

JELLYFISH SUMMER

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INT. MAISIE AND REBECCA'S BEDROOM - DAWN

That sleepy blue hue, just before dawn; not quite dark, not quite light.

An orange KITTEN snoozes atop an occupied bed.

And beneath the thin sheets, MAISIE RAY (10, Black) stirs.

Her forehead is rimmed with sweat, a product of the oppressive heat.

She's got the unkempt hair of a tomboy, the restlessness of an adventurer.

The kitten stretches lazily as Maisie quickly untangles herself from the covers. Her movement disturbs REBECCA RAY (15, Black), also asleep on the slim mattress.

Rebecca's hair is pulled neatly into two tight braids, her body limp and begrudging.

Next to the beechwood wardrobe, Maisie dresses hastily in a child's SWIMSUIT befitting of the current year:

1965.

Her voice is seeped in a Mississippi southern accent--

MAISIE
(loud whisper)
Ya comin'?

Rebecca GROANS. Rolls over, turning her back.

Maisie's not surprised by this response.

She scampers out the door, no attempt to soften the volume of her thudding heels.

INT. ZEKE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maisie nudges a lump in the sheets on a twin bed.

MAISIE
(hissing)
Zeke!

The lump does not react.

Maisie monkeys onto the bed and jabs the lump again.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
(whisper)
C'mon!

EZEKIEL "ZEKE" RAY (17, Black) barely pokes his brooding head out from beneath his cover.

ZEKE
(Southern accent)
Too early...

He burrows back under his sheets.

Maisie jostles him--

MAISIE
Zeke! Ya promised!

Zeke doesn't budge.

Maisie screws her face up in an indignant SCOWL.

She sucks on her pointer finger, then STICKS it into Zeke's exposed ear-- WET WILLY.

Zeke scrubs his ear with disgust.

ZEKE
Agh!

But Maisie's already scrambling out the door.

INT. RAY KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The dim blue light barely illuminates these rustic living quarters: furniture and appliances stuck a decade earlier in the 1950s.

As if the whole house is slumbering, save for:

Maisie rummaging through a wooden chest by the back door. She yanks a heavy FLASHLIGHT free and darts outside.

EXT. RAY HOME BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

The flashlight's beam dances across the crabgrass.

Maisie's shallow PANTING comes in bursts. Her bare feet fall sloppily onto the ground as she hustles down a dirt path to--

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Maisie's pudgy feet plod through sludgy sand.

Her ramshackle house looms behind her. And before her:

The vast ocean.

It's just before the sun crests the earth, the sky kissed pink near the horizon. Incoming waves GRUMBLE as they beat the sand.

Maisie's eyes search the ground below her. Her flashlight's beam mimics the sweeping motion of her pupils.

A-ha!

Maisie halts, squatting in place.

Her hand reaches toward an iridescent BLOB on the beach, the size of a dinner plate. Gelatinous. Slimy.

She plucks it from the sand and rises back to her feet.

Dangling between her palms: it's a MOON JELLYFISH.

The flashlight tucked in her armpit, Maisie waddles her way to the water. She STOMPS the waves before reaching waist level and dropping under the surface.

The jelly's tentacles drag behind her, no threat posed. She swims nimbly through the surf until she's so deep she can barely stand on her tip-toes.

And then she rears her arm back, jellyfish in her fist, and CHUCKS it as far as she can.

She studies the jellyfish as it falls through the sky and lands with a PLOP into the ocean's abyss.

Maisie SMILES.

Triumph.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Maisie struggles back out of the water, every movement she makes like she's racing against the clock.

Her flashlight's beam flicks down the oceanfront to reveal:

The entire beach is COVERED in endless MOON JELLYFISH.

Washed up and helpless.

Maisie takes off running, skittering to a stop at a clump of jellies.

She gingerly scoops up another. Pets its bell sweetly.

MAISIE
Don't worry, I got ya.

And then zips back to the ocean.

EXT. OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

Tentacles spinning in the current behind her as Maisie flails out to the deep.

She pauses again, her chin level with the surface.

Her arm drops behind her head, a catapult gearing up--

And she thrusts the jellyfish with a GRUNT, throwing it as far as she can.

Her eyes trail its trajectory. Register the SPLASH when it returns to the sea.

A determined GRIN.

Movement catches her attention-- she turns to find a begrudging Zeke slogging through the waves toward her.

Her expression drops to a pout.

Zeke lands next to her; he SIGHS before unceremoniously CHUCKING a jellyfish through the air and out into the ocean.

Zeke peers down at her. Sneers:

ZEKE
Happy?

Maisie narrows her eyes at him in response.

Zeke scoffs.

ZEKE (CONT'D)
They just gonna wash up again
tomorrow, ain't gonna make a
diff'rence.

Maisie points out to where Zeke just tossed his jellyfish--

MAISIE
Made a diff'rence ta that one!

Zeke snorts, playfully SLAPS some water in Maisie's direction.

She GASPS, spits the water out of her mouth, before SHOVING as much ocean as her small arms can muster at Zeke.

A water fight ensues, the two breaking into LAUGHTER as they grow drenched.

But they both pause, perk up, when--

A SHRILL WHISTLING fills their ears.

Maisie's small head bobs in the waves as she listens...

She cranes her neck to follow the direction of the screech. Sounds like it's coming from above-- over the ocean--

Her sights catch on a bright orange dot, like a star, moving through the sky toward the earth.

And it's GROWING.

Morphing from a star into a discernible hunk of metal.

Like a satellite.

Maisie and Zeke's mouths gap in awe, lids widen in fear.

They scramble backward, Maisie's legs flinging themselves to find solid ground in the water. Zeke scoops his hands beneath her armpits to help her stand.

Frightened PANTING.

HOLLOW ROAR grows in intensity as the object PLUMMETS from the atmosphere. A ripped parachute flaps angrily behind it, offering little help to slow the fall.

It SCREAMS as it grows closer and closer--

Maisie's feet connect with the sand just as the hunk of metal CRASHES into the ocean with a BOOM.

A GEYSER of water shoots up around its landing spot.

Zeke ushers Maisie forward as he pauses in the surf--

ZEKE
Go!

Maisie races onto the beach, her flashlight's beam jostling wildly about.

And as she runs back onto the crabgrass, the waves from the impact of the object THUNDER onto the sand.

But Maisie just keeps running.

Full speed. No looking back.

TITLES: JELLYFISH SUMMER

INT. MAMA DELILAH'S ROOM - LATER

The door to this modest bedroom SLAMS open as Maisie tumbles through it--

MAISIE
MAMA!

Maisie collides with the bed of a groggy MAMA DELILAH RAY (40, Black), KNOCKING her awake.

Mama Delilah sleepily scrubs a bony hand over her angular features.

Maisie can barely catch her breath:

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Mama! There's another one!

At first Mama Delilah maintains her sure calm. But then she register's Maisie's sentence and JOLTS to life.

Shaking, Mama Delilah removes herself from the bed.

Without stopping--

MAMA DELILAH
(southern accent)
Get ya brother 'n sister.

EXT. RAY DOCK - LATER

The sun is now hugging the skyline, stabbing the world with golden light.

Collective heavy BREATHING, STAMPEDE of feet, as:

Mama Delilah leads her pack of KIDS down the length of a sturdy wooden dock.

Mama Delilah's jaw is tense, her pace unwavering.

Maisie follows close behind Mama Delilah, her short legs doing double-time to keep up.

Behind Maisie: Zeke TROMPS the dock's planks, his stocky shoulders tense and prominent brow furrowed.

And lastly, Rebecca, still in her nightgown and braids, trips after them.

The crew reaches the end of the dock where a rickety SHRIMPING BOAT is moored.

MAMA DELILAH
C'mon, hurry--

EXT. SHRIMPING BOAT - OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

Maisie's buoyant hair WHIPS frenzied around her face as the ship GROANS through the choppy water.

She leans forward over the tip of the boat, JABBING her arm out with a pointer finger extended.

MAISIE
(yelling over motor)
There!

Mama Delilah's expression grim as she mans the steering wheel.

MAMA DELILAH
Maisie, get back here, I don't want ya lookin' just yet.

MAISIE
(protest)
Mama--

MAMA DELILAH
I said get back here!

Zeke and Maisie pass each other as Maisie grumpily recedes to the back of the boat. She lands next to Rebecca.

Rebecca circles her arms around Maisie, a mix of protective and bossy.

Zeke hovers over the side, peering out, readying himself for--

THE HUNK OF METAL.

Maisie perks to catch a good glimpse of it: an oversized metal capsule, a thick titanium door on the side swung wide open. Water RUSHING IN.

Mama Delilah cuts the engine. The waves LAP at the side of the boat as it drifts closer...

Zeke squinting out at the crash site:

ZEKE
(anxious)
Mama . . .

Maisie eyes Zeke nervously, his body shrinking from what he sees.

He points-- Mama Delilah looking--

MAMA DELILAH
(under breath)
Lord...

Maisie listens as a new sound wafts to her ears.

Unmistakable: HUMAN YELLING.

Rebecca leans in to Maisie with a gasp:

REBECCA
They alive!

Everyone STUNNED by this revelation.

Then jumping to action:

ZEKE MAMA DELILAH
What d'we--? String the net--

Maisie wrestles free from Rebecca.

REBECCA
Maisie!

As Zeke and Mama Delilah heft a bulky shrimping net to the edge of the boat, Maisie hits the sideboard with the full force of her body.

Rebecca catches up to her to see--

Three PEOPLE bobbing amidst the wreckage in the water.

All the clothed in ragged white linens that look like a cross between a UNIFORM and HOSPITAL CLOTHING. Their dark hair spilling out to their shoulders, their skin luminously pale.

A TEEN BOY (16, White), BELLOWING in a language we don't know. A deep gash in his thigh drools blood into the ocean.

A DEAD MAN (40s, White), floating face-down in the water.

And a SKINNY BOY (9, White), SOBBING and clutching on to the dead man's upper chest.

Maisie and Rebecca are utterly horrified.

MAISIE
(voice shaking)
What we gonna do with live ones?

Rebecca shrugs.

MAMA DELILAH
Girls! Get back!

Rebecca and Maisie scoot out of the way as Mama Delilah and Zeke TOSS the net into the ocean.

It swings out, catching on the ropes connecting it to a hanging pulley system.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
(calling)
HEY!

Mama Delilah wags her arms in the air, catching the Teen Boy's attention.

EXT. OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

The Teen Boy screams at the Skinny Boy, waving his hand over at the shrimping boat.

TEEN BOY
Milagch!

Language sounds throaty like Arabic, yet phlegmy like French.

Skinny Boy is inconsolable.

Teen Boy begins a pain-staking swim toward the net.

TEEN BOY (CONT'D)
(over his shoulder)
Milagch!

Skinny Boy begrudgingly attempts to swim toward the boat while dragging the Dead Man with him.

SKINNY BOY
(sobbing)
Aukana weni!

Teen Boy reaches back to help the Skinny Boy pull the body along.

They float the body until it's ensnared in the net.

EXT. SHRIMPING BOAT - OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

In the boat, Mama Delilah and Zeke's hands are now sheathed in cracked work gloves. They yank the net up by the pulley system, Teen Boy and Skinny Boy clinging onto the ropes.

Mama Delilah barks orders:

MAMA DELILAH
The one's dead! Get 'em to the
back!

Rebecca rushes up to Mama Delilah's side. Maisie tags along--

With one last HEAVE Mama Delilah and Zeke drop the net into the boat with a THUD!

Teen Boy COLLAPSES on the deck, his gushing leg giving way underneath him. He SHOUTS in pain.

Skinny Boy continues BAWLING, shoving the net aside and draping himself over the dead man.

Maisie stumbles backwards, overwhelmed by the commotion.

Mama Delilah immediately begins wrapping the Teen Boy's leg in a towel, crouched by his side.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
Zeke, Rebecca, get the dead one to
the back!

But Zeke and Rebecca are FROZEN, staring down at the Skinny Boy's quivering body curled on the dead man's chest.

Teen Boy is screaming at the Skinny Boy through pained gasps:

TEEN BOY
*Bagh rahdu weni! Bagh rahdu
weni!*

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
Zeke! Move the dead one!

But Mama Delilah's three kids can't do anything but stare mortified at the Skinny Boy on the Dead Body.

And the Skinny Boy glares up at them with his tear-stained cheeks, an open-mouthed SOB.

Directly at Maisie.

Maisie UNBLINKING.

INT. RAY KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - LATER

THUD as Teen Boy lands on the kitchen table, his face pallid. Zeke and Mama Delilah release their hold on him and retreat from his writhing body.

Skinny Boy continues to sniffle, glued to Teen Boy's side.

Maisie, still in her swimsuit, observes from the edge of the room.

Mama Delilah turns to an ashen Rebecca.

MAMA DELILAH

Call ya Aunt Sarah, tell her ta get
over right now-- tell her it's a
'mergency.

Rebecca slinks to the phone on the wall, wraps the coiled cord around her left fist after dialing.

Mama Delilah's forearms and dress are streaked with blood. She turns assuredly to Zeke:

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)

Fetch me some sheets 'n rip 'em up
like when Daddy got his arm caught
in the rig.

Zeke opens his mouth to squabble--

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)

No protests, just go.

Zeke grunts an angst-ridden SIGH before obeying.

REBECCA

(into phone, feeble)

Aunt Sarah? Mama needs ya ta come
over right now... it's a
'mergency...

Mama Delilah starts picking the linen pants away from Teen Boy's wound, wrinkles creasing her face in worry.

Teen Boy inhales sharply with pain. Mama Delilah shushes him soothingly.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

(to Mama Delilah)

Mama? Aunt Sarah says she got her curlers in.

MAMA DELILAH

Well, Johnny Carson ain't here!

REBECCA

(into phone)

She says Johnny Carson ain't here--

MAMA DELILAH

Jesus Rebecca--

Mama Delilah swipes the phone from Rebecca.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Sarah, get over here right now!

And SLAMS it back on the receiver.

Mama Delilah spins to Maisie--

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)

Go fetch a bucket-a water from the side tap.

Maisie wide-eyed. A nod.

EXT. RAY HOME BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Maisie trucks across the crabgrass, the morning light squinting her eyes.

She glances down at her bare feet and notices that they are lined with Teen Boy's BLOOD.

She stumbles at the sight.

EXT. RAY HOME - CONTINUOUS

A faucet poking from the side of the house GUSHES on, Maisie's little hand wrapped around the knob.

The water sounds hollow as it collects in a metal bucket.

Maisie dunks a hand into the piling water, scrubs her feet to rid them of the blood.

INT. RAY HOME - CONTINUOUS

Maisie struggles with the heavy bucket of water, splashing some onto the floor.

A newly arrived AUNT SARAH WELLNER (43, Black), a nervy woman donning a nest of curlers and a housecoat, panics near the door.

AUNT SARAH
Oh Lord, oh Lord...

Skinny Boy cowers at the edge of the table.

Mama Delilah's taking strips of sheets from Rebecca and winding them tightly around Teen Boy's leg. Her face set in concentration.

MAMA DELILAH
(to Aunt Sarah)
C'mon, get over here, need a nurse
ta tell if I'm doin' it right.

Aunt Sarah gingerly approaches the Teen Boy.

AUNT SARAH
(under breath)
We don't got the proper safety
precautions...

MAMA DELILAH
There ain't a single case of one-a
us catchin' it--

AUNT SARAH
Hospital's still tellin' us not ta
touch--

Mama Delilah boils--

MAMA DELILAH
Then put on some damn gloves and
help me!

Aunt Sarah SIGHS angrily before snagging a worn pair of yellow rubber kitchen gloves from within the sink.

Mama Delilah moves out of the way as Aunt Sarah peers at Teen Boy's shredded thigh.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
Maisie, bring that water over here.

As Maisie does so, she makes eye contact with Skinny Boy.

And once Maisie drops the bucket at her mother's feet, she turns directly toward Skinny Boy to continue her inspection of him.

His white linen outfit wrinkled and dirty. His shoulder-length dark hair still wet and salty from the ocean. Skin pale and translucent.

And he studies her too: Her hand-me-down swimsuit. Her untamed hair. Her dark skin. Her unassuming stance.

Face to face.

BAM as the front door opens-- Zeke marching through.

All eyes on him:

ZEKE
They comin' down the drive!

This sends a new wave of panic through them.

Aunt Sarah and Mama Delilah lock eyes. Anxious muttering between them.

MAMA DELILAH
They kids...

AUNT SARAH
They still do the same to 'em.

Mama Delilah looks to the Boys, wringing her hands.

MAMA DELILAH
We gotta hide 'em.

AUNT SARAH
They catch you hidin' 'em-- ZEKE
But-- Mama!

MAMA DELILAH
I know!

Mama Delilah reaches for the Teen Boy to help him sit up.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
But they kids.

A new resolve in Mama Delilah's demeanor, her commanding voice back at full force.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
 Rebecca, take this one 'n hide in
 the washroom with 'em. Lock the
 door.

