Yes no this is ridiculous. It's far too much.

MARIE

Can we eat them?

MARIE and FELICIE are trying to peel bananas.

EMILY

Of course. That's what they're for.

CAROLINE

Put the bananas down this instant!
We are grateful to Miss Richardson
for her gift but we do not eat
tropical fruits in the bedroom.
Bring them downstairs... dinner is
in half an hour. We shall serve
yours up here, Miss Richardson...

CAROLINE leaves, followed by the SISTERS. EMILY and LOUIS are alone. EMILY looks at LOUIS. He looks up too.

LOUIS

And what is your name... Miss
Richardson...

EMILY

... It's Emily.

LOUIS

Emily... very good... why don't you
join us?

23

INT. DINING ROOM, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - NIGHT

23

ROMANTIC MUSIC. A NOISY, MESSY, EVENING MEAL - everyone talks over each other, serving themselves and each other sloppily.

MRS WAIN is wrapped in a quilt, occasionally dabbing at her nose with a handkerchief. She is a gentle, bohemian spirit.

MRS WAIN

My poor husband William was thrown
out by his family in Staffordshire.
They were all Protestant, you see.

MARIE

Leek.

FELICIE

Yes, the town is called Leek, Mrs
Richardson! Isn't that funny?

EMILY

Hilarious.

CLAIRE

(bad Staffordshire accent)
They talk like this up there...

LOUIS can't help watching EMILY.

CAROLINE

Don't be so stupid, Claire.

JOSEPHINE

Have you got enough swede, Miss Richardson? It's our speciality.

EMILY

(Staffordshire accent)

Yes thank you, Miss Josephine. Nice bit of swede. Lovely!

MRS WAIN

Ooh, that's good! Isn't she good?

EMILY'S plate is a mountain of food. THE SISTERS keep piling different things on there and pouring gravy on it.

JOSEPHINE

Sage and fennel. Mad, I know.

MARIE

Do it again, Miss Richardson.

EMILY

(Staffordshire accent)

Do what again? This is just how I talk.

We notice some of her FRUIT in huge bowls around the side.

FELICIE

(copying the accent)

Can I have a carrot and some peas?

CAROLINE

Mouths closed when you're chewing please.

LOUIS is transfixed by EMILY. CAROLINE seems miffed that EMILY is at the table. MRS WAIN finishes blowing her nose.

MRS WAIN

He wanted to be Catholic, you see... but his father wouldn't let him of course so he just ran away.

MARIE

He was a Cathoholic.

EMILY

And how did you meet him?

EMILY gives a small glance in LOUIS' direction.

MRS WAIN

Through the church. I designed tapestries for the church and he came from a silk family so... he was a draper. And my own father - I'm French, you see...

MRS WAIN does a joking "lah-dee-dah" pose. EMILY laughs. LOUIS can't take his eyes off her.

MRS WAIN (CONT'D)

... he smuggled himself over to England by disguising himself as a woman...

EMILY

No...

JOSEPHINE

True story...

MRS WAIN

We're a family of mischief-makers, you see, Miss Richardson. We might as well be called the Shenanigans. I dare say you'll have your hands full with these three. And as for you two - high time you found some nice husbands of your own, don't you think?

CAROLINE

We will, mother... in time.

MRS WAIN

But when in time, Caroline. You never leave the house.

JOSEPHINE

I was given quite the look by a hatted man with a huge moustache the other day. On the bus. Absolutely enormous moustache he had and a very prominent brow, very prominent. Like a dome. Quite the look honestly, it was embarrassing.

MRS WAIN

But did he seem wealthy, Josephine?

JOSEPHINE

Oh yes, very. I could tell he had money just from the smell of him.

CLAIRE

You love him!

FELICIE

Josephine's going to marry a man with a giant moustache!

EMILY looks back at LOUIS again. She smiles at him. Only CAROLINE senses this connection.

24 **INT. LOUIS' BEDROOM, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - NIGHT** 24

LOUIS lies in his bed. SLOPED CEILINGS. WALLS covered with DIFFERENT WALLPAPER SAMPLES - a hotch-potch display.

25 **INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - NIGHT** 25

EMILY is in a night gown, thoughtfully arranging a series of ROCKS on her mantelpiece.

26 **INT. LOUIS' BEDROOM, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - NIGHT** 26

LOUIS' door is ajar. He hears CAROLINE coming up the stairs. She knocks on EMILY'S ROOM. EMILY answers, in her night gown.

EMILY

Miss Caroline?

CAROLINE

... Is everything to your satisfaction, Miss Richardson?

EMILY

Very much so... why... do you ask?

CAROLINE

Oh no, just because... I was going to say, if the room is not to your liking, I would be perfectly happy for you to swap... with me...

EMILY

... That won't be necessary... I'm very comfortable.

CAROLINE

Of course... Only... I wouldn't want you to feel... ill at ease... sharing a floor with... A man...

EMILY

... Why would that make me feel ill at ease?

CAROLINE decides not to push it and smiles at her oddly.

CAROLINE

Very good. Please keep your belongings in order. You are here to set an example to my sisters.

EMILY

Of course. You're very good with them by the way. Must be exhausting. Having to be the grown up.

CAROLINE

I am a grown up. So... it's not exhausting...

CAROLINE is distracted by the ROCK in EMILY'S hand.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

... Why are you holding a rock.

EMILY

Oh. I travel a lot, as a Governess... so I carry a few rocks with me from Shrewsbury, where I grew up. Helps me to feel at home. Funny, I hated it as a little girl but I miss it sometimes... here, why don't you have this one.

EMILY hands CAROLINE the ROCK. CAROLINE is baffled by it.

CAROLINE

... Sleep well, Miss Richardson...

CAROLINE nods goodnight and heads downstairs, glancing at LOUIS as she goes. EMILY and LOUIS see each other through their doorways. Slowly, EMILY closes her door.

Out on LOUIS. What is this feeling. This is new.

27 **INT. HALLWAY / PARLOUR, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - MORN.** 27

CAROLINE and JOSEPHINE do battle with TWO IDENTICAL GREY BRITISH SHORTHAIRED CATS as LOUIS bounds down the stairs. He pops his head round and sees CAROLINE and JOSEPHINE trying to shoo the CATS out with a BROOM and a SHOVEL, or similar.

CAROLINE

Go on, shoo!

JOSEPHINE

Yes come on, pussies! Out you go!

FELICIE

But why can't we keep them? People keep dogs as pets all the time.

CLAIRE

Because they're cats, Felicie. If we start keeping cats as pets, our neighbours will think us quite the barmiest family on the street.

LOUIS heads off out the door.

JOSEPHINE (O.C.)

We need to pincer them like sheep-bitches...

34

INT. SWIMMING BATHS, GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - MORNING

34

SPLOSH! GENTLEMEN swim up and down a Victorian Pool. OTHER BATHERS enjoy cups of tea in hot baths.

LOUIS spots SIR WILLIAM INGRAM, wearing a pince-nez, breast-stroking slowly in the pool. He sets down his things and dives in to catch up with him. Like his boxing, LOUIS' swimming is frenetic and jerky.

LOUIS
... Good morning, Sir William!

INGRAM
Good morning, Mr Wain! Don't often see you in here at this time.

LOUIS
Well I've come to see you, sir...
Have you got a moment?

INGRAM
Of course, Louis... just let me finish my morning exercise...

LOUIS
Yes, of course...

INGRAM is swimming incredibly slowly. LOUIS gets bored.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Might do some lengths myself now
I'm here actually. See you shortly!

LOUIS swims chaotically down the lane, splashing INGRAM as he goes. This attracts the attention of the OTHER BATHERS.

35

INT. STEAM ROOMS, SWIMMING BATHS, GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - MORNING 35

A GROTESQUE FRIEZE OF SHINY, PINK MALE BODIES. INGRAM and LOUIS sit with towels on. SIR WILLIAM is shaving.

INGRAM
Ahh... so you've come to your senses, young man...

LOUIS watches INGRAM shaving. It makes him anxious. ECUs of the blade, INGRAM'S mouth, LOUIS' mouth.

INGRAM (CONT'D)
Why the sudden change of heart?

LOUIS
Oh, um, well... we've hired a Governess, for my youngest sisters.

INGRAM

... And you don't want her dashing off to some other family because you can't afford to pay her...

LOUIS

Something... like that, yes...

INGRAM

Well... you will start on poverty wages of course, as is standard, but it will be regular. And I'm afraid I can't at this moment offer you holidays or expenses due to new company policy... Will that be to your satisfaction, young Mr Wain?

LOUIS smiles, no intention of haggling whatsoever. INGRAM seems a little surprised to be getting away with this.

36

INT. PHIL MAY'S STUDIO - DUSK

36

AN ARTISTS' STUDIO - drinking, smoking, talking. LOUIS is celebrating with his artist friends HERBERT RAILTON, ALFRED PRAGA and RICHARD WOODVILLE JR. They play BAGATELLE.

WOODVILLE JR

Every penny counting rogue in London tries that trick. You're not supposed to say yes!

RAILTON

Did you not bargain with him? Have I taught you nothing?

LOUIS

Herb, I'm happy with it. Okay? Just leave it...

(seeing the time)

I'd better head off actually. Need to start work on my Steady Cycle patent-

PRAGA

Forget that, you daft donkey. Nobody understands what it is!

WOODVILLE JR

Don't be such a fucking drip!

RAILTON

Look. If you're happy, you're happy. He's swindled you so I don't understand it, but let's... you know... let's have some fun. I haven't seen you for three weeks.

WOODVILLE JR

You've been spending too much time with those weird sisters of yours.

PRAGA

You are staff illustrator for the top newspaper in London and a handsome young fellow. All you need now is the loving touch of a well bosomed aristocrat.

WOODVILLE JR

That's the thing about Phil May, the saucy fiend - always hosting a skulk of wealthy young vixens.

Out in the yard, PHIL MAY is entertaining FEMALE GUESTS by lighting a BRAZIER.

PRAGA

You shall be marrying a noblewoman within the year - I guarantee it.

RAILTON

What do you say, Louis? We can't celebrate your success without you now can we...

LOUIS smiles this all off, still thinking about EMILY.

LOUIS

... Will there be dancing later do you think?

RAILTON

There will be if you're here. I know that much...

LOUIS grins cheekily.

37 **INT. PHIL MAY'S STUDIO - NIGHT**

37

The ATMOSPHERE is now WILDLY MERRY AND HEDONISTIC. A FIRE IS LIT. LOUIS is improvising strange tunes on the piano. A SMALL CROWD has surrounded him, including some FEMALE ADMIRERS. RAILTON drunkenly has his arm around one of them.

RAILTON

You see... He's a musician as well! He's even written a bloody opera... Who wants to marry my friend!

PRAGA and WOODVILLE JR are flirting around the room and generally having a good time. We can sort of guess who PHIL MAY is as he ostentatiously plays host.

INTERCUT:

38 **EXT. GARDEN / INT. PARLOUR / KITCHEN, WAIN TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT** 38

MUSIC CONTINUES. CAROLINE, JOSEPHINE and MRS WAIN are preparing a meal in the kitchen while EMILY teaches CLAIRE, FELICIE and MARIE to fence properly, how to stand.

39 **INT. PHIL MAY'S STUDIO - NIGHT** 39

A little later, the MUSIC continues but LOUIS is now drunkenly dancing with RAILTON. He does an improvised jig. It's highly peculiar but very funny and strangely uplifting. A circle forms around him.

40 **EXT. GARDEN / INT. PARLOUR / KITCHEN, WAIN TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT** 40

EMILY is now teaching CLAIRE, FELICIE, MARIE, JOSEPHINE how to dance "quadrilles". MRS WAIN is at the piano.

They play BLIND MAN'S BLUFF. JOSEPHINE comes to join the fun.

Eventually, EMILY and the FAMILY try to persuade CAROLINE to get involved. To the delight of MARIE and FELICIE, CAROLINE relents and reluctantly joins in a little bit. She dances with EMILY briefly. It's awkward but CAROLINE is smiling.

41 **INT. PHIL MAY'S STUDIO - NIGHT** 41

MUSIC KEEPS BUILDING. MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE DANCING.

LOUIS dances with a pure, child-like freedom. One by one, the FEMALE ADMIRERS come to join him in the centre.

INTERCUT EMILY at home with the WAINS. They are in different places, but they feel connected.

42 **EXT. BACK STREETS NEAR MAY'S STUDIO / BORDELLO - NIGHT** 42

A drunken LOUIS walks through the streets. He lights a cigarette. WOMEN OF THE NIGHT lurk outside a BROTHEL. LOUIS ignores their flirtatious looks.

CRASH! A SIDE DOOR opens. A loud woman, BERYL wrestles an ANGRY CAT and her KITTENS into a sack.

BERYL

Stop squirming for Pete's sake -
you're going in the river! Furry
little witch. Been nibbling at our
butter supplies and terrorising the
customers. Revolting creature...
Mucky paw prints all over our
kitchen.

(at the bag briefly)

SHUT IT, YOU!

(MORE)

BERYL (CONT'D)

(back to LOUIS)

Now she's gone and had a bunch of squealing kittens, the strumpet...

LOUIS

Madam... could I perhaps take them off your hands?

BERYL

Don't be stupid, darling. It's a bag of cats.

LOUIS

I'll give you a shilling for them.

BERYL

A shilling? For *cats*? Shut up.

LOUIS

(reaching into his pocket)

Tell you what, I'll give you two shillings... I'm in a good mood.

BERYL

Two shillings for a bag of vermin? You're out of your tree.

43 **EXT. APPROACHING FISH MARKET - NIGHT**

43

LOUIS scurries through back streets with his bag of cats.

44 **INT. FISH MARKET - NIGHT**

44

A FEW EARLY DELIVERIES are being made at a QUIET FISH MARKET. LOUIS unties the sack.

LOUIS

Here you are. Plenty of prawns and other goodies to nibble on here...

A BLACK MOTHER CAT hops out, followed by FIVE ADORABLE KITTENS. LOUIS notices the MOTHER CAT is missing a leg.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Oh dear. What happened there then?

The MOTHER CAT MEOWS, as if in response, and then runs away.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I see... Well good luck anyway...

Then he sees A WALL OF POSTERS advertising London shows, as well as other things like toothpaste, gum, DOG FOOD and fish.

LOUIS sees a poster for "THE TEMPEST". He remembers EMILY'S book and has an idea. He tears the poster off the wall.

45 INT. FIRST FLOOR LANDING, WAIN TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

45

LOUIS creeps up the stairs. He hears a CHILD CRYING. CAROLINE comes out of a bedroom in her nightgown.

CAROLINE

Shh, Marie is having a nightmare.
Where have you been. You're drunk.

LOUIS

Perhaps a little... I've been celebrating... I accepted the job... with Sir William...

CAROLINE

... Good. Now go to bed.

MARIE (O.C.)

... Where have you gone?

CAROLINE

It's okay. I'm coming. I'm here...

CAROLINE heads back into the bedroom. On LOUIS - perhaps he wanted more from CAROLINE. He carries on up the stairs.

46 INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM, WAIN TOWNHOUSE - CONT.

46

In the dim candlelight, CAROLINE goes to soothe MARIE. CLAIRE is asleep. FELICIE lies calmly awake watching, used to this.

47 INT. TOP FLOOR LANDING, WAIN TOWNHOUSE - CONT.

47

As LOUIS reaches the top floor, he can hear EMILY singing quietly to herself in her bedroom. The door is slightly ajar.

Very slowly, LOUIS approaches EMILY'S door. He looks down at the poster of "THE TEMPEST" and eases her door open.

48 INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM, WAIN TOWN HOUSE, CLERKENWELL - CONT.

48

AAAH! EMILY jumps out of a chair, spilling paint and brushes. She instinctively crawls clumsily behind her bed.

LOUIS

Good evening.

EMILY

Go away...

LOUIS

What, why...

EMILY

Because... What do you mean why?

LOUIS
Oh, sorry... Yes... Sorry...

LOUIS turns to face a wall. EMILY has angled a mirror and been trying to paint herself next to a vase of flowers, her dressing gown slung semi-suggestively off her shoulders.

IT'S A TERRIBLE PAINTING.

EMILY
Mr Wain, *what* are you doing.

LOUIS
Sorry, I don't- What do you want me to-

EMILY
Get out!

LOUIS
Right, sorry, yes... I... I apologise... I'm so sorry...

LOUIS slips back out, leaving the room completely. EMILY makes a panicked attempt to tidy up, then makes for the door.

Flecks of colourful paint are all over EMILY'S hands, even her face somehow.

49 **INT. TOP FLOOR LANDING / EMILY'S BEDROOM - CONT**

49

They now talk through the door.

EMILY
I am under your employ, Mr Wain, but I do not expect to have to tolerate you barging in here after-hours smelling of booze when I am... well it doesn't matter what I was doing, does it...

LOUIS
I know. I'm so sorry. It's just... I have so many sisters. I forget sometimes that it's... were you painting something?

EMILY
That's none of your business, Mr Wain.

EMILY looks at her slightly embarrassing attempt.

