

TITLE CARD: Christmas Eve, Deerfield, Massachusetts, 1704.

EXT. WOODED FOREST - NIGHT

Darkness. Middle of nowhere. Naked trees. Fields covered in fresh snow. Broken wooden fences. Farmland in the distance.

We hear the voice of our heroine, EUNICE WILLIAMS, 16:

EUNICE (V.O.)
This is not my father's story. It's mine.
And I'll tell it the way I see it.

Quiet until...the call of a NIGHT BIRD takes flight.

EUNICE (V.O.)
The King Phillips War pins Protestant
against Catholic, British against French.
And the French have hired three hundred
Mohawks to traverse the 500 miles from
Montreal to where I live. Where I'm safe.
At the fort in Deerfield Massachusetts.

OVERLAP the crunch of SNOWSHOES breaking through frozen snow.

EXT. MASSACHUSETTS WINTER FOREST - NEXT DAY

A TOMAHAWK chops off a bare tree branch. It lands at the feet of a MOHAWK INDIAN. Strategically, he adds it to a small fire. Securing his FLINTLOCK FIREARM, he scours the...

CONNECTICUT RIVER carrying endless MOHAWKS in canoes riding the icy waters, exiting the river bank, and setting up camp.

EUNICE (V.O.)
Their ransom mission. To capture the
famous Protestant reverend of the British
colonies, John Williams. My father.

INT. DEERFIELD CHURCH - NEXT NIGHT

REVEREND JOHN WILLIAMS, 40. Tall. Blond. The holiest man in the church. Cold wind leaks through paper thin walls. Bracing the podium, he gazes upon his obedient CONGREGATION.

JOHN WILLIAMS
This Christmas Eve, we're grateful to be
alive. Our fort at Deerfield is secure.

John's prideful eyes rest on

MRS. WILLIAMS, his beautiful wife. She's a grown up vision of Snow White, 35. Pure. Beloved. She coddles an infant and YANKS the person next to her closer.

MRS.WILLIAMS

Eunice, pay attention to your father.

EUNICE, blonde like her father, disobedient like herself.

Brighter than a halo, Eunice sits in the pew. Lips pouty. Her hair, tousled. Coat undone. Heart open. No shivers.

She PEEKS sideways at a handsome PETER WRIGHT, early 20's. A thin, clapboard AISLE between the pews separates them. He's tall. Dark curly hair.

His icy blue eyes don't stare back.

ELIZABETH and STEPHEN, pre-teens, sit behind Eunice, giggling at their sister foible with Peter.

ELIZABETH

What does sister Eunice see in Peter?

AUNT ESTER

Danger. Or the devil. Take your pick.

AUNT ESTER, sister and a younger replica of the blessed Mrs. Williams, looks upon her niece with strained compassion.

Eunice doesn't try to conceal her wild green eyes for Peter.

JOHN WILLIAMS

For the Lord watches our every move.

John's words become a MUFFLED NOISE to Eunice's ears. Closing her eyes to pray -- Eunice fantasize about Peter.

JOHN WILLIAMS

Is that not truth, daughter, Eunice?

EUNICE

(eyes opening)

I do?

EXT. MOHAWK CAMP/FOREST - THAT NIGHT

KAHNAWAKE, Mohawk Chief, 40, brave, and THORAWANEKEN, 25, who knows his bravery is about to be tested, ready themselves for the mission. Knives, hatchets, and muskets are skillfully packed into leather satchels.

By a fire, Thorawaneken dips his finger into a metal tin of vermillion, blood war paint. Loyally, Thorawaneken's fingers grease his Mohawks leader's forehead.

KAHNAWAKE

Take the bride. Alive.