REBECCA
 But-- I can't touch 'em!

MAMA DELILAH
 That's all propaganda, now get! Ya
 want us in trouble?

Rebecca WHINES, hesitantly steps forward. She wraps her hands in her nightgown's skirts to protect them before guiding the Teen Boy off of the table.

They make their way laboriously up the steps. Skinny Boy follows after them.

Mama Delilah continues giving orders as she yanks an apron over her bloodied dress.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
 Zeke, Sarah, get the dead one from
 the boat and anchor him under the
 dock.

AUNT SARAH
 There's a dead one!?

MAMA DELILAH
 Hurry!

Zeke heads for the back door--

ZEKE
 (mutter)
 Damn Fallen...

Aunt Sarah GROANS before following Zeke.

Mama Delilah rounds the table to where Maisie stands. She crouches down to Maisie.

Her voice stern:

MAMA DELILAH
 Take the little one 'n hide like
 when Daddy's real mad. Don't let
 either of ya make a sound.
 (MORE)

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
Don't come out no matter what.
Understand?

Maisie nods.

The sound of a car CRUNCHING gravel on the front drive wafts through the windows.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
Good girl.

Mama Delilah turns to scrub blood off of the table.

Maisie races up to the Skinny Boy, who's following Rebecca and the Teen Boy up the staircase.

She grabs the Skinny Boy by the hand and yanks him toward the back door.

MAISIE
C'mon!

Skinny Boy pulls his hand free of her.

SKINNY BOY
Gahbi!

The sound of TWO CAR DOORS SLAMMING OUTSIDE.

MAMA DELILAH
(hiss)
Maisie!

Maisie grabs his arm and tugs again.

MAISIE
C'mon!

Skinny Boy reaches for Teen Boy--

YOUNG BOY
Bagh rahdu weni!

Teen Boy shakes his head and nods at Maisie as he and Rebecca reach the top of the stairs.

TEEN BOY
Shal rahm.

Skinny Boy slacks at his brother's words. Allows himself to be pulled by Maisie to the back door just as there are KNOCKS on the front one.

EXT. RAY HOME BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Maisie runs out the back door, Skinny Boy trailing behind. Once at the bottom of the porch stairs she falls to her hands and knees.

But Skinny Boy doesn't follow suit. He begins YELLING instead:

SKINNY BOY
Dak!

He starts toward where Aunt Sarah and Zeke are floating the dead body under the dock. Aunt Sarah still wearing the rubber kitchen gloves.

MAISIE SKINNY BOY (CONT'D)
Shhh! *Bagh ehdu poli!*

Maisie restrains him.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Shhh! Quiet!

She wrestles him to the ground.

Maisie drags Skinny underneath the house with her.

INT. UNDERNEATH RAY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

On their bellies, Maisie and Skinny peer out toward the ocean where Aunt Sarah and Zeke finish anchoring the body underneath the dock.

Skinny won't stop chattering:

SKINNY MAISIE
Muha! Wehka badah-- PEH! Bagh *Shh! Shh! Quiet!*
ehdu poli!

Maisie clamps her hand over Skinny's mouth, but he tears at her hand.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Shh! Look!

She places her other hand over her own mouth.

Skinny slows his speech, watching her hand on her face, her deep breathing.

Finally he's quiet. Maisie's fingers loosen over his lips.

At the same time, she removes her hands from both of their mouths.

And it's QUIET under the dark house, save for the distant waves falling against the shore.

Then FOOTSTEPS.

Maisie watches from beneath the house as her mother's legs guide two sets of uniformed legs through the backyard.

MAMA DELILAH (O.S.)
 Yes sir, we saw it comin' down out
 here, but nothin' washin' up to
 shore yet. 'Cept the summer
 jellies.

The legs approach the house, getting closer and bigger.

OFFICER 1 (O.S.)
 That's quite a lot-a blood ya got
 on yer dress there, ma'am.

MAMA DELILAH (O.S.)
 Please 'scuse that, I just been
 cuttin' up a chicken for us.

Skinny begins to whine. Maisie nudges into him and clamps her hand on her mouth again. Her breath puffing from her nostrils.

Skinny copies her, clutches his mouth with his hand.

Maisie nods at him.

The legs all pause by the porch, the feet inches from Maisie and Skinny's faces. Fingers stretched across their lips.

MAMA DELILAH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Been a bad jellyfish summer 'round
 here.

A scratching SPARK sound as one officer lights up a cigarette.

OFFICER 2 (O.S.)
 Been a bad jellyfish summer all
 over, jellyfish been wreckin' the
 beach all the way down in Mobile.

OFFICER 1 (O.S.)
 Light?

OFFICER 2 (O.S.)

Sure.

THUMP. A shiny LIGHTER falls to the grass in front of Maisie and Skinny's noses--

OFFICER 1 (O.S.)

Damn--

Maisie inches slowly backwards, pulling Skinny with her...

Officer 1 squats down to retrieve his lighter.

Maisie wide-eyed, STOCK-STILL, as the white Officer peers into the darkness under the house...

Both Maisie and Skinny keep their small fingers clamped over their faces.

The Officer narrowing his eyes... his jaw slacks...

Maisie and Skinny barely breathing...

Until the Officer rises again without a word.

A CLICK as the lighter is used again.

Mama Delilah SIGHS.

MAMA DELILAH (O.S.)

Well, jellies'll be gone come September.

The legs move around the side of the house and out of view.

Maisie army-crawls across the dirt to the other side of the house to keep the legs in her sights. She peers out at the front driveway:

Mama Delilah chats with the two WHITE OFFICERS-- look like a cross between cop and military-- beside their official-looking, 1965-model vehicle.

Maisie can't hear their words. Her eyes trail them as the officers return to their car, SLAM the doors.

Mama Delilah tosses them a polite little wave.

The car recedes down the front drive, crunching the gravel and leaving a trail of dust.

Until they are out of sight.

The sound of Maisie's BREATHS as she studies her mother: Mama Delilah raking her fingers across her temple with palpable stress.

Maisie's ears perk:

ZEKE (O.S.)
(in the distance)
Maisie!

Maisie crawls toward the back end of the house--

EXT. RAY HOME BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Maisie emerges from beneath the house, her whole front caked in mud.

ZEKE (O.S.)
Maisie!

And she takes off running toward--

EXT. DOCK - CONTINUOUS

The dock, where Zeke is waist deep in the rolling waves, struggling with something in the water.

His voice is ripped with anger:

ZEKE
They coulda seen 'em! You tryna get
us killed!?

Zeke pries Skinny out from under the waves. Skinny HOLLERS and kicks in Zeke's grasp.

SKINNY
Bagh ehdu weni!

Maisie stomps into the water to help--

MAISIE
Stop! Ya hurtin' him!

And she yanks on Zeke's arms.

ZEKE
He gonna drown himself, moron!

Zeke releases Skinny, and Skinny immediately dives back under the waves.

ZEKE (CONT'D)
See?

Maisie doesn't respond, just ducks under the surface too--

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Maisie squints in the water-- can barely make out Skinny kicking himself down. His baggy linen clothing and long hair billows around him.

His arms reaching for:

The Dead Body. Wrapped in rope and weighted by an anchor.

Maisie taps Skinny with her hand. He swivels to see her, and she motions toward the surface.

She rises in the water. He follows.

EXT. DOCK - CONTINUOUS

Maisie emerges from the water gasping. Skinny bursts up a foot away.

Maisie turns expecting to see Zeke where he was--

No Zeke.

He's now perched on the edge of the dock. Mama Delilah and Aunt Sarah hover above him anxiously, exchanging tense MURMURS.

MAISIE
(calling)
He just wants the dead one.

Zeke doesn't pay her any attention, his focus on Mama Delilah and Aunt Sarah.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Hey!

She swims over to Zeke and tugs his hairy leg.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
He just wants the dead one--

ZEKE
I heard ya!

Mama Delilah and Aunt Sarah gaze down at them with strained frowns.

Maisie turns back to Skinny. But:

He's disappeared.

Maisie swivels her head around-- DUNKS under the water--

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Skinny is down by the dead body, his little hands grasped TIGHT around a few chunks of the dead body's HAIR.

He PULLS and PULLS-- the hair tethered tightly to its scalp.

Maisie observes, unsure of how to respond.

Skinny relinquishes and floats to the surface again. Maisie copies him.

EXT. DOCK - CONTINUOUS

Maisie and Skinny pop out of the water simultaneously.

Skinny clearly exasperated. He looks Maisie straight in the eyes and pulls on his own hair.

SKINNY

Weh ackdul swol! Swol!

He displays his hair again to demonstrate.

Understanding dawns on Maisie's face.

MAISIE

Hair?

Maisie yanks at a piece of her own hair.

MAISIE (CONT'D)

You talkin' 'bout hair?

Skinny nods rigorously and imitates sawing his hair off.

Then he DIPS back under the waves.

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Maisie only watches for a moment as Skinny continues to tug on the dead body's hair...

EXT. DOCK - CONTINUOUS

Maisie swims over to where Zeke dangles off of the dock and taps his leg repeatedly.

MAISIE
Zeke, Zeke--

Zeke continues his listening in on Mama Delilah and Aunt Sarah's discussion.

ZEKE
(hushed)
Shh!

MAISIE
Can I have ya knife?

Zeke proceeds ignoring her.

She FLICKS his foot--

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Gimme ya knife! I need it!

Zeke pulls a SWISS ARMY KNIFE out of his pocket and hands it to her without taking his eyes off Mama Delilah--

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Maisie kicks her way down to Skinny, the waves swaying them back and forth.

She gently moves him aside, grasps some of the Dead Body's hair in her hand. She grimaces at touching the corpse.

Skinny eyes her intently.

Maisie carefully cuts the hair with the Swiss Army Knife. Strand by strand, the hunk detaches.

The second it breaks free from the Dead Body's head, Maisie allows herself to float back to the surface.

EXT. DOCK - CONTINUOUS

Maisie and Skinny emerge from the ocean.

The whites of their eyes red from salt water irritation.

Maisie offers him the hunk of hair. He clasps his hand around it, plucks it from her palm.

And cups it protectively to his chest.

They bob wordlessly in the surf.

MAISIE (V.O.)
Where they come from?

INT. MAISIE AND REBECCA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Maisie sticks close by Rebecca, who leans against the far wall pensively. She answers Maisie's question:

REBECCA
We don't know. They just keep
fallin' from the sky.

Teen Boy is stretched across Rebecca and Maisie's bed, his wounded leg tightly wound with the ripped up sheets. His face glossed with sweat.

Skinny approaches the bed. Extends his hand to reveal the tangle of hair from the dead body.

Teen Boy's eyes connect with the hair, his expression frozen.

TEEN BOY
(voice cracking)
Badah?

Skinny nods.

And Teen Boy's face collapses in tears. His whole chest wracked with SOBS.

Skinny pulls himself up on the bed and curls into Teen Boy's shoulder.

They cup their hands around the bundle of hair and bow their heads, weeping.

Maisie's eyes threaten tears as she observes the moment.

MAISIE
(whispered)
Was that their Daddy?

Rebecca's gaze grim.

REBECCA
Think so.

INT. RAY HOME - LATER

Mama Delilah and Aunt Sarah SMOKE around the kitchen table. Zeke towers over them amongst the plumes of exhaled fumes with tense shoulders.

Maisie and Rebecca watch from the sidelines.

ZEKE

Ya heard what Fallen did ta folks
down in New Orleans just last week--
whole lot of 'em hit a
neighborhood, house by house,
slittin' throats, killin' people,
even kids, just for food--

AUNT SARAH

(mutter)

Beasts do anythin' they get hungry
'nough--

Mama Delilah glances furtively at Maisie, exhaling smoke tersely.

MAMA DELILAH

SHH-- quit it-- these ones just
kids, they ain't dangerous.

ZEKE

(ignoring her)

We shoulda just let officers take
'em--

MAMA DELILAH

Ya seen those camps, that ain't no
place for children!

ZEKE

Well this house ain't no place for
Fallen!

Mama Delilah expels a forced laugh.

MAMA DELILAH

Ha, callin' the shots now, is ya?
Got ya big man pants on?

Zeke SCOWLS.

ZEKE

Daddy'd side with me.

Mama Delilah's tone is deadly.

MAMA DELILAH
 Ya see ya Daddy in this house?

Zeke doesn't reply, but doesn't cast his eyes away from her.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
 Now I *know* I didn't raise ya this way. I know ya scared, but that ain't gonna keep us from doin' what's right.

Rebecca pipes up--

REBECCA
 Mama, what if we get sick from 'em, what if they catch us with 'em--?

MAMA DELILAH
 We ain't keepin' 'em here, baby, Zeke and I gonna take 'em up to Dorothy up in Biloxi first thing tomorrow, she'll take 'em from there. Ya 'member Dorothy?

ZEKE
 But I'm goin' up ta Mobile day after tomorrow 'fore the vote! I told ya, I need the truck then!

Mama Delilah stubs her cigarette out in a cheap ashtray.

MAMA DELILAH
 We'll both go ta Mobile after we drop 'em with Dorothy.

Zeke sputters to reject this plan.

ZEKE
 Bu--but--

Aunt Sarah dabs her cigarette out as well.

AUNT SARAH
 Well ya can keep me the hell outta it.

Her chair SCRAPES as she stands.

AUNT SARAH (CONT'D)
 Ya ask me you're outta ya brain. They'll be comin' back 'round for the wreckage, Delilah, and if they catch ya--

MAMA DELILAH
 I thought ya wanted ta keep the
 hell outta it!

Aunt Sarah dons an indignant snarl.

AUNT SARAH
 Well you're goddamn welcome for
 riskin' my skin for y'all! High and
 mighty like ya know what's divine--
 you're a piece-a work!

Aunt Sarah storms out, screen door THWACKING shut behind her.

Zeke spins and stalks toward the back door.

ZEKE
 She's right 'bout them comin' back.
 I'm dumpin' that dead one farther
 out!

Mama Delilah SIGHS, shaking a fresh cigarette from her pack.

Maisie glances to Rebecca before confronting her Mama.

MAISIE
 What we gonna do with 'em, Mama?

Mama Delilah pauses, studies Maisie's worried expression.
 Mama selects her words carefully.

MAMA DELILAH
 Ya learnt 'bout the underground
 railroad in school?

Maisie shakes her head yes. Mama Delilah returns a curt nod.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
 Like that.

And Mama STRIKES up a match to light her cigarette.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

The bath's rusted faucet SPEWS water into the tub's basin.

Maisie and Skinny, both still caked in mud and sand from
 their hiding spot under the house, sit on the floor, waiting
 for the tub to fill.

Skinny's clothes are stained with blood from his brother and
 the dead body. Patches of dried blood hide behind his ears,
 in the crevasse of his collar bone.

Maisie stares at her own dirty feet. Taps her big toes together.

And Skinny SCREAMS!

Maisie jumps, swings her attention to him. He's pointing at--
The orange kitten.

It's crouched behind the bathtub, its whiskers peeking out from behind the metal edge.

Terrified by Skinny's screech, the kitten rears its back up. Emits a tiny HISS.

Skinny scoots back into Maisie, attempting to distance himself from the kitten. Acting as if it's a ghost.

Maisie bursts into GIGGLES.

MAISIE

Mama!

Skinny whimpers.

YOUNG BOY

Peh! Bagh ehdu dali!

MAISIE

(giggling)

Stop screamin'-- Mama!

Skinny's acting something out to communicate: pointing at the kitten, pointing at himself, acting sick--

Maisie thinks she understands.

MAISIE (CONT'D)

(through her laughter)

Ya can't get sick from a cat, silly-

-

Mama Delilah slips into the room.

MAMA DELILAH

What's goin' on?

MAISIE

Lookit-- he's scared-a the cat!

Maisie's giggles can't be contained. The startled kitten looks adorable.

But Skinny's eyes are wild as he cowers from the kitten.
Looks up at Mama Delilah and screeches terrified:

YOUNG BOY
Raugh!

Mama Delilah takes in the situation and turns on Maisie. She GRIPS Maisie's arm--

MAISIE
(pain)
Ah!

Maisie ceases her laughter.

Mama Delilah crouches, pulls Maisie close to her. Maisie WHINES.

MAMA DELILAH
Ya don't laugh at people when they
scared.

MAISIE MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
Ya hurtin' me-- Ya listenin' to me?

Angry tears prick Maisie's eyes.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
Now this boy prob'ly never seen a
cat 'fore-- he ain't never seen any-
a this 'fore. Ya think 'bout if you
never seen a cat 'fore, and ya
think 'bout if someone was laughin'
at you.

MAISIE
But Mama he ain't been scared
of nothin' else, seems he
seen some-a it 'fore--!

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
(raising voice)
You think 'bout when you and
ya brotha -- quiet Maisie!--
when you and ya brotha saw
that dead Jackson boy hangin'
in town and those white kids
was laughin' at you!

Maisie clams up.

Mama Delilah lets that sink in.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
Now, I don't wanna see ya laughin'
at this boy no more.

