

QUEER

Screenplay by

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Based on the novel by

William S. Burroughs

INT. LOLA'S CANTINA, MEXICO CITY, 1950 - DAY

LEE

You're not queer.

WILLIAM LEE, late 40s, gaunt, American, sweating through his oversized white oxford with a glass of tequila in front of him, looks into the camera as if studying a face. His gaze is piercing, scrutinizing: familiar and yet restless, intense. He stares for a long beat, taking in every feature.

We reverse and see: CARL STEINBERG -- blond, thin-faced, freckly, clean-looking: a bird-like German-American Jewish young man looking right back at Lee. Behind him, we see that the cantina is just finishing lunch service: two locals dance near the jukebox, drinking.

Carl shifts uncomfortably and laughs, not sure what to say.

LEE (CONT'D)

Usually, if I get this far with an American kid, I can get the rest of the way, but with you, there's some... *obstacle*.

Carl shrugs, takes a sip of his drink. Lee notices the Star of David necklace he's wearing under his shirt.

LEE (CONT'D)

Oh.
(smiles)
Your mother wouldn't like it.

Carl just looks at him. Lee can tell that he's right.

LEE (CONT'D)

I had a homosexual Jewish friend who lived in Oklahoma City. I asked him: "Why do you live *here*? You have enough money to live wherever you like." You know what he told me? "*It'd kill my mother if I moved away.*"

Lee laughs at his own joke. He looks at Carl for his reaction: nothing. Lee deflates, perplexed, and downs his drink.

EXT. AMSTERDAM AVENUE PARK - A LITTLE LATER

Lee and Carl walk in silence -- Carl is careful to keep some distance between them. They pass under jacaranda trees, flowers falling around them as if it were snowing.

Lee opens his mouth to say something when, suddenly, Carl bows his head.

CARL
Best of luck, Lee.

He puts out his hand for Lee to shake it. Lee looks at it, taken aback. He shakes it.

Abruptly, Carl runs off. Lee watches as he hops into a streetcar.

Beat. Lee turns around, walks into the park, and sits on a concrete bench molded to resemble wood. He looks at the blue flowers that surround the bench blowing about in the breeze. He looks up at the sky: clouds are moving in for rain. He sighs, defeated, and covers his face with his hands.

LEE'S MIND - THE PARK, AS IF IN A DREAM

Lee slowly removes his hands from his face and looks up to see in front of him a shadowy LINE OF YOUNG MEN. The first steps to the front, his beautiful face suddenly illuminated. Lee looks at him, hopeful.

YOUNG MAN 1
Sorry. Best of luck.

Young man runs off for a streetcar. Lee deflates, turns back to the line. Next young man, also beautiful, steps forward. Lee brightens.

YOUNG MAN 2
Wrong number. Try again.

The young man runs off. Lee deflates.

The next young man -- most beautiful so far -- gets to the front of the line. Lee is hopeful. Young man shakes his head.

YOUNG MAN 3
Can't use it. Don't need it. Don't want it. Sorry.

The young man runs off. Lee watches, despondent. The rest of the young men in the line peel off in different directions behind him.

YOUNG MAN 4
Somewhere else...

YOUNG MAN 5
Someplace else...

YOUNG MAN 6

Not here.

YOUNG MAN 7

Not me.

Lee turns his attention back to the line: only ONE YOUNG MAN left.

He steps to the front: unlike the others, he's *hideous*. He too opens his mouth to reject Lee:

LEE

Who asked *you*, you ugly son of a bitch?

The young man looks at him, taken aback. As his expression turns to anger and he RAISES HIS FIST to strike Lee, SNAP BACK TO:

THE PARK

Lee looks around.

TWO YOUNG MEXICAN MEN are walking by, arms around each other's necks. Lee stares at them. He sucks in air through his dry, cracked lips.

INT. RATHSKELLER BAR - LATER, AFTERNOON

Lee drinks a double tequila. On the walls, there are cuckoo clocks and moth-eaten deer heads. The place looks dreary, out-of-place, filthy. A TV set emits horrible, guttural squawks.

LEE

I was in here last night. Got talking to a queer doctor and his boyfriend. The doc is a major in the Medical Corps, the boyfriend some kind of vague engineer. Awful looking little bitch. So the doctor invites me to have a drink with them, and the boyfriend is getting jealous, and I don't want a beer anyway, which the doctor takes as a reflection on Mexico and on his own person. He begins the do-you-like-Mexico routine. So I tell him Mexico is okay, some of it, but *he personally* is a pain in the ass. Told him this in a nice way, you understand.

(MORE)

LEE (CONT'D)

Besides, I had to go home to my wife in any case.

(downs his drink.)

So he says: "You don't have any wife, you are just as queer as I am." I told him: "I don't know how queer you are, Doc, and I ain't about to find out. It isn't as if you was a good-looking Mexican. You're a goddamned old, ugly-looking Mexican. And that goes double for your moth-eaten boyfriend." I was hoping, of course, the deal wouldn't come to any extreme climax. You never knew *Hatfield*?

We see that Lee is talking to WINSTON MOOR, a thin young American man with long blond hair, pale blue eyes, very white skin. He is barely feigning interest. There are dark patches under Moor's eyes -- he looks prematurely-aged: hateful and passionless.

LEE (CONT'D)

Of course not. Before your time. He killed a *cargador* in a *pulqueria*. The deal cost him five hundred dollars. Now, figuring a *cargador* as rock bottom, think how much it would cost you to shoot a *major in the Mexican Army*.

Lee waits for Moor to react. Moor just stares at him blankly, then turns and calls over a WAITER.

WINSTON MOOR

Yo quiero un sandwich!

Lee looks at him, annoyed.

WINSTON MOOR (CONT'D)

Quel sandwiches tiene?

LEE

What do you want?

WINSTON MOOR

I don't know exactly... I wonder if they could make me a melted cheese sandwich on toasted whole-wheat bread.

Moor turns to the waiter. Lee closes his eyes, tuning out, annoyed, as Moor launches into his awful Spanish.

WINSTON MOOR (CONT'D)
 Es posible hacerme un sandwich con queso uh... *meltado*. Pan de... wheat? Melted cheese? Queso de cheddar? Teine esto?

The waiter just looks at Moor blankly. Moor snarls.

WINSTON MOOR (CONT'D)
 Oh, fuck it. Never mind.

Waiter leaves. Lee opens his eyes. Moor shrugs.

WINSTON MOOR (CONT'D)
 Well... Jackie's probably wondering where I am.

Lee scowls at the mention of Moor's wife, but Moor doesn't notice. He laughs, self-satisfied, affecting "sincerity."

WINSTON MOOR (CONT'D)
 At first, Bill, she was so dependent on me that she used literally to have *hysterics* when I had to go to the museum where I work. I managed to build up her ego to the point where she didn't need me, and after that the only thing I could do was leave. There was nothing more I could do for her.

Lee gestures for another tequila. Moor gets up to leave.

WINSTON MOOR (CONT'D)
 Anyway, I have to be going. I have a lot of things to do.

LEE
 Well, listen, how about dinner tonight?

WINSTON MOOR
 (beat.)
 All right.

LEE
 At six in the K.C. Steak House?

WINSTON MOOR
 All right.

Moor walks away. Lee watches him go over to a table near the front door and speak with another American young man, TOM WILLIAMS. Moor says something to Williams.

They both look over at Lee. Williams laughs. Moor pats him on the shoulder appreciatively, leaves.

Lee frowns and looks down at his empty tequila glass, catching his own reflection:

LEE'S REFLECTION

You must be crazy making passes in that direction when you know what a bitch he is...

Waiter brings another tequila. Lee downs it, shakes his head.

LEE

These borderline characters can out-bitch any fag.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE K.C. STEAKHOUSE - LATER, NIGHT

Lee, Moor, and Williams, whom Moor has brought along, stand outside the restaurant after dinner.

LEE

Would you gentleman care for a drink? I'll get a bottle...

Moor and Williams looks at each other.

WINSTON MOOR

Well, uh... no. You see, we were hoping to work on the plans for this *boat* we're going to build.

LEE

A boat?

WINSTON MOOR

Yes... at Zihuatanejo.

LEE

(laughs)

Boat building is a job for professionals, isn't it?

Neither of them says anything.

LEE (CONT'D)

Well... All right. I'll see you tomorrow? How about meeting me for a drink in the Rathskeller? Say around five?

WINSTON MOOR
I expect I'll be busy tomorrow.

LEE
Yes, but you have to eat and drink.

WINSTON MOOR
Well, you see... this boat is more important to me than anything right now. It will take up all my time.

Beat. Lee looks at him. Moor looks back at him awkwardly.

LEE
Suit yourself.

He turns around, disappointed, and walks away. We follow as, over Lee's shoulder, Moor turns to Williams.

WINSTON MOOR
Thanks for running interference, Tom. I hope he got the idea.

Williams nods sympathetically. Lee doesn't stop walking, but it's clear from his face that he can hear them.

WINSTON MOOR (CONT'D)
I like the guy, but I can't stand to be alone with him. He keeps trying to go to bed with me. That's what I don't like about queers. You can't keep it on the basis of friendship.

Lee scowls, keeps walking.

INT. RATHSKELLER BAR - A FEW WEEKS LATER, AFTERNOON

Lee sits, a tequila in front of him, examining his stainless-steel pocketknife: the chrome plating on the handle is peeling off.

LEE
Everything made in this country falls apart...

He lets the knife fall on the table with a dull clang.

LEE (CONT'D)
Wouldn't surprise me if I picked up a boy in the Alameda and his --

JOE GUIDRY (O.S.)
Someone stole my typewriter.

Lee looks up: JOE GUIDRY, 40s, a large American man with a politician's red Irish face, sits across from him with a beer. He wears a watch and a beautiful pair of boots.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)
It was that Brazilian, or whatever he is. You know him. Maurice.

LEE
Is that the one you had last week?
The wrestler?

JOE GUIDRY
You mean Louie, the gym instructor. No, this is another one. Louie has decided all that sort of thing is very wrong, and he tells me that I am going to burn in hell but *he* is going to heaven.

LEE
Serious?

JOE GUIDRY
Oh, yes.
(laughs)
Well, Maurice is as queer as I am.
(belches)
Excuse me. If not queerer. But he won't accept it. I think stealing my typewriter is a way he takes to demonstrate to me and to himself that he is just in it for all he can get. As a matter of fact, he's so queer I've lost interest in him. Not completely though. When I see the little bastard, I'll most likely invite him back to my apartment instead of beating the shit out of him like I should.

Lee tips his chair back against the wall and looks around the room: someone is quietly writing a letter at the next table. The PROPRIETOR of the bar is reading the bullfight section of the newspaper. The room emits a vibrating, soundless hum.

Joe finishes his beer, wipes his mouth with the back of his hand, and stares at the wall with watery, bloodshot eyes.

As Lee stares straight in front of him, something strange happens: the silence *buzzes* and becomes gradually louder, as if it's *seeping into Lee's body*: his face goes slack and blank, and gradually, his face starts to become *spectral*, **see-through**: we can literally see the wall behind him. The outline of Lee's translucent face is ravaged, vicious, old, but his clear green eyes are dreamy, innocent, *glowing*.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

Well, I have to be going.

Lee's face snaps back to normal, and Joe gets up and starts gathering his bundles. He nods at Lee and walks out the door. Lee just sits there, watching him go.

EXT. THE STREET - LATER, DAY

Lee walks aimlessly. He stops at a magazine counter, skims through a newspaper, puts it back. He keeps walking.

He passes the K.C. Steak House and sees Winston Moor through the window, eating alone.

Moor sees Lee, beckons to him. Lee looks at him: Moor looks *terrible*: greenish *steam* comes off his head and body, pouring out of his ears and mouth. Lee stares at him, disturbed, confused, then walks on. Moor watches him go.

Lee passes a whorehouse, a LEPER selling disgusting-looking food on the street, a CROWD gathered around a cockfight.

Out of the corner of his eye, he sees an obvious GROUP of AMERICAN EX-PATS. He studies them: some wear red-checked shirts outside the belt, blue jeans, beards. Some wear more conventional, shabby clothes.

As Lee looks them over, *one young man looks up at him*. He is tall, very thin, high cheekbones, a small, bright-red mouth, and *bright blue eyes* that have taken on a faint, drunken violet flush.

The man stops Lee in his tracks: he's clean cut, boyish, while also looking exotic -- as if he were wearing makeup. Though he's in his mid 30s, he feels somehow much younger. Lee stares: This is **EUGENE ALLERTON**.

Allerton smiles casually at him: it's like a shockwave is sent through Lee's body. Lee nods and smiles at him. Allerton nods back, turns away from him, and keeps walking.

INT. THE SHIP AHOY - LATER, NIGHT

Lee walks into a bar with a "nautical" atmosphere and heads directly for the bar. Bartender pours him a double tequila.

Lee sips it and looks around the place: it's decorated with phony hurricane lamps, dimly lit, sinister-looking. There are two small rooms with tables, the bar in one room, and four high, precarious stools.

Lee's eyes pass over the PATRONS: they are clean-cut for the most part, American ex-pats. He spots TOM WESTON, the American owner of the place, chatting with JOHN DUMÉ, an elegantly dressed queer man. Finally, Lee's eyes stop on a table in the far corner: **Allerton** sits alone, holding a bottle of beer on his knee. He wears glasses.

Lee's eyes flash with excitement. Allerton, feeling the gaze on him, turns around to look at Lee. Lee tenses up, nervous.

Allerton nods at him casually.

Lee, trying to achieve a greeting at once friendly and casual, *gets up from his stool* and *bows* in a sort of mock-dignified old-world greeting. He attempts to smile warmly, showing an appropriate amount of interest, but what emerges instead is a **leer of naked lust**: it is horrible, ghastly.

Allerton recoils and looks at Lee as if something were seriously wrong with him. Lee is instantly mortified.

Allerton turns away. It's not cold or hostile: it's just as if Lee doesn't exist. The connection is instantly severed.

Lee looks at the back of Allerton's head helplessly for a moment, then turns back to the bar, defeated and shaken.

Tom Weston, who's seen everything, looks at Lee sympathetically. Lee makes eye contact with him for a second, then looks to the bartender, who puts another drink in front of him. He downs it in one gulp.

Lee turns around and sees that Allerton is now at another table, playing chess with MARY, a slightly older, vivacious American woman with dyed red hair.

The energy between Allerton and Mary is clearly familiar, flirtatious. Lee watches for a beat, eyes full of longing and self-hatred, before he throws some money on the counter and gets up.

EXT. THE CHIMU BAR - LATER, NIGHT

Lee walks up to what looks like an unassuming cantina. He pauses at the doorway, sighs, heads in.

INT. CHIMU BAR

As Lee enters, it's clear immediately: this is a queer bar.

There is a little stage at the front where a YOUNG MEXICAN MAN sings as few people listen and dance.

Lee looks around at the scene as he makes his way to the bar: THREE MEXICAN GAYS are posturing in front of the jukebox. All around the room, men are talking close with one another, dancing. Some WAITERS go around taking orders. Lee gets a tequila at the bar. One of the MEXICAN GAYS slithers up to him and puts a hand on his shoulder. Lee looks at him with a mix of fascination and disgust. The Mexican suggestively makes the gesture of a cigarette.

Lee fishes one out and extends it to the Mexican, who puts it in his mouth and looks into Lee's eyes as he lights it.

MEXICAN GAY

Gracias.

He exhales in Lee's face, turns and walks back to the jukebox. Lee watches, at once arrested and repulsed.

As the Young Mexican Man onstage finishes his song to some scattered applause and goes to sit down, Lee looks around the room at the other GAYS: one sits in a booth, perfectly immobile, with a stupid, animal serenity; another dances in a way that suggests ancient temple dancing.

Lee turns and sees that the Young Mexican Man is now sitting alone a few seats away from him at the bar, sipping a drink. The young man looks shy, a bit sad, a bit out of place now that he's not onstage. Lee looks him over.

LEE

Por que si triste?

The young man looks up at Lee and smiles, revealing very red gums and sharp teeth, far apart. He shrugs.

YOUNG MEXICAN MAN

No estoy triste... No realmente.

Lee looks at the man, looks around the room, back at the man.

LEE
 (gesturing to a smaller
 room off to the side)
Vamos para allá.

Beat. The young man nods.

A BOOTH - LATER

Lee and the young man sit on the same side of a booth tucked into the corner room of the Chimu, with a view through the doorway of the bar. Lee drinks a coffee. The young man drinks a beer, smokes a cigarette.

