

THE MAD POTTER

Written by

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Based on the Life of George E. Ohr

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OVER BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE: "And the potter said unto the clay, be ware, and it was." George E. Ohr

FADE IN:

EXT. OHR HOUSE-DAY

The sun creeps above the horizon. Somewhere off in the distance, a rooster CROWS.

INT. OHR HOUSE/BEDROOM-DAY

The bed CREAKS underneath GEORGE OHR (60), who rises slowly. His feet dangle off the side of the bed. His long, grey beard is a ruffled mess, matching the thinning hair on his head. He begins to HACK and COUGH.

JOSEPHINE OHR (50), stirs slightly but is mostly unfazed.

George shuffles towards an aging sink. He turns the knob and splashes his face with cold water. He stares at his reflection in the mirror. He is pale and his eyes are sunken.

EXT. OHR HOUSE-DAY

George straps up his suspenders. With a leisurely stretch, he raises his arms towards the heavens.

INT. SHED-DAY

The rusty hinges of the shed's door begin to SQUEAK as George pushes it open. He steps inside, his eyes immediately drawn to the centerpiece. WOOSH! He yanks back the heavy tarp, unveiling his 1910 Thor motorcycle.

EXT. BEACHSIDE-DAY

VROOM! George tears down the beachline, the bike kicking up sand in his wake. He grips the handlebars, twists the accelerator, the engine HOWLING even louder.

His twisted mustache is meticulously tucked behind his ears. His beard flutters in the wind as his wrinkled face widens into a mischievous grin.

SUPERIMPOSE: "The Mad Potter"

BEGIN TITLES

EXT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: Biloxi, Mississippi, 1917

George's motorcycle rolls to a stop outside the five story building. A worn and tattered sign hangs above the doorway, bearing the faded letters "Biloxi Art Pottery Unlimited."

INT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

SCREECH! George struggles to slide the old, rusty door open. He steps in and scans the room. The shelves are stacked with pottery. His mud babies.

George shuffles towards the workbench, clearing away the cobwebs. His gaze lands on a small CERAMIC MONKEY, perched on a shelf. The sculpture carries a visible crack. George's fingers graze the fault line.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BILOXI-DAY

A very young George (3), criss-crosses his way through the crowded street of downtown Biloxi, a world alive with horse-drawn carriages and bustling shops. His mother, JOHANNA OHR (30's), calls out in a mix of concern and panic. She holds George's brother, AUGUST OHR (5), tightly by the arm.

JOHANNA

George? George?

George continues to navigate through the CROWD. He slips into the nearest shop, finding refuge behind an old, weathered barrel. Peeking through the cracks, he watches his mother's desperate attempt to find him.

JOHANNA (CONT'D)

George? Where's that boy run off to?

Johanna passes by the shop, dragging August close behind.

INT. MEYER POTTERY SHOP-DAY

George emerges from hiding, surrounded by a trove of pottery. His attention zeroes in on a table adorned with trinkets, his eyes fixating on a CERAMIC MONKEY.

He reaches out to touch it. A hand SNAPS around his wrist, spinning him around. JOSEPH MEYER (12), stands in front him, a look of disapproval upon his face.

GEORGE stumbles backwards, colliding with the legs of FRANCOIS MEYER (40's), who towers above him.

FRANCOIS

Well, well, what do we have here?

Panicked, George bolts. Francois yanks him back by his britches.

FRANCOIS (CONT'D)

Hold on, now!

JOHANNA (O.S.)

Oh, thank the heavens!

George looks up to see his mother rushing towards him.

JOHANNA (CONT'D)

George Edgar Ohr, how many times  
have I told you not to wander off?  
Do you have any idea how worried I  
was?

Johanna scoops him up.

JOHANNA (CONT'D)

Apologies, Mr. Meyer. George here  
has a habit of running off at the  
first chance he gets.

FRANCOIS

Seems curiosity got the better of  
him.

JOHANNA

Yes, well, it often does. I hope he  
didn't cause you too much trouble.

FRANCOIS

Not at all. Just seemed very taken  
with the items in the shop. I think  
he has an eye for the unique.

JOHANNA

I can imagine why. You do have  
quite the collection here, Mr.  
Meyer.

FRANCOIS

Ah, yes! Every piece has its own story. This one, for example, has been with me for many years.

Francois picks up a small ceramic monkey from the table, holding it up with care.

FRANCOIS (CONT'D)

Do you know what makes this monkey so special, George?

George shakes his head, his eyes fixed on the monkey with growing curiosity.

FRANCOIS (CONT'D)

He's smarter than he looks. Cunning. Knows just how to get what he wants. I see a bit of that spark in you too, George. A bit of mischief and wonder.

Francois places the trinket in George's palm.

FRANCOIS (CONT'D)

Now listen here, George. I want you to have this...a reminder that sometimes the smallest things can hold the greatest treasures. Promise me you'll look after it, just like you would a friend.

Wide-eyed, George nods.

JOHANNA

You have a kind heart, Mr. Meyer.

Johanna looks down at George who is admiring the new trinket.

JOHANNA (CONT'D)

Well, George? What do we say?

GEORGE

Thank you.

FRANCOIS

You're most welcome. Remember, take real good care of it.

JOHANNA

Good day to you, Mr. Meyer. And thank you again for your generosity.

FRANCOIS

The pleasure was all mine.

Johanna exits into the crowded street. George looks over her shoulder, Joseph staring back with a stern gaze.

INT. OHR'S BLACKSMITH SHOP-DAY

GEORGE OHR SR. (30'S), pulls a piece of steel from the burning coals. He's a muscular man and wields a hammer with ease. CLANK! CLANK!

Johanna approaches with George and August in tow. She gently sets George down.

JOHANNA

You two stay close. Keep an eye on your brother, August!

Johanna sneaks up and wraps her arms around her husband's waist. George Sr. pulls her close and kisses her.

GEORGE SR.

Get what you needed from the market?

JOHANNA

Most of it. How's work?

GEORGE SR.

Too much work, not enough hands. Folk's out to ruin their horses.

JOHANNA

At least there's money to be made.

Their attention shifts to their children playing nearby.

GEORGE SR.

(in German)

And those two?

JOHANNA

August...quiet as always. But George, he's a free spirit, that one.

The two of them watch as August chases George around barrels, laughter filling the air.

GEORGE SR.

He gets that adventurous streak from your side of the family.

JOHANNA

There's nothing wrong with a boy  
his age having a sense of wonder.

GEORGE SR.

Liabile to get him in hot water one  
these days.

George Sr. dips the steel piece in a barrel of oil, causing  
it to steam.

JOHANNA

You worry too much.

GEORGE SR.

I just want to see him grow up to  
be a proper man is all.

JOHANNA

Let the boy be. My Georgie will  
find his own way.

EXT. HILLSIDE-DAY

August chases George down the hillside. George glances back,  
his foot snagging on a tree root. He stumbles, landing face-  
first in the dirt with a THUD.

George pulls himself up, dusting off his clothes. His hand  
reaches into his pocket, retrieving the ceramic monkey, now  
broken in two.

August reaches the bottom of the hill, seeing the shattered  
trinket.

EXT. OHR HOUSE-NIGHT

The hurricane winds beat against the side of the house. The  
shutters SLAM violently. Rain pelts the rooftop.

INT. OHR HOUSE/BEDROOM CLOSET-NIGHT

In the confined space of the closet, the Ohr family huddles  
together. George Sr. clutches a flickering gas lamp, its  
flame barely lighting the room. August clings to his mother's  
waist, his eyes shutting with each SLAM of the shudders.

JOHANNA

There's no need to be afraid. It's  
just the wind making a ruckus.

(MORE)

JOHANNA (CONT'D)  
Momma won't let anything bad happen  
to you boys.

George glances up at his father. George Sr. has a look  
concern. He glances back.

GEORGE SR.  
Don't you worry yourself, boy. Like  
your momma said. It's just the  
wind.

George pulls the ceramic monkey from his pocket, now glued  
back together. He pets the top of its head for reassurance.

EXT. BEACHSIDE-NEXT DAY

Joseph Meyer sits alone on the sand, tears streaming down his  
face. Debris is scattered along the shoreline. He clenches a  
broken piece of pottery. George approaches him cautiously.

JOSEPH  
It's all gone...everything...just  
gone.

George reaches deep into his pocket, retrieving the repaired  
ceramic monkey. He offers it to Joseph.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BILOXI-WEEKS LATER

George watches the Meyer family load all their belongings  
into a horse-drawn wagon. Joseph, now holding the ceramic  
monkey, gives a slight wave to George as they drive away.

JOHANNA (O.S.)  
That poor family. I hope they have  
better luck in New Orleans.

GEORGE SR. (O.S.)  
Let this be a lesson, boys. Life  
can be unpredictable. You best be  
ready for whatever it throws at  
you.

FADE TO:

INT. GULFPORT WAREHOUSE-DAY

George, now in his (20's), stands with his fists up.



POP! A fist belonging to LESTER BIGGS (40's), slams smack dab in the middle of George's face. George stumbles backwards, blood gushing from his nose.

LESTER  
I done warned you, Ohr!

Lester grabs George by the collar of his shirt, yanking him towards the warehouse entrance.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
This is the last time you go  
sleeping on the job!

He tosses George like a rag doll onto the sidewalk.

EXT. GULFPORT WAREHOUSE-DAY

LESTER  
I better not catch your scrawny ass  
on my docks again, or you'll get  
more than a bloody nose.

Lester stomps back inside the warehouse. George stands, dusting himself off, his own frustration simmering.

GEORGE  
I would't dare step foot back into  
that hellhole...you fat son of a  
bitch!

George storms off, disappearing around the corner and making his way across the street.

EXT. OHR HOUSE-NIGHT

The horse-drawn wagon rolls to a stop. George hops off.

GEORGE  
Thanks for the ride.

DRIVER  
Anytime, George.

EXT. OHR HOUSE/BACK PORCH-NIGHT

George attempts to sneak around towards the backdoor, the flicker from a match stopping him in his tracks.

GEORGE SR. (O.S.)  
Long day at work?

George Sr. sits quietly in his rocking chair, puffing away on his pipe. George does his best to avoid eye contact with his father.

GEORGE  
You could say that.

George Sr. looks at the blood stains on his son's shirt.

GEORGE SR.  
You've been fighting, haven't you?

GEORGE  
No sir...

GEORGE SR.  
Don't you lie to me, boy.

GEORGE  
It wasn't a big deal. Lester's  
always had it out for me...

GEORGE SR.  
That right? I'm guessing he had  
good reason to sock you.

George falls into silence, unable to meet his father's gaze.

GEORGE SR. (CONT'D)  
Well? He fire you?

GEORGE  
It's not my fault, Pa.

GEORGE SR.  
It's never your fault, is it, son?  
Goddammit, George! That's the third  
job in the last six months!

GEORGE  
I'll find another job.

GEORGE SR.  
And how long until you get tossed  
on your ass?

George Sr. stands up and takes a long drag from his pipe.

GEORGE SR. (CONT'D)  
I've tried teaching you  
blacksmithing but you don't want  
anything to do with it.

GEORGE

There's nothing wrong with  
blacksmithing, Pa. I just don't  
find any fun in it.

GEORGE SR.

Life isn't about chasing your own  
whims, George. Its about hard work.  
You think I enjoy breaking my back  
every damn day?

George swallows hard, his father's words striking deeper than  
any punch.

GEORGE SR. (CONT'D)

You need to stop being so damn  
stubborn and start taking  
responsibility. Now go clean  
yourself up before your mother sees  
you.

GEORGE

Yessir.

George Sr. resumes his place in the rocking chair, puffing on  
his pipe. George heads inside, his father's words echoing in  
his mind.

INT. OHR HOUSE/BEDROOM-NIGHT

George plops down on his mattress with exhaustion. August  
looks up from his own bed, concerned.

AUGUST

What the hell happened to you?

GEORGE

I don't want to talk about it.

AUGUST

Why you all bloody?

GEORGE

Mind your own beeswax!

George throws a pillow in frustration, barely missing August.

AUGUST

Don't get your britches in a knot.  
A package came for you. It's on the  
nightstand.

August rolls back over. Curiosity piqued, George rushes to the nightstand and grabs the small box. He tears it open eagerly, revealing a letter.

JOSEPH (V.O.)

"Dear George. I hope this letter finds you well. Although it has been several years since we last met, I have never forgotten the kindness you showed me during a much troubling time in my life. My family and I have found a new life in New Orleans where our business has prospered over the years. In an effort to return your generosity, I would like to extend an invitation to you to visit our humble establishment so we may become better acquainted. Please know you will always have a place to stay if you choose to do so. Sincerely, Joseph Fortune Meyers".

George's gaze shifts to the ceramic monkey he once gifted to Joseph. He chuckles softly.

EXT. TRAIN STATION/FIELDS-DAY

A roaring FREIGHT TRAIN barrels along the tracks.

George springs from beneath the bushes and sprints, reaching one of the boxcars. He leaps and grabs the opening, his fingers clinging on as he slowly pulls himself up.

EXT. DOWNTOWN NEW ORLEANS-DAY

George navigates his way down the crowded street, spotting a sign hanging above one of the shops: "Meyer Pottery Kiln".

INT. MEYER POTTERY KILN/STOREFRONT-DAY

George enters, surveying the pottery on display.

FELICIE (O.S.)

May I help you?

FELICIE MEYER (30's), a dainty woman with a confident smile, approaches.

GEORGE

I hope so, ma'am. I'm here to see a Mr. Joseph Meyer.

FELICIE

Certainly. May I ask who's calling?

George give his mustache a twirl.

GEORGE

Could you let him know a Mr. George Ohr is here to see him?

JOSEPH (O.S.)

George?

Joseph, now in his (30's), appears from the backroom and greets George warmly.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

George! It's good to see you! I see you've met my wife, Felicie.

GEORGE

(to Felicie)

Pleasure to meet you.

FELICIE

So this is the fella you were telling me about?

JOSEPH

Yes, indeed. George and I go way back.

GEORGE

I was nothing but guppy back then.

JOSEPH

That you were. Please. Come on back.

INT. MEYER POTTERY KILN/BACKROOM-DAY

The room is cluttered with pottery, unfinished pieces, and tools scattered around. The earthy smell of clay lingers in the air.

JOSEPH

Sorry about the mess.

Joseph grabs a bottle from the shelf.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Whiskey?

GEORGE

Don't mind if I do.

Joseph pours out a glass and hands it to George.

JOSEPH

How's Biloxi been treating you?

GEORGE

Fine, I suppose. Has its ups and downs. Mostly downs lately, if I'm being honest.

JOSEPH

You know, my father—may he rest in peace—was deeply affected by the storm. The stress, the rebuilding...it was too much for him. The man was tough as nails, but even he couldn't bear it all. One day, his heart just gave out.

GEORGE

I'm sorry to hear that. It must've been hard on you.

JOSEPH

Yeah, well...I sort of inherited the family business and have been following in his footsteps ever since.

Joseph takes a long sip, savoring the burn of the whiskey.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

I bet you're wondering why I invited you all the way out here.

George pulls the ceramic monkey from his pocket.

GEORGE

I'm guessing it has something to do with this.

JOSEPH

Exactly. I was going through some old things, clearing out the attic, and to my surprise, I found that monkey.

(MORE)

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

It got me thinking—about that day  
on the beach, when we first met.  
Maybe our encounter was more  
significant than we realized. Maybe  
there's more to it...to us. Perhaps  
our fates are somehow intertwined,  
you know?

Joseph gulps down the rest of his glass.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

George, how'd you fancy the chance  
to learn the trade?

GEORGE

I don't know anything about  
throwing clay.

JOSEPH

I'll teach you. Give you a feel for  
it. You can be like...my  
apprentice. No harm in trying, is  
there?

George strokes his beard and tilts his head.

GEORGE

Well, I do find myself gainfully  
unemployed at the moment.

JOSEPH

Then it's settled. You can stay  
with us until you decide if it's  
for you. How's that sound?

George gulps down the last of his drink.

GEORGE

Sounds like you got yourself an  
apprentice.

INT. MEYER POTTERY KILN/BACKROOM-LATER

BEGIN MONTAGE

Joseph observes as George kneads the clay.

JOSEPH

Press and roll. Press and roll. Let  
the clay mold to your touch.

George wipes the sweat from his brow.

GEORGE

This is tougher than I thought.

JOSEPH

You aren't making bread. It's going to take some elbow grease. Work it with purpose. Pliability is key.

George sits at the potter's wheel, clutching a lump of clay.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

You need to get the wheel spinning with your foot. Control the pace. There you go. Now, drop the clay onto the center of the wheel.

BAM! Joseph demonstrates with a firm smack.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

You try. Aim for the center.

George attempts to throw the clay. It misses the mark.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Give it another go.

George tries it again, this time hitting it dead center.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Good. Now lean into it. Support that arm until you can even it out.

Struggling, George strains to manipulate the clay.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Don't be afraid to give it some force.

