

HOSPITALITY

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BLACK.

Shallow breathing, growing in intensity, followed by a sharp and sudden smash of glass.

INT. A BATHROOM - NIGHT

Fresh blood drips from a broken mirror.

Dragging her body across the shards, an unidentified WOMAN panics and pleads for her life.

From above, the hand of an unknown MAN snatches her by the hair, pulling tight.

Without mercy his fist hammers into the woman's already battered face: once, twice, three times; her blood-drenched hair covers her anguished face.

Her WHITE nightie is torn, doused in blood and tears.

With a subdued cry, she attempts to stand. The man permits her to - toying with her - then drags her back down.

As the woman slumps to the floor, her hand rakes across a shelf, knocking sundry items: a straight razor and a tub of talcum powder falls, bursts open.

The woman curls up on the tiled floor, whelping like a beaten animal.

Next, a brutal kick to her face: her nose bursts, thick crimson mixing with the soft white powder. As she struggles to stand once more, she slips on a puddle of her own blood.

With trembling hands the woman clutches the razor, threatens her assailant.

A sinister laugh drowns her tears of desperation.

With one precise move, the man boots the razor from her hand, grasps her by the throat, squeezes, then smashes her head against the porcelain sink bowl.

Her body crumples, writhing.

One last attempt to crawl to freedom: she drags herself across the floor - no more than a foot - before her body and her spirit fails.

The man's scornful laugh echoes, relishing his victory.

From the sideboard, he grabs a pair of hair straighteners, approaches the woman.

She panics and pleads: pointless. The woman's blood-soaked skin hisses as the man SCALDS her cheek.

She howls as the man yanks the cord from the straighteners and binds her wrists: on one wrist she wears a CHAKRA BRACELET: an emblem of protection that is powerless in this hideous moment.

The man rumples a red handkerchief into a tight ball and forces it down the woman's throat. She struggles in vain to retch it out, when the man whips a leather belt from the top stitching of his jeans, curls it around his clenched fist, yanks it tight, then -

BLACK.

A series of lashes followed by muffled shrieks of agony.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Relentless snowfall. A thick blanket of fog.

A beat-up Volvo Estate fishtails along a desolate highway.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Country music crackles from the radio. A hand grips the wheel. On the wrist - a CHAKRA BRACELET.

Reveal CALLIE (late 20's). From her tawdry jacket she swipes a paper bag concealing a bottle of liquor, takes a swig, and another, when -

A haulage truck emerges from the fog, blasting its horn. Callie yanks the wheel, slewing onto the hard shoulder.

CALLIE

Asshole!

Glancing behind her, she watches the truck melt into the mist.

She swivels her neck, faces forward, stares into the rear view mirror: a pair of eyes stare back at her.

CALLIE (cont'd)

Why the fuck ain't you asleep?

The eyes continue to stare. Empty. Saddened.

CALLIE (cont'd)
I asked you a goddamn question!

She swings her neck around, glares at a young boy - RIVER (10) - curled up on the back seat, shaking, tears forming in his eyes.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Quit bein' a sissy! If I wanted a lil girl I would-a had one. Now get some shut eye.

RIVER
Can't sleep.

CALLIE
You'd better.

She faces forward, her hand slipping on the wheel as she relishes another swig.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Put on your lullabies.

River whips out a cell from his pocket, presses a button, as a soothing melody seeps softly from the device. He gazes into the illuminated screen, transfixed.

EXT. JACOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A solitary wooden house nestled amid a camouflage of trees that stand like sentinels.

A gentle snow peppers the ground. Silence. Stillness.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - JACOB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JACOB (early 40's) lies flat on a bed, sound asleep, vulnerable like a child. He is still dressed in his day clothes: a RED lumberjack shirt and tatty jeans held up by a leather belt.

A Husky, BUDDY, sleeps at his feet.

His daughter, LORNA (13), lightly pulls a baseball cap off Jacob's head, places it on the bedside locker next to a series of carefully arranged items: a RED mug, a Bible, a string of rosary beads, and a collection of lambent candles.

Next, she rakes a blanket over him, pulling it tight to his chin. She takes a pillow, gently raises her father's head, tucks the pillow under his neck.

She leans in, kisses him softly on the forehead.

LORNA
(whispering)
Don't let the bed bugs bite.

She looks lovingly upon her father, when something wrests her attention. She glances to where the pillow lay: a hip flask.

The adoration in her eyes hardens to disappointment, then steely rage.

Angrily, she blows out the soothing flicker of the candles.

Black.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

The Volvo crawls towards a gas pump, surreptitiously grinding to a halt.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Callie takes a swig as booze drizzles down her chin.

She gazes into the rear-view mirror, pulls a smile - holds it for a moment - relaxes her face, then pulls another smile: practice.

An innocent voice utters -

RIVER
Where are we?

Callie turns, faces River curled up on the backseat, awake, panicked.

CALLIE
Stay guard.

She climbs out of the vehicle, staggers over to the trunk - on the rear window, a sticker: the 'peace symbol'.

She hoists open the trunk to reveal two well-used suitcases, a couple of threadbare travel bags, and a rucksack.

She rummages inside the side pocket of the rucksack, pulls out a small packet of WHITE POWDER, conceals it in her fanny pack.

She wanders over to the passenger side of the car, raps on the window.

River winds down the glass to reveal Callie's cold and stern eyes.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Stay guard.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lorna stands at the kitchen counter, watching the clear liquid from the hip flask disappear down the sink.

After a moment she raises the flask to her nose, inhales deeply, then takes a sip: water.

Smiling, she screws the cap back onto the flask.

Her eyes glow with relief.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - JACOB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jacob bolts up, doused in sweat. He glances around the room, panicked, disorientated.

JACOB
Lorna! Lorna!

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lorna sighs, rests the flask in the sink. She slides open the kitchen drawer, retrieves a small towel, then soaks it in water. The methodical precision of her actions suggest this is a nightly ritual for her.

JACOB (O.S.)
Lorna!

Another sigh.

INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Callie slopes towards the liquor aisle, casts her eyes at the CASHIER (mid-30's) who busies himself at the cash desk.

She pulls a small bottle of vodka from the shelf, slips it inside her coat.

The cashier glances over at her as she meanders around the rows of comestibles, grabs a couple of sodas.

As she approaches the cashier, she flips back her hair and pulls the same smile she practiced in the car.

The cashier listlessly scans the goods, bags them up.

CASHIER
Six forty-eight.

Callie rummages inside her fanny pack.

CALLIE
Oh, shoot.

She fixes on the Cashier, her eyes brimming with feigned self-pity.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Y' know what -

She glances at the Cashier's name badge - 'MICHAEL' - and smiles flirtatiously.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Michael, like the angel, huh? So,
Michael, are you a protector, or a
warrior?

Michael doesn't take the bait, but looks at her blankly.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Can I call you Mike?

An impatient silence.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Y' know what, Mike. I left my purse
behind, at the last gas station.

MICHAEL
It's Michael. Six forty-eight.

Callie slowly and suggestively zips her fanny pack back up, smiling coyly.

CALLIE

How about we come to some, ya know, arrangement. Is there anyone out back, Michael?

MICHAEL

Just me.

Callie chews her lip.

CALLIE

What say we slip into the back, so I can pay ya?

MICHAEL

I'm married. Six forty-eight.

Callie changes tactic: with imploring eyes she leans forward.

CALLIE

Please, Michael. Please. I'm on the road with my son. He's sick. I need to get him home. Safe. I have no money for food, and it's such a long drive ahead. We ain't eaten in two days.

Michael weighs her up, can't quite figure her out. He relents, stuffs a bag of chips and a handful of candy bars into the bag.

MICHAEL

Get outta here.

Callie leaps onto the counter, grabs Michael's head with both hands, leans in, and plants an unwanted kiss on his lips.

CALLIE

Thank you! Thank you! You're my angel, Michael.

She grabs the bag and scurries out of the door.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Callie casts her eye at the Volvo, then ducks next to a gas pump. She retrieves the bag of WHITE POWDER from her fanny pack, unscrews the cap of the bottle of soda, pours the powder inside.

She stands, flips her hair, strides towards the Volvo.

As she walks, she pulls opens the bag of chips, stuffs a handful in her mouth, then tears off the wrapper of a candy bar, crams the whole thing in, chewing voraciously.

As she passes a garbage bin, she dumps the remaining chips and candy inside.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Callie climbs into the vehicle, tosses the bottle of soda at River. He recoils.

CALLIE
 Drink up. We aint' stoppin' again for
 a while.

Sheepishly, River takes the bottle of soda, unscrews the cap, gulps it down.

RIVER
 I'm hungry.

CALLIE
 There 'aint no food. Drink up.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LORNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lorna sits on her bed, a small wooden box rests on her lap. She glances towards the door, glances back to the box, slowly opens it.

Inside, a photograph of a woman wearing a RED and WHITE POLKA DOT DRESS, lovingly embracing Lorna as an infant her MOTHER. Jacob's arm is wrapped around the woman. A picture of joy.

Placed on top of the photograph, an AMETHYST CRYSTAL.

As she retrieves the photograph, the crystal slips onto the furrowed bed sheets. She looks longingly at the picture, then -

The sound of a floorboard creaking from the landing.

Lorna panics, fixes on the door, then hastily places the photograph back into the box.

She tucks the box underneath the bed, rushes to the door, rests her ear against it, listens intently...nervously.

Nothing.

Gingerly, she opens the door. As it creaks, she winces. She darts her eyes across the landing.

Still nothing.

She tiptoes across the landing to Jacob's bedroom, rests her ear against the door, listens to the low rumble of his snoring.

Then - shock - as Buddy races past her feet.

She smiles. Relief.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Daybreak.

The Volvo crawls to a halt along a desolate road lined with trees.

INT. CAR - DAY

Callie glances over to River, who is fast asleep. She shakes his body, but he doesn't stir. She shakes again with more force. Still sleeping.

Satisfied, she slides out of the vehicle.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Callie wanders towards a nest of trees, squats down beside a puddle of melted snow and mud.

She scoops a handful of mud, smears it on her face, as if applying war paint.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Hot water blasts from the shower, steaming up the room.

Topless, and with shaving foam around his mouth, Jacob stands at the sink, facing downwards. He carefully and precisely arranges a toothbrush and a straight razor, side by side.

He looks up at the mirror in front of him: not looking at himself, but focusing on the slightly lopsided frame. He adjusts it: perfect.

Reluctantly, he stares at his reflection. His eyes are heavy with sadness. A small crucifix hangs from his neck. The steam continues to rise, slowly erasing his image.

In his reflection, he can vaguely discern the shape of his head, then, in the condensation, he draws a semi-circle on the mirror: a mocking smile on his reflected face.

A half-suppressed laugh to himself, at himself.

He reaches for a straight razor, raises it to his cheek, when -

A fist hammers on the bathroom door.

LORNA (O.S.)

Dad!

Startled, he slices himself.

JACOB

Damn!

He grabs a soft white towel, dabs his cheek, then looks: RED on WHITE.

LORNA (O.S.)

Dad! Come quick!

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LANDING - DAY

As Jacob bolts out the bathroom, Lorna is panicked.

JACOB

What is it?

LORNA

Downstairs.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Still half-undressed and clutching the towel, Jacob races to the front door, blood trickling down his cheek.

Several locking mechanisms line the door frame, but this fortress has been breached: Jacob comes to an abrupt halt upon seeing a disheveled woman with a rucksack slung across her shoulder, cradling a young boy in her arms.

Callie and River.

Lorna scurries up behind her Dad, puts her arm on his shoulder: protection.

JACOB
What's goin' on?

CALLIE
I'm so sorry to call on yous, outta the blue 'an all. It's my little boy, he's sick. We was on our way North, but the car ran off the highway. We was stranded all night.

She turns to Lorna, begins to cry convincing tears, smearing her muddied face.

CALLIE (cont'd)
We're lost, got no place else to go.
Can ya help us?

Buddy charges up behind Jacob, snarling at Callie.

Jacob looks doubtful, turns to Lorna, who looks at him with imploring eyes.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Please, mister. Can ya help me an' my little boy?

Buddy is now barking.

Jacob turns back, stares right through Callie and instead watches the snow falling thick and fast.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Divested of his coat, River is strewn across the couch. Jacob glances over: no mud on River's face.

Callie crouches by her son, her rucksack placed beside him.

Jacob - who has now donned a RED gillet - holds River's coat, inspects it.

JACOB

No mud.

CALLIE

What?

JACOB

You're covered. Head to toe.

He hurls the coat onto the arm of the couch.

JACOB (cont'd)

But your boy: no mud on his face; no mud on his clothes.

Callie turns to her son, strokes his wispy hair.

CALLIE

I told ya, mister. I carried him.

Jacob leaves the room.

At that moment, Lorna appears with a face cloth and a bowl of tepid water.

As Callie stands to make room, Lorna kneels down beside River. She dips the cloth into the water, when Callie kneels, wrests the cloth from her. Startled, Lorna stands.

CALLIE

He's my boy, it's only right.

Shock turns to an uneasy smile.

CALLIE (cont'd)

Besides, you kind folks have done enough already.

Jacob enters the room, now with a cell phone in his hand. He closes the door behind him.

JACOB

No signal. Storm must be real bad.

He watches as Callie, as if in a trance, brushes her hand across her cheek, then wipes her muddied fingers across the cheek of her son.

JACOB (cont'd)

You wanna get cleaned up?

Callie jumps in her skin.

CALLIE
That's very kind, mister. But I
caught ya in the middle of shavin'.
It's only right that you -

JACOB
I insist.

Carefully, Callie stands, all the while staring at her son,
either desperate that he wakes, or desperate that he
doesn't. Not yet.

JACOB (cont'd)
Up the stairs, first door on the
left.

CALLIE
Thank you, mister.

JACOB
First floor. Don't be goin' any
further than that.

She makes for the door.

JACOB (cont'd)
You hear me? No further.

CALLIE
Sure, mister.

Callie reaches the door, her back to Jacob, when -

JACOB
Looks like your boy could use a wash,
too.

She stops in her tracks, doesn't turn around.

A tense silence.

As Callie opens the door, Buddy charges inside the room,
growling at her. A nervous laugh.

JACOB (cont'd)
(to Lorna)
Put Buddy in the kitchen, would you.

Lorna grabs Buddy by the collar, yanks him out of the room.

Callie is next to leave.

Jacob creeps over to Callie's rucksack, squats down, unzips it slowly.

River begins to stir, grumbling as if waking from a deep sleep.

Jacob stops momentarily...River twitches but doesn't wake... Jacob continues.

He pulls open the rucksack to reveal sundry items: nightwear, a bottle of soda, a cell phone and charger, a small purse and a large HAIRPIN.

Jacob fixes on River as he opens the purse: some loose change, bills, and a driver's license. He takes the license and studies the detail: 'Callie Demchenko'.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Fresh from a shower, Callie stands naked in front of the mirror, gazing directly into her reflected eyes.

CALLIE

A truck came straight at us!