Young man drops his hand down and feels Lee's leg under the table.

Lee keeps drinking his coffee, looking straight ahead at the bar, but it's clear that he's excited.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - LATER

A neon light near the entrance shines harshly on Lee as he pushes five pesos through the grill. OLD MAN behind the desk takes the money without even looking at the two of them.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

The old man unlocks the door to a dingy, small room. Lee and the young man enter. Old man dispassionately drops a ragged towel on a chair and leaves, closing the door behind him.

Lee starts undressing. Young man catches sight of something.

YOUNG MEXICAN MAN
Traes pistola?

LEE
 Yes. I carry a pistol.

Young man watches as Lee folds his pants and drops them over the chair. He places his pistol on his pants, then drops his shirt and his underwear on the pistol.

We see Lee's body for the first time: though he's in his 40s, he has the thin body of an adolescent -- shoulders and chest wide across and very shallow, stomach flat, body hair sparse and dark.

Lee sits down naked at the edge of the bed and looks at the young man, who has also begun undressing.

Young man folds his worn blue suit with care. He takes off his shirt and places it around his coat on the back of a chair.

Lee looks at the young man's smooth, copper-colored skin as he steps out of his shorts. He turns and looks at Lee, naked.

The young man walks over and sits beside Lee on the bed.
Beat.

Lee runs a hand slowly over the young man's back. With the other hand, he follows the curve of the man's chest down over his flat, brown stomach. The man smiles and lies down on the bed.

Lee moves on top of him, grabbing ahold of the man's penis, which is already hard. The man grabs ahold of Lee. They look into each other's eyes, stroking each other. The young man spits into his hand and runs it over Lee's penis.

As Lee fucks him, his body moves in rhythmic contractions, every muscle caressing the young man's smooth, hard body, until finally, Lee tenses convulsively rigid, sparks flash behind his eyes, and the breath whistles through his teeth.

Slowly, Lee relaxes his muscles and moves off of the young man. They lie naked next to each other, shoulders touching, catching their breath.

Lee gets out of bed and gets the cigarettes from his coat. He gets back to the bed and lights one for the young man, then for himself. They smoke them next to each other in silence for a long beat, saying nothing.

YOUNG MEXICAN MAN

Tengo que irme.

He gets up abruptly and starts getting dressed. So does Lee.

As Lee is rifling through his clothes, he takes out his wallet and starts counting out a few bills, looking at the young man, whose back is turned to him. Does he expect money?

Young man keeps getting dressed. Lee decides against paying him, puts the money back in the wallet.

INT. LOLA'S - AFTERNOON, A FEW DAYS LATER

Lee sits reading *Ultimas Noticias* aloud to JIM COCHRAN, another American, who keeps unsuccessfully looking for a moment to excuse himself.

LEE

Get a load of this.

(reads)

"When his wife came home from the market, her husband, already drunk, was brandishing his .45"

(looks up at Cochran)

Why do they always have to "brandish" it?

Cochran starts to get up and say something, but Lee looks back at the newspaper, seeing another detail.

LEE (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ.

Cochran sighs.

LEE (CONT'D)

After he killed his wife and three children, he takes a razor and puts on a suicide act.

(reads)

"But resulted only with scratches that did not require medical attention."

(laughs)

What a slobbish performance!

COCHRAN

Listen, Lee --

LEE

(not listening)

Here's a man was surprised in his taco stand with a dressed-down dog... a great long skinny hound dog at that. There's a picture of him posing in front of his taco stand with the dog... One citizen asked another for a light. The party in second part don't have a match so first part pulls an ice pick and kills him. Murder is the national neurosis of Mexico...

Cochran stands up to go. Lee is instantly on his feet.

LEE (CONT'D)

Sit down on your ass! Or what's left of it after four years in the navy.

COCHRAN

I gotta go.

LEE

What are you, *henpecked*?

COCHRAN

No kidding. I been out too much. My old lady --

But Lee's no longer listening: something has caught his eye out the window: **Allerton** is walking by. He stops, looks in, seemingly right at Lee. Lee straightens up, excited.

He is about to wave when Allerton, without seeming to acknowledge him, continues to walk on. Lee deflates.

COCHRAN (CONT'D)

Anyway... Bye, Lee.

Cochran turns to go. Lee just keeps looking out the window.

Suddenly, he turns around and brushes past Cochran to the door, running out after Allerton.

EXT. THE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Allerton is already half a block away. Behind him, we see Lee running out of Lola's to catch up.

When Lee gets within a few paces, he slows down to a brisk walk, trying to look casual. Allerton looks over at him.

LEE

Hi!

ALLERTON

Hi...

Lee looks crazy, out of breath, but he's smiling, friendly.

LEE

I just wanted to tell you... Mary was in Lola's a little while ago. She asked me to tell you she would be in the Ship Ahoy later on, around five.

ALLERTON

Oh... Thank you.

Lee catches his breath. Allerton looks at him.

ALLERTON (CONT'D)
Will you be around tonight?

LEE
Yes!
(correcting himself to
sound more casual)
I think so.

Allerton nods with a slight smile. Lee nods back, turns around. They walk away in opposite directions.

INT. THE SHIP AHOY - LATER

Allerton is sitting with Mary, quietly setting up the chess board for a game: Mary plays black, Allerton white.

In the background, Lee walks in the front door, spots them.

He walks over, excited but trying to look casual. When he gets to their table, they both look up at him. Lee does a strange, old-world bow, as if they were all old friends.

Mary and Allerton nod to him, polite but weirded out. As Lee walks to the bar, Mary leans in and whispers.

MARY
Who is he?

Allerton looks off at Lee, disturbed.

ALLERTON
I have *no idea...*

Mary laughs, putting her hand in front of her mouth.

At the bar, Lee hears Mary laughing, but he doesn't turn around. The bartender pours Lee a drink.

Back at the table, Allerton keeps looking at him.

Mary clears her throat. Allerton looks at her. She points to the board: it's his move. He picks up his pawn and moves it, then looks back at Lee.

Lee still doesn't turn around, but as he sips his drink, it's clear that his mind is focused solely on Allerton's table.

INT. SHIP AHOY - LATER

Lee is now drunk, still sitting alone at the bar.

Around him, the place has become filled with drunks, talking loudly. Music blares over the jukebox.

Someone pushes their way to the bar, bumping into him.

ALLERTON (O.S.)
Two rum and cokes!

Lee looks up, annoyed, but his expression changes when he sees **Allerton** smiling down at him, drunk, face flushed.

They stare at each other, something passing between them.

BARTENDER
Five pesos.

Allerton turns, pays the bartender. Lee is surprised when Allerton hands him one of the drinks and gestures to a table.

ALLERTON
Come sit with us over there.

Lee smiles, trying to contain his excitement.

THE TABLE IN THE CORNER - LATER

Allerton and Lee sit amongst some YOUNG AMERICANS, who are all drunk, talking loudly, but the two of them focus only on each other, each a few more drinks in, mid-conversation.

LEE
How did you check the accuracy of the information?

ALLERTON
Actually, we didn't.
(laughs, takes a drink)
The Counter Intelligence Corps got sucked in on a lot of phony deals when I was in Germany. Of course, we cross-checked all information with other informants and we had our own agents in the field --

As Allerton talks, Lee stares at his face and body, taking in every detail: the thin hands, the blue eyes with a hint of violet, the flush of his cheeks.

ALLERTON (CONT'D)
Most of our informants turned in *some* phony information, but this one character made it *all* up.
(MORE)

ALLERTON (CONT'D)

He had our agents out looking for a whole fictitious network of Russian spies. So finally, the report comes back from Frankfurt -- it's all a lot of crap! But instead of clearing out of town before the information could be checked, he came back with *more*.

Allerton laughs, clearly delighted by his own story. **Lee's mind projects an imaginary, ghost-like hand reaching out to touch Allerton's face.**

ALLERTON (CONT'D)

At this point we'd really had enough of his bullshit, so we locked him up in a cellar.

Lee's ectoplasmic fingers caress Allerton's ear, smooth his eyebrows, brush through the hair near his face...

ALLERTON (CONT'D)

The room was pretty cold and uncomfortable, but that was all we could do. We had to handle prisoners very careful.

Lee's ghost hand *just ever so slightly* manages to move Allerton's hair in the physical world. Allerton feels a strand fall in front of his eyes. Oblivious to what's happening in Lee's mind, he brushes it back out of his face. Lee's mouth hangs open like an animal, so full of desire that he feels an aching pain in his lungs...

ALLERTON (CONT'D)

He kept typing out confessions, enormous things...

Lee begins to snarl and lick his lips, tuning out the sound of Allerton's voice. He imagines two phantom hands now running through Allerton's hair.

ALLERTON (CONT'D)

I went to the door and there he was with a *branch* in his mouth.

Lee looks at him. Allerton is looking back at him, waiting for a response.

LEE

(stammering)

A branch in his mouth...

Allerton nods, smiling.

LEE (CONT'D)
Uh... a big branch?

ALLERTON
It was about two feet long!

Allerton keeps laughing. Lee laughs with him, dumbly, unsure what he's talking about, just looking at his face.

EXT. THE STREET - ALMOST DAWN

Lee and Allerton walk on empty, quiet streets, an awkward amount of space between them: they are just a *bit* too close. They realize and separate. Lee can hardly look at him.

Allerton stops in front of a building. Lee looks at it.

LEE
You go in here?

ALLERTON
(nods)
I have a sack here.

Beat.

LEE
Well... good night.

ALLERTON
Good night.

They look at each other. Lee isn't sure whether he should shake his hand, pat him on the shoulder, kiss him.

Before he can decide, Allerton turns and walks into the building. Lee stands for a moment, then turns and walks away.

INT. LEE'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT DAY

At first, we see just a still image that takes up the whole screen -- a faded color photograph of a crowded arena.

Click. We cycle to the next image: a bullfighter, standing, drinking water, waiting.

Click. The next image: the bull in the pen, also waiting.

Finally, we see **Lee**, fully dressed, sitting on his bed looking through a **VIEWMASTER**. He clicks through a series of images. The clock on the dresser read 4:54 PM.

Brrring brrring brrring brrring.

The ALARM on the clock starts going off as the minute hand turns to 4:55. Lee puts down the Viewmaster, springs up.

INT. SHIP AHOY - LATER

Lee talks, animated, with Allerton. When Allerton's not looking, Lee stares at his face, searchingly.

He looks at Allerton's thin hand as he gestures for a drink.

Allerton catches him staring -- Lee looks away.

INT. SHIP AHOY - AFTERNOON, A FEW WEEKS LATER

Joe Guidry sits, depressed, getting drunk, he wears a pair of cheap Mexican sandals.

JOE GUIDRY

The trouble with me is... I like
the type that robs me...

We see that Guidry is sitting across from Lee and Allerton. As Guidry raises his glass to his face, Lee looks at his wrist, notices the tan line where a watch used to be.

LEE

Where you make your mistake is
bringing them to your apartment.
That's what hotels are for.

JOE GUIDRY

(laughs.)
You're right there. But half the
time I don't have money for a
hotel. Besides...
(drinks)
I like someone around to cook
breakfast and sweep the place out.

LEE

You mean *clean* the place out.

JOE GUIDRY

(sadly)
I don't mind the watch and the
radio, but it really hurt, losing
those boots. They were a thing of
beauty and a joy forever...

Guidry looks off wistfully, tapping his feet in his sandals. He glances at Allerton.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

I don't know whether I ought to say things like this in front of Junior here. No offense, kid.

ALLERTON

Go ahead.

JOE GUIDRY

Did I tell you how I made the cop on the beat?

Lee shakes his head.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

He's the *vigilante*, the watchman out where I live. Every time he sees the light on in my room, he comes in for a shot of rum. Well, about five nights ago, he caught me when I was drunk and horny, and one thing led to another and I ended up showing him how the cow ate the cabbage.

Lee looks at Allerton for his reaction: Allerton's face is neutral, hard to read.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

So the night after I make him, I was walking by the beer joint on the corner, and he comes out *borracho* and says: "Have a drink." I said: "I don't want a drink." So he takes out his *pistola* and says: "Have a drink." I proceeded to take his *pistola* away from him, and he goes into the beer joint to phone for reinforcements. So I had to go in and rip the phone off the wall. Now they're billing me for the phone.

Lee laughs.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

When I got back to my room, which is on the ground floor, he had written "*El Puto Gringo*" on the window with soap. So instead of wiping it off, I left it there.

(MORE)

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)
 (looks at Allerton)
It pays to advertise.

Allerton smiles. Lee looks back and forth between them, trying to gauge Allerton's feelings about the story.

A WAITRESS comes by to take their empty glasses.

WAITRESS
Gustan más?

Lee looks up at her.

LEE
Si. Mucho mas.

Waitress rolls her eyes, leaves. Allerton gets up.

ALLERTON
 Excuse me.

He heads for the restroom. Lee and Guidry watch him go. Guidry turns to Lee and sees the way Lee looks at Allerton.

LEE
 You think he's queer?

Guidry turns and watches Allerton walk. He shrugs. Allerton enters the restroom. Lee turns to Guidry.

LEE (CONT'D)
 I've been seeing him for a few weeks --

JOE GUIDRY
Seeing him?

LEE
Spending time with him. And I can't tell.

JOE GUIDRY
 You could always just *ask*.

LEE
 (shakes his head)
 No.

(MORE)

LEE (CONT'D)

Either you've gotta be dramatic and do the whole *something-I-have-to-tell-you* routine or you try to do it casually, and you say: "I'm queer, you know, by the way..." And then they don't hear you and they yell: "What?" Or you toss in: "If you were as queer as I am..." And then he yawns and changes the subject.

The waitress comes back, plunks down three new glasses. Lee looks up at her. Guidry looks over at the bar.

JOE GUIDRY

Well, he *must* be queer if he's talking to *him*.

Lee looks at Guidry. Guidry points to the bar, where Allerton is now speaking to JOHN DUMÉ, the elegantly dressed queer man we saw talking to Tom Weston in an earlier scene.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

Dumé's part of that little clique of queers who go to that beer joint on Campeche: *The Green Lantern*.

LEE

(scowls.)

I know who he is...

Lee watches Allerton's body language as he talks with Dumé, looking for some kind of sign. Guidry laughs.

JOE GUIDRY

He's the only one of that crew who'd be welcome in a place like this. The rest of those Green Lantern boys are a bunch of screaming fags.

Lee just keeps staring at the two of them.

LEE

Excuse me.

He downs his drink, starts walking over to the bar. Guidry smiles. When he's about half-way there, Dumé pats Allerton on the back and Allerton gets up and starts walking away towards the other end of the room.

Lee stops, awkwardly stuck in the middle of the room. He looks at Allerton, who's approaching a table where Mary is playing chess with a PERUVIAN MAN, then he looks back at the bar, then at Guidry, who's been watching.

Lee scowls at him, turns and keeps walking to the bar. He gets there and stands next to Dumé. He gestures to the bartender for a drink, then looks back at Allerton.

JOHN DUMÉ (O.S.)

How do you like *this* character?

Lee looks over. Dumé smiles, waves with his beer bottle over in Allerton's direction.

JOHN DUMÉ (CONT'D)

He comes to me and says: "I thought you were one of the Green Lantern Boys." So I said: "Well, I am."

(laughs)

He wants me to take him around to some of the gay places here.

Lee looks at Dumé, surprised. Dumé shrugs.

JOHN DUMÉ (CONT'D)

As a general rule, I don't *take* people to the Lantern. Either you're *going* there or you're *not*. But something about the way he asked me -- I just couldn't say no.

Lee looks over at the table where Allerton's playing chess. He studies his face closely.

JOHN DUMÉ (CONT'D)

You don't know him, do you?

LEE

(looking at Allerton,
distracted.)

Huh?

JOHN DUMÉ

He's always in here playing chess with that girl. What's her name?

LEE

Mary.

JOHN DUMÉ

Right. *Mary*. She seems nice.

Lee scoffs.

JOHN DUMÉ (CONT'D)

Though I suppose if she's his girlfriend, she's in for a bit of a surprise.

LEE

(confused.)

What?

Dume looks at him for a beat, laughs.

JOHN DUMÉ

You all right, Lee?

LEE

(cold.)

I'm fine.

JOHN DUMÉ

I asked if you know that boy and you still haven't given me an answer.

LEE

Oh... Yes. I mean, no. A little.

JOHN DUMÉ

What's he like?

LEE

What's he *like*?

Dume, exasperated, just gives him a look. Lee says nothing. Dume sighs and pats Lee on the shoulder.

