

HOW TO WRITE A

Brilliant
Romance

THE EPIC SEMINAR



A romantic couple is sitting on a beach at sunset. The man is on the left, wearing a white t-shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans. They are both looking towards the right, and the man is kissing the woman on the cheek. The background shows the ocean and a sunset sky.

Session 1: What makes a great romance?

Basic understanding of story: Lindy Hop (External Plot)

Basic understanding of story: Lie Journey (internal plot)

Connective tissue: the Romance Plot

WHY ROMANCE?

In 2012 romance fiction generated \$1.51 billion in sales and remained the **largest share of the consumer market** at 14.3 percent.

People still want to believe in love and happily ever after, even in the bad times. Maybe *especially* in the bad times



IT'S ALL ABOUT CREATING GREAT EXPECTATIONS!



WHAT GOES INTO A GREAT ROMANCE?

Heroes & Heroines

Tension & Sparks

Tender Moments

Breakup!

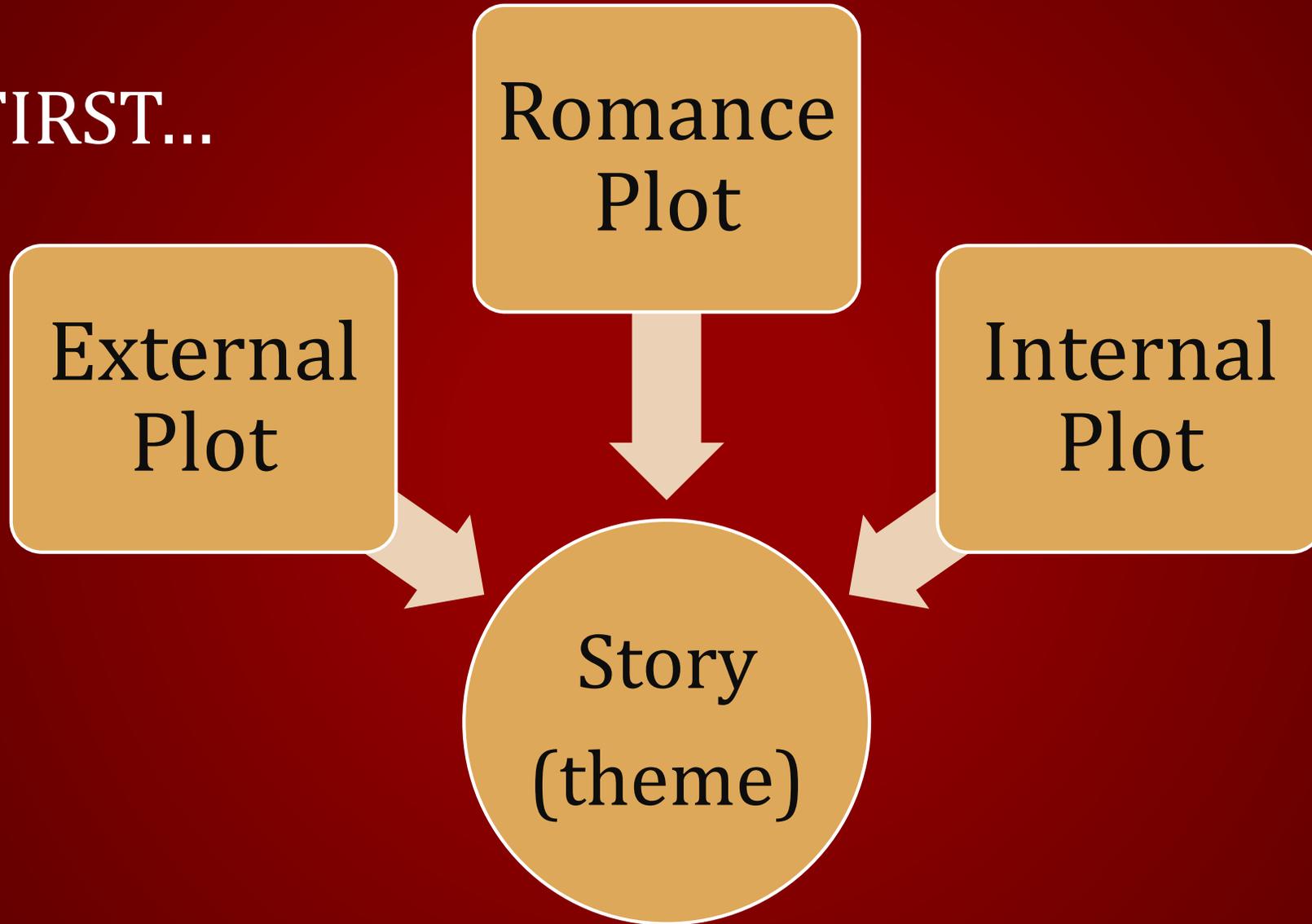
Happily Ever After

....and so much more!

YES, IT'S A FORMULA!



BUT FIRST...

