

WILD

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OVER BLACK:

Rock MUSIC plays.

INT. LIZ BEDROOM - SUNSET

There's stuffed animals on the bed, some torn.

Rock posters on the walls. Joan Jett. The Yeah Yeah Yeahs. The Kills - all bands with fierce, female vocalists.

The vanity is a cracked mirror, framed by magazine cut-outs of big city destinations, like the Statue of Liberty or the Golden Gate Bridge. Sitting here is LIZ THORN (25).

Wearing a shirt that says, *Don't Fake The Funk*, Liz is uncompromising. A storm. A force of nature. At her best, a bouquet of flowers wrapped around a hand grenade.

She pulls rings from her fingers, and then ties her hair back, revealing scar tissue like a necklace around her neck.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Her feet, in mismatched socks, marching down the hall.

Her mouth as she lights a cigarette.

She steps into the living room - mid-Century modern, with book shelves. The MUSIC emanates from an old cassette deck.

ANGLE ON:

The kitchen, where Liz's sister JEAN (28, glasses) is finishing a bowl of Captain Crunch over the sink. If Liz is the storm then Jean is the lightning rod that grounds her.

Liz peels her mismatched socks off, tosses them in a hamper.

Jean SLURPS down her milk, then glances at Liz. It's time.

EXT. THORN HOUSE - YARD - DUSK

They step onto the porch that overlooks the vast acreage of the Thorn property - mostly corn field stretching away into the dusk. A driveway flanks it, down to the road.

There's a flatbed truck in the overgrown yard.

An old combine harvester. A grain silo. A barn.

And the storm cellar. Liz heads that way.

She pulls an iron bolt from across the wood-plank doors. Her and Jean grab them, pulling them back on CREAKING hinges.

Liz takes a final drag off her cigarette, and flicks it away, where it lands among countless cigarette butts.

The cherry still smoldering, as the two women descend into the storm cellar in the background.

INT. STORM CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

It's a plain, concrete room, illuminated only by the light shining in through the cellar entrance.

There's a steel plate bolted to the far wall. A thick steel ring welded to that plating. And a rusted chain looped through the ring. At the end of the chain is an iron collar.

Liz kneels in the center of the room, and Jean slips the collar around her neck, CLICKS it into place. Ritualistic.

Finally, Jean pulls a necklace out, a key dangling from it, and she uses this to secure the padlock on the collar.

Then she heads back up the stairs. Liz puts her hand out, flat on the ground before her:

Dozens of claw marks are scratched into the concrete. Her fingers are tiny, frail in the long, ragged grooves.

Then darkness falls over her as the cellar doors SLAM shut.

INT. THORN HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Jean works three heavy chain bolts across the front door.

Then she moves to the side table and pours herself a tumbler of mezcal. She opens the drawer, and pulls out a pistol.

She slumps into a rocking chair, the fire smoldering in the hearth nearby. The pistol across her lap. Sipping her drink.

Then she opens a book, begins to read.

Beyond the front window, a full moon rises over the corn.

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INT. THORN HOUSE - NIGHT

THUMP

A *faraway sound*. Jean awakes in the chair. Blinks, looks around. The fire reduced to embers. The book on the floor.

The glass of mezcal on the rug has spilled.

THUMP

From outside. She moves to the front door, pistol in hand, pulling back the bolts, one by one.

EXT. THORN HOUSE - PORCH - CONTINUOUS

She steps onto the porch. The breeze ruffling her hair.

The moon has shifted. It's late night, early morning.

Beyond the corn field she can see a truck along the road, its feeble headlights in the pre-dawn.

Thump

THUMP

CRASH

Jean hurries to the edge of the porch, peers toward the back corner of the house: the storm cellar doors shattered, wood strewn across the yard, a trail of destruction leading to...

...the corn, where a row of stalks sways, like a ripple of water, *as something rushes away toward the road beyond*.

Toward the oncoming truck.

Jean runs down the driveway, toward the road. Arms pumping, chest heaving, the gun in her hand.

She's nearly there when she hears a SCREECH of truck tires.

When she reaches the road, she stops. Panting. She can see the truck parked a hundred yards away, headlights still on.

A man, HANK (50s) steps out, too far to be seen in detail. But Jean can see that he has a rifle, can hear him COCK it.

JEAN

Get back in your truck, mister!

HANK
(shouting back)
I saw something...

She's hurrying toward him now--

JEAN
Please!

--as a human shape bursts into the open, sweeps the man off his feet, and into the corn so fast he never even screams.

Jean brings the pistol up.

Not daring to breathe.

The road empty. A hush of wind over the tops of the corn.

Her fear gets the best of her; she turns, and runs for the house. Her feet CRUNCHING on gravel.

And the corn stalks ripple once more, shifting, adjusting for the sound, a shark closing in on its prey.

As Jean reaches the yard.

Leaps to the porch.

Grabs the door.

A GROWL erupts behind her. Her grip tightens on the gun, steeling herself.

Out-of-focus behind her: a distended human shape, panting.

Then dawn breaks on the horizon, casting a faint gold across the land. That's when Jean turns around, to see:

It's Liz at the edge of the corn field, her arms covered in blood from fingers to elbows. Her mouth a smear of red. The collar fixed around her neck, the broken chain dangling.

And a yellow glow fading from her eyes.

She blinks, and looks down. Clutches the broken chain, realizing what's happened. The look of shame on her face.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A cigarette smolders from the soap dish beside the sink.

As Liz RETCHES into the toilet. Jean stands behind her, holding her hair for her. Always there for her.

Finished, Liz leans against the wall. Jean pulls her glasses off, wipes a lens. She drags off the cigarette, calming her nerves. Then she hands it to Liz, and walks out.

Liz smokes for a beat, alone. Then she grabs the toilet bowl to hoist herself up. She pauses, staring:

In the bloody toilet is a man's severed fingers - a pinky and ring finger, the latter with a wedding band on it.

She reaches into the tainted water, removes the wedding band, and discards the finger. She holds up the ring, and it glints in the light. Then she slips it onto her own finger.

Imagining, perhaps, being in love.

Or having a normal life.

INT. RUBY'S BUICK - EARLY MORNING

An older woman's hands on the steering wheel. There's a silver wedding ring with a tiny diamond, on her finger.

This is RUBY LENOIRE (50s). With a face that's stern, even in repose, she wears a Wal-Mart polo shirt and name tag. A woman who's spent her whole life working by the hour.

Beyond the window the wide, flat expanse of rural Kansas in the dawn, still colorless where the sun has yet to touch.

She slows, turns...

EXT. ACONITE TRAILER PARK - CONTINUOUS

..her headlights sweeping around to a row of trailers.

She cruises ahead until she pulls up to hers: a single-wide mobile home, outfitted with Astro Turf. Potted flowers under a retractable awning. A rain barrel perched at one corner.

The faded MCCAIN*PALIN bumper sticker on her car as she parks. Staring: there's a POLICE CRUISER out front, lights off. Solemn. A uniformed officer is heading toward her.

Ruby considers the implication of this visit.

She lights a Pall Mall, turning the music down as officer TISH (late 20s, African-American) steps up to the window.

She's well-meaning, empirical, and like the Aconite PD more broadly, ineffective: always showing up after the crime.

TISH
(leaning down)
Hiya, Ruby.

RUBY
Tish.

TISH
They got you working nights?

RUBY
What do you want?

Beat.

TISH
It's Hank.

INT. MORGUE - MORNING

Pallid light. Tiled walls. Concrete floors.

Blood seeping toward the drain at the center.

Tish moves ahead, toward the covered corpse on a slab.

Officer HARMON (late 50s) stands nearby: square-jawed, salt of the earth, small-town, he's unaccustomed to such carnage.

Unlike the CORONER (40s) standing opposite, a consoling smile on his face. He wears a white button down, tie tucked in between the buttons, sleeves rolled up, and Latex gloves.

CORONER
Mrs. Lenore?

She nods, not taking her eyes from the covered body.

The Coroner peels the sheet back, revealing the face of Hank, the man from the truck. Staring into the lights above, mouth ajar, head cocked back. His chin speckled with blood.

HARMON
Ruby, hold on--

Ruby shakes off the police officer, and pulls the sheet down to reveal the murder wound itself:

The neck nearly severed. The torn ends of arteries and larynx dangling out. The wet gleam of spinal column.

The flesh looking to have been chewed rather than cut.

And four parallel grooves in his chest. Claw marks.

Off Ruby - breathless shock. Harmon pulls the sheet back up, as one of Hank's hands slides away, dangling.

His ring and pinky fingers are missing.

CORONER

Rigor mortis is just now setting in.
I'd say the victim has been deceased
no more than six hours.

RUBY

For chrissake, a victim of what?

TISH

He had his rifle with him, no shots fired. Case of beer in the truck.
Probably huntin' outta season again.

Ruby has tears in her eyes now, glaring at Harmon.

HARMON

I dunno. A bear?

The Coroner gives a shrug, nodding - *good a guess as any.*

Off Ruby, disgusted. She walks out.

EXT. MORGUE - MOMENTS LATER

Ruby steps outside, wiping her eyes. She retrieves another cigarette, her hands trembling as she tries to light up.

Tish steps out, lights the cigarette for her.

RUBY

Who called it in?

TISH

Jean Thorn. It was up near her place
where Hank was huntin'.

RUBY

And what did Jean say?

TISH

What I told you. Her and her sister
found him, and they called it in.

Ruby considers this.

TISH (cont'd)

I am truly sorry, Ruby. This is a
tragic accident.

Off Ruby. She doesn't look so sure.

EXT. PANDORA'S STRIP CLUB - KANSAS CITY - NIGHT

Supertitle: Three Weeks Later

Another moon, this time waxing three-quarters full. Clouds drift across it, followed by a roll of THUNDER.

CRISPY (O.S.)

The world's a violent place.

Below, a windowless strip club on a seedy street. A sign in manic neon reads *Pandora's*.

A BOUNCER sits on a stool, out front.

Across the street are two men:

NICK CASSIDY (mid 20s) leans against his motorcycle, wearing a leather jacket, and perusing Better Homes & Gardens - the American loner, yearning for a home and family of his own.

CRISPY (20s) paces as he rambles. Twitchy, greasy hair, acne across his face, thick glasses. A live wire in the dark.

CRISPY

Take potassium nitrate. Saltpeter.
Pair that with charcoal and sulfur
and you got gun powder. You got mass
shootings and suicide bombings and
pretty colors on the Fourth of July.
Chemistry in motion.

Nick stares at him.

Then the sign above the door goes black. The bouncer stands, takes his stool inside. The club is closed.

Crispy steps forward but Nick's voice stops him.

NICK

Hold up.

CRISPY

For what?

NICK

For everyone to leave? We want the place as empty as possible, right?

CRISPY

Right.

It's starting to rain. Crispy paces, tugging at his jacket, at something concealed underneath. Something uncomfortable.

CRISPY (cont'd)

What are you gonna do with your half?

NICK

Buy a lawnmower. One of the big ones you can ride, like a tractor.

CRISPY

You need a lawn first.

NICK

I'll get one of those too. Mow it every week. Keep it hedged and watered and fertilized. You can use the trimmings for that, you know? I read about it. I'm gonna make something beautiful.

CRISPY

The things we'll do just to have a normal life, huh? Here...

Crispy hands over a battered semi-auto pistol.

NICK

No. You hold onto it.

CRISPY

I'm already packing.

NICK

I told you, no one gets hurt.

CRISPY

No one will. It'll just be Granger and some bitch all alone in his office. But you gotta look serious.

Nick pulls the action back, sees a round chambered, it unsettles him. He hands it back.

NICK
I'll stick to bagging the money.

CRISPY
You're taking all the fun outta this.

A half dozen DANCERS are exiting the club, wearing street clothes, half of them lighting cigarettes as they go. Behind them the bouncer locks up the doors for the night.

Nick grabs an empty gym bag from under his motorcycle seat.

Crispy pulls on a rubber wolf mask. Nick does too.

Then they're moving. Crossing the street.

Angling off toward the side of the strip club, where an eight-foot fence crowned by razor wire blocks an alley way.

Nick slides his jacket off, tosses it over the razor wire, making a padded area, and lifts himself up and over in one quick motion. Drops to the other side.

Crispy follows him over. Nick looses the jacket from the wire, slides it back on, and they hurry down the alley.

To the back lot, where classic cars in mint condition are parked. There's a rear door into the building.

No handle.

NICK
Thought you propped it open.

CRISPY
Chill.

Crispy slides a bottle opener into the space between the door and the building, where the knob would be.

Where a matchbook is lodged between the bolt and the jam.

When Crispy pries the door back the matchbook falls.

Crispy pulls the door, slips inside. Nick follows him.

INT. PANDORA'S STRIP CLUB - BACK HALLWAY - NIGHT

It's a hallway, lined with boxes of booze and fry oil.

Crispy takes point, the pistol in hand as he closes in on a doorway, light streaming out. He rounds the corner, into--

INT. GRANGER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

--a windowless back office. *Nick* freezes.

It's a fucking party in here. Draculas and Frankensteins, Red Riding Hoods and skimpy witches - smoking and drinking and snorting rails of coke off the glass coffee table.

Crispy grabs *Nick*, pulling him into this.

CRISPY

This is a robbery! Everyone put your hands where we can see 'em!

A HUSH over the room. Bewildered looks. *Who the hell's this?*

POCAHONTAS (21) is GIGGLING as she drags off a joint, sitting on the knee of a man wearing a priest's uniform:

This is GAVIN GRANGER (late 30s), the owner. Hair disheveled from a night of partying, he wears a laconic smile that belies a thirst for blood. He glances at his right-hand man:

BILL HASHKE (20s, Navajo), the only guy here not wearing a costume. He sits on a stool, newspaper in hand, a hired killer in repose - staring. Knowing something is wrong here.

CRISPY (cont'd)

I said hands together, goddammit! All of you, start prayin'!

Crispy FIRES into the air, plaster raining down.

Everyone flinches, including *Nick*.

Pocahontas scrambles under the desk as the party-goers put their hands together. Including Granger, who is eerily calm.

Only Hashke remains unmoved.

Crispy points the gun at him.

Granger sighs, his buzz fading.

GRANGER

Billy.

Hashke does as he's told, bringing his hands together.

CRISPY
Now open the fuckin' safe.

There's a three foot tall safe behind Granger, nestled between book shelves.

GRANGER
Fuck you.

CRISPY
You want a bullet?

GRANGER
You shoot me, you're dead.

Crispy unbuttons his jacket, pulls it open - *ta da!*

He's wearing a vest of explosives - a home-made mess of wires and bars of plastique wrapped in electrical tape.

CRISPY
Then we're all dead, am I right?

NICK
What the fuck?

None of this was part of the plan.

CRISPY
We havin' fun yet?

Granger senses Crispy's instability now. Everyone does.

Hashke slides a hand to his lower back.

Crispy clocks the movement, trains the gun back to Hashke, who puts his hands back together.

CRISPY (cont'd)
Don't make me count to three.

Beat. Granger wheels around to work the dial on the safe.

GRANGER
I know you.

CRISPY
You don't know shit.

GRANGER
I know that voice. You work in the kitchen here, am I right?

CLICK. The safe door swings open, revealing several bags of white powder, an assault rifle, and several shelves stacked with the night's take of cash. About half a million worth.