JOHN DUMÉ

Thank you, as always, for the enlightening conversation.

Dume gets up and leaves, taking his beer. Lee just keeps looking over at Allerton.

Allerton feels Lee's eyes on him: he looks up and waves, casually. Lee, disoriented, waves back.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT, A FEW DAYS LATER

Cocteau's *Orpheus* plays, dubbed in Spanish. Jean Marais (Orpheus) and Francios Perier (Huertebise) are in Eurydice's bedroom. Orpheus puts on a pair of strange gloves. Huertebise watches as Orpheus puts his hands out in front of him and starts walking towards the mirror, trying to pass through.

As they watch in the half-full theater, Lee doesn't look at Allerton, but his entire consciousness is focused on him, as if, out of the side of his face, Lee can see Allerton's eyes watching the screen, his chest taking in air, exhaling, his dick and balls, sweating beneath his pants. Lee breathes in, taking in Allerton's scent.

Onscreen, Orpheus gets to the mirror: he can't pass through.

HUERTEBISE

Perhaps you're afraid?

ORPHEUS

*No. But this mirror is a mirror,
and in it I see an unhappy man.*

HUERTEBISE

*You do not have to understand. You
just have to believe.*

Huertebise gets behind Orpheus, puts his hands on his shoulders and begins to push. The mirror now becomes like water: his hands start to go through.

Allerton shifts in his seat. Lee twinges, full of longing.

As Orpheus and Huertebise pass through the mirror, entering a surreal, dream-like landscape, Lee takes off his glasses and runs his hand over his closed eyes, restless with desire.

INT. LOLA'S - LATER

Lee, looking as though he has a headache, drinks a double tequila. Allerton drinks a rum and coke.

LEE

What did you, uh, what did you
think of the picture?

ALLERTON

Enjoyed parts of it.

LEE

Yes... So did I.

Lee downs the rest of his drink.

He stares at Allerton, who's studying the menu. He musters up a little courage.

LEE (CONT'D)

By the way, the law was in putting
the bite on the Ship Ahoy again.

Allerton looks up at him.

LEE (CONT'D)

Vice squad. Two hundred pesos. I can see them in the station house after a hard day shaking down citizens of the Federal District.

(Mexican voice)

"Ah, Gonzalez, you should see what I got today. Oh la la, such a bite."

(doing other cop's voice)

"Aah, you shook down a puto queer for two pesetas in a bus station crapper. We know you, Hernandez, and your cheap tricks. You're the cheapest cop inna Federal District."

Allerton smiles slightly. Lee looks at his face, studying it for more of a reaction, but when he sees that Allerton has noticed him staring, he quickly looks off, waves to a WAITER.

LEE (CONT'D)

Hey, Jack! Dos martinis, much dry. Seco. And dos plates Sheeska Babe. Sabe?

Waiter walks over and looks at him, unamused.

WAITER

(in perfect English)

That's two dry martinis and two orders of shish kebab?

LEE

Solid, pops.

Waiter just looks at him. He takes their menus and leaves. Beat. Lee turns to Allerton, as casually as he can.

LEE (CONT'D)

So... How was your evening with Dumé?

Allerton looks at him. Lee looks back, trying his hardest to hide the intensity of his interest. Allerton shrugs.

ALLERTON

We went to several bars full of queers. One place a character asked me to dance and propositioned me.

LEE
Take him up?

ALLERTON
No.

Beat. Lee searches his face, considers what to say next.

LEE
Dumé is a nice fellow.

ALLERTON
Yes... But he's not a person I
would confide too much in.
(beat.)
That is... anything I wanted to
keep private.

LEE
(very carefully)
You refer to a specific
indiscretion?

ALLERTON
Frankly... yes.

Beat. Lee can hardly breathe.

LEE
I see.

They just look at each other. Lee's heart is pounding.

Waiter breaks the tension by plopping down two martinis on the table. Lee, startled, grateful for the release, looks at his martini, then holds it up to the candle, inspecting it.

LEE (CONT'D)
The inevitable watery martini with
a decomposing olive.

He smiles at Allerton, who doesn't react. Lee frowns, downs the martini for courage once again.

LEE (CONT'D)
So --

LITTLE BOY (O.S.)
BILLETES DE LOTERÍA!

Lee turns around and sees a LITTLE BOY, 10, who has entered with box tied around his neck full of lottery tickets.

LITTLE BOY (CONT'D)
 BILLETES DE LOTERÍA DE A PESO!

Lee rolls his eyes, annoyed. The boy goes from table to table, getting shooed away by the other annoyed patrons.

LITTLE BOY (CONT'D)
 Billetes de loteria?

Someone kicks him. Boy just keeps smiling.

LITTLE BOY (CONT'D)
 Un billete? Un billete?

LEE
 Hey! *Aquí*.

The boy looks over at him. Lee gestures for him to come.

The boy rushes over. Lee takes out two five peso bills. Boy's eyes go wide. Lee puts his hand on his shoulder, kindly.

LEE (CONT'D)
 Go buy yourself some marijuana,
 son.

Boy just looks at him, stunned, no idea what Lee is saying. He fumbles in his box and takes out ten lottery tickets.

Lee grabs them and shoos the boy away impatiently. The boy rushes out of the restaurant, triumphant. Lee turns back to Allerton, who is smiling. Lee smiles too, happy that Allerton's amused.

He opens his mouth again to speak when the waiter returns carrying the shish kebab. Lee closes his mouth, watches as the Waiter puts the plates down slowly and carefully picks up Lee's empty martini glass, leaves.

Allerton starts eating. Lee watches him for a long moment. Finally, he can't take it anymore. He blurts out:

LEE (CONT'D)
 So Dumé told you about my, uh,
proclivities?

Allerton looks up, mouth full, casual:

ALLERTON
 Yes.

They look at each other for a beat as Allerton finishes chewing, swallows. Allerton turns his attention back to his food. Lee just looks at him eating, unsure how to proceed.

LEE

A *curse*... Been in our family for generations... The Lees have always been perverts.

Allerton looks up from his plate.

LEE (CONT'D)

I shall never forget the *unspeakable horror* that froze the lymph in my glands -- the lymph glands that is, of course -- when the baneful word seared my reeling brain:

(dramatically)

Homosexual.

Someone at the next table looks over. Allerton smiles.

LEE (CONT'D)

I thought of the painted, simpering female impersonators I had seen in a Baltimore night club. Could it be possible that *I* was one of those subhuman things? I walked the streets in a daze, like a man with a light concussion. I might well have destroyed myself, ending an existence which seemed to offer nothing but grotesque misery and humiliation. Nobler, I thought, to die a man than to live on, a *sex monster*. It was a wise old queen -- *Bobo*, we called her -- who taught me that I had a duty to live and to bear my burden proudly for all to see, to conquer prejudice and ignorance and hate with knowledge and sincerity and love. Whenever you are threatened by a hostile presence, you emit a *thick cloud of love like an octopus squirts out ink.*

Allerton smiles. Lee affects a mockingly mournful expression.

LEE (CONT'D)

Poor Bobo came to a sticky end... He was riding in the Duc de Ventre's Hispano-Suiza when his *falling piles* blew out of the car and wrapped around the rear wheel.

(MORE)

LEE (CONT'D)

He was completely gutted, leaving an empty shell sitting there on the giraffe-skin upholstery. Even the eyes and the brain went, with a horrible *slupping* sound. The Duc says he will carry that ghastly *slup* with him to his mausoleum.

(looks mournfully at his shish kebab)

Then I knew the meaning of loneliness. But Bobo's words came back to me from the tomb, the sibilants cracking gently. "No one is ever really alone. You are part of everything that's alive."

(looks up at Allerton)

The difficulty is to convince *someone else* he is really part of you, so what the hell? Us parts ought to work together. Reet?

Lee pauses, looks at Allerton, who has almost finished his shish kebab. He frowns, unsure where he stands with him.

LEE (CONT'D)

What I mean is, Allerton: We are all parts of a tremendous whole. No use fighting it.

Allerton looks up at Lee, impenetrable. Lee sighs, looks off at the waiter, gesturing for another round of drinks. He turns back to Allerton.

LEE (CONT'D)

Don't these gay bars depress you?

Allerton doesn't say anything.

LEE (CONT'D)

Of course, the queer bars here aren't to compare with stateside queer joints.

ALLERTON

(shrugs)

I wouldn't know.

Lee looks at him.

ALLERTON (CONT'D)

I've never been in any queer joints except those Dumé took me to. I guess there's kicks and kicks.

LEE
You haven't? Really?

ALLERTON
(shakes his head)
No. Never.

Lee just keeps looking at him, confused, perturbed.

Waiter comes and puts down the drinks. Lee keeps looking at Allerton, who finishes his food. Lee hasn't touched his.

EXT. THE STREET - LATER

Lee and Allerton walk in the cool night past buildings with neon light that shines on their faces. There's a clear, green crescent moon in the sky.

LEE
Shall we go to my place for a
drink? I have some Napoleon brandy.

Beat. Allerton shrugs.

ALLERTON
All right.

Lee smiles, waves for a cab. Almost immediately, one pulls up. Lee yells to the guy in terrible Spanish.

LEE
*Insurgentes y Monterrey. Tres
pesos.*

DRIVER
Cuatro.

Lee waves the guy on impatiently. Guy scowls, muttering.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
Che gringo hijo de tu puta madre.

He throws the door to the cab open and gestures roughly for Lee and Allerton to get in. Lee smiles.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
(mumbling to himself.)
*Pinches güeros codos. Por un puto
peso.*

LEE
 (cheeky, having understood
 just fine.)
 Sorry, I didn't catch that.

Driver looks at him, death stare.

DRIVER
 Get in the fucking car.

Allerton smiles, turns to Lee, deadpan.

ALLERTON
 Sometimes, I think they don't like
 us.

INT. LEE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Lee opens the door and turns on a light. We see Lee's space for the first time: piles of clothing, books, papers and notebooks all strewn about in disarray, as well as some comic books and magazines, including a copy of *Scientific American* open to an earmarked article: *Tribal Rituals of the Amazon*. The furniture looks as though it were gifted by people with money or picked up off the street.

There are no pictures, no decorations. It looks less like a home and more like a crash pad for a man with another life elsewhere. Lee sees Allerton taking it in. Allerton's eyes stop on something poking out from behind a cheap mirror that leans against the cupboard: **a beat up metal tin.**

LEE
 I'll fix you a drink.

He goes to the kitchen and grabs two glasses, pouring a generous amount of Mexican brandy into each.

He goes back to Allerton, hands him one. They clink glasses.

Allerton takes a sip, recoils in disgust.

ALLERTON
Good lord. Napoleon must have
 pissed in this one.

LEE
 (smiles)
 I was afraid of that. An *untutored*
palate.
 (walks over to couch)
 (MORE)

LEE (CONT'D)

Your generation has never learned
the pleasures that a trained palate
confers on the disciplined few.

He sits down on the sofa, takes a self-satisfied sip. The awful brandy catches in his throat and he begins to cough.

LEE (CONT'D)

It *is* god awful.

Allerton laughs as Lee keeps coughing. Lee gestures for Allerton to join him on the couch. He starts walking over.

LEE (CONT'D)

Still, better than California
brandy. It has a suggestion of
cognac taste.

Allerton sits down. Lee stops coughing, clears his throat. Long silence as they both sit there, taking sips of the awful brandy, neither of them sure what to say or do.

LEE (CONT'D)

Can I show you over the house?

Beat. Allerton looks at him, nods. Lee gets up.

LEE (CONT'D)

Over here we have the bedroom.

Lee walks over there. Allerton gets up slowly, following.

They get to the doorway to the bedroom and Lee hangs there as Allerton makes his way past Lee over to the bed, sits down and lights a cigarette. Lee watches him for a moment, then goes and sits in the sad, lone chair in the room. Beat.

LEE (CONT'D)

More brandy?

Allerton nods. Lee gets up and fetches the bottle. Allerton just lies there, smoking. Lee comes back and fills both their glasses. He sits at the edge of the bed. They drink. Silence.

Lee looks over at Allerton. He looks him up and down, reaches his hand out and touches Allerton's sweater.

LEE (CONT'D)

Sweet stuff, dearie.

Allerton looks at him as Lee feels the wool.

LEE (CONT'D)

This wasn't made in Mexico.

ALLERTON
 (taking a sip)
 I bought it in Scotland.

The brandy catches in Allerton's throat and he starts coughing wildly. Lee looks at him, concerned.

LEE
 Are you all ri --

Allerton gets up and rushes for the bathroom. Immediately, we can hear him start to vomit. Lee looks off, concerned.

Lee gets up, goes to the kitchen, and fills a glass of water.

When he gets back to the bedroom, Allerton is finishing washing out his mouth in the sink. Lee watches, tenderly. Allerton spits out the water, wipes his mouth with his sleeve.

LEE (CONT'D)
 What could be the matter? You didn't drink much.

Allerton shrugs. Lee hands him the water. He drinks it all.

LEE (CONT'D)
 Are you all right now?

ALLERTON
 Yes. I think so.

Beat. He goes and lies back down on the bed. Lee watches as Allerton slides his shoes off one by one, letting them hit the floor: *clunk, clunk*. Beat.

Lee goes and sits on the bed. Allerton looks at him.

Lee reaches out a hand and touches Allerton's sweater. He feels the fabric tenderly in his fingers. Allerton reaches and covers one of Lee's hands with his own, squeezing it.

LEE
 Let's get this sweater off.

ALLERTON
 Okay.

Beat. Allerton takes off the sweater, lays down again. He's wearing an oxford underneath.

Slowly, Lee takes off his own shoes and his shirt. He lets them fall onto the floor.

He opens up Allerton's shirt and begins to run his hand down Allerton's stomach and ribs.

ALLERTON (CONT'D)

That rib's broken.

Lee nods, runs his hand over it carefully.

Allerton's muscles contract beneath his fingers.

LEE

God, you're skinny.

ALLERTON

I'm pretty small.

Lee begins to kiss Allerton's bare chest. He looks up at Allerton to see if he likes it. Allerton looks back at him -- there is neither hostility nor disgust but just a surprising, curious *detachment*. Lee looks at him, confused but still excited.

He keeps kissing Allerton's body, looking into Allerton's eyes periodically to check if Allerton wants him to stop, but Allerton gives him nothing -- he just looks at Lee with the calm detachment of an animal.

Lee takes off Allerton's socks. He loosens Allerton's belt and unbuttons his trousers.

Allerton arches his body so that Lee can pull the trousers off. Lee looks at him for a moment, then takes them off. He (and the audience) see that Allerton's penis is hard under his underwear. Lee smiles, drops his own trousers and lies down besides Allerton, also hard.

Lee looks over Allerton's body with deep fascination and excitement. Allerton looks at Lee with the same detachment.

Lee looks into Allerton's eyes, kisses him, tentatively, sweetly.

ALLERTON (CONT'D)

Do I smell like vomit?

LEE

No, no.

He kisses him again. Allerton lets him. They kiss for a long beat until Lee starts kissing his way down Allerton's body. Allerton watches as Lee makes it to his crotch, then takes off his underwear and takes him in his mouth.

Lee looks into Allerton's eyes periodically to see the effect he's having. Allerton just looks at him neither encouraging nor discouraging, even as his body registers the pleasure, and, eventually, he comes in Lee's mouth.

Lee looks into Allerton's eyes as Allerton finishes coming. With the same curious look of detachment, Allerton caresses Lee's face and, before Lee can swallow, starts pulling his head back up to his face. Lee, surprised, goes along with it.

He kisses Allerton, mouth still full of Allerton's cum. They make out for a long beat.

Lee lies back down next to Allerton. Allerton reaches over for his cigarettes on the counter, lights one. Lee reaches for his own cigarettes.

As Lee starts to bring the lighter to his face, Allerton reaches his hand over and grabs a hold of Lee's penis. Lee looks at him, unlit cigarette still in his mouth, flame from the lighter hanging there. Allerton looks into Lee's eyes with the same look of detachment as he starts stroking him. Lee closes his eyes, flame still burning. Eventually, Lee comes: the cigarette falls out of his mouth, the lighter snaps shut. Allerton smiles slightly. Lee looks at him, flushed, shy.

Allerton reaches over and grabs a piece of Lee's dirty laundry, hands it to Lee for him to wipe himself off.

Lee wipes himself, throws the shirt back on the ground, picks up his cigarette off his chest and finally lights it.

Lee and Allerton lie side by side, naked, smoking. Long beat.

