

**Beat Sheet of  
Johnstown  
A Period Love Story/Drama  
Original Screenplay by Bruce Macintyre  
January 1, 2014**

**Opening Image (1)**

- **Gliding up the Little Conemaugh river in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, circa 1889. A new bridge with carriages crossing dissolves to today with the old bridge being torn down.**

**Set-Up (1-4)**

- **A worker notices a sparkle in the mud of the river bed where a coffer dam is keeping back the water. He and the construction company owner, JACK, go down to find it is a diamond ring on the finger of a skeleton. An archeologist is summoned to recover the remains and as they wait, the men talk about the 1889 flood that destroyed the town, the construction owner saying his great-grandparents were caught in it but, luckily for him, survived. They wonder about the unfortunate woman who was wearing the lovely engagement ring.**
- **The scene dissolves to the ring on the finger of a woman trailing her hand in a lake from a rowboat. It is the young VICKIE DONNELSON, being rowed by her recent fiancé, GUY MANSLEY, on their way to a picnic in the woods on the wooded shore of Lake Conemaugh, a lake in the mountain two miles long and a mile across, created by a dam for the pleasure of the wealthy inhabitants of the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club. A large clubhouse and imposing country homes are visible on the shore behind them.**
- **Guy annoys Vickie by splashing her silk blouse, both dressed in elaborate Victorian clothes. As they get out on the far shore, a canoe is visible down the lake with a single man in it. Carrying their picnic things, they set off up into the woods next to a stream.**

**Theme Stated (4)**

- **Guy kisses a reluctant Vickie, obviously intent on having more from her. She protests and he reminds her they're engaged, Vickie responding "Two weeks," saying she wants to wait for their marriage. Guy continues to force himself on her. Their relationship isn't going to survive.**

**Catalyst (4-8)**

- A bear ambles out of the woods by the stream and they flee up the bank into the brush. Vickie falls into a small quarry, Guy unable to get her out from above. He tells her to hide, he'll run to the boat and get a rope.
- As Guy struggles with the rope on the rowboat, the canoe pulls up carrying SEAN PATRICK, a young worker at the club. Guy tells him what's happening and Sean races up into the woods.
- The bear has discovered Vickie in the quarry and she is trying to fend it off with a branch. Sean drops into the quarry and tells her to run while he holds off the bear. Vickie refuses, flinging rocks at the bear. Sean asks if her blouse is silk, Vickie wonders but tells him yes, and he rips it off her. He rubs it on himself and then flings it over the bear's face, the static electricity making it cling to the bear's fur so they can get past it and run.

#### Debate (8-33)

- They reach the shore and call for Guy who appears from the woods. As he listens to their story, he's annoyed as Vickie exclaims over Sean, proclaiming him her hero and kissing him. Guy makes Vickie cover up from having no blouse and gets her in the rowboat, Sean leaving in the canoe.
- Reaching the clubhouse, Sean looks back at Vickie on the lake. He's smitten, but he's poor while she's rich and engaged.
- In the rowboat, Vickie watches her hero head off. She, too, is smitten but there's Guy. Guy isn't smitten with anyone but himself, and he's pissed off.
- Sean gets his weekend pay and walks across the dam and down the valley to the small upriver community where he hitches a ride on the train that carries him the twelve miles to his home in Johnstown.
- Sean is at work at the Cambria Iron Works in Johnstown where he and a couple of buddies are putting in the new electrical system. His boss comes in with DAVID DONNELSON, Vickie's father and millionaire owner of the Pittsburgh Theatre. He thanks Sean for saving his daughter's life and is intrigued to learn about Sean's skill with the new art of electricity, being shown the electric hoist Sean has just built. He invites Sean to have dinner with him and his family at their home in the mountain club the next weekend.
- At work repairing the dam at the club, Sean and the others watch entranced as the beautiful Vickie Donnelson rides up on her horse. The foreman lets her take Sean aside and they have a conversation that puzzles him about his seeing them in Pittsburgh where perhaps they'll give him a party for what he did. He's worried about

fraternizing with the club members which the workers aren't supposed to do, Vickie assuring him he can't get in trouble as her father likes him. He discounts his selfless heroism, telling her they don't need to give him a party, and is puzzled as she abruptly rides away, apparently annoyed with him for some reason.

- At dinner in the Donnelson's, Vickie seems in a better mood, Mrs. Donnelson noticing her daughter's infatuation. Sean tells of his family, his widowed mother and two younger sisters, how his father raised steeplechase horses, his mother becoming a seamstress after his father passed away. Afterwards, Mr. Donnelson takes Sean aside and offers him a job putting in electricity at his theatre and Sean accepts, Vickie thrilled to hear the news.
- Sean tells his widowed mother and two young sisters the news, how Mr. Donnelson will get them all a house in Pittsburgh; but his mother declines to leave, congratulating Sean and convincing him they'll be fine and he's capable now of being on his own.

#### Break Into Two (Choosing Act Two) (33-39)

- Sean rides the Donnelson's private train into Pittsburgh where he's met by Vickie who takes him to his new digs in MRS. WILLEY's cozy rooming house used by a number of the unattached at the theatre.
- Sean begins his new job and finds that Guy is an executive at the theatre.