EMILY (CONT'D)

But... yes, if you must know. I have a drawing lesson with the girls tomorrow and you Wains are all such accomplished artists I rather felt that I could do with a bit more preparation, that's all...

LOUIS

I see... well... I was actually wondering if you would like to go to the theatre, Miss Richardson.

LOUIS slips the poster for "THE TEMPEST" under the door. EMILY was not expecting this. She picks it up.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

As an educational trip of course... with Felicie, Claire and Marie...

EMILY

Oh... of course... Yes...

LOUIS

I know Shakespeare is an important part of your teaching.

EMILY

Very important, yes. Perhaps the most... important.

LOUIS

I'm so sorry again, Miss Richardson. I'm terribly embarrassed. I was just excited to share the idea with you... I don't want you to feel like you have to be cooped up here in the house all the time...

A pause. EMILY appreciates this. She opens the door.

EMILY

... I think that would be a rather splendid idea... Please just knock next time you wish to see me.

LOUIS

Absolutely. Of course.

They look at each other for a bit. Then LOUIS glances at the TERRIBLE PAINTING in the corner. He smirks a little bit. EMILY of course can see the funny side too.

EMILY

... Is something funny, Mr Wain?

LOUIS
Not at all... not at all... good
night, Emily...

EMILY
... Good night, Mr Wain.

EMILY closes the door on LOUIS, leaving him in the semi-dark.
On LOUIS - that feeling again, even stronger now.

LOUIS
Oh and Miss Richardson...

EMILY
Yes?

LOUIS
When it comes to drawing, there is
only really one rule you ever need
to teach... it's to look...

50 **INT. LOUIS' BEDROOM, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - MORNING** 50

BIRDSONG. LOUIS fills a bowl with hot water. He lathers his
face with soap, then begins to shave using a straight razor.

ECUS OF THE BLADE, OF HIS MOUTH.

When he is finished, he looks at himself in the mirror.
Without his moustache, we see his CLEFT LIP.

51 **SCENE OMITTED** 51

52 **INT. TOP FLOOR LANDING, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - MORN.** 52

LOUIS peeks into the SCHOOLROOM. FELICIE, CLAIRE and MARIE
have perfectly sketched FRUIT, FLOWERS, ORNAMENTS.

Curtains drawn, EMILY now shows them a prism experiment -
shining a beam of light through a crystal champagne flute.

LIGHT refracts into ALL COLOURS of the spectrum.

FELICIE
What a clever bugger Mr Newton was.

EMILY
Uh, excuse me, Felicie. Language.

FELICIE
Clever... sausage?

EMILY

Sausage I will accept, though I fear it rather fails to capture the spirit of Newton's genius.

MARIE

I'm a genius...

EMILY

Well if you study hard, Marie, perhaps you will be one day...

53 **INT. LOUIS' BEDROOM, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - MORNING** 53

LOUIS is idly painting an ABSTRACT KALEIDOSCOPIC PATTERN onto a piece of glass. He hears FELICIE, CLAIRE and MARIE thanking EMILY, thundering down the stairs, growling like MONSTERS.

EMILY

Quietly now girls, please!

EMILY returns to her room. LOUIS puts his brush down and heads over to a little mirror, checking his collar, his hair.

54 **INT. TOP FLOOR LANDING, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - MORN.** 54

LOUIS nervously waits outside EMILY'S bedroom. He knocks.

EMILY (O.C.)

Come in, Mr Wain.

55 **INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - CONT.** 55

LOUIS enters. EMILY is sorting through her teaching papers.

LOUIS

Good morning. How was your lesson?

EMILY

Very good, thank you. Turns out your sisters don't really need my help with drawing so... we tried something else instead.

LOUIS

Oh good. Well, um, I...

LOUIS smiles bashfully at EMILY. He sets himself.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I hereby atone for my drunken imposition... by revealing myself to you naked...

EMILY

Please don't reveal yourself to me naked, Mr Wain. I might well consider that to be a secondary imposition, arguably even greater than the first...

LOUIS

But you cannot have failed to notice that I have... quite a profound hare lip.

EMILY

... Yes... and what of it, Mr Wain?

LOUIS

... Have I made a mistake.

EMILY

No, Mr Wain... I think you look very handsome... Once you get to know me better, you'll see that I'm a bit like a big blue goldfish. I forget almost everything immediately.

LOUIS

So... am I forgiven?

EMILY

Why do you need me to forgive you, Mr Wain? Just don't do it again...

LOUIS

Right. Yes... Well, I'm sorry.

EMILY

About what?

LOUIS is not sure what to say or do. EMILY helps him out.

EMILY (CONT'D)

... When do you suppose we might take our trip to the theatre, Mr Wain? For the educational purposes of the children... of course...

LOUIS

Of course... um... I shall consult my diary...

EMILY

Excellent... I shall look forward to it... Good day, Mr Wain.

LOUIS makes to leave, but just before he's out the door...

EMILY (CONT'D)
And Mr Wain...

LOUIS turns.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Thank you. I appreciate the
gesture.

56 **INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM / LANDING, WAIN TOWNHOUSE - DUSK**

56

MRS WAIN and JOSEPHINE are helping CLAIRE and FELICIE to get ready for the theatre, doing their hair and so on.

MRS WAIN
Well I think it's a wonderful idea.

CAROLINE
But mother - we are yet to settle our accounts with the coal merchant and the butcher. He should have consulted me.

CLAIRE & FELICIE
Boring!

CAROLINE
And we can hardly have Louis out on the streets looking like that. Why you have committed this wanton act of violent self-harm I don't know.

MRS WAIN
Oh come now, Caroline. He's had a shave, that's all... Marie! Marie darling, where have you gone!

LOUIS is having tea and reading Emily's copy of THE TEMPEST.

CAROLINE
Well he's hardly going to attract the advances of a lady of fortune looking like that, is he.

57 **INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM, WAIN TOWN HOUSE, CLERKENWELL - CONT.**

57

EMILY is alone in her room, also getting ready, hearing the conversation down below but trying to ignore it.

She shuffles a PATTERNED BLUE SHAWL over her shoulders and looks at herself. She feels nervous.

Then she starts to hear MARIE, seemingly in some kind of distress. It sounds like it's coming from nearby.

57A INT. TOP FLOOR LANDING / SCHOOL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

57A

EMILY can sense that something is up as she leaves her room.

She sees drops of blood on the floor and can hear crying. She follows the sound to the SCHOOL ROOM.

EMILY

Marie...? Marie... are you okay?

MARIE (O.C.)

... Don't come in!

58 INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - CONT.

58

JOSEPHINE

I think we should all go and make an evening of it.

CAROLINE

Josephine, we at least must stay! If Miss Richardson deems it educationally fit for her, as their governess, to take our younger sisters then let us discuss that and that alone.

JOSEPHINE

I'm just saying... I should like to go - not so much for the play as for the handsome young bachelors in the crowd.

Some of the SISTERS and MRS WAIN supportively go "ooh".

CLAIRE

We can practise our flirtations!

LOUIS

And I should like to go because I should like to go... if you care to join us, Caroline, you would be most welcome.

59 INT. TOP FLOOR LANDING / SCHOOL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

59

Through the School Room door, we hear EMILY consoling MARIE.

EMILY

It's okay... it's a good thing. It's perfectly natural... it means you're a woman...

MARIE

... Does it?

60 INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM / FIRST FLOOR LANDING - CONTINUOUS

60

LOUIS

I think it's fair to say that Miss Richardson has had an extremely positive effect on this family and we should show our gratitude.

THUNDERING OF FEET. MARIE appears down the hallway.

MARIE

... I'm a woman!

MARIE, face red from crying, punches the air in triumph, before scuttling off into another bedroom.

EMILY

Hooray!

The OTHER SISTERS and MRS WAIN are taken aback at first but then try to play along. EMILY pauses in the hallway.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Sorry, everyone. Bit of a situation... everything's under control!

LOUIS looks on warmly as EMILY follows after MARIE. He looks at CAROLINE. She is not entirely impressed.

61-63 SCENES OMITTED

61-63

64 INT. AUDITORIUM, THEATRE, LONDON - NIGHT

64

A BUSTLING ATMOSPHERE. FELICIE, MARIE and CLAIRE have snacks and seem excited.

LOUIS' cleft lip is getting a few stares. So is EMILY, who is in a smart version of her Governess attire. She looks around at the grand theatre.

LOUIS spots MISS DU FRAYNE and a couple of her FEMALE FRIENDS, filing to their seats in a booth. They see EMILY and quickly look away, whispering to each other.

It feels like everyone is staring at them and whispering. They try to block it out and enjoy the moment - sweetly, innocently on edge to be here together.

LOUIS

... You look... very-

EMILY

Thank you... so do you.

LOUIS
Thank you.

EMILY
Thank you... shall we sit down?

LOUIS
Yes, let's sit down... is it your first time?

EMILY
... Yes. Yes, it is... exciting...

A GROUP of POSH BOYS are pulling their mouths into shapes and laughing. LOUIS tries to rise above it. A LOW RUMBLE...

JUMP CUT TO:

... CRACKS INTO BILLOWING WIND, THUNDER, LIGHTNING! THE STAGE IS A STORMY SEA. A SHIP IS BATTERED BY HUGE WAVES.

CLAIRE makes eyes at an older bachelor in the seat next to her. He smiles back noncommittally.

Next to CLAIRE sit FELICIE and MARIE, followed by EMILY. And next to EMILY, removed from his sisters, sits LOUIS.

EMILY is full of wonder but the LOUD, FLASHING STORM seems to be making LOUIS slightly anxious. She notices. On LOUIS.

FLASH-CUT MEMORIES OF "THE SEA FULL OF BIG SHIPS" - the nightmare he had as a child about a stormy sea.

OTHER FLASH-CUT MEMORIES - THIS BUILDS TO A BREAKING POINT.

LOUIS
Sorry... won't be a moment...

LOUIS suddenly gets up and leaves. He has to wiggle past ANGRY THEATERGOERS. EMILY watches him go.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Excuse me... sorry... excuse me...

EMILY watches him go.

65 **INT. TOILET, CROWN THEATRE - NIGHT**

65

LOUIS comes out of a cubicle, seemingly recovered. He is surprised to see EMILY waiting for him.

LOUIS
Er, this is the gentleman's toilet.

EMILY

Yes, no sorry, I... I was just worried that you might be... in distress about something...

LOUIS

Um, no... just... a bit of a funny turn, that's all...

EMILY

Right, yes... I just thought that it might have, um... might have reminded you of something... something you found frightening as a child, perhaps... like The Sea Full of Big Ships...

LOUIS is surprised that she knows about this.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I might have accidentally... looked in your journal...

LOUIS

Well, that's nosy.

EMILY

I'm afraid it's one of my many flaws.

LOUIS

Nosiness.

EMILY

Yes, I'm very nosy... that's partly why I chose to be a governess...

LOUIS

And did you find it horrifying? All those dark, disturbing visions...

EMILY

I found it quite reassuring to be honest... I tend to have nightmares about not getting out of places. Once spent an entire dream stuck in a very complicated barn...

LOUIS finds this gently amusing. They are now quite close.

LOUIS

... Well thank god you didn't get stuck in that wardrobe.

EMILY

... Thank god... Thank god I had you to let me out...

LOUIS and EMILY find themselves looking straight into each others' eyes. EMILY kisses LOUIS. It's impulsive, tentative at first. Then they continue kissing with more confidence.

A FLUSH interrupts the moment. A POSH MAN emerges cautiously from a cubicle and starts washing his hands, awkwardly smiling hello, trying not to look at them.

66 **SCENE OMITTED**

66

67 **INT. FOYER, CROWN THEATRE, LONDON - NIGHT**

67

The AUDIENCE make their way into the foyer after the show. LOUIS and EMILY feel the gaze of EVERYONE - looking, gossiping, whispering.

LOUIS spots MRS DU FRAYNE with her SPINSTER FRIENDS, peeling away from the POSH MAN who was in the toilets.

MRS DU FRAYNE

Well if it isn't my favourite family... the Wains... How are you, Louis? Terrific eulogy at your father's funeral.

LOUIS

Thank you. You say that... every time I see you.

MRS DU FRAYNE

And you must be the famous... Emily Richardson...

EMILY

That I am.

MRS DU FRAYNE

We were just remarking how we don't often see Governesses at the theatre... Was it your first time? I heard you got a little bit confused, Miss Richardson... about the lavatories?

A weirdly tense smile-off, where no one says anything.

Across the room, the POSH BOYS have partnered with some POSH GIRLS, one of whom wears spectacles on her nose, mocking EMILY to make the boys laugh.

68 **EXT. LONDON STREETS - NIGHT**

68

A CARRIAGE travels through the quiet of the night.

69 INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT

69

CLAIRE, FELICIE and MARIE are asleep in a sisterly tangle. LOUIS looks at EMILY, who sits next to him. She looks back.

He looks down at their hands, resting by their legs.

LOUIS takes EMILY'S hand. EMILY does not know what to do about this. She is torn. She takes her hand away.

70 INT. FIRST FLOOR LANDING, WAIN TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

70

LOUIS is pacing around, agitated. EMILY sweeps down from the top floor. LOUIS tries to stop her. She continues downstairs

LOUIS
Please, will you just let me speak
to them.

EMILY
No, Louis... I can handle it...

71 INT. DINING ROOM, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - NIGHT

71

CAROLINE, JOSEPHINE and MRS WAIN sit opposite EMILY.

CAROLINE
You are clearly an intelligent woman, Miss Richardson, and we have been impressed by your teaching. But there are certain aspects of your behaviour, and certain aspects of the behaviour that you encourage in my ridiculous brother, that we simply cannot tolerate... this evening was intended as an educational event for the children and as a small token of our gratitude... yet now, thanks to you, this family is the talk of the town...

JOSEPHINE
... And not in a good way.

CAROLINE
... You have three days to get your affairs in order...

EMILY
... Thank you.

LOUIS sits alone in the SCHOOL ROOM. A knock at his door.
It's EMILY.

EMILY

I just wanted to... thank you, Mr
Wain... for a very pleasant
evening... I had a very nice time.

LOUIS nods "you're welcome".

EMILY (CONT'D)

I have taught of countless
adventures from the safety of a
school room... but it was exciting
to be taken on one... for once...

LOUIS

... I very much like your shawl by
the way.

EMILY

Thank you. It was my mother's.

LOUIS

It's blue...

EMILY

Yep... it's blue...

A long pause. Neither knows what to do or say.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I am a governess, Mr Wain... It
simply... cannot be...

LOUIS

But would you... want it to be...

EMILY

... Even that I might... you must
understand...

LOUIS walks towards her until their faces are very close.
EMILY is torn.

EMILY (CONT'D)

... We can't.

EMILY looks into his eyes. She puts her hand on his cheek and
kisses him on his cleft lip - lightly and with finality.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Goodbye, Louis.

EMILY leaves for her bedroom. LOUIS thinks. Perhaps he is
giving up. He retreats into his bedroom.

FLASH-CUT MEMORIES of LOUIS' CHILDHOOD INTER-MINGLE with FLASH-CUTS of his time with EMILY.

LOUIS paces oddly as MEMORIES flash before him. He knows this is a cross-roads. He knows he must act. He sees EMILY closing the door to her bedroom in the hallway.

Suddenly, he rushes back through the SCHOOL ROOM, heading for the other entrance to her bedroom.

73 **INT. SCHOOL ROOM, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - CONT.** 73

LOUIS arrives just as EMILY is closing the door that connects the SCHOOL ROOM to her bedroom. Their eyes meet immediately. She feels it too.

LOUIS
I don't care... I don't care what
people think...

Her eyes are wet with the beginnings of tears. So are his.

EMILY
... This is very inconvenient.

They kiss. They look at each other again. EMILY pulls LOUIS into her room and closes the door.

74 **INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM, WAIN TOWN HOUSE, CLERKENWELL - NIGHT** 74

A BEAUTIFULLY IMPRESSIONISTIC SEQUENCE THAT PULSES IN AND OUT OF TOTAL DARKNESS. Their hair, their faces, their eyes, their mouths, their bodies, as they make love. They try to be as quiet as they can. THE SOUND OF THEIR BREATHING.

LOUIS (V.O.)
On the 30th January, in the year
1884, Emily and I became husband
and wife.

FADE TO BLACK

75 **INT. KITCHEN / PARLOUR, WAIN TOWNHOUSE, CLERKENWELL - DAY** 75

MUSIC CONTINUES. CAROLINE and LOUIS have a fearsome row.

LOUIS (V.O.)
Like my father, I was considered to
have brought shame upon my family
and was banished from my own home.

JOSEPHINE and MRS WAIN restrain CAROLINE as she tries to attack LOUIS. EMILY watches from a doorway, looking after FELICIE, CLAIRE & MARIE.

83 **EXT. CHATEAU - DAY**

83

A WELL GROOMED BULLDOG SITS ON A PODIUM. LOUIS paints at an easel, sipping from a fancy teacup.