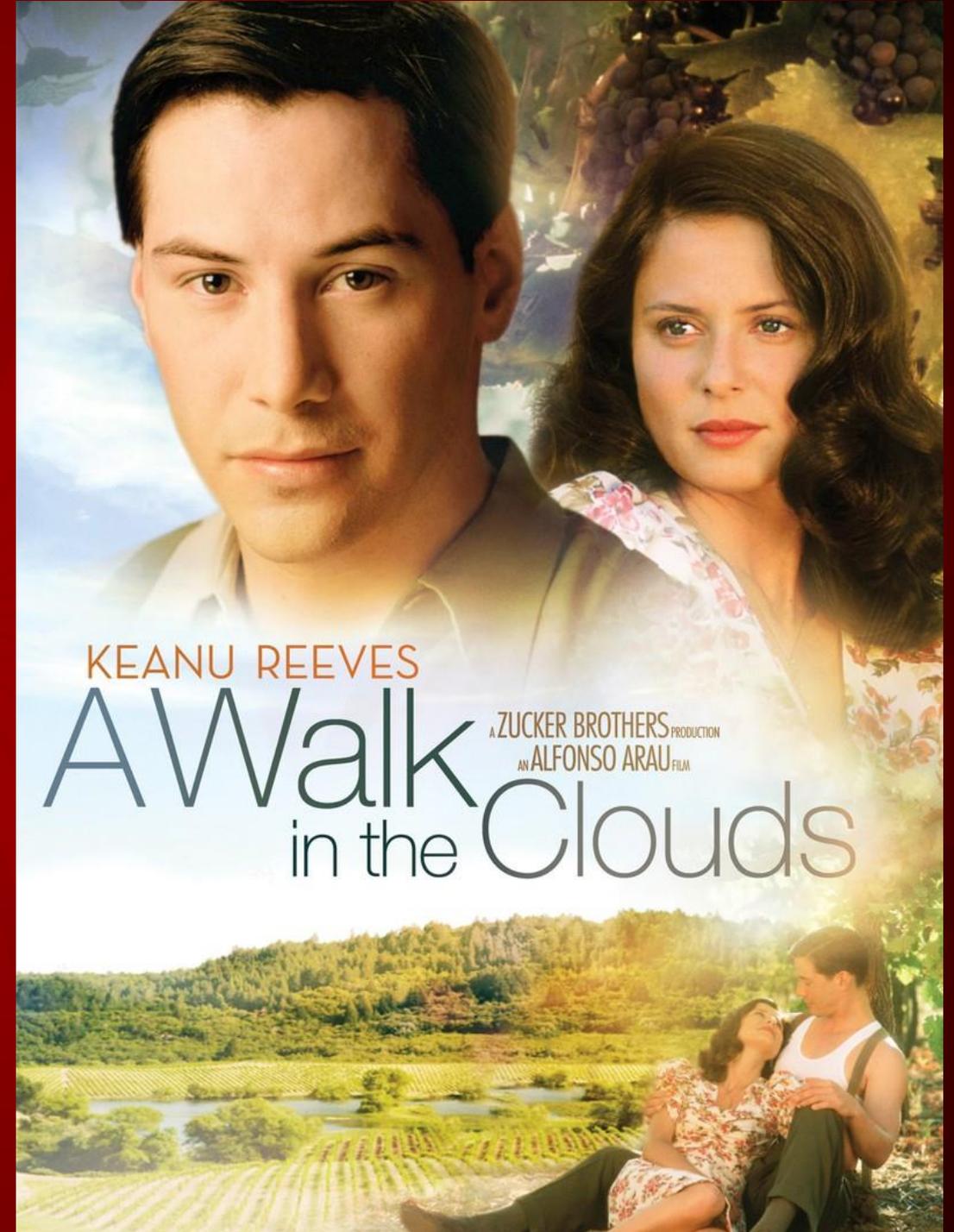


THE EXTERNAL PLOT

(aka...the Lindy Hop)

A story is always about what a character wants and how the external journey puts them through an internal journey of change.

A ROMANCE is the emotional glue that holds these two journeys together. It's not just about the journey of the heart, but the journey of a personal change



L= LIFE

Meet Paul

In 1945, after World War II, United States Army Sgt. Paul Sutton returns to San Francisco to reunite with his wife, Betty, whom he married, following a whirlwind courtship, the day before he departed for the Pacific. The war has left him with emotional scars, and he experiences flashbacks on a regular basis.

Paul's reunion with Betty is strained, especially after he discovers that, although he has written her "almost every day", she stopped reading them after the first few, and keeps the hundreds of unopened letters in a footlocker. He is determined to make a go of the marriage, however, and hopes to establish a new career for himself. She insists he continue to sell chocolates door-to-door, and he sets off to Sacramento.



A close-up, low-angle shot of a man in a military uniform looking down at a woman in a red dress. The man is on the right, leaning over the woman on the left. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows. The man's uniform has gold stripes on the sleeve. The woman's dress is a vibrant red. The background is dark and out of focus.

INCITING INCIDENT....
(something happens!)

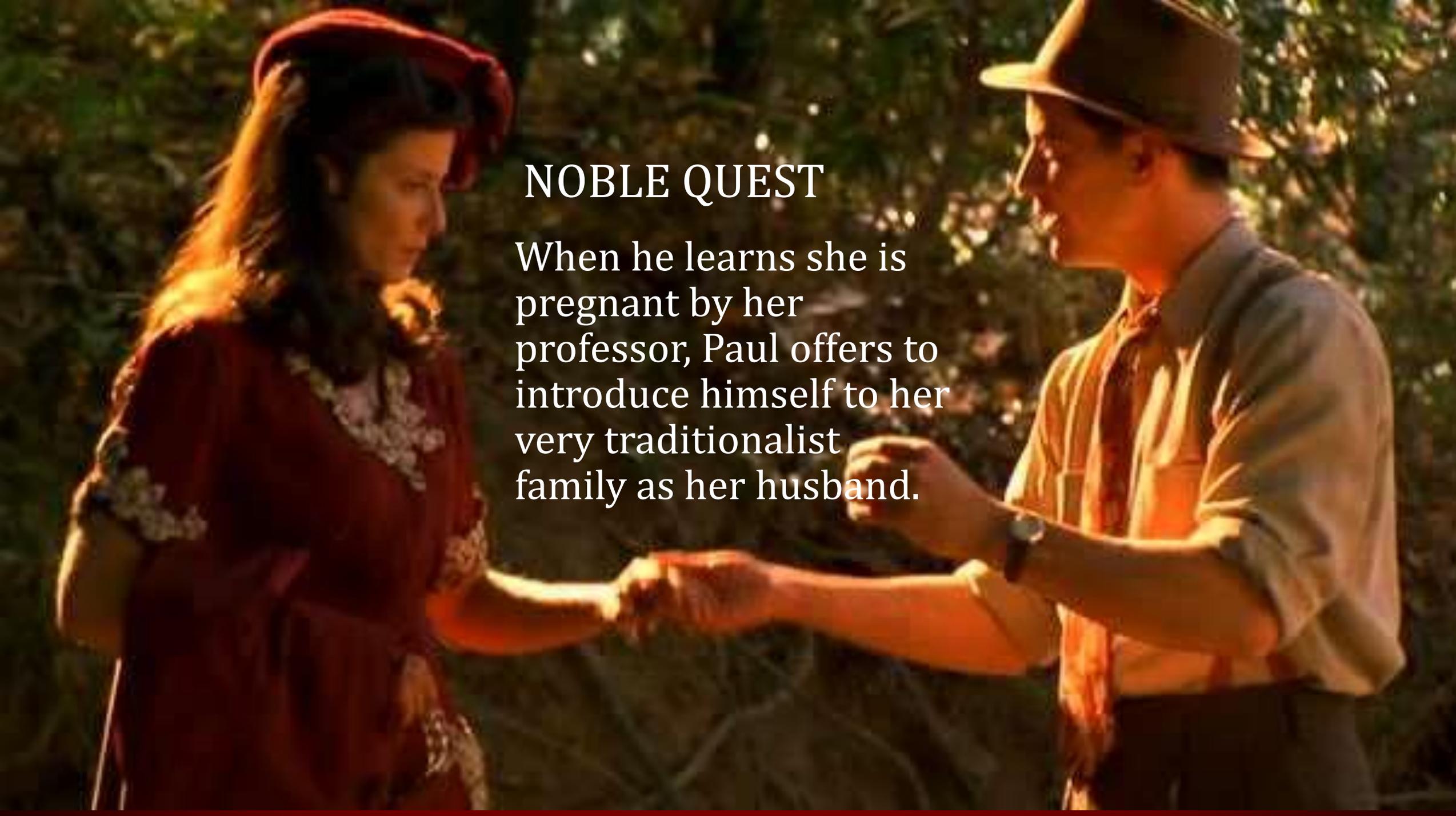
L= LIFE

Meet Victoria

En route, he meets fellow train passenger Victoria Aragon, a graduate student whose Mexican-American family owns a vineyard in the Napa Valley.