GRANGER (cont'd)
What do they call you? Crispy?
Because you work the fryers, *am I*
right, Crispy?

Granger tosses bills onto the desk. Nick loads them up into the bag, his movements erratic. Not accustomed to this.

GRANGER (cont'd)
(to Nick)
Are you one of my employees too?

CRISPY
Quit stalling.

Nick fumbles with the bills, knocking shit over on the desk.

GRANGER
First time?

NICK
Fuck.

GRANGER
You and your dumb shit friend here
are already dead, you know that.

CRISPY
Then we got nothing left to lose.

GRANGER
Sure you do. You've got your souls.

Nick zips up the bag and slings it over one arm, sagging under the weight of it. He stumbles back, to the door.

Crispy backs up too, to join him.

CRISPY
No such thing as souls, mister
Granger. Just chemistry in motion.

Hashke's hand flashes to his lower back again, pulling a gun, and BANG - *blowing Crispy's brains all over the wall*.

Nick startles, tumbling backward--

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

--falling into the hallway to SLAM into the far wall, with Crispy's blood and brain matter all over his mask.

He sees Granger lunging for the assault rifle in the safe.

He rolls to his feet and into a run as-

BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM

-rifle FIRE on the other side of the wall, shafts of light puncturing the dark, right on his heels as he sprints--

INT. PANDORA'S STRIP CLUB - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

--through a mist of artificial fog.

Past chairs up on tables.

Past the plastic spiders, cotton cobwebs, and a banner exclaiming HALLOWEEN BASH 2019 across an empty stage.

ANGLE ON:

Granger marching forward, ejecting a clip and SLAMMING in a fresh one, and then taking aim:

BOOM BOOM BOOM

The wall exploding around Nick as he tears open the door--

EXT. PANDORA'S STRIP CLUB - CONTINUOUS

--and bursts out into the rainy night.

A car SLAMS ON ITS BREAKS.

Nick topples over the hood, lands on all fours: a *silhouette of a wolf in the headlights, panting through the mask*.

He hurries to the motorcycle, straddles it and flips the ignition switch, kick starting - it ROARS to life.

ANGLE ON:

Granger, bursting out the front door, tossing the assault rifle to Hashke, who takes aim, squinting down the scope.

As Nick accelerates down the street, a wolf on the run.

And Hashke steadies the rifle to stay on him, controlled, holding his breath as he squeezes the trigger.

BOOM BOOM

The bike SPARKS - *hit* - but doesn't fall.

And Nick is gone.

Off Hashke, lowering the rifle. Murder in his eyes.

EXT. INTERSTATE - MORNING

Sun shines through rain-washed oak leaves. Dappled light.

Under the tree is the motorcycle. The rubber wolf mask left on the seat, smeared in blood. Off the empty eye holes...

...and Nick's face, the blood caked around his eyes like some kind of macabre raccoon. He's waking up, shivering in the cold, the bag of money a pillow underneath him.

The highway is nearby. In either direction flat farmland as far as the eye can see. Miles outside of Kansas City.

He stumbles to his feet, tries the bike's ignition but there's no power at all now. He kneels down, looking closer.

His fingers probing at the bullet hole under the seat.

He opens the bike up to reveal the battery underneath.

He pulls it out, sees the bullet hole through it, and the caustic fluid that's been oozing out.

NICK

Shit.

As MUSIC fades in, perhaps something by *The Kills*...

INT./EXT. LIZ'S TRUCK - DAY

...the MUSIC plays from the truck's speakers.

Liz wears a a wool-lined denim jacket, her hair about her neck, nodding along to the music.

She breezes past the tall, good-looking guy walking along the highway with a gym bag over his shoulder.

His thumb out, hitch hiking.

She slows down, glancing at the rear view mirror. Trying to get a better look. She's works the clutch.

Then she's cruising backward on the empty road.

Pulling up alongside Nick. She cuts the MUSIC, and rolls down the passenger side window just enough to see his eyes.

NICK

Hi.

LIZ

Hi.

Nick is taken aback by the pretty woman inside. But she's staring at the blood around his eyes, *her nostrils flaring*.

NICK

You headed into town?

LIZ

I am.

NICK

My motorcycle broke down, back there.
You mind if I catch a ride with you?

LIZ

Your eyes are bleeding.

He blinks, wipes his face. Sees the blood on his fingers.

NICK

Oh, god. That's just...that's from a
Halloween party I was at last night.

LIZ

It smells like blood.

NICK

How can you even smell that--

LIZ

Give you some advice?

NICK

I look like I need advice?

LIZ

You look deranged. Wandering in the
sun, bleeding outta your eyes--

NICK
I'm not bleeding--

LIZ
If you want a ride then clean
yourself up and go sit in the shade.
Look sensible. It'll disarm people.

NICK
Are you kidding me?

She turns the MUSIC back up, drowning him out, drives away.

NICK (cont'd)
Are you fucking kidding me?

He kicks gravel after her, breathing hard. Infuriated.

Then he glances back at the trees.

LATER:

Nick sits on the bag of money, under the tree by the side of the road. In the shade now. His face cleaned up.

Another truck comes along, slows to a stop. A bearded FARMER (40s) behind the wheel. Nick stands but doesn't approach.

FARMER
Hot for this time of year.

NICK
Yep.

Beat.

FARMER
Well where you headed?

EXT. ACONITE, KANSAS - DAY

Liz cruises down main street.

There's no shortage here of boarded up windows, overgrown lots, advertisements for LIQUIDATION or 70% OFF EVERYTHING.

This is one of the Midwestern towns that America forgot.

A few harried faces stare back at her as she drives by. At last she parks outside a hardware store.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - LATER

It's a dour space, all concrete and plastic. Shelves cluttered with discount junk and hand written price tags.

An outdated swimsuit calendar pinned up behind the counter.

The clerk, WILLARD (50s) steps up from the back, a desk fan blowing at him, strands of his toupee flapping vertically over his head. Reading glasses sag in his shirt pocket.

He drops a coil of steel cable onto the counter.

WILLARD

Woven steel cable. Twenty feet. One and one sixteenth inch diameter.

Liz stares at the cable, as if it's the only thing in the world that matters. She pulls out some bills, counting them.

WILLARD (cont'd)

Don't see you around much.

LIZ

That's not exactly true, Willard. You don't see me around ever.

She gives him the hint of a smile and he's nodding. She finishes counting, lays down the cash.

WILLARD

There's the delivery fee, plus tax of course. Puts you at an even hundred.

LIZ

Delivery fee.

WILLARD

Mmhmm.

She stares at him. He maintains a poker face. She pockets the cash and pulls out a check book, scribbles the amount.

WILLARD (cont'd)

Not much prospects since the steel plant shut down. Girls your age are either leaving for school, in the city, or getting married. Can't fathom why else they'd stick around.

LIZ

We got farm land, Willard.

WILLARD

Not if these tariffs keep up. And
this summer being the driest yet.
It's gonna be an awfully cold winter.

He sighs the last few words, *staring at her chest.*

She meets his eyes, and he clears his throat, takes the
check and begins to ring in the order on the old register.

Liz's nostrils flare once more - she glances at the door.

Can see the farmer's truck pull up outside - Nick hops out,
waves his thanks, and then walks into the hardware store.

He freezes, staring at her. She stares back at him, squaring
her shoulders with his, ready for a confrontation.

WILLARD (O.S.)

Help you?

NICK

I need a battery.

WILLARD

You'll have to be more specific, son.

Liz softens, realizing this really is just a coincidence.

NICK

Motorcycle battery. Honda three
fifty, standard twelve volt.

WILLARD

Nothing standard about it. That's a
special order.

Willard shuffles through a stack of papers on a shelf behind
him, comes up with a withered catalogue. He puts his glasses
on, licks a yellowed finger, and flips through the pages.

Liz hoists the steel cable over one shoulder, and heads for
the door. Ignoring Nick.

WILLARD (cont'd)

Have a wonderful day.

LIZ

And you.

WILLARD

Here we go. Replacement AGM battery
for a CB 350, pre-charged, with a two
year warranty.

NICK

How long to get it in?

WILLARD

From Kansas City, if I call it in
now? Little over a week.

NICK

You can't get it any faster?

WILLARD

You in some kinda hurry?

NICK

Yeah.

Nick peels a hundred from a wad of bills, lays it down.

Willard considers it. Then he and Nick look over at Liz.

She stands at the door, staring at the money. When she sees
them looking at her she walks out.

Once she's gone Willard scoops up the hundred-dollar bill.

WILLARD

I can have it here by Wednesday.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - ACONITE - CONTINUOUS

Liz takes a few steps, but then stops. Tilts her head.

*Focusing on the voices coming from inside the store. The
conversation grows LOUDER, more acute, impossibly clear:*

WILLARD (O.S.)

It'll be a hundred for the battery,
plus twenty-five for delivery. I just
need a name, number, and deposit.

The SLAP of a hand on the counter...

INT. HARDWARE STORE - ACONITE - CONTINUOUS

...Nick has slapped two more one-hundred-dollar bills down.

NICK
John Doe. No number.

WILLARD
You're in some kinda trouble.

NICK
Is that a question?

Beat. Then Willard grabs the bills.

WILLARD
See you Wednesday.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - ACONITE - MOMENTS LATER

Nick steps outside.

Sees Liz leaning against her truck, smoking a cigarette.

LIZ
Looks like you got your ride.

He just glares at her.

She puts the cigarette out, then climbs into the truck, talking to him through the passenger side window once again.

LIZ (cont'd)
Four days is a long time to leave
your bike on the side of the road.

NICK
It's not a bike, honey. It's a Honda
350 with enough get up and go to make
even you blush.

LIZ
Not from the side of the road. Honey.

Beat.

NICK
I'll give you fifty bucks to drive me
out there and pick it up.

LIZ
A hundred and fifty.

NICK
We're not negotiating.

LIZ
Fine, a hundred.

He slumps down on the bench outside the hardware store, legs out and ankles crossed. Fingers laced over his lap.

NICK
Maybe I'll just wait for another car to come along. Over here, in the shade. Look sensible.

She stares at him. He smiles back at her.

Then she FIRES up the truck engine. His face drops.

NICK (cont'd)
Hey, wait a minute...

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Liz's truck cruises down the road, rural Kansas rolling away to either side, dotted with the occasional barn or silo.

INT. LIZ'S TRUCK - DAY

Nick slumps in the passenger seat, staring out the window.

Liz glances at him from the driver's side.

Admiring his jaw line.

The disheveled hair.

The sun lit outline of lips and lashes.

His eyes in the side view mirror, *watching her* too. She quickly looks away, fixing her eyes on the road.

EXT. INTERSTATE - DAY

Liz's truck is parked under the oak tree. Cars pass on the highway nearby as she drops the tail gate.

She slides a long plank out, positions it to make a ramp.

Nick is walking up, wheeling the motorcycle alongside him.

She's looking over the bike. Steps forward, runs her finger over the bullet hole under the seat.

He stares at her, waiting for her to ask.

But she doesn't. She pulls the bike forward, and he helps her wheel it up the ramp, into the bed of the truck.

INT. LIZ'S TRUCK - LATE AFTERNOON

Heading back now. The sun is shining into the cabin as they drive into the reddening west.

NICK

Thanks.

LIZ

For what?

NICK

For minding your own business.

She shrugs. *The Kills* play on the radio. A LOW, steady undercurrent to their conversation.

NICK (cont'd)

(re: the radio)

I saw them in concert, once. That was in Kansas City.

LIZ

What was it like?

NICK

About what you'd expect. Loud. Crowded. People of all stripes.

LIZ

I meant the city.

NICK

So did I.

He floats her a smile, and she returns the hint of one.

NICK (cont'd)

When's the last time you left here?

She shrugs. She hasn't.

NICK (cont'd)

Never?

LIZ

It's complicated.

NICK

What, you got a husband? Kids?

LIZ

Would that make it more acceptable?

NICK

I dunno, if I had a family this is where I'd wanna be. All this space.

LIZ

All this space makes your world smaller. Everyone knows everyone else, and if you're different you stand out. But in a crowded city there's room for everyone.

NICK

Why not just leave then?

LIZ

You tell me. Why'd you leave?

NICK

(shrugging)

Guy I worked with had a plan. But plans change. Shit happens. You'd go back and do it differently if you could, you know? But you can't.

LIZ

And what was the plan?

NICK

No one gets hurt.

She stares ahead, tense as he speaks to her own predicament.

LIZ

In my experience, when someone gets hurt someone else wants to get even.

NICK

Yeah...

LIZ

There's a motel in town. But people like to talk. You won't stay hidden for long if anyone's looking for you.

NICK

I'll figure something out.

LIZ

My place is a mile or so from here.
You can put up there for a few days,
until your battery comes in.

NICK

Shouldn't you be afraid of me?

She looks at him, imagining what his jugular tastes like.

LIZ

Nah.

NICK

(stung)

Look, don't do me any favors--

LIZ

It'll cost you two hundred a night.
For that you can sleep in the barn.

NICK

How generous of you.

LIZ

Plus an extra hundred a night for
food and hot water. Cash. Up front.

NICK

Shit, how much to breathe the air?

LIZ

Or I can just take a left here, drop
you back off in town.

She pulls up to the intersection and flips on the turn
signal, waiting now for the light to turn green.

He's staring at her, stunned by her impudence. But then she
tucks her hair behind one ear, exposing her jaw line.

Those lips and lashes.

NICK

I didn't get your name.

LIZ

I didn't give it.

Beat.

NICK

I'm Nick.

LIZ
Liz.

NICK
You drive a hard bargain, Liz.

He's smiling. And she smiles too, flips the turn signal off as the light turns green, and drives on. The music SWELLING.

EXT. THORN HOUSE - EVENING

The truck turns off the road, cruising down the long drive.

Past the vast corn field, arriving at last in front of the yard that precedes the ranch-style home.

Liz cuts the engine, staring at the car parked in her spot. It's Ruby Lenore's Buick. That MCCAIN*PALIN bumper sticker.

Her nostrils flare, picking up the scent of danger.

NICK
Mind if I use your bathroom--

LIZ
Wait in the barn. And stay quiet.

NICK
Is something wrong?

LIZ
Yeah. You're still sittin' here.

Beat. He slips out of the truck, heads for the barn. She never takes her eyes off Ruby's car.

INT. THORN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Liz steps inside.

Ruby Lenore sits on the couch. Her sons, HANK JR and ROB (30s) stand to either side, solemn sentinels to her grief.

RUBY
There she is. Sister number two.

Off Liz, annoyed by the moniker.

Jean enters from the kitchen, with tray, tea pot, and mugs.

JEAN
You know Ruby Lenore?

LIZ
Right. I'm sorry for your loss.

RUBY
Our loss. You may remember my boys,
Hank junior and Rob.

LIZ
Could you not smoke in here, please?

Ruby finishes lighting up a Pall Mall. Jean is distributing cups of tea, and as she hands one to Ruby the older woman put her cigarette out in it. Jean glares at her.

RUBY
The police tell me Hank was killed on
the edge of your property.

JEAN
It's twenty acres of property, and
there's no fence around most of it.

Jean sits across from Ruby. Diplomatic, wooden, her glasses and meticulously combed hair giving her an academic look.

RUBY
As I understand it your parents were
killed in similar fashion, years ago.

JEAN
Years ago.

RUBY
Didn't you ever wonder?