George bares down. The clays begins to center.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Now, press your thumbs down the middle, and gently pull outward.

George jams his fingers into the clay. It starts to take shape.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Nice and slow. Take your time. It's art, not a race.

George continues to let his fingers glide upward. The clay begins to rise. Then, an overzealous push leads to its collapse.



GEORGE  
Well, shit.

JOSEPH  
You rushed it. Try again.

George attempts raising the clay a second time. Again, the piece collapses.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)  
Again.

On the third try, the wheel spins too fast, sending the clay spiraling.

GEORGE  
(in German)  
Dammit!

END MONTAGE

JOSEPH  
Hold on a minute. Listen. Pottery isn't the same as blacksmithing. With steel, you need to hammer it hard. But clay is different. It requires patience. Finesse. You've got to let your fingers guide the clay.

GEORGE  
If you haven't noticed, I'm not exactly the most patient fella.

JOSEPH  
Its like dancing. Feel the rhythm, like a waltz.

Joseph mimics the steps.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)  
One, two, three. One, two, three.

GEORGE  
Yeah, yeah. I get what you're saying.

JOSEPH  
Lastly, you have to feel it. Not just with your hands...but with your soul. That's what separates you from the rest...what makes you a great potter.

Joseph grabs him another block of clay.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)  
Now give it another go.

George takes a deep breath and lets his fingers glide the clay upward. This time it holds its form. He meticulously shapes the edges, taking time to even the top. He steps back. They both stare at the perfectly shaped piece.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)  
I'll be damned. Isn't that something. You're a natural.

Joseph wraps his arm around George and pulls him close.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)  
How'd that feel?

GEORGE  
Closest I've felt to making love.

George runs his fingers across his beard.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Show me more.

INT. MEYER HOUSE/BEDROOM-NIGHT

Joseph swings the door open.

JOSEPH  
It's not much but the bed's comfy.

GEORGE  
It'll do just fine.

JOSEPH  
You did well today. Tomorrow, we start fresh. Felicie's making breakfast. You're in for a treat. She makes a mean bowl of grits.

GEORGE  
Sounds perfect.

George scratches the back of his head.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Thank you. For bringing me here. I owe you, I reckon.

JOSEPH

You owe me nothing. Now get some rest. We'll get an early start tomorrow.

Joseph exits while George collapses onto the bed. A pencil and pad of paper sit next to the lamp. He snatches it up.

GEORGE (V.O.)

"Dear Momma. I have reached my destination without misfortune. Joseph has accepted me with open arms and has been teaching me the ways of the potter. While I have to admit I was lost on the subject, my eagerness to learn has kept me afloat. Please give my love to Pa and August. Love, George. P.S. I do believe I have found my calling."

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STATE FAIRGROUNDS-NIGHT

A banner hanging over the entrance reads: "NEW ORLEANS STATE FAIR 1881".

The field is lit up by booths filled with carnival games and food courts. The TOWNSPEOPLE dressed in fancy attire stroll about, their eyes darting from one booth to the next. A large tent sits at the far end of the field, music and laughter emanating from inside.

INT. NEW ORLEANS STATE FAIRGROUNDS-TENT-NIGHT

A lively BAND plays onstage. People dance and mingle. George, sharply dressed, twirls DAISY (20's), a beautiful REDHEAD wearing a pink dress. She giggles as he swings her around in a circle, his beard flapping about.

WALTER DIETS (20's), bursts through the crowd, TWO MEN following close behind. He grabs George by the shoulder and spins him around. Walter towers over him.

GEORGE

Damn, you're big one!

WALTER

What the hell do you think you're doing dancing with my girl?

GEORGE

My apologies, my good man. Permit to explain.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I saw this lovely lady all alone  
and thought it a shame for someone  
with such a charming smile and...an  
exquisite figure to be denied the  
company of a gentlemen such as  
myself.

WALTER

You son of a bitch!

Walter lunges forward with his fist. Before he can connect  
with George's face, Joseph grabs his arm.

JOSEPH

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Hold on, Walter.

WALTER

You know this lowlife, Joseph?

JOSEPH

Sadly so. Let's not make a scene.  
He meant no harm. How about I buy  
you a beer instead?

WALTER

You just keep him away from Daisy!

Walter grabs Daisy by her wrist. She gives George a wink  
before being dragged off.

JOSEPH

Jesus, Ohr. You trying to get  
yourself killed?

GEORGE

What was I suppose to do? She was  
smitten by my charm.

JOSEPH

One these days that charm of yours  
is going to get you in deep.

GEORGE

I'm not worried. Besides, I've got  
the great Joseph Meyer watching my  
back.

JOSEPH

Yeah, well...I can't always be  
looking out for you, George.

Joseph throws his arm around George.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)  
Come on. I could use a drink.

EXT. STATE FAIRGROUNDS/BAR-NIGHT

George and Joseph lean against the makeshift bar, gulping down a couple pitchers of beer.

GEORGE  
I'm telling you. I would've bedded that fille if it weren't for that gibface interrupting.

JOSEPH  
If I were a betting man, I'd wager Walter would have given you an ass whooping.

GEORGE  
I'd take that bet.

JOSEPH  
So you're really leaving?

GEORGE  
Come now, Joseph. We've talked about this.

JOSEPH  
I know, I know. It's just a shame to see you go so soon. You're getting pretty good at the wheel. There's a lot more you could learn, a lot more we could do together.

GEORGE  
Listen. I appreciate all you've done for me, but there's a wide world out there, and I've got an itch to explore it.

JOSEPH  
You got balls, George. I'll give you that. But just remember, the world's a lot bigger-and meaner-than this little corner we've carved out. Don't let it chew you up and spit you out.

GEORGE  
I'll be fine, Joseph. I always land on my feet.

Joseph raises his mug.

JOSEPH  
Here's to a safe journey.

GEORGE  
To new adventures.

FELICIE (O.S.)  
There are my Potter Boys.

Felicie skips up and wraps her arms around Joseph.

FELICIE (CONT'D)  
Should of known I'd find you two  
here. What are you two gabbing  
about?

GEORGE  
We're having a conversation about  
the anatomy of a certain redhead I  
met earlier.

FELICIE  
You men are such fools.

GEORGE  
Wasn't it that Shakespeare fella  
that said its "Better a witty fool  
than a foolish wit?"

FELICIE  
I mistook you for both.

JOSEPH  
The lady doth protest too much,  
methinks.

FELICIE  
Alright. Lay off the theatrics. I'm  
in the mood for some games.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STATE FAIRGROUNDS/DART BOOTH-NIGHT

George and Joseph take turns throwing darts at the balloons.

GEORGE  
Well, shit. I couldn't hit a barn  
if I were inside it!

George glances beyond the booth and spots Josephine, a  
beautiful girl in a sunflower dress. She smiles.

JOSEPH  
Damn. Harder than it looks.

FELICIE  
I'm bored. Dunk booth, anyone?

JOSEPH  
Come on, George.

George's eyes are still frozen on Josephine. He manages to speak.

GEORGE  
Y'all go ahead. I'll catch up.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STATE FAIRGROUNDS/BALL TOSS-NIGHT

Josephine tosses a ball at the milk bottles, knocking one down.

JOSEPHINE  
(in German)  
Shit.

PITCHMAN  
Nice try, little lady.

The PITCHMAN points to George.

PITCHMAN (CONT'D)  
How about you, young man? Win a  
prize for the pretty little lady?

GEORGE  
Why not?

George SLAPS down a token and picks up a ball.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
(in German)  
Wish me luck?

JOSEPHINE  
(in German)  
Good luck.

George winds back and throws. BAM! Two bottles fall.

PITCHMAN  
Valiant try, my good sir. How about  
another throw?

JOSEPHINE  
How about buying a lady some  
popcorn instead?

George offers his arm.

GEORGE  
Popcorn it is.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STATE FAIRGROUNDS-NIGHT

George and Josephine stroll through the bustling fairgrounds, the lively sounds of laughter, music, and chatter surrounding them. The air is filled with the sweet scent of fried treats and the glow of lanterns lighting their path.

GEORGE  
So you grew up around here?

JOSEPHINE  
Born and raised. My folks  
immigrated from Germany before I  
was born. My father passed last  
August, so it's just me and my  
mother now.

GEORGE  
I'm sorry to hear that. Losing  
family...it ain't easy.

JOSEPHINE  
So how does a boy from Biloxi end  
up in the heart of Louisiana?

GEORGE  
A bit of a long story, I reckon.  
The short of it is I'm learning to  
be a potter. Got tired of the same  
old routine back home and decided  
to try something new. Found myself  
here, throwing clay.

Josephine can't help but giggle.

JOSEPHINE  
A clay thrower?

GEORGE  
Something funny about that?

JOSEPHINE  
Lands, no. It's just that I've  
never met one of ya'll before.  
(MORE)



JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

I suppose I always pictured potters  
as old men with gray beards, not  
someone like you.

GEORGE

Well, it's your lucky day because  
I'm the best there is.

JOSEPHINE

Is that so?

GEORGE

Cross my heart.

JOSEPHINE

Then I guess I have to take you at  
your word.

Josephine skips ahead, twirling her dress.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

So, how's your German?

GEORGE

Folks put me through some  
schooling. Haven't found much need  
for it though. You?

JOSEPHINE

My father insisted on teaching me  
when I was a child. He wanted me to  
be prepared in case we ever  
returned to Germany. It's strange,  
really...we never did go back, but  
the language stuck with me.  
Sometimes I even dream in German.

GEORGE

Dreaming in another language?  
Sounds exciting.

JOSEPHINE

It's like stepping into another  
world for a little while. But when  
I wake up, I'm right back here, in  
the middle of Louisiana. Not that  
I'm complaining—it's home.

GEORGE

Home's a good thing. Even when  
you're off wandering, it's nice to  
know there's a place to come back  
to.

JOSEPHINE

And what about you, George? Where do you see yourself settling down, once all your wandering's done?

George pauses, considering the question as they continue walking.

GEORGE

I suppose wherever the road takes me. But...it's nice to think that maybe one day, I'll find a place that feels just right.

JOSEPHINE

Who knows? Maybe that place is closer than you think.

They share a smile, the connection between them growing as they wander through the crowded fairgrounds.

EXT. NEW ORLENAS STATE FAIRGROUNDS/FERRIS WHEEL-NIGHT

A large, circular structure towers above the two of them.

GEORGE FERRIS JR. (O.S.)

What a lovely couple!

GEORGE FERRIS JR. (30's), a smartly-dressed man with a infectious grin, approaches.

GEORGE FERRIS JR. (CONT'D)

You two seem the adventurous type. Care to experience the greatest ride you'll ever set foot upon?

GEORGE

In this contraption?

GEORGE FERRIS JR.

Son, this here is the most original, most unique, most daring, ride ever! Standing at a whopping hundred feet, this here is called the Ferris Wheel...named after yours truly, George Ferris Jr.

JOSEPHINE

Is it safe?

GEORGE FERRIS JR.  
Quite safe, my lady. Why, I put  
every nut and bolt together with my  
own two hands.

GEORGE  
How much?

GEORGE FERRIS JR.  
A meager twenty-five cents each.  
Worth every penny if I do say  
myself.

GEORGE  
Shall we?

JOSEPHINE  
We'd be fools to pass it up.

George and Josephine climb into the swinging cart.

GEORGE FERRIS JR.  
Hold on tight!

The steam-powered Ferris Wheel begins to lift them high into  
the air.

Josephine clings tightly to his arm.

JOSEPHINE  
Would you look at that view!

The steam engine starts to SPUTTER, the wheel grinding to a  
halt. Down below, George Ferris Jr. tinkers with the engine.

GEORGE FERRIS JR.  
Sorry about that folks! Will have  
it back up and running shortly!

GEORGE  
Now may not be the best time to  
confess I have a fear of heights.

JOSEPHINE  
Have you ever seen so many stars?  
You know, when I was a little girl,  
I used to see how many shooting  
stars I could count in one night.  
I'd make a wish on every single  
one.

Josephine turns her attention to George.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)  
Listen to me. I must sound foolish.

GEORGE  
Not at all. As a matter of fact, I  
find it rather endearing.

JOSEPHINE  
"I shot down from starry night,  
With brilliant fiery charm;  
But I lie in the grass tonight:  
Who'll proffer me his arm?"

GEORGE  
Shakespeare?

JOSEPHINE  
Wolfgang von Goethe. My mother used  
to read it to me. It's always been  
my favorite.

She hesitates, then takes a deep breath.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)  
Can I ask you something?

GEORGE  
You can ask me anything.

JOSEPHINE  
Do you believe in fate?

GEORGE  
To a point, I reckon.

JOSEPHINE  
Sometimes, I get this feeling way  
down in the pit of my stomach.

GEORGE  
Like butterflies?

JOSEPHINE  
Something like that. But I feel it  
in my chest too, like something's  
taking hold of me...leading me.

GEORGE  
Leading you where?

JOSEPHINE  
I'm not sure exactly. Closer to  
where I belong, I think.  
(MORE)

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

Or maybe...closer to someone I'm meant to meet. Have you ever heard of such a thing?

GEORGE

I don't know. I like to believe I shape my own destiny.

JOSEPHINE

Then how do you explain us sitting here, all alone, underneath the stars?

George pulls Josephine close. The world around them disappears.

GEORGE

Sounds like fate to me.

George and Josephine lean in for a kiss.

SCREECH! The wheel suddenly jolts back to life, bringing the two lovebirds back down to earth.

GEORGE FERRIS JR.

My apologies. There was a slight mishap with the motor.

GEORGE

No problem. We were just enjoying the view.

JOSEPHINE

Indeed.

GEORGE FERRIS JR.

Music to my ears!

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STATE FAIRGROUNDS/ENTRANCE-NIGHT

George gently caresses Josephine's hand.

JOSEPHINE

I had a wonderful time tonight.

GEORGE

Me too, Josie. You don't mind if I call you Josie, do you?

JOSEPHINE

No...I quite like it.

VERONICA (O.S.)  
Josephine! Josephine!

Josephine's mother, VERONICA GEHRING (40's), approaches.

VERONICA (CONT'D)  
Josephine! There you are! Come  
along now!

JOSEPHINE  
Sounds like I'm in for an earful  
tonight.

GEORGE  
Listen, Josie. There's something I  
need to tell you.

JOSEPHINE  
Yes?

GEORGE  
I'm heading off on a bit of a  
journey. I can't say exactly when  
I'll be back.

JOSEPHINE  
An adventure?

GEORGE  
You could say that.

JOSEPHINE  
And what could possibly be more  
important than an adventure?

George pulls her close. Josephine blushes.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)  
Oh...

Josephine leans in, pressing a gentle kiss to George's cheek.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)  
(in German)  
Let's just leave that up to fate,  
shall we?

George can feel his heart flutter as Josephine disappears  
into the night.

Joseph and Felicie approach, breaking his daydream state.

JOSEPH  
Who was that?

GEORGE  
That, my friend, is the woman I'm  
going to marry.

FADE TO:

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER-DAYS LATER

Joseph waves goodbye to George as he boards the steamboat.  
The horn BLARES. The steamboat pulls away heading north.

BEGIN MONTAGE

EXT. KIRKPATRICK POTTERY-DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: Anna, Illinois

A sign above the warehouse reads: "Kirkpatrick Stoneware  
Pottery".

George examines each piece, his eyes drawn to animalistic  
symbols carved into the pottery's surface.

GEORGE (V.O.)  
"Dear Joseph. I have found myself  
at the southern tip of the great  
state of Illinois. The  
Kirkpatricks, a sibling duo with a  
knack for the trade, run a kiln in  
the small town of Anna. At first  
glance, many of their pieces appear  
to mimic the typical industrial  
pots and such. Digging deeper I  
have discovered their ability to  
create-mighty successfully I might  
add-an inventive range of works. It  
wets my appetite for the more  
abstract nature of things while  
also inspiring me to my core.  
Onward I travel. Your friend,  
George E. Ohr."

EXT. RAILROAD STATION-DAY

George chases after the train heading east, his feet  
stumbling on a giant rock. He stumbles face first.

GEORGE  
Ah, hell.

George jumps back to his feet, chasing after the train. His fingers barely grab the last boxcar. His feet begin to drag.

INT. TRAIN BOXCAR-DAY

He musters up the strength to pull himself up, sliding into the boxcar. He lies on his back PANTING.

GEORGE  
Talk about your deja-vu.

EXT. MAINSTREET-DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: Chester County, Pennsylvania

Mugs, planters, and vases line the shelves of a cozy pottery shop in the Pennsylvania countryside. George examines the intricacies of each piece.

GEORGE (V.O.)  
(to Joseph)  
"Travelled from the Midwest plains  
to the Pennsylvania countryside by  
freight. You'd be surprised to find  
that the world of wares here is  
quite cultivated. A collection of  
ruffled trim and deep floral  
patterns as far as the eye can  
seen. I have never in my life  
witnessed such fanciful elegance!  
My journey continues to fan the  
flames."