Lee looks over at him, takes in the reality of Allerton's naked body next to his. He almost can't believe it. He *knows* he shouldn't say anything, that he should just let the silence sit, but he can't help himself.

LEE (CONT'D)

Oh, by the way...

Allerton looks at him.

LEE (CONT'D)

You said you had a camera in pawn
you were about to lose?

ALLERTON

Yes. In for four hundred pesos. The
ticket runs out next Wednesday.

LEE

Well, let's go down tomorrow and
get it out.

Beat. Allerton shrugs.

ALLERTON

Okay.

Allerton turns away. Lee just keeps looking at him, already suspecting he's said the wrong thing.

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE - SAME TIME

The light is on in Lee's apartment. Plumes of cigarette smoke pass by the window. The curtains blow slightly in the breeze.

LEE (V.O.)

I know telepathy to be a fact,
since I have experienced it myself.

EXT. MEXICO CITY - LATE NIGHT/EARLY MORNING

Shots of the nocturnal city: men picking up hookers; an old woman peeing in the street; a stabbing outside a bar.

LEE (V.O.)

I have no interest to prove it, or,
in fact, to prove anything to
anybody.

EXT. THE STREET - ANOTHER DAY, AFTERNOON

Lee and Allerton walk. Lee puts his hand around Allerton's shoulder, warmly.

LEE (O.S.)

What interests me is how I can use
it.

Allerton jerks his shoulder away. Lee looks at him, perturbed, confused. Allerton looks ahead, impenetrable.

INT. K.C. STEAK HOUSE - DAY

The place is mostly empty. Lee drinks a martini, Allerton a rum and coke. Lee is drunk, talking excitedly.

LEE

In South America, at the headwaters of the Amazon grows a plant called Yage that is supposed to increase telepathic sensitivity. Medicine men use it in their work. A Columbian scientist, whose name escapes me, isolated from Yage a drug he called *Telepathine*. I read all this in a magazine article.

Allerton nods, feigning interest.

LEE (CONT'D)

Later, I see another article: the Russians are using Yage in experiments on slave labor. It seems they want to induce states of automatic obedience and ultimately, of course, "thought control." The basic con. No buildup, no spiel, no routine, just move in on someone's psyche and give orders.

(laughs)

I have a theory the Mayan priests developed a form of one-way telepathy to con the peasants into doing all the work. The deal is certain to backfire eventually, because telepathy is not of its nature a one-way setup, nor a setup of sender and receiver at all.

Allerton looks around impatiently, sips his rum and coke.

LEE (CONT'D)

By now, the U.S. is experimenting with Yage, unless they are dumber even than I think. Yage might be a means to usable knowledge of telepathy. Anything that can be accomplished chemically can be accomplished in other ways.

Lee notices Allerton's disinterest, looks at the menu.

LEE (CONT'D)

How about the T-bone steak for two?

ALLERTON

That's fine...

LEE

They list baked Alaska here. Ever eat it?

ALLERTON

No.

LEE

Real good. Hot on the outside and cold inside.

ALLERTON

That's why they call it *baked Alaska*, I imagine...

Lee looks at Allerton with a mixture of longing and disdain. Allerton drums his fingers on the table, aloof.

LEE

Got an idea for a new dish: Take a live pig and throw it into a very hot oven so the pig is roasted outside and, when you cut into it, still alive and twitching inside. Or, if we run a dramatic joint, a screaming pig covered with burning brandy rushes out of the kitchen and dies right by your chair. You can reach down and pull off the crispy, crackly ears and eat them with your cocktails.

Beat. Finally, Allerton smiles. Lee smiles too, satisfied.

INT. LEE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

They drink the same awful brandy, reading next to each other. Lee puts his book down and looks at Allerton.

Allerton looks over, sees the longing in his eyes.

ALLERTON

Well, if you insist.

Lee smiles. He kisses Allerton. Allerton kisses him back.

INT. LEE'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT NIGHT

Allerton sits at the table in the living room with his typewriter, copyediting for a newspaper. Lee cooks chicken livers in the kitchen.

THE BEDROOM - LATER

Lee and Allerton kiss on Lee's bed. Lee starts to unbutton Allerton's shirt. Allerton stops him.

ALLERTON
I want a rum and coke.

LEE
(laughs)
Sure. Sounds good.

He keeps kissing Allerton, but Allerton stops him.

ALLERTON
Let's go to the Ship Ahoy.

Allerton gets up and starts putting on his clothes. Lee watches him, dejected.

As Allerton is putting on his pants, Lee gets up and sweetly, almost domestic, starts to help Allerton button them. Allerton freezes, rigid with annoyance.

INT. THE SHIP AHOY - LATER

Allerton sits at a table with Mary, drinking a rum and coke.

Lee sits across the room with Joe Guidry and a YOUNG MAN, but he's not paying attention to them. He looks at Allerton, wounded, angry.

YOUNG MAN
I was treated, you know, by a therapist in the Army.

JOE GUIDRY
What did you find out?

YOUNG MAN
I found out I was an *Oedipus*. I love my mother.

JOE GUIDRY
(laughs)
Everybody loves their mother, son.

YOUNG MAN
I mean I love my mother *physically*.

JOE GUIDRY
I don't believe that, son.

Lee laughs bitterly, distant, still looking at Allerton. Joe turns to Lee.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

Hey, Lee, did you hear Jim Cochran has gone back to the States? He plans to work in Alaska.

Lee takes a long sip of his drink, finally turns to Joe.

LEE

Thank God I am a gentleman of independent means and don't have to expose myself to the inclemencies of near-Arctic conditions.

At the other end of the bar, Mary and Allerton laugh loudly about something. Lee looks over, scowls, turns back to Joe.

LEE (CONT'D)

By the way, did you ever meet Jim's wife, Alice? My God, she is an American bitch that won't quit. I never yet see her equal. Jim does not have one friend he can take to the house. She has forbidden him to eat out, as she does not want he should take in any nourishment unless she is there to watch him eat it. Did you ever hear of the likes of that? Needless to say, my place is out of bounds to Jim, and he always has that *hunted* look when he comes to see me. I don't know why American men put up with such shit from a woman.

Lee looks over, sees that Mary now has her hand on Allerton's arm. He downs the rest of his drink.

LEE (CONT'D)

Of course, I am no expert judge of female flesh, but Alice has "lousy lay" written all over her scrawny, unappetizing person.

Lee looks at his empty glass, gestures for another. The Young Man with Joe looks a bit scandalized.

JOE GUIDRY

You're coming on mighty bitchy tonight, Lee...

LEE
Not without reason.

Joe looks at Lee. Lee looks back, shrugs.

LEE (CONT'D)
Never mind. I've got bigger fish to fry.

He glances over again at Allerton and Mary, laughing again.

JOE GUIDRY
Fish is right. Cold, slippery, and hard to catch.

INT. HALLWAY IN A BOARDING HOUSE - LATE MORNING

Lee knocks on a door. Beat. No response.

He knocks again. No response.

He knocks a third time. The door swings open. Allerton stands there, naked, annoyed, still groggy.

Lee looks at Allerton's body. Allerton doesn't greet him, just goes and starts to get dressed.

INT. NATIONAL PAWN SHOP - LATER

Lee and Allerton stand in front of a disinterested OFFICIAL.

OFFICIAL
Boleto?

Lee looks at Allerton. Allerton shakes his head.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
Necesita su boleto.

Allerton sighs.

LEE
No. No *boleto*. He lost it. *Perdido*.

OFFICIAL
Ah... I'm sorry. You need the ticket.

LEE
(pointing at something behind the official.)
But --

Official turns and yells something to his SUPERVISOR. Lee and Allerton stand there annoyed as the two Mexicans have a conversation about protocol. Finally, SUPERVISOR comes over.

SUPERVISOR
Necesita --

LEE
 (pointing)
It's right there.

Supervisor looks at him, confused.

LEE (CONT'D)
Alla. There. We can see it.

Supervisor looks behind him, sees a camera on the shelf. He looks back at Lee.

SUPERVISOR
Necesita --

Lee slaps a few hundred peso bills on the counter.

Supervisor looks at the money, then at Lee.

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)
A ver, permítame.

EXT. THE STREET - LATER

Lee and Allerton walk, still silent. Allerton has the camera around his neck. Lee looks over at Allerton to see if he's happy. Allerton just looks bored, annoyed.

INT. SHIP AHOY - LATER, DAY

Lee has a drink. Allerton doesn't. The camera sits on the table between them.

LEE
 How about dinner?

Allerton looks at him, then down at the camera on the table.

ALLERTON
 I think I'll work tonight.

Lee looks hurt. He laughs, attempting a joke.

LEE

Like the Wallace administration, I
subsidize non-production.

Allerton looks at him blank. Lee spells it out for him:

LEE (CONT'D)

I will pay you twenty pesos not to
work tonight.

Allerton doesn't react. Lee opens his mouth to continue when Allerton looks up at him, completely cold, stopping Lee in his tracks. He looks at Allerton with shocked, hurt eyes. Allerton looks back, perturbed, then looks away, drums on the table, irritable, looking around.

LEE (CONT'D)

(tentatively)
How about a drink?

ALLERTON

No... Not now.
(gets up, abruptly)
Anyway, I have to go.

Lee gets up jerkily.

LEE

Well... I'll see you tomorrow?

ALLERTON

Yes. Good night.

He starts to go.

LEE

Eugene --

He stops. Lee looks at the camera Allerton left on the table. Coldly, Allerton goes and picks it up, leaves. Lee watches him go. He feels behind him for the back of his chair and lowers himself into it like a man weak from illness.

INT. SHIP AHOY - HOURS LATER

Lee sits, alone, now very drunk, empty glasses all around.

The door opens at the other end of the bar: Allerton enters with Mary. Lee looks over at them.

Allerton waves at Lee vaguely, then heads out the door into the alleyway behind the bar with Mary.

Lee watches them go. He downs his drink and gets up, wobbly.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lee exits into the alleyway. One end leads out into the street, the other has a staircase that leads up to the apartment on top of the bar where the owners live. Lee leans against the wall, takes a piss, then starts wobbling up the staircase.

INT. THE APARTMENT UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Lee stumbles into a small gathering. A record plays on the turntable. People are sipping drinks, smoking cigarettes, talking in small groups.

Joe Guidry is there making out in a corner, hot and heavy, with TWO BEAUTIFUL YOUNG MEN, switching between them.

One group is laughing, gathered around a VERY DRUNK MAN *balancing a shot glass on his head* a la William Tell. ANOTHER DRUNK MAN, drinking straight from a bottle of Oso Negro gin, throws olives at the glass, trying to knock it over -- the olives keep hitting the guy in the face.

Dume is there, talking with someone. He looks over and sees Lee wobbling around the party, and he not-so-subtly nudges his companion to look. They both laugh, hands in front of their mouths.

Lee sees them, but he's too wasted and too single-minded to care. He keeps moving, making his way to Allerton, who is speaking with Tom Weston near a window.

LEE

(slurs)

I wanna talk to you --

Allerton and Tom look at him, clocking that he's drunk.

LEE (CONT'D)

I wanna speak... without speaking.

Lee laughs. Tom puts a hand on his shoulder.

LEE (CONT'D)

I wanna *touch you...* like the Russians...

(laughs)

The *Mayans...*

TOM WESTON
 (easing Lee into a chair)
 All right. Easy does it, Bill...

Lee laughs, caresses Tom's face sweetly.

LEE
 You got anything to drink, Tom? I
 could use a couple.

Lee closes his eyes and blacks out. The last thing he sees is Allerton looking at him, the same cold look of detachment.

BLACK. Then...

EXT. ALLEYWAY BEHIND THE SHIP AHOY - NEITHER DAY NOR NIGHT,
 UNMOORED FROM TIME

Lee suddenly stands in front of the bar which looks deserted. He looks around, confused, unsettled.

Down the road, he sees a man -- HIMSELF -- standing at a knife sharpening bicycle, waiting as the sharpener works.

Faintly, Lee hears the sound of crying. He looks to his right and sees a TINY BABY on the ground in the street with *his exact face* - **his son**.

He kneels down and takes the baby in his arms. The baby's sobs become louder. Lee, without thinking, starts crying too, his body shaking with sobs.

He looks up and sees SEVERAL PEOPLE in convict suits suddenly standing there, watching him: Mary, Joe Guidry, Tom Weston, Winston Moor, John Dumé, Allerton. Lee looks at them all, confused. He looks curiously back down at the crying baby, who is now *embedded in his thigh*.

INT. LEE'S BEDROOM - MIDDLE OF THE DAY

Lee looks around, suddenly in his own bedroom, not remembering how he got there, seeing the detritus of a bender all around him.

INT. BATHROOM

Lee rummages through a cupboard, looking for something. He finds it -- a tin of throat lozenges. He opens it up and looks inside: there are a few pieces of opium. He takes one out and looks at it. He eats it. Beat. He eats another.

EXT. SHIP AHOY - EVENING

Lee pulls up in a cab across the street. He pays the cabbie, gets out and starts walking towards the bar.

Allerton is outside, smoking a cigarette.

Lee sees him. He nervously approaches. Allerton looks up. Lee smiles. Allerton smiles back, friendly.

LEE

How are you?

ALLERTON

Sleepy. Just got up.

He yawns. Lee looks like he's about to say something else --

ALLERTON (CONT'D)

See you.

He heads into the bar. Lee just stands there.

INT. THE SHIP AHOY - LATER

Allerton sits at a table alone with a chess board in front of him, waiting for Mary and the Peruvian Man, who are ordering at the bar. Lee sits alone at another table, watching him, almost finished with his third drink.

Lee reaches into his pocket, eats a piece of opium and washes it down with the rest of his drink. He goes over and sits at the table with Allerton. Allerton looks up at him.

LEE

I figure to go down to South America soon. Why don't you come along? Won't cost you a cent.

Allerton looks him over.

ALLERTON

Perhaps not in money.

Lee smiles.

LEE

I'm not a difficult man to get along with. We could reach a satisfactory arrangement. What you got to lose?

ALLERTON
Independence.

LEE
So who's going to cut in on your
independence? You can lay all the
women in South America if you want
to.

Allerton laughs.

LEE (CONT'D)
All I ask is be nice to Papa,
say... twice a week? That isn't
excessive is it?

He looks at Allerton. Allerton can't tell if he's serious.

LEE (CONT'D)
Besides, I'll buy you a round trip
ticket so you can leave at your
discretion.

Long beat. Lee searches Allerton's face.

ALLERTON
I'll think it over.

Lee's face brightens with hope.

ALLERTON (CONT'D)
This newspaper job I'm doing runs
ten days more... I'll give you a
definite answer when the job folds.

LEE
(laughs condescendingly)
Your *job*...

He considers saying something mean -- he stops himself.

LEE (CONT'D)
All right.

Mary and the Peruvian return with drinks. Lee looks up at
Mary, who looks back at him apprehensive, disdainful.

Lee gets up, mock gentlemanly and apologetic, and gestures
for Mary to take her seat back. He goes.

INT. LEE'S APARTMENT - THAT NIGHT

Lee looks around for something, agitated, impatient. He finds it behind the cheap mirror that leans against the cupboard: the beat up metal tin that Allerton noticed earlier.

Lee takes it out and opens it, revealing it to be a **heroin kit**. He lays it all out on the bed, shoots up, and lies down, high.

INT. SHIP AHOY - THE NEXT DAY

Allerton stands at the bar. Lee comes and stands next to him.

LEE

So?

Allerton looks at him blankly.

LEE (CONT'D)

Have you thought it over? The trip?

ALLERTON

I can't decide until I come back from Morelia.

LEE

Morelia?

ALLERTON

A few of my coworkers from the newspaper office and I are going. Just for three days. We leave tomorrow. I'll let you know about South America when I get back.

Lee looks at him, hurt and anger bubbling under the surface.

Allerton gets up and walks away. Lee takes out four Benzedrine tablets from his pocket and swallows them, washing them down with his drink.

INT. SHIP AHOY - LATER

Lee is now very high, still sitting alone, drinking. He looks over and notices a BARTENDER holding up a mouse by its tail away from his body, trying to bring it outside. The mouse writhes and wriggles as the other patrons watch, laughing.

LEE
 (slurring)
 Hold the son of a bitch out and
 I'll blast it!

Everyone looks over at Lee. He gets his pistol out, pointing it at the mouse. A few people laugh, a few look on concerned.

BARTENDER
No, senor. Por favor.

Lee cocks the gun.

LEE
 Hold that little fucker out! Come
 on!

BARTENDER
Okay, okay. Como usted diga.

