

TFL

TorinoFilmLab
Training Development Funding



AdaptLab 2013

Dark Roses
Marianne Hansen

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DARK ROSES

original feature film treatment by Marianne Hansen

adapted from "Buster's Ears" by Maria Ernestam

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TREATMENT
DARK ROSES

adapted from the novel "Buster's Ears" by Maria Ernestam

**Present time (Eva aged 56) is written in italic. The past (Eva aged 7-18) is in regular font.*

A shovel digs into the ground. It is dark. The outline of a young woman grunts and groans as she works her way through mud and dirt. The rain makes her hair and clothes cling to her body. She might be crying, but it is hard to tell with all the water.

A clothes bag is dragged from inside the cottage into the garden and dumped into the hole. Dirt is piled on top of it. The frenzy stops when the hole is filled and a small mound has formed. The young woman plants roses, neatly in rows. She surveys her work, exhausted and wet.

A bird's eye view reveals the mound to be a rectangle, in a coffin-like size.

EVA (VO): I was seven years old when I decided to kill my mother.

Screen card: June 13th.

A birthday party at a country cottage. EVA (56) celebrates with friends and family. We see glimpses of faces: Eva's daughter SUZANNE (38) complains about her estranged husband who has left her for an older woman. Eva's three grandchildren play - two of them, PER and MARI, are rowdy, while the youngest, ANNA CLARA (7), sits in a corner and reads. GUDRUN and SIXTEN, friends of Eva, seem at odds. When Gudrun talks, Sixten ignores her. Another couple, PETRA and HANS, seems equally estranged. Petra, overweight and unhappy, stuffs herself with food, whilst Hans is busy leering and salivating at other women. He even makes a pass at Eva. An animated IRENE SÖRENSON (80) entertains the crowd with her tall tales. She loves being the centre of attention. She wears a lot of make-up and a gaudy dress. SVEN (74), the man of the house, kisses Eva on the cheek and helps greet the many guests. He serves food and drinks, engages in smalltalk and thoroughly enjoys himself. Eva, on the other hand, appears withdrawn and aloofly polite. She seems to tolerate, not enjoy, the presence of so many people gathered in her honour.

Eva opens presents. She receives a diary from her granddaughter. It has roses on the cover. Eva holds it with trembling hands. Anna Clara smiles: "You've been wanting one for a long time, because you need to go under."

EVA (VO): Have I told you about the whales?

Whales swim in a vast blue ocean. First only one. Then two. Strikingly beautiful creatures.

EVA (VO) cont'd: The whales in the Arctic Ocean? How they make love to each other? We human beings walk upright. We straighten our backs and lift our eyes to the heavens. We move our feet, one after the other, again and again and again. Towards our goal. Don't forget. Whales in the Arctic Ocean fight the waves with their fins which guide their massive bodies wherever they want to go. They thrust forth with their great heads, lying down as they move. Don't forget that either. When humans make love, they also choose to lie down. They look into their beloved's eyes and examine his or her innermost thoughts, discover the unsaid and transform it into reality. They have hands that are no longer needed for moving forward, but for touching each other. Human beings can be united in something larger than themselves when lying down to make love. Even this is important for you not to forget. When two whales encounter each other in love, they do not lie down. Two great beings raise themselves up from the water, their wet breath spraying forth in an explosive tribute to lust. The whales in the Arctic Ocean make love standing up and therefore cannot look each other in the eyes, since their eyes are on the sides of their massive heads and looking backwards. So they cannot look up at the stars splashed across the heavens, nor study each other's secrets with their gazes, nor embrace with their fins. But their passion is powerful enough to cause the vibration of hundreds of tons. How can we humans imagine how encompassing and eternal this lust must be, how vast this union of love? Once the whales finally glide apart, they can surrender back into the Arctic Ocean, fulfilled and surrounded by water. The whales reawaken to new life by going under.

Eva stares at the first page in her new diary. It is the middle of the night and she is in her nightgown, sitting by her desk with a glass of wine beside her. Her office is sparse and empty. The diary seems to torment her, mocking her with its empty page. She is unable to write anything. She closes the book again.

Sven and Eva have breakfast on the patio, next to a beautiful rose garden. It is sunny. Sven is buried behind a newspaper, Eva is buried behind a magazine. He informs her that they need to uproot her rose garden in order to put down new water pipes. Eva will have none of it. Sven says it will have to happen sooner or later. Eva says it need not happen in their lifetime. Sven says it actually does. Eva says no it doesn't. Sven lets the issue rest, avoiding further conflict. "You will not touch my rose garden, Sven", Eva reiterates. Sven does not respond.

Eva tends to her rose garden. She cares a great deal for it; she carefully prunes, waters, and talks to the blossoms.

Nighttime. Eva cannot sleep again, and sneaks out to write in her new diary. Armed with more wine, she is able to put pen to paper this time. She writes: "I was seven years old when I decided to kill my mother..."

EVA (VO): Britta had come into my life a few months earlier...

Music plays inside a nice Stockholm home. A little girl in a sailor suit, EVA (7), dances the twist with her Mamma. She has reddish blonde hair and green eyes. Right now those green eyes are smiling, but often times they exude a penetrating, solemn, dark stare.

MAMMA (25), a sparkly, beautiful blonde, laughs at her. Not *with* her, but *at* her, and this soon dawns on Eva who stops dancing. PAPPA (25), a somewhat nerdy, insecure man, commends her for her efforts, but Mamma can only comment on how inept she is. MRS LUNDSTRÖM, the cleaning lady, tidies up after last night's guests. Mamma tells her off for being slow, as their new guest is arriving soon. "Why so many guests?" Mrs Lundström sighs.

The doorbell rings. Eva runs upstairs and hides. Mamma yells at her to come back. The parents open the door, it is BRITTA (15) a sturdy, hearty country girl who is to be Eva's new nanny. Eva can hear their voices, and slowly she is lured back downstairs, where Mamma introduces her with "my daughter is a bit strange" and "she is a slow eater". Britta smiles and gives Eva a wheat bun shaped like a bunny and Eva takes an instant liking to her. Mamma lights a cigarette and observes the situation with some reserve.

They proceed to dinner. Mamma tells Britta what and how she wants things done. Britta listens and nods. Mamma then tells Britta that Eva is a clumsy dancer and needs exercise. We

hear Mamma whisper discreetly to Pappa that "Britta seems a bit simple, but if she does a good job, then okay". Britta is a dreamer; she admires Marilyn Monroe, longs to be famous and wants to buy thin nylons, because it is glamorous. She smiles her sparkly smile, and Eva is under her spell. Mamma lights another cigarette and observes the situation with further reserve. A hint of jealousy, perhaps?

EVA (VO): I fell asleep thinking that the time ahead was going to be truly happy. And in fact I was happy...

Britta and Eva sit in Eva's bedroom doing homework. Britta compliments Eva on her handwriting, and Eva proudly proclaims it is identical to her Mamma's. Britta hugs Eva and they roll around on the bed, laughing and tickling each other. Eva asks if Britta misses home, and Britta animatedly tells her about her life back home in Norrland and her dream of becoming a movie star.

EVA (VO): I loved her. I loved her because she told me about her dreams as if I meant something to her...

Britta and Eva paint pictures, bake, play in the snow and drink hot chocolate in a fancy café where Britta hopes to be discovered.

EVA (VO): I didn't know how to describe unconditional love, I only knew how it tasted, like hot chocolate with whipped cream...

Britta and Eva walk in a forest where Eva accidentally trips Britta up and Britta falls and scrapes her nose. Eva fears Britta is angry with her, but Britta laughs: "My nose is too big anyway and it is good it is getting filed down if I'm going to be a movie star". Eva is so grateful, she throws her arms around Britta who in turn tells her: "You are the best thing ever. Don't forget that!"

Mamma is getting ready for a party, and Eva, watching her get ready, blurts out: "I think Britta is so nice." Mamma does not take kindly to this. "Why is she so nice? Because she always has fresh buns from the oven?" "No, but..." Eva is at a loss for words. "Then why is she better than me? Is it because I'm no idiot country girl that you don't think I'm nice? What kind of mothers are better than me? Is it those normal, dull housewives? Maybe it's because I make so much money, is that why I'm not nice? Maybe you want Britta to be your mother?"

Eva tries to interject: "But Mamma..." Mamma's stare has grown dark and cold. Eva is reduced to tears.

EVA (VO): Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. It was the beginning of the end...

At dinner Mamma starts to criticise Britta. Where Pappa praises Britta for making Eva happy, Mamma finds faults. She is too slow, not thorough enough, behaves too silly with Eva. Britta nods and apologises and promises to do better, but the criticism has no effect on her. She looks at Eva and beams her a smile. As if the world only consisted of the two of them.

EVA (VO): That evening Britta and I did something forbidden...

Britta and Eva sneak into Mamma's room and play dress-up. "What do you think I should wear today?" Britta asks coquettishly. "Britta, you're going to stay with me, aren't you?" Eva looks worried. "Of course I'm going to stay with you", Britta replies without hesitation. The two clean up after themselves, but things are not put back in correct order. They fall asleep in each other's arms.

The next day, the doorbell rings, but it is not Britta. Eva looks at her mother. "Britta is not coming", is all she says. "Is she sick?" Eva does not understand. "No, she's not coming. Not today. Not ever". "Where's Britta?! Why isn't she coming?! Eva panics, as Mamma hovers over her. "She's never coming again. Because of you. And I'm sure you best know why."

EVA (VO): I learned to recognise the stench of betrayal. Since I could not forget Britta, there was a problem with me.

Mamma interviews a new nanny with Eva next to her. "My daughter is a bit strange", Mamma tells her. Eva runs upstairs to her room, and eats up the bread bunny that Britta had given her when they first met and which she had saved. Her dark, solemn stare consumes her.

EVA (VO): In this fight, only one of us could survive. The wheels had been set in motion, but one more thing had to happen, before I would make my decision...

The same dark, solemn stare consumes Eva at her desk. Several pages of diary has been written and Eva's hand trembles slightly. She downs the rest of her wine and closes the book. A knock on the door. Sven peeks his head in, "Are you still writing?" Eva stares at him

blankly. "Yes." "Are you not tired?" "No", Eva curtly replies. Sven nods apologetically, "Okay. Don't exhaust yourself." He closes the door and leaves her alone.

Screen card: June 20th.

Eva receives a phone call from Irene Sörenson, an elderly lady she helps care for, who constantly complains and abuses Eva's kindness and hospitality. Irene demands a visit and commands Eva to bring whipping cream for the homemade pie she has made.

So Eva visits her, and it is clear that Eva's motivation for maintaining a relationship with Irene is out of self-punitive reasons. The entire visit consists of Irene complaining to Eva and Eva nodding and listening and accepting verbal abuse. She does, however, get to eat some homemade rhubarb pie with whipped cream that she paid for and whipped.

Eva goes home and promptly receives a phone call from Irene who accuses her of stealing a necklace. Sven overhears the conversation and yells to Eva from the other room to cut Irene out of her life. "When has she ever so much as given you a Christmas present?"

It is Christmastime. Eva and Mamma bakes in the kitchen. Ginger cookies and saffron buns. They make candle holders from paste dough and sew lavender pouches.

EVA (VO): We were most whole as a family at Christmastime, Mamma, Pappa and I. Mamma enjoyed making holiday food and decorating the house. It was also the only time of the year she talked to me without flipping through a fashion magazine or skimming through paperwork at the same time. When her hands were covered with dough, she couldn't read.

GRANDPA and GRANDMA (Mamma's parents) arrive. Hugs and kisses all around.

Christmas Eve morning. Breakfast is on the table. Eva emerges and sees her grandparents and Pappa. But no Mamma. Eva's smile fades. She goes to Mamma's room and finds her in bed. She is not feeling well and shoos Eva away.

At church, Eva cannot focus on the service. Everyone else is happy, there's the baby Jesus, and angels, and joy to the world, and Eva is miserable.