A man and a woman in 1940s attire holding hands in a field. The woman is on the left, wearing a red dress and a matching hat. The man is on the right, wearing a light-colored shirt, a tie, and a fedora. They are standing in a field with trees in the background. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

NOBLE QUEST

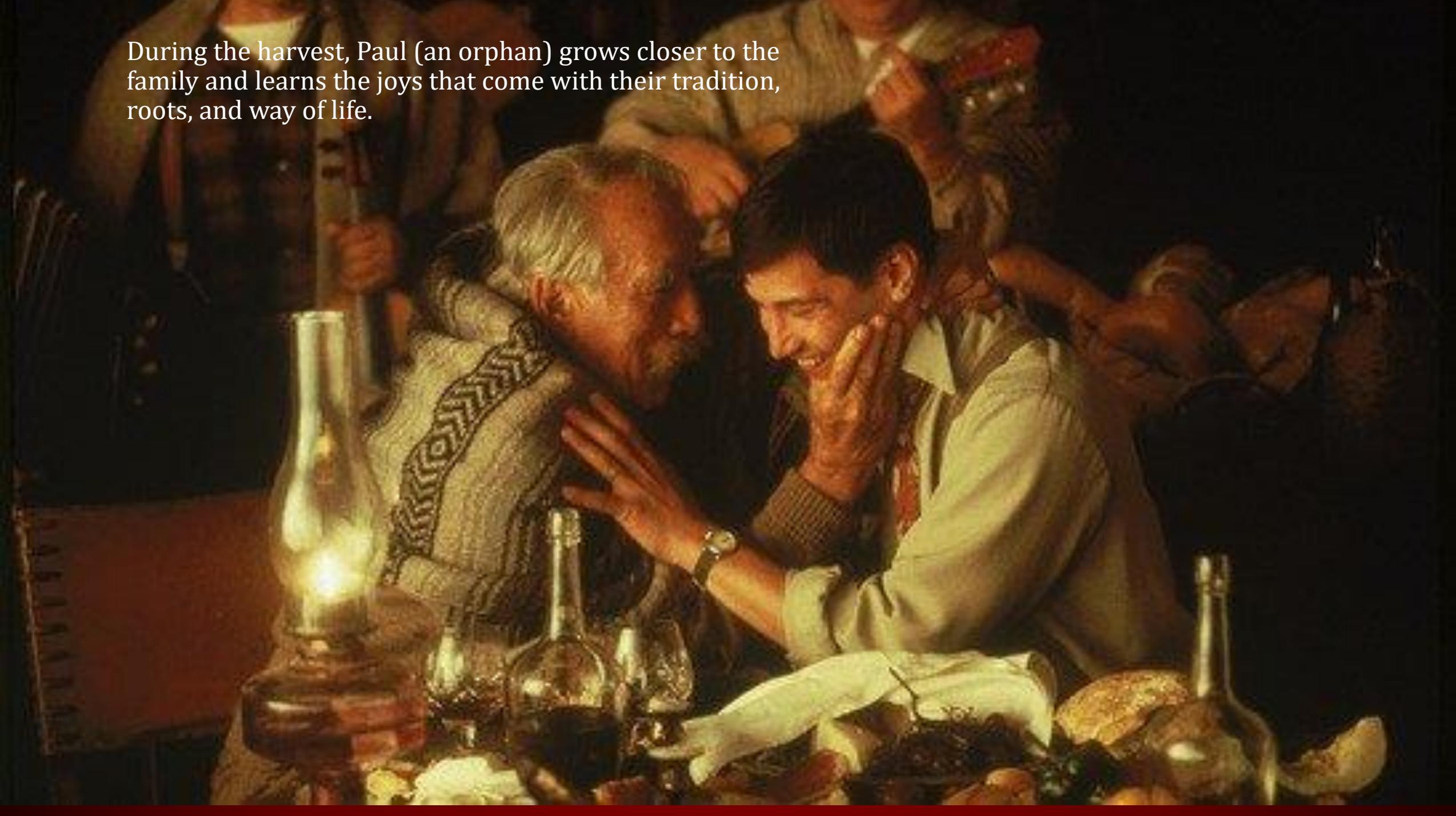
When he learns she is pregnant by her professor, Paul offers to introduce himself to her very traditionalist family as her husband.



TROUBLE! (AKA...Disappointments!)

Victoria's father, Alberto, is infuriated, not only that she married a man below her social standing, but without his permission as well. Paul's initial plan to quietly slip away and continue on his journey, leaving her family to believe he abandoned her, is derailed when her grandfather, Don Pedro, encourages him to stay and help with the harvest.

During the harvest, Paul (an orphan) grows closer to the family and learns the joys that come with their tradition, roots, and way of life.



A man and a woman are standing in a lush, green, outdoor setting. The man, on the left, is wearing a white tank top and dark pants. The woman, on the right, is wearing a long, white, flowing dress. They are both holding large, white, wing-like structures made of a thin frame and a translucent material. The background is filled with dense green foliage and trees. The lighting is bright and natural, suggesting a sunny day.

**Which causes MORE Trouble!
And Y's in the Road!**

He and Victoria try to ignore their growing attraction and feelings for each other, but with little success.