LOUIS (V.O.)
... And took on private commissions
as a dog portraitist.

LOUIS presents his PORTRAIT to an ARISTOCRATIC COUPLE, their CHILDREN and their STAFF. They all clap delightedly.

LOUIS (V.O.)
This was to supplement my continued
work covering general news...

84 **INT. SIR WILLIAM INGRAM'S OFFICE, ILN - DAY**

84

INGRAM inspects LOUIS' SKETCHES with a magnifying glass.

LOUIS (V.O.)
... And various agricultural shows
around the country for Sir William.

85 **EXT. COUNTRY SHOW - DAY**

85

RAIN. LOUIS sits under an umbrella in a sorry looking corner of a COUNTRY SHOW, sketching CHICKENS.

86 **EXT. BRITISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY**

86

A STEAM TRAIN TRAVELLING THROUGH THE RAIN.

LOUIS (V.O.)
But then, just six months after we
had become married, Emily's health
began to deteriorate...

87 **INT. TRAIN - DAY**

87

LOUIS watches the RAIN trickle down the window.

88 **INT. ELIZABETH TERRACE - DAY**

88

RAIN. LOUIS waits outside while EMILY talks with a DOCTOR.

DR QUANTOCK
I gather you are an educated woman,
Mrs Wain.

EMILY
Yes, Doctor... I was a Governess.

DR QUANTOCK
 I... I see... well in that case...
 I trust that you will understand
 me, when I say... that you have
 terminal cancer of the breast...

EMILY hesitates, but doesn't want to be weak. LOUIS is hearing everything, struggling to keep it together.

EMILY
 ... Yes, Doctor.

EMILY sighs. DR QUANTOCK is thrown by this reaction.

EMILY (CONT'D)
 ... Just when I was starting to
 enjoy it...

89 CONTENT MOVED TO 97A 89

90 SCENE OMITTED 90

91 EXT. ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - DUSK 91

RAIN CONTINUES. LOUIS stands by the road under an umbrella and sees the DOCTOR'S CARRIAGE off. EMILY waits for him in the doorway as he returns, unsure of what to say.

Just as he reaches the door - *MEOW*.

EMILY
 What was that? ... Did you hear it?

They look around but can't see anything.

LOUIS
 Strange...

MEOW. EMILY edges out under the umbrellas with LOUIS.

EMILY
 Where's it coming from...

And then they see him. *MEOW*.

Under a bush, in the pouring rain, they see an adorable little BLACK & WHITE KITTEN. He is vulnerable and shivering and looking right at them.

LOUIS
 Hello there, little one...

LOUIS and EMILY carefully walk across the garden towards him.

In a flash of THUNDER, we see A PORTRAIT SHOT of the KITTEN. A classic LOUIS WAIN image. MEOW.

EMILY
Oh, Louis... look...

EMILY picks the KITTEN up and starts hugging him and nuzzling him - an image that will be seared into LOUIS' memory forever, an image of innocence and love.

EMILY (CONT'D)
You're soaking wet, poor thing...
Come into the warm with us... We'll
take care of you. Won't we, Louis?

EMILY heads back into the house. LOUIS is left in the rain, feeling a strange solace, a sense of the comfort that this cat will bring them.

92 **INT. KITCHEN, ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - DUSK** 92

LOUIS watches as EMILY scrubs the tiny little kitten dry.

93 **INT. LARDER, ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - NIGHT** 93

EMILY and LOUIS crouch as the KITTEN laps at a bowl of milk.

94 **INT. PARLOUR, ELISABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - MORNING** 94

EMILY has fashioned a strange toy for PETER, a cotton mouse on the end of a string, which she drags around the room. PETER plays with it, making LOUIS and EMILY laugh.

95 **INT. STAIRS, ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - MORNING** 95

PETER clumsily climbs the stairs. He is congratulated by LOUIS and EMILY as he gets to the top.

96 **INT. HALLWAY, ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - MORNING** 96

SUNSHINE. LOUIS, EMILY and PETER get ready to go for a walk. They tie a LITTLE RED RIBBON round PETER'S neck.

96A **EXT. ELIZABETH TERRACE / NEIGHBOURING FIELD - MORNING** 96A

SUMMER. LOUIS and EMILY go out of their back gate and walk across the field, carrying PETER with them. The village of Hampstead and smoky London sprawl out in the deep background.

PETER is still a kitten. They get looks from DOG WALKERS and PASSERS-BY, but don't care.

97 **EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY**

97

AUTUMN. BEAUTIFUL ORANGES, REDS AND BROWNS. PETER plays in the AUTUMN LEAVES, now a fully grown young cat. EMILY needs a bit of support - she is paler and has lost weight.

EMILY
Come on, Peter! Keep up!

They walk past HUGE OAK TREES.

LOUIS
I think Peter likes the oak trees.

EMILY
Amazing, aren't they. They live for a thousand years... three hundred years to grow. Three hundred years to live... and three hundred years to die...

TRANSITION TO:

WINTER. SNOW. LOUIS and EMILY make a CAT SNOWMAN. PETER looks at it. He doesn't seem sure.

EMILY takes LOUIS' red scarf and ties it round the CAT SNOWMAN'S neck - like PETER'S ribbon. PETER MEOWS and stands next to it. He likes it!

TRANSITION TO:

SPRING. SHAFTS OF LIGHT. LOUIS, EMILY and PETER walk into the woods. They arrive at AN EXTRAORDINARY SCENE. BIRDS swoop happily through the canopy.

VIVID, ELECTRIC COLOURS BURN SURREALLY BRIGHT. IT'S A MAGICAL IMAGE. IT'S AN IMAGE WE WILL REMEMBER.

EMILY picks PETER up. He is wide-eyed too, taking it all in.

LOUIS
Electricity... I can feel...
electricity... can you feel it?

EMILY smiles at him. She would call it "love".

EMILY
This is our place... this is where
I'll be, Louis... when you need me.

97A **EXT. HAMPSTEAD STREETS / INT. CARRIAGE - DAY**

97A

LOUIS and EMILY sit in silence, feeling the light on their faces. EMILY takes LOUIS' hand. This time, they keep holding.

98 INT. BEDROOM, ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - NIGHT 98

EMILY is asleep, PETER curled up on the bed.

99 INT. STUDY, ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - NIGHT 99

By the warm glow of an oil lamp, LOUIS draws PETER.

END OF SEQUENCE

100 EXT. BOXING TENT, LONDON - DAY (1886) 100

TWO FIGHTERS do battle - the huge JOURNEYMAN and the sprightly BENDIGO, who has a weird, cheeky charisma, bouncing about and making up insulting rhymes to put off his opponent.

LOUIS
Go on, Bendigo!

RAILTON
Curious little fellow, isn't he.

BENDIGO is doing a dance - like LOUIS' own eccentric boxing dance - pulling silly faces at the JOURNEYMAN. FLASH PHOTOGRAPHERS huddle to take shots. LOUIS and RAILTON sit ringside. LOUIS is trying to draw BENDIGO.

LOUIS
But he's electric, Herb. Look how his fancy all adore him - Half his opponent's size but he knows how to harness the electricity of the crowd... look, see! There it is.

FLASH! POW! WAPOW! FLASH! FLASH!

RAILTON
Are you talking about the photographers?

LOUIS
No, Herb. Look properly. The electricity. Finally, I feel like I'm starting to understand it. In fact I have a hypothesis that electricity is what pushes us through time. And if I can find a way to conduct and divert electricity with more accuracy, I could, in theory, experience the past as if it were no different to the future...

RAILTON
Louis... Is everything alright at home... With Emily, I mean.

LOUIS

Of course it is. She's teaching herself Chinese so she can read about their history in their own language. And we have a new friend called Peter.

RAILTON

Peter?

LOUIS

Yes, he's a cat. We have a cat now.

RAILTON

For mousing, you mean?

LOUIS

No, Herb. As a pet.

RAILTON

... I'm worried about you, Louis.

LOUIS

Why.

RAILTON

Well... that's a bit disgusting, don't you think?

BENDIGO is closing in on the JOURNEYMAN, nimbly ducking the sweeping punches coming his way.

LOUIS

... Do you know the true meaning of the phrase "there's no time like the present", Herb? It's that there isn't. It's too minimal, too fleeting. We turn the past into the future - that's what the present is - through the power of our electricity. And that is an entirely reversible process. Remembering things in the past is no different to imagining things in the future and neither is any different to life itself. I can remember Emily in the future and she will be there. Do you see what I'm saying, Herb?

BANG! The JOURNEYMAN falls. REFEREE holds BENDIGO'S arm up. CAMERAS FLASH. BENDIGO starts dancing again, geeing up the crowd. FLASHES SPARK WILDLY AS LOUIS' WATCHES WIDE-EYED.

RAILTON is not feeling it in quite the same way.

101 **INT. HOTEL DINING ROOM, THE STRAND - DAY**

101

INGRAM is eating a rich meal. LOUIS' SKETCHES of BENDIGO and the fight are on the table. LOUIS looks at a PHOTOGRAPH of BENDIGO'S KNOCKOUT PUNCH.

LOUIS

But this doesn't capture the spirit of the fight, Sir William.

INGRAM

Um... Yes, it does. That's why it's in vogue. It's fast, it's cheap and it's one hundred percent accurate.

LOUIS

But where is the electricity?

INGRAM looks confused. He wipes his mouth and looks at LOUIS.

INGRAM

... I hear your wife is very sick.

LOUIS didn't realise INGRAM knew this.

INGRAM (CONT'D)

... Did you know, Louis... that I lost my father and my brother in a shipping accident? ... in Lake Michigan... it's how I came to inherit this newspaper... though I was thirteen at the time... that they died... I know that you are still supporting your mother and your sisters, Louis, and that is admirable. So I'm sorry to say this... but it may be that I cannot use you as much as I would like, for the time being. I need to get our finances in order and that means making difficult, practical decisions... but my advice to you would be to spend the time that you gain... with your wife... because when she is gone, Louis... it will hurt...

LOUIS is surprised to see that INGRAM is close to tears.

INGRAM (CONT'D)

These are precious weeks... do you understand?

102 **EXT. VICTORIAN BATHS, LONDON - NIGHT**

102

LOUIS swims alone in the echoey baths, channeling his stress.

103 **INT. BEDROOM, ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - DAY** 103

PETER is dressed in EYEGLASSES and a BOW TIE.

LOUIS does a silly cat voice for PETER. It's shot as if PETER is saying these lines, although his mouth doesn't move.

LOUIS (O.C.)
Stuffed mouse for lunch, Mrs Wain?

EMILY is sitting up in bed, pale and sickly now.

EMILY
No thank you, Peter. I'm not partial to mouse personally...

LOUIS (O.C.)
Sparrow pie...?

EMILY
I don't care for sparrow either, truth be told... bit gristly.
(turning to LOUIS)
Could you stop it now? I don't have an appetite today. I'm a bit tired.

LOUIS
... What's the matter?

EMILY
Uh... I have cancer, Louis. I'm in quite a lot of pain.

EMILY lies back with a huff. LOUIS thinks. Perhaps it's time.

104 **INT. VARIOUS / PARLOUR, ELIZABETH TERRACE - DAY** 104

EMILY'S POV AS WE WALK THROUGH THE HOUSE - WE SEE SLIVERS, FINGERS OVER THE LENS.

LOUIS (O.C.)
Are you ready?

EMILY (O.C.)
It depends on what you're about to show me...

We arrive in the parlour. LOUIS takes his hands away.

EMILY'S face lights up. LOUIS has created a gallery of STILL LIFE SKETCHES OF PETER - PETER playing at home, PETER in the leaves, PETER sliding on some ice and so on.

EMILY (CONT'D)
... When did you do all this? ... has Sir William seen these?

LOUIS
 ... These are not for Sir William,
 Emily. These are for you.

EMILY
 ... But you must show him, Louis.

LOUIS
 ... Why? ... Sir William doesn't
 care about Peter now does he...

EMILY, though sick, looks at LOUIS with beguiling confidence.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
 And besides I should be... I should
 be spending more time with you...
 when you're still-

EMILY
 (half playfully now)
 Who is this sopping wet dishrag I
 seem to have married... I'm the one
 who's ill, Louis. Don't you start
 wallowing in it too...

On LOUIS. He needs to be strong for her. Under her pale
 exterior, LOUIS can see that EMILY is still full of life.

105 **EXT. GOLF COURSE, LONDON - DAY**

105

WELL-TO-DO GOLFERS - tweed, funny hats, socks - do business,
 smoke, play golf. INGRAM tees up with three PLAYING PARTNERS.

LOUIS
 ... Sir William!

INGRAM is surprised and confused to see LOUIS pushing EMILY
 in a wheelchair towards them. They are waving and EMILY seems
 to be vaguely in disguise as a MAN.

GROUNDSMAN
 Excuse me! ... excuse me! Oi!

LOUIS and EMILY run away, laughing as the GROUNDSMAN gives
 chase. INGRAM watches this play out.

106 **INT. CLUB ROOM, GOLF - DAY**

106

INGRAM, amusingly clad in golf clothes, is studying LOUIS'
 pictures of Peter.

INGRAM
 Sorry she wasn't allowed in, old
 boy. I did try...

LOUIS
It wasn't a very... convincing
disguise was it...

INGRAM
... She should be at home resting.

LOUIS
... She wanted to come.

107 **EXT. CLUB ROOM, GOLF COURSE - DAY**

107

EMILY sits peacefully outside, looking at the view and feeling the breeze on her face.

A feeling of quiet serenity. A feeling, perhaps even, of destiny. She knows it's nearly time for her to go.

108 **INT. CLUB ROOM, GOLF COURSE - DAY**

108

INGRAM takes a sip of tea, loads in some extra sugar and stirs it thoughtfully. LOUIS looks nervous.

LOUIS
I'm sorry if we've... wasted your
time, Sir William...

INGRAM
... I have two pages earmarked for
the Christmas edition, especially
reserved for a bit of festive
frivolity... something to raise the
spirits of our readers... I want
you to fill it... with cats...

LOUIS
With... cats?

INGRAM
Yes... with cats...

LOUIS
... Do you not think that, perhaps,
a spread of silly dogs might be
more appealing for your readership?

INGRAM
I've seen dogs before... and I
think you capture something of the
cat, Louis... perhaps because you
yourself are a bit of a renegade...
An outcast, dare I say it...

INGRAM looks at him with huge kindness. LOUIS is touched.

INGRAM (CONT'D)

... How you have managed to conjure images of such delight at such a dark time... I don't know...

LOUIS sees EMILY through the window, her back to him.

LOUIS

It's because... I am indestructible...

LOUIS smiles, tears in his eyes. He doesn't feel strong.

109 **EXT. MARKET STREET - DAY**

109

LOUIS walks down a snow-dusted market street. EVERYBODY is festive, children running around.

A SMALL GROUP AT A NEWS STAND ARE READING "THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS" AND LAUGHING. LOUIS sees that they are enjoying his double page spread: "A KITTENS' CHRISTMAS PARTY".

Further down the street, FIVE STREET URCHIN BOYS & GIRLS huddle round a discarded newspaper. They are filthy and cold, but they giggle at LOUIS' CATS, forgetting their troubles. They feed A STRAY CAT some scraps of bread, even stroke it.

This lifts LOUIS' spirits, but not enough. He pays for a copy of the "ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS" and walks home.

EMILY (V.O.)

Throughout history, cats have been worshipped as mystical gods and maligned as the evil allies of witchery and sin...

110 **SCENE OMITTED**

110

111 **INT. PARLOUR, ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - NIGHT**

111

THE NEWSPAPER is open on "A KITTENS' CHRISTMAS PARTY". EMILY and LOUIS sit by the fire, the remains of their Christmas dinner to the side, EMILY visibly in her last days.

PETER has an adorable Christmas ribbon on and is jumping into an empty present box, as if it's a serious game.

EMILY

... But I think you are the first person ever to see that they are, in fact, ridiculous. That they are silly and cuddly and lonely and frightened and brave... like us...

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

One day, I think it won't seem so peculiar to have a cat in the house, as a little pet.

LOUIS seems quiet.

EMILY (CONT'D)

... What's going on in that funny little head of yours?

LOUIS

... Sometimes, I think of how you will one day be gone and... I have to tell you, Emily, that I find it... intolerably difficult to imagine... I will be so very alone.

EMILY

... You'll be alright, Louis. You'll have Peter...

LOUIS

This time with you, Emily, playing with Peter in the evenings, and sitting by the fire... these have been the best days of my entire life... I can't tell you why it is that I have such... difficulty... just being here, on this Earth... but I can say, with absolute certainty, that you have made it much, much better. You make the world... beautiful. And warm. And kind... And I just wanted to thank you for that, before it's too late.

EMILY

... I haven't made the world beautiful, Louis. The world is beautiful... and you have helped me to see that too...

The sadness returns to LOUIS momentarily.

EMILY (CONT'D)

... Just remember... that however hard things get... however much you feel that you are struggling... the world is full of beauty... and it's up to you to capture it, Louis... to look... and to share it with as many people as you can...