JEAN
Of course. But the Coroner arrived at
the same conclusion: it was an animal
attack, most likely a bear.

RUBY
There's no bears around here.

LIZ
Coulda been a wolf.

Liz stands protectively behind her sister as Ruby's sons stand behind their mother.

ROB

We haven't had wolves in these parts
since they built the steel plant,
what, nearly a century ago?

LIZ

There was that big gray they shot in
Trego County just last year.

RUBY

Coroner said Hank was dead less than
six hours when you found him.

JEAN

I'm not sure what you're getting at.

RUBY

It was the middle of the night, so I
wonder how you found him so soon?

JEAN

I saw the headlights of his truck, up
the road. From the porch, there.

RUBY

But how'd you even know to look? I
mean it was the middle of the night--

LIZ

We heard him scream.

Ruby stares at her, hurt. Weary. Unsure where else to go
from here. Jean leans forward, consoling.

JEAN

When our parents died I found myself
where you are, demanding justice. You
want someplace to put all that anger,
and grief. And resentment.

Off Liz, watching her sister.

JEAN (cont'd)

But in the end all you can do is
accept. And remember the good times.

RUBY

(pulling away)

Hank was a bastard.

She's on her feet now, her voice matter of fact. Resolute:

RUBY (cont'd)
 Plenty of times I woke up on the floor, after he'd got mad. So I'm not doing this for him. I'm doing this for me. He'd of said to let it go, just like you. But then I don't gotta ask his permission any more.

Ruby and her sons head for the door. She notices the three heavy chain bolts, glances at her sons. Then they walk out.

Liz moves to the window, smoking, as the car ENGINE comes on. The headlights sweeping past as Ruby's car drives away.

LIZ
 Sister number two?

JEAN
 Liz.

LIZ
 What a cunt.

JEAN
 Her husband's dead.

LIZ
 You think I need reminding?

There's anger in her voice, and remorse. She stares out the window as she lights a cigarette. Pondering now:

LIZ (cont'd)
 I can't tell if she misses him or if she's glad that he's gone.

JEAN
 That's what it means to love someone.

Jean is collecting the cups off the coffee table, her voice a blatant indictment of their own relationship.

LIZ
 I loved our parents as much as you.

JEAN
 I said those things to console her.

LIZ
 I know what you were saying.

JEAN

I'm putting out fires, that's what I'm saying. You have any idea how close we are to losing this place?

Liz tosses her the pack of cigarettes, disgusted, then moves to the cassette player. Jean lights up, standing her ground.

JEAN (cont'd)

Life insurance has run out, and with three years of low crop yields we're a month away from re-possession. The last thing I need right now are people walking in here and nosing into our goddamn business!

NICK (O.S.)

Excuse me?

They both look over: Nick stands in the doorway.

NICK

I really gotta piss.

JEAN

Who the hell?

LIZ

Jean, this is Nick. Nick, this is my sister, Jean.

NICK

Hey, Jean.

JEAN

What the hell?

LIZ

Down the hall, to the right.

Nick breezes past them, down the hall, shuts the door.

LIZ (cont'd)

His motorcycle broke down. He just needs to crash here for a few days.

JEAN

You brought a stranger to our house?

LIZ

He's not a stranger. He's Nick.

They can hear him PISSING now.

LIZ (cont'd)
And he'll sleep in the barn.

JEAN
This isn't a fucking AirBnB.

LIZ
The next moon is five days away--

JEAN
Four.

LIZ
--and he'll be long gone by then.

Off Jean, her face taut, grim.

The toilet FLUSHES. Nick re-enters, counting cash from a wad in his hand, and Liz nods to Jean. *Give it to her.*

NICK
Nine hundred. Up front. Plus another buck for picking up my motorcycle.

He hands Jean the stack of hundreds. Then he turns to Liz.

NICK (cont'd)
And you're outta toilet paper.

LIZ
Copy.

NICK
Hey, nice cassette deck--

LIZ
Over and out, Nick.

He deflates, walks out. Jean stares at the money, stunned.

LIZ (cont'd)
That should buy us a little time
until we figure out the next move.

Jean looks out the window, dragging off her cigarette.

LIZ (cont'd)
What's for dinner?

JEAN
Hamburger tacos and guacamole.

LIZ (O.S.)
Holy guacamole.

Jean watches Nick as he heads to the barn. Her reflection in the window, suspicious.

INT. BARN - LATER

Nick crouches in the light of an oil lamp, checking the fuel level on a lawnmower that's been stored in the barn.

The flame shudders as the door opens.

Liz steps in, sets out a plate of food and a battered thermos. Their eyes locked over the tension of the MUSIC.

NICK
Thanks.

LIZ
You're welcome.

Beat. She turns and walks away. Off Nick, watching her go.

EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Liz steps into the dark, on the edge of the light that shines from the barn. Listening to him.

Daring to smile. Daring to hope.

And as lightning bugs dance in the dark like twinkle lights in mute celebration, she looks up.

Sees the moon that's more than three-quarters full.

Her smile fades as her eyes take on a dull yellow glow.

INT. LIZ'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The SOUND OF THE LAWNMOWER.

Liz sits up, rudely awakened. She slips out of bed.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

And steps out into the hall at the same time as Jean, also having been abruptly awakened, fumbling with her glasses.

They exchange looks and then march down the hall together, both of them in underwear and shirts.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

And stand abreast at the sink, looking out the window.

Where Nick is mowing the yard. He pauses to take off his shirt. His skin glistening with sweat in the morning sun.

LIZ

Good morning.

JEAN

Mmhmm.

LIZ

Should I...say something?

Jean pulls her glasses off, scrubs a lens, and slips them back on. Getting a better look at him now.

JEAN

We should probably let him finish.

Off Liz, sharing a faint smile with her sister.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Nick steps into the kitchen, wearing his grass-streaked shirt now. He helps himself to a mug from the cupboard, pours himself some coffee. Then he opens the fridge.

A dozen packages of raw ground beef fill the shelves.

JEAN (O.S.)

What are you doing?

Nick startles, glances over. Jean sits at the table, obscured in shadow. A book and coffee laid out before her.

NICK

Looking for milk?

JEAN

You could've stayed at a motel. You would have paid a lot less.

NICK

You know how it is, when you travel, you wanna stay with the locals.

JEAN

Is that how it is? Three hundred a night to sleep in a barn in the nowhere middle of bum-fuck, Kansas?

NICK

With two very pleasant ladies.

JEAN

You're not as charming as you think.

NICK

Agree to disagree?

JEAN

If you think you have a chance with my sister you're sorely mistaken--

LIZ

Thanks for your concern, Jean, but I can look after myself.

Liz steps into the kitchen, grabs herself some coffee.

JEAN

If that were true you wouldn't be soliciting men off the side of the highway to pay the bills.

LIZ

(to Nick)

I apologize, she can be a bitch.

JEAN

In my case, at least, it's only metaphorical.

NICK

Look, I don't know what's going on here. I don't know why everyone's so negative, or why there's twenty pounds of burger meat in the fridge--

LIZ

Iron deficiency.

NICK

--but what I do know? I woke up this morning and cut the grass, with the sun on my face and the wind at my back. And it was the best feeling I've had in a very long time.

Liz and Jean stare at him, seeing him in this new light.

LIZ

In that case we got a cord of wood
that needs chopping.

JEAN

The barn needs re-painting--

LIZ

Gutters cleaned--

NICK

Okay, okay.

Jean and Liz exchange smiles. Nick leaves, shaking his head.

Jean moves to the sink watching him out the window. Liz
grabs a package of ground beef from the fridge.

JEAN

I still say he's hiding something.

Liz joins her at the sink, *eating raw beef with her fingers*.

LIZ

Aren't we all?

EXT. ACONITE - HARDWARE STORE - DAY

A black and silver Pontiac pulls into the parking lot.

A yellow Minion figurine dangling from the rear view mirror.

Hashke steps out, wearing a jacket, jeans, boots. He leans
back, working out the stiffness from hours in the car.

Then he heads for the hardware store.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Willard is stocking the shelves with inventory.

WILLARD

Help you?

HASHKE

I'm looking for a boy that might've
come through here.

WILLARD
You'll need to be more specific.

HASHKE
He was wearing a leather jacket. He's
got a motorcycle needs fixing.

Willard stiffens. Hashke can sense his unease.

HASHKE (cont'd)
You've seen him, haven't you?

WILLARD
How much is it worth to you?

Hashke surveys the interior of the store. No other movement or sounds, and he concludes that he's alone with the clerk.

HASHKE
Ten seconds.

WILLARD
Pardon?

Hashke steps closer, the ribbed shelving still between him and the clerk, but he could reach through now.

HASHKE
You know for all their wisdom and cruelty the founding fathers couldn't stamp their faces onto time? They couldn't hoard it, or give it away.

Hashke glances down at the crow bars for sale on the shelf.

Willard looks down, too. Then back up at Hashke, who smiles.

HASHKE (cont'd)
But I can. And I'll give you ten
seconds worth, starting right now...

Willard glances over his shoulder, at the door near the back: an EXIT sign glowing above it. It's too far to make.

HASHKE (cont'd)
...five seconds.

Willard's breath is short like a baby, or a dying man.

Hashke just stares at him. Finally:

WILLARD
He ordered a battery.

HASHKE
Did he leave a name? A number?

Willard reaches into his pocket, retrieving the three one-hundred dollar bills. Sets them on the shelf between them.

WILLARD
He paid me not to ask.

Hashke touches a bill with a finger, tracing the stamped face of Ben Franklin at the center. Specks of blood there.

HASHKE
When will he be back?

WILLARD
Day after tomorrow. That's when the battery gets in.

Hashke steps closer. Willard shuts his eyes, turning his head away, unable to look Death in the face.

HASHKE
You wouldn't lie to me?

WILLARD
(steady as a prayer)
No. I swear to Jesus, and the saints, and the goddamn ghost of Geronimo, I swear it...

He opens one eye. Then both.

Hashke is gone.

An OLD WOMAN (80s) stands at the door, staring at him. And Willard stares back, his toupee flapping from the wind.

EXT. BARN - DAY

Liz disappears into the barn, carrying a tray of food. A beat later she steps out, looking around. *Where is he?*

Her nostrils flaring, searching for the scent of him. Zeroes in on the path behind the barn, leading away into the woods.

EXT. GRAVEYARD CLEARING - DAY

The dense trees resolve into a clearing, enclosed about by more trees. Wild flowers dapple the grass with color, a lingering vestige of summer. This is a hallowed place.

Nick lays at the edge of this clearing, staring at the sky.

LIZ
What are you doing here?

He sits up on his elbows, grass in his hair. Staring at her.

NICK
It's beautiful here.

LIZ
Your lunch is getting cold.

Beat. He nods at the two mounds of stacked rocks in the middle of the field - grave markers, rising above the grass.

NICK
Are those your parents?

She stares at them, her silence confirming it.

NICK (cont'd)
When?

LIZ
Several years after they found me. I was still just a girl.

NICK
Found you?

LIZ
Jean and her parents are the only family I've ever known.

NICK
Can I ask how they died?

LIZ
(impatient)
Can I ask where you got your bike?

NICK
It's not a bike--

LIZ
I mean, if you're really in trouble then why not just scrap it already, and buy a bus ticket, or steal a car?

NICK
You're changing the subject.

LIZ
So let's change the subject.

Beat.

NICK
That motorcycle belonged to my dad. After he ran off my mom liked to tell me how much I looked like him. How I reminded her of him. So I stole shit and I hurt people, and eventually I ran off too. I guess I sorta became the thing that she needed me to be.

Again, he seems to speak to her own predicament.

NICK (cont'd)
But that motorcycle proves there's hope, you know? For a fresh start.

LIZ
Because it was your dad's?

NICK
Because it's the only thing I got left that I didn't steal.

Beat. Her voice softer now, warmer.

LIZ
Your lunch is getting cold.

She turns and walks away. Off Nick, watching her go.

LIZ (V.O.)
What were they like?

JEAN (V.O.)
Who?

LIZ (V.O.)
Mom and dad.

INT. YARD - DAY

Liz splits a block of wood with an ax.

JEAN (V.O.)
I don't know. I mean, they would go these long stretches without talking.

Nick stacks the wood along the house. They work together, in silence, as naturally as if this has always been.

JEAN (V.O.) (cont'd)
But they were always listening to
each other.

Jean stands nearby, work gloves on, and autumn debris smoking on the burn pile behind her. Watching them.

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

Nick showers, partially visible beyond the shower curtain.

Liz steps in, lays a dark, flannel shirt out for him. She lingers, head bowed. Watching him beyond the curtain.

JEAN (V.O.)
And every laugh or look they shared
seemed to be a secret. Or a vow.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Liz steps in with a tray of food. She sets it down when she notices that Nick has fallen asleep.

JEAN (V.O.)
To mind the details. Stupid little
things, you know? How she liked her
eggs. How he took his coffee.

She lays down beside him, facing him, drawing her knees up as he is, like a child in slumber. *Her eyes glowing yellow.*

JEAN (V.O.) (cont'd)
She once said that she could tell, by
his breathing, if he was dreaming in
his sleep.

The talon-like claws curving from her fingertips, as she touches his face so tenderly he never stirs.

JEAN (V.O.) (cont'd)
They held the tiniest of gestures in
high esteem. Like each one was a
defiance to some inevitable ending.

Her lips parting, the gleam of incisors there, a profound hunger for him as the MUSIC crescendos...and ends.

INT. STORM CELLAR - DAY

Jean uncoils the broken chain from the wall, discards it into a rusted heap on the ground.

Then Liz unfurls the steel cable from the hardware store, and hands one end to Jean.

JEAN

You never cared before.

LIZ

I just never asked before.

Jean runs one end of the cable through the steel ring welded to the wall, cinches it through the choker anchor.

JEAN

Why not?

LIZ

I dunno. Guess I was scared.

She shrugs. Off Jean, her voice warm for once:

JEAN

They vowed to protect you. Mom always said, we stay loyal. No matter what.

LIZ

Yeah.

JEAN

Anytime you wanna ask me something just ask me. Okay?

LIZ

Okay.

JEAN

Though I can't promise I won't tell you to piss off.

They're both smiling a little now. This rare moment of warmth between the two women.

Then Liz fastens her end of the cable to the iron collar.

Off Jean, staring at the new leash. Her smile fading.

INT. JEAN'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Jean sits back on her bed, a drink in hand, lost in thought as a TV DRONES from nearby. Her mood soured in rumination.

Unlike Liz's room, Jean's room is ascetic, without decor. Books, rather than music, are the only aesthetic touch. There's a dresser. A mini TV on top. A bottle of mezcal.

A framed photo of her parents, at which she's been staring.

LIZ (O.S.)
Jean! Dinner!

Jean snaps out of her reverie. Slips her glasses on.

She staggers to her feet, buzzed. Glass in hand she moves to the door, where several more chain bolts are installed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jean moves directly to the side board and refills her glass.

Behind her, Liz steps in from the kitchen and sets a casserole dish on the table among the three place settings.

JEAN
What is that?

LIZ
Nick made hamburger casserole.

JEAN
I meant on your face.

Indeed, Liz is wearing lipstick. Eyeliner. Her hair brushed back, the most made-up we've ever seen her.

LIZ
I wanted to look nice.

JEAN
For what?