Back home, Mamma has barely managed to get dressed. Grandma and grandpa takes over the Christmas dinner with help from Pappa. The ham goes in the oven and a few hours later, dinner is served on a beautifully laid out table. Pappa offers spiced vodka, and Mamma drinks one after another and returns to life, laughing and proclaiming it is pleasant to finally relax. Then she complains that she doesn't have a new dress and, unlike everyone else, has to sit around in "old rags".

Christmas presents. Presents include books for everyone and a marble Virgin Mary statue for Eva, to which Mamma snorts, "Good Lord, just like your father's parents to send something this ugly". Mamma on the other hand gets most of the presents: Chocolate, perfume, a silk scarf and a fur coat from Pappa. Eva presents Mamma with her gift. "A necklace! Very nice!", Mamma exclaims. She struggles with the clasp. "Eva, I don't want this necklace. It's broken." The clasp is indeed broken. And so is Eva's heart. "I can exchange it!", but Mamma has already moved on to a new present. Eva grips the necklace in her hand, squeezing hard.

Pappa blindfolds Mamma and leads her to the garage where they present her with a new, state-of-the-art washing machine. Mamma's pristine smile fades the second she sees it. "A washing machine. That's what I'm looking at, right?" Pappa is all smiles. "Of course it's a washing machine. Exactly the one you said you wanted. And you're worth it. I mean, we're all worth it, since this is a present for the household, you know that we do our part, but this is a bit more luxurious for all of us-" Mamma interjects: "Luxurious? It's supposed to be a luxury to wash clothes? Is that what you were thinking? That I wash clothes on Christmas Eve?" Pappa tries to interrupt, but Mamma won't let him. "Do you think that Björn would give Madelene a washing machine for Christmas? No, he bought a diamond ring because she was having a difficult time at work and needed something to perk her up." Grandma comes to the rescue. "You pull yourself together now. They meant well." Grandma's attempt to calm Mamma down unfortunately has the opposite effect. Mamma screams so that spittle flies from her mouth. "Oh that's just great, you're taking their side!" Eva watches her mother rage on with a heavy heart. She has gripped the necklace so hard, that her hand now bleeds. Grandpa mumbles, "I can't take much more of this." Mamma hears the comment, which is the final drop. She storms off. Eva yells: "Please, Mamma! Come back!" But Mamma is gone. Merry Christmas.

Eva lies in her bed, stiff like a corpse, and her Pappa, followed by her grandma, then her grandpa, all come in one by one to wish her goodnight and offer her words of encouragement:

"Everything will work out, you'll see, Christmas isn't over yet, she'll come back soon, for sure, tomorrow Grandpa will make his traditional fish dish..."

Christmas morning. Everyone is gathered around the breakfast table, including Mamma, when Eva enters. She notices her mother is wearing a beautiful, filigree necklace encrusted with gems. "That's grandma's necklace! It was a wedding present from grandpa!" Mamma smiles, caressing the gems, "Grandma gave it to me. She wanted me to have it for Christmas". Grandma adds, "I might as well give it away with warm hands instead of cold ones." Eva smiles sharply and sits down. They proceed to eat breakfast in apparent happiness.

EVA (VO): How is it be possible that someone could ruin Christmas Eve and then be rewarded for it on Christmas Day? It was at this moment I made my decision. I would kill my mother.

Eva is once again consumed by her solemn, dark stare, even while her mouth smiles.

Eva writes in her diary again in the gloom of night. She stops and looks over at the shelf where a family photo stands - of Mamma, Pappa and Eva at Christmas time. Eva appears to be seven or eight years old. Eva looks at it, then throws it in the trash. Her office looks a little more perky with a bouquet of roses in a vase. Eva sits back down and stares at her diary. She looks distressed, downs some wine, and continues on writing.

Screen card: June 23rd.

Sven informs Eva that they need to uproot her rose garden in order to put down new water pipes. Eva will have none of it. We see the roses, and hear their argument offscreen. Eva runs out of the house and finds comfort in her roses.

Sven appears out of focus in the background, as Eva tends to her roses. "Has something happened? Are you worried about Susanne? I think things will work out for her. She's tough on the outside and soft in the middle, like a chocolate praline." Sven waits patiently for a response. "Mamma keeps reappearing in my thoughts." Eva cannot look at him. "You've had enough difficulties with her. Be happy in your remaining years, Eva." Sven's voice is soothing

and kind. "Yes. Surely there won't be too many more of those." Eva smiles stiffly. Sven returns her smile, and goes back inside.

EVA (VO): The stone dropped into the water, and the whale blew a response.

Eva visits a lonely Irene. Irene's place is a mess. Eva calls Irene's daughter to ask her to come and help clean. The daughter won't come, she hates her mother. So Eva ends up cleaning like a slave, whilst Irene sits in a chair and goes on and on about religion. This reminds Eva of Sunday school that her mother made her attend as a child...

It is Sunday school. The TEACHER reads from the bible, but Eva stares at a wall picture of four different pictograms: 1. A blond boy runs from a lion. 2. The boy hangs from a cliff by a rope, the lion above him. 3. A crocodile below him, jaws open. A rat gnaws at the rope. 4. A shining cross appears in the heavens, the boy raises his arms towards it, and the lion, the crocodile and the rat all retreat.

EVA (VO): Nothing my Sunday school teachers told me could ever come close to the suggestive drama conveyed in that picture. What I got from it was not that the cross appeared as a saviour, but that the boy reached for the answer. Anyone who needed help would have to trust himself and either have a rope handy or be incredibly elastic. That picture probably influenced me more than I knew the day I decided that I would get revenge.

Pappa and Eva walk in the park. They talk about the hamster that Eva can finally have, because Pappa convinced Mamma by promising her something expensive. Eva is elated. She sees a field with flowers and goes to pick some for her mother. A vicious dog, BUSTER, appears out of the blue and attacks her. Both her Pappa and her NEIGHBOUR run to her aid. "He's so playful, isn't he," the neighbour jokes. "The very least a dog owner should do is to keep a beast like that on a leash," Pappa berates. "We can't torture an animal by keeping it on a leash, not at all. Animals are not destroying the earth, people are", responds the neighbour. Pappa loses his temper and gets into an argument about how Buster traumatised a girl when it ate her puppy. Eva has to pull him away. They get home and Eva gives her mother the flowers she picked. "Those are the ugliest flowers known to man", Mamma sneers, "They grow in manure and you can tell from the way they smell. They smell like shit."

EVA (VO): From that moment on I avoided coltsfoot. The next day in school, I had a chalky feeling in my mouth. I couldn't sing. The coltsfoot that smelled like shit had crept into my pores and no one dared go near me.

Eva mouths in a choir. Some boys are being rowdy. The teacher, KARIN THULIN, a spinster, is losing her temper. She takes this out on Eva by demanding she sing, not mime.

At home, Mamma yells: "Eva! Come here at once! We have to talk to you." Pappa sits next to her, nervous and quiet. Eva senses impending doom. "Now I would like to hear just what went on in school today, and how you have behaved. Just as it happened, without lying or using your imagination." Eva racks her brain. "Karin Thulin called me at work a while ago just to tell me how badly you behaved in her class. I called Pappa so that we could sort this out together as soon as possible. How could you act like that toward a teacher?" Eva tries to explain she lost her voice, but Mamma continues: "So Pappa and I have decided that you are not getting a hamster. You are clearly incapable of caring for yourself, so how can you take care of an animal?" Eva runs to her room.

EVA (VO): Someone had to be punished. I couldn't punish Mamma, not yet, but I would punish others who had behaved badly towards their neighbours. Who had murdered, maimed and terrorised.

Eva stares at Buster in the dark, the fence between them. The dog growls and snarls, until it finally leaps at the fence in attack.

EVA (VO): I hated Buster. I hated him, not just because he did what he did to other animals and people, but because he seemed to enjoy it with a kind of morbid intelligence that I thought I recognised. I needed to practice, to train myself, to rid myself of fear. I started with spiders-

Eva lies on the ground with spiders crawling over her.

EVA (VO): -then moved on to slugs-

Eva lies on the ground with slugs crawling over her.

EVA (VO): -Then the dachshund Jocke-

Eva picks up the neighbourhood dog, Jocke, and takes him for a walk. His owners think she is so kind for helping them out. Jocke is a sweet dog. He wouldn't hurt a fly. Eva lets Jocke lick her fingers and she takes the opportunity to feel his teeth. Eva smiles. It's not so bad.

EVA (VO): -Until I was ready for Buster.

Eva throws ham into the sidewalk, and Buster goes for it. As he eats it, Eva puts a rope on him. She continues to throw him pieces of ham and leads him further and further away. They end up at a construction site where Eva locks Buster in a shed and walks away.

The neighbour rings the doorbell and asks if Pappa, Mamma or Eva has seen Buster. She is told no. Eva listens from her room, where she has a makeshift calendar on the wall. She crosses off Monday.

FADE TO: The calendar now has seven crosses.

Eva, in rain suit and boots, returns to the construction site and unlocks the shed. She carries a sack, a spade, shears, and an ax. Buster lies on the ground, flies buzzing. Eva winces at the stench of death. She chops up Buster in smaller pieces and puts them into the sack. She keeps his ears.

Eva drags the sack into the woods and digs a hole and buries Buster.

Back in her room, Eva talks to Buster's ears.: "I read somewhere that American Indians make dolls they carry in leather pouches. Every evening they take out the doll and tell it their sorrows. Then they stuff the doll back into the pouch and put the pouch under their pillow. The next morning, their worries would be gone. Mamma hurt me, and another being had to suffer in her place. My white side tells me this is unfair, but my black side tells me that Buster received his just punishment. He has gone from something evil and become something good: Ears that listen. Thank you. You have taught me that there is a solution to every problem."

As Eva speaks the above words, we see her, on a different day, in the process of preserving the ears. She dips them in and out of different liquids, leaving them to dry, inspecting them up close, and finally putting the preserved and mummified ears into the pouch. Eva, back in her room at night, then puts the pouch under her pillow, and she lays herself down to sleep.

Eva closes her diary. She tapes Buster's pouch to the cover of the book. Her office now has two vases of flowers, and even some candles.

EVA (VO): Buster's ears became my confidante. They listened to me over the years and comforted me in a way that no one else could.

Screen card: June 29th

The sound of the phone ringing. Eva picks up. It is Irene, this time accusing Eva of stealing her silver. Eva tries to defend herself, but Irene is irate. Sven takes the phone and tells Irene to "fuck off".

Later. Eva watches Sven and a man, ÖRNEN, approach from the garden. Her face is hard and determined. Sven opens the door. "Eva, Örnén and I want to talk to you. Do you think we can have a calm, civilised conversation?" Eva nods. "I'm perfectly calm and civilised". Sven smiles. "Örnén has looked at the pipes. Again. And there's no two ways about it. They have to be replaced. And since they run through your rose garden, we have to dig it up". "Over my dead body." Sven sighs. "Eva, be reasonable. Let's find a compromise. A solution that makes everybody happy." "If you dig up my roses, they will die. No matter how careful you are. They are very frail, they won't tolerate such upheaval." "Eva, are you sure about this? How frail can they be? I promise, we'll be very careful. Or you can even do it yourself." "I will not kill my roses!" "Eva, I think you are overreacting." "I am NOT overreacting! You don't know anything about roses! Why are you trying to hurt me?" "I'm not trying to hurt you. I'm trying to replace the water pipes." "Get out!" "Eva, this is my house." Eva turns to Örnén "You get out!" Sven shakes his head. "No, he is my guest. He stays. If you want, you can get out." Eva starts to cry. Sven sighs. "Fine!" He and Örnén leave.

Screen card: July 1st

Eva attends a social church gathering and runs into her friends Gudrun and Sixten. The church has given everyone a bundle of clay to make into whatever they want. Sixten hugs Eva and kisses her ear while he tries to position one of his legs between hers. Eva suggests that he use his lump of clay to model his best friend. "Obviously we didn't get that much clay, but it

still should be enough. And once you're done, you can let it dry a bit and it will be all cracked and wrinkly, really true to nature." Sixten must have misunderstood her insult, since he lights up in a smile. Later in the afternoon he shows up on Eva's doorstep. "Take a look at this." Eva looks and sure enough, it's a clay penis with pine needles stuck near the balls to illustrate the hair. "That's ridiculous at your age," Eva comments, "Put it away, before Sven sees it." Sixten looks a bit crestfallen and is ready to leave. Eva holds out her arms in front of her, so he can't come too close, and emphatically informs him to tell his wife, Gudrun, hello. "I married the woman she used to be, not the one she is now," he manages to whisper, "If you have any problems, I'm good enough for two, you know", he sighs as he leaves. Eva, disgusted, watches him go and another memory is sparked.