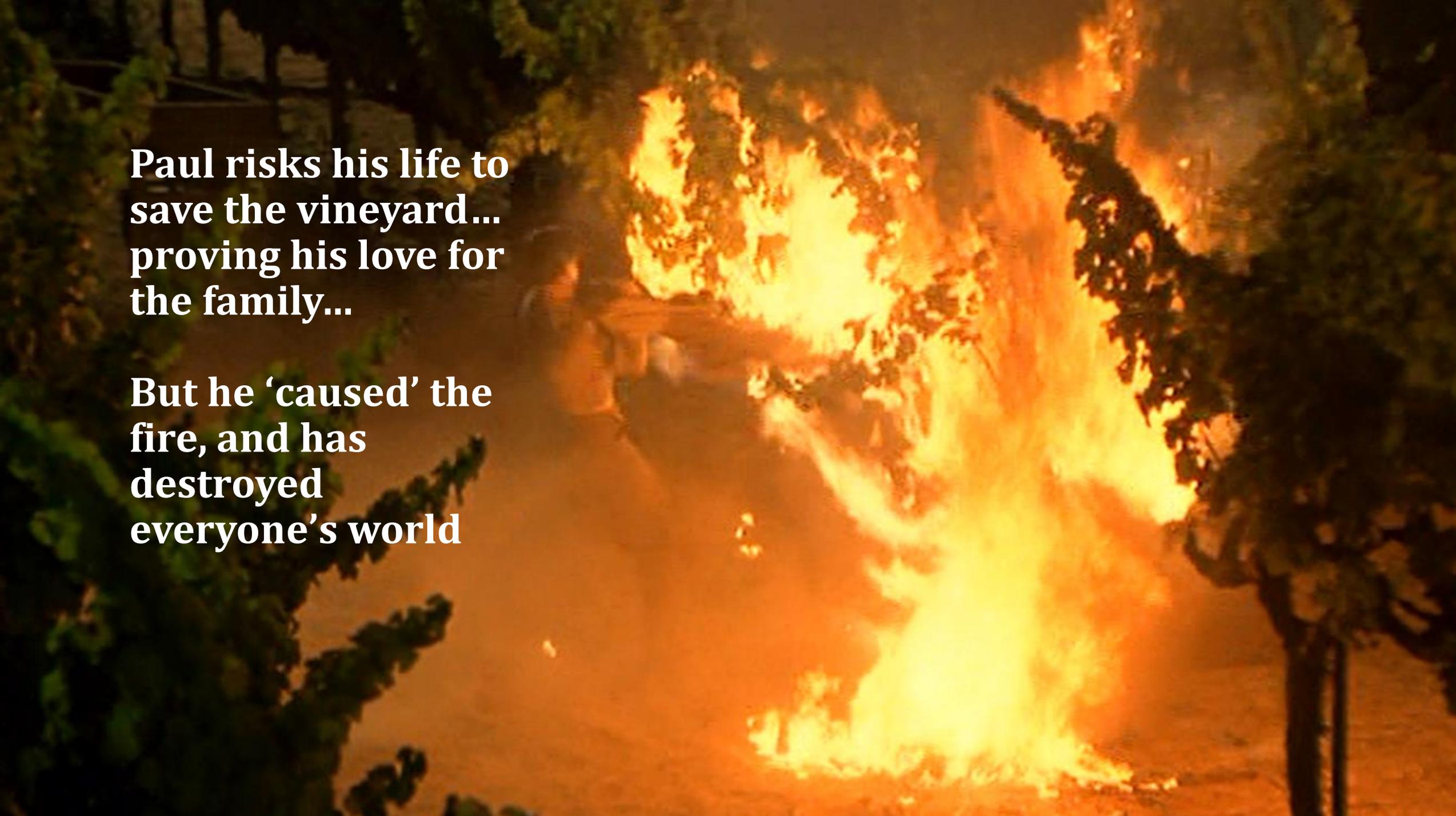


Which leads to a Black Moment Event & Effect

When Paul returns, an argument with an angry and drunk Alberto leads to a disastrous fire which destroys the vineyard.

**Paul risks his life to
save the vineyard...
proving his love for
the family...**

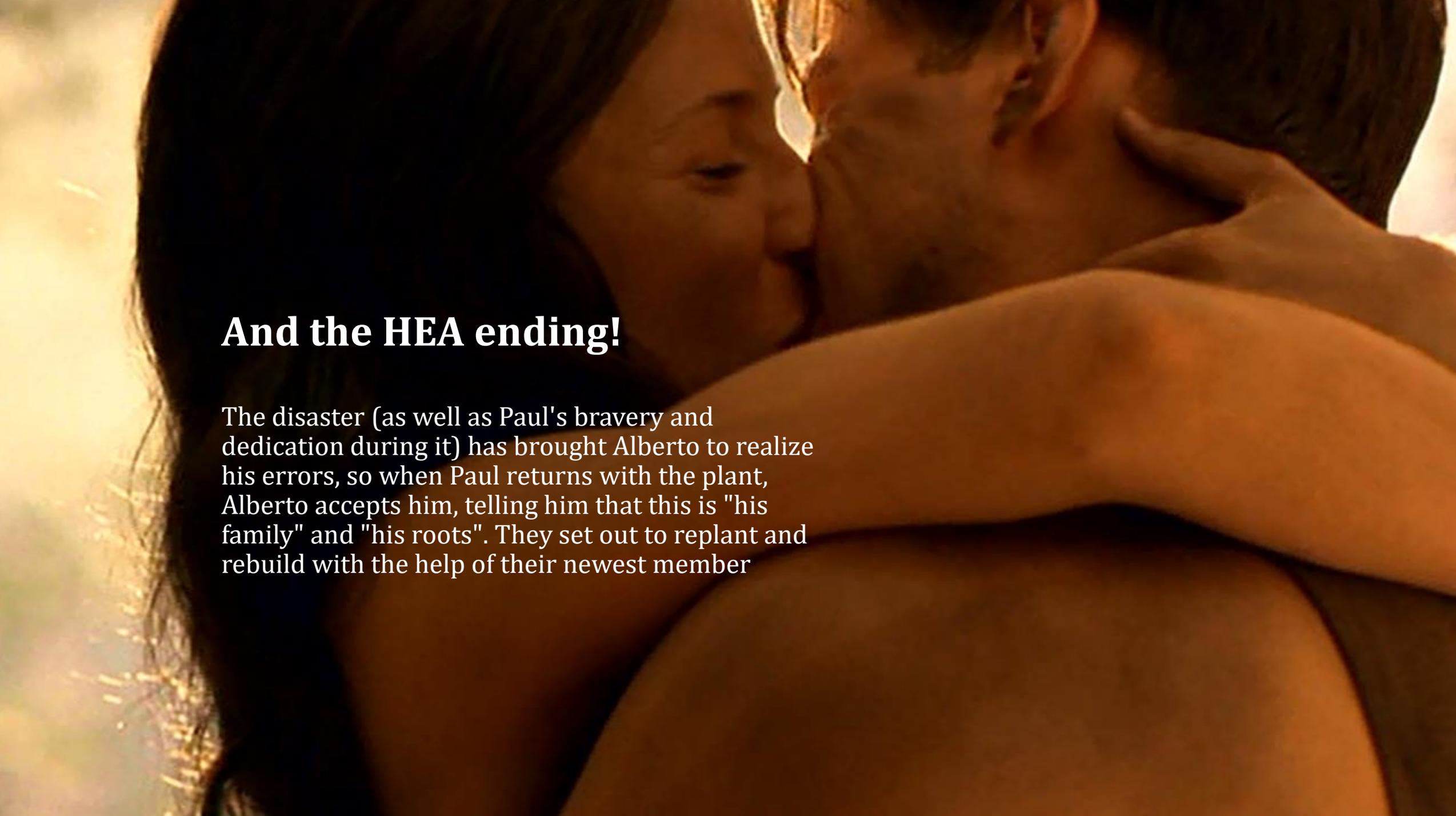
**But he 'caused' the
fire, and has
destroyed
everyone's world**