Maisie nods begrudgingly.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
When other people's scared, ya help
'em.

And Mama Delilah releases Maisie's arm, stands. She scoops up the kitten by the bathtub.

Mama Delilah crouches by whimpering Skinny, demonstrating petting the kitten.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
See?

She strokes the kitten's back.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
Ain't nothin' ta be 'fraid of.
C'mon.

Mama Delilah gingerly guides Skinny's hand across the kitten's back.

Skinny's fear subsides with each stroke of the kitten's back. His bulbous pale eyes fixed on Mama Delilah's reassuring serenity.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
That's it.

Maisie watches on with furrowed brow.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
That's it.

INT. RAY HOME - DAY

Maisie descends the stairs, clean from mud but still in her swimsuit. Skinny, now in a pair of Maisie's old clothes, glances up at her from his post by his brother.

MAMA DELILAH (O.S.)
Do as I tell ya!

Teen Boy is laid out on the family's lumpy couch. His leg elevated and bandaged, a nose bleed oozing down his lip, a bucket of vomit waiting under his chin for more.

Skinny's eyes well as he watches his brother retch again.

ZEKE
I ain't riskin' my hide no more for
'em!

Zeke SLAMS the front door as he stalks outside. Mama Delilah yells after him through the screen door--

MAMA DELILAH
Get ya butt back here!

SOUNDS of the truck stirring up outside and squealing down the gravel driveway.

Mama Delilah SIGHS flustered, turns to Rebecca behind her.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
He took the damn truck!

But Rebecca's disgusted gaze is on vomiting Teen Boy. She pokes a finger in his direction.

REBECCA
That older one's tossin' up again.

Mama Delilah's face falls.

MAMA DELILAH
He ain't gonna make the underground railroad like that.

Mama Delilah turns to a small pad of paper by the phone and begins scribbling on it with a stubby pencil.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
I'm gonna need ya ta get 'em some medicine in town so he'll be able ta leave tomorrow.

Rebecca shakes her head repeatedly.

REBECCA
I ain't goin' inta town by myself!
Make Zeke do it!

Mama Delilah can't contain her exasperation.

MAMA DELILAH
Rebecca, baby, ya see Zeke here?

REBECCA
Does our medicine even work on Fallen?

Mama rips the paper away from its pad and shakes it at Rebecca.

MAMA DELILAH
 We gotta make due with what we got,
 now c'mon. Get.

Rebecca musters up what little courage she has.

REBECCA
 I told ya, I ain't doin' it!

Maisie inches up to Mama.

MAISIE
 I can go!

Mama glances down at Maisie, the paper limp in Mama's hand.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
 Please? I ain't been ta town since
 Fallen started comin' last month.
 Not even for church!

Mama Delilah raises her eyebrows before pivoting the paper down to Maisie.

MAMA DELILAH
 Ya think ya old 'nough ta go ta
 town by ya'self?

Maisie nods rigorously, a grin blooming on her face. Mama chuckles at Maisie's excitement.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
 I think so too.

REBECCA
 Mama! She's too little!

MAMA DELILAH
 (to Maisie)
 Hand the man at the store this
 paper, okay? Ya know where ta go?

Maisie snatches the paper out of Mama's spindly fingers.

MAISIE
 Yeah!

REBECCA
 Mama!

MAMA DELILAH
 Good girl, now ya listen to
 me--

Mama Delilah leans close to Maisie whilst giving instruction.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
 Don't talk ta no one. 'N if they
 ask, ya gettin' medicine for ya
 sick mama. Clear?

Maisie's nodding, giddy with the prospect of escape.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
 Don't dillydally.

And she entrusts Maisie with two crumpled dollar bills.

EXT. RAY HOME - DAY

Maisie's bare feet mount her bike's pedals and poise to ride.
 The slip of paper crushed between her hand and the bike's
 metal handle.

SKINNY (O.S.)
Peh!

Maisie pauses, her eyes tracking Skinny as he runs toward her
 from the house.

SKINNY (CONT'D)
Aukana weni!

MAISIE
 You stay here!

Maisie stomps down on the pedals, propelled forward.

Skinny continues to jog after her.

SKINNY
Peh, bagh rahdu weni!

Maisie skids to a stop, and Skinny PANTS when he lands next
 to her.

Maisie speaks slowly, gesturing clearly--

MAISIE
 You. Stay here. I. Go.

And she hops back up on her bicycle--

SKINNY
Aukana!

Maisie hustles away from him as fast as she can. She peeks behind her, a forlorn Skinny stumbling a few feet after her before stuttering to a stop.

He's slowly obscured by the dust kicked up by her bicycle--

MAISIE
Don't worry! I'm comin' back!

And she sets her sights firmly ahead.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Maisie's bare feet pedal the rusted red bicycle down the dusty road. The tires crunch the gravel beneath.

Mississippi tall grasses and dangling trees line the sides.

Maisie's still in her swimsuit, panting with slick skin from the heat. She's squinting in the noonday sun.

Cicadas WHINING.

Up ahead, a tall chain link fence appears on the horizon.

As Maisie pedals closer, she can see coils of barbed wire wrapped across the top of the gigantic enclosure.

Her bike coasts to a stop by the fence.

She hops off and walks her bike along the length of the barricade. Her bare feet careful to tread the soft grass, not the gravel.

She cranes her neck up, eyes squinting, the fence immensely tall, especially in comparison to her tiny stature.

She glances down the way curiously to see two FIGURES behind the fence approaching.

Maisie slows her walk...

As they come closer, Maisie notices they are WHITE. They have LONG dark hair. They are in matching outfits, white billowing linen pants and shirts, just like Skinny and his family wear.

Fallen people.

And as they approach even closer, Maisie's face slips into fear...

The two figures begin to resemble ghosts or zombies:

They are GAUNT. Their limbs SKELETAL. Their lips cracked with dehydration. Their skin red and scaly from sunburn.

ONE has excrement streaked down the inner seam of his pants.

The OTHER has blood stained down the front of her shirt.

Both open-mouthed and MOANING.

CRYING.

Maisie involuntarily stutters backward as they near her, their pace now a jog.

They collapse at the foot of the fence in front of her, their dirtied, long fingernails tearing at the metal links.

MALE FALLEN (sobbing) <i>Raugh! Raugh weni! Muha!</i>	FEMALE FALLEN (moaning, pointing to her chest) <i>Weh reilagh... weh reilagh...</i>
---	--

Maisie is TERRIFIED, tears boiling to her lids.

And she GASPS when she realizes MORE OF THE FALLEN PRISONERS, all in the same Fallen clothes, all thin and broken with long hair, are collecting along the edge of the fence.

They form a CHORUS of MOANS and SOBS.

Some clutching the fence. Some holding other weak ones up. ONE actively bleeding from the nose.

ONE reaches his arm out toward her from the fence.

Maisie HYPERVENTILATING. Her eyes BUGGING wide.

She TREMBLES as she mounts her bicycle again.

Pushes off of the gravel, swerving a bit in her haste to pedal out of there.

Her bicycle spokes CLICKING as she pedals faster and faster down the length of the chain link fence.

More and more of the FALLEN PRISONERS at the edge, YELLING out at her.

And she reaches a HUGE GATE, where several SOLDIERS, in the same uniforms as the officers who visited her house, stand guard.

They clutch large GUNS. They wear scary GAS MASKS.

The RABBLE of a crowd reaches her ears, and she spies a MASS of PROTESTERS gathered around the main gate.

Some hoisting signs and chanting in favor of releasing the Fallen people. Others demanding to keep them locked away. Black and White people on both sides of the argument.

TWO PROTESTORS pounce into a fist fight as Maisie passes.

Maisie pedals furiously, her petrified gasps releasing tears down her face.

Faster and faster until she reaches the end of the enclosure and breaks free to the open grassland again.

But she doesn't slow down.

She keeps pedaling with all of her might.

And a SCREAM wells up within her and BURSTS from her lungs.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Maisie bikes slowly down the main street of this small southern town.

She's still sniffling, leaking tears.

She coasts past the small businesses, a few WHITE PEOPLE seated outside fanning themselves.

A sign hanging above a storefront reads: WHITES ONLY, NO COLORED. And tacked haphazardly onto the end: NO FALLEN.

A WHITE TEENAGE BOY stands beneath the sign licking a Popsicle, curiously watches Maisie pass by.

Maisie looking back at him, her chin trembling, her cheeks tear-stained.

And she wheels up to a COLORED ONLY GENERAL STORE.

EXT. COLORED GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

A potbellied and slouching young boy, EARL (10, Black) leans against the store's front porch.

He recognizes Maisie as she dismounts her bike in front of him. His face cracks into a grin when he spies her sniveling.

EARL

Ha! Maisie's a cry baby!

Maisie SHOVES him as she passes.

EARL (CONT'D)

Ow!

Maisie's voice raw from crying--

MAISIE

Watch my bike!

Earl rubs his shoulder where she hit him as she enters the aged general store.

EARL

I'm tellin' ya mama ya hit me!

INT. COLORED GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Maisie enters the cluttered general store, passing beneath a "COLORED ONLY, NO FALLEN" sign at the front.

A soda fountain HUMS. A jukebox plays a Motown record. A glass counter BOASTS remedies, hygiene products, and cosmetics.

Maisie sniffles as she approaches the tall counter, her feet still bare and swimsuit mussed from her frantic ride.

A weathered SHOPKEEPER (60, Black) greets her at the counter. His voice deep, dark hair peppered with white streaks.

SHOPKEEPER

Why ya cryin', girl?

Maisie isn't sure how to respond...

SHOPKEEPER (CONT'D)

C'mon, what's troublin' ya?

Maisie hiccups, attempts to find her voice amidst sniffles.

MAISIE

I been by the place for the Fallen,
'n they-- they was--

She pauses to shudder.

Shopkeeper CHUCKLES good-naturedly.

SHOPKEEPER

Oh, now, they sure look scary, huh?

Maisie nods pitifully.

SHOPKEEPER (CONT'D)
Well, don't ya worry ya-self 'bout
them. We keepin' 'em locked up so
they can't hurt ya.

Maisie's wet eyes look up at him confused.

MAISIE
But they don't wanna hurt me.

Shopkeeper's expression darkens... Maisie lowers her eyes,
realizing she's made a mistake...

She offers up her slip of paper from Mama.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Here.

Shopkeeper receives the paper, growing even more suspicious
after he reads the writing it contains.

SHOPKEEPER
What you need this for, child?

MAISIE
My sick Mama, sir.

Shopkeeper narrows his eyes down at her. His face barely
moving as he speaks:

SHOPKEEPER
How ya Mama get sick?

Maisie shrugs at him, her eyes stuck on her bare toes.

SHOPKEEPER (CONT'D)
Ya mama been by one-a the Fallen?

MAISIE
No, sir.

SHOPKEEPER
Ya been-- ya touch one-a of the
Fallen?

MAISIE
No, sir.

Shopkeeper remains skeptical, calculating her reaction.

Maisie shakes her head again for good measure.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
(quietly)
No, sir.

Shopkeeper turns reluctantly and fishes a small glass bottle out of a cabinet behind him.

He bequeaths it to Maisie, and she exchanges the two dollar bills with him.

SHOPKEEPER
Ya got a quarter in change, ya want anythin' else?

Maisie's eyes catch on the brightly colored candies showcased in the glass counter before her.

She taps the glass.

MAISIE
Yellow one.

Shopkeeper plucks a yellow taffy out of the basket and passes it to her. But as their hands connect, they freeze--

For a SHRILL WHISTLING catches their attention...

Both perk their ears and eyes above them-- the SCREECH overhead getting louder and louder--

MOVING OVERHEAD UNTIL IT'S RIGHT OUTSIDE THE SHOP DOOR--

Maisie stampedes out of the shop--

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

CRASH!

A metal capsule, like the one that delivered Skinny and his family, SMASHES into the street in front of the general store, cratering the ground.

Its parachute flutters shakily to the soil.

Maisie and Earl steady themselves against the tremors from the impact of the capsule.

Maisie watches nervously as a CROWD OF WHITE PEOPLE quickly forms around the capsule.

They hold objects like brooms and bats.

They begin SHOUTING, BANGING on the sides of the capsule.

Maisie starts toward the crash site, but Earl SNAGS her arm.

EARL
Are ya nuts!?

Earl's eyes are frantic. He lifts his leaning bike away from the wall.

EARL (CONT'D)
We gotta get 'fore folks start
goin' crazy on the Fallen inside.

MAISIE
Nah, we gotta help 'em, Earl, they
prob'ly hurt--

EARL
You live out in the country,
Maisie, things diff'rent here-- ya
gotta stay far away 'cause people
get real angry when they fall in
town.

Maisie tugs on his arm--

MAISIE
We gotta get 'em outta there 'fore
the soldiers come! Ya seen the
place they put 'em?

EARL
Ya can't touch 'em! You'll get
their sickness--

MAISIE
Nuh-uh, ya wrong. Ya can't get
their sickness.

EARL
Ya don't know what ya talkin'
'bout, stupid!

MAISIE
Yeah I do! We got Fallen at my
house and ain't none-a us got their
sickness!

THUNK--

Maisie and a gap-mouthed Earl swing around to see DILLARD (12, White) GLARING at them from where he dropped his baseball mitt.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Hey!

Dillard snatches up his mitt and bolts toward the white crowd gathering.

Earl reacts as if Maisie has the plague.

EARL
(hissing)
Ya shouldn't've told me that!

MAISIE
Ya think he heard?

Earl doesn't reply, scurries away on his bicycle.

Maisie's breathing quickens, her fearful eyes land back on Dillard. He tugs on the sleeve of a WHITE MAN (40s) on the outskirts of the mob.

Dillard points at Maisie.

White Man turns to follow Dillard's point--

His gaze lands DIRECTLY on Maisie.

Maisie GASPS and scrambles onto her bike. She pedals away as fast as her legs will pump.

Behind her, two injured FALLEN PEOPLE emerge from the capsule to meet the YELLING angry mob. Blood snakes down parts of the Fallen's bodies, their balance swaying from the crash.

The mob won't touch them, but prods them with the bases of brooms, baseball bats, and the like.

The increased volume of the mob causes Maisie to look back over her shoulder, only to see--

A cluster of MEN in KKK HOODS approach the capsule beyond the angry mob.

Maisie GASPS at the sight and speeds away on adrenaline.

EXT. FALLEN CAMP - COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

SUN SCORCHES overhead.

Wheezing breaths.

Maisie is exhausted in the heat, her bike wobbling as she pedals down the gravel road.

Sweat drools down her temple. Her mouth dry and eyelids at half-mast.

Delirious.

The Fallen Camp LOOMS in front of her on the horizon...

Maisie takes a difficult swallow of air and pushes herself to pick up the pace.

Fear drives her as she coasts past the PROTESTERS and gas-masked SOLDIERS.

And when she struggles down the line of fence, she can't pry her eyes away from the masses of terrifyingly ill FALLEN PEOPLE that gather at the border.

They MOAN, their thin fingers REACHING for her--

She's sweating, panting, disoriented--

Her bike slows as she catches her breath.

And her eyes halt on one Fallen person in particular. A young BLACK BOY in the midst of the crowd.

He's tear-stained. He's trembling. He... looks exactly like...

MAISIE
(wavering voice)
Earl?

Maisie tilts her head to look closer--

It looks exactly like Earl, but with longer hair, wearing Fallen clothes. And looking very sick.

She narrows her eyes to look closer, confusion on her features. She calls out again--

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Earl!

She drops her bike and rushes up to the fence, stumbling over her own feet.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
EARL?

She's dizzy with heat. The image of Earl wavers in her eyesight, her squinting--

Earl's getting lost in the crowd-- sucked up in to the mass of Fallen gathering, and then--

ZEKE (O.S.)
(fearful)
Maisie!

She turns to find Zeke JOGGING toward her along the fence. A PROTEST SIGN limp in his hand.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Maisie sits shotgun in the pickup truck, Zeke clenching the steering wheel anxiously.

Maisie finishes off a paper cup of water.

ZEKE
Ya don't go close to the fence like that! Ya don't know what they're capable of, they coulda hurt ya!

MAISIE
They put regular people in those camps, not just Fallen?

Zeke is surprised by her question--

ZEKE
What?

MAISIE
Thought I saw someone I know in there...

Zeke's wagging his head no.

ZEKE
Those camps just for Fallen, Maise. And not for you-- ya scarin' me bein' out there, ya moron.

Maisie swivels around to look out the back window of the truck. The Fallen camp shrinks in the distance...

MAISIE
Zeke? They helpin' the Fallen in those camps?

Zeke's focus is on the road ahead.

ZEKE
Don't be stupid.

Maisie studies him, slowly accepts this as a response, and seats herself forward again.

ZEKE (CONT'D)
Why ya out here? Mama know ya gone?

MAISIE
Yeah, Mama sent me ta get medicine
from town for that older Fallen
boy.

Zeke SCOWLS.

ZEKE
Ya ain't got no business goin' inta
town nowadays...