Eva is now 16-17 years old. At a dinner at her house, she meets her mother's colleague BJÖRN SUNDELIN. He is in his fifties, but even so he is fairly attractive, with salt-and-pepper hair and a muscular build. He makes a decent, sober attempt to ask Eva about what she likes, such as school and hobbies. He mentions that he likes to travel, at least when he was younger, and goes on about backpacking in Canada and hiking in the Alps, and the more he talks, the more his eyes gloss over with nostalgia. "Back in those days I was like a cliff. I stood straight up, and all the shit that flew at me from all directions, I was above it all, I was strong, I could depend on myself. So, cheers to you, little redhead, you have the best time of your life in front of you, so enjoy it!" He puts his arm around Eva's shoulders and gazes at her with unfocused, teary eyes. Mamma's voice suddenly cuts sharply through their conversation: "Hey, Björn! Björn! It's useless to talk to Eva about travel and love, because she knows nothing about anything. Really!" Björn isn't listening, but Eva escapes to the bathroom. She looks through the medicine cabinet: Pain pills, sleeping pills. Suddenly Mamma's reflection is next to her, she has entered the toilet, and Eva hits back: "So you think I don't know anything?" "Go ahead and get angry if it makes you happy," Mamma replies and plucks a lipstick from the cabinet. Eva forces herself past her, goes to her room and straight to bed. She wakes up to the sensation of kisses on her face and mouth. First light and careful, then hard and sloppy. Eva opens her eyes and is faced with Björn Sundelin in her bed. She pushes him away in panic, and Björn mutters incoherently: "Sweet little Eva, you are still so young, it's painful for me to be so old, to have everything behind me, you know... can't I have just one kiss on the mouth, please, just touch you a little... sometimes I long so much to have a young

girl with me..." He lies on top of her, kissing and slobbering. One hand caresses her thigh, the other kneads her breast. Eva does not scream, but manages to tell him in no uncertain terms that he has to get out of her room. So he gets up and tiptoes out of the room.

The next day, Eva tells her father. How Björn came to her room and laid down next to her, hugging her. She does not mention the kissing. Pappa is appalled. He leaps up so quickly that he knocks over his coffee cup. Coffee everywhere. "Come with me to Mamma," he says.

Pappa brutally wakes up Mamma. He draws the curtains apart and speaks loudly: "Sit up. Drink a bit of coffee. We have to talk. I'm not going to keep this party going anymore, there are limits..." Mamma slurps some coffee and makes a face. "Please, sweetie, I have such a headache, what's all this about?" "Björn, that fine, upstanding colleague of yours, that guy that you insist on inviting every time you have your damn gang over... Are you listening to me?" Pappa suddenly grabs her shoulders so forcefully, coffee spills everywhere - again. "Björn, your colleague and friend, went into Eva's room last night. Your daughter was awakened by him hugging her in her bed! What kinds of friends do you have?" Mamma smiles at Eva through the crusty remnants of last night's makeup that never got removed. "So Björn came into your room. How cute. He crept into your bed. He was probably just a little drunk and needed a place to lie down. I bet he didn't even bother to think that a little girl was there." Pappa stares at her. He looks like he might hit her any second. "You mean to lie there and tell me that Eva imagined the whole thing? That she just dreamed that Björn came in and began to hug her? Mamma raises her voice: "I mean that Eva shouldn't make such a fuss about a man taking a nap in her bed, because I know that he wouldn't feel her up, he's not that kind. And as a matter of fact, if he really needs to embrace someone, there are other women than Eva here." Pappa explodes with words like "completely crazy" and "can't stand it any longer" and "no sense of responsibility at all" and "completely without any sense of judgment". Mamma, now fully awake, counters with: "You're boring and dull. You never let me have any fun, and you always take Eva's side. You've heard her version and you've heard mine, and you've made up your mind that hers is the truth, even though I'm the one who's been working with Björn all these years." Then she uses the calm in the eye of the storm to deliver a last devastating blow: "And by the way, haven't you forgotten something?" Pappa looks confused: "What?" Mamma continues: "To ask me how I feel! How I feel!"

EVA (VO): Father pretty much moved to Gothenburg after that. His work suddenly occupied him more and more. Not that he was home much as it was. But now he got an apartment in

Gothenburg. Mamma also stayed out more, partying all the time. And I was alone. I came to the conclusion that Pappa was weak and that Mamma was not really my Mamma, that she was attracted to this guy Björn herself, and therefore jealous that he had chosen my bed instead of hers. In fact, I started to think jealousy was behind most of our conflicts. I weighed black against white and came up with a vague, tentative plan. Björn would never again go into beds where he was definitely not invited. But again, I needed to practice, to train myself, to rid myself of fear.

Eva's science teacher demonstrates a mousetrap, and the sound of it releasing makes an absent-minded Eva jump. She stares at the trap in the teacher's hand. A boy in her class, KALLE, smiles at her. Eva, at first standoffish, decides to smile back.

EVA (VO): How was I to lure a man? I had no experience at all in that field. I started with Kalle.

Eva and Kalle play in wintertime and fall into a soft pile of snow. Kalle kisses her, his eyes closed. Eva's are open, as she analyses the kiss. Kalle's hands start to search under her jacket and his body rubs against hers. Eva lets him do whatever he wants, as she continues to analyse the situation. Then she pushes him aside, gets up and walks off without a single word. Kalle looks like a lost puppy, watching her go.

EVA (VO): Then I moved on to Karin Thulin. She did after all deprive me of my hamster.

A girl, SISSI, complains to Eva about Karin and how she has favourites. Another, ULLA, complains that she is creepy in gym class when she stares at them taking showers. Eva concurs: "I feel the same way! I feel so watched! I wonder if her behaviour is normal?" Thoughts run through Sissi's brain. Eva goes in for the kill: "Sissi, don't you think that Karin Thulin stares at us a little too much? What reason does she have to come into the locker room anyway? She should stick to her music room and practice her instruments, don't you think?"

MONTAGE: Sissi has an epiphany of sorts. She whispers to one girl who whispers to another and so forth, like a daisy chain, which proceeds to the boys, and all the while in the middle, Karin Thulin becomes slowly aware of the web of lies spreading around her. She tries to interject. The boys laugh at her and make snide comments like "Karin, don't look at us, because there's nothing here you want to see, you like to look at the girls", the girls snarl and glance with evil eyes, as they cover up with clothes, and the chain of whispers continues until

it finally reaches the principal who upon hearing the words in his ear, makes a face of dread and points his finger at Karin Thulin and then points at the door. Karin lowers her head and leaves.

EVA (VO): Karin Thulin never returned. I later heard she was “born again”. She became a missionary and went to Africa to spread God’s word. So it was all for the best, like with Buster’s ears.

An image in a newspaper of Karin Thulin in sandy coloured clothes in the midst of a desert village surrounded by African children and their parents. Smiles all around, especially from Karin.

EVA (VO): I was ready for Björn.

Eva on the phone as she asks for Björn. The voice on the line tells her: “Oh, you must mean Björn Sundelin” and it connects her. “This is Eva, you know, the daughter of-” Björn interjects: “Yes, I know.” He sounds happy and surprised. “I’m going to travel this summer. With some friends. Maybe take a hike through the Alps or something like that...and then I remembered that we talked about this stuff when you were at our place. You’d been backpacking in Nepal or something like that...and I thought you might have some advice for us on what we should bring with us, what kind of shoes we should buy, things like that...” Björn is pleased. “That’s exciting. You know, I’m jealous, to just get up and leave like that...but of course I have lots of old material that I can send to you...” Eva does her best little girl voice. “You don’t have time to talk to me for a little bit?”

EVA (VO): The trap was laid.

Eva meets Björn at a café. He buys her hot chocolate and they sit and chat and laugh. He shows her a picture of himself when he was young, in front of the Grand Canyon. Eva smiles. He touches her hair.

EVA (VO): He took the bait.

Eva’s bedroom. Eva lights candles and sits down next to Björn on her bed. A second later he is all over her. Kissing, pulling at her clothes. He gropes her breasts and unbuttons her top. Eva notices a protruding bulge in his trousers. They slide under her covers, with him on top of her. More clothes is removed. Björn: “Yes, just like that. Hold it gently in your hands”. He

lets out a deep sigh, followed by grunts. A stroking motion can be discerned under the covers. Eva concentrates hard. Suddenly the sharp sound of a SNAP. Then a HOWL.

EVA (VO): The whole neighbourhood must have heard him.

Björn runs around, howling like an animal, trying to remove the trap to no avail. His eyes roll back as he sways. He falls into a foetal position with his hands around his privates and faints. Blood flows freely.

EVA (VO): I called an ambulance. When the paramedics arrived, and I told them what had happened, that a man had forced himself on me, and I had released a mouse trap on his penis, they were in no rush to get him to the hospital.

Björn reawakens and starts to whimper. The men lift him brutally and fling him onto the stretcher. They smile at Eva as they leave and praise her for her actions.

EVA (VO): Björn never bothered me again. He moved to London with his wife after telling everyone that he had been mugged and attacked with a knife.

Eva sits alone in her office, in the dark of night, and watches her hand tremble.

EVA (VO): Why am I writing all this? Perhaps because my intuition tells me that everything is coming to a close and I must hurry.

The next morning, Eva tends to her rose garden. She clips rose after rose, enough to make numerous bouquets. She arranges them into vases and places them all over her office. She is surrounded by life in bloom. Eva smiles. Her diary rests on her desk.

Screen card: July 4th.

Eva has lunch with Sven and daughter Susanne at a nice restaurant. Susanne tells them about life at home: "The kids are doing great. Sometimes they live with a bitter and abandoned mother and sometimes with a smitten father and his new fling. I am not so worried about Per. He can show what he's feeling. He screams and bawls and throws things. I have no idea what's with Anna-Clara. She never talked much before and she's not talking much now. Mari

is in bad shape. She locks herself in her room and listens to music and sits on the bed and stares into space. Nobody sympathises with me. Because Jens' new woman is older and uglier than I am. And she's "only" a teacher while I'm a lawyer. There's nothing to be jealous about if my husband falls for an older and uglier work colleague. With such reasoning, I should win the lottery, had my husband turned out to be gay! The ultimate stamp of quality. My guy can't find another woman to exchange me with, so he has to settle for a man." Eva tells her she is not to blame, that she is hardworking, elegant and successful, always well-dressed and good-looking, and that she and Sven love her. Susanne has heard enough. "Love, love, love. Yes, Mamma, I know that you love me. You've said it hundreds of times. Though sometimes it seems like you're loving me to death. As a kid or teenager, I could be really nasty to you, but you were still always the one who said sorry and asked for forgiveness. It was so frustrating. So unbelievably frustrating! You asked forgiveness for the slightest little thing. And you were so in control and able to do anything for me. Yet it was as if you weren't really there at all. In spite of the endless, suffocating "love you, forgive me, sorry, I'm always here for you", it seemed like only one part of you was speaking while the other part sat back and observed. There was a part of you that I could never reach." Eva grows quiet, looking at her food. Susanne continues: "One time, I was supposed to clean my room, and I refused to do it. I wanted a reaction from you, and I shot my mouth off, and after you had asked me nicely five or six times, it finally happened. You roared and grabbed my shoulders and shook me and said, now you'll do as I say, you'll respect me, listen to me, wipe that grimace off your face and look me in the eye. And you know what I thought, Mamma? I thought that finally I have the real you. Finally I'm getting the scolding I deserve, just like the other kids. But...", Susanne shrugs her shoulders and Sven chews his meat with much concentration, "One hour later you came up to me and it was all 'forgive me' and 'I love you', and I felt something die in me. After that, I didn't bother to get upset any more, because you buried every outburst under a heap of love. And I think that's why everything went to hell between Jens and me. Because every time I wanted to yell and scream, I thought what's the point, it would be smothered in love like a pillow over my mouth. I kept quiet and I kept it all in. And what was the result? Jens left me for an older woman. He says at least she has the courage to have an opinion, she dares to argue with him. She's not perfect and she's able to admit it, and that's such a relief. Mamma, my husband left me because I couldn't fight with him, and you were the one who took away that ability. I know, because I used to be able to fight once!" Eva is speechless. Sven leaves for the bathroom. Susanne regrets her outburst: "Forgive me. You've

been a wonderful mother. Right now my life is a mess, so you start to think about things, and if you dig deep enough, the worms start crawling out." Eva smiles: "It's good that you feel you can talk to me. It would be terrible if you felt you couldn't. But I've changed, too, haven't I? Now I'm a much sharper and edgier person than when you were little, don't you think so?" Susanne doesn't answer.