We sense that LOUIS will never forget these words.

EMILY (CONT'D)

You are a prism, through which that beam of life refracts.

112 **INT. BEDROOM / VARIOUS, ELIZABETH TERRACE - NIGHT** 112

LOUIS is asleep. EMILY is weak, but she heaves herself out of bed. She grabs her PATTERNED BLUE SHAWL off a chair and puts it around her shoulders, perhaps for warmth.

She uses a walking stick to make her way to LOUIS' desk in another room.

She pulls open a drawer. Inside, is his journal.

113 **EXT. ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - MORNING (1887)** 113

A CRISP, COOL MORNING. BIRDSONG.

114 **INT. KITCHEN, ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - MORNING** 114

LOUIS is preparing a breakfast of eggs, bacon and tea.

115 **INT. STAIRS, ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - MORNING** 115

LOUIS comes up the stairs carrying the special breakfast.

116 **INT. BEDROOM, ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - MORNING** 116

LOUIS enters the bedroom.

LOUIS

Here we are... a special New Year's breakfast for you today, Mrs Wain.

LOUIS starts setting it up on the side, pouring tea. *MEOW.*

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Yes and to you, Peter. Don't worry I haven't forgotten your eggs.

MEOW. PETER sounds sad. LOUIS stops. He looks down. PETER is staring back at him.

LOUIS looks over to EMILY in the bed, only fleetingly. He can't. He continues preparing the breakfast as if nothing has happened. Then he stops suddenly.

He takes a few moments, pacing. He can't stand still. He decides to start building a fire. He takes some kindling and logs out of a wood basket. PETER watches him. LOUIS tries to strike a match but it will not light.

He tries again and the head breaks off. He does this several times, then stands up again, pacing.

He settles. He looks over at EMILY in the bed. She is dead.

117 **INT. PARLOUR, ELIZABETH TERRACE - DUSK (1887)** 117

The FIRE is going gently. INGRAM and RAILTON sit in FUNERAL ATTIRE, drinking tea. With them, sits an older MRS WAIN - she has a walking stick and is in funeral dress. PETER trots in.

INGRAM

Here he is... Peter the great...

PETER meows quietly. INGRAM and RAILTON politely chuckle, not used to having a CAT in the house. MRS WAIN sits quietly.

118 **INT. KITCHEN, ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - CONT.** 118

In the kitchen, to our surprise, sits CAROLINE, who also looks slightly older now. She sits with LOUIS at the table. They sit in silence for a time. CAROLINE takes a sip of tea.

CAROLINE

A family has moved into one of the mansions, three streets along from us in Clerkenwell. They have a daughter who is not yet married...

LOUIS doesn't speak or react. CAROLINE looks at him.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Perhaps now you can help to repair the damage you have done to this family... we will forgive you, Louis. If you come home... we cannot afford the upkeep of one house, let alone two... and this is no place for a gentleman...

We hear MRS WAIN sobbing next door. LOUIS turns to see INGRAM offering her a handkerchief. RAILTON is on his feet now. He looks through into the kitchen at LOUIS.

119 **EXT. ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - EVENING** 119

STORMY CLOUDS FLICKER WITH ELECTRICITY. RAINFALL MAKES THE STREET FIZZ LIKE STATIC.

120 **INT. KITCHEN, ELIZABETH TERRACE SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - EVENING** 120

The kitchen is a mess. A chaos of half-finished CAT DRAWINGS.

LOUIS looks dishevelled, a beard forming. He fishes two boiled eggs out of a pan, shells them and mashes one with a fork for PETER. He serves it on the table.

PETER leaves for the other room.

LOUIS sits not eating his own egg. PETER comes back into the room and *MEOWS*, looking up at LOUIS.

LOUIS
... She's not here, Peter.

On a dirty tea towel, LOUIS has drawn a SCREAMING CAT. Underneath he has scribbled a caption that reads:

"TELL ME SUNSHINE, TELL ME RAIN,
WHAT'S THE CURE FOR ALL THIS PAIN?"

Next to this image is a picture of a FLUFFY CAT KING, sitting on a throne before A GROUP OF COURTIER CATS. MUSIC BEGINS.

121 **SCENE OMITTED** 121

122 **INT. PARLOUR, ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - NIGHT** 122

STORM CONTINUES OUTSIDE. LOUIS, in his pyjamas, is playing with PETER.

He has the cotton mouse on a thread that EMILY made. PETER loses interest. It isn't the same without EMILY.

LOUIS tries to pick PETER up, but PETER bites him.

LOUIS
Argh, you little- !

LOUIS finds PETER under a dresser. He gets down on the floor.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
I want you to cuddle me...

PETER stares at him, cowering, confused.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Please... please cuddle me...

PETER meows sadly.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
I know, Peter... it's not my fault.

LOUIS lies there, feeling the floor on his cheek. PETER comes out and head-butts LOUIS. He *MEOWS*: "Come on, mate..."

PETER looks at LOUIS sprawled pathetically on the ground.

123-125 **SCENE OMITTED** 123-125

126 **INT. CHURCH, CAT LAND - DUSK**

126

We are in a version of the same CHURCH where WILLIAM WAIN'S funeral took place.

In the coffin, lies a BEAUTIFUL WHITE CAT wearing EMILY'S BLUE DRESS. The coffin is full of flowers.

A CAT KING - a fat ginger cat, holding a sceptre with a crown on his head - sits in the PRIEST'S ornate chair. He speaks in a WEIRD CAT LANGUAGE, like talking but it's hard to make out words - A chattery, human-talkish meow speak.

PETER is there, again human sized, dressed as a kind of JESTER with a wagon full of JESTERLY PROPS. He stands before A CONGREGATION of COURTIER CATS. There is a CANVAS on an EASEL which reads: "PAIN".

126A **INT. PARLOUR / KITCHEN, ELIZABETH TERRACE - NIGHT**

126A

LOUIS sits up slowly. He heaves himself onto his feet and slowly makes his way into the kitchen, followed by PETER.

LOUIS looks at the STORM outside, strokes PETER and then drifts towards the door.

INTERCUT:

126B **INT. CHURCH, CAT LAND - DUSK**

126B

PETER drags a table into the centre of the court, and arranges a tea set which he grabs from his wagon. He pours the tea into the cup. EVERYONE IS CONFUSED.

CAT KING

... Tea?

This word we can make out. After a pause, PETER nods, takes his brush and goes to the canvas. Next to the word "PAIN" he adds the letter "T".

It now spells "PAINT".

Slowly, the CAT COURTIERS begin to nod and clap. They stand up. They cheer. They throw flowers in celebration. THE CAT KING is delighted. PETER BOWS.

127 **EXT. ELIZABETH TERRACE - NIGHT**

127

LOUIS stands outside, bare foot in the rain, looking up at the electric sky as MUSIC RISES.

END OF SECTION

1891 - 1910 "POPULAR WAIN"

128	<u>CONTENTS MOVED TO 130B</u>	128
129	<u>CONTENTS MOVED TO 130A</u>	129
130	<u>INT. STAIRS, SIR WILLIAM INGRAM'S OFFICE, ILN - DAY (1891)</u>	130

We spiral down from an ornate painting on the ceiling of THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.

INGRAM is smoking and drinking sherry, following LOUIS (now 30s) and PETER down the stairs. LOUIS carries a SACK OF MAIL.

INGRAM

Your cats have won you many fans,
Wain! Congratulations!

PETER *MEOWS*.

LOUIS

He says thank you, but go easy on
the sherry.

INGRAM

That's the famous cheek that's
catapulted you to fame, my boy! In
fact, there was a telegram from a
certain Miss Judith Shenton of the
National Cat Club in Deptford.
They're having a kind of "cat
competition" and would like you to
judge it. What do you say?

LOUIS

Peter?

PETER *MEOWS*.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

We'll do it... Oh and, Sir
William... you don't mind if I work
with other people, do you?

LOUIS leaves and we are left with INGRAM. He doesn't mind but didn't expect the question.

A TROLLEY hurtles past, stacked with newspapers. It's a LOUIS WAIN SPECIAL "Summer Edition" - the front cover features SEVERAL CATS in the iconic LOUIS WAIN style.

130A **EXT. MARKET ALLEY - MORNING**

130A

NEWSPAPERS ARE UNLOADED AT A NEWS STAND. CROWDS ARE FORMING - ALL FIGHTING TO GET COPIES OF THE "ILN".

PAPER GIRL 1891
Louis Wain special in The
Illustrated London News!

WAIN FAN
Look, there he is! It's Louis Wain!

LOUIS CYCLES BY WITH PETER IN HIS BASKET. The CROWD chase after him, trampling the NEWS BOY as they go.

130B **INT. NEWSPAPER PRINT FACTORY - NIGHT**

130B

IMPRESSIONISTIC CLOSE-UPS OF LOUIS' WAIN'S ICONIC CAT DRAWINGS BEING PRINTED AT SPEED IN THE "ILN".

131 **INT. LONDON BOOK SHOP / DAN RIDER'S BOOK SHOP - DAY**

131

SHELVES ARE STACKED WITH LOUIS' BOOKS. CUSTOMERS FLICK EAGERLY THROUGH THE PAGES. PETER IS HEAVILY FEATURED.

CUSTOMERS SIT AND READ OR SHARE FUNNY PICTURES WITH THEIR CHILDREN. THEY PLONK THE BOOKS ON THE CASHIER'S DESK AND GIVE CASH. THE BOOKS ARE PUT IN PAPER BAGS AND HANDED BACK.

132 **INT. HALLWAY, ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - MORNING**

132

LOUIS goes to collect a pile of fan mail that has been thrust through his door. He hears a MEOW and opens the door. It's not Peter, but a different cat.

This is BRIGIT.

133 **INT. CAT SHOW, DEPTFORD CHURCH HALL - DAY**

133

A CAT SHOW is being prepared - TEA, BISCUITS, CAKES, ADORABLE CATS IN THEIR BASKETS AND CAGES.

POSTCARD STANDS ARE QUICKLY SLOTTED UP WITH WAIN'S POSTCARDS. CATS OF VARIOUS STYLES, MANY OF THEM NOW LOOK QUITE HUMAN.

We recognise certain scenes - cats boxing, cats playing golf, cats swimming, cats in fancy tearooms.

SHELVES ARE STACKED WITH MAGAZINES FEATURING LOUIS' WORK ON THE FRONT COVER - LOTS OF LOUIS WAIN'S WORK IS FOR SALE.

134 **INT. WOBURN HOUSE - DAY** 134

LOUIS is back doing private commissions for rich clients, this time the DUCHESS OF WOBURN.

He sits, as before, with his easel, but this time - pampered on a podium - is a BIG FLUFFY CAT.

LOUIS whips off some cloth to REVEAL his PORTRAIT OF THE CAT. The DUCHESS and STAFF clap excitedly. LOUIS bows awkwardly.

135 **EXT. CAT SHOW, DEPTFORD CHURCH HALL - DAY** 135

LOUIS cycles. *FLASH-CUT MEMORIES OF EMILY. He is fighting for her. He is fighting to make her proud.*

He arrives at the CAT SHOW. JUDITH SHENTON (wearing the PRESIDENT'S SASH), RAILTON and other CAT LADIES greet him.

135A **INT. CAT SHOW, DEPTFORD CHURCH HALL - DAY** 135A

A CHURCH HALL. A poorly calligraphed banner: "THE DEPTFORD CAT CLUB SHOW". LOUIS is led around by JUDITH.

CATS on pedestals, in cages. ADORABLE KITTENS in baskets.

JUDITH

It's so wonderful to meet a kindred spirit, Mr Wain! I hear even gentry are keeping cats as pets now. And so handsome too. I am quite astonished at your level of knowledge, I really am. Although I must admit I didn't fully understand your theory about cats preferring to face North?

LOUIS

Ah yes, well cats will always prefer to face and to walk northwards, especially along a wall you will notice. You see their whiskers are like antennae and are attracted by the positive poles of the earth.

RAILTON is nervously holding a cat, unsure.

136 **INT. DAN RIDER'S BOOKSHOP, ST MARTIN'S COURT - DAY** 136

A man enters. Immediately customers start whispering that it's HG WELLS (30s). We realise that DAN RIDER, the man with the POMERANIAN on the train, is working behind the cash desk.

DAN RIDER
Hello, Mister Wells... come to
check on your sales?

HG WELL'S "THE WAR OF THE WORLDS" and "THE TIME MACHINE" - as
well as other books - are also on sale.

HG WELLS
No, Rider... I'm here for some
Louis Wain...

137-140 **SCENES OMITTED** 137-140

141 **INT. LONDON BOOKSHOP - DAY** 141

MORE BOOKS are delivered, browsed, enjoyed. We realise LOUIS
is illustrating other people's stories too.

LOUIS SIGNS BOOKS, FACED WITH A QUEUE OF CUSTOMERS. He tries
to be polite, but feels the pressure of them crowding round.

142 **EXT. NEIGHBOURING FIELD, ELIZABETH TERRACE - DAY** 142

LOUIS wears silly golf attire and talks with a journalist.

JAS GORDON RICHARDS
And Peter talks to you, does he?

LOUIS
Oh yes, every day. All cats do...

LOUIS settles down to take a shot, doing a jiggy dance. He
swings... but his club goes flying! He runs off to collect
it, leaving GORDON RICHARDS bemused.

143 **INT. LONDON / INT. RIDER'S BOOKSHOP / MARKET - DAY** 143

LOUIS HIMSELF IS NOW FEATURED ON THE COVERS OF MAGAZINES.

144 **SCENE OMITTED** 144

145 **INT. CAT SHOW, DEPTFORD CHURCH HALL - DAY** 145

RAILTON looks through LOUIS' postcards, which are on sale - A
MIXTURE OF EMOTIONS as he watches the CAT LADIES excitedly
rifle through them. A WHIFF OF JEALOUSY PERHAPS.

LOUIS is inspecting a TABBY CAT, still with JUDITH.

LOUIS

The Tabby's markings are defined by the electricity of their feline heritage. This particular creature might have a great grandmother or some such that was actually *struck* by lightning, as the markings are very defined in jagged lines...

RAILTON has happened upon a PAINTING of a BEAUTIFUL WHITE CAT, wearing a blue ribbon the colour of EMILY'S DRESS. The colour of her eyes, the beguiling, confident, eternal smile - this is a painting of EMILY as a CAT. He looks over at LOUIS.

146 **INT. JEM MACE'S BOXING GYM, LONDON - DAY** 146

LOUIS is back with JEM MACE, sparring against another BURLY OPPONENT. LOUIS is on fire. *FLASH-CUT MEMORIES OF EMILY.*

KAPOW! The BURLY OPPONENT stumbles to the ground.

LOUIS

Yes! I am the Great Bendigo!

LOUIS starts copying BENDIGO'S dancing. JEM MACE claps and laughs, but we sense that LOUIS is a bit edgy, manic.

147 **INT. KITCHEN, ELIZABETH TERRACE, SOUTH HAMPSTEAD - DAY** 147

LOUIS works on a PATENT - "A NEW ATTACHMENT FOR BICYCLES". We can't understand what it is, but "electricity" is featured.

PETER and BRIGIT are having dinner. *MEOW.* ANOTHER TWO CATS at the window - LEO and MINNA. LOUIS lets them in.

148 **INT. CAT SHOW, DEPTFORD CHURCH HALL - DAY** 148

LOUIS and JUDITH and walk on through the CAT SHOW.

LOUIS

Their features are already changing as they become more intelligent and domesticated. Their eyes will become larger and their heads bigger as their brains grow in size. They will turn blue and, eventually, they will stand on their hind legs and communicate with us in our own language.

JUDITH

Goodness, I had no idea it was so... complicated... did you just say they would turn blue?

LOUIS
Yes. Of course.

JUDITH
... Well, thanks to you, Mr Wain,
us cat people are out of the
shadows and finally celebrating in
the open with our feline children.
So... I would like to thank you...

JUDITH takes off her SASH and, with great feeling, hangs it
around LOUIS' neck. She gives him a hug. THE SASH READS
"PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL CAT CLUB". LOUIS surveys the room.
The CROWDS, the NOISE, the CATS - it's getting to LOUIS.

149 **SCENE OMITTED** 149

150 **INT. CAT SHOW, DEPTFORD CHURCH HALL - DAY (1894)** 150

LOUIS pins the WINNER'S ROSETTE on a funny faced PERSIAN CAT
and holds her up for a delighted, cheering crowd. Something
is unsettling about the way everyone is staring at him.

CATS STARING AT HIM. THEIR EYES LOOK LARGER THAN NORMAL.

END OF SEQUENCE

151 **INT. / EXT. GARDEN, ELIZABETH TERRACE - DAY (1895)** 151

AN ARRAY OF "DISHONOURED" CHEQUES ON THE TABLE. The house is
chaos - dirty crockery, uneaten food, cat faeces. CAROLINE
(30s), JOSEPHINE (30s) and CLAIRE (20s) are with LOUIS.

FELICIE (20s) sits in the garden. We are struck by how much
time has passed. The SISTERS look tired and pale.