LIZ
Come on, Jeannie. When's the last time we sat down together for dinner?

Nick enters from the kitchen with three glasses of water. His hair combed. Shaved. Wearing that dark, flannel shirt.

JEAN
Is that dad's shirt?

LIZ
He needed something to wear.

JEAN
(to Nick)
You know our mother ironed his shirt
for him every morning? Even when he
was just driving the combine.

LIZ
Jean.

NICK
I can wear something else.

LIZ
Your clothes are in the wash.

NICK
Then I can just wear some of your
mom's clothes. I can rock a dress.

Both them are staring at him.

NICK (cont'd)
Joke?

LIZ
Maybe give us a second?

Nick nods, grabs his jacket on his way out the door.

LIZ (cont'd)
I'm trying to be good here--

JEAN
You're trying to play house. As if
you don't know how this ends.

LIZ
Maybe I just need something that
isn't a constant reminder--

JEAN
So do I, Lizzie, but every time I
look at you I'm reminded. And I have
to look. Because I'm not strong
enough to look away.
(MORE)

JEAN (cont'd)

I'm not strong enough to lock you up in that storm cellar and then let you starve to death, even though it's the most heroic thing that you or I could do.

Off Liz, her face flushing with shame.

EXT. THORN HOUSE - YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Nick is sitting on the porch when Liz breezes past him.

NICK

Liz? Hey!

She climbs into the truck as he hurries after her...

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

...and slides into the passenger side.

NICK

Where you goin'?

LIZ

Into town. You need to stay here.

NICK

This is our last night together.

LIZ

Get out of the truck.

NICK

I'm going with you.

Off Liz, at once annoyed and taken by him.

INT. THE HARE & THE HOUND TAVERN - NIGHT

The CRACK of pool balls.

Men chalk their cues and circle the table.

ROCK plays overhead. It's a dingy space, wood beams and low ceiling, a watering hole for the town's working class.

ANGLE ON:

The BARTENDER (50s, salty) pours two shots of well whiskey for Liz, who turns to Nick.

LIZ
What are you having?

Nick smiles, thinking it's a joke. But Liz isn't smiling.

NICK
Oh. Um, I guess I'll do the same?

The bartender lines up two more glasses, fills them with a long upended pour. Liz tosses down two twenty-dollar bills.

LIZ
Keep the change.

The bartender nods, takes the money, and Liz drains the first shot. Nick shoots one himself, grimaces, GAGS.

NICK
God DAMN.

Liz sips the second shot, staring into space, thinking perhaps of Jean's words. Her head hung low.

NICK (cont'd)
Are you gonna tell me what happened?

Beat. He touches her shoulder, turns her slowly toward him.

NICK (cont'd)
Hey. You can talk to me.

She looks at him. *Wanting to tell him everything.*

HANK JR (O.S.)
Elizabeth Thorn?

Hank Jr strolls up with Rob and two men, BUD and REESE (20s). All four are welders by trade, drinkers by hobby.

HANK JR
Seen you more in the last three days than I have in the last three years.

LIZ
Just trying to mind my own business.

HANK JR
Me and the boys got a wager goin'. A round of drinks on me says you got the prettiest smile they ever seen.

She just stares at the four men.

HANK JR (cont'd)
Aren't you gonna smile for us?

LIZ
Aren't you gonna say something funny?

Nick grunts with amusement.

HANK JR
I didn't get your name.

NICK
I didn't give it.

HANK JR
Tell me something, stranger. A man
offers to buy a lady a drink it's
customary to accept, don't you agree?

NICK
You'd have to ask the lady.

LIZ
We were just leaving.

HANK JR
You were just being uppity. Not that
it's a surprise to anybody here.

LIZ
Keep it up, Hank...

She shoots the rest of her whiskey, buzzed. Arrogant:

LIZ (cont'd)
...but all the resentment in the
world won't bring your daddy back.

Hank Jr pales. The other boys stop grinning.

HANK JR
You never gave a shit about this
town. So I don't suppose this town
would give a shit about you, or your
sister, if something were to happen.

Liz's hands curl into fists, an almost discernible GROWL
roiling up from her throat. And Nick stands beside her.

That's when Harmon and Tish walk in. When Hank Jr sees the police uniforms he shoots Nick and Liz one last glare, and then walks out with his crew.

LIZ
(challenging Hank Jr)
Yeah, walk away.

NICK
You're better than that.

LIZ
Mother fuckers--

NICK
Liz.

Nick is leading her to a dim corner, pulls her into a slow dance to distract her as The Jesus And Mary Chain's, *Just Like Honey* plays overhead.

LIZ
Just because the steel plant shut down and half these assholes are on unemployment or working at Wal-Mart or drinking here doesn't mean they're the only ones hurting--

He kisses her. Suddenly and inevitably. And she goes still, her anger evaporating in an instant.

NICK
Careful. Your body's a hand grenade.
People could get hurt.

She stares at him, softening. *Does he truly understand her?*

LIZ
You stole that.

NICK
What?

LIZ
That line.

NICK
I might've read it somewhere--

LIZ
Courtney Love wrote that.

NICK
(re: her neck)
How'd you get these scars?

LIZ
Now you're changing the subject.

NICK
So let's change the subject.

She kisses him this time, as they slowly pirouette in their own cocoon of light. The juke box MUSIC serenading them.

And as they complete another revolution, Nick looks past her, across the bar, to the man walking in. It's Hashke.

LIZ
You okay?

Nick has stopped moving. Lights fading back up. The MUSIC A TINNY ECHO from the jukebox now. His world falling apart.

NICK
Time for you to go.

When she sees that he's looking past her she turns to see Hashke at the bar - staring back at them now.

LIZ
Is that who you're running from?

NICK
I'll meet you at the house.

LIZ
You're not walking back--

NICK
Go. Now.

The urgency in his voice. She nods, walking away, passing Hashke, who is heading over with two bottles of beer.

He sits across from Nick, slides a bottle over.

HASHKE
Nice jacket.

EXT. THE HARE & THE HOUND TAVERN - MOMENTS LATER

The moon is nearly full. Liz makes it a few paces out the door. Then she moves to the window, looking in at Nick.

She shuts her eyes, tilts her head, her ears sharpening to points as she focuses in on their conversation...

NICK (O.S.)
How'd you find me?

...Nick and Hashke's voices LOUDER now, impossibly CLEAR:

INT. THE HARE & THE HOUND TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Hashke crosses an ankle over his knee, casual.

HASHKE
I've been to every chop shop from here to Kansas City. Then I met that old man who runs the hardware store. Turns out he runs his mouth too, so here I am.

NICK
I thought Indians couldn't drink.

HASHKE
I thought dead men couldn't talk.

NICK
Kill me, you'll never find the cash.

HASHKE
I'll find your girlfriend.

NICK
She's not involved in this.

HASHKE
Unless you're staying with her. Which means that's where the cash is.

Beat.

NICK
Money's yours. Just leave her alone.

EXT. THE HARE & THE HOUND TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Liz opens her eyes when she hears this. Seeing Nick in this new light.

INT. THE HARE & THE HOUND TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

HASHKE

You really have no idea what you're dealing with.

NICK

I'm giving you the money.

HASHKE

Gavin Granger has a reputation to uphold. I'm not just paid to get his money back. I'm paid to get you.

Beat. Nick looks like he's gonna be sick.

HASHKE (cont'd)

Now. You can either take a stand outside, or you can try to run.

NICK

What's your name?

HASHKE

That doesn't matter.

NICK

Then tell me.

Harmon and Tish are putting lids on their Styrofoam to-go coffee cups - Tish can see Nick and Hashke talking.

HASHKE

Bill Hashke.

NICK

What kind of name is that?

HASHKE

A Navajo name.

NICK

I meant Bill?

HASHKE

That's a white skin name.

NICK

And you work for a white skin.

HASHKE

You're stalling.

NICK
 Your people used to believe in powers
 bigger than money.

HASHKE
 Fuck do you know about my people?

NICK
 I don't. I'm just saying--

HASHKE
 The power of moons and animals are no
 match against the engine of America.
 This engine runs on money. This is
 what you and I have chosen. And in
 this America I get to be the cowboy.
 And you're the Indian, doomed to die.

Beat.

NICK
 I'll be outside.

Nick stands, heads for the door, his bottle of beer in hand.

EXT. THE HARE & THE HOUND TAVERN - NIGHT

He steps outside. Liz is no where to be seen.

Nick taps the beer bottle against the building facade,
 breaking away the base plate, beer gushing like an artery.

He holds a serrated weapon now.

He drifts into the open, alone on the deserted street. Storm
 clouds gather on the horizon, where flickering forks of
 lightening portend doom. Nick waits here, his final stand.

ANGLE ON:

Adjacent to the tavern is an alley.

It recedes back toward a terminus of darkness, far away,
 where a sliver of light appears. A door opening:

Hashke steps outside from the back of the bar.

He strolls down the alley, pulling the semi-auto pistol from
 his belt and threading a sound suppressor onto the barrel.

He arrives at the mouth of the alley, can see Nick in the
 parking lot, his back to the alley way.

Some bar patrons are stepping outside, talking in whiskey-soaked tones and lighting up cigarettes.

From the shadows Hashke raises the gun on Nick.

That's when a figure drops from the roof of the building, landing soundlessly behind Hashke.

The CLAMOR OF A DOG rises up from behind an adjacent fence, a fierce snarling at something it senses to be dangerous.

Hashke turns to see the figure standing behind him.

It's Liz. Her hair blowing across her face. Her eyes are glowing yellow. Coarse fur on her palms as the claws extend from her fingertips. The gleam of incisors in her mouth.

The long, low GROWL roiling up from her throat.

The CLAMORING of the dog nearby is hysterical now. Frenzied.

Hashke nods, acknowledging this final truth - the real and deadly power of moons and animals. Then he raises the gun.

And Liz surges toward him with impossible speed.

ANGLE BACK TO:

Nick turns, distracted by the CLAMORING of the dog. He approaches the alley, brandishing the broken bottle.

Peering in...sees the shape back there, on the ground.

He steps into the dark, breathing hard, edging closer until finally he comes up on Hashke's body crumpled on the ground.

Off Nick's reaction - horrified.

TISH (O.S.)

Excuse me?

He looks up at Tish, standing in the light of an open door that leads into the alley from the bar.

Nick drops the broken beer bottle, turns, and runs. Rain fall starting now, dappling everything.

TISH

Hey!

As Tish flips on her FLASHLIGHT and hurries over. Slowing when she sees Hashke's body. The slashed up torso.

The head nearly severed at the neck.

Half the face and scalp chewed away.

INT. THORN HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Liz RETCHES over the toilet, her hair wet and a towel wrapped about her chest from a recent shower.

GAGGING, she reaches into her throat, starts pulling out a tangle of dark hair. Keeps pulling the long strands, her lips quivering, until it finally comes free:

Hashke's black hair, attached to a piece of scalp.

She RETCHES once more, and an ear plops into the toilet.

She FLUSHES everything. Then she moves to the sink, opens the mirrored cabinet, grabs a bottle of Aspirin.

Her nostrils flaring.

LIZ

Are you okay?

She closes the cabinet, revealing Nick standing behind her. He's soaked through from the rain, clearly shaken up.

NICK

I ran the whole way back.

She turns as he stumbles into the bathroom. His voice a winded whisper as he clings to her.

LIZ

What happened?

NICK

I don't know, I...just don't know.

JEAN (O.S.)

Excuse me?

They both jump. Jean is standing in the doorway now.

JEAN

What's going on?

LIZ

Nothing.

NICK

Nothing.

JEAN
Then why are the police here?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Liz opens the front door, wearing a bathrobe. Tish and Harmon are waiting there, hands resting on their gun belts, the rain falling steadily behind them now.

HARMON
Evening, miss Thorn. I hope we didn't get you at a bad time.

LIZ
It's late.

HARMON
You mind if we come in?

She steps aside and they step in, shaking off the rain. Jean stokes the fire. Nick is nowhere to be seen.

HARMON (cont'd)
Jean.

Jean nods. Then Harmon looks Liz up and down.

HARMON (cont'd)
You two alone?

The sisters both nod.

HARMON (cont'd)
Who was that fella you were talking with tonight?

LIZ
You mean Hank Jr?

HARMON
I mean the guy you were dancing with.

Jean glances at Liz. But Liz won't meet her eyes.

LIZ
Nick. I don't know his last name. I met him a couple days ago.

HARMON
Pretty fast work.

Beat. Tish takes a less judgmental tone:

TISH
How'd you meet him, Liz?

LIZ
Hitching. Just outside of town.

TISH
Can you put us in contact with him?

LIZ
I don't have a number. I don't know where he's staying. He was passing through, he probably already left.

JEAN
What's going on here?

TISH
A man was killed tonight. And we think Nick may be involved.

JEAN
Killed how?

TISH
The details aren't pertinent--

HARMON
He was chewed up, just like Hank.

Jean pales. Tish takes a breath, annoyed with Harmon.

TISH
Look, when this story breaks it'll make a lot of folks here real antsy. It would help if we had a witness.

LIZ
You mean a scapegoat.

HARMON
A scapegoat implies someone else is responsible, miss Thorn. Perhaps you'd like to speculate?

LIZ
He didn't do it.

JEAN
Liz.

Liz walks it back:

LIZ

It just doesn't make any sense.

HARMON

Well, honey, that's why we need to talk to him.

LIZ

If I knew anything I'd tell you.

HARMON

Right. Thanks for your time.

He heads out the door. Tish turns to follow, when she sees the dining room table from the corner of her eye.

Sees the three place settings. She looks at Liz and Jean.

TISH

I know what it's like, when people assume the worst about you. But I can help you. If you'll let me.

JEAN

We'll keep it in mind, Tish. Thanks.

Beat. Tish leaves, and Liz shuts the door.

Jean moves to a sideboard and pours herself a mezcal, shoots it down in one pull. Calming her nerves. When she sees Liz still shaken up she pours her a glass, hands it to her.

JEAN (cont'd)

It's still two days before the moon.

LIZ

I know, Jean.

JEAN

Then how is this possible?

LIZ

I don't know, Jean.

Beat.

JEAN

Are you able to control it?

Liz crushes the glass in her fist, without thinking.

Blood drips steadily to the floor. Jean runs to the kitchen as Liz cups her hand, her face more weary than pained.

Jean returns with a towel and gauze. She sits Liz down and commences to clean and wrap the wound.

LIZ

It was an accident. A mistake.

JEAN

I understand. You're scared. With control comes accountability--

LIZ

I said it was a mistake.

Liz jerks her hand away, finishes the wrap herself.

LIZ (cont'd)

It won't happen again.

Liz walks away, with Jean watching her go.

INT. LIZ'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens, and Liz peeks in.

LIZ

Nick?

But the room is empty. She moves on.

EXT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Liz checks the bathroom. Nick isn't there either. Then she checks Jean's room. Still no sign of him.

Then she glances to the door at the end of the hall.

Her face ashen just to look upon it.

She makes a slow approach, her hand reaching for the door knob. Lingered here, hesitant. Finally she opens it.

INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Light spilling in from the hallway as Liz stands there, a lone silhouette in the doorway.

She tries the light but it doesn't work. She steps in now, searching the darkness. Moonlight reveals a crucifix on the wall. A bare mattress, no blankets or pillows.