Now shifting the intonation of her words -

CALLIE (cont'd)

A truck headed straight for us.

Now angrier, with herself.

CALLIE (cont'd)

A goddamn truck headed straight -

Disappointed in her rehearsal, she slaps herself across the face. Intense breathing as she stares furiously at her own image.

CALLIE (cont'd)

I am strong. I am powerful. I am worthy. I am strong. I am powerful. I am worthy.

Her pace picks up as she continues the recital.

CALLIE (cont'd)

I am strong. I am powerful. I am worthy. I am strong. I am powerful. I am worthy.

A deep breathe, then from her fanny pack, she retrieves the bag of WHITE POWDER, places it on the sink next to a blood stain.

Callie traces the bloodstain to a razor that has been discarded by the side of the sink. She picks it up, inspects the blade, then takes the razor to her forearm.

She digs the blade in, poised to rake it across her arm, then hesitates.

With a sickly smile she gazes into the mirror.

A girlish giggle as she places her index finger across her lips, as if to hush herself.

She glances over at the bathroom door, turns back to her reflection, then drops the razor into the sink. She lifts her forearm to her mouth, licks a drizzle of blood.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Lorna makes coffee whilst Jacob attempts the cell phone once more: nothing. He slams it down on the kitchen counter.

JACOB
Goddamn piece of -

LORNA
Dad! Doc Nolan said to watch your blood pressure.

JACOB
I know.

LORNA
We just gotta help these people for as long as it takes.

A look of concern sweeps over Jacob's face.

LORNA (cont'd)
It's the Christian thing to do, right?

He nods. They embrace.

LORNA (cont'd)
Just watch your temper, Dad. I don't know what I'd do if I lost you and -

Jacob unlocks his arms, recoils. He grabs an empty mug, hurls it across the room. As it smashes against the wall, there is thunder in his eyes and in his voice.

JACOB
Goddamnit, girl, how many times have
I told you, never speak of her!

He storms out of the kitchen leaving Lorna close to tears.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Hesitantly, Lorna enters accompanied by Buddy.

Jacob is sat in an arm chair, his face buried in his hands, sobbing. Buddy curls up beside his feet.

JACOB
They brought this!

Lorna looks confused.

Jacob points to River lying on the couch.

JACOB (cont'd)
They brought the storm!

Lorna inches over to Jacob, perches on the arm of the chair, stretches her arm around him.

Jacob rests his head in Lorna's lap, like a child in need of comforting. She wipes away his tears.

LORNA
It's okay, Dad. It's okay.

In a moment of calm, Jacob glances over at the sideboard, fixes on a framed CRAYOLA DRAWING by Lorna from when she was an infant: the picture depicts the little girl hand in hand with her father underneath a brilliant yellow sun.

JACOB
I'm sorry, honey.

At that moment, River stirs, wakes, panics, shouts.

RIVER
Mom! Mom!

Buddy bolts up with a feral bark.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LANDING - DAY

As Callie creeps out of the bathroom, she folds a towel around her forearm.

She closes the door, turns, and to her shock collides with Jacob, who is now half-undressed, bloodied towel in hand. His arms are adorned with tattoos that denote service in the military.

JACOB
Lorna's makin' brunch.

Feigning politeness, Callie simpers.

CALLIE
Smells heavenly.

As she turns to walk away -

JACOB
Somethin' wrong with your arm?

CALLIE
Oh, it's nothin' just a scratch from my insulin jab.

JACOB
Diabetic?

CALLIE
Sure am. This is where I keep my shot.

She pats her fanny pack, then -

CALLIE (cont'd)
Makes me feel safe, ya know, if anythin' happened.

JACOB
I ain't no medic, but I know you ain't supposed to jab your forearm.

Callie freezes, doesn't respond.

JACOB (cont'd)
Forgive me. None of my business.

Callie makes to flee, when -

JACOB (cont'd)
Oh, one more thing. Your boy is
awake.

A look of panic on Callie's face. She spins around, strains
a fake smile.

CALLIE
That's wonderful.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Callie, River, Lorna and Jacob sit around a dining room
table.

River devours his food, ravenously, oblivious to the
conversation. Lorna eats politely. Jacob doesn't touch his
food, but rather listens intently.

Callie stares at her plate, poking her food with her fork.

CALLIE
A truck headed straight for us, I
reckon the driver had been drinkin'
or somethin', cause he wasn't for
stoppin'. I steered 'round him jus'
in time. But we skidded on the ice,
fell right down the embankment, an' -

Callie is close to tears, buries her face in her hands.

Lorna puts her hand on Callie's shoulder whilst Jacob shoots
Lorna a look of disapproval.

CALLIE (cont'd)
The windows are smashed, the car's a
write off. We should be dead!

She sobs. Lorna comforts her, defiant of Jacob's reproachful
glare.

JACOB
Where's the car?

Callie pulls her hands away from her face, wipes her teary
eyes.

CALLIE
Buried under two feet o' snow. I
can't say where, not for sure.

She digs her fork into her food, raises it to her mouth, but Jacob is already stood, gathering the plates, as if mindfully depriving her.

JACOB

Then what?

CALLIE

Then we walked.

JACOB

'We'? You said your boy is sick.

He turns to River, who looks satisfied from a good meal.

JACOB (cont'd)

He don't look sick.

Now it's Lorna's turn to shoot disapproving looks.

CALLIE

I walked, for miles, carryin' my boy.

JACOB

Then what?

CALLIE

It started gettin' light, an' that's when I came here. There was no place else to go.

She breaks down again. Lorna comforts.

LORNA

Don't be upset. We're glad to help.

She looks up at her father who is now dumping plates into the sink.

LORNA (cont'd)

Aren't we, Dad?

Silence. Jacob twists the faucet.

CALLIE

We'll be on our way, we don't wanna impose or nothin'.

Jacob stares out the kitchen window at the relentless snowfall.

LORNA

The phones are down. How will you get your car back on the road?

CALLIE

Guess we'll keep walkin', hopefully find a garage, or a motel.

Callie momentarily casts her eyes at Jacob, his back turned from her.

She buries her head in her hands once more, turns on the tears.

From the window, Jacob glances at the CRIMSON body of his truck tucked away on the driveway: the body is coated in a blanket of WHITE; the tires have been entirely consumed by snow.

The sink overflows with soapy water.

Jacob's trance is broken.

JACOB

You ain't goin' anywhere.

A twisted smile, as Callie removes her hands from her face.

A twisted smile, as Jacob continues to stare into the white oblivion.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Wearing a sickly smirk, Jacob bolts the front door.

INT. JACOBS'S HOUSE - LORNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lorna and River are sat on the bed.

LORNA

How long were you on the road?

RIVER

I don't remember.

LORNA

Do you remember the crash?

River gazes at the floor, shakes his head, slightly embarrassed.

Lorna looks puzzled.

LORNA (cont'd)
What do you remember?

River shrugs his shoulders, then spies an object enfolded in the creases of the bed sheets. Intrigued, he picks it up: the AMETHYST CRYSTAL.

Lorna snatches it from him.

LORNA (cont'd)
That's personal.

RIVER
It looks like my Mom's.

Lorna is taken aback: panic turns to curiosity.

LORNA
She likes crystals?

River nods.

RIVER
What's that one do?

LORNA
It's for protection. I think.

RIVER
You don't know?

LORNA
No. It belonged to my Mom. She ain't here no more.

RIVER
Then ask your Dad, silly.

Lorna shakes her head, turns stern.

LORNA
Dad hates stuff like this. He'd be so mad if he knew I had it. Please don't tell him.

River doesn't respond. Now pleading -

LORNA (cont'd)
Please.

Ignoring her plea -

RIVER
What does it protect you from?

LORNA
I dunno. It just keeps you safe from
harm I guess.

RIVER
Safe from bad dreams?

At that moment, Callie enters the room, scoops up River in her arms.

CALLIE
C'mon, time for sleep.

River kicks his feet in protest.

RIVER
Can't I sleep here?

CALLIE
You're in the spare room, with me.

Callie turns to Lorna.

CALLIE
Night.

Turns to River.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Say goodnight.

As River looks at Lorna, with sadness in his eyes, Callie turns, catches Lorna pressing her index finger to her lips: *don't tell.*

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jacob is sat in an arm chair staring into the spluttering flames of an open fire. A book rests in his lap.

Buddy is asleep by his feet.

Silence, save for the monotonous ticktock of a grandfather clock.

Swathed in a WHITE blanket like a chrysalis, Callie enters, breaking his trance. With keen eyes she surveys the room, fixes on a framed photograph of Jacob in a military uniform.

CALLIE
I figured you'd gone to bed.

She lingers for an invitation, or even a reply.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Well, goodnight, mister.

As she turns to leave -

JACOB
It's cold. Sit down.

Jacob gestures to an empty arm chair. Callie drags the chair close to the fire.

CALLIE
What you readin'?

JACOB
I ain't readin'. I'm thinkin'.

CALLIE
'bout what?

Jacob raises the book: the King James Bible.

CALLIE
I dunno much 'bout that.

A flicker of compassion - or pity - in Jacob's eyes.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Will you read some to me?

Imploring eyes, followed with an entreating:

CALLIE (cont'd)
Please, mister.

Jacob smiles.

JACOB
Jacob.

Callie mirrors the smile as Jacob turns to a marked page.

JACOB (cont'd)
Repay no one evil for evil. Never
avenge yourselves, but leave it to
the wrath of God, for it is written,
"Vengeance is mine, I will repay,
says the Lord."

(MORE)

JACOB (cont'd)
To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

A hushed laugh escapes Callie's lips.

CALLIE
What's it all mean?

JACOB
It means no matter how much it's a man's duty to fight evil, there ain't no justice.

He slams the book shut.

JACOB (cont'd)
Gotta make your own.

Callie stands, struts over to Jacob, gently bends down.

CALLIE
Well, I can tell you're a just man, an' I wanna say thank you.

Jacob recoils, but Callie continues to lean in, softly kissing his cheek.

As if under a spell, Jacob watches Callie slither towards the door. She turns, smiling coyly.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Goodnight. Jacob.

EXT. JACOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The heavy snowfall is blasted sideways by an angry wind.

A solitary candle flame flickers in a bedroom window, then dies.

INT. JACOBS'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Lorna and River are sat at the table.

Callie bustles by the stove. She opens a series of cupboards, inside there is TWO of every item, both identical: cereal boxes, jars, tins, bottles; all systematically arranged.

Jacob is dragged into the kitchen by Buddy. The dog snarls at the sight of Callie, forcing Jacob to tug on Buddy's lead, restraining him from pouncing.

JACOB

What in God's name are you doin'?

Buddy barks. Callie turns to face Jacob, giddy like a child.

CALLIE

Thought I'd make breakfast, ya know, to say thank you an' all, for what you're doin' for us.

JACOB

Listen lady, you don't just make yourself at home.

Lorna shoots her Dad a reproachful glare.

LORNA

That's very kind of you, Callie.

JACOB

(to Lorna)

This is my house, my rules. Some damn stranger don't just find her way 'round my kitchen. You make the breakfast. That's the way it is. That's the way it's always been, since -

He refrains from resurrecting the memory of his wife, storms out, dragging Buddy with him.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Jacob stampedes towards the front door, unbolts it, yanks it open as if to flee, but stops in his tracks.

He releases his grip from Buddy's lead, but even the dog won't venture any further: the snow is too forbidding.

JACOB

Goddamn!

He charges upstairs, mumbling to himself. Buddy follows.

JACOB (cont'd)
They brought the storm.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Lorna and River are now sat at the dining table. As Callie serves Lorna a plate of food -

CALLIE
Since what?

Lorna is reluctant to respond, but eventually -

LORNA
Since Mom passed.

With feigned sympathy -

CALLIE
I'm so sorry.

LORNA
It's okay. Dad doesn't like to talk 'bout it.

RIVER
I don't see my Dad any -

Callie dumps the plate in front of River. A paltry serving.

CALLIE
Eat your food.

An awkward silence follows. Callie sits.

CALLIE (cont'd)
So ya Dad's pretty protective, huh?

Lorna nods.

CALLIE (cont'd)
What's the big deal 'bout the second floor, anyway?

Lorna fidgets nervously.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Listen to me, bein' so nosy. I didn't mean to pry or nothin'.

Callie rests her hand on top of Lorna's.

LORNA
I wish I could tell you. But I can't,
because I don't know the answer.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - JACOB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jacob sits on the edge of the bed, eyes closed, with rosary beads wrapped tightly around his fist.

JACOB
Lead us not into temptation, but -

A gentle knock at the door. Lorna enters.

JACOB (cont'd)
It's that time already?

Lorna nods.

JACOB (cont'd)
I need a real drink.

LORNA
No, Dad -

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LANDING - NIGHT

Callie hovers outside the bedroom door, listening in.

JACOB (O.S)
Just one.

LORNA (O.S)
Dad! You know what -

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - JACOB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jacob uncurls the rosary beads from his around his fist.

JACOB
I know what the goddamn Doc said. You
don't need to keep remindin' me.

LORNA
Yes, I do.

Jacob wraps the beads around his fist again, tighter this time, his stern gaze burning deep into Lorna's innocent eyes.

LORNA (cont'd)
I've got to look after you.

Jacob's expression softens to a crooked smile. Reluctantly, he nods.

Lorna sits beside him, takes his hand. Jacob jerks back his sleeve to reveal his army tattoos. He fixes on them.

JACOB
The things I've seen.

LORNA
It's okay Dad. God forgives -

JACOB
I don't need forgiveness.

Lorna's expression invites him to elaborate.

JACOB (cont'd)
It's not what I did. It's what I should've done.

Lorna's brow crinkles, perplexed, as Jacob rolls back his sleeve, his eyes now glistening with regret. Lorna embraces him.

LORNA
Shush. It's okay. It's okay.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

With a mug in her hand, Lorna is poised to pour hot water into it, when -

CALLIE
Let me do that.

Lorna is startled, spills hot water on the counter. As she turns around, she sees Callie wrapped in her WHITE blanket.

LORNA
Dad likes me to do it.

With slight force, Callie yanks the mug from Lorna's hands.

CALLIE
It's the least I can do. Besides, I wanna say sorry, for earlier. Make it more personal, ya know?

A fake smile.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Cocoa?

LORNA
(Uneasy)
Sure.

As Lorna exits the kitchen, Callie hastily unzips her fanny pack, retrieves the WHITE POWDER and sprinkles it into the mug.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

At the foot of stairs, Buddy waits, as if guarding passage to the upper floors.

His hostile growl halts Callie in her tracks.

CALLIE
Be nice.

He continues to snarl.

She places the mug on a sideboard, crouches down to pet him.

Buddy barks.

A flicker of vulnerability in her face turns to malice as she stands, then drives her foot into Buddy's rib cage.

He whelps, flees.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Fuckin' mutt.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - JACOB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tentatively, Callie pushes the door open.

Jacob is already resting in bed, head against the wall, his eyes closed, still clutching the string of rosary beads.