#### B-Story (39-41)

- Vickie intercepts Sean on his way home to Mrs. Willey's and invites him to their estate that weekend for a fox hunt.
- Guy spies on them from down the street.

#### The Promise of the Premise (41-54)

- Sean attends the fox hunt at the Donnelson estate, Guy advising him to just try to stay on his horse during the hunt, not knowing that Sean's father raised steeplechase horses and Sean is a champion rider.
- Sean breaks off from the hunt, not the slightest bit inclined to kill a fox, and then finds the fox frantically breaking from the woods ahead of the hunt. He chases down the fox and captures it in his coat then rides for the woods to free it, Guy pursuing him in a race. Sean expertly jumps obstacles and Guy finally takes a tumble, Sean releasing the fox to safety down a hole in the woods.
- He meets up with Vickie and Guy who's injured and being helped back on his horse. Sean gives Vickie a bouquet he's picked and rides with her. Sneezing from red fur

among the flowers, she realizes Sean caught and saved the fox, touched by his kindness.

- At the outdoor reception afterwards, Sean and Vickie talk, Guy off to the doctor's for his injuries. They speak a bit about her being engaged, Vickie hinting she feels it may have been a mistake.
- Sean meets GEORGE WESTINGHOUSE, a friend of Mr. Donnelson's, and they talk about the new art of electricity, Sean using a Westinghouse generator.
- Vickie asks Sean to be her escort to a party for a European opera star coming to her father's theatre, Guy not available as he's going to visit his family. He, of course, agrees, both of them feeling a bit wicked.

#### Midpoint (54-58)

- Guy confronts Sean at work, annoyed that Vickie has asked Sean to take her to the party when he's away. He closely watches Sean working on the wiring for the new electric lights in the executive office building.
- At the party, Vickie sings in her extraordinary voice with the European opera star. Sean tells her he's so impressed, Vickie asking "With just my singing?" She says the party is getting a bit boring and asks if he's up for something different. In the park lit by gaslight, they ride the new amusement of bicycles. Vickie loses control and ends up in the pond, Sean jumping in to rescue her though she needs no rescue. They kiss. They're more than just friends.

#### Bad Guys Close In (58-69)

- Guy isn't visiting his parents; he's in a brothel plotting with a prostitute named DELORES to compromise his rival.
- As Sean works on finishing the new electric light system in the power plant building, Guy comes by to invite him for drinks after work as they need to talk about Vickie. Sean reluctantly agrees.
- Guy is magnanimous over drinks in the bar, telling Sean he's won Vickie's heart and done him a favor as he doesn't want to marry someone who doesn't truly love him.
- From a nearby table, Delores and another prostitute, Jonquil, watch as Sean grows dizzy from the drugged drinks he's been given, the BARTENDER also in on it. Sean staggers to the water closet passing out, Guy following him.
- Guy is driving Vickie from dinner and goes by the bar where the prostitutes are in the street with Sean, pretending they're drunk and carousing when in reality Sean is

unconscious and they're carrying him. Guy makes sure Vickie sees them and Delores tells Vickie that Sean is always with them and she can join them anytime, saying to just ask for Delores in the bar there.

- Hurt and angry, Vickie drives off with Guy who hides his glee.
- Guy drops her off then goes to the theatre and shorts the wires on Sean's electric lighting.

#### All Is Lost (69-71)

- Sean is late to the test of the new lighting, having no idea how he woke up in the gutter, Guy claiming complete ignorance of how he ended up with the two whores Vickie and he found him with.
- Sean has no memory of the event and is stunned by the news.
- Mr. Donnelson is annoyed at Sean being late, but it gets worse when the lighting system doesn't work and then the theatre breaks out in fire, the fire brigade arriving to fight it with everyone helping out. Guy gloats as Sean sinks into despair.

#### Dark Night of the Soul (71-74)

- Sean goes to the Donnelson estate where he tries to see Vickie who rebuffs him, Sean escorted off the premises being told he'll be arrested if he shows up there again.
- In a terrible storm, Sean despondently stares out the window from his house in Johnstown, his young sisters worried about him.

#### Break Into Three (Choosing Act Three) (75-103)

- Vickie gives Mrs. Willey, Sean's former landlady, a ride in the storm and she commiserates on what a shame it was about the young Mr. Patrick. She mentions the only time Sean ever went out was when he was seeing Vickie. Vickie is puzzled as the prostitute claimed Sean was with them all the time.
- Sean's mother is worried about him and in the storm he sets off from his house to try to get his job back at the club, hoping he'll see Vickie there again.
- Vickie goes to the bar and tells the bartender she's a prostitute from Chicago looking for her old friend Delores, bribing the bartender to tell her where the brothel is that Delores works from.
- Delores is angry that Guy threw her over for the younger, prettier prostitute Jonquil but wonders if Vickie wants to hear the truth. Vickie does.