INT. BELL FAMILY POTTERY-DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: Shenandoah Valley

George observes each piece closely, jotting down notes in his notebook.

GEORGE (V.O.)  
(to Joseph)  
"The tradition of working with clay  
is prominent in these parts. The  
pieces carry a functional grace,  
each stroke breathing life."

INT. OTT & BREWER POTTERY-DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: Trenton, New Jersey



George roams the aisles of pottery, his eyes alive with curiosity.

GEORGE (V.O.)

"Dear Joseph. I have made my way towards the eastern seaboard and can barely contain my excitement. Gone are the days of visual simplicity. The clay throwers in these parts have broken the mold so to speak with their asymmetrical designs and eggshell-thin wares. They have elevated the process far beyond the folk potters of the Midwest. I am determined more than ever to master this difficult undertaking on my own potter's wheel."

INT. THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART-DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: NEW YORK CITY

PATRONS of the museum pass by in zigzag fashion.

George stands frozen, a trance-like state, surrounded by a sea of exhibits.

GEORGE (V.O.)

(to Joseph)

"It has been nearly two years and I do believe I have reached the pinnacle of my journey. While I have witnessed first-hand the diversity birthed at the hands of skilled tradesmen, I reckon nothing comes close to what is displayed before me. Europe. The Mediterranean. The Orient. The sheep's wool has been pulled from my eyes and the possibilities are endless."

END MONTAGE

INT. TRAIN BOXCAR-NIGHT

George sits along the edge of the boxcar, gazing out as the landscape blurs past. He flips through his notebook of sketches and scribbings. He puts the notebook away and pulls out a smoke. He FLICKS the lighter and inhales deeply, his eyes lost in the night sky.

HENRY (O.S.)  
Pardon me, young fella.

HENRY GARRETT (50's), emerges from the shadows. He wears a long, ragged coat, his hair covering half his face. He looks like he hasn't bathed in ages.

George jumps to his feet, fists up in the air.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
Whoa now, I didn't mean to go  
scaring you or nothing.

He flashes a smile. He's missing teeth.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
Could I bother you for a smoke?

Henry pulls a flask from beneath his coat.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
Got some moonshine. Good shit too.  
Put hair on your chest.

George relaxes his fists, handing Henry a smoke and his lighter.

Henry lights up and tosses the lighter back.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
My name's Henry, but everyone calls  
me Boots.

George looks down. Henry is barefoot.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
I used to be a cobbler.

He hands George the flask.

GEORGE  
George.

HENRY  
Nice to meet you, George.

George takes a swig from the flask, and immediately coughs.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
Told you it was some strong shit.

GEORGE  
You weren't kidding.

George holds out the flask. Henry snatches it out of his hand.

HENRY  
Where you from?

GEORGE  
Biloxi.

HENRY  
Far from home, aren't you? What brings you to this far north?

GEORGE  
An adventure, I suppose.

HENRY  
Adventure, eh? A young man such as yourself should go on an adventure or two.

GEORGE  
Yourself?

HENRY  
Me? I'm originally from Georgia, but now I guess I'm from a bit of everywhere.

GEORGE  
Don't you have any family?

HENRY  
My folks passed away a long time ago. I was married, but my wife left me on the count of my drinking.

Henry takes long, drawn-out swig.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
I also fancied myself a gambling man. I was good at drinking. Wasn't so good at gambling. Anyway, the missus didn't take too kindly to me losing coin. She decided life was better without me in it. So I folded up shop and been on the road ever since.

GEORGE  
I'm sorry to hear.

HENRY

Yeah, well. Can't change who we are, can we? How about you? Got family back in Biloxi?

GEORGE

My folks. A sibling.

HENRY

Your folks treat you alright?

GEORGE

I reckon.

George fiddles with his lighter.

HENRY

Come on now. You don't have to sugarcoat it, George.

GEORGE

It's...nothing.

HENRY

Come on. Spill the beans.

GEORGE

It's just...my old man. I can't seem to meet his expectations.

HENRY

Fathers can be a tough crowd.

GEORGE

It's like he doesn't get me, you know. He wants me to be a blacksmith, like him.

HENRY

And what do you fancy yourself, George?

George puffs out his chest.

GEORGE

I'm a potter.

HENRY

A potter, eh?

GEORGE

Best clay thrower east of the Mississippi.

HENRY

You know something? I believe you.  
You know why?

GEORGE

Why?

HENRY

Because your eyes tell the story.  
Eyes never lie, George.

GEORGE

You're full of it.

HENRY

I'm serious. Everything you need to  
know about a person...

Henry gestures towards his eyes.

HENRY (CONT'D)

...it's all right here.

George turns to gaze at the sky. Henry studies him.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I've seen that look before.

GEORGE

What look?

HENRY

The look of a man in love. What's  
her name?

GEORGE

Who?

HENRY

What do you mean, who? The girly  
that's got your heart all twisted  
in knots.

GEORGE

Josephine.

HENRY

Tell me about this...Josephine.

GEORGE

Raven hair, sunlit eyes, a smile  
that could brighten the darkest  
days...

HENRY

Sounds like a real looker.

GEORGE

Yessir. But it's not just that. She has a kindness to her. She's confident. When she speaks, you can't help but be drawn in, like she's casting a spell.

HENRY

Sounds like she's something special. Does she feel the same?

GEORGE

I think so...I hope so.

HENRY

Hold onto that, George...hope that is.

Henry's gaze drifts to the horizon. There's a sadness in his eyes.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Because when you lose that, you lose everything, including yourself.

Henry stands.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Thanks for the smoke, George.

George holds out the flask.

HENRY (CONT'D)

You keep it.

Henry pulls out another flask from beneath his coat.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I always keep a spare.

Henry fades into the shadows, leaving George with his thoughts.

INT. OHR HOUSE/LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

George Sr. paces back and forth in front of the fireplace, agitated. Young George, arms crossed, stands his ground, while Johanna sits calmly in the corner.

GEORGE SR.  
This is foolishness, George.

GEORGE  
You said it yourself, Pa. I should figure out what I want to do in life.

GEORGE SR.  
Pottery? There's no future in it. No money to be made.

GEORGE  
It isn't about the money.

GEORGE SR.  
How are you going afford a kiln? A wheel?

GEORGE  
I don't know. Maybe I barter with some the local folk. I'll make due.

GEORGE SR.  
You're wasting your time.

GEORGE  
Don't you get it, Pa? After all this time...I've finally found something I'm good at. Something that makes me feel alive.

GEORGE SR.  
Son, it takes hard work to run a business. You don't have the grit to make it on your own.

GEORGE  
Just admit it. You want me to fail.

Johann stands and walks over to her son's side.

GEORGE SR.  
Will you talk some sense into this boy?

JOHANNA  
Georgie. Your father doesn't want you to fail. He's just concerned.

GEORGE  
I'm going to do this...with or without your help.

GEORGE SR.

Fine. Don't come crying when you  
fall on your ass.

George clenches his fists and runs upstairs. The bedroom door  
SLAMS behind him.

JOHANNA

George. You really should help the  
boy out.

GEORGE SR.

Why? So he can disappoint me again?

JOHANNA

Because he's your son and he's  
trying. When's the last time you've  
seen him this riled up? Let the boy  
go on and watch him. He might  
surprise you.

GEORGE SR.

The boy is all talk. You watch.  
He'll give in by the week's end.

George Sr. storms towards the backdoor, yanking the door open  
and slamming shut behind him with a reverberating THUD.

EXT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

BEGIN MONTAGE

George saws away at the lumber with a giant hacksaw.

George's hands grip the hammer firmly as he expertly drives  
nails into the wooden frame, piece by piece.

George Sr. observes from a distance, his expression a mix of  
skepticism and curiosity.

George swings the hammer, hitting his finger. His father  
shakes his head and keeps on walking.

George pulls a heavy wagon filled with bricks towards the  
empty lot.

Brick by brick, George methodically stacks them, aligning  
each one with care and precision.

As the day progresses, George fills the gaps between the  
bricks with grit. The walls rise higher, the structure  
starting to take form.



## INT. OHR HOUSE/KITCHEN-NIGHT

The back door creaks open, and George, covered in dirt from head to toe, stumbles into the room.

George Sr. sits at the table smoking his pipe. He watches George stammer towards the stairs.

Johanna sits in a cozy armchair, diligently knitting. She glances at her husband and grins.

## EXT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

George continues building cabinets and shelves for the inside of his shop.

George shifts his focus back to the brick structure, taking the time to sand out the edges, ensuring every brick fits perfectly into place.

George stands back, gazing at the completed kiln with a mix of satisfaction and pride.

## END MONTAGE

## EXT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

George sits on the top of the rooftop, hammering in the final nail. He glances up to see his father riding up on his horse, a wagon in tow.

GEORGE

Hey. What brings you by?

GEORGE SR.

I brought some scrap metal. Thought you might find it useful for your wheel.

GEORGE

That's mighty kind of you.

GEORGE SR.

I still think you're making a mistake.

GEORGE

I know...but I rather fail trying than not try at all.

GEORGE SR.  
It's not just about trying, George.  
It's about succeeding. You've got  
to be prepared for what's ahead.

GEORGE  
I know.

GEORGE SR.  
Just make sure you return my tools  
by morning.

George Sr. unhitches the wagon. He jumps back up on his horse  
and rides away.

BEGIN MONTAGE

INT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

George stands before the forge. With each powerful strike of  
the hammer, the metal slowly begins to take shape.

He meticulously assembles the pieces of metal and wood  
together.

The sight of the emerging potter's wheel brings a wide grin  
to his face.

George gives the main cylinder a gentle push, and the wheel  
starts to spin effortlessly.

Unable to contain his joy, George breaks into a spontaneous  
dance.

GEORGE  
Hot damn!

END MONTAGE

EXT. TCHOUTACABOUFFA RIVER-DAY

The sun shines bright. A gentle breeze sweeps over the  
tranquil river. A flock of birds fly by.

George tightens the ropes that hold his raft together.

GEORGE  
Not too shabby, George. You're  
regular Huck Finn.

He loads his supplies and pushes off. He steers the raft towards the center of the river, heading north.

FADE TO:

EXT. TCHOUTACABOUFFA RIVER-LATER

George makes landfall. He pulling the raft onshore.

He grabs a shovel and starts to dig. He plunges the shovel deep into the mud, carefully collecting the wet clay into the crates. Catching his breath, he drags the crates back and loads them on the raft.

EXT. TCHOUTACABOUFFA RIVER-NIGHT

The sun has set on George as he drifts back down the river. He lights up a smoke and lies back, looking up at the stars.

GEORGE  
(in German)  
Where are you, my sweet Josephine?

Drifting further down river, George can hear a faint sound from the shoreline. Looking to his right, he notices a few scattered shacks lit by candlelight. The sound he hears is chorus of voices singing a familiar hymnal tune. He lies back, closing his eyes as he drifts away.

EXT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

George steps up to the potter's wheel. He has a lump of clay in hand. He tosses it down onto the wheel and starts to center it. He takes his time. His hands are steady as a rock. His fingers guide the delicate clay upwards, the piece taking shape. The wheel comes to a stop. He steps back and glances down at his creation.

GEORGE  
Well, well, well. Look at you, my  
lil' mud baby.

INT. CENTER STAGE-DAY

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

A dazzling spotlight flickers to life, casting a warm glow on George. He stands at center stage, dressed in a tailored tuxedo and a perfectly tied bowtie.

His eyes sparkle with excitement as he clutches a vintage German felt hat in his hands.

GEORGE pulls the hat down on his head, a sense of wonder and anticipation in his expression.

GEORGE

Ladies and gents...boys and girls...prepare to be enchanted! Welcome to The Biloxi Art and Novelty Pottery Shop, where dreams take shape, and art comes alive!

The spotlight intensifies, revealing a magnificent display of pottery creations behind him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Come see the most eccentric, the most unusual, most spectacular pottery you have ever laid your eyes on, each one bearing a piece of my heart and soul. I have pots, I have vases, trinkets and souvenirs. Anything and everything you could ever desire...all within your grasp...waiting for you to take it home for a price you cannot deny! I guarantee there are no two alike...that's right! Each piece meticulously crafted by yours truly, George Edgar Ohr...the greatest potter the world has ever known or will ever be!

END DREAM SEQUENCE

EXT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

George is faced with silence.

The TOWNSPEOPLE appear unfazed by his performance, except for a SMALL CHILD who quietly watches while sucking on a lollipop.

The child's MOTHER grabs him by the hand and drags him away.

GEORGE

Hmm...tough crowd.

BEGIN MONTAGE

George does his best to entertain the townspeople. As his act unfolds, a crowd gradually gathers, drawn by his charisma.

One COUPLE stops to take a look. George drags them inside. The couple eventually exits the shop, carrying a decorative pot.

Playfully, George challenges a burly MAN in the crowd to try his hand at pottery. The crowd chuckles as the man's attempt falls into a hilarious mess. George celebrates his victory, and the crowd claps in amusement.

George balances on a bicycle, holding a delicate piece of pottery in one hand. He joyfully sings a whimsical tune about his shop, enchanting everyone around.

An OLDER COUPLE show interest in a small vase near the entrance. George asks them to wait. He rolls out a much larger, beautifully sculpted vase from around the corner.

George smiles and waves as the couple walks off with the larger piece in hand.

END MONTAGE

FADE TO:

EXT. WORLD'S FAIR BUILDING-DAY

A banner hangs at the front entrance of the World's Fair building with the words: "1885 World's Industrial & Cotton Centennial Expo".

INT. WORLD'S FAIR BUILDING-DAY

The expo is bustling with ONLOOKERS. There are several booths scattered throughout the building.

George paces back and forth. The booth is full of his mud babies.

GEORGE

Step right up, folks! I have the most unusual, most unique pottery you will ever see in your life! I have flower pots. I have vases. Mugs. Trinkets. The largest water jugs ever created! I have it all, folks. Over five-hundred pieces to choose from. No two alike!

A few stop to glance at his work, while most of the crowd continues to walk by.

EDWARD SIMMONS (30's), a sharply dressed man with a handlebar mustache and top hat, approaches George's booth.

EDWARD

Pardon me, sir. I couldn't help but notice your lovely collection.

GEORGE

Why thank you. Were you interested in a particular piece? A trinket for the misses, perhaps?

EDWARD

No sir. But I am part of the World's Fair Exposition. I handle the shipping and receiving for most of the exhibitors. I understand you are from Biloxi?

GEORGE

Yessir.

EDWARD

Lovely town. And when will you be returning home, if I may ask?

GEORGE

By weeks end, I reckon.

EDWARD

Splendid! Well, we would be delighted to extend our services to safely transport your cherished works back home via freight train. At no expense, of course!

GEORGE

That's quite kind of you, Mister...

EDWARD

Simmons. But you may call me, Edward. And its no trouble at all. Consider it a token of our gratitude for your participation here at our fine exhibit.

EXT. WORLD'S FAIR BUILDING/ENTRANCE-DAYS LATER

George impatiently waits. He pulls out his pocket watch, checks the time. It's half past six. He starts pacing nervously.

A STAFF MEMBER wearing an officers badge passes by.

GEORGE

Excuse me.

STAFF MEMBER

Yes, sir. How may I help you?

GEORGE

I'm waiting for a man named Edward Simmons. He works here and was supposed to meet me at six.

STAFF MEMBER

I'm sorry, sir. Did you say he works for the exhibit?

GEORGE

Yessir. That's what he said.

STAFF MEMBER

That name doesn't ring a bell...

The staff member checks his notepad.

STAFF MEMBER (CONT'D)

I apologize, but there doesn't appear to be a Mr. Simmons employed here.

GEORGE

Now listen here. Stop pulling my damn leg! He said he worked in shipping and receiving for the exhibit and promised to handle my wares.

STAFF MEMBER

I'm afraid we don't offer such services to our patrons. I recommend you visit the main office to see if they can assist you.

The staff member walks off. George is fuming. He takes and tosses his hat, letting loose a tirade of expletives.

GEORGE

That lily-livered, muttonhead hornswoggled me! He stole every last one of my mud babies! Wait until I get my hands on him-

JOSEPHINE (O.S.)

George?

George turns to see Josephine, standing at the entrance.

GEORGE

Josie?

EXT. AUDUBON PARK-DAY

George and Josephine stroll along the riverside.

JOSEPHINE

I'm real sorry to hear about your pottery.

GEORGE

I feel like a damn fool.

JOSEPHINE

Don't be hard on yourself. You were just putting your faith in someone you thought you could trust. I don't know anyone who hasn't done that at one time or another.

GEORGE

It still stings.

JOSEPHINE

I hope this doesn't discourage you from making pottery.

GEORGE

Oh, Lord no. Can't keep a live squirrel on the ground is what I always say. It's good seeing you again.

JOSEPHINE

I'm glad you haven't forgotten me.