The bartender ties a piece of string around the mouse's tail and holds him out at arm's length. Lee steps up so that he's only three feet from the mouse. He holds out his gun dramatically as if he were in a duel. The rest of the patrons laugh, a few cheer as Lee dramatically takes aim and pulls the trigger.

BAM!

The shot rings out loudly through the space as the mouse's head explodes. Bartender gets covered in blood and mouse-guts. The bullet hits the leg of a chair and ricochets slightly. Everyone ducks and jumps up. Lee bows.

TOM WESTON
 If you got any closer, the mouse
 would've clogged the muzzle.

Lee shrugs, goes over to the bar.

LEE
 Coffee.

The other bartender hands him a coffee. Lee reaches into his coat pocket, takes out a small piece of opium and eats it, washing it down with the coffee.

The door to the bar opens and John Dumé walks in. Lee looks over and sees him.

LEE (CONT'D)
 Dumé!

Dumé looks at him, curiously. He can tell that Lee's plastered. He smirks.

LEE (CONT'D)
I wanna talk to you.

Dumé walks over there.

JOHN DUMÉ
Are we enjoying ourselves, Bill?

LEE
You took our friend Allerton to some queer bars, huh?

Dumé looks at him blankly.

LEE (CONT'D)
Gene. Eugene Allerton.

JOHN DUMÉ
Oh.
(sighs.)
Yes, I did.

Dumé gestures to the bartender for a drink. Lee looks at him.

JOHN DUMÉ (CONT'D)
Most boring night of my life. I took him to the Green Lantern. The whole time, he just sat there like:

Dumé does an impression of Allerton's blank stare.

JOHN DUMÉ (CONT'D)
All night, just:

Again, he does the stare. Lee recognizes it.

JOHN DUMÉ (CONT'D)
Finally, I say to him: "Are you having a bad time, kid? Would you like to go home?" He goes:
(Allerton impression.)
"No. This is fine."

Dumé's beer arrives. He sips it, laughs.

JOHN DUMÉ (CONT'D)
God help whoever's trying to crack that nut.
(looks at Lee.)
Oh God, you're not *making it with him*, are you?

Lee doesn't say anything. Dumé looks at him, mock sympathetic.

JOHN DUMÉ (CONT'D)
You've got enough problems already,
don't you think, Bill?

Dumé puts his hand on Lee's shoulder. Lee shakes him off. Dumé smiles, shrugs.

JOHN DUMÉ (CONT'D)
Suit yourself. I gotta take a leak.

Dumé gets up and heads for the bathroom, leaving his beer. Lee watches him go. When he's fully gone, Lee turns and spits in Dumé's beer. He turns back to his own beer and sips it, deep in thought.

INT. SHIP AHOY - A FEW DAYS LATER

Lee and Allerton sit, drinking cocktails in the afternoon.

LEE
So...

Allerton looks up at him.

LEE (CONT'D)
How was Morelia?

ALLERTON
Oh... it was all right.

Allerton looks down at his drink, aloof, impenetrable. Lee feels a charge of anger pass through his body.

LEE
You know, I'm thinking about buying
a half interest in this place.

Allerton looks up at him.

LEE (CONT'D)
You exist on credit here, right?
Tom says you owe 400 pesos.

Allerton shrugs.

LEE (CONT'D)
Maybe, if I were half owner of the
joint, you wouldn't be in a
position to ignore me.

Allerton just looks at him for a long beat. Lee looks back. Allerton laughs, shakes his head. Lee looks down, ashamed. Allerton drums on the table with his thin hands. Lee looks down at them.

LEE (CONT'D)

What about this trip to South America?

Beat. Allerton stops drumming on the table, shrugs.

ALLERTON

It's always nice to see places you haven't seen before...

Lee's face brightens.

LEE

Can you leave anytime?

ALLERTON

Anytime.

Allerton looks at Lee. Lee looks back at him, hardly able to contain his excitement. Allerton laughs at him.

EXT. BUS DEPOT - A FEW DAYS LATER

Allerton and Lee are lined up to board the bus. Lee holds an envelope overflowing with bus tickets, train tickets, visas. He's talking excitedly.

LEE

We may have to trek back into the jungle to find the Yage. When we get where the Yage is, we'll dig a hip cat and ask him: "Where can we score for Yage?"

ALLERTON

How will you know where to look?

LEE

I aim to find that out in Bogota. A Colombian scientist who lives in Bogota isolated Telepathine from Yage. We must find that scientist.

Allerton smiles, amused. Lee registers this, satisfied.

INT. A CROWDED BUS - LATER, SUNSET

Allerton and Lee sit next to each other. Allerton looks out the open window at the sun setting over Mexico.

He feels something and looks down, sees that Lee has his hand on his thigh. Allerton looks at Lee's hand for a second. He picks it up, puts it on Lee's thigh, and looks back out the window. Lee doesn't care. He just looks contentedly at Allerton sitting next him.

INT. HOTEL ROOM IN PANAMA CITY - NIGHT

Lee sits on his bed watching Allerton brush his teeth. Allerton finishes, gargles and starts to enter the room, stopping in the doorway. He sees how Lee is looking at him.

ALLERTON

What?

Lee gestures to the space next to him. Allerton turns off the light in the bathroom and goes and sits on his own bed, getting ready to sleep.

LEE

We had a deal didn't we? Twice a week?

They look at each other for a long beat. Allerton shrugs and goes to Lee on his bed. He sits down.

Lee looks at him, nervous, excited.

Allerton reaches his hand out and puts it on Lee's crotch.

Lee shudders. Allerton strokes him over his pants until Lee gets hard. Lee reaches out to touch Allerton, but before he can, Allerton bends down and takes Lee in his mouth.

Lee smiles as Allerton goes down on him.

INT. CURIO STORE - THE NEXT DAY

Allerton waits as Lee cashes a travelers check and buys a hat, talking with the CLERK. Lee is shaking slightly.

CLERK

What did you say it was you're looking for down here?

LEE

Not here. In Columbia. Yage.

CLERK
Never heard of that.

LEE
You heard of H and C?

Clerk looks at him.

LEE (CONT'D)
Heroin and Cocaine.

CLERK
Oh.
(laughs.)
You can get those in the city.

EXT. BARS/HOTELS/WHOREHOUSES AROUND PANAMA CITY - LATER

Lee and Allerton walk around looking to score.

EXT. PHARMACY - LATER

Lee waits outside, rolling a small joint with some cheap pot: all sad-looking shake, no bud. As he lights it, Allerton emerges from the pharmacy with a paper bag. He takes out a bottle of **paregoric**. Lee looks at it, eyes wide. On the bottle, it says: "*Camphorated tincture of opium, for treatment of diarrhea.*" Lee smiles, cracks open the bottle.

INT. A BAR - LATER

Allerton dozes off, exhausted. Lee finishes off the last drops of the bottle of paregoric, takes out a little baggie of white powder and dips his pinkie inside, tastes the contents. He shrugs, pours a little out onto the table and snorts it.

INT. PLANE FROM PANAMA TO QUITO, ECUADOR - A FEW DAYS LATER

Allerton looks out the window. Lee sits shivering slightly.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The room looks a hundred years old: high ceilings with black beams and white plaster walls. They sit on their beds, cold. Lee shivers, junk sick. Allerton looks at him, concerned.

INT. DRUG STORE IN TOWN - THE NEXT DAY

Lee still shivers. Allerton tries talking to the pharmacist.

PHARMACIST
Necesita una receta.

ALLERTON
Tengo dinero.

Allerton starts reaching into his pocket.

PHARMACIST
(holding up prescription)
Receta. Necesita una receta médica.

Allerton sighs. Pharmacist looks over at Lee.

PHARMACIST (CONT'D)
Tiene diarrea?

Lee looks at her, eyes pouty, trying to seem extra pathetic.

LEE
Si. Mucho diarrea.

Pharmacist looks at him, sympathetic but suspicious.

LEE (CONT'D)
*Paregoric es la medicacion mejor
para mi.*

Beat. She disappears for a moment -- Lee and Allerton look at each other, hopeful. She returns and plops something on the counter: a box of *Tums*. Lee deflates.

EXT. QUITO, MAIN SQUARE - LATER

A cold wind from the mountains blows trash through the dirty streets as Lee and Allerton walk by some GLOOMY PEOPLE with blankets wrapped round their faces. Lee is shivering -- his junk sickness has gotten worse. Allerton helps him along the road. He looks as they pass a ROW OF HIDEOUS OLD HAGS huddled along the wall of a church. Lee keeps shivering badly.

INT. THE HOTEL ROOM - LATER, NIGHT

Lee and Allerton smoke a joint on the balcony. Lee is wrapped in blankets, shivering, looking out at Quito.

LEE

Tibet must be about like this. High and cold and full of ugly looking people and llamas and yaks. Yak milk for breakfast, yak curds for lunch, and for dinner a yak boiled in his own butter...

(takes a drag, passes)

You can smell one of them holy men ten miles downwind on a clear day. Sitting there pulling on his old prayer wheel so nasty. Wrapped in dirty burlap sacks, with bedbugs crawling around where his neck sticks out of the sack. His nose is all rotted away, and he spits betel nut out through the nose holes like a spitting cobra... The old "wisdom-of-the-East" routine.

ALLERTON

(takes a drag)

Wisdom of the East?

LEE

So we got like, a holy man, and some bitch reporter comes to interview him. He sits there chewing on his betel nut. After a while, he says to one of his acolytes: "Go down to the Sacred Well and bring me a dipper of paregoric. I'm going to make with the wisdom of the East. And shake the lead outta your loin cloth!"

Allerton laughs, smoking.

LEE (CONT'D)

So he drinks the P.G. And goes into a light trance and makes cosmic contact -- we call it *going on the nod* in the trade. The reporter says: "Will there be war with Russia, Mahatma? Will Communism destroy the civilized world? Is the soul immortal? Does God exist?" The Mahatma opens his eyes and compresses his lips and spits two long red streams of betel nut juice out through his nose holes.

(MORE)

LEE (CONT'D)

It runs down over his mouth, and he licks it back in with a long, coated tongue and says: "How the fuck should I know?" The acolyte says: "You heard the man. Now cut. The Swami wants to be alone with his medications."

(takes a drag, smiles)

Come to think of it, that *is* the wisdom of the East. The Westerner thinks there is some secret he can discover. The East says: "How the fuck should I know?"

Lee finishes the joint, stubs it out on the railing, shivers.

LEE (CONT'D)

Fuck, it's cold out here.

INT. THE HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Lee and Allerton lie in separate beds. Lee tosses and turns. He wakes up with a start from a nightmare, instantly cold.

LEE

(whispers)

Are you awake, Gene?

ALLERTON

(groggy, just barely half-awake)

Yes.

LEE

Cold?

ALLERTON

Yes.

LEE

Can I come over with you?

Beat.

ALLERTON

All right.

Lee gets out of his bed and gets into bed with Allerton. He is shaking.

ALLERTON (CONT'D)

You're twitching all over.

Lee presses against Allerton. The junk sickness makes him horny: Allerton can feel Lee's erection poking into his back as Lee starts to feel Allerton's body.

ALLERTON (CONT'D)

Christ almighty, your hands are cold.

Lee smiles. He keeps caressing Allerton, feeling him up, until Allerton shakes him off and curls up, falling asleep.

Lee lies there, shivering.

Allerton rolls over and throws his knee across Lee's body. Lee's whole body tenses. He tries to lie absolutely still so as to not wake Allerton and have him move away.

He just looks at Allerton's knee, feeling it on his body, breathing heavy, trying not to shiver. He looks up to Allerton's face: behind his closed eyelids, the eyes flutter with activity. Lee's eyelids start to become heavy, and he too drifts off the sleep.

INT. LEE'S APARTMENT (DREAM)

We see Lee's POV sitting at a table: Allerton sits across from him.

Slowly, Allerton starts to slide his hands out in front of him on the table. So does Lee until their hands are very close but not touching -- there is just the slightest space between them.

Allerton looks at Lee's face, registering surprise, concern

ALLERTON

What's wrong?

INT. THE HOTEL ROOM - SAME TIME

Lee, still dreaming, eyes closed, shakes his head slightly and mouths, almost inaudibly.

LEE

Nothing...

We pan to Allerton, also dreaming, eyes closed, who scrunches his face as if he too is disturbed by something.

INT. LEE'S APARTMENT (DREAM)

We see that *Allerton and Lee are sharing the same dream space*. We see Allerton's POV of Lee sitting across from him. Lee is looking down at the space between their hands.

We leave Allerton's POV and see them from the side of the table, sitting across from each other.

Hovering just slightly above the table, a thin, almost translucent piece of white paper hangs in the space between Lee and Allerton -- they both look at it, then at each other through the paper, as if holding it hovering in the space between their minds.

They stare at each other, curiously, almost weightless: it's as if, faintly, they can both tell that they are dreaming together. It's at once terrifying and exhilarating.

INT. THE HOTEL ROOM - SAME TIME

They lie next to each other, perfectly still, neither daring to move a muscle, Allerton's leg still slung over Lee's body, both dreaming the same dream.

EXT. STREETS OF QUITO - THE NEXT DAY

Allerton walks a very sick Lee through hilly, narrow streets.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Inside a yellow stucco villa, Lee sits on an exam table. Allerton sits nearby. A DOCTOR, 60s, Jewish, who speaks good English, is closing the curtain to the exam room, looking at Lee's intake forms as he readies the room.

DOCTOR

Dysentery?

Lee nods.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Can you describe your symptoms?

LEE

Bloody diarrhea, cramps,
vomiting...

ALLERTON

High temperature.

LEE

Right. High temperature.

Doctor puts down his clipboard and reaches out his hand to feel Lee's forehead.

He looks at Lee suspiciously for a moment, then gets up to go write a prescription. Lee and Allerton exchange looks.

LEE (CONT'D)

The, uh, the prescription that works best is *paregoric* with bismuth.

Doctor stops writing. Beat. He laughs, gives Lee a long look.

DOCTOR

Tell the truth now. Are you addicted to opiates?

Lee opens his mouth to protest.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Better you tell me. Otherwise, I cannot help you.

Beat.

LEE

Yes.

DOCTOR

Ah ha!

He crumples up the prescription, drops it in the wastebasket.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

How long has this addiction lasted?

LEE

(faking shame)

Too long, sir... It's why I left the States. My condition makes me a criminal there.

DOCTOR

(shakes his head)

You must stop this habit. Better you should suffer now than lose your life.

LEE

I want to stop. But I have to get some *sleep*. I'm going to the coast tomorrow, to Manta.

Doctor sits down in his chair and gives Lee a long, sympathetic, self-satisfied, *human* look.

DOCTOR

You must stop this habit.

Lee nods, faking appreciativeness. Allerton smiles to himself: he can see the annoyance behind Lee's eyes.

Finally, Doctor gets up and goes to his prescription pad. He starts writing something as Lee looks on, hopeful.

Doctor comes back and hands Lee the prescription: three CCs of *tincture*. Lee looks up at the doctor, nakedly disdainful. Doctor smiles down at him, magnanimous.

INT. PHARMACY - LATER

PHARMACISTS examine Lee's prescription, talking amongst themselves. One of them shakes her head. The other goes to get something in the back. Lee watches, deflated.

Finally, the pharmacist comes back and plops down a bottle of *paregoric* on the counter. Lee's eyes widen.

LADY PHARMACIST

No tenemos tincture. Paregoric esta bien?

Lee nods, excited. Pharmacist measures out *three CCs*, a tiny amount, into a vial, and she hands it to Lee. He looks at it.

LEE

That's it?

LADY PHARMACIST

Si. Tres CCs.

LEE

Right, but the doctor made a mistake. He meant --

LADY PHARMACIST

(pointing to prescription)
Mire. Aquí.

Lee scowls. He looks over at the shelf, grabs a bottle of antihistamines and plops it on the counter.

LEE

What about this shit? *Do I need a prescription for this shit?*

Pharmacist shakes her head. Lee angrily gets out his wallet.

INT. AIRPLANE - THE NEXT DAY

Lee and Allerton ride on a small propeller plane to Manta.

Allerton sleeps. Lee empties out a handful of antihistamine pills and downs them with his rum and coke.

INT. BEACH BUNGALOW - THE NEXT NIGHT

The place is made of split bamboo and rough boards. Lee, still a bit sick, is plugging up the holes in the wall of their room with paper. Allerton watches.

LEE

You don't want to get deported under a cloud... I'm still a little junk sick, you know, and that makes me sooo sexy. The neighbors could witness some innaresting sights.