A dresser: mother's perfume bottles, and father's watch. The time has stopped. Everything covered in a veneer of dust.

It's a crime scene perfectly intact.

Liz exhales, her breath in a cloud before her. She sees the open window, snow flakes swirling in.

She heads over, sees the drifts of white snow accumulating on the window sill and the base boards.

She reaches out to close the window, pauses, seeing the small bloody hand print on the pane of glass. Her eyes shift to the snowy yard beyond. There's a small figure out there.

It's a GIRL (9) in long underwear, huddling in the snow, arms around her knees. Her back to the house. Shivering.

The tiny fingertips dripping red into the snow.

And the girl stops shivering. Deathly still now. She turns her head, looking right at Liz with those yellow eyes, the damp hair and pale face. Her mouth and chin dripping red.

And Liz jerks the window shut, revealing the reflection in the glass: *two people on the bed behind her*.

She turns around, sees her parents: FATHER splayed against the wall: the calm, lifeless eyes. His throat gaping open.

Her MOTHER, half way off the bed, her torso clawed into ribbons, the innards roiling between her fingers.

TEENAGE JEAN

Liz?

A TEENAGE JEAN stands in the doorway, wearing her glasses and breathing hard, terrified, indicting Liz with her eyes.

NICK (O.S.)

Liz?

Liz snaps out of it. Nick sits on the floor near the wall.

LIZ

They're gone.

The way she says it. He rises to his feet, staring at her.

NICK

Are you okay?

LIZ

Yeah.

NICK

Is this your parents' room?

LIZ

It was.

The haunted look in her eyes. She hurries past him, out of the room. He steps forward, staring at the window.

There's no snow. And no girl. Just the rain falling steadily beyond. But that faded, bloody hand print is on the glass.

INT. LIZ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Liz hunches before her patio doors, hands around her knees, head bowed - like that girl in the snow. Tears in her eyes.

Candles flicker on her vanity.

She goes still. Turns her head to look at the door way.

Where Nick is watching her. He steps in, looking over the rock posters, and the scattering of stuffed animals.

The photos along her mirror, the places she yearns to see.

She stands up and wipes her face dry. He takes her bandaged hand in his.

NICK

Does it hurt?

LIZ

Yeah.

They could be talking about everything.

NICK

I'll find somewhere else to sleep.

LIZ

Yeah.

She moves past him, to the door...

NICK

I'll just get my things--

...and she shuts the door, locks it. Looks back at him.

His breathing quickening. A GROWL roiling up from her throat. She walks toward him.

And he advances to meet her, kissing now, their bodies pressed together, tugging at clothes as they stumble to the bed, entwined as they fall out of frame...

...only her bandaged hand clinging to the wall. Then she releases, the hand disappearing below.

Leaving a faded, bloody hand print.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The news plays from another tiny TV, this one propped up on the kitchen counter.

NEWS ANCHOR

Police are warning that a murderer is still at large.

Jean and Liz and Nick are finishing up lunch, as natural as if they were a family now. Faces solemn as they clean up.

NEWS ANCHOR

And according to the Aconite medical examiner the victim's wounds bare a grisly resemblance to those inflicted on local man, Hank Lenore, who was attacked and killed just four weeks earlier.

There's what looks like a mugshot photo of Bill Hashke on the TV screen. A photo of Hank Lenore appears beside it.

Off Liz, staring at the TV.

INT. TRUCK - AFTERNOON

The MUSIC fading now, as they drive into town. Jean at the wheel, Liz in the middle and Nick at the passenger window.

Nick and Liz are holding hands.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - ACONITE - AFTERNOON

Jean pulls up, parks. From here the entrance to the hardware store can be seen down the block, across the street.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Nick takes a breath, glances at them. Nods. Then he slips out of the truck and heads toward the store.

JEAN
How's your hand?

Liz holds it out. The cut is nearly healed now. Jean nods, knowingly, and then retrieves a cigarette for herself.

LIZ
Sorry if we kept you awake.

Jean just looks at her, smiling. *Is she really sorry?* And Liz just smiles back, shrugs. Jean can't help a short LAUGH.

JEAN
Glad one of us is getting some.

She hands the battered pack over to Liz, who lights up too.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - AFTERNOON

Nick steps inside.

Sees the TV mounted in the corner of the store. The news still playing. The images of Hashke and Hank still there.

And Willard staring at him, that desk fan blowing his hair up off his head.

NICK
Well?

Beat. Willard takes a breath and ambles to the back.

Nick glances out the window.

At the empty parking lot.

Willard returns with a box. Nick pulls out the motorcycle battery, inspects it. Then he slides it back into the box. Grabs three Squirts from a cooler, sets them on the counter.

NICK (cont'd)
The sodas, too.

He tosses down some bills as Willard bags it all up.

WILLARD
Did you kill that Indian?

NICK
(respectful)
He wasn't an Indian. He was a Navajo.

Willard stares at him.

Then a car door SLAMS. Nick glances out the window:

Four men in cheap suits are spilling out of an Escalade.
Gavin Granger is among them, wearing a scarf and sock cap.

Nick is backing away, into the interior of the store, with the bag of merchandise under his arm, and panic in his eyes.

NICK (cont'd)
I'm not here.

WILLARD
What?

NICK
Don't tell them I'm here. If they find me then they're gonna kill you, too, because men like this don't leave witnesses. Do you understand?

WILLARD
Men like who?

Willard glances toward the door as it opens, the men stepping inside. Granger enters last, closing the door behind him. When Willard glances back, Nick is gone.

GRANGER
Good morning.

WILLARD
Noon.

GRANGER
What's that?

WILLARD
I...I said it's noon.

GRANGER
There's what I've been missing: the dry candor of small town America.

One of the men draws the blinds over the window. Another man flips the Open sign around to Closed.

GRANGER (cont'd)
I'm looking for a young man.

ANGLE ON:

Nick hunches down, back against the shelves of the last aisle. Not daring to breathe.

GRANGER (O.S.)
He came through here a few days ago,
ordered a motorcycle battery.

ANGLE BACK TO:

WILLARD
You'll have to be more specific.

GRANGER
I'm confused. My Indian said he
talked to you.

WILLARD
You mean, the Navajo.

Beat. Granger reaches out and plucks Willard's toupee right off his head, looks it over with disdain.

GRANGER
Are we playing games?

WILLARD
No sir.

Granger drops the toupee and places his hand atop the old man's freckled head, tapping his fingers on the skull.

GRANGER
You have information in here. How I
get to it is up to you.

Willard blanches with fear. He raises a hand, pointing toward the back of the store, toward where Nick is hiding.

Granger nods to his men. They draw their guns, fanning out, advancing down the aisles. Granger among them.

They converge on the last aisle.

But Nick isn't there. *The rear exit door is ajar.*

Granger hurries through it.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - CONTINUOUS

And into the back. Blinking into the cold sun, looking up at the tall fence, crowned with razor wire.

Nick's leather jacket flapping up there, stuck on the barbs where he used it to hop over.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Nick is running up from the back of the store with his bag, climbs into the truck as Jean FIRES up the engine.

LIZ

Where's your jacket?

NICK

I outgrew it. Let's go.

And Jean drives them away.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - AFTERNOON

Granger strolls back in. His men exchange looks as he grabs a crow bar from a rack, and walks toward Willard.

WILLARD

I swear it, he was just here.

GRANGER

I believe you.

And Granger hits Willard across the face with the crow bar, splattering blood across the swimsuit calendar on the wall.

Willard crumples to the floor behind the counter.

And Granger swings again and again, repeatedly bringing the crow bar down on the unseen victim, the dull THWAPS becoming increasingly WET in sound. Finally he stops, breathing hard.

He drops the crow bar.

He walks out from behind the counter and toward the door, one of his men handing him a handkerchief with which he wipes the blood from his face.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Jean CRACKS a bottle of Squirt from the driver's seat, takes a long pull. Watching Liz and Nick through the side mirror.

The truck is parked on the edge of the road. The surrounding trees indicate that they're just outside of town.

Liz slides the plank of wood from the bed of the truck to make a ramp, once more. Nick lifts the tarp off the hidden motorcycle, upends it, and wheels it down to the road.

Liz slides the plank into the truck and shuts the tail gate.

Nick wrenches the battery from the compartment, the inside of it bubbling with battery acid, like an open wound.

He pours the soda in, to neutralize the acid, then wipes it clean with a rag. Then he fits the new battery into place.

When he's finished, he glances at Liz.

And she lingers near the truck, staring back at him, alert, anxious, neither one of them ready to part ways.

LIZ

I guess this is goodbye?

NICK

If we're saying goodbye we can do better than this.

She considers this. Then she walks over to Jean.

LIZ

I'm thinking Nick gives me a ride home.

JEAN

I'm thinking it's not a good idea.

LIZ

I'm thinking I'm not really asking.

Jean stares at her, her voice tender:

JEAN

You know this has to end.

LIZ

I know.

Beat. Jean nods, and FIRES up the engine. She puts a hand out, waving to Nick. And Nick waves back, in farewell.

And Jean drives away, leaving them in her wake.

Wind blowing Liz's hair into her face as she stares at Nick, uncertain, but smiling. And Nick, smiling back at her.

EXT. ACONITE - TRAILER PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

The Escalade pulls up in front of Ruby's trailer.

Her sons step into the doorway. Hank Jr holds a rifle in one hand, barrel pointed down. Rob stands just behind him, holding a big hound by the collar as it sniffs the air.

Granger and his men slip out of the car.

GRANGER

Does Ruby Lenore live here?

HANK JR

Who's asking?

GRANGER

You greet everyone with a rifle?

HANK JR

If that car and those men are any indication you're not everyone.

GRANGER

I prefer to speak with her directly.

HANK JR

I don't give two shits what you prefer, mister. You can talk to me--

RUBY (O.S.)

Quit making a spectacle.

Hank Jr defers as Ruby appears at the door, steps outside. She looks Granger and his men over, unimpressed.

Then she glances back at her sons, standing in the doorway.

RUBY

You wanna heat the whole damn neighborhood?

Rob steps inside with the hound, and Hank Jr steps out to stand by his mother, shutting the door behind him.

RUBY (cont'd)
Who are you?

GRANGER
Gavin Granger.

RUBY
Well, an awfully dark cloud has
settled over this town, Mister
Granger, and it's got all of us on
edge. So you'll have to forgive my
sons for their lack of manners.

GRANGER
Understandable.

RUBY
Now. What the hell do you want?

GRANGER
One of my men was killed here
yesterday. According to the news he
died the same way as your husband.

RUBY
The Indian, you mean.

GRANGER
That's right. Perhaps you could shed
some light on this situation.

RUBY
I doubt it. Doesn't fit the pattern.

GRANGER
What pattern?

RUBY
Rumor has it it's a wolf. Livestock
have been attacked in the area, too.

She lights up a cigarette, holding herself against the cold.

RUBY (cont'd)
All of it near where Hank was killed.
This one property, outside of town.

GRANGER
Bill died outside a bar. In town.

RUBY
See, it doesn't fit the pattern.

GRANGER
Who owns this property?

RUBY
A cagey girl, pretty but able. And
her older sister, who raised her.
Neither of them come into town much.

GRANGER
You don't know if she was in town
yesterday, by any chance, do you?

HANK JR
Matter of fact she was. Me and Rob
run into her at the bar. Sluttin' it
up with some asshole from outta town.

GRANGER
Was this outta town asshole wearing a
leather jacket by any chance?

HANK JR
Matter of fact, he was.

Granger smiles.

GRANGER
Where does this girl live, exactly?

EXT. GAS STATION - EVENING

The motorcycle materializes from the rural road. Nick is driving and Liz sits behind him, holding on tight.

They pull into the gas station and climb off the bike. Nick unfastens the gas cap, gestures for Liz to hold the nozzle.

NICK
Here.

She takes it and he heads inside, pulling cash as he goes.

While she fills up the bike her eyes drift up. To the day moon, near full, materializing against the dying light.

She begins to HUM a song, a few bars, then blinks. She turns and Nick is standing there, listening to her.

NICK (cont'd)
What do you see?

LIZ

Jeannie used to say, it's all because
of the moon. The tides. The seasons.
The migrations of animals.

The nozzle CLICKS, full. Liz puts it away and fastens the
gas cap on as she talks, as natural as if it were her bike.

LIZ (cont'd)

If I could I'd tear it right out of
the sky.

He stares at her, this enigma.

LIZ (cont'd)

Anyway. We should get back.

He hands her the helmet. The look of puzzlement on her face.

NICK

It's simple, here. Your throttle and
brake. And here's your clutch, just
like driving a truck. Only more fun.

LIZ

I don't know.

She looks over the bike.

NICK

Hey. You got this.

He believes in her. And for once she believes in herself.

EXT. ACONITE ROAD - NIGHT

The motorcycle glides down the ribbon of highway.

Quick silver under moon light, racing past the dark autumn
trees. Liz steering, and Nick holding her from behind.

LIZ

Do you trust me?

NICK

Yeah.

She flips the head light off.

The dark trees come into relief around them, unfettered by
the glare of light, illuminated only by the moon.

And her eyes glowing yellow behind the visor of the helmet, though Nick can't see it. His hands tighten around her.

They break from the dark of the woods, gliding now into the shimmering silver of the plains. The moon nearly full above.

And the motorcycle below, at one with the darkness.

EXT. THORN HOUSE - NIGHT

The ENGINE fades back up, growing louder.

The bike pulls up from the highway, onto the edge of the Thorn property. Liz cuts the engine, removes her helmet.

Both of them are breathing hard, still rushing.

NICK

You're wild.

He's leaning toward her...

LIZ

You have no idea.

And he kisses her, like it's the last kiss they'll ever have. Then he jerks away. Touches his lip, bleeding.

The look of confusion on his face. The fear on hers...

...she's staring past him as Granger's Escalade swings off the highway. Parks. Fixing Nick and Liz in the headlights.

NICK

Run.

LIZ

No.

She stands beside him, unafraid.

The men step out with pump shot guns. Granger steps to the fore, sizing up the young couple.

Everyone expelling clouds of breath into the chilly air.

Granger steps forward, plucks the gym bag off the bike, unzips it and looks inside.

At the stacks of cash bundled within.

He hands the gym bag off to one of his men, who tosses it into the back seat of the car.

GRANGER

Tell me one thing. How in the hell did you get the better of my Indian?

NICK

I didn't.

Granger stares at him, sensing the fear. Shaking his head because he can't fathom how Nick ever got this far.

GRANGER

You know what? I believe you.

Then Granger raises the shotgun and FIRES--

--as Liz yanks Nick aside, bird shot slapping his shoulder as he tumbles away, narrowly avoiding a direct hit.

Granger pumps the shotgun, the men all surging forward with their rifles, scanning for a target in the dark.

WHAM, Granger tumbles backward, throwing his arm up in defense with Liz on top of him.

Her face sharp with canine features: whiskers, pointed ears, flared nostrils, eyes burning yellow. And *those teeth*, as she bites through Granger's upheld forearm with a WET SNAP.

He SCREAMS.

Off Nick, blinking from a ditch. Staring, in shock.

Rifle butts are raining down atop Liz. She pivots, swiping with her claws to shred an offender's knee caps, crippling him before swiping again to rip his lower jaw clean away.

As Granger crawls toward the Escalade.