GEORGE

I'd never forget you, Josie.

JOSEPHINE

I'm flattered.

GEORGE

So, how have you been?

JOSEPHINE

Oh, fine. Just trying to survive my mother's relentless attempts to turn me into a proper lady.



GEORGE

Proper, huh? Sounds like no fun at all.

JOSEPHINE

It's exhausting! All that makeup and fancy clothes-it's almost too much to bear!

GEORGE

Well, I think you look beautiful just as you are. No need for all that all that extra getup.

JOSEPHINE

You always know just what to say.

George and Josephine find a park bench and take a seat, continuing their heartfelt conversation.

EXT. AUDUBON PARK-DAY-LATER

George and Josephine are still sitting on the bench. They continue to talk and laugh. The world around them fades away, leaving only the two of them, embraced by the setting sun.

JOSEPHINE

Isn't it beautiful?

George turns to Josephine, their eyes locking in a shared moment.

GEORGE

It truly is.

Without a word, they lean in, their lips meeting in a gentle and heartfelt kiss.

FADE TO:

EXT. OHR HOUSE/BACKYARD-DAY

George and Josephine, dressed in elegant wedding attire, stand hand in hand before the PRIEST. Their faces are radiant with love and excitement as their families and friends look on.

PRIEST

And will you, George Edgar Ohr,  
take, Josephine Gehring to be your  
lawfully wedded wife, to live  
together in marriage, comfort her,  
honor her, and keep her, in  
sickness and in health, in sorrow  
and in joy, so long as you both  
shall live?"

GEORGE

I do.

PRIEST

And do you, Josephine Gehring,  
take, George Edgar Ohr, to be your  
lawfully wedded husband, to live  
together in marriage, comfort him,  
honor him, and keep him, in  
sickness and in health, in sorrow  
and in joy, so long as you both  
shall live?"

JOSEPHINE

I do.

PRIEST

Go now in peace and live in love,  
sharing the most precious gifts you  
have-the gifts of your lives  
united. And may your days be long  
on this earth. I now pronounce you  
husband and wife. You may kiss the  
bride.

George and Josephine share a kiss. The family members erupt  
into CHEERS.

EXT. OHR HOUSE/BACKYARD-NIGHT

George and Josephine sit at a beautifully set table. On  
either side of them are Joseph and Felicie.

Joseph rises from his chair, TAPPING the side of his glass  
with a spoon to get everyone's attention.

JOSEPH

Ladies and gentlemen, if I may have  
your attention, please.

A HUSH falls over the family. All eyes are on Joseph as he  
begins his speech.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)  
I've had the privilege of knowing  
George for more years than I care  
to admit.

The family CHUCKLES, appreciating Joseph's playful tone.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)  
Now that's not entirely true. Truth  
is, George and I have been through  
thick and thin, and I can honestly  
say that there's no one else I'd  
rather call my friend. And when he  
met Josephine, I knew he had  
finally met his match!

There is more LAUGHTER from the family.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)  
In all seriousness. I cannot think  
of two individuals more perfect for  
each other.

Joseph raises his glass.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)  
To George and Josephine. May your  
journey together be filled with  
endless joy, laughter, and  
cherished memories.

The family erupts in APPLAUSE and CHEERS.

EXT. OHR HOUSE-BACKYARD-LATER

George stands alone, a content smile on his face as he  
watches the festivities.

JOHANNA (O.S.)  
It's nice seeing you smile.

Johanna approaches.

GEORGE  
Hey, Momma.

JOHANNA  
She's darling, George. You did  
good.

GEORGE  
Thanks, Momma. She really is  
something, isn't she?

George notices his father sitting alone in a corner, a sour expression upon his face.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
I don't think Pa's too pleased.

JOHANNA  
Don't pay him any mind. Your father's always a bit of a sourpuss at times like these.

GEORGE  
I just wish, for once, he could be happy for me.

JOHANNA  
He'll come around, George. Give him some time. What's important now is that you and Josephine have each other.

George nods, appreciating her words.

INT. OHR HOUSE/KITCHEN-NIGHT

Josephine stands by the window, a smile on her face as she watches George and Joseph tossing back shots of whiskey.

VERONICA (O.S.)  
I see the boys are enjoying themselves.

Josephine's mother, Veronica, approaches from behind, holding a glass of wine.

JOSEPHINE  
Yes, they seem to be having a good ol' time.

VERONICA  
So...now that the two of you are married, is George planning on continuing this pottery business?

JOSEPHINE  
What do you mean by that?

VERONICA  
Well, it's not exactly the most lucrative profession, is it? And if you two are thinking about starting a family someday...

JOSEPHINE

What are you getting at, Mother?

VERONICA

Josephine, I'm happy for you, truly. But you can't live on the meager earnings of a clay thrower.

JOSEPHINE

I'm not some foolish girl, Mother. George is my husband, and I love him for who he is.

VERONICA

And what will you do when love isn't a enough?

JOSEPHINE

I made a vow, for better or worse. I'll stand by him, just like he stands by me.

VERONICA

Spoken like a strong, confident woman. What is it they say? Behind every great man is a great woman? I hope you're right.

Veronica stumbles outside. Josephine continues to watch George from the window, a hint of concern in her eyes.

EXT. HILLTOP-DAY

A lush green hilltop rises above the Mississippi River, offering a panoramic view of the tranquil waters below. George and Josephine ascend the hilltop, their LAUGHTER mingling with the rustling leaves. In their hands, they carry a blanket and a basket.

JOSEPHINE

What a gorgeous view!

GEORGE

I had a feeling you'd enjoy this.

George lays out the blanket, setting the basket in the center.

JOSEPHINE

It's perfect, George.

GEORGE

I like to come here when I get the chance.

JOSEPHINE

I can see why. It's so peaceful.

GEORGE

And now I get to share it with you.

The two of them share a kiss.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I love you, Josie.

JOSEPHINE

I love you too, George.

GEORGE

Ah! I have one more surprise for you.

George opens the basket and pulls out a delicious apple pie.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Got this fresh from the bakery.

JOSEPHINE

Well, aren't you full of surprises.

GEORGE

I know it's your favorite.

JOSEPHINE

I have a surprise for you too, George.

Josephine smiles and takes George's hand, placing it on her stomach. George's expression shifts from curiosity to shock, then to pure joy.

GEORGE

You mean to say...?

JOSEPHINE

I mean to say.

GEORGE

I'm going to be a father?

JOSEPHINE

You're going to be a father.

George's eyes well up with tears as he pulls Josephine into a tight embrace.

GEORGE  
I'm going be a father.

As the sun begins its descent, George wraps his arm around Josephine. They sit in comfortable silence, watching the sun set against the picturesque landscape.

EXT./INT. - PHOTOGRAPH - DAY

FLASH. Baby ELLA LOUISA lies in a blanket, smile on her face. FLASH. Ella is now crying. FLASH. George is seated next to Josephine, who is holding Ella in her arms. FLASH.

EXT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

People spill out onto the street, a few carrying trinkets and such. Ohr gleefully watches the satisfied customers as they exit.

FREDERICK HEWES (40's), a distinguished gentleman with an air of seriousness, approaches.

FREDERICK  
Tell me, Mr. Ohr. Doesn't it bother you that what you're selling is a sham?

GEORGE  
Excuse me?

FREDERICK  
Your pitch...nothing but smoke and mirrors. Deceptive sales tactics wrapped in theatrics and sideshow antics.

GEORGE  
Now why would you say something like that?

FREDERICK  
Because its the truth.

GEORGE  
The smiles on those people's faces would disagree.

FREDERICK  
They do not see what I see.

GEORGE

And what might that be, Mr...?

FREDERICK

Hewes. Frederick Hewes.

Frederick steps closer, the two of them now standing eye to eye.

FREDERICK (CONT'D)

I've been watching you for quite some time, Mr. Ohr. And what I see is a conman whose sole aim is to exploit the good people of this town with a silver tongue and magician's sleight of hand.

GEORGE

I create art, Mr. Hewes. Every piece I make, I make with passion. As for the showmanship...well, that's for free.

Frederick examines Ohr's work with a look of disgust.

FREDERICK

Art is subjective, is it not?

Frederick leans in closer.

FREDERICK (CONT'D)

There's a fine line between entertainment and trickery. And you, Mr. Ohr, are walking dangerously close to it.

GEORGE

Unless you plan on buying anything, I suggest you walk away before I show you what I'm really capable of.

Frederick's grin widens, a glint of malice in his eyes.

FREDERICK

Oh, I'm well aware of what you're capable of, Mr. Ohr. The question is, do you? You're playing a dangerous game, and not just with your so-called art. There are people in this town who don't take kindly to being deceived.



GEORGE

I'm not here to deceive anyone. I'm here to create. To entertain. And if that rubs some folks the wrong way, so be it. But I won't stand by and let someone like you tarnish what I do.

Frederick backs away slowly, his eyes never leaving George's.

FREDERICK

Consider this a friendly warning, Mr. Ohr. The world has a way of catching up to those who hide behind masks. And when it does, I'll be watching.

With a tip of his hat, Frederick disappears. George, left fuming, clenches his fists before turning and storming back into his shop.

EXT. AMERICAN CERAMICS EXHIBITION-DAY

The expo bustles with clay-throwers from across the nation. George hustles about, meticulously organizing his booth.

Joseph approaches, accompanied by MANUEL JALANIVICH (18), a young man of Spanish descent.

JOSEPH

There he is!

George turns to spot his friend hurrying towards him. They exchange a warm embrace.

GEORGE

It's great to see you, Joseph.

JOSEPH

Good to see you too, George. This is Manuel, visiting from Arkansas. He's studying to be a clay thrower.

MANUEL

It's a pleasure to meet you, George. Joseph's told me some fascinating stories about your work together.

GEORGE

Fascinating, huh? You haven't heard the best parts yet. I've got plenty of real whoppers to share.

MANUEL

I look forward to it.

Laughter erupts from the front of George's booth. WILLIAM JERVIS (30s), a broad-shouldered man dressed in a sharply tailored suit and tie, stands with two similarly dressed MEN. They scrutinize George's work, exchanging snide remarks.

JOSEPH

That's William Jervis, just come down from New York. He's a master at the wheel, but he's got an ego the size of Texas.

GEORGE

I don't care if he's the king of England. No one disrespects my mud babies.

JOSEPH

George, just let it go. He's not worth-

Before Joseph can finish his sentence, George strides purposefully towards William.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Damm it...

GEORGE

Excuse me, gentlemen!

William turns his attention to George, who is now approaching swiftly.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I couldn't help overhearing you from over there. May I ask what's so amusing?

WILLIAM

We were merely discussing the amateurish nature of this artist's pieces.

GEORGE

Amateurish, you say?

WILLIAM

Yes, indeed. Clearly, the potter responsible for these pieces must have been severely lacking in skill or completely indifferent to the craft. Or missing an arm.

The men with William burst into loud laughter.

GEORGE

I happen to be the owner of this here booth, and these are my mud babies.

WILLIAM

And you are?

GEORGE

George Ohr, the greatest potter east of the Mississippi.

WILLIAM

Hmm. I can't say I've ever heard of you, but judging by your work, I can see why.

William and his companions chuckle further. William performs a mocking bow before turning away.

GEORGE

You may not have heard of me, but you'll sure as hell remember me after today.

WILLIAM

Is that a threat?

GEORGE

No, Mr. Jervis. It's a challenge.

WILLIAM

A challenge?

GEORGE

Yessir. You and me, at the wheel. Whoever can raise a lump of clay the highest wins.

WILLIAM

Interesting. And what's the wager?

GEORGE

Loser has to fold up shop and leave the expo.

William muses over the wager.

WILLIAM

I accept your challenge. Although I must warn you, when it comes to the wheel, I'm the best there is.

GEORGE

We'll see about that.

EXT. AMERICAN CERAMICS EXHIBITION-DAY-LATER

George and William face each other, the tension palpable as they stand before their potter's wheels.

JOSEPH

Stay focused, George. Ignore him. Keep all your attention on your wheel, and remember to breathe.

GEORGE

Anything else?

JOSEPH

Yeah, don't fuck up.

Joseph moves to where Manuel is standing.

MANUEL

What's the record for the tallest piece?

JOSEPH

Twenty-four inches.

WYATT GREENBURG (50's), a local booth operator, brandishes his pocket watch.

WYATT

Gentlemen. You will have five minutes to raise your clay. The man with the tallest piece wins. Are you ready?

Both George and William nod, their expressions unwavering.

WYATT (CONT'D)

On your marks, get set, go!

George and William simultaneously SLAM their feet onto the pedal, their wheels spinning to life. William quickly centers his clay on the wheel, George hot on his heels.

A CROWD begins to gather, their excitement audible as they CHEER on the two competitors.

George remains focused, hands skillfully working to center the clay. Both men work in tandem, forming the walls of their pieces with precision. The clay continues to rise.

George can feel perspiration trickling down his brow, his fingers quivering. He takes a deep breath, steadying his hands and concentrating on keeping the piece centered.

WILLIAM

Might as well give up, Ohr.

George and William's clay ascends higher and higher, reaching a point where they can no longer reach with their hands. They hop onto their stools with care to avoid disturbing the rising clay.

MANUEL

That has be over a foot!

The clay continues to climb. Suddenly, George's stool wobbles, throwing off his balance.

JOSEPH

Come on, Ohr. Get it back.

Almost as if he hears Joseph's voice, George regains his balance on the stool.

Wyatt checks his pocket watch, time dwindling.

WYATT

One minute, gentlemen!

George discreetly glances at William.

WYATT (CONT'D)

Thirty seconds!

For the first time, William's hands falter, the clay wobbling between his fingers.

WYATT (CONT'D)

Ten seconds!

William quickly stabilizes the clay, raising the walls even higher.

WYATT (CONT'D)

Nine, eight, seven...

JOSEPH  
You've got this, George.

WYATT  
Six, five, four..

The crowd's CHEERS grow louder with each passing second.

WYATT (CONT'D)  
Three, two, one! Hands up!

George and William both raise their arms triumphantly as their wheels come to a halt. The tension remains, with the winner yet to be determined.

EXT. AMERICAN CERAMICS EXHIBITION-DAY-LATER

Wyatt extends the measuring tape along the side of William's piece, examining it closely.

WYATT  
William Jervis...twenty-four  
inches!

With a smug grin, William acknowledges the PRAISE from onlookers.

Wyatt walks over to George's piece, carefully measuring the clay tower. He looks it over meticulously.

WYATT (CONT'D)  
George E. Ohr...twenty-four...and a  
quarter!

The crowd erupts in a deafening APPLAUSE. Joseph and Manuel rush over to embrace George. William, stunned by his defeat, pushes through the crowd and vanishes into the background.

EXT. AMERICAN CERAMICS EXHIBITION-DAY-LATER

George stands proudly in front of his booth, a triumphant smile on his face as he firmly shakes hands with one of the JUDGES, a SILVER MEDAL cradled close to his chest. A camera captures the moment. FLASH!

EXT. WHEAT FIELD-DAY

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

George jolts awake in the middle of a vast wheat field.

He stands up, feeling disoriented, and glances around, trying to make sense of his surroundings.

A BABY CRIES off in the distance.

George's heart races as he frantically searches for the source of the sound.

His eyes fixate on a distant hilltop, where a solitary tree stands. Underneath, a crib gently rocks back and forth.

He runs uphill and reaches the crib, but its empty.

The sound of CRYING grows louder and louder.

George clutches his head in pain, trying to block out the deafening noise.

He looks back to where the crib was, only to find a TOMBSTONE sticking up from the ground.

George drops to his knees. He reads the inscription.

"Here lies, Ella Louisa Ohr, beloved daughter of George and Josephine Ohr."

The crying continues to SCREECH through his head. George lets out a heart-wrenching scream that ECHOES across the field.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. OHR HOUSE/BEDROOM-NIGHT

Josephine lies on the bed, tears streaming down her face. Johanna sits beside her, gently stroking her hair. George slouches in a chair across the room. His face is stagnant.

JOSEPHINE

Why did she have to die? She was just child...

JOHANNA

I know you're hurting, sweetheart. Sometimes, the Lord calls our loved ones to heaven sooner than we expect.

George leaps to his feet and heads for the door.

JOHANNA (CONT'D)

Where you going, George?

George exits without saying a word. He TRAMPLES downstairs, his emotions in turmoil, and moves towards the front door.

GEORGE SR.

George, don't you walk out. She needs you right now.

GEORGE

What I need is for you to mind your own damn business.

George slams the door behind him.

INT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-NIGHT

George BANGS the clay on the table, kneading it harder and harder. He drives his fists into it. BAM! BAM! Each punch smashes deeper into the clay, mirroring the pain he is feeling.

The legs on the table start to buckle, but George keeps pounding. The weight of suffering becomes too much, and he collapses. He sits alone, tears streaming down his face, unable to control his emotions.

