

THE TWO MINUTE MOVIE EXAMPLE

Working title: THE COUNTRY MOUSE
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ACT ONE

Cliff MacPherson steps off a Farmall tractor and informs his waiting father he “ain’t gonna kill no one.” The farmer father is further shocked when his son says he’s filing to be a conscientious objector. The mother looks at her two men. Stoic, silent, worried.

Susan Garber rebelliously screams, “I made him do it! Fry me! I’m as responsible as Bobby for killing those people!” Her black boyfriend, on trial for a murder rampage, sits in gathering comprehension of his electric chair sentence. The Omaha courtroom violently reacts to Susan’s hysterics. She is remanded to Beatrice, the state mental institution. As the jury foreman says, “By reason of insanity. We thought it only right considerin’ you’re a girl and all.”

Cliff pleads to serve two years with the Forestry Service in the Idaho wilderness. Cliff’s draft board decides he ought to be in the state to help his paraplegic father with the crops. Cliff will be an orderly “in Beatrice.” Cliff and his parents are stunned.

ACT 2

Cliff is told to take a pail of water to the Ward A bathroom. Cliff starts washing off “Fuck the World!” – written in defecation on the walls. Around the tub is a shower curtain. Cliff pulls it back to find a catatonic Susan, author of the words.

Cliff’s country simplicity and caring overwhelms the tough, angry Omaha girl. The farmboy takes care of her like “you’d bottle-feed a new calf that lost its mom.” Susan emotionally moves from cynically berating Cliff, to appreciation, then adoration, and finally dependence.

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Cliff responds to all the wounded birds in his daily chores around the mental facility. A loved strange in the strangest land.

After his first kiss with Susan, Cliff is transferred to the most disturbed ward, F. Susan slashes her wrists with the sharpened edge of his belt buckle. It works. Susan is admitted to Cliff's Ward F.

Cliff's deepening love and care gets Susan stronger and seemingly well. The institution's director is troubled, even angry at the possibility of sending Susan home. "We get them well, then return them to the very environment that made them sick." A traumatic meeting with her parents. Susan dramatically regresses. Cliff separately comes to the same conclusion as the director. The city mouse is doomed to her psychosis forever.

ACT 3

A warning buzzer shrieks. It's Harriet in Ward D with her monthly escape attempt. Cliff wants to run with Susan in the other direction. No. She wants to get well and love him in the security of Midvale. "This is no place for two people to love each other," demurs Cliff as he tenderly puts her in his pickup.

The fugitive lovers are chased by state trooper cars and planes. Their most sophisticated communications gear against the wily country mouse. Cliff and Susan fake their deaths by plunging his pickup in the nearby churning, deadly Missouri River. As the bottom is dragged, the lovers steal a motorcycle, ride off to the Western sun, marriage and their dream. The wilderness of Idaho.