CAROLINE
I assumed you had been spending it
all on frivolous luxuries as you
clearly have quite forgotten about
your poor and destitute family -
yet here you are living in squalor
and chaos!

CLAIRE
Don't shout, Caroline.

CAROLINE
I'm not shouting, Claire. I'm
explaining to him with force.

JOSEPHINE
You could at least have stretched
to a maid. I mean look at this
floor. It's covered in cat faeces.

PETER, BRIGIT, MINNA and LEO drift variously in and out. Occasionally the cats come to FELICIE for attention. PETER looks scruffier, older, fur greying.

CAROLINE
Where has it all gone!

JOSEPHINE
We are in huge amounts of debt.
It's really starting to affect
mother's health, I have to say...

CLAIRE
Nobody wants to marry us, Louis.

LOUIS
I didn't copyright the images.

CAROLINE
Oh my Lord... help us, please...

CLAIRE
... What does that mean?

JOSEPHINE
It means people have been re-
printing his pictures all over the
country and he hasn't seen a
penny... which explains why he is
living - not like a pauper, but
actually, Louis, I would say you
are living rather like a pig. The
stench is quite unbearable.

LOUIS
Some of my originals I exchanged in
place of money so they have rather
become a currency in themselves...
Haven't they, Peter?

PETER meows as he passes through. LEO is coughing up a fur ball, making horrible noises.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
I gave the barber a handful of my
Dancing Cats and now I get free
haircuts for the rest of my life.
And look at this snazzy pair of
Chelseas... bought the same way...

LOUIS is wearing decent BOOTS. This is driving CAROLINE mad.

CLAIRE
But why didn't you copyright them?

LOUIS
Because I am not interested in
making money.

CAROLINE

What are you interested in then?
The attention? The adulation? "Oh,
the marvelous Louis Wain who paints
one thing... and it's cats!"
(rattling the table)
What are you interested in!

This frightens one or two of the CATS. LOUIS heads into the parlour, ushering the CATS away from raging CAROLINE.

CLAIRE

(shouting)
Stop shouting, Caroline!

MINNA trots in with a DEAD BIRD.

JOSEPHINE

Agh, for goodness' sake there's a
cadaver now. It's eating a hawk!

CLAIRE

It's not a hawk, Josephine.

CAROLINE

You are not a child, Louis... you
are a man... You are a *man*... Can
you not see how you have tainted us
with your actions.

CAROLINE is getting upset.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Our parents worked hard to build
our reputation and to gather a
fortune for their children and you
have squandered it all on wretched
cats and a wilful, tainted, doomed
romance. You have destroyed this
family with your selfishness and
you continue with your childish
delusions which conspire to keep us
all in penury. The indignity we
have suffered at your hands...

LOUIS

I didn't do it on purpose.

CAROLINE

You didn't what? You didn't get
married on purpose?

LOUIS is hovering somewhere odd, whispering into a corner.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Speak up, Louis!

LOUIS
I DIDN'T THINK TO DO IT!

Silence. PETER is looking at him. LOUIS feels ashamed for his outburst. CAROLINE is now crying uncontrollably.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Nobody told me I was supposed to
copyright the images.

JOSEPHINE
... But what about Sir William? He
should have advised you...

LOUIS
I haven't seen Sir William for a
while... I have been working for
other people...

CLAIRE
... We have no money, Louis. We
can't eat. We can't buy clothes.
We're freezing to death...

CLAIRE stops. There is more to say but clearly it's delicate.
LOUIS looks at CLAIRE, at CAROLINE, at FELICIE.

FELICIE
... Just tell him.

LOUIS
... What has happened.

152 **INT. PARLOUR / DINING ROOM, WAIN HOUSE - DAY (1895)**

152

The house is in disrepair, wallpaper peeling.

MARIE
Get back! Get back, I said! He'll
catch it!

LOUIS
Catch what, Marie... what are you
talking about?

LOUIS keeps his distance, shocked and saddened to see the
state of MARIE (20s). Her hair is a wild mess.

MARIE
I've got leprosy. Can't you see it?

FELICIE
She scrubs herself red raw, Louis.
We can't stop her.

MARIE

Don't talk about me as if I'm not here!

She is covered in red rashes and sores. She scratches and rubs herself compulsively. Her clothes are all torn.

LOUIS

Why do you keep scrubbing yourself?

MARIE

Because of the leprosy. I can feel the prickles and they're in my head. They hate me, Louis. They're plotting. They're going to murder me...

FELICIE is with LOUIS. The other SISTERS and MRS WAIN sit quietly in the dining room.

FELICIE

We're not going to murder you, Marie...

MARIE

Liar. And I seen murders as well - in the alleys by the baker's house. They're going to throw me out because I had relations... I had relations in the graveyard and I bled all over him and we laughed - they're just jealous because he had a big dinger and I touched it, Louis. I saw heaven, that's how I got the leprosy... for punishment. They're all spinsters. They say it's your fault because of Miss Richardson but it's because they're ugly and foul tempered and they lie and plot and scheme...

LOUIS

I tell you what, Marie. Would you like to come to my house and play with my cats for a few days-

MARIE

No, not cats they're poisonous! They've got diseases and I've already got leprosy...

(moaning upsettingly)

... I've got leprosy... get it off... get it off me, Louis! Get it off! GET IT OFF!

FELICIE runs in to try to calm MARIE down. MARIE resists her. LOUIS watches, out of his depth. MRS WAIN and the OTHER SISTERS file in. MARIE is trying to tear her clothes off.

152A EXT. ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS - DAY (1895)

152A

153 INT. SIR WILLIAM INGRAM'S OFFICE, ILN - DAY (1895)

153

INGRAM is looking unhealthy - gouty cheeks, heavy breathing. He finishes a creamy cake and licks his fingers. He downs some sherry. Then he studies LOUIS.

INGRAM

... I think you should move back in with your family.

LOUIS

But they threw me out, Sir William.

INGRAM

But they are your family...

INGRAM lights a cigar.

INGRAM (CONT'D)

I have a series of properties in the village of Westgate-On-Sea - mansions I hire out to families and holiday-makers in the summer. They are very habitable and in good condition. I will do my best to find you more work, Louis, so you can pay off your debts and you are welcome to stay there for as long as you like on a reduced rate... on one condition - that you take your family with you...

LOUIS

But, Sir William, I... I couldn't possibly. Especially after I have been so callously unloyal-

INGRAM

I have plenty of other illustrators on my books, Louis. Don't flatter yourself...

LOUIS

But... why, Sir William...

SIR WILLIAM looks sad, unwell, but his energy is warm.

INGRAM

Because, Mr Wain, in spite of your rather irregular temperament and niggling peculiar foibles - in this occasionally bleak world, you have shown a resilience which I admire...

(MORE)

INGRAM (CONT'D)

and you have, if you must know,
brought me rather a lot of good
cheer, through your pictures.

LOUIS

... Of cats.

INGRAM

... But they're not just cats are
they... you're a brave soul, Mr
Wain, but you can't do this all on
your own... the sea air will do you
all the world of good, especially
young Marie. Sounds to me like she
just needs of a change of scene.
Fresh clothes. Proper food. Brisk
walks.

LOUIS looks over to a framed PICTURE of a FUNNY CAT that
looks a lot like SIR WILLIAM, then to INGRAM himself.

LOUIS

... Thank you, Sir William.

154 INT. / EXT. VARIOUS ELIZABETH TERRACE - DAY

154

As he packs, LOUIS keeps finding traces of EMILY - clothes,
jewellery, the mouse toy she made for PETER. RAILTON is
there, helping, trying to lighten the mood.

The HOUSE becomes barer, emptier. LOUIS packs away hundreds
of PICTURES OF CATS. OTHERS HE THROWS AWAY. SOME HE BURNS ON
A LARGE FIRE IN THE GARDEN. He rolls up his FATHER'S FABRICS.

RAILTON

Do you fancy joining me and the
boys later, to say goodbye? Couple
of drinks maybe? See if old May's
having any people round? Might even
find you someone to, you know...

LOUIS looks angry and shocked.

RAILTON (CONT'D)

Well... You can't be on your own
forever, Louis... she'd want you to
happy... don't you think?

LOUIS

You don't understand me, Herb.

RAILTON

Come on, mate. There's no need to
get-

LOUIS

You never have...

RAILTON realises he has handled this badly. He gets his stuff to leave. He heads for the door.

RAILTON
... You're right, Louis. I don't understand you. But... I'm still your friend.

LOUIS
So what.

RAILTON
So... I'll be here... I guess.

He takes a moment, then leaves LOUIS on his own.

154A **INT. ELIZABETH TERRACE - DUSK**

154A

LOUIS walks back into the house and finds a collection of the first pictures of PETER. PETER meows. He remembers it too.

A SHOT FROM WITHIN THE MIRROR - the same frame he once shared with EMILY, but LOUIS is now alone.

155 **EXT. BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DAY (1895)**

155

HIGH WINDS as REMOVAL MEN carry items of furniture into a large, Gothic seafront house.

LOUIS hammers up a freshly painted sign that reads "BENDIGO LODGE". He has named the home after his favourite BOXER.

PETER, LEO, MINNA and BRIGIT are in covered baskets. They MEOW loudly as REMOVAL MEN carry MRS WAIN into the house on top of her bed. She waves happily at LOUIS who waves back.

MRS WAIN
Coo-ey!

A CARRIAGE arrives. FELICIE, JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE and FELICIE run out with cases, excited. CAROLINE emerges, arms linked with MARIE. CAROLINE looks at the house, then at LOUIS, refusing to smile.

156 **EXT. FAR GARDEN / NEAR GARDEN / INT. BENDIGO LODGE - DAY**

156

CAROLINE, JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE, FELICIE and LOUIS play badminton - CROQUET STUFF, BOULES strewn around the lawn.

They pick VEGETABLES and start to prepare dinner. They chop vegetables, peel potatoes and prepare a joint of meat.

JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE and FELICIE bring warmth and light to proceedings, joking and dancing about - but tension still runs high between CAROLINE and LOUIS.

- 157 **INT. PARLOUR, BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DAY** 157
- SEA VIEWS. MRS WAIN sits with MARIE on a couch, holding her head in her arms and rocking her gently.
- MRS WAIN'S embroidery and weaving equipment is out.
- 158 **INT. KITCHEN, BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DUSK** 158
- LOUIS is not over EMILY. Being in this new space, it feels strange. He leaves the room. CAROLINE watches him go.
- 159 **INT. ELSEWHERE, BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DUSK** 159
- LOUIS is alone, away from everyone.
- FLASH-CUT MEMORIES OF EMILY. BUT THEY ARE FADING.*
- 160 **INT. KITCHEN, BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA- DAY - DUSK** 160
- LOUIS returns smiling. He picks up a cat and buries his feelings, doing a funny jig as he serves food up onto plates.
- 161 **INT. DINING ROOM, BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - EVENING** 161
- The FAMILY sit and pray before eating their meal, but LOUIS is crouched on all fours by PETER, MINNA, LEO and BRIGIT, as they eat their dinner. CAROLINE watches him.
- The family eat, passing food around. They wonder if they might find love here - in a new place, where nobody knows who they are. Meanwhile MARIE sits, not eating. She is silent but under the surface, she is in distress. LOUIS feels it. CAROLINE feels it. They look at each other.
- 162 **INT. VARIOUS, BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - NIGHT** 162
- LOUIS, JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE and FELICIE have a pillow fight. Even MARIE is doing her best to join in, seemingly having a nice time. A pillow explodes and feathers go everywhere.
- LOUIS (V.O.)
After the initial strangeness of
living again with my sisters...
- 163 **EXT. BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA-DAY - DAWN** 163
- LOUIS steps out of the front door and looks out to sea. JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE and FELICIE sit on the porch, painting pictures of sailboats - they are all accomplished artists.

LOUIS (V.O.)
 ... There followed a time of
 relative peace in Westgate-On-
 Sea...

164 **EXT. BEACH, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DAWN** 164

JOSEPHINE supports MRS WAIN with her walking stick as they walk along the beach. CLAIRE and FELICIE run ahead, chasing each other playfully. CAROLINE has linked arms with MARIE.

LOUIS hangs back with PETER, LEO, MINNA, BRIGIT, some on leads, some in baskets in a WAGON full of picnic apparatus. PETER is too old to keep up. LOUIS picks him up, nuzzling him. CAROLINE turns back and looks at him. Close on MARIE.

165 **EXT. BEACH, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DUSK** 165

THE WAINS eat a picnic on some rocks by the water, CATS in their baskets. LOUIS, meanwhile, is pottering chaotically in the shallows, trying to go fishing in a rowing boat.

166 **EXT. BEACH, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - TWILIGHT** 166

MRS WAIN, JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE and FELICIE splash about, swimming in the water. CAROLINE is breast-stroking amongst them, but is then splashed by her sisters and mother. She can't help splashing them back. She can't help laughing.

LOUIS (V.O.)
 But in spite of Sir William's
 prognosis...

LOUIS sits on the shore with MARIE. MARIE rests her head on his shoulder as they watch.

LOUIS (V.O.)
 Marie's condition did not improve.

167 **INT. HALLWAY / VARIOUS, BENDIGO LODGE - DAY** 167

SMASHED VASES, BROKEN PICTURE FRAMES - CHAOS as MARIE, half-naked, is trying to rip her torn undergarments off.

LOUIS (V.O.)
 And after several months of failing
 to help her ourselves...

Her clothes are strewn around the house. LOUIS, CAROLINE and FELICIE struggle to restrain her. JOSEPHINE and CLAIRE try to console MRS WAIN, who cannot bear to watch.

168 **EXT. BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DAY (1897)** 168

MARIE is carried away by TWO PSYCHIATRIC NURSES to a MEDICAL CARRIAGE. DR ELPHICK nods goodbye at LOUIS and the SISTERS.

LOUIS (V.O.)
... A doctor was summoned and she
was taken away to the East Kent
Lunatic Asylum in Chartham Down.

LOUIS peels away to be alone. A little way off MRS WAIN sobs.

LOUIS (V.O.)
And further to my feeble grasp on
publishing rights... I was thwarted
by newly sinister enemies...

169 & 170 **SCENES OMITTED** 169 & 170

171 **INT. DINING ROOM, BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DAY** 171

LOUIS stands before a table on which he has laid out many EXAMPLES OF HIS OWN WORK. Next to each picture is a slightly less good, less charming LOUIS WAIN KNOCK-OFF.

LOUIS (V.O.)
Counterfeiters and copyists who
reproduced my creations in near
identical, if inferior, forms...

172 **INT. COURT BUILDING - DAY (1897)** 172

LOUIS sits with PETER, accompanied by a silently disapproving LAWYER. A JUDGE exits the court room next to them and is surprised to see a CAT in the building.

LOUIS (V.O.)
I was unable to pay off our debts,
let alone settle my bills with Sir
William... and was summoned to
court on several occasions...

173 **INT. TRAIN TO WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DAY (1898)** 173

LOUIS sits cuddling PETER on the train. PETER is PURRING.

LOUIS (V.O.)
And then, in March of the year
1898, my great teacher and best
friend...

174 **INT. PARLOUR, BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DAY (1898)** 174

LOUIS is looking at something from a doorway.

LOUIS
... My dear old Peter... passed
away...

PETER is dead, lying on his side on a patterned rug.

175 & 176 **SCENE OMITTED / SOME CONTENT MOVED TO SC 165** 175 & 176

177 **INT. BEDROOM, BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DAY** 177

LOUIS is in bed, moaning in mental agony. He is sobbing.

LOUIS (V.O.)
And although I did weep for several
years without ceasing... I made an
important discovery - that the more
intensely I suffered, the more
beautiful my work became.

Through a crack in the door, CAROLINE watches. CLOSE ON
LOUIS, lying still in bed, face red from weeping.

178 **INT. STUDIO, BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - EVENING** 178

LOUIS looks exhausted but wired as he works frantically,
accompanied by HIS CATS. ECUs of the brush, the colours,
details of the paintings. His CAT PICTURES are becoming less
naturalistic - SHAGGY BLUE CATS, BLACK & WHITE STRIPED CATS.

LOUIS (V.O.)
I was able to harness the harmful
electricity of my pain and to
transform it into a brighter,
cleaner kind of electricity...

*FLASH-CUT MEMORIES OF EMILY, BUT THEY ARE FADING. THE COLOURS
ARE NOT AS STRONG.*

*FLASH-CUT MEMORIES OF THE MANY CATS STARING AT HIM. THESE
COLOURS ARE STARTING TO LOOK VIVID AND ELECTRIC.*

LOUIS (V.O.)
... An electricity that had been
made pure by the love I still held
for dear old Peter and darling
Emily...

A BRIGHTLY COLOURED SMILING CAT WITH FLOWERS OVER ITS EYES.

179 **EXT. CLIFFS, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DUSK (1906)** 179

LOUIS jogs through a STORM. He stops on a cliff, looking to the heavens. HE LOOKS OUT AT THE VAST OCEAN.