INT. MAYOR WALKER'S OFFICE-DAY

Frederick Hewes stares blankly out the giant window facing Main Street.

MAYOR JOHN WALKER (50's), a portly man with a well-kept white mustache, casually strolls into the room.

MAYOR

Ah, Mr. Hewes. What can I do for you this fine day?

Frederick turns to face him.

FREDERICK

Are you familiar with Mr. George Ohr?

MAYOR

The young man who runs that eccentric pottery shop? George's youngest boy, correct?

FREDERICK

The same.



MAYOR

Yes. A rather unconventional character.

FREDERICK

Yes. Quite.

MAYOR

What seems to be the problem?

FREDERICK

Ohr is the problem, Mr. Mayor.

The Mayor raises an eyebrow, intrigued.

MAYOR

Go on.

FREDERICK

Biloxi has always prided itself on respect and civility, has it not?

MAYOR

Absolutely.

FREDERICK

I believe, as many others do, that Mr. Ohr's behavior threatens the very fabric of our community.

MAYOR

How so?

FREDERICK

For starters, he persistently disrupts the peace with his loud, unsettling rants and outlandish displays. It's as if he's mocking the very essence of what we stand for.

MAYOR

Perhaps he's merely promoting his business. I see no harm in a bit of showmanship. It draws in tourists, after all.

FREDERICK

Are you aware he peddles trinkets that are scandalous in nature? Objects that would cause a respectable woman to blush and a devout man to doubt his convictions?

MAYOR  
Scandalous?

FREDERICK  
Items that are both perverse and immoral, Mr. Mayor. He hides behind the guise of art, but what he truly sells is corruption.

MAYOR  
Artists often challenge conventions, Mr. Hewes. Ohr is no different. His work may be peculiar, but that doesn't make it dangerous.

FREDERICK  
Do you not see the potential damage this could cause? The erosion of the very fabric of our morality?

MAYOR  
While I agree he is a rather peculiar young man, I believe he poses no direct threat. Besides, he does provide a sort of novelty for the tourists.

FREDERICK  
He is a menace to our society. His influence spreads like a disease, infecting the minds of the impressionable. If left unchecked, he will bring ruin to our fair city.

MAYOR  
I recognize your apprehensions, Mr. Hewes. However, as long as he operates within the confines of the law, there is nothing I can do.

Frederick, struggling to control his frustration, heads for the door.

FREDERICK  
Mark my words, Mr. Mayor. George Edgar Ohr will be the downfall of Biloxi!

EXT. MAYOR WALKER'S OFFICE-DAY

Frederick slams the door behind him.

FREDERICK  
Winston! Come along, son.

WINSTON HEWES (10), a spitting image of his father, jumps up from his seat and chases after him as he marches towards the exit.

INT. ARTHUR'S MENS BOUTIQUE-DAY

George stands in front a mirror, a gleeful grin spreading across his face as he adjusts the pristine German felt hat on his head. ARTHUR FREEMAN (40's), the shop owner, stands behind him, watching with satisfaction.

ARTHUR  
Well? How does it suit you?

GEORGE  
I think it makes me look a  
bit...sophisticated. Like one of  
those famous fellas...

ARTHUR  
Max Linder?

GEORGE  
I was thinking more along the lines  
of Harry Houdini.

Arthur's face goes from confusion to delight.

ARTHUR  
Houdini it is!

GEORGE  
What's the damage?

ARTHUR  
Two dollars.

George pulls out some cash and hands it to Arthur.

GEORGE  
Worth every penny.

EXT. MAINSTREET-DAY

George walks out of the shop wearing his new hat, a sense of satisfaction evident on his face. He adjusts the brim and leisurely strolls down the sidewalk.

Suddenly, he nearly collides with HARRY PORTMAN (10), a scrappy-looking boy with a worn-out cap.

GEORGE

Whoa! Slow down there, shorty.

HARRY

Excuse me, sir. My mother...she's really sick, and my father's working out west. We need some food. Could you spare some change?

George digs into his pocket and pulls out some coin.

GEORGE

Here you go, kid. It's all I can spare.

HARRY

Thank you, mister!

Harry gives him a big hug before running off. George reaches down and notices his wallet is missing.

GEORGE

Why that little shit.

EXT. ALLEY WAY-DAY

In the narrow alley, Harry sits behind a stack of wooden crates, flipping through the wad of dollar bills from George's wallet.

GEORGE (O.S.)

Hasn't anyone ever told you if you commit a crime you should have the sense to get your ass out of dodge?

Harry springs to his feet and attempts to flee.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Hold on, now! I'm not going to have you arrested.

Harry stops. He cautiously turning to face George.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

But I will be needed my wallet back.

Harry hesitates for a moment before walking up to George, reluctantly handing him the wallet.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Quick hands there, boy. What's your name?

HARRY  
Harry, sir. Harry Portman.

GEORGE  
Well, Harry Portman. It appears you have a flair for the dramatics. How's about a job?

EXT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

George hammers in the final nail, securing a sign above the doorway. It reads, "Biloxi Art and Novelty Pottery".

Harry is busy painting a larger sign along the wall.

HARRY  
What do you think?

GEORGE  
"Unequaled-Unrivaled-Undisputed-Greatest Art Potter on Earth. You Prove to the Contrary. George E. Ohr"

HARRY  
Don't make you sound too full of shit, does it?

George gives his beard a stroke.

GEORGE  
No, boy. On the contrary, it sounds just like me.

BEGIN MONTAGE

Harry slaps up several flyers advertising Ohr's pottery shop around town.

George stands outside his shop doing his best to entertain the crowd of onlookers.

Harry holds up a new sign he created, getting the approval from George.

George does his best to entice passersby with his awkward acrobatics and dancing.

George flips through a stack of bills, handing a portion to Harry.

People dressed in elegant suits and gowns admire George's pottery displayed in a gallery.

The distinguished guests applaud George while he shakes hands with the curator, cameras flashing around them.

EXT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

George address a CROWD of mostly tourists outside his shop while Harry maneuvers through the onlookers, handing out FLYERS.

GEORGE

People often ask me, "George, what makes your work so extraordinary?" And you know what I tell them? Magic!

POOF! With a flourish, one of his pottery pieces appears in his hand amidst a puff of smoke.

MARTIN COLE (30s), casually leans against a lamppost, surrounded by a group of other MEN.

MARTIN

I've seen better pottery made by a blind man!

Martin and his friends share a mocking laugh. George maintains his composure and continues.

Frederick Hewes stands at the edge of the crowd, observing Martin closely.

GEORGE

Each of my pieces is crafted from the mystical clay only found along the sacred shores of the Tchoutacabouffa river. Now folks, not all the clay along the riverside is blessed with such powers. Oh no, no, no! I had to search far and wide along the northern banks, looking for the signs that would lead me to the lands of the blessed.

George playfully tosses the piece in the air, catching it effortlessly with the same hand.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

It was there that the spirits  
called out to me! I made landfall  
and dug deep into the earth,  
pulling forth the most magnificent  
clay a potter has ever known.

George gives his beard a tug.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I stand before you today, not  
merely offering my wares but a  
promise no other potter can  
make—spiritual enlightenment! For I  
am George Edgar Ohr...the greatest  
potter who has ever lived!

MARTIN

You're great, alright...at failing!

George shoots a searing glance towards Martin before ushering  
people into his shop.

GEORGE

Come on in, folks. Witness the  
wonders of Tchoutacabouffa's clay  
and take a piece of magic home with  
you!

EXT. OHR HOUSE/BACKPORCH-DAY

George leans back in his rocking chair, a cigarette  
dangling from his lip. PAUL HATFIELD (20's), his notebook  
open, sits across from him.

PAUL

Mr. Ohr, thank you again for  
sharing your story for our  
newsletter.

GEORGE

No trouble at all. What'd you say  
your name was again?

PAUL

Paul Hatfield. I'm from the  
Gulfport Gazette. We're doing a  
feature on you in the upcoming  
issue.

GEORGE

Happy to oblige.

PAUL

So, Mr. Ohr, tell me a bit about yourself. How did you end up in Biloxi?

George scratches his beard.

GEORGE

Well now, let's see. My folks met in New Orleans, and soon after, they made their way to old Biloxi by steamboat. I was one of two children born and raised here. One rooster and a duck...I was the duck.

PAUL

How was it growing up here?

GEORGE

I guess I always found myself in a bit of hot water. I had some fun running away from danger and getting caught with open arms. Though I did get the end of a switch every now and then.

Paul scans through his notes.

PAUL

And why did you choose the life of a potter?

GEORGE

I dabbled in all sorts of work, but none satisfied my appetite. My father thought I'd be a blacksmith, but it wasn't for me. Then my friend Joseph Meyer called me to New Orleans to work with him. So I packed up, hopped a freight train, and found my calling.

PAUL

How was it working with clay for the first time?

GEORGE

The moment I touched that wheel, it was like a revelation. Like a wild duck in water. Once I managed to boss a piece of clay into a gallon jug, I left New Orleans and took a zigzag trip across sixteen states.

(MORE)



GEORGE (CONT'D)

I sized up every potter I could. Finally, I returned to Biloxi with twenty dollars to my name, built my own clay mill, brick kiln, and even fashioned my own wheel. I've been throwing clay ever since.

PAUL

Could you elaborate on your distinctive style of pottery?

George leans back and lights a cigarette, taking a long drag.

GEORGE

Shapes come to a potter like verses to a poet. Clay follows the fingers, and the fingers follow the mind. I treat each piece with the same tenderness a parent gives their child. Every one of my mud babies has its own voice. What I create, I can never duplicate.

PAUL

And what fuels this fiery passion within you?

GEORGE

Let me ask you this, Mr. Hatfield. Have you ever craved something beyond hunger? An urge so strong that your only desire is to create from nothing? Working with clay, that's my hunger. Once I knew I was destined to be a potter, the world finally made sense.

PAUL

Some might say pottery is a fool's profession. What would you say to that?

GEORGE

I'd say they're probably right. But I do not worship the dollar as much as I do my mud babies.

George finishes off his cigarette and tosses it.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I am making pottery for art's sake, for the future generation, and for my own satisfaction.

PAUL  
And those who label you...  
eccentric?

GEORGE  
You mean crazy.

PAUL  
Well, if you wish to put it that  
way. Yes. Crazy.

George lights up another cigarette.

GEORGE  
Did folks not call Van Gogh crazy?  
Poe? All I know is this: When I'm  
gone, my work will be prized,  
honored, even cherished.

INT. BARBERSHOP-DAY

TITUS BUFFORD (40s), his bushy hair half-cut, slouches in the barber's chair while CLIFF JENKINS (60s), snips away. He's engrossed in the newspaper article.

TITUS  
"Mr. Ohr with unbounded confidence  
in his own genius is laying up at  
Biloxi a vast store of ware in the  
hopes that it may be purchased  
entire by the nation as an example  
of his prowess."

CLIFF  
Genius? More like deranged lunatic  
if you ask me.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP-DAY

HAROLD CRANE (60's), a robust and jovial figure, sits at a small table reading the journal. He bursts into laughter, spilling coffee on his neatly pressed shirt.

EXT. OFFICE-DAY

Frederick Hewes sits alone, skimming the article. His face twists in disdain as he tosses the paper down onto his desk.

## INT. GROCERY STORE-DAY

BETHANY WARD (50s), flips through the same newspaper article.  
HELEN OAKS (50s), with an air of gossip, holds a basket of groceries, hanging on to every word.

BETHANY

"If we are to accept Mr. Ohr at his own estimate he is not only the foremost potter in America, but the whole world. He said so and he ought to know." I swear, Helen. That man isn't right in the head. Hooting and hollaring all day long. Harassing the tourists. Should be a law against it.

HELEN

I feel sorry for ol' Josephine. Living with that man must be an absolute nightmare.

Josephine, appears from behind the shelves carrying a basket. She places her items on the counter and gives them a knowing look.

BETHANY

We were just yapping, Josephine.

HELEN

Yeah, we didn't mean anything by it.

JOSEPHINE

I know what you meant. And if I were you, I'd watch it with the finger-pointing. My husband may be a bit unconventional, but at least he stands by his convictions. Unlike Mr. Ward, who we all know fancies the gambling tables...or Mr. Oaks, who I hear has a certain fondness for the gentlemen's club uptown.

Josephine lays down some coin on the table and snatches up the groceries.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

Good day to you, ladies.

INT. BIJOU OYSTER SALOON-NIGHT

A husky man by the name of GUS PHILLIPS (40's), stands in his usual spot behind the bar.

Frederick Hewes waltzes in. He spots Martin Cole drinking alone at the bar and pulls up a stool.

GUS  
What can I get you?

FREDERICK  
Whiskey on the rocks, please.

Gus pours a glass and slides it over.

FREDERICK (CONT'D)  
I see you caught Ohr's latest spectacle.

Martin swirls his drink and takes a sip.

MARTIN  
That quack? About as useless as a one-legged man in an ass-kicking contest.

FREDERICK  
Yes. Ohr continues to be a blight upon this town.

MARTIN  
Blight?

FREDERICK  
A stain, Mr. Cole. A stain in need of cleansing.

Frederick leans in closer, lowering his voice just enough to draw Martin's full attention.

FREDERICK (CONT'D)  
And it's up to us, the good men of this town, to set things right. To keep Biloxi...pure.

Frederick slyly pulls a wad of bills and slides them towards Martin.

FREDERICK (CONT'D)  
It would be a shame if something...tragic...were to happen to his fine establishment, wouldn't you agree?

Martin nods slowly, pocketing the money.

MARTIN

Tragic indeed. But accidents do happen, don't they?

Frederick raises his glass in a mock toast.

FREDERICK

To a brighter, cleaner Biloxi.

EXT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

A horse-drawn carriage adorned with "Biloxi Postal Service," rolls to a stop. A POSTMAN steps down with a letter in hand. Two WORKERS jump out of the back of the carriage and start unloading a crate marked "FRAGILE".

POSTMAN

Are you Mr. George Ohr?

GEORGE

The one and only.

POSTMAN

Over here, boys!

George tears open the envelope. His eyes begin to bulge and his face turns red.

INT. U.S. POTTER'S ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS-DAY

Several MEMBERS of the committee are gathered around the conference table. CLARENCE WELLS (50's), sits at the head of the table.

BAM! The doors swing open. George barges in, followed by MARTHA TAYLOR (30's), chasing after him.

GEORGE

Where are they hiding? Ah ha! All the clowns under one tent, I see.

CLARENCE

What is the meaning of this intrusion?

MARTHA

I tried to tell him you were in a meeting, Mr. Wells.

GEORGE

You're the ringleader of this  
shitshow you call a committee?

CLARENCE

I beg your pardon? Who are you?

GEORGE

George Edgar Ohr. Finest clay-  
thrower this side of the  
Mississippi.

CLARENCE

Of course, Mr. Ohr. And what can I  
do for you?

GEORGE

You can start by explaining why you  
decided to toss my works from your  
exhibit.

CLARENCE

As stated in our letter, space was  
limited in our gallery.

GEORGE

Oh, sure. Twelve of my mud babies  
out of the fifty I sent in. Real  
tight squeeze.

CLARENCE

Mud babies?

GEORGE

Mud babies, that's what I call  
them. Each piece is a child of  
mine, as dear as kin.

CLARENCE

I understand your passion for  
your...mud babies, Mr. Ohr, but we  
must be fair to all artists.

GEORGE

They were meant to be showcased  
together. To judge my creations  
based on a handful of pieces is  
like skimming four lines of  
Shakespeare and pretending to know  
the play!

CLARENCE

Your passion is evident, but our  
decision remains, Mr. Ohr.

GEORGE  
So that's how it's going to be.  
Fine then. Looks like we're done  
here.

George exits, leaving a tense air in his wake.

EXT. BEACHSIDE-NIGHT

Harry dangles a lantern over a freshly dug hole in the sand. George, visibly intoxicated, clambers out of the hole, his movements unsteady. Bourbon bottle in hand, he begins to shovel dirt back into the hole, covering the crate filled with his mud creations. Finished, he tosses the empty bottle aside.

HARRY  
Say...George. Why'd you bury them?

GEORGE  
Where they belong...birthed in the  
mud, laid to rest in the mud...

Harry watches George, concern in his eyes.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Everything I've created, molded  
from the earth, just to end up back  
in it...

George's words hang in the air as he starts walking away into the darkness. Harry remains behind, perplexed and alone, accompanied only by the lantern's faint glow.

FADE TO:

EXT. MAINSTREET-NIGHT

The bustling streets are alive with JOYOUS PEOPLE ringing in the New Year. The air is filled with laughter and chatter. A sign hanging high above the street reads, "A Prosperous New Year to All! 1894."

INT. MILLER'S PORTRAIT STUDIO-NIGHT

JACOB MILLER (30's), the owner and local photographer, organizes the scene with enthusiasm. His studio is a charming mix of vintage props and backdrops.

JACOB  
Quickly now! Everyone settle in.