Allerton smiles. Lee goes to Allerton on the bed, starts to kiss his body.

ALLERTON

I wish to register a complaint concerning breach of contract.

Lee looks at him.

ALLERTON (CONT'D)

You said twice a week.

LEE

So I did.

Beat. He starts kissing Allerton's body again.

LEE (CONT'D)

Well, of course, the contract is more or less... elastic, you might say... But you are right...

He grabs hold of Allerton's penis. Allerton is aroused.

LEE (CONT'D)

Twice a week it is, sire.

He starts stroking Allerton.

LEE (CONT'D)

Of course, if you get hot pants
between times, don't hesitate to
let me know...

Lee starts to kiss his way towards Allerton's ear.

ALLERTON

I'll give you... a buzz...

Lee takes the ear in his mouth. Allerton groans.

EXT. THE OCEAN - THE NEXT DAY

Allerton and Lee swim in swim trunks together in the water.
We follow them as they dive under the water.

THE BEACH

They sit, wearing their trunks, looking at the sea. Lee has
stopped shivering.

Allerton gets out his camera from his backpack -- the one he
and Lee picked up earlier from the pawn office -- and takes a
picture of a boat in the water. Lee notices this, smiles.

EXT. BEACH BUNGALOW - LATER

Lee and Allerton sit watching the sunset -- it turns the
whole bay red. Allerton looks Lee over.

ALLERTON

You seem better.

Lee takes out the bottle of antihistamines and shakes a few
more out into his hand.

LEE

These have cut my junk sickness to
something more like a *vague*
malaise. I wouldn't even notice if
I didn't know what it was.

Allerton laughs. Lee downs the pills with water. He lays his
head down on Allerton's lap. Allerton lets him, but doesn't
touch him. He just keeps looking out at the bay. Lee studies
his face.

LEE (CONT'D)

While we're in Ecuador, we must score for Yage.

Allerton shrugs.

LEE (CONT'D)

Think of it: thought control. Take anyone apart and rebuild to your taste. Anything about somebody bugs you, you say: "Yage! I want that routine took clear out of his mind."

(smiles.)

I could think of a few changes I might make in *you* doll. You'd be so much *nicer* after a few alterations.

Allerton looks down at him, impenetrable.

LEE (CONT'D)

You're nice now, of course, but you do have those irritating little peculiarities.

(off Allerton's look)

I mean, you won't do exactly what I want you to do all the time.

ALLERTON

Do you think there is anything in it, really?

LEE

(shrugs)

The Russians seem to think so. I understand Yage is the most efficient confession drug. They've also used peyote. Ever try it?

Allerton shakes his head, looks back out at the bay.

LEE (CONT'D)

Horrible stuff. I had nightmares after using it, one after the other. In one dream I had rabies and looked in the mirror and my face changed and I began howling. Another dream I had a *chlorophyll* habit. Me and five other chlorophyll addicts are waiting to score. We turn green and we can't kick the chlorophyll habit. One shot and you are hung for life. We are turning into plants.

Lee sees Allerton's lack of engagement, frowns.

LEE (CONT'D)

Anyway, much as I dislike the idea, I will have to go back to Quito and talk to a botanist at the Botanical Institute there. They might be able to tell me where in Ecuador I can find the Yage.

ALLERTON

I'm not going back to Quito for anything.

Lee smiles. He reaches for the antihistamines, pops a few in his mouth, then looks up at Allerton, caressing his face.

LEE

No need for you to go. After we go to Guayaquil, I'll go back to Quito and then meet you in Salinas. You enjoy the beach. Papa will go and get the info.

Allerton looks at Lee, then back out at the sunset. Lee just keeps looking at Allerton, caressing his face: Allerton doesn't stop him, but he also doesn't react. Lee stares at Allerton's face, searching. Finally, Allerton brushes Lee's hand away. Lee deflates, looks out at the sunset.

EXT. MANTA AIRPORT - NEXT DAY

A tiny plane takes off from a dirt runway.

EXT. GUAYAQUIL, ECUADOR - DAY

Shots of the strange city: parks full of tropical trees, shrubs, vines; a curiously mixed populace: Black, Chinese, Indian, European, Arab. Large iguanas roam around everywhere.

EXT. TRAIN TRACK/BRIDGE/RIVER - DAY

Lee walks, drinking a soda, looking around at the city. The shoreline is full of garbage and stray animals. Lee passes under telephone poles stacked with power cables.

He slows to watch a group of BOYS hanging around a heap of rubbish. One pees against a telephone pole, smiling at the others. He turns and notices Lee, still pissing. So do the others.

Lee doesn't avert his gaze. He just stares at them openly, yearningly: it's not sexual, but it's full of longing.

The boys start to whisper to themselves, laughing at Lee. Lee doesn't move. He just stares at them.

He focuses on the boy who was pissing. It's as if the world around him goes out of focus, blacks out. The boy is looking at him, grinning with sharp white teeth. Lee looks at his tattered shirt, glimpsing the thin body underneath.

As his gaze goes back up to the boy's face, we see that he is no longer grinning. He looks at Lee as if understanding something. Lee looks back, then looks down at the boy's heart. He *feels it* pounding. Lee's heart pounds too, in rhythm with the boy's. He can feel himself in the boy's body across this divide. And then... **something clicks.**

Like the rush of a shot of heroin, Lee is overtaken by a *flash of fragmentary memories* -- the *boy's* memories:

FLASH:

- Cocoa beans drying in the sun.

FLASH:

- Walking through the hallways of bamboo tenements.

FLASH:

- Playing with other boys in the warm, dirty river.

FLASH:

- Rummaging through rubbish heaps on the outskirts of town.

And then, suddenly, curiously, Lee is overtaken by his own memories, interspersed with the boy's:

FLASH:

-Age 8, sitting in class at the Community School in St. Louis, not paying attention to the teacher explaining multiplication tables; instead, writing a ten-page "novel," *The Autobiography of a Wolf.*

FLASH:

-Age 10, standing next to his mother at an arts and antiques show, watching curiously as she talks with TWO GAY MEN, antiques dealers. Young Lee studies them: one flamboyant man puts his arm around the waist of the other.

Then, quickly, overwhelmingly:

FLASH:

-Age 25, walking through the West Village in New York, with his arm around the waist of an 18-year-old boy, JACK, clearly smitten, obsessed.

FLASH:

-That night, Making love to Jack in his apartment.

FLASH:

-The next night, looking through a tiny hole in the wall, watching Jack fooling around with a woman in his own apartment next door. They laugh, undressing, playful as Lee fills with rage and resentment.

FLASH:

-The next morning, sitting by the window, no sleep, holding his pinkie finger between the blades of a pair of poultry shears. Holding. Holding. Then SLICING a portion of the finger clear off, blacking out from the pain as he stares directly into the sun.

SNAP TO:

INT. DINGY NEW YORK APARTMENT - SOME OTHER TIME

The blinding sun is replaced by a dim candle, illuminating just the upper half of a WOMAN's naked body which rotates slowly on a table. The undulating light from the candle flutters across her as she spins.

An arm enters frame to touch her, then another: *Lee's arms*. We see that they are now **full of track marks**.

The woman's arms are also full of track marks. The two of them have just shot up -- heroin accessories on the table.

The woman laughs as Lee's hands caress her. She looks at Lee, *at us*, with a funny expression.

WOMAN

Aren't you *queer*?

We shake our head.

LEE (O.S.)

I'm not *queer*... I'm disembodied.

The woman smiles. She leans in to kiss us, full of desire.

SNAP BACK TO:

EXT. A LITTLE PARK OVERLOOKING THE CITY - LATER

Lee, smoking, walks up to a park with a view of Guayaquil. A monument depicts the Guayaquil Conference: big, serious looking stone columns with a statue in the center showing Simon Bolivar shaking hands with San Martin De Los Andes. The two historical men are meant to look dignified, noble.

Lee stops and looks at the statue along with a few somber, serious-looking TOURISTS and LOCALS who take pictures.

He studies the posture of the men in the statue, the way they hold each other's hands, the faces. He focuses on the gaze between the two of them. He laughs, seeing it. Perhaps we see it too: the two men look *queer* -- *so queer it rocks you*.

People look over at Lee disapprovingly, but he doesn't care. He keeps laughing, smoking. To the horror of those around him, he stubs out his cigarette on Bolivar's bronze dick.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Allerton lies asleep in the bed, having an intense dream. Lee enters and looks at him. He sits down, shakes Allerton gently. Allerton groans.

LEE

It's three o'clock, Gene. Time to get up.

ALLERTON

What for?

LEE

You want to spend your life in bed?

Allerton looks at him, groggy, annoyed.

LEE (CONT'D)

Come on out and dig the town with me. I saw some beautiful boys on the waterfront. The real uncut stuff. Such teeth, such smiles. Young bodies vibrating with life.

ALLERTON

All right. Stop drooling.

LEE

(sincere)

What have they got that I want, Gene? Do you know?

ALLERTON

No.

Allerton wraps the blanket back around himself and tries to go back to sleep. Lee just stares ahead, perturbed.

LEE

They have *maleness* of course. So have I. I want myself the same way I want others... I can't use my own body for some reason.

Lee looks down at Allerton's body, curiously. He starts to reach his hand out towards him. Allerton opens one eye and sees Lee reaching, shifts his body away.

LEE (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

ALLERTON

I thought you were going to run your hand down my ribs.

LEE

I wouldn't do that. Think I'm *queer* or something?

ALLERTON

Frankly, yes.

Lee smiles. So does Allerton. Lee lies down with Allerton and starts spooning him. Allerton lets him.

LEE

You do have nice ribs. Show me the broken one...

Lee starts running his hand down Allerton's stomach.

LEE (CONT'D)

Is it this one here?

He keeps running his hand down further towards his crotch.

LEE (CONT'D)

Or is it further down?

ALLERTON

(swatting him away.)

Oh, go away.

LEE

But, Gene... I am *due*, you know.

Allerton looks at him.

ALLERTON

Yes, I suppose you are.

Lee smiles. He starts kissing Allerton's neck. Allerton clearly likes it. He breathes in, smelling Lee on him.

LEE

Of course, if you'd rather wait until tonight... These tropical nights are so romantic. That way we could take twelve hours and do the thing right...

Lee runs his hand all the way down Allerton's stomach. This time Allerton lets Lee grab hold of his penis, already hard. Lee smiles. Allerton shudders slightly.

ALLERTON

Maybe it would be better now... You know how I like to sleep alone.

LEE

Yes, I know... Too bad.

He starts kissing Allerton's shoulders.

LEE (CONT'D)

If I had my way, we'd sleep every night all wrapped around each other like hibernating rattlesnakes...

Allerton turns around and kisses Lee. They start to take off each other's clothes. They kiss passionately, sweetly. Lee laughs to himself. He speaks to Allerton in baby talk:

LEE (CONT'D)

*Wouldn't it be booful if we should
juth run together into one gweat
big blob?*

(off Allerton's reaction)

Am I giving you the horrors?

ALLERTON

Indeed you are.

Lee smiles. So does Allerton. They keep kissing, passionately, until, eventually, they begin to make love.

Lee is surprised by the intensity of Allerton's response. Instead of his usual coldness and neutrality, Allerton grasps Lee tightly, squeezing him around the ribs as he comes.

They catch their breath. Allerton sighs, closes his eyes. Lee smooths Allerton's eyebrows with his thumb.

LEE

Do you mind that?

ALLERTON

Not terribly.

Lee keeps smoothing his eyebrows, examining his face.

LEE

But you do enjoy it sometimes? The whole deal I mean?

ALLERTON

Oh, yes.

Lee stops smoothing his eyebrows. Allerton opens his eyes and looks at Lee. They hold each other's gaze for a long beat.

Finally, Lee lies on his back with one cheek on Allerton's shoulder. They both close their eyes and drift off to sleep.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

Lee and Allerton eat breakfast, silent. Lee looks over at Allerton, watching him eat. Allerton doesn't look up. Lee scoots his chair closer. Allerton notices but doesn't react.

Lee puts his hand on Allerton's leg. Allerton just keeps eating, sips his coffee. Lee gets out of his chair and gets on his knees, reaching for Allerton's belt to unfasten it.

Allerton roughly throws him off.

Lee falls back onto the floor. He looks up at Allerton, hurt. Allerton looks back at him, completely cold.

Beat. Lee gets up and sits back down across from Allerton. Allerton goes back to his breakfast. Lee watches him.

LEE

I'm sorry.

Long beat. Allerton doesn't look up at him.

LEE (CONT'D)

I shouldn't have tried so soon after last time... It was a breach of contract.

ALLERTON

I don't like people who apologize at breakfast.

Beat. Lee just keeps watching him eat, scoffs.

LEE

Really, Gene, aren't you taking unfair advantage?

Allerton finally looks up at him.

LEE (CONT'D)

Like someone was junk sick and I don't use junk, I say: "Sick? Really, I don't know why you tell me about your disgusting condition. You might at least have the decency to keep it to yourself. I hate sick people. You must realize how distasteful it is to see you sneezing and yawning and retching. Why don't you go someplace where I don't have to look at you? You've no idea how tiresome you are, or how disgusting. Have you no pride?"

ALLERTON

That isn't fair at all.

LEE

It isn't supposed to be *fair*... Just a routine for your amusement, containing a modicum of truth.

Allerton goes back to eating. Lee stares at him, hurt.

LEE (CONT'D)
Hurry and finish your breakfast.
You'll miss the Salinas bus.

ALLERTON
You're not coming?

LEE
No. I'm going to Quito, remember?

ALLERTON
Oh. Right.

Allerton laughs, dismissively. Lee looks at him, resentful.

INT. AIRPLANE TO QUITO - LATER

Lee sits on the plane, alone.

EXT. QUITO - LATER

Lee walks through the streets. He arrives at the **Instituto Botánico de Quito**.

EXT. GARDENS AT THE BOTANICAL INSTITUTE - LATER

Lee walks through the botanical gardens with DOCTOR HERNANDEZ, 60s, dignified, who is looking at him suspiciously. They pass a variety of magnificent plants.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ
Yage?

Lee nods.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)
And why did you say you were
interested in this plant, Mr--?

LEE
Lee. I read about it in a magazine.
It said that Yage increases
telepathic sensitivity.

Hernandez smiles.

LEE (CONT'D)
It's being used by the Russians in
thought control experiments.
Probably by the CIA as well.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ
Are you with the CIA?

LEE
No.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ
Then why would you be interested in
thought control experiments?

LEE
I'm not. I'm interested in
telepathy.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ
Telepathy?

Lee nods. Hernandez looks him over, sighs.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)
I suspected that it was only a
matter of time before North
Americans like yourself would start
coming to Ecuador seeking out *Yage*.
You think it can *fix* things for
you, open up *pathways* in your mind.
But what you must understand is
that *Yage* is a plant with a very
specific history and usage. The
Indians in the jungle have been
using it for thousands of years.
Sometimes they call it *Ayahausca*.
They cook it as part of a brew for
a tribal ritual. It is not a *drug*
in the sense you understand it. It
is not *recreational* like cocaine or
heroin.

LEE
(scoffs)
There's nothing *recreational* about
heroin.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ
My point is that *Yage* does not
provide a pleasant "trip." It is
not something to be done casually,
without the proper supervision.

LEE
Could you provide me with that
supervision?

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ
Do I look like an Indian in the
jungle?

Lee looks at him. He doesn't.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I can't help you.

Doctor Hernandez stops to look at a collection of orchids.

LEE
How much would I have to pay you
for a map?

Beat. Hernandez looks at him, laughs.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ
I think you misunderstand the
nature of the *telepathy* that can be
achieved with *Yage*.

LEE
Communication without speaking? On
the level of intuition?

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ
Who is it that you're trying so
desperately to *communicate* with?
Your wife perhaps?

LEE
No.

Dr. Hernandez looks at him. Lee looks back, unflinching. Some
sort of understanding passes between them.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ
There is an American Botanist
living a few hours outside of Puyo.
Deep in the jungle. Her name is
Cotter. She's *mad* like you, trying
to develop some medicine. She says
if she succeeds in concentrating
this medicine, she will make a
fortune. Now I hear she is having a
hard time. Perhaps if you pay her a
visit, she can help you. She has a
relationship with the Indians in
the area. If they trust her,
perhaps she can convince them to
help you.

Lee smiles.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

I warn you, though. Yage is not a *portal* to some other place. It is a *mirror*. And when you look into it, you may not like what you see. By the time you realize you're not ready, it may be too late.