Callie creeps in, sets the mug on a sideboard, making sufficient noise to rouse Jacob.

He opens his eyes: a flash of anger, mixed with panic.

JACOB
Where's Lorna?

CALLIE

She asked me to bring your cocoa. I think she's tired.

JACOB

(rising in anger)

First you take over my kitchen, now you take over -

CALLIE

It's my way of sayin' I'm sorry. I truly am sorry.

As Callie perches on the edge of the bed, she sheds the blanket to reveal a WHITE long-sleeved silk nightdress that clings to her body.

Jacob remains silent. He slowly unwinds the rosary beads from his clenched fist, places them on the bedside locker.

CALLIE (cont'd)

I don' mean to intrude. It's habit, I guess. ya see alls I know is waitin' on a man. I never been free of that.

A look of dejection sweeps across her face.

JACOB

What is it?

CALLIE

Jus' had a rough time with men, I guess. My ex, he was -

She hesitates, her body now shaking. Jacob leans in, takes her by the hand.

JACOB

He was what?

She releases her hand from Jacob, pulls back her sleeve to reveal a series of scars and bruises across her forearm.

CALLIE

You can see what kind o' a man he was.

Jacob studies her forearm.

JACOB

These seem kinda recent.

Callie turns away, feigning shame.

CALLIE

That's why we was on the road. I
couldn't take it no more.

She turns back to Jacob, tears swelling.

CALLIE (cont'd)

I grabbed what I could whilst he was
workin'. Took the car. Took my boy.

JACOB

You just took off? But ain't your boy
sick?

CALLIE

We was on the road a day when River
got real bad, so we was lookin' for a
hospital, or somethin', jus' lookin'
for some help.

JACOB

What's wrong with him, your boy?

CALLIE

Narcolepsy. Makes him see things.
Gives him bad nerves. Bad dreams.

JACOB

I'm sorry.

CALLIE

No need to be sorry. I'm jus' glad we
found nice folks like you.

Callie slides off the bed, grabs the mug from the sideboard,
hands it to Jacob. He accepts, nodding in gratitude.

CALLIE (cont'd)

What's your story?

Now agitated, Jacob wriggles in his own skin, turns away
from Callie, retreating into a shell of silence.

CALLIE (cont'd)

I heard 'bout ya wife.

Anger simmers as he fiddles with the wedding ring he still
wears.

JACOB

My wife? How do you -

Callie leans in close, takes Jacob by the hand.

CALLIE
Ya daughter said she passed.

He sets the mug on the bedside locker.

JACOB
I told that damn girl never to talk
about -

Mimicking Lorna -

CALLIE
Shush. It's okay. It's okay.

As she gently brushes her fingers against the back of Jacob's hand, her voice and her touch soothes him like a child.

CALLIE (cont'd)
What happened?

Jacob's breathing is shallow and heavy. Callie continues to sooth.

CALLIE (cont'd)
We both got pain from our past. We
both need healin'.

She leans in, kisses Jacob softly on the forehead.

CALLIE (cont'd)
I know you're a fighter, a soldier.
But you don't need to fight no more.
I can help you heal, Jacob.

His breathing steadies.

CALLIE (cont'd)
We don't need to run no more.

JACOB
I ain't run -

She places her index finger across his lips.

CALLIE
It's okay to feel sad. But don't let
it freeze up that big heart o' yours.

With feline grace, Callie slinks off the bed, stands tall, kinks her knee and places one hand on her hip.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Sweet dreams.

She glides over to the door, leaving Jacob under a spell.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LORNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lorna and River are sat cross-legged on the floor.

RIVER
Please!

LORNA
No. I told you, it's a secret.

RIVER
I jus' wanna hold it, jus' once.

With a reproachful glare, Lorna relents, reaches under her bed, retrieves the wooden box. She carefully opens it, places the crystal in River's hand.

River holds the crystal to the light, rotating it in his fingers, until his eye catches something else in the box.

RIVER (cont'd)
That your Mom?

Lorna lifts out the photograph, nods.

RIVER (cont'd)
How did she die?

With her index finger, Lorna traces around the shape of her Mom on the photograph.

LORNA
I don't remember. And Dad doesn't talk about it. One day, he just said she ain't comin' back, and that was it.

RIVER
I don't remember much about my Dad.

LORNA
Nothin'?

River shakes his head.

RIVER
Jus' nightmares.

LORNA
What nightmares?

RIVER
Hitting. Screaming. Blood.

LORNA
You still get them?

He nods, then -

A gentle knock and the door creaks open. Shrouded in her blanket, Callie is stood in the doorway holding a mug, stirring the contents with her finger.

CALLIE
(to River)
Time for your cocoa.

River stands dejectedly.

CALLIE (cont'd)
What you got there?

Agitated, River glances at Lorna. She nods: permission granted. River unfurls his fingers to reveal the crystal.

RIVER
It's Lorna's.

LORNA
No. It's yours. You keep it.

Callie makes to leave, then spies the photograph laid on the bed.

CALLIE
That her?

Lorna nods, lowering her gaze.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Pretty lady.

LORNA
She was.

CALLIE
The dead don't leave us, sweetie. Ya Mom's alive every time ya think o' her.

Lorna raises her head, tearful.

LORNA

I wish Dad believed that. He doesn't even let me think about her.

CALLIE

No man can tell ya what to think, honey. Ya mind is ya own place.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Callie lies in bed, awake, alert. She twists around to see River next to her. She shoves him. Nothing. She shoves him again. Harder. Still nothing.

She slips out of bed, creeps out of the room.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LANDING - NIGHT

Callie edges down the landing, her body flattened against the wall, careful to avoid giveaway floorboards.

She arrives at Jacob's bedroom, plants her ear against the door.

Satisfied, she slithers further down the landing, arriving at Lorna's bedroom. Same drill: her ear to the door, followed by a smirk on her face, when -

Callie freezes upon seeing Buddy stood at the top of the stairs, motionless, staring at her with piercing cerulean eyes.

She hisses, gestures to kick Buddy, which is enough to make the dog whine and bolt.

Now's her chance. She turns, looks upon the stairway at the end of the landing leading to the forbidden second floor.

As she creeps up the edge of the staircase, carefully planting each step, Buddy peers around the corner and watches his tormentor disappear into the darkness.

Buddy bounces along the landing, panting playfully, tail wagging, tongue flapping. He halts at Jacob's bedroom and, with his paw, pushes the door open.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - JACOB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Buddy leaps onto the bed, licks Jacob's face, but he doesn't move, doesn't even stir: out cold.

Impatiently, Buddy nuzzles him. Nothing. Next, Buddy nudges him with his paw, then attempts a playful headbutt. Still nothing.

INT. JACOBS'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT

Moonlight washes through a solitary window at the end of the landing. On the window pane, a sizable plant encased in a ceramic pot.

Callie slopes down the side of the wall, arrives at the only door on the landing. She grips the doorknob, twists.

Locked.

She hisses, curses, then concentrates.

At that moment, the sound of footsteps from the floor below.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LANDING - NIGHT

Lorna, in a semi-somnambulist state, staggers out of her bedroom door, fumbling her way in the darkness towards the bathroom.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - JACOB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The dog barks - not playfully, but fearfully - enough to fully awaken Lorna.

She charges into the bedroom, panicked.

LORNA
What is it, Bud?

She witnesses the futility of Buddy barking at Jacob. He continues to lie still and silent.

LORNA (cont'd)
Dad!

She rushes to her father's side, shaking him with force. Still nothing. She grabs the empty mug from the bedside locker, flees the room.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT

Callie is frozen with fear as she listens to the commotion downstairs.

She edges away from the window and into the shadows, slides down the wall to the floor, wraps her arms around her knees.

And waits.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Now in the bathroom, panicked and tearful, Lorna fills the mug with water.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - JACOB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Without hesitation, Lorna hurls the water across Jacob's face, then crawls on top of him, strikes him across the cheek, once, twice...

LORNA
Dad! Wake up! Dad!

Tears stream. Wailing, she continues to strike Jacob, when -
Jacob wakes. Dreary but alive.

Lorna collapses to her father's chest. Tears of panic turn to tears of relief.

JACOB
What in God's name.

Jacob bolts up, raises his hand to his temple, massages his aching head.

LORNA
Dad, I thought you were -

JACOB
(confused)
I was out cold. No bad dreams.

Over Lorna's shoulder, Jacob glances at Buddy whose tongue hangs limply from his mouth, tail swaying.

JACOB (cont'd)
Where is she?

As Jacob stands he is hit by a wave of dizziness. He clutches his forehead, sways, as if about to topple over. Lorna grabs him, steadies him.

JACOB (cont'd)
Go check on her.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT

Callie gently sways in the shadows, not fearful but focused.

LORNA (O.S.)
Callie? Callie?

The sound of heavy footsteps from below.

Callie leaps up, darts to the window, desperately yanks it open. A blast of snow hits her, causing her to recoil.

From the floor below: someone hammers on the bedroom door where River is sleeping, and where Callie should be sleeping.

Undeterred, Callie peers out the window, looks directly below to see an unexposed part of a concrete pathway with only a thin skin of snow.

She summons her strength, pushes the plant pot through the window, then watches as it descends and shatters on the concrete.

JACOB (O.S.)
What the -

From below, the sound of feet thundering across wooden floorboards, charging down the landing, down the stairs, getting fainter with each step.

Seizing the moment, Callie hurtles back to the bedroom door, unpicks the lock using her HAIRPIN.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR SPARE ROOM - NIGHT

Through a large, gaping window, moonlight floods the room which is somewhere between a mausoleum and a museum: a large padlocked trunk is tucked into a shadowed corner; white sheets are draped over various items of furniture; and stacks of dusty boxes line the walls.

A stack of boxes, tattooed with stickers of the American flag, leans against the far wall underneath a hanging military uniform.

Callie's attention is caught by a wooden box that sits on top of the stack.

Without hesitation, she opens it. Inside: a series of medals and a wad of unopened letters.

She yanks out the letters, stuffs them into her nightie.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Stood at the front door, Jacob and Lorna are confronted by a wall of snow as the bitter wind blasts through the hallway.

LORNA
You see anything?

JACOB
Nothin'.

LORNA
Could've been the storm.

He slams the door closed.

JACOB
Go check on the woman.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LANDING - NIGHT

Lorna wraps on the door to the spare bedroom.

LORNA
(hushed)
Callie? River?

Silence.

Jacob strides up behind her, makes for the door like a charging bull, bursts into the bedroom.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

He stands in the doorway, sees River curled up beside Callie, both asleep.

LORNA
They must be pretty beat to sleep through that.

Jacob fixes on Callie with searching eyes. She doesn't flinch.

A moment's pause, then the door creaks shut.

Callie's eyes remain closed as her face creases with a sinister smirk.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Callie is stood beside Lorna, watching River - who sits at the table - with unflinching eyes.

Callie dons her blanket whilst Lorna is fully dressed, making breakfast, slicing up rashers of bacon.

LORNA
You didn't hear anything?

CALLIE
Not a thing.

LORNA
I was so scared, I thought Dad was,
y' know -

Lorna places a knife down, turns to the coffee pot, pours four mugs.

Callie's glare shifts to the knife. She chews on her bottom lip, drifting into a daydream. Then, harshly -

CALLIE
No coffee for River.

Lorna is startled, drizzles coffee on the kitchen top.

LORNA
I'm sorry.

Callie smiles, shifting from scary to sweet in a split second.

CALLIE
It don't agree with him, ya know, his
illness an' all. How's your Dad
doin'?

LORNA
Got one helluva headache, but he's
fine, Just the usual mister grumpy
pants.

Lorna giggles.

CALLIE
Why so grumpy?

A prolonged silence.

CALLIE (cont'd)
You can tell me, honey.

LORNA
He never leaves this place. It's like
a prison he's made for himself.

CALLIE
He never leaves?

LORNA
Not anymore.

CALLIE
He don't have friends?

LORNA
Just me. And Buddy.

CALLIE
So what does he do for, y'know, fun?

Lorna shrugs her shoulders.

CALLIE (cont'd)
How does he make a livin', provide
for ya an' all?

LORNA
Oh Dad has a ton of money. He
invested in real estate after the
army.

Callie's eyes widen. She edges closer to Lorna.

CALLIE
No cash?

LORNA
Plenty of -

JACOB (O.S.)
Coffee's at eight, sharp. What's the
hold up?

Lorna is panicked. Callie grabs a mug.

CALLIE
Leave him to me.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jacob rests on the couch, Buddy on his lap. As Callie enters, she sees Jacob laughing playfully with the dog.

Callie sets the mug down on a table, sits next to Jacob. A hushed snarl as Buddy fixes his eyes on her.

With a gentle push, Jacob knocks Buddy from his lap. The dog darts out of the room. Callie edges closer to Jacob.

CALLIE
He don't like me, does he?

JACOB
Snow's still bad, but phone's workin'.

Jacob hands her his cell. She accepts, reluctantly.

JACOB (cont'd)
Look under 'J'. 'Jackson's Garage'.

CALLIE
Right now?

No answer. With a sigh, Callie saunters over to a window behind the couch.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Better signal here.

She punches in a number, waits a few moments.

CALLIE (cont'd)
(into phone)
Hi, yeah. I ran my car off the road.
I need a pick up...three nights ago.
Callie Clarkson, with a 'C'...

His attention now wrested, Jacob twists round to face Callie.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Volvo Estate. White. License 'ARB
961'. You'll call back? Thanks.

She hangs up.

Jacob locks on her eyes as she meanders back to the couch, then dumps the cell onto the cushion next to Jacob. She remains standing, arms folded.

JACOB
They didn't ask for your cell?

CALLIE
They musta figured it's your number.
I guess I'll go help Lorna with
breakfast.

As she struts out of the room, Jacob picks up the cell,
redials the last number...

An automated response: *'Due to a family bereavement, Jackson Motors is currently closed for business. We apologize to our customers for any inconvenience. Please try us again in two weeks.'*

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Bacon sizzles. Lorna and Callie stand, mug in hand.

CALLIE
What's with the dog? Your Dad seems
kinda attached.

LORNA
He is. We got him when Mom passed.
Dad likes his loyalty.

CALLIE
But you give him that.

A half-suppressed laugh.

LORNA
I guess. But sometimes I think I
remind him of Mom an' it gets to him.
Makes him cold, or makes him angry. I
never know which side of him I'm
gonna get.

CALLIE
He's healin'.

LORNA
He was, till he took to drinking. But
he swore to me he's done with that
now. I think he's ready to move on.

CALLIE
Find a new woman?

LORNA
 Oh no, not Dad. Not in a month of
 Sundays.

Callie is lost in a daydream as she gazes at the knife.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LORNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lorna and River are sat on the bed.

LORNA
 Did the crystal work?

River shakes his head.

RIVER
 Mom says they're just dreams. Part of
 my illness. But they feel so real.
 Listen -

River slips his cell from his pocket.

LORNA
 You're so lucky! I'm not allowed one.

