

Northern Scriptures

Screenplay by John Wood

From the original novel by Tia Salingre-Williams

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SYNOPSIS

During a doctor's visit, ROBERT WALTERS, a reporter for The Los Angeles Daily Herald, gets some shocking news – he is HIV positive as a result of his colorful past. Same evening, he attends a party for his friend, photographer SUSAN WINTROP. Susan tells of a new photo assignment that will take her up north, to Lapland. She asks Robert to accompany her. She loves Robert and relishes the idea of spending time alone with him.

Robert declines with no excuse. Later that evening, he breaks down and tells her the diagnosis, his terror. She tells him that it would be the best reason for going away. After agonizing, he decides to go. On the plane, they hear interesting stories about Lapland, about wise men and their healing powers. Their curiosity peaks and they decide to find out if what they have heard is truth or legend.

But when they get to Lapland, their relationship isn't going well because of Robert's anxieties. MARC EDWARDS, a journalist with whom she's had a professional relationship and had invited to meet her there, arrives. Marc is very attracted to her, and Susan, upset that Robert is indifferent to her, falls for this man's charms and advances. She sleeps with him. Robert is angry and storms out. By himself, in the brutal cold, he travels up the mountain to search for Lapland's legendary Spiritual Man and his Dog. He finds them and spends three days in their company – the three most important days of his life – learning secrets to life's many profound questions about mankind and the meaning of life. He comes to terms with his illness.

Susan is looking for Robert with a search team that finally finds him unconscious in the snow. Waking up, he tells Susan about his three days but she finds it hard to believe. He tries to prove to her where he has been, but he cannot corroborate his story, other than charred wood and a dog tag.

About to leave Lapland, Robert mysteriously receives the Northern Scriptures the Spiritual Man promised, and back in America, takes them to his newspaper. The couple returns to the States and Robert realizes he loves Susan and proposes to her. His adventure makes him feel love and happiness are the most important things in life – not just sex and disco sounds. Also, he sees the illness he considered depressingly life threatening as now just a message to appreciate the present. On their wedding day, at the church, Susan and Robert clearly see the Spiritual Man and his Dog. But before they can do anything, the image disappears. Only an unsigned message of love in their guest book remains.