George sits at one end and Josephine is seated on the other end. OTO (4) and LEO (3) are nestled between them.

Harry watches from behind the camera.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
Almost there, folks.

GEORGE  
Hold on a minute there, Jacob.  
Harry. Get your ass in here. You're  
part of this family, like it or  
not.

Harry's eyes light up. He rushes into frame.

JACOB  
Here we go, everyone. The infamous  
Mad Potter and his beautiful  
family. Ready? On my count. Say,  
"Happy New Year!"

ALL  
Happy New Year!

The camera FLASHES.

INT. OHR HOUSE/BEDROOM-NIGHT

George reclines on the bed, a glass of scotch in his hand.

The door creaks open, and Josephine slips inside, closing it softly behind her.

GEORGE  
Kids go down without a fuss?

JOSEPHINE  
Out like candles. The festivities  
did them in.

Josephine snuggles up next to him.

GEORGE  
I can relate.

He takes a measured sip from his glass, his gaze distant.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
The Mad Potter of Biloxi. It's got  
a certain charm to it, doesn't it?



JOSEPHINE  
Well, I reckon so.

GEORGE  
You reckon? I'm a bona fide local  
legend!

JOSEPHINE  
Legend, huh? More like a man with  
an ego as big as the Mississippi.

GEORGE  
And you love me for it.

JOSEPHINE  
I reckon.

GEORGE  
Happy New Year, Josie.

JOSEPHINE  
Happy New Year, George.

Their lips meet in a loving kiss, sharing a moment of pure happiness.

EXT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-NIGHT-LATER

The street remains empty excluding a few drunken PATRONS stumbling about. Martin Cole emerges from the shadows carrying a homemade Molotov. He lights the cloth wick and rears his arm back.

MARTIN  
Let's see you perform your magic on  
this!

Martin launches the Molotov through the air. It smashes through the front window of Ohr's shop, igniting a fire that spreads quickly.

INT. OHR HOUSE/BEDROOM-NIGHT

George twists and turns in his sleep. He is sweating bullets. The sound of CRACKLING fire echoes in his ears.

EXT. MAINSTREET-NIGHT

Sirens BLARE. Flames from the burning building light up the sky as smokes fills the air.

George runs barefoot down the dirt road. His heart pounds in his chest. The smoke now fills his lungs, making it harder to breathe. He stops in his tracks. He stands in the middle of the town, watching the chaos unfold.

George's gaze locks on his pottery shop—flames erupting like vengeful spirits. Panic clutches at his throat.

GEORGE  
No...no, damn it...

George tries to get the attention of one of the FIREFIGHTERS dragging a water hose.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Hurry up, goddammit!

George rushes towards a water pump and starts filling a bucket. He takes and throws the water on the fire, the flames continuing to grow. He runs back and refills the bucket, tossing it on the fire again. The fire grows even larger. George falls to his knees in agony. He watches helplessly as the flames devour his shop along with his precious mud babies.

FADE TO:

INT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

George navigates the wreckage left from the raging fire. The wooden structure of the workshop is burnt to a crisp. Amidst the wreckage, many of his ceramic creations lie in charred ruin. George's eyes settle on a piece, his first creation, still smoldering.

He lifts the piece from the rummage, cradling it tenderly in his hands. As he stares, the pottery transforms in his hands, taking on the shape of a crying baby. The baby slowly turns to ashy fragments, slipping through his fingers like sand.

Josephine approaches from behind, wrapping her arms around him, sharing his pain.

JOSEPHINE  
I am so sorry, George.

Leo runs over, holding one of the mud babies, untouched by the fire. He hands it to his father and smiles. George pulls him in close.

## INT. FIRST NATIONAL BANK-DAY

George slumps down in the chair. HOWARD STEDMAN (30's), a prim and proper man in horn-rimmed glasses, sits across from him, his name plaque displaying his title as "Loan Officer."

HOWARD

Mr. Ohr, I'm truly sorry for the loss of your establishment. But the truth is, there's nothing we can do.

GEORGE

What do you mean, nothing you can do?

HOWARD

You failed to carry any form of insurance on your business. We are unable to cover the damages.

GEORGE

There's gotta be something, anything to help me get back on my feet!

HOWARD

You must understand, you have no credit history with us. No collateral, no assets--nothing that we can leverage for a loan.

GEORGE

Credit? My pottery shop is a national treasure around these parts! People come from all over just to see my work. You can't put a price on that!

HOWARD

Yes, I know. The famed Mad Potter of Biloxi. I understand your plight...I honestly do. But you must realize that many around here, including some of our esteemed board members, believe a business like yours has no place in a respectable town like Biloxi.

George's frustration turns to anger.

GEORGE

I've dedicated my life to creating art for the people of this town!

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
What happened wasn't my fault, and  
now you're telling me to  
just...give up?

Howard stands, sliding in his chair.

HOWARD  
I'm sorry, Mr. Ohr, but my hands  
are tied. The bank cannot offer  
more than our sincere condolences.

He motions towards the door, signaling the end of the  
discussion.

HOWARD (CONT'D)  
Good day, Mr. Ohr.

George stares at Howard, a mix of anger and resignation in  
his eyes.

GEORGE  
Thanks for your overwhelming  
generosity.

George exits, slamming the door behind him.

EXT. FIRST NATIONAL BANK-DAY

George struggles to hold back his anger, mumbling expletives  
under his breath. He is too distracted to notice Frederick  
Hewes standing outside the bank.

FREDERICK  
Such a shame. What will the world  
ever do without the great George  
Ohr?

Frederick walks away, his satisfaction at George's misfortune  
thinly veiled beneath a subtle smirk.

INT. OHR HOUSE/LIVING ROOM-DAY

George pushes himself through the front door. George Sr. and  
Johanna are in the living room. A YOUNG MAN (30s), well-  
dressed, tidies his papers and stashes them in an open  
satchel.

YOUNG MAN  
I should be on my way. Do let us  
know if there's anything more we  
can assist you with. Have a good  
day.

The young man nods to George before departing through the front door. Johanna speaks up.

JOHANNA

I'll go see if Josie needs help  
with the children.

GEORGE SR.

George, come on in and take a seat.

GEORGE

Now isn't a good time, Pa.

GEORGE SR.

I'm not asking, son.

George sighs but complies, sinking into a chair.

GEORGE SR. (CONT'D)

You know, I knew the first day I  
saw you in your mother's arms you  
were bound to be a handful. Saw it  
in your eyes. We haven't always  
been on the best of terms, you and  
I. It's a miracle we've managed to  
share a roof this long. But I'll  
give credit where it's due. You've  
never given up on your dreams, even  
if they meant taking risks.

GEORGE

Pa...

GEORGE SR.

Hush now, let me finish. Life  
hasn't treated you and Josie  
kindly—losing Ella, and now your  
shop in the fire... It's more than  
any man should have to bear.

George Sr. takes a deep breath.

GEORGE SR. (CONT'D)

I've decided to sell my workshop.

George's demeanor turns to disbelief.

GEORGE

But you love blacksmithing.

George Sr. picks up an envelope and offers it to George.

GEORGE SR.

I'm tired, son. Can't swing a hammer like I used to, but you've still got your craft. I want you to take the money. Rebuild your shop.

GEORGE

Pa...I can't...this is too much.

GEORGE SR.

Go on, now. Take it before I change my mind.

Reluctantly, George reaches for the envelope and takes it.

GEORGE

I don't know what to say.

GEORGE SR.

Then don't say nothing. Just promise me you'll keep making a name for yourself.

GEORGE

I promise.

FADE TO:

EXT. MAINSTREET-DAY

George watches from the street as the CONSTRUCTION WORKERS put the finishing touches on the new workshop.

The building stands five-stories high and is topped off with a pagoda-like-tower. On the side of the build reads the words, "Biloxi Art Pottery Unlimited".

As George turns, he spots Frederick Hewes exiting the barber shop.

GEORGE

Hey, Mr. Hewes!

Frederick glances over to see George bent over with his backside showing. George chuckles as Frederick storms off.

INT. MILLER'S PORTRAIT STUDIO-DAY

George, sits in front of the camera, dressed in a snappy suit and bowler hat.

JACOB  
Ready, George?

GEORGE  
Born ready!

He strikes a pose for the first shot, making buck teeth.  
FLASH. Twirls out his mustache and beard. FLASH. Has his hair  
and beard blown to one side. FLASH. Pretends to stand on  
head. FLASH.

FADE TO:

EXT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

A CROWD has gathered as George addresses them. Harry is  
handing out flyers that read "While in Biloxi, Miss., Visit  
Ohr's Art Pottery. See the Finest Display of Art Pottery from  
the infamous Mad Potter! The greatest potter in the world!  
409 Delauney Street."

George, dressed in his potter's apron, carries one of his  
"burnt babies" that he rescued from the fire.

GEORGE  
Good people of Biloxi...and those  
visiting our humble abode! Welcome  
to the grand opening of Biloxi Art  
Pottery Unlimited!

George paces back and forth, his presence commanding the  
crowd's attention.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Tragedy struck our little town. The  
flames of Hell engulfed our  
streets, ravaged my shop, and tried  
to turn my life to cinder. But I  
chose not to give in.

George holds the burnt piece of pottery up above his head.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Today, I stand here reborn, much  
like the phoenix rising from the  
flames. I stared down the devil  
himself and declared, I won't  
falter. I will not be silenced. I  
am George Edgar Ohr, the best clay  
thrower the world has ever known!

Some in the crowd applaud, while others exchange puzzled  
glances. A few onlookers share a chuckle.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Now, folks, don't miss out on your Biloxi souvenir, crafted by the hands of a genuine saint. Grab one before I kick the bucket or get too famous to shake hands!

INT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

George pulls a few pieces from the kiln, meticulously arranging them on the table.

JOSEPH (O.S.)

"George Edgar Ohr, the Mad Potter from Biloxi, is a comical genius. With his long whiskers and childish grin, he is always surrounded by an admiring crowd that is easily amused by his clever and often whimsical antics."

Joseph Meyer leans against the doorway with a newspaper in hand.

GEORGE

Well, I'll be monkey's uncle.

The two men embrace.

JOSEPH

How have you been, George?

GEORGE

Oh, you know. Keeping busy. What brings you to Biloxi?

JOSEPH

Had some business to attend to. Besides, it's been too long since I've seen my old friend.

GEORGE

Who you calling old?

They share a laugh.

JOSEPH

I see you got the new shop up and running.

GEORGE

Isn't she a beaut?



JOSEPH

Indeed she is. Listen, how's about a drink?

INT. BIJOU OYSTER SALOON-LATER

George and Joseph sit at a table towards the back of the saloon. They guzzle their beers, slamming the glasses down in unison.

GEORGE

Damn, good to see you, Joseph.  
How's the missus?

JOSEPH

Felicie's fine. She sends her love.

GEORGE

You still teaching up at the school?

JOSEPH

School ended up closing shop. Got hired on as the head of the pottery department at Newcomb College.

GEORGE

Well, hell! That's something to celebrate! Gus! Another round for me and my friend here!

JOSEPH

How's business these days, George?

GEORGE

Fire about did me in, but you know me. Wasn't about to go tuck my tail and run. Proud to say I'm back to charming the britches off the tourists. Even got a commission from some fancy collector in Paris. Imagine that—my work in Paris!

JOSEPH

I'm happy for you, George. I really am.

GEORGE

Well, I learned from the best.

Gus brings over two more mugs full of beer.

GUS  
Here you go, gents.

GEORGE  
Thanks, Gus. Keep them coming.

Joseph's demeanor shifts, his expression growing serious.

JOSEPH  
You know, George, there's something  
I've been meaning to discuss.

GEORGE  
Uh, oh. I know that tone. I best  
get my violin.

George turns and yells.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Somebody fetch my fiddle!

JOSEPH  
Alright, alright. Enough with the  
theatrics.

GEORGE  
I'm just yanking your chain. What's  
on your mind?

JOSEPH  
It's about this whole "Mad Potter"  
business.

GEORGE  
What about it?

JOSEPH  
You're a brilliant potter, George.  
But some folks, they see your  
behavior and wonder if it's gone a  
bit too far.

GEORGE  
You mean, they think I'm not right  
in the head.

Joseph takes a big gulp from his beer.

JOSEPH  
People have been talking. Not just  
in these parts, but around New  
Orleans too. They're saying your  
antics... they're starting to  
overshadow your talent.

GEORGE

Let them talk. It don't matter none.

JOSEPH

Doesn't it? Your reputation is part of what makes your work valuable, George. If people start thinking you've lost your grip on reality...

GEORGE

And what's your take, Joseph?

JOSEPH

I just want you to be careful. There's a thin line between eccentricity and being misunderstood.

GEORGE

You think I've lost my mind?

JOSEPH

I didn't say that...but I'm worried. I've seen good men lose everything because they didn't know when to rein it in.

GEORGE

You know what it sounds like to me? It sounds like maybe you believe them. How about it, Joseph? You think I've lost my marbles?

JOSEPH

George, calm down.

GEORGE

I don't need to calm down, goddammit! I thought you came out here to see an old friend. Instead you're trying to judge me like the rest.

JOSEPH

I'm not trying to judge.

GEORGE

Sure fooled me.

George finishes his drink, tossing a few coins on the table.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
You know something. Maybe I am a  
bit mad. But I'm not afraid to be  
myself.

He storms out of the saloon.

JOSEPH  
George. George! Dammit...

Joseph watches as George exits, frustration and concern  
etched on his face.

EXT. MAINSTREET-DAY

Music. Floats. Food and drink. PEOPLE gather on both sides of  
mainstreet, watching the parade. Many hold signs that read  
"HAPPY NEW YEAR-1900!"

GEORGE, standing on an elaborate float, wears a flowing white  
robe and holds an hourglass, embodying Father Time. Behind  
him stands a monumental cross.

GEORGE  
Take heed, my brothers and sisters!  
For I am Father Time, and I have  
come to warn you of your inevitable  
trespasses!

Joseph stands among the crowd, watching George's antics. A  
HUSBAND and WIFE stand nearby, a look of disapproval on their  
faces.

HUSBAND  
That man has lost his damn mind.

WIFE  
Utterly disgusting!

GEORGE  
The judgment is upon us! Do not  
give in! Keep your wits and take  
heed to your soul!

The parade continues with excitement, but some onlookers  
exchange puzzled glances, while others nod along to George's  
outlandish declaration. With one final glance of  
disappointment, Joseph disappears into the crowd.

INT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

George is still dressed in his Father Time costume, looks a bit disheveled. Harry, now in his (20's), enters.

GEORGE

Harry! You missed the grand show!  
You should've seen their faces-

HARRY

I'm leaving, George.

George's expression turns to one of disbelief.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Got an offer as a lighthouse  
inspector near Mobile Bay. Decent  
pay, chances for growth...thought  
it's time I spread my wings, you  
know?

GEORGE

Guess you can't be a lowly  
assistant your whole life, can you?

HARRY

No, I guess I can't.

GEORGE

Well, if its what you're itching to  
do...

HARRY

It is. It's been a good ride,  
George. I owe you and Miss  
Josephine a debt of gratitude.

George nods in agreement.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Well, I got some packing to do....

GEORGE

Remember to stop by and see Josie  
before you go. She'll want to say  
her goodbyes.

HARRY

Will do.

Both men sit in silence.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Are you going to be alright?

George manages a reassuring smile.

GEORGE

Don't you worry yourself none. I'll  
be just fine.

HARRY

Gonna miss you, George. You been  
like a father to me.

GEORGE

I'm gonna miss you, too.

Harry goes in for a hug. George pulls him in tight. Harry  
backs away, holding George's wallet.

HARRY

Still got it.

Harry hands the wallet back.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Take care of yourself, George.

Harry walks out, leaving George alone, sitting among his mud  
babies.

FADE TO:

INT. ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI-DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: The Louisiana Purchase International Exposition-  
1904

George stands proudly at his pottery booth, drawing a CURIOUS  
CROWD.

FRANCIS SCHILLING (40's), approaches with two other JUDGES.

FRANCIS

Ah, Mr. Ohr. On behalf of the  
Louisiana Purchase International  
Expo, it's my pleasure to present  
you with the Silver Medal of Honor.  
Your work on the wheel is truly  
impressive. Your glazing techniques  
are exceptional.

He hands George the silver medal. George gives it a long  
glance.

GEORGE

Mr. Schilling, with all due respect, I think my work merits more than a silver medal. Isn't it a bit unfair to judge a piece solely on its glaze?

FRANCIS

While we admire your innovative approach, Mr. Ohr, we found some elements lacking in...shall we say, traditional symmetry.

GEORGE

Symmetry?

FRANCIS

Yes, symmetry. We appreciate your commitment to originality, but some of your pieces might perplex those who expect more conventional forms.

George tugs on his beard.

GEORGE

Well, Mr. Schilling, let me offer you my perspective on symmetry.