RIVER
 The lullabies help me sleep.

River presses a series of buttons, when the cell
 unexpectedly erupts into sound. River panics.

An audio recording plays back: the sound of a violent
 confrontation; Callie's voice hurls verbal abuse; glass
 smashes; a man's voice pleads for her to relent.

LORNA
 What's that?

CALLIE
 What's what, honey?

Callie stands at the door holding a mug of cocoa.

River cowers.

LORNA
 Oh, he was just telling me about the
 lullabies...on his cell.

CALLIE
 Speakin' of which, time for bed.

River protests.

CALLIE (cont'd)
I said time for bed.

River hangs his head, dejected.

LORNA
Just five more minutes. Please?

Imploring eyes.

CALLIE
(reluctantly)
Five minutes.

She places the mug down on a sideboard.

CALLIE (cont'd)
(to River)
Drink up.

She glares at River until he nods in acceptance, then leaves.

River slouches over to the sideboard, listlessly grabs the mug with an expression to match.

RIVER
I don't even like this stuff. It gives me headaches.

LORNA
So don't drink it.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LANDING - NIGHT

River and Lorna creep out of the bedroom. Lorna surveys the length of the landing, then takes River by the hand.

They scuttle towards the bathroom.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Lorna pours the contents of the mug down the sink. River watches, anxiously.

Lorna hands the empty mug to River.

LORNA
She'll never know.

At that moment -

JACOB (O.S.)
Lorna?

Panic.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LANDING - NIGHT

Lorna and River creep along the landing.

JACOB (O.S.)
You seen the time? You should be
asleep.

They are close to Lorna's bedroom, when River stands on a creaking floorboard.

A look of apology mixed with dread on his face; a look of defeat on Lorna's: they have to confess.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - JACOB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A gentle tap on the door as Lorna and River enter.

Jacob lies in bed, propped up against the headboard, with an empty mug resting on his lap. Bible in hand.

JACOB
What in the -

River steps forward.

RIVER
It's my fault, sir. I couldn't sleep,
so Lorna was jus' gettin' me a glass
of water.

Jacob's eyes shoot at Lorna, who nods emphatically.

A tense silence, broken by -

LORNA
Well I guess we should get -

RIVER
What you readin', sir?

Jacob is taken aback. A beat, then he raises the book.

RIVER (cont'd)
(giddily)
I like readin'.

More silence.

RIVER (cont'd)
I'm so sorry for keepin' Lorna up. I
promise I'll, I'll make it up
somehow, sir.

River extends his hand, his small finger bent like a hook. Jacob is puzzled. He watches a warm smile wash over Lorna's face.

RIVER (cont'd)
Pinky promise.

Jacob doesn't return the gesture.

JACOB
Can't sleep, huh?

River retracts his hand, sadness in his eyes.

RIVER
No, sir. I get nightmares. Real scary
ones.

Jacob's eyes glow with pity followed by a rare smile.

JACOB
There's only one thing for that.

Jacob twists, carefully lifting the rosary beads off the bedside locker. He extends his hand.

JACOB (cont'd)
They'll help you sleep.

Excitement mixed with gratitude as River accepts the offer.

RIVER
Thank you so much, sir. I'll take
good care of them, I promise I will.

Jacob smiles again, then clutches his temple.

LORNA
Dad, you okay?

JACOB
 Just drowsy again, nothin' a good
 sleep won't put right.

RIVER
 Do you get bad dreams too?

Jacob is caught off guard. In a hushed tone -

JACOB
 Sure.

River places the rosary beads back into Jacob's hand.

RIVER
 You need these more than me.

Smiling, he leaves the room with Lorna, leaving Jacob dumbfounded.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Callie is in bed, curled into a fetal position.

She slowly rises, glances at River, who is seemingly asleep beside her. An empty mug rests on the sideboard.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT

Callie treads slow, calculated steps along the landing as if stalking the shadows: a specter wrapped head to toe in her WHITE blanket.

She arrives at the forbidden room, nudges the door open, tiptoes inside.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR SPARE ROOM - NIGHT

From the inside of the blanket, Callie draws the kitchen knife, makes her way to the locked trunk tucked tightly into the corner of the room. She kneels beside it, takes the knife to the lock in an attempt to unpick it.

She twists and bends the blade almost to the point of snapping. At that moment, footsteps, followed by a voice from below -

RIVER (O.S.)
 Mom? Mom?

CALLIE
(hushed)

Fuck!

Panicked, Callie stands and paces the room, when a strange shadow emerges on the wall opposite the doorway.

She spins around to see Buddy, poised to pounce, bearing his teeth with a guttural snarl.

Casually she sheds the blanket, barrels towards the dog, knife in hand.

Still snarling, still poised, Buddy begins to retreat, when -

Callie grips the dog by the collar, yanks him back inside the room and, without flinching, plunges the knife deep into Buddy's abdomen, twisting the blade, slicing him open.

Callie slumps to the floor, cradling Buddy's corpse in her arms. A puddle of blood swells around her.

After a few moments of dead silence, her breathing becomes more shallow, more rapid, as if psyching herself up for -

An unearthly howl erupts from her mouth.

RIVER (O.S.)
Mom! Mom!

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jacob ambles into the kitchen. In his arms, Buddy's body swathed in a RED blanket. He places the corpse next to a shovel and slides solemnly to the table, sits down.

Callie is already sat, caked in blood. River weeps. Lorna assumes her habitual duty of consoling.

Jacob takes a deep breath.

CALLIE
I couldn't sleep, so I came down to the kitchen' to make some warm milk, an', an', the dog came outta nowhere, growlin' at me. I tried to be nice, I tried, I tried.

Fake tears. She frantically scratches her wrist, her nails ripping into her flesh, drawing blood.

CALLIE (cont'd)

He came at me. I was thinkin' he was gonna bite me, ya know attack me or somethin', he looked so vicious. I didn't do nothin' to him, nothin' to provoke him, I swear.

Jacob takes another deep breath, pressure building inside, set to explode.

LORNA

That don't sound like Bud.

CALLIE

Maybe it's the full moon, I dunno.

Jacob's fist clenches.

CALLIE (cont'd)

But he went crazy, he went for me. I ran up the stairs. I know I shouldn't have, but I had no place else to escape. So I kept runnin' to the second floor, went straight to the window, tried to see if I could get out, maybe climb down the gutterin', but I panicked, knocked the plant outta the window, it was too high, too far to jump.

More tears.

CALLIE (cont'd)

The dog kept comin' at me, like he was possessed or somethin', so alls I could do was break into the spare room, ya know, try an' find someplace to hide. An' that's when he jumped at me, and I panicked. It was self-defense, I swear it was, on my son's life.

Jacob stares blankly at the table, takes another deep, ominous breath.

JACOB

(calmly)

Why did you have a knife?

He looks up to see Callie wipe away her hair - matted with blood - from her teary eyes. No answer, just a vacant expression. No conscience. No remorse.

Then, Jacob snaps.

He slams his fist on the table, bolts up, his voice bellowing in inconsolable rage.

JACOB (cont'd)
Why the fuck did you have a knife?!

Lorna stands, puts her arm around her father, as if to restrain him.

LORNA
Dad, please -

He shrugs her off, smashes both fists onto the table, leans in to Callie with inflamed eyes.

JACOB
Why? Tell me why?

Callie splutters.

CALLIE
I, I jus' grabbed it, I dunno why, self-defense. I was so scared, mister. Please believe me, I was so scared.

JACOB
Why the second floor? Why?

CALLIE
I didn't want no dog hurtin' my boy. I jus' kept runnin'.

JACOB
Why not wake me?

Callie's head collapses into her hands, her body trembling.

CALLIE
I ran! I was scared!

Jacob glares at Callie, effervescing at the mouth as his voice booms.

JACOB
You killed my fuckin' dog!

Callie sobs hysterically.

CALLIE
I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!

Jacob stomps towards the back door, jerks it open. An angry wind roars through the doorway as he picks up Buddy's corpse, pivots round. Now somber -

JACOB
 (to Lorna)
 Grab the shovel.
 (to Callie)
 Pack your things. I want you and your
 boy outta my house.

He wanders out into the stormy night.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Still wearing her bloodied nightie, Callie stuffs her paltry belongings into her rucksack. River is by her side, gently weeping.

CALLIE
 Quit it, lil sissy!

RIVER
 But Mom, poor Bud -

CALLIE
 I said -

She raises her hand as if to strike him. He cowers, suppresses his sadness.

EXT. JACOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jacob dumps the final load of soil filling Buddy's grave. A bitter wind hurtles around him, as flakes of snow slice into his flesh like icy blades.

He struggles to see amid the fierce flurry, but catches a glimpse of the broken plant pot that lies directly underneath the window of the second floor.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LORNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A gentle tap on the door. It creaks open. Callie enters.

Lorna is curled up in the corner of the room, sobbing.

LORNA
 I try to protect him. I try to
 comfort him. But who's there for me?

Callie crouches down beside her with an item concealed in her hand. Lorna rests her head on Callie's shoulder.

LORNA (cont'd)
It hurts when he shuts me out.

A fleeting look of pity in Callie's eyes, then -

CALLIE
I know what it's like to feel all alone an' cut off from a man. My Dad. My exes. But trust me, you're not alone.

Callie gifts her a thick wad of unopened letters, all of them addressed to Lorna.

Intrigued, Lorna tears open the top letter, reads it frantically. Silence. Her mouth agape in disbelief.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Postmark's only a year ago.

Now puzzled, Lorna looks searchingly into Callie's eyes.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Your Mom's alive.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jacob returns to an empty kitchen. He dumps the shovel on the floor, stamps over to a kitchen cupboard, reaches for a TOOLBOX which sits high on top.

He yanks open the toolbox and retrieves a half-empty bottle of liquor. With seething eyes he twists it open, takes a long swig, and another.

He slouches over to the kitchen table, slumps into a chair, stamps his clenched fist onto the wooden surface. Another swig, and another. He closes his weary eyes. His breathing steadies. His fist unfurls. Anger gives way to calm.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LORNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lorna is now crying tears of joy.

LORNA
How can I thank you?

With feigned selflessness, Callie croaks -

CALLIE

There's no need.

LORNA

There is. You have no idea what this means.

CALLIE

Well, I guess ya could talk to ya Dad, ya know, about kickin' us out so sudden, 'specially with River bein' so sick.

LORNA

I will.

CALLIE

But listen. You can't tell him 'bout these letters, you understand? He'll take 'em away. But the way I sees it, they belong to you.

Lorna nods emphatically.

LORNA

Our secret?

Callie's face cracks with a crooked grin, congealed blood around her mouth and between her teeth.

CALLIE

Our secret.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR SPARE ROOM - NIGHT

Jacob inspects the lock and door frame: no sign of force.

He is less shocked than he is satisfied.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

River is curled up on the bed in a fetal position. Callie stands over him, hands on her hips.

CALLIE

Get up, ya lil girl.

River sits up, his eyes barely dry from crying.

CALLIE (cont'd)
You wanna stay here?

He nods.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Then do as I say.

She leans down to him, raises her hand as if to smack him.

CALLIE (cont'd)
And don't fuck up.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LORNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Callie and River are stood in the doorway.

Lorna is sat on her bed, poring over the stack of letters. Most have been torn open. She continues to read voraciously, noticing that one of the letters contains a telephone number.

CALLIE
Ready?

Lorna gathers the letters, buries them under her pillow.

Callie extends her hand to Lorna. She accepts.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Still and silent, Jacob sits on the couch, transfixed by the dying embers of the fire.

In the doorway, River and Lorna stand hand in hand with Callie: a united front.

Jacob doesn't shift his gaze from the fading light.

Lorna takes a deep breath.

LORNA
Callie's so sorry Dad, please -

JACOB
No.

LORNA
But, Dad -

JACOB

I said no.

Callie turns to River, winks at him. River steps forward with pleading eyes.

RIVER

Please, mister. We got no place else to go.

River turns to Callie. She nods in approval of his performance.

RIVER (cont'd)

Please sir, please.

Jacob turns, sees Lorna hand in hand with Callie.

Then, right on cue, River swoons, hits the floor. Faking panic, Callie rushes to his aid.

CALLIE

Oh God. Please, no!

Shocked, Lorna attends to River with genuine concern.

LORNA

River! River!

Tears gush from Callie's eyes. She strokes his hair, strokes his face, pleads for him to wake up.

Unknown to the others, she taps River three times on the back of the neck.

River wakes, coughs violently as he rises: he's a good actor.

CALLIE

Thank God!

Jacob stands, gestures to the couch.

JACOB

Lie the boy down.

Callie scoops River into her arms, gently lays him down on the couch. The tears stop, like a faucet being turned off. She turns to Jacob with pleading eyes.

CALLIE

Please, Jacob, please don't throw us out like trash.

(MORE)

CALLIE (cont'd)
 The car's off the road an' we aint'
 got no place else to go.

She taps River again.

RIVER
 (coughing)
 Please, mister.

Jacob looks at his daughter, her hands clasped together as if in prayer.

JACOB
 (to Lorna)
 Get some water.

He turns to Callie.

JACOB
 Get cleaned up.

CALLIE
 Thank you. Thank you.

As she turns -

JACOB
 You'll need this.

Callie spins around to see Jacob holding a key.

The last embers die. Darkness.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR SPARE ROOM - NIGHT

Various items of women's clothing strewn across dusty floorboards.

On her knees, Callie is wrapped in a WHITE towel as she sifts through the remaining contents of the trunk: more clothes, some accessories, some shoes.

She drags out a white nightie and with a cunning smile holds it up to the window. As the moonlight seeps through the fine embroidery, Callie beholds an apparition of sorts: the ghost of Jacob's wife.

EXT. JACOB'S HOUSE - DAY

The wind has calmed to a light breeze. The skies are clear. A welcome winter sun beats down.

Jacob is crouched over, shoveling mounds of snow gathered around the base of his truck. The driveway is already clear: he must have been working for hours.

He stands, stretches, creaks his back, then removes his cap. He looks up to the sun, wipes his brow, then turns to see -

Callie, stood at the back door, shovel in hand, wearing a new set of clothes: his ex wife's clothes.

With a playful smirk -

CALLIE

Where do ya want me to start, mister?

The side of Jacob's mouth creases with a smile as he gestures towards the truck.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Jacob and Callie are sat at the table.

CALLIE

I can't thank you enough, Jacob. I've never met a guy as kind as you.

She sips on a cup of coffee, then bites her lip.

CALLIE (cont'd)

There's somethin' 'bout you, makes me feel like I don't need to run no more.

JACOB

Tell me about him.

A deep sigh, followed by hesitation, then -

CALLIE

I jus' wanted him to be a good Daddy to River, ya know? But he never wanted him. He never had time for us. Too busy lyin', cheatin'.

JACOB

Cheating?

CALLIE

He took to gamblin', then drownin' his sorrows when he lost all our savings. I wasn't allowed to work. I wasn't allowed to do nothin'.