BOOM BOOM

The second man firing at Liz, just as she bolts clear--

--the errant bird shot scattering into the third man's face, mangling eyes, nose, and mouth into hamburger.

Granger pulls himself into the Escalade, fumbles with keys.

And Liz lands on the hood, driving her arm through the wind shield as Granger ducks to avoid the claws.

BOOM BOOM

The bird shot knocking Liz off the hood of the car.

Granger puts the car in reverse, kicking up gravel.

The second man reloads the shotgun, pumps, aims as Liz leaps up and over him, taking his head clean away from his torso.

She lands on all fours, holding the head in her claws, the spinal column dangling, as Granger speeds away.

The headless body crumpling to the ground.

Liz pivoting on hind legs, then. Looking right at Nick.

And he rises to his feet, staring at her: the blood-streaked fur along her thighs and elbows, an imperious mane around her neck, monstrous and elegant, wolf-like and human.

He panics, sprinting up the driveway, toward the house.

And Liz drops to all fours to sprint after him.

Nick is closing in on the porch, wild-eyed, toward Jean, who is stepping out the door. That pistol at her side.

And Liz is closing the distance with long strides, ten yards behind Nick now...five...two...

JEAN

Get down!

Nick drops as Jean raises the pistol.

POP.

Liz is hit, tumbling, crashing, skidding to a stop at Nick's feet. A feathered tranquilizer dart lodged in her clavicle.

Nick crawls backward up the porch steps, his eyes stuck on her inert form. She convulses and curls into a fetal ball.

The claws retracting.

The wisps of moonlit fur fading before his eyes.

The fangs in her bloody mouth receding. Her breathing heavy, labored, as if waking from a nightmare.

JEAN (cont'd)

Hey!

Nick snaps out of it, looks at Jean.

JEAN (cont'd)
Are you gonna sit there, or are you
gonna help me get her inside?

Nick nods, clearly still in shock. He tries to stand, then sways, clutching his blood-soaked shoulder.

JEAN (cont'd)
Guess that's a no.

As Nick collapses, unconscious.

INT. ACONITE HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - MORNING

Gavin Granger opens his eyes.

He's laid up in a hospital bed, shirtless, his arm wrapped in bloody gauze, and elevated by wires.

He blinks through a fog of pain medication.

TISH
Thirsty?

She sits in the chair at the foot of the bed.

Granger opens his mouth to speak, coughs.

Tish brings over a bottle of water, unscrews the cap and hands it to Granger, who uses his good hand to drink deeply.

GRANGER
Where's my car?

TISH
Impound.

He's looking around the room, spots his clothes and the gym bag full of money on a side table.

TISH (cont'd)
Some teenagers found you passed out
behind the wheel a half mile outside
of town.

Granger watches Tish's lips move. The vein pulsing in her neck in time with her heart beat. *He can hear the BEATING.*

TISH (cont'd)
Mister Granger?

GRANGER
I don't feel right.

TISH
I imagine not. That bite on your arm
there shattered your ulna and radius,
clean through. It takes a helluva set
of jaws to do that.

Granger is sweating now, feverish as hell.

GRANGER
You wouldn't believe it.

TISH
There's a boat load of things I'm not
inclined to believe, but that doesn't
mean they can't happen.

GRANGER
I'm losing my damn mind.

TISH
What were you doing out there?

GRANGER
He stole from me.

TISH
A young man? Torn-up leather jacket?

He stares at her, sobering.

TISH (cont'd)
We found that same jacket outside a
hardware store. It seems he beat the
clerk to death with a crowbar.

GRANGER
Is that right.

TISH
He's also a suspect in the killing of
an Indian fella named Bill Hashke.
Turns out mister Hashke was employed
by Pandora's Gentleman's Club. I
believe that's your establishment.

Granger just stares at her.

TISH (cont'd)
Whatever vendetta you have with this
guy he's under our jurisdiction now.
(MORE)

TISH (cont'd)
 So if you saw him last night I need
 to know. So I can bring in Liz and
 anyone else who might be helping him.

Granger considers this. Then thinks better of it.

GRANGER
 Truth is...I don't remember.

TISH
 If you're lying that's obstruction of
 justice, and you will be prosecuted.

GRANGER
 You wanna dress up like a policeman
 why don't you do it in the club,
 where you can make some real money?

She just stares at him.

GRANGER (cont'd)
 I can fetch a high dollar for that
 cat between your legs, you're not too
 old yet. Give it some thought.

She steps toward him with her police baton, runs it over his crotch, his face hardening. It's the only thing that has.

TISH
 Knew it. All bluster and no bang.

GRANGER
 (breathing rapid)
 Fuck you.

TISH
 Highly unlikely.

But his breathing doesn't abate, mouth opening and closing, his eyes red-rimmed as the fever takes full hold of him.

TISH (cont'd)
 Granger?

He doubles over, coughing blood and bile into his own lap.

Tish leaps back, covering her face.

TISH (cont'd)
 Jesus...nurse!

Granger releases a low, wet GROWL from his throat.

GRANGER
Something's not right.

Tish exits into the hall.

TISH (O.S.)
Nurse?

Granger lurches sideways, half toppling out of the bed and landing on his feet. He uses his shirt from the table to wrap his arm in a ramshackle sling against his chest.

Then he moves to the door, peers into the hall.

Sees: Tish several yards away, bringing a nurse back, along with two more POLICEMEN.

Granger slings his coat over his shoulders, and grabs the gym bag full of cash, and then pushes the window open.

It's a two-story drop to the pavement below.

There's a gutter pipe running vertically down the side of the building, however. It's his only chance.

He takes a breath and slides out the window, legs first. From this sitting position he leans toward the gutter pipe.

Reaching...

TISH (O.S.) (cont'd)
Stop right there!

...and he slips, falls, dropping straight down.

EXT. ACONITE HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

SMACK, he lands flat on his feet, crouching with the impact.

He rises slowly to a standing position, amazed that the fall has had little effect on him. He looks up.

Tish is at the window, staring down at him. Amazed, too.

Then Granger is running, disappearing out of sight.

INT. THORN HOUSE - LIZ'S BEDROOM - DAY

Nick wakes up. He's shirtless, his shoulder wrapped in gauze. He tries to sit up, GASPS from the pain of it.

He recovers, forces himself up. Swings his legs over the edge of the bed. Drinks the water that's been left for him.

His eyes linger on the side table: disinfectant, bloody forceps, a half dozen shot gun pellets in an ashtray.

He massages his shoulder. Then he rises to his feet.

EXT. THORN HOUSE - BACK PORCH - DAY

Nick steps out the sliding door onto the back porch, one of Liz's blankets wrapped about him.

NICK

Liz?

Nothing. His eyes settle on the storm cellar: The wood doors have been re-patched, unevenly, with corrugated metal.

INT. CELLAR - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens, and Nick stands there looking down. He steps barefoot into the darkness. Scanning the concrete room.

Sees the plate bolted to the wall. The coil of steel cable is fixed to it.

He picks up the iron collar, fixed to the end of the cable. It's heavy in his hand. That might be rust on it. Or blood.

JEAN (O.S.)

Get outta there.

Nick whirls around, sees Jean at the top of the stairs.

EXT. THORN HOUSE - DAY

He emerges from the cellar, following her to the front yard.

JEAN

You have to go.

NICK

What is she?

JEAN

I said, it's time to go.

NICK

You shot her with something.

JEAN
Silver nitrate.

He stares at her. The pieces falling into place.

NICK
And she changes on the full moon?

JEAN
She used to. Then you showed up. Now
who knows what she's capable of?

Jean settles onto the porch steps. She holds a blanket, like a shawl, around her shoulders.

NICK
Maybe she's changing.

JEAN
You saw the graves. Nothing's gonna
change that.

Beat. He sits beside her, staring out at the corn.

JEAN (cont'd)
I remember when they first brought
her home. This stray. She drew these
pictures, went through a whole box of
my Crayons. Wolves and bears and wild
things, marching over waterfalls and
mountains. She made the sounds of the
animals as she drew them. Like a girl
remembering something she'd lost.

A beat, as rumination turns to resentment.

JEAN (cont'd)
But a girl is supposed to grow up.
Shed off that wildness and play by
the rules, and mind her obligations.

NICK
Like you do?

JEAN
Like every woman does.

NICK
Jean, if you feel this way about her
then why do you even stick around?

JEAN
Because. She's all I have left.

EXT. ACONITE TRAILER PARK - LENORE HOUSE - DAY

A KNOCK at the door.

And the hound inside is BARKING.

Another KNOCK, and the door opens, Ruby peering out. Rob behind her, restraining the frenzied dog.

Gavin Granger stands outside in his bloody hospital gown.

RUBY
Jesus, did you lose a bet?

GRANGER
You were right.

RUBY
(over her shoulder)
Get that damn dog in the other room.

Rob retreats with the dog.

RUBY (cont'd)
Right about what?

GRANGER
It's a wolf. More than that.

She's staring at his arm, the blood-stained bandage. His gown, filthy at the bottom hem, and his muddy bare feet.

GRANGER (cont'd)
If you wanna get even then now's the time, before the police get involved.

She looks past him, for any neighbors that might see.

RUBY
Get in here. And wipe your feet.

INT. RUBY'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Granger wipes his feet on the door mat, then steps past her, into the trailer as she locks the door behind him.

RUBY
I'll get you some fresh clothes.
Bathroom's that way.

He heads to the bathroom.

Ruby glances toward the door, behind which the dog is still BARKING. Then she looks toward the bathroom.

Sees Granger watching her, just before he shuts the door.

Off Ruby, bothered by the barking dog.

INT. LENORE HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Granger turns the shower on. Steam is billowing out.

He stands at the bathroom sink, looking at the drawn face in the mirror: eyes blood shot, the surrounding skin jaundiced.

He holds up his wounded arm, flexing the fingers of this hand. Flexing the muscles in the forearm.

Making a fist without effort.

Then he unwraps the bandages, letting them fall to the floor, until he's staring at scarred skin. *Nearly healed.*

He pinches the stitching that remains embedded, and pulls out the long, black strand. Drops it into the toilet.

Then he looks at himself once more. Confused. Horrified.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Liz is filling in the last of three fresh, mounded graves. She wears a heavy coat over her pajamas, and rain boots.

LIZ
That jacket looks good on you.

Nick arrives at the edge of the clearing, showered, boots on, wearing a weathered Carhartt jacket now.

NICK
I know.

He shoots her a half smile, and she smiles faintly back.

NICK (cont'd)
If Jean's giving me your dad's clothes, I know it's time to leave.

Liz's smile fades then.

LIZ
How's your arm?

NICK
It could be worse, if not for you.

LIZ
You're welcome.

NICK
Are those Granger's men?

LIZ
What's left of 'em.

His eyes linger on the fresh graves.

LIZ (cont'd)
We don't have to talk about this like
the morning after a drunk fuck.

NICK
I don't usually talk about it the
morning after. I usually just leave.

LIZ
Right. The only thing men are better
at than comin' is goin'.

NICK
Damn. Is that your line?

LIZ
Depends. Is it true?

He considers that, circling the fresh graves now. Curious:

NICK
What's it like, Liz?

LIZ
Before? I don't know. Before it was
like, I'd change and lose all
control. I was a storm. I'd hardly
remember anything the next day,
except for the fear. And the hunger.

NICK
Before what?

LIZ
Before I met you. Now I'm not afraid.
I'm not hungry. I'm on a motorcycle,
leading the storm whatever way I want
it to go. *I'm learning to control it.*

NICK
You tried to kill me last night.

LIZ
You tried to run.

Beat.

NICK
We could run, together.

LIZ
We could stay here, together.

NICK
If Granger's alive he'll be back.

LIZ
Where would we even go?

NICK
I dunno. Don't you wonder where you come from? Who your real family is--

LIZ
I will not leave my sister.

NICK
Even if she could forgive you for what you are, she'll never forgive you for what you've done.

She knows this to be true. Still:

LIZ
I like you, Nick. I like that you're still standing here, in spite of what you've seen. I like that you're the only guy with a motorcycle I ever met who knows he's not a bad ass.

NICK
Hey.

LIZ
And if you gave me a chance I'd love you. To within an inch of your life.

Off Nick, aroused, threatened, utterly taken by her.

LIZ (cont'd)
But I'm not running away.

NICK

So stay here? Let her lock you up for
the rest of your life?

LIZ

If that's what she needs.

He's shaking his head, stunned:

NICK

I don't understand you.

LIZ

If you ever love someone, you will.

Beat. He turns and walks away.

Off Liz, watching him go. Her heart breaking.

INT. LENORE HOUSE - DAY

The steady BARKING of the hound behind the bedroom door.

Ruby is swaddled in smoke as she puffs a Pall Mall from the recliner, watching Granger with steady eyes.

RUBY

Those clothes work for you?

GRANGER

Sure, as long as I don't concern
myself with comfort or style.

His voice sardonic as he sits in the old recliner, dwarfed
in Hank Sr's shirt and jeans, staring at the wall:

At the half dozen or so taxidermy deer heads up there.

HANK JR

You better eat up, mister Granger.
Get your strength.

Rob and Hank Jr eat from a bucket of KFC at the coffee table
while cleaning their rifles. Granger grabs a bony chicken
thigh and takes a bite, chewing up bone and skin and all.

RUBY

How is it you got away?

GRANGER

My men shot her, gave me time to get
to the car--

HANK JR
They shot her?

GRANGER
Bird shot. Hardly slowed her down.

Ruby is staring at Granger as he swallows the thigh bone. Then he chews into another, his teeth CRUNCHING savagely.

HANK JR
Well, we're using slugs here, so that should slow her down for good.

GRANGER
You really have no idea what you're dealing with.

Ruby and Hank Jr exchange looks.

RUBY
We still got that bullet press?

HANK JR
Yeah. Dad kept it in storage.

She stubs the cigarette, lifts herself up, talking over her shoulder as she disappears into the kitchen.

RUBY (O.S.)
What about the bullet molds?

HANK JR
They're with the press. There's brass casings, too, along with primers.

ROB
Where you goin', mom?

Rob swigs from a quart of milk to swallow the food, a milk mustache on his upper lip now. Granger stares at him.

ROB (cont'd)
Mama?

That's when Ruby comes back, carrying two boxes, sets them on the coffee table. She opens them to reveal a set of silverware in the larger box, and jewelry in the other.

ROB (cont'd)
What are you doing with grandma's good silver?

RUBY
Would you shut up and wipe your face?

Rob recoils, wipes the milk from his upper lip.

As Ruby pulls her wedding ring off, pops the tiny diamond out, and holds up the silver band to the light.

RUBY (cont'd)
We're gonna need all the silver we
can get.

Granger looks on, his face framed in the circle.

EXT. THORN HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - AFTERNOON

Liz stands at the porch, arms crossed, and shivering when the motorcycle ENGINE cuts the air.

Nick, on his bike, is cruising down the drive way. He turns onto the main road, and speeds away without looking back.

Jean steps up behind her, wraps a blanket about her shoulders, warming her. Trying to console her.

JEAN
I'm thinking maybe we get rid of this
place. Start over, somewhere new.

Liz watches the plume of dust Nick has left in his wake.

LIZ
I'm thinking it's too late for that.

Liz heads inside, leaving Jean alone on the porch.

EXT. RUBY'S TRAILER - AFTERNOON

A plank of wood has been laid across two saw horses.