Until the epiphany...

However, Paul remembers one plant that may still have its roots intact, races off to retrieve them, and bring them back to the family.





And the HEA ending!

The disaster (as well as Paul's bravery and dedication during it) has brought Alberto to realize his errors, so when Paul returns with the plant, Alberto accepts him, telling him that this is "his family" and "his roots". They set out to replant and rebuild with the help of their newest member

**This is the root of your life. You
are bound to this land, this family
by commitment, honor and...love.**



- Life
- Inciting Incident
- Noble Quest
- Disappointments
- Y's in the Road
- Help! (Black Moment)
- Overhaul (Epiphany)
- Perfect Ending! (HEA!)

OVERVIEW OF THE LINDY HOP

Inner Journey!

The Inner Journey of your character is about him/her breaking free of the LIE they believe...so that equipped with the TRUTH, they can be set free to LIVE and LOVE.



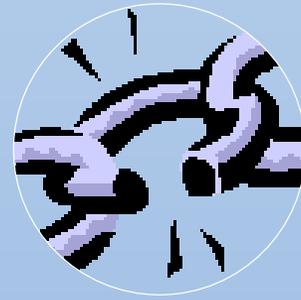
Three Threads in a story:



External



Romance

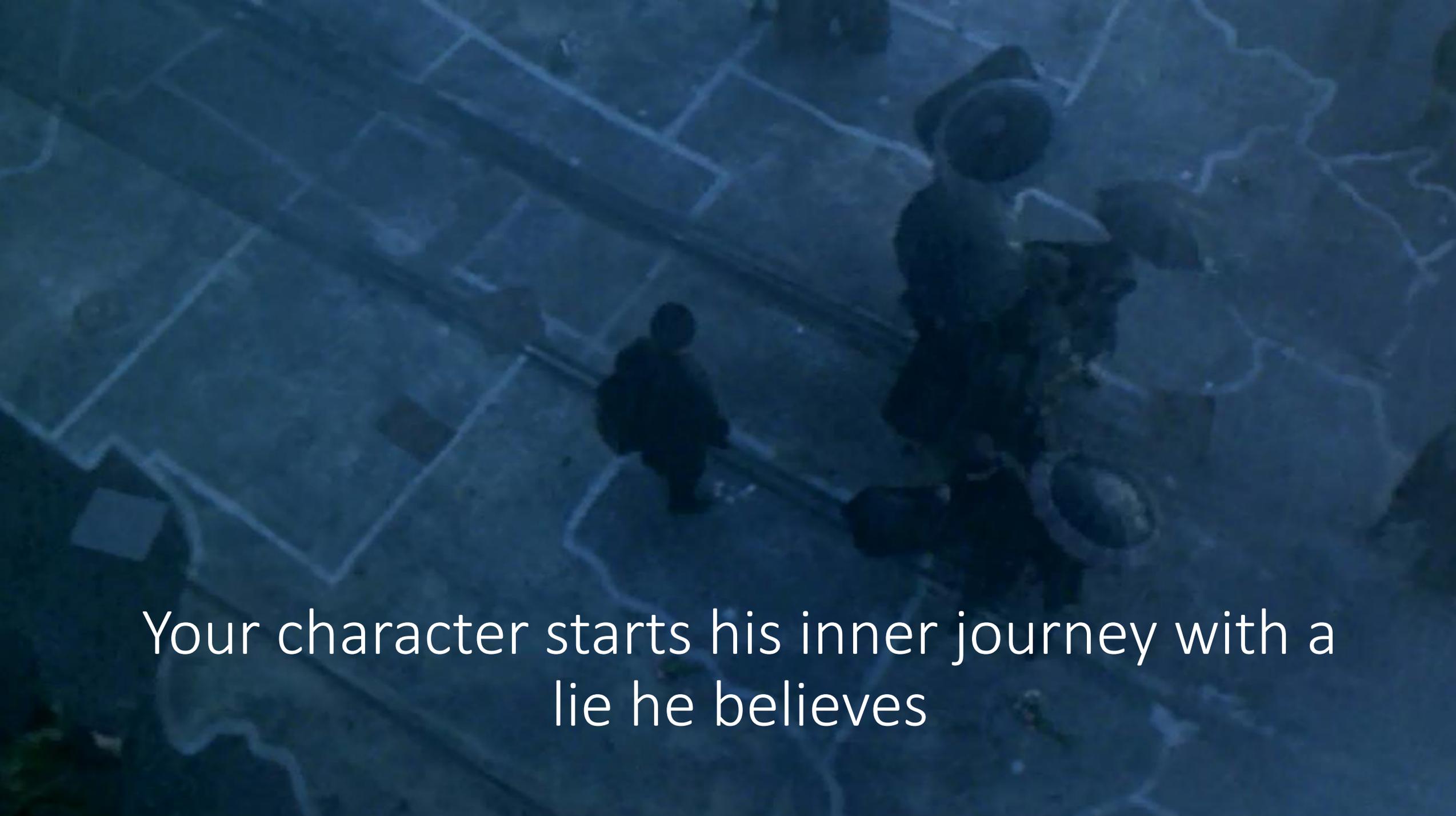


Inner



- ✓ Lie = Dark Moment of the Past!
- ✓ Confirmation
 - Act1: Confirm the lie
- ✓ Truth Tellers
 - Act 2: Introduce the Truth
- ✓ See the Lie/ Faux Truth
- ✓ Black Moment/Lie feels real
- ✓ TRUTH/Epiphany
 - (Break free of the lie)
- ✓ Final Battle
 - (What can they do at the end they can't at the beginning?)