(MORE)

CALLIE (cont'd)
 We was penniless, so he started dealin'. Jus' grass a first, then harder stuff. It was no place for a child.

JACOB
 It was no place for anyone.

CALLIE
 He said I deserved it. He'd beat me for speakin' my mind. He'd beat me for pretty much anythin'. I jus' don't know why. I did nothin' to him.

Callie trembles. Jacob takes by the hand, settles her nerves.

CALLIE (cont'd)
 I jus' had to get outta there, if not for me, then for my boy.

JACOB
 What happened?

CALLIE
 He went from dealin' to usin'. He'd even drug me, ya know, slip it in my drink to keep me docile. But I sussed him out good, an' he didn't like that. He bruised me up, took his belt to me, almost left me for dead. But I ain't going' down like that, like a dog. So I -

She stalls. Jacob looks at her quizzically.

CALLIE (cont'd)
 I was fightin' to survive, ya understand? When I threatened to call the cops, well he got real mad an' said he was gonna rat on me, tell 'em I was in on it too. I wasn't, Jacob, I tell ya I wasn't. But if we both did jail time, then what would happen to River? I had to run. I had to.

Callie is restless, starts playing nervously with her chakra bracelet.

JACOB
 What's that about?

Callie points to the bracelet.

CALLIE
This? These crystals here -

She rolls a WHITE crystal between her fingers.

CALLIE (cont'd)
They protect me, if ya believe in
that kinda thing.

Jacob downs his coffee, stands up.

JACOB
I don't.

CALLIE
You read the Good Book.

Jacob remains silent, wanders over to the sink.

CALLIE (cont'd)
You got a spiritual side. For me,
well, it saved me, helped my healin'
from my younger days.

Jacob spins, faces her.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Let's jus' say my ex and my Daddy had
a lot in common.

He turns away, stares out the window, tightly gripping the
edge of the kitchen counter.

JACOB
I'm sorry.

CALLIE
You're so sweet. There's no need to
be sorry. So, what 'bout you, why do
you believe? Does it help ya with ya
healin', ya know, since your wife?

JACOB
If I choose to believe, then what do
I have to lose? Nothin'. But if
choose not to believe, then what do I
stand to lose? I figure I'd hedge my
bets.

Callie titters.

CALLIE
Handsome and smart.

Jacob spins around as Callie's face turns crimson.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Oh, I'm sorry, I shouldn't have
said -

At that moment Lorna and River burst into the kitchen. River is giddy. Lorna subdued.

River strolls over to the table, stands at a distance from Callie. She reaches out, yanks him towards her and, for show, smothers him in kisses.

He recoils, unsure of how to react, wipes her wet kisses from his cheek.

JACOB
(to Lorna)
What's gotten into you?

A cold silence.

JACOB (cont'd)
Well now the snow's stopped, how
about we head into town, grab some
supplies, and I'll treat you to
somethin' nice.

Lorna is shocked.

LORNA
Town?

JACOB
Sure. What do you say?

Indifferent, she shrugs her shoulders, although River is ecstatic.

CALLIE
(to River)
Don't be assumin' Jacob meant all of
us.

JACOB
(to Callie)
I meant everyone. Especially you.

EXT. JACOB'S TRUCK - DAY

Jacob guns the engine as the truck speeds along the highway. In the rear window, a sticker: the American flag with the words 'made in America' emblazoned on it.

INT. JACOB'S TRUCK - HIGHWAY - DAY

Jacob and Callie are sat in the front, Lorna and River in the back.

Jacob fiddles with the radio. A series of crackles bursts into country music.

CALLIE
My favorite!

JACOB
Mine too.

Callie places her hand on Jacob's knee. He flinches, then relents. Callie gazes at him with a saccharine smile.

CALLIE
We have so much in common.

As they drive past a motel - the Alpine Lodge - Callie's mood shifts as she removes her hand from Jacob's knee.

JACOB
Somethin' wrong?

A fake smile.

CALLIE
Nothin'.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

In the midst of the clothing section in a bustling supermarket, Jacob pushes a trolley brimming with food: TWO of each item.

Giddily, River dumps candy into the trolley whilst Lorna traipses behind, solemn and contemplative.

Callie pulls a WHITE dress from a rail.

CALLIE
Ain't it jus' gorgeous!

Jacob rummages through the rail, pulls out a WHITE dress with RED POLKER DOTS. He holds it against her body.

JACOB
That's the one.

CALLIE
Oh, it's pretty, but I ain't got no money. Had barely enough for gas, let alone -

JACOB
Can't have you wearin' old rags forever.

He carefully lays the dress into the trolley. Callie smiles, notices the mound of candy, and with a reproachful tone -

CALLIE
River!

JACOB
He's fine. He can share with Lorna.

Jacob swings around.

JACOB
Ain't that right, honey?

CALLIE
He really shouldn't -

At that moment two MEN cradling crates of beer stride past.

MAN #1 - RICK (mid-30's) - wolf whistles, looks Callie up and down with leering eyes.

She turns to Jacob with an expression of disgust.

MAN #2 guffaws.

RICK
Say, that's a pretty dress, lady.
I'll bet ya look mighty fine in that!

MAN #2
Even finer outta it.

The two men high-five. As they pass Jacob -

RICK
That's a nice piece o' ass you got there.

They disappear into a throng of customers at the checkout.

JACOB
 (to Callie)
 Ignore 'em. They ain't worth it. They
 can only get to you if you let them.

CALLIE
 You see, that's what makes you so
 different.

She places her hand on his.

CALLIE (cont'd)
 An' so special.

Jacob looks at her inquisitively.

CALLIE (cont'd)
 Ya ain't like all the others.

INT. JACOB'S TRUCK - SUPERMARKET CAR PARK - DAY

As the truck navigates a labyrinth of vehicles, Jacob glances out of the window to see Rick, alone, reclining against a wall, smoking a joint.

He slams on the breaks, turns to Callie, engine purring.

JACOB
 I'll be one minute.

Callie realizes whom Jacob has seen, then panics, pleads -

CALLIE
 No, Jacob. I don't want no trouble.

JACOB
 One minute.

Jacob slides out of the truck and, with calm determination in his steps, strides over to Rick.

Callie watches from the window. She's too distant to eavesdrop, but watches the men as they converse with no sign of confrontation.

After a few moments, Jacob appears to hand something to Rick, then the men shake hands, and Jacob strolls back to the truck.

CALLIE
What was that all about?

A fake smile.

JACOB
(imitating Callie
from earlier)
Nothin'.

Jacob guns the engine, cranks up the radio, and the truck peels away.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

All four sit around the table littered with empty plates and cups. Still sulking, Lorna stands, begins clearing the dishes.

CALLIE
I'll do that, hun. You kids go play.

An excited River bounds out of the room, dragging a reluctant Lorna with him.

JACOB
I don't know what's gotten into her.

CALLIE
Maybe she's just missin' her Mom. It probably don't help me bein' here, wearin' her clothes.

JACOB
She don't remember her Mom. She was so young when she -

He hesitates.

CALLIE
Can't be easy, jus' havin' another woman under the roof. She's the woman o' the house.

A girlish giggle as she gathers plates.

CALLIE (cont'd)
An' I think she likes takin' care o' you.

She slithers over to the sink, dumps the plates, spins around.

CALLIE (cont'd)
She has a big heart, jus' like her
Daddy.

Jacob is uneasy. Callie struts over to him, places her arms around his neck from behind in a choke-hold position.

CALLIE (cont'd)
I ain't never met a man like you,
Jacob. Ya know, someone I feel so
connected to, like we known each
other forever. We're so alike, you
and me, sharin' the same kinda pain,
the pain o' loss, the pain o'
loneliness.

Jacob stands, freeing himself from her clasp.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Ya know I think you're special, don't
ya Jacob?

He nods, cautiously, as Callie edges closer with seductive eyes.

As he backs off towards the sink, she traces his steps, slowly and precisely as if stalking prey.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Ya believe in fate, don't ya Jacob?

Tentatively, he nods.

His back hits the sink. He stops. Callie glides up to him, wraps her arms around his neck. Her eyes are hypnotic.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Ya believe in soul mates, don't ya
Jacob?

JACOB
What about -

Callie places her index finger across his lips, then rests her hand on his cheek, kisses him.

Jacob flinches at first, raises his arms out in a cruciform gesture; but as Callie continues to seduce him, he relents and enfolds his arms around her in a passionate embrace.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - JACOB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jacob lies in bed, Callie's naked body entwined with his. She traces her finger along one of Jacob's tattoos.

CALLIE

It musta been horrible, watchin' the world tear itself apart.

JACOB

My world fell apart when I came home.

CALLIE

Is that when she -

JACOB

Died.

As her fingers roam up Jacob's chest, Callie twists the crucifix chain around her finger, gently pulls.

CALLIE

Everythin' happens for a reason. The good an' the bad. But ya gotta get over the bad to eventually find the good.

Jacob wrests the chain from her.

JACOB

You got to be patient. Wait for the right time.

She digs her nails into his skin.

CALLIE

Well I ain't waitin' no more. It's like I was drawn here. Like it was meant to be.

She caresses his cheek, looks searchingly into his eyes.

CALLIE

I didn't fall in love with ya. I jus' remembered that I've always loved ya.

Jacob squeezes her tight, a look of discomfort on his face: he is torn between tenderness and something else.

CALLIE (cont'd)

Do ya believe in past lives, Jacob?
Do ya believe we're reborn?

Jacob shakes his head.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Do ya believe we get a second chance?

JACOB
Yeah. Somethin' like that.

Callie smiles, goes to speak when -

JACOB (cont'd)
I believe we get a second chance, in
this life, to put the wrong things
right.

She strokes his cheek, leans in, kisses him.

CALLIE
You're my second chance.

JACOB
You're mine.

Their eyes explore each other, looking for a connection, or
validation, even a weakness.

CALLIE
Ya love me back, don't ya Jacob?

Slight reluctance, then he nods sternly.

CALLIE
Say it.

JACOB
Why?

CALLIE
I wanna hear ya say it.

Jacob remains silent. Callie unknits herself from Jacob's
arms.

CALLIE (cont'd)
(playfully)
Okay. Well if ya ain't gonna say
it...

She proceeds to put her clothes on. Jacob's face furrows
with rejection.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Then say it.

Silence.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Your call, mister.

She slips her bra back on, all the while looking at Jacob with lascivious eyes. Jacob is clearly torn.

Teasingly, Callie pulls one of her bra straps down across her arm.

CALLIE (cont'd)
I know ya want me.

Jacob nods.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Ya want me so bad.

He nods, breathing deeper.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Ya can't resist me.

Heavier breathing.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Ya can have me. All o' me. I jus'
wanna hear ya say it.

A deep breath, then -

JACOB
I love -

Reluctance. With entreating eyes, Callie chews her lip.

JACOB (cont'd)
You.

Callie's face beams, she dives on top of Jacob, drives her nails into his chest.

CALLIE
Show me how much, mister.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LORNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lorna lies in bed clutching a letter to her heart. Tears stream from her eyes. Her body quakes with sadness.

LORNA

Mom...Mom.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

River lies in bed, curled into a fetal position. His eyes are wide open, beads of sweat dotted on his brow. He fixes on the bedside cabinet: no mug.

He clutches the duvet tight, quivering and on the verge of panic.

RIVER

(hushed)

Mom? Mom?

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - JACOB'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jacob lies on one side of the bed, staring away from Callie, his eyes closed. Slow and deep breathing, feigning sleep.

Callie lies on the other side, staring away from Jacob, her eyes open and alert.

A cell phone vibrates. Callie grips the duvet tight, pulls it midway up her face. She hesitates, then -

Slowly, she reaches across to the bedside locker, retrieves her cell which is encased in a RED protective cover.

Jacob's eyes flash open. He lies still, listening, sensitive to Callie's every move.

A moment's pause, then Callie, anxiously switches off her cell.

They both lie, eyes open, listening, waiting, until -

Callie twists around, whispers in Jacob's ear.

CALLIE

I love you.

Pretending that he is just waking up, Jacob rolls over, looks deep into Callie's eyes. Callie strokes his stubbly cheek.

CALLIE (cont'd)

(whispering)

Say it.

JACOB
(whispering)
You too.

A kiss, followed by a tense silence.

Jacob rolls onto his back, stares at the ceiling. Callie sits up.

CALLIE
What's wrong, baby?

He is stubbornly silent. She shoves him, playfully.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Tell me, mister.

JACOB
Lorna seems kinda down. I was thinkin' maybe you could take the truck to the super mart, buy her somethin' nice, cheer her up. And get yourself some clothes.

CALLIE
That's mighty kind, but I don't have no money.

JACOB
I'll fix you up with that.

She smiles giddily, kisses him.

CALLIE
(hesitant)
What about River?

JACOB
He'll be fine with me. I thought we could have some man time. A chance to bond.

Callie smiles and, for once, it seems genuine.

CALLIE
How 'bout I fix us all some breakfast, like a normal family.

JACOB
Sure.

Callie swings out of bed, dons a RED bathrobe. She glides over to the sideboard, grabs her fanny pack.

She blows a kiss. As Callie makes to leave -

JACOB (cont'd)
Y'know what's funny?

CALLIE
What's that, baby?

JACOB
I feel fresh as a daisy this mornin'.
Not got those nasty headaches, like I
been havin' the last few nights.

Callie's girlish grin flat lines. A hint of panic, and Jacob knows it.

JACOB (cont'd)
I guess I'm just happy.

Jacob beams as Callie dances out the room.

His smile quickly disappears as he listens intently - waiting for the sound of Callie's footsteps to fade - then bolts up, frantically grabs her cell, tries to unlock the screen, but...a pass code is required.

In a fit of panic, he enters random combinations of numbers.

Pointless.

Frustrated, he is on the verge of hurling the cell at the wall, then resists, takes a deep breath, slumps onto the bed.

He glances at the bedside locker: rosary beads, Bible, candles.

But no mug.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LORNA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Lorna is lying in bed, still pouring over the letters from her Mom.

A gentle tap on the door as it creaks open. Anxious, River creeps in, drowning in one of Jacob's t-shirts: makeshift pajamas.

LORNA
Why are you awake so early?

RIVER
 Couldn't sleep.

LORNA
 Why not?

RIVER
 I didn't have my cocoa. It usually
 helps me sleep.

LORNA
 But you don't like it.

A wave of fear washes over River's face.

LORNA (cont'd)
 What's wrong?

RIVER
 I'm scared.

LORNA
 What's happened?

RIVER
 I couldn't sleep. But I still got bad
 dreams.

LORNA
 What dreams?

RIVER
 Hitting. Screaming.

A flash of insight hits Lorna.

LORNA
 I don't think nightmares. I think
 they're memories.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

River and Lorna are already sat at the table in silence:
 Lorna is lost in a daydream, barely looks up; while River is
 hyper-vigilant and the opposite of his usual, docile self.

Callie is slicing bread, when the knife slips, gashes her
 finger.

As the blood trickles down her wrist, she opens a series of
 cupboards, looks inside.