Screen card: July 7th.

Eva wakes up at night with a terrible feeling that something has happened to Irene. She makes Sven take her to Irene's. No one opens the door despite knocking, ringing the bell and yelling. They break a window in order to enter. The house is a mess, flies everywhere. They search the house. Eva finds Irene in the bathroom, slumped over and unconscious from a stroke. Sven calls for an ambulance. Eva sits with Irene, in tears, a sudden outflow of emotion and tenderness. "Irene. It's me, Eva. Eva is here. Can you hear me? Can you understand me?" Eva holds her hand and strokes her cheek. The paramedics arrive and she is taken to hospital. Eva packs a bag with Irene's things, and her and Sven follow the ambulance to the hospital.

At the hospital, Eva sits with Irene, observing her frail body, mussed hair, and tubes running in and out of her body. Eva calls Irene's daughter, but she seems uninterested in her mother's health and is reluctant to come. She will visit when she has the time to get away. "Well, let's hope that Irene is thoughtful enough not to die until you get here", Eva responds and hangs up. Sven approaches her. "Has Irene turned into an angel yet?" he asks. "Not quite yet," Eva replies. She holds Irene's hand.

Eva holds her mother's hand. A fancy café. The same one Eva used to go to with Britta. Eva sits with her mother at a small table, drinking hot chocolate and coffee. "Mamma, I invited you for coffee, because I wanted to talk about something important. I've been reading about Freud and psychoanalysis... Anyway. This is hard for me, but I feel I have to make the attempt to tell you how I feel. How unjust I think many things have been, how they have hurt me." Eva looks at her mother who doesn't look at her. "I need a new top. Let's go downtown!", her mother quips. "No, I want to talk to you about this. It is important." Mamma sighs, "Well, I need a new blouse. We can go and buy it and then we can talk." Eva musters up her remaining

courage. "In some relationships it is difficult to talk, but we need to talk." Mamma asks for the bill. "You're just like this friend of mine. She's so selfish." Eva perseveres. "Mamma, it was hard for me to be neglected and deceived and always compared to others in the worst possible way." Mamma has noticed the store window across the street. "Look at that blouse. Maybe I should get that one." "Why is everything I do so wrong?"

Mamma pays the bill and rises. "Well, we're quite different, you and me." Eva grabs her arm and holds her back. "But I'm the one you got! Me and no one else! Why oh why is it so difficult for you to like me just the way I am?" A few people nearby stop and listen. Mamma discreetly looks at them and breaks free from Eva's grasp. There is loathing in her eyes. That or complete indifference. "Let me tell you. My mother did not appreciate me either. I learned to appreciate and take care of myself. And so should you." She goes across the street and into the store to try on the blouse. Eva looks at her go in disbelief.

EVA (VO): My mother was a child. I was the adult.

Eva is at a club with some friends. She eyes her mother across the room with some colleagues, drinking and partying much harder than her. She is dancing with a man somewhere between her and Eva's age. Eva wants to leave, but her friends have noticed her mother too. One of them, a boy, blurts out: "Hey, look, it's your mom!" Another exclaims with shiny eyes: "Your mom looks awfully young." They lure her over to them. Mamma is all smiles and very friendly, but doesn't acknowledge Eva. A boy asks her: "Would you like to dance?" Mamma is delighted. "You should always dance if someone asks you". She smiles coyly and disappears with the boy. Eva is horrified. Someone offers her alcohol which she declines. Another asks if she will dance. She declines again. She watches her mother on the dance floor, once again consumed by her dark, solemn stare.

EVA (VO): My time had come. John would enter my life and change it forever.

Images of the harbour on a summer evening. A navy ship has docked, and the town is teeming with seamen. English words can be heard all over the place. It is a British vessel. Eva goes to the dock. It is still light and the colourful sunset glows in the horizon. Eva sees couples giggling and groups of friends chatting and drinking beer. She looks at the naval ship, sees no one is watching, and decides to board the temptingly laid-out gang plank. She hears a voice. "Excuse me, Miss, but you have no right to come onboard this vessel without an escort. Please be so kind to go back down." The man is dressed in uniform and looks to be in his

early twenties. Tall and dark with brown eyes. He has lips that make him look like he is smiling even when he isn't. "There's no sign that says so. And the gang plank is down. I wanted to check out the view. I apologise." Eva disembarks, and finds a bench to sit on. Moments later the man appears before her with his smile that isn't a smile. "Would you like to have a cup of coffee?" Eva looks at him with wonder, as if this will be a defining moment in her life. "My name is John." He smiles. "I'm Eva." They shake hands. A little longer than necessary. They board the ship. John shows Eva around on the ship. The deck. The supply rooms. Various equipment. The torpedoes. The dining room. They talk nonstop, about anything and everything. They end up in the coffee room with hoards of rowdy sailors. John serves her a cold and weak cup of coffee, but Eva savours it all the same. They sit and stare at each other in silence, amidst the noise of the others, and when Eva finishes, John suggests they take another walk. "Are you busy tomorrow? It's my day off, you see, and I'd like to see more of Stockholm and I'd rather see it with you if you'd care to guide me." Eva stares at him in wonder. "Stockholm is my dream, but I never get to stay long, and I've certainly never had the chance to be shown around by a guide who lives here." Eva stammers. "Yes. I would love to." John is all smiles. "How old are you, Eva?" "I'm twenty." Eva lies. "I'm twenty-four," John declares. They smile at each other and part ways. "See you tomorrow." Eva looks back and smiles, "Yes, see you tomorrow."

That night Eva speaks to Buster's ears with energy and animated expressions.

The next day it rains. Eva walks towards the harbour in rain clothes, but in a very good mood. There is no weather bad enough to bring her down. John is already waiting for her by the dock. They smile at each other as she approaches. He wears civilian clothes and is not dressed for rainy weather. He already looks like a drowned mouse. Eva invites him under her umbrella and they start walking. "What would you like to see?" "Well, with such a beautiful lady at my side, I don't really care what we see." He manages to say this without sounding lame. "I suggest we go to the old town." They lose themselves in narrow streets and passageways, town squares and old buildings, talking nonstop as if they had known each other forever. He tells her he joined the navy in order to help the freedom-deprived. When home in England, he still lives with his parents. He loves art. He has a sister. He loves the sea. Eva tells him about herself and adds a few lies to make up for her fake age. She is a university student majoring in maths and she also interns at a fashion company. "Unfortunately, duty requires that I must leave the people I meet a few hours, or a few days, or at most a few weeks

later, and I must decide right away whether I've just met an acquaintance or a friend. I always have to be quick about it." Eva takes him to see the old warship Vasa. John is amazed how much remains of it and that Sweden, opposed to armed conflict, would go to such length to preserve an old warship. They have dinner at a cosy restaurant. They toast, drinking wine. "I don't want this night to end." Eva feels brave. "I can borrow my friend's guest house."

Eva gets the keys, while John smokes a cigarette. They enter a small guest house and look around with approval. They sit and talk to the wee hours of the morning. When Eva sips her tea, John takes it away and kisses her. Eva's first kiss. It goes on for some time. They go to the bedroom. The moment is awkward. "Why don't we just cuddle here for a little while. It's what I miss most when I'm at sea." Eva nods. They fall asleep in each other's arms. Later, he wakes her and tells her he must return to his ship. Before boarding the cab, he gives her three addresses. Two for ports he will be stationed at next, one is his parents' address. Eva gives him her address in return and he disappears. Eva remains, her expression teetering back and forth between her white side and her black side. One second she smiles, the next she suppresses it.

Eva opens her mailbox and finds a letter from John. She is all smiles and hugs it tight. She opens it and her eyes scan the page speedily.

JOHN (VO): Dear Eva. It's difficult to find the proper words to say what I wanted to say last Saturday evening. I would like to thank you for making my time in Stockholm so special. I will remember that visit fondly, as it has more value to me than any other visit. I am uncertain about how you may think about the relationship that seemed to arise between us, but I do think that it was very good and showed signs of becoming something that might last.

On that note, Eva beams a big smile and hugs the letter. She goes inside, dancing and skipping.

JOHN (VO) cont'd: In other words, what I am trying to say is that if you decide you would like to meet me again, I would be very happy. Take good care of yourself, and do write soon. Love, John.

Eva sits alone in her office, in the middle of the night, tears streaming down her face. The diary is also stained with tears.

Screen card: July 13th.

Eva's friend, Petra, calls her for help. "You've got to help me. You've got to come here right away! I've thrown Hans out." Eva is shocked. "Should I bring Sven? He's an expert on the male psyche." "Good heavens, no! Just come as fast as you can!" Petra and Hans' place is the ugliest house ever. The décor is so badly mismatched, it is an art unto itself. Petra's eyes are red, her grey hair stands straight up, and the sores in the corners of her mouth are flaming red, grotesquely enlarging her mouth. "You've got to help me!" Petra's kitchen floor has a multi-coloured rag rug that now is a single colour. The colour of blood. Eva almost vomits. "Would you like some coffee? I think I will be able to concentrate better if I can drink a cup of coffee, since it is time for a coffee break." Petra puts the kettle on and serves up a plate of buns, still warm from the oven. "Everybody thinks I'm the one who talks too much while Hans patiently listens as piously as a saint. But tell me, what am I supposed to do with a man who never says a word? The only thing I can hear is the silence and the sound of the refrigerator and Hans just sits there and says nothing. So I'll tell you what you do. You start talking to fill the silence. You start talking to push away the panic and the dark thoughts and the disappointment with how life turned out and the anxiety that the man I chose, or who chose me, is less interesting than the radio or TV. And now he's disappeared after making a mess of my nice kitchen rug. If he had just fallen a little more to the right, he would have landed on the floor, and I'd just mop everything up and everything would have been fresh and clean. But that's just so like him. Silent and inconsiderate and immune to anything resembling empathy." Eva looks at her. "Petra. What. Happened. Here?" "That's what I'm trying to tell you. He's so inconsiderate. I was shopping at the grocery store and I found a nice bit of frozen lamb, and I got everything home, and Hans said 'hi' which I thought was a good start. So I stand in the kitchen and mix and bake and I tell him that I haven't been feeling well for a while, pain in my chest and an ache in my stomach and maybe I should go to the Health Centre and let them check me out, and I told him that sometimes I am so anxious at night, thinking I'm going to die and I ask, what do you think this means, Hans, and then I turn around and see Hans reading the newspaper. He thinks maybe I'm staring at him so he looks up and smiles and looks very happy and says we have year-round garbage collection." Eva looks at her blankly. "Year-round garbage collection?" Petra nods. "Year-round garbage collection. We only have garbage collection in the summer, so if we come here in the winter, it is difficult to get rid of