Rob works an acetylene torch against a kitchen ladle, melting the silver trinkets in this crude crucible.

Neighbors look on from their porches, smoking cigarettes.

LATER:

Rob is pouring melted silver into the bullet molds.

LATER:

Using smelting tongs, Rob submerges the fresh molds into the rain barrel. A pall of steam HISSES, pluming out.

LATER:

Ruby pops a fresh round from the bullet press, adds it to a row of a dozen other .22 caliber silver bullets.

INT. THORN HOUSE - HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

The familiar ritual. Liz marching down the hallway as she lights a cigarette. Steeling herself for another moon.

EXT. CELLAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Liz finishes smoking the cigarette, flicks it away.

With Jean's help they pull the bolts from the cellar doors, and lift them open on heavy hinges.

INT. CELLAR - MOMENTS LATER

Liz kneels in the shaft of daylight that's shining in.

Jean fixes the collar on her neck, pauses. Something hesitating in her gesture. It's guilt.

Liz just stares up at her, nods. *Do it.*

And Jean takes a breath, locks the collar with the padlock. That's when Liz hands her the battered cigarette pack.

A gesture of truce, if there ever was. Jean nods and leaves.

And moments later the cellar doors are closing, darkness falling swiftly over Liz as one door SLAMS shut.

She's reaching for the claw marks in the floor--

--then the other door SLAMS, everything going black.

EXT. THE HARE & THE HOUND TAVERN - LATE AFTERNOON

The parking lot is full of trucks, or old beaters.

The police cruiser pulls in, from the road. Parks.

HANK JR (PRE-LAP)

The world is a violent place.

INT. THE HARE & THE HOUND TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Granger sits at the end of the bar, slightly removed from the two dozen men who are listening to Hank Jr. There's no music. Hardly anyone drinking. This is a business meeting.

HANK JR

And that violence has taken a shape.
And it lives among us.

REESE

You saw this thing?

ROB

My dad saw it, just before it tore
him to pieces.

HANK JR

So did that Indian fellah, right
outside this bar. And Willard too.
They caved in his skull to keep him
from telling what he saw.

REESE

I dunno, Junior. You can't hang all
these killings on some folk tale.

GRUMBLES of skepticism roil up from the crowd. No one takes much notice as Tish and Harmon step in from outside.

HANK JR

Every tale has some truth to it.

BUD

All you're doing is scaring people.

GRANGER

You're not scared enough.

Granger steps up from the shadows. Feverish, pale and sweating, and his eyes - *this is a man who's seen some shit.*

GRANGER (cont'd)

You've been stumbling through a
broken town so long you can't afford
to think about the wolf that's out
there. Eager for you to fall down.

He looks out over the small crowd, speaking to their fears.

GRANGER (cont'd)

But she is there. And she's hungry.
She set herself apart to hide that
hunger. A hunger that three of my
men, with shot guns, couldn't stop.

The solemn faces stare back at him.

GRANGER (cont'd)

But she's not as hungry as you all.

He brings up the old gym bag, opens it up, begins laying out
the stacks of cash along the bar. You could hear a pin drop.

GRANGER (cont'd)

I need men who can shoot. Tonight.
Once you've killed the beast, and her
kin, you can divide this among you.

The men are exchanging looks now. Tish steps forward to
intervene but Harmon grabs her, warning her against it.

HANK JR

We got mortgages. Families. Rents
waiting on paychecks that ain't
comin'. We can only pray so much.

REESE

If she is what you say she is, Hank,
then...I mean how do we even kill it?

HANK JR

Now we're asking the right questions.

Hank Jr lays three boxes of .22 cartridges on the bar.

HANK JR (cont'd)

I know most of you got a rifle or
pistol that'll hold a .22 cartridge.

BUD

For shit sake, a .22 is a bee sting
on a bear's ass.

HANK JR

It's not about the size, Bud, you
should know that better than anyone.

Grumbles of laughter, the men thawing. Getting on board.

HANK JR (cont'd)

These are made of silver. We cast 'em
just earlier today.

Hank Jr opens a box, holds one up to the light. The men surge around him, to get a look at the shiny silver bullet.

GRANGER

All you gotta do is wing her, and let chemistry do the rest.

The men are exchanging looks now. At the money and the bullets, and at each other. The tide turning.

TISH

This has gone far enough--

HARMON

Tish.

He tries to shush her but everyone is staring at them now.

HARMON (cont'd)

(addressing the crowd)

I mean, uh, this has gone far enough. We're getting to the bottom of things here, fellas, but there's a process, and that process needs time to work.

GRANGER

It's been a month since Hank Lenore was killed, and more killed since.

TISH

There's no evidence that these murders are even related.

GRANGER

That's the best you can do?

TISH

If you want justice, Mister Granger, then give a statement. Press charges.

GRANGER

While this thing makes a run for it? Or kills another innocent person?

More nodding and MURMURS of approval.

HARMON

Now hold on, you're speculating--

HANK JR

We've held on long enough.

Hank Jr starts distributing the cartridges as the men reach out, pushing and shoving to be part of the action.

Tish moves along the wall, making a circle toward Granger.

HANK JR (cont'd)

(rote)

These men are in fear of their lives, and they have a right to self-defense if the law has failed to arbitrate--

HARMON

You better arbitrate that line of bullshit dribbling out of your mouth.

HANK JR

And you better step aside, so we can do the job that you failed to do.

The men are spilling toward the door now and out into the fading light. Hank Jr and Reese and Bud among them.

At the bar, Granger finishes returning the cash to the bag for safe keeping. Then he turns for the door.

But Tish steps in front of him.

TISH

You're under arrest for inciting a riot, and conspiracy to murder.

GRANGER

Ever hear of the First Amendment?

He shoves past her, and she draws her pistol and swings it across the back of his head, knocking him clear down.

TISH

Ever hear of the Second?

Harmon and the remaining bar patrons are staring, impressed.

EXT. THE HARE & THE HOUND TAVERN - DUSK

Tish and Harmon step out, pushing Granger ahead of them in hand cuffs. He's GROANING, barely conscious enough to walk.

The last of the trucks are peeling away down the road.

HARMON

We need to wait for back up.

TISH
 Call it in from the car. We gotta get
 ahead of this thing.

Tish pushing on, taking control now. Harmon ushers Granger
 into the back of the cruiser.

Re-locking Granger's hand cuffs to a bar in the back seat.

Harmon is moving around to the driver's side:

TISH (cont'd)
 I'm driving.

HARMON
 I'm the senior officer.

TISH
 Doesn't mean I can't drive.

She storms past him, plucking the keys from him and sliding
 behind the wheel. He stands there, flabbergasted.

TISH (cont'd)
 Shit or get off the pot, Harmon.

He climbs into the passenger seat as she FIRES up the car.

From the entrance to the bar, Rob is watching them all go.

EXT. HIGHWAY REST STOP - DUSK

Eighteen wheelers WHINE on the highway nearby.

Nick exits a restroom, heading back toward his bike, his
 helmet under his arm. He looks bothered. Distracted.

Then he notices an old MAN (60s) walking past him, to the
 car where a WOMAN (60s) pours over a road map. He hands her
 a Squirt, and hovers over the map alongside her.

She's concentrating and he leans into her ear, whispers
 something. She smiles. A secret, or a vow.

Nick glances back then. Toward the town he's just left.

EXT. THORN PROPERTY - EVENING

A half dozen trucks materialize from the blood red horizon.
 Sweeping past the corn field.

Hank Jr leans from a passenger window, the breeze washing over him, alive with purpose.

The trucks close in on the Thorn house, looming beyond, a ribbon of smoke curling up from the chimney.

INT. THORN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

And Jean finishes adding a log to the fire, stands up when she hears the DRONE OF ENGINES. She looks out the window.

She can see the trucks, parking along the main road.

She brings up the battered pack of cigarettes. There's one left. She lights up, a woman facing her execution.

The full moon visible against the dying light.

INT. STORM CELLAR - INTERCUT

Moon light shines through the riven storm cellar doors, illuminating Liz, chained up. She reaches out...

...lays her hand into the claw marks, illuminated in the moon light. *And hair sprouts from the knuckles, the fingers widening, and the long curved claws growing out.*

INT. LIVING ROOM - INTERCUT

Jean grabs a break-action double barrel shotgun from atop the book case, drops the hinge and slides two cartridges into the breech. Then she SNAPS it home.

EXT. THORN PROPERTY - EVENING

The men pile out of their trucks, bearing gas lanterns and cocking their rifles. Modern day pitchforks and torches.

They gather around Hank Jr as he addresses them all:

HANK JR
We'll head up the main drive.

He glances at Bud and Reese, who nod, anxious to see blood.

HANK JR (cont'd)
Rest of you fan out. Chances are we flush 'em into the corn. Holler when you make a kill.

Nods all around. Then Hank Jr starts walking up the driveway, the two men beside him, also carrying rifles, a thin ground fog roiling about their legs as they advance.

The remaining men disappear one by one into the corn field.

EXT. ACONITE ROAD - EVENING

The police cruiser tears down the road, lights flashing.

HARMON (O.S.)
Got a 10-46 at the Thorn Property,
requesting backup ASAP.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

In the back seat, Granger's head is bowed, GROANING low in pain as he rouses. Tish drives as Harmon works the radio:

TISH
Tell me something, Granger...

DISPATCH (V.O.)
10-4. Sending three units. Stand by.

TISH
...how do you drop from a two-story window and land on your feet?

Granger's groaning dissolves into a long, low GROWL...

The police officers glance into the rear view mirror:

Granger's head is bowed, his body swaying back and forth.

TISH (cont'd)
Granger?

He jerks suddenly at the handcuffs that bind him to the bar in the back seat, startling them both.

Oncoming headlights sweep across the windshield, a car WHOOSHING past in the other lane. It's unsettling.

Harmon turns in his seat to looks at their captive head on. He can see the full moon rising through the back window.

HARMON
Mister Granger?

Granger goes still. Stops breathing.

He looks up as another sweep of oncoming headlights reveal him - *eyes yellow, grinning, a mouth full of jagged teeth.*

Then the headlights pass, enveloping Granger in darkness.

HARMON (cont'd)
What the fuck--

Granger lunges, grabbing Harmon's face in his jaws and pulling back with enough power to drag the older man right over the seat, arms thrashing and muffled SCREAMING--

TISH
Harmon!

Harmon kicks blindly, hysterically, splintering the wind shield, kicking Tish in the face as she jerks the wheel.

Into another pair of oncoming headlights.

A truck's horn *BLARING.*

EXT. THORN HOUSE - NIGHT

FLASH goes a match, as Hank Jr lights a cigarette.

He smokes, standing a few yards from Liz's porch, alongside his boys. Their rifles resting in the crooks of their arms.

HANK JR
Liz Thorn!

The door opens, and Jean steps outside, smoking down what's left of the cigarette. The men in the yard staring.

JEAN
She left already. With that boy.
They're long gone, now.

HANK JR
Is that right?

JEAN
That's right.

HANK JR
And where did they go?

JEAN
If I knew that, well, it'd be none of your damn business.

She flicks the cigarette away.

HANK JR

I won't believe after all you been
through, Jean, you'd just let her go.

JEAN

I wouldn't have believed it either.

INT. STORM CELLAR - INTERCUT

Liz's hulking shape in the near dark, panting, then going still. Listening, as Jean's words drift to her ears:

JEAN (O.S.)

But it would have been selfish to
make her stay. I can see that now.

EXT. THORN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She steps to the edge of the porch to be sure she's heard by the men. And by her sister:

JEAN

I needed to let her go. So she could
have some kinda life. For both of us.
I just hope, one day, she can forgive
me for taking this long to see it.

The men exchange looks. Jean concludes, defiant once more:

JEAN (cont'd)

Now. Before I call the police I'm
gonna politely suggest that you
gentlemen, please, get the fuck off
of my property.

Hank Jr drops the cigarette, steps on it to put it out.

HANK JR

Not 'til we've had a look around.

Beat. Jean steps back inside, SLAMMING the door behind her.

Hank Jr glances at Reese, nods to him.

Reese scurries over to the tall stack of wood along side the house. When he hops up onto it, it shudders under his weight, collapses just as he grabs a hold of the eaves.

Hank Jr COCKS his rifle.

Reese hoists himself up, scrambling to the chimney. He whips his jacket off, drapes it over the top, blocking the smoke.

INT. THORN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The fireplace flames shudder, then go still. Smoke pooling.

Jean has the shotgun in the crook of one arm, filling her pockets with extra shells from an old box. That's when she notices the smoke, blooming out into the living room.

When she sees what's happening she hurries into the kitchen, the sound of the FAUCET, then reappears with a glass.

She pours water over the flames, creating a plume of smoke as she extinguishes the fire for good.

Then she moves across the living room to the front window, pulls a curtain back and opens it, waving the smoke out.

EXT. THORN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Hank Jr brings up the .22 rifle, and FIRES.

INT. THORN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jean snaps back, falling across the floor.

One lens of her glasses shattered where the bullet passed through her eye. Blood is trickling down her face and pooling about her head. The other eye staring, lifeless.

INT. STORM CELLAR - INTERCUT

The wolf shape jerks at the collar, frantic, PANTING, fighting against the cable. But it holds. Unbreakable.

EXT. THORN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Bud stares, a bit rattled. Wasn't quite ready to go this far. On the roof Reese is more excited:

REESE
Did you get her?

Hank Jr cocks the rifle, ejecting the spent brass casing and chambering the next round.

HANK JR
One down, two to go.

INT./EXT. POLICE CRUISER - ACONITE ROAD - NIGHT

The steady TICKING of the busted radiator.

That thin veil of fog creeping along the ground.

Tish lies on the pavement here, amid broken glass. Blood on her face, splayed partially outside the driver's side door.

Her eyes flicker open.

She looks back, seeing in her upside down perspective the truck they hit. It blocks the road, turned at an angle.

The DRIVER leans from his door, held in place by the seat belt. His face covered in blood. Hand dangling, lifeless.

A LOW GROWL gets Tish's attention, and she looks back toward the car she's still buckled up partially inside of.

She sees the contorted form of Harmon's body inside. It's twitching.

Her eyes focus.

She realizes that Harmon is twitching because something is chewing on him. Now she can hear the soft TEARING of meat.

She reaches for her gun, unfastens the safety catch.

The CHEWING stops.

Yellow eyes peer at her now from the darkest recesses of the wrecked car.

And she stares back.

Then those eyes surge toward her.

She JERKS as jaws grabs her leg, pulling her in, and she's SCREAMING in pain, holding onto the door to resist.

She gets the pistol free - BANG BANG BANG - firing into the interior of the car. Granger GROANS and she pulls loose.

She's scrambling backward out onto the pavement.

She rises unsteadily to her feet, aims again - BANG BANG...

But Granger only ROARS. Bucking violently now against his confinement. *The whole car rocking back and forth.*

Tish lowers the gun, realizing she's unable to kill him.

She backs away, turns and limps off toward the edge of the corn field nearby, soon disappearing among the stalks.

On the moonlit horizon, far beyond, is the Thorn house.

INT. THORN HOUSE - NIGHT

Hank Jr and Bud step inside, handkerchiefs wrapped about their faces to rebate the smoke. Only their eyes visible.

Hank Jr walks right past Jean's corpse. But Bud lingers, staring, rattled by the body.