CALLIE

Lorna, sweetie, you got any band aids
'round this place?

LORNA

Top cupboard, if we have any.

Callie reopens the top cupboard, looks inside, nothing. She then spies the TOOLBOX sat on top. She reaches up, pulls the box down, opens it: inside, an half-empty bottle of liquor.

Hastily, she closes the toolbox, returns it to its hiding place.

She wraps her lips around her wound.

Jacob enters wearing a WHITE t-shirt, sees a pile of mail sitting on the counter.

JACOB

(to Callie)

What's this?

CALLIE

Thought I'd get the mail is all.

In a swift and sudden movement, Jacob sweeps the mail off the counter with his fist.

Callie jumps in her skin, drops the kitchen utensil, pins her self against the sink in shock.

JACOB

Did I ask you to?

CALLIE

I was jus' tryin' to be -

JACOB

Just tryin' to interfere!

He storms out the kitchen.

Lorna wakes from her trance, unshaken, casual.

LORNA

Dad gets the mail. It's one of his rules.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Callie and Lorna stand in the hallway, donning their winter coats. River is sat on the stairs swinging his legs.

CALLIE
You be good now, ya hear me?

River's forlorn face is propped up by his hands. He nods.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Why so glum? I told ya we won't be gone long.

RIVER
It's not that.

CALLIE
Then what's gotten into ya?

River glances at Lorna, who returns an expression of concern. He shrugs his shoulders.

At that moment, a door under the stairs creaks open as Jacob emerges from the CELLAR, a wad of cash in his hand: there must be hundreds of dollars.

Callie fixes on the cellar door as Jacob slams it shut.

He strides over to Callie, hands her the cash.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Jeez. Thank you, baby.

At the sight of Jacob, River leaps off the stair and darts over to him.

RIVER
Can we get hamburgers, sir? Can we?

Jacob smiles, poised to reply when -

CALLIE
No hamburgers.

River is saddened, as Callie opens the front door, marches out into the open air.

INT. JACOB'S TRUCK - DAY

Lorna fumbles with the radio. Crackling. Intermittent voices. White noise.

Callie clicks it off.

CALLIE
Thought we could have a chat, jus' us girls.

Lorna folds her arms, gazes out of the window.

CALLIE (cont'd)
I know why you're upset. It's ya Mom, ain't it?

Lorna turns to face Callie, her eyes heavy with sadness.

LORNA
It's the little things I miss the most. Runnin' her fingers through my hair. The way she sang when she was cookin'.

CALLIE
Well I've been thinkin'. What if ya was to write her.

Curious, Lorna turns.

LORNA
Write her? You serious?

CALLIE
Yeh, jus' see what happens.

Lorna turns away again.

LORNA
Dad would never let me do that.

CALLIE
It's our secret, remember?

Now angry, Lorna swings round.

LORNA
Why did he tell me she's dead?! Why did he lie?!

Anger melts to tears.

EXT. JACOB'S HOUSE - SHED - BACK YARD - DAY

With fierce determination, Jacob straddles a motorcycle, fires up the engine.

It growls like an animal poised to attack. He turns around to River, whose arms are clasped around his waist.

JACOB

You ready?

River nods, as the bike speeds out of the shed.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Callie browses the stationery aisle. She grabs some writing paper, envelopes, sellotape and glue. She dumps the items into a trolley which already contains a bottle of wine and sundry clothes for her and River.

Her concentration is interrupted by a voice that creeps up on her.

RICK (O.S.)

Hey pretty lady, remember me?

She turns and, on seeing Rick, smiles coyly.

CALLIE

Sure I do, handsome.

With lecherous intention, Rick scans her body.

RICK

Must be my lucky day.

CALLIE

Must be our lucky day.

RICK

Who's that fella ya was with yesterday?

CALLIE

Jus' a friend. He's lodgin' with me for a while.

RICK

There ain't nothin' going' on between ya?

CALLIE

I'm a free agent.

RICK

They your kids?

CALLIE
Hell no. I ain't got none.

A sickly smile on Rick's face. He nods whilst chewing on a toothpick.

Tucked behind a shelf, Lorna watches from afar. She can't discern what they are saying, but sees Callie undo the top button on her shirt. Then Rick pulls out a cell phone. Curiosity turns to anger. She marches forward.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The motorcycle blazes down the highway, meandering between traffic.

River screams: not in fear, but in excitement. His first taste of freedom.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Lorna strides up to Callie, dumps some food into the trolley, stares at Rick disapprovingly.

RICK
Well, I'll be goin'.

As he slopes off, he winks at Callie.

LORNA
Was he bothering you again?

Callie looks at her blankly.

LORNA (cont'd)
He made you undo your shirt. I saw it.

Callie's expression of surprise turns to self-pity.

CALLIE
He was gettin' all nasty, threatenin' me. But I learned to jus go along with it. 'Cause if ya don't, you'll wind up with a black eye.

LORNA
You should've stuck up for yourself. No man can treat you like that.

CALLIE
It's all I know, darlin'.

LORNA
Wait till I tell -

CALLIE
Don't tell your Daddy.

Lorna has a look of uncertainty.

CALLIE (cont'd)
I'll keep your secret if ya keep
mine. We got a deal?

EXT. ALPINE LODGE MOTEL - DAY

The motorcycle glides into the parking lot of the Alpine Lodge motel. The engine softens to a purr.

RIVER
What we doin' here?

JACOB
Just a little road trip. You been
here before?

RIVER
I think so.

JACOB
You think so?

RIVER
I've seen it before. Maybe in a
dream. Maybe for real.

The engine hums as Jacob swerves through the car park.

JACOB
This is just between us men, okay? I
don't want your Momma freakin' out
that you been on my bike.

River nods.

JACOB (cont'd)
Okay?

Jacob extends his hand. River accepts: deal.

RIVER

Okay.

The motorcycle shudders as Jacob slams on the breaks, sees a parked Volvo. White. License 'ARB 961'.

Callie's car.

The tires screech as he spins around, takes off. The engine thunders. The sound of fury.

INT. JACOB'S TRUCK - SUPERMARKET CAR PARK - DAY

As Callie backs out of a parking space, she spies Rick from afar, reclining against the wall: the same place where Jacob stopped to talk to him. He waves cheekily.

She smiles back, being careful to hide it from Lorna, who is fiddling with the radio.

As the car sets off, the white noise melts into coherent melodies.

Rick continues to glare and wave. To avert Lorna's attention, Callie fidgets with her glove.

CALLIE

Damn thing.

She jerks her glove off, then pulls the chakra bracelet off, dumps it on the dashboard.

LORNA

That's pretty. What's it for?

CALLIE

You like that New Age stuff, don't ya?

She nods.

LORNA

So did Mom. She used to put crystals in my crib, then gave me my own when I was older.

CALLIE

Well darlin', sounds like ya Mom and me had a lot in common. We both care for your Daddy, a lot, and we're both into the spiritual. But ya Daddy can't stand all that, huh?

LORNA
He says it lacks rules.

Callie rests her hand on Lorna's knee.

CALLIE
Us girls don't need rules. We jus'
gotta follow our hearts, follow our
beliefs. No man can tell us
otherwise. Say it.

Lorna looks puzzled.

CALLIE (cont'd)
No man can tell us what to do. Say
it.

Hesitantly -

LORNA
No man can tell us what to do.

CALLIE
No man can tell me what to do.

LORNA
No man can tell me what to do.

Callie pulls Lorna towards her, kisses her on the forehead.

CALLIE
That's my girl.

A bleeping sound. Callie fidgets, eventually retrieves her
cell from her pocket.

A text message from 'Rick'.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

River sits at the table, voraciously devouring a fat burger.

Jacob grabs a portion of fries from his plate, dumps them on
River's plate. River beams, his mouth bursting with food.

JACOB
Ketchup?

River nods emphatically. Jacob slides a bottle of ketchup
over to River, who opens it, douses his fries. He devours
several, red sauce smeared around his mouth.

JACOB (cont'd)
Hungry, huh?

River nods emphatically: the ketchup smeared around his mouth and teeth is eerily reminiscent of the congealed blood around Callie's mouth following Buddy's murder.

JACOB (cont'd)
I bet you stopped off at all kinds of
good diners on the road.

No response. River's chewing slows down and he rests his fork on the table with a look of dejection.

JACOB (cont'd)
No?

RIVER
Mom said we got no money to eat.

Jacob slouches in the chair. A momentary silence, then -

JACOB
So where was you and your Mom headin'
to?

River shrugs his shoulders, stares at this plate.

JACOB (cont'd)
Were you runnin' from somethin'?
Someone?

Heavy silence.

JACOB (cont'd)
Was it your Dad?

River slowly nods.

JACOB (cont'd)
Was your Daddy mean to your Mom?

A prolonged pause, then River shakes his head. Jacob sits up straight.

JACOB (cont'd)
What happened? You can tell me.

CALLIE (O.S.)
Tell ya what?

Callie enters the kitchen, loaded with shopping bags. She stops in her tracks.

CALLIE

River! No!

She dumps the bags, darts over to the table. As she gathers up the food, her cell pings.

JACOB

Hey. We was havin' fun.

Jacob shoots a glance to River, winking.

JACOB (cont'd)

Weren't we?

Callie dumps the food into the garbage bin. Her cell pings again.

JACOB (cont'd)

You're popular.

CALLIE

It's jus' my brother.

JACOB

You never told me you had a -

CALLIE

I have a brother.

JACOB

What's his name?

CALLIE

Karl.

Jacob turns to River.

JACOB

You like your uncle Karl?

River looks confused: no memory of an uncle. He turns to his Mom for a prompt, when -

CALLIE

He ain't never met him.

JACOB

Why is that?

CALLIE

He's been in jail. Made bail last week. Ya happy now?

Jacob stands, extends his hand.

JACOB
Show me.

Callie looks blank.

JACOB (cont'd)
Your cell. Show me.

CALLIE
Ya don't trust me?

Jacob waits, arm outstretched.

CALLIE (cont'd)
If ya don't trust me, then ya don't
love me.

Angry now.

CALLIE (cont'd)
I'm tryin' Jacob, I'm tryin'. I can't
bring ya wife back, but I'm tryin' to
be my best for ya.

With exaggerated tears she flounces out of the room.

Jacob retracts his arm as he turns to River.

JACOB
We'll talk later.

Another wink.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

As Callie mounts the stairs - no longer sad but giddy - she retrieves a message from her cell.

Another message from Rick.

Callie bites her lip, bounces up the remaining stairs.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LORNA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Lorna sits up in bed, a pen poised in her hand. On her lap rests several sheets of paper.

She picks up an envelope, inspects it: no gum seal.

CALLIE (O.S.)
 Glue's in the kitchen. Toolbox on top
 o' the cupboard.

Startled, Lorna turns, sees Callie stood in the doorway, her
 mascara smudged.

LORNA
 What's wrong?

Silence. Lorna springs off the bed, arms outstretched.
 Callie embraces her, squeezes tight, runs her fingers
 through Lorna's hair...like her Mom used to.

CALLIE
 I'll be right, darlin'. You jus'
 write your Mom.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Lorna peers outside the window, sees her Dad outside
 splitting firewood with an axe.

She climbs onto the counter, reaches for the TOOLBOX.

She opens it: shock.

A small bottle of glue and a half-empty bottle of liquor.

Tears swelling, she glares out the window at her father.

Now furious, she snatches the glue and the bottle from the
 box, slams the lid, then places it back on top of the
 cupboard.

Callie enters, singing to herself. She senses something is
 wrong.

CALLIE
 You okay, sweetie?

LORNA
 Fine.

CALLIE
 If you want me to post ya letter, I'm
 headin' out this evenin'. There's a
 box at the motel.

LORNA
 Sure. Whatever.

A self-satisfied smirk on Callie's face as she heads out the back door.

EXT. JACOB'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

The axe drives deep into a block of wood, shattering it in two. Jacob hauls another piece onto a stump, turns to see Callie inching towards him.

CALLIE

You don't mind if I head out for a couple o' hours, do ya babe?

Jacob stabs the axe into the ground.

JACOB

Where you headin'?

CALLIE

My lil brother - the one I told ya about - well he's in town an' I thought we'd catch up.

A puzzled look.

CALLIE (cont'd)

I ain't seen him in forever, Jacob. It would mean so much to me to -

JACOB

You takin' the boy?

CALLIE

Karl, well he jus' got outta prison, so I was thinkin' it wouldn't be proper for River to see him, ya know, not yet. So I figured ya could maybe look after the kids while I -

JACOB

Where you meetin' him?

CALLIE

In town. We passed a nice lookin' diner on the way to the mart the other -

JACOB

You'll be wanting my truck.

Callie places her hands on Jacob's chest, roves up and down.

JACOB (cont'd)
And you'll be wantin' my money.

With a venomous smile, Callie strokes his face, then winks.

CALLIE
I'll show ya my appreciation later.

Jacob uncoils from her, grips the axe. As he twists round, he slices the wood in two.

As Callie slinks away -

JACOB
Hey.

She turns as Jacob hurls the keys to the tuck at her. Startled, she catches them awkwardly.

JACOB (cont'd)
Trade you for yours.

Now panicked, Callie stammers.

CALLIE
Why, what you be needin' those for?

JACOB
In case the garage calls.

She nods, wincing.

Reluctantly, Callie retrieves her keys from her pocket, tosses them to Jacob. He clenches his fist as he catches them, smiling victoriously.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Callie creeps into the hallway, looking behind her, peering up the stairs: all is clear. She edges towards the open CELLAR door, ventures inside.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - CELLAR - DAY

Hurriedly, Callie bounds down the stairs. At the bottom, a hazy sunlight from a small window pierces the darkness.

The cellar is littered with sundry items: an American flag above an old couch, deck chairs, stacks of boxes. There is also a series of tools: there are TWO of each. Identical.

She meanders around the objects with keen eyes, searching with intent, when she stubs her toe on a dull metallic object, about the size of a small refrigerator.

She kneels down. Just what she was looking for: Jacob's safe.

The door is ajar. Stacks of money are placed inside. There must be tens of thousands of dollars.

CALLIE

Jackpot.

Callie's face lights up: excitement tinged with deviousness. Her eyes widen. She licks her lips, when -

The ceiling creaks from a series of pounding footsteps above.

Panic.

She grabs a HATCHET as she scuttles to the base of the stairs, starts mounting the steps, one by one, slowly, carefully.

The footsteps above cease. A tense silence. She climbs higher then -

A dull sound blasts through the cellar, like a heavy weight being offloaded in the room above.

She stops in her tracks, clenching the railing with one hand, grasping the hatchet with the other.

As the noises above fade, she edges closer to the door, when -

The door swings open to reveal Jacob cradling pieces of wood in his arms.

Shock turns to sweetness as Callie, gripping the hatchet, spews:

CALLIE (cont'd)

Oh my, you startled me, Jacob.

He glances at her, curiously.

CALLIE (cont'd)

Ya musta read my mind, 'cause I was jus' about to help.