Beat. Hernandez sees he hasn't swayed Lee. He sighs.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

Come. I'll draw you the map.

Hernandez starts walking towards his office. Lee, excited, follows.

INT. BUS - A FEW DAYS LATER

Lee and Allerton ride from Ambato to Puyo along the edge of a gorge a thousand feet deep. Waterfalls, forests, and streams run down the roadway as they descend into the lush green valley. Allerton sits in the window seat, looking down.

Suddenly, the bus stops. There's a boulder on the road ahead.

As the bus driver and some other men get out to move the boulder, Allerton looks down at abandoned prefabricated bungalows with the ANNEXIA OIL logo that line the riverbank in the valley below. Lee looks at Allerton: for a moment, he seems translucent: *Lee can see right through him to the view outside the bus.*

EXT. RIVERBOAT - NEXT DAY

Lee and Allerton sip brandy as they pass springs, moss, beautiful clear streams, two hundred foot tall trees. The boat powers upriver, penetrating the jungle stillness with its lawn-mower whine. Allerton snaps pictures of the jungle off the bow of the boat. Lee watches.

EXT. THE JUNGLE - THE NEXT DAY

Torrential rain pours as Lee and Allerton traverse a trail covered with a film of mud. They use canes to steady themselves, moving slowly, carrying heavy backpacks.

EXT. A HUT - LATER

The rain has died down a bit. Lee speaks with a VILLAGER outside of her hut.

LEE
Cotter. *El Doctor*. American.

VILLAGER
(pointing)
En esa dirección.

LEE
Cuanto tiempo?

VILLAGER
(shrugs)
Dos o tres horas.

EXT. JUNGLE - LATER

Allerton and Lee keep walking. They pass what look like they might be ancient ruins, long horizontal stone structures embedded in the ground. They keep moving, using machetes to cut through the thick brush. A SNAKE slithers by on the ground in front of them. They stop, standing still, letting it go by.

All around them are vines with feather-shaped leaves.

EXT. A SMALL THATCHED HUT - NIGHT

Lee and Allerton finally come upon a lone hut with a lamp burning -- the only source of light besides the moon. They look at each other: Lee goes up and knocks on the door.

Beat. They hear some rustling inside, some whispers.

Lee knocks again. More rustling.

Faintly, they both hear a *hissing* sound. Allerton and Lee look at each other, confused. The hissing gets louder. We see it first before Lee: two small GREEN EYES are peering at him, coiled around a post near the door to the hut, right next to his head. He turns and sees a FIVE FOOT VIPER.

Just as he screams and jumps back, the snake lunges into frame, knocking them off the doorstep and back to the grass.

Lee tackles Allerton to the ground, preventing the snake from biting him. They shuffle along the ground as the snake slithers after them. Meanwhile, the door to the hut opens, and a WOMAN IN SILHOUETTE stands, watching, holding a stick.

LEE
HELP!

The woman doesn't move. The snake catches up to Lee and Allerton, raising its body like it's going to strike again.

LEE (CONT'D)

For the love of God, help us!

The woman walks over and smacks the snake nonchalantly with the stick. The snake turns around starts going for the woman, but she holds the stick like a pool cue and pokes the snake right in the eye. The snake hisses angrily, then slithers off into the jungle. Lee and Allerton watch, in shock. They look up at the woman, still in silhouette, holding the stick threateningly.

WOMAN

(with a slight lisp)

Announce yourselves or prepare to suffer a fate worse than whatever that viper was gonna give you.

Lee starts to get up to approach the woman. Woman takes out a pistol from her back pocket and points it at Lee.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Right there is fine.

LEE

(hands out in front)

My name is William Lee. This is Eugene Allerton. We've come a long way to talk with you.

He stands, hands still up, and sees the woman in the light now: mid 50s, small, wiry, somewhat disturbed-looking, standing there pointing the gun. Behind her, leaning against the doorway, there is a YOUNGER ECUADORIAN MAN, looking at all of them. Lee smiles.

LEE (CONT'D)

Doctor Cotter, I presume?

Cotter doesn't say anything.

LEE (CONT'D)

I hear you might be in need of some supplies.

Lee starts to reach for his sack. Cotter cocks the gun.

Lee very slowly rummages through the sack, keeping eye contact with Cotter. He pulls out a bottle of puro and extends it to Cotter. Cotter examines it, looks over at the man in the doorway, then pops open the top, sniffs it. She takes a drink.

She gestures with the bottle over to the Man in the doorway. He comes over, sniffs it, and takes a drink too.

COTTER
 (gun still pointed at
 them.)
 How can I help you?

Lee and Allerton aren't sure what to say. The Ecuadorian man, her HUSBAND, puts his hand on Cotter's shoulder.

COTTER'S HUSBAND
Comamos.

He turns around and heads inside. Beat. Cotter gestures for Lee and Allerton to follow him. They do.

INT. COTTER'S HUT - LATER

Lee and Allerton sit at the table with Cotter and HER HUSBAND, a skinny Ecuadorian man. He also has no teeth.

They eat a meal composed of the supplies Lee and Allerton brought -- some sardines, liver paté -- and the food Cotter and her husband have in the hut -- some sort of fibrous root and bananas from the jungle. They drink the puro cut with some tea. They are all a bit drunk.

Sitting next to Cotter at the table there's a TINY MONKEY, to whom Cotter occasionally feeds food. ANOTHER MONKEY roams about the kitchen, feeding itself from Lee's supplies.

Though the hut itself is rough-hewn and primitive, Cotter and her husband have arranged the spartan inside -- full of books, artifacts, lab equipment -- to approximate some kind of academic domesticity. It is not the chaotic jungle shack of a mad scientist: if you squint, it could almost be the modest university apartment of a worldly professor, which just makes it all the more unsettling that it sits in *this* jungle occupied by *these* odd, haggard people.

On the floor lies a TWO-TOED SLOTH, thrashing about and hissing. Allerton eyes it curiously.

COTTER
 My apologies about the viper. He's
 there for security, of course.

LEE
 Security?

COTTER

From prowlers. Coming after my research. I assume they told you about it in Quito?

LEE

Yes. Of course. Or, well, they didn't give me all the details.

Beat. Cotter looks at them suspiciously.

COTTER

Why did you say you boys came out here?

LEE

We wanted to ask you... about the vegetation in the area.

COTTER

The *vegetation*?

Lee nods. Cotter laughs.

COTTER (CONT'D)

I suppose I *would* be the right person to ask about that.

Cotter's husband laughs too. Cotter drinks a shot of puro, winces.

ALLERTON

Why would people be coming after your research?

COTTER

I'm developing a local anesthetic. To be used in medical procedures. If I'm successful, it will change the face of modern medicine. You've seen one of these before?

Cotter reaches over for a BLOW DART QUIVER, takes out a dart and extends it towards Allerton for him to see. Allerton reaches for it.

COTTER (CONT'D)

Don't touch it. If you accidentally prick yourself, you'll be dead in a matter of seconds.

Allerton retracts his hand, not sure if she's serious.

COTTER (CONT'D)

The Indians out here dip their darts in a substance called *curare*.

She indicates a receptacle with an odd looking substance inside on the top of the quiver.

COTTER (CONT'D)

Been doing it for generations. It's a poison that inhibits the *nicotinic acetylcholine receptor*, causing weakness of the skeletal muscles and eventual death by asphyxiation due to paralysis of the diaphragm. Incredibly effective. But if you can separate the substance's toxic properties from the properties that make it a muscle relaxant, you're left with a product that's cheaper and more effective than anything currently on the market for surgeries, dental procedures, any number of things.

(smiles)

It's how hubby and I plan to become millionaires.

Cotter's husband smiles his toothless smile, offers Allerton some more banana slop - he refuses. Cotter pours another shot.

COTTER (CONT'D)

I'm not the first gringo to have the idea, but I *am* the only one who's gained the trust of the Indians. And that trust makes all the difference.

Lee's eye wanders over the indigenous artifacts that are scattered about the room: beads, a headdress, a blowgun, a shrunken head, a statue of the spirit *Tsunki*. On a counter, he sees a **ceremonial bowl**. Cotter notices Lee staring.

COTTER (CONT'D)

Those are all gifts from the Shuar people. *My tribe*, so to speak. Have you ever seen a real shrunken head?

Cotter gets up to show Lee.

LEE

Can I ask about the bowl?

COTTER
 (stops)
 The bowl?

Lee points to it. Cotter frowns slightly, looks at him.

COTTER (CONT'D)
 It's for a healing ceremony...
 involving a brew that's made from
 one of the plants in the area.

LEE
 Yage?

Beat. Cotter and her husband look at Lee. So does Allerton.

LEE (CONT'D)
 Maybe out here it's called
Ayahuasca? I've heard that the
 Russians and the Americans are
 using it for different experiments.
 The truth is that's why we came out
 here.

Cotter doesn't say anything.

LEE (CONT'D)
 I think there might be a buck in it
 if someone could bring it back to
 the West. I want to investigate the
 properties of this drug.
 (trying to sound casual)
 I'd be willing to take some... as
 an experiment. We both would.

Allerton looks at Lee. Cotter looks back and forth between
 them. Tense, long silence.

COTTER
 Yage is connected to *brujeria*.
 Witchcraft. To get some, you'd have
 to develop a relationship with the
 local *brujo*. It would take you
 years to gain his confidence.

LEE
 Do you have that confidence?

COTTER
 (coldly)
 I've been out here for a long time.

Lee just stares at her. Long, uncomfortable beat.

COTTER'S HUSBAND
(breaking the silence.)
The boys must be tired, no?

COTTER
Yes. I imagine they are.

Cotter smiles, gets up and starts clearing the table.

COTTER (CONT'D)
I thank you again for the supplies.
Let me show you where you'll sleep.

INT. BACK OF THE HUT

Cotter, holding an oil lamp, leads Allerton and Lee up a creaky wooden ladder.

INT. ATTIC OF THE HUT

Cotter shines the lamp on a cot about thirty inches wide made of bamboo slats. Lee and Allerton look at it.

COTTER
I guess you can both make out here.

Lee and Allerton put their things down. Lee lies down on the cot near the wall. Allerton lies down near the outside. Cotter puts down the lamp to set up a net.

LEE
Mosquitoes?

COTTER
No. Vampire bats.

She zips it up.

COTTER (CONT'D)
Goodnight.

Cotter leaves. Lee and Allerton listen to her go down the ladder. When she gets to her husband they say something inaudible to each other. They both giggle. She turns out the lamp, then turns out the other lamp downstairs, plunging them into darkness. Allerton and Lee are illuminated only by the moonlight that pours in through a hole in the roof. Lee turns to Allerton, hushed.

LEE
She has it, don't you think?

Allerton shrugs.

LEE (CONT'D)

We're close.

Allerton gives just the faintest smile, then turns on his side and closes his eyes. Lee's eyes stay open, staring up at the stars, excited.

DARKNESS

The sound of heavy footsteps on creaky wood...

INT. ATTIC OF THE HUT - MORNING

Lee opens his eyes and sees Cotter, standing above him in front of the hole in the roof, backlit by the sun, holding a .22 rifle.

He looks at her, then looks for Allerton, who's not there.

COTTER

Your friend's already up having coffee with hubby.

She throws the rifle to Lee. Lee, startled, catches it.

COTTER (CONT'D)

Why don't you take this and explore the area today. Try and kill us something we can eat tonight.

Cotter leaves. Lee looks at the rifle.

EXT. THE JUNGLE - LATER

Lee and Allerton walk surrounded again by *vines with feather-shaped green leaves*. The jungle seems devoid of animal life.

ALLERTON

Cotter says the Indians have cleaned most of the game out of the area. They all have shotguns from the money they made working for Annexia.

LEE

(hears something)
Was that squawking?

Allerton looks at him, unsure. Lee heads in that direction.

LEE (CONT'D)

I'm going to try to shoot it.

ALLERTON

What is it?

LEE

How should I know? It's alive,
isn't it?

Lee pushes through the undergrowth beside the trail. He trips on a vine and falls into a saw-toothed plant. When he tries to get up, a hundred sharp points catch his clothes and stick into his flesh. He screams out in pain.

LEE (CONT'D)

Gene! Help me!

Allerton rushes over and cuts him free with the machete.

INT. COTTER'S HUT - LATER

Lee's leg is up on a chair as Cotter painfully removes needles from his skin. He winces every time Cotter pulls one out, looking over at Allerton, who sits with Cotter's husband at the other end of the hut, playing with one of the monkeys. Cotter eyes them both.

COTTER

Tell the truth now. Are you boys
really just here for Yage?

Lee just looks at her.

COTTER (CONT'D)

I appreciate the supplies you
brought, but if I welcome you into
my home and I find you trying to
run off with my research, I'll kill
you and dump you in the jungle. No
one will miss you out here.

LEE

(laughs)

Doc, With all due respect, I
couldn't give two shits about your
research. I already forgot
everything you told me about it.

Cotter looks him over for a long beat. She roughly pulls a needle from Lee's leg. Lee yelps in pain.

COTTER

You know it doesn't get you *high*,
right? Not like you're used to.

(off Lee's look.)

I'm a *medical doctor*. I can spot a
junkie from a mile away.

LEE

I'm not interested in getting high.

COTTER

Then what are you interested in?

LEE

Telepathy.

Beat. Cotter looks over at Allerton. Lee looks over too.
Cotter sees the way Lee looks at him.

COTTER

There's this Shuar Myth, *The Fox
and the Jaguar*. You ever hear of
it?

Lee looks at her, shakes his head.

COTTER (CONT'D)

Real old story. You boys reminded
me of it. There's this *fox*, right?
And he deceives a jaguar into
making love the way two males of a
species make love. When the jaguar
looks behind him and realizes
what's happening, he gets this big
smile on his face and he chases the
fox all around the jungle and bites
him. Doesn't kill him or anything --
just kind of *gives him a nibble*.

Lee looks at her, unsure what to make of it.

COTTER (CONT'D)

You see, the Indians out here have
no real *conception* of the sort of
thing that's going on between the
two of you. The Spanish tried to
convince them a couple centuries
ago that it was *evil* and all that
nonsense, but the idea never really
caught on. For them, it's more
about being a *trickster*. Like
children playing a game.

Lee doesn't say anything. Cotter looks over at Allerton, then back at Lee.

COTTER (CONT'D)
So which one of you is the fox and
which one is the jaguar?

Beat. Lee smiles. So does Cotter.

COTTER (CONT'D)
I'll help you.

Lee looks at her. Cotter picks up a green feather-shaped leaf from a table nearby -- the same kind that's on all the vines in the jungle: Lee instantly recognizes it as the leaf he tripped over in the jungle earlier.

COTTER (CONT'D)
Banisteriopsis caapi. The Indians
call it Yage.

Lee looks at the leaf, transfixed.

EXT. COTTER'S HUT - THE NEXT DAY, DUSK

As the sun is setting, Lee and Allerton walk up to the hut from the jungle. Lee limps a little from his injury the day before. He leans on Allerton up the hill. As they approach, they can see that there's a fire burning outside -- a strong, strange smell wafts through the air. Lee and Allerton sniff it. Faintly, they hear chanting. They stop and look at each other.

Allerton sees that Lee is suddenly nervous, apprehensive. Allerton laughs, shakes his head, and keeps heading towards the hut. Lee follows.

EXT. COTTER'S HUT - LATER

The "bowl" Lee noticed earlier sits on a bed of sticks above a small fire made of forest logs. Inside burns a mixture of what look like twigs, roots, and the leaves from the vines we saw in the jungle.

Cotter, who now wears an enormous wicker mask with holes only for the eyes, waves around a branch of the vine, chanting in the Shuar language.

Lee and Allerton sit on the ground with Cotter's husband, who also wears a mask.

Cotter keeps chanting, mixing the brew, which is now bubbling brownish/grey, until, finally, she stops. She lifts the mask to smell the brew, looks up at everyone.

Lee and Allerton watch as Cotter starts to grab four cups -- two little ones, two big, and fills them up with the brew.

She looks at them, gestures for them to come forward.

Allerton and Lee look at each other. They both get up and approach Cotter. She hands them each a cup. She hands one to her husband. They all stand there holding them.

COTTER

(chanting in Shuar)

*I, I, I, I, I, I, I / I am like
Tsunki / When I take Yage / My body
becomes cold / I, I, I, I, I / I am
sitting with Tsunki*

Cotter looks at the group. She downs her cup under her mask. So does her husband. Allerton and Lee look at each other. They down theirs.