MAISIE
Why ya at the Fallen camp?

Zeke SIGHS and glances over at Maisie. He searches her curious face before making his decision.

ZEKE
Can I trust ya?

Maisie bobs her head.

ZEKE (CONT'D)
I been protestin'. Ya know what
protestin' is?

MAISIE
(duh)
Yeah--

ZEKE
I want the Fallen ta leave.

Maisie furrows her brow, reasoning with this information.

MAISIE
But--

ZEKE
(interrupting)
Ya know how Mama 'n I been plannin'
on goin' down to Mobile this week?

MAISIE
Yeah...

ZEKE
Ya know what's happenin' in Mobile?

Maisie shakes her head no.

ZEKE (CONT'D)

People like me, folks all over, been protestin' ta make the Fallen leave, and now Congress finally gonna vote on whether we gonna make 'em leave this week. Bunch-a people from the South gonna go ta Mobile, show Congress what we want. Mama wants ta go ta support the side wantin' 'em ta stay, but I'm gonna stand with the folks want 'em ta go.

Maisie's wrapping her head around all of this.

MAISIE

But-- but where they gonna go? If we make 'em leave?

ZEKE

Well... they'd... we'd execute 'em.

Maisie wide-eyed at this.

ZEKE (CONT'D)

Ya know what execute means?

MAISIE

Yeah! But-- but-- then they'd kill the boys at our house?

ZEKE

Well--

MAISIE

But they ain't done nothin' wrong!
That ain't fair!

ZEKE

It ain't about fair. Yeah, those boys ain't hurt nobody, but there's other Fallen out there killin' people! 'N they sick as dogs, that's why they come here in the first place we think. And what if they get us all sick so we're dyin' out? We can't trust 'em-- any of 'em.

Maisie can't find a rebuttal, but remains unconvinced.

ZEKE (CONT'D)
 Maise, it comes down ta this: Who
 ya care 'bout more, them or ya
 family?

Maisie looks back out the front windshield.

ZEKE (CONT'D)
 Mama don't know I'm goin' ta
 support the other side, she thinks
 I'm goin' ta the pro-Fallen rally
 with her. So ya can't tell Mama.
 Else I'll get in hot water.

Maisie absorbs this quietly. Zeke side-eyes her for confirmation.

ZEKE (CONT'D)
 Ya hearin' me, Maise?

MAISIE
 (softly)
 Yeah.

Zeke sighs.

ZEKE
 Ya prob'ly too little ta understand
 anyway...

At this, Maisie scowls out her side window.

EXT. RAY HOME - DAY

Zeke pulls the truck into the driveway, climbs out.

Maisie hops out too, following Zeke up to the porch but not following him inside.

She pauses and squats on the porch next to Skinny.

He's shirtless, hunched over a flattened brown grocery bag, which he's drawing on with broken stubs of crayons.

Maisie observes Skinny quietly. Her forehead creases in worry as she counts his ribs, his knobby spine poking through.

Shirtless, Skinny is even more skeletal than he seemed.

MAISIE
 Ya need ta eat somethin'. Ya skin
 'n bones.

She pokes one of Skinny's protruding ribs, and he straightens to look at her.

Pools of tears brim in his eyes. His face pink from crying, his nose running.

While one hand is gripping the crayons, the other is still cupping the dead body's hair they cut off.

Maisie points to the hair as she seats herself next to Skinny.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
That man was ya Daddy?

Skinny looks down at the clump of hair in his hand. He points to it, then points to his heart.

Maisie nods at him.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
My Daddy gone too.

She kicks her feet back and forth as they dangle off the ledge of the porch.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
He ain't dead, he just been in
Vietnam. Now he in Mobile, since
they called the troops back ta keep
people from fightin' each other
over here. But I still ain't seen
him in a long time.

She glances back at Skinny, who is squinting at her, as if trying to decode her language.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
I don't even 'member what he looks
like, really. But he's real mean.

Skinny's lip trembles, threatening new tears.

Maisie softens, recognizing his pain. She reaches toward him for a hug, but he's startled, scooting away from her.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
It's okay, look--

She walks him through the motions of an embrace--

MAISIE (CONT'D)
This a hug. Okay? This how we cheer
each other up 'round here.

Skinny melts, even hugs her back.

When they pull away from each other, Maisie offers him the yellow taffy she bought at the general store.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Here. I got this for ya.

Skinny reluctantly accepts the taffy, unsure what to do with it. Maisie notices his conundrum. She giggles--

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Like this--

Maisie shows him how to unwrap the candy. Shows him it's edible. His face lights up at the sweetness.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
See? It's good.

Skinny looks down at his hands... SIGHS morosely at the sight of the clump of hair, and then offers it to Maisie.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
For me?

Skinny offers it more forcefully to Maisie's disgust.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
(disgusted, laughing)
Aw, no, thanks, ya keep it.

Maisie's eye catches on the drawing he's made on the paper bag. Looks like a CITY SKYLINE.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
That ya home?

She runs a finger along the drawing, tracing the waxy buildings, the horizontal line marking the ground.

Maisie tilts her head as she deciphers the figures sketched along the ground.

Looks like... people. But they aren't standing vertical. They're horizontal...

And streaks of RED CRAYON are scribbled over their whole bodies...

An ominous air coaxes sullen expressions from Maisie and Skinny.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
(quietly)
That blood?

She prods the red scribbles. Then looks up at Skinny.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
This where you came from? This why
ya left?

Skinny points to the drawing, then points to the ground.

Maisie SIGHS, he doesn't understand. She asks slowly, gesturing to illustrate:

MAISIE (CONT'D)
No, is this ya home?

She points to herself, then to the Ray house:

MAISIE (CONT'D)
This my home.

She points to Skinny's drawing, then to the sky:

MAISIE (CONT'D)
This your home?

But Skinny immediately shakes his head no, no, no.

He points to the picture, then points to the ground. Again. Picture, ground. Picture, ground.

Emphatically: Himself. Picture. Ground.

Maisie is now confused... furrowing her brow at Skinny...

MAISIE (CONT'D)
I'm from here?

She points to herself and the house.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
You're from...?

She points to him.

He points to the GROUND.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Here?

Their eyes locked, desperately trying to understand...

MAMA DELILAH (O.S.)
 (calling)
 Maisie!

MAISIE
 Comin'!

Maisie's eyes linger on Skinny for a moment before she stands.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
 C'mon Skinny.

INT. RAY HOME - CONTINUOUS

Maisie and Skinny tramp inside, the screen door TWACKING shut behind them.

They find Mama Delilah on the phone, Rebecca and Zeke listening in on the conversation with pouts.

Teen Boy growing more and more infirm by the moment on the couch beyond the kitchen.

MAMA DELILAH
 (into phone)
 Alright, we can meet her at the old train station, the one right outside Biloxi. Y'all let her know?

Mama jots information down on the pad of paper.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Can Zeke and I stay at the Mobile sanctuary that night?

ZEKE
 Mama!

MAMA DELILAH
 (to Zeke)
 Shht--

ZEKE
 I ain't stayin' on the underground railroad--

MAMA DELILAH
 (into phone)
 Okay, well, see y'all tomorrow then. Bless ya for takin' 'em under ya wing.

Mama Delilah smiles faintly at whatever response she hears.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Damn right we ain't sittin' down.
 Alright, bye now.

She hangs up the phone and Zeke springs into argument.

ZEKE
 I ain't helpin' ya with the
 underground railroad, Mama.

REBECCA
 Me neither!

MAMA DELILAH
 Well, ain't it nice no one's askin'
 ya ta help, Rebecca?

Rebecca scoffs as Mama turns to Zeke.

MAISIE
 Mama, I can go with ya!

Mama ignores Maisie altogether--

MAMA DELILAH
 Zeke, ya comin' with me, that's
 that. Maisie, ya bring that
 medicine back from town?

MAISIE
 Yes, ma'am.

Maisie extends the small glass jar of medicine to her.

MAMA DELILAH
 Good girl.

Mama snatches it and a spoon from the drying rack.

ZEKE
 Say whatever ya want, I ain't
 stayin' at an underground railroad
 sanctuary, I just ain't.

Mama SIGHS as she crouches over Teen Boy on the couch.

MAMA DELILAH
 Fine. We'll stay with Daddy in
 Mobile tomorrow night 'fore the
 rally.

Maisie keeps her sights on Zeke, who's pacing the kitchen.

ZEKE

And what if I tell Daddy what ya
done with these boys?

Mama attempts to spoon-feed medicine into Teen Boy's mouth but he struggles away from her.

TEEN BOY

Ahhh--

MAMA DELILAH

Then guess you 'n I'll get beat,
won't we?

(to Teen Boy)
C'mon now--

The medicine dribbles back out of the Teen Boy's mouth. He tries turning his head away from the spoon.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)

Hold still!

Mama Delilah aggressively grips Teen Boy's head between her arms and shoves the spoon in.

Teen Boy GAGS.

MAISIE

Mama, ya hurtin' 'em--

Mama Delilah forcibly tilts Teen Boy's head back, smothering his mouth with her hand so he can't spit it back out.

MAMA DELILAH

He gotta take the medicine.

Teen Boy weakly fights her, but she presses her hand harder into his lips.

Rebecca, Maisie, and Zeke look on disturbed by their Mama. Skinny grips Maisie's arm, worried.

Finally Mama Delilah releases his head and Teen Boy sputters, COUGHING.

Mama Delilah looms over Teen Boy, slowly screwing the cap back on the medicine bottle.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)

Now Zeke ya best not make me tell
ya one more time-- go pack ya
things, we leavin' in the mornin'.

Zeke doesn't move.

ZEKE
And what if I say I'm man of the house?

Mama Delilah laughs snidely.

MAMA DELILAH
Boy, you got a lot more ta learn 'bout bein' a man.

Maisie can't contain herself any longer--

MAISIE
I can go ta Biloxi with ya, Mama!

MAMA DELILAH
Hush up Maisie!

Maisie extremely hurt by her mother's snapping.

INT. MAISIE AND REBECCA'S ROOM - LATER

Now Maisie's expression is screwed up in determination.

She's packing clothes and Zeke's swiss army knife in a rucksack from her wardrobe. Skinny watches her from her bed.

Rebecca slips into the room--

MAISIE
I'm goin' with Mama tomorrow.

Rebecca appears irked, anxious. She eases the door firmly shut.

REBECCA
Ya too young ta understand-- what Mama's doin' is stupid!

Maisie slows her packing...

REBECCA (CONT'D)
Bad things happen when people get caught on the underground railroad, when people get caught helpin' the Fallen.

MAISIE
What kinds-a things?

REBECCA
Ya seen them bodies hangin' from
trees in town? That 'n worse.

Maisie drops her arm and rucksack to her side. Worry clearly displayed across her face.

Rebecca notices:

REBECCA (CONT'D)
What?

MAISIE
(hushed)
I think... someone might-a heard me
in town...

Rebecca slides closer to Maisie.

REBECCA
Heard ya what?

Maisie can't meet her eyes.

MAISIE
Say we got Fallen boys at the
house.

Rebecca explodes with fear.

REBECCA
Maisie! The hell--? Who heard!?

MAISIE
Just a boy! Just this boy, white
boy, Dillard--

REBECCA
White boy!?

MAISIE
He's my friend! Kinda. He prob'ly
won't say nothin'!

Rebecca's eyes wild with fear.

REBECCA
It's not 'bout friends now, it's
'bout scared.

Maisie steps toward Rebecca, grabs her wrist pleadingly--

MAISIE

Rebecca, don't tell Mama. She won't ever let me go inta town by myself again!

REBECCA

How'd the boy react? What'd he say?

MAISIE

He... he just--

Maisie looks over to see Skinny anxiously watching...

MAISIE (CONT'D)

Kinda shrugged.

REBECCA

He just shrugged?

MAISIE

Yeah, he don't care. Said he's seen plenty Fallen that fell out by his house.

Rebecca consumes this information hungrily.

REBECCA

So he don't seem... against the Fallen?

MAISIE

No. He said he... His family help 'em too.

Rebecca exhales deeply.

MAISIE (CONT'D)

Please don't tell Mama.

Rebecca dons a stern expression.

REBECCA

Ya gotta be more careful.

MAISIE

I will.

REBECCA

And ya ain't goin' with 'em tomorrow neither.

Rebecca SIGHS again, her anxiety returning briefly.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Ya know they sayin' if that vote
don't go well we might have us a
civil war.

Maisie watches her sister pick at her nails.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Then we'd prob'ly never see Daddy.

MAISIE

I don't care if I never see Daddy
again.

Rebecca fumes at this.

REBECCA

Don't say that!

MAISIE

He ain't never been nothin' but
mean ta us!

REBECCA

But he's still ya Daddy, Maisie!
Family counts for somethin'!

Maisie grapples with what she's said.

INT. RAY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The living room is dark, save for the pale glow from the old black-and-white TV set transmitting the news to Mama in a large worn recliner.

Maisie tromps up to Mama's side to find her stitching on a garment: a delicate embroidery, a pattern of several small hearts that make up a circle.

Maisie's expression grumpy, her voice volatile to match:

MAISIE

Mama--

MAMA DELILAH

Shh-- I'm watchin'.

Mama Delilah gestures the garment toward the TV.

Maisie's upset by being cut off. She glances at the images on the TV, absorbs fragments of the newscaster's tinny voice:

ON TV--

Footage of protests turned violent, reminiscent of famous photos from 60s civil rights protests:

- White officers wielding German shepherds
- Fire hoses BLASTING weapon-less individuals
- Protesters protecting their heads from batons
- A mass of protesters link arms as they march down a street

 NEWSCASTER VOICE
 (breaking up)
 Congressional vote this week--
 Civil unrest-- Nation divided--

Now footage of a Fallen internment camp like the one Maisie passed. GAUNT FALLEN PRISONERS stare out behind chain link fences with hollow eyes.

And then, grainy footage of a BLACK MAN orating passionately at a podium: DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

 MAMA DELILAH (O.S.)
 Ya understand what they sayin',
 Maisie?

BACK TO LIVING ROOM--

Maisie transfixed by the TV. She hesitantly shakes her head no. Mama Delilah pats her lap-- inviting Maisie to sit.

 MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
 C'mon, sit here.

Maisie delivers the meanest pout she can muster.

Mama chuckles at Maisie's ire.

 MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)
 Aw, ya still cross with me?

 MAISIE
 Why won't ya let me help?

Mama Delilah pats her thighs again in response. Maisie SIGHS dramatically before plopping in Mama's lap.

Mama wraps her arms comfortingly around Maisie, continues stitching on the garment as she speaks:

 MAMA DELILAH
 I'm proud of ya for wantin' ta
 help, Maise.
 (MORE)

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)

But when you're a Mama someday, ya gonna learn how Mama's always wanna protect they kids. We livin' in dangerous times, in dangerous places. And as ya Mama, I'll always be wantin' ta protect ya.

Maisie watches as Mama adds another tiny heart, almost like an x, made from two stitches. She's almost completed the circle of tiny hearts.

MAISIE

If it ain't safe... why ya makin' Zeke go with ya?

Mama begins stitching yet another heart, contemplating her answer. Finally:

MAMA DELILAH

I love ya, I protect ya... but what if I ain't there to protect ya no more? I need someone else ta love ya and protect ya for me. Right?

Maisie nods.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)

I need someone to protect ya, not 'cause they ya Mama or even ya family, but just 'cause you a fellow human bein'. Just 'cause it's the right thing ta do.

Maisie looks up to the TV again to find more dire footage of Fallen internment camps: inhumane and haunting.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)

That's why we gotta help these boys, Maisie. 'Cause the second you decide someone's life ain't worth the same as yours or your family's, who's ta say someone else ain't gonna think your life ain't worth anythin' neither? ... Understand?

Maisie nods slowly. She ponders this as she replaces her focus on Mama's next stitched heart.

Mama HUMS a familiar tune to Maisie... Maisie sinking into Mama's arms as she sews.

Maisie joining in with the HUMMING near the end of the ditty.

TUG--

Maisie's attention is snatched by Skinny tugging on her arm. He's wearing a pair of too-big swim trunks.

Maisie sits upright and turns to her Mama---

MAISIE

Mama, can Skinny 'n me go throw
jellies back in the ocean 'fore
bed?

Mama releases Maisie from her lap.

MAMA DELILAH

Alright, but ya gotta promise ta
look after him, hear?

Maisie nods vigorously.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)

That's how you can help out.

Maisie grins slightly at this before she dashes toward the back door.

EXT. RAY HOME BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

The flashlight's beam scatters across the backyard as Maisie jogs toward the beach--

Skinny struggles to match pace.

MAISIE

(smiling)

Hurry up!

Their shallow PANTING. Slamming FOOTFALLS.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Maisie and Skinny stock-still, facing out to the ocean. Flashlight hanging lamely by Maisie's side.

Before them:

The washed-up crash wreckage.

EXT. BEACH - WRECKAGE - LATER

Maisie crawls along the edges of the wreckage capsule, pulling her fingers across the metal exterior.