She waves the hatchet playfully.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Told ya we was connected.

A girlish giggle, but Jacob isn't fooled.

JACOB
I'm done.

Feigned disappointment in Callie's eyes.

CALLIE
Jus' my luck. Well babe, I'm gonna
get -

JACOB
Sure. You don't wanna be late.

Jacob remains in the doorway. Awkwardly, Callie pushes past him, races upstairs.

Slowly, Jacob closes the cellar door, leaving it slightly ajar: an invitation, or a trap.

EXT. JACOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The truck crawls down the driveway, onto the road, speeds away.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LORNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lorna is curled up on her bed, devouring more letters that are concealed inside the pages of a book.

River is crouched on the floor, surrounded by crayons, drawing a picture.

The bedroom door creaks open.

JACOB
You kids need to be okay for half an
hour. I gotta do some work on the
bike.

Lorna doesn't respond. River nods his head whilst concentrating on a picture.

Jacob glances down at what River has drawn: an androgynous face with a large purple blotch on one eye, and tears streaming from the other eye, set against a messy background of black and red.

JACOB (cont'd)
That your Mom?

River doesn't flinch. He shakes his head, continues to color.

RIVER
My Dad.

Jacob is uneasy. Puzzled.

JACOB
Your Dad?

As River nods, Lorna slams her book, swings her legs off the bed. As she strides out of the room -

LORNA
Show him.

River looks confused.

LORNA (cont'd)
The recording. On your cell. Show him.

EXT. ALPINE LODGE MOTEL - NIGHT

Callie climbs out the truck, letter in hand. She tears it into several pieces, scatters them to the wind.

With her hips swaying, she walks down a line of unoccupied rooms, edging closer to the only window with a light. On reaching it, she raps on the door.

A brief silence, then the door swings open to reveal Rick.

He scans Callie up and down.

CALLIE
Miss me, handsome?

He grabs her by the collar of her jacket, playfully yanks her inside the room.

INT. ALPINE LODGE MOTEL - ROOM - NIGHT

Rick sinks into the bed, sprawling his legs as Callie stands above him. She unzips her jacket. As it drops to the floor, it is revealed that she is wearing the POLKER DOT dress.

EXT. ALPINE LODGE MOTEL - NIGHT

On the outskirts of the car park, an engine roars, splutters, then dies.

A figure dismounts from a motorbike laden with a sports bag.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lorna and River sit at the table feasting on ice cream. River is ravenous. His cell rests on the table.

LORNA

You mind if I borrow your cell?

River shrugs his shoulders, engrossed in the dessert.

Lorna gently takes the cell, retreats to the other side of the kitchen.

She hesitates, takes a deep breathe, then dials a number.

It rings. A MALE answers.

MALE (O.S.)

Yeah?

Lorna is frozen with disappointment.

MALE (O.S.)

Who's this?

A few more seconds feel like a lifetime as Lorna holds the cell at arm's length.

The recipient hangs up.

With a stuffed mouth -

RIVER

Who you callin'?

LORNA

No one.

She braves a smile, heads stoically back to the table.

LORNA (cont'd)

Hey, slow down. It's like you never had ice cream before.

RIVER
Mom wouldn't let us.

LORNA
Us?

RIVER
Dad and me.

A half-suppressed laugh of disbelief.

LORNA
Your Mom wouldn't let your Dad eat
ice cream?

River stops eating. He stabs the ice cream with the spoon.

RIVER
Mom wouldn't let Dad do a lot of
stuff. That's why they fought.

LORNA
What do you remember?

Fear creeps into River's eyes.

LORNA (cont'd)
You're safe here. You can tell -

RIVER
I'm not safe. Not whilst she's here.

Lorna leans in, confused but intrigued.

LORNA
Your Mom ain't here.

River pulls up his sleeve. Bruises.

LORNA (cont'd)
Your Mom did that?

He nods.

RIVER
Dad's are worse.

INT. ALPINE LODGE MOTEL - ROOM - NIGHT

Callie and Rick's bodies are tangled under the sheets. He kisses her voraciously. Callie groans, faking pleasure.

CALLIE
Ya want me real bad.

Rick nods, breathing deeper.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Ya can't resist.

Heavier breathing.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Ya can have me. All o' me.

EXT. ALPINE LODGE MOTEL - NIGHT

The figure approaches the parked Volvo, inserts the keys into the trunk, jerks it open.

It is Jacob.

He peers inside the trunk, rummages around, surveying the contents of various bags.

The flashlight blinks.

Next, the rucksack. Impatiently, he unzips the side pocket, pulls out the contents, including -

A small bag of WHITE POWDER.

Curious, he opens up the rucksack to reveal four large bags of powder.

As he stares into the trunk, the flashlight dies out.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

River is curled up on the couch engrossed in the TV.

Lorna stands by the window, agitated, with River's cell to her ear. Her heart quickens with every ring, when -

This time, a WOMAN answers.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Hello.

Lorna beams, then her smile cracks with panic. She freezes.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Hello?

A prolonged silence. Lorna takes a deep breathe.

LORNA
Mom?

She squirms, hangs up. A deep sigh.

She tosses the cell onto the sofa as she slides up next to River.

A momentary silence, broken by -

LORNA (cont'd)
You gotta tell someone.

River's trance is broken. He turns with a quizzical expression.

LORNA (cont'd)
About your Mom.

He turns back to the TV: numbing escapism is preferable to facing reality.

RIVER
I don't wanna end up like Dad.

Intrigued, Lorna leans in closer.

LORNA
What happened to your Dad?

River tenses up.

Lorna takes the remote, turns off the TV. Now, with a stern tone -

LORNA (cont'd)
What happened to him?

A heavy sigh as River shuffles in his seat.

RIVER
He said he would tell the Police
about what Mom was doin' for money.

LORNA
What was she doing?

River shrugs his shoulders.

RIVER
 Sellin' somethin'. But Dad didn't
 like it. I heard him say that's why
 she had no friends. They took all our
 money.

LORNA
 Then what?

RIVER
 More screaming. More crying. And -
 He hesitates, gazing downwards.

LORNA
 What?
 River's calm turns to panic.

RIVER
 I hate blood, I hate it!
 Lorna embraces him, attempting to placate him.

LORNA
 My Dad won't let anything happen to
 you, okay?

EXT. ALPINE LODGE MOTEL - NIGHT

Jacob marches towards his parked truck, brandishes a knife
 and slashes the two front tires.

As the air gushes out, he fixes his gaze on the light
 emanating from a room.

INT. ALPINE LODGE MOTEL - ROOM - NIGHT

Inside the room, Callie slips back into her POLKER DOT
 dress. Rick is sprawled on the bed, still naked.

Callie clips her fanny pack around her waist, blows a kiss.

As she makes to leave -

RICK
 Y'know what's funny?

CALLIE
 What?

RICK
I bet your friend don't fuck like I
do.

Callie's girlish grin flattens.

CALLIE
I wouldn't know.

Rick beams as Callie grabs the keys to the truck. As she
heads out the door -

RICK
Call me, baby.

EXT. ALPINE LODGE MOTEL - NIGHT

Callie hurries towards the truck, clambers inside. The
engine roars to life.

As she reverses, the truck struggles. Callie slams her fists
against the wheel.

CALLIE
Fuck!

INT. ALPINE LODGE - RECEPTION - NIGHT

A MAN (60's) sits at a desk watching a TV. This is EARL, the
owner of Alpine Lodge.

His attention is broken as Carrie barges into the reception,
marches up to the desk.

EARL
I was wonderin' when you'd be back.
You're damn car's blocking my -

CALLIE
You gotta help me mister, my truck
won't go.

Earl doesn't flinch. He remains fixed on the TV.

EARL
If it ain't your station wagon then
it's your truck.

Enraged, she spits -

CALLIE
Ya gonna help me not not?

EARL
I'll help when you move that heap o'
junk.

Now imploring -

CALLIE
It'll be gone tomorrow, I swear. An'
I'll pay ya extra.

EARL
You said you had no money.

An impatient sigh. Earl turns back to the screen.

CALLIE
You ain't gonna help me?

He remains silent, fixes on the screen.

CALLIE (cont'd)
Help me!

With a stern expression, Earl turns his gaze.

EARL
Let me make this real simple for you,
lady. You pay. I help.

Callie slams her fist on the desk.

CALLIE
Son of a bitch! Fuck yourself!

She storms out of the reception into the cold night.

EXT. ALPINE LODGE MOTEL - NIGHT

Callie zips her jacket to her neck. First she strides, then a light jog. She picks up pace and races out of the parking lot onto the highway.

As she runs past the parked motorbike, Jacob emerges from the undergrowth.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Now clutching her arms, with tears streaming, Callie races down the highway.

INT. ALPINE LODGE MOTEL - ROOM - NIGHT

Rick lies in bed, supping on a beer whilst under the hypnotic spell of the TV.

The spell is broken by an impatient knock on the door.

He swings out of bed, swaggers to the door, beer in hand.

Another knock.

RICK
Miss me already, baby?

As he yanks open the door, he freezes in shock.

The beer bottle slips from his hand, smashes on the floor.

RICK (cont'd)
What the...where's my dough?

EXT. JACOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

An eerie winter mist blankets the house.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The living room is shrouded in darkness.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LORNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lorna is tucked into bed, reading her letters by candlelight.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The front door creaks open. Callie slithers around the frame, panting, shivering. In the moonlight she looks ghostly pale with sable lips.

The first thing she spies is the CELLAR door, ajar, inviting her in.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

As she descends into the darkness, Callie switches on the flashlight on her cell.

Deeper into the cellar, she makes her way to the safe which is still unlocked.

She kneels down, waves her cell inside.

Empty.

Puzzled, she turns to leave, when -

She screams as the flashlight illumines a stony face: Jacob.

CALLIE

Jesus, babe. Ya scared me.

A tense silence.

JACOB

What are you doing?

CALLIE

I'm so sorry baby, I really am. I got lost on my way home from town, pulled into a motel to ask for directions and, and, these guys, three of 'em, came onto me, sleazy 'an all. I was so scared, they wouldn't take no for a - but I told 'em straight, I really did, an' they didn't like that, not one bit, so they, they, slashed the tires. I'm so sorry, I was jus' so scared. I had to get outta there. So I ran home. Back to you. But I'm so cold, I jus' need a blanket or somethin'. I thought there might be, maybe a blanket down here -

She trails over, replacing her words with tears.

Silence, except for Callie's labored breathing.

CALLIE (cont'd)

Why ain't you asleep, babe?

Jacob raises an empty wine bottle to eye level.

JACOB

Why did you take the bottle.

CALLIE
What bottle?

JACOB
From my toolbox.

CALLIE
Baby, I swear, I didn't take any -
Jacob lurches forward, as he growls -

JACOB
Where is it?

CALLIE
I swear, Jacob, I swear. I didn't
take nothin'.

JACOB
How can I trust you?

CALLIE
I told ya, if ya love me then ya
trust -

JACOB
Not good enough.

Callie grips Jacob's shirt, almost pleading.

CALLIE
I'll show ya, I'll show ya you can.

Jacob grasps Callie by the wrist, yanks her hand off his
shirt.

CALLIE (cont'd)
I didn't wanna say nothin', but
Lorna, she got secrets she's been
keepin from ya.

Curiosity washes over Jacob's face.

JACOB
What secrets?

CALLIE
I feel bad for sayin', I feel so -

JACOB
(barks)
What secrets?

CALLIE

She took the bottle Jacob, she took it. An', an' -

JACOB

And what?

CALLIE

She been keepin' crystals, ya know, the kind your wife believed in. An', an' she been writin' -

Now a flood of tears.

CALLIE (cont'd)

She been writin' to her...she been writin' her Mom.

As Callie continues to wail, Jacob hands her the wine, turns, and with solemn steps makes his way towards the stairs.

Not a word uttered, just heaviness in his steps and in his eyes.

Then, at the foot of the stairs -

JACOB

I'll get the kids. Friday's games night.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

River lies awake, facing away from the door. A figure enters the room.

River turns to see Jacob slumped on the end of the bed.

JACOB

Bad dreams?

River edges towards Jacob, curls his arms around him.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The four are sat in a circle in front of a roaring fire. Jacob wears a WHITE shirt, Callie a RED bathrobe. The kids are in matching pajamas.

Callie places the empty wine bottle in the center of the circle.

CALLIE
Who's spinnin' first?

RIVER
Me! Me!

Lorna remains quiet. Anger simmering.

River spins the bottle. It lands on himself.

RIVER (cont'd)
I want Lorna to ask!

JACOB
It don't work that way.

Lorna stares at the floor.

CALLIE
Honey, ask a question.

Lorna looks up, fixing her scornful eyes on her father.

A tense silence.

CALLIE (cont'd)
River, why don't ya ask Lorna a
question, huh?

He thinks for a moment, then giddily smiles to himself.

RIVER
Ever stayed up past midnight?

LORNA
Lame. My turn.

Lorna spins. The bottle lands on herself. River is bursting to speak when Jacob interrupts -

JACOB
Do you keep secrets?

An excruciating silence. Lorna nods.

JACOB (cont'd)
Do you keep secrets from me?

CALLIE
Hey, jus' one question, mister!

Lorna spins. The bottle lands on Jacob. With a penetrating gaze, Lorna speaks -

LORNA
Have you ever lied to me?

A deep breath. A pause.

JACOB
No.

Jacob spins. The bottle lands on himself.

CALLIE
Ever lied to me?

JACOB
No.

Jacob spins. The bottle lands on Callie.

JACOB (cont'd)
Have you been unfaithful?

Callie shrinks into a shell. Silence.

RIVER
What does that mean?

CALLIE
It's nothin'. Maybe we should stop
playin'. It's gettin' kinda serious.

A nervous laugh, then Jacob grabs the bottle, hurls it
against the wall. He stands, towering over Callie.

JACOB
I asked you a goddamn question!

As he strides over to the sideboard -

LORNA
Dad, leave it, okay? Stop picking
on -

He lifts open a lid on the sideboard, retrieves a beer.

LORNA (cont'd)
I knew it!

Jacob flips the cap off, chugs. Beer dribbles down his chin.
He wipes it off with his sleeve, turns to Callie.

JACOB
Get outta my sight, you fuckin'
whore!

LORNA

Dad! Stop!

CALLIE

(to Jacob)

How can you be so cruel?

Callie grabs River, pulling him close: a shield. Lorna sides with Callie, embraces her tight.

Another swig.

JACOB

Funny ain't it, how women be actin' like a slut, then soon as they get caught out, they don't like bein' called a whore. They turn it around, say their man is bein' nasty, bein' abusive for callin' 'em out for what they really are.

Callie pulls River tight, tears of panic, or guilt.

Jacob staggers over to her, spits on her.

LORNA

Dad, stop! Please.

JACOB

They're all the fuckin' same. You took your Mom's side, and now you're takin' her side.

Another swig.

LORNA

How can you say that about -

JACOB

I ain't sorry your Mom's gone. Not after what she did.