END OF SEQUENCE

180 **INT. LOUIS' BEDROOM, BENDIGO LODGE - DAY (1907)** 180

LOUIS - looking older (about 47 now), messier, tired - packs things into cases.

DR ELPHICK tries to retain authority. The SISTERS stand by cautiously.

DR ELPHICK

Mr Wain... are you aware of the reason I have been summoned...

LOUIS

I assume it's to inform us of how Marie is doing at the asylum, Dr Elphick. That or to conduct a study on the neural evolution of my cats.

LOUIS sweeps out into the hallway.

181 **INT. HALLWAY, BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - CONT.** 181

We see the frail MRS WAIN watching LOUIS as he stomps around.

LOUIS

Brigit is already half way to talking. Aren't you, Brigit?

BRIGIT replies with a MEOW.

DR ELPHICK

I'm afraid not, Mr Wain. Although, since you ask, Marie seems to be coping much better of late...

DR ELPHICK follows him around, along with the FOUR SISTERS.

182 **INT. ANOTHER ROOM, BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - CONT.** 182

LOUIS starts grabbing other bits and pieces messily.

LOUIS

I'm glad to hear it. In fact I have been working on a psychiatric patent that I meant to send to you... it's for an electric suit.

DR ELPHICK
An electric suit...

LOUIS
Yes. A full body suit made of silk,
copper and steel, which is attached
to a large mechanical motor...

183 INT. HALLWAY, BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - CONT. 183

LOUIS
... That transmits positive
electricity through the nervous
system and into the brain...

184 INT. LOUIS' BEDROOM, BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - CONT. 184

LOUIS chucks it all into a case.

LOUIS
... Thus curing the patient of
harmful thoughts and eradicating
their lunacy... would you consider
taking a look at it?

LOUIS snaps one of the cases shut and looks up at DR ELPHICK.

DR ELPHICK
... No, Mr Wain.

LOUIS
Shame... I would say there is quite
a high chance it could cure Marie
entirely of her sickness.

DR ELPHICK
You might say that, but thankfully
you are not a doctor.

185 INT. DINING ROOM, BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DAY 185

DR ELPHICK is sitting with LOUIS, CAROLINE, JOSEPHINE,
CLAIRE, FELICIE and now MRS WAIN too. LOUIS is packed and
ready to go, wearing a hat. As usual, there is tea.

DR ELPHICK
I have been called here, Mr Wain,
because your sister Caroline is
concerned for your health.

LOUIS
My health...? Why would she be
concerned about my health?

FELICIE

... It is not just Caroline who is concerned, Louis.

JOSEPHINE

Yes... quite right...

DR ELPHICK

... I understand that you are planning a trip, Mr Wain.

LOUIS

Indeed. I have sent colourful missives to several publications containing examples of my charming prosaics and singular pictorial work - including some new, more electrically influenced samplings. I am happy to say that the great William Hearst of the New York American has offered me a full time post as their cartoonist at a considerable fee.

CLAIRE

But why do you need to go all the way too New York...? It's too far.

LOUIS

Because as you are all so keen to remind me we are rather lacking in funds at the minute and - for a variety of reasons that we are all very well acquainted with - my work is currently of little financial value on these shores. What's more, the American people are lightyears behind in their attitude towards cats. I assume you have been reading about Roosevelt and his Gentlemen's Agreement with the people of Japan?

A small nod from DR ELPHICK.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Japanese children will now be taught in the same schools as their American compatriots and their immigrant parents can roam freely in the streets of America... but can their cats?

The SISTERS are curling up with embarrassment. DR ELPHICK stays calm, but impatient.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I have helped this country to make great steps in that regard. Now I must help the cats of America. For better or worse, Doctor Elphick, I am an artist and a prism and a transformative funnel for negative electricity. In these tumultuous times, I want to make the people of America smile... I have never seen an American smile in my life.

CAROLINE

You have never seen an American.

LOUIS

Well it's time to change that. The only reason my sister has called you here is because she has been deeply jealous of my talents since I was twelve years old and will do anything to prevent me from reaching my full potential...

DR ELPHICK looks at the SISTERS and then at LOUIS.

DR ELPHICK

Mr Wain... there is no question that you are delusional. But mere delusions of grandeur are not sufficient reason to commit you to hospital. I would quite strongly advise against your trip to New York and suggest that you stay here to rest and to gain a little bit of perspective before you proceed to the next chapter of your life. But ultimately the choice is yours. And if you do choose to ignore absolutely everyone and proceed with your voyage... then I recommend that you sample these two things during your stay in America - hot dogs... and humility.

Out on LOUIS, stubborn, refusing to be vulnerable.

186 **INT. HACKNEY CARRIAGE / EXT. SEASIDE ROADS - DAY**

186

CAROLINE and LOUIS sit silently next to each other, surrounded by LOUIS' things. MRS WAIN sits opposite.

LOUIS

Look after the cats for me,
Caroline... And my sisters...
obviously. And mother, of course...

CAROLINE

Anything else, your majesty? Would you perhaps like me to iron the feathers in your bed for your return?

Nobody says anything for a bit. MRS WAIN looks at him gravely, tears forming in her eyes.

MRS WAIN

You can run away from your sister, Louis... but you cannot run away from your grief... It trails you... like a violent shadow...

LOUIS and CAROLINE look straight forward, no eye contact.

187 **INT. CABIN, OCEAN LINER - DAY (1907)**

187

LOUIS is in a cabin - a desk scattered with sketching materials, a single bed and a round window onto the ocean. He paces around. The RUMBLE of the ENGINE. The HISS of the SEA.

LOUIS sits, trying to keep it together. On the desk is a PICTURE of a lonely cat on a raft in the middle of an ocean.

188 **INT. RESTAURANT, NEW YORK - AFTERNOON (1907)**

188

MUSIC. A BUSTLING ATMOSPHERE. LOUIS sits with MAX KASE (EDITOR of the NEW YORK AMERICAN) and ALICIA SIMMONDS (his SECRETARY) in a busy New York restaurant.

MAX is dressed smartly in loud, clashing colours. They are sharing a SEAFOOD & FISH PLATTER.

LOUIS

Well every cat-fancier knows that puss likes nothing more than to sit on a brown piece of paper.

MAX

(finding it hilarious)
A brown piece of paper! Oh, stop...

LOUIS

But this is because cats are acutely aware of the dangers of electrical rheumatism. And, of course, should you ever have cause to punish a cat, just rustle the paper to make the sound of thunder.

ALICIA

... Do cats get rheumatism?

LOUIS
Of course, Miss Simmonds.

MAX
Of course, he says. Oh Louis, this
is wonderful. You are wonderful.

LOUIS is not joking. MAX is practically wiping the tears from
his eyes. LOUIS notices ALICIA sucking CRAB out of a CLAW.

MAX (CONT'D)
We've been sharing your kitty
pictures with our staff and they
have been laughing and smiling -
Alicia, tell him I'm not lying.

ALICIA
One of our typists...

MAX
Jeanie. Great personality.

MAX has a WHOLE SARDINE on his fork and bites its head off. A
WAITRESS is crying, being shouted at by A MANAGER.

ALICIA
Well she took some pictures home to
her kids and she said they were
running about on their hands and
knees, pretending like they were
cats and asking to have cats for
their birthday...

LOUIS is nodding, smiling but a bit distracted. EVERYTHING IS
LOUD AND EVERYONE IS TALKING TOO FAST. THE WAITING STAFF
SWEEP BY WITH MORE AND MORE SARDINES AND SHRIMP AND PRAWNS.

MAX
You're kooky. You're funny. You're
smart with the weird moustache
going on. You got the accent which
makes you sound sophisticated.
We're going to get you out there.
You're a personality. Wouldn't you
say Alicia honey? You're Mr Cat.
You're Cat Man!

ALICIA
It has a certain ring to it, I
guess... but I like Louis Wain...
that has a certain ring to it
too... can I ask you a question, Mr
Wain? ... why cats?

On LOUIS - what a question. OMINOUS ELECTRIC SOUNDS BUILDING.

189 INT. APARTMENT, NEW YORK - NIGHT

189

The apartment is tiny. LOUIS is only half unpacked, scrolling through frequencies on a WIRELESS RADIO. He seems fascinated.

ANNOUNCER (RADIO)

... And at the bottom of the ninth
the bases are loaded with Cobb of
the White Sox...

LOUIS continues scrolling. He seems more interested in the STATIC than the stations. A piece of CLASSICAL MUSIC comes on, but LOUIS quickly scrolls past.

Seeming to now hear something in the STATIC, LOUIS turns the dial back and listens carefully. WE CAN ALMOST HEAR IT TOO. A KIND OF WHISPERING. Then it goes away and there is only static. LOUIS carries on scrolling.

NEWSREADER (RADIO)

... The Wabash River Earthquake has
ravaged the state of Indiana....

LOUIS scrolls on to some SWING MUSIC, then on again to more STATIC. He leans in. We can now very faintly, abstractly hear the SOUND OF EMILY WHISPERING AT SPEED.

EMILY (RADIO)

Just remember that however hard
things get however much you feel
that you are struggling the world
is full of beauty and it's up to
you to capture it Louis and to
share it with as many people as you
can... one day I think it won't
seem so peculiar to have a cat in
the house as a little pet...

We can only dimly make this out - abstract, echoey. STATIC GETS LOUDER OVERWHELMING THE WHISPERING.

189A EXT. APARTMENT, NEW YORK - MORNING (1909)

189A

A HOMELESS MAN sits and drinks in an alley, watching a CAT nibble at rubbish.

190 INT. APARTMENT, NEW YORK - MORNING (1909)

190

LOUIS has decorated the apartment with PICTURES OF CATS AND DIAGRAMS ABOUT ELECTRICITY. A PHONE IS RINGING.

He is half-asleep. He tries to ignore it, then slowly walks to the telephone - an old half-eaten hot dog rots on a plate.

LOUIS

... Hello.

MAX (V.O.)

Louis. Buddy. It's Max. Pack your bags. You're going to Chicago.

LOUIS

Chicago? Um... no thank you.

LOUIS hears a MEOWING outside. A NEW YORKER kicks a STRAY CAT out of the way as he takes his GARBAGE out, shouting abuse.

MAX (V.O.)

Listen, do me a favour. Come by the office... let's catch up.

191 **EXT. STREETS, NEW YORK - DAY (1909)**

191

LOUIS walks through busy streets. STRANGERS streak past him in a rush. THE BUILDINGS ARE TALL. People are loud - arguing, laughing, bartering. THE TRAFFIC IS BUSY. He bumps into someone - "Hey, watch it buddy!"

As LOUIS turns, we CRASH into SLOW-MO and suddenly EVERYONE in the street is wearing BLUE, the BLUE of EMILY'S DRESS.

191A **EXT. NEW YORK AMERICAN, NEW YORK - DAY (1909)**

191A

AN AUSTERE, SLATE GREY EQUIVALENT OF THE "ILN"

192 **INT. NEWSROOM, NEW YORK AMERICAN, NEW YORK - DAY (1909)**

192

MAX, a bouquet of BLUES, leads LOUIS through a busy newsroom. STAFF TAP AWAY, YAMMERING ON THE TELEPHONE, DISCUSSING RECENT NEWS. It feels strangely large compared to INGRAM'S OFFICES.

MAX

People are going crazy for your Grimalkin stuff. It's fantastic. But we need to reach more people...

ALICIA sits at her desk being flirted at by some YOUNG SUB-EDITOR. She isn't interested. She sees LOUIS sweeping by.

ALICIA

Good morning, Mr Wain.

MAX

This Chicago thing is a big deal. You'll get all the Eastern papers, the Western papers, the whole thing... and do me a favour - stop making jokes about how sometimes you don't like Americans. They don't get it.

LOUIS
Sometimes I don't like Americans.
They make me feel anxious.

MAX
(laughing a bit)
I know I know. It's good. I like
it, but... hey, come in...

193 **INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE, NEW YORK AMERICAN, NEW YORK - DAY**

193

MAX empties multicoloured chocolate balls from a dispenser into a bowl and starts munching. Behind him is a framed picture of GRIMALKIN - a slender, comic-strip cat.

MAX
You're starting to come across like
this bitter, angry guy - pictures
are fun but behind-the-mask kind of
thing...

On his desk is A GUN. In the corner of the room, weirdly and without context, A MAN IS SILENTLY READING A NEWSPAPER.

LOUIS looks through a folder of STORIES showing unflattering photographs of him looking grumpy - "ANGRY CAT MAN BAD MOUTHS NEW YORK", "CRAZED CAT FANCIER A CRITIC OF MEN".

MAX (CONT'D)
I'm going to be honest with you,
Louis... Mr Hearst has asked me to
reduce your salary by half.

LOUIS
But - no, you can't. I have a
family to support. Please-

MAX
Between you and me, he wanted you
out. I had to fight for you. This
is the deal - it's a rebranding
exercise... you know what I said to
him? I said he's like a cat, Mr
Hearst... he's just
misunderstood... don't make me look
stupid, man.

LOUIS is distracted by the GUN, the WEIRD MAN READING THE NEWSPAPER, the MULTICOLOURED CHOCOLATE BALLS.

LOUIS
... Thank you.

MAX
... I can never tell with you
English guys.
(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

You seem really depressed and ungrateful about it but that's like... that's just your way of being excited right?

LOUIS does a weird smile. MAX laughs a bit, still unsure.

194 **EXT. AMERICAN WILDERNESS - NIGHT (1909)** 194

A STEAM TRAIN travels through the nowhere plains of AMERICA.

195 **INT. TRAIN, AMERICA - NIGHT** 195

LOUIS sits opposite ALICIA who reads documents in spectacles. Not everyone is wearing blue anymore.

LOUIS sketches PASSENGERS as CATS. As he looks around, we recognise their characteristics in his drawing.

He seems to be getting anxious. We see - IN QUICK FRIGHTENING FLASHES - that the OTHER PASSENGERS have CAT FACES. We even see TAILS.

LOUIS takes a breath, putting his pen down.

ALICIA

You alright, Mr Wain?

LOUIS looks up and sees ALICIA smiling at him. He looks away. She returns to her work, amused by his oddness.

VERONIKA

There is so much more to discover about electricity. These guys are at the forefront of their game, you know, they're geniuses. You buy in. We make the lamp. You'll make thousands. It's a solid investment, you got to trust me.

LOUIS leans out curiously. VERONIKA E. VOLTZMANN is a wiry, androgynous woman with a shock of hair, spectacles and a scar down one side of her face - she wears an ill-fitting suit. LOUIS sees a kindred spirit.

The PASSENGER isn't interested.

VERONIKA (CONT'D)

Alright, well, er... thank you for your time anyway. Ah, shoot...

As she gets up, her briefcase spills open and PAPERS fall out. She bends down and starts scooping it all up.

PASSENGER

Crazy broad...

VERONIKA

What was that? Oh, hey... I forgot to give you my business card...

VERONIKA starts to fumble in her breast pocket, then pulls out two fingers in a "V" sign.

VERONIKA (CONT'D)

... Fuck you. You like that? ... I invented that...

VERONIKA heads off down the aisle. LOUIS follows. ALICIA looks up as he leaves, but decides to let him go.

LOUIS

Excuse me? ... Madam?

VERONIKA

What... what do you want?

LOUIS

... I'm, sorry, but... did I overhear you saying that you are working on the invention of... a new kind of lamp?

VERONIKA

Uh, yeah. Yeah, sure... it's exciting stuff, I gotta tell ya.

LOUIS

And it- it involves... electricity?

VERONIKA

Absolutely - but, listen, I'm a physicist, okay? I *know* electricity and this is, like, this is revolutionary, you know, it's not just any old regular electric lamp... it's going to be... more efficient. It's going to be... it's going to be safer. Because - ha, by god! - you know how dangerous electricity can be...

LOUIS eyes widen. Nobody has ever acknowledged this before.

LOUIS

Yes I- I do...

VERONIKA is a little thrown by his intensity.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

And so... I'm in rather a lot of debt, you see...

VERONIKA

Okay... okay... well, listen, why don't you take a seat? I'll talk you through it. Give me a second...

VERONIKA is rummaging in her breast pocket again.

LOUIS

Are you going to... tell me to.

VERONIKA

No I actually do have a business card somewhere... here we go... Veronika... Veronika E. Voltzmann.

VERONIKA hands LOUIS a crumpled, bent up BUSINESS CARD.

LOUIS

What does the "E" stand for?

VERONIKA

Oh, nothing. It just sounded good.

ALICIA peers back at LOUIS, a bit concerned. VERONIKA sits down and opens her messy briefcase.

VERONIKA (CONT'D)

How's this...? You tell me how much you need... to pay off your debts... and I'll tell you how much you need to pay in...

196 **INT. BACKSTAGE, COLISEUM ANNEXE, CHICAGO - EVENING**

196

LOUIS is unpacking, getting ready for the lecture, finding easels and other props among the clutter. ALICIA watches.

ALICIA

Hey, Mr Wain... I was thinking maybe after the show, we could go get some food...

LOUIS

... Perhaps, yes.