the garbage. We run around like thieves in the night putting it in other garbage bins. So Hans decided to get year-round service. That's all well and good, but there he sat and said the most he'd uttered in weeks just to tell me that we have year-round garbage collection when I've just told him that I don't feel well and that I'm afraid of dying while I'm busy making him his favourite buns. So I took the frying pan, and I said, 'This is what you get for your year-round garbage collection service' and I whacked it, I mean I held out the frying pan and Hans kind of leaned forward and fell on it and it must have gotten him pretty badly because suddenly there he is tumbling down and landing on my rug of course, and bleeding an awful lot. And there was not much I could do, as I had to keep my eyes on the buns to make sure they didn't burn and I thought he'll get up soon, but he didn't and when I looked at him, I saw the blood was getting kind of thick and then I thought, my God, he's probably dead, and I got a little scared and I noticed that I was covered with blood myself, so I decided to take a shower. When I came back, Hans was standing there, swaying a bit, and I got so angry that I screamed, 'Pack your stuff and get out of my house!', even though it's under Hans' name actually, and then he staggered out of the room, packed a suitcase and said, 'I'm going to my sister's,' and he was gone. And then I called you." Eva doesn't believe her ears. "Petra, whatever happened, whether Hans fell onto your frying pan or not, you can't escape the fact that the frying pan was in your hand. And it doesn't look good when married men go to the doctor because their wives were not handling their frying pans with proper care. There's a chance he might report you for assault, and I think you might be a tad too old to spend the rest of your life behind bars. And in jail I don't think you'll get freshly baked buns whenever you want them. But if we clean up all the evidence, then it's your word against his and your odds improve." They get out the vacuum cleaner, the cleaning fluids and get to work in the kitchen. The rag rug goes in the washing machine and they scrub the floor and anything with the slightest hint of blood. When done, the kitchen sparkles. Petra is in a very good mood. The previously hysterical woman now looks sane. "Once you get started, it's kind of fun." She looks at Eva. "You seem so unconcerned, as if you've done this kind of thing before. Somehow, I've always felt that you've buried a corpse or two in your day." Petra laughs. Eva freezes. "There were times when I would go in the bathroom and scream when Hans said nothing more than three sentences the entire day. Now I can finally allow myself the pleasure of being quiet. I think it's different with you and Sven. You both talk about the same amount. But on the other hand, you've known each other for such a long time. There were times when I thought it was strange, since he is, after all-" Eva interjects. "No, he's not." "Well, I know,

he's not really, but still. I think about it sometimes." "About what?", Eva asks. "About how your mother took off like that. And how you decided to stay here. And Sven. Something about that...well, one wonders at times." Eva feigns innocence. "What's there to wonder about?" "That she disappeared like that when we all thought you were the one who was going to move to England. Then suddenly she was the one who took off, without even saying goodbye-" Eva interjects: "She wrote. You know that." Petra nods. "Yes. From Paris, Germany, England, from all over, am I right?" Eva says yes. Petra leans in. "She was never very pleasant and it was not easy for you. Lots of people never noticed, but I did." Petra embraces her, but Eva is uncomfortable. "Sorry, I forgot. No hugs." Petra then asks: "Do you think that you can really love somebody? Really love somebody? I don't think I'm very skilled when it comes to love. I did my best to love, but I wasn't successful. I think I did the same thing with love as I did with baking. I threw in all the ingredients, a pinch of caring and a pinch of admiration, a teaspoon of good qualities, add a little spice and there was a dough. I thought that if I kneaded it enough, love would be shiny, pliable and soft and a batch of really fine buns would be the result. So that's what I've been doing my entire life, kneading and kneading and kneading. Perhaps it's entirely logical that this happened right when I was in the middle of baking buns, and I was kneading so well." She looks at Eva and states: "You've been doing the same all your life too." Eva changes the topic. "You could have cut off his ears." Petra looks at her, a bun in midair inches from her lips. "Sometimes I'm really afraid of you, Eva." "Who's the one who just whacked her husband with a frying pan?", Eva shoots back, "You could have cut off his ears and put them in a little pouch. Then you could have taken his ears out whenever you wanted to say something, and you could talk as long and as convincingly as you wanted." Petra is speechless. "What's wrong with you? You're like a hollow shell. You're supposed to be my friend and give me a hug or something." Eva does not answer, but awkwardly embraces her.

Screen card: July 16th.

Eva visits Irene at the hospital, but learns she has been moved to a hospice. All her things are still there. Eva rants and raves about not being informed, but they say they tried to call Irene's daughter, but got no response. Eva packs Irene's things and hurries to the hospice.

The hospice is under refurbishment. Workmen are everywhere, with planks laid out like octopus arms on the holed floor and scaffolding all over. It takes Eva a long time to locate an hospice employee. Old people wander around like zombies. Eva is finally shown Irene's room. She can barely talk, still wears her hospital gown, and Eva takes instant pity on her. Irene grabs Eva with one hand. "Take me home. Take me home." Her other arm is now paralysed. A drink is on the table, but outside of her reach. Her hair is a rat's nest. Irene looks at Eva. "You've come to take me home, haven't you?"

Eva sits in her office, middle of the night, pen to diary. But instead of writing, she starts to draw. As more lines appear on paper, we sense that this will be a portrait.

A picture of John in his uniform, outside a church and next to a rose bush. Mamma laughs: "Well, he is certainly standing tall. And at least he looks manly." She hands Eva the picture back without further interest. "I want to go visit him in August.", Eva proclaims. "That's a good idea. Maybe it will make you happier. Sometimes I don't think you have the capacity to be happy", Mamma quips. Eva's smile fades. She looks at John's picture and her smile reemerges.

Eva receives many more letters from John. VO of sentences he writes, overlap.

Eva and Pappa sit on the porch and observe the sunset. "So you're going to England soon?" Eva nods. "Don't be afraid to try new things. You know what I mean?" Eva does not know what he means. "My father, your grandfather, once had this talk with me. It was about the time I was getting ready for Confirmation. We were on the way to church, and my father and I were sitting in the car. He said there are 'things' you can use. In his day, the men would take what they could whenever they felt the urge, and the women would have to bear the consequences of constant pregnancies. He was upset by that, since there were 'things' that a man could use, and now he wanted to make sure that I would be one to use them. The fact that I already might know quite a bit about 'things' did not enter his mind, but it didn't matter. It was a nice conversation." Eva nods.

Arrival hall, London. Eva walks among a large crowd, looking through a sea of faces. She eyes John. They run to each other, then pause, and then awkwardly embrace. Both are

wearing white and blue. John kisses her cheek and gives her a single rose from his garden at home.

A car drives through the sunny English countryside. Eva takes in the sights. She rests her head on John's shoulder. They arrive at a quaint English cottage. John's parents and his sister greet them. Eva receives a big collective embrace. This family is everything her own isn't: Warm, affectionate and communicative.

Eva and John sit alone in the garden and drink tea on a summer's day. They glance at each other. Little smiles are exchanged. The phone rings and John leaves. Eva suddenly looks scared. Overwhelmed. She looks at the roses in the garden and take a deep breath. She smiles and relaxes. She looks at John inside on the phone, and she is happy.

A crowded pub. Eva and John, his arm around her shoulder, are surrounded by his friends. Pints of beer and lots of laughter. Eva excuses herself to go to the bathroom. When she exits, she runs into STEPHEN, one of John's closest friends. "Had a bit much, then?" Eva nods. "Maybe. I'm a little tired, too." "You want a cigarette?" Eva shakes her head. Stephen lights one for himself. "I haven't seen John this happy for a while. You're doing him good." "Have you known him long?", Eva asks. "My whole life, love. We went to school together. He's a smart man. But life hasn't always been kind to him." "What do you mean?" Stephen doesn't answer. He finishes his cigarette. "He's good at being alone, but he's also afraid of it. So take good care of him, Eva. He needs love, you see." Eva smiles, a hint of insecurity. "Tell me. What is love? Really?" Stephen laughs and they go back inside to John.

Back at the house, John embraces Eva. He kisses her for a long time, brushing her eyebrows and cheeks, lips and hair. Then he walks her to her room. "Mother told me to behave like a gentleman. Isn't it amazing that I still listen to her, even though I'm twenty-four?" Eva goes to bed with a smile on her lips. When the curtains are drawn, it is morning. Eva rubs her eyes and sees John by the window, backlit like an angel, standing with a breakfast tray. "Good morning! Breakfast in bed."

Tea in the rose garden. Dinner at restaurants. Punting on the Thames. Trips in the car. Picnic on the lawn. Theatre and Shakespeare. Cambridge. Oxford. Hampton Court. Drinks at the pub with John's friends. Breakfast in bed. John looks at her like she is his salvation. Eva is happy.

John cooks dinner. Eva watches TV. American planes bombing Vietnamese villages. Civilians running for their lives. A demonstration against the Vietnam war with signs that read "Make Love Not War". Eva is also opposed to the war. John defends himself, asking: "Where would the world be if Great Britain had stood by like neutral Sweden during WW2?". They scream at each other. "Your work makes me cynical!" "Your neutrality makes me cynical!", John shouts back. "People should mind their own business!", Eva screams. John smiles. "You're so beautiful when you're angry."

It is night. John enters Eva's room and climbs into her bed. They lie there, in silence, looking at each other. Then they kiss. Clothes is removed. Then love is made.

EVA (VO): I had forced myself to forget the feeling of a man's hands on my body and how I responded to that touch. But I have to laugh. Of course I remember. How would I otherwise manage to set one foot in front of the other all these many years? How else would I remember to inhale after every exhale? It's the only thing that kept me from sinking to the bottom like a whale in order to find a new life.

Tea in the rose garden. John talks about Eva's mother: "How is it possible not to be proud of a daughter like you? It's a mystery. I can only think of one reason, and that is she is jealous of you, even though a parent isn't supposed to be jealous of a child." Eva shrugs. "I think that she wasn't the type for children. She would have been just fine without one. Sometimes I have the feeling that she, well, that she might not even be my mother." "What does she look like?", John asks. "She's beautiful." John looks at her. "Well, my rose, she can hardly be as beautiful as you are." Eva smiles, somewhat tentatively, as if she doesn't know whether to believe him or not. "If we are going to be... and I do hope that we will be... together, then I must tell you something. It happened when I was twenty, the same age as you are now. I was a swimmer and in fact was one of Great Britain's hopefuls for the next Olympics. I didn't have much left for my girlfriend at the time. Her name was Anne, and we'd been together for a few years. She was incredibly in love with me, and I loved her, too, although perhaps in a different way. It sounds a bit cynical now, doesn't it, so many years later to say that I was everything in her world and she was just a part of mine. She was an extremely sensitive girl. She started to use drugs, and got terribly addicted. I tried to make the whole thing less dramatic by trying them myself. But it couldn't keep going like that. It affected my swimming. So I quit. I begged Anne to quit, too. But she was slipping away. Finally I made it very clear, "If you don't stop using, I'll leave you." But she said, 'If you leave me, I'll kill myself. She never did quit. So I

left her. And she killed herself. She threw herself in front of a train. At the funeral service, the church was full. She had a large family and we had many mutual friends, and all around me, eyes filled with hatred and disgust. 'Murderers shouldn't mourn their victims,' her brother said. Then he gave me her suicide note. I ran away to Paris. There, in a shabby hotel room, I read how she loved me, how life without me was not worth living. I had been the sun in her life and she hoped that now I would think about her every day for the rest of my life. I put the letter in a pouch and wore it around my neck. I didn't go home. I took odd jobs all over the world. Two years I ran. Then my father became ill, and I returned home and I enrolled in the Navy. The sea seemed to be the only place where I could find any solace. I kept that letter next to my heart. I still had it in Stockholm when I met you. I kept it until last night. I watched you in your sleep and then I went downstairs to the fireplace and burnt the letter. I made peace with myself. For now there's one thing I know and that is I love you." Eva looks at him. "I'm not twenty years old, John. I'm only seventeen."

Eva sits in her office, in the still of the night, finishing up a portrait of John. The likeness is very good. Her office is dotted with roses in vases all around.

Screen card: July 23rd.