Plucking up a section of the tattered parachute. Inspects it.

Shining the flashlight directly at a reflective panel, and squinting at the rebounding light.

She inches toward the open capsule door, crawls inside--

INT. CAPSULE - CONTINUOUS

SPLASH as Maisie's bare feet land in the waterlogged bottom.

She lifts her flashlight in the dark to reveal:

Skinny stands knee-deep in seawater.

He stares at damp scraps on the wall. Turns to her, his hand shielding his eyes from the flashlight.

He points to the scraps.

SKINNY

Milagch.

Maisie sashes over to him and scans the flashlight over the scraps on the wall.

Photographs, but matte, on cardboard-like paper, and lighting of the subjects like the harsh flash of a disposable camera.

The edges curled and some images blurred from water damage.

One depicts the Boys with the person who was the Dead Body--their father. No smiles, formal, like Victorian-era portrait.

Maisie's eyes scan it, move along to another more candid shot of Skinny with a DOG.

Skinny in the photo is BEAMING, arms wrapped around the animal affectionately.

Skinny in real life taps the image of the dog.

SKINNY (CONT'D)

Wehka eesa.

Maisie stares at him, the flashlight's beam beneath them casting eerie shadows on their facades.

Skinny waves his hand for her to follow him as he splashes over to another part of the claustrophobic capsule.

He digs his fingernails into a gap in the wall, wrenching a metal panel open, like a drawer.

He digs out a tuft of FUR, same color as the dog's, tied with a red string, like yarn.

Holds it up to Maisie:

SKINNY (CONT'D)
Wehka eesaka swol.

Tugs on his own hair. Points to the image of the dog again.

Maisie glances back at the photo of Skinny and the dog. The flashlight's circle framing it on the wall.

She focuses on Skinny's look of pure joy in the image.

Looks like he's LAUGHING.

Maisie's eyes gaze in wonder at it...

Until her attention is nabbed by SLOSHING again--

Skinny moving toward the capsule's door.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Skinny and Maisie climb out of the capsule and back onto the sand. Skinny tucks the tuft of fur into his shorts' pocket.

His demeanor palpably forlorn.

Maisie picks up on this, circles her arm around him.

They remain unmoving.

Silhouetted by the cresting sun.

MAISIE (V.O.)
This a jellyfish.

EXT. OCEAN - LATER

Tentacles swaying as Maisie hustles into the waves, a jellyfish in her palms.

Skinny follows after with a jellyfish of his own. Tripping over the waves as they attack his shins.

MAISIE (V.O.)
They live in the ocean.

Maisie now deep enough to start swimming, knocked about in the choppy water. She glances back at Skinny.

MAISIE (V.O.)

Some summers the water push 'em out
ta the sand.

Skinny struggles in the waves, his balance wonky from holding
the jellyfish above his head.

MAISIE (V.O.)

But they don't wanna be on the
sand, they can't live there for
long. 'N they can't get back to the
water by theyselves.

Once they're shoulder-deep, Maisie demonstrates how to rear
back, CHUCK the jellyfish out as far as she can to the ocean.

MAISIE (V.O.)

So we gotta help 'em get back home.

Skinny copies Maisie, thrusting his jellyfish out toward the
horizon. Maisie and Skinny watch the jellyfish fall.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

The tide tosses new jellyfish up with each wave that greets
the beach.

Maisie and Skinny squat by a pile of jellyfish. Maisie scoops
one up.

MAISIE (V.O.)

My brother 'n sister used ta help
me throw 'em back. But they don't
help me much now.

Skinny places a halting hand on her arm, an idea dawning on
his features. He hustles off toward the capsule.

Maisie watches him curiously.

MAISIE (V.O.)

Says they tired, 'cause jellies
been washin' up every day this
summer, and they gotta help mama
with all the chores now they old
'nough.

Skinny returns with a mesh bag. He opens it up and carefully
transfers the whole pile of jellyfish into the bag.

After a few moments of watching this, Maisie assists him.

EXT. OCEAN - LATER

Maisie and Skinny swim a mad dash out to the ocean. Skinny drags the mesh bag behind him.

MAISIE (V.O.)
I don't get as much as I used ta
with them. 'N they dry up by
noontime on the sand.

Once deep enough, Maisie plucks a jellyfish out of the bag, throws it far.

Skinny nabs a jellyfish out of the bag and throws it right after her.

MAISIE (V.O.)
But I get many as I can by myself.

Skinny and Maisie watch the two jellyfish land side-by-side in the ocean beyond them.

MAISIE (V.O.)
'N I get some-a them back home.

Maisie and Skinny both with slight grins of success.

INT. RAY HOME - NIGHT

Maisie and Skinny drip puddles onto the wood floor by the back door.

MAMA DELILAH
Watch it! Ya gettin' water all
over!

Mama still in the recliner with her stitching. Zeke and Rebecca at the kitchen table reading books.

Skinny hustles up to Teen Boy, stretched out on the couch.

SKINNY
Zagh, mehka eesa!

He offers Teen Boy the bundle of dog hair he extracted from the capsule. Teen Boy weakly smiles at the sight.

They share a warm moment of reminiscing.

MAISIE
Mama, that wreckage washed up.

Zeke jolts up from his chair.

ZEKE
Why didn't ya come get us right
away?!

He YANKS his boots on by the front door.

ZEKE (CONT'D)
C'mon, hurry! Help me get ridda it!

He trucks out the back door--

MAMA DELILAH
(calling after him)
Careful with the boat in the dark!
(to Rebecca)
Go help ya brother.

Rebecca stays put. Maisie and Skinny playfully follow Zeke outside.

EXT. SHED - NIGHT

Maisie holds the flashlight for Zeke as he loads up a wheelbarrow with tools.

MAISIE
How many Fallen white 'n how many
black?

Zeke's already sweating from the task. Skinny peers into the wheelbarrow curiously.

ZEKE
Some black, some white, some even
look oriental or Mexican. Don't
matter anyhow, nobody likes none-a
'em.

MAISIE
Why they comin' here?

ZEKE
I dunno, where they from,
everyone's sick n' dyin' so I
'spose they tryna escape that.

MAISIE
I know but... where they come from?

Zeke snaps:

ZEKE

Ya already know nobody's got the
answer ta that!

MAISIE

Yeah but they gotta know somethin'!
Don't they got NASA workin' on it
or somethin'?

Zeke GROANS from Maisie's tedious questions. Answers
reluctantly anyway:

ZEKE

Some people sayin' from space...
but some people sayin' from
someplace else.

MAISIE

Like 'nother country?

ZEKE

No, not 'nother country, not
'nother planet, just... somewhere
else. I dunno.

Zeke shrugs.

ZEKE (CONT'D)

People got crazy theories.

Maisie inspects Skinny.

MAISIE

They look like us.

ZEKE

Yeah, they look like us, but they
ain't us. They diff'rent.

Zeke drops a final tool in the wheelbarrow with a CLANG.
Maisie reads Skinny dubiously.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Zeke's knees sink into the sand as he crouches to disassemble
the washed-up capsule.

Maisie emerges from within with an armful of items, which she
dumps unceremoniously into the wheelbarrow.

Zeke manages to pry a hunk of metal away from the side with a
crowbar. With a final CRACK he dislodges it.

Skinny SCREAMS!

SKINNY
Peh! Bagh ehdu dali!

Skinny falls to the beach beside Zeke and grabs at the crowbar in his hands.

Zeke shoves Skinny aside. But Skinny lunges back at Zeke's chest.

ZEKE
Hey! The hell-- he's attackin' me!

MAISIE
'Course he is, stupid! This all his junk!

Zeke wrestles with one hand to keep Skinny away from him.

ZEKE
Well tell 'em ta calm down!

MAISIE
He don't understand me.

ZEKE
Do somethin'!

Maisie SIGHS, approaches Skinny purposefully.

MAISIE
C'mon, Skinny, we gotta do it.

She wraps a hand around his upper arm and coaxes him backwards. Uses soothing tones:

MAISIE (CONT'D)
I know it's sad, but we gotta hide
it so they don't catch us with it.

Skinny lashes out at Maisie and KNOCKS her to the ground.

SKINNY
Bagh ehdu weni!

Maisie lands on her butt with a soft plop-- taken aback by his action.

Skinny leaps toward Zeke and hangs on his biceps to stop the demolition.

ZEKE
Maisie!

MAISIE
I'm tryin'!

Maisie pulls herself back up and drags a squirming Skinny backwards.

MAISIE (CONT'D)	SKINNY
C'mon! Quit it!	<i>Raugh weni! Muha! Bagh reilagh dali!</i>

ZEKE
Oo, damn, he ain't happy.

Zeke resumes deconstructing the capsule with his crowbar.

Maisie sinks to the ground to anchor a struggling Skinny.

MAISIE
Yeah, well ya wreckin' his home!

Zeke doesn't react as he snaps another hunk of capsule away.

Skinny slowly abandons hope of escaping Maisie's grip. He slumps in the sand... begins to weep.

Maisie's heart breaks when she feels his sobbing. She attempts to calm Skinny by whispering in his ear:

MAISIE (CONT'D)
It's okay, Skinny... we gonna find
ya a new home...

EXT. SHRIMPING BOAT - NIGHT

Ropes CREAK as the shrimping net suspends the entirety of the disassembled capsule over the choppy waves.

Zeke captains the boat as they motor out to sea.

Maisie watches Skinny from the sideboard as he leans over the edge, picks through some of the junk in the shrimping net.

He selects a large linen shirt and dislodges it from the pile. He retreats back to Maisie.

Skinny pulls the shirt over his head, the hem of the garment skirting his kneecaps.

MAISIE
(yelling over motor)
That shirt ya Daddy's?

Maisie points to the hair tuft in Skinny's fist to illustrate.

Skinny nods, burrowing further into the shirt as he curls up on the sideboard next to Maisie.

Zeke cuts the engine-- now everything much quieter, the waves LAPPING up against the sides of the boat.

ZEKE
Stand back, Maise.

But Maisie doesn't move as Zeke releases the net--

The three of them observe the junk rain into the ocean, slowly sink below the surface in the spotlamp of the boat.

Skinny brimming with tears.

A moment of silence once the net is fully depleted.

Then Zeke TURNS the engine to life once more.

Maisie YAWNS widely.

ZEKE (CONT'D)
We still an hour out-- y'all can sleep.

EXT. SHRIMPING BOAT - LATER

NO SOUND--

Maisie and Skinny slumbering on the floorboards of the boat in the moonlight...

An ORANGE GLOW creeps across Maisie's features...

SOUND RAMPING UP--

Maisie opens her eyes groggily--

Zeke is YELLING-- POINTING--

Maisie scrambles up to see on the shore:

Their HOUSE is on FIRE!

MAISIE
ZEKE!

ZEKE
Help me dock the boat!

EXT. DOCK - NIGHT

Zeke haphazardly docks the boat-- Maisie and Zeke both bounding off, Skinny close behind.

They stampede down the dock, but Zeke THRUSTS an arm out at the end, catching Maisie--

Maisie looks to Zeke: Something... is awry...

Zeke squints, then his eyes widen in fear.

ZEKE
Get back in the boat!

Maisie grows roots, searching the property, trying to find what Zeke has witnessed.

MAISIE
But Mama! And Rebecca!

Zeke nabs her under the arms -- she YELPS!-- He's dragging her backwards as fast as he can.

ZEKE
C'MON!

Then Maisie SEES IT:

Hooded KKK MEMBERS.

Throwing fiery torches onto their home's roof.

And in the oldest, fattest tree in their yard...

The silhouettes of THREE PEOPLE hanging...

Maisie wildly SCREAMS!

MAISIE
MAMA!

Maisie rips at Zeke's arms to wrestle free, manages to evade his grasp.

She RUSHES toward the house--

ZEKE
MAISIE, NO!

But she continues flying down the dock and onto the bank.

She's sobbing, the fire igniting her features in an ORANGE TINGE, racing toward the hanging bodies in the tree.

The flames from the house have caught the overhanging limbs of nearby trees on fire as well.

The whole yard GLOWS, fiery branches breaking free from above and SHOWERING the crab grass with their embers.

VOICE (O.S.)
Hey! Look!

Maisie HALTS in her tracks, scared STIFF, when she spies three HOODED KKK MEMBERS advancing toward her.

They are backlit, menacing shadow-y creatures, STALKING her way...

ZEKE (O.S.)
(from the boat)
MAISIE! GET BACK HERE!

Maisie stumbles backward to retreat to the boat, but trips and falls onto her backside.

KKK MEMBERS are feet away--

The ONE closest reaching a hand out--

Maisie SCREECHES in fear, shielding herself with an arm before--

SKINNY rushes up to her side, HOLLERING at the top of his lungs:

SKINNY
DAK! GAHBI!

He SWATS at the nearest KKK Member with his hands. KKK Member YELPS and jumps back at Skinny's touch.

KKK MEMBER #2
(Southern accent)
Don't touch 'em, he one-a the
Fallen!

All three KKK Men hesitate, unsure how to proceed. But Skinny continues his yelling tirade:

SKINNY
BAGH EHDU POLI! FASI VAHS! FASI
VAHS!

Skinny utilizes his whole body as a shield over Maisie.

ZEKE (O.S.)
(from dock)
MAISIE!

CRACK!

KKK Members look up and scramble backwards--

One of the bigger burning branches from the tree above gives way and CRASHES down between Maisie, Skinny, and the KKK Members.

This SNAPS Maisie back to attention as she scurries up and pulls Skinny with her back to the boat--

EXT. SHRIMPING BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Maisie, Skinny, Zeke watch their blazing house recede on the horizon, SOBBING in the dissipating orange glow of the fire.

Zeke flies into a rage--

ZEKE
This is all 'cause-a *them*!

He turns and SHOVES Skinny to the ground.

MAISIE
ZEKE (CONT'D)
ZEKE!
We should-a never helped them
boys!

Maisie crumples protectively around Skinny.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Don't hurt 'em!

Zeke prowls toward Skinny--

ZEKE
Get outta the way, Maise! I'm
dumpin' 'em back in the ocean!

Zeke nabs Skinny's arm, attempting to lift him up-- but
Maisie KICKS at him--

MAISIE
NO!

And Zeke SMACKS Maisie in the face.

Skinny scampers up and swaps places with Maisie-- now her shield.

SKINNY
DAK!

Maisie GLARES at Zeke from behind Skinny's protection. All of their chests heaving from adrenaline breaths.

Finally:

MAISIE
Mama woulda wanted us ta take
Skinny ta the underground railroad!

ZEKE
Ya wanna end up like Mama and
Rebecca!?

Maisie doesn't respond as she watches Zeke unsuccessfully try to stop his tears from flowing.

ZEKE (CONT'D)
(voice breaking)
I ain't havin' nothin' ta do with
Skinny or any-a the damn Fallen!
I'm gonna protest in Mobile ta get
ridda every single last one-a them!

Zeke stalks to the back of the boat, leaving Skinny and Maisie in each other's protection.

EXT. SHRIMPING BOAT - NIGHT

Maisie GASPS awake from a nightmare--

Catches her breath in the moonlit air. Realizes where she is... what has happened...

Begins to break down again.

MAISIE
Mama...

Skinny is already awake next to her. He's clutching his dad's hair like a teddy bear, cheeks also shining with tears.

Maisie whispers through her SOBS:

MAISIE (CONT'D)
(whisper)
Skinny--

She can barely get the words out.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
I'm the reason our families got
killed.

Her bawling takes over again.

And that's all she can manage.

Skinny doesn't understand a word, but he offers Maisie a hug.

They embrace in a cuddle, their little arms entwined around
each other.

At the bow of the boat--

Zeke is awake and listening to Maisie. But he's not surprised
by the words she's said. He's wiping tears of his own away.

EXT. SHRIMPING BOAT - DAWN

A high-pitched WHISTLING rouses Maisie from her dreams.

She lifts her eyelids just in time to witness another CAPSULE
CRASH into the ocean.

The sun is just peaking above the edge of the water.

Maisie and Skinny pull themselves up to peer over the side of
the boat, wanting a glimpse of the crash site.

They see that their boat is beached on a shore.

Zeke discovers the same thing--

ZEKE (O.S.)
Damnit!

Zeke's heavy footfalls land by the steering wheel of the
boat. He turns the key only to hear a GEARS GRINDING.

Out of gas.

Zeke GROWLS, KICKS the sideboard.

ZEKE (CONT'D)
C'mon Maisie, let's go! We're only
at Biloxi, gotta walk the rest-a
the way ta Mobile.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Zeke hops out of the boat and onto the sand. Maisie follows closely after him.

Maisie stops to observe:

There are HUNDREDS of washed up jellyfish on this beach.

Zeke calls over his shoulder at her:

ZEKE

Leave Skinny on the boat-- whoever comes for these crashed Fallen can take 'em too.

MAISIE

But they wanna hurt 'em!

ZEKE

Get ya ass over here, Maisie Ray!
I'm takin' ya ta Daddy.