BREAKDOWN OF INNER JOURNEY

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a city street, overlaid with a dark blue tint. The street is paved with light-colored rectangular tiles. Several people are visible walking along the street. One person is walking away from the camera in the center-left, while a group of people is walking towards the camera on the right side. The overall scene is dimly lit, suggesting an overcast day or early morning/late afternoon.

Your character starts his inner journey with a
lie he believes



That lie is confirmed... |
early in the story |



He meets truth tellers...who |
introduce him to the truth |

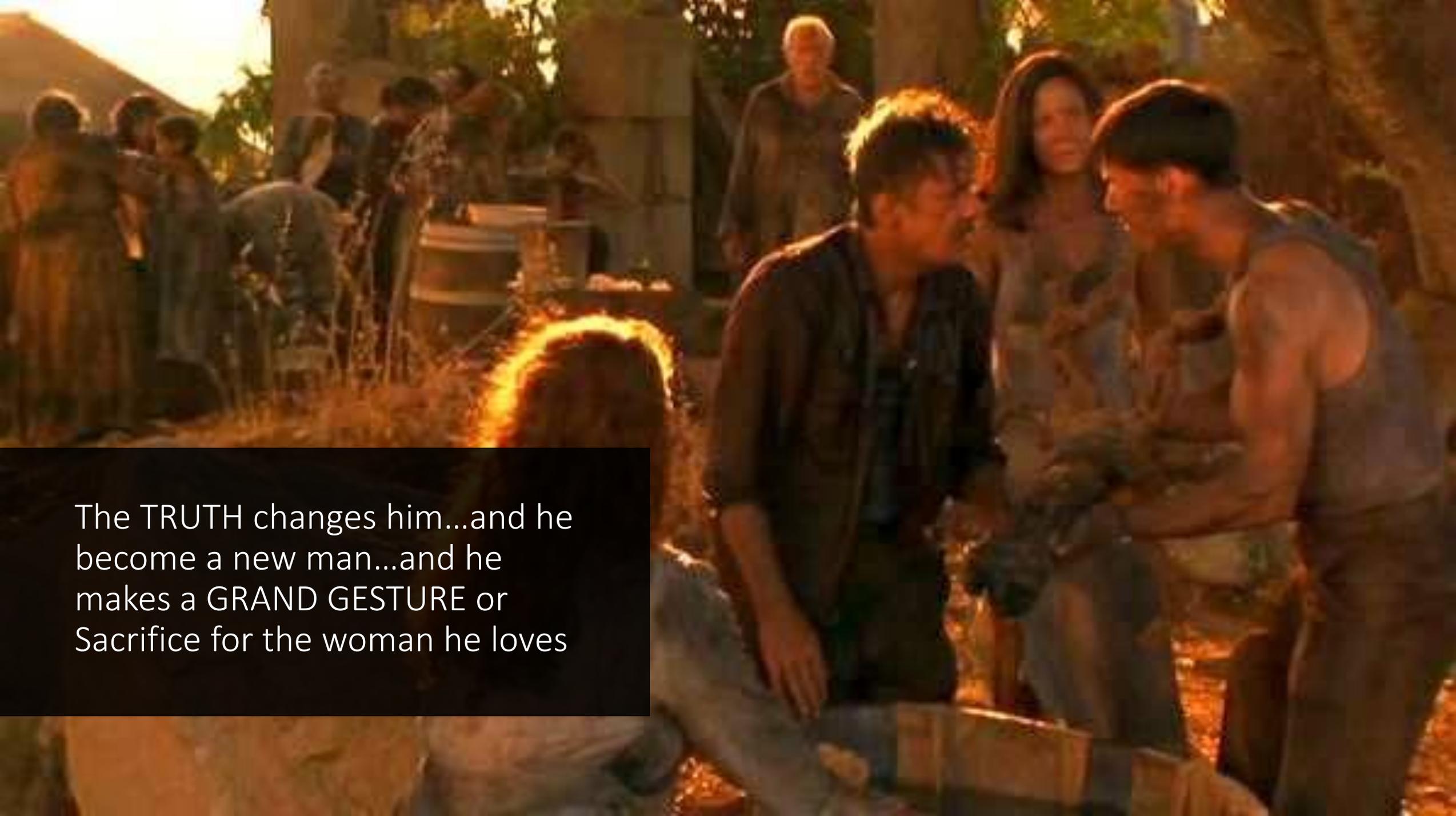
Until he starts to
want...even
believe it..

(And he starts to act in that “truth”
even though he hasn’t embraced it.)





However, the Black Moment |
happens...and the LIE feels real... |



The TRUTH changes him...and he become a new man...and he makes a GRAND GESTURE or Sacrifice for the woman he loves