Petra throws a summer party. The whole town attends. Eva sees a transformation in her friend. She is blossoming like a butterfly without Hans. New clothes, new hair do, slimmer frame and disappearing mouth sores. Sixten, looking handsome in his suit, gazes at her with wonder and longing. Gudrun, dressed in a blue sack of a dress with make-up melting in the heat, observes him. Petra runs around, serving copious amounts of delicious food and chilled wine and beer. The house also looks different. Clean, uncluttered and half the furniture is gone. A shiny floor without dingy rugs. Eva smiles at the beaming Petra socialising with the entire town at her table. Eva then observes Gudrun, practically weeping for joy as she stuffs a piece of steak in her mouth from her plate that is brimming with food. Sixten yells to Eva across the table: "How is Irene?" "She's good", Eva answers, "but I can never find any employees at her nursing home." "Gudrun will start working there now!", he yells back. Gudrun nods. Eva smiles. "Really? How wonderful! Maybe you can straighten that place out?" "I'll do my best!" Gudrun adds. Petra talks with the TOWN PRIEST and Öرنen. She

says, "The three wise men. Those men who came bearing gifts for Jesus, you were talking about them in the sermon the other day. I thought that if they had been three wise women instead, then they certainly wouldn't have had impractical things like frankincense and myrrh or whatever it was. No, first they would have asked for directions, making sure they were in time to help with the birth. Then they would have cleaned up afterwards and had useful things with them like clean clothes, diapers and food.-" Öرنen interjects, "And then what happened next? I'll tell you. The minute they left the stable they began to comment on how Mary's sandals didn't match her tunic, and how the Baby Jesus didn't look one bit like Joseph, and that their donkey was old and worn out and Joseph must be unemployed and that they would never have a chance to return the dish they brought the meatballs in. And one of them would have laughed her head off at the idea that Mary could still be a Virgin. 'I knew her in school, and I know what kind of a girl she was'." The priest is speechless, but Petra and Öرنen break out into a heated argument about gender. Eva looks around. People are happy, eating and being merry. The weather is warm and it is still light. Candles add to the romantic glow of the garden. For the first time, Eva smiles a smile of appreciation.

EVA (VO): John's letters kept me afloat when we were apart. I was his beautiful rose and he loved me and would visit soon. "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will," I wrote back, quoting Shakespeare. The day John came to visit me in Sweden, it was my mother's birthday, and it also happened that I was getting sick. The shock of seeing him when I, throbbing head and all, opened the door, was so overwhelming that I didn't even have the decency to show how happy I was at first. Sometimes I think my inability to be spontaneous cost me everything.

Eva opens the door and all she can see is a big bouquet of red roses - so deep red that they are almost black, and she is about to yell to Mamma that there is a delivery for her, when John lowers the bouquet and Eva sees his face. There they stand for a few moments, with the roses like a wall between them, until Eva cups his face in her hands, tears rolling down her cheeks as her eyes shine with joy. "Please forgive me if I didn't call beforehand, but I just wanted to come." Mamma appears, thinking the roses are for her. "Oh, how wonderful! Just what I needed!", she exclaims, before realises her mistake. Eva regains her ability to talk and introduces John. "By all means, come in, come in, since Eva hasn't had the sense to invite you in, I'll have to. Maybe she thought you should stand outside the entire weekend. Well,

you must have realised that I'm Eva's mother." Mamma smiles her bright, provocative smile as she holds out a well-manicured hand. John takes it, and after a second of doubt, he lifts it to his mouth and kisses it, which makes her squeal with pleasure. "There's no men like the Englishmen. So lovely! And you've come at the right time. Of course you couldn't know this, but today's my birthday." John looks at her and then at Eva in confusion. Then he comes to himself and carefully divides the bouquet into two, handing one half to Mamma and the other half to Eva. "It's only fair, then, I suppose, to divide this under the circumstances." "What a wonderful fragrance! Just wonderful! How did you know that roses were my favourite flower?" "I couldn't possibly know. But Eva and I both love roses." He looks at Eva who remains speechless, despite her best efforts to talk. "Let's go into the kitchen and put them in a vase. If we wait until Eva manages to say thank you, they'll wither away. Would you like something to drink?" "Yes, thank you.", John answers. Mamma disappears. John grabs Eva and kisses her. Mamma returns. Without a drink or a vase. "I'll get my kiss a bit later, but now the two of you will have to stop slobbering all over each other, because it's my birthday and we have to celebrate! Of course the two of you must come along as well! And I don't accept no for an answer, so don't even try!" Mamma whisks John outside and into a waiting cab. "Lock up the house, Eva darling, won't you please? Don't worry, I'll tell the others to wait for you!"

Arrival at a fancy night club. Eva exits her taxi and runs inside. Her eyes scan the room for John. He is dancing the foxtrot with Mamma. They look good together on the dance floor. John, however, keeps glancing furtively over his shoulder towards the door. Someone has given him a tie, presumably so he could enter the premises. "Who's her new guy?" Eva hears a woman say behind her. "His name's John and he's my boyfriend," Eva replies. "You don't say," the woman responds, but before Eva can react to her comment, John sees her and smiles. He whispers in Mamma's ear and rushes over to Eva. "There you are! I find all this rather confusing." Eva smiles.

Eva and John dance together most of the evening. All of Mamma's friends are there to celebrate, but Eva and John are lost in their own world. Obviously this is not to Mamma's liking. She or a friend would often slide in and try to lure them over to her table. Suddenly Eva and John hear Mamma's voice through the speakers. She is on stage. "This evening we have a representative from the British Navy with us. John, hello there, John, come on up on stage! Come on up!" John is confused, but does as he is told. "This is John, everybody. Now

we're going to say hi to John and welcome him to Sweden with a rousing rendition of Yellow Submarine." Mamma misses a pitch now and again, but she is a good singer all in all. Mostly because she is happy, beautiful, enthusiastic and self-confident. Soon the whole room sings along. John looks embarrassed, but his politeness prevents him from showing any signs of being uncomfortable. The songs ends. Resounding applause. "Now it's Eva's turn to sing!", Mamma exclaims. Eva's jaw drops and the colour drains from her face. She is pushed to the stage by Mamma's friends and lifted up. John tries to go to her, but Mamma holds him back. "I want her to sing 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes' for her sweetheart!" Everyone looks at Eva. Mamma laughs. Eva sings. Or tries to sing. Her voice breaks. It falls silent. It sings out of tune. Sweat drips from her face and armpits. Her legs tremble. She loses focus and faints.

Eva awakens in her room. It is dark, and John is by her side, holding her hand. "Dearest Eva, how do you feel? My God, how you frightened me." "What happened?" "You fainted at that awful dance hall. You almost fell right into the audience. Your mother was very worried. She came home with us and we tried to bring you out of it, but you kept mumbling something about a dog and a mouse trap." "Was Mamma really sitting here?", Eva asks. "Yes, but she's gone to bed now." Eva looks at him. "John, will you please just hold me?" John climbs into bed and under the covers and holds her. In the morning, Mamma storms in and declares breakfast is ready. Eva is so shocked she sits up straight, pulling the covers off a naked John. Her mother smiles, taking in the view. John, embarrassed, dresses quickly. At the breakfast table, Eva looks ill and lethargic. She has no appetite and her cheeks are flushed. Mamma's focus is directed at John. "John, it seems you like Eva, right?" John concurs. "Very much!" Mamma smiles. "Well, the most important thing is that you're happy."

Eva lies in her bed, half delirious, with John by her side. He wipes her face, brings her water and reads to her. At night he sleeps next to her on an old mattress. In the morning he awakens her with a soft kiss and tells her he must return to work. "I love you and miss you and let's see each other at Christmas in two months." Eva is beside herself. "I'm sorry this weekend didn't go better. Please forgive me." John smiles. "Hush. Write me soon." The door has barely closed behind him, when Eva decides she must pursue him. She wobbles to her feet and dresses hastily. She finds a jacket that belongs to Mamma, the first one she sees, and runs out the door in pursuit of John's cab. But the cab is too fast, and she is too weak, and she staggers back home dejected. Mamma waits in the hallway, furious. "You've taken my jacket." Eva barely has any strength left. "John had just left and I wanted to catch up to him and I grabbed

the first things I saw." Mamma is not appeased. "I was supposed to drive into town and meet Annika. But my jacket was gone! The car keys are in the jacket pocket. Who gave you permission to take my jacket?! My jacket is there because I put it there! You have your own clothes. How dare you take mine and ruin my plans?! Now I am going to be late! Late! You hear me?! You're good for nothing, absolutely nothing!" Eva is defenceless. "I'm sorry, Mamma, I'm really sorry. I just wanted to catch up to him, I mean, I wasn't going to take your jacket for a long time. Don't be angry." Eva breaks down in tears. She is too weak to fight and too weak to not cry. Her mother is disgusted and becomes even more irate. "Don't tell me what to do! You are not to tell me what to do! You are to listen to me, you are to respect me, you are not to try to put me in my place, you evil child! Eva's legs collapse and she falls into a heap on the floor. "Mamma, forgive me, but please stop, please stop..." Mamma is disgusted. "Get up off the floor and stop playing games with me! Get up! How dare you treat me like this!" Eva sees the hatred in her mother's eyes. She whispers, "Please forgive me, please forgive me, please forgive me, please, Mamma," and creeps back into her room. She collapses on her bed, shaking like a leaf.

Eva, alone at night in her office, drops her pen. It lands on the floor. Her cheeks are wet with tears. She notices some of the roses in the numerous vases are withering. She throws them out.

Screen card: July 27th.

Eva pays Irene a visit in her nursing home, and finds Suzanne and Anna Clara there too. Suzanne looks happy and tanned, wearing a colourful dress. Anna Clara reads. Irene is dazed and confused. It breaks Eva's heart to see her so weak, but she still complains as much when you ask her a question: "Do you like the food?" Irene scrunches her face and makes a farting sound. Eva looks at her daughter. "You're looking good, Susanne." "Thanks. I am feeling better these days." Anna Clara looks up. "Have you been writing in your diary, grandma?" Eva proudly smiles. "As a matter of fact, I have. I'm writing all the time. I have practically written my memoirs." Anna Clara nods. "Well, of course, you're going under." She says it as if it is the most obvious thing in the world. Gudrun passes and flashes them a big smile, gestures she is very busy with work and flitters off. Irene joins the conversation. "Ha oo cooome taaake eee hoom?" Eva is startled. "Not today Irene. When you're feeling better.

Then I will take you home. Irene nods. "I feew baad. Feew sooo baad." Eva and Suzanne look at her with empathy.

Eva storms into the garden. Sven and Örnen are assessing her rose garden. "What are you doing?" "Preparing. Örnen was just taking a look at-" "I told you, Sven, you will not touch my roses!" "Eva, whether you like it or not, we are going to put down new water pipes in ten days. That is a fact of life. Deal with it." "No!" Örnen clears his throat. "Maybe we can carefully move your roses, replace the water pipes, and carefully put your roses back?" "No!" "I'm sure they won't suffer too much damage. Nothing your magical touch won't fix." "No!" Eva is an immovable object, but she has met an unstoppable force. "We're digging up the rose garden, Eva, that's the end of it." "I won't let you!" "Even if you stand in front of the roses, I will take you down with the bulldozer." Sven is serious. Eva screams and storms inside.

That night, Sven awakes to the sound of crying. He goes to Eva's office and finds her wailing on the floor. He is shocked. He comforts her, but she cannot help herself. The tears keep coming. He picks her up and carries her to her bedroom. The diary lays, wide open, on her desk.

EVA (VO): John thinks it's a great idea if I come to university in England to study mathematics. I think it is a great idea too. I am counting the days to Christmas.

Eva is on the phone with John. "No, I understand. You have to work. You're being sent off to sea." Utter disappointment on her face, but her voice is perky.

EVA (VO): Then mother tells me she won't be around either for Christmas. Her work wants to send her all over Europe for meetings. I don't mind at all.

Eva watches her mother happily pack. "Germany, France, Great Britain and Italy. Doesn't it sound divine?!"

EVA (VO): Christmas Eve, Pappa and I made our own party.

Eva and Pappa sit in the living room on separate couches. It is quiet. There are hardly any decorations. The food is sparse. Pappa tries to be happy for two people. Eva seems lost in

thought. The phone rings. Pappa answers. Eva observes with full attention. It is Mamma. Eva loses interest. Pappa listens and laughs. Apparently Mamma is having a wonderful time. She has just left London and is now in Paris.