George leans in and whispers.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Symmetry is for gibface, pigeon-livered, heathens that have no imagination! Glaze counts nothing in my creations. God put no color or quality in souls, why should I?

FRANCIS

I must say, I find your remarks quite unprofessional.

GEORGE

And I find your standards stifling. My work is about originality, not adhering to outdated norms!

FRANCIS

That's enough!

Francis snatches the medal from George's hand.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

If you wish to be recognized, a measure of respect is expected.

(MORE)

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Perhaps next time you'll approach  
such honors with a more fitting  
demeanor.

Francis Schilling storms off, the two judges following close behind.

GEORGE

Symmetry...I'll show him symmetry  
with my boot up his ass.

A POSTMAN, ignoring his ranting, rushes forward carrying a piece of paper.

POSTMAN

Pardon, me. Are you Mr. George  
Edgar Ohr?

GEORGE

By all accounts, it appears so.

POSTMAN

I have an urgent telegram for you.

George snatches the telegram from him. His body goes numb.

FADE TO:

EXT. BILOXI CITY CEMETARY-DAY

George and his family surround his father's gravesite. Johanna reaches down and places a single rose next to the grave. The tombstone reads, "George Ohr Sr. Born in Germany, August 19, 1819. Died, July 8th, 1904".

JOHANNA

He was a good man. Remember that he  
was proud of you, George. Even if  
he didn't always show it.

Josephine steps closer and gently wraps her arms around him as the distant chime of church bells drifts on the breeze.

FADE TO:

EXT. BILOXI CITY CEMETARY-DAY-YEARS LATER

George, much older now, places a bouquet of lilies at the base of the tombstone. It is now etched with the inscription, "Johanna W. Ohr. Born in Germany, May 24th, 1822. Died December 28th, 1905".



George stands alone, a storm of sorrow in his eyes.

EXT. MAINSTREET-DAY

George rides up and parks. A PAPERBOY stands next to a stack of newspapers.

PAPERBOY  
Get your paper, here! Want to buy a  
paper, mister?

George pulls out some coins and tosses them to the paperboy.

He skims through the pages. He stops, his eyes are fixated in disbelief.

INT. GUS'S TAVERN-DAY

George remains silent, his gaze fixed on the amber liquid in his glass. He gulps his shot of whiskey, the glass hitting the table with a sharp THUD.

GEORGE  
Another.

Gus pours George another shot, but George snatches the bottle from him, gripping it tightly.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Leave it.

George downs the shot in one go, then lurches forward, coughing uncontrollably.

WINSTON (O.S.)  
Well, well, well. As I live and  
breathe!

Winston Hewes, now in his (40's), strolls through the door. He is elegantly dressed from head to toe. Two of his CRONIES dressed in similar fashion follow close behind.

Winston runs his fingers through his well-manicured mustache.

WINSTON (CONT'D)  
Looky here, boys. If it isn't  
Biloxi's favorite town looney.

GUS PHILLIPS  
Cool it, Winston. Don't be causing  
trouble.

WINSTON

Why, Gus! I wouldn't dream of it.

Winston pats George on the back.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

I just wanted to congratulate ol' George here on his recent release from the county pokey.

CRONIE #1

How many times that make, George?

CRONIE #2

Too many by my count.

George continues to sip his whiskey. Winston leans in close.

WINSTON

What was it this time, George? Ah, you done went and dug yourself a ditch on government property...isn't that right?

CRONIE #1

He fancies himself a government man.

CRONIE #2

How about it, George? You fancy yourself a government man?

George's face remains stoic, his eyes fixed on his drink.

WINSTON

Now, boys. George here is a changed man. At least that's what he keeps saying.

Winston leans in closer. George can feel his breath on his face.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

You a changed man, George?

George says nothing. Winston is steamed.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Hey! I'm talking to you!

GUS

Leave him be, Winston!

Winston ignores him. He whispers into George's ear.

WINSTON

You know what I think? I think my father was right about you. You're batshit crazy as the day you was born.

GUS

That's enough out of you, Winston! Get your skinny ass out of my bar, and take your lackeys with you!

He backs away towards the door.

WINSTON

See you around, ol' Georgie!

Cronie #2 gives George the middle finger as all three exit.

George gulps down another shot whiskey, reaching for the bottle.

EXT. MAINSTREET-DAY-LATER

George stumbles out of the bar, his steps unsteady as he drags himself down the street towards the center of town.

George pushes through a few of the townspeople, walking straight up to Winston who is flirting with a BLONDE. He taps Winston on the shoulder. As he turns, George punches him square in the mouth.

INT. BILOXI COUNTY JAIL-DAY

CLIK! The jail door swings shut behind him. George collapses on the bench, nursing his throbbing head.

GEORGE

(in German)

Shit.

INT. BILOXI COUNTY JAIL-DAY-LATER

George awakens from his restless slumber to find Josephine standing before him, her eyes puffy and red from crying. SHERIFF WILLIAM REEVES (30's), a tall, lanky gentleman unlocks the cell door.

WILLIAM

You got five minutes.

Josephine steps into the cell. George slowly pushes himself up.

JOSEPHINE  
Are you alright?

GEORGE  
Nothing a bit of aspirin won't fix.

SMACK! Josephine's hand lands sharply across his face. George winces but doesn't flinch.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Reckon I had that coming.

JOSEPHINE  
Damn right you did. They said you went and laid into Winston Hewes. What in the world were you thinking?

GEORGE  
I got carried away.

JOSEPHINE  
Carried away? You thought it was a good idea to start a fight? George, do you even realize what you've done?

GEORGE  
I'm sorry.

George swallows hard, his voice cracking.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Harry's dead.

JOSEPHINE  
I know. I've been in tears all morning...but that doesn't excuse what you did.

Josephine struggles to control her voice, her emotions nearly overwhelming her.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)  
What happened to you, George? Since your folks passed, it's like you've given up. On your pottery... on your friends... on us. That is not the man I fell in love with.

She takes a deep breath, her face hardening as she tries to regain composure.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

I spoke to the judge. There's gonna be a lunacy hearing.

GEORGE

Lunacy hearing?

JOSEPHINE

Winston's lawyer Mr. Doty recommended you be committed. The judge agreed to hear his case.

GEORGE

Josie—wait—

JOSEPHINE

No. Spare me the assurances that everything will turn out alright. You cannot promise that. I've stood by you through thick and thin, more times than I care to remember...but I cannot simply stand by and watch you squander your life away...our life.

GEORGE

What are you saying?

Josephine fights back tears, her voice trembling.

JOSEPHINE

I'm saying...don't expect me at the hearing.

GEORGE

Josie...

JOSEPHINE

I'm sorry.

Josephine runs out of the room.

GEORGE

Josie!

George slumps back onto the bench, the weight of her words crashing down on him.

INT. OLD HOUSE-DAY/NIGHT

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

George is alone in a room, perched on a old, Victorian couch. Above, where a roof should be, open sky stretches into infinity.

The room is shifting. Paint on the walls peels and cracks, only to become new again.

His gaze turns skyward, where time whirls with frantic speed. The sun rises and sets in a blink, clouds chase each other, and the moon journeys through its phases. Shooting stars streak across the night sky.

George's attention is drawn downward, where a youthful version of himself sits across from him. Pointing to a dim corner, the young George reveals a ghostly white horse.

As his eyes return to the young doppelgänger, it ages before him, each moment etching lines of time until it mirrors George's current age. It continues to age rapidly, becoming mummified at first, finally turning to ash and dust.

George's focus shifts to his hands, cradling a piece of pottery. He turns it over, revealing inscribed Latin words on its base: "Cum ego abiit, opus meum erit benedictus".

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. BILOXI COUNTY JAIL-DAY

The early morning sun filters through the narrow jail window, casting fleeting beams of light onto George's weary face as he stirs awake.

The clinking of keys announces the arrival of Sheriff Reeves, who strides into the cell area. He inserts the key into the lock, the metal tumblers click, and the cell door swings open.

WILLIAM

Come along, George. You've made bail.

George lurches upward.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

You're free to go. Judge set your hearing for this Friday. Best be here.

George gives him a sideways glance before sliding past him.

EXT. BILOXI COUNTY JAIL-DAY

George exits the jailhouse to see Joseph standing next to a wagon. George dusts off his hat and plops it onto his head.

GEORGE  
Josie send you?

Joseph nods.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Suppose I owe you.

JOSEPH  
I reckon...but that's not why I'm here.

GEORGE  
Why are you here?

JOSEPH  
Because your my friend, George. I figured you could use one right about now.

GEORGE  
Even for a kook like me?

JOSEPH  
I never thought you were crazy, George. An jackass maybe...but not crazy.

GEORGE  
Don't matter. I've made a mess of things.

JOSEPH  
Come on. Let's take a ride.

EXT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

Joseph guides the wagon to a halt in front the pottery shop.

INT. OHR POTTERY SHOP-DAY

Joseph, carrying a large bucket, slides the door open and enters the shop, with George reluctantly following.

GEORGE  
What are we doing here?

JOSEPH  
We've come to find what's missing.

GEORGE  
Missing?

JOSEPH  
Your passion, George. The spark  
that made you the potter you once  
were.

GEORGE  
It's gone, Joseph. I don't think I  
can ever get it back.

JOSEPH  
Nothing's ever truly lost, George.  
Sometimes it's just buried beneath  
layers of hate, sadness, even  
regret.

Joseph reaches into the bucket he was carrying and pulls out  
a lump of clay, extending it towards George.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)  
It's time we dug it up.

George gives it a long, hard look.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)  
I believe in second chances. You  
can either give up, or fight for  
what matters.

Hesitating, George takes the lump of clay from him.

With clay in hand, George stands before the potter's wheel,  
its rusty frame creaking and groaning as it spins faster.  
George's hands are trembling, his breathing erratic.

GEORGE  
I can't...

JOSEPH  
Yes you can. Take a deep breath.  
Let go of all that's weighing you  
down. Now show me.

As if time is standing still, George closes his eyes and  
breathes in deeply. His hands begin to steady.



Summoning all his willpower, he SLAMS the clay down on the center of the wheel.

BEGIN MONTAGE

In poetic fashion, George pushes the clay towards the center of the wheel.

The feeling becomes familiar as his hands start to mold the clay.

His fingers dig deep, separating the clay and creating the beginnings of the walls.

His expression begins to shift, a subtle grin creeping up.

George effortlessly maneuvers the clay, the piece gradually taking shape.

Like a symphony, his movements become rhythmic, like listening to an old familiar tune.

The mud baby comes to life, a unique creation brought to life.

END MONTAGE

George takes a few steps back, a flood of emotions washing over him as tears stream down his face. Joseph rushes to his side and pulls him close.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

It's alright, George. It's alright.

GEORGE

It's not alright. I've driven away my best friend, my family, and now Josie. I can't lose her, Joseph.

JOSEPH

Josie loves you. That hasn't changed. But you need to make things right. Seek forgiveness, but most importantly, learn to forgive yourself.

George nods, determined to mend what's been broken.

INT. OHR HOUSE/BEDROOM-NIGHT

Josephine lies on the bed, staring blankly at the night sky through the window.

The bedroom door creaks open, and George enters with caution, his presence hesitant and fragile. He stands in the doorway, keeping a distance between them.

GEORGE

I know right now, my words might mean nothing to you. But I need you to hear me out. I'm deeply sorry, Josie. Sorry for the hurt, the heartache...for all the trouble I've caused. You deserved so much more than this.

He pauses, his voice breaking as he continues.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I've lost my way. I've lost sight of what truly matters. But...I can't bear the thought of losing you. I don't expect you to be at the courthouse tomorrow. I wouldn't blame you if you weren't. But I needed to say this...to make sure you know that despite everything, my love for you remains as strong as it ever was.

He swallows hard, fighting back tears.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

That's all I wanted to say. I just needed you to know that.

George slowly lets the door swing shut, leaving Josephine alone with the weight of his words.

INT. COURTROOM-DAY

The small courtroom is packed with TOWNSPEOPLE, filling every nook and cranny. The atmosphere is tense.

SAMUEL H. DOTY (30's), dressed in a polished suit and tie, enters the room and takes a seat next to his client Winston Hewes.

Sheriff Reeves escorts George into the courtroom. George looks determined but apprehensive, his eyes scanning the crowd for Josephine, only to be disheartened by her absence.

JUDGE JAMES ELMER (30's), a tall man with chiseled features, strides into the courtroom.

WILLIAM

All rise...this court is now in session. The honorable Judge James Elmer presiding.

JUDGE

You may be seated.

Judge Elmer flips through the case documents.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Mr. Doty, I understand you are here to address the matter of Mr. George Edgar Ohr Jr.?

SAMUEL

Indeed, your Honor.

JUDGE

And Mr. Ohr, you intend to represent yourself?

GEORGE

Yes, your Honor.

JUDGE

Very well, Mr. Doty, you may proceed.

SAMUEL

Thank you, Your Honor, and esteemed members of the court. We are here today to address the troubling and increasingly erratic behavior of Mr. George Edgar Ohr Jr. Time and again, Mr. Ohr has shown a blatant disregard for the well-being and rights of others. Most notably, he physically assaulted Mr. Winston Hewes, an upstanding citizen who was simply minding his own business. This assault is just the latest in a series of concerning incidents that demonstrate Mr. Ohr's inability to control his temper and respect the law.

Samuel paces the courtroom with a calculated demeanor.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

I believe most of you here are familiar with Mr. Ohr's, shall we say, attention-seeking behavior?

(MORE)

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

And I am confident that many of you can attest to his increasingly unstable actions, indicative of an individual grappling with deep-seated psychological issues.

Murmurs spread through the courtroom.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Hence, for the sake of both this court and the citizens of Biloxi, we propose that Mr. George Edgar Ohr Jr., be committed to a mental institution, where he may receive the vital assistance he so desperately needs.

There are several gasps from the crowd.

Judge Elmer SLAMS his gavel.

JUDGE

Order in the court! Mr. Doty, please continue.

SAMUEL

Thank you, your Honor. I would like to call my client Winston Hewes to the stand.

Winston takes the stand, looking self-assured.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Mr. Hewes, could you describe for the court what transpired on the day in question?

WINSTON

Certainly. I was in town, minding my own business when George Ohr came stumbling over, clearly inebriated. He had fire in his eyes—seething with anger. He came right up to me and decked me hard in the mouth. I nearly lost my front tooth!

Winston tries to muster a sympathetic expression.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

My father, God rest his soul, always said there was something off about George.

(MORE)

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Like the roof's not nailed tight,  
if you know what I mean. If anyone  
belongs in a padded room, it's him.

SAMUEL

So, in your opinion, Mr. Hewes,  
George Ohr's actions were not just  
an isolated incident of violence,  
but indicative of a deeper  
instability?

WINSTON

That's right. I've seen it in his  
behavior before. It's not just  
about this one incident. His whole  
approach to life—it's erratic,  
unpredictable. He's a danger to  
himself and others.

SAMUEL

Your Honor, if I may, I'd like to  
present evidence that supports Mr.  
Hewes's claims about Mr. Ohr's  
erratic behavior.

Samuel carefully retrieves several neatly organized  
documents. He holds them up for the courtroom to see.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

In my hand, are witness testimonies  
detailing Mr. Ohr's disruptive and  
unstable behavior over the years.  
Along with these, I have a petition  
signed by numerous community  
members advocating for his  
commitment.

He hands the documents to the judge, who flips through the  
stack of papers, his brow furrowing as he reads through the  
testimonies and petition.

JUDGE

Is there anything else you wish to  
add, Mr. Doty?

SAMUEL

Only that I hope justice is served  
today, not just for my client, but  
for the good people of Biloxi.

JUDGE

Very well. Mr. Ohr, the floor is  
yours.

George stands and clears his throat, a look of determination upon his face.

GEORGE

Your Honor, I have only one witness  
I'd like to call: Mr. Joseph  
Fortune Meyer.

JUDGE

You may take the stand, Mr. Meyer.

Joseph approaches the witness stand and takes his seat.

JOSEPH

I've known George since we were  
kids. But it wasn't until later  
that I truly understood who George  
Ohr was. He was a man searching for  
purpose, struggling to find  
himself—that is, until he started  
throwing clay. Pottery became his  
lifeline, giving him a sense of  
purpose and pride.

Joseph pauses, looking around the courtroom before  
continuing.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

George may come off as a bit  
eccentric, and sometimes his  
emotions get the better of him. But  
you see, Your Honor, many of us  
yearn to leave behind a mark, a  
legacy, not to be forgotten by the  
world. Fear often holds us back,  
but not George. He's not afraid of  
anything. I won't stand here and  
justify all of his actions, but I  
will attest that George is  
steadfast in his beliefs and  
unwaveringly true to himself. No,  
George isn't crazy. He's my friend.  
And regardless of what unfolds,  
he'll always remain my friend.

JUDGE

Thank you, Mr. Meyer. You may step  
down.

Joseph steps down from the witness stand. George gives him a  
nod.

JUDGE (CONT'D)  
Mr. Ohr. Do you wish to add anything?