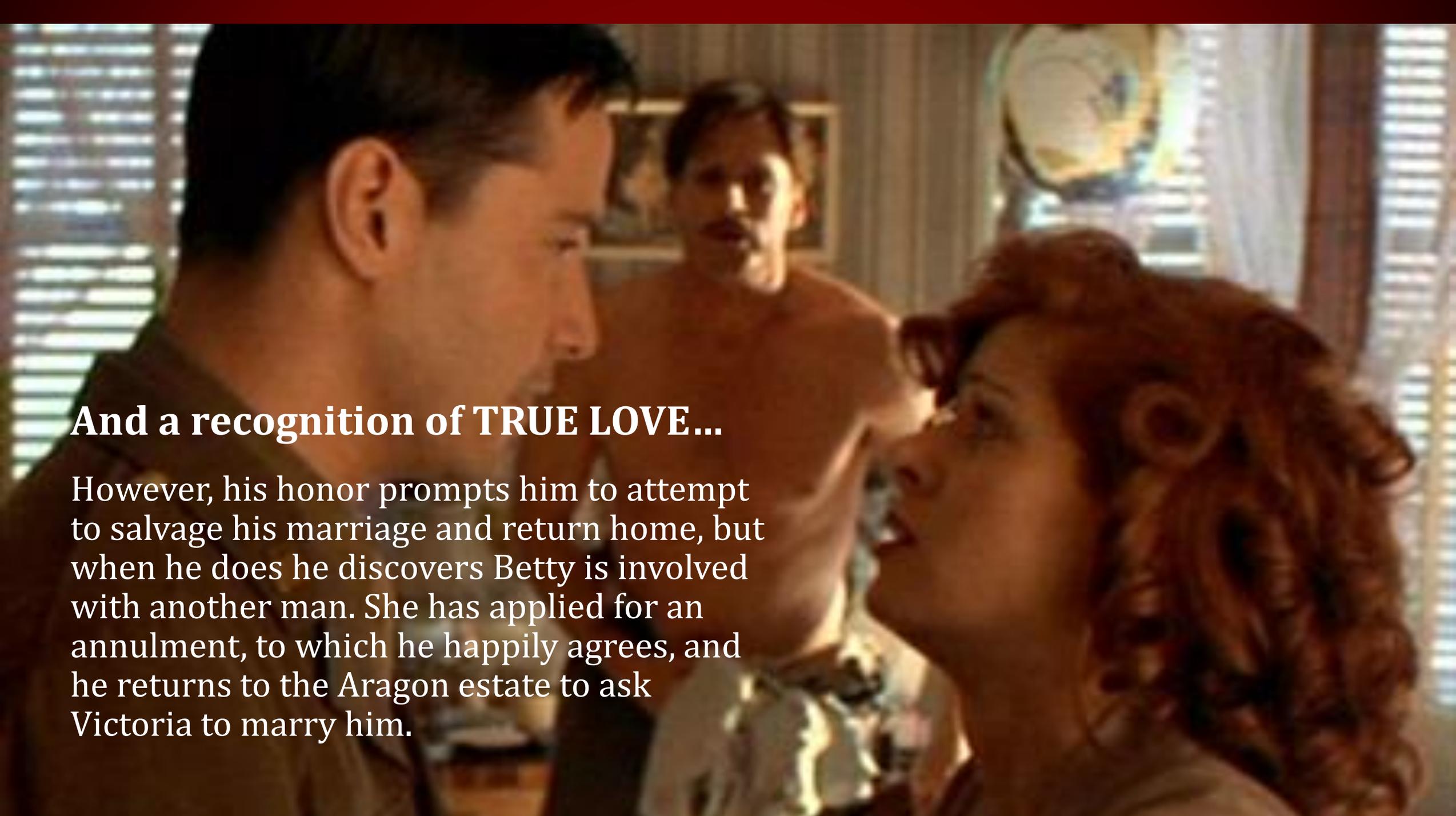
And in the end, gets his
truest desires

Where does the ROMANCE fit in?

- The romance combines the EXTERNAL PLOT (What he wants) With the Internal Journey of TRUTH by adding in that HEART Connection.
- As the Hero meets the Heroine, his Greatest Dream/Secret Desire begins to awaken
- Being with her makes him face his flaws, his lies and reach for the truth.
- The Breakup makes him realize his deepest inner fears
- The Black Moment makes him realize what he has to lose
- The Epiphany makes him realize how much he loves her...and what he needs to do to get her back
- The Grand Gesture shows that love is real, and he has changed
- The HEA Ending satisfies the deep longing of his heart by healing his wounds and giving him his greatest dream/secret desire.



**Every Romance must have
to a Breakup (and broken hearts.)**

A scene from a movie showing a man in a military uniform looking at a woman with curly hair, with another man in the background.

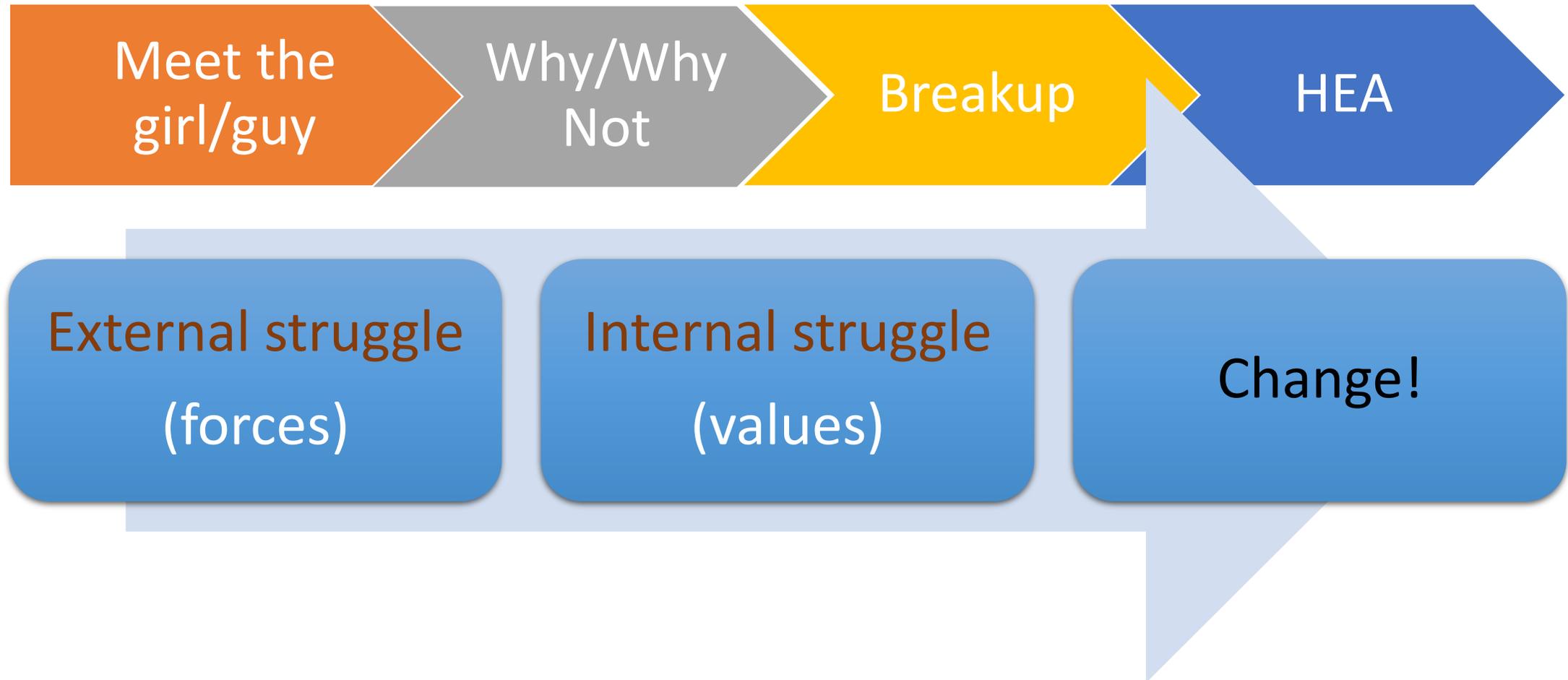
And a recognition of TRUE LOVE...