EVA (VO): I had not heard from John in over three weeks. I was unraveling at the seams. If I hadn't heard from him by New Year's, I would phone his parents, I decided. The rest of Christmas was hell.

Eva throws up into the toilet.

EVA (VO): New Year's Eve came around. I had heard nothing from John.

Eva dials a number apprehensively. She holds the receiver tensely. "Hello, Mrs. Longley. How are you doing? Merry Christmas, or rather, I should say, I hope you had a pleasant Christmas. And a Good New Year, too! Mrs Longley can be heard through the phone. "Hello sweet Eva! Merry Christmas to you too! Are you and your family well?" "Yes, we are. Thank you.. Is John around?" A brief pause. "John's home for the holidays. He's actually sleeping right now, but I'll make sure that he comes down to take your call." Eva is surprised. "Oh, he's home? Sleeping? Okay, I'll wait." A new voice appears on the line. "Hello, Eva. It's me, John. How are things going with you?" Eva tries to sound carefree. "Oh, fine, thanks. I've been working hard, but I had a pleasant Christmas. And how are things with you?" John's voice is strained. "Oh, I'm fine, too. But there's something I have to tell you, Eva. I'm engaged and I'm going to be married." Eva's heart drops. "You are engaged and going to be married?" "Yes. I'm so sorry. I ought to have said something." "So why didn't you?" "It's gone so fast and I didn't know the right way to tell you." "Any way would have been right." "I am very sorry. I tried to write a letter, but I couldn't find the right words. The longer I waited, the harder it got..." Eva struggles to keep poised. "Well, how long...how long did you think you'd wait to tell me?" "I really don't know. Maybe next week. I thought maybe if you didn't hear from me... you might find someone else in the meantime and that would make it easier... everything would just run out in the sand..." Eva cannot believe her ears. "Do you know what you are doing right now? You are telling me that I am a much worse judge of character than I ever though possible. I was imagining all kinds of things, and I called because I was worried! I thought you were stuck out at sea or in some hospital somewhere." John's voice is the same. "I'm very sorry, Eva. You sound so upset." "And Christmas? Was that a big lie, too? That you weren't allowed to go on leave?" "No, that was true, but they changed plans

again. I was ready to request leaving the service when they told me that. I got depressed, too, you know. And then we went out one evening, and she said that she'd always loved me from the first time she met me, and it felt so... good. But we're going to wait a year or two to get married. There was a little bit of an argument with her parents, and they think we should wait. But we are very much in love." Eva pauses. "You use the word love often. You wrote it, you said it, you told me you loved me. You compared me to roses." John falls silent. "It's not the right word any longer. I still like you very much, and in a way I love you still. If we could have seen each other more often, it would probably have been you." Eva refuses to cry. "It was a nice story we had. I will remember it for the rest of my life." John's voice softens: "So will I. We did have a nice time together, didn't we? And if you ever come to England, get in touch, and maybe we can see each other again. I would like to see you. But I have to go now. I'll write and tell you more later." Eva has one final question. "Who is she? Have I met her?" John's answer is brief: "No."

Eva throws up in the toilet again. She cries.

Eva takes the train. She gets off at a countryside station. She walks. She arrives at the family summer cottage. Eva cleans. Does laundry. Shops for food in town. She enters the bakery. She asks for a job. She gets one. She faints on the job. They send her home to rest with a bag of buns. Her boss asks her a question before she goes: "I know this is none of my business, but I'm going to ask this anyway, because I know a thing or two about these matters. When did you have your last period, Eva?" Eva doesn't know, but her silence says it all. She goes home. On her walk back, Eva breathes in the fresh air and starts to smile.

When she gets home, Mamma is there, packing a suitcase. "I didn't expect you here, Eva. Don't you usually work at this hour?" Mamma looks tired, older, pale from winter. No hugs for Eva. "I wasn't feeling well, so Berit Anell sent me home. I was thinking of having some tea and a bite to eat. Would you like to join me?" "Well, if you're offering." Mamma fetches a bottle of wine, the one she was drinking is empty. "I'm sure Pappa told you I'm moving to London. I've packed everything in Stockholm, but there were a few things down here that I wanted to take with me. I'll come for the rest later. I'm moving in with a man in London. But that doesn't come as a surprise, does it?" "No, Mamma, I was just wondering if you were going to tell me about it, or leave without a word." Mamma looks irritated. "Of course I was going to tell you, but you're old enough-" "To take care of myself, yes I know, Mamma." Mamma eats her sandwich. The crumbs fall to the floor, but that is none of her concern. She

starts her second glass of wine. "You've always looked down on me, haven't you? I've had to live with your contempt the whole time. You were willful and difficult, always rejecting me. You took Pappa's side in everything. Pappa and Eva, Pappa and Eva. Always the two of you against me." Eva restrains herself. "I was the one who would have done anything to get you to notice me. You ridiculed everything I did and praised everyone else. I wanted your approval so badly, and I'm the one who rejected you?" "Yes, for a short time you wanted me. When you were a baby, and you screamed and only wanted my breast. You made sure I had an awful delivery, and I hurt everywhere, and I despised my puffy body and that bleeding wound down there. All you did was howl and you only would suck from one breast, I would soon look like a misshapen crone. It hurt so much. I had to put you in the bathroom and lock the door so I couldn't hear you. You were like a leech. But things went well with the bottle. Pappa liked to give it to you and you seemed to love it. You started to push me away after that. Only Pappa mattered. Pappa who did everything for you and nothing for me." Eva rolls her eyes. "You don't know a damn thing about it, Eva. He has never satisfied me in any way." "I can't believe you are my mother." Mamma looks at Eva with surprise, then pleasure. "Not believe I am your mother? That would suit you perfectly, wouldn't it? But let me tell you, I am your mother. But Pappa is not your father, just so you know." Eva shakes her head. "You're lying." Mamma smiles. "Shall I tell you a story? A story about love? That's something you don't know anything about. I thought I had met the greatest love of my life. Of course, I was young, not much older than you. When I met Simon, it was love at first sight. God, you should have seen him. He was so handsome. A few weeks later, I was pregnant, and we got engaged. We didn't have a lot of money, but my god, we were happy. It was the happiest time of my life. But as my belly grew, I came to my senses. He was moody, wanted me all to himself, we lived in that ridiculously small studio, he worked odd jobs at the harbour and dreamt of a life at sea. I just wanted to get rid of him. I couldn't raise a child with him. It all came to a dramatic end, you could say. We went sailing one day, and there was a storm." Mamma looks like she is about to cry. "The rain poured down and Simon screamed at me to help him with the sails. I hated him that moment. I really thought we were going to die. There was not another boat in sight, and right in the middle of it all, Simon began to sing. Can you imagine that? Quite frankly, I thought he'd gone crazy. I screamed at him that if we came out of this alive, I was done with him forever. He was standing at the rudder, and I was trying to help with the sail and bail and suddenly someone let go of the sail and the boom whipped from one side to the other. I threw myself on the bottom of the boat. When I got up, Simon was gone.

He had a life vest and was a good swimmer, so I wasn't really afraid for him, but no way I could handle the boat on my own. The boom whipped from side to side and I howled 'Simon, Simon!' and for a short time I saw him and heard him. He was swimming around not far from the boat screaming something about God. Then something big and black kind of washed over him, and then he was gone, really gone. I called and called, but I never again saw or heard a thing, and finally I gave up and laid there and believed I was going to die. I've never been that frightened in my entire life." Mamma smiles, her sparkly self again. "It's really funny, but the storm ended just about as quickly as it came. One minute the waves were up to the sky and the next the sea was calm and still. A big powerboat appeared and saved me. We circled around looking for Simon, but we didn't find him. No one ever found him." Eva is appalled. "You're saying that Simon... my supposed father... just disappeared and you didn't care at all? Didn't you call his relatives or make sure a diver searched the area? You don't even seem sad about it!" Mamma has almost finished the bottle of wine. "Yes, we did all that, the police, the authorities, but Simon was gone. He left me in the lurch! With a child!" "How could he leave you in the lurch if he's dead?", Eva asks. Mamma rolls her eyes. "He's not dead, he's gone. So I had to look for a new father for you, and I found one. Pappa. Your Pappa. He was one of those devoted admirers I had, and we had slept together a few times when I had nothing better to do. The last time was a week or two before I met Simon. So I looked him up and you know how he is. Didn't suspect a thing. He was even happy. I placed his hand on my stomach and said 'Feel!' and you were kind enough to kick right then, and he was sold. So I moved into his apartment, which was much bigger and nicer than Simon's. We got married a few weeks later. And, now, well, now we're divorced." Eva shakes her head, "It never occurred to you to tell us the truth?" Mamma takes offence. "You got a new father. A better one. I never imagined that he'd be so goddamn boring. The only reason I held out so long was for your sake. Now that you can look after yourself, it's finally time for me to look out for myself. So I'm off." "Am I supposed to be grateful?", Eva asks. "Of course you are. I've done a lot of things for you. Most recently, I made sure nothing more happened between you and John." Eva's face turns white. "What are you saying?" Mamma sighs. "He was no good for you. What kind of life is that? Being a seaman's wife. That's what I almost became, and am I glad fate intervened. You were supposed to be interested in all that mathematics and what not. He would hold you back. If he loved you, he would put you first. That's what I told him, and he was smart enough to see I was right. You can have fun with guys like that, but you can't build a life with them, and I should know." Eva is numb. "When did you talk to him?" "Why, when

I was in London, before Christmas. I had his number and called him and we met" "How did you get his number?" "Don't be naive, Eva, how does any woman get a man's number? He's nothing to be sad about Eva, he really wasn't that great after all, now was he? I only want the best for you. I am your mother. I know you. You're not like me. I take what I want and I dare to try new things, but you? You're such a scared little person, aren't you?" Mamma has finished her bottle of wine, and is well drunk by now. Eva's dark, solemn stare utterly consumes her. "I hate you. You are not my mother. I wish you were dead!" Mamma slaps Eva, but Eva is undeterred: "You are a selfish, ugly human being. You're not beautiful, your soul is black and evil." Mamma attacks her, her hands around her throat. "Shut up, you ungrateful little-" Mamma is not herself. She is consumed with drunken rage. "I wish you were never born. I wish you hadn't ruined my life!" Eva struggles for breath. "Mamma, I'm pregnant. Don't hurt my baby." Eva flails her arms around, knocking over the surrounding furniture that domino-effect-like knocks over more furniture. The Virgin Mary statue that Eva once received as a Christmas present wobbles atop the fireplace. Eva grows weaker, and her frantic stare settles into empty space. Mamma releases her grip and calms down. The craziness in her eyes fades, and she looks utterly lost. She starts to cry, wailing like a child. "I'm sorry baby, I didn't mean to." She tries to shake Eva awake, but to no avail. She checks her vitals, although it is doubtful she can register anything in her drunken state at that level of detail and concentration. "It's okay, there's a pulse, thank god, there's a pulse!" Mamma's bottle of wine is empty, and in her despair she stumbles to her feet to go retrieve another. She wobbles around, trips over her own feet, hits her head on the mantle and drops to the floor, unconscious. The Virgin Mary statue wobbles and falls, and lands on Mamma's head. Blood starts to pour from her skull. Silence. The pool of blood grows larger. The clock chimes. Eva stirs. She coughs and sputters and regains consciousness. She looks around and sees her mother in a pool of blood. Scared to touch her, it takes her some time to ascertain that the woman is as dead as a door nail. Freaked out by the blood, now all over her hands, Eva curls up in a corner, crying inconsolably, scared out of her wits. Finally, she pulls herself together, finds a red clothes bag, a shovel and bag of seeds with roses on the cover. The rest is history.

Screen card: July 30th.