ALICIA

I wouldn't worry about Max... For what it's worth... I think you're doing a great job...

ALICIA goes over to LOUIS.

ALICIA (CONT'D)

Maybe we should get a few drinks after dinner too. What do you say? Let our hair down a little bit...

When she is close, LOUIS stops what he is doing. ALICIA takes LOUIS' hands. TENSE SOUNDS BUILD. LOUIS stares at ALICIA.

FLASH-CUT MEMORIES OF EMILY, now very faded.

ALICIA (CONT'D)
I want to show you that America can
be fun... do you like dancing?

LOUIS starts to remember the DINNER WITH MAX AND ALICIA BUT IN HELLISH FLASH-CUTS WHERE EVERYONE IS HUMAN-SIZED CATS. MAX AND ALICIA ARE HUMAN-SIZED CATS GOBBLING FISH AND SHRIMP WITH SHARP CAT TEETH, STARING AT HIM WITH CAT EYES.

ALICIA (CONT'D)
... Louis?

LOUIS STARTS TO REMEMBER EMILY AT DINNER IN THE CLERKENWELL TOWNHOUSE. BUT HE SEES ALICIA IN EMILY'S PLACE. ALICIA IS LAUGHING, TALKING WITH HIS SISTERS.

LOUIS snaps out of it and looks at ALICIA, breaking away.

LOUIS
No, Miss Simmonds. I- I... can't...
It would be... I can never marry
again, Miss Simmonds. I couldn't do
that to Emily... I just couldn't...
I'm sorry I just... I'm sorry...

ALICIA
Mr Wain... I can't imagine what it
must have been like to lose your
wife, but I just thought you seemed
a little stressed out. I wanted to
cheer you up, that's all... I'm not
asking you to marry me, Mr Wain.
I'm asking if you want to dance.

LOUIS feels bad for misunderstanding but, still, he can't.

LOUIS (V.O.)
Her whispers come in the leafy
tickle of the wind, or the wet
crackle of electric rain...

197 **INT. COLISEUM ANNEXE, CHICAGO - EVENING**

197

LOUIS is on a big stage in a classy auditorium - awkwardly talking into a microphone which CRACKLES AND FEEDS BACK.

LOUIS
Every night, I turn the dial of the
wireless, hoping to catch her clues
in the atmospheric electricity that
comes from the afterlife - how to
continue on this crusade...

The CROWD is confused. Many of them have CATS on their knees. They whisper to each other. ALICIA looks concerned.

A LARGE BANNER READS: "CHICAGO AMERICAN CAT FANCY WELCOMES LOUIS WAIN!". The stage is a CHAOS of CAT DRAWINGS - some of them starting to show EARLY SIGNS OF HIS ELECTRIC SHOCK CATS AND SHIMMERING CATS - and SKETCHES ABOUT ELECTRICITY.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

For it was Emily who taught me the true nature of cats... the true value of cats. And it is only through my understanding of cats, of how they are misunderstood and mistreated for no reason other than simple, blind prejudice... that I came to understand... human beings... how we are all corrupted by a foul form of electricity - which makes us cruel and selfish. And it is only through the work of those who have the transformative gift that we will come to defeat it... without change, we are a fallen species with no future. An animal whose only instinct is to destroy!

LOUIS looks up and with a LOUD CLUNK THE SOUNDS ALL STOP.

The ENTIRE CROWD are now HUMAN-SIZED CATS, some with CATS on their laps - ALL STARING BACK WITH WIDE EYES. AN UNSETTLING FEELING OF SHIMMERING ELECTRICITY.

198 **INT. APARTMENT, NEW YORK - MORNING (1909)**

198

A TELEGRAM slides under his door. LOUIS is slumped on a chaise lounge, red eyed and bleary. He hasn't been sleeping. We see that the TELEGRAM is from "GREAT BRITAIN".

He cuts the ENVELOPE open - "Dear Louis, After a valiant battle with the influenza, our mother has sadly passed away..."

LATER - LOUIS is on the phone. He has VERONIKA'S crumpled business card in his hand. Someone picks up.

LOUIS

Hello? ... this is Louis Wain... I was wondering if you have any news about... my investment...

VERONIKA (V.O.)

Oh, hi Louis... geez, um... I got some bad news...

Out on LOUIS, feeling defeated.

199 **EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - NIGHT (1910)** 199

AN OCEAN LINER is battered by LARGE WAVES as a STORM BREWS.

200 **INT. CABIN, OCEAN LINER, ATLANTIC OCEAN - NIGHT** 200

LOUIS is in bed, making distressed noises, unable to rest, unable to make these feelings stop. THUNDER AND LIGHTNING CONTINUES. We remember seeing him like this as a child.

PICTURES OF CATS ARE STREWN ALL OVER THE CABIN.

LOUIS (O.C.)
Me... Ow... Kill me... Kill me...

ECUs of LOUIS, trying to fight these feelings away.

THE PATTERNS ON THE WALL START TO MORPH AND MELT SLOWLY.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Me... Ow... Haha... Me... Ow...
Emily... Emily, did you hear that?
Me... Ow... I know... it's funny...

FLASH-CUT MEMORIES OF NEW YORK - OF THE CAT AUDIENCE, OF CAT MAX AND CAT ALICIA, OF THE CAT PASSENGERS ON THE TRAIN. FLASH-CUT MEMORIES OF LOUIS' CHILDHOOD NIGHTMARES AND VISIONS. FLASH-CUT MEMORIES OF EMILY - now practically BLACK & WHITE.

SUDDENLY THE LIGHTS GO OUT. DARKNESS. LOUIS SITS UP, AFRAID.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
... Hello!

FLASHING LIGHTS and RAIN. DARK WAVES thrashing at the window.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
... HELLO!

LOUIS goes to try the door, but it's locked. He starts trying to yank it harder and harder as the STORM GETS LOUDER.

FLASH-CUTS OF "THE SEA FULL OF BIG SHIPS".

LOUIS IS BANGING ON THE DOOR FRANTICALLY.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Let me out! Please! It's not safe!

He notices WATER seeping under the door in the darkness. Behind him, WATER is beginning to LEAK THROUGH THE WINDOW.

LOUIS looks terrified. He doesn't know what to do. He starts trying to close the WINDOW firmer but it's not working.

IN THE "SEA FULL OF BIG SHIPS", A GIANT EMILY is fighting her way through the STORMY CLOUDS. Her hair is billowing in the wind and her reading spectacles are covered in RAIN.

WE COME WIDE TO SEE THAT THE WAVES ARE IN FACT MADE OF THE MATERIAL OF GIANT EMILY'S DRESS. IT STRETCHES UP INTO THE SKY. SHE IS WALKING AWAY, DRAGGING CHAOS BEHIND HER.

WATER IS NOW GATHERING AROUND LOUIS' FEET. THE CAT PICTURES ARE GETTING SOAKED, FLASHING IN AND OUT OF DARKNESS.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
I need to get out! I need to get out! Help me, please!

FLASH-CUT MEMORIES OF LOUIS AS A CHILD HAVING THE NIGHTMARE, RUNNING THROUGH THE HOUSE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT TO HIS PARENTS. His voice is echoey, distant:

YOUNG LOUIS
Mummy! Daddy! Help me! I'm drowning! Help me!

But real LOUIS is doing the same thing.

LOUIS
Mummy! Daddy! Please! Help me! I'm drowning! Help me!

LOUIS IS BREAKING DOWN IN PANIC, CRYING, SHOUTING.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
HELP ME! HELP ME! HELP ME!

CRASH! THE WINDOW IN THE CABIN BURSTS AND WATER COMES FLOODING IN DROWNING LOUIS. IMPOSSIBLY THE WATER RIPPLES WITH ELECTRICITY, LIKE IT HAS BEEN CHARGED BY THE STORM.

LOUIS WEEPS UNDERWATER. *FLASH-CUT MEMORIES OF EVERYTHING.*

GRADUALLY WE SINK INTO A DARK SPACE. LOUIS FLOATS IN THE FLASHING DARKNESS - WEEPING, SCREAMING, CRYING.

CLICK. EVERYTHING STOPS. A CLEANER in BOAT UNIFORM has opened the door. He looks shocked, holding a mop. LOUIS stands in the middle of the room. His face is wet with tears.

He is confused, frightened, lost. He has wet himself and the tap is running, water overflowing onto the ground, soaking the CAT PICTURES which cover the patterned carpet.

END OF SECTION

1911 - 1939 "ELECTRIC WAIN"

201 **EXT. CHURCH, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DAY (1913)** 201

A frailer, older looking LOUIS (now 53) hobbles out of a church, followed by CAROLINE, JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE and FELICIE.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Three years after the death of my mother, our sister Marie was also taken by the dreaded influenza.

202 **INT. HOTEL DINING ROOM, THE STRAND - DAY** 202

INGRAM - puffy, red, old - is having a heart attack.

LOUIS (V.O.)

And the great heart of my friend and mentor, the generous Sir William Ingram, finally gave in to his gout.

INGRAM is face down in a rich meal. STAFF run into the room. They and other CUSTOMERS survey this surreal image of death.

203 **EXT. BENDIGO LODGE, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DAY (1914)** 203

LOUIS, CAROLINE, JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE and FELICIE are leaving with FIFTEEN CATS. REMOVAL MEN carry belongings to VEHICLES, including a CHARABANC. LOUIS seems exhausted.

LOUIS (V.O.)

My imprudent investments in New York meant we had failed to keep up with payments on the Westgate property...

204 **INT. CHARABANC / EXT. SEASIDE ROADS, WESTGATE-ON-SEA - DAY** 204

LOUIS and his REMAINING SISTERS sit in a CHARABANC.

LOUIS (V.O.)

... And we were transferred to a pauper's house, back in Brondesbury, London.

205 **EXT. YARD, BRONDESBUARY ROAD, KILBURN - DAY** 205

The WAINS have arrived and clear RUBBISH from the house and yard, some of their cases and belongings still unpacked outside. CLAIRE hopefully places a FLOWER POT outside. OTHER POOR FAMILIES go about their daily business. Some look curiously. It's smaller even than the house in HAMPSTEAD.

206 **INT. LONDON TUBE - DAY**

206

The carriage lights are electric - fizzling in and out of darkness. LOUIS sits with eyes closed, like he is meditating.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I began to use my powers over electricity to navigate consciousness and move through time... and after years of exploring a traumatic past...

207 **INT. IMAGINARY FUTURISTIC HOUSE - DAY (2081)**

207

A HOVER TRAY CARRIES MUGS OF TEA INTO A BIZARRE KITCHEN.

LOUIS (V.O.)

... I started to travel forward into a brighter, more peaceful future...

LOUIS is in a ridiculous space-like suit looking at the tray seriously as it goes to serve CAROLINE, JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE and FELICIE - also dressed in absurd futuristic outfits.

The HOVER TRAY messes it up completely, spilling tea everywhere. The SISTERS look at LOUIS as if he is mad.

LOUIS spots on a shelf, beyond them - A STRANGE FUTURISTIC SCULPTURE OF A CAT.

208 **INT. WORKSHOP, LONDON - DAY**

208

In a workshop with SEVERAL CATS, LOUIS designs and creates FUTURISTIC CERAMIC CATS. They are charming but strange - very similar in style to what he saw in his "vision".

LOUIS (V.O.)

My Lucky Futurist Cats were a success and orders were made across Europe, including in Austria and Czechoslovakia...

209 **INT. CERAMICS FACTORY - DAY**

209

LOUIS' CERAMIC CATS move on a CONVEYOR BELT in a factory. SEVERAL FACTORY WORKERS attend to them. Behind them is the MANUFACTURER'S DISTINCTIVE LOGO.

LOUIS (V.O.)

But at the same time... negative electricity around the globe had risen to a critical level...

- 210 **EXT. LONDON STREETS, KILBURN - DUSK** 210
- LONDONERS move through the streets. ALARMS SOUND and we can hear BOMBS falling. A HUGE SHADOW sweeps over the street.
- LOUIS (V.O.)
... And military tensions blistered into a state of war...
- They look up to see the underside of A HUGE WAR ZEPPELIN.
- 211 **INT. BUNKER, LONDON - NIGHT (1914)** 211
- LOUIS, CAROLINE, JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE, FELICIE and OTHER POOR FAMILIES cram into a bunker.
- 212 **INT. SHIPYARD, ENGLAND - NIGHT** 212
- CRATES MARKED "VERY FRAGILE" are being prepared to be loaded onto A CARGO SHIP. We recognise the LOGO from the factory.
- LOUIS (V.O.)
I had invested many months of hard work and a significant amount of my own money into these brave new specimens...
- 213 **SCENE OMITTED** 213
- 214 **EXT. / INT. NORTH SEA - DUSK (1914)** 214
- IMPRESSIONISTIC SHOTS OF A GERMAN U-BOAT FIRING AN UNDERWATER MISSILE. ABOVE THE SURFACE, A CARGO SHIP EXPLODES.
- CERAMIC CATS, fragmented into pieces, sink through the water, amongst OTHER DEBRIS and DEAD PASSENGERS.
- LOUIS (V.O.)
... But almost all of them were destroyed by a German U-boat in the North Sea...
- 215 **INT. BRONDESBURY ROAD, KILBURN - DAY** 215
- LOUIS picks up a newspaper and finds a story with the headline: "BRITISH CARGO SHIP CAUGHT IN CROSSFIRE".
- LOUIS (V.O.)
Undeterred, I continued to harness the electricity of my pain and to journey into the future.

216 INT. WORKSHOP, LONDON - NIGHT (1914)

216

LOUIS is drawing hundreds of sketches of a 2D ANIMATION CHARACTER CALLED "PUSSYFOOT" who is PLAYING GOLF.

LOUIS (V.O.)
And after discussions with a
revolutionary film director called
George Pearson...

GEORGE PEARSON, a charismatic man, sits in the workshop - smoking a cigar and enjoying LOUIS' sketches.

LOUIS (V.O.)
... I commenced work on one of the
first ever examples of commercial
animation...

217 INT. CINEMA - NIGHT (1914)

217

LOUIS sits in a packed CINEMA of HAPPY CHILDREN and PARENTS.

LOUIS (V.O.)
... Which - due to a rival
production, of which I forget the
name - hardly anybody saw...

ON THE SCREEN IS A VERY EARLY "FELIX THE CAT" ANIMATION.

218 EXT. OMNIBUS, LONDON - DAY (1914)

218

A CAT ferrets a FISH out of a BIN and trots away happily.

LOUIS (V.O.)
And then, on Wednesday the 7th of
October in the year 1914...

A BUS IS HEADED STRAIGHT FOR THE CAT, WHO LOOKS TERRIFIED.

A LOUD SCREECH!

THE BUS SWERVES TO AVOID IT.

A MAN tumbles out of the BUS as the CAT drops the fish and scampers away.

LOUIS (V.O.)
... I fell out of an Omnibus and
into a coma.

It's LOUIS, blood seeping out of his head onto the road.
BYSTANDERS rush in to help.

219 **INT. ST BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL, LONDON - NIGHT** 219

LOUIS is unconscious. CAROLINE sits dutifully by his bed.

LOUIS (V.O.)
 Years of subjecting myself to
 harmful electricity had rendered my
 body weak and my mind...

A tearful CAROLINE takes LOUIS' hand in hers and weeps. On LOUIS, unconscious as the WEEPING continues off camera.

220 **EXT. YARD, BRONDESBURY ROAD, KILBURN - TWILIGHT (1917)** 220

A FRAGILE LOUIS stands in the yard. He is surrounded by CATS.

LOUIS (V.O.)
 ... Like a detuned wireless radio,
 was able only fleetingly to connect
 with the signals of reality...

As the CATS move around, they seem to glow. COLOURS streak ELECTRICALLY behind them. From LOUIS POV, everything seems to be JUDDERING AND SHIMMERING as if shaking with charge.

FELICIE (O.C.)
 Louis...

LOUIS turns to see FELICIE in the doorway.

FELICIE (CONT'D)
 Caroline would like to see you...

221 **SCENE OMITTED** 221

222 **INT. BEDROOM, BRONDESBURY ROAD, KILBURN - NIGHT** 222

CAROLINE is in bed, sick with influenza. CANDLES are lit and the room is dark. She looks very sick.

JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE and FELICIE sit, lined up respectfully by her bed, trying not to cry.

CAROLINE
 Come and sit...

CAROLINE'S voice is quiet and hoarse. LOUIS takes a chair on the other side of the bed to the SISTERS and stares at CAROLINE. CAROLINE turns to look at LOUIS. We notice on her bedside table is the ROCK that EMILY gave her.

She wants him to say something, but he can't.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
I want you to know... that I am
very proud of you...

She can barely talk. She smiles at him.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Our sisters will take care of you
now...

LOUIS does not smile back. He looks confused, almost shocked. CAROLINE continues to smile, but she cannot stop crying. She begins to bawl. The SISTERS come to her aid. LOUIS looks on.

223 **INT. HALLWAY, BRONDESBURY ROAD, LONDON - MORNING (1917)** 223

LOUIS drifts down the hallway and peers into CAROLINE'S bedroom, where she lies - pale, dead.