- Mr. Donnelson gets Guy at work and tells him his wife just called to tell him Vickie took off for Johnstown to bring back Sean Patrick and that the thing with the prostitutes wasn't his fault and that Guy knows about it. Guy claims he doesn't know what's going on except that he knew Sean used prostitutes but didn't say anything about it. Donnelson sends him off in his private train to intercept Vickie.
- Sean arrives at the club to find the storm is threatening to overflow the dam which will cause it to collapse, helping in the desperate attempt to free the spillway grate to save the dam.
- Vickie arrives in Johnstown and goes to Sean's house.
- Guy arrives on the private train to be met by a carriage arranged by Donnelson to take him to Sean's house where she meets his mother and sisters.
- Sean realizes they can't save the dam and grabs a horse, jumps the gap in the dam road, and gallops down the valley to warn everyone of the impending flood.
- Coming back from Sean's, Vickie is startled to see her father's train on a station siding and learns that Guy brought it, commanding it to take her up to the club.
- Sean warns the upriver community and finds the telegraph lines to Johnstown are down in the storm. He commands the train leaving the upriver community, uncouples the engine and tender, and starts racing back for Johnstown.
- Guy finds the Donnelson train gone and learns Vickie took it to go to the club, taking the carriage to chase her.
- Vickie on her father's train is stopped by the tracks being washed away above Johnstown.
- At the club, the dam gives way and the huge lake begins emptying into the river valley in a deluge with a face of tumbling water some forty-five feet high, destroying everything in its path.
- Sean just makes it across a bridge ahead of the flood and gets a brief respite as the flood turns to follow the ox-bow loop in the river.
- Guy finds Vickie on the train and begins his lies. She tells him she learned the truth from the prostitute and tries to take off the engagement ring, but Guy stops her, going on with his lies as she crosses her arms and turns away from him.
- The flood returns to the bridge in force and is bottled up momentarily then bursts through with the pause having built it even higher.

- Sean is stopped by the washed out tracks and jumps from the train to warn the workers and everyone about the coming flood. He sees the Donnelson train and runs to it, Vickie telling him what she's learned.
- Sean knows there's no time and tells them to hold on as the flood is about to reach them. Guy tries to flee, but the flood hits and the train is upended and carried away.
- The train is destroyed in the maelstrom, Sean and Vickie ending up on a piece of the railway car with Guy struggling in the water. Sean rescues him but is thrown into the water himself. Vickie has Guy hold her arm while she tries to pull Sean onto their raft, and Guy angrily tells Vickie she never should have gone looking for that whore. He pulls the diamond ring from her finger, saying he can't let her ruin him with her father, and lets go of her so she falls into the flood with Sean. He slips the ring onto his pinkie while he calls that he had to do it.
- The locomotive rises from the depths into the air above the raft and comes down on it while Guy screams, smashed down into the raging waters while Sean and Vickie are propelled towards the shore.
- They're pulled out by rescuers and lie exhausted, slightly hysterical, Vickie saying to Sean "Are you ever going to stop saving my life?" She relates Guy's schemes and Sean says, "Trying to kill us he saved our lives."
- A woman with a baby boy and young girl riding a piece of debris are suddenly thrown from it into the water. Sean jumps in to save them, getting the woman holding the baby. The little girl is being carried away and Vickie jumps in to save her, the two of them swept away.

#### Finale (103-116)

- The flood has passed, the town destroyed, as Sean searches desperately for Vickie. He sees the little girl Vickie rescued being cared for by the woman. He tells them the little girl's mother and brother are safe at the first medical station and learns Vickie is trapped in debris piled against the brick railway bridge at the end of town.
- He rushes there to find his friend Will from the iron works and others trying to save people, including Vickie who is trapped under a beam in the middle of the debris, alert and resolute.
- The debris pile has caught fire and the rescuers explain they can't move the heavy beam pinning Vickie and are leaving her to rescue others. Sean implores Will to stay to help and finally thinks of the electrical hoist he built at the iron works.
- He and Will rush to the plant and Sean hooks up electric wiring while Will brings the hoist out on the tracks to the bridge. Sean hooks up the wiring and climbs down

through the debris to place the cable around the beam pinning Vickie. His friend starts the hoist and the beam is lifted enough to free Vickie.

- Sean falls down through the shifting debris to disappear in the dark river below and unhesitatingly, Vickie jumps down into the dark hole into the water after him.
- Sean's friend is in dismay seeing the two of them disappear. But then Vickie appears in the river above the debris pile pulling the unconscious Sean to safety on the shore.
- He revives, Will telling him Vickie saved his life. She tells Sean that a few more times and they'll be even. They kiss and...

#### Final Image (116)

- ...they're kissing at their outdoor wedding at the Donnelson estate. Everyone congratulates the newlyweds until the sky rumbles and raindrops begin to fall. Everyone rushes inside, still traumatized by the storm that caused the immense destruction of the flood.

#### Epilogue (117)

- The present day workers in the river bed watch as the archeologist exposes the skeleton. The ring is not on the deceased person's ring finger but the pinkie, and it's not a woman but a man.
- The construction owner is addressed as Mr. Patrick. It's Sean and Vickie's great-grandson that has found the skeleton of Guy Mansley.

The End