MAISIE

I don't wanna go see Daddy!

Zeke whips around to face her.

ZEKE

Listen here-- I'm the man-a the house now, and you're a little girl who's gotta listen ta me!

Maisie PLOPS down in the sand and DROPS Skinny down with her.

MAISIE

I ain't goin' nowhere without Skinny!

Maisie rushes to get the words out as Zeke advances back to them:

MAISIE (CONT'D)

He saved my life! And now we gotta save him!

Zeke slows next to her, her words striking him. His shoulders slump, exasperated.

A pissed-off SIGH.

ZEKE

Fine! We'll drop Skinny with Mama's friend Dorothy, but then we goin' ta Daddy in Mobile, and ain't gonna be no more fussin' 'bout it!

Zeke, Maisie, and Skinny step over washed-up jellyfish as they stalk off the beach.

EXT. ABANDONED TRAIN STATION - MORNING

Maisie and Skinny trail after Zeke on the vacant road.

Maisie squints in the rising sun toward a truck outside of the abandoned train station.

A WOMAN is securing a rope down over the truck bed.

ZEKE

(calling)

Dorothy?

The woman turns, and indeed, it is DOROTHY GUNN (45, Black). Gruff voice, weathered skin, world-weary as can be, yet still prepared to talk your ear off.

And when she recognizes them, she palpably DEFLATES.

DOROTHY

Oh no, I tried callin' ya Mama last night!

The trio reaches her.

ZEKE

(hesitant)

Our mama--

DOROTHY

(interrupting)

The folks she talked to was dead-as-a-doornail wrong, we ain't got no more room at the sanctuary. Like damn sardines up there. Anyway, I gotta get back to my family after this goods drop--

She gestures to the fully stocked pickup truck--

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

'Cause these puppies can't stand no more traipsin' around, I'm done, I tried ta tell ya Mama that last night! Ya gotta take 'em back home.

Maisie's completely crestfallen, bursting into tears.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Oh, hush now, child, ya Mama'll know what ta do with 'em--

MAISIE

Our Mama was killed!

This STUNS Dorothy. Zeke can't make eye contact with her.

ZEKE

(mutter)

Someone snitched 'bout the boys.
They strung her up.

Dorothy expels an impossibly long sigh.

DOROTHY

Damn... Goddamnit. Well I sure am wrecked ta hear it, I'll tell ya that. Ya Mama was a good woman, told my ass of a husband where ta stick it when he went swingin' at me. Use ta hide me out in that boat-a yours 'fore I left the sonuvabitch for good. 'Spose y'all too young ta remember that now.

Dorothy places her hands firmly on her hips as she exhales weightily once more.

MAISIE

Please, ma'am. Ya gotta help us take 'em to the underground railroad. That's what my Mama wanted.

Dorothy grimaces at the sight of Maisie's adorable pleading eyes. Dorothy shaking her head no, but knowing she's decided the opposite.

DOROTHY

Oh, alright, consider 'em part-a my last drop. But we best find some Fallen ta adopt 'em, I'm still jumpin' ship the minute this's unloaded.

Maisie perks slightly at this news.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Dorothy mans the wheel, Zeke, Maisie, and Skinny crammed next to each other in the cab with her.

DOROTHY
(to Zeke)
Few-a us from the sanctuary goin'
up ta Mobile tomorrow for the
rally, gonna watch the speeches, if
ya wanna join us 'fore ya get ta ya
Daddy. Gonna be a historic day, no
doubt.

Zeke hesitates to answer... causing Dorothy to cast him a suspicious look.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
What's wrong with ya? Don't ya
wanna be part-a somethin' big?
Bigger than ya-self?

ZEKE
I'll just take the ride inta town,
ma'am.

Dorothy's eyebrows jump up-- surprised.

DOROTHY
Ya not tellin' me ya think the
gov'ment should up and slaughter
all these Fallen, is ya? Kids 'n
old folks 'n all?

Zeke stone-faced.

Dorothy side eyes him venomously.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Oo... you sure is ya Daddy's boy.

ZEKE
WATCH OUT!!

Zeke's jabbing a finger at the road in front of them--

Dorothy SLAMS on the brakes.

A group of FALLEN MEN, long hair, in tattered Fallen linen clothes, are clustered smack dab in the middle of the road.

They descend on the truck as soon as it stops.

Dorothy's opening her door--

ZEKE (CONT'D)
Are ya crazy!? KEEP DRIVIN'!

Too late--

One of the FALLEN MEN YANKS Dorothy's door open the rest of the way and brandishes a KNIFE.

Maisie SHRIEKS!

The Fallen Man PRESSES the knife to Dorothy's throat, pinching her arms behind her back.

ZEKE (CONT'D)
LET GO-A HER!

DOROTHY
Now, now, Zeke, these folks just hungry, let's-- let's just keep calm 'til they get what they want 'n wander off--

ZEKE
Are ya honestly defendin' 'em right now!?

The other two Fallen Men are rummaging in the back of the truck, snagging food and supplies from the crates secured back there.

Skinny's rising on his knees in his seat, jabbering at the Fallen Man holding Dorothy hostage--

SKINNY
Dak! Fasi Vahs! Bagh ehdu poli!
(turns to Zeke)
Milagch! Raugh!

Skinny swats at the knife-wielding Fallen Man, but he hardly reacts.

While Skinny protests, Maisie is frozen-- transfixed on something on the Fallen Man's chest...

On his shirt, over his heart, an embroidered pattern:

A circle made up of tiny hearts.

JUST LIKE WHAT MAMA STITCHED the night before...

Maisie glances up, mouth agape, only to LOCK EYES with the Fallen Man.

He's staring at her curiously too... in awe of her--

He drops Dorothy, stumbles backward, pointing to Maisie and yelling to his two fellow bandits at the back of the truck:

FALLEN MAN #1

ZEKE
What the hell is happening!?

DOROTHY
I dunno!

The other two thieves round the truck as Fallen Man explains something to Skinny--

FALLEN MAN #1
(to Skinny)
Meh vul polis gahrpa...

He points to Maisie....

FALLEN MAN #1 (CONT'D)
Milagch, meh yalul neni.

Skinny's eyes widen, he inspects Maisie intently before--

Skinny latches a hand on Maisie's arm and crawls over Dorothy, lugger Maisie with him--

Ow! DOROTHY Hey! No! ZEKE

Zeke extends his arms as far as he can, groping to save Maisie, but she and Skinny plop onto the ground outside of the truck, out of his reach.

ZEKE (CONT'D)
Maisie!

The Fallen Man is gesturing, encouraging Skinny and Maisie to follow him towards the woods at the edge of the gravel road.

Skinny scrambles up, pulls Maisie forcefully with him.

MAISIE SKINNY
Hey! Skinny! Let go! *Milaqch! Muha, milaqch!*

Skinny pleads with her, nodding for encouragement. She hesitantly follows him, swayed by his intensity.

The Fallen bandits have trekked into the woods, calling out to Skinny to follow.

ZEKE
Maisie! Stop!

MAISIE
I think Skinny wants me ta follow!

ZEKE
You get ya ass back here! Right now!

But she continues to allow herself to be dragged into the woods by an eager Skinny--

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

And now Skinny drops her arm and begins JOGGING to keep up with the other Fallen.

Maisie hesitates a beat-- hears Zeke approaching--

ZEKE (O.S.)
Maisie! Get back here!

Skinny spins and wags his hand toward him--

SKINNY
Milagch!

Split second decision-- she picks up pace behind him.

Skinny and Maisie dart through the trees and the low-hanging tree moss.

Zeke and Dorothy not far behind, calling after them--

ZEKE (O.S.)
Maisie!

DOROTHY (O.S.)
C'mon back!

Maisie's STRAINED BREATHS, POUNDING footsteps--

Until she breaks into a--

EXT. CLEARING/SWAMP - CONTINUOUS

Swampy marsh: still, filmy water surrounded by a nest of trees.

Maisie halts-- ALL OF THE AIR SUCKED OUT OF HER.

The sight before her OVERWHELMING.

For across the marsh, on the opposite bank, Maisie finds--
MAMA DELILAH.

She can barely believe what she sees; she GASPS, tears gathering in her eyes.

She PUSHES past Skinny, sludging through the swamp to get to the other side.

Mama Delilah notices Maisie rushing toward her, her expression etched with worry at the sight of Maisie's tears--

Mama Delilah outstretches her arms for Maisie, crouching to greet her.

When Maisie finally makes it to the opposite bank, Mama scoops her up in an all-encompassing hug.

Maisie SOBS UNCONTROLLABLY into Mama's shoulder.

Mama rocks her back and forth soothingly...

Finally, Maisie emerges from the embrace:

MAISIE
(through tears)
Mama, I was so scared!

But Mama Delilah appears confused... She doesn't respond...

MAISIE (CONT'D)
(through tears, whispered)
I thought I got ya killed.

And now Mama Delilah is TERRIFIED.

She releases Maisie and STUMBLES away backwards...

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Mama?

Mama Delilah's horrified gaze is fixed beyond Maisie.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

Mama Delilah lifts a pointer finger at Maisie... her hand shaking...

MAMA DELILAH

Maisie is STUNNED. Now she's SCARED.

Is Mama... speaking the Fallen language...?

Mama Delilah continues shaking her pointer finger at something beyond Maisie's shoulder.

MAMA DELILAH (CONT'D)

Maisie slowly pivots to see what she's pointing at.

And she's face-to-face with:

ANOTHER MAISIE.

Identical to Maisie, except for longer hair and wearing Fallen clothes.

Come to think of it, Mama Delilah is also in Fallen clothes...

The two Maisie's are frozen in shock. Inches away from each other. Their expressions HORRIFIED.

ZEKE DOROTHY
Maisie! Maisie! C'mon back!

Dorothy's and Zeke's YELLS grow in volume until they burst into the clearing on the other side of the swamp where Skinny and the Fallen bandits stand.

They stutter to a stop, noticing everyone in this clearing is COMPLETELY STILL.

SILENT.

Zeke looks to Skinny-- who points across the marsh--

And Zeke and Dorothy peer across to see THE TWO MAISIES.

Zeke goes slackjaw.

Dorothy lights up with fascination.

And the Maisies still can't tear their terrified eyes away from each other.

DOROTHY (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)
So the rumors is true!

EXT. DOROTHY'S TRUCK - LATER

Dorothy re-packing the looted truck--

DOROTHY

They ain't space travelers, they
time travelers! They us!

Zeke paces around her, attempting futilely to come to grips with what is happening. His movements are so sharp, they're almost violent.

ZEKE

The hell's that mean!?

Maisie is SOBBING, she can't take her eyes off of the Fallen Maisie and Fallen Mama Delilah.

Meanwhile, Fallen Maisie and Mama can't take their eyes off of Zeke. They reach out to him, tears streaming down their dirty cheeks.

Skinny sticks by Maisie's side.

Dorothy's re-invigorated by this development, her every action MANIC and zipping with adrenaline:

DOROTHY

(to Zeke)

Ain't ya heard tell-a this? The
Fallen are us-- they us from
another plane--

ZEKE

I heard tell, jus' thought nothin'
of it, 'cause it's crazy!

DOROTHY

Crazy, but true--

Dorothy gestures to Fallen Mama and Fallen Maisie.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

I s'pose in another plane-a time
parallel ta ours things added up ta
a plague of some kind 'n they musta
found some way ta jump ta ours--
clever rascals--

ZEKE

(angry)

But-- but-- they ain't like us!
They don't talk like us, they don't
dress like us, don't act like us--

DOROTHY

Just 'cause there's diff'rences
 'tween the two planes that made us
 talk diff'rent or dress diff'rent,
 or grow diff'rent customs or eat
 diff'rent foods, that don't mean
 they ain't us. It's clear as day
 they us-- jus' look at 'em!

Dorothy finishes her packing and spins to her flock.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Don't ya see!? This changes
 everythin'! This's just the
 dynamite our losin' battle needs!

Zeke's shaking his head no, TUGGING at the hair on his head--

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Surely folks'll wanna save the
 Fallen when they realize they *us*. I
 mean, killin' the Fallen'll mean
 killin' ya brothas, ya sistas! Ya
 daddys, ya mamas!

Maisie strokes Dorothy's arm for attention--

MAISIE

(Pointing to Fallen Mama)
 This my Mama? This really my Mama?

Dorothy glances down at Maisie... she studies the crying
 Fallen Mama, who is still in awe of the stewing Zeke.

DOROTHY

Ya know, Maisie, I s'pose it is.
 Yes. This ya Mama.

This ignites a new torrent of tears from Maisie, but with it,
 a cheek-splitting grin.

Zeke meanwhile is DISGUSTED by Fallen Mama, Fallen Maisie,
 both of whom are inching closer and closer to him, hovering
 their fingers out in attempts to touch him--

ZEKE

GET AWAY!

Zeke BATS their hands away wildly.

DOROTHY

Zeke! Zeke! Take ya some breaths!
 Look--

Dorothy approaches Zeke cautiously, gesturing to the Fallen Maisie and Mama.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
They just as happy ta see you as
y'all are to see ya Mama again,
look-- they musta lost their Zeke.

Fallen Maisie extends a clump of black curly HAIR, held together by a worn strand of blue yarn.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
See?

ZEKE
I ain't their Zeke! I ain't their
anythin'!

Zeke is overwhelmed, hyperventilating as he bursts:

ZEKE (CONT'D)
C'mon Maisie!

Zeke grapples onto Maisie's bicep and drags her down the road.

MAISIE
Wait!

Maisie jams her feet into the gravel to stop Zeke from carrying her away--

MAISIE (CONT'D)
We ain't leavin' Skinny! Or Mama!

Skinny's crying after Maisie--

SKINNY <i>Peh, dak!!</i>	ZEKE That ain't ya Mama!
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MAISIE Zeke--!	ZEKE (CONT'D) It ain't Mama!
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DOROTHY
(calling after Zeke)
Hey! Ya can't leave with her, we
need her!

Dorothy jogs up to Zeke and snatches Maisie's other arm.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
(gesturing to both
Maisies)
(MORE)

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
 We gotta show these two ta everyone
 at the rally tomorrow-- prove the
 Fallen really are us, prove why we
 gotta save they lives!

Zeke halts and drops Maisie's arm. He's boiled over--
 SMACKING his fist against his chest for emphasis as he
 declares:

ZEKE
 The Fallen holdin' us back, can't
 ya see that? 'Fore they come we was
 fightin' for our rights! Black
 rights! And we was winnin'! They
 here, now we fightin' for their
 rights?!

DOROTHY
 It's the same thing!

Dorothy brought to frustrated tears--

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
 It's the same thing, it's always
 been the same damn thing! It's
 white folks thinkin' like you that
 pushed us Black folks down in the
 first place!

Zeke and Dorothy in a tense stand-off, Zeke's eyes flashing
 with tears and anger...

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
 Now c'mon, we gotta get ta the
 sanctuary quick as we can--

ZEKE
 We ain't goin'--

Zeke turns to stalk down the road once more.

ZEKE (CONT'D)
 C'mon Maisie, I mean it!

MAISIE
 Zeke, we gotta help 'em!

ZEKE
 No we don't gotta, we gotta take
 care-a ourselves. Helpin' 'em's
 what got our Mama 'n Rebecca
 killed.

Maisie is visibly hurt by his words, her tears intensifying.

MAISIE

It ain't Fallen's fault Zeke, it's--
it's my fault. I let it slip in
town that the boys was at our house--
- don't blame Skinny no more!

And Maisie can't keep talking because of her crying.

Zeke's heart breaks at the sight of Maisie's sorrow. He backtracks to her, pulls her into a hug.

ZEKE

Shhh, it ain't ya fault, Maise.
It's Mama's fault-- she shouldn't-a
kept 'em at our house--

MAISIE

No, Mama's just tryin' ta help 'em,
'n I gave us away!

ZEKE

Maisie--

Zeke SIGHS, a new weight pulling shoulders down.

ZEKE (CONT'D)

It wasn't ya fault, ya hearin' me?
I-- I told 'em 'bout the boys at
our house.

Maisie looks up at Zeke, utterly puzzled.

MAISIE

What?

ZEKE

(tearful)

When I went ta the protest I told
some-a the boys ta take the Fallen
away from our house. I... I never
thought they'd do it the way they
did-- they been my friends 'fore...
never thought they'd get those
white men ta do it...

Maisie's SHOCKED as she realizes the gravity of Zeke's confession...

ZEKE (CONT'D)

But see, it ain't ya fault, so you
can stop worryin' 'bout that.

She SHOVES Zeke away from her.

MAISIE
Why would ya do that!?

ZEKE
I was tryna protect us! You're
gonna understand it when ya older--

MAISIE
I'm plenty old!

Maisie STALKS back toward Skinny. Zeke dons an earnest tone:

ZEKE
C'mon Maisie, we goin' ta Mobile
now, we'll be with our Daddy--

MAISIE
I don't wanna see Daddy, I hate
Daddy!

ZEKE
Well, you'll be with me.