HANK JR

Hey?

Bud looks up.

HANK JR (cont'd)

I'll be out back. Check the other rooms. Shoot anything that moves.

Bud nods as Hank Jr retreats down the hall.

INT. LIZ'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door swings inward and Bud sweeps in, the rifle up. He scans the room. Nothing. He lowers the gun, staring.

At the the curtain over the sliding glass doors. It's roiling inward on a breeze.

He walks over, brushes the curtain aside and sees that the sliding glass door is cracked. Open.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A pair of boots step into the room, near Jean's body.

--it's Nick, kneeling down to look at Jean. His face solemn.

He scoops her up in his arms, and lays her reverently on the couch. Sitting beside her for a beat to take this in.

He takes a breath, lets it go. He grabs the tranquilizer pistol from her pocket and the key from her necklace.

EXT. THORN HOUSE - YARD - NIGHT

Hank Jr kicks in the barn door, looking around, gun up. He concludes it's empty, and turns back to the yard, his eyes zeroing in on something. He heads that way.

Past the motorcycle parked nearby.

Until he's standing, at last, over the storm cellar doors - a muffled GROWLING and MEWLING echoing from within.

He pulls open one door, aiming into the dark, and takes careful steps as he descends.

INT. STORM CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

He brings the rifle up as he gets to the middle of the stairwell. Where he stops, crouching. Looking down.

Lowering the handkerchief around his face to reveal his mouth ajar, his eyes staring. Moon light streaming past him to illuminate the thing on the leash that we cannot see.

It's GROWLING. The sound of the CABLE as it thrashes now.

Hank Jr is shaking his head in grim disbelief. Then he raises the rifle, taking aim.

NICK (O.S.)

Hey.

He whips around as Nick grabs the rifle barrel, kicking him in the chest, knocking him down the steps, to the floor.

Hank Jr rights himself, draws his pistol, aims at Nick--

--as Liz lunges to the end of the leash, hooking him with her claws, pulling him into the dark, his SCREAM CUT SHORT by the WET RIPPING of flesh and cartilage.

Nick lowers himself to the floor, breathing hard, terrified. Liz lunges toward him as he stumbles back, one hand out.

NICK

LIZ!

And she stops, straining against the taut, steel cable.

The crimson face inches from his outstretched palm.

The air of her powerful lungs blowing his hair back.

A low GROWL, as she sniffs his hand. *Recognizing him...*

He reaches for the iron collar, the key in hand, and Liz jerks at the chain, anxious to be free. *Hungry for it.*

Nick recoils, wipes the sweat off his palms. He clutches the collar and padlock in one quick motion, sliding in the key.

CLICK.

The collar falls away. She stands to her full height now.

NICK (cont'd)
Hey...you got this.

Beat. She blinks, *hearing him.*

Then she bolts forward and *he jumps aside* as she bounds up the stairs and disappears into the night.

Off Nick, watching her go, his eyes wide with wonder.

EXT. THORN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

And she's bounding across the yard as Bud emerges from the house, staring in shock before raising his rifle, fumbling with the safety as she closes in. Swiping with her claws.

An arc of blood across the side of the house.

And she leaps to the hood of the truck, and from there to the roof, PANTING up the slope, to the chimney.

Grabbing a hold of the brickwork, her claws leaving grooves as she spins herself around, to the apex of the house.

HOWLING into the night - a life time of pent-up fury unleashed upon the darkness at last.

ANGLE ON:

The faces of men in the corn field, frozen. Horrified.

ANGLE ON:

Tish, humbled too, to hear a HOWL so animal and yet human.

ANGLE BACK TO:

The roof top.

From here Liz sees the corn field stretching away, and the line of lamp lights where the huntsmen are advancing.

She lets out with a hungry GROWL and leaps to the yard below, bounding toward them.

REVEAL: Reese, lying flat against the opposite slope of the roof, terrified out of his fucking mind.

He stands up, panting, and raises his rifle, aiming at Liz from this vantage point. She's almost to the corn--

BANG

--and Reese pitches sideways, tumbling down the roof, and careening over the edge.

ANGLE ON:

The yard, where Nick stands with Hank Jr's rifle, ejecting the spent brass. He looks over just in time--

ANGLE ON:

--to see Liz disappear into the the corn field.

INT. CORN FIELD - CONTINUOUS

And Liz is running now at full speed under the moonlight.

Her strides long, fluid, liberated as she revels in her power. Her feet and hands barely touching the ground.

Zeroing in on a pocket of lamp light.

Cutting down a row of corn, as two men materialize in the dark. Their rifles up as they turn too late.

Her claws flash.

Blood spattering the corn stalks.

The gas lamp falling to the ground, shattering, going dark.

ANGLE ON:

That bird's eye view of the field - GUN SHOTS and SCREAMS erupting as the line of lamp lights extinguish one by one.

EXT. ACONITE ROAD - NIGHT

Red blue police lights shimmer off the bits of broken glass.

Three police cars cruise up and stop, several yards from the wreck: Tish's car, and the truck it hit, are blocking the road. The dead DRIVER hanging outside his truck door.

COP 1 steps out of his vehicle, staring at the damage.

His partner, COP 2, runs to the overturned police vehicle, checking for survivors. He swallows, staring, horrified.

COP 1
Is it Harmon?

Cop 2 nods, grimly. The cops exchange looks. Then:

COP 1 (cont'd)
And Tish?

Cop 2 has his flashlight out now, shakes his head.

Cop 1 looks out over the corn field now, the tall stalks swaying in the night wind. Something ominous about it.

COP 1 (cont'd)
Alright boys, set a winch, and let's haul this shit outta the way.

Off Cop 2's face as more GUNSHOTS erupt from the corn field.

EXT. CORN FIELD - NIGHT

Tish is running as fast as she can go on her bad leg. She looks back once, down the corridor of crooked stalks, then turns to keep running--

THUMP

--she runs into a MAN (40s) from the mob. He turns, aiming his gun at her, ready to shoot.

TISH
Whoa!

When he hears her voice he lowers the gun, recognizing her.

MAN
You could get hurt out here--

WHAM - a freight train of fur and claws ROARS past her, taking the man right off his feet.

And Tish is running again, the other way.

TISH
Oh god oh god oh god...

More SCREAMING behind her, followed by a STACCATO OF GUN FIRE. Several corn stalks splitting with bullets as she...

EXT. THORN HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

...emerges from the corn field.

And Nick stands in the yard, raises the rifle when he sees her, and she raises her gun too.

TISH
You?

NICK
Me?

TISH
What the fuck is going on?

NICK
What do you mean?

TISH
I mean what the fuck is going on?!

She's hobbling toward him, her gun aimed at him.

NICK
I...I don't know where to start.

TISH
Granger. He just...then he just...
then he wasn't human.

That's when Granger lurches from the corn field, streaked in blood, a broken handcuff at either wrist.

Unlike Liz, he's a mutant of wolf and man, more snout than face, ill-proportioned, grotesquely ursine. An abomination.

He lets out a low GROWL.

Off Tish, *Fuck this*, and she makes a run for the truck.

Nick stares at Granger, shocked.

Granger lopes toward him, and Nick raises the rifle, FIRES--
--as Granger bolts clear, into the corn field--
--BANG BANG *CLICK* as Nick comes up empty on the rifle,
throws it down, and draws the tranquilizer pistol.

Scanning the dark. It's eerily SILENT.

Another HOWL shatters the night. Now Nick is running too.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Tish hunches in the passenger seat, examining her bloody ankle: Two half moon-shaped marks where Granger bit her.

Nick leaps into the driver's side, SLAMS the door. Locks it as Tish pulls her pant leg down to hide the wound from him.

He checks the visor for keys.

TISH
No one ever puts their keys there--

Granger LANDS on the hood of the car, a piece of the darkness come alive, and PUNCHES the wind shield, spider webbing the glass as Tish scrambles to re-load her pistol.

WHAM

Granger hits the windshield again, glass exploding inward.

They both flinch as Granger reaches in--

--and *Liz slams into him*, taking him clear off the hood of the truck, grappling and SNARLING into the moonlit yard.

NICK
Go!

Tish opens the passenger side, and Nick slides after her.

EXT. YARD - CONTINUOUS

They drop out of the truck, staying low, as the battle rages on the opposite side. Hurrying to the rear of the truck--

--WHAM, as it shudders from an impact, windows shattering.

They crouch near the tail lights, peeking into the yard.

Granger tumbles into view, as if thrown. He rights himself, sniffs the air, clocks Nick and Tish. Surges toward them.

And Liz slides into view, *between Granger and them.*

TISH

Liz?

Liz stands before them, protective. Then Granger lunges, slamming into Liz, driving her back as Nick grabs Tish's hand, and they're running across the yard, to the porch.

A fierce YELP, and Nick glances back.

Sees Granger sprinting toward the house.

He aims the tranquilizer pistol and FIRES--

--as Granger feints to one side, revealing LIZ sprinting up behind him *as the dart hits her.* She tumbles, skids away.

NICK

Shit! Cover me.

Tish raises her service pistol and fires--

BANG BANG BANG

--driving GRANGER back, SNARLING, recoiling at the sting of lead as Nick sprints into the yard, to Liz's side, scoops her up with one arm, and carry/drags her back to the porch.

As Tish continues BANG BANG CLICK - *out of ammo now.*

And Granger snorts, circling around for a final approach, sprinting toward the house as Tish leaps inside--

INT. THORN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

--and SLAMS the door, sliding the three bolts into place.

WHAM

As Granger rams into it, the whole frame shuddering.

Nick leaps forward and, with Tish's help, pulls a book shelf down sideways to block the door--

--WHAM again, and a bolt tears away from the jam.

Liz sits up, *human now*, groggy, covered in blood, her clothes torn. Waking from a dream, into a nightmare.

Tish stares at Liz, incredulous.

WHAM

Another bolt comes loose, the wood splintering.

And Liz clocks the double-barrel shotgun on the ground, grabs it, checks to be sure it's loaded.

WHAM

The door splintering inward completely now with the book shelf slowly GRINDING out of the way, Granger advancing.

LIZ
Get behind me.

Nick and Tish step behind Liz as she rises to her feet, aims the shotgun and fires both barrels--

BOOM BOOM

--and Granger ROARS, fur bursting, but it doesn't stop him as he lurches into the room, rising to his full height.

And Liz brandishes the shotgun like a club now.

And Tish tosses Nick her pepper spray. Off his look: *what the fuck!* but it's all he has, so he aims it at Granger.

And Tish brandishes her police baton.

And the look on all their faces is pure desperation. Pure defiance. Together, a pack, making its final stand.

As Granger ROARS, and lunges toward them.

BANG

He stumbles.

Stops.

Turns, revealing the bullet hole in his back, *the coarse fur reverting to human flesh.*

Beyond the doorway, the Buick is parked in the yard. Ruby Lenore stands at the driver-side door, rifle in hand.

She COCKS the .22, ejecting the spent brass, aims again.

Granger staggers toward her...

EXT. THORN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

...across the porch, and she's marching toward him too.

BANG

She hits him in the leg and it gives out and still he comes, dragging the hindquarter through a trail of blood.

BANG

His other leg goes out and he drops to his fore paws, PANTING and GROWLING, dragging himself forward.

BANG

She hits him in the chest, and he finally collapses.

He's spitting up blood, the fur on his face receding as he reverts to human form. Staring up at the moon.

Then Ruby stands over him, her face eclipsing that moon.

The face of Gavin Granger emerges, his lips opening and closing as he drowns in blood. And Ruby watches him die.

Rob stands at the Buick's passenger-side door, holding up his iPhone, filming the whole thing, his mouth ajar.

Tish and Nick step onto the porch, staring at Granger.

RUBY
Where's my boy?

Tish glances at Nick. He shakes his head.

Ruby absorbs that like a blow to the heart, and turns to the corn field. Her eyes a thousand miles away.

From the main road the three police cars are arriving, making their way down the driveway now.

INT./EXT. THORN HOUSE - NIGHT

The strobing of police lights play off the inside of the house as the cops show up.

Liz kneels at the couch, holding Jean in her arms, rocking back and forth, both of them tiny in the middle of this vast, ruined space. The world mercifully quiet at last.

FADE TO:

INT. THORN HOUSE - JEAN'S ROOM - MORNING

Liz sits on Jean's bed. A silent goodbye. She looks as beat up on the outside as she feels inside.

She stares at the opposite wall, solemn, tears in her eyes.

It's a wall we haven't seen. Some papers are taped up there, the only decorations in the room. They're Crayon drawings:

Wild things marching over waterfalls and mountains. Liz's five-year-old signature in the faded corner of each drawing.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Liz takes a swig off the bottle of Jean's mezcal. There's a third mound of rocks, beside her parents'.

LIZ

Goddammit, Jeannie. I miss you.

(beat)

I wasn't a good person, I know. But with you I was still a person.

Liz caps the bottle and leaves it by Jean's grave.

LIZ (cont'd)

Thank you for showing me how to love.

She glances at Nick, who stands at the edge of the clearing beside Tish. The man she's come to love.

Liz drapes the necklace and key over Jean's grave. Then she walks away. At the edge of the clearing she hands Tish a plastic baggie, folded up. We cannot see what's inside.

Tish tucks it into her pocket.

LIZ (cont'd)

Thanks. For everything.

Tish nods. Then Nick takes Liz's hand, and they walk away together. Off Tish, watching them go.

EXT. ACONITE STEEL PLANT - DAY

A fire burns.

A shallow construction site dumpster re-purposed as a pyre.

It sits just outside the threshold of the old steel plant, the intricate scaffolding, derricks, and smelting apparatus winding away colossal and silent in the darkened background.

Dozens of people gathered around the pyre, including Tish. They're all silent, bearing witness to Granger's cremation:

A charred frame enveloped in fire, with a broken handcuff gleaming around either wrist.

Tish blinks, *her nostrils flaring.*

TISH

Ruby.

Ruby Lenore steps up beside her, their silhouettes against the unholy blaze of the pyre.

RUBY

How's the leg?

TISH

I'll live.

RUBY

You heal fast.

TISH

I am sorry about your son.

RUBY

I wonder.

Tish looks at her, unsure what she means.

RUBY (cont'd)

I just can't believe that Granger's responsible for all that's happened.

TISH

There's a boat load of things I'm not inclined to believe, Ruby, but that doesn't mean they can't happen.

Tish takes Ruby's hand and drops the plastic baggie into it, that she got from Liz. Ruby opens it up.

TISH (cont'd)
Granger left the hospital in a hurry.
Among his things we found that.

It's her husband's wedding band.

Ruby gives her a long look. She nods, accepting that - she needs to. Then she walks away.

Off Tish, *her eyes yellow with the reflection of the fire.*

EXT. HIGHWAY REST STOP - DUSK

Liz emerges from the restroom, walking back toward the parking lot. She glances over, stops.

Sees two young GIRLS play-running after each other, their parents looking on from a picnic table nearby.

Nick is walking up, hands her a Squirt.

NICK
You okay?

LIZ
I want to find out where I came from.
Will you help me?

Nick smiles, nods. He's all in. MUSIC fades in...

EXT. HIGHWAY - DUSK

...swelling in gritty, driving triumph as the motorcycle speeds down the highway, into the reddening west.

Nick sitting behind, holding Liz with his good arm, as she steers. In charge of their destiny now.

- FADE OUT