GEORGE  
Yes, your Honor.

George moves to the center of the room, taking a deep breath before he begins.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Every one of you here knows me. Some of you knew my parents when I was just a toddler. I'm here today because of a mistake. Truth be told, I've made more than a few. I'm aware that much like my wares, I can be a bit...unorthodox. I've been called a crackpot, kook, madman. And rightfully so. But because of this persona of mine, it makes it difficult for people to truly see the real me.

He pauses, looking around the room.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
For longer than I'd like to admit, I played the part of a court jester, a clown of sorts. I embraced it wholeheartedly, always ensuring the spotlight was mine, along with my mud babies. I discovered early on that being the center of attention paid dividends, even if it meant embracing foolishness. To be honest, I relished it. But staring directly into the light will eventually blind you to what truly matters.

George's eyes soften as he remembers.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
My mama, God bless her soul, used to say, "George, happiness isn't rooted in longing for things, but in appreciating what we have." And although her words stuck with me, my stubborn nature led me astray, causing me to forget about true happiness, of having hope. I'm not going to stand up here and pretend I'm perfect.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I would be lying through my teeth  
if I said so. But truth is, I'm  
tired. Tired of the facade. All I  
yearn for now is to become who I  
should have been all along.

George turns to see Josephine and rest of his family standing  
next to Joseph.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

A better father. A better husband.  
A better friend.

Facing Judge Elmer, George stood tall, his chest held high.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

So, Your Honor, I can't stop you  
from tossing my ass in some padded  
room. That isn't up to me anymore.  
But, given the chance, I'd like to  
show you, and the rest of the good  
folks of Biloxi, that I can change.  
That I can be a better man, not  
just for myself, but for those who  
matter most.

A heavy silence envelops the courtroom.

GUS

I stand with you, George.

George turns to see Gus stepping forward. BIRCH DANIELS  
(70's), a spry, older man, joins him.

BIRCH

I'm with you, George.

Several others rise to their feet, starting to chant. Both  
Samuel and Winston glance around the room, bewildered.

ONLOOKER (O.S.)

Give him another chance, Judge!

The judge BANGS his gavel forcefully.

JUDGE

Order! Order!

Amidst the commotion, Josephine steps forward, her arm  
sliding around George's.

JOSEPHINE

Your Honor, I know my husband has  
done some things I'm not proud of.  
(MORE)



JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

But underneath it all, he is a kind, decent man who has given so much of himself to Biloxi. I stand here asking, begging, please give my husband another chance.

Judge Elmer clears his throat, signaling a pause in proceedings.

JUDGE

Court will take a short recess. Mr. Doty, please join me in my chambers.

Judge Elmer steps down and disappears, Samuel following after him.

INT. COURTROOM-DAY-LATER

Doty returns to his seat. Judge Elmer reenters, the room falling into silence.

WILLIAM

All rise...court is back in session.

JUDGE

You may be seated.

Judge Elmer shuffles through his papers before addressing the accused.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Mr. Ohr. Please stand.

George stands, the weight of the moment palpable.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

After careful consideration, I've reached a decision. For the crimes you've been accused of, I find you, George Edgar Ohr Jr...guilty.

A sound of gasps fills the room.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

However, following private discussions, Mr. Doty has agreed to drop all charges in favor of financial restitution.

Judge Elmer rubs his eyes.

JUDGE (CONT'D)  
Regarding the verdict of lunacy...I  
find the accused, George Edgar Ohr  
Jr., to be of sound mind and will  
not be sentenced to  
institutionalization at this time.

The crowd gets louder, prompting the Judge's stern response.

JUDGE (CONT'D)  
I am issuing you a warning, Mr.  
Ohr. I expect your actions to  
demonstrate your sincerity. Prove  
yourself to your family and this  
community. If I for any reason find  
you here in my courtroom again, I  
will not be so generous. Do I make  
myself clear?

GEORGE  
I give you my word, your Honor.  
This courtroom has seen the last of  
me.

JUDGE  
I will hold you to your word. Court  
adjourned.

EXT. COURTHOUSE-DAY

Outside the courthouse, George and Josephine descend the  
steps together, arms entwined. George's gaze catches Joseph's  
eye.

GEORGE  
Just a moment, Josie.

George walks over to Joseph.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Thanks for sticking your neck out  
for me.

JOSEPH  
That's what friends are for.

In an unspoken understanding, the two men shared a heartfelt  
embrace.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)  
Take care of yourself, George.

GEORGE

You too.

FADE TO:

INT. OHR HOUSE/LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

Josephine sits in her rocking chair, her gaze fixed on the flickering flames in the fireplace. The room is bathed in a warm, golden glow.

George tiptoes into the room, the soft melody of a romantic song filling the air as the record player spins to life.

GEORGE

Care to join me?

JOSEPHINE

George...

She hesitates for a moment before placing her hand in his, rising from her chair. They find themselves in the center of the room, swaying gently to the music.

GEORGE

Josie, I know I haven't always been the best husband, and I've made my share of mistakes, but I want you to know that you are my everything. Always have been, always will.

Josephine places his hand on her chest.

JOSEPHINE

After all these years, you still give me butterflies.

As they sway to the music, George holds her closer.

GEORGE

I love you, my falling star.

Their dance continues as they embrace each other with love in their hearts.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. OLD HOUSE-NIGHT

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

George finds himself once more within the ancient walls of the old house. Time continues to elapse with an eerie swiftness.

His gaze shifts to the left, where a weathered calendar hangs on the wall. The calendar slips, like cards from a deck, flutter away, each revealing a day of the week. They halt abruptly. "April 7th, 1918" stares back at him.

The white horse neighs.

Suddenly, the room is bathed in a burst of sunlight.

FLASH.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. OHR HOUSE/BEDROOM-NIGHT

The lightning fills the sky as the thunder crashes.

George jolts upright in bed, consumed by a violent coughing fit. Struggling to breathe, he stumbles to the sink, coughs overtaking his body. A flash of lightning illuminates the darkened space. George looks down to see blood in the sink.

He spins around to face the calendar hanging on the wall. The date reads "March 23rd, 1918."

INT. OHR HOUSE/BEDROOM-DAY

The morning light filters through the curtains, casting a gentle glow on the room. Josephine stirs in bed, her hand landing on the empty spot where George should be.

INT. TRAIN-DAY

George sits alone in the train cabin, staring blindly out the window.

ATTENDANT (O.S.)  
Ticket, sir?

George hands him his ticket stub.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)  
Heading to Chicago?

GEORGE  
That's right.

ATTENDANT  
Alright. Enjoy your trip.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO-DAY

George strides forward, his steps heavy with purpose. He checks the address written on the letter he is carrying. He stops in front of a small building marked "Doctor".

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE-DAY

George sits on a stool, staring blankly. DOCTOR REED (60's), speaks in a calm but heavy voice.

DOCTOR (O.S.)  
I'm sorry to say, Mr. Ohr...you are  
suffering from cancer of the  
throat...

George's head starts to spin. The doctor's voice seems distant, as if heard underwater.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
...Unfortunately, there's no known  
cure...

George's mind drifts further as the doctor continues to ramble on.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
...I'm sorry...

EXT. TRAIN STATION-TICKET BOOTH-DAY

George stands at the ticket booth, his eyes vacant.

CASHIER  
Sir? Sir?

George blinks, snapping out of his daze.

GEORGE  
I'm sorry...what was that?

CASHIER  
You wanted a ticket to Biloxi,  
right?

GEORGE  
Yes, that's right.

EXT. MEYER HOUSE/DEER ISLAND-DAY

Joseph hammers a nail into the newly built shed as Felicie hangs sheets on a clothes line. He spots a small row boat heading towards them. He looks closer. George is at the helm.

JOSEPH

George!

Joseph hurries to the pier to help George ashore, pulling him into a warm embrace.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

I wasn't expecting you.

GEORGE

Had some free time and thought I'd drop by.

FELICIE

Hey, George.

GEORGE

Hey, Felicie.

FELICIE

Josie couldn't make it?

GEORGE

I'm afraid not.

JOSEPH

Please, come in. You hungry?

GEORGE

Starving.

EXT. MEYER HOUSE/DEER ISLAND-NIGHT

George and Joseph sit on the pier, their feet dangling over the water. George takes a swig from a flask and offers it to Joseph, who shakes his head.

GEORGE

You've got a beautiful place here.

JOSEPH

Felicie wanted to get away from the city once I retired. What better way to enjoy life than on an island.

GEORGE  
I'll drink to that.

JOSEPH  
Seeing you row up here brought back memories.

GEORGE  
Keeps me feeling young.

JOSEPH  
I didn't want to bring it up in front of Felicie, but you look a bit off. You alright?

GEORGE  
Just fighting off a bug. Nothing serious. Remember that day on the beach? After the storm?

JOSEPH  
How could I forget?

GEORGE  
Crazy to think how one chance meeting changed everything.

JOSEPH  
Our paths might never have crossed otherwise.

GEORGE  
I reckon I would have ended up blacksmithing. Working for my father. Day in, day out. Never knowing the feel of the clay.

JOSEPH  
That would have been...tragic.

GEORGE  
Can't argue with that.

George takes a swig and begins to cough.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Listen, can I ask you a favor?

JOSEPH  
Anything, George.

GEORGE  
If something happens to me, promise me you'll look out for Josie.

JOSEPH

Of course. You don't have to ask.

GEORGE

You've been like a brother to me,  
Joseph. I'll never forget that.

JOSEPH

You sure you're feeling alright?

GEORGE

Never better.

The two of them sit in silence, listening to the waves crash  
along the shore.

FADE TO:

EXT. MEYER HOUSE/DEER ISLAND-DAY

Joseph steps outside, yawning as he rubs the sleep from his  
eyes. His gaze focuses, and he scans the surroundings. His  
eyes widen as he realizes the small boat is missing.

He hurries toward the pier, a sinking feeling in his chest.  
In the distance, he spots George rowing away.

George pauses his rowing and waves. Joseph raises a hand in  
return, but his smile is tinged with sadness. A tear runs  
down his cheek.

Felicie joins him.

FELICIE

Already heading out? What's wrong?

JOSEPH

I think...I think that might be the  
last time I see my friend.

EXT. OHR HOUSE-DAY

George reaches for the doorknob. As the door swings open,  
Josephine stands in the doorway.

GEORGE

Josie, I'm sorry-

Josephine lunges forward, throwing her arms around him.



INT. OHR HOUSE/BEDROOM-DAYS LATER

George lies in bed, drenched in sweat. His body trembles as he erupts into a coughing fit. Josephine sits by his side, doing her best to comfort him.

INT. OHR HOUSE/LIVING ROOM-DAY

Josephine and DOCTOR STEVENS (50's), converse in hushed tones.

DOCTOR (O.S.)

His fever is getting worse, I'm afraid. All we can do now is try to make him as comfortable as possible. I can prescribe morphine for the pain. I'm sorry, Josie. I wish there were more we could do.

JOSEPHINE

Thank you, Doctor.

INT. OHR HOUSE/BEDROOM-NIGHT

Josephine cradles George, gently stroking his hair. George gasps for breath, his voice barely a whisper.

GEORGE

Josie...

JOSEPHINE

I'm here, darling. Just rest.

Josephine brings a glass of water and helps George take a few sips..

GEORGE

Josie...did I do right by you?

JOSEPHINE

You did, George. You did.

GEORGE

I'm sorry for the times I let you down. I know I could be stubborn...

JOSEPHINE

You've been a good husband and a loving father. We've had our share of struggles, but we've had a good life.

GEORGE

Will you sing me a tune? Your  
voice...always brought me comfort.

Josephine wipes away the tears, singing softly in his ear, still stroking his hair. George's eyes close as he listens to her song, finding solace in her voice.

INT. OHR HOUSE/BEDROOM-NIGHT

The moon's gentle light washes over George's peaceful face. He stirs, awakened by a distant but familiar sound—the hymnal song he heard on the river years ago.

A white horse appears in the doorway and trots past the bedroom.

George scans the room and realizes he's alone. He glances at the calendar on the wall. It reads "April 7th, 1918."

George pushes himself up and edges off the bed. He is fully dressed. He takes a deep breath. No cough.

He approaches the door, but before stepping out, he looks back at the room.

The room is brightly lit. Josephine sits at the edge of the bed, tears streaming down her cheeks. The rest of his family gathers around the bed, their expressions heavy with grief.

George sees his lifeless body lying peacefully under the covers.

GEORGE

Oh.

George feels the softness of a smaller hand slip into his. He looks down to see Ella Louisa, now older, gazing up at him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Ella?

ELLA

It's time to go, Papa.

George watches his family at his bedside, taking in the sadness that fills the room. Tears begin to stream down his face. He nods and exits the house.

EXT. OHR HOUSE/BACKYARD-DAY

The sun begins to break through the fog that drifts across the backyard.

George stands amid a gathering of familiar faces—his parents, youthful and vibrant, share tender smiles as they guide him away from the house.

JOHANNA

Come, my son. It's time.

A boat rests along the shoreline. Ella Louisa is already on board. Harry Portman gestures for George to join them.

George takes one final glance at his house. Through a window, he catches a glimpse of Josephine.

GEORGE

(in German)

Goodbye...my falling star.

George steps into the boat. Ella Louisa takes her place beside him, and Harry takes the oars, the water shimmering as they begin to row.

George feels the sunlight washing over his face. He is at peace.

The boat drifts off further into the ocean tide, finally disappearing into the horizon.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. BILOXI-DAY

The car carrying JACK CARPENTER (30's), and his wife MARION CARPENTER (30's), glides down a serene country road.

INT. CAR-DAY

Jack's hands rest on the steering wheel, his eyes scanning the road ahead. Marion gazes out the window, lost in thought. The classic 60's tune "Put Your Head on My Shoulder" plays on the radio.

MARION

How much further?

JACK

Not too much longer. The guy at the dealership said it's just up ahead.

A sign appears off in the distance that reads, "Ohr Boy's Garage and Salvage".

JACK (CONT'D)  
Looks like we've arrived.

EXT. OHR BOY'S GARAGE-DAY

Jack pulls up to the front of the shop and parks.

INT. CAR-DAY

JACK  
Stay here. I'll go check it out.

Oto, now in his (60's), emerges from the garage.

OTO  
Hello. How can I help you?

JACK  
Hello there. Jack Carpenter. I  
heard you might have some parts I'm  
looking for.

OTO  
That's right. Follow me.

Oto and Jack disappear into the garage.

Marion exits the car, lights a cigarette, and takes in the surroundings. She notices a shed out back and decides to investigate. As she approaches the doorway, a voice startles her.

LEO (O.S.)  
Can I help you with something?

Marion jumps, turning to see Leo (60's), standing behind her.

LEO (CONT'D)  
Sorry, ma'am. Didn't mean to  
startle you.

MARION  
No, it's my fault. I was just  
admiring your pottery.

LEO  
Belonged to my daddy.

Leo opens the door further.

LEO (CONT'D)  
Feel free to look around. Just be careful.

MARION  
Thank you.

INT. SHED-DAY

Marion carefully makes her way inside. As she explores the shed, she's captivated by the array of Ohr's mud babies.

LEO  
You like them?

MARION  
Very much so.

LEO  
My daddy always said, no two pieces alike.

Marion notices a photo of George standing in front of his shop, holding his creation and a sign that reads "George E. Ohr...greatest potter who ever lived."

MARION  
Your father?

LEO  
Yes ma'am.

Jack walks in, joining Marion.

JACK  
What's all this?

MARION  
These pieces belonged to their father.

JACK  
Impressive collection. He must have been quite an artist.

MARION  
We need to buy them.

JACK  
Which one?

MARION  
All of them.

JACK  
All of them? Marion, you can't be serious?

MARION  
I can't explain it, but there's something about these pieces... something special.

Marion sees the hesitation on his face.

MARION (CONT'D)  
Trust me.

JACK  
Fine. Let me go ask.

Jack converses with Leo and Oto while Marion continues to stare at the photo. She can't help but smile.

FADE TO:

INT. SHED-DAY

A sign hangs above the door to the shed. It's in latin.

"Cum ego abiit, opus meum erit benedictus" ("When I am gone, my work will be praised.")

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE: GEORGE E. OHR, THE SELF PROCLAIMED "MAD POTTER OF BILOXI" IS OFTEN CONSIDERED A PIONEER IN THE WORLD OF CERAMIC ARTS AND DESIGN. THE INSPIRED WORKS AND TECHNIQUES HE USED TO CREATE HIS "MUD BABIES" ARE A TESTAMENT TO THE SKILL AND CREATIVE SPIRIT THAT RESIDED WITHIN HIS MIND AND SOUL. HIS LEGACY CONTINUES TO LIVE ON THROUGH THE WORKS OF THOSE ARTISTS WHO ARE INSPIRED TO LISTEN TO THEIR HEARTS AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO BE A LITTLE-MAD.

END CREDITS.