224 **INT. CAROLINE'S BEDROOM, BRONDESBURY ROAD - MORNING** 224

LOUIS enters the room and approaches CAROLINE'S bed. He looks at her. We aren't sure what he is about to do.

Then, very slowly, he climbs into the bed with her. He cradles her and nuzzles her hair with his head like a cat. He settles into a strange embrace.

LOUIS
(whispered)
I love you...

WIDER SHOT of them in the bed. They look like children.

225 **INT. VARIOUS, BRONDESBURY ROAD, KILBURN - DAY (1924)** 225

SUDDEN CHAOS. LOUIS is frenzied, charging about the house trying to move furniture, trying to take pictures off the walls, smashing things and frightening CATS. JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE and FELICIE are in tears as they try to wrestle him into a state of calm.

RAILTON is there too. He looks much older and is out of his depth as he tries to help the SISTERS. The SISTERS are doing a better job of restraining him. But LOUIS is too in chaos.

He fights them off. He pushes FELICIE away and she falls to the ground. She looks shocked. He has never done anything like this to her before.

We FLASH in and out of his POV - the CATS glow in streaks of ELECTRIC COLOUR, THE FURNITURE fizzing MADLY.

The SISTERS are shouting at a terrified RAILTON to help them. He puts on a brave face and charges at LOUIS.

They begin to FIGHT. They smash lamps, break furniture. THE SISTERS try to help again.

LOUIS SNARLS and HISSES like a CAT. He punches RAILTON in the face, drawing blood. RAILTON holds his face, in shock. He is sad to see his friend like this. The SISTERS, finally, wrestle LOUIS to the ground. LOUIS is out of control. He doesn't know where he is. He is fighting for his life.

END OF SEQUENCE

226 **PSYCHEDELIC ELECTRIC CAT SEQUENCE**

226

BEAUTIFUL INCANDESCENT SHAPES BEGIN TO EMERGE IN PATTERNS - A REFERENCE TO WAIN'S LATER PAINTINGS.

LOUIS' FRAIL, WHISPERED VOICE IS FAST, DISTANT, ECHOEY, ABSTRACT. THIS IS AN EXTRACT OF HIS ACTUAL WRITING.

THE ORNATE PATTERNS KEEP EVOLVING. WE BEGIN TO SEE CATS' FACES IN THE SHAPES OF LIGHT. A FEELING OF TRANSCENDENCE.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I am the origin of nothing I came to the world to try to be the whole of the creation - I was told the world went round - I was told the world went to sleep - I awoke to the truth. I was nothing Nothing goes round Saw not went not came not. The Origin was lost to the world's light. I came and unable it had no chance to give. It slept the sleep that nothing could awaken. The Sleep compels the opening of an eye. The eye was not there. It was at rest. It would not open out as it was nothing. The slumber rested. it was gone abroad The abroad was nowhere. The rest was at an end. The miraculous was the result. Something went to find the opening for nothing came to life. Life was then absent. Nothing held sway, the end being the never condition, it went on to nothing. The end ended. This gave the end no chance to finish. It was nothing The light of God was to finish the evil of all the evils of nothing. The evils of nothing dies The evils of nothing can only once more come... the miraculous was the result...

END OF SEQUENCE

227 INT. CORRIDOR, PAUPERS' WARD, SPRINGFIELD - DAY (1925)

227

LOUIS WAIN is an old man - thin, grey-white hair, a beard. His hands are covered in paint. His clothes are threadbare. The soles of his shoes are peeling off.

He is painting the PSYCHEDELIC CAT PATTERNS we have just seen in the sequence before. PAINTINGS IN THIS STYLE are displayed all around the room.

The DOOR is open and we can hear talking in the corridor. The Hospital Director, DR COOKE, is talking with DANIEL JAMES RIDER, whose voice we might recognise.

DR COOKE

And this is what we call the paupers' ward for, um... for obvious reasons. But I assure you the patients are looked after in a perfectly professional manner... I hope you will report favourably back to the, er... committee that you volunteer for...

DAN RIDER

I am here to assess the welfare of your patients, Mr Cook. Not just on behalf of my fellow committee members, but on behalf of the government. So I shall report back according to what I find...

DR COOKE

... Indeed.

DAN RIDER

So what is the average length of stay here at Springfield? Have you had much success with turning patients out?

DR COOKE and DAN RIDER arrive at LOUIS' cell. DR COOKE acts as if LOUIS' not there. But RIDER is immediately struck. He recognises LOUIS from the train at the start of the film.

DR COOKE

We have had a few successes, but it depends partly on the patient's willingness to co-operate with the treatment...

We recognise him too - the man with the POMERANIAN, who was later working in the book shop, now significantly older.

DR COOKE (CONT'D)

... Which - as you can imagine, Mr Rider - does vary hugely from person to person.

DAN RIDER
Louis Wain...

LOUIS looks up from his painting. DR COOKE stops talking.

DR COOKE
... Yes... this is... Mister Louis
Wain... you might remember his
rather charming cat pictures
from... all those years ago...

DAN RIDER
How are you, Mr Wain.

LOUIS frowns slightly. This man does look familiar.

DAN RIDER (CONT'D)
Dan Rider. We met on the train back
from Andover... I had my sister's
Pomeranian... Cleopatra.

LOUIS face lights up a bit. He remembers it now.

LOUIS
Cleopatra...

DAN RIDER
I had no idea you were a patient
here, Mr Wain...

DR COOKE
He is, I'm afraid, quite insane...
we do our best to help him...

RIDER enters the room and is looking at the paintings.

DR COOKE (CONT'D)
Very sad isn't it, Mr Rider... he
seems almost entirely to have lost
a handle on his craft...

DAN RIDER finds the pictures extraordinary. He finds this
whole situation extraordinary. He thinks for a moment.

DAN RIDER
Dr Cooke... would you give me some
time alone with Mr Wain?

DR COOKE
Visiting hours I'm afraid are...

DAN RIDER
As part of my assessment.

DR COOKE
... Yes. Of course.

228 EXT. YARD, PAUPERS' WARD, SPRINGFIELD ASYLUM - DAY (1925) 228

DAN RIDER and LOUIS sit in the small, grotty yard. You can't see the outside world.

RIDER looks at LOUIS warmly, who seems only half here as he sits back philosophically in his chair.

DAN RIDER
Well that is... quite a story...

LOUIS shrugs. DAN RIDER looks at him thoughtfully.

DAN RIDER (CONT'D)
... Do you like it here, Mr Wain?

LOUIS shakes his head very slightly.

LOUIS
... There are no cats. And... I cannot see... outside...

DAN RIDER
That must be difficult for someone like you, Mr Wain... who has spent his entire life examining the world... suddenly not to see it...

They sit in silence. Tears begin to form in LOUIS' eyes.

DAN RIDER (CONT'D)
Do you miss your wife, Mr Wain...
Do you miss Emily.

LOUIS nods. Quite a long silence. RIDER doesn't want to push.

LOUIS
... I have failed...

DAN RIDER frowns. MUSIC BEGINS VERY GENTLY.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
I have failed her, Mr Rider...

DAN RIDER
... I don't think you have failed, Mr Wain... from what you have been saying...

LOUIS does not agree.

DAN RIDER (CONT'D)
Why do you think Emily wanted you to keep painting pictures, Mr Wain?

LOUIS
To help people... to show them...

DAN RIDER

Perhaps... and there's no doubt
that you have done that... but I
have a rather different theory...

LOUIS looks at DAN - what could he possibly mean.

DAN RIDER (CONT'D)

I think she wanted you to keep
painting... so you would not be
alone...

Slowly, this starts to get to him. The MUSIC IS BUILDING.

DAN RIDER (CONT'D)

When you paint, Mr Wain. You
connect with other people. And you
give them a piece... of yourself...
But they are also connecting...
with you... and that electricity
that you describe... that you felt
in the presence of Emily... I would
call that love, Mr Wain...

LOUIS is looking at DAN through tears.

DAN RIDER (CONT'D)

And that is still here.

229 **INT. PRINT FACTORY - DAY (1925)** 229

IMPRESSIONISTIC CLOSE-UPS OF THE ILN - "THE LOUIS WAIN FUND".

230 **EXT. MARKET CORNER - MORNING** 230

A PAPER GIRL calls out to passers-by.

PAPER GIRL 1925

The great cat artist Louis Wain
needs your help! Get your
newspapers here today!

CROWDS FORM AS THEY HEAR THE NAME "LOUIS WAIN".

231 **INT. HALLWAY, BRONDESBURY ROAD, LONDON - DAY** 231

DAN RIDER, dressed in black and white, looks in a mirror. He
ties a RED BOW TIE. It reminds us of PETER'S RED RIBBON.

He is with JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE, FELICIE. They get ready to go,
armed with leaflets.

ANNOUNCER (RADIO)

And now ladies and gentleman we present to you an appeal delivered by Mr H G Wells, the celebrated author of 'The Time Machine'...

To our surprise, ALL OF THEIR CATS, now numbering about TWENTY have also lined up and are MEOWING.

They are ready to go too.

232 **INT. CORRIDOR, SPRINGFIELD ASYLUM - DUSK** 232

LOUIS walks slowly down the corridor back to his room.

HG WELLS (RADIO)

The artist, Louis Wain, made the cat his own. He invented a cat style. A cat society.

233 **CONTENT MOVED TO 238A** 233

234 **EXT. BRONDESBURY ROAD, KILBURN - DAY** 234

MUSIC RISING as RIDER and the SISTERS pour out of the house with purpose, followed by the CATS. Some NEIGHBOURS follow.

HG WELLS (RADIO)

A whole cat world...

235 **SCENE OMITTED** 235

236 **INT. PAUPERS' WARD, SPRINGFIELD ASYLUM - DUSK** 236

LOUIS chuckles to himself as he hears this.

HG WELLS

Cats that do not look and live like Louis Wain cats are ashamed of themselves...

237 **INT. HALLWAYS / EXT. FRONT DOORS - DAY** 237

WE CUT THROUGH A SEQUENCE OF JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE, FELICIE and DAN RIDER knocking on doors and campaigning to raise funds for LOUIS. They are always accompanied by CATS.

Further down the road, HERBERT RAILTON marches towards them. He doffs his cap to say hello.

We see a SCRUFFY, GINGER, BEARDED MAN with one eye. He bears a striking resemblance to the ONE EYED GINGER CAT from the prologue.

HG WELLS (RADIO)
But that is not what is important.
What is important...

AS THEY GO, MORE AND MORE PEOPLE AND MORE AND MORE CATS JOIN THEM ON THEIR QUEST.

At one house, TWO IDENTICAL TWIN SISTERS, dressed in grey, answer the door.

They remind us of the TWIN GREY BRITISH SHORT HAIRS that JOSEPHINE and CAROLINE once tried to shoo out of the house.

HG WELLS (RADIO) (CONT'D)
... is that Louis Wain devoted his
life to making all our lives
happier...

CATS SEEM TO POUR IN FROM EVERY CORNER TO JOIN THE RALLY.

HG WELLS (RADIO) (CONT'D)
... And cattier.

DAN RIDER PEELS AWAY.

238 **INT. PAUPERS' WARD, SPRINGFIELD ASYLUM - DUSK** 238

LOUIS stands up from his chair as he listens and then, to our surprise, he begins to dance.

He is on his own. He is an old man now, not so steady on his feet and slower in his movements - but it contains the same infectious, peculiar kind of euphoria as when he was first falling in love with EMILY and danced at Phil May's Studio.

INTERCUT:

238A **INT. RECORDING BOOTH - DAY** 238A

DAN RIDER sits close by as HG WELLS speaks into a microphone.

HG WELLS
In doing so, he undoubtedly raised
up the cat in society.

239 **EXT. STREETS, LONDON - DAY** 239

JOSEPHINE, CLAIRE and FELICIE run through the streets, dancing and laughing as they go. Behind them follow RIDER, RAILTON, HUNDREDS OF NEW CAMPAIGNERS and DOZENS OF CATS.

HG WELLS (RADIO)
And he has changed our world, for
the better...

We see, among them, a RAVEN-HAIRED MOTHER dressed all in black. She is on crutches, missing a leg, and accompanied by FIVE ADORABLE CHILDREN. They remind us of the Cat Family LOUIS once rescued and then released at the Fish Market.

CATS sit on their OWNER'S shoulders. They are petted in the streets. They wear ribbons and bow ties.

WE INTERCUT LOUIS WAIN'S PICTURES, PROUDLY FRAMED IN VARIOUS HOUSES: CATS DRESSED IN GOLF ATTIRE, MILITARY CATS, SAILOR CATS, CATS DRESSED IN KIMONOS, SIKH CATS, A CLASSROOM OF CATS WITH THEIR TEACHER, MUSICIAN CATS.

GRADUALLY, WE NOTICE THAT THE GATHERING CROWD ARE ALL DRESSED EXACTLY LIKE THE CATS IN THESE PICTURES. ALL DIFFERENT KINDS OF PEOPLE, UNITED IN A GLORIOUSLY COLOURFUL PARADE.

Perhaps his pictures have somehow come to life in aid of their creator. Or perhaps, sometimes, the world really does look the way that Louis Wain presented it.

240 **EXT. NO. 10, DOWNING STREET, LONDON - DAY**

240

JOSEPHINE knocks at the door of No.10.

PRIME MINISTER STANLEY BALDWIN leans out of a window and is amazed to be greeted by the crowd of CAMPAIGNERS and CATS.

JOSEPHINE
Good afternoon, Prime Minister!

CLAIRE
Would you sign this petition for us?

FELICIE
It's for our brother.

PRIME MINISTER
... And who might that be?

EVERYONE
Louis Wain!

ONE CAT MEOWS.

HG WELLS (RADIO)
But now, as he approaches the end of his own life, Mr Wain and his sisters...

- 241 **INT. PAUPERS' WARD, SPRINGFIELD ASYLUM - DUSK** 241
- LOUIS stops dancing, out of breath. Tears roll freely down his face. He is smiling, almost laughing.
- HG WELLS (RADIO)
... desperately require the most generous help of cat lovers and right-thinking people everywhere.
- 242 **INT. AMBULANCE, SOUTH DOWNS - DUSK** 242
- A view of the British countryside sweeping by from a small vehicle window. LOUIS sits in the back of the ambulance, accompanied by FELICIE and RAILTON.
- HG WELLS (RADIO)
We of the Louis Wain fund ask you now... to show him...
- RAILTON nods at LOUIS and smiles. LOUIS looks slightly less bedraggled and has new shoes. He looks down at them and then up at FELICIE. She smiles at him too.
- 243 **EXT. SOUTH DOWNS - DUSK (1925)** 243
- AN AMBULANCE chunters peacefully through the countryside.
- HG WELLS (RADIO)
... that he is loved.
- 244 **EXT. NAPSURY ASYLUM - DUSK (1925)** 244
- THE AMBULANCE approaches the beautiful hospital.
- END OF SEQUENCE
- 245 **INT. INFIRMARY, NAPSURY - DAWN (C.1930)** 245
- A SHAFT OF WARM LIGHT shines in through the window. LOUIS sits at a table in a communal area. He is surrounded by his painting materials and we notice EMILY'S ROCKS.
- He leafs through his journal and is cradling a CAT, who purrs gently. A COUPLE OF OTHER CATS are curled up around the room.
- LOUIS lands on the pages that EMILY once saw when she sneaked into his room. He stops. Inside the journal, is a small cutting of EMILY'S PATTERNED BLUE SHAWL. LOUIS holds it. Even now, she is full of surprises.
- He looks up out of the window. LOUIS grabs some paper and paints and heads out slowly. As he leaves, we see the colours outside are VIVID and BRIGHT.

246 **SCENE OMITTED** 246

247 **EXT. NAPSURY ASYLUM - DAWN** 247

A feeling of peace as LOUIS walks around the grounds of the comfortable looking hospital, surrounded by greenery. CATS are snoozing in the sun. A FEW OTHER PATIENTS, relax, drift around, sit, sleep.

COLOURS ARE VIVID AS HE CONTINUES WALKING TOWARDS A WOOD.

248 **EXT. WOODS - DAWN** 248

His feet are in slippers as he treads on twigs and shrubs. Details of the paints that he is clutching under his arm.

THE COLOURS ARE BURNING BRIGHTER AND MORE VIVID AS HE GOES, TRAILING WISPS OF STRANGE INCANDESCENCE. HE CONTINUES TO WALK FOR SOME TIME. EVERYTHING IS IN BLOOM. THE SUN CASTS A LIGHT OVER LOUIS AS HE WALKS.

Finally, he stops. He is faced with a quite extraordinary scene. A little brook laps over a fallen tree. BIRDS swoop in and out of vision.

ELECTRIC GREENS AND YELLOWS AND PINKS AND BLUES, BURNING SURREAL AND BRIGHT.

It vividly recalls the place where he, EMILY and PETER once stood together, all those years ago. It's a magical image. It's an image we will remember.

LOUIS

... Look.

END OF FILM