Eva sits pensively in the garden admiring her roses, when Gudrun and Petra pass by. Gudrun, still as fat as ever, is sweltering in the summer heat. But Petra has lost weight and is wearing

a new summer dress. The sores around her mouth are gone and she looks amazing. Eva observes them with tenderness. "How is Suzanne?", they ask. Eva sighs. "She always thought that if you work hard enough or try hard enough, bad things won't happen to you. But they do." Petra smiles. "I remember taking care of her when she was little." Gudrun joins in. "Yes, we looked after Suzanne when Eva had to work in the bakery. Those were the days." Petra turns to Eva. "Until you got the job at Jacobi's travel agency and got to travel the world." Gudrun is amazed: "We've been friends forever, haven't we? Petra chimes in: "And if I may, I'm not sure why, but, Eva, you seem different. Much... nicer." Eva laughs and holds Petra's hand. Gudrun walks around the rose garden. She loves Eva's roses. "I don't know how you do it with your roses, Eva. Mine wither and die or get aphids no matter what I try." Eva smiles. "Roses are easy. You make an effort and you are rewarded in return. Manure and constant love show results." "When are they digging them up?" Eva looks down. "In ten days." Silence all around. Eva changes the topic. "How's your new job, Gudrun? Have you had a chance to look in on Irene?" Gudrun shakes her head. "Not yet. We are horribly understaffed. We'll give a job to whoever asks for one. We just hired this lovely man from Algeria, well he's really from France, and he has a wonderful way with those old ladies. Yesterday he sat with Irene, who hasn't been eating well, and he put his arm around her and said, 'Can't you drink just a little café au lait? Just for me?' The way he said it with his French accent was so beguiling, that a simple coffee with milk seemed extra special. So Irene nodded and managed to drink two cups. She made him promise that the day she was totally decrepit, they would toast one another in café au lait and then he would roll her into Helsjö Lake. She said she didn't want to rot away when she'd had so much fun her entire life." A sad smile from Eva. "How much time do you think she has left?" Gudrun shakes her head. "It is hard to say. Some give up the day they enter our doors. Irene seems to have adjusted well. The interns like her. They say she's so grateful." Eva laughs. "How ironic." Petra joins in, "Irene was never nice. But maybe you need to be not so nice in order to be remembered. Gudrun disagrees, "Mother Theresa was nice and she's remembered." Petra shakes her head. "We've all been Mother Theresa. Given of ourselves and received no appreciation in return. As far as I'm concerned Irene is a better role model. My marriage improved after I put my foot down." Eva is all ears. "Yes, how is that going?" Petra smiles. "He's called me twice. On the phone, Hans can't be silent, he has to talk. So we're having conversations, can you believe it?! He says he wants to try again if I also want to try. I asked what I'm supposed to try. And he just says he has needs. That's it. That's all he says. Quite honestly, I don't know if that's good

enough. And all the crap I've thrown away? I've thrown out half my life, and there was a lot of Hans in that half." Gudrun looks at her. "Does he know you've thrown out so much stuff?" Petra laughs. "No. Not really." Gudrun is in awe. "I admire you for throwing your man out like that and getting your act together. Here I am, eating to comfort myself with no energy to do anything. I should diet, I should exercise, I should clean, I should do all sorts of things I hate. But I don't. And I know Sixten carries on with other women. I pretend I don't, but I do. It's not that I don't want to do 'it' with him. I want it all the time. He the one who doesn't want to do 'it' with me. Whenever I try to talk to him about it, he clams up and doesn't say a word. Like Hans." Petra interjects: "Hans says a lot when he's doing it." The three break into laughter. Sven enters the garden. "Hello ladies! What's so funny?" They all stare at him with knowing smiles. He disappears into the house. Gudrun smiles. "Your father is the nicest guy, Eva." Petra concurs: "I really like Sven too."

Pappa arrives at the summer cottage. Eva tells him everything. That Mamma has taken on a new lover. That she is moving to London. That he is not her father. That she is pregnant. Everything except the truth about Mamma's departure. In Pappa's version, Mamma vanishes into a cab and travels to London. Nothing of what Eva says bothers Pappa much, except for the part that he is not her biological father.

They go to the hospital. A doctor tells Eva and her Pappa the results of their DNA test. He is not her biological father. Outside Pappa tells Eva: "When she walked into the restaurant, I knew I'd do whatever it took to get her back. When she said that I was the father and she wanted us to get together. I was completely happy. I never suspected a thing. Of course I was naive, and I've been naive all these years. Of course I saw how she lived. The thought ought to have occurred at least once that the child she was carrying was not mine. But we human beings like to believe what we want to believe. I was in love. Crazy in love. Once you arrived, nothing in the world would have made me doubt you were my daughter. You have always been mine."

EVA (VO): We were the only ones who understood what life had been like for us. We are the only ones who could understand our past. The curse that is Mamma. So we settled down into our life together, the three of us. He commuted to his job and I kept working at the bakery. We started to be seen as a family in spite of everything, me, my father and my daughter. A few

months after Susanne was born, I stopped calling him Pappa and began to use his real name: Sven.

Eva and Pappa create a home in the summer cottage. Her belly grows, as they acquire new furniture, paint, refurbish and tend to the garden. Eva's roses bloom and grow. Suzanne is born and the three look like any regular family where the father is older than the mother. They sit around the fireplace and admire baby Suzanne who is a very happy child.

EVA (VO): I wondered why he never wanted a new and different life. After a while, I realised that he was happy as he was. Happy because he finally got to do the right thing. Happy because he no longer had to defend Mamma. Happy he could compensate for the things he didn't do for me when I was younger. Still, I've told him many times through the years that he no longer had to atone for anything, especially since he never really had anything to atone for. I was not his real child. "What is a real child?" he'd ask and for that I had no answer.

Eva works at a travel agency. She has her own desk. Snapshots of Eva in front of famous tourist attractions in various countries. She purchases postcards and they all exhibit Mamma's handwriting as they flash across the screen.

EVA (VO): No one wondered why they never heard from Mamma. After I got the job at Jacobi's travel agency, I would sometimes be sent abroad on business, and then I would always send a postcard in Mamma's handwriting from wherever I was.

Screen card: August 8th.

It is the middle of the night. The diary is shut and lies untouched on her desk. Eva has changed into warm clothes and sneaks out of the house. Sven snores loudly in his room. Eva grabs a shovel and proceeds to her rose garden. She pulls up her roses, bush by bush. The thorns cut and tear at her, their wrath threatens to consume her. Eva makes her way through the soil. Every dig, every scoop of the shovel, produces a sound from her past: A cutting word, shrill laughter, a wailing complaint. Eva gasps. The earth rips open. Eva digs as if possessed. Until she hits the remains of a red garment bag. She exhumes her mother's body, piece by piece, carefully placing it onto an old blanket. She bundles up the blanket and carries it, like a child in her arms, to the car. She drives to the ocean. Here she carries her bundled blanket onto a boat. Eva starts the motor and sets off to sea. She embraces the moonlight, enjoying

the silence. The boat stops a good distance from shore. Eva sits there, bobbing on the water, listening to the waves, her eyes gazing lovingly at the bundled blanket. Happy sounds replace the nasty sounds from before: Laughter, dancing, a kiss. She drops the blanket into the black water. The joyful laughter drowns and dies. Silence. Eva then pulls out the pouch with Buster's ears and empties its dusty contents into the ocean as well. She starts the motor again and returns to shore. The ocean is now dark, calm and silent.

When Eva sneaks into her house, Sven waits for her. He sits in his armchair by the fireplace, and his voice breaks the silence and startles Eva. "Where did you take her?" Eva doesn't understand. "What do you mean?" "Where did you take Mamma?" Eva breaks down. "You knew?" "You're a terrible liar. I would have believed that Mamma took a cab to the airport and went to London, never to be heard from again, if your face didn't look so damn guilty." Sven wipes her tears. "And your sudden passion for roses, and our six feet long by two feet wide rose garden." "I didn't mean to kill her, Pappa. She choked me, and I passed out, and when I woke up, it was too late. She was drunk. She fell and hit her head. There was so much blood. Blood on my hands. I cleaned and cleaned, and it's still dirty." Sven is visibly relieved. "She fell and hit her head?" Eva nods. Sven laughs. "You didn't kill her?" "Yes, I did." "No, you didn't kill her." "I wanted to. I wished she was dead." Sven looks her in the eye. "So did I." Those words are a revelation to Eva. "Listen to me, Eva, you've done your time. You're finally free."

Screen card: August 9th

Eva reads the paper at breakfast across from Sven who reads too. "They still haven't found Irene." Sven looks up. "No?" "Her daughter has written a letter that the paper has printed. She demands an investigation. It's just like her to enter the limelight now, without having to lift a finger, and of course it's much more fun to appear on television and to collect an inheritance than it is to clean up a dirty house. Still, she is Irene's daughter and she is supposed to be upset, not me." Sven looks at her. "It's not every day an elderly person disappears from a nursing home. Do you think she drowned in the lake?" Eva flashes him a knowing glance. "The nice Algerian man has disappeared too." Sven is speechless: "No?!" Eva nods. "The police interviewed him and found him to be above suspicion. He told them he opened Irene's porch door, then went to make her a café au lait, and when he returned, she

was gone. He was always so kind to her. And now he's vanished too. Everyone assumes she had the strength to wheel herself down to the lake." Eva indicates she knows better by tapping her temple with her finger. Sven returns to his paper: "She did make him promise that when she was decrepit enough, he would wheel her into the lake." Eva smiles. "Or they are drinking café au lait somewhere. In freedom."

A knock on the door. It is the workers who have come to dig up the water pipes in the garden.

Eva watches them as they desecrate her roses. She smiles. She is at peace.

Screen card: August 10th.

Eva digs out an old letter from a hidden box in her attic. She looks at the envelope. It is from John. The letter morphs into the state it was in when it was new:

Eva holds John's letter. She is standing in front of her mailbox. Frozen.

Eva sits in her garden. A cup of tea by her side. Baby Suzanne plays on a blanket. Eva opens the envelope, slowly and deliberately, taking care not to rip the paper. She starts to read.

JOHN'S VO: "Dear Eva. I hope that you don't mind if I write you once again. But I am so sad about what has happened and I understand completely if you take this letter and rip it up without reading any further. Much has happened since we last saw each other. You know that I was engaged and we were going to be married, in fact, right around this time. Due to a number of circumstances, there will not be a wedding and most likely I will never be seeing Laura, my former fiancée, again. Now I am trying to put the pieces of my life back together. Of course I am feeling depressed and lonely, but really I don't have much to complain about. I still have my work, some money and my health, and that's at least a start. I considered whether or not I should write to you for quite some time. I remember all the good things between us and how interesting I found you and I remember that I used to think that you were the only woman I ever met who could be a good friend even if nothing more happened between us. Then I think about how I treated you, and that I am the person you would least likely want to have anything to do with. My emotions told me I should write, but my sense of decency and my desire to do the right thing, or whatever you want call it, told me to let it be. Finally, I took out all your letters and reread them, over and over and over. I thought about the

lovely time we had together and I felt very much alone. So I decided I had nothing to lose by writing. Maybe there is a possibility that you remember what I remember and will answer me as a good friend. I am sorry if this letter hurts you in any way, but I have often wondered whatever happened to the beautiful rose that I hurt so much, and I wonder how she is doing. I would be very happy to hear from you. With love, John."

Eva folds up the letter and puts it back in the envelope. Then she puts the envelope under her saucer. As if the letter never existed. Eva smiles at baby Suzanne, picks her up and kisses her all over. "Suzanne, my love, you are all I need in this world. You and me against the rest. We don't need anyone or anything."

Eva holds John's letter as she talks on the phone. Or rather listens. We hear the voice of an Englishman through the receiver: "He'd be retired by now, this John of yours. If he stayed in the Navy, he would be getting a pension from us, and in that case we would have his address. I suggest that you write a letter. Send it to us with a cover letter, where you write down everything you know and be as detailed as possible. We will do our best to send on your letter. Write to ASPAA (C), Management Services Case Work, Centurion Building, Grange Road, Gosport, Hampshire. And you need the post code. PO13 9XA. Shall I repeat it for you? All right, if you write, we'll do our best to find him for you." Eva scribbles down the address. She thanks the man and hangs up. She looks at what she wrote and she smiles.

EVA (VO): The whales reawaken to new life by going under and then rising to the surface again. I went under. I plunged through the depths. I rose.