However, his honor prompts him to attempt to salvage his marriage and return home, but when he does he discovers Betty is involved with another man. She has applied for an annulment, to which he happily agrees, and he returns to the Aragon estate to ask Victoria to marry him.

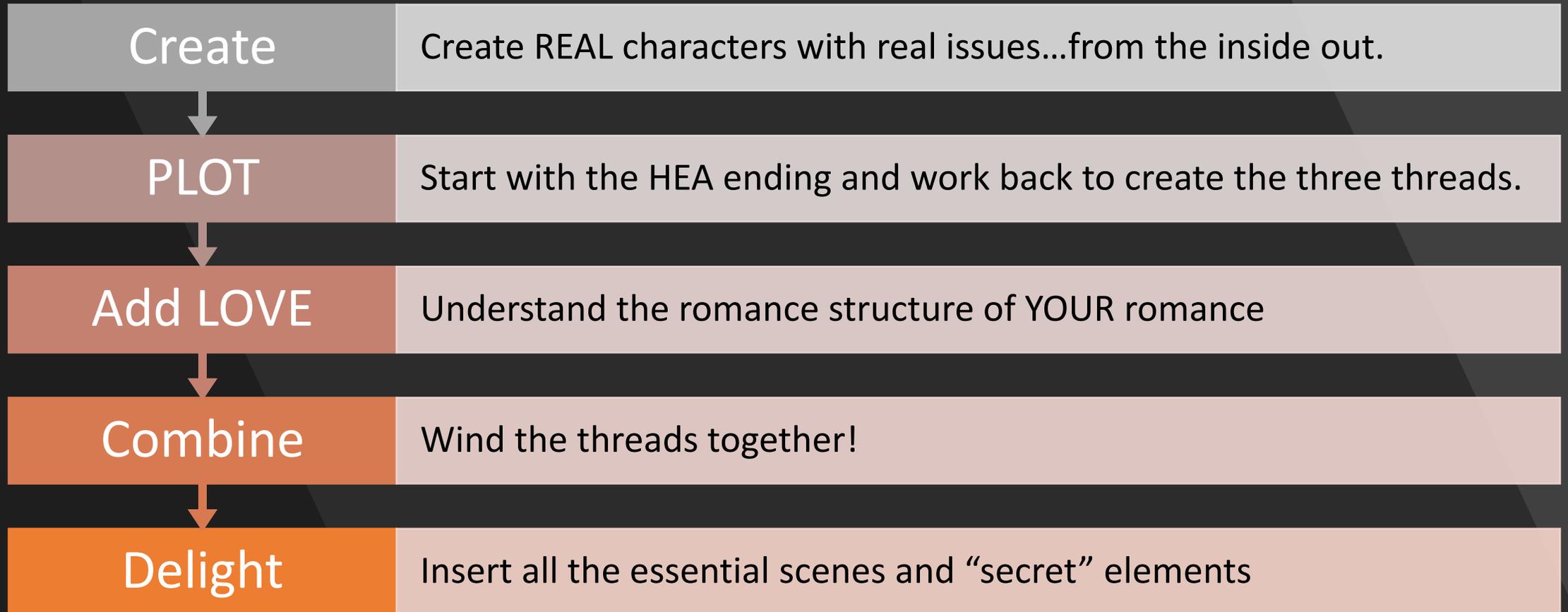


**Which leads to a Sacrifice and
Grand Gesture...**

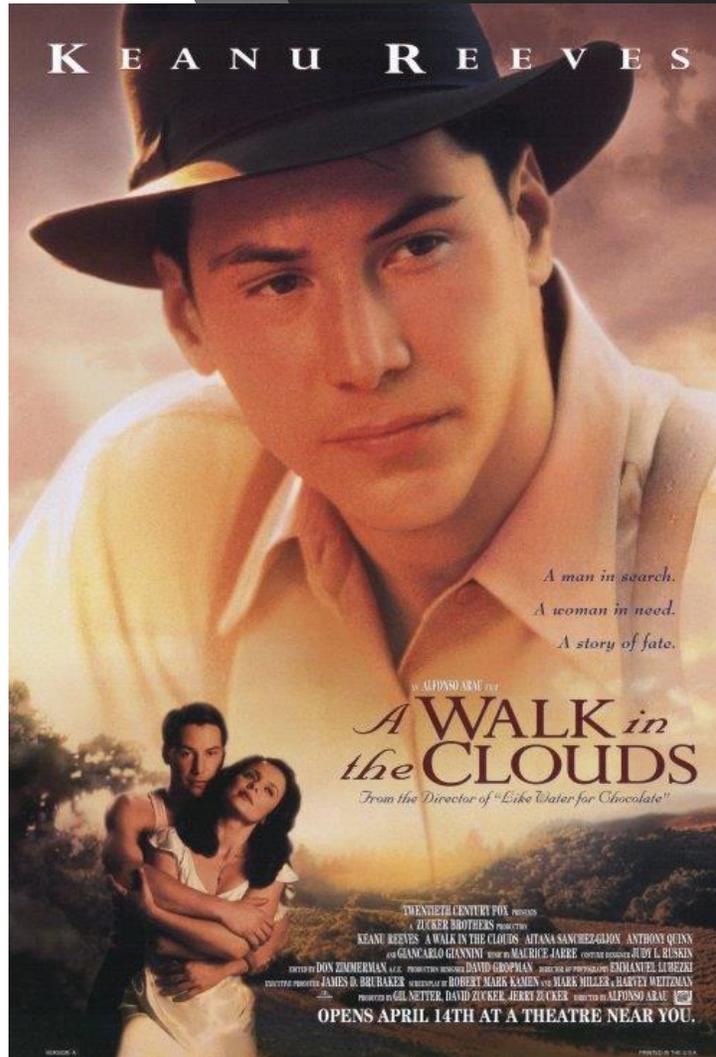
What is the Dramatic Struggle in a romance?



So, how do we find these pieces?



Your assignment: Watch a Walk in the Clouds



- What does Paul want? What does Victoria want? (and Why?)
- What is their secret desire?
- What is their GOAL at the beginning of the story?
- How does their romance start to meet their secret desire?
- Why do they breakup?
- What sacrifice do each of them make to be together?
- How do they get their secret desires, and how are their wounds healed, in the end?
- We'll talk about this in the first session tomorrow!

SEE YOU TOMORROW

9:00 AM CENTRAL TIME!