EXT. AWAY FROM COTTER'S HUT - HALF AN HOUR LATER

Lee and Allerton sit on the grass a bit away from the hut, watching the sun set over the trees. Behind them in the distance, we can see Cotter and her husband sitting by the fire, still wearing their masks. It's quiet, peaceful. Lee turns to Allerton.

LEE

You feel anything?

ALLERTON

No. You?

Lee shakes his head. Allerton looks over towards the fire.

ALLERTON (CONT'D)

I think we just drank a bunch of
leaves and twigs from the ground...

LEE

Yeah... You might be right.

Lee looks down, disappointed. Allerton looks at him, sympathetic. Lee sighs, looks over at the fire.

LEE (CONT'D)

You think the doc and her husband
are trying to go to bed with us?

ALLERTON
 (laughs)
 What? All together?

Lee nods.

ALLERTON (CONT'D)
 I don't think the doc would go for
 it.

LEE
 No?

Allerton shakes his head.

LEE (CONT'D)
 Yeah... I guess you're right.
 (looks towards the hut,
 raises an eyebrow)
 The husband though... That's one
 horny bitch if I ever saw one.

They both laugh, hard. Lee sighs.

LEE (CONT'D)
 Let's get out of here, shall we?

ALLERTON
 Yeah. Let's.

Lee gets up and stretches his arms. He yawns, big, when,
 suddenly, *something strange happens:*

A fleshy balloon starts to form from his mouth.

A look of total terror flashes across Lee's eyes as the
 balloon gets bigger and bigger. Allerton sees it too, eyes
 full of the same terror, until he realizes that **he too is
 forming a fleshy balloon from his mouth.** They look at each
 other, scared, amazed as the balloons stretch and stretch
 until... Lee's *pops*.

A *spray of vomit* falls onto the forest ground in between him
 and Allerton, and in the center of the puddle, **Lee's heart,**
 detached from his body, is **beating** on the ground.

Allerton's balloon bursts too, and **his beating heart flops
 onto the ground next to Lee's.**

They look at each other, eyes wide like animals as their
 hearts lie beating in the vomit puddles between them. **The
 trip has begun.**

EXT. THE HUT - MOMENTS LATER

Lee and Allerton stumble back to where Cotter and her husband are sitting peacefully Indian style on the ground in front of the fire. Around them, the jungle has descended into night -- the fire that cooked the brew is the only light illuminating them, and it's now burned down significantly. Cotter sees the looks in their eyes, nods to her husband. He gets up and helps them both onto the ground.

Lee and Allerton look at the fire. We see Lee's POV: every flicker of flame makes a SOUND -- like a chord being played on the piano. Lee listens to it, transfixed. He looks over at Allerton: Allerton also listens to the fire.

As Lee keeps looking at him, he can see that Allerton's body is becoming *translucent*.

Lee's eyes trace Allerton's neck, ears, shoulders, landing on his thin hands, now almost completely see-through. Lee looks down at his own hands: he too is becoming translucent.

He looks up and sees that Allerton is looking at him. Their eyes lock: a pathway is opened between them, completely overwhelming. **Allerton speaks but his lips do not move.**

ALLERTON'S MIND

I'm not queer.

The words hit Lee. He just looks at Allerton. The fire *flickers through* them both, still making sounds like music.

ALLERTON'S MIND (CONT'D)

Lee. I'm not queer.

LEE'S MIND

I know.

ALLERTON'S MIND

I'm disembodied.

They just look at each other, open, both becoming phantoms as the fire keeps flickering through them, burning down to its last embers.

EXT. THE HUT - A FEW HOURS LATER

The fire now completely extinguished, it is dark outside, the only light coming from the stars. Faintly illuminated by the moonlight, we see Cotter and her husband still sitting there, looking at something. Cotter rests her head on her husband's shoulder, sweetly. We hear strange, animal sounds.

In the space where the moonlight hits the dirt, Lee and Allerton are rolling around naked: somewhere between wrestling and making love. It's intensely erotic: violent, but tender -- less like two animals mating and more like two bodies thrashing against each other. Lee and Allerton start to disappear into each other, until, eventually, they inhabit one body, thrashing in the moonlight.

Cotter, watching, lifts her mask as if to see better. We can see by her face that she is rapt. So is her husband.

DARKNESS

A burst of flame from a match being lit. Cotter uses the match to light a lamp, illuminating Lee and Allerton, who are each lying languid, naked in different corners of the small hut. They look at the light, then at each other. The trip is over.

Weakly, they start to sit up. Cotter brings them their clothes.

INT. BACK OF THE HUT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Lee and Allerton climb silently, a little wobbly, up the wooden ladder.

INT. ATTIC OF THE HUT - LATER

They lie staring up at the ceiling. Long, long silence. Lee turns to Allerton.

LEE

Gene --

Allerton says nothing. Lee reaches over to touch his shoulder -- Allerton turns his body away from Lee and closes his eyes.

ALLERTON

Go to sleep.

Lee just lies there, shocked, frozen, tears starting to form in his eyes. We pan to Allerton, whose eyes are closed: he too has tears forming, about to fall.

EXT. THE HUT - THE NEXT MORNING

Allerton drinks a cup of coffee and eats a banana on the porch with Cotter, who feeds the monkey on his shoulder.

COTTER

You boys should stay a couple more days. For most people, the first time's just an introduction: *the opening of a door*. But for you two it was... *something else*. It'd be a shame not to see where it might take you.

Allerton shakes his head, not looking up at her.

ALLERTON

I need to be getting back.

Cotter looks him over, shrugs.

In the background, Lee emerges from the hut, carrying some of their things and putting them out on the ground, getting them ready to leave.

He nods at Cotter. Cotter nods back.

Allerton doesn't turn to look at Lee. Cotter notices. She leans in and whispers:

COTTER

What are you so afraid of?

Allerton looks up at her, eyes piercing. She laughs.

COTTER (CONT'D)

Door's already open. Can't close it now. All you can do is look away. But why would you?

Allerton keeps looking at her. Cotter smiles her toothless smile.

COTTER (CONT'D)

You should've seen yourself last night.

Allerton just looks at her, disturbed, as she keeps smiling.

EXT. THE JUNGLE - LATER

Lee and Allerton walk.

Lee looks at Allerton. Allerton doesn't look back. Lee focuses on Allerton's thin hands: for a moment, they appear see-through. Allerton turns to look at Lee: his body snaps back to complete solidity. Lee looks away. They keep walking, descending back towards the city.

Suddenly, Lee looks up as if he's heard a sound coming from the sky. We pan up, and immediately the sky turns to **night**, full of stars.

Hold. Sounds of wildlife, insects, breeze.

Almost imperceptibly, a tiny dot begins to fall from the sky. It gets bigger and bigger until we see that it is **Lee**, falling slowly.

He descends until he lands on his feet in...

EXT. PANAMA CITY - DAY

SUPER: TWO YEARS LATER.

Lee walks, alone, now in Panama, Allerton's camera slung around his neck, passing all the places they passed together.

The city is sweltering. Wet heat and smog. Lee passes pimps, prostitutes, beggars, merchants. He makes eye contact with everyone he sees: it's overwhelming, intense, as if he's telepathically communicating with all of them at once.

EXT. THE STREET - EVENING

Lee walks down the main drag. A PIMP seizes his arm.

PIMP

I got a fourteen year old girl,
Jack. Puerto Rican. How's about it?

Lee just looks at the guy, completely cold. The look stops the pimp in his tracks. Pimp lets go of his arm. Lee keeps walking.

INT. AIRPLANE TO MEXICO CITY - NEXT DAY

Lee sits in an aisle seat. He looks past the TOURIST next to him, trying to get a glimpse of the city which is just coming into view. Lee looks down at the guy's hands. They look oddly similar to Allerton's. Guy looks at him. Lee looks away.

EXT. SHIP AHOY - EVENING

Lee walks up to the bar, looks at it.

LEE

Easy now. Cool. Cool.

He heads inside.

INT. SHIP AHOY - CONTINUOUS

The place has been redecorated - it's almost empty. Lee looks at a spot where there's a bullet hole still lodged in the wall from when he shot the mouse. He looks over at the table where Allerton used to play chess with Mary, now replaced by a pool table. At the bar, a large man in his 40s sits drinking a beer. Lee approaches. The guy turns around and sees him: It's Joe Guidry. Joe smiles.

LATER

Lee and Joe are a few drinks in.

LEE

What about Johnny White? Russ Morton? Pete Crowley? Ike Scranton?

JOE GUIDRY

Los Angeles, Alaska, Idaho... Most everybody is gone since you went away. Or, at least, nobody hangs around here anymore. Not since Tom sold the place.

Beat. Joe takes a sip of his drink, looks at Lee.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

Anybody else you'd like to ask me about?

Lee just looks at him.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

No one?

Lee still says nothing.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

A kid named Allerton? Maybe?

Lee looks at him.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

It's why you came back, isn't it?

LEE

I was getting around to it.

JOE GUIDRY

He went down to South America or
some place. With an army colonel.

LEE

How long ago?

JOE GUIDRY

About six months. Allerton went
along as guide. They were going to
sell the car in Guatemala. A '48
Cadillac. I felt there was
something not quite right about the
deal, but Allerton never told me
anything definite. You know how he
is. Nobody's heard from him since
he left. He said something about
joining you down there.

Lee looks at him, taken aback -- this is the first he's
hearing of it.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

He never said anything to you about
it?

Lee shakes his head. Guidry shrugs, looks him over. He
notices Allerton's camera.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

When did you get this?

Lee doesn't say anything. Guidry laughs.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

You know what happened to *my*
camera?

LEE

Stolen --

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

Stolen by this Colombian kid
I was getting acquainted
with. Took a bunch of my
socks too. Little shit...

Guidry sighs, wistful. Lee just looks down at the table.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

So what's the story? You making it
with anyone these days?

Lee just looks at him, shakes his head. Guidry laughs.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

Well, the *Chimu's* still here. Why don't we go check out the local nightlife?

Beat. Lee shakes his head. Guidry sighs.

JOE GUIDRY (CONT'D)

Yeah, I'm not really feeling up for it either...

(smiles, joking.)

Green Lantern?

LEE

Those guys are still here?

JOE GUIDRY

All of them, if you can believe it.

(beat.)

Well, except for Dumé. He's gone.

LEE

He died?

JOE GUIDRY

No, no. He just had to go back to Virginia to take care of his mother.

LEE

Oh... Funny to think about him having a *mother*.

JOE GUIDRY

Well he doesn't anymore. She died.

LEE

Right.

They both knock their drinks back. Long beat. Finally, Guidry looks at him.

JOE GUIDRY

You look good, Lee.

LEE

(surprised.)

I do?

JOE GUIDRY

(considers.)

No. But it's good to see you.

LEE

Yeah. You too.

They look at each other for a moment. Guidry pats him on the shoulder, then signals to the bartender for another round.

EXT. AMSTERDAM AVENUE PARK - LATER, SUNSET

Lee walks, drunk, camera round his neck. There is a slight breeze -- the blue flowers blow around the ground.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

In the same room where Lee took the young Mexican man, he lies in the darkness, sleeping. The window is slightly open, curtains billow in the breeze. Outside, we hear the nocturnal sounds of Mexico City: a shooting, a fight, some catcalling.

Behind Lee's closed eyelids, the eyes flutter with activity. He's clearly having an intense dream.

Sound from the Mexico City streets outside starts to mingle curiously with distinct sounds from New York, New Orleans, St. Louis -- taxis honking in Times Square, a Mardi Gras parade, a Cardinals game -- until suddenly, *all sound from the outside stops*. So does the breeze.

Lee's eyes open. He looks around, confused by the silence and the stillness, until he notices something that makes him sit up, confused, curious.

On the little desk in the hotel room there appears to be a **miniature city**, like a diorama that takes up the entire table. Lee scrunches his face, gets up and approaches it in the silence. He looks at it curiously. The miniature city is an amalgamation of different cities: Mexico City, New York, New Orleans, St. Louis. His eye settles on a street. He leans in closer, looking at it. He starts to hum "Johnny's So Long at the Fair." Sounds of the street start to creep in, getting louder and louder until, suddenly, *we're there*.

INT./EXT. HOTEL ROOM/CITY STREETS - SAME TIME

Lee watches as a miniature version of himself is now walking through the nowhere/everywhere city. We cut back and forth between BIG LEE looking down at the miniature from the hotel room and LITTLE LEE on the ground as he passes: the capsized SS Normandie in New York's pier 88, an old-fashioned Milk Bar in Times Square, and finally, a row of Penny Arcade peep holes in what looks like a construction wall along a street.

Lee approaches an empty spot with a viewing hole and looks through it. His eyes go wide. We see what he sees:

Allerton, floating in a void, his back to Lee. Lee watches, spellbound, as Allerton slowly turns around. *Rays of light* protrude from Allerton's eye sockets. He looks directly at Lee -- the light from Allerton's eyes blinds him.

Suddenly Lee is back on the street. He walks past a strange amalgamation of buildings from different cities until he looks up at one high rise -- a hotel. One window is open, a curtain flapping in the wind.

In the Mexican hotel room, Big Lee leans in to look through the open window.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Big Lee's enormous eye peers in through the window as Little Lee walks slowly down the hallway. Faintly, Little Lee hears *hissing* coming from one of the rooms. He heads over towards it, confused. The door to the room is cracked slightly open.

INT. THE HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lee opens the door to find a **snake eating its own tail** on the red tile floor. The snake is *crying* as it eats itself. Tears run down its skin. Lee looks at it curiously, then looks up at the bed.

Allerton is lying there, half his body under a pane of glass.

The wind shifts in the room and suddenly Allerton is sitting up, looking at Lee, only his torso visible: his bottom half has curiously disappeared. Something passes between them. They look at each other the way they looked at each other in the hut in the jungle. They are *telepathically communicating*, but this time we don't hear what they say.

Allerton stands up, reaches for a tequila glass sitting on the counter, and places it on top of his head. He looks at Lee. Lee looks back at him. They understand each other completely.

Slowly, Lee draws a **pistol** from his pocket and aims it at the glass. He stands there, arm extended, finger on the trigger.

Allerton stands, balancing the glass, completely still. Long beat as they just stare into each other's eyes.

BANG.

Little Lee pulls the trigger. The bullet hits Allerton right in the center of the forehead: he drops to the ground with a thud, instantly lifeless.

Lee lets out an involuntary groan. The tequila glass drops from Allerton's head and rolls across the floor towards Little Lee.

Lee looks at Allerton, shocked, numb, his arm still extended, pointing the gun, smoke still sputtering from the barrel.

He looks down at the shot glass, face full of anguish. It rolls, getting closer and closer but never arriving at his feet -- an endless, asymptotic approach.

He puts the still smoking gun back in his pants and approaches Allerton, on the ground, kneeling down almost as if to revive him. He looks at the hole in Allerton's head, a small trickle of blood still pouring out. He kisses Allerton's lifeless lips, sweetly, passionately, eyes closed. When he opens them, **Allerton is gone**, disappeared from the floor.

Around the room, all traces of him have disappeared as well. The room looks untouched: the bed is made, the closets empty.

Lee stands up, dazed, looking around. He turns and faces the door. Beat.

He goes to open it and catches sight of his hand on the doorknob: it is becoming *translucent*. He looks at it curiously -- his entire arm is becoming see-through. He turns the knob and opens the door. Wind blows through the room.

He goes to exit --

ALLERTON'S MIND

Lee.

He turns around, quickly, breathlessly, but no one is there. Not even Lee himself. His body too has disappeared completely.

Wind keeps blowing through the empty room until, suddenly, the door swings shut. The curtains settle back, one curtain trailing inside the window as if someone had taken it off and tossed it there.

INT. HOTEL ROOM IN MEXICO CITY - SAME TIME

Big Lee backs away from the miniature -- and we see now that he has aged dramatically: he is a *thin, very old man*, looking uncannily like Burroughs at 83, the age of his death.

He shakes a bit, perhaps from junk sickness, perhaps just from old age.

Outside, through the window, we see that the sun is just starting to rise over Mexico City.

Lee, as the old man, goes and shakily sits down on the bed. He looks over at the desk: the miniature is gone. He sits there, alone, thinking. He lies down on the bed and closes his eyes. Long beat in the silence, stillness, tight on Lee lying there with his eyes closed.

From out of frame, we hear a body next to Lee turning over.

A leg -- *Allerton's* -- flops over onto Lee's body.

Old man Lee feels it but doesn't open his eyes -- doesn't dare move a muscle. He just lies there, completely still, trying not to shake so as not to wake Allerton and have him move away.

END.