MAISIE
I don't wanna be with you, ya
killed our Mama!

It's as if this punched Zeke in the gut.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
'N ya killed our sister! I don't
wanna see ya! Ever again!

He bubbles with tears before he turns and walks down the road.

ZEKE
(warning)
I'm leavin' without ya then--

MAISIE
Fine!

Maisie smears tears away from her cheeks, rooted to her spot. When she doesn't follow, Zeke turns back to her.

ZEKE
C'mon!

Maisie bellows with all of her might:

MAISIE
LEAVE!

Zeke broken.

Fallen Mama and Fallen Maisie start to head after Zeke, but Dorothy holds them back gently by their shoulders.

DOROTHY
Get in the truck, Maisie.

Dorothy looks down at Maisie, who's quivering with tears.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
It's okay, now. We gonna fix it
all.

Maisie nods at her.

Defeated, Zeke slowly turns and heads down the path.

EXT. TRUCK BED - LATER

Inside the truck cab, Dorothy and Fallen Mama Delilah sit side-by-side.

In the back of the truck, amongst the cargo, both Maisies and Skinny curl up against the sideboards.

Skinny and Fallen Maisie chatter nonstop in their language:

SKINNY
*Wehka badah faz, wehka kepah sin
faz--*

FALLEN MAISIE
*Sin wehka badah, wehka kepah faz,
wehka tadaah pa weni vivi prozleh.*

SKINNY
*Vivi weh prozleh... sepa wehka eesa
faz...*

FALLEN MAISIE
Weh uzad, weh uzad...

Maisie can't tear her eyes away from her duplicate self. She tilts her head as she inspects all of Fallen Maisie's features, her movements.

Maisie's pulled out of her trance when the truck slows, and Dorothy cranes her neck out of the window:

DOROTHY
(shouting back at them)
We goin' off road, hold tight!

EXT. OFF ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The truck bounces along a strip of land that can barely be described as a road.

Maisie, Skinny, and Fallen Maisie jostle in their seats, peering out at passing thick forests and marshes.

The truck slows... and stops.

It idles loudly at a gaping opening in the trees. Dorothy CREAKS open her door and hops out.

DOROTHY (O.S.)
(under breath)
Lord...

Maisie wrinkles her nose, glancing at Skinny and Fallen Maisie who cover their faces from a nasty smell.

MAISIE
What's that smell?

Maisie leans over the sideboard of the truck bed toward Dorothy--

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Dorothy, what's that--?

Maisie stops short when she spots Dorothy: crumpled by a DEAD BODY-- human (non-Fallen) and Black.

BLOOD pools around the gunshot wound in his head. FLIES buzzing in the heat around its bloated belly.

And Dorothy is weeping.

Maisie GASPS and returns to the other side of the truck to see what lies on that side--

ANOTHER DEAD BODY.

This one a White human (non-Fallen)-- lain out and shot, rotting in the sun.

Maisie can't tear her eyes away from its shattered skull.

Dorothy collects herself and rises from the bloodied grass.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
What happened?

DOROTHY
Looks like this sanctuary's been
found out...

Maisie concerned...

MAISIE
What's that mean?

Dorothy doesn't answer as she treads back to the truck.

Dorothy SLAMS her car door as she resumes her position in the driver's seat.

The truck bumps as it moves forward into the opening in the forest. All three kids in the truck bed unable to remove their eyes from the pair of dead bodies that once guarded it.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The truck carefully traverses this unbeatened path.

Low-hanging trees tickle the top of the cab and stretch their branches toward Maisie, Fallen Maisie, and Skinny.

The kids seal their hands over their noses from the putrid smell overtaking them.

None of them utter a word.

All struggle to keep their balance as the truck climbs what seem like speed bumps.

Maisie peeks over the truck to see that the road ahead is lined intermittently with DEAD PEOPLE.

Some in human clothes, some in Fallen clothes, some Black, some White, one in KKK garb, his mask has slipped off his head to reveal a WHITE TEENAGER beneath.

Tears collect in Maisie's eyes.

EXT. UNDERGROUND RAILROAD SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

Their truck BURSTS into a large clearing where lines and lines of tents make up a REFUGEE CAMP.

But more of the same: DEAD BODIES and an eerie QUIET.

Dorothy cuts the engine and clamors out, now frantic:

DOROTHY
LILY!

Maisie, Skinny, and Fallen Maisie stand on tip-toes in the truck bed to take in the full scene before them.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
LILY!

Dorothy's like a caged animal, stalking the trampled grass before her.

Maisie WHIPS her head to catch some motion--

A few FALLEN PEOPLE emerge cautiously from one tent.

And then from another tent--

Two more FALLEN PEOPLE appear.

The camp stirs with a few SURVIVORS.

But Dorothy pays them no mind, her entire being in a full panic-mode.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
LILY!

A VOICE (O.S.)
Mama!

Dorothy's face dawns with hope.

DOROTHY
Lily? Come here baby!

A weary young woman, LILY (20s, black), round-faced with innocence, crawls out from a tent and stumbles up to Dorothy.

Dorothy encases her in an embrace, weeping with relief.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Oh, thank God!

Lily breaks down SOBBING.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
What happened?

Lily severs the hug, attempting poorly to collect herself.

LILY

Big group-a men came 'n attacked
 last night-- not just white men,
 black ones too. Went 'round
 shootin' 'n cuttin' people-- Fallen
 people and the folks workin' the
 camp. Some-a us tried ta fight back
 but it-- it was a surprise.

Dorothy STUNNED by this news. Lily dissolves with every word.

LILY (CONT'D)

We tried ta clear up the dead
 bodies this mornin' 'fore it
 started reekin' but then lotta the
 sanctuary leaders startin' givin'
 up 'n headin' home or over ta the
 Mobile sanctuary, since this one's
 been compromised. Think I'm the
 only one-a us left here. 'N Mama,
 they killed Isaiah--

Lily sucks in a shaky breath.

DOROTHY

It's okay, child, it's okay--

But Lily is beside herself.

LILY

All the Fallen's comin' up ta me
 with they hurt family, like I gotta
 way ta fix 'em! One-a 'em's got a
 lil baby with its face all cut up!
 'N I can't do nothin', Mama-- think
 if those men come back-- we best be
 gone when they do-- I was just
 waitin' here for ya, prayin' ya
 didn't meet 'em 'fore ya got here--

Dorothy smothers Lily in another hug to comfort her. But Lily continues her breakdown:

LILY (CONT'D)

We gotta get home, Mama, I can't do
 this no more, I'm done with this!

DOROTHY

I know, honey, I know. But listen
 ta me, shhh-- listen--

Lily quiets at Dorothy's calming tones.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

I got some big news for ya, 's
gonna change everythin'. See them
girls over there?

Dorothy points over at Maisie, beckoning the three kids and Fallen Mama over to where Dorothy and Lily converse.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

One-a them's human, one-a them's
Fallen... they proof, ya
understand?

Lily casts a fleeting glance over the two Maisies, but she's unimpressed, still deflated.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Lily? These Fallen ain't some other
world bein's, they *humans*. Okay?
They *us*. Like they been sayin'. If
Congress votes ta kill 'em all
tomorrow, they'll be killin' off
our brothers and sisters and-- and--
selves!

Lily continues to appear unenthused.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

This gonna change everythin', this
gonna sway the vote. Now we must
get 'em over ta the Mobile
sanctuary ta see Dr.--

LILY

Mama, ya don't get it.

This halts Dorothy...

LILY (CONT'D)

People don't care *what* Fallen are.
People just came in here and shot
up bunch-a folks they knew for fact
was people. Hell, people been
stringin' us up 'n puttin' us in
chains when they knew full well we
was *humans* too. People only care
'bout *themselves*, and it's easier
for many-a us if there just ain't
no Fallen.

Dorothy is shocked by Lily's response.

DOROTHY
No... no, folks'll care, you'll
see...

LILY
No they ain't gonna care, Mama--

DOROTHY	LILY (CONT'D)
They sure will, now c'mon we gotta get 'em ta the Mobile sanctuary-- Lily--	People're evil, why's it so hard for ya ta believe that? Just 'cause it's a tough pill ta swallow?

Dorothy SIGHS, doubt crossing her features.

LILY (CONT'D)
I'm goin' home. Time ta worry 'bout
just us, 'n Seymore 'n Jeb.

Lily moves toward the truck. Maisie watches on nervously...

LILY (CONT'D)
Ya comin' with me, or what?

DOROTHY
We gotta get 'em ta the sanctuary--

Lily wrenches the driver's door open and climbs in as Dorothy approaches her at full speed.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
(stern)
Hey! Lillian Regina Gunn--

Dorothy holds the driver's door open.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Look, okay, why don't ya go take
care-a ya brothers, I'll meet up
with ya after I get these two ta
the sanctuary?

LILY
Mama, why ya gonna put yaself at
risk when it ain't gonna change
nothin'? Gonna end up gettin'
yaself killed, 'n for what? So me
'n the boys ain't got nobody?

DOROTHY
This's bigger than our family, this
for many families.

Lily's eyes brim with tears. Dorothy softens her tone.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

I love ya, more than Noah loved the
damned ark. Ya know that. But I
also got a mind like a mule, 'n
it's set on bein' Superman.

Lily is miserable, tight-lipped, as she finishes SHUTTING the truck door. She turns the ignition.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

I'll come home once this vote's
over, okay?

Dorothy's lip trembles. She watches Lily back the truck out.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

(calling)

Mama loves ya!

Lily waves half-heartedly back at her Mama.

Maisie looks to Dorothy expectantly as the truck vanishes in the thicket of trees.

And for a moment, as Dorothy slumps her shoulders and gives in to a single tear, it looks as though Dorothy has given up.

But then Dorothy SNIFFS, fights to contain her emotions when she turns to Maisie.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Alright, we gotta get ta the next
sanctuary, lickety-split.

Maisie studies Dorothy's passionate face with anxiety.

MAISIE

They ain't gonna care 'bout Fallen
bein' us?

Dorothy crouches down to Maisie, boring her eyes into Maisie's.

DOROTHY

There's a very important man there,
gonna give a big speech 'fore the
vote tomorrow. Whole world needs ta
see you two so they know what's at
stake. Then we'll see if they care.

MAISIE

How we gonna get there?

Dorothy's face grows dark.

DOROTHY
We gotta get through Mobile
tonight.

INT. CAMP TENT - DUSK

Dorothy PULLS A SHOE off of a corpse's stiff foot.

With wrinkled nose, she hands it to Fallen Mama.

Fallen Mama and Fallen Maisie finish donning human clothes.
Now it is difficult to tell the two Maisie's apart.

Maisie's eyes are glued to her double.

Dorothy surveys her handiwork, nodding approvingly.

DOROTHY
There we are. Now ya human.

EXT. MOBILE CITY LIMITS - DUSK

Maisie trails behind Dorothy, Skinny, Fallen Mama, and Fallen Maisie. They march along an under-developed road that hugs the coastline.

The sun is beginning to set in the distance.

Their caravan passes a large sign one-by-one, slowing to a stop beside it: A MOBILE CITY LIMITS SIGN.

Maisie squints out at the forboding city as another FALLEN CAPSULE plummets down in the distance over the city and SMASHES to the ground with a distant BOOM.

Dorothy isn't encouraged by this. She pulls Maisie in close--

DOROTHY
How much ya know ya way 'round
Mobile?

Maisie shrugs.

MAISIE
Only ever been with Mama ta see
Daddy off ta Vietnam.

Dorothy SIGHS impatiently, glancing out over the city.

DOROTHY
 Alright then, listen close.
 Sanctuary's on the other side,
 fastest way's straight through the
 middle.

She illustrates by tracing lines over the city beyond.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
 We gonna take this road up through
 'til it comes ta a T, then we gonna
 keep goin' straight inta the
 alleyway-- ya listenin'?

MAISIE
 I can't 'member all this!

DOROTHY
 Ya have to, Maisie, pay attention.
 Ya smart, aren't ya?

Maisie gingerly nods...

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
 That's right. Now ya gotta learn
 this case we get separated. No
 matter what, you 'n the other
 Maisie gotta get ta this sanctuary,
 even if it means ya gotta leave the
 rest-a us behind. Ya understand
 that, don't ya?

Maisie nods once more.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
 Good. Now like I said, we take this
 road, straight through the T into
 the alley, through the main square,
 'n straight back until the city
 disappears, 'n it's just country.
 Ya gonna see an old burnt church,
 ya go back behind it on the trail,
 that's how ya gonna find the
 sanctuary.

Maisie musses her face in concentration, but doesn't look
 secure in her knowledge. Dorothy SIGHS.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
 Listen, I'll repeat it 'til ya face
 turn blue. Just 'member this: if ya
 get there without me, ask for Dr.
 King. Can ya 'member that? Say it
 back ta me now.

MAISIE
(surely)
Dr. King.

Dorothy smiles faintly.

DOROTHY
That's it. Now c'mon.

Dorothy glances over her shoulder at Maisie, Skinny, Fallen Mama, Fallen Maisie, gesturing for them all to hold hands.

Maisie links hands with Skinny and Fallen Maisie--

They all look to each other in anticipation before--

EXT. MOBILE ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Maisie JOGS to keep up in the dark, following Skinny as closely as she can.

Skinny PANTS shallowly, glances behind his shoulder intermittently to check on Maisie.

Fallen Maisie and Fallen Mama rush ahead, Dorothy leading the way down a thin, bleak city alleyway.

The group hustles as quietly as they can through the darkened alley before stopping short and pressing against the brick wall where the alley intersects the main street.

In the distance, they can hear the ROAR of a large crowd, the CRACKLE of a fire burning.

But the alley is still far enough away that they can also hear their collective belabored BREATHING.

The tension in everyone's mannerisms, the bullet pockmarks in the walls, the lack of street lamps and distant GUNFIRE all give an atmosphere of a WAR ZONE.

SHARP footfalls catch their attention, coming from behind them in the dark.

The all look back, gathering together into a clump in fear--

And from the darkness: A RUNNING SOLDIER in an American Army Uniform and toting a GUN sprints by.

He doesn't even look at them as he passes, doesn't even slow as he continues down the alley.

Maisie's PANTING, frightened. She peers down to see-- Skinny is holding her hand.

Maisie steadies her breathing-- in and out, in and out.

Everyone in their crew holding hands again as Dorothy hisses back at them from the front:

DOROTHY
Stay close!

And they go darting into the--

EXT. MOBILE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Their hands linking them together, the group DASHES down the sidewalks, passing smashed storefront windows, bullet-ridden walls, and boarded up doorways.

A FALLEN CAPSULE is encased in the asphalt where it crash-landed in the middle of a street.

Maisie and Skinny can't tear their eyes away from the pool of BLOOD that remains underneath the capsule's open doorway.

The sounds of RIOTS increase in volume, they are rushing RIGHT TOWARD THEM-- toward another intersection--

EXT. MOBILE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Dorothy skids them to a stop at the threshold of the major street with a GASP.

DOROTHY
(mutter)
Good Lord...

Here:

- RIOTERS breaking things in the street
- PEOPLE with protests signs CHANTING at the top of their lungs -- some in favor of Fallen, some against, some simply questioning God in all of this
- SOLDIERS with RIOT GEAR holding people at bay
- A FAMILY clutching their belongings in bags, snaking between the crowd to escape town
- FIRES burning in the streets

- LOOTERS emerging from broken storefronts with food in their arms

PANDEMONIUM.

Maisie's eyes shine with fear as she takes everything in before her.

Something catches her eye--

Someone is hanging an EFFIGY high above the crowd, its stuffed body waving from a rope.

Maisie is transfixed by it-- can't rip her pupils away-- the body's swaying resembling what she saw last of her Mama--

Tears prick her eyes.

A MEGAPHONE blares out orders from somewhere along the perimeter:

MEGAPHONE (O.S.)
IT IS PAST CURFEW, CITIZENS IN THE
STREET WILL BE ARRESTED! RETURN TO
YOUR HOMES! CITIZENS IN THE STREET
WILL BE ARRESTED!

Dorothy takes in the horrific scene before her, calculating... She sucks in the deepest breath possible before giving orders:

DOROTHY
Well we come too far to head back now! Let's go!

And the whole lot of them-- Dorothy, Maisie, Skinny, Fallen Maisie, Fallen Mama -- launch into the mayhem at full speed.

Skinny struggles to keep up, but Maisie CLAMPS her hand onto his. They weave between protesters, get jostled and shoved at every turn while trying to keep hands locked.

GUNSHOTS ring out nearby, coupled with a blood-curdling SHRIEK. Skinny, Maisie, and Fallen Maisie COWER from the shots, all brimming with tears.

Maisie's vision blurs from the hot tears, and she stumbles over her feet.

Maisie TRIPS and FALLS to the ground, scraping her knee.

MAISIE
AHH!

Fallen Mama kneels by Maisie's side, inspecting her wound. She circles a protective arm around Maisie.

Dorothy HALTS and looks back at Maisie and Fallen Mama--

DOROTHY
GET UP! Maisie, stand up!