Lorna is stunned. Dumbfounded.

Jacob kneels down beside Lorna. Her heart races.

JACOB (cont'd)

Truth is, your Mom was a fuckin' whore.

He stands, chugs the remainder of his beer and raises the bottle as if making a toast.

JACOB (cont'd)
Good riddance to whores!

Lorna bolts up, possessed with rage.

LORNA
I trusted you.

JACOB
What in God's name are you -

LORNA
I've seen the bottle. The one you've
been hiding. You're a liar!

Jacob smacks Lorna across the face. She crumples to the floor.

He stomps over to the sideboard, takes the framed CRAYOLA DRAWING drawing, and hurls it to the floor. Next, he sifts through the shards of broken glass, drags out the picture and holds it for Lorna to see, right before tearing it into pieces.

JACOB
Liar, huh? So tell me 'bout the
letters.

LORNA
So what? You can't tell me what to
do. No man can tell me -

Jacob discards the scraps of paper, kneels beside Lorna, grabs her hair, yanks it tight.

JACOB
Your Mom was a whore. And your Mom is
dead.

He releases her, then stands triumphantly.

Lorna and Callie clutch each other, crying hysterically.

As Jacob turns, River seizes him by the tail of his shirt, tugs on it. Jacob spins round, raises his hand, ready to strike when -

On seeing River sobbing, he relents, unfurls his fist, extends his hand.

But River recoils, wraps his arms around his mother.

Anger turns to sadness. Jacob retracts his hand.

JACOB (cont'd)
Get outta my sight. All o' you.

The wailing continues.

JACOB (cont'd)
Out!

Callie stands, River still clinging to her side. She lifts Lorna to her feet, then heads for the door, when -

JACOB (cont'd)
Wait. Stay.

Callie spins round.

JACOB (cont'd)
(to Callie)
Just you.

Lorna and River race out of the room. Callie makes for the couch, perches on the edge.

CALLIE
I knew you'd come to ya senses. I
knew you'd see I ain't no -

JACOB
Whore. Liar. Murderer. Thief.

CALLIE
I ain't stolen nothin'.

JACOB
Thou shalt not steal.

CALLIE
What the hell are ya talkin' -

JACOB
Thou shalt not kill.

Callie now stands: not defensive but enraged.

CALLIE
I told ya, that fuckin' mutt -

She squares up to Jacob.

JACOB
Thou shalt not commit adultery.

CALLIE

Was it when you was away fightin',
killin' all those people, huh? Is
that when she did it?

Jacob speaks through gritted teeth -

JACOB

I was fightin' for my country, for my
God, whilst she was fuckin' another
man.

CALLIE

I ain't your wife. She didn't love ya
like I do. It's just fear, an' your
ego tellin' you somethin' that ain't
true.

JACOB

Sit down.

CALLIE

You ain't takin' that shit out on me.

JACOB

Sit!

CALLIE

All I wanted was to love ya, Jacob,
be a real family. But ya don't want
my love, ya don't wanna heal, ya
don't wanna forgive, all ya wanna do
is -

He smacks her across the face.

Peering around the door frame, River watches in horror. He
slips out his cell and starts RECORDING, when he is startled
by the sound of a distant siren originating from outside.

JACOB

Right on time.

River continues to record as Jacob paces, circling Callie's
trembling body.

JACOB (cont'd)

Remember outside the mart? Remember
that creepy son of a bitch?

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Outside the supermarket, Callie watches from the truck as Jacob converses with Rick.

JACOB
She'll be here. Tomorrow.

Jacob hands Rick a card: his phone number.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

We return to the present...

CALLIE
You bastard, ya set that up?

Next, Jacob tosses Callie her car keys.

JACOB
A truck full o' white powder. And a hatchet with your prints.

INT. ALPINE LODGE MOTEL - ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Jacob lunges into the room, clasps Rick by the neck, forces him onto the bed.

Rick writhes in vain to break free from the stranglehold, as Jacob drives the HATCHET deep into Rick's skull. A shower of blood paints the bed.

A purposely placed bag of WHITE POWDER lies next to Rick's mutilated body.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Present. The wailing siren gets louder, closer.

CALLIE
What have ya done?

JACOB
And a stash of my money for your escape.

EXT. ALPINE LODGE MOTEL - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Jacob dumps wads of cash into the trunk of the Volvo next to the remaining bags of powder. He tosses in the bloodstained HATCHET for good measure.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Present...

JACOB

With prints on my safe. And a witness, who can place you at the scene.

INT. ALPINE LODGE MOTEL - RECEPTION - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Callie pleads with Earl for him to help her.

CALLIE

Son of a bitch! Fuck yourself!

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Present. The siren stops wailing, leaving a dead silence.

JACOB

They have it all.

A trickle of blood oozes from Callie's lip.

CALLIE

They'll never believe -

JACOB

They'll never believe a woman on the run with a fake license and a history of violence, which I'm sure your ex can vouch for. You see I've heard it. On your boy's cell.

CALLIE

You bastard, it ain't fake, it's my maiden name! You can't prove nothin', ya son of a bitch, nothin'!

A resounding knock at the front door.

JACOB

Let them decide.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

River scurries up the stairs. Lorna is sat on the top step, waiting for him, her tears now subdued.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Callie is now on her knees, palms facing, pleading.

CALLIE
Why, Jacob, why? This is a set up, a
lie, this is -

Jacob kneels with a crooked smile.

JACOB
Justice.

EXT. JACOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Snow falls furiously.

Laden with her rucksack, Callie is escorted to a police car by two OFFICERS. She flails in protest. Hysterical.

Momentarily she breaks free, lashing out at Jacob, clawing at him like a crazed animal; but he stands calmly on the porch.

CALLIE
I didn't kill nobody, nobody! An' ya
fuckin' know that, ya fuckin' know
it!

Lorna appears on the porch, hand in hand with River.

CALLIE (cont'd)
(to Lorna)
She won't come, she won't come for
ya! She don't love ya like I do!

River recoils at what he witnesses. He buries in face in Lorna's arms. As she comforts him, she turns her gaze from Callie, when Jacob grips her by the neck, forcing her to watch.

JACOB
Watch. Both of you.

The officers shove Callie into the back seat of the police cruiser. Behind the window, muffled screams of protest, when -

Jacob turns to River, extends both arms, inviting an embrace.

JACOB (cont'd)
You're free, son.

But River refuses.

RIVER
I ain't your son.

Abashed, Jacob retracts one arm.

JACOB
Give me your cell.

River shakes his head emphatically.

Jacob grabs him by the wrist.

JACOB (cont'd)
Now.

Reluctantly, River slips his cell from his pocket. Jacob yanks it from his hand, hands it to one of the officers: incriminating evidence...but of whom?

River embraces Lorna, then solemnly saunters to the police car, opens the rear door, slumps inside next to his mother.

As the car pulls away, Callie wails from the backseat: futile cries of abuse, barely audible. She spits at Jacob, painting the inner window with a film of thick phlegm.

River fixes his despondent gaze on Lorna, until she vanishes into the house.

Jacob remains. River's eyes lock on him, followed by a twisted smile.

Jacob watches as the car is swallowed by the night: his pained expression a strange blend of righteousness and sorrow.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Hot water blasts from the shower, steaming up the room.

Topless, and with shaving foam around his mouth, Jacob stands at the sink, facing downwards, glimpses a toothbrush and a straight razor, side by side in parallel.

Order. Symmetry.

Next, he looks up at the mirror in front of him: it is perfectly straight.

He stares directly at his own eyes that now seem brighter.

A small crucifix still hangs from his neck.

The steam continues to rise, slowly erasing his image. In his reflection, he can vaguely discern the shape of his head. Wearing a smile, he wipes the condensation with his fist.

He reaches for a straight razor, raises it to his neck, when -

A gentle tap on the bathroom door.

LORNA (O.S.)

Dad. Door.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LANDING - DAY

As Jacob ambles out the bathroom, he shoots Lorna a puzzled look.

JACOB

Who is it?

She shrugs her shoulders. Face down.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Now fully dressed, Jacob undoes several locking mechanisms that line the door frame.

He opens the door with caution, which quickly turns to shock.

A well-dressed WOMAN (40's) stands hand in hand with a BOY (8). Her hair is draped on one side, shrouding her eye and cheek.

Lorna approaches from behind. Jacob seizes her from getting any closer to -

LORNA

Mom?

The Woman nods, tears swelling in her eyes.

This is RUTH. Lorna's Mom.

Angry and confused, Jacob casts his eye to a car on the driveway, the engine humming. Inside the car, a man - Michael, from the gas station - watches closely.

JACOB

You got a nerve.

RUTH

You won't do anything in front of Michael, or my children.

Jacob stares at the young boy as rage mingles with regret: a reminder of River.

RUTH (cont'd)

This is Liam.

She turns to Lorna, who is now in tears of disbelief: her eyes are red and blotchy.

RUTH (cont'd)

Your half-brother.

Seething, Jacob makes to slam the door, when -

LORNA

No!

Lorna escapes from his clasp, blocks the doorway.

LORNA (cont'd)

(to Ruth)

You got my letter, so soon?

Ruth shakes her head.

RUTH

The phone calls. Eventually we realized who it was.

Neither can contain their welling emotions. They embrace.

RUTH (cont'd)

I've missed you. So much.

Over Lorna's shoulder, Ruth sees the fury in Jacob's eyes. She releases her daughter.

RUTH (cont'd)
Honey, why don't you show your brother your pretty crystals. We have so much to catch up on. But first I need to talk with your father.

Ruth glances behind her, nods at Michael.

With his gaze fixed on Jacob, Michael cuts the engine, steps out of the car, reclines against the door, arms folded.

Leaving the front door wide open, Ruth enters the house.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ruth tiptoes around pools of beer, shards of glass, even a blood stain. She stands by the window in clear view of Michael.

Jacob is anxious. He hovers by the door, obstructing the exit.

RUTH
Please sit down.

JACOB
I'm fine right -

RUTH
Sit down.

Angered, he slumps onto the couch. The remains of the broken wine bottle lie next to his feet.

JACOB
What the hell do you want?

RUTH
I want closure. I want to explain why I -

JACOB
Fucked another man.

RUTH
You were gone. For years. I was alone with a brand new baby. When you stopped writing, I didn't know if you were even coming home.

Jacob points to his wedding ring.

JACOB
Nothin' but lies. All of it.

RUTH
It wasn't lies. I loved you, Jacob.
Very much. But you came home a
different man.

JACOB
I did. Stronger. Wiser.

RUTH
Intransigent and ignorant.

He crushes the wine bottle underneath his army boot.

RUTH (cont'd)
I needed you. You weren't there.
Michael was.

Jacob's breathing intensifies.

RUTH (cont'd)
I thought you were dead.

Now he clears phlegm from his throat, poised to spit.

RUTH (cont'd)
I was truthful. I told you about
Michael. I told you about everything.
And you spent the rest of our time
together punishing me.

Jacob leans forward with enraged eyes.

RUTH (cont'd)
I've spent all this time carrying the
guilt. Until I realized, it's not
mine to carry.

Jacob is now standing. Ruth edges towards him looking deep
into his fiery eyes.

RUTH (cont'd)
I forgive you, Jacob. But can you
forgive yourself?

She makes for the door, but Jacob obstructs her path. His
heart thudding, his anger rising, he attempts to disarm her
with a penetrating gaze.

Futile. Ruth simply smiles in pity.

RUTH (cont'd)
Goodbye.

Furious, Jacob raises his fist, poised to strike. Ruth stands firm.

RUTH (cont'd)
You can't hurt me anymore.

She pushes past him, makes to leave, when -

JACOB
That all you came for?

Ruth turns back.

RUTH
No. You cut me off from my daughter.
I want her back.

He doesn't flinch, just glares disdainfully out of the window, locking eyes with Michael.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LANDING - DAY

Ruth climbs the stairs onto the landing.

Her pace slows as she inches towards the bathroom, inhaling deeply before she enters.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Tentatively, Ruth scans the room, fixing on the mirror.

FLASHBACK to the opening scene: fresh blood drips from a broken mirror. Dragging her body across the shards, an unidentified woman panics and pleads for her life.

We return to the present.

As Ruth gazes into the mirror, she brushes back the curtain of hair that conceals half of her face, revealing a BURN MARK on her cheek.

FLASHBACK to the opening scene: from the sideboard, the man grabs a pair of hair straighteners, approaches the woman. She panics and pleads: pointless. The woman's blood-soaked skin hisses as the man scalds her cheek.

Back to the present...

As Ruth twists the faucet, she gently pulls back her sleeve to reveal a CHAKRA BRACELET around her wrist.

She splashes her face with water and takes in a deep breathe.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LORNA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Lorna and Liam sit on the floor, chatting, laughing.

Lorna glances up, sees Ruth stood in the doorway, her face alight with joy.

She springs to her feet, gestures to embrace Ruth; but Ruth momentarily blocks her, and instead looks in horror, now realizing that the redness around Lorna's eye was not from crying.

It is a scarlet bruise.

Sadness and shame fill Lorna's eyes. She drops her head, until Ruth tucks her index finger underneath Lorna's chin, propping her head up high.

A loving smile.

Lorna tenderly wraps her arms around her mother's waist.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

A desolate hallway.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark and empty, yet strangely tranquil.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Silence. Pieces of the RED mug lie in the sink.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - JACOB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jacob lies in bed. Instead of a duvet, he is swaddled in the American flag we saw previously in the cellar.

He chugs from a hip flask. The liquor drizzles down his chin as he slumps onto the bed.

Next, he removes the wedding ring from his finger, tosses it on the bedside locker.

He reaches for the Bible that rests on the locker. He opens the book at a marked page.

Gazing into the pages, he wipes the rivulets of liquor seeping from his mouth.

With a triumphant smirk, he spits:

JACOB
Vengeance...is mine.

He returns the book to the locker, reclines on the bed, tucks his hand underneath the pillow, when -

There's something there.

From between two pillows - exactly where Lorna previously discovered the hip flask - he retrieves an envelope, on it the word: 'Dad'.

Tentatively, he peels the envelope open, slowly pulls out the CRAYOLA DRAWING, the pieces of which have been carefully sellotaped back together.

Curiosity turns to sorrow as he struggles to hold back the welling emotion: the searing pain; the hollowness of regret; the surging guilt now demanding to be released.

He breaks down, sobbing violently.

His cries of desperation are broken by the sound of a police siren getting louder, closer...

The room is suddenly awash with light: the red and blue from the flashing siren mingled with the cold white of the full moon: a sick parody of the flag that Jacob is swathed in.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Country music gently hums from the radio. A hand rests lightly on the wheel, on the wrist - a CHAKRA BRACELET.

Ruth turns to Michael who is seated in the front. He lovingly places his hand on her knee. She smiles, rests her hand on top of his, then glances behind her to see Liam and Lorna huddled in the back, sound asleep.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The clear night sky is dotted with stars. The car cruises along a desolate highway, destined for new beginnings.

FADE OUT.