BUT--

Another few gunshots SNAP into the crowd-- BAM! BAM! BAM! -- and blood SPIKES from Dorothy's chest as she is hit from behind by a bullet.

Her face slacks in shock. Her blood speckles the rest of their faces.

And she THUDS to the pavement.

Maisie SCREAMS!

She drags herself up to Dorothy lain out on the street, but it's no use.

Dorothy is completely MOTIONLESS.

Maisie SOBS, looking around at all of the CHAOS from her seat on the ground.

A SOLDIER nearby RINGS out a few more shots, hollering:

SOLDIER #1
(Southern accent)
GET THE FUCK BACK INSIDE!

A stampede of feet all around Maisie.

And tearful Skinny, Fallen Maisie, Fallen Mama all look expectantly to Maisie for what to do next...

Maisie stares back at their anticipative faces... realizing they are counting on her...

She surveys her surroundings dizzyingly...

Setting her jaw firmly.

And Maisie PULLS herself up. She LOCKS hands with Skinny and Fallen Maisie again.

MAISIE
COME ON!

Maisie pushes them all forward.

EXT. MOBILE STREET - CONTINUOUS

As they reach the other side of the block, they face:

A LINE OF SOLDIERS IN RIOT GEAR.

They're walling off the side streets, along the entire length of the main thoroughfare.

Maisie and the group trapped on this hellish street.

Maisie YELLS in despair upon realizing this. She spins around, clocks the utter mayhem behind them, and now they're trapped like a school of fish.

Maisie not sure where to go...

We move up, up, up, high over the crowd--

From above: they are lost in a giant writhing mass of people.

The SOLDIERS use a loudspeaker to BARK at the crowd:

SOLDIER #2 (O.S.)
FINAL WARNING! Past curfew!
Citizens will be arrested!

And then, from behind the line of soldiers, they UNLEASH powerful jets of water from fire hoses into the spiraling crowd--

PUSH back down to--

EXT. MOBILE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Smack dab in the middle of the crowd: Maisie, Fallen Maisie, Skinny are huddled behind Fallen Mama Delilah, jets of water TACKLING people around them.

The SPRAY from the hoses soaks them, obscures their vision.

Maisie motions for everyone to follow her as she forges a path parallel to the line of soldiers.

A FLASH and BANG-- a smoke grenade causes the kids to SCREAM!

The air blooms with thick SMOKE.

Maisie, Fallen Maisie, Skinny CLING to each other, stick close to Fallen Mama.

Fallen Mama struggles to pull them through the crowd.

Then, a rising THUNDER of STOMPING--

A chorus of SCREAMS! Rising RABBLE.

And through the fog, the riot soldiers emerge, charging into the crowd with shields and batons.

Maisie watches with horror as a SOLDIER begins viciously BEATING a young BLACK MAN (20s) on the ground, the fog swirling about them.

Maisie turns her head and catches another SOLDIER holding a crying WHITE COUPLE with suitcases at gunpoint.

When Maisie turns her attention back forward, she hears the CRACK of gunshots exploding nearby. And--

SKINNY

AHHH!

Two SOLDIERS corner Skinny, Fallen Maisie, Fallen Mama--

SOLDIER #3

SPEAK!!!

Their guns raised, AIMED at Skinny, Fallen Mama.

SOLDIER #4

SAY SOMETHIN'!

Soldier #4 JABS his gun at Fallen Mama, who YELPS!

MAISIE

Stop!

Maisie rushes up to the SOLDIERS, HANGING on one's GUN.

FALLEN MAMA

(to Maisie)

Dak! Fasi Vahs!

SOLDIER #3

They Fallen! Round 'em up!

MAISIE

NO!

The Soldiers SHOVE Skinny, Fallen Maisie, Fallen Mama toward an idling truck, one that would normally hold livestock in the bed.

More soldiers round up Fallen people in the back of the truck, but the Fallen SQUIRM and WRESTLE in an attempt to escape the truck bed.

A SOLDIER by the gate of the truck FIRES his gun into it-- a few FALLEN collapsing dead in the center.

The remaining Fallen scared, backing into the truck.

Maisie attempts to follow after Skinny, Fallen Maisie, Fallen Mama, but the Soldier shepherding them BATS her back to the ground.

Maisie watches helplessly as they get herded into the truck, her mouth AGAPE as she cries, all alone.

The world around her MUTING as she SCREECHES:

MAISIE (CONT'D)
MAMA!

Watching Fallen Mama being TAKEN AWAY from her--

MAISIE (CONT'D)
(sobbing)
Mama...

Maisie curling up in defeat...

VOICE (O.S.)
Maisie!

Maisie raises her head at hearing her name. Circles her gaze around to seek out--

ZEKE.

Kneeling by her side. Holding a protest sign by his side, blood spattered across his face from a nasty beating.

MAISIE
ZEKE!

Maisie THROWS herself at Zeke, CLINGS onto him, SOBBING. Zeke breaks down too-- holds her tightly to his broad chest.

Maisie pulls herself away hastily, JABBING a finger at the truck where Skinny, Fallen Mama, Fallen Maisie have been detained.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Help!

Zeke calculates the situation, Maisie TUGGING on his shoulder.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Zeke! Please, help 'em! Save 'em!

Zeke's eyes filling with tears, but the rest of his expression remaining stoic.

Zeke grits his teeth. Abandons his protest sign on the ground beside Maisie as he rises up.

Zeke sucks in a MAJOR breath before he CHARGES at the soldier guarding the back of the truck.

Zeke crouches low before TACKLING the soldier to the ground.

The soldier collapses to the asphalt, but twists immediately to wrestle with Zeke. They LOCK into a battle, both gripping the soldier's gun wedged between their two bodies.

A handful of the Fallen in the truck, including Skinny, Fallen Maisie, Fallen Mama, take advantage-- JUMP out of the back and into the crowd.

Maisie watching Zeke's fight with the soldier in terror.

Finally, Zeke gains control of the gun from the soldier, and--

Zeke SHOOTS the soldier in the chest.

The soldier's head slacks, greets the pavement.

Zeke's shaking... leans back... stunned by what he has just done.

He glances back at Maisie, huddled with Skinny, Fallen Mama, Fallen Maisie.

His lips slowly parting before he BELLOWS:

ZEKE
GO!

CRACK! A bullet pierces Zeke's head--

He crumples to the ground.

Maisie SHRIEKS!

Maisie, Fallen Mama, Fallen Maisie, all break down at the sight of Zeke's corpse.

But Skinny stands.

He reaches down, links hands with the Maisies and yanks them up from the ground.

Fallen Mama follows suit, trembling with weeping.

And SKINNY forges them all forward.

Maisie catches a last glimpse of Zeke before turning to follow Skinny.

BANG! BANG!

Maisie, Skinny, Fallen Mama, Fallen Maisie, all crouch to the ground at another round of gunshots.

And they all scuttle through the swarm of people, crawling amongst running legs and dropped bodies.

EXT. MOBILE STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Maisie JOGS down the city streets toward where the line of soldiers had burst forth.

Everyone PANTS to keep up, all linking hands to stick together in the masses.

And as they sprint, Maisie glares back at the mass of people, the intermittent individuals who break free, and the cloud of smoke looming about it all.

Tears stream down her face, but the CHAOS seems to be behind them.

And when Maisie returns her gaze ahead of them, she can see the streets have cleared up ahead.

Skinny, right in front of her, turns and catches her sorrowful expression.

He GRIPS her hand tighter. NODS at her.

Before turning his head back to the path ahead.

EXT. MOBILE CITY LIMITS - NIGHT

The three kids TRUDGE after Fallen Mama Delilah as they exit the city.

The kids SNIVELING with abandon, their tears still leaking onto their cheeks.

Maisie pauses to look back at the city. Behind them, the city is dark, dotted with a few fires.

Fallen Maisie tugs on her shoulder.

The two Maisies face each other.

Fallen Maisie offers the hunk of hair wrapped in blue yarn.
Maisie inspects it, recognition dawning.

MAISIE
This ya Zeke's hair?

She plucks it from Fallen Maisie's palm. Strokes it with her finger affectionately.

Then offers it back to Fallen Maisie.

But Fallen Maisie shakes her head no, insists that Maisie keep it.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
For me? Ya sure?

Maisie points to herself to demonstrate. Fallen Maisie nods definitively.

Maisie is touched. She hugs the hair to her chest.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Fallen Maisie replies with a soft smile.

Fallen Mama wraps her arms around the Maisies, pulling Skinny into the huddle as well.

Fallen Mama comforts all of the children in her chest.

She HUMS the same tune Mama Delilah had HUMMED to Maisie earlier when she was stitching in the living room.

Maisie closes her eyes, absorbing the song fully.

And when she opens her eyes again, she turns her face to the left, to look out at the glittering, moonlit ocean.

A breeze picks up Maisie's buoyant hair.

EXT. BURNT DOWN CHURCH - NIGHT

Maisie leads the way down the pitch-black gravel path.

She pauses at the ominous silhouette of the skeleton of a burnt down church.

MAISIE
(whispered)
Here!

She waves Fallen Maisie, Skinny, and Fallen Mama along to skirt behind the demolished church.

EXT. WOODED PATH - NIGHT

The crew stumbles blindly down a dark wooded pathway, roots and shrubs threatening to trip them at every step.

Skinny and Fallen Maisie support each other through the obstacle course of a trail.

EXT. FALLEN SANCTUARY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The sound of two metal GUNS clanking as they are raised--

VOICE (O.S.)
Who's there?

Maisie, Fallen Maisie, Fallen Mama, and Skinny approach a large gate, guarded by two BLACK MEN holding rifles.

Upon seeing the kids, they lower their guns.

They smile reassuringly at them.

BLACK MAN #1
Alright, now, ya come ta the right
place. Any y'all speak English?

Maisie raises her hand as she steps forward.

MAISIE
Sir, I gotta speak ta Dr. King.

The guard squats to Maisie's level with a bemused grin.

BLACK MAN #1
And why ya gotta talk ta Dr. King?

MAISIE
'Cause I'm human.

Maisie points to Fallen Maisie.

MAISIE (CONT'D)
'N she's Fallen.

The guard doesn't understand at first, but soon recognition ignites on his features.

Then AWE.

He reaches a shaking hand to the walkie talkie on his shoulder.

BZZT--

EXT. FALLEN SANCTUARY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The kids and Fallen Mama trek down a makeshift road carved in the foliage, similar to the last Fallen Sanctuary they had visited, escorted by the two guards.

The guards can't fight their fascination, their eyes flitting between the two Maisies.

When they reach the threshold of the camp, they come upon rows and rows of tents stretched out in long lines.

Maisie scans the area:

People with Fallen clothing and people with human clothing mill about. Campfires bring people together, happy chatter babbles, even some singing accents the festivities.

The warm atmosphere washes over the crew, encouraging slight smiles from their lips.

INT. SANCTUARY ENCAMPMENT - LATER

The two guards lead the kids and Fallen Mama into a dingy barracks where they are met by a beleaguered TEAM: both black and white folks in respectable clothes.

And in the middle of them all: A BLACK REVEREND.

A natural charisma, a neatly trimmed mustache, presently sporting a kind smile.

REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR (36, Black).

GUARD #1
(hushed to Maisie)
Dr. King been told 'bout ya, go on.

Maisie is in AWE of Dr. King, remembering him from the news on their old TV set.

Dr. King approaches Maisie, calmly observing her and Fallen Maisie lined up before him.

Finally, Dr. King speaks:

DR. KING

I heard you came a long way to get here. I heard about your losses and your sacrifices, and I sure am sorry to hear them.

Maisie looks to Fallen Maisie, then back to Dr. King. Her tone like a challenge:

MAISIE

We wanna help.

Maisie retains fierce eye contact with Dr. King.

Dr. King smiles, bemused.

DR. KING

Miss, you say it like you're picking a fight.

Maisie opens her mouth... wrestling with her trembling lip as she speaks through threatening tears.

MAISIE

Dr. King, they's been people tellin' us that we gonna change everythin', like we some sort of magic trick.

(gestures to herself and Fallen Maisie)

Then they's other people tellin' us we ain't gonna make a lick-a difference. Sayin' no matter what we do, ain't nobody gonna care. They just gonna hate 'em anyway. 'N losin' my family and leavin' my home's all been for nothin'. And if I'm honest, I'm 'fraid those folks might be right.

Dr. King nods subtly as he reviews Maisie's concerns.

He bends to meet Maisie at eye-level, this action not patronizing, but equalizing.

DR. KING

I am sorry you've had to learn this lesson so young, and so harshly. That there has always been, and will always be, people who give in to fear and hatred. But similarly, there has always been, and will always be, people who resist it.

Maisie absorbs his words.

DR. KING (CONT'D)
In my eyes, it is clear to which
class of people you belong.

Maisie's eyes search his face. She nods.

EXT. MOBILE RALLY - DAY

As far as the eye can see, masses upon masses of PEOPLE gather in the streets to listen to Dr. King speak at the pro-Fallen rally.

Tears in people's eyes, absolutely RAPT attention.

Dr. King's voice BOOMS as it is doubled from a microphone and speakers.

DR. KING
If I were standing at the beginning of time, with the possibility of general and panoramic view of the whole human history up to now, and the Almighty said to me, "Martin Luther King, which age would you like to live in?" - Strangely enough, I would turn to the Almighty, and say, "If you allow me to live just a few years in the second half of the twentieth century, I will be happy." Now that's a strange statement to make, because the world is all messed up. The nation is sick. Trouble is in the land. Confusion all around. That's a strange statement. But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough, can you see the stars. And I see God working in this period of the twentieth century in a way that men, in some strange way, are responding -- something is happening in our world. The masses of people are rising up.

And next to Dr. King at the podium:

Maisie, in human clothes, Fallen Maisie, in clean Fallen clothes, side-by-side.

Both sporting a look of resolute determination.

HOLDING HANDS.

CROWD MEMBERS point up to them, cover their mouths in disbelief.

People hoisting each other up on their shoulders to get a better look at the two Maisies.

DR. KING (CONT'D)

Some of us who have already begun to break the silence of the night have found that the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak. We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak. We are called to speak for the weak, for the voiceless, for the victims of our nation, for those it calls "enemy," for no document from human hands can make these humans any less our brothers.

Maisie surveys the massive crowd with awe. And as they begin to APPLAUD passionately, she hazards a slight SMILE.

And now the image fades to BLACK AND WHITE as--

EXT. MOBILE RALLY - TELEVISION

The image of the two Maisie's transposed onto a television screen-- their connection broadcast to the world.

DR. KING (V.O.)

I refuse to accept the idea that man is mere flotsom and jetsom in the river of life unable to influence the unfolding events which surround him.

Then the news footage swaps to show images of newscasters speculating on the outcome, of Congress casting their votes.

Pull out to reveal--

INT. SANCTUARY ENCAMPMENT - DAY

FALLEN and HUMANS together intently watch this footage on a TV in the encampment.

Maisie, Skinny, Fallen Maisie, and Fallen Mama in a cluster on the sidelines, peering between people to catch a glimpse of the TV news.

DR. KING (V.O.)

I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality. Let us develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.

People clasp hands.

People glance at each other in anticipation.

One person, head bowed in prayer.

Everyone waiting with baited breath as the Newscaster is ready to announce:

NEWSCASTER VOICE

We now have it confirmed: The Fallen Readjustment Bill has been voted down with 270 opposed and 265 in favor.

CHEERS all around! WHOOPING, jumping up and down!

Tears mingle with the happiness on everyone's faces; the sacrifices inescapable in this moment of victory.

Maisie GRINNING widely at this news before being consumed by a group hug.

EXT. FALLEN SANCTUARY - DAWN

Maisie curls up against Fallen Mama, both sleeping on a mat. That same sleepy blue hue light as the beginning.

DR. KING (V.O.)

Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop.

Skinny SHAKES Maisie awake. He and Fallen Maisie coax Maisie to follow them--

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

Skinny scoops up one of the many jellyfish washed up on the shore. He INSTRUCTS Fallen Maisie what to do in their language.

DR. KING (V.O.)

Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know, that we, as a people will get there.

Maisie watches with a faint smile as Skinny and Fallen Maisie DASH into the ocean with a jellyfish each.

Maisie stoops down and plucks her own jellyfish up. Follows after them.

EXT. OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

The three kids swim out as far as they can until just their tip toes reach the sand below.

DR. KING (V.O.)

I still believe that we shall overcome.

Fallen Maisie copies Skinny as he explains to her in their language: they rear their arms back and THROW their jellyfish as far as they can.

Maisie chuckles closely after.

DR. KING (V.O.)

For when people get caught up with that which is right and they are willing to sacrifice for it, there is no stopping point short of victory.

All three watch the jellyfish arc into the ocean, the sun beyond just cresting the earth.

Skinny and both Maisies, bobbing in the water side-by-side,
looking out to the horizon.

And on Maisie's features, a trace of TRIUMPH.

CUT TO BLACK.